



On The Step

Issue 30 - April 2012

Newsletter
of the
Seaplane
Pilots
Association
of
Australia

From the M'ship Coordinator

Why I love seaplanes

We received an enquiry from a composer who had created an instrumental piece inspired by his fascination with seaplanes. (see page 7). It got me thinking about the wonderful things about seaplanes that I love. To name just a few:

- The heady mix of aviation and maritime/nautical themes, skills and experiences;
- The whoosh on the hull when you touch down (flying boats that is....not as good on floats);
- That you're mixing it with the boats, and minutes later you can be thousands of feet overhead dancing with the eagles;
- The water splashing up everywhere as you settle down off the step;
- That you can be flying along with other aviators and instead of just saying "what a beautiful lake/river/waterway down there" you can zoom down and be floating on it moments later;
- That you can pull up to a shoreline in your craft and have people come running from everywhere to get a glimpse of your magic carpet and dream/wonder how amazing it must be to fly one;
- That you can get to places you can't go to with any other machine (bar maybe a helicopter with floats, but they're impractical for long distances);
- That you're part of the history of aviation and sharing skills, memories and knowledge with many great men and women of the past glory years!

Philip Dartnell - M'Ship Coordinator,

From the editor

What's the hurry?

Recently a pilot commented that severe head winds had knocked his ground speed back to ONLY 65 kts.

Hmm . . . 65 knots, slow or fast? It's all relative.

You see, I used to do most of my flying in twins and high performance singles, and if my ground speed was not at least 140 kts I was pretty disappointed. So I do understand "the need for speed".

But now I mostly fly my SeaRey, and I cruise at about 75kts TAS.

As I write this I am sitting in the cockpit, over Lake Albert SA, heading for Victoria, my ground speed is only 48kts, and the forecast is for 25-30 kt headwinds all the way to Melbourne. It's going to be a long trip.

But I have had it slower. In the 2007 GASA, 4 SeaReys departed Sydney heading west into the teeth of a howling westerly, in the first hour we averaged 30 kts ground speed.

For a while we were tracking overhead the Western Freeway out of Sydney and we were chastened to watch the cars below us speeding past at 110km/hr.

But it's not all a slow sad story . . .

My pilot friends who have Lancairs, RVs and other pocket rockets, often regale me with stories of how they got from A to B at some phenomenal speed.

I usually ask, "Do you really like flying?" And they invariably answer "Yes!"

So I explain that to fly my SeaRey from A to B would take me 2 or 3 times as long. So I get to do more flying!

And I can stop in at rivers, bays, estuaries, beaches and farm strips along the way.

I call it flying PLUS.

Gear up to Kiss the Water # #

Ross Vining (VH-RRZ) Editor



David Geers "on final" to land at Sir John Falls on the Gordon River. See story on page 8.

Tasmania

Ben Hutchinson

Bathurst Harbour South West Tasmania

Damn that Google Earth! It doesn't show enough detail of remote places to fully satisfy. It just whets the appetite & causes flights of fantasy that can, if not reined in by a pragmatic partner, develop into reality.

And, that's how our Tasmanian trip evolved. We live in Queensland, our summer weather can be oppressive, so heading south seemed like the right direction.

Now, my wife Vicki doesn't like long trips in small planes (a common female affliction) so she suggested we take two vehicles – her campervan and my Lake Buccaneer. Of course, the logistics are more difficult but it gave us travel and accommodation options.

The weather is an important factor in both camping and flying, so we planned for 5 weeks away. Christmas is a fun time in Tasmania with added attractions of the Sydney-Hobart finish, the Taste Festival and hopefully good weather, so we headed off in early December.

Our plan was simple, make our separate ways from Qld and rendezvous in George Town, Tas. After that we'd wing it, so to speak, following whim & weather.

Vicki left a few days before me as she had a deadline with the ferry and although Lake Buccaneers aren't known for their speed, they're a damned lot faster than a Toyota Hiace, can also jump puddles themselves and don't have fixed sailing schedules!

