

# WARM AIR 3 July 2021

## Aviation Sports Club Gliding Newsletter

### THIS WEEKEND:

[www.ascgliding.org](http://www.ascgliding.org)

Bank Acct 38-9014-0625483-000

Saturday	Instructing:	Ivor Woodfield
	Towing:	Peter Thorpe
	Duty Pilot	Geoff Leyland
Sunday	Instructing:	Andrew Fletcher
	Towing:	Rex Carswell
	Duty Pilot	Ian O'Keefe

### MEMBERS NEWS

*Well, one day of soaring was squeezed in last weekend. Many thanks to all the reports, photos and other contributions.*

*In Warm Air this Week;*

- *Weekend Reports*
- *Club News*
- *Situational Awareness*
- *Our Avian compatriots*
- *Roster*

*Keep warm, its looking promising for soaring this coming weekend.*

### Saturday – Instructor Lionel reports

I thought I was late for Saturday morning but fortunately Ray had collected the key and radio. I arrived to find only Ray and Andrew working on GBU's trailer (which was awkwardly sitting on its side so that they could refresh the bottom. )

First up was Sean for a trial flight - he seemed to enjoy it and soon joined his ATC mates with a big smile.



Ray was on duty with the 109 and soon the ATC had arrived, and he left the trailer repairs to Andrew so that he could go flying. We were soon having alternating takes offs - GNF and GNW.

Emilio tried his hand at bounce recovery and baulked approach. I then had a trial flight to 2,500ft which was close to cloud base.

Jonathan had a short flight (as all flights were). which was followed by Debrah continuing her training. Conditions had now forced us to keep the flights down to 1,500ft as the cloud base had descended to about 1,800ft. Matt did a back seat refresher and final flight was Rahul.

All packed up about 4pm. Thanks everyone for a great day.

## Sunday – Instructor Ivor reports

It was raining, raining, raining. So we did not fly!



Matt Moran took a photo of Lake Whenuapai. The next Generation following the great Rex Carswell photo prowess.

## Mid-Winter Christmas Dinner

However, Sunday Evening in atrocious weather, a contingent of brave hungry soaring pilots and patient partners got together for the Mid-Winter Christmas Dinner.



Some of the team and last to leave.

After everyone recognised each other in non-gliding attire and having been soaked from a heavy downpour running from the carpark, much deep meaningful conversation ensued' in between hunting and eating the endless supply of food. *Conversations of course covered topic's such as gliding, weather, if you won lotto, what sailplane would you buy, land out options, if you purchased an FES glider are you still considered a purist soaring pilot, the cost of*

*integrated fridges, the type of avionics you could purchase if you did not purchase a integrated fridge, if you are learning to fly powered aircraft have you gone to the dark side ( and can you tow) , the repercussions of not buying an integrated fridge with the better half and going for the LX9000, how are the trailer repairs progressing, and finally a fashion check “they look great red shoes”. Conversations only gliding pilots can have.*

A big thanks to Kishan Club Captain for organising a wonderful meal and catch up at the Swanson RSA. (Also thanks to the person organising the team photo for “Hot Air” someone said.....sheesh).

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## ***Situational Awareness***



Great Article via Wings and Wheels <https://wingsandwheels.com/newsletter>

*My Club Safety Committee spent a lot of time this week talking about "Situational Awareness" and the loss of it. But what exactly is "Situational Awareness" ("SA") anyway? How do you get it? How do you lose it? How do you know if you have lost it? How do you get it back? It is an elusive matter and one that is hard to write about. The part of our brain that helps us maintain multi-faceted awareness is different from the part of the brain that thinks and writes about ideas. And those two brain parts do not play well together.*

## **Distracted Flying**

*The discussion came up in the context of educating student pilots about the dangers of aerial photography while flying close to other gliders. We had some post solo students publishing on social media aerial photos they took of other gliders in a gaggle with themselves. The students did not perceive that their focus on "getting a good photo" ended their process of looking out for other gliders who might be joining a gaggle. Now, reading this, that all seems obvious - but why didn't the students see that at the time? Understanding exactly why - and how to recognize the loss of situational awareness can be difficult. For example, you could try reading this article while you are flying next but that would be counterproductive to the very thing we are talking about. The same is true if you are trying to be situationally aware. It is actually very hard to think - about how you are thinking. It is even harder to control what you are thinking.*

