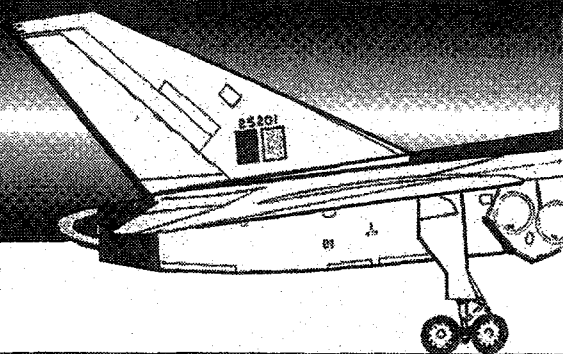


Pre-Flight

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David Cook

Issue Feature :
Malton Airport - the Early Years

Preface

The Malton we knew during the Avro years was growing rapidly, but still had the atmosphere of a smaller town, and was much, much smaller than Toronto, off to the east. However, one still needed transportation to get to Avro in post WW II years. At the time, Malton was barely a century old since the first immigrants came from England, seeking a better life. They came to a part of Ontario that was blessed with good land. However, this came at a price for settlers. It required labour, struggle and persistence to properly clear the land to make it arable and commercially productive. A shack in which to live and utensils to work with were especially critical. Richard Halliday was one of those intrepid souls who settled there in the first decade of the 19th century. He decided to name it 'Malton', after his birthplace in Yorkshire, England. By the 1850s, it was a farming community, with a general store, a blacksmith and a shoemaker, a cobbler. Malton was, for the day, sort of 'booming'. The farmers had a ready market with wheat to be shipped to England and farm produce to be taken to York, Toronto. Thus by the start of the 20th century, Malton's population had gone past the 100 mark. David Cook, in his intimate and detailed presentation, draws our attention to historical highlights from the airport, to Toronto history, and to the halcyon Avro Arrow era.

Indeed, an interesting read.

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Aerospace Heritage Foundation of Canada



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From the President

On August 9th, I attended the 60th Anniversary/Luncheon celebrating the first flight of the Avro C102 Jetliner, held at the Canadian Air and Space Museum in Downsview. The function was well attended.

I was happy to see a large number of AHFC members, along with aviation enthusiasts, some of whom travelled a great distance to be part of this celebration.

Thanks go to Nick Doran, who worked with CASM to ensure that this would be a function to remember.

Frank

Malton Airport - the Early Years

A presentation by
David Cook
Mississauga, Ontario

Dave is well-qualified to speak about the history of Malton Airport. His family used to live on the 6th Line of Mississauga, in what was formerly Toronto Township, near the community of Elmbank, since expropriated to expand the airport into what is now Lester B. Pearson International. The family purchased the property in the late 1940s, then moved into Applewood Acres in 1957 when the expropriation took place. Dave attended Elmbank and Malton public schools and then Gordon Graydon Secondary School, all in Mississauga. A former newspaper reporter and radio broadcaster, multi-talented Dave served three terms on Mississauga Council in the 1980s.

A former race car owner, Dave was active for many years in North American motorsports and he later became general manager of Mosport's Ascot North Speedway.

Dave has written three books primarily on the history of Mississauga. They include: *Apple Blossoms and Satellite Dishes*, the history of Applewood Acres, Mississauga's first major development; *From Frozen Ponds to Beehive Glory*, the story of Dixie Arena Gardens; and his most recent book, *Fading History: Stories of Historical Interest, Volume 1*. The following was based on this 224-page, well-illustrated and wide-ranging soft cover book.

Dave used a map as a reference as he began his discussion by going back to the early 1900s, when Malton was a sleepy little farming community of about 150 people. A major event that stood out was the Calithumpian Parade, a collection of farmers who came together at harvest time and paraded along the main street of town. The parade was discontinued after the First World War erupted. In 1914, Malton was incorporated as a police village. Railway lines and a mill were established, but Malton remained primarily a farming community. Church was central to social life. That began to change in 1937, when the City of Toronto and the Port Authority of Toronto began to discuss the establishment of Malton Airport. They were also involved in discussions that led to the Toronto Island Airport.

