



**The newsletter of  
Dargaville Aero Club**



**Summer 2016**

## **A long way for a feed**

**Rusty Russell**

Anyone that knows me, knows that food features pretty high on my 'gotta have' list. While at the annual Raglan Black Sands fly-in, one of the highlights is to fly north to land on Gibson Beach.



*Gibson Beach, near Raglan*

*Photo: Rusty Russell*

For some, landing on the beach is a novel experience, challenging and exciting, with all the perceived, potential, and real associated dangers. Living in the north, beach landings are a very regular occurrence for gathering pipi, picnicking, swimming, sunbathing, visiting friends, emptying bladders, or fulfilling some of nature's other urges.

So a landing on Gibson Beach could have been a bit ho-hum. But Bruce

Cooke, during his detailed pilot briefing, mentioned there were plenty of mussels there. Now I was keen!

With low-tide due in an hour, getting all interested participants and airplanes airborne promptly is a major exercise. I grabbed Rick Watson and raced into the air to get some aerial shots of all the assembled airplanes on the airfield. Not easy because these fly-ins are an opportunity to share the passion and go



*Mussel hunting begins*

*Photo: Rusty Russell*

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exploring, so catching everyone on the ground is a fleeting opportunity.

I landed, swapped passengers, and joined the exodus. It's only eight miles or so and airplanes slow and fast, pretty, and not-so, roared north.

To an untrained eye it would have looked like chaos. However, the rules of the air made it an orderly if uncontrolled arrival. Some 40 aircraft lined up by the cliffs like naughty schoolboys outside the principal's office. Some folks were milling around or eating lunch, some taking photos. And me? I was off in hot pursuit of someone who knew the whereabouts of the mussels.

The beds were further than I thought. As the tide was not as low as it could have been, it dictated runners off and jeans hoisted for a wade through a wee channel. The mussels were not the Green-lip Countdown variety, but little black buggers, millions of them forming a carpet you had to walk on. My poor bare feet were placed slowly and carefully on the sharp rocks. Eyes were soon focused to spot the larger ones, about three inches long. I ate a couple of dozen raw to satisfy the Ngāpuhi in me, then easily filled my bag, thankfully without having to move far.

On the way back I met Willie Morton and his wife Lorraine, so gave them

enough for a wee feed. They were happy to get some fresh kaimoana.

Seeing those cliffs got me excited, so I spent some time ridge-soaring and then doing circuits off the beach with some power-off landings. The West Coast is such a great playground!

Soon the tide signalled its intentions to reclaim the beach, forcing another exodus and another drag-race. Again I was surprised by the orderly landing sequence. At Raglan I slipped seamlessly into the pattern (well, no-one scolded me). To a relative newbie, having dozens of airplanes in the surrounding sky and several in the circuit, and no visibility in the six o'clock position is still nerve-wracking. Trusting your and others' ability to maintain separation still gives me a rush.

After meeting up again with Peter, Mark, John and Annemieka, and daughter and son-in-law, we headed for the cabin we had booked. Trying to cook up a bag of mussels on a small hotplate proved a challenge, but Penny works miracles in a kitchen and soon had steaming hot, sweet and succulent mussels on a plate outside on the lawn. Finger-licking good entrée, then off to the pub for a cold beer and lovely dinner.

Great destination, fun-flying, tasty food, real friends, lively conversation - the essence of Raglan Black Sands Fly-in 2015. Memorable as!



# The life of Brian

**Harvey Carran**

*(With apologies to Monty Python's Flying Circus)*

I live on a farm that was one of the first in the district to have a topdressing airstrip. It has not been used as such for 40 years because I put a house at the top end of it.

A bright idea came to me. If I learned to fly, I could get an airplane, keep it in a shed on the lawn, and fly off my own airstrip à la John Travolta. So a while back, I joined the Dargaville Aero Club and had a few lessons. These had to be suspended over the summer due to external pressures.

One of the top pressures was the supposed need to upgrade and extend the kitchen. For this to take place the shower first needed to be relocated into

the bathroom. So the bathroom got a shower and a total revamp.

Then a bedroom had a complete re-fit. Then another bedroom, followed by the third. Then came the carpet and a new roof to keep it all dry.

The lounge was a bit sad as it had been forgotten during a 1980 makeover and a divorce. It gained new windows, a ranch slider, and an extension as well.

This was all taking its toll, and to offset 'cabin fever', a dash to freedom was required. A mate and I set forth to view a few airplanes that I had been following on TradeMe.



*Harvey Carran with newly-named ZK-RAG*

*Photo: John Wegg*



Limited funds tends to sharpen one's focus. One airplane that had no appeal on the Internet was a real honey in real life.

Back home again another bright idea arrived. A development loan for the farm was arranged and I became Capt. Carran, owner of a RANS S-6 Coyote.

The builder/owner was very accommodating and allowed me to keep the airplane in his Hastings hangar until he needed the space for his next kit-set project. He arranged for me to join up with the Hawkes Bay East Coast Aero Club so I could resume training, but this time in my own airplane.

