

# AGC Weekly News

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## Weekend Roster

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### Saturday 13

Tug Pilots: John Bongrain, Dion Manktelow  
 Instructors: Jonathan Cross, Christian Derold  
 Duty Pilot: Dylan Watson

### Sunday 14

Tug Pilots: Ron Burr, Wayne Thomas  
 Instructors: Paul O'Neill-Gregory, Anton Lawrence  
 Duty Pilot: Frank Excell

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## Skysight Weather

### Prior Preparation Prevents Poor Performance

*Adam Woolley*



*Photo Sean Franke*

**SkySight** is the tool that I use for this. A beautifully thought out and well-developed weather forecasting web-based application put together by Australian, Matthew Scutter. With excellent customer service and constant development, this is a one-stop-shop for your daily weather and task planning needs.

SkySight over other forecasting tools is its simplicity, ease of use and navigation around the site. What does this mean? Simply, you can envisage the weather easier and make fewer interpretation errors. Let's take a look below at how I plan my flights!

### Potential Flight Distance

I always start here, it gives me a quick snapshot of what can be expected for the day as a guide or benchmark. In particular, I look for the highest PFD within 50km of the airfield, this shows me where the thermals are going the longest – i.e. determining the best finish direction.

### Point Forecast

This feature gives an all-in-one snapshot of the day from the selected point. It primarily helps me select my earliest possible launch time, or allows me to launch when the day is strongest for a short and sharp task. Additionally, you can see all cloud bands in an easy to interpret graph, climb rates throughout the day, wind direction and temperatures - very handy!

Note: In complex or changeable weather, it may be best to check a few different points around the airfield, because local effects may be significant and affect the location you choose, but not those immediately around.

### XC Speed

A fabulous tool to see where the conditions will give the fastest possible cross-country speeds. Or, should you be looking for an easy flight, just plan as much of your flight in the hotter colors - this will basically take you through the higher height bands, the stronger and easier to work thermal strengths! I use this to compliment the PFD too, to help determine my first and last leg direction.

### CU Cloudbase and Depth

Naturally, this one is good to check for the area, to see the areas there are expected to be Cumulus clouds. Areas with grey indicate possible small cloud formations or some degree of uncertainty. I find the depth feature very helpful to use, as it will indicate if the CU's are deep, thin, or whether I should be looking for haze domes (up to minus 250' depth?) or not during the day. Look closely and there are days that SkySight shows streeting using this feature!

## Thermal Strength & B/S ratio

The key points to look for here are the strengths obviously, but also the stippling. Clean colors are the best for smooth thermals, light dots indicate some choppiness, heavy thick dots indicate hard to work thermals. So remember these areas, so you can change gears up or down as you approach easy or harder to work areas.

## Convergence

Helps show streeting too, long runs of energy, also areas of divergence, so the likely hood of sink streets to look out for also. Once I planned a flight that allowed me to do a 250km final glide at 100kts - an incredible feeling!

## Route forecast

This makes planning your start time and route selection so easy. Simply upload your site's waypoints, then with all the knowledge you've gained from the above information, select your start point, start direction, subsequent turn-points and finish from the optimal direction.

SkySight will crunch the numbers, then on the right, you'll notice a group of possible start times and the associated speeds if you were to start at each associated 30min block. This is where you need to determine your risk profile, do you give

yourself space for a mistake or trust that all will go to plan?

Select the time you want to start and SkySight will super-impose an optimum track line on your selected task, indicating it's better to track to the right on the first leg, for example, then criss-cross on the next. Of course, real-life may be different, but it's a good start to have in mind!

Once you've selected your start time, you can select all of the above points or titles of interest in the main menu on the left-hand side of the screen, running the cursor over the time-scaled graph above, to watch the day develop, decay, see the fast and slower spots to look out for!

## LXNAV & Oudie

Thanks to the constant development and great relationship between the two, you can now show the SkySight forecast on your [LX80XX](#), [LX90XX](#) and [Oudie device](#). A super helpful reminder in flight. I find this an essential tool to really help you maximize your flight & overall enjoyment - give it a try!

*Thanks to Kelly Bezemek of Wings and Wheels for giving AGC Weekend News permission to copy Adam Woolley's articles.*

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## Auckland Gliding Club Smeg Task and Goal Week

*Ian O'Keefe went along.....*

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Over the holiday break, Andrew Fletcher and I participated in the Auckland Gliding Club annual soaring competition. Unlike previous years this was a toned-down soaring comp due to COVID. In previous years international pilots have been invited and participated and there has been many sponsors. However, we remained very fortunate to have world class NZ soaring pilot Terry Delore and his ASH25 join the comp and SMEG continued to generously sponsor and support the event and provided some top-quality prizes. For Andrew this was the first flying comp in NZ and in his mighty Mosquito KT. Andrew and I headed to Drury on New Year's Day.

We rigged and with the assistance of Russel Thorne flying the Pawnee launched into a promising sky. Although Andrew has not soared in this area before, he has flown hundreds of hours and sorties training powered pilots through the Waikato Region. Our first flight of the year took us down pass the southern end of the Swamp into the Hauraki plains. A straightforward run with good lift. On our way back we had to tactically work our way back to Drury. The

Maramarua and Mercer areas can become sinky if you are low and this can become confronting when trying to obtain a final glide and heading into the rising ground of the Bombay hills and on into Drury. But this worked out well for both of us and was a nice flight to start the year.

