

# REC WINGS

THE MAGAZINE OF THE CANTERBURY RECREATIONAL AIRCRAFT CLUB



- WELCOME TO CRAC
- WHAT IS A MICROLIGHT?
- CRAC NORTH ISLAND CIRCUMNAVIGATION, AND OTHER FAVOURITE ARTICLES

# OPEN DAY 2021



## RECWINGS

is produced by a keen group of individuals within the **Canterbury Recreational Aircraft Club**.

To subscribe to the e-mailed edition please contact [editor@crac.co.nz](mailto:editor@crac.co.nz).

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The next standard edition is finalised and will be published on April 1<sup>st</sup>. Contributions for the following edition are due by **May 13<sup>th</sup>**. We invite contributions from all, with editorial discretion being final.

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*Cover, Two of the three club Tecnam trainers strut their stuff over North Canterbury*

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## WELCOME!

Welcome to the Canterbury Recreational Aircraft Club's open day, and our celebratory special edition magazine.

Our club is the largest Microlight aero club in New Zealand, with just under 300 members. We own three Tecnam P92 Echo aircraft which we use for training and hire. Our members also own many aircraft and have advanced into the varied branches of aviation - with notable successes in the STOL (Short Take Off and Landing – Bush Pilot territory!) and aerobatic arenas.

The Club is a safety-focussed organisation with our instructors having thousands of hours experience. Our goal

is to progress your aviation dream to a reality - in an easy, safe, supportive, and friendly environment.

flying cheaper. CRAC is able to offer training to members of both organisations and is a part of the RAANZ family of clubs.

We're in the position of being able to offer some of the cheapest flying training in the world, with the responsibility of doing so in a safe manner – producing pilots who enjoy and respect the privileges that we have been granted.

CRAC is also a very community-minded organisation, we support the local ATC Squadron with both flying and materials, and we're launching a scholarship for local



is to progress your aviation dream to a reality - in an easy, safe, supportive, and friendly environment.

New Zealand has a very progressive legal framework for Microlights thanks to the hard work of the CAA (Civil Aviation Authority), and "Part 149" organisations such as RAANZ (The Recreational Aircraft Association of New Zealand), and the Sports Aircraft Corporation.

All microlight pilots need to be a member of a "Part 149" organisation as well. They remove some of the administrative burden from the CAA which helps make our

High School Students. Other community groups have benefitted from donations and support over the years.

RecWings is a magazine published every two months in conjunction with the Canterbury Recreational Aircraft Club. This special edition has a selection of our favourite articles from previous editions.

No matter what your level of interest in aviation, from bystander to keen participant, we hope you enjoy our Open Day.

## "GO NORTH" THEY SAID, "IT WILL BE FUN" THEY SAID!

WORDS: DAVE MCPHERSON

PHOTOS: CREDITED ON LAST PAGE.

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Paul Godfrey, aka Camp Mother, suggested a trip to the Tail draggers fly-in in Hastings. Then the following weekend there was the Brass Monkey fly-in in Tapawera. What about a circumnavigation of the North Island to fill in time while we wait for the next weekend to roll around? Well that sounded like a great idea.

So, the planning started. The idea was that we leave from Rangiora on the Friday, fly to Hastings, stay for two nights and then head off on our circumnavigation. Paul had accommodation sorted at Hastings, so we were good to go. Good plan, but the weather didn't play the part. We had 3 inches of snow at Oxford on the Thursday, which meant that all those last-minute jobs that had to be done so that Ngaire would be able to feed the stock didn't happen. Revise the plan. Everyone decided that Saturday was a better day anyway as the weather up north was suspect at best.

### Saturday 10<sup>th</sup>

Plan B is activated, meet at Kaikoura at 8.00am. The day dawned fine and frosty, perfect. KTP launched from Forest Field at 6.40am. Destination Kaikoura. Interesting moment taking off on 05 into the early dawn light and the windscreen



frosting over. That made me hold my breath, which was good because then the windscreen started clearing up. Tracked overhead RT and onto Kaikoura and a tankful of fuel. I was first to arrive but not long after the rest of the crew turned up. We had three Karatoos, a Rans S6, Zenair 601, a Kitfox and two Europa's and a Pioneer.

So, with landing fees paid for, munchies had, bladder emptied it was on to Cape Campbell. I chose Cape Campbell to make an arrival rather than a landing but managed to survive ok.



Mike and Peter in KTO had decided to have a look out over the strait, as the weather wasn't very flash, and report back to us. They said it was ok (they were wrong) so off we went. By this time, we were down to four aircraft in our group. The others were heading to Omaka and I lost track of where they were until we got to Hastings.

Going across the strait I was pleased that I had a GPS as we couldn't see the land on the other side. It's great when the GPS and the compass agree! So, there we are, down to not very high looking for land. Our plan was to sneak around the coast and head to Flat Point. This was about 40 minutes past Cape Palliser. We all arrived safely in light drizzle and in visibility that was starting to get marginal.

Flat Point is a beautiful field and we all agreed it would be a nice place to come back to, but when the sun was out. Trying to keep out of the wind and keep dry in the drizzle beside hangers that were of the semi round type, with no eaves - it was not pleasant. Meanwhile, phone weather apps were checked and compared. The best outlook was taken note of and somebody would be assigned the task of running out, looking north and reporting back on the hopefully clearing weather.



Eventually we decided that we were wet enough, and it was time to venture forth. It looked better in the air than on the ground and got better as we went further up the coast. We tracked right up to Cape Kidnappers and then headed into Bridge Pa (Hastings) into a stiff breeze. The boys were out with the landing grid, but I decided to just get on the ground with a landing where I could still taxi the aircraft and I would be happy, which I did - much to the surprise of my flying companions.

Bridge Pa is a lovely airfield, very welcoming. After tying down we made our way to the club rooms and managed to polish off some lunch before it was packed away. It was after three o'clock so I guess they were justified in clearing it all away.



By my count we had 10 aircraft representing CRAC. 1 Zenair 601, 1 Kitfox, 1 Sting, 2 Rans S6's, 2 Europa's and 3 Karatoo's. Volkmar was wandering around the North Island somewhere but I didn't see him at Hastings. We were kindly billeted out for the night and met up for a meal at a nice pub and watched the AB's deal to the Aussies. Good way to finish the day.

