

## de Havilland Gipsy Moth VH-ULO

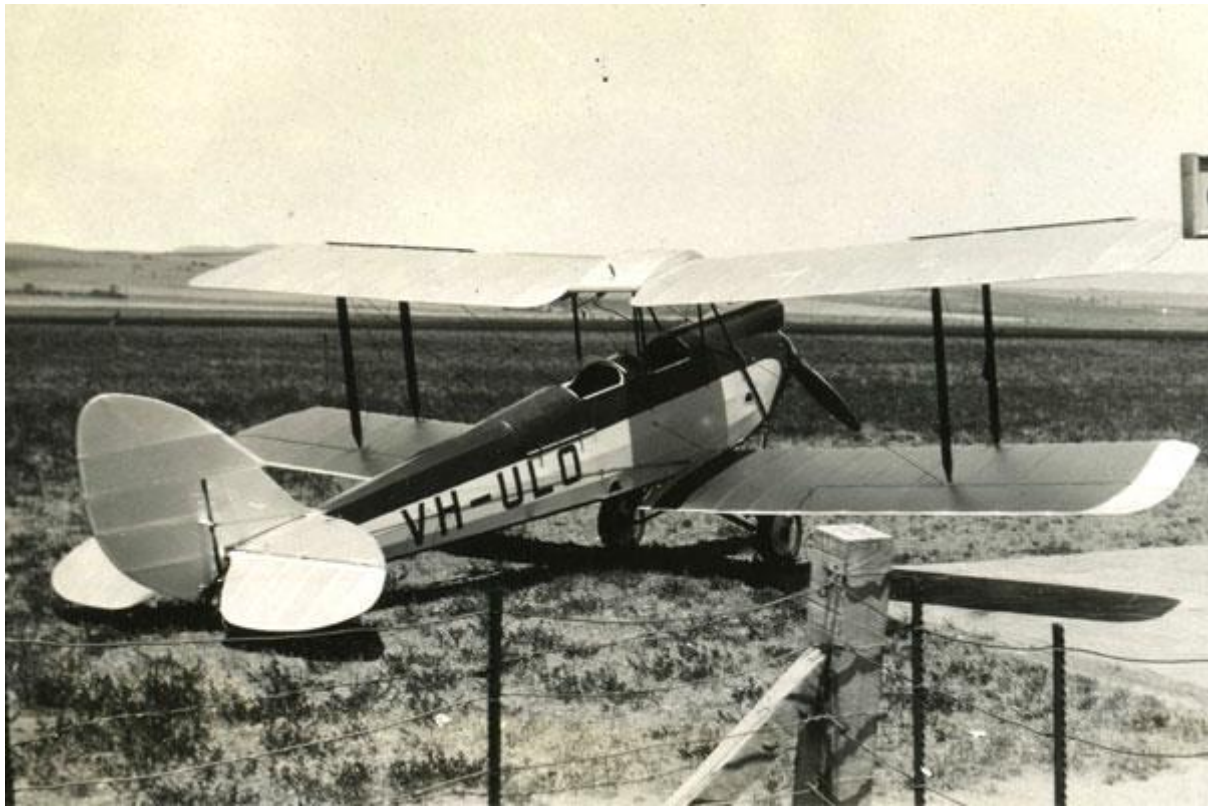
The South Australian Aviation Museum acquired two de Havilland Gipsy Moths (VH-ULJ and VH-ULO) in 1991. They were at the South Australian Museum of Applied Science, North Terrace, Adelaide, from November 1942 until 1961, and from 1965 to 1991, they were in the Birdwood Mill Museum (now known at the National Motor Museum). Both of the Moths were in poor condition when they arrived at SAAM. VH-ULJ has undergone an extensive restoration and is now on display in Hangar 1. VH-ULO is incomplete and is currently in storage awaiting restoration. In the photo of VH-ULO (below) you will notice the vertical stripes on the tail, which was a mark of the Aero Club.



*VH-ULO at SAAM*

VH-ULO is a de Havilland DH.60M Gipsy Moth (metal fuselage), first registered on 13 Dec 1929 to Civil Aviation Branch, Department of Defence and loaned to the Australian Aero Club. It was flown to Parafield by G. K. Rice-Oxley on 16 Dec 1929 to be used by the South Australian Branch operating at Parafield, South Australia.

VH-ULO was flown by many notable South Australian pilots between 1929 and 1937 including Jimmy Melrose, Brownie Lunn, Helen Cato and Roy Gropler. . On 12 Nov 1929, the name was changed to the Aero Club of South Australia and on 4 August 1936 it became 'The Royal Aero Club of South Australia' (The Royal Aero Club of S.A. ceased flying operations in December 1981).



*VH-ULO at Parafield 1928*

### **A Medical Emergency & Crash**

On 26 April 1930, VH-ULO was en-route to Alice Springs with pilot Jack Jukes and passenger Dr. Jungfer when they crashed near Orroroo. The pair were rushing to Alice Springs to attend an urgent medical case where the patient was suffering from blood poisoning. Dr. Jungfer was taking a supply of serum with him. They left Parafield at 5.30am and were hoping to reach Alice Springs before nightfall (816 miles or 1312km). About 23 miles north of Orroroo they ran into a thick fog with about 15 feet visibility. They crashed into a 400 ft range near Minburra Station. Dr. Jungfer was pinned in the cabin. The wreckage was pressing against his forehead and the back of his head. Mr. Jukes took around 30mins to free Dr. Jungfer. They found a track and walked about 3 and a half miles to the station where Mr. Rasheed assisted the pair. It was later reported that both the pilot and passenger had sustained minor injuries. Another aeroplane was obtained at Hawker and the serum was sent on to Alice Springs by way of Marree, Oodnadatta and William Creek. Later in the same year, on 26 Dec 1930 VH-ULO was badly damaged in a forced landing at Yoko Station, Yankalilla, South Australia. A rebuild was completed on 10 Oct 1931

On 26 Dec 1930, Dr. H.C. Nott made a forced landing near Yankalilla in VH-ULO when he lost all fuel through a leak in the flexible petrol feed tube between the filter and the carburettor. No damage was detailed, but it must have been significant as the club approached the Civil Aviation Branch for assistance to repair it. VH-ULO was out of service for nine months.

