

YMUR MURMURS

MURWILLUMBAH AERO CLUB NEWSLETTER No. 1 March 2025



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Welcome to the first “Murmurs” newsletter. We hope this will be the first of many and will help improve communication among our members while providing a bit of interesting and informative reading.

Please let us know if you have any suggestions on things you’d like to see included and how we could make it more interesting or relevant to your world of aviation.

Email us at: news@ymur.com.au

Philip Arthur & Bill Dennis

Breakfast/flying comps

Monthly club breakfast and flying comp continues on the first Sunday of every month starting at around 8am (NSW time). Flying is dependent on weather of course but the BBQ will be fired up no matter what. Come along and join your fellow aviators for a few hours of chatter about all things aviation and have a go at improving your spot landings.

Monthly meetings

The club's monthly committee meeting is held the second Monday of every month from 7pm (NSW time). All members are welcome to attend as we discuss how the club is going and develop plans for the future. Come along and help determine what your club can do for you and more importantly what you can do for your club.

Snippets from last meeting

- Landing fees causing increased accounting costs as it is difficult to match the charge with the pilot. The docket book will be updated to allow space to enter details of landings away from YMUR. A chart will be produced so the pilot can add it to the docket.
- The landing comp was conducted and results recorded.
- Updated valuations of RYC to be sought for insurance purposes
- Two new members accepted into the club :- Raff Himing and Don Kao. Please welcome them.
- Security to be improved at MAC. A camera network to be proposed for discussion next meeting.
- New club shirts and caps have been ordered. New members will receive both as part of their "welcome package". The MAC membership application fee will increase to \$450 to cover the cost

Landing fees – "Pay as you go" now in operation

As a volunteer run Club it's important that we keep costs to a minimum. As you know it's up to the pilot in command to write out an invoice for hours flown in C172 RYC and pay it within a couple of days of each flight. You may not realise that the club is charged for landings at many airfields and airports. If a member hires RYC and lands out the Club may receive an invoice for that landing that may be anything between \$10 and \$50 depending on where it is. Historically once the invoice has arrived our bookkeeper has checked that invoice against the flying invoices our members had filled out and matched it to the relevant PIC. She then sent an invoice to them for that landing and asks for payment. This all takes bookkeeper time and costs your Club money.

So, the board has decided that from now on it will be the hiring pilot's responsibility to check the landing fees for any out landings and then add that payment to their own invoice when they finish the flight and pay for them. This will save time and cost chasing up old invoices. To make things easier we have posted a list on the notice board of the most common landing strips in the local area and the cost for landing/parking at each one. Please check this first and add the relevant amount to your invoice after you've completed your flight. If the airstrip or airport is not listed, please contact the ARO of the relevant location and ask them what the landing fee/parking fee (if anything) is.

We appreciate all members' co-operation with this initiative.

"What is 'currency' in RYC and why do we insist on it?"

You can only fly VH-RYC, our C172, solo if you're current flying that particular aircraft. Every plane is different so even if you've flown another 172 you're only "current" if you've flown RYC as PIC within the past 90 days. This stipulation is a requirement of our insurance policy. You have to write your due date for currency on the invoice before you fly. If you haven't flown in the past 90 days, a check flight with one of our approved instructor members will set you up to go solo. Call one of the following instructors to arrange a time for a check flight:

Gary Clarke 0409 646 242	Cam Baines 0488 198 544
Dominic McCarthy 0423 283 893	Jason Prigoone 0402 765 317

Another flood event

Once again YMUR has been hit with a flood event, this time courtesy of TC Alfred. Fortunately we were well warned and have taken maximum precautions by elevating RYC as much as practical.



Webcam pics below taken late on Sunday 9th March 2025 with the water rising and rain still falling.



