



NSM

A Quarterly Journal
of the National Soaring Museum

Summer, 1978

Vol. 2, Number 3

From the Director

The formal dedication of the museum's new facility took place as scheduled on September 9th. Soaring dignitaries, politicians, and local leaders spoke eloquently and glowingly of the museum's future while a Kirby Gull and an ASW-20 flew overhead. It was a lovely ceremony, preceded the night before by a reception in the new building to which some 400 people came.

Most of those attending the dedication weekend were not aware of the fact that it was only through the herculean efforts of museum staff members Shirley Sliwa, Brenda Wood, and Cindy Kane, and volunteers, including several museum trustees, that the event was able to take place.

Three days prior to the dedication the entire collection, less the 7 sailplanes on display, and all office records and equipment were in the old museum building 1/2 mile from the new. Several days of 20 and 22 hours workdays for the staff and overwhelming support from volunteers made it possible to be open for business as promised, though not all the exhibits were complete or ready. Still and all, when the doors opened for Friday evening's reception, the most commonly heard comment was "Wow!"

That one word, so often repeated, made the long hours melt away for all of those people who had worked so hard for so long to get the building ready for the public.

It might be of interest to our readers to review some of the significant events which, over a ten year period, led the museum to its present position. Some of those events:

- 1968 A small group at Harris Hill began actively to investigate a soaring museum.
- 1969 Museum opens in Administration Building.
SSA Directors vote that Harris Hill become official site of the National Soaring Museum, Archives, and Library.
- 1970 1st design study for new museum complex.
Museum begins to charge admission.
- 1971 Museum moved to Merrill Building.
Museum takes over operation of Soaring Film Library.
- 1972 Museum incorporated as the National Soaring Museum. Paul A. Schweizer elected the museum's first President.
- 1973 Shirley Sliwa, first museum employee hired.
William D. English, Jr. hired as museum Director.
First grant from the New York State Council on the Arts obtained.
- 1974 Museum membership inaugurated.
Museum school programs begun.
Museum sponsors first Vintage Sailplane Regatta.
- 1975 Architect Eliot Noyes presents plan and model for new building for the museum.
Theodore Sprague elected President of the museum.
NSM—museum membership magazine—begun.
- 1976 Bernald S. Smith elected President of NSM.
- 1977 Administration Building on Harris Hill burns.
Eliot Noyes designs new facility for the museum to be built on site of Administration Building.
Trustees determine to go ahead with construction and fund raising.
Construction begun in fall of year.
- 1978 Museum moves into new facility September 9th.
Museum raises over \$500,000 for capital construction program.

What of the future? For the past several years the museum has concentrated almost exclusively on getting established. It needs now to concentrate its efforts on organizing and protecting its present collection on a permanent basis. It needs also to develop its capacity to work with and develop its collection on a more professional level than has been possible heretofore.

With continued support from the soaring community the museum cannot fail to meet its objectives, thereby helping to advance the fortunes of the soaring movement in this nation.

Before closing this report, I would like to comment on the Presidency of Bernald S. Smith, who will be retiring from office on January 1, 1979.

Bernald must be one of the most remarkable individuals in all of soaring. For two years, the museum has been fortunate in benefiting from his inspired leadership even as he has been doing yeoman work for the SSA on a number of projects.

Although many talented and skilled people participated in helping to get the museum started, it is clear to me that it was Bernald who was able to get everyone working together effectively to bring the project off. His personal warmth and sincerity helped us all over the many rough spots that were encountered along the way, while his easy leadership made the taking of decisions an educational and exhilarating experience.

I hope that the progress that has been made during the two years of his stewardship gives Bernald a measure of satisfaction. So much of it was due to his efforts; we have much to thank him for.

I'm delighted that Bernald will continue to serve on the Board where we can continue to make use of his great talents.

NSM is a publication of the National Soaring Museum, Harris Hill, RD 1, Elmira, New York 14903. Anyone is invited to contribute material and pictures with identification about historical soaring activities, renovation of old sailplanes, soaring pioneers, unusual uses of sailplanes, etc. Manuscripts are subject to whatever revisions, additions or deletions are necessary to make the material conform to the space limitations and standards of NSM. Material that is to be returned must be accompanied by a stamped, self addressed envelope. No compensation other than credit will be made.

Publisher — National Soaring Museum
William D. English, Jr., director

Editor — Shirley Sliwa

ON THE COVER

A couple of whispering "Ms". The Minimoa, owned by Vintage Sailplane Association President Jan Scott and a Moswey 3 join up for formation soaring on the way back to the Harris Hill Gliderport during the VSA's 5th Annual Vintage Regatta held September 2-4, 1978. Photo by Geoff Steele, VSA'r and Bungee Cord Editor.

(As Members of the National Soaring Museum you received invitations to the Dedication Weekend, September 8, 9, & 10, 1978. The attendance was good, but the response from the members who did not attend and wished they could, were so supportive that this piece is for them particularly.....as.)

"YOU ARE THERE!!!!!"

