

The Paddock Ford Gymkana held on the start / finishing straight on the Brooklands Circuit, 1939

The project aims to relocate, restore and reinterpret the museum's Grade II-listed Wellington Hangar as The Brooklands Aircraft Factory, with a new annexe to house more of the museum's outstanding collection of historic aircraft, and restore the section of original race track on which the Hangar currently stands. Included in the project, which aims to inspire current and future generations to embrace science, technology and engineering, will be enhanced learning opportunities, a training scheme in historic aircraft restoration and a raft of new activities on the race track.

The initial funding allocated by HLF for this project is £286,500, to which the museum will add further cash and volunteer input to allow development work to a total value of almost £410,000 to be undertaken, helping Brooklands Museum progress its plans to apply for the remainder of the full grant in 2015.

The Brooklands Race Track was opened in 1907 as the world's first purpose-built motor-racing circuit, and, within a year, early experiments in aviation were taking place on the site as well. From these beginnings, Brooklands rapidly evolved into an outstanding centre for the development and operation of racing cars, motorcycles and aircraft. Although motor racing ceased at Brooklands on the outbreak of the Second World War, the aviation factories of Vickers-Armstrongs and Hawker were greatly expanded, with Vickers erecting a number of buildings on the track, of which the Museum's Wellington Hangar was one. Built in 1940 on top of the Finishing Straight of the Race Track, it was used for the assembly of Wellington bombers and later for a variety of other industrial purposes. It now houses the Museum's famous Wellington "R" for "Robert" recovered from Loch Ness in 1985 and restored at Brooklands, and numerous other

aircraft.

Under the HLF-funded project, the Hangar will be completely restored on a new site adjacent to its current one, allowing the finishing straight of the Race Track to be brought back into use for both motoring and aviation activities. Fittingly, in view of its original purpose, the Hangar itself will be presented as an aircraft factory, its displays showing how aircraft from the earliest pioneers to Concorde were designed, built and developed at Brooklands over an 80-year period. The "Factory" will be an interactive learning centre, in which visitors will be able to immerse themselves in the atmosphere of an aircraft manufacturing plant and try for themselves many of the crafts and skills used by thousands of workers in Brooklands' manufacturing heyday.

In a new adjoining "Flight Shed", the Museum's active aircraft will be kept ready to roll out onto the refurbished Race Track for static and taxying demonstrations, while in new workshops underneath that building Museum volunteers will learn and practice aircraft restoration skills.

Brooklands Museum Director Allan Winn, says: "This most welcome HLF funding will help us restore a famous historic building and safeguard internationally important aircraft, to give our visitors the only place in the country where they can see how aircraft were (and are) designed and built. It will also allow us to bring a significant part of the world's first motor-racing circuit back to life – and to use all those elements to inspire youngsters, especially, to engage with the nationally-vital subjects of science, technology and engineering."

Stuart McLeod, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund South East, said: "Brooklands is a unique place which is celebrated as a test bed of invention and daring for both motor racing and aviation development. We're delighted to be giving initial support to Brooklands Museum's exciting proposals to conserve key features of the site and warmly welcome their ambitions to make a real step change in how they engage with audiences in the future. We look forward to working with them over the coming months as they develop their ideas further."

Notes to editors

A first-round pass means the project meets HLF criteria for funding and HLF believes the project has potential to deliver high-quality benefits and value for Lottery money. The application was in competition with other supportable projects, so a first-round pass is an endorsement of outline proposals. Having been awarded a first-round pass, the project now has up to two years to submit fully developed proposals to compete for a firm award.

Brooklands Museum is operated by an independent charitable trust, and occupies a 32-acre site at the northern end of the 1907 Brooklands Race Track in Weybridge, Surrey. Opened in 1991, it attracts over 150,000 visitors a year including large numbers of school children on organised educational visits. The Museum presents the history of motor racing from the earliest days right up to modern Formula 1, and also the history of aircraft manufacture of aircraft manufacture and development in Surrey over more than a hundred years. Many of its displays are housed in historic motoring and aviation buildings (including the 1907 motor racing Clubhouse) adjoining the Members' Banking, the steepest part of the historic circuit. The displays include exceptional racing cars such as the 1933 Napier-Railton (the ultimate lap-record holder) and aircraft including Concorde.

Further information

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