

the

OBSERVAIR

**Ottawa Chapter Newsletter
Canadian Aviation Historical Society**



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CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

October is upon us and one thing I am thankful for is the amount of historic media (films, pictures, etc) being digitized and placed online for the public to access free of charge. It's a project being undertaken by agencies, archives, and even private individuals who see the benefit in sharing what they have in their collections. Of course, there is lots more work to be done, but it's a promising start.

Recently, while searching for a copy of a long out of print book, I came across the National Research Council's Digital Repository. The Digital Repository is part of the National Science Library and contains a variety of digital objects in one searchable database. This is accessible by all Canadians (and I suppose any internet user) online. According to the website "it offers new opportunities to publicly share materials that were previously unavailable". Unfortunately, the majority of images lack captions, and in some cases even proper titles. In the next few issues of the *Observair*, I will be sharing some of the more interesting images I found. In this issue, they can be found on page 8.

At our January meeting you will get the chance to see the sort of films (both short clips and longer documentaries) that organizations like the National Film Board and British Pathé have been digitizing and placing online. For those unfamiliar with British Pathé, it was a UK based producer of newsreels, cinemagazines, and documentaries from 1910 until 1970.

It is finally here! On page 7 you'll find our long awaited carpool list. If you would like to be added to the list (or removed) let me know and I will make the adjustments. One final bit of housekeeping, last month, I assumed the role of temporary editor to the *Observair*. If anyone missed receiving the September issue of the *Observair*, please email me and I will get it off to you post-haste.

*Kyle Huth
Chairman*

The Observair is the newsletter of the Ottawa Chapter, Canadian Aviation Historical Society and is available with membership. Membership fees are payable in September.

Any material for *The Observair* Newsletter should be directed to the Editor, Kyle Huth.

All matters relating to membership should be directed to the Secretary/Treasurer: Mat Joost.

Kyle Huth
Mathias Joost
Colin Hine
Don MacNeil
Hugh Halliday
George Skinner
Erin Gregory
Bill Clark

Chairman/Editor
Secretary/Treasurer
Newsletter Editor
Program convenor
Official Greeter
Museum Liaison
Research Group
Refreshments

PAST MEETING

HOWARD WATT: PIONEER IN COMMERCIAL AVIATION 1926-1941

Diana Trafford

Thirty two members of the CAHS met on September 24, 2015 to hear Diana Trafford give her presentation about her uncle, Howard Watt. Three years ago, Diana Trafford decided she wanted to know more about her bush pilot uncles, Howard and Bruce Watt. Through her research, she was able to piece together the story of Howard Watt's career in aviation. Born in 1900, Howard attempted to enlist twice during the First World War (despite being underage both times); the second time he attempted to enlist in the Royal Flying Corps, it was there that he learnt to fly. During the post-war economic slump, Howard travelled to Los Angeles in 1925 and got a job as a fireman. It was while there that he found his first aeroplane, a Standard J-1. Howard was one of Canada's first 500 licensed pilots, his brother Bruce would receive his license in September 1930, and his commercial license a month later.

Howard got his first taste of bush flying in March 1926 working for Jack V. Elliot Air Service. Jack Elliot was an entrepreneur who had acquired two war-surplus Curtiss JN-4 Canuck's (G-CADW and G-CAEI). When gold was discovered in Red Lake, Ontario these aircraft were transported by rail to Sioux Lookout, Ontario before being reassembled and flown to Hudson, Ontario. It was from Hudson that the two Canuck's would leave for Red Lake on March 5 with Jack V. Elliot Air Service's chief pilot Harold Farrington leading the way in G-CAEI. Bad weather at Red Lake caused both aeroplanes to be damaged making hard landings within sight of their destination. The Canuck's were towed into the Dome mining camp where they were repaired using several improvised "bush pilot fixes". Flying resumed March 10; however, sixteen days later on March 26, Howard crashed shortly after take-off from Hudson. G-CADW was a write-off, and Howard suffered a concussion, a broken jaw, and lost four teeth, he was also unconscious for 19 hrs. This accident would affect him for the rest of his life; many believe it was the source of his fits of temper.

