



# YMURmurs

MURWILLUMBAH AERO CLUB NEWSLETTER No. 6 November/December 2025

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|                   |                       |              |
|-------------------|-----------------------|--------------|
| <b>President:</b> | <b>Martyn Jackson</b> | 0410 669 704 |
| <b>Secretary:</b> | <b>Bruce Gard</b>     | 0418 518 000 |

Welcome to another edition of YMURmurs newsletter.

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](mailto:news@ymur.com.au)

Philip Arthur & Bill Dennis

# Snippets from the Annual General Meeting

The Club's 2025 AGM was held on Monday 10<sup>th</sup> November.

President Marty gave a summary of the year's events.

Last 3 years have been busy years for RYC.

Nov 24/Nov 25 205 hours

Nov 23/Nov 24 144 hours

Nov 22/Nov 23 274 hours

The State of Origin comp was held in June at Redcliffe. Redcliffe were the favourites with twice as many members a MAC. Nevertheless, MAC were victors by 5 points.

In our August interclub comp MAC came 2nd by 0.4 of a point. It was another great day.

The open day to be held on 23rd November. It brings MAC into the public eye and helps with grant applications. Thanks go to Gary and Bruce for organising

We have 19 new members this year. Please make them welcome and show them how things work around the club. Please spend time with new members until they get used to it and help get things done around the clubhouse.

Airfield maintenance. Southern taxiway will be sealed in the near-ish future

RYC is going very well, and will be having its 100 hourly done soon.

The new board was elected. Philip Arthur is an addition to the committee.

Sherie won the Bob Whittle trophy

President's award went to Fay Gard.

## Snippets from December committee meeting

Three aviators applied for membership.

- Tim Chang is originally from Taiwan and has accumulated 240 hours flying time total. He did his CPL at Airways Aviation. He was accompanied by his mate Francis Hang who is from Hong Kong and also did his CPL at Airways. Francis didn't apply to join but would like to next year. Both of these guys would like to build their hours at MAC.
- Gary Field lives at Mermaid Waters and has been flying GA since 1970. He started flying in Scone, and did further training in Coffs Harbour and Armadale. He has a PPL with 280 flying hours. One of his flying adventures in the past was when he flew a Cessna from Essendon to Innisfail. He hasn't flown in recent years for medical reasons but has now cleared the way with his AvMed so wants to get back into flying. He has Microsoft flight simulator at home that he is using to get to know the area including some practice circuits at YMUR.
- Bernie Greal started flying in 1979 at Pt Cook for the RAAF. Bernie is a Queenslander but unfortunately was never posted to Amberley. Instead he spent time with the RAAF at Pierce base in Perth, East Sale,

Tamworth. He flew Helicopters originally but when the government gave the RAAF choppers to the army he became an instructor on Aermacchi MB-326H (Macchi's) in Pierce. He left the RAAF in 1994 and went to the Middle East to fly for BA Systems. Later he went back to the RAAF for a further 16 years and instructed at their basic flying school. Now retired at the Gold Coast, Bernie is instructing Air Force cadets in Diamond DA40s based at Amberley. He would like to take his family flying from time to time so thinks it would be good to hire RYC for local flights or cross country.

There were about 15 hours flown on RYC in November. The 100 hourly will happen before Christmas.

Flying ops went well on 7<sup>th</sup> December. We had a good series of competition flights during the year and thanks to Sherie and Jason for organising them. The monthly flying comps are great way to stay current and improve skills.

On 18<sup>th</sup> January from 8am there'll be a working bee at the club. Come along and help us clean up a bit and make it into a place we all want to be.

Remember that any mechanical issues you notice with RYC must be reported to President Martyn on 0410 669 704. He will then take the appropriate action to ensure we all fly safely.

Please note that ONLY FINANCIAL MEMBERS can fly RYC due to insurance. So if you haven't paid your membership fee do it now. At only \$85 per year (so only \$1.63 per week) to be able to fly when you want it's the best deal around. Remember that if your membership lapses you may be up for \$535 to rejoin the club. So support your club and make a bank transfer to:

Murwillumbah Aero Club

BSB 032563

Account 560358



# Club Open Day

For the second year, on Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> November MAC successfully hosted an open day at YMUR. The main objective was to reach out to the younger ones to provide some initial guidance for a possible career in aviation. The primary audience therefore were students in years 10, 11 and 12 but there were also a few mature age attendees with an interest. You might assume we were thinking of only pilots but it was broader than that. A series of presenters gave an outline of the pathways to becoming a Flight Attendant, Air Traffic Controller, Aircraft Engineer and of course, becoming a pilot. That included Airline, Commercial and RAAF.

Timing is everything in flying and so too the weather. Just as we were preparing for the crowds to arrive, down came the rain. After a quick scramble to relocate the registration desk into the front of the hangar, the skies cleared. The seats soon filled and we were underway.

After a welcome from Club President, Martyn, the floor was given to the primary organiser, Gary Clarke. Gary's excitement and love for aviation is obvious and that was not lost on the audience. Next came a number of speakers from industry.



## Presenters

**David Evans** -- Ex Qantas check captain



David was a check captain for Qantas for many years and was part of the team that safely returned the A380 (QF32) to land after a catastrophic engine failure. His last position with Qantas before retirement was in recruiting. His advice was invaluable to the aspiring pilots in the room. Notably, he said that we are currently in a golden period of recruitment, so the timing is good for aspiring pilots.

**Matt Buckham** – CASA ATC



Matt talked about the various roles within ATC and the personality traits that are important for the job. It can be very demanding at times but also rewarding as teamwork is fundamental. Like most jobs in aviation, shift work is required.

**Dom McCarthy** – discussing RAAF aviation



Although Dom was there as a representative of Airways Aviation, we asked him to cover the various pathways in aviation within the RAAF. He provided a detailed breakdown of the various roles and the diverse training required. It was interesting that only 20 or so pilots are recruited per year, so competition is pretty strong.

