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Spring 2019 Newsletter

West Auckland Airport Parakai, NZPI, Approaches: The Mandatory Broadcast Zone (MBZ) is only a few miles wide, and obviously it is mandatory to have a radio and make a call to 'Parakai Traffic' before entering that.

Not quite so obvious is that the normal rules of broadcasting intentions within 10 miles of an aerodrome also apply... so, all aircraft should change to 123.5 and make a call at 10 miles, just north of Gibbs Farm at Glorit... or from the South well before the glasshouses. Approaching from the East, change at the power lines near Kaukapakapa. The only difference of the MBZ circle from the 10-mile circle is that non-radio aircraft can transit through the 10-mile circle.

The Safety Committee has asked us to remind aviators to arrive at circuit height well before entering the circuit, *to be able to see other aircraft. (Descending or climbing right into the circuit can obscure sight of other aircraft.)*

As with most airports with heavy skydiving (Taupo, Wanaka etc), never do an overhead join in case there are skydivers you're not aware of.

West Auckland Airport NZPI from the SW, non-traffic side.

Tecnam ZK-CDL Overhaul: CDL is back in the air after its overhaul. In addition to the timed replacement of all rubber hoses and critical bolts etc, it has been repainted, had the seat upholstery, cabin

linings and carpet redone. The finishing touches with more decals, logos etc will be done on un-flyable days, and an ADSB in/out unit is being installed… a point to note about ADSB is that in NZ it is illegal to pass radio transmission data to anyone except the 'intended recipient' (which is other air traffic, aerodromes and ATC). Definitely not posting the movements of the Police Helicopters on public blogs.

Tecnam Echo ZK-CDL, inspected and ready for its test flight.

As always with aircraft, there are renovation considerations that don't apply to ground vehicles... e.g. the repainted tailplane changed in net weight, so the forward balance arm weight was adjusted to keep the mass inertia within the prescribed limits, to maintain the correct response to turbulence.

This took a while over the winter, and fortunately Auckland Flying Training made their low wing Tecnam Sierra, ZK-TST, available for approved pilots so that the work on ZK-CDL could be done without time pressure.

ZK-CDL has been really busy since its return to the air, its old friends must be glad to see it back.

The Airport is also looking for another Tecnam to add to the fleet, ideally another identical 'Tecnam P92 Echo Super' so that everything will be the same as ZK-CDL. Any addition will also be fitted with a BRS whole-aircraft parachute like ZK-CDL... you don't expect to ever use the chute, but definitely, "Better to have it and not need it, than need it and not have it".

DynAeros... Recently at the Airport, 75% of NZ's DynAero fleet lined up for a photo op. From the right ZK-WIK, a short wing two seat Microlight with Rotax 914 engine, then ZK-TFB a long wing two seat microlight with Rotax 912, then ZK-PSA a '4s' four seat G.A. aircraft with Rotax 914. The only one missing is ZK-ORR, similar configuration to TFB.

The DynAeros are French designed aircraft built of carbon fibre and having good performance and range. WIK was factory built in Dijon, TFB and PSA were kitset built by their owners, all to a high standard.

Three of the four DynAeros in NZ, lined up for a family portrait

Looking after the Airport's Environment:

Weed Control: The Airport has been researching and experimenting with non-chemical control of the Alligator weed that has long invaded the ditches on the Kaipara and choked the drains. Letting in controlled amounts of seawater has proven effective and is much kinder to the Inanga and juveniles of other fish species that breed in the harbour, compared to spraying weedkiller.

Further work is being done in conjunction with the Council waterways biologists and the method developed is likely to be rolled out by the Council to other properties on the Kaipara Harbour and its rivers.

Bird Control: Work on this has also been quite effective, and by studying the habits of the birds and making the airport less attractive to them, it's been possible to make the birds spend more time elsewhere.

Skydive Auckland runs a bird scaring device on their swooping pond for the same reason... that's what causes the loud 'shotgun' type booms at regular intervals. The birds are not keen to settle if they think there are shooters in the area. With our 'Aimm' Movement Monitoring service now used by nearly half the active NZ airports, we use our client newsletters to spread the suggestions for non-lethal bird control to many other airports in NZ and Australia.

Low-emission Aircraft: The Airport's flight training aircraft have been low-emission for a long time and produce less than half the emissions of a Cessna or Piper training aircraft. Partly this is due to the lighter weight of the Tecnam aircraft used at West Auckland Airport, but mainly because their 1990s designed Rotax engines are considerably more efficient than the 1950s designed Lycoming and Continental engines traditionally used for training.

The Rotaxes also use unleaded road vehicle fuel ('MoGas') getting a similar Km/Litre to an efficient car, rather than leaded aviation fuel ('Avgas') so there is a worthwhile benefit there too. More airports might move to Mogas aircraft if they were exempt from road taxes like those using Avgas :(

As soon as practical the airport would like to move to zero-emission electric training aircraft and ground vehicles and is actively investigating these.

South Island Photos: The McKenzie Country has many airfields ... Omarama, Pukaki, Tekapo, etc and gives access to the valley leading further into the mountains up to Glentanner and Mt Cook. The way out of those to the North and down onto the Canterbury Plains is blocked by the Rollesby Range, which is not particularly high by local standards but high enough to be often in cloud. The Burke and McKenzie Passes let both the road and aviators through. McKenzie pass looks to have been especially made for the convenience of aviators, being short and straight so you can see though to the other side before committing yourself and provided with helpful power pylons as a navigation guide.

McKenzie Pass tracking North in ideal conditions. The pass floor is around 2000ft altitude, and narrower than it looks when you get into it. Over the sill is the Canterbury Plains.

Kaipara Harbour: Close to home, there are a lot of big rivers on the Kaipara. In the shot below where the rivers cross in the middle distance, Tinopai and the Harbour entrance is to the left, the Orawharo river running up to Kaiwaka on the right, and this photo looks up the Arapaoa River towards Paparoa and Maungaturoto. Sparsely populated and unknown to most Aucklanders, though all this land and the rivers are quite close to the city.

But they are all quite well known to aviators in the north as a good route to the south past West Auckland Airport Parakai and along the transit zone under the Whenuapai and Auckland International Western approaches.

Kaipara Rivers. Port Albert in the foreground, and looking north up the Arapaoa River

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