

KEEP SOARING PRESENTS...

THANK GOODNESS IT'S FREE!

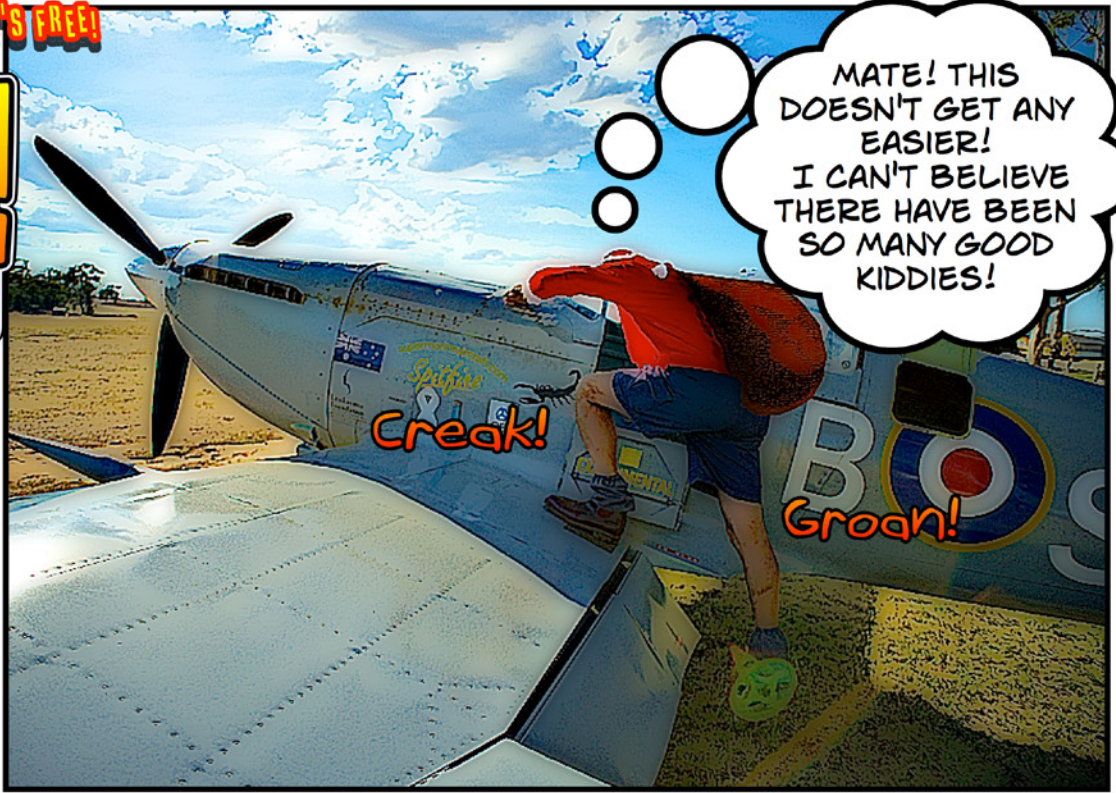
# DOWNLES PULLS IT OFF



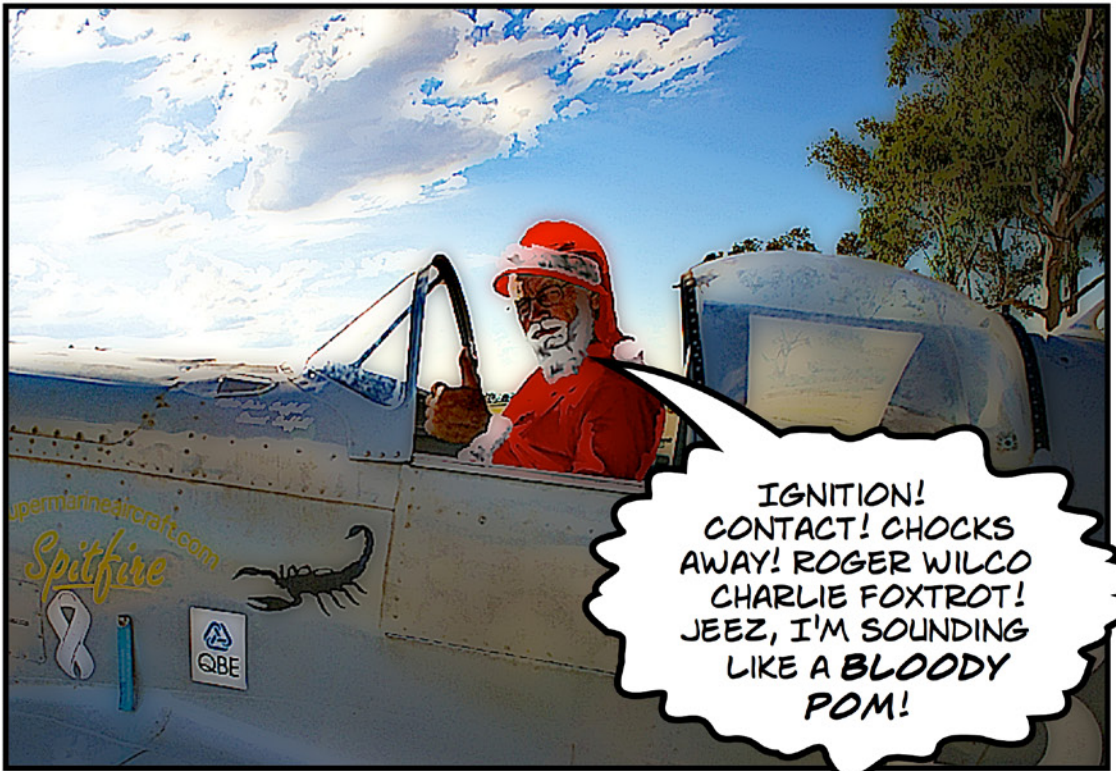
HERE WE GO AGAIN! ANOTHER QUICK ROUND-THE-WORLD DASH GIVING PRESENTS TO ALL THOSE KIDDIES WHO HAVE BEEN GOOD ALL YEAR.

SOUNDS LIKE MORE THAN A ONE TINNIE TRIP TO ME!

IT'S CHRISTMAS AGAIN AND DOWNLES GRABS HIS BULGING SACK OF PRESSES, A CAN OF COLD VB AND HEADS FOR HIS TRUSTY SPIT.

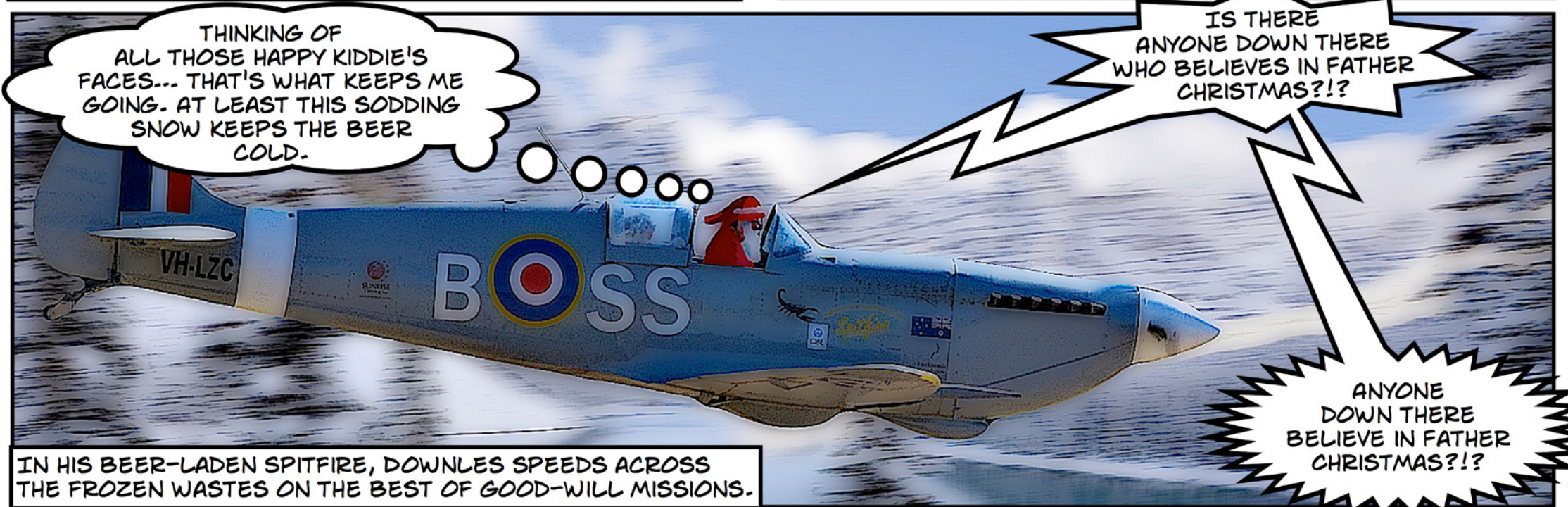


MATE! THIS DOESN'T GET ANY EASIER! I CAN'T BELIEVE THERE HAVE BEEN SO MANY GOOD KIDDIES!



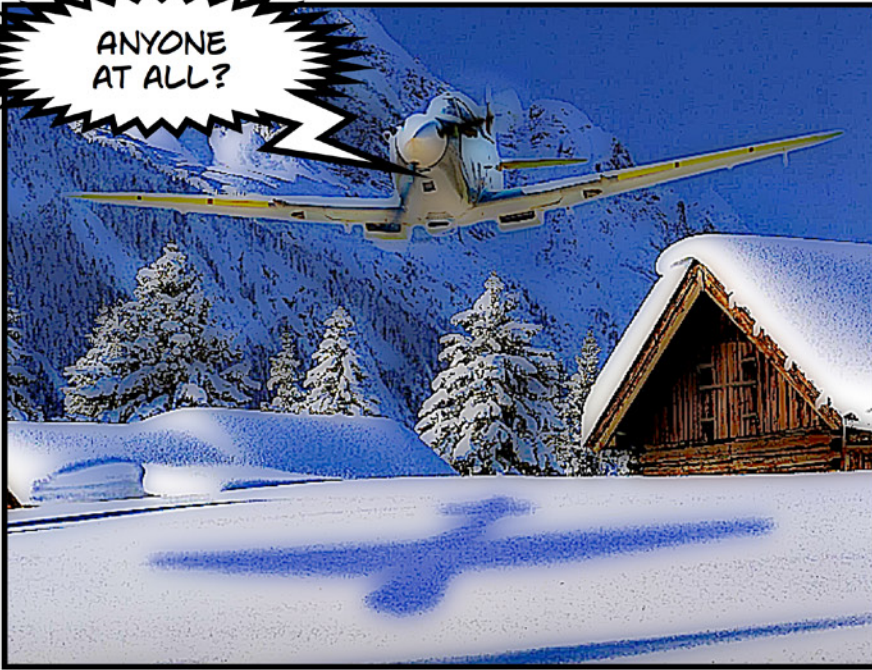
IGNITION! CONTACT! CHOCKS AWAY! ROGER WILCO CHARLIE FOXTROT! JEEZ, I'M SOUNDING LIKE A BLOODY POM!



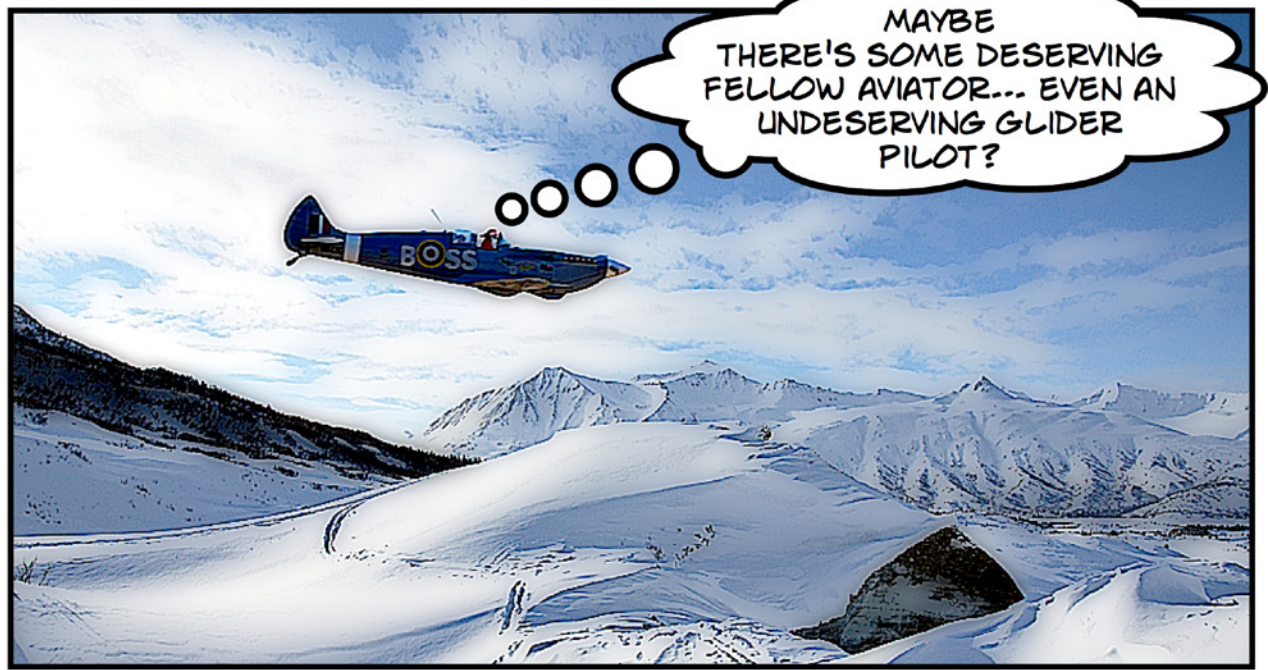




ANYONE  
AT ALL?



MAYBE  
THERE'S SOME DESERVING  
FELLOW AVIATOR... EVEN AN  
UNDESERVING GLIDER  
PILOT?



HAS DOWNLES GOT ONE ROO  
LOOSE IN THE TOP PADDOCK?

**BUDDA-BUDDA-BUDDA!!!**

SOD THEM  
ALL!!

OR IS IT ONE TINNIE TOO MANY  
FOR THE CRACK AVIATOR?









## OUT OF THE BLUE AND INTO THE WHITE.



This edition of Keep Soaring is remarkable for a number of reasons. Mainly its lateness. It's funny how some people (and I won't name Chris Bowman in person here) suggest that waiting until after the Grand Prix and Keepit Fast would be a great idea and then fail to get their finger on the keyboard to write a president's report for another month. Ditto Manager and several others.

At least the CFI and Mr. Pink got their homework in, albeit a month late so I won't name them. The President's lame excuse was "I live in the country now and work by traditional candlelight. Unfortunately my report caught fire as it was coming out of the typewriter.

It certainly has been a huge start to the season at Lake Keepit with back to back events over the last six weeks including the GP, Keepit Fast, G Dale's coaching sessions and the Burketown Safari.

The spring weather is often good for soaring and this spring we've had some excellent weather... one

day at Keepit Fast, the crew got themselves into a lather about a 1,000 km day. Alan Barnes ended up flying 921 km and Jenny Ganderton 761 in her Mozzie.

The last time I saw a frenzy like this was when Chris Carr turned up at the club one January morning, spruiking a 500 km day with a 12,000' cloudbase. A Narromine and return task was set but for some reason the cloudbase was only 3500' and nobody made it past the Kelvins! So Keepit Fast was a very good week.

The catalyst for a lot of this activity was G Dale. I turned up for as much of Keepit Fast as I could get permission for, just to see what the fuss was all about for myself. Well there was very little fuss indeed. G Dale's approach is relaxed and fairly unchallenging. He does not come over as a soaring hero or someone who knows it all.

However, several times each session, I was finding myself thinking "Ah! The penny's just dropped." as a concept which had appeared irrelevant or murky had become important, useful and understandable.

The results at the Narromine cup suggest that a few learned their lessons at Keepit Fast very well with several members of the junior school behaving very badly and running all over the pitch normally reserved for the first 11. No doubt the school bully will be called in to correct matters.

We've got many good flyers at the club and a few great ones, but most appear unwilling to put themselves forwards as coach people... even though they can walk the walk and talk the talk, often as well as G.

I remember during that ugly period when I was learning to fly sailplanes, looking forwards to an instructive talk after morning briefing. It seems a long time since we've had this, even at X-C weekends.

