

FLY BY

**September 2026 NEWSLETTER of the PALMERSTON NORTH BRANCH
NEW ZEALAND DIVISION ROYAL AERONAUTICAL SOCIETY**

The World Travelling Photographer, our very own Barry Heir showed us some of his beautiful photographs of aircraft in the Shuttleworth Collection at Biggleswade near London. This collection was begun in the 1930s and is dedicated to keeping its aircraft in flying condition. The collection extends through generations of aircraft from the 1912 Blackburn Monoplane, to WW2 examples of Sea Hurricane and Spitfire.



Barry visited the French walled village of Le Quesnoy that has a NZ association; it was liberated a week before the end of WW1 by the New Zealand Division who scaled the walls with a ladder. The village has a museum dedicated to the incident and many streets and businesses bear names with New Zealand heritage.



On the subject of Shuttleworth, members may be aware of the crash of the DH88 Comet "Grosvenor House" at an event this last month. This very tricky aircraft appeared to bounce on landing and tipped on to its back. I have the Pilot's notes for this aircraft and it states that, at the stall, the Comet will drop either wing without warning, so it is always wheeled on. The big hump in the middle of the Biggleswade runway almost always causes it to float because at that speed it is still trying to fly.

The airframe is shattered behind the cockpit, but it's like a big model; all wood, so is readily repairable and Shuttleworth have already stated it will be fully repaired, and the opportunity will be taken to overhaul it at the same time.



In better news, I see the following on media:

After years without production, the iconic Canadair 515 amphibious aircraft is officially returning to assembly lines in Canada, marking an important step for modern aerial firefighting capabilities. Developed by De Havilland Canada, the updated DHC-515 builds on the trusted CL-415 design while introducing improved avionics, enhanced operational systems, and greater efficiency for demanding wildfire response missions. Designed to scoop thousands of liters of water directly from nearby lakes or coastal waters, the aircraft can quickly return to affected areas with minimal turnaround time.

Production resumed following strong interest from several international customers seeking to modernize their aerial firefighting fleets as wildfire seasons become more challenging worldwide. The first aircraft are progressing through assembly, with deliveries expected in the coming years. The Canadair 515 represents a renewed commitment to specialized firefighting aviation, offering emergency services an advanced platform designed to support faster, more effective wildfire containment efforts while helping protect communities, forests, and critical infrastructure.

This mighty type is the most successful purpose designed forest fire fighting type, where all others are modified from other purposes, including ex RNZAF C130Hs. The 515's ability to scoop water from nearby lakes while on the wing means its turnaround times are the shortest, so its ability to spread water on large areas is unmatched. A truly great aircraft design!

October BRANCH MEETING

Tuesday 8th September at 7.00PM

Massey University School of Aviation

Airport Drive, Palmerston North

Our speaker for the September Branch Meeting is Squadron Leader Hayden Sheard, his subject will be the "Formation of the NZ Defence Aviation Authority".

SL Sheard has been an Instructor with the RNZAF and has been involved with the Display Flight of the RNZAF.

We look forward to seeing you at the meeting and sharing a cup afterward

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Canadair Type 515