

## Jet Towel hand dryers show respect to days of early jet fighters

**Six 'Smart hand dryers', the hands-under model in the Mitsubishi Electric Jet Towel hand dryer range, have been installed throughout the Grade II listed Officers' Mess building at the IWM (Imperial War Museum) World War II Duxford Airfield in South Cambridgeshire.**

The Officers' Mess was last used by the RAF in 1961 and until recently was being utilised by IWM to store miscellaneous museum items and equipment. Mantle Business Centres took the building on in 2013, on a 120 year lease, and transformed it into a state of the art business centre.

Mantle did not want to simply create office space but was committed to ensuring the preservation of the building, respecting its historical significance while also giving it a new lease of life. Not surprisingly the local Planning Department and IWM were keen on the idea, but absolutely insistent about achieving a very high quality end result.

"Our architects and builders did a great job," says Helen Earl, Facilities Manager at the Officers' Mess. "We have retained all the important features, yet fitted everything you would expect of a state of the art office."

Naturally there were some little niggles that surfaced over the first few months of occupancy, which Mantle was committed to addressing. One was that clients whose offices were closest to the bathrooms noted that they could hear the hand dryers through the walls.

Helen had a great solution to this; she contacted James Loveridge of wholesaler Electrical Deals Direct in Weston-super-Mare, who describes himself as the UK's greatest hand dryer nerd, confidently expecting he would know the best way forward. Says James, "It's not something I mention often at dinner parties, however I do love helping people find a hand dryer that really meets all their needs."

It was not long before James had determined that the existing hand dryers operated at 90dB, compared to an industry average of 85dB. As decibel scales are logarithmic, the difference between 85dB and 90dB is considerable.

"My first thought was that I should suggest a replacement dryer that was quieter than average," says James. "And because it was a prestige setting I began to zero in on the Jet Towel from Mitsubishi Electric, which whispers at 58dB."

In fact the Mitsubishi Electric development team has even managed to design out the higher frequency noises, which are generally considered more penetrating.

James also knew that Mantle likes to maintain best practice in regard to environmental issues, and that this often has a second benefit in that it reduces electricity bills.

"The Jet Towel range is famed for its energy efficiency," says James. "In fact, the Smart units consume 490 W of power, less than a third that of the previous hand dryers, yet they dry hands rapidly and effectively. With typically 110 to 120 people on site at the Officers' Mess, each of whom may wash their hands say three to five times a day, the saving adds up to something really significant over the course of time."

Helen takes up the story: "We have a total of six dryers on site and I was delighted that James introduced me to the Jet Towel range. I like the hands-in units but chose the hands-under Smart model for the practical reason that the previous dryers had been hands-under, so fitting the new Smarts meant the least amount of damage to our listed walls."

Mitsubishi Electric offers the Smart dryers in white or silver as standard, and can also provide bespoke colours on request. Helen says she was drawn to silver, as it seemed to match the existing décor perfectly while giving a hint of something special to the bathrooms.

"Many of our tenants are cutting edge science and technology companies that work closely with Cambridge University, which is only 15 minutes up the motorway from us," says Helen. "We are also close to Stansted Airport, which has a high speed train link to London. I feel like we are at the heart of a dynamic international community. Our modern business facilities do a lot to support them, while also safeguarding one of the most important historic locations in the country."

"For me, this was all brought together at our opening ceremony, where the ribbon was cut by Les Millgate, a pilot who flew Gloucester Meteors, the first British jet fighters, with the Duxford squadron in the 1950s – and he had some great tales to tell about the Officers' Mess."

#### **Image Captions:**

**Pictures 1+2:** Mantle Business Centres took the Officers' Mess building on in 2013 and transformed it into a state of the art business centre.

**Pictures 3+4:** "We chose the hands-under Smart model for the practical reason that the previous dryers had been hands-under, so fitting the new Smarts meant the least amount of damage to our listed walls," says Helen Earl, Facilities Manager at the Officers' Mess.

[Source pictures 1-3: the Officer's Mess]

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## About Mitsubishi Jet Towel

Mitsubishi Electric's first Jet Towel was launched in 1993 and the version now available in Europe is in the eighth generation of its development. It has proved a winner with installers for its high tech elegance, with operators for its low running cost and reliability, and with users for its convenience, speed, hygiene and innovative design. The Jet Towel has high environmental credentials, avoiding the use of paper towels or rolled cloth and lowering power consumption and noise levels to a fraction of alternative hot air dryers.

### Further Information

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