A Standard J-1 (s/n 400) was registered to Howard in September 1926 as G-CAFT. G-CAFT was based at Watt's Air Port at Willowdale on Yonge Street. According to the September 8th Toronto Daily Star:

"With the arrival of the first airplane in the Howard Watt fleet in Willowdale yesterday, the first commercial air service for the city of Toronto was commenced.... The plane has just been purchased by Mr. Watt and flown from St. Louis, Missouri – a distance of 800 miles – in 14 hours flying time."

For the next year and a half, Howard entertained thousands of spectators with his barnstorming antics, and carried 851 passengers. In June 1928, Howard sold G-CAFT to Toronto Airways.

On March 5, 1928 Howard flew from Buffalo, New York to Leaside Airfield in Toronto in the only Ryan M-2 licensed in Canada, G-CAJK. Based out of The Pas, Manitoba, G-CAJK was purchased by Manitoba Basin Mining for supporting their mining concerns in Northern Manitoba and Saskatchewan. Howard was named as their manager of air operations. The Ryan M-2 was one of nineteen M-2s produced, though that number is uncertain, because it is uncertain when production switched from the M-1 to the M-2. The M-2 was designed in the mid-1920s as a mail plane; it had two open cockpits, with the passengers or cargo sitting in the front cockpit under the single parasol wing and the pilot in the back. For operations in Canada, G-CAJK was fitted with skis.



Ryan M-2 (G-CAJK) – CASM 11123

G-CAJK has the honour of showing up twice in Canadian newspapers. The first time was in The Winnipeg Tribute from March 30, 1928:

"The 2,000 people waiting at Kirkfield Park were entertained by Howard Watt, flier for the Manitoba Basin Mines. With a passenger aboard, he climbed 3,000 feet above the flying field and staged an unadvertised exhibition of stunting that thrilled the crowd."

The second time was in the Toronto Globe when G-CAJK and three other aeroplanes got caught in and survived an electrical storm over Ottawa on June 29 1928:

“Flashes of lightning around them and the incessant volleying of thunder gave the crews of the machines all the thrills of warfare as they hovered over the Capital, powerless to rise above the storm.”

In January 1930, the Manitoba Basin Mining company sold G-CAJK to Century Motor Sales in Toronto, six months later, Howard purchased the G-CAJK from Century Motor Sales. Howard installed a new Wright-Whirlwind J-4B engine in his new M-2, but did not get it registered with the proper authorities. On August 30, 1931, an inspector spotted the unlicensed aircraft and the M-2 was grounded until it could be inspected and a certificate issued. Appealing to Ottawa, Howard got a permanent private license issued the very next day, August 31, 1931!

Howard and his brother Bruce headed to Quebec that winter and began using G-CAJK to fly workers between the pulp and paper mills on the North Shore of the Lower St. Lawrence, and their homes on the South Shore. On February 6, 1932 Bruce was returning from Clarke City when an engine failure forced him to land on pack ice 7 miles off Les Méchins. Bruce and his passengers abandoned the aeroplane and after spending two hours on the ice, they were rescued by a man from Les Méchins who had seen G-CAJK go down on the river and rowed out to rescue them. Weather prevented the recovery of G-CAJK, which was last seen February 29, two miles off Rivière-à-Claude. Bruce received a 4 month suspension of his license for operating an aircraft commercially that was not licensed to do so.

From the beginning of his career, Howard like many bush pilots flew mail in a semi-official role. He would fly official airmail in 1929 for Canadian Transcontinental Airways, operating in Quebec and the Maritimes. In December 1929 Howard was flying Fairchild 71 CF-AAT on the Quebec–Sept-Iles–Anticosti mail route. During the winter months, the Fairchild 71 could deliver the mail in 3 hours when it took a dog-sled team 3 weeks. While flying that route, Howard would make many friends on Anticosti Island. Howard worked for Canadian Transcontinental Airways (later Canadian Airways Limited) off and on until December 1933.

In January 1934 Howard, Bruce, and another pilot, Ken Smith, leased Fairchild 71 G-CANB and started a business by the name Service d'aviation Matane/Côte-Nord. This lasted three months until the end of winter. After that venture, Howard took a position as aeronautical consultant to Clarke Steamships; their president wished to expand his business by providing air mail and passenger service in the Gulf of St. Lawrence region. Howard travelled around to the different villages gathering support for the new company. When Canadian Airways Limited got wind of what Clarke Steamships was planning, they decided to cooperate and jointly form Quebec Airways in April 1935.

