

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

## BEST REGATTA YET

by David Goldsmith

The regatta at Blanchetown, South Australia, was the best yet held by the Vintage Glider Association, exceeding even the success of the previous Blanchetown regatta in 1977.

The event was held over the weekend of 31 October and 1 November and attracted 17 gliders whose design prototype first flew at least 20 years ago. Six of the designs were Australian.

In addition to the vintage gliders there was a DSK BJ1 Duster, the prototype of which flew in 1966, and a Phoebus, which had its origin in the Phoenix, the first fibreglass sailplane, which was built in 1957.

Sailplanes at the regatta came from South Australia and Victoria.

Most of the launching over the weekend was by the winch of the host, the Scout Flying Club, though there were some launches by a Pawnee from the Waikerie Gliding Club.

Several Auster and Tiger Moth aircraft attended, but none was fitted with a tow hook for gliders.

There was also a hot air balloon but the wind over the weekend was a little too strong to allow it to fly.

Weather conditions were

good throughout the weekend, with moderate winds and good thermals.

On Saturday, a task was set for those who wanted a challenge. The 80 km course covered a triangle from the airfield to the Blanchetown ferry, then to Morgan and return to the airfield.

The conditions were not so good as expected, with lift going to only about 4500 feet and a fresh southerly wind.

The wind made for difficult flying in the slower machines, especially over some of the scrub country on the final leg of the course.

Six sailplanes, including the Duster, set off while the others contented themselves with local soaring.

The only ones to get home were Peter Wright in Cherokee 2, and Ralph Crompton in his Skylark 4.

Peter was scraping along at 600 feet at one stage but made it back to win the task. Ralph decided to take a slightly longer route, via Waikerie, to

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BLANCHETOWN REGATTA  
(continued from page 1)

use better conditions but he was also scratching at one stage, coming within 800 feet of the ground.

Merv Gill had to land his Spruce Goose several kilometres from the airfield and walk home to arrange a retrieve.

Others to land out were Ron Dunn in his Duster, Neville Daniels in Kevin Sedgman's Olympia and Gunter Zeigler in the Ka8b.

Those who stayed home made soaring flights of an hour and more.

After a fine meal on Saturday evening, Dick Duckworth showed some of his interesting collection of old gliding films.

Before flying began on the Sunday, the members of the VGA met for the annual meeting. An election of office bearers returned Alan Patching as president and Allan Ash as secretary/treasurer and editor of Vintage Times.

There was plenty of lift on Sunday, though the thermals didn't go as high as on Saturday. Best height for the day was 3500 feet.

Ralph Crompton had the best flight of the regatta this day by soaring the Skylark 4 for 5 hours 39 minutes.

The Golden Eagle clocked a total of 8 hours soaring over the weekend, at the hands of several pilots. Good going for a sailplane that first flew in 1937.

The two two-seaters (Jock Barrett's Pelican and the Scout Club's ES49) were kept busy carrying passengers and being tried by other pilots, and there was a general air of relaxed informality amongst the pilots.

It was unfortunate that the Rhon Ranger primary could not be flown over the weekend. It was brought up from Adelaide by Cleve Gandy and Roger Chapman but sustained some minor damage on the journey. It was rigged anyway and provided an interesting exhibit.

A couple of aircraft we have not seen before were a welcome addition to the fleet.

One was the Skylark 2, GFG, owned by Peter Briton-Jones. It was imported in the early 1950s in an unfinished state from England by a syndicate that included the Iggulden brothers and Geoff Richardson.

About 1972 modifications were carried out by Mike Burns which included lowering the wings, fitting a retractable undercarriage and a new longer canopy.

The Skylark series was one of the earliest to use laminar flow aerofoils. The Skylark 2 design first flew in England in 1953.

A new feature on one of the more familiar vintage birds, Leigh Bunting's Grunau Baby 2b, GDN, was a new skid that was beautifully laminated from Tasmanian oak and finished with a highly polished clear varnish.

Sheathed with steel, the

skid was sprung in traditional fashion with tennis balls.

An innovative feature was the way they were held in place. Leigh had ingeniously cut the cups from a cup-cake cooking tray and bolted and glued them to the skid to hold the balls in place.