Murwillumbah Aero Club Calendar 2025				10/03/2025
Month	DATE	TIME (NSW)	TIME (QLD)	
January				No Activities for the month of January due to holidays.
February	Sun 2 Feb	08:00	07:00	Club Flying Comp
	Mon 10 Feb	19:00	18:00	Monthly Committee Meeting
March	Sun 2 Mar	08:00	07:00	Club Flying Comp Quiz questions from VFRG (fliers & non-flyers) 1hr Pilot info session in clubroom
	Mon 17th March	19:00	18:00	Monthly Committee Meeting
	Tue 25 Mar '25	19:00	18:00	AvSafety seminar "Loud and clear" at MAC
April	Sun 6 Apr	08:00		Club Flying Comp Quiz questions from VFRG (fliers & non-flyers)
	Mon 14 Apr	19:00		Monthly Committee Meeting
	Fri 25 Apr			Anzac Day Fly Over
	Fri 25 - Sat 26 Apr			Flyaway to Charleville
May	Sun 4 May	08:00		Club Flying Comp Quiz questions from VFRG (fliers & non-flyers)
	Mon 5 May			Labour Day Public Holiday
	Mon 12 May	19:00		Monthly Committee Meeting
June	Sun 1 Jun	08:00		Club Flying Comp Quiz questions from VFRG (fliers & non-flyers) 1hr Pilot info session in clubroom
	Mon 2 Jun	19:00		Monthly Committee Meeting
	Sat 14 Jun			Fly-away to Redcliff (YRED)- Overnight stay
	Sun 15 Jun			"State of Origin" spot landing comp at YRED
July	Sun 6 Jul	08:00		Club Flying Comp Quiz questions from VFRG (fliers & non-flyers) Club Open Day
	Mon 14 Jul	19:00		Monthly Committee Meeting
August	Sun 3 Aug	08:00		Club Flying Comp Quiz questions from VFRG (fliers & non-flyers)
	Mon 11 Aug	19:00		Monthly Committee Meeting
September	Mon 8 Sep	19:00		Monthly Committee Meeting
	TBA			Poss Runway Dinner TBC
	Sun 14 Sep	08:00		Inter Club Challenge
October	Sun 12 Oct	08:00	07:00	Club Flying Comp Quiz questions from VFRG (fliers & non-flyers) 1hr Info session
	Mon 13 Oct	19:00	18:00	Monthly Committee Meeting
November	Sun 2 Nov	08:00	07:00	Club Flying Comp (last for the year) Quiz questions from VFRG (fliers & non-flyers)
	Mon 10 Nov	19:00	18:00	Annual General Meeting
December	Mon 8 Dec	19:00	18:00	Monthly Committee Meeting
	Sun 14 Dec	12:00	11:00	Christmas Party / Presentations

Overnight fly-away to Charleville, 25-26 April

In a desperate attempt to escape the YMUR circuit, Club members Bill Dennis and Dean Litherland are planning an overnight trip to YBCV aka Charleville, the Iconic Aussie Outback Country Town.

The proposed route will see us departing YMUR on ANZAC day morning following a Dawn Service flyover, stopping at Goondiwindi for breaky and fuel, then arriving at YBCV for an afternoon of Two Up! At our destination we'll be taking in the sights and heading out for a meal and beer with the locals Friday evening.

Roma is our fuel stop on the way back home, sometime Saturday 26th.

It is about 830nm for the total trip.

Going route will be YMUR-YSPE-YGDI (fuel) TGDI-YBCV

Return route will be YBCV-YROM (fuel) YWCK-YMUR

Dean will take RYC and Bill is looking for another aircraft to hire from Air Gold Coast. These flights will be on a cost-share basis. Other aircraft owners have expressed interest in coming along and all are invited to join us.

If you own or can beg, borrow or steal an aircraft why not come along?

Please contact Dean (0478 222 022) or Bill (0418 149 159) if you are interested in coming along to share some PIC time or as a passenger.

Below: finals RWY12 at YBCV Bottom: Corones Hotel, Charleville



AvSafety seminar Tuesday 25th March 7pm NSW/ 6pm Qld

CASA are holding an AvSafety seminar on the evening of 25th March at the MAC clubhouse. The title is "Loud and clear". Topics covered will include:

- The basics of human communication
- Aviation communication rules and procedures
- Real-life examples of how things can go wrong
- Techniques and strategies to improve your transmission
- How to use of an AFRU (Aerodrome Frequency Response Unit)
- Standard aviation communication practices.