It is August 15, 1978, just 24 days until the big weekend. The invitations are going out in today's mail. Director English is at the Museum site with several volunteers hanging sailplanes, the agreed first priority on the count down sheet in getting the Museum interior and exhibits ready. Let me set the picture for you. You park out in front and side step the usual grading equipment surrounding the building, make a giant leap to the third step of the front entry level, as they are still pouring cement; or you could enter at the exhibit hall level through the doors so designed for exhibit entry. If you appeared on this day, this is what would have greeted you.....



Director English, Elwin Cramer and two members of the HHSC Junior Organization hoisting the Museum's Dagling Primary into position. The Primary was built by the Elmira Glider Club in 1929 and rebuilt by Gustav Scheurer. The craft is a gift of the former Elmira Glider Club. In the background you can see the Museum's Hutter 17 positioned over exhibit cases. The ship was built by Fred Webber and is a gift of the Soaring Society of Dayton.

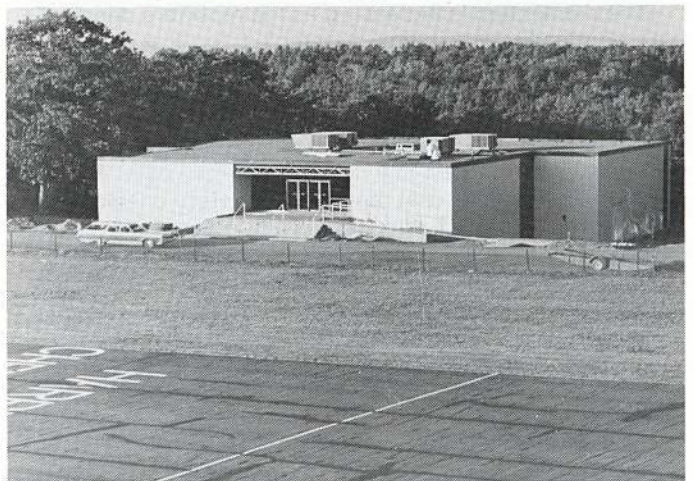
(Photo: George Lian, Elmira Star Gazette.)

It is now Wednesday, September 6th at 3: PM, the office carpeting still has not arrived, the laying of the foyer tile should be completed sometime today and all of the office records, furniture, and equipment plus the remaining archives and artifacts not being used for the opening are still at the other site.

"No way,"... a group of swinging heads uttering negative sounds. "No way,"... less than 48 hours to the scheduled Press Party and this building is supposed to be dedicated on Saturday, September 9th? "No way"..... However, the group did not reckon with the other group of swinging heads (going the other way), a little bleary eyed, and with silly grins on their faces. "Oh yes," yes, we'll make it!" the only doubts being in their minds. Several volunteers were asked to show up on Friday and, "do a little polishing and finishing

up of the little details to make everything just right." Oh brother! The volunteers ended up swinging hammers, stapling felt for exhibits, moving, uncrating, and polishing artifacts, setting up exhibits, running after depleted supplies, and in general, just about anything and everything to make it all happen. Several NSM Trustees and their wives arrived early in preparation for the scheduled Board of Trustees meeting on Saturday and upon shaking hands with friends at the Museum, the strength of their friendship and commitment was tested severely. As they drew back their hands from the handshakes.... hammers, polish, rags, you name it... appeared in their grasp. "Oh sure, we'll be glad to help." But little did they realize, how much help they were going to have to supply. Yes ... there was a large group of Trustees, Staff, and volunteers going through the Dedication Weekend with a glow on their faces. Whether it was from exhaustion, the satisfaction of having made the deadline, or a little of both; how sweet it was,—to see how everything fell into place. (We always knew it would....).

In any case, the big weekend begins. It's Friday, September 8th, 2:00 PM. Coffee's ready for the reporters and the photographers; and everyone has cleaned up after the final check of the building with its historic aircraft hovering above the exhibit cases and panels. Not barely a minute to take a deep breath and recognize that, "IT IS READY!" (Sorting and stacking still going on in the office/library, but we can close the door till they finish.) "Welcome! Won't you come in to the....."



(Photo: Geoff Steele)



GLISTENING AND READY!!!!!!!

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"YOU ARE THERE!!!!!"

(Continued from Page 3)

The reporters are pleased, some even amazed as they had been watching the last minute progress and I suspect were part of the negative swinging heads group. Director Liam English goes through his paces of informing the Press where he anticipates the NSM will be going from here and what he suspects will be the Trustees priorities to move the Museum into the reality of the two major functions of it's Philosophy, "(1) that of preserving the heritage of motorless flight in the United States, and (2) that of promoting a greater knowledge of gliding, soaring, and related aeronautics and physical sciences among the general public." He also relates how the NSM can provide a valuable service and cultural enrichment to the many who visit the Museum.