Some suggest that Leigh's mother is still looking for a missing cup-cake tray but Leigh insists he bought his tray at Coles.

The Association is grateful to the Scout Flying Club for their hospitality over the weekend, especially for the accommodation and catering provided.

The regatta was certainly a memorable one, resulting in more vintage gliders, more launches and more soaring than any previous VGA meeting.

The standard of VGA rallies has been raised and we have a higher goal at which to aim in organising our next regatta.

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It would be interesting if some of the people who flew at or attended the regatta would provide us with their impressions and suggestions for the conduct of future regattas.

In fact, the editor would welcome reports from any of the members who are engaged in flying or restoring vintage sailplanes.

A review of recent issues of Vintage Times will show that most of the reports come from the same few members.

Let us have some news of any flying or project.

## THOSE WHO WERE THERE ...

Seventeen vintage gliders attended the Blanchetown regatta over the weekend of 31 October to 1 November.

The aircraft and their owners were ...

Blanik L13, Scout Flying Club.

Cherokee 2, GRP, Peter Wright (Adelaide Soaring Club).

Cherokee 2, GQE, Nigel Baker and Craig Ligerwood.

EPl Spruce Goose, GHE, Merv Gill.

ES49 Wallaby, GFO, Scout Flying Club.

Golden Eagle 2, GFC, John Wallis (Beaufort Gliding Club).

Grunau Baby 2, GHM, Geoff Wood, Bob Edgecombe and two others (Waikerie Gliding Club).

Grunau Baby 2b, GDN, Leigh Bunting (Balaklava Gliding Club).

Grunau Baby 3a, GHV, Garth Hudson (Midlands Soaring Club).

Ka8b, GPD, Whyalla and District Gliding Club).

ES57 Kingfisher, GLQ, Campbell Curtis (Peninsula Soaring Club).

ES56 Nymph, GHG, Graham Thorpe (Whyalla and District Gliding Club).

Olympia 2b, GLY, Kevin Sedgman (Scout Flying Club).

Pelican 2, GFY, Jock Barratt (Waikerie Gliding Club).

Rhon Ranger, Cleve Gandy and Roger Chapman.

Skylark 2BN, GFG, Peter Briton-Jones (Adelaide Soaring Club).

Skylark 4, GTB, Ralph Crompton.

## ANOTHER HUTTER H17 BEING RESTORED

Gunter Bartasek of Emu Plains, NSW, has acquired a damaged Hutter H17 from Reg Todhunter and plans to restore it to flying condition.

The Hutter was built by Norm Hyde in Melbourne in 1946 and was bought soon afterwards by Norm Wickens of Sydney. It flew at Fluers and Camden for several years (mostly without instruments) until it was sold to a club in Tasmania.

It was air-freighted to the island State inside a DC4.

Some years ago it returned to Victoria in a damaged condition and in 1975 was bought by Mike Derrick, of Campbelltown, NSW.

As part of a glider engineers course at Camden in 1976 the Hutter was dismantled and parts of the wing and tail were rebuilt.

In 1977 it passed into the hands of Reg Todhunter but other projects prevented Reg doing much work on it.

A few months ago, Reg sold the glider to Gunter. Hopefully it will soon join the growing number of Hutters on the Australian register.

Gunter writes: "A partly-built Briegleb BG12A has also found its way into my workshop this year but there are no constructional drawings.

"I need drawings for the three-piece wing. Perhaps one of the VGA members can help me by making them available."

