

Day 1

The day started at 4.30 when we got up and had breakfast. After a busy week making sure the aircraft was ready for the flight, it was difficult to get out of bed however it was made easier due to the immense trepidation and excitement of what laid ahead.



Leg 1: Temora to Renmark

We arrived at the airfield at 0530am (EST) and pulled the aircraft out of the hangar and completed the pre-flight checks very carefully. It was great to see a number of early risers to come and see us off. We began taxiing to depart on runway 18 at 0630am (EST), however at the threshold we had to delay our departure due to an unexpected muscle cramp probably due to the tension of what lay ahead and the briskness of the weather. We eventually left at 0650am (EST) when all was OK again and settled on our track of 263° to Mildura. The first part of the journey was undertaken with much nervous enthusiasm and by the time we reached Griffith, our nerves were certainly starting to settle down. We arrived at Mildura at 0937am (EST) for a much needed pit stop. We left Mildura at 1030am (EST) after filling our bellies but not our tanks (due to it being a Sunday and difficult to get fuel plus the callout fee) and head to Renmark. We arrived 1154am (CST) where the local gliding

club people were more than helpful with refuelling both aircraft and coffee cups.



Short Finals into Renmark



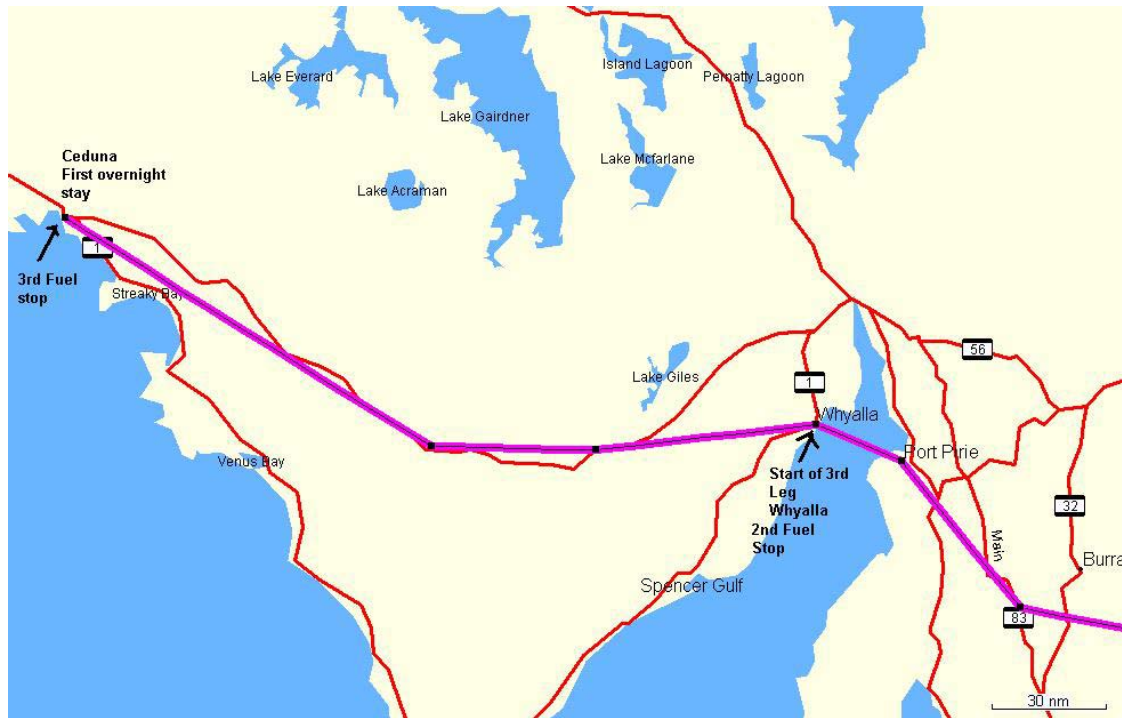
Leg 2: Renmark to Whyalla

Leaving Renmark at 1304pm (CST) we headed on our track of 272° to our first waypoint being the town of Clare where we then changed our track to 316° for Port Pirie. When we were approximately 5 nautical miles from Port Pirie we changed our track to 289° for Whyalla. We also began our ascent from our current height of 4500ft and we climbed to 8500ft at the centre of the Spencer Gulf to ensure that we were in gliding range of land at all times. We arrived at Whyalla at 1534pm (CST) followed in by a Conquest headed for Adelaide.



Whyalla, nice to see land beneath us again

The refueller was notified and unfortunately for him had to be and dragged away from the last few laps of the Motorbike grand prix. Although he initially seemed to be upset about this he ended a being a very helpful and friendly bloke.



Leg 3: Whyalla to Ceduna

After refuelling we then departed Whyalla at 1615pm (CST) and tracked to Wudinna where we then changed our track to 293° for Ceduna. Along this route is where we first began to see some of the magnificent scenery of the Great Australian Bight near Streaky Bay and then as we continued on to Ceduna where we and arrived at 1832 pm (CST) for our first overnight stop.



