

BRIDGEWATER REGATTA FROM 29 DEC TO 4 JAN

The annual vintage regatta at Bridgewater, Victoria, will be held this year from Monday, 29 December, to Sunday 4 January.

The slightly earlier date will allow some VGA members to take part in the Sports Class Nationals at Leeton in early January and others to attend the world gliding championships at Benalla from 12 January.

It is expected that, as usual, vintage sailplanes will attend the regatta from various parts of Victoria and from interstate.

Anyone interested in vintage gliders is welcome to attend, especially if they can bring a vintage sailplane with them.

In the past year, a number of new members have joined the VGA and it is hoped that some of them will join the regatta.

Aerotow launches will be provided by the Midland Soaring Club's Auster J5.

Camping space is available at the airfield and visitors are offered the use of the MSC clubhouse. No hangarage is available for visitors.

The airfield is on the Hokin property, about 8 km by road east of Bridgewater which is

on the Midland Highway about 30 km west of Bendigo.

The airfield is surrounded by large areas of wheat farms. Most of the wheat will be harvested by Christmas, though not all, so outlanding paddocks are usually plentiful.

Thermal soaring conditions are generally good during late December. Cross country flights in excess of 300 km have been made from the site in vintage sailplanes.

Though some daily tasks may be set, the atmosphere will be informal and non-competitive.

It is not necessary for pilots to attend the entire duration of the regatta. The invitation is "come when you can and leave when you must".

Lunch and evening meals are available at a nominal charge but there are other eating places in Bridgewater.

Those who don't want to camp at the airfield can choose to book into the local hotel, motel or caravan parks. (Make your own arrangements.)

There has been a suggestion also that a regatta should be held at Bridgewater over the Easter weekend, 17-20 April, 1987.

If members are interested in this proposal, would they notify the VGA secretary.

YELLOW WITCH GETTING A COMPLETE REFURBISH

The second-oldest sailplane in Australia, the Chilton Olympia "Yellow Witch", will be out of the air for a while and will be completely refurbished by its owner, Keith Nolan of Melbourne.

The Olympia was built in Melbourne by Arthur Hardinge and Ken Davies and made its first flight in 1948.

Keith Nolan reports that it is still in very sound condition but is in need of some minor work and a repaint.

Keith said that while he is doing this work he will carry out a 40-year inspection on the Olympia so that it will be in tip-top condition when it returns to flying, which Keith estimates will be in about 18 months.

Amongst other jobs he will do on the sailplane. Keith is to carefully profile the wing to its true aerodynamic shape.

He comments, "Some people may say I'm wasting a lot of time and money on something that will not improve the performance much. I'm not doing it to gain performance, but as a labour of love, to restore a beautiful sailplane to the best possible condition. I'm doing it just for the satisfaction of doing it. I think that is what our vintage glider movement is all about."

Keith plans to fly his Ka6 in the Sports Class Nationals at Leeton next January.

HELPING HANDS AT THE WORLD CONTEST

David and Jenne Goldsmith have both been recruited to help with the running of the world gliding championships to be held at Benalla during January.

Dave has been appointed as assistant to the Chief Marshall of the contest and Jenne will be helping well-known British glider pilot and author Anne Welsh produce the World Competition's daily newsletter.

SAGITTA MAY BECOME A SELF-LAUNCHER

Earlier this year, Ross Nolan of Melbourne bought the only Sagitta in Australia.

This machine, VH-GQS, was imported during 1965. At that time it was one of the many interesting 15 metre designs being produced in the world.

It had been designed in Holland and first appeared in the early 1960s.

It had a claimed gliding angle of 37:1.

The 20-year inspection of VH-GQS is now well under way in Ross' workshop but he is considering an interesting modification.

This involves fitting a 500 cc engine into the nose of the sailplane to make it into a self-launcher.

Ross says the engine will give him the independence of operation that he wants.

A NEW VINTAGE DESIGN FLIES AT LAKE KEEPIT

Earlier this year, VGA member Ian McPhee of Lake Keepit, NSW, imported an SF26, one of the less well known designs of the German company, Scheibe.

The SF26 can perhaps be described as a super K8, with the same steel tube and fabric fuselage and wooden wing. But where the K8 has a two-piece wing, the SF26 wing is made in three pieces.

This type of structure has wide acceptance for its high strength to weight ratio and its simple maintenance.

The SF26 design followed that of the L-Spatz. The prototype SF26 first flew in 1961.

Ian McPhee claims that the SF26 has overcome problems on both winch and aero-tow that were evident in the L-Spatz.

Performance is claimed to be about midway between the Ka6 and the Boomerang, the wing having a similar section to the Boomerang.

Like most Scheibe designs, the SF26 likes to touch down tail wheel first.

Ian reports that all who have flown the SF26 are pleasantly surprised with its ease of handling and performance.

Ian's new machine will most likely join the fleet at Lake Keepit to become the first-solo aircraft after training in the club's two Bergfalke 3s.

