

ADELAIDE UNIVERSITY GLIDING CLUB INC.

NEWSLETTER

VOL. NO. 3

August, 1976.

The message of this month's editorial is simple:-

**The Club Exists!**

This may seem a ridiculous comment to some of you but to those in the know it means that months of planning has come to fruition. First, the Club is now incorporated. Second, it is now a full member of the South Australian Gliding Association, which means that we don't have to operate under the overriding control of another club and, thirdly, our search for an airfield seems to have succeeded.

The proposed airfield consists of two paddocks, one currently under crop, situated at Mintaro, twenty miles south-east of Clare. It is part of a property bequeathed jointly to the University and the Public Library, and currently held on trust for the widow. Before we can use it permission is needed from the widow and the University Council. Both seem fairly certain to be obtained. When it does become available we will have one of the best gliding sites in South Australia, with two runways, of 1 mile and 1½ miles, and a good soaring ridge only 10 miles away which runs for good distances both north and south. Further, certain private glider owners have indicated that they would provide a hangar, for three aircraft, and some assistance with the building of a winch for launching, in return for the use of the site. It is planned to operate from this site before the end of the year on a casual basis and permanently from some time early next year.

But one warning note, we need money to pull it off. A hangar costs \$4,500, a winch \$1,000, and we want to buy a glider sometime, and they currently sell from \$6,000 upwards. The University will give us some help but they'll help us more if we show that we can help ourselves.

*So please support our fundraising functions, to wit, the Dinner to be held in the South Dining Room on Friday, 10th September, 1976 at 6.30 p.m. The cost is only \$9 for a four-course meal and wines. Also bring all your friends and relatives along; remember their money will give you better gliding!*

GUY HARLEY

FLYING

The total flying time for July was 24 hours 50 minutes and 159 launches. Congratulations to Des Maslen who went solo on Sunday, 8th August at Gawler, the following, who went solo on aerotow:-

D. Biggs	25/7/76
N. Mancktelow	25/7/76
I. Roberts	25/7/76
G. Harley	1/8/76
A. Horton	7/8/76

to the following, who got endorsements on the Blanik and Club Libelle (courtesy of A.S.C.):-

N. Mancktelow	29/7/76
I. Roberts	1/8/76 and 11/8/76
D. Stobie	1/8/76 and 11/8/76
D. Biggs	1/8/76 and 11/8/76
G. Harley	26/8/76 and 27/8/76

to the following, who got endorsements on the pilatus (courtesy of Walkerie):-

D. Stobie	11/8/76
N. Mancktelow	11/8/76

and last, but not least, to the following, who got their 'C' certificates:-

Finally we come to the aircraft itself - Lima Zulu. - On Sunday, 22nd August, she completed her 10,000 flight in just under 20 years and has now done over 3,200 hours of flying. Her life has not been an easy one, on her 10,000 flight she had a cable break at 600 feet and shortly afterwards suffered minor damage to her front wheel well which took a day to repair. However, there's still many good times left in her.

#### DI CERTIFICATES

All solo pilots are reminded that they should have DI certificates for the Kookaburra. The Club is trying to arrange lectures for DI tickets through the Adelaide Soaring Club but, so far, has had no success.

#### FINANCES

During the first five months of operations, the Kookaburra averaged 25.93 hours/month compared with 16.67 hours/month assumed for costing purposes. This, plus the many passenger flights, means that the aircraft account is healthily in the black and the first year's operations will almost certainly show a surplus.

#### FLYING AT BALAKLAVA

Following a meeting between the executives of the Balaklava Gliding Club and A.U.G.C. it has been decided that the Club will return to, and operate out of, Whitwarta airfield. Originally, Balaklava had asked for us to pay for the use of their facilities, by taking out associate membership of their club at \$5 per head. It has now been arranged, however, to pay for the facilities by means of a 25% loading on all flying fees. We have also made a request to Balaklava that our members be allowed to occasionally use their aircraft when they do not require them. They are now reviewing this, but we do not expect a favourable reply.

#### T-SHIRT COMPETITION

The executive of the Club has decided to raise funds by selling T-Shirts with an A.U.G.C. motif on them. The only trouble is that the club doesn't have a motif. So a competition for one has been launched. The prize is one free T-Shirt, and a day's free flying. Entries should be submitted, by 7.00 p.m., Thursday, 7th October to A.U.G.C., C/- the Sports Association Office.

#### A ONE TRACK MIND

The pilot of a Skylark glider, was attempting a five-hour soaring flight in the vicinity of the gliding field, to meet the duration qualification for his "Silver C" Certificate. When he was winch-launched from the field soon after 1000 hours, a hot and gusty north-westerly wind was blowing at about 15 knots. But shortly afterwards the wind strengthened to about 25-30 knots from the same direction.

A dual control Bocian glider, with an instructor and student on board, had also been winch-launched not long before the Skylark, and two other instructors on the ground at the launching point saw that both aircraft were drifting down-wind from the airfield under the influence of the strong north-westerly stream. Soon afterwards, they saw that the Bocian had managed to return to the vicinity of the field with about 1,000 feet in hand, but the Skylark though it was reasonably high, was now so far downwind that the instructors thought it would have difficulty making it back to the field.

