

ZEBULA AIRSHOW 2015

By Steve Allison

The EAA has an annual event called Sun 'n Fun. This year the Zebula airshow turned into Rain 'n Fun and it was fun despite the inclement weather. The event was organised by Chris Potgieter and Paul Weich. They really do put so much effort into organising the show and they do an excellent job. The weather unfortunately was out of their hands.



Boeing Stearman - Sydney Baker



Photograph by Sydney Baker

The morning started off misty with blue sky above, usually an indicator of a bright sunny day, but by the time we got to the airfield, the sky was decidedly grey. However, we all believed the cloud would clear and the show would go on. The show started with a Piper formation and that is where it ended. Shortly after the Pipers took to the air, the rain started to fall leaving the pilots no option other than scurry back to the airfield. Just after they touched down, the heavens opened, people ran for cover of any form of shelter they could find.

We were treated to a three and a half hour downpour, but such is the nature of the Zebula airshow that even standing around in the rain chatting and drinking coffee was a pleasant experience. At around 13h30, Chris Potgieter and air boss Chris Briers took the decision to cancel the show. This was the correct decision as most of the spectators and exhibitors had long since packed up and gone home and it was still raining hard with no sign of a let up. There was only one storm cloud in the whole country and it was over Zebula!

By two o'clock I was in the Amarula tent with Carl Dollenberg and Sean Murphy from Safomar. I was getting cold and hungry so I suggested to my two drinking partners that we should retire to the pub. I walked over to get my video cameras off the Trojan when I bumped into Captain Pierre Gouws. I told him that I was packing up, but he said, "No, we're going to fly now." Sure enough, half an hour later the rain had stopped and various aircraft took to the air.

Airshows are as much about the pilots as they are about the spectators. These pilots had come here to fly displays and that is what they were going

to do. Those that did brave the elements and stayed to the end were treated to some amazing flying. Once visiting aircraft had made a dash for home through the clearing in the weather, the impromptu display began.

First off was the RV formation with seven aircraft putting on an excellent display. They really have been putting in a lot of practise and are flying brilliantly. As usual, Pierre Gouws and Nigel Hopkins made an attempt to fly everything with wings attached. At one point, Nigel was literally running between aircraft. He flew a magnificent display in the MX2, which included a bit of formation flying with the L39 flown by, you guessed it, Pierre Gouws. Pierre went on to give us a great display. Later on the MX2 was back in action racing a Porsche Panamera.

Chris Briers treated us to a wonderful display flying the T-28 Trojan, which included some formation flying with Menno Parsons in Mustang Sally. We really are privileged that we have some wonderful historic aircraft in this country and people like Menno who keep them in the air and bring them to shows around the country. Seeing Menno fly the Bell Huey was a fantastic experience.

The afternoon included, amongst others, the SAA Harvards, the Kodiak in formation with Deon Wentzel flying the Cirrus SR22 as well as flypasts by a diverse mix of aircraft from Biz Jets to Boeing Stearmans. Those spectators who stayed at Zebula despite the rain enjoyed watching some great flying, probably more than if the official airshow had gone ahead, as there was a much more relaxed atmosphere. 📷



Photograph by Sydney Baker



Brian Emmenis of Capital Sounds - Chris Speight