

# Soaring

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## *The Sailplane and Glider . . .*

IN the March issue of the *Sailplane and Glider*, the official organ of the British Gliding Association, much space is devoted to our activities in America. In its Editorial, our older contemporary very graciously welcomes our new publication as the first devoted exclusively to motorless flight in this country. Its good wishes are heartily reciprocated and we hope that each of us may prove of much use to the other.

IN a friendly manner, and possibly quite justifiably, the Editorial takes us to task for overstressing one of the practical advantages of gliding, namely the preliminary flight training of military pilots. We, in America, also believe that soaring flight is its own justification, an end in itself. However, it is often necessary to lay emphasis on the useful side when trying to convince those practical men of business to whom we must go for support and there is no denying that flight training, aircraft design and meteorological knowledge are useful adjuncts quite aside from its appeal as a superb sport.

A FEW of our "Silver C" pilots, when reading the accounts of their flights, will be at rather a loss to remember some of the quoted dialogue. The author seems to have drawn largely on his own imagination, which apparently has little or no interest in the scientific side of an outstanding flight. May we suggest to our soaring pilots in America that they submit to our offices material to be published abroad? It is possible that some misunderstandings might thus be avoided.

FURTHER on in the magazine we find an Open Letter to the Soaring Society of America signed by Philip Wills. In it that leading British soaring pilot and enthusiast has made some rather pointed remarks which seem to be based on misconceptions. We are indeed sorry to hear that Great Britain will not be represented at our National Soaring Contest this year, as we had hoped not only to see new British machines, but also to meet some British pilots and enjoy their competition.

WE had not been aware of the fact that our attention had been so firmly fixed on German methods that we were unable to look elsewhere. The Germans, who have certainly made the greatest progress so far in meteorological research and outstanding performances, freely admit having learned a few things from America. Thermal soaring, the enclosed cockpit, the single wheel landing gear, and the auto tow method of instruction all had their origin in this country and have now been adopted abroad.

MR. WILLS says we must develop our movement along their successful lines. Perhaps this might be true if the situation were exactly the same in this country as in Great Britain. The differences between our two national movements lie not only in our lack of any subsidy, but also in our varied meteorological and climatic conditions. We believe that you will find far stronger thermal currents and more violent air turbulence in this country than you will ever encounter in England. These conditions, to which we may partly attribute our longer distance flights, require an extremely sturdy type of ship.

WE most sincerely wish we had had the \$100,000 which Mr. Wills believes we spent at Elmira. It might interest him to know that we did not have a penny of this money, which was a government appropriation for relief in Chemung County and therefore had to be spent in the county to provide manual labor for as many men as possible. It was our good fortune that the money was spent clearing Harris Hill, building new roads, and erecting buildings which we can use. So far we have had to manage without any subsidy for buying planes, training pilots, or assisting in the formation of glider clubs.

PERHAPS the "Kirby Cadet" has a better performance than our "Franklin", but who can tell until both are flown side by side in similar conditions? If it is really true that this ship can be delivered and assembled in New York, duty paid, at \$350.00, there should be a large market for it in this country. We suggest that Mr. Wills has perhaps failed to consider actual costs and our 30% import duty in arriving at this figure.

WE, in America, are very much interested in obtaining accurate performance and cost figures for the leading British gliders and sailplanes, and so far have encountered some difficulty in obtaining this information. Our being the agents in America for the leading German sailplanes does not mean that we are exclusively committed to German designs. If England has something really superior to offer, by all means let's hear about it.

WE hope that perhaps one or two of our enthusiasts will be able to accept Mr. Wills' invitation to visit Dunstable or Sutton Bank this summer. Nothing could be more useful in bringing about that mutual understanding and cooperation between our two countries which it is our earnest desire to further.