



New Forest Aviation Group.

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2016 TALKS

8th April - 'Flying & Displaying Vintage Aircraft' by Rod Dean

13th May - 'Flying the 747' by Kim Sharman

10th June - TBC

8th July - 'Poole and It's Flying Boats' by Mike Phipp

August - No meeting

September 9th - 'Lawrence - Before and after Arabia' by Colin van Geffen

October 14th - 'Working on HM submarines' by Ray Jones

11th November - 'The Cowboy, the Revolutionary and the Novelist - three unsung aviation pioneers' by Graham Spiller

December - No meeting

2017 TALKS

13th January - 'Short Story - Long History' by Steve Robson



In 1912 Tom Sopwith met up with Sam Saunders and decided to build a 'flying boat'. The wings and tail assembly would be made by Sopwith while Saunders constructed the hull by his patented Consuta method. This was a technique of using layers of plywood 'stitched' together with copper wire to form a water tight hull. This first version of the Bat-Boat never flew but following a redesign the first successful Bat-Boat, also described by the press as a hydro aeroplane, was assembled at Saunders Folly Works on the East bank of the River Medina south of Cowes. The first flight was made on 13th March from the River with Tom Sopwith at the controls, later flights were made by Harry Hawker as Sopwith's test pilot. Harry Hawker piloted the Bat-Boat to win the Mortimer Singer Prize of £500 (approx £50,000 today) for the first practical amphibious aircraft - it had wheels that could be swung away during flight or seaborne use. The engine was an all British Green 100hp,

designed by Gustavus Green who was gaining prominence as an engine designer.

A second bat-boat was purchased by the RNAS at Calshot and the third Bat-Boat, with 118 on its rudder was also bought by the RNAS after the previous one had sunk at its moorings

In 1914 two more bat boats were commenced but this time with more powerful 200hp Salmson engines and these were sold to Germany and Greece. Whilst one continued with the RNAS into WW1 no more were built.

Bob went on to describe and illustrate a specially commissioned 5' wingspan model of a Bat-Boat to celebrate its centenary. This model is now in the Classic Boat Museum Gallery (see photo) at Cowes close to the original works of Saunders. The artwork (above) is a painting by Ivan Berryman son of the late Denis Berryman who was B-N'S Chief Designer. The original painting is also in the Classic Boat Museum.

