



The Vintage Glider Club of Great Britain

NEWSLETTER

Summer 1980 No. 36

This Newsletter follows hard on the heels of the previous one, at least by our standards, because we should like everybody concerned to have details in time for the forthcoming International Rally at Sutton Bank. Attendance will be high, and by all accounts, one can expect another highly successful gathering both from the social and the gliding points of view.

A most pleasant social gathering took place recently in a very congenial setting. This was the VGC's 8th Annual Dinner, which was held on the evening of 25th May at the White Hart Hotel, Lewes, near Brighton. Attendance was not very high, but sufficient to guarantee conviviality and good cheer. This was further sustained by the excellent quality of service and surroundings offered by the White Hart Hotel, a venue for quite a number of gliding functions.

Our member, Mr. Larkin took this opportunity to rig and display his large radio controlled flying model of the 1934 Bowlus DuPont Albatross, America's most beautiful sailplane. Mr. Larkin, previously a keen glider pilot, had seemingly been compelled to abandon this sport for family reasons and, instead, taken to building impressive models of old gliders using VGC drawings and photographs for reference. We thank him for having given those members who came to the Annual Dinner something rather special to admire that evening.

Among those present, Ken Crack, briefly in Britain before a hop to Nigeria, recalled in an after-dinner speech, how the VGC had got off the ground in 1973, and how this was made possible by Frances Furlong's willingness to become Secretary - for one year only. Seven years hence, our Secretary is still with us and this obviously means that she likes it!

During a brief Presentation Award (with the laureates being unfortunately absent), Chris Wills declared that the VGC's Restoration Cup was being awarded to Ken Fripp for his firm's magnificent Hütter H.17A. The Performance Cup was awarded to Derek Godfrey for his 274 km, 7-hour triangular flight in BGA 1297, a 1943 Swedish built JS Weihe. Rodi Morgan was offered a small model of a Rhönsperber in recognition of his restoration work. Rodi is pressing hard to get his historic Rhönsperber flying for the 8th International Rally. Finally, flowers were presented to Frances Furlong, and chocolates to Angela and Fred Porton for struggling with the Rally Secretaryship.

In his speech, Chris attributed the VGC's success to the steadfastness of its Secretary and to the enthusiasm of its members. He recalled the "calamities" of last year, but said the VGC would "continue to give steady direction to try to prevent them from happening again."

OTHER BRITISH NEWS

Ringmer. This airfield near Lewes is the site of the East Sussex Gliding Club. It was decided to hold a Rally there for three days (24-26th May) the last of which was to be a Club Open Day. Unfortunately, the weather for the whole of that week-end was not encouraging. Cloudbase was low and the sun almost never pierced through the persistent haze. Among the gliders lined up were Angela and Fred Porton's Grunau Baby/Eon Baby Hybrid (BGA 1409). This aircraft is composed of a mixture of British Grunau Baby components, some of which go back before the war. Its wings are those of an Eon Baby. Also to be seen were Rodi Morgan's Fauvette, a Jaskolka, a Ka 2, a Specht, an Eon Olympia and BGA 2372, an Olympia Eon 401, built in 1955 (and the second of two prototypes for the Olympia 419 series). This

aircraft has 15 m laminar flow profiled wings (of NACA 64 series section) fitted to an almost standard Eon Olympia fuselage. This glider, together with the Skylark 1, whose wing section adopted the NACA 63 series, was the first laminar flow wing sectioned machine in Britain. Both flew for the first time in 1954 and it was clear from the start that the Olympia 4, as it was originally called, had a very good performance and that its fuselage was strong enough to take much heavier laminar flow sectioned wings. Its wingspan was later increased to 17 metres. For years, this Olympia 401 had been part of the equipment of an RAF club in Cyprus. We are glad that it has been brought back to Britain where it is now in civilian hands and, we believe, for sale.

