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WINTER 2023

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AOPANZ

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Coming up

- AOPA NZ Midwinter Fly-in Haast, 7-9 July
 - AOPA NZ Spring Fly-in Darfield, 22-24 September
 - AOPA NZ AGM 2024 Timaru, details tbc
 - Watch your inbox for notification of One-Day Fly-ins
- For more visit www.aopa.nz

Cover photo: Fred Bull in Cub BKX lands uphill at Haldon Station during AOPA NZ's Omarama Autumn Fly-in
Photo credit: Gavin Wills

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Deadline for ads, articles and photos for the next (Spring) issue: 20 July 2023.

President's Comment



Health is important for a pilot. Your livelihood depends on it.

I started flying in 1984. The older and bolder we get, the slower, more achy and fatigued we become. It's important to register your limits, not only as a junior pilot, but also as an

ageing pilot. The six-monthly aviation medical I must pass to retain my Class 1 comes around far too fast. I continue to keep fit and meet the standard to fly through it.

When a pilot has to elect the medical convener process, it means their medical has been revoked based on a finding by the Aviation Medical Examiner. This finding is required to be divulged to the CAA medical team.

Should you be denied a Class 2 medical then the DL9 has become a favourable back-up for the recreational pilot. Privileges of the DL9 in comparison to the Class 2 medical are outlined on the CAA website, <https://www.aviation.govt.nz/licensing-and-certification/pilots/pilot-licensing/ppl-privileges-by-type-of-medical-certificate/> and the medical convener process is explained in the Ministry of Transport website, <https://www.transport.govt.nz/about-us/what-we-do/queries/reviewing-a-medical-certificate-decision/>

This process is paper-based but there has been a medical

convener review process that allowed a face-to-face panel hearing. AOPA NZ will seek further clarification from CAA during the quarterly meeting that this medical convener review face-to-face hearing will become an ongoing option for candidates in the future.

Regarding DL9 medicals; this medical form does not state its validity. Refer to CAA Rules Part 61.35. This DL9 has the same validity as for a Class 2 medical certificate for a PPL – ie, five years up to the age of 40 years old, then two years after that. Check your DL9 date today and make sure you're still holding a valid aviation medical.

As quoted directly from the CAA website:

If you're a current licence holder, please note that when you receive your DL9 medical certificate you need to send a copy of pages one and four only of the DL9 to the CAA within seven days of it being issued. Please send the copy to licensing@caa.govt.nz. This is a rule requirement and helps us to keep accurate records on active licence holders.

And while I'm in the Aviation Rule book, please remember to disembark your passengers when refuelling your aircraft. Take a look at Rule 91.15.

Enjoy your autumn and winter flying, take care of your health and fly safely out there.

Sue Kronfeld, President

From the Editor

It's been a full-on couple of months shaped for many of us by February 14.

Eleven members of my family across three generations were heavily impacted, left without power and completely cut off by road for over six weeks – even now, the road and bridge link is temporary and vulnerable.

As the days crawled by I found myself desperate for 'eyes on'... which, with the bridges gone, left only the air. The state of emergency 'no fly' zone, imposed to keep the airways clear for emergency services, kept us grounded.



Once it was lifted I was raring to go – however the hangar was still sitting in a bog, the plane inaccessible.

We hired the HB&EC Aero Club's RV12 – climbing into it felt a bit like getting into a dinghy when you're accustomed to something altogether more substantial – and flew up to my brother's farm, circling multiple times, my spirits lifting at my first sight of them in weeks.

We also had the opportunity to take in the scale of damage to land and lives in Dartmoor, Rissington and Puketapu.

In this issue Helen Watson shares her story of flying truckloads of supplies into equally cyclone-ravaged Tutira.

We also have a couple of great pieces covering both organising and attending a multi-day fly-in – thanks to Ian Sinclair and Steve Lyttle for those contributions. It's a jam-packed issue, with award winners, new Executive members and fresh destinations. David Berger finishes his tale of peripatetic wanderings of just



Above: Dartmoor River showing flood damage to the flats... and no bridge. Left: Sodden hangars at Bridge Pa aerodrome.

under 20,000nm. John Evans offers sage advice on safety, Chris Hoffman on IFR. We also farewell our administrator of close to eight years, Mary Bruce. She's been an asset who it will be a challenge to replace.

Hamish and I are soon heading off on a covid-deferred flying holiday – more on that in the next issue!

Anna Mackenzie, Editor

AOPA News

New Life Member

The 2023 AGM saw the ratification of a new AOPA NZ Life Member: Shaun Gilbertson.

Shaun has served on the Executive Committee for many years and continues to assist with the organisation of social events in the South Island. He was active in the formation of the Recreational Backcountry Pilots Association, which aims to preserve access for

GA pilots to some of the more isolated and picturesque regions of the country.

His enthusiasm for all things aviation is legendary, and he has been a stalwart contributor to and supporter of AOPA NZ throughout his flying career. His 'get it done' attitude has been of benefit to all – when Shaun takes on an issue he puts in 110%. Shaun lives in Wanaka where he has multiple business interests and is an active member of the Wanaka Airport Users' Group. He owns a C180.

Got a spare car sitting at an airfield somewhere?

Or maybe you need the use of a vehicle when you fly in somewhere? Groundwings is offering a new service, especially for the convenience of GA pilots, that might be just what you need! See their new ad on page 13 and check out the app and details on their website, www.groundwings.co.nz.

Farewelling a stalwart

It's with much regret that we bid farewell to our Administrator, Mary Bruce. Mary has been with AOPA NZ since 2017.

An accountant and microbiologist, she brought with her the precise range of skills that our volunteer-based organisation required, readily slipping into a challenging role. Alongside our President of the time, Ian Andrews, she played a pivotal role in ensuring the 2018 IAOPA World Conference, held in Queenstown, was a success – the most successful ever, we were assured; in no small part due to Mary's focus on detail and excellent grasp of the finances.

Mary was also key in the transition to Xero accounting software and updating our online presence. For nearly eight years she has been the helping hand for members needing something sorted on the admin side. We wish her well and trust that we will continue to see her and partner Geoff at fly-ins and AOPA NZ gatherings.

Welcome to new members:

Liam Anderson & Theresa Woessner, Cromwell; Kevin Maurice Auckland; Dan Conaghan, Dunedin; Iain Weir, Wanaka; Ron Burr, Albany; Leighton McCarthy, Auckland; Bronnie & Derek Chamberlain, Otautau; Mornay Rautenbach, Richmond; Chris & Danielle Hoffmann, Kerikeri; Charles Davis, Wellington; David & Katie Trust, Whakatane; Peter Henn, Blenheim; Liam Wedlake, Christchurch; Stephen Mosen, Whitianga; John & Deborah Deane, Upper Hutt; Preston Johnston, Auckland; Henry Bolt, Temuka; Glenn Drower, Auckland; Hamish & Karine Robinson, Christchurch; Graham & Jo Johnson, Christchurch; Michael Guerin, Fairlie; Alan Coubray, Whitianga; Craig Dowden, Gore; Hilaire McDonald, Waipu; Phillip Scott, Mapua; James Schmidt, Warkworth; Grierson Fox, Auckland; George Baxter, Ashburton

All round smiles at Waipukurau

For almost thirty years the Central Hawke's Bay Aero Club has hosted the families of the Hawke's Bay branch of the Child Cancer Foundation.

This was started on the initiative of one of the club members who was affected, and has taken place every two years, apart from a Covid miss. The event was run this year on Sunday 2 April, and was very well supported by twelve privately owned aircraft and six club members taking families flying in three of the club's aircraft.

Other attractions available for rides were diverse and fun: several ponies, a genuine WW2 Willys Jeep, huge Case tractor, big truck lent by Twist Trucking, rural fire engine and a water tanker. Lunch was provided by the Foundation and the



Aero Club, and the day concluded with Easter eggs and a small lolly scramble. There weren't as many children there this year but the event has always been popular as it is a chance for the whole family to have some enjoyable and relaxed time together.

CHB Aero Club would like to thank everyone who provided their aircraft and other machinery; your contributions are appreciated by all.





Vice-President's view

The AGM in Whitianga saw Steve Horne step down from the Vice Presidency of AOPA NZ to pursue new opportunities in the motorsport industry. AOPA NZ members have been very fortunate to have someone of Steve's abilities and reputation involved in the leadership of our organisation. I have big shoes to fill as your new Vice President.

The decision to defer the Summer Safari in light of the disruption caused by cyclone Gabrielle was a difficult one, but continuing with the AGM weekend proved to be a good call. Jinny and I had booked a room at a small motel on the Esplanade and were surprised to find it all but empty on arrival. Our hosts told us they had pinned their hopes of financial recovery from the Covid pandemic on the 2022-2023 season. They'd been fully booked for three straight months but most of their guests were now cancelling after hearing of damage to a handful of Coromandel roads during the cyclone. Turning up and supporting the Whitianga business community, albeit it a modest way, seems the right thing to have done.

The hospitality extended to us by the Mercury Bay Aero Club was exceptional. Evan Wheeler, Brian Wigley and their team made us feel right at home at their impressive airfield. The club owns the 60 hectare site and has a successful business model based on hangar ground rental and the operation of their very own hospitality business, the Coro Club Café. In addition, the airfield is used by Barrier Air for their scheduled Whitianga to Auckland service.

Despite the quality of the planned AGM events, the highlight for me was an impromptu dinner at an Irish Pub the day after it was all over. After attending Peter Armstrong's Pauanui lunch, Jinny and I opted to stay an extra night in Whitianga because the weather didn't look great for our trip home. We knew Geoff van Asch was still in town so organised to get together for dinner. He suggested inviting Evan Wheeler, Graham Weck and their wives. While I was on the phone to Geoff, Brian Wigley rang Jinny to ask what we were doing for dinner, so he and Belinda were added to the booking. On the way to the pub we ran into Paul and Gilly Finch and invited them to join us. By the time we arrived our 'table for three' had swelled to eleven and a great night ensued.

