

Another busy season ahead at Hooton Park



Well here we are again, with another season's reopening in sight. So what's been happening while we have been 'closed' for the winter? The behind-the-scenes work has continued on Hangar 16 exhibits and displays. On the HPT side, work has continued on the restorations of the Meteor, Sopwith Baby and Spitfire, and returning visitors should see a big difference in these airframes. It's worth a mention here that hopefully by the time we reopen, the canopy will have been refitted to the Meteor. Alan has been on this project for the best part of two and a half years, and the results of his almost single-handed efforts are spectacular indeed, with the all-new glazing crafted on site. There is also the possibility that there may be more exhibits on the way via loans from the Royal Air Force Museum.

The Aeroplane Collection (TAC) have also been busy, with some great work on the Proctor wings, centre section and fuselage, with the team of four showing great progress over the winter. Aside from the Proctor, Ian has reassembled a full Gemini wing from the various parts held, and with that comes the exciting news that 'HUI' the Messenger should also be in line much sooner than anticipated to get the outer wings built to complete the restoration.

Further down the hangar, Stewart and co. have been steadily working through the jobs-list on the Vampire, including additional front fuselage woodwork repairs. Work is also under way on 'IGP', the ex-Wright Aviation Auster that was Hooton based in the late 1940s/early

1950s. To cap it all off, an ex-633 Squadron Auster VW933 was delivered in March, an exception to the usual TAC airframe acquisition inasmuch that it just needs reassembly to be show-ready.

While concentrating on Hangar 16, I have not forgotten all our other volunteers who come in every week and carry on with maintenance, ground works, repairs, redecoration and administration. So a huge thank-you to everyone, even if not mentioned by name.

On an investment side the Trust has commissioned and completed the stabilisation of Hangar B.18 North Bay annexe, a big investment but one which will now allow us to repurpose some of the space which was unused due to the structural issues. We have also completed training for three new operators and myself on using the scissor-and-boom lifts to enable more of the outstanding high-level maintenance tasks to be undertaken. The Griffin Trust, Wirral Amateur Radio Society, Boat Club and the Museum of Printing also continue to support the Trust.

As we go to press there is still much to do before the first Open Day on the 27th April, but knowing what everyone is capable of, I feel sure that when we open the doors we will be ready and willing to show off the progress everyone has worked to deliver – so on behalf of the Hooton Trust board, I thank you all.

—Graham Sparkes, Chair,
Hooton Park Trust

Special Spring 'Open Day' edition

Hooton Park Hangars – a brief introduction



The Hooton Park Hangars site is managed by The Hooton Park Trust (HPT), which was formed in 2000 with the aim of creating a Trust to oversee and manage the restoration of the remaining WWI hangars on the former RAF airfield at Hooton Park, Cheshire. The long-term aim is to provide a multifunctional site, as well as restoring the buildings and the site itself as valuable historic artefacts in their own right. The buildings will then provide the perfect environment for the projects and initiatives that are planned.

Much still remains of the Hooton Park airfield and its buildings. Three original, Belfast-trussed, hangars dominate the landscape, surrounded by the original access roads, taxiways and numerous outbuildings and offices, all steeped in the colourful history of this one-time Royal Air Force airbase.

Some of the runway also exists. All manner of aircraft types have operated from this aerodrome, for example Austers of the Army Air Training Corps, Supermarine Spitfires of 610 Sqn, and, during the postwar years, classic jets such as Gloster Meteors, De Havilland Vampires, Venoms and much more.

The site, as well as being of interest in its own right, is now also home to many organisations, details of which will be found in the panel on the back page.

Wirral Amateur Radio Society G3NWR

RAF sector clock

The club room now has a sector clock, mounted on a wooden frame by Rab M7UIG from contributions by various members.

A sector clock or colour change clock was a round colour-coded clock used at military airfields and observation posts to help track the movements of enemy aircraft and co-ordinate and control air defences.

