



The Sanders biplane of 1909. (See "Correspondence in Brief," below.)

later convert the remainder of its fleet for proving in revenue service and possible resale in their new form at a later date.

This might well bring in more dollars than the sale of the ten aircraft, and help to keep Britain's lead in engine design. Existing DC-7 series operators, owning well over 100 aircraft which must remain in service for a number of years, have fine airframes married to engines of great complexity, and are likely to be much more interested in conversions than Convair owners, who have a good aircraft which may serve them well enough until the next generation comes along.

Shenfield, Essex.

JOHN RODGERS.

Cody Controversy

ONE man—if he is still alive—could settle the date of Cody's first flight. Mr. Frank McWade, who was works manager at "the factory" until about 1912, kept a works diary over a period of some years. I well remember, whilst a "dogsbody" in his office, eagerly reading his entries concerning the early flights of *Nulli Secundus* and the Cody flier; and receiving well merited reproof for wasting time.

The whole controversy seems rather pointless; Mr. Gibbs-Smith should appreciate that early flights were frequently short because these pioneers, having designed and built their aircraft, had then to teach themselves to fly them; they had perhaps little knowledge, but great imagination and guts.

Pinner, Middx.

W. G. GIBSON.

CORRESPONDENCE IN BRIEF

With Air Ministry co-operation, Mr. Robert Rodrigo (Flat 2, The Hollies, Chiswick Mall, London, W.4) is writing a book on the Berlin blockade and airlift. "I should be glad to hear," he writes, "from past and present R.A.F. officers and men who took part in Operations Knicker, Carter Patterson and Plainfare in any capacity, but especially as groundstaff—maintenance, signals, Air Traffic Control, radar, etc.—at stations in Germany."

Mr. J. Sanders ("Watchoak," Powerscourt Road, Barton-on-Sea, Hants) wishes for information on the biplane built by his father and uncle in 1909 at the Sanders Aeroplane Co., The Common, Beccles. The machine (of which a photograph is published above) first flew in 1910 and was entered in the race for the *Daily Mail* prize the following year. Two of its outstanding features were folding wings and retractable wheels.

In a request [Correspondence, August 22] for information on Nobile's rigid-airship work in 1926-27, the words "for the Italian Government" should have read "for the Japanese Government." The reader requesting the information (Mr. H. R. Bantock, 81 Queen's Road, Buckhurst Hill, Essex) also wishes, incidentally, to get in touch with others interested in rigid airships in general.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

- Sept. 1-7. S.B.A.C. Display and Exhibition, Farnborough.
- Sept. 4. Helicopter Association: Annual Dinner.
- Sept. 4-6. AGARD Avionics Panel Meeting, Cambridge.
- Sept. 8-13. International Congress of Aeronautical Sciences, Madrid.
- Sept. 15-21. Battle of Britain Week.
- Sept. 21. B.G.A.: National Sailplane Aerobatic Contest, Dunstable.
- Sept. 21. Royal Belgian Aero Club: 900 cu m Balloon Competition.
- Sept. 21. Milan Aero Club: Rally.
- Sept. 21. Denham Flying Club: Garden Party.
- Sept. 22-27. A.C.I.M.A. Third European Aeronautical Conference, Brussels.
- Sept. 25. R.Ae.S. Graduates' and Students' Section: "The Next Generation of Civil Aircraft," by G. H. Lee.
- Sept. 25-26. Aerodrome Owners' Association: Annual Conference.
- Sept. 26-29. Austrian Aero Club: Innsbruck Rally.
- Oct. 9. Society of Instrument Technology: "Aircraft Flight Simulators," by Dr. A. E. Cutler.
- Oct. 10-11. College of Aeronautics, Cranfield: Open Days.
- Oct. 16. R.Ae.S. Graduates' and Students' Section: "The Fatigue of Aircraft," by Major P. L. Teed.
- Oct. 20-29. AGARD meetings, Copenhagen.
- Oct. 29. R.Ae.S. Graduates' and Students' Section: Annual Film Show.
- Nov. 11. R.Ae.S. Graduates' and Students' Section: "The Air Transport Auxiliary," by Sir Gerald D'Erlander.
- Nov. 28. R.Ae.S. Graduates' and Students' Section: Annual Dance.
- R.Ae.S. Branch Fixtures:—Sept. 17, Coventry, "Design of Pattern equipment for an Aero Engine Casting," by K. Marston; Weybridge, "The Tyne Engine," by D. McLean. Sept. 22, Henlow, a.g.m. and film show. Sept. 23, Luton, film evening. Sept. 30, London Airport, "The Boeing 707," by M. Pennell. Oct. 6, Henlow, "Mixed Powerplants," by M. J. Brennan. Oct. 8, Weybridge, "Physiological Aspects of High-performance Flight," by Dr. K. G. Williams. Oct. 21, Luton, "Fatigue Testing of the Fokker Friendship," by E. J. van Beek. Oct. 29, Weybridge, Brains Trust. Nov. 4, Luton, "Guided Flight," by L. H. Bedford. Nov. 18, Luton, Discussion Evening. Nov. 19, Weybridge, "Training of a Production Engineer for the Aircraft Industry," by Professor J. Loxham. Nov. 21, Luton, Annual Dinner. Dec. 2, Luton, "Satellites," by E. M. Dowlen. Dec. 10, Weybridge, R. K. Pierson Memorial Lecture, by B. S. Shenstone. Dec. 19, Weybridge, Annual Dance.

