

# THE SOARING SCENE #00

## Seasonal Weather

The year is rapidly running out of days and, as is the norm for this time of year, we might as well pack away our toys until the windy season is over. There is no question it has been windy just as it was last year when November had a record wind run average of 347.2 kilometres - that's over 14 kmh average, all day, every day. The figures for this November have just been released and wind run average was just 307.1 km or 12.8 kmh. For those that are interested this information came from the Marlborough Research Centre's website: <<http://www.mrc.org.nz/>> Marlborough Research Centre | science research in farming, winegrowing, horticulture and forestry. Look at "Press Releases" for monthly weather summaries.

Also on the weather front is Ken McMillan's news about a private weather station which is close enough to Ara to show fairly accurate wind velocities on the BMAC strip. Check out: <<http://www.weatherlink.com/user/hdstuart>> Davis | WeatherLink - My Weather Page Click on "Summary" for current figures - look at the current and average wind speeds to get a reasonable idea of conditions. My initial thoughts are that anything above 15 kmh in a NW wind is starting to get a little uncomfortable due to the turbulence, depending of course on the model and your skill level. I don't know about winds from the Easterly quarter yet but would expect it to be okay up to maybe 20 kmh as the air is normally a bit smoother from that direction. More than that and I'll be saving the petrol (and time).

## NDC.

NDC is now over for the year with the final round of F3K and some Vintage classes pretty much impossible to fly due to weekend winds. Despite that we haven't had a bad year with reasonably regular competition being flown by about half a dozen participants and it will be interesting to see where we have all placed once Model Flying NZ publishes the final results.

Next year I intend to run some kind of accumulating table so that we have a local competition running throughout the year. I'm not sure just how that will work yet but I guess your score for any given event will be a percentage of the maximum possible total time for that event and I'll just keep adding up the scores.

On the subject of next year, the NDC calendar is now out on MFNZ's website:

<<http://www.modelflyingnz.org/Docs/NDC/2016NDCCalendar.pdf>>. As you can see for those into soaring, it is just F3K and ALES Radian in January while there are seven Vintage events so there must be something for Alan Baker there. I would really like to see a few more competitors in 2016 so lean on some of your mates that have a Radian or something similar to come and join us. For those that don't have a suitable model, we can always use time keepers and you will be surprised how much you can learn doing that job.

### Slope Soaring.

Slope soaring didn't really get off to a flying start this Summer season being beset by low numbers, mixed weather and limited venues. Nonetheless we have a few regulars who turn out on Wednesday's and head to Meadowbank to see what the wind is like. We have had most everything from no wind to howling gales, shirt sleeve evenings to freezing cold - you need determination to be a slope fan! A big problem is the lack of a viable site when the nor'westerly is blowing and until the Marlborough District Council sort out an agreement we will probably just have to put up with that. I had an encouraging meeting with Parks and Reserves staff a couple of weeks ago and we have general agreement over the use of the site above the Weld Street water tank, but there are further details to be sorted out, so until the bureaucratic process is complete we will have to limit our activities to Meadowbank (or another private site if anyone knows of one). If you haven't tried slope soaring come and give it a go - we meet at the Wither Hills walkway carpark off Taylor Pass Rd at 5.30 pm each Wednesday. Most anything can soar if the wind is suitable, with a Phoenix, a Radian or even a Bixler being okay for a first try. The purists may frown but sometimes being able to switch on "electric lift" can be quite handy.

This is what you can do in a gentle breeze with the right model and it shows the aerobatic capabilities of a DLG <[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZNmEUxU6A\\_I](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZNmEUxU6A_I)> □ F3K Thowt at the mountains - YouTube.

Still slope soaring but with a completely different kind of model. These look great but they seem very expensive at 400 Euros. <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IlkYY1MHInM>> Hacker FlyAlps 2015 - RCGroups - YouTube

### Aerotow.

The next aerotow event is scheduled for the 30th and 31st of January to be held at Quaildale farm. If you haven't been there it is a great site with wide open spaces and plenty of flat land. I have no idea of entries yet but I'm sure Peter Deacon will keep us posted as the date gets nearer. We have had good turnouts for the past aerotow events that Peter has organised, with some very big models



in attendance, both gliders and tugs. Photo 1 shows some of the entries from January this year.