Relevant references to this Olympia series can be found in Norman Ellison's book "British Gliders and Sailplanes 1922-1970". It is stated that the Olympia 4 was converted from the standard Eon Olympia and flew in 1954. The Olympia 401 had a square cut rudder and elevator. It seems to have first flown in 1955. The Olympia 402 had been converted to a 17 m wingspan, and was destroyed during the 1956 World Championships at St J'en, France. Its pilot, Bill Ivans (USA), was badly injured.

These were the three prototypes of the Olympias 403, 419 and 415 of 1957 and 1958. All three prototypes had only slightly modified Eon Olympia fuselages.

The poor weather at Ringmer did not allow members of the VGC to enjoy very good flying. This was more than made up by the hospitality of the local club's members and, in particular, the welcome offered inside Billie Caldwell's and Rodi Morgan's dormobile.

A Grunau Baby that has come a long way

From Mr. K. N. Harris, of Eynsham, Oxford, we hear of a restoration project which goes to prove that gliders are rather like children: the amount of care and fondness bestowed on them is not necessarily related to their brilliance and qualities. In 1936, Fred Coleman of more recent Harbinger fame, managed to build a Grunau Baby in the bedroom of his lodgings in Gately, Manchester. As he didn't have much space, he had to build each wing spar in two halves and join them later together with bolted metal plates. The final result was a Grunau Baby 2A fuselage with 1A wings. This machine was originally deprived of aileron differential movement, landing wheel, wing spoilers and air brakes. It had a cable running from the top of each fuselage-wing strut to the nose and only a nose cable release hook. This aircraft became in turn the property of the Lancashire Gliding Club, the London Gliding Club, the Oxford Gliding Club (Kidlington), the RAFGSA at Bicester and Halton, and then came into the care of the Upward Bound Trust at Haddenham. During its full life, it had been blown over and broken several times. At Kidlington, its absolute record launch height had been 800 ft, but it was thought that the aircraft should be able to soar because of its light weight. After its last accident, its present owners decided to rebuild the fuselage and then the wings. As they could not find any drawings at first, they worked by measuring the old remains. Two sets of drawings eventually arrived, but they were quite different. However, the result of these valiant efforts was the creation of a virtually new Grunau Baby 2A of which only the tailplane and some of the fittings are original. Let's hope that this new machine will display some of the spirit of the veteran from which it sprang - the spirit of service to the last ditch!

The original Grunau Baby had the BGA registration 277 but during the 60s, for some unknown reason, this was changed to BGA 270. The glider is now waiting to be allocated a new BGA number.

"Per Ardua ex Gallia"

We've received the following account of a rescue operation to save a Vintage glider in France by our member John Mead. It will be seen that such trips across France are not without difficulties, but what an adventure!

"I'd just saved enough for a share in the Capstan (both the children like to fly) when the VGC newsletter arrived containing many ads for two-seaters for sale in France. A glance at the 'Tourist Rates' in the Telegraph showed that these aircraft were being almost given away.

"Study of ferry brochures and French road-maps revealed that it was just possible, for the money available, to get the C.801 (a side by side two-

seater similar to the T.46) from Buno-Bonneveau, about 50 miles SSW of Paris; provided I took a 24-hour ferry return and early - 4 a.m. - crossings. It was possible but still somewhat daunting. I'd never driven on the continent, hadn't spoken French for twenty years since O level, hadn't towed a glider trailer and, in fact, hadn't got a trailer. The French very much regretted that they no longer had a trailer. I bid for the Bristol Club's T21 trailer - and was gazumped!

"In July I obtained the skeletal remains of an old flatbed and set about teaching myself to arcweld bediron reinforcements and fittings. The fittings had to be adjustable since my request to the club at Buno apparently got lost in the postal dispute; so, despairing of ever hearing from them again, I took my courage in both hands and phoned them - hooray for international dialling. I was fortunate enough to speak to M. Edouard Simon - an old friend of Chris Wills - and arranged to collect the aircraft early in September.

"As the trip was to involve over 800 miles in two days, I planned on having three drivers in the party, but when the time came we mustered two and one non-driver - all instructors from 634 ATC Gliding School at St Athan whence we departed at 6.30 on a Sunday evening, scheduled out of Dover at 4.30 a.m. on Monday.