Developed during the First World War and originally known as 'colour change clocks', the Royal Flying Corps introduced sector clocks in 1917 to aid in the chronological monitoring and position plotting of German aircraft.

The sector clock was a fundamental part of ground-controlled interception before modern computerised systems were put in place for air-space control. The clock face is marked with five-minute red, yellow and blue triangular segments. It has an outer 12-hour ring and an inner 24-hour dial.

Aircraft position was recorded along with the colour of the triangle beneath the minute hand at the time of sighting. This was reported to sector headquarters, where counters of the relayed colour were used to represent each air raid on a large table with a map of Britain overlaid with a British Modified Grid. As the plots of the raiding aircraft moved, the counters were pushed across the map by magnetic 'rakes'. This system enabled 'Fighter Controllers' to see very



quickly where each formation was heading and allowed an estimate to be made of possible targets. The age of the information was readily apparent from the colour of the counter. Because of the simplicity of the system, decisions could be made quickly and easily.

'Shack in a Box'

G3NWR club members have made significant strides in their winter construction project, the 'Shack in a Box'. This innovative setup is designed for transmitting and receiving ATV (Amateur Television) signals across multiple bands, including 2m, 70cm, 1.2G, 5.6G, and 10G.

This project not only showcases our technical skills but also strengthens our club's commitment to advancing amateur radio technology. We look forward to sharing more updates as we continue to refine and expand our capabilities. Stay tuned for future demonstrations and opportunities to engage with this exciting project!

A glimpse of ancient Hooton

'The dusty road sweeps through Eastham to Chester, but leaving by the road to the south-east, marked *Ellesmere Port*, the motors are quickly out of sight and mind; for it is now possible to rest on the field gateways to look over the ever-changing country scene. Proceeding in the leisurely fashion of the understanding pedestrian, in a little over a pleasant mile – where many a pause is necessary to listen to the birds, or note the numerous oak-trees which grow in goodly numbers and in shapely size – Hooton Hall, the ancient dwelling-place of the Stanleys for close on five-hundred years, is reached.' In 1621 William Webb eulogised over 'this goodly ancient manor and fair park, the seat of the Stanleys of Hooton . . . Sir Rowland Stanley lived to be 100 years, which note I rather to approve of the healthfulness of the place.'

—H. E. Young, *A Perambulation of the Hundred of Wirral*, 1909



The 'closed season' has seen some progress towards getting our Bedford CA pickup truck back on the road. We were successful in our application for a grant towards its restoration from the National Transport Trust, but unfortunately we were not able to send a representative to the awards ceremony to receive it



from HRH Princess Anne. The award of £1,000 has made a significant contribution to the cost of rebuilding the engine, which has now been reinstalled into the chassis. We are hoping to run it up before bringing the restored cab forward into place. The nature of the design places the engine halfway into the cab, which makes more cargo space at the expense of accessibility. We would like to have it running on site before the last Open Day.

Our other project is a Bedford SWB World War 2, MW ragtop lorry. This at present is an interesting large 'jigsaw puzzle'. The engine and running gear are now in place on its rolling chassis. The cab and rear body is a frame ready for the preparation process to begin before it is painted. We are waiting for the imminent arrival of a further Bedford exhibit into our collection.

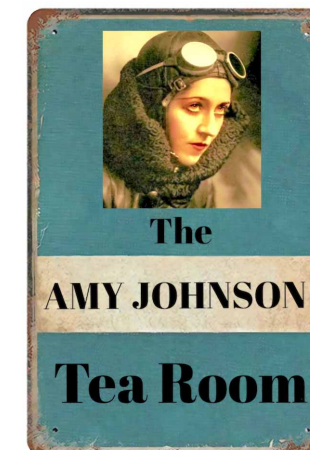
The Amy Johnson Tea Room

The B16 Museum Hangar café has been refurbished and renamed 'The Amy Johnson Tea Room' to celebrate the women of wartime, in particular the female pilots in the WAAF. Amy Johnson (1903–41) was a pioneering British aviator, best known for being the first woman to fly solo from England to Australia. She achieved this record-breaking flight in 1930, later setting numerous other aviation records.

