The Vintage Glider Club of Great Britain

NEWS LETTER

August 1975

Third International Vintage Glider Rally: Gruyere July

Before all else, we must thank Willi Schwarzenbach and Jost Frei for running the meeting. Under Willi's dynamic leadership and Jost Frei's direction the Rally became flourishingly alive and it was ensured that we had the most successful Vintage Rally to date. Both of them stayed on the ground throughout the Rally but allowed other pilots to fly their Spalinger S.18 and Weihe. We were delighted that their families came to join us at Gruyere.

It was announced at the beginning of the Rally that no competition tasks would be set since it was felt that it would be 'criminal' to risk the gliders landing out as fields near the site were hardly adequate and landings in the mountains would lead to expensive and time consuming retrieves, quite apart from the danger of damage.

The Swiss Veteran Glider Pilots Association sponsored the Rally and gave the equivalent of £2,000 for prizes. More than 70 of their members visited the Rally by car and bus on Wednesday, 26th July. Among them were Mr. Hug, the designer of the Spyrs, and Willi Bauer, a member of the Swiss Team at the First International Meeting on the Wasserkuppe in 1937. Willi flew a Moswey 3 at our meeting for the first time in 20 years and later showed us some very interesting pre-war gliding photographs. We were visited by Rainer Karch and his MU 17 from Munich. He flew for 2½ hours and then shot up the nearest mountain to stay in a tent overnight.

Interesting machines at the meeting were:

Moswey 2 Only one of the two Moswey 2s entered actually arrived. Named the Nada it was flown by a Hungarian emigre called Attila Zierman, a great friend of Louis Rotter. The machine was originally built in 1937 and had at that time a wing span of only 13.8 metres. It was designed by the Muller Brothers in 1936 and in spite of its small size had a max. L/D of 1:25 (calculated). It took part in the Wasserkuppe meeting in 1937 when it seemed remarkably modern for the time. Willi Bauer said the Moswey 2 had its wing span increased to 15.5 metres during 1939/40 and became known as the 2A - he thought that the increase in span did not improve the machine. The obvious differences between the Moswey 2 and the Moswey 3 were that the 2 had spoilers and 1½ metres extra wing span, the 3 had airbrakes and a wing span of only 14 metres.

Spalinger S.19 This is a high wing, 17 m. span, strutted Spalinger built in 1937. This last S.19 had been specially restored by its owners to come to the meeting. It seemed as if new, and could often be seen proceeding among the mountains with great dignity, like a giant turkey in full sail.

Swiss Minimoa This machine was built from plans inSwitzerland before the war by a Herr Wullschlegger. Everyone present agreed that the plans must have been early ones, perhaps from before 1937. The aircraft has much less wing dihedral and a smaller differently-shaped rudder compared with other Minimoas now flying. This Minimoa was restored to its present excellent condition by its current owner, a historic aeroplane enthusiast and an experienced power pilot, Werner Von Arx, during last winter. The aircraft is in such good condition that it has a maximum permitted aerotowing speed of 130 kph, as have the Mosweys. Werner Von Arx only gained his gliding licence 10 days before the start of the Rally but it quickly became apparent that both he and his Minimoa could fly very well.

Rheinland 108-74 David Jones says that he has seen a 1939 date written on its main spars, so it must be assumed that it was built at that time. The original Rheinlands, known as FVA 10Bs were built during 1937 with different, flat-bottomed fuselages, and spoilers instead of airbrakes in their wings. The drawing of the 108-74 did not appear in Flugsport until 1943. The question arises - was David Jones' Rheinland originally a FVA 10B which was later changed, or was the 108-74 originally built as early as 1939. As Kranich drawings are marked 108-30 (DFS 30), if 108 stands for DFS this would mean that the Rheinland was the 74th type to pass through DFS. It certainly has DFS airbrakes. Some of us were lucky enough to fly this superb aircraft and everyone agreed that it was one of the most remarkable machines at the meeting.

Our British members "most memorable" recollections are:-

Chris Wills with Len Redding in the Kranich - through the mountains up to 5400 ft. and nearly to Montreux on Lake Geneva and back after 1½ hours

John Light with Len Redding in the Kranich - 4500 ft. with fabulous mountain flying - Len developed the "skimming the side of the mountain trees" technique. Ken Crack also experienced this on a ride with him.

