
Newsletter of the Vintage Glider Association of Australia
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A REALLY GOOD WEEK

The regatta at Bridgewater, Victoria, during January was a success despite blustery wind that hindered flying on most of the days and stopped it altogether several times.

Four vintage sailplanes attended the regatta for the whole week and four others took part on the weekends. In addition, there were two club sailplanes plus a privately-owned Libelle, and Bob Russ brought his home built Monerai one day.

Those attending for the entire period were David and Jenne Goldsmith with their Hutter H17 and their recently bought Ka6, Ralph Crompton and his Skylark 4 (in attractive new paintwork), Bob McDicken with his Grunau 4 and Allan Ash with the Kingfisher he had borrowed from Tom Hinton.

The club flew its Boomerang and M200 on several days and Geoff Young flew his Libelle, with its new 17 metre tips.

Others to fly at the weekends were Keith Nolan and his Ka6 (on the way to the Sports Class contest at Ararat), Tom Hinton with his EP2 Super Goose, Michael Bourke and a crew with the Swan Hill GC's Kookaburra and Geoff Patching with the Golden Eagle.

For most of the regatta,

the tug (Auster J5) was Ric Miller, though David Goldsmith took a turn several days so that Ric could fly or rest.

The weather looked promising during the week before the regatta but the first day, Saturday 5 January, brought a very strong south-west wind. It varied direction from time to time during the next week but maintained its strength so that, though there was good lift on most days, conditions were boistrous and rough most of the time.

As a result, some pilots deliberately landed when they had had enough of being tossed about and those who tried to fly across country found the going very difficult. Most of the distance flights were made in the more modern, faster sailplanes.

Despite the conditions, however, the regatta produced a lot of cross countries, which made it one of the most notable regattas the VGA has had.

In addition, some very good local flights were made, when

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it is remembered that some of the sailplanes were not designed to fly fast and have a bit of trouble battling the wind.

The first flying day produced mostly local flights. Ralph Crompton was the only one to try for distance. He took his Skylark 4 around a triangle of 89 km but was in the air for 5 hours 27 mins.

Bob McDicken (Grunau 4) and Allan Ash (Kingfisher) each flew for 2 hours 10 mins. and Dave Goldsmith flew 67 mins. in the Ka6 after taking off at 7 pm. He finished the flight with a fine display of aerobatics.

Flights of less than an hour were made by Tom Hinton and Mike Bourke (Kookaburra), Dave Goldsmith (H17) and Jenne Goldsmith (H17).

Monday produced many cross country flights. The wind was still strong, with rough lift.

Best distance was 199 km by Ralph Crompton (Skylark 4) in 4 hours 4 mins. Dave Goldsmith (Ka6) flew 179 km in 4 hours 22 mins, Tom Hinton (EP2) went 120 km in 3 hours 6 mins. and Allan Ash (Kingfisher) flew 50 km in 2 hours 30 mins and made the only outlanding of the day. Bob McDicken (Grunau 4) went around a 30 km triangle in just over 3 hours.

However, the best effort of the day was a flight of 4 hours by Jenne Goldsmith in the H17.

Considering the wind, it was a really fine effort.

Tuesday produced some rain and only a few keen people flew, though one of them was Bob Russ who carried out some spin checks in his Monerai as part of its program for Australian certification.

On Wednesday, the strong and gusty wind stopped flying altogether.

Thursday was only a little better. The only notable flights were 3 hours by Bob McDicken (Grunau 4), 2 hours 22 mins. by Jenne Goldsmith (Ka6) and 1 hour 10 mins. by Allan Ash (Kingfisher).

The wind picked up again on Friday, resulting in only a few flights, none very long.

When Saturday dawned with a clear blue sky and almost no wind at all, it took people a little while to realize what had happened. Here was a good day at last!

Being hampered by the lack of an official met. forecast, it was anybody's guess how the day would turn out, but it looked promising.

Optimistically, most pilots declared their intention of trying for 300 or 500 km triangles. Allan Ash was launched at 12.30 as a sniffer and was back on the ground in about 15 minutes. Obviously, it was too early.

Half an hour later, Ralph Crompton took off in the Skylark 4 and gradually gained height. Within an hour every-

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GOLDSMITHS ENJOY GOOD FLIGHTS IN THEIR Ka6

After taking delivery in November of the Ka6 they had bought from the Adelaide University club, David and Jenne Goldsmith made a number of familiarisation flights in it during December and logged over 15 hours between them during the January vintage regatta at Bridgewater (see the separate report in this issue)

But their enjoyment of the Ka6 reached a peak during February when they both made long distance flights in it.

On Saturday 9 February, the conditions looked promising so Dave set off on a 500 km triangle. He made the first turn at Horsham but conditions were not so good on the next leg so

he turned for home and landed back at Bridgewater after a flight of 6 hours 6 minutes, having reached a maximum of 6200 feet and flying a total of 326 km.

