

23rd June 2011

Football legend Bert Williams shares RAF wartime memories

Thursday 30th June 2011

11.30am

Ex England and Wolverhampton Wanderers goalkeeper, Bert Williams, will be visiting the Royal Air Force Museum Cosford to assist the Museum with their ongoing project which examines the lives of footballers who served in the armed forces, in particular the RAF, during the Second World War era. Bert, now aged 91 will be visiting the Museum on Thursday 30th June 2011 at 11.30am to meet with the Museums Education Officer who is leading the research project.

Bert began his football career in October 1937 playing for Walsall, but after only two seasons of professional football, the outbreak of World War II halted Bert's progress. He went on to become a Physical Training Instructor (PTI) in the Royal Air Force during the 1940's and for part of his RAF career was based at RAF Cosford. He spent six years in the Royal Air Force, but not wanting to give up on his love for football; Bert joined the RAF football team and often played in matches against other RAF teams and even the Army. On rare occasions he even made professional guest appearances at football matches for teams whilst stationed around the country, including Nottingham Forest and Chelsea.

At the end of World War II, Bert resumed his professional football career when he signed for Wolverhampton Wanderers in September 1945. He spent most of his playing career at the club where he won the League Championship and FA Cup. After lifting the FA Cup with Wolverhampton Wanderers in 1949, Bert was called to play for England later that year and remained the number one England goalkeeper throughout the 1950 FIFA World Cup. After 420 appearances with Wolverhampton Wanderers, Bert finally retired from professional football in May 1957.

Bert will meet with the Education Officer during his visit where he will be sharing some of his own knowledge and experiences of life as a professional footballer within the RAF, during the difficult period of World War II. Bert's experience will be recorded by the Museum and used as part of the research.

RAF Museum Cosford Education Officer, Philip Clayton says:

"During the Second World War, Bert Williams and his fellow RAF comrades were members of a remarkable football team. These stars of the day; Raich Carter (Sunderland), Stan Mortensen (Blackpool) and Stanley Mathews (Stoke), played with Bert in front of large audiences throughout the UK, as part of the RAF football team. It will be fascinating to hear Bert's memories of this time."

This project is believed to be one of the first of its kind and the more information that can be gathered, the better. If anyone has any memories, information, photos or medals of people who served in the forces and played for Wolves, we would like to hear from you. Please contact wwfcresearch@rafmuseum.org or visit the Museum website and complete the online form at www.rafmuseum.org/wwfcresearch. Alternatively, please write to the Museum at: Philip Clayton, Access and Learning, RAF Museum Cosford, Shifnal, Shropshire, TF11 8UP.

The Museum is open daily from 10am and entry to the Museum is FREE. For further information please contact the Museum on 01902 376200 or visit www.rafmuseum.org

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Notes to Editors

- **Bert Williams is happy to speak with the media during his visit on Thursday 30th June 2011. He is expected to arrive at 11.30am and will spend the afternoon with the Education Officer Philip Clayton. Media visits must be pre booked in advance. Please contact Michelle Worthington by 4.30pm on Wednesday 29th June on 01902 376212 or michelle.worthington@rafmuseum.org.**
- This exciting local project will be a combination of efforts from the RAF Museum Cosford, Wolverhampton Wanderers Football Club, RAF Cosford and Wolverhampton University being led by Post Graduate Samantha Leek.
- Royal Air Force Museum, Cosford, Shifnal Shropshire, TF11 8UP
- Photos available on request
- Open daily between 10am-6pm (Last admission 5pm)
- FREE admission
- For further information and all media enquiries please contact Michelle Worthington on 01902 376 212 or michelle.worthington@rafmuseum.org
- RAF Museum Cosford images & logo available at:
<http://www.rafmuseum.org.uk/cosford/media-enquiries/downloads.cfm>