

BIGGIN ON THE BUMP

Bob Ogley



The most famous fighter station in the world

Froglets Publications

First published in Great Britain by Froglets
Publications Limited, Brasted Chart, Westerham,
Kent TN16 1LY
Telephone: 01959 562972 Fax 01959 565365

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ISBN 1 872337 05 8 (Paperback) 1 872337 10 4 (Hardback)
9781872337058

May 1990. Reprinted June 1990, November 1993,
January 1995, May 1996, May 1998, October 2000,
December 2002 and April 2006

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Cover illustrations:

Front cover: **Once more...Adlertag: August 15,
1940** by Frank Wootton

Back Cover: **The legends of Biggin Hill**
by Bob Murray.

Top Row: F2B Fighter, Gloster Grebes, Bristol
Bulldog.

Middle Row: SE5A, Supermarine Spitfire, Gloster
Gladiator. Bottom Row: Avro 504K (Tutor), Hawker
Hart, Gloster Gauntlet.

The book was originated by Pen & Ink, Branbridges
Industrial Estate, East Peckham, printed and bound by
Thanet Press, Union Crescent, Margate.

THIS book was first published in 1990 to mark the 50th anniversary of the Battle of Britain and to raise money for the RAF Benevolent Fund. It was so successful that a reprint was necessary within a few weeks. By December 2002 *Biggin on The Bump* had been reprinted seven times and had generated, in royalties, more than £15,000 for the Benevolent Fund.

Seven reprints equate to many thousands of copies sold to enthusiasts all over the world who have written frequently to express their affection for Britain's premier station. The RAF, of course, is no longer in residence. It left on October 4, 1992 when the officers of the Aircrew Selection Centre gathered in St George's Chapel to pay homage to Biggin Hill. In a moving ceremony, the last rites of the famous old fighter station were observed with the dignity, solemnity and respect which it had earned during its historic lifespan of 76 years.

It was those same officers who had earlier suggested that the unique photographs in the station's archives would make the basis of a book. They invited Bob Ogley, a local author and historian, to take readers on a journey from the thrilling days of pioneer aviators and brittle biplanes, through the Battle of Britain and wartime England to victory and peace in May 1945.

Bob took up the challenge and later went on to write more books about the war years including *Kent at War*, *Surrey at War* and *Doodlebugs and Rockets*. He discovered, in the public record office, an unpublished manuscript by the late H.E. Bates and obtained permission from the Crown to have it published. *Flying Bombs Over England* raised a further £15,000 for the RAF Benevolent Fund, donated by Madge Bates.

In 1995 Bob Ogley was one of just three people to be awarded a special Certificate of Merit by the Fund and was congratulated for his "exceptional support". He celebrated a few years later by researching, writing and publishing *Ghosts of Biggin Hill*, again supporting the Benevolent Fund. A description of that book appears on the facing page.

Bob enjoyed the privilege of meeting many of our aviation heroes, including Brian Kingcome, Alan Deere, Robert Deacon Elliott, Peter Brothers, Ken Campbell, Donald Stones, Desmond Sheen, Harbourne Mackay Stephen, Neville Duke, Douglas Grice, Ian Cosby, Johnny Johnson, Jack Rose, Ronald Hamlyn, Tom Gleave, Pat Hancock and Henryck Szczesny. He also met the heroines — Dame Felicity Peake (née Hanbury), Elspeth Green (née Henderson) and Joan Elizabeth Mortimer. Sadly many of them are no longer with us.

The strongest link

The Royal Air Force Biggin Hill badge on page one shows a sword ringed by a circlet of chain. The sword, unsheathed with point upwards is a fighting sword, symbolic of the famous part played by the station in the Battle of Britain. The blood-red colour is also symbolic of fighting and of the warriors, in this case, winged, who took part in the Battle. A connotation with the sword of St Paul, which is similar in design and colour and which is displayed in the Arms of the City of London, is also evident, Biggin Hill having played a key part in the defence of the capital against the Luftwaffe. It is of interest too to note that St George of England's sword was a fighting one and that the evocative St George's Chapel at Biggin Hill also commemorates the Station's part in the Battle of Britain. The circlet of chain, in gold to indicate quality, symbolises the ring of Royal Air Force Stations, which then defended the capital city. The motto, *The Strongest Link*, alludes to the fact that Biggin Hill claimed over one thousand enemy aircraft destroyed during World War II.

