

PRESS RELEASE

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Flypast and Royal Navy parachute team to be “headline” attraction at centenary Royal County of Berkshire Show

In the Centenary year of the Newbury and District Agricultural Society the Royal County of Berkshire Show (19th - 20th September) will also be celebrating 100 years of naval airpower with a spectacular flypast by a World War Two Swordfish plane and display by the Royal Navy Raiders Parachute Display team.

This year marks the 100th anniversary of the Admiralty's visionary decision to order the first airship.

The Navy will be marking this centenary year with a panoply of colourful events and activities throughout the UK under the banner Fly Navy 100, among them a visit to the Show and fittingly will be taking to the skies above Newbury as the show stealing highlight of action in the main arena.

As well as the flypast by a WW2 Swordfish plane, there will be a buzz in the air as the Royal Navy Raiders Parachute Display team thrills the audience below in the showground with their acrobatic convolutions before finally landing in the main ring.

The team usually jump from approximately 7,000 ft, which allows 30 seconds of freefall before their parachutes are opened.

The Raiders carry the White Ensign, the flag of the Royal Navy, and some team members jump with smoke to add extra drama to the display.

The Raiders fly a loose stack formation to the arena where they land before the display team can chat to the crowds around the main ring.

The naval theme will continue with music being provided by the Royal Marines Band, some of whom have just returned from a tour of duty in Afghanistan. In addition, the

Royal Marines Fit for Life team will show how to cook up a storm amid the heat of battle, reinforcing the show theme of good British food.

A further attraction is the visit of a Lynx helicopter, an aircraft that plays an essential role deployed on Royal Navy warships, plus the chance to try and land a chopper courtesy of the navy's Merlin helicopter simulator.

Simon Carter, Chairman of the Newbury and District Agricultural Society which organises the Royal County of Berkshire Show said: "We are delighted to be welcoming the Royal Navy to the Royal County of Berkshire Show and are thrilled to share our Society's 100 years with the 100th anniversary of naval airpower.. The Royal Navy display will provide the centrepiece of entertainment in the main arena and I am sure will prove a memorable event for all our visitors to enjoy."

ENDS

Note to editors:

About the The Royal Navy Parachute Display Team

The RN Raiders, was initially formed in 1983, to conduct parachute displays for Naval Establishments in the Portsmouth Area. There was a similar team in the West Country based at the then RN&RM Sport Parachute Association in Devon, and the Royal Marines Freefall team based in Poole, so there was a fairly strong parachuting fraternity in the Royal Navy.

In the past few years, however, the RM Freefall Team has been disbanded and the Parachute Centre at Dunkeswell has been closed, leaving the Raiders as the only surviving Royal Navy Parachute Display team. A number of former Dunkeswell and RM Freefall Team parachutists now regularly jump as members of the Raiders. The team now trains at various military and civilian parachute centres throughout the UK, though its permanent home dropzone is now JSPC Netheravon in Wiltshire.

About the Royal County of Berkshire Show

The Newbury & District Agricultural Society will be celebrating its milestone 100th anniversary over the weekend of 19th and 20th September. The Royal County of Berkshire Show is one of the top ten County Shows in the country and the Society's centennial anniversary promises to make 2009 even bigger.

Organisers of the two-day agricultural and country show, the last big outdoor show of the season, are placing the emphasis on food, specifically local produce, helping to educate the public on how agriculture contributes towards the local community.

Supporting this initiative is the John Lewis Partnership. Chairman, Charlie Mayfield is the 2009 President The Chairman of the Newbury Agricultural Society in its 100th year is Simon Carter.

Joining the Society at the Royal County of Berkshire Show in its milestone 100th year is the Royal Navy, who is celebrating 100 years of naval aviation with its programme FlyNavy100. It will be the star attraction in the show's main ring, in addition to all the usual attractions including top-flight show jumping and the Livestock Champions parade.