

# *WINDSOCK*

The newsletter of  
Dargaville Aero Club



Christmas 2012

## Tauranga - and back

**Stephen Jeffery**

School holidays, relatives in Tauranga, a brother visiting Mount Maunganui for work and fine weather..... with all these things coming together I just had to make a flight to Tauranga. Even she-who-must-be-obeyed had to agree that it almost seemed logical!

*Stephen and TTX in Tauranga*



*Photo supplied by Stephen Jeffery*

I advised an 8.00 am Saturday departure and 9.45 arrival to all who needed to know and set out for the airfield on Friday afternoon for a catch up with Murray and a check of the Texan. Murray and I fixed a flat tyre while Logan, my 11 year old, cleaned a few kilos of dried limestone slurry from the inside of the spats - you've got to earn your flying somehow!

Saturday dawned to frost and fog.... Out to the airfield anyway for a look. Patches of blue sky visible every now and then, but less than 500 m visibility kept us firmly on the ground until 11.00. Take off and climb to 2000' cruise on a now cloudless day with a 10 knot southwesterly. Took a more-or-less direct track to Tauranga over the Hauraki Gulf Islands which were very picturesque on a sparkling blue sea. Entry to Tauranga was very straightforward – Matakana one arrival took us down the coast with a right turn to final for grass 25. Taxi to the aero club and a quick bite to eat before taking the mother in law for a scenic within

the zone. The controllers were very accommodating, clearing a right turn on takeoff from 25 to the Mount, then down the coast to Papamoa. Great overview of the new \$455M 23km East Link road currently under construction between Bay Park and Paengaroa. Be great to see similar sights within Northland one day.....

Back to the aerodrome and then a repeat flight for my second passenger. I made a short visit to the tower to catch up with the controllers and discuss their work. They are an amazing bunch who manage to fit weight shift microlights, aerobatics, gliders and tugs, gyrocopters, jet warbirds and even TTX in and around commercial passenger aircraft. I thoroughly recommend a visit if you ever get the opportunity.

The good people at Tauranga Aero Club were busy setting up their clubrooms for their 80th anniversary celebrations – congratulations Tauranga! We picketed TTX out front for the night and set off for

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Papamoa, seen from TTX



*Photo supplied by Stephen Jeffery*

accommodation and food. Back the next frosty morning with my brother in bright sunshine, fuel up, sweep the ice off the wings (a new experience for me!) then down the coast to Maketu before setting off 32 miles overwater to White Island.

Quite a bit of volcanic activity showing as a long steamy plume drifting off downwind. Spectacular views of the entire Bay of Plenty wrapping around 200 degrees from East Cape to Coromandel. Soon descending on approach to the island and down beneath the plume. A strong smell of sulphur on the downwind side, so we stayed upwind after that! A more rugged environment it is hard to imagine. 15 minutes of photos and it was time to head for land – 32 miles of water looks a long way.....

Closer to shore and with all running well we made a short side trip to look at the continuing Rena salvage work. All the containers from the bow section are gone with only the difficult submerged ones in the stern section left.

Back to Maketu and a look at the PSA devastated Kiwifruit orchards around Te Puke before a return to Tauranga. Logan decided to stay on with his Grandparents and return by bus later, so I set out alone for Dargaville. A moderate southerly saw GPS ground speeds up to 130 kt so back on the ground in quick time.

A great trip to a great area in a great aeroplane!

*White Island, seen from TTX*



*Photo supplied by Stephen Jeffery*

## Raglan Black Sands

**An adventure by Rusty Russell**

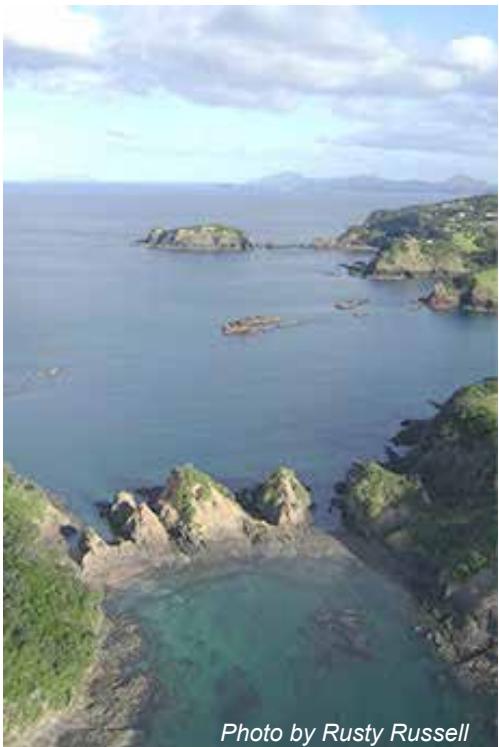
The urge to do some longer trips is getting stronger, and the sign on the notice board got me excited. Raglan and the beach landings etc sounded like fun! This isn't a long trip for most flyers, but for me it was a challenge.

An email to Oskar and Leo (the only other gyro owners in the north that I know of) to see if they were going down. Yes, cool! I was going anyway but the thought of flying with other gyros was exciting.

My idea was to fly down to Parakai, meet up with the other boys, then scoot off down the west coast, stay the night, then back up the east coast. It had been some time since I had the map out, let alone done the full trip planning, true track, heading, magnetic deviation, time, fuel burn per leg, etc., so a mate Andrew Boyd helped me brush up my skills! It's true, if you don't use it, ya lose it!

