



Keith Galloway starts an instructional flight in his brand new Sportstar with Kevin Walters

Recreational flying - an ATPL's view

Report and photos by John Spiers

A good example of the drift to recreational aviation is a 77-year-old retired airline pilot who had just taken delivery of a brand new Sportstar and was getting back into flying after a 23 year break by training with Kevin Walters

After studying the options, Keith Galloway chose the new \$127,000 recreational aircraft over a second hand GA aircraft costing about \$60,000.

Keith retired in 1983 and had not flown for 23 years. He thought about buying a boat but decided maintenance would mean he would never be home.

He was aware that a lot of people said they would never get into an ultralight

but when his son in law learned to fly and talked about buying an older Piper, Keith started checking the market and spoke to many old airline acquaintances who had become involved in vintage aircraft and aircraft maintenance.

While some were diehard GA, many recommended the recreational route.

He researched what new types of aircraft were available to help put some members of the family's minds at rest.

"My wife accepted it because she is used to me. My son said 'good on you' but my daughter in law was horrified.

"When I think about the grand children, a new aircraft should be a lot safer than an old one you do not really know the history of.

"When you buy a new aircraft you know

it has not been knocked about – that the engine has not been punished or the spars over-stressed.

"I saw them as money down the drain – there would be high and rising maintenance costs and lots of fuel which would deter us from flying.

"On the other hand I did not mind putting money into a new asset." Keith says insurance costs him about \$4000 a year.

He has installed an EFIS hooked to the GPS with track readout.

Although flying a recreational aircraft does not require a medical check as long as you can hold a driver's licence, Keith did a PPL medical and was told he came up better than many younger men.

Keith agrees with the views that recreational aircraft can be "twitchy" compared



Without a LAME or regulator looking on, pre-flight checks are entirely the recreational pilot's own responsibility

to heavier aircraft but says this is really just a matter of pilots who are not accustomed to them not applying appropriate light-handed technique.

It was interesting to see that while he acknowledged that there were different handling techniques to be learned with his brand new Sportstar, he was happy to undertake thorough training with an experienced recreational instructor and he had no difficulty adapting.

Interestingly, the only thing he found complex and tiresome was the convoluted radio procedures that the GA pilot has to cope with.

Exclaimed the former TAA A300 pilot with more than 17,000 hours when he stopped filling in his logbook: "We never had to do anything like this. It only ever took us two or three short and simple radio calls to get in and out of capital city airports and they told us what frequencies to go to next and gave us radar vectors when there was other traffic. It was just so simple.

"There was no wondering which frequency you should be on and looking up books in a small aircraft cockpit instead of keeping a good lookout.

"I now spend hours before each flight checking where I should be and whether I should talk or not.

"When you are in the aircraft on your

own you have all these frequency changes. "This is not even going into controlled airspace

"You just sit there and do not speak to anybody. I find that very strange."

But even a non-current ATPL still carries some weight. When Keith showed it and his ASIC at the security desk of the Brisbane briefing office, phone calls were made and he was escorted into the inner sanctum.

"They could not have been more helpful. I now feel a lot more confident, but I have had a job getting a grip of the whole situation.

"I have not looked closely at the whole system but wonder if it could be modified."

Keith has adopted his own system of writing frequencies, levels and calling points on a piece of cardboard for quick reference in the cockpit.

Perhaps it is reassuring to private pilots who avoid control zones or feel fear in the gut over making calls, that even a pilot of Keith's experience shares their concerns.

As this issue went to press, Keith was setting off on a 640nm two day trip to Gregory Springs with a number of flights planned in the gulf country.

The types in Keith's log book read like a history of Australian aviation – and the

type of flying he is doing now is taking him back to his early days.

He was just too young for WWII but started flying training in 1947 at Archerfield with Harold Kenny and Les Butterworth on the Avro Cadet, Tiger Moth DH 82A, DH 94 Moth Minor, DH 60 Gipsy Moth and DH 87 A and B Hornet Moths.

