

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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