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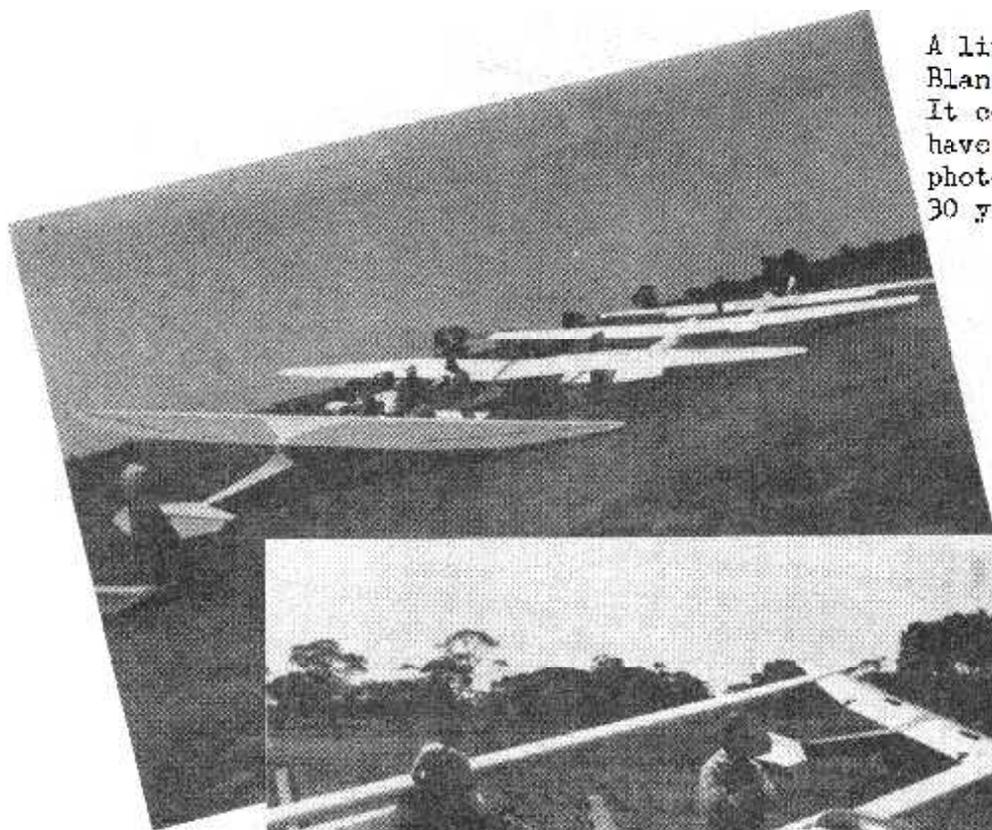
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# THE MOTORLESS CLAN

These four pages show some of the people and some of the sailplanes at the Blanchetown Regatta. The photographs are by David Goldsmith.

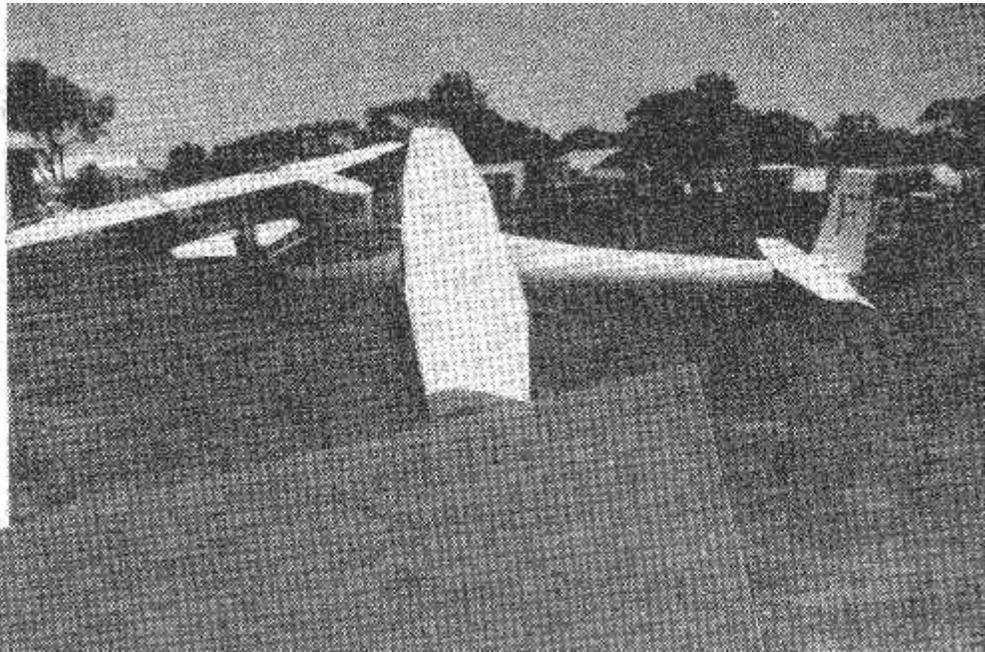
A lineup at Blanchetown. It could have been photographed 30 years ago.



