

THE OMARAMA GLIDING CLUB – SPRING NEWSLETTER 2020



What a year it has been with COVID lock-down, a re-emergence and the associated issues but Spring is nearly here. Hoorah!

Over winter exciting things have been happening. **Hot off the press is the news that Ventus DR has been sold** to Colin Kelly as part of our plan to have a fleet consisting of two twins and one single. The sale funds are going towards the purchase of the new DUO.

Further good news is that Griz Wrigley (from his Chalet Refugees compound) made contact with the Twizel school and gave the students a talk on gliding sparking interest to take educational lessons in the air!



From Michele OCarroll, HOD Digital Technology/EDean Twizel Area School

“What an amazing way to spend 5 hours on a beautiful Sunday. Last Sunday, I, along with seven of our students and their parents spent the day down at the Omarama Gliding Club in the very capable hands of Gavin Wrigley.

Gavin contacted our school late Term 2 expressing an interest in seeing if we had any students who might be keen in taking up gliding. An interest session was held one lunchtime with Gavin and was attended by approximately a dozen students. Gavin has a background in Education as well as (currently) being a professional Gliding and Microlight instructor. He was previously involved in a school flying program in Australia’s Northern Territory for 19 years teaching over 800 students within that time. He is certainly a very experienced instructor and a person who is passionate about gliding and prepared to give up his time to teach young people the art of flying a glider. He started the spark in that interest session and last Sunday we had some very excited students travel down to Omarama to participate in their first glider experience.

We gathered in the terminal building where Gavin gave a brief history of gliding in the area and of course the important safety briefing. Permission forms were signed, and we then left in convoy to a part of the runway where we would stay for the day watching the students (and parents) take for most, their first ever glider flight.

Rather than having a plane fly the glider up into the air, the club has access to a winch which has been at the airfield since the beginning of the year. It is placed at one end of the runway with the glider at the other end. The winch itself is a rather impressive piece of machinery costing around \$200,000. It has two cables (meaning that it can be used twice before the cables need to be towed back to the glider). The cable is attached to the undercarriage of the glider and then the winch engine pulls the cable along the ground until there is tension on the glider. When the slack is taken up, it pulls the glider along the ground at a speed of around 70kph until the glider can take off. The glider then rises at an angle of approximately 45 degrees until it reaches approximately 700m (or around 2000 ft) at which stage the pilot releases the winch cable and the occupant/s of the glider are left floating in the air in a wonderfully quiet and serene space.

Being pulled up by the winch is exciting. It feels much faster than the 100 odd kilometres that you are travelling and the time from being stationary on the airfield to being 700 metres in the sky is very short (less than a minute). Your ears pop around the 500m stage and once the winch is released the feeling of flying is amazing and of course the view from above, out of this world! It is easy to see how people can be hooked into this activity. Once in the air, the students were given the opportunity of having a go at the dual controls under the supervision of the expert in the seat behind. Each flight was approximately 15 minutes and the landing was just as exciting as the take-off. The smiles on the faces of the students when the canopy was opened was priceless!

The day was educational from so many aspects. Not only is gliding all about maths and physics but it is also about the science of weather. Omarama is considered one of the best places (if not the best) in the world for gliding and experienced pilots from all over the world have come to Omarama to experience the conditions for themselves. What a privilege it was then, for our students to be in the hands of some very experienced and knowledgeable instructors and experience this for themselves first-hand.

The day cemented the interest for at least four students who now intend to join the Omarama Gliding Club and Youth Glide New Zealand. Youth Glide New Zealand hold annual camps where students can learn from experts in a safe and supportive environment at a very reasonable cost. The non-for-profit organisation supports young people under the age of 25 by providing access to aircraft, launching and invaluable aviation skills as well as giving them the opportunity of showing leadership and having fun.
MICHELE"

A GREAT EFFORT GRIZ, BO, PHIL, TREVOR, JUSTIN, JYRI AND MARTIN – A BIG THANKYOU TO YOU ALL FOR GIVING THE TWIZEL AREA SCHOOL STUDENTS SUCH AN AMAZING DAY



Great to report the Twizel school flying education continues with ongoing 'lessons'.....

NEW MEMBERS



We welcome Michael Epton of Christchurch, and two YG members Jack McLelland and Laelani Dodds from Twizel. We look forward to flying with you.

