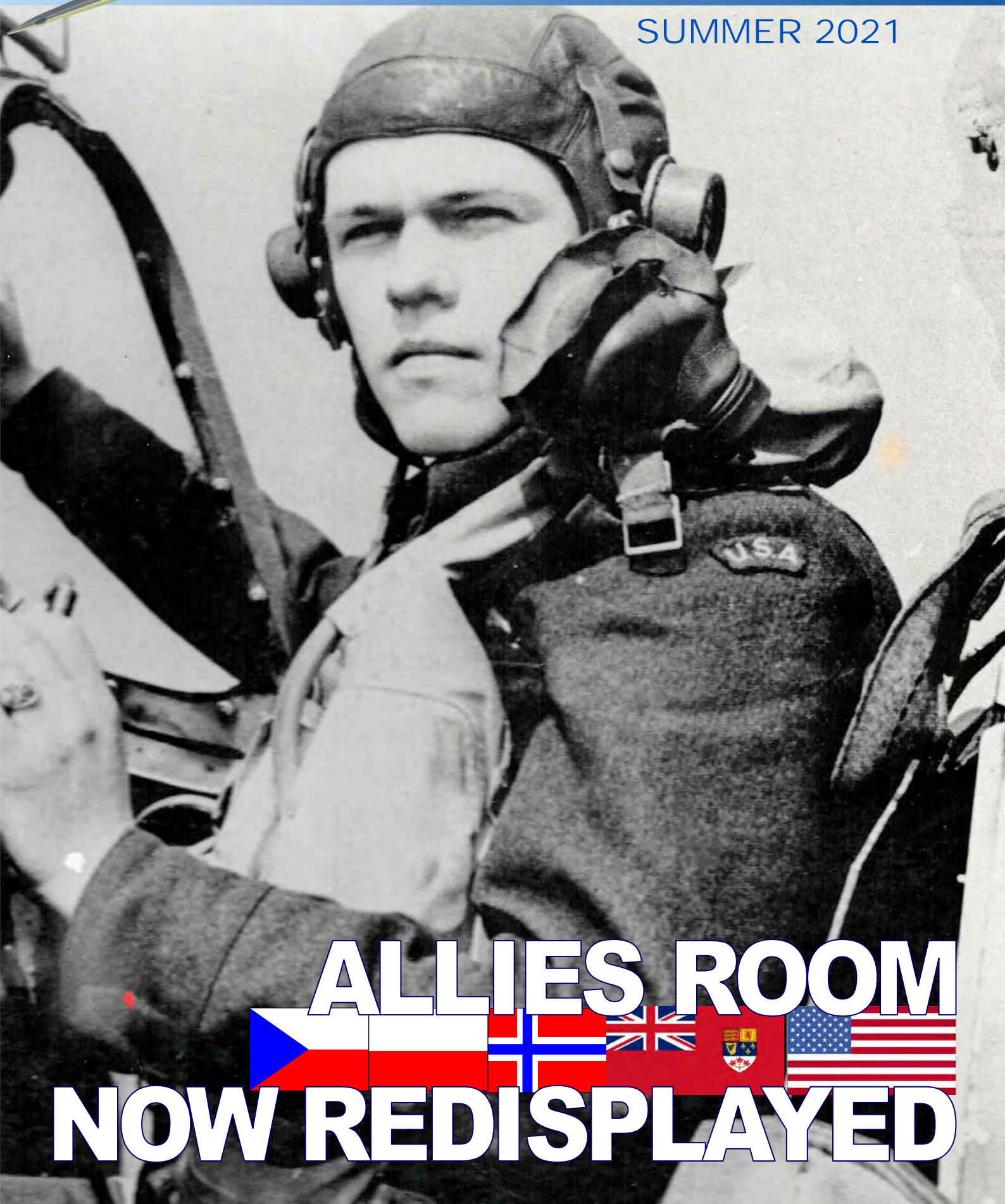




THE HURRICANE

The Newsletter of the North Weald Airfield Museum Association

SUMMER 2021



ALLIES ROOM



NOW REDISPLAYED

THE HURRICANE

NWAMA

MUSEUM OPEN AGAIN

North Weald Airfield Museum, have been open again since May 22. As ever in these strange and trying times., the question remains whether we can stay open through to the end of the season in November or whether we will need to stay open through the winter to make ends meet.

Many of us have probably concluded that we must not assume anything anymore so we will take each day as it comes.



The iconic Memorial has remained accessible throughout the closure period. [NWAM]

During the period of "appointment only" visits and erratic closures the museum on-line presence was kept ticking over with book sales and enquiries, some of the latter will appear in later pages of this edition of The Hurricane.

Many adjustments have had to be made. The museum traditionally offers talks about the museum, its history and aims, these are face-to-face affairs but clearly the pandemic has adversely affected that option, most recipients of these talks, the groups and clubs, shut down for what turned out to be more than a year. On one occasion a talk was given to one of the few groups to embrace the modern alternative to meeting face to face — Zoom. A strange experience to say the least, and one where the speaker has little if any feedback from the invisible audience throughout the presentation. At the end of nearly an hour of audio visual It was refreshing to see that the audience was actually still present. Another new skill learned.

NEW HOUSING THREAT

Although much of the airfield is now clear of threat from being built on thanks to recent commercial contracts with the aviation sector – primarily the emergency services and the leisure flying that are secure for around two decades or more. Thoughts are now shifting to the effect house building is having on the village.

The North Weald Parish Council (NWPC) fear that the 'village concept' of North Weald would disappear if all the plans for hundreds of homes on the green lands surrounding the airfield and village are to go ahead.



NWPC has stated that when other proposed local developments are considered - the 1,050 homes in the district council Local Plan for North Weald plus 1,050 homes for the Latton Priory site (over towards Harlow) and the residential home and care home proposals in the 'North Weald Park' plans - some 2,600 new dwellings and 6,000 residents will arrive in the area.

And we know of course that the new blood will be quickly questioning why a 1916 airfield was built at the end of their 2020s garden! That though is a little way in the future, perhaps ten years. Until then we can assume that no one will be rocking the boat too severely and the museum will enjoy a back-ground of day-to-day aviation.



MUSEUM ON THE MOVE



The Control Tower is on the airfield by the modern main entrance . [NWAM]

The local authority plans for the redevelopment of the eastern side of the airfield are a long way off being focussed. There are plans to coerce the museum into setting aside its current 25 Year lease and move to another location on the airfield – potentially with another 25 Year lease – but that is nothing more than hot air now.

