



Press Release

For Immediate Release - 25/8/2025

HISTORIC AIRCRAFT THRILL CROWDS AT THE STOW MARIES AIR SHOW

The skies above Stow Maries were filled with the sound and spectacle of rare aircraft, thrilling the crowds at **The Stow Maries Air Show** on **Saturday 23 August**. Organised to raise funds for **Stow Maries Great War Aerodrome**, an accredited Museum and the largest surviving WW1 aerodrome in the world, the Air Show brought together a fantastic collection of historic aircraft in the air and a throng of aviation-themed activities on the ground.

The flying display began with the arrival overhead of the stunning 1944 Mk9 Spitfire, Spirit of Kent – a last-minute change of aircraft as the desert camouflage Spitfire booked to appear developed mechanical issues. With just days to spare, a replacement aircraft was arranged from the Spitfire Heritage Hangar at RAF Biggin Hill and crowds cheered as the unique growl of its engine reverberated around the listed buildings of the historic Aerodrome. The action continued with a nail-biting classic barnstorming display from The Stampe Team in their open cockpit, aerobatic biplanes, flying in close formation at speeds of up to 130mph.

The next item on the display was an exceptional flying 'action scenario' of whirling and diving aircraft that would have been a familiar sight during WW1, led by the magnificent Airco DH-9 bomber, the only one in the world still flying. This unique aircraft was carefully restored to its former glory after being found in a dilapidated state in 2000 hidden in an elephant stable at the Imperial Fort and Royal Palace in Bikaner, India. The DH-9 was 'defended' by the Nieuport 17 and the Se5a, as it was pounced on by the German Albatros and Fokker Dr1 Triplane. The thrilling display wowed the audience with cheers as the dastardly foes were 'driven off' by the heroic fighters of Entente forces.

The Turbulent Display Team were next up, flying metres from the ground to perform flour-bombing, balloon-bursting and limbo-flying in single-seater D31 Turbulents; followed by the formidable Tiger Nine group piloting Tiger Moth aircraft in formation. The Fournier Redhawk RF4D aerobatic motorised glider dived steeply to gasps from the crowd and musical accompaniment, with smoke trails from its wings. This was especially poignant as pilot Bob Grimstead was performing his final air display – after 60 years in the air, he chose Stow Maries for his Swansong. On the ground, visitors enjoyed the rare site of a Fairey Swordfish biplane on static display.

Ian Flint, Chief Executive Officer of Stow Maries Great War Aerodrome, comments: *"It was an amazing sight to see these rare and unique aircraft in the skies above Stow, and to have such a great crowd enjoying the day and making the most of everything that the Museum has to offer."*

Tickets are on sale now for the next events at Stow Maries Great War Aerodrome. On 30 and 31 August, **Back to the WW2 Farm** will celebrate the site's history as a working farm during World War 2, with living history, classic tractors and historic military vehicles, plus, on the Saturday, children's activities and a planned visit from the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight, bringing the second Spitfire in a week to the Essex skies! Then, on Saturday 13 September, the **Large Model Air Show** will see

some of the country's finest remote-controlled aircraft taking to the air, some of them as large as a family car, in a thrilling event for all ages. Book tickets now on www.stowmaries.org.uk/events.

-MORE-

2

Stow Maries Great War Aerodrome, Hackmans Lane, Purleigh CM3 6RN is open every Friday, Saturday and Sunday, 10am to 4pm, until 7 December, with fascinating exhibition halls, historic aircraft, interactive flight simulators, pedal planes and more. www.stowmaries.org.uk.

-ENDS-

For more information contact comms@stowmaries.org.uk (normal working days, Tuesdays and Thursdays).

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
- 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.
- More information about Stow Maries Great War Aerodrome can be found at www.stowmaries.org.uk