Thursday 27 April 2017

IWM Duxford marks 100 Years with a special Centenary Programme

2017 marks the centenary of Imperial War Museums (IWM) and 100 years since work began to create RAF Duxford. Since 1917, people have entrusted us with their personal accounts of war, in the knowledge that IWM will continue to share them with future generations. IWM Duxford plays a special role in this, sharing the personal stories of the men and women who lived and worked at the airfield, the history of war from the air and tales of ingenuity in aviation.

IWM’s Centenary - a landmark occasion - is being commemorated with the creation of DX17*, Duxford’s first ever contemporary art installation, inspired by Duxford’s remarkable history. A spectacular and imaginative storytelling device, it engages visitors in a tactile quest to uncover up to 100 memories – narrative fragments, voices, sound, signals, moments, stories or anecdotes – from Duxford’s remarkable past and present.

Inspired by themes of flight and innovation, DX17 is a dramatic large-scale sculpture, similar in size to a Spitfire, futuristic and aerodynamic in form. This innovative sound sculpture has been created by BAFTA award-winning composer and multi-disciplinary artist Nick Ryan. Nick’s previous projects have included Tate Sensorium, an immersive multi-sensory exhibition at Tate Britain and A Living River, the world’s largest sound installation, displayed at Gatwick Airport.

DX17 will be unveiled to the public for the first time on 16 June and will be on display until September this year.

The Centenary programme at IWM Duxford will also include two air shows* - the Duxford Air Festival (Saturday 27 and Sunday 28 May) and the Duxford Battle of Britain Air Show (Saturday 23 and Sunday 24 September) - celebrating and showcasing Duxford as a living and operational airfield, a role it has played since the First World War and most notably during the Battle of Britain. Thousands of visitors attend the air shows to view the spectacular flying displays and to experience history where it happened.

Entry to all of IWM Duxford, including AirSpace and the American Air Museum, is included in the air show ticket price and revenue generated helps to support Duxford and ensure that the museum is able to share its special history with future generations.

IWM Duxford will continue to commemorate its centenary throughout 2017 and will participate in the centenary of the creation of the Royal Air Force in 2018.
Duxford's programme of centenary activities

*DX17
16 June to September 2017
Included in admission to IWM Duxford

BAFTA award-winning artist and audio specialist Nick Ryan has been commissioned to create a new interactive artwork to mark the centenary of IWM Duxford.

Inspired by the themes of flight and innovation, DX17 is a dramatic large-scale sculpture, similar in size to a Spitfire, futuristic and aerodynamic in form, which will form a centrepiece at the heart of Duxford’s historic site from 16 June to September 2017.

A spectacular and imaginative storytelling device, it engages visitors in a tactile quest to uncover up to 100 memories – narrative fragments, voices, sound, signals, moments, stories or anecdotes - from Duxford’s remarkable past and present, making connections between memories and creating new memories of their own.

* Duxford Air Festival
Saturday 27 and Sunday 28 May

The Duxford Air Festival offers an awe-inspiring feast of flying for all the family on May Bank holiday weekend.

In addition to aerobatic displays, feats of aerial ingenuity, roaring jets and amazing bygone aircraft filling the skies, visitors can experience the award-winning exhibitions at IWM Duxford as entrance to the whole museum – including AirSpace, the newly redeveloped American Air Museum and the Battle of Britain exhibition – is included in the price of the air show ticket.

Exciting flying displays confirmed to date include:

- BAE Systems Eurofighter Typhoon, one of the world’s most advanced aircraft
- The RAF Falcons Parachute Display Team (Saturday only)
- The Breitling Wingwalkers
- The Blades, a world-class aerobatic display team of RAF fast jets and former Red Arrows pilots
- The only flying de Havilland Sea Vixen in the world
- The spectacle of the Great War Display Team accompanied by flak, bombing and strafing effects.

Tickets for the Duxford Air Festival must be booked in advance. Ticket prices can be found here

* Duxford Battle of Britain Air Show
Saturday 23 and Sunday 24 September

The Duxford Battle of Britain Air Show evokes Duxford’s finest hour defending Great Britain from aerial attack in 1940.

Duxford’s principle role as a vital Second World War fighter station is demonstrated by exceptional historic aircraft and a poignant massed Spitfire flight. Across the museum, engaging activities bring Duxford’s Battle of Britain history vividly to life.

Tickets for the Duxford Battle of Britain Air Show must be booked in advance. Ticket prices can be found here
IWM & IWM Duxford’s History

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Work began to build Duxford’s airfield in 1917 and it became pivotal to the air defence of Great Britain throughout the Second World War - particularly during the Dunkirk evacuation, the Battle of Britain and D-Day operations - and into the Cold War era.

Over the past 100 years, Duxford has been a continual witness to world-changing events, where ordinary people have shared extraordinary experiences. As part of the commemoration of IWM’s centenary, IWM Duxford shares surprising stories and personal memories from across the former RAF fighter station, our museum and the collections held here.

- Ends -

For further press information please contact:

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Notes to Editors

DX17

DX17 has been created in collaboration with Kin Design (sculpture and receiver design), Tom Cecil Studio (sculpture fabrication) and Sean Malikides (photophonic technology). It has been created with the generous support of Bowers and Wilkins (speakers and headphone) and MOTU (computer audio hardware).

Nick Ryan

Nick Ryan is a multi-disciplinary artist and composer exploring the use of sound and music to represent information, physical sensation, materiality and place. He is widely recognised as a leading thinker in relation to the future of sound for creating unique, immersive and highly conceptual audio experiences that push the boundaries of audio.

