

# THE HURRICANE

The Newsletter of the North Weald Airfield Museum Association

EDITION: SPRING 2017



**November 1938 North Weald.**

At the time of the Munich Crisis newly delivered Hawker Hurricane fighters ready themselves for a war that was yet ten months away.

See pages 10-11







Jim Barton on the de Havilland Vampire of 72 Squadron at North Weald ©EFDC

We have heard the sad news that 72 Squadron veteran Jim Barton passed away on Sunday 9 April after a short illness.

Jim arrived at North Weald as part of his RAF National Service and was part of the 72 Squadron groundcrew at a time when it flew the de Havilland Vampire.

He was a passionate friend of North Weald and the airfield and instrumental in starting the annual reunions for 72 Squadron which have gone from strength to strength over the years. On many occasions the current squadron was able to fly its current mount into the event. In recent times that has meant Tucano trainers from RAF Linton-on-Ouse [Yorkshire] for the weekend of the event.

Although Jim only had one leg, he was determined to be at the centre of the action, and could often be seen in his red US Marine Corps hat, which was given to him by one of the US exchange pilots who served on the Squadron and was a prized possession.

Jim Barton wrote an article about his first day with 72 Squadron for the airfield management's Spirit of North Weald newsletter. It is reproduced here:

*So here I am, standing in the back of a canvas-covered lorry with about thirty groundcrew lads, and it's so dark in the pre-dawn blackness that I can't see the face of the lad that I'm almost nose to nose with, and I'm sure that our noses would have frozen together if they had touched. Boy it's cold this winter!*

*It's been a few months since I arrived here at North Weald from square bashing, and I really thought I would be spending the rest of my two years as a National Serviceman safely installed in the Station workshops as an Engine Mechanic (Turbine). It was an 8-to-5 job, working on the jet engines that had done so many hours, and needed to be serviced – a gem of a job.*

*"Ginge, you'll have to go down to 72 Squadron for a couple of days, as they are short-handed." Complete panic seized me, as I had heard that 72 Squadron had to be avoided at all costs! En-*



©NWAM

quiring why, I was told that they had to work over the weekends because of the two auxiliary squadrons also based here. I could write a book on the things I was told about the dreaded squadron.

They worked all hours, and they had their dispersal on a mud patch that was situated half way across the Airfield, and you can always tell 72 bods, if they are lucky enough to get to the cookhouse on time for meals, they stink of kerosene and they look scruffy and covered in mud, grease and oil. "But Sarge, I don't know anything about aeroplanes." "Aw, you'll soon pick it up," was his reply.

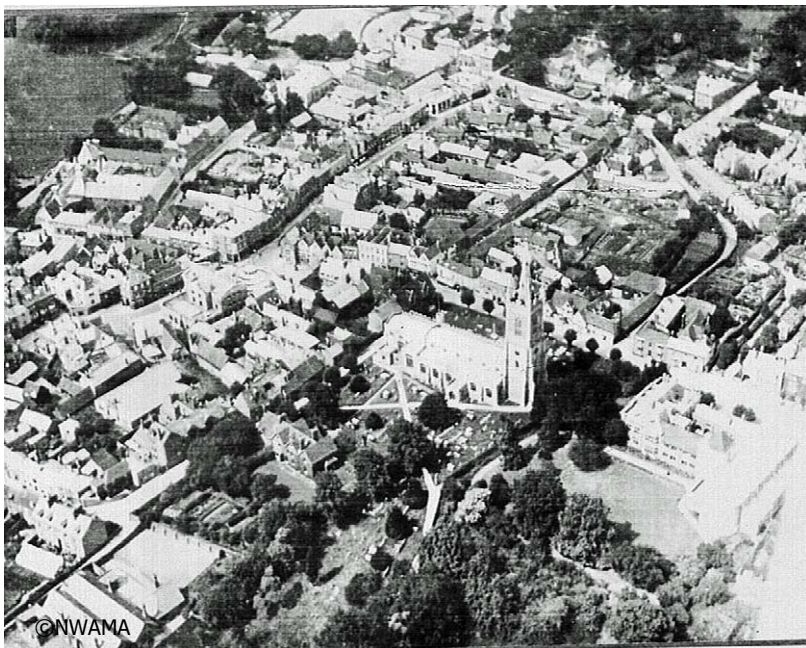
The lorry stopped at what seemed to be the middle of nowhere, and the world seemed to erupt! The lads suddenly became alive and all hell broke loose as they rushed for one of two lights shining from two huts, the crewroom and the Flight Office. I made my way to the Flight Office, the Chiefy looked up from behind his desk and said "You the new fitter?" "Yeah, Chief." "Go and do a pre-flight on 'F', OK?" He handed me a torch and a tank key, for opening the fuel tanks on a Vampire. This was the start of on-the-job training!

