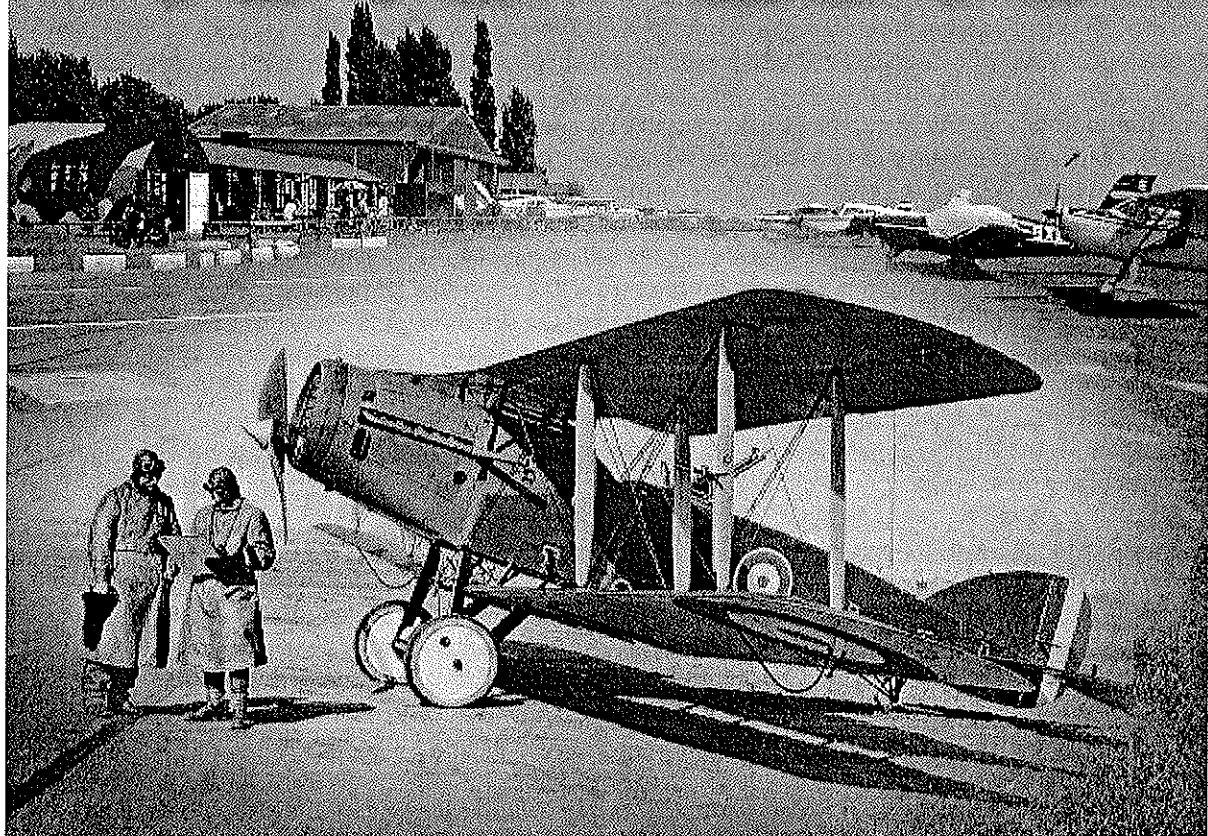




# **North Weald One Hundred 1916 - 2016**



**ONE EPPING FOREST TOURISM BOARD  
PROPOSAL FOR CENTENARY CELEBRATION AIRSHOW SEPT 2016  
ISSUES AND OPTIONS  
JUNE 2015  
CLLR TONY BOYCE CHAIRMAN**

**Introduction**

North Weald Airfield, built prior to the establishment of the RAF, will be 100 years old in September next year. The airfield, which remains a significant asset to the district and a significant asset to the aviation history of London and the UK nationally, is facing challenging circumstances. Epping Forest District has adopted Tourism as one of its key economic development priorities, and has invested in growing and expanding this sector of the local economy. The master plan looks to intensify aviation usage at the site. The airfield has a long tradition of excellent air shows, which again had national recognition, but unfortunately this is no longer the case, though a successful, smaller scale Community day event, with primarily local reach has been resurrected.

