



May 15th Newsletter Feature on End of Flying

Final Flying Season Confirmed

This is going to be a spectacular summer for Vulcan XH558 but also a very emotional one; it is with considerable sadness that we have to confirm that we are about to enter the final flying season. After she has landed from her last flight this autumn, there will no longer be a flying Vulcan. We are therefore going to work especially hard to make summer 2015 a memorable flying season for every Vulcan enthusiast across the country. We intend to use every flying hour available, taking her to more people than ever before, celebrating other iconic British engineering achievements and saluting the heroes of Britain's legendary V-Force in which she played a vital role during the knife-edge tension of the Cold War.

Find out where to see her fly

Planning our Farewell to Flight sorties is complex, so we will be revealing more about where to see her over the coming weeks. To ensure you see her fly this year – your very last opportunity – do keep reading this newsletter. You may also enjoy our active Facebook community and follow her @XH558 on Twitter. Do please share these with your friends, family and colleagues; it's their last opportunity to see a flying Vulcan too.

Farewell to Flight

We are sure you are asking why this has to be the end of this phase of XH558's life, particularly as many of you will be aware that we have been trying hard to find a way to extend her life for at least one more season beyond the additional two years (2014-15) that were promised when we completed the wing modification. The answer is that having evaluated a great many factors, the three expert companies on whom we depend – known as the 'technical authorities' - have together decided to cease their support at the end of this flying season. Without that support, under Civil Aviation Authority regulations, we are prohibited from flying.

At the heart of their decision are two factors. First, although we are all confident that XH558 is currently as safe as any aircraft flying today, her structure and systems are already more than ten percent beyond the flying hours of any other Vulcan, so knowing where to look for any possible failure is becoming more difficult. These can be thought of as the 'unknown unknown' issues, which can be impossible to predict with any accuracy. Second, maintaining her superb safety record requires expertise that is increasingly

difficult to find. Our technical partners already bring specialists out of retirement specifically to work on XH558; a solution that is increasingly impractical for those businesses as the necessary skills become distant in their collective memories. We have recently been made aware that the skills issue is particularly acute as our engines age and will require a considerable amount of additional (and costly) inspection and assessment.

A Valuable Future for XH558

What will happen to XH558? Everyone reading this letter will agree that seeing and hearing her overhead is a thrilling experience, but when we talk to her supporters visiting the hangar they tell us that even on the ground, XH558 is fascinating and exciting. She is an iconic example of that remarkable period of intense post-war innovation that made British aviation technology the envy of the world and helped to keep the peace in both strategic and tactical roles through the Cold War. It's a truly remarkable story. In her new life, still able to accelerate dramatically along the runway, XH558 will build on this exciting provenance to inspire and educate new generations of young people, focussing on the technical skills that our country needs so badly.

We will say this consistently through the season but it really cannot be emphasised too much. Thank you to everyone who has donated their time and/or money to help XH558 fly, including of course the many specialist companies whose expertise has been invaluable. This wonderful adventure and the pleasure she brings to millions of people each year would not have been possible without you. Do please keep reading these newsletters to see how you can help make this final season possible, and to acquire something special for yourself to remember her final season of spectacular displays.

Thank you again for supporting XH558; for a few more exciting months, the last flying Avro Vulcan.

On behalf of the Board of Trustees of the Vulcan to the Sky Trust,

John Sharman
Chairman

Robert Fleming
Chief Executive