





MARCH - APRIL 2023

EDITION 68





RECWINGS

is produced in conjunction with the Canterbury Recreational Aircraft Club.

Contributions for the next edition are due by May-June. We invite contributions from all, with editorial discretion being final.

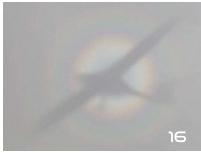
editor@crac.co.nz

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Cover- Rodger Ward brings his amazing and very photogenic CrI Cri to land on NZRT 07, during the CRAC Open Day on April 1st.

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BRIAN GREENWOOD

Once again, whoever's in charge of the weather smiled on the CRAC Open Day. The day dawned cold and rainy, but the precipitation ceased by the time we were getting the aircraft out, and the day warmed up shortly after lunch – much to the Gelato vendor's relief!

The weather certainly lowered the numbers from previous years, but there were plenty enough to keep the Instructors busy with the lessons. One family I spoke to were very happy to wait a couple of hours to get them all through.

CRAC doesn't make any money from these events, the sold-out lessons (and they were true initial lessons with pre-flight training and the effect of controls taught) just covering some costs. We do it to share the love of flying and show off our environment and aircraft.

There were about 50 aircraft on display by my count, including all of the open hangars (not counting the two frames hanging up in Stew's hangar), so I'm sure we surpassed the advertised 60+ by the time we add in the other arrivals and departures during the day.

A huge shout-out of appreciation to the Instructors who worked so hard (with plenty of breaks), and to the organising committee, volunteers, and workers who made the day such a success. A special note of thanks to the ATC for their fantastic work.

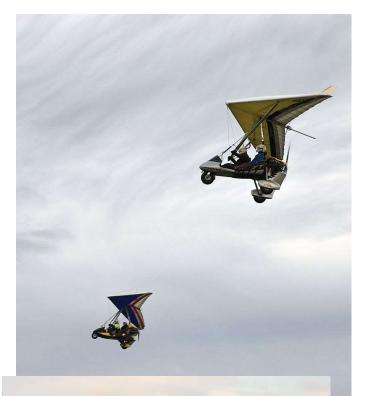
Above, the car parks are nearing capacity and the food vendors are, hopefully, happy! © 2023 John G Cosgrove

Below, a budding aviator learns the joy of flying a yellow tail-dragger.

Bottom, Stewart Bufton was a busy man taking friends flying, this young man has a lot to tell his classmates on Monday (Photo courtesy of Casey Brown).











Clockwise from top left, Brendon Marshall and Doug Anderson's Synchronised take offs looked great! A crowd of admirers gather around MLD's newly polished Undercarriage legs. Chris Pennell's new Chook B.10, Vannessa Martin in her Savannah MYN. The viewing spots were always popular; and Roy Waddingham dodges the Photographer in PAB.







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Wayne has just returned from his bi-annual, update course for Rotax Aircraft Engines at Bert Flood's facility in Australia. This keeps him factory current



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Left, Philip Royds drops in to join the fun in his Avid Heavy Hauler UL, ZK-WEN.

Below left, Stewart Bufton airborne again.

Below centre, Iain Blyth catches up with friends.

Below right, Admirers ignore the trike and swarm over the Bantam B.10.







Clockwise from bottom left, Scott James takes another happy student up in our first Tecnam, RGA; The crowded flightline; a study in (some) primary colours – ZK-JOR, CCB, and MHG; the ATC were a welcome presence and worked very hard to help make the Open Day a success.