Hopefully, since many of our instructors have had coaching from G Dale, they can be persuaded to talk about something! At the worst, it could only become one of those great LKSC group gab-sessions which everyone learns something from.



On the days when I was at Keepit Fast, I took a lot of notes during G Dale's talks. One member had made me aware that this newsletter is often more involved with reporting of events than imparting technical information. Part of this blame is on my shoulders in that I don't feel experienced or good enough to do much in that line and only a few others make technical contributions.

Maybe that's wrong. One piece of information which keeps a low hours pilot in the air rather than outlanding can mean the difference between happiness and disillusionment. Each one, teach one as they say. So expect a bit more technical stuff!

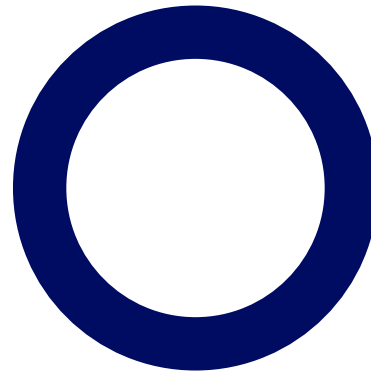
Finally, I must ask you all when you are at the club, to remember the club supporters... those of us who perhaps do not fly but who make our flying possible and more enjoyable.

The list includes a lot of the girls... Ann, Joy, Jan, Louise, Wendy(s), Marga, Bob, Ian, Chris, Tim, Todd, David, Ray... everyone who works to make our club the best club in the country.

And for me of course it's Geraldine, who has driven on every safari over the last 4 years... over 10,000 km of driving. Thanks is not enough!

A happy Christmas to you all with a great flying season to follow. I've got a turkey to stuff, potatoes to sharpen, bread and cranberry sauce to make, a form 2 to do on my glider.....

*Complaints as usual to Editor@Keepitsoaring.com*



*You know...for gliders...*

**Tom Gilbert**  
**T & J Sailplane Services**  
**Temora NSW**

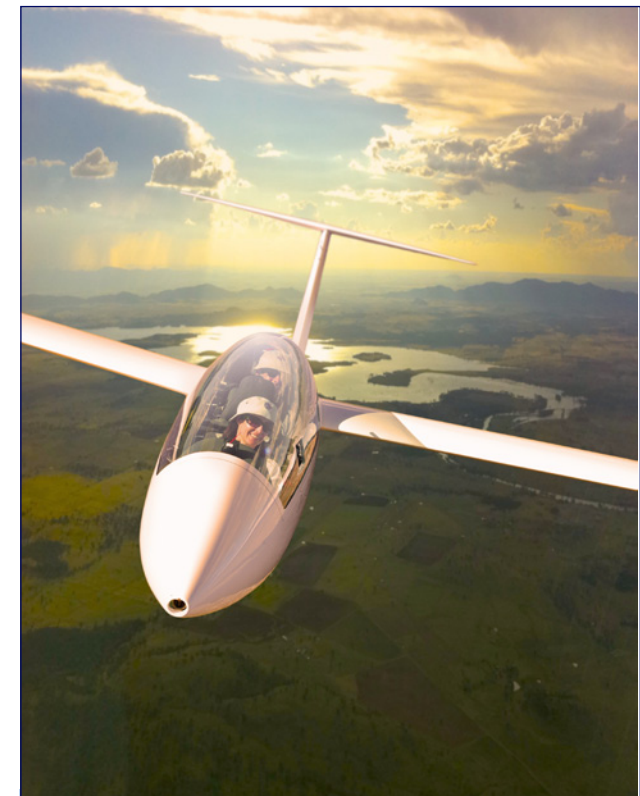
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[www.citycoastmotorcycles.com.au](http://www.citycoastmotorcycles.com.au)  
Geoff Sim

Trade-ins welcome except when member's wives are trying sell in their husband's Ducati



**FOR SALE**

**1/6th share in Duo Discus XT VH-ZAB.**

**For details about this great glider, see the club website:**

**<http://www.keepitsoaring.com/LKSC/index.php/visiting-lksc/duo-discus-xt>**

**<http://www.keepitsoaring.com/LKSC/index.php/visiting-lksc/club-fleet>**

**Hangared in luxury, treated right and always beautifully clean.**

**For further information contact Tim Carr on [tim.carr@optusnet.com.au](mailto:tim.carr@optusnet.com.au) or 0414 405 544**





*The superior valet service offered to transiting passengers flying first class with HOS Airlines. You should see the welcome that economy passengers get!*



*Justin sends in another triffic report to the LKSC newsgroup using his examination finger. "It's my best finger" he says... "but doesn't work with a spell checker".*



*A giant scale model of the new shed at the end of 32 with a full size shade structure in the background complete with seating area and rain-water tank.*



*the irrepressible Bob Dircks, probably standing on an ant's nest... at Keepit Fast.*





*Harry Medlicott's nth birthday party was a huge event, held at the end of June on a mercifully warm night at the Dircks' house. Everyone was there and a great time was had. It turns out that you cannot have too much Llama clothing on this sort of night.*









Le 08/08/2012 03:08, Chris Bowman a écrit :

Sorry mate! I'm up to the gills with **Important Presidential Things** at the moment and have scarcely time to scratch myself, let alone do a scribble for an occasional newsletter.

I'll really try and get something off in the next few days, but if I fail, can you fill in the gaps for me... tell 'em it's all grouse.

Yours (from the Seychelles)  
Christopher.

PS, If you don't get it out until closer to Xmas, add some ho ho ho stuff from me pls.

*On Dec 24th, 2012, at 11:44 PM, John Clark wrote:*

*K.*

## **PRESIDENTS MESSAGE**

**It's all grouse! Money in the bank, sailplanes in the air, happy smiles all around. Grouse!**

**Seasons greetings etc. Ho ho ho.**

*Chris Bowman*



Jan Dircks is making a speedy recovery from her horse-related accident earlier this month. And she's still sharpening the potatoes!

Jan "supervised" much of the catering done at the Dircks' house during Joey Glide. Bob was shovelling pizzas into the newly constructed pizza oven complaining about "control freaks"! The oven worked well, cooking the average pizza in 3 minutes or so.

The pizza and prize-giving evening was a great success with many of the younger and hungrier attendees coming back for seconds (of pizza).



## **MACCA'S BEAUTY TIPS**

Don't waste your money going to a doctor to get something burned off your skin. Go to Dick Smiths Electronics and get some freezing spray. It'll do the same job and you won't waste money on the doc. Best of all, you'll have most of a whole can for later.

Before and after shots show how well it works! It's a useful tool too for whole body resculpturing.







**Sometimes you just have to turn off the spell checker...**

*Justin Smith's flight in early December was remarkable and so was his breathless, stream of consciousness report. The trouble is that the report was a bit short of white space, punctuation, spelling etc which we take seriously at Keep Soaring. So it was put through our proprietary (and highly experimental) Oztextmunger program.*

*I think the result is admirable. For some reason, you do have to read this version of Justin's Great Flight with an Irish accent but never mind... Take it away Justin!*

Jist tart i'd share a bit av last sundays flap witcha as it finished up on a juicy impressive note, flew de longest yet for our LS 6 since we bought it. Joeys' glide 'ad started at Keepit an' it wus funtarstic too clap so many eager young guns balancin' oyt de auld farts in floppy 'ats we git used ter seein' glidin'.

Wan youngster received a Paul dispensashun ter take your man Shorters auld glider XC after only 50 'hrs experience an' managed nearly 100 kph oi 'ear. Anyway oi'd arrived at Keepit ter al' de carry-on an'

tacked on after al' de towin' an' "Marge" in MRP dropped me straight into 8 ter 10 knots over de dam, straight ter cloud base 7000'.

De sky looked dark to the nort an' after gettin' stormed oyt last time near Bingara oi decided ter stay west av de black stuff an' 'ad a dream run nort along de edge av de streets wi' only a few stopovers after Castletop ter Moree, meanwhile de Joeys were 'eadin' Boggabri Mallaley Keepit seemed a bit av a waste av such a gran' day.

Moree arrived after aboyt an 'r an' a 'alf , dialled up Tambar Springs an' Cambridge said 200 km ter go de sky south wus not quite as easy so cud 'av run back south de seem way but elected ter thermal more ter west over Mallaley arrivin' Tambar in gran' dark towerin' CUs juicy gran' sky ter de south but gettin' pure black east al' along de deadly divide south an' up ter Armidale way, so a queck luk at de map ter go a bit further than oi 'ad before dialled up Coolah af another 50 km better climbs down dare ter 10,000'.

"Dis is easy" oi tort to meself, de LS 6 wus at 15 metres an' 100 litres water, turnin' for 'ome 5.30 at 9000' an 130 km it started ter go a bit quiet de sky east gru more menacin' while de CUs towards Mallaley

were fadin', de gran' climbs dropped ter or 4 knots an' finally regained final glide aboyt 60 km oyt at 6 pm oi tort a bit av 'urry up wus needed re de black sky arrivin' Quirindi.

By de time oi approached de Carrols under 4000' de black stuff got pure much closer an' de lift went ballistic, 14 knots pegged on de vario at 120 knots wi' a roilin' roll cloud formin' under de rt win' looked rapid oi troid runnin' along it ter chuck a uie an go back ter Keepit runway 14 but cud not beat it went ter 700'0 ft in a minute so divin' back thru a 'ole in de roll cloud, reminded me av de rotor turbulence behind Mt Cook NZ, lighntnin' crackin' east over Somerton an' Breeza pulled full dive brakes an' 'ang on landed across de west end av 32 stopped in 100 metres in well over 30 knots. t'anks ter your man Ian Downes an' de boys 'elp in towin' back ter de 'angar 1/2 'r before de storm belt.

Oi guess der wasn't another minutes av flyin' time lef in de day. 570 km in 5 hr 37. We sure git sum gran' days at Keepit an' gran' support. It wus reassurin' ter 'ear Ian on de wireless when oi wus on final glide askin' av me whereabouts!

*Justin Smith*



## CFI CARE



On 5 December 2012, day 3 of the NSW State Gliding Championships, Errol Spletter crashed after his LS8 collided with the top of a tree on final approach to runway 22 at Narromine. Errol died in hospital shortly thereafter.

Errol's death was the first that I have experienced close quarters in 16 years gliding and 22 competitions. The crash served as a chilling and brutal reminder that in our glorious sport, the consequences of inadvertence or mistakes can be fatal.

Errol was a very experienced competition pilot and was regarded universally as being competent and safe. Only two days before the crash Dave Shorter and I had the pleasure of Errol's company when we retrieved his glider from an outlanding paddock.

I understand that the circumstances of the crash are being investigated. In accordance with the wishes

of the competition advisors I will not speculate as to the causal factors.

I am told that the logger trace revealed that Errol had adequate speed (energy). He was seen to manoeuvre during the final approach and it is possible that he was altering his approach to land on runway 22 left (bitumen) having been established on final for runway 22 right (grass). The glider had impact damage on the leading edge of the left wing approximately 1.5m from its root consistent with impact with the tree.

We have all been taught to fly safely. Except in extremely rare circumstances accidents occur solely because of human error.

Have you ever:-

- Flown with the wheel down (ie not done a FUST check)?

- Turned without first looking to clear the airspace?
- Taken off with the brakes or canopy unlocked (ie no CHAOTIC check)?
- Looked to the side to suddenly find a glider of which you had been previously unaware?

Such mistakes are not uncommon but have the potential to cause accidents.

Please regard Errol's tragic accident as a powerful lesson. Our capacity for rational thought diminishes with increased cockpit load. By habitually following the rules for safe flight (particularly checks and look out) we improve our chances of responding safely in an automatic way should things start going "pear shaped".





## GLIDER PILOT CERTIFICATE

Many of our members have now obtained their GPC. The glider pilot certificate is a plastic card issued by the GFA (similar to a membership card). It certifies that the holder has demonstrated proficiency in the entirety of the syllabus to the level of an independent operator's certificate. It follows that GPC holders are entitled to exercise the privileges of independent operation at any gliding field in the country. It was intended that the certificate would constitute a de facto licence which would be recognized internationally and could be used by pilots wishing to fly overseas.

Our club is attaining prominence both in Australia and internationally, largely by virtue of the OLC. In my view we should aim to have all our members obtain a glider pilot certificate. I would strongly encourage you (yes, YOU) to get one.

Please contact Alan Buttenshaw, Ian Downes or myself for further information, encouragement and support.

## THE MIGHT OF MENTORING

ATTENTION TO ALL PRE-SOLO AND EARLY  
SOLO PILOTS!

Those who have adopted a mentor have been very complimentary of the arrangement. Whether you seek the inside info on how to embark on cross country flying, competition or conversion to a new type a mentor can and will provide helpful and friendly advice.

If you want one-on-one personal advice and encouragement at the right price (free!) please call me to arrange the perfect match.

Above all, fly safely and fly safely above all.

*Jay Anderson*

### **Sunk**

Still broken wing leaves no scope..

Sunken heart from sunken hope

My body terrestrial will be

No lofty heights will it see

Distances to glide, I put aside

Spirit left, unsatisfied

While thermal peaks you crest

I wish you All, A sky The Best

*Michael O'Brien sent this poem  
written by Errol Spletter: "The Sly  
Dog had many hidden talents,  
but I am only aware of him ever  
writing one poem!" ... written  
when WR was out of action.*





## MINI SAFARI TO DUBBO

**25 to 28 January 2013**

**The January Cross Country Weekend will include a 'mini' safari to Dubbo.**

There will be a thorough 'safari' briefing on the Friday and local cross country flying that day. Coaching and lead and follow will be available if required.

If you are not able to arrive at Keepit until late Friday, the briefing can be repeated on the Saturday morning.

The safari is open to everyone; it is aimed however at early cross country pilots who are interested to try something a bit different.

Landing (intentionally!) at a different airport to the one you took off from is a great experience and adds to your airmanship and confidence.

Ian and Joy will be coming in the C180 to do launches at Dubbo. There will be a modest entry fee to contribute to the ferry cost of PKD.

We will fly to Dubbo on the Saturday and enjoy a BBQ with the Ransby's that night.

A tour of the Dubbo RFDS Base is planned for Sunday morning before heading back to Keepit, with Monday available to make up for lost time or for local cross country flying.

### THE TASK... KEEPIT TO DUBBO

The straight line distance from Lake Keepit to Dubbo is around 230 km. There's some tiger county directly under this course so it's normal to track either slightly north-west via Coonabarrabran or slightly south east via Spring Ridge and Premer Ag strip.

There are plenty of airstrips and landable fields on these routes and they only add another 10-30 km to the direct route.

If the conditions are right, the Coonabarrabran route takes you close to the Warrumbungles and the Sliding Springs observatory. As they say in the Michelin guide, "well worth a detour." The more southerly course takes you over the foothills of the Liverpool ranges and from a good height is very scenic.

In strong south westerlies, the Warrumbungles can set up wave conditions and there can be huge sink in the lee. This makes a track via Coonabarrabran a bad idea.

In a strong south easterly wind, a the southern track is probably bad because of a Föhn wind over the Liverpool ranges. If conditions are good, then a straight-line track is OK.

Either way, Keepit to Dubbo is a relatively easy trip and offers some very scenic landscape to overfly. If conditions are good and you want to get a more impressive OLC score, you could extend to Narromine or even Nygan on the outbound run. If you look like returning to Keepit with lots of height, you can extend to Manilla or towards Kingstown to burn off height.

Please let Vic Hatfield ([vicandlynn@bigpond.com](mailto:vicandlynn@bigpond.com)) or Ian Barraclough ([ianbarra@bigpond.net.au](mailto:ianbarra@bigpond.net.au)) if you are intending to participate, so that accommodation can be arranged by Sunday night 20th January.

If you want to chat about it phone Ian on 0428 410 010.



## REGATTA 2013

**The annual Keepit Regatta is to be held from Sunday 24th February – Saturday 2nd March 2013.**

The regatta has become one of the biggest events in the club calendar. If you are new competition flying, the regatta is a great way to learn. The relaxed atmosphere and emphasis on safety make the regatta a seriously fun event.

Entries are limited to 30 gliders, so don't delay your entry. There are often seats available in two-seaters for coaching and lead and follows are encouraged. The club has a wonderful range of gliders which can be used for this event.

The format will be similar to last year, with a short presentation each day after briefing, a coffee/tea break followed by task setting with gridding around midday an approx. 1pm launch. There will be a degree of flexibility depending on weather of course and the time taken by presenters.