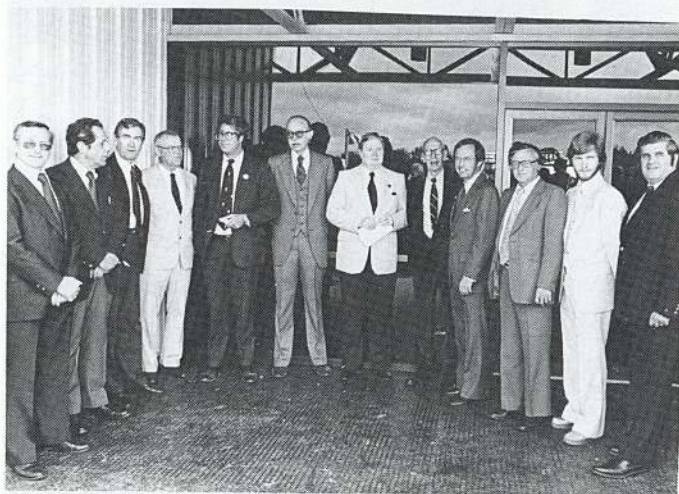
The momentum is increasing as the reporters depart. Tables and chairs are being assembled for the Reception. Guests will be NSM members, SSA representatives, building contributors, Chemung County Legislators and the Harris Hill Soaring Corporation, the 1st Chapter Member of the NSM and the group that provides the visual picture of one of the objectives the NSM is trying to say. More NSM Trustees arrive in town and stop at the Museum before checking into their hotels. "Couldn't stay away! Had to see if it truly happened!" The smiles on their faces reflect what they see.

It is 6:30 PM and guests are beginning to trickle in. The candles are lit on the hors d'oeuvres table, the punch and wine are chilled, and the Museum doors are standing wide open with the numbers of people arriving. The Gala Festivities have begun. THE MUSEUM IS OPEN!



Pausing for a moment during the reception, left to right, NSM President Bernald S. Smith, NSM Director William D. English, Jr., and SSA President William B. Cleary.

Saturday morning at 8:00 AM the Staff arrives for a last minute review before the busy day begins. Immediately after the Dedication Ceremony the Trustees will go into a day long session and the visitors will move in for the "Open House".



Dignitaries gather for a historic moment September 9, 1978. Left to right: Archer N. Martin, President of HHSC, the Honorable William T. Smith, NYS Senator, William B. Cleary, President of SSA, Paul A. Schweizer, SSA Region 3 Director and Vice President of the NSM, William D. English, Jr., NSM Director, Bernald S. Smith, President of the NSM, Stanley J. Douglas, Chairman of the Chemung County Legislature, Edward A. Mooers, NSM Trustee, the Honorable Stanley Lundine, U.S. Congress, the Honorable William C. Hennesey, representing NYS Governor Hugh L. Carey, Pastor Jeffrey Losey, and Conrad T. Tunney, Director of the Finger Lakes Association.



Soaring Pilots "hangar flying" in a new facility. Left to right: Mike Ledet, Rolf Beyer, Dietrich Ennulat and Harold Ennulat. Background: NSM Trustee Lawrence Kelley and Lee Robbins, Chairman of the Chemung Valley Airshow and Aircraft Manager for the Corning Glass Works.

At a propitious moment during the ceremony Roy McMaster in his AWS-20 and Tom Smith in his award winning Kirby Gull gave a soaring demonstration finishing with a pass over Harris Hill, thrilling the spectators on the field and on the steps of the National Soaring Museum.



NSM Trustee Edward A. Mooers cutting the ribbon and officially opening the National Soaring Museum to the public while NSM President Bernald S. Smith and Pastor Jeffrey Losey watch.

The Trustees move into the Class Room to begin their meeting while the guests move in for the Open House.



One of the most popular exhibits for all ages, the 1-34 cockpit.



NSM Trustees left to right, P.J. Baugh, Paul Schweizer, Theodore Sprague, Director William English, Jr., President Bernald Smith, A.J. Smith, George Squillario, Lawrence Wood, Boyd McDowell, Lawrence Kelley and Floyd Sweet. (Trustees not shown, Hal Lattimore, Edward Mooers, Paul Prunier and Ted Sharp.)



NSM Trustee meeting guests, left to right, SSA President William Cleary, SSA Executive Director Forrest Blossom, SSA Vice President elect and Region 5 Director Woody Woodward, and Vic Powell, Executive Director of the National Aeronautic Association.

During the weekend the Harris Hill Lift/Drag Model Glider group sponsored their Annual Meet with over 100 entries, some coming as far as Denver.

The Harris Hill field was shut down for normal operation as the Chemung Valley Airshow was being held simultaneously. The highlight of the show was the appearance of the USAF Thunderbirds, as well as a sailplane demonstration. Other participants were the N.Y.S. Air National Guard and Bob Hoover in acrobatic power demonstrations. As one visitor said when he left the Museum, "What a great air weekend!" President Bernald Smith had a more serious concern, that of keeping the Trustees in meeting during the air activity over The Hill.

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"YOU ARE THERE!!!!!"

