

FLYING CLUB TO START AGAIN SOON

(By Air Correspondent)

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In the world of sport before the war, Christchurch was chiefly known as one of the centres of the yachting and angling fraternities. But in aviation circles it was also well known as the headquarters of one of the most popular of the pre-war flying clubs.

Known as the Bournemouth Flying Club, and under the direction of Mr. F. C. Fisher, the aerodrome at Somerford was a centre of flying activity for many keen amateur aviators, both local and from further afield. Headquarters of the local Civil Air Guard training scheme, it was also the pick-up point for air charter services and scheduled air lines.

It is now learned that Squadron Leader Fisher has opened negotiations with the Ministry of Civil Aviation for the re-opening of the club at Somerford aerodrome, and I was present in the hangars at the beginning of this week when he started moving his fleet of aircraft back on to his old stamping ground.

PRESENT GENERATION AIR-MINDED.

"It will be a great source of pleasure to our old members, particularly to those who have been flying in the R.A.F. during the last six years, to be able to come back to their old haunts." said S/Ldr. Fisher.

"Furthermore, there are many young people throughout the country who have not yet had the opportunity to fly and are keen to learn. They have studied the subject of aviation and have been imbued with the spirit that made Britain show the world that her flyers were second to none. It will be our job to try and bring their ambitions within their reach."

On the subject of air charter services S/Ldr. Fisher said, "It is a little too early yet to go into great detail on this matter. All I can tell you at present is that we are planning to offer aerial transport to all parts of the world from Christchurch. Cost should be no greater than first class surface travel is at the present time." At the beginning of the war, S/Ldr. Fisher's fleet of aeroplanes was requisitioned for service purposes. Their familiar red and silver finish will be well remembered by Christchurch residents. The squadron leader himself was on the reserve of Air Force Officers and went back into the Royal Air Force as an instructor, subsequently becoming a staff officer at Training Command.

HIGH STANDARD OF GROUND MAINTENANCE.

The ground servicing and maintenance of all his aircraft before the war was of an exceptionally high standard in the capable hands of Mr. E.D. Whiting. A veteran of the R.F.C. and R.A.F. in World War One, he re-joined the service in 1939. I had the pleasure of meeting Squadron Leader Whiting in Cairo during the desert campaign in 1942. His job there---and subsequently in North Africa---was "right hand man" to the fighter pilots of the Desert Air Force; when their machines were damaged, S/Ldr whiting took them into his care, and in a matter of days---sometime hours, the aircraft were back in service. All connected with the club will be glad to know that S/Ldr Whiting was today back in the hangars preparing the Bournemouth Flying Club's new fleet of aircraft to take the air. He will be in charge of all ground maintenance.