



Issue 37 Jan - Feb 2017

# Contrails

## Newsletter of the Christchurch Aviation Society

CAvSoc

### Saunders Roe Princess

For our November 2016 talk, last for the year, Bob Wealthy gave us a highly informative talk about Saunders-Roe in general and the Princess flying boat in particular.

The name Saunders Roe, came about in 1929 when AV Roe, of Manchester and Hamble, builder of the famous Avro504, took a controlling interest in the Saunders boat and flying boat company based in East Cowes. Prior to WWII SARO made a number of flying boats but only in small batches – the most notable being the Saro London of which approx 30 were made and went into service with the RAF. The war years saw production of the Supermarine Walrus and Sea Otter. During and following the war the emphasis was on large flying boats and the enormous 10 engined flying boat called the Princess was created but the days of the flying boat was numbered. Also during the war the air ministry had expressed interest in a jet flying boat and the SRA1 was built and flew in 1947 but the project was cancelled shortly afterwards. Post war radical work continued with the SR53 interceptor, yet another fine aircraft that suffered under the politicians axe. The first ever hovercraft SRN1 was built by Saunders Roe and further work continued under the name British Hovercraft Corporation. Also helicopters were built following a take over of the Cierva factory Eastleigh which led to absorption by Westland and the Saunders Roe name had gone by 1965.



### Meetings - at Druiitt Hall commencing 8pm

Wed 04Jan 2017 - Modern Aircraft Instrumentation by Ernie Ball

Wed 01Mar - George Errington - Test pilot for de-Havilland by Mike Phipp

In 1945 project SR45 was born to meet a request from the Ministry of Supply for a long range civilian flying boat. Subsequently 3 aircraft were built - a leviathan of the time – 140 tons, 10 Proteus turbo props, wingspan of 220 ft and length of 148 ft carrying 100 passengers. (Jumbo jet 195ft span, 231 ft long). Much research work was done to achieve hydrodynamic and aerodynamic efficiency using a long testing tank and large models and fly by wire systems were developed for production models but were not fitted on the prototype. Bob's talk was illustrated throughout and showed the various construction stages of the Princess such as sliding the hull on rails inside the factory and tipping the tail to get it out of the factory door.



Civil interest waned with the build up of land based aircraft but despite the low power achieved by the Proteus engine, which was at an early stage of its life, one example flew in 1952 and then displayed at Farnborough in 1953. NASA had considered using them for transporting Saturn rocket components and even for a nuclear powered aircraft but in the end the massive aircraft that had adorned the Calshot Spit awaiting their fate were sent for breaking in 1967.



With all the changes and retail units at Somerford, time to recall a certain Sea Vixen now at Tangmere Museum.