By the end of the day, I could pre-flight, do a 3-day service, re-fuel, do a run-up of a Vampire (so the other trades could complete their own checks), and I could also marshal 'F' into the wartime bays that the kites were using. I could also see a kite off after helping the pilot strap himself in. We just about caught the cookhouse open, and with a lot of pride, I walked in with rest of A Flight bods, stinking of kerosene, and looking scruffy, in a stained uniform, wearing seaboot socks and kerosene boots. For the first time in my eighteen years, I felt alive!

I was to spend the rest of my RAF days with 72. I enjoyed 72 Squadron so much that I signed on for an extra year!

In the last edition of The Hurricane mention was made of the late local air historian Alan Church in the article on Frank Neale. The item mentioned aerial photographs taken by Frank of Epping and that the museum only managed to get a copy of one of them before Alan died. It has been some years since Alan died but much of his collection remained at his home in Epping and only recently became surplus when his widow moved out and the house sold.

Several boxes of material was subsequently donated by the Church family in April. Many books and ephemera relating to his life and some to North Weald. In among the negatives were those I recall of 'Epping' skylines taken by Frank Neale in the 1920s. Except of course that memory is a fickle thing and the negatives are actually marked Bishops Stortford! So we have four important new images 'taken from an Avro 504.'



# EPPING MARKET

## Every Monday

[www.eppingmarket.co.uk](http://www.eppingmarket.co.uk)  
Please come along and see us!



Among the many aviation images are a few on Epping town, the Church's family butchers and his family in the 20<sup>th</sup> century though mainly in the 50s and 60s. These will be passed on to the Epping Society and the Epping Forest District Museum as they can link them to other material they have on the butchers shop business in Epping.

Lots of aviation images but many of them are not directly linked to North Weald in that they include his personal past serving in the RAF in the Far East at the end of the war. Nonetheless the images of RAF and Japanese aircraft in Burma, Singapore and Java probably have a greater general interest than those of his post-war visits to the Farnborough Air Show.



A few of the Church images of events on Horseguards Parade Ground, at Chatham Dockyard and at Farnborough in the heyday of British aviation. [All believed taken by Alan Church]



## 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](http://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	£2
Concessions	£1.50
Children [5-15]	50p

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



## NORTH WEALD AIRFIELD MUSEUM

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North Weald  
Epping  
Essex CM16 6AA

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E-mail [secretary@nwamuseum.co.uk](mailto:secretary@nwamuseum.co.uk)  
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## CONTACT US

### 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!

*Copyright Notice: The content of this publication includes items that are the copyright of others. The source of words and images will usually be indicated together with the source of additional information that seeks to enhance the original information.*

*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.*



Alan was among the group that, in the early 1970s, set up at North Weald what became the International Air Tattoo – now one of the more important events on the UK air show calendar. The donation included papers and images relating to that start-up show.

The image above was from Alan's collection of 1971 Air Tattoo images but taken by Peter R March. It is particularly interesting in that it shows an Austrian Sikorsky CH-53 flying at the southern end of the airfield and illustrating the Epping—North Weald road and the Kiaora Café that used to stand where the golf range is these days.