My GPS that I bought off TradeMe turned out to be a bloody lemon. Sometimes

I think I must have MUG written on my forehead!!! Planning the fuel was my biggest conundrum.



*Photo by Rusty Russell*

It didn't make sense to cart too much weight around the country, as gyro's aren't known for their load carrying abilities. The promoters said there would be some obliging locals willing to drive you from the strip at Raglan to the local garage for mogas about 2 miles across the river. Jerry cans were available at a price? Where? How? Who? How much? I hate relying on others so this was my plan. Leave Whangarei with full tank plus one 20-litre container and one empty, tip that into the tank at Parakai, arrive at Raglan with 40Ltrs leaving 30 litres for local flying. I would require 40

more litres to get home, so relying on a local fuel run would be a must (or a taxi.. or....naa forget walking).

Being an open air machine, and only having one available hand, opening maps, checking AIPs etc. is more than a tad difficult, let alone changing radio frequencies, so notes on my knee pad, written large enough that I could see without my reading glasses, had to do. A small over-night bag in the boot and we were just on the weight limit!

The weather gods smiled and 0730 saw me airborne, settled in, and just felt so privileged to be doing this - and in such perfect conditions, crisp, clear and calm.

Met up with the boys at Parakai, transferred fuel and away we all went. We hit the coast near Muriwai, minimum height over the rugged dramatic cliffs, through the transit lane, over the Manukau harbour entrance and away!

My dream of flying together was not what I thought it would be. Our game plan was to keep about half a mile apart, so one could enjoy the scenery and not have to keep a constant watch on proximity. The reality was I couldn't see



*Photo by Rusty Russell*

the others well at all. Oh well, safe is preferable!

Just before Port Waikato, Drew passed us in WTF. Made us look like we were standing still. It did look good though, glistening white in the morning sun, serene, aloof - and fast!

I got down quite low to ride the wind as it blew in from the Tasman and up the coastal cliffs, sitting on 90 mph at 4500 revs. How fun was this? Felt like a kid again, not unlike sailing with my Dad, planing under spinnaker in our first yacht down huge swells in a brisk wind. Exhilarating!

We were on the chat channel while Leo monitored 119.1 on his dual setup. I must say, this gave a new dimension to flying as it's not the most vocal of sports. Being able to pass comment about various points of interest made it that much more enjoyable!

"Best get some altitude along here and keep your eyes peeled for Paragliders" said Oskar. Thanks, never struck 'em before and I reckon it would completely bugger your day to get one tangled in your spinny bits!

About 15 miles out we all went back to 119.1 and climbed to joining altitude, and on the radio was a constant stream of chatter as pilots did their stuff during the approaches. We came in single file, by the book, and were amused at the approaches of some. Not what I expected. Some were down wind, wide down-wind. Like 10 miles wide down-wind? Could hear him but not see him, but good airmanship prevailed and by the end of the day there were about 200 planes of all shapes and sizes and also a handful of gyros, or is it a gaggle of gyros? Maybe a clatter of gyros?

Registered and had a cuppa and met up with Dennis, who had brought JES down from Dargaville, the little Storch. She

**TTX, the club's Texan Top Class, departing Raglan**



Photo by Dave Evans

looked small and fragile beside some. Good to see a friendly face among the crowd. He was staying the night with his daughter who was there to greet him. Aha, he needed fuel. I had two cans, so we did a trade. He filled JES, then filled my containers for me. What a relief that was, as I saw no sign of the promised volunteers and I didn't want spend all day messing about refuelling. Fantastic! Friends are important! Thanks I owe you one dude! Graham W and his wife were there as were lots of the Dargaville lunch regulars!

After lunch, a talk on beach landings, a little briefing and those that felt the urge took to the skies and headed north to Gibson's beach, about 8 miles north. The tide was right out and a wide area

of hard sand was available. When I got there about two dozen planes were lined up, looking very small from the air, like flotsam, driftwood, washed up. A conservative approach, a gentle landing with little roll, and that was that - cool as. Lined up on the sparkly black sand with other adventurous souls.

We were encouraged to collect mussels from the rocks and to do circuits off the beach which I did and enjoyed. I followed a fixed wing around, an extraordinary looking thing that had huge diameter balloon tyres. It would have floated had the tide come in! I likened it to my old boat, ugly but practical - paddock landings its speciality, I'm picking!

A short hop back to Raglan, parking in a roped off area for rotary craft, watching a constant stream of planes taking off and landing. the cross-wind tumbling over the sandhills and trees making for some wobbly approaches and more than a few go-arounds! Tony Unwin arrived in a machine like mine, a sports copter (gyro) and a Dominator flew in.

The gyro boys were taking lots of spectators for rides. Mitch and his Dominator were particularly busy! That is some powerful machine! I did a flight around and over the mountainous ex-volcano just to the south. What an impressive sight, steep cliffs, ravines, bush-covered sides, clematis flowers bunched contrasting with the dark natives. The 25-knot westerly winds pumping in made it fun on the windward side and scary on the leeward side, and foggy near the top. Windmills on the



*Photo by Rusty Russell*



**Bruce Coulter's Piper Super Cub,  
aka "The extraordinary looking thing with huge balloon tyres"**



*Photo by Dave Evans*

distant hills turning so slowly, awkwardly so - a fun, challenging circumnavigation.