I flew via Flinders Island and camped for 2 nights at Killiecrankie on the NE end. This privately owned gravel airstrip requires prior permission but the area has some spectacular coastline so is worth the stop. I was invited out on a local cray boat to see some of this spectacular coastline firsthand.

From Killiecrankie, I flew south through the Furneaux Group. These islands have many sheltered bays that would be great for seaplanes. But I had a rendezvous so continued without alighting.

At George Town, I was met by Vicki together with a hitchhiker (our daughter Sasha) whom she'd picked up in Melbourne. George Town airport is a friendly base with several runways plus showers and fuel.

With a large high pressure over us, it was time to fly up and explore the high country. Some of the lakes are 3,500ft ASL so careful consideration

must be given to T/O performance on water. I'd successfully tested my Buccaneer on water at close to max TOW using only 26" MP so had a reference as to its water performance at altitude.

The next morning we flew over The Walls of Jerusalem National Park being mindful of the "Fly Neighbourly Advice" relating to this location.

There are many lakes in this area but Great Lake (alt. 3,500ft) looked good for a coffee break. A check of the manifold pressure at full throttle confirmed there'd be sufficient T/O power so we alighted in the lee of an island. The Atomic cappuccino machine (essential seaplane kit) was fired up and we enjoyed our first coffee on the island. It wasn't long before the fickle Tasmanian weather showed its hand with increasing clouds and a wind change necessitating a return to the coast.

It was time to tie the old Buccaneer down in George Town and head off in the van.

We seaplane flyers are truly fortunate (or maybe devious) as there's the possibility of bending the unwritten rule that forbids ownership of more than three items used for pleasurable activities starting with "F". Tasmania is one of those places that together with a flying boat, allows us to combine three such pursuits using the one toy (flying, floating & fishing). Of course, two more toys can now be purchased but care must be taken as some "F" recreational activities, when done to excess or especially when duplicated, can be even more dangerous than flying over tiger country!

The weather gods remained kind over the following weeks and we crisscrossed the State in the plane and van, often going our separate ways to meet up at some distant lake or town. This worked well as we could each indulge our own particular passions, be it fishing, flying, bush walking or shopping.

Tasmania has fantastic seaplane destinations - Port Arthur, Bruny Island, the Huon Valley and the delights of D'Entrecasteaux Channel are all just a half hour's flight from Hobart. Even the remote Bathurst and Macquarie Harbours are within easy reach although care must be taken in choosing the right weather.

Hobart is particularly vibrant around New Year. Flying out over the Sydney-Hobart finishers and being part of the evening action is a wonderful experience; but I also loved the quiet country roads of Tas, its wilderness, remote lakes, trout fishing and friendly people.

I can't wait to return!



***Vicki & Sasha fire up the Atomic
Cappuccino machine at Great Lake
on the Tasmanian High Plateau.***

The First US Navy Pacific Flight

1925 saw the first serious attempt to fly from the US mainland to Hawaii. It almost ended in disaster, but instead turned into a testament to determination and ingenuity. This story is adapted from the book "Above the Pacific" by William J. Horvat



The PN-9 aircraft in Hawaii, the fabric under the wing was used to make a sail, and note the makeshift "keel" at the side of the fuselage.

Patrol planes, ships and submarines were despatched in a huge search operation. The crew expected to be found soon, refuelled and continue on their way to Honolulu.

Rodgers radio receiver used battery power so they could hear the messages from the searching ships and aircraft. But without the engine powered generator they could not transmit!

In 1925 the US Navy wanted to use aircraft to span the Pacific Ocean from the USA to Hawaii. No aircraft had attempted such a long distance flight before.

The Naval Aircraft Factory built new aircraft for the task. They used two newly designed 500HP Packard engines, with reduction gearing to give a high power to weight ratio. This, coupled with the new, strong, lightweight "duralumin", produced an aircraft which could carry more than its own weight in useful load.

Commander Rodgers, captain of the flight, was a pioneer of seaplane navigation. He combined several sextants to make one he could use in a seaplane and estimated their wind drift by sighting on a flare which ignited when it struck the water.

