

# The Avro Heritage Group



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**T**HE ORIGINS OF the Group could be said to date back to July 1963 when A.V. Roe & Company Limited was absorbed into Hawker Siddeley Aviation. The managing director at that time told Harry Holmes (current chairman of the Heritage Group) that the Avro image must be forgotten, as the company was entering into a new era. Anything connected with Avro must be disposed of — from headed notepaper to models with the then fictitious registration G-AVRO. Luckily many of these items were saved and spirited away in the hope that some day they may be displayed for the enjoyment of enthusiasts and historians.

The Public Relations storeroom became home for many of these items as company policy on historical matters began to change. After negotiations, suitable accommodation at Woodford was made available as a Heritage Centre — in a building that had once housed the Personnel Department. In 1995, British Aerospace gave permission for it to be used for the purpose of preserving and recording not only Avro heritage, but also the local products that followed.

Since its establishment, the Centre has gone from strength to strength — a small group of dedicated retired employees and volunteers man the premises two days a week. Besides the extensive archive in which documents and photographs are preserved, there are display rooms dedicated to famous types like the Avro 504, Anson, Lancaster and Vulcan, while a large hall covers other designs. This excellent archive, built up over many years, compensates for the loss of most of the Avro historical records and early photographs in a large fire at the Chadderton headquarters in October 1959. Besides the material saved, contributions have been received from retired workers, ex-RAF personnel and the

general public. Talks on the history of Avro are regularly given to local organisations and have resulted in some excellent gifts, including a fine Avro 504 propeller.

Also at Woodford under the Avro Heritage Group banner are two other teams dedicated to preservation. The first is the Anson Team, named after the restoration to flying condition of Avro XIX G-AHKK, which is now on loan to the Shuttleworth Collection. The team has recently been involved in the building of Avro Type F and Type G replicas (see *News*, November 2005, *Aeroplane*) and have now been tasked with the construction of a Roe I triplane replica to commemorate the early flights of Alliott Verdon Roe from Lea Marshes in 1909. This project, under co-ordinator Mike Taylor, is being sponsored by the Verdon-Roe family and the aircraft will eventually be displayed at the Lea Valley Experience in East London.

The second heritage team is the Vulcan XM603 Club, formed for the preservation of that aircraft at Woodford. This club is also involved in assisting other organisations with similar projects including the well-known "Vulcan to the Sky" programme. To assist the latter the team has recently loaned the nose and cockpit section of the Club's other Vulcan, XM602, to be used as a training aid at Bruntingthorpe.

Besides the many visitors to the Woodford Heritage Centre to see the Vulcan, the building also plays host to RAF and MoD personnel at the site for their involvement in the Nimrod MRA.4 programme. BAE Systems supports its proud heritage, gathered from many famous names in British industry, and the Avro team is itself proud to be involved in preserving this company's outstanding contribution to aviation history in **A** this country.

## Avro Heritage Group

### Contact:

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### Membership:

Membership stands at 27, three of whom were previously part of the former Macclesfield Aviation Society. The remaining 24 volunteers are all former employees of the company. Seven of the volunteers work in the Heritage Centre; ten are assigned to the Anson Team and the other ten make up the Vulcan XM603 Club. The Anson Team is currently building Type F and Type G replica aircraft. Although new members are not being sought at the moment, enthusiasts are welcome to visit

### The Heritage Centre:

The Centre is open between 1000hr and 1600hr on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Visits by individuals or small groups may be arranged by contacting Martin Garland, the Avro Heritage Centre Manager. For security reasons, at least two weeks' notice must be given. Cameras are not permitted on site

## Society aims

To record, preserve and perpetuate the heritage of the Avro company



ABOVE Avro Heritage Group chairman Harry Holmes (left) with Centre manager Martin Garland in the large display hall at Woodford.