On the trip home to Canterbury I called into Hawke's Bay to drop Jinny off for a family visit. The devastation visible from the air during the arrival from the north was sobering. To the south, the landscape appeared untouched and was an example of how the brunt of catastrophic weather events is often borne by a relatively small number of individual families and businesses. The Hastings airfield had just re-opened to general aircraft traffic but was still under a NOTAM to allow cyclone recovery aircraft to operate without disruption. As I was taxiing back out via the temporary taxiway created by the NOTAM, an Air Force NH90 approached towards its dedicated landing area. However the pilot held short in a high hover and waited for me to pass, explaining that he might blow me over if he came any closer. I offered to move out of the way but the pilot said that he was happy to wait. That simple gesture reinforced what I love about aviation. We fly machines of vastly differing capabilities with vastly differing levels of ability but are united by the joy of flight.

In the last edition of Approach I wrote about an unplanned 'outlanding' I undertook near Fairlie in deteriorating weather. I got a lot of feedback in relation to how tricky the weather can be around there, and about how I had made the right decision to land in a paddock. However, the most memorable comments were from a couple of local pilots telling me about two perfectly good airstrips that were probably within reach, had I known they were there. I am currently hatching plans to go back and familiarise myself with them in case I find myself in a repeat situation.

Ross Millichamp, Vice-President

Ross Millichamp, Vice-President

Ross Millichamp, Vice-President



The making of a fly-in

By Ian Sinclair



I've been a member of AOPA NZ for many years but became an active member relatively recently. I regularly read this magazine but had no other involvement. I knew AOPA NZ was a good fit for my type of flying and that they did things that looked interesting, and that they were actively advocating on my and others' behalf.

That all changed when I attended a fly-in at Omarama. Funny full circle moment. This article is about running the Omarama Fly-in and what goes into getting it organised.

A common thread behind all successful multi-day fly-ins is a core group of motivated people who want to make it happen. Kevin Anderson, Murray Paterson, Shaun Gilbertson and Dave Paterson have been the engine room of fly-ins down south for a long time. They have created a culture of friendly, common-sense, safety first but fun fly-ins. Attending such events extends the experience and competence of pilots, while simultaneously offering activities that may not be available outside such events.

This ethos has become the driver of decisions, and the underlying guiding principle for managing our fly-ins. As an organisation we are continually trying to refine and document our process. Part of the motivation for this article is to share some of that experience and help people attending fly-ins understand why things happen the way they do.

Planning a multi-day fly-in usually starts a year or more before. Often they are 'rinse and repeat' events, but not

always. New fly-ins often start with a conversation with an Executive Committee member, and that will lead to the Social subgroup putting it in the calendar and getting involved to support it. Setting a date and block booking some accommodation is the first step. Once that is done there can be a long period during which not too much happens.

It is worth mentioning here that our One Day Fly-ins are far less organisationally intense, generally having a shorter 'initial concept to fly-in date' life. They don't involve fees or services and have a registration lead time of usually only a few days. They're a great way to dip a toe into the fly-in organising pond. More on that another day.

The first notice to our membership that a fly-in is happening is the weekly email comms, where we'll advise that we've added the Fly-in on our website and asked people to register. In reality, this first step is pre-registration. We give dates and a high level overview of how things will run on the weekend. At initial pre-registration we ask people to book accommodation. This year in Omarama, accommodation was a limiting factor so it was prudent to book early.

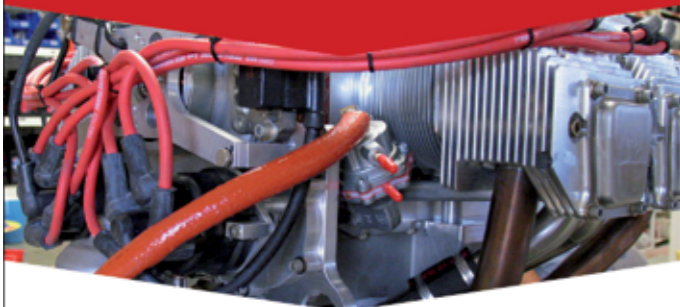
We have changed the emphasis on fly-in registrations to be aircraft-centric, with the aim of getting a single registration per aircraft. It's very common for members to share an aircraft when coming to a fly-in, and it is the number of aircraft and aircraft types, together with a headcount, that is most useful for organisers. Details of exactly who will be attending comes later. The person who pre-registers becomes our point of contact for information sharing and for the detailed registration, which is completed much nearer the time of the fly-in.

Usually there will be conversations happening at this stage regarding how meals will work and where they will occur, speakers or other social things, like presenting AOPA NZ annual awards.

About six to eight weeks out we start having regular meetings. This year's organising group for Omarama included Kevin, Murray and Gavin Wills, six executive members, including four from our safety group – John Evans, Neville Bailey, Dave Paterson and Sue Kronfeld. Shaun had bugged off overseas, so sat this one out.

We met weekly on zoom every Wednesday night, discussing ideas and

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Charlie Draper and Ian Sinclair on volunteer breakfast duty, Omarama 2023

sharing tasks. From experience we knew we would be hosting more than fifty aircraft. All manner of things come up; a quick and probably incomplete summary of topics might include: accommodation, meals, transport, liaison with airport, liaison with fuel company, alerting operators close by regarding what is happening, NOTAM, obtaining strip permissions and details as required, and communicating with those pre-registered.

About two weeks before the fly-in we shared information useful to people

attending, including a joining procedure for Omarama. This is a really important component of keeping aircraft in predictable flight patterns as they join on Friday, and again on Saturday, when there can be a lot of landings happening in a very short space of time. We also remind people to be current and to get out and fly before coming. This is an extremely important requirement for a good outcome at the fly-in. Pilot currency is king.

A recent addition to our toolkit for running a multi-day fly-in is to create a

WhatsApp group. We get this group going early. Using a group chat has seen a great improvement in communications before, during and after the fly-in. The group is used to co-ordinate, request and share all manner of things: transport pickups, weather reports, requests for tools, oil, jumper packs, the all-important photos while flying, and general communication. Having everyone able to talk to everyone else makes things work. We also share some memory jogger lists of things to bring, and a rough plan for the weekend.

A week out

On the Friday a week before the fly-in we send out a detailed registration. This is also aircraft-centric. By now people are making weather assessments and committing to attending or cancelling. The detailed registration covers questions about the aircraft, equipment carried, pilot experience, events attended, other AOPA members and guests attending in the aircraft, numbers for meals, and anything else the organisers need to know. We aim to have the bulk of information back to us by our Sunday meeting.

We have a go/no-go meeting on the Sunday before the fly-in. By then we can see what the weather predictions are looking like for the fly-in weekend and, if things are looking really bad, we may cancel. For the Omarama fly-in we'd decided to make it rain, hail or snow, as it

is generally more accessible in moderately bad weather and also many people can drive for an 'aircraft-less fly-in' – get-together.

After this meeting, things really kick into overdrive. We review who is coming and in what types of aircraft, who will be leaders and where groups might go for strip flying on Saturday. A lot of the activity revolves around getting strip permissions and documenting new strips to add to our database. Farmers and strip owners are extremely generous with allowing us to use their strips. The strip ringers have developed sound relationships with the strip owners and most are very positive about our fly-in. For 2023 we focused on the McKenzie, Waitaki Valley, northern Maniototo, the Haka Valley and southern South Canterbury. In all we had 71 strips. We added 29 new strips to our database for 2023, which was outstanding.

By Wednesday we have a strip list to share with those registered. We do this in several ways. First, via the Fly-in App, which may have pictures of strips, details like length and general information and, of course, coordinates. Second, a pdf

containing the same information is supplied for those without a smartphone or tablet. Third, by sharing files suitable for loading into an EFB, such as Ozrunways or AvPlan. We also share a more refined and detailed running sheet for the weekend.

Friday, it's time to get to the fly-in, bring the stuff we need and do a bit of set-up. Somehow things happen as needed: aircraft parking, transport, helping with tablets and phones, and generally talking about what will happen on Saturday. A lot of people who come to the fly-in are happy to roll up their sleeves and do whatever is needed to help.

We try to get the bulk of the onsite registrations completed on Friday, and to collect money for various expenses. In Omarama this year it was a fly-in fee, landing fees and five meals. We prefer to use an eftpos terminal, as having a lot of cash on hand is not ideal.

Key to a successful fly-in is creating social situations where everyone can mingle and chat. At Omarama we had Friday night dinner at the Pink Glider then back to the terminal building for an overview of

Saturday plans. Group leaders explained the type of strips they planned to visit and pilots were asked to add their aircraft registrations up on group whiteboards. This lets people know who the leaders are and gives everyone time to think about what would suit them and their aircraft best.

We had a chilly BBQ breakfast on Saturday morning. Once again, help to transport people and assist with food prep was easily found, and soon there was a production line of pilot food on offer. A leaders' briefing at 8.40am gave group leaders a chance to think about key messages and how their group may intersect with other groups.

At 9.00am there was an all hands briefing. Key messages about good conservative decision making and choosing to fly with care were emphasised.

At the day's end, we headed back to the Pink Glider for happy hour at 5pm, with a meal and some quick presentations to follow. Sunday saw another BBQ breakfast then lots of departures, a bit of pack-up, some cleaning and it was all over. Well, until the July Haast fly-in anyway. 🛩️

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Omarama fly-in

By Steve Lyttle

Omarama in late April saw clear blue skies, frosty mornings and light breezes – perfect for the AOPA NZ Autumn Fly-in. Interest was keen, with more than 70 planes and around 140 pilots, family members and friends attending from across the country and as far away as Auckland.

