

AGC Weekly News

The weekly newsletter of the Auckland Gliding Club at Drury, Auckland

Soaring, soaring and more soaring from Drury

Gerard Robertson

The Drury comp is in full swing, with about a dozen gliders competing. The Duos are in heavy use, with a rotating roster of club members making the most of the opportunity to fly with Georg or Kevin, as well as Hugo, who's visiting after competing at the Worlds in Australia. The weather gods have smiled on us this year, in stark contrast to last year.

There have been many long flights (often around 400 km); the pilots tasked with trying to get as many points as possible for such novel categories as passing within 5km of specified McDonalds fine dining establishments or, on another day, golf courses and then airstrips.

The demand for retrieves has been generally light, after peaking at eight on Monday for those without engines while three of those with engines used them. I think that SW was the only glider to make it back, Ross Taylor having decided that discretion was the better part of valour.

John Robertson won on Sunday with a flight about three quarters the way down Lake Taupo, landing near Mercer on the return. This provoked a line of calves on the fence line, looking over at this strange tractor. Winners on the following days were David Johnson, Hugo and again Hugo. Timing of the turn for home seems to be the key strategy, ensuring a return while there's still lift.

Watching flights each day (as I was coordinating retrieves and Ross Taylor was flying SW) was interesting. You can look back at flights or follow in real time on <https://gliding.net.nz/tracking>

Hugo's flight on Wednesday in QQ was also interesting, particularly for his willingness to follow a line of clouds in Auckland airspace under 2,500'. Anton's recovery from being low at Meremere was as prolonged as Georgia's on Tuesday, but more successful.

The conviviality at day's end is very pleasant, from about 5:00 or 5:30 onwards. Even if you're not flying but stuck at work, come on out on Saturday, if you're free.

Events like this happen because of the advance preparations (by Ross Gaddes and others) and the work on the day. Hugh is a key player, sitting in the caravan all day recording launches and monitoring progress. Russell Thorne, though competing, has put RT at the back of the grid each day so that he can coordinate launching. Then there are the tow pilots, the wing runners (including young Jack, visiting his uncle Adam who lives across from the clubhouse), and not to forget the Treasurer, who ties it all together. On behalf of the club, thank you all (and my apologies to anyone I've missed).

Standings as of 4 days

	Number	Name	Reg	Final Scor	Final Scor	Final Scor	Final Scor	Final Scor	Final Scor	Final Scor	Final Scor	0.0
1												
2	5	Hugo Corbille	GQQ	832.2	948.3	1000.0	1000.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3780.5
3	2	Ross Gaddes	GBH	887.1	976.6	642.2	895.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3401.5
4	7	David Johnson	GVM	715.9	1000.0	505.4	706.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2928.2
5	3	Georgia Schofield	GLW	895.9	733.7	631.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2260.6
6	6	David Moody	GZD	743.9	0.0	549.6	839.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2133.4
7	12	Jonathan Cross	GSR	628.3	0.0	608.2	615.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1852.5
8	10	Anton Lawrence	GOZ	682.2	0.0	180.2	876.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1738.7
9	9	Tristan Harvey-Smith	GDX	701.8	948.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1650.1
10	15	Ross Taylor	GSW	415.2	0.0	469.4	729.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1614.1
11	16	Russell Thorne	GRT	234.2	0.0	676.6	633.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1544.5
12	14	Paul Schofield	GXY	531.4	0.0	897.7	9.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1439.0
13	11	Frank Excell	GFE	661.7	578.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1240.6
14	8	Kevin Lippold	GDX	701.8	9.7	0.0	480.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1191.8
15	31	Nigel McPhee		0.0	0.0	0.0	1000.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1000.0
16	1	John Robertson	GBI	1000.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1000.0
17	24	Kevin Johnson		0.0	0.0	1000.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1000.0
18	29	Grant Smith	GRI	0.0	0.0	897.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	897.7
19	17	Steve Wallace	GKT	0.0	0.0	0.0	849.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	849.8
20	4	Mathew Kerrigan	GQQ	832.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	832.2
21	27	Georg Schulte	GDX	0.0	768.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	768.0
22	28	Allen Prendegast	GDX	0.0	768.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	768.0
23	13	Nathan Montano	GXY	531.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	531.4
24	26	Lance Feldwicke	GDX	0.0	9.7	0.0	480.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	489.9
25	30	Roy Innes		0.0	0.0	426.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	426.9