**Kristy Driessens – TAFE Kingscliff**



The discussion was primarily on becoming a Flight Attendant and what the job entails. Kingscliff TAFE offer various courses in aviation and it is hoped this will expand into pilot theory to PPL level in the future.





The talks concluded with President Martyn drawing several prizes for the would-be aviators. These included...



A trial Instructional Flight donated by Airways Aviation, won by Kingston B (left)

A trial Instructional Flight donated by Airways Aviation, won by Ezekiel A (2<sup>nd</sup> left)

A 30-minute flight donated by MAC, won by Lotte H. (and her excited mum!)



At the end of the day, there were about two dozen individuals who said their aviation aspirations had increased with their new understanding of the requirements and rewards. So a great success all round.



## DECEMBER'S QUIZ

1. Santa is pre-flighting his sleigh-plane under a starry Christmas Eve sky. He plans to fly under 10,000 ft AMSL. What is the minimum flight visibility required by CASA for VFR?  
A) 3,000 m  
B) 5,000 m  
C) 1,500 m  
D) "As far as the elves can see"
2. Climbing out of the North Pole Aerodrome, Santa enters scattered cloud below 10,000 ft. According to CASA VMC minima, what cloud clearance must he maintain?  
A) Clear of cloud only  
B) 1,500 m horizontal / 1,000 ft vertical  
C) 1,000 m / 500 ft  
D) 600 m / 500 ft
3. While flying over the snowy forests at 2,000 ft AGL in uncontrolled (Class G) airspace, Santa notices the cloud base is just above him. According to CASA, at or below the higher of 3,000 ft AMSL or 1,000 ft AGL, what is required?  
A) 5,000 m visibility + clear of cloud + ground in sight  
B) 1,500 m / 1,000 ft cloud clearance  
C) 1,000 m visibility + ground in sight  
D) No specific minima
4. Smoke from Christmas bonfires reduces visibility to 4,000 m while Santa is at 2,500 ft. He's clear of cloud and has ground reference. Is he legal under VFR?  
A) Yes — conditions are "festive enough"  
B) No — visibility is below CASA's VFR minimum
5. Santa is about to enter Candy Cane Tower's controlled zone (Class D), but the weather dips below VMC. He wants to request Special VFR (SVFR) clearance. For a fixed-wing aircraft, what is the minimum SVFR flight visibility (daylight) under CASA?  
A) 800 m  
B) 1,600 m  
C) 3,000 m  
D) 5,000 m

6. "Flying on top" of a cloud layer — above the top of a cloud — is tempting to Santa because of the view of the Northern Lights. True or False: Under CASA, he may legally cruise on top provided he remains in VMC, maintains required separations, and is confident he can later descend through or around clouds to a VMC layer.
7. Santa's sleigh-plane is fast, but he must obey CASA's speed limit. Below 10,000 ft AMSL (VFR), what is the maximum indicated airspeed (IAS) permitted (unless authorised otherwise)?
  - A) 200 kt
  - B) 250 kt
  - C) 300 kt
  - D) No limit — it's Christmas!
8. Santa's route crosses into a controlled airspace (CTA/CTR) to deliver his presents. What must he do to enter and stay legal?
  - A) Fly through, assuming ATC will let him by on Christmas spirit
  - B) Obtain an ATC clearance, or remain outside controlled airspace
  - C) Descend below 500 ft to avoid controlled airspace
  - D) Squawk 7000 and rely on his Rudolph-powered transponder
9. Low on fuel, Santa is flying very low (under the alleviation level) over the snowfields. According to CASA for low-level VFR, what is required for radio equipment / use in non-controlled airspace (Class G)?
  - A) No radio needed, because elves use hand signals
  - B) Carry the appropriate radio and use it on the correct frequency where required
  - C) Only use a mobile phone (they have good coverage at the North Pole)
  - D) Use reindeer bells to communicate
10. Santa is cruising at 4,500 ft AMSL (odd + 500 ft rule). ATC asks him to change altitude for traffic separation. What should he do?
  - A) Refuse — he insists on staying on "Santa's Altitude"
  - B) Comply with the lawful ATC instruction
  - C) Descend to 2,000 ft so he can see chimneys more clearly
  - D) Climb to 10,500 ft and blame the reindeer