Register here:

<https://events.humanitix.com/avsafety-seminar-murwillumbah>

This seminar will complement any level of technical knowledge, whether you're a novice or experienced pilot. In the end, it is our shared knowledge that creates a safer environment for everyone.

There's no cost.

Any questions? Special requirements? Contact your local AvSafety advisor on 131 757.



Mouth of the Brunswick River, Brunswick Heads

Attitudes

by Bob Tait

Master the 5P's

Proper preparation prevents poor performance

Job was a crazy Norwegian skydiver. He had somehow ended up in Ingham, a North Queensland country town, working at the local sugar mill. To Job, skydiving was not just a casual pastime, it was an obsession. A reason for living. His rig was always at hand in the corner of his bedroom just in case the opportunity arose to climb into an aircraft (any aircraft) and launch himself into free-fall. Job had no special interest in flying - to him an aircraft was simply a device that was necessary to carry him aloft so that he could once again feel the pressure of the wind tugging at his jumpsuit as he accelerated earthward at terminal velocity.

It was in the middle of the crushing season when Job met Shaun, a quiet spoken Irish cane farmer who happened to own a vintage Tiger Moth. Shaun had purchased the 'tiger' from the Townsville Aero Club some years earlier when the club had decided to update its fleet of training aircraft. Job had not had the opportunity to make a jump for six months during the busy crushing season at the mill and he felt his pulse quicken as he realised that here was a local man with an aircraft readily available. Maybe he could fit a jump in occasionally in the late afternoon after work!

Job was not daunted by the fact that, of all the aircraft in the country, it would be very difficult to find one that was less suited to use as a sky diving platform than a Tiger Moth. To add to the challenge, Job's rig was of the old-fashioned type with the main chute packed along his back and the reserve chute packed separately and mounted across his chest. The ripcord for the chest-mounted reserve chute was positioned on the front of the reserve pack.

As Job and Shaun slid the hangar door open a shaft of sunlight flashed across the Tiger's wings. Shaun busied himself carrying out a daily inspection, while Job began the complex task of positioning and fastening the tangle of parachute harnesses in preparation for the jump. Job walked awkwardly to the plane and, with some assistance from Shaun, managed to settle into the seat in the open front cockpit.



Bob Tait grew up in North Queensland with dreams of becoming an aviator. He'd ride his bike to the local aerodrome on weekends and stay for hours, watching the planes and admiring the pilots. After earning his wings in a Tiger Moth, Bob went on to become one of the country's most trusted aviation theory instructors. A true enthusiast, Bob's enjoyed competing in aerobatics and appearing at air shows, as well as piloting helicopters, and skydiving. He also set an Australian altitude record in a Cessna.

<https://bobtait.com.au/>

Shaun gave Job a quick brief of the starting procedure, swung the prop and the engine spluttered into life. The tiger climbed effortlessly away in the cool afternoon air.

At 6000 feet even the tropical air of North Queensland takes on an invigorating freshness, tugging at the shoulders and heads of the two men as the Tiger is positioned for the drop run over the deserted country aerodrome. Job begins to prepare for exit. He undoes his seat harnesses and throws them aside. Now, surrounded by a maze of struts and flying wires he attempts to stand upright on the seat.

Unfortunately for Job, the Tiger Moth cockpit features a horizontally mounted compass that is positioned in front of the pilot. The compass has a lockable ring that allows the pilot to set his/her heading. As Job attempts to stand, the ripcord of the chest-mounted reserve chute catches on the compass grid ring. There is a flash of white as the reserve chute deploys and is carried away in the slipstream. With a violent tug Job is ripped out of the cockpit, sliding along the fuselage and crashing into the right elevator. The impact breaks his leg. He slides along the leading edge of the elevator and finally vanishes behind the aircraft under the fully deployed reserve parachute. The reserve chute cannot be cut away, so Job has no option but to continue the descent under its smaller canopy.

