

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

MEMORIES OF GLIDING AS IT WAS IN THE 1930s by Tom Thompson

I was interested to read in the March issue of Vintage Times about the GCV flying in their primary at Beveridge.

Rice-Oxley gave me my first ground lessons in a primary at Geelong in 1929.

I doubt whether the C of G position caused the spin in the GCV primary as I have had hundreds of flights in such primaries, by car tows and by catapult off hills.

I have seen them flown by the long and the short and the stout and the troubles that people got into were mostly pilot error.

I got into a tight spiral at Belmont once, and from 400 feet I was lucky to recover and land without damage.

The nose was well down and at first I tried to bring it up by pulling the stick back. I learned a lot from that episode.

Primary gliders had no real means of altering the C of G but was dependent on all the wires being taut and properly adjusted, and also on having the proper dihedral.

I once flew squatting in the V of the fuselage frame

behind Norman Hyde in the GCV primary on a circuit at Belmont aerodrome in the 1930s.

We were mad to do it but apart from flying like a brick, it flew alright and we landed safely.

I still have the original rudder from the first primary glider flown in Victoria and probably Australia. It was built by Percy Pratt and was owned by the original Geelong Gliding Club.

We fitted a larger rudder and it was the over-use of this plus a slow speed that caused my spiral.

The standard of flying of pilots in the early years sometimes left much to be desired and this applied to all clubs where ground slides were the only means of pre-solo training.

It's nice to think that a few of us are still around.

APPRECIATION

The VGA secretary gratefully acknowledges the assistance given in the production of this issue by David and Jenne Goldsmith.

The prolonged illness of the secretary's wife, Freda, has made it difficult for him to meet many commitments this year.

FRED GASCOIGNE WAS ONE OF THE EARLY GLIDER PILOTS OF AUSTRALIA

by Alan Patching

Members of the VGA will be saddened to learn that Frederick Benjamin Gascoigne, DFC, died in Melbourne on 26th April.

My first meeting with Fred was at Berwick in 1948 when he returned from flying in RAAF Sunderlands of 461 Squadron.

He had been awarded the DFC for navigating through foul weather to rescue the crew of a ship that had been torpedoed in the Bay of Biscay.

Fred was immediately placed in the Coogee (which is currently being restored by the Peninsula Gliding Club), which was then our top glider, and we were treated to a display of immaculate flying.

In those days there were no spoilers on the Coogee and it was normal to do S-turns on final approach in order to lose height. It was a pleasure to watch Fred beat up and down the fence before turning in to land.

He was quickly made an instructor and appointed auditor for the club. Since I was then the treasurer, we spent many long evenings together while balancing the books.

Fred had quite a few interesting stories to tell about pre-war flying, starting as a boy carrying tins of petrol from the local Benalla garage for barnstormers who sometimes gave him a flight at the end of the day for his efforts.

If he could afford to pay, they would loop-the-loop but he had to wedge his elbows

into the sides of the cockpit as there were no seat belts to stop him from falling out.

After starting to fly gliders in 1929 at Essendon in a brown-paper-covered primary, he moved to Coode Island and joined forces with Carr Withall, Sir Raymond Garrett and Ken Davies to run the Gliding Club of Victoria (known as the Melbourne Gliding Club at that time).

Fred was appointed their first instructor and was the pilot for many new experiences.

Space does not permit me to tell of the first car-tow, aerotowing with steel cable or the first winch launch. All were conducted without accident but not without incident.

In 1939 he joined in the activities of the Victorian Motorless Flight Group and was the ninth person to fly the Golden Eagle, on 30 April, 1939 (the day of his funeral in 1986).

My close association with Fred continued in the Victorian Soaring Association with myself as treasurer and Fred as auditor.

Later, when I became the president of the VSA, Fred was elected as treasurer. For a period he also audited the GFA secretariat accounts including the period while Geoff Richardson was the

secretary.

Fred enjoyed all gliding and while competing in a nationals at Benalla, sharing a Ka6 with Val Carson (Riley) and myself, he completed his Gold C.

He was also awarded the Battler's Trophy for his persistence on some long flights, and he was always directly on track.

This trophy was designed by the late Andor Mezzaros and was donated by Schneiders. It is now awarded to the winner of the 15 metre class.

In 1978, the GFA Council chose Fred as the recipient of the W.P. (Bill) Iggulden Award (a medal designed by Andor's son, Michael) for his outstanding services to the Australian gliding movement.

As far as I am aware, there was only one major incident involving an error in judgement during Fred's long flying career.

This happened on a day with a strong northerly wind while he was flying the Coogee at Berwick. He found that the glide path ran through the power wires.

Remembering an earlier very nasty accident in the same circumstances, he manouvred to gently stall the Coogee into the row of cypress pine trees along the boundary road and came to rest after doing no damage to anything but his pride.

Fred was never known to miss his day as Duty Instruc-

tor and only stopped in late 1981 when he decided to retire completely from gliding.

