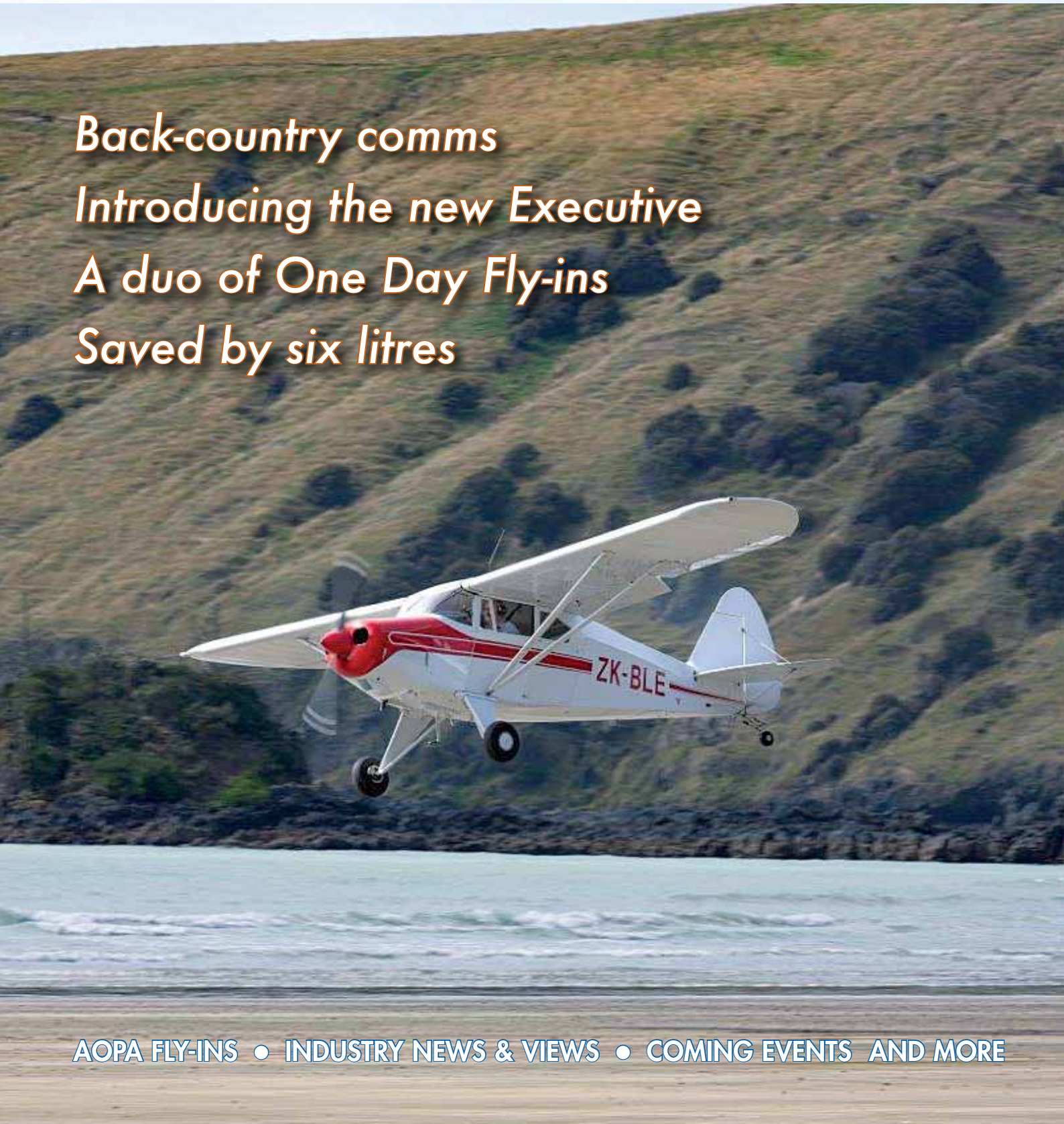
Approach

THE NEW ZEALAND AIRCRAFT OWNERS AND PILOTS MAGAZINE
WINTER 2022



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Approach

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AOPA Committee 2022-2023

President: Sue Kronfeld
Ph: 027 535 6651
Email: president@aopa.nz

Vice-President: Steve Horne
and Northern North Island
Mb: 027 680 5946
Email: steve.horne@aopa.nz

Administration: Mary Bruce
Ph 027 294 0819
Email: admin@aopa.nz

Chris Hoffman: Southern North Is
Mb: 027 563 4016
Email: chris.hoffman@aopa.nz

Geoff van Asch: Northern South Is
Ph: 021 767 744
Email: geoff.vanasch@aopa.nz

Michael Parks: Southern South Is
Ph: 027 696 3306
Email: michael.parks@aopa.nz

Ian Sinclair
Ph: 027 432 4150
Email: ian.sinclair@aopa.nz

John Evans
Ph: 027 526 2111
Email: john.evans@aopa.nz

Stu Haynes
Ph: 027 532 4268
Email: stu.haynes@aopa.nz

Ross Millichamp
Ph: 027 9600 724
Email: ross.millichamp@aopa.nz

Peter Armstrong
Mb: 021 883 080
Email: peter.armstrong@aopa.nz

Coming up

- *Watch your inbox midweek for notifications of One-Day Fly-ins the following weekend*
- *Warbirds on Parade 5 June, Ardmore Airport*
- *AOPA Winter Fly-in 8-10 July, south of the South Island, details tbc*

For more information visit www.aopa.co.nz

Cover photo: Okains Bay One Day Fly-in, April 2022

Photo credit: Aaron Murphy

Contents

Regular Columns

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Editor: Anna Mackenzie ph 027 3345466; editor@aopa.nz

Advertising enquiries: Don Ryder ph 04 479 1367 / 027 442 0016 / don.ryder@aopa.nz

Editorial support: Ross Millichamp ph 027 9600724 / ross.millichamp@aopa.nz

Administration: Mary Bruce ph 0272 940819 / admin@aopa.nz

Postal address: AOPA NZ Inc, PO Box 659, Wanaka 9343

Deadline for ads, articles and photos for the next (Spring) issue: **20 July 2022**.

President's Comment

I was out hiking this week and scaled a mountain face that I regularly fly past. I highly recommend driving or walking within the country you regularly fly over, as the different perspective it provides can be extremely useful.

Perspective is also important when it comes to small aerodromes, which are integral to General Aviation. The management of many uncertified aerodromes within New Zealand rests with local government. Be sure you keep abreast of your local situation, and submit your opinion on any plan changes and developments affecting your local landing site. Local Government elections also provide an opportunity to support aviation-aware councillors.

No doubt you're all aware of the ongoing issues at Raglan and Kapiti. In addition, Glenorchy Aerodrome is managed by Queenstown Lakes District Council and is now deemed to be part of a reserve, a situation set in place by pressure from the surrounding dwellings which were built AFTER the aerodrome.

Council jargon will read something like this: Input has been provided from the Glenorchy Aerodrome Consultative Governance Committee (GACGC), an integral adjunct to the Glenorchy Aerodrome Reserve Management Plan (RMP) and Designation 239 contained in the QLDC Proposed District Plan (the Designation).

It gets better. The Noise Management Plan (NMP) sets out the policy, standards and procedures used for the management of noise generated from aerodrome activities. It is not intended that this NMP should prevent recreational aircraft operators from using the aerodrome, provided they are complying with the NMP and the Glenorchy Aerodrome Reserve Management Plan.

Be aware that as part of 3.9(c) of this NMP, intensive flying activity by non-resident operators, including fly-ins and aero club rallies, is prohibited. As a private operator, do not do circuit practice. The standard join is noise abatement sensitive, which requires no flying overhead the township, no overhead re-joins and keeping the active circuit over the lake.

Consultation was carried out with the commercial operators of NZGY, but this was to formalise what now exists. Communication is crucial when a regulator is to set the standard in any area of activity.

In regard to communication, we continue to work on strengthening our relationship with CAA, and the focus we share on developing a culture of safety best practice. Covid has meant there have been some delays in application processing, STC delays, and delays in other matters requiring physical follow up by our aviation authority officers. AOPA Advocacy representatives attended the Aviation Federation (NZAF) meeting in early April to meet the Director and Deputy Director of CAA and receive an update on moving forward.

AOPA NZ is working with NZAF to extend ADS-B coverage to a lower altitude throughout New Zealand. Funded by Road User Tax on motor fuel used in aircraft, stage one – establishing the areas requiring improved coverage – is underway.

Efforts to further develop the webcam network are ongoing. Current webcams accessible across the country are listed on the aopa.nz website. These cameras are sourced extensively by our membership as well as by organisations such as Rescue Helicopter operators. This expansion plan is being led by AOPA NZ. Please get in touch if you can suggest a site, have access to a site, or have an internet supplier who supplies internet from an elevated site.

I'd like to acknowledge and thank the previous President and Committee, who worked tirelessly on advocacy, including the reform of medical requirements for PPLs, and put in place many programmes we are now benefitting from and pursuing.

I leave you with this thought: Have you checked your HEX ID is up to date? www.beacons.org.nz

Sue Kronfeld, President

Winter Fly-in 2022

Details are still to be confirmed, but mark the date in your diaries and on your calendars!

A highlight of the flying year, AOPA NZ's Winter Fly-in will be held, fair weather or foul, over the weekend of 8-10 July in the south of the South Island.

Watch the website for more information.

Going virtual in 2022

This year's AGM was held online - a relatively common experience since the arrival of the Covid pandemic.