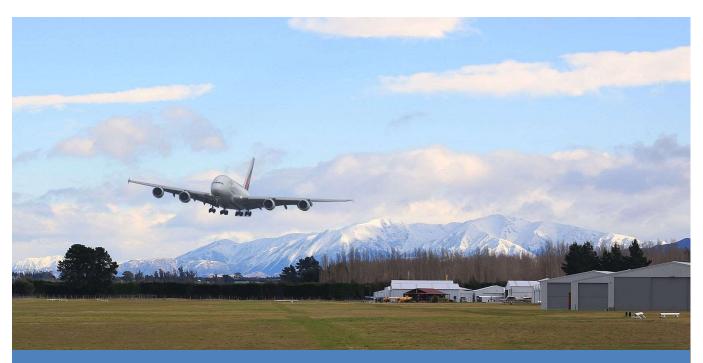


CLASSIC FIGHTERS OMAKA



The organisers of Yealands Classic Fighters Omaka this year have got a real treat lined up – providing the weather is perfectly dry, they intend to run the ex-John Smith De Havilland Mosquito which has been restored for the Omaka Aviation Heritage Centre. And this is no April Fool's day joke, either.

General tickets still available, folks!



EMIRATES SUPPORTS THE CRAC OPEN DAY ON APRIL 1ST STAFF REPORTER

Huge thanks to Emirates for sending one of their premium passenger aircraft, the Airbus A380, to support the CRAC Open day on April 1st.

It was impressive to see it touchdown on 07 and certainly enhanced the display. Surprised it fitted in near Stew's hangar.

I wonder if we can get other airlines to support the Open Day in the future.



			Deconning	2 0111	/ 0111
Altitude	Wind	Temp	Wind	Wind	Wind
1000	NW (310°) 20 kt		NW (330°) 10 kt	W (270°) 5 kt	SW (210°) 20 kt
3000	NW (300°) 30 kt				SW (220°) 25 kt
5000	W (290°) 30 kt	+9 °C			SW (230°) 30 kt
7000	W (280°) 30 kt	+5 °C			
10000	W (290°) 30 kt	0 °C			

Becoming

CHRISTCHURCH

METAR NZCH 122030Z AUTO 21022KT 9999 -RA FEW011/// BKN033/// OVC041/// 12/11 Q1002 RMK SUGARLOAF 18043KT

AUTO Report issued 13th 9:30am Wind: strong southwesterly (210°) 22 kt Visibility: 10 km or more

Cloud (AGL): few at 1100 ft (type not available) - broken at 3300 ft (type not available) - overcast at 4100 ft (type not available)

Temperature: 12°C Dewpoint:11°C QNH: 1002 hPa Remarks: SUGARLOAF Wind: severe gale southerly (180°) 43 kt

TAF NZCH 122010Z 1221/1400 21018G30KT 9999 -RA SCT018 BKN040 TEMPO 1221/1300 4000 RA BKN010 FM130200 20015KT 9999 SCT040 BECMG 1307/1309 26005KT 200

1002 MAX 1011 QNH 1303/1318 MNM 1010 MAX 1019 QNH 1318/1400 MNM 1015 MAX 1024 Forecast issued 13th 9:10am valid from 10am to 1pm

Wind: fresh southwesterly (210°) 18 kt gusting to 30 kt Visibility: 10 km or more Weather: light rain Cloud (AGL): scattered at 1800 ft - broken at 4000 ft

from time to time between 10am and 1pm Visibility: 4000 m Weather: rain Cloud (AGL): broken at 1000 ft

From 3pm becoming
Wind: moderate southerly (200°) 15 kt Visibility: 10 km or more
Cloud (AGL): scattered at 4000 ft

between 8pm and 10pm becoming

Wind: light westerly (260°) 5 kt

2000 ft wind: southerly (200°) 35 kt
between 2pm and 4pm becoming southwesterly (220°) 15 kt

between 8am and 10am becoming variable 5 kt QNH: min/max between 10am and 4pm 1002/1011

min/max between 4pm and 7am 1010/1019 min/max between 7am and 1pm 1015/1024

PEMET - AN OLD MAN'S WHIMSY

IAN BOAG

Being a 60-something engineer, IT person and pilot, I always found the pig latin used in aviation forecasting a bit of a drag. UTC times, cryptic abbreviations and the rest. If I needed help there was always the CAA's card that listed all the abbreviations I had seen plus others that I had never encountered. I suppose all I had to do was learn them

That seemed a bit odd for the early 21st century. Surely one could do something with a computer to generate plain language. Scuttlebutt from CAA and Metservice seemed to indicate that there was an issue with ICAO approval. It was hard to reconcile that with the fact that in Canada the equivalent of Metflight starts by asking whether you want codes or plain language, but maybe the Canadians are not compliant or something.

