

Ulster Aviation Heritage Centre

Ernie Cromie

The Ulster Aviation Heritage Centre is located on Langford Lodge airfield, County Antrim, one of 25 sites in Northern Ireland that were developed during the Second World War as airfields for military use. The Centre's heritage collection is accommodated in three buildings: the former Hangar 6 which was a machine shop and chemical laboratory during the war, the former parachutes and fabrics building and the airfield control tower, which is of unique architectural design and construction.

At present, the collection includes ten historic aircraft (Wildcat, Sea Hawk, Vampire, Cessna 172, Shorts SD-330, Buccaneer, Aerocomposites Sea Hawker, Shorts Tucano and two hang gliders), three aviation-related vehicles (refueller, crash recovery crane and aircraft tow truck), several aircraft engines, numerous artifacts such as propellers and radios and an extensive archive of documentary and photographic information relating to the aviation history of Northern Ireland, civil and military.

The Centre is the only museum in Northern Ireland exclusively dedicated to aviation. It is an initiative of the Ulster Aviation Society, a voluntary association of aviation enthusiasts, which is accepted by the Inland Revenue as a charity. The Centre is financed largely through the efforts of its members, with occasional assistance from local businesses and aviation organisations, on the basis of voluntary contributions. It is neither grant-aided nor financially supported by Government, Local Government, Trust or quasi-state sources such as the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Staffed by members of the Society, the Centre is open to the public between 1.00pm and 6.00pm on most Saturdays from February through to November and at other times by prior arrangement (telephone 028 9267 7030; change 028 to 048 from RoI). There is no admission charge but voluntary donations are welcome. During the six years it has been open to the public, it has attracted a wide range of visitors of all ages, including former members and employees of the armed forces of the UK, Commonwealth and Allies, not least the USA: men and women from that country who served here in World War 2 are especially welcome. Group visits from schools, local historical societies and charitable organisations are becoming increasingly popular. There is a small shop selling books, aviation-related merchandise and tea, coffee and light refreshments. There are toilet facilities but no special provisions for disabled persons as yet. Further information is available at www.ulsteraviationsociety.co.uk

For the attention of former Langford Lodgers

We are seeking information from anyone who served at Langford Lodge Air Depot (3rd Base Air Depot, 8th Air Force Service Command) during World War 2, whether with the Lockheed Overseas Corporation, the US Civil Service or the USAAF. When were you at the Depot and what were your particular functions? Do you have any photos or documentary material that you would be prepared to lend for copying in the sure knowledge that the material would be returned if required? Please do not allow these specific questions to limit the scope of your response. All reflections, on whatever aspect of your time here, will be very welcome. US personnel, military and civilian, who were here in WW2 are fondly remembered by local people with whom they came in contact. Please address your comments to Ernie Cromie, 27 Woodview Crescent, Lisburn, Co Antrim, Northern Ireland, BT28 1 LF (Tel: 028 9267 7030)(e-mail: ernie@airni.freeseerve.co.uk).

