

Honourable Company of Air Pilots (NZ Region)



Issue 4: March 2025

NEW MEMBERS

Nil

REINSTATED MEMBERS

Nil

RESIGNED

Mark Simich

AIRCDRE Andrew Scott

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Greetings fellow Air Pilots,

I regret to advise that our Chair, Captain Allan Boyce, has decided to stand-down from his role as chairman of the NZ executive committee and as a committee member. The NZ Region has benefitted greatly from his experience and wide aviation knowledge in this role. We will continue to enjoy his company as a Liveryman in the Company. Bill MacGregor will stand-in as acting Chair until the committee votes on a replacement. This is not likely to occur before the AGM in mid-year.

At the first committee meeting of the year it was agreed that we needed to focus on generating new membership, particularly among younger aviators. To this end, a sub-committee has been formed to explore ways to expand our membership base. If any current members have ideas or proposals, the committee would

love to hear from you (via admin-nz@airpilots.org). I expect to be able to update you on progress in the next newsletter.

Upper Freeman Ron Thacker
Secretary/Administrator

TIGERS ROAR IN TAUMARUNUI

This is an abridged version of an article written by committee member Brett Nicholls for the Air Pilots magazine.

On the weekend of 18th to 20th of October 2024, the Tiger Moth Club of New Zealand based its annual fly-in in its ancestral home, Taumarunui. The Tiger Club of New Zealand was formed in 1969 in a small shed on the Taumarunui airfield (NZTM), which was a significant location for aerial top dressing. NZTM (650ft AMSL) is arguably one of the best grass strips in the North Island being one vector of 1250m (4101 ft) long and 60m (196ft) wide and mostly in-to-wind, perfect for Tiger Moths. The airstrip was built to allow DC-3s to land there when used for top dressing – which would have been quite a sight!

It is no surprise that many in New Zealand have a love affair with the DH82a Tiger Moth—345 was produced in New Zealand by De Havilland New Zealand at Rongotai, Wellington, and operated by the Royal New Zealand Airforce (RNZAF) until 1955. Of course, post the Second World War and RNZAF service, Tiger Moths were the mainstay of the burgeoning aerial top dressing industry until the early to mid-1960s, and then many that survived became glider-towing aircraft.

Given the location of NZTM and that the fly-in occurs in mid-October, amid the southern hemisphere's spring, weather can be a real issue. NZTM is in the middle of some rugged farming country with hills surrounding it averaging between 1500ft to 2500ft AMSL and higher peaks being 3500ft. More often than not, flying there is a real challenge; in 2023, only one aircraft made it due to adverse weather. This year, the weather was fantastic, truly 'one out of the bag' - with sunshine, no wind and warm temperatures; shirtsleeves and sun cream were the order of the day, exceptional for mid-October in Taumarunui!

The Tiger Moth Club of New Zealand, despite its name, does not only represent Tiger Moths but also supports a whole variety of other vintage aircraft, including DH60 Gipsy Moths, DH89 Dragon Rapides, DH84 Dragons, and DH94 Moth Minors. Other varieties the Club supports include DHC-1 Chipmunks, DHC-2 Beavers, Piper Cubs, Boeing Stearmans, and more.

Given the weather, the turnout for the event was one of the best yet, with 50 aircraft of various types arriving and departing over the weekend. There were 12 Tiger Moths, a Jackaroo (the only one in New Zealand), a stunning recently imported Waco, a Harvard, a Miles Messenger, DH84 Dragon, and a DH 60 Gipsy Moth, to name a few. Of note, the father of the owner of the DH 60 Gipsy Moth flew the very aircraft solo from London to Sydney in 1934, from where it was shipped to its current home in New Zealand. A de Havilland Venom did some low approaches and over-shoots from its base in Whanganui (NZWU), 72nm to the south of NZTM.

The weekend was divided into three key elements: arrival/departure, formation training on Friday, and competitions on Saturday. Of course, social events were held on Friday and Saturday nights.

In New Zealand, civilians operate formation flying via the United States-based Formation and Safety Team (FAST) system, the New Zealand Warbirds Association (NZWA) being a signatory to the FAST organization, and most formation flying happens under those protocols. Many in the Tiger Club are unfamiliar with the FAST protocols, so a briefing run by instructors from the NZWA was held on Friday morning, and then in the afternoon, two-ship formation flying training occurred. It was great fun, with many flights and much was learned. This training day was a first for the Club.

On Saturday was competition day run by the Tiger Club and the very small Taumarunui Aero Club, which included spot landings, bombing, the 'perfect loop', aerobatics and other novel events. Given the weather was so good, including no clouds, it was a fantastic day and much enjoyed. There was also a very healthy turnout of spectators – some driving two or three hours to come and take photos.

