

attended the triumphant arrival than if it had happened later in the day, or in the middle of the week. However, early morning or evening was the best time to fly the lightly loaded pioneer aeroplanes, with their low-powered engines. The local police were soon on the scene, mainly to protect the flying machine from some predatory souvenir-hunters. The photographs of the recently arrived Louis Blériot, who just managed to nurse his machine over the clifftops on to Northfall Meadow to land near Dover Castle after his 22-mile flight, show a motley group of spectators. I have often tried to identify my father in the photographs, but there are several boys of his age, all with similar caps, and all could pass for him.

My father was probably asleep or preparing to start work when Blériot left Sangatte. A short while later Blériot and

his aeroplane were firmly embedded in my father's memory, to be recalled from time to time for those interested in it.

Before my father died, in 1974, we (Homo Sapiens, that is) had put men on the Moon and built Concorde. In one man's lifetime we progressed from the Wright brothers' first successful powered, sustained and controlled flights on December 17, 1903, and Blériot's 1909 cross-Channel flight, to supersonic airliners and Space Shuttles.

As far as I know, my father flew only once in his life. That was to Canada, after he had retired, to see my elder brother. I am sure his mind must have gone back to that Sunday in 1909 when, as a boy, he witnessed that significant episode in history. I doubt whether even Blériot himself could have imagined where it would take us.

Business UP

Port of Dover Annual Consultative Meeting

Terry Sutton

Profits were up at the Port of Dover in 2022, with an increase in business in all sectors except truck traffic (down seven per cent). As a result, Dover Harbour Board was able to donate more to local charities and, at the annual consultative meeting on May 24 2023, a further £109,000 was presented to a fund that finances scores of local charity organisations.

"This is the most we have given away in any 12 months and it's possible because of our improved profits," DHB's chief executive, Doug Bannister told the packed meeting at one of the port's two cruise terminals.

The meeting welcomed Jason Holt, DHB's

new chairman, who introduced his fellow Board directors.

A series of top port officials reported on 2022 successes with increases in ferry revenue (£60 million), cargo (£5.5 million) and cruise sector (5 million). Coach traffic increased and it was claimed that Dover was now taking virtually all cross-channel coach traffic as the Tunnel dropped out of the market.

The meeting was reminded it was 70 years since Dover led the way with cross channel car traffic with the opening of revolutionary drive-on drive-off ferry berths at the Eastern Docks. On display was DHB's new "brand image" with the logo of "Closing the Gap Every Day."