



TAG AVIATION ANNOUNCES OFFICIAL SUPPORT OF SUPERMARINE SEAPLANE CHARITY

News / Business aviation



The extraordinary challenge – to rebuild an airworthy Supermarine S5 Seaplane - is being led by one of TAG Aviation’s own pilots, Will Hosie. With over 22,000 flying hours, Will has a wealth of experience in aircraft such as Airbus, Boeing, McDonnell Douglas, Beechcraft, Bombardier, de Havilland and various seaplanes plus aerobatics and charity flights. Aviation heritage is an important part of TAG’s story, as we lead by innovation and inspiration, which is why we’re excited to get on board with Will and the team of pilots, engineers, volunteers and supporters. With plans to involve universities and schools local to the project sites of Bodmin in Cornwall and later Calshot in Southampton, the charity hopes to not only educate but also inspire young people to take up aeronautics and engineering whilst discovering a love of aviation.

The world famous Supermarine Spitfire didn't suddenly appear, it was the result of a long development programme run by its designer RJ Mitchell, culminating in the Supermarine S5 and S6 seaplanes.

Without these aircraft, Mitchell's Spitfire would never have been designed and built. They fundamentally changed how engineers thought about aircraft, impacting their design for decades to come. The S5 and S6 are essential elements of our national and engineering heritage. But, unlike the Spitfire, very few people know of them, and they are in danger of being forgotten.

These British aircraft competed with the French, Italians and Americans in the Schneider Trophy contests from 1913 to 1931. In the 1920s and 30s the Schneider Trophy, a speed contest for seaplanes, was arguably the most exciting and glamorous sporting event in the world. Cutting edge technologies and innovations in construction and aerodynamics were developed to compete for the trophy, pushing huge advancements in aircraft design. Britain won three consecutive contests and thereby won the trophy outright and forever, setting a new World Air Speed Record for the time.

Now, almost 100 years later, it is more important than ever to keep the heritage of the S5 alive. By 2027, the centenary of her victory in the Schneider Trophy, she will be flying again. The aim is to bring this magnificent flying machine back to life, to recreate the thrill and excitement of early aviation for a new generation.

The project hasn't been without its setbacks. COVID meant the team had to move the build from Bordeaux, France to Bodmin, UK - and then a devastating fire struck the hanger. The drawings, the build and the materials were all lost, which meant starting again from scratch. And of course, the materials are now at least 30% more expensive. Despite all of this, plans are getting back on track and TAG are excited to be involved in the future progress of the rebirth of this aviation icon.

The whole inspiring story can be found on the charity's website www.supermarineseaplane.co.uk



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