

AGC Weekly News

AGC AGM

Due to Covid dragging on and on, our AGM will take place in the form of a Zoom meeting this Saturday morning, September 25, at 09.h30. Our Hon Secretary Diane has already emailed all the members with an agenda and clear instructions of how to log on and participate on Zoom, so a big turnout should be possible.

NB - Just a reminder that to qualify to vote (yes, there will be voting on Zoom) you need to be a paid-up member or at least have an agreed payment plan in place with the treasurer. Unfortunately, there are still many members who do not fit either of these criteria - but there is still time to rectify this.

More on the Dimona Saga

Ian Williams



VH-GNW during better days in Australia

This is the second chapter of the Dimona background and deals with the acquisition of two Dimona Motorgliders, VH-WVW and VH-GNW, from Australia two years ago. It was a really entertaining experience which I will try and share with you all – perhaps with a few creative literary variations, but hopefully not too many.

To introduce the key people...

- **Grant Nelson** who we all know is now an Aussie resident. He runs a glider repair business at Lake Keepit.
- **Steve Cronin** - is an ANZ composite engineer, AGC member and a real good bloke.
- **John** - was the owner of WVW when it met its final demise (or in this case, final flight). By all accounts, he has an interesting background in Australian aviation history, having amongst other things, been a Royal Flying Doctor pilot. I was told that at one time he owned a DC-3. I reckon he could be described as “a bit of an individualist”, maybe one with the view that rules are more discussion topics.

- **Rohan** - was one of the two syndicate members I was dealing with from the Hunter Valley Gliding Club (HVGC) relating to VH-GNW. A real nice dude and tremendous help and support later.
- **Dieter** - was the other GNW syndicate member. He was the primary engineer maintaining GNW. His engineering skills did show because apart from U/C damage, the aircraft was in very good condition for its age. He also was a fantastic help later.
- **Will** - was an owner in Tasmania prior to John.
- **Terry** - Terry and I knew each other as we both were in the avionics trade with the RNZAF from the late '60's to mid-'70's (that is 1960's). He is now retired and lives in Sydney.

This story began during a phone conversation with Grant when he let it slip that there was a Dimona owned by a syndicate at the Hunter Valley Gliding Club in NSW Australia, which was damaged during a heavy landing (VH-GNW).

That did stimulate some interest because I did enjoy the restoration of GCB and discovering that they are a ripper little motorglider. Grant then went on to say that another Dimona was wrecked at Scone airport, also in NSW. Now that did definitely stimulate the grey matter! I did some homework and discovered that WVW had been converted into an upside-down pile of bits at the airport during a storm - and had remained so for a couple of years. The local Scone Council were getting a bit shitty and putting pressure on John to get rid of it. The problem was that John actually lived in Tasmania. There is apparently an interesting story about the exact reason why WVW was at Scone (but better not go any further there). John also had a reputation of having some compliance issues, especially in relation to maintenance (won't go too far there either).

I knew that WVW would only be a source of parts as GNW was the primary aircraft of interest. After discussing all this with my mate Steve, we decided an inspection was in order.

So, after arranging to meet John at Scone, and Rohan and Dieter at the Hunter valley Gliding Club at (Warkworth - about 85Km south of Scone), Steve and I set off across the ditch.

We met at Sydney airport, hired a car and after a night in Sydney, headed north. Our first stop was Scone airport where we met John and checked out the remains of WVW. While most of it was of no value, there were some really expensive bits that were actually OK. Like the engine, prop, undercarriage, instruments, wheels, brakes, etc. Of interest, as the aircraft was blown upside down, the U/C and the mounting attachment to the fuse was still totally intact (the only airframe structure that was). One wing was totally intact and virtually undamaged. John was an interesting dude to talk to. He looked a bit like Ernest Hemmingway's twin brother. Because I knew he was under pressure to clean up the wreck, I think he thought that this dick-head Kiwi with rocks in his head, and his mate, were like the answer to a maiden's prayer. When I asked him what price he wanted, it was well under what I thought it was worth. So, without any further thinking I became the owner of WVW, cunningly disguised as a pile of bits. Logistics issues sorted later.

