

Hastings Aerodrome at Bridge Pa

A GREAT place to spend a night or two is Bridge Pa airfield at Hastings, Hawke's Bay. It is a nice break if flying north or south and the people there are very friendly. Coming up from the south, the approach is simple, just be aware of the training area south of the field as you approach and change from 119.10 to 125.80 early enough. Inbound from the north you will most likely have skirted around or come through Napier Control (who are really helpful), then changed to 125.80 for joining. There is a variety of traffic from flight training and private ops to gliders, so keep a good look out and if arriving on the weekend, then use the seal for your first landing. This will allow you to get the feel of activity on the grass which is used for back tracking and glider tow. Additional traffic is possible from parachuting and nordo aircraft and also note the power line which crosses the approach to runway 11. And note that there is a private house and hanger on the western side of the airfield that aircraft can be taxiing to and from.

Taxi off the active runways via the taxi ways, or across the grass which is firm. Once you pull up for fuel at the BP pump, no sooner than you hop out, a local will be over to say "giddy", ask where you came from and offer to show you around. Take their advice for parking and then enjoy a brew upstairs in the aeroclub rooms. The club also has a number of young pilots training for their career which is based in the ground level rooms. This creates a lively and enthusiastic atmosphere and one gets the impression they are all mad keen on aviation... young and old alike. Weekend arrivals should note that the club has a bar which opens up for drinks, and often a sausage and salad to eat while taking in some fascinating history that is displayed on the walls of the club. Don't forget your landing fees, which are around \$7.

If just dropping by, a very good place to have lunch without the need for wheels is at the Hastings Golf Club, right next door and over the fence by the very old Club House - about 100 yards in an easterly direction. Non members are welcome and the nice food is reasonably priced. The Corn Exchange at Stortford Lodge, about 5 kms away is a good watering hole and restaurant, and of course has good bar nights especially on Friday nights and Sundays. For a taxi call Hastings Taxis (06) 878 5055.

If you are staying the night, why not stay two... a taxi into town (including taxi vans if there are a few of you) is about \$30, where you will find a nice motor lodge called Portmans. It is handy to town, just 2 blocks away. Phone (06) 878 8332 or check out www.portmans.co.nz. There is much to see and do in this stunning area

Contributed by Ruth Presland

and there are rental cars available from \$20 per day. If you are in Hastings on a Sunday, I highly recommend the Hastings farmers market. Foodies are in for a super treat, but be warned that it is easy to get carried away with all the delectable fresh fruit, warm breads, soft and yummy cheese, chocolate and of course wines from the area, plus much more.

Napier is a 15 minute drive from Hastings and if you have never been, take a drive through Napier's art deco main streets - it really is the most elegant town in our country. While you are there, don't miss the National Aquarium of NZ - it's fascinating. Around the Hawke's Bay region here are plenty of golf and vineyard options and one of my favourites, the beaches. A visit to Cape Kidnappers, travelling out on old tractors to see the Gannets is on my bucket list so make sure you add it to yours.

The weather is usually settled in this area, but sometimes it can cut up - refer back to the advice of the local pilots at the club. In my experience it can often blow through quite quickly and there is a good

low level route north bound via Te Pohue saddle, then follow the road to Rangitaiki airfield. There is some tiger country to cross but it is short lived and beyond Rangitaiki it is a clear run west or north.

No matter which way you are heading, Hawke's Bay East Coast Aeroclub is a good stop along the way. For actual weather and enquires contact them on (06) 879 8466.

Be safe and enjoy your flying. RP.



Clockwise from top left: 1. Overhead the field. 2. Hastings is prime horticulture country. 3&4. The airfield is a popular spot for fly-ins and other club events.

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