



Press Release

For Immediate Release

Heritage site marks Festival of Remembrance with poignant parade

November 10, 2023: Over 500 hundred visitors gathered to pay their respects to the fallen at Stow Maries Great War Aerodrome, witnessing the museum's highly respected Remembrance Day Parade. Despite an overcast day with some early drizzle, the weather cleared to lend a calm and still atmosphere to the event, with plenty of very positive feedback from all involved.

The firm family favourite and popular local museum came to a respectful pause as an Honour Party, comprised of local dignitaries and led by Deputy Lord Lieutenant of Essex, John Griffiths-Jones, gathered at the memorial at the hub of the heritage site. The assembled ranks, surrounding the memorial, were made up of units from the Royal Navy, British Army and Royal Air Force Cadet branches as well as some serving members of HM Forces.

After an address by the Deputy Lord Lieutenant, the Rt. Revd. Bishop Adam Atkinson gave a stirring service to the assembled ranks and led prayers for those lost in conflict.

Bishop Atkinson, speaking after the service, said;

"As an ex-serviceman myself, the Festival of Remembrance is always a poignant time. Our region has a very strong and diverse Armed Forces community, serving and veteran. It's important we acknowledge their commitment and dedication, past and present. Today's parade is a perfect example of that acknowledgement and I am happy to be part of it."

Wreaths were laid by Mr Griffiths, the Rh. Sir John Whittingdale MP, the Chairs of both Essex County and Maldon District Councils and Lt. Col. Ed Rankin, Garrison Commander, Colchester. Deputy Chair of the Board of Trustees Stow Maries Great War Aerodrome, John Aldridge, read the Exhortation.

The assembled ranks then performed a March-Past for the Deputy Lord Lieutenant, who took the salute on behalf of the King.

Mr Griffiths commented:

“The bravery of the original airmen at Stow Maries is a poignant, but typical, example of the sacrifice made by so many of our forebears in both world wars and subsequent conflicts. Today we honour and remember all of them with great pride”.

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

“Yet again, all involved with this event have delivered an excellent parade. With such senior dignitaries involved, there is always an element of pressure. However, everyone has risen to the occasion wonderfully – unsurprisingly, the museum team take immense pride in this event. The response from visitors has been hugely positive, especially after the very challenging year we have experienced.”

The museum opens again to regular visitors on Friday 15th November. There are still events taking place at the museum before it closes in December – check <https://www.stowmaries.org.uk/events> for details. The next event is a special Historical seminar, Frontline: England, being held on 23 November.

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

The aerodrome, situated between Chelmsford and Maldon in the Essex countryside, features 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

Ends

Further information from Ian Flint on info@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