

APSS .scot

Trustees Annual Report 2023

Our Charity's Purpose:

- The advancement of the arts heritage, culture or science by promoting the preservation of aircraft and aeronautical heritage.
- To advance education relating to aircraft and aeronautical artefacts of historical, technical and other related interests.
- To provide recreational facilities and organise recreational activities with the object of improving the conditions of life for the persons for whom the facilities and activities are primarily intended.

Starting off in December 2022 members of the APSS committee visited Leonardo at Crewe Toll whom we have partnered with to meet Scott McNeill for a day-long planning seminar



discussing the future direction of the APSS. Using his skills in planning as one of the chief engineers at Leonardo, Scott helped the committee members to focus on the challenges we face in the immediate and long-term future. This exercise enabled us to focus our attention away from the day-to-day business in our hangar.

It also helped strengthen the ties between APSS and one of the largest aviation equipment manufacturers in Europe. We are indebted to Scott and his boss Iain for their support and interest in our projects.

Shortly after our visit to Leonardo, we had a visit from Scott and six of his Leonardo colleagues in January who showed a particular interest in what we are up to here at Congalton. It was good to welcome them here and tell them all about the history and our ambitions for the future. Some of the Leonardo visitors will be retiring soon and have expressed an interest in joining the APSS as they recognised the benefits of staying engaged.





Between Christmas and New Year following a visit from a BBC news team. We were featured not only on BBC breakfast news but also on the main 6 o'clock news and a later evening news. This was fantastic exposure for the APSS on the Strutter project. This and other recent news reports are a direct result of the excellent five-page article in the

Sunday Times written by our journalist friend and advocate, Jean West. All this publicity helps illustrate our mission to inform, educate and inspire people young and old in our area.

In March we had the media studio up and running with the podcast equipment installed and started some practice interviews. The plan is to produce interesting historical and educational content related to the subjects we cover. Podcasts have become a popular media covering all interests. We have a lot to say and many stories to tell and this is a new way of doing it.



The first one has been published on YouTube while we arrange for a dedicated podcast platform. It can be listened to here. <https://youtu.be/Hcj401Pyz6Q>



Some of the members set to dismantling the Shackleton propeller that we had in the hangar. We had exhausted the possibilities of keeping it in one piece and giving it to another organisation. Following its separation into individual blades, one of our members, Alan Campbell arranged for a blade to be given to the Old Aberlady Inn where it has been put on display as a memorial to the 11 crew members who lost their lives in June 1952, when the aircraft crashed off Berwick-upon-Tweed.



In April, we had a major event, we moved Sophie the Strutter from our hanger to the hanger in RAF Kirknewton to begin reassembly and preparation for the first flight. Our deepest thanks, go to R Flynn & Sons Haulage for transporting her, Scott Coppola Electrical for paying the diesel fuel bill and to our friend Keith Griggs for arranging it all. You can see

it here. <https://youtu.be/-Jc07QDAjSc?si=mo3SBuJ3l6G6yzm>



More television news publicity for us this time from STV and Laura Alderman who had previously visited us in January. They came back to finish the filming on the day of our move and broadcast a lovely news article a few days later.

Once our aircraft was installed in the hangar, she had to have the wings fitted and rigged. A timelapse of the two-day task can be seen here.

https://youtu.be/E_6yLwkvpl?si=0dZyKnEhmw-4DtvH

In April, we arranged a visit to Edinburgh Airport control tower through the fire station Watch Manager Martin Broom. Pat Broomfield, one of the Air Traffic Control Officers, very kindly showed us round air traffic on the ground floor before taking us up in the lift to meet the two the girls who oversaw approach, departures and ground traffic on the airfield. We all enjoyed the visit with spectacular views. We were very envious of their office but not necessarily the level of responsibility they have controlling these aircraft. These are the type of activities we like to organise and one of the benefits of being a member.

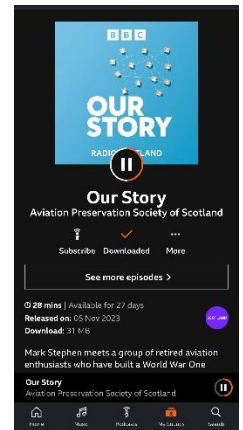


In August, we had some very important visitors. Richard Bell Davies, the grandson of the original pilot, Richard Bell Davies V.C., accompanied by his wife Pru, dropped in to see the finished aircraft. Richard brought with him some incredible memorabilia. This included his grandfather's pilot's licence and logbooks, along with a picture album containing over 200 pictures

taken during the First World War by his grandfather. He very kindly loaned us these items so that we may show them to interested visitors. This was an incredibly kind gesture allowing us custody of these very important and unique artefacts. We do not take this responsibility lightly. Anyone interested in seeing them can make an appointment. This was a major boost to the story we want to share. It is a tangible link to the past.



At the end of August, we rolled Sophie out of the hangar for her first engine start with her wings on. Tim Rayner, the LAA inspector and test pilot had mastered the starting procedure and even after six months since the last run she started within three seconds. We were delighted. On the same day we were joined by Mark Stephen who has a Radio Scotland program called Our Story. Mark interviewed everyone at the airfield and then recorded the engine start. We then moved to the Congalton hangar so that Mark could interview other members of APSS. The program aired on Radio Scotland in November and the producer, along with Mark, told us it was possibly the best programme they had ever done. This being another perfect example of our mission to share the history and inspire. Those interested can find it here.



