



NAAG

Northern Adventure Aviation Group

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To quote the saying that comes from the Robert Burns poem, 'the best made plans of mice and men often go awry'. Well on the 19 March I thought I had chosen some suitable weather for a trip to Hawera. The plan was to meet at Hawera where, local aviator and retailer, Ralph Gibson would collect us and take us to Nigel Ogle's Tawhiti Museum. Having

Cliff does the job of organizing, collecting and managing our NAAG trips. Yep, he's looking for that large note he knew he had.



drawn a straight line on the map the night before we could see the weather was going to prevent such a flight. Leaving Thames Nooky and I worked our way across toward Raglan to the north of Huntly where the weather was clear. Skirting around a bit of low cloud from Aotea Harbour to Taharoa was a little demanding but we were soon in clear air. It was at about this point that I received a text from Bill Sisley asking where

Hmmm. Do I take the Harley or go for a fly?

we were. He had attempted to go via TeKuiti but had been turned back by low cloud. He had to track most of the way back to Raglan before he could find a suitable passage.

With Nooky and I first to get there, we awaited Bill's arrival. Unbeknown to us Bob Byal and Evan Gray were on their way too. Bob had been held up when he





discovered he had a broken wheel spat so stayed to remove both wheel pants before flight. Finally with us all on the ground, Ralph kindly delivered us to the museum. In the rush to get away I left my camera behind in the plane. Fortunately Bob had his camera with him and was able to get a photographic record of the day.

John Menzie has a go at the steam roller. As a tractor driver, John is very familiar with this piece of machinery.



The Prime Minister, John Key, had been at the museum the day before to open a new attraction. This new section was a boat ride through some of New Zealand's history. At times we found ourselves caught up in musket fire over our heads as Maori wars were acted out. This ride comes close to that expected at Disneyland although it was not meant to be a 'rush' but rather an education. Weta workshops had a part to play in making some of the props so you can imagine it is all to a very high standard. I don't want to tell you everything that was part of the boat ride or you won't go and experience it for yourself. Also recently added was a farm and machinery section. I didn't count how many tractors were in the building but there was enough to lose count. My passenger, John Menzie, was wealth of knowledge on much of this former machinery, having worked with or previously collected it in his own museum.

A typical garage scene from long ago amongst the large collection of tractors, mowers and other implements of farming.



Having completed these two sections of the museum we took over Mr Badger's Cafe. This is a small cafe attached to the complex that keeps a good array of food.

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Satisfied once more we moved into the original section of the museum. In 1975 Nigel and Teresa Ogle bought the 70 year old Tawhiti Cheese Factory. As a child he had delivered milk there with his father. What started out as a hobby and a small private collection grew with public demand to become an impressive visual history of South Taranaki. Having been through

One of many scenes depicting life in New Zealand in the form of detailed models.



some two years ago I am still amazed at the work that has gone into both the life sized figures (all taken from casts of real people) and the thousands of miniature figurines. Additionally there is a railway which takes passengers on a reconstruction of the logging railways that used to operate in Taranaki. Passing through bush settings where life sized figures operate an old sawmill this is something not to be missed. This operates only on a Sunday so we were not privileged to ride the train this time.



On the homeward track, the prevailing wind had kept the cloud base down which required us to follow the same coastal route home. For Nooky and I, we made a brief stop at Stratford where the RAAZ national fly-in was taking place. A number of early arrivals were already there but the main days were to be the Saturday and Sunday. Bidding the guys at Stratford farewell we followed the coast up past Awakino as far as the Aotea Harbour before turning inland.

We had enjoyed our day in Taranaki and look forward to coming again to see any further additions Nigel may add. While

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Hawera may not usually be on any part of your journeys, it is well worth taking a detour to visit this fantastic museum which tells so much of New Zealand's forgotten history.

Special thanks to you Ralph for taking time out of your day to ferry the NAAG around.

Safe flying,

Cliff McChesney

Attention to detail and not duplicating the models helps in visualizing a 3D look into the past.

A real steam tractor.




Cliff McChesney
Operations Director

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