



New Forest Aviation Group.

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2015 TALKS

13th March AGM followed by 'Hampshire and Isle of Wight Air Ambulance' by Ian Jeffery

10th April '100 years of Air Accident Investigation' by Peter Coombs

8th May '55 years of Flying Fun' by Clive Rustin

12th June 'Buccaneer' by John Myers

10th July tbd

August No Meeting

11th September 'Spitfire Mk26 - Build and Fly' by Martin Laking

9th October 'Portsmouth Aviation Aerocar' by Bob Wealthy

13th November tbd

December No Meeting

Our February speaker was Dave Ruffle, a self confessed Avioligist, or plane spotter to the rest of us. He had lived near Blackbushe airport, which was opened in 1942 as RAF Hartford Bridge with 3 hangars north of and 2 south of the A30, which made for good plane spotting and photography from this major road artery. The layout was classic three runways with the main south west (260) which remains in use today. The first use was by the Royal Aircraft Establishment for glider trials followed quickly by 171Sqn with Curtiss P40 Tomahawks. By January 1944 there were 3000 personnel operating five squadrons on base. FIDO, the fog dispersal system was developed there from nearby RAE Farnborough and in 1942 was used successfully to recover 70 bombers after one particular raid. A pipeline was run either side of the runway through which fuel was passed and via special burners provided a vast sheet of flame each side – the system was costly in fuel but reduced losses of aircraft and crews. Many aircraft left to support D-Day and the Bostons on base operated to provide smoke screens across the beaches.



Liberators operated from there to return Czech nationals back home after the war although tragically one of these crashed. 1944 saw VIPs such as the King and Queen to award medals, Eisenhower and Montgomery and in December the airfield name was changed to Blackbushe shortly before it became a civilian airfield and in 1946 the Ministry of Civil Aviation took over the airport from the RAF. It became a diversion airfield for the rapidly developing London Airport and served as ferry base for British Aviation services. The early days saw mainly converted bomber such as the Stirling, Halifax, Lancastrian and York along with smaller aircraft such as the Dakota. By 1956 five organisations had occupied the various hangars to include Dan Air, Eagle Airways, Silver City, Britavia, Airwork and the US Navy. The proximity to Farnborough meant it was used as a shuttle base during the famous air shows. VIPs once again used the base and Royalty was represented by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth 2 and the King of Jordan. Photographs of these visitors and aircraft were all included in the wealth of images accompanying Dave's talk. The ubiquitous Viking appeared in many guises along with a who's who of aircraft types – Hermes, Tudor, Wessex, Savoia Marchetti, Bristol car freighter, Heron of the Queens Flight, C46 Commando, Viscounts and Douglas DC7.

