



## Friends of the New Forest Airfields

Registered charity 1063648

Patron: **The Lady Montagu of Beaulieu**

<http://fonfasite.wordpress.com/>

Location references for the Memorial are:

Map OS reference **SZ 208 987** Post Code **BH23 8EB**

Museum & Education Centre Post Code: **BH23 8HE**

# FONFA Members' Newsletter – August 2022

Dear FONFA Member,

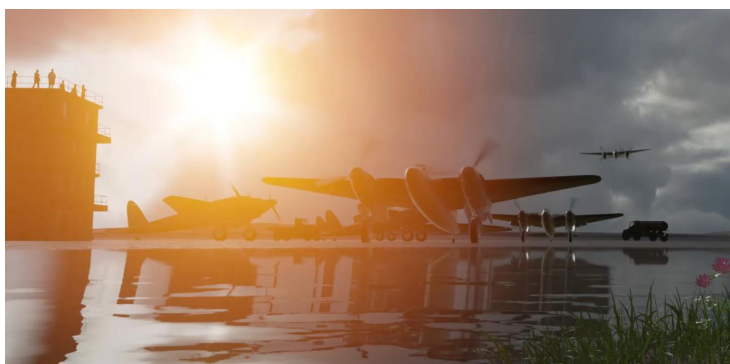
Welcome to the August 2022 FONFA Newsletter. Some of you, who follow the FONFA website, will have noticed that we are developing a new website, via GoDaddy, because the Wordpress portal no longer met our needs, without further significant expense. Our Facebook site will receive similar attention, in the coming months.

The new website is being managed by our new Honorary Treasurer, Steve Williams, who is bringing his wealth of experience of management and Charity work, having been associated with the Swanage Steam Railway for many years, to the new website and to our financial affairs and Charity Commission returns. The transfer of data, reports, stories, photographs and archives will take several months but is expected to be completed by next Spring.

While finances are now satisfactory in the short and medium term, mainly due to the generous 'restart' grants from New Forest District Council, following Covid, there remain concerns about the long term viability of the Centre, and corporate sponsorship may be needed in the coming years, to ensure our future.

In addition to Steve taking over the responsibilities for our finances, we have welcomed Flt. Lt. Darren Pretty, a serving RAF officer, who is Data Protection Advisor to the Office of the Provost Marshal (RAF), based at RAF Honington and also part of the Professional Standards Department at RAF Henlow. Darren brings with him enthusiasm to add to our external activities and the professional knowledge of legal and organisational practices, necessary for running our modern Charity. He has also managed to obtain a promised flypast for us next month.

As part of the website upgrade, we intend developing a 'Members Only' section of the new website, where new content will be available, solely to Members. As a taster of the type of content that we can now access, Gaz Keenam has developed two spectacular CGI videos for us, of Typhoon and Mosquito aircraft, from which the 'stills' below have been taken.





## Friends of the New Forest Airfields

Registered charity 1063648

Patron: **The Lady Montagu of Beaulieu**

<http://fonfasite.wordpress.com/>

Location references for the Memorial are:

Map OS reference **SZ 208 987** Post Code **BH23 8EB**

Museum & Education Centre Post Code: **BH23 8HE**

The Typhoon video was developed from scratch, representing the Advanced Landing Ground at Needs Oar Point, in June 1944, the busiest airfield in the UK during the three weeks around D-Day, when four squadrons of Typhoons maintained an eighteen hour a day vigil over the Normandy battlefield, with at least two in a 'race track' pattern at 10,000 feet throughout, in contact with a forward air controller on the ground, available to attack any German vehicle that moved, from dawn to dusk.

We received good news from New Forest District Council LEADER Programme, this week. We were recently asked by the programme managers to report on activity and progress, since the installation of the Promultis Display Screen equipment, Display Panels and Projector in the Heritage Centre, and on our visitor numbers, over the past two years.

Obviously, the latter have been massively reduced throughout the Covid pandemic, due partly to the Centre being completely closed from mid-March 2020 to late May 2021. Although reporting was delayed by the pandemic, we have been given notice that we have fulfilled expected targets and, although we should retain all records, we will not be required to be reassessed (or return any of the LEADER Grant funds) during the five year post payment period, due to end in 2024. This is excellent news and we can now plan for the future, which includes replacing the doors and upgrading the Display Screen contents, in due course.

Since reopening the Centre in May last year, the visitor numbers have been disappointingly low, with single figures on some Open Days. We have opened the Centre on every Sunday in August, in an attempt to increase numbers, but this has not done so, significantly. It seems that the public are very reluctant to go out to any indoor venues and have changed their habits, possibly permanently, after two years of government restrictions. This is evidenced by Cineworld considering filing for bankruptcy, announced this week, which, if carried through, would mean the closure of 120 cinemas all over the country.

The New Forest Airfields Memorial has not had a significant facelift in a decade and with the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of its inauguration due to be celebrated on Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> September, as previously advised to Members, a small band of volunteers has been working with a contractor, to renovate the railings and the gardens on both sides. The last day for this to be done is **this Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> August**, so please come along with your 1" paintbrush and help out with painting the railings.

The Annual Service starting at 2 pm on 3<sup>rd</sup> September will be conducted by Padre Charles A Lewis', Wing Chaplain, Thames Valley and Dorset & Wiltshire Wings ATC. The flypast by the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight is scheduled for 2.35 p.m. on 3<sup>rd</sup> September.

Finally, we were delighted to receive a visit from Thierry Ozenne, Mayor of Creully-sur-Selles, in Normandy on Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> August. His party of four were accompanied by Andy Martin, one of our Trustees, and the former mayor of Christchurch, Cllr. Lesley Deadman. Thierry Ozenne was visiting Highcliffe, on a goodwill visit to support closer associations between Creully and Highcliffe.

They were most interested in the connections between Creully and the New Forest Airfields, as several on the Typhoon squadrons which were based at Holmsley South and Hurn, in June 1944, went over to the Advanced Landing Grounds (ALGs) in the Creully area, south of the British and Canadian Invasion Beaches, in late June, and operated from them for several weeks, during the Normandy campaign and the eventual breakout, from the Invasion zone. They were able to take away details of the airfields here, via a copy of Alan Brown's Book, and their own airfields, via pages copied from "50 Aerodromes", an excellent book with text in French, covering the ALGs. We hope that this will provide a positive channel of communication for the future.

Henry Goodall, Chair of Trustees, FONFA  
August 2022.