



Some years ago we featured the adventures of Bruce McDonald in Malawi. I am sure you will recall the pictures of him flying over Otter Point, Pictures of Monkey Bay, Nkudze Beach, oh boy, and the flamingoes while he was at Club Makakola.

We again covered Malawi in Robert's Gassmann's Gaggle that flew up the East Coast to Malawi and returned by flying down to the Victoria Falls then on to Botswana before returning home. More recently Paul Mulder's Gaggle that went to Botswana returned with a picture book of their travels that makes the 2015 issue of Microflight Africa a cherished edition. The reason that I mention this is because each year I try to feature destinations that are near and far so as to spark your imagination on the possibilities of flight.



At this year's MISASA WWW SHOWCASE on 27 August 2016, I will be there with back issues for new members to top up on past editions.

As you can see Malawi is a tad hard to find, you may say, it's a hidden jewel.

Earlier this year Reza Robert Sacranie set off to explore the Shire Valley. He transported his Aquilla 2 with a Rotax 503, eco silencer and a ballistic chute on the back of his Landcruiser. Fully loaded his "aircraft carrier" sported all their provisions, camping kit and a motor bike.

The in-flight picture (above) is of Reza flying with Kat Forsythe. The picture was taken by David Allen. The early riser taking a picture is Kat Forsythe (Opposite - top right). Ed

Flying in Malawi

By Reza Robert Sacranie



Upon arrival, we were kept busy by heavy winds during the night. This called for the wing to be dropped so as to change the profile of the wing into the wind. I also tied it down and placed all kinds of random stuff that we had on top of the wing, and I removed the washout tubes so that it would not take off without me. As a final precaution, I slept under the wing with one eye open!



Daybreak and the early morning flights offered us breathtaking views of our surroundings. This area for miles inland is just meters above sea level. It has the Shire river running through it which is the only river flowing out of Lake Malawi. It provides Malawi's hydro power, in the Shire Valley and the river feeds the impenetrable Elephant



Marsh, sugar estates, national parks and game reserves. The dramatic Shire Highlands escarpment borders its eastern edge. While we flew around the marsh, we witnessed huge flocks of the open-billed stork, greater flamingo, pelicans and a plethora of bird life; unfortunately, the elephants are gone, and there is only a few hippo left. As in many African countries, the human-elephant conflict arose due to crop raiding by elephants which led to their demise. Fortunately, education and the selective reintroduction of elephants in the Shire Valley in Malawi and Mozambique may see them being able to reestablish themselves. As you climb above the marsh and see over the escarpment, Mulanje Massif is clearly visible while below the millions of pools of water glitter like gold in a green sea. The Mulanje Massif, also known as Mount Mulanje, is a large monadnock (rock) in southern Malawi 65 km east of Blantyre, rising sharply (10,000 ft) from the surrounding plains of Chiradzulu, and the tea-growing Mulanje district.

Visit Malawi for some exciting flying! Learning how to fly is one of the best choices I made in life. 10 years on and the flights are still just as amazing. I thank my legendary instructors Dave Jackson and Bruce MacDonald for passing on their skills which keep me flying safe. If you are considering adventure flying in Malawi you are welcome to send me a mail at flyingmalawi@yahoo.com and I will give you some pointers to assist you in planning your air safari.





The yacht Romanza showing tourists Seal Island, Mossel Bay



Canola Fields - Riversdale



Top Row / Barkley West: Die Pomphuis en Rockefella

Below/Posmasburg: Posma and the Assmang (Right) Mines

Jannie Visser's private strip in Posmasburg



Eon de Vos on Flight Safety

I could phrase the question differently and ask “Why do you fly Microlights?” However, whether you fly a microlight or a Boeing, once you leave the ground – you’re flying.

I know why I fly. In my on-line Blog www.aviateon.com I have spelt it out many times: “Leaving the ground and entering the fantastic world of flight is a metamorphic experience. It completely alters your perspective of earth, of life and of your own small role in this tapestry of existence, which spreads to the wide horizons below you”.

I have flown for more than thirty-five years. I have flown many types, both fixed wing and helicopter; flown aerobatics, airshows, charter, military, ENG and airline ops – and still I am filled with wide-eyed wonder every time I take off. I have instructed and trained and learned more than my students in the process. And yes – I’ve flown Microlights!

Many years ago Fanie van Rensburg introduced me to Microlights, in the days when they were little more than airborne lawnmowers. With Alan Blain we arranged and took part in a microlight rally from Springs to Pietermaritzburg (ATC wouldn’t allow us into Durban airspace in those days – no radios, no transponders), but we had a tremendous amount of fun.

I’ll have to dig around to find that old logbook, but I do recall that I flew a Flitestar – a “normal” three-axis controlled microlight.

On none of those flights did I ever take off with the intention of not landing at my destination – I’m certain that no pilot actually becomes airborne with the intention of crashing and dying. Please disregard the psychologically unstable types, such as Lubitz who crashed the GermanWings aircraft. I’m referring to sane people, pilots like you and me.

Yet, when we consider the hard evidence of accident statistics, it would somehow appear as if pilots have suicidal tendencies.

I know that I certainly intend one day to die peacefully with my family around me – definitely not leaving them to be quoted in the newspapers: “He died doing what he loved” What rubbish!

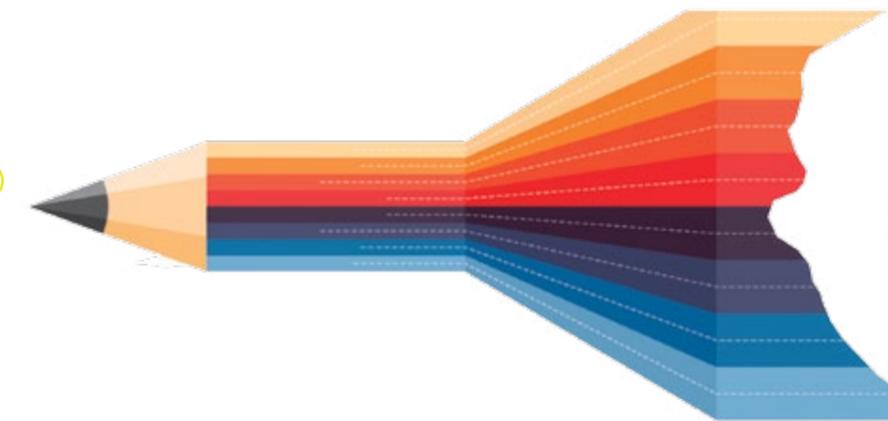
So how do you intend dying? In an aircraft? Or peacefully in your sleep?

If the latter option is your answer, here are ten tips for longevity:

1. Never, ever take an aircraft with a known defect into the air.
2. To achieve (1) – After every flight, do a full post-flight inspection and fix or arrange to fix any little snag. Before every flight (even if you have flown) do a thorough pre-flight inspection. Microlights are not toys – they are



Why do you fly?



aircraft with light airframes which are subjected to high loads and stresses.

3. Set your own limits and vow to stay within them: Weather minima, wind limits, minimum fuel, currency. Don’t be influenced by your brave peers – make your own decisions.

4. Do not, not ever, fly any manoeuvre that you haven’t contemplated, discussed, trained and rehearsed before. No impromptu low level fly-by or stall-turn impresses anyone – it only serves to brand you as a fool.

5. If you fly with a passenger, make their flight as comfortable and safe as possible. Never scare a passenger.

6. Don’t fly with a cold or any other ailment. Remember the IMSAFE acronym?

7. Do the Hazardous Attitude questionnaire, which is currently available on the Aero Club of SA website www.aeroclub.org.za to learn something about your potential weak spots. Remember, copping out with some excuse about the questions being silly or “I’m not like that” already indicates a hazardous attitude!

8. Before every flight, ask yourself whether you can assure a safe outcome. Remember Niki Lauda’s 80/20 risk assessment in Formula One? Risk higher than 20% was unacceptable to him. Risk is always inherent in flight; it must be managed to achieve safety. What we can accept is a calculated risk, which Jimmy Doolittle defined as: “The willingness to embark deliberately on a course of action, which offers prospective rewards, outweighing the estimated dangers”.

It would appear to me that pilots easily underestimate the dangers and overestimate the rewards....

9. When you make a decision in the air, consider the potential outcome and ask yourself:
(a) “What would the board of enquiry say?”;
(b) “What would my life insurance say – would they pay out to my family?”
(c) “What will my family read in the newspapers?”

10. Remember the old adage: When there is any doubt, there is no doubt. Don’t!

Fly safely and love every airborne moment!



FUELISH MISTAKES

by Jim Davis

Fuel mismanagement is a major cause of engine stoppages in light aircraft. To highlight some of the things that can go wrong Jim Davis brings you five true stories as well as some tips on dealing with fuel systems.

Too casual.

It is 1964; the ink is still wet on my commercial licence, and I am about to crash an out-of-the-box, brand-new 235 Cherokee in perfect weather.

As the wheels leave the dirt, the right wingtip tries to dig itself into the desert floor. Full left aileron barely keeps the tip off the boulders. The runway swings away to the left so I don't have the option of landing again.

Easing back tightens the turn and kills the speed, robbing the ailerons of the airflow they need. Easing forward is not an option. I prod more left rudder and gradually sanity returns. The wing slowly rises, the airspeed creeps up, and the aerodynamics arrange themselves such that we can inch away from that blistering surface.

At first, I am terrified, then mystified. What is this force that strives to invert us?