Rodi Morgan in the Grunau Baby - 3 hours 11 mins to 5800 ft. from 1200 ft. in an open cockpit - very cold (freezing level 6000 ft.) - up over the Moleson (2004 m. ASL) under blue thermal street with 15 up - but oh the sink as well.

Ron Davidson with his Petrel - fantastic flying across the mountains - over 18 hours in the week.

David Jones with the Rheinland - discovering for the first time the surge of mountain lift on the peaks, but often a struggle to get there.

Francis Russell in the Weihe - the whole experience - exciting an understatement.

Angus Munro with the Weihe - 15 hours in 5 days, could have been more but for the needs of others. On one occasion no circling or loss of height for over an hour: best thermals 8 up and as a bonus Silver C leg with gain of height of 4400 ft.

Ted Hull with the Kite 1 - fantastic scenery, 5500 ft. but also tremendous sink. Soared at 400 ft. for a time before landing out (about 5 miles up the valley - was "topped up" with Cognac by the local farmer whilst awaiting retrieve).

Mike Hodgson in the Kite 1 - about 12 hours of marvellous flying, not always ea[illegible] and a very different sort of 'side of the ridge' soaring (but the ridges went up to several thousand feet), longest about 3½ hours but could have continued.

Chuck Bentson with the Meise (from Wiesbaden) - (actually an American but he lived with us in Britain for many years) - within 40 minutes over the Moleson to Lake Geneva and back below cloud base at 5000 ft. Chuck also achieved second place in the "white tyre spotting" contest.

Graham Saw with the Rhönbussard - an evening with the "Go-Go" dancers in Luxemburg on the way out - more dangerous than any mountains. Graham got second place in the spot landing contest.

We were pleased to see many of our European members, including Klaus Heyn of the Goppingen Museum and Ary Ceelen, editor of the Dutch "Planeur".

On the non-flying side for the many wives and families, visits were arranged to the local "Model" Gruyere cheese factory, the very extensive Nestle chocolates factory (no lunch needed after vast samplings) as well as a cable car trip up the local highest mountain, the Moleson, with gliders greeting us at the top, and several local trips including down to Lausanne, Montreux and the Castle of Chillon on the lake.

What started as a "let's have a Fondue Supper together" between Ken Crack and Rodi Morgan and their ladies grew to a total of 65 and the virtual take over of "Le Chalet" restaurant in Gruyere village for the evening - a grand time was had by all - with thanks to Chris Wills for his informal words to the gathering in three languages.

Thoughts before the Spring

As much as our aircraft must be safe and sound - so must our trailers be fully roadworthy - we do not want to have a 'Vintage Trailer Salvage Section'. So, please check your trailer over and bring it to the recognised 'standard' arrangements, so that it can also be interchangeable for other towing vehicles if the need arises. We have never left anybody behind - yet - but it may depend on your trailer and its fittings: remember -

1. 50 mm ball - about 16" from the road
2. Lighting connections to British Standard AU 149-1969 (as for caravans)
3. All lights working, over-ride brakes in good order, tyres safe and sound - and don't forget, adequate mudguards are a legal requirement (and there are those of us who have been caught on this)
4. Reflectors (side and rear) fitted and weight marked (if towing at 50 mph).

I am tackling "Unstable Mabel" - home of my Goevier - which scares me much more than any flying:-

(a) New independent suspension with hydraulic dampers,

(b) anti-snaking device,

(c) vacuum brakes (off the engine manifold).

I'll report the results as I go along (hopefully), but in the meantime, if any member has trailer problems of this 'unstable' nature, I will be happy to pass on the results of my researches and the practical details.

Have a good 'safe' season - on the ground as well as in the air!

KEN CRACK

Rally Secretary

THE HELPING HAND

Our farthest members are 12,000 miles away in Australia and New Zealand, but we have been able to extend the VGC helping hand nearer home - to Malaya. When Ken Crack was there, he visited many of the flying clubs (as well as getting his PPL) and at Ipoh had heard of gliders 'tucked' away, so with the help of the Club's Chinese caretakers' English-speaking daughter, he climbed through shuttered windows into an old RAF store hut. He found a T.21 and two Indian "Rohini RG1's" (T.21 copies) de-rigged but otherwise apparently intact. There was just enough light to take down the makers' plate details.

