

Drachen Financial Aid

Hargrave Collection Being Conserved

With financial assistance from the Drachen Foundation, the Royal Aeronautical Society of England is conserving its unique collection of Lawrence Hargrave material. An Anglo-Australian, Hargrave was a 19th century aeronautics pioneer whose fame largely rests on his invention of the box kite in 1893.

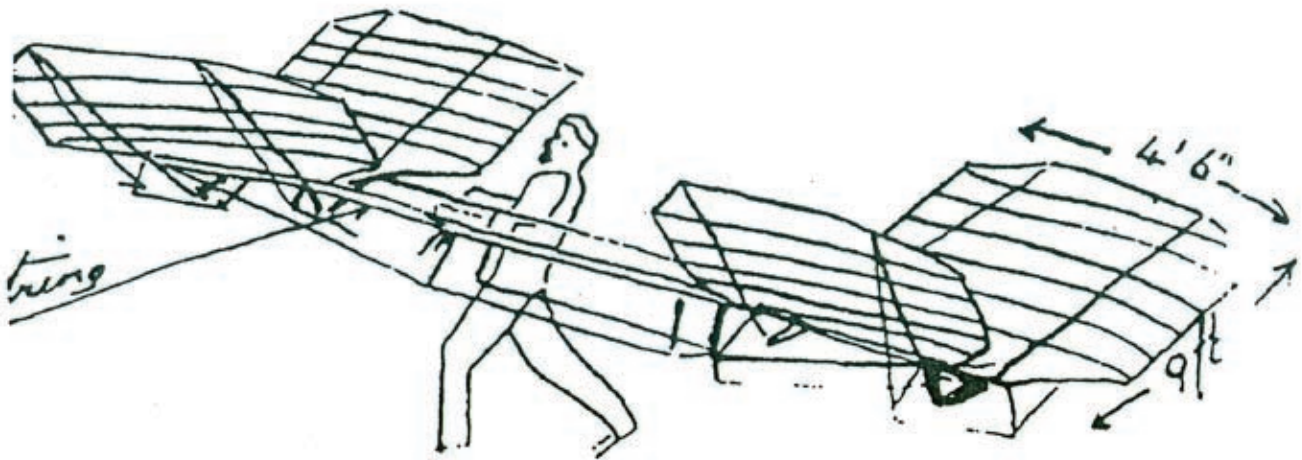
The Hargrave material was given to the society in 1921 by his widow and consists of a large number of notebooks, papers, negatives and lantern slides. Upon receipt of the gift, the society expressed its desire to carefully go through the material “with a view to the extraction of any data which should be put on historical record and which has not been previously published.”

The collection consists of 71 original manuscript letters in Hargrave’s hand; more than 100 contemporary letters by his associates such as G. Crosland Taylor and S.H.R. Salmon; 70 original glass plate negatives; two large photographic albums; Hargrave’s original lantern slides; as well as the author’s copies of his various papers published by the Royal Society of New South Wales.

Using digital scanning technology, the London group is processing the scholarly material so it can be made available to current and future researchers in a CD-ROM format. The grant from Drachen also permits the society to conserve the Hargrave material using professional archival storage techniques.

Hargrave’s original glass plate negatives are being developed and his photograph albums and letters and other manuscripts archivally conserved. A reference slide transparency set for conservation will be held of all the photographs by both the Royal Aeronautical Society and Drachen in addition to the digitalization of the collection for computer access.

Hargrave’s invention of the box kite structure was a highlight of his aeronautical experiments over a number of years with various kite shapes. The box kite, extensively used around the world in weather studies and man-lifting experiments, was also reflected in early Voisin aircraft designs. It remains a popular kite for recreational flying to this day.



Hargrave sketches a man-carrying kite.