AUTUMN 2026

THE PATRICIAN

The Victoria Flying Club ~ Aviation Excellence Since 1946



MUNCHO LAKE ICE STRIP FLY-IN

TOBYN BURTON IN THE NORTHERN ROCKIES

ALSO:

ISLAND HOPPING IN SOUTHERN DENMARK

THE FURTHER ADVENTURES OF GERNOT KRÄMER

THE PROFESSIONAL PILOT

AND MORE!

The Patrician

"To promote flying and aviation in general, and to teach and train persons in the art and science of flying and navigating and operating all manner of heavier-than-air aircraft."
(Victoria Flying Club Incorporation Bylaws, 1946)

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PHOTO CREDITS

Front cover photo by Tobyn Burton.

NEED HANGAR SPACE?

Contact Marcel at the Club to see if a hangar spot is a good spot for your plane and to get on the waitlist.

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NEWS
Around the Club

FROM THE EDITOR:

Welcome to Autumn!

The change to not having Daylight Savings Time has, ironically, been a bit of an adjustment and recent weather across BC has been even wetter than average, but that won't keep us grounded!

In this issue, we have some fantastic articles. First, Tobyn Burton (whose photography's on the cover) recounts his fly-in to the Muncho Lake Ice Strip; then we revisit an article by Dr. Peter Houghton about flying in South Africa.

Our visiting German friend, Gernot Krämer, was kind enough to pen an article about his flights in Southern Denmark's Islands and include some truly breathtaking photography. Finally, what would an issue of the Patrician be without David Gagliardi's *The Professional Pilot?* In this issue, he talks about what a pilot can do to retain proficiency.

Oh, and some free advice: remember to get your flu shots; this year's packs a wallop. I didn't get my flu shot in time and, as a result, this issue was delayed by almost two weeks!

As always, take care of yourselves, clear skies (or as clear as we get this time of year), and happy flying!

—Kelly Clark, Editor of the Patrician

EVENTS & HOLIDAYS

NOV 11	**REMEMBRANCE DAY**
NOV 14-16	**COPA FALL COLOURS CONVENTION**
NOV 15	**2026 BCGA AGM**
NOV 26	**THANKSGIVING (USA)**
DEC 4-12	**HANUKKAH**
DEC 5	**VFC COFFEE & DONUTS**
DEC 21	**YULE / WINTER SOLSTICE**
DEC 24	**CHRISTMAS EVE**
DEC 25	**CHRISTMAS**
DEC 26	**BOXING DAY**

Did we leave any events out?
Let us know at vfcpatrician@gmail.com!

SEEKING HOLIDAY CHEER

Have any holiday events or stories you want to share with the club? Let us know! We're happy to help you write and publish your stories, photography, or articles in next month's issue! No submission too small!

Send anything and everything to ***vfcpatrician@gmail.com***

MAKE TIME FOR DE-ICING

As we move into the colder months, be sure to give extra time for de-icing during your pre-flight inspections. Aircraft must not be dispatched for flight until all required inspections and de-icing procedures have been completed and the aircraft has been confirmed safe for flight. De-icing does not replace the required pre-flight inspection.

"My soul is in the sky."
— William Shakespeare
(A Midsummer Night's Dream)

AI INSTALLED JUST DAYS BEFORE ALL US PLANES GROUNDED

The Federal Aviation Administration has grounded all flights across the United States, citing an air traffic control system issue creating critical safety concerns.

More than 7,000 planes have been delayed or cancelled across the US as the outage continues into its second day.

Canadian Travelers are being advised to check with their airline on the status of their flights.

The Federal Aviation Administration said it expanded a new artificial intelligence-supported air traffic management tool to all 22 of its air route traffic control centers three days before it ordered a nationwide ground stop on departing flights. The tool, Strategic Management of Airspace, Routes and Trajectories, or SMART, is meant to shift air traffic management from a reactive approach to a predictive one, the FAA said.

The FAA ordered departing traffic at all U.S. airports to remain grounded “due to extraordinary circumstances and for reasons of safety,” according to an FAA advisory. Inbound international flights are being handled on a case-by-case basis.

Neither the FAA nor Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy has linked SMART to Friday’s ground stop, and was initially unclear what prompted the stop. Mr. Duffy said it is a “communications issue.”

Mr. Duffy said the communications issue affected all Air Route Traffic Control Centers and that FAA technicians were investigating.

Leads now point to a communications issue originating from Chicago Midway Airport that cascaded across regional control centers, but this has yet to be confirmed, nor has a direct link with SMART.



MILITARY LOOKS TO STUDENTS FOR NEW AIRCRAFT TECHS

The Royal Canadian Air Force is working to bring more technicians into its ranks by encouraging students to consider careers in aviation. Recently, the RCAF has begun actively recruiting at schools, such as Okanagan College's Kelowna Aerospace Campus, in order to fill the critical need for skilled tradespeople.



According to Global News: "Only 13 per cent of high school students say they plan to work in the skilled trades, while about one-third say they might consider it, according to a federal study of Canadian youth. The concern is not simply a lack of interest. The Government of Canada projects more than 593,000 job openings in Red Seal trade-related occupations between 2024 and 2033, largely because of retirements and employment growth. The federal government is now putting billions of dollars behind efforts to attract more people."