The Greater Toronto Airport Authority (GTAA), which operates Pearson today, says that nine farms were purchased. Dave, however, says there were 13. The purchase price ranged from \$120 per acre for 100 acres to \$210 per acre for 150 acres. The first airliner to land at Malton, an American Airlines DC-3, arrived 29 August 1938. That same year, National Steel Car established a large plant at Malton, eventually employing 9,000 to 10,000 workers. Its factory was set up on the west side of the 6th Line (Airport Road) and south of Derry Road. In 1939, three BCATP (the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan) was created and three BCATP schools were located at Malton.

The Toronto Flying Club played a major part in the start-up stages of the BCATP at Malton. In 1942 the government took control of National Steel Car and established Victory Aircraft, producing the highly regarded Lancaster Mark X in quantity for the Second World War. In December, 1945, newly created A.V. Roe Canada Ltd. assumed control of Victory Aircraft. Avro also acquired government-owned Turbo Research Ltd., subsequently known as Orenda.

As Dave noted, Malton transformed almost overnight from a farming community into a beehive of activity, home to a growing airport with domestic and international airline service, the vital BCATP, and an industrial giant in Victory Aircraft. It also was home to a 500-bed Workmen's Compensation (WCB) Hospital which began at the site of the BCATP facilities in 1947.

Some of the events at Malton in those days had a dramatic impact in Canada's history and put Malton on the map in a way that people could never have imagined. The WCB Hospital became a world leader in its own right. Dr. Rex Hylton, a veteran of the Second World War, was instrumental in developing prosthetic devices for seriously injured workmen who needed artificial limbs. He realized one of his major goals - enabling a patient to pick up a glass of water with an artificial hand. Tragically, Dr. Hylton was shot and killed in his office at age 57 by a patient at the hospital on 25 November, 1955. In 1958 the WCB Hospital moved to the Highway 400-401 area in Downsview as Malton airport began major expansion.

When Dave was eight or nine years old, he remembered looking at a hole in the ground. A friend told Dave that the hole was the result of a plane crash the previous year. That mystery stayed with Dave for many years and he wanted to resolve it for his book. When Dave checked with aviation contacts Gerry Spracklin and Bill McVean, he was told there wasn't a crash. So much for that. Dave cleared up the story while doing research at the National Archives in Ottawa, where he came across the printout of a front-

page Toronto Star story documenting a tragic crash at Malton in 1949. Dave noted the reason that Spracklin and McVean didn't recall the accident was that they represented a committee that took over the CNE air show after the initial year or two of operation, subsequent to the accident.

The 23 August, 1949 crash claimed the lives of two Royal Canadian Navy Seafire pilots who were part of the RCN Seafire Exhibition Flight aerobatic team from Shearwater, Nova Scotia. Three Seafires were practising a V-formation at a scant 10 feet apart, at a speed of about 300 miles per hour and an altitude of about 1,200 feet. In unison, they would perform a 360-degree 'Vic-Roll' barrel roll. Then disaster struck. Just as the three aircraft were upside down, two of them collided and plunged to the ground. Killed in the crash were the team commander, Lieutenant Commander Clifford Gordon Watson, and Lieutenant Alfred Charles 'Chuck' Elton. The propeller of Lieut. Elton's Seafire cut through the fuselage of Lieut. Cmdr. Watson's aircraft. One of the aircraft narrowly missed the hospital, where a few staff members and patients were watching the Seafires practise. The third pilot in the formation, Lieut. Joseph J. MacBrien, fortunately avoided the collision and landed safely.

Many years later, Dave traced him down. In fact, it turns out that MacBrien lives down the street, just five minutes' walk, from the author. In an interview, MacBrien said: "I can recall seeing a wing tip near my canopy. Of course, at that time we were all upside down and quickly I took action to move away. Not being far off the ground at that time gave me little room to manoeuvre." Dave's book has a photograph of the 10-member team, taken on 17 August, 1949. Lieut. Cmdr. Watson was a Second World War veteran who commanded the aircraft carrier HMCS Magnificent after the war. He was the older brother of Patrick Watson, the well-known television broadcaster, producer and author who went on to head the CBC. As an aside to the tragedy, the Toronto Star's coverage of the story included a reference to Clifford Watson having nine years earlier made headlines in Toronto when he dressed as a woman and posed as a contestant in a Miss Toronto pageant. Fifteen contestants were eliminated before the true identity of "Miss Watson," known only as entry number 13, was discovered during the final event.

