

4 October 2016

New aircraft arrivals heading to Cosford

The Royal Air Force Museum Cosford will be welcoming a collection of new aircraft to the site later this year as it prepares to celebrate and commemorate the centenary of the Royal Air Force in 2018. New arrivals will include a Wolverhampton built Boulton Paul Defiant Mk 1, the last surviving example of its kind, plus a rare Messerschmitt BF109G-2.

As the RAF and family of RAF charities work towards celebrating a century of service, plans at the RAF Museum are already underway for a major transformation of its London site, with aircraft movements and some exciting new additions making their way to Cosford. The centenary plans will also include exploring the first 100 years of the RAF, the role it plays today and its future contributions by sharing this story online with a global audience.

In preparation for 2018 there are a number of aircraft moves due to take place at both the museum's London and Cosford sites in order to deliver the interpretation planned. The planned moves will see the largest single influx of new aircraft at Cosford since the National Cold War Exhibition building was opened in 2007, as six new aircraft are scheduled to arrive before Christmas. As part of the centenary plans, Cosford will receive six aircraft from the collection in London, enabling the RAF's story to be more comprehensively represented to museum audiences in Shropshire.

Over the coming months, visitors at Cosford will notice a number of aircraft movements and work is already underway to make room for the new arrivals. In September the Consolidated PB4Y-1 Catalina was moved out of the War in the Air Hangar and placed on temporary external display at the entrance to the 'History of the RAF'. The museum has also begun looking into long term plans for the site at Cosford to ensure that all aircraft, including any future arrivals are displayed undercover.

In addition to the Messerschmitt BF109G-2 and the Boulton Paul Defiant Mk 1, other new aircraft heading to Shropshire before the end of the year include the Junkers Ju 88R-1, a sub-type of the most versatile German combat aircraft of the Second World War, and the Gloster Gladiator 1, the first enclosed cockpit and last biplane fighter introduced into RAF service. Following re-assembly, all four aircraft will go on public display in the museums 'War in the Air' hangar.

Also included in the new line-up is the de Havilland Tiger Moth II, one of the world's most famous training aircraft which provided the majority of RAF pilots with their elementary flying training during the Second World War. The Tiger Moth will be displayed next to the de Havilland Chipmunk and Scottish Aviation Bulldog T Mk 1 in Hangar 1, demonstrating progression in training aircraft.

Finally, the Westland Lysander III, the only surviving Special Duties variant of this aircraft (which were used to ferry allied agents in and out of enemy occupied Europe) will be heading to the museum's Conservation Centre for an in depth inspection and condition assessment. The Lysander will join other conservation projects which include the Wellington Bomber and the Handley Page Hampden and work will be carried out over the next few years to replace its fragile linen outer skin.

Head of Collections at the RAF Museum, Ian Thirsk said:

“The museum’s centenary plans have provided an exciting opportunity to relocate significant aircraft in the collection closer to our Midlands audience. I’m particularly delighted that our Boulton Paul Defiant, an aircraft with such strong local links to Wolverhampton, will be going on public display at Cosford for the first time. Additionally, the arrival of the Junkers Ju 88 R-1 and Messerschmitt BF109G-2 will enhance our existing display of Axis Second World War aircraft, several of which are the last remaining examples of their type in the world.”

To make way for the new arrivals, the de Havilland Venom FB4, FMA IA58 Pucara and Folland Gnat F1 have all been moved into the museum’s storage facility on the airfield.

Work is already underway at the museum’s London site to disassemble the aircraft and prepare them for their journey by road to Cosford. Aviation fans can keep up to date with the centenary aircraft moves and on-going developments by signing up to the museums free e-Newsletter <http://www.rafmuseum.org.uk/contact-us/newsletters.aspx>

Visitors will be able to see five of the new arrivals fully reassembled and in their new display positions by early 2017. Entrance to the museum is free of charge and the museum is open daily from 10am until 5pm. For further information, please visit the museum’s website www.rafmuseum.org/cosford or call 01902 376200.

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- Royal Air Force Museum Cosford, Shifnal, Shropshire, TF11 8UP
- Open daily from 10am
- Admission to the Royal Air Force Museum is free of charge.
- RAF Museum Cosford images & logo available at: <http://www.rafmuseum.org.uk/research/media-vault.aspx>
- For further information and all media enquiries please contact Michelle Morgans on 01902 376212 or email michelle.morgans@rafmuseum.org
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