51° NORTH

Autumn 2026

The Magazine of RAF Brize Norton



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DISCLAIMER
Lance Media Group Ltd will NEVER ask for payment by credit or debit card.

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Printed
Micropress Printers Ltd,
Fountain Way,
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IP18 6SZ

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51 DEGREES NORTH MAGAZINE
2026 DEADLINE DATES

	DEADLINE	DELIVERY DATE
SPRING	5 FEB	19 MAR
SUMMER	14 MAY	18 JUN
AUTUMN	17 AUG	18 SEPT
WINTER	12 NOV	16 DEC

51° NORTH

ROYAL AIR FORCE BRIZE NORTON

EDITOR'S FOREWORD

Hello everyone and welcome to the latest edition of 51 Degrees North, the magazine of RAF Brize Norton.

This edition arrives during a significant period for the Station as we mark the formal handover of command from Group Captain Louise Henton to Group Captain Kate Macartney. Leadership transitions are important milestones in any organisation, offering an opportunity to reflect on achievements whilst looking ahead to the future. On behalf of the editorial team, I would like to thank Group Captain Henton for her service, leadership and commitment to RAF Brize Norton, and extend a warm welcome to Group Captain Macartney as she takes command of the RAF's largest station.



This edition also highlights preparations for one of the most significant infrastructure projects in the Station's recent history, the runway overhaul. As RAF Brize Norton continues to evolve and modernise, this major programme will help ensure the Station remains ready to deliver air mobility operations for decades to come.

As ever, RAF Brize Norton continues to operate at pace. Whether supporting global air mobility operations, participating in exercises, engaging with our local communities or celebrating the achievements of our people, the Station remains a hive of activity. The stories within these pages are testament to the professionalism, resilience and dedication demonstrated by personnel across the force every day.

This summer has already brought opportunities to showcase the very best of Brize Norton, from operational successes and Station events to the continued work taking place behind the scenes to deliver our mission. Whatever your role, your contribution helps ensure we remain ready to deliver air mobility operations whenever and wherever required.

51 Degrees North remains your magazine and I would like to thank everyone who has taken the time to contribute articles, photographs and story ideas. Your support allows us to continue sharing the stories that make RAF Brize Norton such a remarkable place to serve and work.

I hope you enjoy this edition and, as always, please keep your stories coming.

Until next time,

Anita Jack
MCO Editor – 51 Degrees North

DEADLINE

PLEASE SUBMIT ALL ARTICLES BY 12TH NOVEMBER

Your article should aim to be between 300-500 words in length, with a high resolution picture over 1MB for every 100 words you write. You should ensure that personnel/activities in photos are named and that you provide the author's details, in case we require any more information. Send your completed articles to BZN-51DegreesNorth@mod.gov.uk. We look forward to receiving your articles and make every effort to publish as many of them as possible.

From Posting to Posting: How Boarding School Can Support RAF and Other Armed Forces Families

For RAF and other Armed Forces families facing frequent moves, boarding school can provide educational stability and lasting friendships.

If you've ever unpacked the same boxes in Brize Norton, Cyprus or the USA, you'll know military family life is never dull. It's an adventure, but frequent moves can disrupt children's education. Just as they've settled and made new friends, new posting orders arrive. Another move, another school, another round of settling in.

For many service families, boarding school provides what the Forces can't always guarantee: stability. With around 500 UK boarding schools to choose from, however, knowing where to start can feel overwhelming.

I'm Claire Calder, a former Cheltenham College pupil, mother to two children who thrived in boarding from the age of eight, and married to a British Army officer for 27 years. Having lived across the UK and overseas, I understand first-hand how daunting finding the right school can feel.

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Royal Air Force Brize Norton Air Wing welcomes new commander

Royal Air Force Brize Norton has formally welcomed Group Captain Stu Patton as the new Commander Air Wing at RAF Brize Norton, marking the transition of leadership for the Royal Air Force's Air Mobility Force, succeeding Group Captain Andy McIntyre, who has served in the role since 2024.



Gp Capt McIntyre and Gp Capt Patton (Commander Air Wing)

Assuming command, Group Captain Stu Patton paid tribute to the work of their predecessor and outlined their priorities for the future, saying:

"I am hugely proud to be taking command of the Air Mobility Air Wing. Whether through projecting and sustaining our forces around the world, supporting humanitarian evacuation or delivering aid to the hardest to reach places. This year has continued to reinforce how Air Mobility is at the heart of everything Defence does. I am acutely aware that this daily effort depends on the hard work of so many - across Wing, Station and industry - who continue to deliver 24/7 from dispersed locations while our home runway is upgraded. I am grateful to all for the support and excited for the challenges we will face together."

The Air Wing forms the operational heart of RAF Brize Norton, the UK's principal air mobility hub, delivering strategic reach through the Atlas (A400M), Globemaster (C-17) and Voyager fleets. The Wing continues to support worldwide operations, exercises and humanitarian missions, providing the agility and responsiveness required by Defence.

Reflecting on their time in command, Group Captain Andy McIntyre said:

"Commanding the Air Mobility Air Wing over the past 2 years has been the greatest privilege of my career. With our aircraft and people dispersed over 6 locations in a way that is transparent to many, and still delivering global Air Mobility sums up just how remarkable our people are. From strengthening our sovereign combat parachuting capability, landing on ice in the Arctic, moving VVIPs, supporting the Carrier Strike Group, rescuing UK citizens whilst providing vital air defence munitions to trouble spots or delivering a doctor by air to a remote British overseas territory, what the team has collectively achieved is astonishing. I just want to say a huge thank you to everyone I've worked with within the Air Wing and across the Whole Force enterprise both at Brize and our deployed locations within Operation Mace Vector."

The Air Wing at RAF Brize Norton remains at the forefront of UK Defence air mobility operations, delivering strategic air transport, air-to-air refuelling and global support capabilities in support of national and international commitments.



Gp Capt McIntyre

Royal Air Force Brize Norton welcomes new Station Commander

Royal Air Force Brize Norton has formally welcomed Group Captain Kate Macartney as Station Commander, following a ceremonial handover parade held at the Station.

The event marked the transfer of command from Group Captain Louise Henton, bringing to a close a successful tenure and beginning a new chapter for the Royal Air Force's principal Air Mobility Hub.

The handover ceremony was attended by personnel from across the Station, and invited guests, recognising both the achievements of the outgoing Station Commander and the appointment of her successor. The parade symbolised the formal transfer of responsibility for leading the RAF's largest station, which delivers global air mobility, air-to-air refuelling and aeromedical evacuation operations in support of Defence commitments around the world.

During her time in command, Group Captain Louise Henton has overseen a period of significant operational activity and change, ensuring RAF Brize Norton continued to deliver its mission while preparing for major future developments, including infrastructure modernisation programmes and the continued evolution of the Station's global air mobility capabilities.

Taking command, Group Captain Kate Macartney paid tribute to her predecessor and outlined her commitment to continuing RAF Brize Norton's vital role within Defence.



Group Captain Henton ceremoniously relinquishing the Station Commander's pendant to an officiator.

As the UK's principal Air Mobility Hub, RAF Brize Norton remains at the forefront of global operations, supporting military tasks across the world while maintaining strong links with local communities and stakeholders throughout Oxfordshire and beyond.

Speaking at the ceremony, Group Captain Louise Henton said:

"As I leave Brize Norton, I do so with immense pride, gratitude, and admiration. Pride in what this Station achieves every day, gratitude for the support I have received throughout my tenure, and admiration for the exceptional people who make it all possible. To the Whole Force, thank you for your professionalism, commitment, and friendship. It has been a privilege to serve as your Station Commander. What you achieve, day in and day out, is truly exceptional. I wish Group Captain Macartney every success as she takes the Station forward into its next chapter."



Group Captain Kate Macartney said:

"I am delighted to assume command of Royal Air Force Brize Norton today and it is an absolute privilege to have the opportunity to command and work alongside you. I would like to say a huge thank you to Group Captain Henton. It has been evident that she has been absolutely dedicated to, not only supporting the continued vital operational output of this Station, but she has been tireless in her efforts to improve the lived experience for all those who serve and live here. I know that her outstanding work for Brize Norton will endure well beyond her tenure with future improvements she has fought hard for and won. So, Lou, thank you on behalf of me and the Station, and I wish you all the very best for everything that comes next." Group Captain Kate Macartney, Station Commander, Royal Air Force Brize Norton



Above: Handover ceremony, attended by personnel from across the Station, and invited guests.

Left: Group Captain Louise Henton is ceremoniously driven off the Station while being saluted by the Station Warrant Officer.

RAF and AirTanker pilots

strengthen partnership to enhance resilience and operational flexibility

Royal Air Force pilots and their civilian counterparts from AirTanker are working side by side to strengthen operational resilience and flexibility across the UK's air mobility enterprise.

