

## Captain Bill Thompson

1926– 2015

by Carla Deminchuk

*A ship is safe in harbor, but that's not what ships are for. – W. Shedd*

The museum was saddened to hear of the passing of one of our founding members on February 1, 2015.

"Without Bill Thompson, most of our collection would not be here," reminisced museum manager Terry Brunner. "Bill trudged all over our coast looking for wrecks and was instrumental in raising the CMF Hampden. One of the funniest stories involved Bill's retrieval of a huge twin aircraft in Winnipeg called the Saunders ST-27. Bill plunked it onto a trailer and collected 19 highway violations enroute to B.C for being overwidth, overweight, overheight, and overlength," laughed Terry.



Captain Thompson did indeed leave a larger-than-life legacy on land, water, and in the air. The early days of the museum involved many car trips from his home in Pender Harbour to the original Crescent Beach location. His tugboat, the Nanaimo Tillicum, served the coastal communities for over 46 years. But Bill's most iconic association will always be his 1942 N3N biplane. Flying was Bill's first love. It was a passion so generously shared, as he never flew alone. Over 300 people were joyfully taken for a ride. It was an experience they would never forget.

And we will never forget Bill Thompson.



### "Boat and Plane at Pender Harbour," acrylic painting on canvas by Brian Croft.

Canadian Museum of Flight member and artist, Brian Croft, was inspired by Bill Thompson's tugboat and N3N aircraft during a 2003 Pender Harbour sailing excursion. Like many other residents on the Sunshine Coast, Brian spent many leisurely summer days watching the indomitable yellow biplane overhead - its propeller orchestrating sky and sea.

*(At the family's request, donations in Bill's memory can be made to the Canadian Museum of Flight. If you would like to read more about Bill's life, please visit the Aviation History section of our website).*

**Please visit our website [www.canadianflight.org](http://www.canadianflight.org) for more news and updates on events.  
Follow us on the Museum facebook page and twitter.**

# The Canadian Museum of Flight

**Bringing British Columbia's Aviation Past into the Future**

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5333 – 216th Street  
Langley, BC V2Y 2N3

## Museum Hours

Open daily from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

## Thank You for a Great Ride! - from your Past Editor, Bruce Friesen

Well, it's been a slice, editing the Glidepath Newsletter for the Canadian Museum of Flight, twenty four issues over six years.

There is so much I appreciated over that time: the readers who expressed interest in the publication and anticipation for the next issue; the many excellent writers who authored stories and news items and the talented photographers who contributed photos; those who provided comments and critiques; the Museum staff, and in particular Terry Brunner, for constant support and encouragement. It is tempting to start naming names, but then the list would grow and still the risk loom of leaving someone out. So, thank you, all!

It seemed each issue loomed into my life as a chore, and then, magically, marvelous articles and photos would arrive, by routes often a bit mysterious or unexpected. Slowly the newsletter would take on a shape, and a character, and soon enough the presses would be running. I do confess a feeling of pride in most of the issues I edited, on behalf of "the team".

It was easy, though, to provide a printed face and voice for our Museum. The Canadian Museum of Flight is an endless fount of interesting stories, fascinating people and exciting events.

In that light, I am confident our new Glidepath Editor, Carla Deminchuk, will have the newsletter content, and the support from the good folks that hang around our funky little museum, required to take the publication to its next phase. I wish her well, and encourage all of you to rally round as you did for me over the past several rewarding years.

## Fasten your seatbelts, it's going to be a bumpy ride? - from your new editor, Carla Deminchuk

As an occasional contributor to Glidepath, I have found Bruce to be the ideal editor. Bruce seemed to know exactly what you were trying to say, and was mercifully light with the editorial red pen. Bruce and his team have done a fantastic job. Thank-you, Bruce.

As your new editor, I will endeavour to make the transition as smooth and enjoyable as possible.

# The Waco Pick-Me Up

by Carla Deminchuk

Airplanes and horses have a lot in common. Both require a lot of maintenance to ride high in the saddle. I had enjoyed ground school and a few flying lessons as a teenager, but they gave way to college, a job, and a barn full of horses to look after. Ironically, our farm was located on the cusp of the Glen Valley Aerobatic quadrant. A sunny weekend came with the guarantee of another impromptu air show. The ears would always be tuned to the pattering of a student's C-152 or the powerful roar of an aerobatic engine. It was hard to forget those earlier aspirations of flight while flinging the manure. A lot of time was spent leaning on the pitchfork, looking up.

