



100th Anniversary of the Royal Air Force Provisional Itinerary Issue 4



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OPTIONAL SECOND DAY AT RIAT & OPTIONAL VISIT TO RAF CONINGSBY FOR MASS LAUNCH & RECOVERY OF 27 TYPHOON & TORNADO FIGHTERS.

Saturday, 30th June - Tuesday, 17th July, 2018



On 17th August 1917, South African General Jan Smuts presented a report to the British government's War Council setting out his ideas on the future of air power. The report was duly approved and led to the formation of the world's first air force being born on the 1st April 1918.

The Royal Air Force (RAF) was formed by the amalgamation of the squadrons and military personnel of the British Army's 'Royal Flying Corps' (RFC) with the Royal Navy's 'Royal Naval Air Service' (RNAS): pictured left is an RFC BE2c and below a RNAS Felixstowe F3.

The coming together of these two separate aerial forces was not popular with neither the Generals nor the Admirals; in fact, most

were furious. Both arms of the British military services were exceedingly jealous of their individual aerial assets and were very reluctant to see a new 'air force' taking over not only their possessions but also eroding their power.

The RAF was placed under the control of Air Marshals in a new "Air Ministry". Back in 1914 the RFC and RNAS combined had some 2,073 personnel, however, by the start of 1919 the new RAF had more than 114,000 personnel and 4,000 combat aircraft in some 150 squadrons.

From 1918 and the ending of The Great War, the intervening 100 years has seen the numbers of aircraft, personnel and squadrons in the RAF rise and fall during the various periods of peace and war. The debate as to whether the RAF should continue to remain an independent fighting force is still raised from time to time, either by a General or an Admiral, arguing that it should be placed under their control. No doubt the next 100 years will bring about huge changes.

During 2018 there will be hundreds of events, large and small, celebrating the 100th Anniversary, many hosted and organised by the RAF; but only ONE airshow: the Royal International Air Tattoo (RIAT) at RAF Fairford in July.

Held each year, it is the largest military airshow in the world; in 2017 there were 246 aircraft from 32 air arms belonging to 26 countries and the 2018 event will be even bigger, as larger numbers of aircraft are expected from around the world, and a 7+ hours flying display on all 3 days.

As one would expect, there are very few, if any, World War One 'aviation' locations still in existence nor in their original state. The old airfields in England, France and Belgium have long gone and - after 2 world wars - are now housing or industrial estates or farmland.

However, the little World War One airfield of Stow Maries in Essex (pictured right) is unique: it has been carefully preserved in its original condition and it is possible to go back 100 years in time. This is the only still active UK airfield from WWI.

Until 1915, the First World War was being fought on the European mainland, then, in response to attacks from German Zeppelin airships and Gotha Bombers hitting the British capital, a ring of defensive aerodromes, including Stow Maries, were built to protect the main target: London.



In September 1916 the first aircraft arrived at the aerodrome, belonging to B Flight of No 37 (Home Defence) Squadron RFC. During the early hours of 17th June 1917, 2nd Lieutenant L. P. Watkins was credited with the downing of Zeppelin L48 at Theberton in Suffolk - the last Zeppelin brought down in Great Britain during the war. The squadron's Headquarters Flight joined B Flight at Stow Maries in the latter half of 1918 and an RAF survey recorded 219 personnel and 16 aircraft being present.



Another airfield still in use today (by biz jets) is Farnborough which started in 1904 as the Army Balloon Factory, part of the Army School of Ballooning. Besides balloons and airships, the factory also experimented with Samuel Franklin Cody's war kites and aeroplanes. In October 1908 Cody made the first aeroplane flight in Britain at Farnborough. In 1909 Army work on aeroplanes ceased and the Factory was renamed the Royal Aircraft Factory (RAF), then in 1918, it became the Royal Aircraft Establishment (RAE) to avoid confusion with the Royal Air Force (RAF). Accurately preserved is the original house and office of Marshal of the RAF Lord Trenchard. He held several senior positions in the RFC during World War I, serving as the commander of the Corps in France from 1915 to 1917 then, in 1918, he briefly served as the RAF's first Chief of the Air Staff before taking up command of the Independent Air Force in France. Returning as Chief of the Air Staff under Winston Churchill in 1919, Trenchard spent the following decade securing the future of the RAF. He is recognized today as one of the early advocates of strategic bombing and has been described as the "Father of the Royal Air Force". The original building and his office (pictured above) is now home to the Farnborough Air Sciences Trust (FAST), and a fascinating museum presenting the history of the

airfield from the first days up to the present day: the venue for the well-known international airshow and aerospace exhibition.

Other places we visit have been specifically selected because they have on display the widest possible selection of RFC, RNAS and RAF aircraft, dating from the first days of the RAF up to the present. This fabulous 'never-to-be-repeated!' tour includes:

- The Shuttleworth Collection's "Military Pageant" and The Shuttleworth Collection Museum at Old Warden
- Royal International Air Tattoo (RIAT), on RAF Fairford - **NEW: OPTIONAL SECOND FULL DAY**
- "Flying Legends" Airshow on ex-RAF Duxford - one the most famous and popular airshows in Europe
- Solent Sky Museum (R.J. Mitchell Hall of Fame, designer of the Spitfire)
- Royal Flying Corps Museum: aka the Museum of Army Flying , Army Air Corp Middle Wallop
- Royal Naval Air Service Museum: aka the Fleet Air Arm Museum, Royal Naval Air Station Yeovilton
- Royal Air Force Museum - Hendon, on ex-RAF Hendon
- RAF Coningsby - a guided tour of the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight (BBMF) and Hangar
- RAF Coningsby - mass launch and recovery of 27 Typhoon and Tornado fighters
- RAF Duxford - home of 4 separate museums: the Imperial War, Airborne, Land Warfare and the 8th US Air Force
- RAF Museum - Cosford on RAF Cosford
- de Havilland Aircraft Museum (formerly the Mosquito Museum), London Colney
- Stow Maries Great War aerodrome
- FAST Museum, Farnborough airfield
- The Pathfinder Collection, RAF Wyton
- Yorkshire Aviation Museum on ex-RAF Elvington
- Newark Air Museum
- Lincolnshire Aviation Heritage Centre featuring Avro Lancaster "Just Jane"
- No 617 "Dambusters" Squadron Bar, Officer's Mess, Woodhall Spa
- Presentation of "Lincolnshire Lancasters Firsts" by 617 Squadron Historian, Jim Shortland
- Cold War Jets Museum, on ex-RAF Bruntingthorpe
- Optional lunch on a DC-6 airliner, now a restaurant, at Coventry Baginton Airport
- Midland Aviation Museum, Coventry Baginton Airport