It was fine when we landed a couple of hours ago. Since then I have been parked in the shade of a baobab tree and have not left the aircraft. There have been no people, animals or vehicles near us. We did not hit anything on landing or take-off. The flaps have not gone asymmetric. The aircraft is new, so I doubt there is structural or mechanical failure. I can see nothing unusual on the wings or that part of the tailplane that is visible from the cockpit. I search inside. I either have to cure this malady or land at Kimberley with a touchdown speed of more than 100mph.

Suddenly I see the problem. There is a row of four little rectangular fuel gauges; the two right-hand ones are brim full while the left tip is stone empty and the left main has about 5 gallons. I select the right tip and gradually over the next hour the aircraft becomes more flyable.

There are three reasons for this atrocity. First, a faulty selector allowed the fuel to cross-feed and overflow on to the ground while we were parked on a slope. Second, if my pre-take-off checks had been less casual, I would have noticed the warnings of those four little gauges. Finally, because I knew nothing could go wrong on the ground, I skipped the pre-flight inspection – something I have never done since.



Game Over? by Charles Gibbons

Leon's Tiger

Leon has bought a Tiger Moth from a guy who lives 30 miles inside the Kruger Park. I am to collect it and fly it back to Phalaborwa with Leon as a passenger. He is much excited – he has never even sat in a Tiger before he bought this one.



Buffalo Dust Storm at KNP by John Waterson

We take off in the heat of the afternoon. The stifling air is red with the dust of elephant and buffalo. I climb to a cooler height and level off before asking Leon if he wants to fly his aeroplane. Of course, he does.

All is fine for a while. Then he complains that the aircraft is trying to lose height. I tell him to trim back. He says that he has done that, but it makes no difference. I bid him trim some more,

and cast a beady eye on the duplicate trim lever in my cockpit to see that it moves in unison with his. Nothing happens. He says he is trimming – and I say he is not. I decide to give him step-by-step instructions in this simple process,

“You see the lever next to your left leg? OK, now if you... Oh shit.” The engine has stopped.

I tell Leon that I have control, and glance round for a landing place. We can make it to the green banks of the Letaba river – wherein lurk hippo and crocodile – or there are some open patches amongst the thorn bushes. The landing should be no problem, but trekking through the game-infested bush holds little appeal.

I turn my attention inside the cockpit. A Tiger Moth is a simple beast – there are no electrics, apart from the mag switches on the outside of the fuselage, which are both ‘on’. The mixture richens itself automatically when you close the throttle. Carb-heat is also automatic. There is only one tank – so there is no need to check fuel selection, but habit takes my left hand to the fuel cock which is out of sight. To my amazement, it is switched off. I push it into the ‘on’ position and wait...and wait... and start thinking of buffalo again. Finally, the engine, which has been windmilling, starts to bang and vibrate. Eventually, it gathers its energy and settles into a relieved rumble.

It is easy to reconstruct what happened. Because it was not a training flight I gave Leon

no briefing, neither did I show him the controls. When he thought he was trimming, he was switching the fuel off – both controls being near his left leg.

There are two lessons: first, always brief everyone who can reach anything. And second, if the engine just suddenly dies, without expensive noises, it's almost certainly a fuel problem.

Aztec drains

Fuel sampling is simple – you drain some into your little bottle, inspect it for smell, water, colour and contamination. Finally, check that the drain is not dripping. Have I missed anything? Actually, yes – you also have to understand the aircraft's fuel system.



Aztec Fuel Drain

I am flying an Aztec out of Port Elizabeth. As we climb through 4 000ft, I notice the CHT (cylinder head temperature) on the left motor going into the red. This is extremely odd – it is a cool day, we are using reduced power, the mixtures are rich, and the other motor is fine. I watch. The CHT is getting worse; the head temp is rising, and the oil temp starts to nudge higher. It seems I do indeed have a hot engine – not a dodgy gauge. I am about to reduce power when the aircraft swings left. The motor splutters, wakes up, quits and splutters some more.

This is not a heart-stopping event. We have plenty of height, and the airfield is not far away. I throttle back, feather the prop and head for home.

While tidying up the cockpit and shutting down the systems on the failed engine, I am horrified to see that the right engine is now overheating in the same manner. Suspecting that it might be suffering an identical malady I decide to re-start the left, in the hopes that if the right should lose power they might have sufficient surge between the two of them to get us home.

This indeed turns out to be the case, and we scrape back with the temperatures off the clocks, both engines banging and wheezing, and delivering just enough intermittent energy to keep us off the beach.

The problem? All four tanks contain vast quantities of water. I am mystified. I refuelled

at the military base, allowed it to settle, and drained in the normal way. Why had I not found the water? Simple – I didn't understand the system.

An Aztec has three fuel drains in a cluster under each engine. One drain is for that wing's outboard tank, one for the inboard tank and one for the filter bowl. A little thought tells me that there must be a longish pipe from each tank to its respective drain. That's right – you need to drain all the fuel out of that pipe before you have a sample of what's in the tank. With an Aztec I now use a two-litre Coke bottle instead of the usual tot-measure.

Dangerous bugs

My first aviation job ever was as hangar-boy for Placo, the Piper agents, at Wonderboom Airport, just North of Pretoria. My status was extremely humble and my immediate boss, Zingi Harrison, was the best and most knowledgeable pilot in the world.

He wore a bow-tie at all times and loved to tell a story. When Zingi spoke, it was always worth listening.

On this particular day the big boss, Mr Piet, had sent Zingi to Virginia Airport, in Durban, a single Comanche to collect Mr Piet's 80-year-old mother, his spectacular wife Myrtle, and two infants.



Draining Cessna Fuel

Zingi left Wonderboom with minimal fuel. He filled the Comanche's tanks in Durban before loading his precious cargo. He was on his way back at flight-level 105 and half way across the mountains in that uneasy zone where you are out of gliding distance from both sides. At this exact point, the comforting rumble of the big Lycoming stopped without warning.

Zingi was baffled. He hit the fuel pump and changed tanks, even though the right main that he was using showed almost full and had given good service for the last twenty minutes.

The way Zingi explained it, the telling took longer than the flight; but in the end, Old Piet's beautiful wife, an aged mother and the sticky infants were none the worse for their experience. Here is what happened.

When he refuelled at Virginia, Zingi didn't take note of how much fuel went into each of the six tanks. If he had, he would have seen that the right main, although nearly empty, accepted only four gallons before it was full. There was good reason for this. A bug, in Pretoria, had made its muddy home in the breather for that tank. This meant that while Zingi was using it on the outward flight, the bladder fuel-cell was being scrunched into a little ball as the fuel was sucked out of it.

Obviously, at the pumps, it took very little fuel to fill this now prune like container. When Zingi peered into it during the pre-flight inspection, the tank looked full, and the gauge showed full because the float had been carried to the top with the scrunching.

This is not just a story about a guy with a funny name and a bow-tie. Mud-bugs are still around and so are bladder-tanks – it can happen to you tomorrow.

The lessons are plain. Make sure that what goes into the tank seems sensible, when you check for bugs – check, and make sure you understand the system – some aircraft have only one breather for all the tanks – so you may not be as lucky as Zingi.

Electrics or fuel?

Bob, a much decorated WW2 Spitfire pilot, was in the left-hand seat and Peter, a 1000 hour

Private Pilot, was handling the maps and radios. Their wives were in the back enjoying the leather upholstery. They were all in great spirits - this was their first trip in ZS-FAW, the sparkling Twin Comanche they had recently bought.

I had done flight-tests for both of them in a Cherokee Six within the previous few months and found them to be above average pilots. Bob was doing the flying because Peter hadn't yet converted to the twin.

They took off from George about mid-morning and headed West for Cape Town tracking parallel to the Outeniqua mountain range.

The first annoyance happened twenty minutes into the flight when the No.1 VHF packed up. No problem, they simply switched over to VHF 2. A short while later this also began to disappoint - it was fading and not getting the range they expected at flight-level 85.

Next, the ADF needle started wandering. Again no problem - the weather was great, and you just stick between the mountains and the coast. But having three dodgy radios on the first trip was starting to take the fun out of things.

Soon after half way, both fuel-gauges drifted to zero and stayed there no matter which of the six tanks were selected. This was a bit of a puzzle because, although the auxiliaries were empty the mains should have been about half and the tip-tanks were brim-full when they took off.

They selected the tips and relaxed.

A couple of minutes later, as they passed the Caledon Mountain on their left, both motors stopped simultaneously. There was no coughing or warning of any sort. One moment they were smooth as silk, the next - dead silence.