The navy positioned 10 ships at 200 mile intervals as checkpoints along the intended flight path. In the day, the ships smoke marked the path and at night they had searchlights. Each ships had a radio compass and could pass bearings to the aircraft.

San Francisco was chosen as the departure point because it had a long body of good water for the take off run. And they needed every bit of it. Rodgers' aircraft, carrying 1,278 gallons of fuel in tanks and 50 additional gallons in five gallon tins was so heavy it could not get on the step. After jettisoning weight, they became airborne after a 4 mile run. They were so heavy it took them 40 miles to climb to 300 feet.

They flew through the night and most of the next day picking up the navy ships every 200 miles. They planned to alight beside one of the last few checkpoint ships to refuel.

The 9th ship, the "Aroostook" was a seaplane tender with aviation personnel and fuel and since they had had little problem locating each of the first 8 ships Rodgers did not anticipate any problem finding it.

However this was not to be, and after an hour of searching they exhausted their fuel and landed without power in heavy swells in the open ocean.

Listening to the search, it was evident that the vessels were getting further away. On day 2 it became clear they may not be found, so they decided to sail the plane to land themselves.

They improvised sails using fabric from the lower wing and fastened between the wings. Facing the wind, the plane moved along at about two knots. Using the rudder they managed to "sail" a few degrees off the direction of the wind. Later the men pulled up some of the metal floor boards and used them to improvise a makeshift keel. Though unwieldy, this enabled them to "sail" up to 20 degrees off the wind.

Their food ran out after 3 days. They were desperately short of water. They had a still but it needed gasoline. They improvised by burning wood from the trailing edge of the wing, this made them a few extra litres of water. Their water ran out on day 6. They were saved from a thirsty death by heavy rain on Day 8.

The unique sailing rig moved the plane about 50 miles a day. The eighth night they saw searchlights, from the Islands 100miles away. Their radio receiver also picked up Navy communications saying the plane must have sunk and the search should be called off.

With limited directional control they aimed to make land fall at Kauai. They were 10 miles off shore by 2 pm, and did not want to try entering the harbour at night. They took the sails down, improvised a sea anchor and fired star shells to attract attention.

A submarine came to rescue them and after providing food and water, offered to take the men on board.

Rodgers and his men refused to leave their craft. They wanted to sail her into Ahukini Harbour. Finally Rodgers relented and allowed the submarine to tow them in, saying "Any ship takes a pilot going into the harbour."

Rodgers and his crew succeeded in reaching Hawaii from the mainland, though not as planned. They covered 1,870 miles in the air, a world record, followed by an incredible sail of 450 miles, in nine days to Kauai.

Honolulu International Airport terminal building is named in honour of John Rodgers.



Rodgers and crew - Note the open cockpits!



Lake Boga Splashin • 20/21st April

Friday 20th April - Seaplanes, start arriving in afternoon. Joy flights by Melbourne Seaplanes. Dinner at Mystic Park Hotel - 1830

Saturday 21st April - Joy flights by Melb Seaplanes. All visiting seaplanes to be parked by 1200. Lunch, tea, coffee, drinks at the museum.

1400 Opening of new Catalina museum by Federal, & Local MPs plus Mayor of Swan Hill.

1600 Fly past of all seaplanes.

Dinner at Lake Boga, guest speaker Captain John Bertrand AM BE (Winner of America's Cup 1983)

Sunday 22nd April - Local flying. Depart for home bases as required.

Operational Details - Visiting pilots, see procedures on Searey intranet site, Lake Boga
www.wwx.com.au/intranet/seaplane

Aircraft Parking; Enter the ramp, turn right and park on the road, aircraft will be marshalled.

Fuel. Mogas at local service station, Avgas at Swan Hill.

Transport; Small bus will transport crews as required.

Fly Past; it's promising to be a spectacular fly past with 11 Seareys & Petrels, 3 Lakes, 3 C180/185/Bird dog and a Helicopter.

