

New Forest Airfields Heritage Centre Inauguration of new display equipment

The 'Friends of the New Forest Airfields' Charity held an inauguration event for the new equipment recently installed in the New Forest Airfields Heritage Centre at Bransgore on Saturday 16th March 2019. Fifty invited guests and FONFA Members attended the event.





The unveiling of the 55" touch table was carried out by the Minister for Veterans and MP for Bournemouth East, Tobias Ellwood, who attended with his family. Also present were Lord and Lady Montagu, who is the Patron of the Charity, Lesley Dedman, the Mayor of Christchurch and New Forest East MP and Chairman of the House of Commons Defence Select Committee, Dr Julian Lewis.



Tobias Ellwood unveiling the touch table with Dr Henry Goodall, Chair of Trustees. The touch table, two new 55" interactive wall screens and a full projection suite with surround sound will enhance the Friends' ability to tell the story of the 30,000 airmen, women and civilians who worked on the 12 New Forest Airfields during World War II.



The Minister was pleased to meet Staff Sergeant Laurie Weedon, a Horsa glider pilot who landed in Normandy on D-Day and at Arnhem, during WWII, accompanied by his wife and by Jane Barkway Harney, from the Glider Pilot Regiment Society, whose late father piloted the third glider to land at Pegasus Bridge, on D-Day.



S/Sgt Laurie Weeden -D-Day and Arnhem Horsa Glider Pilot with Jane Barkway Harney, whose late father flew the third glider on the 'coup de main' attack on Pegasus Bridge on D-Day, 6th June 1944.

In addition to the interactive displays, we are now able to display twenty five upgraded descriptive wall panels at any one time, designed and produced by Graham Thompson of MediaMill, who has upgraded thirty of them to modern single sheet display boards. These improvements have all been made possible by grants from the New Forest District Council's LEADER Programme and the Beaulieu Beaufort Trust.

Our small museum holds a wealth of artefacts, uniforms, models, dioramas and information, telling the story of the airfields, during WWII, most of which had only a short operational life, supporting the D-Day invasion in June 1944.



Louie Smith (right), the young software designer from Promultis Ltd. of Lee-On-Solent, who with his colleague Sam Cush designed the layouts of the new touch table and interactive wall screens, demonstrating the versatility and multiple image capability of the new touch table, to Tobias Ellwood, FONFA members and guests. (Photos by Wendy Goodall)



FONFA Patron, Lady Montagu, in conversation with an SAS Veteran (presently supporting a breast cancer charity)



Staff Sergeant Laurie Weedon, who piloted one of the Horsa gliders in the D-Day attack on Pegasus Bridge, in conversation with an SAS and Parachute Regiment Veteran.



Assembled guests viewing the interactive 'Welcome' touch table



Louie Smith, the Promultis software engineer who designed the interactive programmes, demonstrating the capability of the new screens to Staff Sergeant Laurie Weeden and Mr Ellwood's sons. Behind them, Mr Ellwood chats with Dr Julian Lewis, MP for New Forest East and Chairman of the House of Commons Defence Select Committee. (Photos – Joe Asquith)