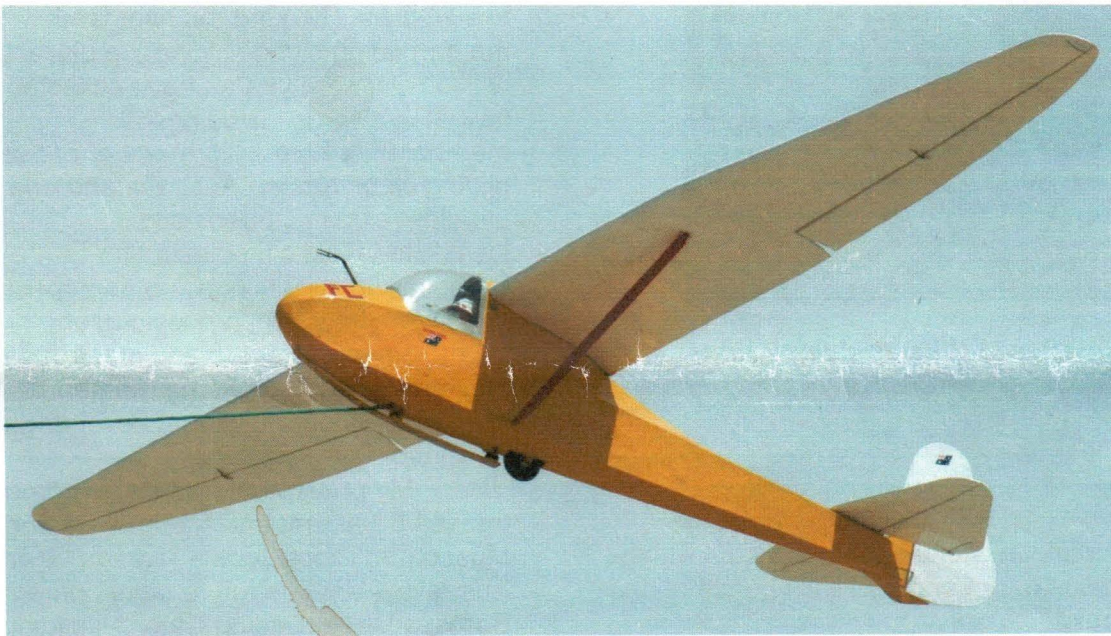


Vintage Times

Our 100th Issue! October 2005

Newsletter of Vintage Gliders Australia

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PETER BROOKMAN PHOTO

AUSTRALIA'S OLDEST AIRWORTHY GLIDER THE GOLDEN EAGLE FIRST FLEW ON 26TH September, 1937

Our 100th Issue features stories from some of those personalities who have contributed to Vintage Gliders Australia over the years. We also feature Martin Schempp and his contribution to gliding on the 100th anniversary of his birth, and we visit the 2005 International Vintage Sailplane Meet at Harris Hill, Elmira, New York.

In the newsletter that was to become "VINTAGE TIMES" Issue number one, February 1978, our founder, Kevin Sedgeman, concluded:-

"IN THE MEANTIME, REMEMBER THAT VINTAGE GLIDING DEFINITELY HAS A MEANING FOR A LOT OF PEOPLE, AND YOUR CONTRIBUTION IS A VALUED ONE".

Words from the past that have no less meaning today! In this, our 100th issue, we are delighted to feature "Recollections", a candid look at Kevin's life from his own pen!

RECOLLECTIONS



A letter to Cilla and Jerry Rim, FROM Kevin Sedgeman

Dear Jerry,

It is Friday afternoon at the airfield in Stonefield - not a soul within miles of me and it's really peaceful and quiet.

Firstly, Jerry, you are not the first old friend to request such information from me. It has always been easier for me to be hands on working among the people I love - be it building airfields or aircraft - hangars or organizing flying type people. The gliding fraternity has existed for me all my life from 1936 onwards, all over Australia, Europe and America. I have

been to meet people in Europe and America who have opened many doors for me, that most people can only read about in books. I have been ever so lucky and have so many wonderful friends in the flying world. Gliding has kept me active and reasonably fit for nearly 84 years as to fly was all I ever wanted to do anyway, from my earliest childhood memories. My first working tool was a pocket knife and I was teaching 5 to 6 year olds how to shape plain bark into aeroplanes.

My present day situation is controlled mainly by visits to doctors and hospitals. Fortunately for me I have a gold card due to my war service and I have that card to thank for being alive today. I certainly would not be able to afford all the attention I get. Vet Affairs have been wonderful to me over the last three years. As fast as one problem is taken care of, another pops up almost immediately it seems.

