



Aeromodelling: The ANZAC Jet Meeting

THE ANNUAL 'ANZAC Jet Meeting' was held at Tokoroa Airfield from 15-17th February.

From early beginnings with only a handful of modellers about 10 years ago, the event has now grown to be the largest jet event of the year for the NZ Jet Modellers Association.

We had 53 pilot registrations including 14 Aussies (and ex-pats) and approximately 80 turbine powered models on show. There was even a jet-powered carbon fibre skateboard.

Word of the jet meeting had been spread at Wings Over Wairarapa in Masterton two weeks prior to the event, through members handing out dozens of fliers while we were there. Lots of interest was generated from our static and flight displays at the WOW show. As well, the big Mig25 jet flew at the recent Auckland Airshow and all of this helped to ensure a great public turnout at Tokoroa.

As this is our premiere event of the year, a lot of volunteer time and effort was put in during the weeks prior to the event. We were very busy mowing and scrub-cutting, removing rubbish and generally tidying up the airfield apron and other areas.

Thanks go to the South Waikato District Council for sweeping the taxiway and runway as FOD (Foreign Object Damage) can be expensive if sucked into our high-revving turbines (195,000 rpm).

Some really keen modellers arrived on Thursday. However the airfield was unavailable until late afternoon due to a driver training program using the runway, so these early-bird pilots had to wait.

Friday

At 7:15am on Friday morning we volunteers were onsite putting up temporary safety fencing, strategically placing hay bales and



Colin Austen's winning Panther took 3.5 years to scratch build.



Strikemaster and Aeromacchi.



Stu Hellyer's new Vigilante was clocked at 384kph !!

attempting to construct gazebos using pigeon English instruction manuals. Generators were fired up to enable overseas pilots to charge batteries.

The official start of the event was with the standard pilots briefing and weather report etc. We had arranged for the airfield to be closed and had NOTAMS in place. CAA granted us a 1000' ceiling which we closely monitored, keeping a handheld VHF radio nearby in case of wayward student pilots.

Scrutineering was carried out throughout the day with models over 15kg being 'signed off' through a separate delegated authority using our Large Model inspection process and rules. A few minor issues with a couple of models were discovered, and models were then cleared to the flightline.

The first plane to get airborne was piloted by an Australian. They very much enjoyed our fantastic facilities and leisurely approach to things, making the most of all opportunities to get airborne. Roger Perrett (ex-pat) commented "You are spoiled here with the Tokoroa site. This is the best flying setup and I love coming back here".

We had a maximum of 4 planes in the air at once during peak times, but generally there were usually only 2 or 3 flying together. In the afternoon we had a full-size Harvard flyby - they were on their way to another event further down South.

Friday is traditionally the practice day of the event and it usually ends with a bit of carnage. This year the only damage to occur was a few undercarriage mishaps.

On Friday night the local ATC put on a BBQ at the field. This was great as it also provided for additional scrutineering time and last minute proving flights in calm conditions before the public



Pete Brown's F4 Phantom complete with chute.

arrived on Saturday. The ATC also manned the gates and BBQ (doing a roaring trade) during the weekend, also assisting with carpark marshalling duties and more.

Saturday

Saturday morning was foggy until 10am. A fellow modeller came over for a flying visit in his Jodel and landed before our NOTAM was active.

A steady stream of public visitors came throughout the day. There were lots of 'oohs' and 'ahhs' from the crowd as they witnessed skilful flying and great demonstrations put on by the pilots. Many people commented that they had no idea our jets actually flew - or else they thought that they were jet looking models but were prop driven.

We had a heli-only slot at lunchtime, and the public got to see four turbine helicopters in the air including the Mil24 (which weighs 24kg). The 3 metre wingspanned A10 Warthog also had a solo slot and was very impressive.

We had been lent a portable wireless PA system and this was put to good use with a running commentary to the public by Tony Withey on the microphone. He answered all the usual "How fast?, how high?, how much?" questions.

We also had a radar gun available and there were some surprising results. In general the smaller models were actually flying slower than expected and big models were travelling faster than they appeared. Stu Hellyer's new Vigilante was clocked at 384kph (although this was downwind after a dive!).

