

FARNBOROUGH AIR SCIENCES TRUST GAINS NATIONAL MUSEUM STATUS

Now in its tenth year, the FAST Museum at Trenchard House on Farnborough Road has been awarded the highest level of national recognition by the Arts Council as a fully accredited museum. This follows three years of preparation to meet the very high standards demanded under the national museums and galleries accreditation scheme, which is now administered by The Arts Council. Supported in its application by the Science Museum, Rushmoor Borough Council and Hampshire County Council, the FAST Trustees have made significant improvements in recent years at the museum, while at the same time carrying out major projects, including a new artefact storage building and the highly popular Cody Statue which is now in full public view on Farnborough Road. The accreditation inspectors looked in great detail at how the museum is managed, its viability, achievements in recording, archiving and making available data held in its collection, its procedures for keeping, lending and exhibiting reports, historic images and artefacts, its educational programme and at its future plans. Unusually for an all-volunteer organisation operating on such a scale the accreditation was achieved at the first attempt, rather than in stages, which is more often the case.

Chairman of the FAST Trustees, Richard Gardner, said, "We are very proud of this new award which will certainly help future development. It reflects the enormous effort that everyone has put in, week in and week out, to ensure Farnborough's unique aviation heritage is safeguarded for the future. It couldn't have been done without the enthusiastic encouragement of Rushmoor Borough Council along the way, as well as many friends, companies and organisations in the local community, but there are now well over 800 members of the Association nationwide, with the core of around 50 volunteers who keep the museum running, acting as guides, working in the shop and restoring and maintaining the exhibits and aircraft. The educational side of what we do is growing all the time, but we need more people to come and join in if this is to be sustained. I'm confident that many will want to join in the fun, which is also now fulfilling a national requirement to improve and encourage youngsters to get involved in engineering and aerospace."

Local MP Sir Gerald Howarth commented, "Many congratulations to the team at FAST on another hugely successful year. The tribute last May to the 500 test pilots who died in pursuit of aeronautical advance was a unique reminder of the debt we owe to those who have enhanced flight safety. However, the unveiling in August of the magnificent statue of Cody was a major landmark in the FAST story. To raise some £100,000 in the current economic climate was a huge achievement and the statue itself a great contribution to Farnborough's aviation heritage. I wish FAST continuing success in the coming year."

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Picture taken at the FAST Museum shows from left to rt: Brian Luff, Museum Manager, Richard Gardner MRAeS FAST Chairman, Dr Graham Rood FRAeS FAST Secretary.