

AVIATION HISTORY & TAPE-RECORDING

by

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During the Second World War when I was in my native country I kept a special diary of the War in the Air, and the events were written down daily. It was all that could be done to preserve the daily occurrences, and exciting aeronautical events in the Netherlands.

But that is only one tool in the preservation of certain developments in the world of aviation. I often thought, "What a pity that the roaring sound of a Ju 88 and the whining notes of a Rolls-Royce are lost for ever. What a pity that we are unable to hear again the explosions of shells from Ack-Ack, and the thundering screams of diving Typhoons."

Now we are living in a different world with typewriters, cameras and tape-recorders. Most serious students of aviation write their own chapter in the historical pages of New Zealand's aviation by means of pen and camera, completed by a lot of painstaking research and visits.

I do not know if any people in NZ use tape-recorders for building up an aeronautical library of sounds and conversations. Two years ago some long-playing records were produced with the sounds of railways and of old and new cars. Most of them had been put down on tape and then converted to LP records. I often thought that it might be possible to catch the sounds of different aircraft on the ground and in the air; couldn't we preserve the sounds of wartime types such as the Spitfire, Lancaster, etc? Would it be possible to catch the sounds of a New Zealand Tiger Moth, or Avenger, or a Harvard? I thought a lot about this before I had even heard of the railway and car records.

How can we tell how a Tiger Moth sounded in the air and on the ground? How will the situation be for future generations if you tell them about that old workhorse, the purring Tiger? Articles and pictures convey a wealth of meaning, but to a certain extent it is dead material. Now let us hear the sounds of a real-life performance and an all-round impression and atmosphere is created. Many variations are possible with this basic theme.

Conversations concerning important topics could also be preserved on tape, and the voices of many different aviation personalities could be heard again and again. Think, for instance, back to the last Ohakea Display; of the Vampires, and of the American Super Sabres which crashed through the sonic barrier with thundering roars and booms!

What I am driving at is simply this: Let us use all the modern technical

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inventions and improvements which are available to us, especially magnetic tape. I have been experimenting a little with tape-recorders, and I am wondering if any other members have had experience with them too, or are interested. It might be that members can put forth much better suggestions for practical improvements in this field.

I would like to invite any person interested in this fascinating subject to get in touch with me at P. O. Box 5190, Wellington, New Zealand. Maybe we can work out this business between us. At all events, your opinions would be welcome.