Once one reaches their use by date maintenance cost really blow out. I still get to fly my "Sunbird" several times a month and I fly ultralights out of Stonefield to visit places around the river land, mainly gliding clubs around the place.

Over the years I have collected a few GFA awards including life membership. I am a life member of five gliding clubs around Australia and one ultralight club in Queensland. I was Stonefield's first instructor to Barossa Valley Gliding Club and spent most of my time when possible, on location in my caravan, and managed to make myself useful. At the moment several of us are building a new hangar on site for three aircraft.

My present interests are promoting the establishment of a National Gliding Museum at Point Cook - Vintage Gliders Australia - and the future development for Barossa Valley Gliding Club. All gliding clubs in Australia are having membership problems. There are some clubs with more gliders than members. GFA stats I believe have dropped from over 7000 members to under 4000 members today.

For me today great inner satisfaction comes in the form of the many past students thanking me for the influence I have had on their lives. I may

have put a lot into gliding in my lifetime, Jerry, but I also have received a lot out of it, for which I am very grateful.

My friend Keith Jarvis has built 13 aircraft in his lifetime – I call him Australia's silent achiever. His design ability is a great credit to him and his workmanship, especially in woodwork on aircraft is the best I have ever seen. For me he has been a mentor and we have done many things together over the years.

He has never been an instructor or active in club activities, so is not very well known generally but in my case being an instructor for over 50 years has given me much more exposure. My main ambition was to be able to give people the opportunity to learn to fly – to get as much pleasure as I did – and there are many that have, it seems.

I have enjoyed building aircraft, I have enjoyed flying aircraft.

And most of all the wonderful people I have met along the way.

So for now Jerry I must end this letter and hope you will wade through it okay.

Many thanks again for your interest, would really love to see you again – so would lots of others here in Adelaide.

Principal Activities in Retirement :-

I retired after selling up my company, after putting in 29 years of my life; but I enjoyed it up until my first wife died of heart failure, then I looked awhile for a buyer to allow me to retire. I worked full time to complete my 53 foot river cruiser in 1981 after seven years work. It replaced my previously built wood Hartley 18 foot half cabin cruiser, and was destroyed by fire on board after nine years – spent mainly on the Murray.

I took on part time work with an Adelaide engineering firm and was sent over to Hong Kong to set up a display stand for our products in preparation for the World Trade Fair.

In 1983 I was approached by John Pope to become part of the Southern Cross Replica Team.

I couldn't start work quick enough, and worked full-time until the test flight in 1987. We then flew around Australia and Tasmania to replicate some of the Kingsford-Smith historic flights.

During 1981-82 period I was approached by Adelaide Festival Theatre to see if I would be interested in the job of Production Engineer for the production of the set for the proposed rock opera "Evita". A great learning curve for me over about 30 months. Everyone enjoyed it and loved the credits and the people I met, Andrew Lloyd Webber being one of them. The set had to be able to be used in three Australian state locations.

In 1983 I represented Australia in Switzerland for the World International Glider Rally.

Chris Wills lent me his "Rhon Sperber" to take from England and over two months introduced me to people in England, Germany and Holland and friendships are still maintained.

I went to Oskosh Airshow in 1980 and 1985 and in 2000 Oshkosh and the International World Vintage Glider meeting at Elmira. A team of five from Australia took with us the Golden Eagle and we showed it at Oshkosh after Elmira.

I visited the USA for Sun Fun Air Show in 1990 and again in 1996.

I moved to QLD. in 1989 after wrapping up The Southern Cross, and joined the Far North Queensland Soaring Centre as an instructor again.

In 1990 I started building Sunbird and in 1993 first flew it and joined the Far North Queensland Ultralight Association.

In 2002 I returned permanently to South Australia again and found myself being welcomed and re-established at the Barossa Valley Gliding Club. Now as you know Jerry I even have the airfield named after me.

These last two pages are a rapid attempt to fill in some of the blank spaces in my letter. Maybe these notes may answer some of your questions.

