



Places to Go: Dunedin

Contributed by Ruth Presland

I WAS recently delighted to fly a cross country dual into Dunedin International. It was a stunning day and we went up to the Tower so my student could see how it all works. As I sat there admiring the great view of all the arrival routes, I realised that not that much had changed since my early days of training here and that this place is in fact a really great location at which to organise weekend fly-ins.

The arrival routes are straight forward, just check your AIP v4. Tune into the ATIS on 128.8, then switch to Dunedin 120.7 and listen for a short time to see what the play of the traffic is. There is a general training area out in the Western Hills and it is a good idea if you are arriving from that direction to take note of who is outside of the zone on 119.10 and who is on the Tower frequency. Inbound from the north, the city arrival is very beautiful and often open whereas the Northern Gap can be restricted with IFR arrivals.

Momona or Taieri

When landing at Momona you will be asked where you are going to on the field. If you are keen on seeing the Tower, call them first and let them know you are coming. You can park beside the Fire Station - a very friendly welcome awaits. Remember our country's Tower phone numbers are in the front of your AIP v4 and it only takes a moment to pick up the phone, probably something we all need to do a little more often. Something else to do more often is update your AIP v4 and check your maps are current too. I do mine during Air New Zealand flights, but anywhere that you have a spare 15 minutes will do.

If your destination is Taieri airfield, on approaching you will be asked to change to Taieri traffic 119.1. Taieri is like Omaka, an airfield within a control zone. Circuit height is 800 feet and ATC clearance is required above 1100 feet. Both places are busy with flight training traffic.

Taieri is the oldest airfield in New Zealand. The Otago Aero Club, where a friendly welcome also awaits, was formed in 1927, starting from land in Green Island and then moving to Taieri from 1929. It is well known for training pilots for the War effort and many people I have met either talk about hiding in the hedges and watching pilots train in Tiger Moths through to Harvards, or proudly show me early entries in their logbooks of training in

such admired machines.

In May 1962, Dunedin Airport at Momona became operational to handle N.A.C.'s jet-prop Viscount's & Friendships which were being phased into service to replace DC-3's. Commercial aviation at Taieri ceased at that point, with Taieri reverting back to being a Club airfield.

Today the Otago Aero Club (Phone 03 489 5168) is an active club with happy members and lots of fly-aways. They are very active in working bees and on social media. In my day back in the 80's when I learnt to fly there, it was also active, with keen young people happy to scrub a Cessna just to learn from the pilots and instructors who were always willing to share stories.

Things to do

One you've landed and said hello at the Aero Club, Mosgiel Taxis (ph. 03 489 3344) can take you into Mosgiel for lunch or into town for a night out.

If you are staying in Dunedin I recommend the Kingsgate Hotel, ph. 03 477 6784. It is a nice, gracious and clean hotel, with rooms around \$110. Another benefit is that it's right next to the Octagon, where you can find a huge variety of great places to wine and dine.

Dunedin city is a lovely old place, with much that is unchanged over the years. Places of interest to visit include the Albatross colony and the penguins. There is also an amazing museum called Otago Settlers Museum. Or visit the tropical forest and butterfly house within the (separate) Otago Museum. If you like trains then a trip on the Taieri Gorge Railway is a must (www.taieri.co.nz). A return ticket for an adult is around \$91 and just a few dollars for children - it's a great day out for the whole family. Another family treat is the NZ marine studies centre; quite unique.

Dunedin also has its very own Castle. For those that haven't been there, Larnach Castle is a rare treat in this country and very interesting with beautiful gardens. I highly recommend a visit. The outer suburbs such as Port Chalmers and Portabello are like stepping back into the old times and are full of interesting knick-knack shops and quaint little cafes.

Dunedin City and her surrounds are definitely worth a visit. So gather a group and start planning to make the trip today. The friendly folk at Otago Aero Club will be happy to make you a cuppa and sit down for a good chat. Fly safe, RP.



Tigers at Taieri in the days of RNZAF training there.



Taieri Airfield looking SE towards Mosgiel.



Harbour view from near Larnach Castle.



Royal Albatross at the Taiaoroa Head colony.



Historic buildings: Law Courts Hotel, ODT Building, and Railway Station in the distance.

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