### Sunday 11<sup>th</sup>

Our hosts kindly dropped us off at the airfield after breakfast. We all got together to plan our trip to Tauranga. The idea was a circumnavigation, so we planned to go around the coast. One problem. Airspace. By now we were down to seven aircraft - 1 Zenair 601, 1 Kitfox, 2 Rans S6's, and 3 Karatoo's with nine guys, or as I got to call it 8+1, but I will explain that later. So, airspace, two of us didn't have transponders and we had heard that it was getting harder to get through TM (Transponder Mandatory) airspace, even if you were attached like glue to a transponder equipped aircraft. A big thanks to all the guys who rang the towers of Napier, Gisborne and Tauranga to sort it out. It was much appreciated by Paul and myself (JFA and KTP) and enabled us to go around the coast.

After a lot of yes we can, no you can't, we eventually got on our way. We headed out between Hastings and "bring your own water" Havelock North and up the coast to Gisborne. It gave the controller at Napier a bit of a



work out as he received the calls and asked what type of aircraft. By the time Mike (Mother Goose) Small had given the full definition of his J6 ucl Karatoo, he said he wished he hadn't asked. Anyway, we all got through safely and on to Gisborne. There they allowed the non-transponder aircraft in so we were able to fuel up.

We had a late lunch and I decided, as it was getting late in the day, to head to Opotiki direct rather than going around the Cape. I sort of regret it now, but know that it is not going anywhere and will be still there for the next time. Dave with Peter Small and Paul with Mike Godfrey (DYM and JFA) decided that they were going to go right around so off they went. The three Karatoo's, Bruce in the S6 and Scott in the 601 headed off over tiger country direct to Opotiki where the airfield 'clubhouse cat' (every airfield has one) made us feel

welcome and put the jug on for us. We had a good old-fashioned clubhouse chin wag while waiting for the others to turn up. Eventually they arrived and we were on our way to Tauranga. Another TM space\*, but one that is very used to Microlights in their airspace. All was good until we arrived, and we had to land direct into the setting sun. This caused a high state of alertness amongst the group. We all arrived safely, with the tower treating us royally.

We then taxied around to Colin Alexander's fabulous facilities, asking us "where had we been?". He had been waiting all afternoon for our arrival. In spite of our late arrival Colin and Norma treated us like special guests. We sat in their hangar, wining and dining, except for Paul and Mike Godfrey as they poured over the remains of a Kitfox that somebody was unable to taxi away after landing. Colin and Norma sorted transport for us all to go out for a Chinese meal. Then back to the hangers for bed and a looked-forward-to sleep.



### Monday 12<sup>th</sup>

After breakfast we wandered down and had a look at Colin and Norma's impressive facilities. If ever you are in Tauranga, you must look them up. After fuelling up it was off on the relatively short hop to Whitianga.

Beautiful day at Whitianga and we managed to get a ride into town

for lunch. After a wander around the town, we decided we better get on our way as next stop was Great Barrier Island. On with the life jacket again and over the sea we go. Another short hop of around 40 minutes and we were there.

After the mandatory photo shoot it was off to Whangarei. For Paul and me it was to be via the Auckland harbour. We got away first and headed directly to Auckland. It wasn't long before we the heard the call of SRF, Scott was joining the party. The others headed direct to Whangarei, over the Hen and Chicken Islands. Meanwhile, we sneaked into the harbour, did a couple of rounds to get a photo, and then headed north to Whangarei via the Whangaparaoa transit lane.

A beautiful smooth trip with a slight delay at Marsden Point while we waited for a commercial to land and then in to catch up with the others.

The boys had some accommodation sorted out at the aero club. Rusty and his wife Penny were the hostess with the mostess. They made sure we were comfortable, got us a ride into town for a meal and generally made sure we were set for the night. After a nice meal we walked back to the airfield and made ourselves comfortable.



\* TM Space – Transponder Mandatory. A Transponder is a radio location device for Air Traffic Control, not all aircraft carry these.

## Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup>

It dawned bright and mostly clear again. Dargaville was the destination, via Cape Reinga. First stop Kerikeri, via the coast of course. We checked out Marsden Point on the way out and headed north. A nice trip up the coast, up into the Bay of Islands and over Waitangi. Then we headed inland for the Kerikeri airport.

About this time an Air New Zealand commercial was heading for Kerikeri as well. Nigel (KTN) and Bruce (WMR) were about to join. They decided that they would do a long slow downwind to keep out of their way. I (KTP) decided to circle around Puketona Quarry while Paul and Mike (JFA) held out at Waitangi. Why am I relating this stuff, it was proof that us little boys and the big boys could share the same airspace, well not exactly the same obviously, (been reading too many Brian Greenwood stories) and the same airports quite comfortably.

To continue the story, when I saw the big bird on short final I headed over for an overhead re-join. As the ANZ landed, the pilot said, "thanks for your help guys". "No problems mate, you are too big for us to get in the



way". Meanwhile Nigel and Bruce were coming in on a five mile final. It turned out to be a logable X-country, just to join the circuit in behind them!

We fuelled up at Kerikeri and had some lunch. While we were there a Foxbat came in and a jovial fellow hopped out. It turned out to be Willie Morton. Those of you who have been around long enough, will remember Willie from Waitohi days, when he came down in an Avid. He also used to write some pretty interesting articles in the RAANZ national mag of the time. We got chatting and he decided to join us on the push around the Cape. So, we were on our way, taking off in dribs and drabs. We all headed out to the coast again, this was a circumnavigation after all. Well when I say all, Nigel in KTN was the exception.



He had decided to keep inland a bit more. Unknown to us he was on a mission, he was aiming to be the first around Cape Reinga. It was a beautiful day, smooth and clear and we trundled our way north. We even went around Knuckle Point and Cape Karikari and then up the long spit to North Cape. We even saw a shipwreck at the entrance to Parengarenga Harbour.

About this time the call came through that KTN had rounded Cape Reinga. His short cut had paid off, he was the first one round. His delight was clear over the radio, "I've knocked the bugger off" "Kilo Tango November, tracking south to Alexandra".

Scott James had great delight in informing us that he was at Scott Point, after all who else had a landmark named after them?!

Mike and Peter Small in KTO had found a good spot to land on the beach, inland up a well-worn track and he guided us all in safely. We had Willie with us so he was able to take a photo of our group of 8+1. Ah yes, I should explain why I called us 8+1. You see every time we took off in a group, Dave Mitchell (DYM) would be the last to leave. Not only that, he would tend to get side-tracked, especially when there was a nice-looking beach to land on.



On the way to the Cape he decided that there was a nice bit of beach that needed inspecting. So of course, we were all there ready for a photo shoot but no Dave. A few minutes later, Kermit arrived overhead, and Mike guided him in. It was time to break open the biscuits and chocolate, we decided that the champagne should wait till another time.