We now have confirmation of 3 airshows: the Royal International Air Tattoo is the world's largest military airshow (it will also be the RAF's main flying event commemorating their Anniversary); the Imperial War Museum's "Flying Legends Airshow" has the largest number of warbirds in a flying display outside of the USA, including 3 or more Hurricanes (there are at least 4 flying in the UK now) and 18+ Spitfires; and The Shuttleworth Collection's annual "Military Pageant" is famous for its WWI aeroplanes! When put together these 3 airshows will cover 100% the 100 year history of the Royal Air Force!

All visits are confirmed: in some cases we have arranged special access to those that are normally closed.

Some museums have storage and/or restoration facilities not open to the general public: we have requested access.

The tour price includes 1 day's normal admission to RIAT, the "Flying Legends" Airshow at Duxford and the "Military Pageant" at Old Warden. Upgraded admission including seating is available at the first 2 shows at a supplement. Please annotate your booking form if you are interested in the upgrade options for either or both airshows and details will be sent to you when published.

There is free time in Salisbury, London, Cambridge and York to enjoy as you wish. We also spend time at leisure in historic Windsor, Warwick (both famous for their castles) and Stratford-upon-Avon.

On our last night there is an optional farewell dinner; and given the very special occasion, where better than at the very prestigious and famous "RAF Club" in Piccadilly, central London! Not open to the general public, we have special permission to hold this perfect ending to your time in the U.K. See details on page 11, Day 17. Please annotate your booking form if interested.

We stay in comfortable 3* or 4* hotels, on a Bed and Breakfast basis, plus 1 evening meal on Day 11, as stated: please see details of all the hotels on pages 13-15. Our travels around England is by air-conditioned coach and the group is accompanied by Global Aviation Tour Manager, himself an aviation enthusiast.

This is a truly fabulous 'never-to-be-repeated' 21-day tour, This is a fitting occasion for aviation historians, enthusiasts - even those who are not 'total aviation persons' - to enjoy a memorable holiday.

Those familiar with England may notice a little bit of back-tracking as we travel around the country. This is due to the change of date of the "Flying Legends" airshow since the publication of the original itinerary. However, the Shuttleworth Collection then announced the date of their "Military Pageant" airshow which was great news as we can now attend all 3 superb airshows. Criss-crossing the country is a small price to pay!

Why not extend your stay in London and/or the UK and Europe. Please contact us if you require additional arrangements.

Provisional Itinerary (all times local)

Day 1: Saturday, 30th June

On your arrival at one of London Heathrow Airport's 4 terminals you will be met by Global Aviation Tours Manager or an Ian Allan Tour Manager. After a long flight you will be wanting a fast and easy transfer to the superb and historic Oatlands Park Hotel in nearby Weybridge, a short 20-minutes drive away. The quickest and most convenient method is by one of London's famous Black Cabs, the approximate cost being \$70.00 plus tip (this transfer is at your own expense). We stay one night on a bed and breakfast basis.

The remainder of your day is free to relax.

If not too tired, why not visit the famous Brooklands Museum: it was on this site that the world's first purpose-built motor racing circuit was constructed in 1907 and the birthplace of British motorsport and aviation! The aircraft collection includes a Concorde and other famous British airliners and military aircraft. Transfers to/from the Museum and admission are not included in the tour price.

Website: www.brooklandsmuseum.com

This evening, at 19:00, you are invited to informally 'meet and greet' your fellow travellers and Tour Manager in the hotel's bar.

Day 2: Sunday, 1st July

At 08:30, after a good night's sleep and a hearty breakfast, we board our coach for the 1/2 hour drive into deepest Bedfordshire, to the peaceful, little grass airfield of Old Warden - home to the one and only "Shuttleworth Collection". Comprising a large country house and Swiss Gardens, our interest is the fabulous collection of vintage aeroplanes (they also have cars, lorries, buses and many motorcycles etc), which includes the famous, original de Havilland DH.88 Comet Grosvenor House built in 1934. We spend a full day at their annual "Military Pageant": to give you an idea of the flying programme please see the 2017 event on the following website: <http://britishairshows.com/shuttleworth-old-warden-military-pageant-july-airshow.html> Featuring aircraft from WWI right through to the present day (pictured above right), one of the highlights in 2017 was seeing all their 3 Hurricanes flying singularly and in formation.



Plus, at the end of the show some of their 5 Edwardian aeroplanes were able to fly (pictured left). They are the most notable aircraft in the collection, one is the oldest British aeroplane still in flying condition. What makes these aeroplanes exceptional is that they still fly - weather permitting. The oldest, with British civil registration G-AANG, is the Bleriot XI (still with its original engine!), which dates back to 1909 - six years after the Wright brothers' aircraft and the world's oldest airworthy aeroplane.



Day 3: Monday, 2nd July

Driving to Hampshire, we arrive in Southampton at the Solent Sky Museum. At the outbreak of the First World War a small industry was developing in and around Southampton. A dozen or so aircraft manufacturers had set up factories and experimental facilities, many of them taking advantage of the Solent's existing boat-building industry as a source of labour and facilities.

Most of the aircraft produced during the Great War were therefore seaplanes and flying boats, and the mile-long sand bank just outside Southampton, Calshot Spit, became a major focus of seaplane testing and operations.

Website: www.solentskymuseum.org/

The museum also features exhibits of R.J. Mitchell (designer of the Spitfire) and the world-famous Schneider Trophy Contests.

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Day 4: Tuesday, 3rd July

This morning we visit RNAS Yeovilton. In 1938 the potential of the land at Yeovilton for use as an airfield was spotted by Westland Aircraft's chief test pilot Harald Penrose and an offer was made to buy the land. The owners however - the Ecclesiastical Commissioners of the Church of England - refused to sell it so in 1939 the Admiralty Air Division simply commandeered the land and work began on the construction of an airfield! 750 Naval Air Squadron took up residence in 1939 followed by 751, 752 and the Naval Air Fighter School.

