

## **MANAGING TRUSTEE'S REPORT – GLOUCESTERSHIRE AVIATION COLLECTION**

### **AGM MARCH 2019**

1. Thank you very much David. David has covered Phase 2 developments in some detail so I'll focus now on museum operations on a day to day basis in the financial year 17/18 - and bring you up to date on some aspects of our work since 1<sup>st</sup> September last.
2. We are in our 6<sup>th</sup> year of operating from the Phase 1 building since we opened to the public in late August 2013. We remain a small museum in terms of the size of our site and our building, even with the Phase 2 extension under construction, but we remain firmly in the medium size Museum category based on the Association of Independent Museum criteria. Visitor numbers have exceeded 20,000 every year since we opened. In FY 17/18 we had 24,887 visitors, compared with FY 16/17, when 25,857 came through the doors. By the end of August 2018, 121,512 in total had been to see us since 2013.
3. The 'Beast from the East' weather effect in the winter and spring of last year and the hot summer undoubtedly had an impact on footfall, but the month long special exhibition 'Cheltenham Remembers the Centenary of the Royal Air Force' run in partnership with the Royal Air Forces Association, Cheltenham Branch, did add a new dimension to our activities and we hope to work in partnership with like-minded organisations again in the future. This event did prove the power of TV advertising, when a 1 minute 40 second slot on the ITV West Country news programme on Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> April resulted in a 4-fold increase in visitor numbers on the following day – Easter Monday. If only we could have this publicity every month! Over the year our repeat visitor numbers remain at about 28% of footfall, with many of our supporters coming on 2 or more occasions in a 12-month period.
4. We remain a purely volunteer run Museum. There are 533 and supporters of the Gloucestershire Aviation Collection and as of last week, 164 active Jet Age Museum

volunteers. About half of Jet Age volunteers regularly engage with visitors on normal opening days at weekends, bank holidays, Wednesdays in school holidays, during weekday private group visits and of course, when we hold special events. Supporting this effort are volunteers engaged in, engineering, cleaning and maintenance, finance, marketing, volunteer co-ordination, café and shop management, managing the collection and displays and planning for the future. So, we have a strong pool of supporters and an active group of volunteers. That said, we need more volunteers to enhance our capacity to govern and manage the Museum, to look after the collection, to sustain the current level of visitor focused activities and to expand to meet the demands of the Phase 2 extension once it is open to the public.

5. We have a clear understanding now of what is needed to be an Arts Council England recognised museum, having completed their formal assessment process with flying colours and being awarded accreditation on 4 October 2018 - a significant step forward for the Museum. The assessment confirmed that we have the organisational structures in place to ensure the Museum has a long-term future, that we follow best practise for the care of our collection of aircraft and other artefacts and that we maximise access to the collection for our visitors and run a vibrant and popular visitor experience. We also are now accredited as a visitor attraction with Visit England, having been inspected successfully on 2 September 2018, demonstrating that we are operating to the standards laid down in their national code of practice. We only narrowly missing out on being nominated for special accolades for some aspects of our customer care, which the assessor considered excellent across the board. Not bad for our very first assessment by this body. Additionally, we are the only visitor attraction in the Gloucester area to achieve a 5-star rating on Trip Advisor. Despite this achievement, we are still ranked number 2 behind the Cathedral, but ahead of Gloucester Rugby's Kingsholm Stadium. To be fair, the Cathedral does have 3,100 reviews against our 520. And finally, we had our annual visit from a Tewkesbury Borough Council Food Hygiene inspector recently to access our café operation on a public opening day and

we retained our 5\* food hygiene rating. Well done to all for the hard work required to achieve the high standards demanded by all these organisations.

6. So here are some of the many achievements in the year or so since September 2017:

- a. Museum Development – Achieving Arts Council accreditation; commencing construction of the first part of the Museum’s Phase 2 extension several years earlier than was expected; establishing a Fund-Raising Working Group to drive forward the many fund-raising initiatives needed to achieve our ‘Reach for a £1M’ funding target.
- b. Museum Operations – Achieving Visit England accreditation; hosting 43 youth and adult private group visits in 2018; welcoming 17 school groups (423 pupils) into the Museum; running 16 special events, some in partnership with other organisations. Between Feb 18 and 19, we recruited 18 new volunteers and 2 web professionals who have given us a new website at no cost to the Museum.
- c. The Collection - New interpretation boards for artefacts on display continue to be added to enhance the Museum; boards are now displayed beside airframes outside the hangar (and being severely tested by the weather); stands have been completed for most of the small aviation related models in the hangar too, making cleaning work much easier; work continues on Project Typhoon with much more of the cockpit detail being restored to the highest standard; the Gladiator’s ‘restored’ Mercury engine will be returned to the Museum shortly from the RR Heritage Trust; work on the Gloster Fire Engine in the workshop is also coming along well.
- d. Finance – gift aid administration is generating significant additional income for the Museum; our Pay Pal account for donations is revived on our new website and bringing in income.
- e. Property Services – An expanded Property Services management team is in place; energy efficient lighting has been installed to reduce electricity bills; the new boiler installed last year has saved on gas, grounds maintenance equipment is now serviced by a sponsor saving more money.

g. Publicity and Marketing - new website developed and rolled out on a free platform; more team members have joined the team under Keith Creighton; links with Marketing Gloucester have been established.

There are many, many other things we have done and are doing - I must apologize for those that I haven't had time to mention.

7. But all this success is a reflection of the fact that what we achieve at Jet Age Museum is dependent on the good will and time freely given by our loyal and hard-working volunteers and support from members. Without all this support we would not be able to welcome the public and raise the significant sums that we generate every day that we are open. Thank you one and all for your continued support.

Chris Campbell

20 March 2019