Time to head to Kaitaia for refueling. We all took off and turned south. I have to say it was

an awesome trip cruising down the beach. I managed to climb to 500 feet AMSL and I cruised down to Kaitaia.

The interesting thing is that there are very few names or reporting points on the map so it is hard to tell anyone exactly where you are because there are no place names to report as you pass by. That's one great advantage of a GPS it will tell you how far away from the airport you are.



We all landed and fuelled up, all except Dave Mitchell (DYM). On the way back to Kaitaia he decided to land, several times in fact.

One particular time he decided to phone his wife Yvonne (Boss gardener). Of course, there was no reception so he had a walk around to see if he could find reception. No go so he decides to carry on, but on the way, he realises he has lost his phone, so back he goes to find it. After wandering up and down the beach several times trying to find it he gives up and heads to Kaitaia. Meanwhile the 8 of us that were there were starting to get concerned. We had been having a chat to a commercial pilot who was waiting for his passengers, when Dave announced what had happened and that he was on his way. After discussion amongst us we reckoned that it was probably in his plane somewhere. So, Paul decided to ring him as soon as he turned off his engine after he had landed. We all stood at the window in anticipation of the phone going off in the cockpit somewhere. We were not disappointed. Much merriment was had at Dave's expense.



Time was moving on and we wanted to get to Dargaville, so off we went. We had a welcome committee at Dargaville. Well known blogger, Keith Morris (Sir Minty) is training at Dargaville and had heard that we on our way. He was there to welcome us and to take photos as we landed. (Ed: See next page!)

It was great to put a face to the name. He had had an exciting day of his own as he had done his first solo that day. The guys ferried us into town and dropped us at some nice accommodation.

The aviation community are so good at looking after people like us. I hope that when we have visiting pilots at our airfield they go away thinking the same thing. After a nice meal we went back to our digs.



Pete Small fell asleep while we were talking so we thought that either the conversation was really boring or it was time to get the sleep. That dilemma could not be resolved so we decided it was to be lights out.

### Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup>

After breakfast, we were taken back to the airfield, except for Nigel who went for a brisk walk each morning. He had decided to walk back. We did our pre flights and made ourselves ready for the trip to Whanganui. We all knew about the “Black sands flyin” at Raglan so we were keen to visit this airfield.

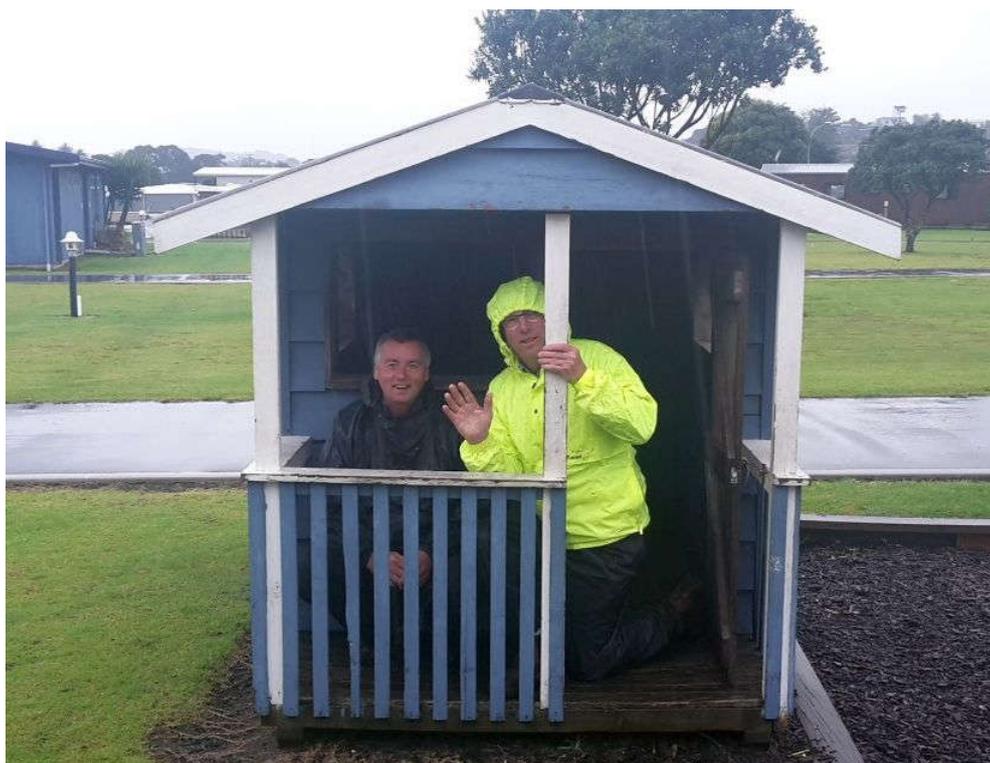
I really enjoyed this trip going down past such well-known beaches as Muriwai and Piha. I was surprised at how much land was uninhabited so close to Auckland. The weather wasn't brilliant when we got there but it was ok. I made a bit of a shocker of an approach an even worse landing attempt so pushed the go button and had another go. Next time was much better.

Raglan is a beautiful little airfield, no facilities, but such a nice setting. It has camping and accommodation right beside the airfield, and it is only a short walk into town.

We headed into town to have some lunch. We found a nice little cafe while we planned our next leg. Stratford seemed like the go. We wandered back to the airfield and made the decision to try for Stratford. The weather wasn't particularly favourable but good enough to have a look. So off we went with DYM being last to leave again.

We were fairly well spread out and reporting to each other the weather conditions and where we were. This is another area where there are long stretches of the coast where it was hard to report exactly where you were because there weren't very many place names on the map. In fact, there weren't many places on the map. There would be transmissions like “where are you” “Just past the bus on the hill”.

Eventually it became obvious that it was getting worse where we wanted to go. The Stratford gap was a no go and New Plymouth was reporting cloud base of 200 feet. So we all turned around and headed back to Raglan. Of course, Dave Mitchell (DYM) was the first to turn around but he was still the last to arrive back at the airfield. How did that happen, well he found a beach to land on. Different people circled around him to see if he was ok and they got a big cheery wave in reply.



We tied down and went and arranged our digs for the night. “How many beds do you need?” “8+1 thanks”. Somebody also managed to negotiate a ride to the petrol station to get fuel. We gathered all the fuel containers we could find and off we went. We had to do a couple of runs to get everyone filled up but thanks to the caretaker at the camp this was done. We wandered into town for a meal and that was the day done.