Anyway the NZ Aviation Federation were keen to have something. Metservice had told them it would cost \$200k to build one. I think AvFed paid me something like \$2k. When we later got the thing up I did offer it to Metservice (for free) and was told (emphatically) that there was absolutely no demand for that sort of thing

This was sometime around 2010. I figured that I would (automatically) log in to Metflght, collect the coded stuff and translate it to English. I figured that I would have to learn a Web language (PHP) and that eventually - is how it happened. I was helped by the fact that a guy in the UK had a (relatively limited) PHP aviation weather translator that he was quite happy to pass on to me. I built the PEMET site using the UK site as a starting point - learning PHP as I went.

There were a few fishhooks but eventually I got through them. The system has a dictionary to translate codes and airfield names into English. Building the dictionary was an interesting exercise when I found a "known" code it was translated as lowercase. Anything I didn't know about was left as uppercase - so I gathered heaps of reports and every time I got an uppercase code in the output, I added it to the dictionary with (sometimes) a bit more





program code to handle it. Eventually it was sorted the uppercase stuff went away and the plain language stuff came out OK.

As an aside, I occasionally ran into errors in the raw codes from Metflight - basically typos in the coded stuff. Things like "SRHA" instead of "SHRA".

Obviously they did not have an ICAO approved pig latin spell checker. They do have ISO 9000 certification and there was a chap in charge of QC so I was pleased to be able to help and the problem did go away.

CAA have been pretty consistent - PEMET is treated as non-existent. I did ask Peter Lechner (CAA weather chap) what I would have to do to get ICAO approval

and he told me there was no ICAO approval available for plain language weather. Someone should tell the Canadians. I did put a PEMET up for Australia (because I could). Unfortunately, their version of Metservice (NAIPS) changed their front end so I let it die

CAA did roll out a translator some years ago at one of their Av-Kiwi roadshows. To help people learn the codes. They paid some software house to do it. It was limited - did just one TAF/METAR at a time and had errors (eventually fixed) in it. It seems to have vanished.

Keeping PEMET up (hosting/domain name etc) probably cost me a couple of hundred a year. At some stage I put my hand out and there was the odd contribution, but basically I did it pretty much for nix. I get friendly emails now and again. I don't know (or care) how many visits the site gets per day - it has been some years since I looked at any reports. For the last 10+ years or so it has just worked.

Anyway as I have moved on from my mid 60's to late 70's I am lowering the shutters. The domain names and hosting expire in July or thereabouts and that will be it

From the Editor:

As one of the users of PeMet I owe Ian a huge 'Thank you' for all of his hard work and finance over the years.

I'm time poor so anything that reliably saves me time is greatly appreciated. I know we're supposed to be able to read the codes like it was our native language,

but to me it just increases the risk of making a mistake.

And for some slight good news - *if* I can get the code running, RecWings will be hosting PEMET on it's own website – URL to be announced if I get it running. Again, a huge appreciation to Iain for passing over the code!







TAIL WHEELING BRIAN GREENWOOD

Time for an update on the Tail Wheel conversion – I'm hoping nobody noticed that it has been quiet for a while!

The training was going well but the aeroplane decided it needed some deep maintenance which just seemed to escalate. Somehow that turned into a mission, so I have to thank Stewart Bufton, Roy Waddingham, and the amazing Jacques Gagné for the work in getting MLD back in the air.

