

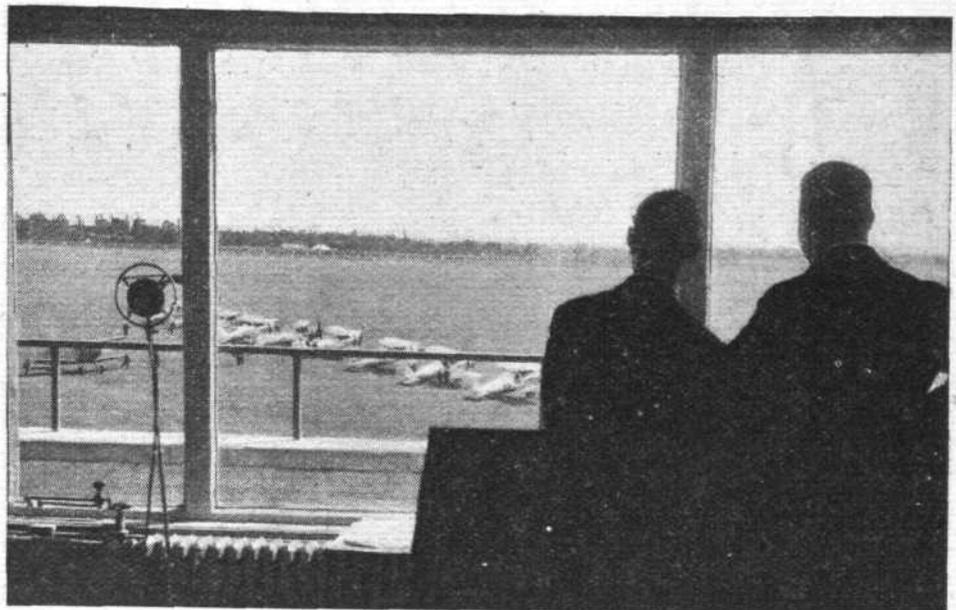
Control-tower silhouettes of the commentators—F/O Lord Dudley and Major Alan Goodfellow

acres, was inadequate as an airport, the committee set about planning the 600-acre Ringway. They owed much to K.L.M.'s criticism of Barton, which, at the time, some had felt to be too brutal. Now he was proud to quote K.L.M.'s chief pilot as saying that Ringway was the United Kingdom's "easiest, pleasantest and best" airport to enter. He was also satisfied—recalling the fact that the Ringway project wriggled through by one vote—that that day's auspicious opening would satisfy local critics. He also thanked the Manchester Chamber of Commerce, who had done everything possible by publicity to encourage business men to use the air.

Putting up a valiant verbal battle against the drumming of canvas within and the roar of the Mercuries and Kestrels without, Sir Kingsley Wood made the announcement already quoted. He expressed the conviction that we were now entering upon a new and happier era in civil aviation. The subsidy was being increased to three millions a year, and a proportion of that subsidy would be devoted to internal airline development. Rationalisation was vital, said Sir Kingsley, and went on to speak of the Maybury recommendations and the new licensing committee.

Turning to military aviation, he referred to his new appeal for personnel, and also announced the probability of a Reserve school being established at Ringway. (There is already one at Barton.) Of the production side, Sir Kingsley referred to local enterprises such as that of Fairey and A. V. Roe, and disclosed that steps were being taken to enlarge the scope of Rootes' shadow factory at Speke by more than forty per cent. That morning, too, he had visited the works of Metropolitan-Vickers, who had now undertaken air work of national importance.

Watched by thousands of Mancunians, admitted free to "standing" enclosures, or seated for a modest shilling, the largely Service flying display which followed was probably the most impressive ever given at an airport opening. Apart from the perfection of the ground organisation, which appeared to have been studied down to the last detail, the flying programme (which involved the handling of whole squadrons) seemed to go with the precision of a Hendon Display. All credit to Sqn. Ldr. J. W.



Turton Jones and Mr. J. J. Jeffs, the control officers responsible for, respectively, the R.A.F. and civil events.

Mr. Jeffs, incidentally, after seeing that all is running smoothly at Ringway, is handing over this week to the two permanent control officers, Flt. Lt. D. A. Craik and Mr. I. Ramsay. Both have extensive experience of commercial flying in the North, Flt. Lt. Craik having been with Midland and Scottish Air Ferries (as was) and Mr. Ramsay with British Airways and United Airways. Both, likewise, seem delighted with the layout of the Ringway control tower, so pilots operating to and from the new aerodrome may look forward to real co-operation.

The Display

Space, unfortunately, precludes a detailed description of the display. Nine Gladiators of No. 72 (F.) Squadron, Church Fenton, commanded by Sqn. Ldr. J. B. H. Rogers, opened with air drill, a fine show in spite of the bumps with which the pilots were obviously contending. Two Gladiators of No. 72 then did synchronised and opposed aerobatics.

Next came what the extremely official and correct programme called "a demonstration to show the mistakes pupils can make and the trouble and patience taken by a good instructor," but which turned out to be none other than our old friend P/O. Peabody, of Hendon, whose flying appears to have improved not one whit with the passing of the years. He still flutters helplessly out of the tops of loops,

and his dives resemble a tea-tray sliding downstairs. Perhaps it was not quite the same Peabody; but the piping voice has evidently become a tradition, like the squawkings of Punch and Judy. The machine was a London University Air Squadron Hart Trainer, handled by Flt. Lt. G. A. Bartlett, an L.U.A.S. instructor; and, at the risk of disclosing a stage secret, it might be remarked that Sgt. Pearce, an F.T.S. pilot, is a wizard at dual-voice impersonation if placed before a control-tower microphone.

Appropriately providing strong local interest, three Fairey Battles of No. 52 (B.) Squadron and three Ansons of No. 233 (G.R.) Squadron performed air drill, and then three Gauntlets of No. 46 (F.) Squadron from Digby, led by Flt. Lt. E. A. McNab (R.C.A.F.), demonstrated flight aerobatics.

Meanwhile, nine Demons took off for the set-piece, one of them trailing a long streamer of smoke from a "shot-down-in-flames" wing-tip flare. Apparently the pilot had pressed the wrong button, and the sudden self-advertisement caused him so much embarrassment that he forthwith left the formation and went sky-writing away into the distance.

Though merely a variation of the good old "suspicious building," the set-piece was grandly done. Battles and Ansons, harried by Gladiators, made a high bombing attack, while nine low-flying Demons, looking like Disney's Satanic wasps, wheeled in a screaming circle through the smoke of the explosions.

So much for the Service side. A C.30A Autogiro—one of those actually built at Manchester—played yet another variation on the local-boy-makes-good theme, in the hands of F/O. R. A. C. Brie, and the remainder of the programme included a parachute drop by Mr. Benno G. de Greeuw (his 26ft. G.Q. parachute is five years old and has made over a hundred descents); an aero-launched gliding display by Mr. L. J. Rimmer, of the North British Aviation Co.; and displays by local Territorial A.A. units.

The efficiency or otherwise of the commentating can make or mar a show of this kind. F/O. Lord Dudley and Major Alan Goodfellow kept Ringway's opening in the former category.

The Ringway control desk, where virtually everything the officer may want is within his reach. Flt. Lt. Craik, one of the two control officers, is seated at this "mighty Wurlitzer."

