



The Sky's the Limit

It is often thought that a person can lose themselves in a museum for days on end. They are places of great wonder, splendour, fascination and intrigue. And for one person the Trust supports, this interest in museums has taken on new heights.

With a personality that goes by the moniker 'Hurricane Anna' there is the immediate sense that Anna Lusardi is going to be full of character. Whether you may mistakenly take the name as a reference to a tropical storm or a wrestling persona from a bygone era, nothing could prepare the ordinary man for the treasure trove of interesting artefacts that lies deep in Buckinghamshire.

Anna takes the name from her favourite interest and hobby that intertwines an encyclopaedic historical knowledge and a keen passion for airplanes. Since visiting the Imperial War Museum in Duxford in Cambridgeshire more than 11 years ago, she has been enthused and fascinated by airplanes from around the world. It was after this visit that Anna started her own personal collection of Airfix models.

Eleven years on and hundreds of planes later Anna has amassed enough fighter planes, battleships and war materials to start her own personal museum. As you enter the room the sign reads "Royal Air Force Imperial War Museum" and then below a word of warning on just how precious these models are "Please don't touch the planes."

Immaculately put together from scratch, Anna assembles the planes on her working desk before putting the fine detail and paintwork into the engines and wings. The remarkable quality of art work is there to see along with the historical background and knowledge she expresses vividly about each and every one.

"I started collecting and painting them in 2000 and my first plane was the Beaufighters 404 Squadron," says Anna, who is supported by the Trust's South Buckinghamshire Community Learning Disability Team.

"I've got into a routine ever since opening the model box, looking at colour charts, transfers and paints and learning the history and importance of each plane. I find it very soothing and calming and spend a few hours most days painting."

There is an array of interesting tools that Anna uses on her professionally laid out desk, with a magnifying glass and light, paint kit and acrylics, cut mat, modelling clippers and even toenail clippers all used with a particular attention to detail and a meticulous eye.

However one thing that stands with great prominence and pride on her desk among the books, DVDs and paint pots, is a black and white photo of her grandfather and inspiration, who was in the RAF in the Second World War.

"My grandfather flew in the Second World War in the Hurricane and would tell my grandmother all the stories of his time over there when he would return on leave.

"I have his cap and hope to find more information out on his time in the war, as well as his medals.

"The Hurricane has always been my favourite for this reason and is where I get my nickname from. Airfields are such beautiful places to visit and you can hear the voices going back in time. It was wonderful when I first saw the Hurricane as I stepped over the barrier and hugged and kissed her.

"If I won the lottery I would buy a big house, a huge shed and a Hurricane."

There is a real skill and finesse with no room for error in every model she paints. Among the immaculately put together cabinets are certain favourites of Anna's from the Submarine Spitfire and the Red Baron to the Hindenburg airship and Queen Mary.

It is not only the models that stand out, as there are aircraft clocks, framed art work and photos and pictures of Anna alongside her favourite vessels and planes.

Anna explains there are planes here from all over the world including New Zealand, Holland, Russia and France, to name but a few. She is already looking forward to her next project, building the Messerschmitt BF109 FW190 Luftwaffe day fighter, a single-seat monoplane used between 1938 and 1945, as well as eagerly awaiting a book on how the Hurricane was built.

Words struggle to describe or give credit to this vast collection of models that help bring history to life in a fabulous setting with a clear passion and enthusiasm that drives it. As Anna so candidly puts it, "The collection is part of my life and family history and without it I wouldn't know what do with myself. One day I would love to live my dream and fly in the Hurricane." And with that "Hurricane Anna" signs off and the museum doors of intrigue and fascination close for another day's business.

Words By ALEX JACKSON
Photos by IAIN GARRETT



My Model, My Dream

by Anna Lusardi

When I buy a model aeroplane,
big or small.
Before I begin to build
I read the instructions first.
And when I read them, I can begin.

The first thing I do
is to paint the parts.
Then I put her together.
The hardest part,
is the painting of the cockpit.
But when she is finished, it's a dream!

When I am building the aeroplane,
all my worries and troubles
go out of the window.
I feel so calm and relaxed.

I think I would like my dream to come true.
That is to be able to fly
in a fighter aeroplane.
It must be so peaceful,
like flying through heaven.

Real finesse in detail