

Newsletter of the Vintage Glider Association of Australia  
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## VIC. MEMBERS PLAN REGIONAL MEET

Following the success of the Regatta at Tocumwal in March members in Victoria decided to hold a regional rally during June. The rally is scheduled for the weekend of June 13-14.

The VGA accepted an invitation from the Midland Soaring Club to use their flying site at Bridgewater, near Bendigo in central Victoria.

The club offered the use of their Auster for towing.

Most of the arrangements for the rally were made by David and Jenne Goldsmith who are members of the Midland club.

It seems likely that there will be at least six vintage sailplanes at the rally. These will be the Goldsmith's Hutter H17, Keith Nolan's Olympia, Garth Hudson's Grunau Baby 3A, Campbell Curtis' Kingfisher and the Kingfisher and Kookaburra from the Sun Centre Gliding Club at Swan Hill.

The site at Bridgewater is a grass field on private land, situated about 30 km west of Bendigo and 8 km east of the town of Bridgewater.

To get to the field, turn north off the Calder Highway onto a dirt road just east of a railway crossing. Drive down the dirt road for about 3 km and turn into the private land

at a gate on the right marked with the name of the property, "Hokin". A white-painted four-gallon drum letterbox marks the gate.

Drive through the property to the clubhouse and hangars.

Although no accommodation can be provided for visitors at the field, there are many hotels, motels and a caravan park in nearby towns.

Though the rally is being held in the winter it is hoped that flying conditions will be good. Local pilots report that thermals are often evident in the area during June.

Perhaps the success of this rally will encourage similar regional rallies in other areas where members can gather to fly vintage gliders.

There are enough members of the VGA in and around Adelaide for a good regional rally to be held there.

The VGA also has a few members with vintage sailplanes in Brisbane. Perhaps a rally could be held in northern NSW. This might attract members who live around Sydney.

# Good soaring at Tocumwal

Good soaring conditions highlighted the vintage regatta at Tocumwal over the weekend of March 7-9. Good lift was found by most pilots on all three days, though at times it was difficult to work. Altogether, it was a good weekend.

The regatta attracted 14 vintage sailplanes and one primary glider and pilots and visitors came from three states -- Victoria, New South Wales and South Australia.

Several of the visitors flew to Tocumwal - Alan Lewis came from Sydney in his home-built Stits Playboy and Kevin Sedgman came from Adelaide in Falke motor glider.

Hospitality and launching were provided by the Sportavia Soaring Centre and the VGA is grateful to Bill and Val Riley and the staff at Tocumwal for their contribution to the success of the regatta.

Weather conditions on the Saturday and Sunday were fine and clear most of the time but a cold front during Sunday night brought strong winds and cloud on Monday.

Lift was not easy to work at low altitudes on any of the days but higher up it improved considerably.

On Saturday, the best duration was 3 hours 45 minutes by Keith Jarvis in Joey, during which he climbed to about 7000 feet. Ray Ash got the best height with a climb to 7500 ft in his Grunau 4 on a flight of 3 hours 25 minutes.

Most of the other vintage gliders made flights of one to two hours.

A message came through that Garth Hudson had landed his Grunau Baby 3A at Finley, some 20 km to the north. Later he was towed back to Tocumwal.

A pig-on-a-spit barbecue in the evening provided opportunity for talking.

Conditions on Sunday were much the same as Saturday but provided higher climbs. Ross Nolan in the Yellow Witch got the best height for the day at 8600 feet and Campbell Curtis got to 8400 feet in his Kingfisher.

Alan Patching climbed to 8500 feet in the Altair during a flight of 3 hours in which he covered about 100 km around a triangular course.

During the day, Ken Davies and Rudi Fiel flew their Zogling primary, to the astonishment of many pilots who had never seen such a machine before.

Keith Jarvis fitted Joey with its little Victa engine and gave an interesting demonstration of low-level flying in it.

A smorgasbord got the evening off to a good start and was followed by a showing of films on gliding. These included scenes of Victorian activities of about 30 years ago, some shots of past VGA regattas, some entertaining

views of Southern Cross club flying in various parts of NSW and some scenes taken by Ray Ash at last year's international Vintage Glider Rally in England.

Many of the members and their gliders left during the Monday morning but some remained to pit themselves against the blustery conditions of the day.

Jenne Goldsmith took off in the Hutter H17 with thoughts of making a flight to Corowa for her Silver C distance but she couldn't get above about 2500 feet and decided it was not worth leaving the field.

The Olympia, Grunau Baby 3A, Skylark 4 and the two Kookaburras found the lift strong but rough and all managed to stay airborne for some time.

An informal meeting of VGA members on the Sunday morning considered several matters.

One suggestion was that a regatta be held next March to last over a week. It was felt that this would make it worth while for members to bring their aircraft over long distances. Tocumwal was suggested as a suitable venue though other sites could be considered. (Comments should be sent to the VGA secretary.)

