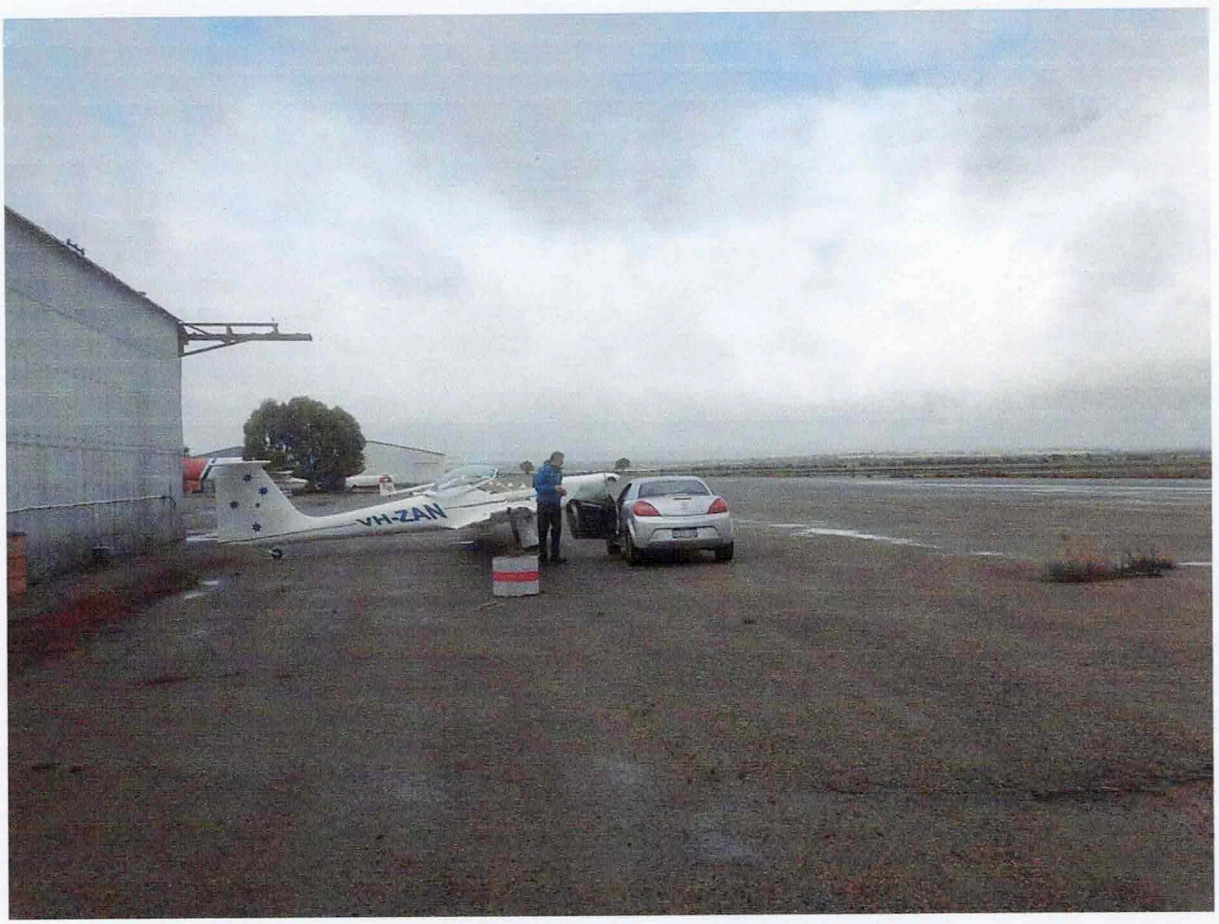
The 2013 pilgrimage to the Morning Glory