FROM THE PRESIDENT – Brian Savage

OGC's OAL LTO granted

A pleasant sequence of letters, rolls off the tongue nicely. What it stands for is Omarama Airfield Ltd granting OGC a Licence to Operate at Omarama airfield.

Although we weren't strictly required to request an LTO due to our standing and status, the executive decided we should put one in to make sure we had future-proofed our operations given the closure of Glide Omarama.

We have now had formal notification that it has been approved by the airfield company. OGC is, therefore, able to provide all aspects of gliding from renting gliders to members, providing towing and winching operations and running gliding courses. As long as the instructors and tow pilots are correctly rated, they can be paid for their services. This latter point is important, as we want to keep a path open for the ex-GO people until the commercial operations situation becomes clear at Omarama.

Just to be clear we will not be running an adventure flying operation under Part 115, all our operations will be running under Part 149. The executive is working on a detailed plan as to how we will make sure that any Trial Flights we provide are carefully managed to avoid conflict with 115 operations.

We are still waiting for the LTO document itself as AOL are drawing up a new agreement for everyone, as the old version had a number of flaws, shall we say. I'll keep you informed when we have signed.

Other LTOs have been granted to Gavin Wrigley for microlight training, Phil Plane and Brad Newfield for a commercial winching and towing operation and Youth Glide NZ for the winching operation.

Still undecided is a part 115 training and adventure flying operation planned by Dan, Martin, Milan and Sabrina.

OGC/Omarama towing operation.

Keith Essex – who attended and was voted onto the OGC Executive at the last zoom meeting – is shipping two tow planes for use at Omarama. A Dynamic – as Canterbury use – and a Carbon Cub, and of course our new-to-us Duo – rego OD - are about to be on their way.

So we will be up and running again for the start of the season. OGC will oversee towing and the operation of the tow planes through Keith as our Tow Master. – *Brian*



We acknowledge with grateful thanks the grant of \$10,000.00 from the Otago Community Trust towards the purchase of the new DUO.

(Applications made to the NZ Community Trust, The Aoraki Trust, Air Rescue Services and The Lions Foundation were unsuccessful).

FROM ALEX BOYES

Things are all go in Omarama. Youth Glide has based its new winch there which offers an exciting new training option for youngsters and oldies alike.

Omarama Gliding Club is all go too, we have a new Duo Discus on its way from USA and the Club is going to run an Introduction to mountain flying cross country course in November. This course is based around Jerry's Course which used to be run by Jerry O'Neill from Canterbury and later was run by Glide Omarama. These courses gave up-and-coming pilots a supportive and fun place to pick up advanced training. This year's course will start the week before the South Island Regionals giving those that want to stay on and fly in the competition the chance to do so. In the morning there will be group discussions followed by a task briefing then flying in the afternoon. For those that would like a little more adventure there will be experienced mountain pilots available to fly with in one of our club duos throughout the course period. In the past these courses have been very popular and help to bridge the gap between gaining your QGP and flying in the mountains. Omarama is a wonderful and exciting place to fly but also has its unique challenges so a week spent with local pilots working through the challenges of flying the mountains is a great opportunity for all pilots. Confirm your entry and see who else has entered at: <https://gliding.net.nz/events/omarama-cross-country-course-nov-2020>

We look forward to seeing new and old faces in Omarama over the coming flying season.

A VERY SPECIAL CONTRIBUTION

One of the immense joys of being part of the gliding family is the wonderful diversity of people we enjoy the company of - some having lived a life "extra-ordinaire". The Omarama Gliding Club is extra fortunate to have many of these as members and in this I have found a real "gem" who has agreed to share his story with us. Enjoy this delightful contribution from Gavin (Griz) Wrigley.



Yvonne has asked me to write something about myself for the Gliding Club Magazine. Curious that, considering the many achievements that Yvonne can boast (but doesn't), and is indeed continuing to be awarded. Watch this space!

So this is not about achievements, more about serendipity.

Where do I start?

Perhaps with the vivid and recurring memory of me as a boy of eight or nine.

I remember lying face-down on a small grassy knoll that was next to a school playground, somewhere near Cologne, in Germany. The playground seemed huge, a massive area of grey asphalt with a collection of steel climbing frames, swings and dangling ropes in the corner.

The climbing frames were often covered with us boys all hanging on tightly and yelling as we felt "willy thrill". A mixture of fear and vertigo and auto-eroticism.