CONAIR CONTINUES TO EXPAND DUE TO GLOBAL NEED

BC's own Conair Group Inc, based in Abbotsford, is expanding rapidly to meet the demands of both climate change, conflicts, natural disasters, and other emergencies across the globe.





Our VFC Volunteers



Conair is just one of 200 aerospace companies in the province, and as the company grows, it continues to bring aviation jobs to BC. “It really is a positive story around the strength of Canadian aviation and aerospace sector, and the strength in British Columbia in particular,” Benson says.

12TH ANNUAL CAPITAL CITY TOY RUN ENDS AT THE VFC AS A SUCCESS!

The 12th annual Capital City Toy Run was held on September 27th, 2026, and brought together more than 200 bikes and classic cars and a staggering amount of toys for kids in need!

The run is a charity motorcycle ride and toy drive that starts at the Oak Bay Marina and ends at the Victoria Flying Club.

This year, more than $8,000 worth of toys were donated The toys and cash will be handed off to Helmet Head Canada, an organization of motorcycle riders who wear costumed helmets and roll up and down Vancouver Island distributing the toys.

“I can’t get over the generosity. Costs are going up for everyone, and yet they’re here with their hearts and wallets,” said Angela Seguin, while packing up the toys for transport.

HAVE ANY MORE AVIATION NEWS? LET US KNOW!

VFC MENTOR PROGRAM

Do you want other pilots to fly with, split flight cost, share knowledge, or get help getting to a new airport for the first time? Find potential mentors and their resumes posted on the Mentors bulletin board beside the Dispatch counter.

Contact details are on each mentor's resume or you can email mentors@flyvfc.com for more information.

Interested in becoming a mentor? There's always room for more experienced pilots!

Send an email to mentors@flyvfc.com for more information on how to join up!

PARKING AVAILABLE!

Interested in prime paved parking spaces for your aircraft?
Good News:there are spots available!

Secure, pull-in/pull-out, easy access.

Call Dispatch at 250-656-2833 to arrange a spot or to get on the waitlist for hangar spaces!

In Flanders Fields

by John McCrae

In Flanders fields the poppies blow
Between the crovsses, row on row,
That mark our place; and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.

We are the Dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved, and were loved, and now we lie
In Flanders Fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders Fields.



GROUND SCHOOL SCHEDULE

PRIVATE PILOT LICENCE GROUND SCHOOL

PPL #26-14: SEPTEMBER 13, 2026 TO DECEMBER 6, 2026
Sundays (09:00 - 16:00)
Instructor: Neil Keating
(Zoom attendance possible by arrangement)

PPL #27-01: JANUARY 03, 2027 TO APRIL 21, 2027
Sundays (09:00 - 16:00)
Instructor: Neil Keating
(Zoom attendance possible by arrangement)

COMMERCIAL PILOT LICENCE GROUND SCHOOL

CPL #27-03: JANUARY 09, 2027 TO APRIL 17, 2027
Saturdays (09:00 - 16:00)
Instructor: Ken Kosik, Neil Keating

IRT: INSTRUMENT RATING TRAINING GROUND SCHOOL

JANUARY 09, 2027 TO FEBRUARY 20, 2027
Saturdays (09:00 - 16:00)
Instructor: Warwick Green

MOUNTAIN TRAINING AWARENESS (MTA)

DECEMBER 12, 2026
Saturday (09:00 - 16:00)

Individual scheduling requests are available for Private Pilot Licence, Commercial Pilot Licence, Mountain Awareness Training (MTA), Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems (Drone) Courses (RPAS) by request.

Individual tutoring is also available for PPL and CPL upon request.

Confirm your attendance with Neil Keating on cell at 204-291-9667 and VFC Operations (Russell) at 250-656-2833.

FIRST SOLOS

"Without disruption of air traffic, these fearless, forthright, indomitable and courageous individuals did venture into the wild blue yonder in flying machines.

Furthermore, these skillful individuals did safely land said flying machines at Victoria International Airport, incurring no significant damage to self or machine, thus completing first solo flights."

THIS ISSUE WE CELEBRATE THE FIRST SOLOS OF THESE PILOTS:

Matthew Spalding
Annes Pandaravalappil
Huilin Shan
Silas Benjamin
Nathan Fourt
Evan Robertson
Jakob Buttner-Danyliw
Samuel Ceballos
Kazuki Higuchi
Liam McGovern
Parker Berezan
Carter White
Tyler Thuma
Alex Labrie
Yuma Yagata
Daniel Pade
Aidan Munro
Trevor Howarth
Murdoch Tashe

We want your first solo or achievement in the Patrician!
Send your photos to vfcpatrician@gmail.com or tag us on Instagram.



Congratulations Trevor!



Congratulations Murdoch!

