

Annual Report for the Adelaide University Gliding Club 2008

1. Airfield

The location of the airfield is proving to be excellent. The good summer soaring conditions have meant that several large cross-country flights have been achieved from Stonefield, including one of over 500km. Several members have also experienced strong wave conditions resulting in climbs to 10,000'. When oxygen systems can be made available for club members to use, the opportunity exists for members to achieve their Diamond Height (height gain of 5000m/16,400') out of Stonefield, something members would have previously travelled to Western Australia or Victoria to achieve.

Thanks to the dedication of a core group of members, the work on improving and cleaning up the airfield continues, but this can be a slow and difficult process for a number of reasons:

- Members can only really work on the airfield over the weekend
- Difficult working conditions during the hot summer months
- Members are often required to run operations

The relocation of the hangar is approaching a milestone. With the work on preparing the footings nearing completion, pouring of the concrete will be a significant step forward. A date for the pour hasn't been set yet, but it is looking likely to occur in either late February or early March 2009.

2. Facilities

The facilities at the airfield are always being looked at to determine ways of improving what we have. For example, Anthony Smith and Justine Thompson bought a number of young trees and have been tending to them on a regular basis. These trees will provide shade and shelter in the years to come and will enhance the attractiveness of the area surrounding the clubhouse.

The maintenance facility at West Beach continues to be of high importance to the club. Without access to this relatively central facility, all the work currently being done by volunteers would have to be done commercially, at commercial rates, and that would simply not be sustainable by the club.

3. Aircraft

Keeping the club's fleet of aircraft airworthy is a monumental task. Redmond Quinn has done an outstanding job in overseeing and performing this work. Special mention should be made of Mark Tyler and Allan Wiseman who have shown a lot of dedication to assisting Redmond in his efforts.

Repairs to both of the club's wooden aircraft, the Bergfalke (GZM) and the Arrow (GNF), are still ongoing. The priority of these jobs is low compared to keeping the other aircraft airworthy and the numerous other jobs such as maintaining the roadworthiness of the club's single seater glider trailers.

Due to the spiralling cost of insurance and the extremely high excess imposed on the club, the Executive committee has decided to self-insure the two single seater aircraft (GMI and WVA) but continue to fully insure the twin trainer (KRO), the Motorfalke (FQW) and the Standard Libelle (GTX).

4. Operations

During the year we had 7 new trainees purchase our solo training package however none have been sent solo as yet. The club is trying to determine an effective way of creating enthusiasm in new trainees so they persist and train to solo standard within a few months. We believe this is critical to their retention but it is difficult task as many are students and such is the culture of today's younger generation.

One highlight on the training front was Andrew Rankmore, who only took 2 hrs 40 mins and 12 launches to go solo. This was a result of Andrew's enthusiasm and dedication by coming to the airfield on both days of a weekend and, as trainee numbers were low at the time, more dedicated time with an instructor.

I'm also pleased to report that the club has a new level 1 instructor, Anne Philcox. Anne has shown much dedication to the club and her assistance with instructing will be greatly appreciated.

During our days at Lochiel, launch failures were common. This often caused delays of up to 30 minutes as the glider was towed back to the launch point and the break in the cable was found and repaired. A launch failure can occur for a number of reasons:

- The cable itself has worn to the point where it breaks (cable break)
- The weak link breaks (weak link break)
- The swages wear away and fail (swage pullout)
- The shock absorbing rope breaks (rope break)

Since moving to Stonefield, we have found that the use of drogue chutes has dramatically reduced the number of cable breaks. We have also replaced the wire rope weak links with TOST style weak links which has reduced the number of weak link breaks. Swage pullouts, the most common cause of launch failures at Lochiel, have almost been completely eliminated by diligently replacing worn swages before they fail. This has improved our operational efficiency significantly.

5. Recruitment

O'Week and Re-O'Week were both major recruiting events for the gliding club and significant effort was put into them. As highlighted in previous Annual Reports, the club modified its approach to selling Air Experience Flights (AEFs) to new University students by charging \$50 and bundling each purchase with club membership; not simply discounting the price of the AEF to \$20 as previously done.

At \$20, the profit margin was almost zero and the club sold such a large number of AEFs that our valued members were donating an unreasonable amount of their time to people who would ultimately return nothing to the club. By pricing AEFs more appropriately, we have avoided the discount hunters and have been able to focus our attention on those who have a genuine interest in the experience and/or learning to fly.

6. Social Events

The social side of the club was previously one of its strong points, but unfortunately the Social Convenor for this past year has not been able to put the time and effort into the position that it really deserves. Finding members who are willing and able to fill these sorts of positions is difficult but I'm pleased to say that we have had a past member rejoin the club after recently returning to Adelaide from overseas who has enthusiastically volunteered to become our Social Convenor.

7. Camps

As gliding is very dependent on the weather, it was no surprise that this year's Flinders Camp on the June long weekend was not much of a success with respect to flying. Rain and adverse wind conditions meant that the club barely did 20 hours of flying over the weekend when in previous years we have done over 50 hours.

The Khancoban Camp in early November was a success this year and everyone had good flying and a safe trip there and back. Due to the popularity of the camp, the host club (the Gliding Club of Victoria) has provided two tow planes and extended the camp from four days to the whole week for the past few years now.

8. Competitions

Unfortunately there were no club members in the Junior age category who were able to compete in the Junior Gliding Championships this year, but Anne Philcox did represent the club at the State Championships held at Waikerie in early January 2009. Despite flying a 'relatively' poor performance glider that wasn't capable of taking water ballast and flying against pilots that have competed at World Class competitions, she did well, learnt a lot and had a lot of fun.

The State Championships and the Multi-Class Championships will both be held at Waikerie in January 2010 and it is hoped that we can get several members ready to compete in those competitions.

9. Thanks

Unfortunately, as it is probably with most clubs, a majority of the work is done by a minority of the members and it is those members that I would like to

express my sincere thanks to, for without the effort they put into the club, we would cease to exist.

On behalf of the gliding club, I would also like to express our appreciation for the ongoing support of the Sports Association in providing accessible sports aviation opportunities to the student community.

Derek Spencer
President