The unclear proposal suggests that the museum might move to the control tower on the airfield as this is to be preserved and replaced by another Air Traffic Control facility situated closer to the active runway. The space likely to be offered is incredibly attractive to both the museum and its visitors – they will have a good view of an active airfield to add to their visit – but the logistics of moving the museum displays and artefacts in store are daunting.

The tenure of the museum remains secure until it decides otherwise. Further details of the plans for the airfield are discussed later in this issue.

RECENT DISPLAYS

In the last few years, the museum has worked on refreshing its displays. Just two years ago the Wulstan Tempest Room, covering 1916-1940, was redisplayed thanks to a grant from a Stansted Airport charity. Many lessons in economic and striking display techniques were learned during the process.

Last year a major new project was undertaken in cooperation with the people of Norway. Thanks to the pandemic the project became protracted, even going to the museum to work on the content was considered inadvisable if not 'illegal' at times. Fortunately, much of work could fit in with the governments advice that we work from home. Eventually the outsize boards were designed, proofed, and sent to print remotely and finally fixed to the walls late in 2020. Meanwhile the display cases were refreshed with a mixture of existing and new material.

Primarily a celebration of two Norwegian manned squadrons [331 and 332] the room celebrates the air war flown from North Weald against the Nazi War Machine. Many squadrons and nations are celebrated including the Canadians and Americans.

The volunteer pilots from the USA flew as "The Eagles" long before the USA joined the conflict and they, like the Norwegians, lived, loved, and



Part of the Wulstan Tempest Room display. [NWAM]



The Eagles and the Canuks. [NWAM]

died flying from North Weald in Supermarine Spitfires. It all amounts to a great tale of endeavour, a multi-faceted storyline that follows the museums primary aim

“A House of Memories”

Although we market the North Weald Airfield Museum around the Hawker Hurricane, there is little doubt that the Supermarine Spitfire featured far more in its operational life. In terms of the front line the Hurricane served from 1938 to 1941 where the Spitfire in all its marks served on the front line from 1941-50. In terms of a presence on the airfield though both types have been interwoven with the history of the airfield at North Weald for eighty years now and new developments will see the Spitfire flying as two-seaters from the airfield in the years ahead.

Despite the occasional difficulties the displays were in place for the opening date - 22 May 2021. Some additional details will be added in the coming months, but the storyline is complete.



Norwegian story boards. [NWAM]



The North Weald based Norwegians at North Weald.
Top: A flypast on 27 August 1942.
Middle: Pilots relax
Bottom: Arming the Spitfires [NWAM]



The Pandemic has wreaked havoc in the museum sector, many had created new exhibitions and events only to find that their best laid plans and advertising were set aside by unexpected government precipitated lock down. Both money and effort wasted. Fortunately North Weald escaped that but faced a massive decline in income. Hopefully we will be able to attract many new visitors to make up for difficult times. At least we can offer some interesting displays that no-one has seen!

OFFICIAL REVIEW

Under a week after the reopening date, on Friday 28 May, the outgoing representative of the Norwegian Government was at the museum to inspect the new displays and revisit the existing exhibit rooms. This was not an official opening of the displays with pomp, ceremony, and marching bands; that will have to await the arrival of non-covid times and by then the whole idea may be so out of date as to be set aside.

Colonel Dr Professor John Andreas Olsen Defence Attache to the United Kingdom and Ireland has been in post for six years. A normal posting is for three years based in Belgrave



Colonel Olsen and his wife at the North Weald Memorial on 28 May. [NWAM]

MEMBERSHIP DETAILS HOW TO JOIN

We accept all currencies in welcoming you to museum membership—becoming a Friend of North Weald Airfield Museum as long as it means the same as £12.50p!

You can join through the museum website www.nwamuseum.co.uk

MUSEUM OPENING TIMES

The museum season is April until November and it is closed for the winter

When open entry is free for members.

Except on Special Event Days visitors will be charged standard rates for entry:

Adults	£5
Concessions	£2.50
Children [5-15]	£1

Group rates vary but generally there is a minimum charge of £50 per group.



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ADVERTISING AND THE HURRICANE

One way in which the NWAMA can earn income and to finance the production of hard copies of the Newsletter is advertising. Advertisers need circulation beyond the membership and they also need to know who is reading the Newsletter. If you pass this edition on please let us know who to so we can help finance your reading!

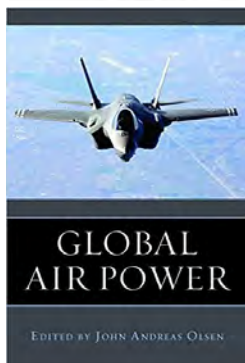
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The Hurricane includes artwork produced for it by Ian J Commin of Insight Design of North Burnham, Slough SL1 6DS. In some cases it may not be possible to indicate the source of this material directly associated with the images used.

Illustrations: Kjetil Åkra. © Wings Forlag A/S



Supermarine Spitfire Mk. VB AH-W/EP177 of 332 (N) Squadron at RAF North Weald June-July 1942. This aircraft was mostly flown by the squadron CO, Captain, later Major Wilhelm Mohr. Following severe damage during a sortie towards Northern France, Mohr bellylanded this aircraft at North Weald on July 31st 1942.



Square but during his extended period in the country he enhanced his educational background attending university.

Colonel Olsen has a doctorate in history and international relations from De Montfort University, a master's degree in contemporary literature from the University of Warwick, and a master's degree in English from the University of Trondheim. Professor Olsen is the author of several books and reports on Air Power. He has received several awards for his command and work.



While at the airfield he took in a tour that included the still in build new facilities of *The Squadron*. In the 1940s this was the flying base for the Norwegians of 331 Squadron although many of the original structures have been swept away – the aircraft pens are the same as those used throughout the war.

