

WASSI



Walsh Aviation Support Society Inc.



Update 1-23

Welcome to the first update for 2023 of recent activities of the Walsh Aviation Support Society Inc. (WASSI)...quite a bit has happened over recent months and hopefully this newsletter will inform you of these activities. While a number of WASSI members were able to participate at, or briefly attend, the 56th Walsh Memorial Scout Flying School plus the WASSI Annual General Meeting (with both being held successfully at Matamata Airfield during January 2023), it is important that all members of the society are kept updated of recent events.

Chairman's Introduction

Folks, I would just like to say a few words at this time...while the 56th Walsh Memorial Scout Flying School ("Walsh") has been hugely rewarding, it was however also very busy. It was excellent to see the four airworthy WASSI aircraft grace the skies above the Waikato region for the first time, while efforts continue toward getting the first Cessna 152 back into the air as soon as practicable.

I would also like to add that thanks are in order for all of your support during 2022. A lot was achieved, including having three Tomahawks placed with training organisations and earning some welcomed income. Despite there being some challenges throughout the past two years the WASSI continues to provide aircraft available for lease.

And let's not forget getting the fourth Tomahawk flying again just before Christmas 2022 in time to have all four ready to attend this year's "Walsh"...a marvellous result that was only achieved through the combined efforts of the WASSI members and various other people and organisations. More of this during 2023 and hopefully the repainting and remaining avionics upgrades for the other two Tomahawks might just be possible as well.

With an increasing aircraft fleet size comes an increasing amount of work related to keeping them fully operational. Thus, it is rapidly approaching the time when more human resources are needed to ensure all the tasks required to achieve this goal can be provided...the current committee members alone are unable to cover this increase in workload (*see below for more details*).

Once details are available through the committee of these new functions and roles the members will be kept informed along with the process to achieve a suitable outcome. So, along with the process of succession planning within the WASSI committee, I would like to ask that you give some thought to whether you may be able to contribute in some capacity in the future. Thank you for your consideration of this request for assistance.

Mark Woodhouse, WASSI Chairman



The first WASSI aircraft to attend a Walsh Memorial Scout Flying School (WMSFS) at Matamata Airfield was Piper PA-38 Tomahawk ZK-FML (left)...this was its fourth school. Meanwhile, participating at a WMSFS for the first time was Piper PA-38 Tomahawk ZK-JHF...the fourth aircraft acquired by the WASSI (right). (both Phil Craig)

2023 AGM Review

The sixth Annual General Meeting of the Walsh Aviation Support Society Inc. (WASSI) was successfully held at Matamata Airfield on 14 January 2023 with a good portion of the current membership in attendance, while several new members also joined during the evening.

The Chairman and Treasurer both tabled informative annual reports to the members, and both were accepted. A few questions from the floor were also able to be answered during the meeting. Full details will follow when the minutes of the meeting are distributed to members.



The other two WASSI aircraft appearing for the first time at a Walsh Memorial Scout Flying School at Matamata Airfield were Piper PA-38 Tomahawk ZK-NJT (left) and ZK-MAJ (right). (both Phil Craig)

Additional Functions within the WASSI

At a committee meeting of the WASSI held at Matamata Airfield during January 2023 it was determined that several new roles will need to be created within the structure of the WASSI for it to operate successfully in the future. As the fleet of aircraft owned by the WASSI has grown so has the amount of work required to ensure the fleet continues to operate effectively and efficiently while achieving the society's goals and objectives.

More details of these roles and descriptions of the positions will be provided to the membership once further work has been carried out to determine their full requirements. The main areas relate to marketing and sponsorship, liaison with organisations operating WASSI aircraft, and the maintenance of WASSI aircraft. Increasing the pool of people involved with ensuring the WASSI functions effectively and efficiently is the primary goal of this decision to spread the workload amongst a greater number of members who will continue fulfilling their roles as volunteers.