She visited Hooton Park aerodrome on numerous occasions during the 1930s, either solo or with her husband Jim Mollison – her co-pilot for many long-distance flights.

Ineligible to join the RAF, she joined the ATA (Air Transport Auxiliary) during World War 2, ferrying aircraft from production sites to operational airfields. Sadly, she lost her life in the Thames Estuary on 5th January 1941 on a flight from Blackpool to Kidlington near Oxford. It is believed she was unable to locate the airfield in bad weather, and with the aircraft low on fuel, bailed out. Her body was never found.

The Tea Room is open from 10am to 4pm on Open Days and by appointment for private tour groups. Contact Sam at samhooton-park@gmail.com for more information.



Public events 2025

The Hooton Park site will be open to the public on the following Sundays, 10am to 4pm, throughout the season:

- 25th May
- 29th June
- 27th July
- 24th August
- 28th September
- 26th October

Admission prices:

- Adults £7
- Concessions £5
- Family £18

and include admission to:

- Aircraft & Vehicles displays in Hangar 16
- Air-Raid Experience
- Museum of Printing
- Wirral Amateur Radio Society
- Ellesmere Port Model Boat Club displays
- Vintage Bus Rides to and from Hooton Station.

Guided tours of the exhibits, together with a history of the site, are also available on these dates.

On 10th August we are holding a Bus Running Day from 10am to 4pm, with resident and visiting buses of many kinds on display and taking visitors on free rides.

Hooton Park will also be open on 13th and 14th September from 10am to 4pm as part of the annual Heritage Open Days.

We also have a provisional booking for the Wirral Vehicle Running Day on 5th October.

Visitors are reminded that there is limited parking on the site, and are requested to park at Hooton Station and use the free heritage bus shuttle service.

Recent progress in The Aeroplane Collection

Vampire XD624



A gun barrel fairing.

The two gun barrel fairings which will be fixed in the bottom part of the nose each side of the centreline, have been painted in the workshop and will be fitted once the nose undercarriage bay has been refurbished.

The main work since the last report has been to fit the engine cowls. Cowls are the metal covers that surround the engine and form part of the fuselage. Five cowls are involved on the Vampire. They were taken off the aircraft when it was moved from the museum at Millom, Cumbria, to Hooton and have been in storage at Hooton. A few months ago they were taken out of storage and painted inside, ready for re-installation on the aircraft.

It would be reasonable to expect that it would be very easy to fit them back on the aircraft; after all, they came off it – just put them in place above and below the engine, connect the securing hooks and tighten up the fixings using external handles. Simple. But no, they would not fit! This was probably a con-



Two cowls in place.

sequence of having a different set of wings on the aircraft. A considerable amount of filing was necessary to make them fit.

The 'trolley acc', which is a mobile unit carrying four, six-volt accumulators and is used to start the aircraft's engine, has been completely refurbished and now looks very good in its blue gloss paint.



Vampire Nose Leg Rig (above)

The rig is again being worked on after at least a year of inactivity. Having completed the mechanical installation, the work will concentrate on the hydraulic operating system. The object of the rig is that when in the museum, visitors will be able to operate the manual hydraulic pump and see how the leg moves to bring the nose undercarriage wheel up or down.

Cirrus engine

Work on the Cirrus engine is progressing well, with all components available and the majority cleaned and awaiting painting. A shortage of fixings has delayed reconstruction, but the majority can be transferred from another engine block we have at our disposal, otherwise it's the usual outside sources. As soon as it is fully complete it will be fitted and the cowlings attached, making AIGP look much more like an aircraft and a better display item ready for the new season.

