



**1. 2.. 3... Go!**

The planned date for the 2015 Singer Trophy rally was postponed because of bad weather. As was the "rain date" one week later. But - third time lucky and the event went ahead on 20th - 22nd March.

Rusty Russell looks suitably puzzled as he takes out the trophy having scored most points. Rusty tells his story beginning on page 2.



# The Singer Trophy 2015

**Rusty Russell**

As it is with lots of aviation events, timing and weather is everything and this was to be no exception, sadly, leading to lots of folks having to cancel their attendance. However three weeks later, the email came through - it was "on" again. Some arrived Friday, and the rest arrived early Saturday, in time for the briefing.

A dozen planes sat ready on the freshly cut grass outside, inside the charts came out, co-ordinates were issued, heads were scratched. Graham Walker and Peter Aitkin had prepared the course and the purpose this year differed from the original 1970 economy/navigation rally from Te Kuiti to Dargaville. Now it's a navigation, observation, avoidance, identification, and social event.

The names/dates on the cup ceased during the years of the fuel crisis, rekindled by Graham, Peter Aitkin, and Steve Gwilliam four years ago, the rally changes format each year to suit the times, pocket depths and abilities.

After another wonderful lunch we headed north. Penny and I snuck off first as the gyro's speed was way down on the competition, to estimate the height and length of a private strip some 10 miles north. I landed to make sure I got half the answer correct, and guessed the length. Then onwards north, following a GPS line over tiger country to a deep valley, a collection of ramshackle farm buildings, dead tractors and cars, storm loading ramps, yards, flattened sheds,

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*The briefing*

*Photo: Rusty Russell*

etc., trying to spot something unusual. Lots was unusual, but nope, nothing jumped out. A Jodel circled below then scarpered. A couple of low circuits and sure enough, in amongst the deceased vehicles, was the fuselage of a small aircraft! ZK-CBU? Yep that had to be it. Another low pass and we had the rego number off it then off again as the others spiralled in for their turn.

Other grid references had us checking, thinking cryptic clues, revisiting discussions, agreement. Penny would steer while I scribbled our answer, making sure the paper didn't blow out the "window". (What window?—Ed.) The next clue points us north of the Hokianga, Kerikeri, Waipapa, Purerua peninsular. It was hard concentrating when overwhelming beauty surrounds



*The briefing*

*Photo: Rusty Russell*

you. Back to Opuā, keen eyes spotted another dead plane on a bush track! (ZK-RDA). The last clue was to name which franchise holder administers the accommodation complex at spot X, which was the prison at Ngawha! Department of Corrections? Correct!

Graham had arranged for local Jenny Edge to have coffee, tea and scones,

cakes, biscuits ready at Kaikohe for our afternoon tea. Wow what a spread and the hot coffee was most welcome as after one and a half hours I was getting cool, and Penny was in need of a wharepuku visit! This runway is a ripper. Long and wide with good approaches. We visited Steve Moor in one of the hangars, building a Jodel D18, soon to be seen in the air around the north.



A fast tail wind trip back to Dargaville meant I had to go play on Tutamoe, a peak at 2500 ft. Enjoyed some fantastic ridge soaring, then heard the others taking part in a spot landing contest. Yippee - nose down, 10 below VNE she just purred. As did I. I also had to fly past the hospital, in support of Muzz who was in for an oil change and new filter. His ever present humour and presence was greatly missed.

We timed our arrival to watch the last FW land, and very close to the "spot". I was determined to nail it. Bugger! Bill the

judge said I over flew it by 6 feet. Bugger again!

Graham fronted a quick pre-dinner prize giving. Placings unimportant really as we all had a bloody good day, and I was most surprised when our names were called out for scoring the highest points! Steve Gwilliam and mate placed a very close second. The Singer Cup and bottles of wine for the top 5 places - most consumed at dinner.

Most of the club members' wives contributed food for the evening meal

# Spot landings...



Photo: Bill Lambeth

**Brian Taylor's Storch**



Photo: Bill Lambeth

**Peter Randall's Alpi**



Photo: Bill Lambeth

**Rusty Russell's AutoGyro Eagle**

and the result was a very yummy and generous feed. My lime wine and mead added to the post dinner ambience. Relaxing topics went from weight and balance, travel tips, how to make biltong...Warren, you are an encyclopaedia! Cheers!

Six of us slept at the club, with Graham and Sue camped out the front in 'toy-hauler'. Warren showed his experience by pulling out ear plugs so my snoring didn't keep him awake! Locals came back for breakfast, coffee, and more stories. We filled two cars and visited Murray and were happy to see him compos mentis, chatty and keen to hear how the competition and weekend went. The out of towners departed happy and well fed with new friendships made!