The Parakai boys headed off about 6pm so I just wandered around town, doing what I enjoy: people watching, eating and

having a few beers. It's a different place, a beautiful harbour, seemed prosperous, clean and fresh, friendly.

The clouds were forming and wind picking up. Bugger.

*Gibson's beach*



*Photo by Rusty Russell*

Walked to the beach for a last look at the weather before dark.

My plan to kip in the bunk house went as planned. Grab any bunk the man said.

Not sure why, but I thought there would be blankets, but no - a thin mattress and an even thinner pillow. Bugger. Motel? Naa, back to the gyro, slipped into my flying suit and that was me – larva-like but ok. I swear it must have been the finals of the national snoring competition - 8 bunks all going hard! Reminded me or my army days, barrack days – ahh, memories.

During the night, the forecasted front seemed to have arrived early. Above the snoring, the wind howled around the bunkhouse, whistling in the trees as do the halyards on the mast in a blow.

The worms got into my head, you know the ones - will I be able to get home tomorrow? What may go wrong? What options are there? My first trip away turning ugly? Should I have left with the others? Possibilities? Consequences? Money? How much shit will I be in if I don't make it home tomorrow? Jeez, big job on Monday I just have to get back. Will I be strong enough to make the right

choices? A crap night all in all and a stinking sinus to top it off!

Dawn took forever to arrive, and the snoring finally stopped. Outside the morning was so-so but not as bad as I had imagined during the night. The wind had dropped a bit, the sky was fully overcast but about 2000 ft.. Had a coffee and cereal in the camp kitchen and decided to do a runner. Just in case the frond had speeded up.

A pre-flight, a tank top-up, others were also taking off. Ok, let's do it.

North to Hunua, past Ardmore, Howick, East Coast bays, through the east coast transit lane under 1000ft. Pre-set the radio channels to make it easy. An option to refuel at North Shore wasn't necessary, an uneventful trip to Whangarei under a heavy sky. Once the nose was headed north, it was all over really.

As it turned out I still had plenty of fuel left. Nice to know that the planning was useful and accurate.

Arrived home happy but buggered, and keen to travel further afield when finances permit.

Balla da Platta is a fun machine. Love being outside in the elements. Love gyros. Love flying.



# The DAC DFC \*

**Bill Lambeth**

Few would guess that spry Bill Lambeth, the club's resident photographer, is in his 83rd year.

Bill decided to join the Royal New Zealand Air Force in 1948, completing an Instrument Course at Hobsonville before being posted to the Instrument Repair Depot at Ohakea the following year. That's when he fancied taking up flying, joining the Middle Districts Aero Club at Palmerston North and gaining his PPL on the de Havilland Tiger Moth.

"In those days there wasn't a lot of book work involved," recalls Bill, reminding us that the open cockpit biplanes had no radio and communication between instructor and student was through the Gosport tube. "During training, there was a lot of emphasis on spinning. That came in handy one day after I had my licence when I pulled up into a loop, was a bit heavy handed on rolling off the top, and found myself in an inverted spin. It certainly gave me a fright."

With a three-year posting to RAF Nicosia, Cyprus, in November 1952, Bill had to shelve his piloting career, although he did manage rides in various locally based types, including the long-nose Gloster Meteor, and hitch rides in military aircraft to get off-island.

Deciding to leave the air force after his return to NZ, Bill went into farming. After served his apprenticeship with several farmers, he became a manager. He bought land at Tangiteroria in 1971 and has been there ever since, breeding Herefords and pure-bred Romney ewes, and for many years finding the time to play polo.

In 2009, after a break of 55 years, Bill decided to join the Dargaville Aero Club and, after 12 hours instruction with Murray Foster, went solo on the Fly Synthesis Storch (FOS). He subsequently gained his SAC Microlight Certificate and now flies JES every week or so. "I love flying—the views, and just being up there."

*Story by John Wegg*

\***Dargaville Aero Club, Distinguished Flying Characters**



*Bill Lambeth*



*Photo by John Wegg*

# Dargaville's third runway

Allan Jessop

When club member and flight instructor Dr Greg Van Der Hulst purchased his Zenair 701 a few months back, it came complete with a set of aluminium floats. These are amphibian floats complete with hydraulically retracting undercarriage, and cable operated rudders. Steering on the ground is by using the hydraulic brakes on the float main wheels with the front wheels castoring. All very high tech.

A few weeks back Greg decided to fit the floats and, with the help of a couple of club stalwarts, jacked the plane up, worked out the Chinese Puzzle, and pieced it all together. The hydraulic hand operated pump for the undercarriage retraction, was already installed in the cockpit, so it was just a matter of determining which hose went where, and how to bleed the air out of the system.

Anyway after everything finally checked out, Greg gave it a field test, a few touch and goes to get the feel of sitting almost a couple of meters higher, which was a bit weird to start with, and then try a river landing. Everything went remarkably well, with Greg estimating only around a 5 knot drop in the cruise speed, surprising given the size, weight and inherent drag aspects of the floats. Obviously a lot of work must have gone into the float design, and the 701's leading edge slats would have to be a big factor towards the aircraft's ease in leaving the ground and the water.