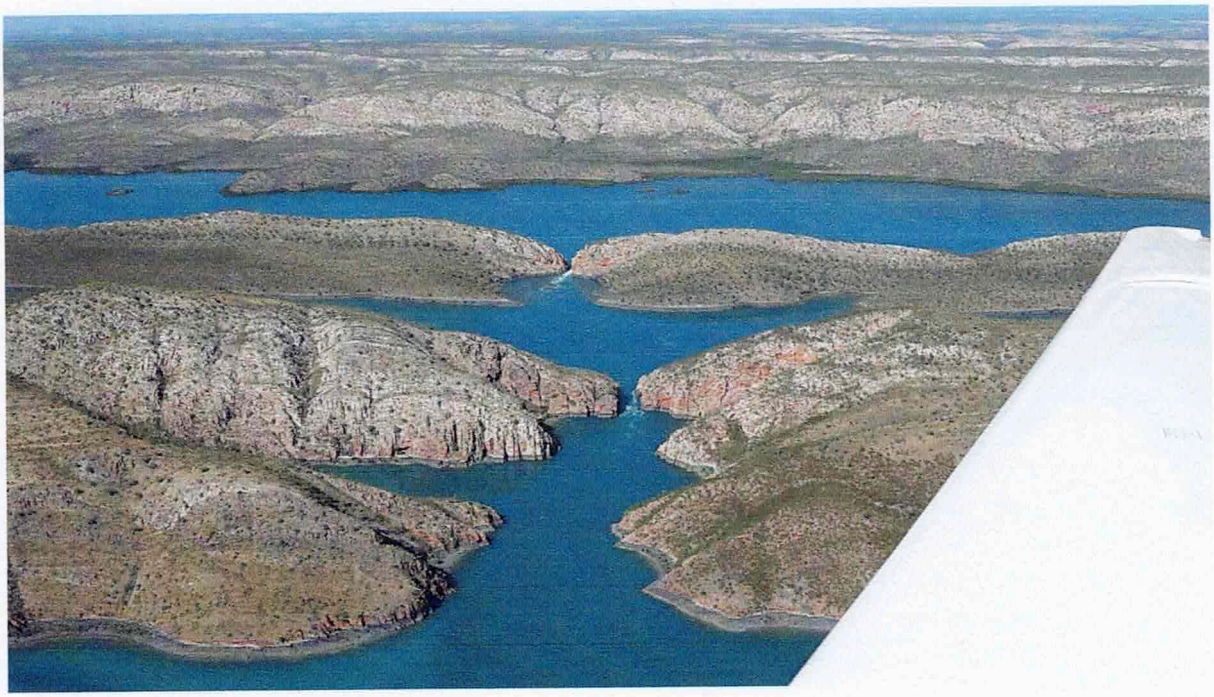
This is the first of a three part account of our trip to visit the magical Morning Glory cloud in far north Queensland. The account starts, fittingly because every time we have departed on one of these journeys in the past the weather has been lousy, with a departure in strong, cold winds and patchy rain from Cunderdin on Thursday 12th September. Stemme GTS with Rob Hanbury and John Orton and Ximango ZAN with Richard Macfarlane and yours truly.



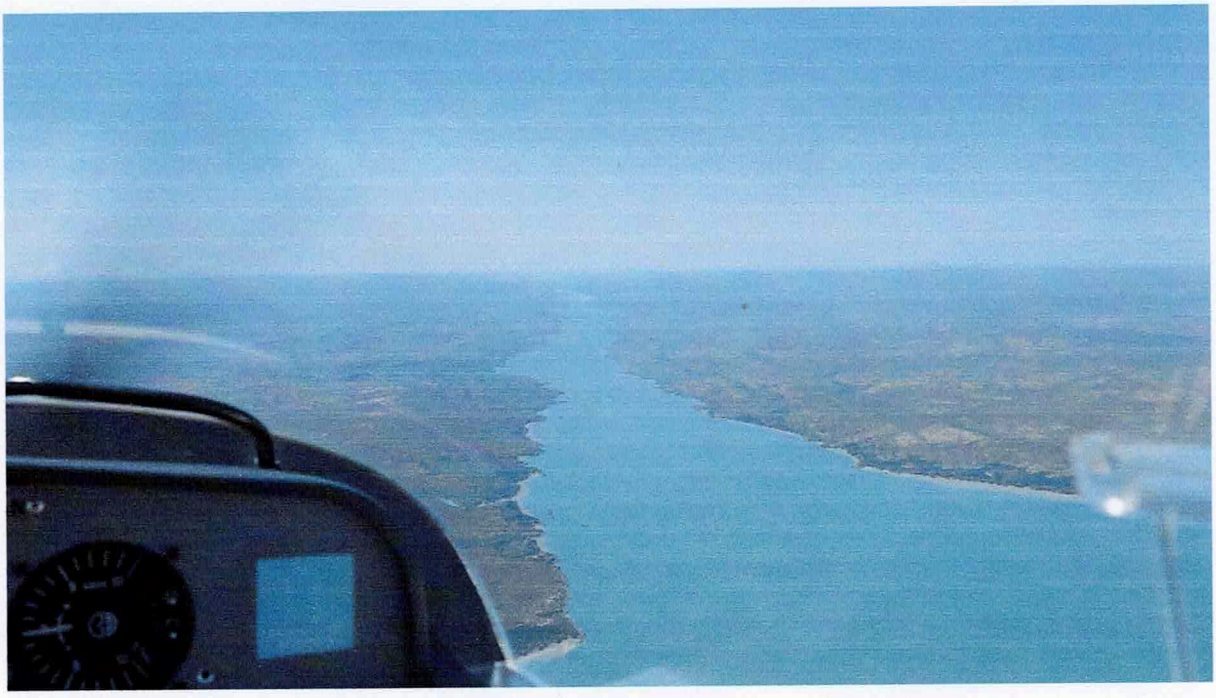
We had decided after much debate in the months preceding our trip to head north to the better weather and to take in some sights on the way. This turned out to be a good decision as, after dodging round showers for an hour or so, we flew out of the weather and arrived in sunny Meekatharra for fuel some 3 hours after departing Cunderdin. A quick refuelling saw us back on our way to Mt. Augustus for a quick trip around the rock and overnight at the Station.

