Canadian Aviation Historical Society
Toronto Chapter Meeting
February 21, 2009
Meeting starts at 1 PM
-Under the Glider-
Toronto Aerospace Museum, 65 Carl Hall Road, Toronto

This meeting is jointly sponsored by CAHS Toronto Chapter and the Toronto Aerospace Museum- All CAHS / TAM members, guests and the public (museum admission payable) are welcome to attend.

Refreshments will be served
“Landing Fee” of $2.00 will be charged to cover meeting expenses
Next Month’s Meeting March 14, 2009

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This month: Author & Historian, Carl Mills on the Silver Dart. Also Sandra Dempsey will give a special presentation.
Silver Dart painting: Don Connelly
CAHS Toronto Chapter President Howard Malone introduced author and historian Dave Cook of Mississauga. Dave is well-qualified to discuss 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*. Dave based his presentation to the Chapter on this 224-page, well-illustrated and wide-ranging soft cover.

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,
During a cold day on December 19, 1941 RAF pilot trainee Fred Williamson took the first major step of his flying training by going solo in a Tiger Moth. Mr. Williamson recalls in a letter that the occasional Douglas or Lockheed airliner would also arrive or depart during the midst of the very busy training activity. After graduating from the EFTS, he was posted to No. 5 SFTS at Brantford where he was awarded his “Wings” in June, 1942. After qualifying he was then posted to No. 6 Bombing and Gunnery School at Mountainview where he flew Ansons and Fairey Battles carrying trainee Bomb Aimers on practice runs. Final Canadian posting was the Air Navigation School at Charlottetown, P.E.I. Returning to the UK in 1943 he was assigned to RAF Squadron No. 172 at Chivenor in North Devon flying Wellington Bombers on U-Boat patrols. The base was shared with RCAF No. 407 Squadron. The flying involved long night patrols from Chivenor and detachments in Gibraltar and the Azores searching for surfaced U-Boats as they sailed in and out of their bases on the French coast. U-Boat movements were also tracked as when they tried to intercept Allied convoys in the open Atlantic. His final posting was to an OTU course to learn to fly the heavily armed Beaufighter just as the war ended. After the war he was in business in the Liverpool area until he retired to Cumbria in the Lake District of England.

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 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.
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 six 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. Chapter Secretary-Treasurer Bob Winson, on behalf of the Chapter executive, members and guests, presented a gift to our speaker, who sold copies of his commendable and enlightening book.

Chapter News – February 2009

Folded Wings

We have been informed of the passing of longtime chapter member H. Fred Heather (CAHS # 4651) on December 31, 2008. A celebration of Fred’s life was held on January 10, 2009 in the Veteran’s Chapel at Sunnybrook Hospital. Fred joined the wartime RCAF after transferring from the 30th. Battery of the Royal Canadian Artillery. He trained on the Fleet Finch, Avro Anson Mk I, Airspeed Oxford and then became an instructor for single engine pilots checking out on multi-engine aircraft. He later trained BCATP Navigation students at several Air Observer Schools. Fred then got a call to report to Ottawa’s #14 Fighter Squadron which was equipped with Curtiss P-40 Kittyhawks. The squadron was subsequently posted to Unimak Island in the Aleutians for coastal defence. This posting entailed the huge task of ferrying 15 Kittyhawks all the way to the west coast and then up to Alaska. Fred was later posted to England with RAF #58 Squadron flying Halifax II’s on U-Boat patrol in the Atlantic south of England and the North Sea. Fred spoke to the chapter on October 10, 1996 about his flying experiences.

College Scholarships

As most chapter members are aware, CAHS National and Toronto Chapter each support annual $500 scholarships at Centennial College and Georgian College respectively. This past October, Chapter President Howard Malone attended the graduation ceremonies at both colleges and awarded scholarships to the recipients. At Centennial College the Doug MacRitchie Memorial Award went to a very capable graduate in the Aircraft Maintenance Program, Mr. Stephen Salmon. Stephen is well known to Toronto Chapter members as he volunteers regularly at the Toronto Aerospace Museum.

