

VAYU on-the-spot report

Visit to Duxford Aviation Society and Imperial War Museum Duxford, UK



Duxford Aviation Society (DAS) is a voluntary organisation which came into being in 1975 and is a partner organisation of the Imperial War Museum. With the passage of time, DAS aims have been widened to include other preservation projects such as military vehicles. The Society owns and maintains The British Airliner Collection and opens some of these aircraft to the public on a daily basis. The DAS Military Vehicle Wing (MVW) regularly presents demonstrations of tanks and other vehicles based at Duxford. The Society is a registered charity and its funds come from the public, from donations, from fund raising activities and as a result of services provided to the Museum. New members are always welcome.

In the Civil Aircraft Section, the Society is responsible for the restoration and preservation of the British Airliner Collection. The Airliners are restored and maintained by volunteers under the guidance of a Project Manager who is a full time employee of the Society. Volunteers are drawn from all walks of life and levels of skill but all have an abiding interest in the preservation of the aircraft collection. Many of the volunteers do not have directly aviation-related skills but learn from those that do and the level of restoration achieved is testament to their industry and commitment.

In the Military Vehicle Section, members of the MVW are involved in the restoration and preservation of military vehicles. In their workshop, they restore vehicles belonging to the Society and to the IWM, and other vehicles that are privately owned but are on loan to the museum or the Society. The collection of vehicles is extensive and varied and a great deal of work is involved in keeping them all in good condition. Some of the vehicles are being restored as running examples whilst the remainder are destined for static display. The MVW is responsible for much of the

restoration work on vehicles used in the various tableaux in the Land Warfare Hall. The MVW is located in a workshop at the western end of the Land Warfare Hall. Vehicle demonstrations can often be seen taking place in the adjoining running area, and it is possible to arrange rides on some of these exciting vehicles.

Imperial War Museum Duxford is a branch of the Imperial War Museum near Duxford in Cambridgeshire, England. Britain's largest aviation museum, Duxford houses the museum's large exhibits, including nearly 200 aircraft, military vehicles, artillery and minor naval vessels in seven main exhibition buildings. The site also provides storage space for the museum's other collections of material such as film, photographs, documents, books and artefacts. The site accommodates several British Army regimental museums, including those of the Parachute Regiment (named Airborne Assault) and the Royal Anglian Regiment.

Based on the historic Duxford Aerodrome, the site was originally operated by the Royal Flying Corps (RFC) during the First World War. During the Second World War Duxford played a prominent role during the Battle of Britain and was later used by United States Army Air Forces fighter units in support of the daylight bombing of Germany. Duxford remained an active RAF airfield until 1961. After the Ministry of Defence declared the site surplus to requirements in 1969 the Imperial War Museum received permission to use part of the site for storage. The entirety of the site was transferred to the museum in February 1976.

In keeping with the site's history many of Duxford's original buildings, such as hangars used during the Battle of Britain, are still in use. Many of these buildings are of particular architectural or historic significance and over thirty have listed building status, Duxford "retaining the