



WWGC Newsletter February 2024

From the President - Simon Casey

What an amazing couple of months in terms of flying conditions and achievements. I have decided to dedicate this edition to these achievements and have asked some members to give me a summary of how they achieved their goals.

But these are only the ones I know about. There may have been other achievements and if I have missed any, please let me know so I can include them in the next newsletter.

Achievements

Simon Casey Winch Driver

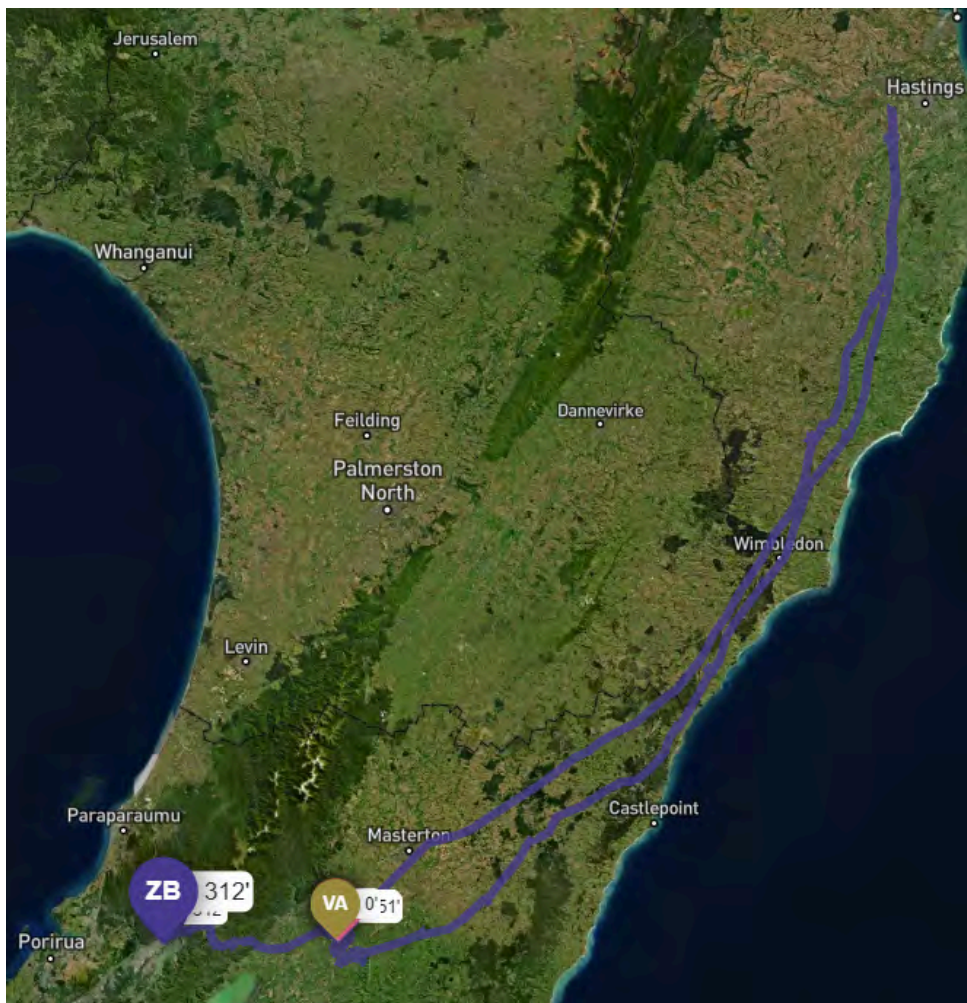
After some great training from Alistar Grocott, I have achieved my winch driver rating. I will now be on call as backup winch driver for both weekend and weekday flying days if available.

See below for the flight achievements.

Ben Wilson Diamond Goal 300Km Out and Return (Almost)



Ben set out to do a Diamond out and return flight to Hastings and back. As you can see from the trace, he made it but unfortunately he did not cross the start correctly so was unable to claim the badge. A very impressive flight all the same.



Mark Wilson2 Silver C 50Km distance



This was achieved on 17 Jan 2024. Below is the trace and summary of the flight from Mark. Three years ago, I made my first 50km Silver distance attempt, north on the western side of Mt Bruce. On the day, I achieved the distance and then landed out north of Masterton on the way back. Unfortunately, the Nano logger shut down just before launch and by the time I noticed, it was too late to fully record a qualifying flight.