Other highlights for the public included the first annual 'Trans Tasman thrust-o-meter' challenge.

Each pilot had to nominate what output they thought their turbines would produce, and they were then measured against a rather sophisticated looking device (actually a glorified pair of bathroom scales). Thrust estimates (by male pilots) were generally shown to be on the optimistic side.

The sky rained foam for a few minutes after a foam electric powered EDF L39 Albatros folded its wings neatly in on themselves.

We had a 3 Panther formation organised, however the lead

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The boys and their toys: 53 pilots, including 14 from Australia, with 80 models.



plane took off and suffered a catastrophic tailplane failure. This model was 15 years old and sadly decided that today, enough was enough.

Peter Agnew is a regular visitor from Australia and this time he brought over a new Aermacchi M346 two metre jet for us to ogle at. Unfortunately at one point he was having too much fun with it and consequently ran out of fuel while airborne, requiring an out-landing in a paddock. The undercarriage suffered and it was not able to fly anymore during the weekend. We did have a recovery vehicle with trailer stationed close by. This got well used over the weekend and saved many pilots from a long embarrassing walk after the occasional extended landing or engine-out.

Conditions were so favourable on Saturday that there were still people flying at 7pm when they were supposed to be at the local RSA for the scheduled pilots dinner.

Overnight hangar facilities were once again provided by Henk Meerkerk. With several large 3 metre models to accommodate this year, there was a bit of a juggling act trying to fit everything in. Of course there were some late antics amongst the pilots but we can't put them into print.

Sunday

On Sunday morning we had a quick (less than an hour long) AGM in the clubrooms and then it was back into flying.

Jason Starkey (Aus) performed his famous 'space shuttle' takeoffs. This involves getting airborne, wheels up, flying level at 5 feet to build up speed then pulling up 90 degrees and disappearing rapidly.



The Jamiesons from Australia with Kermit.



Rene Redmond and his CompARF Flash.



Steve Blackman's 15 year old Panther. Unfortunately it was destroyed minutes later.

from out of town could leave soon afterwards due to the amount of return travel that they had to do. Some had come from Christchurch and as far away as Perth.

The overall best scale jet award was won by Colin Austen with his scratch built 24% (2.7m long) Panther. The project took Colin 3.5 years and was built from scaled up Nic Zirolli plans. It is powered by a Behotec (German) turbine that produces 18kgs thrust and the model itself weighs 23kg. It therefore flies in a very scale like manner i.e. not grossly overpowered. Colin's attention to detail is outstanding and the effort he has put into this project made him the well-deserved winner.

Many thanks go to the sponsors who donated goodies for prizes: www.intairco.net, www.jetcentre.co.nz and www.hobbycity.co.nz

After most people departed, there were glorious late afternoon calm flying conditions. The gentle breeze was blowing straight down the strip so an ideal time for me to have my one and only flight for the whole weekend.

The airfield cleanup operation began and it was very pleasing that a few others stayed to assist. Many hands make light work as the saying goes.

In appreciation

Now to the Thankyou list:

South Waikato Council for organising a luxury onsite portable toilet facility.

Tokoroa ATC for looking after the BBQ and gates.

Dave Hodges, Pete McGregor & Grant Ridley spent many hours tidying the grounds.



Chris Pickering and his Viperjet.



Mibo A-10 Warthog with a 3 metre wingspan!



This LongRanger was one of several helicopters at Tokoroa including an Mi24 weighing 24kg.

Chris Pickering organised the fuel for the overseas visitors, and Paul Buckrell printed all the name tags etc.

Steve Engle (myself) for being Flightline Director and photographer

Brian Borland (Secretary) and Stu Hellyer (President) put countless hours into preparation for the weekend.

There were a lot of others who helped out throughout the event - Brendon Smith spent many hours scrutineering models and others helped out with Flightline marshalling duties etc. A big thanks to you all.

Lastly - the arrangement between our controlling body (Model Flying NZ) and Air New Zealand meant that the overseas guys had pre-approval for their models transport. They were welcomed by the check-in staff and had no hassles at all. Excellent service thanks.

Have a look at our website www.nzjma.com for details of our next meeting and feel free to come along for a look.

Steve Engle



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