Catering: Sandwiches will be provided each day from the kiosk and delivered prior to launching and Ann has kindly offered to organise dinner each evening during the event, all at very modest prices.

More information will be provided closer to the Regatta. Remember the main objective of this Regatta is to have lots of FUN....

David Bull

davidannb@bigpond.com

## FLARM UPDATES

### When was the last time you updated your Flarm?

Version 5 was released in February 2011 and was mandatory for all users but there have been another 6 non-mandatory updates since then. The current release of Flarm firmware is 5.06 from July 2012 and is strongly recommended for all users and designs.

Updating Flarm units is a lot easier since SD card updates were supported but in some ways it can be a mixed blessing. Many of us have found that the performance of Flarm varies a lot, depending on the version we're using.

One upgrade, some time ago, increased the sensitivity to a point which made gaggle flying very difficult. I am not sure what version I am using (5.XX) but I have had quite a few occasions when I got a warning of an impending close encounter which went instantly from nothing to all red flashing alarms.

One, possibly both incidents were head-on where the approach speed was high and the other glider the most difficult to see. I think this type of situation has also been reported by Ian McPhee.

Flarm updates are categorised by Flarm in the release notes on their website. Some releases are only required for some devices but there have been three "strongly recommended" upgrades since version 5.00.

What Flarm version you are running?

## LX UPDATES

One of the great features of computer-based glider instruments is that you can add and improve features over the life of the instrument. Recent updates to the LX firmware has added the ability to load pictures of waypoints and runways using the CUPX file format and SeeYou.

This would not mean much for many users but for those people who are flying in unfamiliar territory, it is a great help to know what you are looking for when approaching a new strip. For Safaris, we prepare a book using Google earth and check and update all the waypoints we can find. Normally these files are printed or used as a PDF on an iDevice which is probably running OzRunways too.

The latest LX update also supports multiple start points (no doubt thanks to Dave Shorter's instigation) and the ability to select the Flarm signal of another glider when team flying (or just following!)







## ERROL SPLETTER

Sadly, a good friend and fellow competitor, Errol Spletter, died in a tragic accident at the Narromine State competition on Wednesday 5th December. Errol was a very experienced and careful pilot and no-one really knows why the accident happened – on final approach the glider clipped the top of a tree and plunged to the ground.

Errol was a good friend, a guy from Queensland I'd known for many years and raced against at many comps. He was just 51 years old. I first ran into Errol at a Chinchilla Regatta in the 90's where he was scorer for the comp. He was a tall lean stick of a guy, quiet,

laconic with a very dry twisted sense of humour. He managed to turn the issue of scoring into an amusing commentary on various pilots' attempts to better their results. He was able to add a note of levity to any situation.

I'll always remember the pranks he'd dream up for startling the crowd in the middle of a comp briefing. He was always in for a "stunt" - at one comp he'd been off to Vinnies, and he and a couple of his Qld mates popped up in the middle of a pilot briefing dressed in dinner suit jackets and top hats, emblazoned with some other outlandish stickers to "demand" some ridiculous change to procedure.

And on another occasion he conned a couple of

young girls from the local dance academy to appear in the pilot meeting and parade around the Comp Director with decorated multicoloured umbrellas.

Errol's accident was very poignant for me and Jay Anderson, as we'd just driven with him for a couple of hours on Monday evening to retrieve his glider. (No one completed the task that day). Then two days later we passed his car in the car park – now sitting vacant. It's stunning how quickly life can change from one moment to the next.

The incident was a very sobering reminder that our sport is very unforgiving of errors. A similar mistake on the road and he'd have probably bounced off a crash barrier and survived. But operating in the three dimensions of airspace and just 100feet off the ground can be lethal. There were a lot of very quiet and bemused pilots after that day – no-one quite sure what to do, how to react, very aware that it could just as easily have been them.

But we still engage in the sport for it's such a wonderfully challenging and rewarding experience. We all know it's dangerous but accept that. If you follow procedures and fly within the limits of the glider and its known performance characteristics it is a very predictable and safe sport. Errol has flown comps at Keepit on many occasions and will be remembered with fondness by many Keepit pilots

Errol was a keen member of the Warwick Gliding Club in Queensland, a tightly knit bunch of pilots. His passing will make a big hole in the Warwick Gliding Club where he'll be sorely missed. As one of them said " We are all struggling with the loss of our good mate. The skies over Warwick and the clubhouse atmosphere will never be the same."



## OUR NEW SUMMER TUGGIE

We've got a new summer tuggie... a young lad from the UK called Alex.

We usually to put some background in Keep Soaring, so while I was up there last week, I got him to scribble down some notes on a piece of paper, stuffed it in my shorts and went flying and forgot about it.

Regrettably, the Authorities washed my shorts without checking the pockets for important documents. There's little that I can read on what I salvaged. There's something about being a full time tuggie at Lasham... he had a granny or an auntie or something who was a well known and very successful comp glider pilot on the UK and that's it.

I rang Ian Downes and he faxed me what's printed here.



Dear Mummy,

December 22nd 2012

Mr. Downes has told me that I have to write home because it's Christmas. I did try phoning but I just got a message that the phone number was disconnected. That's very odd isn't it?

I expect that I shall be a bit homesick at Christmas time.

Mr. and Mrs. Downes have asked me for Christmas dinner at the clubhouse but it won't be the same partly because it will be about a million degrees here. Remember what fun we had at the beach last year at Leamington when the sea froze over?

I am not so scared about snakes any more. I have not actually seen one, but I hear them slithering in the grass. The glider pilots have told me that there are sharks in the lake and crocodiles too so I'm not game to go in swimming although the local oiks sail there.

The food here is very funny. All they seem to eat is meat. Mainly steak though the glider pilots have told me that most of what they call steak is really kangaroo so I mainly eat potatoes. The beer here is funny too. You have to drink it really cold to take the taste away and after only one or two pints, you get a killer headache and can't get up in the morning.



Can you send me some marmite and perhaps some of your marmalade? They have this stuff here called vegemite which they think is better than marmite but it is not and it tastes like toe-jam.

I know Daddy said that coming to Australia would make a man out of me like it did for Prince Charles, but did Pater know that New South Wales is entirely populated by convicts? That's what Mr. Downes told me. I think he is very nice but he speaks in a funny accent and I am not sure I always understand him. He says I have an accent but of course I speak the Queen's English and he does not. (I hope he does not have to inspect my letter before I post it!)

In fact there is no postbox anywhere near here. The nearest thing that you could call a town is a million miles away. Tamworth is like a village full of dangerous looking rednecks who are all enormous because they only eat KFC. I am only allowed to go there on Sunday, and because it is too far to walk in the heat, I am pretty trapped here in my caravan. Kangaroos surround it every night. There are millions of them. The glider pilots have said that the 'roos can get cross and attack, so I am careful not to leave the caravan door open or go out at night.

It's not like the nice clean caravan we stayed in in Cornwall on school hols once. It looks a million years old and full of spiders and most are deadly. I have to get up early each day to check my shoes and socks for spiders. In the middle of the day, the caravan is about a million degrees inside like Mr. Dircks' pizza oven but mostly I am flying so I don't cook. I am getting a lot of hours in, which is OK because it means I can become a real pilot soon.

I do think it is queer that they said the phone was disconnected. I'm not sure the person sounded real either. It's not as if Daddy can't afford to pay the phone bill even if he was too stingy get me a return plane ticket. I'll have some difficulty saving the money on what they pay me as a tuggie.

Everyone ~~says~~ swears a lot over here and I have been practicing myself so people don't notice that I speak properly. Of course I would not swear at home but somehow you do seem rather more grown-up if you can use rude words without blushing. Some of the glider pilots are very good at it.

I'm not completely sure about glider pilots. Mostly they seem nice but they have an odd sense of humour and you cannot always tell if they are laughing at you or just laughing. If I find that they've



been making fun of me, when I become a real pilot, with those gold stripes weighing heavy on my broad shoulders, I'll be mean to them in return. For example, I'll dump them in sink. Anyway I won't need to be a tuggie any more, because I'll be working at an airline and being paid millions.

I'm trying not to think of you all having Christmas without me because I'll get too homesick. I thought I heard something about you having Christmas in the Caribbean since you could afford it now but I don't think you'd want Christmas somewhere warm- it wouldn't seem right, would it?

Anyway, chin up and keep bugging on! (Winston Churchill said that, so it can't be rude.)

Your loving son,

Alexander. X

P.S. I enclosed some pictures that some newsletter chappie took. Sorry, I did not have time to shave. If you think they look OK, can you post one to Lucy from down the road? Please don't forget! It might remind her to write more often.



Spare a thought for our tuggies at Christmas in the caravan in the summer heat dreaming of a white Christmas back home! (OK, we know that it's usually sleet, rain, black ice, burst water pipes etc.)



IAN'S IPAD  
MY IPAD

JOHN - CAN YOU CHANGE THAT  
TO BEER O'CLOCK?  
TODAY AFTER NOON

110% □

Hello all of youse!

It's been a hell of a few months and I've hardly had time to scratch myself. Grand Prix, G Dale Coaching sessions (he's not a bad sort of bastard for a pom) Keepit Fast and then all those little bastards darlings from Joey Glide. I couldn't find a bloody thing after they'd left... the batteries in the laser pointer went flat after they'd used it as a light sabre and we had to move the beer cooler trailer thing right up to the flight centre so they did not strain their poor wee knees and writs carrying slabs of beer across the car park every five mins.

The Joeys gave me a frock at the prize giving... they called it a bath robe but lit looks like a frock and I reckon I'd look like a real ponce wearing it (if I ever get around to having a bath!) I'll probably wrap it up and give it to the missus for Christmas.

I've got a new iPad now... the real thing! I was going to do this report on it but the screen went black. I was waiting to take the bloody thing back to the shop but Mrs. Downes explained that the electricity had leaked out and it needed a top-up. So what you're getting for now is the manual version.



367  
94  
402





This is Canada 6, a young bloke from Canada at Joey Glide. There's so many of them over here, you just have to give them a serial number like in prison... they seem to understand that. More importantly, behind him is this 3/4 scale Spitfire. I had to crawl all over it while the editor took snaps.... I have a feeling I will regret it sooner or later... nice plain though.

The Joey Glide kids were a good lot. I don't trust kids much if they don't play up a bit they way I did. They could fly too and would show the old farts a thing or two if they laid off the beer. (The old ones... and the young ones too come to think of it!) This snap is me telling them a bedtime story





It's getting a bit too close to Xmas to be writing this stuff... With Mrs Downes "online" now, I don't seem to have much time for this type of essay work.

I've had a lot of help from people over the last few weeks during all these busy times and they've certainly made life a bit less hectic and I'd like to say thanks.

That includes all the ladies who help out with the munga... Anne Bull, Loise Ransby, Jan Dircks (I can tell you what I'd do with that plurry horse but the editor would not publish it!) and of course Mrs Downes her good self.

Our new Tuggie, who we all know as "Cater" is going to be a great help when he learns to make his radio calls less like a GA pilot on speed so we can understand him. (Why would anyone call their kid Fauna? I ask you... don't they have nicknames in the UK?)

And of course to all the rest of youse who go to make Keepit the best plurry club in the omniverse? (I think that last VB is made me emotional!)

Have a great Chrissie and see you next year!

Sorry about the sauce stain mate. Can you do your best with this as usual?

Things to get for Chrissy  
Couple of slabs of VB  
Big Turkey  
~~Veggies~~  
Poxtables  
Prunes & berocca  
Pressie for Mrs Downes  
Red Woobla  
Socks



# MEA CULPA

The 3 most useless things in Aviation

The 3 things you need to do in Aviation

2 out of 3 essentials in Aviation

In the first instance, they are: **Air Above you, Runway behind you and fuel you haven't got.**

In the second instance, they are: **Aviate, Navigate and Communicate.**

In the third instance, they are: **Airspeed, Altitude and Good ideas.**

So, what's this about you are saying. Has Mr. Pink finally lost it.

Well, it is a Mea Culpa, a confession of fallibility and hopefully a message that will help some and remind others of priorities and awareness.

Returning from a task a week or two ago I almost got all the above "Homilies" wrong, yes almost ALL!

Here's the scene;

Good final glide from about 55 klms out towards Mt Kaputah, good bouyant air and lift lines, however, a fairly significant and unobserved wind gradient.

Initial speed about 80 kts., from about 8000', happy with the good conditions (unballasted Jantar).

Passing 5500' getting a bit "skinny", back to 70 kts., arousal rising as options diminish, still feeling good about the air ahead.

Through 4000' good air! back up to 90 kts., threshold of 14 "straight in" looking very good in the



*Red line: What should have happened. Purple line: What could have happened.  
Pink line: What did happen.*

windscreen, going down the screen if anything.

3500', almost level in rising air, 110 kts., this is so good!

2500', 120 kts., plan A is to cross the threshold, ease up and turn right to carry out an abbreviated circuit to land 14. \*

2000' 115 kts., hmmm, not a lot to play with for the abbreviated cct! Plan B, ease up and to the left to

turn right onto short final 20 as the wind favours this on the ground! ##

400'agl., eyeball, 110kts., hmmm ??? not yet over the threshold 14, energy bleeding like the budget and I need a plan C.

Up the runway, fairly low, waiting for the appropriate time/spacing/turn radius for the ease up and left, thinking, this is not good!!! +++



So, look in, 90 kts., that will have to do,

Ease nose up,

Ease left,

Watch for turn radius,

Reverse to the right,

Ground looks far enough away,

Speed over ground looks good,

Remember Mr. Pink says "speed is life",

Look in at ASI,

**Eeek, 48 kts!**

Gosh! (four letter word)

Lower nose and monitor ground clearance,

Get 50 kts.,

Hold the attitude,

Look at turn to go,

Height above ground,

Runway alignment,

Cub Jantar on the ground adjacent to aim point,

50 kts., Wings level,

Gear down,

50 kts.,

Aim Point,

Airspeed,

Centre line,

1/2 Airbrake,

Aim point,

Centre line,

Hold it off,

Hold it off,

Touch down,

All in order, roll up to near the car,

Stop.

Close the airbrakes,

Turn down the Vario,

Open the canopy,

Observe right hand to be shaking, and start to rewind the whole debacle to where I should have stopped the idiocy.

\* Here Plan A was still viable, however, a straight in should have been obvious as a back up!

## Here Plan B should have been put into effect here, convert speed to height, set 55 kts., and track for right base 20.

+++ Here and Now, the Rabbit in the headlights!, but could still have put the gear down and landed straight ahead.

So I ended up with Air Above me and Runway behind me,

And, The Aviate, Navigate was extremely lacking,

And, I bloody near had no Airspeed, no Altitude and had no bloody ideas!

Now I teach and preach to be proactive, act early and halve the required inputs and stress levels; so why did I let myself get where I did? This vexed question has me somewhat stymied.

I believe I was fixated on Plan A and didn't pick the wind gradient and then sat on my fingers for too long.

Please take from this embarrassing admission what you will, but definitely take the fact that safe speed near the ground is all that you have when you have nothing else, be disciplined and always have a plan B.

*Allbutts.*



*Ego te absolvo a peccatis tuis.  
Deus venire vobiscum.*



# LAKE KEEPIT SOARING CLUB BURKETOWN SAFARI 2012







**What makes 15 odd glider pilots sign up for a 4,000km round trip like Lake Keepit Soaring Club's Burketown Safari in October 2012?**

There was no shortage of them lining up for this year's epic. Many were flying touring motor gliders like Grob 109s and a Motorfalke but there were at least four and a half self-launchers intending to glide the whole way... an ASH 25, a DG-808 and two Ventus 2CMs with the half being the Stemme which has a foot in both motor-glider camps.

It's fairly normal for a lot of entrants to fall by the wayside before a safari but this time, only Dave Shorter dropped out at the last minute... and his excuse, that the jet sustainer for his JS-1 had not been fitted, was disappointing to all of us. He was flying the first test flights at the club on the day of our return.

It's clear that you need a special sort of crew to succeed in this type of event and all the two seaters matched the criteria. One pilot needs to be a cheerful, outgoing optimist and the other doesn't and normally isn't.

While the Safari's Beloved Leader, Ian Barraclough, is undoubtedly an optimist, his partner in the ASH 25, Geoff Sim, admits to having deep doubts about the fact that the sun will rise tomorrow and would probably take a bet on it if he knew you'd be around to pay up. In a single seater, you need both personalities. Almost all the great sailplane pilots I have listened too radiate confidence and optimism, but for long distance flying in remote areas, there's got to be a voice of caution somewhere in the cockpit...but Mr. Gloomy can't shout too loud.

