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Uni Gliding

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The Official Journal of the Adelaide University Gliding Club



Tim Bates converts to the Pik 20D as the Bergfalke is prepared for another passenger flight.

Photo: Anne Philcox

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QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"Flaring is for wusses!"

Sarah Allen, defending the style of a recent landing.

Editorial

Welcome everyone!

Summer's almost over and it's already the beginning of another university year. O'week presents a perfect opportunity to advertise the many benefits of pilot training to the greater university community. Not only does gliding enable you to soar through the sky with only mother nature as your power source, but it develops important qualities such as practical know-how and initiative. Personally, joining the Adelaide University Gliding Club (AUGC) in July last year has (so far) blessed me with an amazing sense of achievement from flying solo, expanded my circle of friends and even made me competent behind the wheel of a manual car through extensive 'paddock bashing'. I and everyone within the club encourage anyone who's interest is piqued by the introductory information in this newsletter or our display at the university to experience gliding first hand— you will not be disappointed!

Half-price Air Experience Flight (AEF) vouchers are available exclusively during O'week (21st-25th Feb) with club membership (\$5). It is recommended that everyone who collects a voucher redeems it as soon as possible to take advantage of the better soaring conditions during the warmer months. A further introduction to the sport of gliding will be presented in the Bragg Lecture Theatre from 6pm, Wednesday, March 2 with beer and pizza provided. What's that? *Free beer and pizza?! See you there.*

Current members and those new recruits who are keen to start socialising are reminded that there will be a BBQ on the Tuesday 22nd Feb down at the West Beach workshop. Thanks to our social convenor Derek Eilers for keeping us well fed and entertained. Refer to page 14 for directions.

So much has happened within the club since the last issue of Uni Gliding- all the way back in October! Unfortunately the busiest time of the year for the AUGC coincides with the upheaval of the Christmas season and in this case, the appointment of a new



Derek Eilers attempted to move the Boomerang to Stonefield the fun way but outlanded at Halbury. Photo: Derek Eilers



An impressive height gain during the first day of operations at Stonefield. Photo: Derek Eilers

newsletter editor. The main event during this period has no doubt been the change of airfield from dusty Lochiel to dustier Stonefield, which we are sharing with the hospitable Barossa Valley Gliding Club. Ridge soaring will be sorely missed, particularly in the winter, but the lack of a reliable local source of lift should promote more cross country flying. It appears this has been the case, as you will read in the President's Report (page 8).

There is still a lot of infrastructure in place at Lochiel that will need to be relocated within the next year. Please turn up in force when the inevitable hangar-dismantling working bee is announced. Remember there is still a fridge full of beer in the old clubhouse to help everyone remain sane.

Finally, I'd like to congratulate David Conway and our young pilot protégé Sarah Allen for their recent achievements in the NSW State Comps. David has made us all proud by soaring to 3rd place!

Yours truly,

Anne

Logo Competition

For those of you so inclined, now is the time to apply your artistic talents and design a new logo for the AUGC. In particular, the pristine white cab of the new winch truck (see over the page) is begging for some embellishment to say "here is our winch!". Perhaps the advent of a new logo will also spawn some club t-shirts...?

There is no due date as yet, but stay tuned for details of a prize for the best design.



My submission for the logo competition

March 2005



Expending much effort to get the winch back on the road.

Photos: Derek Eilers

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
28 (Feb) Help at West Beach	1 Help at West Beach	2 First General Meeting inc. Videos, Beer & Pizza	3	4	5 Go Gliding!	6 Go Gliding!
7 Help at West Beach	8 Help at West Beach	9	10	11	12 Go Gliding!	13 Go Gliding!
14 Help at West Beach	15 Help at West Beach	16 Executive Committee Meeting 7:30pm, Venue TBA	17	18	19 Go Gliding!	20 Go Gliding!
21 Help at West Beach	22 West Beach Social BBQ Help at West Beach	23	24	25 Go Gliding!	26 Go Gliding!	27 Go Gliding!
28 Go Gliding! Or... Help at West Beach	29 Help at West Beach	30	31			

What is Gliding?

Gliding is the art of flying an aircraft without using an engine. A glider is simply an aeroplane that doesn't rely on an engine to stay aloft; it has all the same generic controls and instruments as a powered aircraft.

Contrary to popular belief, engines do not make aeroplanes fly: wings do! For wings to 'work' they must be moving forwards relative to the air. Engines are used in powered aircraft to supply this forward thrust in a steady, convenient form. Gliders use gravity; they are always gliding downwards through the air, but they glide at a shallow angle typically equivalent to 30 metres forward for only 1 metre down through their efficient design. A light aircraft such as a single-engine Cessna with its engine off will glide around 8 metres forward for every 1 metre down. Still controllable, but nowhere near as efficient as a glider.

