

Rolls-Royce Merlin Engine at FONFA for 'Spitfire Day'

Following our first 'Spitfire Day' in the new Museum, on Sunday 28th May, the Merlin engine will be displayed at the Museum on 11th June.

The early Merlin engines powered the Spitfire and Hurricane aircraft during the Battle of Britain, and more powerful versions were standard on the Lancaster bomber during the latter years of World War II. The engine on loan is one of the later production Merlin engines, a Merlin Mark 24, very similar to the Merlin XX or Mark 22, four of which powered the Coastal Command Halifax GR1Is, flying U-boat patrols over the Atlantic with 58 Squadron Coastal Command, out of Holmsley South airfield. Parts of the engine have been cut away to show the internal structure and components more easily.

In addition, a new item on long term loan to the Museum is a propeller blade loaned to us by Mr Neil Parsons of Canada (West Wellow), whose uncle witnessed a Messerschmitt Bf 110 being shot down by F/Lt J.H.G. 'Butch' McArthur, flying a Spitfire from 609 Squadron based at Middle Wallop, on 15th August 1940. The crash occurred at Black Hill, between Blackhill Farm and Foxley Plantation, south of West Wellow. Neil's uncle removed the blade from the crash site and it was kept in his garage/barn, which later became Neil's, for 77 years, only occasionally being shown to the public at local events.

We are delighted to have this unique piece of local WW2 history to display and are most grateful to Mr Parsons and his family for lending it to us, for our Open Days. Both this and the Merlin will be just two of the many new artefacts that we will have on display on Sunday 28th May for our first special 'Spitfire Day' in the new Museum.

Both can be seen in the photo below (Merlin - centre and propeller blade - left).