There are positives to the online AGM: anyone can attend, irrespective of geographical or time constraints, and online meetings tend to be somewhat briefer, sticking more to the timetable and the point.

Of course, there are also downsides: no face-to-face interaction, no socialising before and after, and in the case of AOPA's AGM, no flying in to a carefully curated scenic location. Still, we coped...!

Annual AOPA Awards

Each year at the AGM we celebrate high fliers across the GA industry with the annual AOPA NZ Awards.

We will cover each of these winners in more depth in our next issue of *APPROACH*, but a heartfelt congratulations here to this year's award recipients. They are:

Most Helpful Control Tower – Dunedin Control Tower

Maintenance Shop of the Year – Elevate Aviation at Dunedin Airport

The Aviation Watering Hole of the Year – South Westland Salmon Farm and Café at Lake Paringa, who will on request pick up aviators from the airstrip and ferry them back to the café.

The GA Champion Award, for the person, business, government organisation or person within an organisation, who has held the flag high for GA over the preceeding year – Carlton Campbell of CAA

AOPA NZ Above and Beyond Award – diehard AOPA-ian Murray Paterson

Look out for more on these in the next issue.

Member benefit

It's worth remembering that GOfuel Aviation offers AOPA members exclusive discounts on AeroShell lubricants. Check out their new ad on page 15 and visit their website for details.

A warm welcome to new members:

Jesse Archer, Tauranga; David Clarke, Sydney, Australia; Christine Graham, Auckland, PA28-161 WWW; Thomas Hornblow, Napier; Allan Kearney, Auckland, Vans RV12 ERV; Don Macdonald, Napier; Jacob Madacanno-Holland, Auckland; Ross McCarthy, Wanaka; Andy & Sara Mckay, Auckland, Cessna FRA150L TDI; Matthew McPhee, Napier, Beech F33A EDS; Kenneth Mitchell, Christchurch, Tecnam P2002 CCV; Johan Vlok, Darfield, Cub Crafters CCX PJV

Marking commitment

To paraphrase JFK, it can be a good thing to ask not what your organisation can do for you, but what you can do for your organisation. And some people take that excellent adage to heart.

Recognising exactly that, the AGM this year saw two life memberships awarded, to Kevin Anderson and Don Ryder.

Kevin spent many years on the AOPA Executive and continues to work in the background on the organisation's behalf. A positive encourager of new members, he has also invested considerable energy in developing and researching ideas, and was a key player in the instigation of the AOPA Winter Fly-in.

A good sounding board, Kevin has offered a broad and practical skillset, while he and Linda have both contributed their genuine warmth and energy to the benefit of their local flying scene and the wider AOPA world.

Don Ryder is quite possibly our longest serving Executive member. He has been a stalwart supporter of *Approach* magazine, responsible for both advertising and chivvying along tardy contributors. 'Our man in Wellington' for many years, he is still a regular attender of ASPEQ and NZAF meetings.

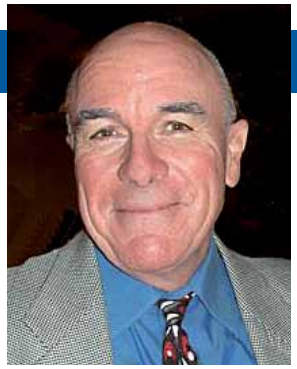
Steve Horne noted that Don has always been a voice of reason on the Executive, hard working and dedicated to the projects he takes on. The VNC Chart Book, *Approach* magazine and the Directory are just a few examples. Even as he steps down from the Executive, Don remains on the publications sub-committee and is continuing his role of managing advertising in our publications.

Ian Andrews added, "I'd like to also make mention of Bev who has always stood right behind Don – except when he's on his motorbike!"

Out-going president Steve Brown congratulated both Kevin Anderson and Don Ryder on their much-deserved life memberships.

Linda and Kevin Anderson, DC3 charter flight to AOPA dinner in Hamilton, 2012

Don and Bev Ryder, 2015 AOPA summer safari to White Island



Vice-President's view

Back when I was growing up in the late '60s and '70s (still a work in progress) there was no internet, cell phones, Uber or Netflix. My first overseas job offer in 1974 came via a telegram delivered by the local postman.

I took my first flying lesson in 1972. It took me another 25 years to get my licence, by which time I was in USA. I went to the States in April 1976, the same year my current Cessna 182P rolled off the production line. The price was, I think, well under US$100K. Now, 46 years later, it would sell used for at least $150K. A new Cessna 182Turbo now costs at least US$600K. Add GST and it will cost you just north of NZ$1,000,000!

Where am I going with this? It seems the conventional route to owning a new or late model GA aircraft is out of reach for almost all aspiring pilots. However, the route via kit-built aircraft such as Vans RV or Sling is a whole lot cheaper, opening the potential market to many more. These aircraft are very capable and use modern construction techniques and superb avionics.

Among the new group of enthusiastic volunteers I am pleased to welcome to our Executive Committee my good friend Peter Armstrong, a stalwart and well-known builder of his unique-to-NZ, Dyn Aero MCR. Peter is also president of the Auckland branch of SAA NZ, and he and I agree that the synergy between AOPA NZ and SAA should be further explored. We have a lot in common and can advance GA in NZ by working together.

After a delay of 15 months, the ACAG working group, of which we are a member, had an online meeting with CAA. It's fair to say that both Covid and vacating their headquarters because of required earthquake mitigation has slowed down many projects. However, I am finding that the people and leadership at CAA are determined to lift the relationship with their 'customers' across all segments from top to bottom. There are several good projects in progress behind the scenes. ACAG has a new Chairman in Qwilton Biel, who some of you will know. Qwilton is an excellent addition to the group and knows the industry and regulations very well.

Our One Day Fly-ins are getting a good response and we are ramping up efforts in the North Island to catch up with our enthusiastic South Island members. Keep an eye on our website and our new Wednesday updates from AOPA NZ comms. Hopefully we can catch up at a fly-in soon.

Steve Horne, Vice-President

From the Editor

Back in mid February we had a family wedding to attend down south. The weather looked promising across most of the country – Hawke's Bay alone was problematic. There was a degree of novelty in that, but we had a deadline to meet. We decided to load up the plane and go take a look.

Departing Bridge Pa was straightforward, but things got murky as we approached southern HB. The high point is Norsewood, and there was no way through. "We'll go back and land at Waipukurau and see what happens," my PIC announced. I assumed he meant it was time to stretch the legs and have a coffee, but no, "Ten minutes might see it clear."

We sat in the plane and watched the clouds. "Looks thinner to the south," he announced (it did?), and we took off again. At Norsewood we could see the windfarm atop the Tararuas. A skiff scurried through and we slipped south in its wake. Into the Manawatu, and we were in the clear.

Overflying French Pass, we dropped into Motueka to refuel, stripping off layers as we stepped out of BHP. All options were open, but a scenic day on the West is a relatively rare beast. We routed cross-country to the coast and followed it south. Okarito didn't disappoint, and then came Franz Josef and Fox.

It's fifteen years since I last saw the glaciers, and it was a shock to see the extent to which they have receded. NIWA reports that, in the last four decades, the Southern Alps have lost one third of their permanent ice and snow coverage, with rapid acceleration of the process over the last fifteen years. The outlook is grim for glaciers the world over, but ours are thinning and losing ground at a record rate. Take a look at Victoria University's ten year timelapse video of the loss of ice at Franz Josef (vimeo.com/443262699).

Sobred, we flew on, thinking about rising sea levels as we tracked the coast.

Up the Haast river, hard right at the Landsborough, over The Neck and we

were skimming above reflected cloud on a glass-smooth Hawea as we ran the final leg into Wanaka. As for the trip home... that's a story for another day.

This issue we introduce five new Executive members and profile AOPA's new President, Sue Kronfeld. Aaron Murphy shares fabulous images of two ODFs, we explore a mix of technical topics, and the newest member of the safety committee, John Evans, offers some thought-provoking reminders.

If there are topics that interest you or you have a story fellow aviators might enjoy, get in touch!

Anna Mackenzie, Editor

Okains Bay ODF

By Aaron Murphy

With a stunning weather forecast and an agreeable low tide at lunchtime, fourteen aircraft and one helicopter set course for a fantastic autumn lunch by the beach at Okains Bay on the first Saturday of April.

Charlie Draper once again beautifully manicured his strip, allowing us to use it as our meeting point and briefing room for the day. Standing amongst strategically placed fresh cow pats, organiser Michael Oakley not only provided an outline for the day's route, including any emergency situation that could arise, but also impressed the gathered crowd with his artistic skills as he crafted an image of Okains Bay on the mobile whiteboard.

With briefing and question time complete, we departed in pre-arranged groups of four or five aircraft of similar performance capabilities, heading to the Ashley River mouth. Skirting Rangiora and Christchurch airspace, we passed New Brighton Pier, Southshore and Godley Head enroute Okains Bay. The last of Canterbury's early morning low cloud patches had all but cleared as Mike Oakley, with Donald White, alighted in the Cub to ensure the beach was clear for the group following behind to land.

A show of hands at briefing time indicated that a little over half of the day's participants would be making their first beach landing, including the author, and whilst I admit to not really knowing what to expect at touchdown, it was a non-event. One comment overheard was 'that was smoother than any bitumen runway I have landed on prior!'

The sight of fifteen aircraft arriving on the beach brought a good number of curious beach goers and campers to the sand dunes to witness the spectacle. Once all were parked up, both pilots and passengers were quizzed about where we had come from, what type of aircraft had landed, and where we were going next, all the spectators enjoying the interesting additions to the Okains Bay coastline.