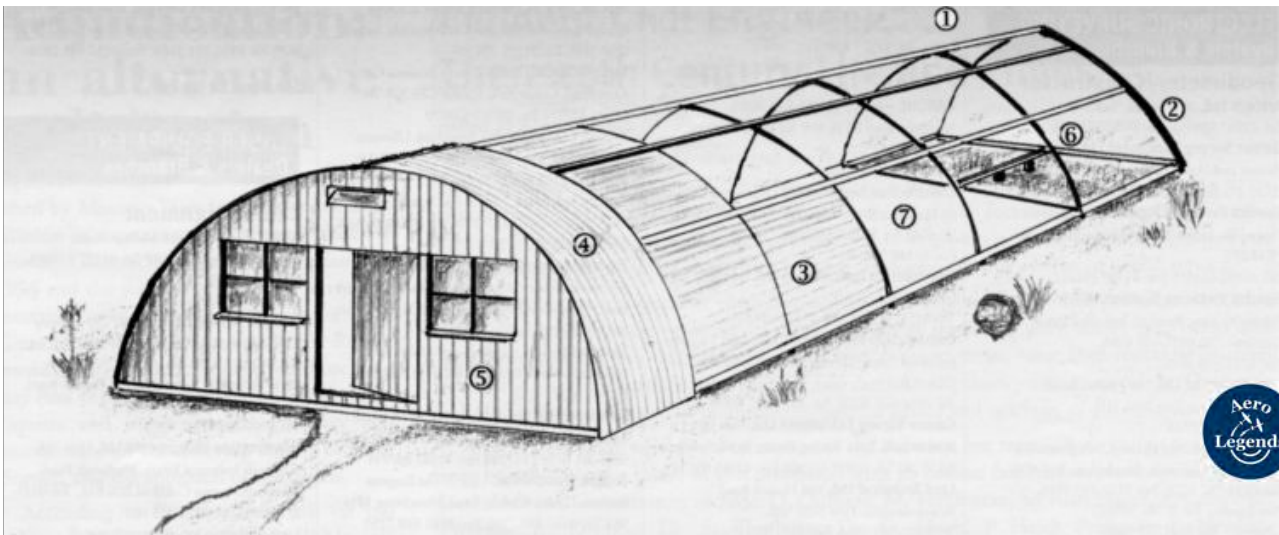
The location is now operating for *Aero Legends* with a stated aim of providing flights in several classic aircraft, the Tiger Moth, the Harvard but mainly the classic of the skies – The Supermarine Spitfire. At the time of the Norwegian visit the Nissen hut, the former bar, remained just a shell but much of the work on the main wooden building was at an advanced stage. The main part of the building will be the reception for the important customers taking the flights in the classic two-seater fleet.

They are new to North Weald but already *Aero Legends* have already significantly changed the west side of the airfield. Many may have assumed a degree of refurbishment to the existing buildings – but they were wrong. The footprint of the originals may be the same but much of the fabric of the old buildings has gone. The former bar that was housed in a relocated Nissen hut has been stripped away and replaced by a new Nissen shell that utilises much new metal and facilities. The original was simply rotting away – a lookalike makes more sense.



The original was rotten and had to be replaced with new metal. The interior panels are in store. [NWAM]





The original buildings were brought in from other parts of the airfield decades ago to create the clubhouse, offices, kitchen, and that iconic and that much loved bar where many heroes trod as they told stirring tales of bravery, death, and destruction.

These wartime buildings were never designed for a long life, like the Spitfire aircraft they will support they are being replicated. Such details as the original Crittall metal windows in the wooden building have been refurbished, some still bear the original bullet damage they collected in the 1940s. With high value customers expected the refurbishment is all about creating efficient and comfortable facilities that match their status as premium individuals while retaining a wartime atmosphere. Hopefully, no one really expected a totally genuine Nissen hut to survive the passage of eighty years any more than they believe that the Spitfires that will serve the venture are 100% 'original.'

Even the bar we remember was a modern compromise with non-standard insulation and relatively modern heating installed. Somehow, I doubt that sticking to the original specification of a simple corrugated metal roof with little or no insulation and a pot-bellied coal heater in the middle of the room would be appreciated by modern customers!

The tobacco-stained insulating roof lining of the old bar famously collected the signatures of many important speakers, now mostly the ghosts of history, who gave those memorable presentations to the Members of the Squadron. Their signatures and rhymes were important but the iconic feature of will not be returning to its original position. It remains preserved in store, its future not yet decided.



Not the stuff of modern health and safety but quite adequate for junior school children of the 1940s and 1950s!

Aero Legends is not an old company but in its short existence it has gone from strength to strength, now offering a premium flying experience service from several sites in England. The service provides the customer with an opportunity to fly in a range of iconic Warbird aircraft serviced by pilots, staff, and volunteers all of whom contribute to the preservation and operation of an iconic collection of historic aircraft. The service effectively provides finance and purpose for the preservation of historic aircraft into the future. In addition to the Spitfire aircraft there are several classic twins including a Dakota and several DH Dove aircraft.

Aero Legends' owner recently received the keys to a latest addition to the fleet - a pub! Barrow House at Egerton, close to Headcorn Aerodrome, Kent (which was RAF Lashenden during the war) and a popular haunt of the 1940s pilots.



Watching over Epping Forest
Assisting residents keeping themselves safe
Contact: efdnwatch@hotmail.co.uk

From the pub garden you can hear the *Aero Legends* Spitfires taking off and they will be overhead the village many times during the coming summer. The pub will be reopening with its original war-time name of 'The George' to be the centre of the village again with great food, an excellent range of beverages and a friendly welcome.

Aero Legends existing flight operations are from grass airfields in Kent and Northamptonshire, each can suffer from the vagaries of the weather. A waterlogged grass airfield can result in the suspension of flying and is costly, especially when the backlog of would-be flying customers exceeds 800. North Weald offers well maintained runways less affected by the often-intransigent English weather conditions.

The plan is that later this summer the North Weald version of Headcorn's George pub attraction will be the ala carte restaurant and bar in the refurbished Squadron buildings.

STALK AND STRIKE

It seems pointless to mention it as the whole story and images have already appeared in a recent edition of *Flypast* (July) but bear with me if you decided not to pay the £4.99! Here is the free version.

In March 2017 *Aero Legends* took on strength Spitfire NH341 'Elizabeth' marking the end of a three year, multi-million-pound restoration by The Aircraft Restoration Company, Duxford. Hundreds of prospective customers eagerly awaited the maiden flight of the aircraft returning to the air.

Aero Legends have now announced that Spitfire MJ444 will be joining their fleet. Spitfire MJ444 is a Mk IX built at Castle Bromwich in 1943. She served in 403 Sqn RCAF, 443 Sqn RCAF and 411 Sqn RCAF like her sister aircraft, NH341 'Elizabeth'.

