

EVERY BOY AND GIRL'S BIG BOOK OF
AEROPLANES



**LEARN TO FLY IN A DAY. IT'S EASY AND FUN! TEACH YOURSELF AEROBATICS... LOOPS
ROLLS & STALL TURNS EXPLAINED. BUILD YOUR OWN FLIVVER FROM OUR SIMPLE PLANS.**

KEEP SOARING AUTUMN 2013



Until last week, I thought we were past the best of the season at Keepit... if we have a season at all... It has been in all respects a good one. The conditions before Christmas were great from September to December and in January, when it has been pretty wet in recent years, the gliding weather was very good and remained so.

I was able to score a few days off work and head up to Keepit. Mid May is certainly mid-Autumn and I was not expecting the works. But Thursday was a cracker of a day with booming conditions all the way up to Kaputar (9 knots in some thermals).

I had decided to head on over to Moree. When I got over Kaputar, some high stuff put the ground into shade and being alone, I decided to head to Narrabri and then down south. Things were a lot softer over the flatlands. I tracked down towards Mullaley in regular 4-5 knot climbs but chickened out 20 km short because of a blue hole all around Mullaley and drifted back to the club for a fairly relaxing 295km in 3 hrs 40.

The flight of the day was on Saturday. It was another one of those days where the cloud is over the ranges between Kaputar and Manilla and you need at least 4000' to make it to the nearest cloud.

I picked up some decent lift just before Manilla and then headed north-east at 7,000' in what appeared to be convergence for an hour or more. I considered Kentucky but again I chickened out. The day was forecast to die at 3:00 and I had launched late.

After turning for Keepit, I had a glorious fly. Vents closed and all quiet in the cockpit, I was able to drift back to Carrol in increasingly smooth and buoyant air finally landing about 20 minutes before sunset, only because of roos on the strip... and the fact that #1 son had just gone solo again at the hands of Steve Hedley.

It was one of those flights where nothing special is achieved in speed, height, distance or duration and yet it was one of the most memorable flights I have had. It's difficult to describe to people who have not flown a glider what silent flight is all about... and lets face it, on many days, the fast and the rowdy days, gliding is anything but silent!

However, I feel confident that if #1 son gets anything like a fraction of the fun and spiritual buzz that I have had from gliding, he'll be happy to be involved in the most remarkable sport on the planet.

I was up at the club over Easter and was struck by the way that most members put an enormous amount of effort into the club. It's probably wrong to single anyone out because a lot of people work quietly behind the scenes rather than conspicuously on the front line but I feel I should mention a few.

Jenny Ganderton was standing in for Ian Downes while he had a week off. As usual, Jenny is everywhere, helping students get what they came up for and it is amazing that she's not only spent days instructing and being a tug pilot but also got far more hours and flights than the rest of us.

The committee had its annual summit at the end of March. It's one of the least fun and most important events in the club calendar and anyone who does not get to go can consider themselves fortunate because summit days are always warm, sunny and perfect flying days where everyone else does a 750... or so it seems when you're locked indoors.

The hero of the summit is Tim Carr. He runs it like a high level boardroom meeting. The amount of preparation which he puts into the summit and the

way he keeps the rest of us focussed leaves me full of respect. The turnaround of the club over the last 4-5 years is a direct result of the summits and Tim's efforts. Hand in glove is Dave Shorter. For the first time I can remember, Dave smiled while reading out his report into the club finances. I took that as a good sign. Without someone like Dave holding hard on the handbrake when necessary, we would be in a bad way.

Anne Bull needs a pat on the back from everyone. Not only does she plan, cook and organise the catering on the days of events like speed week, the regatta, form 2 week etc. but she also feeds us on most of the other days when she's up at the club. She and her tireless helpers have made a huge difference (to my waistline!) recently.

I was on my way up to Keepit when Ian Downes rang to report on his fan belt trouble and tell us that he was grounding himself. I have been charge with taking the piss from Ian since the original line-up pictures or the Father Christmas cover that he starred in, and I hope he does not feel I am slacking in my duty when I say that I and all the members of Keepit sincerely hope that backing off on the adjustment bolt will have everything running 100% in five minutes.

I hope you enjoy this issue of Keep Soaring. I feel my contribution is a small way of celebrating and trying to repay the contributions of all the other members who make LKSC such a great club to be a member of and to visit.



PRESIDENTS MESSAGE

It has been another grouse flying season at the Club and our OLC results provide the evidence. As I write this there are 335 flights logged, covering a total distance of 91,000kms in 840 hours. Standout performances include Jenny Ganderton with the longest raw distance in her Mosquito of 761kms, Dave Shorter with the fastest raw speed of 140kms/hr over nearly 300kms and Steve Hedley with the greatest time in the air of 9hrs 31 mins.

What a bladder that last man has! When I flew with him in the Nimbus the plumbing did not work.

Just think how much better the stats could be if everybody posted their flights on the OLC, for there are many missing. We are 5th in the OLC list of Australian clubs with 3 less than 10% ahead. Now with just a little more effort we could be second.

There has been strong Club participation in State and National competitions this season. It is worth singling out has been the entry of two new competitors – Matthew Atkinson and Jacques Graells. Both have achieved creditable performances and Jacques' blogs on the events have been most enjoyable. Matthew and Jacques are showing the way for a number of us who should have a go.

GREAT EVENTS ARE COMING UP.

The annual Working Bee is on the weekend of the 18th and 19th May. Do try to attend – more bees mean less work and more fun. Let me know if you can come.

In June (7th to 10th) and July (12th to 15th) the 4 Day Weekends will focus on broadening members competencies – we will be working through the GPC syllabus and providing winch launching training. The GFA now requires Instructors to hold a GPC as a prerequisite for a rating. Vic Hatfield is the “go-to” person for these events.

There is a Juniors Week from 8th to 12th July being organised by Ian Downes. Contact Ian if you wish to attend or know someone who might. Why not sponsor a member of your family to attend.

ANNUAL AWARDS DINNER 2013

Our Annual Awards Dinner is scheduled for Saturday 13th July and the Instructor Revalidation and Training Weekend for the 10th and 11th August. Jay Anderson wants all Instructors to put these latter days aside.

Maintenance Week is from Monday 19th to Friday 24th August. David Bull is looking forward to lots of hands to help.

TUGGIES BALL

The AGM and Tuggies Ball are on Saturday 5th October, again timed to ensure the Keepit “Dig Tree” Safari gets off to a slow start on Sunday 6th. This year the Safari is focused on luxury stopovers to reward the long suffering crew who for many years have experienced almost nothing but hardship. Talk to Ian Barraclough if you want to experience this amazing event.

NSW GLIDING CHAMPIONSHIPS

We will be hosting the NSW Gliding Championships from the 16th to 23rd November which is a great opportunity for those of you even vaguely interested competition to have a go in familiar territory. The week before (11th to 15th November) we will be running Keepit Fast again with coaching by G Dale. The will focus will be on competition coaching to prepare members for the NSW Championships. It will also be a good event if you just want to go faster. You can enter the Championships online – see the website. Let me know if you want to enter Keepit Fast.

There is lots of good stuff going on at the Club... plenty of training including of juniors; smooth and continuous operations; and some new infrastructure.

Members are doing a lot of flying and there is an harmonious atmosphere. Financially we are healthy. Our happy current circumstances are due to the efforts of many people who give their time and expertise so generously to the Club. In closing I would like to pay tribute to three people who in recent times have made particular contributions that are very significant for the Club.

The first one is John Clark who is known for this popular newsletter, the excellent Club website and his outlandish outfits. Behind the scenes he is contributing even more to our wellbeing. Google almost any combinations of words that include “soaring” or “gliding” with “Australia” and you will find our website comes up on the first page of the results.

In a number of instances it is second on the list. Two years ago we were lucky to appear in the first 10 results pages.

That is an incredible improvement and is doing a huge amount to raise the Club's profile. John's triumph over the arcane science of the Google search algorithm is highly significant and an amazing achievement.

Secondly I would like to mention Ann Bull and Joy Downes for their culinary efforts. There is nothing like a good feed to improve the harmony in any group and over the last 18 months we have almost all enjoyed many good dinners at the Club thanks to Ann and Joy.

