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Coming up

- AOPA NZ 2025 AGM
8 March 2025, Hawera
- AOPA NZ Summer Safari
9–13 March 2025
Hawera – Te Kuiti – Taupo
- AOPA NZ Autumn Fly-in
28–30 March, Omarama
- Classic Fighters Airshow
18–20 April, Omasaka

For more visit www.aopa.nz

Cover photo: Gipsy Moth NZ-ADT's epic flight is celebrated, 90 years on (see story, page 12)

Photo credit: Anna Mackenzie



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Deadline for ads, articles and photos for the next (Winter) issue: 20 April 2025.



President's Comment

Our New Year fly-in this year took place at Moana Strip, Lake Brunner. Thank you to Ian and Katie

Whitmore for hosting this gathering. The South Island West Coast proved to be the destination for sun over the Christmas period and it was fitting to celebrate that on 19 January.

Your Executive Committee continues to work on the priorities and projects outlined in the Summer Edition of *Approach*. In addition, low level ADS-B has reached the stage of seeking funds to pay for the monthly fee expected at dedicated transmitter sites. Selecting the location is crucial for low level detection throughout New Zealand.

I announced the end of my term as President in the last issue of *Approach*,

but have since found myself in a position where I would be able to continue as President for AOPA NZ for 2025, should the members so determine at the AGM. Current VP, Ross Millichamp will retain the publishing portfolio in addition to his responsibilities as VP, and I heartily endorse him in both these roles.

In his VP column Ross covers matters discussed in our January 2025 meeting with CAA, including SafeHaven, Work Together, Stay Apart, and mogas.

The Cabinet reshuffle saw Chris Bishop appointed Transport Minister, replacing Simeon Brown, and I look forward to the opportunity to discuss general aviation with the incoming minister.

The Resource Management Act affects district councils nationwide. AOPA NZ's advocacy team has established a collaboration with the Aviation Industry Association to source intel regarding any GA concerns that require a submission.

Classic Fighters Omaka Air Show, held over Easter, 18-20 April 2025, will host an NZ Aviation Federation marquee, which will include an AOPA NZ booth. We are seeking AOPA volunteers who are able to assist by chatting with the public about flying and GA. Let me know if you would like to participate, and I look forward to seeing many of you during this event.

School age attendees at air shows participate on a Friday under the aegis of STEM – science, technology, engineering and mathematics, a term used in the context of curriculum choices in schools. The 'House of Science' charitable trust advocates this avenue of education and is opening branches throughout the country to empower teachers by supplying resources to improve scientific literacy. As members of NZAF, AOPA NZ hopes to contribute to ensuring aviation is included in this bracket, allowing more young people to be introduced to GA.

Sue Kronfeld, President 🇺🇲



There has been plenty of aviation activity over recent months, including a personal best of three aviation events in twelve days to kick off November, as well as a 2000km scenic trip south in January. I write

about some of these elsewhere in the magazine, which leaves me room here to express my gratitude to the contributors who continue to make this job worthwhile.

Sometimes it can feel like I'm pestering people for stories, but if they're stories I know you'd all like to read, well. To those who cheerfully agree then get on and deliver the goods, a heartfelt thank you. Pulling together the magazine always has its challenges, but they are challenges made easier by your enthusiasm.

With the AGM in Hawera rapidly approaching, I'm looking forward to catching up with old friends as well as getting to know some new aviation folk. I've lost track of the number of AOPA AGMs I've attended over the years. Some things make one feel old...

In this issue I hope you'll enjoy Paul Hood's tale of flying solo across the Pacific, stories from a range of AOPA fly-ins and gatherings, Neville Bailey's summary of ground rental leases, and a very special aeroplane story... and more.

Happy reading and flying.

Anna Mackenzie, Editor 🇺🇲

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Summer Safari 2025

Sign up quickly if you want to be part of the 2025 AOPA NZ AGM in Hawera, Taranaki on Saturday 8 March 2025!

We will be meeting up on the evening of Friday 7 March, with the AGM due to be held at midday on Saturday.

The AOPA NZ Summer Safari launches on Sunday, with two nights in Taupo on March 9-10, two nights in Te Kuiti on March 11-12, and plenty to do in between.

More information is available on the website.

Work Together, Stay Apart campaign wraps up

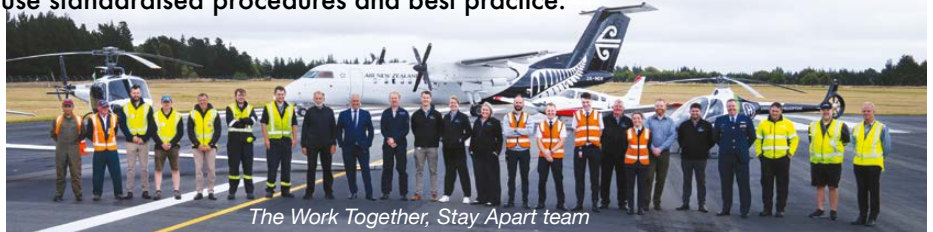
The CAA's two year safety campaign, *Work Together, Stay Apart (WTSA)*, came to an end in early February. The campaign has been the CAA's largest ever nationwide safety campaign, and it stands by the message it conveyed – use standardised procedures and best practice.

CAA's Chief Executive and Director, Keith Manch notes that to maintain a safe and secure aviation system, complacency isn't an option.

"The safety campaign represents a collective effort with the sector to prevent further tragedies, and it's now up to the sector to keep the momentum going."

WTSA aimed to reduce the likelihood of mid-air accidents and the number of near collisions within the circuit at unattended aerodromes. Over two years, 226 individuals and 97 organisations signed a statement of commitment expressing support for the campaign's goal. This was followed by engagement with videos, images and stories on social media and in *Vector* magazine.

More than 3500 attendees participated in 84 educational seminars hosted by the CAA across 31 locations nationwide. The seminars focused on promoting best practice and strengthening collaboration



The Work Together, Stay Apart team

among operators, with key messages including:

- practise good airmanship
- use clear, concise, consistent and correct radio calls
- perform proper lookouts
- work together to manage areas of shared risk
- know the rules – 91.127: Use of aerodromes; 91.223: Operating on and in the vicinity of an aerodrome; 91.227: Operating near other aircraft; and 91.229: Right of way rules.

Support from the sector played a crucial role in spreading the campaign's main messages.

Simon Wallace, Chief Executive of the

Aviation Industry Association (AIANZ) says, "The campaign's focus on safety was a necessary reminder for everyone in the sector to remain vigilant when flying. I hope this sentiment carries on and a robust culture of safety continues."

From July 2023 to December 2024, the overall reported number of airborne conflicts at unattended aerodromes was on a downwards trend, however, airborne conflicts at unattended aerodromes remain a serious, ongoing issue.

"Behaviour and habits will prevent incidents, not statistics," Keith Manch says.

"The positive response from the sector shows that we all share the same goal – to fly safely."



Over 3500 people attended 84 'Work Together, Stay Apart' seminars held nationwide.

Charitable Trust

The trustees of AOPA NZ's charitable trust continue to work towards releasing scholarship opportunities, with progress somewhat hampered by the glacial speed of officialdom.

Keep your eye on this space though, and we will let you know as soon as further developments arise.



Vice-President's view

President Sue Kronfeld and I had one of our regular catch-ups with members of the CAA senior leadership team in January. CAA is in the middle of another review and there could be significant changes to the organisation when it is complete. We

reminded the CAA representatives that we really valued the staff who get out of head office and interact with GA pilots face to face at seminars and flying events.

Deputy Director David Harrison advised that the review was not focused on dollars but on better delivery of core responsibilities. In particular, they are keen to move to a 'risk-based' prioritisation process for determining where to focus their efforts. Aviation organisations that have demonstrated better processes and records could expect 'a lighter touch' for renewals and audits, so that the in-person effort for all parties can be better focused. David issued a caution, however, that they can only control the process from their end. It was up to aviation organisations to have their systems in place so that renewals and audits could proceed smoothly.

We reminded CAA that many private aircraft owners rely on small engineering providers and asked that the needs of the small guys be kept in mind. Final decisions were due to be announced as the magazine went to print, with an implementation date of 4 April to align with the new Civil Aviation Act that becomes law on 7 April.

SafeHaven

Work is continuing in the development of SafeHaven, a place where pilots can go for confidential advice on physical and mental health issues.

CAA and the Airline Pilots Association are currently developing an MOU on how the process will work, but the intention is to help pilots address issues as they arise, by encouraging pilots to report and get advice through SafeHaven. This will be available to all pilots. The formal announcement of SafeHaven is expected to be in March with a start date shortly after.

DL9 medical

The DL9 medical is currently under review by the Ministry of Transport – noting that the DL9 is overseen by NZTA rather than CAA. Its use relates to road transport and is not in any way specific to aviation. CAA doctors are not actively involved in the review, but are monitoring developments closely.