Inspired by his survey of the market in the St. Lawrence region, in 1934 Howard founded St. Lawrence Airways with T.B. “Happy” Fraser, with Bruce joining them later. They acquired two de Havilland Fox Moths, CF-ATV and CF-ATX in January 1935. On Christmas Eve, 1935, Howard crashed CF-ATX while trying to take off from a frozen Shelter Bay (now Port Cartier). Shortly after this crash, Canadian Airways Limited made a complaint to the Department of Transportation about Howard’s activities, and how he was in violation of the regulation that required landplanes flying over water to be within gliding distance of land. It was at this time that Howard began operating as a feeder to Quebec Airways on the North Shore. However, the Department of Transportation began looking into their logbooks and as a result, Howard and Bruce had their licences suspended for 3 months. In spring 1937 Happy Fraser left St. Lawrence Airways, and the company shut down operations, Howard taking CF-ATX and Bruce CF-ATV. CF-ATV was destroyed in fall 1937 after a cabin fire forced



DH 84 Dragon (CF-AVI) – CASM 12524

Bruce to make a forced landing.

Howard's next endeavour was to purchase a used de Havilland 84 Dragon (c/n 6093) CF-AVI and found North Shore Airways in 1937. North Shore Airways would operate successfully with CF-AVI and Fox Moth CF-ATX ferrying freight and passengers in support of the pulp and paper industry in the St. Lawrence region. CF-ATX was passed to Bruce in 1938, and CF-AVI was destroyed by a tornado on the night of January 13, 1941. The loss of CF-AVI spelled the end of North Shore Airways. Howard and Bruce would go on to fly with Ferry Command and Transport Command during the Second World War.

Thanks to Diana's research, she was able to discover and ultimately share this interesting story with us.

Kyle Huth, Editor



RAMBLING THROUGH RECORDS BCATP Hugh Halliday

Probably the most-consulted air force records of the Second World War are squadron diaries, but even training bases had interesting stories to record between routine instructional accounts. Of late I have been looking at quite a few such diaries. Permit me to share a few examples:

Reading the earliest entries for various schools, one marvels that the BCATP ever got off the ground. It was a rare school that opened in something like a finished state; runways, tarmacs, barracks and roads were often in messy construction modes. On 9 April 1941, one day before its official opening, No.11 Service Flying Training School, Yorkton, Saskatchewan, reported:

More rain. Station roads completely impassable. Extra handling of freight due to reloading at railway tracks greatly increasing work. Tried to use Railroad grade for road but it would not stand up. Water contaminated due to several breakages in pipelines and is now being boiled in the mess kitchens for drinking purposes. Large percentage of personnel on station using rubber boots to combat mud.

The diary entry of 20 March 1942 for No.20 Elementary Flying Training School, Oshawa described a rare instance of attempted theft of an aircraft:

Excitement ran high throughout the unit this morning when a German aviator, who escaped from Bowmanville Internment Camp, was captured in one of the barrack buildings. His name was Oberleutnant Frederick Oeser, and he submitted to arrest without offering any resistance. While in custody he answered all questions cheerfully and did not appear to be the least bit disappointed about being captured. His English, while rather poor, was intelligible. He explained how he skirted the main entrance to the camp, scaled the fence and walked to the nearest barrack block where he hoped to secure a flying suit. He confessed that his main ambition was to secure an aeroplane and fly as far south into the U.S. as it would take him. Officials of the Internment Camp at Bowmanville arrived shortly after noon to take him back to the Camp.

Herr Oeser certainly had unrealistic plans. The Tiger Moth of No.20 EFTS would not have taken him far into the United States, which was no longer neutral.

On occasion the BCATP training machines were pressed into extraordinary duties, including mercy flights. Consider a case involving No.34 Elementary Flying Training School, Assiniboia, Saskatchewan (4 February 1943):

Telephone call received from S/L Summerville, Officer Commanding, No.15 E.F.T.S., Regina, Sask., requesting that, if possible, this Unit arrange air transportation to Regina for a civilian child who was seriously ill at Coronach, Saskatchewan. The officer commanding this unit, S/L H. Marsden (70445) consulted with the manager, Central Manitoba Flying School Ltd., and it was decided that this should be done. F/O E.G. Snowden (101031), Flying Instructor of this Unit, took off from the aerodrome, No.34 E.F.T.S., in a Tiger Moth fitted with skis, landed at Coronach and conveyed the child from there to Regina. He was escorted on this flight by S/L Marsden (70445) and P/O R.H. Day (132072) and the flight was uneventful.