The fly past is being coordinated by Jack Peters.

Exact procedures will be dependent upon conditions on the day.

There will be a procedures and safety briefing for all participating pilots at 1500 on Saturday 21st

For more details contact Jack Peters 0414 737 400

The Russian built
MBR-2 (1932)



Beriev Be-200ES

The Russian made Beriev Be-200ES is a multipurpose amphibious aircraft designed for fire fighting, emergency response, search&rescue and air freight. It can trace its origins back to the MBR-2 which first flew in 1932 in Sevastopol.



G'day Ross,

I went to the Singapore Airshow in Feb. There was a Beriev Be-200 there. Talked our way on board ("trying to convince our governments to consider one for fire fighting....???") Huge aircraft inside...can seat 70 pax or any combination of emergency personnel, stretcher cases, cargo pallets, rubber-duckies and/or scoop up 12 tons of water in 15 secs and get it to the scene of the fire at 300+ kts. Got its own crane to lift stuff in or out of the cargo door. Would love a fly of it but not on the cards, unfortunately. Check <http://www.beriev.com> (Delay Mobile 0412434)

Delay (John Daley) enjoying the hospitality aboard the Beriev Be-200



Tasmanian Hospitality



Seaplane "shed" on the Huon River

Water skiers & Seaplanes can be friends!

March saw a veritable flock of seaplanes heading for Tasmania

- Rohan Whittington & American Visitor Mike Cannon - in Rohan's Super Petrel
- David Geers & American visitor Rob - SeaRey
- Bill & Donna Handley - Lake Buccaneer
- Ross & Ben Vining - SeaRey

Vaun Moncur & Joe - in Vaun's Jabiru (yes it's not a seaplane! Vaun was awaiting delivery of his Super Petrel, but could not wait to go on his first splash-in, so he and his friend Joe, followed us in his Jabiru.

The group, from Qld, NSW, Vic and SA was to congregate at Tooradin in Vic but the weather intervened and we were scattered to the 4 winds.

We eventually found each other at St Helens in Tassie. Bill and Donna were last into the St Helens strip in

appalling weather. Donna commented that she was a little concerned during the final approach through rain, and low cloud that she may meet St Peter before they got to St Helens. But Bill's careful piloting got them through safe and sound.

In Tassie we met and were assisted by so many wonderful people.

Gary Skinner and Voula were the most marvellous hosts, providing accommodation, + seaplane parking + a great BBQ dinner at their beautiful home on the banks of the Huon River, south of Hobart.

We were all envious of Gary's "hangar" a converted boat shed in his back yard with ramp down into the river. His hangar houses a Seawind - almost ready to fly, and a SeaStar (early version of the Petrel) undergoing repairs.

Kyle Gardner (SPAA Tas rep) organised a BBQ lunch for us at a water ski camp at Meadowbank Lake.

Numerous water ski families made us most welcome with a sumptuous BBQ lunch.

Vaun landed at one small strip where a local loaned us a cute little "noddy car" for a couple of days.

Other excursions included trips to Bathurst Harbour, Sir John Falls (see story this issue), Port Arthur, Strahan and King Island.

Tasmania is a seaplane pilot's delight - plan a trip there soon. (Ed)



The Group, from the left - Rohan, Ross, Bill, Donna, Mike, Joe, Vaun, David, Rob



Seaplane parking lot at Gary Skinner's place on the Huon River

Gary Skinner and Voula - Huon River

Vaun in the "Noddy Car"

2012 TRANSIT OF VENUS

SUN-EARTH DAY: SHADOWS OF THE SUN

No this is not a seaplane trip, but for anyone interested in navigation and astronomy, this is your last opportunity to experience a rare astronomical phenomena, when the planet Venus crosses the face of the Sun.

The next "transit of Venus" will occur on 6 June 2012 - it won't happen again until the year 2117 - and Australia and NZ are well placed to see it - see map.