Okains Bay camping ground is nestled between the estuary and the beach, immediately behind our impromptu parking area, and provided an idyllic setting to share lunch and chat without any interruption from phones, thanks to there being no cell reception!

While our visit was short, there's plenty to do at Okains Bay for anyone wishing to return. The Okains Bay Māori and Colonial Museum is roughly 2km from the campsite and well worth the 20 minute walk, housing a vast collection of Māori artifacts, including a number of waka.

After lunch, the gaggle of craft departed for their various home airfields under the watchful eye of surfers, beachwalkers, locals and campers, while half a dozen or so decided to the fly the perimeter of Banks Peninsula, past the entrance to Akaroa Harbour and down Kaitorete Spit to Ashburton. The views were absolutely stunning.

At Ashburton Charlie Draper and his venerable Auster, AYU, joined us for some more tall tales. As another successful One Day Fly-in came to a close and participants gassed up and headed home before an impending southerly front moved northwards, the author took the opportunity to finally snap AYU in the air over its local territory.

The ODFs provide a fantastic opportunity for AOPA members to get together in great weather and at short notice. Thank you to the organisers, in particular Michael Oakley, and, as always, to Lionel Green for providing me with a spare seat in Cessna 172S TZR.

Day trip to Otaki

By Aaron Murphy

Hot on the heels of the South Island ODF to Okains Bay, a slightly smaller but equally enthusiastic group of aviators made their way to the Horowhenua's Otaki Airfield, some by air, some by road.

After again being kindly offered a seat by Lionel Green, and with the promise of garlic-infused steak burgers, cooked to perfection, on the waiting BBQ at Otaki, I was on the motorway at dawn, heading for Forest Field. The drive down South Eyre road, with the first rays of sunlight beaming back off the Southern Alps, always generates anticipation of a great day of flying ahead.

With the morning's low cloud around Christchurch dissipating fast but lingering just enough in places to be a tad annoying, we departed via the coastal route north-bound. By the time we reached the Conway River mouth we had blue skies and unlimited visibility. Forest Field neighbour Bob Jarman, also Otaki-bound, breezed past us overhead, his Trinidad nipping by with a good thirty or more knots groundspeed advantage over the 172. We opted to head inland to enjoy the view through the Awatere Valley, descending via Taylor Pass for a what was meant to be a quick stop at Omaka.

As is often the case in the tight-knit aviation community, our planned short pitstop to gulp down an instant coffee, refuel and don our lifejackets, turned into a one hour impromptu catch up with friends from the Tiger Moth Club, who appeared by chance out of a hangar wheeling a Gypsy Moth into the sun. With such incredible flying conditions, we were treated to a mini flying spectacle as Tiger Moth, Stearman, Pitts Special, Fox Moth, home-builts and Trikes all took advantage of Marlborough's perfect flying conditions. But it was now high time to set off for lunch... at lunchtime.

Cook Strait was in places like glass, drawing large numbers of yachts and

sailboats out on the water. Safely across, we hugged the western shore of the North Island as we headed towards Paraparaumu, noting that there had been a bit of moisture earlier but, with our later than planned arrival, we had missed it.

It wasn't long until we joined overhead at Otaki and, being second to last to land, the BBQ hot plate was already up to a good temperature!

Over lunch, friendships were rekindled and cemented. A fantastic spread was provided by the organisers, Chris Hoffman and Rob Kofoed. Around a dozen or so aircraft had flown in, with as many members arriving by road. With the morning's showers giving way to a mild and dry afternoon, the gathering was suitably relaxed, with all enjoying both camaraderie and beautiful surroundings – quite a few, myself included, added to their respective cameras' shutter counts before it was time for farewells.

With lifejackets on, re-adjusted for our slightly expanded waistlines, we re-crossed Cook Strait and headed west to take in the glorious Golden Bay region before a brief landing at Takaka. But again, we bumped into more AOPA members, last encountered at the Cook Saddle Saloon in Fox Glacier on the 2021 Haast fly-in, and chatted for too long to make a stop at Karamea on the way home. Instead, we made for Hanmer Springs to top up, soaking in the breath-taking sights of the late afternoon sun across St Arnaud and Nelson Lakes National Park.

Airborne from Hanmer on the final stretch home, we were already planning where our next trip might take us. As Lionel guided us back into Forest Field, I had one eye on the view outside and one already on the camera as I scrolled through nearly three hundred shots of some of New Zealand's most stunning scenery. We really are privileged to be able to do this so freely in New Zealand.

Chris Hoffman's quick survey of the crowd gathered at Otaki indicated enthusiasm for a repeat event, with the possibility of adding a couple of strip or beach landings. Thank you to Max and his fellow airfield owners at Otaki, to the event organisers for making another ODF a resounding success and, as always, to Lionel Green for his generosity in making a seat available.

Finally... the garlic infused steak burgers were well worth waiting for!

New AOPA NZ President, Sue Kronfeld

By Ross Millichamp

Newly-elected AOPA New Zealand President Sue Kronfeld is a commercial pilot who has worked for more than thirty years in one of the most challenging environments on the planet: the Southern Alps.

Sue was an unlikely candidate for a career in aviation. She has no family history in either civil or military aviation and fell into the industry due to a seemingly random event. Bored by high school, Sue quit at 17 with little idea of her future career. Her first boss had a flight instructor living with him and gave his staff the chance of a cheap trial flight before the boarder moved on. Sue took up the $12.50 offer, but admits she knew so little about aviation that she worried she might not have the strength to pull the Cessna 152 into the air, thinking that some of the energy for flight came from the pilot.

That first flight sparked an interest and Sue immediately enrolled for formal flight instruction with Ron Pownceby of the Paraparaumu Flight Training. With hindsight she believes choosing to train at a commercial flight school, as opposed to an aero club, was a good decision that prepared her well for a career in general aviation. Sue gained her PPL at 18, but quickly came up against the problem facing most aspiring commercial pilots at the time – money! This was well before you could run up a student loan for flight training, and most civil pilots had to pay as they went by holding down a 'proper job'. Sue moved to Wellington and into the computer hardware industry, purely to earn better money to fund her ongoing flight training.

Another difference between then and now was that flying schools often committed to employ their graduates back as instructors to allow them to build enough hours to get into GA or the airlines. Once qualified, Sue started instructing part-time while still working in Wellington, but soon tired of the travel and the workload. While on holiday in Wanaka she got a glimpse into the lifestyle on offer to GA pilots there and made a cold call to Alistair McMillan of Aspiring Air. "I'm a commercial pilot and want a job," was pretty much her sales pitch.

Alistair told her to return when she had 650 hours, so she went back to instructing at Paraparaumu while working for a temp agency in the city. "I absolutely hated the temp work but it allowed me to take on every bit of instructing I was offered and to build my hours as quickly as possible," she says.

With the required number of hours under her belt, Sue went back to Wanaka and asked Alistair for 'her job'. She is not completely sure that he remembered the offer, but he did give her that all-important first job. Initially Sue worked in administration and ran Aspiring Air's small flight school. Before long the opportunity came to move into her dream job, the Milford Run. Sue got ratings in the Cessna 207 and Norman Britten Islander, did one route check as co-pilot on a run to Milford, and was set loose. So she could provide interesting commentary to guests along the way, Sue was given a book about Fiordland and told to read it.

Sue loved flying the Norman Islander. It was a rugged, simple aircraft with one speed for pretty much everything. Approaches, engine-outs and best angle climbs were all done at 60 knots. A trip from Wanaka to Milford return had to be done in 1.3 hours of flying time – no more, no less.

"We were always thinking about how to deal with wind, cloud and other traffic to meet this requirement," she says.

Another factor that kept them on their toes was securing the prized late-morning run to Milford, which allowed the poor, hungry pilots access to the free buffet lunch at the THC Hotel while guests were out on the boats. It took a while for Sue to become accepted as 'one of the boys' among some of the pilots on the Milford run. Initially she took a novel to read while waiting for her guests to return, but slowly began to be included in the group that included Milford aviation icons such as Jules Tapper and Hank Sproull.

In 1994 Sue moved to a role with Queenstown Flightseeing (now RealNZ). GPS-based IFR approaches into Milford had just been established and Sue was keen to start using her IFR training. Another attraction was the chance to fly turbo-props, in particular the Twin Otter. "If they still had those aircraft, I would probably still be there," she says.

The development of IFR approaches into Milford did not turn out to be the magic bullet everyone had hoped for in overcoming the fickle Fiordland weather. The VFR Met Minima at Milford at the time was a cloud base of 2500'. "We would often descend through cloud over the Tasman Sea but be unable to establish VFR flight by 2500' and have to turn around and go home."

In 1996 Sue married fishing and hunting guide Gerald Telford and moved back to Wanaka to start a family and to join him in

a guiding and lodging business. Sue was responsible for administration and running the lodge, which proved a successful business until the arrival of Covid. She and Gerald regularly travelled to sportsman shows in the US to promote their business and to encourage Americans to choose New Zealand as a destination for their next fishing or hunting trip.

During this time Sue continued to work in GA for a number of companies, including Southern Alps Air and Classic Flights. One particularly enjoyable role was as a pilot-guide with Fly-Inn based out of Geordie Hills Station. Owned by Matt and Jo McCaughan, the company hosted foreign pilots on tours of New Zealand in their iconic yellow Cessna 172s. The trips lasted eight, eleven or nineteen days. The shorter trips included Stewart Island, Milford Sound, Big Bay, Glenorchy and other southern aviation highlights. The longer trips expanded to the upper South Island and into the North Island.

