

3 August 2017

## Wolverhampton built Defiant is highlight of Open Cockpits Evening

**Date:** 15-16 September 2017

**Time:** 6.00pm to 9.00pm

**Cost:** £12.50 per person

**The Wolverhampton built, Second World War British Battle of Britain fighter aircraft, Boulton Paul Defiant Mk1 will be one of the highlights at the forthcoming 'Open Cockpits Evening' taking place at the Royal Air Force Museum Cosford on 15-16 September 2017.**

The **Boulton Paul Defiant Mk 1** joined the aircraft display at Cosford only a few short months ago and with just 300 tickets available per evening, organisers are anticipating the event will be hugely popular with aviation fans eager to get the first close look inside (no internal access). The aircraft is the last surviving example of its kind, built by Boulton Paul at its Pendeford, Wolverhampton factory in 1938. This two-seat turret fighter, operated with mixed fortunes during the Battle of Britain period but found its niche as a night fighter during 1940-42.

The RAF Museum's example, serial number N1671 was operated by the newly formed No 307 (Polish) Squadron RAF, who became operational in December 1940. It was painted in its all black night fighter colour scheme the following January and carried out 15 patrols before moving to No 285 (Anti-aircraft Co-Operation) Squadron in June 1942, its last operational user.

### **RAF Museum Cosford Curator, Al McLean said:**

*"After four decades on display at the RAF Museum London, the sole surviving intact Defiant example of its type was transferred to Cosford for aviation fans in the Midlands to enjoy. The new arrival has been added to the list of aircraft open at the September Open Cockpits Evening, making this the first time enthusiasts will be able to view inside the cockpit of this iconic British fighter."*

Also new to the 'Open Cockpits Evening' line-up is a former frontline fighter the **Gloster Gladiator 1** - the first enclosed cockpit and last biplane fighter introduced into RAF service. Although Gladiators saw operational service at home it was most successfully employed overseas particularly in the defence of Malta. At the outbreak of the Second World War, four home based RAF fighter squadrons equipped with Gladiators were sent to France and after just ten days of hard fighting, all the aircraft had been lost. In a desperate attempt to provide fighter cover for the 'little ships' involved in the Dunkirk evacuation, a detachment of home based aircraft known as 'G' Flight was formed at RAF Manston, Kent. They were quickly deployed to assist with the rescue of more than 338,000 British and French soldiers trapped on the beaches.

During the early war years, Gladiators were used by the RAF in several other overseas operations including; Norway, Greece, North Africa and the Middle East. The Museum's example, serial number K8042 was also used for gun trials and experiments, whereby an additional pair was fitted under the top wing, giving a total of six guns instead of the usual four. Like the Defiant it's displayed alongside, the Gladiator is also a new

addition to the aircraft display at Cosford and the September event is the first opportunity for aviation fans to view the interior (no internal access).

Other highlights for visitors on the night will include the **Fairey Delta 2 (FD2)** - one of only two FD2S ever built, devised in response to Britain trailing behind in supersonic aircraft design during the late 1940s. Plus, the **Saunders-Roe SR53** – this interceptor used a rocket motor to climb rapidly to high altitudes and reached Mach 2 (twice the speed of sound) at high altitude during trials.

**RAF Museum Cosford Public Events Manager, Abi Betteridge said:**

*“Visitors will also be able to view inside the rear fuselage of the **Avro Lincoln B2**, never before opened to the public. Just too late to see service during the Second World War, the Lincoln became the mainstay of Bomber Command post-war, but was destined for a short front line career as the Cold War and the jet age brought the shortcomings of its performance into sharp relief. It’s one of our most popular aircraft and this is the first time it’s been included in the event, we hope visitors will enjoy the rare opportunity to take a look inside the fuselage.”*

Ticket holders will also have exclusive after-hours access to the Museum from 6pm to 9pm to experience what it feels like to sit inside a military aircraft that’s seen action around the world and marvel at the advanced technologies on unique airframes. A total of 15 aircraft will be available on the night and to make sure visitors get the most out of the event and access as many cockpits as possible, there will be a large team of Volunteers manning each aircraft to answer any questions from visitors.

Tickets are now available to purchase through the Museum’s website [www.rafmuseum.org/cosford](http://www.rafmuseum.org/cosford) and cost £12.50 per person which includes parking. Minimum height restrictions of 1.07 metres will apply. The Museum will close at 5.00pm both days; however the Visitor Centre and Refuel Restaurant will remain open for ticket holders and will be serving a special ‘Open Cockpits Evening’ menu.

Ends...

**Notes to Editors:**

**Aircraft available for close viewing on 15-16 September 2017 (subject to change) include:**

- Saunders-Roe SR53
  - Fairey Delta 2 (FD2)
  - SEPECAT Jaguar ACT Demonstrator
  - Boulton Paul Defiant Mk 1 (view only)
  - Gloster Gladiator 1 (view only)
  - Kawasaki Ki-1001b
  - Focke Wulf Fw190
  - Avro Lincoln B2 (view only)
  - Short Brothers Belfast
  - Handley Page Hastings
  - Mikoyan-Gurevich MiG 21PF (view only)
  - Scottish Aviation Jetstream T Mk1
  - Junkers Ju52/3M (CASA 352L)
  - de Havilland Chipmunk
  - Scottish Aviation Bulldog T Mk 1
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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](mailto:michelle.morgans@rafmuseum.org)
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