**Current Challenges**

The airfield needs to generate significant investment and intensification of aviation business. It needs to regain its national prominence, profile and position itself again to expand the range and frequency of its use, and look to other ancillary opportunities to enable greater income generation.

The district will need to mark the 100 anniversary, in a way that is commensurate with the airfield's national and regional role in the defence of London and more widely to acknowledge the sacrifice of the many nations who operated and fought and served from the base through two world wars and times of emergency and tension.

The district tourism calendar would benefit from a an anchor event towards the end of season that would give it a national profile, and towards which attractions/high streets and other local economic assets across the district could be stimulate to run complementary festival type events.

The link to traffic from the districts major visitor feeder i.e. London needs to be strengthened and expanded.

**London and Essex Air show Proposal**

The process of negotiation of relocating the Southend Air Show to North Weald highlighted a major opportunity to deliver a nationally recognised event, and enabled contact with a range of organisations which could secure, enable and deliver such a project. News of this opportunity was met with widespread enthusiasm from a variety of quarters from internal EFDC and 'Visit Essex', to other external attractions and partners who were very anxious to participate, if and when, this could be delivered. The fact that next year was so significant in being the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary further sharpened interest. It was felt by industry that this would greatly expand interest from foreign air forces that had served from the base to return to celebrate and mark their connection and the service and sacrifice of their personnel. The ability to secure this international interest and the connection with a national presence from RAF etc would lift the event onto a new level, with a very wide range of participants, including aircraft that used the site through the 100 years since establishment. This would greatly enhance the commercial impact and offer to paying customers and bring significant opportunities to generate substantial income as well as adequately and appropriately mark the service of personnel. The fact that the asset is council owned, that council staff have considerable experience of ground support for events and the airfield's history of operating events in past, are major capacity benefits, enabling and supporting rapid progress

**This initial proposal is as follows**

Following discussion with public and potential private sector partners the following proposal has been worked up but this requires more detailed feasibility and costings. That council announce their intention to host a 100 year celebration of the airfields role that culminates in a 2/3 day international show. This would stimulate and be supported by ancillary events across the district both public and private. Major national attractions (Red Arrows etc), local flying assets (already based at North Weald) and international air forces with connections to the airfield or conflicts with an airfield connection (Norwegian) would provide displays and ground attractions over 2/3 days. This would aim to provide 20 display routines, with headline aircraft flying both days plus variation in the supporting flying to encourage multiple visits. On the ground, displays would supplement the air offer, together with themed evening entertainment events hosted within airfield assets. A national private

sector sponsor would be secured, and London partners GLA etc brought on board, together with specialist aviation and national media. A target of 30,000 ticket sales has initially been set, costed at a very conservative £20 per day and delivered via a national ticket agency, advance sales only. The figure for potential sales has been set at a very low level based on industry estimates of what much smaller shows currently generate and as a worst case scenario. As sales are in advance any issues with weather etc. impacting on ability to fly will not impact on income. An additional VIP sector would be established, and sold at a premium. A single contract would be let for all onsite catering for VIP and executive dining areas, and a marketing and publicity budget established with a main media sponsor. Groundside air-related activities would in the main be delivered by specialist council staff with support of volunteers, and military personnel. Approaches will be made to state broadcasters to feature/mark the event.

Special material, posters etc. would be produced and sold where copy write is held. Showcase marquees for local attractions, business etc. would operate as an Epping Forest expo, and would be charged, with dispensations for voluntary/charity bodies.

### **Delivery**

The date, concept and intention must be agreed as soon as possible to enable the greatest range of displays to be booked and the strongest offer to customers to be achieved. Typically, flying appearances are secured during September and as approaches are made, this also makes public the dates and size / significance / locations of the aviation show calendar for the following year. To ensure the best possible show for North Weald's Centenary, the organisers must be in a position to announce the show and negotiate participants during this key window. This will need an initial £10k for consultancy to enable a properly costed, independent view to be established to support a council decision in time for the display participants to be secured.