(Continued from Page 5)

The meeting is over, the staff has left to handle the mechanics of the Hall of Fame Banquet. The Museum is quiet. The first day is over and we don't even know how it went. But now its time to hurry to the hotel to honor Hall of Fame members and the new inductees Stephen J. Bennis and Bernard L. Wiggin.



Left to right, NSM Trustee Floyd Sweet presenting the Hall of Fame Certificate to Bernard L. Wiggin. Seated, NSM Director William J. English, Jr. Mr. Wiggin is a noted meteorologist. Though not a soaring pilot he has a well known understanding of what soaring pilots face in securing weather information. He was the meteorologist for most of the National Contests following World War II through the 1960's.



Left to right, NSM Trustee Floyd Sweet presenting the Hall of Fame Certificate to Stephen J. Bennis while Director and Mrs. William English look on. Mr. Bennis was one of the first commercial operators and has long been an Instructor for gliders and an authority on the sport of soaring, active in Florida and New York.



HALL OF FAME MEMBERS posing after welcoming two new inductees. Standing, left to right, Stan Smith, Tom Page, Dick Schreder, Paul Schweizer, Gus Scheurer, Fritz Compton, A.J. Smith and Floyd Sweet. Seated, left to right, Barney Wiggin, Ginny Schweizer and Steve Bennis.



In the spirit of the occasion NSM Trustee Edward Mooers waves the significant ribbon from the dedication ceremony. To his left offering moral support, NSM Advisor Asaph Hall and Mrs. Mooers.

During the program, the 1977 Joseph C. Lincoln Award for the most popular writing about the sport of soaring, sponsored by the Harris Hill Soaring Corporation, was presented by HHSC President, Archer N. Martin. The Editorial Board selected "Sierra Sierra" by John Joss. Mr. Joss could not be present to accept his award and Mr. Martin read a communication from Mr. Joss which in part read: "...My hope would be for the book to persuade many more people to acquire a personal knowledge of the delights of powerless flight. Then they could perhaps go aloft to savor the inner values of mind and heart accessible only through soaring.

If my book has given pleasure to men and women in soaring, it will have enabled me in some small way to return to the sport the joy it has given me. That joy started on an English summer day, in July 1951, when I took my first solo flight in a Dagling primary. The joy has never diminished, but has grown with time.

So I accept your award with gratitude. I knew Joe Lincoln, and now stand humbly in his shadow. Thank you."

The Museum was pleased to announce the inception of the Hugh Whitney Scholarship Award which will be presented annually to a pilot to further his or her knowledge and expertise in the art of soaring.

Paul Schweizer made the presentation of the premiere award to Andrew Frechtling of Corning, N.Y. Andy is a mechanical engineer with Corning Glass Works. He has his Commercial Glider license and is working on his Private Power rating. He was with the MIT soaring group for 4 years and was on their Board of Directors for 2 years. He is the Sailplane Maintenance Chairman and is a newly elected member of the HHSC Board of Directors. Andy is a partner in a 1-26 and was the Region 3 Sports Class Contest Manager for 1978. This award will help Andy achieve his CFI rating in gliders.

The evening was much too short for everyone to be able to spend enough time chatting with old friends.

It is now Sunday morning, September 10, 1978 and the museum is a flurry of activity with visitors and the NSM Executive Committee in session. Friends come in to say their goodbyes and give a few words of encouragement and support. It is reported that the NSM Trustees have again taken steps to continue their progress in making the soaring community's facility one of the finest aviation museums in the country. With a warm glow, the Dedication Weekend is over.

I hope that this article has helped in some small part, the members who could not attend and share in the excitement, to feel as though

"YOU WERE THERE!!!!!!!"

Shirley Sliwa

(All Dedication Weekend photos, except where otherwise identified, by Wes Buth.)

Impressions of a Visit to the New National Soaring Museum

By Ron Ogden

It's still a surprise to make the twisting climb up the "Hill" and there see the new National Soaring Museum. It has sprouted up almost overnight to dominate the glider field. Like a new baby in a middle-aged family, it is an unexpected pleasure here at Harris Hill.

Eliot Noyes, the Connecticut pilot and architect, now deceased, captured the exquisite present in his museum design. A sculpture in cement block, steel beams, and glass, the museum's well controlled lines display a clarity of purpose. Functional, yet it remains aesthetic. While it is rectangular, it remains mindful of modern sailplanes; nice lines! The modern new building has thrust the "Hill" into the architectural present. The building makes a fine counterpoint to a W.P.A. (Works Progress Administration) melody.

The fact that this building is here says a lot about a lot of people. Many of today's pilots, many of yesterday's pilots and many people who have never thought of flying a glider joined hands to build this place. They did the work, they volunteered their time and they contributed the money. Nowhere else has such a commitment been made to the sport of soaring as an idea, rather than as a place of business. Never has such a group of people come together to do so much. No names, please-for the list of those deserving a nod would run far too long.

