



# The SnowyFlyer .....

**- First edition - 13<sup>th</sup> September 2008 -**

Dear members of Snowy River Aviators from near and far,

I have got my hands firmly on the controls of **The SnowyFlyer** No 1 and here it is....

You are invited to respond to the sections below in the spirit of true aviators whether Walter Mitty or Lores Bonney. Following editions will endeavour to smooth the turbulence you might create!

## **LAST LIGHT – LATE NEWS**

**September meeting, Sunday 7<sup>th</sup>, at Kennedy Airfield, Adaminaby – Hi all!**

### **The minutes:**

“Even though Dave Bullen, Ion Stott, Gitta Steffes, Adrian Menhennitt and Jane Reid made it to Adaminaby for our monthly meeting on Father’s Day, we were unable to reach a quorum. We had apologies from many people. So we just had a nice day in the sun with people flying and chatting about club things, and some practical things were done.

Much discussion did show that we are very unlikely to have the infrastructure in place enough to justify inviting any number of the public to an event by October 18<sup>th</sup>. Some members of the committee had already said that they were not in favour of changing the date just because of the Roulettes. Others really felt they are important and the idea of asking aerobatics expert, Pip Borman was also tossed around. Dave suggested that he contact some mates with antique aircraft to put on a display. We decided to get together next Friday evening to talk it through and make plans.

Adrian and Ion put the new lock on the clubhouse door which uses the CTAF radio frequency as its combination code. They did lots of walking around with lengthy tape measures to get organised for ordering the storm water drainage pipes.

Dave had a good look at his levelled hangar site and decided it was pretty good.

Signatories on our account need review and so we will look at this on Friday too.”

*Jane*

## **FROM PEGASUS' MOUTH**

- The club's newest aviatrix-to-be is Gitta Steffes who has finally taken to the sky flying for her pilot's licence. She's 4 lessons out by now with instructor Adrian and learning that life's not always straight and level. Close behind her is *Jane Reid* dragging her tail but determined to get past Gitta before she gets her licence. We'll see...
- 2 toilet blocks are up but not ready to be put to good use yet, PLEASE. Septic tank is planned to be delivered ASAP and then Richard will dig the hole so we can skip to the loos with confidence.
- The Davis' have given up hangar No 3 which originally they were to share with secretary Jane and instructor Adrian. Allan Caldwell and Lyndall Dean have taken it up.
- Working bees hum in every so often to propel themselves into beautifying our airfield
- The original date of our **official opening celebration** for the 18<sup>th</sup> of October has been postponed until further notice. It is suggested to hold it in autumn 2009 between March and May.

## **DID YOU SEE THIS?** (Excerpt from RA-AUS, July 2008 issue)

### **Dear SRA members,**

I have chosen to copy some of the text I have read in the president's report of the July issue of RAA as I believe his statement may also apply to our own Snowy River aviators.

As a relative new member to our club I however feel strongly about John Gordon's report and therefore would like to share it with you:

*"How many times in our own experiences have we seen clubs prosper and then suddenly disappear after change of leadership and personality politics. The very things that make a club strong and vibrant can also conspire to bring about its undoing..." And: "In the "club environment" willing workers contributing their skills in an honorary capacity do so to the point of burnout or until personal commitments prevent them from continuing on. Mix into this recipe, politics and personalities, we end up on a treadmill of boom and bust of many community based clubs..." And further:*

*"Have FUN flying and accept the co-commitment responsibilities that go with it."*

So, members of Snowy River Aviators, let's make sure we recognise the hard work of our pioneers and be thoughtful and constructive as we build the future! - G

## **MEMBER'S PROFILE – Gitta Steffes**

### **A Horsewoman wanting wings**

My claim to fame is as a long-distance horse rider. But with the sky in my veins the first inkling that I might become a potential 'flyer' was way back when I lived in the USA, Salt Lake City, Utah. There I met a dashing young pilot on a ski lift one day who promised to take me flying. He kept his promise – by diving his Cessna daringly, and of course illegally, into the awesome Bingham Mine, the world's oldest and largest open-cut Coppermine! I was fired up, my enthusiasm for flying stirred so much that soon I was a regular at Salt Lake City Airport to watch longingly as planes took off and landed. However, horses were still my greatest passion in my spare time after Uni studies.

San Francisco, California. Having moved there a year or so later – was it fate that I should end up in a street called 'Kittyhawk Road'? Whilst I would often take time to hang out at an airstrip, horses though, still kept me on the ground.