Kevin Sedgman said the Scout Gliding Association in South Australia would be happy to host the next VGA regatta. He was asked to make enquiries about accommodation and launching at the Scout's site at Blanchetown and provide a report for the next issue of "Vintage Times".

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## Replica and historic gliders by Gary Sunderland

Further to the comments by Alan Patching about new procedures to permit the flying of historic and replica aircraft in Australia (Vintage Times, March 1981), readers may be interested in more details of the scheme.

There is a growing world-wide awareness of the importance of retaining and preserving aviation history in an appropriate form so that present and future generations will be able to appreciate their aviation heritage.

This means not only static exhibits in museums but also real live flying aircraft to be flown and demonstrated on suitable occasions, to show the capabilities and limitations of these early aircraft.

Vintage aeroplanes and gliders are no great problem to the airworthiness authorities because they possess Certificates of Airworthiness and can operate within the existing civil airworthiness and operational systems.

Until recently, a major problem existed for people who wanted to operate a historic or replica aircraft which would not be eligible for a normal Certificate of Airworthiness in Australia. The problem related mainly to military aircraft but it also applies to the operation of certain old civil aircraft.

In the USA, such aircraft are operated on an "Experimental" permit to fly, and at one time there was widespread agitation to have a similar system here.

Finally, in September 1979, the Australian DOT issued procedures for the issue of "Permits to fly for historical and ex-military aircraft", DOT Reference AW1 No.3-4, and published "Guidance Material for Intending Operators". Copies of this document can be obtained from any regional DOT office.

Following this, permits were issued to a restored CAC Wirraway and two North American Harvards, plus two replica World War 1 aeroplanes, a Fokker triplane and a Sopwith Pup.

Other projects now under way include a Curtis Kittyhawk and a replica Hawker Demon and a full-size tri-motor Fokker "Southern Cross" replica.

Readers will be interested in those sections of the "Guidance Material" which will relate to the construction and operation of replica sailplanes and primary gliders.

Aircraft (including gliders) of a type produced prior to the introduction of formal standards (i.e. before the introduction of ANO 100.17 in 1956) are considered on their merits.

An application is required to the local Regional Office of DOT to be accompanied by the appropriate documents.

These are not defined but would be expected to include drawings and constructional details plus evidence of the previous operation of the glider type.

The DOT Regional airworthiness officers may elect to inspect the aircraft during construction. The glider should be built in accordance with the GFA Manual, Part 3, Section 47.

For the issue of the Permit to Fly, the DOT requires:

- (a) pilots and airworthiness inspectors to be nominated.
- (b) a certificate for the construction by the builder.
- (c) the glider to be registered.
- (d) the glider to be weighed

and its empty weight, centre of gravity and loading to be determined.

(e) the glider log book to be presented.

(f) the GFA Manual Part 3 to be nominated for maintenance.

(g) a copy of the operating limitations.

(h) details of any modifications.

(i) a test schedule for the initial flights.

Following a satisfactory conclusion of these flights and a certificate from the pilot to this effect, a Permit for Historical Aircraft will be issued.

This permit will be subject to renewal at 12-monthly intervals.

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## New Life for derelict Grunau 4

A Grunau 4 that was virtually derelict two years ago has returned to the air, thanks to the efforts of a small group of enthusiasts in Sydney. It was test-flown at Camden on May 2.

The Grunau 4, VH-GLX, was built by Schneiders in 1959 (Serial No. 37) for the Adelaide Soaring Club. It was the fourth and last to be built by the company.

It flew at Gawler until September 1968 when it was sold to the RAAF club at Laverton, Victoria. At the end of 1973 it was leased to the RAAF club at Wagga, NSW, and flew there for a year or so.

Its last flight at Wagga was on May 10, 1974. Soon after this a windstorm blew the roof off the hangar and the Grunau suffered minor damage. It was loaded onto its open trailer and, for some strange reason, stored outside the hangar at the mercy of the elements.

It remained there for several years, gradually deteriorating, until it was brought back to Laverton.

Though only suffering minor structural damage, the fabric was rotted and there was some separation of glued joints in the wings and tail.

Realising that restoration would be a major task, the club decided to dispose of it and the RAAF (since it was officially a RAAF aircraft) called for tenders.

The successful tenderer was Bob McDicken, a member of the Southern Cross Gliding Club

who had only recently taken up gliding.

Bob collected the Grunau in March 1979 but, with almost no experience in aircraft work and with no workshop space, he recognised that the task of rebuilding would be beyond him.

After investigating alternative proposals, Bob gave the task to Ron Mears and Gunter Bartasek as a commercial proposition.

Ron carried out the rebuild of the wings and Gunter worked on the fuselage. Bob says the total cost of getting the aircraft back into the air was about \$3800, plus about \$400 worth of instruments

While Ron and Gunter were working on the sailplane, Bob worked on the trailer, making it fully enclosed.

After the usual inspection and weighing program, the test flight was made by Ron Mears. Later in the day it was flown by Gunter Bartasek.

It is hoped that the Grunau will attend future regattas of The Vintage Glider Association, which Bob joined this year.