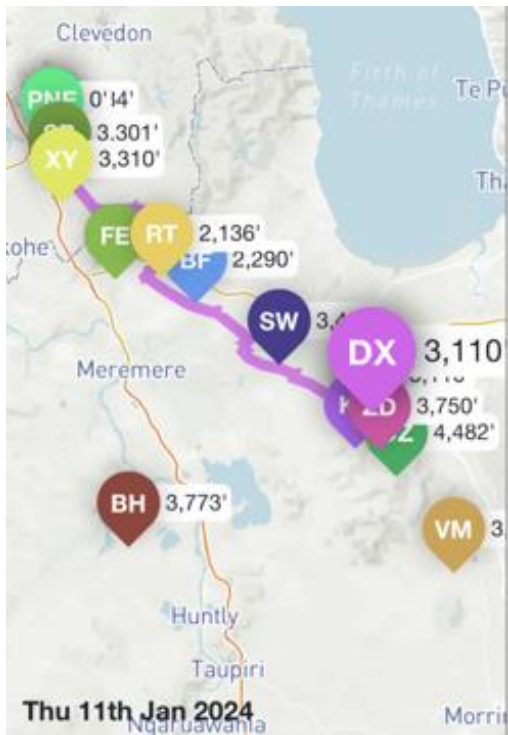
Morning briefing in the club room



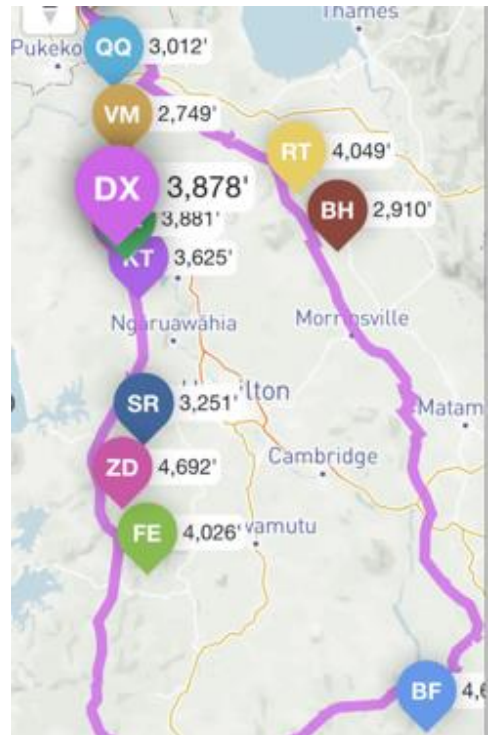
Gridding towards the east



This is Ross – somewhere far away from Drury



Outward bound on task at 13h15 today



Homeward bound at 16h50 this afternoon



Tristan Harvey-Smith with Hugo Corbille in ZK-GQQ

On a more serious note – Canopy cautions

Gerard Robertson

The canopies on Schempp-Hirth gliders can be difficult to close in hot weather. The Tauranga club's Duo lost its canopy at Matamata just before Christmas for this reason.

I know from my own experience on PV, a Discus, and now on SW, a Ventus, that the canopy is often hard to shut.

While I was hooking up gliders on the grid this week, I noticed that the front canopy on DX was

standing proud at the front by a few millimeters and advised the pilot, who closed it before I hooked them on.

My practice is to look over my left shoulder to ensure that the moving pin of the latch is protruding rearwards from the fuselage fitting (quite frequently, it's not).

Please use extra caution when closing canopies on the Discus and Duo.

