



## New Forest Aviation Group.

website: [www.nfag.info](http://www.nfag.info)

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#### 2014 TALKS

11<sup>th</sup> April 'Flying with the Red Arrows' by John Myers  
9<sup>th</sup> May 'Paragliding - the ups and downs' by Neil McCain, Wessex Hangliding and Paragliding Club  
13<sup>th</sup> June 'Flying the Lightning' by John Ward, a former Air Defence pilot  
11<sup>th</sup> July 'Hampshire & Isle of Wight Air Ambulance' by Ian Jeffrey  
August – No meeting  
12<sup>th</sup> September 'Early Testing of the F-35B – Lightning II' by Graham Tomlinson, former BAe Test Pilot  
10<sup>th</sup> October 'The Ordnance Survey Flying Unit' by Paul Marshall  
14<sup>th</sup> November 'Palmar – Bournemouth Airline' by Mike Phipp  
December – No meeting

#### 2015 TALKS

9<sup>th</sup> January 'Britains Last Airliner – the BAe 146' by Steve Robson  
13<sup>th</sup> February 'London's Second Airport – Blackbushe' by Dave Ruffle



1982 team, John Myers 5<sup>th</sup> from left  
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Our post AGM talk was given by Tom Kelly who was in the RAF when he was involved in Operation Grapple, the name given to the UK nuclear air-burst tests in the late 1950s. Initial nuclear tests started in 1953 with a bomb being exploded in HMS Plym of the North West coast of Australia. The test was around 25kilotons (Hiroshima 16kilotons) and further tests were carried out on top of towers. Increasing yields and fall out drifting onto the mainland meant that a more remote spot was required for the higher output hydrogen bombs. Christmas Island in the middle of the Pacific was chosen with nearby Malden Island as the target area for the air dropped bombs which were in the low megaton range. The scientific nature of the tests meant a lot of recording and air sampling was required all of which had to be returned to the UK via Christmas Island and the USA.



The aircraft used for the drops was the first V bomber the Vickers Valiant. The aircraft would set up a race track pattern and then on release of the bomb would make an escape manoeuvre as there was less than a minute to escape the blast of approximately 1 megaton. The difficulty of operating over Malden meant that the tests were moved onto Christmas Island proper. Operation Grapple (May 1957 at Malden) was then extended to become Grapple X (Sept 1957) and Grapple Y (in April 1958) and finally Grapple Z (Aug – Sept 1958). Initially servicemen had protective suits and special goggles but familiarity with

the explosions meant that people just turned their backs on the explosions even though they were less than 20 miles away. An important part remained with the air sampling programme carried out by specially equipped Canberra B6 aircraft operating up to 54,000 ft. Having proved the UK's capability, the relationship with the USA developed and more collaboration resulted and Britain's independent testing finished in 1958.

#### On the 4th of May 1904 history was made...

...a meeting occurred in Manchester engineered by a man named Henry Edmunds who was a director of a company that made electric dynamos and motors. The owner of the company had been dabbling with foreign cars and being rather disappointed with them had made three 2 cylinder cars and gave one to Edmunds who showed it to a car salesman in London. The salesman was not impressed with foreign cars having to spend much time mending them for his customers – but he didn't like 2 cylinder cars. Nevertheless Edmund persuaded the salesman to travel to Manchester and so met the salesman Charles Stewart Rolls and factory owner Frederick Henry Royce. The company names were CS Rolls & Co and Royce Limited respectively and the rest is history. (At this period Rolls was friendly with Tom Sopwith as both were balloonists.)