I try to fly within the limits of my pessimism (Ian Roache's phrase) but I had some additional excuses at the start of this safari... only 48 hours before the start, I had been in some fleapit Dallas hotel, courtesy of American Airlines who had stuffed up the connecting flight back home.

My suitcase was lost in transit and it arrived only a few minutes before we had to leave Sydney for Keepit... but we made it in time for the Sunday departure. Armed with Nodoz and sleeping pills, it looked like another episode of drugs in sport!

The route for the safari was ambitious... there was a fast four day plan, which involved one leg of 570 km and a slightly less quick five day plan, both designed to give us the best chance of getting a few morning glories at Burketown.



The plan for the first day was to meet a whole lot of other pilots at St George, some 370 km away from Keepit, including Macca and David Julian from Byron in the Motorfalke, two Grob 109s, a Technam and a Supercub as well as a Ventus or two joining us from Queensland. Forecasts of temperatures in the high 30s and low 40s promised excellent soaring conditions.

From the start, I knew the first day was going to be something special. It's not often that you fail to hook into something after take-off at Keepit and I can count on the fingers of one hand how often I have had to take a re-light but this day was special.

I reluctantly restarted the motor over the strip, climbed to 6000' and headed north-west. There were some thermals on the other side of the Kevin range but I was lower through the valleys than I have ever been before and saw some impressive rock formations in the Kaputaras which I had hoped never to have to look up at. An ominous start!

Ken Flower, with Justin Smith and Michael Shirley with Ian Roache were leaving from Narrabri and by the time I got to the end of the Kaputaras, the ASH 25 was at Mount Surprise, some 30 km behind.

Ken "I've got a nice Limbach motor in front" Flower flew alongside Michael Shirley's Grob 109 taking air to air pictures and was enjoying himself so much that he suggested that Michael turned off the noise and tried soaring because as he said "the black paddocks are working".

We flew over paddocks which were blacker than anything I had flown over except at night and apart from a suspicious shine from between the furrows, there was nothing.

About 140 kms short of Mundgindi, at 2200' and one NoDoz into the flight, I gave it away again and started the motor like everyone else. The air was completely dead.

Geraldine, driving the English Land Vehicle and towing the trailer containing the bags and fuel arrived late. She had a flat and totally shredded a trailer tyre. Fortunately, someone flagged her down and fitted the spare for her. The next day, Geraldine and Lynne bought two new tyres, had the trailer wheel bearings replaced and followed us late in the day, dodging roos, into Augathella.



There was quite a big gathering for the morning briefing, held as usual in the local bakery and coffee shop. There were so many new faces and aircraft that like Conan's victories, their numbers could not easily be counted. Regrettably, Bob Ward and Steve Harris in one Ventus had to retire right there because their glider's engine extension motor had failed.

The weather to the south was looking extremely gloomy and the promise of great soaring conditions on the way up was beginning to fade.



In fact, by mid-week, it was snowing in many parts of the south with temperatures well below normal. Still, there's nothing like challenging conditions to keep you awake!

And it was challenging conditions we had on most days. There were far CU at times on two days but they only worked reliably on one day. Every other day was blue. The thermal of the day was often a bushfire which you needed an instrument rating to enter!





On most legs, we had strong winds which kept our cross-country speeds down and stirred up the thermals so we got the promised 10 knot Queensland thermals, but only for 50% of the turn. The other half was the legendary Queensland 12 knots of sink. Needless to say, there was talk of refunds until it was remembered that there was no entry fee to refund.



One notable day was the leg from Longreach to Cloncurry. Tony Tabbart gave us the weather briefing at breakfast in the local cafe... an increasingly strong headwind and high cloud with overdevelopment and possible storms at the destination. Tony is experienced and very fast and if he lets any pessimistic thoughts in, he does not show it... except with the forecasts. He was likely to finish a good while before the rest of us in the self launchers.

We were all together until the Longreach-Cloncurry leg. I hooked into something good on climb-out at Longreach and shut the motor down early with barely a litre of petrol used. Once on track, the "cloudbase" went up and up until I got a boomer to 10,000' and then another to 11,300'.



Happy times are here again! And then the day turned to worms. I slid down to 4500' over the next 35 minutes without feeling anything worth turning in and then down to 3,000' before it dawned on me that the day had well and truly changed. The excited chatter on the radio died.

How can you face your wife and children, look them in the eyes and tell them that you took a 2 knot climb on a 10 knot day? I find changing gears downwards very difficult but it is a skill that's worth learning when Mr. Gloomy takes over the controls but with the complete overcast, very little sunlight was getting at the ground.

Fortunately the Beloved Leader called off the day's task and the self launchers turned back for Winton. I was still in gliding range and Mr. Gloomy had already set the glide computer to Winton as the destination airstrip. The motor gliders carried onwards to Cloncurry... but only just. Justin Smith in Ken's 109 had to rely on prefrontal lift to get high enough to glide into the 20-30 knot headwind on the strip at Cloncurry.

So now the safari was divided into two parts. Those of us in SLGs at Winton... Geoff and Ian in the ASH, Tony in the Ventus, Paul and Keith in the Stemme and me in the DG... and the rest in their motor gliders up at Cloncurry.





Tony's partner Jo had made it to Cloncurry but fortunately Geradline and Lynne and the bags of clean undies were with us (ours not necessarily theirs) while the northern party had none.

Winton is OK. We had a good stay at the mostly restored deco North Gregory Hotel and then went off looking at Dinosaur footprints the next day, waiting for the weather to improve enough to get to Burketown in two modest legs.

The weather was often cool and we wore jumpers at breakfast time or it was incredibly hot and we sweltered in our cockpits before take-off.

The days continued blue and with the inversion often topping out some days at a solid 5,200' and meagre 2 knot average climbs for the day, and it was hot and hard work low down.

The thermals were mostly workable and fairly consistent, but if you missed one, you absolutely had

to get the next or you were looking at outlanding opportunities in the form of deserted farm strips or vast barren paddocks... and there were plenty of them.

Smartphone apps such as OzRunways are essential for the gloomy glider pilot. Just when you are stressing about whether you entered an airstrip's coordinates correctly, you tap the iPhone screen a couple of times and get a second opinion on the bearing and distance.





## OUTLANDINGS

When you're flying in the bush and get below 5,000', it's eyes on the ground, looking for suitable outlanding spots. With the ground at around 1,000' and a safe remote-area engine starting height of 2,500' agl, your working band is very small.

Half the point of owning a self-launcher is to avoid outlandings. It's dinned into you from the start that your motor is most likely to fail and you need to be always prepared for an outlanding but since the motors almost always do start, you never get the outlanding practice that the pilots of pure gliders enjoy. So the prospect of a real outlanding fills SLG pilots with terror.

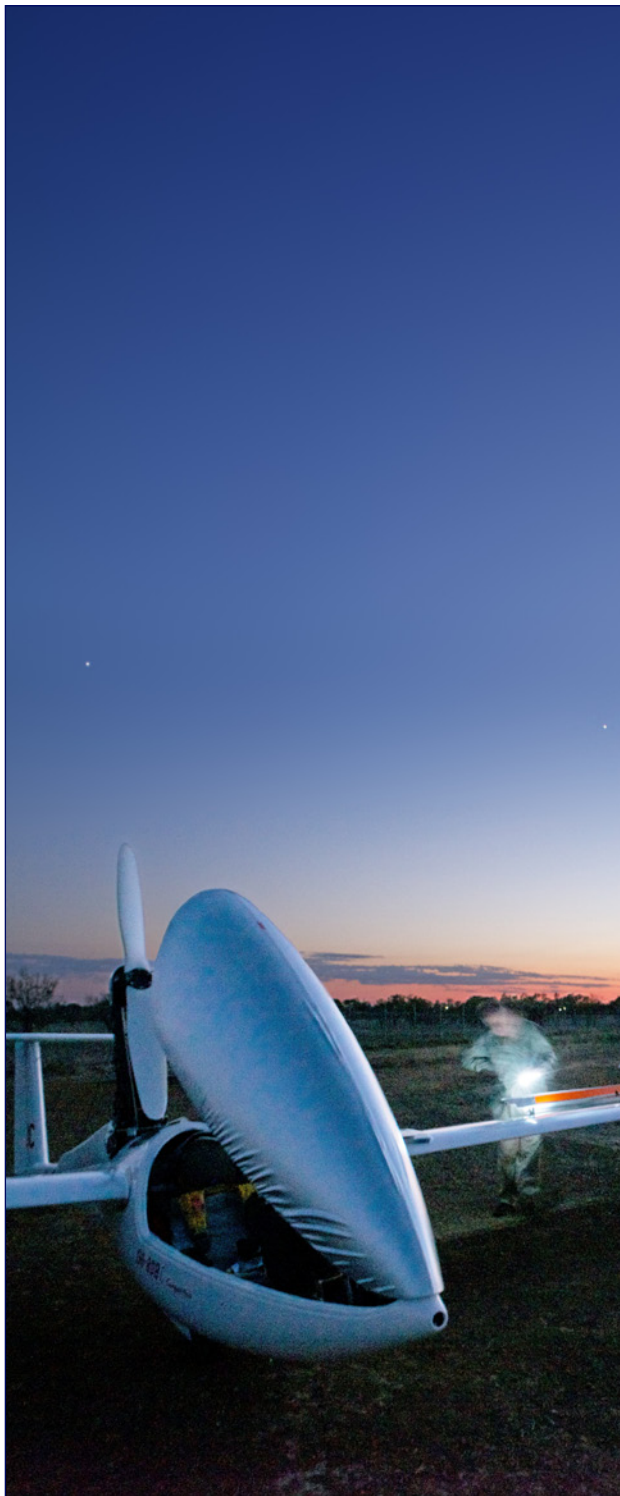
Having driven on some of the FNQ roads, I would not immediately choose to land on the bitumen because the reflective markers either side of the road are metal, stiff and quite closely spaced. It would have to be a nicely judged landing to drop down over the top of one set of markers and pull up before the next.

The dirt roads had no markers and though they were probably rutted gravel, there were plenty to choose from and at more varied angles to the wind. However, on many days where we were flying from one town to another and following the main road, so was the wind. This meant that the dirt roads were normally at 90° to the wind.

The fields were the least inviting. You might land OK but it would take days for anyone to drive to where you landed only to discover that the crocodiles had eaten you.







**Once at Burketown, we had a chance to relax a little, at least in the afternoons and learn about the Morning Glory.**

The Morning Glory is an odd thing... I have a cartoon of Sir Nigel Molesworth chasing a gerund and it does remind me a lot of what goes on with the Glory.

The first half of the problem is written on the can... Morning. The point about gliding is that it is an afternoon occupation and you don't need to get up any earlier than 5 minutes before briefing.

If you are not a morning person, then don't bother to come up here and chase any MGs because Mornings is what you get. The other half of the problem is that because most of the day is spent sitting around looking for things to do, the evenings hang heavy (with hang and heavy being emphasised here).

Since the pub burned down a few months ago, Burketown has been a dry town. Macca saw an ad from the wine discounter Dan Murphy's which offered to get a slab of anything you want to anywhere you want in Australia for \$2.

Spotting a bargain, Macca ordered a pallet full of woobla (more accurately, it was bombo) and true to their word, Dan Murphy delivered... and Woollies shares promptly dropped \$2.

As the time to leave Burketown got closer, the bombo lake sat on the pallet until Macca was forced to discount heavily what tasted like heavily discounted bombo in the first place. So getting up early in the morning was not been as easy as it might have been.

Another half of the problem was that at least two of us (Beloved Leader and I) got the meaning of the

letter "P" wrong on our iDevices and were rudely not awoken at 4:15 PM instead of at sparrowstart. We were roused by others and staggered late, hungry and unwashed onto the strip.

At least another 50% of the problem is that nobody sleeps to an early alarm. You wake up every 30 minutes and check the clock to see how long you have left to sleep... and the result is that you wake up feeling like a dishrag or with a mouth like the bottom of a parrots cage (see bombo above).

The final half of the problem is that the MGs are elusive... rather, they are more mystic than elusive. For at least 85% of the year they don't come. Then when they do come, they are either invisible, early, in the wrong direction or weaklings.

You don't consult some mystic guru to discover the gerund, you talk to someone like Garry Speight who knows English better than you or me. To discover the chances of a Morning Glory, you consult everything and everyone from information written on road signs to the pub wall.

The signs and portents are elusive... dew on the pub's fridge door (which is no longer there, having burned down), warping table tops (ditto.)

Local sages who are the custodians of the cloud, pontificate in complex weather-speak about what causes a morning glory and with many wise nods or shakes of the head say there is a 50% chance of a morning glory tomorrow (but probably only a 20% chance of that) and your best option other than the fridge door, is to cut open a Brolga and examine its entrails.





While waiting for a Morning Glory, the motor-glider boys flew off to a local island for more grilled Barra. They get bored easily and need constant motion. Following on from this, they decided that conditions were not favourable for an MG and left while Tony T was taking off towards where the rising sun would hopefully rise, some time later, looking for one.

Note: This early take off stuff is something which Geoff never did, full of doubts about whether the sun was going to appear at all.

The rest of us decided stay another day. This would mean a hard five day schedule on the return trip but I decided to have a lie in rather than getting up early in the morning again. It's not that I didn't want to fly a morning glory... But I did not have Tony Tabbart's zeal who aimed off into the early dawn every day. It would

be a long hot leg down to Cloncurry with the worst options for outlanding of all the legs.

It's difficult to sleep in knowing that things are afoot and I was awake at 6 (AM). Tony T had again launched early. Very early, but then he is instrument rated.

I had a widdle and wandered outside to try and find out which direction the sea was and sure enough, there on the horizon was an unmistakable thin white line. I ran back to the hut and yelled to Geraldine, "It's on!" pulled on my clothes and ran for the strip.

By the time I got there, Ian and Geoff in the ASH and Macca were just taking off. The MG was still some distance away... now perhaps a hand's width above the horizon.

I did a hasty DI (how much can go wrong when you have done the same on the two days preceding and not flown?) and then taxied out to the piano keys.

At this stage, an AI Giles moment occurred. I shut the canopy and the perspiration from my body after the run, immediately condensed on the inside and the runway all but disappeared. I guessed that this would clear as soon as I took off... and it did. Others got condensation at the same time but on the outside of the canopy.

I climbed to 2000' heading towards the coast, shut down the engine and glided towards the approaching cloud. It was not the biggest or strongest of Morning Glories but it was there at last. Long, wide and perfectly formed... a white cliff in the sky, sparkling in the low sun as the air rippled over the top as white as snow.









It's not easy to take good pictures of the cloud and I was perhaps wrongly, more interested in taking pictures than flying it. At one stage I felt a vibration through the pedals and saw that I was side slipping along the face at 100 knots or more to keep the clear view panel in the right position to take a picture.

Paul Thompson and Keith Dixon in the Stemme had perhaps the longest flight at close to 300 kms. Tony Tabbart picked the cloud up earliest, close to the sea with the sunrise still below it and left it shortly after it went over Burketown. Ian and Geoff in the ASH 25 were seriously considering taking the cloud all the way to Cloncurry but their GPS was playing up so they returned to Burketown.

The cloud was a great event, especially for Tony Tabbart who really wanted to fly one and landed with

as close to an ear to ear grin as a real Aussie country boy can manage.

So we got what we came for and left Burketown a few hours later as very happy campers. Initially, the wispy CU from the sea breeze provided fitful lift to 2,500' but it soon lifted and lifted until we were getting something like 9500' later in the afternoon. It's a great deal more relaxing at that height over that terrain. The clouds were as usual, not really behaving... at least for anyone other than Tony who got a long way ahead and they disappeared as we got down track.

As usual, it was rough. At times, the thermals were like someone beating their fists on the undersurface of the wings... bumpy in the extreme and almost impossible to centre. But there was little doubt that we would make the distance.

Not so for Geraldine and Michael Shirley in that monarch of the road, the English Land Vehicle which spat the dummy at Burke & Wills Roadhouse. After some talking with Roadside Assist... never an easy matter in a payphone in 38° (there's no mobile phone coverage out there), it was decided to leave the car and trailer and travel on to Cloncurry with Jo, stuffing all the contents of our box trailer into Tony's glider trailer.