<https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/m001snbr>

We also have a new website. With the amount of attention on us increasing as we approach the first flight, I felt it was extremely important for us to have a website that encompassed everything that APSS does. It's just like an online brochure and it has links to our other social media sites along with various videos. We were extremely lucky in being able to capture the online domain called **www.apss.scot**



As part of our educational mission, at the end of October following a visit from a group of students from Edinburgh College a couple of weeks earlier, Gerard, Lucy and Scott joined them at the college for the next phase of their design sprint. This is a project they are taking part in to help design a visitor friendly display for the APSS radio and radar section. I joined them for the afternoon and was very impressed with their enthusiasm and creativity. The lecturers are also delighted to have the opportunity to work with us on a real and not fictional project.

And continuing our STEM Ambassador work with schools, North Berwick High School invited us to a careers event in September. James, Scott, Lucy and Gerard set up a table with everything from brochures to tiny working radars, keyrings, stickers and model aircraft. We were right next door to Archerfield and Leonardo and yet our table was very busy. These career events are a wonderful opportunity to attract parents and



teachers as well as the youngsters looking for a roadmap to future careers. We've now done 6 school events ranging from activity days to talks about careers and are booked well into next year. Working with schools is both good fun and highly satisfying. Seeing young people responding so positively to our presence, serves to confirm that we are right to ramp up our commitment to work with schools. What we have to offer is unique in East Lothian. Once we make our workshop fit for

purpose, we will offer placements and further down the line, apprenticeships. We have already taken on 5 trainees for a project and had 1 school placement. 2 of our trainees went on to employment and our placement has applied for an apprenticeship at Leonardo. Word is that he has a very good chance thanks to what he had said about working with the APSS. We have a wonderful opportunity to make a difference to our community and our local schools.



Another visit from the Bell Davies family took place in November. This time Hamish Macdonald OBE and his wife Inky, Richard Bell Davies' granddaughter, joined us at the hangar in Kirknewton to see Sophie the Strutter starting up. They were overjoyed to witness this and Inky was able to connect on video to her mother Joan (96) RBD's daughter in law so she could see

Sophie running and see into her cockpit. The tangible link continues. A video was made of the event, you can see it here. <https://youtu.be/A2pbXZN2Np4?si=kafaAglvAvumvQki>



Our Radio & Radar Section has been busy too. With the run-down of the group's involvement wiring the Strutter's electrical system it was possible to start designing a new layout of the exhibits. The floor area available was decided and painted. A few attempts have been made at designing a layout which would be good from a visitor's perspective. Much of the floor space will be dedicated to the

exhibits and the remainder to a workshop area. It is envisaged that there will be three main exhibit themes, the story of radar, avionics and radio. The radar story is in two sections. The first being the story of the development of radar in the UK. The second part features the development by Ferranti of their groundbreaking airborne radar sets. The avionics section gives examples of avionic equipment designed and built by Ferranti, starting off with the manufacture of the Gyro Gun Sight. The Edinburgh home of Ferranti at Crewe Toll was

created to build the Gun Sights. The radio section contains a variety of radio sets dating from crystal sets through examples used in aircraft. We plan to have a system for live reporting of aircraft in the area and maybe a weather station. APSS is very committed to promoting STEM related projects. We are working closely with the STEM team at Leonardo in Edinburgh. Working closely with them and with staff and students from Edinburgh College, we are developing designs for the best possible display for visiting groups. An extremely busy year ahead to get this exhibition designed, built and made operational for visitors.





And finally, in October, we had a major milestone where the Chairman Mike Harper witnessed LAA Inspector Tim Rayner presenting Strutter team leader Evan Pole with the final paperwork and logbooks for the air frame and engine. The paperwork was then carefully packaged up and sent to

the LAA with a lovely picture of Sophie inside the box along with it. The paperwork has been processed and another LAA inspector, Ben Syson, visited to finalise the process. There are now only a few small adjustments to be made before Sophie can fly for the first time.



Sophie's first flight will be the most important milestone in the history of our charity and our work continues with another aircraft. The next project is underway, a Sopwith Pup which came out of the Sopwith stable after the Strutter and was more famous. Our mission to Inspire and Educate while giving retirees the opportunity for recreation and a purpose continues as we face our biggest challenge to date. We have been fortunate in that our rent has been paid for the last three years by a very kind anonymous donor. Someone who values our work and was determined to support us and allow us to continue. Now our



landlord has given us notice as he wants to sell the building we occupy. To save the APSS and allow us to continue in our good work we need to raise £100,000 to buy our home. We know that under the current climate this will be difficult, but we are working hard to drum up financial support internally from the members and externally from anyone who values our mission.

Signed on behalf of the trustees.

Lindsay Lees, Secretary
 Alan Manning, Membership Secretary
 Evan Pole, Strutter Team Leader

Mike Harper, Chairman

..... 19.12.2023