## **What is Awareness?**

*Awareness, at least in the simplified way that I am trying to present it here, can be described as "a state of total observation and attention to all matters and inputs impacting the flight". That seems a pretty good definition of what we want to maintain. But the problem is that our brains are wired in a way to completely obliterate the "big picture" in favor of any tiny little thought, detail, or function that pops up - regardless of that item's actual degree of importance (or even danger) to the overall flight. Our mind works like a screen with an out-of-control "zoom in" feature. We do not ask ourselves, "Is this problem worth thinking about?" Instead, we just think about it, and it consumes the brain space that we need for full situational awareness. The world-class marksman Brian Enos explained it this way, "A quiet open mind will perceive everything that's happening and send automatic controls to your body in an endless flow. A mind that's fixed with only one glaring thought in it cannot perceive what's happening beyond that thought."*

*This is important and explains what we call "tunnel vision". And the more immediate, complex, or challenging the specific thought or job is (like inflight changing a database, fixing a flight computer glitch, or, in the case of the students - framing and taking a photograph), the further back into our minds SA gets pushed. Accident databases are full of cases where a pilot's attention was hijacked by some simple problem that he focused on relentlessly - and fatally. Sadly, there are too many examples of towplane fatalities caused by the glider pilot's preoccupation on tow with a camera, an open canopy, a dropped object, or other distractions. The preoccupation persists until the glider balloons well above the tow plane - which cannot recover in time. This also explains why we should not fly in times of mental stress or after an argument or other emotional event. Our brains continue to rework, process, and reanalyze the emotional event and that takes up the peacefulness and mental space we need for full awareness. Being startled by something also has this effect. Fear and preoccupation with landing out does the same thing and can actually cause a land out that could have been avoided if the pilot escaped the tunnel vision. (Didn't you see that bird circling near you?)*



## **Stay in the Present**

*So, now that we know how we lose SA, how do we get it back? There are a couple of tricks. One is to ask yourself a question frequently during your flight, "Is what I am thinking about right now helping me to fly safer or more efficiently?" If the answer to that question is "No" - then refocus your mind onto something that IS helpful for safety or efficiency. Banish the unhelpful thought. Another good question to ask yourself is "Am I thinking about something 'right here right now'?" Or are you thinking about something in another place (a problem at work or at home)? Or something in the past (a lousy start, an old argument, a competitor that passed you)? Or something in the future (will I land out? Or what will be my contest or OLC score)? SA is all about the here and now and, and if you focus on only that, the score will take care of itself, you will pass that competitor in the next hour, and the land out will not happen. Here and now is all you can control anyway.*

*If a job requiring complex thinking (like checking airspace criteria, or task/waypoint setting in the computer) can be done ahead of time - do those before launch. Do not import jobs for yourself into the flight that will distract you. Stow or leave on the ground the GoPros, cameras, and other gadgets that pull your mind away from flying safely and efficiently. For God's sake, do not text, read texts, or fool with your phone or InReach during the flight. Ignore what the other pilots are saying or bragging about on the radio. Unless a transmission is imperative you should be too busy to chat. Ever notice that the best pilots do not talk much?*

## **Looking Outside**

*Lastly, and especially as you get low and begin to worry - get your mind and your eyes outside of the glider. Look at the clouds - which ones are growing? Which are dying? Where are the energy lines? Are there other gliders circling or birds out there? Are there smoke plumes or dust devils? Did some birds just leave a perch? Did smoke that was traveling sideways just start to go straight up? Are there areas of sunlight on the ground that the cloud shadows do not cover? Are there areas of shade or puddles that should be avoided? Is there a paved area that will be warm now? A metal building or structure that is hot and will focus a thermal? Is there a slope to some terrain (or the wall of a quarry) that is perpendicular to the sun? Will that train, truck, or tractor kick off a thermal? Where is my safety field? How much altitude do I have to work with and how best to use it? . . . And remember to look UP as well as out and down. There might be birds, clouds, or gliders above you. Get your head and eyes out of your instrument panel and outside of the canopy. It is what is out there that matters. There is so much to learn from just seeing and observing. Then, you are back to situational awareness, and you will see what you need to solve the problem. And you will be a safer pilot too.*

