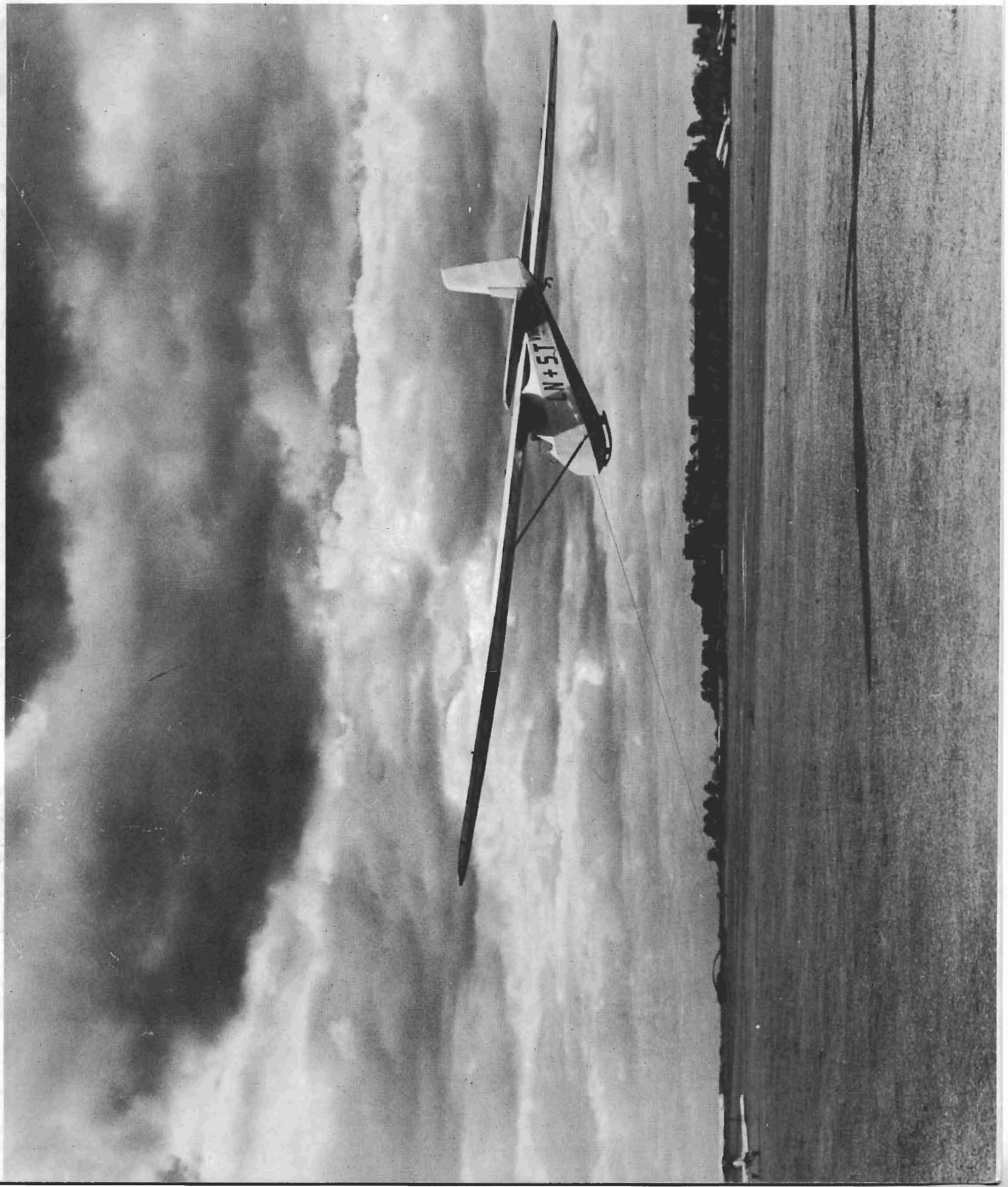
VGC Newsletter

No 48 **Summer 1983**



FOR SALE

Castel 25S built 1947. This was one of the two standard French training 2-seaters designed in 1941. It is in perfect condition, with instruments, and can be inspected by appointment at Eric Rolph's premises, London Road, Moreton in the Marsh. Tel: 0608 50530. Its owner, to whom offers should be made, is:

Billie Caldwell, 14 The Towers, Grand Avenue, Worthing. Tel: 0905 40418.

Tutor In first class condition. Southdown Aero Services, Lasham Airfield, Nr. Basingstoke, Hants. Tel: 025683 359.

Grunau Baby 2A Now fitted with Göppingen system Air Brakes. BGA 1432. German built 1951. With open trailer. Offers to: Bob Pirie, c/o Lasham Gliding Centre, Nr. Alton, Nr. Basingstoke, Hants.

AIR 102 in Bordeaux. Details from: Robin Traves, Rose View, Marden Road, Nr. Staplehurst, Kent.

DETAILS WANTED of uncovered Slingsby Cadet, which is for sale at an RAF Club in the North. Please could details and enquiries for the aircraft be sent to: C. Wills, Wings, The Street, Ewelme, Oxon OX9 6HQ. Tel: 0491 39245.

WANTED Colour photographs of Prefect in RAFGSA or ATC colour scheme. Please send to Robin Traves.

Produced By:

C. Wills,
Wings,
The Street,
Ewelme,
Oxon.

R. Traves,
Rose View,
Marden Road,
Staplehurst,
Kent.

Taxis in Budapest are very cheap providing that they are official taxis. The price from Budapest to the site being about £1.50.

Tipping is widespread throughout Budapest and Hungary.

Buses from Budapest to the site. From Moscow Square to the Village of Budakesci - No. 22. From Budakesci to the site - No. 40.

Food in Budapest is very cheap.

Accommodation. Because of the great numbers of tourists at this time of year, this might be hard to find, but, generally, it is cheaper in the old town of Pest on the other side of the Danube, than in Buda.

Movements of the Münster Oldtimerclub. They will be, with their Minimoa only, at Unterwössen (the Bavarian Alpine Soaring Centre) during 19, 20 July; at Zell am See during the 21, 22 July (the Austrian Soaring Centre); and at the airfield of Eisenstadt near the Hungarian frontier, on the Neusiedler Lake, (near Hegyeshalom/ Nickelsdorf) on the 23 July. They hope to meet with other teams at any of these locations, but especially at Eisenstadt, before the frontier crossing.

Their Goevier will also come to Budapest, but after a Grand Tour of Germany and Austria (incl. Wasserkuppe) first.

BRITISH NEWS

After the most awful spring and early summer weather ever experienced, which did not encourage the flying or even the restoring of vintage gliders, the weather improved during mid June (Mid summer) for our Rally at Wycombe Air Park to give 13 of our gliders two days of good soaring.