Inside, the museum's design features a mobility aimed at accommodating new exhibitions every so often. As the seasons change, so may the featured exhibits. Visitors may come and come again to see new shows. Old and new gliders and the techniques for flying them will mix throughout the museum as the facility fulfills its role as an institution of education, a role as important as that of a storehouse of history.

Something new will periodically make its appearance in the huge display hall. Stasis and deep dust will have no home here. Musty is an anathematic word. Vibrancy will rule.

Yet, history will have a place here, too, especially in the gliders that the museum will display. Oh! the wonderful ships... The do-it-yourself Dagling primary is here along with the early Hutter which foreshadows the Libelle's brilliance.

The first 1-26 flies here in the grey museum sky. And then there is the sweetly swept and singing Albatross, a world record holder and a poem of fine wrought wood.

Imagine a grey, over-developed contest day in the early sixties. Tension mounts as ships fly for home ahead of rainshowers now not far from the finish gate. The spectators wonder, "Where is the Sisu?" Suddenly, there it is diving for a high speed finish, racing ahead of the rain, aiming for the line and the pit of your stomach. Will he pull up in time? That's what you see when you step onto the balcony overlooking the main exhibit hall, all fifty-plus feet of thin wing seeming to move at one hundred knots right at you. Then you realize that the ship is hanging there in air, supported by thin strands of wire. What a way to come into a museum of flight!

These sailplanes dance well together. Gathered in their vault and nearly touching, their ballet bemuses. It's a frozen waltz in time as the dancers rule the scene, looking down on the slow and graceless below.

More than gliders are here, though. A sinuous wall curves along the floor decorated by the best of soaring photography. A full day can be spent contemplating the delicate shades of color and composition created by the best camera artists in our sport. Round kiosks dotting the floor offer many small artifacts, instruments, models and trophies, for example. A 1-34 cockpit mock-up,—a kid's heaven on earth—sits invitingly on one side of the floor. On another side is a 1-19 on a trailer. This is a complete museum.

The staff shares an office on one side of the balcony, and special rooms house the class facility and library. Downstairs is a large public room with a kitchen that features the newest in appliances.

On the balcony near the entrance is a booth where souvenirs and books can be purchased.

It's truly a magnificent place. Looking at it, the most pertinent consideration is of where soaring has come in its nearly fifty year American history. As gliders wheel overhead, the museum holds forth below serving as a centerpiece around which soaring in this country wheels on its own course. Home are the flyers... home on the Hill.

First Official U.S. Glider Mail

by Simine Short



This fall, the new National Soaring Museum opened its doors to the public. The Elmira Stamp Club came up with an idea to help celebrate this special occasion. We wanted to reenact the flight of Warren E. Eaton, carrying the "First Official U. S. Glider Mail" on July 11, 1933 in his Franklin glider. It was a proud moment and a special event during the Fourth National Gliding Contest in Elmira. But, due to some misunderstandings, the postmaster in those days could not accept the mail as "official" because members of the Stamp Club (not the postal authorities) had carried the mail from the glider to the Post Office. The wording "Official U.S." had to be blackened out before the Post Office could process the mail.

Forty-five years have gone by, and we wanted to give it another try. Liam English, the Director of the National Soaring Museum, agreed to pay for the special slogan canceller (die hub) which would be used in the Elmira Post Office during the summer months on all outgoing mail.

With all these things planned, we could get going. Many telephone calls were made, meetings were called and slowly, step-by-step, we came closer to make the dream of the "First Official U.S. Glider Mail" become reality. We all wanted Elmira, the historic Soaring Capital of America, to be the location where this would take place.

Paul A. Schweizer was asked to fly our glider-mail in a 2-32 Schweizer sailplane; he was just as excited about the ideas as we were and agreed. Warren E. Eaton, Jr. was called and asked if he would like to sit in the back seat with the mailbag and fly the same route as his father did. He, too, agreed very happily.

The tempo for the Stamp Club increased. Special cacheted envelopes with an explanatory note inside were printed, a special rubber stamp was made to identify all those covers which were actually flown, stamps were bought and licked and all envelopes were serially numbered (a total of 928 covers were flown). Time was running short. The officer-in-charge from the Elmira Post Office tried his very best. Many problems needed solving. The official "blessing" from the Washington office came just the week before our glider flight was supposed to take place.

On June 29, one of the die hubs arrived. This new slogan cancel was applied to the mail on June 30th. during an impressive lunchtime ceremony at the Elmira Mail Facility. There were members of the Stamp Club, Liam English and Shirley Sliwa from the National Soaring Museum, local newspaper and television reporters, representatives from the Post Office Department, and of course, the technician who knew how to run the complicated cancelling machine. But, we all were very happy and relaxed.

On Sunday, July 2, 1978, the weather god was happy with us, the sun was shining a little, with rain forecasted for 2 PM. About 11 o'clock, Jim Short brought the freshly washed 2-32 sailplane to the Harris Hill gliderport, thermalling over the beautiful countryside for a while. Shortly before noon, everyone else arrived. The local Post Office representative came

up with a freshly waxed jeep. A bright orange "Air Mail" bag, which had not been used during the past years, (as you all know, there is not air mail letter service anymore!) was holding all the envelopes. Exactly at 12:30 PM, the 2-32 was rolled to the take-off field and up they went. Turkey hawks were joining Paul A. Schweizer in his thermals; maybe, they too felt happy about the successful significant launch.