British personnel who served and trained in Canada had to adjust to a climate which, summer and winter, was characterized by unfamiliar extremes. Some risked their lives in finding out about these conditions. Consider No.35 Elementary Flying Training School, Neepawa, Manitoba (entry of 27 March 1942):

All ranks were confined to camp on account of the blizzard reaching at its height. A blizzard experience: This curiously enough concerns the Chief Flying Instructor and the Medical Officer, who were marooned in the town of Neepawa for four nights and three days owing to a severe blizzard reputed to be the worst in twenty years. After travelling by foot for a half-mile from the town to the local hospital to give medical assistance, these two officers were in a state of exhaustion, in particular the Medical Officer who suffered from severe shock from exposure and frost-bite. A lot of first-hand information, however, has been gleaned from this experience in that (1) we are not clothed for the rigours of the climate. (2) The hospitality of the Canadian Nursing Staff was unbounded in making the officers comfortable and content. (3) That frost-bite occurs without warning. (4). That unless prepared for a blizzard by being adequately and properly clothes, an individual will succumb quickly and without pain in a short time.

The histories of some schools were brightened by unusual visitors. Excerpts from diary of No.4 Elementary Flying Training School, Windsor Mills, Quebec, demonstrate:

(24 September 1942) Boeing Stratoliner "Comanche" landed today at 1320 hours direct from Scotland on account of carburetor trouble in three of the four motors. The following were on board -Major General Clarke, General Gilkerson, General Larkin, Lieutenant-Colonel Jackson, Colonel Slocum, L.A. Gason, Mr. Culbert, Captain Terry, pilot and other crew members. A second Stratoliner, the "Cherokee", arrived at 1700 hours to take away personnel and mail, but damaged two flaps on landing. The Beechcraft and Goose finally took passengers to Dorval en route to Washington, while the "Cherokee" finally took off in the evening....Lieutenant-Colonel Jackson, mail courier, remained overnight in Officers' Quarters.

(25 September 1942) Boeing 247D arrived with mechanics from Washington to repair carburetor in Stratoliner "Comanche". Lieutenant-Colonel Jackson took his mail on to Washington on this plane.

(26 September 1942) The Boeing Stratoliner made several test flights in the afternoon before finally leaving for Washington at 1730 hours. Before leaving, the supervisory staff and company officials were taken for flights, with local pilots being given opportunity to handle control in flight.

Every life is a biography, and every airfield has a story - though excavating it from the records may be an exacting task

Hugh Halliday



Pubs & Mags

Airliner Classics (Jul 2015) 7pp on Canadair's RJ family

Airliner World (Sept 2015) 2pp on Bombardier's presentation of the CSeries in Swiss markings

Airways (Oct 2015) 6pp on Vancouver's Harbour Air

Jets (Sept/Oct 2015) 6pp on the CF-101 Voodoo in Canadian service

Notices and Announcements

On November 11, 2015 at 7:00pm Cineplex Cinemas Lansdowne will be showing *Reunion of Giants*. For those not familiar, *Reunion of Giants* is the documentary about the Canadian Warplane Heritage Museum's Avro Lancaster travelling across the Atlantic to fly with the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight's Lancaster.



Images of recent sightings at Ottawa's Macdonald-Cartier International Airport (YOW)



A topside pass by the RCAF's Demo Hornet 188761 illustrates to good advantage its commemorative Battle of Britain inspired colour scheme. © Rod Digney



To commemorate the 75th Anniversary of the Battle of Britain this year, the 2015 Demo Hornet (188761) is painted in a glossy version of the green/earth camouflage pattern and codes worn by fighters in 1940. © Rod Digney



As the official Canadian airline of the Pan Am and Para Pan Am Games held in Toronto in over the summer, Porter Airlines temporarily decorated some of its fleet with the colourful logos of the event as seen here on DHC-8-402 C-GKQF at MCIA 10 July 2015. © Rod Digney



