



Darbyshire Syndicate EON Olympia, c. 1949

Cat. No. 0025



[Dave Darbyshire in the Olympia VH-GHR, c. late 1950s – photo from AGM collection]

Prior to World War II an international competition was held for design of a standard sailplane for use in Olympic competition in 1940 in Finland. The design chosen was the “Meise” from DFS in Germany and its designer Hans Jacob. The 1940 Olympics were cancelled due to the outbreak of war and post war international gliding competition has been organized as World Championships, not as an Olympic event. After the war the Meise was manufactured by firms in Europe and a few were built by amateurs from plans.

In 1945, a United Kingdom firm, Chilton Aircraft Limited, revised the plans for the DFS Meise Olympia keeping its aerodynamic shape and prepared new technical drawings for the production of the Chilton Olympia. It engaged Elliotts of Newbury (a firm with aircraft production experience during the war) to build a set of wings for its prototype. The wings were made by Elliotts but it

apparently refused to let Chiltons have the jigs required to build more wings. The matter was resolved by Chiltons transferring its production rights and equipment to Elliotts. Elliotts produced several batches of the Olympia (the “EON Olympia”) – probably about 150 in total from 1947 including Marks 1, 2 and 3 versions (featuring some structural changes and design improvements).

The Australian Gliding Museum’s Olympia is a Mark 2 (actually 2B according to the logbook) which can be distinguished by the built-in main wheel and blown Perspex canopy. It was designated as serial number EON/O/34 by Elliotts. It was damaged badly at Bristol, UK, in 1949. The wreckage was acquired by a Melbourne based syndicate, including Dave Darbyshire, and imported into Australia. Additional damage occurred in shipping due to the need to shorten the wings to fit them into a crate. The syndicate rebuilt the glider and re-launched it in 1956 (registration number VH-GHR). It was flown by the syndicate and several gliding clubs in Victoria and South Australia until about 1972.



[The Olympia in storage in 2011 awaiting completion of restoration at Bruce Brockhoff Annexe: photograph B. Duckworth]