The prize-giving event was held in the clubrooms of the local gold club, which has a surprisingly nice course for a town so small. The view from the clubhouse deck with a refreshment in hand was stunning, assisted by the very mild evening for spring in the Central North Island.

Sunday was departure day. I had flown in a two-ship Tiger Moth flight down from Ardmore to NZTM without any problems and in good weather, taking about one hour and twenty minutes. We decided to head back early on Sunday morning to make the most of the beautiful conditions – the weather charts showed great weather, and the Auckland International Airport TAF, the closest TAF to Ardmore, indicated gin-clear skies and light winds. However, New Zealand's weather is fickle, especially in spring; the flight north was not as smooth

as the one south. We struck 10+-knot headwinds about 20 minutes north of NZTM, and that persisted along the rest of the 110nm flight. While this did allow us time to enjoy the stunning scenery, looking west over the coastal hills of the Waikato out over the Tasman Sea, it was rather chilly! Closer to Auckland, we encountered moderate turbulence and rain showers near NZAR. So much for the weather forecast!

After a one-hour and forty-four-minute flight (!!) and an uneventful landing at NZAR late Sunday morning, we rushed to push the Tigers back in the hangar to avoid the rain showers, wiped the aircraft down, and went for a coffee to warm ourselves up after a fantastic Tiger Moth fly-in.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT WEBINARS

Our Technical Director, CAPT Mike Zaytsoff, continues his series of professional development webinars each month. These are conducted at 1000hrs on the second Wednesday of each month. You should have all received email invitations to join these webinars – if not, please contact the secretary and we'll ensure you are on future invitations. These presentations are conducted in partnership with the NZ Society of Air Safety Investigators (NZSASI) and are open to all who are interested.

MASTER'S VISIT

Over the period 18-24 November 2025 we hosted the Master of the Honourable Company, Mr Richie Piper, for the NZ leg of his tour of the regions. Along with his wife, Gill, they sampled some holiday time with friends in Queenstown before travelling to Wellington for the annual cocktail reception and industry visits. Fruitful meetings were held with senior representatives from the Aviation Industry Association, Transport Accident Investigation Commission, CAA and RNZAF. The Master then moved north to the Manawatu where he visited RNZAF Base Ohakea and the Massey University School of Aviation. At Ohakea, the Master spent time visiting Flying Training Wing (an affiliated unit of the Company) and No 3 Squadron, where he presented the unit with the Barry Marsden Memorial Award for its work during Cyclone Gabriel. He also stopped at Biggin Hill, Brendon Deere's heritage aviation hangar at Ohakea, where he inspected the range of aircraft on site.

Continuing north, the Master attended the NZ Region's annual formal dinner, held in the Officers' Mess at RNZAF Base Auckland. At the dinner he formally presented awards to John Cook (the Miss Jean Batten Memorial Trophy) and John King (the Hugh Field Award). The following day, the Master enjoyed some informal time with the warbirds community at Ardmore, and took to the skies in Brett Nicholls Harvard.



FEMALE PILOT SURVEY

A current undergraduate student at the University of West London is conducting a survey to support a dissertation project regarding the experiences of female pilots and their educational background. If you, or someone you know, are interested in participating in the survey, please see further details at this link:

<https://app.onlinesurveys.jisc.ac.uk/s/uwl/diss-survey>

EREBUS ANNIVERSARY

The NZ Region supported a service in Christchurch on 28 November to commemorate the 45th Anniversary of the tragic Erebus accident. The service was led by our Honorary Chaplain, Rev. Dr Richard Waugh QSM. The Company continues to support efforts to establish a permanent memorial to this accident, but we await the resolution of siting discussions between the various authorities and Auckland iwi.

RNZAF C-130H RETIREMENT

On 18 February, the final flight of an RNZAF C-130H took place when NZ7001 was landed on the grassed '40 Acres' area adjacent to the Air Force museum at Wigram. The landing had been carefully reconnoitered, local residents had been warned in advance, and a touch-and-go landing was conducted to assess the final approach before the actual landing. The aircraft will now be prepared for long-term display at the museum.



UPCOMING EVENTS

TROPHIES & AWARDS

The Trophies & Awards banquet in Guild Hall will be held on Thursday 23rd October. The awards ceremony is live streamed for those who wish to observe the proceedings.

MASTER'S VISIT

The new Master of the Honourable Company, John Denyer, will visit New Zealand over the period 11-23 November. Details of the visit will be promulgated in due course.

NZ REGION ANNUAL DINNER

The annual dinner will be held in conjunction with the Master's visit in late November. Details will follow in due course.

"There Are Three Simple Rules For Making A Smooth Landing. Unfortunately, No One Knows What They Are."

Anonymous