"Matt's trip design was quite clever and we were almost always able to get everything done, no matter what the weather was doing at the time," Sue says.

Some of the guests were owners of fast, complex aircraft back home and were challenged by the slow speed approaches needed into short strips in the 'floaty' 172s. The pilots from Canada and Alaska were generally the most capable in this environment, having been around bush planes most of their lives.

Sue is proud of her involvement in the New Zealand Association of Women in Aviation, which includes among its members private pilots, airline pilots, helicopter pilots, air adventure pilots, GA pilots and aircraft engineers. A member since 1984, she was President between 2013 and 2015. Sue has made many friends through this small but tight-knit group of female aviators, many of whom have faced the same challenges in being recognised in an industry that was traditionally male dominated.

2019 was the year from hell for Sue and Gerald. Sue had taken on the role of CEO and Chief Pilot at Wanaka Top Flights after it was purchased by foreign owners. When Covid hit, the owners called for the business to be dramatically down-sized and all the aircraft sold. Sue was particularly concerned about her instructors, who were part-way to getting the experience they needed to move into other GA roles or into the airlines. She brokered a deal to sell the training part of the business, together with all its aircraft, to Wanaka Helicopters, who were keen to be the sole provider of flight training at Wanaka Airport.

Sue (right) with Jo McCaughan (centre) and friend from Geordie Hills Station

At the same time Sue was fighting a personal battle with cancer, her daughter had been seriously injured in an accident in Melbourne, and the fishing and hunting business had completely dried up. Gerald was able to return to his roots and go back into farming, but after much thought they decided to sell up and move to Kaikoura. Gerald is confident that the guiding business will come back to life, while Sue is helping out at Air Kaikoura doing training flights, scenic flights and the 'crayfish run' in a G-8 Airvan to Wellington.

For many years Sue has offered mountain flying courses, specialising in training private owners to use a familiar aircraft in an unfamiliar environment. The typical course is run over three days and includes around ten hours of flying. Sue intends to carry on this work, from both Kaikoura and Central Otago, through her company Mountain Flare.

Part of the 'deal' struck between Sue and Gerald over the move to Kaikoura was the purchase of another aircraft. They had previously owned a Maule tailwheel aircraft, but the Covid pandemic pretty much shut down both of their income streams overnight and the aircraft had to be sold. In the last month Sue has taken possession of ZK-MSR, a Murphy Super Rebel 2500. This is a four seat, 300 horsepower tailwheel aircraft registered in the amateur-built category on the CAA register. She bought the aircraft from Ike Stephens of Tauranga, who completed the build in 2017.

"It is the newest GA aircraft I have ever flown," says Sue, who intends to use it solely for private ops. Without students on board or commercial factors to consider, Sue is looking forward to getting back into recreational aviation, including the many AOPA events.

Introducing your new AOPA Executive

John Evans (Timaru)

John was born and bred in Timaru before moving to Christchurch to pursue a Bachelor of Engineering (Mechanical) at the University of Canterbury. Over subsequent years he worked in the engineering and aerospace industries for organisations such as Meridian Energy, New Zealand Antarctic Programme, Rocket Lab, Wisk (electric v-tol air taxi) and is now back on the family sheep and beef farm inland of Timaru.

John was exposed to aviation from an early age through family and friends, and achieved his PPL in 2010, followed by his CPL in 2020. His primary aviation interest is the ability to access the amazing New Zealand backcountry and rural countryside. John is in the Beaver ZK-CKH syndicate and has Cessna 180 ZK-CGJ based on the farm, an aircraft his grandfather flew in the late 1960s. He learnt the ropes of flying tailwheel aircraft in the Piper Pacer ZK-PAL. Attending his first AOPA meet in 2015, the AOPA Winter Fly-in in the Pacer, remains a highlight of his flying adventures to date.

John's motivation to join the AOPA Executive stems from what he gained as a young aviator attending Fly-in events. "They are invaluable opportunities to meet and learn from fellow aviators and to explore new areas," he says. Through being part of the Executive he looks forward to contributing to organising AOPA events and writing articles for our publications. In a wider sense he wants to work to preserve the freedom to aviate, and to continue to learn and improve through the sharing of knowledge and experiences.

Peter Armstrong (Auckland)

Peter started flying in the 1970s out of Christchurch while working as a computer engineer for the American Company Digital Equipment (DEC), which looked after the computer systems for the Waitaki power stations and canals. He learned that it was cheaper and more efficient to charter an aircraft than to drive on his fortnightly visits. Peter's pilot was a B Cat instructor so he started taking lessons on the way to and from the Mackenzie Country.

A move to Auckland in 1981 put that on hold until 2000 when he attended 'Big Boys Toys' in Auckland and saw a kitset aircraft on display. Until that time Peter did not know such stuff existed and was hooked. After much research he settled on a DynAero MCR-4S four seat kit aircraft, and set off to France where, over three visits, he completed the build. It was then packed into a forty foot container and shipped home. Four years and two months after the build was started, the DynAero took to the air. Peter now has about 700 hours flying in the aircraft and, apart from a minor incident with a fuel pump at the 2016 Summer Safari which necessitated a forced landing in a rabbit infested paddock near Alexandra, has enjoyed every minute of it.

Peter has recently used his skills as a computer engineer to build his own ADS-B ground station at his holiday home in Pauanui. He is currently president of the Auckland Chapter of the Sport Aircraft Association (SAANZ) and SAANZ's advocate on the CAA ADS-B working group. He is past president of Pakuranga Rotary, past president of the International Flying Fellowship of Rotarians and has participated in AOPA NZ Blue Light events on an annual basis.

Stu Haynes (New Plymouth)

Stu has worked as a construction consultant on large infrastructure projects around New Zealand, Australia and the Pacific. He completed his PPL in 2012 and has owned a Cherokee 6 for a little over a year, which he purchased when Covid put a stop to international travel.

The family has enjoyed travelling around New Zealand in the Cherokee, with trips ranging from short coffee breaks to overnighters. Charlie the dog has taken to flying and happily jumps up on the wing and into the second row to await his Mutt-muffs.

Stu now has 250 hours of fixed wing time and enjoys both controlled and GA flying.

Stu was introduced to AOPA NZ by Sue Kronfeld when doing mountain flying training, and has found the organisation to be super friendly to a new aircraft owner and low hour private pilot.

Frank in describing his challenges with CAA to regain a flight medical after suffering a mental health episode, Stu wants to do what he can to help others navigate this process, should they have the same experience.

Stu enjoys DIY projects, including maintaining his '61 Plymouth Fury and '57 Morris Minor. He tends to solve any problems via Google searches and has recently learned MIG welding in order to rebuild a trailer.

Always keen for a yarn or a visit here and there, Stu encourages members to reach out if there's anything they wish to know about AOPA business or any upcoming social activities.

Committee members for 2022-2023

Ross Millichamp (Greendale, North Canterbury)

Ross is a former public sector manager who is now semi-retired and living with his wife Jinny near Christchurch. He gained his PPL in 2010 as a form of rehabilitation following a life-changing injury, never really thinking he would do much with it, post qualification. However he caught the bug and aviation is now very much part of his and Jinny's lives, thanks in no small part to the camaraderie and opportunities that come from being part of the AOPA community.

Their first aircraft was C172 ZK-JBT, which they took all around New Zealand before replacing it with something with more backcountry capability. They've owned Cessna 182 ZK-JBT for eight years and have had many great adventures in it, both as participants in AOPA events and on self-motivated trips whenever the opportunity arises and the weather allows. Jinny and Ross recently moved from central Christchurch to a lifestyle block near Darfield and are lucky enough to have their aircraft at the back door.

Ross enjoys all forms of recreational aviation from hunting trips into the backcountry, to long distance flights through busy airspace into major airports. Prior to joining the Executive Committee Ross assisted AOPA NZ in an editorial support role, sourcing *Approach* magazine articles from throughout the membership base and the wider aviation community, and will be continuing with this role.

Michael Parks (Tapanui)

Michael's love of flying came through the late James McKenzie, a good friend of his parents. His first flight with James was in Beagle Airedale ZK-CCW, followed by many trips in Cessna 180 ZK-BMW, which sowed the seed for his ownership of his own C180A many years later.

Michael started his journey towards a PPL at the Herriot Airfield, aged 21. After this airfield closed, Michael transferred to the Southern Districts Aero Club at Gore (now the Gore Aero Club). At the time he was a driver for West Otago Transport. On his way home each Sunday, after dropping a load of lambs at the Mataura freezing works, he would stop at the aero club to carry on with lessons and building hours. Buying his first farm put paid to flying lessons for twelve years, but he finally obtained his PPL in 1996.

The family's first AOPA NZ event was the 2004 Winter Fly-in at Twizel in Cessna 172A ZK-BVP, which they had purchased after selling their first aircraft, Cessna 150 ZK-CXF. This purchase of the Skyhawk meant that the family could fly together for the first time, something that continued for many years.

Mitchell, Courtney and Fergus pretty much grew up in the back of either ZK-BVP or the Cessna 180A that followed it. They imported ZK-TSM from the UK and had the pleasure of hosting its prior owners on a couple of occasions, which they enjoyed immensely. With their children now off living their own lives, the 180 was a bigger aircraft than they could justify, so they now have ZK-RWJ, an RV7, and ZK-DDC, a Bushby Midget Mustang. In mid 2021 they sold their farm in West Otago and are now semi-retired in Dunedin and Tapanui, where Michael works part time driving trucks and diggers.

