

LONGACRE PRESS RESOURCE KIT

Winging it!

THE ADVENTURES OF TIM WALLIS

By Neville Peat

'He has a rare kind of fighting spirit.'

When Sir Tim Wallis's Spitfire crashed at Wanaka Airport in 1996, the accident was reported around the world. This lion-hearted 'Southern Man', a legendary figure in the aviation, deer farming and business worlds, was suddenly fighting for his life: a life that had been filled with adventure, risk and success. The question on everyone's mind was, would he recover?

Tim Wallis is known as the helicopter pilot and entrepreneur who helped pioneer our country's deer industry. He was a pathfinder in what has been described as 'New Zealand's Last Great Adventure', the recovery of live red deer from the Southern Alps and Fiordland. In recent decades Tim Wallis has had a passion for restoring and flying vintage fighter planes and is the man behind the phenomenally successful Warbirds Over Wanaka air show.

Tim's life has been an inspiration to many. To him, 'a problem is an opportunity', and he loves nothing better than moving from challenge to challenge, and finding new ways of doing things.

Tim Wallis's life story is told here by writer Neville Peat, who shares Tim's great love of the outdoors. *Winging It!* is a whirlwind adventure story about an extraordinary New Zealander. It's dramatically illustrated throughout with photographs, maps, and highlighted quotes.



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RESOURCE KIT CONTAINS:

- comprehension questions
 - author statement
 - discussion topics
- topics for creative response
 - research topics

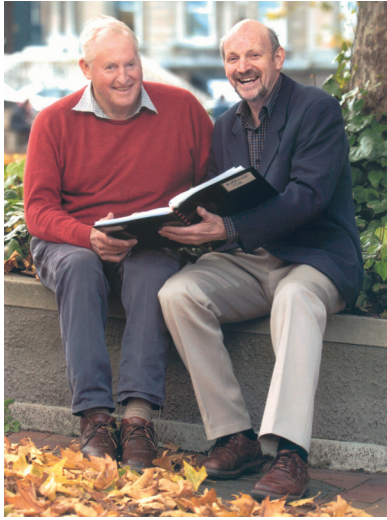
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Author Statement

(taken from the Preface to *Winging it!*)

Take a wild animal (red deer) in plague numbers, spread them across a remote and rugged terrain (Fiordland and the Southern Alps), throw in helicopters hell-bent on shooting or recovering them live, then add a daring pilot called Tim Wallis – these are the ingredients of a whirlwind adventure story.

This is Tim's story. It's about the way he built a career and a multi-million-dollar business out of a weekend hobby, deer-stalking. It's about how he used helicopters where they'd never been before, and about exploring new frontiers in New Zealand and other parts of the world. Tim – Sir Tim at formal occasions – is a pioneer of deer farming in New Zealand, and that passion has taken him from Canada to Vanuatu and even Siberia.

Since the mid-1980s he has ventured into tourism and vintage warplanes. He's collected Second World War fighter aircraft from around the world and every two years you can see them in action at Warbirds Over Wanaka, an event he founded in 1988.

Tim's had quite a few accidents over the years. When he was 29 his helicopter hit power lines and crashed and he was told he might not walk again. But he did. In 1996 he crashed a Spitfire upside down and suffered shocking head injuries. This time the doctors said he might not live. But he did. Tim's a survivor. So in addition to the adventure and the drama, this is also a story about how Tim has beaten the odds with his never-say-die attitude.

He has a rare kind of fighting spirit. In a country where heroes are mostly found in sport, he's legendary.

I chose the year 1968 as a starting point for the story. It's a terrific year in his life. In 1968 he caught red deer live for experimental farming, he used ships in Fiordland for processing the venison, and he met Prue Hazledine, who would become his wife a few years later. It was also the year he broke his back and faced business failure. How did he survive? Read on and be inspired.

Neville Peat

Broad Bay, Otago Peninsula

February 2006

Comprehension

CHAPTER 1 – Daring and Determined:

- How does Tim like to do business?
- Why does the helicopter rise before it drops to the ground?
- Why did the ambulance have to be towed by a tractor?
- What concerned Tim the most when bedridden in the spinal unit?
- What different kinds of transport were used to get the deer out of Fiordland?
- Why did the park board agree to Tim's plan?
- How did Tim maintain contact with his business while in the spinal unit?
- What was the second blow Tim's company suffered?
- What is different about the water in Fiordland?
- How did Blackie solve the problem of Tim needing two legs to fly?