Shaun knows something dramatic has happened but has been unable to follow the chain of events. He is relieved to find that, even with the badly damaged elevator, the trusty old Tiger still offers an adequate degree of control. He manages to land safely beside Job who is seated beside his deflated reserve chute. He is nursing his broken leg.

How easy it is to fail to identify the latent threats that lurk behind poor planning!!



The Old Station Airshow Weekend – 23-25 May 2025

A perfect Fly-Away destination

by Philip Arthur

The “Old Station” is a 26,000 acre (105 square km) cattle station located in a scenic valley between Gladstone and Rockhampton. Owned by the Creed family since 1869, it's a great spot to fly into for a short stay. The third-generation owner, George Creed, was a private pilot and his passion for flying led him to construct a 2km long grass runway across the creek from the homestead. In recent times the Creeds have branched out into tourism, hosting bus tour groups, weddings, conferences and fly-in visitors in purpose-built motel type rooms. The highlight of the Old Station calendar is however the famous airshow.



Old station runway and accommodation block

The Old Station Air Show, hosted over a long weekend every couple of years, had humble beginnings in 1989, when informal fly-ins for 'smoko' at The Old Station became a regular tradition. George and his wife Leonie, along with their sons, eagerly shared their passion for aviation with visiting pilots and friends.

Soon, recreational pilots from Gladstone and beyond began making regular weekend trips to The Old Station, forming the Old Station Flying Club (OSFC) in 1989. The kettle was always on, and there was always something sweet for 'smoko' - but before landing, pilots had to do a low pass to clear the strip of cattle and avoid obstacles on landing!

These casual gatherings evolved into something bigger, and in 1992, the club hosted its first official fly-in—and they haven't looked back since. Over the years, the event has grown dramatically, with the 2022 show welcoming over 12,000 visitors and more than 200 aircraft on the ground. They've hosted the Queensland Aerobatic Championships, an evening rodeo, and an incredible lineup of warbirds and high-performance aerobatic aircraft, including the full RAAF Roulettes team.

Supporting the community has always been at the heart of The Old Station Air Show. In 1995, the event donated the initial funding needed to establish the Capricorn Helicopter Rescue Service, which continues to save lives today. They've also helped install telecommunications and radar systems in Queensland Aerial Ambulance aircraft and have continued to support local community groups and emergency response groups throughout the years.

Just under three hours flying time from YMUR in a 172, it's a perfect opportunity to venture north over some amazing scenery and camp under the wing, enjoy country hospitality meet and chat with like-minded aviators and view some impressive aerobatic displays. In 2025 it will be held from Friday 23 to Sunday 25 May and it's the year of V12's! They plan to have a P51 Mustang a Spitfire and a P40 Kittyhawk flying routines.

My first visit to an Old Station airshow was in 2016 and here are some notes from my visit at the time:

In a phone call to the station a couple of days before our planned departure I learned that the airstrip was in “very good condition – just mowed” and there’d be marshals on a ground frequency to guide us to the parking area. We just had to call up from 10 miles out on 126.7MHz.

About 90 minutes after departing Redcliffe we were 10 miles out and, hearing that RWY 24 was active, advised our intention to join downwind. The property is located in a valley between hills so it wasn’t until we were about 5 miles out that it suddenly appeared. It was quite a sight, with about 80 or so aircraft parked on the southern side of the strip and about 100 camper vans and caravans on the other side.

Following another plane on downwind, as a chopper flew below and another plane joined behind us from the north, we flew a wide base to give the guy in front plenty of time to land and vacate the runway, then descended to the grass strip.



The surface was a bit bumpy and turning onto the taxiway we couldn’t help but notice a Jabiru with a bent nose wheel. We taxied to the paddock that had been mowed for aircraft parking. The ground marshalls directed us to our parking spot and we shut down. It was an ideal spot to pitch the tents under the wings.

There would have been about 1000 people at the event. It was great to wander around among the impressive range of aircraft that included some vintage replicas and warbirds. Later in the afternoon there was two-hour aerobatics show with a variety of planes. Matt Hall did an impressive series of stunts based on his Red Bull Racing routines, except that instead of flying between inflatable plastic gates he was dodging large eucalypts. On some of the turns he was pulling 8g’s according to the running commentary over the PA system.

