

Gadabout Adventure To Kalannie W.A.

On the Aussie Day long weekend the gadabouts set forth to spread the Ultralighting concept to Kalannie and surrounding district.

It all started a few weeks ago when a few pilots were discussing our next adventure for the long weekend. Our Xmas dinner held early in Dec. at Dale River (organised by Ben Sharpe our RA-Aus W.A. Rep) was fading and a new venture was called for.

A few places were discussed and we finally settled on Kalannie, 81 nm. nearly due north from Northam. Kalannie is in the wheatbelt and a producer of wheat and fat lambs whenever the seasons are kind to the growers. A 'phone call to the council to seek approval for our fly in was accepted with enthusiasm and eagerness.

The council informed us that there is a sporting facility which has toilets, showers and a big kitchen right next to the runway and for a small charge (to cover cleaning costs) we were welcome to use it.



The usual invites and emails were sent to all the members and quite a few replied, pending the weather. The forecast was for a lot of wind and hot days ahead.

Wayne and I decided to leave a day early and suss the place out. We left Northam on Thursday afternoon 1620 in our Thruster T500 with a strong tail wind, giving us a ground speed of 75 kts. and a temp of 38 C. About ½ hr into the flight, we encountered a 15 kt. headwind slowing our ground speed to 40 kts.

1 hr. 40 min. into the flight saw Kalannie appear right on schedule on the nose.

Selecting runway 32 and an uneventful landing saw us at Kalannie. After securing the A/C., we were greeted by Mick an old (read young) mate and partner who took us to the nearby watering hole and introduced us to the staff of the Bowling Club.

A 'phone call from our support vehicles advised us of car problems, busted lower radiator hose and after repairs would meet up with us.

The evening was pleasant with a cool breeze blowing and some tall tales told.

About 2.00 am the support team arrived and a hasty camp was set up, needless to say there were no early risers that morning.

By 0730 the wind came up to 25 kts. putting an end to flying for that day. The locals arrived and were full of questions about our machines and were eager to go for a fly. Unfortunately, due to the wind we were unable to fly but with the promise that later in the afternoon when the wind calmed down a bit we would be more than willing to take them in the air.

Graeme, a local farmer popped in to see what the activity was all about and offered us the use of a big industrial blower cooler which was greatly appreciated by all who felt the effect, as it was quite hot. The cooler brought the temperature down by about 10 degrees. Thank you Graeme.

The 'phone was ringing hot, with people cancelling. This was due to hot and windy conditions. More members arrived by car and settled in. Later that afternoon Wayne rigged his Mustang. It was trailered over and joined the flight line.

That evening when the wind died down, the roar of the Robin and Rotax filled the air as we took to the air with some of the locals wanting to see Kalannie from the air.

Just before last light the A/C were tied down and the group departed for the club, where we had a very nice dinner, washed down with some amber liquid and/or a nice bottle of wine.

Again the night was quite cool with the wind blowing gently most of the night and after having a good evening and sitting up till quite late, we retired for the night.

Next morning a Sapphire from Bindoon joined our ranks, flown by Roger. He had a good flight for the first half and encountered some thermal activity over the dry salt lakes, making him work a little harder. His landing attempt with a strong X wind was hairy until he landed into wind in the paddock next to the runway.

Later that afternoon Kathy arrived in her new Bantam from York. Kathy is one of our new members having very recently converted to Ultralighting from G.A. and HGFA. - the only female pilot from NZ (yes a Kiwi) to have flown in. Eat your heart out fellas.

That evening we had a BBQ dinner with salads provided by the Club, washed down with the usual amber liquid.

Next morning (Sunday) the wind was again strong from the N.E. A few more locals were taken over their beloved pieces of country and enjoyed the scenery.

The Sapphire and Bantam took off for their home airfield before it became too unpleasant. Both pilots called in to notify of their safe arrival back home.

After a general cleanup and packing our gear, it was time for us to depart the beautiful country town of Kalannie. We said goodbye to some of the locals who had come to see us off.

The take off was interesting to say the least due to strong, gusty windy conditions and the climb out quite bumpy. At 3200ft the air became smooth and pleasant. At 4500ft the view was magnificent and we could see for miles.

Over to the west, we could see smoke rising to a great height. A fire had started over at Bindoon, lightning strikes the previous evening were the culprit.

Just on 1 hr. 10 min. flight time saw us back at Northam, ground speed approx 70-75 kts.

After landing and putting our A/C to bed, saw the close of another enjoyable long weekend by the Gadabout Adventures.



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