"New" in the Skies over Britain

We are glad to report that the Grunau Baby 2b, BGA 963, which had been lovingly worked on by Frank Reeks, took the air for the first time for 13 years, at Duxford, in the hands of the BGA Inspector, John Scott, on the 30th April. We congratulate John Edwards, its new owner, on finishing Frank Reeks' work. A photograph reveals BGA 963 splendidly turned out in transparent fabric and orange and white paintwork. It already has a fine trailer, finished by Frank Reeks and we hope that we shall be lucky enough to see John Edwards and his Grunau at our Annual Rally during the last two weeks of August, at Lasham. We believe that BGA 963 is an Anglo-German Grunau ..... the wings and tailplane having been built in a Royal Naval dockyard, and the fuselage in Germany during the war.

We are also happy to announce that the Austrian Mg 19A, BGA 2903, has had its first two flights in Britain, after a grounding of some four years in Austria, on 5th June, at the Avon Soaring Centre. In spite of not very good conditions, the first two flights in the hands of Tony Smallwood and C. Wills went off successfully. The C of A work had been carried out on it by Eric Rolph at Moreton in the Marsh. An enclosed metal trailer is now being built for the Mg.

Newly Recovered with transparent fabric. The T.21C, at Lasham. Colin Street and his partners, John Light, Peter Davis and Ron Tarling, have completed this task after at least 6 months' work and the result must be wonderful to behold!

Flying Again

After a C. of A. by David Richardson and work carried out by Francis Russell, the famous Rhönsperber, BGA 160, is flying again. Of four Rhönsperbers (2 in Germany and 1 in Krakow, Poland), known to be existing (out of the 100 built), this is the last one airworthy.

Not yet quite finished. The Falke (Falcon 1) at Southdown Aero Services. Warmer temperatures have allowed John Sproule to start work on the tailplane, elevator and rudder of this glider in his garage at Shoreham on Sea. The rest of the aircraft, without fabric, has been stored at Southdown Aero Services. Such is the pressure of work now at Southdown Aero Services on other aircraft, it will not be possible to complete the Falcon in time for the VGC's Annual Rally at Lasham during the second half of August. However, it is hoped to exhibit the aircraft complete except for fabric. Both Ken Fripp and John Sproule have stressed that the structure of the Falke is so complicated to build, that it would have been possible to build three Grunau Babies in the time needed to build the Falke.

The King Kite

This aircraft is complete and fabric covered. David Jones is now painting it. David has still to build a trailer for it but he thinks that this will not take him very long.

The VGC Rally at Wycombe Air Park 18th & 19th June 1983

This was organised by Dave and Margaret Richardson, and supported by 13 vintage gliders and magnificent weather.

The following gliders were present:

Moswey 4, BGA 2277. Ted Hull.
Rhönbussard, BGA 2077. Martin Harris.
Rhönbussard, BGA 337, Steve White and Chris Wills.
Rhönsperber, BGA 160. Francis Russell.
FW Weihe 50, BGA 2602. Francis Russell, Louise Coates and

Mü 13d-3, BGA 2267. Geoff Moore.
T.31, BGA 1376. Mike Boxall.
Grunau Baby 2A, BGA 277. John Smoker.
Grunau Baby 2B, BGA 2709. Richard Cowderoy.
Nord 2000, BGA 2534. Thames Valley Gliding Club.
Bergfalke 2, BGA 2750. Bev George.
Gull 1, BGA 378. Tony Smallwood.
Kite 2, BGA 751. David Richardson.

The Rally was very well organised by Dave and Margaret Richardson who even prepared a magnificent barbecue for us on Saturday night.

We believe that we made a considerable impression on the airline pilots who much frequent Wycombe Air Park with their fibreglass gliders and aeroplanes.

The sunny weather and cumulus allowed extensive flying over the whole area late on both days, when cloudbase reached 4,500 ft. above site. On the Saturday evening, Chris Wills reached Princes Risborough to the North and Henley on Thames to the South West, which was downwind, landing at 7.30 pm, in his Rhönbussard. This illustrates the sort of flying that could be done and other pilots may have flown further. Princes Risborough and Henley on Thames are 16 miles apart. However, it was felt that the late thermal development and the fresh N.E. wind precluded cross countries in any other direction except downwind, but there were no outlandings. We were glad to see the Rhönsperber airborne again and noted how it outclimbed all opposition even although its variometers did not work. We were also very glad to have with us the very old Grunau Baby, BGA 277, which was flown by its owner, John Smoker. This aircraft is a GB 2A with spoilers and weighs only 340 lbs.

In the workshop could be seen Peter Bourne completely restoring to original condition his Scud 2, before going to Hungary in July. This tremendous task is being carried out by him and Dave and Margaret Richardson, in four weeks!

Flying vintage gliders over the Chiltern Hills in those beautiful conditions was a wonderful experience, and we thank those who made it possible for us, especially the members of the Thames Valley Gliding Club who allowed us free club membership and free hangarage for our rigged gliders.

An Old Grunau Baby

Barbara Reed writes that she and Chris Duthy James now own the Grunau Baby that she flew for her Silver C Cross Country and Height, from the Long Mynd last year. As she had earlier flown her five hours in a Tutor over the Mynd, she has completed her entire Silver C on vintage intermediate gliders. The Grunau Baby is thought to be the oldest in the country although it is now fitted with landing wheel and airbrakes. It was owned by the North Wales Gliding Club who still use it, and a Bocian, as their only two club aircraft. During its last re-cover, the C.F.I. of the club found date stamps on the wood indicating dates between 1933 and 1936! Barbara says that the wheel is soon to be removed. She also owns a Slingsby Cadet which is to be restored to 1936 condition. John Sproule says that when he designed it, the Cadet was a good soarer and that the RAF made it much heavier for the ATC during the war.

That Dickson Accident ..... described in the last Newsletter, No. 47. Bill Manuel says that when his dog broke the Dickson Primary, he ended up having to repair the glider, much to his disgust, as he was busy with Wrens at the time. He still has a photo of his dog, but not the glider!

Harold Holdsworth writes:- "I also remember the open Dickson quite well. It was one of the early English Primaries. The wing spars were in the shape of a letter I, put together with brass screws at 3 inch intervals. A rough landing always broke the rear spar at a screw hole. With a labrador dog thumping down on the middle of a flying wire, no wonder the spar broke! The Yorkshire Dickson made just one descent at Sutton Bank after being fitted with a nacelle. In spite of its cost, it was inferior to both Zoegling and Dagling. Early Reynards were horrors but perhaps one should not tell tales."