CHAPTER 2 – A Coaster at Christ's College:

- What business was Tim's family involved in?
- How does Tim show himself to be a sociable person even as a pre-schooler?
- Why was there a red cross on the roof of the hospital?
- Why didn't Tim's father serve in the military overseas?
- Why did Tim like dissecting eels?
- In what ways did Tim's father teach him and his siblings manners?
- What does Tim's primary school essay foreshadow in his career?
- What kind of experiments did Tim like to do?
- What was so unusual about Tim's Aunt Betsy?
- What was Tim's inheritance?
- How did Headmaster Hornsby challenge the boys?
- How did 'fagging' work?
- How did Tim prove himself adept at practical Physics?
- In his time at Christ's, what (mostly extra-curricular) things did Tim excel at?
- What was Tim's first business opportunity?
- How did Tim push the limits at school? How did he take punishment?

CHAPTER 3 – Deer-stalking After Work:

- Why didn't academic study appeal to Tim?
- How did Tim get his car up the steep mountains to the summit?
- What was Tim's first job? What did it involve?
- What, for Tim, was the challenge in deer-stalking? What was the point of it?
- How did Tim make the most of his weekend job?
- How did Tim's first deer 'harvesting' operation work?

CHAPTER 4 – 'Lord of the Choppers':

- What did the first helicopter used become more commonly known as? Why?
- How did they manage to shoot over 200 deer in that first day's trial?
- What made Tim decide he needed his own helicopter?
- Why did Tim and George sell the timber business?
- What did John Reid find astonishing about Tim?
- What was the first disaster Tim faced? How did he react?
- Why did Tim's friend Robert crawl inside the deer carcass?
- How did deer-recovery methods using helicopters change? Name the two main ways.
- What is the purpose of the tail rotor on a helicopter?
- How did Tim get sole rights to harvest in Fiordland National Park?
- Why did the air force send in choppers?
- Why did Tim oppose the governments planned 1080 drop?
- What factors made Tim look for an alternative to harvesting dead deer?

CHAPTER 5 – Airborne Deer:

- What was the first tactic for capturing wild deer? What were its setbacks?
- What replaced this method? How did it work on the deer?
- Why did Lincoln university want live deer?
- What other methods of live-capture did Tim

and his colleagues develop?

- Why were red deer introduced to New Zealand?
- How was live-capture a ‘battle of wits’?
- What interest did the Asian market have in the deer industry?
- What did Tim appreciate about the Asian way of life?
- What was different about the business ventures in Canada?
- What was a major blow to Tim’s (and others’) businesses? What, financially, most likely saved Tim’s businesses?

CHAPTER 6 – Tim’s Navy:

- What were the *Ranginui* and *Hotunui* used for?
- How did Tim keep the Fiordland tourists alert?
- What stopped Tim tramping into the bush with his sons? Why was this not a problem in water?
- How did Tim rescue the boys? What added danger did he have to compensate for? How did he do this?
- What animals proved the most destructive to the *Ranginui*?
- What did Tim see as having potential in the Auckland Islands?
- Why did the New Hebrides venture not succeed?

CHAPTER 7 – Drama in Russia:

- Why was Tim interested in Siberian maral deer?
- How was it possible to be in three places at once?
- Explain, in your own words, the ‘Cold War’.
- How did these farms run under the Communist administration?
- What kind of business did Tim have in mind? How does this differ in focus to his earlier ventures?
- Why did Tim carry American dollars?
- What changed politically at the time Tim was doing business in Siberia? How did this stall Tim’s plan?
- Why was doing business in Russia dangerous?
- What element of Tim’s Russian operation was successful?

CHAPTER 8 – Warbirds:

- What did Tim value in the vintage fighter planes?
- Why was Tim described as ‘New Zealand’s Douglas Bader’?
- How did they simulate the sinking of the battleship?
- How did Tim pay tribute to the New Zealand pilots of the First and Second World Wars?
- How did the stealth bomber manage to go ‘undetected’?
- Why did Tim describe the Mark 14 Spitfire as ‘a wild gypsy woman’?
- Why did Tim put on an aerobatics display for the spinal unit?