Dave's book covers other aspects of the rapid growth of aviation at Malton, including the stories of Avro Canada, Orenda, and more. There are several relatively rare photos --- such as a picture of the 692nd and last CF-100 on the production line; a photo of Jim Floyd, Vice-President of Engineering, standing on the tarmac beside his car with licence plate number 100.105

Cook ... cont'd.

reflecting Avro's achievements with the CF-100 and CF-105 Arrow; fascinating shots of the Avrocar "flying saucer"; and historic shots of the Orenda, Iroquois and Chinook engines built by Orenda.

Another chapter covers Teddy Morris, who took the Toronto Argonauts to three Grey Cup victories - three as a player and three as a coach. He and his wife Minnie lived on the 6th Line, Malton. Their farmhouse was just 100 yards from the entrance of the BCATP Elementary Flying Training School site and about a mile south of the Victory Aircraft plant. Teddy was a good friend of Dave's and his death at age 55 after a heart attack in 1965 shocked the football fraternity.

Dave's next book will cover more of the early history of Malton airport. In his research, he came across the man whose father paved the runways. In fact, he did 17 runway projects for airports that were part of the BCATP. Dave noted his books are intended to serve as living history that average people can relate to, as opposed to providing in-depth technical data. Hoping to keep the memories of a great era at Malton alive, Dave is astonished to encounter people who have never heard of the Arrow. For good measure, a photo of the rollout of the Arrow in 1957 is part of a montage of photos on the cover of his book. "We're living at a time when, sadly, history is fading away from us," he said. Dave's writing reflects a flair for fascinating details, characteristic of a former newspaper reporter.

Dave enjoyed fielding lots of questions and sharing stories about Malton with the audience. He recalled that his father borrowed \$14,000 to buy a house on a 60 x 140 lot in Applewood Acres in 1957 after the expropriation. The price was equivalent to about \$50,000 an acre. Escalation in land prices since then has been incredible, as exemplified by a story Dave told from his days as a municipal councillor. In 1983, he was sitting at a table face to face with a man who wanted \$15 million for five acres in the heart of Mississauga during construction of the new city hall. Dave was aghast at the price.

Hazel McCallion, Mississauga's feisty mayor, then let the air out of the balloon. She looked at the man, and without hesitating, she told him: "Well, we're going to take your land for nothing." The property owner owed the city of Mississauga \$15 million! End of story.

Howard Malone expressed his thanks to Dave for a thoroughly enjoyable, first-hand presentation on many aspects of the rich story of Malton. Dave's account brought back many memories for Howard, who as a boy in the 1940s flew out of Malton in a Piper Cub and went on to spend about 35 years of his life flying in and out of the airport.

This report of David Cook's presentation was prepared by Gord McNulty, AHFC # 078 a longtime member and regular contributor to Pre-Flight, our newsletter.

Members Matter

Because so many AHFC members attended the Jetliner anniversary dinner at CASM, I thought it would be pertinent to give our general membership first hand information as to the situation at the Canadian Air and Space Museum. The following is the news release sent out to Media and all Museum CASM members, September 16th., 2009.

"Dear Museum Members,

At the Board Meeting of September 15, 2009 a motion was put forward which created a conflict that in the end divided the board. As the result of this conflict, the following directors have given their letters of resignation: Wayne Barrett (chairman), Barry Lubek (vice chair), Rod Jones, Hugh Black, Don Lawrence, Greg Mozesson (treasurer), as well as contract employee, Sue Douglas. At the end of the meeting the remaining of the board members regrouped, lead by James Montgomery, to ensure the stability of the Museum. A board meeting has been scheduled for Tuesday September 22, 2009 at which time the board will plan out a new course of action for the Museum. Further communications will be sent to the members of the Museum following the meeting of September 22nd. Meanwhile we thank you for your ongoing support as we organize for the Museum's continuing growth. If you have any comments, questions or concerns please do not hesitate to contact us by email at casm@casmuseum.org.

Sincerely,

Your friends at the Canadian Air & Space Museum."

The new Chairman of the CASM is James Montgomery and the Vice-Chair is Ken Swartz. I am still the AHFC representative on the CASM board. Your board passed the following motion "The AHFC moves to support the Board of Directors of the CASM in their efforts to continue to operate the Museum in an orderly and responsible fashion."



Nicholas Doran, Membership