Winter arrived and turned to spring. The ewes lambed and the cattle needed attention. Birds nested in the Coyote. The lounge needed a new deck, so a new deck it got plus a damn good extension to boot. An external entrance to the proposed new kitchen needed shelter from the easterly weather, so a porch was built with an outdoor sink bench for use on the deck extension.

All this took precious time. Time that was not being used to learn this flying game at Hastings. A trip to Dargaville was required. Murray rubbed his chin and thought that as the Cessna was leaving, a Coyote could move in. But Hastings is not next door to Dargaville.

Enter Brian. Brian Taylor was the man. He had a current taildragger rating, so I was introduced. Seems he grew up on

the farm next door to my ex-father-in-law's farm. Small world. No problems.

So, off to Hastings we went by Air New Zealand. Cleaned the bird's nest out of the Coyote and flew it Dargaville. Pretty simple, really.

Along the coast we flew over Raglan, Manukau, Muriwai, then South Head. "South Head, isn't that where the bombing range is?" I asked Brian. I kept a keen eye out for anti-aircraft activity. Brian who, by this stage I realised, had led a full life, retired with grandkids, da da da etc, seemed unconcerned. Myself, I have big plans for the future, with lots yet to achieve. Being shot down, even accidentally, on the maiden voyage, just didn't seem to cut it for me. Plenty still to be learned about this flying caper, I supposed.

So, now, the Coyote has a new address at 'Dargavich'. It just needed a new name. Another bright idea. If I called it 'The New Kitchen', two problems might be solved. Maybe?

Now, the flying lessons. I've been known as a lot of things over the years but never, and I repeat never, an athlete. Maybe I had harboured within some latent abilities in this field. Possibly, with dedication, I could represent Dargaville at the upcoming Olympics. I'm talking here, of course, the high jump. But the gymnastics trampoline was also an option.

Landing this headstrong, highly strung beast began to test my patience. That was



just my patience, not instructor Taylor's. He has been in this place before and at times appeared somewhat ragged. That was the vertical Olympics department dealt with, but this plane is also a taildragger. These types are known as being inherently unstable in the going straight ahead department. When I finally tamed it to stay in constant contact with the ground, it would try and swap ends on me.

"Don't be a pussy foot. Use your feet. Dance. You can really throw these things around if you want to." All this advice rang in my ears while all I wanted to do was have a cup of tea in the clubhouse.

"It is well known that white men can't dance," I offered. "It is well known that, I, too, am a white man," replied Brian.

Practice is the essence.

The Black Sands Rally at Raglan was a go, so it was off to the beach. Brilliant weather, beach landings, hundreds of like-minded people. Brian is still talking to me.

Despite my landings, The New Kitchen hasn't had any broken crockery. The self-appointed experts on the balcony of the clubroom still pass judgement. Yes, you know who you are.

As Rachel Hunter said in a rare moment of clarity, "It doesn't happen overnight." As Harvey Carran said at the beginning of all this, "Life is not simple." As Ghia keeps telling Harvey, "You make life very complicated, VladiPutin."

**Harvey Carran and ZK-RAG lifting off from Raglan Black Sands fly-in**



*Photo: Dave Evans*

# From the instructors' corner

**Dennis Williams**

It has certainly been HOT and HUMID this summer, and have you noticed that the hedges seem higher and the runways seem shorter and the engine feels knackered? I haven't put on any weight so what's going on? Why isn't the love of your life performing as she did just a few months ago? (The aircraft that is!)

Air density. Yup. Or should I say the lack thereof. Air density affects our aircraft's performance and the density of that air is affected by heat, humidity, and pressure. For those just into their training, hot air, moist air, and lower pressures (think less pressure the higher you go) have less density and adversely affect the performance of your aircraft.

So, what is the performance of our aircraft? Well, GA aircraft generally have performance charts and all PPLs know exactly how to use them. I can hear murmurs at the back of the class - see Jill after skool. I have looked everywhere for performance charts for our microlights and failed dismally so we must calculate.

Let's get straight into the calculations, assuming zero humidity:

$$DA = \frac{T_{SL}}{\Gamma} \left[ 1 - \left( \frac{P/P_{SL}}{T/T_{SL}} \right)^{\frac{\Gamma R}{gM - \Gamma R}} \right]$$

Duurrrr! Exactly. Hardly user friendly. So what do we know?



From the pilot's manual the manufacturer states that on a standard day (temperature +15C, air pressure 1013.25hPa and humidity 0%) our Storch at the maximum take-off mass (weight) of 550kg requires a distance of 250 metres to reach a height of 15 metres, and 200 metres to land over the same 15 metre obstacle. Now bear in mind these figures have been decided by the test pilot flying accurate speeds - and trying to sell the aircraft. You are unlikely to do as well.

Today it is certainly not a standard day. There is a sub-tropical low drifting down the east coast giving a QNH at Dargaville of 1000hPa, the temperature outside is +30C and the club weather station says the humidity is a sticky 96%. We have all the factors to reduce our performance, so is the runway still long enough to miss those pesky trees at the end?