After a few months of not flying, the landings were a little bouncier than I wanted, but some good instruction sorted that and I am back solo again, working towards knocking the BFR on the head and carrying on with life.

In the meantime, here's a little philosophy on why should you do tail wheel training?

The simple answer is "for the experience". Any kind of flying you can do extends your skill set and thereby





increases your enjoyment and, hopefully, safety. It's the same with type ratings, STOL training, and Aerobatics.

But the real reason is – I wanted an 80hp Rans S6 and MLD was available! But there are some added benefits in opening your world to tail draggers.

Those Walter-Mitty-esque dreams of flying Spitfires, Mustangs, Lancasters and B-17s will never come to pass – but there are scale replicas of some of them. One of my all-time favourite aircraft is the SE.5a. Although The Vintage Aviator Limited is not silly enough to loan me one of theirs, ownership of a scale replica is not out of the question – two others in New Zealand have already made that journey. ZK-TOM would have to be one of my favourite Kiwi aircraft.

The next time you see me in a leather helmet and goggles, I'm probably just going to a fancy dress party as Biggles. Walter Mitty indeed!



CLASSIC AIRFRAMES 1:48 BLENHEIM IV BRIAN GREENWOOD

The Bristol Blenheim was a twin-engined light bomber used by the RAF and Allied forces in the early part of World War Two.

It was the result of a 1934 challenge by a wealthy Englishman, Lord Rothermere, for UK manufacturers to develop the fastest commercial aircraft in Europe. The superb Lockheed Electra 12A, Boeing 247, and Douglas DC-2 were all under development in America, and the Germans had the Heinkel He70 and other designs being prepared.

Bristol's chief designer, Frank Barnwell, had visited the USA in the previous year and studied the Lockheed design. He was heavily influenced by this aircraft and eventually produced a design, the Bristol Type 142, in reply to the Challenge.

The aircraft, christened "Britain First" (*above right*), flew in April 1935, and soon proved to be an exceptionally fast aeroplane. Its top speed of 494 km/h (307 mph) was well in excess of serving fighter types.

Lord Rothermere gifted the aircraft to the nation, and the Air Ministry quickly produced a specification for a bomber version for the RAF.

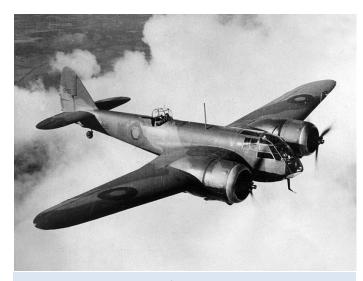
The Blenheim Mk I, as the type was named, differed from the Type 142 in that the nose was adapted for a



bomb aimers position and a machine gun, and the wing was changed to a mid-fuselage position to allow for an underwing bomb bay. The semi-retractable upper fuselage gun turret was another addition.

First deliveries of the Blenheim I commenced in March 1937, with licenced production happening in Finland, Yugoslavia, and Canada (as the Bolingbroke). By 1939 the main production version was the Blenheim Mk IV which had an extended nose to house the Bomb Aimer/Navigator. The nose was asymmetric, with the area in front of the pilot set lower to provide a better view. The Mk IV had Bristol Mercury engines of 675 kW (905hp) instead of the Mk I's 630kW (840hp).

The later version gradually replaced the Mk I in home squadrons during the Battle of Britain period in 1940, with the Mk I being used for night fighter duties with a four .303 machine gun added under the bomb bay. It was one of the first aircraft to be fitted with Air



Above, a Blenheim Mk I in flight, probably just pre-war?

Interception Radar (AI Mk III).

Given the pace of development in the late 1930's, the Blenheim's performance had been somewhat left behind. It was an example of an excellent aircraft that quickly became vulnerable to the faster, newer fighters such as the bf 109 and the Mitsubishi Zero.

