

Grumpy Old Men's Club update

The latest outing for the "Grumpies" was a visit to the Biggin Hill Memorial Museum. A small group of eight Grumpies enjoyed a guided tour before wandering around under our own steam.

Biggin Hill Memorial Museum tells the story of RAF Biggin Hill through the personal experiences of those who served there, and the community who supported them.

The museum journey begins over 100 years ago when RAF Biggin Hill was just farmland. Its high altitude and strategically important location between London and continental Europe destined it to become the most important airfield of the Battle of Britain, laying the foundation for the European landscape as we know it today. One of Britain's oldest aerodromes, RAF Biggin Hill is still internationally recognised as Sir Winston Churchill's "strongest link".

The objects in the museum collection are directly associated to the people who served at RAF Biggin Hill. They include uniforms, medals, personal letters, documents and even furniture from the local pub. The collection also includes objects related to remembrance and memorial and the founding of the two chapels at the airfield from 1943 – 1951.



Aerial view of Biggin Hill Airfield 1946



Exhibits including a jacket belonging to Sgt David Derham – Deputy Controller

The museum surrounds St George's RAF Chapel of Remembrance, which was built in 1951 to preserve the legacy of the fighter pilots who served and died flying from Biggin Hill sector. This is the second chapel which was built following the destruction by fire in December 1946 of the original. Whilst most things were lost, there were some unlikely survivals such as the chapel's Bible which is currently part of the museum's collection.

St George's RAF Chapel of Remembrance was managed by the RAF until 2016 when the site was transferred to the care of the London Borough of Bromley. The museum enables access to, and safeguards the future of, this important building. The chapel has many interesting features, including its flooring which is made from propeller blades. There are 12 stained-glass windows designed by Sir Hugh Easton. Wing Commander Gordon Sinclair posed as the central figure which represents the spirit of a pilot with six wings.



The Chapel



The altar and remembrance panels



Stained glass window