This Spitfire transferred to 403 Sqn RCAF, motto 'Stalk and Strike.' During her time with 403 Sqn, she was flown by Flying Officer Mac Reeves and extensively by Flying Officer Stephen Butte DFC under the leadership of Wing Commander 'Johnnie' Johnson.

Aero Legends has secured images of F/O Stephen Butte at North Weald, in 1944 and upon his return in 2002 in one of the revetments now used for *Aero Legends* flying experiences.

MJ444 was then transferred to 443 Sqn on the 14th of December 1944 while both Squadrons were based in Belgium. Flt Lt E H Fairfield successfully bailed out of the aircraft on the 13th of January 1945 after being hit by flak near St Vith, Belgium.



The wreck of Spitfire MJ444 will be restored to a two-seat dual control trainer configuration over 26 months. The Aircraft Restoration Company will oversee the restoration to flight and the following test flight programme next year. Like the buildings at North Weald the Spitfire is an 'original reproduction' as befits the passage of over 75 years since it was brought down from the sky.



Even if every Spitfire that still existed were to return to the skies there would never be more than eighty. The rebuilding of operational wrecks slightly tilts the numbers upwards, but the number remains finite and the UK Civil Aviation Authority will not countenance the building of replicas. The restoration of wrecks is almost building a replica, but the use of an original identity gets around a mountain of changes in aviation certification rules that a replica would face.

Others are in the business of bringing North Weald related Spitfires back to life. The Norwegian Spitfire Foundation endeavours to honour the tremendous efforts and sacrifices of the Norwegian pilots and ground personnel during World War 2 in funding the restoration/rebuild of Spitfire PL258 to flying condition. The wreck of the Mark IX Spitfire FN-K of 331 Squadron was found in the Netherlands some 300km north of the location of MJ444. It had been crash landed near Tubbergen near the German border by 2nd Lt Carl Jacob Stousland on 29th December 1944. It was salvaged and preserved by local farmers and then collectors.



Help us restore Spitfire PL258

Donate now!



<http://donate.norwegianspitfire.com>

This Spitfire flew with 331 Squadron, but it appears unlikely that it ever visited North Weald. It was a June 1944 built aircraft and delivered to the Norwegians in the July. By then D-Day had taken place and the Norwegian squadrons (331 and 332) had moved forward to support the invasion of Europe. Its final flight in 1944, should not be its last. It is already registered G-NDFS in preparation for the rebirth but will be re-registered as a Norwegian aircraft as soon as it is restored. <http://donate.norwegianspitfire.com>

Meanwhile, back to the Colonel; he does not complete his handover to a successor until July so subsequent to his North Weald visit he had a number of other important dates in his diary for bidding his goodbyes to acquaintances and work colleagues across the British Isles.

Perhaps the most important appointment was in the West Country in mid-June. Like many other Defence Attache's he was to be found in the background of the G7 meeting of heads of state at St Ives/Carbis Bay, west Cornwall.

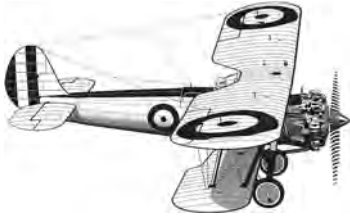
EPPING MARKET

Every Monday

www.eppingmarket.co.uk
Please come along and see us!

MARKETING

North Weald Airfield Museum has a new leaflet. The 5,000-print run of the last leaflet featuring the Hawker Demon has finally come to an end. It was wildly out of date with several manuscript amendments. The new design is similar to the last but now includes two variants of the Bristol Bulldog flown in the 1930s by 56 Squadron and a complete change of images in the fold-out interior. Thanks as ever to Ian Commin for the fantastic artwork. Copies have been mailed to museums and tourist information points in the region.



The leaflet is ably backed up in marketing the museum by an online combination of a website, www.nwamuseum.co.uk Facebook and Twitter accounts. And of course the direct mail delivery of The Hurricane several times a year.

This year additional advertising was placed with a local printed diary company and the Essex Mums website.

In a further marketing ploy the museum is working with two groups of museums (the 11 Group Network and EAAHN) to provide visitor interconnection electronically and by way of leaflets. North Weald will appear in the East Anglia Aviation Network leaflet compiled by Ken Delve of the Marham Aviation Heritage Centre.



RESEARCH

During lockdown there were several enquiries seeking further details of the family history of departed loved ones thought to have connections with North Weald. Family history has become an important pastime driven by the stay-at-home culture of the pandemic. On this occasion the museum has learned a great deal but sadly has been unable to assist greatly.

Tim Ardill has been researching the life and times of his late father Walter Douglas Ardill (30/10/1908 - 12/06/1982). Walter was stationed at North Weald Aerodrome during the Battle of Britain until at least later in 1940. Unfortunately, in a house clear-out all the pictures he had taken during his time in the RAF were lost. The few remaining include one of him in uniform visiting his brother, a missionary in Egypt, around 1941/42 and there are his five medals that include his five medals (Africa Star, Italy Star, 1939-1945 Star, Defence Medal, and the 1935-1945 War Medal).

Although it was known he served at North Weald as a member of the ground there were no obvious pointers to indicate which squadron he served with. A small complication with his identity was that his original birth certificate was incorrect in having his surname as Ardell and that was only corrected with the Register General in the summer of 1945.


All the family know is that his Service Number was 640553 and he enlisted from his home in Belfast as a civilian and became an Aircraft Hand (Class F Reservist). He subsequently became an LAC (Leading Aircraftman). It appears that he worked on the aircraft engines, a prized possession being an old spanner with "Rolls-Royce" on it. After the war he joined London Transport at Chiswick depot as a fitter on the Buses. He volunteered for war and was proud of his service, and the comradeship he found in North and South Africa and Italy.

Waltham Abbey

MARKET

8am to 3pm

TUESDAY & SATURDAY



WALTHAM ABBEY

He was stationed at North Weald during the Battle of Britain when the Germans bombed the airfield, including his accommodation (he was in a shelter fortunately). The first major raid was on 24/8/1940 when 200 bombs fell. By late 1940 (he got married on 18/12/1940) he had left and was living with his squadron at Wittering Aerodrome, Northamptonshire. He went overseas shortly afterwards in support of squadrons assigned to support the Eighth Army, the Desert Air Force. It was assumed that following the victory in the Desert of North Africa he followed the squadron to Italy after the landings in 1943.