Photograph Captions

From LEFT to RIGHT. TOP to BOTTOM.

The photographs on this page were all taken by C. Wills at the latest VGC Rally during the 18th and 19th June 1983 at Wycombe Air Park.

1. The Rhönsperber lifts off. The photograph, which could have been taken in 1938 (as could most of the others on this page) fully captures the excitement of the moment as Francis Russell flies his Rhönsperber for the first time.

2. Geoff Moore's Mu 13d-3 makes one of its slow (seemingly) approaches in the hands of Mike Boxall. This type and the Petrels have the most outstanding low speed performance of all vintage gliders.

3. Could have been 38. The Rhönsperber at rest.

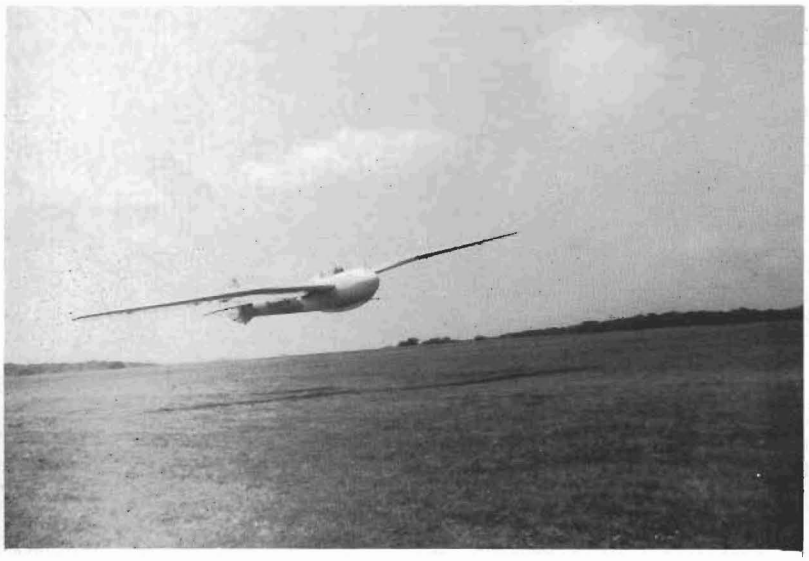
4. The Grunau Baby 2A and its owner/restorer, John Smoker. This aircraft started life being built in a Leeds bedroom by Fred Coleman in 1936. It is now entirely rebuilt.

5. Mike Boxall about to start in the Mu 13d-3.

6. Ted Hull in his 15.5 metre span 1950 built Moswey 4.

7. Richard Cowderoy and his German built Grunau Baby 2.

COVER PHOTOGRAPH. Reproduced by kind permission of the RAF Museum, Hendon. An original Charles Brown photograph of the German built Grunau Baby 2B LN+ST, being aerotowed by a Tiger Moth at Cranfield during the summer of 1945 ? LN+ST, which still has its post June 1943 Wehrmacht Luft registration, is now in a damaged state at Peterborough Sailplanes. The swastika on its rudder was roughly painted out before the aircraft flew in England. Apart from this, it is, with one other Grunau Baby 2B, LZ-NC, (post June 1943 NSFK registration), which is kept in store at the Paul Garber facility of the Smithsonian Institute at Silver Hill, the only suvivor, as far as we know, of Grunau Babies in the period colours of that time.




















Rhonsperber

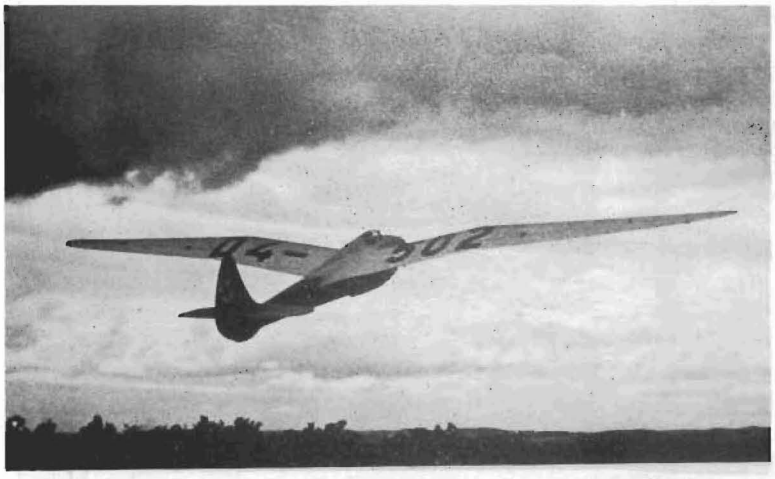







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Captions of Photographs

LEFT to RIGHT. TOP to BOTTOM

At the Wycombe Air Park Rally ... 18th - 19th June 1983.

1. Two Grunau Babies; a 2b built in Germany ... and a 2A built in England.

2. A brace of Bussards, or an explosion of transparent wings. The two Rhönbussards that exist in England. That, in the foreground, BGA 2077, and that, in the background, BGA 337. Behind them is the Kite 2 with Skylark fin and rudder, owned by Dave Richardson.

3. The Rhönsperber being rigged.

4. Rönbussard. BGA 337.

5. Francis Russell and his magnificent Rhönsperber.

6. Not at Wycombe Air Park but at Waikerie, South Australia, in 113°F heat, the PELICAN 2 side by side 2-seater.

7. The Austrian Mg 19A two seater, as it came from Austria. This aircraft has now a C of A and has been flown. However, it was deemed too risky to take the fine aircraft to Hungary on this trailer. A new metal trailer is being built for it.

8. As 7.

9. Peter Riedel flying the Sperber Senior during the 1937 US Nationals.

10. Peter Riedel flies the Sperber Senior over New York, just prior to the 1937 US Nationals.

Harold Holdsworth continues ... "Do you recall the Chilton Olympia Meise built as a combined effort by Chilton and Elliotts during 1945? When Chilton Aircraft wound up and became Chilton Electronic, their draughtsman, who redrew the German drawings, emigrated to Australia as a consultant engineer but, now retired, helps out with the vintage and ultralight movement, as a labour of love, much to his wife's annoyance. Recently, his picture and a letter appeared in Aeroplane Monthly, and, through the Editor, we made contact again after 37 years. Forestor Lindsley sent me a clip from the Australian Newsletter about all the accidents, but, far more interesting, he was enquiring about the Chilton Olympia drawings he made so long ago. Apparently, some Chilton Olympias were made in Australia but no Elliotts Olympias, and, after a long interval, two part-made Chilton Olympias are to be completed by a Mr. Gilbert Simpkins, if he can get all the drawings. I have made a few enquiries, but it is early days yet but how interesting it was for me to hear a voice from the past, as it were."