"My co-driver, Chris, was navigating on the first leg and decided to throw me into trailering at the deep end off the M4 and straight on through Central London and onto the A2. Shortly before the M2 a weld failed at the top of the kingpost. We now had our first experience of drilling bediron with a hand drill and none too sharp a drill bit. We reached Dover at 1 a.m. expecting to check in and then get three hours' sleep. Not so, we were marshalled into a line of vehicles and at sea by 1.35.

"At the exit from the ferry terminal at Calais is a roundabout with a sign to the right in very large letters PARIS - must be the way to the autoroute (motorway) I thought, having taken over as nav. After a few km, it became obvious that we were on the old road, but as we were making good time we threw out the planned route chart and map read round Paris past Creil, where two Mirages nearly blew us off the road after a touch and go, south to Melun then south-west to Buno arriving at mid-day.

"We were met by M. Simon who whisked us off to lunch followed by a conducted tour of the beautiful Essonne Valley arriving back at the site at 3 o'clock! At last we got to the hangars and there among Nimbus, ASW 20, M 200, Breguet 901, Air 100 (being rebuilt) was my C 801 derigged (fortunately) and dusty in the corner. With M. Simon and a willing band of club members we adjusted and loaded the trailer and were ready to set off at 5. Between the hangar and the club house our bolted repair failed again and it took two-and-a-half hours of drilling, bolting and Gallic shoulder-shrugging to get us going again. No time now for anything but a direct run up the autoroutes; all went well until we entered the Boulevard Peripherique - a three lane urban motorway with no hard shoulder - no place to break down so we limped our way round to a rest area on the A1 just north of Charles de Gaulle airport. Nine o'clock, dark and an even blunter drill, but perseverance and two large G cramps fixed it. So onwards northbound at a steady 40 mph trying to reach Calais by 4 a.m. By midnight we were having to do twenty-minute stints driving as that was all we could manage before the mesmerising white lines had us dropping off. We made Calais at 2 o'clock but it took over half an hour to find our way through a conflicting maze of signs to reach the ferry with an hour to spare.

"We all breathed a sigh of relief as we rolled off the boat at Dover, even though we were kept to the back of the line to go through HM Customs. Here I caused some consternation to the young officer when he realised that it really was the glider that I wished to declare, and that its cost was less than the duty-free 'other articles' allowance. However, after a consultation with his 'dad' from the back office we were duly cleared.

"Given the trailer's record to date, we bypassed London to the South and headed for the M4 near Heathrow. The trip was then uneventful until we were clearing the Severn Bridge when a puncture on the trailer cost us nearly an hour, but that was the end of our troubles and we arrived at St

Athan at 6.30 just 48 hours after we left, exhausted but delighted to be back!

"I heard later from Edouard Simon that after we left Buno the club members organised a rescue party - just in case!

"Would I do it again? Well if the Air 100 were offered at the right price and we had a RELIABLE trailer ... That was all six months ago, since when I have been scrounging bits and seeking information for the restoration - my thanks in particular to Rodi Morgan and François Nuville for their answers to my letters. I hope that the Caudron will fly this year."

Glider News

A special 1944 Grunau Baby 2B-2, with a longer than normal span (14 metres) is now kept at the London Gliding Club under new ownership. BGA 1910, whose previous owners included the late Derek Murray, and David and Mary Squires, is still in its original form. It was one of the few Grunau Baby 2Bs (108-49 B-2s) built by Flugzeugbau Petera, which was not standard. It soars remarkably well, as was ascertained by one of its new owners, Andrew Humphries, who took it on a Silver C cross country to Newmarket, reaching over 6,000 ft. The indications are that he reached his Silver C height during that flight. Andrew now intends to complete his Silver C with 5 hours over Dunstable making use of hill lift if necessary. There can be no finer way to get a Silver C than on a Grunau Baby, the old Silver C machine.

