

# Approach

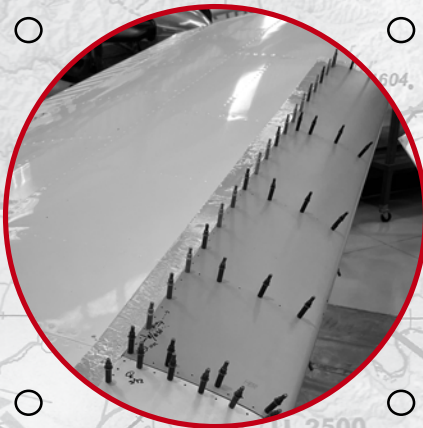
AIRCRAFT OWNERS AND PILOTS ASSOCIATION OF NEW ZEALAND  
SPRING 2026

*Reading the wind  
Clouded judgement  
Microlights on tour  
Under the seat*

AOPA NZ FLY-INS • INDUSTRY NEWS AND VIEWS • GA ADVENTURES AND MORE



**MAINTENANCE**



**REPAIR & REBUILD**



**ENGINES**



**AVIONICS**



**24/7 BREAKDOWN**



**IMPORT / EXPORT**



**TURBINES & JETS**



**GENERAL AVIATION**



**RECREATIONAL**



Distributors for Garmin, Aspen Avionics, L3 Lynx, Goodrich, Appareo, Avidyne, Electronics International, uAvionix, & more.

Authorised Service Centre for Cirrus and Pilatus. **Contact our friendly team for all your aviation needs.**

Feilding Aerodrome | 06 212 0920 | [mat@avcraft.co.nz](mailto:mat@avcraft.co.nz) | [facebook.com/avcraftengineering](https://facebook.com/avcraftengineering) | [avcraft.co.nz](https://avcraft.co.nz)

**President: Richard Eberlein**

Mb: 0211 655 300

Email: [president@aopa.nz](mailto:president@aopa.nz)

**Administration: Nikki McKay**

Mb: 022 634 1739

Email: [member.service@aopa.nz](mailto:member.service@aopa.nz)

**Roger van der Zanden (Tolaga Bay)**

**Advocacy portfolio**

Mb: 022 453 1880

Email: [roger.van.der.zanden@aopa.nz](mailto:roger.van.der.zanden@aopa.nz)

**Tim Pearce (Marton)**

**Pilot Health & Wellbeing portfolio**

Mb: 027 440 7091

Email: [tim.pearce@aopa.nz](mailto:tim.pearce@aopa.nz)

**Darren Hooks (Wellington)**

Mb: 021 180 1114

Email: [darren.hooks@aopa.nz](mailto:darren.hooks@aopa.nz)

**Holly Lyttle (Blenheim)**

Mb: 027 821 1356

Email: [holly.lyttle@aopa.nz](mailto:holly.lyttle@aopa.nz)

**Neville Bailey (Christchurch)**

**Publicity & Comms portfolio**

Mb: 029 129 6320

Email: [neville.bailey@aopa.nz](mailto:neville.bailey@aopa.nz)

**Matt Vaughan (Christchurch)**

**Fly-ins & Social portfolio**

Mb: 021 899 283

Email: [matt.vaughan@aopa.nz](mailto:matt.vaughan@aopa.nz)

**Reuben Hansen (Christchurch)**

**Safety Advisory portfolio**

Mb: 027 410 0457

Email: [reuben.hansen@aopa.nz](mailto:reuben.hansen@aopa.nz)

**Lewis Cooper (Ashburton)**

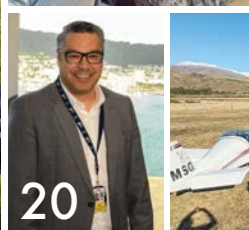
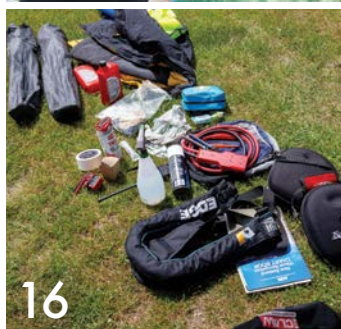
Mb: 021 181 7605

Email: [lewis.cooper@aopa.nz](mailto:lewis.cooper@aopa.nz)

**Ian Sinclair (Geraldine)**

Mb: 027 432 4150

Email: [ian.sinclair@aopa.nz](mailto:ian.sinclair@aopa.nz)



## Contents

**Blue Light Kāpiti** Opportunities for youngsters shared by oldsters [4]

**Clouds versus clouded judgement** Roger Simpson's take [5]

**Back to the Solomons** David Berger on a French colonial adventure [7]

**Making the rounds** Murray Smith tours down south [10]

**Microlights on Tour** Wayne Godfrey and friends circle north [12]

**The wind you can't see** Reuben Hansen on local wind effects [14]

**What's under your back seat?** Murray Paterson gathers evidence [16]

**ThinkAviation update** From Trust Chair, Mandy Deans [19]

**Kane Patena** Ross Millichamp introduces the Director of CAA NZ [20]

**Anama** Lewis Cooper shares a highlight of Mid Canterbury [22]

**The fullest of lives** A tribute to Merv Halliday [24]

## Regular Columns

**President's Comment** Richard Eberlein meets and greets [2]

**AOPA NZ News** Flight Planning, insurance and awards [3]

**From the Editor** Anna Mackenzie takes in the peaks [4]

## Coming up

- **September:**  
[AOPA NZ Darfield fly-in](#)
- **December:**  
[Meet & Greet Wānaka](#)
- **January 2027:**  
[Back to Basics](#)
- **March 2027:**  
[AOPA NZ AGM, Whakatāne](#)

For details check out  
[www.aopa.nz](http://www.aopa.nz)

Cover photo: Tracking into Fiordland...  
for longer than expected! (see page 5)  
Photo credit: Roger Simpson

AOPA NZ APPROACH magazine is published by AOPA NZ Incorporated  
Articles on relevant topics are welcomed. The editor reserves the right to edit submissions for clarity and/or length. Submission does not guarantee publication. Editorial submissions should be sent directly to the editor at [anna.mackenzie@aopa.nz](mailto:anna.mackenzie@aopa.nz)

ISSN 2422-8230 (print) / ISSN 2538-1083 (online)

Editor: Anna Mackenzie ph 027 3345466; [anna.mackenzie@aopa.nz](mailto:anna.mackenzie@aopa.nz)

Advertising enquiries: Nikki McKay ph 022 634 1739 / [member.service@aopa.nz](mailto:member.service@aopa.nz)

Editorial support: Ross Millichamp ph 027 9600 724 / [rrhmillichamp@gmail.com](mailto:rrhmillichamp@gmail.com)

Committee contact: Neville Bailey ph 029 129 6320 / [neville.bailey@aopa.nz](mailto:neville.bailey@aopa.nz)

Postal address: AOPA NZ Inc, Box 114, Geraldine 7956

**Copyright:** Material in this magazine is copyrighted to AOPA NZ Inc. Articles may be reproduced in part or full provided permission is requested and a credit given to AOPA NZ Approach Magazine.

**Disclaimer:** The views expressed or implied in this magazine are not necessarily those of the Aircraft Owners' and Pilots' Association of New Zealand Inc, or of its Committee.

**Deadline** for ads, articles and photos for the next (Summer) issue: **20 October 2026.**



## President's Comment

It's an unfortunate reality that the weather dictates our fly-ins. The cancellation of the Haast dates was a real let down. The Fly-in and Social sub-committee thought long and hard before taking any action but recognise that having fifty-plus aircraft on

the West Coast in bad weather wouldn't be fun for anybody. The group did their best to find that good weather window, but given four forecasts each giving different patterns, it was difficult to know how things would pan out.

On the other hand, the Te Kowhai fly-in Meet and Greet was a great success. Low cloud and fog prevented a few early arrivals, but by mid-morning aircraft were able to get in and enjoy a splendid morning tea with scones, jam and fresh cream. Quite a treat. As the morning went on numbers swelled to around fifty and tours of the airpark got underway. There are plans for around 100 dwellings, with a mix of hangar houses and two-storey houses, all benefitting from the on-site café, bar, fuel, maintenance, instruction and aviation community. They even have their own brewery!

As the cloud cleared, a few aircraft headed over to Raglan for lunch. A tricky approach beneath low cloud, but only a short walk into town to join up with the early arrivals and enjoy lunch.

An even trickier return flight to Te Kowhai for a quick nap before a hearty dinner in the on-site bar. It was very enjoyable to meet up with the regulars and to see a lot of new faces. The Meet and Greet AOPA NZ events are increasing in popularity. Thank you to the team at Te Kowhai. They did us proud.

By the time we came to fly out on the Sunday, a storm was raging in the Cook Strait, with 70kt winds at ground level. Wellington Airport was closed. Paraparaumu had 30kt crosswinds, yet my destination of Nelson was enjoying calm sunny days. Philippa and I therefore stayed on in Hamilton using a car borrowed from the airpark to see everything that there was to see around the city. On the Wednesday we were able to head south to Feilding. Another car borrowed from our advertiser Avcraft and a hangar loaned to us by Bruce Gordon kept us in the Feilding/Palmerston North area through until the following Sunday, when at last the winds started to drop. We still had a turbulent trip back across the ditch but found still, calm, sunny conditions from Picton onwards.

It highlighted just how fantastic it is to be part of the AOPA NZ community; stranded in locations around the country, but looked after by the kindness of fellow aviators. It is an unseen benefit of being a member of AOPA NZ. Thank you.

Whilst the Haast fly-in was called off, two ODFs (One Day Fly-ins) in Kurow and Tikokino replaced it on the Sunday when the weather improved a little. Thank you to the strip owners Gary Hawkins and James Butler for hosting between twenty and thirty aircraft at each. The local teams put the arrangements together and all enjoyed the days. Tikokino was attended by two current committee members, several past members, two past presidents, our magazine editor and many more new and long-term members of AOPA NZ, while down south a similarly widespread and boisterous turnout made for a reportedly excellent day. Unfortunately, both were a little far for a day return trip for me, but I hope to arrange something closer to home soon.

A shout out must go to all the members involved in arranging fly-ins, with hours of on-line meetings, phone calls to strip owners, motel arrangements and so on. And sometimes only to be foiled by the weather. However, even with the disappointment around Haast, it was great to see the AOPA NZ members travelling far and wide to ODFs, and to be at the receiving end of their kindness. It is heartening to be part of this real community.

In committee news since the last magazine, Roger van der Zanden accepted the position of Secretary responsible for handling the Incorporated Societies register, constitution and formal notifications. He retains his advocacy portfolio, with current efforts focused on assisting Vance Boyd in negotiations with Queenstown Lakes District Council over plan changes.

We have additionally appointed chartered accountant Regan Brown of Te Kowhai as our treasurer, replacing Geoff van Asch, for whose many years of work we are most grateful. I'm sure I speak on behalf of you all in welcoming Regan to our team.

Richard Eberlein, President



### THE AUTHORISED JABIRU & ROTAX REPAIR FACILITY BUILT ON REFERRALS FROM SATISFIED CUSTOMERS



We service/rebuild any sport or experimental engines and, avoid delays getting aircraft back in the air, we now offer the opportunity to hire Rotax 912, 100hp, fixed and variable pitch gearboxes while we repair yours.