Chester Herald, College of Arms.

To Chris,

Biggin on The Bump

With best wishes

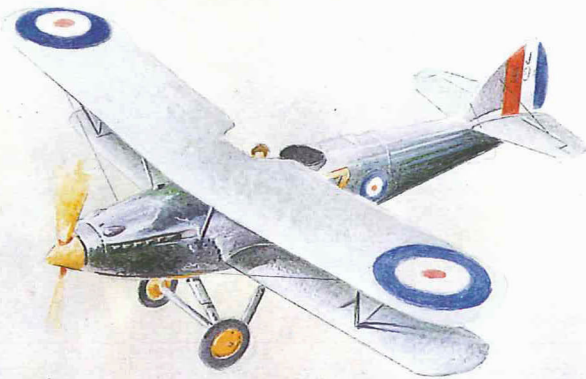
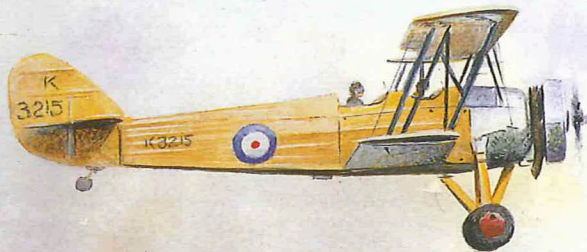
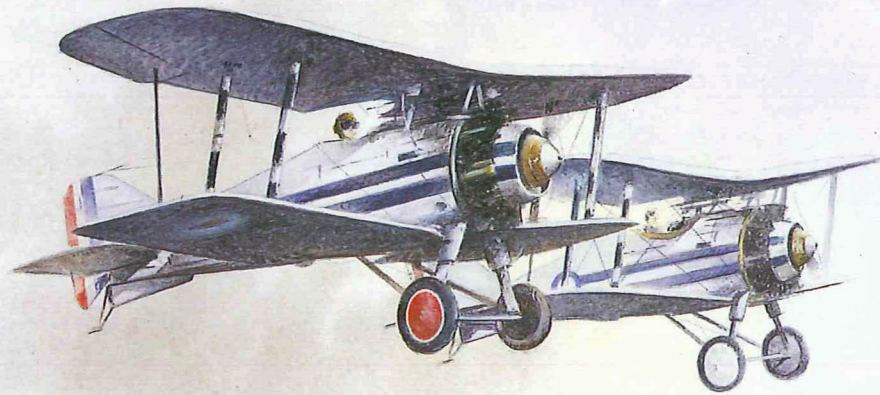
THE STORY OF THE MOST FAMOUS FIGHTER STATION IN THE WORLD

by Bob Ogley

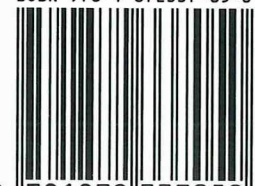
Bob Ogley

It was the pilots of the Second World War who called it "The Bump". Returning from a sortie above the orchards, or a patrol over the Channel, they would fly across the Weald of Kent towards the chalk hills of the North Downs and, at the highest point, look for a terribly scarred concrete runway. This was Biggin Hill, "home" until the next scramble. Just a tiny patchwork square of England, but a beautiful sight. Biggin Hill is a name comparable to Alamein in epoch-making glory for it was one of the ramparts from which The Few launched their attack against the Luftwaffe. It guarded the southern approaches to London and its aces, flying Hurricanes and Spitfires, shot down more than 1,600 enemy aircraft. This book provides a unique photographic record of the men, women, machines and indomitable spirit which made Biggin Hill the most famous fighter station in the world.





ISBN 1-872337-05-8
ISBN 978-1-872337-05-0



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£10.99

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