Greg didn't have to ask me twice if I wanted to go for a ride, and it felt rather strange climbing up into the cockpit.

As the undercarriage struts no longer provide any cushioning effect, the ride on the ground whilst taxiing is quite firm, but not as bad as I had anticipated.

Take-off from zero 4 limestone was shorter than I expected, considering wind conditions were calm and on climbing out it felt no different to a 701 with a conventional undercarriage. On take-off, Greg started pumping a lever which retracts all four wheels, and a strategically placed mirror indicates when the wheels are stowed.

We circled around and then made our first approach to 022 water. Had been expecting a firm jolt and heaps of spray, however the landing was a bit of an anti-climax, no spray and a very soft touch down, almost like landing on pillows. It was great. The take-off run was fairly short, probably similar in length to the limestone take-off, and once up on the step, the slats took over and just plucked us out of the water.

We made a couple of landings on the calm side of the river and then followed the river where it bends around the end of 04 and faces South, where there was a bit of a cross wind chop. Landing here once again was a doddle, although the chop could be heard slapping against



Greg's Zenair 701 before...

Photo by John Wegg



...and after

Photo by Allan Jessop

*The view from inside,  
looking out at the old-fashioned runway*

the floats, and Greg had to use a bit of rudder to counteract a tendency to weathercock into the slight Southwester. Again the take-off was a non-event and we returned to dry land. In all, a very enjoyable experience and thanks a lot Greg.

I think Dargaville can now claim to be the only airfield in the country that has three parallel runways, limestone, grass, and water. So aviators, take your pick.



*Photo by Allan Jessop*



*Photo by Sue Taylor  
Dargaville Visitor Information Centre*

# What Andrew and Grandpa do...



Photo by John Wegg

**Gather tuatua at Ripiro Beach with Greg and Nicky van der Hulst**



Photo by Greg van der Hulst

# **Something I'd always wanted to do**

## **Peter Randall**

Learning to fly was one of the things I had always wanted to do. The big 60 was fast approaching and seeing an advert in the local paper encouraging people to have a trial flight, I decided it was high time I did something about it.

The next Saturday saw me down at the Dargaville Aero Club going for a trial flight in the club Microlight plane. I soon decided this was for me. Over the next 3 years, as time allowed, I gradually got my hours up and passed the necessary exams.

However I found that whenever I wanted to fly so did other club members and consequently the club planes were all booked. So the obvious answer was to have my own plane and I started to look at the different options. Finally I decided that I wanted to get on and fly and not spend my limited free time (I had a farm to run) building a plane from a kitset.

At first I looked at rag and tube type microlights but in the end I decided to bite the bullet and go for something better. I ended up buying an Alpi Aviation Pioneer 200 which at first I kept in a hangar at Dargaville Aero Club. A while later I built a hangar and constructed a 300 metre runway at home on the farm.

Through flying I have found a hobby that gives me considerable enjoyment and relaxation besides finding a whole lot of new like-minded friends.

## **Joanne Hales**

As a young child my family lived below the threshold of Runway 06 at Whangarei, so I regularly saw aircraft overhead. My mother would walk us to the terminal building to watch the planes, so an early interest developed then.

Much later, on a trip to Pauanui, the Warbird Dakota DC-3 was on the airstrip, we were able to have a look in. I thought then that I would like to fly.

The former Northland Districts Aero Club offered a scholarship trial flight in 1992, so I entered and caught the bug. I never won the scholarship, but to my knowledge I'm the only one still flying from that group. It took commitment, juggling of time, family, and funds to achieve my PPL in 1996.

Women friends in the aero club introduced me to the NZ Association of Women in Aviation. This group of amazing women have encouraged me to continue to fly.

Belonging to NDAC initially and now Dargaville Aero Club keeps myself and my husband Graeme (PPL as well) interested as well. It's not just planes, it is the people.

## **Graeme Hales**

### **Brian Taylor**

Flying is something I've always had a bit of a fascination for but as a teenager never thought I'd be able to do.

As time went by and more major development projects on the farm were coming to an end, thoughts turned more towards flying. We had relatives that were flying and friends involved in the Dargaville aero club. As time went by the tax bill started to grow and I started to think "If I'm paying money to all these buggers being paid to do nothing, it's time I learned to fly." (Didn't reduce my tax bill but I learned to fly)

Having still not got around to it, I got a phone call from Murray Foster saying he had booked an introductory flight one Saturday. And the rest, as they say, is history.

Basketball and golf were my main off farm interests, until the day I flew to the Fieldays with a neighbour in his plane. I was hooked before we were off the end of the runway.

It was several years before I started learning to fly, and it was a bit of a challenge to finance and be consistent with my lessons. It was and still is a stimulating, but relaxing way to get off farm for a few hours.

Flying is a passion, it is something you can put in as little, or as much as you please, so long as you maintain standards.

I continue due to the people we meet from all over NZ, and with Jo, my wife, (also a PPL) there is always another part of this country to fly to.