Got an engine with part tightness in rotation?  
Crankshaft need trueing? We can help!

**For help with any questions and reliable  
accurate advice contact Terry 027 437 0399  
or [terry@mmsnz.co.nz](mailto:terry@mmsnz.co.nz)**

**MOBILE MECHANICAL SERVICES LTD**

3/17 Wise Street, Addington, Christchurch

[www.mmsnz.co.nz](http://www.mmsnz.co.nz)

## AOPA NZ launches free Flight Planning resource

Good flight planning starts with having the right information at your fingertips. To make that easier, AOPA NZ has launched a new Flight Planning page that brings together many of the online resources New Zealand pilots use before every flight.

Available free to all, the AOPA NZ website Flight Planning page provides quick access to a wide range of planning tools, including MetVUW weather, webcams, NOTAMs and aeronautical information, flight plan filing, flight following and other useful aviation resources. Instead of searching across multiple websites, pilots

can now access many of the tools they need from one convenient location, making pre-flight planning quicker, simpler and more efficient.

The Flight Planning page will continue to evolve as new resources become available. If there's a useful aviation website or tool you'd like to see included, we'd love to hear from you. Send your suggestions to [member.service@aopa.nz](mailto:member.service@aopa.nz).

The resource has been developed as part of AOPA NZ's ongoing commitment to supporting New Zealand's general aviation community by providing practical



tools that benefit all pilots, whether or not they're AOPA NZ members. Take a look, bookmark the page for future flights, and feel free to share it with your flying friends.

Visit: [aopa.nz/flight-planning](http://aopa.nz/flight-planning).

## Service medal for Club stalwart

For 35 years, the FAI Air Sport Medal has been awarded by Flying NZ for outstanding services in connection with air sport activities. This year saw it awarded to AOPA NZ member Beverley Pranker, a stalwart of Hawera Aero Club (HAC).

After joining HAC in 2018, Beverley quickly became a driving force, learning to fly at the age of 60 and stepping into the role of Club Captain in 2019, a position she continues to hold with unwavering dedication. Beverley competes at regional and national competitions, organises HAC competition training days, co-ordinates teams, and mentors competitors. She established HAC's Young Eagles programme and continues to inspire youth involvement through regular gatherings, flight opportunities and hands-on support. Affectionately known as 'camp mother' of HAC, she runs fly-ins, supports club events, maintains the club-rooms and quietly manages countless behind-the-scenes tasks.



Medal winner Beverley Pranker (third from left) with Hawera Aero Club members Nathan Bradly, daughter Kara Pranker and Hayden Cook

An active member of the New Zealand Airwomen's Association, and supporter of local AOPA NZ events, -the medal acknowledges her outstanding contribution across every level of aviation.

## Reward excellence

Don't leave your nominations for the 2026-27 AOPA NZ Annual Awards until the last minute! Nomination forms are available on the website year-round. Fill one out while a possible recipient is fresh in your mind!

Go to the [website](#) and in the 'News & Events' drop-down menu, select 'AOPA NZ News' then click on 'AOPA NZ Annual Awards' for the form.

Awards are announced at the AOPA NZ AGM dinner. Categories include Best Aviation Watering Hole, Best Maintenance Shop, Most Helpful Control Tower, GA Champion and Above and Beyond.

## Insurance for older pilots

It appears that some insurance underwriters are tightening medical requirements for pilots aged 75 plus, especially those flying on an NZTA DL9 medical certificate.

One member reports being advised that his insurer would no longer provide cover for pilots aged 75 and over unless they hold a CAA Class 1 (ie, commercial) or Class 2 (private pilot) medical certificate. After further discussion and an individual risk assessment, the underwriter agreed to continue his cover, however, it has raised concerns for him regarding future coverage availability. Another member has noted a clause to similar effect being added to his most recent policy.

There does not seem to be consistency around this, as others report having no difficulty with cover for older pilots who meet all current licencing requirements, which suggests the variation may lie between insurance companies.

If you have experience pertinent to this issue, please get in contact with Tim Pearce, who holds the AOPA NZ Pilot Health and Wellbeing portfolio, via email [tim.pearce@aopa.nz](mailto:tim.pearce@aopa.nz)

Sharing experiences helps all of us stay informed. If you are nearing or over 75, it may also be prudent to talk to your broker before your policy renews, and to check your policy carefully.



## From the Editor

Blue skies, frosty mornings, mild, still days. That's autumn in Hawke's Bay (sometimes!). And what better to do with such weather than gather a few friends and... you guessed it! In mid July we set off, tracking direct for Taupo, an easy 35 minutes,

passing overhead Ripia airstrip and noting several strips in the Mohaka valley as we passed the northern Kaweka Range.

With our two Cessna 182s, two Minicabs and a Chipmunk safely on the ground, we strolled from Taupo Airport to a nearby shopping centre offering several lunch venues. A table for twelve was secured and happy aviator babble ensued.

Across the lake, the majestic loveliness of the peaks of the Central Plateau shone white under an azure sky. A detour en route home was in order. East along the lake shore tracking Tarawera, as we approached the snowy trio we had a clear view of Mount Edgecomb to the northeast and Mount Taranaki to the far west. With the lovely cone of Ngauruhoe on our right, Ruapehu's rather thinly dusted ski fields and Tongariro's Emerald Lakes slid beneath our wheels.

Tracking over the Kaimanawa Range to the north of the military restricted area, we headed home across Ngamatea,



picking up the Ngaruroro River which led back to the Heretaunga Plains and home. It was a reminder of the best that aviation in New Zealand has to offer, and how privileged we are to enjoy it.

This issue features adventures enjoyed, lessons learned, and opportunities seized, alongside some useful advice that may well prove useful when you least expect it. Thanks to all our contributors and to all who provide encouragement and support. It's great to know the magazine is enjoyed by so many. Special thanks to Aaron Murphy, whose photos we often enjoy, alongside all our writers, regular and new. To paraphrase Murray Smith in his article in this issue, your stories are the lifeblood of the magazine. Keep them coming!

Anna Mackenzie, [anna.mackenzie@aopa.nz](mailto:anna.mackenzie@aopa.nz) 🐣

## Blue Light Kāpiti

**Glorious autumnal weather helped make a memorable day for thirty Horowhenua primary school students given the opportunity to take to the skies from Paraparaumu Airfield in late May.**

Organised by Levin Police/ Horowhenua Blue Light in partnership with AOPA NZ and Kāpiti Aero Club, primary schools across the Horowhenua district were invited to nominate students who consistently demonstrate positive behaviour, work hard, help others, and make valuable contributions to their school communities. Selected students enjoyed sightseeing flights along the Kāpiti Coast, with breathtaking views as the aircraft headed north before turning inland along the Ōtaki River, then returning south along the coastline. Adding to the excitement, one student was randomly selected from a draw to enjoy an extended 30-minute helicopter flight, making an already special day unforgettable.

AOPA NZ's Peter Merwood managed a team of AOPA NZ/ Kapiti Aero Club volunteer pilots and ground crew, joined by Blue Light volunteers and sponsors Green By Nature and Levin New World who provided a fantastic BBQ.

Senior Constable – Youth Aid Services, Andrew Collis was very positive. "This was a fantastic day. We received overwhelming positive feedback from the students and their families."



*With thanks to Andrew Collis and Chris Hoffman.*

Blue Light is a registered charity established by New Zealand Police to provide young people with positive experiences, personal development opportunities, and activities that encourage growth, confidence and community engagement. The organisation also aims to strengthen relationships between police, young people, their families, and the wider community. There are currently seventy Blue Light branches throughout New Zealand. The Blue Light 'Take a kid flying' programme has been running for fifteen years.

Horowhenua Blue Light extends its sincere thanks to all who contributed to the success of the event, which provided not only an exciting aviation experience but also a well-deserved reward for young people who are making a positive difference in their schools and communities. 🐣



# Clouds versus clouded judgement

By Roger Simpson

This article is about a flight undertaken some months back that did not quite go to plan, revealing the pressures and pitfalls of 'Get-home-itis'.

Day 1: We lifted early one morning in my Robinson R22, heading from Central Otago to Southland to visit a job site and undertake some surveying. On board was my engineer, Paul, who is also a good mate and has spent a good couple hundred hours in the cockpit with me. The day was very clear, and I recall only one isobar around the whole lower South Island. The temptation of perfect weather was too great, and we decided a decent loop around some fiords was a worthy deviation before work.

With a refuel in Manapouri, we tracked up lake Te Anau, across Henry Pass and wove our way into the top end of Nancy Sound. The weather was calm, with some

scattered clouds around the tops. Having flown many times around Fiordland and to its further edges, it's always been a place where I'm never completely comfortable due to its changeable weather, plus the fact you always seem to be flying away from fuel.

Decision was made to fly out to the coast, a short hop south and back inland up Thompson and Doubtful Sounds, across Wilmot Pass and back to Manapouri. On reaching the coast, the cloud base lowered considerably. Still with long-range horizontal visibility and in no danger of entering IMC, we proceeded with the intended track on the assumption that when we headed back inland to

Wilmot Pass we would re-enter the same fine inland weather we had just left. That was the moment of error.

Flying up Doubtful Sound, still with long-range horizontal visibility, we reached Wilmot Pass with the cloud base locked tight around 1000ft lower than the pass. I acknowledge one amazing benefit of rotary wing over fixed is the ability to land on a rough riverbed, shut down and consider options without distraction. With roughly 1.5 hours of fuel on board and looking back at the rapidly lowering cloud on our just flown track, the decision was made to fly the thirty seconds back to Deep Cove Village and contemplate the situation.



stevebunting@avionicsnz.co.nz

## SAB Avionics Ltd

Wanaka's independent Avionics provider

Dynon Avionics Dealer



Call for competitive pricing

In addition to:

Part 43 Checks | ADS-B  
Avionics Installations  
Avionics IA on Staff  
Avionics System Troubleshooting  
Mobile Service

(+64) 021 189 2438

11 Lloyd Dunn Ave, Wanaka Airport, 9382

Discussion with boaties taught us the phrase 'don't worry, it'll be clear in an hour'. Comfortable with that information, we waited. Five-thirty pm came, the day was done, we were staying. With only the clothes on our backs we were very generously hosted with food, beer and the spare room of locals Billy and Vilma.

Day 2: "Don't worry, it'll be clear in an hour." We waited then did some more waiting and began to feel the rising frustration of being grounded. Feedback from boats near the coast was that the cloud/fog was down to sea level and Wilmot Pass still clogged. This was where we had to start making clear decisions. First, it was decided that any attempt to leave the safe spot we had at Deep Cove would be done with nothing short of a 100% chance of success. This was to combat the rapidly rising 'Get-home-it is'. Once again 17:30 came, the day was done, we were staying again. Billy and Vilma remained fantastic hosts, providing daytime fishing, evening hunting with Billy, fantastic meals and plenty of beer. I'm not going to lie, it could have been worse!

Day 3: Pouring rain, visibility right down, but we had the latest update from some boaties: 'Don't worry, it'll be clear in an hour'. We did have options. We could get a ride over the pass and by road and boat out, however the logistics of coming



back some other time to retrieve the machine were off-putting. Let alone that we had to spend the first two hours each morning fighting the kea, who were intent on tearing into the aircraft. Get-home-itis was really knocking now, the brain saying 'plenty of fuel, maybe low-level peak out to the coast and spot a hole?'. But this could easily result in spending a night in the bush with low fuel. The versatility of the helicopter can tempt you to take chances. It took great restraint to stick to plan A, which was no attempt with nothing short of a 100% chance of success.