Merv Gill and his Spruce Goose. Behind is Leigh Bunting's Grunau Baby and the Pelican.



Skylark 2  
with enlarged  
canopy and  
other mods.



Garth  
Hudson  
in his  
Grunau  
Baby 3a

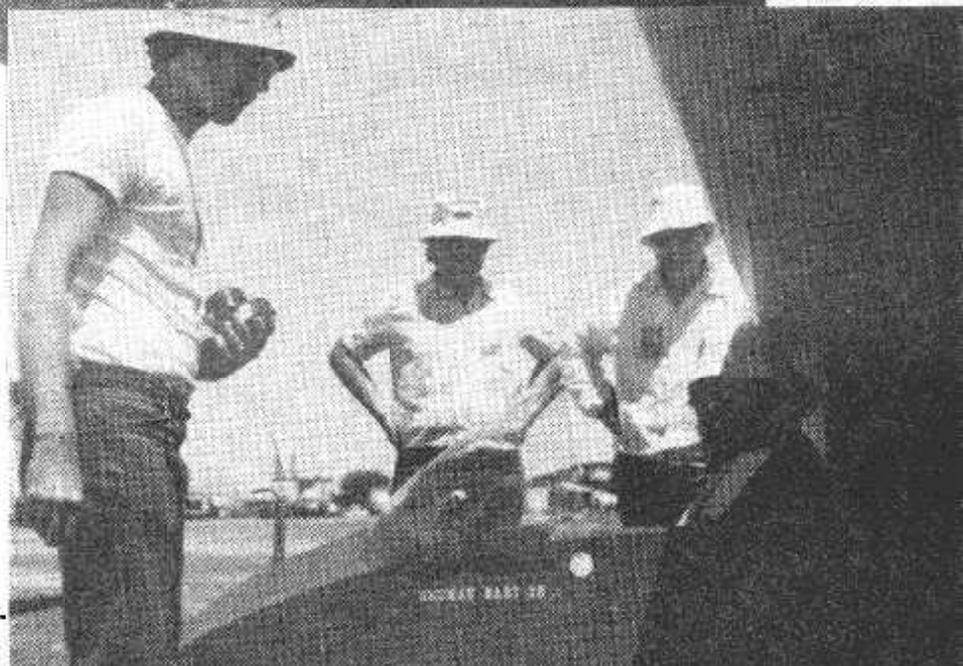


Nigel Baker  
prepares to  
fly his  
Cherokee 2  
which has an  
open cockpit.  
The fixed  
movie camera  
allowed good  
air-to-air  
photography

Channel 7 TV  
interviewing  
Kevin Sedgman.



A view  
of the  
airfield  
on Sunday  
Morning.



Leigh Bunting,  
Peter Briton-  
Jones and Alan  
Patching watch  
as Ian Patching  
tries Leigh's  
Grunau for size.

