

Seeking RAF Biggin Hill - Walking Trail: 1.6 miles

1 Kings Arms Pub

This pub was very popular with pilots stationed at RAF Biggin Hill. The building itself has a long story dating back to 1585. On 18th August 1940, the Kings Arms experienced a direct raid overhead. Customers Bill Blundell, Lou Deane and landlord Fred Horwood suffered injuries from the machine gun of a German Dornier. Bill lost part of his leg, and tragically both Fred and Lou later died as a result of their wounds.

2 Vincent Square

Vincent Square used to be the married quarters for RAF personnel. It has now been developed for private housing. The remaining buildings date back to 1929. You will notice some gaps in the line of the houses - this is the aftermath of bombing during the Second World War where some houses were never rebuilt.

3 Barracks Block RAF

Here you will see red-brick buildings which were a part of the RAF West Camp facilities. They were mostly established during the post-1923 expansion of the RAF. They operated as workshops, barracks, hangars, offices and a mess. Some of the buildings are now in use by the Metropolitan Police.

4 Biggin Hill Memorial Museum

Here you can discover the story of Britain's most famous fighter station through the personal experience of those who served there and the community that supported them. You will notice the Hurricane and Spitfire planes as gate guardians - they are replicas of actual planes of Geoffrey Wellum and Peter Brothers - pilots who both served here during the Battle of Britain.

5 Officers' Mess

Behind the tall fence, just in front of St. George's Chapel, you can see a red-brick building which was used as the Officers' Mess. Dated around 1935, it is now used as a private residence.

6

St George's RAF Chapel of Remembrance

The St. George's RAF Chapel of Remembrance which you can see now replaced a temporary chapel located on South Camp which was destroyed by fire in 1946. It was built in its current location in 1951 after a fundraising campaign led by Sir Winston Churchill as a memorial to the aircrew who died flying from the Biggin Hill sector during the Second World War.

7 Building 33 Station HQ

As you go along Main Road, you will notice many characteristic red brick houses. They were built for the RAF but now they are abandoned and they are **not accessible to the public**. One of them is building 33, built in 1933, as the station headquarters building.

8 Saltbox Hill

This was the site of The Saltbox Tea Rooms, a distinctive landmark for pilots returning to Biggin Hill. Originally two cottages, it became a cafe before the RAF took it over in 1936. It was the only residential building on the airfield side of the road. It was **demolished** when the road was widened in 1954. The name Saltbox derives from the salt box house - a building with a tall upright shape and a steep, sloping roof.

SAFETY NOTICE

Please be aware of other users of the road, especially cars. Also, be prepared for unexpected noise and gusts of wind as you walk around the edges of the airfield. It is not advisable to walk in poor weather or at night. The trail is just under 2 miles long so it should not take more than 1hr 30 mins.

The Nightingale Cafe

During the Second World War, the tearooms served tea and cake to the soldiers as well as welcoming passing trade. The cafe had an illegal fruit machine. The owner of the cafe gave a bacon sandwich to anyone who scored three cherries in a row. The original Nightingale Cafe doesn't exist any more but Biggin Hill Memorial Museum's cafe, named after the Nightingale Cafe, keeps its legacy still alive.

Barracks Block RAF

St George's RAF Chapel of Remembrance

Biggin Hill Memorial Museum

The Nightingale Cafe

War Memorial

Black Horse Pub

Teapot Gardens

War Memorial

This war memorial was unveiled on the 21st March 1923 to commemorate 32 people from Biggin Hill who lost their lives during the First World War. Later on, after the Second World War, 27 new names were added to the list in memory of those who lost their lives.

Black Horse Pub

The Black Horse pub played the role of 'dropping off point' for buses coming to Biggin Hill. It was a popular pub for locals, soldiers and airmen. The original building was **demolished** in 1908 and the new Black Horse was built, which you can see today.

Teapot Gardens (now demolished)

On this site stood one of the most famous tearooms in the area, it was known as the Teapot Gardens. A huge 4ft teapot was mounted on the top of a long pole. During the First and Second World Wars, units stationed at Biggin Hill organised 'moonlight raids' - competitions to remove the teapot from the pole and bring it back to the airfield as a 'prize'.

Street names along the trail

Many street names in the area are related to the history of RAF Biggin Hill, commemorating pilots, personnel and places. A few examples are given below, but more detailed information can be found at www.bhmm.org.uk/trail

Dowding Road - Fighter Command Commander-in-Chief Air Chief Marshal Sir Hugh Dowding (1882-1970) conceived and oversaw the development of the 'Dowding system' - an integrated air defence system.

Henderson Grove - Corporal Elspeth Henderson (1913-2006) was one of the first three women in Britain to be awarded the Military Medal, for refusing to leave her post in the operations room at Biggin Hill after it took a direct hit during a German bombing raid.

Keith Park Crescent - Air Chief Marshal Keith Park (1892-1975) was the commander of 11 Group during the Battle of Britain. His first operational responsibility was to improvise plans for the evacuation of Allied troops from Dunkirk in May and June 1940.

Hanbury Drive - Air Commandant Felicity Hanbury MBE, (Later Dame Felicity Peake, 1913-2002), was a founding director of the Women's Royal Air Force (WRAF).

Grice Avenue - Wing Commander Richard "Dickie" Grice DFC, was Group Captain at RAF Biggin Hill from 1939 and then Biggin Hill station commander from 1940. Every evening during the Battle of Britain he arranged a coach to take his pilots for a meal and to play a game of darts at the White Hart (See driving trail).

Street names

	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	j	k	l	m
	Atkins Close	Henderson Grove	Mouchotte Close	Turner Avenue	Mortimer Drive	Barwell Crescent	Moxey Close	Keith Park Crescent	Grice Avenue	Hanbury Drive	Churchill Way	Wireless Road	Dowding Road