Regards, Kevin Sedgeman

REGIONAL RALLY
AT BENDIGO
29th Oct to 1st Nov, 2005



THE COMFORTABLE CLUBHOUSE

There has been considerable interest shown in the Regional rally at Bendigo Gliding Club, Raywood, over the four days of the Melbourne Cup Weekend. A number of Victorian members have indicated their plans to attend, and Wal Stott with some family members from as far away as Lake Keepit Soaring Club may be bringing his Ka6. Also Leigh Bunting may bring his GB2. The rally is to be run along informal lines without tasks being set, unless requested by those attending on a daily basis. It is a perfect opportunity to brush up on flying and crosscountry skills early in the summer season, and to enjoy a few days in wonderful soaring country. The Bendigo club hold a coaching course for cross country flying at that time, and it is expected that our activities will fit in well with the course. During the day the local area should be relatively quiet while the course members are flying their tasks. Catering will be provided by the club's members and their families, winch launches are available and two tow-planes will be present. The club has an excellent clubhouse and good hangarage facilities, with some hangarspace available for the visiting gliders.

The airfield is located 5 km East of Raywood in flat country ideal for gliding. The weather should have warmed up by then and good flights are to be expected. This gives our members a wonderful opportunity to dust off the winter chills and get into practice early for some great summer gliding! Lots of local attractions are within easy reach and Bendigo is just down the road. Camping on the field is

available and there are many local hotels and motels.

Mark the dates in your calendar and prepare for a great time. For further details and updates please contact Dave Goldsmith. Thanks are due to the Bendigo Gliding Club for supporting VGA over the weekend.

BORDERTOWN 2006
VGA Annual Rally
7th to 15th January 2006

RECENT CONTACT with the Bordertown-Keith Gliding Club has confirmed that preparations are in full swing for this summer's annual rally. Some building work on the clubhouse should make some more space in the kitchen and bar area, and club members are looking forward to the event. Keith Nolan will be offering a wooden aircraft repair course during the rally – see VT page 12. We are hoping for some new participants this year after the great time had by all last year.

We look forward to seeing all those who can make it. If you can, please give Ian Patching an indication of your intention to come.

NEW MEMBERS

We would like to welcome the following new members to Vintage Gliders Australia:-

Aaron Stroop, Rhodes, NSW (H17, T21)

Barry Van Wickevoort, IL, USA (Ka6)

Albert Uster, MD, USA (Moswey III)

Jeff Byard, CA, USA (Bowlus BA-100
Baby Albatross, Schweizer TG-2)

Ed Golden, IL, USA

Ken Ueyama, Yokohama, Japan (T21,
Olympia)

Geoff Moore, UK

Ian Dunkley, UK/NZ

Bill Johnston, Melton, VIC

Dean Kramer, PA, USA (Frankfort
Glider B)

ALICE SPRINGS - 1954



By Doug Cole

Arriving in Alice Springs early in 1954 with a new job lined up, I looked forward to some flying with the local gliding club, still in it's infancy, with the promise of some great flying conditions, as you would expect in Central Australia.

Having learnt to glide down south at the Adelaide Soaring Club based at Gawler, I soon settled in, and got to know the boys at the club. A T-31 was used as the club trainer, and as they were short on for instructors I was checked out and helped in this department, and I managed to get a few people started. The airfield we used was known as the Townside Strip, which was the home base for Connellan Airways, serving most of the cattle stations and towns throughout the Northern Territory, a huge area. The field was only about a 3 minute drive from the centre of town, so was pretty close in. Today it's all built on with housing etc. The club also had a Grunau Baby and a Gull 1, at the time, and we did all our launching by auto tow, which worked pretty well. When a north wind was up and going, it was possible to ridge soar along the McDonnell Ranges that ran along the southern edge of town. It gave the boys some steady flying, and great ridge soaring practice. On a good day when the thermals were active it was a case of hang onto your hat, mate, - yeah, awesome, one launch and stay up all day!

I started building a Jumbuck single seater, a 10 meter span glider designed by Keith Jarvis down in Adelaide. My job took up a lot of time and things were a bit slow in the building department. I found it a bit of a struggle to get materials and all the bits and pieces you need to finish off a glider and get it into the air – being pretty isolated didn't help.

One of the local boys decided to buy Kev Sedgeman's Jumbuck, and bring it up from Adelaide. It proved to be a good performer in the local conditions, and being a small light weight glider you could take it out and launch off any open area. On some days we'd take it about 40 km up the Darwin Road, and auto tow it right off the highway. Things could get pretty exciting when ready to launch, and in the distance a road train would appear – yeah, good fun. Try doing that today, lock you up and throw away the key!

I didn't get to complete the Jumbuck, and left it for the boys at the club to finish off – the last I heard about it, was that it was badly damaged after bouncing off the trailer in transit out to a cattle station, so the story goes.

I always believed in the real potential for record breaking flights in Central Australia, with good back up and the right aircraft it was just waiting to be done. Not many years later my little theory proved to be right, and is now a part of history.

