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

WEEKEND AT WAIKERIE

by Jenne Goldsmith

Nine vintage gliders attended the rally at Waikerie over the weekend of 27-28 October. The warm conditions and light wind provided a fine start to a successful rally.

Three of the sailplanes came from Melbourne. They were the Olympia "Yellow Witch" (Keith Nolan), the Altair (Ian and Geoff Patching) and the Boomerang GTR (Theo Van Alkenade). Special awards were made to these three aircraft in appreciation of their efforts.

Other gliders present were the Pelican (Jock Barratt), Grunau Baby 2 GHM (Geoff Osborne and Terry Wynne), Spruce Goose (Merv Gill), Skylark 4 (Ralph Crompton), Ka6 (Adelaide University GC) and Duster (Ron Dunne).

It would have been nice to see more vintage gliders at the rally, particularly those built by Schneiders in the 1950s. Let's hope we see more next year.

Waikerie was a bit of a home coming for the 36-year-old "Yellow Witch" as it had been owned by the Waikerie GC from 1950 to 1967. During this time it earned many Gold Cs and diamonds and flew countless cross country miles.

Keith Nolan generously made the "Witch" available to Waikerie members who had flown her during those years. David

Jones, who won his Gold C in the "Witch", and Malcolm Jinks eagerly took up the offer.

David made a long local flight on Saturday. Malcolm was not so lucky on Sunday but enjoyed being back in the old "Witch".

Though far from vintage, a welcome guest at the weekend was Harry Schneider's new two-seater Platypus. Many pilots took the opportunity to fly this exciting new aircraft. To say they were impressed would be an understatement.

It was wonderful to see so many gliding pioneers at the rally. Dick Duckworth, Norm Hyde, Leo Dowling, Ken Davies, Geoff Richardson and Jim Robinson had made long journeys to be at the event.

Also present were Jock Barratt, Kevin Sedgman, Alan Delaine and Harold Bradley. Talking to these men about early gliding days is an experience. They all have so much to tell.

The fine weather on Saturday led to the setting of a small triangular task around Waikerie area which was devoured by those attempting it.

(continued next page)

WEEKEND AT WAIKERIE

(continued from page 1)

The winner was Andrew McGrath in the Adelaide Uni Ka6. All who flew enjoyed good soaring with heights to 7300 feet. Ralph (Feathers) Crompton made the longest duration by flying his Skylark 4 for 4 hours 23 minutes.

A nice Waikerie touch was a box of oranges at the pie cart with an invitation to pilots to help themselves.

Launching during the weekend was provided by Waikerie's Pawnees and the Scout Flying Club's winch. This was the first time a winch had been used on Waikerie's airfield since 1968. Kevin Sedgman did well in obtaining permission to use it.

Winch drivers Nigel Baker and Alan Mengersen of the Scout Flying Club gave their time to winch driving.

The dinner on Saturday night was attended by 136 people, about 50 of whom were VGA members and their spouses. We were treated to an entertaining evening of great fellowship.

The dining room, in Waikerie's spacious club room and bar, was a picture. The place-carded, candle-lit tables, decorated with fresh flowers, gave atmosphere to the occasion. Mary Goodwin deserves great credit for her hard work here.

During the dinner we heard many amusing tales of early gliding days from pioneers

Geoff Richardson, Harold Bradley and Jock Barratt.

Jock told us (among other interesting stories) of his Gold C flight in the "Yellow Witch". In those days you had to go down to 1000 metres to take turnpoint photos. This didn't help your chances of completing the task.

Jock had no need to worry though. After his last turnpoint he climbed to 12,500 ft and got home with 2500 ft in hand. He was so pleased, he did 31 loops before landing.

It was considered appropriate to make presentation of the 1983 Harry Ryan Award to its recipient, Harold Bradley, during the dinner. This was presented by GFA president John Brougham.

The award is made in recognition of outstanding service in the field of airworthiness, design, construction or technical achievement.

Harold Bradley, whose career in gliding spans nearly 60 years, has designed, assisted in design, or built many sailplanes and has acted as glider engineer in many clubs.

