



# Aerodrome link to TV sports coverage

By PAUL TOMLIN

Conveniently situated alongside the M60 ring-road at Eccles, where the high level motorway bridge crosses the Manchester Ship Canal, north of the Trafford Centre, Barton Aerodrome has long been used by many visiting business and general aviation aircraft accessing the city and the Greater Manchester region.

When the Commonwealth Games were awarded to Manchester, plans were immediately put in place to accommodate the anticipated increase in airborne visitors to the airfield. Sporting occasions have always figured prominently in Barton's movements, with match fixtures at nearby venues in Old Trafford attracting numerous visiting aircraft during a season.

As expected, the airfield has seen a substantial increase in helicopter movements associated with the Commonwealth Games, including specially equipped television broadcast aircraft providing live Games cov-



• An airship eye's-view of The City of Manchester Stadium, with final preparations under way prior to the opening ceremony.

erage of out-of-stadium events.

The colourful airships operated by The Virgin Lightship Group are also regular visitors to Barton, acting as aerial television platforms covering major cricket and football events. One airship was on-station for the duration of the Commonwealth Games.

Incidentally, it has been noticed that there is often a

marked increase in reported UFO sightings whenever an airship has been in the vicinity. This is especially so at night, as the airship's internal lighting illuminates the semi-translucent envelope from nose-to-tail. So it is easy to appreciate how the 'floating patch of light' can be mistaken from a distance: on the other hand...



• UFO sighted! Wearing the banner of Piccadilly Radio's KEY 103, the airship has been based at Barton for four weeks, operating over the city centre, pop concerts at the Lancashire Cricket Ground and the Commonwealth Games.



## Crowne Plaza

Following an initial £1.1 million investment, the Posthouse Manchester Airport has been re-branded as Crowne Plaza Manchester Airport. Peter Budd, chairman of the Commonwealth Games Business Club and chairman of the British Airports Group performed the official opening by revealing the new sign at the entrance to the hotel, located on the airport complex at terminal 3.

Joining Peter on the day was Marilyn Stean, director, Commonwealth Economic Benefits, Robert Dodwell, regional general manager, Six Continents Hotels and Fiona Lockyer, general manager, Crowne Plaza Manchester Airport.

The 295 bedroom hotel was transformed in just under 16 weeks which included refurbishment and re-decoration of all rooms and public areas in readiness for the Commonwealth

Games. In addition to new services such as concierge, Crowne Awards Club and 24-hour telephone services, luxury toiletries have been introduced, to ensure they qualify as Executive. Every employee has undergone intensive training to meet the exacting standards of the Crowne Plaza. Fiona Lockyer, general manager, said, 'We have achieved our goal...

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