Next, Steve and I headed South to the Hunter Valley Gliding Club to check out GNW.

VH-WVW history

Prior to ending up a pile of fiberglass at Scone, VH-WVW, along with VH-GNW and our Dimona

ZK-GCB, all served with the Royal Thai Air Force from 1982 to around 1992. After disposal, WVW was owned and operated by a Tasmanian syndicate. During that time, as well as cruising around Tasmania, it made numerous crossings of Bass Strait and even trips to the Northern Territory to fly the legendary "Morning Glory". I am not sure of the exact sequence, but I think John joined the WVW syndicate later during its life in Tasmania. I know Will was involved with a major engine repair when it dropped a valve off the Tasmanian coast (what happens when maintenance is neglected). Landfall was made but the engine was totally destroyed. Note - correct tappet clearances are VERY important as they play a critical part in valve cooling.

A new "short" engine was obtained from Limbach in Germany which included factory heads with two plugs per cylinder (usually single ignition). A "wasted spark" electronic ignition system drove the secondary system.

WVW had another couple of incidents prior to its demise, again with John at the helm. Another emergency landing in Tasmania saw him force-land on the side of a hill, whereupon the aircraft went into reverse and broke the rudder on the back fence. He had another incident later which involved a damaged tailplane retaining pin. This resulted in an unscheduled tailplane departure at a reasonably critical phase of operations. Diamond had previously generated an AD specifically to address this issue. This again reinforces the importance of "proper" maintenance. Sadly, its final landing was a result of a storm at Scone where being parked outside, it was blown off its tie-downs, landing upside down some distance away. Canopy smashed, fuse broken into a number of component parts - and not at all economic to repair.

VH-GNW history

GNW also has an interesting background. It had been owned by the same syndicate ever since liberation from the Royal Thai Air Force. Dieter was the primary care giver over that time and was very particular with the paperwork and maintenance. A situation arose where the aircraft hadn't flown for a while, so Dieter decided an engine run was needed. So minus wings, he set it up for a ground run. Apparently, the battery was flat so he did a hand start. Well, that was when the shit really did hit the fan. By all accounts, no chocks and the throttle a bit too far open was a bad combination. GNW decided to do a cross country all by itself, racing across the airfield, through a fence and into some trees. The result - broken U/C and prop, plus other

superficial damage. The insurance claim was substantial: engine rebuild, new U/C and prop, plus more. Eventually when GNW was airworthy once more, renewal of the insurance cover was refused. Murphy's Law persisted and after only 10 hours after this major repair, Dieter sadly

made a heavy landing at Warkworth. Apparently at the time the weather was decidedly dodgy. This time the complete U/C parted company from the fuse, skidding on its guts to a stop, breaking the new prop in the process.



VH-WVW picketed at Jacobs Well/Heckfield, QLD, Australia, 15/11/14

A major setback, to say the least, especially with no insurance. So, the owners de-rigged it and parked it in its hangar, wondering what to do next. A year or more passed – and then the “rocks in his head” Kiwi and his mate Steve turned up.

Overall though, we were favorably impressed with the general condition of GNW, apart from the U/C damage. It was an old motorglider with only 100 hours or so to go before needing its 3000 hour inspection. But you could see the result of Dieters engineering expertise.

So again, rather than make an offer, I was interested in what they wanted for it. Well, the amount was also very favorable, so I became the new owner of GNW. Unlike WVW, GNW is an economic repair prospect. And as with WVW, the logistics still to be sorted.

Chapter 2

Now what next? Steve and I drove back to Sydney, then flew back to NZ. The next month or so was spent getting freight estimates. Some of the quotes were telephone numbers, but the company CH Robinson did give me a good freight rate and all the other included costs for a 40-foot container from the Hunter Valley Gliding Club to Ardmore. But first I had to do the packing.

