

Newsletter of the Vintage Glider Association of Australia  
Editor: Alan Ash, 38 Murray Drive, Burwood, Victoria 3125

## Good support for Tocumwal meeting

There has been good support promised for the Vintage Regatta at Tocumwal over the weekend of March 7-9. A survey of members indicates there could be about 15 vintage aircraft attending.

More than 40 people, including members and their families, have said they will attend and there are sure to be many other members, plus visitors.

Most of the sailplanes will be from Victoria but several are expected from other States.

Among the gliders likely to be there are the Golden Eagle (Alan Patching), Altair (Doug Vanstan), Hutter H17 (David & Jenne Goldsmith), Kingfisher (Campbell Curtis), Skylark 4 (Ralph Crompton), Olympia (Keith Nolan) and two Kookaburras (Army Apprentices Gliding Club), all from Melbourne.

From Swan Hill will come a Kookaburra and a Kingfisher and from Benalla, the GCV has promised to send its Kookaburra.

A Skylark 2 (Peter Briton-Jones) and an Olympia (Kevin Sedgman) are expected from South Australia and a Cherokee (Gunter Bartasek) and Grunau 4 (Ray Ash) are likely to come from New South Wales.

In addition, Gary Sunderland, who will be crewing for

the Golden Eagle, has promised to bring his home built MOBA 2 sailplane which, though not a vintage machine, will be of great interest to all.

It is likely that a number of vintage gliders will come from other places to attend the regatta.

Launching at Tocumwal will be by aero-tow using the tugs of the Sportavia Soaring Centre but, because of the usual heavy demand for these tugs and to accommodate the needs of vintage gliders, the VGA is endeavouring to provide at least one and perhaps two tugs of the older variety. At the time of preparing this newsletter nothing had been finalised but negotiations are continuing.

In Victoria, Monday, March 9, is a public holiday and it is expected that most of the gliders and their crews and families will attend for the three days.

In addition to the usual conviviality in the evenings, it is hoped to screen some interesting films on gliding.

## Defining a vintage glider

Jan Scott, president of the Vintage Sailplane Association in the USA, recently wrote to leading people in the Vintage glider movements in Britain, France, Holland, West Germany, Switzerland and Australia to discuss the definition of a vintage glider.

He suggested several possible definitions and asked for comments on them plus further suggestions.

The survey resulted from the formation last year of an international committee to co-ordinate future vintage glider rallies in Europe.

Jan Scott felt that one of the first essentials was the clear definition of a vintage glider or sailplane.

He pointed out that the generally-accepted rule of "25 years old" would not be adequate for much longer as many sailplanes designed in the 1950s (such as the K6, Skylark 2, 3 and 4, Schweizer 1.23, 1.26, 2.22 and other production sailplanes) were still flying in large numbers in many countries.

Some of the early fibre-glass sailplanes are not much younger.

As international rallies are already being filled to capacity, the acceptance of designs of the 1950s could lead to problems for rally organisers.

In his survey, Scott gave the definition established by the Vintage Sailplane Association in 1974.

"A vintage sailplane is any glider out of production since 1950 or a more-recently built

glider with appearance, performance and construction characteristics similar or comparable to those manufactured prior to 1950."

Scott commented that this definition served well in the past but is in need of updating.

He suggested the introduction of two categories: Silver Veteran for gliders built after 1950 when they become 30 years old, and Gold Veteran for gliders built before 1950.

Other suggestions were that a date be selected and that a glider built before that date should qualify as Vintage.

The survey invited other suggested definitions.

As might have been expected the result of the survey was a mixture of support for many proposals.

One of the recommendations was that qualification should be based on the year of design rather than the year of manufacture. This means that aircraft built at any time to an old design would qualify as true vintage and would not be classed as replicas.

Another interesting suggestion was that the prototype of any design, even modern ones, should be accepted because of their historic significance.

There was some support for

the VSA definition, with an appropriate adjustment of the date involved.

Another proposal was for a point system based on both the age and the rarity of the design. This would allow a sole remaining example of a type to collect maximum rarity points in addition to age points.

