



Autogyro Flight

Brian Greenwood

It all started when I published what I thought was a photo of a visiting aircraft, the Autogyro Calidus ZK-RCZ. Trevor Shadbolt got in touch and gave me a few more details, including the fact the he, and RCZ, would be based in Rangiora soon.

Fast forward a couple of months and Trevor invited me to go for a flight with him. That was

accepted very quickly.

Trevor's a great guy and very easy person to fly with, for example you're having a nice conversation when you realise you've just had a full safety briefing! Strapping in is easy and the rear cockpit of the Autogyro is comfortable. The first thing that strikes you is the view; there is no fixed wing to obscure it.



It does seem odd taxiing onto the runway with the main rotor not moving, but Trevor engages the clutch and it soon winds up. Once it has reached minimum revs we roll down the runway and lift off in a reasonable distance. There's a slight vibration, more of a gentle wobble, but it's a very pleasant ride once airborne.

We head out towards Leithfield and Trevor invites me to fly it. He's explained (carefully) that rotary-winged aircraft really do not like negative G, and pushing sharply forward on

the stick is an activity best avoided. With that in mind I try some straight and level and a few medium turns. The Calidus is amazing easy to fly, far easier than my own Rans S6 (at least at this level).

After this Trevor demonstrates some slow flying (in my aircraft it would have been a stall followed by a wing drop), and some steep turns, they're incredibly tight and not at all uncomfortable.

One interesting effect was that the centre of lift moves slightly out to one side as the aircraft increases in speed, I just thought it was my usual lack of ability to fly straight and level! Once Trevor explained this it made sense, and its easier to cope with than torque steer on power changes in a fixed wing.

All too soon it was time to come back to earth and reality. I have to admit that I am very taken with

Autogyros and am keen to do more with them. Prices range from \$40K to roughly \$180K for the high end ones, with the Calidus being at the upper end of the scale.

A stunningly enjoyable and different flight, thank you, Trevor! And especially: thank you for dispelling some of the ridiculous myths that I have heard about Autogyros. They're simply an amazing, easy, and safe form of flying.

