



NAAG



Northern Adventure Aviation Group

Volume 2 No.18

Kaitaia & North Cape Flight

...9.20 am on Saturday morning. The radio call comes through "Kilo Foxtrot Charlie, 2000 ft, five miles South East Springhill." I realized I wouldn't have to rush as there would still be another couple of minutes before the expected two aircraft arrived in the circuit.

Runway 30 was preferred with the westerly crosswind of around 8 to 10 knots. Landing well in is recommended to avoid the turbulence from the trees and Cliff McChesney in the Pulsar, with Nooky close behind, both landed very smoothly. I was soon climbing aboard Nooky's Tecnam Sierra to join them for the flight up to Kaitaia.

Huge seas make a spectacular coastal trip.

The line up of 7 NAAG aircraft at Kaitaia is quite a sight.

Nooky rests up on a Kauri two seater.

The wind was noticeably stronger at altitude as we climbed out towards the west and fortunately the mechanical turbulence diminished as we gained some height. We followed the usual route towards Dargaville then eased out towards the west coast to find the expected smooth air once we were out over the water.

The wild beauty of the day could really be appreciated with the breaking high tide waves showing up the outline of the coast extending towards the north. It was overcast to begin with but eventually the sky gradually brightened somewhat as we approached our first port of call on the way. We were hoping to catch up with friends, Max and Bev Dean, who advised that they were standing on a jetty waiting to wave to us as we passed by.



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We turned in to the Hokianga harbour and there it was, a large jetty. Actually it was a large wharf, and as it turned out later, it was the wrong one. I'm sure the people standing on it were absolutely thrilled to see the two aircraft circling overhead waving frantically at them.

Back out to the coast again where we followed the breaker line until we reached the sandy headland where we altered course inland until we soon arrived overhead Kaitaia Airport.

Just one of hundreds of pieces of Kauri carving work.

Hours of work have gone into this staircase inside a Kauri log.

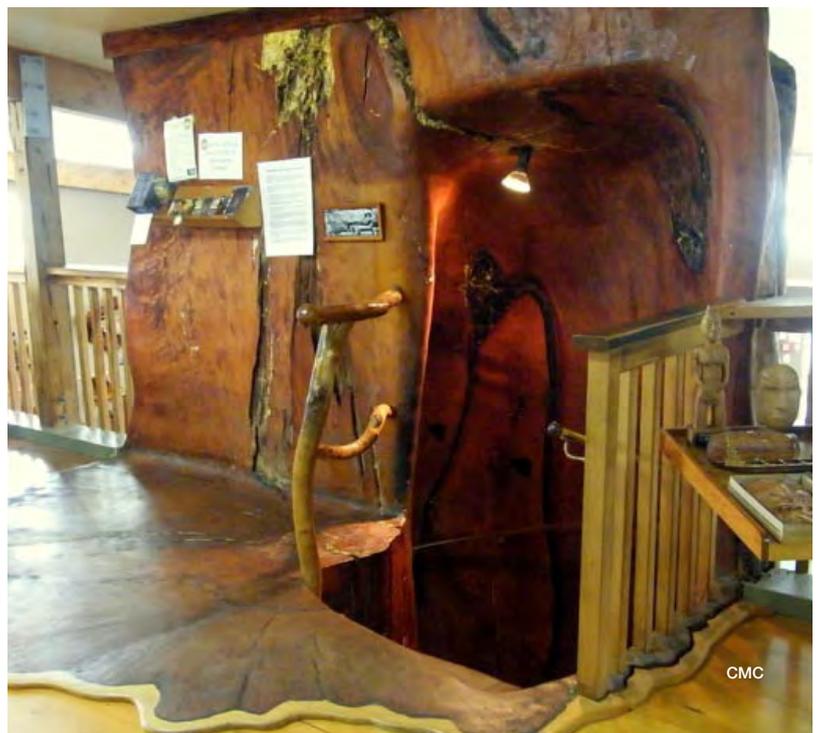
The top of the staircase.

We were made very welcome at the clubhouse and were introduced to Phil Lightband and his lovely wife Esther. It wasn't long before a most welcome cuppa was available and it didn't take long to see that club President Jim Sommerville's other half, Valerie, was the quiet one in the background who was to do so much for us in the way of culinary satisfaction.

Transport was arranged and we were loaded up and off to the Kauri Kingdom for some lunch, followed by a most interesting tour of the kauri woodwork examples on display.

