

# ALL-PARTY PARLIAMENTARY GROUP ON GENERAL AVIATION (APPG GA) HERITAGE WORKING GROUP PROGRAMME 2019-2020

The All-Party Parliamentary Group on General Aviation (APPG GA) addresses issues that can directly or indirectly contribute to the growth and success of General Aviation in the UK. This paper describes the APPG GA Heritage Group Programme and will be amended from time to time as agreed by the Sectorial Chairman in consultation with the APPG GA core team.

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## 1. OVERVIEW

### a) Aviation Heritage in the United Kingdom

For the last 100 years, the UK has been a leader in the world of aviation. In both World Wars, in the Cold War and in the development of commercial air travel, British aircraft made significant, well-known and proud contributions. Aviation is a major part of British history, and very much part of the public's consciousness – Spitfire, Hurricane, Swordfish, Lancaster, Vulcan, Sea Harrier, Concorde. This is confirmed by the enthusiastic and popular response to the current celebrations of the Royal Air Force's Centenary.

Aviation Heritage is important in a number of ways. From the earliest days, the British contribution to the development of aviation in terms of design and innovation has been world-beating. The story of that development is told by examples of aviation heritage both on the ground and in the air.

The defence of the realm has been dependent on military aircraft from the First World War onwards. In the First World War the Royal Naval Air Service and the Royal Flying Corps pioneered the development of military aviation. By the end of the War they had combined to form the world's first independent Air Force, The Royal Air Force. UK inventions and initiatives continued to lead the development of aircraft carrier and maritime aviation. The country might well have fallen to its enemies in the Second World War if it was not for the outstanding contribution of the Bomber, Coastal and Fighter Commands of the Royal Air Force. The RAF's V-Force provided the country's strategic deterrent during the early years of the Cold War. The UK's military jets, both fighter and bomber, were world-beating as regards their performance.

The growth of commercial and military aviation after the Second World War gave rise to a significant economic contribution from an industry employing thousands. The aircraft and aerospace export trade was and still is an outstanding success.

Aviation is naturally exciting and attractive, in particular to the young. Aviation heritage has an important part to play in inspiring the young to take up technical interests, especially as it is geographically dispersed, and in the form of air displays, it comes as entertainment.

Aviation heritage has this vitally important story to tell, one that is unique in Europe. There are two components: flying aviation heritage, and aviation heritage that is ground-based, although possibly capable of movement under its own power.

## **b) Flying Heritage**

To be appreciated fully, and to generate inspirational excitement, historic aircraft need to be seen flying, and manoeuvring to display their capabilities. Airshows organized around the country from March to October at both inland locations and on the coast have proved an enduring popular spectator entertainment, at which historic aircraft are demonstrated alongside more modern examples. Stricter regulatory oversight from the Civil Aviation Authority has recently added significant costs for airshows, causing a reduction in the number of smaller airshows because of the impact on financial viability.

The three services have been maintaining small fleets of historic aircraft flying, in the RAF's Battle of Britain Memorial Flight, the Royal Navy Historic Flight and the Army Historic Aircraft Flight, but budgetary pressure from the Ministry of Defence is limiting their activities. The same pressures are resulting in the progressive reduction in the number of current service aircraft available for air displays. This is despite evidence that a significant amount of recruitment to the Services is stimulated by airshows.

The majority of airworthy historic aircraft are privately owned or in the hands of a few groups, such as the Shuttleworth Collection. Keeping historic aircraft airworthy is becoming increasingly expensive, and the technical skills required to work on flying heritage aircraft are becoming rarer.

Regulatory action following the Shoreham tragedy is making flying heritage jet aircraft almost impossible, with several owners selling their aircraft abroad. There is a real prospect of there will be no flying heritage display aircraft from the 1950's, when Britain led the world in aircraft design, mainly due to concerns about maintaining and operating heritage jet engines.

The current regulatory environment is not helpful towards heritage aircraft operation. Risk-based Safety Management Systems adopted elsewhere in the world would transfer the burden of responsibility to the heritage flying sector, and would ease the load of an already-overworked CAA. Delegation of the administration of aircraft airworthiness to approved maintainers would place decision-making in the hands of those who understand the specific historic aircraft type. The opportunity to carry passengers on an "informed consent" basis would bring new vitality – and funding – to the sector.