How does a glider stay up?

The air is rarely still. It moves laterally as wind and it also moves vertically due to density differences. The 'magic' starts when the glider is in air that is rising faster than the glider is descending. The glider will then be carried up by circling in the rising air, in exactly the same way as eagles and other soaring birds. When the glider leaves the rising air it will resume its slow descent. Utilising this rising air is called 'soaring'. Provided there is enough rising air around, a glider can stay up indefinitely.

Of course air currents are invisible and can't be seen rising directly. There is much theory and also instruments available to help the pilot find rising air, but it is here that gliding passes into the nether world between science and art. The challenge of using rising air to the best advantage is akin to a sailor using the winds and currents of the ocean and this challenge is what keeps most enthusiasts coming back.

Rising air (also called 'lift' by glider pilots) can be found in the form of bubbles of hot air called 'thermals'. These bubbles can extend very high into the atmosphere during summer. A thermal is formed from a 'trigger point' on the ground, such as a quarry, shed roof or a clump of trees. Rising air can also be found where the wind blows over a ridge or range of hills. The air is forced up over the face of the hill which provides continuous, predictable rising air called 'ridge lift'. Unfortunately this lift is limited to near the hill and doesn't go very high unless the wind is strong and it is a big hill. Adelaide Uni Gliding Club (AUGC) had an advantage at its airfield near Lochiel as it was adjacent to the Hummocks range which is ideal for ridge lift. Prevailing westerly winds necessary to generate lift on the airfield side of the north-south range were common, particularly in the winter. Hopefully at Stonefield the AUGC can find similar lift emanating from nearby ridges of the Adelaide Hills.

How does a glider take off?

There are a number of ways to get a glider airborne. The most well known method is to simply tow the glider behind a powered aeroplane (called a 'tug'). This process is called 'aerotowing' and has the advantage that the glider can be towed to any height or position in the sky. The downside is the cost. Maintenance, fuel costs etc. associated with the tugs makes aerotowing an expensive launching method, one that would not suit the modest budgets of most students.

The Adelaide Uni Gliding Club uses a cheaper method known as 'winch launching'. Many people would argue that this is much more fun and, more importantly, inherently safer. A large engine (V8 in our case) mounted on the back of a stationary truck is used to wind steel cable onto a drum at high speed. The glider is attached to the other end of the cable and is pulled into the air like a kite. An average launch takes the glider to 1400 feet above ground, although heights in excess of 2000 feet can be gained with a significant headwind. At the top of the launch the cable is either released by the pilot or by the glider automatically.



The club's Pik 20D in initial climb on a winching cable. As the glider gains more height and speed the pilot will rotate to a standard climb angle of 45°.

Photo: Anon

How safe is gliding?



Some of the instructors also have an interesting sense of humour. Derek Spencer illustrates this to Sarah Allen in the Bergfalke.

Photo: Sarah Allen

Gliding is a very safe sport. Like driving a car, it is only as safe as you make it. Yes, there are risks just like in any other activity, but the risks are fully understood and catered for; procedures are put in place and religiously followed to make sure that the risks are minimised. Our self preservation instincts are just as strong as yours! Before a glider is permitted to fly on any particular day, it must be carefully inspected by a qualified inspector. Furthermore the gliders are put through a thorough inspection every year where the gliders are disassembled and checked.

All of the club's instructors are experienced pilots that have undergone rigorous training and testing that is supervised by the Gliding Federation of Australia. You learn to fly at your own pace and the more advanced aspects of flying are only introduced as you are ready for them. The club's aim is to produce safety conscious and competent pilots. Someone who flies regularly (about once per fortnight) can expect to go solo after around 10 hours of flying. There are no minimum time requirements; once your instructor is satisfied that you have reached the required standard, you are given the opportunity to go it alone!



Club Aircraft

Puchatek (KRO)

This is a Polish built, aluminium two seater that was bought brand new by the club back in 1994. Whilst only of average performance, it is excellent for basic flight training and also has the advantage of being rated for aerobatics for those that tire of straight and level flight. Puchatek apparently is Polish for 'fluffy bear' and is their nick name for 'Winnie the Pooh'. It also is common to hear the Puchatek's wings lovingly referred to as 'wooden planks' for obvious reasons.

Since this is a training aircraft, its absence over the past year for repairs has been all too apparent. However, we are promised a Puchatek appearance at the club in just over a month!



