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

Good support for New Year regatta

Though still some months away, the vintage glider regatta scheduled to be held at Stonefield, site of the Barossa Valley club, SA, from 26 December to 3 January, looks like being well supported by VGA members.

Organiser Peter Brenton reports a number of acceptances from South Australian pilots and several from Victoria and New South Wales.

Among the vintage sailplanes likely to attend the regatta are several Grunau Babies, Several Kookaburras, Jock Barratt's Pelican, an ES49 and an Olympia.

Ralph Crompton's Skylark 4 and the Brentons' Super Arrow will be there, of course. They are based at Stonefield all the time.

Other likely starters are the Golden Eagle and the Spruce Goose.

Peter Brenton estimates the final attendance will be some 15 to 20 sailplanes.

Launching will be by winch and Peter says the thermals should be good at Stonefield at that time of the year.

The usual social events are expected to be a part of the

week's activities.

Anyone wanting more information should contact Peter at 9 Margaret Street, Evanston, SA 5116. Phone (085) 22 2094.

INFORMATION WANTED ON GERMAN MARKINGS

One of our VGA members, Frank Smith, is a keen builder of model sailplanes. Some of our other members will have seen examples of Frank's work at our vintage regattas and various gliding meetings.

Among his recent projects have been radio controlled models of a Grunau Baby 2 and a Moatzagotl. He is currently working on a 1/4 scale model of a Bowlus Baby Albatross.

Frank is also researching information about markings on pre-WW2 and the wartime German sailplanes. He would be grateful for any information other VGA members could provide.

If you can provide this information, or put Frank in touch with anyone who can help him, contact Frank at 4/270 Warrigal Road, Burwood, Vic. 3125. Phone (03) 288 6546.

The Altair, designed in the late 1950s by Ron Adair and Cliff Gurr of Adelaide, is the only 18-metre single-place sailplane ever designed in Australia. Some of us have seen this fine sailplane at vintage regattas in recent years, but not many know that it once held the national out-and-return record of 230 miles (370 km). Here is the story of that record flight, reprinted from the August 1961 issue of "Australian Gliding".

HIGHLIGHTS FROM HISTORY

A record out-and-return

by Cliff Gurr

After the Nationals at Gawler, I thought I could not look at another sailplane for months.

However, two weeks later, the look of the weather on the Friday brought out the old urge, and a call to Keith Jarvis at Adelaide Airport confirmed that the weather was really good and likely to continue the next day.

The idea then was a 500 km distance diamond but the urge didn't extend to a retrieve of that distance.

So one of the tasks I had dreamed up as a joke for the Nationals came to mind as perhaps being practical after all -- namely, Lake Cullulleraine and return, 332 miles.

A look at the map brought a further idea. Why not extend the course to make a triangle by including Waikerie?

This is a long, thin triangle but legal by the book, with some margin over the 500 km distance in case the sea breeze brought me down short of Gawler.

So it was off to Gawler that night to clean the dust off the Altair and grease the

pins, ready for a quick rig and get away in the morning.

Saturday morning did not look so promising, but a call to the Met. office gave hope, with a 20-knot north-westerly to 3000 feet, and above that north-east at 8 knots and instability to 13,000 feet.

The Altair was rigged and ready to go at the planned take-off time of 10.30.