ANSWERS ARE ON THE LAST PAGE



| Murwillumbah Aero Club<br>Calendar 2026 |                |               |               | Updated 12 Dec 2025                                                                                      |
|-----------------------------------------|----------------|---------------|---------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Month                                   | DATE           | TIME<br>(NSW) | TIME<br>(QLD) |                                                                                                          |
| January                                 | Sun 18 Jan     | 08:00         | 07:00         | Working bee at clubrooms (Garden and Interior)                                                           |
| February                                | Sun 1 Feb 26   | 08:00         | 07:00         | Club Flying Comp                                                                                         |
|                                         | Mon 9 Feb '26  | 19:00         | 18:00         | Monthly Committee Meeting                                                                                |
| March                                   | Sun 1 Mar '26  | 08:00         | 07:00         | Club Flying Comp                                                                                         |
|                                         | Mon 9 Mar '26  | 19:00         | 18:00         | Monthly Committee Meeting                                                                                |
| April                                   | Sun 5 Apr '26  | 08:00         |               | Club Flying Comp                                                                                         |
|                                         | Mon 13 Apr '26 | 19:00         |               | Monthly Committee Meeting                                                                                |
|                                         | Sat 25 Apr '26 |               |               | Anzac Day Fly Over                                                                                       |
| May                                     | Sat 2 May '26  |               |               | Back to Murwillumbah fly-in Day 1                                                                        |
|                                         | Sun 3 May '26  |               |               | Back to Murwillumbah fly-in Day 2                                                                        |
|                                         | Sun 3 May '26  | 08:00         |               | No flying comp due fly-in                                                                                |
|                                         | Mon 11 May '26 | 19:00         |               | Monthly Committee Meeting                                                                                |
| June                                    | Sun 14 Jun '26 | 08:00         |               | Club Flying Comp<br>Quiz questions from VFRG (fliers & non-flyers)<br>1hr Pilot info session in clubroom |
|                                         | Mon 15 Jun '26 | 19:00         |               | Monthly Committee Meeting<br>(Kings Birthday long weekend)                                               |
|                                         | Sat 13 Jun '26 |               |               | "State of Origin" spot landing comp at YMUR ???                                                          |
| July                                    | Sun 5 Jul '26  | 08:00         |               | Club Flying Comp<br>Quiz questions from VFRG (fliers & non-flyers)<br>Club Open Day                      |
|                                         | Mon 13 Jul '26 | 19:00         |               | Monthly Committee Meeting                                                                                |
| August                                  | Sun 2 Aug '26  | 08:00         |               | Club Flying Comp<br>Quiz questions from VFRG (fliers & non-flyers)                                       |
|                                         | Mon 10 Aug '26 | 19:00         |               | Monthly Committee Meeting                                                                                |
| September                               | Sun 6 Sep '26  | 00:00         |               | Club Flying Comp                                                                                         |
|                                         | Sat 12 Sep '26 |               |               | Shute Harbour Runway Dinner<br>Possible fly-away                                                         |
|                                         | Mon 14 Sep '26 | 19:00         |               | Monthly Committee Meeting                                                                                |
|                                         |                | 08:00         |               | Inter Club Challenge                                                                                     |
| October                                 | Sun 4 Oct '26  | 08:00         | 07:00         | Club Flying Comp<br>1hr Info session                                                                     |
|                                         | Mon 12 Oct '26 | 19:00         | 18:00         | Monthly Committee Meeting                                                                                |
| November                                | Sun 1 Nov '26  | 08:00         | 07:00         | Club Flying Comp (last for the year)<br>Quiz questions from VFRG (fliers & non-flyers)                   |
|                                         | Mon 9 Nov '26  | 19:00         | 18:00         | Annual General Meeting                                                                                   |
|                                         | Sun 29 Nov '26 | 12:00         | 11:00         | Christmas Party / Presentations                                                                          |
| December                                | Mon 7 Dec '26  | 19:00         | 18:00         | Monthly Committee Meeting                                                                                |

# Have you paid your membership fee?



We don't want you to join the army  
We just want you to be financial so you can fly RYC

At just \$1.63 per week it's the best value in the land

Transfer your \$85 to:  
Murwillumbah Aero Club

BSB 032563

Account 560358

## Christmas Party December 7<sup>th</sup>

This year's Christmas party was held in conjunction with the monthly flying comp. As a result, the actual party didn't kick off until around 2pm because up until then people were still queuing up for circuits in RYC. Not the best outcome as some members had things to do and places to go so as a result when the ham finally was brought out the numbers were down. Nevertheless, those who persevered had an enjoyable time and the winners of best flyers awards were jubilant and congratulated by all present





## MAC WhatsApp Group

Keep in touch with other members

Stay up to date with Club activities

Post aviation events, flyaway ideas, photos and videos of your flying adventures or aviation info

Invite others along if you're planning a flight  
and want some company

Raise questions, share ideas, or flag any issues  
with aircraft or facilities

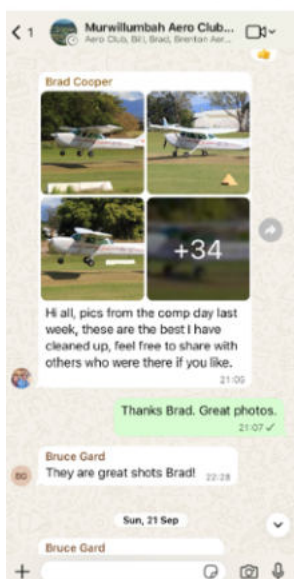
Text or talk to

Nick Christian on 0413 171 664

or

Philip Arthur on 0412 217 510

to sign up



# Curly's corner

by Phil (Curly) Ware

*Phil Ware is a life member of the Redcliffe Aero Club with a long and illustrious career in the RAAF and Air Traffic Control in Brisbane. After retiring three times from various ATC roles, he finally managed to retire properly but is still always keen to share his knowledge and experience to demystify ATC for the rest of us.*



Years ago, the main training aircraft at the Club was the Cessna 152, with three in use: BUE, BUQ and IVW. IVW was eventually consigned to the scrap metal yard and a new C172 bearing that call sign was subsequently purchased by the Club. Even though all trainee pilots studied and passed their weight and balance theory, they were allowed to use a "standard weight" of 77kg per adult instead of actual weights. This approach proved problematic at times.

One day a newly qualified private pilot received a phone call from the Club, letting him know that a new C152 had been added to the fleet and asking him whether he would come out and fly it. The pilot duly arrived at Redcliffe, dipped the tanks and found it needed refuelling. The Cessna 152 had a total capacity of 92 litres and a fuel flow rate of 27 litres per hour so it always seemed a good idea to fill the tanks, which was done. While the refuelling was underway, a man of massive proportions wandered over to observe. He was a detective sergeant from the then Woolloongabba CIB, and was indeed a b-i-i-i-g man. He'd always wanted to be a pilot and asked whether there was any chance of him going for a ride. Approval was given, the passenger was strapped in, given his safety briefing and the C152 started up and taxied to the holding point for Runway 07. The pilot had made many flights in C152s so he made a quick mental calculation of the W&B: 2 adults at 77 kg each plus 92 litres of fuel - weight within limits - fine. It was a hot day, and the QNH was relatively low. The take-off roll commenced, and about three quarters of the way down the runway, noticing the acceleration was not quite as expected, the pilot began to have misgivings about the aircraft weight and conditions. Nevertheless, the take-off continued and the aircraft became airborne and climbed away. It was a very low climb rate however – similar to how a toilet block would climb, if it had wings!