He has recently completed (at age 85) the construction of a vintage Hutter H17.

The award for the best-presented vintage glider at the regatta was made to Geoff Osborne and Terry Wynne for their beautifully-finished Grunau Baby 2, VH-GHM.

Geoff and Terry recently completely re-fabricated and refinished the Grunau, painting it in the old Adelaide

Soaring Club colours of green and white. A gold trim completes it nicely.

VH-GHM was built by members of the Adelaide Soaring Club in 1947-49. Alan Delaine, who built the fuselage, familiarised himself with the old bird, delighted to see it in such good condition.

Alan was able to tell Geoff that GHM was the ASC Grunau well-known as the "Golden Grunau" in post-war years.

Another award, not made until the finish of flying on Sunday, was for the most time flown over the two days. This went to Ralph Crompton in the Skylark 4.

After dinner we watched old films from Kevin Sedgman's collection. Among other things we saw footage of the Golden Grunau doing aerobatics at an air show, also some flying shots of the ASC's first two-seater, a modified Grunau, built about 1949. Harold Bradley did the stressing for this aircraft.

Hardys earned much appreciation for providing free wine for the dinner, as did the restaurant "Joan's Kitchen" for donating complimentary lunches used as prizes.

Some people enjoyed the evening so much they were still partying on at dawn when they hoped to see a hot-air balloon launch. Sadly, this could not happen because the wind was too strong.

Soaring conditions were not good on Sunday, though flying did continue.

Harold Bradley enjoyed a flight in the Tiger Moth ART flown by Alan Marshall, and others were thrilled by their first flight in the Platypus.

Many thanks are due to our hosts, Sue Martin, Maurie Bradney and the Waikerie Gliding Club for their hospitality and use of their facilities.

Thanks also to Kevin Sedgman for his excellent organisation and to the Scout Flying Club for the provision and operation of the winch.

INVITATION TO HELP BATHURST CELEBRATE

The Bathurst Soaring Club, NSW, has been invited to take part in the official celebrations to mark the 100th anniversary of the founding of the city of Bathurst.

The club would like to see a gathering of vintage sailplanes included in the program.

Ron Balfard, secretary of the Bathurst club writes: "We are proposing a special weekend of gliding on 31 August and 1 September 1985 and we believe it would add to the occasion if members of the VGA came along with their aircraft to make a memorable weekend.

"We are planning special flights in club aircraft for the public, aerobatics, landing competitions, etc. Hopefully we will have a Tiger Moth or two, and they could be useful as tugs for the vintage sailplanes. We look forward to support from VGA members."

RECONDITIONED CHEROKEE MAKES ITS FIRST FLIGHT

The Cherokee 2, VH-FQU, had its first flight at Camden on 19 August after being extensively reconditioned.

About two years ago, Bob McDicken of Sydney rescued the sailplane after it had been located in bad condition at Beaudesert, Queensland.

A lot of the repair work and covering was done by Ron Mears and it was Ron who made the first flight after the work was completed.

Bob McDicken reports: "The conditions were poor, with SW winds gusting to 30 knots at times. We waited for a lull then Ron had a launch, made a quick circuit and landed.

"Ron said it flew very nicely and seemed to be the lightest-controlled Cherokee he had flown.

"That was the only flight we made that day and Ron said he would like to fly it again before handing it over to, me."

Bob said he still had some work to do on the trailer before it is registered.

Two people have asked Bob to sell them shares in the Cherokee and Bob is considering these. "After all, I can't fly two aircraft at once," he said.

Bob says he expects to be at the vintage regatta at Bridgewater in January and, if conditions are suitable, make an attempt on a 300 km flight in his Grunau 4.

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A VISIT TO EUROPE

by Alan Patching

While in Europe last year to attend a meeting of the Sailplane Development Panel of OSTIV, I was able to contact several people with interests in vintage gliders.

On the way to Sweden for the meeting, I stopped off in England and was invited to stay with Chris Wills, president of the Vintage Glider Club of Great Britain.