Our readers may remember that it was Harold Holdsworth who built the fuselage of the first British Olympia in difficult conditions in a chicken house at Hungerford. The firm of Chilton Aircraft folded up after a Fiesler Storch, that had arrived very unofficially from Germany where it had been found in a field, crashed with the managing director and pilot on board. It was thought that the crash was due to the aileron servo trim tab coming undone in flight, although there was almost nothing left of the remains. We believe that all Olympia drawings, including German, Eon and Chilton, are being stored by Mike Russell near Duxford.

Harold Holdsworth describes the disaster which brought about the end of Chilton Aircraft, and their construction of the first British Olympia.

The German Fiesler Storch

"Near the end of November 1945, Denys, the draughtsman, who was ex-RAF and was invalided out with inoperable wounds, approached me with the news that a friend in Germany had told him of a Fiesler Storch standing in a remote open space, quite unclaimed by anyone, and, why not come over, claim it, and fly it away?

With the blessing of Dalrymple, he set off and not a word was heard about him. He had just vanished. When his parents enquired for his safety, Dalrymple denied all responsibility.

There are two stories about what happened next; the inquest's, and that told me by Fred Luscombe, whom I prefer to believe. At the time, I was at home with my sister and my future wife. The first news of the tragedy was huge headlines in the Press in front of me as I sat in the train waiting to start for London.

Christmas Day 1945 was an exceptionally fine day for the time of year .... ideal for fyling! Suddenly, in the afternoon, a German Fiesler Storch appeared which beat up the town of Hungerford .....; in other words .... very low flying over Mr. Bush's house. It then landed at Hughes Farm, not far from the works. Most Chilton employees grabbed their bicycles and rushed to see what it was all about .... including Mr. Dalrymple. It was Denys alright, who had just about broken every rule in the book. In spite of its tatty and neglected appearance, Dalrymple demanded a ride at once, in spite of Fred's

advice NOT TO and they were climbing away, when the Storch lost an entire wing. In the ensuing fire, there was nothing left to justify a funeral. An inquest was held, and a service of remembrance, but there was nothing left to bury. The RAF collected some spares which Denys had unloaded, and I started looking for a new situation at once.

The real reason for the break up will never be known. The Storch might have been booby-trapped and two mens' weight instead of one might have been the reason, but this is unlikely. I prefer Fred's theory. It would appear that the Storch had a broken aileron trim flap which Denys had locked in a crude manner. (If an aileron servo tab had been "locked" at all it would have produced assymetric loading in the ailer on system. CW.)

Fred suspects, quite reasonably, that the landing and taxying on pasture, shook the packing loose and, in the air, they came right out, causing the ailerons to flap about, which, in turn, badly over-stressed the wing and main lift struts, causing total failure in a few seconds.

For several years, I have had a pen friend in Canada who is acquainted with a former Luftwaffe pilot. From them, I understand that, in May 1945, when the war was obviously over, there were aeroplanes standing about in considerable numbers through lack of petrol. Anyone who could fly and scrounge some petrol, did so and flew to their home, if it was away from the Russians. So the Storch standing unclaimed, was not remarkable. What was unusual, was taking it without permission from the Allied Control Commission.

Shortly after the crash, we learned from quite unofficial sources that, had the crash not taken place, both Phillips and Dalrymple, especially Phillips, would have had to face charges about a yard long. Among the more serious were:- Flying AT ALL; flying an enemy aeroplane; evading the customs; low flying (to warn Bush that he had arrived); no Pilot's Licence (Denys was ex RAF); NO INSURANCE AT ALL; No British C. of A. for aircraft; etc., etc. Quite an impressive list. In the event, it was all scrubbed and forgotten.

After a disastrous five weeks at Martin Hearn at Hooton Park, who later made Slingsby types, I spent the next 28 years until retirement with a local concern."

After working on a Fi Storch at Wycombe Air Park, Chris Wills has this to say.

"The aileron tab on a Storch is a servo tab operated by a fixed push rod. That is to say that, for every movement of the aileron, the tab moves in the opposite direction, thus assisting the aileron's movement. With the tab fixed in a neutral position in relation to the aileron, its push rod would have had to have been disconnected from it, or the aileron would not have been able to move, or, had it done so, it would have become seriously damaged. From Harold's account, one assumes that the push rod had been disconnected and that the aircraft had been flown from Germany with one of its ailerons with an unoperative servo tab. This would have caused assymetric loading of the aileron circuit but might not have caused damage. Had this tab become free, still disconnected from its push rod, the aileron might have fluttered during the high speed beat up of the Hungerford farm. This might have caused damage to the wing structure, which resulted in complete failure of the wing and struts during the next take off, with two people on board, increasing the wing loading.

The aircraft was noticed to be in bad condition because it had been standing unattended in the open for the nine months since the war had ended. We imagine that this, and the fact that the aileron servo tab was not as it should be, was noticed before its last take-off, as the ensuing crash and fire made accident investigation difficult.

Whatever the cause of the crash may have been, and we shall probably never know the exact truth, this was the reason why Chilton Aircraft only built one Olympia fuselage (rather, it was built by Harold Holdsworth) and that the aircraft was finished by Elliotts of Newbury for Dudley Hiscox. This firm later finished first 100, then, much later, a further 50 Eon Olympias and many other gliders after that. So what happened on that Christmas Day in 1945 was an important event in British Gliding History."

The Great Sale of T.31's (Cadet Mk. 3's) and T.21's, belonging to the RAFGSA and the ATC.

Group Captain John Delafield, who is in command of the operation, has given us the following information. It is true that the Air Training Corps is to re-equip with modern German fibreglass two-seaters and single-seaters. In order not to have inferior equipment to the ATC, the RAF Gliding and Soaring Assn is to re-equip also and will sell their older wooden aircraft. This means that a total of over 100 vintage gliders are to be sold. However, as the German glider factories cannot build replacement aircraft so quickly, the sale of the T.21's and T.31's will not start until mid-1984, and then, they will be offered for sale in batches, with time lapses in between, in order not to flood the market. At the moment, a T.21 is being offered at Bicester for £1,000, but it is felt that, next year, their prices may be cheaper. We have been told that the T.31's will be sold first. The VGC has been told the sale will take place in between 12 and 18 months from now. We imagine that the aircraft will be sold mostly without trailers so that prospective buyers should prepare themselves trailers which should be closed, unless covered space can be found. The ATC gliders have almost all been recently overhauled at great cost (£5000?) by the Maintenance Unit, RAF St. Athan's, carpenters, so they are in excellent condition. The Carpenters stated that they were all in as-good-as-new condition, before they overhauled them, and expected that, as they were built with Aerolite glue that they would last for ever! Nevertheless, it is clear that prospective owners will need dry storage space for these.