Bergfalke IV (GZM)



This German built two seater is constructed of steel tube and fabric with wooden wings. Whilst it is an older two seater, it has surprisingly good cross country performance – surprising for other clubs when it beats their fibreglass two seaters at local competitions. The Bergfalke has been the mainstay of the club for many years and is so good that Anthony Smith bought one too. There is a rumour that only real pilots do their first solo in the Bergfalke. *(This rumour is true. –Ed)*

Soon the aesthetics of the Bergfalke will be improved by refabricating the fuselage. At the moment it seems like more of the surface consists of taped up holes rather than fabric.

Arrow (GNF)

Built at Parafield in 1963 by Australia's only glider manufacturer, ES Schneider Pty Ltd, the Arrow is a lovely, light, easy to fly single seater. Pilots fly the Arrow a short time after going solo in the two seat trainers. Most then fall in love with it and become very possessive before their fickle attentions pass to the higher performance fibreglass single seaters – but the Arrow doesn't mind, it looks after the next generation of pilots. While lacking the performance of other gliders, a skilled pilot can achieve flights of over 300 km cross country. In recent times a few pilots have taken to flying the Arrow without the canopy. A unique experience definitely worth trying!



Club Libelle (GMI)



This is the club's intermediate single seater and the first fibreglass glider solo pilots get to fly. It is extremely popular with its smooth lines. The Club Libelle is easy to fly yet has good performance making it a great club glider for local flying and early cross country training. Rigging and de-rigging is also a breeze compared to the Arrow!

Currently the Club Libelle is in the workshop for its 4000 hourly check up. While receiving all the standard treatment, it will be spoiled with a nose-job and should be returned with a sleek white finish.

Pik 20D (WVA)

The Pik 20D is the high performance glider in the fleet and a source of inspiration for newly solo pilots. Equipped with camber-changing flaps, the Pik is capable of flights in excess of 500 km. This glider has represented the club at the National Club Class championships on many occasions and is always eagerly transported to the annual advanced gliding retreats in the Flinders Ranges and Khancoban. It has also represented Slovenia in the World Club Class championships held in January 2001 at Gawler, where we were shown just how fast it could go!



Motorfalke (FQW)



The Motorfalke is the club's two-seater powered glider, purchased only recently in 2003. It is similar to the Bergfalke in that it is constructed of steel tube and fabric with wooden wings, but it also has a small Volkswagen motor and propeller. This allows it to launch without the aid of a winch or tow-plane and, if necessary, to stay up when there are no thermals or other forms of natural lift. The Motorfalke can offer extended training flights on days when there is insufficient lift and enables trainee pilots to practice their landing skills without being stuck on the ground afterwards. It is also great for general recreational flying, as flight distances are not limited by soaring conditions.

Gliding: The Cheap Way to Fly

AUGC provides a safe and cost-effective way for students to learn how to fly. The club has endeavoured over the years to minimise the cost of flying. As a result, AUGC costs are now the lowest in Australia.

Students can try gliding for the first time by purchasing an Air Experience Flight (AEF) for \$30, which includes your first launch and up to 20 minutes of flying time in one of our winch-launched twin-seater gliders. Alternatively - generally if conditions are unfavourable for soaring flights on the arranged day - students can experience an equivalent flight in the Motorfalke at no extra cost. If you would like to continue your flight beyond 20 minutes, you can do so and commit to an extra 30c/min if you're in a winch-launched twin, or \$1/min if you're in the Motorfalke.

Subsequent flying (including training from our qualified instructors) can be obtained for 30c/min (\$18 per hour) in our winch-launched twin-seater gliders, with each additional launch costing \$4.50. For the Motorfalke, flying/training costs 45c/min plus 55c/min for the time that the engine is on. There is also a \$5/weekend fee for membership to the Gliding Federation of Australia (GFA). This is a legal requirement in Australia for insurance purposes. There is also a \$4/day clubhouse levy to assist with the upkeep of airfield facilities. Note that AEF recipients have their GFA membership and clubhouse levy included in the purchase price of the package.

If you try it out and enjoy it, you can choose to pay-as-you-go for ongoing hire of the aircraft you fly during your training and subsequent solo flying as outlined above, or you can pay a once-off fee for our 'Bulk Deal'. This covers all of your aircraft hire, launches, clubhouse levy fees, the training textbook (*Basic Gliding Knowledge*) and your log book. The Bulk Deal remains effective for either 12 months, 15 flying hours, 50 launches or until you reach solo standard (whichever occurs sooner), and is available to students for \$310 (at the time of printing). This represents a 30% saving on the 'typical' cost of training. Note that the bulk deal doesn't cover GFA membership (either \$5/weekend or \$56/year). If you're flying with us more often than every 3 weeks it's cheaper to commit to the yearly payment, but it is a legal requirement that you *must* become a full GFA member before your first solo flight.

