

Cole Palen's OLD RHINEBECK AERODROME



- Looking for something fun to do with the whole family?
- Need a unique and interesting place to take a date?
- Do you feel the need to go out by yourself for a few hours to escape the fast-paced world that we live in today?

Visit Cole Palen's Old Rhinebeck Aerodrome this Summer!

The Aerodrome is a "living museum" of vintage aircraft and antique vehicles dating from 1900-1940. Visiting provides the opportunity to step back in time to enjoy the sights, sounds and smells of a bygone era. You will see: 50+ historic, vintage aircraft including one of the oldest flying planes in the world, and 40+ antique automobiles and motorcycles. Thrilling weekend air shows feature barnstorming acts, "dogfighting" WWI aircraft, and our Sunday shows include exciting pyrotechnics.

Scenic Hudson Valley Air-Tour Biplane rides are also available!

Museum - open daily (10am - 5pm): May 18 - Oct. 20

Air Shows - Every Saturday and Sunday (2pm - 4pm): June 8 - Oct. 13

Special events throughout the summer - Food/picnic grounds on site

Located just 10 minutes from the Kingston /Rhinecliff Bridge

Visit www.olderhinebeck.org or call (845)752-3200 for more info.

Spring... Not the only thing in the air at the Old Rhinebeck Aerodrome

By Tom Polapink

Pleasant weather has finally arrived in the Hudson Valley, and with "spring in the air" comes the return of air show season to the Old Rhinebeck Aerodrome. For over half a century, and a full 20 years since the passing of its legendary founder, Cole Palen, the Aerodrome will continue to bring back the sights, sounds and smells of the early years of aviation with its internationally famous and unique collection of vintage aircraft, dating from 1900 through 1940.

This "living museum" of machines of a bygone era is well worth visiting, even if only to view the hardware in the collection; but the Aerodrome is so much more than a collection of

old aeroplanes and automobiles. It is a place where history is not only remembered, celebrated, and recreated, but it is also a place where history has been made, and continues to be made, and its impact has been felt around the world.

The story of Cole Palen starting the Aerodrome collection in 1951 upon acquiring six WWI era aircraft from a closing air museum at Roosevelt Field is familiar to many. The Long Island airfield and museum were shut down to make way for the Roosevelt Field shopping center. Over the years he faced his share of struggles and hardships along the way, but his passion, and perseverance resulted in basically the collection that we see at Old

Rhinebeck today. Cole's infectious enthusiasm and supportive encouragement was also a major key to the success of Old Rhinebeck in that he inspired people to get involved and help. Every piece of the collection has its own unique history and its own stories to tell. All of these stories stem from people... the people who flew, drove, restored, built, worked on, previously owned, donated, or even just went for a ride in one of the aeroplanes or early automobiles at the Aerodrome.

Expanding on this, the ability of the collection of vintage aeroplanes and early autos to draw people to the aerodrome has helped to fill both children's and adult's dreams of aviation and

inspire people for over five decades now. Over the years, more than just a few of the many Aerodrome visitors who looked up to the sky to see an original 1917 Curtiss JN-4H "Jenny" flying overhead became inspired to volunteer and work at the Aerodrome. Others went on to pursue careers in the field of aviation outside of the Aerodrome, or build, restore and fly vintage aircraft of their own.

One of the best known figures in the early aviation world today, Kermit Weeks, was one such "young type" as Cole liked to call them. Today Kermit is owner of one the largest private collections of vintage aircraft in the world. His museum is called Fantasy of Flight, and it is located in Polk City, FL.

"When I was thirteen years old, I worked for my grandparents in Connecticut over the summer of 1967 and got a chance to go visit Old Rhinebeck Aerodrome. In anticipation of my visit, I sent a letter to Cole Palen to let him know I was coming

and that, if there was any chance, I would love to get up close to inspect and take pictures of the planes. He responded with a postcard with the Fokker Triplane on the front. I still have it! We arrived early and Cole let me hang out behind the ropes while they got the airplanes ready for the Sunday show."

"I think there are a number of us out there that would agree that Cole and the show at Old Rhinebeck Aerodrome had a big influence on us kids! One day, as Fantasy of Flight builds out and we are able to fly more airplane-type shows, I hope to dedicate our WWI Show to Cole and continue the legacy!"

Rebecca Fleming-Petridis, a 737 First Officer for Alaska Airlines was also bitten by the "aeromania" bug at Old Rhinebeck. "My dad worked for TWA in a variety of customer service positions so I was around aviation most of my life. I visited Old Rhinebeck Aerodrome with a friend when I was 16. One of the

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air show pilots was standing by his vintage airplane and spent some time with us explaining his love of flying and aviation history. My visit to Old Rhinebeck Aerodrome was a major inspiration to get my pilot's license and started me on my way to a flying career."

Over the years the Aerodrome has also served as the setting that has helped to spark romance. Just ask Jim and Mary Hare who met at Old Rhinebeck in 1982. Now 31 years later, they are happily married with four kids. Mary played the role of "Mademoiselle Fifi" in the Aerodrome's "melodrama" ground shows at the time. As it turned out, Kathleen Higgins (the Aerodrome's "Trudy Truelove") was the maid of honor at Jim and Mary's wedding. Jim is one of the Aerodrome's air show announcers and he has been actively involved there since he first volunteered.

John and Janet Nenadic of Camas, WA also met while working at Old Rhinebeck, as did Brian and Jenny Coughlin, of Cazenovia. Both couples have two kids, and John, Janet, Jenny and Brian are all pilots. Gwen and Parker Ackley of Fairfield, CT went on their first date at Old Rhinebeck and ended up volunteering there for 20 years together. Bob and Denise Tator were one of at least a few couples who were married in the Aerodrome's 1929 New Standard rides plane while circling above the scenic Hudson Valley!

Most recently Marius Ivascu and Heather Howley (who also visited the Aerodrome on their first date) were married and held their reception in the museum's "History of Flight" building in March. The event made the local news as Heather piloted a helicopter over the Aerodrome and Marius jumped out with his parachute to greet the wedding party and guests!

The Aerodrome is truly a special place where magical things happen... This summer bring your family, a date, or just go yourself to see what it is all about and realize how lucky we are to have this unique facility in our own back yard. Who knows?



Marius Ivascu and Heather Howley were married at the Aerodrome.

Maybe your children or maybe even you will be inspired to learn more about aviation once you get a first-hand glimpse of what the early days of flying were like.

Aeroplanes, Spring, and even love is in the air... and you can be too if you decide to go for a ride in the Aerodrome's 1929 New Standard biplane this year!

The Rhinebeck Aerodrome Museum is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization and memberships are available starting at \$25. Donations are tax deductible and very much appreciated. For more information contact call 845-752-3200, email info@oldrhinebeck.org or visit www.oldrhinebeck.org.