Open Day – Chairmans Review.

Summary.

There is a far more comprehensive analysis of the event detailing the aims, methodology, budgets and the outcomes which is being prepared to ensure that we remember what went well and the lessons learnt. This review is intended as a brief summary only.

The most important outcome targeted was to move the Museum further towards the ultimate goal of opening to the public on a regular and permanent basis even if it will be on a reduced scale at the beginning (one or two days a week). We think this was achieved as the public response was good from all the target areas namely schools and other organisations, the general public and fire enthusiasts (many of whom travelled considerable distances to come, Manchester, Hull and Kent for example).

Given that this was the first event of this nature that the Fireworld Team had attempted and that the rain on the day lasted all morning and then until nearly 2 ½ hours into opening time the attendance of 1400/1500 visitors was a real achievement. There is no doubt that the weather was against us and the people most affected were the stallholders, who would have been better off with the planned outdoor display areas, that so far many have returned the “After Event Questionaire” with such positive comments and declaring their support for any future event is a credit to their understanding and fortitude.

The feedback from the attending Groups and display teams has been very positive (with many asking when we are doing the next one). The performers on the stage, in the arena and circulating within the site have been equally supportive with their comments.

The Napoleonic Re-enactment Regiment with their marching and musket firing demonstrations looked at home surrounded by the 200 year old buildings. The Spitfire Group (in their WW2 clothing), the Napoleonic Regiment and their camp supporters (all dressed in costume) and Combustuk with their stilts, bubbles and humour all helped the colourful, diverse nature of the crowd. Some of the braver young ones even ended up as part of the arena events either by recruitment into the “Regiment” when they were taught to march and charge with bayonets (albeit wood in their case) or as part of the performing arts display (Combustuk) with hula hoops and poi seemingly going in all directions. This mixing of performers with the visitors, with the use of cheerful music, helped keep the event a happy occasion and kept all areas included in the general atmosphere of the afternoon.
The attendance of Scania with their latest prototype Fire Appliance, the Northamptonshire Fire & Rescue with various appliances and displays alongside the many Fireworld exhibits and the Northampton Fire Brigade Museum team with their appliances all helped achieve the balance between educational displays and pure enjoyment.

The Childrens Amusement section would have been much larger had the weather not forced the activities to be curtailed but even so the reduced number of rides were busy throughout the afternoon and meant we had something for visitors of all ages.

The amount of work done by the Steering Sub-Group members in planning and preparing the event and our volunteers with so many exhibits being brought up to display standards proved our ability to continue to move forward towards our ultimate aim of a permanent museum. We must now use the momentum created to continue forward from this point.

My congratulations and thanks to all those involved.

Norman Dickerson.