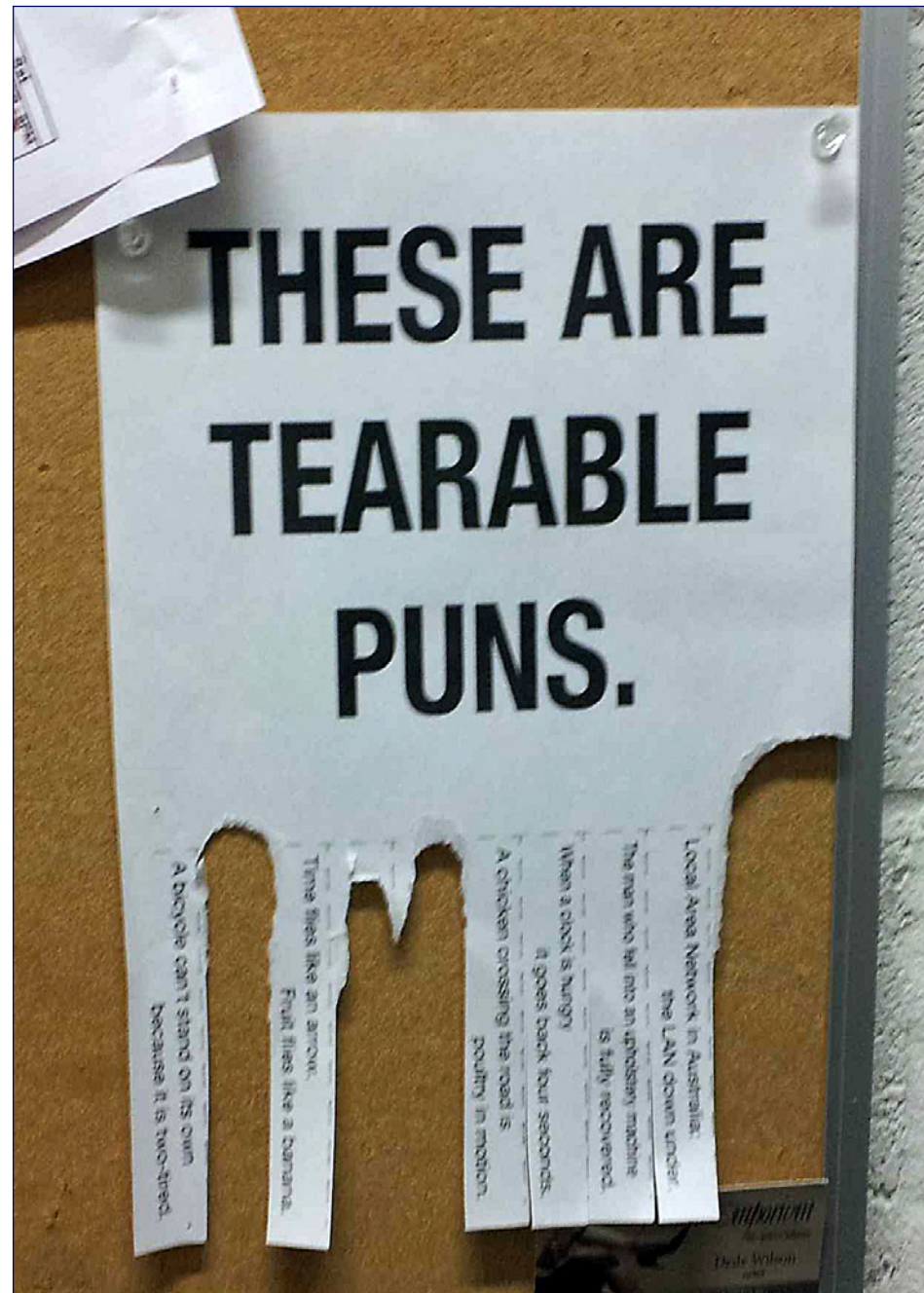
In the middle of last week, before Easter, I sat down to a dinner attended by 21 people – that many before Easter and mid-week! It was almost as though there was a major event on.

Not long ago there would have been 2 or 3 individuals cooking dinner in the Clubhouse, couple more in Cabins 4/5 and 7/8 with other residents scattered around the restaurants of Manilla and Gunnedah.

Now in the evening the Club is just too good to leave and abuzz with conversation. Ann and Joy's contribution to the pleasure of being at our Club is very significant and out thanks go to them.

I look forward to seeing you at the Club soon.

Chris Bowman



From our international jet-setting correspondent Jim Staniforth comes this remembrance of times past when all the correspondence in the club was like this.



MACCA'S BEAUTY TIPS

I was going through an old shoe-box full of pictures the other day and found some nice snaps. I thought this might be more interesting than discussing beauty nonsense. Look at this one of Trevor... There's a man who should be wearing a llama beanie more often to hide his beauty!



This one above is the last time Trevor was seen with a drying up cloth in his hands! Better hide this from 'er indoors'. Beards were "la chose a faire" in those days eh? This one below is a cracker. The club house back in the days when there were just 12 of us and gliders were something you made with a saw and sandpaper.





This one on the left is me doing the banking.

Back then, you could trust banks more than you can today but the best thing you could do was to bury your money somewhere in the traditional way..

The trouble was, what with the club growing in leaps and bounds, that you'd easily forget where the money was buried... so this is me having just made a cash withdrawal from some tree near the strip.

If I was younger and fitter, I'd get around the club house with a metal detector and spade in my spare time and see what was down there. Enough to pay for a season's flying I guess.

The one above, as you can do doubt see, is the strip.

No bitumen. No nasty T hangars...in fact, just one hangar on the whole place. It's amazing how the club has grown.

It might be worth getting a coil of some copper wire that Telstra don't need, what with the NBN, and hanging it under your glider. If you put a signal through at say 2 Ghz and watch the SWER on a meter, you might pick up some of the buried money somewhere... but don't let Dave Shorter know or he'll nick the lot!

TALL TALES AT THE BAR (OR MY EXCUSE FOR NOT FLYING A 500 AND WHY IT DOESN'T MATTER)

Matthew Minter

With my wife Li Ling and daughter Harriet still in Taiwan I had returned for work and had two days of freedom before heading back to the classroom. Just two days! No responsibilities at home. I intended to take maximum advantage of this extremely rare opportunity and head off on the most epic adventure possible.

My ambition was to journey from Lake Keepit, out beyond the Warrumbungles, across the western plains to Narromine. Out and return for a 500 kilometre flight.

The weather report was quite promising with cu's across the whole area, going to 9000 feet over the western plains beyond the Warrumbungles later in the day. The gliders were allocated, and the only one available for me was the lowest performance single-seater, the SZD-51 Junior. There goes my 500?

After launch, however, I just felt in the zone. Gunnedah, Mullaley, Coonabarabran and Tooraweenah flashed effortlessly beneath my wings. As I set out across the western frontier beyond Gilgandra I really started to feel alive.

The epic journey, the endless plains, the solitude, the entire experience was so exciting. It was at the tiny village of Collie about 30 kilometres west of Gilgandra

that I started to think I had a chance of making the 500 kilometre flight after all. So I headed boldly south, leaving the safety of the cumulus clouds behind, out into the ocean of blue, so far from home.

Unfortunately though, the blue wasn't working so well and eventually the tiny craft descended gracefully towards the plains below. Narromine gliding field was just ahead of me, tantalizingly close and within gliding range. I continued my descent, 4500 feet. Then, a nudge on the wing, a haze dome with the first wisps of cloud starting to form high above me, I had a thermal.

A short while later, at 3:45pm under a lone cumulus cloud, I had to make a decision: I was at 8000 feet, 251 kilometres from Lake Keepit, enough height to connect with the clouds back towards the Warrumbungles

that stretched forever to home, or the blue road to Narromine, and a certain out landing, somewhere.

I turned the small craft around, believing that I had just a slight chance. I would have to fly efficiently and consistently find those lovely 7 knot thermals to 9000 feet all the way home. The winds above 3000 feet this far west weren't too strong on the way across, as I had clearly seen by the smoke from the bushfires.

It wasn't to be. The wind at height quickly picked up, soon giving me a paraglider like glide angle of 10 to 1. Slowly I struggled for nearly three hours back to Tooraweenah. Then came the crossing of the Warrumbungles, into the headwind, with the last thermals of the day.



It turned out to be amongst the most exciting and wonderful flying I've experienced so far, right up there with wave flying in the mountains New Zealand. This was all somewhat dampened though by the saddening sight of so much devastation, caused by bushfires, below me. I could clearly see two houses where the firefighters had lost the battle to the flames.

The smoke, nevertheless, was producing terrific lift late in the day with steady 4 knot climbs to 9000 feet. I of course knew that getting beyond Coonabarabran was impossible at this stage, so the Imperial Hotel at Coonabarabran had become my new goal and suddenly I was on Safari!

With 10 kilometres forward per 3000 down as my "final glide" calculation it was quite tricky to get a good climb close enough to Coonabarabran to ensure a safe landing there.

The lift would die soon and there were no landing options other than the aerodrome, a single point of safety beyond an ocean of burned forest and blackened rocks. From a 9000 foot climb north west of Tooraweenah I headed into the mountains, there was a cloud ahead that looked tantalizingly promising, and I knew it to be my last chance.

If it didn't work, I would have to turn back. Unfortunately it broke up and died before my very eyes just as I arrived. Another cloud further on looked even better but it was too far and my height was just not enough.

If that one didn't work, I could easily be stuck in the mountains, caught by sinking air, low in the valley, surrounded by rocks with nowhere to land. It was too much risk.

I contemplated my two choices: possible death in the mountains - how this would effect Li Ling and Harriet I dared not consider - or turn back for a completely safe, but expensive and inconvenient, landing at Tooraweenah. I turned towards safety.

As if rewarded for my for decision, moments later, with my back to goal, the vario began to chirp, another cloud was forming, driven by the smoke from the visible red flames below or perhaps the blackened slopes that faced directly into the seven o'clock sun.

A second and final thermal followed, back in the right direction. I couldn't believe it, such elation!

I found myself above the observatory at 9000 feet, safe, with final glide. The view was extraordinary. To the north the Pilliga scrub stretched to the horizon, 100 kilometres away to the east I could see the hills around Lake Keepit and further south was the Liverpool Ranges.

As the air became completely smooth the glider started to feel as if it were floating on a single cushion of air that stretched all the way from the horizon to the ground. It was at this moment that all of those treacherous earthly stresses and worries simply slipped into the airstream and disappeared behind me.



