

PRESIDENT'S MUSINGS MAY 2016

My friends and I spent ANZAC day at Foster in Gippsland. As in previous years HMAS CERBERUS provided personnel to assist in both the march and the service. Well done Navy!!!

Last year the march was lead by a Light Horse re enactment group, and this year an armoured vehicle led the parade which created much enthusiasm amongst the locals. I hope your ANZAC day was as enjoyable and memorable as ours was enjoying the hospitality of the folk from Foster.

We invited the Shiplovers Society of Victoria to join us at our meeting on May 23rd and we received a good response. Pat Majewski from the Ship Modelling society of Victoria was our Speaker. Pat is ex-RAN and had prepared an illustrated address on Her Majesty's Colonial Steam Sloop Victoria and his audience showed a lot of interest in what he had to say. He showed us the partly completed model of the ship and whilst it was only the hull, it had lovely lines. Our own Peter Williams provided the original drawings to the Modelling Society from his extensive archives.



Our June and July meetings are a good excuse to turn up the heaters and enjoy not only Rodney's suppers, but the excellent Naval Video Time Capsules-episodes of the Royal Navy which have been provided to us by our friend David McFall of the 'Maritime Model Museum' in Sydney. These Videos have been compiled from the archive film of the Imperial War Museum in London, by Roland R Smith. They are excellent viewing! In June we have part 8 of the series entitled 'The Great Armada-Operation Torch'. Torch was the code name for the allied assault on North Africa which took place in November of 1942. The Armada consisted of some 350 merchantmen and 170 war ships, which in reality was a prelude to the 'D' day landings of 1944.

Frank and Margaret Cronin's grand son Patrick Cronin died in tragic circumstances last month. We extend our heartfelt sympathy to the Cronin family.

REX'S ODYSSEY-PART 6 (Colindale -August 2015)

The RAF Museum is at Hendon in London and if you go by rail to the Colindale tube station, I recommend you then take the short bus trip to the old Hendon Aerodrome. I elected to walk, which was definitely a mistake. The Museum opened in 1972 and over the years has developed into a huge complex consisting of 5 exhibition halls: Milestones of Flight, The Bomber Hall, Historic Hangers, The Battle of Britain Hall and the Grahame-White factory. Most of the pictures we feature for you were taken of WWI and pre war planes. Naturally I took many more but I have long had a particular fascination for planes of this period.

You enter through the Milestones of Flight Hall. I was tempted to try out the Simulator there and experienced a flight with the Red Arrows which was indeed fun. This Exhibition Hall features many different and unique aircraft including foreign planes. It traces the history of aviation from early days up to the sleek Euro fighter of today.

The Bomber Hall follows the development of the bomber from World War I, WWII, the Cold War until the highly sophisticated precision machines of today. Of particular interest to me were the WWII era Avro Lancaster, the Boeing B-17G Flying Fortress, The B-24L Liberator, the Heinkel He 162A-2, and the Royal aircraft Factory B.E.2B and F.E.2B from WWI.

Historic Hangers featured a variety of planes, including the Beaufighter TF.X, the Beaufort, BAC Lightning F.6, the Kittyhawk IV, the Vampire F.3, Canberra PR.3, Meteor F.8., Lockheed Hudson IIIA, Messerschmitt Me262, Phantom FGR.2, and Supermarines Southampton, Spitfire F.24, Spitfire Vb, and Stranraer.

The Battle of Britain Hall was of course a highlight. All the aircraft you would expect to be featured were well displayed. Also featured were a VI Flying Bomb, a V-2 Rocket and a Westland Lysander III. Excellent interactive displays give you insight into the minds and actions of those on both sides who experienced the battle at first hand. Refurbished to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the Battle, this memorial to the 'Few' is a must for those of us of British heritage to visit, whilst in London. Jenny and I first visited it in 1981 and were very impressed. It is even better today!

The Grahame-White Factory and Watch-Office opened in December 2014 with London's first new permanent exhibition for a decade, 'The First World War in the Air'. The exhibition follows the progress of the Royal Flying Corps from 1914. Then it numbered just 1,500 people. By 1918, when the Royal Air Force was created, this had grown to more than 205,000. The exhibition tells a wonderful story through their superb collection of WWI aircraft, and personal artefacts, including medals, letters, uniforms and displays which bring both moving and inspiring stories to life.

YOURS AYE!!

REX WILLIAMS