On 22 Jan 1930, Helen Cato (flying solo) made a heavy landing in VH-ULO but the damage was minor, with some broken bracing wires and a fracture of the plywood between the cockpits. The repairs only took a few days. VH-ULO was damaged again in April 1930, its propellor was damaged prior to leaving for Melbourne to take part in the Victorian Branch Pageant.

VH-ULO suffered a hard landing on 24 Feb 1935, another on 7 June and yet another on 26 Dec. at Callington.

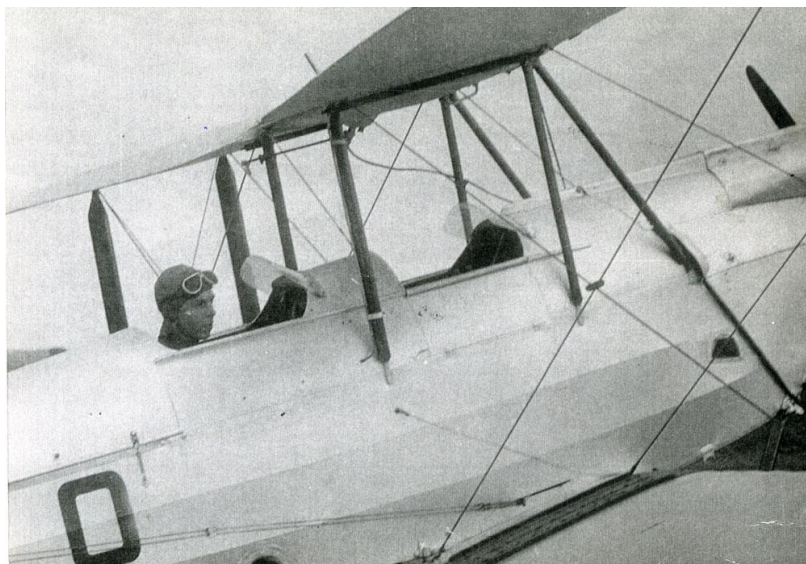
### **The Brownie Lunn Connection**

VH-ULO underwent a major reconditioning and was wired for night flying in Jan 1933. On 3rd August 1934, it was reported in the Adelaide Advertiser that the Aero Club was training student pilots in night flying in VH-ULO. Those under instruction included Miss. M. F. (Brownie) Lunn. Ms. Lunn has been recognised as the first Australian woman pilot to go night flying.



*Brownie Lunn in front of VH-ULO*

## The Roy Gropler Connection



Roy Gropler in VH-ULO c1934.

Around 3.15pm on Sunday 16 December 1934, Roy Gropler was flying VH-ULO at about 2,000 ft over Toorak Gardens when an oil pipe burst. Mr. Gropler put the machine into an easy glide and made a forced landing at Victoria Park racecourse. At the time Mr. Gropler was one of the youngest aviators in South Australia and was employed by the Aero Club as an assistant ground engineer. The plane was repaired and flew back to Parafield the same day. Three months later, Gropler was suspended from flying for a month for performing aerobatics over Rose Park.

## The End for VH-ULO

Richard Dutton (from Anlaby Station) was flying VH-ULO when it crashed at Anlaby Station, Kapunda, S.A. on 21 Sep 1937. It was reported that he had suffered abrasions to the face and legs, two teeth knocked out and was in shock. The aircraft was reported to be in poor shape, with the propeller broken and the undercarriage torn away. The Dutton family agreed to pay a settlement to the Aero Club. VH-ULO was never repaired. The engine was later used in VH-UTN (which was a plane flown by Nancy Bird Walton). The registration was cancelled on 18 Dec 1939 and it was sold to the S.A Museum of Applied Science, Adelaide. In 1965, it went to the Birdwood Mill Museum (with VH-ULJ). Both VH-ULJ and VH-ULO were delivered to SAAM on 1 June 1991.



*VH-ULO at Parafield*

### **History of Type**

The prototype De Havilland DH-60G-EBKT first flew on 22 February 1925 at Stag Lane, UK, piloted by Geoffrey de Havilland (later Sir Geoffrey). Its simple lines and outstanding performance on low power set an instantly popular fashion in light aircraft configuration, which lasted for several decades. This two-seat basic trainer was an instant success around the world with the first of the type being imported into Australia in 1926. They were initially used by Aero Clubs and the RAAF. The latter used them until replaced by the DH-82 Tiger Moth. The DH-60 type was also used by charter operators, for news reporting, aero medical services, mineral exploration, by private owners, and for aerial photography (most notably by Adelaide photographer D Darian Smith).

### **Technical Specifications**

Engine: De Havilland Gipsy I of 100 hp

Maximum take-off weight: 750 kg

Length: 7.20 m

Wing span: 9.09 m

Height: 2.70 m

Cruising speed: 75 kt (142 kph)

Range: 533 km (295 nm)

Capacity: 1 pilot and 1 passenger