



## New Forest Aviation Group.

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

Chairman: Steve Robson  
Vice Chairman: Chris Gilbert-Norton  
Hon. Treasurer: Roy Arnold  
Hon. Secretary: Fred Hambly  
Hinton Villa, Faversham, Brockenhurst, SO42 7TH Tel: 01590 622681  
E-mail: [fredhambly@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:fredhambly@tiscali.co.uk)  
Speaker Secretary: Steve Robson Tel: 01202 300763 E-mail: [stephen.robson10@btopenworld.com](mailto:stephen.robson10@btopenworld.com)  
Additional Committee: Phillip Arnold, Fred Hambly, Monty Ward,

### Newsletter No. 188, March 2014

#### 2014 TALKS

14<sup>th</sup> February 2014 'Aerial Surveillance - Part 2' by Phil Nelson  
14<sup>th</sup> March 2014 - AGM and 'The UK Nuclear Test Programme' by Tom Kelly  
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 tbd  
August – No meeting  
12<sup>th</sup> September tbd  
10<sup>th</sup> October tbd  
14<sup>th</sup> November tbd  
December – No meeting



Last February Phil Nelson gave his talk 'How aerial surveillance affects the price of fish' when he gave us a fascinating insight into how the UK maintained the watch over the 200 territorial mile fishing limit around our coast by the Royal Navy Fishing Protection Squadron (FPS) assisted by the aerial surveillance aircraft of FRA. This February Phil gave us 'Aerial surveillance part 2' which followed up with the non-fisheries aspects for which the surveillance aircraft could be called upon by other agencies using the equipment fit and skills of the operators. Typically this involved low level flying taking pictures of vessels of interest to the authorities – usually HM Customs. Again the wide ranging authority to fly anywhere at any time, at any height and get refuelled at civilian as well as military airfields enabled the aircraft to be tasked at short notice away from its normal Bournemouth base. Cornwall airfields were especially useful for the long range Atlantic vigils which could be used to shadow suspected drug smugglers approaching the UK. A classic operation with HM Customs involved a successful interception of a sailing cruiser which netted a haul of half a ton of cocaine hidden between panels in the boat. Coast Guard stations around UK could also task the aircraft to search for hazardous cargoes lost overboard, vessels in distress and possibly bodies.



ELINT Russian Intelligence Gathering vessel

The turbine powered Islander BN2T was used out to 50 miles but another type was required for the longer patrols with improved speed and transit times whilst retaining a rugged capability to handle low level operations. The Dornier 228 proved to be fast, economical and reasonably comfortable for additional crew members. A specialised equipment fit included Ferranti Searchwater 360 radar, FLIR, HF/UHF/VHF and Marine Band radios, data-link video, night vision and stabilised optics and GPS for recording accurate positions. One type of task proved a little too demanding. Illegal anchoring or trawling in areas where undersea telephone cables lay would create cable breaks which were very costly to repair. Despite the aircraft being vectored into the appropriate area the perpetrators had usually moved on thereby preventing a successful interception. Oil and sewage polluters were more likely to be caught as a trail was normally visible, likewise dredging and illegal dumping could be monitored effectively. 'Trawlers' with lots of aerals but few nets were observed to be 'fishing' the air waves. Illegal radio broadcasters who relied on staying just outside the 3mile limit also had their positions checked. There were also entirely different operations such as spotting Richard Branson's boat during his Blue Riband attempt and finding algal blooms which could become toxic and therefore posed a threat on sea and wild life.