Oh to float on the smoky air with those shining silver wings, suspended high, a tiny jewel in the vast cathedral of the sky.

A verse from the Cuthbert Hicks poem, The Blind Man Flies, played through my mind:

Now Joy is mine through my long night,
I do not feel the rod,
For I have danced the streets of heaven,
And touched the face of God.



During the final moments of my longest ever flight, after 6 hours and 45 minutes in the air, I felt comfortable and relaxed, completely free from any fatigue or discomfort.

As the sun moved lower toward the horizon behind the ancient, jagged and smoky peaks of the Warrumbungles, I wondered how it is that some of us may escape for hours into the endless sky, while others are struggling for mere existence.

Why have I been chosen for the privilege of this experience, while so many others don't know where their next meal will come from?

I positioned the glider for landing and found myself sharing the circuit with a lone helicopter returning from battling the flames, a huge water bucket slung beneath its fuselage, another symbol of the transience and impermanence of our lives and our fortunes.

Arriving at a pub in a country town by glider is just something tremendous, as all safari trekkers will attest.

The grey nomads may have parked their mobile homes outside the pub and walked in for their counter tea, but nothing could match my adventure of a lifetime, the near 7 hour journey without an engine, carried aloft for vast distances by elusive air currents and the wind, to finally make an intrepid and triumphant voyage over the mountains with the very last thermals of the day.

I had really, "arrived at the bar".



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 or 0414 405 544

A RAINY DAY AT KEEPIT



Above: Looking north towards Mount Borah, 10 minutes before the start gate opened.

Day 4 of the annual Keepit Regatta dawned with a promising looking sky and an eager pilots briefing room jostled to get the good news on how good the task was going to be.

The weatherman, however had other ideas and presented a grim outlook for the day.

Low climbs topping out at 4000 feet and over-development and rain showers from midday. However, www.lookoutthewindow.com showed promising early Cu's and pilots were set a task befitting the weatherman's gloomy predictions.

The task was Manilla, Boggabri, Gunnedah, Keepit being about 150km point to point and even shorter taking into account the generous AAT circles.

Having missed a couple of days early in the Regatta, I readied the Nimbus 2 and headed up to the grid and pulled up at the front. With the sky looking great, it wasn't long before I was the first to launch and, like all tows at Keepit, was dropped into a great climb, and went straight to cloudbase of 4000 feet in about 4 knots.

Matthew Atkinson, being second to launch, soon joined me and with the rest of the fleet still to launch, I suggested we head off on an exploratory scout around to see what the conditions were like.

Looking north, the clouds all aligned like the F3 in the direction of Rangari. We headed off and I floated

along at cloudbase and didn't need to turn for the first 20km and got to the foothills of the Nandewar's still at cloudbase.

At this stage my thinking was that the day was looking like an epic! These conditions really suit the Nimbus, given the big wing and good LD, it will happily float along at cloudbase in these conditions all day. Given it can't carry water (due to a leak in one wing), it under-performs at higher speeds and on strong days, where the heavy ships have a distinct advantage.

Hearing the rest of the fleet launching, Matthew and I stoged around for a bit and then tracked back down the Kelvin's and Carroll's to prepare for the start

gate to open. Very unprepared for the Regatta, I didn't have the start points in the Oudie which Chris had newly acquired.

This made the start point selection a challenge, and required world war 2 bomb sighting precision. The issue on returning to the Keepit area, was that my cloud street had now turned into overdevelopment over my selected start point and the virga was starting. Circling over my start point under the cloud, I was in 5 knots of lift, and going through a car wash.

I eagerly awaited the start gate opening and continued circling half in and half out of the rain. My problem was only had only memorized one start point. Rookie mistake!

After what felt like half an hour in a washing machine, the gates opened, and everyone headed off. I struck off towards Manilla, and found a large rain shower ahead stretching right across in front of me.

Several gliders went to the south, however already being an expert in flying in the rain, put the nose down a went through. A couple of good climbs later found me at the base of the Bora's and I again got to cloudbase. I could see a number of the fleet heading out the other side of Manilla to maximise their distance in good air, however I decided to turn onto the next leg towards Boggabri.

The reason for turning at Borah, was that on looking up the next leg, I could see large bands of showers coming through, and I thought it was now or never. I could also see a number of the fleet that had pushed hard early, were now scratching away down low out towards Manilla.



The Keepit strip gets an early bath. Probably doom and gloom ahead then.

After the turn, I took a line that ran right along the rain shower that extended from about Keepit to the mine on track to Boggabri, west of the Kelvin Gap. As I approached this cloud, I heard a couple of the keepit fleet dashing back to beat the rain onto the ground. Of particular note was Dr Death, who seemed to have an aversion to water.... Should I chicken out, no way!

I ran along the rain band and found good consistent lift along the shower line. I had one wing in the gloom (no doubt bucketing down in there) and just enough cockpit out the side to give me a clear view.

I ran along the rain line right up to the mine, and managed to get most of the way there without turning, while keeping in touch (literally) with the cloud.

At the mine, it was all doom and gloom ahead, as the rain band had just traversed this area and dumped a good deal of rain. Having touched the circle at the mine, I turned for Gunnedah and ran down the western side of the same rain line I had come up.

At about 15km to Gunnedah, the ground looked dry and the sun was shining, so I tracked further to the west. In running through this area I flew under a

few clouds that looked like they had good potential, however no luck. Just north of Gunnedah, I struck gold and got a good climb to 4000' in 5 knots.

Before this climb I think I got down to about 2500' and 11 Gunnedah was looking inviting. This gave me glide home with room to spare. I was going to be right on time, so tracked off towards Curlewis to use up my extra height above glide.

Turning in the vicinity of Curlewis, I then picked up a good line on the way home and managed to stretch the glides with a few pull ups to gain a few extra feet.

I could hear a few of the Keepit fleet in front of me, however had to smile when I saw gliders tracking north to the Boggabri circle, looking like they were doing it tough down low.

Harry and Wendy called 10miles and I must have been about 5km behind them. As I got closer to Keepit, my Oudie was still showing excess height, so I pushed and peddled the N2 as fast as she could go. The rain showers had now passed to the south of Keepit, giving me a clear run home.

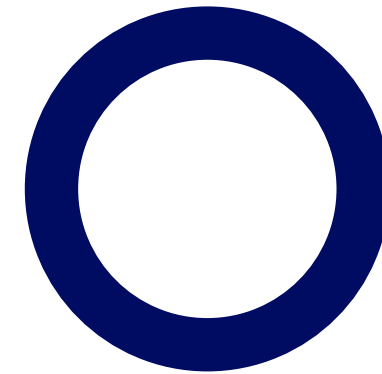
What a great day! I opened the lid, with a big smile. Not knowing how the others went, I found that some had chickened out and opted for a dry hangar, some had pushed hard early and lost contact with the clouds and grovelled around in the inhospitable terrain, between Borah and Rangari. I think everyone managed to get home though.

I submitted my trace, and was pleased to see 103kph off the stick. I think that is my highest Nimbus speed on a comp day. Not bad for a day of flying in the rain!

In the end, Wendy managed to pip me at the post in her new Arcus scoring 103.1kph. Yep 0.1kmph! Harry, mind you was manning the Arcus's ingenious bomb bay doors which kept opening and shutting when I was thermalling beneath them. No doubt this secret weapon gave them the 0.1kph they needed. Well done Wendy and Harry!

All in all another great day at Keepit, which proved that some of the most enjoyable days at Keepit are when the weatherman says to pack a brolley!

Tim Carr



You know...for gliders...

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

Expert Repair and Maintenance of Gliders.
Tyres, gap tape, mylars and good advice.

email: tnjgilbert@internode.on.net
website: www.tjsailplanes.com/
phone: 02 6978-1559
fax: 02 6878-0505

City Coast Motor Cycles

262-264 Keira St Wollongong 2500
Tel: (02) 4228 7392 Fax: (02) 4226 6769
sales@citycoastmotorcycles.com.au
www.citycoastmotorcycles.com.au

Geoff Sim



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



ANOTHER CRACKING DAY

MINI SAFARI TO DUBBO

25 TO 28 JANUARY 2013

As usual, we begin with the excuses. The blipmap for Saturday, when we were meant to set out for Dubbo looked like somebody was drawing a dark blue roller blind across the country from Tweed heads down towards Adelaide. The normally colourful RASP pages got greyer and greyer until, by 2 o'clock, the advertised cloud base was 1000' with thermals of zero fpm.

Of course, the conditions on the day turned out different but nobody would have set out on a 250km leg on that forecast unless they had to, or unless they were Jim Staniforth.

The day before, on Friday, Jim had set a 500 km task round Kaputar, Tooraweenah, Quirindi and home. It was a brilliant day. The sky was picture perfect and as good as I can remember seeing a sky. Evenly spaced CUs dotted the blue as far as the eye could see.

A gang of us including Jim, Ian Barraclough and Geoff Sim in the ASH 25, Al Giles in the ASH 26, Jenny Ganderton, Miro and others went on the task.

As it happened, there was a problem with the tug tailwheel and the SLGs got into the air a half-hour or more before the other gliders. Bearing in mind the weight penalty of our motors, we did not wait for the others but set off early on task.

After rounding Kaputar, we turned towards Coonabarrabran. The smoke plume from the fires was

clearly visible. The big conflagration had gone through the week before, destroying hundreds of houses and thousands of hectares of farmland and national park and was still burning in places.