Charlie Geddes of the Epping Society sent us this comment on two slide images in the collection – they show a burning building and a fire engine in the early 1960s..

"Thank you for this interesting image.

"I asked Freeman of Epping and our Society Life President John Batchelor. This is John's reply.

*"I remember this fire in the High Street, as I was living above our shop [Batchelors], and I think it was a Saturday afternoon.*

*"The building on the right with Car Park sign is the Alba Restaurant, with the coffee bar next to the alley way. It was owned by Bruno Post a former WW 2 Polish fighter pilot. He was a short man, always smart with Brylcreem on his black hair, and drove round in his Rolls Royce. He was a member of the Epping Rotary Club. I remember going into the coffee bar with its "frothy coffee" in glass cups and saucers, and the juke box playing "Poetry in Motion" a hit in the early 60's.*

*"The building on fire was the old Electricity Office which is now the site of the Vape Shop and Belgique. The fire appliance in the picture is a Dennis Pump Escape I would say from Harlow or Loughton [they were both 2 pump stations]...*





"Next to that was the West Essex Printing Works on the corner of Grove Lane ... I remember this being empty and run down with smashed windows, after the printing of the paper moved over the road to Garden Terrace."

The other photograph [one sent by the Epping Society] is from a series of local images given to the Society by relatives of the late Stewart Turner recently. This particular one was taken in 1973 shortly before its demolition.



1946 Alan Church in Burma



Several fuzzy images among the Church collection are of a woman walking past a Hillman Airways DH Dragon airliner. Hillman operated flights to Paris and various parts of the UK, initially from Romford and later from Stapleford. The subject of the unclear images appears to be pioneering pilot Amy Johnson who flew for Hillman on their flights to and from Paris in the mid-1930s. When they were taken Alan would have been a boy so I assume that they were acquired by him later in life.

Amy is back in the news and in the air as she is to become the second British hero honoured on the tailfin of an airliner operated by Norwegian. Her portrait is set to appear on two Boeing aircraft, a 737 EI-FVJ and a 787 Dreamliner, on routes between the UK, Europe and the US later this year.

The airline has a history of commemorating famous figures and has more than 80 'tail fin' heroes who it says symbolise the spirit of Norwegian the airline. The series featuring British heroes reflects the airline's rapid growth in the UK, where it now flies 4.5M UK passengers each year to 50 destinations.

Born in Hull in 1903, Johnson was the first woman to fly solo from England to Australia. She did it in 1930, one year after being awarded her pilot's licence in an open cockpit single-engine Gypsy Moth named Jason. She flew for Hillman Airways in the early 1930s and was delivering aircraft in the early war years. She was killed in January 1941 while flying an Airspeed Oxford from Prestwick to RAF Kidlington after apparently going off course and bailing out into the Thames Estuary.

Norwegian's chief commercial officer Thomas Ramdahl said: "Amy Johnson is a giant in the history of aviation and a truly inspirational British figure so it is a huge honour to have her adorn our aircraft and help her take to the skies once more."



## BYTES

"Unto the skies" is a new biography focusing on the life of Amy Johnson.

The publishers are claiming this to be an extensive, fully-researched biography of Britain's most famous aviatrix. *Unto the Skies* takes readers from the early days of her childhood and adolescence in Hull, through to her estrangement from her family in London, to the point where her love of flying led to the fame she later, albeit reluctantly, gained after her epic 1930 Australia flight.

Her story still serves as an inspiration to many, being Britain's first qualified woman ground engineer – despite being told she would never be a flier – and completing her world-famous solo flight at the age of 26, before other setting other records. The story of her life is available from Amazon and from [www.bookguild.co.uk](http://www.bookguild.co.uk) operating from 9 Priory Business Park, Kibworth, Leicester LE8 0RX. The book was published at the end of March at a price of £9.99 or just £4.99 for the Kindle edition.