Next stop - New York City, New York. Though I had carted my 4-legged friend from west coast to east coast horses no longer held my undivided interest.

Now it was the dream again of planes and learning to fly that excited my whole being – but how to afford it?

At the time I was teaching languages at the Berlitz School of Languages in the Wall Street district of Lower Manhattan. Simultaneously I was studying the art of photography, a hobby that I took very seriously and which eventually replaced teaching as my profession. "There", I thought, "lay the secret of how to obtain my pilots license!" I would offer recreational aircraft owners photographs of their planes and use those payments to finance lessons.

The idea worked and soon I found myself either up in the air or cramped into the flight simulator. 4 lessons up when I drove the 150 miles out to Long Island where my horse was stabled and ready to be sold. "One more thrilling ride along the beach", I decided. But soon we ended up in a terrible collision, head-butting in full gallop with an oncoming out-of-control rider. My horse toppled over me, an ambulance sped me to emergency and I woke up with concussive headaches I didn't know could exist. Flying? Dream on, girl...

Next stop – Rome, Italy. Horses were again 'my thing'. I had just completed a 6-months/4500 kilometres-long solo horse trek around Italy, became editor of an Italian horse magazine and felt I wanted to reward myself with something special. Surely flying...? But too expensive there. The closest I could get to a flying activity was sky diving. After a half year long rigorous training course at the sky diving school of Latina, south of Rome, I went for my first jumps. WOW, what a thrill, I surely couldn't get closer to flying than that!

Australia – Cooma. After coming to Cooma in May 1996 I met the challenge of the Nullarbor Plain by taking on a 1700 kilometres buggy-mule safari from Port Augusta to Kalgoorlie following the Trans-Continental rail. Still keeping my heart on flying I raised \$5000 for the RFDS (Royal Flying Doctor Service) on the way. I even got to be rushed (flown) to Port Augusta hospital again when camels spooked my mule and caused another smash-up and temporary delay of that adventurous journey.

2008, June – Cooma/Adaminaby, Snowy River Aviators.

Horses still fully absorbed my time – until recently pushing the envelope too far, collided with an out-of-control tree, was bucked off (or did I eject?), ended up with concussive headaches again in emergency, this time in Canberra, realizing I might have used up my lucky nine lives by now, I thought again. I decided then FLYING will be 'my thing' from now on!

A deal was struck: my horse in exchange for my pilot's licence...

**I'll be a 'flying woman' at last!**

*Gitta Steffes*

One day the pilot of a Cherokee 180 was told by the tower to hold short of the active runway while a DC-8 landed. The DC-8 landed, rolled out, turned around, and taxied back past the Cherokee. Some quick-witted comedian in the DC-8 crew got on the radio and said: "What a cute little plane. Did you make it by yourself?"

The Cherokee pilot, not to let the insult go by, came back with a real zinger: "I made it out of DC-8 parts. Another landing like yours and I'll have enough parts for another one."

## **THE INTERVIEW... with Geoff Bowland**

**Q** – *Why are you a member of SRA?*

**A** – I have a life long interest in flying, possibly starting from my reading of Biggles books. Some years ago I met up with Niall Waterhouse and we started SRA by advertising for interest in the local paper. I had been experiencing quite a gap in not finding an active flying club on the Monaro from when I first arrived in 1977.

**Q** – *When you started what was your vision?*

**A** – My hopes were not high because of the long absence of a flying club on the Monaro. My outlook however improved when I met Niall as a hitchhiker going through the area and I found a companion spirit in

him. Later he decided to relocate to Cooma and then I could envisage the nucleus of a club being formed, surely more than the two of us, I hoped.

**Q** – *How did your hopes develop?*

**A** – I was very pleasantly surprised when about a dozen people responded to the newspaper ad and radio publicity. An inaugural meeting was held at the Polo Flat airfield.

**Q** – *Where are we today with the club?*

**A** – Today I see a magnificent development in the club. It has moved from airfield to airfield and now it owns its own airstrip at Kennedy Field, Adaminaby. There is a temporary club house and some magnificent hangars. The membership base comprises aircraft owners, trainee pilots and social members who are all keen.

**Q** – *What can you foresee in the club's future (development)?*

**A** – The club has achieved a most solid stage of development in the Snowy Mountains with memberships from a 100 km radius. It is to be hoped that the mix of private aeroplane owners and general pilots training together with the social content will rise so that membership will increase to a significant amount.

The upcoming official opening will give the club the opportunity to display its potential and cement the country-style hospitality and atmosphere which has already developed.