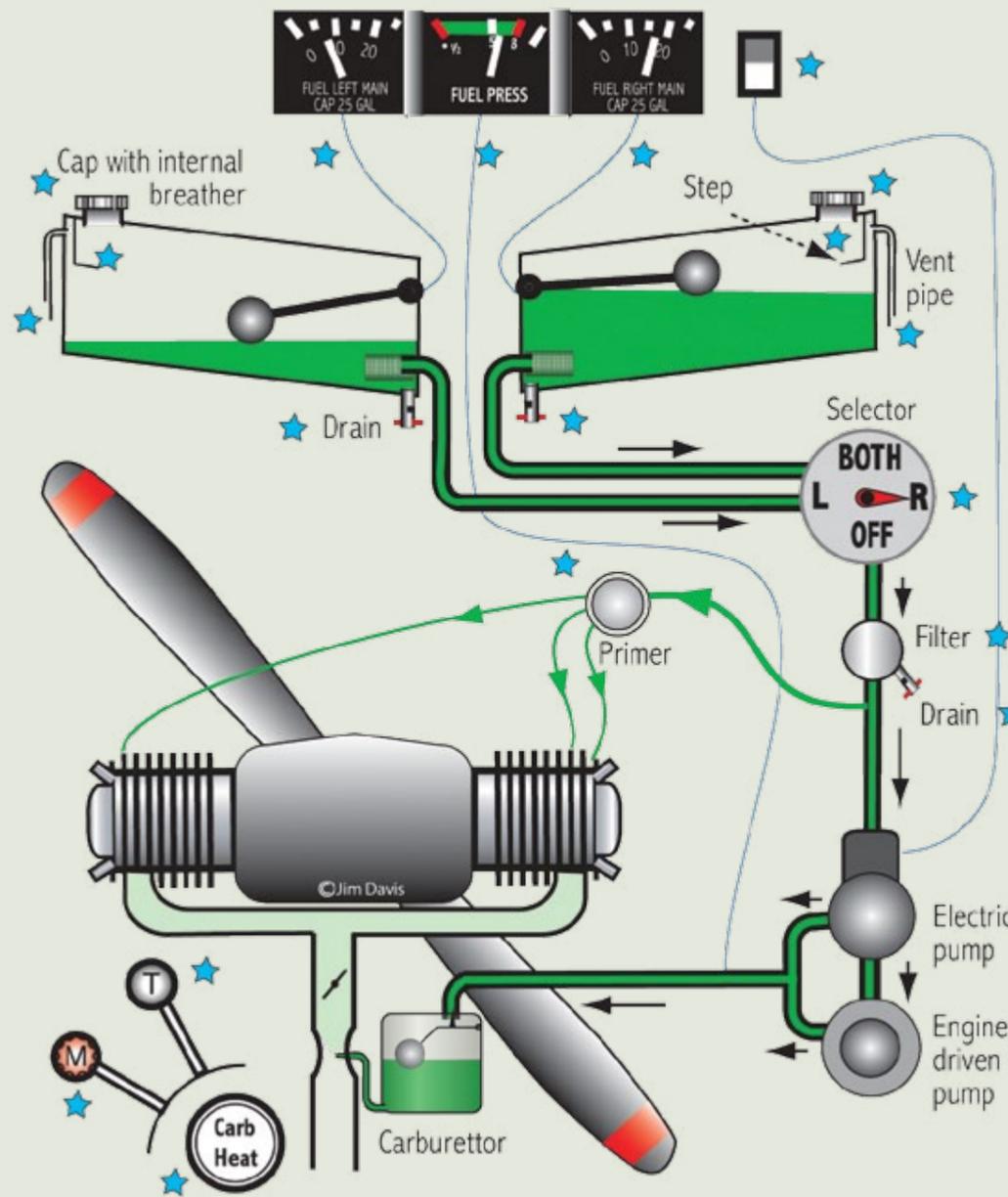
It was turning into a bad day - but not the end of the world - Caledon's dirt runway was within easy gliding distance. Bob turned towards the field, made sure everyone was tied in and judged the descent beautifully.

But fate had still not finished dealing her appalling hand.

They approached a little high - as it should on such occasions - and Bob only selected gear and flaps when certain of making the threshold comfortably.

The final crunch was just that - the crunch of alclad and rivets against gravel. They had done a wheels-up in their new aircraft.

Now, when I was a hanger-boy for Placo at Wonderboom in the 60s, my boss, and mentor, Zingi Harrison, said, "Davis, when the dust has settled after an accident, there are only two things to blame. It was either the aircraft's fault or the pilot's. Don't blame the weather, the dirty fuel, the crosswind or the slippery runway - those are pilot problems - the aircraft didn't choose them."



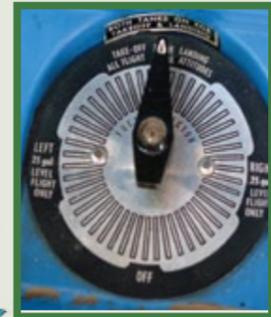
Cherokee Fuel Cap



Cherokee Fuel Pump Switch



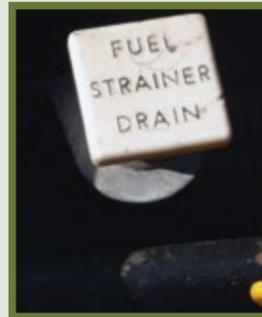
Cherokee Selector



172 Fuel Selector



235 Fuel Drain Lever



Cessna Drain



Tripacer Cap



Tiger Trim & Drain



Fuel Breather

What Zingi said the best part of half a century ago is still true for light aircraft accidents today.

So where does the blame lie for Bob and Peter's broken Twin Comanche on that dusty Caledon strip? It seems pretty obvious that the aircraft was at fault. But was it?

Here's what happened. That accident started two months before this flight. Bob had come to me for a conversion to the twin; when I told him to expect somewhere around ten hours he went off to a buddy of his who gave him a "quick conversion". I go cold when I hear those words.

Also, Bob was one of those guys who are a bit too slick around the cockpit. But the bottom line is that Bob didn't understand the machinery he was flying.

He was not used to generator switches. On most singles the generator is switched on with the master switch. Twins usually have separate switches - one for each generator, so you can test them individually or switch off one if it gives trouble. You've got it - Bob's flashing hand never found those blue generator switches.

From there on it was pretty predictable. The radios were the first to suffer from low voltage, then came the fuel gauges. Next, the solenoids that select the tip-tanks dropped out and fuel feed defaulted to the empty auxiliaries. Finally, there wasn't any electricity left to extend the flaps and undercarriage.

How could two experienced pilots get it all so wrong? Well, until the engines stopped there was no single item shouting "Warning - look at me - red flag". Radios do pack up - particularly on older aircraft. Twin Comanche fuel gauges are not technological wonders - they are vague wandery things. Besides, both pilots had visually inspected all the tanks. In any case dicky, fuel gauges are not an obvious indication of major electrical problems.

That is the thing with electrical systems - they don't wake you with clanging alarms - they leave subtle clues, suggestions and innuendo. It is your job to understand these hints.

So the problem was caused by the pilot not understanding the electrical system? Well, yes and no. The engines stopped because he didn't understand that the fuel system had electric solenoids that selected the tip tanks. So he also didn't understand the fuel system. If he had, he could have restored power by simply selecting the mains.

The diagram, on the page opposite, shows a typical light aircraft fuel system. It is a minefield of potential trouble spots. I have put blue stars next to all the bits you should understand. If you know how things work you are in a strong position to avoid trouble or find a way round it when it arrives.

The priming system on a four-cylinder engine normally primes only three cylinders. This is so

that if you over-prime at least one cylinder is OK and there is a chance that it will start on that one.

If any of the thin copper pipes are cracked, broken or loose, there is a risk that priming will spray fuel around, possibly causing an engine fire at start-up.

Most primers have an indent position which stops them from turning and unlocking - which can cause an engine failure. If you are not sure about this, have a good look at yours next time you fly and get the feel of how it works.

The fuel selector is prone to mismanagement and mechanical problems. Imagine you are on a longish flight. You start with full fuel, and you record your use of each tank. Let's say the left gives you exactly two and a half hours. It seems reasonable to expect the same from the right tank (allowing a bit for the climb). If you are flying one of the Cherokee series you would be correct, but many of the Cessnas will give you far less time on the second tank. This is because they tend to cross-feed, which means that while you are flying on the first tank, it is also taking in fuel from the other one - making a nonsense of your figures.

Cessnas also do it on the ground if the aircraft is not dead level. Fill up the tanks of your 172 in the evening for an early morning departure, and you can be in a lot of trouble if the ground is not exactly level - or even if one tyre is soft.

The fuel drains from the high to the low tank and then overflows into the grass leaving no trace. Flying with the ball out of the middle can do the same.

While I am knocking Cessna fuel systems, the little 150 and 152 series, have a baffling fuel selector. How on earth are we meant to translate the flat-on-the-floor diagram to the vertically mounted selector?

Some fuel-injection systems draw more fuel than the engine uses, and then return the surplus to a particular tank. This causes mayhem with fuel management because the receiving tank either overflows into the slipstream, or mysteriously fills itself in flight.

Twin Comanche tip tanks are selected using electric solenoids. This means that if you run out of electricity, you also run out of fuel.

In all cases the message is clear – study the POH (Pilot's Operating Handbook) and understand the system.

A final word on fuel selection – unporting. This means fuel in the selected tank moving away from the outlet pipe – which can cause the engine to hesitate or fail. It is induced by the ball being seriously out of the middle (sideslipping) in flight, or cowboy turns on the ground. Swing on to the runway and open the taps and the engine may start sucking air at the while you are trying to clear the trees.

Fuel caps are more complex than they appear. Many, like the Cherokee ones, contain a breather which lets in air but not water, and won't let the fuel out. Cessna went through a phase, which may not be over, of having a series of expensive mods on fuel caps. Some sucked in water, some leaked and others didn't breathe. Each new cap came with terrible warnings about using the previous model.

If a cap comes off in flight, not only do you lose the cap but also a whole lake of fuel – it gets sucked out by the low pressure above the wing. On low-wing aircraft, you may watch in horror while this happens, but on a high-wing, fuel starvation may be your first sign of trouble. On many twins the lost fuel swirls into the exhaust gases – say no more. The moral – never let anyone else check your fuel caps.

Breathers and vents. Sometimes they are part of the cap, sometimes part of the filler neck, sometimes separate little pipes. The terms are often interchanged but correctly a breather lets air in to replace the fuel that is used, while a vent allows for expansion and overflow. Again, check your POH to understand the system; and remember Zingi's tank scrunching bug.