Friday was kick-off day, and from mid-afternoon the airfield was a hive of activity as aircraft landed, refuelled and were picketed down for the night. I arrived mid-morning from Timaru, intending to relax for the afternoon, but after refuelling our Carbon Cub, I was approached by Gavin Wills and asked if I would be 'Tail End Charlie' with his taildragger group. I was keen, but the proposed programme featured landings on uphill top-dressing strips, and I felt I lacked skills in that area. To my delight, Gavin offered to take me flying for the afternoon to do some serious training.

A chance to learn from one of New Zealand's most competent backcountry pilots is not an offer to refuse. Fortunately, I've maintained a very high level of currency in the Carbon Cub and was keen to expand my flying skills. Gavin, in his plane, led me through a progression of strips with increasing gradients and gave a debrief after each landing. After a final debrief at day's end I was deemed competent to act as Tail End Charlie.

Saturday morning's pilots' briefing focused on safety and aimed to ensure that all pilots were in a group matching their aspirations and abilities. This was emphasised in the group leaders' pre-departure briefing: the day was about having fun flying with new friends, making the most of opportunities to up-skill in a controlled environment, and exploring new country. The message was clear: if a pilot was uncomfortable with any strip, there was no pressure for them to land,

and the Tail End Charlie would guide them to another landing well within their comfort zone. Going around was to be applauded, as it's a sign of good situational awareness and great airmanship.

Once the seven groups were ready they departed for their first nominated strip, where their designated group leader briefed them on subsequent plans. Typically, each group had ten or fewer planes, to avoid congestion around some of the more confining strips. Prior to moving on it was reiterated that safety was paramount, eyes outside and sensible spacing; if not happy with your approach, go around, and if guidance was needed to talk with the team leader.

Our group had twelve taildraggers and two helicopters, split into two sub-groups. Gavin led one while Mike Oakley, an experienced glider, balloon and Cub pilot, led the other. The plan was to land at two slightly uphill paddocks then graduate to several topdressing strips that would become progressively more challenging. We were given a sound briefing on the techniques for landing uphill, with the emphasis on increased approach speed and making the call on go-around or abort in a conservative manner. Once all aircraft were parked up at each strip there was a group debrief and general discussion and question and answer session. We were then briefed on what to expect at the next strip. This process continued throughout the day, and it was cool to see the way pilot confidence built as the day progressed.

For me, the most spectacular strip of the morning was at Dead Cow Saddle, located at the head of the valley running south from the Ahuriri arm of Lake Benmore. The strip enjoys a fine view from a ridge in the saddle, and sits at just over 2000' with the terrain to the south falling steeply down to the Otematata River. The ideal aiming point is as close as safely possible to the threshold. A nice round-out with a touch of power sees you touch down within the first third of the strip. Once the main wheels are on the ground, more power is required to run the plane to the crest of the strip and the fertiliser bin. Care must be taken not to arrive too hot at the crest as there can be parking congestion, so good speed control and braking is required.

Departure from the strip was steep downhill with a right turn and a short climb up over the saddle to the south, followed by a quick descent to the Otematata River and a spectacular flight winding through a rocky gorge to Lake Benmore.

At the end of the ten-strip morning we joined the other taildragger group at Totoro Peaks Station strip for lunch. One of the station owners, Sonja Metherell, welcomed us and had kindly opened the ablution block in their adjoining Benmore Views Camping Ground for our use.

Totoro Peak strip runs from the edge of Lake Benmore up towards the homestead and is around 600m long with a gentle uphill slope. It was a perfect day and we couldn't have found a better spot for lunch, with stunning views across

the lake to Black Forest in the east and Mount Cook to the north.

The afternoon session saw the two groups separately flying to three top-dressing strips on Haldon Station on the eastern side of Lake Benmore. After a quick flight back across the lake, both groups landed on the border dyke flats south-west of the hydro canal at Glencairn Station. Landing was to the south beside the canal with a 180 degree turn at the end of the landing roll and an immediate take-off in the opposite direction on the adjacent border dyke flat. This created quite a bit of interest for passing traffic as more than twelve planes landed line astern and departed.

After landing at seventeen strips and paddocks, the last visit of the day was Glenbrook Station, with a final debrief before we entered en masse into the rejoin procedure developed for the weekend.

Back at the Pink Glider Café it was time to relax and catch up with all the other groups. With collectively more than 900 landings, everyone was home safely, and it immediately became apparent that everybody had enjoyed an amazing day's flying. Over dinner, awards were made to those who had exhibited the best airmanship of the day.

Sunday morning saw most people heading home, with some of us doing more strip flying on the way.

All credit to the AOPA NZ organisers, who did an amazing job of ensuring we were all ready for the event, with nothing left to chance. Using WhatsApp meant we were instantly updated with any minor changes to the programme, which was also helpful for those organising transport to and from the airfield.

A big thank you to Tanya and the team

at the Pink Glider Café, who provided excellent evening meals on Friday and Saturday, as well as the Saturday takeaway lunch. Thanks also to the AOPA NZ Executive members and helpers who prepared the BBQ breakfast, ensuring all were well fed and ready to take on the day's flying.

The landowners around the region who made their strips available need a special mention. It's a privilege to land on these strips, and fly-ins would not be possible without their willingness to share them with us from time to time.

No matter what plane you fly, attending AOPA's various events can help you see new country, meet other pilots and refine your flying skills. For me, the Omarama Fly-in proved a huge growth opportunity, with 48 landings and 7.4 hours flying over three days. Not only was I able to refine my skills and learn new techniques, the weekend expanded my horizons and additionally gave me a far better understanding of what my plane is capable of.

My five key take-aways:

- Get involved in AOPA NZ Fly-ins; they're of immense value
- Prepare thoroughly by reading the Fly-in pre-event briefing papers
- Be prepared to learn new flying techniques
- If you're not sure, ask questions at the briefings or have a private chat to the Group Leader
- Don't be afraid to extend your flying horizons; knowing what's possible and what you and your plane are capable of might, if things one day do turn to custard, save you from embarrassment or even a disaster!

Opposite: First briefing at Riverside strip.
Below: at Haldon Station deer yards.



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Journey's end...

By David Berger



The previous instalment of our journey left me saying goodbye to Tom at dawn on the apron at Kununurra, one morning in October 2019. He was continuing with the aircraft to the east coast of Australia and then onward to New Zealand. I was heading back to Broome to do a stint working in the hospital. This episode follows Tom from Kununurra all the way to journey's end in Omarama.



Australia is enormous. It is so extraordinarily enormous, and so extraordinarily empty, that this fact bears repeating at regular intervals, lest it gets taken for granted. From Cape Byron in the east to Steep Point on the coast of Western Australia, the country spans no less than forty degrees of longitude, so the direction in which you are crossing it in a light aircraft has a significant effect on how far you can get in a day. Heading east pits you against the daylight and, almost before you know it, you're racing the sunset to land.

Tom's plan involved getting from Nowhereville (Kununurra edition) to

Nowhereville (Charleville edition), via a fuel stop in Nowhereville (Tennant Creek edition), a total distance of 1170nm. In this whole distance, he would be crossing the habitation of a literal handful of souls and only two sealed roads: the Stuart Highway from Alice Springs to Darwin and the Boulia to Bedourie section of the Diamantina Developmental Road in far south-west Queensland. To put the scale of this outsized country into perspective, routing Cape Reinga-Auckland-Wellington-South Cape of Stewart Island is but 907 nautical miles. Look no further, friends, for the GABA, the Great Australian Bugger All.

Tom dons a drysuit for the trans-Tasman crossing. Above left: refuelling at Lord Howe Island. Below left: the GABA.

The direct track from Kununurra to Tennant Creek passes overhead Wave Hill Station in the Northern Territory, site of the Wave Hill Walk-Off in 1966, when the Aboriginal stockmen went on strike to demand fair pay and conditions, heralding the emancipation legislation of the late 1960s, but for Tom this pivotal chapter in twentieth century Australian history was just another dusty brown smudge on a dusty brown canvas as he cruised high above in the cool early morning air, the autopilot serenely ticking off the miles, his Spotify playlist burbling in his headphones. Refuelling and lunch were uneventful at Tennant Creek and there followed the 780nm leg to Charleville, arriving late in the afternoon.

Charleville is the first outpost of civilisation as you coast into the beginnings of inhabited Eastern Australia from the vast ocean of land that makes up the red centre. Even this town, though, not quite halfway from Brisbane to the border with the Northern Territory, has neither Coles, nor Woolworths, neither McDonalds, nor KFC, for by the presence and number of such cultural landmarks is the size and significance of outback towns measured. Like all such places in Queensland and



The "thin continuous ribbon" that David and Tom Berger stitched eastways round the globe, covered in these pages over the past thirteen issues.

New South Wales, Charleville's heyday is long gone, its population shrunken to a fraction of what it was, as agriculture has moved from bodies to automation.

Apart from the fin de siècle grandeur of a couple of its hotels, you can, however, still find one other relic of Charleville's times past. In a small building at the corner of the sleepy airfield, running the fuel concession and a tiny café, is South West Air Service Pty Ltd, owned by the man who has a decent claim to be Australia's last bush pilot: Alan 'Cracker'

Macdonald. Cracker operates a Cessna 210, 206 and 185 on agricultural work – seeding and baiting – and charters. He's a local station man, tall and wiry, in his late fifties, with the crow's feet that signify a lifetime under the Queensland sun. His territory spans the vast area from the Gulf of Carpentaria in the north, to the Murray River in the south, to the Simpson Desert, far out beyond Birdsville, in the west. He knows this parched land, he knows bush flying and, most importantly, he knows Cessna 185s.