This year in more favorable conditions, I had another go, this time aiming for Ekatahuna (~54km from Papawai according to Google) as my turn point.

The trip north followed good thermals over Carterton and up the western side of the valley to just south of Mt Bruce. The remaining 20+km over the rolling Mauriceville hill country turned out to be largely absent of usable lift but I was reasonably confident I could get in and out off the last 5000ft climb. Due to the lack of lift in the area, I turned back a couple of kms short of the township but was confident I had gone over 50kms. Log analysis later showed I had made it (just) with 50.4kms.

I didn't find any lift on the return leg and by the time I got back over flatter land in the Mikimiki area, I was down to about 1100ft and eyeing up prospective landout paddocks. While preparing a circuit, I was glad to find a usable (1kn) thermal, then 2-3, then 6-7kn thermals back up to 5000+ ft over Masterton. That made for a relaxed trip back along the eastern side of the valley (the middle had gone blue by then).

PS: If you don't have SeeYou or similar to analyse your flights, I found this handy BGA website (igcviewer.bgaladder.net) where you can upload an IGC log to do basic flight review, analysis and measurements.



Martyn Cook - Long Flight just short of Waiouru



I motored to Wharite Peak, and across the Ruahines. I was exploring the concept of commuting to an area of promising lift, enjoying some good soaring, then soaring (or motoring) home afterwards. In this case I had planned to return along the convergence in the Wairarapa.

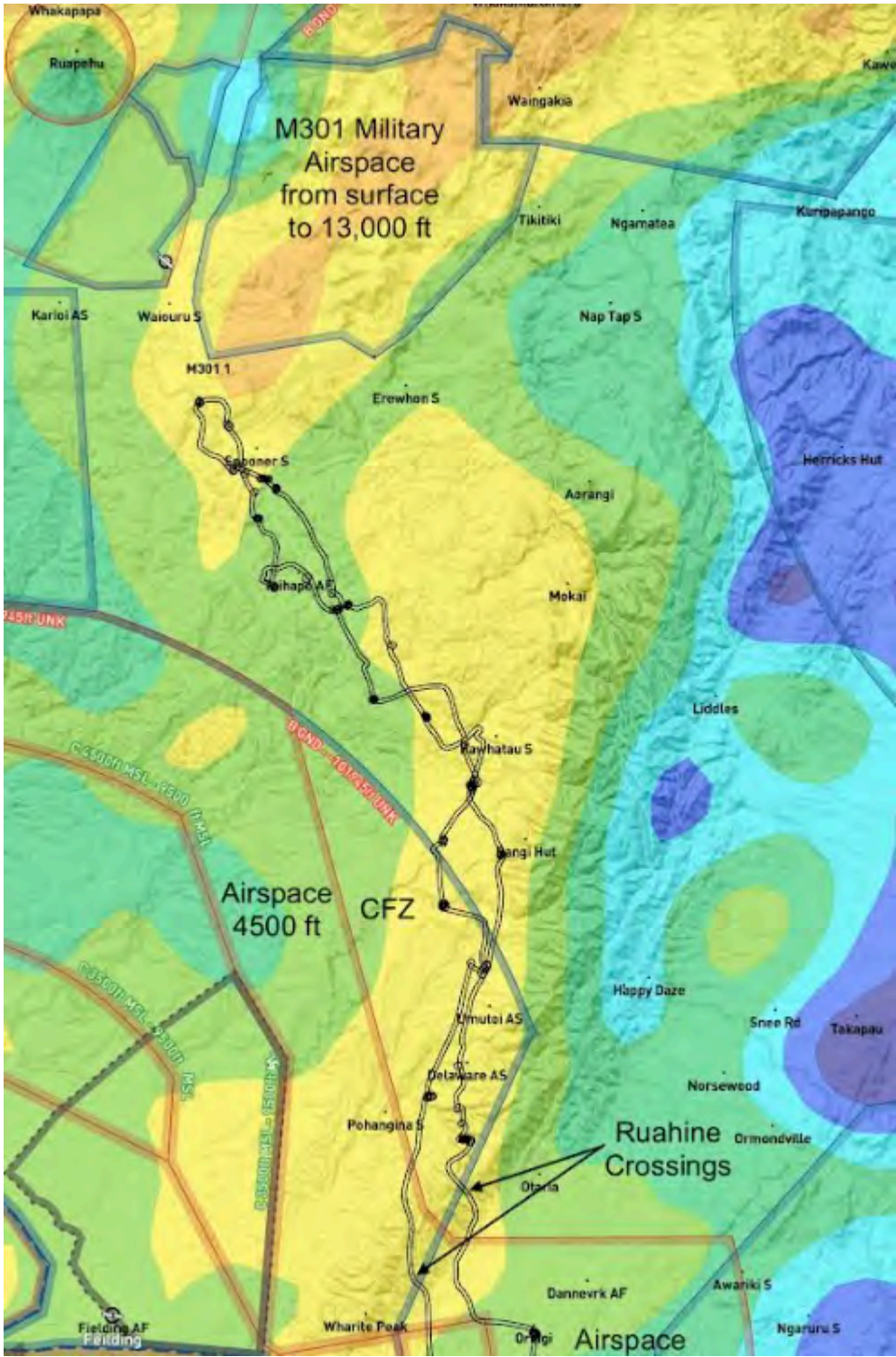
The second exploration arose from recently being denied access to controlled airspace. Could I fly to Taihape and back without flying through controlled airspace? Going north under power was easy enough. The only issue was finding a gap between the Ruahine tops and cloud base to cross over to the western side. It was there, but the clouds were not as high as forecast, so I sneaked over a low saddle.