So far it is evident that some areas are being tightened up and others relaxed. At this stage, no changes to the DL9 rules are being considered. CAA is keen to see a consistent application of the DL9 standards by GPs, and has noted that NZTA plans to move to an electronic form rather than the current paper form.

David Harrison also reminded us that the DL9 is not an aviation medical, and that GPs do not need to have an understanding of aviation medicine to issue a DL9 to a pilot; rather, they simply need to determine whether the applicant meets the DL9 standard for driving.

We asked the CAA team for their views on the potential for the increased use of mogas in the light aircraft fleet. They advised that fuel suitability guidelines are up to aircraft and aircraft engine manufacturers. Oversight of mogas supply and standards is not a CAA role. This is a function undertaken by MPI and all such fuel must meet standards applied by them.

They did note that the move to higher octane unleaded avgas in USA was experiencing teething issues, with problems still to be resolved. Our response was that, while there may be issues with mogas and unleaded avgas, the current situation of pilots buying mogas at petrol stations, storing and transporting it in cans bought from Mitre 10, also poses issues, and that a long term solution is needed.

There were a number of smaller issues discussed. The International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) is scheduled to conduct an audit of the New Zealand aviation sector in July. This will include CAA, Airways, TAIC, MoT and some aviation organisations and airports – the latter for information rather than audit.

Aeropath is currently considering a move towards having more electronic and fewer paper-based documents in the cockpit. The company is also looking at increasing the amount of live electronic data available, for example, real time information on hazards such as wires. Check out the data available via PreFlight and IFIS Mobile.

We look forward to meeting again with the CAA team in three to four months' time. If you have any issues you would like us to raise with CAA on your behalf, please contact Sue or me.

I would like to once again acknowledge the work of our advocacy team, who continue to lobby for the continuation of private aircraft ownership and operation. Please let us know if there is an issue in your area that we should be aware of. We have resources and expertise available, but we also need a passionate local to champion any fight. We were saddened to hear of the possible closure of Turangi Airfield, and hope that a solution allowing the continuation of the airfield can be found.

Finally I need to acknowledge the huge amount of work that has gone into organising the 2025 Summer Safari. After the disruption of Covid in 2020 and Cyclone Gabrielle in 2023, we are all looking forward to a return to the traditional format where we get to truly explore a special part of New Zealand. In addition to offering great flying and priceless camaraderie, safaris play an important function in unifying AOPA NZ into a truly national organisation.

Executive Committee member Tim Pearce has led the organising committee and reports that every request for help has been responded to generously. At the risk of forgetting someone, Tim wishes to acknowledge George Thompson and the Te Kuiti crew, Beverley Pranker and the Hawea Aero Club, and Martin Jones and the Centennial Airfield team. And we cannot forget people like Murray and Dave Paterson, Kevin Anderson and Geoff van Asch who are always available to help, no matter the destination. See you at the AGM and on safari!

Ross Millichamp, Vice-President 

Lake Heron

Back to Basics

By Sara Elmes



Keen to get our wee four month old girl Sophie out adventuring, John and I decided to head to the AOPA NZ 'Back to Basics' fly-in in January at Lake Heron Station in the heart of the Canterbury high country.

With the weather forecast all over the show I was initially hesitant, however John promised there would "just be some passing showers" and "it'll otherwise be clear". So I packed up everything I thought we might need to camp with a baby, John loaded the trusty Cessna 180 family wagon, then we were ready to go.

Baby gear is generally light but quite bulky. We've found it really handy having a light collapsible pram, a small portacot and, of course, lots of clothing layers. It takes John a bit of thought to pack the plane, securing all the paraphernalia meticulously.



We have ear muffs for Sophie which currently do the job – at least until she works out how to pull them off. We try to time flights around a feed and her sleep, which works well. She travels in her car capsule, rear-facing, buckled into the rear seat of the Cessna behind the pilot's seat. I sit in the front passenger seat and can move my seat back beside her as required. Our little co-pilot looks out the window for take-off then happily

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Four month old Sophie proved an easy passenger and happy camper at the 2025 Back to Basics fly-in at Lake Heron Station, central Canterbury.

drifts off to sleep. The gauge of John’s landings is whether or not Sophie wakes up!

Arriving at Lake Heron just before a rain shower, we assembled our tent to find that it was not in fact waterproof. Thankfully Sophie was happily sheltered in the Cessna with the sound of rain on the tin roof to keep her at ease while we rapidly sorted out a Plan B. Hangar camping it was!

It turned out we were not the only ones using Philip’s hangar for shelter, with others finding their 15 year old tents were not

waterproof either. We were thankful to have surrogate grandparents Claire and Murray Paterson and many others dotting on Sophie, providing entertainment any chance they got.

After the shower cleared, we were joined by our friends James and Anna, and their 14 month old Toby. They were far more prepared than us, bringing a Cessna 185 with a belly pod and, vitally, a waterproof tent. Something we might consider purchasing soon... the tent, not the 185. Although I have been told we will “need” a 185 if we have more than two children. Good luck to John on convincing me of that.

As the evening drew on, Sophie slept easy enough in her portacot in the hangar. The white noise of plane chat, Neil Diamond’s ‘Sweet Caroline’ and the beat of a certain Manawatu vet’s dance moves soon had the wee aviator fast asleep.

Saturday morning provided a weather window for the flying campers to explore the airstrips in the Rangitata and Rakaia Valleys. We stayed on the ground, going for a walk to the local stream for a go at fishing. The flying campers arrived back for lunch, by which stage the weather on the east coast was packing in.

The afternoon was shared between walks, hangar talk and showing off accessories, not just aeroplane accessories, but camping ones too. Philip Todhunter very kindly provided Sophie and I, and reluctantly John, an escape from the chat with a drive to explore the farm.

A few extras stayed on Saturday night owing to the weather, and were warmly fed from Ian Sinclair’s endless supply of goodies and a shared BBQ. Cards provided a much appreciated break for the ladies from the plane engine and battery chat, which I’ve learnt is never ending! Discussion amongst the passengers led to the discovery that we’d all been given the same line: “It’ll be sunny.” – we might all check the weather forecast ourselves next time!

On the last day we finally got a glimpse of the sunshine we’d been promised as we packed up for a smooth trip home. Thank you to the Todhunter family who were very generous in allowing the use of their farm, airstrip and hangar for the twenty or so aircraft and their happy flying campers. 🦅

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AVIATION SAFETY



Bringing N63PH home

By Paul Hood

In the last issue, Paul Hood picked up his new C206 in Kansas and he and Lynette enjoyed flying cross-country to Nevada. He picks up the story in Las Vegas.

On arrival in Vegas we were unable to get hold of Fred Sorensen from our contractors, Flight Contract Services, so we tied the aircraft down and caught an Uber across town to the International Airport for a rental car before checking into a hotel at the north end of town. The next morning Fred texted that he was flying a charter flight back from the east coast, arriving that afternoon. We met him out at North Vegas airfield. Immediately after being introduced, Lynette told him that she'd tried to talk me out of flying N63PH home. Fred nodded agreeably, adding: "But we're probably wasting our time trying to change Paul's mind."

He was right. That afternoon we towed the aircraft around to one of his hangars where, over the next ten days, N63PH would be prepared for the flight home.

All the seats except the front left were removed – I arranged for the others, plus a few items we'd acquired around the US, to be shipped home. Two aluminium tanks were installed: a 100 US gallon tank sat beside the pilot's seat with a 135 US gallon tank positioned across and behind the pilot's seat. With 87 US gallons in the wings, it gave me 322 gallons total fuel, about 310 usable. The fuel, the pilot (myself), the other front seat, which we managed to wrap in plastic and stow behind the tanks, and an allowance for a little luggage put the aircraft 800lb over its all-up weight. Fred arranged the overweight permit – easy for Cessnas, he said, as they have a generic overweight permit with FAA for ferry flights up to thirty per cent over their all-up weight.



Having collected his new Cessna 206 in Kansas, Paul Hood was determined to fly her home, with the addition of two extra fuel bladders and a system for adding oil in mid-flight.

An oil line was put through the firewall and teed into the oil return from number two cylinder head. This gave the ability to add oil while in flight if needed. The fuel electric boost pump from below the floor was mounted to the front of the seat rail and the two internal tanks were plumbed through the pump into the existing system. The ELT aerial was removed to give access into the aircraft for the HF antenna which went back to the top of the tail and out to the tip of the starboard wing. A heavy power lead with a 30 amp fuse was routed from the battery through the firewall to the HF radio, which was strapped to the top of the fuel tank beside the pilot. A hole was drilled in the bottom of the cabin with a right angle bend facing into the airflow, which was the breather for the fuel tanks. This also added positive pressure to the tanks and removed the risk of tanks siphoning.