While at the 56th Walsh Memorial Scout Flying School, both Piper PA-38 Tomahawk ZK-MAJ (left) and ZK-JHF (right) were adorned with the WASSI logo and name of their tails. (both Phil Craig)

WASSI at the 56th Walsh Memorial Scout Flying School

Despite the inclement weather during the first week at this year's school, the fifteen aircraft utilised by the students and staff completed 1,150 flights and amassed over 630 hours of flying while the air traffic controllers handled almost 6,600 aircraft movements! Amazingly, and a testament to the efforts of the students, flying instructors and everyone else involved at the school, forty-one of the forty-eight ab-initio students completed their first solo flight at the "Walsh".

The following is a summary provided by Unit Leader Ben Girven and Deputy Unit Leader Sophie Collingridge...*"this year's Walsh Memorial Scout Flying School was a major success. Ex-Tropical Cyclone Hale didn't allow much flying in the first few days, so the ab-initio students had most briefings on the bad weather days. When the weather improved flying took priority, with planes in the air from 6am until 9pm. With almost half the normal number of returned students, they had a very busy and successful school with lots of flying too. Sunday 15 January was Family Day...an opportunity for a student's family to see how their young pilot was getting on, to meet instructors and to watch the RNZAF firefighters' competition plus an incredible display by the Black Falcons. On the last night students were presented with their Scout Wings and certificates at the Wings Parade ceremony followed by flag down and Awards Dinner. Several high-profile guests attended, many being sponsors of the school or providers of scholarships, along with speakers and representatives from other organisations. Many deserving students were awarded prizes at the dinner, such as money for flying, pilot equipment, and work experiences. These prizes were provided by Air New Zealand, Airways New Zealand, the RNZAF, the MetService, Aspeq, and others. The Walsh Trophy, for top ab-initio student, went to Lukasz Swain who also received a large award from Air New Zealand. "Walsh" is an amazing, addictive, and incredibly rewarding experience. It's easy to understand why people keep coming back year after year"*.



As the 56th Walsh Memorial Scout Flying School begins to draw to a close, several students are in the process of washing and cleaning Piper PA-38 Tomahawk ZK-JHF (left) and ZK-MAJ (right) before they are both able to be returned to their current flight training organisations. (both Phil Craig)

Instructor's Praise

Hi Folks

I'm still recovering a full week later from the mayhem that was Walsh '23. It is probably the first five days being cyclonic devastation of the atmosphere, with no good reason to squeeze an aircraft into inclement weather, that pushed our workload into the orange arc during the second week. Reflecting on my musings at day six, "this year we probably won't see a single solo, it'd be a miracle"...I was so far off after Mother Nature and the flight instructing team defied the odds. We were able to get forty-one of the forty-eight ab-initio students through to completing their first solo, and the one token Cessna

A152 Aerobat was hectic for two days flying those students who had managed a lap on their own or needed a morale boost prior to their return in 2024.

I've mentioned orange and safe already, and the WASSI aircraft seem to love both those traits. I had ZK-MAJ on my flight, and it was the most sought after aircraft in my section of the flightline. The retro paint scheme will be a shame to lose...it oozes personality unlike most tin sleds! The Boeing brown interior is in great condition, and it just flies fantastically! Hands off is a breeze, and it has more poke than a pirate's gangplank...no one out climbed us in the circuit!



"Good morning Waharoa!". Piper PA-38 Tomahawk ZK-NJT watches the sun rise over the Kaimai Ranges to the east of Matamata Airfield that is located just north of the small Waikato settlement of Waharoa. (Nick Rowe)

It was splendid seeing all four aircraft in the WASSI fleet basking their matching tails in the Matamata sun (week 2, of course), and I look forward to all four in matching schemes with dazzling colours in the near future. I'm especially keen on reuniting myself with Aerobat ZK-MUM when the time comes...we shared many experiences and aerobatic escapades in her previous life.

To those who have supported the WASSI this year, I thank you and salute you.