Crossing the Pillaga Scrub is always interesting. Mostly, if the day is good, I go straight down the middle... and the day was good. Coming in from the north end, there are plenty of exits towards landable country and at the south end, you can go over the west side towards Coonamble. The east side looks less inviting but there are patches of open fields.

That's the theory! There was a bit of chat on the radio about strategy. "Is everyone going straight across or what's the plan?" was the most asked question. Most people answered that they were sticking to the edges and then flew straight across.

The Pillaga is always exciting and one's optimism rises and falls with altitude. We did not have heaps of that... perhaps 7,000' but the clouds were consistent and reliable. As we got closer to Coonamble, the destruction caused by the bushfires was visible. But you had to look hard. It was difficult to see much change in the bush... the trees were just a different colour.

It was only when overhead that you saw what had once been a neat and tidy farm, and now the buildings were disassembled and spread over the ground, twisted sheets of corrie iron everywhere.

On the drive down to Dubbo the next day, Geraldine and I diverted through part of the national park. Again, it was the buildings which told the story of the fire rather than the surrounding bush. The leaves on the trees had all gone yellow and their trunks



were frequently bright orange... all in all a fairly pretty autumn scene... until you saw what had been people's houses. I didn't photograph any houses.

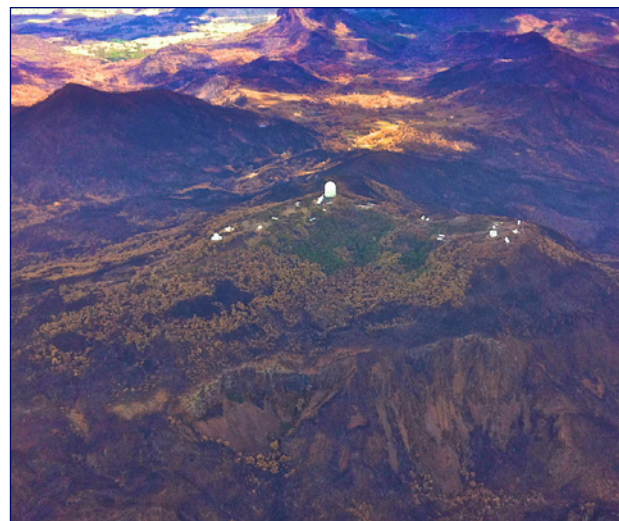
Tooraweenah is just over the back of the Warrumbungles and to get there, we had to fly right over the top of the Siding Springs Observatory which mercifully, had missed the worst of the fires. On the western side of the ridge, a bush fire was still burning and I felt a pang of guilt as I headed towards the smoke, looking for lift.

Circling in the column of smoke, I watched the bush fire brigade trucks and farmer's utes spread out along the track while they fought to contain the dying remnants of the fire. It felt strange to be enjoying a wonderful day's flying while people toiled below against the more malign or dangerous forces of nature.

Heading towards Quirindi, I started to think that the day was better than 500. In fact, had we headed out earlier, it would have been very much better! I headed further south than Jim's turnpoint to stretch

things out a little. Jim sets tasks with nice 120° corners because they rate well on the OLC!

After turning around Willow Tree, the sky looked great all the way back to Keepit. I started wondering about 600 or even 700. I could not remember hearing anyone talk about these numbers. 500 yes, 750 better but was there an intermediate number which was still acceptably a great flight and not a waste of a 750 day?



I had two choices... one was to carry on towards Kaputar and the other was to do a U turn at Keepit and head back towards Quirindi. Considering that I knew the air was good back down to Quirindi because I had already flown through it, I chose to push on towards Kaputar. This was the wrong decision but for the right reasons (I think!)

In this month's S&G, there's an interview of Hans-Werner Grosse by Mike Bird. In this, H-W says: **"When competing in the OLC, fly to places where you have never been before, even if you give away points to yo-yo pilots who always fly up and down the same race tracks. Bring adventure back into your flying."**

I've done my bit of yo-yo flying. It certainly helps on the OLC even though you don't feel very good about it afterwards. So I got a bit of adventure flying, a little too close to Kaputar.

The problem with the country around Kaputar is that it comes up at you. Fairly soon, I was barely scraping over the top of ridges, still flying north but towards lower ground, wriggling around for some lift, while keeping enough height to either find a safe outlanding or start the motor.

The cloud was overdeveloped and the ground in a lot of shade and there did not appear to be any lift around.

When I finally started the motor, I had just over 620 on the clock. Due to Jim's cleverness, this scored 664 on the OLC but since it was certainly a 750 day, it felt like 500!



So Saturday dawned fine and lovely but the blipmaps forecast was terrible. The line of the front as it rolled across the state was straight as a ruler and the cloudbase was forecast to drop from 7,000' to 1,200' behind it.

Everyone decided to drive to Dubbo instead because it was Louise Ransby's birthday party and we were promised a tour of the Royal Flying Doctor base by Gary.

Jim Staniforth thought differently and ran around, begging everyone to tow a trailer to Dubbo so he could fly down before the rain. Many of us were driving direct back to Sydney from Dubbo and the others did not have tow bars and most of us thought the chances of gliding Dubbo were slim and didn't fancy a retrieve in the rain so poor Jim ran out of luck with the trailer.

As we headed out on the road, the sky was amazing. Ahead, it was booming, absolutely booming, like a better version of the day before and it looked as if Dubbo would have been an exhilarating 2 hour dash. But behind us as we drove, slowly, the RASP forecast drew across the sky the north was inexorably covered in a deck of black cloud.

The party for Lou was good. It was a "significant" birthday and Gary had secretly organise for both of Lou's daughters to be imported for the occasion... mainly to do the cooking or so it seemed! We got the BBQ over before the thunder and lightning.

Alcohol was consumed during which we performed an interesting experiment with the aid of Rear Admiral Harold Pott's tie. (Who else would wear one?) It has been claimed that many (most?) people, when blindfolded (with Harry Pott's tie) cannot tell white white from red.

So blindfolds on, a number of the blokes sat for the test... and failed to tell the difference. The best result was Al Giles who thought that both glasses were white wine, so he got one right.

Later on in the evening when the levels in the bottles were a lot lower, the girls had a go. Presumably they did not want to waste a drop. Anyway, this time the results were entirely different.

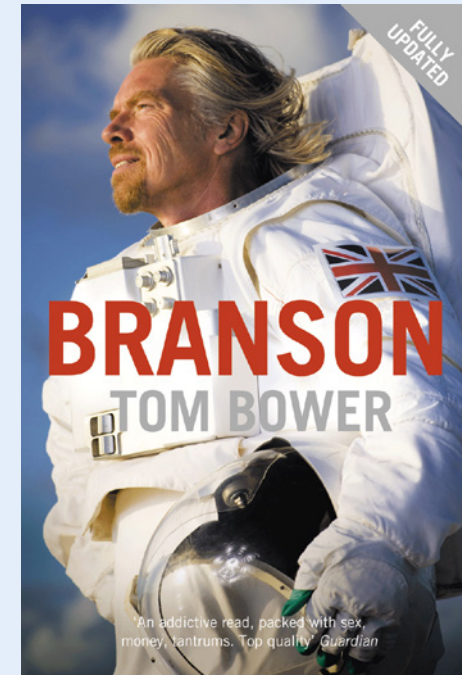
In every case, they were 100% right. Lou's daughters were particularly sharp and could tell the difference by smell and never tasted a drop. So the answer has to be qualified a little more to say that

"most glider pilots, after a few glasses, cannot tell the difference between red and white." So you may as well continue to drink VB like any good Southerner.

I remember saying at the party "I hope we get truly biblical weather conditions to make up for the waste of a good weekend." As we were about to leave, I got my wish. It absolutely bucketed down. The rain fell so hard that we were soaked to the skin in the 20 metre dash for the car and we tramped mud back into the motel rooms.

The funny thing was though that the sky on Sunday looked great and in spite of the fact that the ground would have been wet in places, it really did look like another cracking day for a return back to Keepit.

I did not see Jim S in the morning but I should imagine that he was chewing lumps out of somebody's dashboard on the way back to the club.



HARRY POTTS BOOK CLUB

What I have read has offended me on every single level. It is a foul, foul piece of work from the first words to the last - really rotten, nasty stuff.

That's Richard Branson's own review of this book and on that basis alone, it is worth a read.

Because it is either difficult or impossible to get this book in Australia, Harry Potts donated several volumes which are here and there in the clubhouse and accommodation.

It's shall we say, a "dry read" but afterwards, you would not be in any hurry to get on anything Virgin. It certainly explains the incomprehensible Virgin rail fares... promising cheap but charging the earth because nobody can work them out!

Dearest Mummy,

March 22nd 2013

I'm coming home!! I'm sure you will be glad to hear that I have saved my pay by not going out and drinking and have enough for the airfare home! No more snakes!! No more spiders!! NO more smelly glider pilots being mean to me about my accent!!!

I hope you won't mind when you see how I have grown. Mrs Bull made dinner almost every night and because steak is almost free over here (well it costs about \$100 less per pound) (but they weigh things in froggie keelos here so it may be more) I ate 'till I chundered most nights. (That's ossie slang for having a lie-down).

