



CAMBRIDGE BRANCH

VISIT TO THE VULCAN TO THE SKY TRUST at ROBIN HOOD AIRPORT near DONCASTER

WEDNESDAY 9th NOVEMBER 2016

Join this visit to see the iconic Avro Vulcan XH558 Spirit of Great Britain and the record-breaking Canberra Scorpion rocket motor testbed WK163 which is being restored for flight for the Royal Air Force Centenary in 2018.

The coach will leave **Milton** Park & Ride (note - **not** Trumpington) promptly at **0830** and return at about **1900**. A pick-up will be made in Godmanchester at **0900** on the outward journey and a set-down on the return journey at **1830**. A brief stop will also be made on the outward journey.

Visit We will have a buffet lunch on arrival at Robin Hood Airport followed by a guided tour of Canberra WK163. After tea/coffee & biscuits we will have a guided tour of Vulcan XH558. More details of both aircraft & venue overleaf.

The cost of this visit is **£30.00** which includes coach journeys to and from the venue, buffet lunch, tea or coffee and biscuits, visit administration costs, coach driver's tip and Cambridgeshire County Council park & ride coach charges.

Payment If you would like to join this visit please complete the booking form below, detach it and send it with your payment to me at the address below. Confirmation will be by email - if you are not on email please include an SAE.

Branch members will be given priority for places on a first-come first-served basis. Non-branch members may also apply and will be placed on a waiting list until 30th October 2016 when any spare places will be allocated to them, also on a first-come first-served basis. Your personal details will not be divulged to any third party without your consent.

Mike Hawkins FRAeS, Cambridge Branch Visits Secretary (new email frog2020@outlook.com, telephone 01480 455809)

Booking Form - RAeS Cambridge Branch Visit to the Vulcan to the Sky Trust at Robin Hood Airport - Wednesday 9th November 2016

Please complete the form legibly, especially postcodes & email addresses, including the use of upper & lower cases.

Name Contact telephone number (preferably mobile)

Email address Branch Membership Number

Postal address (including postcode)

Please say here if you wish to be picked up in **Godmanchester**

Please say here if you have any **dietary** concerns

Please **reserve** me a place. I enclose cheque payable to the Cambridge Building Society - M L Hawkins for **£30.00**.

Send to: M L Hawkins, 5 Martin Close, Godmanchester, Huntingdon, Cambs PE29 2WA

Vulcan BMk2 XH558

XH558 was the last remaining airworthy example of the RAF's Vulcan BMk2s. Assembled at AVRO's Woodford factory, it first flew on 21st May 1960 and made its last flight as G-VLCN on 28th October 2015. XH558 went first to No 230 OCU at RAF Finningley and then to RAF Waddington with Nos 44, 50 and 101 Squadrons. Late in its RAF service it was converted to MR2 and then K2 tanker standard. It then moved to the Vulcan Display Flight for the next seven years, long after all the remaining Vulcans had been retired, its last flight being at Cranfield in 1992. It passed into private hands at Bruntingthorpe and eventually purchased by the Vulcan Trust in 2005. The painstaking restoration process then began, including a major contribution from Marshall Aerospace, leading to its first test flight in 2007. It then performed eight seasons of display flying, overcoming several funding and technical crises. In 2011 XH558 was relocated to Robin Hood Airport where a permanent facility has been built in the No 3 Hangar. This is focused on providing an inspiration for future generations to consider a career in science or engineering, skills that are vital to our country's future prosperity.

Canberra WK163

WK163 was built in 1954 as a BMk2 on the same AVRO production line as XH558 and went straight into service as a research aircraft, first briefly for the Armstrong Siddeley Viper at Bitteswell but much more famously as the Napier Scorpion rocket motor testbed. Flown from Luton on 28th August 1957 by Mike Randrup and Walter Shirley, it broke the world altitude record at 70,310 feet. When the Scorpion was cancelled WK163 went to the Royal Radar Establishment at Pershore where, updated with BMk6 wings and engines, it was used for avionics trials, the most important of which was Infrared Line Scan (IRLS) for the Tornado. After retiring from the DRA fleet in 1994 and fitted with a BMk6 nose, it joined the airshow circuit as G-BVWC painted in a grey & black livery to represent a No 617 Squadron aircraft.

Following an engine fire in 2007 it was retired again, this time to Coventry Airport Museum, with an uncertain future. It was purchased by the Vulcan Trust last year with a view to restoring it to flight in time for the Centenary of the Royal Air Force in 2018. It was moved to Robin Hood Airport in July and currently resides in the same hangar as XH558. It will become the only airworthy Canberra in Europe with only five other examples elsewhere in the world.

RAF Finningley and Robin Hood Airport

Robin Hood Airport (often known as Doncaster/Sheffield or just Doncaster Airport) began life as RAF Finningley in 1915. Operating Bristol BE.2c fighters the RFC's main task was to protect Sheffield from Zeppelins. The airfield was extensively developed in the 1930s with five 'C' type hangars, still standing today, and concrete runways in the 1940s when the main task was training bomber crews in the Second World War. Arguably Finningley's finest days came in the Cold War when in 1957 it received first Valiant and then Vulcan V-Bombers. The Vulcans of No 230 Operational Conversion Unit remained up to 1969 when aircrew training became the focus using successively Varsitys, Dominies, Jetstreams, Jet Provosts, Hawks & Tucanos. The station was also home for the RAF's Search & Rescue HQ. RAF Finningley closed in 1996 and reopened as Robin Hood Airport in 2005, handling mostly budget and charter flights. At 9,500 feet its runway is longer and wider than at most UK airports leading to it being designated as a space shuttle emergency landing site.

October 2016
FRAeS

Mike Hawkins