With the ferry flight equipment installation complete we positioned everything we needed in flight where it could be accessed from the pilot seat. Life raft and

four quarts of oil behind the seat. A bag with food and drink on top of the ferry tank behind the HF radio and the hand pump for the oil. Urine bottle in a bag tied to the front of the fuel tank. My travel bag was stowed in the back. Sitting in the seat to test that everything was accessible, I found I was unable to reach the pedals because the seat could only come two thirds of the way forward, due to where the fuel pump was bracketed. That problem was rectified with couple of cushions behind my back.

The evening before departing Vegas, Lynette and I went around to Fred's for a full briefing before taking him out for dinner. The briefing was invaluable, with reporting on the HF radio and flight levels being a little different to my previous flying experience.

Next morning I took Lynette to the International Airport while Fred took N63PH to another LAME on the field to get the 50 hour service done. I returned about lunchtime as the guys were finishing the service. We put a little more

pressure in the tyres to compensate for the extra fuel load, then put 25 gallons in each tank and filled up the wing tanks. The tanks inside had to be filled using a hose attached to the fuel nozzle and sealed with a rubber cap and hose clip. Fred gave the fuel system a final going-over, then I was off on the 2.5hr flight to Santa Maria KSMX on the coast north of Los Angeles.

The trip doubled as a test flight for the fuel system. The procedure was to take off on the wing tanks, then change to the front tank once established in the cruise. That meant opening the tap on the front tank, opening the fuel return which went into the front tank, then turning the fuel cock to off, and using the fuel boost pump if needed. It wasn't; the engine never missed a beat. Then to go to the back tank it was just a matter of turning the tap on to the back tank and turning off the front tank. Just before the top of descent it was back to the wing tanks by shifting the fuel cock to 'both' and shutting off the inside tank and the fuel return. All systems worked without a hitch.

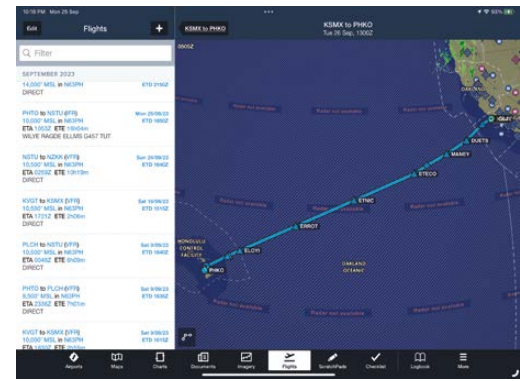
The hotel at Santa Maria is on the

airfield so I was able to tie down right outside and order the fuel. The fuel truck turned up just before dark. The less time the aircraft sits with all that extra fuel weight the better. My plan was to get airborne just after day break – timing was important as just after daybreak the sea fog can roll in at Santa Maria.

At 5.15am the security guard unlocked the door to let me airside. I packed the tie down away, pre-flighted the aircraft, climbed into a flotation suit and donned a life jacket and, after start up, synchronised the flight plan on ForeFlight with the aircraft's G1000, turned on the Garmin in-Reach tracker, which I could text on, did the run up and was ready. The tower was on duty and had picked up my flight plan. I received my taxi and departure instructions and was cleared for take-off just as it was getting light.

A third of the way down the runway and 72kt and I was airborne, climbing out at 400ft/min at 90kt. Soon after take-off the tower transferred me over to LA approach. Twenty minutes later I levelled off at 8000ft.

Once I had the aircraft set for the cruise



at 15 US gal/hr I changed over to the front fuel tank. About 40nm out, LA approach gave me a primary and secondary frequency for the HF and instructed me to contact San Francisco radio. On contacting San Francisco radio, I was asked to read out the full flight plan. They also asked if I had a sat phone, which I didn't, and was advised to give a position report in longitude and latitude with estimated time at next way point every hour on the hour. A couple of times, when I couldn't make contact with San Francisco radio, I made contact on the VHF radio emergency channel 121.5 with an overflying airliner and they kindly relayed my position report. Hawaii to mainland USA is a



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very busy airway and there were usually at least three aircraft within VHF range. I found I could always contact them on 121.5; they didn't seem to be listening out on 123.45.

The hours were filled with giving the position report, recording the fuel burnt, calculating points of no return, and doing my stretches.

The trip started as forecast, with a 10kt headwind, and ended with a 15kt tailwind.

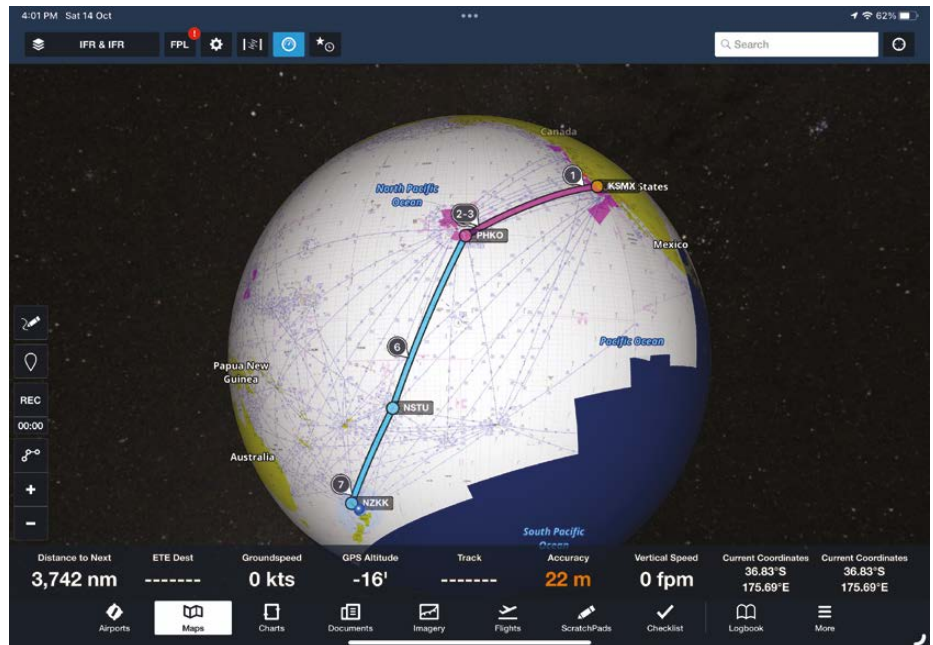
Once on the front tank I'd burn two hours before changing over to the rear tank; two hours on the rear tank and it was back to the front tank, which would be full again from the fuel return. I got just over 5 hours out of the rear tank before the fuel pressure gauge would start to flicker and the engine started to run rough, the indication that the tank was empty.

There was still fuel in the front tank when I started my descent into Kona (PHKO). San Francisco radio cleared me to make contact with Honolulu approach about 80nm out. At about 60nm out the sun dropped below the horizon and, being close to the equator, it was dark five minutes later. Kona was well lit up with good visual conditions. On landing I was guided by the tower to the FBO.

I spent three nights at Kona. On the second day I met up with Jim and Ian, two ferry pilots delivering a twin engine Tecnam to Pago Pago for a businessman starting an airline serving neighbouring islands. Late that afternoon we fuelled both aircraft up and lodged our flight plans for a 3am departure. After fuelling I calculated that I actually had nineteen hours' range with full fuel.

We arrived at the airport at 2.15am, when we'd arranged to meet a staff member from the FBO, who would let us airside.

I'd agreed with Jim and Ian that I would fly at 8000ft while they flew at 6000ft in the Tecnam. Our flight plans were different, putting me up to 10nm further west while they would be about 5-10kt faster. We were in VHF range the whole way, which was handy, as they had an iridium sat phone and were able to relay back to San Francisco my position report when crossing the equator - HF radio proved very unreliable at our altitude for two degrees either side of the equator.



Just after 5.15pm, Faleolo, Samoa, approach cleared me to join left base NSTU. I landed half an hour behind the Tecnam. At 16 hours, that leg was an hour longer than KSMX to PHKO.

After customs had finished with me it was off to the hotel, where I caught up with Jim and Ian at a welcoming do put on by the owner of the plane they'd ferried out. The next day I gave the guys a hand to de-tank the Tecnam and enjoyed a quick tour of the port. That afternoon I refuelled N63PH. As the first aircraft to be fuelled from their new avgas truck, the local media turned out for the occasion.

I arranged for the customs guy to pick me up from the hotel at 3.45am the next day, for a 4.30am departure.

Next morning easterly showers were

blowing through, so it was a reasonable taxi to 05. Five fast clicks of the mic button lit the runway up. Once airborne I picked up my flight plan with Faleolo approach, who quickly handed me over to Auckland Oceanic, only to be handed back to Nuku'alofa approach, who I stayed with until passing over Nuku'alofa's NDB, where I was handed back to Auckland Oceanic. Auckland Oceanic were very good, letting me know of passing airlines in case I couldn't get through on the HF, although there was no issue on this leg.

