

# Correspondence

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## American Sailplanes

YOUR magazine's articles concerning various gliding and soaring events are greatly appreciated. The available news sources that include even token coverage of such events in your country and on the European continent are few. Consequently, we hesitate to "bite the hand that feeds us." However, there is one item in *Prospects for Butzweiler* in your June 3 issue that requires clarification. You refer to the sailplane flown by Richard H. Johnson as the "RHJ-6." This aircraft is called the "Adastra" by Mr Johnson. You have possibly been confused by the name of the RJ-5 and assumed the Adastra to be a continuation of a family of sailplanes.

It appears that many are unaware that the "R" in the name RJ-5 is for Ross, the designer and builder of that sailplane and its four predecessors. Mr Harland Ross has designed and built several sailplanes which established US national or world records in their day. Included among those are the "Silver King," the "Zanonia" and the "Ibis." While it is true that Mr Johnson, under the tutelage of the late Dr August Raspert at Mississippi State University, improved the performance of the RJ-5 by geometric boundary layer control, it should not be forgotten the sailplane was, in its designed state, one of the highest performance sailplanes then in existence. Mr Ross' contribution to the success of that sailplane is, unfortunately and unjustly, usually omitted.

You might also be interested to know that the successor to the RJ-5 is the R-6. The wing of the R-6 is identical to the RJ-5 while the fuselage provides for two occupants. While flying the R-6 in the two-place configuration Mr Ross established world speed records for the 100, 200 and 300km triangles on three successive days—August 12 to 14, 1958—at Odessa, Texas. On August 15 that year he also established the two-place US national goal and return record of 234 miles. In the R-6 Mr Ross also completed US Diamond C No 14 last year with a 365-mile flight during which he attained an altitude of 21,800ft in a cu-nim. His average speed on this flight was in excess of 65 m.p.h.

One final item concerns the sailplane flown by Mr Richard Schreder. While he intended to take his HP-9 it is our understanding he actually took the HP-8. Perhaps your future issues will show the names of the two ships actually flown by the US team in the Open class.

We shall look forward to future issues for additional information on the World's sailplanes as well as subsequent notes on soaring.

Wichita 7, Kansas

H. MARSHALL CLAYBOURN,  
President, Kansas Soaring Association

[The June 3 list was as given by the organizers of the championships, and was subsequently corrected in our reports from Butzweiler. Schreder did fly the HP-8, but Johnson retained RHJ-6 as the designation of his aircraft in discussions with *Flight* at Butzweiler.—Ed.]

## Link Training Value

FOR the benefit of those who, like myself, love flying and endeavour to attend as many International Rallies as possible during the short summer months, I would like to tell of my experience when returning from La Baule to Denham, via Cherbourg and Eastleigh, on June 27.

The day in La Baule was glorious with blue skies and sunshine. The weather reports obtained by the Royal Aero Club on the other hand were not quite so promising. These spoke of a general cloud base of 1,800-2,000ft, low stratus on the Cherbourg Peninsula and a general visibility of 5-8 miles. The weather prophets also promised an improvement towards midday. I therefore decided to set course in my Gemini G-AKEM, accompanied by my wife who acts as navigator.

At first weather was fair and visibility according to the forecast. On nearing Affranche, however, visibility got steadily worse and even at 1,000ft I was flying in and out of low stratus. I obviously could not go below 1,000ft as there is quite a bit of high ground on the Cherbourg Peninsula and I therefore carried on in the hope that: (1) It would not get worse; (2) I would certainly recognise the coast of the northernmost tip of the Cherbourg Peninsula; (3) I also had a radio which would enable me to home on Cherbourg by means of QDMs.

Visibility did not get worse, but on arriving at the coastline I found it difficult to find Cherbourg and had to make use of radio and QDMs to make a satisfactory landing.

The weather in Cherbourg was cold and unfriendly, low stratus kept drifting in from the sea and only occasionally could one catch a glimpse of a bit of blue sky. Having completed all the formalities

I consulted Control and the weather man, who obtained an actual from Eastleigh which gave visibility at 3 n.m. Consulting Silver City pilots I was told that the top of the stratus was at about 2,000-2,500ft and that visibility on top was reasonable. I therefore arranged with Cherbourg Control to fly inland, climbing to 3,000ft; and if I had reached top and was satisfied with the conditions I found that I should set course for Eastleigh, checking my bearings with the Cherbourg homer. If, on the other hand, conditions were unsatisfactory I was to come down and Cherbourg would bring me in by means of QDMs.

