

## AUSTRALIAN NEWS

*Continued from the May-June issue are the accounts of the record flights made in the Kirby "Gull."*

### NEW VICTORIAN RECORDS FOR HEIGHT AND DISTANCE

First Interstate Cross Country Soaring Flight.

Jerilderie (NSW) to Essendon (Victoria) 169 miles.

Distance in straight line—NSW section, Jerilderie to River Murray (State border) near Tocumwal, 33 miles. Victorian Section, Tocumwal to Essendon, 136 miles.

Launch—aero tow to 1400 feet; maximum height, 9000 feet (over Shepparton, Victoria). Victorian height record raised to 7600 ft. (Previous record, Norm Hyde, 5300' 12/30/39, Geelong, "Grunau").

Victorian Cross Country record raised to 136 miles (Previous record, Norm Hyde, "Grunau Baby," Laverton to Beveridge, 30 miles, 1/22/39).

*Report by Pilot, Harry Ryan—*

"When the Tiger Moth party arrived from Narrandera no time was lost in setting out the tow rope, filling up the thermos flask with drinking water, putting in some fruit and checking over the maps and proposed course of flight. However, by the time everything was ready it was ten o'clock and I pulled the release at 1400 feet at about 10:04 a. m. after a short tow upwind by the Tiger with Merv Waghorn at the controls. The wind was varying between 20 and 25 miles per hour, at a guess, and although I had cut loose into a thermal I drifted rapidly towards the town without gaining much height. However, Jerilderie is quite a small town and I did not have much trouble in keeping on the outskirts while hanging around between 1000 ft. and 2000 ft. After what seemed a long time, but was probably about a quarter of an hour, I struck a better thermal downwind from the town and this took me up to 3000 feet and thereby started the journey south. Although somewhat rough and uneven the thermals rapidly improved so that by the time I reached Tocumwal Aerodrome thirty-three miles away, I had reached 8800 above the take off point. Tocumwal is right on the border of N.S.W. and Victoria and I got a great kick out of being the first glider pilot to fly interstate in Australia and thoroughly enjoyed the sight of the River Murray stretched out below me marking the boundary of the two States. I now began to think that I really might make Melbourne, which up till then had been treated partly as a joke by most of us, as they all wore a very wide grin and said "See you in Melbourne" when I took off. Shortly afterwards, when near Shepparton, I reached my maximum height of 9000 feet and left a good up

current at that, owing to a slight touch of giddiness, not wanting to spoil the flight by air sickness as I had once done on a flight of 85 miles from Condonbohn to Barmedman. I found some good areas of lift without having to circle when approaching Melbourne, and did not fully realise at the time that a change in the behaviour of the "Gull" was due to the strength of the wind having increased considerably. With plenty of height to spare (6500 ft.) I cruised joyfully over the suburbs south of Essendon Airport but got a rude awakening when I turned towards the said airport and found that I could not make any headway without putting the nose of the Gull down to 55 mph and more. I was sinking rapidly and thought I would have to pick the softest looking rooftop, but struck another patch of lift and after watching an airliner take off and get out of the way, I made a bee line for the tarmac. Unfortunately though flying at a much faster speed than usual, I misjudged my approach somewhat and still had some height to lose at the end of the drome so was compelled to execute a sharp turn low down. As soon as I came around into wind again the strength of the latter was such that I only had a forward run of four or five yards after the skid touched down and I had to crouch forward in the cockpit with the stick pressed forward also, to prevent the Gull being blown over. However, the R.A.A.F. boys came to the rescue and offered me the shelter of their hangar, for which I was very grateful. The total distance was 169 miles and the time of landing was 2:05 p. m. so that under normal conditions I still had about three more hours flying time left, which makes it rather unfortunate that I had not prepared myself with maps for a longer flight following the coast down south."

PARKES to NARROMINE—63 miles.

*Pilot, Dr. G. A. M. Heydon. 2100 feet to 6100 feet.*

On Saturday 29th December 1945, Dr. Heydon was launched from Parkes Aerodrome (1030') by aerotow to 2100 ft., releasing at 11:20 a. m. and proceeded towards Narromine in clear weather conditions with a light southerly wind. On the way to Peak Hill (877') which was passed at 12:33 p. m. he was seldom above 3000 ft. From there to Narromine the lift was down and at times he was down to 700 ft. Narromine (776') was reached at 1:52 p. m. He flew on five miles past Narromine but conditions were bad so after flying in a fairly regular thermal over the drome a landing was made on the aerodrome at 3:28 p. m. after a 63 mile flight during which the maximum height reached was 6100 feet. NARROMINE to three miles west of GOONUMBLA—50 miles. *Pilot, Len Schultz. 2000 feet to 7500 feet.*

On Monday 31st December 1945, Len Schultz was launched at 9:35 a. m. but

returned to the drome after 20 minutes with an unserviceable variometer. Variometer trouble was apparently caused by the balls sticking due to becoming statically charged in extreme dry conditions. (The temperature was 103°F. in the shade at ground level.) Wiping them and cleaning out tubes fixed up the trouble. He was again launched to 2000 ft. at 11:15 a. m. in a light E.N.E. wind, with clouds forming. Good lift was found and at a height of 7500 feet a course was set for Parkes. Peak Hill was reached at 1 p. m. and not long after at Goonumbla (1038') a landing was made due to the lift failing.

Three miles west of GOONUMBLA to two miles south of GILGANDRA—93 miles. *Pilot, Mervyn Waghorn. 1200 feet to 12,000 feet.*

On Tuesday 1/1/46, Merv Waghorn was aerotowed to 1200 feet (from the paddock in which Len Schultz landed) in clear weather with a S.W. breeze. He released at 10:20 a. m. and gradually came down to about 400 ft. ready to land when he caught a good thermal just near a dam in which Martin Warner and Harry Ryan were swimming. This took him to 9500 ft. Thermals were good but far apart during this part of the trip. Peak Hill was passed at 12:45 p. m. at 8000 ft.

Tomingley (836') was reached at 1 p. m. with 11,000 feet and at 1:50 p. m. scattered clouds had formed and Dubbo (867') was sighted. At Dubbo 1200 ft. was obtained (temperature 35 deg. F.). At 3:13 p. m. Gilgandra (942') was sighted from 8000 feet and rain commenced to fall. No lift was encountered after this and a landing was made at 3:55 p. m. after a 93 mile flight in 6 hours 35 minutes.

DUBBO—out and return. 600 feet to 9700 feet. *Pilot, Martin Warner.*

On Thursday 3rd January 1946, M. Warner was launched from the Airstrip at Dubbo in a strong west wind to a height of 600 feet. In very turbulent conditions 3000 feet was reached and from there to 9700 feet just in cloud, easier thermals were encountered though conditions were very rough. The ground party was sure that he had "burned his boats" and was very much surprised when he came back into sight again, as it did not seem possible to work back against the strong wind.

"Soaring Flight—The Art of Gliding" by Terence Horsley. Publishers, Eyre and Spottiswoode, London, September, 1944. This work is of 303 pages (8½" by 5½") written in excellent literary style (the author has written 6 other books) and contains 41 full page photographs apart from diagrams. (From the Australian Gliding Association Circular No. 42.)