Twelve hours later, at 3.30pm, I was joining for Kerikeri NZKK. Once cleared by customs I headed back to Whitianga where I was welcomed home by Evan Wheeler and Leigh and Linda Hopper. Job done. 🐣



Ground lease rents

By Neville Bailey

Many of you may be wondering just how entertaining an article on ground lease rents is going to be, so I'll save you some time. For most of us, this stuff is about as dry and mundane as chewing on leather with a mouth full of flour. However, if you're an accountant or lawyer, reading this may well be the highlight of your day and you'll have difficulty containing your excitement. Likewise if you're a hangar owner smack in the middle of a rent review with a newfound passion for reading lease agreements. So you lot, grab a coffee, find a comfy chair, and read on. The rest of you can skip to the end and save yourselves the suffering.

Many of us keep our aircraft at local airfields, and it's commonplace to own a hangar. Nothing new there. The usual arrangement is to lease a ground-space from the airfield management – often the local council – and build a hangar on it. Leases vary in their nature, but apart from their mind-numbingly boring-for-most-of-us content, they usually have a few things in common. Typically they will specify a lease term, the rental amount, a 'rent review' procedure, a disputes clause in case there's a disagreement, and a few other things.

Rent reviews normally fall into one of two categories, either a CPI (consumer price index) review, or a 'market' review. Most leases contain both types: a CPI review most years, and a market review every three to five years. The CPI reviews are usually straight forward – the original rent is put into an online CPI calculator on the Government Stats website, which then displays the new updated rental. It's hard to argue with that one, and it results in the rent rising at a similar pace to the cost of other goods.

A market rent review, on the other hand, can be very subjective. Often a valuer will become involved, sometimes valuers will be involved on both sides and, in more extreme cases when the valuers aren't in agreement, an umpire (also a valuer).

Historically, many of the airfields where

we hangar our aircraft were simply large paddocks on the outskirts of town, with minimal facilities. Ground rents were a token amount, management was minimal, most of us dressed in shorts and gumboots, and people were happy. There simply wasn't a lot to manage. Airfields were treated largely like other recreational facilities such as sports grounds, parks and reserves, and were there for the benefit of the local community. Where scheduled air transportation operated, it became common for operators to install sealed runways and passenger facilities. These were usually ratepayer funded via councils, for the benefit of the community and local businesses.

Rising cost of managing a paddock

Over the years, business models have changed and it has become commonplace for councils to try and make airfields 'stand on their own feet'. For larger airports with their various revenue streams, this probably makes sense. With smaller airfields, however, fees have also been sky-rocketing around the country, driven largely by councils' need to balance 'recoveries'.

What's a recovery, I hear you ask? Well, when the local council need to pay staff wages and salaries, they calculate the number of hours that a staff member has put into working on the airfield, and 'recover' that cost from airfield income.

When a consultant is contracted to do a study or give advice pertaining to the airfield, that cost is attributed to and recovered from airfield income. When the airfield needs maintenance, new fences, signage, security gates, that cost is also recovered from airfield income. When rental disputes occur, the cost of valuations and umpires is recovered from airfield income. All of which makes one large assumption, that the said airfield actually has an income.

In the case of small recreational airfields, it's highly unlikely that they have an income at all, but that doesn't stop council managers from attempting to monetize them.

In recent years we have seen attempts to significantly increase landing fees. This usually involves installing electronic equipment to count aircraft movements, or contracting that service out. We were advised last year that the cost of counting movements at Ashburton airfield equates to \$3 per aircraft landing. In other words, by choosing to count movements, the council now needs to charge an additional \$3 per landing in its council recoveries.

Ashburton ground rent dispute

So in March last year it was only mildly amusing to receive an email from the Ashburton District Council's (ADC) lawyer advising that they were increasing the

hangar ground rental from the existing \$4/m² to \$7/m² – a rise of 75%. The rent was due to be reviewed to ‘market’ so I’d expected some change.

I did a quick back-of-the-envelope calculation to compare the CPI rise over the previous three years with farm values/yields in Canterbury (the airfield is on ‘Rural B’ unirrigated farmland), took a look at industrial yields and values, and quickly concluded that a fair rental was somewhere around between \$4 and \$4.76/m². At that point I made an involuntary ‘you’ve got to be friggin joking’ noise, wiped the coffee off my chin, and reached for the lease agreement. I rang my friend and fellow hangar owner Charlie Draper, and we decided right then and there to ‘push back a bit’.

The ground lease contract contained a documented disputes process, so all we had to do was follow it line by line. First, I emailed and asked them for their justification, and duly received a ‘Colliers Rent Report’ commissioned by ADC, that explained all the rationale for the eye-watering 75% rent increase. It started by citing, among other things (and I kid you not), Auckland Basin Yacht berthing leases, Port Nelson leases, a Grey Harbour Board industrial lease, Timaru Seaport industrial leases, Port of Lyttleton leases, Havelock Port rents, SouthPort (Bluff) rents, and rents at an industrial subdivision in Ashburton.

So we did what any self-respecting Mid Canterbury hangar owner would do. We wrote back disputing the proposed new rental amount, in accordance with the contract, and offered them a new rental amount of \$4.76/m².

The rest is a long, drawn-out story, and although I know you want to know every detail, I’ll cut to the short version. With a lot of help and encouragement from Charlie, we engaged a valuer, and eventually an umpire. Our first attempt at appointing an umpire was opposed by Colliers, so ultimately they made the nomination and we accepted their appointment.

Finally, a result!

Our own valuation report came in at less than we had been paying for the previous three years. Eventually, after lengthy nervous anticipation, the umpire’s binding decision came through,

and recommended a new ground rental of \$4.75/m². Good news indeed, but tempered by the knowledge that other councils around the country are also trying to raise ground rents to a level that, in our opinion, is difficult to justify.

At this stage I wrote to ADC to request that they apply the new rental amount of \$4.75/m² fairly across all ground leases at Ashburton Airfield as they, in turn, come due for rent review, and we’re waiting on the outcome of this. We’ve also asked that they backdate any reviews that have been signed in the interim, now that a second valuation and an umpire have provided a more balanced view.

Now, valuers need to put bread on the table, and none of this is free. In fact, it’s damned expensive, and very time consuming, which is largely why many rent reviews go unchallenged. Over time though, if multiple rents are increased above where they should be, they eventually become the ‘Market’, and can then be used to justify future increases.

With some fairly large bills to pay, we passed the hat around the local hangar owners, and were pleasantly surprised to receive over \$10,000 in contributions. What an amazing effort and show of solidarity from the Ashburton hangar owners. Given the nature of this ‘test’ case, AOPA stepped in as well to pick up the cost of the umpire.

Community assets or best use?

One big question remains: how could the valuation commissioned by ADC have been so far off the mark? There appear to be significant inconsistencies and contradictions in airfield rent valuation reports, sometimes even when they are written by a single company. This is a matter which warrants further scrutiny, and potentially an approach to the NZ Institute of Valuers – information about your individual experience which may shed further light is welcome.

I suggest there are several significant issues with the way small airfields are being valued. First is the phrase used in many rent reports, that a valuer should consider the “highest and best use” of the land. This approach recognises only the monetary value of the airfield to the council, and in a seemingly flawed manner. It might make sense when valuing a

house or commercial building, but in the case of a small airfield, it seems irrational.

The recreational nature of airfields means they’re there for the community and are therefore not available for other uses, with most lease agreements including clauses preventing non-aviation uses. To ignore this is akin to valuing the local sports ground on a purely financial basis and concluding that a better use would be to sell it to a developer.

Second, there’s the question of why some councils have begun to treat small community airfields differently to other recreational facilities, such as sport grounds, parks and reserves. If you’re going to install expensive equipment or contract out movement data collection, for example, then there’s a real disparity with the free community use of other facilities. Installing a barrier arm at the local park to allow only paid entry simply would not be in the spirit of most communities, and efforts to monetize entry and use probably wouldn’t be well received. Yet recreational airfields seem to be viewed differently.

AOPA hangar ground rent survey

A real issue in airfield valuation is getting hold of accurate data. If a lease has been issued in the previous few years, then it may have been recorded, but otherwise it seems that valuers tend to revert to what they know best – industrial and commercial rents.

With that in mind, AOPA NZ, with huge help from Ian Sinclair, last year set up an ‘Airfield Ground Rent Survey’. More than fifty of you responded. Thanks! Essentially, this has given us a database of hangar ground rentals at many small airfields across New Zealand that can be used by valuers on request. A valuer will still have to double check and, if needed, update the data they use. But it provides real airfield ground lease data, as opposed to data from local industrial subdivisions with vastly different uses and purposes.

