

21 October 2016

Wellington wing and Hampden fuselage are open week highlights

Date: 14-19 November 2016

Time: 10:15am-1:00pm

Cost: £5.00 per person

A newly painted Vickers Wellington bomber wing, the Handley Page Hampden fuselage and a Red Arrows Gnat are just three of the aviation treasures on show to visitors next month at the Royal Air Force Museum Cosford's Conservation Centre Open Week.

An exciting highlight to this year's open week is the newly fabric covered and painted **Vickers Wellington** bomber outer wing. This popular aircraft is a favourite with aviation fans and has undergone work to treat small amounts of corrosion to its famous geodetic framework, both wings and fuselage, since its arrival at Cosford in June 2010. Now free of corrosion, both wings have been painted in a protective layer and in the last 6 months, one of the wings has been re-covered in Irish linen, doped and painted in its Bomber Command Night colour scheme by one of the museum's Aircraft Technicians. Work is now underway to repeat the process on the aircraft's second wing and eventually the fuselage. Initially a five year project, the Wellington is expected to be completed within the next two to three years.

The team in the museum's Conservation Centre are also lining up another treat for visitors, quite literally. For the first time ever all four sections of the **Handley Page Hampden's** fuselage will be placed in line showing an almost fully complete Hampden silhouette. Work has been advancing on the Hampden considerably over the last 12 months and large sections of the badly damaged aircraft have been built from scratch on site at Cosford. Since it was last viewed by the public almost 12 months ago, the forward fuselage and cockpit section has been manufactured using pre-production drawings and where possible castings and a few components from the original P1344 Hampden have been incorporated. The new section will be placed alongside the rear fuselage, tailboom and tailplane for visitors to get an up close view of this rare example. All effort on the aircraft is going into manufacturing the fuselage section which is hoped will be completed sometime in 2018.

Another aircraft spending a short period of time in the Conservation Centre is the **Hawker Siddeley Gnat T1** - the first aircraft used by the RAF Red Arrows, superseded by the current aircraft, the Hawk in 1979. The aircraft was previously on public display at Cosford and was moved into the Conservation Centre in June. The aircraft is destined to move to the museum's London site in 2017 and the open week in November is a last chance for Red Arrow fans to see the aircraft in the West Midlands. As the aircraft is being prepared for transportation by road, it is also a chance to see it in a partial stripped condition.

RAF Museum Conservation Centre Manager, Darren Priday said:

"With the museum fully engrossed in the RAF Centenary Programme the Conservation Centre team have spent a lot of 2016 away from Cosford at our London site preparing aircraft for moving. Another task that has taken us away from home is the Spitfire XIX that is currently on display in the Bahrain National Museum, the fourth location it has been on display in the Middle East country in 2017. With all these tasks

going on away from Cosford it would have been easy to 'down tools' on the long term projects, but we haven't. The Wellington wing with its new covering and surface finish is a work of art. In respect to the Hampden, regular visitors will notice how much the forward fuselage section has come on since last year's open week. The chance to line up all four fuselage sections was something I have been looking forward to for a long time. Finally the time has come and we will be able to show a Hampden fuselage in the UK; the last time this would have happened would be over 70 years ago. We look forward to greeting our repeat visitors but also a warm welcome awaits anyone visiting for the first time".

Visitors will also be able to view the continuing progress on the **Range Safety Launch**, a project being led by a team of Volunteers, plus see a glimpse of the **Dornier Do 17**. Now clear of all the marine crustaceans, the Dornier is currently housed in a controlled environment with de-humidifiers whilst the museum awaits further advice from the project advisor on how best to treat the metal.

Museum Technicians, Apprentices and Volunteers will be available throughout the week to speak with visitors about their work and answer any questions they may have. In addition, from Wednesday through to the Saturday, family members of the crew from the museum's ill-fated Hampden's last flight will be in-attendance.

The Conservation Centre will open from 14-19 November between 10.15am and 1.00pm each day and admission is £5.00 per person (children under 16 are free and must be accompanied by an adult). The Museum's other hangars will be open from 10am until 5pm and entry to the museums is free of charge. For further information, please visit the museum's website www.rafmuseum.org/cosford or call 01902 376200.

PLUS...in addition to the open week, visitors will also have the exciting opportunity to climb on board the **Hawker Siddeley Nimrod R.1 XV249** during daily tours. Tickets are available to purchase on arrival, for more details visit the museum website.

Ends...

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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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