The awesome southern coastline of Streaky Bay, SA

Once again a Regional RPT followed us in, this time a Rex aircraft. We rang the locally advertised motel and the owner arranged for the taxi that was awaiting the arrival of the Rex plane to take us to his motel.



Parked at Ceduna Airport

Day 2

The weeks leading up to this journey and the first day of flying had been very demanding, hectic and tiring and this combined with the eagerness due to the forthcoming trip had led to substantial lack of good sleep the previous night so we had decided to take our time leaving Ceduna. We did the tourist thing and after a substantial breakfast we took a short look around the town after which the motel owner gave us a lift out to the airport, thanks Brian. If you need a great stopover I can highly recommend the East West Motel of Ceduna.



Brian advertising his pilot friendly motel



Leg 4: Ceduna to Forrest

We departed Ceduna at 1233pm (CST) and tracked 278° to the Nullarbor Roadhouse and were in awe at the scenery below. The superlative and unique coast of the Great Australian Bight was a sight not to be forgotten easily with the aquamarine blue of the ocean, the red, orange and white cliffs and the clear blue skies as the perfect backdrop. Overhead the Nullarbor Roadhouse we then tracked 258° for Eucla as we were overhead BP Border village we changed our track to 311° and headed across the featureless plains of mulga scrub to Forrest. Along this route we kept to dirt track from

Eucla to Forrest in sight, as this was obviously the only place to land in case of any emergency. Up until this leg of the journey we had at all times somewhere to land so we felt it was wise to continue to do so.



Forrest: An airport oasis in the mulga

Forrest is a place where no person flying across this great land of ours in a small aircraft should miss where two thirds of the population come out to greet you.



Two thirds of the town's population came out to greet us

The friendliness of the town people (all 3 of them) and the splendid salad sandwiches make you want to stay longer, however as we were running out of daylight we could not dawdle in this great small town and we departed Forrest after filling our tanks and bellies once again.



Leg 5: Forrest to Kalgoorlie

This time we tracked direct for Kalgoorlie following the railway line, overtaking the Indian Pacific and racing the end of daylight in the last 15 minutes, so we opened her up put the pedal to the metal and beat the setting sun. On arrival in Kalgoorlie at 1800pm (WST) we joined circuit and gave our downwind call, a Qantas 737 pilot contacted us and requested we repeat our call sign and intentions, as he was on a 30 NM final. We told him we were late downwind and would slip in before him and expedite our exit from the runway. Once leaving the runway we gave our "Storm 3968 Clear of all runways" call, only to hear over the radio from the Qantas pilot "Thanks, Goodnight".



STORM19-3968 – Mixing with the big boys

We then had the task of looking for the parking area for light aircraft, we asked the BP guy and he told us to leave the aircraft where it was (in amongst the RPT aircraft) as no further aircraft would be arriving that night. It was very interesting trying to acquire accommodation in Kalgoorlie, as there was a mining convention on (surprise surprise!!! – a mining town after all). We found an extremely helpful taxi driver who took us to this strange cheap little pub that had clean beds and good food, however the early morning (4am) bottle run was a little disruptive to the sleep pattern.

Day 3

On upon waking and after morning rituals we went downstairs for an early breakfast only to find the pub open, full of patrons and very scantily clad girls serving drinks, definitely an eye opener in many senses of the word for that time of morning. After arriving at the aerodrome at 0700 (WST) we first had to have our luggage X-rayed and ourselves scanned, even had to take a sip of our coffee. Upon arriving at our aircraft we were surprised to see that we were now surrounded by a large number of RPT aircraft. This was because all the

early morning Perth flights had been diverted to Kalgoorlie due to one of the very rare occasions of Perth and the surrounding area being fogged in. The meeting of a trough of moist air flow from the ocean and the smoke from back burning in the hills the day before had caused the fog.



Leg 6: Kalgoorlie to Serpentine SAAA Airfield

We departed Kalgoorlie at 0818am (WST) and tracked 257° along the highway to Southern Cross, due to the mulga country between Kalgoorlie and the farmlands on the eastern side of the Darling Range. Just before Southern Cross we changed our track direct to Narrogin and then across the Darling Ranges for Serpentine, thereby avoiding Perth controlled airspace.



Short finals into Serpentine SAAA Airfield

We made good time even though we had to battle a left crosswind, and arrived overhead Serpentine at 1120am (WST) and joined the circuit for runway 23 landing at 1125am with a small welcoming party waiting for us.



Congratulations at Serpentine

Serpentine is a recreational aviators Mecca, with now about 80 private hangers on the airfield, and the most enthusiastic and helpful people around. Thanks Tom for letting us put our aircraft in your hanger for the duration of our stay, especially in light of the 100 KPH winds that week.



Leg 2: Complete Route - Temora to Perth