The following day was spent tracking down two hire cars, one to take Michael Shirley and Ian Roache back to Burketown with a replacement radiator for their Grob and the other to carry on down to Sydney with us. Tony and Jo had a tighter schedule than the rest of us and flew south that morning while we did the 400km drive to organise the hire cars.





Once upon a time in a far off land, there was a Princess who, like most real princesses, dreamed of becoming a truckie. As she grew older and drove all-to-smooth drug-dealer's 4WDs, she longed for the simplicity of a real working man's ute, preferably with a flashing orange light on the top and letters down the side, huge breasts barely concealed by a blue singlet, a set of heavy work boots, high vis clothing and extremely short shorts.

Well, you can't have everything. The Princess got her ute, refused the shorts and singlet and missed out on the rest. Armed with the flashing lights, she tandem-towed the ASH and DG onto strips while the Stemme followed on its own legs.



Part of the joy of this type of flying is the thrill of flying into new airstrips, especially when they are either set so deep in trees that you cannot see the runway from circuit-joining height or when the bush-fire smoke is so dense that you cannot see any strip from 10 km away or best of all, where the cross strip is closed and there's a 24 knot cross-wind. We had these joys on most days.

The most fun we had when taking off was at Winton on the return leg. The wind was really strong... blowing dogs off chains strong. Things like tail dollies blew away. It was hard to stand straight. Once the tie downs were removed, the gliders spun in the wind. And so on. They had the ISO 9002 strong-wind windsocks which were difficult to read unless you

are a jet pilot but it seemed stronger than 25 knots on the ground.

We opted for the cross strip. There are two strips at Winton. One is tarmac and the other isn't. It is made from talcum powder covered with a thin layer of cornflakes. The width of the strip between the cones is about 17.5 metres. The DG wingspan is 18 metres, the ASH is 25 and the Stemme is something 21. It also has two wheels but on a narrow wheelbase.

We lined up with the ASH in front, followed by the DG and finally the Stemme. We were as close to a set of cones as possible to give the longest run-up before the next set. Paul T ran the ASH wing and they took off OK but stayed at 100' for what seemed like 15 minutes... at least until they were over the horizon.





Then it was my go. Normally I don't use a wing runner but this time, I got Paul to run the wing. I was not completely lined up in the middle of the strip... it was a hard call in any case, being just a rutted dust strip.

Almost as soon as Paul let go, a wing dropped, possible due to me turning onto the hoped-for centre-line and it took what seemed an lifetime to pick up before the next looming cone. This was alarming since the wind was strong enough to keep the wings level at a stop! After that, the climb was a scratchy 2-300' in heavy sink until I caught up the ASH in a thermal some miles ahead.

With strong winds it is inevitable that sooner or later, you'll get a strong crosswind landing. At Mungindi, there is a single bitumen strip with a closed-

off cross strip. The wind was blowing directly across the main strip when we arrived. There was no doubt about the strength of the wind. There was bags full of it... bushfire smoke streaming parallel to the ground, dust blowing up behind vehicles, white caps on the dams and GA planes blowing across the strip... (OK... it was the day before and blowing 100 kph when the Cessna 172 blew over).

The Beloved Leader decided to land diagonally... touching down on the wide gravel shoulders, running over the main bitumen strip and pulling up before the bushes on the far side. Coming in second, I did the approach as He suggested, side slipping like mad, touched down between the lights at the edge of the strip, bounced slightly and then squirrelled across the



strip... and it was over. Paul T did a wonderful landing in the Stemme, and it was amazing to see how far sideways the plane went on its one slight skip.

Another deep joy of bush strips is the ritual evening tie-down. If you are lucky, you tie down in the GA area but mostly, we tied down somewhere else.

Screw-its don't work about 90% of the time. It's very rare to find a type of dirt that they'll screw into and hold. Mostly it is either rock hard or powder. Towards the end of the trip, I found that a small libation of Guinness, poured into the hole, seemed to help. This might be another use for Vegemite, diluted with water, which looks much like Guinness. Something to be researched!





By Mitchell, we were back to the “Old Firm,” the same three gliders and mostly the same people who flew the Lake Eyre safari the year before... a happy and relaxed bunch.

We had the fun of landing on some huge strips, suitable for 747s. At Longreach, there's a frisson of panic when you look down and see a Jumbo in the parking area... until you realise that it is part of the Qantas museum.

Longreach is not a bad place to stay... there's the Qantas museum and the Stockman's Hall of Fame. The motel was good too and the whole gang of us had the dining room all to ourselves. Oddly, we had to order dinner a few hours early and for a change, we'd arrived a few hours before the ground crew of Lynne and Geraldine. I thought the menu was not bad, but

when I read out a selection to Princess Geraldine, she yelled back “No, no, no! F\*\*\*!” However it was not the menu that was the problem. She thought she'd hit a roo in the car. Fortunately she narrowly missed it.

Was this a great safari? Yes, it was another unforgettable experience. There's no doubt that having to get from A to B in a day puts you in a different situation compared to the normal club flying. Conditions can vary far more on a straight 350 km leg than on a triangle of the same distance and the experience of different country and airstrips each day should make you a better airman.

That being said, the “T” word was heard even from the lips of the Beloved Leader part-way through the trip. I agree. If I was to try to fly the Morning Glory again, I would take the glider in its trailer to the end of

the bitumen road and fly to Burketown from there. But I would not change much about the safari idea itself.

I think that there was a difference in emphasis for the two groups... the motor gliders seemed mainly interested in flying the Morning Glory, though on most days had informal competitions to see who used their engines the least. The self-launchers were perhaps more interested in the journey as an end in itself with the Morning Glory being the icing on the cake. The motor-gliders managed to do the safari inside the scheduled time while the self-launchers were two days adrift.

It would be nice to boast that we'd flown to Burketown and back on less than 25 litres of petrol... the DG actually did this, but we were all followed by cars which used considerably more fuel.





In fact, the really hard yards on the safari are always done by the road crew... the long suffering and uncomplaining Geraldine, Lynne and Jo. Heroines all! (OK, the "un" was a typo!)

It would be great to be more independent in a self launcher but most are not really made that way. The Stemme is the most independent. It can taxi, does not need a wing runner and has enough storage space for more than a toothbrush.

The ASH 25 is probably the least independent. It normally needs a wing runner, it cannot taxi on most small strips and is heaviest to man-handle on the ground.

Of course, the performance of the ASH in the air separates it from the Stemme. The DG-808 sits in the middle. With its steerable tail wheel, large wingtip wheels and a miniature wing walker, it can be taxied

on most strips and it is light enough to be ground handled by one person... but the storage space, even for drinking water, is tiny.

For me, the surprise of the last two safaris has been the Stemme. It's both a proper sailplane and a proper motor glider. There were days when Paul led us home because he was able to fly more aggressively than we did. There were times when he decided that he'd had enough and cruise-climbed to 10,000' and rode above the bumps... or so he claimed.

The Stemme went off on picnic trips and even flew off on a 90 km shopping trip for a bag of prawns... the leaking of which will reduce the plane's resale value considerably.

All that being said, I would not swap either with my DG-808. Compared with the other gliders, it's a ballerina, light, agile, beautiful to look at and really no

more temperamental than the other clumsy chorus-line gliders. Its climb rate under engine or thermalling is fantastic. Nor would I swap a single-seater for a two-seater in spite of the obviously greater work load. Imagine having to put up with some gibbering optimist in the other seat for a 4,000 km safari!

**The Numbers:** There were 12 legs, six of which were around 350 km + one flight on the Morning Glory for most of us. The distance flown without motor was around 3840 km.

Engines were used for self launching and apart from the first leg to St George, were used on one or two legs as a relight. Engines were also used occasionally within 5 kms of the destination to get enough height to see the strip or avoid other traffic.

One day was unflyable due to bad weather. One day was lost to car problems.





*Clockwise from the top: Mitchell, before the storm. Paul Thompson misbehaving as usual. Ditto, with John Clark and Keith Dixon. Somewhere over FNQ...not many outlandings down there! Tony Tabbart, after flying his first morning glory. He got what he came for.*







*Clockwise from the top: Ian Barraclough DI-ing at dawn. Paul Thompson misbehaving as usual. Macca and David Julian from Byron. Not Betty Davis eyes, but Groucho Marx eyebrows! Seen at Burketown. Dangerous cows and an odd road sign. Geraldine took most of the pics too.*







*Judith and Ian Ferguson, Jo Pocklington and Lynne Thompson in the wind under the Morning Glory.*



# THE JET AGE HAS ARRIVED



**Sitting around the kitchen bench over breakfast, almost two years ago, I mused to my wife "There was a very interesting presentation on a new glider at the last comp at Dalby."**

"Hmmm" said my wife.

"Yes, it was a new 18m glider being built in South Africa."

"Hmmm".

"It has performed very well in a recent European international competition and beaten a lot of the German gliders."

"Hmmm"

"Bruce Taylor is now flying one of these and says it feels the air really well."

"Hmmm".

"Interesting.... It's also quite reasonably priced compared to the German gliders."

"Don't beat about the bush Dave. Just tell me! Have you bought a new glider?"

"No Darling ... I was just discussing it with you. I thought you'd be interested."

"Hmmm!"

"One of the things that interested me particularly is that it can be fitted with a jet sustainer motor, which would get me home. Save driving the trailer out for a road retrieve and unrigging in paddocks."

"Ohhh?" she said. "That is interesting..... (pause)..... How long do you think it would take to get one?"

"Normally delivery on gliders takes around 2 to 3

years Darling."

"If you're going to get one you can't wait that long! Can't you get it before then?"

So I phoned Todd Clark, the JS agent, and placed my order for a JS1 glider with a jet sustainer engine.

Interestingly, Todd wasn't so sure, and tried to advise me against the jet, as he had some reservations. None had delivered at that stage, which was December before last, and he believed it was an untested development which needed more work before he could be confident in selling them.

But for me, one of the key attractions of this glider was the benefits of a jet sustainer, and the choice for me was JS1 with jet, or no JS1.



So the order was placed with the factory. I was confident I wouldn't be the bunny with the first jet as my order was for jet No.5 – four other customers in line before me who would trial the engine. Hopefully it would be well and truly debugged by the time I took delivery.

Well, Todd was pretty right about the development program for the jet. It took another 18 months or so for the jet design to be bedded down and to get a prototype flying. In the meantime I took delivery of the glider “sans jet” with the promise that the factory would send their own technicians to Oz to retrofit the jet at factory expense. I imagine it's been a pretty costly affair for the Jonker factory as all the jet orders they've taken in the last 18 months will have the same treatment.

So, after all that, and twelve months after taking delivery of the glider, Todd has visited the German jet manufacturer and he's reassured, and I now have the jet engine fitted to ZDS. (As it's turned out it's Jet No. 3 – the South African prototype and Russell Cheetham in UK have Nos. 1 & 2. Brett Hunter from NZ had his Jet No 4 fitted at Lake Keepit after mine.)

So why was I so insistent on the jet as a sustainer, and not a conventional propeller job?

Firstly, I'm getting a bit old and tired of outlandings. Hence the desire for a sustainer, to get home without the struggle of lifting heavy wings. If you're pushing your flying and trying to optimise performance it's not unreasonable to expect a few outlandings every season – I've had my share, probably averaged 3 to 4 every year, and more in earlier years. It's part of the X-C experience.

OK! Sustainer required .... but why a jet? For me the benefits are compelling:

The drag from a jet installation is minimal, less than the undercarriage. During trials I was unable to sense any increased drag as the motor was deployed. If the motor fails to start for a retrieve, you continue a normal approach and landing into your chosen paddock. With a propeller the drag is monstrous and the glider falls like a brick.

There is no need to dive to get a propeller windmilling to start, nor fly at any critical speed. The jet is spooled up by an electric motor and will start at any speed.

The climb rate of the jet installation at full power, developing around 40kg thrust, is a solid 3 to 4 knots – not the very marginal performance of most motorised sustainers. If there's sink around some motorised sustainer gliders can barely maintain height, let alone climb.

Jet fuel (essentially kerosene or diesel) is less flammable than the petrol required by a motor – less fire hazard.

Less moving parts – the impeller assembly. It's simple.

Reliability should be much better than an internal combustion engine. I gave up lawnmowing years ago because of the frustrations I endured trying to start those motors.

Light weight. The total jet installation – motor, actuating mechanism, fuel installation and instrumentation weighs only 16 Kg, vs something like 45kg for a motor sustainer.

Ease of operation. The JS1 jet start is fully automated. Turn on two switches when you need to

go – 1) power switch, 2) RUN switch – then under computer control in quick succession:

Doors open, motor extends

Glow plug on,

Doors close over behind the pod to maintain aerodynamic profile,

Motor spins up to ignition speed,

Fuel injected

Ignition and

Run up to idle speed 30,000 rpm

It seemed like about 30 – 40 seconds from switch-on to ready-to-go.

Then twist the rotary throttle knob on the 57mm instrument in the panel and fly away.

Optimal cruise speed would appear to be around 70 knots, although the jet can be run at any speed the glider is capable of (I ran the glider up to 120-130 knots with engine on as a test – not that this would be of any benefit on a retrieve.) Propeller sustainers have very restricted limits to cruise speed.

The only drawback I can see is the increased fuel consumption of the jet vs a conventional motor. At full power, 98,000 rpm, the highest fuel consumption reading I saw on the panel instrument was 71 litres/hour.

With usable fuel tank capacity of 43 litres, a cruise speed of 70 knots and a climb of around 3 knots the glider has a range of in excess of 200kms. Should be enough to get home!

While Ronald and Alan, the South African lads, continued to make adjustments to fine tune the starting performance, over a period of 5 days I made 4 test flights and a dozen engine starts.





*A neat installation - the engine bays doors closed with motor extended. Fairings over the motor support and controls, and the fibreglass nose cone all minimise aerodynamic drag. "Any increased drag was not noticeable. It seemed to be less than the drag from the undercarriage."*



*The Jet Control Unit, manufactured by LXNav, mounts in a standard 57mm hole on the instrument panel. Starting the jet is simplicity itself – flick the two toggle switches up. The throttle is the bottom centre knob – rotate for full power. The hairdryer function is optional for those of use who are hair challenged.*



*During start up there is a short impressive fiery display out the back of the jet which disappears as ignition burn is fully established. The motor is offset from the centreline by 4° so the exhaust misses the fin. Even so, you can comfortably stand in the jetstream alongside the fin, and when flying the airstream provides further cooling.*

I neglected to mention the characteristic noise of the motor – worse than a rock band if you stand alongside it in the hangar. But the noise was quite reasonable flying in the cockpit, and I could still hear the radio transmissions from Ronald passing instruction to me from the ground.

After gaining confidence in the jet's starting ability I did a simulated start from a landing approach – the sort of situation one might encounter with a outlanding "save". From a startup commenced mid downwind I had oodles of time to wind up and get going.

This of course meant running along the strip after startup. My wife Carol with Joy Downes and a few others were preparing meals in the clubhouse when the glider passed by. They rushed to the door of the cottage to see what they'd missed.

"That sounded just like a jet flying past" said Joy.

"That's because it was a jet" explained my wife..... with a knowledgeable smile.

*Dave "Rocket-man" Shorter*



# THE WIND IN THE TREES

It was a windy day, perhaps 25 knots. There were whitecaps on the water and the windsocks were horizontal. The favoured runway was 20, almost directly into the wind.

I turned final at 70 knots. Ahead of me were the trees which border 20. I watched the strip against the far edge of the trees... Plenty of height. I cracked the airbrakes a fraction. Glancing occasionally at the ASI and checking my aiming point against the trees, I found that I was easing the brakes back in, to the point where I quickly closed them and had one of those brief anus-clenching moments... maybe I was a little low.

It only lasted a second or so but it was enough. With a headwind that strong, the safe option would have been to come in higher over the trees and land long. With trees in the way, the consequences of landing short were very bad. When landing long in that wind, the round-out and landing run would be short and there was heaps of strip to spare.

You can easily get into a habit of landing short because in theory, it's good practice for outlanding in small paddocks. The reality is though, that the best practice is to pick the safest place to land and make sure that you touch down and stop where you planned.

I believe that on this occasion, I had taken into account the effect of the headwind on the glider and was flying the approach at a sensible speed, but I had ignored the effect of the wind in the trees.

Trees can create a lot of turbulence or rotor. We all are aware of the rotor coming off what John Hoye calls "100 acre woods" beside runway 14. It can give some exciting take-offs and even more exciting landings. We're perhaps not so aware of the effect that a line of trees can have when they are directly in our flight path, especially on low final.