And so 17:30 came, the day was done, we were staying, Billy and Vilma showing the magic of Kiwi hospitality once more.

Day 4: It was getting beyond a laugh now; we had to get home. Cloud was still very low. The fantastic commercial heli operators on the other side of the hill said there was hope today would clear. It was jointly decided by 11am that Paul would take the drive/boat option and make his

way home, with me staying on site and maintaining Kea Patrol.

At 2pm confirmation came through from a local pilot that we could track out to the coast and cross MacPherson Pass and back to Manapouri. I can safely say, whilst not offering the best odours in the cockpit after four days in the same attire, the trip that afternoon was amongst the most enjoyable flights ever undertaken.

Ironically, I reached Manapouri before Paul, who arrived 20mins later, mildly inebriated due to the contributions of some obviously great travel companions during the lake crossing, who again displayed typical kiwi hospitality by filling my entire heli pod with live crays!

The summary: was the decision wrong, flying into weather expecting it to get better? Probably. We don't intentionally make wrong decisions; it's only on reflection that we can evaluate. What I was happy with, was that we gave ourselves clear parameters as to how we were going to get out of the shit we were in. Get-home-itis is a dangerous emotion, and this experience allowed me to see just how easily it clouds good judgement. One calculation we made early on. If we live to be, say, 80 years old, that's somewhere over 29,000 days. So who cares if we spent one more day (alive) in Fiordland, a place arguably one of the most special on the planet? 



**DENNIS THOMPSON INTERNATIONAL LIMITED**

**Ph (09) 298 6249 | Fax (09) 298 4440**  
**Mb 029 4923 160**  
[dennis@dtiaircraftsales.com](mailto:dennis@dtiaircraftsales.com)  
[www.DtiAircraftSales.com](http://www.DtiAircraftSales.com)



**Victa Airtourer 115: ZK-CLD**  
 Deceased Estate owner seeks an urgent sale of this Victa Airtourer 115 Project ZK-CLD, located in our hangar.  
 Serious offer required: 'As-is, where-is';  
 \*With the engine reassembled and installed;  
 \*With engine zero time since major overhaul  
**URGENT SALE - Offers invited!**



**CESSNA 195 BUSINESSLINE: ZK-BEB**  
 1949 Cessna classic. Complete restoration 1995.  
 Many upgrades. Imported into NZ 2013.  
 Jacobs 'Round' 275HP engine. Pilot plus 4 pax.  
 Pristine paint & interior. Complete records.  
 Price reduced: **\$225,000** +GST (if sold in NZ)



**CESSNA 182-P SKYLANE : ZK-RLG**  
 1972 model. Fresh Annual & 100hr Inspections July 2026.  
 New windscreens. SIDs & ADS-B compliant. Dual controls.  
 Crew seats shoulder harness. Wheel fairings. 8,043 HSN.  
 Garmin upgrade October 2023.  
 Asking: **\$230,000** inc GST (if any)



**DOUGLAS DC-3C Airliner: ZK-JGB**  
 Just 20,900hrs since new. Engines: 893 & 1250hrs to run.  
 Props: 200/200 since overhaul. 19 pax in 'Business Class' configuration. Tray Tables. Aft toilet. Private owner/operator  
**"SEEKING SERIOUS OFFERS"**



**1978 CESSNA R182-RG: ZK-MPE**  
 Only 4149hr since new. Corrosion proofed. No corrosion.  
 Engine overhauled May 2023 with just 57hr since overhaul.  
 Upgraded Avionics. ASPEN EFD 2000 Glass. No Vac Pump  
 Autopilot. SIDs, CAPs compliant, IFR.  
 Asking: **\$399,950** +GST if sold in NZ



**MORANE SAULNIER RALLYE 235E: ZK-FIT**  
 1980 Model. 1863hrs since new. STOL performance. 4-5 seat cruiser. 991 lbs useful load. Overseas owner seeks an urgent sale of his Rallye 235E, fresh from 100hr; annual & ARA.  
**Urgent sale! Offer invited:**  
**'as-is, where-is' at Ardmore!**

**COMING:** Cessna 404; Grumman G-44 Widgeon  
*Thinking of selling? Let us be of service!*

# *Back to the Solomons, the hard way*

## *Part 2: A French colonial adventure*

By David Berger



Tom and I had flown our Cessna 185 from Gold Coast to the international airport in New Caledonia, Tontouta, situated forty minutes' drive north-west of Noumea.

There, we cleared customs and immigration and picked up our third crew member, Ed, who had flown commercial from Coffs Harbour via Sydney on the Air Calin A330, arriving about an hour and a half after us. We had dispensed with his otherwise invaluable services in favour of an extra 33 US gallons of avgas for the eight hundred nautical mile trip from Gold Coast, but now loaded him aboard for the fifteen minute hop to Magenta, the domestic and GA airport in the very centre of Noumea.

While the terminal at Tontouta is a cavernous, echoing airship hangar in the French style and the apron is a vast, empty expanse of concrete almost the size of Wales (it's always Wales), Magenta is a tight, colourful, bustling little airfield, crammed into an improbably small space in downtown Noumea. During the unrest of 2024, the road from Noumea to Tontouta was closed for many months and international passengers had to be shuttled by air back and forth from Magenta to break the siege. Almost all the domestic flights to the main and outer islands leave from this dark, chaotic old terminal, heaving with colourfully dressed women carrying woven baskets and laundry bags overflowing with produce – it could be anywhere from outback New Guinea to the farthest reaches of Fiji or French Polynesia.

Magenta is also where the tiny GA community lives: a couple of flight schools, a flying club, a maintenance organisation and, an increasing rarity in the world at large, an avgas pump. On the instructions of the very helpful ATC, we pulled up and parked at the itinerant GA parking area on the south side, next to a derelict, French-registered Cessna and a Dutch-registered King Air, which we later found out was on approach aids surveying work.

All pilots will know that feeling, after a long and intensely planned flight, and especially an international one, of shutting down and opening the door to a flooding silence, broken only by the 'tick, tick, tick' of the cooling engine. On this occasion, we resisted for once the temptation to lie down flat on the tarmac and luxuriate for a few moments in the relief of arrival, and pressed straight on with unloading the aircraft for a stay of a couple of days.

The patron saint of visiting pilots smiled mercifully upon us as we ambled along the apron with our bags in search of a gate to the outside world, delivering unto us a saviour in the form of Monsieur Jean-Michel Rio. I had hailed a thin, young, pink-scrubbed Frenchman, who was watching our progress with bemusement from the open hangar of the micro-light flying school. Upon receiving our request for assistance he beetled off in search of 'Le Patron', who turned out to



*Top: Parked up next to a derelict French Cessna at Magenta; inset: Ed and Tom enjoy petit-déjeuner à Nouméa.*

be an avuncular man of middle age, a native-born, white New Caledonian of many generations' standing, and the owner of said organisation. He had excellent English and soon had us packed into a taxi to our hotel (for which he paid the fare and would not accept reimbursement).

I was on best behaviour, having been warned sternly off discussions about politics and independence by Ed, but our taxi driver, a Kanak of about thirty-five, was having none of that. Upon discovering my Australian nationality and serviceable French, he cautiously asked me whether I had heard of 'the troubles' the previous year. With an answer in the affirmative, he was off: the French had to go and the Kanaks would figure everything out when they were gone.

I showed him a picture of the newly built, fully equipped Médipôle Hospital in Noumea, which we had just flown over. I pointed out that in the neighbouring countries of the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu, healthcare approaches the levels of Sub-Saharan Africa, while in New Caledonia it is firmly of Western standard, so that



Left: The new Médipôle Hospital in Noumea, which boasts two MRI scanners; right: the unspoiled charm of the beach at Mont Dore.

those with enough money in Vanuatu fly to New Caledonia for their medical tests. I indicated that the road we were driving on was of top quality, replete with full signage and with no potholes, which was not the case in neighbouring countries. They may not have any Kanak doctors, engineers or lawyers, he countered, but they would figure it out when the French were gone. The priority was to get the French out and then everything would fall naturally into place.

My fingers tapped away on my phone: France subsidises New Caledonia by US\$1.75 billion per year. GDP per capita is ten times that of the Solomon Islands or Vanuatu. “Doesn’t matter,” he replied, “Happiness is priceless. We will be poor, but happy,” a Utopian fantasy to which there is no retort.

Our lesson in the supremacy of pride over logic complete, we hired a car and spent a pleasant 36 hours in Noumea, which has the air of any small town on France’s Mediterranean coast. We quaffed café au lait and ate croissants and marvelled at the cheese and dried meat selection in the hypermarché, before innocently taking a little road trip south to the suburb of Mont Dore, just thirty minutes’ drive from the centre of town.

Whatever haze of touristic innocence still enveloped us quickly evaporated as we passed a string of torched garages and shopping centres, followed by the battered, paint-splattered urban combat vehicles of the Gendarmerie, patrolling the Kanak suburb of St Louis. Groups of muscular, angry-looking young Kanak men with dreadlocks lounged along the dilapidated streets, beneath independence flags and slogans daubed on the

walls. It was clear that the fighting may have stopped, but the problems had not gone away.

In Mont Dore itself, a seemingly idyllic little beach-front village which faces Noumea across the bay, we were told by an affable local, out exercising his chihuahua, that they had been cut off by road from Noumea for eight months in 2024. The only way in and out had been by boat, landing and departing from the beach.

From Mont Dore, we drove back to the airport and filled the aircraft at the hal-lowed avgas pump for the next leg of four hundred nautical miles to Santo in Northern Vanuatu. Total Energy in New Caledonia does not accept cash or credit cards, so if you don’t have a local Total fuel card you need to send funds to pre-authorise fuel. It turned out that ten days had not been enough time for the funds to clear, an oddity in this day and age, but then New Caledonia is an oddity from start to finish. Thankfully, a call to the local manager got us our fuel.

The next day brought an early, and very heavy, departure from Magenta and an equally weighty landing in Tontouta to clear customs and immigration. It’s at times like this that I appreciate the eye-watering amount of money spent on N185MW’s new gear box and titanium gear, which makes the nightmare of a broken gear leg at the end of the world an unlikely eventuality.

Once again, getting through Tontouta was a breeze and we were shepherded to and from the aircraft by the same cheerful Polynesian man with a flower behind his ear and the highest camp manner this side of Bangkok. The total cost for the inbound and outbound landings,

handling and formalities? Under A\$100. This shows rip-off Australia for what it is, and there seems no end to where the prices are heading for everything aviation-related.

By 9am, we were heading north along the coast, before turning right to cross the low Col de Nassirah and the skinny waist of the mountainous island to the open sea beyond. ‘Le Patron’ had told us the north coast was tiger country, as far as separatist activity was concerned, and even he would be anxious about travelling there on the ground. He allowed his aircraft to land there, but not to stay overnight. We looked down on the peaceful-looking villages and winding roads with a delicious frisson and congratulated ourselves on how very daring we were.