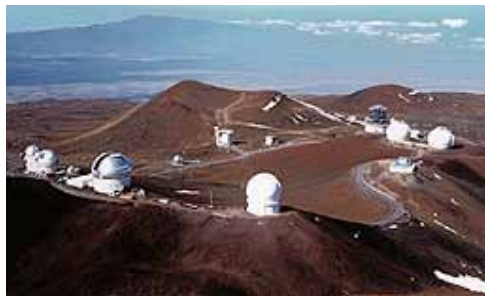
The transit will commence at approx 8:16am and conclude at 2:44pm, Sydney time.

This astronomical oddity played an important role in helping us understand the size of the solar system.

The first recorded sighting of a transit of Venus was by British cleric, Jeremiah Horrocks, in 1639 and he only saw it because he had mathematically predicted it.

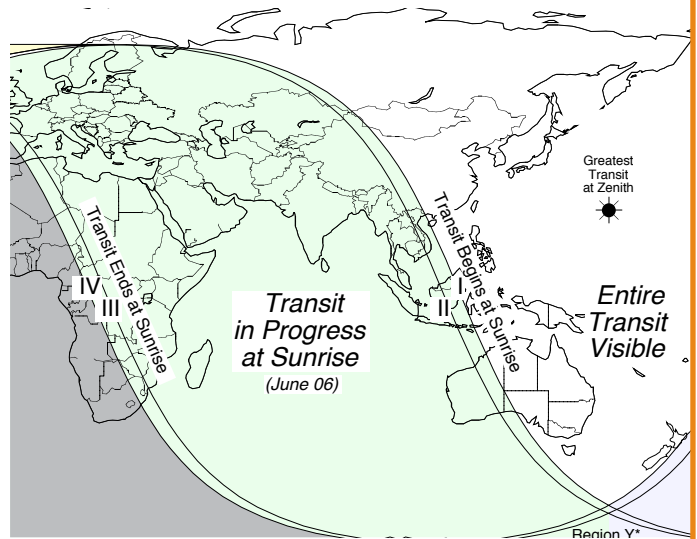
In 1663, mathematician Rev. James Gregory suggested that the Earth-Sun distance could be determined using data from a transit of Venus.

During the 1761 transit, Russian astronomer Mikhail Lomonosov



noted a beautiful halo around Venus as it slide into the Sun's bright edge. This was the first indication that Venus had an atmosphere!

For more info see <http://sunearthday.nasa.gov> That website will webcast the transit live from the Mauna Kea Observatory in Hawaii.



In 1769 many international expeditions planned observations. The most famous was led by Capt. James Cook in the Endeavour. His astronomers set up an observation post in Tahiti at a position now known as "Point Venus". They later discovered New Zealand, got stuck on the Great Barrier Reef, and explored the then unknown coasts of Australia. This expedition established Cook's fame as a mariner and explorer.

The next transit, on December 6, 1882, made world headlines. Enormous volumes of photographs and data were collected and in 1896, after a decade of calculations, the Earth-Sun distance was established to be 93 million miles.

The Venus transit continues to fascinate scientists and the public. Don't miss this rare opportunity to experience the wonder of our universe.

Don Mueang Airport Thailand October 2011

Late 2011 saw the worst floods in Thailand in half a century.

Floodwaters closed Don Mueang Airport in Bangkok and left many aircraft looking like they needed floats.

The floods in Thailand claimed several hundred lives and will cost \$billions in repairs for the country.



Great Barrier Reef

From David Geers

I have been advised by the Qld Parks & Wildlife Service that non-commercial seaplane scenic flights do not need a permit to operate in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park, or for the Great Barrier Reef Coast Marine Park (State). However they are concerned that landing and take-offs around islands and cays in the GBR may disturb nesting seabirds and impact on survival rates of chicks.

Accordingly there is an extensive list of islands and cays in all areas of the GBR from which aircraft are excluded. This list may be downloaded from ????. Whilst the recreational use of the marine park is an "as of right" use, all users of the marine park must abide by the zoning regulations set out for each of the relevant zones.

