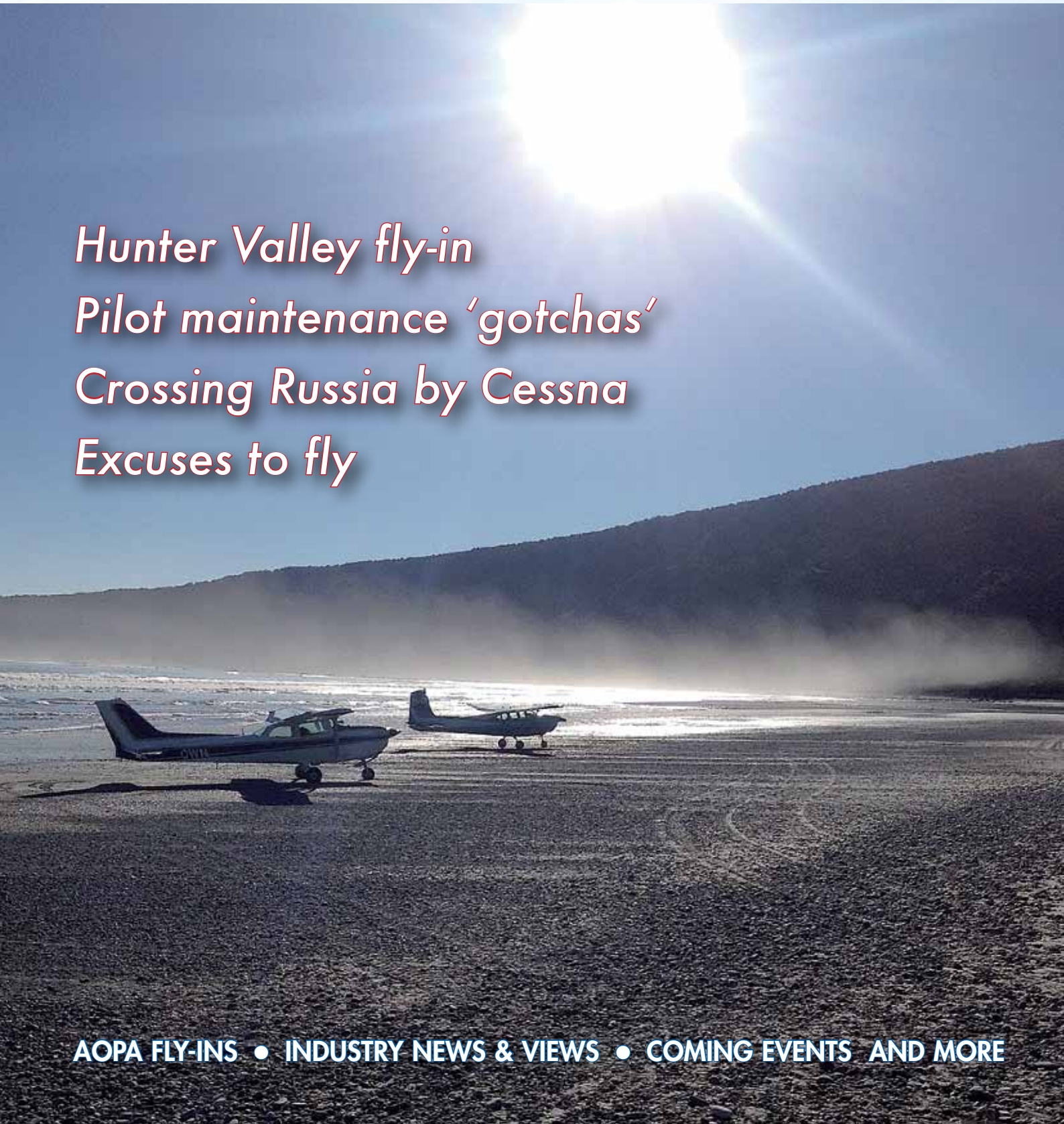
Approach

THE NEW ZEALAND AIRCRAFT OWNERS AND PILOTS MAGAZINE
AUTUMN 2021



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Approach

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Coming up

- *Warbirds on Parade*
  15 March, Ardmore
- *Kittyhawk Flying Club/*
  AOPA NZ 50th Anniversary
  19–22 March 2021
- *AOPA NZ AGM*
  Sunday 21 March, Cromwell
- *Ruatoria AeroClub fly-in*
  27 March, Ruatoria
- *Classic Fighters Airshow,*
  2–4 April, Omaka, Blenheim
- *For more information visit*
  www.aopa.co.nz

Cover photo: One from the archives, – a big day out at Big Bay, West Coast, South Island

Photo credit: Hamish Ross

Contents

Regular Columns

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Deadline for ads, articles and photos for the next (Winter) issue: **20 April 2021**.

President's Comment

ADS-B has had a lot of exposure recently. I'm not going to apologise for this. I believe ADS-B gives our cockpits a new dimension. It has a legal aspect – a bit boring, it has a track following aspect – good, it has a safety aspect – very good, but the best thing about ADS-B is that it is fun to have and play with… it offers a new dimension.

Our C182 has ADS-B in and out. I think 'in' is essential, though there are numerous way to get it and you don't need the expensive options.

We've had a rough time flying to and from our Marlborough Sounds bach over the holiday break. One of our most memorable trips was a day when Sue got an attack of 'get home-itis'. I did my assessments and it was flyable but not easy. We had rain and 1000ft cloud down most of the Kaikoura coast and Canterbury. We were flying into a light southerly for most of the way to RT. Not much turbulence but not a relaxing flight.

Once we were out of Omaka and on the coast, the autopilot worked smoothly. I consider a good autopilot my best friend in these conditions. Set and monitor; we were following the coastline so were adjusting the heading on a regular basis. Altitude was mostly 1000ft, and on occasion down to 600ft. We were clear of cloud but in drizzle and rain, following the coastline and always in touch with it. Heater was going and the coffee tasted good. I was comfortable but for Sue it was a new style of flying, not comfortable, as it was for our non-verbal autistic son, who took it all in with a bit of a startled expression.

As pilots will recognize, this is how VFR pilots get home on so many occasions. We are not allowed to climb through the clouds to the sun above, or head out to sea and fly in cloud at a sensible altitude. The rules forbid it. We 'scud run'.

IFR ratings in this country are difficult to get and difficult and expensive to maintain. Only about five percent of our pilots are IFR rated, compared to fifty percent of American or Canadian pilots, where the rules are modern, more sensible, and safe flying is a higher priority.

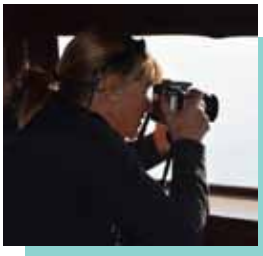
The aim of this comment is not to promote IFR, though I am a great advocate for change in this area. But no, while flying south from Kaikoura the radio got busy. There were three aircraft coming up the coast or in our vicinity. The sea was grey, the clouds were grey, the aircraft were silver – a big nothingness out there.

We would survive without ADS-B, but the comfort that seeing these three aircraft on the screen and knowing that, even though we were all at similar altitudes, we were well apart and able to talk ourselves into a safe passing, was well worth the expense of the ADS-B installation. Don't get me wrong: radios and eyeballs are primary, but radio calls are rarely accurate enough and the eyeball is a poor scanner of vast areas of grey. We eventually spotted the planes, but the difficulty in locating them on visuals, even when we knew exactly where to look, provided a salient lesson.

My hope is that more and more aircraft will subscribe to the ADS-B magic and that the niggling doubt that there may be 'non believers' out there, potentially in my flight path, will melt away.

Safe flying.

Steve Brown, President



I haven't been flying much over the past couple of months, but I have been reading, thinking and losing hair over aviation.

Putting together each issue of *Approach* magazine can be a challenge. I might rephrase that: putting each issue together is almost always a challenge. Many aviators assure me that they like to read flying stories, but it seems that the people prepared to write them are few and far between. The magazine can only be as good as the contributions you send in...

So this is a plea for you to set your fingers on the keyboard and write a story – about a flying trip, about buying or building or rebuilding a plane, about a safety or technical issue, a mechanical problem, a misjudgement. About introducing a friend to GA or a glorious moment of aviation achievement.

The possibilities are broad, and (surely?) as various as our membership. You can write about a recent occurrence or something you experienced in the dim and distant past – sometimes we need a bit of perspective before we're ready to formulate and share a story.

Ross Millichamp recently joined the magazine's editorial team, and has contributed a story in this issue. He's also been tasked with encouraging others to write articles (and to get them in by deadline; a challenge in itself). Heartfelt thanks to Ross, and to the other stalwarts who frequently rise to the occasion and share their musings – in particular, regular contributors Ian Sinclair, Matt Anderson, David Berger, Jay McIntyre, and to advertising wrangler, proofreader and default Executive mag reminder, Don Ryder. A few more one-off or regular contributors would certainly help to spread the load.

Another request: if there are topics you'd like to see covered in the magazine, drop me a line with your suggestions and requests (editor@aopa.co.nz). And do, please, let Ross or I know if there's a story out there that you think should be followed up: if we don't know about it, we can't cover it.

As we go to print, we're rapidly closing on AOPA's AGM and 50th anniversary weekend. I'm looking forward to the trip, to catching up, to celebrating our organisation's past. Please do take the opportunity in Cromwell to chat to me about the magazine and any stories you'd like to share.

Anna Mackenzie, Editor

AOPA 50th Anniversary & 2021 AGM

AOPA marks its 50th Anniversary – and holds its annual AGM – over the weekend of 19–22 March 2021 at 'The Gate' in Cromwell, Central Otago, but there have been a few changes in the programme.

The first unofficial meeting of the Kittyhawk Flying Club was held nearby, at Walter Peak, in 1969 and lead to the Kittyhawk Flying Club being incorporated at Taieri in March 1971.

To attend, you need to register via the AOPA Events page on the website and also book your accommodation by phoning the hotel on 03 455 1777. As we have booked the whole complex you will not be able to book online, as it will show no vacancies. The accommodation will be on a bed and breakfast basis of $240.00 per room. When the hotel is full, the office at *The Gate* will offer alternative accommodation in Cromwell.

Weekend Programme

Friday morning: Christine Taylor Memorial Golf Challenge
This biannual event will be played between North and South Island teams at the 18 hole Ranfurly Golf Course. Land and walk 200m from the paddock to the Golf Course

Friday Evening: 5pm, meet for drinks and nibbles in the conference room at *The Gate* and catch up with fellow AOPA members.

Saturday morning: breakfast at *The Gate* followed by pick up to Highlands Park to view the go-karts, high speed taxi, supercar fast dash. The National Motorsport Museum, highlighting an amazing part of NZ history will be open, as will its onsite cafe.

Saturday Lunch: 1pm at *The Gate* conference centre.

Saturday afternoon: a celebration of the Kittyhawk Flying Club and AOPA NZ. This will include a forum of AOPA members who will lead a discussion highlighting our history.

Saturday Evening: Bar opens at 5pm for pre dinner drinks and nibbles. 50th celebration dinner from 7pm, with a surprise guest speaker and presentation of the Annual AOPA Awards.

