CORRESPONDENCE

The Editor of "Flight" is not necessarily in agreement with the views expressed by correspondents in these columns. The names and addresses of the writers, not for publication in detail, must in all cases accompany letters.

Restrictions on the Private Pilot

THE adverse critics of my letter which appeared in your November 29 issue have without exception missed its point, which was to defend M.T.C.A. air traffic control officers who do not lightly invoke the law and who cannot well defend themselves. My letter did not attack private flying, which I am in favour of, though I do not think the subject sacrosanct. My remarks, therefore, did not imply partisanship; moreover, I have been an instructor myself as well as a private pilot.

I am grateful, however, to Mr. Ogilvy (December 20) for illustrating an attitude I did criticize. I think his head should be fuller of "Notams, information circulars, flight planning charts"—surely he means graphs—"and performance schedules" than it evidently is. It should also contain information about what Airways and Control Zones are for. The Commercial Licence technical examination is on this sort of thing.

One would think from Mr. Ogilvy's letter that pure flying is the whole of piloting. It is not; not even if you include instrument flying, which seems to have been forgotten by your correspondent. It is the lesser part of piloting for both private and professional pilots. The neglect of the non-pure-flying aspects of piloting is what seems to me wrong.

Jersey, C.I. AIRLINE PILOT.

History and Accuracy

I SINCERELY hope that "Beltane," in his letter published in *Flight* of December 6, is not forging a two-edged sword. The claim to historical accuracy is a most desirable Olympus. To cloak such a collective body as he suggests in the mantle of authenticity is, in plain English, just asking for it! Any error in its findings, once discovered, would rebound on the heads of its perpetrators; its sayings for evermore would be suspect.

By all means have a society to put the question and discuss the answer, if found, but there are already so many societies, forums, clubs and so on, doing the same thing in their own enthusiastic ways. Any organization of the kind suggested that omitted names such as P. W. Brooks, J. M. Bruce, C. H. Gibbs-Smith, C. H. Barnes and others would be bound to fail in its primary function.

For your correspondent's inside information, there has existed for some time a minute group with no pretence to written constitution, whose individuals have maintained constant contact with one another to check and cross-check the sort of circumstantial evidence he has in mind.

The publication of J. M. Bruce's work is the logical outcome of this free association and achieves its object in one vital respect—it puts right out of court so many of the historical inaccuracies that have gone before in the printed word.

Woking, Surrey. C. F. ANDREWS.

Britannia in Service

THE recent most able lecture by Dr. Russell proves two things about the Britannia. Firstly, that the Government should have placed its order for Transport Command many years ago, and, secondly, that statistics are usually gloomy things.

B.O.A.C.'s chief problem with the Britannia has been the exposure of its passengers to a form of development flying which ought to have been carried out in many thousands of hours of route proving experience by R.A.F. Transport Command. It is very wrong that the Government should lag so far behind, as they did before with the Comet, and again propose to do with the V.C.10. The Forces' undeniable need for the Britannia came at the time of the Suez affair when those already delivered to B.O.A.C. were mustered into service on behalf of Transport Command.

One can well argue that B.O.A.C. could have made earlier provisioning of spares along its routes, for the statistics show that more than half the time lost *en route* has been due to the lack of spares at overseas stations. But it can never be said too often that this is the first prop-jet mainliner in the world; and if anyone imagines that you can ever enter into a first service without teething problems it would be to deny the immense complexity of a modern airliner. B.O.A.C. have shouldered this burden with the Comet before and Dr. Russell's statistics clearly show that both these British aircraft have in their initial month of operation proved to be far more successful than either the Argonaut or the Stratocruiser. Nor should we forget that both the latter aircraft had the experience of several other airlines to support them before they were delivered to B.O.A.C.

Direct comparisons also tend to overlook differences in route pattern. B.O.A.C. chooses not to expose the Seven Seas to the tremendous temperature and humidity variations of tropical transits. It is difficult to measure their effect but such a tough operational environment must surely be responsible for adding an adverse bias to the Britannia's record?