The fifth prototype of Bombardier's CSeries CS100 made an unexpected overnight stop at Ottawa on 8 September 2015. Initially, C-GWXZ (c/n 50005) diverted to YOW due to thunderstorms at its Mirabel home base but a subsequent technical snag is believed to have been responsible for a stay late into the following day. © Rod Digney



This Royal Air Force Lockheed Martin C-130J-30 C4 Hercules MH877 (c/n 382-5461) made a short one-hour stop to drop off some cargo at YOW on 3 September 2015. © Rod Digney



Some fifty years after the last performance of the RCAF's famed *Golden Hawks*, the team's beautiful gold paint scheme is still both striking and inspirational. Kevin Horton of Greely, Ontario has painted his Van's RV-8, C-GNHK (c/n 80427) in the Hawk's scheme. It is seen here at the Vintage Wings of Canada's fly-in breakfast on 23 May 2015. © Rod Digney

New Plaque Honours First World War Pilot

A new plaque was unveiled on Water Street in Prescott, Ontario over the summer. This plaque was put in place thanks to the efforts of the Grenville County Historical Society to honour William F.N. Sharpe.

Sharpe was born in Prescott, Ontario in 1892, he moved to Ottawa at a young age to attend school. His interest in aviation would see him travelling to California to train as a pilot. At the outbreak of the First World War Sharpe returned to Canada in September 1914 to enlist. He was one of three personnel appointed to the newly established Canadian Aviation Corps.

Sharpe was soon sent to England to train with the Royal Flying Corps. He flew several sorties over the trenches in France before returning to England for further training. It was while he was in England training on a new aircraft that he was killed in a crash on February 4, 1915. His body was repatriated to Canada on March 22, 1945 and buried with full military honours in Sandy Hill Cemetery, Prescott, Ontario.

Kyle Huth, Editor



Sydney Baker and Col. Chris Hadfield at CASM on 17 September, two days after Sydney Baker's 100th birthday. By good fortune Col. Hadfield dropped in at the museum during a celebratory tour set up for Sydney and his family and friends. Photo by Erin Gregory.

Carpooling List

Member	Area	Email	Phone
Claude LeBlanc	Lowertown		
Peter Houston	Uplands		
Robert S. Grant*	Metcalfe		
William White	Carlington		
Tony Smyth	Gloucester		
Doug Zahody	Orleans		
Ed Stevens	Britannia		
Bernie Runstedler*	Barrhaven		
Don MacNeil	Kanata		
Peter Robertson	Carlington		
Owen Cooke	North Gower		
John Crook	Chelsea		

*Doesn't always attend meetings

Images from the National Research Council online archive

In 1946, the Royal Air Force loaned Consolidated C. Mk. IX *Liberator* (JT973) to the Royal Canadian Air Force (who would operate JT973 in co-operation with the National Aeronautical Establishment of Canada). Soon to be known as *Rockcliffe Ice Wagon*, JT973 was used in de-icing and cloud-seeding experiments. As the captions are missing, it would be great if we could identify some of the individuals in these pictures!

Kyle Huth, Editor



What Flies Around Comes Around

Ottawa, 2 October 2015: CBC News reports that the Royal Canadian Air Force and the Ottawa Redblacks' ownership group have both apologized after a CF-18 Hornet fly-by during Thursday night's CFL game [1 October 2015] - in honour of Canadian Armed Forces appreciation night - scared residents. The fighter jet flew over TD Place Stadium in the Glebe and Old Ottawa South neighbourhoods as the CFL game was getting underway. Tweeted one person, "*Anybody just hear fighter jets flying super low overhead? Scared the shit out of me. I hope there's no security threat.*"