Sunday morning: 50th AGM at 10am

Sunday lunch: at Alexandra Airport, along with a tour of the new development at the airport. Afterwards, meander back to Cromwell to enjoy another night of fellow aviators' company before heading home on Monday morning.

Get your accommodation booked and fill in the AOPA Events webpage now. Organisers: Murray Paterson, Ian Sinclair, Sue Kronfeld, Ivor Yockney and Steve Brown.

ADS-B installation date extended

CAA has recently extended the compliance date for ADS-B installations by 12 months. The new date is **31 December 2022**.

This extension is mainly a result of delays brought about by difficulties due to Covid shut-downs, and will hopefully benefit those hoping to be able to install the smaller, lighter, cheaper Trig equipment (once certified).

We encourage members not to delay ADS-B installations any longer than absolutely necessary.

A warm welcome to new members:

Bernard Bader, Wag Aero Cuby, OLE; Neville Bailey; Malcolm Carlyon, MD 500E helicopter HNI; Steve Clarke, Alpi Pioneer 200 MSG; Andrew Crang, Cessna 650 N163JM; Roger Creighton, Cessna 172M DXK; Dane Dickinson, Zlin Aviation Savage Cub ZSC; Bill & Sally Gaddum; Callum Gordon; Craig Grylls, Cessna 172H TOR; Shannon Harnett & Shane Clark, Cessna 185D CKT; John Isaac; Lincoln Jones, Pitts Special LDJ; Michael Kenyon; Mark LaHood, Cessna 172 YAT; Phil & Sheree Lawton; Roger Laxon, Eurofox LKL; Ross Marfell, Alpi Pioneer 300 RS RFT; Mahanga Maru; Scott Milne, Cessna 182P DYV; Grant & Mary Murdoch, Nanchung CJ6 MUD; Roger Read, Sirus TL 3000 RNK; Thomi Richards, RV12 DMB; Jami-Lee Ross, Cessna 172 KAS; William & Jane Sage, Maule M6 MTP; Shane Smart; Steven Stronach, Cessna 172 CQF; Shaun Sutherland, Cessna Centurion DCA; Thomas Webster, Piper PA-22-50 PCR; Phil Welcome, Cessna 170 BIT.

Is your Directory listing up-to-date?

Our on-line Directory is only as good as the information supplied by members. In order to keep the Directory useful and fit for purpose, please check your personal listing and correct anything that requires up-dating.

AOPA Webcams

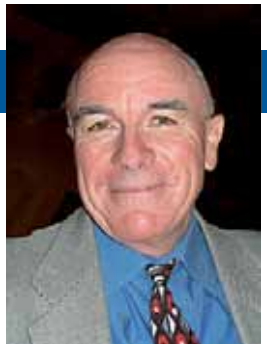
There has been a fair bit of back room stuff happening with webcams over the last few months which should make things more reliable. There are still a few steps to complete.

We have added a few new webcams onto the pages. We have also retired a couple.

Google's Chrome browser has had a recent change whereby it will not display a mix of https (encrypted) and http (not encrypted) content on the same page. I suspect it will only be a matter of time before all browsers implement this discipline. We still have a few cameras that are not https. If you are using Chrome, you may have some cameras that do not appear. If this happens, try accessing the site with another browser and they should appear. Opera is a good choice. We are working to fix this for all cameras, but some are out of our control.

As always, view the cameras with scepticism. Check dates and if there are no dates, cross-check with close images.

Let us know of any issues or cameras which we might add, at: webcams@aopa.co.nz



Vice-President's View

Advocacy is an important part of the AOPA NZ executive role. I serve on the ACAG committee to represent the views of AOPA NZ.

Acronyms breed at an alarming rate in aviation. TAF, Metar, IFR, VMC, LAHSO, VY are but a few examples that we often need to know. ACAG stands for the Aviation Community Advisory Group. It is made up of every representative group within aviation in New Zealand, including Air New Zealand, Airports, Airways and LAMEs.

ACAG's purpose is to work with CAA during the development phase of potential updates and rule changes. It's a way to get input to CAA before and during the development stage.

Just prior to Christmas I spent two days in Wellington with this group. We had a session with CAA staff focusing on current ongoing issues, then a meeting with senior CAA department heads to learn and to provide input into building an ongoing relationship.

My view is that CAA is working hard to improve both input and relationships with their customers, whom ACAG represent. I met some key people at CAA, and within ACAG learnt a lot from the diverse group.

Establishing and improving rules takes time due to the complexity and process required. Ultimately, most rule changes and updates have to go to the Minister of Transport to sign off on.

Social media is literally in the headlines at present. Some of us use social media such as Facebook. I use it cautiously, and have found many excellent groups related to aviation within Facebook.

We have carefully been growing the AOPA NZ Facebook group. Basically, anyone with an aviation interest can join. Our members are obviously predominately Kiwis but we also have members from Australia, USA and other parts of the world.

I am the administrator and try to post things of interest and also to cover the many aviation fly-ins that constantly occur throughout New Zealand. These are often organised by the local Aero Clubs and flying communities of which we are all part.

So, if you are looking for interesting events and use Facebook, sign up for our group and enjoy the 'view'.

Steve Horne, Vice-President

Progress with PPL Medical Standards review

By Stephen Brown

At long last we can report that our CAA has formally passed its recommendations for the PPL medical examination to the Ministry of Transport. The Ministry's consideration and sign off will be the final step to incorporating the DL9(P) medical standard (completed by your GP) to allow us to fly a raft of PPL privileges.

The PPL privileges CAA are prepared to let us fly on this medical standard are:

- Aircraft up to 2,730kg
- Multi engine
- Pressurised
- Controlled airfields with a radio or colour competency proven
- Over towns and congested areas
- Aerobatics, solo, over 3000ft
- Banner towing
- Helicopter sling loading
- Night flying, keeping within 25Nm of a lighted airfield
- Glider towing and parachute dropping below 10,000ft.

As you can see, no IFR, no agricultural flying and, of course, no air ops or hire and reward are permitted.

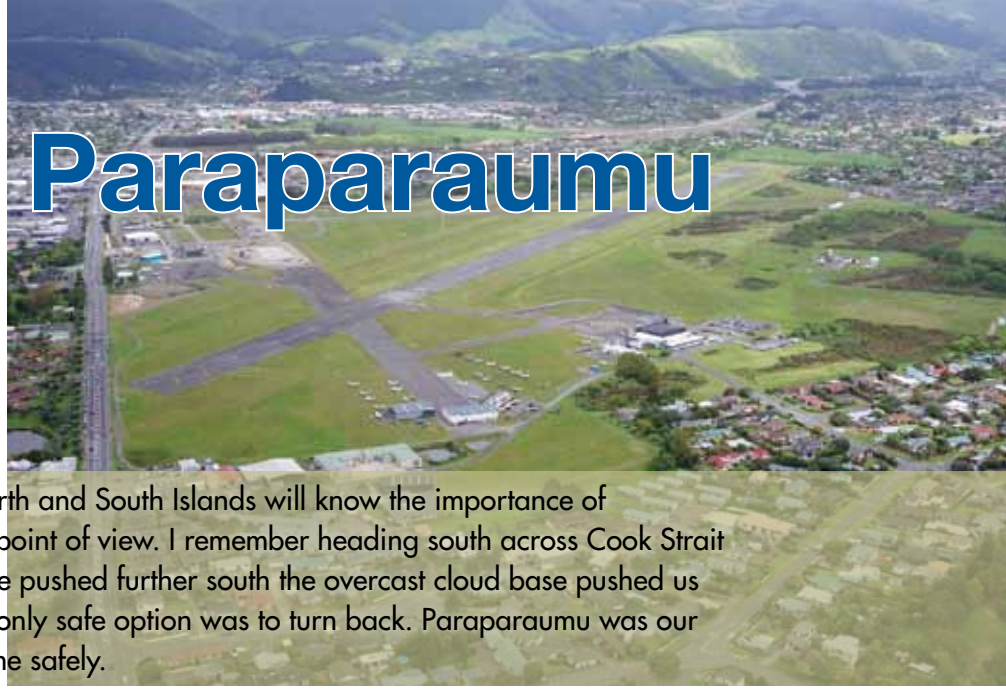
At present these privileges will only be available in New Zealand airspace, but CAA have indicated that if any other country decides to allow this medical standard, then this would be fine rom CAA's perspective.

They have also indicated, knowing that ICAO is reviewing PPL medical standards, that these recommendations will be reviewed in two to three years time, rather than the more usual seven years. This is all good news.

Your AOPA NZ Executive is currently working to expedite the inclusion of these recommendations into our formal regulations.

SOS from Paraparaumu

By Tim Costley, MP for Otaki



Anyone who has flown between the North and South Islands will know the importance of Paraparaumu airfield from an aviation point of view. I remember heading south across Cook Strait and, despite having the latest met, as we pushed further south the overcast cloud base pushed us lower and lower to the point where the only safe option was to turn back. Paraparaumu was our divert airfield that day and it got us home safely.

I can also think of days where we could push on across the water just far enough to see The Brothers and eventually Rarangi. This was possible because we had enough fuel to turn back and divert to Paraparaumu if required. If we had to hold Whanganui or Feilding, we could never have safely ventured that far into the haze. Paraparaumu is a life-saver.

Many of you will have seen in the media that the owners of what was once Wellington's main airport have their own plans: plans without planes, it seems. The thought of this iconic Kiwi airfield chopped up for the profits is appalling; even worse that most of the profits will likely go offshore, never to help or be returned to New Zealand. But the reason the Save Kāpiti Airport group are fighting for the airfield's future is not just to provide recreational pilots with a safe haven when crossing the Strait. Aside from all the recreational flying, there are three key reasons to save Paraparaumu.

First, we need it for resilience in crises. Not just for providing support to Wellington after the big one, but for when the Kāpiti Coast is cut-off to the north and south, just like Kaikoura was in 2016. We could only survive with an air-bridge, and life support for an area of this size needs large transport planes like Hercules flying in everything from milk to toilet paper.

Second, we need it for everyday safety. LifeFlight use it for patient transfer, Rescue Helicopters use it for the same and as a necessary fuel stop. Military and Police use it for training and for staging support to operations. Recreational pilots use it as a safe haven for crossing Cook Strait.

Finally, we need the airport for its commercial air connections to Auckland and the South Island – for business travellers, family holidays, tourists coming into the region. Kāpiti Airport is easier to get to than Wellington, it has better parking, and will soon be the regional hub serving travellers from Levin to Johnsonville. Unless it gets closed.

You might read online that the owners want to sell it because they're not making enough money. Putting their creative accounting aside, we believe the airport is viable with the commercial rents that come from the surrounding land, and scope to develop more. You may also hear that it is a 'safety' decision, especially if the AFIS is removed. Of course we all know that airports like ours operate all around New Zealand: Whanganui and Taupo are two examples of many. Anyone with a PPL can tell you how unattended airfields work and work safely. Whanganui has more traffic than Paraparaumu, Air Chathams fly there too, as does a large training school, along with military and civilian flights. NZPP is not dangerous nor has it passed its use-by date. Paraparaumu has a safe and thriving future, but we need help to fight to protect that.