Continuing on the Executive Committee are Steve Horne, Geoff van Asch, Ian Sinclair and Chris Hoffman, together with AOPA NZ's new President, Sue Kronfeld (profiled on page 8) and administrator Mary Bruce.

Wrong way to New Zealand: part 9

In which six litres of vodka

By David Berger

Author's note: This is the first instalment of Wrong Way to New Zealand to be written since the Russian attack on Ukraine in February 2022.The pandemic, and now the ongoing fighting and atrocities in Ukraine, have pushed our trip, which took place just two and a half years ago, irretrievably into 'The World of Yesterday'.
Although it seemed incredible to us at the time that we were able to make such a trip, we had no idea of just how halcyon a period for independent travel in Russia we were living through, nor how rapidly it might vanish.
This was a trip that was made joyful by the friendship and help of ordinary people, and that is the story I have to tell. It is not the little people who make wars; it is the leaders. Of them I refuse to speak, and I will not refer to the Ukraine war again. Please enjoy the rest of our story for what it was at the time: a tale of comradeship and humanity, of kindness and friendship, a story devoid of political enmity, xenophobia and hatred. For that is the way the world can be, the way the world should be, and the way we must all work to make it be.

We woke up early in our floral themed, Soviet, apartment-block hotel, ready for the Wacky Races challenge the day was to bring.

To recap: it was Saturday morning at the end of September in Mogocha, a run-down town in Eastern Siberia, which had serviced the many prison camps in the area in Soviet times. We were literally in the middle of the Gulag and we had to get from there to the immigration office in Blagoveshchensk, the regional city 450 nautical miles east, before 12.30pm to register our application for a visa extension. If we failed to do so, we would be classified as visa overstayers, which would result in a court appearance, a fine and a delay of a month or possibly longer. Apart from the huge inconvenience and stress of it, a month's delay would take us into late October, a time of year when light aircraft travel in Siberia should most definitely be finished.

It was a freezing, clear night and there was not a sign of the dawn as we stepped into the taxi to take us the short distance down the hill to the airstrip at the bottom of the valley in which Mogocha sits. The weather was fine in Blagoveshchensk and on our route, with nil wind. At the airstrip we were dropped off at the night watchman's caravan. It was 05.30. A departure at 06.00, or even 06.30, would get us into Blagoveshchensk at 10.30 at the latest, giving us time to make the forty-five minute journey into town and register our visa extension request at the visa office. Our friends in Blagoveshchensk had been briefed on the situation and had a car ready to whisk us to the immigration office. Perfect.

We walked out to the aircraft with the night watchman, frozen mud crunching underfoot, our breath forming long grey plumes in the frigid air. He told us it was minus twelve. He smiled. It was "не холодно" ("Not cold").

Reader, I must tell you, however, that it was холодно. It was so холодно that it had coated the aircraft in a layer of hoar frost so thick that you couldn't scratch through it with your fingernail. Obviously any attempt to take off in this state would end up in a pile of wreckage at the end of the runway, or ever so slightly beyond. We stared at the aircraft. Neither of us spoke. Then I did: "Shit".

I turned to the night watchman and pointed hopefully to the sky: "солнце?" ("sun?").

He turned and pointed at the top of the hill to the east: "половина десятого" ("half past nine").

"Shit."

We walked around the aircraft a couple of times, as if looking at it from a different angle would somehow make a difference, then trudged back to the caravan with the night watchman. The kettle was on – it always is – and he made us each a mug of tea. We sat in the warm, cosy fug, a Russian soap playing softly on an old TV set in the corner, nursing our mugs and looking out the window into the blackness, searching for inspiration.

I looked to see if I had any mobile reception. I did. It was early afternoon in Grand Junction, Colorado, so I messaged the situation to our friend Joe, who had overseen the aircraft's rebuild then flown with us across the Atlantic as far as Scotland. I was mainly seeking sympathy, but he came right back with: "Hey man, you're in Russia! Go and buy some vodka and pour it over the aircraft. That'll de-ice it fine."

"Really?!"

"Yes, go and do it! Now!"

With some effort we established from the night watchman that there was a grocery store open where we could buy vodka and within five minutes we were back in the taxi and on our way.

Russians have learned over centuries that it is best to keep your thoughts and

save our bacon

reactions firmly to yourself, lest you unwittingly incriminate yourself in some unknowable way. And so it was that when a pair of foreigners rushed into her store in a remote Siberian town at 6am on a Saturday and breathlessly asked for six litres of vodka and please make it snappy, the shop assistant did not bat so much as an eyelash and we were soon back in the car, cradling our liquid platinum and speeding to the airstrip, trying not to hope too much.

Happily, however, we were soon able to answer the question "How much vodka does it take to de-ice a Cessna 185?" with more authority than anyone else on the planet, and that answer, friends, is six litres: four for the aircraft and the remaining two for the night watchman.

We sloshed the vodka all over long-suffering N185MW, jumping and whooping like mad things as the hoar frost melted miraculously away. Within twenty minutes we were roaring down the potholed concrete runway in the pre-dawn, smelling like an illicit hooch den, perhaps, but an illicit hooch den with wings that could sustain lift. Wheels up time was 07.15: not great, but not terrible either. The game was still on.

Our course for Blagoveshchensk took us due east two hundred miles around an inconvenient, protruding lump of China then south-south-east to the city itself, which sits on the Amur river, the border with China in these parts. The air was still, with little wind at altitude, and the flight passed in a pleasant haze as the adrenaline of the morning's events ebbed slowly away. Our turning point grazed the Chinese border and we looked curiously towards it, speculating how much of a diplomatic incident we would cause by straying inadvertently into Chinese airspace. Answer: "A humdinger", and we gave thanks for the divine gift of GPS as we continued smoothly on our magenta way.

"It bloody works!" Saved from ice, the gulag and the depths of despair by six litres of vodka.

Our destination was the 700m grass airstrip of Fregat, located just east of the small town of Ivanovka, itself some miles north-east of the city. There is another grass strip about a mile north of Fregat with a similar sized, east-west orientated runway. Mistaking the two would not be difficult. I could hear Evgeny's gravelly voice in my ear: "Your strip is the one south of the main road. Remember, south. And the owner has old airliners and fighters parked there. South, remember."

We remembered "south", identified the road and the airliners, and were soon taxiing in along the bumpy taxiway, to be marshalled by the owner, Vladimir, to park below the tail of a superannuated Yak 44 airliner. How an airliner came to be parked on a 700m grass airstrip we would find out later, but for now we were on a mission. Within five minutes of shutting down, and after the usual brutal handshakes and broad smiles, Vladimir had bundled us into a car driven by one of his employees, Dimitri, and we were speeding towards Blagoveshchensk.

My Russian is limited to short phrases and grunts. Dmitri's English was limited to grunts. Nevertheless, we could tell he was anxious we might not make it in time. He drove like a crazy man, pointing forward all the time and, despite a traffic jam in town (at Saturday lunchtime?), we managed to get to the immigration office with fifteen minutes to spare.

No Russian travelogue would be complete without an impassive functionary shaking their head, folding their arms, planting their feet wide and pronouncing "нет!" and this is the point in our story where we meet her. Irina (I shall call her that, though I never found out her name) stood firmly before us, resplendent in the standard issue olive green uniform of

Leaving Mogocha and parked beneath the tail of a YAK 40 in Blagoveshchensk. Following page: Another chapter in a tale of comradeship and kindness.

Russian officialdom, arms folded, buxom as Hattie Jacques and as determined not to move as a hog in a wallow. It was too near closing time. We were not getting in to see the official who could register our request to extend our visas, oh no. That would be craziness.

By now, we had come to understand how all these situations eventually play out: at the beginning, the novelty of the foreign visitor with an irregular request occasions fear and obstruction, for Russians are (rightly) terrified of upsetting their superiors by doing the wrong thing. Over time, however, as the annoyance of the situation increases, so too does the notion that their superiors may be just as upset by having a messy, unsolved problem on their hands. I don't know what Dimitri said in that five minute Russian fusillade, but I suspect it was along the lines of: "Look, these guys just need to get the request registered, it'll take five minutes and if they don't do it today we are all going to be dealing with them for the next six weeks and it's going to be a major hassle and no-one's going to be pleased, least of all your boss, so please let them in and then we can make them into somebody else's problem as soon as possible."

Anyway, whatever it was it worked and she waved us through. We dashed down a corridor and round a corner to find another woman sitting at a desk in a small office. This one had a big smile. Dimitri explained the situation, she took our passports, looked at the visas and said "Вам очень повезло!" "You are very lucky!" We nodded and smiled. We knew.

It was Saturday. The visa extensions would not be ready before at least Wednesday, she explained. She would call Dimitri when they were. After profuse thanks we found ourselves back in the entrance, where Irina, now also smiling beatifically, let us out of the locked door and onto the street.

Dimitri took us back to Vladimir's small suite of offices, a short drive away in the centre of town. I think it was a kind of import-export business, but what really grabbed our attention was the six foot tall 1950s vintage rocket engine standing in the corner of Vladimir's office, along with a collection of other Russian space memorabilia. It turned out that Vladimir was not only a space enthusiast, but knew many cosmonauts personally and was a fairly frequent visitor to the launch site at Baikonur. He even had a little teddy bear cosmonaut that had spent some considerable time on the International Space Station. Quite how this connection to the Russian space world came about we never did fathom, despite spending a very pleasant evening with Vladimir and his wife at their flat the next day.

