

Sir Keith Park Memorial Airfield Inc.

Newsletter – December 2025 - #20



SKPMA Inc. – Officers:

President:	Geoff Furkert	021 833 044	[geoff.furkert@xtra.co.nz]
Treasurer:	Stuart Read	0274 770 104	[sturead@outlook.co.nz]
Secretary:	Warren Sly	021 772 351	[warren.sly@prepress.co.nz]
Committee:	Adrian Catran	0212 785 657	[adrian@twentymans.co.nz]
	Gary Brunt	0276 458 315	[gary@thorolds.co.uk]
	Cliff McChesney	0274 805 454	[freedom4life@xtra.co.nz]

HIEADLINES:

- Sir Keith Park Memorial Inaugurated with aplomb;
- Excellent TVNZ 1 and newspaper coverage of the event;
- \$16,000 still required to meet outstanding financial obligations;
- Plan to publish two Children's Books featuring Sir Keith Park;
- Joanne's new photo book covering the development of the statue available;
- Battle of Britain 2026 - thoughts;
- Annual General Meeting feedback.

BATTLE OF BRITAIN AND INAUGURATION 2025:

The Battle of Britain Commemorations and the Inauguration of the Memorial to Air Chief Marshal Sir Keith Park went off very well on Sunday 14th September, despite a bitterly cold westerly wind.

Through the efforts of William Earl (a member of SKPMA Inc.), we managed to get excellent coverage on TV1 News that same evening. This was followed by equally great coverage in The Mercury Bay Informer and Valley Profile newspapers.

FINANCIAL:

Although the statue is there, and the Memorial has been completed and inaugurated, we still need about \$16,000 to meet outstanding financial obligations. This needs to be addressed and settled before 31st March 2026.

Further funds will be required going into the future for maintenance, insurance and security – as well as for new initiatives to keep spreading the word about Sir Keith auspicious legacy – an inspiration to all young New Zealanders.

Please – donate now !!! Bank details below.

Every donation – however large or small – will promptly receive a receipt, and remember that SKPMA Inc. is a registered charity so such donations will be tax deductible.

NEW INITIATIVE:

Discussions have started to write and publish two Children's Books featuring Sir Keith Park. One will target the primary school age group, the second will target the secondary school age children. These will be based on work already undertaken by Sally Muir and Michelle Mulholland, in a format similar to the series "Little People, Big Dreams". That series covers a wide range of prominent individuals and is available widely throughout New Zealand.

More information will follow with the next newsletter in the New Year.

SPREADING THE GOOD WORD:

I continue to be available to address any and all appropriate forums as a means of spreading the word about Sir Keith and his legacy. Similarly, the Children's Books will offer a pathway to the parents of such children when they are sharing these books.

We had coverage of the Battle of Britain Commemorations and the Inauguration in the latest edition of the KiwiFlyer Magazine (Issue 111, 2025 #7, page 6), exposing our project and efforts to a significant national group of readers in the aviation sector – perhaps even international!

There is also a full colour page feature about our project in The Mercury Bay Informer Summer Magazine.

I have engagements scheduled already next year at The Wellington Club and Rebus Mt Hobson. If any of our readers can make introductions or have suggestions as to possible forums that would be interested in learning about our hero, please let me know.