The club is finding the jump from the Bergfalke to the

Astir is too large for some pilots.

Ian says the SF26 was imported from Germany "to fill up a container". In conjunction with Ditter Hildenbrand, Ian has imported several containers of second-hand two-seaters from Europe.

Unfortunately, the supply of ASK13s has dried up, but for those really keen, a new ASK13 can be bought for \$35,000, tax paid landed in Sydney.

The Lake Keepit Club are converts to the Scheibe steel tube and wooden gliders.

The club conducts five-day courses to solo standard, using both winch-and aero-tow to the best advantage.

The Bergfalke are ideal for winch launching, having a lower all-up weight and wing loading than similar two-seaters.

Thus the Bergfalke place less load on the cables, so the Lake Keepit club have achieved a cable-break record of more than 1000 launches per actual cable break, a record which is excellent by Australian standards.

Although nothing definite is planned, Ian and Ditter are looking at yet another Bergfalke 3 and an SF27, the next in line of Scheibe gliders.

Don't forget to notify the VGA secretary if you change your address. Occasional news from members for publication in VINTAGE TIMES will also be very welcome.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM HISTORY

7600 FEET ALTITUDE IN THE GREY GRUNAU BABY by Frank Dowling

The met. flight on the morning of Friday 2 January 1948 gave promise of a really good day and, by afternoon, as my flight approached, the conditions looked perfect.

Ted Desmond had left for Albury in the blue Grunau Baby and Jack Edmonds, when he landed in the grey Grunau, reported "lift everywhere".

At 14.40 hours I was winch-launched in the grey Grunau Baby to 1300 feet into a south wind and cautiously explored the area for lift, without success.

Feeling very annoyed with the sight of the red ball at a steady 3 ft/sec, I flew west towards the landing spot.

At 400 feet I flew into lift and, circling steeply, was soon climbing at 5, then 8 ft/sec in steady lift.

At 5900 feet I was above the Mokoan Swamp, 8 miles north of the drome and still well below cloudbase.

I flew south towards a big cumulus in 2 ft/sec sink. As I reached the cloud I rose at 5 ft/sec until I reached the base at 7500 feet.

By this time I was feeling very cold, being in an open cockpit and unsuitably dressed for altitude. I flew to the SE towards the hills, getting steady lift under each cloud

and 1 to 2 ft/sec sink between them.

On some occasions I was surprised to find "no sink" between the clouds.

I circled under a large cloud due east of the drome in 3 ft/sec lift and flew up into the cloud. I flew straight through it, turned and entered it again, reaching 7600 feet, the greatest height during the flight.

Leaving this cloud, I flew west towards the drome at 45 mph and encountered 15 ft/sec sink. I flew for fully a minute in this "down" until I reached a small cloud, when the green ball began to show again.

At this stage my hands, feet and face were so cold that I was feeling really miserable as I flew towards the drome.

At 17.00 hours I was above the drome at 6200 feet. I got some lift under a small cloud and circled to 7100 feet.

Soon after this I decided to land as I had been in the air more than 2½ hours. So I circled over Benalla until I was down to 3000 feet, then I tried my first loops and then landed at 17.40 hours, three hours after takeoff.

FIRST INTERSTATE SOARING FLIGHT

Over the Christmas period at the end of 1945, members of the Sydney Soaring Club took

their Slingsby Gull on a tour of inland NSW.

In the course of this tour, Harry Ryan made the first interstate soaring flight in Australia when he flew from Jerilderie, NSW, to Essendon airport, Melbourne, a total of 169 miles.

Harry took off by aerotow from the paddock where Len Schultz had landed the afternoon before.

This is a summary of his description of the flight:

The wind was varying from 20-25 mph. I released in a thermal and 15 minutes later I had reached 3000 ft, and the journey south began.

By the time I arrived at Tocumwal, 33 miles away, I had reached 8800 feet.

Tocumwal is on the border of NSW and Victoria and I got a great kick out of being the first glider pilot in Australia to fly interstate.

I now began to think that I really would make Melbourne, which idea had been treated as a joke by most of us. They all said, "See you in Melbourne," when I took off.

Shortly afterwards, when near Shepparton, I reached my maximum height, 9000 ft, and left a good thermal at that, owing to a touch of giddiness and not wanting to spoil the flight with airsickness.

I found some good areas of lift without having to circle as I approached Melbourne and did not realise at that time that a change in the behaviour

of the Gull was due to a big increase in the wind strength.

With plenty of height to spare (6500 ft) I cruised joyfully over the suburbs south of Essendon airport but got a rude awakening when I turned back to that airport and found I could not make headway without putting the speed up to 55 mph or more.

After watching an airliner take off and get out of the way, I made a beeline for the tarmac.

Unfortunately, through flying much faster than usual, I misjudged my approach and still had some height to lose at the end of the drome. This compelled me to make a steep turn at low altitude.

As soon as I came into wind I touched down and ran forward only about five yards before stopping.

I crouched forward in the cockpit with the stick held hard forward to prevent the Gull being blown over.