**Q** – *Where do you stand now?*

**A** – I feel privileged to be part of this wonderful club. I have a PPL which requires activating to use and in the case of these recreational craft I know I will require separate endorsement. I have no need to pilot an aircraft at the present but the interest is there as I see these fast and economical flying machines replacing aircraft of yesterday. I intend to get back into the air when the circumstances are right. I am happy, at the moment, in this environment, being surrounded by pilots and potential pilots who get together on a regular basis and would feel that there is some thing drastically wrong if I missed a club meeting.

## **WEBSITES**

Of interest for aviators, some exciting info on your aircraft can be viewed on [www.YOUTUBE.com](http://www.YOUTUBE.com)  
Just type in your aircraft type and explore.

## **MARES TAILS**

**Charlie Tango tries for Caloundra – July 2005**, by Paul Nossiter

Having finally achieved a life long ambition of learning to fly at the beginning of this year and now happy owners of our CT2K ultralight we've just returned from a wonderful first trip. Now, hope you don't mind a bit of a ramble but we'd like to share some of our new experiences in the company of Charlie Tango 3841.

Flight plan done, weather checked, NOTAMs checked, baggage hold secured, fuelled to the 544 limit, DI done, last minute loo break, life jackets donned, EPIRB in place, knee board strapped, sarwatch arranged and the mandatory caps on. Ready to launch 0950 June 14 and Charlie Tango is airborne. Gwen and I had planned this trip for weeks, at last we're off.

The plan was to track from our home base of Cooma-Snowy to Moruya then follow the coast to Newcastle (can't get lost that way) with a possible stop at Wollongong if needed. So up we went, then up some more and some again to 7500 to give us plenty of air over tiger country (and it's real rugged stuff) between Cooma and the coast. A nice tailwind saw us over Moruya at 5000 in 27 mins then a turn toward Nowra. Anticipating the need to track the VFR lane through controlled air around Nowra we called the tower only to be told their radar was down and that the area was normal MBZ conditions. Darn, and we'd just invested in a transponder ready for the question 'are you transponder equipped?' and we didn't need it. There you go.

Our real reason for flying the coast was for the scenic value. Great value it was, we've never had such good views of so much coast, ever. It was simply beautiful... you've got to do it. And the best was yet to come.



Past Nowra, then Kiama, no need to stop off at Wollongong so on we went past Stanwell Park and on toward Port Hacking for entry to Victor 1. All the way from Moruya to Port Hacking was a gentle and economical descent cruise at 100kt IAS and 11/h. Joining Victor 1 was a new experience. An early call to Sydney Radar to request flight following yielded and negative "due to workload" (darn, still no use for the transponder), checked Sydney ATIS for local QNH, trimmed off for 500 then settled back for magic views of Sydney from a couple of miles off-shore (hence the life jackets). Awesome stuff watching the big international flights dropping overhead for landing at Kingsford Smith, they look sooo close. Just off Sydney heads we collected our first bonus points... whales right under us.

Beyond Sydney we climbed to 1500 to continue the scenic flight past Central Coast (more great views) then over Lake Macquarie for our first destination. During our planning we were disappointed to learn that Aeropelican was closed but delighted to find a small private grass strip in the western suburbs of Newcastle at Wallsend. With prior permission this was to be our home for the next few days. It's amazing how difficult it can be to spot a small airstrip in unfamiliar terrain. There it is, snuggled into a built-up corner of homes and businesses, running power lines to the west east and surrounded by its 740m length. Oh no, almost horizontal straight to circuit height, line up, those trees... come on, around. Second approach still being lifted off the pretty sudden bumps corrections but down we at last to cancel sarwatch



03/21, bordered by HT and wetlands to the trees along a third of look at that sock, it's across the strip. Down oops there's lift off get sown. No go a bit longer and lower, trees with a couple of needing quick go and on the ground at 1220. Bert and

Peter, a couple of the syndicate owners, were waiting for us and very kindly complimented our landing in such conditions. That was nice, thanks guys. Added to their kindness was the offer to put our 'cute' little CT under cover in one of their still-being-built new hangars, another bonus. The crew at Wallsend are a great bunch, very friendly and helpful. While there we learned that Bert is now the Oz agent for the Quicksilver.