The collaboration brings together military and civilian aircrew operating the Voyager aircraft, combining expertise and experience to ensure the UK maintains a responsive and adaptable capability in support of global operations.

By integrating training, sharing knowledge, and operating within a joint environment, RAF and AirTanker pilots are enhancing their ability to respond to a wide range of operational demands from routine transport tasks to critical contingency operations.



Officer Commanding 10 Squadron, Wing Commander Brook said:
"This partnership is a clear demonstration of how our whole force approach delivers operational advantage. By working closely with AirTanker, we are strengthening resilience, increasing flexibility, and ensuring we can respond effectively whenever and wherever we are needed."

AirTanker pilots, many of whom bring extensive commercial aviation experience, operate seamlessly alongside RAF crews. This integration could support a consistent, safe, and highly capable output, and help the force scale activity to meet changing demands, if and when required.

The Voyager fleet plays a critical role in UK Defence, supporting air-to-air refuelling and strategic air transport tasks. The partnership between the RAF and AirTanker is central to maintaining this capability, ensuring it remains robust, flexible, and ready for future challenges.

Paul Kimberley, Chief Operating Officer at AirTanker said:

"This represents a practical step in how we continue to develop the Voyager Force, with the potential for civilian pilots to support military crews when demand requires. Most importantly, it reflects how the RAF and AirTanker partnership continues to adapt in a considered and pragmatic way, ensuring the capability is ready to respond when needed."

This enduring collaboration highlights the strength of the whole force model—bringing together military personnel, civilian specialists, and industry partners to deliver world-class air mobility for the UK.

Flight Lieutenant John Skinner

Receives Flight Lieutenant Colin Bell DFC Award

Flight Lieutenant John Skinner has been awarded the prestigious Flight Lieutenant Colin Bell DFC Award in recognition of his outstanding commitment to Defence and continued service beyond his regular military career.

The award honours individuals who demonstrate exceptional dedication, professionalism and service, embodying the enduring values of the Royal Air Force while continuing to make a significant contribution to Defence.

Flight Lieutenant Skinner was presented with the award in recognition of his commitment to supporting Defence capability, maintaining strong links with the military community and continuing to serve in a capacity that benefits both the Armed Forces and the nation.

The award is named in honour of Flight Lieutenant Colin Bell DFC, whose distinguished service and commitment continue to inspire those who support Defence beyond their regular careers.

The presentation highlights the vital role played by those who continue to support Defence after regular military service, bringing valuable experience, expertise and commitment to the wider Defence community.



Speaking after receiving the award, Flight Lieutenant Skinner said:

"I am deeply honoured to receive the Flight Lieutenant Colin Bell DFC Award. Service does not end when a regular military career concludes, and I am proud to continue contributing to Defence alongside so many dedicated colleagues, reservists, veterans and volunteers."

Station Commander Group Captain Louise Henton said:

"I am delighted Flight Lieutenant Skinner has been recognised with the Flight Lieutenant Colin Bell DFC Award. His commitment to Defence, exemplify the very best of the Royal Air Force."

RAF Brize Norton hosts Gloucestershire Local Resilience Forum

RAF Brize Norton welcomed members of the Gloucestershire Local Resilience Forum (LRF) for an engagement visit aimed at strengthening collaboration and deepening understanding of the Station's operational role and its impact across the county.



The visit provided LRF representatives with valuable insight into the operational output of RAF Brize Norton, the UK's principal air mobility hub, and how its activities directly relate to resilience planning and response within Gloucestershire.

The programme included a briefing from Wing Commander Tom Howell, Officer Commanding Operations Support Wing, who outlined the scope, scale and pace of operations conducted from the Station. This was followed by an opportunity to visit a 99 Squadron aircraft, offering a first-hand perspective of the aircraft and capabilities routinely employed in support of UK and overseas operations.

The visit forms part of ongoing efforts to strengthen engagement with key stakeholders across the Gloucestershire LRF. By fostering a shared understanding of roles, responsibilities and working practices, the visit supports the development of a more cohesive and coordinated approach to planning and response.

Such collaboration is vital in ensuring an effective joint response in the event of any major aircraft or air systems incident within Gloucestershire boundaries, where close cooperation between military and civilian partners is essential.

RAF Brize Norton remains committed to working with partner organisations to enhance regional resilience and ensure a joined-up approach to managing risk and responding to incidents.

Officer commanding Operations Support Wing, Wing Commander Tom Howell said:

"It was a pleasure to host representatives from the Gloucestershire Local Resilience Forum at RAF Brize Norton. The visit provided a valuable opportunity to demonstrate the scale and complexity of the Station's operational output, and to highlight how our activity directly supports and impacts the resilience of the county. This event strengthened our understanding of the specialist roles each organisation conducts and how we would work together to ensure an effective, joined-up response to routine, emergency and contingency operations."





Innovation in action:

ASTRA hosts Logistics and Support Innovation, Research & Experimentation (IRE) Team at RAF Brize Norton

Over the course of a productive two-day visit, the RAF Brize Norton ASTRA Team welcomed colleagues from Logistics and Support Innovation, Research & Experimentation (IRE) Team to explore some of the cutting-edge projects and technologies shaping the future of Defence.



The visit provided an excellent opportunity to share ideas, strengthen collaboration, and discuss how innovation can help solve real-world challenges across Defence. Discussions focused on a range of exciting initiatives currently being explored, including:

- Artificial Intelligence (AI) Vehicle Maintenance Reporting – leveraging AI to streamline maintenance processes, improve reporting accuracy and reduce administrative burden.
- Advanced Manufacturing of aircraft components – exploring how modern manufacturing techniques can improve efficiency, reduce costs, and enhance operational capability.
- Li-Fi Technology in Explosive Areas – examining the potential of light-based wireless communication technology to safely provide internet connectivity within environments where traditional radio frequency communications may be restricted.
- Cyber Security & Innovation – understanding emerging threats, sharing best practice and exploring how innovative technologies can strengthen Defence resilience.

A highlight of the visit was a demonstration delivered by the Tactical Medical Wing, who provided an overview of the Critical Care Air Support Team (CCAST) capability onboard a Globemaster C-17 aircraft. Attendees were shown how the aircraft can be rapidly transformed into an airborne hospital, enabling critically ill or injured patients to be monitored, treated and recovered whilst in flight.

During the visit, the ASTRA Team, headed up by Flight Sergeant Peter Ajayi, also showcased its vision for the soon-to-be-launched Brize Norton ASTRA Hub. Designed as a dedicated innovation and creativity space for station personnel, the Hub will provide a safe and inclusive environment where people can develop new skills, experiment with emerging technologies and turn ideas into reality.

Flight Sergeant Peter Ajayi, ASTRA Lead, said:

"We welcome this new collaborative working relationship with the Logistics and Support IRE Team. The visit has highlighted the incredible opportunities available when innovators from across Defence come together to share ideas, challenge convention and develop solutions to real operational problems. We look forward to building on this partnership and delivering tangible benefits for personnel across RAF Brize Norton and the wider Defence community."

The ASTRA Hub will feature opportunities to learn and collaborate in areas such as:

- 3D Printing
- Laser Etching and Engraving
- Coding and Digital Skills
- Virtual Reality (VR) Technologies
- Drone Racing and STEM Activities

The visit highlighted the importance of collaboration between frontline innovators, medical specialists and Defence experts to accelerate change, develop practical solutions and empower personnel to think differently. From AI-enabled maintenance reporting and advanced manufacturing to deployable healthcare capabilities and the future ASTRA Hub, the two-day event demonstrated how innovation is helping shape the future of Defence.

A huge thank you to the Logistics and Support IRE Team and Tactical Medical Wing for supporting the visit and sharing their expertise. We look forward to continuing these partnerships as we work together to drive innovation, experimentation and continuous improvement across Defence.



A member of Logistics and Support IRE Team added:

"Engagements like this are essential to ensuring innovation remains connected to frontline challenges. The enthusiasm and vision demonstrated by the ASTRA Team, particularly through the development of the ASTRA Hub, is a fantastic example of how local innovation can create meaningful impact across Defence."

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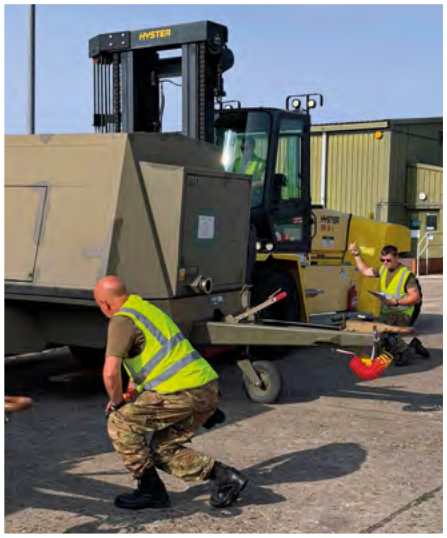
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4624 Squadron supports critical RAF relocation

During the temporary closure of RAF Brize Norton's runway for maintenance work, 30 Reservists from 4624 Movements Squadron RAuxAF played a vital role in supporting the relocation of Air Mobility (AM) Air Wing squadrons and 1 AMW movements operations from RAF Brize Norton to Boscombe Down.