They next saw the Skylark heading back directly towards the field, descending quite rapidly as it did so. At one stage, the glider broke off its approach and made a 360 degree turn as though attempting to thermal, but instead of gaining height the Skylark had obviously encountered an area of sink, for it lost more height before it could complete the turn. Certain now that the glider could not make the field, instructors saw it resume its straight-in approach, getting lower and lower as it neared the downwind boundary where there was a line of gum trees about 30 feet high.

But not until the glider had descended to tree top height, only a short distance

When about three miles downwind from the field, the Bocian broke off and returned to the aerodrome, but at about this time, the pilot of the Skylark found some particularly good lift. Wanting to make the most of it for his endurance attempt, he concentrated on working this lift to the detriment of noticing that he was continuing to drift away from the field. The pilot admitted he was not paying as much attention to drift as he should have with such a strong wind blowing. When he finally ran out of lift altogether, he found himself at 3,8000 feet, but six miles downwind from the field. At the Skylark's normal angle of glide of 24:1, this height would have been more than sufficient to return to the field, but against a 30 knot head-wind, it became a doubtful proposition. The pilot saw this might be so, but decided he would try it anyway.

The pilot said he realised afterwards that when heading directly towards the eastern end of the strip, he was literally flying in "a street of sink", which no doubt accounted for the continual high rate of descent. When about a mile short of the strip, at 1,800 feet, he had encountered another patch of lift, which he attempted unsuccessfully to work. As a result, he not only lost further height, but again drifted downwind, thus throwing away any hope of reaching the field that might still have remained. At this stage, he assessed a small ploughed field beneath him as suitable for an outlanding, but then, because he thought that his angle of glide would still bring him safely to the field he decided to continue.

Reaching the area immediately downwind from the glider field, the pilot again made a mental assessment of whether he should set up an approach and land there, but as the area was bordered by fences and trees, and he had not previously made an outlanding, he was undecided as to what to do. At this point he encountered a further small area of lift, which made up his mind for him. He kept going, but very soon afterwards, when he was down to 150 feet and approaching the trees bordering the aerodrome, he encountered a high rate of sink and shortly afterwards found himself down to tree-top height with insufficient room remaining to make a landing straight ahead before reaching the trees.

Having flown himself into this position, the pilot had no alternative but to turn away at low level, and he did so, intending to land crosswind and parallel with the line of trees. But forced to turn so steeply in the gusty conditions, just before reaching the trees, the glider overbanked, and the turn continued until the tip of the lowered port wing brushed the ground. Before the pilot could recover, the nose struck the ground heavily. The glider then fell into a level attitude, swinging sharply around to the left through almost 180 degrees as it did so, snapping the fuselage in two midway between the wing and empennage. The wreckage finally came to rest after sliding backwards for 70 feet.

Although the pilot made an error of judgement in initially thinking he had sufficient height to make a direct flight back to the field, there was no reason why he had to persist with this course of action when its success began to look increasingly doubtful. The pilot admitted he had recognised several cues prompting him to make an outlanding but for one reason or another, he had rejected them all. There was no dearth of suitable areas in which a successful outlanding could have been made even right up to the final fence where the line of trees were, but the pilot apparently had a fixation about getting back to the strip as quickly as possible. Had he accepted the possibility of an outlanding in the first place, and gone looking for other areas of lift on either side of the direct track back to the field, he might well have found some which would have enabled him to continue the flight. Even if he had found none, he could still have outlanded normally and been no worse off.

From this accident it seems that glider pilots, especially those who are comparatively new to the sport, need to be constantly reminded that there need be no stigma attached to an outlanding. There can be little doubt that most clubs would prefer to retrieve their glider intact from 60 miles away, rather than from the next paddock in pieces!

#### TRAINING NEW PILOTS

In 1975 the Gliding Federation of Australia issued 434 new "C" Certificates, compared with 335 in 1974. The achievement of the "C" indicates a fair measure of progress in the sport. It requires soaring flight and represents an important step towards becoming a true sailplane pilot rather than a mere glider pilot. Many

Given an efficient training organisation, it need not take very long to bring an *ab initio* to "C" certificate standard. Under the old regime of winch launching in two-seater gliders of poor performance most instructional flights lasted only four or five minutes, and the pupil might spend a whole weekend at his club site for the sake of four or five such brief trips. Much depended on getting up at crack of dawn to get the aircraft out of the hangar, do the inspection, service the winch and lay out cables and, eventually, persuade the instructor to rise from his bed. At the end of a hard day, the last two-seater circuits would take place in failing light, yet still the student counted himself lucky if he'd flown four times. Even with the best possible equipment, there used to be innumerable delays; launching cables would break or become tangled, instructors would demand breakfast, winch drivers would fail to observe signals, and often enough there would be a hold-up of an hour or two in the program. Not surprisingly, it could take anything from three to six months before a weekend pupil could go solo. To make his "C" certificate soaring flight from a winch launching might take several further months of fruitless effort before connecting with and maintaining contact with, that first vital thermal.