The next day, Jenne took off after declaring for an out-and-return to Sealake, a total of 312 km.

She had a slow start with thermals going only to 3500 ft for the first 1½ hours. There was improvement later and her best height was 8800 ft. She got back to the airfield with 4000 ft in hand, despite a final glide at 100 knots. The flight took 6 hours 12 minutes altogether.

Jenne's flight gave her Gold distance and a diamond goal. Dave achieved both these qualifications some years ago.

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WITH THE CHEROKEE AT THE
1972 FORBES GLIDING CAMP

by Harry Crossan

Andrew McBurnie and I arrived in Forbes on Saturday night 1 January 1972, having retrieved the Cherokee after an abortive attempt by Col Hayler to fly it from Bathurst to Forbes to join the Southern Cross club's camp.

On Sunday we rigged the Cherokee and Col Hayler set off cross country hoping to complete as much as possible of a 300 km course via Narromine, Trangie and Condobolin.

He arrived over Narromine, about 100 miles, after about 3 hours and decided to complete his 5 hours and land there.

Having completed this, he landed outside the aero club and strolled into their licensed bar to enjoy a few beers and wait for his crew. He swears he had no idea there was a bar on the field. Gliding can be really rough sometimes.

The next day, the Cherokee was rigged and Andrew McBurnie set out on a Silver C attempt to Condobolin. Frank Jackson and his son Chris set out in the Blanik for an out and return to Condobolin.

Andrew ran out of clouds about halfway and thought he was heading into a blue hole with no lift when he spotted a flash of the sun on the Blanik's wings as it circled in a blue thermal.

As Andrew approached Condobolin he passed the Blanik headed back towards Forbes.

When he rang Forbes I took off in the Southern Cross Super Cub and flew to Condobolin. When I arrived, I swapped seats with Andrew, he launched me and I flew the Cherokee back to Forbes.

The next day, Tuesday, was forecast to be good with the chance of afternoon thunderstorms. With a north wind of about 5 knots, I decided to do a cross country downwind in the Cherokee.

Nick Young launched about the same time in the Blanik and we flew around the drome together for an hour or so.

Leaving Nick at noon to continue his 5 hours attempt, I drifted south-west towards West Wyalong. Arriving there about two hours later, I noted that the clouds had started to street in a NE-SW line so, as base was now up to 6000 feet, I made the decision to press on.

Over Ardlethan, and down to 3000 feet, I had to struggle up in a weak thermal over the tin mine. Lift was weak low down but at cloudbase it was quite strong, so I determined to stay high.

The streeting really came good after that and at times I flew 60 miles in a straight line, working between 7000 and 8000 feet. At times the lift was such that mile after mile went by at maximum rough air speed (67 mph!) and the Cherokee was still climbing!

The last 100 miles to the Murray River were flown down the western side of two big thunderstorms that were dumping rain and hail on the eastern side. They were awe-inspiring, especially from the cockpit of the fragile Cherokee.

Arriving over the Murray, I spotted a big dam at Yarrawonga and, as my map didn't show it, I assumed it was the Hume Reservoir at Albury. At this stage I decided to head for Benalla.

Tracking south-west, I was amazed to see Shepparton ahead of me. I sorted myself out at this stage and, using the last thermal of the day, climbed back to 8500 feet, setting a course south-east for Benalla.

On final glide I could find no lift as a rain shower had passed through. As the Cherokee got lower, I felt we would never make it.

About five miles out I had about 2500 feet with the town on my side of the drome. Knowing that they had beer on tap, a hangar for the Cherokee (storms about) and a bunk, I felt I just had to make it.

Straining forward in the straps, I urged the Cherokee on, and with the help of a lot of zero sink, skimmed into the airfield with 500 feet to spare at around 7.30 pm. This meant about 8½ hours in the air for 250 miles.

Introducing myself to the crowd who were discussing the day's flying over a beer, I

told them I had just flown down from Forbes in a Cherokee. I was amazed at the cool "oh yeah" reception. I pulled out my money and ordered a beer.

While quietly drinking and listening to the conversation, I wondered just what they classed as a fair distance when a chap walked in and asked who belonged to that strange little glider on the airfield. When I spoke up it dawned on them that it wasn't a Cherokee aeroplane as they had thought, but a sailplane.

Then it was on. Beers were lined up and I had a battle to tear away and ring poor Andrew at Forbes.

When he arrived about 7 pm the next day, he bumped into Jim Barton who said casually that the Cherokee had been launched several hours earlier to attempt to fly back to Forbes. They let him stew on this for about 10 minutes, then he spotted the "Rubber Duckie" in the back of the hangar.

When we were told we could tryout the GCV aircraft we decided to stay on for a few days and become "monthly" members.

They checked us out on the Kookaburras and then let us have a go at the Arrow and Super Arrow (glide of 1:33). What a nice change from the Cherokee!