To put some perspective on this event, we need to go back to 29 May 1930 and read the *Ottawa Journal's* report "Charge Pilot With Breaking Flying Rules / Civil Aviation Officials Suspend R.A. MacDonell After Flight". The report stated, "Facing charges of breaking several of the most stringent provisions of Air Regulations of Canada, following complaints from numerous residents of Ottawa South and the Glebe district, Roy A. MacDonell, 317 Clemow Avenue, a well-known local private flyer [and a charter member of the Ottawa Flying Club], was immediately placed under temporary suspension from all flying by Government aviation officials as he landed at the Uplands Field airport, Bowesville Road, shortly after 7 o'clock last night [28 May 1930]. Officers of the Civil Aviation Branch of the Department of National Defence will conduct a searching inquiry into complaints that MacDonell indulged in aerobatics over city streets, endangering not only his own and his passenger's lives, but the life and property of the public....Some of the residents of Ottawa South will never forget the sight of the stunting [Avro Avian] airplane over their homes last night....Residents of one Cameron Avenue home said the 'plane was flying dangerously low, and making repeated dives towards the ground, sometimes with the engine off and sometimes with it on. They were afraid to go into the street, and feared for the safety of their home as the airplane roared close to the chimney-tops."

Now let's go forward to 9 November 1940 and read the *Ottawa Citizen's* report "Monsters Of The Night Roar Over Ottawa With Young Fighters Aboard". As training ramped up at the R.C.A.F.'s newly-opened No.2 Service Flying Training School, some residents of Ottawa were grumbling about developments. "A pious post-service hush, carried into the streets of Ottawa one recent Sunday evening as congregations emerged from the quiet solemnity of the churches, was deafeningly shattered as a [Harvard] airplane roared through the night sky, seeming to skim the tops of the leafless trees. Faces turned in unison to peer into the darkness overhead for the howling thing. They saw it...its two coloured navigation lights, faithfully trailed by the brighter white tail light, and the glow cast by the Capital's myriad lights reflecting on its yellow underside. No one was frightened, for all knew it was an R.C.A.F. ship, but....One person - a small, elderly man - was annoyed. "*Blast those things!*" he spluttered to his companion. "*Why do they let them fly around at night like that? Why, some nights they wake me out of a sound sleep with their infernal noise!*" The companion cast a pitying glance at the little man and, quietly, replied: "*You don't realize, my friend, that the men in that airplane and the others who fly over Ottawa every night are the very men who will eventually prevent the Germans from coming over here and entirely doing away with your sleep!*" And that is just what those night flyers are doing: learning, through the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan, to fly the fast ships through inky skies in combat. They love night flying, they know their machines."

Sounds like déjà vu all over again! Did Yogi Berra really say that?

Peter Robertson

Montreal Soaring Council

Driving to Montreal via Highway 174 (the former Highway 17) one passes a grass airfield west of Hawkesbury, home of the Montreal Soaring Council which was formed on June 25, 1946 when three clubs, The Canadair Recreation Association, The McGill Gliding Club and The Montreal Gliding Club amalgamated.

The Montreal Soaring Council finally found a permanent home in 1957 at Hawkesbury, Ont., after many years of flying from different locations (Montreal East, Granby, St. Eugene and even Pendleton for a short time). It now averages 2,600 flights a year, operating seven days a week (May-November) weather permitting.

The MSC club fleet consists of three L19 "Bird Dog" tugs and 10 sailplanes. In addition to the club fleet, there are approximately 15 privately owned sailplanes tied down in trailers on the 260-acre airport. The airfield itself boasts a 2,000 by 400-foot grass strip which is tiled with 20,000 feet of drain.

Sunday, August 23 was an especially good day for soaring. One pilot managed to stay aloft for five hours.

Hugh Halliday

NEXT MEETING OF THE OTTAWA CHAPTER CANADIAN AVIATION HISTORICAL SOCIETY



John Braham standing in front of a de Havilland Mosquito wearing a German life vest in 1943.

Unknown Ace - John Braham

Mike Braham

Mike Braham talks about his father, Second World War night fighter ace John Randall Daniel “Bob” Braham DSO & Two Bars, DFC & Two Bars, AFC, and CD. John’s career in military flying began with his enlistment in the Royal Air Force in 1937, and last until 1968 when he retired from the Royal Canadian Air Force. During that time he fought in the Battle of Britain, was a POW, and flew Beaufighters, Mosquitoes, Sabres, Canucks, T-33s, Starfighters, and Lightnings.

Location: Bush Theatre, Canada Aviation and Space Museum, Rockcliffe

Date/Time: Thursday, 29 October, 2015, 1930 Hours

Meetings include guest speakers, films, slide shows, coffee and donuts.

Visitors and guests are always welcome.

Landing Fees: \$1.00