MEMBER ACHIEVEMENTS

PPL WRITTEN TEST
Sheldon Nordell
Kieran Porter
Noah DiBattista

PPL FLIGHT TEST
Shrija Paudel
Jane Pico Villamizar
Zoe Leduc-Wright
Maximus Morgan
Henrik Pedersen
Spencer Gordon
Kieran Porter
Keenan Rancier

CPL FLIGHT TEST
Matthew Stratton
Darius Isganaitis
Eric Hodge
David Thomas
Jacob Ross

MULTI-ENGINE RATING
Aya Hammond

GROUP 1 IFT
Takumi Satake

INSTRUCTOR RATING
Olivia Wang
Tristan Bacon

WELCOME NEW VFC MEMBERS

Timothy Croft
Jason Terfloth
Gina Joseph
Bruce Phillips
Joshua Lovan
Mitchell Miller
Souvivun Naomi Lovan
Evan Davis
Tomass Auzans
Garth Racicot
Amol Kamath
Rajan Manak
Seung Kyun Choi
Sullivan Ford
Yohannes Tamene
Jack Redmond
Bruno Paradis
Cameron Mieduniecki
Achraf Er Riha
Erik Dresen
Benjamin Bierman
Jeremy Ransom
Holden Tidswell
Amirhossein Ravanbod
Karl Robertson
Nico Ruperto
Maya Sahli
Andrea Gentile Silvestri
Triana Newton
Kirill Menkov
Bryn Dolsen
Carson Cancela
Matthew Milkowski
Qiyun Zang
Dylan Eakin
Muskaan Muskaan
Liam Knott
Robert Gallagher
Monika Torok
Anthony Barrionuevo
James MacMillan
Julien Forgeois
Annalise Gibbs
Naim Zandieh
Joel Oliphant
Roman Karadjov
Ky Fox
Jonathan Cooksey
Graysen Gomboc
Adam De Orio
Mieran Loria
Doris Huang
Oliver Bomford
Shane Oswick
Lorenzo DeMartino
Phuc Thanh Huynh
Moumita Bhadra
Cameron Peters
Courtney Crisp
Allison Phillips
Amelie Dempster
Ross Marecek
Jia Run Zhan
Nicholas Brown
Matthew Jones
Ke Zhu

MUNCHO LAKE ICE STRIP FLY-IN

Flying to the Northern Rockies in C-GYGR

By Tobyn Burton





It's mid-April in Northern British Columbia, I am on final to land after the second three-and-a-half hour leg that day, with three planes ahead and another three downwind in the circuit behind me. Ahead of me lies the runway, a frozen lake with a plowed surface about 3500 feet long. I brake lightly after touchdown expecting to have reduced braking performance on the ice, only to stop much sooner than expected. As I taxi off the lake, on to the shore and towards the hangar at the Northern Rockies lodge I take a moment to think back to the day It's mid-April in Northern British Columbia, I am on final to land after the second three-and-a-half hour leg that day, with three planes ahead and another three downwind in the circuit behind me. Ahead of me lies the runway, a frozen lake with a plowed surface about 3500 feet long. I brake lightly after touchdown expecting to have reduced braking performance on the ice, only to stop much sooner than expected. As I taxi off the lake, on to the shore and towards the hangar at the Northern Rockies lodge I take a moment to think back to the day several months earlier when I walked into Mike Schlievert's office to begin discussing this very trip with him.