I figure if one can't get inside an airplane, the next best thing is being near one. And there's nothing I'd rather get closer to than a vintage airplane. It was the Canadian Museum of Flight that reopened the hangar door.

While attending the 2003 Canada Day festivities at the Langley Airport, I was enthralled when some of the museum aircraft circuted the field. But one really stoked my fancy; a cream and candy apple red biplane. I tracked down a museum volunteer who told me the biplane was "the late Doc Pickup's 1937 Waco."

A few days later I made my first visit to the museum. I inspected the Waco and other aircraft, pored over at the displays, and chatted with the friendly volunteers. I also learned a bit about the Waco's history plying our coastline as a small-town doctor's winged horse and buggy. The Waco was one of our province's first air ambulance – saving the lives of

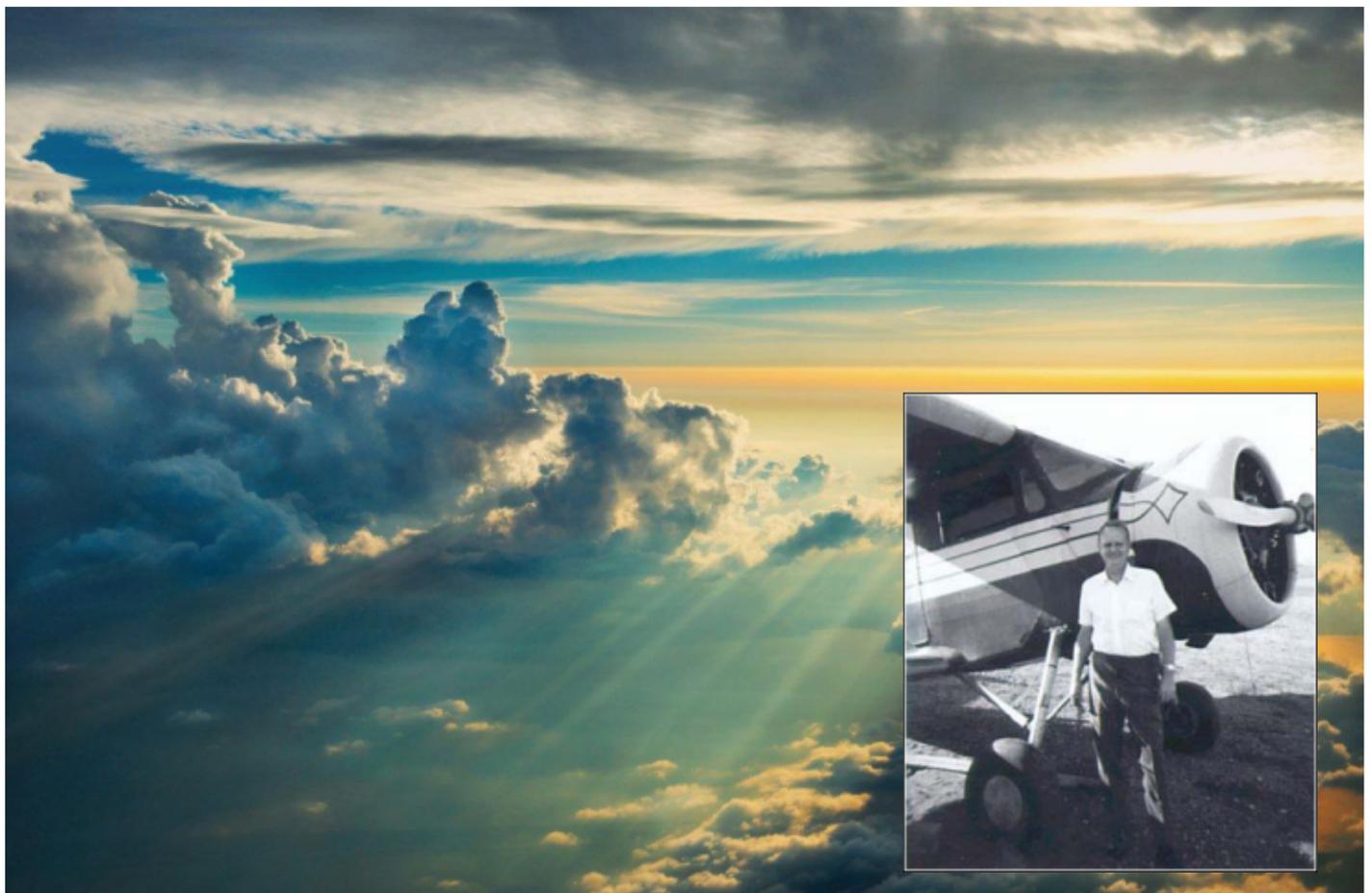
countless fishermen, loggers, and others scattered along those watery fringes.

