

= 1910 London to Manchester air race =

The 1910 London to Manchester air race took place between two aviators , each of whom attempted to win a heavier @-@ than @-@ air powered flight challenge between London and Manchester first proposed by the Daily Mail newspaper in 1906 . The £ 10 @,@ 000 prize was won in April 1910 by Frenchman Louis Paulhan .

The first to make the attempt was Claude Grahame @-@ White , an Englishman from Hampshire . He took off from London on 23 April 1910 , and made his first planned stop at Rugby . His biplane subsequently suffered engine problems , forcing him to land again , near Lichfield . High winds made it impossible for Grahame @-@ White to continue his journey , and his aeroplane suffered further damage on the ground when it was blown over .

While Grahame @-@ White 's aeroplane was being repaired in London , Paulhan took off late on 27 April , heading for Lichfield . A few hours later Grahame @-@ White was made aware of Paulhan 's departure , and immediately set off in pursuit . The next morning , after an unprecedented night @-@ time take @-@ off , he almost caught up with Paulhan , but his aeroplane was overweight and he was forced to concede defeat . Paulhan reached Manchester early on 28 April , winning the challenge . Both aviators celebrated his victory at a special luncheon held at the Savoy Hotel in London .

The event marked the first long @-@ distance aeroplane race in England , the first take @-@ off of a heavier @-@ than @-@ air machine at night , and the first powered flight into Manchester from outside the city . Paulhan repeated the journey in April 1950 , the fortieth anniversary of the original flight , this time as a passenger aboard a British jet fighter .

= = History = =

On 17 November 1906 the Daily Mail newspaper offered a £ 10 @,@ 000 prize for the first aviator to fly the 185 miles (298 km) between London and Manchester , with no more than two stops , in under 24 hours . The challenge also specified that take @-@ off and landing were to be at locations no more than five miles from the newspaper 's offices in those cities . Powered flight was a relatively new invention , and the newspaper 's proprietors were keen to stimulate the industry 's growth ; in 1908 they offered £ 1 @,@ 000 for the first flight across the English channel (won on 25 July 1909 by the French aviator Louis Blériot) , and £ 1 @,@ 000 for the first circular one @-@ mile flight made by a British aviator in a British aeroplane (won on 30 October 1909 by the English aviator John Moore @-@ Brabazon) . In 1910 , two men accepted the newspaper 's 1906 challenge ; an Englishman , Claude Grahame @-@ White , and a Frenchman , Louis Paulhan .

Claude Grahame @-@ White was born in 1879 in Hampshire , England . He was educated at Crondall House School in Farnham , and later at Bedford Grammar School between 1892 and 1896 . Apprenticed to a local engineering firm , he later worked for his uncle Francis Willey , 1st Baron Barnby . He started his own motor vehicle business in Bradford , before travelling to South Africa to hunt big game . In 1909 , inspired by Blériot 's historic cross @-@ channel flight , he went to France to learn how to fly , and by the following January he became one of the first Englishmen to obtain an aviator 's certificate . He also started a flying school at Pau , which he moved to England later that year .

Isidore Auguste Marie Louis Paulhan , better known as Louis Paulhan , was born in 1883 in Pézenas , in the south of France . After doing military service at the balloon school at Chalais @-@ Meudon he had worked as an assistant for Ferdinand Ferber before winning a Voisin biplane in an aircraft design competition . Paulhan taught himself to fly using this aircraft , and was awarded Aéro Club de France licence No. 10 on 17 July . Paulhan was no stranger to British audiences ; he competed in an early flight meeting in October 1909 at Blackpool , and shortly afterwards flew in an exhibition at the Brooklands motor racing circuit . Paulhan took part in many airshows , including several in the United States of America , and in Douai , where in July 1909 he set new records for altitude and flight duration .

= = = Grahame @-@ White 's first attempt = = =

Grahame @-@ White was the first to attempt the journey . He planned to take off at 5 : 00 am on 23 April 1910 , near the Plumes Hotel in the London suburb of Park Royal . A crowd of journalists and interested spectators assembled there from about 4 : 00 am , with more arriving by car , until about 200 ? 300 were present . The Times described the sky as " clear and starlit " , and the weather as " very cold , as there was a slight frost . " Grahame @-@ White arrived at about 4 : 30 am and began to prepare his Farman III biplane . The aeroplane was brought into the field from the yard it was stored in , and its seven @-@ cylinder 50 hp rotary engine was started . Once the engine warmed up , Grahame @-@ White took his seat . Several people wished him well , including his sister , mother and Henry Farman . He guided the biplane for about 30 ? 60 yards across the frosted grass , and took off at about 5 : 12 am , before altering his direction to head for the start of the course ? a gasometer at Wormwood Scrubs , within the required five @-@ mile radius of the Daily Mail office in London .