We'd love to hear how you've used Paraparaumu Airport over the years, and why you believe it's important that it be retained. Please send your stories to info@savekapitiairport.co.nz to help us #SaveKāpitiAirport.

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Keep an eye on your mates

By Ian Sinclair

AOPA NZ is like a lot of other organisations where people come together because they share a passion that requires some resources and time commitment to feed it.

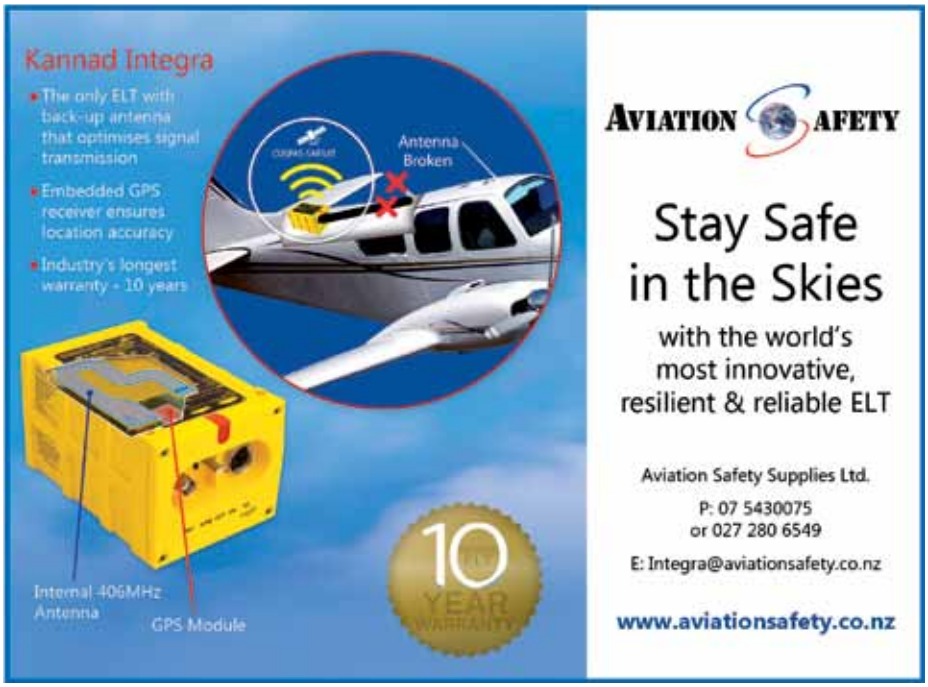
Often the resources and time are more likely to be found later in life, resulting in our membership being weighted to the more experienced (read 'older') end of the life journey. Our typical member is successful in their working and private life; our members are generally motivated and decent people.

Alzheimers is an illness that does not care about your past experience, your intellect, your skill or your achievements. It does not care if you are a pilot, it does not even care if you are an ace pilot. You can't beat it down with training or effort. We all know a close friend or a relative who has or will have Alzheimers. In New Zealand, about one in ten people aged over 65 have Alzheimer's; one in three over 85 years.

The disease can be very hard to identify in its early stages. Bits of memory drop out, there can be confusion with numbers, mild disorientation, forgetting little things a lot, a higher level of agitation, uncharacteristic depression. There are any number of signs. Generally, none of these is a great attribute if you're a pilot. Perhaps things you might notice things changing in a fellow pilot.

If you find a friend is struggling with these sorts of things, encourage them and their family to get a test. A GP is a great starting point.

Getting a diagnosis and sharing it with family and friends is the first step towards opening the door to understanding and allowing everyone to help to improve the situation.



If you have never had a friend who has suffered through Alzheimers, take the time to learn about this disease. There are any number of good articles on the web written by skilled and qualified people. Use your mouse.

Never accept unexpected behaviour at face value from a valued ageing friend. Ask their family if there is something happening. It can be confronting at first, but we all need to understand the disease and to support Alzheimers sufferers, their partners and their families.

People who find themselves at the more advanced stage need friends who accept them and the impact of the illness. It can be challenging, and most of us need some practice listening, saying "yes" and agreeing with things we may want to say "no" to. My number one rule is to remind myself that it is not about me, it is about the sufferer. Their reality is important to them and they need positive reinforcement.

When you have advanced Alzheimers you can't be the person who takes the lead role in a relationship; you need your family and friends to support you.

If you find you have a friend who is dragged down this path, the biggest gift you can give them is your ear and your time. The person they are is still in there, and you will be rewarded if you take the time.

Keeping an eye on your mates is a lifelong commitment.

For more information on Alzheimers and related illnesses, visit www.alzheimers.org.nz

Lining up the ducks

By Ross Millichamp

Almost everyone starts their aviation career in the same place. We get into an aircraft with an instructor for the first time and start on the long and seemingly impossible PPL syllabus.

The training regime is very structured, follows a logical procession and generally carries the student along on the journey until completion.

"Today we do medium turns, next time we do stalls. Make sure you book your next lesson at the desk before you leave."

If the instructor does not hear from you for a while, you might get a text encouraging you to get back in the air before you start to forget what you've learned.

Once initial training is completed our aviation paths diverge. Some people leap straight into CPL training and then into a career where motivation for flying is automatic and assured. Some people become active at their local aero club, which motivates members with competitions, fly-aways and social events. Sadly, some people who excel during training do not enjoy the unstructured environment of private aviation and drop out.

Perhaps aircraft owners are the most fortunate. We have ready access to our aircraft of choice and are free to decide where and when we fly. We also tend to fly more often than non-owners and are less likely to suffer the loss of confidence that comes from long periods on the ground. Of course, this comes at a significant financial cost, but once you've bought the aircraft, insured it, bought/rented a hangar and paid for the annual maintenance, you can con yourself into thinking that the only cost of going flying is the fuel and the oil.

However, even aircraft owners struggle for motivation at times, which is why AOPA fly-ins and safaris are such a Godsend. When one of Ian Sinclair's emails appears in our inbox, we have a reason to get the plane out of the hangar

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and head off somewhere new and interesting. If the event is to somewhere a bit challenging, we might just sneak out and do a little practice beforehand.

Like most pilots, I have to constantly work on ways to increase the utilisation of our aircraft. My answer is to include activities such as fishing and hunting into my flying programme.

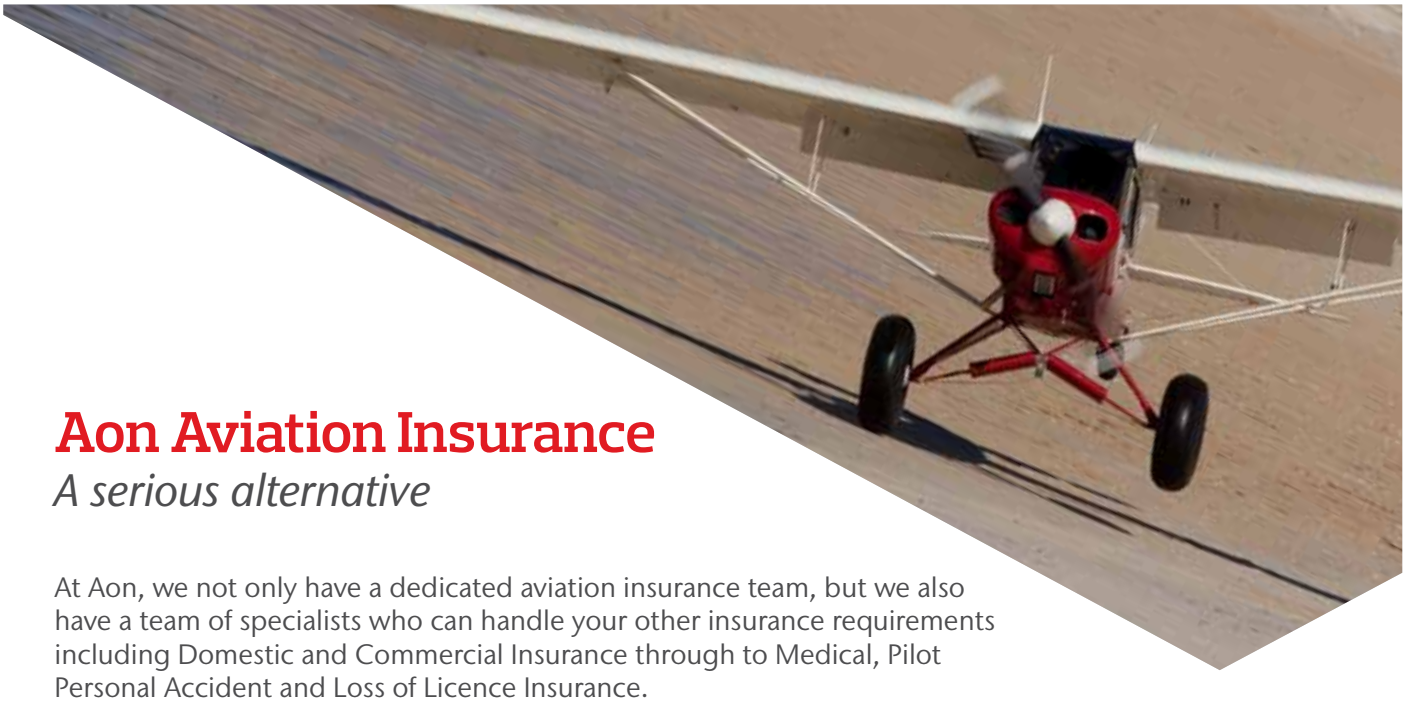
One of my most satisfying trips occurred not long after we bought our first aircraft, a 180HP Cessna 172, which turned out to be perfect for an aspiring back country pilot of modest ability.

A friend was acting as the caretaker of a property on the Cascade River in South Westland and invited me over to go hunting. I went first with an instructor for a practice run before heading back a few weeks later on my own with a rifle. To a novice, the strip appeared short, bumpy and narrow with big drains on either side. The valley itself seemed tight and the approach felt cluttered with terrain and trees. I circled the strip a couple of times before I plucked up the courage to land.

Nowadays I find the strip to be reasonably straightforward, but at the time it felt challenging. I'd grown up reading stories of the early fixed wing venison pilots who worked out of South Westland bush strips, so it was a proud moment when I wandered back through Security Gate 16 at Christchurch International Airport carrying a stag's head!

Since then I've made it a rule to try to use the Cessna before resorting to road or airline travel. A few years ago I flew to the Far North to meet my brother and fish for the spring run of big snapper in Doubtless Bay. We had great success and this has now become an annual event.

Some years the dodgy spring weather allows me to get there in the Cessna, while in other years I have to swallow my pride and go with Air New Zealand. One thing I've learned is that, if the weather is looking 50:50 a week or two out from a trip, to book a 'flexidate' ticket with Air New Zealand as a back-up. They are fully refundable.



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On the way to and from the Far North I try to make fuel stops at an airfield I've not been to before. This has given me the experience of landing at Wellington, Kapiti, Wanganui, Taupo, Te Kuiti, North Shore, Kerikeri and Dargaville – places I might not have had reason to visit otherwise.