## Thursday 15<sup>th</sup>

Today dawned a dreary and miserable day. Camp Mother informed us that today would be a lay day. So after



breakfast, watching TV and tidying up it was off into Raglan to explore the town. That didn't take very long as Raglan is not that big.

We went to the Raglan Bakery for lunch. I can recommend this place; it has a great variety of food all of which was very nice. After lunch we wandered back, to camp, some to kick the tires and make sure they were ready to go, some to check

the weather and some to have a nana nap. Late afternoon it was into town to find a place for a meal. After checking around, it was decided that the best place was the pub again. After a nice meal it was back to our cabins and see what tomorrow would bring.

## Friday 16<sup>th</sup>

Déjà vu, or as Yoga Berry said, déjà vu all over again. Another day where we were going nowhere. It is interesting looking at some of the photo's in hindsight, you think that doesn't look too bad, how come we didn't go. I can assure you it was worse than it looked and worse where we wanted to be, so we were staying



put. It was a nice place to stay, only problem, those cabins that we were in were booked out. This turned out to be a good thing because we were shifted into a place that had a much better layout for a group like us. It had a communal living area and rooms off to the sides. Fantastic. So today, apart from the shift was much the same as yesterday, into town lunch, back home (we were calling it home by now) TV, nana nap, telling lies etc.

Then into town for tea. The boys decided to go a bit more upmarket today, got themselves set up in the fancy restaurant, got the water, and looked at the menu and decided that this wasn't what they wanted, so they scarpered and left Scott and I to explain that they were country lads and not refined enough for fine dining. So back to the pub again, for pizza. That was classy wasn't it, boys!!!



### **Saturday 17<sup>th</sup>**

Another dreary day. This time it was going to be a longer walk for lunch. Raglan is famous for its fish and chips, so we planned to walk around to the wharf and have lunch. It was an interesting walk with lots of places to have a look at, but the much-anticipated fish and chips was a let-down. They would have to be the worst fish and chips that I have ever had in my life, and I wasn't on my own there. Raglan did redeem itself though, there was a camp shop at the camping ground that sold really good fish and chips.

So back home for the afternoon. Nigel and I headed into town early evening so we could get a spot at the pub to watch the rugby. The rest of them drifted in as the night went on. There are a few in our group that don't care about the rugby. Strange people. Anyway, another win to the AB's then back home. Tomorrow was to be the day, so they all reckoned.

### **Sunday 18<sup>th</sup>**

Today's the day that we'll be on our way. An early start was planned, but it wasn't to be. Low cloud and occasional drizzle again but it was looking a bit more promising for later in the morning. After breakfast it was brightening up so the decision was made to go. We took off, well 8 of us, Dave decided that he wanted to get a bread roll. We headed out towards the coast and as we rounded Mt Karioi things brightened up considerably.

The plan for me was to get to Whanganui because I have a good mate that lives not far from the airfield and I was keen to catch up with him. We could see that it was still cloudy and foggy inland but ok down the coast. I was going to try to go through the Stratford gap. As we got closer, we could see that it was not going to work but it was still good around the coast. As I didn't have a transponder I headed out to sea to skirt around the TM airspace. Paul (JFA) went inland and skirted it. We both ended up at the Oakura

reporting point around the same time. Now we just had to follow the coast to Whanganui, but the weather was deteriorating.

My mate, Robin, who used to be a topdressing loader driver, like Duncan, told me when we were in Raglan, if you can get to Okato ok, the weather will start getting better. But with this weather system the exact opposite happened. As an aside I had something to amuse me as we were flying round Taranaki; Bruce trying to pronounce some of the Maori place names as he flew past. I was fortunate that I had stayed with Robin when he lived in Taranaki so I knew the local pronunciations. We might need some lessons before the next trip up there.

The weather was not looking too flash towards Whanganui so we decided that we should try for Hawera. Hawera is only about three miles from the coast but anybody that knows Taranaki knows that the land rises deceptively fast as you head towards the mountain. This means that Hawera is 374 feet amsl. This didn't leave a lot of leeway between the cloud and the ground. It was raining quite steadily by now so we gave each other plenty of space between ourselves to make sure we arrived safely without running into each other. I know that you shouldn't rely on GPS, but it is there as a tool, and I was pleased to have it to let me know exactly when I was at the field. It made life a lot easier and safer I might add, because I could concentrate on looking out at what was around me and not looking at the ground so much.

Mike Small (KTO) had landed at New Plymouth and we had no idea where Dave Mitchell (DYM) was so we were down to 5 aircraft and six guys. When we were landing the president of the Hawera Aero Club just happened to be driving by. She and her husband called in to welcome us and check that we were ok. Julie was awesome, she organised a Pajero for us to get fuel and food. She also got some airbeds and made sure the fire was going. They even left the key to the bar. Thank you, Julie.

We heard that Dave and Mike had met up and they carried on from New Plymouth managing to get Whanganui and then on to Foxpine.

After getting fuel and food we were set for the night. Warm dry and comfortable. Thank you, Hawera Aero Club.

### **Monday 19<sup>th</sup>**

Today was a better day. My plan was to fly to Whanganui and stay the night with my mate, Robin, and then fly home the next day. The rest of our team, Scott, Paul and Mike, Bruce, and Nigel were heading for home. Paul decided to go to Whanganui and fuel up so we travelled together. It was a nice trip down the coast. We bade Nigel and Bruce farewell at Patea as they cut the corner to Foxpine. Scott had already disappeared into the wild blue yonder.

We gave our calls into Whanganui. There was a small commercial twin taxiing out and he came on the radio. "Are you lot with Mike Small" Holy Moly, what has Mike done that we are going to get in trouble for. No worries, it was a mate that Mike knew. Pheww. Paul taxied in and we fuelled him up. Before long he was on his way. It all seemed a bit surreal after being with the group for the last week or so and now it was just me left. I went in and paid my landing fee and asked where the best place to tie down was. The lady said go and see the airport manager and he will tell you exactly where, which way round and how to do it. I went in fear and trepidation and found him in his office. Well he couldn't have been more helpful or nicer. As I was fueling up he came out and asked about the Karatoo and where I had been. We had a good old chin wag.

## Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup>

A good day to go home today. Strong headwinds (what else are there) but good visibility. The plan was to go to Paraparaumu and fill up out of the can I had on the seat beside me. M306 Raumai wasn't active so I cruised down at 1500 feet. I called Paraparaumu and they advised that I could go straight in on 16. That sounds good to me. After landing Flight Service asked what my intentions were. I embarrassingly said that I wanted to find somewhere to refuel but I was a bit lost. He said, "no worries just backtrack to the aero club". "Sweet, thanks for your help".

