Civil Air Support Delivers Critical Milk Bank Mission in Record Time

Wednesday 15 April, 2026

Three charities, one mission, and a race against the clock — Civil Air Support's Transport Group once again proved the power of teamwork and aviation for good.

Civil Air Support (CAS) volunteers completed a high?value, long?distance support mission this week, transporting frozen human milk from **Princess Anne Hospital, Southampton**, to the **Cheshire Milk Bank** in record time. The mission was undertaken in partnership with **SERV Wessex – The Blood Runners** and **Merseyside & Cheshire Blood Bikes**, highlighting outstanding collaboration between charitable organisations serving communities across the UK.

The request came from SERV Wessex Blood Bikes, who urgently needed specialist assistance to move the temperature?critical samples north for laboratory research use — all within a very limited shelf?life window.

Two CAS volunteers, **Javed Rashman** and **Ian Haskell**, immediately stepped forward, flying a **Piper Arrow (G?AZFM)** directly from **Thruxton to Hawarden (Chester)** under full IFR conditions. What would normally have been a **225?mile road journey and around five hours of riding** was reduced to **just one hour of flight time**, ensuring the samples were handed over to Merseyside & Cheshire Blood Bikes well within the required timeframe.

Carl Beardmore, Duty Operations Manager for Civil Air Support, coordinated the mission:

> *"This was a first for CAS — and for Javed and Ian — involving this type of transfer. Working with two new Blood Bike groups was both a fantastic learning experience and incredibly rewarding. Communications, planning and execution all ran smoothly, and knowing we'd made a real difference made it even more worthwhile."*

The operation also marked the addition of **Hawarden (Chester) Airport** to CAS's list of Friendly Airfields, with both departure and arrival airfields generously waiving landing fees in support of the mission.

CAS Deputy Director of Operations, Tim Bennett, said:

> *"This is another fantastic example of three separate charities working together to serve our communities and make a real difference. Our thanks go to everyone involved — from the Blood Bike teams to the airfields who supported us without hesitation. Well done all."*

The crew completed the return journey the same day, logging **2 hours 25 minutes of total flight time**, demonstrating the efficiency and responsiveness of CAS's Transport Group.

For pilot **Javed Rashman**, the mission was particularly meaningful:

> *"I absolutely loved doing this — and I'd very much like to do more."*

Archie Liggat, Director of Operations for Civil Air Support, praised the operation:

> *"An excellent operation in all respects. Hawarden has now been added to our Friendly Airfields document, and a formal letter of thanks has been sent. Cooperation and combined operations like this are thanks enough for everyone involved."*

This mission stands as a powerful reminder of how **aviation, volunteers and cooperation between charities** can overcome distance and time pressures — delivering vital support where and when it's needed most.

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