

# OUTLANDING

The Taupo Gliding Club's Newsletter



## April-May 2025

*Welcome everyone to this edition of Outlanding. The cooler days have now started as we head into winter. Autumn weather has generally been pleasant and there has been some enjoyable local flights.*

*The club's Dinner and Awards Night will be held on the 21<sup>st</sup> of June and the AGM the following day. Time is running out for those of you wanting to enter the airmanship competition so book your flight on the booking system.*

*If anyone has an article or notification to be included into the next newsletter, please have to Trace by 20 July 2025.*

*Fly well and have fun!*

*Cheers, Trace*

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## CFI Info by CFI Colin McGrath



As we head into the winter months, I'd like to take a moment to highlight a couple of important safety reminders.

Firstly, recent feedback from the National Ops team has noted a few checklist-related issues creeping into operations. These may seem minor, but they are critical to safe flying. With winter bringing fewer flying days, it is even more important that we remain vigilant and stick to procedures, especially when flying

becomes less routine.

Secondly, we're now entering that time of year when the sun sits low in the afternoon sky. This can make our lookout much more difficult, particularly when looking west into the sun. To help manage this risk:

- Ensure your canopy is clean and free of smudges or haze.
- Consider your visibility to other pilots. If the sun is behind you, gliders ahead may struggle to see you.
- Be especially cautious when flying near the east face of Mt Tauhara. This area falls into shadow in the afternoon, making it very difficult to see into from the sunlit side.

Let's all stay sharp and continue a good look out routine.

Fly safe, Colin

## Waterborne Tom

There was a strange sight at Centennial Park one autumn morning when a strange aircraft with funny wheels landed on runway 07. And guess who should leap out of the cockpit? None other than Mark Funnell.

After a quick cuppa and chat with Tom, Mark suggested that he go for a flight with him out over the lake. Tom of course didn't need any pushing as he scrambled out to the aircraft and away they went. Now Tom thought that he was only going as a passenger, however, Mark gave the controls to Tom and Tom accepted eagerly. Tom was even more surprised when Mark suggested that he actually land on the lake and with Mark's guidance Tom completed his first ever water landing.

As you can see by the smile, Tom was elated and that grin remained on Tom's face for days. Thank you Mark.



## To the Mountains or Bust! An Omarama Review - by Charlie Irvin

I think as good ole New Zealand Glider Pilots we've all seen in our training syllabus the Alpine Pilot goal- to soar to the face of Mount Cook- and thought to ourselves "*one day I'll do that!*" For some it might be a far-fetched dream, or to others something you can put on the back burner for a few years until you can afford to do it. Well, after throwing most of my savings into a third share of a DG-100, I scraped up the pocket change to buy a ferry ticket and decided that for the summer of 2024 I would learn how to become an Alpine Pilot. Here is my review of the greatest three months of soaring I have ever had:



Firstly- I am predominantly a flat land pilot. Mountains (to me) are the Kaimais, all my flying is central North Island based, so I reeeaaally like having a landable area at my disposal at almost all times. I am a newer XCP pilot with about 150 hours under my belt and I've met a few cows and farmers on my travels. When I drove into central Otago my jaw was hanging loose. Snow dusted mountains double the height I was used to, flat lands filled with boulders and rocks, and a vast emptiness with not the best cell coverage in the world. A whole new world, as some would say. Everything was just so wide and open, even the clouds seemed bigger. Lenticulars stretched across the horizon the day I arrived, we don't get the same ones up north!



You might be asking yourself, why leave the safe field you know? Why leave the nest? Which is what I almost immediately thought when the shocking realisation hit me at one of my first briefings on my Mountain Soaring course, hosted by Omarama Gliding Club, that "*I have to fly THAT close to the mountains?!?*" One of the key aspects to achieving cross country soaring here is taking



advantage of thermal sources coming off hot rocks and summits/peaks, which does mean you and your fibreglass beauty are about to get real buddy-buddy with the hills. The one to the immediate south of the field (known as Horrible), is the one you'll get to know the best, as it's the starting point for most hopeful flights.

