

Approach

A yellow and grey biplane is the central focus, parked on a dry, grassy field. The plane's upper wing is a bright yellow, while the fuselage and lower wing are grey. The background features a range of mountains under a clear blue sky. Another smaller aircraft is visible in the distance.

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30 May–2 June
North Shore Aero Club
- Haast Midwinter Fly-in
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Cover photo: Lining up for the
Highlands Park ODF, Central Otago
(story page 20)

Photo credit: Reuben Hansen

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



President's Comment

Among the fixture gatherings of AOPA NZ's annual calendar are our fly-ins.

This year's Omarama Autumn fly-in took place over the weekend of 28-30 March, shortly after the northern safari. Camaraderie, accommodation and catering were as enjoyable as ever, as were the majority of the organised strips. Members were truly appreciative of Countrytime Hotel reopening to host AOPA NZ.

The tragic incident which occurred at a strip during the fly-in, and which resulted in one fatality, has been covered in our e-news and in the media. Investigation of this event will run through the usual thorough course with the appropriate authorities. AOPA NZ has also held a review of its processes to mitigate against any such accidents occurring in the future and we will continue to focus on safety at all our events.

Once again, our deepest sympathies go out to the families and friends of those involved in this tragic occurrence.

AOPA people

The AOPA NZ Executive Committee met on 6 April 2025 and has, as per usual, hit the ground running. Your Executive Committee has expanded by two new recruits, Richard Eberlein and Holly Lyttle, Richard stepping into the Vice President role, while Holly will be active in the social, membership and youth portfolios.

I am deeply grateful for the countless volunteer hours contributed by outgoing Executive member John Evans, who, I am pleased to report, has agreed to accept an ongoing role as a sub-committee member in the safety and social sphere of our Association's work.

Going forward, Neville Bailey will head the safety team, while Roger van der Zanden will take on advocacy liaison. Other portfolios include social, overseen by Tim Pearce; ADS-B low level completion, overseen by Peter Armstrong; publishing, which remains under the wing of Ross Millichamp; IT and e-comms,

which falls to Ian Sinclair, who is also on the Board of the Charitable Trust; while Reuben Hansen takes on monitoring advocacy and safety portfolios, and Geoff van Asch oversees the Association's financial situation. As President I will continue to operate across all aspects of our work.

It is with regret that we farewell Karen Williams as our Member Services Officer from the end of June. In the first instance we are looking for someone within the Canterbury region to fill this paid role. I welcome your interest should you have 20-30 hours per month of your time to give to our Association.

Sid McAuley, who has played a key part in the successful formation of the AOPA NZ 'Think Aviation' Trust, stood down as a Trustee as of 1 May 2025. Many thanks to Sid for his work in getting the Trust up and running. We have approached a Trustee to take Sid's place and this will be notified to the membership in due course.

A big 'thank you' to Tim Pearce for coordinating the AOPA NZ Northern Safari, 8-13 March 2025. Many threads were pulled together by Tim, including venue, catering, entertainment and strip access, ensuring this gathering was an out and out success. I thoroughly enjoyed the camaraderie and flying; these stand at the heart of AOPA NZ, and this event proved an excellent example of this aspect of our organisation's purpose.

The 2026 AGM will be held in March in Greymouth. Planning for this event is already underway.

Advocacy meetings

In June our new VP, Richard Eberlein, will accompany me to a meeting of the NZ Aviation Federation (NZAF), and a meeting with CAA. NZAF encompasses nineteen GA associations and interests, all sharing the goal of ensuring that general aviation continues to thrive throughout New Zealand. One current project is supporting 'House of Science', a trust which creates science resource kits aimed at improving the scientific literacy of our 8-11 year olds, as well as introducing information about career pathways into industries such as aviation.

Our meeting with CAA will be our annual face-to-face in Wellington (our other quarterly meetings being online) with Keith Manch, John Kay, David Harrison and Mike Hall – I like to call them 'the awesome foursome'. Safety, air rules, security, ICAO and other issues impacting on GA will be discussed. I'd like to take the opportunity to acknowledge Keith Manch's efforts in overseeing our Aviation Authority, and to wish him well in his future pursuits. It will be interesting to see who replaces Keith as Director of CAA.

Our Haast fly-in is scheduled for late winter 2025; keep an eye on your AOPA NZ e-news for further information and a call to register.

Sue Kronfeld, President 🇳🇿



Two important advocacy wins

Following extended negotiations with the Timaru District Council, we have achieved much-improved noise restriction conditions, together with more liberal take-off and landing allowances.

Members might have noted from the financials provided at the AGM that our organisation made a significant contribution to legal costs to fight the prohibitive rules originally proposed in the Timaru District Plan. As this plan is likely to be used in future as a template for council planning around the country, this represents a very worthwhile investment, as well as a positive result for GA pilots. You can read more on this success story on page 21.

Milford Sound. AOPA NZ has negotiated a renewed and extended concession, exclusive to AOPA NZ members, to access to Milford Sound Aerodrome. Specific requirements apply as this concession is within DOC conservation land. See the article on page 5 for full details.

Prop discount for AOPA

Through our affiliation with IAOPA, AOPA NZ members now have access to a discount of \$1000 off any carbon fiber composite Hartzell propeller. For details, visit www.hartzellprop.com/aopa-top-prop-propeller-discount.

Welcome to new members:

Andrew McLennan, Upper Hutt; Nick Gambirazzi, Morrinsville; Chris De'Ath, Whangarei; Peter Martin, Huntly; M Poulton, Woodville; Keith Cammock, Dannevirke; Louisa Patterson, Queenstown; Skip McLennan, Upper Hutt; Ian Santos, Auckland; Andrew Garner, Blenheim; Peter Hodgson, Auckland; Patrick Cooper, Leeston; Brad Pearpoint, Feilding; Logan Robinson, Rolleston; Thomas Michael Hoefer, Dunedin; Mandy Deans, Wanaka; Latham Jones, Cromwell; Wolfgang Kaepfel, Whitianga; Warren Butler, Pukekohe; Kinshuk Chhabra, Queenstown; Chris Saunders, Lake Rotoiti; Gerard te Heuheu, Taupo; Craig Duff, Christchurch; Skip Kaepfel, Whitianga; Glenn Lord, Rakaia; Shayne McAulay, Wanaka; Roger Cruickshank, Hamilton; Andrew Jakimiuk, Auckland; Russell Opland, Auckland; Gareth Pike, Southland; Leslie Berger, Northland; Ryan Carswell, Taradale; Edwin Lamont, Auckland; Gavin Yates, Christchurch; John Luff, Durie Hill; Andrew Craig, Marlborough; James Rattray, Sandringham; James Last, Dannevirke; Marc Edgar, Brightwater; David Grove-Hills, Auckland; John Nicholls, Mangonui; Maarten Hofmans, Arrowtown; Blair Walter, Cromwell; Paul Richardson; David Devine, Otoko; Rodney Lake, Tauranga; Nick Fraser, Cambridge; Mike Small, Rangiora.



AGMs can make people's eyes glaze over, but AOPA NZ's tend to be brisk and to the point.

The social side hits full swing at the Friday arrivals dinner, this year hosted admirably by Hawera Aero Club, flows through the awards dinner that follows the Saturday AGM, and doesn't let up.

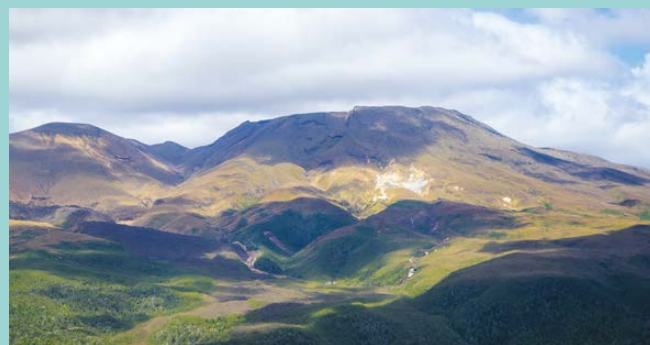
Sunday saw us briefed and off in our groups to drop in at Raetihi and Ohakune before circuiting the mountains, Ketatahi Springs steaming away above the bronze and purple slopes of Tongariro. Turangi Aero Club proved an excellent spot for a picnic lunch.

One of the great strengths of flying in New Zealand is the rich variety of landscapes that can be enjoyed in short order, from the stark central plateau to the sparkling waters of Lake Taupo. On Monday we headed north-east to Edgecombe, where we enjoyed

meeting a few locals, then south to the coastal jewel of Opotiki, and back over rich farmland to Centennial Park. Heading back into Hawke's Bay, the landscape changes and changes again.

Graham Johnson writes about his summer safari experience on page 6.