BBC Radio Essex has been taking a great deal of interest in the museum of late with several broadcasts fronted by the museum Chairman Peter Gardner.

Steve Wagstaffe, Trustee, minute secretary and member of NWAMA will be taking some time off from the museum in the next year.

It has been long expected but it will make the manning of the museum that little bit more difficult. After the Museum Open Day on the 3<sup>rd</sup> September he will be stepping back from regular activities with the museum until his year Master of his City Livery Company ends in September 2018. The greatest loss will be his place as the welcoming face of the museum on many of the summer Saturdays.

If anyone can kindly step forward and assist us with manning – even if only for this coming year – we will be grateful.

Which brings to mind airfield events this year. Full details are to be found, as ever, in the latest edition of *The Spirit of North Weald* the hand-size magazine written and published by the airfield team from Epping Forest District Council. Great magazine in hard copy if you can get your hands on one but it is also available in PDF standard on their website. [LATEST SPIRIT](#)

**Air-Britain Vintage& Classic Fly-In, Saturday and Sunday 17-18 June**

**Wings and Wheels Saturday and Sunday 24-25 June**

**The Squadron 1940s Hangar Dance 8 July 2017 1930-2330**

**The Best of British Community Day & Fly-In is on Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> July**

Our annual **Museum Open Day this year is Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2017** and according to the calendar of events there is not a great deal happening on that day so it must surely be a case of everyone off to North Weald Airfield Museum for the day!



NWAMA is supported financially by Epping Forest District Council.

## LETTERS

1

Hello Bryn,

I read the AGM report with interest and note the subject of the web site came up. When Simon was alive, we swapped a whole lot of emails and he learnt things from me about NW in the '50's and he also supplied a lot of information I wanted. When I saw the topic of reviving the web site came up I thought I wonder if while doing this a type of forum could be incorporated? There are often questions I ask my self and like black and white photos, I find my memory of times at N W are somewhat black and white in themselves and would love to find out if others who were stationed there have better memories.

For instance, I'm trying to acquire aircraft models that I recall from my days stationed there and I have just bought a Tiger Moth, which I recall being in Station Flight which was situated opposite our armoury where I was based. The model I have is yellow, which was the norm colour for trainers yet I somehow have in my mind that the S F ones were silver with squadron type markings. I just have some B & W photos that Simon sent me to refer to.

Anyway, I'm sure I have taken up enough of your valuable time but finally let me thank you for all the good work you do as secretary. At 81, an outstanding item on my bucket list is to pay a visit to N W someday. Strange to think that when I was stationed there I live an hours cycle ride away at Chadwell Heath but since my demob I have lived near Coventry and worked for Rolls-Royce engines. My sincere wishes to you for the coming festive season.

Best wishes

Will Roe

2

Hello -

I wonder if you would be kind enough to help, please ?

I'm researching for some background to an incident that happened at North Weald on 24 August 1940. I'd like to try and find some further information to assist a well-known aviation artist portray the event in a painting.

One account describes the incident:

*" . . . the German bombers came and caused damage to accommodation blocks, cookhouse, Officers Mess, and other buildings, also civilian buildings nearby including the "Woolpack" public house. Nine soldiers were killed these being all young men who had dashed into a shelter near one of the blocks, only for it to receive a direct hit from one of the bombs. Approximately 200 bombs were dropped, some of them being of the delayed-action type.*

*S/Ldr King had landed minus the aircraft propeller and its associated reduction gear which had been shot away in an action with an Me 110.*

*I was in the hangar when the attack commenced and ran, complete with steel helmet and gas mask, also a rifle with 50 rounds of ammunition towards a shelter near the boundary fence. I can see now, some chaps pushing a Merlin engine towards our dispersal. They ran but the engine, which was on a wheeled mounting, began to run down-hill . They stopped, ran back and chocked it just as the bombs hit the camp. We all ended up in the entrance of the shelter, crouching down just as one bomb. burst about 5 yds away and collapsed the shelter. Several chaps were dragged out covered in dust and in a shocked state."*

Squadron Leader Eric King was killed in action just a week later. I understand he was flying a Hawker Hurricane Mk 1 Registration V7380 of 151 Squadron based at RAF Stapleford during the incident.