Auster G-AIGP

Work is continuing on the air frame and engine in parallel, with an emphasis on getting the engine fitted and front cowlings on.

The seats were in a pretty poor state of repair, but



Auster fuel tank.

better ones have been taken from a donor aircraft. The seat supports are not in place so a repair or alternative solution will need to be addressed, but this is not seen as a priority at this stage.

The perspex windscreen and roof have been moved across from a donor aircraft, but not fully fitted, although the handbrake has been fitted and adjusted.



Percival Proctor centre section.



Percival Proctor wing rebuild.

Percival Proctor

The centre section has been flipped over to enable working on the underside.

The starboard flap has been replaced, as the one fitted was the incorrect size and shape and also perished.

The underside ply that was either damp or damaged beyond repair has now been replaced, retaining a central access panel.

Steve has continued rebuilding the wings and one is now complete with a new leading edge fitted.

Ian has finished ply skinning the Proctor fuselage and the fuselage will be mounted on the centre section/undercarriage some time this summer.



The complete Miles Gemini wing with the Percival Proctor fuselage in the background.

Miles Gemini G-AKEN

Ian has also rejoined the three parts of the Miles Gemini wing to make it whole again (they were sawed in the late 1950s). This will be the start of the Miles Gemini project, and reskinning of some of the ply on the wings has been started – slightly hampered by every glued joint in the wings having failed!

Missing parts of the undercarriage have been sourced and will be moved to HP in the summer.

—Stewart Turner and Ian Maddock



Cirrus engine (see opposite page)

Recent work on the Spitfire replica



Over the past few months several improvements have been made to the Mk IX Spitfire replica, not only to improve the overall look of the replica but also to convert it to an early C-wing variant used by 611 Squadron.

One of our main objectives was to replace the blank plates originally fitted in lieu of the radiators. A chance conversation with regular open-day visitor and Comper enthusiast, Tony Pritchard (North Wales Radiators, Dee-side) provided a solution. Tony kindly offered to build facsimiles using similar materials as used on an original Mk IX and donate these to HP.

The core for the radiators and aftercooler were made from a Corvette Stingray core to replicate the Gallay radiators fitted to the Mk IX. The Serck type oil cooler on the port radiator was made from perforated sheet to simulate the 'honeycomb' tubular cooler.

The frames were made from steel channel section offcuts. To finish, a 3D-printed (Liverpool John Moores University, LJMU) overflow vent tube was fitted to the starboard radiator.

Further work is needed to

repair the panels on the underside of each wing and to add details to the wheel wells before the aircraft can be repainted.

Other improvements to the aircraft largely relied on 3D-printed components for the C-wing, courtesy of LJMU.

To convert the original replica to s/n EN133 we needed to fit a cannon stub to each wing to sit alongside the existing 20mm Hispano cannon.

Whilst we had the plans for these, before the stubs were 3D-printed we had to ensure they would be a good fit to the wing profile on this particular replica. To do this Tom Bryne (LJMU) 3D-scanned the appropriate portion of each wing and adjusted the 3D model of each stub accordingly. The resulting fit of the printed parts was very good.

Other small improvements included a 3D-printed pitot tube which, together with its base plate, was fitted to the underside of the port wing, and a dorsal navigation light fitted aft of the cockpit.

We are very grateful to both North Wales Radiators and Liverpool John Moores University for their support of this project.

—Andrew Young

A new addition to the Museum of Printing



Another fine old Victorian press was brought into the Museum of Printing during March – the 'Arab' treadle-press of about 1890 which was given to me five years ago in a rusty state and which was renovated by my grandsons Noah & Dylan and myself and brought into full working order.

The press, built in Halifax but used throughout most of its life in a Liverpool printing firm, is a 'clamshell platen', and works by bringing together both the forme of type and the platen holding the paper.

Press reports of 1872 show that its inventor, Josiah Wade, had named the machine 'The Arab', the view being that the Arab race was hard-working and reliable.