El Nino conditions remain in place through the equatorial Pacific, peaking this month. However, despite these oceanic conditions, weather across New Zealand may end up quite different to what we usually regard as typical El Nino conditions as other shorter term climate drivers dictate.

One of these is the Madden-Julian Oscillation (MJO) which may become active again over the tropics north of New Zealand towards the latter parts of the month. This may help drive an unsettled Tasman Sea which brings the risk of rain to northern and western parts of the country. However, this progression of the MJO is not set in stone, and a longer, more typical El Nino dry period should be seen through to the middle of January at least.

January 2024 Outlook – Settled and summery, but Tasman rain may be lurking

The month of January may very well end up with two distinct periods. A large and slow-moving high pressure system is likely to dominate over New Zealand through to about mid-month. This generally means sunnier days, pleasant temperatures and lighter winds. There may be the odd front here and there, but overall, these should not result in much severe weather. That said, they

could increase temperatures and humidity, and in turn create conditions favourable to showers and potential thunderstorms for some inland places. These should be somewhat isolated and as a result, soil moisture deficits could increase quickly over the next week or two for most places.

There are signs of these settled conditions departing during the last two weeks of the month as Tasman Sea systems may become more common again. This will be very dependent on the high that needs to give way first, and this battle between the high and an incoming Tasman Sea system can be tricky to pin down this far in advance. However, there are hints of north to northwesterly rain for northern and western parts of the country, potentially flipping a dry month to normal or slightly wetter than normal for some there. Confidence decreases for the South Island where places like Canterbury and West Coast lies borderline with incoming rain, while it may run drier in the deep south.

Temperatures and humidity should increase next week, making for some unpleasant nights in particular. Humidity is likely to remain a factor later in the month for northern parts of the country, while southern regions could see a cooler period or two.



Unusual Mammatus clouds photographed near Matamata



This title is not what you think. Or, is it? Have you ever noticed what those orange/red color rings, or that short piece of “red” tape over a hole are for usually on the left side of the glider cockpit? It is where the manufacturer is telling you to connect to your lifeline! An interesting fact is that the manufacturer does not say one thing about it in the GFM.

This short discussion may help. This short article is a so-called “PSA” (Public service announcement). How many glider pilots that you know, actually use that “ring” or that specially-made hole in the cockpit? It is for your “static line” connection! This is where you will attach your static line from your parachute. It’s your lifeline! Your lifeline can be manufactured or you can make one. Strong Parachutes will install a static line to almost any chute that they sell. Para-Phernalia, a parachute manufacturer makes them too. I purchased 2 from them recently for my two National 425’s. Any FAA Master Rigger can install (see photos). Very few glider pilots even use one! I wonder why? Or is it a lack of knowledge?

All of my chutes (T-6, E-75 Steerman, etc...) that I use have one, either installed by Strong or made by myself. Some conditions must be met. The

recommendation is at least a 300-700 lbs test or strength line at least 35 feet in length (to clear most wings). Usually, 1/8 inch of reliable nylon works fine for breaking strength (approx. 575 lbs). Too little strength the rope breaks and with too much it becomes overly bulky in the cockpit. How do we use such a device? Again, no guidance from the manufacturer.

The line itself should be folded or rolled in a way that unraveling is not hindered. The pack itself should be attached to either the parachute or a place inside the glider that WILL NOT interfere with cockpit duties or controls. Remember to either disconnect your line prior to exiting the glider or you may have a chute deployed for no reason! After my flight, and before exiting the glider, I disconnect my belts and chute so I know that my line is safe.

Let’s review some of the experiences of leaving a glider. There are many stories and many that have jumped. In the past few years, I know of one incident in which there was an inflight breakup of the sailplane; usually pilot induced; occurred around 10000 to 13000 feet. One of the pilots bailed out, became unconscious for a period of the descent, and came too, at around 2000-3000 feet AGL He deployed his chute & landed. During

the egress, he could have been hit in the head and rendered unconscious for a short time while falling (probably that happened). If this happens at 2000 feet AGL, you will become a statistic on the local news. Make a safety device work for you! A very small investment as well. Again, I ask, how many glider pilots do you know who use one?

