



contributed by Ruth Presland

Places to Go: Ashburton

ASHBURTON is a place I have enjoyed since I was a child because it has a fantastic airstrip, a friendly aero club, no landing fees and most importantly, great shopping.

Flying there is relatively easy, even without a GPS. The trick if you are approaching from inland is to spot the several tributaries of the Ashburton river. Arrival overhead is standard but a good number of aircraft fly out of NZAS so you will most likely hear which runway is in use before you get there. If you have never been to the bi-annual SAA (Sports Aircraft Association) fly in every second February then put the 2015 date on your calendar now! It is well worth it and the hospitality is fantastic - a good excuse to visit mid Canterbury.

There is ample parking for your aircraft and town is only a short drive away. The taxi will pick you up (03 308 2288) and doesn't cost much. Before you go though, it is well worth checking out the aviation museum. Ashburton Aviation Museum is home to Southern DC3's Heritage Airliner, ZK-AMY, known affectionately as Amy. Amy is crewed by industry pilots and is available for charter by arrangement. This grand old airliner is entrusted to the museum in perpetuity and earns her keep by providing visitors with a taste of the 'Golden Years of Air Travel'. www.southerndc3.co.nz. There are many other aircraft to see here, including a Harrier Jump Jet, older piston engine machines and historical gliders.

You'll find many accommodation options once you arrive in town. Try and check in at Taylors Motel which is very good so you will have to book in advance. Alternately the Hotel Ashburton is a lovely spot with nice rooms and a great restaurant. Many pilots may remember this venue from the Instructor Seminars which always provide entertainment and good learning. If you are out and about and looking for fast delicious food there is a Thai restaurant in town. I can also recommend Robbie's Bar and Restaurant which has a good atmosphere and good old fashioned pub meals.

One thing I really like about Ashburton is the shops. I've shopped in Ashburton for years - my favourite place is the mall. It is at the southern end of town and has a great clothing shop with jeans that actually



NZAS Ashburton Airfield.



Ashburton Aviation Museum is well worth a visit.



Aoraki Balloon Safaris is based at Methven.



Salmon abound in local Canterbury Rivers.



The view from Mt. Hutt.

fit us Kiwi girls; you may pay a little more but they wear for years and are well worth it. Venture further into the mall (which in typical Kiwi style leads from one street out to another), and you will find my favourite café half way in on the left. Picture old fashioned pastries filled with cream and dusted with castor sugar that Granny used to serve... or dainty tasty savouries and you'll know what I mean when I say I can't walk past this shop.

Unique Jewellery is a small shop just down from the mall which is owned by Jeweller Adrian Waddell. He manufactures incredible designs and is happy to create something different for that special occasion.

Being a farming town I have always found Ashburton to be reasonably priced and full of friendly people. Brent and Kelly Duncan are an example of this, running Anglers Retreat Adventures. Quinntat Salmon enter the local Canterbury Rivers, after spending three years at sea, some weighing over 15lb. Visiting Ashburton is an opportunity to experience the exhilaration of catching these highly sort after sports fish.

Brent has spent most of his life fishing these distinguished braided rivers, and enjoys passing on his knowledge and expertise to other keen fishermen and women. He will also provide a pick up service if you are staying in town.

Half day & whole day fishing trips are catered to all levels of expertise. Fishing rods, gear and waders are provided along with access provided by jet boat to some of the harder to reach spots. Email: fishybrent@hotmail.co.nz

If you haven't been to Methven I would highly recommend a drive to there while in the district. It is a spectacular trip and the township itself is really nice. Do not go past the blue cod at the Blue Pub. If you are a ski buff then winter is when to go. Hire your skis from Jace at Jace's Ski Hutt as he has been in the industry as long as I have been flying. Lastly if you haven't tried the hot air balloon experience then stop making excuses and go for it! Aoraki Balloon Safaris is based at Methven and flights start from \$340.

Check out www.midcanterburynz.com for more information on this wonderful area.