

LETTERS . . .

grass runway, spacious hangars and a control tower. The grass is cut all season.

Why isn't this airstrip used? Because the "city fathers," for the past 20 years, have been determined to make a residential estate of these 400-odd valuable acres—or so it would appear. The runway has been allowed to deteriorate, the hangars are now pottery factories, and the control tower is a factory office.

In the past few years many business men have tried to get the airfield licensed for executive, private, club and taxi operations, but the Airport Committee always seems to have an excuse not to spend any money for the benefit of the community.

The housing plan has now been submitted to the Ministry of Town and Country Planning. If this is passed, the last chance of the Potteries ever having an airstrip will have gone, as no suitable area is available for miles around.

Stoke-on-Trent, Staffs

G. K. ARNOLD

Northolt's "Giant"

SIR,—I think Mr Pearks's "giant Russian biplane bomber" was the Kennedy Giant—designed by a Scotsman whose first aeroplane was designed and built in Russia before the First World War.

Mr Chessborough J. H. Mackenzie-Kennedy was 18 when he arrived in Russia in 1906. He had trained as an engineer in the USA and his first employers in Russia were the Putilov Gun Works, several engineering firms and the Admiralty. He became a member of the Imperial Russian Technical Society and in 1908 started designing aeroplanes. The following year he formed the Kennedy Aeronautic Company at St Petersburg, and in 1912 completed the construction of a large Wright-type biplane. It was flown with some success in a much modified form during the summer of 1914.

While in Russia, Kennedy, as a member of the Russian Technical Society and the All-Russian Aeronautical Society, met the pioneer designers I. I. Sikorsky and V. A. Slessarev. He was undoubtedly influenced by the Sikorsky Il'ya Mourometz and the Slessarev Svyatogor when he designed his own Kennedy Giant.

He returned to Britain soon after the outbreak of war and succeeded in getting War Office backing for his giant bomber, which was built by the Gramophone Co Ltd and the Fairey Aviation Co between them. It was assembled at Northolt in 1916.

The Kennedy Giant was very similar in appearance to the successful Sikorsky bombers, but with a span of 142ft, length of 80ft and empty weight of 19,000lb, compared with the 101ft span, 56ft length and 8,377lb of the IM-G. To power it were four tandem-mounted Salmson engines with a total of 800 h.p. Engine-power of the IM-G varied between 600 and 880 h.p.

It is not altogether surprising, therefore, that the Kennedy Giant was underpowered, never succeeded in getting off the ground, and, as Mr Pearks says, remained on the edge of Northolt aerodrome.

Incidentally, the Slessarev Svyatogor was similarly underpowered and likewise did not fly.

Dorchester, Dorset

JEAN P. ALEXANDER

[This corroborates and amplifies Mr Peter Masefield's letter published last week. Our thanks to other readers who have submitted information, including Mr Philip Jarrett, Mr R. C. Oxbury and Mr Geoffrey Negus—Ed.]

For Finningley's Production Line

SIR,—Last year a team of enthusiasts at this station built a replica of the Wright Flyer for display on Battle of Britain Day. Due to a blown gasket it did not achieve "powered, controlled, sustained man-carrying flight" on that day, but it did fly on two occasions; we have film to prove it—and Wg Cdr Fennel probably holds the world altitude record for Aerodynes, Type One.

One result of the interest and enthusiasm generated by a very favourable Press was the arrival of a rotary engine from Sheffield University. To make it fully operational we will have to manufacture a number of parts, but before starting may we appeal to readers in the hope of finding the following? Cylinder and liner, to replace (or exchange for) one "cut-away"; magneto; carburettor; oil pump; front crankcase and propeller mounting; propeller for Tabloid/Scout.

The engine has a plate inscribed "80 h.p. Le Rhone, W. H. ALLEN & SON Co. Ltd, Serial Number [blank], Type R." It is thought to be one of a number of presentation engines distributed at the end of World War One by Allens of Bedford to universities and technical institutes, so these "spares" (or further engines?) may be "hidden" in instructional museums.