Speed was held at the "Best Rate of Climb Speed" as the aircraft skimmed over the coastline and the pilot commenced a 5-degree left turn, so as not to lose altitude in the turn. Suddenly he noticed a placard on the instrument panel that he hadn't seen before. It read:

**CAUTION - This aircraft is fitted with long range fuel tanks  
With 2 POB do not fill above 92 litres**

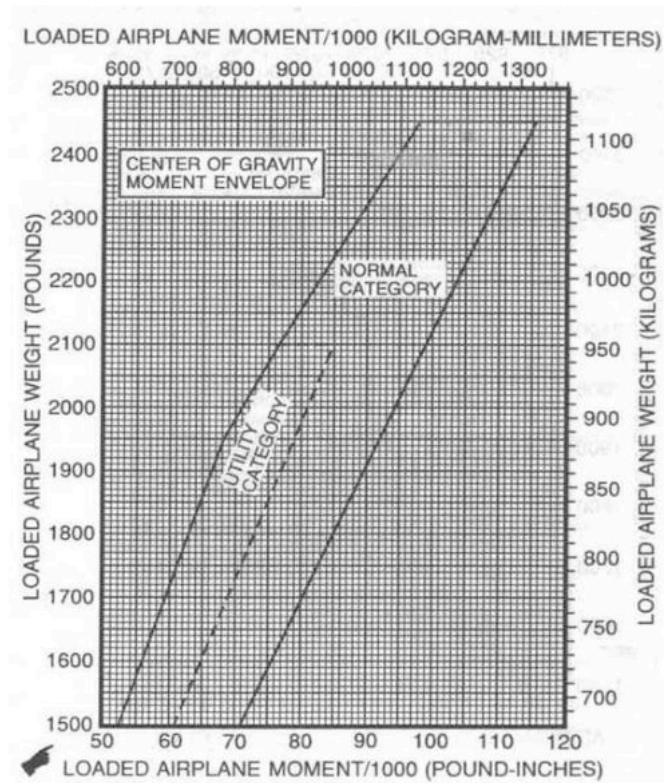
It was common knowledge that a C152 normally held 92 litres but this wasn't a normal C152. With long range tanks, this particular aircraft had taxied out with 160 litres on board, making it way over the maximum take-off weight. Moreover, the pilot suddenly realised that it was also way over the maximum landing weight! What to do? He quickly calculated that he had about three hours of flight time before he'd burned enough fuel for the aircraft to be back below legal landing weight. So he said to his passenger "How would you like a run up to Hervey Bay and back?" The passenger was delighted and so the

flight proceeded over water to Hervey and back with mixture full rich to use as much fuel as possible and, on return to Redcliffe, calculation confirmed that the aircraft was finally below its legal landing weight.

It was a "greaser" of a landing. The plane taxied in and parked and the passenger was ecstatic. Never in his life had he flown with such a competent pilot! And with that he fished some notes out of his wallet, stuffed them into the pilot's shirt pocket and said that the best part of the flight was the low-level departure from Redcliffe, where he had such a good close look at his properties. He didn't realise just how close he came to arriving prematurely in the back yard of one of those properties!

Ignorance is indeed bliss and the passenger had enjoyed a very blissful flight while the pilot had learned some valuable lessons. So he counted his lucky stars and contemplated what he'd learned that day:

1. Always check your weights (including fuel on board) and do thorough weight and balance calculations before every flight; never just rely on "convention" or assurances from others.
2. If there is any doubt during the take-off run abort the take off run - do not take off.
3. If there are doubts during the subsequent flight, wait for conditions to improve and/or adjust the actual weight being carried. As a former RAC Chief Pilot said, "When you open the throttle, you must have already asked yourself all the questions and have all the answers that permit you to take off safely and legally."



# Attitudes

by Bob Tait

## The dominoes at play

*Most accidents are the result of a series of 'dominoes' that fall in a particular order*

A perfect autumn morning offered near perfect flying conditions for the planned flight from south-east Queensland to a destination in the far north-west of the state. Jenny (not her real name) and her four passengers arrived at the airport early to load and prepare the Beechcraft Bonanza for the long flight. Although Jenny was a capable pilot with a number of long flights in Cessna 210s in her log book, she was less familiar with the Bonanza. This particular Bonanza featured a 'toss over' control column. The control column was centrally mounted with a single control yoke at the end of a rotatable arm. This permitted the control yoke to be situated in front of the occupant of the left-hand seat, or rotated to be positioned in front of the occupant of the right-hand seat.

*The first domino had fallen.*

The pilot who had last flown the aircraft on the previous afternoon had been practising short field landings. In this configuration, with only a pilot on board with full flap and landing gear extended, the Bonanza required almost full nose-up trim to maintain the reduced approach speed on final. The pilot did not reset the trim after landing.

*The second domino had fallen.*

Jenny checked the fuel and satisfied herself that the tanks were completely full, then carried out the remainder of the daily inspection. She organized the stowage of the baggage and directed the passengers to



their seats. She was becoming concerned that the departure was running late and was keen to make good her flight-planned departure time. The aircraft was very close to its maximum take-off weight. During her daily inspection she had not noticed that the elevator trim was in the fully nose-up position.

*The third domino had fallen.*

Like many general aviation aircraft, the Bonanza's trim is achieved by rotating a wheel situated just beneath the instrument panel. Jenny was not a particularly big person and she had to stretch forward in her seat to operate the trim wheel. The recommended procedure is to actually rotate the trim wheel to the full extent of its travel and then set it to the desired take-off position. Jenny checked the trim position indicator instead and satisfied herself that the trim was in the neutral position. The trim position indicator is a ribbon that moves beneath a transparent window with a lubber line to indicate the current setting. The symbols 'D', 'O' and 'U' indicate fully nose down, neutral and fully nose up respectively.

Jenny saw the letter 'U' which indicates fully nose up. However the lubber line was running across the top of the 'U' and she mistook it to be 'O'.