When looking at the way trees affect the wind, there are three main variables. The height of the trees, the wind speed and the density of the tree barrier.

The relationship between these factors is interconnected so that the higher the tree barrier, the further upwind and downwind their effect will be felt, so most calculations are related directly to tree height.

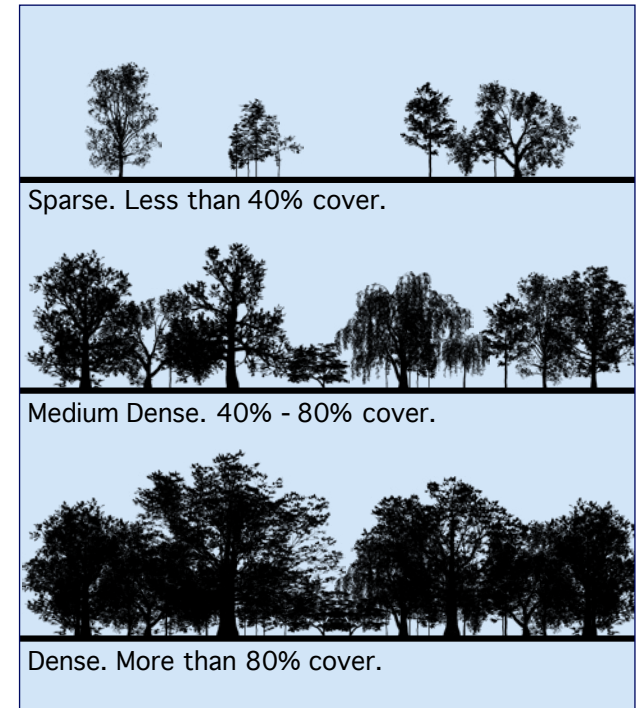
## FLYING OVER TREES

At low wind speeds, less than 8 knots, the air flow over obstructions is fairly laminar and there is little energy in any rotor that a tree line may produce.

If you are flying over a tree line on low final in winds less than 8 knots, a sparse tree barrier will provide little change in wind speed, little change to the airflow over the barrier and therefore little turbulence.

As the wind speed increases, the energy increases exponentially. Anyone who has launched from a cliff site in a hang glider will confirm that taking off between trees or bushes at 10-12 knots is fairly trivial but at wind speeds of over 20 knots, it is anything but trivial.

If you have successfully flown over a line of trees in 10 knots, do not expect the air conditions to be the same at 20 knots and more. Be exponentially more cautious.

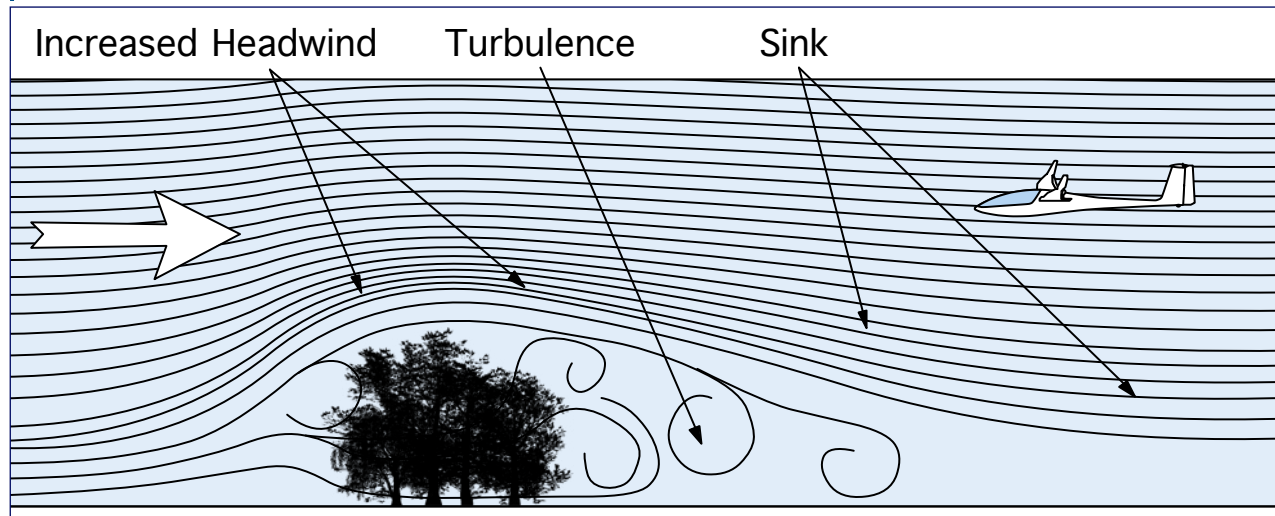


We're all aware of the effect of wind gradient over a runway and the way that the wind speed becomes slower as it gets closer to the ground. We maintain a safe speed of about 1.5 times our stall speed because of this. However, what happens to the wind gradient over a rough surface like a field with crops or the tops of trees, is considerably more extreme.

Over a normally smooth grass strip, the wind speed increases by a factor of 1.4 between 3 and 30'. So if you have 10 knots at 3', you can expect 14 knots at 30'

Over a long grass or cropped field where the surface is rougher, *the wind speed increases by almost 2 times*. This means your 10 knot wind has increased to 20 knots at 30' And a line of trees is significantly rougher than a field!





To allow for the increased wind gradient over trees, especially in strong winds, it would seem prudent to either make sure that you overfly with significant height to avoid the worst of the gradient, or that you add more than half the wind speed to your safe speed near the ground.

If you have energy in reserve (speed or height) you could choose to fly low and dive through the turbulence and wind gradient, but depending on the strength of the wind, this can be a risky strategy compared with staying high.

It makes sense to treat a moderate to dense tree line as if it was a hill when overflying it in moderate to strong winds and fly at least twice the tree height above to avoid the effect of the trees. In a strong wind, allow more vertical separation than this.

The density of the tree barrier is the third significant factor in assessing the effect of trees and can be divided into three broad types.

- An sparse or open barrier where there is less than 40% tree cover.

- A medium dense barrier where there is between 40 and 80% cover.

- A very dense barrier where there is between 80 and 100% cover.

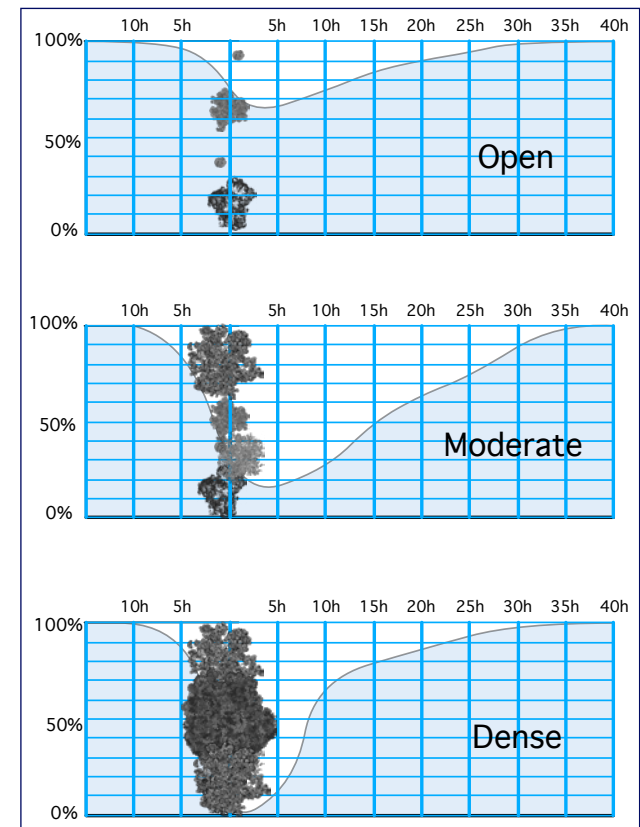
It's the medium and dense barriers which present difficulties for sailplanes in terms of over-flying a tree barrier on final or landing on a field bounded by dense trees.

## LANDING IN FIELDS NEAR TREES

The graphs opposite show in the way wind speed varies with distance from a barrier. The barrier is shown in plan view and the graph shows wind speed on the Y axis against distance on the X axis.

The horizontal or X scale of these graphs is reduced and is about 1/10th the scale of the vertical axis.

A tree barrier will affect the wind speed both upwind and downwind. The biggest effect is downwind of the tree line and it's not until about 30 times tree height that the effect ceases to be significant.



Putting this into numbers, an average 15 metre high tree barrier will be felt 450 metres downwind... almost half a kilometre.

Closer to the tree line there will be increasing sink, wind gradient and turbulence. Overhead the tree line, there will be a compression zone with increased wind speed relative to the height and density of the tree barrier.

The dense tree barrier behaves as if it was solid and at ground level, the wind speed close to the tree line will be close to zero. Further away from the barrier at around five times the tree height, gusts are caused by rotors from above.



Because wind filters through a moderately dense tree line, it behaves slightly differently to a very dense tree line and the lowest wind speed is found some distance further away. In fact, the overall reduction in wind speed is greatest with a moderately dense barrier.

With less than 40% tree cover, the effect on wind speed is minimal with the low point being about five times tree height away from the barrier.

With a moderately dense barrier, there is some wind immediately behind the trees and the greatest overall wind speed reduction. Wind speed reaches a low point five to ten times tree height away.

A very dense barrier will have almost zero wind immediately behind itself but the wind increases more rapidly with distance. In the near zone from 0 - 10% tree height, significant gusts can be expected.

If you are landing in a field bordered by a sparse or open barrier of trees, only a small drop in wind speed will be felt about 5-10 times the tree height from the tree line. But if the barrier is dense or moderately dense, you need to make a significant allowance for the effect of the trees on the wind.

As a final note, for its own personal reasons, wind prefers to travel around barriers rather than over them. Friction over the barrier also changes the direction of the wind to the end that the wind blowing over the barrier is closer to straight on. This means that the wind at the ends of barriers may not only be stronger but the direction will be different.

If you are landing in fields surrounded by trees in moderate to high wind, you need to be aware that an approach over trees or a landing towards a tree line will be affected.



Because of the speed and mass of sailplanes compared with flexwing gliders, many of these effects can be ignored for most of the time, but if the wind is stronger than normal, be prepared!

It is a fairly alarming feeling to think that you are about to grease it in over the tree line and find that at the last moment, you are suddenly dropping towards them... or to have made a perfect approach and be rounding out nicely only to find that the wind speed has suddenly dropped and you are approaching a stall or a hard landing.

A downwind leg in a strong wind can be quite exciting as you see your aiming point zip past unnaturally fast, but that's the time to assess the wind direction and speed and if necessary make an adjustment to your plan.

If you do a diagonal leg between downwind and base, you will have plenty of time to adjust your position in relationship to your chosen landing point and make sure that your final leg over any obstacles is flown safely, with plenty of height.





When I announced my retirement from gliding the Editor asked for a Memoir for the newsletter. Now 59 ½ years into say 2000 words comes to 34 words a year so this will not be an abstract of my log books.

I will spend most time on my early days because it was different then. In consequence of not putting a word limit on me the Editor has to publish my copy in two serial instalments – that never did Charles Dickens any harm.

I remember my first thoughts of flying. I was about ten, sitting on a log on the side of a hill when a crow flew in one sweeping movement across the gully and lighted in a tree on the other side. I imagined what it would be like to fly over the trees across the gully, stopping to examine trees and rocks that took my fancy, instead of having to walk down and climb up the other side.

Ten years later I found that flying in an aircraft is not like that: flying is beautiful but it is different from the low and slow flight of birds. I remember my delight and wonder the first time an aircraft separated from the ground and climbed away – a delight that I still enjoy.

I was ten years or so behind the postwar pioneers and fathers of the GFA, and a generation behind the pioneers of the 1930s. Doc Heydon, Martin Warner and Merv Waghorn were just names to me.

My father, interested in the mechanical things that developed so rapidly in his lifetime, took me on the tram to Essendon to look at the aeroplanes but long distance flyers had dropped out of the sky all through the 1930s and he resisted all my whingeing for ten bob for a ride in a Tiger Moth. “Supposing it fell down” he

said. Privately I thought that was nonsense but you don’t say that to your father.

In my early teens I built a rubber powered balsa model but it crashed and I lost interest.

I would have been under sixteen when I cycled from Essendon to Berwick to visit a lifelong friend of my mother’s. The online trip planner says 54km – how the world has changed. She sent me down the road to the Berwick airfield: not an Airport but an all-over field. It was the property of Lord Casey: MP from 1931, Governor of Bengal in 1943 (I didn’t know where that was but it sounded grand).

Both Dick Casey and his wife Maie were pilots and a Percival Gull or some such beauty resided in the hangar. He had not one but two Bentleys: the older one, which I thought of as the Lesser Bentley charged



around the field while I supposed the Greater Bentley went on State occasions.

(I know I was not yet sixteen when I cycled to Berwick because at sixteen I put my age up and got a motorcycle licence. I am still a year older in Victorian records than anywhere else.)

There I saw the wondrous sight of primary and secondary gliders being launched and flying circuits, sometimes landing short of the fence and being winched out with the aid of a set of rollers over the fence, kept for the purpose.

The winch had a long drum, chain driven from the propeller shaft. I fancy there was a dog clutch to disengage the drum so that the winch could be driven. Like computers in those days the spreader walked on two legs, and pushed and pulled a cable guide by hand. On some winches a drum was bolted on in place of a rear wheel. I think the other wheel was grounded and the differential ran continuously. The retrieve car was a cut-down Essex Six. I was admonished for doing wheelies in it on the green grass.

I thought it was earlier but my first log book entry is three years later, for the first of February 1953. In a bit over a month I made seven ground skids in the Primary glider, the Heron. A primary glider had no fuselage, just a truss frame with a skid and a parasol wing braced by a pylon and a nest of wires. You sat on a plank seat with your feet on the rudder bar at the extreme nose of the frame.

Unfortunately I never really got to fly it. You began by wing balancing at standstill with the large ailerons and progressed to skids along the grass, towed by a cut-down car with a flat bed. The instructor hung his



legs over the back with his hand on the release. He said "If it looks like leaving the ground put the stick forward".

Log book comments include "Started OK but then reversed controls" meaning I ground one wingtip into the ground and the instructor pulled the release, "Much better", " 2ft off- airborne - good" [first solo on my sixth ground skid, 23 Feb 1953].

The joy of feeling the wind in my face was never repeated: years later, solo in a Drifter ultralight, helmets were in vogue to spoil the feel of the wind but the ground was still there beneath the rudder bar.

Then it was dual in the Slingsby T31b, which was built from a kit by VMFG. This was a tandem two

seater with parasol wing and open cockpit. "Has been doing very good round out and touch down" - this on my fifth flight in the T31b.

At Berwick there were solo pilots who flew single seaters but lowly sprogs never got to speak to them. Alan Patching is about eight years older. It doesn't mean much now that we are old men but then it made the difference between a youth and a young man. We are now friends. Geoff Richardson, a pioneer of GFA, was a towering and remote personality to me, flying the Golden Eagle that he had designed and built himself.

Years later Alan Patching, for the Vintage Gliding Group which now owned the Golden Eagle, let me fly





it. He also let me fly the Altair, a wooden glider of I think, 18 metres, built by Ron Adair who appears in the history books as an early airline pilot. I was chuffed when he let me loose in these historic and irreplaceable aircraft. They both flew well.

Later again I was President of that first club VMFG, an old and honourable club.

993 words already and I have barely hit my stride.

After the T31b I moved from Melbourne to work at Yallourn Power Station and won a flying scholarship that gave instruction to PPL with Latrobe Valley Aero Club. This story is about gliding so I will rush past most of that but I will mention teaching myself inverted flying at the top of a loop, fuel streaming away from the tank vent.

And a slow roll in the Tiger Moth (the Tiger's roll was very slow and you had plenty of time to think about top rudder and then stick forward) when something rose up from the floor and fell away above my head. It was the fire extinguisher, probably still rusting in a paddock near Morwell.

I returned to gliding in 1964 when I used to drive 355 km each way from Morwell to GCV at Benalla. When I joined the tug roster I used to leave home at 0400 and have breakfast at the Railway cafeteria in Melbourne. Ah, youth! There were no speed limits.

On the Hume Highway you had to work your way past a long string of cars to get ahead of a slow truck but once there you had a clear road. It was difficult to judge the distance necessary to overtake because a car approaching in the distance could be doing any speed up to 150kph.

In the next two and a half years, dual and solo

in Kookaburra mostly on the winch, I had only three flights longer than twenty minutes. Then I got a two and a half hour flight and looped the Kooka for joy.