The 1st, 2nd and 3rd day we did not fly due to poor weather. We could have flown on day 3 as the others did, however heavy thunderstorms were reported to be building and we felt it may be a one-way trip. Others did and had some good flights and other got shot down. There were tales of heavy rain for 45 minutes and paddocks turning into muddy quagmires.

On day 4 the weather was good, and we were tasked to head to Tokoroa and get in as many miles as we could muster. There was a 20km circle around the waypoint. The conditions were not strong, and it was a somewhat tentative run along the hills adjacent SH27, with gliders converging on weak lift. It was a sight to see 6-7 gliders slowly climbing over Mt Ruru near Morrinsville. Andrew was in the thick of it and I

hung back to see what was coming up or going down. I do understand some fellow competitors saying to Andrew, every time we scooted clear, you were always amongst us. The flight continued South to the township Putaruru. The sky was blue from there to Tokoroa. Some chose to press on ahead which did end in a land out and one long retrieve from Tokoroa. The rest of us hit the circle and headed back. The route back was through the centre of the Hauraki Plains and conditions improved. Good climbs to 5000ft at the Swamp made it a good run home.

Day 5 had a bit of everything in it. The waypoints were in any order Tahuna/Thames / KFC Chicken sheds with a 30km south of the Kaimai/Tauranga Road. The track here was to cross the swamp and head to Te Aroha and run along the Kaimai's. The ridge was working with thermals, but very little breeze. There was a need to lookout for Hang Gliders who were soaring along the ridge. I struggled a little on the way down and was actually quite low on the ridge. It was worst to hear that I was at 1500ft and the others were at 4000ft. However, we eventually hit the circle and headed back. Better climbs and I was at a far better altitude. Off to Thames. Andrew was steaming ahead, loving those flaps and making good progress. At Te Aroha I had a good climb and headed to Paeroa and started out to Ngatea and decided to miss Thames. The clouds had run out, the sea breeze had entered, and it was Blue ahead. Radio calls from others were indicating the sky was flat and they were getting low. I had descended to 1500ft and found glimpses of lift to stay aloft. Andrew had taken a big climb back towards Hikutai and straight lined it to Miranda. Calls were coming in now of land outs at Miranda. I finally managed to get a climb and literally back tracked to Thames. I would either land there or try to get a climb and push for Drury. I did the latter and watched several others landing out ahead. I managed to slowly and tentatively enter over the hills into Maramarua and slowly edged up to Hotel De Vin. I missed a climb and slowly descended. A land out resulted at the bottom of the Bombay's. Andrew had managed to reach and land at Mercer Airfield. So at least we were not too far from home and although we had both landed out it was a great soaring day and very satisfying.

Day 6 was a similar route. Thunderstorms and over development were expected. It was for me a bit of a struggle to get away and I was low over the Maramarua region heading out. Andrew had got away well and was surging ahead. Energy in

the sky developed throughout the day. The return trip from the Golf Ball (on the Kaimai's) was good with a massive and powerful convergence over the swamp. As we entered the Maramarua area there were rain showers ahead. Andrew had encountered one of these and this unfortunately gave him a soaking and he headed into Mercer land. I managed to reach the twin forests and was able to wait for conditions to cycle. I watched Andrew receive an aerotow retrieve and shortly after I could proceed to the Bombay's. I also encountered a shower which was heavier than I expected but was able to push through to get a climb on the other side and eventually and comfortably get home.

The Auckland club did a superb job and put on a great meal on the last day and a prize giving of wonderful and generous gifts from the sponsor SMEG. Everybody went out of their way to help each other. There were some epic flights that were done. I know Andrew had a ball and we will see him flying in more comps and undertake more cross country runs. He is good and can sniff out those thermals.

We had the experiences of no wing runner launches, a mix of conditions and strategies, land outs and the pleasures of flying with many others. It was also proof that the pilot maketh the plane and not the other way. I was reminded of this several times seeing a PW6 ahead of me several times and doing some stellar flights. So keen were Andrew and I following the official competition we flew the next day. The conditions were testy, and this found Andrew very low east of Mercer. I had managed to tentatively head towards Meremere but decided to head home. Andrew was at 1100 ft, and he, I and everyone in the air expected him to land out. However, he was fighting hard to defy gravity in a weak thermal. He would climb a bit, then sink a bit. This went on for a while. Put it this way I had time to fly back to Drury, derig my glider, have some lunch, derig another glider before the call came in that he was down in one of my land out paddocks. So, what a fight and he was close to beating mother nature. We were greeted with a big smile when we retrieved him.

As I have mentioned in the past if you wish to enter a X-country comp this is a nice one to enter. You can be as competitive as you want, based on your level of experience. Great conditions, countryside and people to fly alongside and learn from. So keep it in mind for 2022.

***For sale/wanted***

**Share in Drury hangar:** Hein Groef's hangar share is now available. Please inquire through Paul Knight on 0276288077 or email [paul-knight@xtra.co.nz](mailto:paul-knight@xtra.co.nz)

**ASH31Mi:** Accident free, built in 2015, 30 engine hours, 600 hours airtime accumulated 2018-2020, flawless engine performance, five-year check/overhaul in 2020, complete documentation, aluminum Cobra trailer, LX 9070 etc. \$356 000.00. Serious inquiries only to Ross Gaddes +64274789123

Thanks to all those who have helped put this newsletter together. If there is anything you would like to share with the members via this newsletter, text or photographs, please e-mail me. I will be grateful for any contributions.

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