The instrument panel of Piper PA-38 Tomahawks ZK-FML (left) and ZK-NJT (right). Both aircraft have received avionics upgrades still being owned by the WASSI. (both Phil Craig)

I for one chip a bit off my pay every fortnight to keep the WASSI momentum, and was suitably proud when Dad (not the Cessna Aerobat!) made a contribution upon seeing the WASSI fleet at Walsh this year. With your generous support, you too made an impression on the sixty young adults that manipulated the best looking, better flying, and safest Tomahawks in the country.

I look forward to you again visiting Walsh during January 2024, and seeing for yourself the difference you made to the young ladies and gents confidence, skills, and enthusiasm that they are currently spreading around their part of New Zealand. Oh, and all those magnificent paint schemes. Thank you.

Nick Rowe, Flight Commander, WMSFS

An Air Traffic Controller's Perspective

When Mark ("Woody") Woodhouse first spoke several years ago about his dream to obtain a fleet of suitable two-seat training aircraft for use at the Walsh Memorial Scout Flying School ("Walsh"), it sowed the seed in my mind that I needed to be involved. The opportunity to be able to give back something in return for everything that I had got out of being part of the "Walsh" since January 1998 was a chance I was not prepared to miss! Nor have I regretted the decision.

So, a few years later when the Walsh Aviation Support Society Inc. was formed it was a 'no-brainer' that my wife Carolyn and I signed up at the inaugural meeting of the society held at Matamata Airfield during January 2017...as did many others who also thought the concept was a very worthy cause to be part of. Since that time the WASSI has continued to grow, both in membership (over one hundred) and aircraft (now totalling five).

We have been contributing fortnightly to the WASSI since it became a Charitable Trust and Registered Charity. Remember that donations made to the WASSI are tax deductible...a big bonus! And what a fantastic effort by everyone involved in the WASSI so far. Whether you are a member who is a regular or irregular contributor to the society financially or are part of an organisation that has provided funds to the WASSI as a charity or provided assistance with aircraft engineering and maintenance or helped with many of the other tasks that have been undertaken, every bit helps no matter how much you have or do contribute to the WASSI.

One of the areas that "Woody" wanted to concentrate on was the colour of the aircraft in the WASSI fleet. After discussion with James Pengelly (Chief Controller, Tauranga and at the time Chief Controller, Airshows with Airways New Zealand) and others, it was highlighted that the livery to be applied to the WASSI aircraft needed to enhance their ability to be seen. This resulted in the decision being taken to use vibrant colours on the extremities of the aircraft...these being the tail section and outer wing panels. And this style of livery suits both low-wing and high-wing aircraft, such as the Piper PA-38 Tomahawk and Cessna 152 two-seat training aircraft that are currently in the WASSI fleet.

While the livery applied to the WASSI aircraft is relatively simple, also making it easy to apply, it is the vibrant colours used along with these being applied in large amounts on the wings and tail that make the aircraft easier to be seen. This is not only beneficial when the aircraft are on the ground but also when viewed in the air from the ground, and more importantly when they are in the air...especially if flying around a busy aerodrome circuit! Certainly, from an air traffic control view point it is so helpful to be able to identify a particular aircraft in the circuit or on the aerodrome based purely on its livery...and the vibrant colours along the wing leading are especially a huge benefit to identification when viewing aircraft head-on. It is the livery applied to the WASSI aircraft that ensures this is possible!



Posing during a break in the flying programme for some promotional photographs to be taken during the 56th WMSFS are Piper PA-38 Tomahawks ZK-NJT (left) and ZK-FML (right). (both Phil Craig)