Some RAAF boys quickly came to the rescue and offered me shelter in their hangar, for which I was grateful.

The total straightline distance was 169 miles and the landing time 2.05pm, so that under normal circumstances I still had about three hours of flying time left.

So it was unfortunate that I had not prepared myself with maps for a longer flight so that I could have followed the coast of Port Phillip Bay further south.

ZEPHYRUS GEETING A 20-YEAR INSPECTION

After suffering some slight damage when the trailer in which it was being carried overturned, the Beaufort Gliding Club's Zephyrus two-seater will be given its 20-year inspection while undergoing repairs.

Designed about 1950 by Doug Lyon, the Zephyrus made its first flights at Bacchus Marsh in December 1965.

Construction of the sailplane was carried out entirely by Beaufort club members and it has been the club's basic trainer for 20 years.

Though of only modest performance by modern standards, Zephyrus has mane a number of cross country soaring flights, including several 300 km triangles.

DOING HIS BIT FOR THE YOUNGER GENERATION

When he is not flying his vintage Olympia or Ka6, Keith Nolan takes a turn as instructor for the Air Training Corps cadets at the RAAF base at Laverton, on the outskirts of Melbourne.

The ATC operate under the title of VICAIRTC Gliding School. They have a Blanik, a K8 and an ASW19 which they launch by winch.

The K8 is currently undergoing its 20-year inspection at Laverton.

KOOKABURRA REBORN IN A NEW SHAPE

While carrying out the 20-year inspection of his Kookaburra VH-GFK, Doug Vanstan of Bacchus Marsh, Victoria, took the opportunity to include some modifications.

The major work was to lower the wing from the high position to level with the pilot's shoulders.

The nose was reshaped, the rudder was rounded and a new canopy fitted. Doug reports the Kookaburra flies well.

A full report will be in October "Australian Gliding".

RAF SELLING OFF ITS OLD GLIDERS

As already mentioned in "Vintage Times", the Royal Air Force is selling off its old ATC gliders and is replacing them with modern two-seater sailplanes from West Germany.

A number of sales of these old gliders has already taken place and sales will continue during this year.

Aircraft sold include T21 and T31 two-seaters and Grasshopper primaries and Swallow single-seaters.

Among the buyers have been glider pilots from Britain, Holland, Sweden and the USA.

Many of the old gliders are in airworthy condition and are selling for only a fraction of their current value.

HOW TO STOP OLD PILOTS BEING INVOLVED IN ACCIDENTS

For many years, people in the aviation industry have noted efforts by aviation authorities to arrive at 100% safety by keeping aircraft on the ground.

"The only safe aircraft is one that is locked up in a hangar," was the theory. One cannot deny the absolute truth of this viewpoint, but still we choose to resist it.

A recent news item in the British "Vintage Glider Club News" tells of a similar idea being put into operation in Poland.

In that country, it seems, the authorities have ruled that no pilot of 60 years of

age, or over, is allowed to fly at all, except in the company of an instructor. The ruling apparently applies to both power and glider pilots.

It would be interesting to know how many pilots, including how many glider pilots, there are in Australia who are 60 years old, or more, and how they would react if Australian aviation authorities tried to impose such a regulation.

The "VGC News" report mentioned that 82-year-old Peter Riedel, of West Germany, recently flew with skill and finesse at a recent vintage glider rally in Switzerland.

In Australia, too, we have active pilots who won't see their 80th birthday again.

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ANOTHER Ka6 JOINS THE RANKS OF THE VGA

Many of the Ka6 sailplanes built by Edmund Schneider Ltd during the 1960s are now more than 25 years old.

In their day they were a popular and successful design, taking part in national and international competitions.

For many pilots, the Ka6 is as popular today as it ever was and a number of owners of this design are becoming members of the Vintage Glider Association.

The latest recruit is Tom

Pearson, of Bathurst, NSW, who bought his Ka6, VH-GPN, during May this year.

GPN carries Schneider's serial number 69. It was first flown at Gawler on 27 January 1964.

Tom Pearson reports that GPN was first owned by a private owner group comprising B. Sinclair, D. Ruming and W. Pye. It was later owned by other groups and by the Northern Slopes club and the Miles and District club.

Its longest distance flights were made during 1982 when it was owned by a group at Albury. D. Pobjoy flew it for 324 km, M. Pobjoy for 306 km and G. Issom for 306 km.

David Pobjoy flew the Ka6 on its best climb when he reached 13,000 feet to achieve his Gold height leg.

The longest duration flown in GPN was 7 hours in 1969, though it has made two flights of more than 6 hours and 10 of more than 5 hours.

At the end of June this year, GPN had logged a total of 1410 hours from 1655 launches.

All this is very encouraging to its new owner who is a member of the Bathurst club.

Tom took up gliding in 1965 as a foundation member of the Forbes club. He has also been a member of Southern Cross, Sydney Tech, Corowa and Albury clubs.

Tom says he hopes to become active in the vintage glider movement in the future.



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