We need to know the pressure altitude. Easy - just set the sub scale on the



altimeter to 1013 and read off the altitude. Looks like 390ft to me. (Don't forget to reset the altimeter to airfield elevation!)

On the Koch chart below draw a straight line between the pressure altitude (390ft) and the air temperature (30C).

Where your line crosses the middle scale is the percentage correction to apply to your normal take-off distance and rate of climb, around 30% in this case. So you require an extra 75 metres of take-off distance, for 325 metres.

To correct for the high humidity we will use rule-of-thumb figures, based on 100% humidity to be safe. At sea level add 32%; for 3,000ft add 14.5%; and for 5,000ft add 11%. This adds another 104 metres now making a total distance required 409 metres. It's now time to decide just how good a pilot we really are. I would suggest adding at least 20% to the total, giving for today a total take-off distance required to clear 15 metre trees of 499 metres.

All of a sudden, touch and go circuits take on a whole new meaning, especially

if you land long. Admittedly you are probably still rolling but there have been sightings of pilots recently going around the trees at Dargaville rather than over them. Go around early or stop.

And finally, HEAVY, this should be all bonus as all the calculations were for the aircraft at maximum take-off mass (weight). If your take-off distance required is close to 2/3 of the take-off distance available, throw your passenger out rather than risk hitting anything.

There are other methods of working all this out but I believe this method to be the simplest. Err on the side of safety. There are, of course, further corrections, so pick up a copy of the CAA GAP Take-off and Landing pamphlet. Those with Internet access may like to see a close call: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6BoKzLw-dzU>

And lastly, following a minor incident (not one of ours, fortunately), do you know where your wing/rotor tips are in relation to hangars, pumps, posts, other aircraft, etc? Take great care when taxiing.

Safe and happy flying.

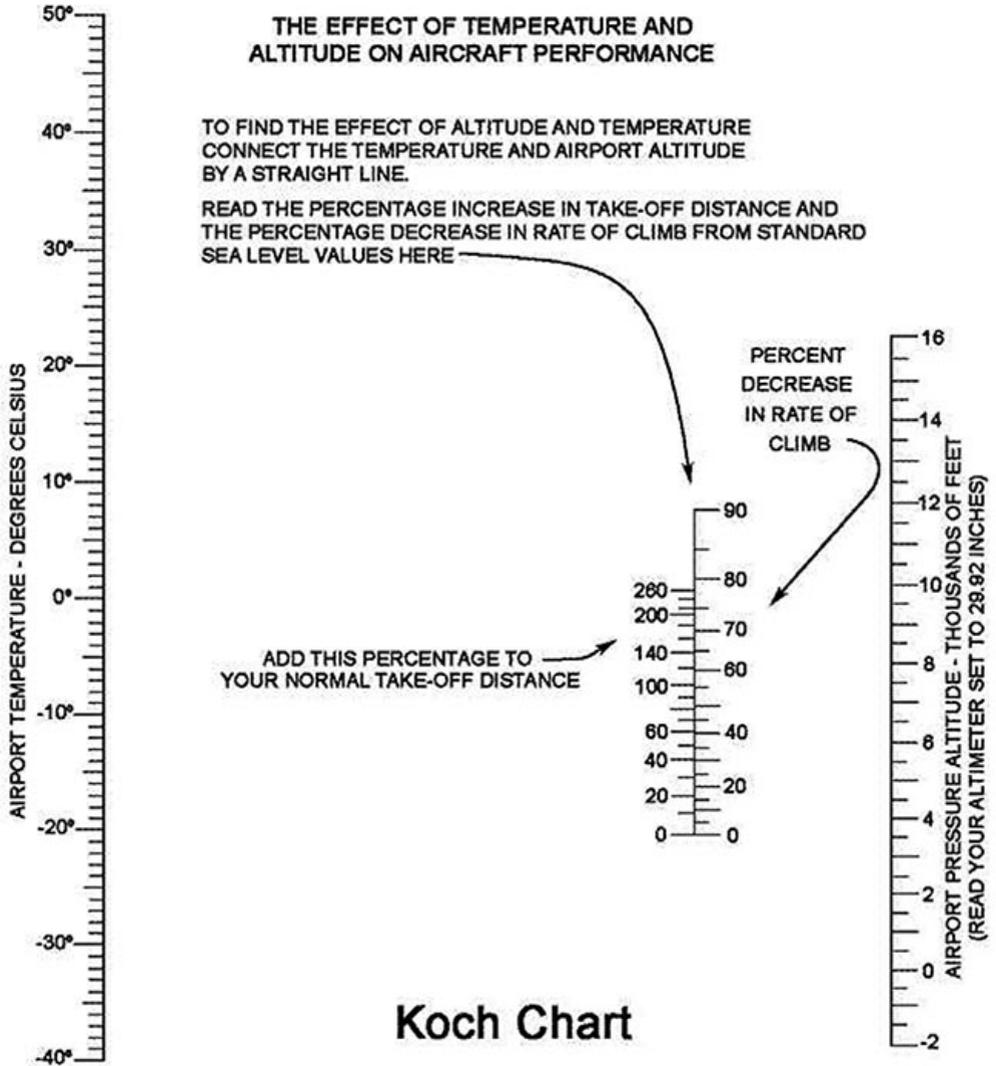
*There's a scary video of a large jet suffering from "hot, humid and heavy" here:* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UZGXwbPfwQs>



## THE EFFECT OF TEMPERATURE AND ALTITUDE ON AIRCRAFT PERFORMANCE

TO FIND THE EFFECT OF ALTITUDE AND TEMPERATURE  
CONNECT THE TEMPERATURE AND AIRPORT ALTITUDE  
BY A STRAIGHT LINE.