Chris was putting the finishing touches to the Club's Newsletter which included an account of Chris Thorp's long distance flight in the Zephyrus.

Chris Wills has a large collection of photographs of gliders taken in England and Germany before 1939.

He also had a H17 in his front garden which had been built in South Africa recently. The workmanship in both the glider and its trailer was faultless.

Chris asked if we would try to make some long distance flights during our vintage regattas, just to show up the modern fibreglass sailplanes.

I explained that we tend to enjoy making short flights in each of the various aircraft attending the rally.

While I was in Sweden, the chief gliding instructor for the Royal Swedish Aero Club, Klas Goran Bask, told me he is a vintage glider enthusiast and would like to receive our Newsletter.

Unfortunately, most gliders made before 1956 were grounded in Sweden because of some poor glueing during manufacture and

most of them were destroyed or sold overseas.

However, I did see two of the few that are still in Sweden when I visited the Stockholm Gliding Club at their new field at Longfora.

They were a Grunau Baby 2B that needs some restoration and a Meise Olympia which is in immaculate condition.

The glue appears to be casein and is very well protected by a good coat of varnish.

I also met some of the present owners who told me that they only fly it on special occasions, about five times in each year.

This Olympia was first flown in 1951.

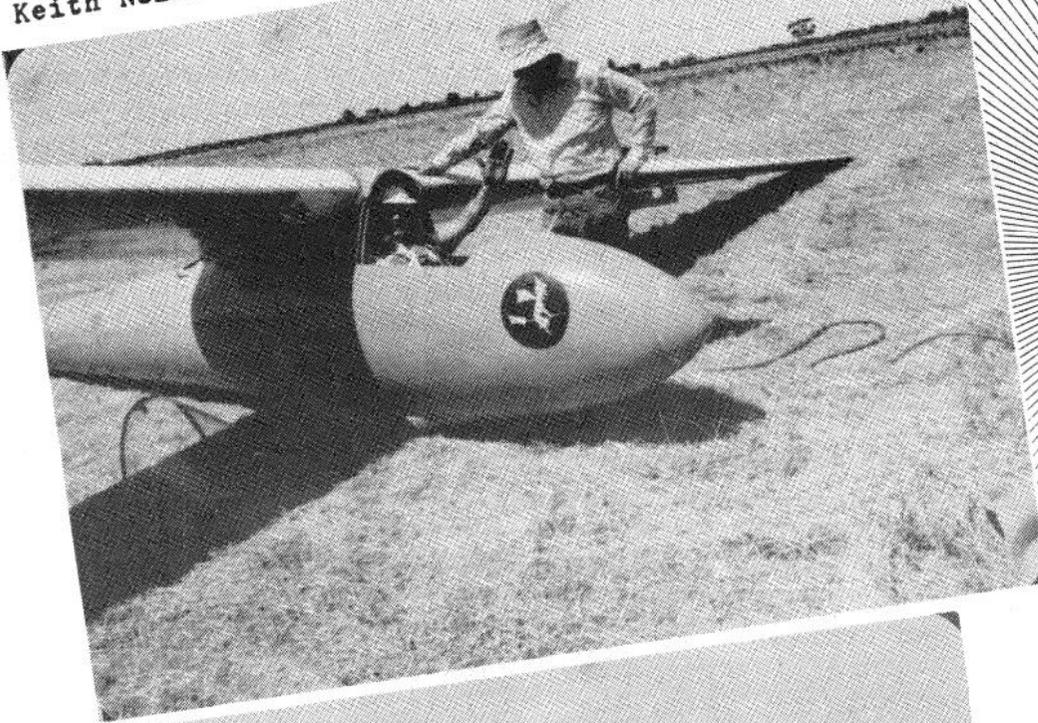
Interest in vintage gliders is growing around the world and Chris Wills claims there should be a separate FAI committee for vintage gliders as the objectives of vintage glider pilots differ markedly from those of the current CIVIV which is concerned more with long distance flights and competitions.