I was wondering whether you might, please, hold any further information regarding Sqn Ldr King's combat and emergency landing at North Weald that day, please . . . or perhaps suggest where I might be able to find any further information ? For the painting I'm particularly interested in discovering what the markings of the aircraft would have been. The Squadron code was, I believe, DZ - but I have no idea how to discover what the remaining identification letter of the marking would have been on V7380 on that day.

Any information at all would be very useful - and if you require any further background please do let me know.

Your time's much appreciated.

Thanks and all best wishes -

Roger Keech

3

Dear secretary

Might anyone be able to identify the names of any secret agents flown out from NW in Aug/Sep 1940 before the SD Squadron moved to Stapleford Tawney?

I understand that agents trained by SIS at Brickendonbury Manor, Hertford, were flown out on their missions from North Weald.

Best wishes,

Bernard O'Connor



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Licensed bar until 11.30pm - Limited tickets in advance



## COVER STORY

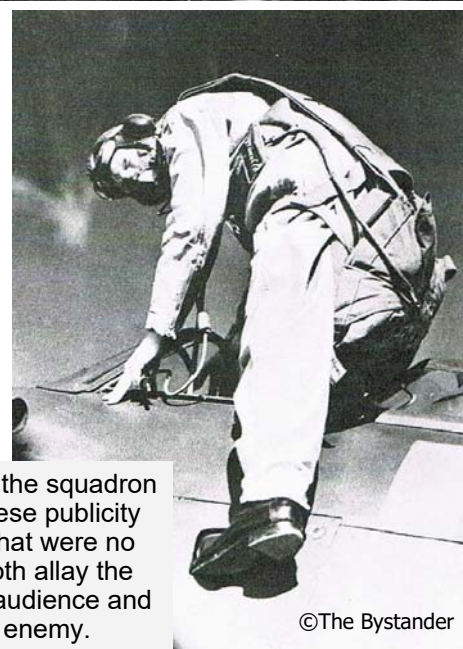
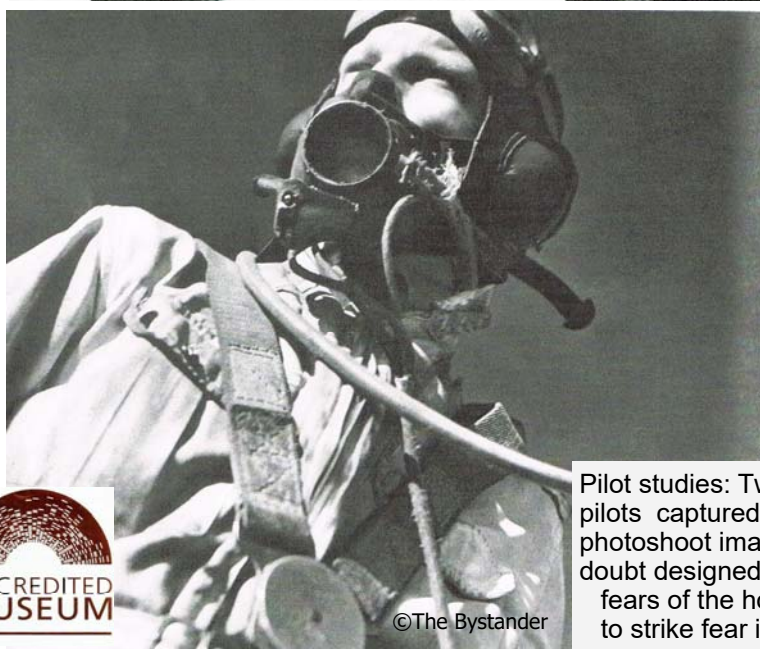
Continued research via the British Newspaper Library brought to the fore some previously 'unseen' images of North Weald in 1938 in a long defunct magazine called *The Bystander*. Not exactly unseen of course... the original pre-war readers of the publication will have read the words and viewed the images but until now the images were lost to us.

