



New Forest Aviation Group.

website: www.nfag.info

Chairman: Steve Robson
Vice Chairman: Chris Gilbert-Norton
Hon. Treasurer: Roy Arnold
Hon. Secretary: Mike Collo
6, Blackdown Close, Dibden Purlieu, Southampton, SO45 5QS Tel: 02380 840139 / 07830 222872
E-mail: m.collo@btinternet.com
Speaker Secretary: Steve Robson Tel: 01202 300763 E-mail: stephen.robson10@btopenworld.com
Additional Committee: Phillip Arnold, Monty Ward.

Newsletter No. 214, October 2016

2016 TALKS

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

January 13th - 'Whittle and the Jet Engine' by Stephen Robson
February 10th - "Flying and Displaying Vintage Jet Aircraft." by Rod Dean
March 10th - 'The Wessex Aircraft Industry' by Mike Phipp - preceded by AGM
April 7th - Half a century of military flying - Bernie Scott
May 12th - 'Fleet Air Arm Sea Vixen pilot' by Kim Sharman



Our September speaker was Colin van Geffen with a talk about TE Lawrence before and after Arabia. Colin's interest was triggered by the knowledge of Lawrence's involvement in rescue launches and the high speed flight at Calshot during RAF service, and his nearby family home at Langley Lodge, from 1894-96 .

An Anglo-Irish nobleman, Thomas Chapman, left his wife and Ireland, to live with the household's governess in Wales using her father's surname 'Lawrence'. So TE Lawrence was born in Wales in 1888. After several moves the family lived in Oxford where Lawrence studied history. His undergraduate thesis, which resulted in the book *Crusader Castles*, was an archaeological study taking him through Europe and significantly to Carchemish in Syria where he worked for the British Museum team.

In WW1 he joined the army and was posted to Cairo from where his intelligence duties led to his involvement in the Arab uprising. Near the end of the war an American correspondent, Lowell Thomas, was authorised to meet Lawrence and with the film and narrative obtained made Lawrence a household name shortly after the war in a series of talks. After WW1, in the rank of Colonel, Lawrence was retained in a diplomatic role for Faisal during the Paris Peace conference. After a spell in the Colonial office Lawrence sought solitude and applied to join the RAF in 1922 as a basic aircraftman in an assumed name of John Hume Ross but the recruiting officer (who later became the author of the *Biggles* novels) realised the deception. Lawrence was able to use his connections to bypass the issue but after a year was 'discovered', and was forced to leave the RAF and then joined the army in 1923 as TE Shaw but was unhappy and managed to rejoin the RAF in 1925.



The publication of his book *'Seven Pillars of Wisdom'* renewed interest and to avoid the publicity he was posted to India and ended up in a remote outpost called RAF Miranshah. However, his presence created rumours of spying activities and he returned to England and served at RAF Cattewater (later named RAF Mountbatten) near Plymouth. Here he acted as an admin assistant to CO Sqn Ldr Sydney Smith who was then planning the attempt on the 1929 Schneider Trophy to be held at Calshot. For their work, Smith and Lawrence were presented with a small motor boat which Lawrence used in the waters of Plymouth sound.