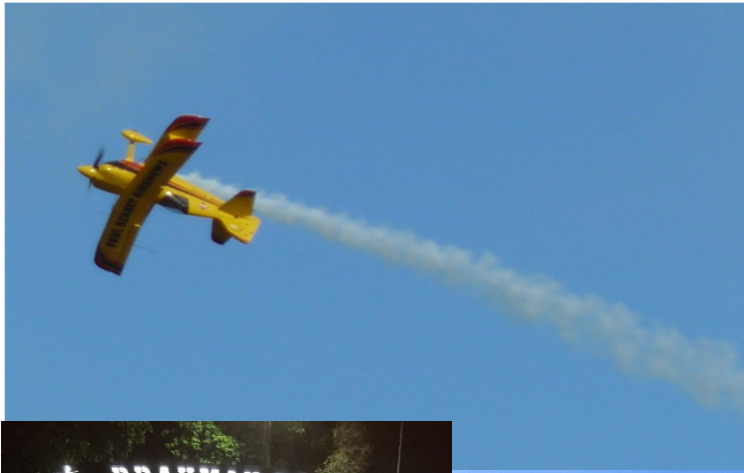
There was also a range of vintage farm machinery, trucks and tractors on display, along with other horticultural oddities. Entertainment included tractor pulling, truck shows, and joy flights. Local service groups and businesses operated food and drink stands and a full bar throughout the day and evening so there was plenty to eat and drink. In the evening a live band played under the starry sky. Matt Hall even displayed more of his many talents, playing drums with the band for a few songs. Four massive braziers filled with ironbark posts and a few glasses of “house red” kept the night chill at bay.

After a good night’s sleep we made use of the hot showers before enjoying a cooked breakfast. By 10am aircraft were starting to head off so we packed up the tents and prepared for departure.

A visit to the Old Station airshow should be a “must” for any aviators in this part of the world. Be part of it this year and organise a group to fly up there. The Redcliffe Aero Club already has a plan to take a few aircraft up and would be happy to have anyone from MAC to join them up there.

Pack the camping gear Clear prop Power on and you’re set for an awesome weekend!

More info is at: <https://theoldstationairshow.com.au/> and <https://www.facebook.com/oldstationflyin/>



Your passengers, your unknown hazards

by Rob Knight

Although it's rare, passengers, and students for instructors, can be unknown hazards you strap into your aircraft and take flying. The law is very clear - you may not allow another person to handle the controls of an aeroplane in flight unless they hold a current pilot licence (or certificate) AND meet the recent experience requirements as required by the appropriate aviation authority. The ONLY exception to this is when the pilot in command holds a valid flight instructor rating or endorsement. Yet I regularly hear of others, most low time pilots, who regularly allow friends, acquaintances, and neighbours too, to, "have a go" when they are flying together.

This can be a disaster. Not often, or there'd have been a spate of accidents where this was the cause, but often enough to justify the legal requirement to preclude this activity except by a select few of the flying fraternity.

Let me illustrate.

My own experiences lead me to describe two serious issues that relate to this activity. The first was whilst working for the Waitemata Aero Club at Ardmore in New Zealand. I was booked in to fly a trial flight (TIF in Australia) for a neighbour of one of my recently qualified PPL's. On the day, a pleasant young woman, aged around 18 years, presented herself to the flight office counter and asked for me. We met, and in the usual manner, I offered her a coffee so we could talk. I asked the standard questions about what she did for a living, did she really want to learn to fly or was this just a fun flight, all the usual preamble, and afterwards felt comfortable that she was a normal young woman, displaying no abnormal tendencies that could be an issue. We went out to the aircraft, a Victa 100, ZK-CHF. We pre-flighted it, I sat her in the cockpit and arranged for her to strap herself in securely, mouthing the usual patter all the while. I strapped in and started the engine. All was apparently normal when we taxied out and during the run-up. I did the DVAs and we were cleared for take-off. All this time she was behaving the same as the last 50,000 trial flights that I had done.