The end of March saw the Omarama Autumn Fly-in, an event that delivered amazing highs and an appalling tragedy; a reminder of the need to focus, jointly and individually, on not only safety but on lifelong learning. In this issue Chris Hoffman and Ross Millichamp offer insights into aspects of safety that should be considered for every flight – and not only for flights. The messages AOPA NZ promotes regarding awareness, human factors, and supporting each other apply across many aspects of life.



This issue also introduces your new Executive members, celebrates the winners of the annual AOPA NZ Awards, and highlights a couple of key AOPA NZ advocacy achievements.

The aim with every issue is to provide you with variety – technical information, flying stories, industry news and more. Please don't hesitate to get it touch if you have a story to contribute.

It was great to catch up with so many AOPA NZ members in Hawera and beyond. I hope to cross paths with more of you soon.

Anna Mackenzie, Editor 



Vice-President's view

At the Hawera AGM I was elected Vice President of AOPA NZ, and tasked with preparing an item for *Approach*. This would usually be a summary of the events, meetings and major committee issues since the last magazine, however, as I

have only just taken up the post and have not as yet attended any outside meetings, I am free to ramble on topics of my own choosing!

Recent AOPA NZ flying events included the North Island Safari and AGM. This was a great success and Sue has paid tribute to Tim Pearce and his team of helpers for their efforts. Aircraft arrived from all around the country and enjoyed visiting Hawera, Taupo and Te-Kuiti. The hospitality afforded at each venue was fantastic, and we all look forward to the next such event. To reiterate Sue's comments, a big 'thank you' to everybody involved in making the safari so memorable.

The Omarama Autumn Fly-in was also a well-arranged event that was enjoyed by many of those who attended. However, despite careful and detailed organisation, it was unfortunately marred by a very sad accident.

Our thoughts are with the families and friends of Ivor, and we wish Don all the best in his recovery.

With Sue, I am attending the regular AOPA quarterly meeting with CAA in April. Items up for discussion include:

- Progress on the Omarama accident investigation
- Denial of VFR flight in Controlled Airspace
- Increased CFZ areas and mandating the use of CFZ radio channels
- AOPA NZ/CAA flying videos
- ADS-B use/exemption by rescue helicopters.

Please let us know if you have any other concerns that you would like us to voice.

Constitution

The AGM in Hawera also approved the AOPA NZ's new constitution. Although our original constitution had been amended along the way, it was outdated and did not comply with new legislation. Many volunteer hours of work by committee member Roger van der Zanden and the team culminated in a new document that now satisfies the Incorporated Societies Act 2022. No momentous changes, but the more notable updates include:

- Objects of the Association – tidied up and simplified
- Membership – new complimentary member added
- Executive members previously held office for 1 year, now increased to three years
- Executive members' indemnity clarified
- Disputes resolution procedures clarified in line with requirements set out in the Act.

Safety, Safety, Safety

I sometimes find that my brain clouds over when I read the 'safety' word. Even if it is written three times! However, there have been a number of flying accidents in the news recently, most in other parts of the world, but unfortunately they include two in New Zealand which tragically resulted in fatalities – one being the first fatality at an AOPA NZ event in over fifty years.

There are of course inherent risks in flying but, as the instructors say, accidents are generally a consequence of the holes in the cheese lining up. Perhaps you can recall an incident when, luckily, those holes didn't quite line up. My own recent dalliance with the ground thankfully resulted in no injuries, but it plays on my mind how easily and rapidly things happened. If I had only paused for two seconds to check myself and the aircraft, I might have taken two minor actions and the outcome would have been a pleasant flight.

We all have the safety of ourselves and our passengers in our minds, but it can still sometimes be tempting to rush familiar checks and processes. Many of us are recreational, low-hour pilots who may find maintaining currency an issue. No matter how many hours you might have in the logbook, currency in the relevant type of flying is key. Perhaps we all ought to get into the habit of taking that breath; taking a pause to ponder how safe we are to fly; a pause to check your plane; a pause to consider the possible tragic outcomes of little things going wrong. Two seconds of delay before we push the throttle – it isn't much to help prevent a truly awful outcome.

Richard Eberlein, Vice-President 

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Milford concession

By John Evans

AOPA NZ has a newly issued concession to land at Milford.

One of the most stunning places in the world to fly to, Milford is a definite 'pilot goal' for many of us. While it has a reasonable length tar-seal runway, suitable in length for almost all of our members, it has no shortages of challenges.

Fiordland and Westland weather is challenging. At Milford, the annual rainfall is nearly 7m per year, and it rains on average 182 days a year. Adding to that, landing at Milford can be challenging, with katabatic and anabatic winds, windshear, sink and, at times, extremely high levels of aircraft activity.

All of that aside, to land at Milford, you need to be operating under a Concession, sometimes referred to as a permit.

A Concession is required by certain activities occurring on conservation land, and that includes aircraft landing at Milford Sound Aerodrome. If you do not hold a Concession, you are in breach of the Conservation Act 1987. The requirement to have a Concession to land at Milford is not new, and it is clearly stipulated within the Aeronautical Aerodrome Plate (AIP), as are other requirements such as a pilot briefing.

Following on from work led by AOPA NZ Life Member Shaun Gilberston, we have renewed our concession. This was an effort supported by Nigel Griffith and Shaun, alongside a very constructive Department of Conservation (DOC) team, who very much considered our desire to have a pathway to access Milford Sound Aerodrome as recreational aviators. While many concessions have a life of five years, we secured a ten year concession. Annual permissible landings have been increased from 60 to 100 landings per year following this renewal. What has changed however, is that a number of other flying organisations came under the umbrella of the old concession. The renewed concession is for AOPA NZ members only.

The new 97708-Air concession is active, and we need to meet the requirements of it. Firstly, before you go to Milford, you need to be a party of the concessions. This is an online form, accessed via our website, where your details are provided to DOC, and which is filed within their database monthly. You only have to do this once for the tenure of the concessions. If you visit Milford with a different aircraft or you have multiple aircraft, then the

form needs to be completed for **each** current aircraft registration. We encourage everyone who may go to Milford in coming years to complete this form. You need to read the concession, and agree that you have read and will abide by the conditions. This information has been published in recent email communications and we have received many responses.

Once you have become a party to the concession, **each time before you visit**, you need to complete the pre-visit form, as

linked on the website. This is for internal AOPA NZ use only, so we can fairly manage landings (we have a limited number) and prompts to make sure you have met the concession requirements and if your registration needs updating with DOC records. It also asks that you

have met the requirement to receive a pilot briefing. The briefing is extremely important, even if you have visited recently, as you need to know of activity levels, flying conditions and parking arrangements, depending on your plans. We can assist in connecting you with Milford operators to obtain this briefing.

DOC sends us a list of registrations who have landed at Milford and are not accounted for through a concession. If you land at Milford having not completed the requirements of our concession, then you will not be party to it and you will need to resolve that with DOC. Normally this resolve involves fees and a letter quoting breaches within the Conservation Act 1987 and, worst case, legal proceedings.

You do not get charged by DOC to use our concession, nor do we pass on any costs. However you will be charged by the Ministry of Transport (who operate the aerodrome) and Airways, who provide the Flight Service.

It is important for our membership who are privileged to use this concession that you abide by the conditions imposed by DOC within our concession, and respect what is required by us as an organisation that has worked extremely hard to hold this concession and administer it. 🦅

*To land at Milford, you need to be operating under a Concession ...
The renewed concession is for AOPA NZ members only.*

Summer Safari adventure

By Graham Johnson



My AOPA summer safari adventure began with a phone call from Charlie Draper, a long-time AOPA member and friend.

Charlie and I had enjoyed many previous flying trips together, and the similar performance of our aircraft made planning and managing travel as a pair straightforward. This also made the prospect of visiting new airfields and meeting unfamiliar pilots less daunting.

As our departure date of March 7th approached and the weather forecast remained favourable, our map and AIP

study intensified, and the trip looked increasingly certain.

On the morning of our departure, we decided to meet at Hanmer for fuel and to finalise our route to Hawera. Before reaching Hanmer, my first stop was Mt Grey to pick up Will Morris, an accomplished pilot who would be my co-pilot for the week.

At Hanmer, we met up with Charlie and



Mt Taranaki presided over the AOPA NZ AGM at Hawera in March; inset: Graham Johnson.

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Mike Oakley. Mike and Charlie would share the flying duties in Charlie's Cessna 170, while Will and I would be in the Bearhawk Patrol.

For those unfamiliar with the Bearhawk Patrol, it's the smaller, tandem-seat sibling of the four-seat Bearhawk. Often compared to a Piper Cub, it boasts a slightly better cruise speed of around 105-110 knots. I've been flying my Patrol for 18 months, having built it using a quick-build wing kit and scratch-building the remainder according to the plans. Powered by a Lycoming O-320 engine and a Catto fixed-pitch propeller, it offers straightforward operation.