I refuelled and then thought I would go into the aero club and check the weather. What a helpful bunch of people. Turns out the guy I was talking to trained at Christchurch, West Melton and Rangiora, and had been into Forest Field a few times. He printed out the weather for me, and then I got him to explain it for me. I have never been able to get a good mental picture of what the weather will be from an aviation weather printout. They were so good and helpful.

So next stage was over the big blue. I had got OzRunways before this trip. Made it so much easier to flight plan. I knew I was going to get a head wind so I planned on a ground speed of 60 knots from Ohau point to Cape Campbell. So off we went. I looked at the clock at 22 mins and thought Cape Campbell still looked a long way away. Five minutes later I looked at the clock again and it said 23 mins. This is going to be a long trip I thought. Ah well might as well enjoy the ride. Well after 45 minutes I got to Cape Campbell and headed down the coast. In theory I had plenty of fuel to go straight home to Forest Field but with the headwinds and weather that you couldn't trust I wanted to be sure. Trucks were keeping up with me down the straights so I decided I would top up at Kaikoura.

Got to Kaikoura and fuelled up. Taking off into the Southerly and rain clouds rolling down the hills I moved out to sea a little. I could see Banks Peninsular ahead, so it was all steam ahead. I was keen to get home because I had organised a "meet the candidate" night for that night and I was facilitating it, but I had arranged for someone else to do it if I didn't get home, I didn't want to fall into the trap of "get homeitis". Anyway, it was a good safe trip home albeit a little bit slow.

We had a great bunch of guys that all got on well together. We had lots of funny experiences, some were the butt of our jokes, sorry Mike Godfrey. There was the girl that turned up at our cabin one night. Then there was Nigel, tinder and his cell phone. But as they say, what goes on tour, stays on tour. My lips are sealed.

**FOOTNOTE:** Thanks Dave for writing about your experiences. We had an awesome trip. Good weather (mostly), good crew, and it was great to see some wonderful countryside and meet some great fellow aviators.

Thanks again Dave, and all those involved in this adventure

**Paul Godfrey**

*Photo Credits: All Paul Godfrey except: Page 7 lower, Page 8 top and left: Willie Morton*

*Page 10 Keith Morris (alias Sir Minty) and swiped from the wonderful NZ Civil Aircraft blog, <http://nzcivair.blogspot.com>*

## Tecnam P92 for HIRE



100hp Tecnam P92 Super Echo available to CRAC members for hire at \$125 per hour.

This aircraft is ideal for cross-countries, fixed-pitch prop and 100hp Rotax.

For further details or to register for the booking system e-mail [thelightaircraftco@gmail.com](mailto:thelightaircraftco@gmail.com) or phone Erin Heese on 027 292 3689.

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Photo © 2021 Brian Greenwood

# ASHBURTON AVIATION MUSEUM HOSTS CRAC FLY-IN

BRIAN GREENWOOD



The kind folk at the Ashburton Aviation Museum hosted the CRAC Crew for a fly in on Saturday, August 11<sup>th</sup>.

The day dawned bright, frosty and clear. A light northerly developed during the morning to give a few knots tail wind for the trip down.

I didn't sleep much for some reason, so **Duncan Fraser** kindly offered me his spare seat. Great company, great flight! It was cool to get some time in Budgie too, she's a lot quieter and smoother

than JOL despite having the same engine.

There were around ten planes waiting to depart Rangiora, but somehow that grew to around a couple of dozen by the time we got to Ashburton. Somebody had been telling members that the safety briefing was at 9 instead of the advertised 8:15 am. Keep your eye on the club e-mails!



*Heading photo: Some of the CRAC line up and a Cherokee at Ashburton*  
*Second photo: Ross Marfell's Alpi 300 and Reese Hart's Rans S6 taken from the Ashburton Control Tower.*

*Above left, Duncan Fraser's Ragabond "Budgie" behind Jeff Bannister's Corby Starlet.*

*Above right, the Starlet and Zenair 601 warm up.*

*Left, Scott James and Basil Buwalda stir up the frost, departing NZRT in Scott's 601.*



*Greg Van der Hulst departs in his Jabiru J160*



*Jeff Bannister at full noise in the Corby Starlet*



*Doug Anderson and Ray Corbett's new Savannah, and Max Earnshaw's Avid Heavy Hauler. Right, Matt Dowdall's Aeroprakt A-22*



*Third from the top, left: Michael Blomfield's Dynamic WT9  
Fourth from top, left: Frank Barker's 701, Deane Philip's 701  
Third from top, right: Trevor Shadbolt's Autogyro Calidus found a friend!*

*Right: two dodgy controllers in the tower! (actually, the very un-dodgy Buzz Harvey and Ross Marfell)*





## DERRICK HUBBARD SOLO'S AGAIN – AT 92!

WORDS: DAVE MITCHELL AND BRIAN GREENWOOD

PHOTOS: TERRY SALMON

FIRST PUBLISHED AUGUST 2018

As if flying solo on your 90<sup>th</sup> birthday isn't enough, club member Sqn Ldr (Retired) **Derrick Hubbard** (*above, right*) has celebrated his 92<sup>nd</sup> birthday by flying solo again! CRAC Instructor W/O (Rtd) **Dave Mitchell** (who served under Sqn Ldr Hubbard in the RNZAF) oversaw the flight in RGB, and has provided some highlights from Sqn Ldr Hubbard's career:

- In 1941 at the Hertford Grammar School Air Training Corp summer camp at RAF Panshangar, Derreck took a 30-minute flight in a Tiger Moth. He also visited the De Havilland factory at Hatfield and saw the prototype Mosquito.
- He attended the RAF Pilot Grading School at Woodley and Shellingford, and completed 12 hours dual (didn't solo due to heavy snow!)
- At the RAF's No. 4 Flying Training School, Heany, Derrick flew the Tiger Moth – 24.3 Hours dual, 15.5 hours solo. This FTS is still in existence today, flying Bae Hawks.
- Following this he did 19.20s dual on the Harvard, and 19.85 hours solo.
- Post WW2, Mr Hubbard has flown 97 flights in the PA38 at Omake – 19.35 hours dual and 51 solo



On August 14th, Derrick completed a cross country flight from Rangiora to Hokitika with Dave as a passenger and navigator.

These photos were taken after Derrick's solo on his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday, by club member **Terry Salmon**.

Since this article was first published, Sqn Ldr Hubbard and his wife have sponsored a Flying Scholarship for a local student to achieve solo status!