Ah, them were the days!

OLYMPIA AND T21 COMING TO AUSTRALIA



New member Ken Ueyama with his Olympia. He is also bringing a T21. The aircraft will probably be based at Tocumwal, arriving late in October.

Martin Schempp

a life dedicated to soaring

23th March 1905 – 9th July 1984

"To his 100th. birthday anniversary"

BY PETER SELINGER

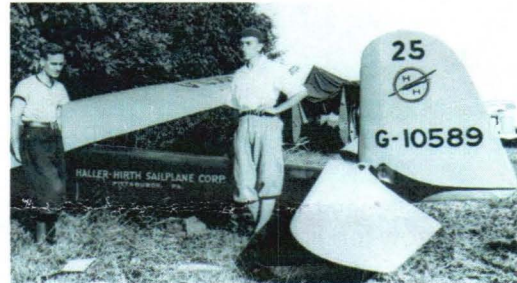


Martin Schempp in the cockpit of the Gö2, tandem 2-seater of 1935

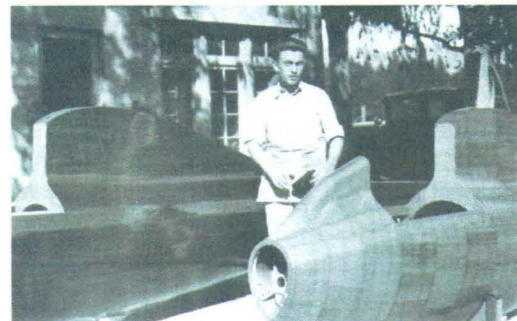
March 23 this year Martin Schempp would have been 100 years old, a worthy anniversary to remember him on. No sailplane is named after him, but many famous sailplanes wouldn't have been built in series without him, such as the "Minimoa" and the Gö IV in pre-war times, as well the Standard Austria, the Cirrus and later designs from Klaus Holighaus, beginning again 45 years ago. Also, Martin Schempp was an important soaring pioneer in the United States, where he lived from 1926 to 1934, with a few interruptions visiting Germany. His glider licence is no.23 in the US (1931) and has been signed by Orville Wright himself with an ink pen. On 14th November 1932 he received the silver badge no 8. (!!!) for two soaring flights using thermals in the United States, the first silver badge performed in America and outside Germany. BTW America's first silver badge soarer is Jack O'Meary (No.12, 10th June 1933) the best known soaring pilot there in those years.

A public lecture by Charles Lindbergh in 1928 initiated Martin Schempp's love for aviation.

Since 1929, when Martin Schempp finished his pilot's licence course in Germany in the Klemm-Flugschule, he lived for soaring and sailplane building. Together with Wolf Hirth he imported German sailplanes into the US, built them under licence at the East Coast in the Haller-Hirth Sailplanes Inc. and transferred his soaring knowledge as chief instructor for the company.



Martin Schempp flying the Schloss Mainberg for the Haller-Hirth Sailplanes in 1930/31



Martin Schempp in California working for Hawley Bowlus' sailplane production (Photo courtesy Raul Blacksten, VSA)

Beginning in 1932 he helped Hawley Bowlus to realize those designs in California. When in 1934 there was no chance for him to continue employment in the States, he returned to Germany, becoming soaring instructor at the Hornberg gliding center, which was headed by Wolf Hirth. On January 4th he founded the Sportflugzeugbau Göppingen, which, in 1938 was renamed Schempp-Hirth and moved to Kirchheim/Teck. Yes, that famous sailplane manufacturer, still existing today and still and one of the very few global players and market leaders in sailplanes for competition and record flying, and advanced instruction and training.



The Minimoa in Germany with the soaring Club Aventoft, close to the German-Danish border

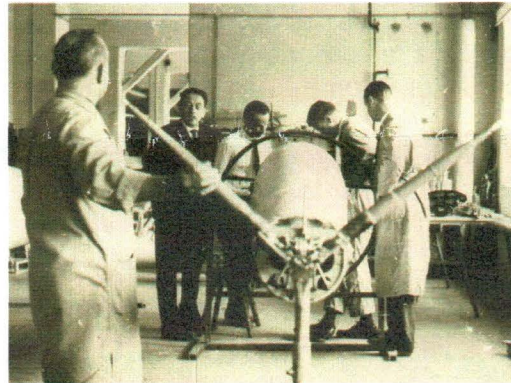
In the first years, before WW.II, Martin Schempp built Wolf Hirth's sailplane designs, firstly the training glider Gö 1 Wolf, but very soon the very famous Minimoa, with its gull-like wing shape, still so appreciated today. Martin Schempp installed a very efficient production organisation, so Schempp-Hirth could produce high performance sailplanes in numbers unknown before. 100 Wolf were produced in 3 years, 100 Minimoa in four, and some others in between, including the production start of the Gö 4 side-by-side 2-seater and few Habicht aerobatic gliders.



