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Historic aircraft to fly at Open Day

Several planes with ties to the Te Anau Basin will be flying in the air display at the Te Anau Airport at Manapouri Open Day on Saturday April 19.

A Dominie ZK-AKY which operated from the airport for several years in the 1960s will be part of the air show. The De Havilland Rapide, more commonly known as the Dominie, is owned and operated by the Croydon Aviation Heritage Trust at Mandeville.

This aircraft was built in 1943 and flew for the NAC on southern provincial routes until being purchased by Ian Ritchie, of Ritchies Air, in Te Anau. The Dominie flew mainly into Milford Sound and supply dropping trips in Fiordland. Later this aircraft was also flown by Sir Tim Wallis who will be attending the open day.

Mr Ritchie said he and his late wife flew the plane with its first passengers from the Te Anau Airfield on Labour Weekend, October 1960.

“We operated from this airfield for many years, well into the late 1960s.”

The Croydon Aviation Heritage Trust is also providing a Tiger Moth and the De Havilland Dragonfly.

Te Anau pilot Rod Hall-Jones will be flying his 1932 Spartan three Seater II c/n 102 at the display.

Twenty-five of the three-seater planes were built in the 1930s but only seven were built with the more powerful engine, of which c/n 102 is the only survivor.

The aircraft's owner, R.A. Clark, put the Spartan into storage in 1939 and there it remained until moved to southern England in 1992 where it was subsequently shipped to New Zealand and restored in by Southair Ltd at Taieri Airport, Dunedin, for Mr Hall-Jones.

Te Anau pilot Bill Black will be flying his gyrocopter and there will be a range of helicopter and fixed wing displays by local operators.

The air display finale will be flown by well-known Wanaka pilot Robert Broock in a North American P51 Mustang.

After the show, the Mustang is also available to take customers up for a thrill of a life time.

The Open Day starts at 12pm at the airport, with the official opening at 12.30pm and the air display after that.

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