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Newsletter of the Vintage Glider Association of Australia  
Editor: Alan Ash, 2 Heath Avenue, Frankston, Victoria 3199

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## VGA flies at Mangalore

Members of the Vintage Glider Association were at Mangalore, Victoria, over Easter to attend the annual Fly-In of the Sport Aircraft Association of Australia.

The seven vintage sailplanes joined many hundreds of modern, vintage, historic and ultra-light aircraft that came from all over Australia to be in this impressive event.

The vintage sailplanes at the Fly-In were the Olympia, Golden Eagle, Altair, Zephyrus, Skylark 4, Hutter H17 and Joey.

The modern sailplanes were a Hornet from the Gliding Club of Victoria and three home-builts -- Moba 2, an HP14V and a partly-built Monerai.

Launching for the vintage sailplanes was provided by the Midlands Soaring Club's Auster which was greatly appreciated.

Friday and Saturday were marked by strong gusty winds blowing about 30° or more across the strip. This made flying rather turbulent but soaring was possible and many made use of the conditions.

The best flight (as usual) was made by Ralph Crompton in his Skylark 4. On Saturday he soared for more than 4 hours. David Goldsmith flew the H17 for more than 1½ hours and

several pilots flew more than an hour.

Flying conditions on the Sunday were perfect, but the soaring was non-existent as the day was given over to the public air show, which was a really spectacular affair. It rained and blew all day Monday and the glider were not flown at all.

Among the other aircraft at Mangalore were five Thermite powered gliders. They were limited to operations under the ultra-light category but a lot of people had the opportunity to examine them and see them in action. They were quite impressive, all things considered.

The display of sailplanes was supported by a tent exhibition of photos, posters and other literature. A lot of people passed through the tent during the weekend.

At the annual dinner of the SAAA, the Golden Eagle was the winner of the prize for the best vintage sailplane. The HP14V was the best homebuilt.

## SOME SUPPORT INDICATED FOR WEEK-LONG REGATTA

There has been a small but worthwhile response to the suggestion that a week-long regatta for VGA members be held during next summer.

The concensus of those who responded to the idea is that it should be held during the Christmas-New Year period at the end of December. The date is not yet final but nobody has suggested any other date.

Among the Victorians who support the idea are Keith Nolan (Olympia) and Tom Hinton (Kingfisher). Garth Hudson (Grunau Baby 3A) is not yet certain of his availability and Alan Patching (Golden Eagle) says his commitments to help organise Austraglide 84 and his participation in the Victorian State Contest will use up all his available leave from work.

Ray Ash of Sydney (Grunau 4) says he is a likely starter and at least two others from the Sydney area have shown an interest.

Ralph Crompton of Adelaide (Skylark 4) says he will definitely attend.

Rather unexpectedly, the plan has aroused a lot of interest in Brisbane. Gilbert Simpkins says he is prepared to bring his Slingsby T31 to a regatta held in southern NSW or, just across the Murray and he has aroused the interest of the syndicate that owns the L-Spatz at Beaudesert (George Dick, Chris Rawson-Harris and

Tim Harlock.

Gil says it is possible the L-Spatz may join the T31 in the long drive south. If it is ready in time, he will also bring his Hutter H17, says Gil.

Altogether, it begins to look as though a week-long regatta will get enough support to make it worth holding.

Any other VGA members who would be likely to attend, either with their vintage sailplane or as a visitor, should notify the VGA secretary and indicate preferences for time and site.

Gliding clubs at Corowa and Bridgewater have both expressed interest in hosting a vintage regatta. Other possible sites are Swan Hill, Tocumwal and Leeton. Other suggestions will be welcomed.

Some of these sites can offer winch launching but the availability of accommodation, hangarage and other needs vary amongst the suggested sites.

SLINGSBY T21 MAY  
COME FROM BRITAIN

Brad Edwards of the Lake Keepit Soaring Club in NSW is hoping to buy a Slingsby T21 two-seater while in Britain this year and ship it to Australia inside a London bus!

