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NEWS

On the 10th of January 2012 the museum lodged an appeal against the decision by MVDC to refuse the planning application to redevelop the site with new environmentally friendly buildings. A firm of professional planners had been appointed to represent the museum during the appeal process. A number of documents and responses were sent to the inspector. On the 30th of April 2012 the inspector conducted a site visit. He indicated that we could expect a decision fairly soon.

Peter Vallance has recently been admitted to hospital with a heart problem. He has had an operation to resolve the problems and was discharged a couple of days later. We wish him well and welcome him back to the museum.

The museum hosted a local film company in mid December 2011. A film entitled "Shady Lady" was being made about a B24 Liberator that carried out a famous bombing sortie from Australia. The film company "Fact not Fiction", is based in Horsham and had converted a couple of units at the museum to look like a briefing room and the corner of a hangar. They filmed sequences at the museum for three days. Here are three pictures taken during the filming.



The S.1. Buccaneer XN923 now has both Gyron Junior engines serviceable! On the 3rd of February the "new" port Gyron was turned over for the first time. The first run was just to ensure that no nasty noises emanated from it, so dry only, no fuel and no crackers. More on this later!

Update:-

On the 30th of May 2012 the planning inspector announced that Gatwick Aviation Museums appeal against Mole Valley

District Council's (MVDC) had been rejected. This is a clearly a great disappointment, although some consolation may be found in the actual judgment made by the Inspector. He upheld the council's view that the development would be "inappropriate development in the green belt". (This ignored the fact that the application was for a "redevelopment" of the site as allowed for in the terms of the original 1992 Inspectors decision). It was some consolation to see that he rejected the other four points used by the council to deny planning permission. Further discussion with advisors is now taking place and it is hoped that we can resolve the issues as soon as possible.

Earlier in the year we were asked by RNAS Culdrose if we could assist in providing an instrument or two that would have been fitted in the Sea Prince. It was required to provide a presentation piece to a retiring Admiral who had flown the Sea Prince. We were able to provide a couple of instruments one of which (an RPM gauge) was used in the presentation item.

In May we had a visit from members of 750 Naval Air Squadron who stopped by on their way to North London. This squadron has just received the

new King Air Avenger aircraft which will be used for a similar training role to that of the Sea Prince. It was to make a comparison between the two that prompted the visit and they seemed quite impressed with the Sea Prince and the amount of room that it offered students.



Here is a reminder that as from March 2012 the museum will be open to visitors on ALL Saturdays (10:30 to 16:00) in addition to the Sundays' that are advertised on the web site. This decision was taken to allow flexibility in visit times. Saturday is also the primary day on which most of the engineering staff is present and working (Ha,ha!) so there is a presence already on the site.

In February of 2012 we were contacted by the publishing company of Dorling Kindersley (part of the Penguin group), with a request to look over our collection of model aircraft. They had a very extensive and detailed list of particular models that they were looking for to be part of a new publication. As a consequence of this initial contact they visited the museum to conduct an appraisal of the models identified on the list. We are very fortunate in having Ted Wright as our resident expert this topic. Ted's expertise meant that he was able to assist and guide the visitors to each model of interest. The final consequence of the visit was a few days later a professional photographer set up a session to capture all of the models identified earlier as being good enough to be photographed.

Once again Ted was on hand to retrieve the items requested and help position it for the photographer.

As a part of the consolidation of the museums artifacts a number of items will be sold to rationalize the exhibits. Amongst the first to be offered for sale is the nose section of Victor K.2 tanker XL164. This was saved from complete destruction when it was moved from the fire dump at RAF Brize Norton to the museum. Sadly the interior has been striped out, but it is felt that with sufficient time and resources the nose section could be taken on by an individual or group and become a valuable addition to the community of nose sections. As this rationalization process progresses the number of items in the "for sale" section of the web site will be added to in the next few months.



Details of the sale can be found on the web site.



We have been fortunate to have secured, via one of our engineering volunteers a sponsorship deal with Ambersil. This company manufactures

and sells a great many products that are used by a wide variety of engineering companies. As a result it's not too surprising to find that their incredible range of products has many and varied uses in the aircraft industry. So their support in supplying some of their products will be a vital element in ensuring that our attempts to preserve our airframes succeed.

Although the major museum exhibits are the large airframes that dominate the site, inside the museum there are some displays that are often overlooked. David Wise has been collecting and presenting a couple of fascinating historical aspects to the local aviation history. His presentation of the Laker years is an ongoing tribute to the late Freddy Laker and the airline he started. So for anyone with an interest in Laker and its history this exhibit is a must see!



As well as the Laker exhibition there is another airline that features amongst the presentation, Caledonian



Airways, which despite its name was a major independent airline based at Gatwick. This display has often prompted visitors to linger and many remember both

flying with and working for this renowned airline.

Engineering Work

XN923 Buccaneer S.1.