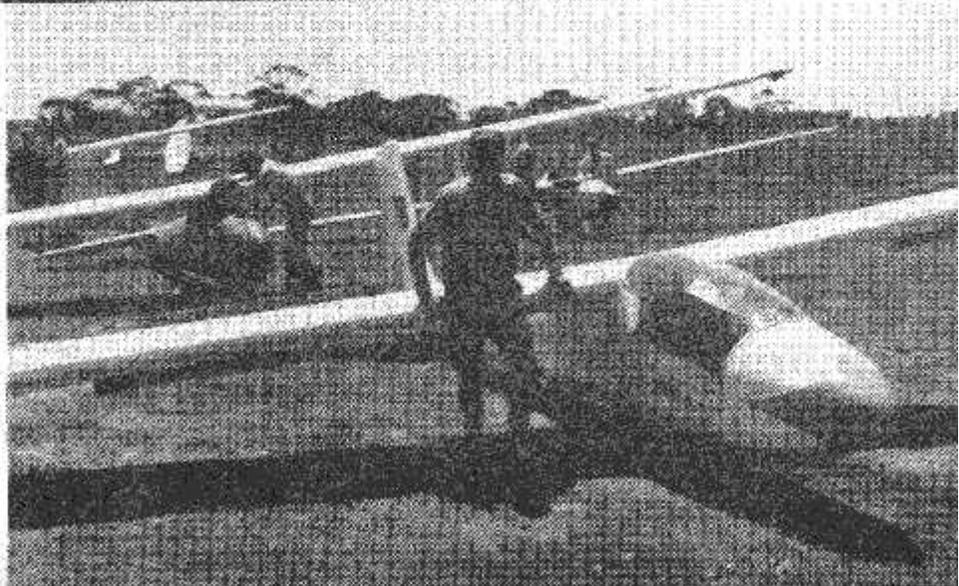


Doug Vanstan  
and Alan  
Patching  
assist Ian  
Patching  
in the  
Golden Eagle.



Leigh Bunting  
in standard  
high-flying  
gear.

Ralph  
Crompton and  
his sleek  
Skylark 4  
in front of  
Kevin  
Sedgman's  
Olympia.  
In the  
background  
(left) is  
Jock Barratt's  
Pelican and  
(right) Ron  
Dunn's Duster.



## WANT TO BUILD AN OLYMPIA?

Does anyone want to build a brand new vintage sailplane? One of the sweetest-flying aircraft ever designed can be yours in return for a small amount of money and a year or two of hard work.

Nearly 30 years ago, two Western Australian pilots began the construction of two Olympia sailplanes to drawings obtained from the Chilton company in England. They were Harold Luckley and Geoff Higginson of Perth.

They spent more than 2500 man-hours over several years and built a lot of parts -- bulkheads, ribs, fittings etc.

Then other things forced the builders to shelve the project. They stopped work but it was to be only temporary as they intended starting on the work again soon.

But the years passed and they never did start again. Harold suffered ill-health and Geoff became involved in other projects.

The Olympia parts rested in Harold's home, safe but neglected.

The parts are still there, beautifully made and still in excellent condition. There is also a supply of aluminium, plywood and other materials and a set of constructional drawings.

Harold has estimated that about 1500 man-hours would see one of the aircraft complete.

The parts of these two air-

craft are now for sale. Harold puts their value to him at around \$1000. Of course, packing and transport would be extra, but this sounds like a bargain for someone with a good workshop and the necessary spare time.

Anyone seriously interested in this proposition should get in touch with Harold Luckley, 10 Balwarra Avenue, Dianella, W.A. 6062.

## LOCKING FORWARD TO FLYING IN GRUNAU 4

Bob McDicken of Sydney is looking forward to doing some soaring in his Grunau 4 this summer.

During July he was checked out by club instructors to fly the sailplane but the weather has not been very suitable, as there have been strong winds on several days he wanted to fly.

During August he was able to make four flights at Camden with times up to 23 minutes.

Tom Gilbert, the engineer for the Southern Cross Club, remembers flying this Grunau when he was in the RAAF.

Bob comments, "I've seen a lot of people take more interest in vintage aircraft when there are one or two around.

"Other pilots have said they would like to acquire a vintage glider for fun flying and because the high cost of modern machines makes their operation prohibitive."

## LONG FLIGHTS BY TWO DUTCH VINTAGE PILOTS

The Newsletter of the Vintage Glider Club of Great Britain reports two long distance flights in vintage sailplanes by young Dutch pilots.

On April 29, Raymond van Loosbroek flew a Grunau Baby (built by Fokker in Holland) from Nistelrode, Holland, to Dour, Belgium, a distance of 195 km in about four hours.

On May 30, Sikko-Jan Vermeer flew a Slingsby Perfect around a 163 km triangle in 4 hours 20 minutes.

He found thermals of about 1 to 2 m/sec under 4/8 cloud with a base at 1100 metres.