Most of those who responded to the survey favoured a two-tier classification (Gold and Silver, or some similar classification) while one suggested three tiers - Veteran, Vintage and Classic.

Readers of "Vintage Times" might like to comment on this subject or any of the definitions given above.

The subject was discussed briefly at the last meeting of the VGA at Mildura. As requested by the meeting, the secretary wrote to the Vintage Glider Club of Great Britain to ask its definition of a vintage glider but no reply has yet been received.

It seems likely that an internationally-acceptable definition will arise soon and it is important that the views of Australian enthusiasts be put forward at this stage. While we are not compelled to adopt a definition made elsewhere, it would be advantageous to do so.

Who knows? Perhaps one day there may be an opportunity to send an Australian sailplane to an international vintage glider rally. It would be a shame to miss out because our definition didn't comply.

## KEITH NOLAN FLIES 514 km IN OLYMPIA

While taking part in the Sunraysia Mini Comps at Mildura during December, Keith Nolan of Melbourne flew 514 km in his Olympia "Yellow Witch" to gain his distance diamond.

This is the first time an Olympia has been flown over 500 km in Australia. The best that had been done previously was by Mervyn Waghorn when he set a new Australian distance record in 1955 by flying the Sydney Soaring Club's silver Olympia 303 miles (488 km) from Narromine to Wangaratta.

Keith's flight was a triangle from Mildura with turning points at Balranald and Birchip.

The flight took 7 hours 49 minutes. On several occasions the lift took the Olympia over 10,000 feet, with a maximum of 10,800 feet, though at other times the ground was within 1100 feet.

Eight sailplanes flying in the Sports Class completed the task on this day, December 9.

Weather conditions were hot and dry with a light wind that enabled the slower aircraft to complete such a long triangle.

Thermals were not especially strong (usually 1-3 kts) but they continued until late. The Olympia was the last to land at about 8 pm.

The Yellow Witch was built in Melbourne in 1946-48 and had completed more than 3200 hours and 53,000 km flying to the end of December 1980.

## A PROBLEM FACING VINTAGE BUILDERS

Eric Ehrenberg of Melbourne ran into a problem recently when he considered building a replica of what is one of the earliest gliders designed in Australia.

Eric had learned that Dick Duckworth had a set of constructional drawings of the Lasco Lark designed in 1930 and built by the Larkin Aircraft company in Melbourne.

The Lark flew for several years in Victoria, including two national duration records at the hands of Sir Raymond Garrett (then a Flight Lieutenant in the RAAF Reserve).

Eric says, "I was full of enthusiasm at the idea of building and flying a Lark.

"My enthusiasm was short-lived. I was reliably advised that the GFA would not permit a Lark to be flown. It seems incomprehensible that hang gliding is permitted, yet the Lark would not be approved. I consider the latter to be far more airworthy.

"In his article, 'A visit to the Wasserkuppe', Alan Patching expresses the hope that a building might be obtained to house and display Australian gliders and other historical material.

"Perhaps some club or group will be interested in building a replica Lark as a museum piece. I raised the idea with the Gliding Club of Victoria but there has been no action to date."

In response, Alan Patching said the only problem with the plan to build a Lark is that it has no Type Approval.

"This would prevent it being registered and flown like other sailplanes," he said, "but it does not rule out the possibility of building the sailplane and making occasional demonstration flights at vintage rallies and similar gatherings."

## STRONG WINDS LIMIT FLYING IN GRUNAU 4

Ray Ash of Sydney reports he did very little flying in his Grunau 4 during 1980.

"Whenever I went to Camden to rig, a gale blew up. With its low towing speed, I prefer relatively calm conditions for the Grunau," he said.

One of the problems in towing the Grunau has been that it was fitted only with a c/g release which required towing with the stick well forward. In boistrous conditions this did not leave much reserve for countering the efforts of the sailplane to climb above the tug.

However, Ray has now fitted the Grunau with a nose release for towing. The release was given to him by Jack Watt who salvaged it from the remains of the Schneider Gnome which he acquired some time ago.

