



NAAG

Northern Adventure Aviation Group

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White Island Trip 2010

With the shortest day approaching the NAAG needed to get out and do something local. After some consultation about a suitable day we made plans to take in a trip over White Island. The 10th June looked promising and with a number confirming their availability I booked a rental van to meet us at Whakatane Airport. Our first stop would be a visit to the Awakeri Hot Pools. Having lived there for the first eight years of my life it has become

We had the entire pool area to ourselves.

We enjoy good food at the Whakatane Hotel.

a popular place to visit, especially for my children. We arranged an arrival time of 11 am at Whakatane Airport and I was pleased to see everyone there on time. It was good to welcome a couple of newcomers to the group, Ross Walker and Chris Hoffmann. Ross flies a Storm 300 out of Whitianga and Chris is a part owner in a Tecnam Sierra that is based at Parakai. Our rental van duly arrived and the ten of us piled in. The Hot Springs are only 15 km from the airport so within 15 minutes we were enjoying the benefits of a good hot soak.

<http://www.awakerisprings.co.nz/>

After a time we were all beginning to take on the impression of a prune and some of us were getting rather hungry. Loading into the van we headed into Whakatane. After some debate we settled on the Whakatane Hotel which has an excellent outdoor eating area right on the



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main street. The food was good value for money and while most of us found the quantity to be more than ample, Max Deane was happy to clean up at least three of the left over remains!

Max Deane finishes up Bev's sheep shanks. The waiter took away only clean plates!

With lunch over and a forecast of building winds, we needed to get back to the airport to allow those that had come the greatest distance time to get home before dark. Donning our life jackets we were soon ready for the flight out to both Whale Island and White Island beyond.

While it might seem like a daunting task to head out from the safety of land, with the company of four other aircraft about you it is not such an issue. White Island, New Zealand's only active marine volcano is 27 nautical miles (50 km) off the coast of Whakatane. In the early days, White Island was mined for its sulphur until in 1914 a lahar killed all 10 workers. Rising to a height of 1043 feet above sea level, White Island is often visible on a

Life jackets on, it's time to head out over the water.

clear day from the Waihi Beach coast line. While there was little thermal activity on the day we were there, at times there is quite a large plum of steam visible. After several circumnavigation laps of the Island we steered off in the direction of Waihi Beach and Mayor Island. This is a big stretch of water with over 60 NM before reaching the mainland. Some ten miles from Mayor Island the winds picked up slowing our progress. At one point we noted 25 knots on the nose! This was evident also by the strong wind lanes on the water. As if by magic,





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the moment we passed Mayor Island it disappeared as quickly as it had come. Landing at Waihi Beach I left my passenger, Bev Deane, for Max to take home with him. While Bev is starting to trust Max's flying ability she prefers to be with someone who has a little more experience and confidence.

Whale Island with White Island visible in the background.

The forecast strong winds that had been predicted for the afternoon did not eventuate except the brief

White Island with it big open crater. Chris Hoffmann flies Tecnam ZK TNM past the island's crater. Sightseeing complete we head for Mayor Island 45 NM northwest.

encounter we had prior to Mayor Island. Well it was a fitting end to another wonderful day out. Plans are already underway for the next two outings.

Until next time, stay safe...

Cliff McChesney





N.A.A.G.

Northern Adventure Aviation Group

Nooky and Chris make their way toward Waihi Beach. While the others took a short cut, Nooky and I went round the northern side of Mayor Island (top to bottom).



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