CORRESPONDENCE . . .

hours at the bottom of a hole, cold-bloodedly unscrewing the booby-trap fuses of an unexploded bomb."

Reading Lt-Cdr. Rawlins' article I thought that one might appropriately second that motion with this extract from it: ". . . and, although no one would recommend riding the ejection seat under water as a form of sport, there is no doubt that use of the seat is an acceptable method of underwater escape."

London, W.1.

TIGER TIMID.

"Sarah" for Airlines ?

I WOULD like to draw attention to the leader "Air Disaster" in the *Manchester Guardian* for August 15, relating to the recent Atlantic crash of a K.L.M. Super Constellation. An excellent device is proposed which should make the location of crashes much simpler. What I should like to stress is that the idea is eminently feasible.

The device should take the form of a floating canister containing a transmitter, batteries and aerial in a very similar form to that at present used in naval sonobuoys (omitting, of course, the underwater-detection gear). This canister could easily be attached so that, no matter how the aircraft should fall, it will detach, float free, and transmit in all but the worst seas. Suitable locations would be the tail-cone or wing-tip, reducing risk to the device from fire.

The signal could be very simple—for example, a discharge every second, which should be ample for direction-finding purposes. Thus the maximum power could be used, and yet be conserved for as long as possible. Most searches take less than 48 hours, and as the device would itself shorten the search, an endurance of 24 hours should be sufficient. Perhaps the best frequency to use would be the international maritime distress frequency of 500 kc/s, though technical consideration might dictate a crystal-controlled frequency in the H.F. band, where the aerial would be more efficient.

I hope you will find this short specification of interest. I have no doubt that the device will become as commonplace in time as the inflatable liferaft. In fact, in the recent accident, the liferafts were unfortunately unnecessary, but a homing device would have greatly helped the searchers.

Halebarns, Cheshire.

A. B. KNIGHT.

Pioneer Aerobatics

THE French authorities now regretfully accept the bare priority in looping accorded to the Russian Lt. Nesterov, who made the first loop in his Nieuport a few days before Pégoud made his, Pégoud having succeeded on September 21, 1913, at Buc. (He had first flown upside down on September 1 at Juvisy.) His machine was a Blériot with a 50 h.p. Gnome. Two months later, on November 21, Chanteloup first looped the loop on a Caudron, at Douai. This sequence of events—Pégoud followed by Chanteloup—is confirmed by the contemporary periodicals in France and England (see especially *Flight* for September 27, 1913).

But, despite the slight priority of Nesterov in looping, the French rightly acclaim Pégoud as the true father of aerobatics: his "marvellous flights" (as they were described) laid the foundations for all others to follow, as he not only repeated his looping over and over again, but perfected many other manoeuvres. He was a splendid pilot, "plein d'ardeur, esprit bien équilibré," who also made the first parachute descent from an aeroplane in Europe on August 19, 1913, following the all-time first by Albert Berry on March 1, 1912, at St. Louis, U.S.A.

London, W.1.

CHARLES H. GIBBS-SMITH.

Turboprop Conversions

ECONOMICALLY attractive as the Eland-Convair may be, the case of the DC-7C is of more importance, as this aircraft seems to suffer more than its fair share of engine trouble, and improved safety and reliability could be offered. As no Seven Seas operator is likely to replace these aircraft with Britannias (apart from B.O.A.C.) and as the 7C may not be so very easy to sell second-hand in a year or so's time, a change in B.O.A.C. and Government policy seems indicated. Instead of trying to dispose of its DC-7Cs, B.O.A.C. should release, say, two each to Rolls-Royce and to Bristol, for experimental work and demonstrations, and