If it arrives, it will be the only T21 in Australia. The side-by-side sailplane was designed by Slingsby about 1945. It has open cockpits and large wings which make it ideal for soaring in weak conditions.

# Some memories of early days

by Ted de Kuyper

My introduction to gliding came when I was riding a bicycle through the Fawkner cemetery with a friend one day soon after the end of World War 2. I looked up and saw what seemed to be a massive bird flying through the air. It was the Merlin two-seater of the Gliding Club of Victoria coming in to land.

I wasted no time getting across to the old hangar that was the headquarters of the club at that time. I remember that the pilot on that flight was Leo Dowling.

With my father's help I was soon an active member of the club.

I remember that the club fleet at that time consisted of the Merlin, the UT1 utility, the Blue Grunau, the grey Grunau and a couple of Eagle primaries. The club also owned four winches and a towcar.

Close to the hangar was the small workshop of "Australian Sailplanes", run by Norm Hyde, who had designed the Merlin and the UT1.

The main flying site for the club at that time was at Somerton. I spent every spare moment at the club. In return for my work I occasionally got a brief flight in the Merlin.

A new member of the club, who was a member of the South Melbourne football club, had suggested that a demonstration flight be made over the football ground so on the appointed day Rob Dowling took off from Somerton in one of the Grunaus on tow behind a Tiger Moth.

He was towed over the city to the football ground where

he gave a magnificent display of aerobatics before landing beside the lake in Albert Park.

The club also used a site at Reservoir. Many flight notes were made from this field including one to 8000 feet by Ted Desmond who, at that time, was a weather man at Essendon airport.

I remember one windy day at Somerton. The grey Grunau had been rigged when a gust of wind lifted it out of the hands of its crew and dropped it onto its tail, breaking the fuselage.

At Reservoir one day we had rigged the sailplanes when it was found that the tailplane of the Merlin had been left at the Fawkner hangar, a few miles away. With two other members I walked back to the hangar and then carried the tail plane back to the flying ground across two creeks and several open paddocks. It must have been quite a sight.

Gliding angles weren't much in those days. I remember that the average flight in the UT1 and Merlin was about 3 minutes each. Only occasionally were we able to extend flights by using thermals. A couple of times I had 5-minute flights in the Merlin in thermals.

More recollections next issue.

## GOOD PROGRESS ON REBUILDING CHEROKEE

Bob McDicken of Sydney says work on the restoration of his Cherokee 2 is making good progress in the hands of Ron Mears.

Bob Writes: "The fuselage is ready for covering now with the nose section brought back to the standard shape. Ron has made a good job of it. He is now going over the wings very thoroughly before starting the necessary work on them.

"The only problem is that nitrate dope is unavailable so I won't be able to cover the Cherokee with cotton as I'd planned. I'll have to use Dacron instead and this will mean the covering will cost \$1000! Quite a shock!

"Wattyl Paints will make up nitrate dope to order but only in quantities of 500 litres or more at a time. Unless a number of people get together to place an order, it is out of the question. Is anyone else interested in joining me to put in an order for nitrate?"

I recently spent two weeks with my Grunau 4 at Narromine. The weather was not good and it was too late in the season to try for a 300 km flight.

I flew on only four days, logging a total of 3 hours 50 minutes. The best flight was 2 hours 15 minutes.

But the trip was not in vain as I was able to buy some superceded instruments from the Soaring Centre to fit to the Cherokee. I also picked up a cockpit harness.

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## OLYMPIA PARTS OR PLANS WANTED

Gilbert Simpkins of Brisbane is looking for parts and plans for the Chilton or Eon Olympia to assist him in completing the construction of two partly-built Olympias he bought last year.

Gil says that some sheets are missing from the set of drawings that came with the box of parts he bought. He hopes also that the purchase of some structural parts, even in damaged condition, would save him the task of building them.

Three Olympias were built in Australia and at least two others were imported during the 1950s. Two of these have been written off but some of the parts may still be lying around in sheds and hangars. It is also possible that construction may have been started on one or more others at some time.

If anyone knows the location of any Olympia parts or plans, they can contact Gil Simpkins at 11 Phillip Street, Woodridge, Queensland 4114.