After refuelling and donning our life jackets, we departed Hanmer, flying north through Molesworth Station, across Cook Strait, and onward to Whanganui for another fuel stop before finally arriving at our destination, Hawera.

Hawera served as our base for the first two nights. The Hawera Aero Club extended a warm welcome, hosting a very enjoyable BBQ for all the visiting pilots. Courtesy vans efficiently transported us to and from our accommodation, and the impressive behind-the-scenes organisation by the AOPA team was becoming increasingly apparent. After a restful night and breakfast at the local café, we attended the comprehensive 9:00am briefing. I found the thoroughness of these briefings, coupled with the helpfulness of the other pilots, particularly reassuring given my relative inexperience with fly-in events.

The morning's flying involved exploring local airstrips and visiting Stratford and Norfolk Road airfields. The day concluded with the AOPA Annual General Meeting (AGM) and later the AOPA Awards annual dinner at the Hawera Park Bowling Club.



Opotiki lies within easy reach of Centennial Park, Taupo. Below: The team at Poronui strip.

Our next destination was Centennial Park, Taupo. The morning briefing outlined the airstrips available along our route from Hawera, across the central plateau, to Taupo. During the briefing, we were organised into groups based on aircraft performance, with each group having a designated leader who briefed their group on the planned airstrips and handled all radio communications, effectively minimising radio chatter and preventing overcrowding at any single airfield.

After an enjoyable day of flying, we arrived at Centennial Park and were once again well looked after by our hosts, the Taupo Gliding Club.

Our second day in Taupo involved covering a significant portion of the Bay of Plenty (BOP), culminating in a stop at Opotiki before returning to Centennial Park. The evening's entertainment consisted of a delightful cruise on the lake featuring guest speaker Barry Payne.

Te Kuiti was our destination for the final two nights of the safari. The morning briefing and planning followed the established format, with the addition of specific information required for landing at Hamilton Airport. This day proved to be

a significant highlight, made possible by our AOPA NZ connections.

After several landings at interesting rural airstrips en route, we landed at Hamilton and visited NZ Aero, renowned as the home of the Cresco aircraft, among other builds. We enjoyed lunch and a fascinating tour of the impressive NZ Aero facility. From Hamilton, it was a short flight to our new base at Te Kuiti and the welcoming hospitality of the Te Kuiti Aero Club.

Our final day of flying from Te Kuiti included exploring agricultural (ag) strips in the morning, a lunch stop at Raglan, and a return to Te Kuiti for our farewell dinner.

After an uneventful flight back to my home base near Darfield and a few days to reflect on the experience, I can confidently say the safari was a highlight of my flying career to date. We logged 18 hours of flying, explored a lot of new and beautiful country, met new and interesting people, and thoroughly enjoyed the very social atmosphere of the entire event.

I would particularly like to thank Tim Pearce and his team for their outstanding organisation. I would also like to express my gratitude to the many fellow pilots for their advice, help and camaraderie. 🇳🇿



Fit to fly – but are you?

Before any flight, I am sure we all carry out a degree of preparation – a look at the weather and NOTAMs at home and at the destination, plus a check of the route for issues – then when we arrive at the airport, just prior to departure, we run through a preflight inspection of the aircraft.

At the very least we check fuel and oil and then take a walk around the plane checking for any obvious problems. Ten to fifteen minutes, maybe more, for the first flight of the day. We should check the tech log, particularly if someone else has flown the plane since we last did. We brief the passengers and off we go... But what about us? Did we run through a check list of our fitness to fly? And if we did, was it a last minute thing or was it something we gave some thought to, maybe the night before or the morning of the flight before we left home?

We should all be familiar with I'MSAFE checklist; it's been around a long time in a number of formats (my research found it was first published in the USA by the Civil Air Patrol), and is promoted locally by AOPA NZ, CAA and most training organisations. The acronym stands for Illness, Medication, Stress, Alcohol (and drugs), Fatigue, and Eating. The original version had E for Emotional state, and some have an extra A, as IAMSAFE, for Alimentation (being fed and watered). In NZ we use E for eating and the Emotional stuff is captured under the Stress or Fatigue sections.

Most of the time we can usually tell we are okay to fly – a quick self-check – do I feel alright? Yep, and we're off.

But do we understand and recognise some of the subtleties? I had no problems recognising I couldn't fly after I had knee surgery – a quick phone call to my CAA Medical Examiner in the week before my elective surgery, and my Class 2 was temporarily suspended. Six weeks later and after a medical checkup my Class 2 was reinstated.

I was safe to fly again, and I did, the following afternoon... but on my own, in my local area, doing some circuits and running through some emergency scenarios to make sure I was up to it before taking loved ones with me.

There is a degree of responsibility that falls upon us when we take others with us and it should make us stop and think a bit more about I'MSAFE.

Illness – this is usually easy. Have I got the flu or covid? No... but what about that slight lingering cough or sore throat. Or worse, a blocked ear that will cause more pain as you climb to altitude. Or D&V's – not a good way to start a flight with an upset gut... best stay on the ground.

Medication – again we should be knowledgeable about any regular medications we take, but it's when we start self-medicating to deal with minor medical problems that we can get into trouble.

Hayfever can require the use of antihistamines and this can be a problem if they produce sedation. Best check with your local doctor. Another problem can be muscle or joint pain – especially back pain. When simple paracetamol and ibuprofen aren't working, don't be tempted into using your partner's stronger Codeine or Tramadol before you go flying. These drugs can also produce drowsiness. If the pain is that bad it will interfere with your concentration – you're probably best to stay on the ground.

Stress – you need a clear mind to go flying, so if there are major issues at work or home that you're worried about, this could distract you during critical checks. But stress effects can be more subtle, especially if you have new responsibilities at home, such as a young family, and here you are heading off with your mates for a fly-away. Ensure you have good supports in place if they stay at home, and if the family all come too, then make sure you have looked after their needs and make sure they understand that your tasks, like preflight checks, need concentrated attention. Having them with you will increase your stress, so slow down and step through things carefully.

Alcohol and Drugs have such a



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negative impact on pilot performance that the new Aviation Act 2023 is demanding that all commercial operators have in place Drug and Alcohol Management Plans. These plans require mandatory drug and alcohol testing for safety-sensitive workers, including random testing. The Act also allows the CAA Director to conduct drug and alcohol testing. DAMP operators need to submit their plans to the CAA for approval, and the CAA has set time frames for this process. At the moment this is not required by Part 91 private operators. This puts more emphasis on your own self-awareness of the issues.

Any alcohol in the bloodstream will have a negative influence on pilot performance, and most organisations will have a zero tolerance policy. A level below 0.02% (less than 20mg per 100ml of blood or a breath alcohol of less than 100µg/L) is considered a negative result. Whilst twelve hours bottle to throttle will reduce the chances of a significant amount of alcohol still being in the system, it will depend on factors such as how much was consumed, etc. I am not aware of the CAA wanting to extend its random testing to private pilots, but I see that the UK CAA has indicated it will be looking to expand its surveillance to include recreational pilots. Being hung over after a big night out is not conducive to safe flying.

Fatigue is something that most of us can avoid. It classically hits shift workers who work night shifts and international pilots and travellers who cross time zones. I personally have canned weekend flying after a busy week of work involving broken sleep because of fatigue, and it takes more than just a good night's sleep to catch up. Anyone with young children who is woken regularly at night will know what I mean. Perhaps more pertinent for the older male pilot is the fatigue from broken sleep caused by having to get up for a pee in the night. Prostate problems can creep up on us as we age. Add in a few beers of an evening and the problem compounds. This is something to be aware of when away on a fly-away trip. Add in the stress of flying to new strips and perhaps not being very current with the plane on short take-offs and landings, and you can see the potential for problems.



Eating/ Emotion – keeping the brain fed and watered keeps the blood sugar up and prevents the light-headed feeling or dizziness that can otherwise occur. Strong emotions like being upset or angry with something or someone before leaving the ground can interfere with decision making, and of course the age old ‘get-home-itis’ can rear its head. The strong urge to get home can get in the way of good decision making. This is not just about pushing the plane and the weather too far, but about pushing yourself into the dangerous mindset by disregarding the signs behind I’MSAFE.

All the I’MSAFE items tie into broader concepts of human factors in aviation safety. Pilots are human, not machines, and human limitations must be respected. No level of skill or experience can fully compensate for impaired mental or physical condition.