In 1941 Wolf Hirth (right) and Martin Schempp could celebrate the 100th side-by-side 2-seater Gö 4, here at Nabern gliderfield near Wolf Hirth's factory

During WW.II Schempp-Hirth and Wolf Hirth produced test bed parts for Dornier and large series for Messerschmitt Me 321 and Me 109. As in all production facilities in Germany during the war, Schempp-Hirth had to employ some hundred workers from Eastern countries, mostly from Russia, to be paid to the

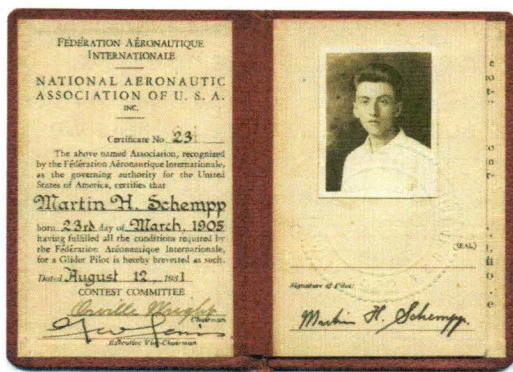
German government. But with extremely high risk for his own life he tried to improve their living conditions and often he succeeded, as those workers would later tell to the Allied officials. After the end of the war the American troops made him Lord Mayor of Kirchheim/Teck for 6 months until the first free elections. Soon the Schempp-Hirth company started production of strongly missed products for living and homes with the remains of aircraft materials.



With the Standard Austria S (S for Schempp-Hirth), in 1961, Schempp-Hirth started again in sailplane series production (Photo courtesy SG Olten via Daniel Steffen)

When in 1951 Germany was allowed to practice soaring again, Martin Schempp left the sailplane market for Wolf Hirth. After the tragic death of Wolf Hirth he initiated a restart with the OSTIV-prize winner of 1960, the v-tailed Standard Austria. And he ensured the future of Schempp-Hirth into the composite era with the employment of Klaus Holighaus, one of the famous designer group of the innovative Akaflieg Darmstadt D 36 "Circe" composite sailplane. Holighaus started in 1965, soon Cirrus, Nimbus, Standard Cirrus and Janus would achieve their great success and appreciation in the soaring world. In three steps (1972, 1974 and 1977) Klaus Holighaus took over the entire responsibility of the Schempp Hirth company.

After a severe illness Martin Schempp passed away on July 9th, 1984. He never was a sailplane designer, but he has been an organizer and producer who combined efficiency and humanity at a level we should follow every day!



Martin Schempp's US glider licence

Unless otherwise listed, the pictures are courtesy of the Schempp family or Peter F. Selinger and the Selinger collection.

Thank you to our member Peter Selinger for preparing this article for the 100th issue of Vintage Times.

2005/06 MEMBERSHIP FEES ARE NOW DUE

This year we are again running a VINTAGE TIMES raffle, and First Prize is Martins Simons' book **Sailplanes 1965-2000**. This wonderful book is the third in the series.

Titles are "**Sailplanes 1920-1945**"
"**Sailplanes 1945-1965**"
and "**Sailplanes 1965-2000**"

and they are available from:-

**Future Aviation Pty Ltd.,
10 Antigua Grove,
West Lakes, S.A. 5021**

Tel/Fax 08 8449 2871

e-mail eckey@internode.on.net

www.futureaviation.on.net

Current price for each book is \$108.90 incl GST + \$10 Postage & Handling. As Future Aviation Pty Ltd has shared with us the cost of providing this wonderful prize, please mention **Vintage Times!**
The ideal Christmas present!

Second Prize is "Born to Fly" by William Schweizer, signed by the author and donated by the Editors.

Third prize is "A Fine Week of Soaring", a DVD with Karl Striedieck, donated by Hans Prem at Elmira.

Tickets are only \$2 each – see your attached membership renewal form.

I.V.S.M.



ELMIRA, NY, USA 2005

IVSM 2005 Aussie Team Tour

Six representatives of Vintage Gliders Australia made the long journey to IVSM 2005, held at Harris Hill, Elmira, New York State, from 20th to 27th August, 2005.