Cracker knew Tom was coming and greeted him warmly as he climbed out of the aircraft, stiff from over six hours in the cockpit. The pleasantries over, Cracker pointed at the shiny, titanium undercarriage of which we were so proud: "You know your landing gear's on the wrong way round, don't you?"

"What?! You're kidding!"
But it was true. The new titanium gear had been installed with the legs reversed several months before: right on left and left on right. This explained why the

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engineer had had so much trouble fitting them into the new Pponk gear boxes, and why it had taken so many shims to sort out the wheel in-toeing. The gear was pointing backwards instead of forwards, which obviously brings a greater risk of nosing over. By that point, we had flown three quarters of the way around the world without mishap, so Tom elected to continue and the problem was eventually rectified by the excellent Mark Stagg and his team at Argus Aviation in Motueka several months later.

The next day was a short four-hour flight, south-west across the Darling Downs and then the Great Dividing Range, before descending over the rain-forest-filled mountains and valleys which form the barrier to the coast at Coffs Harbour. Arriving at a familiar destination from an exceptional trip always carries an air of unreality: "Have I really just flown across the world in this tiny machine? Am I sure it wasn't all just a dream?"

But, no, it was true: a thin continuous ribbon sewn by N185MW with Tom at the controls now connected Grand Junction, Colorado with Coffs Harbour, New South Wales. And not just any ribbon, mind, an EASTABOUT ribbon.

After a few days of R&R at home in the small town of Bellingen, Tom took the aircraft down to Bankstown in Sydney to get a proper HF aerial fitted for the crossing to New Zealand in the hope (vain, as it turned out) that this would make our HF comms something we could actually depend on. And then it was time to go on to New Zealand, where the gliding season was getting underway and Tom had a job summer towing at Glide Omarama.

Thanks to our tip tanks, giving a total usable fuel of 436 litres (114 USG), only one fuel stop was needed at Lord Howe Island, with the second leg direct to Kerikeri. Tom kept an eye on the weather (starting to get unsettled in November, as the sea begins to warm up), saw a window and decided to go for it the day before, only to then find that Kerikeri needed three days' notice for customs. Thankfully, and very kindly, they waived this requirement and the next morning found Tom, pre-dawn, at Macca's in Coffs Harbour picking up a muffin and a coffee, before setting course due east, the sky just starting to lighten, the red lights

of the instrument panel bathing the cockpit in a soothing glow and the sound of the engine taking on that soporific tone which it only seems to in the night and early morning.

From Coffs Harbour to Lord Howe Island is only 320nm and by breakfast time the abstract outline of that marvellous island was visible on the horizon: beads studded onto a molten sea. Unusually, there was almost no wind, a relief in a Cessna 185, which even its most ardent supporters must admit is an aircraft which is more than somewhat deficient in the crosswind department.

Tom was met by the multi-faceted and friendly Rachel, who represents Border Force Australia on Lord Howe, along with wearing a number of other hats. Immigration and customs formalities sorted, it was time to refuel. He could have brought forty gallons in our fuel bags from Coffs Harbour in the belly pod, but it's time consuming and wearisome to refuel that way, so he'd decided to make use of the fuel available on Lord Howe instead. Unfortunately, it turned out the refueller had gone fishing, and on an island with no mobile phone service, this could have been a problem. Somehow, however, he was located, presumably by means of some secret sub-ether communications network that most islands seem to possess, and before long Tom was climbing to altitude, after a brief flypast of the spire of Ball's Pyramid, and setting course for Kerikeri.

Tom is a sensitive soul, who by the age of nineteen had already discovered that denial is the path to tranquillity and so, following normal trans-oceanic procedures for N185MW, he selected 'Full screen' for the PFD on the Garmin G500TXi, thus relegating the engine instruments to the tiniest portion of the screen possible, where he could more easily pay them only the barest and most intermittent attention. In such an oblivious haze, and in good weather, passed the 760nm to Kerikeri, broken only by the periodic and painful repetition of position reports over the HF and a chance VHF conversation with a lunatic coming the other way in a Piper Tomahawk.

Aotearoa lived up to its name and soon Tom was coasting in to land at Kerikeri, the helpful customs folk presenting him

with a fragment of the exhaust shroud, which appeared to have disintegrated en route, fragments of it falling off on the apron as he taxied up. This was the first mechanical fault in nearly 20,000nm. It could have been worse.

Tom stayed that night with the kindly Gary Larkan, a Kerikeri local who had been following our flight, and the next day set off to Taupo to meet up once more with Barry and Sandra Payne at Bazbase, their fantastic hangar home on the airfield. Here, he did an oil and filter change, exchanged war stories and basked in their warm hospitality, waiting for the weather to improve for the final leg to Omarama.

And so, a few days later, with an uneventful trip to Omarama, our epic adventure, only a couple of months in the planning, came to an end. There had never been any thought of a 'grand finale'. There was no ostensible ulterior motive to this trip, no charity to 'raise money for', no historic event to 'commemorate'. This was a journey for the pleasure of it, a trip we did because we were healthy and together, because we had the time and the resources, and because, for that instant



At Charlesville, eastern Australia, Cracker Macdonald pointed out that the landing gear was on the wrong way round (shown at left, compared to the right way, in the centre). Right: a fragment of the exhaust shroud that disintegrated over the Tasman, handed to Tom after touchdown at Kerikeri.

in all eternity, we wished to and we could.

Nevertheless, in the end there was a finale, an unexpected one, and one from the heart: Andrew Bowmar flew up in his 185 from his farm near Balfour to welcome Tom and N185MW into safe harbour at the end of their twenty thousand nautical mile odyssey across the turning globe. Thank-you, Andrew, we will always be so touched and grateful for that kind gesture.

And there, dear readers, we finish our story. Thank you for following it over

these thirteen episodes. It has been a pleasure and an honour to relate it to you, and both Tom and I, and his younger brother, Ed, also now a pilot qualified on the 185, look forward to meeting you in New Zealand. N185MW will be making future visits back to these shores from its home in Australia, and when it does so it will nestle in a hangar currently under construction in Omarama, where its stable mates will be a 1946 Republic Seabee and a 1969 Super Cub. Oh, the adventures that await!



Dawn departure, Sydney; Auckland; Canterbury Plains; Lake Pukaki and Mount Aoraki.

AOPA Awards 2023

Annually presented; winners are selected by the AOPA NZ Life Members from member nominations. Members can email nominations for the coming year's awards to admin@aopa.nz at any time!

Best Maintenance Shop – Airborne Aviation, Hastings

Airborne Aviation is a friendly, family-run maintenance outfit based at Bridge Pa Aerodrome near Hastings.

The company has built a reputation for providing stand-out service at a fair price, while also ensuring that upgrades and routine maintenance can be a pleasant experience for aircraft owners. With avionics work also done in-house, Airborne offers a one-stop-shop for all GA aircraft maintenance.

Andy and Gina Bargh took the helm in 2019, taking over from Andy's father, Laurie, and his business partner, Wattie Soloman, who traded as HB Aviation for many years. Andy and Gina have a team of skilled staff who can take care of most maintenance issues, from fabric wings to airtractors to corporate jets.

They care for a large number of commercial helicopters and perform repair, restoration and modifications to a wide range of aircraft. Andy and his team provide a very efficient service at a very reasonable charge out rate and, although busy, they always seem to be able to find time to help with urgent fixes.

Top: Gina and Andy Bargh with their children and Andy's parents, Dale and Laurie, together with staff and contractors Jamie, Nick and Evan receive the AOPA NZ Award from new Executive member, Reuben Hansen. Right: Jamie on the job.



Most Helpful Control Tower – New Plymouth



New Plymouth Control Tower, always helpful and friendly, went the extra mile in supporting the AOPA NZ Fly-in in November last year, in particular with sequence landing and take-off traffic – not to mention a very interesting tower visit for event participants.

Chief Controller Dan Malone describes the win as a great boost to team morale, adding that it's great to see air traffic returning in abundance after all the COVID-induced uncertainty of the last couple of years. New Plymouth has experienced more visual flight rules (VFR) movements during the last twelve months than in any of the preceding nine years, he reports.

"The controllers certainly enjoy dealing with the wide variety of GA aircraft that use the New Plymouth aerodrome and surrounding airspace, and we're also enjoying the new technology available.



From left: Sanna Karlsson, AOPA NZ President Sue Kronfeld and Executive member Peter Armstrong

"The broad uptake of ADS-B means we can now more closely monitor controlled airspace for the position of low-level aircraft, and pass more accurate and effective traffic information when required. Given the increasing complexity of our airspace and procedures, it will be interesting to see how this technology can be used in the future," he says.

NP Tower's stand-out attitude certainly make visiting New Plymouth a breeze for pilots from near and far – and Dan says the award makes the New Plymouth Tower team even more committed to providing a quality service and being super-helpful to pilots.

Best Aviation Watering Hole – Omaka Heritage Centre Café

Great food and coffee is on offer at the Omaka Café, but that's not the only reason for stopping in.



The Aviation Heritage Centre, situated alongside Omaka Aerodrome, offers something of interest for all the family. Both museum and café are easily accessed, being just a gentle stroll from the field, and are staffed by an efficient and friendly team.

Pies, quiches, muffins and cakes, together with CPR premium roast coffee and a range of other beverages, can be enjoyed indoors or out. It's an interesting region with plenty on offer, but if all you have time for is a quick bite to eat, you need look no further than the Omaka Heritage Aviation Centre café.