A couple of months later while attending the Langley Cruise-In, there was my cheery biplane again, wagging her wings at the crowd. Whenever I could steal a few hours away from the job or farm, I'd make my way back to the museum, notebook in hand. It is a good place for a budding writer; every airplane is entwined with a plethora of stories. But it was Doc Pickup's Waco and its humanitarian connection that made the visit especially worthwhile. I called it the "Waco pick-me up."

On May 27th, 2009, it was one year to the day that I had lost a good friend to cancer. A grey morning weather-wise and emotionally. An early-afternoon break in the clouds took me outside to sand rake the paddocks. I soon heard the approaching hum of another airplane. I knew the museum had been preparing the Waco for a trip to Alberta in celebration of Canada's 100th anniversary of powered flight, but I had been too preoccupied to remember the exact departure date. Today would be just too uncanny. I ran for my binoculars and immediately recognized a familiar head-on silhouette coming my way. The Waco then flew directly overhead! More inspiration and cheer on a day that needed it the most. I waved and wished the pilots a safe trip and Godspeed home.

As I watched my favourite biplane fade into the distance, I think Doc Pickup must have been looking down - nodding in approval.

After all these years, his Waco is still uplifting souls.



# Around Vancouver Island in Five Hours

by Vic Bentley

I had thought for some time about circumnavigating Vancouver Island. Using my GPS to plan a suitable routing showed it could be done in the Harvard in about 4 hours flying time, depending on the routing and number of landings. While it wouldn't be quite in the style of *Around the World in Eighty Days* by Jules Verne, it would be a satisfying accomplishment.

To get the weather, aircraft availability and passenger all to coincide was a major challenge. However, in mid-July my son, Duane, was in Surrey, the aircraft was available, only leaving the weather as the major unknown. There was a period of sunny skies and warm temperatures that would suit us fine – except on the west coast of the Island. The west coast from California to Alaska is well known for the marine stratus that forms on the shore in the good summer weather. A hundred metres inland from the coast is usually clear of cloud. The day previous to the planned flight I discussed the weather with the Met briefer.

Although most of the flight would be in habitable areas, some of it is fairly remote, so we took a survival kit and wore life jackets for the flight. We were in contact with various radio facilities and on a flight plan or flight note. The latter part of the flight we were in radar contact with major ATC centres.

With full fuel tanks we took off for Campbell River. We cruised along the North Shore of Vancouver and once clear of restricted airspace climbed to 4500 feet. With the power set for cruise and the mixture leaned out we settled down in cruise with a groundspeed of about 130 knots. The outside air temperature was over 20C and we had the air vents wide open and bright sunshine pouring in through the canopy. Shortly