For me, the value of these events is priceless. It encouraged/forced me to up-skill my navigation knowledge, spatial awareness, radio procedures, fuel management, frequency changes,

approach charts and my obsession - landing on the spot! All life-preserving and possibly life-saving skills. I hope more events like this can be arranged, very beneficial for us new boys as we progress in aviation.

A big thanks to Graham and Peter, the amazing Dargaville catering machine, all the wives for the cooking, and Sue, Jan and Penny for making dinner and those who entered and made it fun. It's no surprise that people find the warmth and relaxed convivial atmosphere so attractive at Dargaville.

#### *Post event comments:*

- 1 Rebecca flew in JBA, her first flight after gaining her PPL. Congrats Bex!
- 2 Graham had his first flight in a gyro.
- 3 I am making a biltong dryer, watch this space...
- 4 Muzz is on the mend - long may good health prevail!

#### ***On the ground at Kaikohe***



*Photo: Rusty Russell*

# Hello, Autumn

**Greg van der Hulst**

The first day of autumn was celebrated by around 30 aircraft arriving at Leo Johns' private airstrip at Mata, 5 miles south of Whangarei. Brian Millett had put the word out that there was to be a barbeque and quite possibly scones, which lured aircraft from as far away as Waihi Beach and Thames.

At one point there were six in the circuit, but with customary good airmanship demonstrated by the group there were no problems as everyone set up in a wide left hand circuit and made allowances for backtracking aircraft on the ground. The gentle easterly made 06 the vector of choice. The large forested hill at

the threshold to 06 made for some interesting approaches. Rusty Russell in his gyro probably made the shortest landing roll, with other pilots employing side slipping and various angles on final approach to mitigate the lift from the hill and ensure a safe arrival.

A great variety of microlight and GA aircraft was present, with plenty of war stories and other lies being told. Bob and Brian with assistance from a few others provided a veritable feast of burgers and sausages on bread. And there were indeed scones. A great day had by all, with thanks to Leo, Brian, Bob and the other helpers for the hospitality.

***The turnout for the barbecue - and scones (after the first departures!)***



*Photo: Dave Evans*

*The Vodka Cruiser lands*



*Photo: Dave Evans*

## Seen at Mata...

*Low-level view from Rusty's gyro, just before touch-down*



*Photo: Dave Evans*

**Bob Syron's Ragwing**



*Photo: Dave Evans*

*Cliff McChesney makes an early departure in ZK-KFC*



*Photo: Dave Evans*

# More tiger tales (I)

**John Askew**

The wind spoilt the flying at the annual meeting and fly-in of the Tiger Moth Club at Kaikohe on 21 February. So the only competition flown on that day was the bombing and, by the time it was completed, the wind was making things difficult. So we missed out on the spot landings and the perfect loops. The fourteen Tigers present were in great condition and a credit to their owners.

Also present was a Moth Minor, a low wing two seat (open) monoplane powered by a 90hp Gipsy Minor; and a Fox Moth, a derivative of the Tiger Moth with an enclosed cabin forward of the pilot's cockpit, with room for up to three passengers. Fox Moths operated the original air service down the West Coast landing often on the beaches.

At the Kaikohe fly-in, after the visiting Harvard climbed up and looped high over us, one Tiger Moth looped just as well. Pity the competitions and aerobatic display was postponed. But a great day.

Back in 1958 when I was training in a Tiger for my Private Pilot's License the requirement was to stall the aircraft, spin it two revolutions and recover. So we would climb to 3000 feet, clear the space, close the throttle, pull the nose

quite high and when it stalled apply full rudder. The aircraft would flick over and spin and, after the two revolutions, apply full opposite rudder, centralise the stick then when the spin ceased centralise the rudder, stick forward to break the stall and regain flying speed, then power on to pull gently out of the dive. I hope my memory is right about this.

A friend of mine at Stratford at the same stage of flying as me took off to practice spinning and recovery. He climbed away towards Mount Taranaki over rising ground but did not get to 3000 feet before he put the aircraft into a spin. During the second revolution he realized the ground was a lot closer than it should have been. The stick wasn't central and he applied full opposite rudder in a hurry. The aircraft stopped spinning but he didn't center the rudder and immediately the aircraft flicked over and spun the opposite way. Before he could correct that spin the aircraft hit the ground on its nose and one lower wingtip first. The wing buckled and the engine pushed back into the front cockpit. The pilot in the back cockpit climbed out unhurt.