Cheered loudly by the thousands of spectators who anticipated his arrival , Grahame @-@ White flew across the starting point and turned north @-@ west toward Wembley . Standing on top of the gasometer , Harold Perrin , secretary of the Royal Aero Club , waved a flag to indicate the start of Grahame @-@ White 's attempt . By 5 : 35 am the aviator was over Watford , and at 6 : 15 am he flew over Leighton Buzzard . Crowds of cheering spectators were there to greet him as he flew above the line of the London and North Western Railway , at an altitude of about 400 feet (120 m) . Meanwhile , Perrin and two mechanics from Gnome et Rhône (who supplied the engine used on the Farman III) boarded one of two cars , and were headed for Rugby . Along the way , one car took a short cut across a field and crashed into a ridge ; one occupant was seriously injured .

Grahame @-@ White made his first stop in Rugby just after 7 : 15 am . One of the cars that left London arrived about 10 minutes before he landed , and his mechanics attended to his aeroplane . News of his take @-@ off in London reached the area , and a large crowd gathered ; they were kept from the aeroplane by a group of boy scouts . Grahame @-@ White was taken to nearby Gellings Farm , where he drank coffee and ate biscuits , and told those present about his journey . " It was wretchedly cold all the way ... and I was cold at the start . My eyes suffered towards the end , and my fingers were quite numbed . " Grahame @-@ White 's average speed was estimated at more than 40 miles per hour (64 km / h) ; a few of the vehicles following him from London did not arrive until some time after his descent .

He took off again at about 8 : 25 am , but was unable to reach his next scheduled stop at Crewe . About 30 miles outside Rugby a problem with the engine 's inlet valves forced him to land in a field at Hademore , four miles outside of Lichfield ? about 115 miles into the 185 @-@ mile journey . On landing , he damaged a skid , and his mechanics were telegraphed for . While the necessary repairs were being made , Grahame @-@ White ate lunch and then slept for a few hours , looked after by his mother , who had arrived by car . Meanwhile , a large crowd of interested spectators gathered , and the farmer who owned the field charged them for admission . Soldiers from a nearby barracks kept the public from getting too close to the biplane .

As the sun fell the wind grew in strength , and at 7 : 00 pm Grahame @-@ White conceded that the high winds made any further progress impossible . He decided to try again at 3 : 00 am , hoping to reach Manchester by the 5 : 15 am deadline , but at 3 : 30 am he abandoned the attempt , and said that he would travel to Manchester and try again from there . He ordered the soldiers to peg the aeroplane down , but his instructions were ignored ; the next night it was blown over by strong winds and severely damaged .

= = = Paulhan 's attempt = = =

Grahame @-@ White 's biplane was returned to London , and on 25 April was being repaired at Wormwood Scrubs , in the Daily Mail 's hangar . Paulhan arrived at Dover from California , where he performed exhibition flights . Another competitor , Emile Dubonnet , also formally entered the contest , and was due to try a few days later . On 27 April 1910 Paulhan 's biplane (a newer model

than Grahame @-@ White 's) was brought to Hendon , on the site of what is now the London branch of the Royal Air Force Museum . It was assembled in less than 11 hours , and at 5 : 21 pm that day Paulhan took off for Hampstead Cemetery , his official starting line . He arrived there ten minutes later , flew on to Harrow , and began to follow the route of the London and North Western Railway . The railway company prepared for the event by whitewashing the sleepers of the correct line for the competitors to follow . Paulhan was followed by a special train , on board which were Mme. Paulhan and Henry Farman . Other members of his party followed by car .

Grahame @-@ White attempted to make a test flight earlier that day , but the huge crowds hampered his efforts , and he was unable to take off . Having spent two days supervising the reconstruction of his aeroplane , he retired to a nearby hotel . At about 6 : 10 pm he was awakened with the news that Paulhan had begun his attempt , and he decided to set off in pursuit . This time he had no trouble clearing a space in the crowd . His biplane 's engine was started , and by 6 : 29 pm he passed the starting line . Almost an hour later he flew over Leighton Buzzard , just as Paulhan was passing over Rugby . As night approached , Grahame @-@ White landed his aeroplane in a field near the railway line at Roade , in Northamptonshire . Fifteen minutes later , Paulhan reached Lichfield , where about 117 miles (188 km) into his journey he ran out of fuel . He managed to land the biplane in a field near Trent Valley railway station . The aeroplane was pegged down , and Paulhan left with his colleagues to stay overnight at a nearby hotel . Grahame @-@ White meanwhile stayed at the house of a Dr. Ryan . Both aviators intended to restart at 3 : 00 am the following day .