If these pilots had a static line, and became unconscious after leaving the sailplane, their static line would be deployed, opening the chute and ensuring 100% survivability. The only disadvantage is a potentially long, cold descent in wave conditions. An emergency bail-out bottle should be attached or installed to mitigate risk, but it is still a better alternative to not having a static line.

Remember the steps: CANOPY, BELT & BUTT!
Fly safe!



Shawn Knickerbocker has been flying gliders since the mid-sixties. Is a retired FAA DPE who held designations in Airplanes, Helicopters and Gliders for all rating, including the elusive CFI initial, plus numerous type ratings, he has over 62 FAA authorities as a DPE/SAE/SMFT. He also possesses a TCCA (Canada) License with ATP Ratings for airplanes, all classes (SMELS), plus numerous type ratings and Aerobatic Instructor (ABI) in Gliders for Canada. He was the SME for the FAA in rewriting the Airplane Handbook, Helicopter Handbook and the Glider Handbook and PTS in 2000. He was instrumental in developing the CAP Glider Program for Florida back in the mid 90's to include the "wing runner & tow pilot manual" and has developed many other training programs for the military and US Government Aviation Agencies. He is the current Program Manager for the SSA Cross-Country Instructor Pilot Program. Shawn been flying 58 years, a FAA Master Pilot with over 25,000 hrs. Shawn lives at Seminole Lake Glider port. Email; faadpe1604@aol.com. C- 904.382.9614

Vintage Kiwi Rally Matamata 2024.

Combined Annual Rally with V.K's 21 st Birthday bash!

Where. Matamata Airfield.

When. Saturday 10th February – Friday 16th February 2024.



AeroTowing will be by a DH82A Tiger Moth and Fox Bat.

This will be one of the very few chances to experience an aerotow by a Tiger Moth, so don't miss out.

The V.K ASK13 G.F.X will also be available for members to fly.

So come and join the adventure at NZ's premier soaring site.

This is one Rally that you really cannot afford to miss! Any one can participate in any of our V.K Rallies, one does not need to be a member. On site accommodation with the Matamata Soaring Centre's Bunk House units. But please book early and make your plans now. msc.gliding.co.nz

See you all at Matamata 2024.

The Kopuatai Peat Dome

(we call it "The Swamp")

Adapted from the Forest & Bird website, and Wikipedia

Pilots from the AGC regularly fly over what we have come to call "the swamp". Many will even testify to it being an excellent source of lift. Apart from the fact that it's not really a "swamp" at all, but what is termed a "peat dome", there seems little explanation as to why lift should manifest itself here. Be that as it is, this is a unique area and I hope many of you will enjoy reading about it, even if it has nothing to do with gliding. (Ed).

From Wikipedia...

The Kopuatai Peat Dome is a large peatland complex on the Hauraki Plains in the North Island of New Zealand. It consists of two raised domes, one in the north and the other in the south, that are up to three metres higher at the center than at the edge. The 10,201 hectares (25,210 acres)

wetland contains the largest intact raised bog in New Zealand and was listed under the Ramsar Convention in 1989 as a Wetland of International Importance. Most of the wetland is ombrotrophic, meaning it receives water and nutrient inputs solely from rain and is hydrologically isolated from the surrounding canals and rivers. Locally, a popular misconception persists that water flows from the nearby Piako River into the bog and that the wetland acts as a significant store for floodwater.

History of the wetland

Kopuatai has survived extensive draining of the wetlands on the Hauraki Plains and was given protection in 1987 when it came under the administration of the newly formed Department of Conservation.



Scientific and conservation value



Looking westward from the center of Kopuatai bog towards the Hapuakohe Range.