In the early war years, the Blenheim was the only twin engine light bomber the RAF had of reasonable performance, and it was used in every theatre of war. The loss rates were always higher than later aircraft, a few missions attaining a terrible 100% loss rate.

Blenheims served in Europe, the Mediterranean, the Middle East, and South East Asia. Notable actions

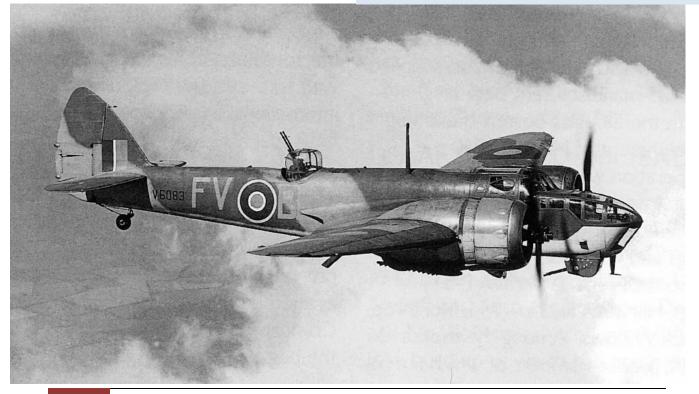
included airfield attacks during the Battle of France, Anit-ship missions over the North Sea, attacks on German airfields and Power Stations in Occupied France, Anti Submarine warfare (becoming the first RAF aircraft to sink a U-Boat), Night Fighter operations over the UK, bombing operations over North Africa, ground raids against Japanese forces in Bangkok, and an attack by 9 aircraft on the Japanese main carrier battle group!

As a day fighter it was too slow and cumbersome compared to equivalent German types, however it was successful as a night fighter, and crews gaining experience on the Blenheim later moved on to more capable aircraft as they became available.

In service it was eventually replaced by such aircraft as the Bristol Beaufighter, De Havilland Mosquito, North American B-25 Mitchell, and the Douglas Boston.

It was the best aircraft available, at a time where the initial urgency was for Spitfires and Hurricanes. Recalled with some fondness by their crews for their flying abilities but less so for the performance against more modern types!

Below, a Blenheim Mk IV Bomber of No. 13 OUT (Operational Training Unit). Note the later twin gun installation in the upper turret and the different under nose gun installation.





Above, How low can you go? An attack on a Japanese vessel off the coast of Burma by Blenheims of 60 Squadron, Royal Air Force, on October 11th 1942.

Somewhere there's a video of an amazing anti-ship strike, with the attack being pressed home with extreme vigour and at very low level. As often happens, the pilots skill and daring make up for some slightly older equipment! This was the case with our own Strike force, the older A-4's always respected for their pilots' ability and never taken for granted during exercises.

I've always had a soft-spot for this aircraft, my earliest memory of the terrible 1950's vintage Airfix kit with the canopy and nose moulding looking more like a deformity than an actual model!

Classic Airframes, a company specialising in low volume limited run specialist kits, produced a 1:48 Blenheim I and IV around the turn of the century. It had an accurate moulded fuselage and wings with a vac-formed canopy and some resin detail parts.

The kits was re-issued in 2007 with some beautiful injection moulded transparencies and resin details such as the wheels and interior.

I'm not sure where or when I purchased mine, but I had made a start by 2009. It looks beautiful in the box but it is typical short-run moulding in that it had no locating tabs (apart the wings) and requires some real modelling skills to put the thing together. No one else would ever produce a 1:48 Blenheim, so it had to be done (OK, So Airfix released a 1:48 Mk I a couple of years ago, a beautiful kit).

The Mk IV had that interesting "sculpted" glazing, by

around 2010 I had assembled the fuselage and attached the wings. Annoyingly, even though I eyeballed it against plans and tried to be very careful with my superglue, the thing wasn't straight. Off to the shelf of doom it went.

And there it sat for the best part of a decade, but every so often I would do a little more for some reason. The fuselage joins were a matter of sand, fill, repeat. The fun part was masking that gorgeous canopy.