The subject of the photo-shoot was inevitably 56 Squadron and their early model Hawker Hurricane fighters with fixed pitch two-blade Watts propellers.



Ready and prepared—six 1,003hp 56 Squadron Hurricanes pass over the Shire horses that were then the prime agricultural motive power.

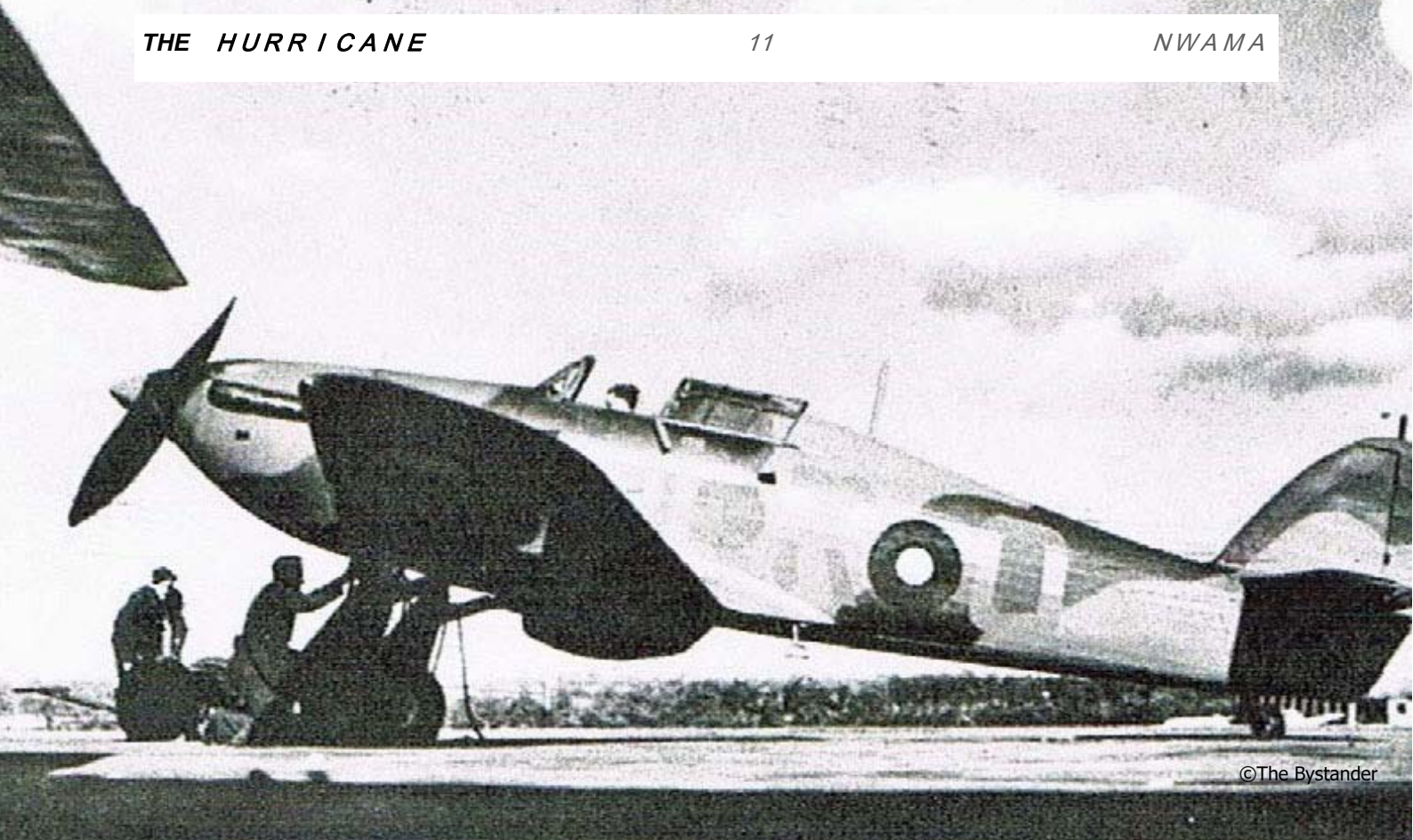
©The Bystander



Pilot studies: Two of the squadron pilots captured in these publicity photoshoot images that were no doubt designed to both allay the fears of the home audience and to strike fear in the enemy.

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# North Weald Airfield

## Best of British Community Day and Fly-in

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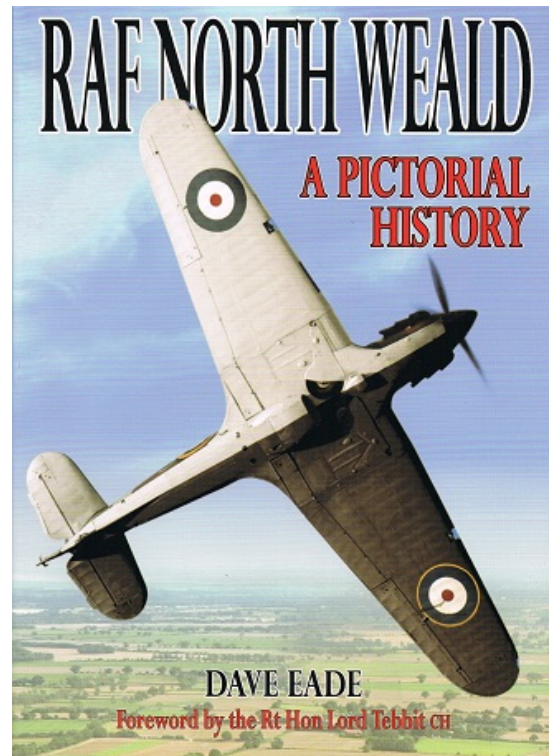

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**'Village Green' displays from 12.00**

Information correct at time of print.  
Aircraft subject to weather and serviceability.