One day in 1958 when I had about 140hrs on Tiger Moth and Chipmunk, Royal Vic Aero Club brought an Auster to our field near Morwell and I had a dual flight in it. The Auster had the refinement of flaps but the flap lever was a long lever above your left shoulder. The natural thing was to pull the flap lever down and push the stick forward. I came away saying I will never be able to fly an Auster as long as ... [a current but indecent expression]. But by 1966 I had 320 hours and a few other types including Comanche (constant speed and retractable) when I encountered the Auster again at Benalla and soon began towing in it. I have therefore been on tug rosters in five of my six clubs for 56 years.

I nearly lost Bill Riley's Maule M4 Rocket in a crosswind landing at Waikerie at the World Comps. The Franklin engine picked up as directed and I went round. I thought Bill was being a bit free with his aircraft. I don't know what I would have said to him.

When I was about to tow the senior pilot Ken Davies at GCV Jim Barton said to me "The old boy's rough but he's safe: you must realise he's never had dual instruction". I was given a book from the 1930s which comments that training in single seaters has the advantage that the instructor can observe the pupil's progress without danger to himself. Ken flew with GCV on the hill at Beveridge, well before my time. They used bungee launches and timed the flights with a stopwatch. In 1938 Ken Davies set distance and height records of 17 miles and 3,700 feet. His record was broken in 1939 by Norm Hyde, whom I did not know, with 30 miles.

I got a job in the electrical design office of the Snowy in 1967. When I flew to Cooma for the interview I checked that there was an aero club. The CFI was Stan Birtus, who had won his B certificate in the Tatra mountains of Poland and had flown for the RAF in the War. He died at an advanced age after returning from skiing.

Heinz Fuersanger, Bernie Salmon and I were the executive core of the Cooma Gliding Club. We had interesting meetings with the German for whom his way was the best way, the excitable Frenchman and the Australian. My children Jane and Mike, about ten, hooked on and ran wings. Bernie would drive the winch all day but at last a cloud of dust would sweep down the strip and Bernie would say "I 'ave been on ze winch all day and no one came to see me. I am going 'ome and I am taking my wire cutters". Without wire cutters we could not operate. I used not dare to go to his place until Tuesday, when he would embrace me with "Ah, my fren" and we could talk club business. Both Heinz and Bernie are dead.

They took me to meet Erich Hader, who had flown in Germany before the War but had now retired. He said new members had to serve five weekends in the workshop repairing crashery before they were allowed on the field. Most flights were hops down the slope from a bungee launch. The crew then ran down and hauled the glider up again. Erich said the affluent clubs had a horse.

I wrote for Australian Gliding about the Grunau Baby that we bought from Klaus Lenffer and brought home to Cooma from Armidale. I got five hours and Silver height in a sea breeze front, then flew 49 kilometres after which we had to sell it. I learnt





much later that it was built by Adelaide Soaring Club in I think, 1948. It was last seen hanging up in the Waikerie hanger, having had its fiftieth birthday party there. The 50km attempt was to be under continuous observation by my then wife so I had her made an Official Observer, gave her a course in reversing the trailer, and she followed along the road in the Rover 2000.

We always winch launched the Grunau. About the only aerotows I remember were at Forbes, for the test flight I following its 20 year inspection. Most of the cockpit was taken up by a borrowed parachute. I wondered about bungee launching it from one of the hills in the Monaro but that was never a serious possibility. The Grunau had no airbrakes, only spoilers and you made a slipping approach.

One day at Canberra GC's old site at Currendooley, NW of Canberra we continued to fly, from the winch, while the wind increased to a velocity that gave us all something to think about. CGC probably had a Kookaburra and a Nymph. When you turned final the

Grunau seemed to descend vertically to the aiming point and you had to fly the base leg over the fence. Bernie Salmon went behind the fence and we had to shoulder the Grunau through the gate. On one landing I rounded out and came to an immediate stop. I opened the canopy and was about to step out when I found I was still flying a few centimetres above the ground and stationary in the wind.

It was hangared in a hay shed with a barbed wire cockie's gate. The cows broke down the gate and sat on the wingtip to lick the fabric. Twenty year inspection had just been introduced and we asked GFA what we should do. They said "We don't know, just do what you think you should". We re-covered it in synthetic fabric and had the steel fittings X-rayed.

Cooma club had the two seat Schweizer TG3A that Fred Hoinville had owned. It had marginal aileron control: it would bank one way but the other way it would only bank by further effect of rudder. It had divided ailerons and we found that the inboard ailerons had been disconnected. A LAME at the Snowy, who

had learned his trade on wood and fabric in the RAF, found that the incidence of the wings differed by a quarter of a degree – significant when you remember that the wing cruises at about four degrees angle of attack.

It was heavy and unwieldy, obviously intended for training American bomber pilots. What it wanted to make a decent aircraft was 250 horsepower. There is no substitute for horsepower unless it be kilowatts. It is now where it belongs, in the museum.

Canberra Gliding Club sometimes visited us at Cooma in order to get away from controlled airspace, When Comma GC folded I joined CGC as an instructor and tug pilot.

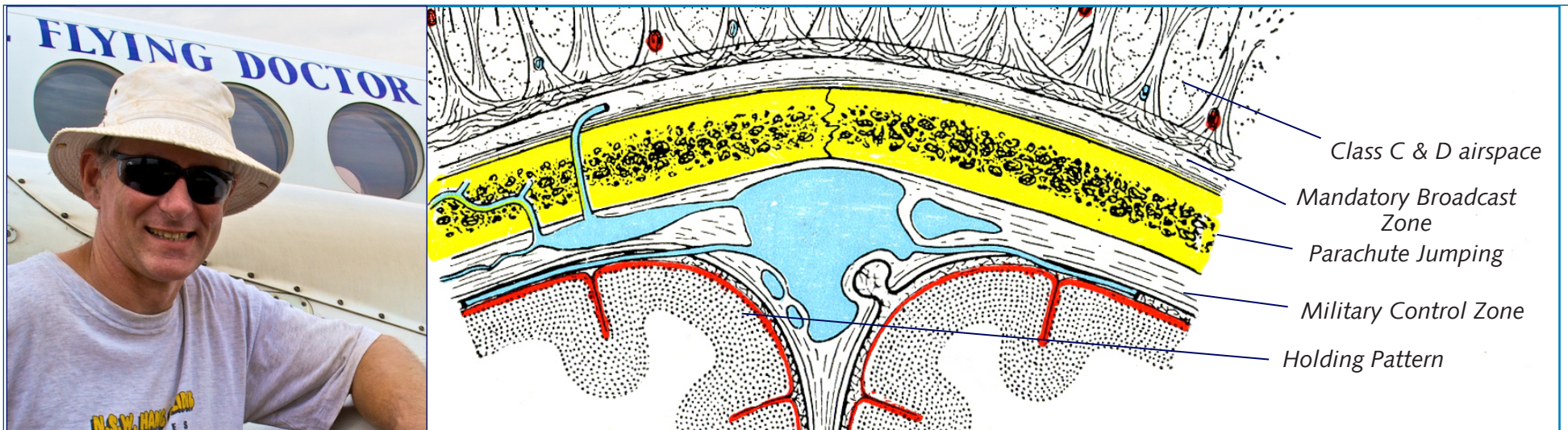
In due course at Canberra GC I got sick of bouncing the Auster down the field on the undercarriage bungees and set out to teach myself landings (I had by now got the hang of the flaps). My first instructor in the Tiger used to say "Raise the nose to keep it on the pine trees at the end of the strip" but I found a better way at last.

At one time at Canberra club we used to tow the gliders one after another about twenty minutes to another site and return empty in the Auster. I learnt to slip my legs across and put my right foot on a left rudder pedal and my left foot on a right pedal. It felt like crossing your hands on the handlebars of a motorcycle. If I had another tug pilot with me I used to invite him to do the same. Hilarious.

TO BE CONTINIUED Don't miss the next exciting instalment.

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This month's column, or rather colon (semi or otherwise) has been inspired by Lance Armstrong, the pinup boy for pharmaceutical research and for all of us who know that perfectly natural bodily functions can be quite useful in getting ahead in the air.

Many of you will be wondering about the sudden proliferation of the JS1 at Lake Keepit, about the little vent on its turtledeck, what its purpose might be and whether it assists the JS1 in achieving its impressive competition results.

Well, you read it here first: it does indeed, by taking advantage of a little known loophole in the FAI comp rules regarding MoP (Means of Propulsion) and a better-known process of human digestion, especially after an Allbutts curry.

You would possibly be aware that the action of micro-organisms in the gut can by fermentation produce a very small amount of ethanol hydroxide, better known as beer to the average glider pilot, and some clearly produce more than others.

For this reason the blood alcohol level for pilots is not set at zero, although consumption before flying is restricted mainly to Europe, where otherwise your Flarm is apt to cause excessive anxiety due to overcrowded gaggles and ridges.

In the same way, bacterial action in the colon produces a variable amount of gas which would be known as flatus if it didn't so closely resemble the conversation of glider pilots on non-flying day.

Flatus is not particularly useful in most gliders. In two seaters it is apt to be the subject of in-flight negotiation or ultimatum, which may distract from aviation, navigation and competition (see Moffart's 'Winning on the Wind').

In motor gliders it may activate the carbon monoxide warning, and is suspected of being involved in a recent self-launcher fire. In single-seaters it may fill the cockpit and by its buoyant action raise the C of G to make the glider quite unstable. Some instructors are known by their conversation to have the same effect.

However, in no case is this actually useful as a means of getting around that 300km or 500km triangle just that little bit faster. Until the JS1 came along, of course.

Even in the JS1 the advantage of that dorsal vent is minimal due to drag from air leaks - until the addition of cockpit flatus is taken into account, and then there is no doubt as to its designed intention.

I emphasise that, just as with my mate Lance, the technique is entirely legal and that no JS1 pilot has ever been shown to have breached the FAI comp rules on Means of Propulsion.

But a test case is in the offing. Emboldened by their success in having the dorsal vent approved as legal, JS have reached stage 2.

Stage 1 - the consumption of an Allbutts curry pre-flight and the in-flight use of the turtledeck vent when low - produces a moderate amount of thrust and therefore can be used to produce some lift.



Note that the curry is crucial, and the absence of this from Uvalde's kitchen in recent times caused a critical loss of performance for Keepit's favourite son. However, far more thrust is produced by combustion than by simple expansion (see reference to Allbutts curry, above).

Our club Treasurer, always the first onto a good thing, has been quick to install a device behind the turtledeck on his JS1 which will infinitely magnify the benefits of flatery, and if the fuel tank is empty for competitions, it may appear entirely innocent. But don't leech on this glider.

For those who feared the 'dump and burn' had disappeared from Australian skies with the demise of the F111, fear not.

Not for nothing is the JS1 turbine's input known as the 'fuel ring'. But will the benefits of flatery still find their way through the FAI's loophole once all of us realise what's going on?

## BEAUTIFUL BUMS GO BOOM AGAIN!



Keep Soaring

In the last issue of Keep Soaring, we brought you some exciting news about Janira Secrets "efecto boom" undies which offset the effects of Male Arse Atrophy. Now we have the next stage... Odour eating undies!

The Japanese have been working on this for a few years. Originally, the idea was to neutralise that terrible "old people" smell (see OFITTHs) but after testing prototypes in old-people's homes, they discovered the potential to neutralise more than just body odours.



Professor Hiroki Ohge of Hiroshima University diligently analysed a wide range of farts and came up with a ceramic nano-particle which could be bonded to fabrics and resist wear and washing and still retain their gas guzzling properties.

The Prof thought that the main market would be gliding clubs and old people's homes, "But to our surprise, lots of people like businessmen who have to sit in crowded places on a daily basis, bought them."

Of course, many of you will already know about the famous English "Shreddies" Flatulence filtering underwear which have been on the market for some decades.

Christmas 2012



Shreddies use a lower-tech approach, with charcoal as the active ingredient but do claim that when wearing their product, you can "fart with confidence". Shreddies are available for both the male and female pilot while the Japanese Seiren underdaks appear to be rather... ahem... unisex.

The technical and research staff at Keep Soaring feel there is still a way to go to make the perfect gliding underwear. The most obvious improvement is to incorporate an "efecto boom" pad of confor foam, both for safety and holding up your trousers. There may also be merit in a "stadium pal" feature for complete comfort on long flights. With Allbutts curries, we have the perfect test lab. Watch this space!



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# KEEPIT FAST 2012



**Keepit Fast is a successor to the 2011 Speed Week. As the names suggests, it's a week designed to get pilots flying faster. This year, UK import, G Dale was the main man, supported for the first few days by Bruce Taylor.**

The attendance, like last year, was very good with a lot of pilots from Keepit and other clubs like Bathurst and Hunter Valley. The success of Jacques Graells and Matthew Atkinson at the NSW State Championships shows just what a good session this week was.

The days were fairly intense with briefings from 9 until 12 which meant that gliders had to be DI'd early and ready to grid. The Dircks provided a lot of industrial strength caffeine products and several members got instruction and were signed off on the espresso machine.

What follows is my re-interpretation of my hasty notes taken on scraps of paper and an iDevice during G Dale's sessions at Keepit Fast. E&OE as they say. The reason for this article this is that there are a few key ideas here which, though they were not necessarily new, were either presented in a new way or which formed part of a "Eureka" moment for many of us.

When I returned from Keepit Fast, all fired up with trying to fly a little more efficiently, I grabbed Silvio Beluscone's "Fly now, bunga bunga later" from the bookshelf. Unfortunately, it's a dense and difficult book, poorly translated which does little to enlighten the gloom for many of us. G Dale's talks could not have been more different. Perhaps he has not won as many comps as Beluscone, but he knows how to communicate. I hope these notes do him justice.

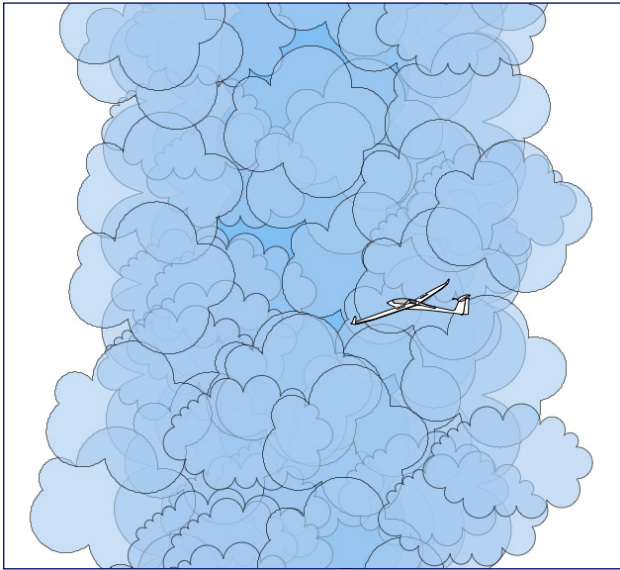
## FINDING THERMALS.

We know two things about thermals. The centre is going upwards, often quite fast, and the outer area, beyond the thermal is either not going up, or actively sinking.

It's common to draw thermals as an elongated tube or bubble but we know from watching a fluid like water, that this type of motion must result in turbulence between the two opposing flows. You can easily visualise this behaviour by running a tap hard into a clear container which is full of still water.

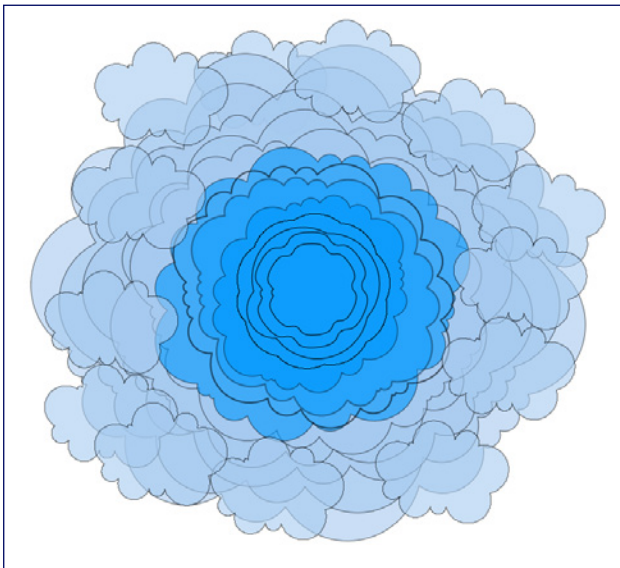
Where the fast-moving stream meets the stationary fluid, clouds of turbulent vortices will result, which occupy a larger area of the cross section than the laminar flow in the centre or core.