Today there are still many small clubs, usually in country districts, where similar methods of training prevail, but such clubs rarely have long queues of trainees awaiting their turn in the two-seater. At most there may be half a dozen beginners and all then may get a fair share of the flying. At the larger clubs however, aero-towing has become almost the rule, and the training aircraft are capable of advanced soaring and cross-country flying. A few of the larger gliding sites operate with full-time professional staff running mid-week courses. It is not uncommon for a pupil who has his first glider flight on the Monday to be flying his first solo on the Friday. Since some of his dual flights earlier in the week will usually have involved some soaring, he may well be able to recognise and make use of a thermal on his second or third solo flight. Even the weekends-only pupils at such clubs get a better deal now, and while they tend to slip back a little in proficiency in the intervals between their training sessions, they can expect to progress quite swiftly.

Such accelerated training methods do however, produce some less fortunate side effects. The pilot who, in the past, had spent so long learning to fly, had by the "C" stage proved himself dedicated to gliding. Those who were not so keen would give up months before and indeed a great many did so. Clubs used to budget for a very high drop-out rate and there were sometimes muted grumblings. A newcomer might be expected to pay, on joining the club, not only the full annual subscription but also a fat entry fee. If he gave up after a couple of weeks, the cash was not refunded. From the treasurer's point of view, the more innocents who paid up and disappeared, the better, at least in the short term. In the long run, of course, some clubs made many enemies this way. Yet those beginners who did persist became stalwarts, used to working hard for their few hours in the air, familiar with all the difficulties and vagaries of local site and equipment and, almost of necessity, bound together with their fellow pilots in a spirit of fellowship and mutual help. They would proceed almost imperceptibly from the status of pupil to solo pilot, thence to passenger carrier and by easy stages to assistant instructor and instructor so keeping the machinery turning. The gliding movement in Australia, as elsewhere, was built by the efforts of such dedicated persons.

Now, a student pilot who attends a week's course, probably far away from his home, returns after a few days with a brand new certificate and hardly any background knowledge or skill. If his local club is comparatively slow and un-professional in its attitudes, he may find it hard to adjust. He may also find that the local club cannot provide him with the superior type of sail-planes that he will soon be anxious to fly. The larger, fulltime-operating clubs can afford to invest more capital in aircraft while the weekend-only clubs often find it quite uneconomic to have expensive "glass" ships lying idle five days out of seven. Such a pilot would, in earlier times, never have reached this stage. His reaction now is usually not to give up gliding, but to change his allegiance from the small club to the larger. This involves him in a lengthy drive from home to the site he probably considers the time better spent if, on arrival, he can speedily get himself into a high performance sail-plane and head off on a cross-country flight. The big clubs thus get bigger, the small clubs find themselves soldiering on with few new members and hence less chance than ever of building up the facilities that would attract them.

At the larger club, too, the keen beginner is more likely to become familiar with the idea of private ownership and syndicate ownership of advanced sail-planes

Dedication and hard work by gifted amateurs are still required, particularly in the club governing committees, the State Gliding Associations and the GFA itself. The only reason for the existence of the professional operation is to train more good pilots more effectively. This task is now being carried out better than before. But the long-term future of the sport depends on the survival of the older tradition of self-help and self-sacrifice. Somehow this spirit must be preserved even while the organisation changes.

How far the trend has gone already may be gauged from the fact that four clubs (of the 92 now established) produced about 30% of the new "C" certificates in 1975. Every one of these four clubs reports increasing membership. At the same time; new professionally staffed centres are being established, and, sadly, each year sees one or two of the smaller clubs cease operations.

#### DIRECTORY OF A.U.G.C. OFFICIALS

PRESIDENT:	Des Maslen	1 Netherby Avauue, Plympton. 5038 Ph. 2934732
SECRETARY:	Tony Kiek	11 Coolibah Avenue, Kensington Gdns. 5068 Ph. 2234333 Ext. 2813 A/H 313999
TREASURER:	Andrew Horton	29 Blythewood Road, Torrens Park. 5062 Ph. 710395
SOCIAL CONVENOR:	Guy Harley	42 Northumberland Street, Tusmore. 5065 Ph. 313788
CHIEF FLYING INSTRUCTOR:	Emilis Prelgauskas	Box 1, P.O., Bridgewater. 5155 Ph. 3392381
NEWSLETTER EDITOR:	Guy Harley	(as above)
WINCH SUB-COMMITTEE:	Des Maslen Emilis Prelgauskas Allen Brown	(as above) (as above) 3/303 Anzac Highway, Plympton. 5038 Ph. 2234333 Ext. 2495

#### DIARY OF EVENTS

September 2nd	- 7.00 p.m. - Meeting in Sports Association Office
September 10th	- 6.30 p.m. - Dinner in South Dining Room.
October 7th	- 7.00 p.m. - Meeting in Sports Association Office
October 9th-11th	- Balaklava Regatta.
November 20th, 21st, 27th & 28th	- Bordertown-Keith Regatta.
December 29th-January 14th	- National Championships at Renmark.