At first, this terrified me, but the lessons it taught me were invaluable as a pilot. Starting with- **Safe**

**Speed Near the Ground**, one of the most important factors to any flight but particularly here. You will be close to the ground - that's the only way you can get to the best parts of the lift. By tracing ridges and peaks as you fly, you are more likely to hit an area where the warm air has been triggered upwards. There's science to that theory and lots of explanations from a myriad of pilots, for now my source is Trust Me It Worked Most Of The Time. Remembering your basics is so important here, maintaining a constant safe speed, along with smooth and balanced turns, and being hyper aware of your surrounding landscape. Is it safe to complete the turn here? Do I have ground clearance? Are there other gliders around me? Do I have a safe route





if I need to get out? Spending my first week flying dual in a Duo Discus helped ease the mental load for me, as my brain was working overtime in this new environment, and having someone show me step-by-step gave me the ability to focus on learning to walk before I attempted to run. Once you've got some confidence, you realise your perspective moves from jumping from cloud to cloud, to jumping from peak to peak. Instead of running cloud streets, you'll run ridge lines. You shift your thinking but your foundations are the same, and that fear starts bleeding off.

Although it took some massive trial and error, and colouring in Mt Horrible with my track for hours, I was finally taking my lovely DG sight-seeing on my own after a few weeks.



It wasn't long before I was joining in with the local task setting program Whio Glide, from developer Phil Plane, which allowed us little wing gliders to fly small tasks against each other that were set on the day, for whatever weather we had. After three task attempts, I won my first Whio Glide task and was rewarded with a little Whio (aka the Blue Duck) after setting an impressive 86.6kph speed on a 120 km task. Not bad for a rookie!

Now, I mentioned a little hill we all know as Mount Cook/Aoraki earlier- standing at 12,220 feet, it's rather impressive from the ground. But where it really shines to me, is when you're looking down on it from 16,000 feet in an aircraft with no engine. During the Mountain Soaring Course, I was offered an opportunity to take an ASH25 (one of my favourite gliders!) up into the wave system to see it all for myself with friend and instructor Terry Jones. After forty minutes of being thrown around in the rotor we were able to weave between clouds and up into that smooth laminar flowy state where it feels like the thing is flying on rails. G Dale has some excellent books that go much more into detail about wave and mountain flying, for the sake of my review I'll be leaving out the nitty-gritty details.



Wave soaring is incomparable, being above the clouds on supplemental oxygen looking down on the most beautiful snowy landscapes, is half the reason I became a glider pilot. It is such a privilege to be involved in a sport where you get to experience the world from that unique point of view, and as we climbed through 14,000 feet at about 110 knots, I could have almost shed a tear looking down at Aoraki. The other half is the satisfaction knowing I was able to put in the work to get the aircraft there to see it all. Even though at that height it was about -10 degrees and I could no longer feel my toes, I felt like I was on top of the world, and that made every penny and the 13 hour drive absolutely worth it.



In my time down there, I graced my little aircraft with her first airstrip after falling into a valley, I learned so much about my own ability as a pilot, and I had another 45 hours to put in my logbook, the most I've ever put in for such a short time. Coming away from my three months, I can proudly say I am a better pilot for it, and my appreciation for the sport has grown immensely. If you're thinking about giving Alpine Soaring a try, go and do it! As I saw on the Grand Prix advertising poster at Matamata- sell the house, sell the kids, do whatever you can. You won't regret it.

Here are some more photos to convince you...



## Fire Pit Christening Potluck Dinner

Saturday the 31st of May marked the final day of autumn, and what better way to welcome winter than with the christening of our new fire pit? On a blustery evening, with a fresh south-westerly breeze and a definite chill in the air, eight brave souls gathered to share warmth and good company around the crackling fire.