I decided on the kit decals of an RAF Coastal Command aircraft of 105 squadron, based out of Lossiemouth in late 1941. Possibly in tribute to those anti-ship strikes.

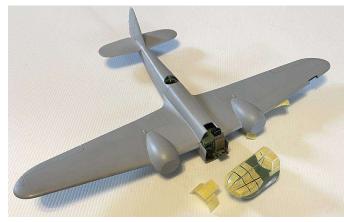
I tried the Tamiya equivalents of Extra Dark Sea Grey and Slate Grey (which looks green) but I didn't like them, so I ended up using the remains of some Xtracrylic pots which I had purchased years ago for the Fairey Swordfish. They worked very well, considering the age of the paints.





Then on to the undercarriage... the main legs just glue against the wall of the forward wheel well. Yeah, that went better than expected not 100% sure of the alignment but, by this stage, I had decided that straight was over-rated. But I couldn't figure out how to do the smaller, supporting struts on the undercarriage... and somehow it languished on the shelf of doom once again. Another couple of years passed...

It looked very sad, eventually I decided that practical was better than accurate for the sake of finishing the



project, so instead of the complex internal structure I just used two supporting struts from each gear set. Simple. One day, if I ever get free time, I'll do the rest of them... (why can I hear very loud, hollow, mocking laughter?!).

My verdict on the kit? Beautiful, a lot of work, and for something that's now unobtainable I am very grateful. Now that I have done mine, I am sure Airfix



You're welcome.

Classic Airframes stopped producing kits in the Global Financial Crisis but did do some aftermarket parts afterwards. They always produced aircraft that no other manufacturer would touch in 1:48 Scale, such as the Sea Venom, Lockheed Hudson, Fiat G.55, Martin Baltimore, Gloster Meteor 4, 8, and NF.14, Fairey Battle, Fairey Gannet, Bristol Blenheim I and IV, Avro Anson, Curtis Hawk, Savoia Marchetti S-79, Ragwing Hurricane, Do-17, Supermarine Walrus, the list is mouth-watering. Interesting that Airfix have created new moulds of the Meteor 8, Blenheim I, Anson, Walrus, and the Defiant I, and Ukranian company ICM have done the Do-17 justice.

















CRAC NEWS

AGM, COMMITTEE POSITIONS, AND CLUB AIRCRAFT PURCHASE

As you should have heard, the club AGM is being held later than usual this year to help us with the workload over the Open Day and Easter.

Please be aware that there is a rule change promulgated, if you're unaware of this please check the All-Club e-mails sent out by Iain Blyth. This is a compulsory change required by the IRD, but we must follow the legal process correctly to implement it.

There's at least one high-level position that we need to fill, that of Secretary. Iain Blyth, who has done the role so excellently for the past few years has resigned, with your Editor being a poor substitute.

At least one other Committee member has expressed their intention to not stand again.

You'll also note the proposal to purchase the Club-Build project Savannah as part of the club aircraft training fleet (well, we already own it – the proposal is to retain it).

As this is a major change of direction and a re-tasking of club funds (which are mostly being built up to purchase replacement engines and Tecnams when necessary) I'm hoping the committee will hold this decision over until the club can discuss it and we can come to a general agreement. We don't have to decide until it is complete, and the Instructors views are the most important part of the decision.