I'm not sure but I think that Pater has been on the dog to Mr Downes. The old fool's so mean that he could not bear to waste a plane ticket but he's arranged to ship me over here again for next summer because Mr Downes says I am still a mummy's boy. There's nothing wrong with loving your mummy is there mummy?

Anyway, don't bother to pick me up at the airport in case pater has another one of his "breakdowns" and I have to walk home in the rain. Rain!! I dream of rain! Welly fulls of rain! See you soon.

Your loving son,

Alexander. XXX

TOODLES ALEX!

Well it's goodbye to our summer tuggie Alex.

Mrs Bull made him a great big farewell dinner and a couple of dozen of us sat down and ate as much as we could to save Alex the expense of excess baggage, having to take it back to the UK.

The good news, for us at least, is that Alex may be back next year for more of the same. It would seem a shame to throw away all of our training.

Our new mid-week manager, Val, is a friend of Alex so they can panic about snakes together.

Thanks to Ian Downes for faxing me this letter (after making Alex sit down after Sunday school and write it.) It looks as if his spelling has improved, if not his understanding of the Australian language.



IAN'S IPAD
~~MY IPAD~~

JOHN - CAN YOU CHANGE THAT
TO BEER O'CLOCK?
~~TODAY AFTERNOON~~

110% □

Hello Mates and matesses (if that's not a real word, can you change it mate?)

It has been a busy start to the year and I've been working my ring off with much activity around the club. The Christmas/New Year period morphed into the Regatta, which ~~unlikely as it may seem~~ was won in ~~an~~ a exemplary fashion by Bob Dirks.



The munga at the club attract a lot of praise from foreigners... there's not much point going into town because when Ann Bull is around, everyone is stuffed... full that is. The Regatta was no exception. Annie leads a very capable team of "babbling brooks" Gator the tuggie has doubled in size after some decent tucker.

Lots of club members and visitors from lesser clubs continue to achieve what they came for. Mark Towns just achieved his Jantar conversion (~~before the committee sold it~~) and completed his Silver C.



367
94
408

A fabulous addition to the Medicott Gliding Club (a sub-branch of LKSC) is the Arcus Ultra Heavy Metal. Harry and Ian McFee worked for 40 days and 40 nights to fit complete instrumentation and the co-owner (Wendy) is seen here trying to explain to Harry what they all mean giving Harry last minute instructions prior to the first flight in Australia.



Our "Perennial Pom", Saint Harry Potts was again in residence and when he is not flying or mowing he is in the kitchen at The Chalet ~~stuffing his face~~ preparing yet another repast.

~~I don't know why the bastard doesn't put on weight like the rest of us!~~



Peter Steingruber from Switzerland visited us in February/ March and at the end of his stay Peter had completed his Silver C and conversion to the Junior, one of Peter's aims was to fly more hours in gliders during his visit than travelling hours from Switzerland to Australia and return (approximately 48 hours). He achieved this during his last week at LKSC.

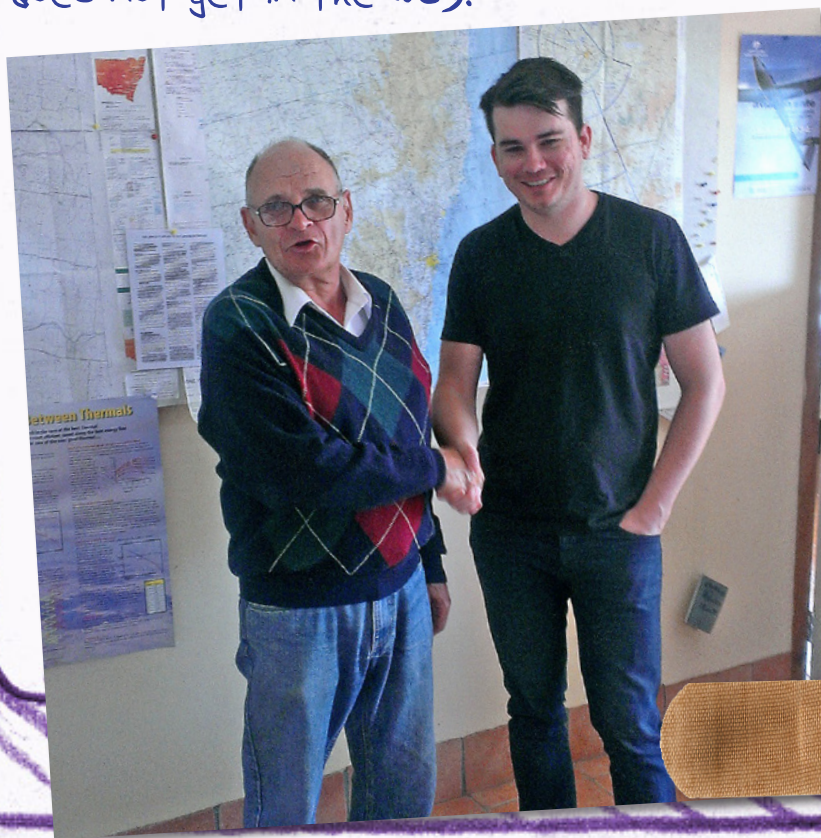
Our seafaring dentist, Graham Rowe, improvises with a lounge extension in the clubhouse. he also fits into the Junior.

JC- I stuck the picture on sideways to hide the sauce stain on the paper but can youse do something better on this page mate?



Our summer Tuggie, Alex Butters (right) departed our shores for "back 'ome" on Easter Saturday. Before he left he was able to welcome to the club Karl ~~Marr~~ Martin also from Lasham Gliding Society.

Faunator was ~~OK~~ a pleasure to have as our Tuggie and has agreed to return for the 2013/14 season if ~~we can't find anyone better~~ a real job does not get in the way.



Pat O'Donnell from ~~a lesser club~~ up north Kingaroy came to LKSC to continue his ab initio training with Gerhard.

Pat soloed, converted to the Jantar and did the two 1 hour flights for his C badge.

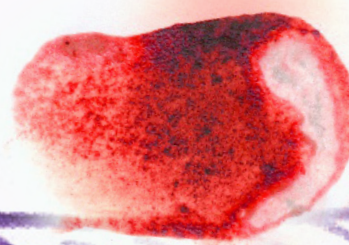
As advised by Chris Bowman, snapped here by me after a few bracing outlandings, it is my intention to ~~piss off and bludge~~ retire as the club manager in October 2013.

I will still be around as a regular club member doing some personal flying and I believe the committee has made an excellent choice with my replacement.

I'll let you know more details about Val's arrival so you can do the treatment on her before she arrives like you did to me you bastard and she's a pommie too!"

I know that she will enjoy the wonderful "camaraderie" that exists at LKSC hehehe.

Lots of great things are happening at Lake Keepit ~~as you can see by the stains on the page.~~ Check the calendar for details and I look forward to seeing you in Paradise!



KEEPIT REGATTA 2013



Take a look at the smiles on the gobs of some of the 2013 regatta participants before reading this article. As usual, the regatta was fun and a great time was had by all with some good and great flying being done by some, (mainly Nick Singer).

Yes, there was some rain and the last two days were not flown but the rain did little to spoil the fun on the other days and to prove once again, that the regatta shows up the sheep from the goats.

Fortunately for any other goats, this report is being written by one, and for those of us who don't know, Tim Carr has written an article on flying in the rain which follows this. Read it and learn!

It has was one of those weeks that anybody would have been forgiven for staying at home after a quick gander at the weather forecast. Certainly, Dave Shorter

could have been forgiven, what with the flooding and power cuts up in Banana Land, but after he insisted that the show must go on when David Bull mentioned the forecast, Dave had to wade through the floods to make it a day late.

Sunday was the first official day, and I don't know what happened because I too decided that the weather was crook. However, I too was shamed into coming up later in the day. In fact, Sunday turned out to be a good day.

Monday was called off because of a biblical storm coming in from the North East. (That's not Monday itself being called off which can only happen in a Certified Biblical Storm.)

Most people flew though.

A group of us, led by Nick Singer, headed towards Boggabri and the sun and then tracked down the Pillaga towards Mullaley in wonderful buoyant conditions.

Due to the great streeting, we did not need to look over our shoulders until we turned for Gunnedah by which time Keepit had been engulfed in the spreading darkness, fire and brimstone. The best option other than panic, looked like Coonabarrabran. Big rain was falling on the Carrols and Kelvins and Nick Singer was all for protecting his precious and landing at Gunnedah to sit it out.

Matthew Atkinson, who knows more about insurance, was all for pushing on to Keepit. GregorJustin (which ever one of them was not flying with us but the one who was on the radio back at the flight centre) said "It's not raining at Keepit now and the 25 knot

crosswind has gone. I reckon you have a good chance of making it." Reassuring words. However, if you had IR or night vision goggles, you could see Keepit round the edge of the rain clouds and we all got through and landed, anuses clenched, in a light rain.

The picture to the right is taken just before crossing the Carroll gap. Up until then, I was too nervous to get a camera out, but I had a briefly wonderful moment when I got a good climb under a black mass on the Gunnedah side of the Carrolls.

There were daggy stragglers hanging down under the cloud which developed enough to nearly form a second layer underneath with a column of stragglers either side. But there was a nice eyelet between the two layers which I climbed up and through into the "light". I say light, in fact you needed a torch to see up there but it was light compared with the surroundings.

Paul Mander, surely not showing off, elected to do a low altitude jet powered go-around so Matthew could land the wrong way on 27 and treated all to a Vulcan style flypast in the gloom.