GRUNAU GETTING C Of A

Leigh Bunting reports that his Grunau Baby, VH-GDN, is currently undergoing an annual inspection in Adelaide.

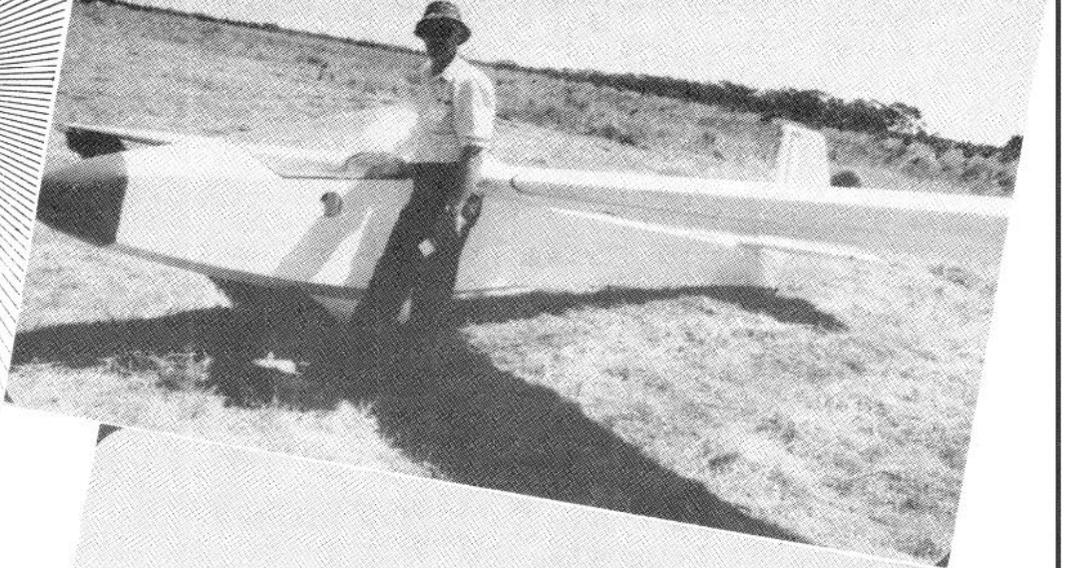
He says he has been too busy to fly it since April but is looking forward to summer.

Keith Nolan in his Olympia



SCENES
FROM THE
WAIKERIE
REGATTA
1984

Ron Dunne with his Duster



Photographs by
Kevin Sedgman

Altair

Ian Patching with the Altair



Nigel Baker and Alan Mengersen



TRIUMPH IN THE RUBBER DUCKIE

by Maurie Nelmes

Reprinted from "The Thermal"

Journal of the Bathurst Soaring Club

I suppose it all began when Gunter asked me to get his ballast out of the Cherokee. By the time I had heaved 35 pounds of lead over the side I had decided that diet I must!

For some time I had been flying "Rubber Duckie" with full trim and lots of back stick and trying to believe my bathroom scales were correct and clothes weigh nothing.

It wasn't true, and 10 lb over LU's limit of 190 takes all the pleasure out of flying as well as depriving me of a parachute safety blanket.

So there I was, now 20 lb lighter, with an ambition to get that 5 hours of torture "done with" some time in the future and scrubbing bird-lime off LU, when Grant comes over with a grin on his hairy visage and asked me if "I knew it was open season for ducks".

Now I've got a reasonably thick hide but it hurt a little. After all, it's all I had to fly since my Mucha syndicate went sour and my overseas trip left me broke.

Anyway, it wasn't fair - I may be the oldest, possibly the worst and certainly the most scared of the lot but to be reminded that I also had the oldest and worst plane was just too much.

I grumbled that he should not talk to a bloke while he's doing a DI and off went young Grant to get his bottom into the Libelle.

Now I hadn't been able to

stick sitting on my ham bones for more than an hour on sponge cushions and had only that week discovered my polystyrene bead padding from the Mucha, and the day's flight was just going to be a tryout.

