



## A HELICOPTER GARDEN PARTY...

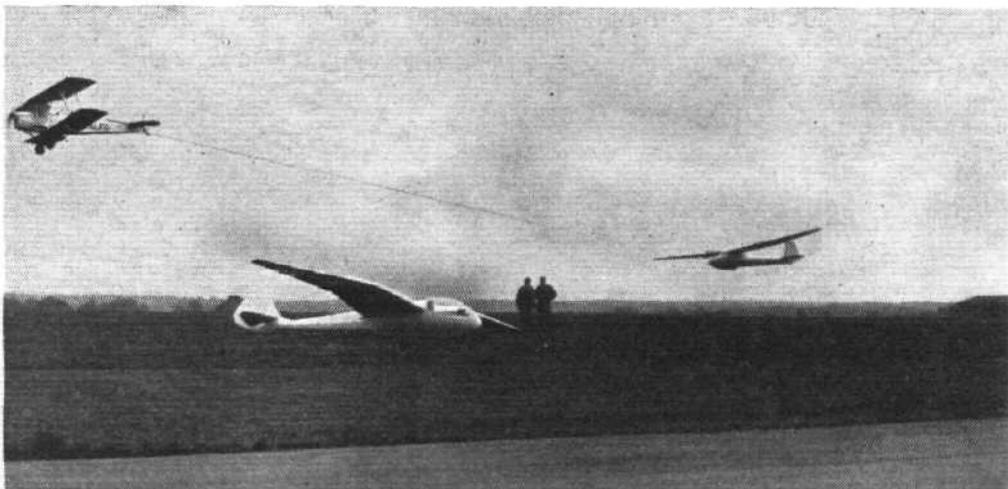
THE fine grounds of Dunsborough House, Ripley, Surrey, were placed at the disposal of the Helicopter Association by Mr. and Mrs. Charles Hughesdon for a "helicopter rally" last Saturday. Threatening weather, which later cleared, failed to discourage over 300 visitors, some of whom arrived in half a dozen helicopters. These consisted of two Dragonflies (respectively operated by Westlands and Mr. Richard Fairey) and four Sycamores (variously from Bristols, B.E.A.—one brought the chairman, Lord Douglas—and R.A.F. South Cerney). B.E.A.'s Bristol 173 also appeared, but did not land, and after tea the Westland Widgeon dropped in. In the group above are (left to right) Mr. Charles Hughesdon—who was a racing pilot in pre-war days—Mrs. Hollis Williams, her husband (Westland's technical director) and Mrs. Hughesdon (Miss Florence Desmond, the actress).

*"Flight" Photographs of Two Week-end Events with the Accent on the Social Side*



## ... AND A GLIDING "AT HOME"

AT Lasham Aerodrome, Hampshire, some 200 members and guests attended last Saturday's At Home organized by the Surrey Gliding Club group. In the photographs below Frank Irving in the Imperial College Skylark 2 is preceding his aerobatic display with a demonstration run in the low-tow position behind a Tiger Moth, with Slingsby Petrel in foreground; while (right) the visitors included Mr. F. N. Slingsby, Mrs. Beswick, Mr. Frank Beswick, M.P., and Sir Alfred Le Maitre.



## The Waterton Story

*"The Quick and the Dead,"* by S/L. W. A. Waterton, G.M., A.F.C. and Bar. Frederick Muller, Ltd., 110 Fleet Street, London, E.C.4. Illustrated. Price 15s.

THESE are only two kinds of experimental test pilots, asserts Bill Waterton—the quick and the dead: "Like dogs, planes usually bark before they bite. . . . This is transmitted in many ways, and a test pilot must learn to recognize even subtle variations in feel, sound, vibration and smell. Not only recognize them, but know how to act."

Yet, after reading his book, one wonders if survival could often depend on mere quickness in a jet age. Peter Lawrence was probably quick to recognize what was wrong with the second prototype Javelin when it got into trouble on June 11, 1953: but he died. Survival might depend more often on whether a man is prepared to abandon a valuable aircraft or, like Waterton himself a year earlier, try to get it down in one piece at great personal risk.

It is a pity that he was not content to write a purely autobiographical book, because there is no more lively description than this of the duties that fall to the lot of a chief test pilot. His newer profession of journalism has helped him to tell the story of the 1946 world speed record attempt and his subsequent test and demonstration flying of Meteors, CF-100s and Javelins in a way that is readable for the general public and satisfying to the technician (if occasionally irritating in its terminology).

It has also taught him the commercial value of sensationalism.

Waterton's criticism of matters like the aircraft industry's slowness to develop prototypes and of the demonstration "dodges" practised at the S.B.A.C. Display is sometimes justified; but he does not acknowledge that the wartime German and post-war U.S. aircraft industries have suffered setbacks every bit as severe as those experienced by our own, and for much the same reasons; or that equally artful aviation takes place at foreign displays. Nor does he show much appreciation of design or strategy when he implies that our manufacturers are able to build bombers only half the size of the Boeing B-52; he apparently forgets that the great size of the American aircraft reflects its need to carry fuel and equipment for operation over much longer ranges, because its American bases are farther from potential targets than are those of our V-bombers.

It is untrue that the R.A.F. had no aircraft comparable in speed with the 1946 Meteor record-breaker in large-scale service in 1955, and mere foolishness to criticize A.R.B. pilots for lack of jet experience in 1948—before any civilian jet aircraft had flown.

To offset such irritations and frequent misspellings, it is interesting to read that B.E.A. nearly bought two Meteors for a London-Paris mail service in 1948; and to find that Egyptian modifications produced a Spitfire with buried radiators, and Dakota bombing and ground strafing aircraft.