For more event information phone Weald Aviation on 01932 525 176,  
e-mail: [events@wealdaviation.co.uk](mailto:events@wealdaviation.co.uk) or call Airfield Operations  
on 01932 564 200.  
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Still available via the Museum Shop or via the website is Dave Eade's classic RAF North Weald A Pictorial History - Do you have yours?



In among the Alan Church Collection of images were a few 'flash cards' depicting the Hawker Fury so recently a North Weald in just the same colour scheme. No more than a coincidence of course but it does show up some of the differences between the original and the modern 'replica' colour scheme. The major difference relates to the absence of the 'stinger' hook on the visual reproduction of the original aircraft.

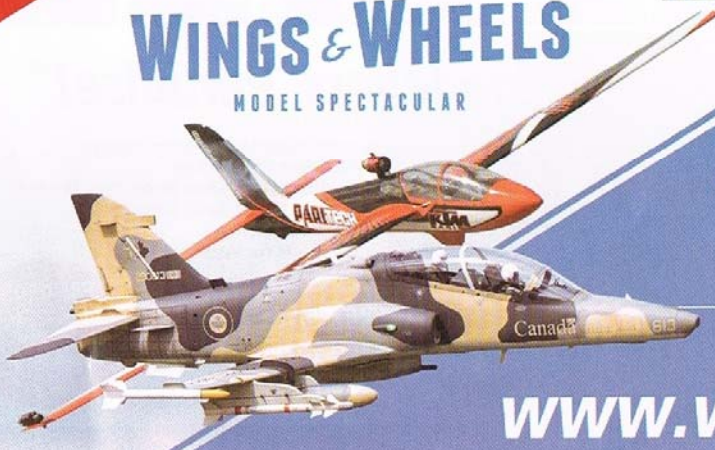


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