



PRESS RELEASE – 27th September 2010

Airport Open Day a runaway success!



Airport bosses are celebrating after over 2000 people flocked to the first charity open day at Gloucestershire Airport on Sunday, raising over £2500 for Help for Heroes in the process. Despite the chilly breeze, over three hundred passengers took to the air in helicopter rides, trial flying lessons, aerobatic trips and flights with Manx2.com, who were offering scenic flights over the Severn Bridges and Cotswolds in their 19-seater Dornier, which is normally used on the Isle of Man scheduled service.

Fire trucks, police dogs, Air Traffic Control tours, bouncy castles and face painting also kept the crowds entertained alongside the range of aircraft on display, ranging from microlights to executive jets.

The highlight of the afternoon was a flypast by the Avro Vulcan bomber, which roared overhead just after 3pm. Airport head of operations Darren Lewington said: - “The Vulcan was the icing on the cake of a great family day out. One of our homebased companies had been doing some air-to-air photography with the iconic Cold War bomber and, after some string pulling and calling in of a few favours, they were able to arrange a special detour over Staverton.”

Another very special guest was former bomber pilot, Squadron Leader Ron Waite. The 98-year old last visited Staverton in 1943 when he delivered a four-engined Halifax bomber to be used for engineering training. Darren Lewington said: - “We were honoured that Ron could join us. He’s very much a hero of his generation and it was our pleasure to invite him back after all these years.

Not surprisingly, things had changed since his last visit! Ron recalled just a few huts and a barrage balloon on top of Chosen Hill when he landed in 1943. He was surprised at how things had developed and how many aeroplanes were on display, including a vintage bi-plane very similar the one he did his basic training on, which rekindled happy memories for him.”

Airport staff presented Ron with a diecast model Halifax to a round of warm applause from the gathered crowd.

Business development manager, Kim Davenport has asked for feedback from visitors. She said: - “We’d love to hear if everyone enjoyed themselves as much as we did. We’re looking into future events and we’d like to know what the local community would like to see from their local airport.”

You can use the contact page on the airport’s website or email your comments to enquiries@gloucestershireairport.co.uk