



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 – October 2019

Dear FONFA Member,

Welcome to the autumn 2019 edition of our FONFA Newsletter, the third this year, bringing Members up to date with events at the FONFA Heritage Centre Museum, the Memorial and our Charity Organisation.

Sadly, our long-serving Trustee colleague, Charles McKenzie, passed away on April 7th, after a long illness, bravely borne, aged 78. Charles was one of the founder Trustees of the Friends of the New Forest Airfields and a Member from January 18th 1999 until his death on April 7th 2019 (Member No.011). A detailed obituary was published on our website on 1st May.

Charles was appointed as the Project Manager for the design, materials procurement and construction of the New Forest Airfields Memorial in Black Lane, on the western dispersal area of the Second World War airfield at Holmsley South. The success of this monument is a testament to his ability and perseverance. More recently, he regularly attended Board Meetings until his illness last year and was always a thoughtful, kind and valued companion to all those who knew and worked with him for FONFA. We shall miss his gentle humour and ready wit.

We have had a spectacular summer season, this year, with both visitor numbers at the Heritage Centre and Website 'visits' and 'views' already up on last year's twelve month figures, by early October. The introduction and commissioning of the three new display screens, the thirty new display panels and the audio-visual projection and surround sound suite has brought much praise from our Heritage Centre visitors. The numbers reviewing us on the 'Trip Advisor' website have increased, thanks to our visitor comments' and we are now their "No.1 visitor attraction in Bransgore".

These improvements, paid for largely by grants from the New Forest National Park LEADER Programme and the Beaulieu Beaufort Foundation, have brought us from 1980s technology to true 21st century 'state of the art' interactive display presentations and, in addition, have upgraded the 30 wall panels, 25 of which we can display at any one time.



Children and young people interact with the three interactive display screens instinctively, with little or no introduction, being used to this type of information gathering and delivery, both at home and at school. We hope that they will attract a new generation of enthusiasts to see and learn about our local history and heritage of the WWII era.



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As I reported in the April Newsletter, we urgently need a Volunteer Member to take over as Minutes Secretary.

With Steve Robson stepping down immediately, due to his expanding other commitments, **this is now an IMMEDIATE requirement.** Steve has been an invaluable member of our Board in recent years, especially since we moved into the new Centre in the Spring of 2016. Although he initially wished to step down from this role two years ago, he kindly stayed on, as a personal favour to the Chairman, which was very much appreciated. However, now is the time for a change, so we are asking the Membership for a Volunteer to step into his shoes, for the next meeting in January 2020.

The commitment is to attend the four Trustee Board meetings annually and to prepare the Minutes, which are recorded digitally at every meeting. In the future, the Minutes Secretary will collate items for and prepare the agendas for these four meetings per year.

Looking forward, all our planned Heritage Centre Open Days for 2019 will be listed on our website from January, at <https://fonfasite.wordpress.com/>, under the heading 'Open Days & What's New', but Members have a preview of the planned dates below, to enable you to be the first to receive this information. The dates are currently provisional but will be confirmed publicly when the information is posted on our website.

To raise our profile and outreach to the next level, we need to increase the number of Open Days for 2020, which means more FONFA Member Volunteers becoming involved in showing our visitors what we have to offer and hosting them during their visits.

As this year, the outline plan is for the Heritage Centre to host Open Days on the First and Third Sundays of the month, from March to October. The schools Half Term and Bank Holiday means that the late May date is moved to 24th.

Overall Draft Plan: Normally the 1st and 3rd Sundays in the month

March	1 st	&	15 th
April	5 th	&	19 th
May	3 rd	&	24 th (Half Term & Bank Holiday weekend Sunday)
June	7 th	&	14 th (avoiding Father's Day on 21 st as requested)
June	28 th - Annual Memorial Service		
July	5 th	&	19 th
August	2 nd	&	16 th
September	6 th	&	20 th
October	4 th	&	18 th

The Trustees would like to open the Centre EVERY SUNDAY. Achieving this depends entirely on YOU, the Members!

Please consider whether YOU can volunteer to man the Centre for four days per year (only!). YOUR ACTIVE PARTICIPATION AND ASSISTANCE WILL BE APPRECIATED.

If forty FONFA Members would spare just four days per year, plus half a day every two years to train as a Fire Warden, WE WOULD BE ABLE TO OPEN THE CENTRE EVERY SUNDAY FROM MARCH TO OCTOBER and have plenty of volunteers to cover holidays, sudden illness etc. Again, THIS MEANS YOU! The Volunteer sheet is attached hereto.

It has been good to see an increase in the total number of Members, this year, and in the increased numbers who have visited the Centre on Open Days, in recent months. With Members in mind, we will plan to hold another Members' evening at the Museum, this autumn, the date will be advised later, via e-mail. We are also planning to commemorate our founder Trustee, Charles McKenzie, who passed away in April 2019, by the inauguration of a Charles McKenzie Memorial Lecture, during the winter months.