According to the log book, GLX has already had a successful flying life. It has made a total of almost 9000 launches for 2258 hours and has flown two 300 km triangles, one in 8 hours 30 minutes and the other in 6 hours 25 minutes.

## VINTAGE GLIDERS VISIT BRIDGEWATER AT LASTER

Over the Easter weekend, several members of the VGA visited the Midland Soaring Club site at Bridgewater, near Bendigo.

Jenne and David Goldsmith flew their Hutter H17, Lloyd Stewart brought his Kookaburra from Swan Hill and Kay and Noel Webb brought Campbell Curtis' Kingfisher up from Melbourne. Garth Hudson visited on the Saturday without his Grunau Baby 3A, which was having its instruments overhauled.

Launching was provided by the club's Auster, which was in keeping with the vintage gliders present.

Conditions during the week-

end provided some excellent soaring. Saturday was relatively mediocre but resulted in flights up to 30 minutes.

Conditions improved on the Sunday. The Kingfisher made the best flight of the day by staying up for 2 hours 10 minutes. The Kookaburra flew for well over an hour.

Members of the Midland Soaring Club expressed great interest in the vintage aircraft.

Unfortunately, the good conditions and time limitations resulted in only one of the club pilots having time to have a flight in one of them.

The VGA members agreed that Bridgewater was an ideal site for the regional regatta. The only drawback is the lack of spare hangarage.

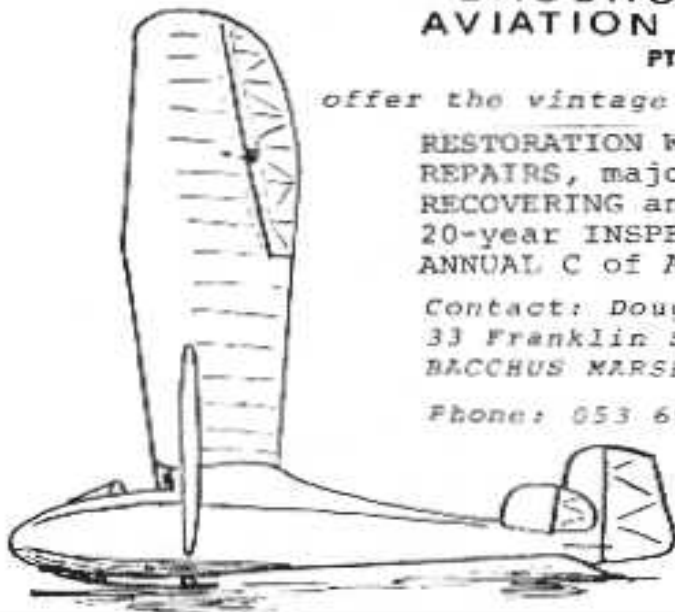
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SPRUCE GOOSE DAMAGED  
IN FIELD OUT-LANDING

Merv Gill reports that his Spruce Goose suffered minor damage when he landed it in a rocky field during a cross country flight in February.

It suffered damage to the undercarriage and fuselage.

During 1980, Merv flew the Goose on 26 flights for 38 hours including 13 triangles.

IMPROVEMENTS  
TO GRUNAU 4

Ray Ash of Sydney reports that he is continuing to make improvements to his Grunau 4.

He has fitted a release in the nose, which has improved the glider's handling during aero-tow.

He has also fitted a home-made electric variometer with audio. "While it is not marvellous," he writes, "it has a quick response compared with the vane type."

Ray is planning to fit the Grunau with a radio soon.

On a recent flying day at Camden, the Grunau logged durations of 2 h 30 m, 1 hr 5 m and 20 minutes.

After flying at the Regatta at Tocumwal, Ray has become concerned about the extensive area of spiky thorns amongst the grass on the airfield. At the Regatta, several sailplanes suffered punctured tyres because of the thorns.

Ray reports that by the time he got the Grunau back to

Camden, it had a flat tyre and he spent almost a whole day picking thorn spikes out of the tyre to prevent future trouble.

He says this is a serious problem and could cause many glider owners to shun Tocumwal unless it is remedied.

SLINGSBY T31 SHOULD BE ACTIVE  
AGAIN SOON

Gilbert Simpkins of Woodridge, Queensland, has owned a Slingsby T31 two-seater since about 1970 but hasn't done a lot of flying in it because he hasn't been able to spare the time from his business.

But his two sons have taken up gliding and are now putting a bit of pressure on him to get the veteran sailplane back into the air.

The T31 was built about 1954 and brought out from England by the RAN Gliding Association. It flew at Nowra for many years and was then sold to the RAAF club at Amberley in Queensland. Gilbert bought it from the RAAF.

Though he hasn't flown it much, Gilbert has kept the T31 snug in its trailer and has kept its C of A current. He had hopes of flying it regularly but his bakery business kept him too busy.

Now that his sons are so keen, he sees the possibility that it will be flown regularly in the future and might even get to a vintage rally one day.