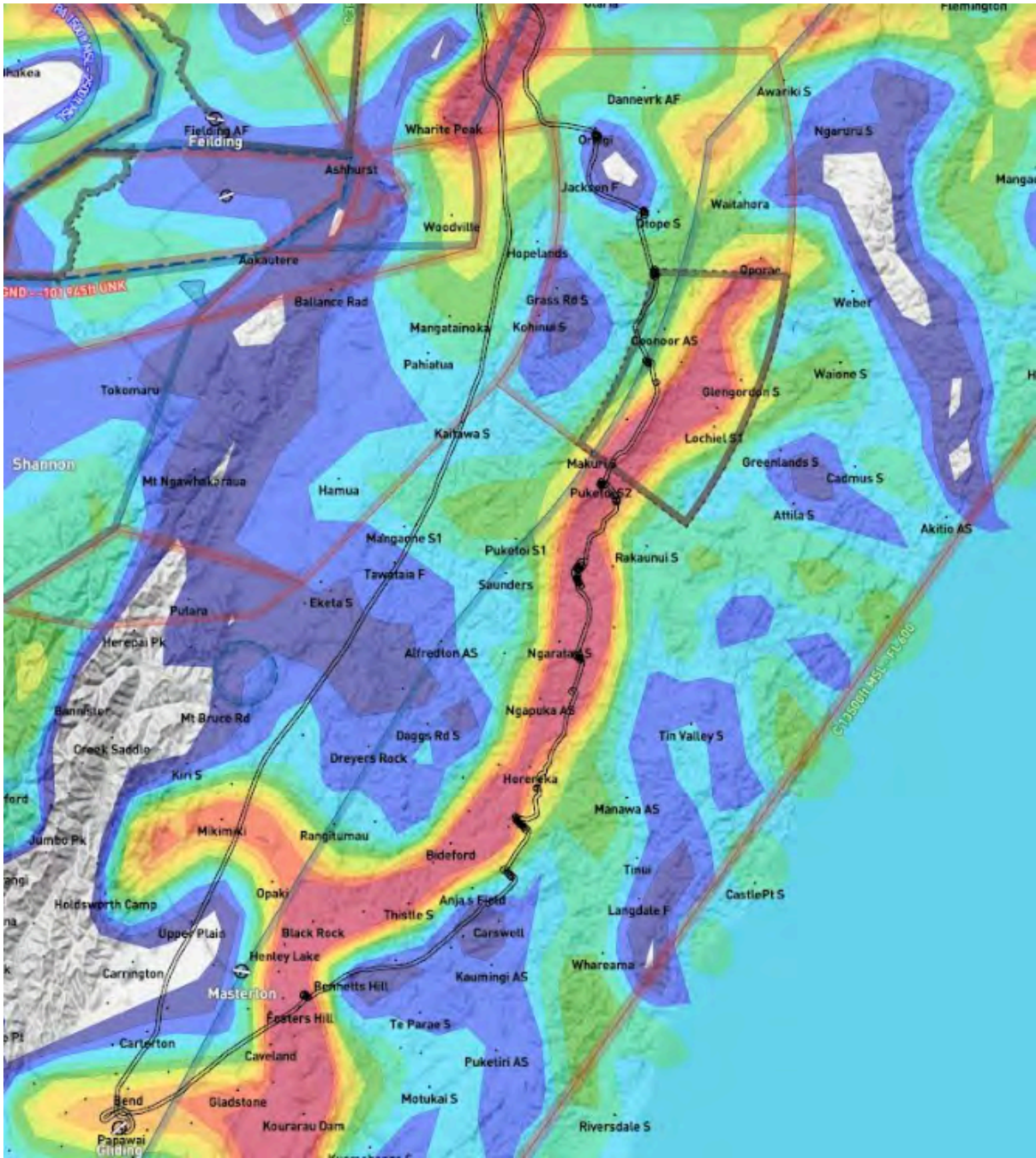
The attached map 1 shows the "potential flight distance" and the airspace boundaries, both from Skysight. This was the basis of the planned flight. The western side was forecast to have cloud bases of 7,000 ft, but I barely got to 6,000. The lift was broken and the clouds were teased out with almost no proper thermal cores. It was very rare to encounter a thermal which provided a steady 2-3 knots of lift all the way around, so it was a case of blundering along and circling hopefully in anything that felt substantial. Made for a slow trip.

