

# Foreign & News Notes

## ENGLAND

### A 72 MILE GOAL FLIGHT

by P. A. Wills

(From "The Sailplane and Glider")

September 3rd was the second of the three consecutive phenomenally active days during the 1937 competitions. The wind was south of west, 20-25 m.p.h., and down-wind would take me considerably south of the course of my declared goal-flight to Great Driffield, along the south bank of the Humber towards North Coates. I had flown to North Coates the day before, and went there again the following day. This day, though, I wanted a change, so declared for Driffield.

I took off in Hjordis at 11:35, and in a few minutes found lift under an approaching cloud-street, under which we fled six miles down-wind to Stannage Edge, which was a bit less crowded than Bradwell. Here, in company with the Cambridge and Peter Davis in our gallant old Scud II, we soared up and down for perhaps twenty minutes, surveying the scene of carnage below.

Misled by the truly staggering conditions of the day before, when people left the hill just after breakfast and landed for elevenses at Hull—when shrieking virgins were whistled, impotently struggling, in secondaries up to cloud-base and deposited a short while later dazed but in one piece at the seaside—sundry innocents had, a second time, cut away from the hill straight from their take-offs, and were now to be viewed adorning the rather forbidding scenery at the foot and on the slopes of Stannage Edge, 6 miles from the start.

Now a thermal came along which took us to 2,000 ft., and as the country behind Stannage Edge falls a further 1,500 ft., this was good enough, and I set off for Sheffield. The voluminous smoke from the town was being sucked up in a sort of funnel to a tremendous cumulus cloud over its eastern boundary.

We flew directly over the town and started to climb. It was a large and meaty up-current, and gave me a chance to check my course on the map as I circled up. I found we would have to make a considerable distance cross-wind to reach the goal (actually on the map it measures 25 miles across in 60 to go altogether), so decided to try one bite at the cherry (or bullet) and get an altitude in the cloud above enough to achieve the cross-wind distance in one glide.

We went into the cloud at 3,600 ft. (sea-level heights) and found very strong smooth lift at 12-14 ft. per sec. After about 1,000 ft., a sharp rattle started on the cockpit cover and we entered a region of rain or hail. I noticed from a few drops which came in at the open window and fell on the instrument board that the moisture was a dirty grey. Sheffield's muck was having a high old time a mile above the town.

A second thousand feet, and at 5,900 ft. the machine gave a little shudder, the

first since entering the cloud. I was taking no risks of entering turbulent air blind in Hjordis, so straightened up and steered a compass course due north. There was a bit of racketing as we passed out of the strong up-current into the descending edges of the cloud, then we came out of the side of a vast billowing cliff of dazzling white, miles high.

Seemingly miles below was the green, brown and grey patchwork of industrial England; in front, across a wide chasm of clear blue air, shone another street of cloud. Like Blondin crossing Niagara on a tightrope, we pushed off from the friendly monster behind and made for the other side, sinking steadily. The air between the clouds at altitudes above the cloud-base seems incredibly smooth and creamy, and even the normal hum of the machine is subdued in awe.

This air is also steadily descending, and our sink was as much as 5 ft. per sec. until we reached the level of the cloud-bases. Here, although we were still in the clear sky, the rate of fall checked for a while, then continued again. Twenty minutes of steady descent seems an age, and we were down to barely 500 ft. above the starting height before we struck more lift; but now Driffield lay nearly down-wind, so from now on course-finding was pretty easy.

We climbed again into the cloud above, and went off down-wind, passing over Goole, where the Humber estuary starts. We left the end of the street, and over the southern boundary of Howden airship field struck trouble.

Ahead had appeared the menacing grey line of a front travelling cross-wind from the north-west; under it heavy rain. We approached it at an angle, and unexpectedly early hit the up-current leading it. There was a loud bang, and my heart leapt into my mouth. The green ball of the Slater-Cobb variometer leapt into its mouth too, and disappeared for good. I banged it and cursed it, but to no avail. It had irrevocably swallowed its false teeth, and the red ball started a simultaneous sympathetic strike. My goal was still over 20 miles ahead, and I had to try and make it by means of the sensitivity of the posterior, a notoriously unreliable instrument.

I went on for a mile or two, but my altimeter failed to flatter my anatomy: we lost height steadily; we were not going to make it. In a pet, I flung my solid map on to the seat beside me. It struck the variometer thermos flask, anchored to the floor just in front of the seat, with a slight crack; simultaneously the green ball dropped miraculously out of the top of its tube, and both green and red sprang to life again.

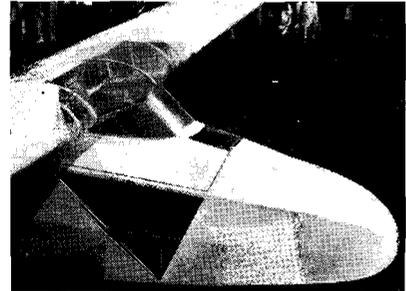
From being too difficult the flight now became too easy. The advancing front caught us up; we arrived over Driffield aerodrome at 4,000 ft., and started to hurry down before the rain came.

But, try as I might, she wouldn't come down. I dived, slipped, swish-tailed, stalled, still the variometer showed rise or, at the best, no climb. I would have spun, but Hjordis won't. At last, however, we

found a patch of descending air, and circled tightly down, landing on the aerodrome boundary at 1.55 p.m.

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## GERMANY



Anthony J. D. Sips  
The nose of the Mü 13.



Anthony J. D. Sips  
Kurt Schmidt in the cockpit of his self-built Mü 13.

We have just received several excellent photographs of the already well-known German sailplane, Mü 13, "Atalante", showing in considerable detail the construction of the fuselage, arrangement of the cockpit and provisions for pilot comfort and visibility. The picture of Kurt Schmidt, who won the 17th Rhoen Contest in 1936 with this ship, and also placed well up in last year's contest, shows where he stows his lunch before taking off on a cross-country flight.

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Anthony J. D. Sips  
The "Atalante" on the Wasserkuppe