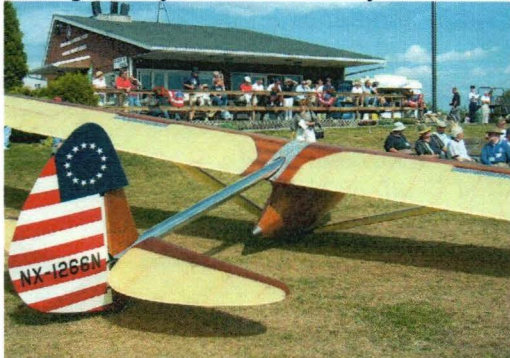
They were Alan and Lorna Patching, John Ashford, Dave and Jenne Goldsmith and Hans Prem. Apart from the Americans and Aussies present, there were visitors from Sweden, New Zealand, United Kingdom, Germany (Klaus Fey, Martin Simons' publisher, brought his SF-27A), Canada, Italy, the Netherlands and Japan.



VGA MEMBER ALBERT USTER AND MOSWEY

A wide variety of sailplanes were present, including Hutter 17, Bowlus BA-100 Baby Albatross, Slingsby Kirby Kite, Dart 17R, Capstan, Schweizer 1-26, 1-21, 1-23, 1-35, 2-22, Morelli M-200, Scheibe L-Spatz 3, SF-27A, Bergfalke 2-55, GB-2b, EoN Olympia 2b, Schleicher Ka-1, Ka-2b, Ka-6a, Ka-6b, Ka-6cr, Ka-6E, Ka-7, Ka-8b, Sisu 1a, Frankfort Glider B, Focke-Wulf Kranich III, Moswey III, and Franklin PS-2.

John Ashford had helped Jeff Byard tow his Baby Bowlus from California, a four day drive. After the rally John had to drive back alone as Jeff was called for flight duty with US Airways.



JEFF BYARD'S BOWLUS BABY ALBATROSS AT THE OPENING CEREMONY

For photos OF IVSM 2005, visit George Constantin's website at <http://photos.yahoo.com/goglidegood>

Launching on the short hill-top airstrip was done by Pawnees and Super Cubs. On most days, launching was into the North, which allowed immediate contact with the hill lift along the North-West face of the hill. Thermals to about 6,000 agl were available on most days, and conditions were very pleasant throughout the meet, except for the strong wind on the last day. The Elmira Regional Airport is only a few miles north of Harris Hill strip, but despite commuter airline jets arriving regularly, designated areas near the airport allowed gliders almost unrestricted use of the airspace required.



DEAN KRAMER'S FRANKFORT GLIDER B WITH THE KIRBY KITE
Operations were very well managed with morning met. briefings and good ground support provided mainly by the juniors, who enjoyed flights in the two-seaters. Landing gliders were quickly moved and occasional "rush-hours"

kept everyone on their toes! A golf buggy was put to good use, and everyone mucked in when needed. A check flight in a two-seater was required for all those who had not flown at Harris Hill in the last two years. A few pilots went cross-country, and staying up generally did not seem to be a problem much of the time. Prizes for appropriate daily achievements were given out at next morning's briefing.

Socials were organized on some nights. The culture night attracted local delights from each team's home state or country. The Aussie team presented fresh Vegemite sandwiches and Fosters beer, both of which were quite popular. Our T-shirts and stickers sold well, too. The Italian team presented a memorable Italian night, and Albert Uster's famous steak dinner was wonderful, with huge steaks of the melt-in-the-mouth variety! The wind-up dinner and awards banquet provided a fitting end to a wonderful week, and Alan Patching collected a wonderful stained glass GFA logo, a present from the Vintage Sailplane Association to the GFA. On behalf of the Aussie team John Ashford presented signed cardboard primary glider models to the other international teams present.



The National Soaring Museum right beside the airstrip provided lecture rooms and office headquarters for running the event. As well as a wonderful collection of gliders, including a Bowlus Albatross, Minimoa, Hutter 17, some Wright replica gliders and a special Schweizer display area, the museum has a great gift-shop with many items and books on sale. To see the website visit www.soaringmuseum.org Our group, some of whom are associated with the Australian Gliding Museum Inc, were delighted to spend time here, and I'm sure

that the AGM will benefit from the ideas gathered. The National Soaring Museum is certainly inspirational.



HARRIS HILL, ELMIRA, N.Y. AND THE NATIONAL SOARING MUSEUM.