GA Champion – Nathan Clarke

This year's AOPA NZ GA Champion Award went to Nathan Clarke.

Nathan is an A Cat flight instructor, and flight examiner who works with GA organisations to get flight tests done around the vagaries of weather. He is also an upholstery genius who will fit and sort aircraft decor.

A past CEO of the NZ Aviation Academy, Nathan continues to contribute to the wider enjoyment of GA as a mentor and backcountry flying tutor. He has been a strong contributor to a safe operational regime at Rangiora aerodrome. Nathan is part owner of a syndicated Maule.



A delighted Nathan receives his GA Champion Award from AOPA NZ Executive member John Evans at the late April 2023 Omarama Fly-in

Above and Beyond – Alistair Matthews



Alistair is a great supporter of GA, through both AOPA NZ gatherings and aero club initiatives.

An A Category flight instructor, flight examiner, air ambulance check and training pilot, Alistair is familiar to many in the GA world.

This award recognises his long contribution to the safety culture of AOPA NZ.

He was one of our first safety officers and a strong advocate for including safety considerations in our event planning. When issues arose, Alistair was always willing to talk to the pilot concerned there and then, nipping small problems in the bud before they grew into bigger issues, always with a positive outcome.

"He has always shared sound judgement," adds one of AOPA NZ's Life Members. Alistair owns a Bolkow.

Truckload to Tutira

By Helen Watson



Cyclone Gabrielle devastated swathes of the North Island on 14 February of this year, with many areas of Hawke's Bay particularly hard hit.

The clean-up following this catastrophic and life-changing event has required and continues to require huge physical and emotional effort from a great many people and organisations. The following is an account of how we came to be involved in a small way, and an opportunity to express our appreciation to the many folk, including a number of AOPA members, who helped us bring it together.

The backstory: In 1995 I transferred from Christchurch to Ohakea as an Air Traffic Controller, horse float in tow. Within the first week I was gallivanting with the Rangitikei Hunt Club, and there met Bridgy. She and her daughters, Penny and Lucy, and their dad, Mike, together with Bridgy's sister Fen, her husband Pete, and their daughters LJ and

Sophie, became lifelong friends.

Move on 28 years: Lucy, now married to Max, lives in the district of Putorino, inland from Tutira, north of Napier, where they farm sheep and beef and run a large and well-respected Angus stud. Cut-off by the cyclone's destruction of crucial bridges, news that they were safe took days to reach us. The farm, much of which is medium to steep with pumice soil, fared less well. Fortunately, Lucy has a few horses which enabled them to check on the neighbours. A few days in, helicopter help arrived, delivering initial supplies and much-needed generators to the community.

The phone call: Bridgy and Mike rang, pretty desperate to help Lucy and Max. "We have no idea who to ring or how to



Deliveries by air proved invaluable for isolated communities, as did horses.

go about getting into the valley, so we thought we'd ring you."

I knew exactly who to ring! "So, Dave Paterson, what are you doing next week?"

Dave, being a strip ferret, did some research on a number of possible strips. We each made a few phone calls to operators and various people with local knowledge in and around Hawke's Bay. The decision was made to take ZK-SMP, a C172XP, and see what we could achieve.

We launched from Maddisons Road, south of Christchurch. Thanks, Mark, for helping wash her!

Direct to Hastings 9000' controlled VFR. In the vicinity of Dannevirke, Ohakea control advised us that the runway was closed at Hastings. We had to fill in an hour, so dropped into Waipukurau.

After a quick catch up with Murray Paterson, Ian Sinclair and Richard Bradley, who were enroute to Whitianga for the AGM, we hopped into Otane to visit Josh and Suz Calder. Josh had been working up the Tutira valley with his Cresco a few days earlier, so gave us a fabulous briefing of various strips and their conditions, and which one would be best.

I'd also spoken with Wallace Steele from Turangi, who'd been into a strip further inland delivering one of Max's best buddies a week earlier, and advised not to attempt it in SMP. Advice heeded.

We met Mike and Bridgy at Bridge Pa Aerodrome, Hastings, with their truck and trailer load of supplies, including donations from the Whanganui Collegiate fraternity, friends and family. Thanks to Jamie Gunson and Hamish Ross, we stored it all in Jamie's hangar, which became our distribution centre for the duration.

Our first trip was to deliver Bridgy and Mike, Tux dog biscuits, and various food supplies onto a one-way strip, aka 'The Atkins'. Fair to say we did a thorough investigation of this steep ag strip before landing. We were met by Max and Lucy who were pretty damn excited to see us arrive!

After unloading, Dave and I investigated a more convenient strip at Round Hill, a farm leased by Max's family. Thought initially to be too wet, we found it was spot on. Back to Hastings and another load of Tux (Max has 25 dogs!), various consumables, water fittings, plumbing supplies, and packages sent for others by equally concerned families.

That evening we flew back to Fielding to stay with Fen and Pete near Marton, who were eager to hear of our mission and booked their seats on another trip to Putorino. Their home became our home for the next five days. Dave made contact with Bruce Gordon, who has a strip



Cyclone Gabrielle caused devastating slips that have changed the face of farmland across Hawke's Bay, sweeping away pasture, fences, trees and water systems.

up the road at Fern Flats. As Bruce was away in Pauanui, he kindly gave us the use of his strip and hangar, which was much appreciated.

Each day we transited back to Bridge Pa Aerodrome, collected more from the hangar, fuelled appropriately and began our deliveries. We wore a track from HS to Tutira, west of the NR control zone. The destruction we saw across the district was incredible to view first hand.

Day 3, it was Fen and Pete's turn to transit with us. We delivered them to Round Hill, and an equally happy reunion. Lucy decided to take Bridgy, Fen and me out for a hack. It had been years since we'd ridden together. Our initial challenge was to find our steeds, which had inconveniently disappeared over a couple of hills and into another paddock. Meanwhile, Max took the boys out on quad bikes to have a look at some of the damage to the farm and stock water supply.

On one of our trips to Round Hill we took Max and Lucy up for an aerial look around the farm, which is littered with slips, lost or broken fence lines and numerous tomos. Max was able to video areas that would otherwise be difficult to get to, which gave him footage to work from as they launch into recovery.

Prior to our last day's commute we dropped into Fielding/Taonui for fuel and

to meet up with Logan Hoskin. I met Logan and his family a few years ago in Omarama at a Youth Gliding camp and have since followed his aviation journey. I took a back seat (first time in my own plane) while Logan, a brand new C Cat trained by none other than our own Sue Kronfeld, flew us to Hastings under the watchful eye of Dave.

Another couple of loads to Tutira then, after extracting Mike and Bridgy, it was back to Hastings via the devastated Esk Valley and coastline. Picked up Logan and, heading to Fielding via Waipukurau, Dave had a plan... put Logan through his paces to achieve an XP type rating.

Mission complete. Fern Flats direct to D'Urville Island 8000' landing at Greville Harbour and then Nopera in Pelorus Sound. Lunch at Omapa, followed by a number of attempts to get into a tricky wee strip up the Awatere. The wind wasn't my friend! Ashburton bound, via the Molesworth. We were pretty happy to be home.

To all those in our AOPA NZ community who helped piece this trip together, thank you. Small as it may have been, it was immensely satisfying to contribute something to the recovery effort. Thanks, too, to Dave for his expertise in planning, loading, refuelling – and the inflight service food was pretty damn good too!

New to the AOPA NZ Executive Committee

Neville Bailey

After many years in aviation, I'm very happy to join the AOPA Executive Committee.

Originally from Gisborne, my wife Sarah and I now live in Christchurch. Somewhere in between there was a 22 year stint in Hong Kong as we followed a flying career that took me from Air Gisborne to Eagle Air and on to Cathay Pacific. Both our kids were born in Hong Kong and are now settled in New Zealand. They're still working on their Kiwi accents.

The aviation career has been both challenging and rewarding at every step. One of many career highlights was ten years in the Boeing Check and Training department. It also gave us a tremendous opportunity for travel, and saw us develop many lifetime friendships.

Throughout my career, I've found myself reflecting back on the



GA days that I'd enjoyed early on, and hankering to one day return to the grass roots. That opportunity arrived when we returned to live in New Zealand, and the prospect of building and flying my own aircraft became a reality.

Between tramping, trail running, mountain biking and time tinkering in the workshop, I dusted off the NZ flying licence, gained a tail-dragger rating, renewed the old

B cat instructor rating and enlisted a lot of help to learn back-country ops. All of which is a huge learning exercise and still a work in progress. The highlight so far has been AOPA fly-ins, meeting new friends and exploring this great country we're all so lucky to be able to enjoy.

These days I head into the mountains at the slightest excuse, either on foot with a backpack or in the Bearhawk with a tank of gas and sense of adventure. 🦋

Reuben Hansen

I learned to fly with Ross MacDonald at Waipukurau Aero Club when I was still at high school, subsequently going on to instruct at Hawke's Bay & East Coast Aero Club, where I later became CFI. Recently I've joined Barrier Air, flying the Cessna Caravan on single pilot IFR ops.

Currently chairman of Flying NZ Instructor Council, I have done a stint on the Flying NZ executive, as well as six years on CHB Aero Club committee.

My involvement with AOPA NZ has been at Winter fly-ins, one day fly-ins and in assisting with the simulator at air shows. I have thoroughly enjoyed these activities and look forward to more.

My main areas of interest lie in the training and development



of future generations of pilots (both professional and recreational), ATC, aircraft engineers, etc, as well as with aviation safety, and I look forward to working on these and other issues and to being of use to the organisation and the wider industry. 🦋

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Decisions, decisions, decisions

Decisions made 'on the fly' are fraught with human factors and confirmation bias. When something really goes pear-shaped, task saturation is probable, with limited spare capacity to formulate plans. Pre-planning decision points as well as solutions to potential issues, specific to the environment, is a better starting point.