At Wycombe Air Park, a fine closed wooden trailer has just been completed by the owners of the Nord 2000, F-CAUI (French built Olympia Meise) which is based there. Unfortunately, during its storage last winter in the workshop, rain water managed to enter the D-box at the root of one wing, causing deterioration to the casein glue. The extent of the damage has yet to be ascertained.

"Bluebell", the Cambridge Gliding Club's famous T.21b, which had a severe accident last year during a training landing, has been repaired by John Hume and is now again in service at Duxford. The crash caused the nose to burst in two parts, but instructor and pupil came out unhurt. We are glad that this particularly famous T.21 is back in the air. "Bluebell" was built in 1947, has carried out innumerable epic cross country flights, and has had many accidents. The T.21 is a type of glider that appears to go on for ever, thanks to its sturdy design and construction.

Materials

It may be of interest to our members that Dick Green has designed a new safety cable release hook. In addition to releasing under backward tension, the device also releases when the cable is at an excessive upwards angle. It is to be installed on a number of tow planes and will automatically release the cable should a glider get too high on aerotow. This can cause the aerotowing aeroplane to stall by forcing it to attempt to maintain climb with loss of airspeed. Such a situation has resulted in at least two fatal accidents in Britain alone. As Vintage gliders are just as likely to rise too high on tow as other gliders, we feel that the new release hook may be of interest to our members. Dick Green, who uses a shed in his garden, is being submerged by orders for a product which will undoubtedly save lives. His address is at 79 Park Lane, Harefield, Middx. Tel: Harefield (089582) 3348.

On another matter, those restorers who wish to reproduce the NSFK cream colour might be interested to know that a perfect result can be obtained with the British specification 366 Light Beige (extracted from B.S. 381c 1964). Any reputable paint firm should be able to mix this paint if given the above specification. Synthetic (oil based) paints were used in Germany in the years before the war. Although aircraft 'dope' can be bought, it is unlikely to be the right colour and anyone using cellulose non-aircraft paint should remember to add a softener, or plasticiser, so as to make the paint flexible enough for fabric or plywood covered surfaces. The absence of such additives will cause the paint to crack eventually. But according to one competent source, the use of these additives is never successful and it is therefore better to use synthetic paints which will achieve watertight results, even though its application to repair work is not as easy as with cellulose paint. To make sure that the above British paint matched the NSFK Cream colour, Chris Wills compared it with a sample card sent to him by Klaus Heyn and which matched the colour of a model Weihe made in Germany during 1938. As far as we know, all German

gliders between 1937 and 1945 were covered with the above specified cream. If we are wrong, we should be pleased to receive the relevant details.

It will come as a surprise to some that the firm Schleicher is still using Kaurite, the glue used in Germany during the war, to glue their wooden main spars because it is cheaper and easier to use. Let's hope that the French authorities will not discover this. A short time ago, they ordered the grounding of all wartime built German gliders because they were glued with Kaurite. This measure led to the destruction of many gliders. Fortunately, a few were saved by François Ragot. If the French discover that they still have Kaurite-glued German gliders in their midst, they might burn all their Ka 6s and Ka 13s. Will there be another witch hunt?...

Events

The London Gliding Club held a Vintage Gliding Rally at Shuttleworth on Sunday, 8th June. Unsuitable weather prevented any cross country flights from Dunstable to Shuttleworth, as had originally been planned. But when the fleet of participants had been aerotowed there, some thermal soaring was possible, especially towards the end of the day. On that particular Sunday, the only aircraft flying at Old Warden (Shuttleworth Collection), were Vintage gliders. All members had a pleasant day and were aerotowed home. Participants included Geoff Moore (MU 13D-3), Rex Moorey (Kite 1), Ted Hull (Moswey 4), David Braham (T.31) and Andrew Humphries (Grunau Baby 2B-2). Another Vintage event was due to take place at Dunstable on 15th June.

Exceptionally good thermal conditions had prevailed over Dunstable on 18th May. These enabled our members Francis Russell, Ted Hull, Rex Moorey and Geoff Moore to achieve flights to well over 6000 ft.