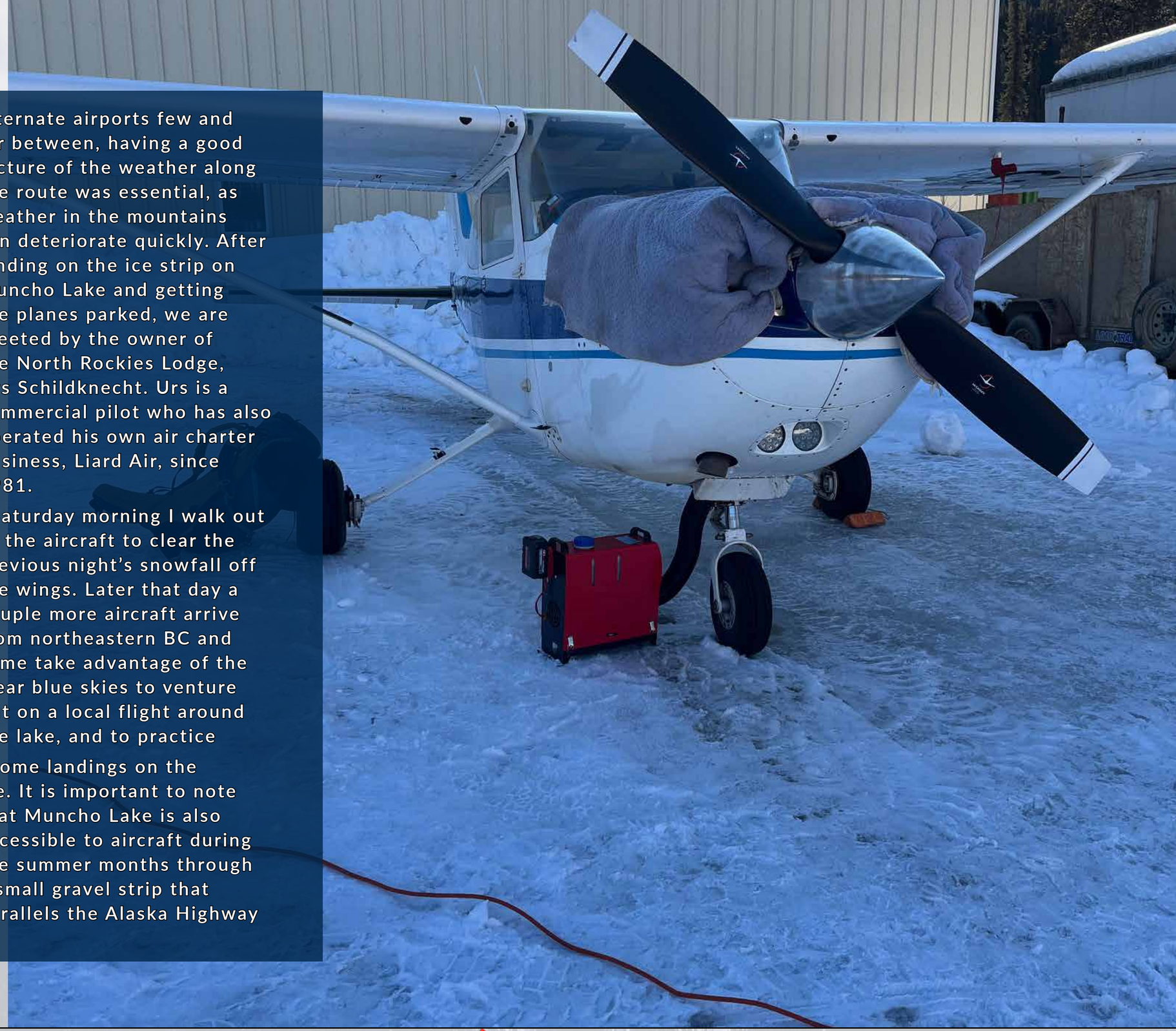
Back in January I was discussing some flying events for the spring with fellow pilots at Pitt Meadows Airport, and one such topic of discussion was the Muncho Lake Ice Strip Fly-in, an annual event organized by the Northern Rockies Lodge every spring. Those with their own aircraft began planning for the trip and I was very generously offered to catch a ride in a Cessna 180. A few weeks later in February, a friend planning to attend the Fly-in suggested I should rent a plane and fly there myself. As a low-time Private Pilot with minimal experience flying in the mountains, I quickly dismissed this suggestion. However, I found myself in Mike Schlievert's office the next day to discuss what it would take for me to fly a Victoria Flying Club aircraft to Northern BC. Anyone who has spent time chatting with Mike will know he has a wealth of knowledge



regarding long cross-country flights, and some great stories to share about his experiences. In the weeks leading up to the Fly-in, I completed a mountain course as well as a short checkride in the VFC's latest addition to the fleet, the Hawk XP.

The day before the Fly-in I landed in Pitt Meadows to meet up with my passenger and the pilots of five other aircraft I would be flying with for a weather briefing. The next morning, we departed shortly after sunrise and began the first leg of the journey to Mackenzie for a fuel stop. Half way to Mackenzie our flight of six was joined by another pilot enroute from Qualicum Beach. After approximately three-and-a-half hours our flight of seven aircraft landed in Mackenzie for fuel, with several other planes also enroute to Muncho Lake joining us there. The second leg of the journey from Mackenzie to Muncho Lake would take at least another three hours, and with suitable alternate airports few and far between, having a good picture of the weather along the route was essential, as weather in the mountains can deteriorate quickly. After landing on the ice strip on Muncho Lake and getting the planes parked, we are greeted by the owner of the North Rockies Lodge, Urs Schildknecht. Urs is a commercial pilot who has also operated his own air charter business, Liard Air, since 1981.

Saturday morning I walk out to the aircraft to clear the previous night's snowfall off the wings. Later that day a couple more aircraft arrive from northeastern BC and some take advantage of the clear blue skies to venture out on a local flight around the lake, and to practice some landings on the ice. It is important to note that Muncho Lake is also accessible to aircraft during the summer months through a small gravel strip that parallels the Alaska Highway





at the south end of the lake, and of course, by floatplane when the ice has melted by mid-June. By nightfall Saturday evening I take my camera to the lake to capture some long exposures of the aircraft beneath the Aurora Borealis.

Sunday morning everyone begins the lengthy process of packing, fueling and pre-flighting their aircraft. Luckily my passenger had brought a small diesel generator with us to keep the engine oil warm before starting. With twelve aircraft on the ice, Urs gathered all the fly-in guests for a group photo before we all started our long day of flying home. He shared his excitement with us mentioning that this year's fly-in set a new record for number of aircraft attending. Much like on the Friday we had arrived, the weather was excellent – cold clear blue sky, and this made for some truly stunning views through the mountain valleys as we made our way south. Quesnel was our next stop, four hours away.



Enroute out of Quesnel, our convoy of seven aircraft continued south towards the Fraser Canyon. As our group makes its way back to Pitt Meadows, the aircraft ahead contacts Pitt Tower, and our flight of seven is cleared to land all at once. Monday morning arrives and I wait patiently for the weather to improve before making the short flight from YPK to YYJ. By Monday afternoon I had the XP back at the flying club, along with hundreds of photos and already thinking of planning for next year's Muncho Lake ice strip fly-in. Perhaps next years attendance will be even higher!



SOUTH AFRICAN FLYING

By DR. PETER HOUGHTON, M.B., Ch.B

Some of us take a while to get to our mail and I've only just recently read Derek Melton's January article on flying in South Africa. He certainly brought back memories.

