

PRESS STATEMENT NO. 2

Aircraft have been flying from Biggin Hill for nearly 90 years and the airport has an excellent safety record. In that time the airport has steadily changed from being an RAF base into a commercial airport and training base.

The Citation twin-engine jet which crashed yesterday, 2.5 miles north of the airport, was on the route for incoming aircraft that has been followed since the airport was built in the 1920's.

Mike Roberts, the Captain was a very experienced commercial pilot and a friend of many of us on the airport. His cool judgment in managing the aircraft emergency and minimizing loss of life on the ground is typical of such a remarkable man and he will be sorely missed.

His business partner of 15 years, Mike Wells said that Mike Roberts was an extremely experienced commercial pilot and a remarkable man.

“I have known Michael for 20 years and know that he would have done everything in his power to minimize the effects of this tragic incident on his colleagues, passengers and people on the ground. He will be missed by everyone in the flying community at Biggin Hill and by his many friends worldwide.”

Thousands of flights are in the air over Europe and in and out of London everyday and 7% of them are business aviation flights which have an excellent safety record, on a par with scheduled airline services. This was a most unusual event for twin-engine business jets, anywhere in the world.

Biggin Hill Airport Rescue and Fire Fighting team was first on the scene at the accident and has been commended by senior officers of the London Fire Brigade. It is not the duty of the airport to attend accidents that are not at the airport, but our crew was already alerted for the aircraft to arrive and used their initiative to act. They were assisted to the site of the crash by members of the public and we would like to thank the public for their support at this difficult time.

BH/31/3/08
12.00