If you have Hangar Ground Rent Review coming due, by all means reach out. We can help guide you in the right direction, with the right data. In our experience the best result will be obtained if you first talk with your local council, with the support of other local hangar owners. 🐦

A well-travelled Moth

By Anna Mackenzie



Ninety years ago, Stan White returned from a foray 'home' to Britain. Shy and unassuming, he might not have seemed the 'Bold Adventurer of Empire' type – but such an impression would have been misleading.

Having learnt to fly in 1930 at the Hawke's Bay & East Coast Aero Club, Stan took a ship to England early in 1933 with the plan of joining the RAF. Both British weather and the RAF proved something of a disappointment, his experience not improved by a ruptured appendix. Recovered but disheartened, he declined a five-year commission, deciding instead to return to New Zealand – but not via the straightforward sea route.

Having long nurtured a dream of visiting India, and being perfectly comfortable in his own company, Stan, at the age of 22, purchased a second-hand De Havilland Gipsy Moth, which he planned to fly home.

Designed by Geoffrey de Havilland and first flown in 1925, the DH60 Moth offered reliable performance for relatively low cost. It was easy to fly, handled well and had a forgiving nature, which secured its success as a training aircraft, while its reliability and ease of maintenance under challenging conditions made it a popular choice for long-distance flights.

Fabric over a primarily wooden frame, the Moth was initially powered by a Cirrus engine, from 1928 replaced by De Havilland's own Gipsy engine – leading to its name 'Gipsy Moth'.

G-AAJO had rolled off the production line in 1929. When Stan purchased it for £450, it had already flown to Rangoon and Casablanca at the whim of its previous owner, eccentric English aristocrat and socialite, the Honourable Mrs Venetia Montagu, a favourite of Prime Minister Asquith and friend of the Churchills.

Aircraft secured and with just 139 hours in his logbook, Stan began planning his route on linen maps supplied by the UK Automobile Association who also supplied a booklet covering the intercontinental air routes of the day, together with monthly – yes, monthly – met reports.

Never one to seek out celebrity, on 18 September 1934 he set out without fuss for Le Bourget, Paris.

The French authorities proved slightly less sanguine regarding the young man's plans, confiscating his log books to keep him grounded until they judged the weather sufficiently settled to allow him to continue. In his logbook Stan bemoaned the delay, but a scant few days later he was skipping across France. In Montelimar on 24 September he crossed paths with the Graf Zeppelin on its way from South America to Berlin.

Four days later he achieved his longest



Inset: Stan's daughter, Jan Chisum chats with the crowd before taking to the air for NZ-ADT's 90th anniversary commemorative flight.

sea crossing – 550 miles from Athens to Cypress – noting in his log that “there were some islands about but no sharks!”.

By the month's end he was in Aleppo with 34 hours of flying under his belt. Heading on for Bagdad he ran out of daylight and was obliged to put down, aided by car lights, at the RAF aerodrome at Ramadi. Crossing Iran he skirted the bleak and worrisome vastness of the desert by following the Euphrates river.

With an average cruising speed of 85mph, the trip might today feel like a crawl, but in the 1930s it would surely have seemed to Stan that he was racing around the globe.

Pakistan brought tropical thunderstorms but they slowed him not a jot. Reaching Jodhpur in Rajasthan he stopped for four days to undertake engine repairs, including replacing the No 2 cylinder head. He was welcomed by the Jodhpur Flying Club, taken for a flight in the Maharajah of

Jodhpur's Monospar and given a tour of his 'marvellous' new palace.

Early on 8 October Stan was under-way once more, with his longest day – 871 miles in 9.4 hours – taking him from Allahabad via Calcutta to Akyab (now Sittwe) on the coast of Myanmar, a journey which generated a 'very sore bottom!'

From Rangoon onwards Stan met the monsoons but battled on in shorter hops. On the 12th his planned landing at the air-field marked on his map at the southern-most point of mainland Myanmar came near to disaster. The marked field proved no more than rough grass, inhabited, he was later told, by snakes and tigers. When he subsequently wrote to the AA to suggest they amend their maps, they expressed their grateful thanks!

The trip didn't get easier. His next leg delivered him to Alor Setar in Malaysia, where the field was so muddy from the rains that he narrowly avoided nosing over. The following morning's take-off, with a strong crosswind on top of the mud, Stan describes as 'unpleasant'.

A night in Singapore and he hurried south to Palembang in Indonesia – then the Dutch East Indies – but there he was obliged to stop for ten days to recuperate from malaria.

On 24 October he set out again, skipping eastwards across the islands of Indonesia. October 27 saw him depart Timor for Darwin, seven hours away, mostly out of sight of land. With his compasses giving different readings, Stan opted to fly different headings for set times, eventually, and doubtless with much relief, finding the Australian coast and Darwin, where a zealous customs official required him to pay tax on his remaining fuel!

Rough airstrips and navigation challenges dogged his progress through the outback, but saw him finally arrive in Sydney on 1st November. What a relief that must have been! Six weeks, 17,000km, 160 hours in the cockpit and who knows how much stress had gone into the trip.

There was no great fanfare or celebration. This modest young man quietly arranged for his plane to be shipped to Auckland, the sea-crossing being a step beyond the range of the Gipsy, from where, on November 14, he flew her south to his home field of Bridge Pa.



The plane had been equipped with a larger than standard metal propellor for the trans-global flight, subsequently deemed by the NZ Air Department as inappropriate in New Zealand. Stan was unperturbed; he'd flown out with the standard wooden prop strapped to the side of the plane, providing him a spare in case of incident en route. It transpired, however, that the prop supplied by De Havilland was the wrong size, making it doubly lucky he hadn't needed it at some remote location along the way.

With a replacement propellor acquired and fitted, Stan flew his Gipsy, now registered NZ-ADT, around New Zealand until the outbreak of WWII in 1939 when she was impressed by the War Department. Stan had thought she might be used as a military trainer but it appears that she wasn't – which probably kept her in one piece for the duration. Stan, meanwhile, wasted no time joining up and spent the war working as a flying instructor.

When the RNZAF's fleet was dispersed after the war, ADT was part of a bulk purchase by New Zealand's first major airline, Union Airways of NZ, later being transferred to the newly formed NZ National Airways Corporation (NAC) for uses such as ferrying parts. Surplus to requirements, ADT then passed through a string of private owners, in the late 1960s being purchased by Lee Middleton of Pukekohe.

A great enthusiast of the Moth, Lee began a ground-up rebuild of the aircraft which took over thirty years and was eventually completed around 2005.

Stan's daughter, meanwhile, had developed an interest in aviation. Asked whether her father nurtured her into flying, Jan replies: "Not a bit – he tried to discourage me!"

Later Jan learnt from an aunt that his reluctance was largely due to concern for her wellbeing – but the young Jan saw it differently and remained determined. She booked a trial flight, loved it, and signed up immediately for lessons. Her passion for aviation continued to grow through the decades, eventually becoming a shared interest with husband Jerry.

In 2010 the couple, with a little help from John Pheasant, convinced Lee Middleton to let Jan fly ADT into Bridge Pa to mark the 75th anniversary of her father's homecoming. The occasion was suitably grand, but there was more to come. Two years later, Jan and Jerry were delighted when Lee agreed to sell them ADT. Stan, who died in 1999, was no longer around to enjoy the family reunion, but he did once – somewhat reluctantly – consent to fly with Jan in the HB&EC Aero Club's Cherokee.

"I never could get him in the Tiger," she adds. "I'd tell him I wanted him to give me some tips, but he always had an excuse. He was proud of me though."

Stan would have been proud, too, of the event held at Bridge Pa Aerodrome in November 2024, to mark the ninetieth anniversary of his flight home from the UK in Gipsy Moth G-AAJO/NZ-ADT.

The HB&EC Aero Club initiative saw more than fifty supporters take to the air in twenty aircraft, with a similar number gathered in support at the clubrooms and a stream of spectators lining the runway's end. Some turned out in recognition of the historic occasion; others arrived to view the modern-day spectacle.

The participating aircraft were grouped according to speed and set off at spaced intervals in clusters of four or five, treating residents of Hastings and environs to a mini airshow as they looped out to the coast at Te Awanga and circled behind Te Mata Peak before returning to the aerodrome.

A great cross-section of private aircraft, from trainers to high performance microlights to Piper Cubs, Cessnas and Cherokees, made up the flight, with two bi-planes – Jerry in DH Tiger Moth

NZ-BMY and Bruce Govenlock in his Stearman NZ-STM – flanking Jan in the final group.

ZK-ADT was looking her finest in the soft golden hour light as Jan lined up on final and came in above the crowds, all the aircraft who had accompanied her parked facing the runway.