Throughout the period, the Reservists contributed significantly to the AM Air Wing outload and the transition of Air Movements Squadron (AMS) operations. Twelve personnel assisted the Station Mobility Support Flight (MSF) in deploying 1.2 million kilograms of squadron equipment by road, loading 339,500 kilograms of freight onto 62 forty-foot trucks. This accounted for one-third of the total outload and was achieved in just ten days.

Meanwhile, ten personnel were instrumental in relocating AMS Import operations back to their hangar following the completion of building works, ensuring essential business-as-usual activity continued seamlessly throughout the high-tempo transition. In total, 98 aircraft pallets of equipment were moved, and 26 forty-foot vehicles were loaded and dispatched.

The additional workforce provided crucial resilience during this demanding phase. Thanks to early collaborative planning between 1 AMW and the MSF, all tasks were completed on schedule. Feedback highlighted that the support provided by 4624 Movements Squadron was invaluable and a key factor in ensuring the successful completion of both the outload and transition activities.







Trainee firefighter course 01/26 celebrates graduation at DFTU

The Defence Fire Training Unit , based at the Fire Service College in Moreton-in-Marsh, proudly celebrated the graduation of Trainee Firefighter Course 01/26.



The ceremony marked the successful completion of an intensive 14 weeks training for 17 new RAF firefighters, who will now begin their careers across the Defence Fire and Rescue Service.

Family, friends, instructors and guests gathered to recognise the hard work, professionalism and resilience demonstrated by the trainees throughout the course. The graduating firefighters now move on to stations across the UK, joining the frontline defence fire capability and continuing the proud tradition of RAF firefighting excellence.

The Reviewing Officer for the event was Group Captain Karen Moran, Deputy Assistant Chief of Staff Aerodrome Operations & Battlespace Management, whose distinguished career has spanned almost four decades of service. The graduation ceremony was particularly poignant as it was one of Group Captain Moran's final official engagements before leaving the Royal Air Force after 38 years of dedicated service.

Her attendance provided inspiration to the graduates, offering a powerful example of leadership, commitment, professionalism, and culture setting. On behalf of the Defence Fire Training Unit, we thank Group Captain Moran for her outstanding contribution to Defence and wish her every success and happiness in her well-earned retirement.

Squadron Leader Charles Carpenter, Officer Commanding Defence Fire Training Unit, congratulated the graduates on their achievement and recognised the dedication of the instructional staff who have guided them through training. He praised the course for its teamwork, determination and high standards, qualities that will serve the new firefighters well throughout their RAF careers. As the newest members of the Defence Fire and Rescue family depart for their first postings, they do so equipped with the skills, confidence and values required to protect personnel, assets and operations across Defence.

Congratulations to all graduates of Trainee Firefighter Course 01/26 and best wishes for long and successful careers in the Royal Air Force.



RAF Brize Norton marks start of Operation Mace Vector with official runway handover



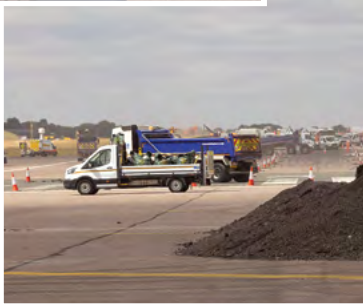
RAF Brize Norton has marked a significant milestone in its history with the formal handover of its runway to contractors, signalling the start of major infrastructure works as part of Operation Mace Vector. The project will see the Station's existing runway replaced and critical airfield infrastructure upgraded, ensuring RAF Brize Norton remains capable of supporting UK and global operations for decades to come.

The official handover ceremony took place after the departure of the final aircraft ahead of the planned runway closure, bringing to a close months of detailed planning and preparation involving personnel across the Royal Air Force, Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO), industry partners and supporting organisations. Operation Mace Vector will enable flying operations to continue from alternative locations across the UK while work is carried out at the RAF's principal Air Mobility hub.



The programme forms part of a wider investment in RAF Brize Norton's airfield infrastructure. Works include the complete replacement of the 3km runway, refurbishment of taxiways, upgrades to airfield lighting systems and improvements to drainage and supporting infrastructure, delivering a safer and more resilient operating environment for future generations.





The Station Commander formally handed responsibility for the runway to the project delivery team and contractors who will undertake the works over the coming months.

All images are MOD Crown Copyright





Station Commander RAF Brize Norton said:

"When completed, this project will provide a modern, resilient and future-ready airfield capable of supporting Defence operations for decades to come. I am immensely proud that RAF Brize Norton is leading the way in delivering one of the most significant infrastructure programmes currently taking place across Defence."





Royal Air Force chaplain awarded Bronze Polish Army Medal

A Royal Air Force chaplain has been awarded the Bronze Polish Army Medal during a ceremony at the Polish Embassy in London.

Reverend (Squadron Leader) Mark Perry was presented with the honour by Poland's Deputy Prime Minister, Władysław Kosiniak-Kamysz, in recognition of his excellent contribution to promoting the history and traditions of the Polish Armed Forces internationally.



The award recognises Reverend Perry's sustained efforts to support the Polish community and strengthen awareness of Poland's military heritage among allied nations.



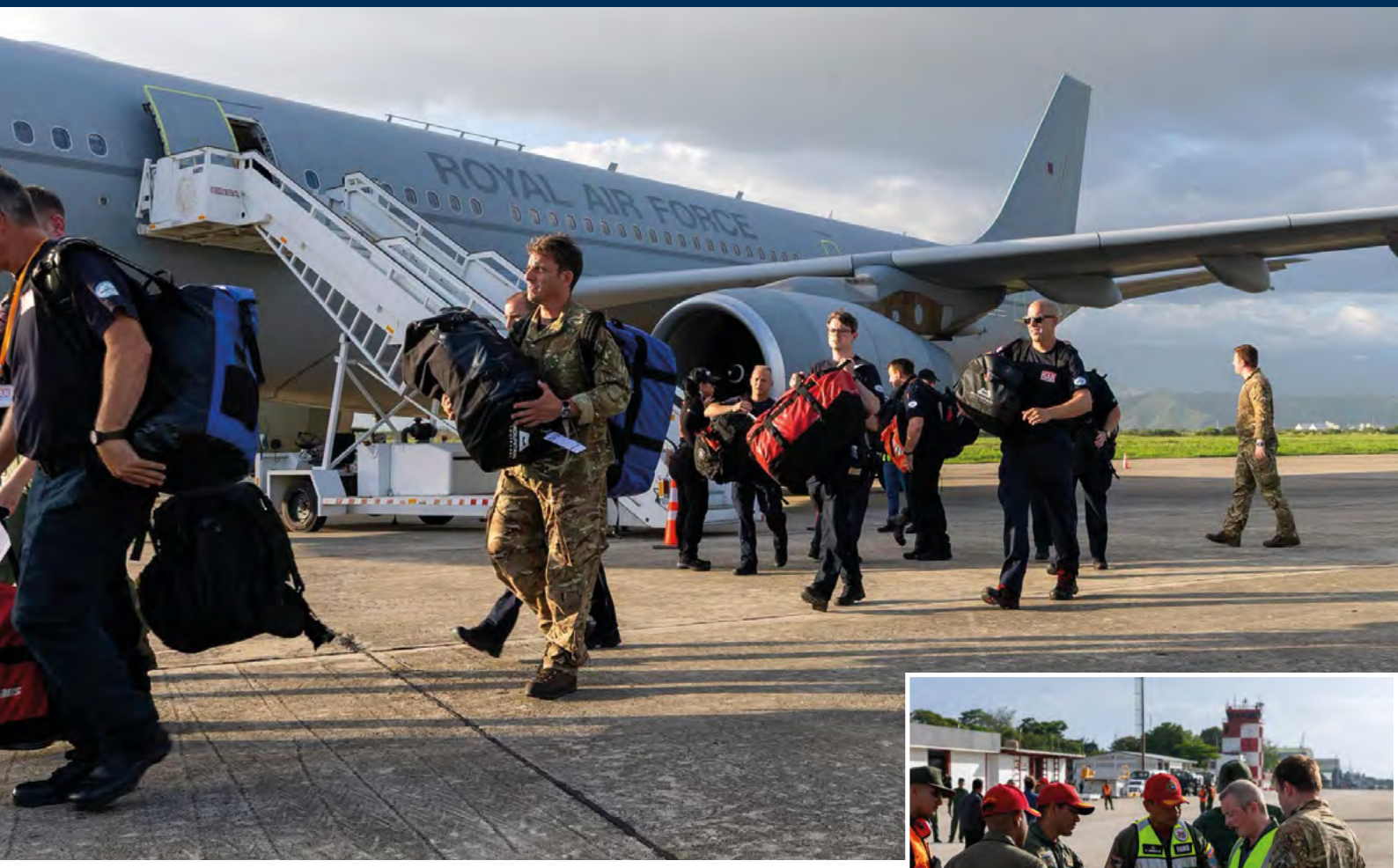
The Polish Army Medal, established on 3 September 1999, recognises service to the Polish Armed Forces by foreign civilians and military personnel. It is awarded in three grades Gold, Silver and Bronze and is presented to members of allied armed forces by Poland's Minister of National Defence.

