



## New Forest Aviation Group.

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### Newsletter No. 213, September 2016

#### 2016 TALKS

September 9<sup>th</sup> – 'Lawrence - Before and after Arabia' by Colin van Geffen

October 14<sup>th</sup> – 'Working on HM submarines' by Ray Jones

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

December – No meeting

Mike Phipp gave our July talk entitled 'Poole and its Flying Boats'. Before 1936 Imperial Airways had forged routes through to Brisbane and the government wanted a mail service on the route for which people would pay the normal inland stamp cost. To provide this an order of 28 aircraft was given to Short Brothers straight off the drawing board for the Shorts Empire (C-Class) or C23. Whilst the route took 10 days, over 4,000 lb of mail could be carried although the passenger load of 17 was filled mainly by government personnel on empire business. A route to Durban was also established with a common stop in Egypt on the Nile where eventually a permanent flying boat terminal was built to take over from the temporary moored ship. A special Pullman train service took passengers down to the terminal at Southampton. All was well until the start of WW2 when it was realised that the Southampton terminal was vulnerable to attack especially being located near the Supermarine aircraft factory which was a likely target – as proved later to be. Also in 1939 Imperial Airways was combined with British Airways to form British Overseas Airways Corporation. Poole Harbour was set out for six runways. In September 1940, during the Battle of Britain, the head of a delegation was flown by a C-Class (G-AFCZ) to New York to obtain war equipment aid. In 1943 G-AGIA was modified with faired over turrets and canvas seats to start a service to Lagos in West Africa direct in comparison to the Horseshoe route via Durban.



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To improve services to the USA, three of the enormous Boeing 314 Clipper flying boats were purchased from PanAm and were in service by mid 1941 – restrictions on lend lease meant they had to be serviced in USA. Catalinas were used to reach West Africa and soon 5 of them left for Australia. In 1943, following the fall of Singapore which cut off the normal C class service, routing to Australia was set up from Ceylon to Perth using these special long range Catalinas. Travelling on this service entitled the passenger to the entry of the Secret Order of the Double Sunrise for which a certificate was awarded to show that the passenger had been airborne for more than 24hours although the flight lasted more than 32hours. Meanwhile women were brought in to operate the tenders that served the BOAC services.