

Volunteer at the Anson Engine Museum Receives Prestigious Award

Jon Leigh received a massive accolade at the Cheshire Awards for Tourism Skills at their annual award ceremony. He was awarded the “Cheshire Champion” prize for his work as Trustee and Volunteer at the Anson Engine Museum in Poynton. This is the fourth gold award that the museum has received at the Cheshire Awards for Tourism Skills and adds to their impressive collection of awards and trophies.

The event is now in its 8th year. Emma Clarke, Head of business development at Visit Chester and Cheshire, said *“The Awards showcase some of the best talent in the tourism industry. The standard of entries has been higher than ever this year and I congratulate the entrants of their achievements.”* She went on to say *“It’s clear that there’s a growing recognition that a skilled and committed workforce is the key to the future success of the industry.”*

At the glittering award ceremony a packed room of over 450 managers, professionals and employees from the North West’s Tourism Industry, were spellbound listening as the shortlist and then winners for each category were read out. The evening was presented by celebrity chef Simon Rimmer, Simon’s television career includes Granada Breeze, Livetime, Battle of the Chefs, This Morning, Granada Tonight, A Taste for Travel, Lunchtime Live and The Afternoon Show.

Whilst reading out the nominations for the new category of “Cheshire Champion” the judges explained they were looking for someone with a “can do” attitude, who spent their time helping others. They had even thought of calling the award the “Octopus Award” as it was looking for someone who had the capacity to juggle many different roles within an organization; that was a competent team player and focused on quality and values.

When they read the entry from the Anson Engine Museum nominating Jon Leigh, they knew they had found their man.



The judges heard how Jon first became involved with the Museum back in the early 1980s when it was first formed and he was invited to become a Trustee. Over the years Jon has helped with everything from laying foundations; carrying out the role of Treasurer and manning the front reception desk.

Until his recent early retirement from Faiveley Transport at Birkenhead he held the position of Technical Director. His job took him around the world and could within a month visit Sweden, Germany, India or Japan and have several trips to London. His trusty laptop was always to hand allowing him to sit in far off hotel rooms doing the museum's accounts. His nomadic lifestyle and laptop also allowed him to run the museum's on-line shop from wherever he found himself and during his frequent visits to India, he even sourced some of the museum stock eg Cotton bags, T-shirts and caps. He set up his mobile phone to inform him when goods had been ordered on-line so he could phone back to the UK to organise for the goods to be shipped to customers in his absence. Jon manages the on-line shop and the shop in the museum, ordering stock; laying out displays and of course accounting for all the sales.

Jon has other interests too which include Leader of Norbury Hand bell Ringers; Past Railway Division Chairman, Past North Western Region Chairman and Former Vice President of Institution of Mechanical Engineers (IMechE); model engineering and horology. He manages the Vintage Machinery section of the Poynton Show and assists his nephew and brother with service crew duties for a gravel rally car.

Geoff Challinor, Chairman of the Museum said "It was with great pleasure that I supported the nomination of Jon Leigh as *Cheshire Champion*. Jon is willing to tackle anything from cleaning the toilets to counting the coins from the donation boxes. He is as likely to greet you at reception as he is to be running an engine or making you a cup of tea. There are times when he does all of these in one day. He jokes to the visitors about how many hats he can wear at once. I am delighted he is one of our volunteers and wholeheartedly supported his nomination. I am glad the judges agreed."