Part 1: The decision to fly

Taking off is the only optional aspect we have concerning flight; gravity determines landing as an inevitability. A lot goes into our decision process before opening the tap or even getting anywhere near the aircraft.

We consider our mission, be that a local A-A, an A-B or a multi-day A-B-C-D-A. The longer duration or further afield the mission, the more the weather plays a part, and the greater is the need for contingencies, places to stay, possible routes, fuel/rest stops.

VFR flying is not sympathetic to your need to be somewhere at a certain time. Delays go with the territory, and the old saying 'Time to spare, go by air' always applies. Using VFR aircraft as a form of A-B transport requires an agreed flexibility in your work and personal arrangements. A good friend of mine has long

emphasised the importance, when an aircraft is involved, of ensuring partners avoid putting pressure on you to be somewhere at a certain time, if this would mean upping your risk threshold to make it happen. Turning your weekend into a long one because the weather and company is so good, well, that's a different story... So this arrangement and understanding needs to occur well in advance, with the question leading up to your mission: what are the implications or consequences of plan B, C, D?

Are you and your aircraft ready?

There is the standard pilot brief IMSAFE, as well as medical/BFR requirements, and currency. Your aircraft needs fuel, oil, a current Airworthiness Review, current maintenance, minimum equipment, avionics review and, of course, a good pre-flight check. You need charts and the AIP, charged phones or tablets and a review of NOTAMs – super easy with phone applications.

Your intentions? Maybe file a flight plan or have someone flight follow you via inReach/ Spidertrack/ ADSB etc. If you or the aircraft are not sorted, will you leave the ground? Checklists are your best friend. There is a lot to consider, and for many of us, are a natural process that we work through, but it is still easy to miss things.

Willy Sage, a highly experienced aviator in almost every aspect, mentioned a particularly poignant consideration in a recent podcast, 'Kiwi Tales' (which I encourage you to search out and listen to on Spotify or Youtube). Imagine you are planning a mission and there is something that is bothering you. The example Willy uses is weather, but it could be daylight, an unfamiliar route, passengers, and so on. Whatever it is, it is now attracting most of your attention, resulting in worry and diverting your focus. Willy's point is that this worry has now potentially become the biggest hazard of the day, as your focus on it has opened the opportunity for something else to catch you out (fuel/oil caps, baggage doors and so on). His advice is to slow everything down, take a step back, do your pre-flight methodically, make sure everything is checked off.

Distractions and distractors

Another aspect, equally worthy of attention, is the distractions that present in the lead-up to taking flight – these might be to do with passengers, work, time pressures, family and so on.

Personally, I prefer to have plenty of time to prepare my aircraft without the distractions of others, and I need a disciplined headspace leading up to any flight. I allocate time and get things

ready before the distractions arrive, or I distract the distractors with something else and get them out of my hair!

Don't let the distractors get in the way of anything, and that includes opening hangar doors (at least half the time they won't open them fully) and pushing/pulling the aircraft, slamming doors and so on.

Before you get in

Getting closer to take off, there is the weight and balance of your aircraft and how the day's conditions (wind/DA) may affect take-off performance to consider. It's easier to check these things before getting in. Is the wind steady, gusty, varying, and do you need to pre-empt a crosswind? Are you hot, high, and heavy – how's that DA looking? Should you be expecting a downdraft in the climb-out? How about the airstrip conditions: size/ surface/ slope/ stock/ sun. Now is the time to consider your preferred departure and conditions on that path. Does it look clear – get a forecast before departure, watch it in days leading up to see how the system has evolved and check out the webcams. Reassess your plan B, C, D.

Allocate at least 30 seconds before you jump in, for one final walk around. Have you got room to turn around, a clear path to taxi, a clear path ahead in case things get away from you. Have you briefed your passengers, got them buckled in. It pays to pre-plan for the unexpected.

Irrespective of how well your aircraft performs, most do not perform well with an engine failure on take-off, partial power (carb ice, blocked injectors, throttle/pitch not set, brake drag), uphill slope, in a downdraft, or when DA/ tailwind had a much greater effect than considered, to name a few examples.

Briefing yourself prior to advancing the throttle was drilled into us during training: what is my decision speed/point and what am I going to do at that point, and what would I do if my engine failed? Rules of thumb are 'go to's. A good one I use for the take-off decision point is 70% airspeed by 50% length. This checkpoint provides me with greater awareness if things are not going well as I accelerate, and room left to abort if performance is less than expected.

There's a lot there, but it should all be part of your pre-flight process. You'll have your own routine, but these summated considerations may form part of it.

- Your personal set of conditions/ limits for you and your aircraft before you leave, and setting/ maintaining your preferred environment/ mindset leading up to taking flight.
- Plans B, C and D, and their implications.
- Leveraging your AOPA network to help with accommodation options should you need it.
- Communication with partners/ work/ personal arrangements so that influence does not increase your risk profile.
- Disciplined and focused pre-flight environment.
- Take-off decision point conditions.
- Possible area/s to overrun.
- Flight path/s after take-off, considering wind, lift/ downdraft and possible landing areas given terrain and wind.

Now you're hopefully airborne. Next comes the enroute and the inevitable landing. There are plenty more decisions and decision points to come! 🛩️

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Interested in PPL IFR?

By Chris Hoffman



I have recently finished reading 'NorthStar over my Shoulder' by Bob Buck. It's a great story of the pioneering days of commercial aviation in the USA in the 1930s, flying DC2s and DC3s on routes across the country, in unpressurised aircraft with basic instrumentation and rudimentary meteorological forecasting.

Bob started flying crop dusters in the 1920s and ended up as Chief Pilot at TWA, flying Boeing 747s. The basic six pack panel with a Radio Direction Finder was used to navigate to Non-Directional Beacon (NDB) radio stations, often at night and in IMC and then, using compass bearings and timing with a watch, a descent was made through the clouds to gain visual reference of the airfield. Bob was involved in improving the understanding of weather systems during World War II and then describes the advances after the War, with radar and improved beacon designs and Inertial Navigation systems. Automation in the cockpit was to begin with minimal, and Cockpit Resource Management was virtually non-existent.

He flew in GA aircraft as well, finding single pilot IFR flying to be very challenging, even with twin engines. Navigating

along radio beacons using VOR/DME required significant training and currency to keep 'ahead of the plane'.

Jump ahead to where we are now – commercial airliners are fully digital with multiple GPS Navigators and Flight Management Systems providing real-time situational awareness and automation that can land the plane if need be. Fully automated aircraft are being trialled in New Zealand right now.

The modern GA cockpit can be similarly well equipped with GPS navigators and glass panel displays, fully digital engine monitoring and back-up systems for extraction using ground-based aids (VOR/DME for approaches). Autopilots with three axis control can automate the journey from 500' on departure to the Minimal Descent Altitude at the destination. The Met information, whilst never perfect, is now delivered to pilots in real time as they

plan their flights – satellite images, forecasting of local and destination weather with multiple web cams to check. Fully automated landing systems are now approved in some light aircraft, eg, Piper M600 SLS with Garmin Autoland.

Getting an IFR rating in New Zealand has been the challenge. The rating requires examinations that are based on outdated technology, and it is pleasing to see that a re-write of the syllabus and examinations is nearly complete. Gone will be the need to understand NDBs and the effect of mountains and coastlines on the radio waves. Instead, a knowledge of Global Navigation Satellite Systems (GNSS) will be required, in our case the American Global Positioning System (GPS) with, by 2028, the Satellite Based Augmentation System to improve signal accuracy and reliability of signals.

These developments have generated

an increase in interest in PPL pilots flying IFR in some countries, and this has been met by a change in the way licensing and currency is regulated.

The European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) has been developing a roadmap to guide safety improvements in GA (check out the information on the EASA website at www.easa.europa.eu; you'll find it in the document library under general-publications). I quote: "Within the GA Roadmap, EASA has a strategic objective to increase and facilitate Instrument Flight Rules (IFR) operations for GA pilots with a final objective of enhancing the safety of operations."

Similar advances are occurring in Australia with the proposed Private Instrument Flight Rating – full information is available on their website, www.casa.gov.au/licences-and-certificates.

The goal is a competency-based rating in modular format, with initial issue and currency requirements that are seen as safe and achievable for private pilots. This raises the question of what we can do at AOPA NZ to encourage and enhance the uptake of IFR ratings for private pilots.

When, in 2012 at Wellington Aero Club, I first expressed an interest in flying IFR, there was limited expertise with the modern Garmin GPS650 navigator, and it was only through personal contacts that I managed to link up with qualified and current IFR instructors. It is now much easier at both Wellington and Kapiti Aero Clubs, with increased numbers of capable aeroplanes and instructors.

The requirement is to complete the standard IFR rating with 40 hours instrument time and 10 hours in cross-country on an IFR plan. The currency requirement is three approaches and three hours instrument time every three months, with a full renewal every twelve months.

