



Straight and Level



ACCORDING TO A CORRESPONDENT in *The Times* business news section on October 26, the cost of the Concorde—£250 million to this country spread over 10 years—“is, of course, a large sum of money but I saw recently that annual spending on the social services has increased from £5,144 million a few years ago to £7,457 million this year.”

I seem to recall many previous letters to *The Times* comparing Concorde cost with social expenditure, but never that way round before. Hang on a moment while I adjust my rose-tinted National Health spectacles . . . yes, I think I can definitely discern the beginning of a trend.

● I see that wing-tip vortices are now called wing-tip tornadoes. The biggest tornadoes, apparently, are going to be generated by supersonic airliners and jumbo jets taking off at full weight.

According to an American expert, as quoted in our report of the IATA technical conference at Lucerne last month, “they can stay right on the runway waiting for the next aircraft.”

A chilling thought indeed. Things could get so bad that controllers will have to plot the movement of these tornadoes around the airport with special radar, and keep pilots advised of their movements. Thus perhaps: “Wing-tip Tornado Gladys is moving away from Runway 13R and appears to be travelling rather rapidly towards, er, towards the airport radar centre—Omgawd! WHO-O-O-SH HOWL KERJOINK. . .”

● A Ministry of Defence spokesman, commenting last week on the sightings of those flying saucers, is reported to

From Vol I of the current “ABC Airways Guide.” Not only POW—but POW! WHAM! ZAP!



Well, it was just that this particular isolated aircraft had a mild pitch-up problem, so we tried the idea of a small rotor on the radome and some small wheels underneath just in case all else failed



Ah! the sweet nostalgia of that never-to-be recaptured moment—No 26 Goodbye to the “Queen Mary” from Uncle Roger too. This picture comes from the 1936 “Flight” photograph album. The aircraft is the prototype Airspeed Envoy. The “Queen Mary” was working-up for her maiden voyage in May 1936. The Envoy was probably being flown by Ft Lt Colman. It was sold to Spain and was lost in the Civil War

WANTED. Person to be responsible for cat house. Must be dedicated to cat welfare. Caravan accommodation provided. Please ring the Warden, Biggin Hill 2586. WEST RIDING SOLICITORS with extensive conveyancing

From the “Daily Telegraph,” September 29

have said: “We can definitely confirm that there are no little green men running about the country.”

No, indeed not Neddy. They’re all at committee meetings discussing Britain’s military aircraft policy.

● The US Federal Aviation Administration has ordered stringent new air safety measures. These could cost the US airlines as much as £250 million in the next two years.

Airlines must be able to demonstrate a 90sec evacuation time instead of 120sec. New emergency lighting must be installed so that even if the fuselage breaks all exit signs remain on. All furnishing material must be self-extin-

guishing, not just non-flammable. Fuel lines and electrical cables must be able to “give” 20in without breaking.

Deadline dates are given for each modification; for example, rearward-collapsing landing gear must not rupture fuel tanks or pipes after April 25, 1969.

What I don’t understand about these Americans is why they didn’t appoint a safety committee instead of actually doing something.

● Following the US Government’s ruling that all passengers flying in US airlines in and out of the United States must carry hand baggage that can be stowed under their seats, an official of Pan American at Heathrow is reported to have said: “Many passengers try to get around the regulations. We recently had a man trying to take a harp into the cabin.”

● Mr Christopher Cockerell, inventor of the hovercraft, was not invited to the launching of SR.N4 last week. I am sure he would have liked to have been there. All the VIPS were.

Read Whittle’s book—he got the same sort of treatment. I hope, if and when Britain’s swing-wing aircraft is first shown, that Barnes Wallis will not be forgotten. Why are prophets so often without honour in their own country?

● You’re not going to believe this, but this woman on a train was looking at an advertisement for MEA’s “Cedar Jet” services, and she said to her husband “Fancy making jets out of cedar, I mean, do you suppose they’re all right. . . .?”

Roger Bacon