

Vintage Times

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AUSTRALIA'S FIRST MINIMOA TAKES SHAPE

A visit to Mal Bennett's workshop in Mordialloc on 8th November, 2010, revealed that Mal continues to make good progress with the Minimoa he is building for Fernando Salazar.

AUSTRALIA'S MINIMOA TAKES SHAPE

The fuselage is having the control circuits and fuselage fittings made and installed, the ply for covering has already been fabricated. The canopy frame is almost complete, and the rudder, elevators and horizontal stabilizer have been fabricated ready for fittings and covering.



Front cockpit activity – the canopy frame is in place and will be ply covered when the nose is covered.



The canopy frame held adjacent to the main bulkhead, with the wing fittings clearly visible



The fuselage turtleneck ply removed to reveal the fuselage interior and elevator pushrod.

The laminated wingspars have been completed and shortly the long process of building approximately 120 wing ribs will commence, each taking around 75 minutes.



The rudder is installed for fabricating fittings, the tailplane attach bolts clearly visible. The rudder is removed via quick release fittings so that the tailplane can also be removed for trailering.

Mal does not like to estimate a completion date, preferring to say that the Minimoo will be finished when all the building processes are completed! However, as these pictures show, it is certainly well on the way.



Mal and Jenne Goldsmith with the horizontal stabilizer and elevators, spanning 3 metres

The Minimoo was developed from the 20 metre span Moatzagotl. It has a seventeen metre span cantilever wing, and for cloud flying the structure was stressed for a load factor of ten instead of the more usual eight. The first prototype flew in 1935, and three were built before a substantial redesign included lowering the wings. Wolf Hirth and Martin Schempp built 110, commencing production in 1936, until production stopped in late 1939. 4 Minimoo's are still flying, 2 in Germany, one in Japan and one in the UK.

“WEB FOOT” MELBOURNE CUP VINTAGE RALLY

30th October to 2nd November, 2010

By Jenne Goldsmith

In weather better suited to ducks, the Vintage Gliders Australia Melbourne Cup Rally 2010 was held over 4 days at Bacchus Marsh on the long weekend from Saturday the 30th of October to Tuesday the 2nd of November. The Australian Gliding Museum contributed greatly to the occasion by holding an open day on the Sunday at their Bruce Brockhoff annexe on the field.

The weather bureau, in the days leading up to the event, made very clear their expectation of flooding rain over the weekend. It is true that their dire warnings did induce some to leave their gliders at home but let it not be said that all in vintage circles are not of highly optimistic nature, or don't possess a healthy dose of skepticism when it comes to forecasts, or, heaven forbid, lack enthusiasm to fly!

Despite the diabolical nature of the said forecast, there were two vintage gliders (Ka 4 and Boomerang) lined up at the launch point ready to fly early on Saturday morning. It was only the tardy arrival of the rostered tug pilot (can't imagine WHY he was so tardy) that caused there to be no vintage aviating to occur on the first day of the rally.

With not a small measure of disappointment the aircraft were returned to their hangars about midday when it became obvious that maybe the heavens were going to open shortly thereafter as remarkably accurately forecast. And indeed they did! It pelted down, and just when you thought it couldn't possibly get any heavier it drummed even louder on the hangar roof. Webbed feet and well oiled feathers became a distinct advantage for anyone wanting to get around outside. A car was bogged up to its axle when it departed from the gravel near the Museum. Lakes and rivers of water appeared as it was sadly decided that the Museum would probably not be able to fly its T31 on its open day after all. Some even worried that maybe not enough people would come to make up a quorum for the Annual General Meeting that was planned for the day as well.

Sunday dawned grey and raining, but the latter worry proved completely needless.

Over 40 people from 4 states turned up for the Museum's Annual General Meeting and open day, despite the weather. At the AGM, Alan Patching stepped down as President, with David Goldsmith now taking that position. Bernard Duckworth, son of gliding pioneer Dick Duckworth, was elected to the committee, with all other committee members being re-elected. The hangar talk was lively as people marveled at the progress the museum has made during the 10 years since its inception and inspected its highly significant collection of aircraft, archive centre, and display of the Dick Duckworth collection of photographs. First hand stories from some about their experiences of flying some of the exhibits added rich colour to the history on display.