The press was supplied in parts like modern-day flat-pack furniture; the instructions claimed that any man competent with a screwdriver could easily erect it in a day.

Wade was invited to send an example of his press to the Patents Museum in London in December 1881 to contrast with earlier presses. The *Halifax Courier* reported that Wade was pleased with this accolade, as it demonstrated the quality of what could be produced in the North of England.

Production stopped in Halifax in 1959 and the interests of the firm were sold to Wellsman and Parry in Liverpool.

—Ken Burnley

The formation of 610 Squadron at Hooton

CHESHIRE AUXILIARY AIR FORCE

A Pioneer Bomber Squadron At Hooton

The 610 (County of Cheshire) (Bomber) Squadron Auxiliary Air Force, formed officially on Monday, 10th February 1936, at Hooton Aerodrome, will be commanded by Squadron Leader Ian Parker, an old Etonian and an experienced airman of some years' standing.

The Air Ministry are providing comfortable accommodation for the squadron at Hooton, with a permanent ground staff of about 50 men. Hooton Aerodrome is a delightful spot and the unit should be most happy there. Those concerned with the formation of the Squadron are determined that it shall be worthy of Cheshire, and great care will be taken in the selection of its personnel. Its ranks are open to Cheshire residents and anyone wishing to join can register his name by writing to: The Adjutant, No 610 (County of Chester) (Bomber) Squadron, Auxiliary Air Force, Hooton Park Aerodrome, Hooton, Wirral, Cheshire.

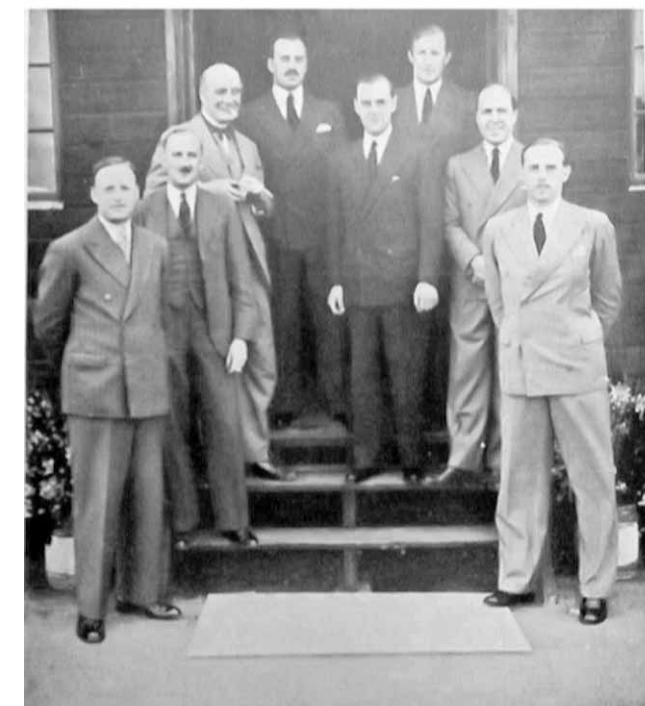
Various types of specialists

The Squadron is composed of various types of specialists, not necessarily pilots, such as clerks, fitters, riggers, mechanical transport drivers, wireless operators, photographers, storekeepers etc. but the general policy is to welcome within the ranks of the Squadron men without any aeronautical knowledge at all, but who are willing to learn. By this method it is hoped to build up a reserve of trained air-minded personnel within the county. It is not proposed to fill the Squadron entirely at the outset with already air-minded personnel.

The county should be particularly gratified that the Air Ministry has entrusted to it the responsibility of forming one of the few Bombing Squadrons in existence, and it is now for the county to see that it is the best Squadron.

An article transcribed from *The Cheshire Observer*, Saturday 4th April 1936 reporting the formation of 610 Squadron at Hooton which at that time was a Bomber Squadron flying Hawker Hart biplanes, later replaced with Harts, in January 1939 its role changed to a fighter squadron. The article is transcribed as written.