For further information contact: Scott Firth
Senior Technical Officer-Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area; Qld Parks & Wildlife Service
Ph: 07 4222 5279 : scott.firth@derm.qld.gov.au

Seaplane Music

From Philip Dartnell

A recent enquiry read:

I am a musician - a composer. I am hoping to interest a company in an instrumental piece I have written and recorded entitled "Adventures in a Flying Boat". It would be perfect to accompany a film/video of the romance and adventure of seaplanes.

I would appreciate any help. Steve Warner

I supplied Steve with info and asked him "What inspired him to compose "Seaplane Music"?"

Steve's reply was:

Seaplanes look so sleek I just want to jump in one and go. It's the romance of it that has got to me. What can be more romantic than a seaplane with all its possibilities and associations?

I have attached the track from my album "Sketches of Paradise". It was the seminal piece - the tone I wanted to set for the rest of the album. We used a tropical ocean scene on the cover, with a little sketch of a seaplane.

Steve Warner
warner.tribe@bigpond.com

Steve's music is very evocative. I felt I'd been transported to Fiji/Jamaica/Greek Islands (or somewhere that has better weather than Sydney this summer) with lots of smooth turquoise water and a cocktail at a friendly bar by a pool!

I can imagine a great film clip set to this music. It got me thinking about all the wonderful things about seaplanes I love. (see the editorial page of this newsletter.

Steve's music captures many of these feelings and notions. I love the flute work too. Brilliant!

Contact Steve for more info.

Eclipse 2012

In Cairns/Daintree
November 13

Rohan Whittington is coordinating a seaplane gathering for the eclipse at Daintree. He has

accommodation booked and a full house of 8 now. If you are planning to go (and why wouldn't you?) contact Rohan for details on how to connect up.

Ph 0411 321 307 or rohan@hydro-flo.com.au

Rules for Seaplanes in NSW

From Philip Dulhanty

The SPAA resolved to provide a information on the local (state) rules for the operation of seaplanes on the water. This piece covers the rules in NSW.

The NSW Roads & Maritime Authority accepts registered seaplanes as "boats capable of a speed in excess of 10 knots". Their VH Registration is accepted as a boat registration.

To operate on the water, the pilot must have a boat drivers licence - which automatically requires him/her to abide by the regulations and any local rules such as speed limits, noise limits, no wash zones, etc

For a large gathering of seaplanes in an organised "Splash In" a special exclusion zone in the form of an aquatic licence may be applied for and granted. This is common practice for 'EVENTS' such as on the bridge to bridge water ski race on the Hawkesbury River.

Apart from this, there are no special rules for seaplanes so you can alight and take off from any waterway where a speedboat can operate. Although not a requirement it is recommended a seaplane should carry & maintain a listening watch on Marine VHF Channel 16 and be an ACTIVE member of the Volunteer Marine Rescue and Customs Coast Watch.



Friends or family visiting Tasmania? Suggest they get a unique view of Tassies spectacular scenery from a seaplane. New operator, **Tasmanian Air Adventures** operate on the waterfront close to the centre of Hobart. <http://tasmanianairadventures.com.au/>



Sir John Falls - Gordon River Gorge, Tasmania

Ross Vining



Sir John Falls, deep within the Gordon River Gorge, is just a hundred metres downstream from where the "Gordon Below Franklin Dam" was to be built in 1983.

The recent "Summer in Tassie - seaplane trip" included a visit to this spectacular site.

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We took off from the quaint town of Strahan on the west coast and headed south down Macquarie Harbour.

The weather was superb, blue sky, no wind, glassy water. Magic conditions. We were flying in company with 2 other planes, skimming the water, then climbing a little, then down again to skim the water surface.

Macquarie Harbour is huge, but after 30 kms of skimming pleasure, we turned east and started up the Gordon River, stained a deep brown colour by the tannins that drain out of the button grass plains on the high plateaus. On a perfectly still day like this the water looks black and makes a perfect mirror.

We left the river and began a climb to clear the 3,000ft Elliot Range and then descended into the Franklin River Valley.