Paul has had a lot to put up with. He gave a talk on three days to a very unruly and disrespectful crowd with interjections from both the knowledgeable sheep and the rest of us goats. Garry Speight, a card carrying sheep, was reported to be particularly upset with the talk because there was so little to disagree with.

Anyway, back to the flying. Tuesday was soggy. A good task was called over the wetlands down south. Towards Quirindi, you could look out of the cockpit and see happy families of farmers (presumably the Clifts) teaching their cattle to swim two by two into the Arc. Splashing about in the fields they were, like a



Crossing the Carroll Gap, the strip at Keepit is just clear of rain and Greg "reckons" we can land!

summer holiday weekend. Cloudbase was about 800' so you really could see well how much they enjoyed it.

It's hard to say where they got the water from. Yes, the dam is very low. Yes, the surrounding fields make Ireland look brown. But the cotton farmers soak up so much that you would not have thought they would have left any over for swimming in.

As befits a well set task, most people outlanded early and only Nick Singer made it around, nearly followed by Bob Dircks (whose glider is light enough to float properly) Geoff and Ian in the ASH.

David Bull (Competition director), was sufficiently current with outlanding to abandon and be in the hangar almost 30 minutes before anyone else landed.

Wednesday was a much better looking day but the task setters whimped out and set a slackers task Manilla, Narrabri, Gunnedah and Keepit with 60 or 70 km circles around each so that you could almost fly the task by doing a 5 km triangle over the field.

I probably did badly on the task but Justin in YL cruised in over the strip to finish with several thousand to spare (my sort of flyer) and caught another thermal at the end of 14 and radioed in that he was "going for a fly". A good idea since it was barely coffee time.

So the two of us set off and did the task again. Easy, I hear you say since it was only a 5 km triangle. Alex Cator (the tuggie called formerly known as Fauna) flew a brave silver C in the Junior and probably had the fly of the day. Great fun.

A minor triumph for me was the fitting of a Quiet Vent, imported from the US by Jim Staniforth. This tiny thing reduces the cockpit noise in my glider by a quite remarkable amount and also directs the airflow much better over my gob. The result is that I can now fly much faster in comfort and Nick Singer had better watch out, especially if he slows down a bit. Highly recommended for \$5.

Thursday looked like a re-run of Tuesday but with more of the soggies. I followed Tim Carr and Matthew Atkinson off and had a nice cruise under a bitumen-black cloud street with the others towards Kaputar, hoping to "learn the day." Needless to say, being the goat that I am, I did not learn anything much more than that there was lift in the black stuff. I don't think Matthew did either judging by the amount of time he spent below 2,000' later on in the day. I know, because I was frequently looking up at him.

It must be said that the area looked fantastic, especially if you dream of flying in the Emerald Isle. The fields were green like I have never seen them and dotted with moving cloud shadows.

At about the time the start gate opened, the clouds got together and those that did not bucket rain clumped together to blank off any lift. There were a few thermals and any goat who got a climb, aimed out on task at an aggressive speed. I know, because I was one such goat.

I turned Manilla and then slowly sank out of the lift until I was turning somewhere near Gainneys, seemingly well below Mount Kaputar, with Matthew close above. In fact, too close above to thermal well so low down. (My excuse.)

I started the motor and went home. Matthew finally scratched enough height to go back to a start point and have another go. Brave man! Unfortunately, it did not work that well.

It turned out that the sheep who learned the lesson got high and stayed high, flying very slowly to conserve height. Almost anyone who pushed the stick forwards got shot down except for people like Robert Smits who was ridge soaring on the upwind side of rain clouds.

Wendy and Harry in the Arcus did the task but slipped home about 10 minutes early, narrowly beating Tim Carr. I nagged them both to write something down about flying in the rain and Tim Carr obliged with the following article.

Thursday night, it bucketed down all night and most people chose to bail out, the forecast for the weekend being even worse.

We were stuffed full every night by the tireless efforts of Ann Bull who slaved away over a hot stove every night. Her other half was responsible for the organisation. I have come around to accepting that it was not really his fault that the weather did not cooperate... but we all have a lot of fun... as is usual for the regatta.

And the winner was...

Bob Dircks! Well done!



The Gang of Four cobble together another unflyable task. Isn't that the way it's meant to be?



The problems committee convene around Steve Hedley, whether he needs their help or not.



Harry Medicott tries to scare the photographer into not taking his picture. This technique doesn't work.



Paul Mander draws ears and bums on the whiteboard in a fruitless attempt to get control over the unruly class.



Wet or dry, hot or cold, the new shade structure proves it's worth. For Fauna, it's just another lovely warm day away from home.

SIXTY YEARS OF GLIDING. PART 2



I have been able to update the heading: It seemed a pity to leave it at fifty nine and a half years. I celebrated a birthday and the sixtieth anniversary of my first "flight", 600mm above the ground in command of a primary glider, with a dual check and a local flight in the Discus 2b. Sixty years of power flying will be reached later this year.

In 1970 I qualified as a map and compass navigator. I took a Cessna 210 from Canberra up the Centre to Darwin and Kununurra and home via the Gulf country and the East Coast.

At Broken Hill the briefing officer said "Have you got a VHF Survival Beacon?" These were just coming into use and no, I hadn't one.

"Then you can't go, it's a designated remote area." Devastated! I had three friends whom I had promised to fly to Darwin. To turn back now...

"Well, have you got HF radio?"

"Ye-es" (What's coming now?)

"Then you could go Full Reporting: nominate waypoints 30 minutes apart, pass an amended estimate if your estimate varies by one minute, report within three minutes of the estimate" - to Darwin and back over nearly featureless country that I had never seen. I took a breath and said OK.

And so I went, planning with protractor and dividers and Kane computer, amending times and headings by mental arithmetic while hand flying the aircraft (I

don't remember an autopilot) over arid country, with night arrivals, over the maze of watercourses of the Channel Country, through storm diversions leading to last-minute clearances through controlled airspace and a dash over the skyscrapers of Sydney at 1500 feet to Bankstown to refuel and recover my nerves.

A 210 in a tailwind is fast and if you need to re-plan in the air to enter controlled airspace you have to be nimble. At Bankstown I confidently but carefully planned the last leg for a night arrival at Canberra and I felt like a veteran when a young pilot said "Excuse me Sir, can I borrow a pencil?"

The thought that when I was over the desert this capable organisation would interest itself in my safety if they had not heard from me for 30 minutes plus

three was a great comfort and I always went full reporting after that.

I tried back-tracking on an NDB but that was not accurate enough and I did not do it again.

Three months after the '74 cyclone I went from Cooma to Darwin as the Electrical Engineer, later Power Station Superintendent, at the power station. The cyclone stories I heard were fascinating but they are not gliding stories. Darwin was just right: it was a single persons' town where it was unusual to meet anyone over 35, and I was single again.

Once you get used to the climate the Top End is beautiful and exciting. John's wine bar was the meeting place on Friday nights. I still have my Darwin Rocksitters Club T shirt. What did we do? Well, we met as friends on a rock in the harbour, accessible at low tide. I walked for twenty years – save for an interlude of four years in the South – in the Kakadu wilderness, navigating by map and compass.

Walking and sleeping in Aboriginal country for twenty years I gained some insight into their way of thinking. The Dreamtime creator spirits are still immanent in the country. Some of the sites we visited are now restricted. The Gagadgu aborigines recognise six seasons. Weeks before you could feel the Build-up to the Wet, when you flew a circuit over Batchelor the trees were in blossom. They knew the Wet was coming.

The Darwin reference library contains a wealth of material on early exploration and development of the Territory.

I was at different times on the committees of the camera club, film society and aero club, President of

the gliding club and bushwalking club, CFI and Level 3 instructor, safety committee of the sailing club (I had no experience of sailing but the Rules of the Road match the Rules of the Air except for the one that says an aircraft shall not pass over or under another unless well clear.)

I got the occasional single engine VFR charter: "Geoff, could you go to Snake Bay before work tomorrow?" I flew five aborigines home to Numbulwar, happy drunks singing their way home with tribal songs that people go miles with tape recorders to hear.

Once I came home alone from a charter for a night approach over the lights of Darwin, the sun setting over the water on one side and a full moon rising on the other... I saw the sandstone Arnhem Land escarpment lit by a late sun and seeming to be luminescent of itself.

I am forever proud that the first time I left Australia, in 1979, was in command of a single engine aircraft for five hours over water to Ambon. People ask "Where is Ambon?" Rather sad because three hundred Australian soldiers were thrown into a mass grave there in 1942 when the garrison was overwhelmed by the Japanese and survivors were executed (Note 1).

The feeling of setting off over limitless water with the engine keeping a steady beat and the gauges where they should be is magical. The NDB let-down to Ambon in cloud is a story on its own. What a comfort to hear an Australian voice on HF radio on the way home even though there was more than an hour of water to go.

At the Northern Australian Gliding Club we were towing a Blanik and a Kookaburra with a two-seat Pawnee. When the engine ran out we replaced it and

could then not afford to keep the Pawnee. Then we winch launched a Blanik over unlandable country in heat and humidity. Anyone with any sense would have gone sailing. The club folded and that is what I did – in a Laser, a single-handed fibreglass dinghy.

We are now in modern times and I must shorten this story.

