

25 August 2016

## **Roald Dahl and his RAF journey to literacy stardom**

**Date:** 10 September 2016

**Time:** 2pm

**Cost:** £5 per person (recommended for families with children aged 10 and over)

**One of Britain's most iconic writers, Roald Dahl will be the focus of a talk taking place at the Royal Air Force Museum Cosford next month. Celebrating the 100<sup>th</sup> birthday of Roald Dahl, the talk entitled 'Roald Dahl's War' will delve into his life before he became an iconic writer, including his career in the RAF. Presented by historian Graham Laurie, the talk will take place at 2pm on Saturday 10 September 2016.**

During this talk, Graham will examine Roald Dahl's career from the moment he left school through to his employment with the oil company Shell, his first overseas post in Africa and his life in the Royal Air Force. Dahl eventually went on to become a giant in the world of children's books, making characters like *'The BFG'*, *'Matilda'* and *'Charlie and the Chocolate Factory'* household names for millions of children.

So famous were his popular novels, Dahl's Royal Air Force career is often one that's over looked. Following the outbreak of World War Two in 1939, at the age of 23 Dahl enlisted in the RAF and quickly began his training in Tiger Moths. Once qualified, he travelled to Iraq for advanced training on Hawker Harts and was commissioned as a Pilot Officer in the RAF Volunteer Reserve and posted to 80 Squadron based in North Africa.

In 1940 on a flight to deliver new aircraft to his Squadron on the coast, Dahl came into difficulties and was forced to make a landing during which the aircraft overturned. As a result he suffered severe head and back injuries requiring almost six months recovery in a British military hospital in Alexandria, Egypt. The following year he re-joined 80 Squadron near Athens, Greece, flying a Hurricane Mk 1 and went on to take part in 'The Battle of Athens'. After suffering debilitating headaches as a result of his crash in Libya and no longer able to fly, Dahl returned home to Britain and was discharged from the RAF.

This illustrated talk contains many of Dahl's own photographs and is given by kind permission of The Roald Dahl Museum and Story Centre. The talk will take place at 2pm on Saturday 10 September, just three days before what would have been Roald Dahl's 100<sup>th</sup> birthday. Places are limited so anyone interested in attending is advised to book their place now via the museum's website [www.rafmuseum.org/cosford](http://www.rafmuseum.org/cosford). Spaces on the day will be subject to availability.

The insight into Dahl's military career and life before his famous books will be presented by guest speaker Graham Laurie. Now a historian and an ambassador of the RAF Benevolent Fund, Graham was a pilot in the RAF for 36 years and during the latter half of his career he flew members of the Royal Family and senior government ministers.

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

*“We are looking forward to celebrating 100 years of Roald Dahl here at the RAF Museum Cosford and honoured to be able to share the stories of his time serving in the RAF with our visitors. He was such a significant writer to children and adults alike and we look forward to our guest speaker, Graham Laurie telling us more about a side to the author many people know little about.”*

Admission to ‘Roald Dahl’s War’ lecture is £5 per person and is recommended for families with children aged 10 and over. For further information or to book your place visit: [www.rafmuseum.org/cosford](http://www.rafmuseum.org/cosford). The museum is open daily from 10am and entry to the museum is FREE of charge.

Ends...

**Notes to Editors:**

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



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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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