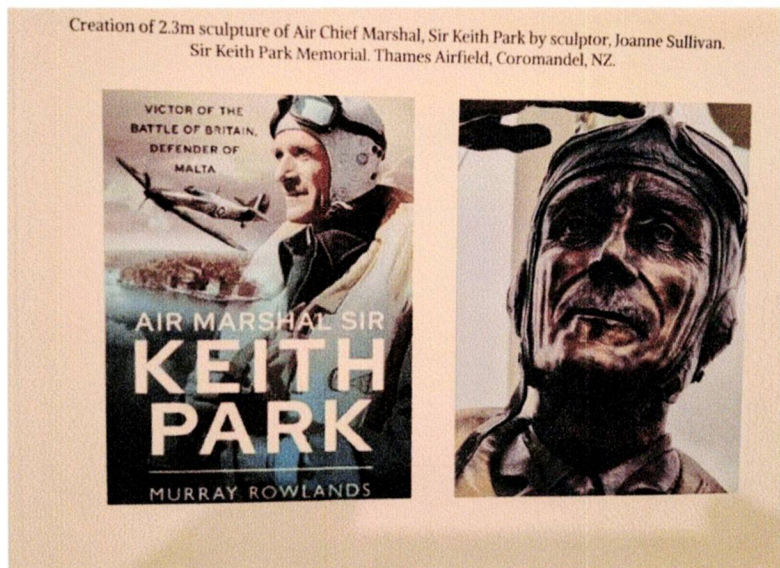
Fraser Boddy is in discussion with our management contact at the Vero Centre, in order to have a suitable quotation about Sir Keith posted on the northern wall of the foyer. This wall

space will become available early next year when the big wheel now occupying the foyer is removed, going to a new home down-country.

JOANNE'S LATEST PHOTO BOOK:

Joanne has just released a new coffee table photo book about the statue of Sir Keith. This version covers the full statue project from start to finish, and includes photo coverage of the unveiling of the full-sized clay model in her Helensville Studio, and the 2025 Battle of Britain Commemorations and the Inauguration.

Copies are available through me at \$70.00 plus P&P each.



BATTLE OF BRITAIN 2026:

Next year's event will of necessity be a much less grand affair. It is scheduled for 11:00am Sunday 13th September at the Thames Airfield.

A key feature in the planning will be the unveiling of a memorial tablet with the names of those New Zealanders who flew in the Battle of Britain, and have been recognised with the Battle of Britain Clasp as one of The Few.

Such a list of names must be accepted as the best possible view, as reported numbers of New Zealanders in the range variously between 127 and 145!

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING:

The SKPMA Inc. Annual General Meeting was held on Sunday 23rd November at the Hauraki Aero Club. Key points are:

- Officers and Committee members remain unchanged until at least next year;
- New Constitution for SKPMA Inc. approved by the meeting and will now be submitted, as required, to the Incorporated Societies Act 2022 for approval;

- \$16,000 required to meet outstanding financial obligations before 31st March 2026;
- Subscriptions to SKPMA Inc. are to remain at \$60.00 per annum for this year;
- Discussions initiated to explore succession planning for the president, and the governance of SKPMA Inc. possibly transioning, to NZWarbirds in two to three years.

WINGS AND WHEELS 2026:



Remember the Thames Wings and Wheels event at the Thames Airfield:

Saturday 24th January 2026.

Gates open: 10AM - 3PM

Come and enjoy a fun family day out!

TE KOWHAI, AND WHAT COULD BE DONE AT THAMES:

Te Kowhai Airfield has embarked on a major development project, to create the Te Kowhai Air Park. A summary from current media coverage is attached.

Check out their website at: tekowhaiairpark.co.nz.

This is the sort of potential waiting to be unlocked at the Thames Airfield. If the Thames-Coromandel District Council (as the owner of the asset) does not have the funding or the appetite to undertake such a project, it is hoped that Council may at least enable and support a third party so to do.

Geoff Furkert

W: www.sirkeithparkmemorial.org.nz

M: 021 833 044

E: [geoff.furkert@xtra.co.nz]

Bank Account Name:	Sir Keith Park Memorial Airfield Inc.
Bank Account Number:	38 9022 0151185 – 00
Charitable Registration:	CC60152





NZ's first residential airpark offers a one-of-a-kind lifestyle.

Imagine waking up in your brand-new home, making yourself a cuppa, then being airborne a few minutes later.

Getting to your plane would be a breeze – it's just down the hall, next to your car in your garage. There's no check-in to worry about, no airport queues. And by the time you reach altitude, that cuppa is still warm...

It's a lifestyle familiar in Florida and Texas – and it's coming to New Zealand for the first time.

Bringing destinations all around the country to within just a few hours' flight from your doorstep, and itself just a short drive from Hamilton, Te Kowhai Airpark is the country's first purpose-built residential aviation community, marketed by Lodge Real Estate.

