

Imperial War Museum Duxford March 2026

A group of us made our way by coach to Duxford for our March club trip.

Duxford was an operational base during WW2 and is, apart from being a static Museum, still a live airfield used by private small aircraft and on occasions, by a Spitfire using it for practice or for pleasure trips. There is also an old 1940's built passenger biplane called a Dragon Rapide that is also used for pleasure trips.

In fact a few years ago a small group of us went up in it on an earlier trip to Duxford. Now that was an experience. We even had to be weighed individually as that determined where we were to sit inside the aircraft. Now that doesn't occur nowadays.

The aircraft on static display are very impressive. In the first hangar on entry sits a prototype of Concorde that was used in the late sixties to determine the behaviour and so on of this futuristic icon of an aircraft. This was together with more up to date aircraft, modern fighters and bombers of the day, Tornado fighter, Vulcan bomber etc. etc.

As you walked outside and down the huge grounds you came across further hangars and buildings that displayed the history of the base together with various aircraft and personnel that were present during the war and so on.

Inside certain hangars are aircraft that are under repair and general maintenance. We had different Spitfire models, Hawker Hurricanes, even German Messerschmitts from the war. There was also an American Flying Fortress. Not all aircraft were of the more modern type. They also displayed old vintage mono wing, and in particular, biplane wing type aircraft used during and around WW1.

As we ventured further down the airfield we came across a more modern hangar that was especially built more recently to house a mixture of American aircraft. These were also from different eras of the twentieth century. There were aircraft hanging from the ceiling on steel cable to static aircraft on the floor below. An example was a modern F15 fighter aircraft, a 'Warthog' aircraft that had a lethal Gatling type gun in it's nose. A Mitchell bomber used during WW2 and a jaw dropping B52 bomber. This mighty aircraft was colossal. It's wingspan virtually stretched to both sides of the huge hangar they were all housed in. It dwarfed all the others inside.

Back outside there are static passenger aircraft on display, ranging from old BEA and BOAC used planes to more up to date aircraft. Examples were a British Airways Trident plane, an early Comet and a VC10. Some aircraft entries were closed off on the day that we went but others you could climb up and into them to see what they were like inside the cabins.

We had a lovely treat while we were there, in that a Spitfire that is used for pleasure trips etc. taxied in front of us and took to the skies. What a fantastic aircraft to watch, together with that distinct engine sound.

The weather was kind to us, sunny and pleasantly warm and we all had a great day. Maybe a day out not to all tastes, but for people interested in aircraft and their histories, a place that is well worth a visit.