Tiger Moths were draggy machines and didn't reach high speeds in power-off vertical dives. What fun.



# More tiger tales (2)

**Allan Jessop**

*After reading in Windsock (previous two editions) about John Askew's Tiger Moth, Allan Jessop told John that he used to own the same Tiger Moth when it was in Fiji. Here's Allan's story:*

I was fairly involved with aircraft when living in Suva, during the early 70's, and was the only private aircraft owner in Fiji at the time. I learned to fly in a Victa 115hp, eventually buying this machine, and then bought a C172 from Fiji Airways. I owned both aircraft for some time and then sold the Victa to the Tongan Army, who intended to use it for ab initio training. It never happened, however that's all another story.

Shortly after we moved to Suva, after spending the prior 3 years on the northern Island of Vanua Levu, I commenced training in the Airtourer and noticed a Tiger Moth tied down on the grass in front of Fiji Air's maintenance hangar. It obviously hadn't been moved for some time, considering the long grass growing around it, and being mildly interested I inspected it. It seemed in pretty good condition, apart from a small tear in the cloth on the left rear fuselage. It was fitted with a cockpit cover, which I had a peek under, noting everything was where it should be and I enquired with the maintenance boys as to who it belonged to. Their reply was "nobody" and their story was that a syndicate of bank boys had owned it, not flown it much, and then their work contracts had expired they had returned to their respective countries, abandoning the

plane. I contacted the Director of Civil Aviation (whom I knew quite well) Johnny Koroitamana, asked him about the plane and he confirmed what I had been told by the Fiji Air boys. I then asked Johnny what did I have to do to obtain ownership. His reply, "we'll register it in your name and it's yours. Get Fiji Air's boys to get it up to scratch, get a rating and you can fly it". The Tiger was duly registered in my name. The Fiji Air boys located the log books and it was left at that while I continued with my Airtourer flying lessons. Probably 6 months passed, I took no further interest in the plane (which by then had become universally known on the airport as Jessop's Tiger) as working long hours and traveling quite a bit to Australia, Japan, and around Samoa and Tonga, it was pretty much all I could do to squeeze in the occasional hour for flying instruction, let alone worry about the Tiger.

I left for one of my periodic trips to Japan, was away three weeks and on return, landing at Suva (Nausori) Airport, noticed that the place had a beaten up look and my Tiger wasn't in its customary parking spot.

After clearing the usual formalities, I hurried across to the Fiji Airways hangar and the boys greeted me with long



faces. "What's happened?" Well, a small hurricane had gone through Suva a week previously and on its approach the boys decided to move the Tiger into an old vacant, concrete roofed WWII vintage hangar. The hurricane arrived in all its fury and part of the concrete roof had collapsed on the Tiger causing considerable damage to the wing. The boys were pretty upset and said if they had left it where it was, with some extra tie-downs, it probably would have been O.K. However, that's the luck of the draw and I told them "shit happens" and not to worry about it and just leave it where it was until I decided what to do with it.

A couple of weeks passed, then I received a phone call from Francis, the Fiji Air Service Manager, advising that there was an Australian tourist wandering around, who had spotted the Tiger, and asked if it was for sale. He said he was interested in taking it back to Australia

and repairing it. My reply was, "Tell him he can have it for nothing". Francis told me later he had passed my advice onto the guy, who had taken off like a shot and a truck arrived later that day with a shipping container. The boys removed the wings, packed the machine into the container and off it went, we thought, to Australia.

Over the ensuing years I never thought anything further about it, until John's story appeared in the *Windsock*. I couldn't believe it, and said to Rosy, "that's my old Tiger". That's when I discovered it hadn't been shipped to Australia, but to N.Z., which leaves me wondering who the tourist was that picked it up and took it away.

I had considerable delight in telling John that I knew another side to his Tiger Moth story, and enjoyed relating it. It's great to see that it has survived.

***Here's a scale model of the Tiger Moth that belonged to John Askew and Allan Jessop, in the livery it now wears as part of the RNZAF Historic Flight. The late Zac Wilcock (ex-Warrant Officer, RNZAF) built the model.***



*And here's the real thing flying in RNZAF livery*



*Photo by permission from <http://www.nzcivair.blogspot.co.nz/>*

**Seen at Dargaville:  
Bill Lambeth alongside Tiger Moth ZK-  
BAH, registered to John Baynes of Gore.  
Bill has a similar photo of himself taken  
about 70 years ago.**



*Photo: Rusty Russell*

# Another perspective

Warren Butler

Since the weekend of Cyclone Pam, and subsequent bad weather, I was hoping that 2015 was not going to be the first time in 6 years that for some reason I wouldn't be attending the Singer Trophy. I had been looking forward to flying up to Dargaville to meet the gang and commit some interesting aviation.