Drain points. The idea is to drain a sample of fuel from the low points of the system. While Cessna's multiple tank drains are a nightmare they are understandable and they do the job. Some of Piper's drains are just plain stupid. Ones that you drain from inside the cockpit are

like the Aztec – you sample pipe-fuel, not tank-fuel. They also ruin the tar under the aircraft, cause a fire hazard, and often you can't be certain that they have stopped draining. Doing it properly is a two person job – one inside, and one grovelling on hands and knees with a two-litre bottle.

Also, beware the gascolator (fuel filter) drain on low-wing aircraft. You can sometimes leave this open without fuel running out. Once you are inside with a tank selected and the electric pump on, fuel will pour out, but you won't see this – it's hidden below the cowl.

Finally, how about systems that require you to pull a knob next to the oil cap and dump fuel into your shoe, or on to tar immediately below the exhaust? What was Mr Cessna thinking?

The electric pump. Its purpose depends on the fuel system and engine type. For fuel-injection, the pump is used to prime a cold system or purge air-bubbles from a hot one. With carburettor engines, the electric pump is a stand-by in case the mechanical one fails.

It is a very good habit, after take off, when you switch the electric pump off, to keep your finger on the switch for a few moments while you watch the fuel pressure, or flow, gauge.

But the only real way to avoid fuelish mistakes is to read the POH and understand the system. Sorry, have I said that already?

How to Ground Loop a Sonerai 2!

by Phil Bristow

I have about 4hrs tail dragger time on a Bushbaby and 40 hours on the Sonerai. Time spent perfecting taildragger flight on the Sonerai has been interesting, to say the least. My instructor signed me out after I managed to make it back to FASH) 01 after engine failure from 800ft just after takeoff. There is nothing like a non-simulated forced landing to make you get it right first time.

ZS ULK (The HULK) has a steerable tail wheel but no brakes to speak of. I have to choose well which airfields to land at and take note of airfield gradient, wind direction and X-wind strengths. Nothing like flying the JORA, Ikarus or Titan Tornado with less concern for the above. My typical approach is to slow down from a cruise (+-135mph) to 90mph on downwind, try to slow down to 80 on base and aim for 75 over the fence. I have to do a lot of slip to see the runway. Once I straighten out after round-out, I cannot see the runway ahead and can also see very little on the peripheral as I have the mid-wing Sonerai 2. Once I have three pointed I push stick forward and roll until airflow can't keep the tail up. The drum 'park' brakes help to slow down the last 30 meters or so.

That's the background: On the Day Oom Callie (JORA) and I decide to visit Bugs airfield at Theewaterskloof near Villiersdorp. Nice long runway (800m?) but only one way in and the

other way out due to a big mountain. Bugs fly's a Barron out of the airfield so he has put some tar for run-up's at the ends but otherwise, it's all gravel. My approach was similar to always, but I wanted to come in even slower than normal to give myself some extra room. After three pointing I pushed the stick forward as usual, and all was good. When I felt comfortable with the speed, I dropped the tail, perhaps a little sooner than normal. The HULK started to wonder off to the left a little, but this is no problem just apply a little right rudder (tail wheel). . . . No response!! I killed the motor and continued to apply right rudder while also breaking as much as possible without losing traction on the gravel. Three seconds later I was in a bush! Two minutes later after establishing that it was just my ego that had been bruised Callie was canning himself. Five minutes later the HULK was out the bush, and we established that she had not even a scratch! Fifteen minutes later we were in the air heading back. One day later all of Swellendam was calling to ask if I was changing the HULK's reg to 'John Deer.'

On reflection: I should have kept the tail up for as long as possible. Dropping the tail left me with no airflow over the rudder. A quick burst of power may have assisted with this. I am busy in negotiation with the goose over the loot needed to pay for disc brakes!

Fly Safe
Phil



Our First Presidents Trophy Air Race

By Alan Hussey

Funny how some of life's most memorable experiences start as a joke.

It all began with a simple Facebook comment in which I described my ground speed coming back from some trip in my Aquilla as being "almost fast enough to qualify for the PTAR..." A chap called Piet Meyer then replied to this by saying "How about we enter my Jabbi next year...you can be my Navigator?" So started our adventure into air racing....

Before I realised he was actually "serious" about this, Piet had started the process, and we found ourselves slowly preparing to be entered into the oldest Air Race in the world... The Presidents Trophy.

The PTAR is held annually every last weekend in May. A different venue is chosen every year, and the 2016 event was due to be held in Bethlehem, NE Free State. It is exactly what it suggests, a race. Competitors race each other over two days, navigating a different 300NM route each day according to a handicap in a similar fashion to Golf. This allows faster aircraft to race against slower aircraft over the same course.

The minimum cruise speed allowed is 100knts and Piet's Jabiru J400 was fast enough to qualify. With a few months left until the day, Piet and I had a few practice runs and NAV exercises to get used to both each other's company as well as the performance and capability of the Jabbi ZU-DUU, which I coined "The Jabbaught"....."Team Tailwinds" was officially born.

Flying a WCM trike, with very little experience flying in fixed wings, coupled with the fact that my knowledge of Quantum Physics was infinitely higher than that of "Air Racing", I soon discovered that navigating in a trike is completely different to that of a fixed wing!

Firstly... the idiots that design these blik planes seem to have a fear of windows? There's not enough of them....and then they decide to block the biggest one with a strange panel of gauges, switches, buttons and gizmo's most of which make no sense to a Samosa driver like me?

Secondly, the world passes you by quite leisurely in a trike....leaving you plenty of time to take photos, have a chat to your PAX, fiddle with the GPS or radio....or just generally enjoy playing around while you now and then check your heading or something serious like that? My first trip in the Jabbi made me realize how tough this was going to be, and my biggest challenge, in the beginning, was getting used to things like the added speed, looking further up the horizon and to the side for landmarks and working harder on the accuracy of my headings and calculations due to the reduced visibility from the cockpit.



Our practice flights went fairly well, and we spent the months before the race reading up on previous editions and learning as much as we could about the race itself. In the flights we did do in preparation, we concentrated on flying as accurately as possible, but we never pushed the Jabbi too hard regarding speed. We figured that in the race we would just do the same except faster? Simple?...Yes. Naive?... In hindsight, definitely!

Before we knew it, the day of departure arrived. On a clear, calm Thursday morning we packed the Jabbi and taxied to the holding point at Wonderboom. We flew via Springs to Bethlehem in great conditions full of excitement at the prospect of competing in this long awaited event.

We touched down at Bethlehem Aerodrome on Rwy 11 and vacated to an army of marshals who guided us down the parking area to our numbered slot along the line of competitors. Before we had even got out the aircraft we were greeted by our hosts and a shuttle vehicle was ready and waiting to take our gear up to the Registration area.

We were immediately amazed and impressed by the level of organisation and professionalism displayed? Before long we had our bags in a hired car, and Piet and I headed off to the hangars to sign in and get our Race Numbers.

Pilot and Navigator each get a bag of goodies and memorabilia. Mine contained the Race Course Booklet and maps. A well versed and bound booklet with each turn point both photographed and laid out in order. Rules, procedures and safety info all in one easy to flip through the layout. Brilliant!

We drove back to the plane and proudly stuck our race number 53 on the Jabbi's flanks. Even the re-fueling was managed to perfection through a system of stickers for each day. Once you've registered, the bowser simply fuels your plane for you on the apron after each days flying and writes the fuel intake on the sticker. Effortless and easy management. I cannot compliment the Organizers enough; we were blown away by their professionalism!

We took a drive to our nearby Guesthouse and checked in before driving straight back to the airport for some planning and to relax. Two marquees were set up and were a hive of activity. Beer, food and banter were everywhere, with the tents filling up fast as more and more planes and competitors arrived. Large tables in the tents were utilised for flight planning and made the tiresome job of joining maps much easier.



Over a quiet beer, Piet and I opened our Race Program and started planning the next day's first challenge.

Now to understand the race, I need to explain briefly how each day works....

Day 1 is a Timed Nav over roughly 300 NM against your handicap speed. Your handicap is the average ground speed your aircraft is deemed to be capable of doing and is determined by a Committee using a complicated formula that no one seems to understand except the Committee themselves?

Believe me...there is much debate and grumbling about this....and even we did not think the Jabbi capable of the 123.7 knts we had been given, but more on that later....

Equipped with this info, competitors start Day 1 all flying the same route but taking off from the fastest handicap to the slowest in 30-second intervals. Thus, the faster planes fly away from, the slower planes and each aircraft essentially flies against itself to set the fastest time.

Day 2 is exactly the opposite, and planes take off from slowest to fastest based again on handicap as well as the results from Day 1. (Time lost or gained according to your handicap)

This ensures that the competitors will all roughly finish the race together, with the faster planes slowly catching up to the slower ones. The whole point of the race is to fly as fast as possible according to your handicap... and hopefully faster! In theory...the first plane over the line after Day 2 is usually the winner, but this is not always the case as penalties and other factors can influence the final result.

Race Day 1:

Day 1 of the PTAR started with a Safety Briefing. This was done twice daily and is essential to the safe passage of this event. Strict roll call is in place with each crew's Race No being called out and ticked off after you acknowledge your presence. If you miss a briefing, you don't compete...no exceptions.

We were briefed by the Race Director and it must be said he likes to keep things serious but fun, and I enjoyed his chirps and presentation of matters. Emphasis was, as it should be, on safety and common sense? "Hi Risk" flying demands nothing less....and in a hangar filled with the crews of close to 100 aircraft we all listened intently to the instructions.

After the Briefing, we head off to be issued our official race Data Loggers, the only timing/tracking device allowed. Planes are scrutinised and inspected, and we also hand in our cellphones and any other GPS-enabled devices to be sealed into a bag. They are taken with for safety but obviously a broken seal will be grounds for disqualification! We go back to the plane and await the 10h00 start time. Essentially we are in "Quarantine" ready for the action.