In addition an initial view needs to be taken on how the show is to be delivered. Either directly by the council, using private sector experts and contractors, or seeking a private sector partner to fund and deliver the show. Initial costings indicate even at lowest projected sales (30,000 tickets) the potential for surplus is very significant, in the region of £132,500. If more realistic estimates of demand are used, a surplus of approximately £700,000 based on current assumptions and sales of 60,000 tickets could be achieved. It is envisaged that advance sales will enable the vast bulk of costs to be covered upfront. This does not include income from sponsorship, grants, advertising or sales. There needs to be a view taken on the risk v reward equation in this proposal

It may be appropriate to establish a Community Interest Company to deliver the programme, shareholding to be determined, which would enable interest within and outside the airfield to be represented, to help shape the programme, and take on governance arrangements. This could also be better placed to secure outside funding unavailable to a statutory body.

If the council is the sole shareholder, all income surplus will be retained to enable further strengthening of the airfield viability going forward, or donations to local charity groups, or for any other purpose the council decides. If this is to be provided by a private sector body, and interest has already been shown, it is unlikely that income beyond a fee for the airfield and use of council staff on the days require could be secured, but additional income might be subject to negotiation, but something appropriate by way of celebration may be secured.

### **Conclusion**

The Centenary is a once in a lifetime opportunity to achieve a range of aims the council has set itself for the airfield and the district.

Papers attached deal with costings and more technical aspects of the proposal that have been assembled so far without costs. These will need to be scrutinised and further investigated to show due diligence.

However a clear statement of intent is required at this stage to enable a programme to be secured and further investigations to be undertaken, with partners already in the conversation and those who may well wish to become involved. This announcement will give the project traction and enable the benefits to the airfield and district to be further realised.

## **North Weald 100 (working title)**

### **The aims**

To create a show which marks a celebration of 100 years of the airfield and its community including its local social history, the people who organised, flew and maintained the aircraft based on the field and the manufactures and suppliers and nationalities whose aircraft, services and products kept the airfield in operation.

To create a centenary show of such a standard that it evokes the standing of the previous "Fighter Meets" and is the first of a new regular "destination" calendar event for the general public and aviation enthusiast alike.

To create a centenary show with involvement from other nations, making it truly an international event.

To create a long weekend "festival" event encompassing the wider tourism offer in the district and particularly directly marrying the airfield's existing activities concerning flying and motorsports with the adjacent heritage railway and other tourism attractions beyond, catering for families and enthusiasts alike.

To create a show with something for everyone and one which people will put firmly on their "mustn't miss" list every year.

To capitalise on the current lack of a major air show within reach of Londoners or major festival event of the kind planned within Essex - and target it accordingly.

To involve as many local businesses as possible in the supply of products and services, and to spread the positive benefits of the show as widely as possible across the district.

To boost the economy with an influx of visitors including overnight stayers.

In the longer term, to establish the airfield and district as a centre for visitors and related business and encourage smaller or similar and related events to take place capitalising on the kudos and reputation of the larger event.

### **The opportunities**

To create an offering unique in Europe by bringing together an outstanding line-up of aviation, motorsport and railway exhibits and activities under one umbrella event.

To attract the involvement of key organisations and individuals to add value and prestige to the event.

To gain media coverage and put the district on the map.

To create one of Essex's main tourist attractions.

To deliver a first class event in terms of value for money and customer feed-back.

To generate significant income from the airfield and grow this year on year.

### **The show**

The target month is September. This month has been chosen for three reasons: it marks the centenary (the airfield was constructed during August and September and first flew operationally at the end of September), typically there is less competition from air show activity at this time of the year and it gives a full year for making show arrangements. It is envisaged that the majority of the ticket sales will take place well in advance

of the show allowing demand to be judged and additional tranches of tickets to be released up to a predetermined maximum.