## INTERESTED IN IMPORTING A SAILPLANE FROM GERMANY?

Jack and Brett Iggulden of Bellingen, NSW, are now in Europe on a business trip. One of their sparetime tasks will be to look over available used sailplanes with the view to arranging to buy them on be-

half of Australian purchasers.

VGC member Ian McPhee of Lake Keepit has bought a used Bergfalke 3 and another member of the Lake Keepit Club has bought a K7.

Ian says there is still space in the container for another couple of gliders and by filling the container, all the buyers will save on freight costs.

Ian quotes current prices of used sailplanes in Germany as about \$2500 plus import duty for an L Spatz and about \$5000 plus duty for a K7.

Shipping costs to Australia is about \$2000 for each aircraft but this will be slightly less if the container is full.

Ian expects the shipment to be ready to leave Germany in a month or two. Anyone interested in having Jack and Brett look at a used (or vintage) sailplane on their behalf can contact Ian McPhee, Aerodrome, Keepit Dam, NSW 2340. Phone (067) 69 7640.

## EAGLE TO BE AT WODONGA AIR SHOW

Alan Patching will take the Golden Eagle to Wodonga on the long weekend of 11-13 June (Queen's Birthday holiday) to take part in the annual air show held by the Antique Aeroplane Association of Australia.

This will be the first time a glider has appeared at this popular gathering of antique aircraft.

## KINGFISHER FLYING AGAIN AT BOORT

Tom Hinton of Boort in the north of Victoria reports that his Kingfisher is flying again after some minor repairs and an overhaul.

Tom says he flew more than 12 hours from seven launches during the late summer. These have included cross country flights of 105 and 65 km.

"Both these flights involved into-wind legs which were hard going for the Kingfisher," he says.

"There have been some days of very good conditions with one local pilot getting to 15,000 feet, but I didn't have the Kingy flying at that time. On another day however, I took it to 9000 feet which was very pleasant.

"I had hoped to do my five hours during the summer to complete my Silver C but it is too late in the season now for the attempt.

"If the proposed week-long rally is held I would probably be able to attend for a few days but family and farm responsibilities would prevent me staying much longer.

"There are a number of vintage sailplanes based in nearby towns (two Kookaburras, two Kingfishers and a Cherokee that I know of). There could be more, but most of them are club aircraft and in constant demand so I doubt if they are likely to be able to attend a vintage rally.

"These aircraft get plenty

of use. I know the Swan Hill Kookaburra flew nearly 100 hours last year and the Bendigo club's Kooka would probably have done more.

"My own Kingfisher, VH-GLQ, which was built by Harold and Alan Bradley in 1970, has had a total of 660 launches to date for 356 hours."

## COURSE STUDENTS WILL WORK ON HUTTER H17

Those attending the GFA course on woodworking at Kingaroy, Queensland, in August will be able to practice their skills on a Hutter H17.

The Hutter is owned by Gil Simpkins of Brisbane who will be the course instructor.

Gil bought the sailplane from Larry Allen of Albury. He said it will need a full overhaul before its C of A is renewed, so he decided to let the course students gain some practical knowledge by working on a real wooden sailplane instead of simply making sample structures as exercises.

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FOR SALE --- SCHNEIDER ES49

TANDEM TWO-SEATER

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## A WONDERFUL BIRD IS THE PELICAN

From Waikerie, Jock Barratt reports that his Pelican 2 flew 121 hours from 110 launches during 1982. Most of the flying was done by Jock himself, though some was done by his son Christopher.

Jock writes: "When Christopher Wills, president of the Vintage Glider Club of Great Britain, visited Waikerie in January I took him for a trip in the Pelican.

"It was a good day and we were up for two hours and were able to tour the district. He was impressed with the handling and performance of the old sailplane and seemed to enjoy the flight very much.

"I reminded him that his father, Philip Wills, had flown with me in the Pelican about 30 years ago.

"Chris very kindly made me an honorary member of the Vintage Glider Club of Great Britain. I was glad to see that their latest Newsletter included a report of our rallies at Bridgewater and Whyalla.