During my preflight at my home airfield of Pukekohe East, I couldn't help noticing some dark and rather wet looking clouds bearing down onto Manukau Heads from the north east, the route I intended to follow. Looking at the rain radar on the MetService app confirmed what I was seeing. It was already approaching 10h00 and I didn't want to be late for the briefing at 11h00 since flight time would be around an hour. All packed and ready, I left a few minutes past 10 and tracked Clark's Beach. The closer I got, the more the showers appeared to be leaving Manukau Heads to the south which was good news. I clipped the tail end of the last shower since I couldn't really avoid it due to the sea out west and Auckland airspace out east. Having between 12-15kts on the nose, I knew I would be a bit later than 11h00 at Dargaville. Passing east abeam Parakai, I had a brief chat with Richard Seymour-Wright who was in the Tecnam flying with a student near Shelly Beach. He said he would have loved to attend but had many students to fly over the weekend so had to bow out.

Tracking east of the military zone of Kaipara Harbour, I called Dargaville announcing my ETA of around 11h10, still with about 12kts on the nose. I passed a strange looking band of cloud around Tinopai, running east to west and for about 1 minute it was very bumpy at 2500ft. After passing this band of cloud, the turbulence ended like the flip of a switch. To my surprise, my groundspeed had increased from 85kts to almost 100kts and dead-smooth. The band of cloud I passed was obviously the border between 2 local air masses. Anyone manning the ground radio at Dargaville must have thought me delusional as I reported my ETA now to be 10h55! Dargaville airfield was soon in sight and an overhead join got me safely in.

The briefing was interesting since at different times, there were a few 'corrections' made to the various waypoints so most of us had to redo a few marks on our charts or change our GPSs to suit. A lovely lunch was served and soon after that we all got going. The first 3 waypoints, for me, were draped in light showers but by heading slightly east of the waypoints, I was able to avoid most of the drizzle with a curved flight path eventually taking me overhead each one.

I don't like flying in the rain with my Brent Thompson wooden prop. It has been built and finished a whole lot better than the previous wooden prop I brought from South Africa 7 years ago. That prop



*Warren's Jabiru SK80 at Kaikohe - with Brent Thompson propeller*



was very susceptible to rain erosion on the leading edge since it wasn't glass covered and often had to be lightly dressed with a bit of glue and sandpaper after encountering a bit of rain. I've now got this 'thing' about dodging showers.....

A few of the waypoints had pretty obvious things to identify and enter on the logsheet but others weren't so clear – to me, that was. One of the reasons could be the fact that unlike most other pilots who kept around 1000ft AGL, I maintained at least double that since I fly behind a Jabiru engine and height is your best friend when things suddenly go quiet up front. Having had 2 of those 'quiet moments' in the past, I am a bit more cautious.

The flying around Kerikeri and the islands was really cool since it's mainly during the Dargaville rallies that I ever fly around those parts. Passing overhead the Kaikohe Hilton and Luxury Spa Resort (the local prison was one of the waypoints), Kaikohe airfield was soon in sight.

The ladies put on tea and scones and this went down a treat. We had to have a laugh during the payment of our collective landing fees into the wee slot in the honesty box. Someone had the brilliant idea of collecting all the cash and wrapping

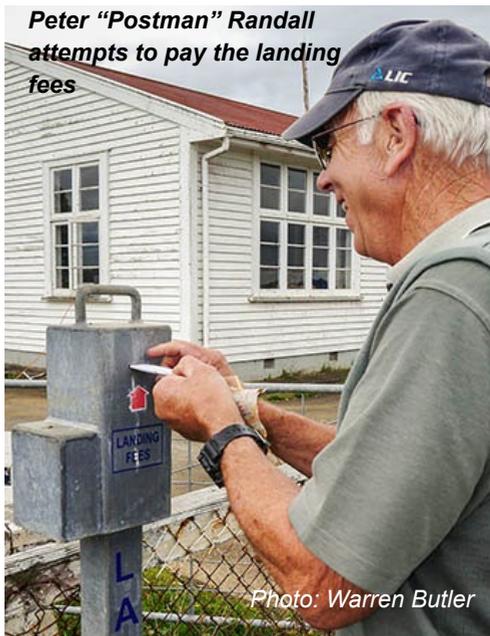


said cash up in an A4 sheet of paper containing all the aircraft regos. Naively thinking that said folded up package would safely slip through a slot measuring only 30mmx5mm was a very tall order indeed! Unwrapping the parcel, we deposited all the cash in bits and had to tear away all the unnecessary parts off the A4 sheet of paper so it would fit into the slot.

