



Press Release

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THE QUEST FOR FREEDOM – EARLY SUMMER EXCITEMENT ON THE GROUND AND IN THE AIR AT STOW MARIES GREAT WAR AERODROME

Stow Maries Great War Aerodrome has an exciting few months ahead, with events that celebrate freedom on the open road and in the skies, as well as remembering the battle to keep Britain's freedom during World War One.

The first event runs over the Saturday and Sunday of the May Day Bank Holiday weekend, when living historians will be bringing the site's wartime legacy alive. The **World War One Living History Weekend** on 2-3 May is one the Accredited Museum's "added value" events – which means that alongside entry to all the aircraft hangars and exhibition spaces, visitors can enjoy extra things to see and do at no additional charge.

At the family-friendly **World War One Living History Weekend**, visitors will be able to interact with living historians who specialise in the era, including members of the 399 Detachment, RND who will represent a training camp of replacements for the Royal Naval Division and will show off a variety of historical skills. They will be joined by Leon Seccombe and The 54th Field Ambulance, part of the WW1 Medical Services Living History Society. Dressed in authentic uniform, he will explain to visitors how wounded servicemen were treated and evacuated from the frontlines. Neil Bond from Past History will appear as a British Army Chaplain and The Lufberys RFC Living History Group will set the scene as Royal Flying Corps personnel, who were based at Stow Maries in 1916.

We are also delighted to be joined by **Kelsey Ellington, known as The Flying Historian**, who specialises in World War One aviation and the early culture of military flying. Fresh from filming for Channel 4, **Kelsey says:** "I'll be spending the weekend stepping into the world of the Royal Flying Corps, alongside living historians to explore what life was really like for the first generation of military pilots. My own research focuses on the realities behind the popular image of these men, so this is a chance to see how those stories are interpreted and brought to life today, right at Stow Maries Great War Aerodrome!"

The second of the season's added value dates is on Saturday 16 May, when a brand-new event for 2026, **The Stow Maries Motorbike Show**, will celebrate the freedom of the open road. Motorbikes of all kinds – vintage and modern – will be on display in the Aerodrome's historic green spaces, along with trade stalls, a barbecue and a bar. Riders and their pillion passengers can enjoy free entry – but only if they have pre-registered, and been accepted, by Sunday 3 May.

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2/... Then follows one of the most exciting regular events at Stow Maries Great War Aerodrome, **Wings and Wheels** on Sunday 24 May – which celebrates the freedom of both the open road and the skies above. One of the registered charity's most important fund-raising events of the year, Wings and Wheels combines the twin delights of hundreds of vintage cars on the ground with historic aircraft going through their paces right overhead (weather permitting). With a barbecue and bar, stalls, a chance to get up close to the aircraft on the flight line walks, and the whole of the Museum and its exhibitions and aircraft hangars to enjoy, this is a superb day out for the whole family.

Ian Flint, Chief Executive Officer of Stow Maries Great War Aerodrome, comments: "We are really excited about our early summer programme – ranging from World War One living history, to motorbikes, classic cars and vintage aircraft. Every event helps us to raise the vital funds we need to preserve this unique WW1 Aerodrome for future generations."

All events run from 10am, last entry at 3pm. For added value events, standard admission prices apply – adults £12, children 0-10 free, children 11-15 and concessions £9. Tickets can be bought online or on the gate, and for the World War One Living History Weekend, a single ticket is valid for both days. Tickets for Wings & Wheels must be booked in advance: Adults £25, children 6-15 £12, children 0-5 free, family 2+2 £65, plus small booking free. Please note that The Airmen's Mess café is open to ticket holders only during these events.

Stow Maries Great War Aerodrome is open Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays, 10am to 4pm. The new family-friendly pricing structure for 2026 means that children aged 0 to 10 are now free on all standard admission days, and prices for adults and concessions have been frozen. For more information, to book tickets for any event or to sign up to the monthly newsletter, visit www.stowmaries.org.uk.

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Notes for editors:

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