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| [**[Richard Pearse](http://home.clear.net.nz/pages/geoff.rodliffe/)**](http://home.clear.net.nz/pages/geoff.rodliffe/)**Richard Pearse: "Mad Pearse", "Bamboo Dick", self-taught inventor, prophetic designer, trail blazing aviator and eccentric visionary. On or about 31st March 1903 a reclusive New Zealand farmer Richard Pearse climbed into a self-built monoplane and flew for about 140 metres before crashing into a gorse hedge on his Waitohi property . Even at half the distance Pearse must have felt the liberating but anxious exhilaration of flying. There is uncertainty about whether it met the definitions of sustained flight, but it came eight months before the Wright Brothers entered the record books at Kitty Hawk North Carolina on 17th December 1903.**  The centenary of the achievement of the Wright Brothers was celebrated in 2003 as one of the defining moments of the Twentieth Century. The event is etched in our consciousness as an enduring symbol of imagination and technological triumph in man’s never-ending confrontation with nature. Conversely, Pearse was largely forgotten until, when forty or fifty years ago, the remains of one of his prototype airplane models were discovered in a Christchurch garage.  He died in obscurity and his achievements have been clouded by the controversy over whether or not he "flew" before the fully documented Wright brother’s flights. Grid jostling aside, Pearse’s achievements might be remembered as even more remarkable in that, unlike the Wright brothers, who employed skilled engineers, and later enjoyed the luxury of government sponsorship, Pearse managed to get airborne with no technical training and absurdly scant resource. On his isolated farm at the edge of the world he relied on practical ingenuity and trial-and-error innovation to design, finance and build everything himself. It was sheer achievement against the odds: a modern day Icarus from down under who fashioned his wings not from feathers and wax, but bamboo and scrap metal.  **Childhood Dreaming** Richard William Pearse was born on 3 December 1877 at Waitohi Flat, Temuka, South Island, New Zealand, the fourth of nine children to Digory Pearse and Sarah Brown. Digory was an immigrant from Cornwall, England and Sarah from Ireland where she was working in a shop in Timaru. They farmed a property, Trewarlet, five miles inland from Temuka. There the couple, known locally as the "gentleman farmers", maintained an active social and cultural life. They fielded a strong tennis team, building their own courts on the estate, and even in an age where self rather than mass amusement was the norm, they were uncommonly musical, forming their own family orchestra in which Richard played the cello.  http://www.nzedge.com/heroes/images/rp-family.jpg   The Pearse Family Orchestra, Richard on left Courtesy Geoff Rodliffe  Richard, by disposition introspective, gentle, quiet and somewhat aloof, was a dreamer even at school, to the detriment of his studies. He excelled in one subject - engineering - and demonstrated an interest in flying and an eager mechanical curiosity from an early age. By the time he had finished his primary education at Waitohi his tinkering had blossomed into several inventions. These included a mechanical needle threader for his mother, a zoetrope for his sisters that produced moving-images by flicking through a series of still pictures, and a small steam engine made from a golden syrup tin filled with water. One day he arrived at the one room Upper-Waitohi school with a contraption consisting of a cotton reel, a nailed board, a piece of string, and the top of a herring tin cut and twisted into a propeller. He wound the string around the reel, tugged on it and sent the tin propeller shooting off from the nail. For the amusement of his classmates he had unwittingly made a facsimile of the earliest aircraft known: a mechanical toy first pictured in the pages of a 14th Century Flemish manuscript. After finishing school the young Pearse wanted to study engineering at Canterbury College, but the family could not afford it and instead, in 1898, when he turned 21, he was given the use of a nearby 100-acre farm block, which he was to farm intermittently for the next 13 years. |

