

Friends of the New Forest Airfields (FONFA)

The Registered Charity, Friends of the New Forest Airfields, was established by a group of aviation enthusiasts, veterans, authors and historians who lived in the New Forest National Park area, which is located in south-west Hampshire on the south coast of England.

In the late 1990s, the Friends raised a memorial to the twelve WWII airfields of the New Forest and all those, civilian as well as military, who participated in their activities. The memorial contains a time capsule containing memorabilia, books, and documents relevant both to the operations of the airfields but also the lives of the people involved at the airfields and in the wider community.

Much of the initial work of the Friends was to raise funds for the memorial through membership subscriptions, and donations. Donations large and small were received for all over the world, from organisations and individuals. Over a number of years steady progress enabled the construction of the memorial, to a design by Basil White of Sopley.

On August 16th 2002, a formal dedication of the memorial took place. Since then, the grounds of the memorial, including two garden areas, which flank the memorial's enclosure, have been landscaped and planted.

The time capsule contents were collated and catalogued, and the capsule was interred during 2005, to be opened in 2045.

The Friends have an outreach programme to help schools, students, historians, authors and enthusiasts of all ages and backgrounds understand the activities, achievements and sacrifices of the New Forest Airfields in war and peace. The Trustees make educational visits to schools and host visits to the Heritage Centre by school parties and other interested groups, and provide speakers to groups and societies, on-line information and information stands at local venues.

The New Forest Airfields Heritage Centre originally opened to enable visitors to use our reference library, see our collections and meet our History Team. At the end of 2014 the old Centre was closed, and the contents were put into storage. In November 2015, FONFA relocated the Centre into a replacement building and spent the next six months creating the new displays and exhibitions.

The new Heritage Centre building, which also contains the charity's registered office, stores and workshop opened to the public on 29th May 2016 and was open from 10 am to 4 pm on most Sundays, throughout the summer, until October 2016. Now, we normally open the Museum on two Sundays per month, from March to October.