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YORKSHIRE AIR NEWS

** THE JOURNAL OF THE WEST RIDING BRANCH OF AIR BRITAIN **

VOLUME IX

NUMBER IX

SEPTEMBER 1973

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BRANCH NOTICES

- MEETINGS:
- 1) The next Branch Meeting will take the form of a coach trip to Tee-side (see below).
 - 2) October 28th Mr. John Allen will be showing us slides he took in America of preserved aircraft in museums - promises to be good.
 - 3) November 25th - Annual General Meeting. All meetings are at the Aero Club, Yeadon, courtesy of the Directors, commence at 3.00 p.m.

COACH TRIPS

- 1) September 30th, SUNDAY, a trip to the Teeside 'Air Display'. Cost to Air-Britain members is 80p and £1 to non-members, entry to the display extra. Depart the Aero-Club Yeadon 09.00 hrs., return about 20.00 hrs.
- 2) October 27th, SATURDAY to the Southend Air Museum via Luton airport, Cost to Air-Britain members is £2.25 and non-members £2.50. Depart the Aero Club, Yeadon at about 07.00 hrs. Deposits to the Editor 50p, for each trip.

NEWS

Northern Aeroplane Workshops are seen to commence construction of a replica of a Sopwith Triplane, it will contain an original engine and will be as close as possible a faithful, flying, replica. It will be built at the Dewsbury workshop and is expected to fly from a Yorkshire Airfield in about two years. A two-seat replica of a Triplane with a Continental engine will be built at Chesterfield, although two-seat aircraft of this type were never built it will closely resemble the Tri-plane, the fuselage being only a few inches wider to accommodate the second seat, and the Continental engine will not alter the outline of the original cowling shape. A study is being made into the possibility of building a static replica of the Blackburn 1910 monoplane as an exhibit for the Leeds museum which is shortly to be opened.

In the first 7 months of 1973 the total passengers using Leeds/Bradford airport was 161,413 which compares with last years figures of 145,963 for the same period. 33,523 passengers used LBA in July (last year 31,322). Freight for the month was 70.3 metric tonnes (79.7 last year), and seven months freight totals are 550.5 metric tonnes (545.3 for last year).

Northeast Viscount G-AOYH clipped a lamp standard at the end of 15 on 22nd August at about 14.00, it was flight NS 342 from Dublin. The only damage was a gashed tyre and damaged fuel jettison pipe, there were 76 passengers on board.

Dan-Air has applied for a licence to operate from Leeds/Bradford to Aberdeen and Edinburgh commencing 1st November.

The Flying Flea under construction by three branch members is progressing well, the fuselage section is nearing completion.

NEXT PRESS DATE IS 6th OCTOBER.

BYGONE DAYS AT BARLOW.(SELBY). YORKS.

by Cos. Mowthorpe

Travellers along the road between Selby and Snaith (A.1041) pass a byroad marked Barlow approximately 2 miles out from Selby, when heading South. Few realise that further down that lane, past the village of Barlow and where the fields border the River Ouse is the site of the old Armstrong-Whitworth Airship Constructional Works. Today very little remains and that which does is part of one of Her Majesty's Ordnance Works and hence a prohibited area.

During the First World War however, the scene was totally different. Whilst Britain had dabbled in rigid airships since 1910, nobody really took them seriously. Even during the early days of the war, the rigid airships programme was shut down completely for several months. During the latter months of 1915 the Royal Navy began to appreciate how valuable the Zeppelins were to the German High Seas Fleet for long-range scouting and suddenly everybody wanted British airships that could compete with the Germans. A Rigid Airship Committee meeting on 11th Jan.1916 set up a building programme and one of the firms interested was Messrs. Armstrong-Whitworth. They were told to buy land and funds would become available for one large 'double' shed. An initial order (subsequently much modified) was given them for three rigid airships to the pattern of the Vickers No 23., to be paid for on a cost-plus basis. The land was bought at Barlow, Selby, Yorks. Construction of the shed was commenced. Staff was recruited.

The choice of the Barlow site was quite common-sense. A main railway line passed within less than a mile. The land was flat, free from obstructions, with the River Ouse a good navigational feature. Also, Barlow was a Constructional Works only, not a RNAS Airship Station. It was, however, very near to the newly constructed RNAS Airship Station at Howden-thus providing extra hangerage for these giant craft, if necessary.

By the end of 1916 the huge double shed was complete and arrangements were being made to build the No.25r Airship. The shed had undergone a major alteration during it's construction. More was now known about the Zeppelins and it was admitted that the Vicker's 23-class was out-of-date. Hence the shed was built to accomodate Airships of the then predictable future-final dimensions were 700ft. long by 150 ft. wide and 100 ft. high.

Working in close co-operation with Messrs.Vickers, Armstrong-Whitworth soon got production of No.25r under way. Many of Vickers staff from Barrow were sent down to Selby and formed a nuculus to impart their knowledge to local workers.

All sections of these Airships (three were finally built at Barlow, No 25r R.29 and R33) had to be pre-fabricated at Newcastle-upon-Tyne, transported to Barlow by rail and finally assembled inside the huge 'hanger'. The gasbags for No.25r and the R.29 were sent down from Vickers at Barrow-in-Furness but the R.33's were made on the site. Mrs.Milner of D'Arcy Rd. Selby was a gas-bag worker who came from Barrow and had worked previously upon the No.1.(Mayfly), No.9 and No.23. She was part of the team who constructed the gas-bags of R.33 at Barlow. She tells how when one of these huge bags developed a tear, her previous experience enabled her to repair it thus saving the bag having to be sent up to Barrow for this rather delicate task. The material was 'goldbeater's skin' made from the intestines of thousands of oxen and repairing this was considered a highly skilful task. (Also a very unpleasant one!)

No.25r was successfully completed and despite many modifications was finally delivered on 14th October, 1917. She was not very well liked. Owing to so many modifications being necessary her gasbags had been inserted after she was 'lifted' in the shed to add the keel. Together with impure Hydrogen she tended to 'surge'. After re-gassing, improvements were noticed but although some use was made of her as a training ship, she ended her days at Cranwell being used as a 'guinea-pig'. Finally being broken-up there in 1919.

Alongside No25r in the Barlow shed construction commenced upon the R.29 which was of similar dimensions but fitted with an internal keel and more powerful engines. R.29 was a complete success compared with No.25r. Delivered early in 1918 and based at Howden she is often stated to be 'Britain's most successful rigid during WW.1.' With a useful payload (or 'lift') of 8.6 tons she took part in three engagements with U-boats. The first finally got away but the second rammed a mine whilst fleeing from R.29 and the third was hit by a 120-lb.bomb from the airship which slowed her down sufficient for destroyers to finish her off. This was the UB-115.

Whilst R.29 was being constructed the latest German plans for Airships became available. Therefore they built the first of these 'German copies' alongside R.29 at Barlow. This was the most successful rigid (in terms of hours flown) Britain ever had. It was a tight squeeze in the hangar when both the R33 and R35 were erected and a ticklish job bringing R.33 out of the hangar for her first flight on 6th March 1919.