The most amazing way to get to the upper level of the building was via a hollowed out tree trunk which had been done with a chainsaw. Apparently 800 hours work had gone into it just to get the basics, then the tidying up and polishing time was added on to that.

Then it was back to the airfield so we could be taken to our motels where we could unload, settle in, and prepare for the social





evening planned for us back at the clubhouse.

When we arrived, the room was packed full of noisy people all enthusiastically renewing acquaintances and exchanging experiences.

It wasn't long before Jim Sommerville made an announcement that, as an appetiser, there would be some tuatua's available shortly. True to his word, 10 minutes later there they were, obviously freshly gathered earlier that day and now ready to be eaten as quickly as they opened on the hotplate.

This 2 seater couch was a bit too heavy for the plane and wallet at \$55,000!

Nooky finds a new passenger in a friendly Kiwi.

Tables of food awaited us on our return to the club house.

A short time later the main meal was set out on the table and a sumptuous dinner was enjoyed by everyone present.

Cliff had made a suggestion that everyone present do a brief introduction as to who they were and where they came from. Everyone who participated made it a most enjoyable experience.

From one of those introductions I met another power boating enthusiast, Malcolm, who holds the water speed record in his class at a speed in excess of 130 mph. We chatted for some time as we realized just how much we had in common, and knew so many people with the boating bug. Finally it was time to go back to the motel, remembering to set our clocks forward to daylight saving time.

Kaitaia didn't wake up early it seems and it took some time to find a place that was open for breakfast.



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McDonalds was the only option. As one of the guys pointed out, the cardboard probably tasted better, probably because we had been spoilt by all that lovely food the previous night.

While we had been wandering the streets looking for our breakfast we saw two microlights flying overhead as they circled the town. It was Nooky and Graeme Styles taking Malcolm and his friend for their first flight in a microlight. "Awesome" they said when we caught up with them later.

The sun sets on our aircraft.

MacDonalds the only option early Sunday morning.

Nooky and Ross formate over some large sand dunes.

Our departure time was rapidly approaching so we headed back to the airport to gas up and prepare for the next leg of our journey. There were seven aircraft in our group and it was a great spectacle to see them all lining up and, after takeoff, departing towards the coast. Our plan was to fly up to Cape Reinga, then follow the coast to Spirits Bay, North Cape, Hohoura, Mangonui, Bay of Islands, then land at Whangarei for lunch.

From Kaitaia it was out to the coast where the blue skies made everything look so much brighter than it had been the previous day. The white waves breaking all along the shoreline could be seen endlessly disappearing towards the north through the light haze to where we were heading.

The beauty of our New Zealand coastline is something we can so easily take for granted and the camera sat in my lap, sometimes totally forgotten while the beautiful scenery slipped by below.

As we closed up and formatted closer together we frequently changed our positions to take photos of each other, then it wasn't long before



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N.A.A.G.

Northern Adventure Aviation Group

Volume 2 No. 18

the Cape lighthouse came into view. It was partially obscured by the now clearing mist and not a tourist bus was in sight. We had it all to ourselves although it wasn't long before a Salt Air Cessna 206 was circling above us, going in the opposite direction to our orbits.

After a wonderful hour and a half of most enjoyable coastal flying, we arrived at Whangarei where we went in to the terminal building for some much appreciated lunch.

Cape Reinga looking from Cape Maria Van Diemen.

The light house temporarily shrouded in mist.

Pilots prepare the aircraft for the last leg of the journey home.

There was only one girl serving behind the cafeteria counter. We were most impressed that she was able to handle the sudden influx of fourteen people so efficiently. Yet she was able to be so friendly and courteous too.

The landing fee was only \$4.50 for microlights and could be paid at the Air New Zealand counter, a worthwhile saving compared to having an account sent out.

Whilst preparations for departure were being made we chatted to two Parakai guys, (not part of our group) who had flown up in ZK TWT a Cessna 150 that had spent much of its earlier life in the Northland region.

It was time to disperse and say goodbye as we were all heading off to our respective destinations, and we were soon off on the last leg of my part of the journey, Springhill. On arrival there were two modellers braving the windy conditions and one of them, Ted Hatton, told us that he has been enjoying flying models for sixty years now.

I watched Cliff and Nooky take off before reluctantly heading for home after a truly wonderful weekend.

Thanks guys,

Brian Millet





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Volume 2 No.18



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Jim Smylie joins us for his first NAAG trip



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