

SAFARI NEWS

Thursday 25 March

Welcome to the Safari News, the daily newsletter of the Classic Hits Around New Zealand Air Safari. This newsletter is an informal way of sharing snippets of news, gossip, rumours, jokes and anecdotes with your fellow safari participants. Personal bios, great flying stories (true or otherwise), birthdays & anniversaries – pretty much anything goes. It is also intended that the newsletter be published regularly to the website so friends and family at home can follow what we've all been up to. If you have anything you would like to share please email racedirector@ihug.co.nz or contact Anna in person or by calling or texting 021 0262 2933 or 027 856 7470.

Diary

Yesterday's proceedings began in the right way with a hearty breakfast provided by the Tauranga Aero Club.

Participants had various amounts of success in completing the course from Tauranga to Taupo because of inclement weather. Lunch was hosted by the Taupo Aero Club, and attended by the Mayor of Taupo who welcomed everyone to the region. Presenters from the local Classic Hits station set up their audio gear and provided some music over lunch, and also gave away some prizes to safari entrants.

After the midday briefing everything was looking good for an on time departure, with pilots and crew in their aircraft waiting for start instructions. Then the

weather scout aircraft returned with the news that the weather had closed in and the planned route was impassable. A cold front was passing through and bringing with it extensive rain showers with associated poor visibility. A few hours of "hurry up and wait" ensued while weather forecasts and reports were updated and locals in nearby areas were consulted as to the local conditions. The weather aircraft departed again, and was forced to land at Whakatane due to deteriorating conditions en route. In Taupo the weather started to improve, so the decision was made to continue to Gisborne with entrants deciding whether to go direct or to continue via the safari route. The weather aircraft eventually made it to Gisborne after a long flight around the East Cape, and discovered that many aircraft had beaten them to Gisborne. Everyone was on the ground by dark, and no one was even late for dinner.

The Gisborne Aero Club fed everyone well with a camp oven dinner, which was preceded by a performance by a Kapa Haka performance by a group from a local school. Once again safari participants were treated to the local hospitality and made to feel very welcome.



Cooking the camp oven dinner

Observer Robin Knight has joined the team from England where he is just about to complete his PPL. He met Tony through his father in law who works with Tony, and found the opportunity of participating in the Classic Hits Around New Zealand Air Safari too difficult to pass up. He usually flies a Piper Warrior in the UK, and works as a Business Analyst.

Team Wam are flying a club Cessna 172R in the safari.

Team Wam

Waiting around at Taupo afforded the chance to get to know entrants better and to catch up from previous events. Tony Petch competed in the 2004 Around NZ Air Race, and has since completed his Commercial Pilots License. He now flies part time from the Waikato Aero Club as a charter pilot, as well as volunteering as a glider tow pilot on weekends. He started flying in 1973. Tony works as a Group Manager at Environment Waikato, and one of his current projects is the protection of Lake Taupo.

Viv Webb has also returned from the 2004 race, and has also regularly competed in the Great Northern Air Race organized by the North shore Aero Club since she completed her PPL in 2001. Outside of these events she tries to fly at least once a month from the Waikato Aero Club. She works as a Geographical Information Systems trainer.