—Neil Hutchinson



An early photo of some of the new members of the squadron; the CO seems to have been misnamed as J. R. Parker, his first names were Ian Robertson and was CO from the Squadron's formation in 1936 to December 1939.

A full list of contacts for the Trust and for the specialist groups operating within the site can be found on the back page.

Volunteers are always welcomed to help with the many and varied tasks at the Hooton Park site. Please email us in the first instance, or make yourself known to members of the Hooton Park community.

No. 663 (AOP) Squadron at Hooton Park, 1949 to 1957: Part 2

Personnel

A Territorial Army Captain commanded each flight, his pilots being Territorial Army Officers, except at Hooton Park, where there was a mixture of regular Army and RAF pilots. In addition, there were two regular NCO pilots on the Midland and Manchester Flights. The flights' aircraft were serviced by RAF personnel, both RAuxAF and regular. The Army ran the transport side of the squadron, and a mixture of Army, RAF and civilian TA carried out the administration.

The Headquarters Flight at Hooton Park was used primarily for training and liaison and carried several RAF NCO pilots as instructors; it also had the largest manpower. Basic work of the ground crew was major servicing of the outlying flight's aircraft in addition to its own. At all flights, flying was carried out more intensively at weekends when the Territorial Auxiliaries and the RAuxAF virtually took over the entire squadron, with the regulars acting in an advisory capacity. During the week, the aircraft were serviced with routine tasks.

Aircraft

Initially in 1949, it was equipped with a Tiger Moth, an Auster AOP.4, seven Auster AOP.5s and eight Auster AOP.6s, with the aircraft being distributed among the various flights. By September 1951 the AOP.5s had left the squadron as Auster T7's started to arrive, along with more Auster AOP.6s, which formed the mainstay of the squadron. De Havilland T10 Chipmunks augmented these. Auster T7 WE600 between 1952 and 1954 was basically, the squadrons CO, Major Sturgeon aircraft and hence retaining its silver doped scheme whereas the rest of the unit's aircraft were camouflaged. The aircraft was eventually used by the British Antarctic Expedition and is displayed at the RAF Museum at Cosford.

The Auster AOP.6 had a 145 hp De Havilland Gipsy Major engine and was fitted with an auxiliary aerofoil flap aft of the wing trailing edge and longer undercarriage legs. These features added up to a truly STOL (Short Take-off and Landing) aircraft, making it ideal for use in the field as an army observation aircraft. But it was still rather behind the times, having to be started by hand swinging the propeller, and the brakes were cable operated on an undercarriage

sprung on rubber bungees. Made of composite wood and metal construction, the AOP.6 normally had two crew, a pilot and navigator/wireless operator.

Training started in August of 1949, with the first operational exercise with the Royal Artillery in March 1950. Training often took the form of decamping to a friendly farmer's field in mid-Cheshire at the weekend where the Austers would fly in and out. Annual summer camps took place at Middle Wallop where exercises could be performed on Salisbury Plain, or St Athan where the exercises took place on the Brecon Beacons.

—Colin Schroeder



663 Auster AOP6 VF547.



Return from summer camp, 1952.



In a field near Tarporey.

Douglas tram No. 47



As the warmer, sunnier days take over from what felt like a never-ending winter, the MTPS volunteers helping to restore 1911 Douglas Bay horse tramcar No. 47 are concentrating on some gloss painting. The sudden transformation has been exceptional, as the old tram was painted in dreary layers of grey or white primer and undercoat.

Next big job will be scraping the guano from the roof, before a huge new single sheet of canvas is stuck down and stretched using the time-honoured traditional wet paint method, though a modern staple gun will be used for around the edges and not the thousands of tiny tacks, as were originally employed.

