

# Motueka Fly-in

On the morning of Friday 13th, which no one considered ominous, a number of our club's intrepid aviators gathered at Feilding in preparation for their journey to the 2009 RAANZ National fly in at Motueka. The organisers had promised brilliant weather as is quite the norm for Nelson bays and all were looking forward to a fairly straight forward trip.

Frank and Tony (complete with silver tea pot) realised that although ZK-SKO is a cavernous aircraft some stuff just had to be left behind.

JBR and ED fitted into ZK-EBR snugly.

Stan and Bill P shared ZK-ZOT's cockpit. (the Avid was still not repaired after it's hanger rash disaster).

Old Pete had young James as navigator in ZK-LPD and lastly was Mark in his steed ZK-SND.

First stop was Koputaroa to meet up with Big Pete in ZK-PLP, for an updated weather brief. This unfortunately turned into quite a long morning tea break. Many thanks to Pam for the many coffees and teas. Our intention was to first to go to Omaka for lunch and visit the museum but the miserable Met dept had used the wrong coins in their meter and Blenheim's cloud base was not much above tree top height.

A couple of hours later it started to improve so off we set. The cloud base did limit us to flying a bit lower than our sphincter muscles were comfortable with when flying over water but we all made it with out too much trouble, although Pete did sojourn over Woodbourne looking for Omaka.

Neil and a couple of his wee clan were there to greet us in ZK-go fast.

We had lunch at the Museum followed by a conducted tour. This was just awesome and suggest to others to do so when they can. You will get so much more history and great stories with an expert guide rather than just wandering around by your self.

Our next plan was to travel south down the Wairau river valleys to Lake Station then turn north up towards Nelson. The cloud base was about 2500ft with some lower patches marred by some rain which was reducing visibility. Chatting to some locals they said we would not get though the passes to the south and suggested a zigzag route through the Marlborough hills via Havelock and the Rai River valley.

Lots of pencil scratchings on charts and briefings on how to tackle the task was accomplished and then we prepared for departure. We were all given a Domes departure by Woodburne Tower which involved tracking west and around the

zone before turning north again to pick up the entrance to the required valley. This put a bit of pressure on the controller and he did remarkably well in containing his disappointment when we were all airborne and discovered that over half of us did not notify him that they did not have a transponder, which is required. He was well relieved when we were all finally clear of his patch. Although he did give one of our pilots, who was returning to his Bulls strip, a bit of a bollicking for not carrying out the Ponds departure correctly.

The trip through the valleys required some skills that not all had experienced before and demonstrated how it can very easily turn out unsavory if you do not map read effectively and keep you wits about you. We eventually broke out into clear weather north of Pepin Island and then tracked directly across Tasman Bay to Motueka.

Once we had tied down, registered and had our fill of a great BBQ meal we all traipsed off into town to our find our accommodation, apart from Frank, Tony and PK who decided to rough it on the airfield in tents. We met up with the Stratford chaps and chapesess who were at the same place and had a few convivals. They certainly know how to keep all aroused.

We had spotted JJ in town entertaining a local red head lass in a bar so a few of us went in to put a spanner in his plans. He has settled into the easy life rather well and really enjoying himself.

Next morning was competition day with bombing, spot landing and cross countries planned. The weather was a bit overcast and decidedly cooler than we anticipated. Bombing comprised of 3 attempts at dropping a zip lock bag full of sand onto the target which was an old, but still mobile, car. Frank and Tony were first up and they thought the car was just a joke so had a go at a set of tires a further distance away until their misconception was pointed out. Tony had apparently worked the trajectory parameters out mathematically rather than using the mark one eyeball and they did quite well in the end and got quite close. Yours truly had James hanging out the window of the Skyarrow and with great team work he subsequently exclaimed after our second pass "I think we hit the bloody windscreen" to which the judges confirmed "Bulls eye". We did not win the competition as it was an aggregate score but we did get a prize for the only hit.

By this time there were about 6 or 7 aircraft continually in the circuit for the competitions as the spot landing was running parallel to the bombing. This certainly had your eyes out on stalks trying to establish a good sequence especially with the mix of types and performance. There were a couple of idiots who decided they would do orbits on short final with numerous others behind them. They did get some short sharp comments of disapproval.

Spot landings were interesting with some of us getting very close to the spot. One of us was lucky that his passenger did not have false teeth with the subsequent very firm touchdown. Again it was aggregate scoring but I believe one of us Manawatu-its may have got a placing but will have to wait for the RAANZ magazine to come out as they only announced the winners.

PK decided that as the circuit was so busy he would do the short cross-country that had been planned. He got James to do all the work and navigate, and I am proud to say that James won that event. Well done.

In the afternoon most anticipated in the long cross country. This was not a timed event so you could add whatever sightseeing you wanted to it. By this time the weather had improved somewhat. This event involved identifying some prominent land marks and picking up playing cards at an uncharted strip and Takaka. We all thought we had won it but sadly the judges did not agree.

There was a ROTAX work shop run by Colin Alexander of Tauranga which was extremely worth while. He really has an entertaining way of ensuring that all have a correct understanding of what is required for engine maintenance.

The prize giving was held in town with a sumptuous smorgasbord of edible delights, along with copious amounts of enlivening liquid refreshment. The guest speaker was from a company that restore and build Vintage World War 1 aircraft. They make every thing from all flying components to engines, and to the exact original plan specifications. The end result is an aircraft that responds and flies to the original flight manual specs. They are certainly skilled trades people.

The evening, for some of us, ended up with the raucous Stratford mob until the wee hours. I reckon Mark has a split personality and has been unduly influenced by his numerous trips to Taranaki. You would not believe he may not be the quiet reserved chap you know.

Young James decided that Motueka was really rocking on the Saturday night, quite different from the backblocks of Taihape, so went out on the prowl. He came back most disappointedly saying that he could not find a suitable member of the opposite sex that did not have a tattoo or a ring through some part of their anatomy. What a good clean country lad up bringing.

Sunday morning dawned and promised to be an absolute cracker of a day with nary a breath of wind and hardly an ominous cloud in sight.

Whilst down in this wonderful area we could not miss out on a flight over and through the ranges to the west coast, landing at Karamea, north along the coast to Farewell spit and return to Mot. After a couple of false starts awaiting for JBR to clear his flooded carbs we set off and enjoyed some most spectacular

scenery.

Unfortunately whilst we were away there was a fatal accident involving a Skyarrow in the Westport vicinity. The registration was SKA and being very similar to SKO it was thought by the local organizers it may have been me, who was flying it at the time. It was with due relief when we all eventually turned up unscathed.

A bite too eat and at about 1500 we said farewell to a great fly-in and set heading for home. By this time we had come to rely on our trusty steeds and their reliable hearts of mechanical fire, that the long stretches of water were of little concern.

I can truly say that a tremendous time was had by all and we all experienced and learnt new skills that enriched our love for flying.

Bill Penman