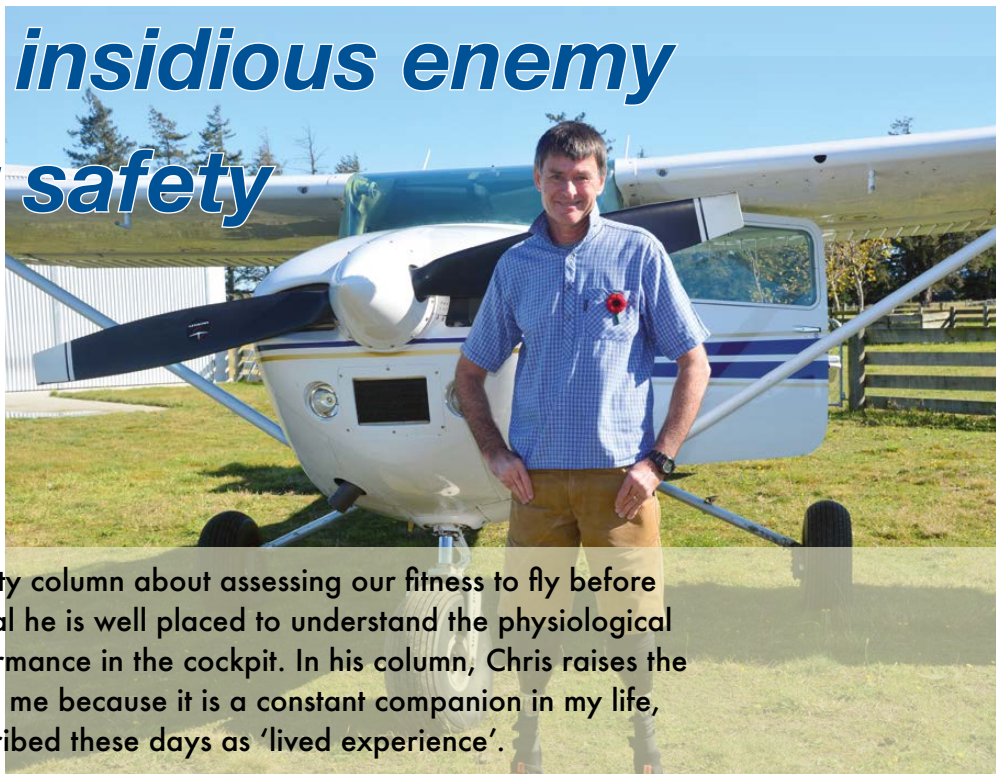
I’MSAFE should not be a passive checklist but an active, reflective process. Pilots should have clear ‘no-go’ criteria for themselves. If any item on the I’MSAFE list cannot be confidently answered with “I’m safe”, the pilot should delay or cancel the flight without guilt or pressure. Aviation is built on a layered system of safety barriers; refusing to fly when unfit is an essential barrier.

By embedding I’MSAFE into pre-flight rituals, pilots reinforce a culture of caution and professionalism. Honest self-assessment can prevent accidents before they even start.

Remember, ultimately, aviation’s safety record depends on pilots making the right choices — even when that means postponing a flight. As the saying goes, “It is better to be on the ground wishing you were in the air, than in the air wishing you were on the ground!”

Fatigue: the insidious enemy of flight safety

By Ross Millichamp



Chris Hoffman has written in the safety column about assessing our fitness to fly before every flight. As a medical professional he is well placed to understand the physiological factors which lead to impaired performance in the cockpit. In his column, Chris raises the issue of fatigue, which resonates with me because it is a constant companion in my life, not as a medic but from what is described these days as 'lived experience'.

Prior to 2008 I was a fit, healthy bloke in his early forties with no understanding of fatigue. Sure, I felt the effects of significant physical exertion, but recovered quickly from the aerobic and muscular stresses. If I am honest, I was probably slightly arrogant about my state of health, priding myself that I maintained better fitness and outdoor capabilities than many people of my age.

In 2008 I suffered a medical crisis following a random bacterial infection that got out of hand, leading to septic shock, organ failure and multiple surgeries. After a five month stay in hospital and many

more months of rehabilitation as an out-patient, I attempted to re-start my life where I had left off.

From the start I was chronically tired, which I put down to a lack of strength and fitness, but as my fitness returned the fatigue remained. I sought medical advice and was directed to a specialist in the field. There I learned that fatigue is not the same as being tired. Tiredness is a short-term physical condition affecting the muscles and aerobic system, whereas fatigue is an insidious condition affecting the brain. Poor concentration, slow reflexes and impaired judgement

are classic consequences of fatigue. If you can still do a crossword after coming back from a run, you are merely tired. If you cannot be bothered starting a crossword first thing in the morning after getting out of bed, you may be fatigued.

Unfortunately, fatigue is not something that can be easily measured by blood test or medical examination. It can be difficult to diagnose, except in cases such as mine where there was a documented list of medical insults that my body had endured.

Looking for answers, my wife Jinny, a medical scientist, delved into the literature and found a paper in the Lancet that showed a link between organ failure, the time spent in intensive care and post-recovery fatigue. That ticked all the boxes for me, but for most people fatigue is an insidious condition that comes and goes in their lives in response to mental stress. Thankfully, this means it can be managed. Take away the stressor and the fatigue should resolve.

In aviation we are all susceptible to the effects of fatigue and need to learn how to identify it, what action to take when it sets in, and how to resolve it in the medium term.

I first became aware of aviation-related fatigue during my PPL flight test. I started the flight feeling confident and the early exercises went well. However, as the 90 minute flight progressed, I started to struggle. On the ground, Canterbury Aero

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Club CFI Jay Peters told me I had passed, but only just. He said my early exercises had easily met the CPL standard but the latter ones were barely acceptable for a PPL. Jay recognised that fatigue was an issue and told me that it was my responsibility to manage it in the future. They were wise words that I cherish to this day

A little later, as a first time aircraft owner, I engaged an experienced backcountry instructor to teach me about mountain flying. We had a great day in the Canterbury foothills, landing on strips that I thought neither the aircraft nor I were capable of. On the way home Kate MacDonald suggested a final strip, but I said, "No I've had enough." At the post-flight discussion Kate asked whether I was upset about something and I told her about my issues with fatigue. She sympathised, telling me that she believed one hour of backcountry flying to be the equivalent of two to three hours of driving. After three hours in the air it was no wonder that I had had enough!

These days, a self-analysis of my energy levels is a core part of my personal aviation safety management system.

Some of the things I consider are:

Go/no go?

As a private pilot I have the luxury of flying when I want to and staying on the ground if I have any doubts about my energy levels. My mantra is that recreational aviation is an expensive exercise and there is no point going up if I am unlikely to enjoy it. Weather is another factor. Flying on rough days is so much more taxing than cruising along on a fine, calm day with the aircraft nicely trimmed. Concern about whether cloud or visibility will interfere with a VFR flight also introduces stress, which can lead to fatigue.

It is much more difficult for commercial pilots, who have less flexibility in relation to where and when they fly. I remember Arch King of Air Rangitata telling me about how exhausted he got flying to and from Kaikoura in the aftermath of the earthquake during a prolonged spell of gusty northwest wind conditions.

Flight planning

One way to reduce in-flight stress and fatigue is to get most of my decision making done in advance. This involves planning the route, inputting relevant waypoints into the GPS, checking the NOTAMs and webcams, writing down the frequencies I may need, printing off the relevant airfield plates, planning an arrival to facilitate an easy join, and briefing myself on alternates should the weather not work out as hoped.

Time of day

I always try to fly at the start of the day. My energy levels are higher, the sea breeze or thermals are less likely to be active, and there is plenty of time available should things not work out as expected. I seldom fly at the end of the day, which is a shame because it is a magic time to be in the air, especially in Canterbury with the low angle sun lighting up the braided rivers and mountains.

Knowing when to pull the pin

You may have noticed how I often opt out of the last few strips of the day on an AOPA fly-in. Once I start to lose interest I know it is time to head home. The problem with flying, of course, is that one of the most difficult tasks takes place at the end of the flight. You need to keep some energy in reserve for the approach and landing, especially if your base is a challenging farm strip or a busy airfield.

Checklists

I am a little embarrassed to say that I am not a great user of formal checklists. I fly a relatively simple aircraft and have flown it for so long that I am able to glance around the cockpit in a practised way and see that everything is set correctly in place. I do grudgingly run through a pre-take-off checklist because I know it is the right thing to do, but I seldom find anything that has not been done. I am more of a stickler for the pre-landing checklist, however, especially at the end of a long flight, recognising that when I am fatigued is when I am likely to miss something.

Take along another pilot

If I am feeling 50:50 about my energy levels I may ask a fellow pilot along. Even if the other pilot is unfamiliar with my aircraft or location, having them with me reduces the workload and helps to identify small issues before they become significant. Most importantly, it reduces the burden of responsibility that is often felt when flying alone.

Recognising fatigue is easy for me because it's something I live with every day. For others it's more difficult because it's likely to come and go due to other factors in life. If it is brewing in the background, it's likely to rear its ugly head in the cockpit because aviation is such a task-saturated activity. Pilots may not notice the onset of fatigue in the air because they are distracted by the job in hand, but this does not mean that performance is unaffected. The best way to assess whether fatigue is an issue is to consider how you feel once you are back on the ground and freed of the tasks and responsibilities. If you feel suddenly weary, you may have pushed it too far. 🐻



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AOPA NZ Awards 2025



John Evans (left) with Murray Paterson

Above and Beyond

On a brisk May day at Kokonga, John Evans was presented with the AOPA NZ Above and Beyond Award for 2025.