In the distance, we could see the immaculate Ouvéa, northernmost and most picturesque of the Loyalty Islands, which lay directly on our track to Santo. It beckons with its enormous, turquoise lagoon and 25km of white sand beach, but the Loyalty Islands are a major stronghold of Kanak separatism. In 1988, members of a separatist group killed four gendarmes and took twenty-seven hostage, followed by the hostage negotiator himself and a further eight soldiers. In the subsequent assault by French forces to release the hostages, nineteen hostage-takers and two French soldiers were killed, with accusations later of summary executions of some of the hostage-takers. Bad blood like that hangs around for a long time. On both sides.

Soon, even the Loyalty Islands were left behind and New Caledonia, with all its anguish and contradictions, faded into the blueness of the vast Pacific and the island of Espiritu Santo, site of Vanuatu’s

second largest town of Luganville, lay three hundred nautical miles ahead. We droned on in silence, the air so still at six thousand feet over the ocean that we could have built a house of cards on the dash. Very few vessels punctuated our passage, in contrast to the channel between Australia and New Caledonia, and once we were out of VHF contact with Noumea (and having our usual travails trying to contact Vila on the HF), we really felt like deep Pacific voyagers for the first time.

Espiritu Santo was marked by the usual cloud signatures, visible from over a hundred miles out, and we ducked down under some low cloud over the low-lying island of Aore, to the south of the airport, and landed in between showers.

Right away, the difference to New Caledonia was palpable. We had crossed an invisible frontier in the sky and landed firmly in the third world. Gone was the bright, high quality, up-to-date French VFR chart on OzRunways, identical to any chart from mainland France. In its place, we were now offered the faded, sixty-plus year-old ONC chart of the Pacific, showing the 'New Hebrides' as a 'France-United Kingdom Condominium' and, to the north, the 'British Solomon Islands'. Out were the crisp instructions of French ATC, waypoints, and controlled airspace, and in was the relaxed pace of an information service at Santo. The immaculate international terminal at Tontouta was now a distant memory, replaced by a more dilapidated, peeling version, with verdant, dripping vegetation threatening to encroach upon it. A single Britten-Norman Islander just in from the Banks Islands sat on the apron, discharging

a small contingent of local women.

We shut down next to a Vanuatu-registered Squirrel helicopter, newly arrived from Vila, and introduced ourselves. This turned out to be Paul Hubbard and his engineer, on their way back to Honiara. Paul was the reason we were able to do this trip at all. An Australian, he runs a company called Helicopter Logistics, based in Honiara, and for a time had operated an Islander on inter-island charters. This had, unfortunately, proved unviable, so the Islander was sold and he was now left with a few barrels of avgas; the only avgas remaining in the Solomons, which we had arranged to upload in Honiara and also in Munda in Western Province.

Immigration formalities were quick and friendly and we all shared a taxi into Luganville and made a loose arrangement to meet up again next morning to potentially tag along together on the next leg to Lata in Temotu Province, the very easternmost island group of the Solomons. This was a short hop for us, a mere three hundred nautical miles, but at the very limit of range for the helicopter. The privilege of verticality does not come cheap.

Accommodation in Luganville was sparse, so after a damp, pot-holed drive through a town which had clearly not seen better days for a very long time, we found ourselves at the western edge of town at the comedically-named, Beachfront Resort. Though presenting neither much of a beachfront, nor much of a resort, it did have a room for us and some second-rate food at a very high price. Nevertheless, we were thankful and quickly put away some cold beers, as we watched successive rain showers pass



*The Pacific perfection of Ouvéa.*

through and the afternoon fade almost instantaneously into night, as it does so strikingly in the Tropics.

Luganville was a major logistical hub for allied forces during WW2, the stepping stone to the Coral Sea and the Solomon Islands. In a curious throwback, we could see the US Navy's USS John L. Canley, an expeditionary base ship, anchored just offshore in the strait between Santo and Aore on a 'goodwill and cooperation mission'. Eighty years before, its maritime forebears had packed this natural harbour, carrying men and matériel for the campaign in Guadalcanal, and the three newly constructed airfields dotted around the town, now reduced to one, had roared with continuous activity. It was fun to sit at the bar and observe the roly-poly, identically crew-cut US sailors on shore leave at the resort, a distinct sub-species if ever there was one. They were all so scrupulously polite, "Yes ma'am" as if their lives depended on it.

It wasn't long before we had set up the Starlink and had the Windy app open on our phones. It wasn't looking particularly good for the morrow, but while this might have concerned us at the beginning of our trip, we were now sufficiently into the swing that we were quite happy to let the future look after itself, and we retired to bed with full bellies, our minds tranquil in the satisfaction of another leg completed without a hitch.



*Refuelling at Santo, where both finding and then working the credit card machine was problematic.*

# Making the rounds

By Murray Smith

Having planned for Laurel and I to attend the Haast Fly-in before continuing on to Invercargill, its cancellation was disappointing, although in hindsight it proved the right decision.

A few days later, however, notification arrived of two AOPA ODF fly-ins – one at James Butler's strip at Tikokino and the other at Kurow. With divided loyalties, I opted for Kurow, as it still allowed me to continue on to Invercargill, as originally planned after Haast. Unfortunately Laurel was unable to accompany me due to other commitments.

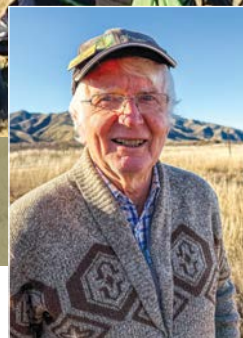
The North Island weather forecast wasn't favourable for a Saturday departure, but Friday afternoon looked much better. I departed Te Awamutu at midday, arriving at Omapa at 2.15pm. Weather en route was exactly as forecast: overcast as far as Whanganui, then clear skies all the way to Omapa. I was very grateful to the Marlborough Aero Club for the use of their visiting pilot's car and hangarage, particularly the following morning when a heavy frost greeted us. They have a very supportive team, thanks guys and girls for your assistance.

Saturday's flight to Kurow included a

refuelling and comfort stop at Ashburton, together with a look through the recently completed extension to the Ashburton Aviation Museum hangar. Before departing I checked the weather, which indicated a 25–30kt wind funnelling down the Waitaki Valley at 2000ft. A quick phone call to Gary Hawkins, the strip owner who kindly made his strip available for the ODF, eased my concerns. Gary reported only 5–10kt at his property, about eight kilometres east of the strip, and promised to keep an eye out for my arrival. My ETA was around 4pm, which meant landing into the setting sun. Plan B was to divert to Oamaru if conditions proved unsuitable.

Departing Ashburton, I tracked down the coast, enjoying a helpful tailwind while remaining about 700ft seawards of the coast until approximately 20 miles south of Timaru. From there I routed via Waimate and crossed the lower hills into the Waitaki Valley near Ikawai. As

Murray Smith and the crowd at Kurow.



expected, the wind through the valley at 1500ft was strong. Groundspeed dropped to just 68kt, although the air remained surprisingly smooth. Descending to 700ft saw a slight increase to groundspeed and by the time I reached Duntroon, it had increased to around 80kt; Plan B was redundant.

Approaching Kurow, the windsock indicated less than 10kt of westerly, straight down the strip. My initial approach from the west was abandoned because the low afternoon sun made visibility difficult, so I repositioned for an eastern approach and completed a tailwind landing instead. By 4.30pm EOF was securely picketed outside Gary's hangar, and shortly after Gary arrived and kindly took me to my accommodation.

Sunday dawned clear and calm. After breakfast at a local café, I packed my gear and met up with Steve Lyttle, who was

## ALEXANDRA AIRSTAY LX 3 BEDROOM ACCOMMODATION – SLEEPS 6



Enquiries to John McCaul - 0276285558  
belross@xtra.co.nz

- Superior self-contained 3 bedrooms, each with twin single beds, plus hangarage for aircraft if available
- Short or long term stays
- Full amenities for use including vehicle for town use
- Great holiday area for fly-ins, fishing, photography and rail trail base
- E-BIKES available on application

already in town. The Alps to Ocean Cycle Trail conveniently passes the western end of the strip, only a ten-minute walk from Kurow township. Steve and I inspected the runway for rabbit burrows, before long hearing aircraft approaching. By 11.30am, 28 fixed-wing aircraft and one helicopter had arrived, along with several members travelling by road. We gathered at the eastern end of the strip for fellowship, lunch and perfect flying weather.

When the Haast Fly-In was first cancelled, I posted on WhatsApp asking whether anyone would still be interested in flying to Haast if conditions improved. Initial interest was limited, but as the ODF approached and the weather forecast continued to improve, enthusiasm steadily grew. As the afternoon wore on and many attendees departed for home, six aircraft set course for Haast via various routes, including Siberia, the Arawata River and onwards to Neils Beach, where Mandy Deans had generously invited us for afternoon tea. Many thanks to Mandy for her hospitality – it was both timely and greatly appreciated. Later that evening Mandy and her husband joined us for dinner at the Haast Heritage Hotel where we were all staying, about 30 minutes from their home by road.

Monday morning began with breakfast after watching Mike Oakley, via his phone, move his cows onto a fresh break. Conditions were perfect for departure to Makarora. Unfortunately, the café opposite the airfield was closed, so Shaun commandeered a ute from the local helicopter operator and drove us to another café further towards Hāwea.

From Makarora most aircraft began dispersing for home. My destination, however, was Invercargill before sunset,



Okuru, West Coast. A social lunch at Kurow was followed by an equally sociable overnight at Haast.

with a lunch stop and fuel at Wānaka.

Leaving Wānaka in perfect conditions, I tracked through the Clutha Valley to Cromwell, crossed into the Nevis via Nokomai, then followed the Mataura River to emerge over the Waimea Plains near Balfour before continuing via Dipton and Winton. I arrived in Invercargill at 3.30pm as a shower approached. Fortunately, the rain eased long enough for me to picket EOF in the dry before my taxi arrived for the trip to our farm at Makarewa, where I planned to stay until Wednesday.

Wednesday morning delivered fairly typical winter Invercargill weather: scattered showers, reasonable visibility and a workable cloud base. A review of IFIS, the upper wind forecast and the 10,000ft winds made it an easy decision to fuel up and head directly home: exactly 600 nautical miles.

North of Winton I requested a climb to Flight Level 100 controlled VFR direct GPS track to Hamilton. Clearance was approved to 9500ft. EOF is fitted with tip tanks, providing approximately eight hours' safe endurance at FL100. Mine isn't quite that good, but fortunately there are practical solutions and accessories!

I've flown this route several times previously and Hamner Springs generally marks the limit of my endurance.

The forecast tailwinds proved remarkably accurate. OzRunways predicted, shortly after leaving Invercargill's CTR, that I would arrive home at 4.15pm, and the wheels touched down at 4.12pm – hard to argue with that.

I commend both the organisers and my fellow pilots for another outstanding ODF, together with those who continued on to Haast and beyond. Having been an AOPA NZ member since 1979, it has been pleasing to watch the next generation embrace social media and modern technology to improve communication and enhance flight safety. Roll on the day when Starlink, or similar technology, becomes commonplace in our aircraft, although certification may still take a while.