“I had a real lump in the throat moment when we flew in and the ‘guard of honour’ was arrayed along the side of the airfield,” Jan says. “Dad was definitely sitting on my shoulder then.” 🦊



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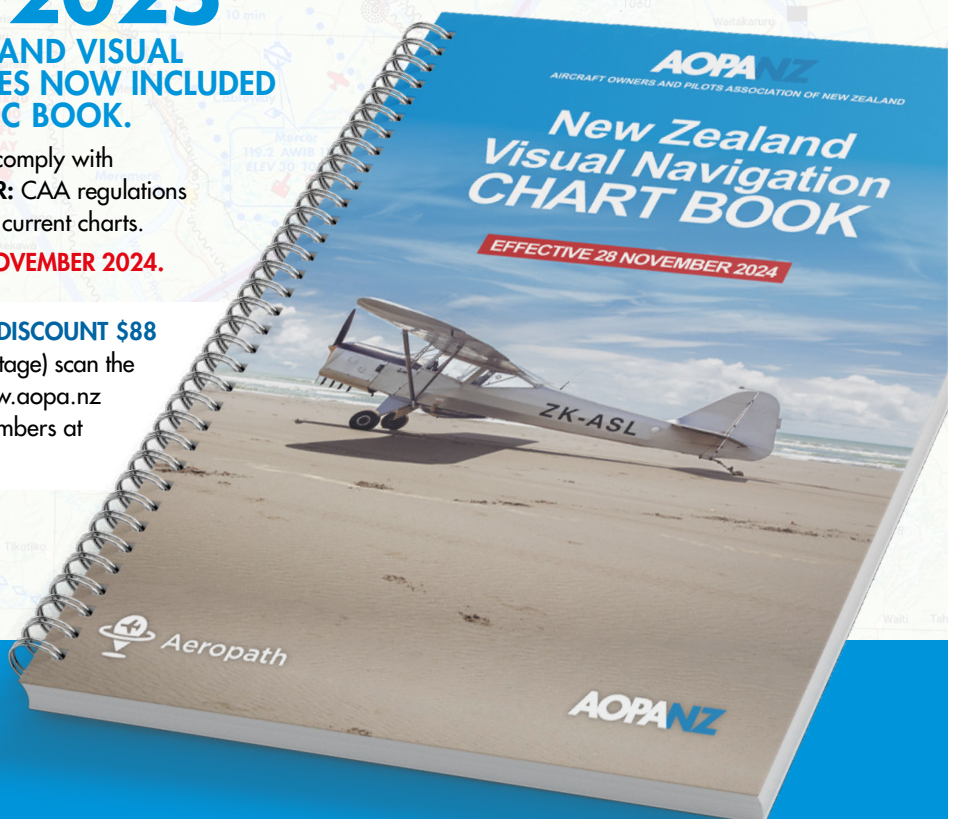
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Deadlines and paperwork...

By Jay McIntyre

Photo credit: Gavin Conroy

And still, I can continue to talk about DC-3s!

Last edition saw us seemingly up against it, needing a mod from a Pt 146 Design Organisation to install ADSB-Out in the old girl. Luckily a Mode S transponder was already installed and just needed the GPS position source to make it ADSB-Out compliant. However, being over 5700kg MCTOW we could not use AC43-14, hence the requirement for the mod. Somewhat to my surprise, NTech came through with the required mod in time to meet our almost non-existent timeline requirement!

With the rest of the annual inspection requirements completed, the aircraft went on to complete a New Zealand tour in November, flying more hours in those two weeks than she had in the twelve years she had been in the country, with only a couple of minor issues reported.

The planned deadline sale of 31st December did not eventuate, with last-ditch attempts to keep the aircraft operating going on in the background. Ironically, New Zealand's other two operating DC-3s have been sold to the Australian operator who originally came to inspect ZK-JGB back in mid-2024! It may well be that JGB is the last flying DC-3 in the country, but who knows how long for.

The plan is to have the aeroplane on display at Omaka's Classic Fighters Airshow over Easter in what could well be the last display in New Zealand of a DC-3. Rather sad really.

With the paperwork on JGB's annual completed before lunch on a Friday, I took off that afternoon for a short family break in Canada and, to be fair, have not really caught up since. We had a lot on all year and on my mind, whilst in Canada, was my commitment to having the Walsh Aviation Support Society's (WASSI) Cessna A152 ZK-MUM completed and ready for participation at the Walsh Memorial Scout Flying Schools 58th iteration.

Many long days and nights through November and December saw the seemingly never-ending list of finishing touches and checks completed, with a couple of days to spare, before we broke for Christmas.

Ryan Southam had the honour of taking her aloft for the first

time in ten years, and luckily reported no major issues. Of great relief was that the flight control rigging was pretty much spot on. WASSI staff went on to put 20hr on the overhauled engine over the Christmas break before taking her north to Matamata for the camp, where she was warmly received. She has now been returned to us for some final titivation before going out on the line with a training organisation. So glad to have that spot in the hangar cleared!

Recently we have taken on the maintenance of a few new aircraft due to sales around New Zealand, and on two Cessnas we have found that a 2019 revision to the SIIDs inspections had been missed. To be honest, I only noticed it as I was reviewing the SIID publications while rebuilding ZK-MUM (MUM not having had the SIIDs completed before she was removed from service) and noted the amendment.

I would say that the previous maintainers probably fell into the trap of following their maintenance planning spreadsheet for the regular repetitive inspections without taking a fresh look at the document. Easy mistake perhaps, as one might think the SIIDs are a finite document. I can't speak for all Cessnas but it may pay to make sure your maintenance facility is on top of it.

Lastly, my workload is not helped by having to chase owners for the hours flown since the last inspection. It is the operator's responsibility to make sure the logbooks are filled out, but naturally this is done by the maintainer 99% of the time. As most aircraft have time-in-service recorders of one sort or another, it is usually easy enough to use basic math to determine the difference in the current reading and the reading at the last inspection and figure out the total time and thus what maintenance is required. However, often there is only a list of flights on a scrap of paper or, worse, the owner logs them electronically via some random programme then forgets to send them on for inclusion in the aircraft logbooks, regardless of multiple reminders.

I find the simplest way is just to record each flight in the tech log after you complete the flight – also a good way of reminding yourself what maintenance might be coming up! 🐦

Exploring south

By Anna Mackenzie

In early January a friend arrived from the US for a three week visit. On previous trips she'd explored a few North Island highlights – Rotorua, the East Cape, Lake Taupo, Hawke's Bay. It was time to head south...

With excessively hot having given way to excessively wintery weather, we spent a week wondering whether we'd get out of Hawke's Bay, but luck was with us and on an overcast morning we loaded the C182 as the cloud began to thin and were airborne by 10.30am. Route options were limited: it was straight down the centre. There were a few bumps as we overflew the Manawatu Gorge's necklet of wind farms, then blue began to overtake grey. Patchwork fields and urban sprawl slid by through the Manawatu then, as we ploughed into a headwind between Porirua inlet and Mana Island, the South Island hove into view.

Turquoise, teal and aquamarine striped the Strait. We dropped in at Omaka for fuel and an unmemorable lunch, noted the ten degree lift in temperature and the crispy

tone of the surrounding hills, and headed on down the Awatere valley. International guests always merit the front seat, and I found myself enjoying the slightly different view offered from the back.

Golden slopes gave way to the bleached browns and greys of the Molesworth. Braided rivers, patchworks of irrigated green, the emerald jewel of a high mountain tarn. We overflew Hanmer Springs and the inland Canterbury lakes – Coleridge, Heron and Clearwater, crossed the Two Thumb Range and had the cameras clicking as we tried to capture that specific glacial blue of Lake Tekapo.

Hamish detoured up Lake Pukaki to show off Aoraki Mount Cook, which co-operatively slipped from its wreath of cloud, then hopped over the Barrier Range to follow the Dingle into Wanaka.

It was hot. Layers were shed. We tied down the plane and sort shelter in town.

Hamish's childhood was spent shuttling between Wanaka and Dunedin, so each visit includes an accounting of change. More roundabouts this year and (shock, horror!) traffic lights, alongside continued big box development and urban expansion. Our favourite eateries were thriving (don't miss *Francesca's* for dinner, *The Big Fig* for brunch and *Pembrooke Patisserie* for sheer indulgence) and our favourite walks were not too crowded. Carol fell in love with the views and the ambience. We toured her about – Cromwell Old Town, Clyde and Ophir (for a smidgeon of my family history), Makarora and Haast. We introduced her as well to those AOPA aviators who gather around the lake's fringe (thanks, Ann, for short notice hospitality).



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Above: Two Thumbs Range and alluvial fan at the head of Lake Pukaki. Below: Hamish and Carol. Previous page: Franz Josef glacier; inset: 'Hangar Around' café, Motueka Aerodrome.

All too soon the week was done and it was time to head north. After thirty plus degree days under scorching blue skies, Saturday dawned overcast and cool. With forecasts up-country looking good we cleared Wanaka Airport just after 10.15am. Cloud was still hanging about as we tracked Lake Hawea, crossed the Neck and headed up the Makarora, re-tracing the route we'd driven just days before. The Gates of Haast look oddly diminished from on high.