Monday dawned blue and sunny, the rivers of water had stopped running the previous day but the lakes, though receding, still abounded. We assumed that the field would be too wet to fly and set about some work in the Museum. Tantalizing cumulus appeared overhead, and our rostered duty instructor for the day, Martin Power (now a new VGA member, welcome Martin!), appeared on the field. Not one deficient in enthusiasm, as befits a VGA member, Martin walked the runway and declared enough of it dry enough to fly.

The Vintage Gliders Australia Ka 4 Rhoenlerche II was quickly DI'd and taken out to the launch point with some very pleasant flying ensuing in rather unusual circumstances for Bacchus Marsh – we had the sky almost to ourselves! A Cessna 150 flew in to do a couple of circuits before leaving again and a Decathlon shared the air for a short while, otherwise it was just the Ka 4, trusty Super Cub tug MSA, the ibis and the eagles.



Ross Birch and John Mackley in the VGA Ka4

John Mackley put the Ka 4 to its best use as a trainer and did some aerotow training with instructor Ross Birch before David and I took it away for a magic 46 minutes up to cloud base of 4300'. The cu worked reliably and the ibis showed where the best bits were, the Ka 4 giving the lie to the rather unkind nickname the type had earned in Germany of "Rhoenstein", translating to "Rhoen rock" in English (The Rhoen is the region in Germany that gave birth to the Ka 4, the 4th design of Rudolf Kaiser, which was factory named the "Rhoenlerche II", meaning "Rhoen-Lark II" in English). We explored its very pleasant flight characteristics with some chandelles, stalls and steep turns to get down and allow John Buchanan and Martin to take it up for another three quarters of an hour before putting her safely back to bed.



The ASK-13 is prepared for flight

The last day of the rally (Cup day) gave us the field completely to ourselves, no power traffic at all except for our tug. Two different vintage birds came out to play, the ASK 13 GPZ belonging to the Geelong Gliding Club, and the Boomerang GTR owned by Theo Van Alkemade. John Mackley explored spins with Martin in GPZ, the look upstairs showing them that there were quite a few scattered rainshowers about. Despite that, the lift was quite good at times up to a maximum altitude of 3700', with David and I coming back, brakes out, after three quarters of an hour. Sylvia Sharman reacquainted herself with a glider again in GPZ with Martin after many years break since she last flew her Ka 6 in England.

Ian Patching flew over an hour in the Boomerang GTR, during which he shared some good air with an eagle forming on his wingtip, before a rainshower and associated sink forced him home. Caleb White then took GTR up for another 35 minutes in an interesting flight during which he soared

along the line of a front in a compromise between weak lift and light drizzle, before pushing through heavier rain to come home. By then we decided that the rain was beating us and it was time to put the birds to bed and repair to the clubhouse.

All in all it was an interesting rally, the wet of which I don't think we have ever seen before. It was great to see the many people that turned up anyway, the Museum open day adding great interest to the event.



Ian Patching prepares the Boomerang

United States Vintage Gliding Enthusiasts Visit Bacchus Marsh



Ross Birch with Lee and Mary Cowie

Six members and friends of the United States Vintage Soaring Association visited Bacchus Marsh on Sunday 7th November. Dave and Betty Schuur, Lee and Mary Cowie, and Bill and Geneva Jokerst fly with the Wabash Valley Soaring Association. David flies a Ka6E, Lee a 1947 Grunau Baby IIb, and Mary flies her ASK-18.

The weather was a little threatening – maybe a seven day cycle from the previous wet rally weekend – but some good flying was done by the visitors, who flew the VGA Ka4 or the Syndicate Platypus, some having a flight in each. The day was soarable, but the lively flying in the breeze kept our visitors on their toes. Late in the day a line of rainshowers moved threateningly towards the launchpoint, and a tactical withdrawal of the gliding operations brought the flying to a close. Whilst at Bacchus the visitors also inspected the gliders in the Australian Gliding Museum, and admired the unique Zephyrus belonging to the Beaufort Club.



