

YORK MAZE

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YORK MAZE NEWS RELEASE

WORLD'S LARGEST SPITFIRE IS A-MAZE-ING TRIBUTE TO 'THE FEW'

A Yorkshire Farmer has created the World's largest Spitfire to mark the 70th anniversary of the Battle of Britain.

Farmer Tom Percy has cut the shape of a giant Spitfire in his maize field near York. Measuring over 300m (1000ft) in length the Spitfire is 30 times the size of the real thing and has been painstakingly carved out of over 1 million living maize plants. The design also features the words 'Never Forget 1940-2010' in 40ft high letters and a giant Union Jack. The 10km of pathways form an intricate maze for visitors to explore. York Maze is the largest maize maze in Europe and one of the largest in the world.

Tom Percy's previous maze designs have included an Astronaut, the Statue of Liberty and the Flying Scotsman.

Yorkshire's last surviving Battle of Britain veteran, Flight Lieutenant William (Terry) Clark, was guest of honour at a special ceremony to unveil the maze on 9 July almost 70 years to the day since the start of the Battle of Britain on 10 July 1940.

Ft Lt Clark (91) from Wheldrake, York, says "I am delighted to be able to be here today to mark the 70th anniversary of the Battle of Britain. The maze is a wonderful idea as a tribute to the aircrews and it is fitting that it can be seen from the air."

Terry Clark took to the air once again this time in a helicopter for a flight over York Maze to see the giant Spitfire. Commenting on the flight Terry Clark said, “I’ve flown in lots of different aeroplanes but at the age of 91 this is the first time I’ve ever been up in a helicopter so it’s a new experience for me.”

The Battle of Britain Spitfire Maze is Tom Percy’s tribute to the brave aircrew who flew in the Battle of Britain.

Says Tom Percy, “I’m delighted to be able to make my contribution to mark the 70th anniversary of the Battle of Britain, and to pay tribute to the brave airmen, ‘the few’ like Terry Clark who in a unique battle for the skies helped keep this country safe. It is also a tribute to all the other service personnel who have served our country and continue to do so today.”

Forces staff and their families are being offered discounted admission to York Maze this year.

York Maze opens to the public on Saturday 17 July and will be open every day until Sunday 5 September. www.yorkmaze.co.uk.



Yorkshire’s last surviving Battle of Britain veteran Flt Lt William (Terry) Clark (91) In front of a Spitfire.



Terry Clark and York Maze creator Tom Percy in front of a Spitfire



Aerial photograph of York Maze 2010 - battle of Britain Spitfire Maze

Editors Notes

York Maze

York Maze covers 45 acres including a tractor-trailer ride maze, a maze of illusions and crazy golf in a maze. The Spitfire maze is 18 acres (8 football pitches) in size. York Maze is thought to be one of the biggest mazes in the world.

Additional activities at York Maze include: giant sand and water play area, water wars game, jumping pillow, Monkey Mayhem interactive tractor-trailer ride, maze of illusions, crazy-mazy golf, electric junior quad bikes, shop, café and BBQ.

New for 2010 is the UK's largest inflatable slide, at 40ft high it is equivalent to nearly three double decker buses stacked on top of one another. There is also a smaller one for younger sliders.

Farmer Tom Pearcy started York Maze seven years ago as a means of farm diversification following the foot and mouth crisis.

Previous designs:

- 2002 Viking Longship
- 2003 Spiders Web
- 2004 Flying Scotsman
- 2005 Big Ben
- 2006 Star Trek
- 2007 James Bond
- 2008 Statue of Liberty
- 2009 Astronaut

York Maze Elvington Lane (B1228), York, YO19 5LT, just off the A1079 Hull Road. Open daily from Saturday 17 July to Sunday 5 September from 10am to 6.30pm (last admission 4.30pm). 2010 admission prices: Adult £8.95, Senior £8.45, Children (3-15) £7.95, Under 3s Free, Family (2 adults and 2 children) £32.00. 30% off adult and child admission for forces personnel with ID. Free parking.

Telephone: 01904 607341, www.yorkmaze.co.uk

Flight Lieutenant William Terence Clark, DFM, 219 Squadron.

Terry Clark (91) joined 219 Squadron RAF based at Catterick, North Yorkshire from the Auxiliary Air Force. His early career was as an air gunner on Blenheim night fighters, before switching roles to become an Airborne Interception (AI) operator - what we now call radar.

The first AI radar sets gave the British night fighters a tactical advantage and was such a valuable secret weapon that the planes carrying it were forbidden from flying anywhere near enemy lines in case they were shot down.

As an AI operator Mr Clark's job was to track enemy aircraft on the cathode ray tubes and guide the pilot in for the attack. One night Mr Clark and his pilot shot down two enemy aircraft. In all he claimed six 'kills'.

219 Squadron was a night fighter unit based at Catterick. Each night the planes would transfer to RAF Leeming ready for that night's missions. Although a night fighter unit, the Squadron was scrambled in daylight on 15 August 1940 to intercept a raid on the bomber airfield at Drifffield, part of the largest Luftwaffe daylight raid on north-east England of the whole Battle of Britain. The day was to become known within the Luftwaffe as 'Black Thursday'. In September 1940 the Squadron moved South and was based first at Redhill and then at Tangmere, where the Squadron transferred to the faster and better equipped Beaufighters. They made a significant contribution to the night defence of the South East.

After 219 Squadron Terry joined 488 New Zealand Squadron flying in Mosquitos, the wooden wonder, as navigator Radar out of Bradwell Bay and Colerne before moving onto Ground Control Approach where his role was to talk down aircraft lost in bad weather.

For his wartime bravery, Mr Clark was awarded the Distinguished Flying Medal, which he still wears with pride alongside five others - including the rare Battle of Britain medal and clasp.

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