—Terry Martin

Wildlife reports



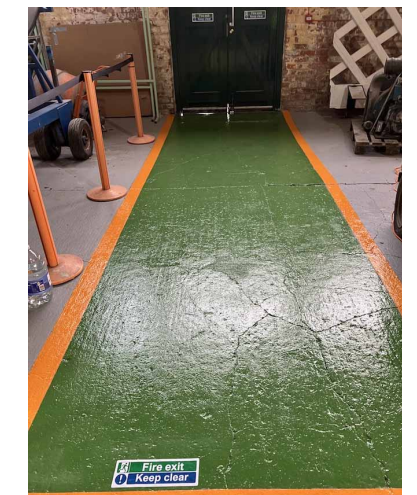
Spring has arrived at Hooton Park and we have had a lovely display of daffodils around the site – the hedgerows here are also starting to show green as well. Our resident fox has been sighted on several occasions and Glyn even managed to video it but then managed to delete the footage. Also pictured on the Pear Tree field are a pair of Herring Gulls who appear to have made Hooton Park their home over the winter. The fox was spotted one day recently when I was locking up, skulking away after an unsuccessful chase of one of the site's young rabbits.

—Graham Sparkes



Upgraded fire routes

HPT Volunteer Gerry Bateman has been busy upgrading Fire Routes during the closed season to help keep fellow volunteers' and visitors' safety a priority. The Volunteers at Hooton Park carry out works such as this across the site throughout the year – 'There are always jobs to be done somewhere at HP,' said one Volunteer recently.



Out of the mouth of a child ...

One Tuesday evening recently we had the Beavers scout group to entertain; I was giving the air-raid experience and I just happened to mention to these 5 to 7 year olds, that I was born in the Second World War. One of the group said that I was very old and why wasn't I dead!

—Bob Frost

From the archives of The Aeroplane Collection

The two items below have been taken from TAC's extensive archives and illustrate an event to mark the 'Battle of Britain' week eighty-five years ago. On the left is a poster used to promote the event, while the cover of the event's official Souvenir Programme is on the right. The archives are in the very capable hands of Colin Schroeder who will search out more interesting items for inclusion in future Newsletters.

A very unusual request!

On opening up the Trust's e-mails one morning not so long ago there was a rather unusual request. Heike, a dog owner, was to have an operation and the recovery period meant that she could not drive for three months and would need to use public transport. The problem was that Sophie her pet dog was frightened and nervous around buses.

The request was to bring Sophie along to Hooton to interact with buses. Glyn Plevin was approached, and after a bit of head scratching agreed to accept the challenge. A number of visits entailed and I'm pleased to report that Heike (and a still little apprehensive Sophie) have now been travelling on local buses.

A good result all round, and Heike would like to thank everyone who helped.

—Graham Sparkes

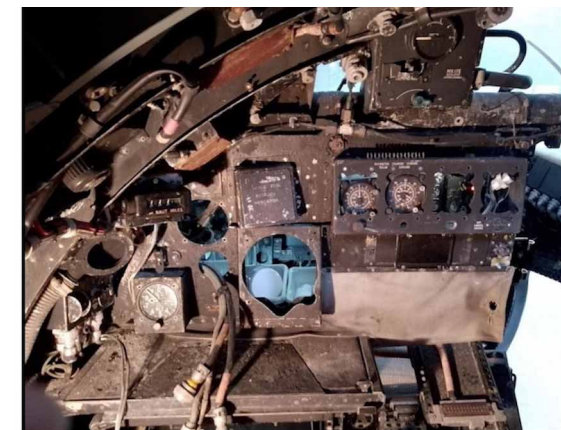


Canberra update

In the previous newsletter I detailed my work on the repurposing of the Canberra pilot's cockpit section to make it appropriate as an exhibit in the forthcoming 'Kids' Corner', and as this is now completed I have moved into the rearward area. As our aircraft is the PR7 reconnaissance version this rear section would have housed just the navigator/camera operator, and that ejector seat is still in place. The bomber version would also have housed the bomb aimer, so this additional seat is not installed.

