

## Hawkes Bay Gliding Club - 1957-2007

### The first fifty years

Gliding in Hawke's Bay commenced in 1915 when "Tyc" Hushcer, then 15, built and flew a gliding bi-plane in Napier. The police ordered him to destroy this because of his German ancestry. It was really a hang glider with directional control by swinging his body. It had an 18 foot wingspan and 16 foot fuselage. After the first World War Tyc continued his aviation interest by being involved in the formation of the Napier Aero Club, the Napier Aerodrome and the Hawke's Bay Gliding Club.

The New Zealand Gliding Association was formed in 1931. It held the first annual camp at Dannevirke during the Christmas holidays of that year and the second camp was held in Hastings. During the depression, the number of participating clubs fell from six to three.

After World War II it took a few more years for gliding to become re-established in Hawkes Bay. Enthusiasts met on the 3rd April 1957 and Tye became the first vice president and Gerrit van Asch the first president of the new Hawkes Bay Gliding Club. Roy Russell, well known to older members, was one of the early instructors.

Flying started at the Beacons Airfield (now Napier Aerodrome), but for the first few years the club was nomadic, operating from Craggy Range, Roy's Hill, Ocean Beach, Poukawa and various farms. At Te Mata Peak, the first winch was built from a Bren gun carrier donated by Gerrit's brother Piet who founded New Zealand Aerial Mapping. In 1966 the club moved to its permanent base on the Hastings Aerodrome at Bridge Pa. The hangar was built in 1969 with a clubhouse added in the 1990s and the hangar built with the private owners followed in 1999..

Membership peaked at about eighty and in the 1970s, the Waipukurau Gliding club split from the Hawke's Bay Club. We continue a close association with Waipukurau and this year the clubs combined to hold the Central Districts Championships..

Our Patron, Wyn Craven, was the founding Editor of the New Zealand Gliding Kiwi, and has served the club in most of the executive positions. Geoff White, ex-Spitfire pilot and CFI at both clubs, was flying until recently. Our guest speaker, his son-in-law, Bob Henderson, is well known not only on the international scene but also for his exploits at Waipukurau.

1981 was a momentous year for the Club with the writing off of the tow plane, its replacement with our current Champion Citabria CPD and the purchase of the Grob G103 Twin Astir GMX. Both aircraft are still giving excellent service..

Hawke's Bay is noted for both its thermal and wave flights. These can range from East Cape in the north to Turakirae Heads in the south. The club has produced a number of world representatives and members have set National Records and featured as the winners of many regional and national competitions.

Our current club and private fleet include a K13, K6CR, Twin Astir, Libelle, LS3, LS4, LS8, Cirrus and ASH25M.

Looking back, we should be very grateful to those who have worked so hard to promote our sport in Hawkes Bay. Our challenge is to see that their efforts are continued for the next generation.