



Wings & Things

Welcome to the March 2020 newsletter for the Wellington Branch of the RAeS.

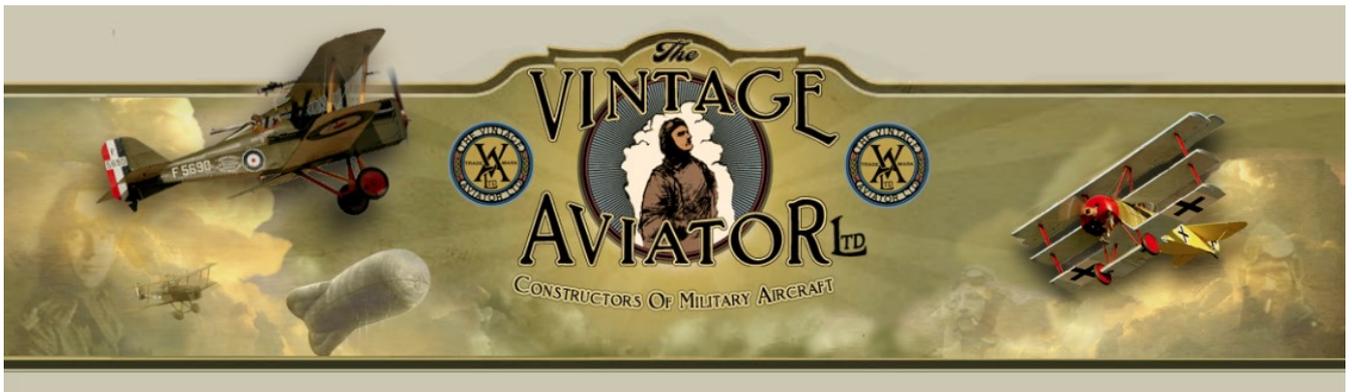
For the Month of March –

Wellington Branch, Royal Aeronautical Society

Saturday 28 March

Hood Aerodrome, Masterton

RAeS Visit to Wairarapa Flying Tigers and The Vintage Aviator Ltd (TVAL) at Hood Aerodrome



RAeS Wellington Branch is planning a visit to Hood Aerodrome on Saturday 28 March and invites all members, friends and associates to attend. The intention is to visit The Vintage Aviator Ltd (TVAL) hangar, to avail ourselves of the Kittyhawk Café and have access to Wairarapa Flying Tigers (WFT) hangars and view the aircraft. It may also whet the appetite of those who wish to pay for that long planned and not yet achieved bucket list flight at a future weekend to be arranged directly with WFT.

Our original intention was also to provide adventure flights in the two WFT Tiger Moths but unfortunately there will be no pilots available that day because of various work and other commitments. Nevertheless, the day will provide a rare opportunity to see a range of remarkable aircraft, both flying and static.

TVAL, as most will know, is the finest collection of WWI aircraft in the world, both in terms of numbers and range of aircraft. A number are genuine originals from 100 years ago. Others are fully authentic reproductions of originals down to the finest detail and include British, French and German types. 28 March is a working day for the collection and a majority of aircraft will be flying and on display. Branch members will be given an escorted lunchtime hangar tour and flight line walk, with an opportunity to speak with a number of TVAL pilots.

WFT is a unique organisation in the world of preservation societies flying and preserving aircraft for future generations. No other vintage aircraft collection is owned by its collective membership and permits ready access to its assets by pilot, engineer and enthusiast members.

The Kittyhawk Café is located onsite in the WFT aviation centre, with a range of lunchtime food and a fine view of the flight line.

Timing will be to arrive about 1100, TVAL tour 1200-1300, lunch as required and departure when preferred.

Accordingly, we need to know numbers with some urgency. If you are planning to attend, please respond URGENTLY to the Branch Secretary Bernard Weinstein before list closing time FRIDAY 20 MARCH 7pm !. (Ph. (04) 476 0588 or E-mail bernardwe2@gmail.com)

Last Month - Early Aviation History in Wellington by Charles Davis and Bernard Weinstein

At our February meeting members enjoyed a “two pronged” presentation from Charles Davis and Bernard Weinstein.

Charles Davis, a past President of the Wellington Aero Club traced the history of aviation in the Wellington area which culminated in the formation of the Wellington Aero Club in 1929.

The first aviation event in the Wellington area was on 27 September 1889 when Captain Charles Lorraine flew a Balloon from the Basin Reserve. This was followed on 13 June 1894 when Leila Adair made a Balloon ascent from the Petone Showgrounds .In November 1907 Professor Barnes flew a monster Balloon in Days Bay.

Powered flight in the Wellington area commenced in the first years of the 20th century, where in particular Arthur Schaeff flew in the Lyall Bay area and consideration was given to the possible development of an aerodrome at Gear Island in the area now known as Gracefield in the Hutt Valley. Later, a Test Pilot Reg White flew a Fisher monoplane at Pidgeon Bush in the southern Wairarapa. In 1912 James Walsh made an unsuccessful attempt to fly Cook Strait in an American Bleriot . (It was in 1920 that Euan Dickson made the first successful crossing of the Strait-from south to north.) Will Scotland flew a bi plane from Newtown Park in 1914.

In 1921 the Wellington City Council resolved to allow temporary use of a Reserve situated at Rongotai for aviation activities.-no hangers were allowed! Subsequently Rudolf Wigley built the first hanger in 1922. On 31 October 1928 the decision was made to set up an Aero Club at Rongotai and steps were taken by the Council to level the ground for the Aero Club Aerodrome. In February 1929 Blundell Bros, owners of the “Evening Post” newspaper published an open letter inviting members of the public to be involved in the formation of the Aero Club. Blundell Bros also purchased the first aircraft for the Club.

Flying activities continued up until the second world war when activities were severely curtailed. During that period Commercial aviation activities began at the aerodrome including the arrival of Union Airways and Cook Strait Airways(both subsequently absorbed into NAC,)

In order to facilitate safer airfield approach and departure procedures the top section of Moa Point was removed during this time. The De Havilland aircraft factory was established during this period and was responsible for the construction of Tiger Moth and other aircraft which contributed significantly to the NZ War effort.

The presentation concluded at the time of the opening of the Airport as we now know it in 1959.

Bernard Weinstein, a Life Member of the Aero Club then spoke of his Fathers involvement with the Aero Club from the time of its incorporation. His Father who had emigrated to New Zealand as a young man served in the First World War and then in later life in the second World War. Having joined the Aero Club at its founding he became a member of the club Executive and subsequently became both Vice President and President. He was made a Life Member of the Club in 1937. (Members were shown a screen photo of his pilots Licence with type ratings included.)

At that time the Club was criticised for not flying British Aircraft! Bernard then screened a photo of the ticket for his first flight at the airfield-age seven! (7 December 1933) He then went on to describe his personal flying experiences at the Club

During his life as a member of the Club he also served for a time on the Executive and was made a Life Member in 2010.

In the history of the Club the Weinstein family is the only family to have produced two Life Members.

Report by John Cook

Future Events

Saturday 28 March Visit to Wairarapa Flying Tigers and The Vintage Aviator Ltd (TVAl) at Hood Aerodrome

Thursday 23 April Wellington Branch AGM plus presentation topic to be advised

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