Reverend Perry is currently based at RAF Brize Norton, where he continues to promote Poland's military heritage and strengthen international defence ties.

Speaking after the ceremony, Reverend Perry said:

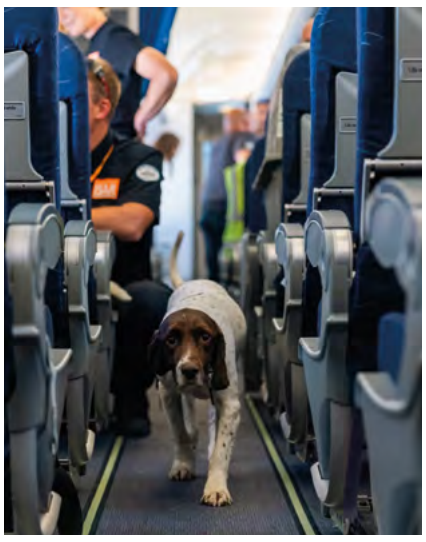
"It is a privilege to serve the Polish community. I am conscious this medal represents more than any individual. It speaks to a wider story of service, remembrance and shared purpose, upholding the dignity of humanity.
"Recognition like this is a reminder that acts of service, often small and unseen, contribute to the pursuit of lasting peace.
"As Desmond Tutu said, 'Do your little bit of good where you are; it's those little bits of good put together that overwhelm the world.' It is a timely reminder that service to others can have a profound impact."





Voyager Force takes UK search and rescue teams to Venezuela

A Royal Air Force Voyager aircraft departed RAF Brize Norton carrying UK International Search and Rescue (ISAR) personnel and humanitarian support equipment to Venezuela, reinforcing the United Kingdom's commitment to providing rapid assistance to those affected by emergencies overseas.



Operating from the RAF's strategic air mobility hub, the Voyager aircraft transported specialist search and rescue teams as part of a wider UK Government response coordinated by the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO).

The mission highlights the vital role which involved the whole force at RAF Brize Norton in delivering global air mobility operations, enabling the rapid deployment of personnel and equipment anywhere in the world at short notice.

Royal Air Force personnel worked alongside government and partner agencies to prepare the aircraft and facilitate the departure, ensuring the specialist teams could begin their journey to support relief efforts in Venezuela.

Officer Commanding 101 Sqn Wing Commander Prager said:

"The Royal Air Force's ability to rapidly deploy people, equipment and humanitarian aid worldwide is central to the UK's response to international crises such as Venezuelan earthquake. This deployment demonstrates the professionalism of our personnel and underscores the vital role of strategic air mobility in delivering timely, lifesaving support to those most affected."

The Old Crown Coaching Inn – Hotel, Pub & Restaurant

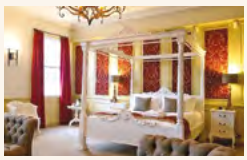




The Old Crown Coaching Inn holds two AA Rosettes for the quality of its cooking, a recognition earned through consistent excellence in the kitchen. Under Head Chef Jamie Whitting, the food here is rooted in English tradition but finished with a European sensibility: honest, generous, and made from ingredients that have not travelled far.













The Old Crown Coaching Inn – A Family-Run Home from Home

The Old Crown Coaching Inn is a much-loved, family-run business in the heart of Faringdon, Oxfordshire, combining centuries of history with a fresh, modern and exceptionally welcoming atmosphere. Dating back to the 16th century, this characterful coaching inn has been lovingly transformed since the Evans, Webb and Clarke family took over in 2021. Today, guests can enjoy 14 beautifully refurbished bedrooms, a stunning 80-seater restaurant, JJ's Wine & Cocktail Bar, our traditional public bar, a beautiful courtyard and convenient parking. Whether you are joining us for dinner, drinks, live music or an overnight stay, we pride ourselves on being a friendly, relaxed place where everyone feels at home. The inn's fascinating history includes links to Oliver Cromwell and Judge Jeffreys, adding plenty of character to an already very special place.



At the heart of The Old Crown is our food, with excellent chef Jamie Whiting leading the kitchen and creating an inspired menu with a particular focus on our Josper oven. Our beautiful restaurant provides a memorable setting for everything from a relaxed meal to a special occasion, while the pub offers a more informal atmosphere, with live music every Saturday and a real sense of community. We are also ideally located for RAF Brize Norton, approximately six miles away, making The Old Crown a fantastic choice for RAF personnel, visiting families, friends and those looking for a comfortable and welcoming place to stay close to the base. Whether you are here for one night, a weekend or a longer visit, we offer a genuine home-from-home with great food, comfortable rooms, friendly service and plenty to enjoy under one roof.





For more information, please visit: www.theoldcrowncoachinginn.com

Swedish Airforce visit RAF Brize Norton

Members of the Swedish Airforce have visited RAF Brize Norton as part of a NATO study visit to learn more about airfield operations at a UK main operating base.







The trip involved Swedish Airforce personnel shadowing their RAF counterparts in similar roles to gain a better understanding of how RAF Brize Norton's airfield is managed and runs with 3 fleets of large air transport aircraft. The two-day visit developed ties between the RAF and one of NATO's newest member nations, strengthening relationships and the ability to work together.

Captain Anna Obrovac of the Swedish Airforce said:

"This has been a very valuable visit where we were able to meet several counterparts and share mutual methods of working. It has given us the opportunity to discuss both similarities and differences in the way we operate our airfields, and we are looking forward to further collaboration in the future."

The visit culminated in an exchanging of gifts between both the RAF and the Swedish Airforce before the visitors departed on their C-130 Hercules.

Flight Lieutenant Aidan Robinson, Flight Lieutenant Operations said:

"It was a pleasure to welcome personnel from the Swedish Airforce as one of NATO's newest members to RAF Brize Norton. It has been a fantastic opportunity for interoperability between our two air forces on how to operate a busy frontline airfield. We look forward to a continued partnership as we keep working together."



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ABTA ABTA No. V4744

RAF Brize Norton and VIN + OMI: Transforming waste into opportunity

RAF Brize Norton are consistently investigating ways to reduce waste through a wide range of methods including policy changes, large scale projects and new initiatives.

More recently there has been work to explore ways of using those materials that we have no choice but to regard as waste, for example items that are no longer fit for purpose and cannot be repaired or refurbished.

In order to explore the possibilities and push the boundaries of recycling, we have joined forces with environmental and sustainability pioneers VIN + OMI.

VIN + OMI have over 25 years' experience in the sustainability field focusing on social impact projects across the globe. They have a long-standing collaboration with King Charles III who is renowned for his dedication to environmental causes.

Creating garments is just one way in which they showcase their work and their message. The team transformed our waste materials into unique, eye-catching garments, demonstrating that materials we see as waste can still have a life as something else. These creations took centre stage at their catwalks at London Fashion Week in both 2025 and 2026 sharing the message that recycling is the way forward and that 'waste' still has a wide range of uses.

VIN + OMI, said,

"With all large institutions, waste, recycling, and environmental protection are complex challenges. This collaboration with the RAF allows us to explore new ways of tackling these issues. Some of the outcomes showcased at our fashion shows educate students and the general public about the possibilities that recycling can offer. We look forward to Phase II of our collaboration, focusing on how longer-term recycling initiatives can benefit communities."



Old cargo netting was used to create an eye-catching garment show at London Fashion Week 2026.

The Station Commander said,

"I am proud of RAF Brize Norton's innovative efforts to reduce waste and our partnership with VIN + OMI. This initiative demonstrates our commitment to our environmental responsibilities while engaging with the local community. Projects like this harness the forward-thinking approach we strive for across the station and utilise it to set a strong example of sustainable practices."



Pictured left: Launching the beginning of our relationship with VIN + OMI, Prue Leith wore a dress made from an old parachute at London Fashion Week 2025.

Pictured right: RAF Brize Norton personnel collected aluminium cans that were then used to create dress shown at London Fashion Week 2026



Station Environmental Protection Officer, said,

"By exploring the possible life cycles of items we are no longer able to use for their initial purpose we have been working with the team to initiate exciting new recycling projects. These projects will look to involve local groups and communities by focusing on social impact, a vital element of environmental protection. More information on these projects will be released soon, watch this space!"