Alan Patching, Wayne Mackley, Lee Cowie and Dave Schuur with the Platypus



Mary Cowie boards Platypus

AN UNEVENTFUL TRIP!

By Dave Goldsmith

The story was relayed to Australian Gliding Museum committee members by email late on Thursday evening 14th October. "We are back home in Gisborne after an uneventful trip". Little was I to know how this comment was to tempt fate!

The Museum had been trying to get two historic gliders, a Grunau Baby and a Kestrel, from Cunderdin in Western Australia

back to Bacchus Marsh, for about eighteen months. It was within 15 minutes of happening five months ago, however my truck-driver friend could not proceed when his yard foreman was sacked just as the trip was to commence!

Finally, Jenne and I decided that here was a chance to combine business and pleasure, visit WA, and bring them back ourselves! Bertha the Bedford had been recently superseded by a nice Avan motorhome on a turbo-diesel Fiat, and Ian Patching kindly offered his enclosed Long-wing Kookaburra trailer.



An overnight stop

The trip went well, and to cut a long story short, we dropped the trailer at Cunderdin and enjoyed the tourist trail in the South-West for nine wonderful days. We were delighted to spend time and meet members of the Narrogin Gliding Club, the Beverley Soaring Society and the Gliding Club of WA, as well as Balaclava Gliding Club and Waikerie Gliding Club en-route. Thanks again for your wonderful hospitality, guys and girls!

After extracting the Kestrel from the rafters of the hangar and loading the gliders at Cunderdin, we drove back to Gisborne. All up, 8,350 km exactly. Then I sent out the fateful arrival advice mentioned above!

Next morning after a good sleep I visited the Post Office to collect the mail in pouring rain when Jenne rings – "Mayday! – the trailer is leaking like a sieve on the exposed wooden gliders within, we have to get them undercover and dry at Bacchus Marsh asap!" I rush home and we head off on the 30 minute trip, Jenne having placed plastic sheeting and buckets strategically, including above the exposed spars of the Kestrel!



Having a bad day!

Heading down the steep hill near home, at a reduced speed because of the severe conditions, I notice the trailer trying to overtake our vehicle on the right hand side! Slowing to a stop, we park on the restricted area beside the road, double yellow lines on a slight crest! Jenne puts out the safety alert triangle, which blows away in the wind. The rain continues unabated, the buckets are not coping, and we find the drawbar welding has given away and we are going nowhere!

Urgent phone calls, a towtruck operator contacted ("be there in twenty minutes!"), and we settle down to try and keep the gliders dry in the freezing wet conditions! During the next five hours, and many phonecalls, we try to keep warm and dry, fortunately the motorhome on a left lean in the long wet grass providing some creature comforts. Why, oh why, had I unloaded all our clothing and dry socks the previous evening? Finally the towtruck arrives and with some difficulty the large trailer is loaded. "Not taking that to Bacchus Marsh, too unstable!", the driver announces. Fortunately he agrees to try for Melton, where his day job as a welder allows the trailer to be repaired. We tow the trailer to the Bruce Brockhoff Annexe at Bacchus airfield, and with John Ashford's help unload and dry off the gliders before they sustain serious damage. Driving home cold and tired late that night, I vowed to never again call a trip successful until it is REALLY over!



Grunau Baby and Kestrel safe and awaiting restoration

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JUST THE THING FOR CHRISTMAS!

A Memorable Flight

By Allan Ash

One does not have to fly long hours, long distances, or great heights to get satisfaction from gliding. Often it is just the completion of a safe well-flown flight, even if only of modest proportions.

How does one decide which was one's most memorable flight?

I haven't flown a sailplane for ten years, having been grounded by advancing years and retreating eyesight, but I was nostalgically browsing through my log book recently and reviewing my adventures from my first flight, in a Zoegling primary glider, on 31 March 1946 to the 812th, in the Platypus on 10 January, 2001.



Photo Rob Benton

Ian Dunkley about to fly a Skylark 2 in NZ

My choice of my most memorable flight was not the longest duration or the greatest distance or the highest altitude, all of which have been notable. It was a 75 minute local flight in a Slingsby Skylark 2 on 19 October, 1968, the 637th flight in my logbook.