Pricing for students at institutions other than Adelaide University (including secondary schools) is identical provided you are studying full time, pay \$112/annum for full GFA membership (Adelaide Uni students are eligible for a 50% subsidy from AUGC) and join the Sports Association at a cost of \$60/annum.

Non-students are also welcome - their first gliding experience can be had for \$50 with the same 20 minute limit, however subsequent flying costs are about 30% higher than those for students.

A complete description of fees and charges at AUGC can be found on our website at <http://www.augc.on.net> under the 'Manuals' heading.



The Standard Libelle GTX enjoying the last few rays of sunshine over the ridge at Lochiel.

Photo: Tom Wilksch

President's Report

Derek Spencer

I'm pleased to report that lots of cross-country flying has been done in recent months. Sarah Allen represented 'Team SA' at the first Australian Junior Nationals held at Temora in early December. She was positioned 9th overall and 3rd under the Joey Glide scoring system. Sarah was well supported by other club members who tagged along to help and also experience the competition atmosphere. Tim Bates got the opportunity to experience cross country flying first hand under the guidance of Mike Maddocks in his DG 500M.

Alban O'Brien and Tim Bates participated in the Basic Cross Country course at Waikerie in January and both were successful in achieving their Silver C distances. Sarah Allen, Mark Newton, David Conway, Anthony Smith and Justine Thompson all participated in Performance Week, also held at Waikerie during January.

It's been great to see members taking advantage of the improved thermal conditions we are now experiencing at Stonefield, in comparison to what thermals were like back at Lochiel. We have had a number of flights (and attempted flights) up to Robertstown and the surrounding area. Congratulations to Tom Wilksch, Igor Blazujevic, Mark Tyler, Dave Hichens and Derek Eilers for all getting out there and giving cross country a go.

I'd like to make a special mention of David Conway's 770 km flight in his Ventus. Congratulations. 1000 km next then?

Whilst on the subject of cross country flying, GMI is still in the workshop at West Beach. For those of you who have helped rig and de-rig the Arrow recently, you would appreciate how easy GMI is to rig and de-rig in comparison. Please lend a hand and help get GMI finished and flying again— the retrieve crews will thank you for it.



Sarah on aerotow at Temora. Watch where you're going girl! -Derek
Photo: David Conway



Team SA! From left: Sarah Allen, Jade Palmer, Derek Spencer, yours truly, David Conway, Tim Bates, Kerry Battye and Tom Wilksch
Photo: David Conway

Something really important that needs to be acknowledged is the outstanding efforts of Derek Eilers, David Battye and crew for the work done on the new winch truck and the transplantation of the V8 engine and safety cage (see page 3). Thanks also to Dirk Seret who let us use his workshop.

In years gone by, the club had been able to take advantage of the winter south-westerly to westerly trade winds to ridge soar the nearby Hummocks range. Unfortunately Stonefield doesn't have a nearby ridge that is usable in those winter winds. However, there is another form of lift that the club has rarely had the opportunity to use that has been seen on a number of occasions in the vicinity of Stonefield. That lift is called wave.

On a flight from Lochiel to Waikerie late last year, there was a westerly wind blowing. I used the Hummocks initially to gain some height before heading over the back of the ridge on my way east to Waikerie. To my surprise, I found several patches of good lift, but it didn't dawn on me where that lift was coming from until I saw the wave cloud in the distance. As I approached the wave cloud, I found an area of excellent lift. Using that lift, I climbed to the airspace limit of 8500 feet. From there I estimated the wave cloud to be at least another 15000 feet above my current height.

The height gain required for the Gold Badge is 3000 metres (9840 feet). The Diamond Badge is 5000 metres (16400 feet). With wave lift occurring in the area that can go well over 20000 feet in height, the opportunity is there for members to achieve their Gold and Diamond height Badges from Stonefield. Something worth looking forward to!

Derek Spencer
President AUGC.

Beyond Final Glide

Tom Wilksch

It was a cool morning leading into a clear sunny day when I dragged the Standard Libelle (GTX) out of the hanger. The forecast promised around 30 degrees, which gave us predicted thermals to around 6000 feet. It looked like a good day.

The Libelle is an interesting glider to fly, and one that I am really starting to warm to. It takes more concentration and co-ordination than the basic single seat training aircraft, but you reap the rewards if you fly it properly; something I am just starting to discover. It also has better performance than some of our other singles, which gives you the confidence to go places (and a feeling of superiority). Experienced Libelle pilots can utilise this type of aircraft very effectively, something that is shown by repeated high placings in national competitions.