Another problem, however, loomed large. The customs officer at Anapa on the Black Sea coast, our entry point into Russia, had given us a customs carnet for the aircraft which was only valid for as long as our visas were valid. Apparently he could have given us a longer one, but he hadn't. Anyway, that meant we also had to extend the customs carnet, so where in town might the customs office be? We would go there first thing on Monday. That, unfortunately, wouldn't be so easy, we were informed by Vladimir, apologetically. The customs office for the Amursky Oblast, in whose regional capital we were standing, a city of no less than 200,000 people, was not in that same city, but in Poyarkovo, a tiny village two hours drive east. And not just in Poyarkovo, but in an office in a derelict factory in Poyarkovo, down a dusty dirt track, bordering the Amur River. Everyone else seemed as baffled as we were as to why it was there, but there it most definitely was, and there we would most definitely have to get.

Dimitri drove us to a car rental place in the city and we managed to rent a car with little ado, driving to our surprisingly avant garde hotel on the promenade which stretches the entire of Blagoveshchensk's frontage on the Amur river. That evening we had a burger – Russia is full of excellent and highly original burger joints, all with the obligatory technopop sound drop – and strolled along the promenade. On the other side of the river was the Chinese city of Heihe and a dazzling neon light show from every building, designed to show the Russians just what a bunch of dowdy, long-nosed peasants they were. Very pretty it was, too.

On Sunday we drove out to the airfield and Vladimir and his glamorous wife took us round the aircraft collection. He showed us the pictures of the Yak 44 being helicoptered in from the main city airport by a Russian behemoth of a machine. There had been plans afoot to bring in a retired Mig 29 as well, but

the million ruble price tag had in the end proved too much.

The next day we set off at about 8am to go to the customs office in Poyarkovo. The roads were very poor quality and once again we reflected on how everything became more decrepit the further east we came. Poyarkovo did not disappoint: a dusty village of mainly dirt streets, the usual wooden houses and no discernible centre. Yandex (the Russian Google maps) took us into the kind of derelict industrial yard in which you would ordinarily expect to get knee-capped, but, sure enough, there seemed to be a few offices in the corner of a long, low building. There was no-one at the entrance and we advanced cautiously in and around a corner to find an open door leading to an office with an earnest-looking, fair-haired man of about thirty in uniform, sitting at a desk and talking loudly on the phone. He acknowledged us and we waited. "Таможня?" ("Customs?") I asked, when he put the phone down.

"Да," he said with a smile.

Misha proved to be an exceedingly pleasant and helpful man with good English, a keen paramotor pilot who had been forbidden from flying within 100km of the border by his boss, which irked him somewhat. We talked at length about our trip and his fishing trips in remotest Siberia then finally got down to business. There was a lot of concerned head shaking as he inspected our papers. He would have to call the issuing customs post in Anapa. Problem, however: it was 4.30am there. More head shaking.

The phone rang again and he spoke animatedly for a few minutes. On hanging up he said joyfully: "Congratulations to us! We caught five Chinese vodka smugglers last night!"

He told us they would spend the night in prison then be deported back to China, from whence they would be smuggling again the next day, likely to be caught again soon, when the whole cycle would repeat. This seemed to be an arrangement which kept everyone happy – the smugglers with enough profit and the customs officers gainfully employed – and we congratulated him also.

David and Tom with Vladimir and Dmitri outside the immigration office in Blago.

By now our novelty was wearing off and the Theory of Rising Annoyance starting to take effect. He couldn't extend our customs carnet without more information from Anapa, but anyway how long had we said our visa extension was going to be? "Ten days," was what we had been told.

"Look, I shouldn't really do this, but I'll give you ten days from Wednesday. Just make sure you're in Japan by then, OK?"

That was fine by us and we were soon in the car, bouncing happily back along the road to Blagoveshchensk. The trip had been saved by the timely application of vodka and the efforts of many good people. Nothing more, surely, could go wrong...

Be heard, not herd...

I was recently at a working bee with my local ski club, alongside a tramping club, a group of mountaineers and off-season back-country skiers and we had an interesting discussion around pack (or herd, mob, gang) mentality. Our conclusion was that you're almost certainly going to make different decisions in a pack than you would individually.

Whether mountaineering, tramping, ski touring or flying, the great collective knowledge a group offers can all too easily be overshadowed by a reduction in good decision-making, collective preparedness and knowledge or control over what's going on. Psychologists have for a long time been studying how participants in experiments conform to group pressure; refer to the Asch Conformity Experiment, amongst others.

Key determinants of any group include the variety of skill level and experience (which you may or may not know about), varying levels of preparedness, differing expectations/intentions, and who is leading – if anyone.

A few examples to consider:

• Going somewhere you did not plan to go, but suddenly you're heading there. Without a considered decision-making process, problems can arise: the destination might not be suitable – possibly you didn't even know the place existed; there may not be room for all of the group; and whoever 'leads' the way in may not themselves know if it's suitable. For example, a Super Cub lands somewhere suitable for them, to be shortly followed in by others for whom it may or may not be suitable.

• The desire to get to a place you just really want to get to, making you more willing to take risks than you otherwise would – aptly named 'get-there-itis'.

• A random excursion, potentially good fun at the time, but which afterwards has you thinking differently.

• Not turning back when you would have if you were by yourself. Those in front may take comfort from others behind, potentially not saying anything about any concerns, while those behind rely on the assumed knowledge of those ahead. Together, everyone ends up deeper in than they would have gone on their own.

• Having someone follow you – maybe you didn't even know they were with you. They may not know what they are in for, may not be prepared in terms of equipment/skills/aircraft, or may not have reviewed the necessary AIP's/charts for

aerodromes and controlled airspace. For example, I was with a group where another aircraft unknowingly tagged along with us, eventually on landing causing quite a hazard to a number of parked up aircraft.

• A false sense of security from having others around you. An example: if your practice is to have your passenger walk ahead directing and identifying hazards while you taxi off an unfamiliar airstrip (which I'd encourage you to do), then continue to do that even if you have a bunch of onlookers, because they might not be looking out for you like you expected while your passenger will be.

• Being unduly influenced by envy of others' capabilities (not just their skill but their accepted level of risk, aircraft type and configuration/loading).

• Yourself or someone in your group makes the decision that the approach/landing/route is not for them (always an admirable decision) – but where does that then leave them?

The more challenging aviation experiences are often best approached in a small, organised group. That way, you know who you are flying with and you can plan ahead without additional unknown factors impinging on your decisions.

If you are exploring new places it is advisable to do so with someone who has already been there, as you can leverage off their experience. Ideally they will also have some knowledge of where you are at and can thus offer appropriate guidance. AOPA's community is fantastic for connecting pilots, and partaking in AOPA events will introduce you to these fellow aviators.

There are few experiences in life, particularly those with the potential for excitement and reward, that do not entail some level of risk (especially if it is not your preference to sit at home in front of the TV on a nice day). We therefore utilise what mitigations we can.

First and foremost is a briefing. Less formally, this is a discussion and some sort of plan, developed with others or just with yourself and your passengers. This should cover, at the very least, questions such as: Where are you going? What are the conditions? Have you got permission to land? Have you spoken to someone experienced with this area? Who else is coming or might join and what skills and capability do they have? What is the back-up plan? If the plan changes, where to next? What happens if someone in the group opts to take another option?

"First and foremost is a briefing."

Don't avoid initiating the hard conversation when something doesn't feel right to you, or someone in your group.

Develop a plan, execute it and debrief after.

The PIC of the aircraft is ultimately responsible for their aircraft and passengers, irrespective of what the group and group leader are doing.

Speak up! Be heard not herd!

And lastly, if in doubt, come back when the conditions and situation are right. There's always another day to go fly!

Back-country communication

By Ross Millichamp

In the last edition of *Approach* I described what happens when you push the red switch on an aircraft's Emergency Locator Transmitter (ELT) or activate a Personal Locator Beacon (PLB). These devices are intended for use in genuine emergencies and, if an explanation does not come forward within a short time of activation, a full blown search and rescue operation will likely commence. So what should you do when you have a problem that is not an emergency? A dead battery, a flat tyre or merely a delay due to weather?

In the old days, a non-emergency situation in the back-country necessitated walking to the nearest farmhouse and asking to use their telephone.

A helicopter pilot friend of mine once got called out of the office to do an urgent job in the headwaters of the Rangitata River. He was a long way inland of the last farmhouse when the tail rotor chip light came on, indicating the presence of metal particles in the tail rotor gearbox. Although these do not always mean imminent failure of the gearbox, standard procedure is to land immediately and have an engineer determine whether it is safe to continue. My friend put the machine down and commenced the long walk out to civilisation – in his office loafers! After that he always wore tramping boots in the machine.

These days there are a number of affordable satellite-based options for non urgent communications. These can be grouped into two main types: flight following devices and communication devices.

Flight following devices are most applicable to commercial operators, as these work best when there is someone back at base monitoring your track. It is also helpful if the 'follower' has some knowledge of the aircraft and its mission – things such as the fuel endurance of the aircraft, the likely route being followed, and any alternates that the pilot might choose should bad weather be encountered. Communication devices are particularly useful to private pilots who generally do not have base support.

There are two communication satellite networks in common use in New Zealand. The Inmarsat system uses fourteen 'geostationary' satellites which sit at an attitude of 37,500km above the equator. In 1945, science fiction author Arthur C. Clarke worked out that an object positioned at 37,500km will orbit at the same speed as the earth, so will stay in the same relative position. In New Zealand our nearest L Band Inmarsat satellite is just to the north of Papua New Guinea, so you need a clear line of sight to the northwest to get a signal. However, because they do not move, once you have connection you should be able to retain it and know that you will be able to get it in the same place in the future.