On my early trips north from Canterbury I would track east of Mt Taranaki and up the West Coast past the Manakau Harbour, because there was no controlled airspace and I could stay on 119.1 much of the time.

Lately, to keep things interesting, I've started tracking over Ardmore and through east Auckland airspace past the Skytower, the Auckland Harbour Bridge and north via the Whangaparaoa Transit Lane. It's certainly much busier, with multiple frequency changes, but that side of Auckland is stunning from the air. I often hear visiting North Island pilots say they're a little intimidated by the Southern Alps. Believe me, we South Islanders feel the same way about Auckland airspace!

Any long trip is inevitably accompanied by weather concerns along the way. New Zealand has a highly variable climate and it's unlikely that the weather will be good on both the east and west coasts at the same time, or good in both Canterbury and the Far North. Jinny and I have had our share of unscheduled stops along the way, but over time you learn to go with the flow. As they say, 'If you have time to spare, go by air'.

On one trip Jinny and I were forced to land at Thames when we found ourselves boxed in by weather in unfamiliar terrain. The heavens opened as soon as we landed and we were stuck. We wandered into town, found a motel, rented a car and had a couple of days exploring the Coromandel while we waited for the weather to clear. It turned out to be a great experience.

Another time we were forced to land at Raglan when afternoon thunderstorms blocked our progress north at a time when I was starting to run low on fuel and even lower on ideas. We had no trouble booking a cabin at the Top 10 Holiday Park next to the grass strip, but were told our Labrador was not welcome. We called the local vet who was kind enough to put her up for the night. We asked the vet if this was a regular occurrence.

Maximise the fun and variety, says Ross, who aims to use the plane whenever possible. Above, downtown Auckland, Far North snapper; wife Jinny. Previous page: hunting on the West Coast.

"Never happened before," he said.

Such is the fun and variety of private aviation.

I am always looking for excuses to fly. I have learned that you have to plan more trips than you might really want to do, because a percentage will end up being cancelled due to the weather. Our friends have learned that when we say we're coming to visit, as often as not we'll cancel at the last minute. However, when all the ducks line up, you can't beat it.

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One day in the Hunter Valley

By Boyd and Sarah Devereux

It started with an AOPA email in the first week of January. A one day fly-in was planned for Saturday the 9th. That could work, I thought gladly, as we would be in between weanings on the farm.

"Do you want to fly to the Hunter Valley on Saturday?" I asked my wife, Sarah.

"Why?" she replied.

"An AOPA fly-in."

"What's the weather forecast?"

"Good."

"Right, sounds great."

Hunter Valley Station lies on the western shore of Central Otago's beautiful Lake Hawea. It has always been a place that I have wanted to visit by air, having passed by the airstrip plenty of times while fishing on the lake.

Saturday dawned fine, as predicted, and an early start saw the plane fueled and pre-flight checked, ready to roll by 9am. A short flight from Moa Flat to Alexandra to collect Sarah after she'd dropped our daughter off with her grandparents, then we were on our way.

We climbed out of Alex over the Clyde Dam, followed the Cromwell Gorge onto Cromwell, then the top of Lake Dunstan and into Wanaka CFZ. Next point of interest was Lake Hawea township; a couple of orbits overhead and a wave to the 'old man' then we headed up the western side of Lake Hawea. The radio chatter started to get busier as we approached the Hunter, familiar voices and call signs telling me there were quite a few heading to the same destination.

Smooth flying conditions meant a relaxed passenger beside me taking plenty of photos of the scenery. Below us, the lake was like glass.

Introducing Tony Schischka and Nick Schischka

A new Maintenance Provider is underway at Rangiora Airfield. Canterbury Aircraft Maintenance is staffed by Tony and Nick Schischka, who have amassed a vast amount of maintenance, flying and admin experience between them.

A LAME holding Groups 1, 2, 3 & 4 Aeroplane Ratings and a Group 1 Power plant Rating, Tony's career began with the RNZAF. Over 24 years there he gained wide experience across the full spectrum of RNZAF operations, culminating as Flight Commander of the NDT Flight responsible for all RNZAF NDT personnel and equipment.

He then moved to the (then) Civil Aviation Department where he established a Surface Methods NDT Qualification Scheme for GA and held various leadership positions for process development, including in the new era of sport and recreation flying, and for oversight of maintenance activities for Operators & Maintenance Organisations.

Next was a role with Royal Tongan Airlines as Engineering and Maintenance Manager, later followed by becoming QA Manager for Eagle Aviation Limited and then with Alpha Aviation Group.

Tony's various professional memberships include being Past VP of the NZ SAA and he claims as one of his most satisfying achievements, the construction of a folding wing Thorpe T-18C metal aircraft from plans, for which he also undertook the test flying.

Nick grew up around aeroplanes and helped his father build the T-18. He obtained a PPL before completing an engineering degree and joining the oil and gas industry. He has lived and flown in several countries and earned his FAA CPL, Multi-Engine Instrument rating, and Instructor rating in Houston before returning to NZ in 2019. He also holds a NZ CPL and is a proud aeroplane owner. Now he has seen the light and decided to become an Aircraft Engineer, learning the skills necessary from his Dad, Tony.

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Hunter Valley was soon in sight.

Another familiar voice on the radio told me the boss was leaving Wanaka in the Bearhawk.

Better slow down (tongue in cheek); I did not want to be first there.

Overhead the strip at 1800ft, left hand downwind, number two, over the lake and onto finals. As with any first time into a new strip, there is always a little of the unknown! Through the gap at treetop height, a bit of sink, a touch of power, a gasp or two from my co-pilot, and we were on the ground.

Clear blue skies, sun shining and amazing scenery: what a great setting for smoko/lunch and a catch up with friends new and old. We had the added bonus of watching the Tiger Moth gracefully performing aerobatics overhead. In all 26 aircraft arrived.

After an hour or two of talking everything aviation (and a little farming) with fellow aviators and their partners, it was time to head home. Guy Mead, who'd made the short hop from Dingleburn, had invited all who were interested to land on the Dingleburn Station strip, so that was our next destination. Another strip I'd long wanted to visit.

The view as we rounded the peninsular onto long finals was spectacular. More chat here then we decided to head up the Hunter River for a recce. The southerly was getting up by this stage and further up the valley, after a little encouragement from Sarah, we turned back and headed for Alexandra. The wind steadily picked up from the west all the way down the Clutha Valley, so we headed over Bannockburn via the Fraser Dam to Clyde then into Alex.

It was bumpy and gusty when we arrived on the ground at Alex and it was a good feeling to be taking up the kind offer of a hangar and an overnight stop with family in Earnscleugh. The flight home to Moa Flat the next morning was much smoother.

I cannot say enough about the organisation and support for these fly-ins, through email, text and the AOPA website. While the notice can be short, the concept of the one day fly-in is great, as you have a far better chance of getting the weather right. If you get the chance, join in.

Many thanks to Digby, Hannah and Walter for your warm welcome and hosting us at Hunter Valley.

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Far left: Hunter Valley airstrip; inset: Sarah and Boyd Devereux in MFD. This page: Hunter Valley; inset: approaching Dingleburn airstrip.

Wrong way to New Zealand: part 4

Into the soft underbelly of

By David Berger

As far as we are aware, prior to the pioneering crossing of Russia by Norman Surplus and James Ketchell in their autogyros in the northern spring of 2019, no Western light aircraft had ever before crossed Russia from west to east without a Russian navigator on board.

Since about 2015, it has been possible to transit the Pacific coast of Russia from Nome in Alaska to Japan, by way of Magadan on the Sea of Okhotsk, and this was initially our preferred route to fly our aircraft home to Australia from USA. In the spring of 2019, however, we watched agog as Norman and James forged a route across that vast land in their tiny craft, from Pskov in the west to Provideniya in the east, a distance of over 5000nm.

"You know, instead of heading northwest from Colorado up to Alaska, we could just go east, cross the Atlantic, keep going across Russia to Japan, and then turn right and head south. We could go the wrong way home!" This was in May. We planned to leave in mid-July.

By a roundabout route, we soon found ourselves in contact with Evgeny Kabanov. You don't cross Russia without Evgeny's help. Evgeny is a warm, gravelly-voiced, laconic businessman from Moscow, who loves aviation even more than you do. He is a fan of the Lord of the Rings and flew his R66 helicopter, as one of a flight of three, from Moscow to New Zealand in 2014. Some people reading this will have met him in New Zealand during that trip. He has also flown it to the North Pole. His mission in life, through his company makgas.com, is to bring Western aviators to Russia and to open up the country's flying scene generally.

"Sure, no problem. Just tell me where you want to go and I'll see if I can arrange it," said Evgeny.

"Anywhere?"

"Anywhere."

I studied Russian at school in England in the 1980s, so was able to spend a while negotiating the various Russian aviation websites, including the AOPA website, which has a map of all the airfields, with details about fuel availability, runways, etc. My eye was drawn immediately to the Black Sea and the Caucasus. I mean, why not? He did say "anywhere", after all.

Various plans were considered, discussed and shelved. Enter at Sochi, the famous resort on the eastern side? "No, don't go there. If Putin unexpectedly turns up at his palace, they'll close the airspace and you could get stuck for a week."

Transit stop through Georgia then north across the Caucasus into Russia? Could do, but could also get stuck waiting for good enough weather to cross the mountains. In through the eastern Caucasus and over to dip our toes in the Caspian Sea in Dagestan? Tempting, but time-consuming, potentially geopolitically "involved" and we had a lot of Russia to cross in the space of a four week visa.

Anapa looked good, a resort town close to the eastern edge of the Crimean peninsula with customs at the airport and the potential for fuel: "Can we go there?"

"Sure."

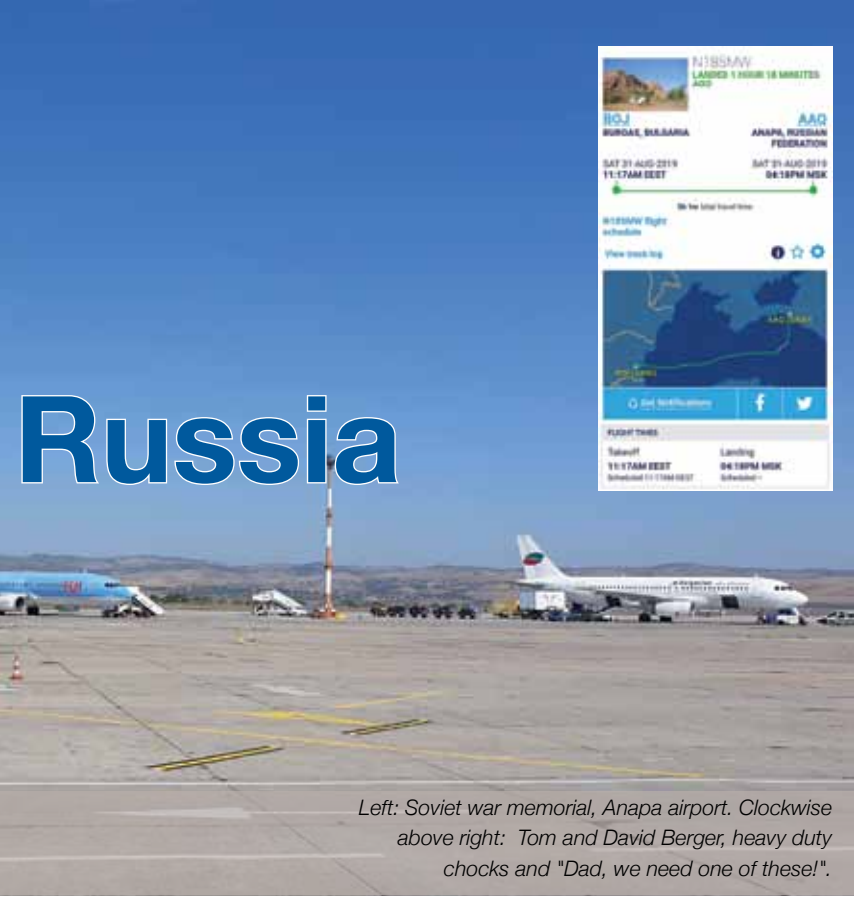
So, Anapa it was, and that's how we found ourselves one sunny morning in late August driving north from Burgas city in Bulgaria to the airport at Sunny Beach, from where we were shortly due to launch ourselves five hours east across the Black Sea to Russia.