With the take-off clearance in hand, we lined up and I took off. I had the controls and the climb-out to 500 feet was completely normal.

As was the practice, at 500 feet AGL I made the first turn after take-off. It was a rate one to port and only through about 45° of heading change. I patterned the turn but as the left wing went down, just that few degrees, she screamed and became hysterical and leant as far across the aircraft towards me as her harness allowed. However, her flailing arms smashed my expensive sunglasses into my face and cut my eyebrow. I rolled level and pushed her away. With the wings level she returned in an instant to being a normal, intelligent person. I asked her



Rob Knight grew up in New Zealand in the 1950s and 60s with a crazy urge to fly. Employed on his family's farm, his wages were somewhat minimal and he turned to writing to provide an income to support his flying addiction. As a result, Rob was commissioned to provide numerous articles for overseas aviation magazines including the Plane and Pilot Magazine in Santa Monica, California. He became a flight instructor and worked in the industry for many years, eventually as Chief Pilot/Chief Flying Instructor for the Wellington Aero Club.

Now retired and living near Amberley, Qld, in addition to being the editor of the BVSAC Flyer, the newsletter of the Brisbane Valley Sport Aviation Club that is based at Watts Bridge, Rob writes articles for a variety of aero clubs and flying schools in Australia, New Zealand, the UK, and Canada. He has also provided articles for AOPA and EAA magazines and has enjoyed seeing one turned into a video.

how she was feeling and she said she was good. Then she told me that I'd cut my face, but didn't mention my sunnies.

I had decided to discontinue the flight before I levelled out at 1000 feet. By this time, I was overhead Drury, the standard VFR reporting point for joining the circuit from the training area.

This time, I turned to the right. Again, she screamed and forced herself hard against the side of the cockpit and perspex canopy, trying to remain upright whilst we were banked. When I levelled the wings, she quietened down. I called Ardmore and requested an urgent rejoin as I had a distressed student. They expedited my rejoin and landing.

When we returned to the club apron, I could hardly see out of my left eye because of the blood from the cut eyebrow and, as I found later, from another cut on the side of my nose. It had flowed prominently down my face, onto my collar, and down onto my left shoulder. The flight office staff asked about it but I declined to answer, I wanted to get washed up first, so I gave them the exit meter reading from CHF and left them to do the paperwork.

When I returned, now with most of the blood cleaned away and my forehead and nose bridge sporting band-aids, I took her into the briefing room and tried to gather some more details about her but she was completely unperturbed and oblivious to any issues. She said that she had enjoyed the experience immensely and wanted to make another booking. I said that



we were frantically busy right then, and she would need to come back in a couple of months when the rush had died down.

I called my ex-student and asked, in more detail, about her history. He asked her family and they said that she'd been in a bad car accident where the vehicle she was in had been T boned by a concrete truck and rolled over at an intersection. Subsequently she'd failed her driver's license five times due to panic attacks. She never contacted the club for another flight and I neither heard from her or saw her again.

I had not allowed her to touch the controls – her behaviour proved that she was a serious danger!

The second one was a PPL at the Rukuhia Flying Club where I was the CFI. She was out pre-flighting the Cessna 150 she'd booked when I overheard her large, strapping, belligerent passenger telling others that he intended to have a fly whether she would allow it or not. I went out to see her and discretely mentioned his comments. She was quite upset because he'd made similar comments to her. I advised her to cancel the flight but she fearfully declined so I cancelled it for her and we gave a pretext that the aircraft was unserviceable. Later she hired a similar aircraft at another club at another field and had a serious issue in flight when he took the controls from her. She had the presence of mind to advise ATC who arranged for police to meet the aircraft on her return, obviously after he had returned the controls to her. I was later told that she had never flown again, letting her license lapse.

She was forced to relinquish the controls. However, she was warned that this man presented this risk, and she chose to ignore advice not to take the man flying at all.