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| http://www.nzedge.com/images/space01.gif | **Distracted Farmer** Pearse lived on at Trewarlet, turning his new property’s iron roofed cottage into a workshop where, behind a large overgrown gorse hedge, he began to work into the night on his inventions.  It was the beginning of the reclusive lifestyle that was to characterise the rest of his days. He designed and built his own lathe and forge (from cast-offs found at the tip), and rather than tending to the farm, spent most of his time inventing gadgets. The first output of his one-man factory was an ingenious style of bicycle. Patented in 1902 it was constructed out of a bamboo frame, with a vertical drive pedal action, rod-and-rack gearing system, back pedal rim brakes and integral tyre pumps.  But Pearse was obsessed with the lure of the bird’s eye view, putting endless hours into its pursuit: "Evening crinkles the land/into folds of the brain", writes poet Bill Sewell in *"Solo Flight"*, his meditation on Pearse. There is evidence that from 1899, Pearse had begun working on solutions to realise his dream of powered flight. In the context of the time and place this was a quixotic ambition. The "horseless carriage" was only a recent invention, far removed from the isolated horse-and-gig farming community that was Temuka. Most people thought flight was impossible, a science-fiction fantasy, while others saw it as a lunatic and heretic act to strive for the heavens: "if God had wanted man to fly he would have given him wings." But regardless of interpretations of their decree, the heavens have always lured: from the Chinese invention of the kite over 3,000 years ago, through Greek mythology, to Leonardo da Vinci’s Renaissance designs for a flying machine, the problem of getting airborne had fascinated generations of innovators.  Icarus    Icarus: the imagination of flight.  By the end of the 18th Century the first manned balloons were sent up by the French Montgolfier brothers. German aviation engineer Otto Lilienthal had achieved glided flight for up to 300 metres before a fatal crash in 1896. By the turn of the 20th Century Graf Ferdinand von Zeppelin had built the first successful dirigible (or airship). A cluster of inventors had experimented with powered flight, to varying degrees of failure and broken bones: utilizing everything from avian-imitating wing flapping to American Hiram Maxim’s mammoth craft with 32.5m cloth-covered wing frames. The first flight in New Zealand was a balloon sent aloft ten years previously, and it wasn’t until 1907, three years after the Wright brothers' efforts, that a heavier-than-air craft, other than Pearse’s, would be attempted to be built in New Zealand.  Faced with ridicule and indifference, Pearse continued to work industriously in the secrecy of his workshop. Without access to a university library and oceans away from centres of technology and scientific debate, he kept up with developments through a subscription to overseas magazines such as *Scientific American* (in one of the many contradictions of Pearse’s life, he was often seen by locals with his head buried in the latest issue of the magazine, distracted, while trudging behind a horse-drawn plough). For him the immediate problem was that he needed a suitable internal combustion engine. Unable to buy a purpose built engine, he was helped by Timaru engineer Cecil Wood (the first person in New Zealand to build an internal combustion engine), making his own spark plugs, carburettors and crankshafts plundered from old tobacco tins and cast-iron irrigation pipes. An article in the *Scientific American,* dated 1909, shows Pearse's remarkable idea of an ignition timing system built inside a spark plug. From scratch Pearse set out to adapt the engines being fitted for cars, to flight.  For months nothing seemed to come of his toil until one evening in 1902 the sleepy Waitohi Valley was woken by the reverberations of what seemed to be the arrival of the stampeding horses of the apocalypse. Pearse's first successful two-cylinder, 25 horsepower petrol engine had rattled to life, frightening cattle, provoking the ire of local farmers and leading one local to fear that the Boer War had come to New Zealand. Nevertheless the engine worked, and unlike the bulky engines that were being developed to power automobiles, it weighed a mere 57kg. This led Pearse to claim his was the lightest engine in the world for its power (equivalent car engines of the time were four times as heavy). Then, using bamboo, tubular steel, wire and canvas, he constructed a low aspect ratio monoplane. Its 25-foot wingspan was supported on a tricycle undercarriage. Of prophetic design, it closely resembled in appearance a modern micro-light aircraft.  http://www.nzedge.com/heroes/images/rp-diagram.jpg Diagram from *Richard Pearse Aviator* Courtesy Geoff Rodliffe |