Whereas previous policy was to train boys for one solo flight in the hope that they would join the RAF ..... (and many did), the new policy is Aircrew Selection. Gliding was successfully used for this means by the Luftwaffe between 1935 and 1945. The new gliders will enable ATC boys to receive advanced gliding, which might include cross countries and field landings. Who knows, one of them could even become a World Champion. In the old days (the 1950's) ATC instructors successfully competed in the British National Gliding Contests with T.21's. Because of higher performance gliders, flown more recently by other competitors, this, for some years, has not been possible. However, with new fibreglass gliders, the Air Training Corps is again taking part in the Nationals. This most forward-looking policy, has been brought about by Air Vice Marshal John Brownlow, himself a very keen glider pilot, and by Group Captain John Delafield, of the British Team.

AUSTRALIAN NEWS

Members of the Vintage Glider Assn. were at Mangalor, Victoria, over Easter, to attend the annual Fly-In of the Sport Aircraft Assn. of Australia.

The seven vintage sailplanes joined the many hundreds of modern, vintage, historic and ultra light aircraft that came from all over Australia to take part in this impressive event.

The Vintage sailplanes present were: Olympia, Golden Eagle, Altair, Zephyrus, Skylark 4, Hütter H.17 and Joey. 4 more modern sailplanes were also present.

Launching for the vintage sailplanes was provided by the Midlands Soaring club's Auster. Friday and Saturday were marked by strong, gusty winds blowing about 30 kt or more across the strip. This made flying turbulent but soaring was possible and many made use of the conditions. The best flight (as usual) was made by Ralph Crompton in his Skylark 4. On Saturday, he soared for more than four hours. David Goldsmith flew the H.17a for more than 1½ hours and several pilots flew for more than one hour. Flying conditions on the Sunday were perfect but there was no soaring as the day was given to a really spectacular public air show. It rained and blew all day Monday and the gliders could not be flown. The display of vintage gliders was supported by an exhibition of photos, posters and other literature in a tent. Many people passed through the tent during the weekend.

At the Annual Dinner of the SAAA, the 1936 Golden Eagle was winner of the Prize for the best Vintage Sailplane.

Some Support Indicated for a Week-Long Regatta for 1984

There has been a small but worthwhile response for this idea. The consensus of opinion of those who replied is that it should be held during the Christmas/New Year holiday. The date is not yet finalized but no-one has suggested another date. Among the Victorians who support the idea are: Keith Nolan - Chilton Olympia; Tom Hinton - Kingfisher; Ray Ash - Grunau Baby 4; and at least two others from Sydney are likely starters. Ralph Crompton - Skylark 4, Adelaide, says that he will definitely be there. Rather unexpectedly, the plan aroused much interest in Brisbane. Gilbert Simpkins (who owns and means to build, the two Chilton Olympias), says that he will come South with his T.31 and may also bring his L-Spatz and Hütter H.17a, if it is finished in time. Gliding Clubs at Corowa, Bridgewater have both expressed interest in hosting such an event. Other possible sites are: Swan Hill, Tocumwal and Leeton. These are all in South Australia or Victoria.

Slingsby T.21 may come from Britain

Brad Edwards of the Lake Keepit soaring club in NSW is hoping to buy a T.21 while in Britain this year and to ship it to Australia in a London Bus! If it arrives, it will be the only T.21 in Australia.

Olympia Parts or Plans wanted: Gilbert Simpkins of Brisbane is looking for parts and plans for the Chilton, or Eon, Olympia, to assist him in completing the construction of two partly built Olympias that

he bought last year. Gil says that some sheets are missing from the set of drawings that came with the box of parts that he bought. He hopes also that the purchase of some structures even in damaged condition, would save him the task of having to build them. Three Olympias were built in Australia and at least two others were imported during the 1950's. Two of these have been written off, but some of their parts may still be lying around in sheds or hangars. It is also possible that construction may have been started on others. If anyone knows the location of Olympia parts or plans, could they contact: Gill Simpkins, 11 Phillip Street, Woodridge, Queensland 4114, Australia.

Golden Eagle to attend Wodonga Air Show: Alan Patching will take this aircraft to Wodonga for the long weekend of 11-13 June (Queen's Birthday Holiday) to take part in the annual air show held by the antique Aeroplane Assn. of Australia. It will be the first time that a glider has appeared at this popular event.

Course Students will work on Hütter H.17a: Those attending the Gliding Federation of Australia's woodworking course at Kingaroy, Queensland, in August, will be able to practise their skills on an H.17. The Hütter is owned by Gill Simpkins of Brisbane, who will be the course's instructor. Gill bought the sailplane from Larry Allen of Albury. He said that it will need a full overhaul before its C. of A. is renewed, so he decided to let the course students gain some practical knowledge by working on a real wooden sailplane instead of making sample structures as exercises.

A Wonderful Bird is the Pelican: From Waikerie, Jock Barett reports that his Pelican 2 flew 121 hours from 110 launches during 1982. Most of the flying was done by Jock himself, although some was done by his son, Christopher. We are printing a photograph of this extraordinary glider. Although it was built in 1950, its three ancestors, the Australian Kite 1, the Australian Kite 2 and the Pelican 1, go straight back to 1930. Either the Australian Kite 2 or the Pelican 1 had its wings copied from a photograph of Kronfield's Wien, in an Adelaide workshop. The aircraft was found to successfully fly with its wing tips clipped a little. The Pelican 2 stalls at around 30 knots, but is thermalled at 55 - 60 knots... at which speed, it outclimbs everything! At 70 knots, there is a noise like a rushing waterfall and she is covering ground in no uncertain fashion with hardly any change of attitude. With such a speed range, it should, in Australian conditions, still be able to perform great flights. Its good performance, Jock says, is due to its clean, cantilever, three piece wing, of almost elliptical planform, with its shallow, fast, RAF profile, and also because its wing is set on the fuselage at the same angle as the tailplane. There is no angle of incidence between wing and tailplane. Its rather wide pod and boom fuselage was tested in the Victorian Railway's wind tunnel with smoke, and was found to be better aerodynamically than that of the Olympia!

The Pelican 2 is certainly a most remarkable Australian vintage glider, and it is wonderful that it flies at Waikerie where the thermals are often used by pelicans (birds) which live in bird sancturies by the River Murray.

GERMAN NEWS

Barry Smith writes:

"The Grunau Baby Rally was a great success, though only one day was

soarable (and I did not connect). There were eleven Grunaus taking part (if one includes the Cumulus) and everyone seemed pleased that we had made the journey from Britain."

