

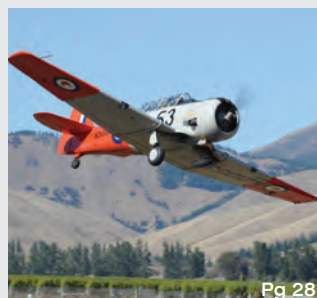
Pg 12



Pg 15



Pg 18



Pg 28



Pg 36

FEATURES

- 12 Taupo Club Class National Competition 2013
- 15 World Club Class Championships
- 18 Central Districts Gliding Championships
- 20 Competing for the Tasman Trophy in Australia
- 23 Lilienthal Medal Awarded to Bob Henderson
- 24 Whangarei Gliding Youth
- 28 Omaka Airshow 2013
- 30 Vintage Kiwi Rally Taupo 2013
- 32 Decision Fatigue
- 34 The Performance Triangle in Gliding
- 36 Gliding in Indonesia

REGULARS

- 6 Log Book
- 31 Book Review
- 33 A Question of Safety
- 35 GNZ News
- 38 Airworthiness
- 39 GNZ Awards and Certificates
- 40 Vintage You are History
- 44 Gliding New Zealand Club News
- 50 Classified Advertising

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What I did on my Easter Break

Yes, it is that old school essay favourite, what I did on my holiday. I'm not really sorry about that, because our Easter was fabulous. We went to the Classic Fighters Airshow. This is the one at the Omaka Airfield in Blenheim, where all of Peter Jackson's replicas and rebuilt WWI fighters live at the Aviation Heritage Centre. Most of them fly and I just love them. I know they're war machines, but they bumble around the sky like a bunch of enthusiastic puppies. And they're so pretty.

The show runs the gamut of warbird aircraft. A brief list included the Spitfire, Corsair, and Mustang, contrasted by the little Piper L-4, the military version of the Cub; all of which were contrasted completely by the Vampire and Strikemaster Jets. The RNZAF was there with the Kiwi Blue parachute team, the Red Checkers, the Iroquois and Sea Sprite helicopters, and their flash new Boeing 757. There was a Messerschmitt Bf108, Nanchangs and Yaks, to make sure it wasn't only the Allies represented. The star of the show was the beautifully restored Avro Anson bomber. For more information on all of this, look for my article on the show in the next issue of *Kiwi Flyer* magazine.

As well as all the powered and noisy aircraft, also displaying at the show was Doug Hamilton flying Jamie Halstead's ASH 25. The beautiful aerobatic display, engineless and in complete silence, wowed the crowd.

The commentary that went with the display didn't please me nearly as much. That was because, through lack of any more suitable candidates, I ended up doing it. I found the experience absolutely awful and I never want to have to do that again. I wasn't too concerned leading up to it, even though there were something like 18,000 people going to hear me. I'd only discovered that I had to do it the day before, but had good notes on the glider and about Doug, and had plenty I could say on gliding. You know me, I'll happily talk about gliding until the cows come home. In fact, I worried I had too much to say and wouldn't be able to get it all in.

When the time came, my son Robert and I climbed up to the commentary stand, high at the top of a scaffolding tower. I can fly gliders just fine, but don't do that sort of heights at all well. I just did my best to ignore where I was standing. I introduced myself to the commentary team, was handed a microphone, Doug released from tow, the music started (Enya - Orinoco Flow) and I spoke.

To my horror, my voice came back to me (loudly) over the speakers, a very disconcerting moment after I spoke. So naturally I stuttered, while my brain tried to work out what was happening.



Robert and I talking gliding to 18,000 people.

Pulling myself together a little, I stuck my finger in my ear to try to block it out and started talking about the glider. My amplified voice sounded appalling. Surely I don't sound like that? I didn't recognise myself at all. My voice seemed flat, nasal and as if it was coming from someone with a mental impairment who spoke extremely slowly. It was truly horrifying. (My son had already made a comment that my voice drove my family mad, so it was bound to do the same to the audience. I suddenly realised he was right.)

