

WARM AIR 1 Feb 2025

Aviation Sports Club Gliding Newsletter

THIS WEEKEND:

www.ascgliding.org

[ASC Gliding | Facebook](#)

Bank Acct: RNZAF BASE AUCKLAND AVIATION SPORTS CLUB 38-9014-0625483-000

Saturday 1 Feb	Instructing: Towing: Duty Pilot	A Fletcher G Cabre
Sunday 2 Feb	Instructing: Towing: Duty Pilot	S Wallace P Thorpe R Semmens

MEMBERS NEWS

In this edition of Warm Air

Club News

Weekend Reports

Upcoming Events

Roster

Thank you for the pictures, stories and contributions from members!

Hey folks, heck its February already.....Hey with no Gliding Last Weekend, we have a awesome story from Steve Wallace with his soaring in the Sth Island to add to the newsletter. It's a cracker. Thanks Steve.

Some status notes below on flying this weekend and what's serviceable etc. RDW is back after its op.

Tow Plane Status – It is out of surgery - We are informed RDW should be back up and running for this weekend. Yay....

PW5 VF – Remains out of Service this weekend The Seat Belts need to be fitted

RNZAF Parachute Activities (Potential Impact to Gliding)

Please note PTSU are planning some intensive Para training over the period 10 Feb – 21 Mar 25 which will affect WASC flying, especially on the weekends. This will include:

6 days a week (Mon-Saturday)

Sundays reserved for poor weather delays

Night jumps

We will endeavour to keep you updated on the flying program, please know that Para Ops will have the priority.

Duty Pilot Swap

Tony Prentice needs a Duty Pilot Swap for the 1st Feb and Craig Best needs cover for 9th Feb. If someone is able to swap, both chaps would be grateful. Please contact Tony, Craig directly or if need be me (Ian) and we can formalise.

Steve's Most Excellent South Island Adventure

Over the summer break I ventured South to compete in the NZ MultiClass Nationals being flown out of Omarama.

I was entered in the Racing Class in a Duo Discus with my good mate Nigel Davy. There were three other Duo Discus entered in the class and a bunch of single seaters. We flew 8 days and missed only two due to the weather. Unusually for the South Island we had no wave days with the wind mostly from the South and the East the whole time. Thermals were generally between 7 – 9,000ft but the winds did make flying in the mountains tricky especially if you got below the tops as the valleys could be difficult if not impossible to get out of, as we were to find out. Nigel and myself ended up 2nd overall to the combo of G Dale and Peter Alexander in one of the other Duo's.

My highlight for the flying was not a day we won but a day we landed out. Landing out is always an adventure and while I have landed out at various places in the South before I had never landed on, or towed out of, a high-country strip. It was task 6 and Nigel and I had a good start. We were way ahead of the field being quick to the first turn point at Makarora, a small township on the Haast Pass highway in the Mount Aspiring National Park. Having rounded the turn, we had to decide whether to head North West up the McKerrow Range or South East down the range towards Lake Wanaka. Having prior to the turn tried some clouds to the West that did not produce, we headed down the range looking for a climb off a south facing sunny spur as the wind was southerly. Nothing really worked and we felt we were below the tops on the wrong side of the range so when a lower saddle in the range appeared I had a quick discussion with Nigel and said shall we do it (cross the saddle). We literally only had a few seconds to decide as once we fell below the saddle height the option to cross would be gone. As we had had no success on this Western side of the range the quick decision was "let's do it" and I rolled the duo left and across the saddle. As soon as we crossed the sink started and we were immediately below saddle height in a very narrow high mountain ravine with no option to go back. So down the gorge we went, sinking all the way, steep rocky slopes on both sides. Our narrow ravine soon exited into a larger ravine, also filled with same downward flowing air. Like a winged luge, we rode the flow of sinking air down the steep ravine until we were eventually spat out overhead the alluvial fan where the ravines mountain stream exited into the upper reaches of Lake Hawea. We were at this point still 2,000' above the lake so where to from here was the decision that needed to be made. About 14km south and on the other side of the lake was the Dingle Burn Station strip. This track would be into a 10 – 12kts southerly head wind. About 12km up the Hunter