Our escort through the airport was a pleasant young law student from Sofia on his summer job with, naturally, perfect English. We had soon paid our handling fee in a tiny office in the freight hangar and were walking back out to the aircraft when we saw an airport car driving purposefully towards us. It stopped and the driver asked us to get in and drive over to flight ops. There was a problem with our flight plan. Of course there was.

The airway we had flight-planned for took us through a tiny snippet of Turkish airspace and Ankara Control wanted to know the purpose of our flight. The purpose of our flight? What could this mean? Tom and I looked at each other anxiously and proceeded to overthink it. Were they being cagey about us passing through their airspace into disputed Ukrainian airspace and then on to Russia? Was this actually US military intelligence trying to stop us taking a US-registered aircraft into Russia? What should we say the purpose of our flight was?

The man in flight ops, a dark, hairy fellow

Russia



Left: Soviet war memorial, Anapa airport. Clockwise above right: Tom and David Berger, heavy duty chocks and "Dad, we need one of these!".

with a moustache like a New Guinea caterpillar, looked at us amusedly and barked: "Ferry flight!"

Ferry flight it was, then, and after suiting up in our immersion suits for the first time in a while, we were soon climbing out over a shining sea, peppered with a few small cumulus at about 5000ft. The air was dead smooth at our cruising altitude of 9500ft and we settled into the familiar serene routine of cruising over an ocean. Tom set a mellow Spotify playlist to play through the audio panel and we felt rather special and excited as we gave our position reports in amongst those of the dense stream of heavies far above, their blithely unaware human cargoes sipping coffee and watching movies as they sped to and from the Gulf and points east and west.

Ankara Control showed no special interest in us and soon handed us over to Odessa Control for the next leg of our flight through Ukrainian airspace. Keen students of global geopolitics will remember the Russian annexation of the Crimea from the Ukraine in 2014, the ongoing war with Russia in the Donetsk region and the shooting down by a missile of MH17 by Russian-backed separatists, or maybe even by Russian troops themselves.

As a result of the risk from small arms and rocket fire in the Dnipropetrovsk FIR in the eastern Ukraine, and from conflicting guidance from Ukrainian and Russian controllers in the Simferopol FIR, which extends down to meet Turkish airspace over the Black Sea, various parts of this airspace have been placed out of bounds by the FAA to US-registered aircraft since 2014. This meant that we were not able to take a direct route through the Simferopol FIR to our destination, but had to make a significant dog-leg which added about half an hour to the journey. It also meant that the near constant hubbub of airliners making position reports ceased almost entirely as soon as we entered Ukrainian airspace, leaving only the occasional Ukrainian Airlines flight from Kiev to Odessa to pierce the static.

It was a spooky feeling, knowing that we were almost certainly being observed from a US AWACS plane over Turkey and that the crew would be speculating as to what this US-registered single-engine Cessna was doing on such an odd flight. Perhaps our details were being passed on to the CIA and right now someone was running a check on us in Langley, Virginia? Sometimes it does not do to allow the mind to run wild, especially when you are flying through fiercely contested airspace over an ocean far from home.

But the Ukrainian controllers were as helpful and efficient as everywhere else and we chuntered on uneventfully. After a couple of hours, we were turned left and passed on with no ado to their Russian colleagues for the last hour of our flight, which was in uncontestedly Russian airspace. There was a lot of local traffic on the Russian frequency and it felt as if the Ukrainian airspace had been a wormhole, a vortex, through which we had been transported into a completely different universe. Ankara Control, Sofia Control, Burgas airport, Europe: all now felt unimaginably distant.

Before long, we could see the Russian coast ahead and, a few miles beyond, the airport, a little way north of Anapa town. As we came down final approach we could see two lime green S7 Airlines Boeing 737s parked in front of the terminal and, closer to us, adrift in the concrete

*Anapa port and town: "F**k, we're in Russia!"*

wilderness of an enormous ramp, three old-style Russian turboprop airliners, the ones with the quaint glass nose bowl for the navigator and a samovar of tea always on the boil in the aisle. (The last bit may not quite be true, even if it should be.)

The wheels squeaked onto the runway and, as we turned off after the Follow Me car at the designated exit, we may have turned to each other with a quiet, satisfied smile and firmly and proudly shaken hands on the achievement. Or, we may have exclaimed in disbelief: "F**k, we're in Russia!" One or the other.

The Follow Me car took us to a lonely patch of concrete that looked like all the other patches of concrete, placed some red metal chocks aside each of the wheels, devices so enormous that they could have immobilised a Soyuz, and then drove off, leaving us alone.

We noticed a movement over our left shoulders. From the direction of the turboprops, a couple of hundred metres away, three young women in 1960s-style air stewardess uniforms were striding towards us with bags over their shoulders.

"How nice," we thought. "The stewardesses from those turboprops are coming over to greet the gallant foreign aviators."

But as they approached, it became apparent their mission was not to place the Russian equivalent of leis around our necks (perhaps a chain of vodka minis), but an altogether less frivolous one. They were the immigration officers and they wanted our passports. How did we know? From a good twenty yards off one of them started shouting "Passport! Gen Dec! Passport! Gen Dec!" over and over.

We were still in the cockpit, still in our immersion suits, and tumbled out as they continued to bark: "Passport! Gen Dec! Passport! Gen Dec!"

We struggled out of the immersion suits, furnished the required documents, which appeared to be in order, and they calmed down, eventually becoming as giggly as they had been shouty. They finally left us in the charge of the customs officer, who had ambled up by this time. He was a pleasant young fellow of about thirty, but perturbed. He kept scrutinising my passport and the aircraft registration papers, looking from one to the other, repeating the same phrase and shaking his head sadly: "это не стандартный случай." (eto ne standartnyy sluchay) "This is not a standard case."

It was clear by now that foreign light aircraft asking for a month's permission to cross Russia and then to depart it eight time zones and 5000 nautical miles away were not a frequent occurrence in Anapa. We felt like something of a local sensation and we had only been in the country for ten minutes.

As it was now 4pm on Saturday afternoon, we agreed that we would reconvene with his boss at the customs office on the far side of the airport on Monday morning to sort out this "non-standard' case. In the meantime, though we could not proceed on our trip, we were free to go into Anapa. This was fortunate, as by now we were badly in need of a meal and some beer, so we hired a car and drove into town to a cheap hotel we had booked on booking.com.

Anapa is a pleasant enough little seaside town, but congested, a bit tacky and its limited riviera charms would not set the heart of a Kiwi or an Australian ablaze. It takes the recollection that these few hundred miles of the Black Sea coast are the only warm water access this immense nation possesses, to understand why direct flights land here from as far away as the frozen city of Yakutsk, over 3000nm away in the Russian Far East.

Sunday was spent at leisure in Anapa, strolling around, eating bliny in a small café at the port, and remarking to each other at frequent intervals, "Hey, we're in Russia" and "Can you believe we're actually in Russia?" Into this triumphant interlude, however, kept intruding the gnawing uncertainty of what Monday would bring. We reassured ourselves that there were only two likely outcomes: they would allow us to proceed on our way or they would send us back the way we had come. And, while one outcome was more palatable than the other, we could live with either. The third potential outcome – impounding the aircraft and throwing us in the clink – seemed unlikely as it would mean too much hassle for them, what with the consequent diplomatic uproar, questions from their superiors, recriminations as to who had authorised this outrage and so on. We had faith that we were a problem they would ultimately wish to be rid of, and so it proved.

The problem, as we discovered on Monday, was simple and yet, to the bureaucratic mind, not so simple. I am not a US citizen (I am an 'alien' in the charming vernacular of that country) and so I cannot legally own a US aircraft. N185MW is therefore owned by a UK based trust, administered by a US citizen, of which I am the beneficial nominee. It is under the name of this trust – Southern Aircraft Consultancy Ltd – that the aircraft is registered, not my name. I produced a letter from the trust authorising me to operate the aircraft worldwide. I produced the purchase invoice and the trust agreement. All of these were in English and while my schoolboy Russian of forty years before ("давай купим мороженое!"

– davay kupim morozhenoye – “Let’s buy some ice cream!”) had proved sufficient for a Sunday afternoon in Anapa, it was not sufficient to explain the intricacies of Federal US law as it relates to aircraft ownership by non-US citizens. Evgeny eventually managed to explain it all to them over the phone, but the documents were going to need to be translated into Russian before they would think of issuing a customs carnet. Until then, the aircraft was impounded.

It was now after lunch on Monday and Evgeny thought he could probably get the documents translated in Moscow by the end of the day on Tuesday, which meant nothing was going to happen until Wednesday at the earliest. We refuelled the aircraft that afternoon from the two 200 litre drums which were delivered by truck from the city of Krasnodar, the first of our hand-pumping exercises since Schefferville in far off Labrador some weeks before. Our concerns about fuel quality in Russia were instantly allayed. The drums were brand new, immaculately labelled and, connoisseurs of AvGas that we are, smelled and looked absolutely right. This was pukka 100LL alright.

