

Out of the Blue

Waikerie Gliding Club Newsletter

July 2004

MAY 2004 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting of the Waikerie Gliding Club was held at the Clubrooms, Waikerie aerodrome at 1400 Hrs, Saturday 22 May 2004. The following report was provided by John Hudson the President.

Committee, Fellow Members, Supporters and Visitors.

It was with some pride and a privilege that members appointed me to serve with the Waikerie Gliding Club Committee as President. We have a great Committee - members can be proud of the efforts of this small group of enthusiastic volunteers for their efforts over the past year - a time of some stress for our Club through a time of considerable change.

For the benefit of the future, we must get this process behind us and work to revitalise our membership – make Waikerie a great place to be - and build the “local” membership. By local I mean at best the Riverland, at worst South Australia. Some young blood is highly desired, and it’s great to see some young members – Andrew Mudge and Andrew Maywald to name a couple. I strongly encourage these young people to get intimately involved with the operations and activities of the Club – you will be our future leaders.

Firstly, I would like to recognise the efforts of some of our Members, helpers and supporters, whose active involvement throughout the year has been an enormous inspiration.

To our Committee, for their dedication and a great effort, - Craig Vinall, Bill Mudge, Graham Francis, Ron Brock, Greg Jackson, Allen Hudson and Pete Page, who was co-opted late in the period. Gentlemen, it has been great to work with you.

For the next Committee, the real work has begun.

To our Social Committee, who came together at the last AGM. This group were a tower of strength at the January Nationals. I extend a big thankyou to these true supporters, who worked so tirelessly, for so long, for the benefit of our Club. Well done.

To a few particular members,
- Mark Morgan for his ongoing care and guidance as CFI – again well done. We hope Mark will continue to serve as our CFI, as an

Continued on page 2

WORKING BEE

Saturday, 10th July

The main jobs are to: replace the tracks on the Igloo Hangar Door, work on the glider pad irrigation system, and clean out Igloo Hangar.

Barbeque in the evening. Hope to see you there.

DIARY DATES

Working Bee	Sat 10 th July 04
Next Committee Meetings	Friday 16 July 04, 7.00 PM Friday 27 th August, 7.00PM
Team Waikerie Days	Sat 17 th July & 28 th Aug 04
Sports Class Nationals	11-21 January 2005

PLEASE NOTE NEW BANK ACCOUNT DETAIL

Under the new club operation, we have reduced the number of bank accounts. From now on, could all EFT payments be made to the following account:

Bank BankSA
BSB 105-048
Account No. 203183340

Phone (08) 8541 2644

Fax (08) 8541 2644

E-mail wgc@riverland.net.au

Web www.waikerieglidingclub.com.au

Instructor and as the movement's RTO-
Airworthiness.

- Our Instructors, of which we have too few. In particular, I must again recognise the personal efforts and contribution made by Bill Mudge.
- Our few Tow Pilots,
- Pete Siddal, for his untiring support with the Club website and internet.
- Rod VandenBrink - chef extraordinaire - for his personal efforts during the last Nationals, and to those who assisted, in any way, in the provision of sustenance to the competitors. Rod has volunteered to do it all again in 2005.

There are a number of other members and supporters who are worthy of special recognition for their efforts and contribution during the Nationals – I suggest they know who they are, but to name a few –

Betty Vinall, James Duvnjak, Ann Woolf, Pete Paine, Pete Siddal, John and Bron Blyth, Pete Robinson, Christine and Rob Boyd, Moss Potter, Jean Hudson, Marie Hudson, Peter Page, Graham Francis, a huge effort by Greg Jackson who was always there to help, David and Lynley Jones.

To all those who helped in any way, a big thankyou.

Membership

I extend a warm welcome to our new members who have joined in the past year. Right now, we need an influx new members in the younger age brackets - to ensure our future.

Our overall membership numbers have continued the trend in decline; however the number of active flying members – those who can actually make a difference - has declined considerably. As a priority, we must reinvigorate those members who have displayed a determination to maintain their membership, but who do not visit the Club - and put effort there and to new members – and actively encourage them to become regular visitors to the Club.

The low membership numbers are reflected in many areas and aspects

- The decline in flying times for the Club fleet.
- The low utilisation of each sailplane.
- The high unit cost of unit insurance.
- The high unit cost of aerotow.

The saying "many hands make light work" is real.

Commercial Activities

In March 2004, the Club's commercial flying activities drew to a close. This milestone in the Club's history was probably a year or two overdue. The decision to close the commercial arm was effected after the resignation tendered by Mark (Morgan).