READ THE PERCENTAGE INCREASE IN TAKE-OFF DISTANCE AND  
THE PERCENTAGE DECREASE IN RATE OF CLIMB FROM STANDARD  
SEA LEVEL VALUES HERE



Koch Chart

***Rand KR2 on a hot day at Dargaville...***



*Photo: John Wegg*

***It does pay to know where your wing tips are in relation to lamp posts, etc.  
(This Caravelle aircraft never flew again)***



*Photo: John Wegg*

# Presidential proceedings

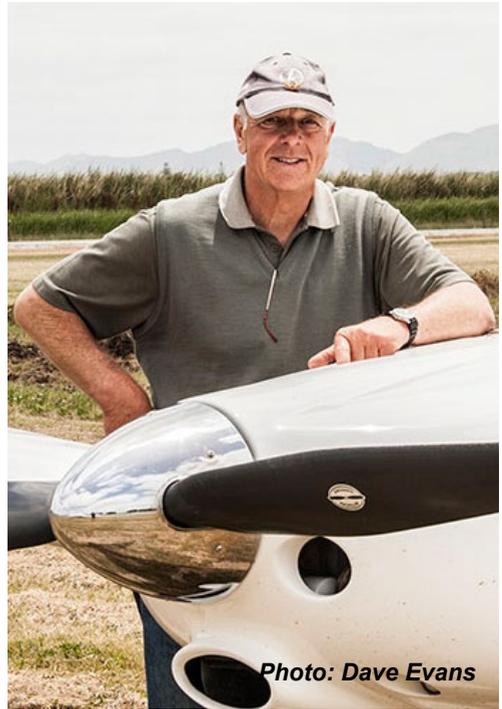
**Peter Randall**

I believe Dargaville Aero Club members can be really proud of what we have at Dargaville Aerodrome. It is a club and airfield which is a pleasure to visit as it always has a friendly and welcoming atmosphere. The club rooms are tidy and clean, the lawns mowed and gardens looked after. The runway and grassed areas mowed and the hangar brushed out and tidy.

This is all down to our members doing their bit so you all deserve a pat on the back. From instructors, mowers, brushers, and through to those who simply provide a smiling face to visitors, a big thank you for your continued support.

In the winter we struggle for areas to park aeroplanes because the grassed areas become too soft. So we have laid two areas of limestone, 191 tonnes in total, on either side of the taxiway. This means we can park aircraft by backing them off the taxiway onto the new limestone-strengthened area. This should also keep the taxiway clear. We will keep giving it a roll after every rain until it has settled down firmly and then let the grass grow over. This should work out successfully but only time will tell.

Our club signs, one by the club house and one out by the main road are becoming the worse for wear. So do we repaint them or come up with totally new signs? I welcome any feedback on the subject. Are there any budding design artists out there that would like to come up with new design ideas?



*Photo: Dave Evans*

If there are any members who have any ideas or issues regarding the club that they would like to air, please feel free to bring them up with myself or one of the committee members. We are always seeking ways to improve our club and its surrounds.

It is good to see Rusty Russell working to get the Whangarei Aero Club back on track. They meet every Sunday so I am sure Rusty would appreciate you calling in for a cuppa.

Fly safe!