No doubt if I saw the place now it would seem to be far smaller than I remember

The smooth surface of the playground was perfect for very fast roller-skating.

At the time most roller-skates had large diameter metal wheels which were a very different to the new low-profile rubber wheeled skates that were just appearing. The metal-wheeled ones were clamped on to the welt of your shoe by means of a key that caused angular restraints to move inwards and grip the sole, then soft leather straps were tightened over the shoe. The result was that you were a little bit higher than the rubber-wheeled skaters but you could go much faster in a straight line.

The corners were tricky and the skates made loud crashing and squealing noises.

You also fell off them more easily.

Were we skaters?

No, we were aeroplanes!

When not swinging our arms for balance and to gain momentum they were held out horizontally in an approximation of the aircraft you were 'being' at that time.

"I am a Vulcan!"

"I am a Hawker Hunter!"

We shouted our aerodynamic identities to each other whilst we sped around the rectangle as fast as we could, exhilarated by the feel of the airflow we were creating. Most of us were knowledgeable about aircraft. The school, my third primary school, served mainly British children who were in Germany because their parents were in the armed forces. It was only nine years since the end of the second world war.

My Father was flying Canberra bombers on photo reconnaissance sorties in those days. He had a 'bone dome', a hard, silver-grey flying helmet that he brought home after work.

It had a powerful, magical aura for me, a symbol of daring and romance and authority. It also had an oxygen face-mask, large earphones and a switch that activated a microphone.

A full-face curved visor could be lowered if required. Bloody magic!

I sometimes put the helmet on and entered a fantasy of whooshing through the sky, despite the fact that my pea-sized head was rattling around inside the vast interior of this totemic object. My Father never knew this.

At other times, without the helmet, I would upend some furniture and drape a rug over the frame so formed to create a tunnel-like space that I would crawl into.

I would lie on my belly and have in front of me a domestic radio set in a wooden or Bakelite surround with glowing valves and round dials covered with numbers and letters.

These could be rotated with knobs. This was my instrument and control panel and allowed my fantastic flying vehicle to speed anywhere that my imagination wanted it to.

I wonder how many of you can relate to this, the childhood imaginations that drew you into gliding?

My longing to be part of it led me to suffer several miserable days in a queue at RAF Cosford.

'Next' yelled the instructor and you, anonymous erk, got three flights in the T21. My first 39 flights were 3 mins each. My 40'th flight was 4 minutes. I hated the quasi-military rubbish, but loved the feeling of flying, the magic of the wooden machine, and I was hooked. That had to wait, now, until I was 30.

I have spent a lot of time, as we all have, wondering how to engage more young people in our passion. Over many years the same observation persists, that some of us 'just knew' we wanted to do it, and also many of us had fliers in our families. Notably, the competitive juniors often seem to be second or third generation aviators.

But my dream of joining the Royal Air Force was dashed when the medico informed me that I could join, as a dental technician or a catering officer.

I was colour-blind and didn't know it!

Strange world. About five years later I became a qualified Art teacher, a hedonistic hippie, a long-haired leftie and was long way from the Royal Air Force Officers mess.

Officialdom versus competence is a hot topic in Omarama nowadays. It seems to follow me!

The colour vision issue has also debarred me from maritime qualifications, but did not stop me from circumnavigating almost twice, and doing many yacht deliveries over the years. I own my third live-aboard yacht, a 40' Baba Cutter-Rigged floating Galley and pleasure palace called 'Anyway'. Very beautiful and extremely seaworthy, she languishes in Malaysia at the moment, occupied by a large male monkey and his harem of 23 females. On the deck only, I hope. Maybe one day before too long I can sail her back to New Zealand, where I bought her nine years ago.

Teaching was a sentence to insolvency in 1967, when I started. £723 pa. Parking meter attendants started on £750 after three weeks training. But a teaching qualification could help one travel very easily and was always a good fallback for a restless (curious?) person. After a formative period as a Tinker/Diddycoy itinerant farm worker Gypsy caravan painter and seller of dodgy cars to Oxford university students, I joined BOAC as a Steward.

What a fantastic romp! I avoided Jumbos and worked on VC10's and 707's. There were usually three young and attractive stewardesses in the crews, typically the three males in

the same line-up comprised an alcoholic Liverpoolian 'chief', a gay 'first' steward, and then the young hopeful down the back, me.