On behalf of the Committee and members, I would like to recognise Marks contribution to this "episode" of our Clubs history – for his personal commitment, dedication and active involvement over many years.

The commercial activities – flying and glider maintenance - suffered from several factors which adversely impacted our activities over recent years. Some of these we were able to influence, but others were completely outside our control, including:

- Sars
- September 11, a few years ago,
- The general decline in gliding

Events from which we, nor the rest of the world, have recovered from, but which ultimately contributed to the demise of our activities.

Our Club has little to show from such a long exposure to "commercial" business, except a group of great "international member" who I hope will continue to support Waikerie Gliding Club by continuing their annual "pilgrimage" to Waikerie. We have a great future, given the facilities, a group of willing people and a great place to fly.

With the shutdown of the commercial activities, it is necessary that Club Members pickup the work previously undertaken by paid staff. You may see some minor hesitations. Members are encouraged to get behind the Committee and take on some of the work which still needs to be done.

Flying Activities

It is pleasing to report another year without a Club glider accident.

Our Instructor ranks remain small, which places an increased burden on the Instructors we do have. Any member with aspirations to become an Instructor are encouraged to discuss their aspirations. This aspect we must get right for our future benefit.

We did experience a landing accident with the Tug VH-WGC, with a prop strike during a paddock retrieve. While the accident was covered by Insurance, there were areas in the engine which needed to be repaired (which were not covered by Insurance) but it was

prudent to do, while the engine was dismantled. This was a cost – in excess of \$9000 we did not need – now or ever.

The Fleet

With the demise of the commercial operation, it is planned to dispose of one Tug – VH-FAL. Advertising has resulted in some interested buyers, who are now being pursued. The damage to WGC stalled the sale in order that the Club could continue to operate.

Two gliders were recently advertised for sale. While some interest was shown in these, there were no serious contenders.

The 2004 Club Class Nationals

The three week period in January 2004, when we hosted a *Performance Week* immediately followed by the *National Club Class Gliding Comps* produced a great outcome. To see over 100 people sitting down to the presentation dinner here in the Clubrooms on the final night was enormous.

Again, a big thankyou to all the Club members and supporters who assisted in these events. We have the opportunity to host these again in January 2005, and I am confident next years events will be even bigger and better. We know how to do it now, it should be easier and we have many of the arrangements “ready to go”. Hopefully we will see some true Waikerie weather. I encourage any member who is able to assist to do so – it really is a great experience.

The Future

It is planned to arrange a 3 to 4 month period of fulltime flying activity in the summer period to cater for our international members. It is planned to do this from 1 December through to 30 March. This will require a fulltime Instructor and Tow Pilot for the period, who will be paid for by those who fly.

We are currently negotiating a workshop lease with Mark Morgan, who will operate a private commercial glider workshop in facilities leased from the Club. This arrangement is aimed at cementing our future and continues to provide the opportunity for our international members to fly at Waikerie.

General

There are many issues worthy of discussion. The Club fleet, Insurance costs, irrigation, membership categories, flying costs – the list is endless.

It has been a busy year for our Club. I believe the priority is to build the local membership, increase fleet utilisation to enhance income and build the social activities of our Club.

Thankyou

John Hudson
President
2003/2004.

ELECTED OFFICERS

Following the AGM, the committee is as follows:

President	John Hudson
Vic-President	Craig Vinall
Secretary	Graham Francis
Committee Members	
	Peter Page
	Allen Hudson
	Ron Brock
	Greg Jackson

The Treasurer's roll will be undertaken by Craig Vinall assisted by Peter Page. Due to the changes in the club structure, there is no longer the need for as complicated accounting program as MYOB. We have purchased a simplified program written specifically for Australian Gliding clubs which will enable all flight time times to be simply logged and for member accounts to be easily produced.

The committee is now working hard to implement changes to the club structure that will be the basis for a continued successful gliding operation at Waikerie.

Workshop Lease by Mark Morgan

We are please to report that Mark has agreed to take on the workshop as a private business. As of 1st of July, Mark will be operating out of the existing workshop and is leasing these facilities from the club.

We all wish Mark the best in this new venture that as it will be an important factor in maintaining the reputation and viability of the Club.

Some Thoughts

By Greg Jackson

What other aviation sport offers the same high level of competition as Gliding?