Manfully, I staggered through my notes, while attempting not to give in to blind panic. I forgot to look at the glider and comment on what it was actually doing. I did remember to mention that, unlike the aircraft we'd seen the day before bouncing on landing and putting on power to go around, the glider couldn't do that. I know I said that the best place to find out about gliding was from the GNZ website.

Apparently, I didn't make too much of a fist of it. I got good feedback. I was momentarily famous. John was talking to his brother on the phone that night. They were spending Easter in Wanaka. Donald already knew I'd done the gliding commentary. He'd been up Mt Iron, when someone had sent him a text. Later at the show,



Doug Hamilton display at the Omaka Airshow 2013.

Photo John McCaw

next issue

Simplifying the sporting code.
Giorgio Cialetto - Lillienthal Winner.

Deadline for Club News, articles
and pictures is 11 May and
22 May for advertising.



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when I was tracking people down for interviews for Kiwi Flyer, several people said to me that they recognised my voice. That is not encouraging. That means I DO sound like that.

The worst thing about it was that I had to do it again the next day. Robert had said we needed a youth voice, so I made him do it too. He didn't talk nearly as much as I had hoped. I found myself even more reluctant to actually speak. Day Two's glider commentary allowed for a lot more silence for Doug to show the glider off all on its own. It is all about silent flight after all.

I'm airshowed out. This is the third Easter in a row we've airshowed. We've either been GNZ representatives or journalists or both. While I've certainly appreciated getting to see all of this without paying an entry fee, and I've really enjoyed them - don't get me wrong - I'm still over it. Next Easter I think you'll find me with the caravan parked up by a beach somewhere, no aircraft in sight. John can take his cameras and poke them at aeroplanes if he wants, but I'm going to the beach. And, er... just in case I'm wrong and I find myself once again at Wanaka, the one thing I can categorically state is that I will not be doing a commentary on the glider display.

You're welcome.

Stay safe
Jill McCaw

TAUPO CLUB CLASS NATIONAL COMPETITION

By Karen Morgan



As South Islanders, Terry Jones and I did something unusual this summer. We went way up north to a gliding competition held at Taupo. I had learned to glide there in the 1980s, so it was a real treat to return.

As always, the Taupo club is exceptionally welcoming to visitors, and this year we learned that they run a good competition too. Roy Edwards directed with his normal flair, and with Trev Terry tasking, David Hirst predicting the weather, Bill Kendall keeping people safe and Ed Devenoges scoring, things were well under control. Tom Anderson seemed to fill every other job, with great helpers on the grid, towing and in the kitchen. If nothing else, go to Taupo for the meals!

The Club Class Nationals was the main event, and there was a class flying the Matamata Soaring Centre contest for those of us who had 'flash' gear. Terry entered that, and I loitered, crewed, shopped, ran wings and regularly grabbed the glider to fly in the stunning conditions whenever Terry brought it back early enough. I even flew the K21, which feels like a good trainer.

Twenty-two pilots entered the competition, with most from north of Taupo, but Tony Van Dyk and Mark Wilson travelled from Wellington, and Mike Strathern from Nelson. Ten came from Auckland, two from Tauranga, three from Piako and there were two Taupo locals. Skills ranged from 'newbie' to 'gun' so it was a good mix.

The drought had its positive side for flying, as we had day after day without rain. Only one day was missed, as it was not expected to develop until it was too late to race – so I flew and found the thermals just great. It was really hot on the ground most days.

Trev Terry had negotiated extra chunks of airspace, to make tasking across the area safer, with higher margins over forest land. This was great, but having to deal with airspace added significantly to the workload for me. I have, for the first time, used my transponder (so untouched that I couldn't find the 'on' switch), however I found the PNA helpful, although there is a nag in it that says "Airspace. Airspace," all the time when you get a good thermal.