Throughout his term on the Executive, John has made a very visible contribution to AOPA NZ and to GA as a whole. Calm and capable, John applies himself fully to the task in hand, and as a consequence achieves excellent results.

Ian Sinclair offered an anecdote that aptly sums John up. "I first met John long before he or I were on the AOPA NZ Executive. I had a very small wireless internet service and my friend Rob Peck phoned me and said his neighbour needed a connection. That neighbour was John. John had built a 'hut' on the side of a hill on their family farm, fitted it with solar power and thought an internet connection might be a good addition. The details are a bit blurry now but one thing remains clear: at this point John was still at school."

Ian adds that John always has projects on the go. They might be an upgraded solar system for the Fox Peak ski field, commissioning a new drone for the farm, preparing witness statements for a district plan submission on behalf of AOPA NZ, negotiating with DOC to streamline Milford landings, reviewing procedural documentation for AOPA NZ, participating in AOPA's Safety and Advocacy groups, connecting LOWRA devices around the farm, organising a fly-in, or changing a nappy.

In the words of one of AOPA NZ's life members, "John is the perfect example of why this award exists." The life members were unanimous in their view that John is a highly worthy recipient. Congratulations John!



Sacha Wetzel (left) receives his trophy from Shaun Gilbertson

Aviation-friendly café

Being in the food and beverage game takes a lot of both patience and good will. The award for the Most Aviation-Friendly Watering Hole was this year made to The Runway Lounge at Wanaka Airport, owned by Sacha Wetzel and Liz Martas.

Because of its winning combination of excellent service and delectable food, The Runway Lounge gets good support from local airport businesses, personnel and the many visitors who fly in to Wanaka. It has also become a regular Wednesday morning coffee spot for older local identities, who relive stories and reminisce over coffee and something sweet and dangerous.

Take the opportunity to call in next time you're passing; you won't regret it!



Graeme Daniell (left) accepts Southair's award from Kevin Anderson

AOPA NZ Awards 2025

Most Helpful Tower

Woodbourne Tower was this year's winner of the Most Helpful Control Tower award.

Submissions to the selection panel mentioned early intervention by Woodbourne controllers with helpful advice designed to prevent any conflict or infringement by pilots perhaps not familiar with the area – the close proximity of Woodbourne and Omaka airfields resulting in fairly compact airspace, including a transit lane in and out of Omaka.

It was noted that the Woodbourne controllers are all club-friendly, two of them having close links to GA, and are invariably proactive in terms of preventing incidents (usually airspace incursions) and/or offering transit through the control zone in the most expedient way possible. This award acknowledges their efforts.



From left: Woodbourne Tower Controller Mark Miller, Deputy Team Leader Thea Follet and Team Leader John Strang receive the Most Helpful Tower award from Geoff van Asch

GA Champion: Mike Oakley



Michael Oakley was this year's recipient of the AOPA NZ GA Champion award – a choice heartily endorsed by attendees at the Awards Dinner in Hawera in March, judging by their enthusiastic response.

The award recognises Mike's ongoing and long-term contribution to encouraging young people into aviation.

Over the past twenty years Mike has introduced over 1000 teenagers, boys and girls, to the many aspects of aviation via an introductory weekend course based at Springfield airfield, primarily through Scouts groups. The weekend course has included flights in a fixed wing aircraft, glider, helicopter and balloon. The youngsters also visit a maintenance facility and a control tower. They are also introduced to 'human factors' and their importance within aviation (and so much else).

The young people are given the opportunity to attend a second weekend the following year to achieve all the goals of the programme and to cement the learning they gain from the intense experience.

Mike's commitment to the programme was clear during his acceptance speech, as he recounted how young men and women, now airline pilots or working in other aspects of the aviation industry, will bump into him and thank him for setting them on a path which has enabled them to achieve so much.

Mike also acknowledged the team of volunteers who give their time and money to ensure the introductory course continues to happen. The award is a way for AOPA NZ to extend its own thanks and recognition to Mike for his initiative, energy and enthusiasm, not to mention the sheer hard work of making the introductory programme such a success. Mike, take a bow.

Top Maintenance Shop

Southair Ltd is the recipient of the 2025 AOPA NZ Best Maintenance Shop award.

Aopa's life members, who form the judging panel for the awards, commented that General Manager of Southair, Graeme Daniell, runs a very efficient company which caters for multiple aircraft types and sizes, noting that the engine shop, in a new upsized part of the building, is among the biggest and busiest in the country.

Southair employs fourteen staff, including two apprentices. The judges commented that this was particularly good to see in our ageing engineering environment.

On accepting the award, Graeme acknowledged both his dedicated staff and loyal customer base, noting that without them Southair would not be the thriving company it is today.

Highs and lows at Omarama

By Lynda Harrap

In late March the AOPA NZ Autumn Fly-in was held in Omarama in the re-opened Countrytime Hotel, which offered not only a warm welcome, but the opportunity to fly virtually to the doorstep of your accommodation.

It started with an aerial display on Friday evening when a 25m wingspan glider gracefully whipped by, soared upwards, turned on a dime and swooped back around to pass by us again. It was soundless, beautiful and a pleasure to watch.

Watching for the last to arrive, ECT and meetings over, groups decided and leaders chosen, a great catch-up was had over burgers and beer in the old but tidy hotel. It proved a great place to gather, warm and spacious, with excellent staff

and delicious food – not to mention the delight of looking out on a wonderful line up of treasured planes, tidily lined up in two straight rows, as the sun set behind the gorgeous clay cliffs.

Saturday dawned, not bright and shiny, as hoped, but damp and foggy – a bit of a trait of the Omarama basin; no one was going anywhere for a while. Gathering in the well laid out Omarama Gliding Club rooms, we took the opportunity to learn, to listen to advice old and new, to enjoy a plethora of stories, and to make plans for

the strips we would later visit.

A very interesting weather briefing was given by Dan – Dan being a Glider Man. Glider folk use different websites to gain a deeper understanding of weather patterns, thermals, places to be and times to be there – it was a great learning experience for us mere engine-powered pilots, with all who attended listening attentively and deepening their knowledge.

Gavin Wills also refreshed our minds on the ins and outs of mountain flying – it was good to revisit this discussion.



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I found it sowed seeds and planted pictures firmly in my mind, while also sharpening the senses to my surroundings. Always a good thing.

Briefed and led by Ian Sinclair, we finally got airborne around midday, the planes splitting into their allocated groups and flying off to their designated first strips. For our group, this was Glenbrook, however this proved a 'no go' due to a thick blanket of fog, so we skirted around and made a bee line for the rough (or so it felt to me!) but beautiful Glenmore strip. Situated at the base of a hill looking up into the stunning Cass Valley, with the most gorgeous sunshine and blue skies flooding our senses, it was breathtaking.

Regrouping with perfect precision, we headed across the tussocks and into the second strip of the day, Braemar, and more breathtaking moments, including Aoraki Mt Cook, with its sparse scattering of snow, looming up from the still, turquoise waters of the stunning Lake Ohau. Time for a quick chat with the mischievous pilots of the racy red Savannah ZK-RDY, which gave me a few good belly laughs, and off we went again.

Our group had broken into two sub-groups, with Mark Watson our new leader. Zipping into the lower Dingleburn, the experience was made complete by a fabulous sighting of eight fine looking deer. New Zealand's wilderness landscape is made up of so many colours and textures, it's hard not to feel overawed. The vistas give the decidedly surreal feeling of being inside a classical painting.

Past the Hunter Valley, Lake Hawea sparkling crystal blue and smooth as we hugged tight against the hill – for good reason; once past the Neck, the wind blew, seemingly from nowhere, while below, our side of the lake was choppy, cold and dark. For the four of us who braved Minaret, it was worth it. The strip is virtually manicured it is so tidy, straight and wide. We had the wee R22 helicopter with us, and it was great to watch Roger fly up and away, heading back to calmer waters, along with his light friend ZK-LAP, who was almost flying before even beginning his take-off roll!

Getting airborne off Minaret, it was now just ourselves and Mike and Kate Evans in RV6 ZK-XTC. We headed towards our



Clockwise from above: Mike and Kate Evans keeping company en route Ribbonwood; the beautiful blues and golds of a Central Otago autumn; R22 lifting off from the well manicured Minaret Station strip.



next strip, enjoying some formation flying, then they were gone, whipping off toward Longslip. We chugged along after them, checking out Ribbonwood where XTC watched us plough through the cow dung to execute a perfect landing. Seeing as we were so close, we also checked out Bendhu's ag strip. Perhaps I should have been an Ag pilot?!