# Te Hapua - New Zealand's northernmost military aerodrome

Greg van der Hulst

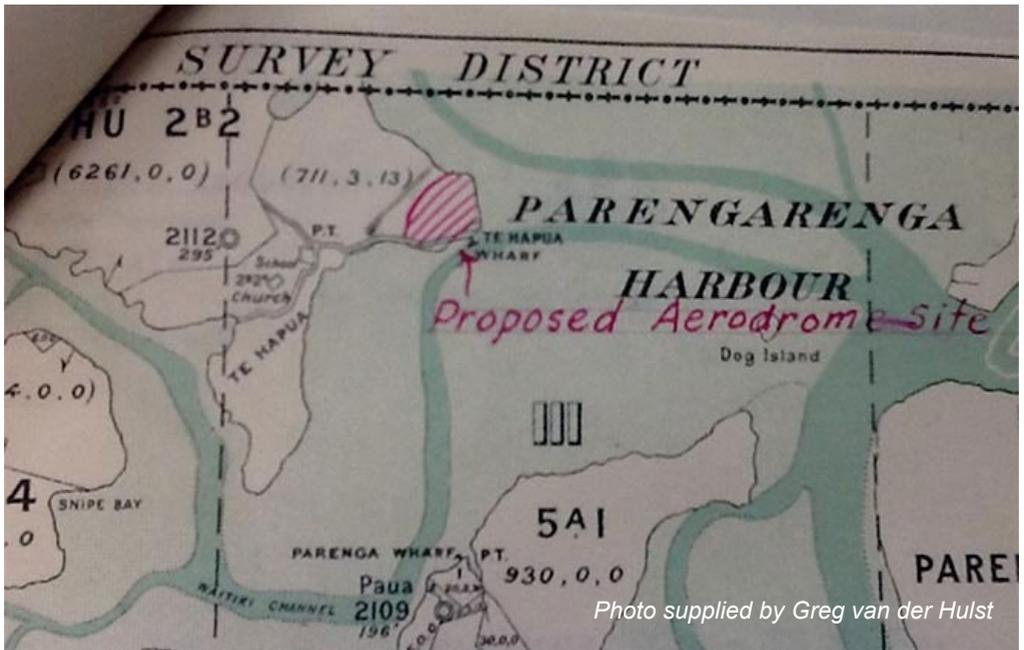


Photo supplied by Greg van der Hulst

Te Hapua was first surveyed as a possible landing ground in March 1936 by the Public Works Department Engineer based at Kaitiaki. At that time a site at Te Pahi was also being considered for development as an aerodrome, though it is unclear whether that was the site of the current 700m Waitiki Landing airstrip, developed by Northern Air in 1995 and now used by Salt Air for tourist flights to Te Pahi.

Wing Commander TM Wilkes ([https://www.caa.govt.nz/history/t\\_m\\_wilkes](https://www.caa.govt.nz/history/t_m_wilkes).)

[htm](#)) responded to the Public Works Engineers' initial survey results and recommendation with caution, noting that while 'a ground in the extreme north would undoubtedly be of value - it might also conceivably be a menace under certain conditions. For that reason I am inclined on first thought to favour Te Pahi ... to Te Hapua since the latter is on the coast and more accessible to a potential enemy for use as a base'. There is a handwritten addition to this letter which changed his conclusion following a discussion with then Public

Works Aerodrome Engineer EA Gibson. 'PS. Since writing above have talked the matter over with Mr Gibson who states that Te Paki is not altogether a suitable site - Te Hapua should therefore be reserved if possible'.

The *New Zealand Herald* reported on 23 February 1939 that the Minister of Works, Bob Semple, had visited and approved the construction of an aerodrome by the shore of Parengarenga Harbour at Te Hapua. The 100 acre area was adjacent to the Te Hapua wharf (built in 1936) which, it was proposed, would allow the shipment of aviation supplies by sea as 'the roads in this district are of a very primitive character'.

Bob Semple was, apart from being a colourful parliamentary figure, an enthusiastic proponent of regional development and modernising New Zealand's transport networks. Known as an arresting speaker with a tendency to hyperbole, Semple promised an aerodrome 'covering 100 acres', a large project. One wonders if Mr Semple was aware that as early as July 1936 the proposed layout for a 900 x 200 yard main vector and 700 x 250 yd secondary vector had been pared back to a rather more modest 20 acre development with 500 and 320 yd vectors. In July 1936 the Whangarei District Engineer (a Mr Wood) had written to the Director of Air Services in Wellington (Wilkes) advising that funding would only stretch to the smaller proposal and that it would '... make a useful emergency landing ground in a locality such as this'.

By June 1940 the 20 acre area adjacent to the Te Hapua wharf had had stumps removed, been drained, levelled, and grassed. District Engineer Wood at Whangarei reported to Wellington at that time the area had been developed for the dual purposes of 1, Providing a grassed area for Native dairy stock; and 2, As a potential emergency landing ground. The first purpose was important, as this was part of the deal the Public Works Department struck to obtain the land. In another letter to the Air Services Department in 1940, Engineer Wood wrote '...in view of the fact that 21 acres of pasture would enable Te Hapua Natives to run dairy stock and remedy the existing local lack of fresh milk for adults and school children, the Native Department agreed to find 500 pounds for labour and to give the land for a landing ground free of compensation provided local natives were employed and they had the right to run stock on the grassed area. In this manner we obtained the land and the money required to develop runway strips'.

Olwyn Ramsey in *Wings Over Waipapakauri* writes '...under the guidance of Jack Thomason, a landing ground was constructed ... by the Public Works Department, using local labour. Two huts from Te Paki Station were moved north to the site and placed alongside the field'. The local labour were Maori who previously had been employed by the Native Department on the drainage of Te Hapua flat to the west of the settlement.