We have every sympathy with Dr. Russell and Bristols in the problems they have had to face with their now rapidly improving airliner, but what a pity that the statistics he uses are so gloomy. Would it not be better to turn them upside down and look on the happy side by considering the percentage of arrivals that have not been delayed, and the number of components that have survived their various lives? Thus we could all see the steadily improving reliability of the aircraft which is clouded, I would submit, by the introduction of indices as in his paper.

Operators usually appear to be obsessed with the idea of delays in terms of the hours lost and it is good to see that Dr. Russell has gone one step forward in relating the delays to revenue miles lost. May I suggest that there is a third stage which would present the operator and the manufacturer with a more useful comparison, namely that of the time lost in terms of scheduled capacity/ton-miles, then one would be incorporating in one measure an appreciation of the aircraft's speed and of its load lifting ability. We should learn more about the earning power of the aircraft and the statistics would be our servants rather than our masters.

London, W.2. K. R. WARREN.

The RW3 Multoplane

WE have noted with considerable interest the article in your issue dated December 27, 1957, concerning the RW3 Multoplane D-EKUM. As U.K. sales agents for this aircraft, may we take this opportunity to advise you that we shall have one available in this country for demonstration purposes in April or May 1958.

The original aircraft D-EKUM should have appeared at Baginton last summer, but unfortunately there was a last-minute hitch and we were compelled to cancel the allocation in the air-display programme.

Mr. Neumark has written his account of the RW3 very well indeed, but we should like to comment that three of the points of most importance to private flyers (particularly without a lot of experience) and pupils, are: (1) the simplicity of control, in that the controls have no sloppiness whatsoever yet at the same time are not over-sensitive. There is little necessity at any time to swing the control column around and then have to correct, as the reaction is almost like steering a motor car; (2) the amazing simplicity in cross-wind landings; and (3) the aircraft's almost complete indifference to turbulence.

The present prices for the two models are D.M. 30,000.950 (approximately £2,630) for the 32.8ft span version; and, for the model A2 with span of 49.2ft, D.M. 32,460 (approximately £2,760) ex airfield München Gladbach.

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IN BRIEF

Mr. John W. R. Taylor (36 Alexander Drive, Surbiton, Surrey) is anxious to secure an illustration of the B.E.7 with 140 h.p. Gnome engine which E. J. Gerrard used for altitude-record flights in May 1913.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Jan.	10.	Helicopter Association: "Boost Systems for Helicopter Gas Turbines," by A. W. Morley, Ph.D., A.F.R.Ae.S.
Jan.	15.	R.Ae.S.: Main Lecture at Leicester: "Rolls-Royce Engines," by A. A. Lombard, F.R.Ae.S.
Jan.	15.	Kronfeld Club: Debate.
Jan.	17.	Institute of Navigation: "Influence of Atmospheric Conditions on Radar Performance," by Dr. J. R. Saxton.
Jan.	18.	Aircraft Recognition Society: Annual Contest.
Jan.	21.	R.Ae.S.: Section Lecture: "Environments and Environmental Testing," by P. J. Duncton, A.F.R.Ae.S., and T. F. R. George, A.F.R.Ae.S.
Jan.	22.	Kronfeld Club: Film Show.
Jan.	23.	R.Ae.S.: Guided Flight Section: "Guidance and Control," by L. H. Bedford.

R.Ae.S. Lectures (to Jan. 18):—

Jan. 10, *Preston*, Annual Dance. Jan. 13, *Glasgow*, "Guided Weapons," by J. J. Gait; *Halton*, "Impressions of Soviet Aviation," by C. Jenkins; *Henlow*, "Procedures of Test Flying at Supersonic Speeds," by W/C. R. P. Beamont. Jan. 14, *Boscombe Down*, "Aircraft Control," by Prof. G. A. Whitfield; *Cambridge*, Lecture by W/C. Lewis. Jan. 15, *Brough*, "Aviation's Prophets," by Capt. J. L. Pritchard; *Chester*, "Nuclear Propulsion of Aircraft," by R. E. Wigg; *Leicester*, Main Lecture (see above). Jan. 16, *Christchurch*, "The International Geophysical Year," by Dr. R. d'E. Atkinson. Jan. 18, *Birmingham*, "Airworthiness for the A.R.B.," by W. Tye.