



Children 'blown away' by helicopter landing

Tuesday, April 10th, 2018



Bratton School Helicopter with children

Children at Bratton Primary School were treated to a pre-Easter holiday treat with a visit from a Gazelle Squadron army helicopter, which landed in their school field to raise money for charity.

The event was organised by a mum of one of the pupils, who is related to one of the display team members. She wanted to give the children the opportunity to learn all about the work they do and help to raise money for local charities.

During the day, children purchased raffle tickets to be in with the chance of being selected to sit in the cockpit and have their photograph taken with the team. Two lucky children from each class were chosen and will be presented with their photographs at the start of next term.

There was also a voluntary non-school uniform day, with a donation of £1 per child, to boost the fundraising for local charities, Naomi's House and Julia's House.

The display team was made up of Pat Dodge, training organiser, Ray Evans, ground crew, Craig Davies, pilot and Andy Stuart who was the pilot who flew the helicopter in.

As a team they volunteer their time on weekends across the year to take part in demonstrations and visits to raise money to hand out to charitable organisations, but mainly Naomi House in Devizes. They are looking to do 20 air shows across the year.

It is the first time the display team have landed at a school, and they would like to make more visits, including returning to Bratton School next year.

Training organiser, Pat Dodge told White Horse News, "All went to plan with the flight, apart from the weather. It was touch and go in the morning as to whether we could fly, but there was a sudden clear path so we decided to head off as soon as possible.

"The school has been amazing, there has been lots to organise in terms of Health and Safety, but it all worked well and the children look like they are really enjoying it."

Headteacher, Ian Bolton, said, "The helicopter visit today proved to be a fantastic success all round. We all assembled outside and got to see the helicopter circle the school, then fly in over us and onto the field, which was thrilling for all.

"Every class then spent time close up to the helicopter, with the crew, who were tremendously enthusiastic and knowledgeable. This has been a unique experience for the children and, along with the mufti day, has helped raise a lot of money for the causes supported by the Gazelle Squadron Display Team, i.e. Julia's House Children's Hospice and Blesma, who support wounded veterans.

"Once again a massive thank you to the parent for facilitating this visit and to the Gazelle Squadron Display team who came on the day and made it so memorable for all."