My thanks also to everyone involved in AOPA communications. I encourage all members to support Anna and the magazine team by submitting articles and photographs. Likewise, consider organising a fly-in or a safari. These events and the stories they generate are the lifeblood of AOPA New Zealand. 🐦

[Return to contents](#)



VIXXEN

www.foxbat.nz



For more information or to arrange a demo flight please contact Jim Lyver.  
027 440 0747 jimlyver@icloud.com

Foxbat New Zealand Ltd

Two models: A32 or A22LS

These Aircraft are the future of aviation

A32 Cruise speed 120 kts TAS with an all moving tail plane • Both types: VSTOL - take-off and land in just under 100 m • 27 kts IAS stall speed Rotax 912 ULS 100 hp engine • 30 kg luggage compartment • 200 kg available after full fuel • Centre Y stick or yoke control • Standard or long range fuel tanks • The best ab-initio trainers to teach students to fly in • Ideal private owners aircraft • Tundra tyres available for the A22LS

# Microlights on Tour

By Wayne Godfrey

On a fine Monday morning in early autumn, five aircraft set off from the Rangiora area with one aircraft from Taieri in their midst. The plan was a circumnavigation of the North Island.

The group of two-seat, exclusively Rotax powered aircraft comprised two Kitfox, with Paul Godfrey and Neil McLaughlan in JFA and Wayne Godfrey in ROX, John Headifen in his Rans-6 SIX, Iain McPhail in Karatoo KTI, and Craig Buist in SeaRey WET. The idea, initially suggested by Paul and enthusiastically taken up by the rest of the group, was first floated a few months out, with several weeks going into working through logistics and planning.

Paul's previous circumnavigation of both islands, together with a recent trip

taking in the wild Fiordland coast (in a microlight!) made it seem very achievable. As a side note, Paul says that, in terms of distance, his motor has already circumnavigated the globe and is now on its second lap! Iain also has experience in abundance, particularly in the North Island, and is very familiar with controlled airspace. John, a very experienced air force and airline pilot, ran most of the briefings. All in all, it was a great team effort, in both the planning and the execution.

And so we were off. After a short stop at Cape Campbell, by permission of the landholder, we headed over the water. It's interesting how that control stick seems to be pushing back against your grip as we kept it under the lower limits for the airspace. And having a float plane was extra comfort, well at least somewhat.

Without boring you with the details of every strip we went to, I can tell you the list is extensive. We visited a total of 38 airfields over an eight day period. I've never spent so much time over water;

indeed we were in life vests almost constantly. The travel was anti-clockwise up the east coast, and we managed to meet up with some good friends along the way, people we'd met at the STOL comp at Omaka and others as we travelled. On one occasion we were even treated to a personal acrobatic display by a local.

The North Island hospitality was just amazing. We stayed at various club rooms and in private residences all the way. The locals always knew the best restaurants and were extremely helpful regarding fuel acquisition. The Rotax runs quite nicely on 95 octane, so it makes a cost-effective trip. Some of us filled up at the avgas pumps to top up, but it hurts watching the numbers!

It's always a good idea to pack a tail wind (one of our crew has a good habit of bringing one) and this trip was planned well. At one stage we climbed to 8000ft to get out of turbulent air, but we generally operated at a lower level, up to 2500ft.

Problems, well, yes, we had a couple. Nothing catastrophic, although a radio failure was fairly inconvenient. Overnight courier and a slow start the next day didn't really hold us up much. On the scale of things, nothing to worry about – though I may be down playing things here. The appalling lack of tea-making etiquette of one of the team was a constant bug bear which remains unresolved...

For me, flying with more experienced pilots allowed me to learn a lot, while the mixture of airfields, from controlled airspace to basic strips, was a good challenge. At times the weather was a bit average, with rainstorms up north being fairly dramatic in intensity at times, but it's comforting to be with experience.

By the trip's end we had our pre flight briefings running quite slickly; a pity the cup of tea still had a lingering tea bag floating. Some things you just can't fix.

[Return to contents](#)

*Right: The touring team, from left: Iain McPhail, John Headifen (with mascot), Wayne Godfrey, Paul Godfrey, Craig Buist, Neil McLaughlan.*

*Above: from unspoiled coastlines and sunsets to a fly-by of central Auckland, the trip offered memorable highlights from start to finish.*





# *The wind you can't see...*

## *Understanding local wind effects*

By Reuben Hansen

One of the great attractions of flying in New Zealand is the ability to experience places that many people will never see. Mountain valleys, remote airstrips, farm paddocks and backcountry locations are all part of what makes this type of flying so rewarding.

However, these same environments also bring challenges that require careful consideration.

Before a flight into a farm strip or backcountry airfield, most pilots follow a familiar routine. We check the weather, determine whether our aircraft performance is suitable for the strip, and make a phone call to the landowner or strip operator. These conversations usually cover the practical considerations – whether the grass has been mown, whether the surface is firm or soft after recent rain, whether there is stock in the paddock, and whether any new fences, equipment or other obstacles have appeared since the last visit. In the case of an AOPA NZ fly-in, a lot of these items will be covered in the strip briefing, for PIC consideration.

These are all important questions and form part of sensible pre-flight planning. However, one factor that can have a significant effect on a strip operation is often harder to identify before arrival: the local wind behaviour.

Flying into a strip environment requires a heightened level of awareness, where the runway itself is only one part of the operating picture. The surrounding landscape plays a significant role in shaping the conditions we encounter, with hills, valleys, shelter belts, ridges and even isolated farm buildings all capable of influencing the airflow around the aircraft. While local wind effects can also be

present at larger aerodromes, they often have a greater impact on strip operations due to the combination of additional considerations involved.

Often, the challenge is not the wind indicated by the windsock, but the changes in airflow that occur around the surrounding landscape.

### **The windsock isn't the whole story**

A windsock remains one of the most valuable tools available to a pilot, but it is important to recognise its limitations. It provides an indication of the wind at one location on the strip, and only at that moment in time.

It cannot tell us what the airflow is doing half a mile back on final, over the crest of a nearby ridge, or behind a shelter belt protecting the runway.

Many private strips are located in terrain that has a significant influence on local airflow. Rolling hill country, valleys and tree-lined paddocks all modify the wind in ways that are not immediately obvious from the cockpit.

A pilot may observe a comfortable headwind at the windsock, only to encounter significant sink, turbulence or a sudden loss of headwind moments before touchdown.

Reading the landscape is just as important as assessing the strip itself. Before turning onto final, consideration should be given to where turbulence is likely to develop, whether the lee side of a ridge

may produce rotor, and whether nearby trees or buildings could disturb the airflow close to the ground.

### **Reading the landscape**

As we know, air behaves much like water flowing around rocks in a river. As it encounters obstacles it accelerates, changes direction, rises and descends. This helps explain why even modest terrain features can have a noticeable effect on an aircraft during the approach.

A ridge forces airflow upwards on the windward side before it descends on the lee side. Depending on the strength of the wind and the shape of the terrain, this descending air may be relatively smooth or develop into turbulent rotor. An approach that appears stable can quickly become unstable if the aircraft encounters unexpected sink close to the ground. How does this look? What cues are you looking for?

Terrain-induced winds also evolve throughout the day. On clear days, solar heating warms slopes and causes air to flow uphill, producing anabatic winds that generally strengthen through the afternoon. As the ground cools during the evening, this process reverses. Denser air drains downhill as katabatic winds, sometimes producing unexpected tailwinds or crosswinds in valleys and sheltered strips during the evening or early morning.

These local effects are not confined to mountainous areas. Coastal strips may

experience afternoon sea breezes that differ markedly from the forecast gradient wind, while inland valleys often develop their own local circulations. A strip that offers a comfortable headwind approach early in the day may experience very different conditions only a few hours later, despite little apparent change in the regional weather. A lunch stop separating a landing and take-off might be the difference between a headwind for the landing developing into a reasonable crosswind for take-off. Unnoticed, this could bite.

The lesson is to consider not only the forecast wind, but also the time of day and how the surrounding terrain may modify it.

#### Local knowledge beyond the basics

In addition to getting permission to land, calling the strip owner before a flight is great airmanship, but it is worth considering the questions we ask. Most conversations naturally focus on the obvious: we ask about the condition of the strip, recent rain, grass length, stock, fences and other physical hazards. These are all important, they are visible and measurable. **Less frequently do we ask about the local wind.**

Yet the farmer who has lived on the property for thirty years will likely know that a north-westerly always tumbles over the ridge on short final, that the sea breeze reaches the strip by mid-afternoon, or that calm mornings often give way to a strong valley wind after lunch. This knowledge is invaluable. However, unless we ask, it is unlikely to be volunteered because the local operator simply considers it normal.

When planning a flight into an unfamiliar strip, consider adding a few simple questions to the conversation:

- Are there any wind directions that cause problems?
  - Does the strip behave differently at certain times of the day?
  - Are there areas of turbulence that regularly catch visiting pilots by surprise?
- The answers may prove just as valuable as knowing where the fences are.

#### The wind between the trees

Mechanical turbulence is another hazard that deserves respect.

Shelter belts are common around New Zealand farms, protecting stock and crops from prevailing winds, and they can significantly alter the airflow around a strip. The wind may appear smooth on the upwind side of a tree line, yet become turbulent immediately beyond it. Even a modest reduction in headwind close to the ground can increase landing distance and result in a touchdown much further along the strip than planned.

The same applies to isolated buildings, bluffs and small ridges. Individually they may seem insignificant, but together they create an ever-changing pattern of airflow that is difficult to predict unless the pilot has consciously assessed the terrain before commencing the approach.

#### Developing a wind picture

Rather than relying on a single source of information, a mental picture of local wind effects can be developed. The weather forecast provides the broad overview, but it is only the starting point.

Along the route, smoke, ripples on water, moving cloud, bending trees and even other aircraft provide valuable clues. Combined with an understanding of the surrounding terrain, these observations allow us to continually refine our assessment of the conditions we are likely to encounter.

Importantly, this picture is never static. We need to constantly compare what we expected with what we are actually seeing. If the aircraft experiences more drift than anticipated, if the windssock differs from the forecast, or if turbulence develops earlier than expected, we can reassess the plan rather than pressing on regardless.

#### The approach is where it matters

Unexpected wind effects become most critical during the approach and landing, where there is little time or altitude available to recover. When significant sink, turbulence or changing wind conditions prevent the aircraft from remaining stabilised, the safest response may be to discontinue the approach and reassess. You might go around, and on the second attempt, the conditions that destabilised the approach may not be as pronounced, as this is the fickle nature of local, changeable winds.

The fundamentals – runway length, slope and surface condition – will always deserve careful consideration, but they are only part of the picture. The air above and around the strip is constantly being shaped by the landscape, the weather and the time of day. Those influences are often subtle, sometimes unpredictable, and almost always invisible.

The next time you plan a flight into an unfamiliar remote strip, don't stop at asking whether the grass has been cut or whether the fences are clear.

Ask how the wind behaves.

Study the surrounding terrain.

Consider how the weather and time of day may influence the approach.

Because, the greatest hazard is often not the wind you can see.

It's the wind you can't. 🌪️

[Return to contents](#)

## Accommodation and hangar available at Pukaki Airport, Twizel



3 bedroom house and hangar available at Pukaki Airport in the McKenzie basin. Vehicle available. Per night or weekly rates. Enquiries to Lionel Green. Phone 027 359 5849 or email [lionelgreen@xtra.co.nz](mailto:lionelgreen@xtra.co.nz)



# What's under your back seat?

By Murray Paterson

Think of this: fifteen aviators standing around looking at each other, two cups of coffee or tea already on board, while it blows 20–30 knots westerly with no sign of decreasing. Upshot: we were going nowhere by air, so had to come up with something else to do with the day.