After over half an hour in the air, the sailplane landed in the valley below and rolled almost to the front steps of the Schweizer Soaring School. The local Post Office representative took the bag, so precious to all participants, out of Warren E. Eaton's hands and turned it over to the Elmira Stamp Club representative.

The "First Official U.S. Glider Mail" was over. The American Airmail Society was properly informed, and if everything goes well, this flight will receive official recognition from them by being listed in the fifth volume of their catalog under "Souvenir Historical Flight."

I would like to thank all the fellow collectors, participants and friends for their advice, help and knowledge they gave. The Elmira Stamp Club wishes success to the new National Soaring Museum. Why don't you come and look at its exhibits when you have a chance?



"First Official U.S. Glider Mail" flight completed. Left to right: Postmaster Mr. Peter Dominique, Postal Manager of Customer Services Mr. Richard Dalton, and Mrs. James (Simine) Short, President of the Elmira Stamp Club and author of this article.



Checking the die hub for all outgoing mail from the Elmira Post Office. The hub read "Dedication Ceremony — Home of the National Soaring Museum". Behind the technician is Director English and to his left are Richard Dalton and Peter Dominique.



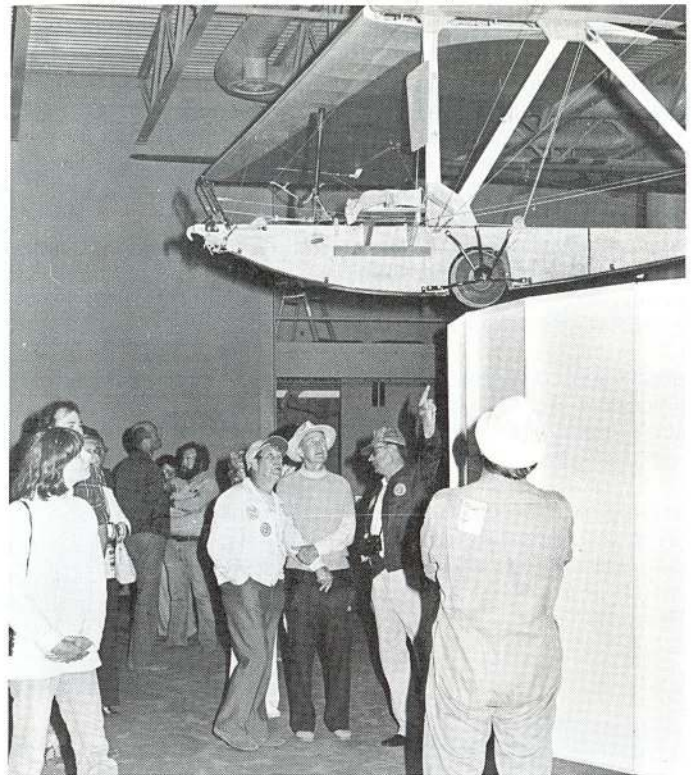
Warren E. Eaton, first President of the Soaring Society of America, accepting the cargo for the "First Glider Mail" flight on July 11, 1933 during the Fourth National Gliding Contest in Elmira, New York.



Richard Dalton, Manager of Customer Services for the Post Office delivering the "Air Mail" bag to carrier Warren E. Eaton, Jr. and pilot Paul A. Schweizer for the "First OFFICIAL U.S. Glider Mail" flight on July 2, 1978.

Fifth Annual Vintage Sailplane Regatta

The Vintage Sailplane Association held their Fifth Annual Vintage Sailplane Regatta at Harris Hill, September 2 - 4, 1978, co-sponsored by the National Soaring Museum and the Harris Hill Soaring Corporation. It was a huge success and the weather cooperated. The VSA Program consisted of flying events, a Concours d'Elegance, sailplane judging, a cook-out, a general membership meeting and an Awards Dinner. The next issue of BUNGEE CORD, the VSA's publication should have a more complete report of the Regatta and the VSA activities. President Jan Scott reported for everyone by asking that the NSM and HHCS consider co-sponsoring a regatta again next year.



VSA'rs get a pre-opening tour of the new National Soaring Museum. Aeroclub Albatross members Russ Gehling (white jacket, center left) and Raymond Young (white hat) view a Primary glider constructed by their fellow club member and SSA Hall of Fame member Gus Scheurer.

(Photo: Geoff Steele.)



Vintage Sailplane Association members and families gather for a photo during the Fifth Annual Vintage Sailplane Regatta at Harris Hill, N.Y. In the background is a Goppingen 1 "Wolf" intermediate training glider, designed by Wolf Hirth.

(Photo: Geoff Steele.)