The Iridium network uses 66 low earth orbit satellites positioned 800km above the earth, which are always moving relative to your position on the ground. They should enable a connection without a view to the north-west, but you may have to wait for a satellite to come into view, and you may not retain the signal for more than a few minutes.

With either system you will get a better connection out in the open on a high ridge than you will at the bottom of a

steep-sided gully under a bush canopy.

The ultimate back-country communication system is the satellite phone. I bought a handheld satellite phone soon after purchasing my first aircraft, and found it incredibly useful, especially in the early days when I had limited knowledge about how the prevailing weather might affect my intended route. Before departing a remote location I would ring experienced pilots for information on the weather enroute and seek their advice on the best way home in light of those conditions. My satellite phone used the Iridium network and I often had to wait to get a signal and always advised people on the other end of the line that my call would drop out if we chatted too long.

Satellite phones are not just restricted to calls. They can be used for texts and emails, which can be cost effective as long as they are short and simple. The speed of data transfer via the satellite phone system is 2.4kb/sec, which is significantly slower than old fashioned dial up internet, which operated at 56kb/sec. Even a simple email will take a couple of minutes of call time to send.

Most satellite phones are a bit clunky to use for long messages because you have to press each key up to four times to select the letter you want, similar to texting on early mobile phones.

For a lot of texting and emails, the Iridium Go system allows you to Bluetooth the satellite phone to your Smartphone. Be aware, though, that you will be reliant on your Smartphone being in working order and charged. Smartphones have changed our lives, but they are relatively fragile and do not like water.

The best thing about satellite phones is that you are talking to a real person and you get immediate confirmation that your message has got through. The big disadvantage is the cost. At between $1400 and $2600 to purchase a phone, $70 per month in subscriptions and around $2 per minute when calling, it proved a lot of money for something I did not use that often. Like most novice pilots, I fancied being away in the Cessna most weekends, but the realities of the New Zealand weather and my other commitments meant that months would go by without me ever turning it on. The big killer was the monthly subscription, which was not easy to put on hold. Had it been cost-effective to remove it from the network when not in use I would still have it.

When researching this article I talked to Peter Nally of Pivotel. He explained that it was important for users to understand the strengths and weaknesses of the two systems. The main disadvantage of the Inmarsat system is that if you can't get a signal in a certain position, you'll need to move to a location with an unobstructed view to the north-west sky to initiate communications, because the satellites will not come to you. He noted, however, that the extremely high attitude of the Inmarsat satellites gives them an impressive look angle into locations such as Milford Sound.

The disadvantage of the Iridium system is that, while you'll get a signal in more locations, you may have to wait a while and it may not last long. Peter has clients who are commercial fishermen in Fiordland who have recently changed to the Inmarsat system after frustration with Iridium calls dropping out.

I'd heard from a friend that he'd given up on Iridium phones because he could never get a signal on Stewart Island – at times he had to motor offshore in his boat to get the thing to connect!

In response, Peter explained that the original Iridium satellites were launched in 1999 with an expected service life of 13 years. In fact they stayed in use until 2019, and may not have been at their best towards the end of their time in service. With a brand new system in place, Peter is confident that the system is now performing as it should.

The other communication system of relevance to aviation is 'satellite communicators', which use the satellite system to send simple texts and emails. These are significantly cheaper to buy and to operate than satellite phones. My Garmin Inreach 66i retails for $1000 and costs about $25 per month in subscriptions, which includes a number of free messages. After the messages are used up you are billed about $1 per incoming or outgoing message. It is also cheap and easy to suspend your account if you know you are unlikely to use it for a month or so.

One of the cool things about the Inreach system is that you can set it up to include a link to a map showing the location where message was sent from. So if you are summoning help, the recipient will automatically get your exact position.

Texts are limited to 160 characters, which I learned the hard way on a recent trip to Fiordland. We were being picked up by helicopter and I spent twenty minutes writing the pilot a detailed message about where and when we'd meet him, where we'd left some gear and the approximate weight of the gear in each cargo net. The text wouldn't send which I eventually discovered was because it was too long. By the time I had it down to the required number of characters it pretty much said "We'll see you at 10am"!

Messages between Inreach users are free, which works well if you are away in a group and you know that everyone is monitoring their gadgets. You can also set up a limited number of fixed messages that can be sent to a nominated recipient outside of the Inreach network for free. One of mine is to my wife's cell phone and simply says "arrived safely".

My Inreach also includes a gps mapping device which has replaced my handheld gps for fishing, hunting and boating.

A great feature of the Inreach system is the ability to get weather reports, which cost the equivalent of one message for a 'basic' report, and a little more for a 'premium' report. While they are not as detailed as a TAF or METAR, they give you predicted wind direction, wind strength and rainfall at two hourly intervals for a twenty-four hour period, which I find incredibly useful in a remote location without access to an aviation forecast.

The downside of satellite communication is the time it takes to create a message, to wait for it to be sent and the uncertainty about whether the recipient is monitoring their device in order to receive it. The whole process has to be repeated in reverse before you have confirmation that the message has got through and is being acted upon. If you are in an area of marginal coverage, a single send and respond cycle can take an hour.

Although this article is not intended to review flight following devices, some of them do include satellite-based messaging systems.

The early version of Spidertracks would generate a message back to a nominated recipient when you had safely landed, as long as you had pushed the blue 'watch' button. The later versions allow more detailed messaging through the 'Spidertext' feature, but they do rely on the recipient being registered to the system to be able to receive them. While formal flight following is a great safety system, it may not completely remove the need for another communication system in remote locations.

The key thing with all communication devices is to get completely familiar with the way they work before you head into remote areas. They are all a bit clunky to use compared to a Smartphone, so you need to set up your contacts in the directory, set up your allocation of pre-set messages on the host website, and practice making calls or sending messages before you leave.

Tau ke!

AOPA members support the East Coast

AOPA members were in support at Ruatoria back in March, creating a buzz that drew the crowds to a Covid vaccination event.

Highlighting the region's role in WWII, Charles Davis, Paul Grayson, Simon Holdsworth, Andy Stevenson, Chris Hoffman and Paul Davidson decorated their planes with the names of soldiers from C Company, 28th Māori Battalion.

During the Second World War a large contingent of men from the East Coast responded to the call and signed up to join the war effort. Known as C Company, or the Cowboys, the unit was respected by their foe for, amongst other things, their hand to hand combat skills.

"Many C Company soldiers were killed overseas," descendant Zac Te Maro said. "My Uncle is buried in Italy, and the Italian people do a wonderful job of looking after his grave. We had the privilege of visiting my Uncle's grave a few years ago."

Supported by Te Puni Kōkiri, the event attracted many families and young children, who came to connect with their ancestors and to get vaccinated, keeping the Ngati Porou vaccination team busy. Te Puni Kōkiri Senior Manager, Mere Pohatu, attending from Gisborne, is the daughter of the late Flt Lt Leslie White DFC 485 SQN, who flew Spitfires during WWII. Locally known as Chalky, the Ngai Tahu airman farmed near Ruatoria – the story of his courageous escape across the Pyrenees to England after being shot down in enemy territory is described in the book Pilot on the Run.

AOPA member Paul Grayson noted that "It was very special to come back and to have Chris, Charles, Simon, Paul and Andy supporting this important kaupapa to vaccinate whanau living here on the Coast. As in many rural communities, the challenges to vaccination are complex."

A highlight for Paul, a former Navy man whose whanau come from Te Araroa, was meeting and talking to the family of Te Moana-Nui-A-Kiwa Ngarimu about his Victoria Cross, won in the attack on Point 209. Paul proudly displayed his hapu tee-shirt on his beloved Charlie (CDY).

The five pilots who attended from Wellington, Paraparaumu, Gisborne and Te Awamutu were thanked by Ngāti Porou Chief Executive, George Reedy. "These guys are awesome and really helped us get whanau vaccinated."

Mokopuna of the 28th Māori Battalion C Company connect with their ancestors.

Gisborne Mayor Rehette Stoltz added thanks to the pilots for letting the kids play in their planes and 'showing them around with a smile'.

Event organiser Mahanga Maru was humbled by the generosity and support of the AOPA team. "These guys have given so generously of their aircraft time and their energy to our Ngāti Porou people; they have literally saved lives."

Mahanga related one of his iwi Ngāti Porou whakatauāki, which talks about leadership: "E hara taku maunga a Hikurangi I te haere, he maung tu tonu, ko toku kingitanga no te po mai rano, no oku tīpuna, matua! – My mountain Hikurangi does not move, it remains steadfast; my authority comes from beyond, from my ancestors."

On behalf of Ngāti Porou, Mahanga sends thanks and says "Ngā mihi nui to our AOPA team and whanau (Sally Hoffman, Helen Hoffman, Sara Grayson) for your leadership and generosity to protect the current and future generations of Ngāti Porou by supporting this kaupapa. Tau ke e hoa ma!"

Above: AOPA whanau and supporters pose before departing RR for GS. Contents page image shows Paul Grayson holding his grandfather Bill Rowland's photo, together with Agnes Walker, niece of Lt Te Moana-nui-a-Kiwa Ngarimu. Rowlands and Ngarimu served in WWII. Photos: E.W Media.