I had an interlude of four years in the South. I trailered a VMFG Ls3a from Melbourne to Waikerie for some of my best flights; flew a Canberra Club glider 540km along a cold front, at that time longer than the record to a goal but not declared; got up at 3 in the morning to get the weather by phone and set off with the Ls3a from Melbourne for Grampians Soaring Club in the (unrealised) hope of wave; drove from Melbourne to Cooma to contact wave in a Canberra GC Cirrus.

CGC had as equipment officer an ex-RAAF man who wanted me to shave off my beard in order to fit a diluter demand oxygen mask. I came back after he left the club and clamped a mask over my beard. I wore aircell pyjamas, ski pants, jeans, a pair of plastic foam overboots that I made myself and wallaby fur mittens. I only got to 23,000 ft but it put my name on the Martin Warner Trophy for that year. I was in a cold and silent region where nothing lived but Man with his oxygen bottle.

I felt as if I had trespassed in the Hall of the Mountain King where no mortal was meant to go. Nothing was left of my passing, only a wake that soon dissipated, and there was no creature to hear the sound.

On descent I thought I saw 10,000 ft on the altimeter and set off to tour the Snowy Mountains

under controlled airspace but the little hand was in fact at 20,000 ft and I had to turn about. That night I went alone to the hangar in the cold moonlight and the dew, and caressed the wings of this artifact of Man's imagination.

The Radio 2XL mast was within the boundaries of Polo Flat airfield and you had to fly around it in the circuit.

My Company moved me to manage a Brisbane office and I instructed, towed and flew some cross-countries with Darling Downs Soaring Club. As happened at Lake Keepit, if you are new to a club some people think you are new to gliding. One day I set off from Jondaryan and landed almost straight away. The duty instructor said You'd better get some more experience before you set off like that.

I played with an approaching storm front in a K13. I said to the trainee Get the nose down or we'll be sucked into this cloud but he had never seen anything like it. I had to take over and lower the nose to what looked like thirty degrees and go to 80 knots with brakes out.

Darwin again and more winch launches over unlandable country. I did however, survey a 50km route via bush strips and arranged with Darwin for block release of the airspace on request. Bush strips could become unserviceable in weeks. Every Saturday we patrolled the wartime bitumen at Batchelor, which had a bomb crater at one end, and knocked down termite mounds which had grown to 30cm since last week.

We shared the strip with Darwin Parachute Club. I sometimes flew for them, and I made half a dozen



Planning a launch in a Blanik at Cooma, that's our Geoff in the shades!

free-fall jumps from 10,000 feet. I have the video, and some ABC footage of the gliding club.

When Rod Loder proposed that we buy a self launching glider and base it at RAAF Tindal where he was stationed it did not take me long to retire from instructing. All I had to do was drive my Peugeot 504 (mechanical fuel injection) 300km, with no speed limit, on Friday night to Tindal. A pair of bored policemen stopped me one night, could find nothing wrong with my car, and in final triumph demanded to know what was the green powder they could see through the window. Staminade.

The RAAF normally operated on weekdays but one Saturday when I checked with the tower he said "No wait, I have three F111s coming from Amberly but hold on, I have the first one now on radar at 180 nm, he'll be here in twenty minutes."

It helped that the Officer Commanding, Spike Lee, was a glider pilot. I was warned to tell the dog handlers I was there. They said they exercised at weekends and the dogs are trained to go for the throat.

As a publicity stunt we arranged to fly three gliders into Darwin International Airport.

We sold a Blanik to the South. How to get it there? We learnt that the RAAF sent a Hercules south every week so I rang RAAF Darwin and said "May I speak to the Officer Commanding and what's his name please?" He said "We can't do it this week, we're full" but he agreed to fly the Blanik to Richmond the next week and we had it picked up there. That's Darwin.

From Darwin to Melbourne in 1997 for treatment for prostate cancer; several years of world travel; reunited with the DG400 in Tasmania; trailer on the Bass Strait ferry: I missed the turn at Devonport and had to go round the block. I came to a No Left Turn sign but I was not going to go on and look for a place to turn. The trailer cut in on the turn and knocked down the No Left Turn sign.

Harry Medlicott said on the phone in 2004 "Why not come to Lake Keepit". 25,000km cross-country from LKSC; lived on site after Jim Stanley died, Steve Hedley asked me to answer the phone while I was there so I covered the interim while Sarah Allen came and went and until Jenny came; organised advance coaching week 2006; numerous gliding articles published in Tamworth and Gunnedah newspapers; design of a house that became a standing joke – planning got the better of me but the result is good.

Two engine failures: the DG400 was lined up at Waikerie but when I increased revs for the magneto check the propeller stopped dead with a shudder. The crankshaft had broken. While the Pawnee was idling between tows someone made signs for me to take my headset off. He shouted "Can you hear that clatter coming from the engine?" A chilled cast iron cam follower had broken and shed pieces into the works. The engine probably had minutes to run. Never

happened on the Peugeot, only on a Lycoming. If troubles come in threes I hope my next engine failure is on the ground.

I am happy in retirement. Years ago I heard Sir Mafarlane Burnett, Nobel Prize winner, famed Director of the Walter and Eliza Hall immunological research institute, say in a radio interview "I am now very happy growing tomatoes." I have no interest in tomatoes but in books and music.

Geoff Neely

STATISTICAL APPENDIX

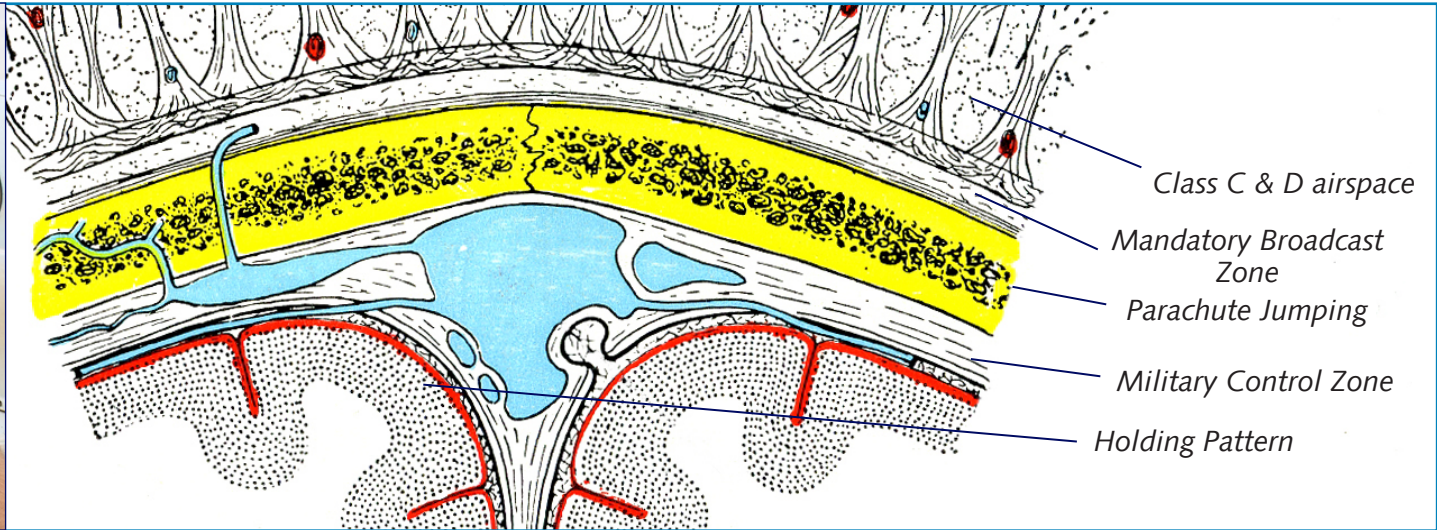
85,000 km cross-country; combining power and gliding 4200 hours in 71 types; diamond badge no 76 in Australia and no 3245 in the world; 60 years of flying.

President of three of my six clubs. No wheels-up landings, no damage to any club glider or tug, undercarriage collapse and bird strike on my glider, bent flap in a Chipmunk when I ran over a sheep early in my career.

3,676 tows as tug pilot since I began counting in 1997. If this is increased pro-rata from 5 to 56 years I might have done 40,000 tows.

Note 1: For more about Australian soldiers on Ambon refer to <http://www.awm.gov.au/exhibitions/alliesinadversity/japanese/ambon.asp>





The real Flying Doctor is off on another foreign jolly. The locust or stunt-doctor has sent this stuff in which is published to fill in the end of the newsletter.

PERFORMANCE ENHANCED GLIDING? YES PLEASE!

If you could take a pill or rub some cream on your legs that would give you the performance of a world champion, would you take it? *Sure you would!*

Maybe you think taking pills for sporting sorts of things is wrong, but what if everyone else was doing it? Would you take the pill? And what if you were 99% certain that nobody would know that you were doing this?

Drugs in sport is a hugely popular subject right now and it's worth having a think about how it affects us glider pilots.

At the moment, apart from a big gang of Aussie Rules players whose names are unknown in the north, the most successful and popular sporting drug taker this year is Lance Armstrong.

Before going further, it's worth declaring an opinion here. Drugs or no drugs, the Armstrong years in the Tour de France were some of the best and most exciting of the last decade. Armstrong's performance and participation put the Tour well and truly on the international map and like President Nixon, he never let anyone down... well apart from the drugs business. What Lance did was to give the Tour a sense of drama and underlined the epic nature of the event.