Members of the Ipoh Club are now getting the T.21 airworthy with a Chipmunk for towing from the Kuala Lumpur Club, and we were able to get all necessary C. of A. information and drawings fromSlingsbys for this happy resurrection of B.G.A. 982.

It's nice to have friends in far away places!

Do you need somewhere to hold a meeting in London - business or social conveniently situated near Victoria Station.

The Kronfeld Club in the basement of 74 Eccleston Square, S.W.1 (01-828-8740) has been associated with the flying movement over very many years and is now being kept in being by the Tiger Club of Redhill as a London Centre. It is not open at all times but normally regularly on the 2nd and 3rd Tuesday evening in each month, or by arrangement.

For details contact Richard Jones of the Tiger Club, at 01-682-2212.

WANTED

A Barograph, by our Rally Secretary. Offers direct to Ken Crack at 45 Church Crescent, Finchley N3 1BL (Tel. 01-346-8094)

NEW FROM BRITAIN

THE WILLOW WREN B.G.A. 162

Britain's oldest glider was bought and moved from Rochester Airport on the 14th December 1974 by Chris Wills and Mike Russell. The machine fitted very well into Mike's Petrel trailer and has been taken to Henham where it can be stored in a dry place. The machine did not seem to be in a bad condition and will be inspected during February with a view to making it airworthy. A small enclosed trailer is to be built for it.

The following notes have been taken from a most informative letter received from the machine's designer and builder, Mr. Manuel:-

Built during early 1932 at Hawkinge, Kent and test flown by Mr. Manuel during December 1932. Flown again in April 1933 after Mr. Manuel had left the RAF and was living in a caravan at Dunstable. In 1933 the machine was handed over to a syndicate at Dunstable, among them Jack Dewsbury, on condition that Mr. Manuel could fly it when he wished. At this time, the machine received its B.G.A. C. of A. No. 162.

Flying speed - 30/35 mph. Elevator becomes rather over-sensative when speeding. Handling characteristics otherwise normal.

Mr. Manuel then says "Please don't fit a windscreen. My recipe for a vintage pilot is - no instruments - full blast of pure air - sit on a piece of ply - no cushions. The ASI is adequately taken care of by the noise of the bracing cables to the nose.' A little bit of flying soon accustoms one to the correct note. What better air speed indicator!".

The machine was restored and painted in its original colour - yellow - with transparent dacron fabric by Mr. Manuel in 1962. The machine is fitted with an Ottfur release hook, which should enable it to have slow winch launches at least.

A Willow Wren owned by Mr. Robertson won the Cellon Prize, which was offered for the first flight of over 50 miles by a British machine.

****

MARTIN SIMONS has returned to Australia. He will be remembered for flying Ted Hull's Kite 1 with great skill in Britain and on the Wasserkuppe. He is Editor of the Australian Gliding magazine which has included a great number of very interesting articles on historic sailplanes. We hope that we shall hear from him often and that it will not be too long before we see him again.

****

MORE DRAWINGS AVAILABLE

As a parting gesture, Martin Simons sorted out ORIGINAL DRAWINGS OF PRODUCTION AND Pre-PRODUCTION WEIHES from the store at Slingsby Sailplanes. Also ORIGINAL DRAWINGS OF THE KRANICH 1 and 2. All these drawings, together with some of the DIVE BRAKE LAYOUT FOR THE REIHER AND RHONBUSSARD (a DFS dive brake for the later Rhonbussards) are now being stores by Chris Wills at Nettlebed. Drawings of the POLISH KOMAR B have been lent to an aeromodeller, but it should be possible to retrieve these in due course. If anyone needs drawings they can be lent free od charge.

Another set of original Weihe drawings are owned by James Miller who wishes to sell them.

Norman Ellison in Yorkshire has original sets of the DFS Meise Olympia, Eon and Chiltern Olympia drawings.