Flying neighbourly

By John Evans

Aircraft noise is one issue we need to front foot. For a century we have operated aircraft into areas and aerodromes. In the meantime, communities have expanded, meaning greater numbers of neighbours.

In some cases, our neighbours enjoy the privileges and services that aviation provides, but only when the impact is on their terms. We need to be mindful of the impact of aviation and respectful of our neighbours through being increasingly aware of how noise is generated and received.

The procedural side of noise abatement

Part 93, Special Aerodrome Traffic Rules and Noise Abatement Procedures apply to Auckland, Ardmore, Matamata, Paraparaumu, Wellington and Christchurch. Aerodrome operators (such as Wellington, Christchurch, Nelson, Whangarei, Auckland, Queenstown and Ardmore) have Noise Management Plans that stipulate similar requirements. District Plans also detail how noise is managed. There's plenty of reading in all of that which is beyond the scope of this article, but themes include considerate flying procedures 'flying neighbourly', engine testing and movement curfews, using available runway length, achieving 500' AMSL within airfield boundary, circuit directions suited to the environment, noise abatement areas, noise dBa limits, and so on. In extreme circumstances some of these plans preclude movements to the point where a fly-in and even circuit training would be non-compliant (refer draft Glenorchy Aerodrome Noise Management Plan).

The neighbourly side of noise abatement

'Flying neighbourly' is the primary scope of this article. Principally, by being conscious aviators we can perhaps avoid further prescriptive measures being imposed. Just take a moment to think about your impact when you fly, and that it might be unwelcome to some (whether you think that should be the case or not!). Built-up, rural (especially around horses and at lambing time), and back-country and wilderness areas are the

obvious ones. There are quite a few designated Wilderness Areas in New Zealand, of which we should be particularly respectful. Look them up on the Federated Mountain Club website (https://fmc.org.nz/wilderness-are-mapping-tool/).

Caveat: noise often means performance or potential for it, so noise abatement should not come at the expense of safety. The following approaches to noise mitigation are purely informative, with the resounding theme being neighbourly flying.

Take-off and climb out

Before take-off, just take a moment to consider your environment and study the relevant AIP Aerodrome Plates. Alongside slope/size/surface, existing circuit traffic, wind, and the aerodrome environment (and neighbours), with the added knowledge of your noise impact, go ahead and pick a vector. Backtracking to use the available runway length is generally a good thing, keeping you within the aerodrome boundary for longer, to a point where a safe reduction in power/RPM might be achieved and allow you to be in a better position to avoid noise sensitive areas. RPM (the normally blue knob or the throttle for fixed pitch) has the greatest effect on your noise signature. Some aircraft have relatively high RPM governor setpoints or fine pitched fixed-pitch aircraft, and sitting on the red line may not be necessary, particularly if the propeller tips are supersonic.

Cruise

Your pilot operating manual will stipulate cruise power settings with RPM/MP combinations, and you may have a setting that works for you – for example, minimising vibration/harmonics and achieving your desired performance/cooling. First and foremost, operate to the manual and what works for you, but the same theme applies: lower RPM settings will reduce noise. You may be able to temporarily operate outside of your preferred/normal settings until you have vacated the noise sensitive area.

Approach/landing

A high RPM propeller on a descending/low power approach to a typical aerodrome can generate excessive noise, and it is generally not a time you need a high RPM setting. Cruising/descending to join a 1000' AGL circuit or a 1500' overhead join typically requires planning through a gradual reduction in MP (for engine cooling, airspeed reduction and the increase in MP as ambient air pressure increases) and, without needing the potential for power immediately, reducing the propeller RPM alongside MP is good practice (and nice to your engine). A high RPM propeller in the overhead or downwind will have folk on the ground looking up, and have some of our fellow aviators anxious about an Aerodrome Noise Abatement Procedure/Plan being drafted. When going full fine/RPM in anticipation of needing power (sink, overshoot), with a low MP and the propeller already on its full fine pitch stops, you will not see an increase in RPM.

Do your thing, fly your aircraft, but self-awareness (considering the environment and stipulated AIP Aerodrome procedures, and actually knowing how noisy your aircraft is) alongside awareness of our neighbours (and keeping a good relationship with them) will help us all preserve our existing freedoms to fly to the places we love, additionally respecting those (aviation groups such as AOPA and commercial operators) who make a conscious effort to manage impacts.

Jay McIntyre is the owner, LAME and IA of JEM Aviation, Omaka

A tale of despair - continued

As readers of the last edition will recall, I recounted the despairing tale of a recently rebuilt aeroplane's initial engine runs and subsequent disaster when all the holes in the cheese lined up.

This issue, I'd like to look at the things that conspired to create this mess. As we all know, it's often the little things that conspire against us!

Schedules: from the get-go we were under a bit of self-inflicted pressure to get the task done. The guys who had spent the last few years rebuilding the aircraft had completed all the work necessary to run the engine (or so we thought) and everyone was keen to complete the next steps towards getting her ready for a C of A. Finding a day on which we could concentrate exclusively on this task was proving an issue, but eventually things came together and 'tomorrow' was it.

On the day itself we were blessed with great weather and did not feel rushed.

Unfamiliarity: it was perhaps a mistake to have the owner carry out the initial engine runs. Of course, it felt wrong to take the triumph of the moment away from him but, given his own distractions and unfamiliarity with the cockpit controls and layout, it was perhaps unfair to put him in this position. Operation of and location of various controls, including the setting of the throttle for start, did not come naturally.

That's not to say that I was any more familiar with the cockpit layout than he was, but working on aeroplanes every day does give one a bit of an advantage.

Perhaps the biggest mistake was assuming that jobs had been done AND done correctly. This is not a question of distrust in the capability of the guys doing the work, rather, due diligence on my behalf. If the aeroplane had been going flying, then I would have approached the task in quite a different mindset. Because it was not yet a flying machine, a certain degree of apathy was probably evident.

For example, the brakes had been worked on extensively, had been bled recently and we assumed they were in working condition. I never actually checked the operation myself, and to date we don't know why they were inoperable.

It transpired after the event that the rudder cables, although hooked up, had not been tensioned. If they had been, then there may have been a chance that the aeroplane could have been steered away from the other aircraft – all it needed was a few degrees!

Operation of the primer should have been checked prior to hot oil priming so that there was no pressure to use alternative methods of starting. This was the first event in the Swiss cheese model and perhaps when we should have quit!

In hindsight it is amazing that the battery even had a charge, as often enough a flat battery has let us down.

To date, the aircraft which was damaged by the runaway machine has been repaired. We were very lucky with that one as the damage was done in an area that was more easily repaired than anywhere else on the airframe. The runaway aeroplane has had some work done but is awaiting it's turn in the owner's queue for the main damage to be repaired.

Part of the reason for writing this article was that I had been thinking about how what seems from the outside to be a simple task can take a huge amount of time – particularly from the perspective of the owner. This then translates into an equally huge invoice at the end of the day, especially at today's labour rates. What needs to be remembered is that in most cases the maintainer is trying to do the job to the highest quality, but also in the quickest possible manner. This is particularly an issue with complicated machines, and perhaps even more so with very old equipment that requires non-existent special tools for a one-off job that may never need to be carried out again.

Sometimes slow and steady really does win the race!

Flying Getaway...

Waiheke Island

By Steve Horne

Waiheke is a 45-minute ferry trip from downtown Auckland, but only a 12 minute flight from Ardmore Airport. It's a great place to visit for just the day or for longer holiday trips.

Waiheke has a good airfield with good width and length. I've seen a Beechcraft Baron in there, along with a Cirrus SR22 and other light twins. In my Cessna 182 it's a breeze. The runway orientates north-south with vectors 17/35.

It often blows a crosswind though, so make sure you are proficient. My go/no go number on wind is generally 15kts and I gauge the expected wind direction from the Ardmore AWIB on 121.00. If the wind has a northerly component, then land slightly uphill on runway 35. Always check your groundspeed to see if you have gained a tailwind. It's best not to land with any tailwind on either runway.

Make sure you get a briefing prior to flying in if you haven't been before. Call Chris, the airport owner and manager, on 021 2800964 for briefing and permission.

Landing fees are payable in an honesty box at the corner of the hangar. Ensure you've read the AIP briefing plate and understand the offset approach to runway 17. I have a couple of YouTube videos, links below, of landing in each direction.

Taxis are available at the airport if you call with an arrival time. Try Waiheke Island Taxis on 09 3720088 or Executive Taxis on 0800 372200. Both can do vineyard and local tours. Or you can rent a car, which can be prebooked to be there at the airfield when you land. Try Waiheke Car Rental on 0800 110851.

There are so many places and restaurants to visit that it's hard to pick from amongst them. My favourites are both at Onetangi beach, a 15 minute trip from the airfield – and a fabulous beach for swimming. Try Charlie Farleys for a casual lunch or evening meal, or 372 for something with a bit more cuisine.

Another favourite activity is the zip line at EcoZip adventures, but make sure you book beforehand. For something unique visit Stoney Batter underground tunnels, about 35 minutes from the airfield.

There is accommodation right at the airfield at Waiheke Lodge, as well as a vineyard with fabulous views and an excellent restaurant. If you'd like to know more or catch up over coffee, get in touch.

Useful web links:

email: waihekeairportmanagement.co.nz
www.stonybattertunnels.nz/
www.ecozipadventures.co.nz/
www.waihekelodge.co.nz/the-lodge/
www.batchwinery.com/
www.youtube.com/watch?v=a8GAEkRO_5o
www.youtube.com/watch?v=pkYzjl5gZ0Q