### **John Askew**

At 13 years of age, for the first time, I saw aerial topdressing on the family farm in Taranaki hill country. From then on I was hooked. While still at high school I learnt to fly in a Tiger Moth at the time when the Government was subsidizing pilot training to provide a pool of trained pilots in case there was another world war. So I borrowed and worked to achieve my Private Pilot's Licence. However marriage, family, and buying a farm of my own in South Hokianga meant an end to my flying (apart from some hang gliding). Now I'm semi-retired with a bit more time on my hands I am attempting to obtain a Recreational License at a reasonable cost at the Dargaville Aero Club.



# Murray's message

## Murray Foster

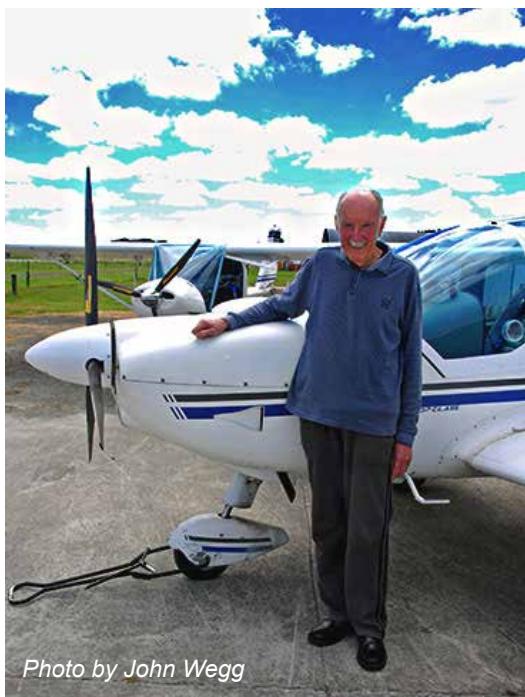
Hi all! Merry Christmas is already here. This year has certainly gone quickly - no quicker than any other year, but the busier you get with life the more it appears to be that way.

Flying training is going great apart from lots of strong winds which we have been having lately, very good for cross wind landings. Student training is still on the increase which is very well in these conditions. Some get a little grumpy but I let Dennis sort them out, he is a good father figure (when it comes to flying, anyway). Brian and Greg are excellent motivators and encouragers. We have a good team. This leaves just me without a job, apart from doing the flight tests, renewals and ratings, and all the theory exams. We all would like an increase in salary but our treasurer is pretty tough and has the job of working out what would be several hundred % of \$0. But she's the best!

We have new students starting before Christmas, there's Kim, Megan and Hilary. It's good to see those of the more attractive sex becoming involved. Congratulations to Scott Davidson, Terry Morelock, Bill Bowskills and John Askew who have just gone solo. Scott and John have done well in passing some of their exams. And Luke Gilliam who will be solo by the time you read this newsletter.

Both the Storch and the Texan are performing very well with no problems or incidents. This club is fortunate that all our pilots and students fly them like they own them – which they do – and treat them with care, even when operating off the limestone strip. Both have no problems, no damage to the propellers, with care doing run-ups and avoiding using full power at the start of the take-off roll.

It's good to see Greg's float plane, which is a good attraction to our club, and Greg intends to do many water landings. We now have three runways, 22/04 grass,



*Photo by John Wegg*

limestone and water! Greg is completing his water rating in Taupo.

Rusty is clocking up the autogyro hours and he asked me to do his Biennial Flight Review, so after taking a bottle of stress and anxiety pills we were all ready to go. He did all the exercises I asked him to do, even the auto rotation. When I asked him, he said, "She's right chief, I can do this with my eyes shut. I've had plenty of practice". I said, "Don't bother with

the eyes shut bit". He then did a perfect landing on the beach. And we even joined in the bombing and spot landing competition on the way back. Rusty is a good, safe pilot and one of the better gyro pilots I've flown with. The only one, as a matter of fact.

Have a good Christmas and New Year, from the Hoanga Road coffee house.  
Murray

## Jill's message

### Jill Mortensen

Hello from the G.A. sector. First of all I would like congratulate Murray Foster on a very long career in voluntary aviation instructing and receiving an award from Flying New Zealand to recognize this. Well done Murray and keep up the good work.

Next congratulations go out to Joel and Blake for completing all their PPL written exams, so well done you two. Now it's on to cross-country flying when the weather decides to stay fine for long enough.

Now a note on the importance of doing thorough pre-flight and shutdown checks. On a recent pre-flight inspection Tyler noticed the carb heat duct had become

detached on JBA, which could easily have resulted in an engine failure had it not been rectified, so well done Tyler.

A few weeks later another fault was found in the shutdown checks, with the magneto switch not cutting the engine in the off position. The engineers found a broken wire was the problem and fixed it straight away. So checks are very important.

Rebecca is soon to sit the radio exam, and is working well in the circuit with the flying. Keep up the good work Rebecca.

Well that's all from me this time, so Merry Christmas to all, a happy New Year and safe flying. Jill

# Back from the deep south

Colin Barlow

As you all know, Invercargill is known as a bit of a backwards place and, I can assure you, that is true. But when it comes to flying, the area is truly amazing. With Stewart Island, Fiordland, Queenstown, and many more picturesque places all within little more than one hour flight time away. It is this, coupled with the challenging (and often downright obscene) weather, that makes Southland and Otago a great place to fly and train.

