
Newsletter of the Vintage Glider Association of Australia
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A WEEK OF FLYING PLANNED

A week-long vintage glider regatta at the end of December is an opportunity for members of the VGA to get together for some flying, fun and relaxation in a holiday atmosphere.

In the past, the VGA has held its regattas over a week-end (sometimes running to an additional day). Generally, a weekend in October or November was chosen but the late Spring weather has been somewhat uncertain, often with strong winds and low temperatures.

Also, many members have had to come long distances to fly at these regattas and with rising costs, now feel that a weekend is not sufficiently long to make the trip worth the expense and effort.

To overcome both of these problems it is planned to hold a week-long meeting between 26th December and 1st January this year.

As there will be no formal program of events, members can come and go at any time during that period. It may even be possible to stay on for an extra few days if arrangements can be made for launching.

The site chosen is Bridgewater, about 30 km west of Bendigo on the Calder Highway in central Victoria.

It is on private property

and is the home site of the Midlands Soaring Club. Launching by Auster will be available.

There is a small clubhouse on the property but no residential accommodation. However there are hotels, motels and caravan parks available at the nearby towns of Bridgewater, Inglewood and Marong. Intending visitors should make their own bookings.

In addition to flying, it is planned to provide interesting evening activities, including several barbecues and film evenings.

The area around Bridgewater is generally flat and open, offering safe outlandings with easy approaches.

Members of the VGA have already proved that the area is good for cross country flying and general soaring.

Full details of the event will be included in the December issue of "Vintage Times".

In the meantime, it would be helpful if intending visitors would notify the VGA secretary.

REPORT ON PROGRESS OF H17 IN ADELAIDE

The VGA's oldest member, Harold Bradley, of Adelaide, reports that he is well advanced with the construction of his Hutter H17. Though well past his 80th birthday, Harold is as keen as ever.

He says he began the project last year at the suggestion of his family who felt he needed something to occupy his time.

Harold began gliding in the early 1930s. He has already built at least three sailplanes and contributed to the design and building of several others.

Harold says that electric tools today make metalwork and woodwork relatively easy. He says his family has shown a great interest in the project.

He reports that the fuselage and tail unit are completed except for covering and the wings are being assembled. He says he left this work until the winter months because the hotter weather causes the glue to set too quickly to allow him to do his best work.

At the time of writing, the end of June, he had installed the D-nose on one wing and was working on the other. He estimated that, at that time, he had about 75% of the work done on the Hutter.

His only complaint is about the amount of paper work involved with the construction.

Harold says he has had a lot of visitors while he has been working on the Hutter.

His final comment was, "I am building something of interest to me and, when it is finished, I have no doubt it will give pleasure to many people."

20 YEAR INSPECTION ON SKYLARK 4

From South Australia, Ralph Crompton reports good progress on the 20 year inspection of his Skylark 4.

The original plan was to take the opportunity to renew the fabric on the centre section of the three-piece wing but Ralph decided to go the whole hog and replace all the wing fabric.

"Since I started the work," says Ralph, "I've regretted my enthusiasm since the wing has a span of 60 feet."

"However, it is making it easier to remove the paint from all the wing fittings to allow a full inspection for cracks and other flaws. I'm now glad I decided to undertake all the work."

"Emilis Prelgauskas is doing the survey for me and we have found only minor damage to the wings so far."

"I have carefully gone over the surface of the wing and any grooves or marks have been removed. By the time they are finished I should have a good surface."

"We have not yet begun work on the fuselage but I hope to have all the work completed by the end of October."

More memories of
early gliding

Ted de Kuyper
continues his
recollections

My flying training began by wing-balancing a primary glider in a stiff breeze, getting the feel of the controls. If there was not enough wind to provide control feel, an instructor had to stand at the wingtip and move the wing up and down in response to the control movement of the pupil.

Then followed ground skids to practise rudder and aileron control together. When the pupil could steer a straight and level course he progressed to low hops.

After reaching this stage of training, I had some short flights in the Merlin two-seat trainer.

More advanced pilots flew the club's grey Grunau Baby or the syndicate-owned blue Grunau Baby. Later, the club had a red Grunau Baby and this aircraft is still flying, now owned by Garth Hudson.

During one Easter camp at Berwick, the Blue Grunau was damaged as a result of cars being parked along the edge of the runway.

The Grunau came in low, made a steep turn and the port wing clipped a car. It landed just inside the boundary fence and stove in the nose, giving the pilot a severe shaking.

A holiday camp at Christmas 1949, soon after the GCV moved to Benalla, resulted in many good flights by pilots in the Grunau Babies.

The most outstanding was by Keith Chamberlin in the grey Grunau. After a good morning of thermals there was a build up of thunderstorms all over the sky.