*This article is via courtesy of Wings and Wheels. Checkout their website for all soaring supplies. [Soaring & Gliding Pilot Shop \(wingsandwheels.com\)](http://wingsandwheels.com)*

*Roy Bourgeois is a well known US and South African glider pilot who serves as the Chief Pilot for the Greater Boston Soaring Club. He has held several US national records, competed in many US and Canadian Nationals, and has flown over a quarter million XC kilometres in his 4200 hours of gliding. He can be reached at royb@bw.legal*



## Our Avian compatriots, Part 2: Habitats and recently self-introduced.

This week, I will mention the habitats at Whenuapai and the recently self-introduced species (Spur-winged Plover, Welcome Swallow, and White Faced {or Fronted} Heron, oddly most of the individual birds we see.

To us aviators, RNZAF Whenuapai is a well-established airfield with two (until recently three) runways plus a grass vector, the later inhabited by gliders and the odd vintage aircraft not at home on seal. Use is closely monitored by Air Traffic Control.

To our avian colleagues, it is an area of cropped grassland, with some barren stony areas. There is also a recurrent puddle. The grass areas provide abundant animal food (no insecticides) for all, and suitable nesting areas for some. There is a Spur-winged plover nest at present, about two-hundred metres up the 26 vector. The birds are fiercely defending it and I have not checked if eggs have been laid. They probably have (why defend an empty nest?) but with a cold snap due after quite warm weather, they may be in for a shock. Skylarks will be nesting soon. Even with the mowers and our gliders, broods are usually successful. They do not obey ATC, even if attacked by vehicle and flares.

The barren stony areas provide a warm resting place for oystercatchers and others at high tide when they are unable to feed on the shore (in the UK the runway warmth is appreciated by adders. Twelve of the fairly rare and moderately poisonous snakes have been removed from RAF Valley's runways so far this year, to be released in the sand dunes. Fortunately we do not have this problem).

'Lake Whenuapai' is more than an occasional puddle of interest to ducks and white-faced herons (no fish, but slugs and worms flooded out of their refuges). Even when empty, the grass is longer and muddier, and provides food not found on the well-drained grassland. Yellow Hammers occasionally appear there feeding, as do Starlings. The Welcome Swallows appreciate the many insects flying above it.

### The Australian Spur-winged Plover (*Vanellus Miles*)

This noisy species self-introduced into South Island in the 1930s, but felt the cold so spread rapidly northwards. They nest from June to December, often raising two broods. On grassland, the 'nest' is just a slight natural depression containing three or four brown darkly blotched eggs. The grass sward provides ample bugs and worms for food, and the almost invisible fluffy chicks can wander under the parents watchful eyes and feed almost as soon as born.

The wing-spur (actually evolved from the alula or 'bastard wing' – more of that when we get onto bird flight) is a weapon and will inflict injury on a cat or dog threatening the nest.

The adults mob Kāhu (Australasian Harriers) during the nesting season even far from their nests – a spurwinged chick is a tasty meal for a Kāhu and watching this 'air combat', it seems there are violent mid-air collisions.

The Spur-wing plover is found in New Guinea as well as in Australasia.



Spur-winged plover  
nest



Newly-hatched chick



**The Welcome Swallow *Hirundo Neoxima***

This species self-introduced from Australia to Northland in the 1950s, with the first known nest in 1957. It has since spread widely and is firmly established. As a very distinctive new species, reminding Pakeha of the swallows of Europe and Australia, it received the 'Welcome' epithet. It feeds in flight on insects, and judging by some of the last-micro second manoeuvres to catch prey must be stressed to twelve 'G' plus. Their heads move rapidly in a manner no human would survive without vomiting, but then they have had millions of years to evolve this ability.