Southern Wings is a relatively small flight school in Invercargill, with a fleet of 5 aircraft. 2 Alpha 160As (Very similar to the Robin 160), 3 Piper Cherokees, and a Piper Seneca II. As it turns out, Murray's instruction was of a brilliant standard, making the transition from microlights to GA aircraft very easy, with me going solo around 6 hours at Southern Wings, and making PPL exams very easy.

With regards to the training, It is very much a self-propelled course, with the option to progress at your own pace and intensity. Once you have gained your PPL, you can gain hours almost however you want. With such beautiful country so close, cross countries are encouraged,

and a very comprehensive mountain flying course was provided.

I took full advantage of this freedom, often flying through Queenstown, Wanaka and Manapouri. And on one occasion, 2 friends and I flew all the way from Invercargill to Dargaville in one of the school's Cherokees. Also, I took full advantage of the aerobatic training available, and now have an aerobatics rating in the Alpha 160s.

Flying with Southern Wings proved to be very beneficial for me as a career, with them providing a very professional, though loosely structured, environment to enjoy flying. Also they helped me to learn how to handle flying as a crew, and as a CAR part 135 operator. This, coupled with the weather, made it a very good experience to fly with them.

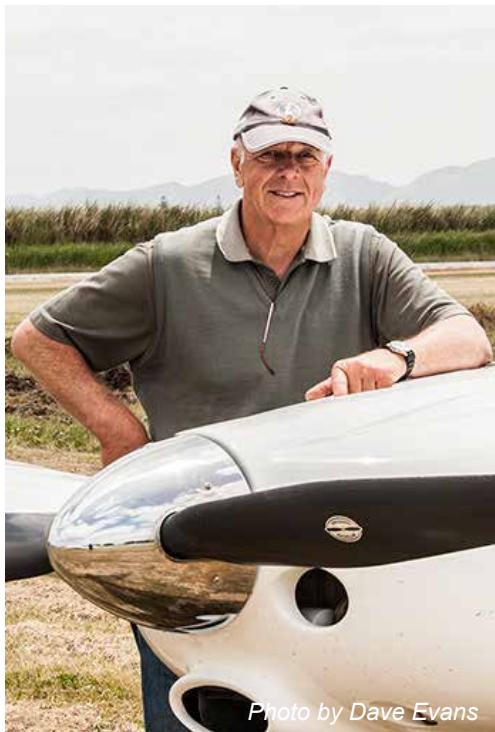
All in all, I enjoyed the experience in Invercargill. Seeing a different (and at times very different) part of the world, and having the opportunity to fly almost every day in a very beautiful part of the world was great. However, it must be said, I'm very happy to be back in the normal end of the country, and flying with the Dargaville Aero club again.

# President Peter writes:

The club has had a busy November which saw many members volunteering their time to help the club. The silage on the grass runway came off in early November. The runway was rolled directly afterwards so that it would be in good condition for the Northern Regional Flying competitions.

The competitions took place on the weekend of November 17th and 18th. The competitions were supposed to take place on the Saturday with Friday afternoon available for practice. However Mother Nature had other ideas and with such an awful weather forecast for the weekend it was decided to start some of the events on the Friday afternoon and evening and hope that they could be finished come Saturday. We were of course over optimistic and events on the Saturday had to be abandoned before lunch and in the end were completed on the Sunday.

I was really pleased with the amount of support the club members provided especially as the competitions ended up lasting for 3 days instead of one. From cooking breakfasts on Saturday and Sunday, catering for lunches on the Saturday and Sunday as well as marking out the grid and general running to and fro. A very big thank you to all of you who helped in so many ways. Flying New Zealand was very pleased with how things went. The club made \$2200 from the weekend and everyone left thoroughly satisfied.



*Photo by Dave Evans*

I must also thank Dargaville Fire Brigade and in particular Peter Ward for providing a first class, very reasonably priced, taxi service for the competitors to travel between the club and their accommodation.

Apart from the weather everything ran very smoothly. The only hiccup on the Sunday afternoon was when one of the departing planes had to make a Mayday call about 2 miles east of the field. They had almost lost their door but managed to cling onto it and land safely. Thankfully there were two in the plane one to hang onto the door and the other to pilot the plane.

The presentation dinner on the Saturday evening was held at the Dargaville RSA. 61 attended. The highlight of the evening for our club members was the presentation to Murray Foster of a plaque from The Royal New Zealand Aero Club recognising Murray's services to Aviation. I am sure I don't have to tell the club members how deserving Murray is to receive such an honour. This is only the second time this award has been made.

The two weekends after the Flying NZ competitions some of our club members have been making use of the grid marked out on the grass runway for our own spot landings, forced landings and bombing competitions. These got very competitive especially the bombing!

We have arranged for 500 tons of limestone to be spread on the runway.

We hope to keep the grass runway operational while this is happening. The limestone runway will of course be closed so please be sure to **check for Notams** if you are flying into Dargaville.

On Saturday December 8th the club held its annual Christmas party with 62 for lunch and 21 planes flying in. Santa (Alan Jessop) flew in to the waiting, excited young fans. We had a good turn out of members' children and grandchildren. Santa departed by aeroplane with lots of waves after giving presents to all the children. A lolly scramble followed and the children tucked into jelly and ice-cream and plenty of cakes.

I would like to wish all members and their families a Very Happy Christmas and a Prosperous and Healthy New Year.