I had visited the club that was, at that time, operating from the Raglan airfield east of Bathurst in NSW. The weather was sunny with no wind, but the sky was filled with a heavy grey haze.

I could see the club's Blanik and a couple of single-seaters soaring in the mild conditions. Among the aircraft on the field was a syndicate-owned Skylark 2, GFG, and one of the owners offered me a flight in it. "Stay up as long as you can", he said, and I accepted gladly as I had never flown a Skylark before.

I released from the tug at 2,000 feet, expecting little more than a brief local flight if I was lucky. To my surprise I found the air was quite buoyant and I began to climb slowly in wide circles in the gentle lift. I didn't expect to get very high and was quite pleasantly surprised when the lift topped out at 6,700 feet!

In the still, hazy air I had drifted hardly any distance during the climb and, although I could see the airfield quite clearly below me, the haze limited my visibility any distance around the field.

I wondered what I could do with the altitude on hand. The air was as smooth as silk but felt quite buoyant. Visibility was virtually nil in all directions except straight down. I finally decided to make an extended circuit, using the available altitude but keeping fairly near the airfield.

I reasoned that from close to 7,000 feet it would take the Skylark almost an hour to reach the ground, even without further lift, so I decided to fly a square circuit of 15 minutes on each side. This would return me to the airfield in the hour.

After checking the altimeter, still showing 6,700 feet, my compass and my watch, I set off, heading due west.

I wondered if I was perhaps flying IFR in the heavy haze. I could see the Skylark's wingtips but nothing else horizontally, but looking straight down I could see the ground quite clearly so I decided this made the flight VFR.



Photo Rob Benton

In creamy smooth air I flew due west for exactly 15 minutes, then made a quick left turn onto a southerly heading. Although I could see nothing horizontally, below I could see ground features, hills, a few farm houses, roads, and sometimes, cattle. Before long there were more ordered roads, lined with houses, and I realised that I was now over the outskirts of the city of Bathurst. Motor traffic took the place of cows and horses. After 15 minutes on a southerly course it was time to turn left again. My altitude was a little above 4,000 feet and the air continued to be buoyant but smooth, providing some areas of reduced sink.

The housing estates were left behind and a long roadway appeared, with cars and trucks travelling in both directions. It was the Western Highway leading to the Blue Mountains, and eventually to Sydney. I knew exactly where I was.

The thick, grey haze still surrounded me as I saw familiar round hills around which the highway now wound. Altitude was getting lower but I was confident I had enough to finish the flight back to the airfield.

At the end of the third leg, I turned the Skylark northwards and began peering ahead. If my calculations and flying were accurate, the field should appear dead ahead very soon. But were they correct? Would the flight end with an outlanding?

The altimeter showed a shade over 2,000 feet when we emerged suddenly from the heavy haze into clearer air. The hills below looked familiar, but they also looked close. I peered ahead hopefully, scanning left and right. Then, there it was! Straight ahead, about a mile distant. Well within reach. I had 1,000 feet in hand as we sailed over the airfield. More than enough for a safe circuit and a smooth landing.

The owners of the Skylark greeted me cheerfully and probably with some relief. They hadn't seen their aircraft for over an hour.

As I browsed over my logbook, the details of the flight came back to me. It was indeed a memorable flight!

CHEROKEE RESURRECTION

BY PETER RAPHAEL



Cherokee GLV was built by Reg Barrington of Renmark South Australia and first flown on the 3rd of January 1960. Aside from suffering major structural damage in a cable hangup in 1962 resulting in a major rebuild of the front part of the fuselage and internal wing structures, the glider has had an illustrious career. The glider flew regularly through the 60's until 1973 whereupon it appears that there was a hiatus of 4 years, before it was purchased by Lindsay Cooper for the sum of \$1600. In this time, according to the recollections of Allan Ash, among many of the notable achievements of others

was a flight by Harry Crossman of over 400km from Forbes to Benalla in 1972.