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WRFM: Serving the Community Through Local Voices

WRFM, a beloved local radio station in West Oxfordshire, continues to be a vibrant hub for local news, music, and entertainment. Broadcasting live 24/7, the station reaches listeners across Oxfordshire and the Cotswolds on their FM frequencies and online streams.

WRFM prioritises providing a platform for the community. Their programming features a diverse range of music catering to all ages, alongside local news updates and traffic reports. Interactive elements like live chat shows allow residents to engage with local issues and connect with each other.

The stations primary aim and focus is to be a truly local resource for the community. This includes interviews with residents, discussions on pressing local matters like housing and flooding, and promoting local businesses and events.

Whether you're looking for familiar tunes, updates on what's happening around town, or a chance to connect with your neighbours, WRFM offers a warm and welcoming space on the airwaves.

Why not follow WRFM on social media? Find us on Facebook (facebook.com/witneyradio), Twitter (@witneyradio) and Instagram (wrfm_radio). Tune in on their FM frequencies 90.2 - 107.4FM, on DAB, listen online, or ask your smart speaker to "Launch WRFM" and become part of the vibrant community.





101 Squadron Charity Committee

In 2023, personnel from 101 Squadron came together with a shared goal: to support a cause close to the hearts of their Squadron family. From this commitment, the 101 Squadron Charity Committee was formed.

The committee chose SSNAP (Supporting Sick Newborns and their Parents) as its charity partner after two Squadron families received vital support during neonatal emergencies. Inspired by these experiences, the team set out to raise both funds and awareness for a charity that provides invaluable assistance to families during some of their most challenging moments.



Their first fundraising event, a cake sale in October 2023, raised £300 and marked the beginning of a remarkable journey. Since then, the committee has raised more than £7,000 through a variety of events that have strengthened community links, supported service families, and promoted charitable giving across RAF Brize Norton.

Highlights have included participation in the Blenheim Palace 10K, where committee members ran alongside a SSNAP representative, helping to raise the charity's profile. The team has also supported the Carterton Christmas Light Switch-On for two consecutive years, running popular stalls featuring festive treats, raffles, and prizes generously donated by local businesses.





Creativity and teamwork have played a key role in fundraising efforts. An around-the-world hamper, containing items sourced from locations where Squadron personnel had deployed, celebrated the global reach of the RAF and proved a popular raffle prize.

The committee has also been a familiar presence at RAF Brize Norton Families Days, providing face painting, games, children's activities, and a handcrafted wooden "stocks" attraction that proved particularly popular. Partnerships with local organisations, including the Carterton Brownies, have further strengthened community engagement, such as through an Earth Day plant sale featuring hand-painted pots planted with peace lilies, selected for their oxygen-producing benefits.



In addition, the team has organised Easter and Halloween celebrations for service families, creating memorable experiences for children while raising valuable funds. At the Bampton Donkey Derby, the committee's stall attracted strong support and provided an unexpected highlight when SSNAP founder Dr Andrew Wilkinson visited and expressed his appreciation for the Squadron's efforts. What began as a six-person initiative has grown to a team of 15 dedicated volunteers. Alongside fundraising, the committee has fostered leadership skills, strengthened RAF-community relationships, and helped raise awareness of the vital support SSNAP provides.

The initiative was a great success, raising awareness of SSNAP and providing valuable support for the charity.





Set within 150 acres of picturesque West Oxfordshire parkland near Witney, Cokethorpe School is a co-educational independent day school for pupils aged 4 to 18, offering a seamless educational journey from early years through to Sixth Form. Blending heritage surroundings with a progressive outlook, the school provides an environment where academic ambition, personal development and a strong sense of community come together.

Cokethorpe is committed to inspiring pupils to achieve more than they thought possible. A culture of belonging underpins school life, encouraging pupils to become confident, curious and compassionate individuals, well prepared for life beyond school. Cokethorpe has been proudly co-educational for over three decades, with 2027 marking 35 years of co-education - half the school's history. This established approach fosters an inclusive environment where pupils learn from diverse perspectives, develop mutual respect and build the interpersonal skills essential for modern life.

The school's approach to learning is guided by research-informed teaching, ensuring lessons are rigorous, engaging and responsive to individual needs. A broad curriculum enables pupils to explore a wide range of subjects, from the Prep School through to GCSE and A Level, with small class sizes allowing teachers to support and stretch each pupil, nurturing academic success and a lifelong love of learning. Pastoral care is a central strength of Cokethorpe. Built on kindness and mutual respect, the supportive community ensures every pupil feels known and valued. Structured systems and strong relationships between staff and pupils create a secure environment in which young people can build confidence, resilience and independence.

Beyond the classroom, pupils benefit from exceptional breadth, with an extensive co-curricular programme that includes over 100 activities in the Senior School. Outdoor education is a particularly distinctive feature, making full use of the school's expansive grounds and dedicated facilities. Opportunities such as kayaking, sailing, climbing, bushcraft and access to on-site rifle and pistol ranges allow pupils to develop practical skills, resilience and teamwork, while building confidence through challenge and adventure. Preparation for the future is embedded through the Futures programme, which provides tailored guidance on higher education and career pathways. Pupils receive expert support with university applications, apprenticeships and career choices, ensuring they leave with clarity and ambition.



Admission to Cokethorpe is selective, with entry points at 4+, 11+, 13+ and 16+, and scholarships and means-tested bursaries available. Overall, Cokethorpe offers a well-rounded education that combines academic excellence, outstanding pastoral care and rich opportunities beyond the classroom, enabling pupils to thrive and succeed.

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veterans, their families and the bereaved



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Civil servants explore RAF heritage at the Battle of Britain Bunker



Civil servants from RAF Brize Norton visited the historic Battle of Britain Bunker in Uxbridge to develop their understanding of the pivotal role air power played during the Second World War and how its principles continue to underpin modern military operations.

The educational visit provided a unique opportunity to explore the underground operations centre from which No. 11 Group Fighter Command directed the air battle that helped defend the United Kingdom in 1940. Everyone gained a greater appreciation of the leadership, decision-making and innovative command and control systems that contributed to victory during the Battle of Britain.

The visit formed part of ongoing efforts to increase awareness of Royal Air Force history among civilian personnel, helping to provide valuable context for the RAF's role today as a globally deployable and technologically advanced air force.

Cheryl Mylchreest, PLA Learning Centre said: *"Understanding our history is essential to appreciating the importance of air power today. The Battle of Britain demonstrated how control of the air can be decisive to national security, and many of the principles developed during that campaign remain relevant in modern operations. Visits such as this help our civil servants better understand the Service, they support and the vital contribution the RAF continues to make both at home and overseas."*

Throughout the day, participants examined how the integrated air defence network developed during the Second World War enabled commanders to make informed decisions at speed. They also considered how advances in technology, intelligence gathering and command-and-control systems have transformed air power while maintaining the enduring requirement for effective leadership, situational awareness and rapid decision-making.

The visit encouraged discussion on the similarities and differences between wartime and contemporary air operations, highlighting how today's RAF continues to employ air and space power to protect UK interests, support allies and respond to global crises.
By strengthening understanding of the Royal Air Force's heritage, the visit reinforced the important role civilian personnel play in enabling the RAF to deliver air power in support of Defence objectives.

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As the popularity of Carnival Store grew, and as retail shifted to digital, carnivalstore.co.uk was born and now remains the UK's biggest online fancy dress retailer. Carnivalstore.co.uk has now grown to selling over 18,000 products worldwide and is still expanding!

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A quiet but vital neighbour:
The role the Voyager Force plays at home and abroad

Many people across West Oxfordshire will have seen the Voyager aircraft taking off and landing, heard about them in the news, or been connected to RAF operations. While these missions may take place thousands of miles from home, they are made possible by the people, skills and careful planning rooted here in the UK at RAF Brize Norton.

Behind every major UK air operation, there is a Voyager aircraft, Voyager is one of the most available, heavily used and effective assets in the RAF. Each year, the fleet carries out more than 1,200 air-to-air refuelling missions, with the Voyager aircraft flying for around 12 hours every day, delivering this demanding workload with a remarkable 96% on time performance.



The fleet is currently providing live support in the Middle East, refuelling RAF Lightning (F-35) and Typhoon aircraft, and continues to play a central role in Operation Shader and also supporting Eastern Sentry.

Voyager regularly supports major international exercises such as Exercise Red Flag and has played a key role in Operation Highmast, helping to move and sustain Carrier Strike Group 25.

The Voyager Force, made up of AirTanker, and the RAF's 101 and 10 Squadrons, who truly think and act as one. The team consists of civilians and military personnel, including 148 Sponsored Reservists and 202 Veterans, working side by side, committed to recruiting, training and retaining people from the local community. Together, they ensure the aircraft are available, safe and mission ready whenever they are needed.

This exceptional level of reliability means that when aircraft need fuel, people need moving, or missions need supporting, the Voyager Force is ready to respond.

