

Flying to Kangaroo Island - 14/12/2009

WOW... what an experience... this had been on my wish list since I began flying and since living in SA (South Australia). I've been here since 1996 and I have never ventured to the Island and always wanted to.

So... today was the day - Monday 14th Dec, 2009. I made the journey and arrived at my destination... unscarred. I loved the flight there and as usual enjoyed the wonderful scenery including the windfarms between Rapid Bay and Cape Jervis.

On arrival at Kangaroo Island (KI), I had to battle a couple of challenges: an unplanned downwind landing then several goes at a fairly fierce crosswind landing at Vivionne Bay. There is always something to test your metal.



If ever the wind is going to change... it's going to be when I am flying in to land. I flew over the field at American River and viewed the windsock... so over the river I went to come into land. It was a bit bumpy in the circuit coming in and it wasn't until I finally taxied over to where everyone was standing (over the kangaroo pot holes) and got out of the plane that it was suggested to me... to try landing into the wind next time. Oh gosh... what can I say. Anyway changing windsocks as they are... next time I might just circle a couple of times overhead to be sure the windsock is going in my favour. As it turned out the runway was plenty long enough and



with a slight uphill slope so I had plenty of time to pull up... and I did.

John Bone and his grand daughter Lauren (in Foxbat 5090) had flown from Strathalbyn, whilst I had left from Murray Bridge without a passenger.

Once I had arrived at KI I got to meet the hosts at American River Judy and Dean Johnson who offered us coffee and Christmas cake and cookies... yum! They also showed myself and Lauren around the [Muston Heights B&B](#) and that will be another holiday destination on the agenda very soon. A car is available for hire at \$50/day.

After coffee and cake... we decided to take a look around the island, from overhead of course. So off we went and headed toward Vivionne Bay. The wind was reasonably fierce and both John and I faced crosswind landings. John got down on his first try, whilst I finally got down on my fourth try... after thinking I wouldn't make it at all. Once landed, we raided our planes for our picnic lunches and went for a hike toward the beach. We had no maps of the walking tracks and we could guess which was the sea was... so off we set on the tracks away from the airfield and toward the beach. John was very handy with the GPS from his plane which guided us toward our planned destination.



Finally we reached a lovely spot, not exactly at the beach... but close enough to have a lovely

view. We settled ourselves under some shade sitting on some logs and enjoyed our food, the view and more conversation.

Fully fed, we headed back to our planes. Since we were all tired and hot, we decided to follow the GPS and take the shortest way back. This was loads of fun as it included battling with the scrub where there were no tracks. We arrived back at the airfield in record time, packed up and headed off home.

I let John lead the way... and after he had braved the crosswind take off he radioed to tell me, as soon as you get up Di, rotate into the wind as quickly as possible.

So armed with this information, I made my taxi and rolling calls and headed off into the wild blue yonder. At 1000ft it seemed like I couldn't climb any higher, it just took ages, then finally I gained the height I was after, went up to 5,500ft where the air was smooth as silk and perfect for the fly home.

Flying back over American River and Penneshaw I took photos of the airfields for future reference and started my climb to 7,500ft to fly across the water (Backstairs Passage).



I was in awe at the wonderful sights from being up where I wanted to be. At one point there was nothing but water as far as you could see... fantastic... this is freedom!

I arrived back at Murray Bridge (YMBD) about 90 minutes later (total trip from Vivionne Bay) and was greeted by three of my friends.

One of these friends was 90 year old Beryl... who I had promised to take for a flight for her birthday. Unfortunately the day we had originally planned for was just too windy so this was my first chance to fulfil my promise to her.

Without hesitation she jumped in beside me and off we went for a 30 minute trip around Murray Bridge, up the river toward Myponga, Caloote and Mannum and then back into the circuit.

Once we landed I offered to take her daughter Rosie for the same flight and she loved it too.

After putting the plane away we all decided to head off to Hahndorf and The German Arms for dinner – what a lovely way to end a beautiful day.

I feel very privileged to be doing what I am doing and sharing the experience with my friends.