On hearing we were last out, we headed back to where we'd started – Glenbrook, which proved a lovely strip – getting in one last short landing and take-off. The wee Maule had performed very well and was a pleasure to ride in.

On return to Omarama, I was in for one more treat. Mike was waiting with XTC all set to go. And go we did, out over the lake, fast and free, loops and rolls, turns and twists – it was exhilarating. If I were to ever own an aircraft, it would be one of these racing cars in the sky. Thanks Mike!

As a non-fixed wing pilot, I was impressed with the airmanship and handling

of craft throughout the day. Important to also mention that the day witnessed a tragic accident, with all the incumbent grief and sadness this entails; nothing can be worse. The only positive way to remember this is that from such experiences, we learn. All of us. Our thoughts are with the families of the men in PEE.

Through sharing these days together, we all take home a little bit more knowledge and experience to help keep us safe and that just may, one day, save our lives.

It was a special time for me, emotional and sorrowful yet also exhilarating and offering moments of joy. I am very grateful to our aviation community, especially AOPA, for organising these events and helping us all stick together in good times and bad.

Over Saturday night dinner it was great to see the comradeship and emotional support flow so freely between a wonderful group of air men and women. Thank you all. 🐦

Introducing the AOPA NZ Executive



Richard Eberlein

Richard Eberlein, AOPA NZ's incoming Vice-President, has spent the last decade happily pursuing a long-held interest in aviation.

and Philippa have thoroughly enjoyed discovering the more remote areas of New Zealand alongside other members.

Eventually tiring of hiring the C172, Richard imported a Bearhawk 4-place kit from USA and started the build in 2020. After two years the aircraft was in the air and Richard was enjoying the flexibility of a more powerful aircraft with more appropriate STOL attributes, and the space to fit two mountain-bikes and luggage in the back. They have since taken ZK-RJE all around New Zealand, from Kerikeri to Invercargill, Milford to Waipukurau, enjoying many great adventures. Whilst many trips have been self-arranged, they have found the camaraderie of AOPA NZ events hard to beat.

Richard is a keen fan of one-day fly-ins, back to basics and safari events. He and Philippa have joined other members

on as many as they can fit into their busy lives. They also appreciate the advocacy that AOPA NZ provides for its members.

Unfortunately, the Bearhawk recently had a little incident with the ground, but ZK-RJE should be back in the air shortly. Richard and Philippa have appreciated the support given by numerous members.

Richard currently holds several roles as a trustee, director, employee and organiser which have afforded him a wealth of experience in business, community, sporting and club environments. He has previously held commodore, presidential and chairman leadership roles. Richard was asked to consider standing for a position on the Executive – an honour for an immigrant, low hour, novice pilot. He isn't sure that he can offer AOPA NZ very much, but is very willing, he says, to help where he can. 🦅

A semi-retired Chartered Surveyor, Richard lives with his wife Philippa in Nelson City, having moved from England to New Zealand in 2004.

He had always wanted to fly, but while self-employed and with young children, found he had little time for hobbies. With daughters Harriet and Annabel now enjoying their own families, Richard was finally able to pursue his interest, and gained his PPL in 2014.

Initially flying the Nelson Aero Club C172 to attend AOPA NZ events, Richard

Roger van der Zanden

Roger van der Zanden started gliding in Whiteman's Valley in 1974, then power flying in 1975 while at school. He gained his PPL in 1977, CPL in 2003, holds an FAI C badge, and is an experienced hang glider pilot and microlighter.

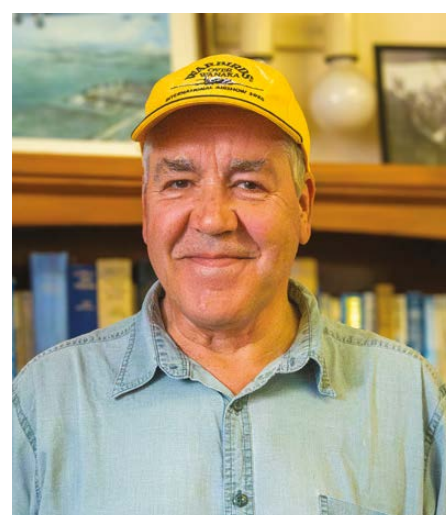
Roger saw first light at Whakatane in 1959 and has been a world traveller ever since. His 'chief partner in crime and a very neat lady', Anne-Mieke and he married in 1978, and it's been a fast ride from then through to the present, he says, with the journey encompassing children, grandchildren, jobs, businesses, midlife crises, adult student-hood, and living all over the world. Roger retired from law-yring in 2015 and reports that he then became busy!

Over the years, Roger and Anne-Mieke have owned all sorts of planes, from

Austers to Cessnas and Pipers. Their latest, a 1969 V35A Bonanza V-Tail, they imported from South Africa, and they hope they will soon be flying it around the countryside; look for it in the skies – ZK-RMZ.

Roger says he has also been lucky enough to fly the old Harvards. He is a syndicate member of 66, the Harvard with blue Navy livery based in Tauranga. This is Anne-Mieke's favourite plane, and both she and Roger consider it a real privilege to be able to fly such historic aircraft.

Roger has attended a few AOPA NZ



fly-ins, enjoying both the events themselves and flying to them from Gisborne, which sometimes can be a challenge.

Keen to serve AOPA NZ, Roger brings to the role a focus on advocacy that aims to preserve and grow access to general aviation for all. 🦅

AOPA NZ Executive



Holly Lyttle

Holly has been flying for the last eight years, achieving her PPL in 2018, but her introduction to aviation occurred at a very young age.

Holly's dad was heavily involved with gliding at Omarama, and by age two Holly had already been for a flight in a Piper Cub and a glider. After completing her PPL with South Canterbury Aero Club during her final year of high school, she moved to Christchurch to attend the International Aviation Academy of New Zealand, where she achieved her MEIR and CPL in 2020.

With COVID impacting the industry, Holly chose to move home to Timaru and completed her C-Cat part-time with South Canterbury which she achieved at the end of 2021. Now a B-Category Flight Instructor, Holly loves being able to share the joy of flying and help new pilots in their journey towards achieving their

pilot's licences and other endorsements.

Alongside flight instruction she has also gone solo in a glider through attending Youth Glide camps, holds an aerobatic rating which she is putting to use in a Yak 52 owned by a syndicate she is part of, and enjoys flying Cubs, developing her mountain and strip flying skills.

Holly was encouraged to join AOPA by her dad, who had attended several fly-ins, and has thoroughly enjoyed the community that AOPA provides. Holly is hoping to bring a fresh new perspective to the AOPA Executive and is keen to get involved with safety awareness and growing the membership, especially through encouraging the involvement of young pilots and female pilots. 🦋

Re-elected members

The incoming members of the Executive join continuing members Sue Kronfeld (President), Peter Armstrong (Northern North Island), Tim Pearce (Southern North Island), Geoff van Asch (Northern South Island), Neville Bailey (Southern South Island), plus members at large, Ross Millichamp, Reuben Hansen and Ian Sinclair.

Your Executive welcomes your engagement on issues affecting AOPA NZ and GA in New Zealand. Contact details for all members of the AOPA NZ Executive appear on the contents page of *Approach* and on the AOPA NZ website, www.aopa.nz.

Note that the rule change adopted at the March 2025 AGM means term of appointment to the Executive is now three years, with staggered terms to ensure ongoing continuity of representation and preservation of institutional knowledge. 🦋



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Just my bad luck?

By Chris Hoffman

When I purchased my Cessna 206 in 2020, it was an aircraft that was at the lower end of the value cycle and was needing further investment – that is, with an engine reaching end of time before overhaul (TBO) and an instrument panel I could upgrade to IFR.

I achieved the cockpit refurbishment (with nice leather seats) and the instrument panel rebuild (with Garmin G3X, GTN650 GPS and G500 autopilot) whilst nursing the engine 'on condition' past the TBO of 1700 hours. I managed to get passed 1900 hours before finally the engineer said no more.

I had investigated the options and selected an upgrade to a factory remanufactured IO-550N engine using a Summit Aviation STC (Supplemental Type Certificate) to mount the engine on a rebuilt six point mounting. It's the non-turbo engine that has been fitted to the Cirrus SR22 and Mooney M20. This was a jump in power for my 1975 Cessna C206F, from 285HP continuous with 300HP for five minutes maximum, to 310HP continuous. I purchased a factory remanufactured engine and had it supplied with all the mounting on kit for installation into the C206.



The installation began in March 2023 but before it could be run, the first of several issues arose. The Federal Aviation Authority (FAA) in USA issued an Airworthiness Directive demanding an inspection of the circlips holding the counter-weights to the crankshaft. An assembler at the Continental engine factory had apparently installed a few in backwards and this had led to the counterweights coming loose, with catastrophic consequences. Thus the FAA AD required cylinders be pulled to inspect the counterweights, and I had to wait several weeks until two Continental-approved engineers could visit my aeroplane to inspect the engine. They removed two cylinders to inspect the counter-weight circlips and found they were fine. No action needed, and the cylinders were reattached. First problem fixed.