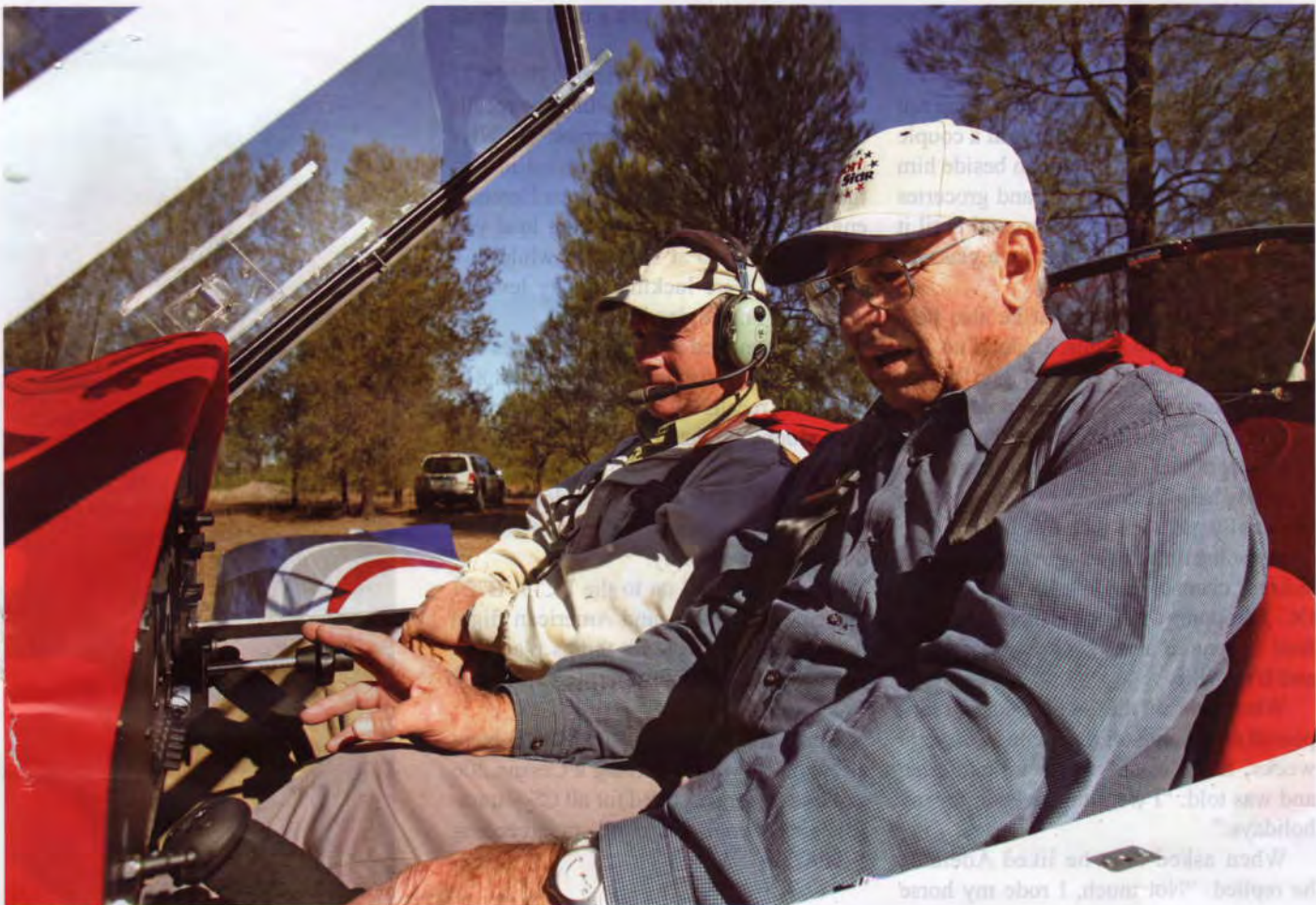
In 1949 he was tapped on the shoulder to form Somerset Airways at Muttaborra 80 miles north of Longreach to form a small charter airline for an entrepreneur who was installing a first generation of refrigerated cool rooms on stations and needed to ferry parts, installers and repair crews around.

He was loaned a fire plower grader to establish his own airstrip on the local sportsground and told to pick and buy an aeroplane.

From Kingsford-Smith Aviation in Sydney to take delivery of one of the first Auster J5-Bs and had it fitted with long range tanks and a longer exhaust to cut noise.

He recalls only one spot of trouble with the aircraft – Gipsy Major engines were shedding rocker gear so a local mechanic performed the recommended torque-up of the bolts "by feel" as he did not have a torque gauge.

Unfortunately he was a touch too enthusiastic and, when the engine failed while



Keith rehearses pre-start checks while Kevin looks on

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dropping food and mail to property owners stranded by flood, the aircraft ended up upside down in the mud.

Usually, low level operations were not a problem. Keith recalls flying at a couple of feet with the local mailman beside him dropping out a box of mail and groceries that would slide along the ground until it stopped without even breaking a glass jar of honey.

His log book shows that he also flew the Fairchild F-24 Argus, Taylor Cub J-3, DHA-3 Drover and DH-84 Dragon "a bugger of an aeroplane - no-one liked it."

One of his jobs was to take passengers to and from the TAA DC-3 at Longreach. By being helpful, cooperative and keen he eventually got a job with the airline.

For some time he flew government-subsidised "channel runs" - a five day trip in a DC-3 dropping off supplies including stock feed at remote areas such as Charleville and Birdsville.

When one of the local loaders reappeared after being off the scene for several weeks, Keith asked where he had been and was told: "I went to Adelaide for my holidays."

When asked how he liked Adelaide he replied: "Not much, I rode my horse

down, slept one night in a park and rode home again."

Keith also flew the Bristol 170 Mk 31 freighter in New Guinea which he recalls as noisy but a good performer: "In New Guinea you were very interested in getting above the weather. With one Hercules engine shut down and a decent load you could still climb at 9000 feet while in a DC-3 you were lucking to stay level at 3000ft on one engine."

He then moved on to the F-27 series 100 and 200, then Viscount 720, 756 and 816 series. He recalls the Viscount as becoming very sloppy on the controls with wear on their rod joints: "It was an English aircraft - the cockpit was cramped and looked like a guy went in with a box of instruments and put them in randomly."

He then moved on to the DC-9, B727 100 and 200 and found American flight decks more roomy with things placed at hand. His final mount before retirement was the A300.

Somewhere in the midst of that he spent a few holiday weeks flying a Cessna 206 and as a result was rated for all CS retractable single engine aircraft not exceeding 5700K MTOW



Keith Galloway with the pilot's little helper

BM 4513 125.5
 4M/MT HALLEN 353M
 PAN @ BON 8min
 MT HALLEN/RED 067M
 37min @ 9000 = 22min
 ETA RED
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 ABOVE 3000 121.2
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One of the world's few privately owned EC135s VH-GKK is owned and flown by AOPA member Richard Green of Sydney for outback photographic missions. This shot was taken in the Northern Territory.