Our visit to Newcastle was a return home for us (we moved away in '88) so we have lots of friends and relis to visit.. The plan was to head north again for another overnighiter at Port Macquarie the next Monday (six days later) and ten on to Caloundra for a week's holiday the following day. Part of our flight to Caloundra was to include a visit with Bruce Stark (Tecnam) at Southport. Raincheck Bruce? Watching the weather reports it was decided to delay a day for expected better weather north on Wednesday. Good decision? Nah! On Tuesday the westerlies moved in with ferocity. So, we shall wait, and wait, and wait some more. The weather forecasts gave us some hope of the winds settling down by the weekend which they did, just as the rain moved in (no complaints here). Another look at the reports and we could see bad weather north and bad weather south. Now what...? It's Foreign Air Mail Route Number 9 from Lima to Santiago, Chile, South America!

Well, no, hang the holiday, let's go home and wait for better conditions. Time for a new plan, head west of the Divide away from the coastal weather then over the hills to home. So, on 25<sup>th</sup> between showers we lifted off from a very wet and muddy strip (glad to have learned short-field work and very glad of a nice little craft that happily jumps off in under 200m fully loaded). I think the onlookers were impressed. We tracked Maitland, Singleton, Denman, Gulgong, Wellington and Parkes. Our flight was mostly at 1000 to 1500 agl just below cloud, though bumpy air and ducking the occasional shower glad to see clear and blue sky at Wellington.

An overnighiter at Parkes where we met up with a couple of friendly locals, Dave and Bill, from the aero club who, after admiring the lines of our 'cute' CT, proudly showed us through their stable of planes before giving us a lift into town. The morning presented a steady 15kt wind straight down the runway. Up again but now

in smooth air at 5000 just above 2 oktas cloud tracking Cootamundra, Tumut, Talbingo, Adaminaby and home. But alas, just past Talbingo and over pretty rough Tiger country again we observed ahead of us cloud down to the ground. No way Jose, turn back and head for Tumut. En route we tapped into Canberra ATIS to hear that their local conditions sounded favourable if we chose to track around ACT for home. When at Tumut we found Pat Malone on his pat malone and enjoyed a hot cuppa with him while we called home for conditions. No chance, fully overcast down to just 500 agl and grizzle. So, Tumut for yet another overnighiter.



Ahh, Monday morning with still air. The plan now is to head over the hills toward Talbingo again for a look-see then if not safe turn back and head around Canberra for a lower, safer trip home. Bingo, what a beautiful sight. We climbed to 7500, again plenty of air over the high country, to be presented with this wonderful corridor of clear, smooth air. Few clouds below us, high cloud above us, 8/8 low cloud west of us on the Snowies with snow covered peaks jutting through and 8/8 heavy weather creeping in from the east. We are so privileged to see close up the awesomeness of God's handiwork. Ahead we could see plenty of clear air below the incoming weather so we dropped to 5500 over Adaminaby and on to Cooma-Snowy for the final touchdown just an hour before the weather closed in. A magnificent finish to an eventful trip. And Charlie

Tango purred happily all the way.

Looking forward to going again, and soon. We highly recommend this recreational flying, so if you have the time. Go for it, it's great. Not only do you get to see plenty of interesting sights, you get to meet lots of interesting people along the way.

**Paul**



Flight prep Snowy Mountains style

## OUR CLASSIFIEDS

As you can see as editor I am making space for advertising to help our club raise cash. **Please** contribute to the club by buying space in our next newsletter. It's **only \$ 5** per ad!  
Please pay our treasurer, Ray Killen, when you next see him!

### **FOR HIRE**

Dear Gitta – congratulations on your enterprise for the club. Please insert the following ad for me:  
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## AEROQUIZZ

Do you know...?

... the name of the world's longest and fastest air-mail route, and the longest aviation route?

**Tip:** the route was first flown in around the mid- to end of 1929 over a nineteen-hundred-mile-stretch flown initially with a single-engine Fairchild 71 and later a Lockheed Vega.

See if you can find the answer before searching the sections of this bulletin you have just skipped over.

## NEXT ISSUE of **The SnowyFlyer** No 2 – View our additional new column

**Women of the air** – from pioneering, history-creating women pilots to present-day women flyers of our very own SRA club and beyond who represent a new era in modern flying machines.

*Happy Flying*

*Gitta*

### TAIL FEATHERS



Andy Hain – 2008 – OBE – Barney Woodhouse

**O W N B L O O D Y E F F O R T !!**

Watermark in this issue: Committee member Ion Stott flying his Corby Starlet over Snowy Mountains Airport/Cooma, NSW, 9-August-2008. Photo by Gitta Steffes.

Gitta Steffes

#### **Newsletter**

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For our monthly flying news **please** send me: stories - snippets - photos - jokes - hangar talk etc.