

Footloose at Farnborough 2018



Hawks of the Red Arrows 'escort' a Spitfire to mark centenary of the Royal Air Force

How time flies (as do aeroplanes)! This Journal's first foray to the hallowed airfield at Farnborough was for the 1976 Air Show, when the skies above Hampshire also witnessed an exciting new shape from America which was then subject to intense evaluation by nations of the NATO alliance, seeking a new lightweight fighter. The (then) General Dynamics F-16 was to eventually beat the competition and be ordered by Belgium, Denmark, Netherlands and Norway, in what was termed as 'contract of the century'. Early model Fighting Falcons flown by GD test pilots carried out awesome aerial displays, and four decades later, the much evolved F-16 wowed visitors again, however only on penultimate day of this edition. The F-16 has remained a contender for the IAF's MMRCA requirement now for 14 years – and counting!

But back to Day 1 of the Farnborough Air Show 2018 and there was palpable excitement in the shuttle bus from the station to the site as a bright-eyed US industry executive could barely contain

his enthusiasm as this was to be his first international air show. 42 years later, the same grounds, airfield layout, black hangers as always, but this time, fewer combat aircraft on the ground and virtually none

in the air (sans the lone F-16 as mentioned earlier).

The Main Hall has been much spruced up, the facilities truly 21st century, the air conditioning effective (very much needed

AH-64 Apache seen below the wing of an USAF Hercules