I went to medical school at the University of Cape Town and, whilst the university had a flying club, as a 17 year old student, I certainly didn't have the money to learn. However, I promised myself that my first pay cheque after graduating would go towards flying lessons. My brother was a pilot in the South African Air Force and I was envious of his flying stories.

Fast forward six years to the end of January 1977 and my first pay cheque as an intern at Edendale Hospital, Pietermaritzbug in Natal Province (about 90km inland from Durban on the coast).

Edendale was a very busy place, about 1,800 beds with roughly 800 deliveries a year and countless patients through the various outpatient departments. It was the main hospital for a large rural area around Pietermaritzburg, as well as the city itself. We worked endless hours and were exposed to a massive amount of pathology.

That first cheque wasn't much, but it was enough for me to join the Pietermaritzburg Flying Club. They had three Cessna 150's and two 172's and later a Grumman Tiger — which was a great little plane.

Rental per hour for a Cessna 150 was Rand 17, or 21 Rand with an instructor. It seems laughable now, especially as in those days a Rand and Canadian dollar were virtually identical.

Now it's about R14 to 1 Canadian Dollar.

Life is sometimes a series of coincidences, so it's odd that Derek should've been checked out with my instructor Mel Barker. Who knows, maybe Derek and I even crossed paths in the club one day. I too flew Cessna 172 ZS – FXX on many a jaunt around the Natal Midlands and down to the coast.

As Derek mentioned, the club was a fun place, and there was often a Sunday Braai (BBQ for Canadians) and swim after the morning spot landing contest.

South Africa has some wonderful places into which to fly; some with nice runways and some a tad more tricky. There is a line of mountains called the Drakensberg, which run from the North East



India Lima Hotel



Finals on a wintery day.

hundreds of kilometers towards the South West of the country.

There are a number of resorts on the south side of this range where the peaks go up to 11000 feet ASL. Some of these hotels have short grass runways and are pretty places to go for a flight and a meal.

However, they are about 4-5,000 feet above sea level, and with the heat of the day that 150 becomes a one seater and the 172 a two. In summer there are often monster thunderstorms, so it was usually a good plan to go early in the morning and get back to Pietermaritzburg early.

There are beautiful rolling hills in the Natal Midlands leading up to the mountains and in early summer, green with all the rains. In the southern hemisphere winter there would often be snow on the mountains in July or August after a cold front had gone through. From Pietermaritzburg it was only about a forty minute flight to get close to the mountains which would look very spectacular with the peaks all white.

Periodically, the club would have fly ins to various farmers fields in the surrounding areas. We were usually billeted with families in the area. On one occasion I had flown one of the 150s India Lima Hotel to the field. I parked tied and went to join others having a beer under the umbrella to wait for more planes coming in.

This particular grass runway was very much a one way strip. Fly up a gentle valley, make a little turn on to final, and then roll up the slope bouncing over the tufts.

As we sipped our beers we heard the unmistakable sound of one of the members in his Tiger Moth. The bright yellow distinctive wings shone in the sunlight as he wagged them overhead and joined downwind.

It being late afternoon on a hot day some thunderheads were building in the distance and there was a bit of a crosswind. We watched the Tiger bobble around in the wind as he lined up on finals. There was quite a bounce from one wheel to the next and I heard the muttering

“ Hope he doesn’t ground loop. “

There was a collective sigh of relief as the pilot seemed to catch it in time and slowly taxied up towards us. The onlookers gave a round of applause for him as he took off his helmet and gave a cheery wave. People gathered round to admire this lovely old aircraft which had been so perfectly restored.

The sheep on spits were taken off the fires and about a hundred people tucked in to the spread . There was much talk of aeroplanes and places flown.

That night the heavens opened with massive lightning and thunder. I was confident I’d tied ILH down securely enough, but wondered as I turned over in bed whether the runway would be too water logged.

Morning dawned and it was overcast with a drizzle and low cloud everywhere. The forecast was for more of the same for the next four days. Clearly this was another case of “ time to spare, go by air.”

I managed to hitch a ride the three hours back to Pietermaritzburg and told the club secretary I would go and fetch ILH when the weather smartened up.

Natal in the summer often has spells of constant drizzle and low cloud. It was a week before

I could go and fetch the plane. It was a glorious sunny day as I lifted off and headed back to town. Trimmed out ILH pretty much flew herself in the calm air and after all the rain visibility was brilliant. It was so clear that I felt that I could reach out and touch the Drakensberg mountains in the distance.

All the aeroplanes were back safely so later that evening a bunch of us met in the pub at the flying club to share a beer, play some darts and hear the different stories of getting to and fro with the dismal weather.

This article was originally published in the October 2023 issue of the Patrician.

ISLAND HOPPING IN SOUTHERN DENMARK

TEXT AND PHOTOS BY GERNOT KRÄMER





Who knew it could be so easy!

Before landing, I only had the following information about the airfield on the island of Bjørnø: no PPR, no radio contact, no landing fee, no fuel—just 570 meters of grass. I also had a phone number, but no one answered. On the neighboring island of Drejø, where we'd been earlier, I'd therefore asked at the village store about it—specifically, I'd asked Johannes, who looks after the airfield there.