The 4th Baby Meeting took place this year at Bohmte, the Wittlage Aeroclub, during the Whitsun weekend, 20th - 23rd June. The airfield is at the Northern edge of the Wiehen mountains, about 20 kms south of Dommer Lake. The Meeting was run by Detlev Horman, Helmuth Schlinsog, Harald Kamper and, of course, our member Christian Kroll. Barry Smith was the first foreigner ever to take part in the Grunau Rally.

Barry continues ... "I gather that next year's Baby Treffen is to be at Terlet in Holland. I hope to go to it if I still have the Grunau".

Still no news has been received of the Goevier Rally in Holland.

Another story from the old days

Harold Holdsworth relates how dogs, cats and small boys should be discouraged.

"Another favourite trick of small boys was to blow down the pressure head of the A.S.I. to show off their knowledge. Invariably the pointer would go four times round and then the spring would break. Dudley Hiscox got round that, by soldering three long and very sharp needles on the pressure head so that it was impossible to get the pressure head in to a normal mouth. It probably upset the calibration a bit but not enough to worry a glider pilot of the period.

The picture in S. & G. of a Landrover driving over a wing of a parked glider, brought back memories. At the 1934 National Contests at Sutton Bank, the Treasurer of the Y.G.C. did just that to a visiting Prüfling, the property of Mr. Hatcher of the Southdown Club. Naturally there was only one honest thing to do, and that was, to repair it for him free, at once. When the fabric was off, a previous repair was exposed, and Hatcher related the following story.

In 1932, all-weather trailers and hangars for gliders were unknown. Hatcher, like other enthusiasts, kept his machine in a friendly farmer's barn, which is now known to be unwise.

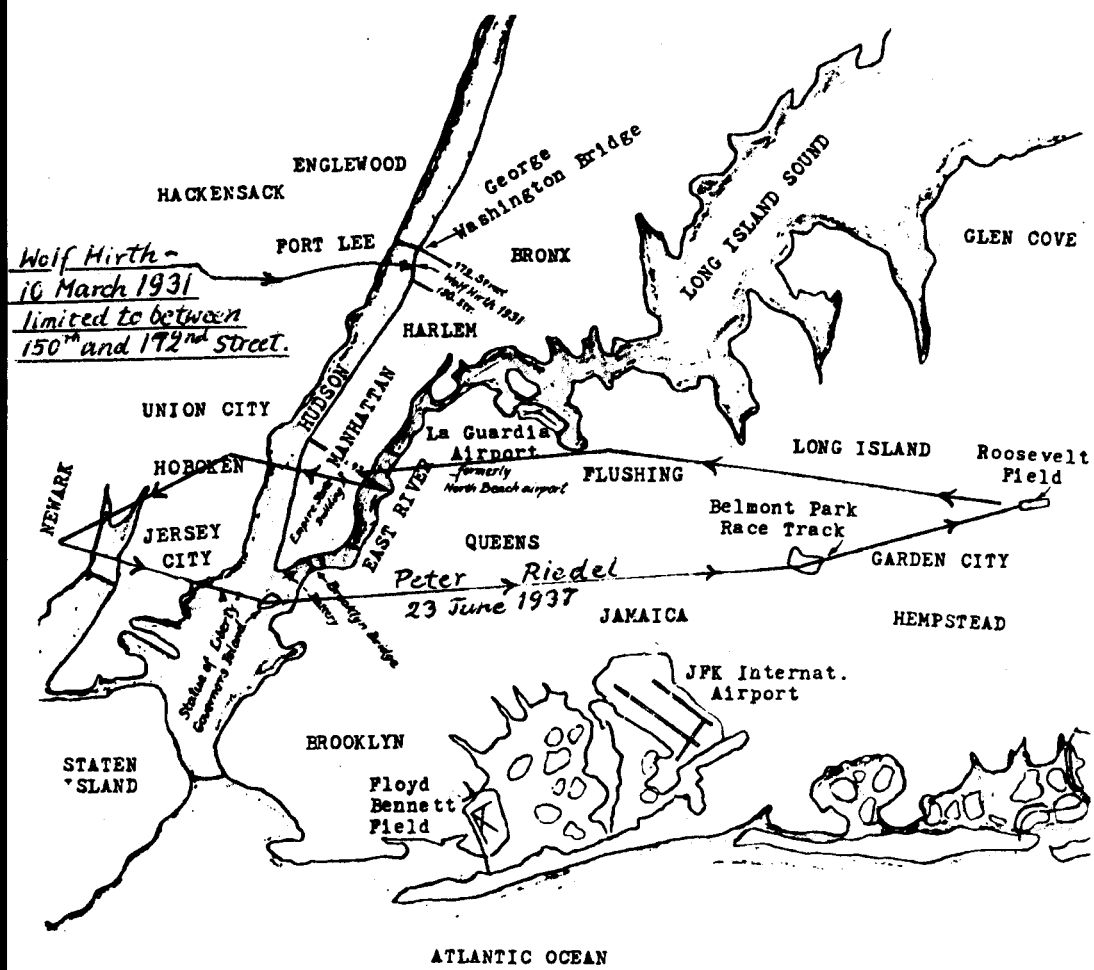
Soaring in a very strong wind and, being tossed about a bit (A Prüfing was rough at the best!), Hatcher suddenly became aware of strange sounds coming from the wing, which were quite abnormal. As he had visions of the wing breaking up, he landed at once on the crest of a ridge, cross wind ..... and blew over. He was uninjured but the machine was damaged. You can guess what he felt like when a mother cat and four kittens emerged from the wing and ran off! The farmyard cat had thought that the interior of the wing was a fine place to have her family. The strange sounds were their claws on the fabric as the Prüfling was banked round!"

PETER RIEDEL'S FLIGHT OVER NEW YORK IN 1937 - OVER THE "BIG APPLE."

"Coming from Miami's tropical heat, it surprised me that fog could form here in the north, during the month of June. What a contrast to Columbia, South America, which I had left a short time before! An invitation from the Soaring Society of America to take part as a foreign guest in the 1937 National Soaring Contest in Elmira had induced the management of SCADTA airline to give me, - one of their pilots - a special leave of absence."

In New York I found that a friend, now flying for Lufthansa, had spent seven years in New York City before returning to Germany. Several of his pals from a New Yorker Gliding Club met me at Newark airport with my new car that I had ordered while in Bogota. It was a shiny black Chevy. They also had arranged to pick up my sailplane from a ship in New York Harbour and had taken it to Roosevelt field, where it was waiting for me. All seemed incredibly good. The plane, SPERBER SENIOR, was one of a kind. It had a 17m wing span, instead of the standard Sperber's 15m. Years later, I was told that it contained a design error. In the wing centre section, the angle of incidence increased from the root to the outside .... just how much, I don't remember. But its flying performance and handling characteristics were good, though they might have been better without this mistake in the wing layout."