So far, I have been happy to hang around above the airfield in TX. This is a habit that needs breaking if I am to be competitive at cross-country flying. The sense of security from being near the airfield simply isn't there when flying cross-country, but really it is a silly thing to be hanging on to. After all, the worst that can happen is an outlanding in a paddock and then a short walk to the nearest farmhouse to arrange a pickup.

After performing the requisite daily inspection on the glider and towing it to the launch point, there was a bit of a lull while I waited for the day to heat up and start providing some good thermals. I helped launch some twins on training flights then put on my parachute and jumped in TX. I took the next cable and was launched up to 1600 feet.

Seven minutes later I was back on the ground and decidedly grumpy! It'd been a while since I'd flown TX, and it takes some time to readjust. Of course this is just an excuse! Really I could have just been better at finding thermals and centring them.

I took a relaunch, and this time hooked into a thermal ascending at about 200 feet/min. This was enough to get me some height and a bit more time to search around the sky. I turned into my second thermal and really started going up. Suddenly an eagle flashed under my wing. It was a wedge-tailed eagle, about 1.5 metres wingtip to wingtip and not to be messed with. Fortunately, he seemed quite happy to just watch me and obviously I was doing the right thing, as he banked and started circling with me. It was an awesome sight.

As we reached the top of the thermal, he flew off and left me alone. I wandered around for another ten minutes before I noticed a problem: I was getting bored. I've been noticing it more and more lately; simply flying around the airfield is easy and holds no challenge anymore.

I should probably clarify exactly what I mean. When you are having your first flight simply moving the wings with the stick is a wonderful achievement. Then, when you are training, a good landing leaves you grinning like an idiot (*Sure does! -Ed*). A newly solo pilot wears the same expression after staying up for over an hour with no guidance. The sense of satisfaction is incredible. But I have been flying for long enough that, on a good day, I can expect all this from one flight. I am looking for more, but am still at a stage where I have a mental tether to the airfield that needs breaking.

As I got lower and thought about landing, I noticed another glider circling. Closer inspection revealed it to be Derek Spencer - an instructor and president of the club - in his jointly-owned Boomerang. I flew over and joined his thermal and was rewarded with some close proximity flying. I followed him round the thermal and we climbed together, until we reached the top. Derek called me up on the radio and suggested we head away from the airfield for a while.

This was just the chance I had been looking for. Pair flying gives me the opportunity to leech off other people's experience. With Derek in the same patch of sky as me, I can ask him questions about my specific situation and find out why he is doing something, and what he is thinking. It also increases our chance of finding thermals, and lastly I can blame him if I outland!!

We headed west away from the airfield, towards the hills on the edge of the Barossa Valley. As we continued on our heading, we talked about the conditions and how the air felt. Flying side-by-side about 300 metres apart meant we could search more of the sky for thermals, and inform the other pilot if we found a good one. In most instances Derek would call me up and let me know he was in a thermal so I could fly over and join him. Derek's superior flying ability was only partly cancelled out by the fact that I was flying a higher performance glider.

We diverged and started searching for a good thermal as we neared the hills. A range of factors cause the hills to be consistently good thermal triggers, and we soon found one and both climbed to 5000 feet. Then we pressed westward to the second line of hills.

Once we had crossed the valley we flew south along the ridgeline, looking for more thermals. The air was very still and I noticed that Derek was holding his height with more success than me even though I was in the 'better' glider. I asked him about this and he pointed out that thermals, which often run in streets, can cause the sink to run in streets too. Of course! Why didn't I think of that? I had been flying down a street of sink. I turned and dropped in behind Derek and my glide performance soon improved.

By this time we had flown over Truro and were getting low again. It was time to find a thermal and think about heading home. We turned northeast back towards the airfield and reverted to flying side-by-side.

At this point I couldn't help but think how impressive the glider TX is. Its excellent glide ratio meant that I could barely see the airfield – a small square just off my nose – but I knew I could make it back with height to spare. And that was assuming I wouldn't find any more thermals, which was unlikely considering the quality of the day. As a general rule, the Libelle can travel 10 kilometres for every 1000 feet it loses in height, and I was 15 kilometres away at an altitude of 3500 feet. Not a problem!



*What Tom would have looked like if he'd launched from Lochiel.
Photo: Anon.*

Derek wasn't quite so lucky. The Boomerang has a lower performance rating compared to the Libelle and was close to the limit of its glide-back-to-the-airfield range at this point in the flight. Locating a thermal would certainly have made Derek more comfortable. As I watched the Boomerang get lower and lower off my right wing, he slowed, and then turned into lift. Sure enough, halfway back to the airfield, he had found a thermal. A second later he was on the radio and told me he found 2 knots of lift (i.e. 200 feet/min up). I still had enough height so I let him know I would head back to the airfield, only to fly straight into a 4 knot thermal. I informed Derek and we were soon thermalling together.