With safety the primary concern, there is pressure on aircraft operators to provide adequate opportunity for training, practice and currency flying, adding to the operating costs.

The financial resources required to maintain and operate heritage aircraft safely are significant. When it was flying, the Vulcan programme consumed £2.5million per year; the Heritage Aircraft Trust, operating the Folland Gnat team, requires £250,000 per year. Would there be some benefit through any consolidation of resources, or a national effort to keep these aircraft in the public eye?

In summary, the unique and broad public benefit of the sight and sound of flying heritage aircraft is at great risk of loss by a progressive set of regulatory and financial pressures.

## **c) Static and Ground Running Aviation Heritage**

There are over 150 aviation museums, aircraft collections and historic aviation sites around the UK, housing a huge array of exhibits. Because of the propensity of museums to be based at past or current airfields, the majority of these are to be found in the South and East of the country. However the rest of the country is not bereft of aviation museums; most people live within an hour's drive of an aviation museum.

Whilst museums vary considerably in size, it is estimated that there are over 2.5million visits to aviation museums per year, generating a revenue of over £40million per annum, and contributing significantly to the heritage tourism sector. There is also a considerable indirect benefit in terms of the stimulation of the young to choose an aviation or engineering-oriented career.

Many museums are dependent on significant numbers of volunteers to look after their exhibits, and act as guides for visitors. Long-term volunteers are now aged, but still vital. The heritage sector provides a constructive activity for experienced adults, and work experience opportunities for the young and unemployed within a structured environment. However a continuing programme of skills transfer is necessary to ensure skills in heritage technologies are not lost.

Current estimates show that aviation museums employ over 500 people across the country, rely on in excess of 10,000 volunteers for their operation, and benefit from hundreds of thousands of less active supporters.

Due to their size, many museum aircraft exhibits are located outside, and have been for decades, eventually succumbing to the effects of weather. Historic artefacts are often acquired or rescued from imminent decay where commitment and tender loving care replace the weather-proof buildings deemed essential for national collections. The continual drive for new museums rather than investment in current collections is exacerbating an already difficult position.

To remain relevant, aviation museums need to display modern as well as historic exhibits. A more pragmatic policy on disposals by the Ministry of Defence with smaller museums being offered the chance to purchase items before they are offered to the dealers, would improve the situation. Since the public has paid for these aircraft, why should they pay again?

Working exhibits restored to running condition, such as taxiing aircraft, and static aircraft with working engines, are breathing new life into existing collections.

Many of the non-national collections are held in leasehold premises, this leading to three possible challenges: no or little investment in the buildings; escalating costs when the lease is renewed; and, if the lease cannot be renewed at an affordable rent, huge questions about what happens to the collection. Owners and trustees of these collections need to be encouraged to think about the medium to long term future of their collections and have a worst-case disposal policy in place.

Most museums are independent and receive no local or national financial support.

As Britain celebrates the centenary of the RAF, with the 2019 anniversaries of Atlantic crossings, commercial aviation and Concord imminent, the aviation heritage sector is well-placed to tell those stories to the young, and to the wider public, plus the UK's numerous foreign visitors. Whilst national museums are able to implement long term and expensive 'sponsor opportunity' projects, the voluntary sector can create exhibits within their own resource constraints in a shorter timescale.

Aviation museums make up a country-wide network of opportunities for STEM engagement and inspiration of the young. Youngsters are often engaged by grandparents' stories; the aviation museum sector is full of safe, trained and experienced mentors who can provide inspiration and education in group sessions, family engagement or one-to-one encounters. Local schools just queue up to engage at local destinations.

Local and engaged volunteer-run aviation museums often become repositories for family papers and items of historical interest that would rarely attract national interest, and offer support and expertise extended to families, local history groups and genealogists when researching history and individuals involved in aviation. These fuel the increasing needs of independent researchers and documentary makers. The sector encourages best practice in conserving these resources and making archives accessible to their audiences.

## 2. KEY ISSUES

There are a number of significant issues that need to be addressed by the APPG GA Heritage Group.

