

Vintage Times

Newsletter of Vintage Gliders Australia

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Membership \$20 due 30 June

Articles for Vintage Times are welcomed



HUNTER VALLEY VINTAGE RALLY A HUGE SUCCESS!

The Hunter Valley Easter Vintage Rally 2019 will go down as one of the best rallies held in Australia in recent times. With a spacious club owned airfield and excellent facilities, very strong support was provided by the club, who even vacated some hangar spots to make room for the old-timer gliders

.Enthusiastic management by Paul Dickson, assisted by Rob Moffat and club members and visitors, ensured that every need was taken care of. Many thanks to all for a wonderful week!

The rally facilities and launching were continued beyond Easter to the following weekend, encouraging visitors from afar to make the journey.



Peter Rundle and his ES56 Nymph

Among many members and visitors attending were, from Queensland Laurie Simpkins (Foka 5 GEF), Scott Johnson (BG-12A GAC), and Graeme Manietta (Cherokee II GNR). From Victoria were Bill Hughes (Bocian GQJ) Peter Raphael (Cherokee II GPR) and David and Jenne Goldsmith (ESKa6 GNB). From New South Wales were Phillip Brown (Cobra GHW), Boris Jovanovic (Central Coast Club Pilatus B4 GJV), Ron Kingston (K7 GQP), Dean Erby (Cherokee II GLU) Peter Rundle (Scheibe SF-27MA ZOT and ES-56 Nymph GHA), Rob Moffat (M200 GTG, Central Coast Club ASK-13 GTU), and Paul Dickson (Slingsby T51 Dart I7R IZO).



Scott Johnson's BG12A

Flying commenced on Good Friday with 20 flights. Generally, the weather was pleasant for the entire rally although a bit windy on the final Friday. Staying up was not difficult on most days, however heights to only about 5,000 feet, usually under nice cumulus, were available. Three vintage flights exceeded 100 km distance on OLC, with the overall total about 1,000 km.



The Slingsby T51 Dart 17R

Efforts to vie for the Easter egg prize for the best handicapped distance flight continued each day with spirited friendly rivalry despite the autumn weather. This caused the only land out during the rally, when Paul pushed it perhaps a little too hard in the beautiful Dart 17R. A safe outlanding at Whittingham and an aerotow retrieve saw him launch again for a good flight of over 100km, not quite enough to earn the egg though-that went to Laurie Simpkins in his Foka 5



Rob Moffat presents the Peoples Choice award for best restoration to Peter Raphael and Bill Hughes of the Bendigo Gliding Club for the Bocian restoration.

The Hunter Valley club had brought in an extra Pawnee from Bathurst club, so two tugs were available and the most flights, 48, were made on Sunday.

The mornings began with an operations and weather briefing in the clubhouse, followed by a presentation each day by one of those present to tell us the characteristics and unique history of his vintage glider. This was a most interesting addition to the normal rally procedure and was enjoyed by all.



Rob Moffat shares the M200

Flight operations were well organised with lots of help available to keep the two lines running at the launch point – coupled with the usual chin-wagging!



Laurie Simpkins in the Foka 5 ready to go!

When the gliders were packed away evening meals cooked by volunteers were ready in the clubhouse. Extra activities after dinner included a talk on Paul's Slingsby Dart, a history of the Rathmines Flying Boat base, and a presentation about the 2019 International Vintage Rally at Stendal, Germany and the Wassekuppe and other Museums. A trivia night brought much jocularity on Saturday night!

Overall the rally was lot of fun and we will certainly be including the Hunter Valley Gliding Club Easter Vintage Rally in the calendar for next year!



More fabulous photos can be seen at this website:-

https://www.flickr.com/photos/phillip_browns_photo_stream/sets/72157708085048395/

Coming events:-

Vintage Gliders Australia Melbourne Cup Vintage Rally at Bacchus Marsh, 2nd to 5th November 2019 Contact David Goldsmith on 0428 450 475.

Australian Gliding Museum AGM and Open Day at Bacchus Marsh Sunday 3rd November 2019 at 10 am. Contact Graeme Barton, Secretary, on 0407 773 872.

Australian Gliding Museum minor wood repair course 6 to 9th November 2019.

Fabric covering course 10 to 13th Nov. 2019

Materials Provided, course fee \$450

Airfield accommodation available.

Contact Jim Barton 0419562213

Vintage Gliders Australia Annual Rally

Members and friends are invited to the annual Vintage Gliders Australia Rally at Bordertown airfield from 5th to 11th January 2020. Social and flying activities will ensure a fun time for all. Winch launching will be provided. Further details are available from VGA President John "JR" Marshall 0407 417 747



In the Eagle's Realm

By Hal Hopkins

Is there a better way of spending a fine afternoon than cruising around at 5000 feet, looking at the wonderful landscape below? Where the creeks and rivers run, the roads and rails, the hills and dales, and just why the towns are where they are? Even seeing how the farmers work their ground, what's arable and will take the plough and where the soils are thin on the hillsides and suitable only for grazing.

I took my first glider ride in 1966 with a winch-launched Slingsby Sedbergh at Dunstable Downs in England. Fascinating, but all too short. At 800 feet in the open cockpit Sedbergh, you could hear the cattle lowing and the dogs barking! I'd finally escaped from Melbourne University with an engineering qualification and accepted a cadetship with a British company that had branches in Australia. So, I was living in Hertfordshire, and Dunstable was just 20 miles away by village buses, changing in St Albans market square.