Most do not realise that AirTanker sits at the heart of these missions. Working alongside 101 and 10 Squadrons, the Voyager Force ensures the pilots flying RAF Lightning (F-35s) and Typhoons have fuel, support and aircraft availability to remain airborne longer and carry out their roles safely and effectively.



AirTanker provides essential flying services that support both military and civilian needs, playing a key role in keeping people, equipment and vital operations moving safely around the world, operating quietly but reliably to support national security and international stability. While the work may often go unseen, its impact is felt every day.

For local communities, it is a reminder that worldclass defence capability does not always come with fanfare. Sometimes, it comes in the form of steady partnerships, skilled local people, and aircraft that are always ready when the country needs them most.

Those interested in being part of this vital work can explore career opportunities with AirTanker and follow the company on LinkedIn to learn more about life behind the scenes.



A shared journey in Service

Serving in the Royal Air Force is a proud tradition for many families, but for us it has taken on an especially meaningful significance.

As mother and daughter, we found ourselves progressing through our RAF training journeys at the same time, sharing experiences that few families have the opportunity to experience together. As a Reservist with 4624 Squadron and with a daughter serving in the Regular RAF, we have followed different paths in Service, yet our experiences have been closely linked.

Although our roles and commitments differ, we were fortunate to complete key stages of training during the same period. This unique experience gave us a shared understanding of the challenges, achievements and personal growth that come with serving in the RAF, whether as a Reservist balancing Service alongside civilian life or as a full-time member of the Regular Force.

Watching my daughter complete her training was a moment of immense pride. As both a parent and a fellow member of the RAF, I understood the dedication, resilience and determination required to reach that milestone. Seeing her confidence



and professionalism develop along the way reinforced my admiration for those who choose a career in Service.

A short time later, our roles were reversed when my daughter was able to support me through an important milestone in my own training journey. Having the encouragement of someone who truly understood the experience made the occasion all the more memorable and created a shared memory that we will both treasure.

What makes our story even more special is the family legacy behind it. We are proud to be continuing a long tradition of military service that spans multiple generations. Sharing this chapter together has strengthened our connection to that legacy and deepened our appreciation of the values that have inspired generations of Service personnel.

Serving at the same time has strengthened our bond and given us a unique perspective on RAF life. It has also highlighted the enduring values at the heart of the Service: commitment, teamwork, resilience and mutual respect. These are values that transcend generations and continue to unite those who wear the uniform.

We are both incredibly proud to serve, grateful for the opportunities we have been given, and honoured to contribute alongside so many dedicated people. This shared experience has not only strengthened our family connection but has also reinforced our pride in being part of an organisation built on service, professionalism and teamwork.

AirTanker awarded Armed Forces Covenant Gold Award

AirTanker has been awarded the Ministry of Defence Employer Recognition Scheme Gold Award 2026, the highest level of recognition for organisations that demonstrate outstanding support for the Armed Forces community.

The award recognises AirTanker's long-term commitment to supporting serving personnel, reservists, veterans, service leavers, cadets and military families. It also reflects the unique military and civilian partnership at the heart of the organisation. Supporting veterans is part of AirTanker's DNA with 25% of their workforce and 50% of their executive leadership team being veterans.

The Gold Award acknowledges AirTanker's work to create career opportunities for service leavers, support reservists and veterans, invest in cadet organisations, champion military charities and promote the Armed Forces Covenant through its supply chain and wider business network.

The award submission highlighted a range of activity delivered across the business, including fundraising for military charities, support for the cadet movement, engagement with the Career Transition Partnership and AirTanker's Sponsored Reservist programme.

Nathan Glasspool, Talent Acquisition Manager, who spear headed the application, said:
"This award is one of the achievements I am most proud to have been involved with during my time at AirTanker. It reflects not only our unique connection to Defence, but also the genuine commitment of our people to supporting those who serve, have served, and their families. Thank you to everyone who helped make this possible."



Airtanker sponsored Reservists Experience Day - UK Ministry of Defence

AirTanker's Gold Award submission showcased activity across several areas of Armed Forces support, including:

- Providing the airbridge between the UK and Canada for Team UK's participation in the Invictus Games, supporting wounded, injured and sick serving personnel and veterans as they competed on the international stage.
- The submission also highlighted partnerships with organisations including, Wings for Warriors, Turn to Starboard, Healing Military Minds, the Royal British Legion and the UK Armed Forces Winter Sports Association, helping former service personnel develop new skills, improve wellbeing and build lasting support networks.
- Supporting the future generations, has always been a key focus. Through hangar visits, simulator experiences and training activities, AirTanker continues to support the cadet movement and inspire young people to explore careers in aviation, engineering and Defence. The organisation also provides facilities for RAF Air Cadet adult volunteer development courses.
- Working closely with the Career Transition Partnership, AirTanker has attended service leaver employment events and hosted recruitment sessions to connect departing military personnel with civilian career opportunities.

AirTanker remains committed to supporting the men and women currently serving. It's Sponsored Reservist programme remains an example of military and civilian integration, supported by policies and working arrangements that help reservists balance military commitments with civilian careers. The Armed Forces Covenant is a promise that those who serve, or have served, in the Armed Forces, and their families, should be treated fairly and face no disadvantage because of their service.

The Employer Recognition Scheme recognises organisations that go above and beyond in delivering that promise. Gold Award holders are recognised for embedding support for the Armed Forces community into their culture, employment practices and wider social impact activities.



Career Transition Partnership Event



Turn2Starbourd completed their Full Circle in support of Invictus Games happening next year



Wings for Warriors and AirTanker who raised £10,000

AirTanker will formally receive the Gold Award at a ceremony in Middle Wallop in September.

For more information on careers at AirTanker please visit their website: www.airtanker.co.uk

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An inspiring experience of RAF professionalism and support on the South Atlantic Airbridge

A Swiss couple travelling on the South Atlantic Air Bridge share their personal account of the exceptional support and professionalism they experienced from RAF Brize Norton personnel during their journey.

It gives us great pleasure to share feedback following our second journey on the South Atlantic Airbridge. You kindly wished us 'the safest and most enjoyable of trips', which we are pleased to say we experienced in full. We would like to provide an overview of our flights and the impressions and experiences we gained throughout.

We have now returned safely home to Zurich, Switzerland. As with our first experience with the RAF, both our southbound flight and our northbound return were a complete success in all aspects of travel. On this occasion, we also gained a deeper appreciation of the highly professional structure of the South Atlantic Airbridge and the excellent care provided to civilian passengers, particularly during disruption.

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to the RAF South Atlantic Airbridge and, in particular, to three members of RAF personnel (listed below) who took it upon themselves, proactively, responsibly, and with great professionalism, to help resolve the challenges caused by the delay to our northbound flight.

From the moment we arrived at RAF Brize Norton, we were made to feel welcome as civilian passengers. Throughout the check-in process, RAF staff supported us at every stage, answering questions and providing clear guidance. At all times, we felt we were in the hands of a highly competent and approachable organisation. We can only offer our highest praise for what was, for us, an inspiring travel experience. Such a long-haul operation clearly demands a high level of care and service, which we consistently received from both the RAF and Airtanker crews.
A new experience for us during this journey was the 16-hour delay at Mount Pleasant. Despite the disruption, we were impressed by the professionalism shown throughout. It was reassuring to receive a clear and informative briefing from a senior officer, who explained the meteorological cause of the delay to both staff and passengers. As civilian travellers, this made us feel included and valued, almost as if we were part of the RAF itself. For one of us, it even brought back memories of military service in the Swiss Army.

As a result of the delay, it became clear that we would arrive at Brize Norton late on Saturday evening and would miss our connecting arrangements. Chris (who we understand was on training at Brize Norton) recognised our situation early and took responsibility, supporting us, making arrangements from Mount Pleasant ahead of our arrival. In addition, Flt Lt Kennard-Kettle provided prompt assistance by issuing documentation for our travel insurance, as it was evident we would miss our onward flight from London to Zurich.

Upon our arrival at Brize Norton late that evening, Chris continued to support us, and Emma, one of the ground staff, who had clearly been pre-briefed, was already waiting. Both were exceptionally helpful and made every effort to ensure we were safe and



comfortable. They arranged for us to stay overnight in the heated waiting area at the entrance gate, with security staff fully aware of our presence and offering support if needed. Thanks to their care, we were able to rest safely before continuing our journey by bus to Oxford and London the following morning.

Once again, it was a great honour to travel with the RAF Airbridge. The professionalism, reliability, and sense of responsibility demonstrated by RAF personnel left a lasting impression on us. In our view, many organisations in the private sector could learn from this example; particularly in terms of decision-making, ownership, and willingness to help beyond formal responsibilities, as was so clearly demonstrated in our case.
We very much look forward to travelling with the RAF again in the future on our next journey to the Falkland Islands."