We emerged into clear skies over the coast, with crisp views of the snow-be-decked Alps and Fox and Franz Josef glaciers as we tracked north.

Turning inland at Hokitika we followed the fertile swathes of the Grey and Inangahua valleys before crossing more rugged country to Murchison and on to Motueka, where we stopped for fuel and lunch. The airfield was strangely quiet for a sunny summer weekend, the aero club facilities locked up, but we spotted some activity a few buildings along and there

discovered a great little shipping container café, *Hangar Around*, open seven days "except when it's raining". Staff were welcoming and the refreshments great.

Bidding farewell to the South Island we crossed Tasman Bay and skipped over French Pass in the Marlborough Sounds, ship-spotting across Cook Strait before gaining the coast north of Kapiti Island. A repeat burst of turbulence over the Manawatu Gorge and we were back in Hawke's Bay, admiring the rare sight of green hills in January.

One of GA's great strengths is the ease and flexibility of travel it offers; another is the access it allows to New Zealand's beauty, wild and managed. In a single day you can take in rugged mountains and fertile plains, braided rivers and sandy beaches, urban landscapes and rolling hills, juxtaposing the contrasts our impressively compressed geology has to offer. And there's nothing quite like seeing it via a fresh set of eyes to help you appreciate it all anew. 🐦



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Collaborate and separate

Collaborating and separating is working together, staying apart. Sound familiar? Hopefully it is, given the recent Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) safety campaign. This is a topic that is super important for all of us.

When working together, we share the airspace, most of which is uncontrolled. Sharing airspace relies on our looking out for each other; this is our primary tool to maintain VFR separation. Next, there's VFR cruising levels and valley/coast conventions, as well as the give way rules. Working together relies on us being predictable. This particularly applies in and around aerodromes, where there are joining procedures, which are described in the aerodrome plate.

There are places we fly that do not have an aerodrome plate, but may have multiple aircraft joining, for example at a fly-in. The conventions still apply, and these may be communicated within briefings or by the airstrip operator. In the absence of any specific guidelines, and providing terrain/conditions allow, the preference is left-hand circuits, flying predictably as you would at an aerodrome. Airstrip inspections should also follow what would be a normal circuit with an overshoot allowing for an inspection. While airstrips may not have vectors, you can do the circuit leg radio calls, using approximate headings, for example, left-hand downwind landing to the north, or landing upstream. Ensure you are on the correct radio frequency and that your radio is working. If you can, do a radio check in with others around you. Navigation and knowing where you are is critically important, so you do not end up flying through the middle of an airstrip circuit.



Work Together, Stay Apart places significant emphasis on preparation before leaving the ground. That is, reading the NOTAMs and aeronautical plates, reviewing airspace charts and weather forecasts. While many airstrips may not have NOTAMs, you still need to do your homework, for instance, have I got permission (landowner or concession) and have I talked to the landowner or someone who may have operated there recently.

The CAA safety campaign has focused on circuit procedures 'Circuit Certainty' and radio etiquette 'Plane Talking'. Near misses and conflicts are more likely around aerodromes or when joining where there is a higher concentration of traffic, a higher workload, procedures specific to the aerodrome, variable aircraft performance, possibly VFR, IFR and even NORDDO traffic, and visual obstructions as aircraft manoeuvre.

The Circuit Certainty seminars focused on predictable circuit etiquette. A contributing factor to near misses and occurrences is communication and radio etiquette. The Plane Talking seminars focused on predictable radio and communication etiquette.

We encourage you to review the resources on the CAA Work Together, Stay Apart website. There are many excellent *Vector Online* articles, videos and the brand new Good Aviation Practice (GAP) booklet, *Plane Talking*.

The themes in the Work Together, Stay Apart programme apply everywhere, not just at aerodromes. Off airport, or at our fly-ins, the same planning, predictability and communication is required. 🐦



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Double the fun at Christmas

By Amanda Rutland

Brian Hore, one of AOPA NZ's founding members, was kind enough to let me reposition his lovely yellow Tiger Moth from its home in Wanaka to Ashburton for the summer. But things get busy in the lead-up to Christmas, so I missed the email about the two South Island AOPA NZ Christmas lunches. Thankfully, Ian Sinclair put links to the website registration page on our group chat and, just like that, I was heading off on another adventure in the Tiger Moth.

The first lunch was at Blythe Downs in North Canterbury. Some quick planning on AvPlan indicated flight time of around 1hr20 each way – Tigers only go about 75kt (85mph). With an auxiliary fuel tank in Brian's Tiger, I'd have plenty of capacity to get there and back without refuelling. The aux tank in the Tiger holds 45L (1.5hr) and takes around 600 manual pumps to get the fuel up into the main tank where it's gravity fed into the engine. It's a great way of keeping warm in an open cockpit!

The day started early with the drive from West Melton commencing at 7am. In Ashburton the local instructor was waiting and together we pushed the four aero club aeroplanes out into the sunshine – the Tiger living at the back of the club hangar.

After filling up the aux tank with mogas I'd brought from Rolleston, I did a walk around, put the chocks in and gave her a swing. She started first go (as usual) and I piled on all my warm clothes as the engine warmed.

Flying solo in the Tiger is a bit more time consuming at the outset. Without my usual ground crew I jumped in the cockpit, ran up the engine, did a mag check and back to idle. Back out of the cockpit, chocks away and safely stowed in the locker, then back in the cockpit and seat belts on. Finally I was ready to go, and bang on time.

I'd planned to leave early so I could arrive at Blythe Downs before everyone else – the Tiger has no brakes and takes a bit of room to manoeuvre, so I didn't want to be winding my way between other aircraft as I taxied in. Plus, as it was my first time flying a Tiger to an AOPA fly-in, I wanted to make a good impression! Heading north from Ashburton I went inland over Aylesbury and Swannanoa before hitting the coast at Amberley. Conscious of not wearing a life jacket, I stuck to the ridges above the coastline. Passing Motunau I heard someone heading into Blythe Downs: so much for being first!

As it turns out I was second to arrive and somewhat ostentatiously positioned the Tiger at the front to give myself plenty of room to get out. The early arrival also gave me the opportunity to wipe off the standard oil deposits from the Gipsy Major and replenish the oil with a couple of quarts.

Over the next couple of hours I met several new people and caught up with some good friends before we were all treated to a fabulous meal by our hosts Stephen and Phoebe Field. We had a great turn out; I didn't count the number of aircraft but it must have been a couple of dozen at least.

Knowing I had a long journey home, once people started to drift away I said my goodbyes and headed for the Tiger. An Auster pilot familiar with Gipsy Majors offered to give me a swing, which substantially improved my departure time.

Heading south I took the coastal route back to Ashburton, down to the pier at New Brighton and along the hills over Lincoln then back out to the coast. It was a spectacular trip on a glorious afternoon. After tucking the Tiger back into the hangar and heading home I arrived back in West Melton about 6pm. A fantastic day out, with many thanks to the Fields for their wonderful hospitality.

The second southern Christmas event was at Kokonga in North Otago, and I was interested to discover that Kokonga is about the same distance from Ashburton but in the other direction! This time I had a passenger and ground crew in the form of AOPA member and Tiger Moth Club president, John Baynes. John is from Gore and was on a road trip to Blenheim and timed his trip north to join me for the Kokonga lunch.

Since the timing for the Blythe Downs trip worked so well we followed the same pattern, leaving home at 7am. As we arrived in Ashburton another AOPA member, Aaron Murphy, advised



us he was on his way to Rangitata Island and would call in to Ashburton to say giddy on his way through. This slightly delayed our departure which meant we arrived overhead Kokonga at the same time as everyone else... but more on that later.

With ground crew we were airborne in a far more expeditious manner and though it was overcast and grey in Ashburton, by all accounts the weather was lovely in Kokonga. Our planned track had us heading over Danseys Pass, however Murray had advised there was low cloud on the pass first thing, so we elected to stay west of Oamaru and head over the eastern end of the Kakanui mountains then up the Pig Route to Kokonga.

As we passed through the Timaru MBZ, we started hearing radio calls from AOPA members heading south to Kokonga. By the time we crossed the Waitaki River they were all passing us. As we approached Kokonga, more aircraft were arriving from the south – I counted eight within ten miles of the airfield, not including us, so climbed up a few hundred feet and orbited overhead until all the ‘big boys’ were on the ground. The Tiger is a lot slower than most other aircraft and can be a pain to follow in the circuit, so I opted for staying out of the way.

Once on the ground, Kevin Anderson marshalled us in to a prime spot at the front of the hangar – sometimes it pays to be in a vintage aircraft!

Once again I met new people and caught up with old friends, although different ones this time. There was another great turn out, with probably three dozen aircraft, and even some Christmas tinsel to add a festive air.