Before fitting the release, Ray took it apart and cleaned it. He reports that it is now working perfectly.

## ANOTHER PUBLICATION ON VINTAGE AVIATION

For members interested in early aviation, including experiments in gliding, "World War One Aeroplanes" is devoted to restorers and builders of those magnificent flying machines.

High in technical content and "how to do it", this magazine covers the period up to 1918 with the accent mainly on the first world war period and early flying machines.

Readers should be aware that the development of the high performance sailplane in the period 1920-1930 owed its origin to the advances in the development of glued plywood shell structures and canti-

lever wings by the German during WWI. These structural advances are covered in much detail.

Typical offers of interest are original drawings for the Lilienthal glider of 1894, three drawings at \$5.50 per sheet. Issue No. 70 of October 1978 was devoted to Percy Pilcher's gliders.

Other stories have covered the work of the Wrights, Chanute and Lilienthal. Fascinating reading!

The editor is Leonard E. Gedycke, 15 Crescent Road, Poughkeepsie, N.Y., U.S.A. 12601. The magazine has no annual subscription. Readers are asked to send along what they think the magazine is worth to them.

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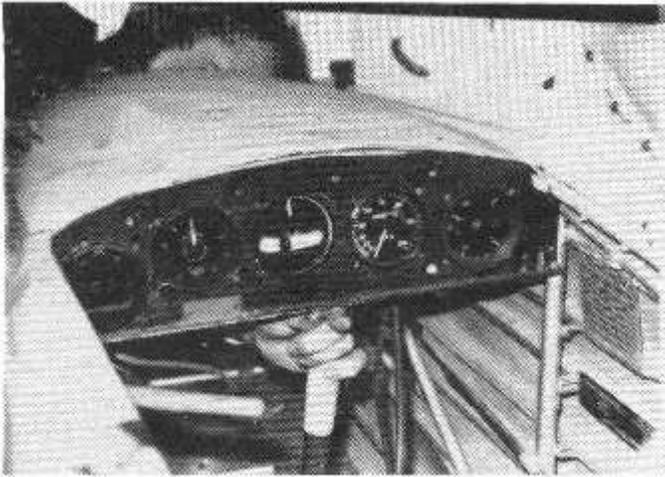
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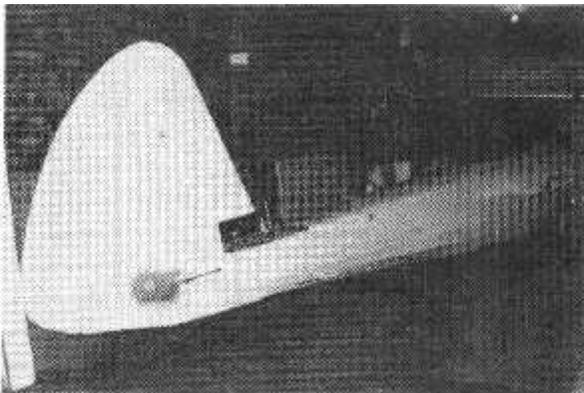
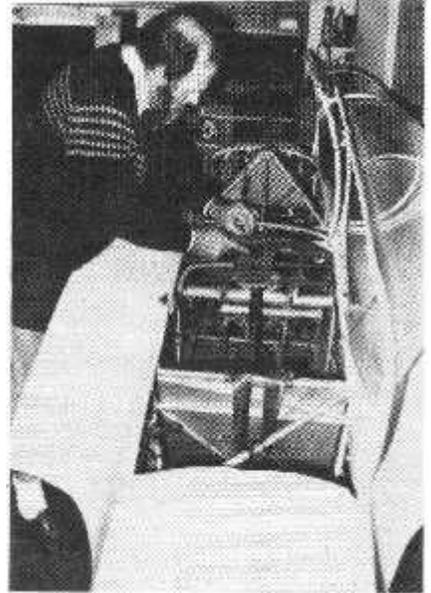