In winter, kelp flies on the beaches provide food elsewhere less plentiful. Even so, there is limited migration northwards searching for food in winter.

The swallow family originally made their mud nests on cliff overhangs or in caves, but they have embraced the arrival of *Homo Sapiens* and now often nest under the eaves of his abodes, raising four or five chicks. These chicks, having just flapped their wings a little during 'nest runs', must solo on their first flight *and* catch food. A steep learning curve. Likewise they have found human telegraph wires ideal for communal perching when resting.

Their range has spread to include the sub-Antarctic islands, and the Pacific Swallow is barely distinguishable. The latter has a range as far as tropical Asia as well as the Pacific islands.



**Hungry chicks. Or Peter's choir?**

**White Fronted Heron *Ardea Novaeollandiae* Matuku Moana**

This species was noted in New Zealand as long ago as 1900, but in the late 1940s a large number arrived in the North Island and have since become the most common heron (of half-a-dozen species) in New Zealand. Why the sudden 'invasion' occurred is unknown, but perhaps it is an avian equivalent of the 'Ten pound Pom'. Dispersive behaviour is well known in birds, the Collar Dove having reached almost everywhere in the world bar America from just southern Asia a century ago. The Maori name relates to the Reef Heron, Matuku Tai. Apart from the expected fish diet, slugs and other invertebrates are tasty, hence the heron's appearance on Lake Whenuapai. As with other



**WFH in breeding plumage resting.**



herons, they have 'powder down' on their flanks. These feathers disintegrate when the beak is rubbed on them, removing eel or other fish slime from the beak. An early form of hand-sanitising perhaps? They nest communally in tall trees. Landing such a lanky airframe on a moving branch can be amusing to watch.



Looking for a tasty slug. Non-breeding plumage



WFH on short finals to nest tree. Time for a red and green flare?

To be continued.  
Jonathan Pote

## Classifieds

### GLASFLUGEL LIBELLE 201B SHARE FOR SALE

Ill health forces me to sell my share in Libelle 201B ZK GIV. This glider is based at Whenuapai in partnership of two. Easy to fly, the Libelle has a good performance that in the right hands puts more modern machines to shame. Email Graham Lake [gclake@pl.net](mailto:gclake@pl.net)



## Duty Roster For Jul, Aug, Sept

Month	Date	Duty Pilot	Instructor	Tow Pilot
Jul	3	G LEYLAND	I WOODFIELD	P THORPE
	4	I O'KEEFE	A FLETCHER	R CARSWELL
	10	M MORAN	S WALLACE	F MCKENZIE
	11	T O'ROURKE	R BURNS	D BELCHER
	17	R BAGCHI	L PAGE	R HEYNIKE
	18	T PRENTICE	A FLETCHER	G CABRE
	24	C BEST	P THORPE	R CARSWELL
	25	E LEAL SCHWENKE	I WOODFIELD	D BELCHER
	31	R MCMILLAN	S WALLACE	P THORPE
Aug	1	A MICHAEL	R BURNS	P EICHLER
	7	R WHITBY	A FLETCHER	R HEYNIKE
	8	C DICKSON	P THORPE	G CABRE
	14	K JASICA	L PAGE	F MCKENZIE
	15	J DICKSON	I WOODFIELD	R CARSWELL
	21	S HAY	S WALLACE	D BELCHER
	22	K BHASHYAM	R BURNS	P EICHLER
	28	K PILLAI	A FLETCHER	R HEYNIKE
	29	G LEYLAND	P THORPE	G CABRE
Sep	4	I O'KEEFE	L PAGE	P THORPE
	5	M MORAN	I WOODFIELD	F MCKENZIE
	11	T O'ROURKE	S WALLACE	R CARSWELL
	12	R BAGCHI	R BURNS	D BELCHER
	18	T PRENTICE	A FLETCHER	P EICHLER

	19	C BEST	P THORPE	R HEYNIKE
	25	E LEAL SCHWENKE	L PAGE	G CABRE
	26	R MCMILLAN	S WALLACE	F MCKENZIE