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Airspeed



Newsletter of the Montrose Air Station Heritage Centre

www.rafmontrose.org.uk
Registered Scottish Charity No. SC023193

Welcome to Airspeed; a bi-monthly members' publication presenting news, stories and updates from Montrose Air Station Heritage Centre. Members are invited to contribute stories and comments for future editions. Please send to:

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In memory of

**Marjory Connon
&
Jeanette (Jen) Lawes**

It was with great sadness that we learned of the passing of two of our longstanding members late last year. Both were extremely active volunteers and highly valued members of the team, as well as dear friends.

They will be sorely missed by all at Montrose Air Station Heritage Centre and our thoughts are with their families and friends.

A look back at some of our past social events:

We'll meet again...

Keep smiling through

Just like you always do

'Till the blue skies drive the dark clouds far away

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NEXT ISSUE OUT MARCH

NEW YEAR. NEW COVID RULES.

At the time of writing this newsletter, the country is once again in the midst of another 'lockdown' with rules and 'stay at home' regulations similar to March of last year.

Sadly, this of course means that the museum has had to close its doors completely, for the second time in less than a year, to all visitors - both the public and all members.

The frustration felt by many regular volunteers is shared by us all, as many aspects of our lives are once again put on hold.

A decision to close completely is never taken lightly but as an accredited museum, it is important that we adhere to all Scottish Government guidance and, with a new prevalent strain of COVID-19 taking hold across the country, it is essential that we keep everyone safe.

We look forward to welcoming visitors and volunteers back as soon as restrictions allow. Stay safe!



A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN...

To all our Volunteers,

As we stagger from one lockdown to another it has become evident to me that I am missing the social and welfare support that our activities provided us when attending the Museum.

This sentiment has also been expressed by many other volunteers over the past 10 months.

Recent personal sad events coupled with the sad loss of two of our hard working volunteers has further reinforced in my mind the sadness that I feel for not being able to share time and conversations with other like minded volunteers at the Museum.

It was always my intention to address the welfare aspect of all our volunteers and to enable this it is my intention to

form a Volunteer Welfare and Co Ordination Team at the Museum.

The new Volunteer Welfare and Co Ordination Team will focus on the continued efforts to include as many volunteers as possible in all aspects of volunteer life at the museum as well as planning and encouraging social gatherings which will allow everyone a chance to meet informally and to share experiences and past stories of interest to all.

Georgina MacDonald and Marie Paton have steered the co ordination efforts in the past and I would like to thank them for their sterling efforts to date and I would hope that they would wish to continue their efforts within the new Volunteer Welfare and Co ordination Team.

Should any other volunteers

wish to be involved with this new and vitally important team please do not hesitate to contact me directly for an informal chat about the role the team will play in the future.

Please let me assure you all that I firmly believe that the social aspect is the cement that will help hold us all together over the forthcoming challenging years and those who know me well can testify that a good "beer call" is worth a thousand formal meetings!

I sincerely hope that we can all find an element of normality within the first 6 months of 2021 which will allow us all to re establish the friendships and acquaintances that have been missed over the past Covid 19 period.

- Stuart Archibald

WHAT DOES 2021 HAVE IN STORE FOR THE MUSEUM?

With the festive period behind us for another year, it is time to look to the new year ahead. Although the year may not be getting off to the best start, we at Montrose Air Station are remaining hopeful that 2021 will bring brighter days yet.

Chairman, Stuart Archibald has been pressing ahead with plans and arrangements for our potential 2021 events calendar. Of course it must be noted that events are subject to change, and are heavily dependant on

COVID-19 restrictions, but it is important to have some things to look forward to!

Firstly, we would like to have an official opening of our fantastic new runway, which was completed last year as part of our major ground resurfacing works.

The museum would also like to showcase our incredible murals in Hangar 1B by having an event to unveil them.

Finally, we are hopeful that this

year may see the return of our much loved fly-in weekend and this has been *lightly* pencilled in for September.

In other exciting news, we are planning to see a new aircraft added to the museums collection in the not too distant future... (more information below).

Let us all have our fingers (and toes) crossed for a better year!

Pictured Right:

Top – Our completed runway;
Middle – Hangar 1B Murals;
Bottom – visiting aircraft at our 2019 fly in.



HERITAGE HEROES WANTED!

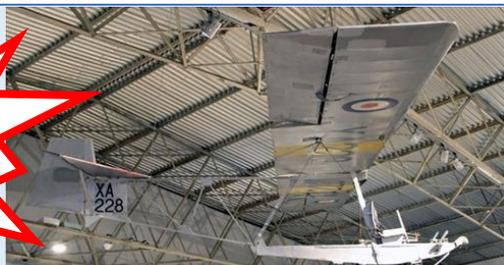


A New Addition

We are pleased to announce that the museum has been offered a unique opportunity to add a Slingsby T38 Grasshopper glider to its collection. The acquisition of this aircraft would see it move to the museum permanently after being kept in a dusty storage area for many years. Our plan would be to suspend the aircraft from the ceiling of the Butler Building as if in flight – creating a spectacular display for our visitors.

Funds

The museum is seeking to raise funds of £2,000 to help with this project, and we are hoping to achieve this goal solely by collecting donations. This sum would see the aircraft fully recovered and repainted to original specifications, as well as contributing towards transport, re-assembly and display costs. The current owners of the glider are a professional heritage aircraft restoration company based in Sussex with many years experience in restoring heritage airframes to very high museum display standards. On arrival in Montrose, the company have kindly agreed to reassemble the aircraft for



Left: An example of a Slingsby T38 Grasshopper Glider.

us and they are also very generously offering to absorb a high percentage of the costs involved with this project.