The installation was completed and the first flights conducted with the installing engineer (Mike Scotter at Rangiora Engineering is a LAME and airline A320 pilot, and owns a C206 with the same installation that he did himself) and everything ran well during the break in. I then followed the various guidelines from Continental and Savvy regarding running in the engine. The engine was initially burning about one quart of oil per four hours and seemed to be improving, but then I had an intermittent problem with a slightly rough running engine. Eventually, at twenty hours, the left magneto failed completely. It was removed and sent away to an approved service company to be repaired under warranty. On inspection a loose terminal was identified within the magneto, with burning marks indicating it had been making contact intermittently, hence the intermittent roughness. This was not a new magneto, rather a factory remanufactured one, so this was a manufacturing error. The terminal fastenings were secured and the magneto reinstalled and I carried on flying the plane.

But the oil burn never further improved. It remained at one quart per four hours no matter how I flew the plane. I sent all the engine data from the G3X engine monitor to Savvy. Nothing looked out of place.

After listening to Mike Busch via his podcasts on the Savvy Aviation website (www.savvyaviation.com) and reading his various articles on running in an engine, I tried as he suggested running it at low level wide open throttle; still no change.

I continued to use 100 straight oil, changed it every 25 hours, and still no improvement. I asked the engineer who installed the engine to boroscope it at 75 hours. He had an older scope, but we got some reasonable photos which I uploaded to the Savvy website. As part of my annual subscription to the site,

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they looked at the photos and the uploaded engine data and said it looked okay and to keep flying the plane. I installed an oil/air separator on the breather as the oil seemed to be coming out there. No improvement.

The concern was that the cylinders might be glazed and I should be preparing for the inevitable engine re-honing. This glazing of the cylinder walls occurs if the rings don't bed in properly during the running in period. The first twenty hours are the important ones – right when I was having the magneto problems.

The engineer at my home field suggested I just wait, so I flew the plane like normal – LOP (lean of peak), as per the house of Mike Busch and Savvy. My GAMI spread was an acceptable 0.6 Gal/hr, with no problems with the lean mag check. Very smooth in flight but still burning a quart every four hours, no matter if I started with seven quarts or let it run down to five (engine has a smaller than usual sump that takes eight quarts rather than the twelve of my original engine).

Then I decided to buy a boroscope and I printed out the Savvy Guidelines and convinced my own engineer to do a full inspection. He had not completed a full boroscopic examination like this so it took us 45 minutes to get the first cylinder photographed – all eleven views. By the sixth we had it down to less than five minutes. All photos uploaded and the question asked of Savvy again: are these cylinders glazed? Answer, no!

So this begs the question, why am I burning a quart of oil every hour in a 100hr engine?

Next suggestion from Savvy was 'Do a Ring Flush' and they sent me the protocol.

Neither of my two engineers had ever done one. The installing engineer was sceptical – he had heard that you do this on old tired engines. He was not keen.

My local engineer was open to it so we set out together to do the ring flush at the 125 hour mark. The process involved draining all the oil, leaving the sump open to drain the flush. The solution is a mix of one gallon of Varsol (mineral spirits), one gallon Xylene (dimethylbenzene) and two quarts Aeroshell W100. The solvents were purchased from the local paint merchant. The top spark plugs were then removed from all six cylinders and the first cylinder was inspected to get the piston coming up into compression cycle. This closes both valves. A pint of the flush is then poured into the cylinder and the spark plug replaced. The propeller is then rotated against the hydraulic lock that has been



created. It is important not to move the piston beyond about twenty degrees past Top Dead Centre or the exhaust valve opens and the fluid is lost into the exhaust. Holding the pressure for a minute or two, we started to hear the mixture squirting past the rings into the crankcase and then out the drain.

This first cylinder, number 1, was perfect and the sound of the mixture squirting in the crankcase was easily heard. Number 3 took about half the pint of mix to run freely. Then we got to cylinder 5 – it was jammed up and took a while of constant pressure to get the first pint through. As per the instructions we loaded a second, then a third. Eventually it took 5 pints of the mix to flush the rings free in cylinder 5. On the right side, cylinder 2 was slow to start flushing but freed up, cylinders 4 and 6 were okay.

After the wash, eight quarts of 100 straight oil was added and it dipped at seven quarts (one in the filter). I went back to flying and after ten hours flying it was still sitting just on seven quarts. The oil burn has slowed to a more normal quart every fifteen or so hours.

An amazing change that neither engineer can believe or explain. Presumably the oil ring had become gummed up and this increased the pressure in the sump and it was blowing the oil out. It still begs the question, why did this happen to cylinder 5 and to a lesser degree cylinders 2 and 3, and was it triggered by the intermittently failing magneto in the first twenty hours?

If so would this be a warranty claim? I have put this question back to Mike Busch and the Savvy team, but am yet to get an answer. I'll keep you posted. 🐦

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Highlands Park ODF

By Reuben Hansen



As a North Island AOPA NZ member, whenever possible I've tried to attend the full weekend fly-ins, however, I never imagined I would make it to a One Day Fly-In this far from home – until the Highlands ODF was advertised. Being both a keen aviator and motorsport fan, this fly-in offered the perfect blend of my passions.

Flights were promptly booked from Hawke's Bay to Dunedin, rides were arranged, and a Club 172 in Balclutha organised for the trip. Anticipating potentially inclement South Otago weather, we decided to head up to Wanaka on Saturday night to keenly await the fly-in on Sunday.

Upon arriving at Wanaka Airport, Paige and I were greeted by a chipper Murray Paterson, who kindly assisted us with unpacking, picketing the aircraft for the night, and driving us to our accommodation. This is one of the often-overlooked membership benefits of AOPA: you get to make friends with people in all corners of the country who are willing to support visitors to their neck of the woods. We hope to provide the same in ours.

Sunday arrived, and we were at Wanaka Airport at sparrow's fart to untie the dew-covered Cessna 172 and get going. A gaggle of Wanaka-based AOPA NZ members were with us as we departed Wanaka for the quick fifteen minute flight to Cromwell Racecourse Aerodrome. Cromwell Racecourse was an airfield I had not previously flown to; it was great to visit what is clearly becoming a GA hub for Central Otago.

Warm AOPA hospitality was again on display, with familiar faces Kevin Anderson and Murray Paterson marshalling us in. We then watched as thirty plus arrivals followed, in anticipation of a detailed briefing delivered by Kynan Yu and Murray Paterson. With the in-person briefing and the excellent pre-circulated material regarding the landing area at the racetrack, arrival procedures, and safety topics covered, we felt at ease with what would have otherwise been quite the arduous task of getting thirty aeroplanes from an airfield to a racetrack only a couple of kilometres away!

Participants proceeded to start their engines in order of their proximity to the runway, a naturally coordinated sequence. When we were next up, we were called to the runway, which felt more like the starting grid for a race event. We were then assisted in our decision-making regarding spacing with the preceding aircraft, thanks to Murray's stopwatch timing departure gaps.

Between taking off at Cromwell Racecourse and landing at Highlands Motorsport Park must have been only about three

minutes or so – a take-off, level off into a low-level downwind, setting up for an approach, and landing on a racetrack straight. That had to be one of the best three minutes of my flying career to date. Thankfully, a smooth touchdown in the middle of the racetrack followed. I say thankfully, as I'm sure my PPL-qualified front-seat passenger, Paige, had her scorecards ready if it was anything but.

One of the cool parts about landing on a racetrack that I had not foreseen is that, upon completion of the landing roll, you get to taxi around the race track to parking, as if you are a race car – albeit minus the speed and roaring V8 engine noises. The safe taxi speed of the 172 and the Lycoming engine purr would have to do.

Following parking the aircraft and shutting down, we were greeted by some friendly Highlands Motorsport Park staff who drove us from the track up to Highlands Café. As part of registering for the AOPA NZ Fly-In, we were able to put our names down for a buffet breakfast, which was fantastic. While eating breakfast, we were surrounded by fellow aviators in a café area nestled in the museum, which was well worth visiting. Highlights for me included seeing Michael Schumacher's Benetton Formula 1 car and Shane van Gisbergen's Bathurst-winning Gen 3 Supercar, as well as the 'Loos with a View' themed toilets overlooking the motorsport park.

When it was time to leave so the racetrack could be reopened for its day of racing activities, we were again delivered another excellent safety briefing and distributed into Highlands vehicles to be taken down to the track. A steady flow of departures followed as AOPA NZ members split off to their respective homes or other destinations.