Over its life the glider was owned consecutively by J.C. Maddock, the Renmark Gliding Club, Loxton Flying Group, J Scriven and Lindsay Cooper, before being acquired by Garry Morgan in 1990, who then undertook a major inspection and recovering of the glider at its 20 year survey. Garry still recalls flying the Cherokee over a 300km triangle, West Wyalong, Junee, Leeton in 1991, and also winning days at the Vintage Gliding Regatta held at Ararat. The logbook now rests with the glider having flown 1377 hours over 3021 launches.

Garry ceased flying the glider in 1992 and placed it on the market to ultimately pursue his interest in manufacturing light sport airplanes. So there it sat for some time until Bendigo Gliding Club member, Ken Williams spied the advertisement in the Australian Homebuilt Sailplane newsletter. In 2007 Ken brought it to the club and assembled it for the first time in many years. His hopes of getting the glider back into the air was unfortunately curtailed by ill health, which further conspired to seriously limit any further flying ambitions.

Hearing that the glider was in need of a good home I approached Ken and received his blessing to take her away with the view of placing her back in service. At this point in her career she is due for a 50 year survey and while her true condition is still to be established she has been well stored in the trailer in a shed while laying idle.

While GLV has now relinquished her original registration due to the long period of inactivity it is my hope that she can soon be re-registered, find a new beginning and recommence her role in the Vintage Gliding movement.

OLD MATES WEEK at BENALLA

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Contact Jim Barton 03 9309 4412

VINTAGE GLIDER CLUB ANNUAL RALLY SPITZERBERG, AUSTRIA

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www.vgc2011.spitzerberg.at

Schweizer 1-35 Rigged

Sunday 31-Oct-10

Photos by Gary Smith and Bernard Gonzalves
From the Gliding Caboolture website

Bert Persson has over recent months applied many, many hours of his unique engineering expertise, experience and wizardry to the Schweizer SGS 1-35 (VH-WUC).

The major challenges were the re-engineering required to replace the original Schweizer self-retracting tow release with a GFA approved Tost release (requiring the tow release cable to be re-directed to provide initial forward pull before being re-aligned back through instruments that had to be re-arranged to give the cable clearance to the control panel) and to repair some "hard landing" damage to the underside of the fuselage at the skid.

The huge tail-wheel assembly that had been fitted to the 1-35 (with it's 8" diameter pneumatic-tyred wheel) has also been replaced with a much, much smaller original Schweizer 1-35 tail-wheel assembly (with a 2" solid rubber-tyred wheel) ... the improvement that this will make to the 1-35's attitude in ground roll for take-off should be dramatic.

In recent weeks, Bernard "Speedy" Gonzalves has been applying his magic to the paintwork to the fuselage, tail-fin and turtle-deck.

As the following photos show, "the pocket rocket" is getting close to being back in the air ... it was re-rigged today for the first time in some 22 years.



Mark Higgins checking out John "Scrubby" Ashford's electrical work and Bert Persson's plumbing and engineering work.



The manual said "starboard wing first" (Kevin Rodda and Eric Dickeson guiding the wing root under the expert supervision of Bert Persson - the other helpers in this photo are Mark Higgins, Mick Moloney, Bernard "Speedy" Gonzalves and Mike Grady).



Bert has it all sorted out. The wings have not needed the paint to be touched up ... they have been washed but not yet even polished!



The wings went in very easily. Speedy's re-furbishing of the paint work on the fuselage looks great!



Proud owner Kevin Rodda with the 1-35 rigged for the first time in 22 years.



Bert Persson perusing the flight/owners manual (with the rigged 1-35 back in the hangar). Perhaps he was contemplating the amount of work that he has enthusiastically put into this project? Or perhaps he was just checking the manual for the control surface movement figures?

One thing is for sure, Bert is very excited about taking his next flight in WUC very soon ... an aircraft that he flew during his time with Bill Riley and Ingo Renner at Tocumwal.

Bert fondly recalls his first flight in WUC where, after finding a few unexpected thermals early in the flight, he pushed on to complete a leisurely 500 kilometer triangle!