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| http://www.nzedge.com/images/space01.gif [[Top of Page](http://www.nzedge.com/heroes/pearse.html#top)](http://www.nzedge.com/heroes/pearse.html#top) | **Into The Insubstantial Air** Pearse carried out endless trials of his creation. A neighbour reported seeing him steer his "beast" around his paddocks using reins attached to the controls, another reported seeing him jogging along after the plane holding the wing’s trailing edge. The time came for the fist attempt at flight. Wheeling his plane down to the school crossroads on Main Waitohi Road, adjacent to the Pearse farm, Richard tried several times to start the engine in front of a small crowd who had heard that "Bamboo Dick" was up to something. Late in the afternoon the engine finally burst into life and lumbered into the air. The craft immediately lurched left due to a lack of suitable control, then climbed slowly for a short distance before crashing into the pilot's own gorse hedge. Most witness accounts have the distance traveled as somewhere between 100 - 150 metres, with more generous estimates suggesting that Pearse may have flown up to 400 metres.  [[http://www.nzedge.com/heroes/images/rp-brownplane.jpg](http://www.nzhistory.net.nz/Gallery/Pearse/Pearse.html)](http://www.nzhistory.net.nz/Gallery/Pearse/Pearse.html) Diagram from *Richard Pearse Aviator* Courtesy Geoff Rodliffe  To the exasperation of believers and skeptics alike, and the source of the controversy over whether or not Pearse "flew", no details of the flight were recorded, by Pearse or onlookers. Unlike the Wright’s attempt in Kitty Hawk, no one in Waitohi wielded a camera or measured the airspeed of the gorse-bound excursion. No proof exists to pinpoint the date or offer proof of the flight: records of the visit Pearse made to the local hospital after injuring his collarbone in the fall were destroyed in a fire, and a photo of the aircraft prone in the hedge, taken by a professional photographer the day after the flight, was later destroyed in flooding. |
| http://www.nzedge.com/images/shim.gif[Top of Page](http://www.nzedge.com/heroes/pearse.html#top) | **The First Flight?** Pearse himself, in two letters, the first to Dunedin’s *Evening Star,* published on May 10th 1915, the second published in the *Christchurch Star* on September 15th 1928, didn’t believe, by his own rigorous standards, that he had achieved ‘proper’ flight. For him this meant a powered take-off followed by "sustained and controlled flight". Pearse’s flights, characterised by powered take-offs followed by erratic descents, failed to meet his own criteria. In the letters he states that he set out to solve the problem of aerial navigation in February or March 1904, and acknowledges that pre-eminence should be given to the Wright brothers. They flew on 17 December 1903 and achieved aerial navigation in 1905. However, as Pearse’s biographer Gordon Ogilvie, points out, "… a great deal of eyewitness testimony, able to be dated circumstantially, suggests that 31 March 1903 was the likely date of this first flight attempt."  One or two eyewitnesses have mentioned the date of March 1902 as the first take-off date, but with all surviving witnesses now dead and no extant documentary evidence, the claims are likely to remain unproven.  Regardless of the exact date of Pearse’s first foray and the irresolution of the debate over whether it could acceptably be termed flight, his first aircraft was a remarkable design achievement. The tragic paradox of Pearse is that it was to have absolutely no impact whatsoever on the development of aviation history. Yet his design, like the flight, unrecognised in his lifetime, was unerringly ahead of its time, embodied visionary concepts that would become commonplace in the world’s aircraft of the future. As Vaughan Yarwood notes in "The Birdman of Waitohi" (*New Zealand Geographic,* Oct-Dec 1999)they would usurp the Wright brothers in design preference in almost every particular: single wing as opposed to biplane, wheels in preference to skids, propeller at the front, not the back, and moveable wing panels incorporating the world’s first aileron controls instead of wing warping – closely resembling the method of control used in today’s high speed aircraft. "The Wright's got the recognition, Pearse the legacy."  [Go to MOTAT's website](http://akcity.govt.nz/around/places/motat/)  Replica of Pearse's aircraft displayed at Museum of Transport and Technology ([MOTAT](http://akcity.govt.nz/around/places/motat/)) Auckland. Courtesy of Geoff Rodliffe |