Since we were both easily within final-glide of the airfield, I straightened up and headed back to Stonefield. Derek was obviously enjoying himself and followed me back about 10 minutes later. Once I was directly over the airfield I floated around for a while, and then called Derek on the radio with a suggestion. He agreed and we turned in together.

Those on the ground, while not able to enjoy the flight itself, hopefully enjoyed the finish. We executed a spectacular dual high-speed pass over the airfield, turned to join circuit and landed. I rolled to a stop near Derek and we both jumped out with big smiles on our faces (*I bet they were idiotic smiles -Ed*). Awesome fun!

Needless to say, this was a new type of flight for me. Unless I am doing a specific cross-country task, I have always stayed close to the airfield. Leaving that comfort zone is liberating and confidence building and, most importantly, enormous fun.

It is often difficult for non-glider pilots to understand the diversity of gliding, but those who think it is limited should consider the fact that I am now at the tip of a large iceberg. From here I can push myself all the way to national competition level; all simply by being an enthusiastic member of a club that encourages cross-country flying past the solo stage. I am already looking forward to the Junior National Gliding Comps at the end of this year.

If you want to experience all this then book a place, and come flying.

And thanks for a great flight Derek!

Tom Wilksch

Outside the Funnel

Alban O'Brien

This year the SAGA Performance Week and Basic Cross Country course were held at the Waikerie Gliding Club. Organized each year by the SAGA Regional Technical Officer for Sports, this year Bernard Eckey, this event aims to bring pilots together to develop cross country flying by sharing skills and experience in a non-competitive environment.

During the week Tim Bates and I had the opportunity of taking the Arrow and completing our 50 kilometre Silver C badge flights. I also had a second flight from the Waikerie aerodrome back to Stonefield.

Gliding as a sport is a huge commitment. The commitment is matched only by the rewards the sport offers. Learning to fly is a wonderful thing and flying the ridge as I had the fortune to do this winter can be a real buzz. In the end there is one thing which is seen by many as the ultimate point; taking a motor-less aircraft out on a task and achieving that task by making use of natural lift.

My first flight of the week was on the first day with Emilis in his IS 32. He brought my attention to the need to thermal with the nose tracking evenly around the horizon in order to make a proper circle and maintain a stable speed. For those who learnt to fly on the ridge at Lochiel this tends to be a new skill which requires some



*Circling in a thermal with company on one of the coaching flights.
Photo: Alban O'Brien*

attention to master. The trick is to fly a good circle and identify the point in that circle where you find the best lift and correct toward it on the next turn to get closer to the core. The IS 32 has one of the flattest polars (*graph of sink rate versus airspeed* –Ed) of anything I've flown so when Emilis started flying us around the place I was surprised by just how far we could go with the height we had.

The next two days were wash outs. I had to collapse my tent when a squall line came through and ended up spending the next few nights sleeping in the hangar. On the Tuesday I decided the Arrow needed some lettering so I went into town and got some black cupboard grade contact and spent that evening measuring up and cutting out the letters.

Wednesday was looking like a good day, Thursday maybe a little better. Wednesday was my day to go. Thermals were reaching around 6000 feet with 15 knots of wind up top. Cloud base was somewhere around 6200 feet. After setting up my camera and barograph and speaking with my official observer John Hudson, I was towed out to the launch point. I'd declared Loxton wheat bunker as my turn point. I asked the only person there who I knew, Leigh Bunting, to hold my declaration board for a couple of photos and asked him how he'd gone in his Grunau baby. "Could you make it to Loxton?" "I could make it there but doubt I could make it back".

I finished preparing my aircraft and started my checks. Then there I was at a launch point crewed by Balaklava members I didn't know about to start one of the most important flights of my life. Alone.

My launch was decent and I managed to get a thermal at the top. I worked it for a while and lost it. I fell my way back down until I was getting close to circuit height and needed to move to the non circuit joining side to look for lift and think about a circuit. I found something and took it to a little over 5000 feet. Decision time. Am I going to leave on task and quite probably outland? It would be a long day if I do and my friends are going to have to come out and pick me up. If I stay local and land back on field I won't have that problem and I can relax for the afternoon. Here I am set to go and its time to leave.

I managed to stay pretty high. I was using some streeting to get there, flying from cloud to cloud in a reasonably straight line. Fly forward till you get to the next one, take a couple of turns and then fly on. Another glider joined me early on. I saw the winglets and then the registration QH. It was David Conway who stayed with me in the thermal for some time giving me plenty of room. We didn't make radio contact but he thanked me later saying it was a good thermal.