Throughout the 56th "Walsh" this year I often heard phrases from my colleagues on the radio such as "follow the yellow Tomahawk" or "you are number four following the orange Tomahawk". Crikey, I am

sure I used these phrases many times as well myself! What that demonstrates to me is that the colour of the WASSI aircraft is a superb tool for identifying an aircraft...a great asset indeed to enhancing the safety of everyone involved! The use of a bright yellow on Piper PA-38 Tomahawk ZK-FML is a nod to the aircraft being painted a shade of yellow for many years before it was acquired by the WASSI. Then when we became involved with the project to buy and import the Tomahawk that has been refurbished and restored for the WASSI, similarly it was a nod to a special someone's favourite colour that ZK-NJT was painted white and orange. We are both immensely proud of the result and wish to take this opportunity to thank every one of you that is involved with WASSI. While we would like to especially thank "Woody" and Treasurer Steven Bodt plus the team at JEM Aviation Ltd at Omaka Airfield (Blenheim) please remember that the success and achievements of the WASSI are possible because of everyone's collective contributions of time, money and other resources, no matter how much each individual or organisation provides toward reaching the society's goals and objectives! It was an outstanding achievement to have four WASSI aircraft at this year's "Walsh"...that was possible because of all of you!!

And while 2023 may be a year of consolidation for the WASSI, we are so looking forward to seeing Cessna A152 Aerobat ZK-MUM flying in its white and cyan livery after its refurbishment and repaint along with Tomahawks ZK-JHF in white and cyan plus ZK-MAJ in white and lime when they are able to be repainted. Wouldn't it be a fantastic sight to see five WASSI aircraft finished in the society's livery at the 57th Walsh Memorial Scout Flying School at Matamata Airfield in January 2024?

Phil Craig, Deputy Chief Controller, Matamata Tower



Who had the bright idea of flying during "my" meal time? Did they ask me first? I don't think so! (Phil Craig)

WASSI Merchandise for Sale

The opportunity to purchase an initial batch of WASSI branded merchandise, in the form of caps and bucket hats, was offered to the membership in late-November 2022. Over thirty items were able to be sold in this round of orders, and I would have to say that everyone is very happy with the products. As modelled in the photograph below, the caps are available in the four colours used on the aircraft in the fleet (yellow, orange, lime and cyan with a black logo, plus black with the logo in either white or one of the four aircraft colours) plus a more limited range of bucket hats (only in yellow, orange and blue). Delivery of the majority of these items was able to be made to WASSI members at Matamata Airfield during the "Walsh", and they were then seen to be proudly worn for the remainder of the school! Thanks to all who supported this fundraising and marketing initiative that is helping to raise awareness of the WASSI wherever people are seen wearing them.

In addition, through several generous sponsors the WASSI now has two high-viz jackets contained in a bag in each of its aircraft. These are emblazoned with the WASSI logo on the front and the aircraft registration on the back...thanks to those who gave generously to provide for these safety items.

A second order of merchandise will be placed in early-February 2023 based on expressions of interest taken during this year's "Walsh". However, it is anticipated that a further order is likely to be made around October that may also include clothing items such as polo shirts and t-shirts...the membership will be advised of merchandise items available for purchase by email at that time with the expectation of delivery taking place at Matamata Airfield during the 57th "Walsh" or soon after for anyone unable to collect their purchases in-person.

Phil Craig, WASSI member and supporter



What a magnificent range of caps and buckets hats...in various colours! And could we have found a finer bunch of WASSI members to model their recently purchased merchandise?...well, that's debatable! (Carolyn Craig)

“Walsh” Participants

At each Walsh Memorial Scout Flying School, photographs of all the participants is taken as a record of who attended. This includes both the staff members and the students, and it becomes a valuable record each year.

This year, due to the inclement weather conditions, the decision was made delay the photograph being taken and to use the marquee...whereas usually it is taken in front of the Matamata Soaring Centre. Of course, Murphy’s Law, on the chosen day the conditions encountered were a little humid in the marquee but at least the photographic record was achieved without any weather disruption!



The 56th Walsh Memorial Scout Flying School photo was taken, unusually, in the marquee. While this was not the “official” school photo, the team of staff and students are shown happily waving...and complete with a small dose of Hawaiian shirts interspersed amongst the group plus a good quantity of WASSI merchandise on display “front and centre”! What else would we expect? Well done everyone! (Steven Bodt)