As an instructor, I was always aware of the initial lack of any medical vetting of a new student. Obviously, this was further enhanced after the episode I mentioned initially in this piece. Other instructors did likewise.

However, a young instructor at a coastal aero club in New Zealand had a new student appear who was a bulldozer driver, physically large and powerful, and mechanically minded. On his initial training flights, he displayed ample dexterity between hand and eye to be a promising PPL student.

Although frequently requested to get his student pilot medical and an SPL issued, he had not at the time they started the initial circuit training. The aircraft being flown was a 90 hp PA18 Cub, a tandem seated aircraft in which the student sits in the front. After the initial circuit briefing, the two, student and instructor, departed for their first dose of circuits.

All the previous flights had been morning ones but this one was a very late afternoon lesson. On their second approach, their Cub was observed to suddenly divert from a normal approach path and dive, almost vertically into the ground at a considerable distance from the near threshold.

It was later reported by the student's family that he suffered from epilepsy and was prone to have fits when exposed to strobe effect - the effect of flashing lights in front of his eyes. This would have happened in this case on approach with an idling propeller and looking into the setting sun.

When the wreckage was examined, it was reported that the rear control column had been pulled back so hard it had torn its mount from the floor. This was considered the result of the instructor pulling back whilst the student pushed and held the front stick forward at the time of his flashing light induced fit.

This is a hazard that all instructors face. There is no easy fix as it's impractical to expect, nor induce, every potential student to go through a medical and pay the costs of a student pilot license before a trial is carried out.

However, don't you think that this is pretty good reason why you don't let others fly your aeroplane if you aren't an instructor?

In yet another example of a passenger causing a disaster, a pilot allowed a young passenger to put his hands and feet on the controls whilst he did a low-level beat up of a friend's farm. In the first run past the friend's house, the Cessna 172 suddenly swerved right and crashed at full flying speed into a stand of trees. The aircraft was totaled, but both occupants escaped with injuries.

The pilot had bruised shins and arm whilst the passenger suffered a badly broken right ankle. This was the ankle on the foot that he pushed forward, trying to apply the "brake" when he got a fright during the low-level run past the house.

The pilot was grounded by NZCAA for illegal low flying, and was later sued by the aero club to recover the excess on the insurance policy. Also, his passenger has been left with a permanent and severe limp from the damage to his ankle restricting his foot movement.

In my last example, a pilot was returning from a fishing trip with family members on board. The aircraft was a PA32 Cherokee 6. The evening prior had been a fun time, with lots of beer flowing for those not piloting and the following morning hangovers were the norm. Whilst loading their chilli bins (eskiies in Australia) a teenage nephew asked if he could ride in the front. The C of G was not a problem and the pilot replied in the affirmative.

After around an hour's uneventful flight, for most of which the nephew slept off the night before, the pilot joined at their destination airfield and made a normal circuit. However, on short final, the newly awakened and cold passenger, reached forward AND PULLED THE MIXTURE CONTROL OUT. He thought, he later said, it was the heater control (it was red - the same as the heater control in their old Standard Vanguard car).

As is common in GA aircraft, the pulling out of the mixture control shut off the fuel and the engine stopped.

Before the pilot could push the mixture control back in and regain power, the aircraft sank heavily into pampas grass just before the airfield boundary. There were only minor injuries to people, but very substantial ones to the propeller, nose gear and engine cowl.

Although the aircraft was insured, the company concerned refused to accept a claim because the pilot in command should have ensured that his front seat passenger, still considerably over the alcohol limit to drive a car, would not touch any of the aircraft controls.

I have knowledge of a number of such incidences, but one should be sufficient here.

So, what do you do when you take a passenger up flying with you? In some cases, you might have known that person for decades and are very well aware of any medical issues that might be hazardous. But what if you don't.....????? Do you ensure that your passenger is briefed not to touch the controls, nor have their feet near the rudder pedals, even during a taxi?

I do accept that in almost all cases, there will be no issue, but there will always remain a chance that there could be a horrible surprise waiting, on every flight with a passenger, or a student.

As the old Boy Scouts motto goes: Be Prepared!