Yours sincerely,

Dr Adrian Meyer and Inge Meyer
Zurich, Switzerland

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Padre's Peace
– Padre Paul Stephens

Remembering the Battle of Britain: A Call to Service

Each September, events and services commemorate The Battle of Britain, one of the defining moments of the Second World War. Britain's survival depended upon courage, resilience and individuals willing to put duty before self.

Writing to the church in Philippi, St Paul says: "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves." He points to Christ, who "emptied himself" and "took the very nature of a servant" (Philippians 2:1-11).

That example of service resonates strongly with military life.

The Battle of Britain was never simply a story of individual heroism. Engineers, pilots, ground crews, controllers, observers, medical personnel and many others, including civilians, each accepted responsibility for one another and contributed to a common purpose. The Few could not have stood alone. Military service asks not only what can I achieve? but what can I contribute? We learn to rely on those beside us, accept responsibility and place the mission and welfare of others ahead of personal comfort.

Philippians also offers a powerful model of leadership. Christ demonstrates that authority is not ultimately about status or privilege, but service. As Jesus himself taught: "Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant" (Mark 10:43).

Remembering the Battle of Britain should therefore do more than recall a famous victory. It should remind us of the courage, loyalty, discipline, sacrifice and service that made endurance possible.

Those who fought in 1940 did not know how the war would end. They could only fulfil the duty before them. In our own uncertain world, we too are called to serve faithfully without knowing what tomorrow will bring. As St Paul reminds us: "Be courageous, be strong. Do everything in love" (1 Corinthians 16:13-14).

For Christians, that service finds its ultimate example in Jesus. His humility was not defeat, but the pathway to exaltation: "Therefore God exalted him to the highest place" (Philippians 2:9).

As we remember the Few and all who supported them, may their example inspire those who serve today - and may we be faithful in the duties entrusted to us, courageous in adversity and ready to put the needs of others before our own.



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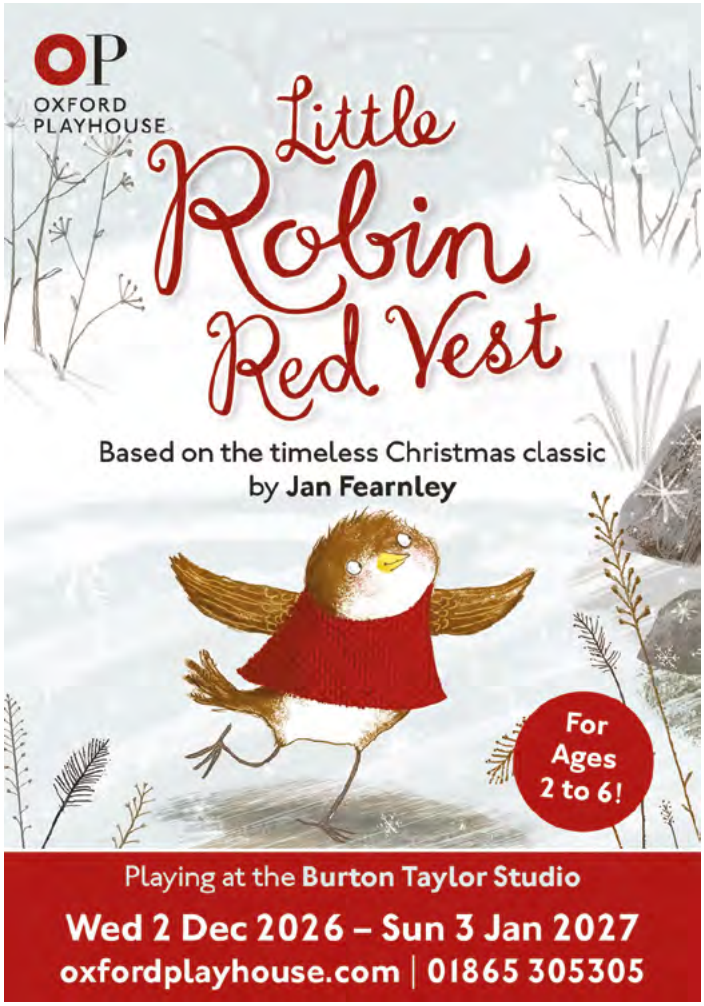
When it comes to our skin, finding the right treatment can be about far more than simply looking good, it's about feeling confident and comfortable in your own skin. That's the ethos behind Cotswold Cryotherapy Skin Clinic, founded by Zoe Wilkinson in 2023.

With more than a decade of experience in advanced skincare and professional treatments, Zoe has created a welcoming, personalised clinic within Affinity Salon, right in the heart of Carterton. Offering expert treatments to clients of all ages and genders, the clinic provides a relaxed space where individual skin concerns can be discussed without pressure.

Cotswold Cryotherapy Skin Clinic specialises in fully insured cryotherapy for the removal of benign skin lesions, with every treatment beginning with a thorough consultation to ensure it is suitable for the individual. Alongside cryotherapy, treatments include mole mapping, chemical peels, microneedling, charcoal facials, teen facials and bespoke facial treatments.

Whether supporting teenage skin, improving the appearance and texture of mature skin or simply providing some well-deserved self-care, every treatment is tailored to the individual.

For Zoe, it's about combining professional expertise with a friendly, personal approach - helping clients feel comfortable, cared for and, most importantly, confident in their skin at every stage of life.



Little Robin Red Vest at Oxford Playhouse's Burton Taylor Studio

This December, introduce children to the magic of theatre with a brand-new production of Little Robin Red Vest, based on the best-selling book by Jan Fearnley.

One frosty evening, a week before Christmas, Little Robin washes and irons seven warm vests for the chilly nights to come. As the days go by, he comes across lots of cold and shivering animals, and kindly gives them his vests to wear. But by Christmas Eve, Little Robin is cold and alone with no vests left. That is, until a mysterious friend arrives to reward his kindness with a perfect little red vest.

Ideal for children aged 2-6 and their families, Little Robin Red Vest features original songs, puppetry and integrated Makaton. Join the playful performers of Filskit Theatre as they share this heart-warming tale of friendship, generosity, and the joy of giving.

Little Robin Red Vest plays from Wednesday 2 December 2026 to Sunday 3 January 2027 at the Burton Taylor Studio. To book tickets, visit oxfordplayhouse.com or call the Box Office on 01865 305305.



Mirror, mirror on the wall... which panto is the most magical of them all?

Step into the enchanted West Oxford Wood as Oxford Playhouse invites you on a magical, glittering adventure with a fresh new take on the classic fairy tale, *Snow White*.

From the Panto Award-winning theatre, this year's festive show blends ancient forest magic with a world of image-enhancing technology. At the heart of the story is Snow who is drawn to the last remaining enchanted forest and all the people who live there. But nature magic's becomes under threat when the glamorous Queen Narcissa and her all-knowing mirror, MiRi, discover a magical resource that preserves the queen's beauty. Driven by power and need for endless admiration, she becomes determined to mine every last piece of the forest. Can Snow and some unlikely friends outwit the Queen and restore balance to the natural world?

Filled with dazzling dance numbers, familiar songs and plenty of hilarious jokes along the way, this must-see pantomime is perfect for all the family. This Oxford Playhouse production is written by **Sarah Henley** and directed by the venue's Artistic Director **Mike Tweddle**.

Playing from Fri 20 Nov 2026 – Sun 3 Jan 2027 at Oxford Playhouse www.oxfordplayhouse.com

Remembering the five airmen who lost their lives near Black Bourton on 27 August 1944

This week marks the 82nd anniversary of the loss of Royal Air Force Albemarle V1782, which crashed near the Oxfordshire village of Black Bourton on 27 August 1944, killing all five members of its crew.

The Armstrong Whitworth Albemarle, operated by No. 297 Squadron RAF from nearby RAF Brize Norton, was returning to base following an operational mission when tragedy struck. During the attempted landing, the aircraft overshot the runway and crashed in a field at Mill Farm, near Black Bourton. The aircraft was destroyed and all five airmen on board were killed.



The men who lost their lives were:

- Flight Sergeant Alan Henry Busbridge
- Flight Sergeant Bernard Vincent Mowan
- Flight Sergeant William Frederick Insley
- Sergeant Kenneth James Shay
- Sergeant Edgar Frederick Bonser

The crew had been involved in wartime flying from RAF Brize Norton, including operations connected with the Allied airborne campaign and missions supporting resistance forces in occupied France.

Today, the site at Mill Farm is marked by a memorial cairn commemorating the five airmen. Acts of remembrance have been held at the site on successive anniversaries, with RAF personnel, veterans' organisations, relatives and members of the local community paying their respects.

More than eight decades later, the memorial at Black Bourton remains a tangible reminder of the human cost of the Second World War and of the young airmen who served from RAF Brize Norton .