So back to Sydney (just me this time), hired a car and drove back to Warkworth. This time I drove

up the Putty Road, through the Blue Mountains. A really nice drive but probably more black than blue these days. Being solo on this trip I was able to stay in accommodation at the Hunter Valley Gliding Club. Totally fascinating that was too, because early every morning large numbers of kangaroos were hopping around in the mist. Some of them were really big buggers!

A 40-foot container was delivered to the HVGC site so work began. I had preciously contacted the Scone Council regarding what we were up to. So first off, Rohan, Dieter and I headed up to Scone with an open glider trailer belonging to the HVGC and proceeded to sort out the remains of WVW. My mate Terry and his wife turned up, trying out their new caravan, which was great.

Dieter had a big battery-powered angle grinder which did a great job. My plan was to chuck away a lot of the broken bits. In the event we made only one trip to the tip. One wing was just too good to toss so I kept it, the other was chopped up for some skin material. I also kept a section of the rear fuse, recovered the engine, U/C, prop and all the other good bits. All got packed on the open trailer and taken back to the HVGC.

Packing both lots of aircraft parts and components into the container was reasonably straight forward. We hired a water blaster and

cleaned as much as we could to prevent any Aussie nasties creating havoc in NZ.

A couple of interesting things happened though. The first thing was that we had packed all the heavy stuff in the container, thinking that we could finish off the next morning, as the truck was due the next day. Well, at about 7 am in the morning I heard this loud truck-like noise. Shit! It was the truck to pick up the container. The driver though was really obliging and gave us an extra hour to finish the packing, so we really discovered what balls to the wall meant. Success though.

The second thing was, as we were congratulating ourselves, Dieter asked me if I had "got the stuff" from a storage box in the hangar. Well, er, no

actually. By now the truck was disappearing down the road. The "stuff" was actually enough engine spares to set up as a Limbach dealer. To cut a longer story short, Bunnings gave me a reasonable deal on a couple of big plastic containers, so I chucked the "stuff" into the rental car and headed back to Sydney. Time was getting a bit critical as I was booked to come back to NZ the next day. In Sydney I stayed with my mate Terry in Blacktown, and that night and we both repacked the "stuff" into the two Bunnings containers. I delivered them to the freight company, delivered the rental car back to the depot at the airport and flew back to NZ.

To be continued...



H36 Dimona at the Royal Thai Airforce Museum, Don Muang/Bangkok (mentioned in Ian's previous Chapter 1)



After enjoying the "Yellow PIK" for 22 years I've decided it's time to upgrade. The PIK20 is a strong, fast 15m glider that soars well. It rigs easily and has an excellent fibreglass trailer. I'm looking for serious offers over \$20k, making it great bang for your buck! There's also some interest in forming a syndicate at Omarama if you don't want outright ownership. [Contact John Robinson](#) Phone 0210637616.

Proposed New Glider Charges – Something to Think About Now

Grahame Player

Single subscription scheme

Advantages:

Some simplicity.

Current "B" scheme members get cheaper flying.

May encourage more flying by existing "A" scheme members.

Disadvantages (or Problems to be solved)

Existing "A" scheme members who do limited flying in club aircraft effectively subsidise other members - especially current "B" scheme.

May discourage some existing or prospective members e.g. Some proficient pilots do a limited amount of gliding. Already the existing membership fees plus glider hire charges, when converted to an hourly rate are considered exorbitant if only a few hours are flown annually.

Many private owners put considerable effort into the club - especially as instructors and tow pilots. While some do fly club gliders in addition to their own, the additional impost may be seen as an unbearable burden.

Separate glider charges will still have to be maintained in order to cope with visiting pilots and provisional members doing "additional flights at club rates".

As recording becomes better managed, the charging of glider time to "A" members will be less of a burden.

Charging for Competition flying and Daily bookings will have to be resolved.

Past experience was that only half of the "B" scheme members did more hours than if they had been paying "A" scheme rates. This means that the "underusers" may get a reduced rate, but are unlikely to do more flying i.e. we get less money from them! The "overusers" who already get their

fill also benefit from the reduced rate but are unlikely to do more flying.