Heritage Heroes

An online JustGiving fundraising campaign has already begun, and generous contributions have started coming in, especially from our dedicated social media following. At the time of writing this newsletter the total amount raised online so far is £820. All donors will become 'Heritage Heroes'- helping to save the day by conserving a piece of RAF history. A 'Heritage Hero Board' featuring the names of all contributors will be displayed alongside the restored aircraft. It will thank our supporters and highlight the vital role their donation has played in preserving this unique airframe.

History of the Grasshopper

The Grasshopper T38, later named the Grasshopper TX.1 by the RAF, was first manufactured by English company Slingsby Sailplanes in 1952. Its' design was largely modelled on the pre-Second World War German SG 38 Schulgleiter aircraft, but altered to adopt the wing design from the Slingsby T.7 Kirby Cadet Glider. The aircraft was intended as a primary effects of controls

airframe trainer for use by the Air Training Corps and it was designed to be stored dismantled. The glider has a wingspan of 39 ft and in order to launch it required a team of people to assist by pulling an elastic rope or V-shaped bungee. Aircraft controls could also be illustrated to trainees by mounting the glider onto a rotating tripod facing the wind.

After the Second World War, the RAF identified the need to accelerate their pilot recruitment and assessment process and the introduction of airframes such as the T38 Grasshopper, which were cheap to manufacture, greatly aided this process. Use of the aircraft for training purposes ceased in the late 1980s.

In total only 115 of these aircraft were ever ordered and made for the RAF, so now is the chance for our museum to own a unique piece of aviation history.

So please spread the word about this fantastic project – there can never be too many heritage heroes! Why not become one yourself?

Watch this space!

We hope to bring you an update in the next newsletter. If all goes well we would like to receive the aircraft early this year.

NEWS FLASH! Quick Updates



HAWK PROGRESS

Taken just before our current lockdown, the above photo shows the current state of the Hawk. We are now at the stage of the registration number being applied to the fuselage and wings underside.



COMMANDERS' OFFICE

Before lockdown work was also moving along with the new Commanders' Office exhibition. Shown above are volunteers Billy Dewar and Andy Lawrence hard at work on the renovation.



RUNWAY UPDATE

Our runway now has a windsock placed on top of the HQ building.. Every good Air Station has one!

THEN AND NOW

Members Michael Brewis and Mike Craib have been busy putting together these 'Then and Now' images by cleverly layering an archive image on top of a modern day picture.

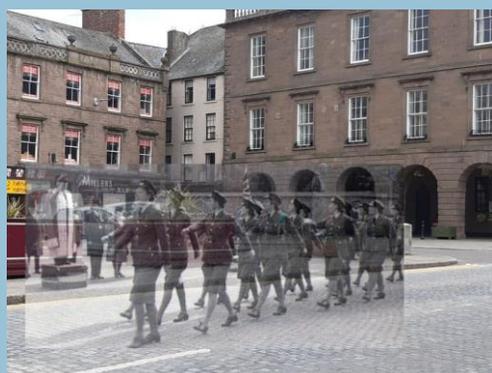
They have a few ideas for more images but we'd would love to hear your ideas too...



BURKE'S SHEDS

This image shows a First World War RE 8 Biplane beside the original Montrose Air Station hangars known as Burke's Sheds.

We can just imagine the aircraft standing outside the hangars as they are today.



WAAFs AT THE TOWN HOUSE

This image shows Corporals from the Womens Auxillary Air Force marching past the Town House as part of Montrose's VE Day parade held in 1945.



GUNNERY TRAINING

The image shows gunnery training taking place on the North Range of Montrose Air Station during WW1. This is now at the North of the GE site.

LOOKING FOR A NEW CHALLENGE?

Why not join one of the museum's many teams?

Prior to COVID, the museum was attempting to develop a new team structure and all volunteers are encouraged to join one of the many teams, which help to keep the museum running smoothly. Each team has an important role to play, but no team stands alone, as most museum projects require a variety of different skills, knowledge and expertise. If you are interested in joining a particular team, or for further information, please contact:

enquiries@rafmontrose.org.uk

CURATORIAL TEAM



The role of this team is to manage the ever expanding museum collections. They are responsible for all aspects of record keeping as well as the secure storage all of the objects, documents and artefacts in the collections in order to conserve and preserve them for future generations.. This team manages the archives and the museum's extensive photographic database.

ENGINEERING TEAM



This team undertakes the aircraft restoration projects – previous work includes the BE2 & Sopwith Camel projects. And they are currently working on the Hawk restoration. The team also take care of all the engineering requirements relating to displays / exhibitions as well as general repair and maintenance duties around the museum.

DISPLAY & EXHIBITION TEAM



This team is responsible for designing and preparing interesting and innovative displays of museum objects. They must ensure that objects are displayed in the correct manner to keep them safe and undamaged, as well as making the displays visually appealing to visitors. As displays need updated or rotated frequently, this team is always kept busy.

RESEARCH TEAM



The research team is responsible for expanding our knowledge of the history of RAF Montrose. Researching aircraft and facts about the site as well as uncovering the personal stories of the many men and women who trained or worked here. As well as local members, our team has recently expanded to include researchers from all over the globe – the US, Australia, New Zealand, France, and Canada and S. Africa. Some have a personal or family connection with Montrose, others simply have a keen interest in aviation history.

SHOP & RECEPTION TEAM



This team are effectively the 'face' of the museum, greeting and welcoming all visitors and providing orientation information as well as dealing with all aspects of sales in our new fantastic flagship shop.

MEDIA & PR TEAM



This team controls the museum's presence on social media – managing our Facebook, Twitter and Instagram accounts as well as more traditional forms of communication such as newspaper press releases and TV coverage. With the museum currently closed, this team are playing a vital role by ensuring we keep our followers interested and updated.