WUC last flew in 1988 after being imported from the USA in 1977 and located at Tocumwal by its original Sydney-based owner (the late Keith "Nearly" Woodward).

RENDEZVOUS RALLY 2011

Aalen-Elchingen, Germany
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www.edpa.de

Winter Wander

By Jenne Goldsmith

David and I were enjoying mostly circuits and some blown out, washed out weekends when we had an irresistible invitation from many leagues north.

John McCorquodale was planning to attend a wave/ridge soaring camp at Gloucester, NW of Newcastle, with his syndicate K7 GPG and asked if we would be interested in joining them for a bit of winter fun.

Justifying a trip to the warmer north by tying in overdue visits to family and friends, we thought for about a millisecond before agreeing to hook the trailer carrying Ka6E GEA onto "Fred" Fiat for a very pleasant winter wander.

We arrived in the Hunter Valley on the last day of July to overnight with my brother and family. Our drive up to Gloucester on the first day of August was positively tropical! 21 degrees! I started to worry about not having suitable clothing for all this heat. The sun was shining brightly and the wind was light. A call to John revealed however, that all was not as bright as it seemed.

Gloucester had received deluges of rain the previous week, and the dairy farm on which the airstrip was located (home of the Gloucester Aero Club) was a quagmire. John had succeeded in towing PG into the airstrip with his four wheel drive, over the same track that 480 cows walk twice a day to be milked, but recommended that we not do the same. The thought of all that deep, wet cow manure got our instant agreement. John's graphic description of the new "paint" job on the trailer (plumes of chocolate manure to roof height) belonging to one other of the party after he had decided that some speed was necessary to negotiate the bog, was also very persuasive.

We towed our trailer to the Gloucester Caravan Park to meet up with the other ridge/wave hopefuls camping there for a very pleasant social evening.

The next morning dawned bright and clear. We took a ride with John out to the airstrip for the 9am briefing. The weather was perfect, the scenery glorious and a very inviting wind blew directly onto the ridge. However, after taking a squelchy walk up and

down the field, it was sadly agreed by all attending that the pudding that was usually an airstrip was not going to dry out quickly enough to allow operations to take place before the week was out, especially as there was an expectation of some showers as a front passed through over the next day or so.



At Gloucester, the gumboots say it all!

Spirits were not to remain soggy for long however. A new plan was made! Lake Keepit was, after all, only a few hundred kilometers over the wild New England Ranges away. The 7 day a week operation there could easily cope with a few refugees from the Gloucester bog.



Rigging in front of the Lake Keepit clubhouse

So it was that three gliders in trailers set off for Lake Keepit, the Goldsmith's via Armidale to visit friends and relatives as the front passed through. Gloucester had the last laugh however, with "Fred" Fiat having to be ignominiously towed backwards out of a bog in the caravan park by the park tractor before we could attach trailer and get on the road.

Lake Keepit airfield proved to be agreeably dry and we were warmly welcomed by mid-week manager and CFI, Ian Downes. It is an extraordinarily picturesque place to fly, with the lake, ranges and plains adding much variety and interest. The fertile Liverpool Plains to the south were, however, pooled with water, indicating that an outlanding anywhere maybe fraught with more than a little difficulty, therefore best avoided.

This had not prevented the refugees who preceded us from Gloucester, Arie van Spronssen and Phil Endecott doing some good cross country flying on the Wednesday while we were traveling down from Armidale.

On Thursday the Cu flourished and gave climbs to about 3500' AGL. The light wind on the ground made conditions very pleasant while a stronger westerly upstairs encouraged some streeting. David enjoyed almost an hour before coming down and for me to have another 42 mins of pleasant exploration.



"an extraordinarily picturesque place to fly"

Friday brought higher cloud bases and reliable climbs encouraged going further afield to have a look at Carroll and mooch along the Carroll Range. Some strong Cu over the range gave climbs to 5600' above Keepit, and an eagle showed me a good climb over the valley on the way home, not long after I had been assessing the paddocks for their outlanding potential (wet!). It was a thoroughly enjoyable tour of almost three hours, a lovely treat in mid winter!