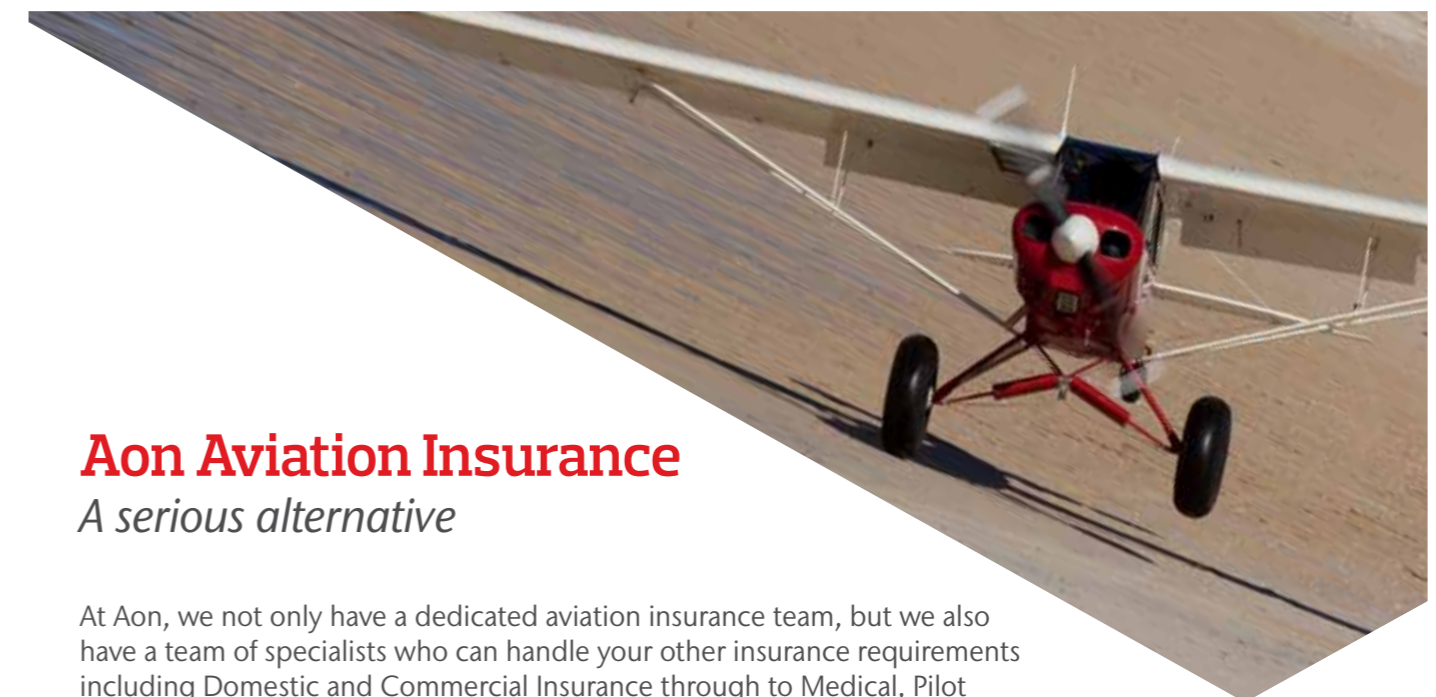
I have flown with an IFR rating in a GPS and autopilot equipped aircraft since 2013. I usually fly about 75 hours per year and about half is IFR.

I belong to a European association called PPL/IR EUROPE (<http://pplir.org>), which is a small dedicated group of private pilots who fly IFR around the UK and Europe. They arrange educational activities on-line (they have a great set of webinars and presentations on all manner

of topics), as well as planning fly-ins that allow them to spend time keeping each other current and informed. They provide advocacy for PPL IR pilots, both to local aviation organisations (airports and Airways) but also to the Regulators in the UK (CAA) and Europe (EASA). They help with collecting data and presenting evidence to ensure that regulation and rule development doesn't adversely affect private aviation. One of the highly visible milestones that they have achieved is the Competency Based Instrument Rating under EASA.

Whilst I know there is only a small number of GA IFR pilots in New Zealand, I'm interested in fostering a similar group here, and see this carrying on the work that has been achieved by the advocacy of groups like AOPA NZ and the NZ Aviation Federation.

Have a look at what is happening in Europe and Australia on the links above and check out the PPL/IR EUROPE website. If you are interested in getting, maintaining or better using your IFR rating, then please drop me an email, with your details, at ppl-ir@aopa.nz.



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Prepping the classics

By Jay MacIntyre

A few months back I wrote about the history of the ex-Marlborough Aero Club WACO UOC that Rex Newman and I were in the process of wrapping up. The aircraft was issued a Special-Experimental C of A in early December 2022, with the decision taken to postpone test flying until the New Year due to the cost of three weeks of insurance that we would not use!

Ryan Southam got her airborne on 9 January 2023, three weeks shy of the 65th anniversary of her last flight in 1958.

The first few flights were largely uneventful, with only a minor adjustment of the rudder trim and re-tensioning of the elevator trim cable required, together with an investigation into the non-operation of the vacuum flaps (this being quickly traced to a leaking flap selector tap).

Test flying continued with no real vices discovered; rather the aircraft was

described as delightful to fly. The cable operated drum brakes proved very good, something we were not expecting, and the tailwheel lock that was installed during the rebuild has turned tailwheel ground handling into something of a dream compared to what we were expecting.

The only problem we encountered was high oil temps. We quickly identified that we were getting very little airflow into the accessory area of the engine bay, and equally little out. This meant that the oil

in the oil tank was unable to be cooled and the temperature just kept rising. We found that flights could be carried out for periods up to thirty minutes before the temperature would approach redline.

Some head scratching went on, as CHTs were more than acceptable at 150°C and none of the photos, drawings, documents, etc, that we had indicated an oil cooler being fitted.

We eventually came up with a plan that would allow us to fit an oil cooler, and



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

this was implemented in stages during the build-up to Classic Fighters 2023 at Omaka. Not having the cooler operational at that stage was not a problem, as the flights were less than thirty minutes and the problem was somewhat reduced by autumn's lower ambient temperatures.

Post Easter, we completed the installation of the cooler and were gratified to see a reduction in temperature of around 50° F to a stable 140–150° F. The installation was completed in time for us to stretch her legs in April with a trip to Ashburton for the SAA Annual Rally, where we were rewarded with the Smiths Air Tech Trophy for Best Classic in attendance.

Both legs of the trip were just delightful, with the aeroplane proving to be the perfect cruiser. She only gets along at about 105mph but it was quite nice to be able to look around for a change, rather than travelling at my normal 135kts in the Nanchang. Oil consumption was quite a bit higher than we would have hoped, so we might be in for a bit of a top overhaul.

Prepping the Classics

Having mentioned Classic Fighters Airshow I thought I should give an idea of what we (JEM Aviation) actually get up to during the show.

I'm one of four Trustees of the Classic Fighters Airshow Charitable Trust, so I guess in the end the buck stops with us. Although peripherally involved in the organising of the show, I don't do much compared to the other volunteers, who organise all the necessary requirements such as toilets, infrastructure, fencing, parking, fuel, health and safety, display co-ordination and so on and so on. Ultimately, my job comes down to (obviously) ensuring that all of the aeroplanes we look after are ready to display.

Careful management of annual inspections and any unforeseen rectification should see these aircraft ready to display in a timely manner, but there is usually something that crops up which sees us running around like headless chickens in the lead-up to the show.

This year was a dream, with everything going to plan until the Mk XIV Spitfire went U/S on the Thursday during practice flights. We'd had a problem with a magneto dead cut for some time, but



Above: WACO UOC airborne at Classic Fighters 2023 at Omaka. Below: Mk XIV Spitfire magneto – or possibly something from Sputnik!

had rectified it in early April by replacing a coil. Unfortunately, the problem reared its head again and the boys worked diligently to repair the fault with another coil, enabling the aircraft to fly again during the Saturday flight. The same problem grounded the aircraft for Sunday.

The magneto looks like it should have been fitted to Sputnik (see right), but oddly enough we are confident that we can repair the fault properly with the help of a Marlborough Aero Club member who has fallen into a business rewinding magneto coils! Will let you know how this works out next article.



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Graeme Bethell

By Ross Millichamp

Graham has always been fascinated with aircraft and aviation – and wasted no time pursuing the dream.

Growing up on his parents' Waikato sheep and beef farm, he was captivated by the topdressing planes that flew into the neighbour's strip and spent many hours hanging around the top dressing crews. Despite the time he took up, he was "never once told to piss off".

There was no money for flying lessons, but his parents scraped together enough to pay for a single familiarisation flight in a Victor Airtourer before Graham donned a uniform himself as a Royal New Zealand Air Force Cadet. The Vietnam War was raging at the time and the initial Wings course had been shortened to just twelve months.

His father, Peter Bethell, had joined the Fleet Air Arm in 1939 and completed four tours on convoy escort duty flying Wildcats and Hellcats off Royal Navy aircraft carriers. He came back from the war having flown a host of aircraft types during a remarkable era, but had just 800 hours in his logbook. Like many pilot veterans, he never flew again.

Peter was surprised that Graham's initial training was to be in a complex aircraft like a Harvard, having started out in a Miles Magister, but was supportive. By the end of his Wings course, Graham had about 160 hours in Harvards and 60 hours in the twin-engine Devon.

Aged nineteen, he was posted to a fighter squadron flying de Havilland Vampires. In 1971 he was one of the first RNZAF pilots to be trained in the brand new A4 Skyhawk. He did a number of overseas postings to Australia and Singapore. The RNZAF did not deploy fighter aircraft to

Vietnam, although some pilots did act as Forward Air Controllers on the ground.

After four years in the RNZAF and with around 2000 hours in his log book, most in single-seat fighter jets, Graham joined Air New Zealand, at the time owned by the government, so it was not a big deal to transfer from one 'branch' to the other. Graham found some commonality between the A4 Skyhawk and the DC-8, which was his first airline posting. Both were made by Douglas and both had Pratt and Whitney engines. "They were also both swept wing types with similar handling characteristics," he says.

