

# UNVEILING OF MEMORIAL STATUE

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*Glebe Farm, Lower Stanton,  
St Quintin, Chippenham*

*Home of Mr Martin and Mrs Eunice Robins*

*In Memoriam of Sir George Dowty DL FRAeS*

# INTRODUCTION

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The founder of the world renowned Dowty engineering business, Sir George Dowty, eschewed the limelight and he was not self-serving. His inventions saved lives on a monumental scale and he made a significant contribution to the winning of the Second World War.

Nearly fifty years after his passing two statues have been erected in his memory - one in a private location and one for public recognition. Solomon the wise observed that diligence in business brought reward-

“Do you see a man who excels in his work? He will stand before kings; He will not stand before unknown men”.

This booklet records the unveiling of one of the statues and is a tribute to one of England’s finest sons.

“He was a man, take him for all in all,  
I shall not look upon his like again”.  
Hamlet, Act I, Scene II

**Martin Robins**

Chairman of the  
Sir George Memorial Committee

# WELCOME

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## **Unveiling ceremony conducted by Mr John Kett-White.**

Welcome to James Gray, until 11 hours ago, member of parliament for this constituency, who kindly consented to unveil here today, an original and very significant twin memorial statue to the late Sir George Dowty.

Sir George was photographed standing beside the wheel and undercarriage of the Lancaster bomber, brought into service with the Royal Air Force in 1942, during World War II, which is the basis for the design of the statue.

He was responsible for this outstanding and remarkable aeronautical innovation incorporating hydraulic and pneumatic cushioning of landing of this very heavy bomber, when fully loaded, protecting and saving many lives in these and many other later aircraft. No aircraft programme was ever delayed for lack of Dowty equipment and no single aircraft was ever unserviceable for lack of spare parts, a record that perhaps was unequalled.

Sir George was also responsible for innovative pit props for our nation's coal mines, which provided our principal wartime industrial energy source. These pit props slashed the high daily death rate and reduced the danger, which led to an enormous reduction in disablement, whilst increasing productivity.

He was a member of the Royal Aeronautical Society and an honorary Doctor of Science of the University of Bath.

In 1956 Sir George received a Knighthood in recognition of his work. In 1967 the Royal Aeronautical Society made him an honorary fellow, the greatest distinction it can confer, "in recognition of many years of outstanding service to aviation".

Sir George was born a twin, and it is hoped the twin of this statue will be placed in the Imperial War Museum.

We are also delighted to welcome Sir Francis Richards, Governor and Commander in Chief of Gibraltar, director of GCHQ, and chair of the Imperial War Museum, Geoffrey Bridgman, the area Chairman of the Royal Air Force Association, and Staff Sergeant Alec Thomas, from Buckley Barracks and his contingent.

My late father, also a member of the Royal Aeronautical Society, at that time living here with my mother and I, and as Squadron Leader supervising a very large number of these remarkable Lancaster bombers, stored and maintained ready at short notice for service if the Cold War was to have rapidly deteriorated, whilst Berlin was besieged by the Soviet Union, and the recipient of the allies' Berlin airlift aircraft from our base here. Then all equipped with Dowty landing gear, liaising with Dowty and company.

Through the grace of our hosts, Mr. Martin and Mrs. Eunice Robins, he is also commemorated here.

In respect of the truly outstanding achievements of Sir George Dowty and his companies world wide, in responding to the supply with essential reliability, which saved many lives, for which we have all benefited, we must never forget the sacrifice of those who were unable to return.

This is especially appropriate as we enter the commemoration of the 80th anniversary of the Normandy invasion, and the massive loss of lives that was to follow.

**Please follow the Kohima Exhortation, after the unveiling.**

***James Gray:***

Ladies and Gentlemen,

**The Kohima Exhortation**

They shall not grow old, as  
we that are left grow old,  
Age shall not weary them nor  
the years condemn.  
At the going down of the sun  
and in the morning,  
We will remember them.

***All:***

We will remember them

**Two Minutes Silence**

**Their epitaph declares:-**

When you go home tell them of us and say  
“for your tomorrow we gave our today”

**Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori**

Gentle and gracious.

**Let us say the Lord’s Prayer:**

Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy name;  
thy kingdom come;  
thy will be done;  
on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those who trespass  
against us.  
And lead us not into temptation;  
but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom,  
the power and the glory,  
for ever and ever.