The group of Bearhawks, 4-place and Patrol, Cessna 170s, Cessna 180 and Piper Cub, was in Waipukurau for the annual Tail Draggers Fly-in. As conversation began to thin, an idea was mooted.

How about the owners all dig in their aircraft and pull out everything they were carrying on the trip, laying it all out on the ground, so we could talk through what each aircraft carried over and above the standard operating requirements.

Out came all the gear. Lots of laughs and 'oh's and 'ah's, but everything laid out was there for what the pilot felt was a good reason. We decided it would be worth sharing what we all had lined up, leaving you to draw your own conclusions – and consider your own equipment!

## Common to all

- Sturdy set of pickets, good for a blow in the High Country (good or bad will be discussed in a future article).
- S turdy hammer – in GA aircraft this could be the axe.
- Ropes or strops fit to take strong winds that might get up causing the plane to attempt to fly.
- Control lock, either on the control column, control stick, or externally on the flying surfaces.
- Aviation oil, Camguard and a funnel.
- Sturdy zip-up bag for storing the items above.
- Reasonably comprehensive first

aid kit, generally including survival blankets.

- Window cleaning kit with soft cloth to avoid scratches on windows.
- For the trip across Cook Strait, all the South Islanders had life jackets.

## The 'nice to haves'

**Graham Johnson** in his Bearhawk Patrol additionally carries a canopy cover, which can be laid out to put people on or to wrap up in, spare bungy cord, and a sturdy jacket. In his basic tool kit he includes a selection of common screws, nuts and bolts that may be handy, and a 12 volt jump-start kit which includes a compressor. Graham has a plug-in spot in his dash to recharge his battery jump pack, phones and tablets.

**Neville Bailey** in his Bearhawk 4-place has seriously good (in the right ground) screw-in pickets that can be driven in by a 'rattle gun' or large 'armstrong' style socket. As an extra back-up he carries a tyre plug kit and a Bosch tyre inflator which is USB chargeable. Orange duct tape, in case of minor damage to fabric (as might be caused by deer or cattle rubbing on the plane), allowing a repair sufficient to get home. He also carries a spare spark plug and, for overnight trips, a cabin/engine cover.

**James Butler** stows the standard equipment, as above, under the back seat of his Cessna 180, additionally packing a



2m<sup>2</sup> tarpaulin, high vis jackets, 15m of rope, a golf umbrella, packet of biscuits, 1l drinking water, good warm jackets for all on board, and a plastic container in case of airsickness.

**Brad Raven** flies a Cessna 170 and, because of the continual oil leaks which can be an issue with O-300 engines, in addition to the standard tool kit carries three 1 litre containers of oil. Some older Cessna types can leak around the doors when flying through rain, so he recommends a roll of aluminium foil tape to keep the pilot and front seat passengers a lot drier.

**David Paterson** and I carry some 'convenience' items in the Bearhawk, including plastic folding steps to aid refuelling, two heavy plastic one-size-fits-all ponchos to keep us reasonably dry if we land in remote places in wet weather. A roll of white duct tape for emergency fabric repairs, small socket set which includes Metric and Imperial, plug socket with ¼ or 3/8 drive, 6in crescent, long nose pliers, multi-tip screw driver, spare hose clamps, spare fuel tank drains, selection of cable ties.

I have an 'Anderson Plug' under the dash where I can plug in modified jumper leads for starting, PLB, jump-start pack with compressor, aviation portable radio, and a spare tail wheel tyre and tube. For trips off the beaten track, we always have

a 'smoko' bag with hot drinks and a container of home baking. Occasionally, as needed, we include a portable syphon if using fuel from Jerry cans.

Having a spare tyre and tube for the tailwheel brings me to a couple of situations shared with me by two more mature southern aviators.

### Merv Halliday's beach wisdom

The story, as told by Merv's son Grant, not long after the sad passing of his father, stems from the Stewart Island days of landing on Horseshoe Bay. The plane was doing a lot of beach work and, with the terrific adhesion of hard sand and hard braking, the tyres were slowly turning on the rim. It wasn't until he'd had two flat tyres that Merv realised the tyre was turning and eventually causing the valve stem to rip off the tube. Fortunately, on both occasions the tyre went flat, the plane wasn't on the beach.

Once Merv figured what was happening, he painted a line on the tyre and rim so he could see when the markers got about an inch apart. He would then jack up the plane and let the air out, so the tube inside the tyre could reset itself. From then on he carried a spare main-wheel tube, spare tail-wheel tyre and tube, tools needed to take a wheel off, and a 12v air compressor. This meant that if he ever got a flat tyre on a beach, he could fix it before getting gobbled up by the tide.

The system was put to the test when Merv was on one of his Pacific Island trips. A flat tyre on one of the remote outer islands, with no resources available to get it repaired, could have been a catastrophe. Instead, the rest of the group were amazed to see him climb into the tail and pull out his tools, a new tube and an air compressor. They removed the wheel, fixed it under a coconut tree, and were able to carry on.

Today DOD still has marks painted on its tyres, in the tail carries a tool kit, spare tubes and tyre, 12v air compressor and 12v battery jump pack, as well as a rocket designed to shoot up through and lay orange sheet on top of bush canopy, claw pickets, oil, fold up army shovel and collapsible plastic bucket.

### Lending a helping hand

I also asked Jules Tapper, who owned and operated the Hollyford Valley walking



track, including developing the lodges at Lake Alabaster and Martins Bay, to share what he kept under his back seat and in the shed at Martins Bay.

Both aircraft had at least two Sportsmen space blankets and two Army style two-day ration packs and pencil flare guns, plus wax style matches in a waterproof container. Four Maggi soups – Jules notes that you can use the packet as a small billy with a small stick or wire through the top edge, and barley sugars. He also carried a basic tool kit and Philips/flat head screwdriver, spare spark plug, spare longest high-tension lead, spark plug spanner and engine oil.



At Martins Bay he stored a spare starter, alternator and quick change cylinder, plus other bits and pieces including spare hydraulic oil. "And every bit of kit was used at one time and another," he recalls.

When attending C180/185 fly-ins he took a spare alternator, starter, spare main tube, complete tailwheel assembly with bearings (good quick change assembly), spare spark plugs and socket, and a bit of hydraulic oil. Also included was a 12 V compressor pump, valve removal tool and spare valves for tubes.

And at nearly every fly-in someone had to borrow some of the gear. Jules recalls one morning at Makarora when one of the guys from around Auckland found he had a flat tailwheel: "We had the rear fuselage up on a 12 gallon drum, the old tailwheel off and the spare tailwheel assembly fitted, and he was on his way within 30 minutes of finding the problem. Most grateful northerner!"

### Be prepared!

When going into remote areas, it is also a good idea to pack a good bush shirt/Swandri and good footwear, a Leatherman and a personal PLB – the latest have texting capability, and our family are great proponents of their use both on the ground and in the air.

The moral of the story is that we have enough kit on board to help each other out of sticky situations when flying away from home base.



# THE ULTIMATE AVIATION LIFESTYLE

Fowler Homes has apartments and lifestyle property design and build options for sale now in Te Kowhai Airpark.



For a sales pack and enquiries contact:  
Brad Tunley – Fowler Homes North Waikato  
**027 657 4334 | [brad@fowlerhomes.co.nz](mailto:brad@fowlerhomes.co.nz)**



Est. 1984

Visit our Office at 84 Duke Street, Cambridge | [fowlerhomes.co.nz](http://fowlerhomes.co.nz)

YOUR STYLE OF LIVING

By Mandy Deans,  
AOPA NZ Charitable Trust Chair

We're delighted to share the progress the Trust has made across a range of initiatives in recent months. Good things take time, especially when building relationships, and careful research of complex issues is needed for a solid foundation.

### Aviation Ambassadors

At the end of June, a room full of curious young students at Tokomaru Primary School eagerly listened to the stories of AOPA NZ member Mike Elston. This was the first of many nation-wide school visits, through a Trust partnership with the House of Science (HoS) Charitable Trust. Their mission is to empower teachers to raise scientific literacy with better resources and classroom programmes.

Collaborating with the HoS for the 'Things with Wings' programme has enabled us to offer visits from Aviation Ambassadors. Each visit brings real-world experiences, inspiration and context to the activities in the resource kits. As well as discussing the science, Ambassadors explain the range of career and recreational opportunities available, showing kids that aviation is something you can actually participate in.

HoS has recently been awarded a Government contract to deliver resource kits for students across the whole of New Zealand, so the potential for this budding relationship is significant. So far, the Aviation Ambassadors have been hand-picked, and as the programme develops, we intend to recruit more.

### New Trustee

We're very pleased to welcome Stephen Shepherd, who brings a wealth of experience as a Chartered Accountant, private pilot, aircraft owner, company chair and trustee.

In particular, Stephen was involved with the formation of Skyline Aviation Ltd and New Zealand Air Ambulance Service Ltd, holding various roles since 1991, including the CAA 'Senior Person' appointment for the organisation's Part 119/125/135/145 certifications.

"I have first-hand experience of the shortage of LAMEs in the GA aircraft maintenance space, and the more we can do to help with that the better. I'm enthusiastic about becoming a trustee and look forward to doing what I can to achieve the Trust's mission."

Stephen lives in Hawke's Bay and is a life member of the Hawke's Bay and East Coast Aero Club.

We also add our thanks to Richard Bradley for his service as a trustee. Richard's resignation was regrettably accepted at the Trust's AGM on 28 May.



*New Trustee, Stephen Shepherd.*

### Scholarships & Mentoring Programme

Two new sponsors have allowed the Trust to offer scholarships for 2026.

Thanks to the generosity of Matt Vaughan of PacAvia International Ltd, we've offered the ThinkAviation PPL Scholarship, consisting of \$5000 towards fixed wing flight training. More than fifty eligible applications were received.

The James PG Foundation-ThinkAviation Trust Scholarship is a new collaboration, allowing us to offer a \$10,000 package of helicopter PPL flying hours, training, networking and support. This generous package was made possible with the support of Louisa 'Choppy' Patterson and the James PG Foundation.

Additional benefits from AOPA NZ, such as one year's membership subscription which includes a calendar, quarterly magazine and regular digital comms, will also be offered to the winners. Thank you AOPA NZ, for offering this support.

As part of our small but growing Trust Mentoring Programme, we have new mentors lined up for the scholarship winners. Recipients are due to be announced in early September.

Find out who won, and read more about the programme at [thinkaviation.nz/scholarships](https://thinkaviation.nz/scholarships)



*Mike Elston engages students during the first school visit in association with the House of Science's 'Things with Wings' programme.*

# Kane Patena

## Director CAA NZ

By Ross Millichamp



Kane's first flying lesson with Carlton Campbell. Image: Steve Kroening

Kane Patena was aware of three concerns from within the industry when he joined the CAA NZ as Director and Chief Executive in September 2025. First, that he was a lawyer with a prosecution background; second, that he came from WorkSafe New Zealand; third, that he is not a pilot.

When I sat down with Kane at the Civil Aviation Authority NZ office in Wellington, he came across as anything but the stereotype of a career regulator. Quick with a laugh and with a genuine interest in AOPA NZ, he was appreciative of the role we play in fostering grassroots aviation.