Onto the madness...

The previous day I had joined (for the first time in my life) four 1:250000 Aeronautical Charts together with sellotape to plot our course. Our route would be a 96NM leg from Bethlehem to Volksrust, followed by a 100NM leg to the next turning point at Heilbron.... then SW for 65NM to Senekal and a 40 odd mile final leg via an Apple Orchard back to Bethlehem. Total distance 301 NM.

The parking lot is a double line of planes,

parked wingtip to wingtip on both sides of the inactive grass runway. Waiting patiently for our 10h33 start time, we watch the aircraft ahead of us on the Apron slowly start up and enter the taxiway on the far side. It is difficult not to compare this sight with what RAF pilots must have seen in the Battle of Britain so many years ago? Like battle hardened Spitfires, each row of competitors fire their beasts up and taxi single file up to the start line...and into "war".

We jump in the Jabbaught and fire up the engine. Idling in anticipation, the Marshall's get closer until at last you hear your Race number called.



"Race 53, Taxi via the centre line to the starting line and check your logger on!" Thumbs up, green lights on the logger and we are off.

There are at least 20 aircraft in the cue in front of us. Run up's and control checks all done by the time you line up. Slowly you enter the active in staggered positions like a real Grand Prix! The starting light sequence releases a plane every 30 seconds.

Hearts pumping we count down the planes and etch ever forward till we are on the line....

White and red flash.....then red on for 6 seconds.....Piet hits the throttle, holding her on the brakes until the white flashes... GO GO GO! We are rolling, and the adventure begins!

Rotate and fly to the first turn at the end of the runway....hard right and we set our heading for Volksrust. We climb slowly, and I call out the marks and way points as we go. All is good until I make my first mistake. We are right on track till we pass Aasvoelkop.

Here the terrain starts to rise in a series of ridges and isolated rocky outcrops. At 1000ft AGL I could see over them....now at 500to 700ft agl I lose sight of the landmarks, and we start to drift off track. Looking, searching....



nothing looks familiar? We keep going.

A large ridge appears in front.

Left or right? "Dammit....don't know....go left Piet!"

I know we're close to Volksrust but where the hell is it?

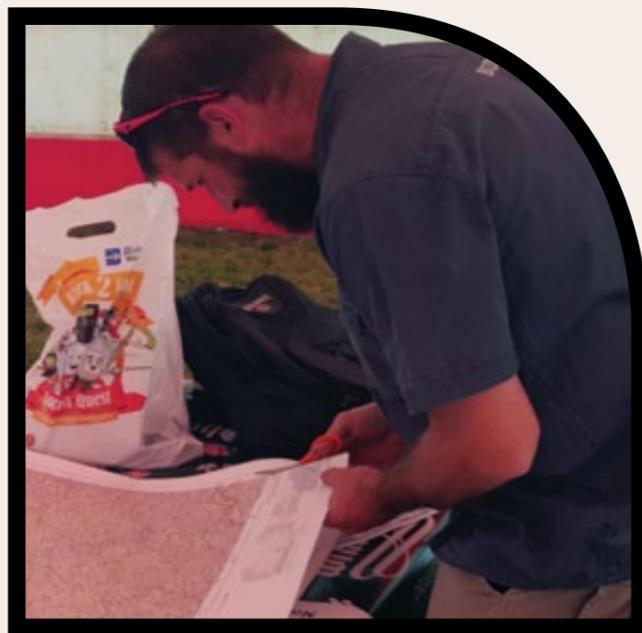
Suddenly we see planes at our 11 o'clock headed the other way. They must've turned... but where the hell is the town?

We hug in close to the ridge on our right and as it ends we finally see Volksrust right below and to our right, hidden all this time by being on the wrong side of the ridge!

We can see the dayglo orange gazebo marking the Turn Point, and we have to correct our angle.

No traffic on the left so we descend in a right turn and make a hard left around the Turnpoint making sure we are inside the 200 to 700ft turn point height limit.

Onward we go towards Turn two at Heilbron, another 100NM north east. I have to adapt quickly. In our practices, the farm roads were easy to spot as the reddish brown soil stands out against the dry veld? Here in the winter Freestate landscape, the grey sandy roads are hidden in the veld making them much more difficult to spot from afar. In addition to this, the drought has rendered most dams empty, or near so, which makes them just as difficult to spot! I start looking for farms instead. These are visible for miles as almost all of them have tall green trees around the homestead in the otherwise treeless surroundings. I start lining them up along our track. "See that farmhouse Piet?....we need to route just to the left..."



This is working much better, and we find Heilbron without incident. Onwards we fly, "full taps" towards Senekal. We achieved less than a 0,2% error on this track, so it proved we were flying far more accurately now. We turn at the gazebo and enter the final run into Bethlehem via an apple orchard way point. This was added so that we would approach the finish at a more perpendicular angle. Piet holds heading and height perfectly, and as the finish creeps up into view, we start to relax a bit.

Cross the line, join RH Downwind and Piet gently puts her down on Runway 29.

As we exit the active and taxi to the apron, we are exhausted, relieved and excited all at once. The sheer levels of concentration we had to keep up for the last 2,5 hours have sapped us dry.

We tie the Jabbi down and the bowser refuels, so we head off to hand in the loggers and get a well-deserved beer as we wait for the results. There is little time to relax for me.....

No sooner has that beer calmed my excitement and I have to start joining maps together again for the next day. It's a bow tie shaped route, shorter this time but just as complex with the first three critical legs flown over very sparsely populated landscapes with little to guide you?

A few more ales and a meal in the tent amongst the camaraderie and laughter but we retire early...

No partying into the night for Race 53...we are simply exhausted.

Race Day 2:

Both naturally early riser's, Piet and I are huddled around the table with the map at 5 am doing final calculations and studying our tracks intently. The briefing started promptly at 8 am. We get our start times and loggers again and head off to the plane to prepare for the most difficult and challenging phase of the race. Our Route today takes us from Bethlehem to the town of Montevideo, then North to Kroonstad before routeing back to Bethlehem (bow tie crossover) and then eastwards towards Harrismith. Here we turn North West and head for Reitz before the final turn southbound again for the finish line. Total distance is 275NM.

We ended the previous day over 6 minutes behind thanks to my bugger up near Volksrust. We knew we were not going to make the top 25, but we were hopeful of at least making up a few places on this day for our pride if nothing else?

The first plane, a Piper took off at exactly 10h39. We lined up 16 aircraft down the line and patiently waited with sweaty palms for our 10h53 start. Grand Prix style again we

are staggered up to the start line. Engine humming and wings were shuddering from the prop blasts in front after each light flashes. The gaps vary from minutes to just a few seconds. Sometimes the plane in front is not even airborne yet before your light flashes white and it's "Game on!"

We had quite a long gap after the plane in front took off. Approx 50 seconds passed before our lights sent us careering down RWY 29 and into the action. We rotate and turn 30 degrees left towards Montevideo. We have no visual on the aircraft in front of us as he is too far so we must be accurate on our heading. We turn at the first point and at this stage everything is pretty similar to the day before. I am calling out the headings and landmarks, and Piet is flying full throttle as best he can in the choppy, unstable skies.

We see one aircraft headed in the wrong direction. We hold our heading, and we can see Kroonstad creeping in from the haze. "Where the hell is the airfield Piet?" I can't pick it out and judging by the other aircraft weaving up ahead neither can they? F

inally, we see the gazebo....we are just about on top of the damn thing! Hard 275-degree turn and we are headed back to Bethlehem for the crossover. The planes ahead seem unsure of their heading? We don't follow them as I'm convinced of my heading.

We start slowly catching traffic, and we passed at least two planes on this leg. Finally, Bethlehem comes into view. The crossover is beyond the airfield on a bridge over the dam. We have to descend to be within the turn point limit which we do, but no sooner have we done that and set course for Harrismith then we realise we have a massive ridge right in front of us. Piet puts the Jabbi in a climb, and our airspeed starts to die immediately.

We have no choice....the Jabbi starts to climb slowly as we fly towards the Ridge....we are still well below safe height and its looming closer and closer. Our ASI is sitting at 75 knts....this little climb is killing our race time! We are fast reaching a critical point as we have to turn soon enough towards the low ground on our right if we are to avoid a really stupid accident? We get a bit of ridge lift, and suddenly we are soaring nicely to a safe height to clear the big stone obstacle in front. We carry on... can't look back....it's balls to the wall boys!

At this stage of the route, navigation becomes less important than keeping your eyes outside the cockpit. Planes start overtaking you....and you them... and it takes on the feeling of a proper race. We had a yellow Sling in front that we set our sights on. Slowly we hauled them in, and we overtook them on the inside as we turned overhead Harrismith.

Yeehaa! One down.

Between Harrismith and Reitz the sky becomes filled with aircraft....Left, right, below... above....everywhere you look you have aircraft passing you. The Lancair (the fastest plane in the race by handicap) whizzes past our one o'clock at over 220knts! That pearl beast is like a paper plane with a rocket engine...we may as well have been standing still? There's no more map reading... all we are doing is monitoring ourselves and others....holding our line, not making any sudden moves. Follow the dots (other planes) is the name of the game at this stage of the race unless you are still in front? We turn at Reitz, stressful in the extreme due to the sheer number of planes around us. Keep it stable, don't run wide....it's sensory overload as we all make the final dash to the finish!

124.80 is filled with short and sharp comms..."53 Beep beep!"..."96 Beep beep" giving simple warnings to the planes being overtaken. You hear your number and just hold your line. You can only avoid what's in front of you; you have to put all your trust in the pilots coming up from behind that they will, in turn, avoid you!