3 Days later ... Early next morning, we were on Roosevelt Field. The plane was quickly assembled and a clear sky with hardly any wind, promised thermals. My friends lined up the 225 hp Stearman for the air tow. I explained how this should be done. The big Stearman







WOLF HIRTH'S AND PETER RIEDEL'S SOARING FLIGHTS ABOVE NEW YORK CITY AREA.

Drawn: P. Riedel
Febr. 1977

taxied into position. The tow cable, steel like the ones used in Germany, tightened as it reached its 250 ft. length. A signal, and then the Stearman roared ahead, accelerating me with unaccustomed power. In just seconds, the Supersperber was airborn and I tried to follow the rapidly climbing bi-plane. One big thermal bounced him higher and hit me forcibly a moment later. That was a good one! Another followed - even stronger than the first. A quick glance at the altimetre - 300 metres ... 1,000 ft .... enough! Pang! went the tow cable and I threw the Sperber into a steep turn. The rate of climb dipped only for a second ... then came up again. Hurrah! In a strong thermal after the shortest tow of my life. While climbing in 700 ft/min lift, I could not help smiling when I saw the Stearman climbing on and on - finally out of sight. The pilot hadn't even been aware that I had long since released!

The time was now shortly before 10.00 a.m. The Roosevelt Raceway was directly underneath as I left my first thermal at 3,000 ft, close to some rapidly forming first puffs of cumulus clouds. Relaxing after concentrating on the variometer indications, I could see the impressive skyline of Manhatten, 23 miles away. Hampstead's suburbs were spreading in my direction, so I decided to fly towards the Belmont Park Racetrack: it could serve as an emergency landing field. Trying to stay as high as possible, it took some time before the Supersperber was circling over Belmont Park, where, in 1910, the first powered aircraft contest had taken place in New York. The cloudbase by now was 4,000 ft. North Beach Airport - today's La Guardia Field, was the next chance for an emergency landing. At that time, this small airstrip was nothing but a pebble-strewn peninsula jutting into the East River with an unpaved runway and a few crummy-looking hangars. Now the skyscrapers of downtown Manhattan appeared to be close indeed. The great Central Park beckoned. Would its green surfaces be large enough for an emergency landing? I did not want to endanger my sailplane for my main object was to take part in the Elmira National contest ... not this stunt of soaring above Manhatten's skyscrapers! But they attracted me against my will ... or better judgement. "Just give it a try" I told myself. I could always make it back to the pebbly beach, which I had inspected on the way out to Roosevelt Field, earlier that morning. Someone had given me a road map. For the first time, I looked it over carefully, while circling close to cloudbase. It showed the airports!! There was even one on Governor's Island ... That did it! With that field available, I could risk losing height temporarily, while making a dash straight for the Empire State Building! From there, it could only be five or more miles to Governor's Island and safety. The cloud shadows were moving slowly in my direction, so the wind was favourable. It was about noon now as the awesome and impressive canyons of downtown Manhattan opened up below me. Frankly, I looked down with trepidation. I was too uneasy to enjoy this fantastic sight. Something bothered me - scared me. No it was not the altitude. From this comfortable 3,000 ft, I could easily reach either the North Beach Airport or Governor's Island. Finally, I realised the problem. For the first time in my life at the controls of an aircraft, I was feeling dizzy from the height. I had felt this dizzyness when on high buildings or near mountain precipices ... but never before, while flying. Those buildings down there looked top heavy, like they were reaching up towards me, getting bigger and bigger. "Just don't look down"! I told myself. "Look to the horizen". This helped a lot. Only once did I swallow, take a deep breath ... and look down. There they were! The Chrysler and Empire State buildings were reaching up above the others. Finally I pumped up my nerve, fumbled for my Leica, and prepared it for some shots. Anyone, of course, could take such photos from an aeroplane, so I had to be sure that my gullwing was in the shot. What a sight! I had soared above Berlin, Rio de Janeiro, Sau Paulo and Buenos Aires (in the Fafnir - CW), but this! This was unsurpassed!

Circling directly over the Empire State Building, I aimed my camera at the tallest building in the world at that time. Quickly now ... another shot at the Chrysler Building ... the second largest,as the target, with the gull-wing pointing directly at it. When I looked up, it became clear that it was high time to concentrate again on soaring because during this minute or two, I had been losing height fast. That landing field on Governor's Island suddenly seemed rather small. If I missed the approach, I would be floating in the Upper Bay. Now, 2,200 ft! Man, you'd better find lift now ... quick! There was the Brooklyn Bridge and, on the other side of the channel, large chimneys of a power plant were sending up columns of smoke into the hot afternoon air. There ... there would be my last chance. If I couldn't find a thermal over those chimneys, where else? My heart was pumping as the Sperber Senior lost more altitude during the crossing of the East River Channel. Now the black circular openings of the chimneys moved beneath my wings. Nothing ... nothing yet. Then suddenly, the bump I had longed for. The variometer jumped from "Sinkt" to "Steig t". More than 1000 ft./min lift! My sailplane was carried quickly back to 4,000 ft. and even higher ... closer to 5,000 ft. "Goodbye Governor's Island, you'll not see me this time". Now I felt much safer in returning over downtown Manhatten. Circling slowly towards the Hudson, I could see a large passenger liner edging in to its birth. It was surrounded by little tugs ... and the grey water was swirling around the long ship's sleek, dark hull.

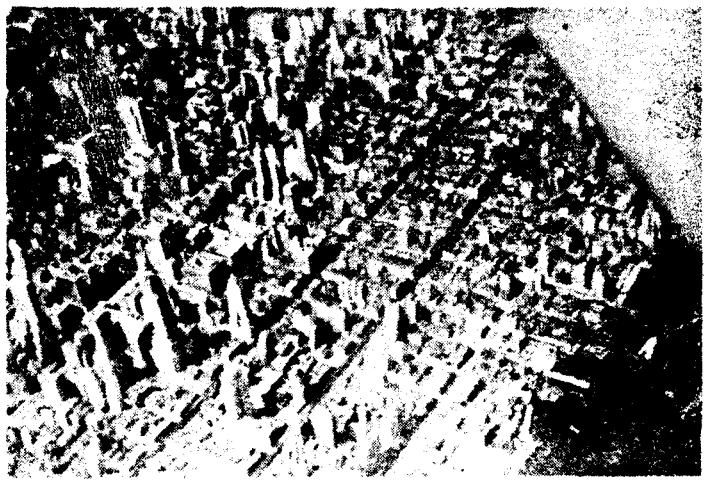
There was Newark Airport on the map, inviting me to make a hop across the Hudson. Union City, Hoboken, Jersey City, Newark ... one after another, they came under my wings. The paved runways of Newark airport reflected in the sun. Just a few days ago, I had arrived there with Karl Fromm. Perhaps he would read about my flight in the newspapers... I hoped so.

