



## Edmund Schneider ES 52 “Kookaburra”, c. 1954

The ES52 Kookaburra is a two seat high wing glider – sailplane of wooden construction designed by Harry Schneider and built by Edmund Schneider Pty Ltd. It was first flown on 26 June 1954 and became the glider of choice for training new pilots of many gliding clubs around Australia in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s. Several found their way to New Zealand. Further two kits were sent to Brazil and at least one of these was finished and flown successfully. The ES52 performed well with a glide ratio of about 22:1 and had soaring and cross-country capabilities. A notable feature of the ES52 design was the staggered side-by-side seating arrangement of the cockpit. This made for good in flight communication between instructor and trainee. Overall, thirty six were built by Edmund Schneider Pty Ltd.



[Harry Schneider in the ES52 prototype, c 1954; photo – A. Ash Collection]

A longer wing version (the ES52B) was also introduced that had a better glide ratio (around 25:1). Five examples of this version were built. In Germany a modified ES52 was built incorporating a metal tube fuselage frame and with the addition of an engine driven propeller mounted on top of the wing which enabled the glider to be self launching.



[ES 52 restoration- AGM workshop; photo – C. Saunders]

This museum collection item consists of the fuselage, tailplane, elevators, fin, rudder from the Mark I, ES 52 Kookaburra, formerly registered as VH-GFF and last owned by the Barcaldine and District Airports Club of Queensland. The glider was in a damaged condition when it was acquired by the Museum. A decision was made by the Museum to repair the glider for display rather than endeavouring to restore it to an

airworthy condition. The reconstruction of the wings has been undertaken by using parts of damaged ES 52 Kookaburra wings (as it happened from later ES 52 Marks). For more convenient storage and handling the new wing consists of three pieces that can be disassembled as the need requires. Of course, originally VH-GFF had a one piece wing – as is the case for all Edmund Schneider Pty Ltd made ES 52s. With the exception of this modification and some necessary minor adjustments to the wing centre section to refit the perspex canopy, the end result is a Mark I replica that can be more easily transported to exhibitions.



[ES 52 restoration- AGM workshop; photo – C. Saunders]

The Log Book for VH-GFF reveals operational life with a succession of gliding clubs around Australia:

Victorian Motorless Flight Group - December 1954 to July 1959; Alice Springs Gliding Club - July 1959 to February 1963; RAAF Richmond - February 1963 to September 1964; RAAF Williamtown - September 1964 to August 1972; Gayndah Gliding Club - August 1972 to October 1976; Blackwater Gliding Club - August 1972 to October 1976; Southern Downs Aero and Soaring Club - January 1978 to August 1980; Charleville Gliding Club – August 1980 to date not disclosed; Barcaldine and District Airports Club – dates not disclosed. The Barcaldine Club, after liaison with Ian Patching, donated the glider to the Australian Gliding Museum on 10<sup>th</sup> March 2002. For the museum, the glider was collected from Queensland by Ian Patching and Geoff Hearn.



[ES 52 restoration- AGM workshop; photo – C. Saunders]