However, as Paul Moores, one of the new Trustee Board Members, who joined the Board this year, recently remarked, we are currently attracting a diminishing (ageing) sector of the public to our Centre, given the lamentably poor teaching of 20th Century history in our state schools in recent years, so we need to redouble our efforts to reach the younger generation. Two years ago, a survey demonstrated the level of ignorance in the population, as listed on our website:

<https://fonfasite.wordpress.com/2017/10/17/whom-did-we-fight-in-ww2-youngsters-havent-a-clue/>

Our local heritage is all around our young people but if they don't know about it, our efforts will be in vain.

Therefore, if ANY of you have ANY contacts with schools, please promote us to them and we will provide free presentations or host a bespoke Heritage Centre visit for groups of schoolchildren, on request.



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The Vintage Car Drive-in Day in mid-April was not so well attended this year but we still made a small profit on the day. In view of the changes in and around this event, the Board has decided not to continue the Vintage Car Drive-in Day next year. The 'Assault Glider Day', which we had planned for late May had to be postponed, partly because of the many commitments around the 75th Anniversary of the D-Day invasion in 1944 and due to critical personnel not being available. We hope to stage this next May.

Regarding Board Members and Trustees, our Founder Trustee, former Chairman and current Treasurer and Membership Secretary, John Brooks, plans to retire from these roles this autumn and will be handing over these responsibilities to Simon Daniels, who has joined the Board, on his return from working in Hong Kong. John will continue to manage and supervise the Memorial and the Annual Service, US Memorial Day and Remembrance Sunday events there. Simon brings a wealth of business and financial experience to the roles and we look forward to him playing an active role in our activities in the future.

Paul Moores has joined the Board, bringing a lifetime's experience in the Aviation industry both in the UK and USA, and his expert modelling skills. Members will know that one of the large display cabinets in the Centre contains over twenty of his models of aircraft, which flew from the New Forest. Paul will take responsibility for building security and exploring and progressing the necessary refurbishment of the building.

Edwin Levett is an enthusiastic Board Member, who puts out the direction signage on Derritt Lane on Open Days and, with John Brooks, manages the 'signing in' of Centre visitors. In addition, he demonstrates the capabilities of the new 'Welcome' display screen to visitors, when they arrive, introducing them to what we have to offer in the Centre.

Andy Martin has joined the Board and brings his many contacts in the Newspaper industry, business and the media, together with a lifetime's experience of management and negotiating skills. He has already represented FONFA at the Highcliffe fete.

Peter Walsh continues the long march to log all library items and has now commenced a detailed log and analysis of all the prints, drawings, artefacts and the contents of the display cabinets. This detailed information will be essential if we are to apply for Arts Council accreditation, at some time in the future.

Lin Corbin and Lynda Asquith manage the Tea Room between them but are always willing to receive help from other Member volunteers, on Open Days.

Philip Benstead has effectively and efficiently managed the facebook account and reviewed and contacted all the local 'Free' magazines, distributed in the New Forest area communities. The latter have been invariably disappointing in their responses to our requests for publicity, or the publication of articles about FONFA and the airfields. His other work commitments, which take him all around Europe, will make it more difficult for him to give sufficient time to this aspect of our communications in the future. If any of you can volunteer to assist him in this task, please step forward and contact the Board via fonfa2010@gmail.com

Our website is our primary public face. If you have ideas for and comments on the site, please let us know via the e-mail, fonfa2010@gmail.com or directly, on an Open Day. It's YOUR Charity, so All contributions are welcome. If you would like to write an article for publication, please let us know. For those of you who have not been keeping up with events reported on the website, we have introduced a number of new models into the Centre, during the summer months.

These include a Hamilcar and Horsa Glider dioramas, in display cases, and more recently, an airborne Stirling Mk IV and Horsa glider combination, in the Holmsley South area of the Heritage Centre of the displays.





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Later in the summer, we added an airborne Christchurch based P-47 Thunderbolt, whose pilot was Captain Charlie Morhle, and a Bisterne based P-47 Thunderbolt diorama, depicting the aircraft of 2nd Lt Harry Strahlendorf.



In August, the South Hants Branch of the Military Vehicle Trust brought their Jeeps and trucks to the Centre, on a New Forest Road Run, which was enjoyed by many visitors to our Centre, on the day. We have also received a visit from the Hythe and Waterside Rotary members, who enjoyed their evening visit.



Finally, John Brooks has kindly organised the repainting of the blue lettering on the Memorial at Holmsley South, which had become degraded with the passing of time, due to the weather. This will look much better for the Annual Service in June next year.

However, with all the advances made this year, almost entirely the result of the sustained hard work by a very small number of dedicated volunteers, I reiterate, the Memorial and the Heritage Centre remain your organisation's 'raison d'être'. Without them, there would be no FONFA. So, **we are encouraging ALL MEMBERS to become ACTIVE MEMBERS in the future.**

Please volunteer to help, or there will soon be no FONFA at all.

The Volunteer sheet, enabling you to make a small commitment of your time, to support Open Days, is attached hereto. Please complete it, as you are able to give some time, and return to the FONFA e-mail as an attachment, or print and drop it in to the Centre.

Henry Goodall,
Chair of Trustees, FONFA
October 2019