A feat by Josée Mosley-Williams

It is already two years since we mentioned that Josée, the then 72 year old daughter of the aviation pioneer José Weiss, had flown solo at Wycombe Air Park after having been prevented from flying solo on the grounds that "she was too old" by her own club. Little did they expect that by this present time, she would already have had some 21 solo flights to her credit. One of them, achieved on 26th May in a Ka 13, lasted for almost 90 minutes and went to over 4000 ft. Now 74, Jose is poised to complete her Bronze C. Each of the 21 aerotows counts as three flights from winch launches, meaning that she has completed 63 flights towards her Bronze C.

The late Gordon England, who was gliding in 1909 in one of José Weiss' gliders, once told her that "she owed it to her father to learn to glide".

José Weiss was a painter of Alsatian origin who took to pioneering aircraft as a hobby. Just as Sir George Cayley had done over 50 years before, he started by building models, some of which were fitted with automatic steering, and then man carriers which he never flew himself. It was in one of these that Gordon England, who died two years ago, carried out a flight over a quarry in the South Downs during 1909 and which may well have been the world's first soaring flight. Josée has many photographs and much information about her father's aircraft. José Weiss must have been the third British gliding pioneer, after Percy Pilcher, a contemporary of Lilienthal, and Sir George Cayley (1773-1857). José died before the end of the first world war, saddened that the aviation that he had helped to pioneer had been used for destruction.

Cross Country News

1943 JS Weihe (BGA 1021) has recently been taken on two Silver C distance flights from RAF Cranwell. The first one was achieved on 4th April by D. Beech who flew 75 km to Slipton (Kettering) in two-and-a-half hours, reaching 3000 ft five times. On 18th May, Barrie Briggs flew the aircraft to the Coventry Gliding Club at Husbands Bosworth, 75 km away, in approximately three hours. As he reached 6000 ft from a "low" of 900 ft, he is also claiming Silver C height. BGA 1021 is one of two JS Weihes which are based at RAF Cranwell. The other is BGA 1230.

NEWS FROM ABROAD

UNITED STATES

Jan Scott has recently paid a visit to Raimar Horten in Argentina. He spent five days on the 500 acre farm of this famous tailless-glider designer, some 140 km west of Cordoba. Raimar Horten lives quietly there with his Chilean born wife Gisela, who is of German ancestry and who, some years ago, flew her Silver C in a Grunau Baby.

In about 1948, Raimar Horten started work for the Argentinian Government at their Instituto Aerotecnico at Cordoba. All his creations bore the identification I Ae followed by a number. He first designed 3 tandem two-seater and 2 single-seat versions of the Horten 15, which was now called I Ae 34. He then helped a club far out in the Pampas to build an adapted version of his first design, the Horten 1b. Then, in 1950, he guided some students in the construction of the ultra-light Horten X "Piernifero". At that time, conditions in Argentina made the construction of gliders outside Government institutions very difficult. The rest of Raimar Horten's work, barring one conventional glider with tail surfaces, has been on military aircraft. The great blow had come when Argentina, who had entered two Horten 15 single-seaters together with two other gliders, did not win the 1952 World Championships in Spain. The blame for this disappointing outcome was placed on the shortcomings of tailless sailplanes rather than on the possible shortcomings of their pilots. As a result, no more I Ae flying wings were built.

We hope to learn soon from Jan whether any of the above sailplanes still exist. At his Scott Air Park, Jan has been pursuing work on his recently acquired Pratt & Read. On removing the fabric, he found the aircraft in reasonable condition, even though a large mouse nest had to be displaced. Jan will have to rebuild 3 or 4 ribs. He expects the glider to fly before the end of the year after some repairs have been done to the vertical fin attachment points.

SWITZERLAND

Willi Schwarzenbach reports that the fate of a Rhonbussard has been secured and that the aircraft, now in good hands, will be restored. He states that the drawings of all Moswey sailplanes have been given to the Swiss Aero Club and that they are likely to be sent later to the National Transport Museum in Lucern which already have the drawings of all the Spyr's. It is hoped that all the Spalinger drawings will later be entrusted to this Museum. The designer of the Spalinger, Jakob Spalinger, and the designer of the Spyr, August Hug, are still alive. The Mueller brothers who designed the Mosweys are dead.