When Corny heard me say this, his immediate response was "why not now?" and I could not think of any reason for not giving it a go.

So at 1.30 pm. seeing a few clouds starting to pop up, I was urging Nick to get me up next.

Five minutes later I'm at 2000 ft in the Cherokee after a good launch which places me nicely in the only thermal around.

Half an hour later I'm still over the rockpile at 3000 ft and finding that I'm playing rubber duckie games (one up and two down) whenever I venture away.

In the meantime I had company from the Twin Astir which seems to like being 200 feet below and 200 feet to the right of me. Not the safest place to be when I'm flying one knot above stall and spin.

Finally the lift starts to work at about 2.30 pm. I'm over Bathurst at 4500 ft trying to remember where Eric had said the parachutists were at

play. It was south, anyway, so I head off east to Raglan.

It was only then that it dawned on me that I had 6500 feet, I could reach the cloud bank over the hill and my bum wasn't sore. As Corny had said, "Why not?"

Two hours later I'm still on top of the thermals using a height band of 7200 ft (the best) to 6500 ft.

I'm still finding that the vario knows only 1 knot upward but happily goes to 3 down if I blink an eye.

I'm halfway to Orange at 7500 feet and find the clouds seem to be giving patchy lift, and it was like flying over cobblestones. I head back to a point where I reckoned I have half an hour's gliding time and distance if I maintain my 7500 feet.

By 5.30 pm (one hour to go) I'm beginning to hallucinate, becoming quite convinced that the clouds should be in touching distance. A few swigs of water brought me to my senses although the infernal Thermos almost went out of the window before I became rational. Dehydration is an insidious thing. You don't even feel thirsty.

Suddenly the bank of cobbly clouds has vanished and all I can see is milky air between me and the strip about 20 km away (I'm over the hills). I have 6600 ft on the clock and off I go at the slowest speed and the lightest touch the Cherokee has ever had.

I've got an hour to go and

I'll take anything, settling finally for half a knot sink over rocks beyond Mount Canobolus. At 3000 feet I reckon it's time for a final glide and then I'm back over the strip with 500 feet to spare and about five minutes over the five hours.

Down on the ground I'm welcomed with a can of beer and lots of happy supporters.

Thanks to you all, and especially John Phillips who made my day complete when he remarked that I'd spoiled his when, having struggled to 5500 feet he looked up to see the Duckie scooting along at 6000.

What greater accolade than the envy of John Phillips, other than the generosity of Julie-Anne who was "most impressed" and gave me a big hug and a kiss.

So there it is. If I can do it, anyone can. So buy some shares and join me in the fun flying. After all, 50 km and 300 km are possible.

RALLY AT BRIDGEWATER
TO BE WELL SUPPORTED

At least six vintage sailplanes are expected to attend the rally at Derby airfield, Bridgewater, in central Victoria from 5-13 January. The total could be as high as 10.

It is expected that VGA members will come from NSW, Victoria and South Australia to attend the rally.

Launching will be by the Midland Gliding Club's Auster.

PILOTS BUY VINTAGE FIBREGLASS DIAMANT

Two VGA members in Adelaide are now the proud owners of what they believe is the first fibreglass sailplane to be imported into Australia.

Nigel Baker writes that he and Craig Ligertwood sold the Cherokee 2, VH-GQE, which they have shared for years and bought the 17.2 metre Diamant VH-GUV from Trevor Smart.

An earlier owner was Tim Knappstein and the original owner was Malcolm Jinks. In the Diamant, Malcolm won several National Gliding Championships and made many long distance flights.

The new owners are hoping they will be just as successful with it.

HANGAR PROJECT TO HOUSE SKYLARK 4

From Adelaide comes news that Ralph (Feathers) Crompton is building a hangar to house his Skylark 4.

Ralph says: "I didn't do a lot of flying during the winter because of the poor conditions but I have been building a hangar at Stonefield to save me having to rig and de-rig the Skylark.

"It is T-shaped with an opening of 62 feet. This has caused us some headaches but it is progressing well.