Kane grew up in Auckland but spent much of his spare time in and around Tauwhare with the Ngāti Hauā side of his family. He studied law at Auckland University while holding down a full-time job as a galley serviceman at Auckland Airport, not knowing that aviation would become a big part of his future career. After graduation he joined Auckland law firm Meredith Connell, working his way up to being a senior Crown Prosecutor in South

Auckland. This meant dealing predominantly with serious crimes, and after eight years, Kane decided he had seen enough of that sad side of society. He then took up a national manager role in Housing New Zealand's assurance group, his first exposure to the world of change management, before returning as a partner to Meredith Connell to help set up a Wellington office. His next move was to join the Wellington City Council as Director of Strategy and Governance, after which he was appointed Director of Land Transport at the NZTA, and subsequently Deputy CEO then Interim CEO at WorkSafe New Zealand.

These latter roles provided lessons and insights that would prove valuable as Director of Civil Aviation. At NZTA he worked to resolve what was acknowledged as a regulatory failure stemming from a single operator. Dargaville Diesel Ltd, a small company found to have been issuing fraudulent vehicle warrants of fitness, proved on investigation to be the tip of an iceberg of non-compliance throughout the sector. At WorkSafe NZ, the issue was a policy that strived for perfection across every sector in the work safety environment, which was never achievable with the resources available. With just four industries responsible for most serious accidents, WorkSafe NZ needed to direct more of its resources into these areas. Looking back, Kane sees that safety outcomes are often driven as much by trusted voices within industry as by the regulator itself. As Kane puts it, "The singer is more important than the song in safety" – a reminder that messages delivered by respected peers are often the ones most likely to change behaviour.

Kane is under no illusion about the work to be done. As is the norm in the public service, Kane's is a five-year appointment with an expectation that he brings a fresh set of eyes and stamps his mark on the organisation within that time. Bringing people in from the outside ensures they are not captured by past decisions and relationships. Kane's arrival came as part of an almost clean sweep of the upper echelons of the CAA: a new Director, new Board and new Executive Leadership Team were all appointed over a short period, demonstrating a clear

## Available to rent



Comfortable 3-4 bedroom house plus two 250m<sup>2</sup> hangars set on a ten acre lifestyle block in Richmond, Nelson, available for a helicopter pilot/ engineer.

**For further details, please email Thom van Eeghen at [info@elkranch.com](mailto:info@elkranch.com)**

mandate and expectation that he will drive change within CAA.

One of Kane's key decisions was to appoint Brett Banner into the new role of Chief Financial Officer. "CAA is still primarily a user-pays organisation, and we need to ensure we get our decisions right in this arena," Kane said.

One of the CAA's current priorities is the Rules Update Programme, which attempts two decades' worth of rule changes in two years, and reflects the rate of change within the aviation industry. The focus is to create rules that drive consistency, responsiveness and timeliness within CAA and across the aviation sector. Allowing the wider use of digital processes, as opposed to paper-based systems, is a common theme.

The review of Part 61 (licencing) rules has generated a lot of feedback from the sector. One example where improvements could be made is in the training and certifying of engineers. "We are considering an approach where trainees complete modules and assume responsibility in small areas as they work through the wider syllabus," he said.

CAA has engaged former Air New Zealand Chief Pilot, David Morgan to help gather information from the aviation sector about the Part 61 rules change process. "Despite all of the change that is afoot, safety remains the core focus of CAA," he said. The GA sector still represents the bulk of the risk and needs to be actively managed. Airline risk potential is lower but far more catastrophic if it occurs. Different approaches are needed for both.

I raised a couple of issues of particular interest to AOPA NZ members. The first was the future of the DL9 medical. Kane was not aware of any moves to change the system, either to do away

with the DL9 or to extend it to further types of aviation.

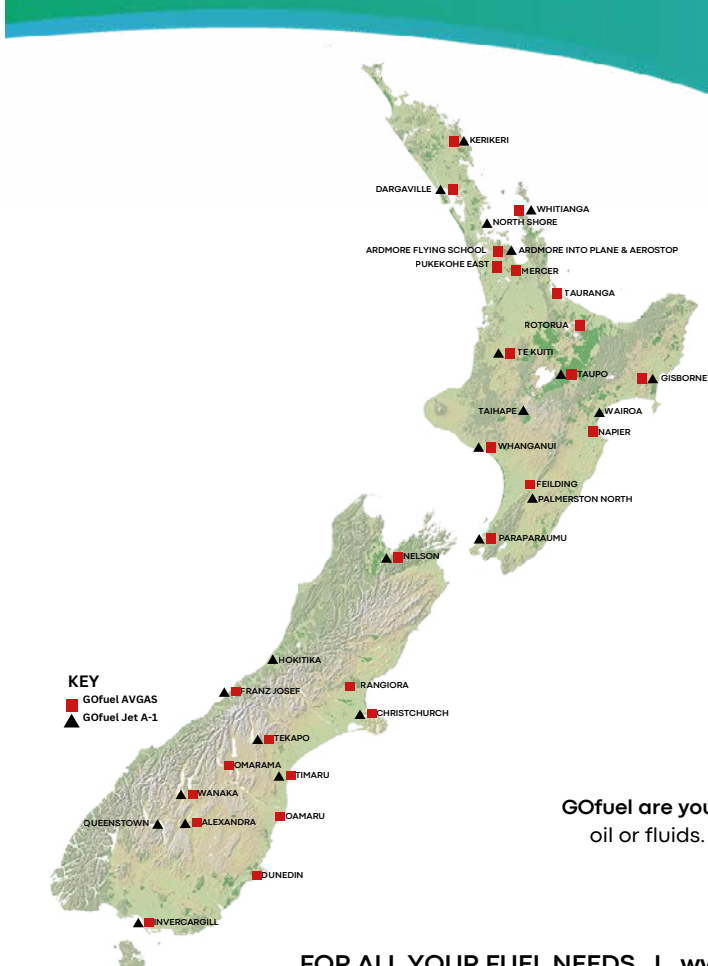
The possible introduction of MOSAIC rules to New Zealand is another hot topic I had to ask about. The 'Modernisation of Special Airworthiness Certification' is an FAA rule amendment to the USA's sport pilot licence (more on this in a future issue). Kane advised that CAA is not obliged to follow FAA rule changes and that it is up to New Zealand to come to its own decisions in this sphere, adding that many of the rule changes were very recent and that CAA NZ were maintaining a watching brief on developments. "We are certainly not ruling out the introduction of MOSAIC into New Zealand, we just want to monitor what takes place in the USA first," he said.

Kane has made a deliberate attempt to overcome his lack of aviation knowledge. In less than a year he has met with over seventy operators and aviation groups. This includes not only the big players such as airlines, but also smaller organisations such as the NZ Association of Women in Aviation and the Walsh Memorial Scout Flying School. I invited him to attend an AOPA NZ event in the near future and he agreed immediately, reminding me of the offer as we made our farewells at the end of the interview. Kane is also making plans to learn to fly; he has a medical scheduled and intends to set aside one week blocks to focus on flight training. "I want to go solo before the end of 2026," he said.

Outside work, Kane and his wife are keen users of local hiking tracks around Wellington. "The first nine months in the role have been hectic, but I hope to travel further afield to undertake longer tramps over the coming summer," he said. 

[Return to contents](#)





## GOfuel Aero Stop Network

Access the **GOfuel Aero Stop fuel network** with a GOfuel Aviation Card apply online at [www.gofuel.co.nz](http://www.gofuel.co.nz)



**GOfuel are your one stop shop for all your aviation requirements from fuel to oil or fluids. Our team can answer your questions and provide you with the right products to meet your needs.**

Contact: Barry Brown M 027 738 0380 E [barryb@gofuel.nz](mailto:barryb@gofuel.nz)

**FOR ALL YOUR FUEL NEEDS | [www.gofuel.co.nz](http://www.gofuel.co.nz) | 0800 42 83 83**

# Destination: Anama

By Lewis Cooper

Mid Canterbury is spoiled for choice when it comes to stellar flying destinations, and it's no secret that one strip in particular is rapidly developing into an excellent destination: Anama.

As Chief Flight Instructor at the Mid Canterbury Aero Club, I spend much of my time buzzing around the Ashburton Aerodrome, which was covered as an outstanding flying destination in *Approach* a couple of years ago by my fellow committee member, Neville Bailey, leaving me to look further afield – and doing so proved a pleasure.

Nestled at the base of the Mid Canterbury foothills, Anama Aerodrome (NZAN) is a welcoming destination for recreational pilots. Located in uncontrolled airspace, Anama is unattended, frequency 119.1. The plate can be found in the AIP.

Established in 2022 and operating under non-certificated status, the vision was clear from the outset: to provide a practical, welcoming and environmentally responsible aviation hub that would offer an ideal stopover for short visits and extended stays.

Located approximately 3km from Mayfield, 7km from Mt Somers, and 25km from Methven and Ashburton, the aerodrome features a well-maintained 615m x 30m grass runway, with parking and toilet facilities accessible via the taxiway at the southern end. Designed as a completely green facility, power is delivered via a combination of solar energy and generator systems. This environmentally-conscious approach reflects the site developer's desire to minimise environmental impact while supporting modern aviation and hospitality services.

The strip is available for general use without permission from the operator. There are no landing fees, and tents are permitted for overnight stays. From summer 2027, additional facilities will include a pilot lounge, modern toilets, on-site accommodation, aircraft parking, fuel services and a second and longer runway (east – west). Accommodation will initially be comfortable and budget-friendly with plans to expand later into luxury accommodation. Anama Aerodrome offers short and long term hangar lease opportunities, providing flexibility to suit a variety of aviation requirements.

## Flying in Mid Canterbury

As with flying anywhere in New Zealand, Mid Canterbury has a few things to be aware of if you're not familiar with the area. Anama is located near the mountains between the Rangitata and Rakaia Rivers – an area ripe with awesome strips to visit; more on those soon. With its proximity to Christchurch, there are always plenty of winged friends transiting the region.

## LEADING AVIATION VALUATION SPECIALISTS

### Aviation Valuations need an Aviation Specialist

#### FIXED AND ROTOR WING AIRCRAFT

- Pre-sale or purchase • Finance • Insurance
- Import • Export • Recovery • Taxation



Serving clients across  
Australasia

0274 422 569

[helpdesk@gencovaluation.com](mailto:helpdesk@gencovaluation.com)

Offices in: Auckland – Central Otago – Melbourne  
(formerly Southern Aircraft Sales Ltd, Est. 1999)

[www.gencovaluation.com](http://www.gencovaluation.com)

The aerodrome sits outside the South Canterbury and Ashburton CFZs, so traffic information is often intermittent. Keep a keen eye out for any friendly faces buzzing past.

Having an idea about how the weather is developing becomes particularly pertinent on westerly days. Given its proximity to the Southern Alps, notably turbulent conditions occur reasonably regularly. A good tell, from my experience, is when you start to see the clouds from the west pushing up over the ridge-tops: the bumps follow close behind.

For the folks who fly in areas not quite as blessed with forced landing options as Mid Canterbury, a common mistake I see my students making is just choosing a damn paddock to put the plane down into. Have you ever sat down in the evening to watch a good movie or documentary on Netflix, but found so many options that by the time you've chosen, it's already too late? Forced landings can be a bit like that around Canterbury. Pick a suitable spot, trust your gut, and fly the plane down.

