Air-Britain Annual Report 2025/26

Report by the Board of Trustees

In reviewing the past year, we need to mark the passing of two people who made great contributions to Air-Britain over the years.

Terry Smith, who died in April, first joined Air-Britain in 1962 and served as a Director between 1974 and 2014. He organised the first trip for Air-Britain Travel in the 1970s before handing it on to others so he could concentrate on other Air-Britain roles. Terry played a major role on the Publishing Committee and was involved in compiling and editing a number of enthusiast publications, including our production listings on Airbus, Turboprop Airliners and was still working on the other Jetliner types until recently. He was the lead compiler on our *Airline Fleets Quick Reference* series and also helped bring *Military Transports QR* into our range of QR publications.

Rod Simpson, who died in May, joined Air-Britain in 1958; he served as a Director and Trustee between 1968 and 1974 and again from 1996 to 2021, including a period as chair of the Board. Rod was editor of our house magazine *Air-Britain Digest*, latterly *Aviation World* from 1997 to 2019 and a regular contributor of articles to the magazine until recent times. Rod specialised in writing about general aviation topics and authored a number of books in this area, most recently our own *General Aviation Handbook* detailing the many types on the scene in this century. Rod was also the recipient of a number of Air-Britain awards.

We have also lost a number of other members, as age catches up with those enthusiasts from the earlier years of Air-Britain, a reflection of our membership demographic.

You will note from the accounts that we made a small profit in 2025-26. Substantially better than the previous year, this would have been even better, except that our investment account, along with the general stock-market, took a hit at the end of March, due to the Iran conflict. The value of this has now recovered and continues to grow.

A major development at the start of 2026 was the launch of a new style digital version of *Air-Britain News*, as well as expanding the digital product to *Aviation World*. More recently we have introduced new software, to send personalised copies of the digital magazines direct to subscribers. The improved version now allows members to store the magazines on their own computers and they are fully searchable.

We also changed printers for the hard copy magazines, which has enabled us to return to our desired schedule of posting magazines towards the end of the issue month for *Air-Britain News*. New postal suppliers have also removed much of the hassle that we were encountering dealing direct with Royal Mail, as well as smoothing deliveries to the EU. However ever-changing regulations have hindered our efforts to ship books and second-hand items to the EU and we are still, currently, looking for a solution. Costs to send items outside of the UK also continue to rise.

We published a full range of annuals this year, with the *European Registers Handbook* to follow early in 2027. We added another type to our series of softback books on British types, with the *Handley Page Hermes*. We hope to have the next in the series, covering the *Handley Page Herald* available at the AGM, with the *AW Argosy* next in line. Another book scheduled for the AGM is our first photo book, covering British DC-3s. If this is successful, then we plan further books on a variety of subjects.

We have three heavyweight books well along in the production process, as well as a number of other titles on our forthcoming list.

We also have a second-hand sales operation, with extensive lists of both *Air-Britain* and other publisher's books and magazines. We are grateful to Malcolm Fillmore for this and for also the donations that come from members.

Of course, these books and our magazines, as well as other activities, rely heavily on a range of people to fill the roles involved across Air-Britain. As noted at the start of this report, we have lost people who contributed much and are looking for members who can step up and help in a number of positions. As well as editorial help on *Aviation World*, as highlighted in the latest issues of our magazines, Steve Mitchell has indicated he will be stepping down from his numerous roles when his current term as a Trustee comes to a close, in October 2028. But we don't want to wait until then, so if you feel you can help in areas of finance, website oversight or the digital archive, please do let us know. We are grateful to all of those who are involved in the running of Air-Britain, many of whom do this is their spare time. Please remember this when things may not meet your expectations and be courteous in your interactions.

We now have a different approach to our visits programme. Paul Ashton has arranged visits to places normally off-limits to the general public, including the RAF Wittering Heritage Centre, RAF Syerston and the Wattisham families days. The structure is that Paul makes the arrangements to enter these places, but members have to make their own arrangements to get to the site. We have a number of places on our wish list, but it is hard to find the right avenues to make these visits happen.

One of the biggest challenges Air-Britain has is how to deal with the archive material that we hold. We have a mass of images in various formats, as well as hard copy research material and, increasingly, digital materials. Rather than trying to deal with this as one big issue, we are looking to break it down into distinct groups. Of course this will mean the need for further people to help. We hope to be able to share these plans soon.

This Annual Report accompanying the statutory accounts of The Air-Britain Trust is a formal document but at the forthcoming AGM at the Boscombe Down Aviation Collection at Old Sarum airfield, we can report more fully on all our activities and initiatives. The AGM is an opportunity for you to give your views on how Air-Britain can move forward and deliver what is wanted by you, our members. In the meantime, we do thank all our members and particularly those who work so hard on our many activities and for the loyalty and support shown over the past year.

Air-Britain's Accounts and Activities for the Year Ended 31 March 2026

The Statutory Accounts for the Trust accompanying this report are required by law to be provided to all members.

£000	**2025/26**	**2024/25**
Income:		
Sales of books and other publications	155	123
Membership Subscriptions	126	141
Interest /Donations	31	12
Costs:		
Production costs of magazines	73	68
Production costs etc. of books and other publications	61	56
Book and magazine postage and distribution costs	58	58
Rent/rates, warehouse labour & other distribution costs	48	50
Advertising and General Administration costs	52	53
Archive Costs	6	6
ABPic	13	15
Net Surplus / (Loss)	**2**	**(30)**

At the end of the financial year in March 2026, we had 2054 members (March 2025 – 2094)

The Board of Trustees