Amen.

**Remembering the fallen from  
WWI and WWII.**

# DOWTY FLIGHT

“Dowty Flight” over Glebe Farm. An on-board observers report.

The privilege of a private flypast in salute to Sir George and the Dowty legend at the official unveiling of the new statue was a rare treat, one which underlined the commitment and contribution of all those involved in the statue’s realisation and the legendary contribution of Sir George to the nation.

Flying under the call sign “Dowty Flight”, the flypast consisted of two de Havilland Chipmunks: G-BCPU of 1953 vintage flown by flight leader Mark Pickavance and, G-BBMN flown by Steve Baker.

Bad weather at other airfields prevented the planned five-ship formation gathering, but these two Chipmunks performed a tribute fly-by at 90 knots at the regulation height over Sir George’s new bronze statue, on time.

Guests observed from the driveway and those on board the aircraft could see everyone gathered as the Chipmunks flew overhead: “Sir George” glinted in a well-timed shaft of sunlight that fell upon the driveway at Glebe Farm at 11.15 a.m.

Having taken off from the Oaksey grass strip and following an accurate and timed flight plan, the Dowty Flight pair, one in grey hue, the other in RAF red and white training livery, dealt with blustery winds that refused to align consistently with a compass point.



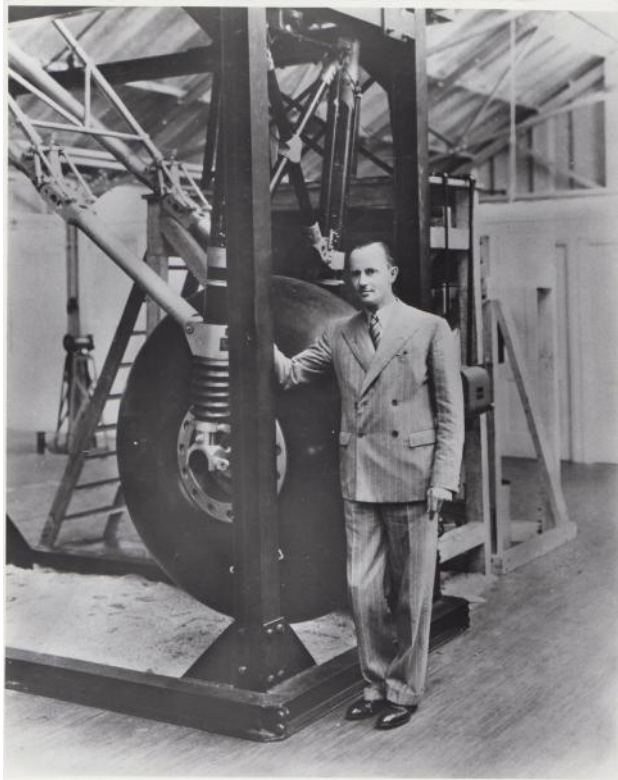
Despite some buffeting, the pair performed their duty and thanks are due to the generosity and superb operational planning that Mark created to ensure an airborne aspect to the unveiling of Sir George’s manifestation in bronze.

With thanks to Martin Robins for his organisational efforts and arranging the on-board reporter’s place in the Chipmunk.

*Engrave thy image , not on  
the sands of time but on the  
parchment scroll,that they that  
are to come may look upon it  
and revere thee...*



*The heights by great men,  
reached and kept...  
Were not attained by  
sudden flight*



Sir George Dowty, a distinguished figure in aeronautical engineering was the founder of the Dowty Group. Born in 1901, his enthusiasm for engineering blossomed at a young age, propelling him towards an apprenticeship at Heenan and Froude.

Throughout his career, Dowty broadened his knowledge and experience by working for various engineering firms, including T. Cooke and Sons, a renowned scientific instrument maker in York.

In 1931, Dowty made a pivotal decision by establishing his own company, Aircraft Components Co.

This later transformed into the Dowty Group, a company celebrated for its production of aircraft landing gear.

Dowty's remarkable contributions were acknowledged in 1956, when he was knighted for his exceptional service to the industry. He played a pioneering role in the invention of the first-ever internally sprung aircraft wheel. During World War II, his company played a critical role by supplying landing gear for a vast majority of British aircraft. Following the war, Dowty's experience in hydraulics extended beyond aeronautics, influencing the design of motorcycle forks, industrial pumps and mining equipment.