Kopuatai contains the largest remaining population of *Sporadanthus ferrugineus*, a peat-forming plant that was once widespread in the upper North Island, but is now found in only a few places, in the Hauraki Plains and Waikato basin. *S. ferrugineus* in turn provides the only known food source for the rare endemic moth *Houdinia flexilissima*, also known as 'Fred the thread', described as recently as 2006 and remarkable for being the thinnest caterpillar in the world. A number of other undescribed insect species are thought to inhabit the peat dome. Other plant species found at Kopuatai are the peat-forming plant *Empodisma robustum* and the fern *Gleichenia dicarpa*.

Kopuatai is remarkable for being an exceptionally strong sink for carbon dioxide compared to other bogs globally. Carbon dioxide is absorbed from the atmosphere by the peat-forming plants and transformed into peat which can be up to 12 meters thick in parts of the bog.

Few people realise there is a hidden world in the heart of the Hauraki plains - much loved by both hunters and ecologists alike -- the Kopuatai Peat Dome covering nearly ten thousand hectares.

From Forest & Bird...

Walking in the Kopuatai

Walking in the Kopuatai peatlands is like walking on the crust of a pudding, bouncing along and every now and then breaking through and sinking up to your thighs. In places, rushes breaking down underfoot provide a bouncy surface to walk on, elsewhere sphagnum moss forms a spongy carpet.

Waikato wetland expert Bev Clarkson says it's

easy to tell the difference between a swamp and a bog. "If your gumboots fill up with water all the time, you are in a swamp.

If your feet stay dry most of the time and the vegetation supports your weight, you are in a bog." It is an important distinction as the vegetation of the bog tends to be more fragile, and walking on them has a huge and lasting impact.



The peat dome at ground level – not a place to land out

Bog building

Wetlands develop from swamps to bogs over thousands of years. First, high nutrient species such as raupo, harakeke (flax) and sedges colonise poorly drained depressions in river terraces or basins. Those that need fewer nutrients such as manuka and tangle fern then replace these plants.

Over time wire rush (*Empodisma robustum*) takes over and starts to vigorously form peat as the conditions become more and more acidic, and too low in nutrients and oxygen for bacteria to break the plant material down. Over thousands of years a gentle dome is formed, rising above the influence of ground water. This is what defines a bog – an area fed only by rainwater.

The last plant to arrive is the 2.4 m tall giant cane rush (*Sporadanthus ferrugineus*). It grows in only three places in the world, all in the Waikato peat

bogs, and is most abundant in Kopuatai. A mysterious caterpillar nicknamed "Fred the Thread" has recently been discovered living in Sporadanthus.

Directory of Wetlands in New Zealand (see Chapter 14).

<https://www.doc.govt.nz/Documents/science-and-technical/nzwetlands00.pdf>

More information

Read more about Kopuatai Peat Dome in the

Map on Page 8 courtesy of Waikato Regional Council.

Member's Ads

LS3-A (revised ad)



ZK-GLL. Has been refinished in PU and is in excellent condition. Recent upgrades include LXNav S100 plus remote stick, Trig ADSB, transponder, new front panel, Flarm mouse, new enclosed, galvanized, tilting trailer. Glider fits in the trailer the same as a cobra trailer with the fuselage and wing trolley's being visually similar to what the expensive trailers use. After several landouts the trailer proves to be successful and easy to use. Comes with tail dolly, wing walker tow-out bar, oxygen bottle and EDS system – EDS never used so cannot vouch for its functioning. Annual recently completed. A great performing 15m flapped glider. \$45,000 Contact Keith Macy keith.macy@outlook.com

PW5



ZK-GKF. Current Annual until Dec 2022. Ready to fly. Approx 800 hours flying. Radio, altimeter, airspeed indicator, electric and mechanicals varies. Includes open trailer. Priced to sell at \$8,000. Ideal for single ownership or cheap syndicate. Reason for sale is that glider is surplus to requirements. Phone Murray on 0275 875 438

IMI Power Rigger.



Remote controlled battery powered one-man rigger for single-seater glider. New. \$3184.00. Contact the Editor as below.