Some time ago we received a Gyrion Junior that had been in dry storage/display for many years. The engine was inspected by our engineering experts and it was declared a suitable replacement for the damaged port engine. This process was started in late 2011 and the engine change was completed in early 2012. By the first week in February the engine was declared ready to run.



The procedure was a three stage process, first the engine was turned over on the air start system to implement a dry run to ensure no major “nasties” were present in the engine.

On the second run the fuel system was introduced, again the object being to check that the system functioned before committing the engine to light up.

As it turned out there was a fuel leak coming from the system in the bomb bay. This delayed proceeding for a while until a temporary fix was made. A more permanent fix was carried out a few days later. With the fuel system now OK the final and decisive run could be made. For the third time the air start was applied and the engine was lit for the first time. It was a dramatic event, but, as it was

hoped for, there was no drama. The engine simply lit without any fuss and ran up idle speed. We all anticipated one of Andy’s famous “wet starts”, but no such excitement happened!



It was left at idle speed whilst



the engineering team checked all around the engine for leaks or other problems, no obvious troubles could be found and the day was declared a success.

Two weeks later another test run was carried out and again everything ran smoothly and without any problems. It was decided that we should also start the starboard Gyrion. This engine performed flawlessly and for the first time in many years we had the sight of the worlds ONLY running S.1. Buccaneer running both Gyrion Junior engines.

It is the intention that this aircraft will be run on a regular basis. Some of the problems in the past have been the result of the system being left idle for too long and allowed to degrade. Now that both engines are serviceable more of the aircrafts’ systems will be restored and made functional. This includes the hydraulics to

allow the wing fold mechanism to operate under its own power.



Members of the team who had spent a lot of time in carrying out the engine run were acquainted with the run procedure, from the cockpit side.

Almost as soon as the engine work had been completed another major project commenced. This entails tackling the major areas of corrosion on this airframe. XN923 seems to have suffered more than most in the outdoor environment. Although we are acutely aware that whilst outside all of the airframes are subject to a continual degrading process, the Buccaneer seems to have suffered most. For most of the spring and summer continual work has been carried out in an attempt to stop some of the corrosion. This has been targeted initially at the starboard wing root and undercarriage, although the wing joints have also had considerable attention. With these cleaned it is now possible to assess the extent of the work needed to correct the problems that exist in this area.



This corrosion treatment is just a small part of the overall

problems with corrosion that this aircraft suffers from; it will take many more months, possibly years, before the major areas of corrosion are repaired.

Sea Prince WF118 (G-DACA)

The conditions outside have taken their toll on the nose of this Prince. As reported in the last newsletter the nose had been stripped to bare metal and some corrective action taken on the various "dings" found in the metal. Now, despite the poor weather for painting it has been restored to pristine condition by Dave Tylee. Dave managed to find enough good weather slots that coincided with his shift pattern to respray the nose. The following pictures show the process.



Lightning F53 ZF579

ZF579 Progress 2012

Although all appears to have been quiet on the project front, it has been bubbling away under the surface quite happily (no

pun intended)! There hasn't been any big leap like we had hoped this summer, due to various team commitments and a lack of ground support equipment in existence for various tasks. Not that there was actually a big amount left to do on ZF579 anyway, since the old tub is impatiently waiting for it's power plants!

Since the last update, the replacement air turbine gearbox has been installed, tested and passed muster. The previously overhauled unit developed a high frequency harmonic, which we were not happy with since it was pulsing high frequency harmonics through the rear stabilizers and fin. We changed it out. The mentioned unit's vibration has been identified and will be rectified if we require it to be made serviceable.

As you will see from the previous update, the no1 jet pipe was then installed; leaving reheat (after burn for our pals across the pond) pipes and engines to go in.

No.2 reheat pipe has been installed and plumbed in recently, after its work shop strip down, overhaul and testing.



No.1 reheat pipe is nearing completion, ready for install in the next 4 weeks. These specialized brutes have sucked up approx 500 hrs overhaul time between them!

Various other niggles and snags, which crop up as part of general maintenance and anti

deterioration exercises, have also been rectified, keeping things ticking over. All of the ground equipment required for engine installs, has been rallied up after an exhaustive search over the last year, apart from a jet pipe handling trolley, this remains a frustration. We can work around it, when required.

Various additional OEM air frame, engine and fuel system spares have been procured this year, including a rare find; an Avon 301 engine going spare.



A good engine strip, clean up, and an overhaul of the fuel control systems too, will see that as a nice spare for ZF579, should we ever have any issues with either of the new engines.

Avro Shackleton WR982(J)

A number of minor changes have been made to 982. It was intended to begin to prepare the external surfaces for a repaint. However the constant poor weather meant that very little was done. Inside a general clear up has begun and over the next few months it is our intention to improve the internal appearance. The beam window Perspex has been replaced on both sides and we will begin to replace some of the windows further forward. The ones we'd really like to replace are the engineers and radio ops, sadly we don't new replacements. It is still planned to carry out a full external repaint, with luck the weather over the next twelve months will allow us to complete this.