Robin Shepherd, in *Te Hapua School our 75th year*, writes 'Mr Pickens, the



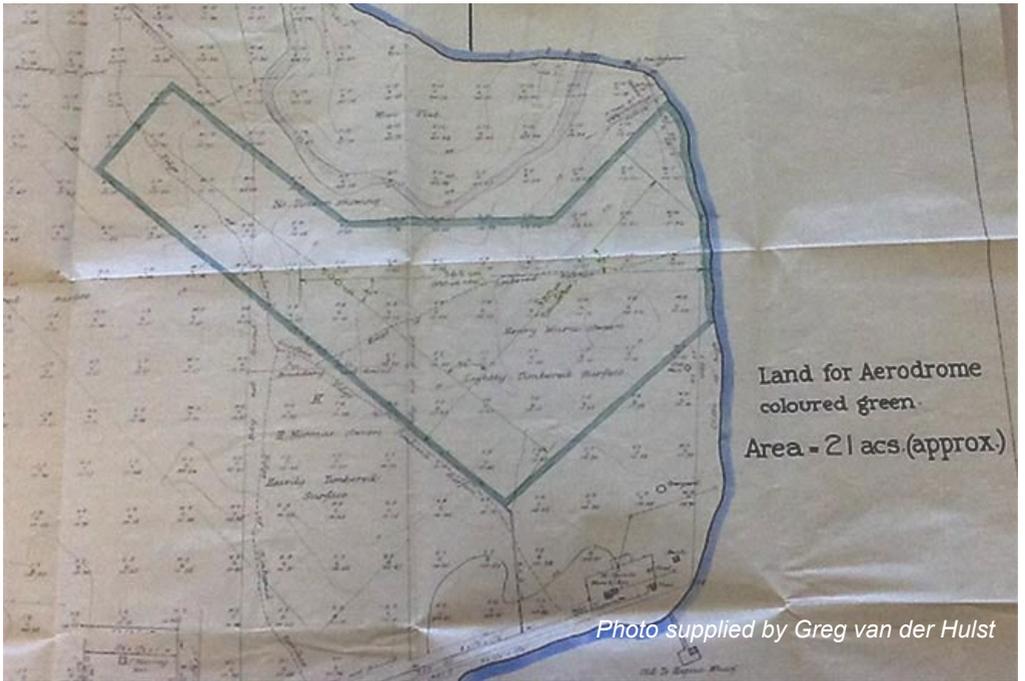


Photo supplied by Greg van der Hulst



Photo: Ian Skipworth

headmaster at Te Hapua School was sworn into the air force and appointed "Station Commander". He waited in vain for an opportunity to exercise the powers of his position though what those powers were he was never told'.

In July 1940, Engineer Wood again wrote to the Air Department advising ... 'the area which will become available for emergency use this summer is *not* considered adequate in size for use as an all-type emergency landing ground'. The Air Department responded in August 1940, noting 'if the landing ground is to be of any real value in an emergency, the south-west and north-east landing strips should be at least 550 yards long'. It seems this wasn't considered feasible (financially, operationally, or practically), as some time later in April 1941 the Air Department wrote again to the District Engineer instructing him to re-grass the developed area to be suitable for grazing cattle and that '...there is no likelihood of the Te Hapua Aerodrome being used during the war'. This was only a few months after the grassed surface had been completed by the PWD.

Early in 1942 the Japanese were undertaking aerial raids on Darwin and other parts of northern Australia. This led to renewed concern that Te Hapua could be used by an invading force, given the closest defending air force and army units were 70 kilometres to the south at Waipapakauri and Sweetwater. It was decided to dig drains across the aerodrome vectors to prevent their

use by enemy aircraft, reportedly 4 to 5 feet wide. Olwyn Ramsey writes 'the method of obstruction was left largely to the initiative of individual Home Guard commanders, a method resulting in the usefulness of the obstructions varying considerably'. It is difficult to see these drains from the air today, but a planned road trip later this year may reveal where these were built.

In September 1945, two of the original land owners (Henare Murupaenga and John Rameka) wrote to the Public Works Department asking that the land be returned to them. 'For patriotic reasons we did not mind [the land] being taken for [an aerodrome] but as the war is now finished we would be glad to have the property back as soon as possible'. The Native Land Court was involved in the original decision to take the land for Defence purposes, and in July 1947 ruled that the land should be offered back to the original owners, but only if they agreed to pay for the fences that had been built on the land. The original owners refused to pay, and it was another few months before everyone agreed that in lieu of rent and in the interests of concluding the matter, the fencing should be handed over at no cost.

The area just north of Te Hapua settlement today is now mostly covered with regenerating scrub, with little evidence remaining of the few months in the summer of 1940-41 when it was New Zealand's northernmost military aerodrome.

# New-style Stealth

**Dave Evans**

*The new outfit looking good*



*Photo: Dave Evans*

Derek Taylor has just finished refurbishing 'The Stealth', otherwise known as the Horn TH-1, which sports the registration ZK-TLH. As well as sorting out a myriad of minor things, Derek has given the old girl a new outfit. A new coat of spray paint, that is.

You may already know something of the history of The Stealth. The late Tom Horn of Levin was its creator, completing the design and build during the 1980s using a 1.8 litre Subaru engine. Inspiration for The Stealth came from the lines of the North American P-51 Mustang. After Tom passed away, his cousin Graham inherited the aircraft and eventually transferred it to Taupo. Brian Taylor was the next owner, having spied it sitting unused in the back of Graham's hangar. Brian told the

story in the Summer 2007 issue of 'New Zealand Sport Flying', the magazine of the Sport Aircraft Association NZ. If you have trouble tracking it down, Brian might let you see his copy!