We look around the large Fleet Air Arm Museum whose excellent collection of aircraft includes a Concorde as well as a comprehensive range of British naval aviation aircraft including, pictured left, a very rare Fairey Albacore. Website: www.fleetairarm.com

Aircraft in the Restoration Workshops can be seen through the glass wall, however, we will request a private tour of Cobham Hall - their storage facility which is not open to the general public.

Lunch or snacks can be taken at the appropriately named Swordfish Restaurant (at your own expense).

At 13:30 we are on our way to Farnborough and a visit to FAST (as mentioned on page 2). Before we wander freely around the museum and the various aircraft on display outside, we partake of tea, coffee, cake and biscuits in Lord Trenchard's office! No other single location in the world has contributed so much to the development of aeronautical science over such a long period of time as Farnborough. From the first airborne cameras and flying clothing to high altitude 'space suits', night vision aids, head-up cockpit displays and the first carbon fibre experiments - the list of Farnborough's aerospace contributions is endless.

The FAST Museum's collection, in the setting of this historic listed building (pictured right), includes an enormous archive of equipment, machinery, photographs, films, reports and books related to this illustrious history.

At around 19:00 we arrive at our hotel in the centre of London: the Ibis Earls Court, located in the well-known area of the capital. We stay 3 nights on a bed and breakfast basis.



Day 5: Wednesday, 4th July

A free day around London to enjoy as you wish.

Day 6: Thursday 5th, July

We start today in north London: Hendon - another famous airfield of early British aviation (and the equally famous "Hendon Pageants"). Located on the historic, and now hardly recognisable aerodrome, Hendon was an important centre for aviation between 1908 and 1968. After the First World War it was famous as a place of pioneering experiments which included the first airmail, the first parachute descent from a powered aircraft, the first night flights, and the first aerial defence of a city.

Sadly most of the site is now covered in housing. It is, however, still the home of the RAF Museum-Hendon, one of the largest (100+) and greatest collections of aircraft in the world. Housed in 5 major themed buildings and hangars we will enjoy several hours wandering around at leisure the various display halls including the historic Grahame-



White building. Pictured on the previous page is a Bristol "Beau" fighter. Website: www.rafmuseum.org.uk/london/

Lunch may be taken in the museum's restaurant (at your own expense). The museum also has a large aviation bookshop.

Mid-afternoon we arrive at Salisbury Hall in London Colney: home of the de Havilland Aircraft Heritage Centre incorporating the Mosquito Museum. Website: www.dehavillandmuseum.co.uk/

Among the many fascinating aircraft on display is the world famous “jack of all trades - and master of them all!” — W4050: the D.H.98 Mosquito I prototype (pictured right) which was built here in total secrecy during World War 2. This was followed by examples of the de Havilland Vampire and Venom in 1968. In 1970, the collection was joined by a further example of the de Havilland Mosquito following its use in the famous film “Mosquito Squadron”. The collection now includes examples of the single-seat Vampire, Sea Venom, Sea Vixen, Chipmunk and Dove. Also, the fuselage of a Mosquito FB6 - the only survivor of the most numerous sub-type to be preserved in Europe. Also on display, the fuselage of the last surviving square-windowed de Havilland Comet 1, the world’s first jet airliner. It is the largest museum solely devoted to one manufacturer in the UK.

Website: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/De_Havilland_Aircraft_Museum

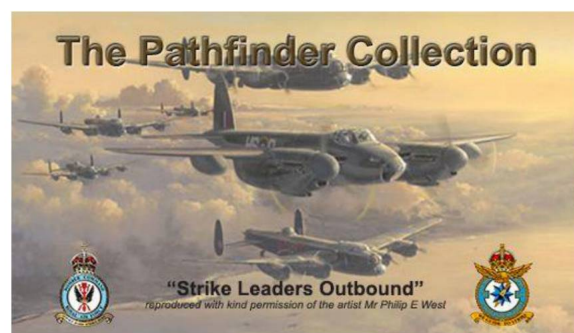
We arrive back at our hotel in London around 19:00.



Day 7: Friday, 6th July

This morning we drive to the east of London to Maldon in Essex, about a 90-minutes journey. Nestling deep in the countryside is Stow Maries - an original, untouched, RAF airfield dating back to before the First World War: here time seems to have stood still. See details on page 1. We will be shown a film, served tea and biscuits in the original Airmen’s Mess and soak up the atmosphere in hangars containing late production and replica First World War planes. Website: www.stowmaries.org.uk/

Shortly after midday we leave Essex and head for Cambridgeshire, arriving in the famous university city of Cambridge 90-minutes later. We stay the next 2 nights at the ideally located Arundel House Hotel on a bed and breakfast basis. Overlooking the River Cam and Jesus Green Park, the historic centre with its colleges, shops, restaurants, cafes, bars and nightlife is but a short walk away.



Day 8: Saturday, 7th July

At 09:00 we drive to RAF Wyton, 40 miles to the north. Wyton has been a military airfield since 1916, when it was used for training by the RFC and then its successor the RAF. During the World War it was used primarily as a bomber base, flying Bristol Blenheim, de Havilland Mosquito and Avro Lancaster aircraft and is famous for flying the first bombing mission to cross the German frontier of the Second World War - on the first day - and, in 1942, it became the home of the Pathfinder Force under the command of Australian Group Captain - later Air Vice Marshal, Sir Don Bennett.

We visit the Pathfinder Collection: a memorial and testimony to the airmen of No 8 Pathfinder Group of RAF Bomber Command during World War II: the RAF’s only officially recognized ‘elite’ force, it commemorates that organisation and those who gave so much in achieving its goals: many of the air and groundcrews came from various Commonwealth countries.

Website: www.raf.mod.uk/rafbramptonwyton/history/pathfindercollection.cfm

At midday we set off to one of the most famous fighter airfields of the Second World War: Duxford. The airfield dates back to 1918 when many of the buildings were constructed - by German prisoners-of-war! First resident was No 8 Squadron in 1919-1920 equipped with Bristol Fighters. Then came No 2 Flying Training School until April 1923, when 19 Squadron was formed with Sopwith Snipes. In 1938 resident No 19 Squadron was the first RAF squadron to receive the new Supermarine Spitfire.