He will always be remembered for his quiet, helpful manner while giving all his attention to ensuring that things were done correctly, both on the ground and in the air -- the very attribute that resulted in the DFC.

SPRUCE GOOSE NOT
FLOWN FOR 18 MONTHS

Merv Gill reports from Adelaide that he has not flown his Spruce Goose since January 1985 when the C of A expired.

"It is in excellent condition", Merv says, "but I'm not sure just when I'll get a new C of A on it.

"I will certainly fly it again and would like to get to Bridgewater, possibly next year.

ES49 WILL FLY SOON
AFTER REP AIR WORK

Kevin Sedgman of Adelaide is carrying out the weight and balance checks on his ES49 in preparation for test flights following an extensive repair.

The ES49, built by Erich Hader in Cooma, was damaged in an outlanding several years ago.

To date it has logged some 1600 hours from about 13000 launches. It first flew in 1961.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM HISTORY

GOAL FLIGHT: BENALLA
TO ALBURY, 63 MILES
by E. J. Desmond

Friday 2 January 1948 was the first really promising day we had struck for beginners to set off cross-country from Benalla.

The met. forecast was for strong instability with cloud base about 6000 feet, and as the morning progressed, fair weather cumulus forming about this height quickly dotted the sky.

The wind was southerly and, before I was launched, I decided to try to make Albury aerodrome. This was for two reasons, the assurance of some assistance after landing and the ease of retrieving by aerotow.

Taking off in the blue Grunau Baby at 12.57 hours, I was towed to 3500 feet by Norm Hyde and released upwind of the field at 13.06 hours.

I released in 10 fps lift and circled with about 10 degrees of bank. I rose quickly to 5500 feet above the field, which was about 200 ft below cloudbase.

I drifted north under this cloud, exploring for more lift but could not get above 5500 feet.

Over Mokoan Swamp at this height I decided to try and make the next cumulus which was building up a few miles to the north of me.

At 13.30 I set off towards it at 45 mph and between the two clouds found sink of 20 fps.

By the time I reached the edge of the cloud I was down to 3000 ft. I pushed on underneath it looking for lift and finding nothing.

At this stage I began looking for a place to land, but continued northwards. My persistence was rewarded by a patch of no-sink under the cloud and, having explored this, I flew northwards again, to run into a terrific thermal which jammed the green ball of the variometer at the top of its tube, and by 13.48 I was up to 6000 feet.

Still circling under the cloud, on the northern edge, I reached cloudbase at 14.00 hrs over the hills due west of Wangaratta at 6400 feet.

This stretch of "tiger country" had to be crossed, so I decided to drift cross under the cloud and then make an attempt to fly eastwards to get back onto the track to Albury.

As I cleared the hills, I saw another Cu developing between my position and Wangaratta, and visibly pushing up its round head.

I flew to the eastern extremity of my cloud, struggling to gain as much height as possible, and then set out for this cu.

Once again I experienced 20 fps sink but this time I did not have to fly so far before

the cloud was above me and, flying across the wind, I went under it on the northern side.

I ran into 20 fps climb and circled lazily up to cloudbase again, at 14.15 hours. I was now about 10 miles north-west of Wangaratta.

Here I had the opportunity to enter cloud as I rose into the base at 20 fps, but as I settled down on the instruments I discovered that the T&B had packed up, so I dived smartly out again.

Unable to make the turn-needle work, I switched the instrument off and scooted off to the north-east at 60 mph, maintaining height at cloud-base.

Leaving the cloud, I found a series of ups and downs as I flew towards Springhurst and showed a gradual loss of height.

The clouds were less frequent and the thermals were more patchy. There seemed to be no half measures. Either I was rising at 20 fps, turning with about 70 degrees of bank, or sinking at 20 fps.

The transition from up to down was almost instantaneous and made things very rough.

When circling in the lift I had to fly at 40-45 mph just to maintain control in the rough air.

I arrived at Springhurst at 14.31 hrs but the steady loss of height continued and I sank fairly quickly as I tried to make progress northwards.

I decided that I might have

to land and determined to get to Chiltern, so set out for that town.

Just north of Springhurst I found more patchy lift and lived a lifetime in some of the roughest air I have experienced in the Grunau, trying to maintain height as I drifted towards Chiltern.

I chose the racecourse as the best spot to land and flew over the town to have a look at it. I arrived there at 15.00 hours at 2700 feet.

I found no-sink over the town, which became six inches lift, then one, two, three feet a second. Soon the green ball was at the 10 mark and I rose smoothly to 4200 feet.

I decided to attempt to cross the next strip of timbered country and headed for Barnawartha.

I arrived there at 15.10 hours at 3400 ft and flew to the north of the town looking for lift. After about a mile I ran into another thermal that started at 10 fps but built up to 20 fps.