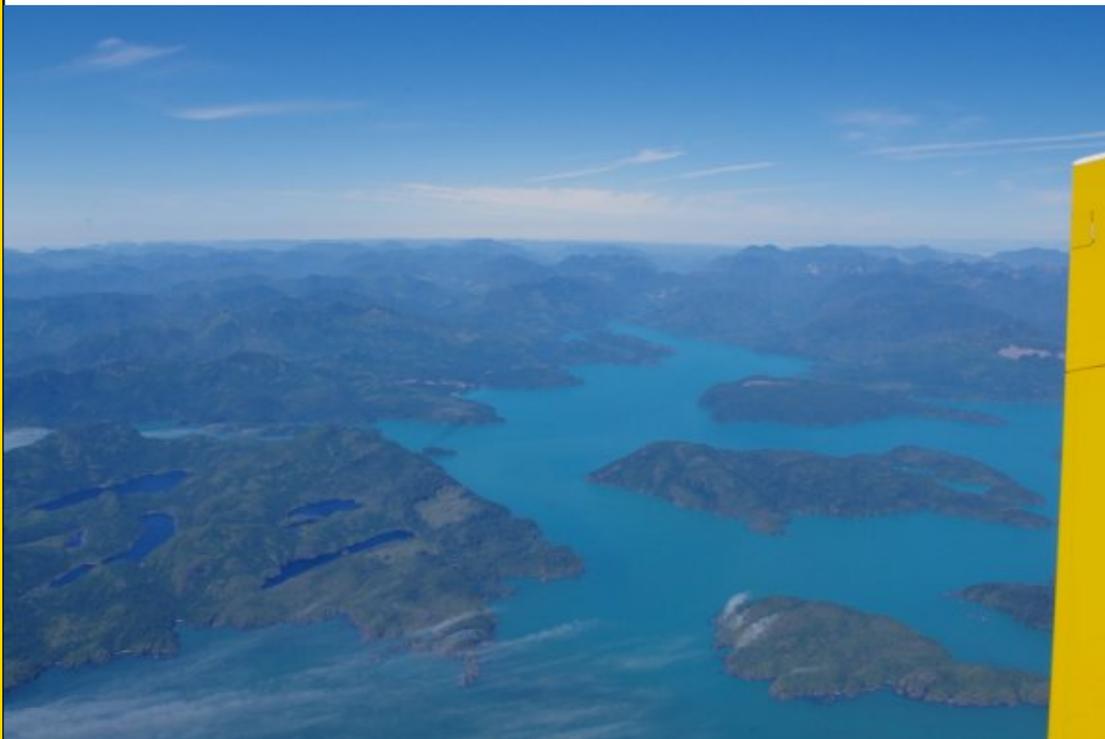


*Vic and Duane before departure from Langley.*

after this the wide-open spaces northwest of Vancouver were in view and we enjoyed the scenery of the Sunshine Coast with the Strait of Georgia on the left and the Coast Range and its snow-capped peaks to the right. Soon we were over Powell River and concentrating on avoiding the military airspace around Comox. We were soon on the ground after a one-hour flight and at the fuel pumps for a top up.

Checking the weather ahead showed the expected gradual improvement, but aware that this can change by the minute depending on the wind. Leaving Campbell River, the Aeradio operator presumed we would be doing a right turn and

heading southeast as our flight plan was filed to Langley. We informed him we would be heading northwest and going to Langley the long way! The mountains in the centre of the Island are up to 7,000 ft so I chose to cruise at 6,500 ft for the best visibility and terrain clearance. Cockpit temperature was now very pleasant. Duane had been assigned to camera duties so frequently slid the rear canopy open and shot away at the passing scenery. Victoria Peak dropped behind and the long stretch of water in Nimpkish Lake was on the left. We passed by Alert Bay and Port McNeil in the sunshine, then spotted Port Hardy ahead with stratus covering part of the airport.



*The aqua waters of Kyuquot Sound.*

*continued on Page 5*

## Around Vancouver Island in Five Hours *continued from Page 4*



**Power generating windmills near Cape Scott with the extensive marine stratus behind.**

Now we could see the solid stratus layer covering the ocean far out to sea to the north and northwest, leaving the land in bright sunshine. As we approached Cape Scott we could see the wind turbine farm with only a few of the big blades making a half-hearted attempt to generate power in the lazy air. The aptly named Winter Harbour showed itself tucked away up a long inlet. Continuing west would make landfall on the Kamchatka Peninsula in Russia – too far for the Harvard ...

A gradual turn to the left had us taking up a southeast heading. According to the custom of the air we climbed to 7,500 ft as our heading was predominantly east. Now we could see the shoreline with the ocean swell crashing on small islands and the rocky coastline. Brooks Peninsular stood out as a finger pointing to the west, its flanks clothed in swirling mist. Long sandy beaches were visible on the south side, looking like an inviting place for camping away from the crowds.

Then the aqua waters of Kyuquot Sound showed up ahead. This looked for all the world like a vista from the Caribbean, with the palm trees replaced by Douglas Fir! The water in the huge inlet was a similar milky blue colour, while other inlets and the ocean were a much more sober navy blue. Shortly after this we were over historic points in Nootka Sound with names such as Cook Channel and Bligh Island.

A crescent of glistening white sand became visible near Hesquiat Harbour – and not a high-rise tower in sight. Several boats were anchored in sheltered coves, no doubt travellers enjoying the solitude of the west coast.



**A crescent beach near Hesquiat Harbour.**

The Pacific Rim National Park and Tofino were next on the agenda. The stratus was just offshore near the airport with the official weather quite poor over the southwest quadrant. I advised the Aeradio operator (who was on the other side of the Island in Nanaimo) that I could see the airport from 10 miles away. We contacted Vancouver Centre and were given a transponder code and radar identified. This kept us aware of most of the traffic, but they did report one at 500 feet, suggesting a float plane scooting along under the crud. Shortly afterward we were over the kayakers dream location of Barkley Sound – a cluster of small islands just right for paddling and out of reach of the huge ocean rollers that have travelled nonstop from Japan.