A commercial seaplane operator briefed us on the tricky procedure for manoeuvring our aircraft down into the 1,000ft deep, narrow, twisting gorge.

The procedure is intimidating. Once in the Franklin River Valley you begin a steady descent to reach an altitude of 900ft at the junction of the Gordon and Franklin rivers. And then it gets really interesting.

I remember it vividly. Fly with me now.

We are flying down the wide Franklin River Valley, descending to 900ft. Ahead we can see the Gordon River coming in from the left, its valley is relatively wide, but where do the combined rivers go?

The map says they continue to the right. But I can't see how that can be. Above the junction of the 2 rivers soars Innes Peak. At 2,179ft it towers above us and appears to merge into the Elliot Range on our right. There does not seem to be anywhere to go.

Then as Innes Peak seems close enough to touch I see that the combined rivers continue down a narrow deep gorge to our right.

I make my first call **"Sir John Falls traffic, Seaplane RRZ is at the junction, 900ft, on descent."**

I bank the plane to the right and enter the gorge. Seconds later I bank into another 90° right turn, I am now in a narrow gorge descending through 800ft heading straight at the summit of the Elliot Range (2,986ft).

A sharp 180° turn to the left looms up.

Another quick radio call **"Romeo Romeo Zulu is at bend one, 700ft"**. I keep to the outside of the bend to gain the maximum turn radius.

We are now deep down in the canyon, the walls of the gorge towering above us on both sides, and so close you feel you could reach out and pluck a leaf.

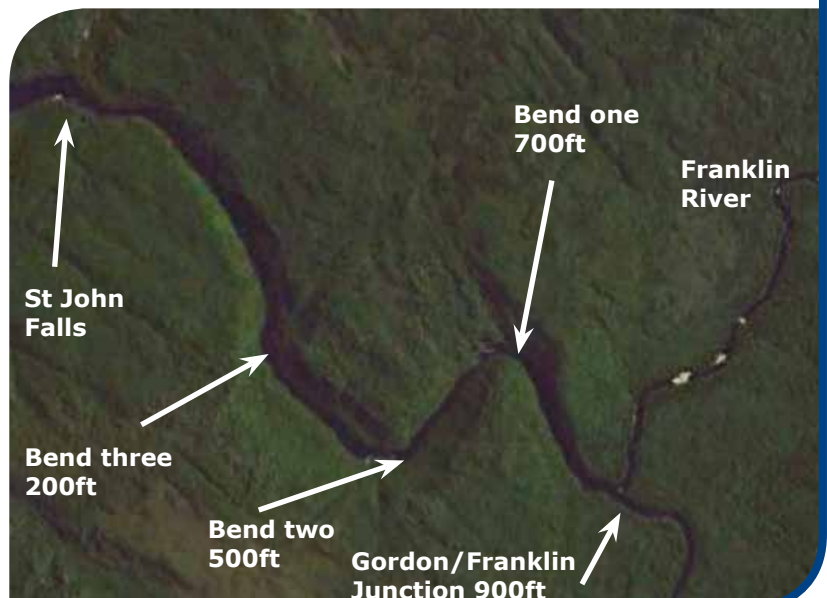
Next is a 120° turn to the right. Another staccato radio call **"Romeo Romeo Zulu is at Bend Two, 500ft"**. Our wing tips are just 20 metres from the rainforest trees clinging to the rock face.

We have barely straightened out when the gorge continues to the right then twists back around to left. Time for the final call **"Romeo Romeo Zulu is at bend three, 200ft"**.

We bank into the turn, round the bend and there is a straight section several hundred metres long filled with ink black water looking like a perfect mirror.

I ease the power, pull the last stage of flap, and grease it onto the water in the most magical place to land a seaplane that I can imagine.

Was that a dream? No it was real! It was a surreal sensation!



Letters, NEWS & Views

Dear Editor - **Business Opportunity**

The Huon Valley Council has recently approved the installation of floating pontoons in front of my water front restaurant. The **Petty Sessions Gourmet Cafe** in Franklin, Tasmania is on the banks of the beautiful Huon River.