The airfield played an essential part in the Battle of Britain in 1940: Hurricanes of 310 Squadron arrived in July, flown by Czechoslovakian pilots who had escaped from France. Then came the Hurricanes of 242 Squadron commanded by a certain Douglas Bader who came down from RAF Coltishall; together with 19 and 310 Squadrons they became known as the “Duxford Wing”, the first of 12 Group’s “Big Wing” formations. In recognition of the efforts, achievements and sacrifices made by all the squadron’s airmen and airwomen during the Battle of Britain, the “gate guard” aircraft on display at the entrance to IWM Duxford is a Hawker Hurricane II, squadron code WX-E of No 302 (Polish) Squadron (serial P2954), flown by Flight Lieutenant Tadeusz Pawel Chlopik.

In 1942 the first Hawker Typhoon Wing was formed. Then in 1943, until the end of the war, Duxford was assigned to the United States Army Air Forces and became known as “Station 357 (DX)” of the 8th Air Force Fighter Command.

On 1 st August 1961, a Gloster Meteor NF. 14 (pictured right) made the last take off from the runway before Duxford closed as an RAF airfield and was abandoned.

This afternoon you are free to wander at your leisure the various museums located here: the Imperial War Museum, 8th US Air Force Museum, the Land Warfare Museum (tanks AFVs etc), the Airborne Museum and the classic civil airliners belonging to the Duxford Aviation Society. Last but not least, the warbird restoration and display hangars. Website: www.iwm.org.uk/exhibitions/iwm-duxford/air-shows

Lunch, at your own expense, can be enjoyed in the on-site restaurant. There is also a huge aviation bookshop here

Alternatively, spend the whole day in Cambridge to enjoy as you wish.





Day 9: Sunday, 8th July

At 08:30 we depart for the old town of Newark, to the Newark Air Museum located on the ex-RAF Winthorpe airfield. In the Second World War it was a Heavy Conversion Unit training up pilots on Lancasters. We arrive around 10:00.

The Museum's large and amazing collection of some 70+ civil and military aircraft (pictured left) go back to the 1930s. See the list of those on display in the hangars and around the grounds at www.newarkairmuseum.org/Aircraft-List

Several aircraft cockpits will be open for our group to sit inside (for a small fee, not included in the tour price). There is a small souvenir shop and cafe serving snacks and hot and cold drinks.

We then continue north, into Yorkshire, and the old RAF airfield of Elvington: in WWII it was the home of No 77 Squadron with around 20 Armstrong Whitworth

Whitley medium bombers. These were quickly replaced by the Handley Page Halifax: pictured below is "Friday The 13th" Halifax II. The squadron suffered heavy losses during its time at Elvington with over 500 aircrew killed, missing or taken prisoner and almost 80 Halifax's lost as it played a major part in the Battle of the Ruhr and the bombing of Berlin.

In May 1944 No 77 Squadron moved to newly opened RAF Full Sutton and was replaced at Elvington by 2 French Halifax squadrons, 346 "Guyenne" and 347 "Tunisie" who both played a leading part in the bombing of Germany. Elvington was the only airfield in the UK used by the remainder of the Free French Forces and nearly half of the squadrons' members lost their lives. Fittingly, the station was selected as the site for "The Allied Air Forces Memorial".

Now home to the Yorkshire Air Museum and its huge range of exhibits and collections spanning the entire history of flight: from the early pioneers of aviation, through both world wars, right up to the Cold War era. Today there are over 60 historic aircraft and vehicles and its 'Post World War II' collection is one of the most comprehensive in the UK: from the 1853 Cayley Governable Parachute through to the current GR4 Panavia Tornado, the Museum represents the history of aviation in Britain. Website: <http://yorkshireairmuseum.org/exhibits/>

Free access to the Halifax by the general public is not possible. After a very long and expensive restoration the museum, quite rightly, wishes to preserve the aircraft in its immaculate condition for generations to come.

Guided tours are given to ex-Halifax air and groundcrews, and direct relatives of Halifax veterans, for \$80.00. Subject to availability tours for other persons are very strictly limited and there is a charge of \$240.00 per person. The Museum has very kindly agreed that a very small number of our group - who are not veterans or a direct relative - can be shown around the aircraft at the above price. If interested please annotate your booking form stating clearly if you are a Halifax veteran, a direct relative or just very keen!



The museum has a souvenir shop and a 'NAAFI'-style cafe serving cooked meals, snacks and refreshments. A good place to have lunch (at your own expense).

We depart when the Museum closes at 17:00 and 30 minutes later arrive in the historic medieval city of York. Although the Vikings were rampant in this part of the country (there is an excellent museum in the city), York was founded by the ancient Romans: the huge 13th Century Gothic cathedral, York Minster, has medieval stained glass and 2 functioning bell towers. The City Walls form a walkway on both sides of the River Ouse and the Monk Bar gate houses an exhibition tracing the life of the 15th-century Plantagenet King Richard III. There is also the National Railway Museum and the famous "Shambles": an old street with overhanging timber-framed buildings, some dating back to the 14th Century. It was once known as The Great Flesh Shambles - in Anglo-Saxon Fleshammels literally means 'flesh-shelves', the word used by butchers to display their meat. In 1872 there were 25 butchers' shops located along the street, but none remain today. Website: www.visitvork.org/seeanddo/must-see-york.aspx?AskRedirect=true

We stay 2 nights in the middle of the city at the Novotel York Centre Hotel on a bed and breakfast basis, perfectly located only a short walk from most of the city's major attractions.

Day 10: Monday, 9th July

At 08:00 we set off for East Kirby, arriving around 10:15



at the home of the Lincolnshire Aviation Heritage Centre - and their Avro Lancaster "Just Jane"! Restoration to flying status is an ongoing project, which should be completed in the not too distant future having successfully acquired the last of four airworthy Merlin engines, however, the aircraft remains on public view (pictured below). It is uncertain at this time if taxi rides up and down the runway will be available due to the restoration work and prior commitments.

The airfield was built in 1943 as a Bomber Command Station and used by both No 57 Squadron and No 630 Squadron from 1943 until the end of the war.

