



NEWCASTLE

KWA ZULU NATAL (KZN) AIRSHOW 30 MAY

By Pete van der Spek

Another successful Newcastle airshow was held on 30 May and was attended by a good crowd of some 5500 people. The crowd was treated to some fine flying by the 'young guns' and the veteran pilots. Nobody went home disappointed.

Slick 540 - Pete van der Spek



Newcastle airshow is always a very 'laid back affair' and this year was no different. Air boss Chris Briers and his team of Pete Graham and John Neilon had good control over the proceedings. Even before the airshow began, the air traffic controllers (ATCs) were put to test by Jan Kemp flying in for the airshow. Jan experienced an overheating engine and had to make an emergency landing on the N11 near Newcastle. After some quick repairs, CAA gave Jan permission to take-off from the road and land at Newcastle. Thank goodness for a safe outcome.

The airshow started with the usual skydivers along with the big SA flag. Next came an interesting new act for KZN, with three RVs and Nigel Hopkins flying in the number four slot in his MX2. It is a very interesting formation and well flown by the team. Michel Leusch flew next in his YAK 52; a fine display by one of the up and coming 'young guns', one of our own KZN pilots.

Aero L-39 - Pete van der Spek



The crowd favourite - Menno Parsons flying his P51 Mustang screamed in and the crowd surged toward the fence. Menno has his own inimitable style and always flies in from the rear right and displays the wings for the photographers. You have to be quick though as the Mustang is usually going virtually top speed. The sound of the wind passing over the Mustang's gun ports and the roar of that beautiful Rolls Royce Merlin engine are sounds one does not forget in a hurry

The Silver Falcons made a welcome return to Newcastle and flew two displays; one in the morning and then the final display of the day. Werner Vermaak and his team are flying so well and are totally professional in their approach. I listened to Werner briefing his team before its first display. Excellent! Their display is varied, pretty tight and as good as any display in the world.

Pitts Special - Fiona Hugo



Yak 52 - Charles Hugo

Neville Ferreira flew his Slick twice, once as a solo display and then again in the car/aircraft race. Neville is steadily getting better and better. His display is always high energy and sharp. Neville raced his Slick against a monster Mercedes 563 Coupe V8 which almost filled the width of the runway! Neville battled to keep the car in sight and eventually caught up, but lost by a whisker. Pete Graham was the flagman and was mercilessly ragged by Brian Emmenis, but we won't go there...!

Talking about high energy, Nigel Hopkins in the MX2 then showed just why he is South Africa's top aerobatic pilot and one of the best in the world. Nigel's display always looks out of control, but Nigel always remains with his finger on the pulse. Nigel is another crowd favourite and people cheered him on completion of his routine.

Airboss Chris Briers was not about to be outdone. He briefly gave over his duties of safety officer to John Neilon and jumped into Menno's Trojan T28. His display was excellent and he showed the aircraft to its full potential. Later, Chris flying the T28 joined Menno flying the Mustang for a warbirds' flypast and both their second solo displays – alternately dovetailing in a warbird display.

The Eqstra Harvards led by Scully Levin flew their routine. It is always great to hear those big radial engines thumping away. The solo flypast at the end was marked by team member Ellis Levin's lovely low runway inspection. A WOW moment which the crowd, but most of all the photographers - loved!

It was great to see Pierre Gouws back on the KZN airshow scene. He has been missed by us down in KZN and his flying is always

so relaxed and well controlled. Pierre flew a display in firstly the Czechoslovakian L39 Albatros jet and then flew an amazing display in the Bosbok. I always enjoy watching Pierre flying.

Two other jets flew during the airshow; Mike Weingartz gave his usual smooth display in the Impala and KZN pilot Martin Schultz who flew his Aero L29 Delfin, gave his local fans a show of note.

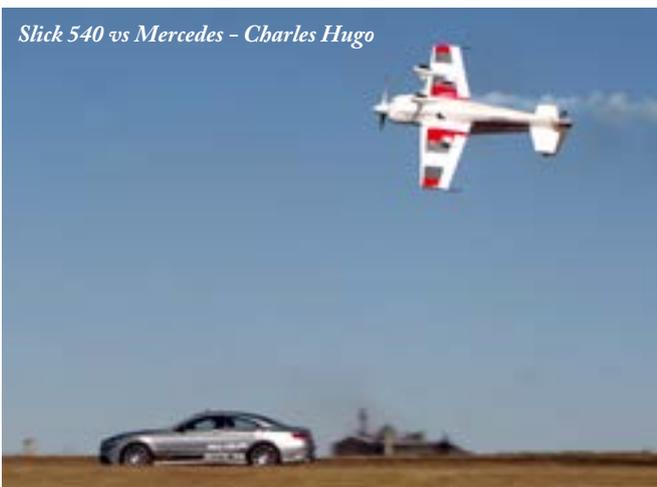
Dennis Spence's Pitts Specials Goodyear team was also present, very capably led by Glen Warden whilst Dennis watched from the ground. Standing next to Dennis, I was interested to hear his comments as the team flew its display. Dennis saw things we mere ground dwelling mortals would never notice.

A little BatHawk LSA was expertly flown by Andrew Pappas. The BatHawk LSA is an excellent platform to undertake anti-rhino poaching observation. Commentary was again handled by Brian Emmenis and his Capital Sounds and except for one small power related glitch right in the beginning, beyond Brian's control, the team did very well. Brian was his usual knowledgeable self and the crowd loved his commentary.

Johan Pieters and Christo van der Vyver of Champ Marketing must be congratulated for putting together another excellent airshow. The pilots and support staff as well as the media were well looked after. The grounds were kept clean all day. The crowd had many food outlets from which to choose and the youngsters had an amusement park in which to play. This proved most successful.

All in all a great day. Roll on Newcastle 2016! 📷

Slick 540 vs Mercedes - Charles Hugo



Silver Falcons briefing - Mike Wright