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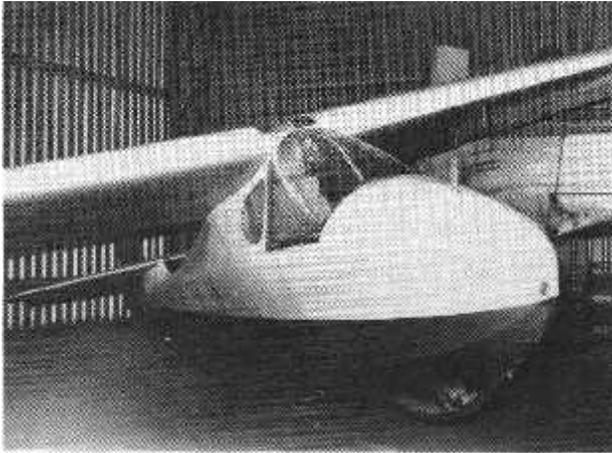
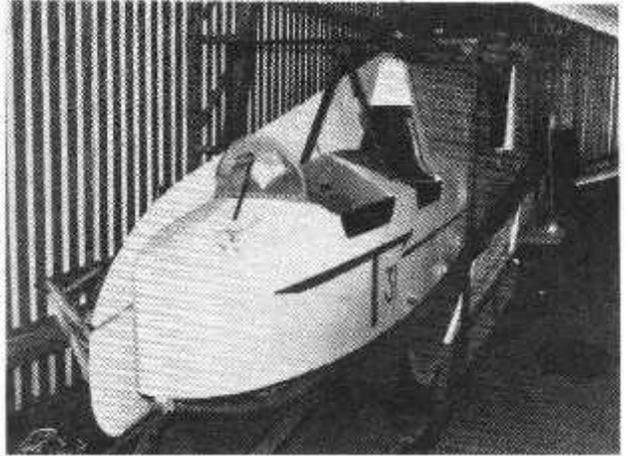
VINTAGE GLIDER RESTORATION  
IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Don Shaw (pictured) and his partner Frank Schell of Perth are making good progress on the restoration of their Laister Kaufmann LK-10 two-seater. The sailplane was built during World War 2 as a trainer for glider pilots of the U.S. Air Force. It came to Western Australia about 1951 and made many notable flights at the hands of Ric New, including several national records. It has a steel-tube, fabric covered fuselage and wooden wings and tail.



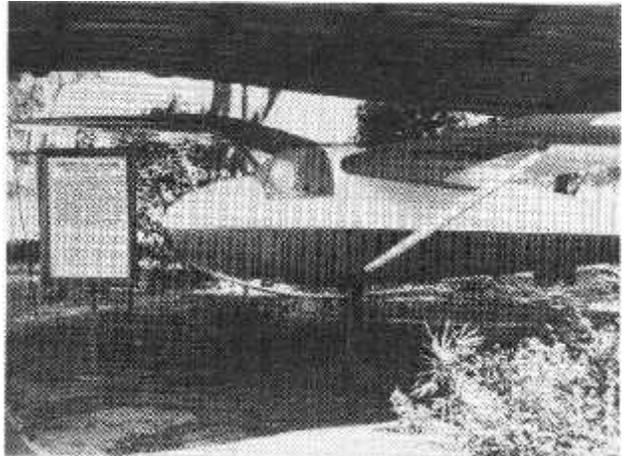
The photographs on these two pages were taken by Neville Wynn.

This Slingsby T-31, VH-GPQ, began life as a trainer for ATC cadets in Britain. It is now being overhauled by Alf Williams and partners at Cambalda, W.A.



Geoff Higginson of Perth has just finished a major overhaul of this ES-57 Kingfisher in Perth.

This Slingsby Gull came to Australia in 1939 and set many national distance and height records before being retired. Carefully preserved, it is now a static exhibit outside the studio of Perth's Channel 7 television station.



## NEW SOURCE OF SPRUCE AND PLY

"Rag and Tube", journal of the Antique Aeroplane Association of Australia, reports a new source for supplies of aircraft quality spruce and plywood.

A new company, Burton Products, advises it can offer wooden aircraft spars and other parts to order and would be glad to quote on any drawing supplied.