*The fourth domino had fallen.*



The Bonanza's engine spluttered into life. As the fully laden aircraft gathered speed on the take-off run, the nose began to rise and, in spite of her desperate efforts to stop it, Jenny could not prevent the aircraft from adopting a high nose attitude and finally becoming airborne. The occupant of the right-hand seat, who was also a pilot, couldn't help because there was only one control yoke and it was in front of Jenny.

*The fifth domino had fallen.*

Finally, with the aircraft leaving ground effect, it stalled and descended into trees where the wings were torn off as it exploded into flames and crashed into a creek.

*The sixth domino had fallen.*

Although it seems impossible to imagine how, everyone on board escaped, with only Jenny suffering serious burns from which she recovered well.

*The 'toss over' control column that allowed either pilot to take control, but not both*



*The remains of the Bonanza as it came to rest in flames*



# Private Pilot Theory Lectures

by Bob Tait



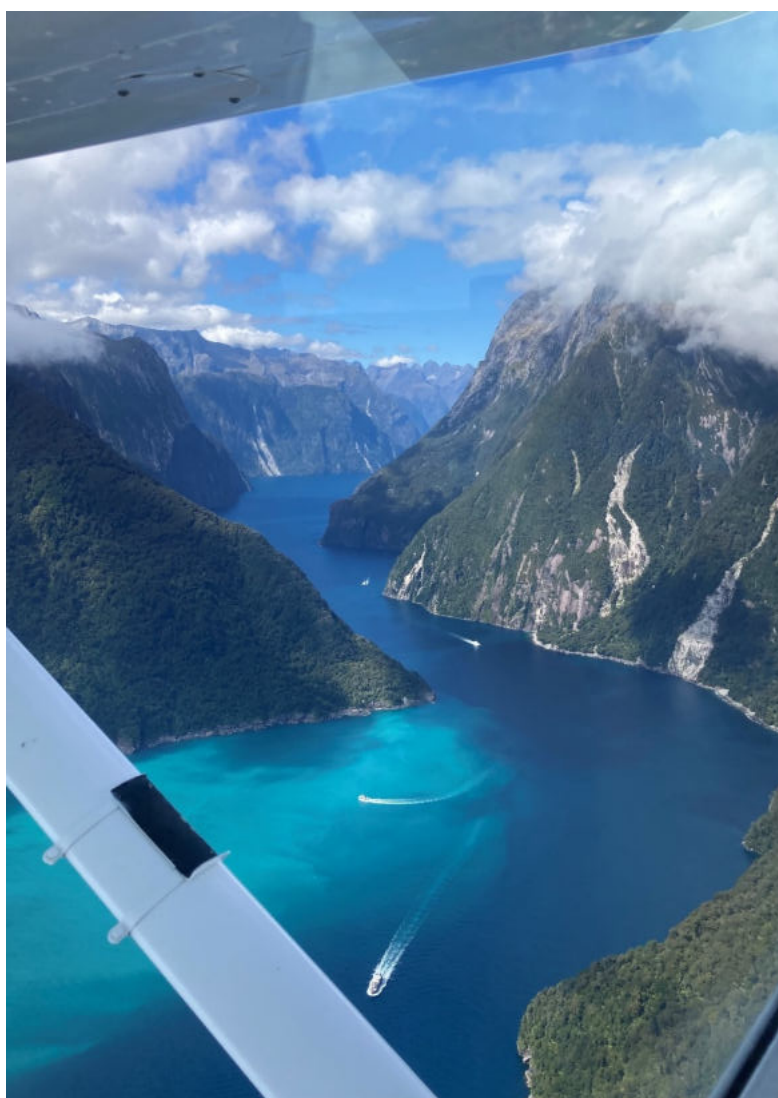
**Private Pilot Theory Lectures for the beginner with no previous experience!**

**Full details at [www.bobtait.com.au](http://www.bobtait.com.au)**

# Three perfect days

by Philip Arthur

In March 2023 my wife Sigi and I flew to the South Island of New Zealand for a holiday. The original idea was to join a group of friends on a cycle trip along the Central Otago Rail Trail but it gave me the perfect opportunity to tick off a bucket list item.



Some years before a member of the Redcliffe Aero Club did a one-day mountain flying course at a flying school called Learn to Fly NZ <https://www.learntoflynz.com> in Wanaka, about one hour's drive from Queenstown. He wrote up his experience for the club's magazine and inspired me to do something similar. I'd visited the South Island numerous times for work during the 1980s and 90s and had good memories of the region and thought how cool it would be to fly there and see it all from the air. So, after being invited on the cycling holiday in Otago, I contacted Learn to Fly NZ. We had plenty of time, so I booked myself in for a three-day mountain flying course. It seemed that three days would give me enough time to learn the basic skills for flying in the mountains and visit a few spectacular spots while not costing the earth. Little did I know that it would exceed all my expectations.

Arriving in Queenstown on 1<sup>st</sup> March, we knew we'd arrived because the Virgin pilot provided us with a rather

"firm" landing, and I said to Sigi "I hope I don't do any like that while I'm on the course." We headed straight over the Crown Range to Wanaka, where we'd booked a motel for four nights.

The next morning, I drove the 10 minutes out to the airport and met up with instructor Karl Hillary at 8:30. Karl was a local who'd been working for the company for only 12 months but appeared to know a bit about mountain flying as he took me through an interactive PowerPoint presentation. He explained basics like never fly up the middle of a valley, keep to one side (preferably the right but it depends on the winds) so you have as much room as possible if you want to turn around. Fly on the side with the updrafts to give you additional lift

and watch out for turbulence and rotors on the lee side when you fly over a ridge or pass. Approach a ridge at 45 degrees so you can turn and fly away from it if you decide you might not make it over. And so on. There was about an hour of classroom instruction before we headed out to the aircraft, a Cessna 172N ZK-MDR with a STOL modification on the leading edge of the wing and a touch screen Garmin G3X glass cockpit.