This little piece of the countryside has just become the "prop wash" capital of the world! No way to avoid it you just correct and power on through.

We see the finish and the Jabbi gives it all.... across the line.... we are finally done!

Or so we thought?

Now to put this in perspective... 79 aircraft crossed the finish line in under 9 minutes! That's a plane roughly every 7 seconds, and now each of these have to join and land! We joined as instructed behind a long line on a LH Downwind. At least 20 ahead of us in the circuit, all trying as best they can to maintain separation and the 90knt circuit speed required. When we turned base, we almost couldn't see the airfield anymore. Planes ahead weaving on finals to try force some space. Coming in hot, 30 knts faster than a normal approach, Piet dumps some flap to try slow down over the threshold, the Jabbi floats.... reluctant to give up flying. Up ahead it is crazy. Three planes still on the runway....and they are slowing down....we are running out of space!

Piet is about to hit the go around button when the Jabbi (probably due to wake effect) simply falls out the sky from about 8 feet. We hit hard on the back wheels and bounce back into the air....

"Shit...shit SHIT!"

In a flash Piet gives power, and we level off.....5 feet....10 feet....slowly up and over we go.

"53 Going round!"

We climb away from danger, and when my heart starts beating again, I look at Piet and ask if we still have all our wheels? We have a chuckle, but we're both pretty rattled. We come around again and land uneventfully as the circuit clears. We slowly taxi to the apron and shut the Jabbaught down. Our race is run, and the Jabbi has not skipped a beat.

I have never been more happy to be alive (after our close call).....and I can honestly say I have never felt more "alive" in an aircraft than during those 575 NM of racing? As we reflect on the mistakes and the close calls, the nerves and the excitement, we are both filled with euphoria and jubilation and a quiet but self-satisfying level of achievement. What an unbelievable experience we have both just shared...

We take our logger in and await the Formal Dinner and Prize Giving. Dressed in our best, we sit in a Hangar Banquet Hall around tables as the results and trophies are slowly handed out...

The results? Well, the results were quite irrelevant to me?

Officially, 104 entries were received. 87 Aircraft started Day one, and 80 were left in the running after the end of Day two.

Team Tailwinds came 69th with no penalties.

Sounds pretty mediocre... but Piet and I were ecstatic and very happy with our result having picked up five places on the final day.

Much is said about the inaccuracy of the Handicaps? However, considering how close the field is to each other at the end of the race, it satisfies me at least that the handicaps given are pretty damn close to accurate with a few exceptions of course. Even ours was proven fairly accurate....and had we not overflowed the distance by 10 miles due to errors in navigation we would have probably finished very close to the 123,7 knots we had to aim for?

I think Piet and I both approached this event with the right attitude? We did not care about handicaps and winning; we did this race to prove something to ourselves... nobody else. We achieved that and so much more.

Is it safe? Yes, it is as safe as you allow it to be?

Although we witnessed some unbelievable risks being taken, the overwhelming majority of pilots taking part conduct themselves in a most professional and sensible manner. You don't have to fly the race at tree top level (some do) and sticking to the rules and applying common sense while remaining within your own limits will ensure you complete the challenge safely. It takes both sets of eyes outside the cockpit at times, but

you are always in control of the risk. The most dangerous part of the race is, without doubt, the last 30 miles or so. Many planes around you and the joining and landing phase is equally challenging. We learnt valuable lessons here that we will take through to next year!

We had an unbelievably rewarding and challenging experience that we will both never forget.

Rally se moer!....This is a RACE! See you in Springs! I leave you with some funny RT heard on Day 2.

Pilot:
"Traffic in the Reitz area, XYZ routeing from (somewhere) to (somewhere)....any conflicting traffic?"

Race:
"Last caller be advised...Air Race in progress, 80 aircraft routeing to Reitz at this time...please keep a look out!"

Pilot:
"Copy that.... at what altitude?"

Race:
" EVERY ALTITUDE!!!"

PS - Stephen Roussouw took the picture top right.





Top LeftL Sunrise. Top Right (Left to Right) Donovan Barton-Hobbs, Donald Hicks, Mark Warren, Rowena Kraidy and Deon Kraidy. Bottom Left: Mike Visagie and Ricardo de Bonis. Bottom RightL Len and Christine Klopper.



EAA Convention – Mossel Bay – MISASA Fly-In



The Marshalls braving the cold- From the left: John Boucher, Paul Sabatier, Mike Visagie and Nigel Musgrave.

The whole event received ample coverage in the aviation media including Pilots Post written by Cobus Brink and SA Flyer written by Horace Blok. So, without repeating what has already been printed ... a brief experience of the event. Microlight & LSA events in the Western Cape are lacking – that’s a fact! I was hoping that this event could and would lead to greater things. Sadly, the weather threw us a curve ball.

I serve on the Mossel Bay Aero Club Committee, and when fellow committee member – Horace Blok presented the fact that the EAA Convention would be hosted in Mossel Bay, I jumped to the possibility of co-hosting or at least “piggy-backing” on the event albeit just the Saturday. The advantage of this would mean that all the legal requirements regarding a special air event would be sorted and in place.

I ran the idea past Paul Lastrucci of EAA, and I got the nod of approval and in Paul’s words – “Let’s spread the love.”

Some familiar “team members” would be present namely Nigel Musgrave & Paul Sabatier. I would also be working with Mike Visagie for the first time but only in an observation/advisory capacity – it was after all primarily an EAA event.





Top Left: Thelma Roberts-Boucher & JP. Grubbs Up! Top Right, Monique & Michael Davies and Bottom Left, Elna Botha and Keith Bekenstein. Bottom Right: Gunther Klamofi sharing his shoulders - It looks like he cannot believe his luck!



From the left back: Len Klopper Jenny Feyerabend, Christine Klopper, John Boucher, Donald Williamson, Monique Davies and Elna Botha. From the left front: Gunter Klampfi, Michael Davies and Keith Benkenstein.

The skies would be in charge of renowned ATC Ivan Louw ("Know Your Spots" fame) and assisted by Bianca Olivier – both ex FAGG ATNS.

The weather, the weather, the weather At least we can blame something for the less than expected turn out. As the weekend drew nearer, it was evident that microlights and LSA's were going to be hampered due to a couple of fast advancing cold fronts. The bottom line was that if you were not on the ground at FAMO by the afternoon of the 28th April, you weren't going to get in safely for the next couple of days.

Deon & Rowena Kraidy drove all the way from Hoedspruit.

The chaps from Natal including Donald Hicks and Craig Lang and Bryan Erasmus from Port Elizabeth can vouch for that.

Mike Visagie flew with Ricardo de Bonis in the unique AirCam and Andrew Conroy, all the way from Jacobsdal, in his somewhat patriotic coloured CH750 uniquely registered ZU-WTF. They had routed via the Robinson Pass and experienced some challenging CAT (clear air turbulence) - It was definitely all "rock and roll" for them.

The MISASA chaps had expected some camping facilities, but we had gone one better. SkyDive Mossel Bay owner and fellow committee member Henk van Wyk, had decided to move his operation to Oudtshoorn for the weekend and all of a sudden – "5-star" facilities were available!

My word, toilets, lounge suites, DSTV, carpeted floors and most of all WARM SHOWERS!

A couple of toilets and warm showers is all we were asked for by the chaps that wanted to come early, camp over and support the airfield; especially the clubhouse! We were happy to exceed expectations.





Top Left: Mr & Mrs Donald Williamson. Roger Brink leading the Cubby Fltpast.

Below left: Savage S. Below Right: Len Kohler, Donald Hicks, Donovan Barton-Hobbs and Mark Warren.



Friday we were greeted with lots of grey matter, water, cold & miserable conditions. No flying today and what was less promising was that Saturday's prediction wasn't looking much better. So what does one do? You occupy the club's bar and restaurant, watch videos, hangar talk and "bigtime kuier"!

The evening festivities were restricted to a massive braai and liquid refreshments and rubbing shoulders with the EAA chaps and others drinking red wine we dare not mention! Saturday dawned... it did not look great. One cannot compete with the weather, and that was that.

Well, matters did change towards 10 am, and some chaps could hop in and go and do some sightseeing in the area.

Some flew as far as Malgas I do believe ;-). A contingent of MISASA & SAGPA members and their loved ones arrived from Morning Star, and they will no doubt identify themselves in some of the photos reflecting the good time had by all.

Nigel Musgrave had been quite busy on the apron and only thought it fitting that I relieve him for a couple of hours. The EAA chaps had active presentations in some of the hangars

and those that had not flown somewhere, attended the interesting topics presented. On Saturday evening, MISASA members and friends had the clubhouse to themselves as EAA members attended the EAA banquet in the Diaz Hotel. All had a fabulous and fun filled evening.

Sunday saw most pilots and aircraft depart as the weather had lifted and as Murphy would have it, turned out to be a glorious day.

Lessons learnt, and we look forward to a national MISASA event in 2017... where remains to be seen.



John Young (Left), Andrew Strydom, Theo Scheepers & Billy Louw. The smiles are for the forever young and enthralling, WASP; Sharon Seager, who is standing in front of them with the camera. Looks like Andrew has the biggest smile! Ed.



From a young boy, I have always been fascinated by aviation. In my early twenties, I applied to join the Civilian Airforce but unfortunately failed the eyesight medical.

A few years later, now living in Durban, with a wife, two small sons & a mortgage, I took up flying Radio Control model aircraft, which was a great hobby for me & my sons. It also fueled my passion for flying.