"The next project is a new trailer, as the present one is on its last legs. I would like to have it finished in time to use it to come to the regatta in January."

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CHEROKEE DOES WELL IN SERVICE CONTEST

David Newman, a Flying Officer in the RAAF, reports that his Cherokee 2 put up a worthwhile performance last summer when he flew it in an Inter-Service contest at Forbes, NSW.

He reports: "In the RAAF v The Rest contest, I raced the Cherokee against an ASW15, Ka6 and Libelle.

"I had made only three cross country flights before this contest, none of them in the Cherokee, so it was all new to me.

"Considering that I had no radio, parachute or MacReady Ring, it was that much more difficult.

"Anyway, I won the practice day outright (104 km) and came 3rd (952 points out of 1000) on my first competition day, a 198 km task.

"Unluckily, I couldn't get away on the other two days because of the conditions. Still, I was happy with my performance.

"One of the guys at work, Dave Lackner, also flew the Cherokee and got the highest point score in Sports Class. Not bad for an aircraft that some of the other pilots openly laughed at.

"Before the contest, Dave had made only one flight in the Cherokee.

"This year I won't be able to fly the Cherokee due to my RAAF commitments. I have had to let the C of A lapse but I will get it renewed when I

return from the Sinai.

"I expect to leave Australia in January for six months so GNR should be flying by the end of 1985.

"It's a pity to leave her in the trailer but I just haven't had the chance to fly her much.

"I'll keep the glider because it has real character."

TWO SA Ka6s BOUGHT BY VICTORIAN PILOTS

Two members of the VGA who live in Victoria have bought Ka6 sailplanes from owners in South Australia.

Keith Nolan bought VH-GHA from Ralph Crompton of Springton and Dave and Jenne Goldsmith bought VH-GNB from the Adelaide University Gliding Club.

Keith owns the well-known Olympia "Yellow Witch" and the Goldsmiths owns a Hutter H17. Both of these aircraft will be retained by their owners.

FOR SALE CHEROKEE 2 VH-GLU
First flight 1962. 20-yearly inspection completed. Total flying time 1498 hours. Comes complete with basic instruments and open trailer. No work needs to be done on the glider but the new owner may want to improve a couple of things like most vintage glider enthusiasts. Asking price is \$2900, but offers will be considered. Gunter Bartasek, 28 Gardenia Ave, Emu Plains, NSW 2750. Ph. (047) 35 4403.

PARTNER WANTED TO HELP RESTORE COOGEE

Is there anyone in the Melbourne metropolitan area who would be interested in helping Campbell Curtis get the Coogee sailplane back into the air?

Campbell bought the Coogee some years ago and has done a lot of work on it but he is now unable to spend much time on it.

He says it needs only some small amount of structural work, then fabric covering and painting.

The Coogee was designed and built in Melbourne in the early 1940s and was flown for many years by members of the Victorian Motorless Flight Group.

It is an intermediate sailplane (rather like a large

Hutter H17) and is of wooden construction. It is complete with an enclosed trailer.

Anyone interested in helping with the remaining work, or helping pay for someone to do it commercially, should get in touch with Campbell. Ring him on 341 9274 in office time or 844 3780 at home.

BOOK TELLS HISTORY OF YORKSHIRE GLIDING CLUB

The Yorkshire Gliding Club in England celebrated its 50th anniversary this year.

A book written by one of its long-term members tells of the early struggles of the club and the various problems it has faced during its life.

Though there are unfortunately no illustrations, the author, J.C. Riddell, provides some interesting details of the many aircraft owned by the club during its life.

There are also many amusing anecdotes about the members plus some behind-the-scenes glimpses of the politics of the sport which affected the progress of the club.

Despite many typographical errors, the book makes very interesting reading.

Copies can be obtained from the British Gliding Association, Kimberley House, Vaughan Way, Leicester, England.

The book comprises 44 pages of A4 paper and the price is £2.50 (about \$4). Well worth the money to anyone interested in gliding history.



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