

Whangarei Flying Club



NEXT WFC MEETINGS –

→ Sat. 29th August 2015 – Committee Meeting at 11.00am; followed by \$5 Lunch about noon.

→ **Please check the Flying Club website for all upcoming events as this is constantly updated.**

{The Club Breakfast defaults to the **second** Saturday of the month, and the Committee Meeting / Lunch to the **last** Saturday of the month (unless circumstances force an alteration)}. All members are welcome to attend the Committee Meetings and Lunch.



**Providing Safe and
Affordable Flying**

August 2015

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President's Report:

The perceptiveness among you will have noticed the absence of a July Newsletter, for which I have no excuse! OK, it's winter and not much has been happening, but all that could change as the days get longer and warmer and we start to emerge from our burrows back into the light!

There have been a few changes recently. Firstly we have added a switch to the SpiderTracks system. This is to enable experienced pilots to de-activate the tracking system when they feel it isn't needed. We will also be changing the way we pay for this, in line with our current usage.



The ruling will be that it is always activated for cross country flights and all flights over water. It must also be activated for all student solo flights, including those in the circuit. The switch is illuminated when the Spider is alive. The club will continue to pay for the SpiderTracks system, so you have no excuse for not using it! Look how quickly the recent couple were found after crashing in thick bush with an active locator beacon.



It was recently noticed that WCF was sitting one wing down in the hangar. Northland Aviation have dismantled and checked the undercarriage and replaced all the mounting bolts. They appeared to have stretched slightly, and were replaced as a precaution. You will notice that there is still a bit of a lateral tilt. I am assured that this is sound and not a concern, but we may pursue this as an insurance claim. The aircraft must have experienced one or more heavy landings recently, and it re-affirms the need to report any incidents that occur when you have charge of the aircraft; not to be told off, but so we are aware that checks may need to be carried out.

Mark has moved his aircraft back into the hangar, and we welcome him back as he has agreed to continue to monitor and service WCF. He recently completed the 100 hour checks on the aircraft which have been monitored by Northland Aviation who are maintaining all our aircraft logbooks, so a big thank you to Mike and Mark!

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Neil Foreman will be away overseas for the next month, so instruction will be down to Bob and myself. Bob will be working shifts and will fill in where he can. I can be available most days during the week and Saturdays, but not on Sundays. As we are also running a B&B, evenings are generally better for me than early mornings ...

... and now for a couple of extras! The first is from June, following here recent trip to Australia; the second is anonymous and *rather* special...

Where the Hell is Noonamah! by June Billings

“You haven’t seen Australia until you have seen Darwin”. When I won a \$500 travel voucher, what better way to spend it than “See Darwin”.

Darwin, Northern Territory is Lat. 10°, hot, hot, most days 33 deg., some 35, one 38 and another, when in an enclosed space with the NT Coastguard. 40 deg. The CG ran a rope course, courtesy of a RAN Bosun and afterwards lit a BBQ, dizzyingly hot, but they make really good snarlers in the NT. This being the Dry, everything was coated with a fine dried- red dust and under a cloudless blue sky.

“Don’t go swimming in the sea” was the mantra from all Darwinians, Tour Drivers, Boat crew – hard to take at 33 deg. and an azure blue sea. Beware crocs, box jellyfish and snakes. It was strange to see miles of golden beaches, lapped by this gentle azure blue sea absolutely deserted, but definitely a no-no.

Luckily every home, motel and hotel has a good sized pool, but in the Wet they can become invaded by Salties and Freshies (*crocs to you and me. Ed.*). Salties can grow up to 5m and these monsters are all given pet names, e.g. “Sweetheart” and “Michael Jackson”.

Darwin was nearly bombed out of existence in Feb 1942 by the Jap bombers, 243 of them, more than bombed Pearl Harbour, but the news was smothered by Canberra as the defences of the North were of the order of “one rifle each five men with 10 rounds per rifle”. Why the Japs never came and invaded the NT no one knows.

Darwin got over that with the help of Uncle Sam and was then wiped out by Cyclone Tracy, Christmas Eve 1973. 241 Km/hr winds with over 50 people killed, the hospital wiped out, houses destroyed and all public services annihilated. The evidence of these events are everywhere and Darwinians are very proud of their new city.

