

OMARAMA GLIDING CLUB NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2015



TO "Chiefie"

EION COUTTS

**Who celebrated his
80th birthday at
Omarama in February**



GREAT STUFF COUTSIE – MANY HAPPY RETURNS!

**THANKS HEAPS CHIEFIE FOR YOUR HUGE AND AMAZING CONTRIBUTION TO
OUR CLUB**



Gliding friends gathered at Omarama on Friday the 6th February to celebrate “Chiefie’s” 80th birthday with a bash organised and prepared by Kim and Roger Read starting with sherries and ales before being seated for the delightful 3 course meal prepared by Kim.

Stories were told, adventures recounted and praise and thanks passed on to Eion for his long association and huge contribution to the Wigram Aviation Sports Club (renamed the Omarama Gliding Club) and other clubs and pilots he has helped. The party concluded with toasting the birthday lad with port accompanied with a selection of cheeses.

Sunday he was away in his trusty Cobra for a 4 hour soaring flight

- smiling like a Cheshire Cat on his return.



So many of our newer members will not know much about ‘Chiefie’ (also known as ‘Coutsie’) who gained his nick-name from the many years he was the Chief Flying Instructor of the Wigram Aviation Sports Club. In addition ‘Coutsie’ was also seen frequently towing in the club tow plane Piper Cub ZK-BTF. Chiefie was to be seen on the RNZAF Wigram airfield every weekend, and at Omarama during the annual Christmas camp and did much else besides as he kept the “show on the road” on and off the field.



A real character - Coutsie was always well ahead of his time in the art of 'recycling'. Spare parts and required materials were sourced from sheds and garages, dumps and acquired from wherever (no questions asked!) over many years to create something new or for maintaining the old stuff. Eion was well-known for his ability to "fix" anything mechanical - tractors & cars were kept going forever and 'Coutsie manufactured winches' were to be seen on a variety of airfields over the years. (His acquisitions gathered over many years find a home in his 'open to the street view' section – a vista not enjoyed to the same extent by the neighbours we suspect! He is happy surrounded by "useful of course" stuff and interesting relics to use in yet another future project). *Jokes abounded but Chiefie "saved the day" on many occasions and ribbing was always taken in good humour*

with his good natured chuckle.

Those who attended the OGC 50th Anniversary celebration would have seen photos of Chiefie's nasty 'whoopsie' at Wigram and the injuries he sustained is the reason you will never see him move faster than his current pace (so don't ask him to put out the fire!) but that was so long ago now it has passed into the folklores of club history and I wasn't around then to know exactly what happened that day – perhaps just as well!

Many gliding pilots were taught their flying and soaring skills by Chiefie whose ongoing love of aviation, enthusiasm & legacy to gliding will be enduring for many years to come. **Eion Coutts** is one of those 'gifts to gliding' for which we will be ever grateful!

GUESS WHAT?



Photo of Graham taken at the YSDC

Most of you will know this chap! Graham Erikson has been 'coerced?' into taking on the role of National Operations Officer (NOO) for the South Island! We feel this is a great tribute and truly recognises the depth of expertise and experience Graham will bring to this role. Graham is a great listener, awesome Pilot, Instructor and mentor and his input and opinions are well considered. Thanks Graham for taking on this task – we think you will be terrific!

GOOD TO SEE OUR MEMBERSHIP CONTINUES TO GROW

NEW MEMBERS - A BIG WELCOME to:

Alex McCaw, Andrew Perley, Jonathon Wardman, Tobias Read,
Hiroko Suzuki, Melissa Jenkins, Brian Sharpe, Joel Garris



ACCIDENT WE NEED TO LEARN FROM

**ENSURE THE ITEMS YOU WANT TO TAKE DURING
FLIGHT ARE SAFELY AND SECURELY STORED!**

The Auckland Gliding Club lost their Discus CS recently when items stored behind the pilot fell back and jammed the controls. Fortunately the Pilot bailed out safely but hard to contemplate the outcome if this had occurred at a lower level. Because of the serious nature of the accident CAA is involved and a directive has been issued "that incorrect installation of the storage tray can result in an undetected gap between the tray and the aft bulkhead through which stowed equipment can enter the flight control system". It appears the primary problem was a feature of the aircraft which allowed it to be rigged in such a way that the parcel shelf was insecure without being noticeable to the pilot. In time the CAA investigation results and recommendations will be published but all pilots need to take this on board as it is a proven potential hazard and important to ensure equipment they pack in the glider is secured in such a way that potential interference with the aircraft operating systems is not possible.

Request: *Please close water tanks unless ventilating them in a controlled manner.
(Reasons: saves the springs and prevents fauna from entering)*



FROM THE EXECUTIVE

The Executive will be meeting at Omarama on Saturday 28th March. If you have any matters you would like brought up at this meeting please let Bruce Graham know (bruceandstell@xtra.co.nz).

A decision will be made regarding the positioning one of the single seaters at Springfield over winter. OGC Club members are welcome to make the most of the opportunity to fly an OGC glider in Canterbury. On-field accommodation is available.

Over winter your Executive will be working on fine tuning the new gliders.



**HOPE YOU GET SOME GOOD WINTER
SOARING**

YVONNE LOADER