If you haven't tried aerotow and want to have a go drop me a line - it's really a lot easier than you expect and we have tow planes in the area now that can handle most everything. The smallest thing I've towed with my electric Fun Cub is a standard DLG and Peter's big IMAC model could readily tow the 5 or 6 metre beasts that some people fly. Ken has a bigger electric Cub and Carl has a powerful Ugly Stick so I think we can tow whatever you own. You don't need a tow release, we just fit a velcro tab under the nose of the glider and a quick loop is all that is required to disconnect. This system has been successfully used locally on gliders over 3 metres wingspan, so if you want to have a go get in touch - it doesn't have to be at an aerotow event.

### Discus Launch Gliders

Now that Allan Knox has departed we have just four guys who fly DLGs and we would really like to see more. I know I'm biased, but nothing is more fun to fly (or more frustrating) and launching is not nearly as physical as it looks





- us 70 year olds can do it so you should be able to as well. The big stumbling block is the cost, as you can expect even a well flown second hand model to set you back several hundred dollars. Let me assure you that if you get bitten by this particular bug you will find the money. We four have all upgraded recently so it may be possible to talk one of us into parting with a model if we thought it was going to someone who would fly it locally. I would be prepared to let a competent Mode 1 flyer handle the sticks to see what a DLG is like to fly and I think Peter Deacon could be similarly cajoled by a Mode 2 flyer (although I haven't asked him!).

I've been asked in the past if there are any cheap DLGs on the market and I've come to the conclusion that the answer is probably "no." It does depend a bit on what you consider cheap of course. There are smaller alternatives. I did have a scratch built 1 metre DLG and I currently have a Libelle <<http://dream-flight.com/products/libelle-dlg>> Libelle DLG but neither compares in any way to the real thing. In fact, having read a lot about how great the Libelle was before I bought it I was quite disappointed in it's performance, particularly the launch. On the plus side it's a great little slope soarer. The Elf <<http://www.hyperflight>.

co.uk/products.asp?code=ELF&name=elf-mini-dlg>Elf Mini DLG - RC Gliders - DLG F3K Hand Launch has a fine reputation and Hyperflight are a great outfit to deal with if you are happy to start with a smaller model, otherwise you have to bite the bullet and be prepared to shell out at least \$500 for a an entry level model or a reasonable second hand one. If you want state of the art there is little change from a grand - it's a hard world!

This is an interesting short video showing a DLG from almost every imaginable angle using a camera on the model, on the ground, on a quadcopter and even on the pilot. Some serious editing and a lot of flying was required to put this together: <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vLdGwtgYOtM>> F3K from a different perspective - RCExplorer.se - YouTube.

Photo 2: Here they are, the four horsemen, the band of brothers, the old farts club - call us whatever you like, we don't care, we're having fun flying DLG!

### Electric Gliders

It's my impression that there are actually quite a lot of these around but not many are being flown competitively. That's okay, you fly what you want and in



whatever way you want, but unless there is an aim to the flight you are missing out on half the fun of this type of model. There is absolutely no reason to be shy of the kind of competition we are flying in the NDC ALES events. This type of event means that you launch when you are ready and do your own thing on the flight. What is different is that there are limits on the launch altitude and a target time to be achieved. Add to that an opportunity to score more points via a very basic spot landing (inside a 15 metre circle) and I guarantee you will find yourself trying to do better on your next flight. There is no intense rivalry, rather you will find the other guys encouraging you and giving tips on how to squeeze a bit more time out of each flight.

If you have watched us fly one of these events you may have found the larger models to be a bit intimidating but, as is normally the case, it's not how good your tools are that counts, it's how well you can use them. Certainly there are a number of big composite models being flown by club members but this year one round was won by Peter Graham with his Radian and I won a round with my scratch built Guppy so you don't need a big fancy model to be competitive.