REPORT OF A VISITATION TO THREE EUROPEAN AVIATION MUSEUMS AND SEVERAL HISTORIC SOARING SITES

by Paul A. Schweizer

(Editors note: The NSM Trustees have been visiting various museums of note to develop an understanding of the needs of the National Soaring Museum. When I learned of Paul and Ginny Schweizer's plans to visit European museums and historic soaring sites I asked Paul to submit an article for the NSM.)

AVIDOME IN AMSTERDAM HOLLAND

This is the National Aviation Museum of the Netherlands and located at Schiphol Airport in Amsterdam. Although it is adjacent to the airport, it is hard to get to, unless you are fortunate enough to get an Avidome leaflet with a map.

The main building is a geodesic dome about 180 ft. across plus an attached single story conventional building to house the entrance, lobby, office, shops and auditorium. Several airplanes were on display outside the dome; a KLM, DC-3, Grumman S2F, and some sort of a missile.

The entrance fee is 3.75 guilders (about \$1.75) and 2.50 g (\$1.15 for children). Their store, in the lobby, handled by the attendant who takes the admission fee, has books, models and other souvenirs available.

The dome provides lots of air space but only lighter aircraft can be hung. The dome's inside surface was a dull aluminum color and did not give the feel of space that I had expected. A two-story center-unit provides more exhibit space, with the ground floor level area used for a small theatre where a film is shown at regular intervals.

An interesting display was an area, set aside as a shop where a SPITFIRE was being rebuilt. KLM Airlines had an effective display of models of all their aircraft arranged in the order in which the original airplanes were acquired by KLM.

The full sized aircraft on display were those involved in Holland's aviation history and also included a number of gliders—a replica of the Lillienthal, a Dutch Primary, and several "K-6" class sailplanes built in Holland.

The Avidome has a good collection of airplanes, engines, and other related matter and is a worthwhile museum to visit.

A slick 4-color booklet about the Avidome and aviation is available, but it is in Dutch. It does have quite a few pages on gliding and soaring and related meteorology.

ROYAL AIR FORCE MUSEUM At Hendon, England

This museum is located at site of the old Hendon Airport in the Northwestern outskirts of London. It is available by the London tube plus a one-half mile walk.

There is not charge for entry although donations are requested, by the use of a plexiglass container with lots of "seed" money in it, at the entrance. The museum is operated by the Royal Air Force, but funds were raised by contributions.

It effectively has used four old 1915 hangars which have been joined together and surrounded by a new modern building. It houses 38 aircraft and is an outstanding collection and the hangars make a very appropriate display area. The aircraft are all displayed on the ground and outdoor-indoor carpeting is used for the aisles. The floor area where the aircraft are displayed is painted white and no one thinks of walking on it. The whole area is well lighted which adds greatly to the displays. The only aircraft hanging up was the Cayleys "flying bathtub" replica which Derrek Piggott flew a few years ago.

The two story building that forms the front and west side of the main display area, houses 11 galleries, each covering a different period of Royal Air Force History. It also includes an art gallery with a fine collection of aviation art, including some sculpture. They also had outside displays of aircraft.

There is a large store that sells books, tapes, models, stamps, etc. There also is a theatre for films and special programs, and a cafeteria which seemed to be very busy. An audio system is available for visitors who are willing to pay a charge. A pair of headsets enable the visitor to hear explanations of exhibits as he moves through the Museum.

It is an outstanding museum with most significant British Air Force Aircraft included. It is much more intimate than the Air Force Museum in Dayton. Near the Museum, they have built another building which will be used for a special "Battle of Britain" Exhibition which will commemorate the 40th Anniversary of the event in 1980. They were working on the displays and apparently planning to open well ahead of 1980.

The Museum is explained on an attractive 4 color booklet available at the Museum Store.

TRANSPORTATION, AIR & SPACE MUSEUM In Lucerne, Switzerland

This museum, which was principally a railroad museum, now includes a special Air & Space Building. It is a very high building - about 50 ft. high, and exhibits aircraft at four levels. Several balconies and walks provide a means of viewing the aircraft closely from all angles.

They had six sailplanes on display plus several hang gliders. The aircraft on display included a number of Swiss aircraft, plus aircraft of other nations which were used in Switzerland. A single engine Fokker was the largest aircraft on display.

There was a charge for entrance. (A couple of Francs as I remember, \$1.25). A large store and food service area is near the entrance. They had several aircraft displayed outside including SWISSAIR DC-6.

Unfortunately we were limited by time so we could not do a fair job of evaluating the exhibits.

CLERMONT-FERRAND AND ITFORD

On our trip, we also spent a week at the International Soaring Contest at Chateauroux, France. Since we were so close to Clermont-Ferrand, the site of the first French International Soaring Meet in 1922, we took a day to visit that area.

We became interested in Clermont-Ferrand from a report that Eddie Allen, the famous Boeing Test Pilot, had written about the three International Meets held in 1922: the meets at Clermont-Ferrand in France, the Wasserkuppe in Germany and at Itford in England.