After a short taxi out to RWY29 we took off and turned to the east, where we tried some basic turns. Karl was illustrating how tightly a 172 can turn at 100 knots so I had a bit of an idea how much room we'd actually need in a narrow valley. Then it was off to said narrow valleys where I practised flying as close as possible to the right-hand wall and then turning 180s and 360s. From there we flew north over a couple of passes and Lake Pukaki to Mount Cook. It was perfect conditions. Clear blue sky and a bit of wind to create some updraughts and downdraughts.

Approaching Mt Cook, Karl told me we could legally fly above 10,000ft and up to 13,000ft without supplementary oxygen for up to 30 minutes. It would allow us to fly higher than the peak of Mt Cook (12,218ft). Soon we were climbing, climbing, climbing up over the Mt Cook airstrip and past the Heritage resort to get a magnificent view of the mountain and its glaciers.

It was a pleasant flight back, following a variety of valleys and crossing a number of passes, approaching Wanaka from the north over Lake Hawea. End of Day 1. It had been a great day.

On Day 2 I had another instructor, Austin. Austin Jones had been flying out of Wanaka for about eight years. Karl had told me that Austin knows every valley and mountain pass intimately so would be my best guide for the two remaining days of the course.



*Mount Cook above and Lake Pukaki below*



*Lake Wakatipu*



*Lake Wanaka*



Austin outlined the plan for the day. There was a bit more cloud than on Day 1, which would be good for learning how to judge which valleys to fly down and which passes we could (or couldn't) make it over. We'd fly west, over the famous Skippers Canyon and the northern end of Lake Wakatipu, and head south over Lake Te Anau to Manapouri. After a lunch stop we could fly over to the west coast and up the coast to Haast and then try to fly back inland over the Haast Pass. Great plan.

Austin also introduced me to [gopreflight.co.nz](http://gopreflight.co.nz), the local flight planning tool. It allowed me to check the area weather, TAFs etc.

I also logged into [aip.net.nz](http://aip.net.nz), where you can find the NZ version of ERSA, aerodrome diagrams, instrument approaches and departures and other operational data.

Taking off over Lake Wanaka we had spectacular views of the town and the surrounding mountains and were soon at about 5000ft over Skippers Canyon and the Shotover River, with a clear view of the southern arm of Lake Wakatipu in the background. The Skippers Canyon Road is notorious for its sheer drops to the river below as you can see in the photo (right). It was originally built to allow access to gold mining areas in the canyon.

From there we dodged some cloud and avoided another light aircraft that was climbing through the valley below us and were soon passing over Glenorchy at the northern end of Lake Wakatipu. Avoiding the controlled airspace around Queenstown we flew via various valleys and passes to Lake Te Anau and Lake Manapouri where we landed for lunch.

Taking off to the north, we flew to the northern end of Lake Te Anau and then followed the Hollyford Valley to the coast. It was one magnificent view after the other even with the increase in cloud cover. It was in fact becoming gradually more difficult to avoid the clouds but Austin was confident that we'd find our way so on we went and popped out on the west coast at Martins Bay, home to a rather exclusive fly-in resort for people who want peace and quiet and maybe a bit of fishing.



*Skippers Canyon*

Flying north along the coast Austin pointed out Big Bay and the inlets that pepper the coastline and in about 20 minutes we were over Haast, a small settlement on the coast. It's at the end of the road over the Haast Pass, the only land-based route from Central Otago to the west coast. The clouds were BKN at about 2000ft by now, so we cautiously flew inland, up the valley, following the road, searching for a gap in the clouds. Finally, Austin decided it was a lost cause and announced we'd fly back along the coast and find another valley to head inland. Retracing our steps, we made it to the Hollyford Valley and climbed between the clouds and finally made it over a pass. On the eastern side of the main range the sky cleared. We were back in SCT to FEW descending back over Lake Wanaka. The end of another perfect day.

When Day 3 dawned, the clear blue sky beckoned as Sigi and I drove to the airport. Austin was ready and waiting. He told us the plan was to fly via a number of valleys and passes to the coast and then south to Milford Sound. We'd land there for lunch and then consider where to from there.

This time Sigi would fly with us, as she was keen to see Milford Sound and soon all three of us were climbing out over Wanaka once again and heading to the west coast, this time wearing Hutchwilco life jackets. These

are made in NZ and are probably the most comfortable ones I've worn. We needed them as we'd be landing and taking off over the water at Milford.

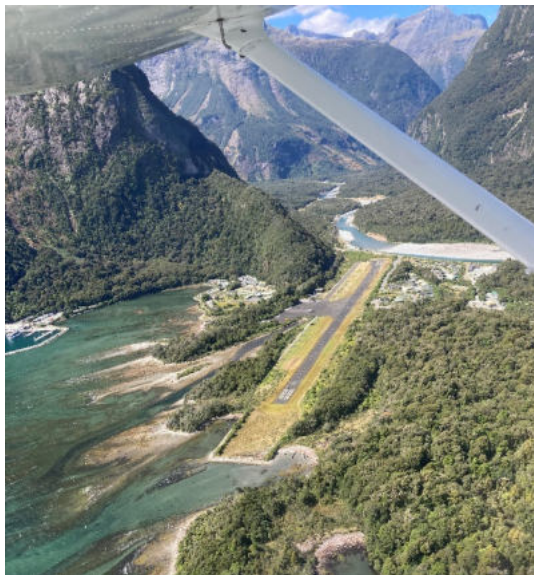
Taking off to the west again, we had amazing views of Mt Aspiring and various glaciers as we climbed out.

After negotiating numerous valleys and passes we reached the coast where, after flying a further ten or so miles south, we descended to 2500ft for the flight into Milford Sound. We hugged the southern side of the valley past Mitre Peak and descended to 1000ft. With an easterly wind blowing up the sound from behind, we'd have to turn and land into wind from the 'mountain end'.