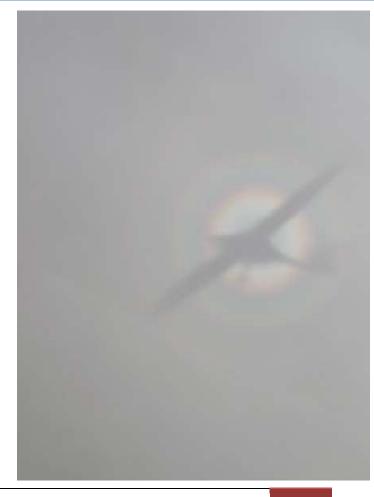
PILOT'S GLORY

WORDS: BRIAN GREENWOOD - PHOTO: COLIN MCDONALD

The mighty Interweb tells me that a "Glory", at least in terms of an optical phenomenon, is a rainbow halo on moisture or ice around the shadow of a person or aircraft. I was very pleased to get this image from Colin McDonald, with the following comment:

'Here is an interesting shot of the "Pilots Glory" phenomena observed by Dave Mainwaring and me between Taumarunui and Whanganui on Sunday morning in the Pipistrel.'.

Given the operating rules around Microlights (VFR Day only) it's rare to get a microlight shadow in one of these – well done and thanks for the amazing shot! Very obvious that the aircraft is a Pipistrel, too.







COMMITTEE NOTES MARCH 2023

- RGE Gearbox leak still under investigation
- Clubhouse Flagpole project- hardware being acquired and assembled
- New higher quality inner tubes arrived,
 awaiting replacement wheel nut before fitting
- E-mail regarding safety aspect of minimum four hour hire per overnight aircraft hire received and discussed at length. Discussed options to remove it and leave to the instructors discretion or reduce to 2 hours – proposal to be presented next Committee meeting.
- Hanmer fly-away scheduled for March 25th
- Fuel trailer progress Compliance consultant seeking confirmation on compliance requirements.
- RGC to be given leak-down test to check for cause of higher oil consumption
- One minor safety issue dealt with in the previous month
- Separate Bank account proposed for Tuck Shop payments – unable to use this as would require double signatures and we are unable to use a credit/debit card. Agreed to create separate personal account for the small amounts involved.
- Trial flights at Open day changed to full 20minute Lessons for legal compliance. Likewise, club signage to be changed from Trial Flights to Lessons.
- Club house maintenance second coat of roof paint done, second coat for club house shortly.
 Noted that the roof probably has 10 to 15 years life remaining.
- Proposal to retain the Club build project
 Savannah for club use. Discussion held over to next meeting.
- Proposal to start the club house refurbishment by moving the kitchen to the library area (building a new one and removing the old) now

 agreed to form a sub-committee with quotes from 3 sources and funding approved by whole committee.
- Fuel cards for cross country flights to be obtained.



CANTERBURY RECREATIONAL AIRCRAFT CLUB (INC)

P.O. Box 440 Rangiora 7440

www.crac.co.nz

WHATSAPP

CRAC Drop Of The Hat

CRAC Revolution (for chat)

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Interested in joining us?

E-mail <u>secretary@crac.co.nz</u> or use the online application form.

We can send you an information pack which includes membership details, costs, and joining forms. Membership enrols you for the magazine, too.

UPCOMING EVENTS

1st April – CRAC Open Day, Rangiora Airfield

7th - 9th April - Classic Fighters Omaka

18th April – CAA Presentation on Rangiora Airfield, 1900 to 2100, Rangiora Sports Stadium, Cold Stream Road, Rangiora

26h April - CRAC AGM, Canterbury Aircraft Club clubrooms, NZRT 1900hrs – check your e-mails for AGM and rule change notifications

Keep your eye out for weekly club e-mails, join the **CRAC Drop Of The Hat** WhatsApp group for informal group fly-aways. Join **CRAC Revolutionary** for general chat and good humour.

CONTRIBUTIONS AND ATTRIBUTIONS

Ian Boag, Colin McDonald

RecWings logo by Eric Lim.

Disclaimer: This Magazine is prepared by dedicated enthusiasts; the opinions expressed herein are not to be taken as official club policy unless approved by the committee.

NEXT NEWSLETTER

Contributions for the next edition are requested, publishing deadline
May 11th, 2023

Next publishing date approx. May 31st, 2023

Brian Greenwood, Editor (editor@crac.co.nz)

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