### **Mayfield, Mount Somers and more**

Soon, guests at Anama will be able to take advantage of rental car services and electric scooter hire!

A quick 3km trip down the road is Mayfield, one of Mid Canterbury's lovely wee towns that's well worth a visit. Not only does it share similarly gorgeous views, but also offers some classic Kiwi 'must-do's'. A favourite of locals and visitors is the Stronechruvie Accommodation and Restaurant in nearby Mt Somers. I also hear great things about the Panthers Rock Country Club, offering exactly the kind of vibe you love to see from a rural South Island town.

Few locations offer such easy access to the natural wonders of Mid Canterbury and the wider South Island. Anama Aerodrome sits in a strategic position that places visitors within comfortable driving distance of some of New Zealand's most celebrated outdoor destinations, including world-class trout fishing, skiing and snow sports (through Mt Hutt or Methven), scenic drives and photography, and Lord of the Rings Country landscapes.

### **Nearby aerodromes**

Along the Rangitata River there are several awesome spots to drop into. Some of the highlights for me have been:

- Mesopotamia Station, located in the beautiful High Country,
- Mount Potts Lodge, which offers accommodation plus a bar and cafe, is a great spot for lunch,
- Rangitata Island, a vibrant and active aerodrome that's well worth a visit.

A little further east sits my home turf: Ashburton – which I truly believe (completely unbiased opinion) to be the greatest aerodrome in the country. If you're visiting the South Island by air and camping at Anama, Ashburton is the best pit-stop for fuel or, via a short taxi ride into town, for anything you'll need to continue the journey.

And there is so much more! When it comes to a flying trip, Mid Canterbury has so much to offer. 🐦

[Return to contents](#)

*Do you have a destination you love to fly to for a coffee, an overnight or a longer term stay? If you're willing to share your special place with other AOPA NZ members (and we hope that you are!) please get in touch with Anna via [editor@aopa.nz](mailto:editor@aopa.nz)*

## **Pursuing your flying dream is easier if you have a clear pathway**



For just \$24 a year, AOPA NZ's new Pathway Membership offers people aged 15 to 30 access to AOPA NZ's quarterly digital magazine, website and e-news, fly-ins and events, and to the experience and support that our members have to offer. Plus all the benefits of AOPA NZ's advocacy work on behalf of the general aviation community.

**Find out more at**  
**[www.aopa.nz](http://www.aopa.nz)**



# **AOPANZ**

# *The fullest of lives*

## *A tribute to Merv Halliday*



Merv Halliday, one of the founding members of the Kittyhawk Flying Club, which later became AOPA NZ, packed his long and busy life with a wide range of fun, hard work and, most of all, family.

*Merv Halliday (left) with granddaughter Emma, son Grant and family favourite, ZK-DOD.*

Flying was important to him, but took its place alongside other interests which he maintained from a very young age, such as stamp collecting and genealogy, and others he added later, including outdoor activities such as waterskiing, tramping and hunting, conservation and deer culling.

Born in August 1941 to Ernest and Margaret Halliday, Mervyn James Halliday, together with his sisters, Beverly, Lynette and Heather, grew up on the family farm in Kamahi. In his last years of primary school, Merv was an active member of the scouting movement, each week cycling four miles to Edendale and back, gaining outdoor skills that served him throughout his life.

Merv attended Southland Boys High School from 1956 to 1958, boarding in town during his first year. Though he enjoyed his secondary education, his future was always tied to the land. The family's 2500 acre property was still being cleared, stumped and drained, with the trees milled in the family sawmill, when Merv left school. Intrigued by the huge caterpillar bulldozers, Merv, aged 16, began his progression into the family farm. In 1969, he entered into a partnership with his father, taking over the remaining interest in the farm in 1981.

Merv's involvement in the school tramping club and Southland Ski Club reflected his enthusiasm for outdoor activities, which soon expanded beyond the mountains. After seeing photos of water-skiing then discovering the equipment wasn't available in New Zealand, he built his own water-skis – after which he had to learn how to use them. A dozen pairs later, each better than the last, he and his father built their first boat. Water-skiing displays at Te Anau regattas saw family and friends roped into human pyramids, while Merv, dressed as a clown, rode a ski-mounted bicycle.

In 1958, in support of the preservation and rehabilitation of the recently rediscovered Takahe, he was invited by Dr Geoffrey Orbell to join an elite group given exclusive hunting rights to 250,000 acres in the Murchison Mountains, from the South Fiord to the Middle Fiord of Lake Te Anau, which saw him cull hundreds of deer in the pre-helicopter hunting days.

In December 1961, aged 20, Merv entered a flying scholarship with the Southland Aero Club. He always felt he blew his chance

of winning by telling them he'd fly whether he won or not. He flew solo for the first time in January 1962, earning his PPL a few months later. The following year he purchased his first aircraft for £1000, becoming one of only two private aircraft owners in Southland. His first flight home didn't end well for the aeroplane, leading to the removal of a fence and trees to create a larger landing strip. Merv owned five aircraft over the years, the last of which, ZK-DOD, eventually returned to the family. (For the story of DOD's full circuit, see *Approach* Summer issue 2024.)

In 1965, Merv whisked his new bride, Jenny, off on a 'flying honeymoon' around New Zealand, their trip around the North Cape making the papers. Stewart Island became a regular holiday destination for the family, initially by way of beach landings at Horseshoe Bay (365 in all), often carrying a planeload of building materials for the under-construction bach, and returning with boxes of frozen blue cod destined for high school fundraisers.

Merv was the first tow pilot for the Southland Gliding Club and a founding member of the Kitty Hawk Flying Club, receiving a Life Membership of its successor, AOPA NZ, in 1986. His flying became increasingly ambitious, involving trips to Norfolk Island, New Caledonia, Vanuatu, Fiji and the Chatham Islands. After a final flying safari around Northern Australia in August 1998, Merv hung up his headset, having logged 3000 hours of flying.

From developing an air charter business to the Chatham Islands, to visiting Antarctica and flying to the edge of space at Mach 2.1 in a Concorde, Merv was never one to miss an opportunity. After 'retiring' he became a full-time coach driver taking tours into Milford Sound, wrote several books, including 'I Did It My Way', a best-selling biography of friend and helicopter pilot Bill Black, drove school buses, ferried crayfish, and threw his energy behind the Haast-Hollyford Highway project.

Perhaps more important than any of his many achievements, Merv displayed his deep commitment to family throughout his life, along the way instilling a love of aviation in his children and grandchildren, but most of all building strong and resilient family relationships and friendships, ensuring that all who knew him mark his passing with sorrow. On behalf of AOPA NZ, we wish Merv a fond farewell and heartfelt thanks. 🐦





IT'S TIME TO UPGRADE YOUR COMMUTE



BECAUSE HOME IS WHERE THE HANGAR IS

HOUSE AND LAND PACKAGES NOW AVAILABLE

# TE KOWHAI AIRPARK

NZTE, WAIKATO



## CHOCKS AWAY

There are just five sections remaining in Stage One of New Zealand's first purpose-built residential air park.

With Stage One officially open, this is your chance to secure your place in a vibrant, purpose-built community for aviation enthusiasts. But with just five sites left, now's the time to get on board!

Stage Two titles expected Q2 2027.

Learn more about our house and land packages and book your site visit today:

[WWW.TEKOWHAIAIRPARK.CO.NZ](http://WWW.TEKOWHAIAIRPARK.CO.NZ)

E 175 09 31

S 37 44 42

TITLES ISSUED



# OzRunways

Electronic Flight Bag

9:41 AM Tue May 7

\*\*\*

100%

CSV NZTI-NZMO Plan Fuel W&B

07/07/26, 01:53: ZK-ETL

|                                       | ALT<br>ft | TAS<br>kts | TRACK<br>°M | WIND<br>°T/Kts  | HDG<br>°M | GS<br>kts | DIST<br>NM   | ETI<br>Min   | EET<br>Min | ETA<br>Z     | FOB<br>L        | FUEL<br>L   | REV<br>Z            | ATA<br>Z | NOTES |
|---------------------------------------|-----------|------------|-------------|-----------------|-----------|-----------|--------------|--------------|------------|--------------|-----------------|-------------|---------------------|----------|-------|
| NZTI                                  |           |            |             |                 |           |           | 141<br>Total | 134<br>Total |            | 02:04<br>ETD | 114<br>Starting | 82<br>Total |                     |          |       |
| ↔ MOUNT HYDE                          | A055      | 110        | 299         | 040°/12<br>User | 305       | 60        | 5            | 6            | 6          | 02:10        | 106             | 3           | 02:10               |          |       |
| TOD - 2NM from MOUNT HYDE             |           |            |             |                 |           |           |              |              |            |              |                 |             |                     |          |       |
| ↔ CLARKS JUNC...                      | A055      | 110        | 265         | 040°/12<br>User | 271       | 105       | 11           | 7            | 13         | 02:17        | 102             | 4           | 02:17               |          |       |
| ↔ CLARKS JU...                        |           |            |             |                 |           |           | 25           | 38           |            | 02:42        | 87              | 15          |                     |          |       |
| NZRX                                  | A055      | 110        | 267         | 040°/12<br>User | 273       | 113       | 33           | 18           | 56         | 03:00        | 77              | 10          | 03:00               |          |       |
| CP - 2NM to NZVL                      |           |            |             |                 |           |           |              |              |            |              |                 |             |                     |          |       |
| NZVL                                  | A045      | 110        | 191         | 040°/12<br>User | 190       | 122       | 36           | 18           | 74         | 03:18        | 67              | 10          | 03:18               |          |       |
| NZVL                                  |           |            |             |                 |           |           | 15           | 89           |            | 03:33        | 58              | 9           |                     |          |       |
| PNR - 48NM to NZMO TOD - 19NM to NZMO |           |            |             |                 |           |           |              |              |            |              |                 |             |                     |          |       |
| NZMO                                  | A055      | 110        | 274         | 040°/12<br>User | 280       | 114       | 56           | 30           | 119        | 04:03        | 41              | 17          | 03:40<br>23NM early | 03:40    |       |
| NZMO                                  |           |            |             |                 |           |           | 15           | 134          |            | 04:18        | 32              | 9           |                     |          |       |
| Alternate                             |           |            |             |                 |           |           |              |              |            |              |                 |             |                     |          |       |
| TOD - 23NM to NZNV                    |           |            |             |                 |           |           |              |              |            |              |                 |             |                     |          |       |
| NZNV                                  | A055      | 110        | 126         | 040°/12<br>User | 121       | 116       | 60           | 31           | 151        | 04:24        | 23              | 18          | 04:11               |          |       |

NOTES

Diverted to NZNV due WX

Help

# The new Plan sheet has Landed

Plan local flights, cross-country trips, and weekend adventures with ease.

The new Plan Sheet in OzRunways for iOS combines multi-sector planning, en-route alternates, and fuel insights in one customisable view.

**Ready to give it a try?**



**See Plan Sheet in action**  
Scan to watch the video



OzRunways

Download on the  
App Store



RWY

GET IT ON  
Google Play

Try **OzRunways on iOS** or  
**RWY on Android** today!

Download from the App Store  
or Google Play for a **FREE 30 day trial**.

**ozrunways.com**