You are regularly required to compete against 40 or so highly skilled and experienced pilots. Fly consistently over 10 days and to also perform each day to your maximum mental and physical endurance. You are required to fly great distances at the best speed possible for the prevailing weather conditions. Combine all these skills with the need to use leading edge cockpit technology, whilst at the same time extracting the best performance out of the glider – what a sport.

A quick look at the past

- It has been 30 years since the world comps marked an era in Australian gliding.
- Open Class (28 gliders) competition was won by George Moffat.
- Standard class (39 gliders) competition was won by Helmut Reichmann.
- General Motors provided 44 Holden's as crew cars.
- Both Don Dunstan and Prime Minister Gough Whitlam were at the opening ceremony.
- Other records were broken, the first world competition without a wooden aircraft,
- 10 days of competition flying and a huge 707 km task.

Following the championships there was phenomenal growth in private ownership as glider pilot from all over Australia feverishly put together syndicates. Taking advantage of the opportunity to own the best gliders available in the world at affordable prices, imports boomed for the next 10 years.

In 1974 the Pik 20 arrived on the scene and a year later the CIVV announced the introduction of an unrestricted 15 metre class.

It was thought that this new class of glider would see the end of open class and it almost did, however it's great to see those big wings are still around and even better to see the resurgence in popularity of standard class gliders.

In 1975 Waikerie had 140 members (19 female) reported 8480 launches for a total of 4361 hours and flew over 75,000km cross country. The fleet consisted of 2 Pawnee tugs, 2 Blaniks, Kestrel, Std Libelle, Pilatus, Std Cirrus, ASW 15b, ES60/2 Boomerang and 11 privately owned gliders.

Is it likely that Australia could run another World comps ? – we could, but the resources and funds Australia wide to stage such an event would be difficult to find.

Greg Jackson

CFI News

By Mark Morgan

It has been awhile since you heard from this corner. As members are aware there are now no staff members to monitor flying activities. Members are encouraged to help out where they can.

For flight crew it means having to be more thorough when preparing aircraft and supplies as there are no pre-checks now. If tug oil supplies are low, tell the tug master. If there are problems you cannot resolve, tell the Instructor. It is suggested pilots arrive earlier to allow for hick ups that need ironing out.

Flight crew availability continues to be a problem. The Queen's Birthday weekend was a prime example, we had pilots looking to go flying, we had a couple of instructors but unfortunately all our tuggies were either crook, unavailable or had other plans already in place. We rely on a very small number of members to make it possible for the rest of us to go flying.

One way around some of this is for all you pilots who are eligible, to apply for an Independent Operator's Endorsement. This allows a pilot to operate from a club site without an instructor on the field; you only need to be able to get off the ground.

The criteria for this is in MOSP Ops, look it up next time your in the briefing room. The catch with this endorsement is (and not all realise it) this endorsement is only valid for 12 months. At the completion of an endorsed Annual Flight Review you

apply to the CFI for a renewal which is in the form of a sticker. The onus is on the pilot to apply for it.

Anyway, our main problem is that WGC needs more instructors and tuggies. If you have a power rating, it's not too hard to complete the training with John Hudson to get your tuggie rating. If you have an interest with instructing, there are avenues for you to undertake this. WGC has always had a sponsoring system in place for these things.

On Field

Believe it or not! The airfield has a green colouring now. From Christmas to the end of May 23mm of rain had fallen on the airfield. Well the first 2 weeks of June has seen 26mm of rain on the field. Don't get too happy yet!

We are still less than half the rain fall of this time last year, and that was a drought!!!

In The Air

Well as you can imagine from the notes above there has been little flying going on. I can tell you that even though the days have been short, there has been some interesting looking days. Streeting & wave, I'll bet the ASC guys are so full of it from the wind direction and strength over the long weekend because their ridge & wave camp was held at Wilpena Pound and it was windy!!!

Just remember, even though the days finish earlier in the winter, they also start earlier. Too many people still think a 12 or 1 o'clock launch is required. Even though it may not be so high, the thermal activity is more constant, better shaped closer to the ground and the distance between is not as far as summer time. Just remember to keep warm!!

Just another flight!!!

By Graham Francis

Day - 15th November, 1956; Place - Waikerie;
Machine Type - Slingsby T35; Duration - 5 minutes

A notation against that entry in my Log Book reminds me that this flight was not like the numerous 5 minute circuits that we were prone to in this timber framed, fabric covered two seater trainer with its struts and wire bracing.

