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## ***Flight Training at Paraparaumu (1958 – Present) – A Brief History***

***Researched by Keith Mackersy***

Pilot training at Kapiti Coast Airport (previously known as Paraparaumu Aerodrome) has a rich history extending from 1958 to the present time. Several flight training organisations have operated from Paraparaumu at various times since 1958, with most of them located in buildings located along Kapiti Road. During the 1970's, 80's and 90's Paraparaumu was the second busiest airport in New Zealand, largely due to flight training, skydiving and gliding club activities.

The Kapiti Districts Aero Club has the longest history, and it is now the only flight training organisation still operating at the airport.

The following summary outlines the organisations that have offered flight training since 1958.



***Wellington Districts Aero Club (1958-1983)*** – was formally registered in December 1929. It first moved to Paraparaumu in mid-1958 after being banished from Rongotai during the last six months of the redevelopment of Wellington Airport. Although it subsequently returned to Rongotai, the Wellington Districts Aero Club continued a branch at Paraparaumu from the late 1960s.

The Wellington Aero Club is still very active and operates from its club rooms and hangar at Wellington Airport.



***Central Flying School Ltd (1964-1965)*** - was formed in about 1964 when the Auckland Flying School established a new Central Flying School at Paraparaumu, set up by Jim Bergman.



***The Sinclair Flying School Ltd (1964-1968)*** - Bob Sinclair established this school in 1964 and it was located near the *Paraparaumu Flying School* until about 1968.

*Photo: AustAirData Collection*



***NZ Aerosales Flying School (1965-1966)*** was largely an organisation that sold aeroplanes, but it expanded its operations into flight training at Paraparaumu under the name *NZ Aerosales Flying School Ltd*. The school was set up by Paul Legge in 1965, and one of its instructors, Harry Jenkins, went on to start the *Paraparaumu Flying School* in 1966 when *NZ Aerosales Ltd* was sold.

*Photo: Peter Lewis*



**Paraparaumu Flying School (1966-1970)** - as noted above, *Paraparaumu Flying School* was established by Harry Jenkins in 1966.

*Photo: Allan Wooller*



**Associated Aviation (1975-1981)** - was started by Harry Jenkins in 1975 and offered flight training and limited charter work from Paraparaumu. Harry expanded his involvement in aviation at Paraparaumu, establishing Associated Air Charter, which offered air taxi flights to Auckland from 1981, and scheduled flights to Auckland, Nelson, Blenheim and Christchurch in 1982/83.

*Photo: Tony Arbon*



**Gold Coast Air Ltd (1975-1992)** - provided training and charter services from Paraparaumu from about 1990. In 1992, Richard Bull, Brian Davison, Richard Joel and Richard Baldwin formed **WELAIR Ltd** when they took over Paraparaumu based *Gold Coast Air Ltd*.

*Photo: D Noble*



**Kapiti Districts Aero Club (1983-Present)** - In 1983, as part of a restructure, the Wellington Districts Aero Club offered to sell the Paraparaumu branch to Kapiti-based members who took up the opportunity and formed the Kapiti Districts Aero Club.

The Aero Club was originally located in the old NAC terminal building and aging hangar alongside Kapiti Road. Given the age and state of the old hangar, it was decided to build a new one which was built in 1985. When the then airport owners subsequently developed plans for the now large commercial area along Kapiti Road in 2013, they moved the new hangar across to the western side of the airport and assisted with the setting up of new clubrooms for the club.

KDAC is currently very active with more than 300 members and operates a fleet of twelve aircraft and a flight simulator.



**Paraparaumu Flight Training Ltd (1988-1995)** - was established by Ron and Shenna Pownceby in 1988 and operated close to several of the other training organisations at the airport.

*Photo: Allan Brookes*

### **Upcoming Meeting Programme**

Every Tuesday	9.30 to 11.00am	Open forum at the Museum

## Visiting Aircraft: Pan American DC4 “Clipper East Indian”

In 1953, Pan American World Airways Douglas DC4 “Clipper East Indian” was diverted from Ohakea, at night and in very bad weather with minimal visibility, to Paraparaumu and arrived here with only a few minutes fuel remaining. At this time there was no radar in use in the region so the pilot was guided in to a successful landing by Paraparaumu Control Tower officer, Chris Greig.

In the morning daylight the American crew were shocked and surprised to see how close Kapiti Island and the surrounding hills were to their flight path and safe landing!



*Photo: Jim Beattie Collection, Kapiti Public Library*

## Planespotting at recent Kapiti Aero Club Fly-In, by Stu



Alpi Aviation Jay Hawk ZK-CWJ



de Havilland DH 112 Venom ZK-VNM



Micro Aviation B22J Bantam ZK-JMA



Robin DR400-500 President ZK-VAX



## More Planespotting from Stu



Harmon Rocket II ZK-TWU



Taylor J2 Cub ZK-AGD



Diamond DA40 Star ZK-MTZ



Cessna U206F Stationair ZK-DWX



De Havilland DH89 Tiger Moth ZK-BEF



Auster J1N ZK-ATS

### MUSEUM HOURS:

**SUNDAYS 1pm to 4pm**

PRIVATE AND GROUP VISITS BY ARRANGEMENT

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