Climbing to 3,000ft I found conditions far better than I had expected. I was well on top and having received my bearing from Cherbourg I set course. At 50° latitude the low stratus ended and was replaced by haze and mist which gave no forward and practically no downward visibility.

I then contacted Eastleigh homer and asked for weather conditions and QDMs. Eastleigh informed me that visibility had deteriorated, but that they would continue to give me QDMs. The ensuing half-hour was tense; I had never flown in such bad conditions before and when Eastleigh instructed me to fly to 4,000ft and maintain the course they had given me because they were bringing in two Dakotas, I did not feel particularly happy.

I listened to the two Dakotas being brought in and with great relief finally heard the Controller calling me and asking me to transmit for identification. From then on my troubles seemed to cease. I could not see, but the voice of the Eastleigh controller telling me what course to steer and what heights to maintain seemed to remove the responsibility from me to somebody else. I just concentrated on the instruments and went through the GCA procedure without any qualms or misgivings and eventually the controller stated GCA ended, land straight ahead. I looked up and there was the Eastleigh runway in front of me.

I must add that my rate of climb indicator chose to go unserviceable during this procedure and that the controller, apart from giving me course to steer, also always gave me the height I should be at any given moment, with which I coped satisfactorily.

The moral of the whole story is that I would never have been able to complete this flight satisfactorily had I not taken a course of Link training instruction during the winter and kept up exercises once every fortnight. I concentrated particularly on GCAs because I felt that was probably the most likely exercise I might need one day.

Fellow private pilots, please note. Link training is not just a sport, but a necessity and an exercise that I recommend most warmly to everyone who wishes to go farther afield in the same way as I hope to for many more years. Just for general information I would add that I am 63 years of age.

London W6

A. R. DRIESSEN

## RNAS Airship Speeds

IN your issue of June 10 your contributor Mr Golightly, in his article on the RNAS airship, gives a maximum speed for the Zero type airship as 75 m.p.h. This figure needs correction. The Admiralty handbook for this type gave the maximum speed as 53 m.p.h. To obtain 75 m.p.h. a power unit of about 250 h.p. would have been required. The actual power of the Rolls-Royce Hawk used was 75.

Anyway, at 75 m.p.h. the nose of a non-rigid, with the gas pressure as used, would blow in (although, of course, bow stiffeners were fitted). I suppose 75 m.p.h. would be about the top speed of the later rigid types of ship. The figure 53 m.p.h. would seem to be quite high for such a small power unit as 75 with a thrust of, say, 450lb.

London SW12

J. R. PIKE

## FORTHCOMING EVENTS

- |             |        |  |
|-------------|--------|--|
| July        | 16.    | Parachuting Competition, Woburn Abbey.   |
| July        | 16-22. | RAF Inter-Command Gliding Championships, Odiham.   |
| July        | 17.    | Royal Aero Club Rally, Woburn Abbey.   |
| July        | 20.    | Kronfeld Club: Film Evening.   |
| July        | 23.    | RN Air Station Lossiemouth At Home.  |
| July        | 23.    | Army Air Corps: Open Day, Middle Wallop, Stockbridge, Hants.   |
| July 23-24. |        | Trento Aero Club: 10th Aerial Circuit of the Dolomites.  |
| July 23-31. |        | Inter-Services Gliding Championships, Odiham.  |
| July 24-    |        | Aug. 1. Gliding Weeks: Yorkshire GC., Sutton Bank; London GC., Dunstable; Coventry GC., Edge Hill (opens July 23). |
| July        | 27.    | Kronfeld Club: "132 Miles in a Cadet," by John Jeffries.   |
| July 31-    |        | Aug. 7. Bulgarian Aero Club: World Parachuting Championships, Mousatcheva, near Sofia.                             |
| Aug.        | 3.     | Kronfeld Club: Polish film of 1958 World Gliding Championships.  |
| Aug.        | 10.    | Kronfeld Club: MTCA Air-miss film.   |
| Aug.        | 14.    | Elstree Flying Club: Tea Patrol.   |
| Aug.        | 17.    | Kronfeld Club: Talk on National Gliding Week.  |
| Aug. 20-21. |        | Pescara Aero Club Rally.   |
| Aug.        | 28.    | Oxford Aeroplane Club At Home, Kidlington.   |
| Aug. 28-    |        | Sept. 4. Czech Aero Club: World Aerobatic Championships.   |
| Sept.       | 3-5.   | French and Savoy Aero Clubs: International Centenary Rally, Aix-les-Bains.   |