Heading back to Dargaville with around 5kts on the tail, most of us remembered

the spot-landing competition on the grass runway. I think I fluffed this with being a wee bit before the line but as they say: "Any landing you can walk away from was a good landing." Tying down the plane and having some much needed refreshments was a really good idea before the prize giving. Much aeroplane was spoken during and after supper and a relatively early night was had.

Thanks again to Graham, Steve, Dave, the ladies and all the other helpers for organizing everything.



**Peter "Postman" Randall attempts to pay the landing fees**

*Photo: Warren Butler*



**Dawn at Dargaville**

*Photo: Warren Butler*

# A test of a relationship

**Rusty Russell**

Right from my first gyro flight, I had heard about the “Dannevirke Gyro Fly in”. During my initial flight training in Nelson, Lloyd Heslop told me of his trip up in RAE, a RAF 2000, over the Cook Strait and the fun encountered, the people and the wacky machines. I made a mental note to cross this one off my list of things to do.

As a member of the New Zealand Auto Gyro Association, I get periodic news letters and it told of the upcoming event in late Feb 2015. After the bitter disappointment of having to cancel the warbirds trip to Wanaka with Mary, I looked forward to making this happen and being in the mid-summer at least the weather gods should be in a good mood!

Mark gave Bala da Plata a 100 hr and her annual inspection. Then Bala got greased, oiled, polished, gassed, charted, plotted, timed; we got bagged undies and tooth brushes - we were all set.

Getting Penny out of bed early wasn't a problem, a good brekkie, some prayers said, incense burned, and we were off. Crystal clear blue morning sky, cool and crisp and a slight nor-easter - lined up 06, heavy.

Bala seemed keen to get airborne. Despite being at max take-off weight she rose with the willingness of a lover. The thrill of getting airborne still as keen as it

was on day one, exceedingly invigorating and somewhat intoxicating! How privileged are we?

The first leg to Thames was via Whangaparoa and Waiheke. Penny now happy with her life jacket and comfy-ish over water. Coming in on 05, I was a bit unnerved by 20 odd folks lined up shooting towards us with shotguns, I could smell the cordite and see the puffs of smoke. A hell of a welcoming committee I thought (naaa - just the regular skeet shooting boys having fun!!)

Topped up the tank while Penny went in search of a dunny. Or a bush - the latter was easier to find. We found our way over to a coffee shop across the road. Another brekkie, a coffee and another visit to the small house and back across the road. Cliff McChesney was at the hanger when we returned, and he recommended the Mohaka Gorge as a means of getting over or through the Ruahine Ranges. I listened to his words, soaking up his advice like a sponge. Added this route to my tablet, an easy task on Air Nav Pro, and away heading for Taupo.

We avoided Matamata as there was supposed to be an ATC jamboree or some such. Keeping the Kaimais close trucking over miles of flat farmland, this gave way to rolling, then pine forests. Tokoroa on the right, over and around some big hills, bendy lakes, rift valleys



## **Sir Keith Park Memorial Airfield, Thames**



*Photo: Rusty Russell*

with Wairakei and its steam and stench. Then Huka Falls, Taupo and its beautiful waterfront.

We slotted in with the jump planes for 17. Low down the runway, to grease it on at the apron exit. Hard to concentrate with all that stunning scenery - the lakes, mountains, forests, colours vibrant despite being mid summer.

I had considered doing the trip in one day but thought we shouldn't rush, spend the night in town, enjoy cruise'n'chill. I'm retired now - slow down ?

I parked up next to a chopper out in the middle, tied the cover securely and had lunch at the airport café. I recommend this eatery - cracker tucker and the lovely old fella who cooked made us so welcome. A real funny, likeable old pom.

I rang the airport motel and booked a room. Checked the map - not far, we

need the exercise, let's walk. Only looked about a couple of K. A couple of km usually we can do before breakfast standing on our heads, but this day the temperature was in the mid-30s. After 1 K the missus started to complain. After 1.5 km the whine got louder. By 2 km she plonked down under a tree like an abo and refused to walk any further despite my assurances that the motel was just around the next corner. The shade and wind didn't cool her enough to energise or galvanise, so in the interest of marital bliss and its associated benefits (or the threatened withdrawal of some) I called a cab.