## CRAC HOSTS NASA: A DAY AT RANGIORA AIRFIELD

WORDS AND PICTURE HAMISH PULLEY

FIRST PUBLISHED JULY 2017

Some of the NASA crew based in Christchurch for the SOFIA missions came out to Rangiora Airfield for a visit. A few CRAC members took them for flights, I took a couple up in my plane and some of them went up in trikes and out around Lyttelton. Several of our guests even got a flight in Trevor's Autogyro, and Stewart flew some of them in for a beach landing. I believe at least one went up in one of the club planes. A good time was had by all, despite the weather!

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## NASA HOSTS CRAC: AN AFTERNOON WITH SOFIA

BRIAN GREENWOOD

I'm not sure how the connection came about exactly, but a group of our members hosted some of the visiting NASA crews at Rangiora Airfield (refer to Hamish's report on the previous page), which resulted in a reciprocal invitation for club members to visit their airborne telescope SOFIA. It was one of those invitations that didn't have to be asked twice!

The NASA flight crews are rotated through Christchurch to fly the missions, currently there are two crews based here. Many of them were on site on the day we visited, our host was Flight Engineer **Tim Sanson**. It was very refreshing to be told "take photos of anything".

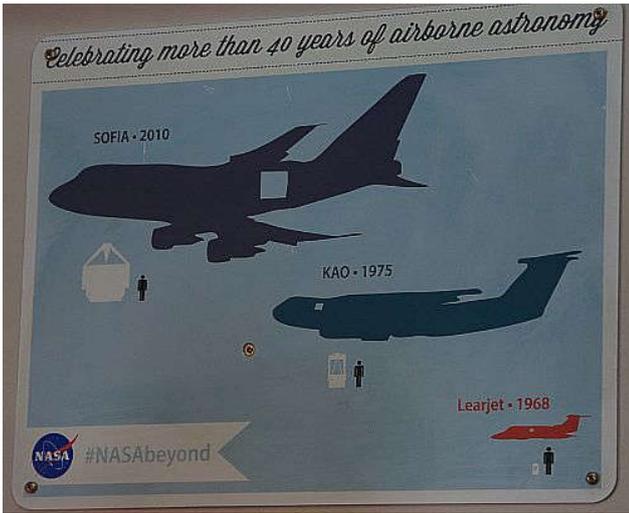
SOFIA (Stratospheric Observatory For Infrared Astronomy) is a Boeing 747 SP modified to take a 2.5 metre Infrared Telescope through a large hatch in the side of the aircraft. It's here on a 6-week mission and will fly 18 missions during its stay. It's operating from the Operation Deep Freeze base at Christchurch Airport during the Antarctic off season, which is obviously a very cost-effective use of this resource. One of the targets on these missions will be the minor-planet Pluto.



One of the reasons for operating at our latitude is that, at the 747's operating altitude (37,000 – 45,000 '), the air is almost as dry as space. This is vital for Infrared observations.

The Aircraft itself was one of less than 50 short fuselage SP models produced (The "short wheel-base version" as one of my car-nut friends put it). It was designed to give airlines a very long-range version of the popular 747, which suits the current role very well.

It served Pan Am for ten years before being sold to United, with whom it served for another decade. It was then retired for a period before being acquired by NASA in the 1990's, the modifications taking another decade. It still wears the original Pan Am name, **Clipper Lindbergh**, and was re-christened by Charles Lindbergh's grandson Erik Lindbergh in 2007.



Above, two of the information placards on board the aircraft



## FAMOUS KIWI FLYERS - ARTHUR CLOUSTON

BRIAN GREENWOOD



You may have heard the fuss on the news recently about the Kiwi pilot who was offered £1,000,000 to assassinate Hitler. I'm not sure why it rose to prominence as "revealed", it was first published in his book **The Dangerous Skies** in 1954!

I read this book in the 1970's and Clouston (along with a few other long-distance pilots) became one of my heroes.

Arthur Clouston was born near Motueka in 1908, the eldest of nine children. In his teenage years he established a business buying old cars, repairing them, and selling them on.

Arthur learned to fly at the Marlborough Aero Club at Omaka and, after a failed attempt to join the RNZAF, he moved to the UK in 1930. He joined the Fairey Aviation Company as a working student. His repeated attempts to join the RAF failed until it was discovered that his blood pressure was lower when flying than on the ground! He was accepted in late 1930 and by mid-1931 he was flying Hawker Fury biplanes as a pilot officer with No. 25 Squadron. In 1932 he was promoted to Flying Officer.

In 1935 he left the RAF and accepted a post of Civilian Test Pilot with the RAE at Farnborough. During his time at Farnborough he tested autogyros, various light aircraft including the Miles Hawks, and ice formation on such aircraft as the Handley Page Heyford and the Northrop Gamma.

The tests that impressed me were the wire strike tests on the Miles Hawk and the Fairey P.4/34.

These tests were to assess the amount of damage done



to an aircraft by wire cables suspended from a balloon or parachute. The P.4/34 was a modern all-metal construction aircraft, later developed into the Fairey Fulmar naval fighter, and the Miles Hawk was a civilian aircraft of wooden construction for comparison. Imagine deliberately flying into a suspended cable!

Arthur Clouston was asked to do the test flying for the Westland Whirlwind twin-engine fighter, including its first flight.



During this time, he developed a taste for long-distance record-breaking flights and air racing. He had various attempts using such aircraft as a Miles Hawk Speed Six (**above**), Pou-du-Ciel, and his own Aeronca C3.

When he learned of the sale of the De Havilland DH.88 Comet G-ACSS (**left**) by a scrap dealer he persuaded his

friend Fred Tasker to purchase it for air racing. This aircraft was already famous, having won the 1934 McRobertson London to Melbourne Air Race. It had been damaged during subsequent testing by the Royal Air Force.

The Comet was repaired by Jack Cross (who also prepared Alex Henshaw's Mew Gull) and participated in the Istres to Damascus air race in August 1937. Clouston and co-pilot Flt Lt George Nelson came fourth behind the state sponsored Italian Savoia-Marchetti S.73's. Clouston and co-pilot Betty Kirby-Green then broke the England to Cape Town record previously held by Amy Johnson. 1937 was a busy year for Arthur Clouston, marrying Elsie Turner in December. Elsie was the daughter of a colleague at the RAE.

In February 1938 an unsuccessful attempt was made on the UK to Darwin record, which was foiled by bad weather and a damaged undercarriage. The aircraft was repaired and was re-flown in March 1938. The co-pilot for these attempts was Victor Ricketts who was the Air Correspondent for the Daily Express.