I turned 4 miles short of the Army museum at Waiouru at 2pm, after encountering over-development (no sun on the ground). The peak of Ruapehu was only 17 miles away, but invisible due to cloud. The big disappointment was bumping up against the military zone to the north, where stronger lift was evident, but M301 is permanently closed up to 13,000 feet.

Crossing back over the Ruahines the cloud base dropped to about 4500 feet, and I was swarmed by gliders flying out of Waipukurau. Although the base was lower the thermals were better formed and easier to read. Keeping with my "no airspace" experiment I stayed below 4,500 feet along the Puketois, although I would normally have got a clearance and climbed higher. I finally connected with the convergence, which had set up pretty much as forecast by Skysight for 4:00 pm - see map 2.

Next attempt will be to go north from Kawhatau rather than north-west, possibly as far as Boyd.





Stewart Barton Diamond Goal 300Km Out and Return



This was achieved on 24 Jan 2024 where he flew to Waipukurau. This is after a number of previous attempts. The trace and commentary follow.

While I soloed early 1969 at Masterton, it was very exciting when my father bought Ka6cr, which I later bought off him. I did my silver C in that machine. For the 50km flight we had to release at 1200 feet and land out at Pirinoa. No gps and return then!

My father and I discussed a thermal 300km flight from Wairarapa. Because of the gorge effect it becomes a much more difficult thing to do than a lot of other sites. Interestingly, it is only very recently that I believe this has been achieved. Mark Wilson I think was the first award thermal 300 km flight from Wairarapa and I'm proud to join the club.

My first attempt was November 1977. I landed at Pahiatua. A few more attempts were made but wasn't to be. A thermal flight diamond from Wairarapa was really what I wanted. In February 1986 I got close, I declared Martinborough/ Ruakokopatuna/ Ormondville/ Martinborough. After seven and three quarters hours in Echo India I landed just short. One more small climb I would have done it.

I also more recently in Victor Alpha need one more small climb to get home. In desperation I even declared a 300 in very poor wave getting too low after being messed around by ATC. Had to motor out of Eketahuna.

Then finally on Wednesday 24th 2024 nearly 50 years after fathers echo India arrived, The weather forecast looked on, with an amazing convergence forecast. Years back we really didn't understand convergences, thinking they were cloud streets and often flying incorrectly under them.

Now I'm retired, so it is easier to select the right day. Allan agreed to be the official observer, David Hirst coming over in the morning to load my Nano, James giving an amazing weather forecast. I was ready yet again. South jury, Waipukurau, South Jury. 305 kms. Then Oh dear, only one magneto working on my motor. The motor still ran well so I took off with no problems.

I motored up to 3000ft, because I can, and went through the one kilometre wide line at South Jury. Grae and Martyn were ready in GUS and Ben ready to do his very credible 400km flight to Bridge Pa and return.

