



## New Forest Aviation Group.

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### Newsletter No. 196, January 2015

#### 2015 TALKS

9<sup>th</sup> January 'Britain's Last Airliner – the BAe 146' by Steve Robson  
13<sup>th</sup> February 'London's Second Airport – Blackbushe' by Dave Ruffle  
13<sup>th</sup> March, 10<sup>th</sup> April, 8<sup>th</sup> May, 12<sup>th</sup> June, 10<sup>th</sup> July, 13<sup>th</sup> November – talks TBA  
August – No meeting  
11<sup>th</sup> September Spitfire talk – TBA  
9<sup>th</sup> October 'Portsmouth Aviation Aerocar' by Bob Wealthy  
December – No meeting

Mike Phipp gave a talk in November – the last for 2014. The Palmair story starts with Bath Travel, founded by Reg Bath in 1924. His son Peter left the Royal Navy after WW2 and having met his wife in Southbourne, joined the company in 1947 and subsequently took it over expanding it to over 60 offices. In 1958 the company arranged a trip to Majorca (15 days for 45 guineas) in a chartered Viking aircraft. Over the years further charter holidays took in the Costa Brava, Ibiza, Corfu and many other destinations using chartered aircraft including the BAC1-11 and Dan-Air 727. Peter Bath, known as PJ, added the personal touch by seeing off each flight much to the delight of passengers. In 1990 he used a BAe146, known as the "whisperjet" because of its low noise foot print, from charter airline Princess Air. It became clear that the market would support operating his own airline and Palmair was born using a BAe146 (G-BPNT) with an inflight magazine called 'Whispers'. Whilst the aircraft was leased from Flightline, but in Palmair livery, the crews including stewardesses in striking red outfits, all belonged to Palmair with in house training for cabin staff. When Bournemouth's runway was extended, and opened by Concorde, flights were arranged by Bath Travel to destinations such as Rome in 1997 with the passengers flying Concorde one way



and the Palmair 146 the other – a speed contrast indeed. With New York in PJs sights Bath Travel chartered Concorde but the Bournemouth runway was not long enough for a full passenger and transatlantic fuel load. This did not prevent the entrepreneur in PJ, he 'simply' arranged for Concorde to land and take off from Boscombe Down, a MoD airfield used for military aircraft testing and the home of the Empire Test Pilot School. Further flights with Concorde were planned but the Paris air crash put paid to any further trips. By this time the popularity of Palmair meant that the capacity and range of the BAe146 was limiting growth. In 2003, the same year that 'Which' readers voted Palmair as the best airline for customer satisfaction, a Boeing 737-200 provided by European took over the routes to provide room for more customers. A feature was the removal of several rows of seats to increase the legroom. Peter Bath died after a short illness on 22 December 2006 – the end of an era having been awarded an MBE the previous year for services to travel and charity. In November 2008, European, who supplied the 737, went bust and the aircraft was grounded. After using various charters Palmair took on a 737-500 with Astraes and this gave more range and efficiency. However, the low cost operators of Ryanair and Thompson were now operating out of Bournemouth and with the economic downturn Palmair returned its aircraft with Thomson supporting flights until a final closure in 2010. Photos courtesy of Mike Phipp.

the removal of several



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