On Saturday we had the pleasure of being launched by Harry Medlicott's dyneema cabled winch (previous launches had all been by aerotow). It delivered very smooth, powerful launches to about 1900/2000' AGL in the light wind conditions that prevailed on the day. David enjoyed a flight of 1 hour 16 mins with climbs up to 3700 AGL before he handed GEA over to me to indulge in a last flight of 25 mins before landing to derig for the trip home.

The sky on Sunday looked pretty good as we drove South and we mused over whether we had done the right thing to derig. An attempt to fly as far as possible would have been fun . . . but then . . . it was a bit wet around the place. There is always next year. We had a great time, the company was fantastic, the weather definitely warmer than at home, and we had all that wonderful soaring to boot!

Anyone interested in a 2011 winter wander?

MY BOOMERANG WONT COME BACK

By Doug Vanstan
From Australian Gliding, May, 1963

A phone call from Laurie Harrison on Friday evening to inform me that he and Dave Rees would be up early next morning to rig the Grunau for me to have another attempt at 5 hours duration for Silver C was received with mixed feelings as I had sheep yarded to be dipped on Saturday morning and also I seem to be jinxed on 5 hour attempts.

Saturday I was up at 5.15 am and began work at 5.45, the weather was rather cool with a stiff SW wind.

After dipping the sheep, getting cleaned up and having a quick lunch I arrived at the airfield to find the Grunau ready to go. Feeling a bit guilty about not having done anything toward earning this flight I was airborne immediately. Oh for a gentleman's life! After fooling around for 5 minutes I was back on the ground waiting for another launch.

This time we were away with the vario showing 10 feet per second (fps) lift, rate of climb was u/s; time of takeoff was 12.45. At 4,500 feet we set course for Macedon being helped along by a good tailwind.

I had rather optimistically nominated a downwind 5 hours towards Benalla.

We used every thermal we found as we were over tiger country crossing the Great Dividing Range. At Mt Macedon we were low enough to be scratching around for slope lift, - unsuccessfully. Then we found a weak thermal and were able to drift further downwind to Hanging Rock, where a good one took us to 5000 feet. We were now abreast of Lancefield and set course again for Benalla.

Conditions were mediocre. Thermals were reached at low altitude due to solid sink, with red ball at the top of the tube – it was a case of press on at 50 mph and hope for another thermal before touching the grass. Pyalong was a small town with big houses, and a nice little thermal to 5000 feet soon put things back in perspective again.

Puckapunyal to Avenel was a struggle for we were crossing the Goulburn River area and lift was patchy. Here again we managed to drift away from this dead spot and at Euroa we were at the highest point of the flight with 6,700 feet on the clock. Wind direction had changed slightly to the south which gave a slight cross wind to contend with.

At Violet Town we were down to 3,500 hoping for just one more thermal to take us to Benalla. At this point I realised we had come about 100 miles, my first 100 – but the black and white Grunau had done it many times before. I was awakened from my daydreams by a solid kick in the seat and automatically began circling. We took this one all the way to 6,500 feet and now I could see Benalla clearly but was puzzled by the absence of gliders either in the air or on the ground. I concluded that they had all gone on cross country flights, so we decided to press on the Wangaratta climbing in 15-20 fps up – probably a wind shadow thermal – to 6,500 feet over Wangaratta. I now decided to try for Albury, but this was to be the last thermal for the day.

Nearing Chiltern I had a field picked out near a farmhouse but arrived with enough height to reach the racecourse further on, decided to go there instead, only to find a race meeting in progress. Not wishing to be attacked by hordes of people I landed in a small field clear of stock alongside the Chiltern Railway Station. The landing occurred at 1700 hours, flight duration 4 hours 15 minutes, distance 165 miles.

Three very tired members of the Boomerang Soaring Group returned to Bacchus Marsh at 03.30 am on Sunday.

Five hours anybody?

Fournier RF-4b moves to new home



Tim Kroger has purchased this beautiful RF4b from the United States. It was recently flown from Warring near Nagambie to it's new home at Bacchus Marsh.

*Best wishes for a
Merry Christmas and a
Happy New Year!*

We hope to see you at Bordertown!