From there he moved to the DC 10, which he flew to Australia, Asia and USA. In 1978 Air NZ merged with the National Airways Corporation, which affected Graham's seniority in the company. Feeling it was time for a change, in 1979 he accepted a job with Cathay Pacific and he and Karen were based in Hong Kong for the next twenty years. "I loved Hong Kong" Graham says. "I earned twice as much as I did in New Zealand and paid almost no tax."

At the time Cathay Pacific was a small airline with only fifteen aircraft. Graham spent the first three years as a First Officer on the Boeing 707 before being moved to the Boeing 747. After three years in the co-pilot's seat he was given command of the 747 at the age of just thirty five. "It was my first multi-engine command since flying the Devon in the RNZAF many years earlier."

A few years later Graham was promoted to Training Captain on the 747.

The typical trainee arrived with plenty of simulator time but the first time they flew the real thing was with 400 passengers on board. Graham put a lot of energy into this role and would often schedule additional tutoring for trainee pilots in their hotel rooms during stopovers to give them the best chance of passing their check rides. "The cockpit is a very busy environment and not always suited to the training of complex procedures," he says. He is proud of the fact that his trainees had a 100% pass rate under his guidance.

In 1997, at the age of 49, Graham resigned from Cathay Pacific so that he and Karen could spend more time with their daughter Alexandra. The life of a long-haul airline pilot is very intense and he'd had enough. They bought a lifestyle block near Christchurch and settled into semi-retirement. Graham had another reason to move back to New Zealand. In 1990 he and John Sager had bought a P51D Mustang from Tim Wallis. Karen had encouraged him, arguing that he should start to enjoy the benefits of their many years of hard work on the other side of the world. In 1996 John sold his share and Graham became the sole owner. Graham has now owned the P51 for more than thirty years, paying the bills by displaying it at air shows and offering 'once in a lifetime flight experiences' to aviation enthusiasts. With several hundred hours of Mustang time in his logbook, he is probably one of the most experienced P51D pilots in the world. Being involved in the warbird scene also gave Graham

the opportunity to fly other memorable aircraft, such as the Catalina, MIG 15 and Hawker Hunter.

Graham has an unfortunate nickname among his peers. He became known as 'Boom Boom Bethell' after suffering an abnormally high number of engine failures (currently eleven) during his career. Perhaps the most spectacular was in a single-engine Vampire while doing a display over the Kaikohe Airfield. He was nearing the top of a vertical climb when the engine started to surge and splutter. "Those early turbine engines did not love turbulent air, so it was not uncommon for them to struggle during slow speed manoeuvres," he recalls.

He cut the throttle to give the engine the chance to sort itself out, rolled the aircraft on its back and dived towards the ground to regain airspeed and set himself up for landing. Such was the precision of the approach that he did not have to touch the throttle until he was on the ground and about to taxi off the runway. Only at that point did he realise that the engine was dead. He has also had engine failures in wide-bodied passenger jets right at V1 (the slowest speed at which the pilots are able to continue the take-off) on two separate occasions. At these low speeds the big aircraft can be very difficult to handle in an engine out situation.

After returning to New Zealand Graham conducted enroute training for Freedom Air as a Training Captain on Boeing 737s. He enjoyed the relaxed schedule of trans-Tasman flights, with less jet lag, fewer overnight stopovers and more time at home, but gave it up when Freedom Air merged with Air New Zealand and transitioned to Airbus aircraft.

Graham has owned a number of traditional private aircraft in recent years. He bought a twin-engine Cessna 337 to fly to his holiday house in Wanaka. Next came an RV6 and then a Glasair, which he bought as a partially-built kit and completed under the guidance of John Crawford at Aylesbury Airfield where they both live. "Complex engineering is not my strong point and John helped me immensely in the build."

He recently sold the Glasair and bought a Maule tailwheel bush plane, and "is learning to fly all over again". He claims to be a novice at strip flying and is still careful about where he takes it. His mentor, Fred Bull, comes from a vastly different flying pedigree, having owned and operated the same 100hp Piper Cub for 42 years and has flown none of the complex types that are in Graham's log book. Fred's early advice to Graham was to approach a landing in a Cub at a back-country strip in the same way as he would

approach a landing in a 747 at the old Hong Kong Airport, because both have little margin for error.

Graham has been a long time member of AOPA NZ but has only recently started participating in fly-ins, either in his Maule or with Fred in the Cub.

Despite his impressive aviation career and a larger-than-life personality, there's a gentle side to Graham; from the first time we met he has been supportive and encouraging regarding the barriers I face as a disabled pilot.

Graham is actively involved in the Canterbury Aero Club, having served on the Executive, and still helps out at the West Melton airfield - I wonder whether the foreign students studying at the club's International Airline Academy know the pedigree of the guy standing behind the bar or manning the BBQ.

Jinny and I recently ran into Graham at the Classic Fighters air show at Omaka, where we saw him standing next to his Mustang talking to members of the crowd. One little bloke took a fancy to Graham, and found himself helped over the security fence, lifted onto the wing and plonked into the pilot's seat. At the end of the experience I heard Graham telling the boy to consider a career in aviation. I would not be at all surprised if he does. 🛩️



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Flying Getaway...

Hastings

By Reuben Hansen



Hawke's Bay is the place I call home, and my 'local' airfield is one I'm always keen to share, in itself and for the wide range of fantastic experiences to which it provides access.

2020 'Dawn Raid' at Hastings Aerodrome

The heart of recreational flying on the North Island's east coast, Hastings is not only a great destination for committed aviators, it's also ideal for passengers who are looking for non-aviation-related activities to enjoy. It's also an excellent stop-over when you're on a long distance trek north to south, or vice versa, given its central location.

The aerodrome is home to over a

hundred aircraft, most privately owned, ranging from single-seat weight-shift trikes to hi-spec microlights, vintage biplanes and, of course, plenty of the Cessna and Piper variety.

The region enjoys favourable flying conditions almost all year round, and there are various routes in and out of HB that can be utilised, taking into account weather conditions on any given day.

Home of and owned by the busy Hawke's Bay & East Coast Aero Club, there is always a friendly face to greet you at the aerodrome when you arrive. Parking is plentiful and there are no charges for this, as well as waived landing fees for recreational aviators. GA parking can be found near the clubhouse and there are permanent pickets available to be used.

The club buildings house a modern bar

facility, open from 5pm on a Friday and Sunday evening. On Fridays the club offers the famous 'Friday night dinners' which are very popular with members and airfield visitors alike. Basic buffet-style meals are served in a casual atmosphere with no RSVP required. Just head on in and enjoy a meal and some aviation fellowship.

As you will find on the AIP plate, there is a main sealed runway, parallel grass runway and a cross runway, all well-maintained. For those interested wishing to be extra prepared for cross-country flying, the Hawke's Bay & East Coast Aero Club website has an information document that expands on the details in the AIP. This can be found in the 'Aerodrome Safety' section of the website.

Now, what to do when you get there? A journey ideally offers a rewarding destination, and Hastings and its wider region provide ample opportunities for visitors, catering to a wide range of interests.

Set in the Bridge Pa area, home of the wine industry's renowned Bridge Pa Triangle, there are numerous wineries and breweries only a short distance from the aerodrome if you are on an overnight visit. In Hastings, Havelock North and, if you're heading a little further afield, Napier, there are many cafés and restaurants that cater to a wide range of budgets and tastes. In the Joll Road area in Havelock North you'll find some excellent eateries from casual lunch spots to fine dining, or if you're staying a little longer and have access to transport you might head to Clifton beach and enjoy a brunch at Hygge, dine in style at the Mission in Taradale, enjoy an easy pub meal at Brave Brewery or Black Betty's BBQ.

If you're just making a quick refuelling stop, there is also a café at the Hawke's Bay Golf Club within walking distance of the aerodrome.

With its fantastic climate, large (but not too large) urban centres of Hastings and Napier, and beautiful coastline and landscapes, there is no shortage of activities to entertain visitors to the region. You might enjoy a trek out to the gannet colony at Cape Kidnappers or a round or two of golf – there are two golf courses right next to the aerodrome; if you've got the family along, a visit Splash Planet or



Early morning flight from Bridge Pa; below: local attractions include wineries and coastline.

the many parks, beaches, walking and cycling trails might appeal. Throughout the summer, music abounds with local and international artists performing at events such as the Mission Concert and Black Barn Vineyard amphitheatre, and multi-day events like the annual Art Deco weekend and summer jazz series.

For those with more specifically aviation-orientated interests, Hastings aerodrome hosts some interesting aviation, including the mid-winter 'dawn raid' in July and, my favourite, the Taildragger Weekend held in September. Keep an eye out for these events. The Hawke's Bay and East Coast Aero Club Facebook page is a reliable source of information.

It's worth noting, as well, that the Club is currently developing an exhibition space recording the Club's rich history – HB&EC is one of the earliest aero clubs founded in New Zealand, and has enjoyed highlights such as the 1928


visit of Charles Kingsford-Smith and the 'Southern Cross', and was an important base in the 1950s for the newly developing aerial topdressing industry. Take a look when you're passing through.

To get into town from the aerodrome, you'll need a taxi (multiple options; Hastings Taxis Ltd can be reached on 06 879 5055) or someone at the Aero Club might even be able to give you a ride. Once in town everything is within walking distance. If staying in Havelock North, I recommend Porters Hotel as it is very central and close to the Joll road area. In Hastings there are many options central to town.


If you're making an aviation weekend of it, there are many destinations for day trips. Enjoy a coffee at Taupo or Turangi, both approximately 45 minutes flight time away. A great scenic flight can be had around the mountains of the Tongariro National Park. Or you might explore the coast north and south, drop in at Napier or Waipukurau, catch up with the aviators you're sure to find on site and get some tips on other local highlights.

I hope Hastings aerodrome is now on your to-fly-to list.





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