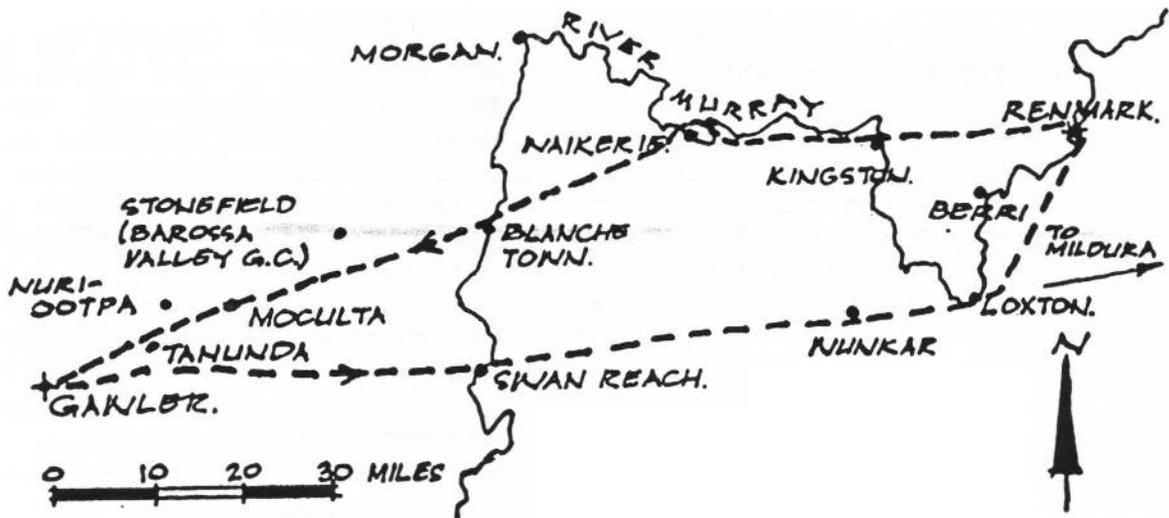
The first launch was not successful but on the second, at 11.20, we were winched into lift at 1200 feet. At 400 fpm we reached 7500 feet and were on our way.

Best height on the way out was attained near Swan Reach, 11,500 feet under one of the few thin clouds that formed in a double line each side of the river.

On course to Loxton, I took stock of progress. The average speed was about 40 mph as against the 45 mph I had hoped for, and the thermals had been quite variable in strength.

Adding these facts to the late start, I abandoned the nominated course and headed for Renmark.

We arrived over Renmark



airfield at 2500 feet, just as the Renmark club's Austral was launched and began slowly to wind its way up.

Next stop was Kingston, to climb back to 8000 feet and sight a distant speck circling below a solitary cloud in the direction of Waikerie.

On course again and the speck resolved into the Adelaide Soaring Club's Grunau Baby, flown by Col Churches, on its way to Mildura. I gave Col a cheer as he passed overhead.

Over the Waikerie airfield at 9000 feet, we had the Barossa Valley Kookaburra in the same thermal.

I heard later that the Waikerie club were somewhat frustrated to see all the traffic overhead and not having any success themselves.

Next point of interest was the river crossing at Blanchetown with 12,000 feet, the best height of the day under the double line of cumulus by

the river.

We carried on to Moculta at the foot of the Adelaide Hills where, with 9000 feet and 28 miles to go, I looked like having it in the bag.

However, the smoke from the Angaston cement works showed a strong sea breeze against us. We reached Tanunda with 3000 feet in hand.

Some weak lift carried us to 4500 feet, from which height the airfield at Gawler could just be seen. A glide at 50 mph was started with my hopes fluctuating with the rate of climb needle.

Finally, the airfield boundary went by, 200 feet below, and we landed six hours and 16 minutes after take-off and a round trip of 240 miles, or 230 miles not counting the Waikerie diversion.

Back at the clubhouse, I answered the phone to hear Col Churches announce he had arrived at Mildura for his Gold C distance and diamond goal.

McDICKEN'S CHEROKEE GOES TO CENTRAL QUEENSLAND

Bob McDicken of Sydney says he has sold his Cherokee 2, VH-FQU, to Pat Malone, a member of the Central Queensland Gliding Club at Emerald.

Bob had planned to sell his Grunau 4 and keep the Cherokee but he got an offer from Pat Malone that he couldn't refuse so he agreed to part with the Cherokee.

Bob rescued the Cherokee 2 from certain death from neglect a couple of years ago and, with the help of his friend Ron Meares, rebuilt the sail-plane.

In the last two years Bob has done some good flights in the Cherokee, including several cross countries.

Bob reports he has had an offer for his Grunau 4 from a pilot in Alice Springs. The deal is not yet finalised but will probably go through.

So that he won't be left on the ground without an aircraft, Bob has bought a damaged Ka6, which he and Ron Meares are in the process of repairing. Bob estimates it will be about 18 months before the Ka6 is flying again.

THE EDITOR REGRETS ...

Apologies for the smaller size of this issue -- only 4 pages instead of the usual 8.

Hardly anyone has sent in any news lately. Drop me a line to put in the next issue.

... Allan Ash

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