Just as well! Actually it was still a couple of km and I must admit the bag was getting heavy and my earplugs weren't up to it! Yes, you guessed it, this was the test mentioned atop.

A swim in the lake, a different smell, green duckweed but cool. A fantastic

**Huka Falls (lower left); Lake Taupo**



*Photo: Rusty Russell*

**Lake Taupo  
(with swimmer!)**



*Photo: Rusty Russell*

seafood outlet, a comfy room, a fan, a kept promise and a good sleep. Life is good I reckon!

Back at the airport the pilot of the chopper passed on good knowledge for flying through the Mohaka. He knew the guys I know up north here including Pete Turnbull - the guy is an aviation legend. Indeed it's a small world.

In no time at all we were entering the gorge and Wairango. Around a corner and we were in a different world, not a sign of human interference, just rugged, beautiful bush, high steep sided hills. I stayed at low level down the gorge and didn't hurry to enjoy the magnificence of it. Around bend after bend, gob-smacking awesomeness! Thanks Cliffy, you were right on the money!

After 45 minutes we hung a righty near Puketitiri and stayed just east of the Ruahine Ranges all the way to Dannevirke. The scenery was wicked to the west - bare mountaintops; proper native bush to the east. The valley so wide and flat with rivers cut deep into the ground hundreds of feet below the farms.

They were a laid-back bunch at the airstrip. Little was organised, a dozen or so gyros were parked about. Was blowing like a bastard. We met a few guys, took a few for rides. Hub and Elton, Tony Turner were some I knew. Some gyro talk, then off to town to sort out a place for the night. Ring a cab - ok? Yeah, Naaaaa - no taxis, even though the place is the size of Whangarei! Penny fluttered her assets and a nice man offered us a ride into town to a nice



motel. We were somewhat pole-axed so didn't check out the nightlife.

There was some flying about the next morning and a trip to a local fella's farm some place to the south for a cuppa and scones. More flying folks about, then back for the AGM at the club. Laid back, but the usual administrative issues – fees, election of officers etc.

We got notification that friends from Ozzy had arrived unannounced in Auckland and wanted to stay, so we had to cut our visit short. Just as we were saying our goodbyes, the president called everyone around and presented us with two trophies - one for the longest flight to attend, and the one I was chuffed with, "for promoting the sport"! How cool.

We basically retraced our steps but, as you can imagine, exploring the mountains and valleys knowing we had gas to burn. The Ruahine Ranges are a delight to play around. I got up to 4500 feet at times. Just enough to clear the bush ridges up to the snow line.

Flying back up the Mohaka I learned stuff. Climbing slowly, full power, progress slow – mmmm. I could see how these places could get ugly should the conditions change. A strong mind and a reliable engine a must! There were three bush strips in the gorge, with DOC huts beside them. The strips looked pretty good but I was reluctant to try them out - maybe next time?

Another night at Taupo, utilising the taxi service and same motel, fish shop, lake

and off licence! We headed more east on the way north. Massive geological features over near Rotorua. Some tiger country covered in pines. Another coffee with the un-smiling barista with the toilet at Thames.

Boats aplenty in the gulf and yachts everywhere on the Waitamata. We decided to call in on Muzz so made a bee-line from Orere river.

It was fortunate there was an ag strip on top of a significant hill east of the Kaipara as the reports of an overflowing bladder from the back seat were becoming "urgent" and frequent. Words like, "its only another 30 minutes" didn't help, so all that practice of landing on the spot came in handy. And timely!

With the good westerly and empty bladders we got off no sweat. It was so nice to be home in familiar surroundings I had to smile. So cool to again hear TXN doing circuits with Bill's distinctive Chinese/English calls. We followed him in. As usual Muzz was surrounded with people, students and droppers in, but still made time to listen to a bit about our trip and share a cuppa

On the return to Whangarei we flew the ridge of the Tangihua power off, soaring back and forth unhurried, hovering, circling, while maintaining altitude, relishing and revelling in the magic that is gyroflight.

All in all a good wee trip. Had fun, met more cool aviators, learned heaps, didn't break the bank and explored more of our beautiful country.





*Gyros of all styles fly in to Dannevirke for the annual event*





*All photos: Rusty Russell*



# Thanks, from Germany

**Klaus-Andreas Schmidt**

Dear Members of the Dargaville Aero Club, from the 09 Jan till the 25 Jan 2015 I visited New Zealand. The last four days I spent in Dargaville. On my turn arounds by car I crossed the River Wairoa and saw the sign to the Dargaville Airport. I went into the office and met Mr. Murray Foster. Explaining him my situation, an older pilot without practice the last two and a half years, he just answered, we will change it. He was very helpful, so I came down next morning and started forthwith, checked the "Texan" and started for a two hours ride.