# Santa's arrived!



*Photo by Peter Randall*



*Photo by Rusty Russell*

# **Stewart Island - and other adventures**

**Stephen Jeffery**

It started with a discussion about taking a flying holiday and the question arose – where to? You can't get much further than Stewart Island and neither of us had been there before, so the decision was made.

A few months of research, planning and preparing Bernie's TL Sting microlight, SLY and we were ready to go. Trouble was, the weather wasn't. Around lunch time on the appointed day the drizzle cleared and the cloud lifted off the deck. Made a quick trip from Whangarei to Dargaville to catch up with Murray and do a type rating, then off down the

Kaipara coast to Norfolk road glider field in Taranaki where we met up with some of Bernie's gliding friends. The day was clear so I took the opportunity to make a glider flight. The tow to release height was 'interesting'. Trying to stay on station behind the big grunty PZL Wilga was something else – you've got to hand it to those glider pilots.

Unfortunately, tyre problems kept us on the ground until the following morning when we were able to fit the spares we had with us. Many thanks to the Wisnewskis for taking pity on us and giving us a bed for the night. Then off

**SLY and Taranaki**



*Photo by Stephen Jeffery*

to Rangiora after a fantastic flight over Durville Island and Hanmer Springs.

We took a bus into Christchurch for a look around the central area. The scale of destruction is immense, but life is returning to normal and the rebuild process is slowly beginning. Another kind offer of a place to stay for the night was gratefully accepted from Bernie's hang gliding friend and family.

We were able to partly repay them by taking the family for a series of flights next morning. A short hop over to a farm strip near Dunsandel saw us catching up with some of my ex-northland dairying friends for an hour or so before pressing on to Omarama. The south island hills just keep getting bigger and take some getting used to.

As it happened the gliding regional competition dinner was on that evening, so we joined in and got to hear some great gliding stories. 1000km flights were almost commonplace. When you consider the rugged terrain that these people fly in, you realise what an achievement that is.

We booked in to the excellent Country Time hotel which is right on the edge of the field - very convenient and great value. Omarama turned it on the next day with good waves forming up high.

Bernie's friends Terry and Karen have a share in a German ASH25 glider, GTF based at Omarama. The ASH is an extremely high performance machine with a 60:1 glide ratio – imagine being at 2600 ft over Whangarei and being able to

land at Dargaville with no further power or lift..... After a quick tow to a nearby low range they built altitude in ridge lift until getting into wave and taking off for a 200km return trip to Mt Cook at around 20000 ft on oxygen.

*Omarama wave*



*Photo by Stephen Jeffery*

The conditions were still good later in the afternoon, so we climbed aboard SLY and headed up to Mt Cook. Unfortunately the mountain was in cloud, but the waves were still performing. A few miles north of Pukaki airfield we stopped the engine at 10000 ft and were promptly climbing at 400 to 600 ft/min in smooth air. Pulling out at 13000 ft we headed back to Omarama surrounded by the hills. A truly magical flight.

Next morning we called the guys at South East Air who run the Ryans Creek airfield on Stewart Island. The forecast was for

rising westerlies so quickly off to Gore for a fuel stop and a final phone call. Unfortunately the wind was now deemed too gusty, and landing permission was refused. Undaunted, we decided on an overflight of the island to get oriented. We arrived overhead Oban in rough air and pushed straight over to the western side of the island through light showers. The wild sea and dark skies accentuated the nature of the island and didn't detract from the experience at all.

After a quick photo from beyond the most southerly point we retraced our steps to Gore. This is a great stopping place for anyone flying in Southland - three grass runways, a fuel pump and no landing

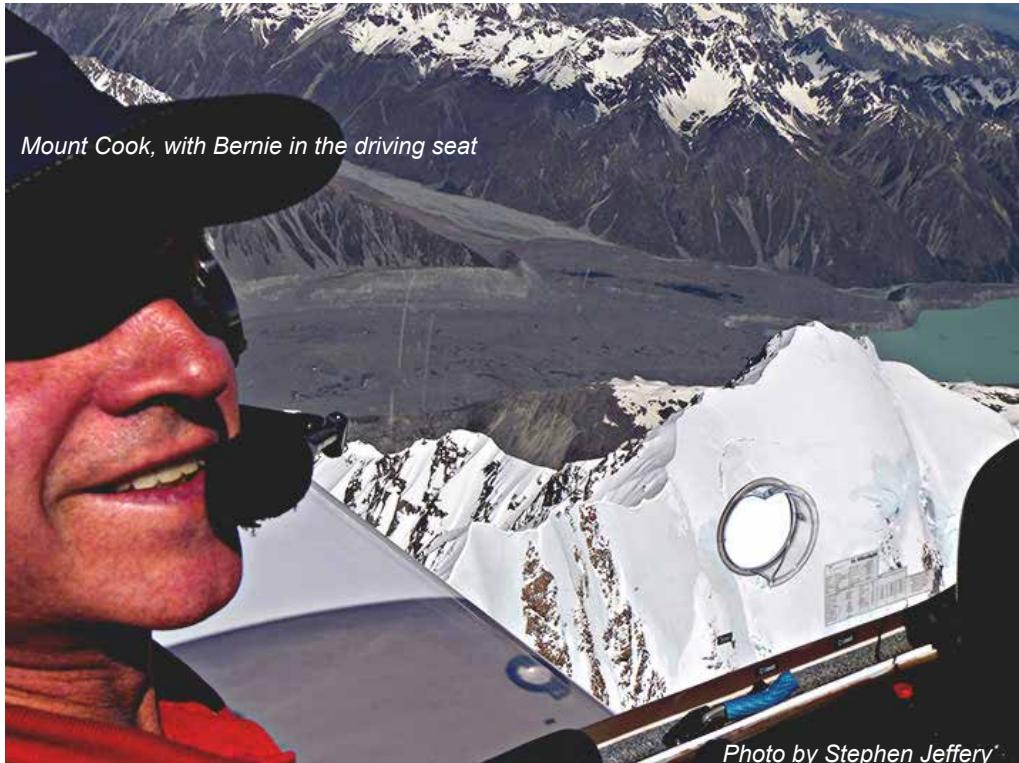
fees - all the things an aviator needs! The day was still young so we called Mandeville for landing permission and made the 10 minute flight to visit the Croydon Aviation Heritage Centre and Aircraft Company. The collection of historic NZ aircraft and the restoration work taking place is a credit to both organisations. Highly recommended.