FRANCE

Toni Bianci, of Personal Place Services, has reported the certain existence of an airworthy Castel 242 two-seater ten years ago at Troyes. This would be a truly Vintage French sailplane from the War years. It was in fact a close relative of the pre-war Castel 24.

FOR SALE

SWITZERLAND

One of the 10 1944 Swiss built Meises. HB-381. Red fuselage. Silver wings. Offers to: Willi Schwarzenbach, 52 route de Cossonay, 1008 Prilly, Switzerland

GERMANY

Kranich 3. C of A until March 1981. Modified aerodynamic fuselage. Aileron serbo trim tabs (Flettner). Air Driven Cloud flying instruments. With trailer. Telephone: 0 26 61/55 25. after 1800 hrs. 0 21 02/6 81 44. (from April 1980 Aerokurier)

Grunau Baby 2B with trailer. For sale. Telephone: 0 50 55/78 56

Ka 1, built 1953. Good condition. 40 starts, 19 hours flying, since basic overhaul. With instruments, closed trailer. Price 2,500 DM. Tel: 0 63 22/6 42 27 after 1700 hrs. From May 1980 Aerokurier.

Grunau Baby 2B with open trailer. Will be flown at the 8th International Rally and then sold. Very good condition. Horst-Dieter Rey, 5 KBln 30 (Vogelsang) Nachtigallenweg 8, Postfach 301064, West Germany

BRITAIN

Polish Jaskolka with new metal trailer. One year's C of A. Instruments include artificial horizon and Turn & Slip. Price £2,900 ono. Tel: 0602 213868. The prototype of the above flew in 1951

Prefect Mk 2. Excellent condition. C of A until March 1981. Closed trailer. Barograph. Open and closed canopies. Price £1,400 ono. Part exchange for another glider considered. Tel: day 01-486-0043. evenings 0277 216323

Eon Olympia 2B. Instruments including Audio/Vario. Barograph. 12 months C of A. Aluminium covered trailer. £2,250. Tel: Dinnington 3060 (Sheffield)

Prefect. £1,000 ono. C of A until May 1981. Closed cockpit. Offers to May Esson, "Balleigh", The Glebe, Bothwell, Glasgow. Tel: Bothwell (0698) 853350

Eon Olympia 2B with Dart canopy. Fully instrumented, with Audio/Vario, also closed trailer and radio. 12 months C of A. Price £2,250 ono. Graham - Stock on Trent 502197

Grunau Baby 2B. Good condition. German built. Fitted with G8ppingen system Dive Brakes and skid. Open Trailer. Offers around £700. Tel: 0789 298441 days. 0789 293862 evenings.

Grunau Baby 2A fitted with wheel and air brakes. Very good condition. Strong open trailer. Privately owned, little used. £750 ono. Must be sold. Tel: Stafford 58541

Eon Olympia 2. Carefully maintained. Electric vario. audio. Winter barograph. Closed trailer. C of A to September 1980. £2,250. Alan Hunter, Tel: 0482 654192

Skylark 4 with trailer and instruments, retractable wheel. Current Swiss C of A, BGA C of A applied for. Can be seen at Sutton Bank weekend 26/27 July. Contact James Butler, 1 Beaumont Street, Emley, Nr. Huddersfield, W. Yorkshire. Tel: (0924) 848305 or 271537

Parts. Eric Rolph of London Road, Moreton in the Marsh, has many components of Grunau Babies 2A, 2B and 3 as well as those of Eon Olympias, Eagles, Kite 1 etc. which he may be prepared to give away. Tel: Moreton in Marsh (0608) 50530

Mrs. Richardson of 12 The Downsway, Sutton, Surrey (Tel: 01-642-1225) still has the parts of two wartime built German Grunau Baby 2Bs and a British built Hutter H.17, in very bad condition, and also a British built Grunau Baby 2A, in rather better condition, for sale

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