First we flew north to Kerikeri, circled about the Bay of Islands and could not see enough of this beauty. The fuel-indicators reminded us to go ahead, so we turned southbound to Hukerenui and followed the River Wairoa all the way back to DA. It was a great experience for me, to see this beautiful country from a plane, flown by myself. Thanks!!

Also thanks to Dennis, my instructor, who cared for me. After landing he told me, stop controlling the plane too much by the rudders, if it is trimmed properly, it goes on automatically. That was my first day flying in your club.

The next day I flew with Murray Foster himself. We started south-east, crossed the country to Mangawhai Heads, then south down to Auckland. We turned east, overflew the harbour to the bridge,



turned around along the skyline of Auckland, saw cruising and warships. This was highlight number one for me, it was so impressive, I never will forget! Thank You Murray for this great day and this unforgettable experience. We flew back to Dargaville via Orewa and Shelly Beach.

On my third day followed a trip north-west over the endless, lonesome beaches up to Opononi and turned into this inlet to discover Hokianga Harbour. These nice little places and campgrounds, the nature, the dunes, forests and lakes are still in my mind. You are living in a paradise, please never forget this. Because you see this day by day and you might get used to it. The three days flying in your nice club was for me first a surprise then pure

*The plane Klaus enjoyed so much*



*Photo: Klaus-Andreas Schmidt*

excitement and now this experience is deeply engraved in my awareness. Once again, thanks to all the people helping me to discover your great area from the air.

Thanks especially to Murray, Dennis and John. With best regards and the hope to come back to you.

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# First impressions

## Andrew Underwood



As a fixed wing pilot who has gone through the student loan funded training system, opportunities for me to step outside the box and dabble in niches

of aviation not included in my CPL course structure were few and far between. However, having now graduated and begun flying single engine pistons away from flight school, I've been able to meet a good variety of local pilots who fly just for fun, and even been invited along for rides in aircraft types that I would never have imagined myself flying in back at Ardmore.

One such machine that I've had the pleasure of back-seating recently is Whangarei-based Gyro ZK-KIW, a German built AutoGyro MT03 Eagle belonging to 'Rusty' Russell. It's registered as a Class 2 (dual seat) microlight, set him back roughly \$100,000 and has been his favourite toy for 18 months now. I was thoroughly uneducated on gyrocopter type aircraft before meeting Rusty, and rather apprehensive at the concept of strapping myself in to an open air cockpit without the security of a physical barrier between myself and rotating propeller assembly directly above my head.

I was also unaware that the large horizontally rotating blades were actually unpowered (other than a pre rotating mechanism) and utilised the relative

oncoming airflow to keep them spinning in an autorotation state. Instead of generating a downwards force that would be uncomfortable to those seated directly below, the blades just act like one big circular aerofoil similar to the configuration of a high winged monoplane. The smaller vertically arranged propeller, driven by a 100HP Rotax engine at the rear of the aircraft, is responsible solely for forward propulsion.

Rusty explained to me that gyros only require minimum take-off distances (10 to 100m), and can land at walking pace in practically no distance at all. They are capable of flying at speeds between 10 to 110 mile per hour in the cruise, to hovering stationary if the oncoming breeze is strong enough- all the benefits of a light weight helicopter at about 10% of the cost! The MT03 runs on mogas and burns a minimal 13L/hour flown alone, or 18L/hour with 2 POB. I was told a 'big weekend of flying' only sets the owner back \$150!

The 64 litre tank gives ZK-KIW a range of up to 300 miles. Rusty's longest trip to date was Whangarei to Taupo, via Tauranga. Incidentally, Tauranga is the home of Gyrate New Zealand Ltd, where owner Tony Unwin is the New Zealand agent for the aircraft type.

One of the main advantages the gyro has over other traditionally structured microlights is the inability to accidentally

spin, or actually stall the aircraft. Pulling full backwards on the stick eventually leads to an airspeed reduction, a temporary hover, then a gentle vertical descent.

Anyhow, on the day of our flight, we got airborne from less than 1/100th of the 1097m long sealed strip at Whangarei, nosed forward slightly and reaped the benefits of lift generation from ground effect during our initial acceleration. I'd picked up on a negative stigma about this aircraft type from my misinformed peers, and was expecting a somewhat shaky, unstable ride as we banked left and made our way towards the local low flying zone. But I was wrong.