Ever since reading about these meets, we have wanted to visit these places. We had visited the Wasserkuppe a number of years ago so Clermont-Ferrand and Itford were our next goal.

At the time that Ed Allen wrote this report he was a graduate student at MIT and a member of the group that brought the MIT glider to compete in these meets, the 1st USA entry into an International Gliding Contest. His report about the three Meets was a most interesting analysis of gliding and soaring at that time. He was a keen observer and gives a rare insight into these Historical International Meets.

The contests in France and England were a matter of prestige, since these countries did not want to let the successful soaring contests held at the Wasserkuppe in 1920-21 to out-do them.

The French were poorly prepared. Of the 25 gliders to arrive, the only one that had flown before the start of the meet was the MIT Glider. The French had chosen the smooth hills around Clermont-Ferrand at Combe-grasse as the site for the Championships. The Meet ran for two weeks and there was a

(Continued on Page 15)

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EUROPEAN SOARING MUSEUMS AND SITES VISITATION

(Continued from Page 11)

great deal of crashery and really no outstanding flights made. I believe the best flight was under 10 minutes. However, as a result of this Meet the French gliding movement got underway.

Clermont-Ferrand is approximately 250 km SE of Chateauroux in the south central part of France. We drove down, passing through the interesting Indre Province and passed by the home of George Sands.

We made numerous inquiries in the Clermont-Ferrand area in trying to locate Comegrasse with no results. We finally found a Travelers Information Center but even they could not help. We had not done enough research beforehand and so were not able to determine which of the many ridges and mountains surrounding Clermont-Ferrand were the ones actually used. We hope we can someday track down someone who can help us locate Combegrassie and maybe we will have another chance to try to locate it.

The English Meet at Itford was encouraged by the Daily Mail newspaper putting up a 1,000 pounds prize for the 1st glider to stay up more than one hour. The group that

organized the Meet felt this was too optimistic a goal and convinced the Daily Mail to reduce it to one-half hour. There had been practically no gliding done in England except for the early experiment by Cayley and Weiss.

The smooth hills at Itford near Lewes on the Channel, South of London, were picked. They had expected to use the north-west side of the ridges facing the prevalent wind. However, in the early portion of the Meet north-east winds forced them to use the ridge that faced into that direction. There were some International entrants including Maneyrol from France and Fokker from Holland. The soaring in this area proved to be excellent and it wasn't long before Maneyrol in his tandem wing glider broke the worlds record set a few weeks earlier at the Wasserkuppe. He stayed up three hours and twenty minutes. The meet was a great success with many flights exceeding the 1/2 hour requirement. In spite of this success it is surprising that the soaring movement in England did not get going until 1929-30.

We visited the area and walked on the ridges of Itford. You could see that with a steady wind they were ideal sites for the glider used at that time. Firle Beacon, one of the ridges, is the site of the present South Down Club.

We enjoyed the chance to visit these museums and the opportunity to get to see several historic soaring sites. We hope we can do some more "exploring".

Paul A. Schweizer

ANNOUNCEMENT

At their September meeting, the Board of Trustees of the museum elected P.J. Baugh of Lexington, Kentucky to succeed Bernald S. Smith, as President of the museum.

Jack Baugh has served on the museum's Board since 1976 and has played a highly significant role in the advancement of soaring over the past two decades through his leadership of, among other activities, Len Niemi's Sisu project and his close involvement with the museum and its growth. The museum is most fortunate in having a man of Baugh's stature and wisdom provide leadership during this critical period in the museum's history.

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KRESGE FOUNDATION GRANT

"We are pleased to advise you that the Trustees of the Kresge Foundation have approved a challenge grant of \$75,000 toward the construction of a new museum facility. This grant is in memory of (museum architect) Eliot Noyes." These were the opening words of a most welcome letter dated July 17 to Liam English from William H. Baldwin, Chairman of the Board of The Kresge Foundation.

This grant, the largest single contribution the museum has ever received, has put the museum's 500,000 capital campaign "over the top."

During 1978, The Kresge Foundation, one of the nation's most prestigious, made 203 grants after having considered 1229 qualified applications. Such grants were generally toward the construction and major renovation of facilities and almost always required the raising of additional money on a challenge basis.

Since the founding of the Foundation in 1924, appropriations of more than \$311 million have been made to institutions in the areas of higher education, health services, the arts, social welfare, and the care of the young and old. The Kresge Foundation was created solely by the personal gifts of the late Sebastian S. Kresge and is not affiliated or associated with any other corporation or organization.

Eliot Noyes, in whose memory the grant was made, was a noted industrial designer and architect who, among other things, was responsible for the design of the IBM Selectric Typewriter, the Mobil Corporation's round gas pumps, and World's Fair pavilions for IBM, Mobil, and the United Nations. In addition to his professional work, Noyes was an enthusiastic aviator and helped to coordinate the massive glider program of World War II that resulted in several airborne invasions in both Europe and Asia. The National Soaring Museum building on Harris Hill was one of the last projects Noyes worked on prior to his death in July, 1977.

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