Pilot Officer Christopher Panton served as a Flight Engineer with Royal Canadian Air Force 433 Squadron, based at RAF Skipton-on-Swale. On the night of 30th/31st March 1944, he was flying in Handley Page Halifax HX272, one of 782 heavy bombers taking part in a raid on the German city of Nuremberg. This attack, known as RAF Bomber Command's "Black Friday", would become notorious for the high losses incurred - 108 British aircraft were lost, 665 aircrew were killed and 159 taken

prisoner. One of those aircraft on the raid was HX272, which caught fire and exploded after being attacked by a night fighter over Friesen, Germany. Christopher Panton was among the five crew killed, the remaining three survived to become prisoners of war.

By the early 1970s, Christopher's younger brothers - Fred and Harold Panton - were successful poultry farmers. They became interested in acquiring a Second World War aircraft as a tribute to him and managed to obtain an option to purchase Avro Lancaster Mk VII, NX611, then serving as a gate guardian at RAF Scampton. In 1981 they bought part of the former RAF East Kirkby, to be a site for the aircraft and the Lancaster was moved there in 1987.

Also to be seen here is the cockpit of an English Electric Canberra; wreckage of a Spitfire Vb; 2 aircraft undergoing restoration to flying condition - a Percival Proctor and a Handley Page Hampden; various World War 2-era RAF ground vehicles; a concrete-filled, practice 'Upkeep' bomb (a 'Barnes Wallis' bouncing bomb of 617 Squadron fame); and a 60cm, German anti-aircraft searchlight with its generator, which are in working order.

Optional lunch, at own expense, can be enjoyed in the Museum's NAAFI.

Then to the busy, operational front-line station of RAF Coningsby, about a 15 minutes drive across the countryside of Lincolnshire.

We begin our guided tour of the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight's (BBMF) at 14:00: a fascinating 90-minutes guided tour of their hangar where most, if not all, of their collection of 6 Spitfires, 2 Hurricanes, 1 Lancaster, 1 Chipmunk and a DC-3 will be present. The group will be split into smaller parties for this.

The BBMF includes Spitfire Mk IIA (P7350), the oldest airworthy Spitfire in the world and the only 'Spit' still flying to have actually fought in the Battle of Britain! It is currently presented as a Mark 1a (Serial N3162) of No 41 Squadron, coded 'EB-G': this aircraft was flown by the top-scoring Battle of Britain fighter ace Eric Lock, who on the 5th September 1940, destroyed 3 enemy aircraft in a single sortie.

Website: www.raf.mod.uk/bbmf/

In the Visitors 1940s tearoom they offer a selection of cakes, scones, toasted teacakes and hot and cold drinks. There is also a souvenir/bookshop at the Centre.



Day 11: Tuesday, 10th July

A free day to enjoy some of the famous attractions of York as you wish.

Alternatively, return to RAF Coningsby this morning to witness the launch and recovery of 27 or more Typhoon and Tornado fighters as they participate in the RAF 100 Anniversary Flypast over central London. Rather than return to York you would then go to the hotel in nearby Woodhall Spa. Estimated price of this option is \$80.00 per person depending on how many people go.

For those spending the day in York, at 15:00 we board our coach and drive to the small, peaceful village of Woodhall Spa, arriving at approximately 17:15. Here we check-in for one night on a dinner, bed and breakfast basis at a very special hotel: the Petwood.

This hotel is a very famous and historic aviation site: it is the original Officers' Mess of No 617 "Dambusters" Squadron! Things have changed since World War II: the squadron bid farewell to its Tornado's and was dis-banded a few years ago but in

January 2018 it will have reformed as the first British frontline squadron operating the F-35 Lightning II. 617 Squadron will be composed of both RAF and RN personnel, operating from RAF Marham and off the new Queen Elizabeth class aircraft carriers.

The original 617 Squadron bar of WWII is untouched and in order to preserve it access is by prior permission only, which we have received! Also, throughout the hotel, there are many interesting items of memorabilia of 617 on display.

Before dinner tonight, Squadron historian Jim Shortland will give a 1 hour presentation on "Lincolnshire's Lancaster Firsts".

Day 12: Wednesday, 11th July

Departing the hotel at 09:00, two hours later we arrive at Bruntingthorpe airfield. Work on the construction of RAF Bruntingthorpe was started in 1942 for its role as a heavy bomber base which continued throughout World War II. After the war the airfield was chosen as the site for top secret tests of the jet-propelled aircraft designed by Frank Whittle's company, Powerjets Ltd. His designs, and the development work carried out on Bruntingthorpe, pioneered the way to the world of jet aircraft and aviation that is today taken for granted.

During the 1950s, the Ministry of Defence redeveloped the airfield and it was given over to the United States Air Force (USAF). The newly-constructed two-mile-long runway - still one of the longest in the UK - was essential for the USAF's largest nuclear bombers which were deployed here as part of the Cold-War defence of the Western world against perceived threats from the Soviet Bloc.



At the end of the long and tense Cold War, Bruntingthorpe's role changed again and from 1973 it was used for vehicle testing. This continued until 1983 when the Walton family bought the airfield and proving ground and formed the fabulous Cold War Jet Collection: the collection includes a Victor, Hunter, Canberra, Comet, 2 Lightning's (pictured right), Starfighter, Mystere, Sea Vixen, 4 Buccaneers, 4 Jet Provosts, Super Guppy, Iskra, an RAF Jaguar, Nimrod MR2, Sea Harrier and an ex-Boscombe Down 2-seat Jaguar. On two Open Days each year, many of the jets are brought back to life and do taxi runs along the runway.



A few years ago the crew of the Victor literally got carried away and the aircraft did more than a fast taxi - to everyone's surprise it accidentally took off! Details of the collection can be seen on: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cold_War_Jets_Collection

In 1997, the airfield was used by the USA's FAA and the UK Civil Aviation Authority to conduct a test on a Boeing 747 to study the effects of a terrorist planted bomb explosion on board a wide-body aircraft such as had happened over Lockerbie.

Continuing to Coventry, we visit the very interesting 30+ aircraft in the collection of the Midland Aviation Museum, incorporating The Sir Frank Whittle Jet Heritage Centre (pictured left). Website: www.midlandairmuseum.co.uk/about.php

Time also - for those who wish - to take an optional lunch in the nearby "DC-6 Diner". This vintage DC-6 airliner featured in the James Bond film "Casino Royale" but since 2010 has been a very unique restaurant. Meals will be ordered in advance so that they are ready for when we board and take our seats. Interested? Please annotate your booking form. Website: www.dc6diner.com/

Continuing our east to west journey across the middle of England we arrive in Telford, where we stay overnight at the Holiday Inn-Telford Ironbridge on a bed and breakfast basis.