Obviously, the idea with drugs in sport is to improve your performance and many consider drugs to be cheating. While Lance was being grilled on TV, he made an interesting claim about this... He said that cheating was to gain an "unfair advantage" over your opponents.

That clearly exonerates him from cheating in

cycling since at that time, almost everyone was on performance enhancing drugs to the point where they have been unable to award any of his tour wins to the runners up because all but one of the top ten have either been caught or admitted to being on drugs.

As the famous French cyclist of 50 years ago, Jacques Anquetil said, "You'd have to be an imbecile or a hypocrite to imagine that a professional cyclist who rides 235 days a year can hold himself together without stimulants." He went on to hold a strike for the right to take drugs. Another champion, Italian Fausto Coppi, when asked if he took drugs, said "Whenever it is necessary." When it was necessary turned out to be all the big tours and as well as all of the big one day classics and a lot of other races too.

Most, if not all, footy players seem to be "enhancing" their performance these days in the club's official "high performance programs" which clears them of cheating. If everyone is doing it, the playing field is level again and it's clearly not "unfair". Is that cheating?

In most sports it's only against the rules to take substances which are officially banned. If it's not banned, you can go for it!

The good news here is that sports "scientists" are developing or discovering performance enhancing drugs at a much faster rate than the drugs can be either detected or banned. Isn't it refreshing to find another area where professional qualifications and ethics have such a huge disconnect?

This means that if there's no way of detecting a substance, you can take it without a problem until someone develops a test and as long as the tests are not done retrospectively, you're in the clear. It's commonly claimed that nobody wants to reexamine samples taken at sporting events such as the Olympics from more than 10 years ago because most athletes would turn in positive samples with current testing methods.

An Aussie team doctor said, just before the 2000 Olympics, "You're either on drugs or you are going to lose." And if everyone is doing it, then it's not cheating is it?

With tens of thousands of so-called sports "supplements" on the market, you have a pretty good chance of taking something which will sooner or later become illegal... if the substance actually does increase your sporting performance.

But hang on a minute! According to Pear's Cyclopaedia, the source of all knowledge, it is arguable whether things like gliding can be considered to be a sport. Golf and Aussie rules are not sports according to Pear's but for different reasons.



PERFORMANCE ENHANCEMENT FOR OLD GOATS

Check out these two pilots. One is a real man with a firm hand on his stick. The other is a performance enhanced old goat daintily holding his stick between finger and thumb.

One is out there doing it for real in a heritage tin glider with the performance envelope of a day-old meat pie. The other is in a plastic fantastic with 18 metre wings, the cockpit filled with the reek of two-stroke and old nappies and performance which costs about \$100,000 per L/D point.

One is wearing short shorts, showing a bit of ocre and prunes even... the other is all ponced up in matching khaki with a parachute and some GPS thing on his shoulder to alert mummy if something goes wrong.

One is looking down, grinning on lesser pilots from a great height while the other is looking up, only dreaming of getting higher.

One is refreshed after a night with the (legal) missus and a few glasses of red bombo or more with the edge taken off with a few cups of coffee and the odd No-doz... so is the other one... only the goat has the O₂ up his nasum because he can't take the headaches from being over 13,000'.

So hands up everyone who would prefer the Puchatek to an 18 metre self launcher!

The key element of inherent boredom and not being played by a team of either 11 or 15 players are some factors which prevent these from being called sports. So, like golf and Aussie rules, that makes gliding just a pastime or hobby. Do performance enhancing supplements give one an unfair advantage in a hobby?

And what does constitute an unfair advantage? There's no doubt that there are many factors which may give one glider pilot an advantage over another. Here are some of them:

A newer or faster glider. More wingspan. Modern instruments. A self launcher or sustainer in the boot. There's no doubt that all of these will give the pilot an better time than someone flying an older, slower glider with heritage instruments.

A comfortable 18-20 metre self-launcher is far easier to fly and at the end the day in any competition, the pilot is likely to feel more relaxed and confident than the pilot of an older, less comfortable, slower glider with the constant worry of outlanding... irrespective of handicap which only relate to the glider, not the way the pilot is operating.

The ultimate expression of this is of course, ocean racing. Money can certainly buy you happiness here. Not only can you buy a bigger yacht, but since it is the hull and rig which is handicapped, you can stack the rail with the top paid crew, whether it is your sailmaker or yourself who foots the bill. And if this doesn't get you a win, if you have the money, you can buy the whole race... if it is the Americas cup. Is this unfair?

But back to gliding. What else might be an unfair advantage? How about if your competitors are smarter than you? What about if they have more time

to practice? What if they are younger or better able to manage the stress? All these things are advantages but are they unfair?

Nature did not create us all equal and there are those who would consider that this is actually unfair... so can drugs level the playing field and make some of us less unequal?

Regrettably, there appear to be few drugs that can make anyone more intelligent but the converse is certainly true. Anyone who has had to listen to people who were under the influence of most so-called recreational drugs would surely agree that many of them, most notably marijuana make anyone into a dope. Give me Guinness any day.

The two most popular drugs with glider pilots are alcohol and caffeine, closely followed by oxygen. Alcohol used to be very popular pre-flight in Europe, especially France, but its use seems to be on the wane despite how effective it is. The sense of courage that alcohol gives you is especially useful when flying in the Alps but the side effects and come-down are big drawbacks, especially when you need your wits about you for example if you are flying in the Alps.

Caffeine is a great way to wake up before (or during a flight with No-doz or similar) but can have similar depressing effects to alcohol. Perhaps the best use of these two is the designer drink, carajillo which is one of Spain's finest inventions. A carajillo consists of a short black coffee with a belt of rum, brandy or whiskey.

The alcohol and caffeine seem to have equal and opposite effects with the result being a general feeling

of well-being and inner warmth without the noticeable side effects of either. Thank goodness we have 12 volt espresso machines which can work in gliders.

Oxygen is very popular as a pick-me-up in gliding and may be one of the few chemicals that does improve performance. Though oxygen probably cannot be considered to be a stimulant, there are many who swear that it improves concentration at any altitude and does enhance performance. Whether this is true for a pilot in reasonably good health is debatable but is it fair that some pilots have oxygen and use it at all stages during a flight while others cannot or do not?

Of all the real drugs, Testosterone is the one which gets great results and gets them almost immediately. Does anyone remember Floyd Landis' performance in Stage 16 of the 2006 tour? He tanked, losing 11 places and the stage was won by that girly Dane Rasmussen (later outed for drugs.)

The following day, Floyd Landis came back with a vengeance and won the 17th stage by a clear five minutes. His amazing and visibly weird performance lifted him from 23rd place to 3rd in the GC... in one day. And it was all due to some testosterone cream he rubbed on his legs. Of course he was banned later the same day

Yes, there are side effects with testosterone such as shrinking goolies, hair loss and breast growth... and that's just the ones that women get. On the other side, testosterone reputedly gets rid of that grumpy old man syndrome and if you've lost most of your hair and your wife has said the breeding program is over as with most glider pilots, then testosterone has to be worth a consideration.

Regrettably, most of the benefits of testosterone are irrelevant to most glider pilots unless you are on a difficult retrieve and many may be downright dangerous in the confines of a cockpit. Imagine punching your way through the canopy in a testosterone induced roid-rage!

In many cases, it's pretty easy to tell which "sportsmen" are on drugs just by looking at their physiques and the weensy size of their heads compared with their bodies. When you see a whole football team trotting onto the field looking like they've been to the witch doctor... and they're a high school foot team, a bell's ringing loudly somewhere. This might be a bit of a give-away in a gliding club.

If you are interested in taking drugs to enhance your performance and you can use a computer, you're in luck because the information about what to take, how much to take and where to get it is as freely available as the local bus timetable... and probably more so.

Hang around at any gym or horse vet's surgery and you'll be able to score almost anything... even if you are not a horse and with the chances of being caught somewhere south of 1%. However with a choice of 50-60,000 "supplements" on the market, it would be easy to take the wrong thing.

It's been suggested that banning performance enhancing drugs is a waste of time because, just like other drugs, the benefits appear to outweigh the disadvantages and what the people want, the people get. It's also been suggested that sporting events be re-categorised so you can choose to take drugs and compete or not.

Here's how you do it. For events like the Olympics, where the sporting prowess of a whole country is at stake, the participants will be chosen at random... a pin through the phone book process... if you can find a phone book... to find the average of a country's citizens rather than the self-styled "elite".

The spectacle would be very watchable... seeing the fat, the stupid, the lazy and the old of each country, the average people, having a go. It's more or less the stuff of most reality TV programs right now.

Bear in mind that before you criticise, that only a few years ago, many people who were asked to name three Olympic athletes whose performance was really memorable, would include Eddie the Eagle, an average performer who inspired a nation. Average does not mean bad TV.

For other sporting events there would be three categories. Super-modified human, standard issue human and damaged. In the super-modified class, anything goes. Drugs, genetic modifications, surgery... and if something goes wrong, then these folk can enter the damaged class.

Regrettably, the least interesting will be the standard human class where normal people's performance will be so undramatic that it won't be worth watching. It's a brave new world and you are not part of it unless you are taking something. Speaking personally, I would not take performance-increasing drugs because I would no longer have an excuse for failure.

O, wonder!

How many goodly creatures are there here!

How beauteous mankind is!

O brave new world,

That has such people in't!