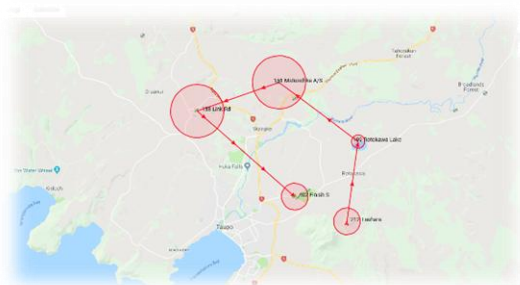


After enjoying the glow and warm of the fire, the group moved into the club room to continue the evening with a relaxed potluck dinner. The food was delicious, the conversation entertaining, and the atmosphere full of good humour.

It was a thoroughly enjoyable evening and if this first outing is anything to go by, the fire pit is sure to become a much loved feature for many more gatherings to come.

## taskPilot

Pilots using taskPilot may have noticed that the program recently experienced a crash. This was due to a change in the host server's rules, which prevented the platform from operating correctly.



Fortunately, the creator of taskPilot, Brian Savage, was promptly made aware of the issue. Brian has since upgraded the platform, and it is now fully operational again.

It was encouraging to see increased participation in this season's league compared to previous years. The competition between the pilots remained reasonably close throughout. In the end, Geoff Thompson managed to stay ahead of the field and has been crowned the **2024/25 taskPilot Champion**. Well done, Geoff — that's two in a row!

Watch out for the upcoming season — it's sure to be an exciting one!

### Taupo Gliding Club League table 2024/25 season.

- 1 Geoff Thompson – 1099.49 pts
- 2 Trace Austin – 859.93 pts
- 3 Craig Hunter – 634.80 pts
- 4 Peter Lynch – 524.87 pts
- 5 Philip Overall – 254.48 pts



## Achievements

Congratulations to:

- Geoff Thompson - for attaining his backseat rating. Geoff will commence his training to become a 'C' Cat Instructor.
- Phil Overall – for attaining his backseat rating.

Well done to both of you.





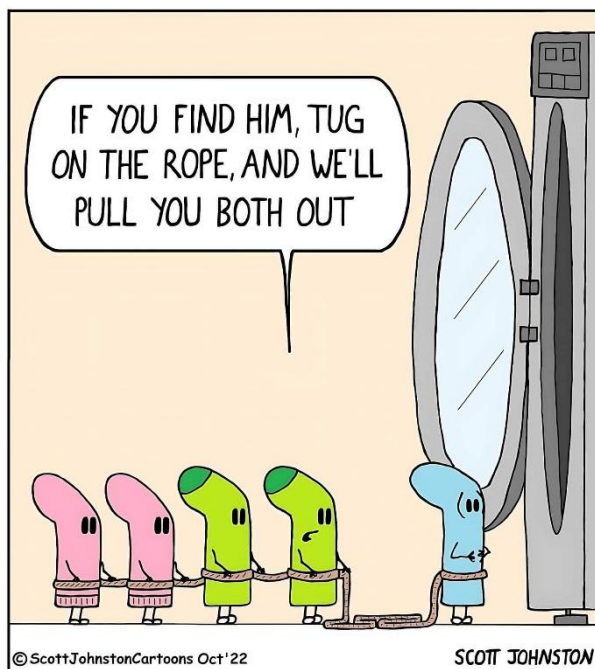
Around the club



## Up and Coming

- GNZ 75<sup>th</sup> Gala Night and AGM – 14<sup>th</sup> & 15<sup>th</sup> of June
- Annual Dinner and Awards Night plus AGM – 21<sup>st</sup> & 22<sup>nd</sup> of June
- Club ridge flying weekend this winter at Matamata – *Date TBC*
- June the 21<sup>st</sup> – Shortest Day. This means summer is coming ☺

## Humour



Looks like a very serious  
leek under the sink