The pilot of the blue Grunau investigated the biggest of the cumulus but found it very turbulent so radioed to Keith in the grey Grunau to keep away from it.

The radios in those days were not very good and because of the bad reception Keith thought he was being told to have a look at the cumulus.

Within a few moments, the grey Grunau was sucked up into the cloud and Keith virtually lost control. In the open cockpit, Keith was pounded by giant hailstones and freezing rain.

Eventually, the storm took the Grunau up to 15,600 feet before it flew out of the lift and into strong sink. On the barograph chart the line of descent is almost vertical!

At 800 feet, Keith found himself once more out of the cloud but in a steep spiral dive. He recovered control and landed in pouring rain in a paddock, suffering exposure and shock but with a new national height record.

About the time the club sold the Merlin and bought a Slingby T31 two-seater I had to give up gliding for medical reasons. Though I have not flown for a long time I retain my interest in soaring

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

According to the official GFA listing of Australian sailplanes there are about 200 sailplanes in Australia that were designed more than 25 years ago. It is a moot point whether all of these could be, or should be, described as vintage.

In Australia, we have not made a hard and fast rule on what is vintage and what is not. Besides, clubs operating Blaniks, Kookaburras, Arrows and such like probably would not appreciate such a description on their aircraft.

But even discounting all of these still-popular old sailplanes, there are still many others that could be called "classic" if not "vintage".

These include the whole range of Schneider-built sailplanes as well as a few of the early imported machines like the L-Spatz, Skylark 2 and 4, Schweizer 1-26, LO-150, Mucha and Jaskolka.

Though most of these aircraft are still very active in the hands of club and private pilots, they are inclined to slip quietly into oblivion if they are involved in a major accident. The owners realize that, quite often, they are not an economical proposition to repair, so they hibernate in their trailers or in the dark corners of hangars.

As members of the Vintage Glider Association, we should be on the lookout for such old machines. If the owners can't be persuaded to get them back into the air, they could be persuaded to sell them to some one else who will do it.

There have been several instances of such things in the past year.

At Beaudesert, Queensland, a Cherokee 2 was quietly falling apart in a hangar because the club that owned it didn't consider it worth repairing. The aircraft was salvaged by Bob McDicken of Sydney and will be flying again soon.

At Camden, NSW, a group that owned a Hutter H17 were too busy flying more modern sailplanes to operate their vintage machine so it just sat in its trailer for years and deteriorated. When the trailer became damaged and let in the weather, the owners didn't do anything about it.

So a group of interested people sought to buy the H17 to preserve it. When the group who owned it wouldn't sell it, the enthusiasts agreed to repair it and care for it in return for permission to fly it.

There are probably a lot of old sailplanes around Australia that could be restored if people would only seek them out and take over ownership.

For instance, browsing in back issues of "Australian Gliding", I read two items of news dated 1958.

In that year, the Northern Slopes Soaring Club at Inverell bought a partly-built Grunau

Baby 2 from someone in Sydney. Whatever happened to it? Is it one of the seven Grunau Babies currently flying in Australia, or is it still waiting to be finished? Perhaps someone can provide an answer, or chase up the old Grunau and get it flying after 25 years.

Also in 1958, the Townsville Gliding Club began building a Hutter H17. How far did they get with the work? Where is this aircraft now?

And what about all those old sailplanes that we know were crashed? Are their remains still in existence? Can they be restored? What became of the remains of the Kite 2 that crashed in Alice Springs many years ago? And what of the grey Grunau Baby that was

written off at Kalgoorlie in the 1950s? Where is the UT1 Utility, built by Norm Hyde that was last heard of in the Boggabri area?

Sadly, we know that some of our early sailplanes no longer exist. The original Munn Falcon was burned after it crashed near Geelong. The old black and white Grunau that made a name for itself in Victoria was deliberately broken up after it crashed.

It would be an interesting exercise to make up a list of all the sailplanes that once flew in Australia and track down what happened to them. We might find some of them are still around.

There could be some interesting discoveries awaiting us.

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MOTORISED JOEY HAS GOOD PERFORMANCE

Keith Jarvis of Adelaide reports that he has never been busier than since he retired from work. "I don't know how I found time to go to work," he says.

He has not flown his Joey as a sailplane for a long time but sometimes takes it out of its trailer to fly it with its little engine.

"I have not had time to improve the engine set-up yet," he reports, "but the reliability of the crude installation and the Victa motor is surprising.

"It gets along at 60 knots on full throttle and 45 knots at half to three-quarter power

returning about 90 miles to the gallon. I don't quite believe it. I'll have to do some accurate tests.

"I would like to cowl the motor but don't have time at present. Since December I've been building an original design aircraft of 30 ft span and 100 sq. ft area powered by a Robin 250 motor, though I may fit a JPX motor.

"Once this is finished I must complete my Corby Starlet.