My Guppy has given me a great deal of pleasure over the four years since I built it and I stopped counting the flights when I got to 600, about two years ago, so it's been a great model. I have plans for both the Guppy 1 and Guppy 2, plus a canopy mould should anyone fancy a simple build. The build log on RC Groups has all that you need: <http://www.rcgroups.com/forums/showthread.php?t=539755> GUPPY electric sailplane Building & flying PART 1 - RC Groups. I would think that I built mine for less than \$100 including motor, esc and servos so it's not much to pay for four years of entertainment, flat field or slope.

### Vintage

This is not purely soaring but most of the events are pretty closely allied, inasmuch that many of the competitions involve a climb and glide, and we need to give our local exponent, Alan Baker, all the encouragement we can. Alan builds some amazing models and it would be really good to see a few more old timers appear - that's the models not the pilots. This is probably not a branch of the hobby that is going to appeal to everyone, especially if you are not interested in traditional style building (balsa bashing), but I do hear many people talking about the good old days and that's exactly where these models come from.

Photo 3: Here is Alan launching a small rubber powered model on it's way to an impressive flight of well over a minute at Ara. Don't get the idea that this model

is typical. Alan has a variety of free flight and r/c models powered by glow plug, diesel and electric motors as well as hand launch and catapult launched gliders. If you are at all interested in something within the vintage field, he's the man to talk to.

### Other Stuff

One of the things the MDC specified for use of the Wither Hills was "NO DRONES". I'm not sure why people get so bug eyed about quadcopters, they are just powered models after all and they are going to become more and more common as the commercial operations ramp up. I'll be surprised if this particular operation ever comes to fruition, at least in my lifetime, but Amazon seem determined to keep the idea of drone parcel deliveries in the public eye. Here is one of their recent advertisements for what the future holds: <[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MXo\\_d6tNWuY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MXo_d6tNWuY)> Amazon Prime Air - YouTube. So that's what happened to Jeremy Clarkson!

Amazon appear to be serious but I much preferred this guy's take on the issue: <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jHrngvEok9M>> Amazon Rockets - 5 Minute Shipping - YouTube.

Scale gliders are becoming a big thing with the advent of aerotowing and there are some beautiful (and huge) models being flown in various parts of the world, particularly in Europe. Towing is not the only way to get them in the air though - you can just chuck them off a cliff: <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Qh6inGyav8>> Brittany slope soaring 2014 Part 9 (Arcus and ASK 21) - YouTube. The big Arcus at the 4 minute mark epitomises graceful flight. One of the great things about slope soaring is that you get to see your glider flying close up and often at eye level, so expect to see more of this kind of shot in future newsletters.

There is always room for some full size soaring on my computer and these shots are exceptional, or they would have been if the photographer hadn't been apparently suffering from St Vitus Dance or some similar syndrome. Still worth a look: <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CYZiDr0wPOc>> Glider Looping Near Mountain - YouTube. In a reversal of the usual line, If you didn't know better you might think this was a model.

I have previously recommended that the <<http://www.rcsoaringdigest.com/>> RC Soaring Digest magazine is well worth a look. This is a monthly e-magazine which always contains top class articles and photos sent in by contributors. The December issue has just been posted on the website to download or read on site. There are 32 years of back issues available in the RCSD archives, all free!



I suggest you become a member by clicking on this link <<https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/RCSoaringDigest/info>>RCSoaringDigest - Yahoo Groups and then the “join group” button. That way you can be notified when a new issue is posted - and have a look at their archive, it’s a mine of information.

I’ll try to get these newsletters out from time to time and I’m happy to include any contributions you may have - some photos would be good. I hope to have the newsletter on the BMAC website in the not too distant future - in the meantime pass it on to anyone you think may be interested and if you don’t want to receive it let me know and I’ll knock you off the list.

There is not much to add except to wish you all a Merry Christmas. I hope to see you at an NDC event in the coming year and on the slope while daylight saving continues.

One of our World Champion DLG team members, Kevin (Rowdy) Botherway always ends his communiques with a familiar salutation - “SOARING ROCKS”. I agree with Rowdy.

— Rex