*Mount Aspiring*

*Milford Sound airstrip*



Austin explained how I'd have to join downwind just to the right of the Milford strip and head directly for the mountains, then turn 180 degrees in the valley behind and align ourselves with the runway to land to the west. He coached me all the way through the approach, while Sigi did some Hail Marys in the back seat. During the approach it was a bit gusty, with some slight turbulence and, being surrounded by jaw dropping scenery, it was breathtaking in more ways than one!

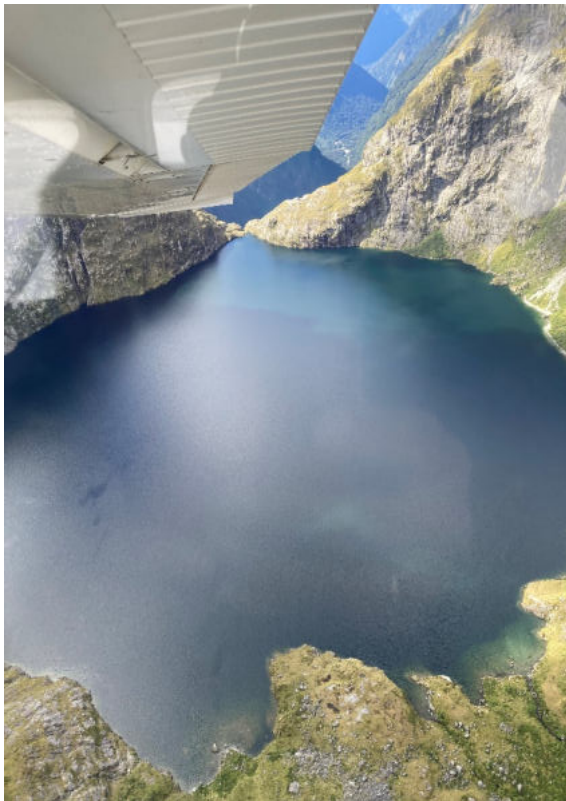
A five-minute walk led to the cafe where we ate our lunch and observed all the other day trippers who had mostly come in by ground transport. We felt very fortunate to have been able to fly in.

*Milford Sound*



It was the sort of day that pilots dream of. It's why I learned to fly. A perfect day in Milford Sound, which is renowned for its many not-so-perfect days.

Soon we were back at MDR, donning our life jackets and starting to prepare for departure. As we taxied out Austin told me that after takeoff I should "hug" the mountain on the right side of the sound to maximise the lift. We lifted off and I flew close to the cliffs, having now become fairly used to being close to mountain sides, and we caught an updraft that had us climbing at 2000ft/min. Not bad for a 172.



*Lake Quill*

Reaching 5000ft, we banked left and passed Mitre Peak and entered the Arthur River Valley. Climbing steadily, I could soon see a waterfall that was spilling out over a ledge before us. It was the 580 metres high Sutherland Falls. Continuing to climb, we passed over the top of the falls and entered a circular crater that contains Lake Quill, a brilliant blue alpine lake.

Austin wanted to demonstrate how good the 172 is at getting out of tight corners in the mountains so he told me to aim for the left-hand side of the crater and wait for his command before starting to turn. When we were really close to the cliff (Sigi saying more Hail Marys in the back seat) and a couple of “wait for its” from Austin, he said “Ok, start a GENTLE bank to the right”. I banked right and put in some rudder but as I tried to turn the yoke a little bit further noticed I couldn’t bank any more - Austin’s knee was (purposely) blocking his yoke (and therefore also mine) from turning any further. We were doing a 15-degree bank and he didn’t want me to bank any more. He said that was plenty and sure enough we managed to stay far enough away from those cliffs to our left as we circumnavigated the lake.

Completing the 360-degree turn, and having thus proven Austin’s point, we headed back over the edge of the Sutherland Falls as the ground dropped away to the valley floor 600 metres below.

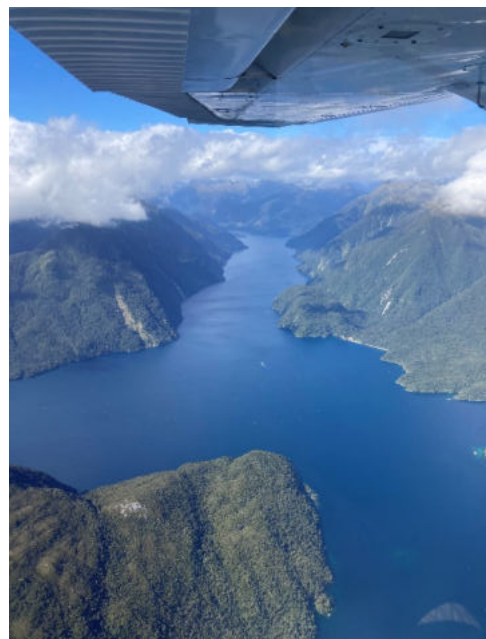
Banking right, we headed over the Mackinnon Pass (3,800ft) where we could just make out one of the huts used by walkers on the Milford Track perched on the ridge.

Sigi had originally wanted to catch a bus to Doubtful Sound that day but they’d been booked out, so she’d decided to come flying with us instead. Austin suggested we fly on to Doubtful Sound so she didn’t miss out. He gave me the task of planning a route through the valleys west of Lake Te Anau to the coast, while avoiding clouds and mountains. I chose one with a pass height of about 2000ft at its end and made our way up and over, dodging clouds and staying on the windward side of the valleys to catch the updrafts as we went.

Fifteen minutes later we were at the coast heading south towards the mouth of Doubtful Sound. Flying into and along the sound all the way over the sound to Deep Cove proved to be another dramatic spectacle.

After flying over the pass at the end of the sound we were approaching Lake Manapouri when Austin said “Oh it’s later than I thought. We’d better head back home asap. Climb to 9500ft so we can fly direct to Wanaka!”