At its core is the air show with flying displays. These would take place on Saturday and Sunday and comprise of around sixty to ninety minutes flying time each. Content is dependant on securing participants but a working idea is to have headliners (Red Arrows, Battle of Britain Flight etc) on both days but a different support line-up Saturday and Sunday. This might be modern fighter displays from countries representing the nationalities (pilots and squadrons) who have fought from the airfield one day, and classic aircraft types that have operated from the airfield (including those currently based there) on the other day. This will insure maximum attendance with enthusiasts and stayers booking both days. Many will also attend both days who wish to experience the full “planes, trains and automobiles” experience.

With two to three hours flying per event day, the attendees will have lots to see and do outside of flying time with static displays, ground exhibitions, the motorsport activities and displays and the railway programme with classic buses and trains linking venues. Ground events will include a major exhibition marking the history of the airfield and it is envisaged that this will be undertaken by Epping Forest District Museum in conjunction with the Airfield Museum. There will also be an Epping “Forest Market-Place” for the promotion of local products and services in conjunction with the Chamber of Commerce. Souvenir publications and other merchandise will be available at the exhibitions as an additional revenue stream.

Catering concessions, programme and site advertising, pitch hire and other associated income streams will sit alongside ticket sales and sponsorship packages will be developed alongside VIP packages at various levels.

Beyond the two days of the show there will be additional events taking place on the Friday, Saturday and Sunday evenings. Initial ideas to be considered include open-air concerts and film screenings, events in hangers, VIP and sponsors parties, Balloon Ascents and Nightglows, themed events on heritage railway, aviation/rail/motor themed auction, aviation societies and squadron reunions, and associated and themed events in local venues, pubs, hotels etc.

### Time scale

July : Agreement to initial £10k Council investment to scope the show, meet with potential partners and approach sponsors, develop branding and investigate options for related and additional events.

August: Council agree show. Finalise the outline and programme for the show. Agree branding and prepare media launch in conjunction with any confirmed partners and sponsors. Agree ticket sales partner.. Agree ticket and VIP packages and prices.

September: Negotiate and secure flying and related ground/static displays for show (and thus agree show date). Negotiate and agree majority of content for show – attractions/Railway activities/motorsport activities etc (headlines for marketing only – actual content a year to develop).

Sept/October: Launch the show via media with initial ticket sales. Marketing push for ticket sales.

October-December: Opportunity to monitor sales and release additional tickets and gauge audience numbers for planning delivery (or decide to scale down show to trim costs to meet targets in very unlikely event of sales performing below expectations)

Sept 15 – Sept 16: Create/plan show content/exhibition/literature etc etc.

Week preceding show: Airfield set-up and aircraft arrivals

Week after show: Show get-out and airfield clean-up, aircraft departures

**Costings** (for air show and related ground show elements):

A conservative forecast based on 15,000 advance tickets sold per day for a two day event. The figures are rough estimates based on lowest ticket price only and contractor quoting should bring the outgoings down\*.

30,000 tickets @ £20 sold = £600,000  
Catering & Concessions = £20,000  
Total Income: £620,000.

Outgoings for two days:

Initial Flying Budget (actual aircraft)	£150,000
Flying Administration (Flying Director, Flying control committee, ATC, tower radios, marshallers, fuelers, pilots reception, CAA licences, etc)	£80,000
High Quality distributed PA Systems & international commentary team	£18,000
Additional Toilets & Generators	£38,000
Medical	£12,000
Advertising	£40,000
Fire Cover	£15,000
Stewards/car parking	£15,000
Utility crew	£5,000
Hotels 300 room nights @£65 per night	£19,500
Ground/event administrator & office services	£55,000
Miscellaneous/insurance, etc	£40,000
Total income	£620,000
Total outgoings	£487,500
Surplus	£132,500.

Ticketing targets set low at 15,000 a day. Experts are confident that the show would exceed that considerably once the project got under way and the additional ticket money would be largely additional income as most of the outgoings are the same for 15 or 25 thousand people a day.

Costs do not include additional costs of staging airfield history exhibition or local products/services market place and associated marquee hires etc.

VIP packages, festival passes and weekend tickets etc will bring additional entry revenue. There will be a specially discounted entry for Epping Forest residents.

\*Airfield manager has already found very competitive quotes for marshalling, fire cover, fuelers, car parking & stewards and medical cover.