



Fred Barnes and Lucretia Buxton

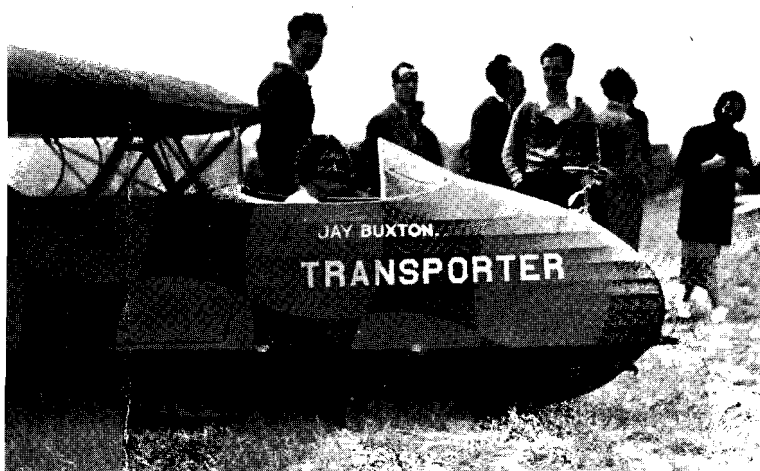
times getting quite close to their bases, when the lift seemed to peter out; or we lost it before we could reach them. On one occasion we experienced a rather exciting event. We had picked up a cloud and were climbing at around five hundred feet a minute for several hundred feet when suddenly the ship seemed to stop going forward, slipped sideways to the right and then fell off on the right wing. We dropped frightfully, and when we got straightened out again, the altimeter showed we had lost about five hundred feet. The barograph was rescued from under the front seat and our stomachs from somewhere under the floor boards as it seemed. Later we discussed the incident with Dr. Lange who explained that as the air under a cloud has a rolling motion, and we were flying cross wind, we slid off the top of the roll from the lift into the down draft.

About four o'clock, Dick duPont came up in his new Göppingen I, and we had a much appreciated change in routine as we watched him maneuver the new ship in masterly fashion. Occasionally, we followed him around over the valley, figuring there must be something there or he would not go out. Sure enough, he did find some good thermals. After an hour or so he returned to Harris Hill, and we headed back to our previous rounds. Soon Dick came up again, and we flew together for some time talking things over. He gave us some encouragement and told us to stay up a couple of more hours, and we would have the two place duration record.

As the afternoon faded and the sun neared the horizon, the air became very cold and the thermal conditions disappeared. We were forced to return to ridge soaring entirely, and as we were getting pretty cold and tired, it was hard work trying to get the best out of the ship. Several times we were down below the crest of the ridge, and a landing in the

valley seemed inevitable, but somehow we always managed to get back up a few hundred feet. After several narrow escapes, we decided we were keeping the birds from settling down for the night with our continual skimming along barely over the tree tops, so after squeezing out about three hundred feet over the ridge, we followed it down to Harris Hill and landed on the runway. We were greeted first by Earl Southee, who immediately asked us all about the flight. It was a joy and a relief to stretch out and down several cups of good hot coffee.

The duration records are, of course, far above our performance, and there is really not much to be gained in pushing them higher, nor are they particularly interesting in contests; but on this and other similar flights, we formed some definite opinions pertaining to soaring ships. A two place sailplane has innumerable advantages over a single seater. Also, we believe that more emphasis should be placed on the pilot's comfort in future construction of ships, such as closed cabins, comfortable seats, and controls mounted on free-running bearings. Careful provisions should also be made for trimming the ship up perfectly in flight. A number of good flights have been cut short and prospective records lost because of the pilot's discomfort and fatigue, which cut down his efficiency considerably just when alertness and good technique were needed most. I cannot praise the performance and characteristics of the Buxton two-place too highly. If it had not been for our inexperience in that country and a lack of good instruments, I am sure we could have achieved far better performances than we accomplished with it.



The Buxton Two-Seater