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Phone Roger at HELISPECS on 027 498 2812 to discuss all your helicopter requirements or email: heli.specs@hotmail.com

Places to Go: Rangiora

Contributed by Ruth Presland

FOUNDED IN 1878 Rangiora has a proud history of 133 years servicing a prosperous farming district. The largest town in the Waimakariri District of North Canterbury, Rangiora is a vibrant place of 12,000 residents and is situated 25 minutes drive north of Christchurch. The outer regions are beautiful to fly over and in recent times I have been fortunate enough to learn more about the area from the ground. This region offers the tranquillity and quality of life that comes with a semi rural setting and a strong sense of community. So if you happen to end up here, you'll find yourself surrounded by warm and welcoming people.

Canterbury is a great place to fly to and stop a while. I have spent many a time stuck on the plains somewhere, usually in poor visibility, and have enjoyed my fair share of Canterbury Recreational Aviation Club pies. If you are planning a trip via Canterbury, then beware of the NE conditions that can bring low cloud, and prepare to be stuck for a day (or three). Local knowledge is always valuable so give a pilot a call before you take off. There is an interesting website for Rangiora weather <http://www.dwight.co.nz>.

Flying into Rangiora requires a good sense of direction and as many eyes outside as possible. The Sefton Chip Mill smoke should help with orientation as you can see it from quite a distance. Study the map before you take off and as you go, because there are frequency changes to make along the way. Take your latest VNC 1:125,000 and note that RT is within the recently established 120.20 CFZ. From the South it starts abeam Darfield and extends a few miles to the north of Rangiora town ship. Make regular calls using the reporting points as there is a lot of training traffic, low flying areas and many airfields inside this CFZ.

Keep looking for traffic, and I do mean keep an eagle eye out. Rangiora is bursting with recreational activities, private ops and flight training, so join overhead, being aware of potential NORDO traffic and that microlights may be circuiting at 500 ft AGL. The strip is in good order and is nice and wide, therefore great for practising cross winds! Once on the ground, there is BP Avgas available and an honesty box for the landing fee. The Canterbury Recreational Aircraft Club has nice club rooms, with internet and all the good

pilot food; biscuits, pies and hot drinks for just a few coins in the tin. They even have coffee whitener in the cupboard if there is no milk on hand. People are friendly and there are many private

hangars full of projects, large and small. There is lots of shelter behind hangars for tie down requirements and most likely you will bump into friendly folk who are happy to help. For maintenance, Grant Porter at 'The Landing Spot' (the South Island's Certified Rotax Service Centre) has a loan car for you to use when you take your plane to him. Contact Grant on 03 424 1612. Steve Noad has parts including Rotax. Phone him on 03 310 7290 or check out his website at www.aircraftlogistics.co.nz.

The clubrooms have a bunkroom in the back if you are stuck and like to stay close to the airport action. An option central to town is Kia Ora Motel (03 313 3449), with quiet units for just \$75 a night at time of print. If you would prefer closer to the field then try the Rangiora Holiday Park (03 313 5759) which is just over 1km from the airfield, but you don't need to walk. It is run by Raewyn and Allen Campbell (who love planes) and provide a free airfield shuttle on request.

There are many delightful cafes and restaurants in town, or visit the supermarket if you would rather cook at your accommodation. If you can stay longer then I recommend a day trip. Drive out to highway 1 and head north. It is a lovely drive with interesting land marks and it isn't far up to Cheviot for lunch. (Information and a decent map on <http://www.cheviotnz.com>). Turn off just after Domett onto the Hurunui Mouth road for a look and follow this around to Gore Bay. This is a lovely little village just a few kilometres from Cheviot but right on the beach. The road is partly gravel and winds through very old farm land with grand houses in well established landscapes, reminding me of where many of the settlers came from back in the olde country. Closer to the coast, a large array of gardens are revealed – a tribute to the micro climate that the coast provides. After a day out in this area, you are sure to be left planning another trip in the future for greater explorations.

If all of the above appeals, then store the numbers I have mentioned in your phone, plan yourself a safe trip, and look forward to enjoying the hospitality of the friendly folk at Rangiora.



Scenes from Rangiora, supplied by Doug Anderson and Peter Collins from Canterbury Recreational Aircraft Club.

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