

Accessibility Guide

This Accessibility Guide does not contain personal opinions as to our suitability for those with access needs but aims to accurately describe the facilities and services that we offer our visitors.



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Introduction

The Arctic Convoy Museum is situated on the outskirts of the village of Aultbea. The Museum comprises a one storey building known as the Exhibition Centre and a Wartime Trail of information/interpretation boards, which follows the shores of Loch Ewe. Access to the Exhibition Centre carpark is directly from the A832 road, which forms part of the North Coast 500 tourist route.

Hours of operation for the Exhibition Centre are generally 10am-4pm, Monday to Saturday from April to October. Opening and closing dates may vary slightly from year to year and are highlighted on our website and social media channels. The Wartime Trail is open at all times.

Getting to the Exhibition Centre:



By road:

Access is directly from the A832 and slightly to the north of Aultbea village. Approaching from the north, the Exhibition Centre, is on the right side of the road, just before the first turn off into Aultbea village. Approaching from the south, the museum lies just beyond a left turn into Aultbea and onwards to Mellon Charles. The Exhibition Centre is marked by flags located on the roadside.

Parking:

The Exhibition Centre has a small open air car park which is free for visitors. There is space to park motor bikes to the side of the building. Parking space for large motorhomes is to the left of the carpark and clearly marked.

In front of the Exhibition Centre, there is a dedicated space for one disabled visitor car. The Museum staff will reserve that space for a particular visitor at a particular time, if asked in advance.



By public transport:

The Exhibition Centre is not readily accessible by public transport as there is only one bus a day in either direction. Some bus tours visit the museum and details of these can be obtained by contacting us.

Entrance to the Exhibition Centre:

The car park is hard standing and there is access from it to the front of the Exhibition Centre via a footpath or the entrance road.



There are two steep steps up to the main door, with a handrail. If you park in the disabled bay, a member of staff come out to assist you. A portable ramp can be deployed to enable wheelchair access if necessary. Reception overlooks the parking bay and arrival will be noticed. By calling ahead, we can have the ramp waiting. We have plans to improve ramp access in the future.

Reception:

The entrance door to the Exhibition Centre is 83 cm wide and leads directly into our Reception area which has the following features:

- The floor is vinyl with an unfixed door mat.
- The reception and shop are on one level.
- The reception desk is inside the door on the left. opposite the door. It has a wooden front.
- The reception desk is 92 cm high.



- There is no seating in the reception.
- The reception is evenly lit by ceiling spot lighting.

We charge an entrance fee to the Exhibition Centre for all visitors except children under 12 years old. A one off membership fee allows unlimited entrance for one year. The entrance may can be waived for carers on request.

Display Areas

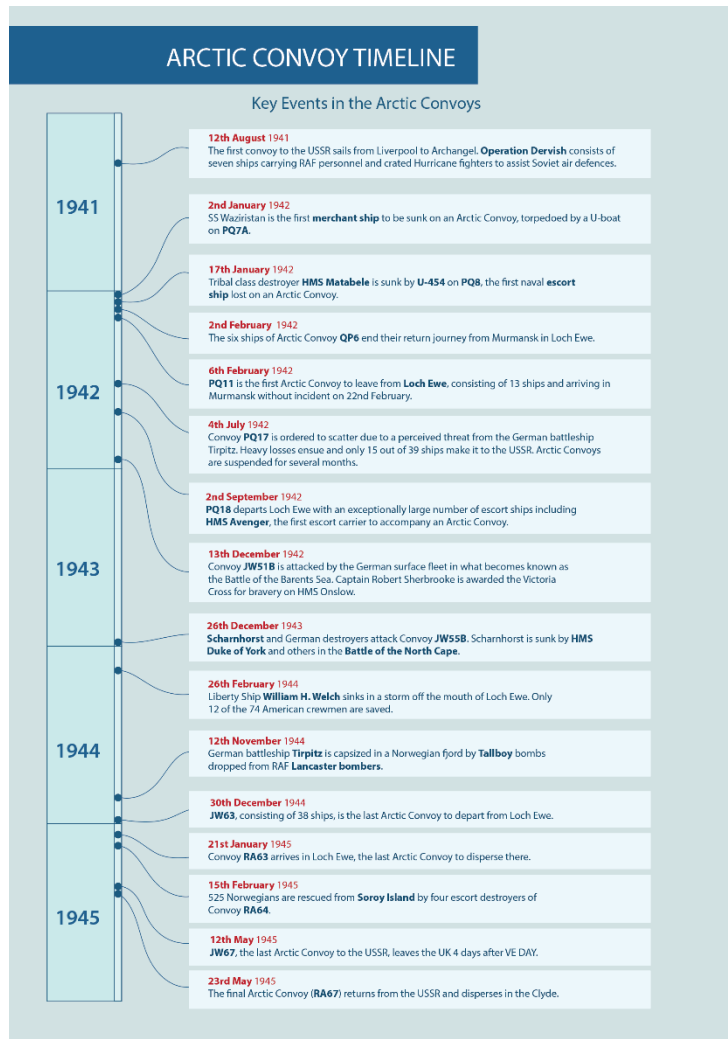
The Exhibition Centre comprises of a single gallery with level access to all areas. Entry to the display areas is through an internal door with a clearance of 78 cm. This door opens outwards from Reception.



