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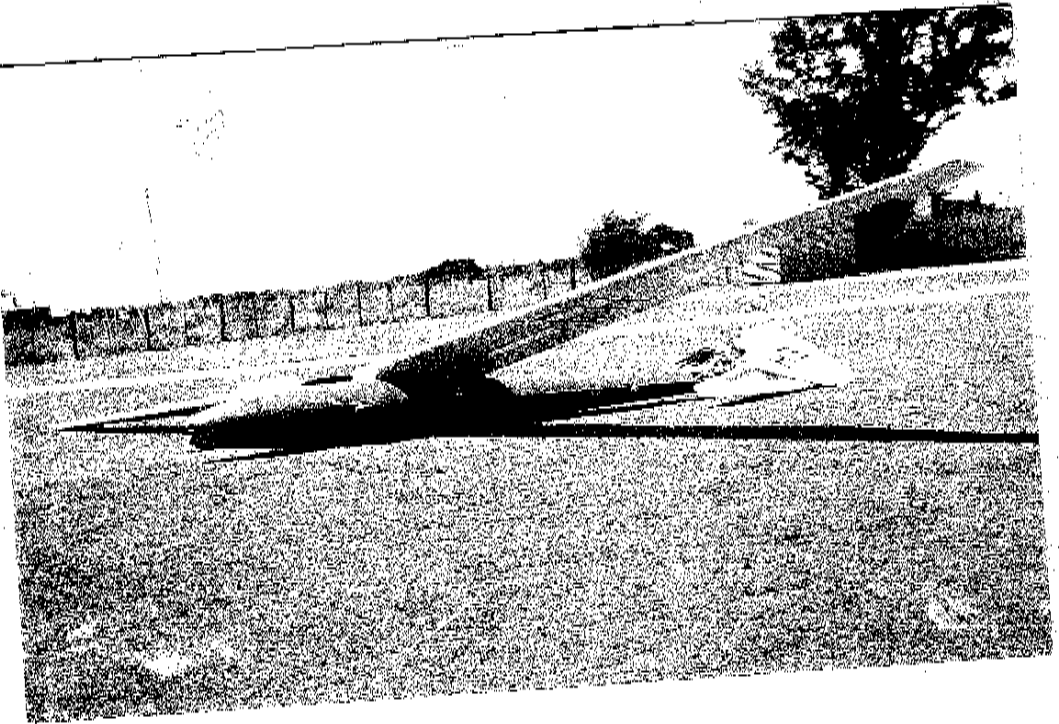
TWENTY-FIFTH
ANNIVERSARY





Many clubs are born through the efforts of a dedicated few who are long on enthusiasm and usually short on cash. It was no different with the formation of the Hawkes Bay Gliding Club on the 4th May 1957 when the inaugural meeting elected officers to the committee and so set in motion events which continue to provide pleasure to its members to this day, and fond memories for past members who are no longer able to fly or join in the social activities.

The original committee comprising President Mr G.K van Ash; Vice President, Mr A. Holdsworth; Secretary, Mr C.N Brayshaw; Captain, Mr R. Russell; Executive Committee, Messrs K.R Reiper, P. Gibb, R. Spiller and B. O'Keefe were able to get the club airborne through the generous help of Mr Russell who lent both a single and a twin seater to the club. Two years later the club purchased its own Rhonlerche two seat trainer ZK-GBE for £900 financed largely by £5 debentures.



From its inception until 1960 the club was nomadic, operating from many locations including Poukawa, Ocean Beach, Beacons Airfield and various farms belonging to members or their friends.

The first permanent flying site was Mr J. Joll's farm at the base of Te Mata Peak on the Waimarama road which offered good ridge soaring above the peak itself. Auto towing, usually with Mr van Ash's Studebaker Wagon at Beacons Airfield, and Aero towing behind a Tiger Moth borrowed from Waipukurau at \$5 per hour gave way to winch launching at Joll's farm with a winch build by Mr van Ash using a Bren Gun Carrier as the basic Vehicle. Club membership at this time was \$8 joining fee and \$3 Annual subscription. Gliding time was 6d per minute and 2/6d for a winch launch.

With membership around 50 or so in 1961 many were pressed into service to assist with building a Hangar to house the Club's equipment and end the necessity to rig and derig each flying day. A slingsby T31 trainer ZK-GAW was purchased from the Manatutu Gliding Club in a written off condition for \$230 and rebuilt by two dedicated members. This aircraft was sold in 1963 as it was not as satisfactory

as at first thought, probably due to its open cockpit and our often chilly weather. Following the sale of ZK-GAW the club purchased a new Rhonadler K7 ZK-GDA for \$1500. This aircraft saw four years service before being sold to Piako Gliding Club.