The only clue that might indicate where he served was that Rolls Royce spanner and, of all places, eBay. That modern shopping portal featured images of similar spanners for sale. Such spanners relate to the RR Merlin engine which powered the many wartime aircraft. In 1940 North Weald had several aircraft types posted but the main fighter equipment consisted only of the Hurricane and the Bristol Blenheim. The latter was not powered by a Rolls Royce engine.



In tracking the squadron movements at the time, it appears that it is most likely that 151 Squadron was the unit that moved to Northamptonshire.

All a bit vague but at least that dumb lump of steel provided just another grain of information in filling many gaps.

TATTOO FIFTY

This year marks a full half-century since a band of enthusiasts organised the inaugural Air Tattoo gathering, at North Weald airfield. Supported by the UK Royal Air Force, the 1971 event also attracted flying contributions from Austria, Denmark, France, the Netherlands, and Norway.

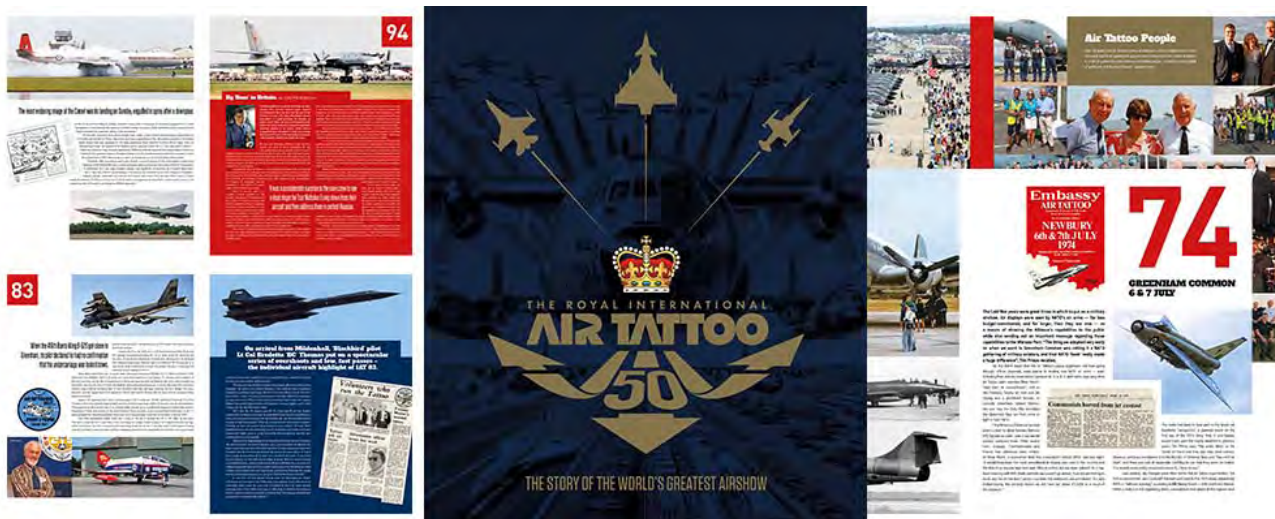
To mark its Golden Jubilee, the Royal Air Force Charitable Trust Enterprises has published *Air Tattoo 50 – The Story of the World's Greatest Airshow*, which looks back at its evolution into one of the main highlights of the aviation calendar.

Authored by Ben Dunnell, the book takes a year-by-year look at the aircraft and participants that gave the show so many unforgettable moments.

This 50th-anniversary publication is the definitive companion to the past half-century of the Royal International Air Tattoo. The book is a perfect mix of amazing photographs showing the finest line ups, displays, and flypasts, mixed with behind-the-scenes stories and some never-before-told tales.

Twenty-five years on from the last official book, this 300-page hardback details the history of the Royal International Air Tattoo, decade by decade, show by show. Featuring personal memories, quotes, and more, it tells the story of how the world's greatest air show came to be.

Air Tattoo 50 - The Story of the World's Greatest Airshow (RRP £30+p&p). Available through the website airtattoo50book.com





MOTORWAY LINK

The new M11 Junction 7A is one of the largest infrastructure projects in the country for a number of years and will see the creation of a much needed new access to and from Harlow. It will take much of the traffic pressure on the junction closest to the museum [7].

Work is currently underway on the widening of Gilden Way and has reached the Churchgate Roundabout. The widening of this part of the existing network is an important element of the scheme, creating an extra lane for traffic approaching Harlow, as well as improved walking and cycling access.

Alongside this, work is underway on the junction element itself. Piling works have been completed for the west and east abutments of a new bridge and piling for the various motorway gantries along the hard shoulder continues both northbound and southbound.

Earthworks for the new link road and M11 slip roads on to and off the M11 at the new junction 7A have begun.

THE STRATEGIC MASTERPLAN

The master plan for the airfield continues to evolve. At the present time there are proposals affecting a whole range of buildings and areas but no definite final plan with form.

In the next few years the area of the airfield set aside for facilitating post-Brexit traffic to Europe will close leaving a partially developed area that was previously mainly grass. That will no doubt attract new tenants, or tenants displaced from elsewhere on the airfield when work starts. Currently there are plans with boxes on but nothing that seeks to attract development financing. That position will remain for several years yet.

The strategic plan relates to the east side of the airfield and is proposed as a collection of hangar scale buildings. The initial plan did not even acknowledge the existence of the 1927 hangar close to the museum – so clearly the drawing presented simply a ‘serving suggestion’ - something to discuss rather than a proposal – that same 1927 building owned by Epping Forest District has just entered into a lengthy lease with a storage company. In theory it cannot therefore be simply dismantled on a whim.

We did have another similar original hangar and that was used for storage of paper. That caught fire and burned. Hopefully the new tenants will not be so unfortunate.



The latest major building to be completed on the airfield is the multi-purpose hangar for the Essex and Herts Air Ambulance. It is a more substantial than Hangar 10 used by the National Police Service [NPAS]. On June 17 West Yorkshire Police the operator of NPAS declared their intention to give up control of the police aviation operation. This may impact on the police use of Hangar 10. [NWAM]

The west side of the airfield is a series of different projects. The many alterations already made to that part of the airfield by the police hangar, the air ambulance centre and now Flying Legends are evident but for the moment they remain part of the airfield as a whole. In time each half of the airfield will have separate access gates and more buildings will be added to or altered over time beyond whatever the Strategic Plan formulates.

