

'Salisbury Hall and the de Havilland Aircraft Museum'

Talk by Alistair Hodgson on 21 June

Alistair Hodgson is a chartered engineer who started volunteering at the de Havilland Aircraft Museum 11 years ago. He recently became the first curator of the Museum. The earliest aircraft museum in the country, it is currently applying for a big Heritage Lottery grant to build a new hangar for its collection of historic planes.

Alistair will talk on the history of Salisbury Hall and the role of the de Havilland Aircraft Company during World War II. The Company's founder Sir Geoffrey de Havilland was one of the first people in Britain to learn to fly (in 1905) and held one of the first pilot's licences. The de Havilland Company produced the DH 98 Mosquito planes which were made of laminated plywood and balsa wood in furniture factories: their most famous aircraft, the Mosquito, was designed at Salisbury Hall and assembled at Hatfield. After the war, the first prototype Mosquito was returned to Salisbury Hall to form the basis of the Museum which has grown considerably since, and which still has several ongoing restoration projects for visitors to see.