A few more minutes brought us over Port Renfrew and a change of heading directly east toward

Victoria airport. ATC requested us to descend to 5,500 ft – were we interfering with the Seattle or Vancouver traffic, I wondered. We passed just to the north of Victoria's airport and over the southern Gulf Island to the south point of Saturna Island, then through US airspace to

Point in Washington. After further descent we were turned loose as we passed by White Rock and made a direct approach at home base – Langley.

What a spectacular trip – great scenery, interesting navigation, minor weather challenges. A memorable adventure for a father-son team.

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# Canadian Museum of Flight - 2015 Annual General Meeting

Please be advised the Canadian Museum of Flight 2014 Annual General Meeting will be held:

**Date:** Saturday, April 25, 2015

**Time:** 7:00 p.m.

**Location:** Canadian Museum of Flight Hangar

Please join us for this meeting, to help us achieve a quorum, and to help the CMF transact the tasks required by our Bylaws under the Societies Act, including review and acceptance of financial statements and election of Directors. Note the Bylaws require members be in good standing for 30 days prior to the meeting to be eligible to vote.

Four vacant Director positions will be filled at the AGM. As of April 10, four individuals have agreed to let their names stand for Director positions for the next two years. Our thanks go to each of those folks. Their photos and (highly condensed) biographies are provided below for your consideration. Additional candidates may come forward between now and the meeting, or at the AGM itself.



## **DAVE ARNOLD:**

*Dave is the team co-ordinator and spokesperson for the Fraser Blues, Formation Demonstration Team. He has been flying recreationally as a private pilot out of the airport for twenty-five years. Dave holds a Master's in Social Work and has an extensive background working with the BC government as a social worker, staff trainer and administrator. Dave has been a CMF Director for the past two years, holding the position of Vice-President for the last year.*

*Dave's goals are: to keep the museum open; keep the aircraft flying; develop plans for a New Museum facility.*



## **BRUCE BAKKER:**

*Bruce has lived in Langley since 1983, operating a farm he co-owns with his wife Jana. He has 3 daughters, one of whom earned her pilots license at the age of 17. His interests include ham radio, vintage cars and outdoor activities. His goal as a director would be to break the fact that CMF is Langley's "best kept secret". Bruce has completed his private pilot licence and is now flying.*



## **INDER MATHARU:**

*Inder Matharu has been a member of the Canadian Museum of Flight for over six years and a member of the Board for the last 4 years.*

*During Inder's Board tenure, he has served on various committees, co-chaired the 2013 CMF Auction and Dinner and currently holds the position of Treasurer. His 25 years of experience in finance has served well in understanding the financial position of the museum and holding accountability to the monthly financial reports.*

*During the past 4 years he has been involved and part of the committee for the New Museum, assisted with the 2012 AGM as well as the Jim Byrnes "Blues over the Valley" fundraiser in 2012. Inder was also instrumental in the introduction of the "Mail Chimp" email program that now serves as our primary email newsletter.*

*Inder has been involved in the financial industry in various roles ranging from branch management to regional and project responsibilities. He has also been part of various boards ranging from business plan review boards to community projects and corporate boards. Inder's support team consist of his wife Rubbi, and their 3 children. Currently Inder is the VP of Broker Development and a partner at Bayfield Mortgage Professionals. Inder would be happy to continue to serve as a productive member of the board.*



## **GORD WINTRUP:**

*Gord has been involved for over 51 years in the banking and finance industry and currently is the founding partner of Bayfield Mortgage Professionals with their head office in Langley.*

*Gord has been a member of the Canadian Museum of Flight since 2004 and has served as member of the board since 2006. Gord has held many positions on the CMF board. In prior years he has held the positions of President and Treasurer. During Gord's years he co-chaired the 2013 Auction & Dinner, he holds the position of Chair for the New Building Committee (2012-2015), chaired the 2012 AGM, and was the Chair for the Jim Byrnes "Blues Over The Valley" Fundraiser in 2012.*

*Gord would be honored if elected, and would welcome the opportunity to continue to oversee the completion of a New Museum facility at the Langley Airport.*

## New Building Workshop, a report by the Editor

The sod for our new hangar remains unturned. However, the new building task force, headed by Gord Wintrup, continues to furiously dig away at the mound of regulatory and fiscal challenges associated with a project of this magnitude.

