

# SAFARI NEWS

## Monday 29 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](mailto:racedirector@ihug.co.nz) or contact Anna in person or by calling or texting 021 0262 2933 or 027 856 7470.

## Diary

We arrived at Hood Aerodrome in Masterton yesterday invigorated from the day of rest on Saturday and ready to get back in to the safari, only to discover the gloomiest weather of the event so far enveloping the airport. The forecast didn't project much hope either, with a front expected to cross Cook Straight in the opposite direction to the safari at the same time as our intended crossing. The original route over the Pahiatua Track was abandoned soon after hearing local reports of low cloud and poor visibility in the Manawatu, which was expected to develop into gusty turbulent conditions as the day progressed. Route B became the plan of choice, tracking to the south of Masterton via Lake Ferry then across the Straight – all that remained was for the low cloud to lift from Masterton and for the weather aircraft to get airborne to scout the route. Following local reports from various locations across the route it was decided to abandon the scheduled lunch stop in Motueka, much to the disappointment of everyone who was looking forward to the promised hospitality of the Motueka Aero Club. The leg was declared a non-safari leg, so no points were accumulated from today's flights

towards the end results. Entrants were given the choice of making their own way across to Motueka if they wished, and about 11 aircraft chose to take this option. The remaining aircraft headed directly to Omaka, arriving at about 3pm. Some chose to visit the Omaka Heritage Centre in the evening and enjoyed a guided tour of their collection of aviation memorabilia.



*The boys from Oz prepare to cross the Cook Straight*

## Leg 9 - Masterton to Motueka - well almost.

*By David Skinner, Safari 33*

For Wellingtonians the rest day at Masterton on Saturday was a welcome chance to pop home for a couple of nights R&R. For the crew of Race 33 MRH, Paraparaumu was a good compromise for the crew to park the Aircraft on Friday. This meant a very early start on Sunday morning to rejoin the Safari in Masterton by 7am Sunday. Once again we were thwarted by weather – but this time it wasn't Wellingtons weather that foiled us!

Sunday dawned (or rather misted) into daylight with low cloud and misty drizzle from yet another front over the lower part of the North Island. While getting out of Paraparaumu was going to be ok, getting into Masterton definitely wasn't with occasional rain and cloud off the deck. This also meant that the majority of the Safari aircraft weren't going to get out of there any time soon either. The only sensible solution after our 4:30am start was to head for a cafe with big breakfasts and strong coffee.

The weather was forecast to improve but the question was when? From talking to the Safari organisers this was going to occur on the west coast well before Wairarapa so Safari 33 bravely took to the air on behalf of all Safari aircraft to be the first into Motueka airfield, our first stop in the South Island. The weather across the ditch was doing its usual random local thing with us measuring wind of 47 kts at 3500 ft from the south east which got us to the beautiful Nelson region in record time (pity Liz wasn't counting) to arrive at a newly mown Motueka airfield shortly after midday. What greeted us was a party of several hundred local supporters, the largest lunch we have seen for a long time including mussels,

whitebait fritters, hams, chicken, numerous salads, desserts and more – unfortunately all for a small Cessna with 3 people in it. Motueka Aero Club, who were one of the very first supporters of the Safari, had organised the largest reception for the Safari seen so far on the route. The two local vintage car clubs had arrived with their wonderful collections of vehicles which kept many of the spectators interested while waiting for all the wonderful exotic aircraft to turn up – sadly, they were still stuck in Masterton.

There were many local children waiting (as they kept asking their parents) for the Catalina. We tried to represent our Cessna as a baby Catalina but they were too smart to buy that. The local school had produced drawings of the Safari for each of the aircraft due to arrive including ours which even included a flying saucer. So much excitement and so much hospitality and so few aircraft that could make it through left us feeling sad that we could not fulfil the expectations of the children and fairly return the hospitality of the wonderful local people and superb organisation by the Aeroclub management and supporters. We did at least thank everyone for all their efforts on behalf of the Safari. Ultimately it was due to the weather gods again, but it was a bitter pill. Then again – that's flying.



*The crew of the Catalina posing at Ardmore*