What a fantastic experience Highlands Motorsport Park gave us. As I wandered around the park, I frequently saw their promotional motto 'Experience the Exceptional'. I think this not only sums up the visit for AOPA NZ members but also the facility itself – well worth a visit by road if you couldn't make it to this fly-in. Special thanks to Kynan Yu and everyone at Highlands for making this possible. 🐾

District Plans: part 6

By John Evans

We have been running a series on District Plans, looking into a variety of rules in new generation District Plans concerning aircraft activity in the General Rural Zone. Many of these new rules contain unreasonable setbacks and monthly movement limits.

Through the series, we have looked more closely at a variety of rules within plans and noise standards which can apply. We have provided our members with information on how the Resource Management Act provides protections for existing activities, either through an Existing Use Certificate or a Certificate of Compliance. We looked closely at the noise standards which regulate noise activities.

This part, the final in the Timaru District Council case, talks about the relief.

A quick recap. In December 2022, the Cessna 180/185 Group, AOPA NZ, SAA and Recreational Backcountry Pilots Association jointly submitted against Timaru District Council's Proposed Plan, opposing a 500m setback and ten movement monthly limitation. In July 2024 we attended a Hearing presented by AOPA NZ members and our lawyers from Wynn Williams.

Following the Hearing, in July 2024, we, alongside our lawyers, have been working with the council to develop suitable relief. In RMA speak, relief is another word for something submitters are happy with. The Reporting Officer (on behalf of the Council) initially proposed amendments based on the standard noise levels required to be met by other activities in the General Rural Zone. The noise metrics used (as described in previous parts of this series) are generally extremely unforgiving for aircraft activity, given the extremely short duration of noise emission

from aircraft, and the fifteen minute recording period the standard applies, within the LAeq metric. This approach would be overly restrictive, perhaps more so than that notified in the plan.

Our lawyers responded with a

Memorandum of Counsel describing why this was not suitable relief, utilising some of our own acoustic advice.

Given the Council's limited knowledge of acoustics and the standards they apply to noise generating activities, they

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enlisted their own acoustic consultant to consider our memorandum. A letter from the Council's counsel was received in October 2024, and it considered the concerns raised by us as submitters and the need to provide a degree of regulation in order for the Council to adequately control the activity. We were asked to consider these recommendations provided by the acoustic consultant. Largely, and fortunately, the acoustic consultant suggested some very reasonable and permissive controls.

We responded with minor amendments, within another Memorandum of Counsel to the Council's counsel. The Hearing Panel directed the Council, via a Minute, to respond to submitters with a proposal, to consider as relief.

Come March 2024, we received the proposal. This was a weighty response. A five page Memorandum of Counsel, from Council's counsel, a twelve page

Statement of Evidence from the Council's Reporting Officer, a 22 page Statement of Evidence from the Acoustic Consultant to consider the amendments we had suggested to the initial report from October 2024, and a Minute from the Hearing Panel directed to us, to consider all of this and whether or not we agree to it as relief.

So considering all of that, we agreed with it and filed that as a Memorandum of Counsel to the Hearing Panel. While we do have to wait until sometime in 2026 to read the decision's version of the plan, we are confident they will accept our relief, which is backed by the Council and its consultants.

What have we ended up with?

- If you are within 500m of a noise sensitive site (a neighbouring house), no more than twenty take-offs and twenty landings per month;
- If you are within 500m of a noise sensitive site, the activity is permitted

as a "fly-in" provided no more than twelve fly-ins occur within a year;

- If you are between 500m and 1000m of a noise sensitive site, no movement limits during the day but night time noise controls exist;
- If you are greater than 1000m from a noise sensitive site no movement limits apply, day or night.

As a reminder, the notified version of the district plan set a limit of ten take offs or landings per month and a minimum 500m setback from a neighbouring house.

So what we have now is a rule set that permits aircraft activity, which would have triggered a resource consent when less than 500m from a neighbouring house, and very minimal restrictions when setback greater than 500m.

Of course all of this is extremely time consuming and expensive, and beyond reasonable doubt, the Council would have spent more money on this than us, since they notified a plan unfit for our community.

Some very generous AOPA NZ members alongside AOPA NZ itself funded this, and our extremely competent legal firm has led to us being confident of a favourable outcome.

Through this process, we have a rule set developed by Council, their consultants and supported by us. This should provide for a valuable case and background as we submit on other plans.

All of this aside, we still need to consider the effect of our activity on others, so that the effects a council need to consider are minimal. This means flying neighbourly, through consideration of operating hours, flight paths, propeller/power settings and good neighbourly relations. 🐦



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Pulling the pin

By Jay McIntyre



Following up on my paperwork comments in the last edition of *Approach*, and before getting onto the airshow that wasn't, I'd like to make a comment on the use of electronic maintenance records.

Computers are a great way to make record keeping and scheduling easier, but I have had problems where an aircraft is maintained by Company A who uses maintenance planning software programme A. All good until the aircraft is transferred to Company B who uses programme B, or no programme at all!

Like VHS and Beta, programme A won't talk to B, and a lot of time is wasted transferring all the data between programmes. Even worse, when the logbooks are transferred from Company A to B, sections of the logbooks such as Repetitive AD's, Out of Phase Maintenance and others are simply left blank with a statement such as 'Refer to Company A's electronic maintenance planning system'.

Frustrating, as the new maintainer must then try to elicit the information from the previous maintainer. This should be easy but, invariably, busy maintenance controllers don't get the required information off in a timely manner. It is my view that it should be a requirement that, prior to transfer, the logbooks be updated to a state where anyone can ascertain the status of the aeroplane without access to a computer. This seems obvious but sadly it doesn't seem to happen, particularly with the larger 'professional' companies.

Tenth hour cancellation

Easter has come and gone. Here at Omaka we are still all a bit flat after having to pull the pin on Classic Fighters at the tenth hour. It was the right decision for a great number of reasons, but at times over the Easter weekend it all felt a bit hollow as the forecast winds never eventuated and much of the time the weather made for beautiful flying conditions.

On the other hand, it has given us a bit of breathing room to finish off projects that we'd hoped would fly in the show but which, as with all aircraft restorations, didn't quite go to plan!

One of these was the rebuild of Yak-3M ZK-VVS 'Full Noise'. Final reassembly began earlier in the year, albeit somewhat later than we had hoped. This meant that it was always going to be a close run thing in regards to whether or not she would participate in the show. We'd made very good progress by late March but determining the order of the last few remaining tasks always ends up in a few lost days waiting for this and that.

At the 1992 'Warbirds over Wanaka' I remember seeing the Alpine Fighter Collection's newly restored P-40 having her first test flight early on the Friday morning and then being flown in a very spirited display later that day... Well, thirty odd years later, that's not going to happen! Things like LLDA's, pilot currency, display practice and the owner's work roster were starting to look like roadblocks to airshow participation, but if we could get a successful couple of flights in, we might just be okay.

We were eventually ready to fly on Wednesday 9th April, just ten days before the show. All the 'i's were dotted and 't's crossed. It ended up being quite a full-on day as Frank Parker had come down to exercise the FW190 prior to the show. Frank turned up early in the morning and the plan was for him to carry out two OCA checks on the pilots flying the Yak so that they could resume Pt115 rides once the test flying and engine run in was completed. This was duly done then Frank took the 190 for a lap round the block.

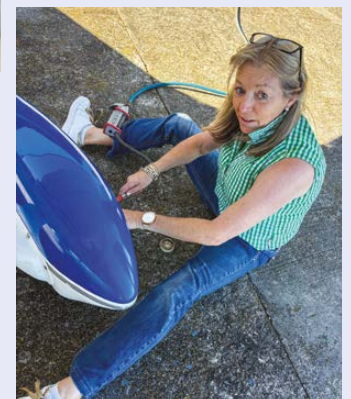
Graeme hoped to fly the Yak after he landed (in order to avoid too much excitement in the air at one time) but was thwarted when he found that the pilot's seat had been installed in the wrong position for his delicate derriere. Not the easiest thing to change but after some upside-down work in the cockpit he was ready to go. About this time Frank went up for a second round of excitement in the 190 and I was heard to remark that 'it was about damn time someone else got a LAME round here'!

Graeme's flight was aborted after about ten minutes when he found he was unable to keep the coolant temperature under control. While not rocketing away, it was just steadily rising. Very annoying, but otherwise the short flight revealed no real handling issues or other areas of concern. The engine was very strong and sounded great. Oil pressure was right where it should be, something we had struggled with on the last engine.

Since then we have been working through what might be causing the issue. We have so far had about half a dozen 'Eureka' moments but none of them have elicited a positive result. As I write this, we are about to wrap up maintenance on the latest theory and test fly tomorrow. If I think it suitable, I might even tell you what we found next time! 🐦



A great turnout of AOPA NZ life members (top row), and fantastic organisation (thanks Bev and Tim, above), saw the 2025 AOPA NZ AGM and safari well attended and a rip-roaring success. Well done all involved!





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