Johannes seemed surprised by our concerns. He disappeared briefly to make a call somewhere, and then said, "No problem, you can fly over! Of course, no one's there."

That last remark could have been the motto of our island tour, because that's how it was pretty much everywhere: no one there, and yet no problem. Even the seemingly most deserted places surprised us with perfectly mowed runways. Although the funny thing about Bjørnø was that someone suddenly showed up after all to welcome us. But he wasn't the owner of the airfield, Helge clarified, but rather a retired professional pilot. One of his neighbors was a helicopter pilot, and yes, the other neighbor—who owns the airfield—flies as well, of course. So many pilots among just 26 residents? That's almost a record.

The trip began with my discovery that some airfields in Denmark—ones I'd heard or read about—are almost impossible to find on aviation maps, be they digital or not. So I started by gathering information, locating the runways on Google Earth, and entering them as waypoints into my SkyDemon





navigation app. I occasionally mentioned this to others, and right away two pilot friends said, “If you’re flying there, I’m coming along!”

My friend Andreas Bode had the perfect aircraft for the mission—his Morane 880B, based in Eggersdorf near Berlin, which I’ve been flying for a long time: a sturdy french-built plane capable of relatively short takeoffs with excellent all-around visibility. However, despite the back seat, it’s not really a three-seater, but rather suited for two people with plenty of luggage. A plan soon took shape: I would pick him up from an appointment in Copenhagen so we could fly together to Sejerø, whose airstrip he knows well.

Before that, I would visit the other airfields on my personal little list with my other friend, who is also named Andreas (last name Arnold). Since some of them are short and lack any infrastructure, it made sense to choose



Our first stop on the way there is in Barth in Northern Germany’s Mecklenburg region—a technical stop to refuel as a precaution and put on our life jackets prior to flying over the Baltic Sea. At the Ærø airfield, we find two bicycles waiting for us, as arranged by phone, and ride them to the hotel in the nearby town of Marstal. The hotel fully lives up to its name, “Udsigten”: The view of the Sea glistening in the sunlight is simply magnificent. Before dinner, we take a swim right in front of the hotel.

The next morning, we head first to Drejø—just a stone’s throw away; the preflight checks and engine warm-up take almost as long as the flight itself. There’s no wind sock on the 445-meter-long runway, so we go by the wind direction we’d just experienced in Ærø. The approach and takeoff are over the sea, so there are no obstacles. With flaps fully extended and at 1,800 RPM, we reach exactly the 90 km/h



a slightly more accessible airfield with a gas station as our base camp so we wouldn’t have to lug our luggage around all the time. We settled on the well-known and tried-and-true Ærø.

We’re setting off at the end of May:



recommended for short landings; the roll-out distance is short, as is typical for a Morane plane.

Only a small embankment and the walking path around the island separate us from the water at our parking spot. We walk past the idyllic church, located a short distance from the village, to the store to pay Johannes the small landing fee of 50 kroner. Since we haven't exchanged any Danish money, we give him ten euros. We also buy a few snacks, which we eat at the rest area by the old harbor.

A few hundred meters from there, we want to go for a swim, but we've apparently picked the wrong cove: no matter how far we wade into the water, it's simply not deep enough to swim. Instead, we continue our tour of the island, watching deer and cranes, and return to the airfield via the shoreside path. Even from a distance,





we can see the blue-and-white tail of the Morane gleaming from behind reeds or bushes at every bend.

So our next destination is Bjørnø. We fly around the island first and decide to land from the sea side. The runway has three distinct bumps—not ideal for fast planes with low ground clearance. After parking the plane, we spread out our picnic blanket and look across the strait toward Faaborg. We chat with Helge, a professional pilot, who soon bids us farewell with a friendly, "You're always welcome to land on Bjørnø!" Taking off over the three bumps with a light tailwind—since we don't want to fly low over the village—is quite challenging.

We had actually planned to continue on to Kegnæs on the island of Als—unlike some others on our trip, this 400-meter grass airfield even has an ICAO code (EKKI),



although, as far as I can recall, I haven't been able to find it on any map at all. It's run by a German couple, and there are also vacation rentals on the grounds. Unfortunately, we weren't able to make contact beforehand. It's unclear to us whether PPR applies, so we decide to fly over to see if there's any activity on the ground (again, there's no radio at the airfield).

It's just bad luck that a rain front is currently moving in from exactly that direction. So we turn around and fly back to Ærø. Since the front is only grazing the , we're still able to cycle to picturesque Ærøskøbing for dinner after refueling. The seaside path between Ærøskøbing and Marstal is enchanting, and the sunset reflecting off the water is nothing short of spectacular.



The next morning, the weather is still nice, but the sun has hidden itself away, and the west wind is shaking the trees vigorously. We skip our first planned stop—

Langeland on the island of the same name—due to the strong crosswind and fly straight on to Vejrø (EKVO), about which I've already read a lot. Here, too, the approach over the sea is completely unobstructed from both directions. Anyone who can manage a 550-meter grass runway will have no problems here.

In a cabin next to the runway, there's a flight logbook where you're supposed to sign in; the landing fee is paid at the restaurant at the other end of the island. But it's no big deal: the entire island is only 2.7 km long, and it probably takes more than 20–30 minutes only for people who—like me—often stop to take photos. Plus, you can arrange to be picked up at the airfield if you'd like.