"My eldest son, Lynn, has his Arrow hangared at Bala-klava. It has been fully restored and is in very good condition.

"I think it was one of the very first Arrows and was originally owned by the Port Augusta club."

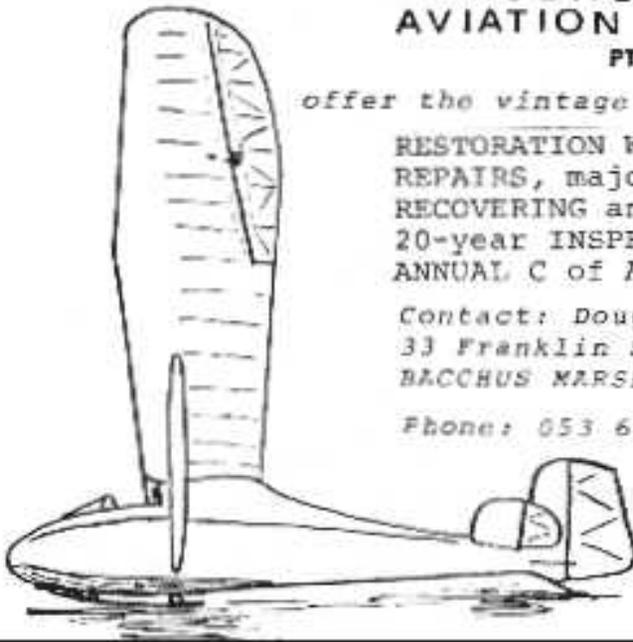
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CHEROKEE SHOULD BE FLYING AGAIN SOON

Restoration of the Cherokee owned by Bob McDicken of Sydney is almost complete and the sailplane should be flying in the near future.

Following the report in the June issue of "Vintage Times", Bob says he was able to get a quantity of nitrate dope from Brisbane but by that time had already begun to cover the fuselage with Dacron so didn't need it after all.

He says, "The fuselage is finished except for the fitting of inspection doors and instruments and work is now under way on the wings.

"The Scout Gliding Wing at Camden offered to buy the Cherokee from me in unfinished condition but I like to finish anything I start so I offered to lease my Grunau 4 to them instead.

"A couple of their members turned up one Saturday and had some flights in the Grunau and liked it, but the matter is still being negotiated.

"My attendance at the week-long regatta at Christmas is uncertain. I've been offered the chance to fly a longwing Kookaburra in the Sports Class contest and haven't yet decided what to do.

"If I don't fly at the contest I will probably bring the Grunau 4 to the vintage rally. If I could find someone suitable to tow it, I might bring the Cherokee too. I'll wait a while and see what develops."

INVITATION FROM NEW SOARING CENTRE

The Euroa Soaring Centre, recently established at the Euroa airfield about 150 km north-east of Melbourne, has extended an invitation to VGA members to visit and fly there sometime soon.

The centre operates a Tost winch that gives launches over 1500 feet. The best launch to date is 2400 feet.

Two runways are available, oriented NE-SW and E-W, and a limited amount of hangarage is available to visitors.

The proprietor of the new commercial centre, Peter Johnstone, was formerly an instructor with the Gliding Club of Victoria.

He said a clubhouse should be available at the airfield this month. No accommodation is yet available at the airfield but there are hotels, motels and a caravan park in the town, about 4 km away.

DAVE IS ENJOYING SPACE AGE FLYING

After a year based in NSW, flying as captain on Fokker Friendships for Ansett Airlines, David Goldsmith has returned to Victoria as a First Officer on Boeing 767s.

Dave describes the big jets as fantastic, with all the latest space-age technology. Slightly more complicated than the Hutter H17 which Dave and his wife Jenne usually fly.

EAGLE DRAWS ATTENTION AT ANTIQUE FLY-IN

The Golden Eagle, the oldest airworthy sailplane in Australia, drew a lot of attention from visitors to the Fly-In arranged by the Antique Aeroplane Association at Wodonga on the Queen's Birthday weekend in June.

Ian Patching took the Eagle to Wodonga and put in on display, along with the many old aeroplanes that attended.

During the weekend, those who inspected the Eagle included some of the pilots who had flown it in earlier days when it operated at Beveridge, Mordialloc, Mount Martha, Berwick and other sites.

"FROM WOLF TO MINI NIMBUS"

This fascinating book by noted German author Peter Selinger tells about all the sailplanes designed by Martin Schempp and Wolf Hirth from 1933 to the mid-1970s. The text is German but there are photos galore plus three-view drawings and technical details of a host of fascinating sailplanes, some very rare. One copy of the book is for sale because in trying to buy a copy through several sources, I ended with two copies. It is offered for what it cost me, \$35. The book is not currently available in Australia. Contact Frank Smith
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Burwood, Vic. Ph. (03) 29 1039.

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