The thermals were strong. Staying aloft was easy. So, I decided to extend the duration of the flight as long as possible. I wasn't hungry, even though breakfast was a long time ago. This flight was giving me good practice for the coming contest. I hadn't been soaring for more than a year and this ship was new to me. Flying a Tin Goose Ford Trimotor in Columbia wasn't exactly good preparation for soaring. So the hours passed slowly while I made my way back towards Queens, Belmont Racetrack, Mineola - and finally Roosevelt Field. There I spent my altitude with loops, Immelman turns, and landed shortly before 6 pm.

Two of the racing car drivers from Roosevelt Raceway had observed my antics. They appeared while we were bringing the Sperber into the hangar and seemed to be fascinated by the idea of soaring. Of course, I wasn't the first one to soar over New York City. Wolf Hirth, who spent nearly one year in the USA (1930-1931) was launched by bungee cord from the bluffs above the Hudson river's East shore near the George Washington Bridge on March 30th, 1930. He quickly gained altitude in the slope lift and rose to a maximum of 1000 ft. above the river. The New York Police Dept. had stopped all traffic near Hirth's landing site, and were keeping order with an especially large detachment of officers. Hirth's permit to fly had been granted on condition that he would stay within the limits of 150th street and 172nd street - near the George Washington Bridge. The stiff westerly wind might have permitted him to soar in slope currents all the way down to the Battery - more than 10 miles away. But Wolf resisted this temptation and landed after 40 minutes, when police flagged him down. He performed a very difficult landing on the small open space on top of the bluff, from where he had taken off. One should not forget that the sailplanes of those days had no spoilers or brakes. (Hirth was flying his Musterle, which later returned to Germany. CW) These were first introduced about four years later. Wolf Hirth often showed a film taken from the

ground that portrayed him soaring back and forth along the Hudson river bank. Since it was March - and very windy on a cold day, there was no chance for him to try thermal soaring. In his comments, written shortly after the flight, he foresaw the day when a pilot would be able to soar above Manhatten using the strong thermals generated from the Downtown area. I was the lucky one to be there at the right time, with a good ship, and to have the chance to do it. It was truly an unforgettable experience.

This outstanding account has been reprinted, shortened, from "The Bungee Cord" article 'Over the Big Apple' by Peter Riedel, on P.8 of Vol No. 4, No. 1 of March 1978. The story has made a great impression on contemporary American glider pilots as soaring over New York has been prohibited for years.



Above: A Super-Sperber's eye view of Manhattan Island -- a different sky-line from another time. Note the definite crank of the gull wing just visible in the upper right of the photo; can you pick out Chrysler Bldg'

BOOKS

Nurflügel by Raimar Horten and Peter Selinger. The Story of the Horten aircraft. It can be obtained from: Herbert Weishaupt Verlag, Postfach 29, Berlin Ring 4, Graz, Austria, and possibly from: Beaumonts Aviation Bookshop, Holloway Road, London. Tel 01-272-3630. This is a limited edition, only 1000 copies having been printed. Therefore its price might be as high as about £26. The German text is supported by an English translation by Jan Scott and by many photographs and drawings, some of which are original. We highly recommend the book to all aviation enthusiasts.

DRAWINGS. The VGC has now received from America, by kind courtesy of Beryl Reeks, a complete set of Grunau Baby 2A building drawings and is now in a position to send copies of the drawings to anyone who needs them. Prints from the drawings, or a print of an individual drawing, can be obtained cheaply. The VGC has also a set of old blue prints from the Rhönadler 1932, but these would have to be traced before copies could be obtained.

MICROFILM. The VGC has microfilm of the drawings of the following sailplanes that are still in current use: Rohnbussard, Hütter H.17A, Weihe, Kranich, Minimoa 1936, Gö 1 Wolf. Copies of this 35 mm microfilm can easily be obtained, as well as A4 size prints, also cheaply. Larger prints would be more expensive. For the above Microfilm and drawings, please apply to C. Wills, "Wings", The Street, Ewelme, Oxon OX9 6HQ. Tel: 0491 39245.

EDITORIAL

We would like to take this opportunity to wish all our members who are going to Hungary, the BEST OF LUCK.

It is the longest SAFARI ever undertaken by members of the VGC. Thoby Fisher has already left with his Olympia Meise and, just to show us that the journey really is not so far, he is going from Bristol to Budapest via Italy and Greece! One almost wonders whether we should not attempt to have a VGC Rally in ASIA next!

Be that as it may, it seems timely that we should celebrate our 10th year as a club by going on this long Safari to Budapest.

As far as we know, five teams are going from this country: Eon Baby - P. Moran and syndicate; T.31 - Colin Anson and syndicate; Scud 2 - F. Bourne; Rhönbussard - C. Wills and Ted Hull; Meise - Thoby Fisher (already almost there). To them ..... and all the others ..... from Holland, Switzerland, France, Germany and, we believe, for the first time, from Austria, we wish them Happy journeys! Sok szerencsét kivánok! (all the best). Jo Repulest! (Good flying).

We encourage them with the cry - FORWARDS TO THE EAST!

HUNGARY

We now have further information to supersede the report in our last Newsletter.

The site to which we are going, marked BIA on the small map in our last Newsletter, is a flat airfield, at least one mile from the now disused hill site FARKASHEGY, photos of which were published in our last Newsletter. It would seem that our instructions on how to get there were correct.

The Club Houses, which we are to inhabit, are on the flat airfield. (Not the one in the photographs of the old site, published in our last Newletter.)

The Towplanes. These are the FZL Wilgas and Gavrons which are fitted with Russian radial engines. It is thought that at least the smaller of the two will tow as slowly as 55 mph.

In the photographs printed in the last letter, the orientation of Budapest and the Danube with the old site may not have been correct.

Frontier Crossing. The Hungarian Oldtimer Club has only suggested that we cross at Nickelsdorf/Hegyeshalom as this was conveniently on the line Vienna-Budapest, the roads are good, and access to the site, easy. However, the Hungarian frontier may be crossed at any point suitable for our members.

Registration with the Hungarian Police will be organised and forms will be distributed.