

14th October 2011

Wellington Restoration Progress is highlight of Open Week

14th to 19th November 2011

10.15am to 1.00pm

FREE Admission

The award winning Michael Beetham Conservation Centre at the Royal Air Force Museum Cosford will be opening its doors to visitors for one special week to enable greater public access and understanding of the Centre's work. From Monday 14th to Saturday 19th November, a range of aircraft and other artefacts in various stages of restoration will be on display daily from 10.15 to 1.00pm. This includes the Centre's largest project, the Wellington Bomber.

Since its arrival at the Museum there has been significant progress made on the Wellington. The project to date has included detailed photographs being taken of the fuselage section, including the fabric joints to record how the material was fitted to the airframe. This will also provide an ongoing reference for the Museum about original technical information. After this process the fabric that was previously covering the Wellington was carefully removed, wrapped in special acid-free tissue for storage and boxed in a special container. The process of removing the fabric revealed the distinctive Barnes Wallace designed geodetic structure. Smaller items such as the Fin, Flaps and Wing False-work structures have also been carefully removed and removal of corrosion on many of the smaller structural components has commenced.

The Vickers Wellington is one of the largest aircraft that the Conservation Centre has ever undertaken restoration of during its nine year history. This history has seen many new arrivals or established exhibition aircraft pass through its doors for conservation, restoration or maintenance. The extensive conservation work on the Wellington structure will take place at the Museum's Conservation Centre over the next four to five years.

Manager of the Conservation Centre, Tim Wallis says:

"At almost every stage of our work thus far, the Wellington has presented us with new challenges and we are constantly impressed by the innovation and workmanship that the original build represented. The aircraft remains one of our main projects but much more than that, she is much-loved by the staff, volunteers and visitors alike and a sort of kinship exists that borders on pride. We hope that the public will choose to share that experience with us and visit during the week"

During the Open Week, visitors will gain exclusive behind-the-scenes access to aircraft conservation work and have a rare opportunity to speak with the skilled Technicians and Apprentices and view current projects including on-going refurbishments such as the Handley Page Hampden TB1, Spitfire Mk XIX and Range Safety Launch. This may also be the last opportunity to view the conservation efforts on the Mk1 Sopwith Dolphin which is nearing completion.

Admission to the Conservation Centre Open Week is FREE and from 10.15am to 1.00pm each day. Cosford's main Museum will open daily from 10am. The next Open Week is planned for November 2012. For further information, please contact the Royal Air Force Museum Cosford on 01902 376200 or visit www.rafmuseum.org.

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Notes to Editors

- Opened in May 2002 by Marshal of the Royal Air Force Sir Michael Beetham, the MBCC is regarded as one of the world's foremost centres of excellence in aircraft conservation and restoration. Its skilled technicians undertake careful, extensive work to prepare aircraft and other projects for display at both of the Museum's sites in Cosford and London with the MBCC team responsible for the conservation and routine maintenance of some 300 aircraft.
- Royal Air Force Museum, Cosford, Shifnal Shropshire, TF11 8UP
- Photos available on request
- Open daily between 10am-6pm (Last admission 5pm)
- FREE admission
- For further information and all media enquiries please contact Michelle Worthington on 01902 376 212 or michelle.worthington@rafmuseum.org
- RAF Museum Cosford images & logo available at:
<http://www.rafmuseum.org.uk/cosford/media-enquiries/downloads.cfm>