CHAPTER 9 – Survival:

- Why was Tim’s friend Brian surprised Tim chose to fly the Mark 14 Spitfire?
- What went wrong during take-off? Why couldn’t Tim correct the problem?
- What made the rescuers realise Tim wasn’t dead?
- What was the most worrying of Tim’s injuries?
- What did Prue see as the thing that would ensure Tim’s recovery?
- In what ways did Tim’s family and friends encourage him back to consciousness?
- How did Tim surprise the doctor when he woke up?
- Why did Tim’s friends call him ‘Turtle’?
- How did the warbirds pilots salute Tim?
- What seemed to be the turning point in Tim’s recovery?
- What does an occupational therapist do?
- How does brain injury commonly affect a person?

CHAPTER 10 – Tim’s Way:

- To what was Tim’s recovery due, according to Neville Peat?
- What message does Tim live by?
- What principles did Tim’s father instil in him?
- How did Tim use his money to help people?
- What about Tim appears to be the least affected by his brain injuries?

Discussion Topics

- Tim, like the men in his family before him, was a boarder at Christ's College in Christchurch. The school had a strong sense of discipline. Do you think this helped Tim? If so, how?
 - *'[Tim's] life was all about moving from one challenging project to another. He loved a challenge and exploring new ways of doing things.'*
How is this a typical 'Kiwi' attitude? Could you class Tim Wallis as an iconic Kiwi hero? How does the attitude described above relate to Tim's accidents, and the way he lives now?
 - Throughout his career Tim has shown an enterprising attitude; if he sees a problem, he tries to make it into an opportunity. What examples can you see of this in Tim's story? What problems can you see in New Zealand that could be potential business ventures?
 - After his major crash in 1996, Tim was determined to get back to work. As soon as he was well enough he returned to the office. Why do you think Tim's work is so important to him? Why did he, even when injured, remain determined to be involved in his businesses?
 - When Tim crashed his Spitfire, the doctors said he was unlikely to survive his injuries, yet he did. And he learned to walk, swim, write and smile again. What do you think allowed Tim to recover as much as he has? Was it just luck?
 - Tim's advice to Rotary youth included the following business principles:
 - Make your first loss your last loss
 - Select top people
 - Engage the best accountancy advice
 - Make employees feel they have a stake in the business
 - Don't let mistakes frighten you – they build judgement
 - Be honest, keep your word.How has Tim lived by these business principals?
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Creative Response

- pp. 72–74. Matt and his friend get into trouble in the water. Following the description of Tim's rescue manoeuvre, draw a diagram plotting out the steps.
- p. 124. An itinerary of one of Tim's busy days is given. Photocopy a map of the world and New Zealand, work out the times and routes, and plot them on the map. How long is Tim's working day? Draw a cartoon or storyboard that takes you through all the items on Tim's itinerary.
- Design the paintwork for a special helicopter for Tim Wallis. Write a short piece about how the design represents Tim's character.
- Imagine Tim Wallis is launching his own brand of adventure clothing for the busy businessman.

Design clothes that would be suitable for hunting and flying, and which can be dressed up to be suitable for a business meeting with international clients. Design an advertising Logo for 'Hurricane Tim Adventure Wear'.
- Take one episode from Tim's life and rewrite it as a newspaper article. How would it differ from the way Neville Peat tells Tim's story?
- Write a script for an interview with Tim Wallis, in the format of question and response. You could include some of Tim's friends and business associates. From descriptions of Tim's character in the book, think about how you could portray him accurately. Perform the interview for the class or film it as though it were a TV news interview.

- Tim's life story is being made into a film. You have been given the task of casting the film. Who will you get to play Tim, his family and his friends? Write a cast list, and design a poster for the film.
- Every hero has a theme song, don't they? Write music for the Hurricane Tim film that will play every time the character 'Tim Wallis' appears on screen.
- Write a character description of Tim Wallis. You could do this from the viewpoint of several different people, such as his father, headmaster, colleagues in Russia, piloting friends, etc.

Research Topics

Use printed library sources as well as internet material in your research.

- Research different breeds of deer around the world. To which countries are they native? In which are they farmed? Are there any countries in which deer are still a pest? Is there anywhere they are endangered?
- Research farming life in Siberia. How does it differ to farming life in New Zealand?
- Find out about fighter planes from World War Two. What were used by each country? What were the differences in design, and what advantages did these give? You could present your findings as a talk to the class, with visual media, or, if possible, as a PowerPoint presentation.
- Research some aspect of deer farming or the deer products trade as it currently stands in New Zealand. You may find the Deer Farmers Association website useful: www.deernz.org
- Find out about the current state of the wild deer population in New Zealand. What is being done by the government to control wild deer? You might find some useful information on the Department of Conservation website.