Yet again we had a long trip home so as others started to head off we packed up the Tiger Moth and taxied out. Much thanks to the Mathesons for hosting us at such a fantastic location.

With the early cloud cleared our trip home was via Danseys Pass then almost direct up the western side of the Timaru MBZ to Rangitata Island. The Aviation Historical Society were meeting here and were very pleased to see a Tiger Moth appear. While we were on the ground a DC3 did a fly-by on its way north. We also came across a second Tiger Moth that needed relocating to Ashburton, so John bailed on me to jump in that, and we made our way in formation back to Ashburton in two yellow Tiger Moths. Yet another fantastic day out.

Thanks to the AOPA team for organising these events. I know how much work goes into it and I'm very grateful for the opportunity to partake in the fun. Keep up the great work! 🐅

Turangi Christmas fly-in

By Peter Armstrong



There was a record turnout at the annual Turangi AOPA NZ fly-in and Christmas lunch, held on 17 November 2024. Alan Turner, President of the Turangi Aero Club, welcomed the pilots and passengers of the forty or so planes who flew in for the day.

The celebratory nature of the event was overshadowed by the news that it may prove to be the last such gathering at Turangi, Taupo District Council not having extended the Licence to Occupy Agreement with the Turangi Aero Club from January 2025. Their reluctance appears to be due to the land leased by the Club, part of a larger block leased by Taupo District Council, being subject to a Treaty of Waitangi claim.

Alan and his team are pursuing the matter with local Iwi in an effort to get an arrangement in place that will allow the continued provision of an airfield for the Turangi community. Let's hope they are successful.

The annual Richard Primrose Trophy landing competition was not held in 2024, and the Richard Primrose cup is in the care of AOPA NZ until the outcome of Turangi Airfield is resolved. 🐅

One-day fly-in: Tikokino

By Anna Mackenzie

November 10 dawned cool, a little overcast... perfect weather for a fly-in, especially one with a historic hotel within strolling distance.

It's a short hop from Bridge Pa to Tikokino in Central Hawke's Bay so we saddled up without fuss, departing just after 11am, and were second in at James Butler's farm strip. AOPA NZ Executive member Reuben Hansen was already waiting to welcome the gang, soon arriving thick and fast.

The challenge lay in identifying each newcomer from the merest hint of engine noise, aided by the bucolic quiet, a broad expectation of who might be coming, and the previous weekend's Taildragger competitions (nothing like standing by the touch-down line for precision landing competitions to refresh the memory of aeroplane engine noise nuances).

It wasn't all familiar faces however; the one-day fly-in format drew aviators from Napier, Waipukurau, Dannevirke and Bridge Pa, as well as wheedling them out of a few farm hangars.

Fifteen planes enjoyed the gentle undulations of the strip and the admiration of the watching cows as they came in to land. The expanding cluster broke into a ragged trail as we strolled along to the conveniently handy Tikokino Hotel. They were expecting us and took the group size in their stride. A great old historic building that has suffered any number of better and worse renovations over the years, it was good to see this relatively isolated rural watering hole thriving in these straitened times.

After lunch – fish and chips all round at our table – it was time to mosey on back to the strip. Elder statesmen Richard Bradley and Bob Gunson saw us off from their front circle comfy chairs,



and the walk provided further opportunities to chat with a few of the new faces.

Well done AOPA for pulling together a reliable, low-key format and an enjoyable Sunday outing. Thanks to James Butler for the use of the strip, and Tiko Hotel for a pleasant lunch in a setting the whole family can enjoy. 🐦



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Destination Taupō

By Barry Payne



Nestled in the heart of New Zealand's North Island, Taupō Airport (NZAP) offers an unforgettable flying experience for light aircraft pilots. With its breathtaking views of Lake Taupō and the surrounding volcanic landscapes, together with a pilot-friendly atmosphere, flying into Taupō is more than just a convenient stop, it's an adventure in itself.

Whether you're looking to enjoy the many local attractions, re-fuel for the next leg of your journey or simply take in the stunning scenery from above, Taupō Airport provides the perfect blend of accessibility, amenities and natural beauty that makes it a must-visit destination for any aviation enthusiast.

Taupō weather is often referred to as the 'Blue Hole' because of its tendency to have clearer skies and more favourable flying conditions than its surrounding areas. This phenomenon occurs due to Taupō's unique geographical position, nestled in a large basin surrounded by mountains and volcanic terrain. These natural features can create localised weather patterns that shield the area from incoming cloud cover and adverse conditions, often leaving a pocket of clear, flyable skies above the airport even when surrounding regions experience poor weather.

The airport is home to Taupō Tandem Skydiving (TTS), New Zealand's premier skydiving provider, which has been operating for over 25 years and is rated by Tripadvisor as the country's number one skydive operator. Fly-in, wander over to TTS, mention you're an AOPA member, then climb onboard one of their Cessna Caravans and experience dropping-in from 15,000ft. In the event that Skydiving is not for you, be assured the locality also offers much more.

The airport terminal is architecturally stunning and home to the charming café *Lil Something*, open seven days. The barista who makes your coffee will even arrange a taxi for you; just ask. A trip into central Taupō will set you back a meagre \$35. It's also worth popping into the terminal just to admire the decor and view the huge, unique wall sculpture by famous New Zealand potter, Barry Brickell. The back-story as to how a local businessman saved this work of art further adds to its provenance.

Want to venture further afield? Most of the major rental car companies have a kiosk in the terminal. You'll typically find the lovely lady from RaD car hire eager to supply you a car for around \$80 per day, or call ahead on 0800 73 68 23. There is much to see and do in the Taupō locality.

So, you've decided to fly into Taupō Airport... great idea! It's an uncontrolled aerodrome within a Mandatory Broadcast Zone (MBZ) that extends from the surface to 6500ft MSL.

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Huka Falls heliport and float planes operating off the lake are also within the MBZ, and with all of this traffic communicating on Taupō Traffic Multicom frequency 118.4, the locality can at times sound rather busy. Furthermore, only 5NM north of the airport and not included in the MBZ is Centennial Park, a sometimes busy glider aerodrome with its own CFZ extending from the surface to 4500ft. Apprehensive? Don't be. The local operators are ultra friendly and only too willing to assist a visiting pilot.

Taupō does have some idiosyncrasies. To begin with the aerodrome elevation is 1336ft MSL. Yes, your altimeter should read 2335ft when downwind in the circuit! Also keep in mind that, on a hot day, density altitude can easily be in excess of 3000ft. But if concerned about performance, runway 17/35 has an ample bitumen surfaced length of 1385m.

For taildraggers or 'fat-tyre' flyers, there is a grass cross-runway available, orientated 10/28 and 670m in length. It is important to note that, no matter from which direction you might approach Taupō Airport and regardless of the runway you have chosen for landing, you must NOT execute an overhead rejoin, and circuits are always on the western side; for example, righthand for seal 17 and also righthand for grass 10.

As previously mentioned, Taupō is a very busy skydiving airport. Rule 91.229(c)(5) requires all aircraft to give way to parachutes and for this reason aerodrome procedures do not include an overhead rejoin. Prior to entering the MBZ simply broadcast your position, altitude and intentions, with an estimated arrival time, then join the circuit downwind, on base or straight-in on finals for your selected runway. There is an AWIB broadcast on 125.2 that helpfully includes a preferred runway. Whenever skydiving is probable, G451 and the associated airport drop zone will be active. Pilots flying skydive aircraft are all professionals and when in the air they continually monitor MBZ traffic and will routinely broadcast intentions prior to dropping parachutists.

As you join the circuit and make your landing approach, it is easy to be distracted by Taupō's stunning scenery, so stay alert until the aircraft wheels are firmly on the ground. Take any runway exit, call clear and make your way to a parking position.

If you need fuel, there are two avgas bowsers, Z and BP, located side by side immediately south of the airport terminal hardstand. There is parking on the grass to the east of the pumps and overflow parking parallel to taxiway E on the eastern side of the former control tower. You will be invoiced a \$10 plus GST



Taupō is a busy skydiving airport, so please follow the rules; while visiting, don't miss the architecture and artworks of the terminal building.

light aircraft landing fee, with higher fees applying for heavier aircraft; details on the airport website, www.taupoairport.co.nz

Did you know the only aviation medical examiner based in the central North Island operates from rooms on Taupō Airport? Doctor Peter Battersby is able to certify Class 1, 2 and 3 CAA NZ Pilot medical certificates, including initial issue, renewal, upgrades, plus DL 9 endorsement P for RPL. For more details and bookings visit www.taupoaviationmed.co.nz

Here's a suggestion: The Taupō Super400 is an annual Supercars Championship event held at Taupō International Motorsport Park. The next event is set to take place April 11–13 2025. Why not fly in and enjoy the spectacle?

Whatever your reason for flying into Taupō Airport, be it to stay a while or simply refuel and refresh enroute to someplace else, this airport will not disappoint. 🛩️



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