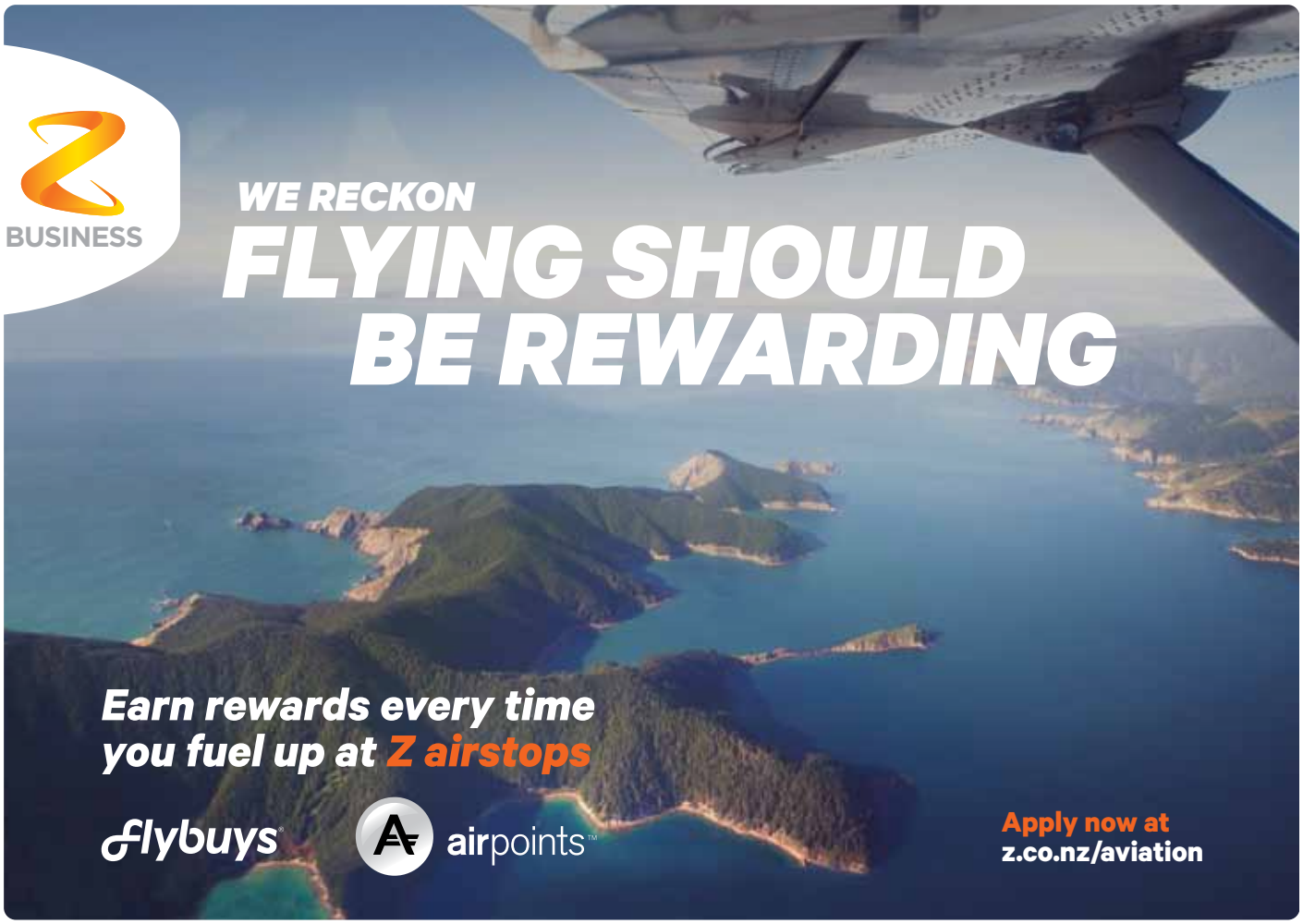
The next day, Tuesday, we decided to drive to the Crimea, which is about an hour and a half to the West across the newly built (2018) and phenomenal Kerch Bridge, the only decent piece of infrastructure we came across in the region. Lunch was in a pleasant café in the city of Kerch, quite a picturesque town, but down at heel. Tom bought a pair of jeans in a small shop, run by a woman who clearly loves jeans and kept telling us so: “Я люблю джинсы!” (Ya lyublyu dzhinsy!) “I love jeans!”

And, to be fair, she did have a terrific selection. If you’re ever in Kerch and you find you need jeans, you’re in luck.

On the way back we stopped at the tiny beach resort of Veselovka on a small sand spit which holds back a large brackish lagoon. It didn’t take much to imagine the generations of Soviet workers who had once holidayed here. Apart from the endless Russian technopop blaring out all down the beach, instead of patriotic or schmaltzy folk songs, it didn’t look like much had changed.

Wednesday dawned and the translations of the trust and purchase agreements came through from Moscow. We trooped back to the customs office at the airport, past the indolent guard at the door with his oversized Russian peaked cap (why is that, anyway?). He looked like he was keen to kick us in the kidneys. The two senior customs officers were pleasant enough, but obviously more bored with this whole affair than they had been two days before; a good sign. Before long, we were stepping out of the office with a newly minted Russian customs carnet covering our beloved N185MW until the end of our visa.

The problem was we had already been five days late into Russia and now had lost another five days, giving us only twenty days to get through Russia before our visa expired. We had a lot we wanted to do, it was September and that meant we were heading into the uncertain weather of a Siberian autumn. We were almost certainly going to need to extend the visa and the customs carnet, but that was a problem for another time. For now, though, we could think only about the next day’s destination: Stalingrad!



Turangi for Christmas

By Phil Pacey

November of 2020 saw the annual North Island Christmas BBQ back at Turangi, and it proved a great opportunity to to celebrate the close of a challenging year, and to enjoy some healthy annual competition.

The small Turangi Aero Club always look after us with a great meal and fellowship. Their little airfield is always in good order and is very easy to find, as it is at the south end of New Zealand's biggest lake (Stump Bay to be precise) on Grace Road.

The November gathering saw a good turnout of 37 aircraft, ranging from light sport to Kim McKay's Seneca II (Kim is currently flying 747 freighters out of Florida, which is quite a change from the grass at Turangi).

The spot landing for the Richard Primrose Memorial Cup was won by Kjell Westerburg in the Tecnan, with Peter Armstrong (PSA) second and Brent Ferguson in this Malibu third.

The 2021 North Island Christmas BBQ will be held at Turangi on 21 November – mark it in your diary now.

Above: Phil Pacey hands over the Richard Primrose Memorial Cup to Kjell Westerburg, who took first place with a convincing landing right on the line (this image)

The right approach

I am privileged to have General Aviation as both part of my career and as a recreational interest, and to be in a position to enjoy the social side and flying that is possible with membership of AOPA.

My observations while training and during recent fly-ins, lead me to believe a refresher on slow flight and approach to stalls may be timely.

The New Zealand pilot licence syllabus requires the pilot to be able to identify the symptoms of the stall. These symptoms are experienced frequently, most often during the transition from round-out to touchdown. Observing these symptoms does not necessarily mean you are stalled.

The pilot syllabus also teaches recovery at the onset of the stall, should the stall symptoms prolong.

Slow Flight training was introduced to the syllabus to teach the pilot how to control the aircraft during low airspeed at various flap settings and undercarriage positions. A study of past aircraft accident history prompted this additional lesson, to train for scenarios such as approach to land, go around and climb out in a low speed flap/undercarriage down configuration. It ensures that the PIC can maintain the ability of the aircraft to remain in flight during this sequence of events AND at maximum all up weight.

I have seen a number of pilots, both student and licensed, who either fear the thought of stalling and therefore fly the final approach at a higher airspeed than required, which will not allow the aircraft to touch down in a reasonable landing distance; or hold the aircraft on an approach to land at a low airspeed, but without appropriate control inputs to sustain the aircraft during transition from a round-out which is too high, causing them to fall on touchdown.

It is not necessary for a trainee pilot to hold an NCEA level 3 in physics, but it is a necessity for the PIC to appreciate inertia and the fact that flight defies gravity.

As a pilot, you must be comfortable within your cockpit, know your aircraft's performance capabilities, and know the location and operation of the flap and undercarriage lever, throttle and friction nut movement, dial identification and trim effectiveness. Know your own cockpit so that you can reach and glance at all your controls without effort.

As PIC, when flying to a new location and setting up to land, it is all about your abilities. These abilities set your limitations. When I instruct, one of the things I consider in assessing your progress as a PIC is your ability to take care of passengers in comfort and safety.

If you feel you may need to refresh your abilities in this area, please action this now for the benefit of yourself and others. Keep current, improve your skills, talk to an instructor, observe experienced pilots. There is always more to learn to maximise your enjoyment of aviation.

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Some 'Gotchas' of pilot maintenance

Jay McIntyre is the owner, LAME, IA, PPL and chief bottle washer of JEM Aviation, Omaka

Ahh, Christmas holidays… Everyone's on holiday, including your friendly engineer! Darn it, flat tyre. Hmm, what to do…? Don't want to disturb the engineer on his holidays… Need to fly. That's right! I seem to recall that I can change spark plugs and tyres as an owner. Good as! Job done… or is it?

Pilot Maintenance seems to be one of those things that has almost mythical status and, like most myths, is misinterpreted and misunderstood, not only by the pilots but, to varying degrees, by engineers as well.

Yes, you can change your own tyres, as per Rule Parts 43.51 and 43 Appendix A.1 and A.2, but it has to be per the Rule, as there are a couple of real 'gotchas' including the requirement for proper training for the task being carried out (that is recorded as having been carried out) and for ensuring the work has been signed for (the dreaded Release to Service).

43.51 (b) (1) allows for the pilot to do the maintenance specified in Appendix A.1 and/or A.2. (Note that A.1 specifies maintenance that can be carried out on aircraft used for hire and reward, whereas tasks listed in both A.1 and A.2 can be applied to aircraft not used on hire and reward operations.)

I think most people probably get to that point and their brain tells them 'Yah! We can do it', but, like most of us, they then fail to read what is effectively the fine print of the agreement.

From there, 43.51 (c) (1) advises that the person carrying out said maintenance must be 'authorised in writing by the operator to perform the maintenance' (In my view it is not necessary for a private owner, unless you want to write yourself a letter!) and (the kicker) 'be appropriately trained by the holder of a current and appropriate aircraft maintenance engineer licence with an appropriate rating…'

What does that actually mean?

Obviously, you need training. That's all well and good, but how do you prove you've been trained when the local CAA Field Safety Officer finds you changing the tyre? In my view, the Rule falls down here, as it should mention something about a Record of Training that shows what tasks you have been formally trained in. This is something I provide for my own customers who have asked to exercise these privileges.

The training will, of course, show you what special tools are needed to complete the task, for example a calibrated torque wrench for the installation of spark plugs, or jacking adapters and the like to change the tyre. We don't want any ad-hoc jacking arrangements that might result in unnecessary damage to the aircraft!

So, all is in order and wahoo! Job's done! ...Or is it?

The other major 'gotcha' in all of this is that someone has to sign for the work carried out. In many situations your engineer will probably be happy to do so, but what if it's the Christmas holidays? Well, 43.101(a) (6) allows you, as the appropriately trained pilot-maintainer, to sign a Release to Service for the work carried out. Most typically this would be on the aircraft Tech Log, and if you have ever looked at the back page of this, you'll have found a self-explanatory section which has spaces for all the information required. Filling out the Tech Log would, of course, be part of the training process, and should also explain Release Note documentation for parts used.

As with everything in aviation law, there is another 'gotcha' in that you need to be aware of what your signature on the Release-to-Service encompasses. Rule Part 43-103 'Requirements for certifying release-to-service' lists these and the pertinent point here is:

43-103 (a) (1) 'A person must not certify an aircraft or component for release-to-service after maintenance unless— (1) the maintenance has been performed in accordance with this Part.

i.e., all sections of Rule Part 43!