We left late afternoon for Balclutha to stay with Terry and Karen (and to deliver Terry's iPad which was accidentally left at Omarama.....) Next morning saw similar high winds, so we abandoned plans to land at Ryans Creek and bumped our way around the south coast over the pretty Catlins area before

***Mason Bay, Stewart Island***



*Photo by Stephen Jeffery*



*Photo by Stephen Jeffery*

another quick fuel stop at Gore. Also in for fuel was a 1940's Percival Proctor that had previously been restored at Croydon. A beautiful aircraft with a very proud owner.

West to Lake Te Anau for a look before climbing into the Fiordland 'hills'. We made a couple of orbits above the Southland falls and the now overgrown Quintin airstrip. Strong turbulence kept us high. Overflying the airfield at 10000 ft brought some curiosity from Milford flight service as to what sort of microlight would be in the area. We descended down the Dart River to Glenorchy airstrip at the head of Lake Wakatipu before getting a lift into town with one of the

guys from the local skydiving company. We enjoyed a coffee at a café then had a very enjoyable walk back to the aeroplane along the lake edge soaking up the majestic surroundings.

Half an hour of revising the arrival procedures and a phone call to the tower had us ready to tackle the short flight to Queenstown International. Helpful and friendly controllers soon had us 'rubbing wings' with the corporate jets as we taxied to the Wakatipu aero club.

We caught a bus into town for a look around and were very impressed with the thriving activity of the tourist trade. Ian, another of Bernie's old hang gliding friends,

took us in for the night. Next morning we joined in with Ian, who runs a tandem hang gliding and paragliding company. The launch site on Coronet peak was a hive of activity with gliders from several companies all operating together. We were able to assist with logistics by shuttling vehicles and pilots between launch site and landing area. A rise in wind at the takeoff site unfortunately prevented us from making a flight in the early afternoon.

Take-off from Queenstown was straightforward with a 'Skippers Saddle' departure then tracking north towards Mt Cook. The climb was rough and slow until getting well above the peaks where smooth air and a good tail wind saw high ground speeds.

Motueka was reached in light winds after a little over 2 1/4 hours. Fuelled up, we

set course for Feilding and an overnight stay with my brother who works for Massey University.

The final day dawned clear, but the forecast was for worsening conditions further north. Away early, we struck showers and a lowering cloud-base north of Manakau, but arrived overhead Dargaville with room to spare. Had a quick debrief with Murray and then back to Whangarei to clean the plane and put her away until next time.

This was a fantastic trip and the highlight of my flying activities thus far. Many thanks to all those who showed us such great hospitality during our travels.

Plans for a return trip next year are already forming up with a list of new objectives and adventures.



Photo by Stephen Jeffery

# Seen at Dargaville

A young lady from CTC Hamilton dropped in for fuel en route to North Cape  
in this Diamond DA20-C1



Photo by John Wegg

Brian Taylor in his Jodel is a familiar Dargaville sight



Photo by John Wegg

*Planning, planning, planning...*

EXIT



*Photo by Bill Lambeth*

## Flying NZ competition - 12th Nov.



*Photo by Bill Lambeth*

**North Shore-based Cessna 172B Skyhawk ZK-BZU touches down in the box**



*Photo by Bill Lambeth*

## **Flying NZ competition - 12th Nov.**

**The North Shore Aero Club's Robin R 2120U Alpha 120T hits the spot.**



*Photo by Bill Lambeth*

**Dargaville Volunteer Fire Brigade recently ran a drill at the airfield, using the hulk of a 1965-vintage Piper Aztec which lay abandoned at Whangarei for some time**



*Photo by Bill Lambeth*

## **What's the weather doing?**

Visitors to the clubhouse will likely have noticed the weather station on the club computer screen. Did you know that this is (usually!) available to anyone, anywhere, over the internet?

Many thanks to Greg van der Hulst for all the work that has gone into this facility.

To take a look, go to  
[www.dargavilleac.no-ip.org](http://www.dargavilleac.no-ip.org)  
- and prepare to be amazed!

PS: Sorry if it doesn't happen to be working when you visit the web site.  
Maybe somebody in the club house clicked something by mistake ;-)



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