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| [Top of Page](http://www.nzedge.com/heroes/pearse.html#top) | **Wings Clipped and Disillusioned** The Wright’s first flight on 17 December 1903 over a prepared sandy flat lasted a mere 12 seconds and managed a distance of 120 feet, before dipping to the ground in much the same manner as Pearse. After another two trials of similar length their fourth flight later that morning powered on a true line for 59 sec and traveled 852 feet. It concluded with a halt as abrupt as Pearse's had been, but the North Carolina sand-dunes were fortuitously free of gorse hedges. The news of the Wright brothers' flight at Kitty Hawk, was as Pearse’s brother Warne remembered, a "sad awakening" for Pearse. Yet he continued his flying experiments, achieving several further powered take-offs, or long hops. Most of them were witnessed but none of them significantly furthered his ambition of sustained flight. He patented his aircraft in July 1906.  http://www.nzedge.com/heroes/images/rp-patents.jpg   Pearse's 1906 patent application. Courtesy Geoff Rodliffe  During these years of aviation trial and error Pearse’s mechanical inquisitiveness drew him into other areas. Perhaps inspired by a desire to preserve the music of the Pearse family orchestra, he developed two sound recording and playback devices. One of these was a version of the gramophone: a phonograph and trumpet using wax-coated discs that could be heard 400 metres away. In 1909 Pearse received some attention from the *Temuka Leader* and the *Otago Witness*, both reporting that he was ready to trial his "airship". However Pearse was finding his new design under-powered for its size and he was beginning to have doubts. By this time there had been over 70 powered take-offs worldwide, the English Channel had been crossed by Blériot in July of that year, and the United States Government had awarded the Wright brothers $30,000 for breaking the 40 mph barrier. Modestly resourced (to say the least), Pearse had increasingly turned to theory and to working through his calculations on paper. After having powered himself shakily off the ground and having spent five years working, with scant resources, on building a larger and more stable prototype, he must have realised that he was coming to the limits of what he could achieve. As he wrote retrospectively in the 1928 letter to the *Christchurch Star* (lamenting an inability to generate sufficient speed to make the rudders effective on his craft),  "So I never flew with my experimental ‘plane … [however, given his reliable motor] I had successful navigation within my grasp … but I decided to give up the struggle, as it was useless to try to compete against the men who had factories at their backs."  The isolated farmer’s vision had far outstripped the limited workshop technology he had available to realise its potential. An edge dweller in excess, as Bill Sewell notes: "Pearse you were squeezed out/this never was your centre."  Late in 1910, after falling seriously ill with typhoid (the same disease that was to kill Wilbur Wright two years later) he sold up the farm at Waitohi and shifted in 1911 to South Otago where he farmed at Loudens Gully near Milton. He took his designs and aircraft with him, but the land was less suitable for launching or landing air trials and he dismantled and packed away his models in the shed. Being earthbound didn’t improve his aptitude for farming. To the detriment of his stock and the scorn of neighbours he continued to devise a variety of ingenious pieces of farm equipment, including a motorised plough, a fertiliser applicator and an automatic potato planter with mechanical arms fixed to a plough.  http://www.nzedge.com/heroes/images/rp-bike.jpg   Pearse's Powercycle Courtesy Geoff Rodliffe  He was known around Milton not for his experiments in flight, but for a self-fashioned "power-cycle" made with the cylinder from the aero engine. As Yarwood writes, Pearse, on the road to town to visit the Milton Athenaeum and catch up on the latest advances in engineering, must have been a head-turning sight:  "The vertical exhaust pipe rose above his head and without muffler the four-stroke engine made the indescribable din that was his signature tune. He was sometimes seen on the country roads in the evenings, coat flapping, sparks spouting wildly from the high exhaust."  In May 1917 Pearse was conscripted into the Otago military regiment, and although sent overseas in January 1918, illness prevented him from seeing action. In October that year he returned to New Zealand. |