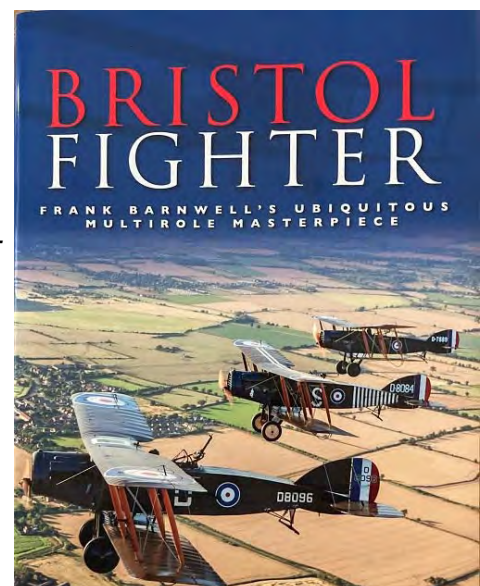
BOOK REVIEWS

Normally I leave reviews of new books to our member Eric Probert – and some from his pen will follow but having recently acquired a book on a Great War classic aircraft I decided that I would give you an opinion on it.

Not since the iconic book “Spitfire – The history” was published way back in 1987 to cover details of over 24,000 the iconic fighter have I come across a book that has attempted to cover every rivet so meticulously in a classic aircraft in book form.

The new book “Bristol Fighter – Frank Barnwell’s Ubiquitous Multirole Masterpiece” was published earlier this year by Air-Britain. It is the work of many authors I have known over the years as active supporters of the North Weald Airfield Museum. All of them are greats in the aviation publishing world but, sadly, most of them are now long dead - *Ray Sturtivant, Gordon Page, James J Halley* are survived only by *Philip Jarrett*. ISBN 9780851305363

This is the most complete book yet produced on this important aircraft. The deaths of the researchers have left it to renowned aviation author Philip Jarrett to update and expanded the original drafts of the three and brought to the market a masterpiece that each would be proud of. The later years of the Great War period at North Weald centred around this iconic two-seater in defending London against German bombing attacks and this period of its service life is covered in full.



As well as chronicling the Bristol Fighter's extraordinary history from its origins to its final years, this volume provides individual histories, technical data, production and rebuild listings, scale drawings and colour side elevations for over 5,400 F2Bs that were built. In addition, survivors and reproductions are described and their histories recorded. The text is embellished with over 950 images, many hitherto unpublished.

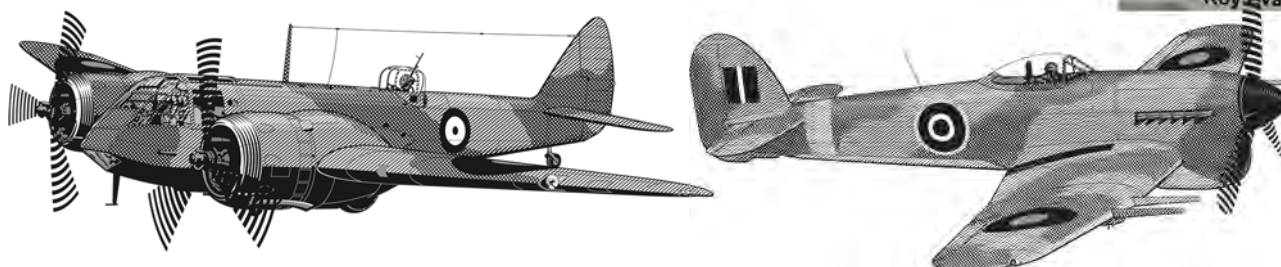
The A4, hardback has 480 pages and if you are a member of Air-Britain you can purchase it for a shade under £40 where more normal mortals will need to find £60! It is almost worth taking up membership for that sort of discount!

There are other books to be found on the Bristol Fighter, but they are classic titles from decades ago and mainly written by long dead authors and nowhere near as comprehensive. This bible on the BrisFit may be expensive but there are hours of reading in between its covers – and I make no claim to have completed that mammoth task.

Although it was open in 'mail-order' form throughout the lockdown, the museum shop remained pretty much in limbo.

In recent days it has taken on more stock in the way of secondhand books and collectors plates. In terms of new books four new volumes on the British Aircraft Industry have arrived from Roy Evans. The four volumes cover de Havilland, Sopwith and Hawker, Handley Page and Avro and update the story once told by a series of expensive books published by Putnam in the 1970s. Many of the Putnam titles are still expensive, they are now classic collectors' pieces, so Roy Evans books at £12.99 are an attractive alternative. Check them out when you visit the museum.

I mentioned earlier the artwork of Ian Commin. The most recent images produced for the museum are the Hawker Typhoon, Bristol Blenheim and now, hot off the press, we have the Avro 504 which means we now have drawn images of all the major aircraft posted at North Weald apart from the SOE Lysander and Whitley and the Warwick transport.



REVIEWS BY ERIC

One of the Few

This 218-page illustrated hardback comprises the memoirs of Wing Commander "Ted Shippy" Shipman who was an RAF pilot during the Second World War having joined the service in 1930 and retired in 1959, as told by his son John from notebooks, logbooks and other material provided by Shippy.

The story commences with Shippy's enlistment as a driver and then his progression to become an aero engine fitter and then trainee pilot. Awarded his wings, he joined 41 Squadron at Catterick and encountered the Spitfire. He then experiences action for the first time before flying patrols in support of the evacuation of Dunkirk then perfect interception is described. Prior to his leaving 41 Squadron and on journeying to Southern Rhodesia, he was involved in flying training and was awarded the Air Force Cross before renewing his acquaintance with the Central Flying School. He then left flying training behind to take up a posting in Germa-



ny with a mobile operational unit, but in 1952 he returned to the UK to be Commanding Officer of 469 Signals Unit at RAF Sopley when he was promoted to the rank of Wing Commander. After 3 years at Sopley he was moved to become Reporting and Staff Officer at the Northern Sector Headquarters at RAF Shipton. Subsequently he was involved in Suez and Cyprus. Finally, we learn of his time from 1957 at RAF Boulmer, the master radar station in Northumberland, before retirement from the RAF at the age of 50 in December 1959.