During the week John Ashford, David and Jenne Goldsmith drove down to Washington, DC., to visit the Smithsonian's National Air and Space Museum and the Udvar-Hazy Center at Dulles Airport. Words just cannot describe these two museums, which are called "America's Hangar" and are the largest collection of air and space memorabilia in the world. In addition, the IMAX presentation on constructing the Space Station was worth the trip itself – perfect 3D a foot in front of your eyes! The Aussie visitors took particular note of the clever way that sailplane exhibits were featured throughout, in key positions and complementary to the other big-ticket displays. Our team also noted methods of supporting exhibits for maximum effect – and we even gave the building construction a once-over. Ah, if only WE had a US60 million dollar benefactor! Visit www.nasm.si.edu with links to the Air and Space Museum and the Udvar-Hazy Center at Dulles Airport, where you can even use the live cameras to see the exhibits! These websites are well worth having a browse around – they are amazing!

The Aussie team also visited the Glenn H Curtiss Museum at Hammondsport, not far from Elmira. This is a fascinating museum dedicated to a legendary aviator who was flying hot on the heels of the Wright brothers. Apart from being the "Fastest Man on Earth" by achieving

136 mph with a V8 motorcycle in 1907, he built the world's fastest aeroplane, capable of 46.5 mph, in 1909. He built many innovative land and sea planes, and the museum includes designs such as the JN4D "Jenny" and the Curtiss P-40 Kittyhawk. Curtiss-Wright built 28,000 aeroplanes between 1939 and 1946. The museum concentrates on the pre-WW2 era and allows visitors to spend time in their extensive workshop featuring wooden construction techniques.

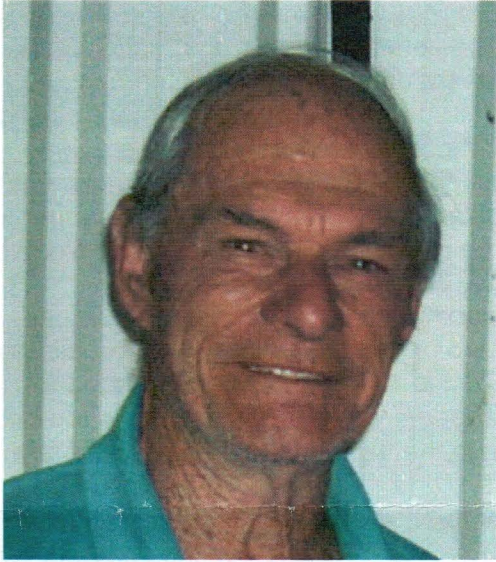


BARRY VAN WICKEVOORT'S Ka6A HAS A WINGSPAN OF ONLY 14.4 METRES

Hans Prem won a daily prize for a flight in a Schweizer SGS 1-26E from the Harris Hill Soaring Center (HHSC), a club glider, and the award was "for the youngest Australian male at the meeting - it's not often I get that award these days 😊 Just kidding, the award was for height, a sizzling 6,500ft QNH!" He kindly donated his prize to the VINTAGE TIMES raffle.

Overall, the team regarded the experience as well worthwhile despite the long travel times from Australia, the jet-lag etc. Jenne went from "never again!" to "maybe in another 5 years!" after only the first few days at Elmira! Friendships and contacts within vintage gliding worldwide were made and renewed. Fascinating sailplanes not normally seen in Australia were inspected and some were flown. Operations were experienced at the challenging hill-top site at Elmira, in close proximity to jet airline traffic and with aerotowing in high-tow exclusively. We also visited highly developed and user-friendly museums that provided a multitude of ideas to be considered for the future development of the Australian Scene. We would like to thank Vintage Gliders Australia and the Gliding Federation of Australia for their support for the Australian team to IVSM 2005.

A SEASON WITH THE Ka6



By Ralph "Feathers" Crompton

To say I was taken aback a little when asked would I do a report on my cross country flights in 1989/90, would be an understatement, but I said, "Yeah, OK, why not?"

However after further reflections I asked myself "why me? There are other pilots who have done and got better results to show than I had." I was beginning to think this report was not such a good idea after all. The next thing to cement these thoughts was "where and how do I start this report?", so I said "Why not at the beginning of the season", so here goes.

The first cross-country of any note was when I paid a visit to "The Lake Bonney Gliding Club" site near the edge of Lake Bonney. The surface is good with a rise near the eastern end. Bill Haby was happy to give me a winch launch after which I released at about 1300 feet. My task I declared was to Karoonda, Nildottie, Lake Bonney, total 251 k.

Even with the conditions marginal, I did not have too much trouble completing the task. For the record it was 28.10.89, time 4 hrs 18 mins., and highest height was 7,400 ft.

