

Summer's Fun



The Roaring 40s Harvards are in action almost every week during Summer, either 'on the job' at airshows around the country, or practicing at their home base of Ardmore.

BACK IN November there was little on the NZ Warbirds Calendar. How things can change.

Following on from the very successful Mosquito First Flight Display in September, NZ Warbirds ran a twice yearly Open Day on Sunday 9th December with the continuing theme of remembering Pearl Harbour, the surprise attack which brought the USA into the fray of WWII. On these days Warbirds provides up to three one hour flying displays during the day, a formula which enables the airfield to function (almost) normally and enables Warbirds to display its unique aircraft in a relaxed atmosphere. It is an opportunity for the Association to promote itself and

provide visitors with a day of entertainment at a budget price.

January 19-20 being Wellington Anniversary Weekend, saw the Wings Over Wairarapa Airshow in Masterton. Two years previously the Weather God had been most disgruntled for this event and a weather bomb saw the Sunday show cancelled, a disappointment for the audience and participants and a disaster for the promoters. For this year's show the organisers went all out and produced a stunner. Pride of the show was the Mosquito on its last outing before being shipped to the USA. This unique aircraft was supported an incredible collection of other types. de Havilland was represented

by numerous types from the Gypsy Moth to the Venom. There were some memorable formations of the Mosquito with Vampires and Venom and Mosquito with two Spitfires and Mustang. That's five Merlins in formation - a wonderful sound. There were six WWII fighters and a number of The Vintage Aviator Limited's WWI collection. The highlight for many was the six aircraft Jet Formation. This was led by John Lanham and comprised three L-39 Albatros', two Vampires and a Strikemaster (see Kiwiflyer Issue 26 for a background on this formation). Overall, a successful and entertaining weekend.

Come mid-February and it was Art Deco Weekend. The Roaring 40s Team have displayed at Napier in support of this weekend for the past eight years. It is always a relaxing weekend with lots of '30s' action. The vintage cars are my favourite and if this period of history rings your bell then you have to make it at least once. There are thoughts of a more organised air display in support of the event next year, so watch this space.

For a local day out, the Whenuapai Aviation Sports Club invited Warbirds to their facilities for a lunchtime BBQ on Saturday 2nd March. This saw a number of aircraft, including the Harvards, a pair of Yak 52s from Pauanui, T-28 Trojan, L-39 Albatross, and MX-2 (not a Warbird but...) make the short trek across the city and take advantage of the opportunity to fly a display practice over the field. I hear the 'snags' were pretty good too. Thanks to the Whenuapai folk for their invitation.

The following day, March 3rd, was the Ardmore Showdown. This is really a 'Petrol Heads' day with burnouts and drags by a variety of hot machinery. Warbirds provides a limited display "to add a little sobriety to the mayhem". For this event the Harvard Team were once more in action



For many, the highlight of this year's airshow season has been the de Havilland Mosquito.



The fun isn't limited to warbirds. High performance aerobatic displays feature at most airshows.



Wings Over Wairarapa this year saw the first formation display by six warbird jets.

alongside displays by the Spitfire, two Yak 52's, Strikemaster and an aerobatic display by Wayne Ormrod in the Extra 300. Once again another successful day for the Warbirds Team.

On this same weekend the Tiger Moth Club held a fly in and AGM at Opotiki with over 10 aircraft and 20+ people in attendance. As with the rest of summer this year the Weather God was in good humour and a successful weekend was enjoyed by all.

As I write this, thoughts are on the Classic Fighters Airshow at Omaka which is happening over Easter. This is another 'major' for the Association with participation planned for the Harvard Team,

the Fighters (Spitfire, Mustang and Kittyhawk), Strikemaster plus a number of other classics from the hangar. This Airshow by its title features the Classic aircraft of the 1930s and Fighter Aircraft of WWI and WWII - and the organisers are promising a couple of surprises. I can't say much as this magazine goes to print but one of them has a big round engine!! I'm looking forward to this show.

The final planned event for the year will be another NZ Warbirds Open day on 2nd June themed on 'Remembering D-Day', 6th June 1943 when the Allies started the invasion of Nazi Occupied Europe, one of the pivotal actions of WWII.

All of the above activity requires a lot of support and while the frontline folk, that is the pilots, are highly visible I wish to endorse the NZ Warbirds Volunteers who do all the planning and groundwork to ensure these events are successful. Thank You folks.

Regards, Frankly@xtra.co.nz

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