

Behind the scenes at Manchester Airport

20 ladies from various branches of the Womens Institute, in and around Knutsford, were lucky enough to be selected for a tour of Manchester Airport. The weather was perfect as they assembled early at Chelford railway station to travel to the airport. On arrival their host, Tina, was waiting with check board in hand to escort them across to the staff building.

Once the security checks were complete and passes were issued, the group went into the conference room where they were welcomed by Wendy Sinfield and her team. They explained how the airport was transforming itself. The stats were impressive; over 16,000 jobs will be created by 2030, £1bn investment, 28million passengers travel each year to 220 destinations. The airport complex, known as Airport City, has exciting plans and is attracting new investments including hotels and tech companies. It is clear to see how Manchester has become the second largest UK airport and why it is attracting new routes year on year.

The team covered the history of the airport; for the audience this was a trip down memory lane (anyone who remembers the chandelier lights will be reassured to hear that one is now in St Helens Glass Museum) and Wendy explained the efforts the airport puts into managing the routes to minimise disruption over the local area.

After lunch, the Group enjoyed a tour through the airport, using the staff routes to get airside and then onto a bus. Passing by the various planes and extensive building work, the bus stopped at the sleek new Pier 1, opening in April and boasting glass panelled walkways with climate control. A quick group photo and then it was back to the terminal and a visit to the old Control Tower. There was time on the way to ask lots of questions, the WI ladies were inquisitive and keen to know how the airport managed its environmental credentials. Jonathon from MA was the oracle and provided the facts and figures. The old Control Tower allowed a fantastic bird's eye view across the airport; hangars, planes landing and taking off, all set against the backdrop of the surrounding countryside.

By now it was mid after-noon, the day had flown by, Ruth Turner, WI Organiser, thanked the hosts and the group made a quick dash to catch their train. All in all, it had been a superb visit.



WI ladies at the new Pier 1



Stunning views from the old Control Tower