A week later I was lucky enough to do my first 300 km for the season. On the

morning of 4.11.89 conditions looked promising, so I declared Waikerie, Taplan, Stonefield Airfield Waikerie. When I launched, I found good conditions, but they were hard to centre and also broken, but nevertheless the lift was in the order of 700 fpm. Again I had no real problems to speak of and finished the task of 314 k in the good time of 4 hrs 43 mins.

Once again a week later, on Armistice Day, I managed a respectable flight of 250 k, time of 4 hrs 45 mins!! A little slow, but after releasing, I found things were not what they were cracked up to be, lift was rough and broken with a low inversion of around 3,500 ft. Nevertheless I decided to still do my task if I could. At first it was slow going, but slowly as the day wore on it became better and I managed to finish. Result read 11.11.89, time 4 hrs 45 mins, height 6,600 ft.

After another flight of 230 kms on the 20.11.89, I had a very good flight on 22.11.89 by doing my second 300 k. The task this time was Taplan, Karoonda, Nildottie, Waikerie. Conditions did not kick off until a little later than expected, however when I released, I found 500 fpm straight away and headed for my first turn point. This leg I did a good time, as soon as I turned for my second, I found an upper level wind stronger than expected, but conditions were very good, so much so, I was regularly recording 1,000 fpm lift.

After taking my turn point photo, I headed for my last turn point, and it was along this time that I noticed a wide band of high level dark cloud cover moving in. However I was still getting lift, so I pressed on, but as it turned out, it was a wrong decision. I arrived over my last turn point at 3,000 ft., took my photo and headed for home. It was also noted that the wind direction had changed and was now three quarters head on my left. Up to now progress had been good, but all that was about to change. Pressing on to beat the cloud cover behind, I found myself at 1,200 ft with still 50 km to go. I contacted the pie cart and gave them the picture. Shortly after, I contacted some broken and rough lift and worked it to the top of 4,100 and headed for home. After another near thing, I managed to get home. Result was

22.11.89, time 5 hr 37 mins, height 12,300 ft.

Two weeks later I was once again blessed with the good fortune of a third 300 km. A task of 350 k was declared Karoonda, Overland Corner, The Gums, Waikerie. Because of conditions becoming weaker, I decided to turn at Morgan instead, thus it ended up only 312 k, so the final results were 5.12.89, time 5 hr 26 mins, height 6,300 ft.

After some minor cross-countries, my fourth 300 k did not come until February of 1990. The task set and completed was Taplan, Karoonda, Morgan, Waikerie. It turned out a very good day, under set, with the possibility of 400 k being achieved. However the result read 12.2.90, time 5 hrs 44 mins, height 7,500 ft, distance 353 k.



Ralph in Ka6 GNB at Bordertown 2005

With the above thoughts still fresh in my mind, I decided next day to declare 400 k, this being my first attempt at this distance so far this season. Peebinga, Morgan, Wunkar, Waikerie. As it turned out due to unforeseen circumstances, I started later than expected, nevertheless I had a good run to both first and second turn points. Also while on track to the last turn point, however, I realized around this time that I was running out of day time. Things were getting weaker and weaker, I became aware then, that I was not going to be able to complete the task, so with only 2,500 ft on the clock and still 20-25 k short of Wunkar I reluctantly aborted and slowly made my way back to base. In this case the result ended up as follows, 13.2.90,

time 6 hr 5 mins, height 9,300 feet, distance 335 k.

A week later I arrived again after what was thought to be a good forecast, so I again decided to try for the more elusive 400 k, so declared the same previous task, but unfortunately it didn't turn out as promised. A low inversion put starting time back somewhat, however it did rise later on. Undaunted I set sail for Peebinga, but it was to Loxton before I could get above 3,500 ft and Peebinga at 4,500 ft. After I turned and headed for Morgan, I thought to myself, it is too late to do the full task, but I will try and turn there and return back to the airfield. After completing the said flight and putting the Ka6 away, I worked out the distance covered and was elated to find I had in fact done another 300 k, my sixth for the season. Result, 19.2.90, time 5 hr 25 mins., height 6,300 ft.

The season was not the best, but I was still disappointed at not doing at least one 400 k flight. However I was pleased to have ended up doing as many long flights as I had. Number of flights for the season 21, Time in the air 86 hours 29 minutes, distance flown 3,954 ks.

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4. Best Two seater.
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Got any interesting stories from the past year, let us know what's happening!

Ian Patching. Hon. Treasurer.