

15 October 2015

Popular spy plane tours set to return

Date: 24 Oct-1 Nov and 9-14 Nov 2015

Time: Tours run between 10am and 1pm, each tour lasts 15 minutes

Cost: £5 per person

Due to the popularity of the summer Nimrod tours, the Royal Air Force Museum Cosford is re-introducing tours on selected dates in October and November. Tours on board the aircraft proved so popular with aviation fans that the Museum wants to repeat the offer, offering a limited number of tours for those who missed out first time round.

Visitors during October half term and the Conservation Centre Open Week in November will have the opportunity to climb on board the Hawker Siddeley Nimrod R.1 XV249 and learn about its intelligence gathering role in the Royal Air Force. Intimate tours for groups of up to six people last approximately 15 minutes and visitors will learn about the history of the aircraft, hear about the crews on board and view some of its sophisticated surveillance equipment up close. Plus, tour guides will be on hand to answer any questions.

Find out why this aircraft and its missions were so secret that even the existence of 51 Squadron who operated it wasn't mentioned in official documents until 1992, after the end of the Cold War. Learn why, of the twenty six mission specialists on board, up to eight of them were language specialists and how the equipment on board allowed them to pass tactical, minute by minute information to allied aircraft during a raid. The aircraft's capabilities were such that even flying through friendly and allied nation airspace required diplomatic clearance. Mixed with a few light hearted stories of the crew on board the Nimrod, these fascinating tours led by Museum staff will have visitors wondering what really goes on in the skies above us.

RAF Museum Public Relations Executive Michelle Morgans said:

"We ran Nimrod tours during an initial trial period in July and following really positive feedback from visitors we extended them throughout the summer. The demand to have access on board our aircraft is always high and almost every tour sold out. Those who missed out in the summer have been asking when the Nimrod will re-open so we have added new dates, giving visitors two more opportunities this year to enjoy an intimate tour of one of our most sophisticated aircraft."

The Nimrod flew in both the Maritime patrol and electronic intelligence gathering role. Maritime surveillance, anti-submarine operations and intelligence gathering have been key tasks for the Royal Air Force for much of its long history. When the Nimrod was finally retired from service in 2011, the type had operated with distinction for over forty years in all these roles, and more.

Nimrod R.1 XV249 is one of only four R.1's from a total of 46 Nimrod's delivered to the RAF. The R.1 was an electronic-intelligence gathering variant, three of which originally entered service with the RAF in 1971. They carried up to 29 crew members and were involved in several major conflicts in the latter part of the 20th and early 21st centuries. When an original R.1 aircraft was lost following an accident in 1997, XV249 was selected as a replacement and, after conversion, served with No 51 Squadron

from RAF Waddington. The aircraft amassed over 18,000 flying hours during its service life and took part in operation Ellamy over Libya in 2011, thus remaining operational until its withdrawal from squadron service on 28 June 2011.

Nimrod Tours are available daily throughout October half term week (24 October – 1 November) and during the Conservation Centre Open Week (9-14 November) 2015. Tickets cost £5.00 per person and tours last 15 minutes (max 6 people per tour). As the number of people per tour is limited, organisers are advising any interested visitors to pre-book their time-slot now via the Museum's website www.rafmuseum.org/cosford. All children must be accompanied by an adult, tours are not recommended for children under the age of 5.

For further information please call the Museum on 01902 376200. The Museum is open daily from 10am and entry to the Museum is FREE of charge.

Keep up to date with the latest news and event information by following us on:

- Facebook – Royal Air Force Museum Cosford
- Twitter @RAFMUSEUM
- Instagram – rafmuseum

Ends...

MEDIA INVITE:

The media are invited to climb on board the Nimrod for photo and interview opportunities. If you would like to have access on board the aircraft, please email michelle.morgans@rafmuseum.org to arrange a visit.

Notes to Editors:

- Follow us on Facebook – The Royal Air Force Museum, Cosford
- Follow us on Twitter – @RAFMUSEUM
- Follow us on Instagram - rafmuseum
- 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
- All images used should be credited: '©Trustees of the Royal Air Force Museum'