Food for thought, hopefully.

Don't get me wrong: I'm not against pilot maintenance, but it needs to be held to the same levels of accountability and responsibility as maintenance carried out by a licensed engineer. There's nothing worse than an aeroplane coming in for a service and having to figure what why there is a new tyre on it when there's no record of it ever having happened!

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Milford Sound awareness

By Sue Kronfeld

Considering flying into Milford Sound? Fixed wing pilots, read on!

First, get acquainted with the GAP Milford Sound booklet. Second, seek advice from a commercial operator who frequently flies into Milford Sound. The entering and exiting routes of Milford Sound have been adhered to for years, and they work. The pointers here will become obvious when you actually enter the fiord on approach to runway 11 or 29.

When you enter or exit Milford Fiord you do not fly down the middle. As PIC you need to come to terms with where to place your aircraft on approach or departure. Be aware that the illusion of the size of the rock face can prevent you from correctly holding the north or south side. The appreciation of other traffic within the fiord will confirm the sheer size of the geography.

The word 'illusion' cannot be over-emphasised; this is part of the mountain flying experience.

Remember that airspeed is your friend. Set a comfortable cruise climb indicated airspeed for your type of aircraft, then ensure that you do not drop below this while manoeuvring within terrain. A fully laden C172 using 80kts as a minimum speed is a good example. Effective application of this airspeed will become apparent when experiencing the overwhelming tendency towards instinctively pulling back on the control column as rising terrain looms closer on your direct flight path, or flying conditions dictate the inability to maintain straight and level.

Your steepest angle of bank should be no more than 30 degrees while manoeuvring within valleys. Your passengers will thank you for this. The frequent use of this degree of angle of bank will ensure you have a plan, and will set your limitations when you need to place your aircraft in a comfortable position to vacate an area, for photography, a ridge crossing, or setting up for landing. If you don't have a plan you cannot change anything!

Keep ahead of your aircraft at all times. You must be comfortable in your office so that you can keep your eyes outside and fluidly manoeuvre your aircraft.

The most important component of mountain flying is yourself as PIC. Set your limits, and set your intended flight route on the ground with your passengers so that you will not pressure yourself into making a last-minute decision en route.

Combine the above with the knowledge that Milford Sound is a high tourist zone for commercial Part 135 & 125 aircraft operations, with operators based out of Queenstown and Wanaka who take the pattern of joining and vacating Milford Sound very seriously. As a visiting fixed wing PIC, you must conform with the regular pattern of operation.

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The low wind time of day in Milford is during the morning. Utilising this will make life easier for a visitor to MF aerodrome. Summer afternoons often see a gusty crosswind sea breeze, with energy increases and decreases on final.

All operations take off on runway 29. Caution, runway 11 in use for landing aircraft to allow you to backtrack and line up in the opposing direction from runway 29. Radio clarification is required here.

Once you have touched down, turn off onto the apron and park to the far west of the apron area, away from the main tarmac in front of the tower, as this area is primarily used for parking commercial aircraft. Turning comfortably onto the apron area ensures that any following traffic can file in to prevent a go around, but at all times fly your aircraft safely. If you land without the capability of taxiing off to the apron (runway 11) as desired, then continue rolling through to the end of the runway and clear to backtrack on the taxiway.

MF Flight Service will provide wind direction and traffic movements within the fiord. If you hear the QNH, conditions and the traffic location, then inform Flight Service that you are in receipt of this information and tell them where you plan to slot in to the joining sequence. Do not make Flight Service repeat the full blurb if not necessary. Inform joining traffic that you have them in sight. Keep the radio chatter to only what is needed.

Study the AIP and know the taxi area. Upon start-up and taxi backtrack, inform Flight Service of how many on board and in what direction you intend to vacate.

Study your map or iPad BEFORE entering or vacating Milford Sound, as your eyes must be outside at all times. This means studying the reporting points on the map and the general locations of places such as St Annes, Dale Point, Arthur, Pembroke, Gulliver, Eastern passes (Adelaide, Gertrude and Donne), Ada, Dumpling and Lake Quill.

Radio calls address Fiordland Traffic 119.2 and Milford Flight Service on 118.2; 'Where you are, your height and intended route'. Milford Flight Service will want to know your aircraft type, POB and intentions. Upon entry into Milford Fiord, advise when you are abeam Stirling Falls, and finals for Runway 11 or downwind Runway 29. Runway 29 is not a perfect rectangle circuit but it is imperative to set up your aircraft in your customary standard landing configuration. Airspeed and profile are important, as the close proximity to terrain is a real illusion and 'does your head in', so fly your aircraft for landing so that your profile on final is not too high, running the risk of overshooting the apron turnoff. Always fly your aircraft at all times.

Runway 29 allows a relatively straightforward go-around. However Runway 11 will have you fly toward rising terrain so, if you are totally outside your limit on approach to Runway 11, have a turn away point on your long final to Runway 11 so you can set up comfortably again if necessary. Filing your aircraft within the other joining and departing traffic flow is also an important consideration.

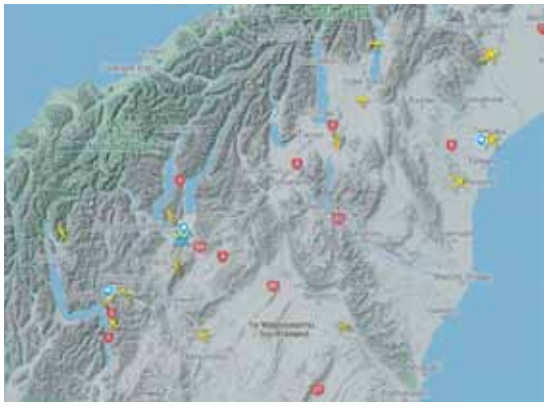
To perform an over-fly of Milford Fiord, the User Group of Milford Sound have set up a 5000ft level to maintain a conflict free view of the fiord.

Sue Kronfeld offers mountain flying courses, in your own aircraft or in the flying school C172, through Learntoflynz, based at Wanaka.

For more information, visit www.learntoflynz.com/mountain-flying

ADS-B IN is awesome

By Ian Sinclair



I have been loving my ADS-B IN lately. It is especially satisfying knowing that my electronic 1090 ES ADS-B OUT data is showing up on other people's ADS-B IN screens.

There are still a bunch of aircraft that do not have OUT and will not appear on your IN, but it is encouraging how many do. Quite often when I fly cross-country from South Canterbury to Wanaka, the majority of aircraft giving position reports are also showing as IN targets.

I've got into the habit at the start of each flight of not trusting my IN until I have seen a target show up. Usually I can do that by zooming out and picking up high altitude traffic. It proves that all the links in my chain of technology are working and that I can reasonably expect to see targets on my IN.

I think IN is also really good as a visual traffic identification training tool. I find that once there is a target showing on my IN, it drives me crazy if my visual scan has not picked up the traffic, and I use the IN data to zone in on the traffic visually. Sometimes I can't see traffic because of the distance or altitude difference.

I'm also constantly amazed by how full a sometimes quiet and empty-looking sky really is.

ADS-B IN is just another tool in your situational awareness tool kit. Your aeroplane can still fly with IN turned off, but why would you? Having functional IN – and OUT – is the same as having a clean windscreen. You can fly with it dirty, but why would you?

Seeing the future:

Condition-based maintenance meets big data AI

By Mike Busch

For the past twenty years, I've been preaching the gospel of reliability-centred maintenance, the then-revolutionary philosophy of maintenance developed in the 1960s at United Airlines by aeronautical engineer Stanley Nowlan and mathematician Howard Heap.

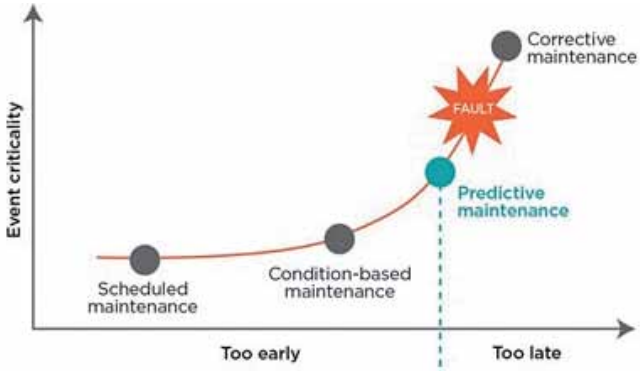
Reliability-centred maintenance was almost universally adopted by the airlines in the 1970s, by military aviation in the 1980s, and by high-end business aviation in the 1990s. The only segment of aviation that hasn't yet enthusiastically adopted reliability-centred maintenance is owner-flown general aviation. I've made it my personal crusade to change this, and to help drag lightplane maintenance kicking and screaming into the twenty-first century.

Reliability-centred maintenance arose from a rigorous analysis of historical data by Nowlan and Heap showing that the airlines' maintenance programmes called for more preventive maintenance than necessary, and that such excessive maintenance was actually making aircraft safety and dispatch reliability worse rather than better by increasing the incidence of maintenance-induced failures. At the time, these findings were considered heresy by most folks in airline maintenance organisations, who had been taught to believe that maintenance is a good thing and more maintenance is always better. In spite of these objections, the airlines adopted reliability-centred maintenance anyway. Not only did they save a fortune on reduced maintenance costs, but aircraft safety and dispatch reliability improved significantly.

The core principle of reliability-centred maintenance is that most preventive maintenance should be performed only when genuinely necessary. It accomplishes this by doing away with most scheduled preventive maintenance (including most TBOs) and replacing it with a programme of condition-based maintenance. This means doing away with time-based maintenance in favour of a programme of inspections designed to assess the condition of critical aircraft components and to determine when their condition has deteriorated to the point that failure might be imminent. Component repair, overhaul, or replacement is not performed until a condition inspection indicates it is required. As a result, work is performed only when demonstrably necessary, as opposed to at an arbitrary time interval when some aeronautical engineer calculated that it might possibly be necessary.

Reliability-centred maintenance has been a huge step in the right direction, but it's still less than a perfect solution. It requires regular condition inspections that are not inexpensive and may be somewhat invasive – they involve taking things apart and putting them back together – and so are not completely free of maintenance-induced failure risk. Perhaps we can do even better.

Graph 1: Predictive Analytics



During the two decades I've been working to bring the benefits of reliability-centred maintenance to owner-flown GA, another quiet revolution that started with the airlines has been quietly trickling down the aviation food chain. It's called predictive maintenance and is based on a technology known as predictive analytics. (See graph 1)

Condition-based maintenance has been a huge step forward, compared with traditional scheduled maintenance. Predictive maintenance is the next big step forward.

FEVA 2.0 uses machine learning techniques to predict when exhaust valves are at elevated risk of failing.

Predictive analytics

Modern air transport aircraft and engines are built with thousands of sensors that measure air data, critical engine operating parameters, vibration levels, electrical and hydraulic system parameters, flight control and landing gear positions, fluid levels of all kinds, cabin pressurization and environmental parameters, and just about every other measurable aspect of the aircraft. Measurements from these many sensors are digitized by the aircraft's data acquisition unit and then either transmitted to ground stations in real time or captured continuously by a quick-access recorder and extracted once the aircraft is on the ground, via the cellular network or on flash memory cards.