Denby Thompson and I worked in the same office back then and on this day we finished early so that we could take part in a rare mid week flying day. By the time we arrived around 4pm. the others had finished flying and the T35 was ours.

Denby was designated "pilot in command." There was no argument. After all, he had gone solo a week earlier than I had, he was 2 years my senior in the Bank and he owned a Morris Minor which he let me drive on special occasions.

The weather was humid and the sky totally overcast. Cloudbase was around 1,500ft. and we were launching into the west. Bob Rowe, CFI, hooked us on and, after 3 strong pulls on the cable to signal to the winch driver to begin the launch, ran the wingtip.

As we climbed steeply upwards I savoured the experience of sitting in the seat normally occupied by an Instructor, and noticed that the view was somewhat restricted by the wing above and struts and Denby's head in front. Best vision was out to the sides and this is probably why, at around 1,000ft. I noticed a white glow appear out of the cloud cover about half a kilometre to the south and slightly ahead of our port wing. It looked like a car headlight coming out of the fog. Before I could say anything it had streaked towards the wingtip, growing in size and intensity, where it disappeared in a flash of white light. Denby caught sight of the flash out of the corner of his eye and by the time he had turned his head to see what it was he was greeted by a burning wingtip.

Now a wing built of a light spruce framework and covered with fabric, which has been made taut with dope (and which has the faint smell of a volatile solvent that lingers for years) is not a desirable place to see a fire at any time and especially at around 1,000ft.

For a moment I forgot that I was the passenger and I made a grab for the release knob and stick but Denby was on top of the situation and already setting up a sideslip to the right. This dragged the flame away from the wing and seconds later the fire was out. The controls appeared undamaged so we were not overly concerned and elected to continue on with the flight. Lets face it, a 5 minute circuit is pretty short at the best of times, why make it any less?

However, those on the ground saw things a little

differently. They had seen the lightning strike, and not knowing the condition of the glider or its occupants, followed our progress fearing the worst. The electric charge which caused the fire had earthed itself via the winch tow bar, cable and probably the aircraft's skin. It seems most likely that we had flown through light mist near the top of the launch which dampened the surfaces. This charge physically threw the winch driver, Stuart Cox, to the ground and stopped the winch motor. He remembers lying on his back and looking up at the T35 with its burning wing while the cable fell in an untidy mess on the ground. Jumping into his Ute, he drove to the take off point to alert the others and all were relieved when we rolled to a stop next to the gathering.

It was surprising and a little disappointing to see that the fire had only charred several of the tip ribs and burnt out a 30 to 40 cm. square of fabric because the evidence didn't really support the seriousness of the incident.

I am not totally clear on what followed after that, but as hotels closed at 6 pm. in those days and I was under age, I believe Bob Rowe would have made a quick trip into town so that the group would have had sufficient refreshments to undertake a comprehensive debriefing. I'm sure that Denby and I were only too glad to co-operate – what young pilot would not share the details of his 5 minutes of fame with his peers and friends.

However I do remember that Bob had (unfortunately in my view) repaired the damage within 24 hours and all that could be seen was a shiny patch of paintwork. Fabric repairs were common in those days and, as one more patch held no interest for the regular weekend flyers, the incident was quickly forgotten.

Some time later Stuart mentioned that there had been a hole in the ground beneath the winch tow bar and what appeared to be a small lump of fused material in the hole but he had not thought to pick it up. If he had, it could have been an unusual souvenir for the Clubhouse display cabinet..

Graham Francis

FINIAL GLIDE

It is with regret and sadness that I must report the passing of Mark Schultz.

Mark's involvement at the Gliding Club started in the early 1980's and although not active with flying at the gliding club for the last few years, Mark was well known and liked by many. He was a great character who will be missed by all those who were lucky enough to have known him.

Everyone's condolences at the club go to Mark's family.

His ashes will be scattered at the flying field on 25th July.

For sale.

Diamant 17 – VH-GUV. Nigel Baker 0418 841 631 nigalbaker30@hotmail.com

201 Lebelle – VH-GBV. Ron Brock 8541 2809, fax 8541 4434

GOT SOME INTERESTING NEWS?

Please consider writing something for the newsletter. All articles gratefully accepted. Please send to the Editor at craig@madderns.com.au

Flying Roster

Flying during winter will be on alternate weekends and will depend on flight crew availability. Flying will be on Saturday and Sunday where possible. The most up to date roster can be found at www.waikerieglidingclub.com.au/roster/. Each day will require a duty instructor for operations to proceed. Other days will be scheduled when possible.