These include, in no particular order:

- a. National consolidation of flying heritage aircraft and capabilities; maintenance and growth of heritage aviation engineering skills
  - Identify areas where either increased funding or reduced cost would enhance and sustain aviation heritage activity: e.g.: training, skill recognition.
  - Identify the critical skill sets required to sustain aviation heritage into the future.
  - Identify the key organisations engaged in current aviation heritage activity:
  - Identify the main “centres of excellence” of expertise in specific areas of aviation heritage activity: technical, operational and regulatory;
  - Propose partnership models between those centres to combine knowledge and make best informed recommendations to appropriate bodies;
  - Identify the most critical perishable skill sets underpinning activity;
  - Propose methods to incentivise and sustain critical skill sets.
- b. The indirect and direct economic Impact of Airshows and Aviation Museums
- c. The Business Model for Heritage Aircraft (Restoration and) Operation.
- d. Regulation of airshows and regulatory costs: the current situation is damaging the sector. Can we identify areas where increased funding and/or more sophisticated regulation would significantly enhance aviation heritage activity?
- e. The future for flying jet heritage aircraft
- f. Defence disposals
- g. Military involvement in air displays
- h. Role of air displays and aviation museums in inspiring young people in STEM and aviation
- i. Ageing volunteer population
- j. Expiring museum leases
- k. “Brown signs” to encourage visitors to museums
- l. Impact of CAA resource and skills shortages

### 3. ROLE

The APPG GA Heritage Group will identify issues that impact on the sustainability and growth of Aviation Heritage, both flying and on the ground. In doing so, the APPG GA Heritage Group will

- 1) Consider the needs of all aspects of heritage aviation.
- 2) Liaise with all elements of Aviation Heritage to ensure a balanced view is delivered to Government.
- 3) Ensure that the Department of Transport, the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport and Parliamentarians are clear about problems Aviation Heritage is facing and suggested solutions.
- 4) Identify research to aid Parliament in considering issues related to heritage and historic aviation.
- 5) Consider the terms of reference for holding Parliamentary Inquiries into aspects of aviation heritage in the UK, both flying and static or ground-running.
- 6) Promote developments that will encourage the young to become involved with aviation.

#### 4. GOVERNANCE

The APPG GA Heritage Group provides the leadership team with support on aviation heritage matters. The APPG GA Heritage Group has an appointed Parliamentarian, an appointed sectorial chairman and co-opted subject matter expert advisors. The APPG GA heritage sectorial chairman reports to the APPG GA leadership team.

The APPG GA Heritage Group will communicate by email, phone and occasional meetings. The sectorial chairman will periodically report to the leadership team as agreed from time to time.

The APPG GA Heritage Group includes a Parliamentarian, Sectorial Chairman and Vice Sectorial Chairman (TBN) and a number of subject matter experts who are available from time to time to advise on a variety of issues.

Name	Role
John Brown (IWM)	
Robert Courts MP	Parliamentarian
Steve Crocker (AACS)	
Tom Cunningham (Navy Wings)	
Wally Epton (HAA)	
Ron Fulton (AH-UK)	
Sir Gerald Howarth	
Dr Robert Fleming (AH-UK)	Sectorial Chairman
Nigel Price (Key Publishing)	
John Romain (ARC Duxford)	
Tim Routsis (Shuttleworth)	
John Turner (BADA)	

#### 5. WORK PROGRAMME

During 2018 and 2019, the APPG GA Heritage Group will;

- a. Identify specific heritage aviation issues with supporting evidence

- b. Propose solutions to those issues
- c. Engage effectively with Parliamentarians (under an agreed lobby plan) to achieve results, including;
  - I. Debate concerns on the floor of both houses
  - II. Table questions for oral or written answer
  - III. Table motions in the House of Commons
  - IV. Table and debate amendments to bills
  - V. Suggest attendees at select committees
- d. Provide periodic updates to inform and advise Parliamentarians and others of progress or otherwise
- e. Demand meetings with ministers (do not deal with officials, except by agreement with the relevant minister)
- f. Demand meetings with regulators and policymakers

As it evolves, each issue and associated work-stream will be described under an expanded section 5.

## **6. COMMUNICATIONS, SOCIAL MEDIA AND PRESS**

The APPG GA Heritage Group work will be communicated as effectively as possible through the APPG GA core team. The APPG GA website will reflect the importance of the APPG's heritage work and highlight the main issues.

## **7. TIME TABLE**

The work program detailed timetable will be published as soon as it is practical to do so.