Predictive analytics – also known as predictive failure analysis – employs computer algorithms to process this mass of digital data and detect patterns indicating that some sort of preventive maintenance is necessary, or that evidence of some incipient component failure has been detected.

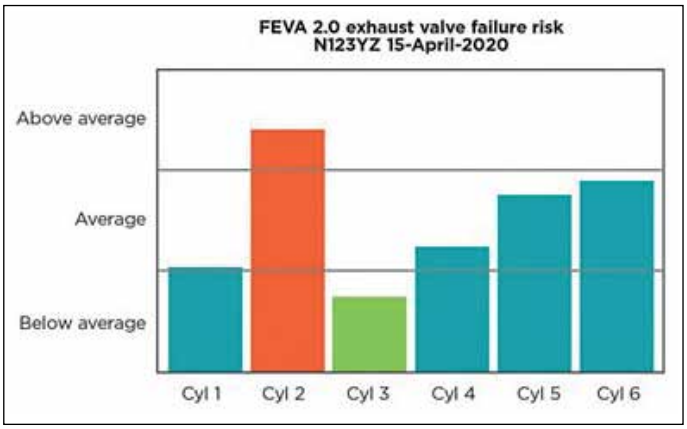
Detection of parameter degradation, exceedance, or adverse

trending – low tyre pressure, high electrical bus voltage, decreasing oil pressure – is generally pretty easy. Prediction of 'rare events' – contaminated fuel nozzle, damaged compressor blade, failing engine bearing – may require complex algorithms.

Boeing pioneered predictive analytics sixteen years ago when it introduced a service it calls Airplane Health Management (AHM). Boeing's AHM monitors the health of an aircraft in flight and relays that information in real time to airline personnel on the ground. When the aircraft lands and arrives at the gate, maintenance crews are ready to make any needed repairs quickly. AHM algorithms also attempt to predict when aircraft components are in jeopardy of failing so the operator can replace or repair them at the next scheduled maintenance check.

Nowadays, virtually every airline that flies Boeing's 777 or 787 uses AHM, and Boeing is working to expand the service to earlier Boeing models as well as to non-Boeing aircraft (eg, intercontinental business jets). Last year, I had the opportunity to see AHM in action when I visited the Boeing Global Services office in Englewood, Colorado, and to say I was impressed would be an understatement. This is very cool technology.

Not to be outdone, Boeing's arch rival Airbus has launched a predictive analytics service called Skywise in partnership with Palantir Technologies, a Palo Alto, California, software company that specialises in big data analytics. Recently Airbus announced a partnership with Delta Air Lines as the pilot customer for Skywise Predictive Maintenance on Delta's A320 and A330 aircraft to assess the failure probabilities of aircraft parts and anticipate the need for preventive maintenance tasks. Delta is



claiming a success rate of more than 95 percent for pending failure predictions. According to Delta, the carrier had only 55 maintenance-related flight cancellations in 2018, compared with more than 5,600 cancellations in 2010, and it credits predictive analytics for most of this improvement in dispatch reliability.

Jet engine manufacturers also have adopted this technology. General Electric presently appears to have the lead in predictive analytics with its Prognostic Health Management Plus programme of real-time analysis of continuously downlinked engine operating data for both air carriers and high-end bizjets. Pratt & Whitney's eFAST has similar objectives, and in 2018 its parent company, United Technologies, acquired Predikto, an Atlanta-based provider of predictive analytics software. Rolls-Royce appears to be still developing its predictive analytics programme called IntelligentEngine.

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What about piston GA?

Few of our piston GA aircraft are riddled with sensors the way modern airliners like the 787 or A330 are. But more than half our fleet is equipped with some sort of digital engine monitor capable of capturing exhaust gas temperatures, cylinder head temperatures, and other engine parameters. Some of these engine monitors also capture fuel flow, air data (altitude, airspeed, outside air temperature), electrical bus data (volts and amps), and/or GPS position. Quite a bit of interesting analysis can be done with this data.

In 2012 my company launched a free web-based digital engine data analysis platform at SavvyAnalysis.com. Since then, owners have uploaded data from more than 10,000 piston GA aircraft to the platform, and our database now contains data from some 2.5 million flights. From inception, this platform has automatically flagged exceedances such as high CHT. In recent years, we've been developing and incorporating more sophisticated predictive analytics algorithms.

Failing (burned) exhaust valves are 'rare events', but they're the leading cause of cylinder replacement, and exhaust valve failure is a significant cause of piston engine power-loss incidents. I've long observed that failing exhaust valves often cause small, slow, rhythmic EGT oscillations that are fairly easy to spot in a graphical plot of the data. In 2015, we developed a heuristic algorithm called FEVA (Failing Exhaust Valve Analytics) that scans all uploaded engine monitor data for this signature. We've been using this to alert owners to the possibility that they may have a failing exhaust valve and that a borescope inspection of the cylinder is suggested. But to be honest, we've been less than thrilled about the accuracy of the FEVA algorithm.

Over the past year, we've been developing a new algorithm (FEVA 2.0) that uses machine learning techniques, and we've trained the algorithm on thousands of flights involving known-good and known-failing exhaust valves. The result is a significantly higher accuracy rate and fewer false positives than the heuristic FEVA 1.0.

In the meantime, we've been working hard to develop another algorithm (SEVA) to detect the sticking exhaust valve syndrome that especially afflicts Lycoming engines and is often referred to as 'morning sickness'.

A sticking exhaust valve typically starts off causing fairly innocuous roughness when the engine is first started cold, and which goes away as the engine warms up. But if not detected and addressed early, a sticking exhaust valve can progress to the point that it results in a bent pushrod and power loss, and occasionally a valve strike and catastrophic engine failure. It's obviously important to catch this condition early when it's still in the incipient stage. This seems like a perfect candidate for predictive analytics, and the preliminary results of our R&D have been very encouraging.

Predictive maintenance is clearly the wave of the future. The more sensors we have in our aeroplanes, the more comprehensive and powerful it will become. Over time, it will increasingly be our aircraft – not our mechanics – that tell us what maintenance needs to be done.

Mike Busch is a CFI, A & P, IA and regular contributor to *AOPA PILOT*.
Article published with thanks to Mike Busch and AOPA USA.

South Island Christmas gathering

The Pink Glider in Omarama was the venue for the South Island's 2020 AOPA Christmas gathering.

It was fortunate that there was a postponement from what proved to be a less desirable weather Saturday to a glorious hot Monday.

Over twenty-five aircraft with fifty-plus folk arrived to enjoy a coffee, scones and savouries for morning tea. Tania, from the Pink Glider – winner of the 2019 AOPA 'Best Watering Hole' Award – again did herself proud with an array of salads, barbecued meat and a choice of desserts, all served outdoors where everyone relaxed under the trees.

A highlight of the arrivals was Mike Oakley in his glider. After a little towing from Sheffield to the mountain ranges he managed a great run along the ridges to join us.

Thanks to all who were able to come along and special thanks to Tania for a great lunch... we'll be back!

Just a few of the fifty or so folk who parked up the planes at The Pink Glider in Omarama to enjoy a day out and mark the end of 2020.

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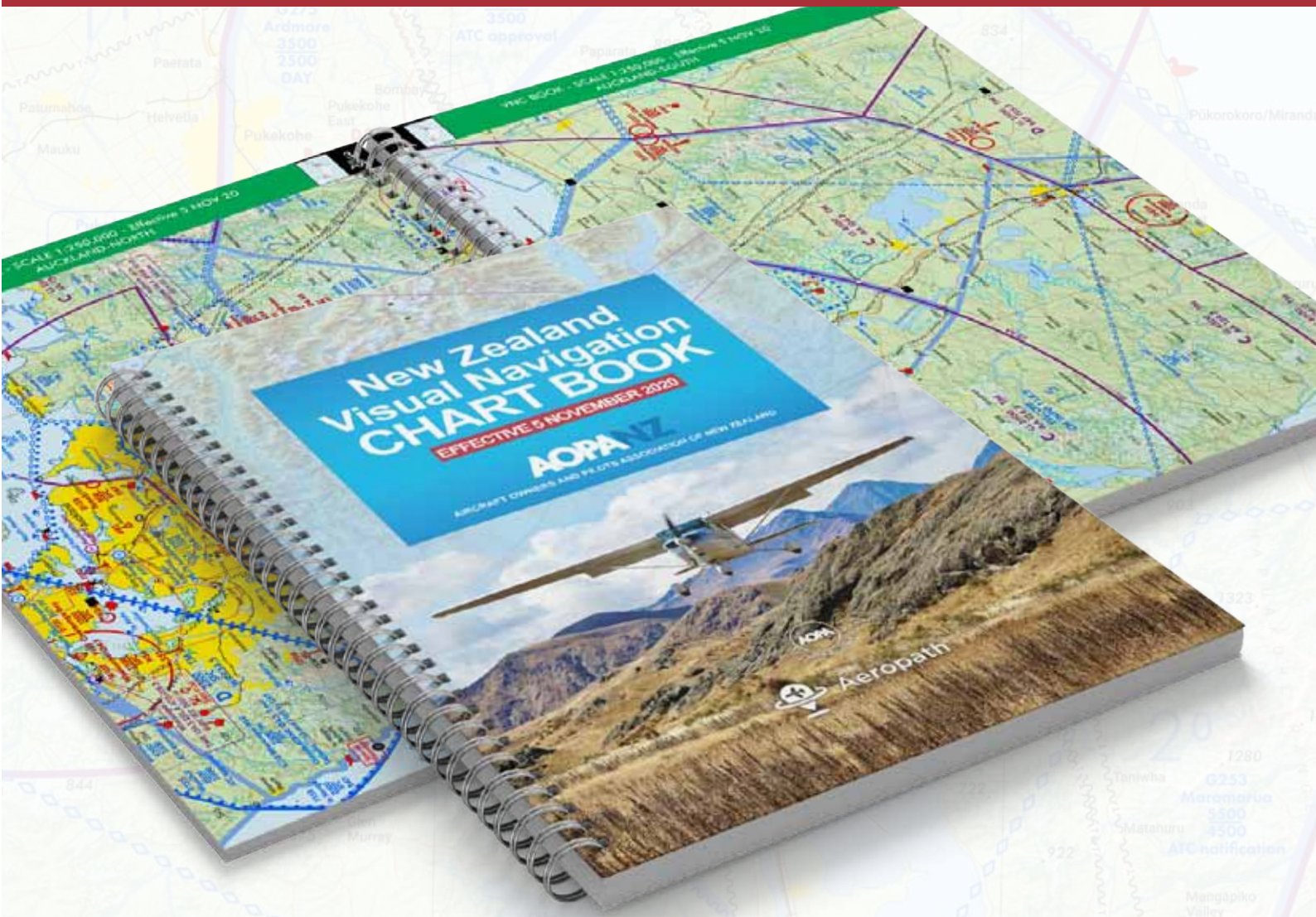

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