His work involves applying emerging technology to the process of creating and experiencing audio, introducing people to new ways of thinking about sound. His novel sound installations, bespoke instruments, generative music compositions and interactive audio experiences explore ways of representing information, language, story and perception solely through the act of listening.

Nick is the recipient of a BAFTA for Technical Innovation, a Motion Picture Sound Editors Golden Reel for sound editing and holds an Honorary Doctorate of Music from Plymouth University. He is currently an artist in residence at Somerset House studios.

www.nickryanmusic.com
IWM Duxford’s remarkable story

- Work began to build Duxford during the First World War, in October 1917, under the auspices of the Royal Flying Corps.
- In April 1918, Duxford became No.35 Training Depot Station and was used to train pilots. Members of the United States Air Service were also stationed here to train as engineers.
- Flying ceased in 1919 after First World War active service ended but started again in 1920 with the opening of No.2 Flying Training School.
- In 1924, Duxford became one of the earliest operational Royal Air Force fighter stations.
- On 6 July 1935, to celebrate King George V’s Jubilee Review of the Royal Air Force, Duxford hosted the Royal party for lunch at the Officer’s Mess.
- By the end of 1938, No.19 and No.66 squadrons, based at RAF Duxford, became the first RAF squadrons to be equipped with the new Supermarine Spitfire fighter aircraft.
- Duxford played a vital role in the Battle of Britain, one of the most significant aerial battles of the Second World War. Famous fighter aces such as Douglas Bader flew and fought from this historic airfield.
- Post-Battle of Britain, Duxford was used by the Air Fighting Development Unit, testing the capabilities of new combat aircraft and evaluating captured enemy aircraft. It was here, in 1942, that the Unit suggested to Rolls-Royce’s Ronald Harker that fitting a Merlin aero-engine to a North American P-51 Mustang could greatly enhance its performance. As a result, this new long-range fighter had much greater success at high altitude and was able to compete with Luftwaffe fighters.
- In April 1943, the airfield was handed over to the 78th Fighter Group of the United States Army Air Forces, flying fighter aircraft such as P-47 Thunderbolts and P-51 Mustangs. Duxford provided air support for the Allied D-Day invasion on 6 June 1944.
- During this time, the 78th Fighter Group played host to famous stars including Vera Lynn (1943), Bing Crosby and the United Services Organization Show Troupe, Bob Hope and James Cagney (1944).
- Post-Second World War, Duxford was handed back to the RAF. It then underwent a series of modifications to ensure that it was prepared to face a new kind of Cold War threat.
- In 1961, the station was regarded as unsuitable for the next generation of Cold War supersonic jet fighters and was officially closed as an RAF base.
- For several years, Duxford’s future was uncertain. In 1968, Duxford became famous as the location for the Battle of Britain film.
- In the early 1970s, much of the site was semi-derelict. Imperial War Museums obtained permission to store aircraft onsite. With the help of a dedicated group of volunteers, the museum site began to evolve.
- In 1976, Duxford opened to the public on a daily basis. Since then, Duxford has grown into a world-class museum and heritage site.

IWM Centenary

In 2017 Imperial War Museums (IWM) marks its centenary. IWM was established while the First World War was still being fought. Since its establishment, people have entrusted IWM with their stories of war from 1917 to the present day, in the knowledge it will continue to share these stories with future generations. IWM will commemorate its 100 years through a centenary of stories from its rich collections across its five branches (IWM London, IWM North, IWM Duxford, Churchill War Rooms and HMS Belfast).

2017 also marks the centenary of IWM Duxford. Work began to build the airfield in 1917 during the First World War. 100 years later, Duxford’s vibrant, living airfield remains at the heart of its story and it is now a heritage site of international importance. As part of the commemoration of IWM’s centenary of stories, Duxford shares extraordinary moments and personal memories from its own remarkable 100-year history.

IWM Duxford

IWM Duxford is Britain’s best-preserved Second World War airfield, with a fascinating 100 year history that dates back to the First World War. Duxford has been a witness to world-changing events over the past 100 years where ordinary people have had extraordinary experiences. At this active and dynamic museum, historic
aircraft can regularly be seen taking to the skies from Duxford’s wartime airfield. Exploring state of the art exhibition halls and historic buildings, visitors walk in the footsteps of the men and women from across the world that served at RAF Duxford and explore the rich displays which share powerful stories of the impact of aviation on the nature of war and on people’s lives.

Open Daily:

Summer 2017: 11 March to 22 October 2017 10am to 6pm. Last entry at 5pm.

IWM

IWM (Imperial War Museums) tells the story of people who have lived, fought and died in conflicts involving Britain and the Commonwealth since the First World War.

Our unique Collections, made up of the everyday and the exceptional, reveal stories of people, places, ideas and events. Using these, we tell vivid personal stories and create powerful physical experiences across our five museums that reflect the realities of war as both a destructive and creative force. We challenge people to look at conflict from different perspectives, enriching their understanding of the causes, course and consequences of war and its impact on people’s lives.

IWM’s five branches which attract over 2 million visitors each year are IWM London, IWM’s flagship branch that recently transformed with new, permanent and free First World War Galleries alongside new displays across the iconic Atrium to mark the Centenary of the First World War; IWM North, housed in an iconic award-winning building designed by Daniel Libeskind; IWM Duxford, a world renowned aviation museum and Britain’s best preserved wartime airfield; Churchill War Rooms, housed in Churchill’s secret headquarters below Whitehall; and the Second World War cruiser HMS Belfast.

IWM Centenary

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First World War Centenary

2014 - 2018 marks the centenary of the First World War, a landmark anniversary for Britain and the world. IWM is marking the centenary by leading a vibrant, four year programme of cultural activities across the world. For more information visit www.1914.org