Karl Kaniewski was the well qualified recipient of our Don Rogers Memorial Scholarship at
Allan Byron “Teddy” Morris in his farming clothes. Photo courtesy of Helen Clark.

Georgian College. Karl also won the Georgian Alumni Scholarship due to his outstanding co-op work placements in the aviation industry and his excellent grades in the aviation management program. The chapter considers these awards as valuable exposure of the CAHS to a younger audience. The awards are funded by donations from members and initiatives like this are in fact required under the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) regulations. Under current CRA regulations, CAHS is only allowed to retain $1 for every $5 received in receipted donations to spend on acceptable general and administrative purposes (i.e. Chapter Newsletters, Journal, etc). The balance of the funds must be disbursed to education, research and aviation history preservation initiatives.

Help Wanted
The Toronto Aerospace Museum (TAM) is looking for a volunteer to maintain the technical section of the museum’s library. The work would include sorting, filing and cataloguing technical manuals, engineering notes, artifacts, etc. A sound knowledge of aircraft systems, engines and instruments would be a valuable asset. Basic computer skills are also desirable, but not essential. If you are interested or know of someone that might be interested in volunteering, please contact Mr. Paul Cabot, Manager / Curator at (416) 638 – 6078.

Editor’s Note
It’s a small world. As I assembled this edition of Flypast I wondered if I’d see any mention of my great uncle’s farm. His was only one of many that were bought out to build what is now Pearson Airport. I had heard stories of him as a much loved brother (from my grandmother) and uncle (from my father), although he died before I was born. My father remembers his uncle’s farm fondly, including a visit in the early 1950s when a “big black jet” flew very low and very fast overhead. It would have been the first CF-100. On the other hand, Uncle Ted was still making the CFL highlight reel 65 years after he stopped playing football.

My grandmother and the rest of my family were delighted to see him featured in Dave’s talk. From all of us, here is the family legend about the game when Teddy ran the ball almost the length of the field until he zigged when he should have zagged. Our story is about the huddle setting up for the next play. His team mates were going to set him up for the touch down. Uncle Ted refused. He’d run the ball because he was in the right position. The team would score with whoever was in the best position. It worked, but my grandmother still thinks he could have been a little less selfless that day.

Allan Byron “Teddy” Morris in his farming clothes. Photo courtesy of Helen Clark.
By Taxi: Take the TTC Subway to the Downsview Station and take a taxi from there. It will cost around $8 one way, but it is by far the most convenient option for tourists, because the cab will take you right to our front door, whereas the TTC - unfortunately - doesn't!

By Car: From the 401 East or West, exit at Keele Street North. Turn right on Sheppard Ave, and follow Sheppard the entrance to Downsview Park. Turn right into the park (onto John Drury Road) until you reach Carl Hall Road. Turn left at Carl Hall and continue east over the railway tracks to the Museum, which is on your right hand side.

By TTC: From the Downsview TTC station take the 108 Downsview, the 86 Sheppard West, Westbound or the 84 Sheppard West, Westbound bus and ask the driver to let you off at the Downsview Park entrance (it is well past the DRDC and Idomo buildings). Walk into the park entrance and follow John Drury Road until you reach Carl Hall Road. Turn left at Carl Hall Road and continue east over the railway tracks to the Museum, which is on your right hand side. Approximate walking distance is 0.7 km.

CAHS National Website: [www.cahs.ca](http://www.cahs.ca)
Meetings and news from all the chapters, journal back issues, and more!

Toronto Chapter Meetings - 2nd Saturday of the month 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm.
Toronto Aerospace Museum, 65 Carl Hall Road
TAM is in the former deHaviland building in Downsview Park
Near Downsview TTC Station
All Welcome