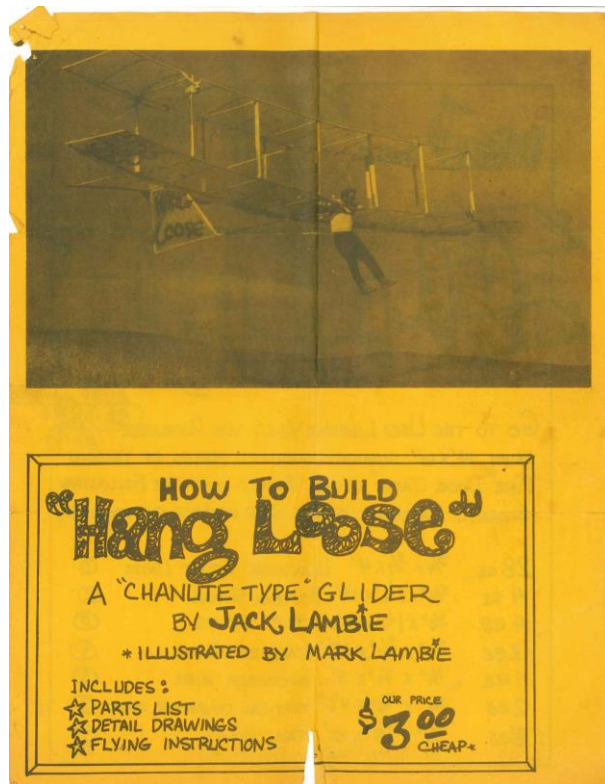


Following much reporting on the Hang Loose glider in various medias through the fall of 1970, including Time Life magazine, Jack Lambie came back home from a few months away to find three shopping bags full of mail waiting for him. Jack, who had been in North Carolina flying a Wright Brother's glider replica for a film, said "Many had six-to-eight-page letters, often from highly experienced pilots telling of their love of flight and how [the Hang Loose] seemed to be their long-sought dream. Some were from what were obviously twelve-year-olds."

I was 12 years old when he wrote to Jack Lambie in the winter of 1970-1.



Jack Lambie, an unconventional soul, amongst others helped Paul MacCready (.. yes, speed-to-fly..) build the first successful man-powered aircraft and years later bicycled around the world with his wife. Lambie was in the summer of 1970 a high school vice-principal, teaching a summer aviation class to fifth and sixth graders. In order to make the learning experience more meaningful for his students, Jack Lambie decided to have the students build a biplane hang glider in the final two weeks of the class. Seventeen years earlier, Jack Lambie had built and flown a replica of a Chanute biplane hang glider. The hang Loose was built in the class room and, once complete, taken out into the school yard where each student had a few "flights" as fellow students pulled and pushed the Hang Loose across the school yard.



Shortly after, Jack Lambie took the Hang Loose to some gentle grass hill in the Mission Viejo area south-east of Los Angeles and it there that the Hang Loose first truly flew. The photographs of that days flights are the ones that accompany Jack Lambie's article in the December 1970 issue of Soaring magazine titled Downhill racer and which inspired me to want to build and fly a Hang Loose.

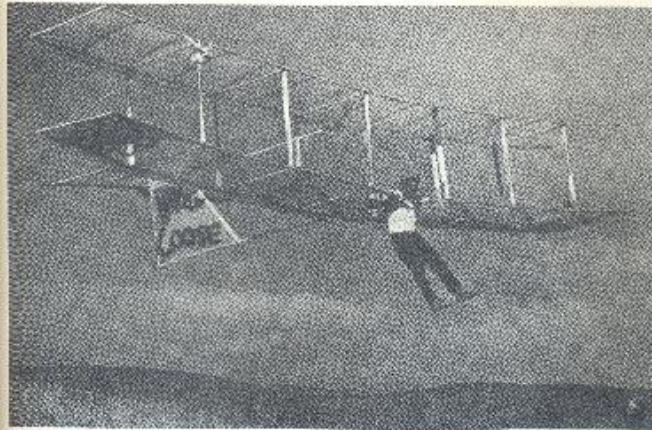
In the winter of 1970-1, I sent \$3 to Jack Lambie requesting a set of Hang Loose plans. I was an avid model builder and surmised that this would simply be like building any other model... but admittedly much larger. When the plans arrived they could not have be more appropriate. Jack Lambie's brother Mark had not only illustrated the plan so that I could understand them, but had given the plans a comic strip feel throughout.

Our father, Elvie Smith quickly realized that a lack of suitable hills close to Pendleton where we would be flying the Hang Loose was a problem. But the solution was simple: add to the Hang Loose glider a seat, flight controls, a landing gear and, operationally, plan to tow the craft behind a car. Our father had grown up on a 1930s wheat farm in an era where farm equipment had to regularly be redesigned and substantially rebuilt in the midst of urgent harvesting. And this had subsequently translated into an extraordinary ability to see practical engineering solutions to most any problem he was confronted with.

At 6 years of age, David Smith participated in the construction of the Hang Loose, which largely involved his either spreading much white wood glue or acting as a human clamp while various pieces were being assembled. Construction occurred in the basement of our suburban family home in Montreal and final assembly was made in the Carpenter Shop at Pendleton airport.

## HANG LOOSE

A Chauute type biplane hang glider



Construction: Wood, wire and plastic; a great linking craft with many wires and struts.

Dimensions: 27' span, 4.5' chord, 15.5 long.

Old model used weight shift for control; new one uses ailerons, rudder and weight shift. Costs about \$35. to build

Plans with an entertaining description and kits are available from:

Two facts conspired to make the first flight of our Hang Loose quite spectacular. The position of the seat was such that the glider had a very aft center of gravity even though numerous bags of lead shot had been lashed to the front tip of the landing gear ski. Separately nylon ropes had been used to connect the control stick to the elevator. When my father acting as the intrepid test pilot gave the launch signal for the maiden flight, Eric Wimberley driving an impressively large and powerful white convertible sped away... and kept accelerating! In a moment, the Hang Loose was well past its VNE .. VNE being 26 mph. And the combination of aft c.g. and lack of elevator control due to the nylon ropes simply having stretched, made the Hang Loose climb wildly. At some 30 to 40 feet of altitude, with a 20-25 degree nose up attitude, our father released. The Hang Lose came to a standstill, paused momentarily, and then descended in roughly that attitude until it impacted the ground.

Surprisingly, little structural damage occurred and within a few weeks was repaired, sporting a seat now mounted forward of the wing which gave the Hang Loose a correct center of gravity.

In the early fall of 1971, I soloed in the Hang Loose at the age of 13, having been instructed by my father who would sit on the tail gate of our family station wagon shouting helpful comments as the Hang Loose was being towed. That summer and subsequent summers, David also actively flew the Hang Loose, sitting in either my or our father's lap. By the summer of 1974, with the addition of many ground slides, David had enough experience to solo at the age of 9 years old, sitting on top of two or three 20 pounds bags of lead shot to ensure that the CG was correct.

The Hang Loose is often credited with being instrumental in launching the hang gliding movement !

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t-XC0dxeYs>