Within the display areas, Most objects are in glass cases dimly lit by LED lighting. Between some cases, independently mounted exhibits create an uneven distance, the narrowest of which is pictured below and measures 90cm.



Interpretation in the galleries is in the form of printed text panels and labels. The museum's interpretation is text based in Myriad Pro font with a minimum size of 21 point on display panels. Our graphic panels are black text on an off white background. Some text panels and labels are positioned above eye level on the wall.



Seating is available in the museum and there is a reading area with a table.

The gallery is lit with a combination of fluorescent tube and LED ceiling lights in addition to the lighting inside display cases.

There is one video in the museum with sound and subtitles.

Amenities

Accessible Toilet:

There are two toilets for use by all visitors and staff, one of which is spacious and wheelchair accessible. The toilet is open to the public and does not require a Radar key. It has the following specifications:

- The door is 87 cm wide.
- The toilet height is 48 cm.
- There is a horizontal rail on the side wall adjacent to the toilet.
- An emergency alarm pull cord is located next to the toilet.
- The floor is non-slip vinyl
- There is a single monobloc mixer tap on the sink.



Museum Shop

We have a shop located within the Reception area which sells a selection of books and gifts relating to the Arctic Convoys as well as some local crafts.

- The narrowest point in the shop area measures 1 metre wide.



- A member of staff will be happy to help you if you have difficulty accessing anything in our shop, or if you would like a book recommendation.

Café

There is no café on site but we serve tea and coffee at Reception. There are picnic tables in the museum grounds which all visitors are welcome to use.

Wheelchairs

The Exhibition Centre is accessible by wheelchair with the width limitations set out in this guide. A single wheelchair is available for the use of visitors and can be reserved by calling in advance.

Additional Information

Assistance Dogs

All dogs, including Guide and Assistance dogs are welcome in the Exhibition Centre.

Signage

Most of the general signage has black writing on a white background. There is silver signage with darker silver writing at the lift areas and on each floor as a building directory. There is braille available on these signs.



First Aid

During opening hours, there is always a first aider available. If you require First Aid assistance, please speak to a member of staff.

Alternative Formats

We provide a printed introduction to the museum for visitors in the following languages... Our souvenir guide is available to purchase from the museum shop in print [<https://shop.racmp.org/products/souvenir-booklet-the-arctic-convoys-to-the-soviet-union-physical-copy>] or in digital format [[Souvenir Booklet - The Arctic Convoys to the Soviet Union \(Digital Cop – Arctic Convoy Museum Shop\)](#)]. A large print version of the introductory information provided by our volunteers is available on our website and a hard copy can be requested from Reception.

Building Evacuations

In the event that the building needs to be evacuated, there are comprehensive plans in place to evacuate guests safely and quickly from the building. The evacuation procedures make provision for evacuating guests with additional mobility requirements. Regular training and evacuation drills take place to ensure staff are familiar with procedures.

Personal assistance: We have volunteers on hand most days, who will be pleased to escort you round the exhibitions personally. If you would like to be sure that a volunteer is available, please call ahead.

Induction Loop: As yet, we do not have an induction loop. The volunteers' introduction is available as text (see above).

Seating: Volunteers will often provide information at the start of your visit, but you will not be obliged to stand and listen if you prefer to wander freely. Seats are available.

Accessing the Loch Ewe Wartime Trail

This unique heritage trail is a route that can be followed independently by road. A free map with description of the trail is available from the Exhibition Centre and [downloadable from our website](#). The trail consists of interpretation panels, mosaics and metal sculptures which bring to life the wartime history of Loch Ewe and the communities around it. The trail stretches several miles in total, and lies on a mixture of private and public land, none of which is owned or controlled by the Museum.

By car

Most of the trail can be accessed by driving along public roads, and parking near the points of interest. The distance from a parked car to any particular feature varies, although it is

generally only a few metres. Sometimes it may be necessary to walk across a small area of rough ground. From Poolewe to Cove the B8057 road is single track and is not recommended for large camper vans or towing caravans.

By bike and on foot

Walkers and cyclists can tackle the trail independently, although some of the route lies on the A832, which is a busy main road and not recommended for walking or cycling with children. From Poolewe to Cove the B8057 road is single track and quiet, as is the road from Aultbea to Mellon Charles (no road number). Both of those sections are good for cyclists.

Arctic Convoy Memorial

The promontory at Rubha nan Sasan on the western tip of Loch Ewe is the site of the Arctic Convoy memorial, unveiled by the Russian Convoy Club in September 1999. There is car parking at the base of the hill on which the memorial is located. A steep path with loose chippings leads to the memorial itself.



The path up the hill is sufficiently wide for a four wheel drive vehicle to negotiate, but the section from the top of the hill to the memorial, which is relatively flat, is only accessible on foot. The steepest section is approximately 12 degrees (1 in 5, or 20%) at its steepest. The surface is also rather broken





William H Welch Memorial

Although the Wartime Trail ends at the Arctic Convoy Memorial at Cove, there is another memorial near the sea some distance beyond. This commemorates the men lost when an American Liberty ship ran onto rocks in a storm in 1944, and the strenuous efforts made by local residents to save them. It cannot be accessed by car. The path is over rough ground and somewhat challenging. Sturdy footwear and weather appropriate outer clothing are essential if you plan to visit this isolated spot.