It is intended to build a replica of the Sopwith Tabloid, to commemorate the victory at Monaco in 1914 (the first of a long line of Sopwith/Hawker types—the Service has never been without at least one) and the first strategic raid against an enemy homeland by British aircraft—Düsseldorf and Cologne on October 8, 1914. We are aware that it is the "wrong" engine, but it does rotate. Also, we will incorporate ailerons as on the later versions. Should we continue in ten-year steps we will again be level with "the rest" by 1973, and ten years ahead by 1974!

5 Briar Close,
Finningley, Yorks

J. T. C. LONG,
Flt Lt

IN BRIEF

Mr Peter Laurie, of 20 Northumberland Place, London W2 (Park 9927) is collecting material on Maj Thomas Orde Lees—the colourful character whose adventures in World War One included a jump from Tower Bridge to test the Guardian Angel parachute—and would welcome recollections, letters or photographs.

Mr J. Huggon, of 168 Dalston Road, Carlisle, Cumberland, is anxious to obtain a copy of *Brief Glory—the Story of the ATA*, by E. C. Cheesman, published by Harborough in 1946.

DIARY

- Mar 2 British Light Aviation Centre and Guild of Air Pilots and Air Navigators: Symposium—"Training for Proficiency in General Aviation," Royal Aeronautical Society Lecture Theatre, 4 Hamilton Place, London W1.
- Mar 2 RAeS Southend Branch: "Increasing Use of Light Aircraft for Transportation of VIPs and Executives," by Lord Waterpark; Queen's Hotel, Westcliff, 7.45 p.m.
- Mar 5-9 American Society of Mechanical Engineers: 12th Annual Gas Turbine Conference and International Products Show; Houston, Texas.
- Mar 6 Pilots' instruction lecture: Introduction to gliding and soaring; Kronfeld Club, 74 Eccleston Square, London SW1, 8 p.m.
- Mar 6 RAeS Test Pilots' Group: "Development Progress on the F-111," by V. Prah; 4 Hamilton Place, London W1, 6.30 p.m.
- Mar 7 Aviation Forum: Annual general meeting and film show; Kronfeld Club, 74 Eccleston Square, London SW1, 7 p.m.
- Mar 8 Kronfeld Club: "Gliding," by Anne and Lorne Welch; 74 Eccleston Square, London SW1, 8 p.m.
- Mar 8 IERE South Wales Section joint meeting with the IEE: "Satellite Control," by E. G. C. Burt; Welsh College of Advanced Technology, Cardiff, 6 p.m.
- Mar 8 RAeS Chester Branch, joint meeting with IMechE: "The Wankel Engine," Lecture Theatre, Grosvenor Museum, Chester, 7.30 p.m.
- Mar 8 RAeS Southampton Branch: "Pneumatic Constant-speed Drive," by S. B. Turner; University Engineering Lecture Theatre, Southampton, 8 p.m.
- Mar 9 RAF Reserves Club: Ball; London Hilton Hotel, Park Lane, London W1.
- Mar 9 RAeS Cambridge Branch: Lecture by Gp Capt A. D. Dick; Lecture Theatre O, Baker Building, University Engineering Laboratories, Cambridge, 8.15 p.m.
- Mar 9 RAeS Halton Branch: "Development of Martin-Baker Rocket Ejection Seats," by Wg Cdr J. Jewell; Halton.
- Mar 10 RAeS Coventry Branch: Annual dinner dance; Masonic Hall, Coventry, 7 p.m.
- Mar 11 British Gliding Association: Annual general meeting and ball; Cheltenham.
- Mar 13 RAeS Historical Group: "The Wellington," by C. F. Andrews; 4 Hamilton Place, London W1, 7.30 p.m.
- Mar 13-17 IEE and IERE conference: "ATC Systems Engineering and Design," Institution of Electrical Engineers, Savoy Place, London WC2.
- May 26-
June 4 Paris Air Show.