Vejrø is a private island; twenty years ago, it was purchased by a Danish banker who manages it in an environmentally friendly and largely self-sufficient manner. Electricity, water,







fruits, and vegetables are produced on-site, as is the fabulous Æblemost (apple juice). I've never seen as many pheasants as I have on Vejrø—we spotted the first one right on the runway—and ever since lunch at the "Jord" VBurant, I've known just how delicious they are. For light meals and drinks, there's the harbor bar, just a few minutes' walk away.

We're probably among the last to have landed on the island at the old price; as of July 1, 2026, the new, increased landing fee of 500 kroner has been in effect, and it's no longer offset by a restaurant visit or an overnight stay at the hotel. Whether it's worth it is something everyone has to decide for themselves. In any case, we found the nearly four hours on Vejrø to be one of the highlights of our trip.

Before reaching our destination for the day, Holbæk on the island of Zealand, we still have two airfields on our itinerary. First, we're heading to Orupgaard on Falster island, a well-maintained and easy-to-approach 660-meter grass airfield about four kilometers outside of Nykøbing—though it lacks any infrastructure. There isn't even a windsock, just the box—familiar from other Danish airfields—for depositing the "Landingsafgift" (landing fee), which again amounts to 50 kroner.

After a brief stop, we fly on to Koster Vig (EKMN) on Møn. The airfield (513 m grass), which borders a small forest and is lined with fields, is located near Highway 59, which connects the island to Zealand via the Queen Alexandrine Bridge. You could do quite a bit here with folding bikes, but otherwise it's a bit off the beaten path. We'll see Møn's main attraction from the air later on as we take a detour around









the famous chalk cliffs. The water at their base turns a bright green due to a chemical reaction with the chalk.

Instead of heading directly to Holbæk, we fly through Copenhagen on the Ellehammer Route. This is a precisely defined transit route over the waterway that divides the city into western and eastern halves. You fly through the control zone of Copenhagen-Kastrup International Airport (which is clearly visible), but due to the TMA above it, you're not allowed to climb higher than 1,500 ft.

All of the city's landmarks are strung out here like pearls on a necklace: Tivoli Gardens, the royal palaces of Christiansborg and Amalienborg, Nyhavn (New Harbor), the opera house, the Trekroner Fort built on the water, and so on. It's worth mentally running through the route beforehand, because when flying through at low altitude, everything happens so quickly that you otherwise won't know where to look first.





Incidentally, the friendly air traffic controllers place great importance on strict adherence to the route; shortcuts, such as skipping a waypoint, are not permitted.

From Copenhagen, we follow the coast north until we reach the picturesque town of Helsingør. There, we want to fly over Kronborg, the Danish royal castle that Shakespeare made world-famous as the setting for his play "Hamlet." Needless to say, Shakespeare himself never saw it, let alone from above as we do. The fortress is situated on a peninsula and juts out into the Øresund—the strait between Denmark and Sweden—at its narrowest point. Even in our slow Morane, we'd be in the neighboring country in less than two minutes.

Holbæk (EKHK, 565 m grass) in northwestern Zealand is the fourth airstrip we're landing at today, and the fourth where we haven't encountered a single soul. There was even an airfield festival that afternoon—but now, at twenty to eight, it lies completely deserted once again. We land using blind approach procedures, park the D-EHSN, and walk to our guesthouse, which is just a few hundred meters away.

But why Holbæk in the first place?—Because it's only a few minutes' walk from the airfield to the Ny Hagested train station, and from there it's just over an hour to Copenhagen, where a crew change awaits us: Andreas A. (Arnold) is flying back to Berlin on a scheduled



flight tomorrow at noon, and the day after tomorrow, we'll continue on the Morane with Andreas B. (Bode). I myself now have a day off from flying, which I'll spend sightseeing in the Danish capital.

Early Monday morning, Andreas B. and I refuel the plane in Holbæk for the final day of the trip. A club member who lives nearby has come to unlock the gas station for us. Then we fly northwest to the by far most challenging airfield of the trip on Sejerø. Andreas B. is friends with the owners, Jorgen and Bente, and knows the island inside and out. The weather has turned beautifully sunny again, and the sea glows a Caribbean-blue hue.



The approach to the 415-meter grass runway, surrounded by trees, commands my respect, especially since a road runs immediately behind the western threshold. The runway itself is narrow but, once again, exceptionally well-maintained, and Jorgen and Bente welcome us with great warmth. Jorgen drives us to the harbor and shares the latest news from the island; afterward, I hike with Andreas to the lighthouse at the northern tip, and we go for a swim. The island is a dream and makes quite a varied impression.



After Andreas safely guided us down there thanks to his extensive experience with Sejerø, I take over the piloting a few hours later. A lap of honor around the airfield, where Bente and Jorgen are standing next to their house waving, is of course a must. We've planned one last stop in Denmark, back on Zealand. The Næstved airfield (423 m grass) is located on the western edge of the town of the same name, next to a canal. It isn't until late in the approach that we spot a poorly marked high-voltage power line right in our path as we approach from the east. For once, someone is actually there, tinkering around



the hangar.

