

RAANZ Ops report 2016

My personal circumstances have had quite a change this year as the time had come to consider retirement. So at the end of January I called it quits after 47 years in Air Traffic Control. I decided I needed a new adventure after having given the Manawatu a real seeing too and moved to the Bay of Plenty.

On reflection I have had a wonderful career and have experienced the enormous changes with aviation and associated technology. It is hard to imagine that the majority of general traffic when I started out operated in a NORDO (no radio) environment. Just about all aerodromes either had Flight Service or Air Traffic Control present. The controlled aerodromes had Signal squares that had such things as Landing T's, to indicate runway in use and, circuit direction arrows. A flag was raised to indicate ATC was on watch. The controller was a like a one armed bandit controlling traffic with a radio, Signal lamp or a Very pistol that fired red/green flares. However Pilots had to be very skilled in ensuring situational awareness and looking out the window. There were also no charges for General Aviation operators.

I have had a PPL since 1970 and I ventured into the microlight world in early 1980 with a very scary first flight in a Kasperwing, then onto Quicksilvers, Pterodactyls, Mirages and Scouts etc. and as the years passed by onto some pretty amazing GA beating machines.

Over this long period there have been some drastic changes when the Ministry of Transport/CAA relinquished control of ATC to the new State owned Enterprise of Airways. They introduced Secondary radar and the advent of GA charges. This saw the move of a number of flying establishments out of a controlled environment. NZ became a haven for overseas pilots coming to our shores in droves. This created a new environment for us to operate in with foreign speaking pilots

This pre-amble is all about embracing change. It is a fact of life and to be not accepting of such will leave you behind and ill prepared for your flying adventures. Aviation overall has become very risk adverse and the 'she'll be right' attitude is no longer accepted. Unfortunately common sense is also not an excuse any more, as everyone's sense of common can be different. Our industry has favoured simplicity and RAANZ would like to keep it as less regulated as possible. However RAANZ has had the challenges of dealing with the growth of LSA equivalent Microlights and the changing world of the regulators. CAA have had a number of staff changes that have had to be educated into the world of Microlights after the sad retirement of our friendly stalwart Rex Kenny. RAANZ has to become more credible when teaching our budding pilots as the aircraft we fly are now quite sophisticated and are akin to the GA world. To enhance these required skills RAANZ is developing an Instructors Technique course which will be compulsory for all budding instructors.

Airways are continually reviewing the way ATC is managed and the pending introduction of ADS-B and compulsory mode S transponders coupled to an appropriate GPS by 2021, will create other challenges for us all, not to mention the cost. I understand by that time the manufacturers should have some reasonably affordable products available. RAANZ has been busy over the past year with input to the numerous airspace changes, especially around the Waikato, Bay of Plenty and the Manawatu. Some of the control zone sizes have been reduced in size, which is great for our operations. The introduction of more CFZ's is

also welcomed to reduce the confusion of what frequency one should be on and thus make it safer for flying around in busy class G airspace.

As always it has been reiterated before but is always worth mentioning again that in a voluntary organisation like ours it is often not really understood the effort that our behind the scenes executive, instructors and ATOs put into making the success micro-lighting is today. Well done all.

Fly safe.

Bill Penman