But the cost! It was painfully clear that my princely salary of £1100 per annum would not support bad habits like gliding. There always seemed to be a fair bit of month left at the end of the money! My two years in England stretched to three – but then I needed a proper job – either stay in Britain or return home. The Australian company offered me a job in Sydney with a salary that was 2.5 times that in the UK at then prevailing conversion rates, and an average temperature that was plus 15 °C on the North Yorkshire numbers! Slithering through the snow to work was not great entertainment! Life offers up difficult decisions at times – but that was not one of them.

Moving to Sydney, I soon discovered the nearest gliding was at Camden Airfield, about an hour away. Time for another go! Georg Detto took me up in the ES52b – Southern Cross Club's Longwing Kookaburra. Aerotow plus ES52b plus Georg gave a much longer and more interesting flight. I signed up for more!

When I was an early solo pilot, the Club had a long weekend away at Carrick, just North of Goulburn. I had the honour of flying the 90 minute aerotow, taking the Ka7 down with

Casey van Dyke in the back seat, behind the Super Cub with Chris Colton in charge. The early and later parts of the journey offered plenty of landing out possibilities but the middle section was 'tiger country' heavily wooded with few small and rough paddocks. We also trailered our Blanik and Ka6 down by road.

Eventually we arrived at the Carrick field, a 100ha triangular paddock owned by a farmer member. The western border was marked by the mainline Goulburn - Sydney railway and the southern end by a low range of wooded hills broken by a pass the railway went through. Among many questions, we wanted to know where the reliable local thermals were. Our new Carrick friends informed us the range on the northern side of the railway was good and there were a couple of wedge-tailed eagles living there. "We often fly with them, they're friendly and they show us the way!"

Next day, a couple of us launched in the Blanik, and of course, headed across the railway for the northern range. In minutes we saw the eagles – just dots above the horizon – they were circling, so over we went. In minutes, they were well above us – just tiny specks. Then one of the dots got even smaller before growing rapidly. He'd folded his wings and was diving on us! Just a few metres above the canopy – Pop!!! – out went the wings and we watched in amazement as he did a backwards somersault and disappeared behind us. Neither of us was confident the Blanik had ever passed the 'frozen chicken test' and here was nearly 7 kg of blood and bone, muscle and feathers attacking us!

Discretion being much the better part of valour and a more certain road to a long life. We high-tailed it out of there and found our own thermals.

Years later, my job took me back to Melbourne and I transferred to gliding at the Gliding Club of Victoria at Benalla. One fine day, the diminutive 13 metre ES59 Arrow was idle with nothing to do. I could have it for an hour or so of local soaring. So off I went, initially scratching about in weak conditions near the airfield. There must be somewhere nearby with better lift. What about the Lurg

Hills? The afternoon sun was beaming on their western slopes and those soils look dry and thin, so I headed over. Soon a wedge-tailed eagle could be seen soaring over the ridge, so there must be lift there.

He was doing lazy left-hand turns – I prefer right – but he was in first so that's the direction today. And immediately – up went the vario to 4 knots – that's much, much better. His turns were tighter than mine and he was soon far above. But then, the little dot shrank as the wings came in, then grew very rapidly as he dived. Oh! Oh! A similar performance but without the backwards somersault this time. Nevertheless, he missed by only a metre or so, and where has he gone? Surely the ES59 has never passed the 'frozen chicken test' either, so I'd better be careful.

What's that scratching noise? He's landed on the starboard wing tip and is scrambling in. Hey, that's only 1.5mm ply out there – take care with those razor-sharp talons of yours! And he's a very big bird, maybe 2.5 m span, big

even with the wings 3/4 folded. And the huge bill, opening and snapping shut like a hydraulic bolt-cutter. Angry too, with a great yellow eye absolutely glowing with rage.

Time to be out of there. Full right rudder, stick to the right front quarter, a fast diving roll and off he goes. And so do I, in the general direction of away.

Australia has a lot of soaring birds, the water birds especially. Pelicans in the lower Coorong think nothing of a 90km commute for morning tea or brunch and a cruise home in the evening. The thing Pelicans hate, is having to flap their big wings. Ibis too, can often be found in North East Victoria soaring in large flocks to 8000 feet or higher. But they are shy, and will move off if you try and join them.

The big eagles are wonderful soarers and can spend the day on the wing. While excellent thermal markers, they need to be treated with regal respect when in their kingdom.

VINTAGE GLIDERS AUSTRALIA

2019 ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS DUE 1.7.2019

\$20

Name _____ e-mail _____

Address _____ P/C _____

Phones (H) _____ (M) _____ (W) _____

Payment Options:

1. I have deposited \$ _____ into VGA Westpac **BSB 033 624 Account 176 101** *and emailed payment advice to ruthpatching@hotmail.com along with any new contact details.*

OR

2. I enclose *this form plus cheque/money order* to value of \$ _____ to Vintage Gliders Australia and posted to: **Ms R Patching, 50a Angus Ave, Altona North, VIC, 3025**

I have included \$ _____ to buy _____ raffle tickets at \$2 each (prizes to be announced)

I would be happy to receive **VINTAGE TIMES** by email only **Yes** **No**

I am happy for my details to appear in a VGA member's directory **Yes** **No**

I own/have a share in the following glider(s):

Thanks for your prompt renewal