Despite a steady 10 knot sea-breeze, I was perfectly comfortable in shorts and a T-shirt as we motored along over the mangroves. There weren't any uncomfortable vibrations present, and very little stick manipulation was required to control the aircraft.

Rusty demonstrated the ability to stop overhead a desired reference point, hold the aircraft stationary, then close the throttle and nudge the stick left or right to rotate vertically on the aircraft's own axis, almost like a fireman sliding down a pole, until a desired lower altitude has been obtained- then continue forwards without any hesitation. Being able to manoeuvre in multiple dimensions with so little effort was incredibly novel for me, and quite an experience as a passenger.

Over the two-way in-helmet voice intercoms, Rusty explained he'd taken a

few Air New Zealand long haul captains, as well as a Lear Jet pilot up for a spin, and they were all having the same reaction as me- they couldn't believe how much fun hands on flying like this was, where moving the controls in the direction of travel generated such an instantaneous response. And spending the entire flight at a relatively low level - low enough to see stingrays swimming through the shallows, and patches of drying asphalt on wet rural roads - the sort of height one only usually traverses through briefly on take-off and landing, was like being in another world with such an abundance of detail.

Before heading back to the airport, we made a touch and go landing on the empty golden expanse of Ruakaka Beach. Final approach must have been flown at 10 or so knots, and with the wheels meeting the sand in such a docile manner it was made obvious to me that the versatility of this aircraft was almost unlimited!

On the return hop back to Whangarei airport, I'd forgotten about any nervous qualms I'd had earlier and was keenly leaning forward in my harness as much as it would allow to soak in the views of the headlands and harbour that I'm used to viewing from a few thousand feet higher. It was a fantastic experience that kept me buzzing for the remainder of the day, and I can only end this piece by recommending a gyrocopter trial flight to any of the sceptics who happen to be reading!



# President Peter writes...

**Peter Randall**

The Singer Trophy Rally was eventually held after the weather led to it being postponed twice. As in previous years it proved to be an enjoyable and interesting weekend. Thanks must go to Graham Walker and his team of organisers.

I hope that before Easter, Harrison's Contracting will have spread limestone on either side of the taxiway so as to give us some hard parking areas for the winter. It will also keep the taxiway area clear for pilots wanting fuel. On the matter of fuel please note that Z-Energy has put in a new card reader at Dargaville Aero Club. Therefore you will be asked to punch in your pin number before you can pump fuel.

The parts for the Storch have now been dispatched from Italy. My thanks to Allan Jessop for arranging this. Hopefully this will mean that it will not be too long before the Storch is flying again.

At the time of writing Murray has just been discharged from hospital. I am sure you will all join me in wishing Murray a speedy recovery. While Murray recovers, there may be days of the week when

the club is not actively staffed. Club members are probably best to coordinate with one of our instructors ahead of time if they require flight instruction, a BFR or help with theory or exams.

After significant discussion the committee has unanimously agreed to institute changes that will ease Murray's significant workload at the club. Murray has been instrumental in making the club the success it is today, and all committee members believe that the club must provide more support with the day to day operations of the flight school. Dennis Williams, Brian Taylor, John Wegg and Greg van der Hulst are available with prior arrangement for flight instruction. Their contact details are below. Murray has expressed his intention to be back at the club as soon as he has recovered, but he will not be providing direct flight instruction. The committee is grateful that club members will still benefit from his vast instructing experience, not to mention his unfailing hospitality and great sense of humour.

I would like to wish all our members and their families a safe and Happy Easter.

Instructor contact details:

Dennis Williams  
Brian Taylor  
John Wegg  
Greg van der Hulst

dennis@mrblueskies.com  
clear-ridge@xtra.co.nz  
john@jetaircraftoperations.com  
gregvanderhulst@dargavilledocs.co.nz



# A big shout out to...

Rebecca Davidson, who has gained her Private Pilot Licence.

Well done, Rebecca!



*Photo: John Wegg*

***In the shed at Kaikohe - Steve Moor is building a Jodel D18***



*Photo: Warren Butler*

# Seen at Dargaville

*John Crone's Tecnam Sierra retractable*



*Photo: John Wegg*

*Brian Taylor's delighted mother-in-law*



*Photo: Paul Shaw*

**Calidus Autogyro**



*Photo: Paul Shaw*  
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**Murray Hargreaves of Maungaturoto is a regular visitor to DA with his Gippsland Aeronautics GA200**



*Photo: John Wegg*

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