

AERONAUTICAL SOCIETY OF GREAT BRITAIN.

OFFICIAL NOTICES AS SUPPLIED BY THE SECRETARY.

Meetings.—*Mr. Holt Thomas's lecture will be held, by kind permission, in the Committee Room of the Royal Automobile Club.*

June 12th, Wednesday, 8.30 p.m. G. Holt Thomas on "Hydro-aeroplanes," illustrated by cinematograph. The chair will be taken by Lord Saye and Sele.

Members are requested to note that under the rules they are permitted to introduce visitors at General Meetings.

Informal Meetings.—Informal Meetings for the discussion of set subjects are held at the Society's Offices, 11, Adam Street, Adelphi, on Mondays from 5 p.m.

June 10th, "Aerial Targets for Artillery."

Associate Fellowship Election.—The following have been recommended by the Council for election to Associate Fellowship:

Dr. F. A. Barton, A. E. Berriman, Robert Blackburn, Harris Booth, F. H. Bramwell, Capt. H. R. M. Brooke-Popham, Capt. C. J. Burke, Col. J. E. Capper, C.B., R.E., Col. J. D. Fullerton,

R.E., W. E. Gibson, B. Melvill Jones, H. F. Lloyd, Capt. E. M. Maitland, F. K. McClean, G. F. Mort, Percival Spencer, Prof. Herbert Chatley, Bertram G. Cooper, Horace Darwin, F.R.S., Harry Ferguson, Edward P. Frost, A. P. Thurston, W. R. Turnbull, Howard T. Wright, and W. Ellis Williams.

Society's History.—An illustrated history of the Society has been prepared and is being circulated to all members. The Council hope that members will assist them in their efforts to increase the membership and funds of the Society by purchasing copies for distribution, or by forwarding donations to the Secretary to defray the cost of their effective circulation.

The Council beg to thank the following for donations for the distribution of this history: Griffith Brewer, Harris Booth, Hon. Alan R. Boyle, Dugald Clerk, Alex. McCallum, F. K. McClean, Alec Ogilvie and Howard T. Wright.

T. O'B. HUBBARD, Secretary.



AVIATION HISTORY AND WILBUR WRIGHT.

SOME of our contemporaries among the daily press have taken occasion to lay claim to being the first to publish statements relating to Wilbur Wright's early work, the *Daily Mail*, in particular, mentioning their issue of December 29th, 1905, as containing the first account of human flight ever printed in an English newspaper.

The *Daily Mail* has indeed done more than all the other English newspapers together to further the practical progress of aviation, but it does not happen to have been the first to record the Wright Brothers' experiments.

The first account of human flight ever printed in an English newspaper appeared in the *Auto.* of December 26th, 1903, which issue contained a leader referring to the triumph of Wilbur Wright and his brother, who, after three years' experimental gliding, had finally built a motor-driven aeroplane, and had on December 17th of that year achieved four free flights, rising from the ground against the wind.

In justice to a foresight, which was much ridiculed at the time, it is only fair to recall how the *Auto.*, which was mainly devoted to the interests of motoring, laid itself out systematically to chronicle aeronautic development. This it regarded as properly within its sphere, inasmuch as neither the aeroplane nor the dirigible could fly at all without the aid of an engine similar, at least in principle, to those employed on motor cars.

In February, 1902, there was a leader in the *Auto.* appreciating the Wright Brothers' gliding experiments, and forecasting that it was "only a matter of time" before they would succeed in building an engine-driven flyer. In the same month of 1904 there was a full account—so far as it was ever possible to obtain a full account of the Wright Brothers' work—of how they had fulfilled this prophecy.

It is not without interest to recall these little incidents in the journalistic side of the past, because it is, after all, in the light of such records that future historians must paint their picture of progress. Moreover, 1908, when the first Aero Salon was held in Paris, the aeronautic section of the *Auto.* was in such imminent danger of overstepping even its most extended limits (and it had grown from an occasional paragraph to a page or more a week) that its proprietors decided to found a sister paper on the spot—and thus *FLIGHT*, the first aero weekly in the world was born.

An Early Letter from Wilbur Wright.

THE following letter from the late Wilbur Wright has very kindly been sent to us for publication by Mr. Sidney Hollands: it has an



Another Attempt on Leeds-Filey Trip.

AN attempt was made by Mr. J. Brereton, on his Blackburn monoplane, to fly from Filey to Leeds, on Wednesday last week, but motor trouble put an end to the trip after a third of the sixty miles had been covered. Bringing his machine out about 6 a.m., Mr. Brereton made a preliminary flight over the sands, and finding everything in order decided to start at once. Rising to a height of 800 ft. he steered in the direction of Staxton, and still continuing to climb he passed by Sherburn and Heslerton. When over Rillington the motor stopped and the pilot was obliged to plane down into a cornfield near Malton. He managed to pull up in time to miss a hedge, but slightly damaged the machine. Everything was right again in an hour or two, but in trying to get away one of the tyres gave trouble. Eventually the aviator re-started at five o'clock, but

especial interest as in it the great pioneer refers with characteristic openness and modesty to his historic achievements:—

(Copy.)

"Wright Cycle Company,
"1127, West Third Street,
"Dayton, Ohio,
"July 16th, 1905.

"DEAR MR. HOLLANDS,—We have received your letter with much pleasure. Our experiments were continued during a considerable part of the summer and autumn of last year with quite favourable results. It is not our desire, however, that too much interest in our work should be publicly aroused at present, and accordingly cannot make any extended report until the experimental period is past.

"In 1904 we succeeded for the first time in making complete circles, and landing at the starting point.

"On two different occasions the flight extended over nearly four rounds of the field—a distance of nearly three miles. The duration of these flights was five minutes and four seconds in one case, and four minutes fifty-two seconds in the other. The speed was about 35 miles an hour.

"The new problems, previously unsuspected, which are met with at almost every step, consume much time in developing a machine for practical use, but the critical points have been passed, and within a reasonable time we expect to have the machine ready to present to the world for some serviceable purpose.

"Your articles in *Flying* (1901-2)* were read at the time with interest, and it would please us to see some experiments along that line, to see whether it would offer any advantages over gliding as a method of practice.

"We hear from Mr. Chanute now and then, and at last report he was well, though he had a troublesome attack of the influenza last winter.

"You have probably seen some account of the experiments which Mr. Avery made with a Chanute glider at St. Louis last summer.

"We have no recent word regarding Professor Langley, but think he has abandoned the effort to fly his machine. It was evidently too frail to be of real value for experimental purposes.

"There is much more interest taken in aviation than for some years past; but, except the experiments of Mr. Montgomery, little of the work is of much value.

"Yours truly,
(Signed) "WILBUR WRIGHT."

* "The Bicycle as an Accessory to True Flight," by Sidney H. Hollands and G. Lacy Hillier.

the motor was again in difficulties about two miles further on, causing a descent in Welham Park, where the flight was abandoned, the machine being taken back to Filey by train.

A Good Flight at Rhyl.

ON Tuesday week, Mr. Hewitt was up on his 50-h.p. Gnome-Blériot for 40 mins. Leaving the Foryd aerodrome, Abergelle, at 7.30 in the evening, he flew over the promenade at Rhyl at an altitude of 1,500 ft., and then had a very exciting race with an express train as far as Prestatyn, about five miles distant, easily beating it. Mr. Hewitt was testing a new *cabane* which he had made, and during the 40-minute trip found it highly satisfactory. It being Whit week, the promenade was black with people, who intently watched his flights round the excursion steamers.