

PRESS RELEASE

Breathtaking display to honour iconic jet's 60th anniversary.

One of Britain's most iconic fighter jets will be honoured with an historic and breathtaking display at the 2011 Cotswold Air Show.

The theme of this year's show, at Cotswold Airport, on June 18 and 19, is the 60th anniversary of the first flight of the Hawker Hunter.

Only a few airworthy examples remain of the elegant swept wing historic jet aircraft and it is hoped that one of the highlights being planned will be a spectacular diamond nine formation flypast.

The airport retains close ties to the Hunter and several of the remaining machines are based and maintained on-site.

From 1954 to 1989, RAF Kemble (as it was then known) became known as the "Hunter MU", as virtually every UK Hunter (over 1,200) built for the RAF and Royal Navy passed through its doors.

The skilled workforce of No5 Maintenance Unit, which was based at RAF Kemble, turned its hand to maintaining and servicing the jets and won many accolades for its workmanship.

In addition to the Hunter, there will be a wider 'classic jet' theme to the show as well.

Event organiser Glen Moreman said: "The Hunter is such an iconic, beautiful aircraft and the fact that it has such a history at Kemble we felt it was important to mark such a landmark anniversary.

"Lots of local people will have worked here on these aircraft and it will be great to see them back in the Gloucestershire skies again.

"Here at Cotswold Airport, we are lucky enough to see Hunters on a fairly regular basis and, by making the aircraft the theme of this year's show, it will enable other aviation fans to share that experience.

“For the 50th anniversary in 2001 we managed to put together a stunning 15-ship formation, this turned out to be the largest ever civilian formation of classic jets in the world! It was a memorable day, but there are now so few airworthy examples in the world that to pull together several for a diamond nine formation flypast will be a real coup, not to mention a truly historic event.”

The Hunter served for many years with the Royal Air Force and was widely exported, serving with 19 air forces.

A total of 1,972 Hunters were produced by Hawker Siddeley and under license in other countries.

Seeking better performance to suit military needs, Hawker Aircraft's chief designer Sydney Camm developed a machine with a 35-degree swept wing design and it is from there that the Hunter evolved, serving a total of 20 air forces.

As well as serving as a frontline military fighter, the aircraft also broke the world air speed record in September, 1953, when legendary test pilot Neville Duke achieved a speed of 727.63mph in the development prototype aircraft.

Hawker Hunters were also used by several RAF display teams including the Black Arrows, who set a record by looping a formation of 22, and later the Blue Diamonds, who used 16 of the aircraft.

The planned Hunter diamond formation will be a major attraction at this year's air show, although, as always, there will be plenty of other crowd pullers.

In addition to the Hunter, the show will include a wider 'Hawker' theme and it is hoped aircraft such as the Sea Fury, Hurricane and the Sea Hawk will take part. The show will also celebrate the 75th anniversary of the first flight of the Spitfire and at least three Spitfires will take to the skies to celebrate this other very important milestone.

There will also be a strong contingent of other classic jets and the Red Arrows, who were based at the airport for 16 years, when it was known as RAF Kemble, are also set to make their now annual return to what is often referred to as their 'spiritual home'.

Glen said: "It's really shaping up to be a great event and we will have aircraft from all over the world flying in to display."

Tickets for the event, which are initially available online through the airshow website (www.cotswoldairshow.com), will go on sale from March 1st.

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AIRPORT BACKGROUND BRIEF

Royal Air Force Kemble opened in 1938 as part of the RAF's 'expansion plan', which concentrated on training and maintenance bases.

It has been used for aviation activities ever since and was home to the world-famous Red Arrows display team during the 1980s, who were a regular sight in the skies above the south Cotswolds, practicing up to four times a day.

The airport's current owner, Ronan Harvey, operated the airfield on behalf of the Ministry of Defence for five years, before purchasing it outright in 2001.

His aim was to maintain the site's use as an active airfield and safeguard its rich heritage, while at the same time encouraging both local and international businesses to base themselves at Kemble – a move which has created hundreds of jobs in the local community,

Today, the site, which is known as Cotswold Airport and is licenced by the Civil Aviation Authority, is home to dozens of businesses, flying clubs and a thriving restaurant.

The airport stages a host of events, including the hugely popular annual Cotswold Airshow, Vintage Flying Weekend, Race for Life, and Mobility Show – the biggest UK show devoted to mobility for the disabled.

In addition, the airport has very strong ties with the local community, offering a flying scholarship scheme to young pilots, engineers and would-be traffic controllers.

The airport also raises thousands of pounds for charities and worthy causes, including the RAF Benevolent Fund.

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EDITORS' NOTE (not for publication): For more information please call Cotswold Airport Media and PR officer Paul Bull on 07728 552215.