Relocating to East London the Radio Control flying went on the back burner for a few years, but having

finally finished educating my sons & they having flown the nest, I took it up again. Flamingo, the airfield where I often flew, just happened to have a hangarhousing Andrew Strydom's Microlight, & the rest, as one says is history! Inevitably, Andrew invited me for a flip & I was hooked! I started taking lessons at age 65 & obtained my licence at 66.

I bought a WindlassTrike in December 2009, which I am still flying, I have even persuaded my wife to join me! The longest flight I have done to date is from East London to Port Alfred for a week's holiday.

Flying is my passion, my wife says it's my mistress, (she's probably right!) I'm now 72 & I still love it, I fly as often as I can, so my advice to all aspiring pilots

out there, go for it! You're never too old to follow your dream!

Fly safe

John Young



I FINALLY GAVE UP MY TRAINING WHEEL

by Roy Gregson and Amy Barnes

Roy Gregson, the elder of the "Gregson Brothers" Protea flying team, describes his lifelong dream of owning a Piper J3 Cub as just that... a dream!

"I have been enthralled with this aircraft since I knew what an aircraft was. At the age of 18, I received a gift to experience an introductory flight in the aircraft and after that, I was hooked. In 1996, on a trip to Oshkosh, I recall admiring a L4 Piper Grasshopper that was at the Airshow. On returning home, I bought a scrap 1957 Piper Tripacer, which I believed would be the closest I would ever come to owning a Piper Cub.

I spent the next 14 years restoring it to its former beauty, and it has become a part of the family. It is a seriously underrated four seater. It is Piper's last high wing and first nose wheel aircraft." Roy explains. Almost 50 years later Roy's dream was to become a reality when in 2014, a Piper L4 Grasshopper, similar to the one he had seen in Oshkosh in 1996, was up for sale."

He decided it was now or never!

"In partnership with my son and a friend, who didn't need too much convincing, we bought this beautiful, authentic and simple aircraft. After three days; 16 hours of flight time, the Grasshopper finally arrived home.

My son, Marc, and I flew from Morningstar in Cape Town to Panorama Johannesburg. I flew a Sling as a Tanker and Marc flew the Grasshopper. It has two and a half hours endurance and flies at 70mph, with a strong head wind, this meant many stops along the way, landing every one and a half to two hours to refuel.

She is a 1942 Piper L4 Grasshopper, the Military version of a J3 Cub. It was active in WW2 in the American Army Air Force from 1942 to 1945 and far as I know, it is the only "real" original in South Africa."

We at the Johannesburg Flying Academy are excited to share the news that the Grasshopper has been introduced into the school and is available for introductory flights for others to experience the thrill of flight, with her door open, low and slow.



Aero Canard Southern Africa The Creation and Start-up By Barend de Beer

For the past three and a half years, my wife Sarie and I have been building a Cozy MkIV rotary turbo aircraft. We are ready for the flight tests to confirm that everything is working as planned in a safe and reliable manner.

Our journey began in October 2011 when we bought the plans from Aircraft Spruce in America. We initially started the building process with the fuselage and smaller components in our garage at home, and then as the aircraft progressed, we moved it to our hangar at Wonderboom. Kevin Hopper, the CAA AP from the Experimental Aircraft Association, has been invaluable throughout the process; guiding us, carrying out inspections and making sure that all the components we built from scratch complied with the quality and technical specifications."

There are approximately 300 cozy MkIV's worldwide, with our aircraft being one of

four Cozy's built in South Africa. The unique safety features, excellent performance figures, four seat ability and futuristic looks of the Cozy convinced us that this is the only aircraft for us.

The Cozy MkIV was originally designed by Burt Rutan, the creator of the Virgin Space Ship One. Unlike a conventional aircraft, the Cozy will not stall mid-flight; instead, it automatically lowers its nose and flies faster if the plane is being flown too slowly. This immediately eliminates one of the primary reasons for a potential accident. With its exceptional design, the aircraft comfortably seats four people and can carry up to 440kgs. It has a cruise speed of 320kph, a range of 1800kms and only weighs 476kgs.

This has been an amazing journey for my wife and me, and we are proud of what we have achieved with the help and support of the EAA.

During the building process of our Cozy we realised the exceptional design, safety and performance abilities of this aircraft and so

we decided to explore the possibilities of marketing and selling this amazing aircraft in the Southern Africa region. We started by making contact with Aero Canard in the United States who produce various plans and Kit options for the Aerocanard aircraft range which is a derivative of the Cozy MKIV. Aero Canard awarded the Southern Africa region agency to us, and we are now able to offer several options to future builders ranging from plans, building materials, quick built kits and technical support from an approved AMO at Wonderboom airport. Our options can be customised to fit in with any potential builders budget and technical ability. The quick build support program will enable a customer to be in the air with his new Aerocanard in less than six months.

During our launch exhibition at the Wonderboom Adrenaline show, the interest of existing pilots and the general public surpassed our wildest dreams. To view the kit and aircraft options, please visit our website at www.aerocanard.co.za or contact Barend at 0713055752

Grahamstown on the fly

Grocott's Mail: 20 May 2016 - Letters to the Editor

Photo's by Sharon Seager

In a show of support for Grahamstown, some 45 aircraft flew in last Sunday morning (15 May). Aviators from Port Alfred, Queenstown, PE, Uitenhage and East London arrived just after 8am in what was described as the as the largest number of aircraft - which, in this case, included helicopters, vintage and modern fixed wing as well as microlights - to assemble in Grahamstown since the second World War when Grahamstown airfield was used as a training base for South African pilots.

Organisers of the event said that, with Makana under administration, resources are scarce to maintain the airport.

Spokesperson for the community flying club, Ron Weisenberg said, "Donations received from the Eastern Cape aviators will go a long way towards doing urgent maintenance work on structures and facilities."

"Grahamstown Flying Club enjoys a good relationship with the Municipality and we work together to keep the airport viable."

" We want to thank the Eastern Cape flying community for their sense of connection and support."

It was a great turnout and the Grahamstown Flying Club was delighted."

Multi tasking, Sharon Seager took the pic's whilst flying her trike. Right is Eugene Raderman with his wings. Ed.



The largest no. of aircraft in Grahamstown since the Second World War!





Bo: Carla & Adele Loots
Onder: Hendrik Loots

“Sling projek (“kit”) te koop in Krugersdorp.” AVCOM, jou doring!!!!

Dear Hendrik Loots

Dis 2 September 2013.

Ek wou nog altyd ‘n “geniune Aerie” hê, maar ai-toggie, die goed is so duur!!!. Menigte nagte het ek oop oë gelê en dink oor die koop. Toe besluit ek, tot hier toe en nie verder nie. Rustig opgestaan en my jare lange “hanger” maat, Theunis Botha-alias AWACS-Wingman 2, gebel. “Chomma, ek wil ‘n Sling kit koop. Stel jy belang in ‘n vennootskap?”

Na vele aande se koffie drink by die Mugg en Bean in Irene Mall, het ons uiteindelik ons dierbare vroutjies oorreed oor hoekom dit so ‘n goeie koop is. Die nodige oproepe is gemaak, prys beding, en die wiele is aan die rol gesit.

Ons koop die romp, onderstel asook die stertgedeelte. Die res sal gekoop word soos die proses vorder. Ek het geen kennis van aluminium, rivets, clecocs, rivnuts ens nie. Gelukkig is my “partner” darem ‘n man met kennis

in hierdie velde. Altans, so sê hy....’n Sleepwa is gehuur en die rompedeelte, asook ander los stukke van die vliegtuig, is vanaf Krugersdorp na die “Sling Cave” verskuif.

Stuk vir stuk is daar met die groot “Macano” stel begin. Eers was dit lekker...toe minder lekker en daarna werk. Gelukkig het ons van Vincent te hore gekom. Hierdie man is ‘n kenner van formaat. Hy werk reeds jare vir Mike en met hom betrokke, het die los stukke van die legkaart ‘n prentjie begin vorm. Jandrè, my seun, en Christo, Theunis se seun, het ook so af en toe gehelp.

Tot op hede het ek soveel ander Slings staan en bewonder. Gaan my droom om eendag so ‘n vliegtuig te besit, bewaarheid word??? In watter kleure gaan hierdie stukke rou aluminium opgetof raak???...Rooi, blou, rooi en wit, wit en blou....ek weet nie.

Die koppe werk oortyd!!!! Daar is soveel moontlikhede!!!!. Een ding weet ek en Theunis verseker - ons Sling gaan uniek wees - dit gaan en moet ‘n “stunner” wees. Ons wil die voorblad van vele vliegtuyskrifte haal - en ons gaan dit regkry!!!. Hoe weet ons nog nie, maar ons visie is groot. Orals het die oë geloer vir idees. Die Airplane Factory is gereeld besoek om te sien wat ons volgende moet doen. Mike Blyth het ons gehelp en vir ons gewys watter plaatjie kom waar en hoe pas die “manual” eintlik inmekaar. Hy het alles so maklik laat lyk, maar glo my, baie-baie ure se werk gaan in so ‘n projek in.

Dis tyd om engine te koop. Geld uitgehaal en klaar gekoop. Nog’n treetjie nader aan my droom.

24 Augustus 2014.

Die engine word gehang, en die propeller word opgesit.

Nou lyk hierdie stuk blik darem meer na “aerie”. Maande gaan verby en daar word baie min aan die vliegtuig gewerk. Ons daaglike verpligtinge neem weer oor en alles staan nou stil. “Ons sal ons gatte weer in rat moet kry Theuna” word daar gemompel. “Ek stem...ek stem saam.” bevestig Theunis. Die regte woordjies word in die vrouens se ore gefluister en met alle moontlike beskikbare tyd, kry ons weer die projek aan die loop.