The text is supported by over 50 black and white photographs, especially of pre-war aircraft including a formation of 10 Hawker Fury aircraft of 41 Squadron.

There are a multitude of appendices - 14 in all – too numerous to mention all here, but including Aircraft flown by Shipman, History of 41 Squadron RAF, Relevant Air Ministry records, Notes on the pilots mentioned and diagrams of fighter formations and interception tactics. There is too a Bibliography of relevant books and an index in which no fewer than 23 different RAF Squadrons are listed, together with 16 airfields.

This is an interesting portrayal of an officer's career in the RAF. Although never based at North Weald airfield, Shippy's story will not be dissimilar to officers who did serve at North Weald and flew as fighter pilots during the Battle of Britain. Published by Frontline Books at a recommended retail price of £15.99, it is available from Pen & Sword Books Tel: 01226 73422, Email: enquiries@pen-and-sword.co.uk. Web: www.pen-and-sword.co.uk.

The Battle of Britain in Colour

This 163 page lavishly illustrated magazine style booklet edited by Andy Saunders with contributions from Richard Molloy who specialises in the digital colourisation of historic images and Andy Godfrey, who specialises in profile artwork. It is produced by Warner Brothers Publications, publishers of *The Armourer*, for the 80th Anniversary of the Battle of Britain. It is sub-titled "The RAF's Greatest Victory commemorated as never before." Every aspect of the battle is covered in 15 sections from the build-up prior to July 1940 to the losses and other statistics of the allies and the Luftwaffe. Along the way we encounter the leaders of the two sides and much more. A notable extensive feature with iconic photographs is "A Day in the life of a fighter pilot" but the most revealing section is entitled "From dogfights to Blitz nights". There are 30 pages devoted to brief biographies of the pilots of many Nations who participated in the Battle.

The Hardest Day -18th August 1940 when more aircraft were shot down than any other day is mentioned but Sunday 15th September when fierce air combat took place over London and the Southeast became established as Battle of Britain Day when the RAF lost 28 aircraft compared to the 56 aircraft lost by the Luftwaffe. There are also pictures of crashed aircraft and buildings damaged by falling aeroplanes.

Also touched upon is the funding of the spitfire seen as a weapon of victory Spitfire Fund, survival and rescue in the fearsome channel and Victoria Cross heroes. Men of the Battle includes short biographies and the daring courageous deeds of the pilots, and I was pleased to see included a colour photograph of a medal group with the Battle of Britain clasp on the France and Germany Star medal.



Victory 1945 in Photographs

This book shows over 100 photographs from Mirrorpix, one of the World's largest collections of images, which in actual fact are also available for purchase at www.imagephotosonline.co.uk. The images have been arranged under four headings; The End of Hostilities, Celebration – both VE and VJ days, Rebuilding Britain and Commemoration. As well as each photograph being captioned, there is a brief introduction for each heading. The iconic photographs, all black and white, are printed on high quality glossy paper.



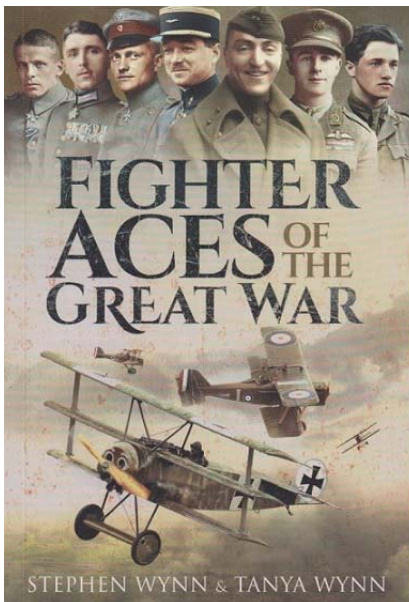
The signing of the Instrument of Surrender features in The End of Hostilities as do liberated prisoners of war and the return of Royal Marines at Tilbury Dock, Southampton Docks bedecked with flags, and a parade at the Victory column in Berlin. VE day is depicted in Celebration with

joyous factory workers, children enjoying street parties, and visitors to the ruins of Coventry Cathedral, a baby born on VE Day, an ATS girl and others dancing in the street and Piccadilly Circus thronged with people. VJ Day is illustrated with a decorated Daily Mirror building and a parade of Members of Parliament. Bomb damaged buildings and sites are depicted in Rebuilding Britain as well as pictures of reconstruction work including excavators and concrete mixers as well as a family living in former airfield accommodation. In Commemoration there is an evocative picture of a Dakota flying over the statue of an angel during a VJ Parade in the year 2000 as well as many parades of second world war heroes and veterans wearing their medals so bravely fought for.

A wonderful pictorial recollection of those heady days in 1945 and later which those of us who are old enough to remember will be able to think about, whilst others will review in awe the momentous events over 75 years ago. Published in 2019 (ISBN 9 780750 993326) with a recommended retail price of £12.99 it is available from The History Press (Tel: 01242 895310 email: web@thehistorypress.co.uk www.thehistorypress.co.uk

Fighter Aces of the Great War

Within the 176 pages of this illustrated paperback the authors have packed in the eight chapters, the biographies of many fighter pilots who achieved aerial victories from 1914 to 1918. Writers, Stephen and Wynn have a keen interest in military history and are the authors of other books on similar topics. The authors have included pilots from all participating countries of the conflict and what a pilot had to achieve before being given the accolade of an "Ace".



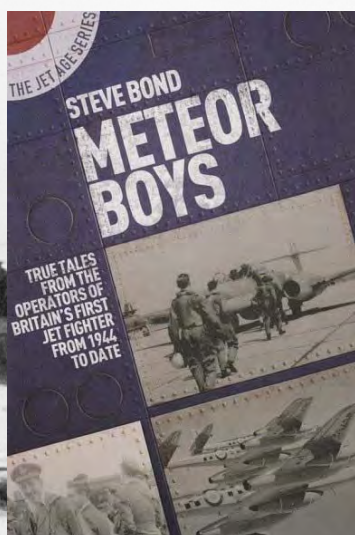
The story commences when military aviation was in its infancy just over 10 years after the first recorded flight by the Wright brothers. In the first chapter the authors consider how an aerial victory was defined and points out that the flyers of different countries had different ideas. In the next 100 pages he looks in detail at the flying and combat careers of the pilots as aces from William Avery Bishop to the German, Werner Voss and there are photographs of most of the aces. The author then briefly examines the losses sustained by the RFC and the RNAS during the first five months of the war, before discussing the RFC's losses of 245 aircraft and 211 pilots killed, with a further 108 captured in April 1917. There follows a listing of aces by country from Argentina to the Czech Republic with the number of victories and, in many cases, the unit in which they served. Life expectancy of the pilots is considered next before a brief discussion on training. The book concludes with a listing of "Aircraft of the First World War" arranged by countries from Austro-Hungary to the United States plus a short list of web sites and newspaper sources consulted by the author and an index which includes the names of the Aces and aircraft types featured.