Day two, beautiful and sunny but still a bit cool, we depart for a refuelling at Port Headland before proceeding up the west coast to an overnight in Derby. By now we have firmly arrived in shorts and thongs country....and so it remained till a day out from Perth on the way home! In Derby it was good to catch up with Len Wright, barramundi fishing with his helicopter, who generously fetched and carried us about the place – thanks Lenny.

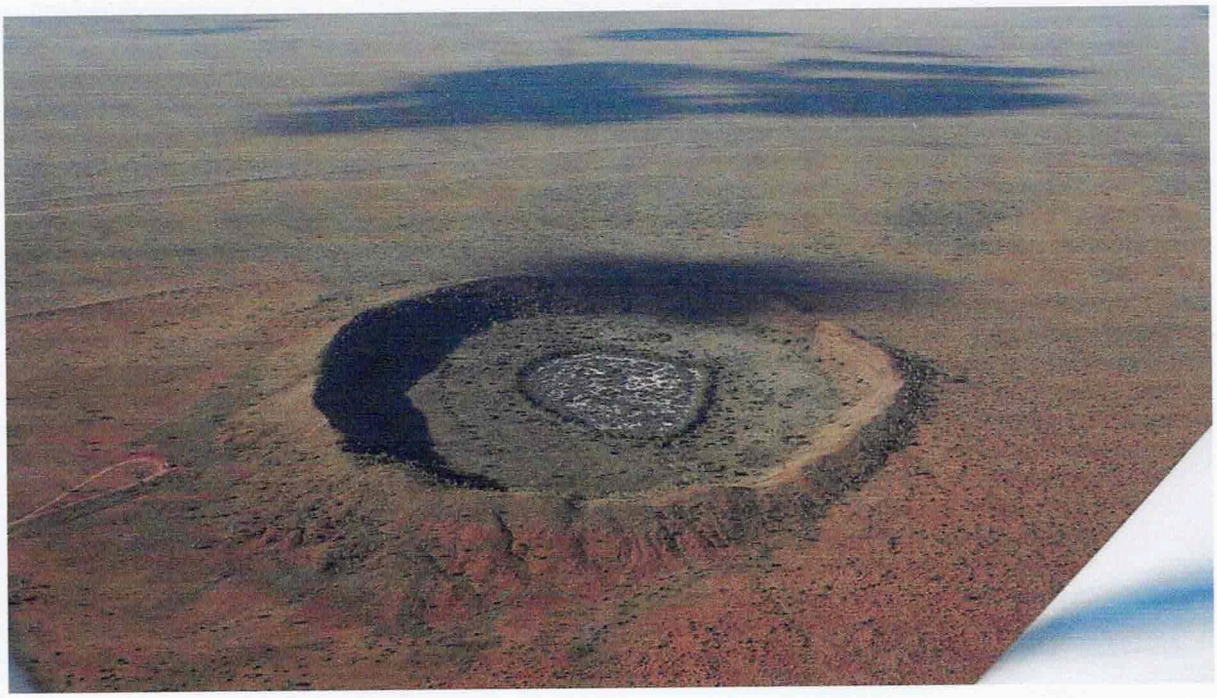
Day three, another beautiful sunny and warm day, and we have decided today to make an out-and-return sightseeing trip from Derby taking in some of the beautiful, but very remote, Kimberly coastal region. We were blown away by the beauty of the horizontal waterfalls



and the majesty of the Prince Regent river....



A quick refuel in Derby before departing for Halls Creek via Wolf Creek crater, a spectacular impact crater



Day four and some weather related decisions to make. A trough associated with thunderstorms and strong winds is forecast to lie between us and Tennant Creek. A quick change of plan and we divert northwards for Katharine taking in the beautiful Bungle-Bungles on the way

We encounter rather good soaring conditions on this leg so the Stemme takes full advantage and arrives with almost as much fuel as it left with!

Overnight in Katharine and we make an earlyish departure on day five to escape before the military become active and the airspace becomes controlled. The visibility today has become poor due to lots of bush fires in the area but improves significantly within an hour of departure. The day rapidly improves into quite a good soaring day and, once again, the Stemme takes full advantage, so much so that Rob and John elect not to land for fuel at our most favourite refuelling stop – Borroloola. For those of you who haven't yet sampled the delights of this community stopover – boy do you have a treat in store for you someday!

After a very quick refuel ZAN is back in the air to try and chase down the Stemme as we run into our final destination of Burketown – we failed and GTS got to the prize well ahead of us. 23 hours from Cunderdin, lots of beautiful places visited, and we are safely at our home-away-from-home. Now let the fun begin!

To be continued....