On April 18th, the task force (Gord Wintrup, Richard Bent, Gary Brush, and Kurt Alberts) invited our membership to partake in a workshop. The challenge: what is your vision for the new museum? A pro-active exercise ensued. At the conclusion of this exercise, it was determined that the preservation of our aviation heritage is synchronistic with the fiscal sustainability of the new hangar. While the major purpose of the new hangar is to display and maintain our aircraft and artifacts, the building must be flexible enough to generate the funds to uphold this mission. The discussion then shifted to space allocation for various fund-raising opportunities: the gift shop, special events, trade shows, etc. The layout must also be sensitive to the needs of future partners like the Air Cadets 746 Squadron. This gave rise to other issues like access and parking, but the site is also flexible enough to accommodate those concerns. There was also much discussion about public appeal and perception, future event-venue competition, and shifting demographics.

We would like to thank the hard-working task force for this informative and inspirational session.



### Bling! Bling! Bling! We have a winner!

A diamond may be forever, but the museum would be nowhere without your support. A big thank-you to the sponsors, supporters, and attendees at this year's "Planes, Trains, and Automobiles" Gala..

photo - RD Captured Memories

Ring donated by Key Largo Jewellery. Visit our website for the full gala recap, and please support our valued sponsors.



### Membership Benefits!

• **Partnerships!** Members are entitled to visit, free of charge:

*Flight Museum in Seattle*

*PBY Memorial Foundation, Oak Harbour WA*

*West Coast Rail Museum in Squamish*

*Military Education Centre in Chilliwack*

• **Discounts in the Gift Shop of 15%**

### Volunteers Welcome!

*The Canadian Museum of Flight is always looking for new volunteers. We are always in need of history and aviation enthusiasts of all kinds, for aircraft restoration, gift shop operations, facility maintenance, and many other tasks. No experience is necessary. We invite everyone, from students to retirees, to join the team. If interested, please contact the Museum General Manager, Terry Brunner, at 604-532-0035.*

## TAILWINDS – Bits 'n Pieces Around the Museum (and Beyond)

**DC-10 Entrance Cowling**.....have you ever waltzed through our unique hangar portico and wondered if any of the original 446 DC-10 deliveries are still in service? The last DC-10 passenger flight was with Bangladesh Airlines, February, 2014. One-hundred and seventy-four are still flying for various cargo and fire-suppression companies like Kelowna's Flightcraft.....

**The Conquest of the Air Documentary**.....catch this accidentally funny 1936 production on You Tube .....

**"I'm Lovin' It"**.....you may have heard about the Canadian pilot who treated his passengers to Timmies and hot chocolate during an agonizing weather delay, but how about this? Confronted by a cabin of unfriendly stares, the captain of an obstructed prison transfer flight bought bags of Big Macs and chocolate shakes (but hold the McThuggets?) for his hungry charges. The good captain was their man of the hour, and they were soon on their way....

**Terry's Retirement**.....our GM will be leaving us the end of June. Watch for Terry's au revoir interview in the next issue.....

**Hangar Envy**.....Vector Aerospace, a company that specializes in fixed and rotor-wing maintenance, has started excavating for a 80,000 sq. ft. facility on the north side of the Langley Airport.....

**Miller, Brown, and the Red Baron**.....congratulations to former airport manager, George Miller, upon his induction into the Canadian Aviation Hall of Fame. George joins Arthur Brown, the Canadian RNAS pilot who nailed the Red Baron.....

**Famous Last Words**.... "What's the hurry? Are you afraid I won't come back?" Manfred von Richthofen (The Red Baron) before his fatal encounter with Brown!

## Canadian Museum of Flight Upcoming Events for 2015

|              |  |
|--------------|--|
| April 25     | Canadian Museum of Flight Annual General Meeting |
| April 26     | St. George's Day with LAMB in Fort Langley       |
| June 20      | CMF Display at the Legion                        |
| July 25      | Boundary Bay Airshow                             |
| July 26      | North Fraser Airshow, Pitt Meadows               |
| Aug. 7/8/9   | Abbotsford Airshow                               |
| September 20 | Battle of Britain Day                            |

*Please note these dates are subject to change, so we suggest you check with the Museum for the latest information.*

For more information on Canadian Museum of Flight collections and events, please visit our website at [www.canadianflight.org](http://www.canadianflight.org) and the Museum Facebook page "[Canadian Museum of Flight](#)".

**Please consider supporting our work.  
Join us as a Member, volunteer, or make a financial contribution.**

**Yes, I want to support the Canadian Museum of Flight!**



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### OPTION 1: A ONE-TIME GIFT

Donation amount: \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
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 Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

I understand I can cancel my monthly contributions at any time by contacting the Museum at 604-532-0035.