As Darwin is built on ancient granite, 15, 20 and 30 storey pent- house blocks are numerous in the downtown area, courtesy of oil and gas money from drills and wells in the Timor and Arafura Seas, but out of the Centre, this being Mitchell and Cavannah Streets, there are shops with wooden varandahs straight out of the 30 and 40’s.

So Where The Hell Is Noonamah? Go 1½ hours down the Stuart Highway (keep going for four days and four nights and you are in Adelaide) go past Bundabah, Yarrawonga “Just down the road a way” and there it is, consisting of a pub complete with Holdens, Toyota wellbacks, more Holdens, Land Rovers and more Holdens, (local health authorities recommend four litres of fluid a day in the tropics, so make half of that a Carlton!) a bowzer for Prime or BP, and a large country store which sells Akubras, boots, groceries, cosmetics, farm gear and Peters’ Ice Cream for the kids. The BP and Prime tanker drivers are Lords of the Road with a tractor, three trailers, 80 wheels in all and at 100 km/hr.

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“Just down the road a bit” is where you will find the NT Ultralite Flying Club. I drove down the road a bit for an hour, thought I had lost my way, but no, another quarter hour and finding Bees Creek Road, a one mile road of red dust, there is the Flying Club. They are quite a spread out establishment, and have a helicopter training club there also. NT FC was flying a bright yellow Echo they had bought from Otago. A little rough around the edges, gets a hard life, but just the same little Echo as we had at WFC. The instructor I was with made many apologies for the rough ride at 1630 hours, saying it was a pity I had not come out sooner when it would not be so rough, but it was not rough at all after NZ, only a few wobbles at 1500-2000 ft, watching a rogue bush fire take off. Three hundred and sixty degrees of savannah, dull grey, no green. Landing was OK, but heat kept Echo in the air at about 12 ft until I made her come down on the long red dust strip. The clubrooms had no walls, fuel was brought in by road when needed and all this at \$240.00 per hour. We can't complain about our price here at WFC.

The Ultralite club runs a school for 70-80 high school boys and girls interested in flying and all tuition is paid for by Canberra, with probable assistance again from Uncle Sam.

I took a harbour cruise, again big presence of Uncle Sam with there having just been an air/naval exercise with the Aussies in the area north of Darwin – US destroyers and frigates in the harbour, which is four times bigger than Sydney Harbour and has an 8 metre (m not feet) tidal fall. I asked how it compared to the Hauraki Gulf and just got a blank stare.

Went fishing out past Magnetic Island, caught a 2 metre shark which they wouldn't boat –too big- a small golden Indonesian snapper and a barramundi. Barramundi are pretty tasteless compared to NZ snapper so I gave that little fellow away.

Had a long day (15 hr) trip to Katherine, including the beautiful Katherine Gorge, where there were 21m floods in the Wet of 1998, the town was pretty badly damaged then. There were swimming holes and picnic lunches on the bus trips. Home 2100 hot and tired. Went to Kakadu (kakaja is the native name) Wildlife Park, again a swimming hole, met a snake, yuk, and only a 10 hour day. All trips excellent lunches or lunches at pubs on the way.

The Dry and the Wet are each divided into three seasons, The Dry, harvest, controlled burn-off; six weeks after that, planting. The Wet: Little Wet, Bigger Wet and Whopper Wet.

Would I visit again? I don't think so. Could I live there? – no way – give me the North and WR in particular every time.

June.

... and now for a very special report ... Ed.

60 Seconds to Impact!

What began as a fun day at the club with lots of public enthusiasm became somewhat of a nightmare for one pilot and his trial flight passenger. The flight began with the normal preparation, with the previous passenger exiting the aircraft and the new climbing in for their briefing and flight. Checks completed and with a confidence building chat to the passenger we were off to the holding point. Normal take-off and climb out and all looking good for another great flight.

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Not long after that it all changed as a blast of air lashed the occupants of the cockpit. The cockpit canopy was blown off and with it went headsets, caps and glasses as it all disappeared up and over the pilot and passenger. Sitting there with the wind howling and lashing at us was stunning for a moment but the violence of it I think prevented my mind from being stunned for very long!

“What the....???” and then as I looked down and saw us diving for the ground the thought entered my head, “This is it.” Quite calm, yet knowing we were not likely to come out of this.