Plywood of 0.4 mm to 6 mm thickness is available.

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Enquiries can be made to Burton Products, 24 Burrealong Road, Erina, NSW 2250. Phone 043.676.113 or (All) 043.326.694.

## CHANGE OF DATES FOR INTERNATIONAL RALLY

Because of expected heavy holiday traffic during the period announced for the 9th International Vintage Glider Rally at Burgfeuerstein, near Nuremburg, Germany, the date has been advanced by a week.

It is now scheduled to be held from July 25 to August 3 1981.

During the week before the International Rally, a warmup to be called the Rendezvous Rally will be held for vintage gliders at the Dutch Gliding Club, Malden, near Nijmegen, from July 18-24.

It is expected that many of the entrants in the International Rally will also be at the Rendezvous Rally.

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## REGULAR FLYING BUT NO NOTABLE FLIGHTS

Leigh Bunting of Adelaide reports a year of regular flying in his Grunau Baby VH-GDN but no notable flights.

Leigh says "During 1980 the Grunau logged 25 flights for a total of 15 hours 40 minutes.

"Responsibilities to my home and family limited attendance at the flying field and when I did fly the weather was usually poor.

"Since mid-January I have had the Grunau in the workshop undergoing a minor repair to the wing leading edge."

## EX-CLARE KINGFISHER NOW IN WEST AUSTRALIA

The ES57 Kingfisher once owned by the Clare Gliding Club in South Australia is now owned by Geoff Higginson of Perth.

Geoff bought the Kingfisher VH-GRE several years ago and completely overhauled it.

The present colour scheme is white and orange.

Geoff Higginson will be remembered as one of the very active members of the Gliding Club of W.A. about 25-30 years ago.

Among other things, he was GFA Regional Officer/Airworthiness for a long time.

With Harold Luckly he began construction of a pair of Eon Olympias but by the time about half the parts were made the two builders ran out of time

and the project was shelved.

The parts were in storage for about 25 years until, a few years ago, someone bought them and, Geoff believes, brought them east.

If anyone knows the present owner or the location of the two partly-built Olympias, the VGA would like to know.

## JOEY FLIES WITH "A LITTLE ENGINE"

From Adelaide, Keith Jarvis reports that his diminutive Joey sailplane has been flying recently with the help of some external power.

Keith says "I have fitted Joey with a Victa 160 cc motor which 'plugs in' on top of the centre section.

"The motor uses less than half a gallon of petrol an hour to provide a cruising speed of 45 knots.

"The power developed by the motor is limited by the prop revs.

"Joey flies quite well with the motor on but glides like a greased brick with the motor stopped.

"I have been able to make this installation as the low weight of the sailplane gets it into the minimum aircraft category covered by ANO95:10.

"I am considering a retractable mechanism for the motor but haven't decided if I will persevere with it.

"I'm currently building two Mitchell B10s and these are occupying all my time."

It was with some measure of excitement that David and I set out for a couple of days of gliding at Tocomwal. Who knows? We may even have a new canopy awaiting us!

Our friend John Lynch had had our Hutter H-17 stored in his workshop at Tocomwal while he formed a new canopy for it.

Our enthusiasm was dampened a little as it became obvious we would not be able to fly that day. Thunder, lightning, heavy rain and wind developed as we drove toward Toc.

As the fury of the storm increased, fallen trees had to be negotiated with care and we became increasingly thankful that the Hutter was in John's care. Those old WW2 bomber base storage sheds of his were as solid as Gibraltar. They'd been up now for 40 years. How could anything shift them?

As we approached Tocomwal, the rain stopped and the wind calmed. Low cloud still hung about but it would clear. Tomorrow could be a great day!

Our momentarily-raised spirits were soon to turn to feelings of apprehension, for as we drove out of the town the scene that greeted us was one of fire-blackened horror!

A raging bushfire, clearly of great intensity, had been through the area, and right up to the town limits.

With straining eyes we took in the scene, looking beyond the burned rails of the race-course for a glimpse of John's sheds. Yes! They were still standing! And no small amount

of relief flooded us.