As the expertise of club pilots increased, together with their greater understanding of meteorological conditions conducive to long cross country flights, it became evident that the Te Mata Peak site was somewhat limited and members on occasion flew from Bridge Pa. Finally it was decided to move the Club's base to Bridge Pa in 1966 when the Hawkes Bay and East Coast Aero Club welcomed the Gliding Club on a permanent basis with the attitude that it would be of benefit to both clubs. This has indeed proved to be so and this mutual benefit continues to this day.

Piper Super Cub ZK-BOY was in 1965 to become the club's first full time tow plane. This aircraft performed very well until the C of A and engine hours expired presenting the club with the alternative of carrying out a major overhaul or finding a replacement. At that time an offer was made to the club that it be swapped for a Piper Pawnee in

flying condition and valued at £1200. This offer was taken up so providing us with ZK-BDQ late in 1967.

The club aircraft were then ZK-GBE, which was sold later that year to Waikukurau Gliding Club together with the winch, Rhonsegler K6 CR ZK-GEH which was purchased in 1967 and remained with the club until mid 1980. Also in 1967 ASK 13 ZK-GFL was purchased for £2050 which provided faithful service and saw many pilots off on their first solo until 1981 when it was sold to Gisborne Gliding Club to become the first Glider in their newly formed club. Incidentally in 1969 both GBE and GEH were written off in separate accidents at the same time and were subsequently bought back from the insurance company and rebuilt.

However, with the time consuming Rig/Derig and equipment storage problem again, this time at Bridge Pa, the main priority was the building of another Hangar which was approved by the landlord HB & EC Aero Club in 1968 with the Hangar becoming a reality in 1969 following much hard work by our club members. The names of those who donated generously of their time and money for this project can be seen today set in bricks in the hangar floor.

Firmly established in our new home at Bridge Pa, many away weekends for fun or competitions were enjoyed by our members with many a tall story being told around the campfires.

Fund raising, as always, received much attention in order to keep the aircraft flying, equipment serviced and the club solvent in order to meet future commitments. Low membership numbers continued to be a problem (as it is today) and much time was devoted to organising public displays, open days and scholarships in order to boost membership, as it is the week by week cashflow from flying members that provides the much needed funds.

The club continued to prosper and many meritorious flights were made for distance and height gains along with some National records. The club K6 CR was used successfully in competitions and for a relatively small provincial club we can be particularly proud of these achievements together with those of private owners within our club.

Mid 1972 saw the addition to our fleet of the K6E ZK-GFE which again brought our fleet up to that as modern as any in the country while providing us with a very competitive single seater. The following

year it was decided there was a need for a further two seater to supplement the K13 and ZK-GND a K7 was purchased from the Wigram Aviation Sports Club for \$4500. This aircraft was sold in 1975 to the Waipukurau Gliding Club who are still operating it today. This K7 was considered a short term measure only as it was of the type the club owned in 1963.

Another K13 was purchased late in 1975 to give the club two of these aircraft which were considered the best training aircraft of the day and are still considered as such by many instructors today. The new K13 ZK-GKA had many features that were an improvement on the other K13 ZK-GFL. These two aircraft provided all the training until, as mentioned earlier, ZK-GFL went to Gisborne, while the K6 CR and K6 E provided the more advanced pilots with many hours of enjoyable soaring.

The single seaters became under utilized in the late seventies prompting the decision to sell ZK-GER which was subsequently purchased by a local syndicate in mid 1980 following 15 years service to our club.

During the seventies we also saw the

rapid increase in towing charges brought about as a direct result of the fuel crisis. This led the club into the decision to build another winch in order to reduce costs and assist in getting around the fuel restrictions placed on private aircraft by the Government. As always, a dedicated few worked long and hard until the fruits of their labour were realised with the first launching in May 1979.

During Easter weekend of 1981 the club suffered a setback when the tow plane collided with a fence and was subsequently written off. This setback turned into a blessing in disguise when the insurance paid out enabling us to purchase a new tow plane, Champion Citabria ZK-CPD. This tow seater had it's 100 HP engine replaced by the 150 HP engine taken from ZK-BOQ and has since proved to be an ideal tow plane for the club's needs.

Perhaps one of the more courageous and controversial decisions was made by the club in 1981, and that was to purchase an all fibreglass high performance two seater so again bringing our training fleet up to as good a standard as anywhere in the country. The new aircraft, a Grob Twin Astir G103 ZK-OMX arrived brand

new in November 1981 at the horrific cost of \$34000. It is unfair to compare this with the cost of our first aircraft of £900 without considering inflation, but an interesting comparison none the less. The Twin Astir has been well utilized during the soaring season, has proved a most acceptable addition to the fleet and is hopefully the forerunner to further modernization of the fleet to glass in the future.

The formation of the club back in 1957 must have taken great dedication by the founders which surely they must see as repaid tenfold at this the 25th year of operation of the Hawkes Bay Gliding Club. The present members owe much to those who have preceded them, kept the club spirit alive and who have done much to provide the facilities that we enjoy today. This appreciation will no doubt continue to manifest itself in the continued support of present members and of those in the future.