I was still calm but realizing that throughout these thoughts my hands, feet and mind had also been assessing what I still had to work with to try and regain control of the aircraft.

The heading to this article sounds maybe a little dramatic for some who will read this but it is actually the facts. When you look at it, we were 1500' above sea level traveling at 100 knots and when the canopy blew we were immediately sent into a dive at 1500' a minute. Sixty seconds was all we had left at that point. Obviously the elevator was the first control surface to assess and the elevator seemed to be stalled. It was mushy and had no effect on the rate of decent. Throttle right back to idle and see what happens. Speed slowing, will that allow the nose to rise? What damage has been done to the elevator? Have I got an elevator back there or maybe just a tail plane? If I have something back there how badly is it damaged?

Speed slowing and nose beginning to rise, centre of pressure must be rolling back. Can I help with power or still too soon? Increase power a touch but too soon as nose stops rising. Throttle right back and wait.

Are my ailerons working? Not going to try them yet as still diving and don't want more instability in case ailerons cause an adverse effect. Speed still slowing, can I try for some power to help attitude? Small amount of power, so far so good, little more, still good, keep it in until full power and rate of descent now slowing!

Next problem, hills ahead, need to turn but how stable will she be in a turn? Light northerly over the hills, bugger, will turn into a tail wind position when I turn, can I hold altitude? Nothing left for it but try and see what happens and deal with it. Hold full power into the turn for max lift and keep turn flat. So far so good, staying stable but not holding height. OK, I now know I have a rudder and the ailerons are stable. What can I do about the height? Get away from the hills and pick up some speed and see if I have any elevator. Still feels stalled but when I pull some on the speed drops very rapidly so can't use much if at all. At least I must still have elevators there but not much use. Away from the hills with full power and height now holding below 300', temps and pressures top of the green but stable. Back off some power to save the engine, can we hold height? Only just but almost below airfield threshold. Back to full power and watch a slow increase in height, very small help with elevator as speed fragile with elevator input.

Next problem: Where is XYZ? (rego altered).

When I became airborne there was no other traffic in the circuit and no other aircraft broadcasting in the MBZ, but XYZ was doing pre-flight checks and must be almost ready to go. Where is she? On the runway and backtracking or at a holding point or maybe lined up and ready to roll? I didn't know and I couldn't ask as the headsets were gone and I couldn't transmit. Even if I had been able to find a headset no one would have heard me over the lashing of the wind from the prop blast alone. Being able to see would have been helpful too, but the prop blast was incredible right into our eyes making me almost blind.

This was the only moment I froze throughout this episode. There was a little shiny red button staring at me on top of the control column and I knew in my head I should be pushing it and making a Pan call (figured now we could live, so not a Mayday). However there was a battle going on in my head saying it was no point as it wouldn't work but I still wanted to push it and do the call. This battle went back and forth for a

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few moments before it became a physical discipline to make myself look away from the shiny red button and when I did my head clicked back into gear and once again I was Pilot in Command!

So, where was XYZ? I couldn't ask anyone and I could see extremely little! Prop blast is ferocious stuff and I had heaps of it often with the engine at full power. The runway was a blur in the distance at very low angle of attack and all I could pick out as we drew closer were the threshold markers and the thousand foot markers. When closer in I spotted a white blob between the markers down the 06 end and assumed I had found XYZ. But what to do? I wanted to land on the reciprocal of the take-off but XYZ was back-tracking and I had no idea how stable I would be once below 60 kts. I had been back to 60 kts at one point and stayed airborne but had no idea what damage may be behind me in the tail assembly so no idea what was going to happen when speed dropped off further. I also wanted to come deeper into the runway as I had little to no ability to counteract any sink on the approach. If I came in behind XYZ and lost directional control or couldn't slow down or had to try an overshoot I was likely to take her out too. Not a pleasant thought!

Reassess again. Am I stable and holding height? Yes, just. Can I go down wind for 06. Think so, worth a try. What about the grass? Possible, but this would not be a good approach for an aircraft not able to cope with sink as there are often large amounts of sink on vector 32. There is a house right on the approach and I could end up in the house. Could I go around the house? Maybe but didn't want to be left needing to slip when not knowing what damage there may have been to the tail section. Also, very rough strip and the short coupled under carriage is not all that happy on rough strips so not knowing just how good the rudder was I elected to go for the seal. My speed over the fence was going to need to be a little faster than normal to keep above 60kts and wanting to be deeper in for this decided the longer sealed vector was my only real option.

