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R101



Synopsis

His Majesty's Airship R101 was intended to be an aerial flagship, connecting the far-flung outposts of the Empire in a fraction of the time it took to make a sea voyage. Her story is one of grand dreams and fine ideas, brilliant technology, political and romantic intrigue, human weakness, heroism and ultimate tragedy. The ill-starred career of the gigantic airship and her horrific fiery end on a French hillside exert the same kind of fascination reserved for the Titanic and the Hindenburg. Her loss in 1930 sent the nation into shock, marking the end of Britain's interest in airships and even perhaps representing the death throes of the imperial dream. This pictorial history of the airship is based on the archives of the Airship Heritage Trust. These include the records of the Royal Airship Works, which built the R101 and have previously denied all access.

Book Information

Hardcover: 160 pages

Publisher: Sutton Publishing (January 25, 2001)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0750925027

ISBN-13: 978-0750925020

Product Dimensions: 7.8 x 0.6 x 10.6 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.6 pounds

Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (4 customer reviews)

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Customer Reviews

This is definitely a PICTORIAL history. Other than the captions, there is very little text. If you're looking for a detailed account of the ship and the disaster, buy 'R101: The Airship Disaster, 1930' which, I feel works as a perfect companion piece to this book. The lack of text is more than made up for by the wealth of previously unpublished photos. They are incredibly thorough with chapters covering the planning and construction of the airship, the passenger accommodations, sheds and mooring masts, the passengers and crew, the disaster site and the state funeral. This book is an absolute must for any airship enthusiast.

Airship books are few and far between, so any new book is cause for celebration, but this one is an absolute gem. Produced by the Airship Heritage Trust, this is an essential book for anyone interested in the R101... The majority of the books 230 photos have never been published, and include some extremely rare shots of the interior of the ship. Also of interest are detailed photos of the ships hydrogen valves, something I had not seen in any other book. If you are interested in reading more about the R101, there is the aforementioned book currently available, plus *The Millionth Chance* by James Leasor, which is relatively easy to find from out-of-print bookdealers. The holy grail of R101 literature is *To Ride the Storm* by Sir Peter Masefield. It's very difficult to find, so if you ever run across it, snap it up!

This book is a great collection of pictures of R101, its construction and operation. Also are seen the people involved in its project and brief flight time. It can be blamed for being biased, but not so much. It's not easy for someone to blame his country politics and military-economic interests which denied the necessary time to correct, or at least improve, some of the flaws of R101. The only mistake I found is in page 46, where fabric reinforcements, which would be fixed to the border of the outer cover to attach it to the airship structure, are pictured as parts of the gas bags. Besides this, you won't find anything with more pictures on the subject.

This book has an amazing number of never before seen photographs of the R101 and her crew. It had way it is quite amazing. It said it was a pictorial history and it lives up to the pictorial side but what is disappointing is that it makes a lot of claims, that the R101 wasn't so bad (when we know she was), that the new fangled innovations were actually great (when we know they were not) but does not back them up. Instead they are just a lot of assertions. On that score I was disappointed.

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