Pictures of explosions, mushroom clouds and real-life bushfire columns show this same appearance and it seems logical to believe that this is what thermals look like.

The reason this picture is important is that you can easily see and feel this structure when flying in your glider using the most basic instruments.



It will not only tell you when you are in a thermal but it will also tell you quite clearly, when you are not in a thermal.

While the centre of the thermal will be more or less laminar and smooth, the further out from the centre you go, the more turbulent the air will become until you're outside of the thermal altogether.

A total energy vario reacts differently to the vertically moving air in the centre of a thermal or the swirling air in the turbulent zone. A total energy vario sees the horizontal gust component of a turbulent eddy as a sudden increase or decrease in energy.



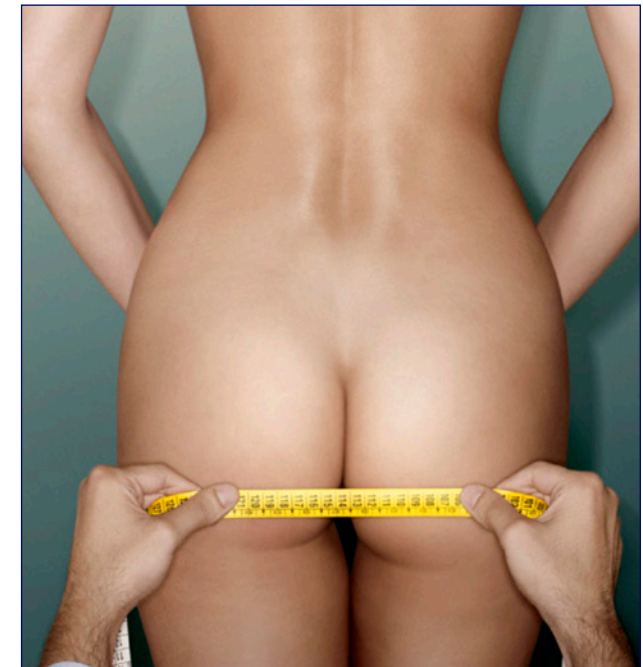
The result is that the needle flicks rapidly up and down and the vario tone beeps suddenly for lift or sink. It's easier to see this on a mechanical vario needle than an electric one and only a short glimpse is enough to tell the story.

This rapid flicking is quite different to the more or less steadily increasing lift that is registered by the vario when entering the laminar core of a thermal.

It's important not to start to turn in the outer turbulent zone, but to fly on steadily with your senses

on high alert, for the vario sound to change to that real steadily changing thermal sound. (If you're unsure of what a real thermal sounds like, do an internet search for Brauniger vario ringtone and you're bound to get something close.)

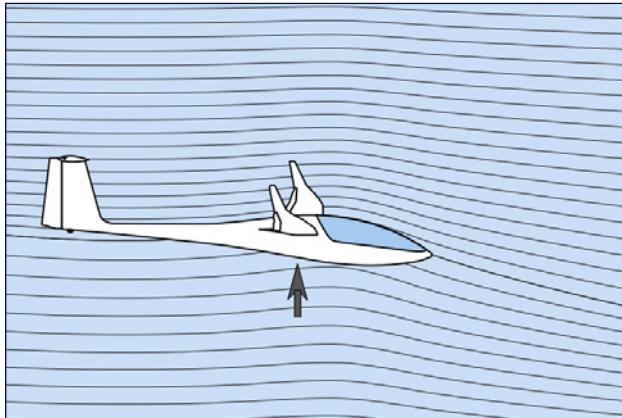
While your senses are on high alert, which sense will give you the best idea of the state of the air? It's your arse.



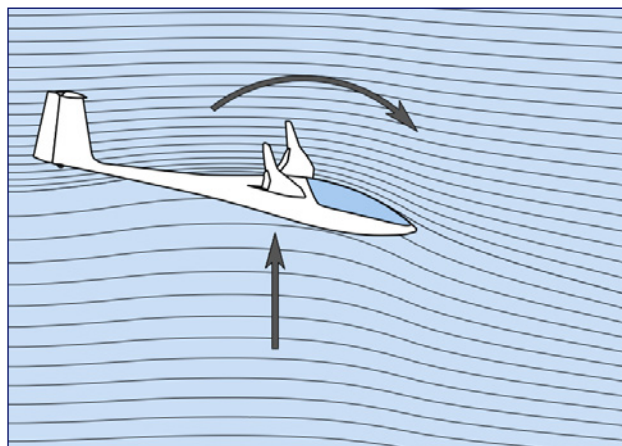
Your finely calibrated bum is fitted with sensitive precision acceleration sensors and will give you a very accurate indication of the shape and structure of the air you're flying through. They're acceleration sensors so they won't tell you anything about speed. When the acceleration stops, you'll need to listen to your vario. You are either in the centre of the thermal where the air is smooth and laminar, or the glider has flown out the other side... the vario sound will tell you which.



It's really important to get a feel for the sensations of thermal entry, especially for flying on blue days or days when the clouds are not working. Your bum will rarely lie! As the glider approaches a thermal and enters the turbulent zone, you will almost always get an unmistakable signature-shaking or vibration and you will know when to slow down and prepare for a turn.



It's essential to fly with a very light grip on the stick. The main reason for this is that the glider's attitude will change as you get into lifting air. There's an unmistakable feeling that the glider is being lifted upwards from somewhere aft... the nose pitches down a little and the glider goes up.



This over-the-falls feeling is caused by the change in the angle of attack of the air in the upwards-moving air of the thermal that the glider is now flying in.

As you approach the thermal core, you'll feel as if the glider was flying up a ramp in the sky... the start of a spiral staircase. This is a combination of the sensations from your backside letting you know you are accelerating upwards and the balance receptors in your ears together with your eyes, picking the change in the attitude of the glider.

These tell-tale sensations will give you a better idea of when to start turning than any vario. If you learn to feel these sensations, then you will rarely mistake turbulence for a thermal and you'll get more sensitive to the welcome physical sensations of an approaching thermal.

Some of the best cross country fliers will suggest that you practice this technique. Find a good thermal and when you have enough height to not be nervous, fly out of it for a few hundred metres and then re-centre it a few times, just by feel. Try doing this with the vario covered up, so you are not distracted by things inside the cockpit and are just relying on sensations.

Remember while you search for the core that the sound from your vario is a historical record... there's a significant delay between a change in climb and the vario reporting it and when the vario sound peaks, the lift may have actually dropped off a little.

While flying into the turbulent zone, don't let the speed get too slow. As Harry Medlicott says, you can search for a thermal as easily at 70 knots as you can at 50.

When you know you have crossed the turbulent zone and are flying up the ramp, you can slow down a little in preparation for turning but keep enough speed on for good manoeuvrability so you can turn in smartly.

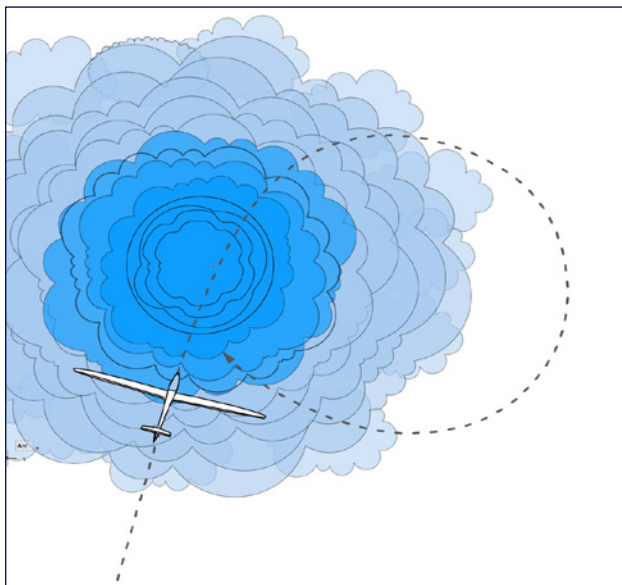
There's a terrible temptation to start circling in the first patch of smooth lift that you find. This can be a big mistake, especially low down, because you may not be in the best part of the lift. It is best to fly a smooth, shallow banked turn at reasonable speed and explore the area, getting a mental picture of the shape of the thermal and deciding if it is worth staying with.

Your first question should be "Is the thermal large enough?" Really tight and boisterous cores can be impossible to centre and you may be better to move on.

Your second question is "Is it strong enough?" The answer to this does depend a lot on how high you are. If you are low, then perhaps you can take a weak climb for a while before moving off to find something better, but if you are towards the top of your height working band, then only take something worthwhile.

G Dale differs significantly from "classical" theory in his recommendations for centring a thermal core. Anyone who has read Hans Killer's book on cross county soaring will have seen three separate and fairly complex strategies for centring thermals... something that most low air-time pilots would find difficult to understand, let alone master.



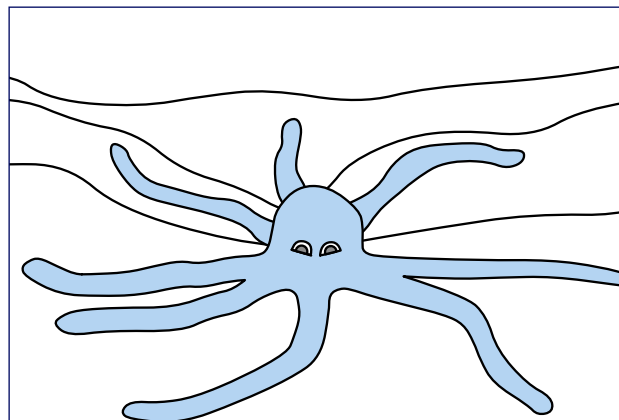


G Dale's opinion is that most pilots will waste less time and find it easier to bank more steeply when the glider gets to the best lift and open out for a beat when the lift decreases, making sure all the time that glider's nose attitude to the horizon is steady and that you are flying accurately.

It's very important to get a good mental picture of the shape of the thermal quickly so that you can get the best of the lift and not blunder out of it. Looking inside the cockpit, even at a flashy snail's trail on a moving map display can be a mistake... apart from the historical nature of the display... it's showing where you were in air that has probably moved with the wind, it is the sound and the feeling of the glider in the air which will give you the best mental picture.

It can be a mistake to bank too steeply in a thermal. The steeper the bank angle, the faster you need to fly so the circle does not get a lot tighter. There can be diminishing returns with bank angles much over 45° in all but extreme conditions.

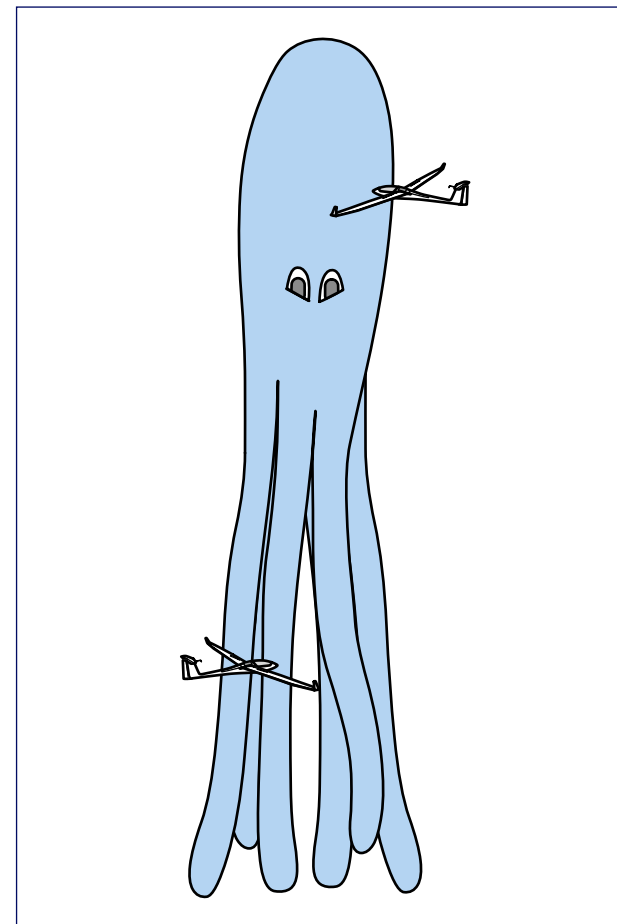
One of G Dale's more interesting images was of an octopus thermal. You can visualise a thermal which is about to be triggered as a squishy octopus-like thing, with its body spread out on the ground and its tentacles lying in gullies and depressions on the ground. When the thermal releases and starts moving upwards, the body rises first in a round-topped column.



At some point in time, the warm airmass which was lying on the ground is almost exhausted and the rising octopus-like body starts to pull up its tentacles. These dangly-down bits form multiple, smaller columns of rising air below the main thermal.

The experience of the sailplane entering the octopus thermal near the head will be very different to the experience of one entering in the tentacles. It's certainly going to feel different to the pilot and understanding the structure will help you associate the feeling.

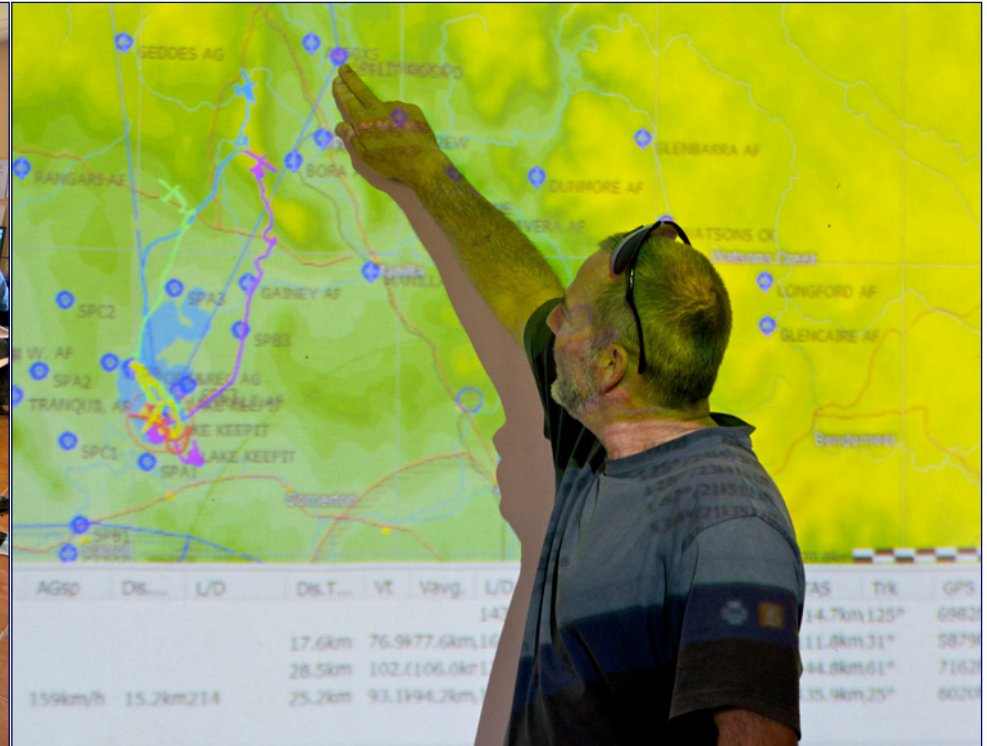
If the thermal is being repeatedly triggered from the same source in bubbles, the octopus body may be smaller and the tentacles longer and you may find yourself entering a zone between bubbles where the climb is weaker than experienced by gliders only a short distance above or below.



Thermals can be enormous masses of air rushing upwards, weighing more than one of those coal trains which you see, carrying away your children's inheritance and the momentum of a fast-rising thermal is huge and will affect almost every aspect of finding and flying it so be prepared to alter your mental picture in line with the conditions of the moment.

The next article will cover clouds. Which clouds are working, which are worn out. What the best part of a cloud might be and looking for thermals under large cloud decks and in windy conditions.













## 2012 18M QUALIFYING AND STANDARD CLASS GRAND PRIX

This event was conducted in great secrecy between November 10th and 18th. It was apparently a great success but you probably had to be on Face Friend or similar to get any info about the event.

Sometimes these events are so involved that you don't have time to post something on the LKSC chat group and as a result, a sporting event looks like a CIA black-op!

Anyway, there were some nice shots of gliders finishing low and fast over the lake.