Fast forward to 2012 and Brian is building a hangar and house, with work being done by builder brother Derek. A deal of the sort only brothers can hatch between them sees the aircraft stealthily become Derek's property. Builders can't work for nothing, but a discounted hourly rate eventually earns Derek enough credit for Brian to dig out the ownership papers and hand them over to Derek. With ownership comes new opportunities – the shiny new garb shows what the opportunity to lavish tender loving care can do.



*Photo: Dave Evans*

***TLH wearing the previous outfit, with Brian Taylor at the controls***



***Photo: supplied by Brian Taylor***



# The Mustang, briefly

**Dave Evans**

In 1940 World War II was raging, Britain had its back to the wall, and there was a shortage of capable aircraft. The British Purchasing Commission signed a contract with North American Aviation to build a new fighter aircraft using the Allison engine that powered the Curtiss P-40 fighters. Progress was swift with the first prototype taking to the air in October 1940, a mere 21 weeks after the contract signing.

The Allison engine lacked high-altitude performance so was replaced by the Rolls-Royce Merlin with a two-stage supercharger. This transformed the Mustang into one of the most capable fighters anywhere. The design allowed the aircraft to carry a large fuel load, enough to escort bombers all the way

from Britain to Germany and back. Mustangs also flew in the Pacific war arena.

After the war ended, air forces around the world continued to operate the Mustang. The Dominican Republic's air force retired its last Mustang in 1984! Many examples were sold into private hands, notably for air racing and as 'Warbird' display aircraft.

New Zealand's first Mustangs arrived just as the war was ending. Thirty aircraft arrived but were stored before being assembled. The Territorial Air Force began to fly them in 1951, continuing until 1955, when they were retired because of ongoing undercarriage and corrosion problems.

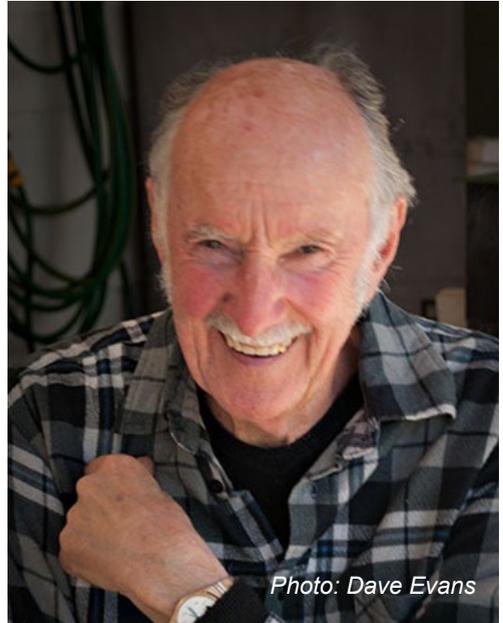


*P/O Andrew Ian French of No 1 Squadron, w Whenuapai, was flying a P-51D (NZ2425), similar to this one, when he disappeared on 20 March 1955.*

*Photo: John Wegg*

We have had a good summer for flying. Both the Storch and the Texan have been very active for the first two months of 2016. Apart from many trial flights, we have two new students and others have settled in for regular training. Welcome to Ian Fox and Riddhi Dhakecha. Congratulations to Hunter Zwaans for going solo while still a high school student. Well done Hunter! Justin Marinkovic, already a commercial pilot, is doing a rating in the Texan. Scott Neill is working his way through the exams and preparing to set out on his cross-country exercises. David Mason completed his exams and has gone solo after 20 years away from flying. Bill Rea has passed all his exams and started on his cross-country exercises. Tim Barnaby has done his flight test for the intermediate licence and is also ready for cross-country exercises. All in all it has been a busy few months.

Our club has decided to purchase a new gyrocopter, which will add to our fleet of recreational aircraft. A final decision on which one to buy will take into account the price and the models available. Rusty is advising on the type best suited to our club. We have club members who have trained in Rusty's own gyro, and other members who also would like to train in a gyro. This type of flying suits quite a few people. Rusty will train the students as he has done in the past on his own gyrocopter. The modern gyrocopter is safe and very exhilarating, so watch this space.



*Photo: Dave Evans*

Whangarei Aero Club is under new management. Members of the Dargaville Aero Club are keen to support them to get up and running again, even if they only call in for coffee and a chat.

The social side of our club is really growing, with an average of 45 people for Saturday lunch and 10 to 15 aircraft visiting on flyable days. They come from far-flung places, including Thames, Tauranga, Waihi Beach, Kerikeri, Kaitaia – and Whangarei. It's good for the visitors to have a chat, meet other pilots from different clubs, and check out the aircraft that have arrived. We would like another cooking team to help with the lunches. The kitchen facilities are excellent, so let us know if you can help in any way.