There are now only nine sections left in stage one, allowing people to build homes that let them drive in from the road on one side, and taxi their plane out the other. This exciting lifestyle is a vision long held by a group of aviation enthusiasts including airline captain Dan Readman, Regan Brown and Paul Andrew, all of whom learned to fly at Te Kowhai.



Homes built for those who fly

NZ's first residential airpark offers a one-of-a-kind lifestyle.

"Our common interest is flying," says Paul Andrew. "We're not jet pilots, we don't own helicopters, we're just general aviation enthusiasts with a diverse range of skills".

From playful excursions in Bantam microlights to Readman's captaining a Boeing 777, their experience levels might be at different ends of the spectrum, but what's shared is a serious passion for flight and for the lifestyle opportunities of Te Kowhai Airpark.

"Being able to live on site and have your airplane at your own house, at your own property, is just amazing," Andrew says.

Intended to provide a truly unique lifestyle, Te Kowhai Airpark thoughtfully balances a variety of features. Custom residences sit on north-facing lots, with covenants and design guidelines maintaining property standards. Planes are housed in private hangars, and some can be parked in garages on their owners' private properties. That would be quite the conversation starter while taking guests on a tour of your new house.

Beyond aircraft, Te Kowhai Airpark offers space and security – including number plate detection and the latest in CCTV technology – for storing larger toys. Whether it's a classic car collection, boats, caravans, motorhomes, or other prized recreational equipment, the facility provides exceptional protection for your valuable assets.

For the pilot who wants to land and taxi right to their home, there's a well-maintained 983m runway, with aerodrome facilities to support its pilots. And those living at Te Kowhai Airpark will come together as a vibrant connected community, with thoughtful phased development, communal spaces, and membership in the owners' association that will guide the Airpark's future.

There's a superb quality of life to enjoy at ground level, too. Te Kowhai has a decile 10 primary school, is on bus routes to excellent secondary schools, and has all the amenities of a vibrant small community – cafes, supermarkets, and a fish and chip shop. Huge shopping centre The Base is a few minutes' drive away, while Hamilton CBD is around 15. Boaties and surfers alike will enjoy the proximity to Raglan, which is a 35-minute drive from the airpark.

Nearly a decade of planning has gone into the details, tackling rezoning, compliance and red tape. Andrew and his partners took an urban planner on a visit to 15 different US airparks to learn what would work (and what wouldn't) back home. They met with management, homeowners' associations and residents, and were excited by what they learned.

"The big ones for us were in Florida," Andrew says, "Spruce Creek being the biggest." About the size of Cambridge, it has 600 homes, three runways, two golf courses and was for a while home to John Travolta and his private fleet. The scale offered by Te Kowhai Airpark is more suited to New Zealand's way of life, but what the overseas examples make abundantly clear is the popularity of the lifestyle they offer.

"It didn't matter how much money you had or didn't have," Andrew says, "if you had a shared passion for aviation, you could have a great lifestyle. There were literally multi-millionaires living beside newlyweds who didn't have much money at the time, all part of this great community."

Andrew, who already has his name on a section and uses his aircraft as part of his business, looks forward to the potential. "I can fly to Christchurch in two hours and 15 minutes," he says. "In the same time it would take to drive 40 minutes to Hamilton Airport, check in and wait for a minimum of 30 minutes before even taking off, I'm almost there."

"It's just going to be amazing," he says – a sentiment shared by Te Kowhai Airpark agent Simone Parkes of Lodge Real Estate. With a bit of an aviation background herself, she's excited by the spontaneity that will be afforded: "Being able to wake up in the morning and look outside and go, 'Gosh, it's a stunning day. I think I might go for a flight. I might pop to Pauanui for lunch. I might go to Raglan. I might take some friends up to Waiheke for the day.' That's very special."

It's a lifestyle and community like no other, where the best of New Zealand is at your doorstep – both figuratively and literally.

For more information, visit: tekowhaiairpark.co.nz