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| [Top of Page](http://www.nzedge.com/heroes/pearse.html#top) | **"A Plane in Every Home"** In 1921, weary of the land and plummeting wool prices, Pearse sold up at Milton and moved to Woolston, Christchurch. He built three houses, renting out two of them and living on his own in the third. Using the rental income to work on his inventions, and becoming ever more secretive and reclusive. He turned his house's garage into his workshop and, in the early 1930s set about designing and building a second aircraft: his "Utility Plane". It had an engine that could be changed in pitch, so the aircraft was able "to take off vertically on rough ground or limited areas" anticipating vertical take-off jet-aircraft such as the Harrier Jump Jet. It was Pearse’s vision that his plane would be the Model-T Ford of the airways, "the private plane for the million", able to be flown from any suburban backyard and, with fold-a-way wings, able to stored in the garage.  http://www.nzedge.com/heroes/images/rp-uplane.jpg   Pearse for the people: the Utility Plane Courtesy MOTAT / Geoff Rodliffe  The inventor, who had been experimenting with flight since before automobiles were anything other than a novelty, now dreamed of flight for the masses. He applied for a patent in November 1943, and after battling bureaucracy for six years it was finally granted in 1949. His plane was however, never flown. Sadly for Pearse, his design, an eclectic mix of the prophetic and the outmoded, was out of its time. By now the Sikorsky helicopter had been successfully tested and research into the jet engine was surpassing the propeller (coincidentally another New Zealander, [William Pickering](http://www.nzedge.com/heroes/pickering.html), was at the leading edge of this research at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, USA). Embittered and disillusioned by the [[Utility Plane Plans - click to enlarge](http://www.nzedge.com/heroes/pearse-utilityplane.html)](http://www.nzedge.com/heroes/pearse-utilityplane.html)lack of interest from aviation companies, Pearse became increasingly paranoid and in June 1951 was admitted to Sunnyside Mental Hospital. There he died of a heart attack  in July 1953 aged 75. He never married. |

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| [Top of Page](http://www.nzedge.com/heroes/pearse.html#top) | **Lonely Death and Posthumous Resurrection** In his lifetime Richard Pearse saw his efforts ridiculed and his patents ignored. Fifty years of research into the potential of flight had reaped nothing. His death had gone unnoticed and the wider world knew nothing of his work, which had no discernable influence on the development of aviation. It was only through the serendipitous discovery of the model for Pearse’s Utility plane, locked away in his Christchurch garage, that he is remembered at all. His reputation, was posthumously resurrected by the dedicated efforts of the late George Bolt (a former Chief Engineer for Tasman Empire Airways and himself a pioneer aviator). Bolt rescued the relics of Pearse’s life from almost certain oblivion, tracking down surviving witnesses and rescuing machinery from the Waitohi refuse dump. His work was later advanced by others made curious by Pearse’s quixotic story, men such as [Geoff Rodliffe](http://home.clear.net.nz/pages/geoff.rodliffe/) and [Gordon Ogilvie](http://www.ccc.govt.nz/Library/Heritage/LocalHistory/CanterburyWriters/gordon_ogilvie.asp).  http://www.nzedge.com/heroes/images/rp-georgebolt.jpg   George Bolt with salvaged parts of Pearse's plane from Waitohi rubbish dump Courtesy MOTAT /  Geoff Rodliffe  Sparked by the diverting controversy over whether he flew before the Wright brothers, Pearse soon entered popular Kiwi folklore. A NZBC documentary on his life was produced, and in the mid 70s a replica of his first aircraft was constructed. The replica, complete with Pearse's unique engine toured throughout New Zealand, and was exhibited at Auckland’s [Museum of Transport and Technology](http://www.akcity.govt.nz/around/places/motat/) where it remains to be seen today. In 1980 it was subjected to wind tunnel tests at Auckland University and found to be capable of flying in a manner similar to modern micro-lights. The replica was also exhibited at the Vancouver Expo ’86, and in a fitting irony was dismantled and flown to Canada in the hold of a Boeing 747. Timaru airport is named in Pearse’s honour, and numerous plays, television documentaries and poetry have been written on him. In 1999 Pearse was featured in New Zealand Post’s "Leading the Way" http://www.nzedge.com/heroes/images/rp-stamp.jpgMillennium issue of stamps, alongside suffragette [Kate Sheppard](http://www.nzedge.com/heroes/sheppard.html), atom splitter [Ernest Rutherford](http://www.nzedge.com/heroes/rutherford.html), Everest conqueror [Ed Hillary](http://www.nzedge.com/heroes/hillary.html), and jet-boat inventor Bill Hamilton. |

