

Braves Bask in Summer Sun at

Wonderful White Waltham

It was quite a revelation to have no weather worries, other than the fact that it may be just too hot, as final preparations were being made for our Young Aviators event scheduled at the White Waltham home of our hosts, the West London Aero Club. Everything was in place from pilots and aeroplanes to catering and so as we drove down to the airfield early on the Sunday morning in brilliant sunshine, we were feeling really happy that we were in for another great White Waltham day and so it was to prove!!

By the time we had arrived and prepared everything for participant arrivals quite a few of the pilots were taking advantage of the relative peace and quiet of the clubhouse lawn before things were scheduled to liven up a bit; it was clear that this was something of a breakfast hot-spot as groups of pilots were chatting happily swigging tea and tucking into the traditional “full English” before the call to flight briefing for the day; it was a good opportunity as well for me to renew old acquaintances and meet some of the new Bader recruits. With about 30 minutes to go before the first group of Braves arrival the pilots were called into the meeting room for briefing; there was an awful lot of local air activity schedule for the day including one or two air shows along with a display nearby by the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight. However a clear route had been determined and after reminders about any effect the heat may have on flying everyone left in a very upbeat mood and were full of confidence that this was to be a great day!!



The club had erected a marquee that was to provide welcome shelter from the sun throughout the day as well as the Bader Braves Op’s Room. Right on the scheduled arrival time excited Young Aviators began to appear and once the usual formalities had been completed it was straight into action and the first of the 37 Braves flights that would be made throughout the day taxied out to make final checks and then onto line up ready for take-off.

It wasn’t long before the early morning peaceful breakfast on the lawn was but a distant memory for now the whole place was alive with activity. Quite apart from the Operation Braves there was much more going on; White Waltham is a very busy place on a Sunday with a lot of regular club flying activity as well as guest aircraft flying in from all around the UK and even the continent.

There was now a steady flow of Braves arriving at check in. Jess was busy welcoming everyone, making sure that all the paperwork had been properly completed and handing out



the goody-bags before directing them to Tessa and Arthur who were co-ordinating flights. Aircraft were now departing and returning with amazing regularity.

However not only were things hotting up on the activity front but the temperature had been steadily rising throughout the morning and by lunchtime the wind had changed direction. It was becoming slightly more difficult now to allocate people to flights as not only does the

Bader Braves Squadron comprise a range of different types of aeroplanes each of which has been volunteered to Bader Braves for the day, but high temperatures such as we were now experiencing, greatly effects the performance of a light aircraft with weights and balances becoming much more critical. Undeterred however, the pilots continued their tasks



and no sooner had our morning group been completed than the afternoon Braves started arriving. Fortunately a number of the aeroplanes were in shared ownership with each partner taking a turn at the controls which allowed operations to continue pretty much seamlessly throughout the afternoon.

Around 4.00pm we were down to the last three flights which was just as well as the temperature had now risen to a blistering 28.5c and the wind had dropped considerably making it feel even hotter. By the time flight number 37 landed most of the Braves had left for home and the pilots along with Tessa, Arthur and Jess were able to take a well-earned rest. As we all gathered round to mull over the day there was the usual display of camaraderie amongst the pilots, sharing of experiences and much laughter; it was quite clear that had been yet another brilliantly successful White Waltham event and, as always, we are indebted to all those who so generously gave their time, effort and aeroplanes and made sure that everyone went home with a big smile.



Just one noticeable difference today though – at the end of the day there was none of the usual cuppas in evidence today it was all ice cold drinks!! IT SURE WAS FLIPPIN' HOT!!

Well done WLAC and thank you one and all!!