Day 13: Thursday, 12th July

We depart the hotel at 09:45 for our visit to the huge collection of aircraft in the RAF Museum Cosford which opens at 10:00.

RAF Cosford opened in 1938 as a joint aircraft maintenance, storage and technical training unit and has remained mainly as a training unit to this day. No 2 School of Technical Training was formed in 1938 and during the Second World War it trained 70,000 airmen in engine, airframe and armament trades. During the war No 12 Ferry Pool of the Air Transport Auxiliary (ATA) was formed here, which involved delivering Spitfires from the base and returning with bombers or fighters destined for No 9 Maintenance Unit. These ferrying flights were often crewed by women pilots and Amy Johnson came to Cosford on more than one occasion.

The RAF Museum Cosford has over 70 aircraft housed in 3 wartime hangars and the National Cold War Exhibition building. The world's oldest Spitfire and a Lincoln Bomber, are just 2 of the highlights in the 'War in the Air Collection' - added in April 2017 is a very rare, beautifully restored, Junkers JU-88R-1.

In the Test Flight hangar there is the TSR2 (pictured right) and the unique Bristol Type 188.



There are 60+ engines and missiles in Hangar 1 in arguably one of the finest collections in the world. In 2007 the £12.5 million National Cold War Exhibition was opened and several of the 19 aircraft are suspended in flying attitudes.

This is the only place in the world where you can see all 3 of Britain's V Bombers: the Vulcan, Victor and Valiant!

There is also an aviation bookshop and cafeteria: lunch, at your own expense, can be taken here.

Early afternoon we depart for Swindon, a 1-hour drive to the south, and stay the next 2 nights at the Jurys Inn - Swindon City Centre on a bed and breakfast basis. Located in the city centre, it is ideally located for those going to RIAT.

The Royal International Air Tattoo (RIAT) requires many hundreds of hotel rooms to accommodate the several thousands of military personnel and civilians involved in this huge event. All large hotels within a 75 mile radius of RAF Fairford are permanently booked by RIAT for every July. Based on experience with our previous groups going to RIAT we consider it is essential we stay as close as possible to RAF Fairford and for that reason we have chosen this city-centre hotel.



The big advantage is that travel to and from RIAT will be on the special shuttle bus service from nearby Swindon Bus Station, driving along a dedicated 'shuttle buses only' route, which is the quickest way in and out of the airshow. With several hundreds of thousands of people driving to Fairford, the local country roads are soon heavily congested and you get nowhere fast!

Day 14: Friday, 13th July

Enjoy a full day at the world's largest airshow, at the 100th Anniversary of the Royal Air Force Airshow. Details of participants in the static area and during the 7-hour airshows will

be announced from late 2017 onwards. Expect 400-500+ military aircraft and a number of national aerobatic teams from around the world. Pictured below is a Colombian Air Force C-130 Hercules with arguably the best 'nose art' - ever!

Admission is by advanced purchase ticket only and the tour price include 1 day's standard admission ticket.

A shuttle bus service operates from Swindon's bus station. Journey time is about 30 minutes and services run approximately every 15 minutes as follows: Swindon Bus Station to RIAT: from 06:45 to 12:00. RIAT to Swindon Bus Station: from 14:00 to 19:30. A return ticket is included in the tour price.

Day 15: Saturday, 14th July

Departing at 09:00 we set off for Warwick, a journey of around 1 hour 45 minutes. This beautiful and historic town dates back to medieval times. Warwick Castle is one of the most intact castles anywhere and can trace its history back to 914 A.D. and the daughter of King Alfred the Great!

Among the events held during the summer in and around the castle are pitched battles between knights and peasants; jousting tournaments where knights, complete with lance, gallop madly towards each other on horseback; archery; musketry; and falconry! All the 'actors' are in period dress in a replica village depicting life as it was in medieval times! Website: <http://visitwarwick.co.uk/>

At 13:15 we leave for Stratford-upon-Avon arriving 30 minutes later. The birthplace of William Shakespeare and steeped in culture and history, the town is set in the beautiful rural Warwickshire countryside, on the banks of the lovely River Avon. It is one of the most popular tourist destinations in the whole of the UK. Here you can wander through the historic streets and get a taste of Olde England. Website: www.visitstratforduponavon.co.uk/

At 16:45 we depart for Cambridge, arriving around 19:00 and check-in at The Royal Cambridge Hotel which is ideally located on the edge of the city centre but only a 10-minutes stroll away from Kings College. On-site facilities include restaurant and bar and the well-equipped rooms include tea/coffee making machines.

Alternatively, a second full day at RIAT! Again using the special shuttle coach service to/from the show, you return to the Jury's Inn hotel and, from there board our specially chartered coach which will transfer you all the way to Cambridge.

Estimated price of the coach charter is \$100.00 per person, depending on who many people take up the option: cheaper than a taxi and quicker than going by 2 trains and the London Underground!



Day 16: Sunday, 15th July

At 08:00 we depart on the 15-minutes drive for a full day at one of the most famous and well-known airshows in the UK, in Europe, in the world! The 2018 Flying Legends Airshow at Duxford featuring around 100 mainly classic and historic

piston-powered warbirds (with only a handful of modern jets).

The finale is the famous 'balbo', a massed-formation, 15-20 minutes, tail-chasing finale featuring many of the aircraft which have taken part in the flying display, is unique to the Flying Legends Air Show and a world-renowned spectacle.

Admission is by advanced purchase tickets only and the tour price will include a standard admission ticket. In addition, there will be various optional upgrades available at a supplement and these will be published early 2018. Details will be sent to you should you wish to consider them.

When the flying display finishes, usually around 18:00, we return to where we were dropped off: the coach park outside the Museum's shop, and board our coach for the return transfer to the hotel.



Alternatively, you are free to spend the day as you wish in Cambridge.

Day 17: Monday, 16th July

Leaving the hotel at 09:00 we go to Windsor, a journey time of around 2 hours 45 minutes. In addition to the old town, Windsor it is famous for its Castle. Also, on the other side of the River Thames, is one of the world's most famous places of learning: Eton. There are also cruises along the River Thames.

