



Grant Finlay

Neroli Henwood reports from Raglan

Not your ordinary Black Sands



Grant Finlay

GlaStar, RV, Jabirus — you name it, it's at Raglan for Black Sands.



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Wayne Butt becomes airborne in his CriCri with the help of determined visage.



Bill Henwood

Leave a pair of Corby Starlets together in a dark hangar and what do you expect?



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ONCE AGAIN THE Black Sands fly-in at Raglan on 12–13 November was a hit with the lucky ones who flew and drove in, thanks to the Waikato Chapter and in particular Bruce Cooke.

This was the event's sixth year, and its popularity keeps growing. The weekend always seems so well orchestrated and the atmosphere (for the visitors anyway) seems so relaxed. Tides weren't right for the usual beach landing, but there's always next year ...

The kitchen team maintained its usual high standard, with excellent lunches on both days. Thanks must also go to the Raglan Kopua Motor Camp for providing excellent facilities and service, making the venue very hard to beat.

The weather gods were also managed fairly well and we were blessed with breezy but flyable weather for the most part. All proceeds from this year are going to the Waikato Air Ambulance.

The Raglan community turned out in large numbers throughout the weekend and I was impressed by the pilots who took the time to show people their aircraft and talk to them about flying. Many were seen hoisting small children up into the cockpit for a closer look. Lots of smiles on little faces.

I do think it is important that we make this connection, especially as the pressure increases to close small airfields. The locals appreciate being involved and are more likely to support the retention of these facilities if we make the effort.

I am amazed at the huge variety of aircraft flying today. It has become difficult to identify them all and I can remember a time when there were the usual light GA aeroplanes and a small number of homebuilts. Now there is something for everyone, ranging from modestly priced, basically equipped machines to fast and sleek aeroplanes



Bill Henwood

Noel Bailey (standing) is about to find that Warren Butler (right) has the winning poker hand after the strip flying.

with all the bells and whistles.

It is also interesting that pilots' personalities are often reflected in their choice of aeroplane.

Keeping up with all the arrivals and departures over the weekend was difficult, but the register showed 77 arrivals over the three days.

The ever-popular Corby Starlets were stars of the show for me. The well-known family of ZK-TNT and ZK-TOY now have matching paint jobs and look like a pigeon pair. To top it off, David Wilkinson had his radio controlled Starlet (yes, painted to match), complete with the marks ZK-TOT.

Both (full-size) Starlets are shared happily between four men who are obviously such great friends. To watch Don and David Wilkinson, Dave Campbell-Morrison and Alfred Hirzel work as a team is always a pleasure. They capture the true spirit of grassroots flying and the homebuilder ethos.

The RV series probably made up the biggest type group, a lovely sight with their sleek lines and colourful paint schemes. I can see why they have such a large following all over the world. Rex and Ruth Newman from Omaka were

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Bill Henwood

Above: View from our kitchen window on Sunday morning. What a great sight to wake up to!

Right: Early Sunday morning ... awaiting some action.



Bruce Cooke



Grant Finlay

Pilots of retractable-undercarriage aircraft are said to belong to two groups — those who have landed with the gear up and those who haven't yet. A third, very small, subset comprises those whose undercarriage has retracted prematurely on takeoff. This mishap attracted official attention and caused a temporary halt to proceedings at Raglan.

back again this year and took the prize for the furthest travelled in their beautiful RV-7A ZK-REX.

Noel Bailey organised the popular Poker Run again. This year we had a choice of local airfields including Te Kowhai, Matamata, Hinuera, Te Awamutu, Otorohanga, Wharepapa South and Collins Road. Each airfield had a stack of playing cards sealed in peek-proof envelopes and it was a matter of each pilot visiting a choice of five airfields over the weekend to collect their cards and be seated with their hand at the poker table. Warren Butler from Pukekohe East (Jabiru ZK-CEN) produced an impressive winning hand and took home the box of chocolates.

Bruce Cooke had very much hoped to have his own-design and -build Avian Adventurer ZK-CKE at Raglan, as it has performed very well through flight testing and he is itching to get out and about in it. However, there was a hitch with some paperwork and so it remained tucked up in its hangar at Te Kowhai. This just gave some a good reason to head over the hills to Te Kowhai for a viewing.

The swirling, changeable winds made for some interesting landings over the weekend. At any one time the wind-



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Flying at Raglan is more public than at most airfields. Bill Henwood and one of his pupils cross the fence in Super Cub ZK-BQV.

socks at either end of the field often showed different wind directions and strengths, with a good bit of crosswind adding to the mix.

On Saturday the pilot of a Zephyr arrived with a heavy landing, damaging one main gear leg and the nose wheel and causing the aeroplane to slide alarmingly towards a row of parked aircraft. We all watched with hearts in mouths until it came to a stop in front of a Cherokee with both occupants uninjured, a huge relief. With the help of a few friends the Zephyr was pushed to the side of the field, dismantled and taken away by trailer the following afternoon.

But the action wasn't over there and later in the day a Mooney had its retractable gear malfunction on the takeoff roll, coming to rest on its belly. There appeared to be limited damage to the fuselage, but the propeller was badly damaged as the engine was under full power for takeoff. The pilot and two passengers emerged unharmed but somewhat surprised by what had happened.

The runway was cordoned off by the fire crew and the Mooney was later released by the CAA to be moved to the side of the field. A large group of strong people bodily lifted the aeroplane and the gear was lowered, locking down to the relief of all. It was a forlorn sight pushed to the side of the field.

As is the usual tradition on Saturday night, most people wandered into town over the footbridge for the evening meal

and a bit of a get-together. I enjoy this chance to get to know people a bit better. There are always faces I see at various fly-ins but don't always get a chance to meet properly. We had a tasty burger at the Gourmet Burger Bar followed by a few drinks at the Raglan Hotel.

We woke on Sunday morning to a beautiful clear sky. The view from the motel window was straight down the airfield, with all the overnighting aircraft standing ready for another day. After lunch on Sunday, with the rain clouds gathering along the western hills, we all headed for home, looking forward to the next Black Sands. ✈️

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