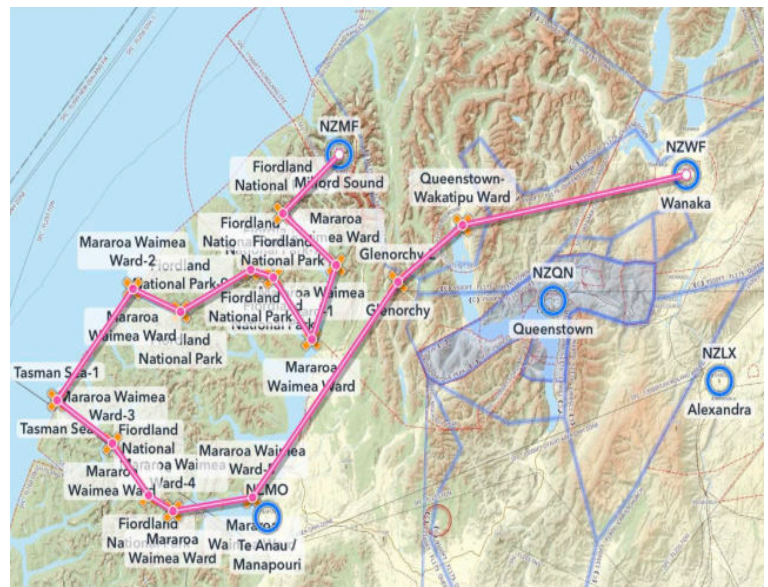
*Doubtful Sound*



Passing over Lake Te Anau we did a bit of a dog leg to avoid the controlled airspace west of Queenstown then crossed the northern end of Lake Wakatipu before descending over Skippers Canyon and the rugged mountains around the Cardrona ski field on the way back to Wanaka.

We joined midfield crosswind to land on RWY29 at Wanaka. The end of another incredible day's flying.

It was thanks to Austin, Karl and [LearntoflyNZ](#) for the three-day course that worked out better than I'd ever imagined. The most amazing flying experience of my life. We just don't have anything like it in Australia. To fellow aviators I cannot understate how much fun the course was. I recommend it highly to anyone interested in challenging both their flying skills and themselves in such a beautiful part of the world.



## RYC currency reminder

Just a reminder that members 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 |

## The Flight Docket

Our flight docket (as shown to the right) that must be filled out when you hire C172 RYC.

**Please fill out all parts of the form each time you fly including date and time of your flight.**

Also remember that it's now up to you as pilot in command to include any landing/parking fees (if applicable) along with hours flown in your invoice and pay them within a couple of days of each flight. To make things easier we've posted a list of the most common landing strips in the local area on the notice board along with the cost for landing/parking at each one. Please check this list first and add the relevant amount to your invoice after you've completed your flight. If the airstrip or airport isn't 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 filling out the form, including all landing fees, each time you hire the aircraft.

**Also note that the hire rate is now \$270 per hour.**

**MURWILLUMBAH AERO CLUB INC.**

ABN 59 001 253 872    accounts@ymur.com.au  
PO BOX 254 MURWILLUMBAH NSW 2484    PHONE 02 6672 3235

**FLIGHT DOCKET**    **9999**

**TAX INVOICE/RECEIPT**



**MURWILLUMBAH AERO CLUB**

| AIRCRAFT | DATE OF FLIGHT | TIME OF HIRE |
|----------|----------------|--------------|
| VH-RYC   |                | UNTIL        |

| PASSENGERS / INSTRUCTOR |                            |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. ....                 | Mobile 04 ..... Wt .....kg |
| 2. ....                 | Mobile 04 ..... Wt .....kg |
| 3. ....                 | Mobile 04 ..... Wt .....kg |

|               |    |
|---------------|----|
| VDO END       |    |
| VDO START     |    |
| HOURS         |    |
| RATE \$/HR    | \$ |
| FLIGHT CHARGE | \$ |

PILOT IN COMMAND (PRINT)

.....

Mobile 04 ..... Wt .....kg

|                            |                            |                         |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------|
| I AM CURRENT IN RYC UNTIL: | MY MEDICAL IS VALID UNTIL: | NEXT FLIGHT REVIEW DUE: |
|                            |                            |                         |

Note: For insurance purposes you must have flown RYC within the last 90 days to be current. If not, you need to do a check flight with one of the Club's approved check pilots before flying solo.

FLIGHT ROUTE (UNDERLINE ANY LANDINGS)

I undertake to comply with the Approved Flight Manual which I have read and had explained to me including its requirements and any special instructions.

If the Club's aircraft or any other property is damaged or someone is injured whilst the Club's aircraft is in my care and control I will indemnify the Club for the full amount of any insurance claim excess/ deductible, or up to \$5,000 if no insurance claim is made, at the discretion of the Club's board.

My legal right to fly is current in all respects including RYC currency, medical certificate and flight review.

PIC ARN/LICENCE NO..... LICENCE CLASS.....

| FLIGHT CHARGE | LANDING AT | LANDING AT | LANDING AT | LANDING AT | OTHER FEES | TOTAL CHARGES |
|---------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|---------------|
| \$            | \$         | \$         | \$         | \$         | \$         | \$            |

CHARGE TO: .....

MEMBER NO: .....

SIGNATURE: .....

**BANKING DETAILS**

**MURWILLUMBAH AERO CLUB**

**BSB: 032563    ACC NO: 560358**

## QUIZ ANSWERS

1. B — 5,000 m
2. B — 1,500 m horizontally / 1,000 ft vertically
3. A — 5,000 m + clear of cloud + ground in sight
4. B — No (visibility too low)
5. B — 1,600 m
6. **True**, with caveats (must maintain VMC, cloud separation, safe descent)
7. B — 250 kt
8. B — Must get ATC clearance or remain outside controlled airspace
9. B — Carry the appropriate radio and use it on the correct frequency where required
10. B — Comply with ATC instruction