Tasks were commonly AATs to the north, west and east of Lake Taupo, and, a couple of times, there were turnpoints to the southern end of the lake. Many of the routes were over large areas of forest, but there were good briefings on the available landing



Huka Falls. Hanging around waiting to start.

Photo Mike Strathern



Photo Karen Morgan



Photo Karen Morgan



Photo Karen Morgan

Grid - golden ground and thermals just above

Club house from the north.

Terry Jones

areas, and the safe ways to cross them. Pilots flew in thermals and convergences and, on one memorable day, a westerly ridge run to Thames and (almost) return. The tasks were challenging and generally achievable, but with enough distance to remind pilots that this was a Club Class Nationals. The seven AATs were generally two and a quarter or two and a half hours in duration, with one for three hours.

There were a number of outlandings, so in the absence of crews for most gliders, locals and other pilots drove all over the countryside. Mike Strathern invited Youth Glide to crew, and they were lucky enough to get to retrieve him from south of Turangi, getting dinner and a unique experience together.

DAY ONE

Mark Wilson made good use of the Libelle's handicap, and came back with a win, with 82 km/hr over the 274 task. Tim Bromhead was bridesmaid.

DAY TWO

Mark won the AAT task with 302 km at 96km/hr, and Tim was right behind. The next day was a 'rest' day.

DAY THREE

Winner Steve Wallace was the only finisher, with 344km at 81 km/hr - with Mark in second. Thames return was a real challenge, and although the ridge worked, lack of thermals around Tokoroa put almost everyone on the ground.

DAY FOUR

Here comes the south! Mike Strathern won the day, 266km at 106 km/hr. I would say flying at South Island speeds, but actually Steve Wallace was a close second.

DAY FIVE

The Rotoaira turn was tricky, and no-one completed the task, however Mark flew the furthest on handicap, with Steve Wallace close behind.

DAY SIX

Another day, another AAT, and Mark was comfortably in the lead, with Steve and Tim not so far behind. Speeds were good for these three, at 96 to 100km/hr. The rest of the field struggled today.



Steve Wallace, winner Club Class



Landout options – um



Mike Strathern at Thames, about to turn back to Taupo



Scenic landout

DAY SEVEN

Not a good day for Mark, forced into a rough paddock to the west of the lake, with a little wheel damage the result. It took a couple of days to get the Libelle back into action, so this left the field open for Steve at 86 km/hr over 263km, with Tim 2nd at 74 km/hr. Steve was now in the lead.

DAY EIGHT

Things were mixed up today, Bob Gray came through at 83km/hr over 207 km, and Mike was a whisker behind. Mark drove to Bridge Pa and back to get parts (okay, it was a whole glider), then took the glider apart to replace his damaged gear.

DAY NINE

AAT around five turnpoints, passing all sorts of rural views, lakes and power stations – Steve took this one out, with Mark only 2 km/hr behind.

DAY TEN

Visit Kawerau, and then race... Mike topped 100km/hr, and got home to win his second day, Mark was a comfortable second.

DAY ELEVEN

Bennydale was a long way away, and Bob Gray was the only finisher on the devalued day – with Mark in second.

After a solid performance, Steve Wallace from Auckland won the Nationals in his Mosquito, with Mike's ASW20 in second, Mark's

Libelle third and Bob's DG100 fourth. Pilots flew over 40 hours in hot, often blue conditions.

The other class flew the same tasks, launching second every day. I could tell you the day-by-day details, but that would be very repetitious. Suffice it to say that Pat Dreissen cleaned up, only dropping three points from the maximum possible.

Overall, we had a fabulous time, with great weather, varied tasks, old friends, nice scenery, really cheap tows and, for the crews, I would say that the shops are good compared to home (Balclutha). Thanks to the organisers and helpers for a well-run competition; I know it is hard work, so we appreciate the grace you all displayed.

The round trip was 2,500km, so not for the faint hearted, but it was well worth the trip. To the South Islanders - go north in a drought year and broaden your experience.



Roy Edwards, it's hard work running the competition on these hot days.