Meteor Boys

The 184 illustrated pages of this paperback in the "Jet Age" are entirely devoted to the Gloster Meteor fighter in all its variations. The author, Steve Bond, is an aviation historian who served in the RAF for 22 years as a technician and has written several books on military aviation topics notably one on the Gloster Javelin. He has sub-titled this book "True tales from the operators of Britain's first jet fighter from 1944 to date". The history of this iconic jet is told through the experience of the ground and aircrews as the story is based on the author's interviews with 40 veterans.

The narrative commences with the Tigers of 74 squadron, sometimes based in East Anglia at Bentwaters and Horsham St Faith, exploring the day fighter at the height of its popularity. Next we learn of its use by the weekend flyers of the Royal Auxiliary Air Force before the stealth role of the night fighter version, is examined. Low and fast fighter reconnaissance operations are considered next prior to the high flying photo-reconnaissance versions. Challenging pilot training in the 1950s and aircrew training in the 1960s is described. Thereafter their use as target aircraft and ferrying personnel are explored prior to the aircraft's participation in air displays.

There is a useful appendix listing the units of the Royal Air Force and Royal Navy Units that oper-

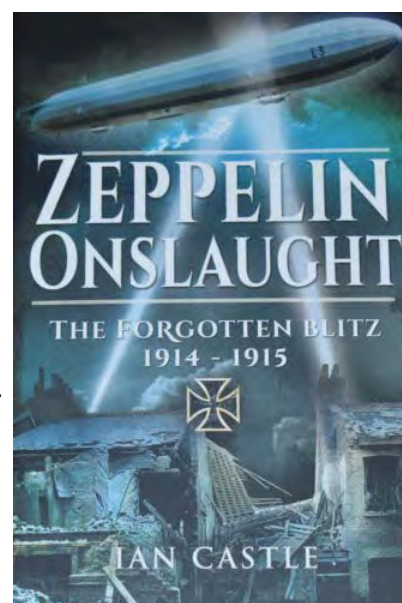


ated Meteors, together with the dates, aircraft types and bases. From this it can be seen that types F8, NF12 and NF14 were flying from North Weald from July 1952 to June 1959 with 72 Squadron and the F8 with 111 Squadron from December 1953 to June 1955, and 601 and 604 Squadron (RAuxAF) from Aug 1952 to March 1957. There is too a helpful list of abbreviations to be found in the text plus a short bibliography of relevant published books and an index conveniently in categories of places, personnel, and military units.

A really well researched account of the history of this early multi-role jet which may be used as a reference work on the meteor aircraft in service with the Royal Air Force and the Royal Navy in the 1940s 1950s and later. Published in 2020 as a paperback (ISBN: 13-9-781-911621-90=4) it is available at a recommended retail price of £12.99 from Grub Street Publishing (Tel: 01207 924 33966, email: post@grubstreet,

The Zeppelin Onslaught

The 356 pages of this illustrated hardback allow the author, Ian Castle, to tell the story of the raids by German airships on the British Mainland during the first part of the Great War in 1914 and 1915. Ian Castle is a military historian, writer, and speaker whose focus is on the Great War and maintains a website, Zeppelin Raids, Gotha's and Giants – Britain's First Blitz, 1914-1918 (www.IanCastleZeppelin.co.uk). In this book the author concentrates on the early years of the war and has sub-titled the volume "The Forgotten Blitz, 1914-1915". So, Ian Castle presents his extensive study of the topic with zeal. The author initially asserts with advent of dirigibles in the air, Britain is no longer an island, and considers that attack is the best form of defence before describing the home truths facing a concerned population who begin to experience London burning from aerial attacks. John Castle points out that the guns fight back but the frightened helpless civilian population gaze in awe at these beautiful cigar shaped airships but with dread as they were purveyors of mayhem on the ground. Each raid is described in detail including that on Thornwood in Essex on 11 September 1915. After the extensive raids in this month, it is ex-




plained how London is to be surrounded by air and ground defences as the raids continued including a raid on Suttons Farm, Essex in October. Finally, the multi-airship raids on London are explored and it is highlighted that the 20 Zeppelin raids of 1915 resulted in the loss of 207 lives and injuries to a further 533 people on the Home Front.

The 22 black and white captioned photographs depict the devastation caused to buildings but do include some of the personalities, both military and civilian, involved with the raids. The book is completed with a series of 8 maps showing the location of the raids including several for London and one for Essex and Suffolk, for September 1915, plus three appendices explaining German airship numbering systems, a listing of the raids of 1915 detailing the airship designation; number of buildings damaged and casualties, and a listing of the names, ages and locations of civilians killed. The author has usefully included chapter by chapter comprehensive notes to the text and source references as well as a bibliography for those who want to learn more and an extensive index which includes British aircraft types and crew members and several airfields in Essex such as Broomfield (Chelmsford), Chingford, Hainault Farm, Writtle (Chelmsford) and Sutton's Farm.

A very professionally researched book providing, in vivid details, the damage caused by the Zeppelin raids on London, East Anglia, Yorkshire and Northumberland and their effect on Britain's civilian population in the early days of the war which will be a revelation to many readers.

Published by Frontline Books in 2018 it is available at a recommended retail price of £25 from Pen & Sword Books (Tel: 01226 73422) Email: enquiries@pen-and-sword.co.uk. Web: www.pen-and-sword.co.uk.

<https://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/.../north-weald-airfield-strategic-masterplan>



No, it is not real, a composite of images from the museum collection—London in the 1930s and the rear turret of a Bristol Blenheim as operated from North Weald in the early part of the Battle of Britain.

The next refurbishment project for the museum is to refresh the Battle of Britain Displays. [NWAM]