This time the trip was successful. Although they failed to break the London to Darwin record, they unknowingly broke the London to Sydney record! After a quick night's sleep, they flew on to New Zealand and landed at Omaka (*right*) breaking several more records.

It was around this time that a "well-known" Jewish businessman asked him to modify and disguise the Comet to bomb Hitler. Clouston decided, quite rightly, that it was unacceptable and outright murder as the countries were not at war at that stage.



On the outbreak of World War 2, Clouston re-joined the RAF and joined the Aerodynamics Flight of the RAE. He claimed a Heinkel 111 and a Messerschmitt Bf 110 during his time as a test pilot. Other responsibilities included work on the Turbinlite aerial searchlight in a Douglas Havoc night fighter, dropping coils of parachute-suspended cable in front of enemy bombers, and the development of the very successful Leigh Light for night-time anti-submarine work.

Later he was promoted to Wing Commander and given charge of a Liberator-equipped anti-submarine squadron, where he was awarded the DFC and then the DSO. He was then promoted to Group Captain and commanded two Beaufighter squadrons on anti-shiping duties at RAF Langham.

Post-war, Arthur Clouston was given a permanent commission with the rank of Squadron Leader and served in the British Forces of Occupation in Germany. He was given a two-year posting to the RNZAF as Commanding Officer of Ohakea Air Base in New Zealand from 1946.

Back in the UK he was appointed as Commandant of the Empire Test Pilot School at Farnborough in 1953, being promoted to Acting Air Commodore and posted as AOC Singapore. He was appointed as a Companion of the Order of the Bath in 1957, his final posting was as Commandant of the Aeroplane and Armament Experimental Establishment at Boscombe Down.

Arthur Clouston, CB, DSO, DFC, AFC & Bar, retired from the RAF to live in Cornwall in April 1960. He passed away on January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1984.

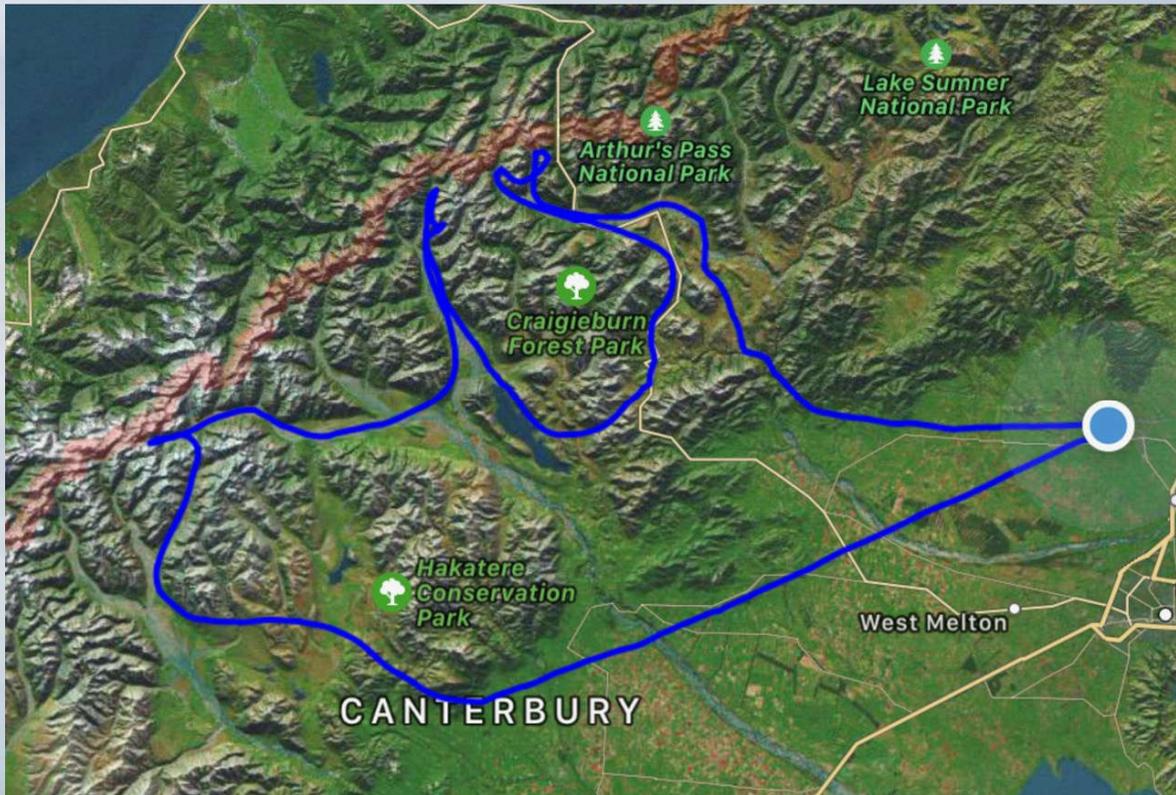
## THE SOUTHERN ALPS IN RGB

PHOTOS AND PILOTS: TIM WILLIAMS AND WILL AITKEN

On Sunday, May 5, 2019, Will Aitken and Tim Williams did a Southern Alps "Tiki Tour" in the club Tecnam ZK-RGB.

They followed the Waimakariri, Rakaia and Rangitata rivers up to Mt Rolleston, Mt Murchison and Mt Whitcombe. Apparently, there was not a breath of wind and no bumps at 7,000 feet! They flew back across Butler Saddle (6135ft).

They had some very nice views of Lake Pearson and Castle Hill on the way round which they have kindly shared with us. The total flight time was 3.3 hours.





*Left, Mount Whitcombe has greeted many pilots on the way to the West Coast*



*Below, Castle Hill Village on the way to Arthurs Pass.*



*Below, Castle Hill and Car Park. The Paddocks just off the bottom of this image were used as an airfield during the AOPA fly in last year.*



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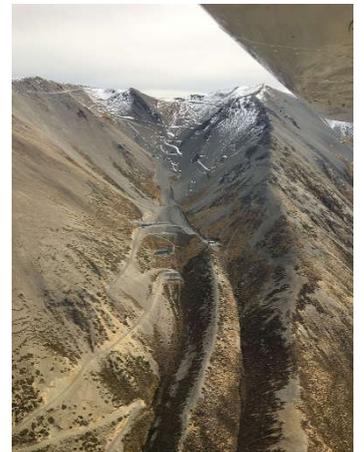


*Above, Lake Pearson and State Highway 73, slightly out of order – this is prior to the Castle Hill photos.*