We ask if there's a landing fee. "No, no," the man laughs, "not for planes from Germany!" I'm sure this charming reply is tailored depending on where the visitors are from.

We file the flight plan required for cross-border flights via SkyDemon and are back in the air an hour later. The rest is routine: just like on the outbound flight, we head back to Eggersdorf via Barth. Five incredibly intense days are behind me. And just like after every trip to Danish island airfields, I'm overcome by a sense of sadness that it's over. Back home, I pick up the map again: There were still a few I haven't been to... where are they again?





THE PROFESSIONAL PILOT

by David Gagliardi

"'Professionalism' is commonly understood as an individual's adherence to a set of standards, code of conduct or collection of qualities that characterize accepted practice within a particular area of activity." -Universities UK et al. 2004

MAINTAINING PROFICIENCY

Professional pilots embody the attributes in the definition above. Being a professional pilot has nothing to do with what license you hold, it is ultimately about the attitude with which you approach flying. This article is the twelfth in a series that will examine aspects of piloting light aircraft to a professional standard.

Professional pilots are always on the lookout for good advice. In that spirit I am reprinting with permission of the author and the publisher Avweb, some great advice

Professional pilots embody the attributes in the definition above. Being a professional pilot has nothing to do with what license you hold; it is ultimately about the attitude with which you approach flying. This article is the Sixteenth in a series that will examine aspects of piloting light planes to a professional standard.

In earlier articles I discussed ways newer pilots could gain skills and experience by completing added training and making the mental transition from training flights to flying on their own after obtaining their license. In this article I will discuss ways to maintain proficiency because professional pilots know that it doesn't matter how good you used to be, what matters is how good you are on today's flight.



The average recreational pilot does about 15 flight per year. Obviously, some do much more flying but for most recreational pilots renting an airplane 15 flights is often the most that can reasonably be done given the realities of weather, time, and costs. However, did you do 15 flights or 1 flight 15 times ?

Maintaining your knowledge and skill requires a plan for every flight. I would suggest that “the plan” encompasses 2 strategies. The first is how can I used a planned trip to maintain my skills?

Let’s take a sight seeing trip around Victoria with some visiting friends as a common example flight. The reality is that this flight doesn’t require much planning. The weather is what you see out of the flying club window and the navigation will be familiar since you have probably done this flight several times in the past. But even a simple flight like this offers opportunities to refresh your knowledge and skills. For example:

- Do a full weather briefing including examining the GFA, METAR’s, TAF’s, SIGMET, AIRMET’s and look for nontraditional weather information like marine weather stations, and web cams on the Victoria waterfront.
- Do a weight and balance. Fleet Captain and/or one of the many electronic flight planning apps does this for you but doing one by hand occasionally will keep your familiarity with the procedure up.
- Do the performance calculations for take-off and landing distances and climb and cruise performance as well as Vx and Vy speeds from memory. Sure, the runway at Victoria is much longer than you need but doing the calculation refreshes your knowledge.
- Review the POH emergency procedures. You are supposed to be able to do the procedures that are shown in bold in the checklist by memory. If you can’t then some review is in order. Also go to the POH Airplane and Systems section and pick one of the major systems and review the full description of how the system works.



When you have signed out the airplane and are ready to go flying use the same strategy.

- Give your passengers a route brief. That is show them the path the airplane will fly on a map and point out things to see as well as find out of if there is any particular place the passengers would like to see. Route briefings aren't just good for the passenger they are good for the pilot as they reinforce the mental model of how the trip will be flown.
- There is a preflight checklist, but I often see pilots not using it and instead using the airplane itself as a checklist. This is not necessarily wrong, but the cabin check often gets short changed and items may get missed on the external inspection. Do the cabin and then see if you missed any item and do the same for each for each major part of the airplane (ie left wing). I bet you will find items that you have been inadvertently missing in earlier walk arounds.
- Set up your cockpit like you are going on a longer trip with maps or tablets organized for the flight route, dispatch sheet and note pad available, sunglasses/extra glasses available and loose gear properly secured or stored.

For the flying portion I would suggest that your focus should be on accurate flying. For example:

- Maintaining the exact runway centerline on the takeoff roll and smoothly establishing and maintaining the desired climb speed after takeoff.
- Leveling out at the desired cruise altitude and trimming the airplane to the hands off condition with minimal deviations from the selected altitude.
- Keeping all turns co-ordinated and at a constant bank angle.
- On the arrival picking a geographic point that will be the bottom of the descent point and the point where the airplane will be at circuit altitude and at the correct speed.
- Pick a planned touchdown point and work to touchdown as close as possible to it even though this is a normal landing

These are some but by no means all the ways you can use any flight to maintain you knowledge and skills and I encourage all pilots to seek out other opportunities to keep their skills.



However, it is not possible to refresh all your skills on a normal flight.

Slow flight, Stalls, Spiral dive recoveries, steep turns and performance landing and takeoff maneuvers are not likely to be practiced on typical flights.

As a general comment most proficiency program requirements have a 6 month periodicity which becomes the second part of your skill maintenance strategy. At the six month point of your club annual proficiency flight, I recommend a dedicated training flight to practice those extra maneuvers.

THANKS FOR THE SHARE!













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