

sembling that of the silkworm. They are in the fields by the thousand. Inasmuch as the little weaver and his thread are so light that they more or less float in the air, they are displaced by the slightest breeze or gain altitude if any up current carries them with it. The electric and telephone wires serve as a barrier and snare the threads. These threads join others and are as visible to the pilot as fibres of fuzzy cotton because of their conspicuous whiteness. At times it is very easy to find ourselves driving thermally in a straight line to where these are floating while searching with the variometer.

Because of the lack of a plane we generally use an automobile to tow our ships, with a cable of 250 meters. The altitude gained in this way is 180 meters. The limited altitude obliges the pilot to find an updraft immediately. These difficulties have made it necessary for the pilot to make use of other resources if, after some seconds of searching by means of the variometer, he does not find any up current. If there are not birds, weaver threads or any other "natural indicator," we observe (at times with excellent results) the movement of the trees for the direction of the wind. If, for example, some of them move nervously and the wind "combs" them more clearly than those beside them, it is an almost certain signal that an ascending current of air in the process of formation is passing there.

Immediately we place ourselves above or a little behind, depending on the altitude of the glider, and many times we find 1 and up to 1½ meters per second of lift, which begins to increase progressively up to 2 and 3 meters per second with the advantage which may be gained from a thermal just rising from the ground, which generally carries up very high and on repeated occasions to the very zone of inversion in a single rise. The same can be said with respect to the columns of dust that rise after the passage of an automobile over dirt roads.

When George Harnisch returned from his educational tour of Germany he declared his admiration for the method we used as we were "fishing for" the thermals with the Grunau Baby.

The meteorologists are conspicuous by their absence at the soaring sites in our country. We are still orphans as far as this technical advice is concerned. Of course, we depend on good German books and in this way instruct ourselves; but the lack of assistance which weather charts offer in forecasting weather conditions for the day has, many times, prevented us from attempting distance flights.

Argentina, as stated above, possesses every kind of climate, depending on the region. Beyond question the best site for the establishment of a base like that of the Rhön would be in the province of Córdoba, in the heart of the country with extensive plains and mountainous zones.

In the province of Buenos Aires, approximately 218 miles from the city of the same name, there are the mountain ridges of Tandil, Azul, Balcarce and Olavarría, where there are good hills, but they suffer from the same defect as Merlo (base of the Club Albatross) because the sea is relatively near. These hills would serve only as a place to experiment with shock cord launchings and to do some "ridge polishing," in which we are not interested.

For this reason the pilots of the Club Albatross are forced to specialize in thermal flying which will rebound to the great credit of our sport and may, perhaps,

be the cause of flights whose results go beyond our boundaries.

The region in the south of the country called Patagonia is still a vast region about which little is known. The cold becomes more intense as one approaches the South Pole according to the latitude. The winds are very constant and, depending on the zone, their velocity may reach approximately 90 miles an hour. At times the planes of the Argentine Airmail Co. have to land like an elevator at the airport and, once on the ground, they have to advance with motors wide open to make their way painfully to the hangars. The wind velocity of Patagonia is less variable than in the more northerly latitudes.

Near the Atlantic Coast of Chubut (Patagonia) in a district of oil wells a few enthusiasts formed the "Condor Aero Soaring Club." In 1935, above some hills, Francis Allisch flew for one hour and eight minutes in a Kassel, primary, but was obliged to land because of the strong, piercing wind and the intense cold.

The number of flights made by the enthusiasts of that club put it in second place, after the Albatross, among similar institutions in the country. They also built a Rhön (Hol's der Teufel) with which they flew 20 minutes in a thermal, but the small protection which the ship offered against strong winds kept them from any great activity in it. For safety in strong winds they are depending on a brand-new Rhonbussard, with complete equipment, which the German government gave them and in which they are making more important flights.

We can affirm that, for many reasons the region of Patagonia, in general, makes the effective development of soaring very difficult and all the progress that can be made will have to be done principally by a human force, an example of which is the "Condor Aero Soaring Club."

And returning to the principal center of activity, which is the Albatross Soaring Club of Argentina at Merlo, one is able to summarize.

As regards glider launchings, we are experimenting with all systems. During the winter of 1938 we made about 200 airplane tows, using a Gipsy Moth, 100 H.P., with which we ascended at the average rate of one meter per second. Bad luck forced us to give up this machine but the government handed over to us to replace it a biplane "Pelican," Wright motor, 225 H.P., with which in 1939 we surpassed the number of tows made in 1938, commonly making tows of two or three ships simultaneously.

The shock cord launchings from hills were practiced on the occasion of various excursions which took place in 1932 and 1933 to the dunes of Ostende above the Atlantic Coast in the Province of Buenos Aires and in the hills of Olavarría. As for automobile tows, we possess much experience. In late years we have made more than 5,000 tows annually, and since we began activities in 1930 there has not been a single accident of serious consequence in the Club Albatross. There was one fatal accident in a club at Bahía Blanca but it was not due to the failure of the tow but to the breaking of one of the wires on the wing of a primary.

Performances:

We are going to exclude from this commentary a report of the flights made in this country by those aces Wolf Hirth, Peter Riedel, Heinrich Dittmar and Anna Reitsch considering that they are beyond the scope of