



Press Release

For Immediate Release

Popular Museum closes for Winter on with a Christmas Cracker

December 1, 2024: hard-hit independent museum, Stow Maries Great War Aerodrome, has ended a run of fundraising events with a festive Craft Fayre.

The atmospheric 1917 Airmen's Mess was surrounded by a number of traders, mingling ceramics and metalworks with art and crafts. Inside the Mess, more stalls gave Christmas shoppers a chance to pick up a special something from a local creator. Meanwhile, the award-winning exhibitions were also open for those that wanted to enjoy the traditional offer at the site.

As Father Christmas wandered around and chatted, the crowds had a special treat – Bishop of Bradwell, the Rt Rev. Adam Atkinson, led the Chelmsford male Voice Choir in a carol service, encouraging all present to join in.

This event is the last of a busy run of events at the embattled museum, as it fights to secure its future. After being devastated by road closures that prevented its visitors reaching it in the Summer, the team pulled out all the stops to fight on and recover. This event was another example of the charity trying to attract diverse audiences and build income. Ian Flint, CEO of the charity, picks up the story:

“We love putting on fun, exciting events and our supporters know that. Today is no different – you can always rely on the team at Stow Maries to have something interesting on! This year, we have ranged from big airshows to historical seminars, Living History events to dog shows. All of these have contributed to keeping us open and brought in new audiences. We're very grateful to everyone for their support”.

The museum is now closed to the public – but, thanks to a lot of hard work and fund raising, it will open on 14th February next year. There are already lots of events on their website and the charity is gearing up for a great 2025, as Mr Flint notes:

“We faced the worst-case scenario this year. Through no fault of our own, we were looking at being forced to close permanently. Thanks to the team and some very generous donations, we are now looking forward to 2025. We're not out of the woods yet, but we're

still here. We're aiming for a fantastic year and with support like we have seen today, we're going to have one!"

The museum opens again to regular visitors on Friday 14th February 2025. For details of the events taking place at the museum in 2025, check <https://www.stowmaries.org.uk/events>. To plan your visit on a regular opening day, go to www.stowmaries.org.uk

All proceeds from this and all future events directly fund 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 14th February 2025, 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