Democracy... In any democratic decision there will be a defeated section. Some of the "defeated" will go along with the decision and some may feel aggrieved & take further action. Our club relies mainly on discretionary spending and not on a captive audience. The aggrieved may take their spending elsewhere (even to another club), thus leaving our club to exist on a smaller base with higher fees.

Other relevant points affecting Subscriptions

Using 2020 accounts as a base, subscriptions were \$33,402 and glider time \$41,960. To maintain at least the same level of revenue, ordinary subscriptions would have to increase by a factor of over 125% i.e. from say \$600 to \$1,350 and assumes that the same level of membership is maintained.

A further (and possible unrelated factor) to ask is - Why are a number of pilots bypassing the Auckland Gliding Club and going to other clubs? Will increased subscriptions exacerbate this?

If simplifying the system is one of the main drivers of the proposed change, I feel that there are far better ways of achieving this.

Our current membership registered with NZGA is 100. Of these,

- 25 are private owners
- 8 are non-flying members or do not regularly fly with our club.
- A number are tow pilots only

The vast majority of private owners do most of their flying in their own gliders. A small number are building up cross country experience and will, in the short term, use club gliders. As their experience grows, use of club gliders will usually decrease markedly. i.e. the financial benefit to them will be relatively short term.



UAM?



intelligence) with IA (irritating acronyms). Now, what do you say to UAM? Some will think of Underwater to Air missile, but no, what we have in this interesting piece submitted by Gerard Robertson is all about Urban Air Mobility. Take a look at

<https://leehamnews.com/2021/09/21/airbus-presents-their-cityairbus-uam-market-entry/>

In our present age of fashionable acronyms, one can be forgiven for confusing AI (artificial

The Auckland Soaring Champs are ON



**1ST JAN
9TH JAN
2022**

**SOARING
CHAMPIONSHIPS**

**COMPETITIVE FUN
TASK WEEK
FOR ALL LEVELS**

**COST \$230
EARLYBIRD \$180**
EARLY BIRD ENDS 1ST DEC
STANDARD TOWING
CHARGE \$66
**ENTRY FORMS ON
GNZ EVENT SITE**
ALL OTHER DETAILS ON
GLIDINGAUCKLAND.CO.NZ

Convenors: Simon Gault & Ross Gaddes
Competition Director: Mike Marra
Email jmmarra1@gmail.com
or rsgaddes@gmail.com
for more information

**Auckland
Gliding Club**

**QUAIL LODGE
smeg**
technology with style

Weekend Weather

For the sake of continuity, here is Gerard Robertson's submission for the weekend weather. At least with all the recent rain, Auckland's water

storage is now sitting at just over 80%, so perhaps we will escape summer water restrictions this year.

Hunua

23 September 2021

Friday 24 SEP		Partly cloudy, with isolated showers clearing in the afternoon. Southwesterlies, possibly strong in the morning.	▲ 18°C ▼ 7°C
Saturday 25 SEP		Partly cloudy. Southwest winds dying out early, northwesterlies developing late.	▲ 19°C ▼ 10°C
Sunday 26 SEP		A few showers, but rain for a time later, possibly heavy. Northwest wind turn southwest later.	▲ 18°C ▼ 6°C

Reminder of some important Operational Changes

Most of you already know about the changes that have been implemented regarding timekeeping on the flightline and for the billing of flights. The handbook **"How We Do Things"** has been updated accordingly and distributed by Roy Innes directly to you via email. To sum up these changes:

- Time sheets are being completed electronically on a Chromebook.
- No Launch Tickets are issued or sold. The old blue Winch Tickets still in circulation may still be used.

- No payments are to be accepted on the day except for Trial Flights and Visiting Pilots. Member pilots will be billed later via email.

Shortly before we re-commence flying, another more detailed reminder will be included in the newsletter to ensure everyone is fully aware of these procedures.

Special thanks to all the members who have contributed towards making the newsletter what it is.

It may come as a relief to some members that this is my final newsletter compilation. Peter W.