The missing instruments that were available from our stock have been reinstalled, plus a couple which had to be purchased to complete the ensemble. A fair amount of work was needed to remove disintegrating insulation and spray painting, but with the addition of 12v LED lighting and general tidying, this section is now also completed.

As our first Open Day of the new season draws near, it was felt that the external rear bulkhead area should be given some attention as it was in a generally sorry state and the exposed rough cut edges had some lethally sharp projections. This has been done and the outer fuselage edges are now protected with a neat grey protective edge-trim, and the bulkhead has been completely repainted.



Navigation area before restoration.



Navigation area after restoration.



Rear bulkhead tidied, repainted and made safe.



The last major undertaking will be the reinstallation of the pilot's ejector seat which will hopefully be covered in the next Newsletter.

—Paul Gilling

Prestigious award



At the recent Aviation Heritage UK Annual Awards, we were awarded Museum/Group of the Year 2024!

'The Aeroplane Collection's impressive restoration at Hooton Park of Miles M.38 Messenger Mk.2A G-AHUI, expertly led by Ian Maddock and assisted by Steve Poole and others, was declared to be "finished for the moment" by 18th November 2023 and is believed to be the first example of a Messenger to go on current public display in a British museum.

Although missing its "outer wings" as the original one-piece 36 foot/11 metre span wing was cut into three many years ago, this 1946 Newtownards-built aeroplane last flew in 1957, and after storage by various preservation organisations was donated to TAC by The Miles Aircraft Collection in 2002.

Together with TAC's recent acquisitions of Percival Proctor IV RM169/G-AMVY, Miles M.65 Gemini 1A G-AKEN (donated by Peter Turner) and Hooton Park Trust's Comper Swift G-ACGL (delivered in September 2024 on loan from the RAF Museum), this project now enables TAC and Hooton Park to have this country's best and largest collection of British light aircraft after The Shuttleworth Collection.

Lloyd Robinson, on behalf of TAC, was presented with the award by Martin Withers.

A full list of winners can be found here: <https://aviationheritageuk.org/award-winners-2024/>



Chester No. 4 tram progress

Our volunteers have survived another winter of sub-zero conditions at Hooton. The work carries on relentlessly. Woolly hats and mits are the order of the day. One drawback is that the paint is extra thick, but nothing that a kettle of hot water can't warm up.

We are currently making seats for the upper deck., with two made so far and twelve to make at the rate of one per week. We've had the chrome removed by shot-blasting to reveal some sort of brass. Chrome didn't come in until the 1930s when it was cheaper than paying a cleaner to polish brass every week.

Picture on the left is a single seat (no seat-back fitted yet) – we need seven of these, and then there are double ones and we need five of these. All these seats have a backrest that flips over depending on which way the tram is going. The right-hand picture is the three-seater one on each end. This has a fixed backrest of course. Rob is testing it out: note woolly hat and thermal boiler suit.

—Rob Jones



Ellesmere Port Model Boat Club

The Club is looking forward to another season of sailing on their lake at Hooton, when they will be displaying and sailing their model boats at the Open Days on the last Sunday of the month.

The Hooton Park Duty Officers

One of the most important yet often taken-for-granted roles at Hooton is that of Duty Officer. This demanding and responsible task is fulfilled by a small group of dedicated volunteers who work on a rota system to ensure that the site is safely and securely managed for all who use it.

The many doors, gates, alarms and CTV systems have to be monitored throughout the day, as well as dealing with requests and enquiries from those working on-site and from other members of the public.

Most regular users and occasional visitors will hardly notice the Duty Officer's presence, but behind the scenes they quietly and efficiently keep this large and complex site functioning during the day, and take steps to ensure its security after hours.

Thanks go to all who do this demanding yet fulfilling job on both a regular basis and as temporary fill-in.

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