

FROM THE ARCHIVES

It all started with pair of De Havilland Moths.....



photos courtesy of CAPA, Canadian Aeronautical Preservation Association

From the archives May 1981 written by Hugh Matheson.

FOUNDING MEETING IN 1915

Among those who attended the founding meeting (1915) were J.W. Patterson, who served faithfully as secretary, J.J. Senkler, K.C. W.W. Burns, Judge Schultz, and H.O. Bell-Irving, senior.

AEROCLUB PLAYED A PART IN THE BIRTH OF YVR

(from article in Vancouver Sun July 18, 1981) "MacLaren and the Aero club of BC spearheaded the psychological assault on city council." to get an airport for Vancouver. Finally the city council decided to spend \$300,000 to construct an airport at Sea Island. This was in **1929**. MacLaren and club members got farmers to agree to sell their land for \$150 per acre and conducted such an excellent publicity campaign that the airport bylaw passed with a large majority

"If you build a mile of road you have a mile of road; if you build a mile of runway you have a gateway to the world."

EARLY DAYS

In the early 1920's Royal flying Corps and the Royal Air Force veterans met socially from time to time in the Vancouver area, but attempts to form a permanent organization did not crystallize until April 1, 1924, when the Air Force Club of B.C. was formed with Major A.D. Bell-Irving as president. Members of the club got in little flying time as the club did not own an airplane. The club was reorganized in December 1927, as the Aero Club of British Columbia (Vancouver Branch). Although many changes in the club's constitution have been made in the intervening years, the club as maintained a continuous existence since 1927.

In the files of the club we have the original and actual 1927 constitution with its declaration of by-laws, "Filed and registered the 3rd day of December, 1927, H.G. Garrett, Registrar of Companies" (The document's signatures include Donald R. MacLaren, aviator, one of Canada great war aces having shot down 54 aircraft, 48 of which were airplanes, during world war one.)

Perhaps, then its was not mere coincidence that the Aero Club of BC has continued to exist as an entity since 1927. The objects of the club were to bring together "**..persons of either sex who are interested in aviation...**" The use of "either sex" undoubtedly reflected the fame of Katherine and Marjorie Stinson, Amelia Earheart, Jacqueline Cochran, and others. The club was granted the right to "*properly provide, equip, maintain, own and control aerodromes, landing grounds, air ports, seaplane bases, hangars, workshops, aeronautical schools, club houses, libraries, and all things necessary and conducive to carrying the objectives of the club*". The bylaws went on to say that "active members" would be entitled to rent aircraft from the club. The bylaws went on to say that "active members" included those who were receiving instruction towards obtaining their private pilot's license and "those qualified to hire aircraft provided by the club"

Following the clubs formation in 1927, the club received a De Havilland moth from the department of national defense on the understanding that the club would provide a surety bond for \$10,000. The bond was guaranteed by general J.W. Stewart and H.O. Bell-Irving. At this time, the club also acquired another DH moth. These two aircraft, G-CAKH and G- CAKK , of wood and fabric construction were in constant use until 1930 when they were replaced two fleet biplanes of metal construction and fabric covered. They were powered by Kinner radial engines. At about the same time as the Moths were acquired, the club had obtained two Eagle rock biplanes. The fleet airplanes and two or three other fleets subsequently added to the club's stable of aircraft and had an active

career over the next decade. They proved to be very sturdy and were considered ideal training airplanes.

- from 1981 newsletter by Hugh Matheson

