



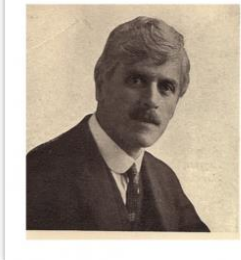
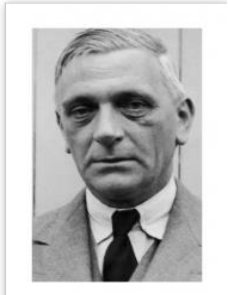
Shortstown was only created from 1916 onwards. The land originally lay in the township of Eastcotts which was itself a part of the ancient parish of Cardington.



A map from 1946 of an area where Shortstown now stands

Early in 1916 the Admiralty was seeking a site for an airship works for Messrs. Short Brothers. A site had been selected at Cardington. It was picked as it was well served by roads and railways, was within easy reach of London by steam train and was a broad, flat valley running east-west without any obstructions. It was beyond the range of then known German bombers in Belgium, while "penetration by submarine landed agents was not considered likely due to the distance from the coast which it would be necessary to travel".

Oswald SHORT



Eustace SHORT

After being awarded the contract from the Admiralty to build airships, brothers Eustace and Oswald Short arrived in Bedford in 1915. The Shorts building was built in 1915 to house design staff. 131 houses were built for their workers in 1917 and the housing estate was named SHORTSTOWN. The brothers built the R31 and R32 but left Shortstown in 1920 when their contract ended.

The Royal Airship Works (RAW) was established in 1921. The large hangar, Shed 1 was built on 1915 and extended in 1928 to accommodate the famous airship R101. Shed 2 was added in 1928 to house its predecessor, the R100 which was built in Howden, Yorkshire.

The hangars are 247m long, 84m wide and 55m high. Nelson Column in Trafalgar square is 52m high and can easily stand inside.

The two hangars



The R101 in Shed 1



The R101 attached to its mast at Shortstown