The GCV hospitality was tremendous. Our only regret was that their Libelles were at Waikerie. We would like to have flown them.

50-YEAR-OLD KESTREL TO BE RESTORED IN GEELONG

One of Australia's oldest sailplanes is to be restored by a Geelong man who has been a glider pilot for 50 years.

Tom Thompson of Geelong is planning to rebuild the Dunstable Kestrel that was built by Percy Pratt about 1936.

Pratt built the sailplane from drawings he bought from England. He flew it from a number of sites in Victoria, but mostly from his home town of Geelong.

Known as the red Kestrel, it was never fitted with any instruments but Percy Pratt made many successful soaring flights in it.

Tom Thompson, a long-time

member of the Geelong Gliding Club, learned to fly at Geelong under the tuition of Percy Pratt.

He acquired the red Kestrel some years ago and is now at work to restore it. He says it will not be flyable, but he visualises it as a valuable museum piece and a link with the very early days of gliding in Australia.

GOOD SHOW, KEITH!

VGA members will be pleased to know that Keith Nolan put up a fine effort at the recent Sports Class contest at Ararat by taking second place in his recently-acquired Ka6. He took top points on two days.

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STRONG WINDS LIMIT FLYING IN GRUNAU 4

by Ray Ash

My plans to do some cross country flying in my Grunau 4 over the Christmas period were spoiled by poor weather conditions, especially the strong winds in January.

I took the Grunau to a new site at Gulgong, just north of Mudgee, a couple of weeks before Christmas, in company with our K7 group.

We planned to stay for a weekend to test the conditions with the idea of returning in January for a week's flying holiday.

In addition to two hours in the K7, I flew the Grunau for 3½ hours under clouds that produced broken lift that was difficult to work. I climbed to 3000 feet but decided the conditions weren't good enough to go cross country.

We left the sailplanes at the site and returned during January. For most of the week the wind blew at 20 to 30 kts, making it nearly impossible to fly in anything but the glass machines.

Our K7 and another owned by another group made several short distance flights in very strong winds, with gusts up to 40 knots.

As might have been expected, the wind dropped on the last day of the camp. I took off in the Grunau at 10 am and was struggling to hold 2000-3000 feet for the first hour.

Conditions gradually improved and I came down deliberately from 5000 feet after 4½ hours as we had to pack up and leave.

This was at 2.30 pm and conditions were just starting to improve, so the potential for 8 or 9 hours in the Grunau was there if I could have stuck it out. However, I was already starting to feel very cramped.

LOCATIONS OF FUTURE INTERNATIONAL RALLIES

At a meeting in England in September last year, the International Rally committee of the Vintage Glider Club of Great Britain decided on the location for future international vintage glider rallies.

It was decided that the 1985 rally would be at Amlikon in Switzerland, in 1986 it would be at Lasham, England, in 1987 in Germany, 1988 in France, 1989 in Hungary and in 1990 in either Holland or Belgium.

International rallies have in the past attracted entrants and visitors from many European countries and the USA.

It would be good if members of the VGA could get along to one or more of these rallies just to show our flag.

Any VGA members considering an overseas trip any time over the next five years should try to get along to one of these international events.

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one else launched into a blue sky and a light NW wind. To the south a few cumulus formed and people were still hopeful of a good day.

But it didn't turn out that way at all. Ralph Crompton got a few miles down the track but found lift very elusive. He was down to 900 feet at one stage so headed back for the airfield. He floated around in weak conditions for the rest of the afternoon, eventually landing after 6 hours 33 mins. in the air.

Dave Goldsmith in the Ka6 also left the field but after a difficult struggle, turned back at Inglewood and flew

back to the airfield, having covered 38 km in 1 hr 55 mins.

Allan Ash (Kingfisher) and Tom Hinton (EP2) set off hopefully but found the thermals weak and patchy. Both were below 3000 ft most of the time and both landed in the same paddock at Kamarooka (33 km) an hour after take-off.

Bob McDicken (Grunau 4) got to 6500 ft and flew a 30 km triangle in 2 hr 21 mins.

Later in the afternoon Bob was invited to fly the club's Boomerang. As this was his first flight in a Boomer, he thoroughly enjoyed it, especially as he got to 6500 ft, the highest flight of the day.

A number of the pilots and crews left on Saturday evening and others didn't fly on Sunday as they were derigging and packing up.

But Jenne Goldsmith capped her week of fine flying by soaring the Hutter H17 for 2 hours 34 mins, reaching 5800 feet.

It was a good finish to a really good week of soaring.



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SEDGMANS TO TOUR OVERSEAS

Kevin Sedgman and his wife Helen hope to visit gliding clubs in Britain and Europe during a four-months holiday from May to September.

Kevin is repairing the ES49 he bought from the Scout Flying Club and expects to have it flying by Christmas.