



Taupo & Great Barrier Island

With the worst of winter weather now behind us and the airstrips slowly drying out we can hope to see a bit more flying activity. While I have been to Te Awamutu, East Cape and Opotiki a few times over the last couple of months, the NAAG hasn't been many places as a group so I planned a trip to Taupo for the 19th August. As the day approached Jim Hickey changed the forecast somewhat from the intended big

Richard Izard's new hangar complex on the Taupo Airfield.

The NAAG were given an informative talk on each of the aircraft.

sun across our part of the country. I assumed the worst of the weather would be slightly further east of our planned flight path but it did put a few off from coming. Getting away from Thames the weather was calm and as I got closer to Taupo I could hear a number of our NAAG pilots converging on the airport. Taupo has a good range of amenities including an all weather sealed runway and two cafes. The landing fee for microlights is also appealing at \$1.50 if paid on the day! During the course of the morning we finally collected seventeen people from ten aircraft. We worked the cafe staff to capacity as we enjoyed our leisurely lunch in the terminal. Plans were made for a trip up over Ruapehu before the return flight home but there was some doubt if this would happen due to a large cloud bank on the eastern slopes of the mountain.

Prior to departure we were privileged to have a look through



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Richard Izard's new hangar. For most of us it was like being let loose in a toy shop! Richard has started a new airline (Izard Pacific Aviation Ltd) operating out of Taupo. The pride of the fleet is a King Air. Many of us took the opportunity to get inside and have a good look at the office end of the aircraft.

Also in the same hangar is a Piper Seneca, Tecnam twin, Robinson R44 and Tecnam Sierra RG.

With our tour over, six of our aircraft set off for the summit of Ruapehu.

King Air ZK ZZA.

Up front and personal.

The western face of the mountains was clear but cloud banked up on the eastern slopes. I managed to get to the summit of the mountain but the Crater Lake was obscured which was a bit of a disappointment for my passenger, Dennis Moller. I remained clear of the western wall as Harvey Lockie had reported being caught in a downdraft that had him losing five hundred feet of altitude in twenty seconds! While I do have a few photos taken from the summit they look like I am caught in a blizzard and are not worth reproducing here! It was a great social outing even though the flight over the mountains was a bit disappointing.

The first of the Tecnam Twins to be delivered in NZ.

On the 7th September a group of us left for Great Barrier Island. There was little wind as I made my way up the eastern side of the Coromandel Peninsular with first time passenger, Tim Palmer. Changing radio frequencies at Port Jackson I could hear members of our group coming from all directions. Within ten minutes we were all on the ground, including Brian and Gail Taylor who



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had come from Whangarei in their Jodel. The ten aircraft on the ground made an impressive sight. We had turned the otherwise tranquil airspace around Great Barrier into something more akin to Heathrow!

A very pretty Seneca.

Brian and Gail Taylor's Jodel D11.

Waiting for others to fly in.



It is always a pleasant walk to the cafe through the little bush track that follows the road. Fortunately there were eight late comers, as the first group of us ran the cafe out of food with some having to wait close to an hour to get something to eat! In future we have been asked to phone ahead with numbers. The NAAG has become so popular now that we have 110 pilots on the list. We get new people at each event and we are always pleased to add new members to the group. If you are able to fly during the week and enjoy getting out with other aviators then we would love to see you along on our trips.

When the rugby world cup is over we might look at a trip to the South Island. A transalpine trip to Greymouth might just be on the cards.



Safe Flying,

Cliff McChesney



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The first of the heard on their way to the Claris Texas Cafe.

More hungry members of the NAAG on their way for food.



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A final tally of 21 people enjoy the food at the Texas Cafe.



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When a call comes to fly to the Great Barrier my thoughts immediately go to a real steak filled pie offered up at the Claris Texas Café. The best bar none. K.S.



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