

Chapter 2 Under Weigh

2.5 Reviewing maps; aerial navigation of Westernport.

There was a loud knock on Phill's back door at 11 a.m.

"Hi, Phill," Tristan and Chris shouted out together. Both had just arrived on their bikes.

"Hi guys, come on in. It's a bit rainy and low clouds everywhere!"

Very low rain clouds slowly drifting from the south-west. Small squalls obliterated various areas at different times over the whole Westernport area.

"What's the go, Phill?" Chris wanted to know.

"Well, as I said on the phone yesterday, as we want to circumnavigate French Island in our boat, we need to prepare ourselves properly. Even motoring it's about a five-hour trip, plus there is that dangerous tidal fall away over the 'hump' close to Jam Jerrup Point. We don't need to do it as tough as the French midshipman Leon Brevedent, when he became the first white man to row and sail around the island."

"It's okay, Phill, Chris and I have our boat licences now so we are not going to do anything stupid."

"That's a good attitude, Tristan. Why don't we spend half an hour looking at a couple of Westernport maps, use our little bit of navigation knowledge and draw lines to where we want to fly today. It will also allow us to study the buoy and danger beacons."

"What time do we have to meet the diesel mechanic on your boat at Yaringa?"

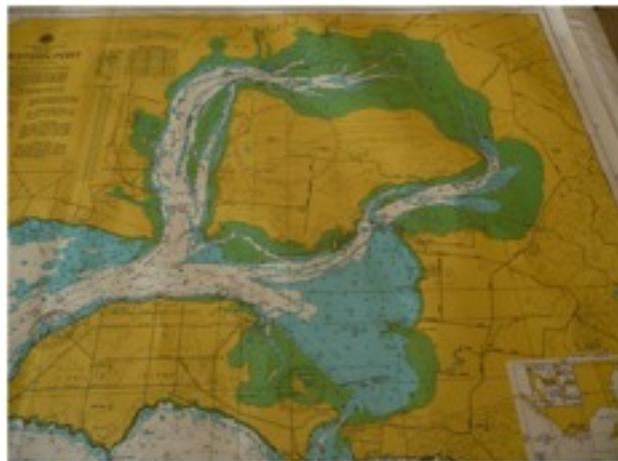
"About 2 p.m."

"Do you think we will still be able to fly around the island after that?"

"I think so, Chris, the weather looks like it may improve, so the later the better."

Tristan was impatient to get it over with. "Hurry up, you guys."

To check out the guys' knowledge, Phill suggested they each use a different map. He then showed them on their maps the various landmarks the plane would fly over. After some time with the drawn lines it was time to write down the compass headings. Both guys read off a bearing from Yaringa channel entrance to the Telecom tower at Lang Lang. Chris marked it as 100 degrees true north minus 12 degrees for magnetic variation: fly at 88 degrees. Tristan marked it as 98 degrees true north with 12 degrees for magnetic variation: fly at 86 degrees. A superb effort by both. They then identified the marker buoys and the state of the tide.



Australian hydrographic map of Westernport giving depths and latitude and longitude



Map of Westernport with buoy and marker locations. PV.

Now for some fun. To fill in time before seeing the diesel mechanic and flying, the guys decided to kick-start the old Volkswagen and bash around the small property.

After killing the large black spider he found on the back seat, Chris positioned the Discovery close to the Volkswy. Tristan found the hood release button and raised the bonnet, and connected the battery jump leads. Chris started the Volkswy without flattening the discovery battery.

The guys drove around and about, taking turns, until Nan decided the grass was getting torn up too much. "Enough!" she declared. The guys then started doing monos and other things on their bikes around the place. They obviously needed to let off steam.



The Volkswagen-a good old car

At the boat harbour, the boat servicing was carried out. The three fellows went on to the airfield.

"Hi, Hal, how's the plane?" Phill asked his friend.

"Checked out as carefully as we used to do when we did a lot of flying together," was Hal's response.

Phill wanted Hal to fly the plane so he and the guys could concentrate of the aerial viewing. Particularly now that the weather had turned a little better, and every man and his dog would be taking to the air. The flight would also intrude on two other airfields' circuit and training areas. The pilot would have to be very alert.

Phill gave Hal the overall flight and compass headings wish list: fly east at 080 degrees to the Telecom tower at Lang Lang; down to Stockyard Point, overfly Corinella; down to the Bass River, follow it in an anti-clockwise circular motion to over the township; turn around and head to San Remo; continue to the eastern entrance of the port, then home.

"Okay, guys, can do. However, I may have to vary it a bit to avoid other planes and Tooradin air space. The main problem is avoiding those small drifting rain-filled clouds. I'll do my best."



Flying east to the Telecom tower at Lang Lang



On the starboard side, Barrallier Island



At the tower, Stockyard Point, middle picture; French Island, eastern tip on the right; the most dangerous part at low tide: channels do not exist!



Eastern tip of French Island, looking south; Settlement Point and Corinella, middle right



***French Island, showing Elizabeth Island, south-east looking partly west.
Reasonable anchorage place in appropriate conditions.***



Bass River-the township is the darker area beneath the wing tip



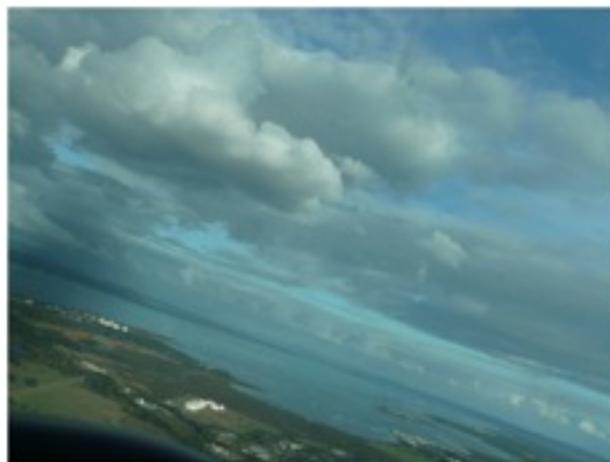
Churchill Island, just off Phillip Island



Southern shore of Phillip Island; eastern entrance to Westernport ahead



Back at the starting point, Barrallier Island in the middle: preparing to fly over the airfield at 1600 feet.



Joining the circuit downwind; Kings Creek entrance in the bight, middle foreground