I went everywhere, saved very little money despite the fabulous salary and allowances, and had an extremely good time. After four years I suffered from a fit of vaingloriousness and resigned, not wanting to be part of the increasingly crowded charter and tourist travel industry, and pretty sick of airports. I have been impecunious ever since!

Hotel management in Scotland proved to be the most foreign experience I have ever suffered, before or since. Nuff said, so my girlfriend and I left to work in a very lovely, small ski lodge in Colorado. We skied every day. Brilliant once again, until the 'Feds' sprung us and we were fairly firmly invited to leave by a due date.

Not wanting to go back to the UK, and intending to go eventually to NZ, we bought tickets to Australia, via Tahiti, where we waited for Visas.

It's a bit like the gliding passion, some things are destined to happen. As a child I knew I wanted to go to New Zealand. When living on Moorea (Tahiti) I knew I wanted to return...that led to the circumnavigation twenty years later. We went to Sydney, to work and save money before travelling to NZ and work in the snow, we hoped.

Serendipity. I worked on a building site but chose to temporarily help out with a holiday programme in inner Sydney that was being run for 'latch key kids' during the Easter break. I had missed working with kids and found myself applying to direct the very revolutionary 'Leisure Centre' in North Sydney. A great job, hands on and community arts based, with zilch money but lots of smiles-and dramas. I met some people there who influenced me greatly and led me on to do a Postgraduate Diploma in Outdoor Education in Brisbane. Not the 'jock strap' version of Outdoor Education at all, more environmental education from a canoe, dinghy, scuba mask, cliff face, and even horseback.

My vision of an Outdoor Educator looked like A.S. Neil in walking boots.

At the end of this year I had a big smile on my face but was in debt once again, and my girlfriend was pregnant. I got a job developing an Environmental centre on a remote peninsula on the undeveloped west side of Darwin Harbour. No road, only sea (beach) access. Zachary was born then, he learned to walk on the beach while we looked out for crocodiles and searched for mud crabs. A great lifestyle for two years, until the management changed and we lost our (successful) autonomy.

That year, 1979, I became one of the founders of the Northern Australian Gliding Club. The club flourished for a few years, had five gliders and a Callair, plus a home-made winch, before dying a slow death. I turned the lights out and gave the hangar away in 2015. The advent of micro lighting, combined with torrid temperatures and humidity had all contributed.

Lyn and I, plus Zachary, bought a Piver Trimaran and lived on it for a few years. The usual lifestyle tensions developed and Lyn became a University lecturer and in love with her job, so we never did sail that boat 'properly'. We sold it, I took a job teaching and we lived ashore. My job escalated and I became the Outdoor Education 'Advisor'. It was very hard to enthuse schoolteachers about the (fabulous) outdoors up there. Remember humidity and crocodiles. The best tool I had was to begin the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme (The Dukes Mob!) and draw community clubs and organisations in to involvement with young people. But it was still not 'hands on' enough for me so I joined the planning staff of a new High School. We had a brilliant two years doing things in a quite revolutionary way, offering mixed age-topic based self-selected ten-week modules instead of the lock-step chronological subject-based pattern. It worked! Mike Middleton's model. Books contain chapters about that time.

But 'The Department' had other ideas and made us conform to the ancient ways of doing things, so I moved on again.

To Narromine, where I became Shinzo Takezawa's first CFI. Try not to work with a Japanese boss, that's all I have to say.

I guess that was enough of 'trying' for me, so I sold my Salto and my Cirrus and bought another sailing boat, a 32' steel sloop called 'Saltotu'. I had two Australian Standard Class records and had won the Two-seat Nationals. But flying required working.

So we went to sea instead, my new wife, Louise and me.

I suppose the eventual circumnavigation was accidental. First a year on the barrier reef, then the Ambon international boat race, then a slow wander through Indonesia until Sri Lanka appeared.

I had always wanted to go back, again, after visiting Colombo when in the airline. But we were met with a 24-hour curfew and a civil war. Not the Tamil one, but a sort of 'back to the ox cart' fundamentalism that involved blowing up railway lines, and people. Next? We followed new Swiss hippy friends in their large Latteen-rigged Prahú 'Om Gaia'. Phoebus and Bea showed us all the little 'gunkholes' that they knew very well all the way up the Indian coast to Goa.

