



# Press Release

For Immediate Release - 13/05/2025

## **STOW MARIES GREAT WAR AERODROME CELEBRATES ITS WORLD WAR TWO ROLE WITH A NEW EXHIBITION - *FEEDING THE NATION: FIGHTING WITHOUT FLYING***

**Stow Maries Great War Aerodrome**, the largest surviving World War One aerodrome in the world, played a vital part in the air defence of Britain during WW1 – but by the time war darkened the skies again, it had returned to its peacetime roots as a farm.

With the threat of starvation hanging over the nation, the farmers of Great Britain found themselves fighting another battle - to put food on the tables and keep the nation healthy. Our new exhibition, which opens on Saturday 24 May, **Feeding the Nation: Fighting Without Flying**, plays tribute to the hard work of those involved in wartime food production.

The exhibition, set in one of the historic Grade II listed aerodrome buildings, features a selection of historical objects and documents relating to the site's role as a WW2 farm. It explores the wider stories of the Women's Land Army, the Black Market – even touching on the use of child labour and the Battle of the Atlantic. There is also a full programme of exciting supporting events, including living history and children's activity days throughout the summer and beyond.

**Saturday 31 May – Evacuees!** This family-focused event is a rare chance for young people to get a feel for the experiences of child evacuees. Young visitors will experience the relentless Air Raid practices and make their own gas mask box. They will discover what it really meant to be evacuated, seeing the few home comforts they were allowed to bring - all in guided sessions. They will also explore the evacuee's journey in the famous children's story, *The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe*. Pre-book only, £5 per adult with two evacuees (aged 6-11) permitted per adult FREE! Details and tickets only available through <https://www.stowmaries.org.uk/events>.

**Saturday/Sunday 21 & 22 June – Back to the WW2 Farm.** This weekend-long celebration of Flambirds farm in the 1940s features living historians, period vehicles and speakers. Visitors will be able to roam around camps representing members of the Women's Land Army, the Women's Volunteer Service and even the all-powerful County War Agricultural Executive Committee of Essex! To make the event extra special, we are delighted to be welcoming a flypast by the mighty **Battle of Britain Memorial Flight**, showcasing the iconic Supermarine Spitfire on Saturday and the awesome Avro Lancaster on Sunday (weather permitting).

**Food Production Activity Sessions** – a series of activity days offering children and young people the chance to pick fruit and vegetables grown traditionally on site, then prepare and cook their own wartime-inspired recipes. Activities will take place on Saturdays **21 June, 26 July, 30 August, 20 September** and **18 October**. Bookings for these events will be open soon.

For more information visit [www.stowmaries.org.uk](http://www.stowmaries.org.uk) and [www.stowmaries.org.uk/events](http://www.stowmaries.org.uk/events)

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**Ian Flint, Chief Executive Officer of Stow Maries Great War Aerodrome**, comments:

*"Stow Maries Great War Aerodrome was decommissioned as an active RAF station after World War One, but it doesn't mean the location didn't play a vital role in World War Two. **Feeding the Nation: Fighting Without Flying** tells the story of the intrepid farmers, here at Flambirds, in Essex and across the UK who poured their energy into keeping our country alive in a time of crisis. Without their work, the war would have been lost by 1942."*

All proceeds from opening to the public and all events directly fund the ongoing work to preserve and protect Stow Maries Great War Aerodrome and support its battle for survival.

The museum opens to the public every Friday, Saturday and Sunday. Private bookings are available on other days. To plan your visit on a regular opening day, go to [www.stowmaries.org.uk](http://www.stowmaries.org.uk). For details of other exciting events at the museum in 2025, see [www.stowmaries.org.uk/events](http://www.stowmaries.org.uk/events).

Situated between Chelmsford and Maldon in the Essex countryside, the site hosts the largest collection of Royal Flying Corps buildings in the world. It was the base of 37 (Home Defence) Squadron Royal Flying Corps, which was tasked to protect London from raids by German Zeppelin airships and Gotha heavy bombers.

Stow Maries Great War Aerodrome, Hackman's Lane, Purleigh CM3 6RN is open from 10am until 4pm, on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays. [www.stowmaries.org.uk](http://www.stowmaries.org.uk)

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For more information contact [comms@stowmaries.org.uk](mailto:comms@stowmaries.org.uk)

**Notes for editors:**

- Essex County and Maldon District Councils led the acquisition of the site for the nation in 2013, following a generous grant from the Heritage Memorial Fund. It was placed in the care of Stow Maries Great War Aerodrome, a registered charity.
- Today the museum, still an operational airfield, is supported and maintained by over 100 volunteers. It is open each Friday, Saturday and Sunday from 10am until 4pm
- More information about Stow Maries Great War Aerodrome can be found at [www.stowmaries.org.uk](http://www.stowmaries.org.uk)