New Forest Aviation Group.

website: www.nfag.info

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2016 TALKS
8th January - 'Battle of Britain - 1935' by Stephen Robson- foundations that enabled the 'Few' to succeed
12th February - An Airborne View by Ian Haskell
11th March - AGM then 'The Sopwith Bat Boat' by Bob Wealthy,
8th April - 'Flying & Displaying Vintage Aircraft' by Rod Dean
13th May - 'Flying the 747' by Kim Sharman
10th June – TBC
8th July – TBC
August – No meeting
September 9th – TBC
October 14th - TBC
11th November - 'The Cowboy, the Revolutionary and the Novelist - three unsung aviation pioneers" by Graham Spiller
December – No meeting

For our November talk, the last in 2015, Phil Nelson spoke about the English Electric Canberra and his experiences as a pilot. The aircraft type was specified as a fast, high flying twin jet engined aircraft with no defensive armament - a replacement for the Mosquito – specified by B.3/45 in 1945 and a first flight was achieved in 1949. In 1957 it set a world altitude record of just over 70,000 ft giving it the ability to evade the early interceptors of the time. Phil's first flying was to be one of ten students in a Valetta learning the basics of navigation.
Having mastered flying in the Piston Provost, a rapid transition to the Vampire advanced trainer was made on which he gained his wings. Operational training was at 231OCU, RAF Bassingbourn, South West of Cambridge, equipped with the Canberra T4. A first taste of multi jet aircraft with side by side training was also an introduction to the joys of sitting on an unyielding ejection seat. This was also a time to team up with two crew and learn each other's vagaries known as 'team melding' and to transfer onto the B2 bomber. The following tour at Cyprus was ideal and a change of mark from the B2 to B16. But the tour proved all too short when a posting to the Bomber Command Armament School at RAF Wittering provided the serious training for nuclear bomb delivery at high level. However, developments in technology pushed the need to evade radar and local anti-aircraft defence and forced an approach to a target at low level which meant the aircraft could be within the blast radius of the bomb. To enable the crew to escape, the Low Altitude Bombing System (LABS) had been developed whereby, after a low level approach, the aircraft was put into a specified climb initiating a loop and the munition released at a predetermined point. The aircraft continued its loop with a roll off the top and max rate descent to as low as possible and max speed to escape. The munition would follow a calculated trajectory to the target. Visual bombing at 250', HiLoHi and low level formation were all in the syllabus. Navigation exercises used "Green Satin" which was a Doppler radar system that measured drift and ground speed along with later versions which had better performance over the sea being called "Blue Satin". Despite these systems astro navigation was still maintained. With no self-defence weapons the aircraft was fitted with a tail mounted radar called "Orange Putter". Phil related the dangers of flying over the desert at night – the lights of scattered villages could look like the sky and disorientation caused him to invert. An investigation into the incident followed that led to greater awareness and training into spatial disorientation.
The conventional bomb load was six 1000lb iron bombs. Additionally a pylon could be fitted to each wing providing another two 1000lb stations or an unguided rocket pod of 37 two inch rockets each. A variant containing a ventral pack of four 20mm cannons was also made. But the B2 provided the most numerous with over 400 built for RAF and other air forces around the world. The engines used throughout were Rolls-Royce Avons, typically of between 7 and 8,000 lbs thrust with one or three cartridge starts. Whilst the bomber s had bubble canopies the photo reconnaissance variants had an offset fighter style canopy. Phil finished with a series of anecdotes of the various places visited on what were termed rangers – effectively navigation exercises – which 'showed the flag' across many countries.