"I am sorry I haven't got along to any of our rallies lately. It is so costly to get to them these days. We will have to arrange a meeting at Waikerie some time."

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If you need to telephone the secretary, his numbers are (03) 699 8522 at work or (03) 783 8915 at home.

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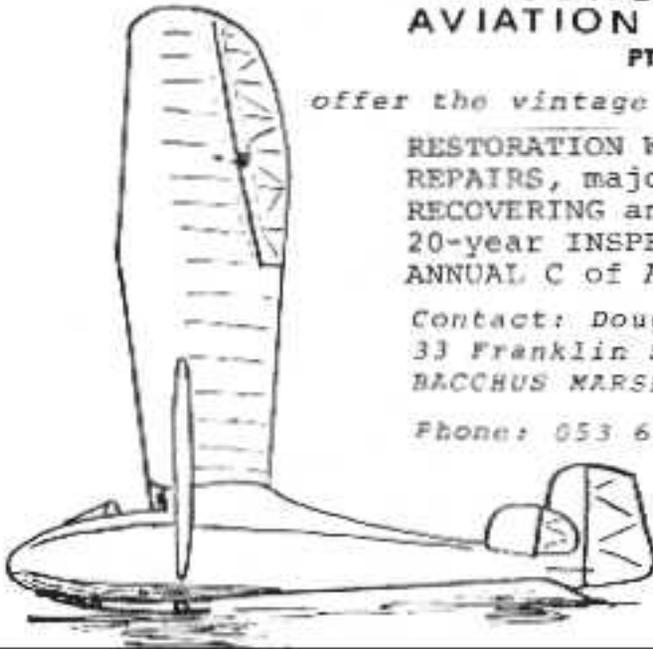
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## BRITISH VINTAGE PRESIDENT ENJOYS VISIT TO AUSTRALIA

The president of the Vintage Glider Club of Great Britain, Christopher Wills, has written to say he enjoyed his holiday in Australia during January.

He spent two weeks at the Waikerie Gliding Club and made several cross country flights in an Astir but was also able to meet several members of the Vintage Glider Association of Australia.

"I met Kevin Sedgman and one of the owners of an ES49 and had an enjoyable flight with Jock Barratt in his Pelican," he says.

"We flew for over two hours and reached about 9000 feet. Jock then insisted on aerobating it to lose height.

"I was absolutely amazed at this aircraft. Its minimum speed was near 30 knots but it was flown in thermals at 55-60 knots and between thermals at 70 knots with hardly any loss of performance.

"It has a staggering speed range and could give most pre-war gliders a run for their money. In my opinion it is still capable of setting two-seater records.

"Though I didn't manage to do my diamond distance, I had an enjoyable time. I have never seen so much sun. After my holiday I had to rush home to 0° weather to get stuck into our next Newsletter.

"I hope to be able to visit Australia again one day."

## WINTER OVERHAULS FOR TWO ACTIVE SAILPLANES

Two of our most active members will be taking their aircraft out of commission during the winter to carry out maintenance and inspection work.

Keith Nolan of Melbourne is giving his Olympia, "Yellow Witch", a complete overhaul and new fabric and paint. He says it will be back in the air in the late Spring, ready for the next Summer season.

Ralph Crompton of Adelaide is carrying out a 20-year inspection of his Skylark 4 and will renew some of the fabric on the wing centre section.

Ralph says he is keen to get his 500 km diamond in the veteran Skylark 4.

## CHEROKEE COMES BACK EAST AFTER 12 YEARS

After spending the last 12 years in Western Australia, Cherokee 2, VH-GNR, is flying again in the eastern States.

The sailplane was built in Victoria by Fletcher Smith and made its first flight in 1964.

After being owned and flown by a number of gliding clubs and private groups it is now the proud possession of Flying Officer David Newman, a RAAF pilot based at Fairbairn, ACT.

David, who is one of the newer members of the VGA, says the Cherokee has had its 20-year inspection and he is now looking forward to soaring it.