The town is notable for its long association with the English - and later the British - royal family and for its architecture. The original castle was built in the 11th century after the Norman invasion of England by William the Conqueror.

Since the time of King Henry I, the fourth son of William The Conqueror, who ascended the English throne on the 2nd August 1011, it has been used continuously by every reigning monarch since then and is the longest-occupied palace in Europe.

The castle's lavish early 19th-century State Apartments are a superb and unrivalled sequence of rooms widely regarded "as the finest and most complete expression of later Georgian taste". Inside the castle walls is the 15th-century St George's Chapel - "one of the supreme achievements of English Perpendicular Gothic" design. Windsor Castle is the preferred weekend home of Elizabeth II and today more than 500 people live and work there, making it the largest inhabited castle in the world.



Website: www.royalcollection.org.uk/visit/windsorcastle

Explore the charming town of Windsor situated on the banks of the River Thames, go inside the Castle grounds and even take a tour of the Royal Apartments (admission to the latter is not included in the tour price). Website: www.windsor.gov.uk/

Mid-afternoon we depart for central London and check-in for a second stay at the Ibis Earls Court Hotel, this time for one night on a bed and breakfast basis.

We are nearing the end of our time together and a Farewell Dinner will be a fitting finale. We are offering, therefore, an optional evening social occasion.

For this very special "100th Anniversary of the RAF" tour there is no more appropriate or perfect a venue than the very prestigious Royal Air Force Club at Number 128 Piccadilly, in Mayfair!

We have been given special permission to hold the dinner in the Battle of Britain Suite incorporating the Spitfire Room and the Hurricane Room.

Simply referred to as the RAF Club, membership is open to men and women who hold or have held commissions in the RAF, PMRAFNS, Reserve Forces and Commonwealth and friendly foreign air forces. It was founded in 1918 and the buildings, still in use today, were acquired in 1919 (the Piccadilly frontage - pictured left- was originally the Ladies Lyceum Club, while the rear half, facing Old Park Lane, was stables).

At 18:30 we depart by coach and arrive at the Club approximately 30 minutes later. After pre-dinner drinks (cash, pay-as-you-go bar), at 19:30 we take our seats for a 3-course dinner. As we would hope that a large number of the group will take up this fabulous option, and to ensure the meal is served hot and in a timely fashion, the Club suggested the meal be decided in advance: so, as befitting your visit to England and Scotland, it will be typically British: a starter of Smoked Salmon with Brown Bread and Butter; a main of Roast Sirloin of British Beef with Yorkshire Pudding with Traditional Roast Potatoes and a Selection of Vegetables; a dessert of Apple and Blackberry Crumble with Custard; and Coffee and Petits Fours. A vegetarian alternative is also available on request.

As some of you may be heading home early tomorrow morning, at approximately 22:00 our coach will return us to our hotel.

Alternatively you may remain in central London and return to the hotel later, by Underground, bus or taxi - as you wish!

The price of the Farewell Dinner - including coach transfers - will depend on how many book on the option, but based on 20 we estimate it will be around a \$200.00 per person. Dress is smart, casual. No t-shirts, shorts or sandals/flip-flops. Gents: that means open-neck, short or long-sleeved shirts and trousers. Ladies - you know what I mean!

Day 18: Tuesday, 17th July

Time to transfer to the appropriate terminal at Heathrow Airport and check-in for your flight. We will have a record of everyone's departure details (latest check-in time, airline and terminal) at Heathrow Airport, and for those who wish, your Tour Manager will be able to determine who can share a taxi. He will discuss this matter with you during the tour.

Alternatively, there is the cheaper - but more arduous - option of transferring to airport from the nearby Underground station.

Your Tour Manager will be in the hotel's reception during the morning to assist at check-out if required, and to wish you "Bon Voyage".

Your Hotels



Oatlands Park Hotel, Weybridge

The Oatlands Park is a superb, privately owned, 4* hotel set amidst the splendour of extensive manicured private gardens, and was built at the turn of the 18th Century on the Oatlands Estate, which has a long and varied history. Originally the site of a grand Royal Tudor Palace, the Oatlands Estate in Surrey has been home to the Kings and Queens of England, played host to Emperors and Earls, and been immortalised in both prose and paint, throughout the centuries.

The current building was built on the footprint of a large mansion which burned down in the late 1700s, but had dated back to the 15th Century. A Parliamentary Survey of that period mentions a house which sat in the grounds of a "great royal palace", on the Oatlands Estate. Henry VIII erected the palace for his new Queen, Anne of Cleves. It was a worthy rival to his other, more famous, riverside house: Hampton Court.

The great cedar tree at the front of the hotel was planted by Charles I to celebrate the birth of his son, Henry of Otelands.

Leisure facilities include restaurant, bar, lawn terrace, 9-hole golf course, tennis

court, gym, wi-fi and broadband. Rooms have tea/coffee makers.

Website: www.oatlandsparkhotel.com/

White Hart Hotel, Salisbury

A beautiful 4-star Georgian-style hotel, the White Hart is ideally located for exploring Salisbury and its five rivers. Enjoy an afternoon cream tea and al fresco dining either in the courtyard or the cosy and atmospheric lounge. Located in the centre of this historic city's shopping and entertainment district, the world-famous cathedral is just a five-minute walk away.

Its air-conditioned rooms are well equipped with luxury king beds, a lightweight duvet, a choice of firm and soft pillows, powerful shower, Freeview TV with 80 channels, free wi-fi and tea/coffee making facilities.

Please note that there are no lifts in this hotel but portage is available (pay on the day).

Website: www.accorhotels.com/gb/hotel-6616-mercure-salisbury-white-hart-hotel/index.shtml#



Ibis - Earls Court, London

The Ibis Earls Court is ideally located between Kensington, Chelsea, Knightsbridge, Fulham and Hammersmith.

On-site is "La Table" restaurant and the "George & Dragon" Pub.

This hotel has been chosen because of its ideal location in central London and the excellent Underground and bus services for getting around to many of London's major attractions. The nearest Underground station is "West Brompton", on the District Line, and is only a 2-minutes walk away; or you can take a bus to the West End, famous for its theatres and shopping, Leicester Square, Piccadilly Circus, Trafalgar Square, the Strand; also, the City, St. Paul's Cathedral and the Tower of London - all easily accessed.

