



Parham Airfield Museum Annual Report for Parish Meeting 2021

We are pleased to celebrate the museum's 40th anniversary this year. Sadly we haven't been able to open to the public yet but are working hard to do so as soon as possible.

The enforced closure has enabled us to work on fitting out the new building and work has continued throughout the winter to complete our new Exhibition Hall. Every Wednesday and Sunday a small, dedicated working party continues the building project. The new building exceeds building regulations and environmental requirements, with effective insulation and an air source heat pump supplying under floor heating.

The concept is a building that conforms to modern standards but looks as much as possible like one from the 1940s. Wartime style lights create a yellow glow whilst glass cabinets are lit with LEDs and artefacts are displayed with new style, easier to read labels. Various photos and memorabilia are wall mounted in the research area.

The display cabinets are now in place, with new collections of exhibits and modern style labelling. New information boards have been produced for the walls. The additional space allows us to feature weapons and uniforms in 360-degree glass display cabinets. Other large exhibits such as automatic weapons, stretchers and flags are also highlighted in their own space. We now have an Anderson Shelter too, manufactured largely from original parts found at Parham.

Ever mindful of the need to appeal to children, we have provided a dressing-up rail from which younger visitors can try on various items of American and British uniforms and equipment. The final stage of the project will be an attached building to house our 390th jeep. It will also store artefacts from the replica operational base, which must be removed to a dry environment during the winter.

Our little working group has been much encouraged by the positive response of the very few who have seen the results of our efforts. The attempt to blend the history of the locality, the British Resistance and Station 153 with world events seems to be especially appreciated.

Whilst all this has been going on, we have been improving other areas of the museum too. For example, the barrack room and showers have been refurbished, as has the old Signals Office on the first floor of the Control Tower. There is a corner devoted to the airmen's pet mascots, such as monkeys, dogs and even a bear named Roscoe who roamed around Parham during some of WWII. It is always important to remember that the Tower itself is a significant historical exhibit, so we are ensuring that each part has a clear description of its original function.

Several of our regular volunteers are retiring from the museum following this break due to Covid and we are keen to bolster our volunteer numbers again. If you, or anyone you know, has a couple of Sundays a month free to help meet and greet

visitors or serve in our gift shop and café please get in touch. We are a friendly crew and volunteering at your local museum can be very rewarding.

So, when will we be able to open to visitors? Currently we are using the latest safety advice to plan our visitor experience to make it “COVID secure” and we are aiming to open in June. When we first open, this will mean some significant changes to ensure the safety of visitors and volunteer staff. These may include limiting visitor numbers and other measures to ensure strict hygiene and social distancing. We think that it is better to open with these precautions in place than not to open at all for the new season, especially as we are keen to show off our new building and displays and welcome visitors to celebrate 40 years of our existence.

***Parham Airfield Museum
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***Celebrating 40 Years
1981- 2021***

www.parhamairfieldmuseum.co.uk

