**Naval Dockyards Society**

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**CALL For PAPERS**

**Naval air stations and the defence of dockyards**

Conference Saturday 16 April 2016

National Maritime Museum Greenwich

The Royal Naval Air Service was formed from the Naval Wing of the joint Royal Flying Corps (1912), but from 1914, when the RFC became the flying branch of the British Army, it was administered by the Admiralty Air Department.It merged with the RFC as the RAF in 1918. In 1924 the Fleet Air Arm was formed of RAF units operating from RN ships, in 1939 brought under Admiralty control.

Naval air stations guarded dockyards and promoted research and development. John Moore-Brabazon made the first flight by a British pilot in Britain on the Royal Aero Club’s flying ground at Shellbeach on the Isle of Sheppey in 1909. The first naval pilots graduated in 1911 from the Royal Aero Club flying ground nearby at Eastchurch. Isle of Grain (Port Victoria) near Chatham, Fort Grange Airfield/HMS Siskin at Gosport and RNAS Portland/HMS *Osprey* near Portland Naval Base were all significant. From East Fortune Airfield near Rosyth, Sopwith Cuckoos dropping torpedoes were the first planes launched from aircraft carriers. In 1917 Commander E. H. Dunning landed his Sopwith Pup on the moving HMS *Furious* at Scapa Flow. Later, Pembroke Dock became the largest operational flying boat base in the world.

First World War Zeppelins attacked Portsmouth and Rosyth Dockyards in 1916, causing air-raid shelters to be built, while as a result of the first night-time Gotha bombing raid, HMS *Pembroke* Drill Hall at Chatham Naval Barracks suffered the loss of 130 lives from two bombs in 1917. It was to protect the dockyard at Chatham that the first anti-aircraft gun emplacements were constructed. Second World War bombs ravaged Devonport and Portsmouth, resulting in anti-aircraft batteries and radar stations. Proposals focusing on naval air stations near dockyards and airpower-driven activities at dockyards are invited.

If your proposal for a previously unpublished paper is accepted by the committee the NDS will pay reasonable UK travel expenses and your conference fee, give you lunch, publish your paper in the annual *Transactions*, and give you a free copy. The delivered presentation will be around 40 minutes. The paper when published will be 6–10K words. Your paper will be required six months after the Conference for editing.

Please send your title and 300 word synopsis (and any queries) by 30 November 2015 to: Peter Goodwin, Secretary, Naval Dockyards Society, 26 Duncan Road, Southsea PO5 2QU, 023 9229 5949, seaphoenix@talktalk.net, and anncoats49@gmail.com.