So where was XYZ? ON the b...y threshold markers and just sitting there! Well at least I knew where she was. Not her pilot's fault that I couldn't tell him how welcoming the ground was looking if he would just MOVE! I had no way to transmit so XYZ was oblivious to my situation.

Further reassessment:

If he doesn't move before I get there (30 seconds again!) what do I do? Overshoot and go around? How long can I keep this up? Any major sink is going to be a problem so where do I fly to keep lift? If I land over him and that 210 begins her take off roll it could be another nasty option. Have I time to get in front where he can see me? Don't know because at any second he could roll and I am not quite there. Can I orbit? I Might be able to as it was stable in the last turn. I also picked up 200' when I turned onto the wind so will I lose that, or more, when I turn off the wind again? I need that 200 to cope with sink and get some depth onto the field. Out of options, commence turn and cope! Lost a hundred but all good and XYZ moving! Keep your speed, keep your speed!

Final flare and stall onto the runway - we are on the ground. Wow, new perspective on life!

So what caused all this? A stupid mistake and the breaking of a cardinal rule. Let me explain.

When sitting at the parking spot XYZ started her engine and the prop blast blew all over my cockpit which was not comfortable for me or my passenger. I pulled the canopy down and pushed the locks partially forward to hold while I moved the aircraft out of the prop blast. When continuing my checks my brain accepted the fact that the canopy was down and latched. However, the latches were not in the locked position and the result you have already read about.

There is no doubt that this incident was pilot error. Although XYZ (not the real rego) has featured in this article it was never any fault of XYZ that caused the incident I had to cope with, XYZ just happened to be there.

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Aircraft facts:

When the canopy blew the aircraft response was a dive at approx. 1500' per minute. Immediate drop in power settings to idle, after a time the nose gradually began to rise.

At no time was the aircraft unstable in the turn and indeed the aircraft felt stable at all times. The only issue was the amount of elevator I could or mostly couldn't use.

The elevator felt stalled at all times but I have realized after the fact that the elevator was still effective, *once out of the dive*, but the airspeed dropped so dramatically when elevator applied that I could use only the barest minimum. Over a distance I was able to gain height as long as there was no heavy sink to contend with.

The approach and landing were standard, I could use down elevator with no trouble and stalled nicely onto the runway; as soon as the nose was elevated the speed disappeared and we touched down easily.

Side note:

The passenger, who had never flown, went on to fly again later that day and signed up to become a pilot!

Go figure!

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Editorial comment: Amazing story, and thank you for sharing this with us.

Minimum 1,200' height loss without canopy? If you hadn't managed to climb to 1,500' before the incident it would have been a different story ("40 seconds to impact"?) and almost certainly would have needed a different author. Sobering thought. Ed.

Drew's News

Dargaville Aero Club are hosting a Microlight Presentation by Flying NZ at on Saturday 29th August from 2pm to no later than 4pm. I've booked WCF in case the weather happens to be clear, so if there's anyone who might be interested in going with me...?

This is the descent into Queenstown, filmed from the cockpit of a commercial flight. Click on the link...

[Cockpit view landing through thick cloud](#)

I'm pretty sure I've included this clip before, but it's worth a second viewing! Magical; and close to REAL flying. Now if only it wasn't \$150,000 !! (... and they also do a self-launching electric powered version...)
<https://player.vimeo.com/video/39325401>

Drew's Views

It's why we fly... Views from the cockpit... Contributions welcome !!

Calm day take-off



Coming Events...

with thanks to Brian Millett and the NMC Newsletter.

Not much on just now...

OSHKOSH 2016. July 25th – 31st. Start planning and putting aside any spare cash for your trip now.

Classic Fighters Airshow. April 14th 2017 Omaka Aviation Heritage Centre, Blenheim.
<http://www.eventfinda.co.nz/2017/classic-fighters-omaka-airshow/blenheim>

If anybody hears of any up coming events on the aviation calendar that you think would be of interest to our members, please let me know, or contact Shaun to put on our web site. Ed.

HAPPY FLYING!



27th August 2015