So the wandering continued until my daughter, Koel was born in Mandraki harbour, Rhodos. Not long after that the passion for sailing was undermined by the responsibility to an infant and Louise flew back to Australia. I undertook to sail the boat back and did so with the help of a variety of friends on various stages of the journey. Indecently quickly really, but still fun. That was a six year circumnavigation, impecunious but priceless.

Back in Darwin and reunited with Louise and Koel. After a season on a mackerel fishing boat in the Kimberleys I came back to land and became an artist! Martin Sellwood and I

became 'Street Level Public Art' for four years. Silly Buggers. Hard work. Some great projects, but....

When not doing short stints as a Gliding instructor (Narromine, Lake Keepit, Waikerie, Batchelor) I worked in the Northern Territory's Juvenile Detention Centre as a casual art and craft teacher. This, once again, became a full-time job and in a short time I accepted the poison chalice of the Principals job. My predecessor had hanged himself, possibly having become overwhelmed by the unsolvable issues in the job. One big issue was having to work within the Correctional Services establishment.

Strangely, considering the awful backgrounds of most of the 'students', the atmosphere in the schoolrooms was very loving and constructive. We had a revolving door of remanded and sentenced youth, mainly aboriginal, most of whom had avoided school since Primary, and some had English as a second or third language. Challenging. The only 'discipline' that worked was to run programmes in a way that appealed to the students. They were 'over' any 'authority'. Interest or respect had to be earned. I saturated the school with appropriate characters, most of whom had no formal qualifications. Art played a big part in all this, but most really did want to learn maths and writing, you just had to find out how to make it work. We were classified as a 'special' school, and I took this as a license to do what could be done despite some regulations. It all went very well for about six years.

In my eight years there I had to explain this 'different' school to five superintendents..my boss each one in turn, while they shuffled their way up the Education department ladder. The fifth one insisted on implementing the National Curriculum, complete with tomes of paperwork, and refused to let me employ the adults that I chose, sending me some pretty crappy disinterested teachers instead.

I left. One year later the school was closed down with tear gas and riot police. Correctional services took over the school. Further riots followed and a Royal Commission investigated, an absolute scandal!

I 'spat the dummy' once again and became the instructor/coach at Nympsfield in the UK. A fabulous club, full of renegades. Even the airfield refuses to lie down and be flat. When not there I did some yacht deliveries, including one from Hawaii to Darwin, and eventually discovered Omarama in 2004.

NZ finally!!

So I am sure you are all tired of this narrative, if you got this far. Perhaps the Flying Programme that I ran for 19 consecutive years is a final topic of interest. With the endorsement of an enlightened and perhaps adventurous principal, David Canon from the Essington School, I provided four flying lessons, plus theory, to year 10 students in this secondary school. I know of no other school where the year 10 (or any) students are EXPECTED to take flying lessons. The aircraft involved morphed from my old (but great)

Motor Falke, to an aerotowed Blanik (expensive), to Jabiru and Tecnam and Drifter microlights, to the fabulous Super-Dimona. A bonus of this my son and my four grandsons, and that I could then divert, when returning the Super-Dimona back to Adelaide, to continue exploring the 'Morning Glory' in Burketown.

A very special experience, too extraordinary for my puny vocabulary.

But then the school board had a row, the principal resigned, and the new regime saw no point in the programme. (I believe that they didn't want to be creative either educationally or financially and 'Oh the Risk!!' What about the paperwork!').

Re-reading this, I think I might have written an anarchist manifesto.

So be it. If we all learn to manage upwards (and stay effective) perhaps the world can be a better place.

But it is a really good place to be, none the less! - *Gavin*

EVENT DATES: Its going to be a busy year!!

Jerry's Course	9 th – 13 th November
South Island Regionals	14 th – 21 st November
Springfield Soaring Championships	28 th November – 5 th December
YSDC	10 th – 19 th December
NZ Multi Class Nationals Omarama	1 st – 10 th January 2021



Photo: Geoff Soper

It was sad news indeed to hear of the accident at Twizel that took the life of Trevor Shadbolt known to many as a Past President of the Canterbury Gliding Club, Owner and instructor of Gogyro Ltd, Manager of the Pukaki Airfield and a regular visitor to the Omarama Airfield. His cheery persona will be sadly missed.

SEE YOU SOARING AT OMARAMA SOON – YVONNE