This took me to 6200 feet and I was then about 4 miles north of Barnawartha. A cloud formed above me but I didn't reach it's base.

At 15.25 hours I was over the Murray River and I decided to run the 16 miles to Albury. I set out at 50 mph and found lift all along the river.

I found this the most exhilarating sensation, throw-

(continued on next page)

ing a lazy circle or two in patches of 20fps lift and then continuing on my way.

Arriving over Albury at 15.35 hours, with 3100 feet, I headed out over the airfield and set about getting down.

At first, to show any sink, I had to fly at 55-60 mph and I raced around the circuit as I lost height. I landed at 15.42 hours and was met by the aero club members. I had covered 63 miles in 2 hours 45 minutes.

The aero club chaps gave me every assistance, hangingar the Grunau for me, phoning to Benalla, and providing a welcome cup of tea and some cake.

In due course, Norm arrived with the Tiger Moth and towed me back to Benalla, where we

arrived just before dark.

Readers of Vintage Times are invited to contribute to these accounts of early soaring flights.

RESTORATION OF BOCIAN MAY TAKE A YEAR OR SO

Maurie Nelmes expects to spend at least a year in the restoration of his Bocian, VH-GQU.

He says the glue needs to be renewed in many places.

Built in Poland in 1964, the Bocian has logged a total of 1791 flights for 3611 hours to date.

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"CLUB CRAWL" RESULTS IN A GOOD HOLIDAY

A holiday tour of four gliding clubs provided David and Jenne Goldsmith with a lot of interesting flying and the opportunity to renew some old friendships and make new ones.

During April, David and Jenne left their home at Gisborne, Victoria, with their Ka6 on tow and spent a month wandering about in Victoria and New South Wales.

The clubs they visited are at Euroa, Narromine, Warkworth and Lake Keepit.

They flew on 14 days during the holiday and between them logged a total of 47 hours of flying. "Every launch resulted in a soaring flight", Jenne reports.

At Euroa, in Victoria, they were able to indulge in some winch launching to keep themselves in practice in this now somewhat rare form of launch.

At Narromine, David flew a triangle of 240 km and Jenne did an O&R of 65 km. At Lake Keepit, Jenne flew a 100 km triangle.

Both David and Jenne agree that Lake Keepit is one of the best sites they have seen.

In their early days in the gliding movement, David and Jenne were associated with the clubs at Warkworth and Armidale, so enjoyed meeting up again with people they knew, as well as visiting their parents.

TOM JOINS THE BIRDS AT BENDIGO CLUB

Tom Hinton says he enjoyed flying in close formation with a young hawk when he went to Bendigo at Easter.

He says he went to fly at Bendigo in order to renew his currency on winch launching.

"Mike Burke and I had a pleasant hour in the club's K7 but the best thing about the flight, apart from it being my first in a K7, and getting away from a 1200 ft launch, my first winch launch for about two years, was the two thermals we shared with a young hawk.

"Every time I moved my circles to get into the strongest lift, the hawk was there already. He (or she) could easily outclimb us.

"Twice, he (or she) folded back his (or her) wings and dived at us, pulling away at the last second, once swooping down in front of us and pulling away over the port wing, missing it by a couple of feet.

"It is hard for me to describe the feeling of flying in company with a hawk, even to another pilot.

"The thrill of this flight was really beyond my ability to describe," Tom reported to Vintage Times.

Later in the weekend, Tom had three launches in the Beaufort Club's veteran Zephyrus and then a couple of short flights in his own EP2 Super Goose.

ANOTHER CHEROKEE
MAY FLY SOON

Lindsay Cooper of Argenton, near Newcastle, NSW, has returned to gliding after flying ultralights for 18 months.

He owns a Cherokee 2, VH-GLV, built by Reg Barrington and first flown in January 1960.

It has not flown since it's C of A expired in 1980, but Lindsay hopes to get around to doing the 20-year inspection soon so that he can fly the Cherokee again.

EASTER REGATTA
WAS CANCELLED

The proposed regatta at Bridgewater, Victoria, over the Easter weekend was cancelled at the last moment because of the serious illness of Clive Hokin, the owner of the property on which the Derby airfield is situated.

It was felt that it would not be appropriate to have a lot of visitors and activity close to the homestead at such a time.

Subsequently, in mid-April, Clive Hokin died as a result of his illness.

Clive had been an active member of the Midland Soaring Club for many years, both as a glider pilot and tug pilot.

Members of the Vintage Glider Association, especially those who have enjoyed Clive's hospitality during regular VGA regattas, express their sympathy to Mary Hokin, and other members of the family.



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NYPH ON DISPLAY
AT MANGALORE 86

The only sailplane on show at the SAAA's Fly-in at Mangalore, Victoria, this year was a vintage glider.

Mike Cleaver of Canberra trailered his Nymph to the big Easter air show.

The Nymph didn't do any flying during the weekend as Mike was heavily involved in helping to run the show.