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Eastchurch Aviation Museum

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Photos by

Date: 23rd September 2026

The planned trip to Eastchurch Aviation Museum, Isle of Sheppey, was a great success. Hardly in our neck of the woods, it was well worth the roll round the M25 and M20.

A fairly early meet at Teal's Café, near Hildenborough, enabled us to meet up with a couple of my mates from that side of London, one of whom knew a 'good way' to the museum, near to Sheerness.

The museum is at the former Eastchurch airfield, a site with a remarkable place in the history of British aviation. Eastchurch was one of the country's earliest flying grounds and was closely associated with the pioneering Short Brothers, as well as some of the earliest naval flying. It was here that many experiments were carried out in the early days of aviation, including seaplanes, aerial gunnery and bombing. The site later became an important Royal Naval Air Service station during the First World War and continued its military aviation role through the Second World War.



A quick coffee in the nearby prison café set us up for a most informative visit. The museum itself is run by a dedicated team of volunteers, who have done a tremendous amount of work preserving and displaying the aviation history of the Isle of Sheppey. There is a fascinating collection of photographs, artefacts and information covering the pioneering days of flight, the Short Brothers and the site's important role in both World Wars.

The time and dedication of these trustees never ceases to amaze me. The history of the once very active base fills in another part of the aviation history of both wars.

It was particularly interesting to discover just how much aviation history is connected with Eastchurch. The site was involved in the early development of naval aviation and became a centre for flying training, experimentation and gunnery. It was also the birthplace of many aviation 'firsts', making the museum well worth a visit for anyone with an interest in aviation or military history.

The D-Day Museum in Portsmouth is next on the list.