Dis 2 Februarie 2015. Presies 1 jaar en 5 maande nadat ons die vliegtuig gekoop het. Die vlerke is so pas betaal. Die karretjie se wiele draai weer in die rigting van die Airplane Factory. Sleepwa gehak en reg vir die aksie. By die Airplane Factory aangekom, word die nodige bokse met stukkie aluminium gelaai. Ek dink so by myself: “Hoe is dit moontlik dat ons ‘n vlerk uit hierdie stukkie blik kan bou?”.

Gelukkig, vroeg in ons bouproses, het ek en Theunis

besef dat ons nie al die kennis het om hierdie vliegtuigie aanmekaar te sit nie. Ons sal maar die nodige kennis moet huur om ons te help. Sodoende het Eric, Buthu en Vincent ons gehelp om die nodiste te doen. Ek en Jandrè het gerivet dat ons blou word en clecocs ingesit vir ‘n vale. Daar is geprime en die generators het amper aan die brand geraak soos hulle gestaan en brul het. Lekker man....lekkerrrr. Die vlerke is in ‘n rekord tyd van 2 naweke(Saterdag en Sondag) gebou. Pragtig...’n ware stukkie kuns.

Die tyd het aangebreek en ons moes ons kleurkeuses maak. Ek hou van rooi - Theunis is ‘n Blou Bul en dus is sy keuse natuurlik blou. Wit was van die begin die gemeenskaplike tweede kleur. Prentjies is ingekleur en daar is fotos van ander Slings geneem, maar ons wil nogsteeds uniek wees in ons kleurkeuse en ontwerp. Daar is ge-google en gesoek. Koppe is bymekaar gesit en toe het ons dit. ‘n Ware kunswerk word uit alle

moontlike bronne saamgestel. Mona Lisa op haar beste!!! Kwotasie vir verf is aangevra met terugvoer soos: “Remember, very good design but also very expensive”.

Ons wil dit hê. Dis ons styl en ons weet dat ons nie te duur kan gaan nie, maar ons kan ook nie “Fly by Nights” kry, wat al ons harde werk, kan opneuk nie. Die verfwerk is van die belangrikste kwaliteite van ‘n goed afgeronde vliegtuig. Ons vliegtuig gaan en moet duursaam lyk. Ons visie leef voort. Verwer gekry wat ons uiters professioneel kon help en “WOW, stunning, exceptional” ensovoorts was die terugvoer op die eindproduk.

Soos die projek vorder, word ons glimlagte net groter. Ons twee maters is bevoorreg, werklik bevoorreg!!!!. Ons kan sien dat ons droom stadig maar seker waar word. Ons regte “aerie” word nou ‘n tiener. Die baba-tyd is verby en haar spiere word stadig meer gevorm.





Bo: Carla Loots en Danicke du Plessis
Middel: Vincent (voor), Christo Botha (agter) en Jandre Loots
Onder: Adele en Hendrik Loots

Teen middel September 2015 is die “canopy” klaar gedoen en nou begin die vliegtuig vorm kry. Dis tyd vir instrument rangskikking, skakelaar plasings, rekenaarprogramme word ingespan en finale besluite word geneem. Instrumente is intussen klaar aangekoop. Grottes word op die instrument paneel ingesny en die installering en bedrading begin.

Die vliegtuig is amper klaar. Die nodige leer vir sitplekke word aangekoop. Spesiale ontwerpe op die sitplekke word uitgekies. Privaat ouens word ingespan en die eindproduk is net soos ons die wou hê. Matjies word aangekoop, gesny en pragtig in binnekant uitgelê. Harde werk en baie ure, maar die tuigie begin nou 5-ster karakteristieke aanneem. Ek en Theunis se sakke is leeg, maar ons voel soos rykgatte. Dis mos die lewe man....One Live, Live It.... is die troos.

Tyd vir “Authority to Fly” en registrasie. Die nodige manne is gekontak. Die dokumentasie is volledig en sorgvuldig voorberei en dus was hierdie proses sonder enige probleme afgehandel

Dis tyd om SLING ZU-IHK te “start”. Die sleutel is gedraai en alles werk soos dit moet. Klein verstellings hier en daar op die instrumente en propeller en alles loop soos ‘n droom. Alle grondtoetsings is voltooi. Soos twee stout seuntjies het ek en Theunis die aanloopbaan op en af getaxi. Gedurig het daar ‘n stemmetjie by my opgekom wat sê: “Styg die vliegtuigie op seuna. Jy wag nou al so lank om die tuigie te vlieg...gee net bietjie meer “throttle” en da gaat jy”!!!!” Gelukkig was daar altyd verantwoordelike mense om ons.....

Die Airplane Factory het die vliegtoets kom doen. Een van die grootste oomblikke in my lewe was sekerlik toe ZU-IHK haar wiele die eerste keer van moederaarde lig. “Sy vlieg....sy vlieg en klink so mooi....”

Dis 11 Desember 2015, 09:02:56. Vandag is ek ‘n “Sling Pilot”. ‘n “Pilot” van ‘n vliegtuig, wat met die hulp en insette van ‘n ware vriend, self gebou is. Thanks Theunis....

‘n DROOM IS BEWAARHEID.....

CRECHE CRUISE TO BARBERTON

Every year Mervyn Reynold’s takes a group of pilots from Microland to visit Brian Young at his airfield and fly-in lodge in Barberton. I did it years ago with Stafford Masie and others and we had an awesome time. Brian now offers an optional extra course in spotting emergency landing possibilities and on how to assess, in a flash, the danger of a dead stop landing. Let me explain.

I am writing this story because ROCKETMAN has writers cramp. If ever you find yourself asking your friends: - “Am I a Pilot?” - “Am I really a Casanova?” - “Am I a scribe?” Chances are you’re not feeling wildly confident as you have lost the spark to light your rockets! I simply cannot believe that my good friend and scribe ROCKETMAN (aka Brian Young) has nothing more to say. He has not written us a story in ages.

Brian has an incurable ailment. It is common among Casanova’s who cannot keep an eye on the ball - it just happens; it’s called - The Roving Eye! In Brian’s case, there is nothing counterfeit about it as it comes from years of flying with one eye constantly hunting for an emergency landing spot.

In his case, his Roving Eye has gone global. I hear that he is busy, around the world, conducting workshops. It’s the ultimate in 20/20 vision that offers perfect freedom in the air and happy emergency landings. The ailment is however that dead stop landings are hard to find. But then who says that short term, emergency touch and go’s aren’t more fun!

Attend Brians’s Touch ‘n Go course and you will learn not to cry because it’s over; you’ll learn to share a smile because it happened! Yip, as Brian says, “I’ll teach you to get airbourne.”

Fly safe, Ed



Flying in the Smog

by Phillip van Rooyen

Many years ago I flew my Rotax 503 powered Beaver Microlight from home base Lichtenburg to Klip Rivier south of Johannesburg. I always longed to fly there again and decided that the Tedderfield breakfast fly-in will be the day.

Weather reports were so-so. I left early and with a slight tailwind the 180km's were eaten away quickly. With about 20km's to go the Johannesburg smog, fog and smoke, appeared in my flight path.

I decided to carry on. Soon the visibility went down to about 1km. I had to make a decision fast before I got into serious trouble. I calmly thought my situation through. At 6,500 feet ASL I was at the upper edge of the smog, I could see the horizon clearly which meant I would not lose control of the aircraft.

In the Jhb special rules area, I did not go above 6,500 feet ASL, and I stayed on the radio on 125.8. With visibility at about 1km, it was good enough to be able to do an emergency landing if needed. Not that there is any place to land in the concrete jungle!

I could turn back and divert to Carltonville if things worsened. Then there is a danger

area to avoid near Tedderfield and a no go area inside their circuit area and the helicopter training area east of the circuit. 8km's west of Tedderfield I left the purple track on my faithful GPS and followed the N14 east to avoid the danger area on my right. As I was flying into the rising sun, my visibility worsened, but the highway offered guidance.

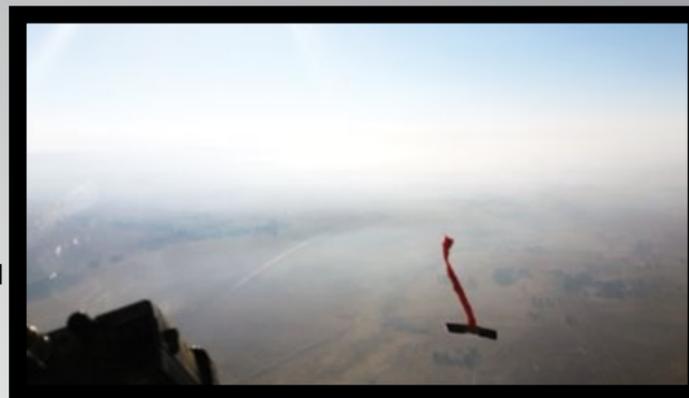
The circuits at Tedderfield are RW11 left hand and RW29 right hand. I tried in vain to contact other pilots at the field for active runway info. A few minutes back I did a radio check with two Bathawks who were flying near Fochville, and they confirmed that my comms were working fine. I decided to go for RW11 and just beyond the danger area where the N14 intersects with the N1 south I turned and joined RW11 left base.

At that stage, visibility was about 500 meters, but to my relief, the hangers and airstrip loomed into sight.

Here are some interesting facts.

I was the only Microlight that flew in. No one responded to my radio calls because nobody was flying due to the bad visibility.

What made this flight special for me is that my son, daughter in law and grandson joined me there for breakfast.



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