The sky was working really well and I caught sight of my turn point sometime after the first hour. I was staying close to cloud base up to that point so the plan was to go into the sector, catch a thermal then circle in it whilst taking several turn point photos.

It didn't really work out that way though. I got past the turn point and took what turned out to be a couple of perfectly good shots and then got carried away looking for lift close enough to get a few more shots. I was being blown downwind slowly and never really found a decent climb. I picked a nice bright yellow paddock with a T junction at one corner and landed toward the junction. Some people criticised my choice on the basis that it would have been too sandy for an aerotow retrieve if I'd been looking for one. I'm not sure how I could have tested the makeup of the soil but my choice was based on the reassurance offered by the yellow stubble and that there were no SWER lines running through it. I tied down one wing, walked to the road and called my retrieve crew.

On the Thursday Tim Bates declared Waikerie, Loxton wheat bunker return and made it.

Over the next two days I flew twice with Terry Moore in the Concrete Swan for some coaching on how to calculate final glide using the Borgelt system and getting an appreciation for cross country speed.



*Alban casually draped over his trusty Arrow in the sandy paddock.
Photo: Justine Thompson*

None of my flights during this week, including my first solo XC will be remembered as fondly as my next. The task: fly the Arrow from Waikerie to Stonefield; a flight of around 63 kilometres including a crossing of 25 kilometres of unlandable scrub. I planned the flight looking at a 5500 foot ceiling with the chance of 7000 feet if the day started cooking. Mandy Temple was very helpful and deserves special thanks for her enthusiasm. She pointed out that the previous day's hottest temperature occurred quite late in the day, I think around 4pm, and suggested some useful tactics like hanging around near Blanchtown where there are good paddocks and waiting for this peak in the hope of getting higher.

This time there were more familiar faces at launch. Halfway up launch I found my first thermal. It still took a while after I got off at the top to twig as to why I was coming down so fast and what I needed to do. I was out of the CTAF pretty quickly and off on task. I found a gaggle just away from the field and a thermal nearby which kept me clear. I headed off south of Waikerie and tracked north of the road working a height band between 4000 and 5000 feet with 3500 feet being the 'take anything you can' level. The feeling of flying the aircraft with the stick and the rudder was amazing. Making turns and feeling the aircraft respond to the pressure I applied. I hadn't enjoyed the Arrow that much for some time.

As I got close to the river I found myself getting low and identified a couple of paddocks that looked good for landing and intuition told me might be working. They were. These two excellent paddocks were my last alternative to crossing the river. I wanted to break 6000 feet before heading out over the donga. This never happened. I crossed the river and hung around well within glide to my paddocks for a long time trying to get higher. Eventually I saw a paddock on the far side which looked landable and decided I had final glide to it. I left a turn at 5500 feet and went for it.

Once again I had the feeling of being there. Flying straight and high above the ground. Like when you're on approach into Adelaide on a 737 after a trip away. This time I'm the pilot, it's my plane. You just don't get that local soaring.

I got a couple of thermals on the way across and made it to the other side at about the height I had started at. I had been worried about where the airfield was but it turned out to not be that far from the edge of the scrub. I had enough height to do a few spins before landing. I arrived just in time to help unload a bunch of stuff Derek E, Redmond, Angus and Anne had brought over from Lochiel.

With respect to gliding I've been very fortunate with timing. I've come into the club at a point of tremendous change. While we've had the sadness of losing our airfield, I've been fortunate enough to experience it before it was gone. Though we face an uncertain future we are evolving as a club. A number of longer term members have commented that they have never before seen such enthusiasm for cross country flying as they do now. I'd like to hope that in the future an event like this one is not the best chance people will get to go somewhere. I'd like to see it become a supplement to a strong club culture of going out beyond the threshold and experiencing flying at its best. I think that is happening now and I look forward to seeing how we are in the future.

I would like to give thanks to my retrieve crew Tim, Justine, Anthony, Derek S, Jade, and Mark Newton. Also thanks to everyone who participated in and organized the Basic Cross Country course.

Alban O'Brien



Above: You'd have to be confident of final glide with this view of Stonefield, even if you are in an Arrow.

Right: The Arrow (sporting new lettering on its tail) resting at Stonefield. Alban is quite insistent there was absolutely no wind.

