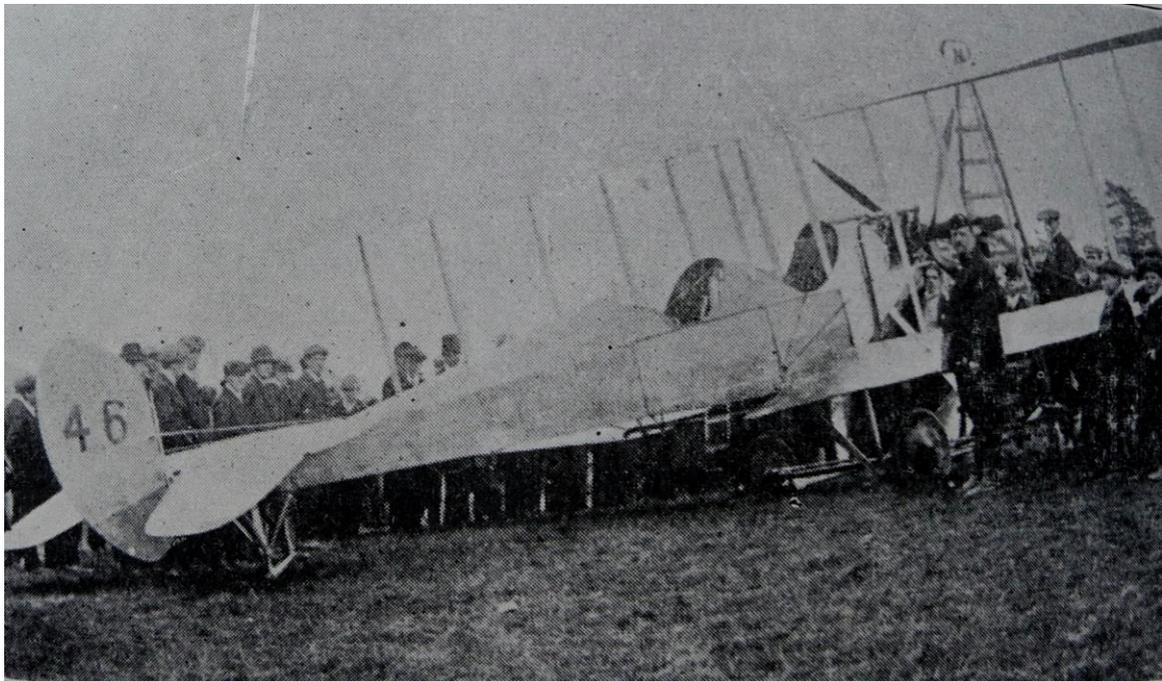


VILLAGE ECHOES

In April 1913 an event occurred which caused great excitement in Goudhurst & Kilndown, a flying machine landed at Trillinghurst. A newspaper cutting of 18th April 1913 described what happened: "On Friday morning a new bi plane, numbered 46 and said to be of 70 horsepower, descended safely into a meadow on Trillinghurst Hill, close to the high road leading to Kilndown. The experienced aeronaut in charge of it was Commander Samson who had had rapid passage from Aldershot but had deemed it wise to break his journey at Goudhurst on account of the wind, the piercing cold and the biting sleet. The journey to Eastchurch was continued at about 3.45 on Sunday afternoon in fine weather, and the start was made in the presence of an immense number of motorists, cyclists, pedestrians and others who had speedily assembled from Goudhurst, Kilndown, Horsmonden, Lamberhurst, Brenchley, Pembury etc".

The report continued saying how this was the first occasion local people had the chance to see an aeroplane close up. Thirty-one years later, during WW2 another aircraft came down in, if not the same meadow, one very close by. This was a Liberator bomber of the USAAF which had been damaged by enemy action when returning from a bombing raid on the Zeppelin Maybach aircraft engine factory at Friedrichshafen in Germany.



Sadly two men were dead when the plane crashed and two more died whilst on their way to Pembury hospital in the ambulance which had sped to the scene from Goudhurst. Three more of the crew were seriously injured and two slightly injured. The pilot, 2/Lt Stanley D Kelley, was attempting to make a forced landing in the large meadow at the top of Trillinghurst Hill when a wing hit some Scots pines that stood on the right hand side of the road; this spun the plane into the ground. The trees with their damaged tops could be seen until they were felled a few years ago.

According to the Goudhurst ARP log books held by the history society, as well as the Liberator, eight British and five German aircraft crashed in the parish during WW2.

Local History Society