Still in the Slingsby loft are believed to be drawings of all the pre-War Slingsby glider types including those of the Hjordis and King Kite (possibly in poor condition), and Falcon 1 (RRG FALKE 1927). Norman Ellison is keeping a watch on the drawings in the Slingsby store to ensure they are not destroyed.

Manuel Wren and Grunau Baby drawings are kept by Ken Fripp at Lasham. He possibly also has a set of prints from Weihe drawings.

Some Rhönsperber drawings (prints) are in Rodi Morgan's possession.

Drawings of every HORTEN TAILLESS AEROPLANE AND SAILPLANE are now in the possession of Karl Vey, the German Aero Club's official Archivist, at Neu Isenburg, Frankfurt am Main.

A set of prints from original Kranich 1 and 2 drawings are now on loan to RAF colerne from Chris Wills.

****

1947 SHORT NIMBUS was aero-towed to RAF Bicester last October in the hope that Senior Warrant Officer Andy Gough could find a buyer for it, but it is still for sale.

1951 SLINGSBY SKY 2 quarter shares available for £310 each. Competition No. 213, at present based at Lasham. Good closed trailer. Major C. of A. carried out in April 1973. Skylark canopy. Colour? tangarine and blue. No parachute or barograph.

NEWS FROM ABROAD

Our thanks to Willi Schwarzenback for sending us copies of the 1941, 1956, 1972 and 1973 Swiss Glider Registers. More information available to members on request.

An error in the last News Letter. The Deutsches Museum in Munich has no original FS.3 Bessenstiel (Broomstick). It has a scaled down replica of the machine. We got our previous information from the book 'Die beruhmstesten Segelflugzeuge' and it is not correct.

Klaus Heyn is continuing his work on the FS.3 replica and is at present doing more research on the aircraft and its pilot, Ferdinand Schulz.

An advertisement in the December Deutscher Aerokurier urgently seeking a centre section for a Horten 4 has aroused curiosity. The advertisement is under 'chiffre' and so we can only guess that the Deutsches Museum is trying to find a centre section for its Horten 4 wings. If these wings were off the Horten 4A which was being used by the RAF during 1950, and we think they must be, then this machine was sold to a German Club at Frechen. The centre section may perhaps still be there. If, however, no centre section can be found, the drawings that would enable an enthusiast to build another one will be with Karl Vey.

Our member, Roland Poehlmann reports that the Deutsches Museum now has the HKS 3, the 1958 World Championships winner in Poland, when flown by E. G. Haase. The Museum also has an MU 13 (almost certainly an E), a Baby 2, an 'Einheits Schulgleiter' (perhaps an SG 38). Additionally the firm of Reuss made a series 20 models in 1/25th scale of German and international sailplanes, which will, together with several existing models, form a collection of about 50 exhibits, showing the development of gliding from Lilienthal to to-day's super-orchids. We know that the Museum also has the famous MU 10 Milan 2-seater.

Michael Schlotterbeck is looking for some more wings for his Grunau Baby 2B. The original wings for the machine have become too heavy. The aircraft was originally built by the Backnang Gliding Club. Some Casein glued wings have been offered to him. The BabY's fuselage is being taken to the wings to find out whether they fit, as Grunau Babies have been built over such a long period that it is doubtful whether wings are interchangeable.

****

Please make the following amendments and additions to your Club List: if nothing else at least cut this off and staple it to your copy!

RODI MORGAN is now a SENIOR INSPECTOR

Weihe BGA 1290 has been sold by Don Bricknell, now Assoc. Member. We'll let you know who to when we find out.

New Members

EOB BABY BGA 629 Jack Aked Syndicate/Richard Darbyshire, 6 Wakefield Crescent, Standish, Wigan, Lancs/Malcolm Eaves, 202 Cunliffe Road, Blackpool, Lancs/R. Greason 207 Oriel Drive, Aintree, Liverpool L10 3JP

Tutor BGA 804 Bruce Gibbs, 7 Uplands Road, East Barnet, Herts EN4 8NY

Kranich 1 BGA 1092 Ian Gordon, Shepherds Bank, Kettleshulme, Cheshire

Kranich 2 Fred Porton, 21 RannochRoad, Southmead, Bristol BS7