Photos: Alban O'Brien



Stay In Touch

The club has an e-mail group address, augc-people@lists.internode.on.net, that is used to either discuss or arrange things within the club. If you want to stay in touch with the club, subscribe to the mailing list by filling out the online form at

<http://lists.internode.on.net/mailman/listinfo/augc-people>

You can still send an e-mail to the list even if you have not subscribed to it. There is also an 'augc-announce' list for official club announcements, courtesy of our friends at Internode. If you are an AUGC member and have provided your email address then you will already be on this list. If you want to join this list or want to change your subscription, go to

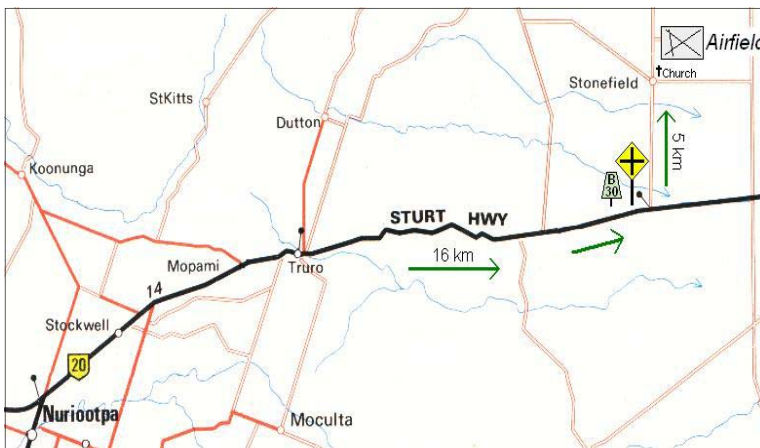
<http://lists.internode.on.net/mailman/listinfo/augc-announce>

You can also get the latest newsletter and up to date news on what is going on at the club's web page:

<http://www.augc.on.net/>

If your e-mail address is on the membership database the club's Assistant Treasurer can send you your account updates over the internet. Send an e-mail to: accounts@augc.on.net

Want to fly this weekend?



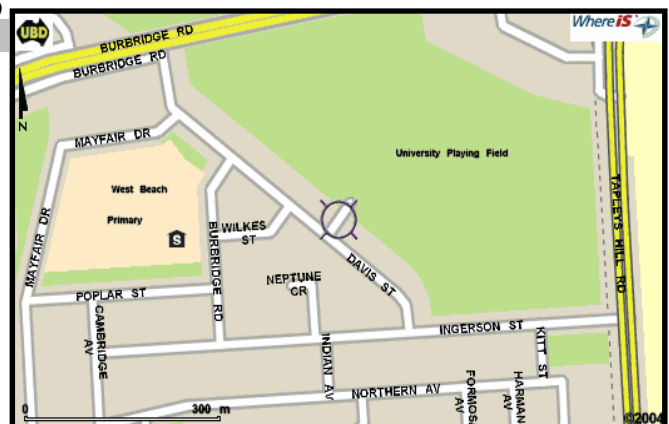
Want to go flying on the weekend? You must ring the club contact person, Mark, on the Thursday before, between 8.00pm and 10:00 pm, on 0412 870 963, (or by e-mail before: contact@augc.on.net) so that he can organise instructors and transport for those intending to fly.

You can either drive up yourself by following the map at left, or Mark can arrange a lift to Stonefield either from the Adelaide University footbridge (meet at 7.15am to leave at 7:30 am), or from the Caltex Service station on the corner of Montague Road and Main North Road (meet at 7.45am to leave at 8:00 am).

Want to help at West Beach?

West Beach is where we carry out the maintenance and repair on our gliders and equipment. There are usually volunteers working down there on Monday and Tuesday evenings. The entrance is at the end of Foreman St, West Beach.

So you want to help fix the gliders at West Beach, but can't get there? A lift can be arranged from the Adelaide University footbridge at 7.30pm via augc-people@lists.internode.on.net.



Contact List

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Newsletter Editor:	Anne Philcox	0409 202 250	editor@augc.on.net

Upcoming Events

Wed 2 March: General Meeting

6.00 pm in the Bragg Lecture Theatre, University of Adelaide.

An introduction to the Adelaide University Gliding Club and a chance to meet the current members and instructors. There will be a presentation of the club video and other glider porn ☺. FREE beer and pizza!

Wed 16 March: Executive Committee Meeting

7.30 pm at a venue TBA.

All are welcome to come along and have a say in how the club is run.

Tues 22 March: West Beach social BBQ

6.00 pm, West Beach maintenance shed.

Come down to West Beach for snags, socialising and sailplane maintenance. Snags, bread and sauce are available at \$1/snag (or 5 for \$3). Bring other food/drink yourself. Soft drinks and beer are available from the fridge at the usual prices.

25 - 28 March: Easter long weekend

FOUR days of flying! Great opportunity for pilots early into their training to consolidate the skills learnt to date. Accommodation available at the airfield. Just bring along a sleeping bag and a pillow! Ladies, contact president@augc.on.net if you require a teddy bear and don't have one of your own ☺