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| [Top of Page](http://www.nzedge.com/heroes/pearse.html#top) | **Pearse and Popular Myth** That New Zealand wants desperately and proudly to claim Pearse as the first powered-flight aviator speaks about the creativity and insecurity of coming from a land downunder. We have an anxious need to assert ourselves as more than "first to see the sun". Mad Pearse flying his strange craft before a small crowd of locals, was wickedly parodied in Peter Jackson’s 1998 movie *Forgotten Silver*. In this acclaimed docu-spoof Pearse’s first flight ends disastrously when "pioneering filmmaker" Colin McKenzie's camera causes Pearse to turn the crude plane and crash. The camera then focuses on a newspaper in a spectator’s hip pocket to show the date that would prove that Pearse took to the air before the Wright brother’s first successful flight. As Jackson reflects on his own efforts at myth-making the spirit would not have been one unfamiliar to Pearse:  "There's a pioneer spirit in New Zealand, because we're such an isolated country–a feeling that we can look after ourselves. If we want something, we'll invent it. The film is a tribute to that spirit."  Embodying the doggedly determined but self-effacing side of the Kiwi psyche, Pearse himself modestly noted "It is impossible to assign any invention to one man, as all inventions are the products of many minds." Despite this, Pearse has become emblematic of Kiwi ingenuity. That an obscure bloke from down-under, tinkering in his shed to the amusement of skeptical locals achieved something which none before him had done: powered flight. Perhaps, leaving the issue of "who was first" in the gorse hedge we could make a claim for Pearse’s erratic first flight as the originating moment of Kiwi extreme sport. |

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| [Top of Page](http://www.nzedge.com/heroes/pearse.html#top) | **The Legacy of "Mad Pearse"** The Concorde crash in Paris in July 2000, primarily an event of tragic human loss, may later be read as symbolic of the romance of flight falling from the skies. That its flight path, a brief urging towards the sky before lurching back towards the earth, closely resembled the early flights of pioneering Kiwi inventor Richard Pearse is an unfortunate irony. Rewind almost one hundred years: Pearse emerged from his sortie into a gorse bush with a few bumps and bruises, the passengers on the 25th July flight did not survive. One was a flight of hope, an Icarus yearning for the sun, the other a casualty of the future, a supersonic vision of high performance excellence salvaged from the space age. One embodied one man’s practical, industrious imagination: a tightly coiled roll of No.8 fencing wire, the other the application of untold research, money and resource dedicated to the pursuit of luxury and speed.  http://www.nzedge.com/heroes/images/Pearse_concord.jpg  "The Concorde, which first flew in 1967, was the last holdout; despite its stunning tech, it was really a throwback to the idea that getting airborne was the highest human achievement of the twentieth century. Breaking the sound barrier, to the tune of Mach 2, and roaring along at the edge of space was icing on the cake, a way for the very wealthy to feel, briefly, that they were channeling Chuck Yeager." Matthew DeBord, [*Feed Daily*](http://www.feedmag.com/daily/dy072700.html)*,* July 27 2000  In the later years of his life Pearse’s everyman dream was "a plane for the millions", the Model-T mass-produced consumerist ideal that might make ubiquitous the wonder of flight. The tragic irony of Pearse’s life is that his pioneering and ingenious innovations were never recognised in his lifetime, or else they were developed and surpassed elsewhere – he didn’t have the "Wright stuff". As his biographer Gordon Ogilvie writes:  "... there seems to be an element of Greek tragedy in the man. Even the Gods were against him. He was an inventive phenomenon in a small community where farming was everything. If you couldn’t farm you were an idiot. And yet he chose to do the unthinkable – to fly."  [Go to Peter Jackson's site](http://tbhl.theonering.net/films/forgotten_silver.html)   The first flyer as imagined in [*Forgotten Silver*](http://tbhl.theonering.net/films/forgotten_silver.html).  From a land of travellers, whose national symbol is a poorly sighted, flightless bird, came an eccentric visionary with a soaring imagination who managed, against the most improbable odds, far away from any centre, of scientific debate or knowledge, to upset assumptions and become airborne. Pearse was a prophetic designer and engineer who had absolutely no influence whatsoever on the course of history, yet he is immortalized for his inventiveness, ingenuity and achievement against the odds of ridicule, geography and resources. Richard Pearse: the Kiwi who flew. |