As we drove closer we noted how complete had been the destruction of everything in the path of the fire, and our feelings of dread rose again.

When we turned in the gate, the scene brought gasps from both of us. The two huge sheds appeared untouched, though the fire had furiously burned everything that could burn around them. Only a small patch of barley remained intact, safely bordered by the main road and John's access roads. It was all that remained of his share crop.

But the closest shed to us looked as though a bomb had hit it. A large section of the roof had been ripped off. Bits of asbestos cement roofing was strewn about like confetti. Roofing beams had flung about and snapped like matchsticks, taking tree branches with them.

Fortunately, the Hutter had not been in this shed but John's immaculately-finished Pioneer (a tailless glider of American design) was there.

Fortunately, an inspection showed that the Pioneer was safe in its trailer.

It was then that John greeted us with "You don't know how lucky you are!" Boy, were we to find out!

John's main building, in which are his living quarters,

workshop and our H-17, had been badly damaged by the same squall that had wrecked the first one we had seen. The squall line had rolled through the property about two weeks previously, taking off a big section of roof from the main building, directly over the H-17 on its open trailer, and rending the other building with an explosive bang, damaging it extensively.

Incredibly, the Hutter was untouched by flying debris, though the roof was gone from above it and the walls bowed toward it.

But John was to have little respite from disaster. The next day brought 43°C heat and scorching 60-80 knot NW gales. The inevitable happened and a bush fire started and roared toward the town. At first, John seemed safe. While the wind remained from the NW the fire steered clear of him. In the meantime he had moved the Hutter to a safe part of the shed and had braced the weakened walls securely.

But now a freakish turn of the wind brought the gale-fanned fire down upon him. With only seconds to get out, John had to make the hardest decision of his life ... to leave all his possessions, his Pioneer and our Hutter. But there was really no decision to make. John had time only to take himself and his pet birds to safety in a vehicle before flames engulfed his property.

From a couple of miles away John could barely see what was

happening but the thick smoke, flying ash and flames at times seen licking the walls of the buildings made him sure he would have nothing to go back to. His sheds, with parts of their roofs missing, were particularly vulnerable.

With heavy heart he went back as soon as the fire had passed, but this feeling was to turn to rejoicing as he found that, though he had lost his lawns, his newly-planted orchard, vegetable gardens and barley crop, the contents of the sheds were unharmed.

Miraculously, the Hutter had escaped destruction. Though her cockpit and trailer were full of ash and burned grass, she had failed to go up.

I couldn't begin to tell you how much I enjoyed the flights I had in that little bird the next day. We might as easily have lost her, twice it two days.

For John, I have heartfelt sympathy and the utmost respect. He has taken a terrible knock but already, by the day we arrived, he had the roof back on his main building and the walls repaired.

He has had a bad setback by hopefully his canopy-making business will soon be in full swing again.

I might add that, if all else wasn't enough, on the day we arrived, a lightning bolt had struck John's power pole, burning out his transformer and leaving him with candle-power only. He might well be excused from asking "Why me?"

## SUPPORT FOR LECTURES ON MAINTENANCE, REPAIR

Jenne Goldsmith of Gisborne has written to support an idea mentioned in the last issue of "Vintage Times" suggesting that the VGA should own a two seater sailplane to help promote interest in vintage glider activities.

Jenne writes: "I've been thinking for some time that as one of the major aims of the VGA must surely be the restoration and preservation of our vintage aircraft, then we should be looking to the provision of support for members who are restoring, maintaining or carrying out 20-year C of A inspections on vintage sailplanes.

"You proposed using an Association aircraft as a base for lectures and demonstrations on the maintenance and repair of wood and fabric structures. Perhaps this could be done even now by using an aircraft under repair or maintenance by one of our members.

"If enough interest was shown, perhaps a fee could be charged to participate in a lecture course to cover the cost of employing someone (such as Doug Vanstan in Victoria) to conduct it."

This seems like a very interesting proposal. VGA members are invited to consider it and let us have their thoughts. If there is enough support something might be done to get it started.



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