*A very popular lake for Salmon and Trout fishing.*

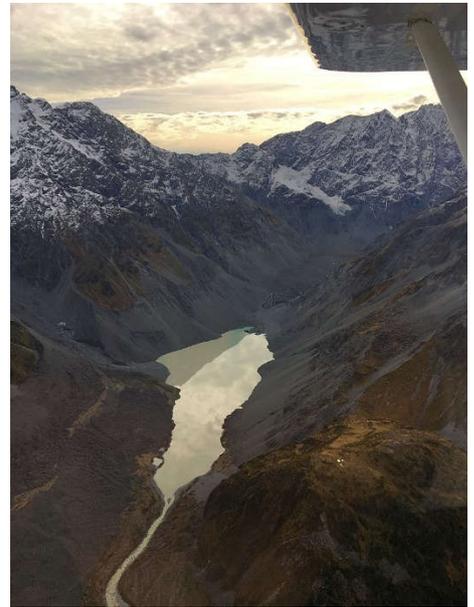
*Left, the Waimakariri Gorge*

*Right, one of the many Ski fields – probably Porters.*





*Right, That's Mount Whitcombe in the right-hand background, and the unnamed lake (-43.271S,170.913E)*



*Heartfelt appreciation to Will Aitken and Tim Williams for supporting the club by supplying the photos and articles.*



## CRAC SUPPORTS OUR LOCAL AIR CADETS AND OUR COMMUNITY

WORDS: BUZZ HARVEY

PHOTOS: VARIOUS

Over the past few years, CRAC has begun supporting our local community more and more. The forthcoming Open Day is a great example of this and follows a highly successful similar Open Day about 18 months ago, where locals came out to NZRT to see what goes on at their airfield. Other recent examples of community support have seen trial flight vouchers donated to the Citizen's Advice Bureau and hosting local groups at the airfield. One area that has seen great support from CRAC, is towards our local Air Cadets Squadron. No.88 Squadron Air Training Corps has continued to grow, currently parading some 60+ cadets.

CRAC has made a significant contribution to the flying side of things, annually sponsoring a cadet scholarship, and also providing instructors and Tecnam hours to their annual flying weekend. This support really provides a significant boost to the cadets and has helped bring more young aviators into our club. After years and years of wondering how to get more younger members to join, here is a natural gateway for youth to join, along with the significant number of Gen Y Millennials that have joined in recent times.

Each year, CRAC provides a scholarship to one deserving cadet to assist and encourage them in their

This was held at Woodbourne over the summer holidays, where the participants learned the basics of aviation navigation, with theory classes backed up by actually flying a planned route.



**Above,** Blake undertaking his theory study prior to departing to points around the upper South Island to test their planning skills.

Blake summed up his week of learning and flying:

*"I had a great time and enjoyed the experience and challenges I was fortunate enough to be a part of during the navigation course. Having the opportunity to learn about the basics of flight navigation and becoming more proficient at it, then using those skills afterward in a practical situation. Having the opportunity to use skills in a real scenario and applying the skills made the experience an amazing and memorable one, and I'll carry the skills through my life. I also feel very fortunate to have received the CRAC Scholarship this year. The chance to start flying is a huge dream of mine, and so I am looking forward to where this takes me in the future."*

- Blake McCurrie



pursuit of aviation. Last year's winner is **Blake McCurrie**. He is pictured above, receiving his scholarship from President Doug Anderson and CFI Stew Bufton. Blake was also lucky enough to be selected for the annual Air Training Corps National Aviation Course – Navigation.

Another local 88 Squadron cadet was also selected to attend the ATC National Aviation Course, but as part of the Power Flying



contingent. **Lucy Gilroy** also has a real interest in aviation and was also a top contender for the CRAC Scholarship. Lucy did extremely well on the course, achieving first solo. Well done Lucy, we look forward to possibly seeing you about the CRAC clubhouse soon too.

Below are a few thoughts from Lucy about the course:

*"I really enjoyed the ATC National Aviation Course for a number of reasons. Firstly, I was able to meet so many amazing people who I would now call my good friends. Secondly the incredible experience of being able to fly every single day with amazing instructors who teach you everything you need to know about flying. And lastly but most definitely not least is going solo!!! Flying in a plane on my own without an instructor was the most terrifying but most amazing experience ever! I want to thank cadets for the absolutely incredible opportunity that I will most definitely never forget for the rest of my life!"*

- Lucy Gilroy



**Above and top left**, Lucy receiving the traditions of flying solo at a youth aviation course

As you can see, we have cadets who are out making the most of the aviation opportunities that are available to them and it's great that our Club supports them to in pursuit of their dreams. These young people really appreciate operating from Rangiora Airfield and being immersed in aviation.

The support shown to No.88 Squadron is very much appreciated by SQNLDR Tania Mackinnon and her staff, and pass on their sincere thanks for the support and assistance to the Air cadets from CRAC.

*Buzz Harvey*

## WHAT'S A MICROLIGHT?

BRIAN GREENWOOD



A microlight is a single or two seat light aircraft with specific characteristics. For example, maximum weights (e.g. under 600kg for a two-seater land-based aircraft), a stalling speed of under 45 knots, and “low momentum” characteristics as defined by the Director of the Civil Aviation Authority. Full details are specified in the CAA’s Advisory Circular AC103.1 which is available online.



To answer the question – all the aircraft down the left-hand side are Microlights. The top three photos are first to third generation Microlights, respectively.



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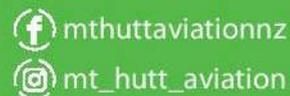
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*Disclaimer: This Magazine is prepared by dedicated enthusiasts; the opinions expressed herein are not to be taken as official club policy unless approved by the committee.*

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## HOW TO JOIN

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**At the Open Day: Grab a club member and ask!**

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You can also e-mail the secretary, [secretary@crac.co.nz](mailto:secretary@crac.co.nz) for an membership pack.

## CONTRIBUTIONS AND ATTRIBUTIONS

**Dave McPherson, Tim Williams, Will Aitken, Dave Mitchell, Terry Salmon, Paul Godfrey, Willie Morton, Keith Morris**

RecWings logo by **Eric Lim**.

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## COMMUNICATIONS

Weekly e-mails (The club "Rap") keeps members up to date with club events and issues.

The club operates two WhatsApp groups - **CRAC Drop Of The Hat** for informal group fly-aways, and **CRAC Revolutionary** for general chat and good humour.

The club magazine, RecWings, is published two-monthly. Non-club members can also get the magazine.

The next edition is finalised and is due for publication on April 1<sup>st</sup>.

**Contributions for the following edition are requested, publishing deadline May 13<sup>th</sup>, 2021. Next publishing date approx. May 31<sup>st</sup>, 2021**

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