All rooms have TV, tea/coffee makers, individually controlled air-conditioning; wi-fi is available in rooms and throughout the hotel. Porterage is available, at a supplement payable on the day.

Website: www.accorhotels.com/gb/hotel-5623-ibis-london-earls-court/index.shtml

Arundel House Hotel, Cambridge

Beautifully located overlooking the River Cam and open parkland, this 3* hotel is only a short walk across Jesus Green Park to the city centre and the attractions and architecture for which Cambridge is famous throughout the world.

The hotel, which is privately owned, has been formed from a terrace of particularly fine late 19th-century Victorian houses. The facade and elegantly proportioned interiors have been carefully preserved while still allowing the hotel to offer all the modern services which discerning travellers now demand. All of the hotel's 103 bedrooms have private facilities en suite, with either a bath, a shower or bath and shower. All rooms also have tea and coffee making facilities, television, radio, hairdryer and a direct dial telephone with an automatic wake up alarm facility. Free wi-fi is available in all areas of the hotel.

Website: <http://arundelhousehotels.co.uk/>



Novotl York Centre

The Novotel York Centre is situated close to the celebrated historical City walls and only a short Riverside stroll from the centre: perfectly located for exploring the historic and cultural delights of the city as well as its shopping, restaurants and bars.

There is an on-site restaurant and bar, outside terrace and an indoor heated pool. Wi-fi is free. In-room facilities include 32" LCD TV, hairdryer, iron, laptop safe, fridge and tea/coffee maker. Please note: their twin-bedded rooms comprise one double bed and one double fold-out sofa bed.

This 3* hotel has been chosen because of its perfect location in the centre of the city and its attractions.

Website: www.accorhotels.com/gb/hotel-Q949-novotel-york-centre/index.shtml



Petwood Hotel, Woodhall Spa

In the early twentieth century, non-stop express trains would bring wealthy Edwardians from London to the woodland setting of Woodhall Spa for treatments at the baths. One of these frequent visitors was Baroness Von Eckhardstein: or, Grace Maple. During her divorce, the Baroness was looking for a country retreat within easy reach of London and she chose Woodhall Spa, in her 'pet wood'. Grace was the only surviving daughter of Sir Blundell Maple - the owner of the famous Maple furniture company - who died in 1903 and bestowed to her a significant fortune with which to establish an English estate. Designed and built as a bungalow in 1908, the architect Frank Peck had been engaged to design further extensions featuring Tudor to Jacobean' styles. Summary taken from extracts of Petwood: The Remarkable Story of the Petwood Hotel A Famous Lincolnshire Hotel by Edward Mayor, 2004.

Grace remarried in 1910 to Sir Archibald Weigall. In their newly extended, splendid home filled with Maple furniture, the Weigalls were ready to entertain on a lavish scale and royalty, nobility, stars of stage, screen and sport were all duly welcomed to Petwood over the years, years.

Despite a spell as a military hospital for convalescents in the First World War, the Petwood's most notable appearance in wartime history is that as the Officers Mess for No 617 Squadron. Requisitioned by the RAF in 1942, originally Officers of 97 and 619 Squadrons were based at the Petwood. When it was decided that the 617 'Dambusters' Squadron should be made into a special duties squadron which would work in isolation and secrecy, Woodhall airfield was selected as their operational base. So 619 Squadron was moved out and 617 Squadron was moved in. For Officers at war, the Petwood was fondly remembered as a "splendid place" remote from hell and terrors of battle over the skies of Europe.

The Squadron Bar has a wide range of memorabilia and tributes to Guy Gibson VC, Leonard Cheshire VC and their Officers.

This 4* hotel's excellent facilities include in-room tea and coffee makers, satellite TV, direct-dial telephone, and free Wi-fi.

Website: www.petwood.co.uk/



Holiday Inn Telford - Ironbridge

A comfortable hotel near Telford's iconic, 18th-century iron bridge - the first bridge constructed of iron in the world.

All rooms have en-suite facilities and are equipped with TV, telephone, free wi-fi and complimentary tea/coffee making equipment.

There is easy access to the award winning Town Park which is directly behind the hotel.

The Olive Tree restaurant is open for breakfast and dinner. You can relax inside or outside in the garden. The Olive Branch bar serves food throughout the evening and room service is available 24/7.

[Website: www.ihg.com/holidayinn/hotels/gb/en/telford/teluk/hoteldetail7cm_mmc=GoogleMaps--HI--GBR--TELUK](http://www.ihg.com/holidayinn/hotels/gb/en/telford/teluk/hoteldetail7cm_mmc=GoogleMaps--HI--GBR--TELUK)



Jurys Inn - Swindon City Centre

The Jurys Inn boasts a 24-hour reception, stylish bedrooms with flat-screen TVs, a large work space and spacious bathrooms with spa toiletries. Also free wi-fi.

Breakfast is served in the contemporary restaurant which also offers an international dinner menu in the evening. The bar serves lunch and snacks as well as coffees and drinks.

A modern hotel, it is located in the centre of the town and a quick walk from restaurants and bars, as well as shopping at the McArthur Glen Designer Outlets. The bus station - from where the RIAT shuttle coach service operates from/to is only a few minutes walk away.

[Website: https://www.jurysinns.com/hotels/swindon](https://www.jurysinns.com/hotels/swindon)



The Roydal Cambridge Hotel, Cambridge

The hotel is in Cambridge's centre, just 200 yards from the Fitzwilliam Museum; a 5-minutes walk from the historic Cambridge University Colleges; the Grand Arcade Shopping Centre is a 10-minute stroll; and the lively market square is but a half-mile away.

The elegant en-suite bedrooms each have a satellite TV, work desk and free wi-fi.

The High Table Restaurant serves a modern British menu, featuring fresh local produce served 24 hours a day and there is fresh coffees and light snacks in the spacious bar.

You will also discover the Gin Palace - The Royal Cambridge Hotel's very own Gin Cocktail Bar. They also serve English Afternoon Tea, which is indulgent with or without that added glass of fizz!

[Website: www.theroyalcambridgehotel.co.uk/](http://www.theroyalcambridgehotel.co.uk/)





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