The flight to the first turning point was slow because of weak thermals but

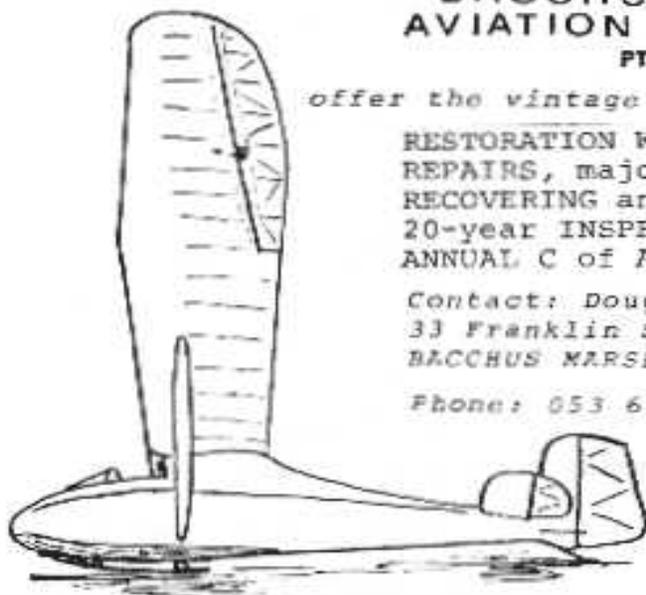
the second leg, into wind, was covered at an average of 55 km/hr.

Vermeer completed the long flight at about 4 pm but the thermals continued until at least 7.30 pm, suggesting that a flight in excess of 300 km might have been done that day.

## VGA WILL ATTEND NATIONAL FLY-IN

It is expected that several vintage sailplanes will attend the annual Fly-in of the Sport Aviation Association at Mangalore next Easter.

They will take part in the public display on the Sunday and will do general flying and soaring on the other days.



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## NOEL WEBB BUYS WODONGA HUTTER

One of the last things Noel Webb did before leaving Victoria for Queensland in September was to buy the Hutter H17 from Darryl White of Wodonga, Victoria.

The Hutter was built in the 1950s by Gordon Briggs in Victoria.

It had been stored for some time in its trailer and has some damage to the wings and tail but Noel considers it to be repairable.

## INTEREST SHOWN IN JANUARY RALLY

A proposed gathering of vintage gliders at Bridgewater in central Victoria during January is expected to result in some cross country flying.

The rally will be held at the site of the Midlands Soaring Club.

David Goldsmith, a member of the Midlands Club, said the members were always glad to have vintage gliders operate there.

The club can provide tows by an Auster and is situated in an area which offers good, safe cross country flying for vintage aircraft.

The meeting aims to be quite informal, with people coming and going as they please between January 2 and 17.

Camping sites are available on the airfield and

hotel and motel accommodation is not far away.

David and Jenne Goldsmith will fly their Hutter H17 at the rally and Bob McDicken of Sydney says he will be there with his Grunau 4.

It is likely that two or three other sailplanes from Victoria will also attend.

Further information can be obtained from David Goldsmith, phone (054) 28 3358.

the market place

FOR SALE - ES52 Kookaburra Mk3 in damaged condition. Cockpit destroyed but most of other damage is minor. A 20-year inspection completed this year. Going cheap.

Open trailer available also if required.

Enquiries and offers to Barry Daniel, 39 Rinora Street Corinda, Queensland 4075. Ring (07) 379 8474 (home) or (07) 377 3989 (work).

FOR SALE - ES57 Kingfisher Mk3 VH-GRF. C of A recently done, 20-year inspection done two years ago. Total flying about 500 hours.

In good condition with red and white paint finish and basic instruments. Price \$3500 complete with really good all-metal open trailer.

Contact Chris Kennedy, 7 Douglas Drive, Amberley, Qld, 4305. Phone (075) 643 211.

## OLYMPIA ATTENDS VIC. WAVE CAMP

Keith Nolan flew his Olympia "Yellow Witch" at the wave camp at Dadswell's Bridge, in Victoria during the last week in August.

He reports that conditions were not especially good and his best height was only 8500 feet.

He flew in company with a number of other more modern sailplanes from the Sunraysia Gliding Club, with tows by a Pawnee and a Tiger Moth.

Keith will be flying the Olympia in Sports Class events at Mildura, Leeton and Horsham during the summer.

## NEW MEMBER IN THE FAR NORTH

One of the newest members of the VGA is Larry Allen who lives in Weipa on Cape York Peninsula in northern Queensland.

Unfortunately there are no gliding clubs or vintage gliders near the place.

Larry hails originally from Western Australia and was a member of the Narrogin Gliding Club.

For a short time he owned a share in a Kingfisher, VH-GDH, and enjoyed the small amount of flying he did in it before his employers transferred him to north Queensland.

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