I was ahead initially but ran into a little trouble short of Masterton ponds, it didn't look that good east at first. I found a climb which got me East towards the forecast convergence. Grae and Ben got ahead of me then and I never saw them all flight. We did converse a bit on the radio though.

I had a wonderful flight up the coast passing many landmarks mostly cruising the convergence at around 6000 feet stopping a few times to top up. It was a thrill to pass Cape Turnagain. A significant New Zealand landmark. Soon up to Porangahau looking down at its lovely beach. Of course I was checking land out areas, which are scattered about among some very rugged countryside though, but I was very comfortable at the height we were able to cruise at.

Now with easier terrain ahead it was time to stalk Waipukurau. I had to fly into the quadrant as indicated on my programmed TopHat. I lost a good 1000 feet and had to decide whether to go for a couple of promising cloud south of YPuk or risk getting a bit low contacting the convergence further east. The second cloud worked very well and gave me good height back to the convergence.

What an amazing flight home, nearly retracing my flight up, with the convergence even stronger. If one was brave I think it would have been possible to fly that leg without circling. However I was very keen to complete this task so I took about three extra climbs to about 6800 feet. Then cruising at only at 60 knot at about 6200- 6300feet. Watching my finial glide computer go from 4000 feet under glide to slowly plus 2500 feet, I gave Stephanie a call to say bring out the bubbles and Beer to the club. I believe there is still some undrunk beer at the club. As I speed up to 100 knots at the head of the Bideford valley the lift got incredibly strong on the way home. I arrived at South Jury at 3000 feet making sure I went through the line. Steph and son-in-law Rob were there to see me land.

Thank to Summer crew who make midweek flying possible for us, Allan as OO, David for his time loading Nano, James for down loading Nano, Bruno for making sure it all correct on behalf of FAI and gliding NZ. And my Wife Stephanie for backing my attempts.

Note that Stewart also came 2nd in the Racing Class at the Central Districts Gliding Championships at Waipukurau from 17 - 24 February 2024.



James Austin Diamond Goal 300Km Out and Return



This was achieved on 17 Jan 2024 when he flew to Kawhatau. The trace and commentary follow.

A few days prior I saw what looked like a potential 300km day coming up mid-week, and put the word out. Approximately 8 private owners came to fly, so straight away I had to prove my prediction of the conditions was accurate! With a forecasted convergence along the Tararua and Ruahine Ranges, I chose Kawhatau as my turnpoint, given the less promising conditions on the eastern side of the Ruahines.

Taking off second, I got started quickly, but encountered delays south of Mt Bruce, falling behind the others headed to Kawhatau. I went up along the ranges, securing clearance into controlled airspace up to Ballance. There, with the cloudbase dropping to 3k ft, not sure of conditions on the other side of the gorge, I hesitated, turning back after Simon and Stewart who'd aborted a while earlier. However, Grae called me and assured me the clouds would lift north of the gorge, so I pushed northward again, finding clearer skies beyond the gorge and riding the lift along the western side of the ranges to Kawhatau.

The return journey was smoother, as the convergence made for an easy glide back towards the gorge, where I navigated below 3k ft clouds without ATC delays this time. Despite a westerly wind disrupting the convergence north of the Tararuas, I managed a detour east, battling weak thermals and ATC restrictions, to finally catch strong lift at Bennetts Hill.

Eventually climbing to 5k ft around 5:30pm, I was finally above final glide and knew I'd make it. Despite a brief video call with Bruno just before crossing the finish line, I landed to cheers, a beer, and a retrieve vehicle, marking exactly 6 hours in the air.



Note that James also came 3rd in the Club Class National Championship held at Papawai 7 - 15 February 2024.

Mark Wilson Winner Multiclass National Championships



This was held in Taupo from 19 -28 January 2024. Mark was the winner of the racing class in his Standard Libelle GGX. Tony Van Dyk came 7th in the open class in the same competition. Great results from the Papawai team.

Note that Mark Wilson came 2nd in the Club Class National Championship held at Papawai 7 - 15 Feb 2024.

Alain Marcuse Winner Central Districts Gliding Championships

This was held at Waipukurau from 17 - 24 February. Alain won the racing class in his LS-4 glider. I understand that he had a landout on one of the days of the competition and still managed to win. This competition also had Stewart Barton and Tony Van Dyk from our club..

This month's funny side

The irony!