I love seaplanes. I co-founded Wilderness Air and operated C185s in the Gordon River for some years.

My restaurant is well established (10 years) highly respected and strategically located on a major tourist route at the heart of Tasmania's most spectacular wilderness scenery.

I understand the Tasmanian tourism market and the operational requirements of a successful Seaplane business. With this in mind I am adding the pontoons to enable seaplane and boat business for the restaurant and also to facilitate a full-time scenic Seaplane tourism business.

Franklin is an ideal location to operate an all year round Seaplane operation.

I would like to attract an Equity Partner for this business. A person with a passion for seaplanes would be an ideal partner. Please contact me to discuss possibilities.

Rod Matthews Ph 0418 129 852
Petty Sessions Cafe 03 6266 3488

Last Newsletter opened with an editorial titled Aircraft and Dogs. I received the following response.

Dear Editor

I read your article "Aircraft and Dogs" in the last newsletter with some concern as I am a dog.

My name is Snoopy and I have been flying from all my life. I am probably the only licenced dog pilot in Australia (as my master is probably the OLDEST pilot still flying).

I came into this world to replace another dog, a blue healer named "Bluebell" who drowned when he crashed at sea.

From my experience I find that I create a considerable Bow Wave until I get on the step. Once on the step and the plane needs a bit of extra lift, I lift my leg which gives us a better "P" factor.

When coming up to a mooring I switch off early and dog paddle the rest of the way.

My grandfather (a Sopwith Pup) flew dogfights against the Red Baron in WWI and he taught me to fly a dog leg before entering the circuit.

But you are right Aeroplanes and Dogs do have a lot in common. We both have a tail, a nose, a stick, we both love patting and we will bite you if you maltreat us.

My owner now has another aeroplane which is a CAT. I don't like fat CATS but a CAT-A-LEANER will be OK!

Snoopy Dulhunty

Dear Editor. As a new floating hull, RAA pilot certificate holder I can't learn enough, quickly enough and I love the advice in the newsletter.

During my WH training I was given several simulated engine failures. I could not believe the confidence and control I had in slipping the Super Petrel LS.

"Question" - If I am too high approaching my intended touch down point, should I slip the Petrel to descend quickly over an obstacle or tree ?

Is there a risk of sending a disturbed air flow over the rear control surfaces, rudder, elevators , vertical fin and wing which could impede control, before I kick it around straight, just before my round out point? It feels safe to me, as I have the sufficient air speed from this steeper decent angle, despite using no throttle! Is this a dangerous practice ?

Vaun Moncur, Victoria

I put this question to our resident safety experts - their replies follow-Editor

**Bill & Donna's Buccaneer
at rest on the Huon River**



=====

G'day, Vaun,

I have no experience of flying a Petrel so I cannot give a definitive answer. If you have practiced it at altitude and it feels OK then it probably is OK. In the Lake and SeaRey (both being high drag aircraft, especially with the flaps down) I generally

just push the nose forward, which gives only a slight increase in speed.

Regards, Kevin Bowe, Queensland

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**The danger with a
slipping approach lies
in allowing the airspeed
to get low.**

**A stall from a slip near
the ground ends the
game violently!**

Hi Vaun,

First, I have no experience with the Petrel, and little with the hull seaplanes. However, the slip (skid) is an effective manoeuvre that is considered safe and controllable in conventional float planes. If a constant speed (controllable pitch propeller, or multi position prop) is available, it is an effective drag producer, producing a greater vertical speed (down) than even full flaps on the Cessna 180-185 series.

I recommend trying every conceivable control position in a slip with the bird in question up at a safe altitude, and near gross weight. If it is not possible to make it uncontrollable, it should be a safe manoeuvre. The danger lies in allowing the airspeed to get low. A stall from a slip near the ground ends the game violently!

Even if familiar with the model, it is a good idea to test the specific airframe as small differences in rigging sometimes make a big difference in how the bird behaves.

Cheers, Dale DeRemmer, USA

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**David Geers in
glassy water
Derwent River
Tasmania**