



## New Forest Aviation Group.

website: [www.nfagroup.tk](http://www.nfagroup.tk)

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### Newsletter No. 170, May 2012

#### 2012 TALKS

May 11<sup>th</sup> – “Plumber to Airline pilot” by Peter Clark

June 8<sup>th</sup> – TBD

July 13<sup>th</sup> - “Flying with the Royal Family” by David Greenaway

#### August – No meeting

September 14<sup>th</sup> – “From Spitfire to A380” by Phil O'Dell, Chief Test Pilot, Rolls-Royce plc

October 12<sup>th</sup> - TBD

November 9<sup>th</sup> - “Cold War Bomber Pilot” by Phil Nelson

#### December – No meeting

#### 2013 TALKS

February 08<sup>th</sup>- “Flying the Vampire” by Matthew Hampton TBC

For our April talk we were pleased to have on board former Captain of Ark Royal Adrian Nance OBE. He made an immediate impact, not only due to being 6'5", by putting all the less senior services in their place with the sense of humour that is recognised by all service people.

Although not a pilot, Adrian has had intimate experience of aviation and its power, not least by being on HMS Sheffield when an Exocet struck her during the Falklands campaign. Five years prior to that on HMS Avenger as flight deck officer he was involved in "First of class trials" for the Lynx on what was a very low and small flight deck on the Type 21 Frigate that had previously carried the much smaller Wasp helicopter. Storm weather conditions had to be found, as well as calm seas, to prove the procedure for handling and we were treated to some heavy weather pictures when the operation of helicopters was to say the least – challenging – yet in two weeks 270 landings were achieved.

Another conflict, this time in the warmer seas of the Arabian Gulf for 1991 saw him out front, i.e. ahead of the fleet in harm's way, in command of the Type 42 destroyer HMS Cardiff with 500 tons of fuel, 50 tons of munitions amidst floating mines. The air power scenario was incredibly complex with the slow moving helicopters on the one hand and fast jet fighters and bombers on the other. Whilst the world's news was focussed on the land battle the sea battle was less recognised yet remained vital, the analogy being the RAF actions at Dunkirk where an unseen, air battle was conducted well away from the people who were being fought for.

Moving to 2003 saw Adrian's main command HMS Ark Royal. To summarise a few of the facts – in 600 feet on four decks are 1300 personnel, (approx 10% women) of which half provide the fighting power and half operate the ship, like the equipment to make fresh water and bake fresh bread and the ability to be able to feed all in the ship (canned rations) in 40 mins under action stations. The ship's role would depend on what aircraft were carried – for sea control a typical aircraft mix could be ASW helicopters, Airborne Early Warning (AEW) helicopters and, until recently, Harrier – for strike the mix would have focussed on Harrier with supporting AEW and Search and Rescue (SAR) helicopters – for amphibious the emphasis would be on heavy lift helicopter (Chinook), AEW, SAR and attack helicopters in support of the marines – for humanitarian the mix would be similar to amphibious. Internally the ship was a like finely tuned watch with small teams of people operating their diverse equipment in harmony to provide a balanced sword which when shown could change the dynamics of battle or out of sight could launch aircraft to strike effectively at an enemy.

Using animated graphics Adrian showed how the ship would operate with a typical mix of fixed and rotary wing to ensure safe operations. After such a command followed by various staff jobs, Adrian retired and has turned his hand to helicopter borne logistic aid for humanitarian disasters in Mozambique as the CEO of the charity "Wings like Eagles". He focuses on the essential of moving supplies, typically within 24 hours, to hundreds of people who have been afflicted by flood or other natural disasters or moving doctors quickly to critical areas. The charity is based in Chandlers Ford.



After the sinking of the third *Ark Royal*, the survivors used the ships fund to buy a silver bell, for the next ship to bear the name. The names of all the CO's of the 5 "Ark Royals", including Captain Adrian Nance OBE, are engraved on the bell.