Representing RAF Brize Norton, Wing Commander Steve Jones said:

"It was a privilege to represent RAF Brize Norton at today's Albemarle Commemoration. We gather not only to remember those who served and sacrificed, but also to honour the enduring bond between the RAF and the communities that support us. Their courage, commitment and sense of duty remain an inspiration to us all, and it is fitting that we come together to ensure their legacy is never forgotten."



UK Armed Forces Boxing Association

Development Championships Finals Night showcases Armed Forces talent at RAF Brize Norton

The UK Armed Forces Boxing Association (UKAFBA) Development Championships Finals Night took place at RAF Brize Norton, bringing together some of the most promising boxing talent from across the Armed Forces.

The event provided a platform for Service personnel from the Royal Navy, British Army and Royal Air Force to compete in front of supporters, coaches and fellow athletes, demonstrating the skill, determination and resilience that underpin both military service and amateur boxing.

With championship titles on the line, competitors showcased the high standard of boxing being developed across Defence, with closely contested bouts highlighting the commitment and dedication required to reach finals level competition.

The UKAFBA Development Championships play a vital role in identifying and nurturing emerging talent, providing opportunities for Service personnel to gain competitive experience, build confidence and progress through the military boxing pathway.

Chairman of the RAF Boxing Association, Air Commodore Paul Hamilton said:

"The Development Championships Finals Night was an opportunity to showcase some of the most promising boxing talent from across the Armed Forces. The dedication shown by all competitors throughout their training and preparation reflects the values of courage, discipline and teamwork that are common to both military service and boxing."

Military sport continues to contribute to operational effectiveness by developing leadership, resilience, physical fitness and teamwork, while strengthening relationships across Defence.

The successful staging of the finals night at RAF Brize Norton further demonstrated the station's commitment to supporting military sport and providing opportunities for Service personnel to excel both professionally and athletically.

Congratulations to all those who stepped into the ring and represented their units with pride, and especially to this year's champions whose hard work, dedication and skill earned them Development Championship titles:

Bout 1 LCpl Tom McCallion – 1 Regt RLC
Bout 2 AS1 Jack Bushell – TMW
Bout 3 AS1(T) Alex Masterman – RAF Coningsby
Bout 4 KGn Taylor Day – 1 Lancs
Bout 5 LCpl Ryan Wainwright – 1 Lancs
Bout 6 AS1 Nicolas Smith – RAF Marham
Bout 7 AS1 Alex Cross – RAF Odiham
Bout 8 Pte Eric Justin – 17 Port and Maritime Regt









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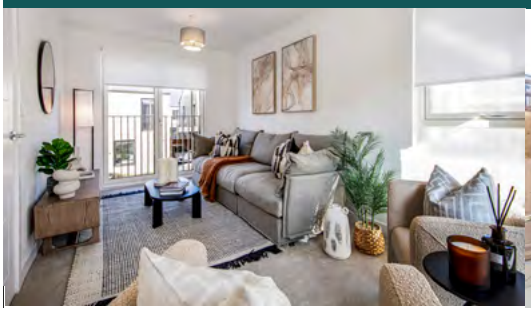
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A Home That Works Around You

Finding a home that offers flexibility, quality and convenience has never been more important. At Beckley Place in Oxford, Leaf Living is providing a modern rental experience designed around the needs of today's residents.

Situated within the growing Barton Park community, Beckley Place offers an ideal location for those connected with RAF Brize Norton who are looking for a professionally managed home close to Oxford. Residents benefit from excellent transport links, a thriving local community and easy access to employment, education and leisure opportunities across the region.

The development features a collection of thoughtfully designed homes, offering generous living space, modern layouts and energy-efficient features. Whether you're relocating, upsizing or looking for greater flexibility, Beckley Place provides a home that adapts to your lifestyle.

A key benefit of living at Beckley Place is the Leaf Living difference. Every home is professionally managed, ensuring residents have access to dedicated support and responsive maintenance throughout their tenancy. This commitment to service helps remove many of the challenges often associated with traditional private renting. Residents can also benefit from Leaf Living's partnership with Flatfair, offering a deposit alternative that can help make moving more affordable and accessible.

Leaf Living's focus is not only on delivering high-quality homes but also on creating thriving communities where residents feel supported and valued. Long-term security, well-maintained homes and a customer-first approach give residents the confidence to make their house a home.

The development is particularly attractive for households seeking flexibility. Renting with Leaf Living allows residents to enjoy the benefits of a modern, professionally managed home without the responsibilities that often come with home ownership.

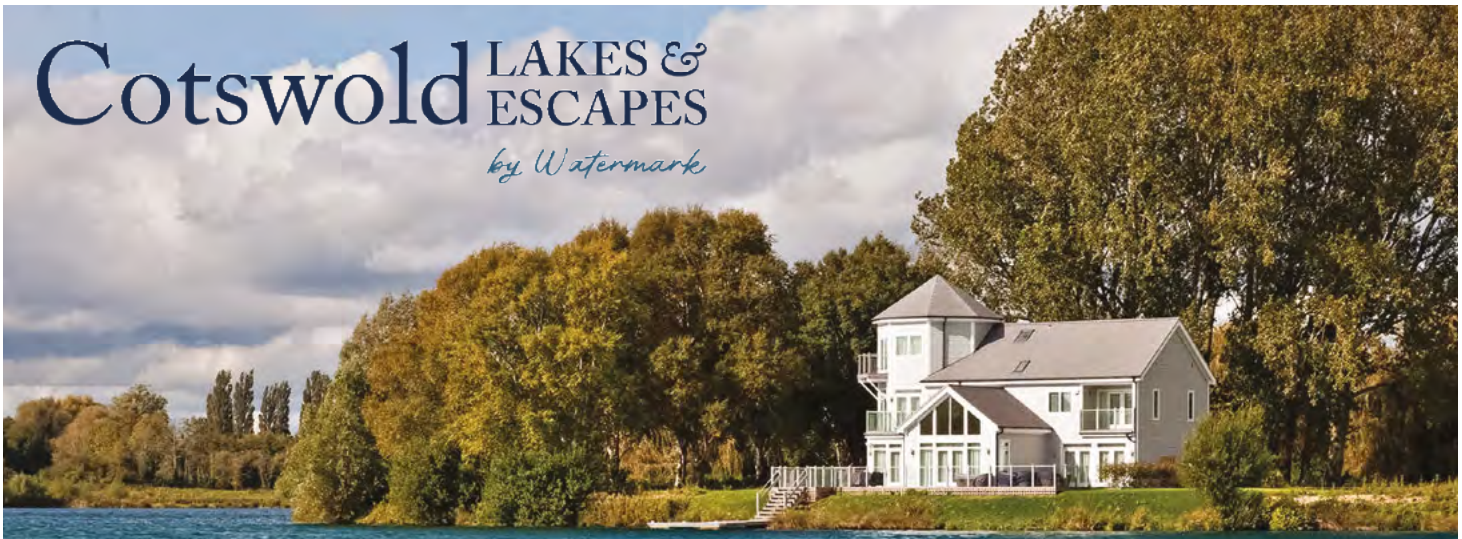
Pet-friendly living is another important part of the offering, helping ensure that every member of the family feels welcome. Combined with attractive surroundings and a strong sense of community, Beckley Place provides a place where residents can settle quickly and comfortably.

With Oxford city centre, major road links, retail destinations and extensive green spaces all within easy reach, Barton Park continues to be one of Oxfordshire's most sought-after new neighbourhoods.

As more people seek a balance between flexibility and stability, professionally managed rental homes are becoming an increasingly popular choice. Beckley Place combines the very best aspects of modern renting with quality homes, excellent service and a desirable Oxford location.

For those looking for a fresh start, a new posting or simply a better way to rent, Beckley Place offers a place to call home.

To find out more about available homes at Beckley Place, visit www.leafliving.com/beckley-place or call 0330 043 0144.



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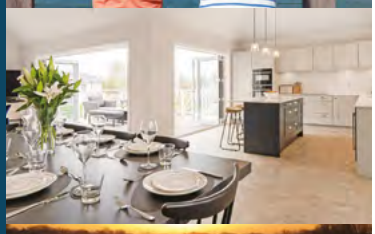
Luxury Lodges & Country Homes

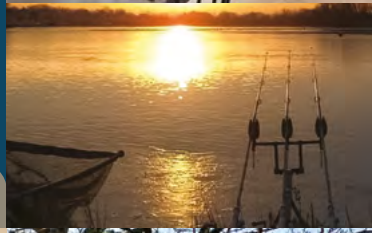
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Furthermore, there is the opportunity to own a slice of heaven with our selection of lodges & properties for sale.

Your time with us can be a symphony of relaxation or a crescendo of adventure. Pamper yourself in a nearby spa, partake in a myriad of water sports, immerse yourself in the surrounding heritage or take in the quiet countryside views. This is life undiluted.







Find out more at: www.cotswoldlakesandescapes.co.uk