Still about 60 miles (100 km) behind the Frenchman , Grahame @-@ White made a historic decision ; he would make an unprecedented night flight . Guided by the headlamps of his party 's cars , he took off at 2 : 50 am . Within minutes of becoming airborne however , he almost crashed ; while he was leaning forward to make himself comfortable , his jacket brushed the engine ignition switch and he accidentally turned the engine off , but he quickly corrected his error and was able to continue . Using the lights of railway stations to guide his course through the pitch black night , within 40 minutes he reached Rugby , and at 3 : 50 am he passed Nuneaton . Despite making good progress , Grahame @-@ White was carrying a large load of fuel and oil , and his engine was not powerful enough to raise the aeroplane over the high ground before him . Disappointed , he landed at Polesworth , about 107 miles (172 km) from London , and only 10 miles behind Paulhan . A few minutes later the Frenchman , unaware of Grahame @-@ White 's progress , resumed his journey . He passed Stafford at 4 : 45 am , Crewe at 5 : 20 am , and at 5 : 32 am he landed at Barcicroft Fields near Didsbury , within five miles of the Manchester office of the Daily Mail , thereby winning the contest . His party was taken by train to a civic reception , held by the Lord Mayor of Manchester . Grahame @-@ White was notified of Paulhan 's success , and reportedly shouted " Ladies and gentlemen , the £ 10 @, @ 000 prize has been won by Louis Paulhan , the finest aviator that the world has ever seen . Compared with him I am only a novice . Three cheers for Paulhan ! " He retired to bed , leaving his mechanics to repair his aeroplane , and later sent Paulhan a telegram , congratulating his rival on his achievement . Grahame @-@ White attempted to resume his journey to Manchester , and reached Tamworth , but he later abandoned the flight .

= = = Presentation = = =

Paulhan was presented with his prize ? a golden casket containing a cheque for £ 10 @, @ 000 ? on 30 April 1910 , during a luncheon at the Savoy Hotel in London . The event was presided over by the editor of the Daily Mail , Thomas Marlowe (in lieu of Lord Northcliffe) and attended by , among others , French ambassador Paul Cambon . Grahame @-@ White was given a consolation prize of an inscribed white @-@ silver bowl , filled with red and white roses .

I am in England for the second time , and I must say in no country that I have visited have I ever received a more cordial welcome . I believe sincerely that the victory I have won belongs of right to your brilliant and courageous compatriot Mr. Grahame @-@ White . [Cheers .] I am proud to have had him as my rival in this battle of the air . In the name of the aviators both of France and of all the other countries I offer my congratulations to the great English journal , the Daily Mail , which , by its

magnificent prizes , has given an inestimable stimulus to the science of aviation , and has thus contributed more than any other agency to the conquest of the air .

= = Legacy = =

The events of 27 ? 28 April constituted the world 's first long @-@ distance air race , and also marked the first night @-@ time take @-@ off of a heavier @-@ than @-@ air machine ; Grahame @-@ White 's decision proved that night @-@ time take @-@ off , flight and navigation were possible , provided that the pilot was able to relate his position to the ground . Grahame @-@ White did this with the help of friends , one of whom shone his car 's headlamps onto the wall of a public house . Paulhan 's arrival in Didsbury was notable for being the first powered flight into Manchester from any point outside the city . His achievement is commemorated by a blue plaque , fixed to the front wall of 25 ? 27 Paulhan Road , a pair of 1930s semi @-@ detached houses near the site of his landing .

Within weeks of Paulhan 's victory , the Daily Mail offered a new prize ; £ 10 @,@ 000 to the first aviator to cover a 1 @,@ 000 @-@ mile (1 @,@ 609 @-@ km) circuit of Britain in a single day , with 11 compulsory stops at fixed intervals . The challenge was completed by M Beaumont on 26 July 1911 , in about 22 ½ hours . Paulhan and Grahame @-@ White competed again later in 1910 , for the newspaper 's prize of £ 1 @,@ 000 for the greatest aggregate cross @-@ country flight , which Paulhan won .

The flight 's 25th anniversary was celebrated at the Aero Club of France , in Paris , on 16 January 1936 . Present at the banquet were Paulhan and Grahame @-@ White , along with the French Air Minister Victor Denain , Prince George Valentin Bibescu (President of the FAI) , Harold Perrin , and a number of other notable dignitaries as well as early aviators and constructors such as Farman , Voisin , Breguet , Caudron , Bleriot and Anzani .

Although by then retired from flying , on 28 April 1950 ? the fortieth anniversary of the 1910 flight ? Paulhan repeated the journey from London to Manchester , this time as a passenger on board a Gloster Meteor T7 , the two @-@ seater training variant of the first British jet fighter . After travelling at 400 mph (644 km / h) , the 67 @-@ year @-@ old Frenchman said " C 'était magnifique ... It was all I ever dreamed of in aviation ? no propellers , no vibration . " The Daily Mail entertained him at the Royal Aero Club in London , where he was accompanied by his former rival , Claude Grahame @-@ White .