# Great Barrier Getaway

**Rebecca Davidson**

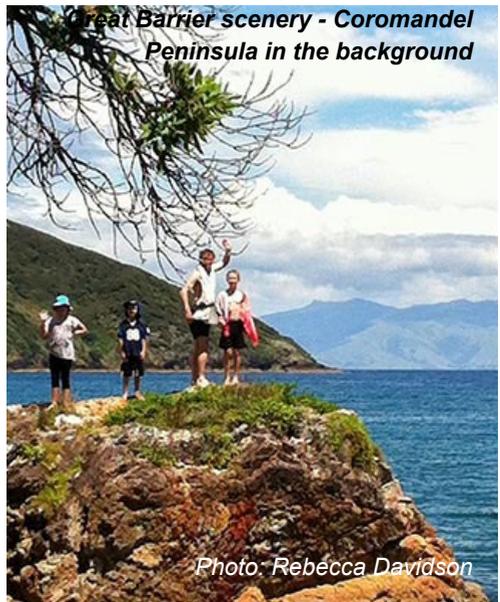
I've had my PPL for almost a year now. After the disappointment of someone else realizing what a great aeroplane the club's Cessna JBA was and taking her away, I managed to convince the Hales to give me a go in their Piper PA-28-181 Archer, KCC. Thanks to Jill (and Blake) I did my type rating in time for summer flying.

I've been fortunate to have the whole family squish in for trips to Raglan, Kaitaia, and Great Barrier Island. I had been looking forward to Great Barrier for some time and, even though the weather forecast predicted some low-ish cloud (1,500'), it was expected to lift late in the morning. Sure enough, the forecast was correct and from Breamtail Head it was hard to see the Barrier, which was covered in low cloud. I tracked to Little Barrier Island, around the restricted zone that protects the wildlife there, then approached Claris from Blind Cove.

After landing and taxiing to the parking spot, the kids were keen to explore. First stop was the airport terminal and information stand to find out what to do, where to go, and how to get there. Thomas grabbed an ample supply of all the maps for the whole island – and they are good maps. Then we walked around to the rental car yard. Heaps of dunger cars in various states of decline, so that looked promising. But they were all booked out for the day. So back to the terminal to try another car hire place

(there is more than one). They too were booked out, but might have something after the ferry sailing.

It was just as well Thomas' map showed us a playground nearby – kids happy. I spied an ice cream shop across the road – me happy. Scott was kicking himself for leaving the fishing rod behind – Muzz did try to remind him. After an ice cream, and the locals pointing out the Waikato Aero Club lodge next to the aerodrome, the kids headed back to the playground, while Scott and I pretended to be cultured and took in the art gallery. We must have fooled the very nice lady at the display, 'cos she took pity on us and offered her car to use for the afternoon.



“It’s just sitting in the car park till I go home at four”. Yippee – we scored some wheels. Now we really can get around the island. Scott did offer to fill her petrol tank, then suffered from shock when he saw the price on the pump: \$2.60 per litre.

Still, we made our way to Whangaparapara where the boys jumped off the pier. Then rock-hopping before driving to Midlands. We thought about trying to do the trek to the hot water pools but decided to leave that for next time.

Midlands Beach had huge crashing waves, which we weren’t brave enough to experience. Scott had already checked out the surf as we flew in. My eyes had

been fixed on the runway to position my downwind leg. Then time to return the car to the art gallery and squish into KCC again.

Air traffic was getting busy, but I managed to get away without holding short at the holding point. With several aeroplanes radioing that they were approaching from the west, I decided to go north along the eastern coast. We saw the airfield at Okiwi before heading west ourselves to the ‘mainland’.

Great Barrier is on our list of places to return to. It would be good to check out if the Waikato Aero Club would let us use their accommodation, and next time we will book a car.



# 35 Years of Dargaville Aero Club

**John Wegg**

This year marks the 35th anniversary of the official opening of the current aerodrome on Hoanga Road and gives the Dargaville Aero Club the opportunity to host a celebratory Open House and Fly-in.

The airfield, which replaced the Awakino Road strip (now the site of the Dargaville Hospital), was formally opened on 18 April 1981 after much effort by members of the Northern Wairoa Aero Club, now the Dargaville Aero Club.

We will be engaging the local community to show off what the club has to offer, as well as promote NZDA to flyers from other parts of the country. Not least, the occasion will give DAC members a boost in pride, a chance to meet each other and a wide array of visitors, and—of course—engage in the collective and satisfying spirit of working together for the future.

Besides trial flights in the club's Storch and Texan, sightseeing flights in a new

Robinson R44 will be offered by HeliNorth.

Rusty Russell has promised a good turnout by gyros and, with an open invitation to all aerial conveyances, we hope to attract a varied selection of microlight and general aviation types that can be inspected by the general public as well as other aviators.

While we anticipate the local ATC squadron will provide safety/crowd control and parking directions, we will need DAC members to offer guidance.

Our usual Saturday lunch will be BBQ-style, with cold drinks and tea and coffee available all day at reasonable prices.

If you have ideas or would 'love' to volunteer for a wee task (or three), either in advance and/or on this worthy day, please contact our event coordinator John Wegg, email:

[john.dargavilleaeroclub@gmail.com](mailto:john.dargavilleaeroclub@gmail.com)



*Peter Ian Wilkinson, MP (National) performing the opening ceremony on 18th April 1981*



*Photo: from the DAC archives*

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