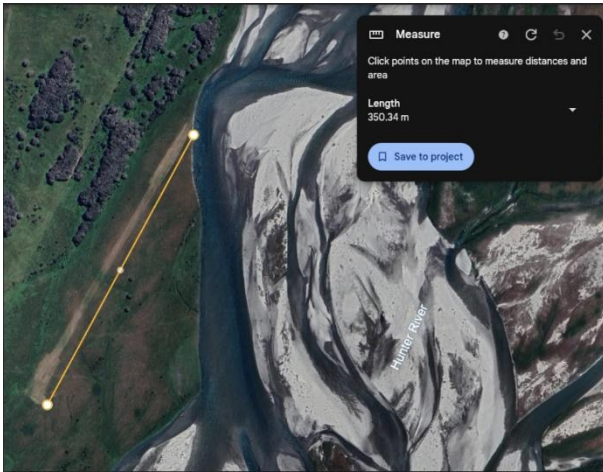
valley, with the wind behind us, was the Hunter strip. So easy decision, up the valley we went. The air in the valley was cool and dead so apart from the wind blowing up the odd small south facing spur not a hint of lift was encountered. Lucky for me, Nigel knows the strip so he was able to see it long before I could as it was not really very obvious. A nice right-hand circuit had us on final approach overhead the Hunter River. So 12 minutes after making the decision to cross the mountain saddle some 4,000' feet higher in the ranges above us, we were safe on the ground. What a ride! And what a magnificently scenic and isolated spot it was. 7,000' mountain ranges either side of us, snowy mountain peaks in the distance further up the valley and Lake Hawea further down the valley. The only sound being that of the river, happily and steadily burbling away beside us, unperturbed by its newly arrived visitors. The nearest road was some 37km away if one was to follow the 4WD drive track. The track is narrow and winding in parts and involves the fording of at least 15 not insubstantial mountain streams that flow out of the steep ravines of the McKerrow Ranges. One of which we had just been exploring by glider. So, a road retrieve was out of the question. Aerotow is the only option and with no cell phone coverage a radio relay via another glider back to Omarama base is needed. Initial radio calls produced no result so we decided to go for a walk and check out the strip hut while we waited for some gliders to come into range. The hut was in use as there were two freshly skinned rabbits hanging up in the huts meat safe and some eggs and flour on the kitchen table but no hunters to be seen. As it turned out we saw them fishing for Salmon further downstream as we towed out. If things hadn't worked out it would have at least been rabbit pie and salmon for dinner!



Back at the glider and radio contact was made with another glider and the message relayed to Omarama to send the grunty towplane and short tow rope. At a strip length of only 350m, we could not be wasting valuable ground roll on long tow ropes. In our favour was a 10kt headwind but not in our favour was long grass and no wing runner. So, while we waited we scouted around and found two suitable sticks to hold the wings level. The procedure was, once the tug had landed we pushed the glider back as far as it would go and propped the wings level with the two sticks. The rope was attached



and Nigel stood to the side of the tug and used hand signals to slowly walk him forward until the rope was tight, while I sat in the glider holding it on the brakes. The glider could not be allowed to roll forward otherwise it would fall off the sticks. Nigel then ran back and jumped in the back of the glider. Once



ready, the all-out was given. In Nigel's case this was "go, go, go" over the radio. The tow pilot went to full power while holding on the brakes and I held the Duo on its brakes before we both released. The sticks fell away as they were meant to and we were rolling with a surge. The prop wash tried to drop the left wing but aileron control was good and immediate. Conscious of not wanting to pull the Duo off the ground too early I held until I saw the ASI reach 40kts and the wheels of the tow plane lift. We were flying! Shortly after this and only a few feet below, the end of the strip flashed beneath us, immediately replaced by rough ground. Matagouri and rose hip bushes passed lazily by to our left and right before the view opened up as we climbed

out over the Hunter River. What a thrill it was to be airborne, the tension of the short take-off gone, stunning lake view scenery unfolding before us and home only a 20 minute glide away from our release point in the Dingle. We may not have had a good day racing wise, but we did have a great and memorable day of adventure in the South Island's magnificent mountains.

You can access the trace at this link here: <https://seeyou.cloud/flight/public/6jnNyLXcO-TFYkzaKHFWHk>

Steve

Duty Roster For Jan, Feb, Mar

Month	Date	Duty Pilot	Instructor	Tow Pilot
Feb	1		A FLETCHER	G CABRE
	2	R SEMMENS	S WALLACE	P THORPE
Waitangi	6	A SHIPOV	I BURR	R HEYNIKE
	8	B SLY	P THORPE	G CABRE
	9	C BEST	L PAGE	R HEYNIKE
	15	S CHAND	I WOODFIELD	R BURNS
	16	B GAMBARO	A FLETCHER	P THORPE
	22	A MICHAEL	R BURNS	G CABRE
	23	G STANFIELD	S WALLACE	P THORPE
Mar	1	K JASICA	I BURR	R CARSWELL
	2	C HAYWARD-SLATTERY	P THORPE	R HEYNIKE
	8	A NEJATI	L PAGE	R BURNS
	9	M KUYS	I WOODFIELD	G CABRE
	15	M WEYNA	A FLETCHER	P THORPE
	16		R BURNS	R CARSWELL
	22	K BHASHYAM	S WALLACE	R HEYNIKE
	23	I O'KEEFE	S WALLACE	R BURNS
	29	T PRENTICE	P THORPE	G CABRE
	30	R SEMMENS	L PAGE	R CARSWELL