



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 – February 2019

Welcome to the first FONFA Newsletter of 2019, bringing Members up to date, a year in which we will see great progress in our organisation's offering to our visitors. At the start of this year, the Trustee Board has agreed to re-brand the Museum and Education Centre as the 'New Forest Airfields Heritage Centre'.

There are several reasons for this change. During the past year, we have been visited by around twenty people who declined to make a donation, to enter the Museum. We have explained to them that the Museum is privately run and relies solely on these donations and on presentations given to interested groups for income, to cover utility bills etc. They chose not to make any donation and so not to enter the Museum.

There is an assumption by some people that, because free entry to national museums is funded by central and local government, entry to our museum should also be free. In addition, to many people, the word 'museum' implies a musty, sometimes academic building, in which only items of esoteric interest are described or displayed. The Trustee Board members wish to widen both the age spread and outreach of our offering, so a re-branding, emphasising our local 'Heritage', to be shared by all, is now both timely and appropriate.

As reported in the October 2018 Newsletter, our Grant applications to both the New Forest District Council's LEADER Grant programme and the Beaulieu Beaufort Foundation have been successful. The grant from the Foundation has already been gratefully received. The LEADER grant process is more complex and bureaucratic pan-European system, supporting rural development which, in our case, is to promote 'Rural Tourism'. The LEADER Grant will support 80% of the cost of the hardware and software in the new equipment and the Beaulieu Beaufort Foundation grant will cover most of the additional funds required.

These Grants will enable us to upgrade the Centre offerings from 1980s techniques to 'state of the art' national museum quality displays. The new equipment will transform what we have to offer and how we are able to tell the story of the airfields. The software content of the new technology will focus on the twelve World War II New Forest airfields.

A 55" floor mounted 'Welcome' interactive touch table will introduce visitors to the Centre's contents and describe the location of the airfields on a large map. Touching an airfield location 'hot button' on the map will provide some general information about the individual airfield to be displayed. Additional 'touch panels' will bring up photos and descriptions of Early Flying and the First World War, the former RAF Sopley Camp, the principle of the temporary Advanced Landing Grounds and the differences between them and the more permanent concrete runway airfields.

Two 55" wall mounted interactive touch screens (see the photos below) will replace three of the current wall panels, providing interactive exhibits, describing the timeline of squadrons stationed on the airfields with photographs and video (with sound) of the aircraft and personnel involved. A 'touch slide panel' will allow a 'then and now' aerial image of the airfields to be revealed. Touching an aircraft's name on the timeline will bring up a three dimensional depiction of the individual aircraft.



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**



In addition, thirty of the existing explanatory wall panels, which all currently consist of eight laminated A4 size paper sheets on cardboard, in metal frames, will be replaced by newly created single sheet panels, presenting the same information in a more modern format, mounted in the same metal frames.

This will give us flexibility to alter the Centre contents displayed, from time to time, refreshing the displays for those visitors, who return to the Centre on multiple occasions, and for Members interested in the details.

A 'state of the art' projector has been installed, suspended from the H-beam in the roof. This will project large images onto a retractable screen, mounted above the entrance doors. The projector can show PowerPoint presentations and video, with surround sound, from speakers mounted below the screen and on both sides of the upstairs gallery. It will be controlled from a laptop connection, mounted on the wall in the library area.

In addition, we are delighted that the New Forest National Park Authority Archaeology Department has more recently agreed to fund ten hand-held audio guides for the Centre. These will guide visitors around the Centre, without the need for personal guiding by Trustees and Volunteer Members.

To launch all this new equipment, we will be holding a special 'Launch Event' on Saturday 16th March, at the Centre, from 10 am to 1 pm, to which all FONFA Members are cordially invited. Civic leaders, Veterans and those who have funded, assisted and supported the transformation will be invited as our guests. If you plan to attend this event, to see the changes and enjoy the new displays, please let the Trustee Board know, well in advance, via a short e-mail sent to fonfa2010@gmail.com, so that we have some idea of numbers attending. For security reasons, please bring your Membership Card on the day. If you have not yet renewed your 2019 annual membership subscription, you can do so on the day (or earlier, please!).

Before then, we will need to carry out the essential Annual Spring Cleaning of the Centre, so Please come in to help on Saturday morning, 2nd March, bringing cleaning materials if you can.

The Trustee Board members are confident that you will be impressed with the new displays and will both enjoy and be entertained by their quality and content. As posted on our website at <https://fonfasite.wordpress.com/>, we plan to have Open days at the Centre twice a month, from March to October, mostly on the first and third Sundays in the month. We look forward to seeing you there and to increased numbers of visitors (and new Members) in 2019.