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| http://www.nzedge.com/images/space01.gif [[Top of Page](http://www.nzedge.com/heroes/pearse.html#top)](http://www.nzedge.com/heroes/pearse.html#top) | *Our thanks to Geoff Rodliffe for his insight, encouragement, material and pictures.*     **References:**  Rodliffe, Geoffrey (1993).  *Wings over Waitohi*, Auckland.    Ogilvie, Gordon (1994).  *The Riddle of Richard Pearse,* Revised edition, published by Reed Publishing, Auckland.    McLauchlan, Gordon (1995).  *New Zealand Encyclopedia*, (4th Edition), David Bateman Ltd, Auckland.    Riley, Bob (1995).  *Kiwi Ingenuity: A Book of New Zealand Ideas and Inventions*, AIT Press, Auckland.  Rodliffe, Geoffrey (1997).  *Richard Pearse Aviator*, Auckland (for the younger reader).  Moore, Helen and Rodliffe, Geoffrey (1999). *"Oh for the Wings of a Moth",* Auckland.  Yarwood, Vaughan (1999).  "The Birdman of Upper Waitohi", in *New Zealand Geographic,* Oct-Dec.    **Plays:**  **http://www.nzedge.com/heroes/images/rp-johnpalmer.jpg** John Palmer as Richard Pearse in *The Pain and the Passion* Courtesy Sherry Ede  *The Pain and the Passion* written and directed by Sherry Ede (email: [edenpacific@xtra.co.nz](Mailto:edenpacific@xtra.co.nz)), performed at the Company Theatre, Belmont, Auckland in June 2000.  *Too High the Son*, by Stephen Bain and France Herve - [Playmarket](http://www.playmarket.org.nz).  **Web Links [accessed December 2000]:**  Official [NZ history](http://www.nzhistory.net.nz/Gallery/Pearse/Pearse.html) site with an article by Gordon Ogilvie from [*The Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*](http://www.cultureandheritage.govt.nz/History/DNZB/index.html), Vol 3 (1996) – includes a virtual "loop the loop" simulation in Pearse’s first flying machine.  [*Time* Magazine](http://www.time.com/time/magazine/articles/intl/0,3266,33686,00.html)"Time 100", "Most Influential People of the South Pacific" issue.  Geoffrey Rodliffe [article](http://avstop.com/History/AroundTheWorld/NewZ/research.html) in [Avstop](http://www.avstop.com/) magazine detailing his research, including witness testimony, into Pearse’s early flights.  Geoffrey Rodliffe's [homepage](http://home.clear.net.nz/pages/geoff.rodliffe/).  New Zealand journalist Debbi Gardiner's article about her Great Uncle Pearse in [Salon](http://www.salon.com/tech/feature/2002/08/22/richard_pearse/index.html). "Had he been an American, not a New Zealander, his greatness would surely have been recognized sooner. And yet the fact that he was a New Zealander, and one ostracized by the locals, may well have what made him so determined to fly."  New Zealand Post ["Leading the Way"](http://newstamps.freeservers.com/e9912/newzealand.htm) Millennium stamp issue.  Auckland [Museum of Transport and Technology](http://akcity.govt.nz/around/places/motat/).  Aviation fan [Chris Brady’s](http://chrisbrady.itgo.com/pearse/pearse.htm) site, featuring information on early aviators with a substantial illustrated article on Pearse, including major links.  [Auckland Airport](http://www.auckland-airport.co.nz/pearse.html) page on Pearse.  [Temuka](http://www.infocus.co.nz/temuka/pearse.htm) homepage.  Entry on Pearse in the [Working Class Encyclopedia.](http://hammer.prohosting.com/~penz/encycl/p2encyc.htm)  Lively [debate](http://www.coolboard.com/msgshow.cfm/msgboard=519059512942082&msg=136495424429629&page=1&idDispSub=142319927611562) stimulated by the play *The Pain and the Passion.*  [Bill Sherwood’s](http://www.ctie.monash.edu.au/hargrave/pearce1.html) Australian tribute site to Pearse: "Man’s first powered flight":  Christchurch City Council Library page on Pearse biographer [Gordon Ogilvie](http://www.ccc.govt.nz/Library/Heritage/LocalHistory/CanterburyWriters/gordon_ogilvie.asp).  Victoria University page on poet [Bill Sewell](http://www.vuw.ac.nz/nzbookcouncil/writers/sewellbill.htm).  ***Forgotten Silver* links:**  [http://www.nzedge.com/heroes/images/rp-forgotten-silver1.jpg](http://tbhl.theonering.net/films/forgotten_silver.html)  [Peter Jackson’s](http://tbhl.theonering.net/films/forgotten_silver.html) official fansite.  New Zealand Washington Embassy site [review](http://www.nzemb.org/movie/silver.htm) of the film.  *LA Times* [review](http://usatoday.hollywood.com/news/topstories/01-15-98/html/1-1.html).  "Films of the Golden Age" [review](http://www.filmsofthegoldenage.com/1999/november99/reviews/forgottensilver.htm).  **Poem:**  Come to the edge, he said. They said: We are afraid. Come to the edge, he said. They came.  He pushed them, and they flew...    Guillaume Apollinaire (1880-1918) French Poet  WRITTEN BY PAUL WARD  **Sites which have linked to this page:**  [Salon](http://www.salon.com/tech/letters/2002/09/04/bamboo_dick/index.html)  [Nzine](http://www.nzine.co.nz/pearse.html)  [Central South Island Tourism](http://www.southisland.org.nz/html/richardpearse.html) |

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