

# GLIDING IN RHODESIA

By MAURICE PIKE

After the hard post-war struggle to accumulate aircraft and equipment we are now on the threshold of some real soaring, and a wonderful feeling of enthusiasm exists at the Salisbury Gliding Club at the present time.

Salisbury, Southern Rhodesia's capital city, is situated on the Central African Plateau 5000 feet above sea level. The club is the base of motorless flight in the colony, and owns an English Slingsby T-31 two-seater and a single-seat Cadet. The latter is, I imagine, similar in performance to the Schweizer 1-19. The club rents a government hangar and airstrip used by the R.A.F. for war time aircrew training. Launching is mainly carried out by a Ford V-8 winch, but when the wind is suitable, we sometimes use a very good Tiger Moth for aero-towing.

There are three privately owned sailplanes, one of which is serviceable. This is the yellow Swiss-made Grunau Baby IIB which was recently bought for 200 Pounds, and this is very cheap as Rhodesian costs are inflated because of the high transport charges. This "Baby" has a fully enclosed cockpit and is equipped with dive brakes. The average age of the present proud owners is 21.

Two other sailplanes are almost ready for flying, one of them being the German H-17 which is being recovered and re-painted cream instead of blue. This popular little sailplane has been the most consistent flyer in the club for some years and was the first to fly away from home when one of its owners reached his goal, a small town called Sinoia, 65 miles away. So far, this is our only goal flight, because difficult and uncivilized terrain make retrieving a problem and the trip hazardous for the pilot. However, more attempts will certainly be made this year. Incidentally, this H-17 also holds the duration record of 4 hours.

The third machine, a Kirby "Kite," is being completed by the club's chief instructor who has incorporated spoilers, a blind flying panel, and a shapely, fully enclosed cockpit canopy. This will be the most efficient sailplane in Central Africa and in an all-white

finish will make a pretty picture against our deep blue Rhodesian skies. It is due for test flying within a few weeks.

We consider that Rhodesian conditions are pretty good and would be interested to know how they compare with your Texas thermals. There are nine months of dry weather in the year, and during this season dust devils are frequent. Superb lift produces rip-roaring climbs with the green ball trying to break out of the top of the tube. Our dry weather occurs during the cold season (can't really call it winter) when chilly mornings are turned into hot clear days by a sun high in the sky.

Club members are interested to read American activities in SOARING, which is a very effective magazine.

Best wishes to all soaring types the world over from us in Southern Rhodesia and, of course, "Happy Landings."

## THE MOBILET 150 2-WAY RADIO

SSA President Carsey for some time has endeavored to obtain transmitter-receiver units suitable for use in sailplanes. The most recent to arrive for testing was the Mobilet 150, and this was tested by Powell and Easley during the second week-end in June, at Grand Prairie Airport.

The Mobilet 150 is intended for use by the C.A.P. and is tuned to 148 megacycles, which, although slightly higher than that assigned for sailplanes, is close enough to be similar in operation. The unit itself measures 8" by 5" by 6" high and is powered by a 6-volt supply through a vibrator. The set is complete with microphone and antenna.

One complete unit was installed in Easleys' BG7 while the other was plugged into the cigarette lighter socket in the retrieving car.

Powell had planned a flight northwest from Grand Prairie towards Wichita Falls, and throughout the flight contact was maintained with three ground stations in addition to the retrieving car. Finally, over Bowie, 33 miles distant from Grand Prairie, Powell was able to direct his crew to a likely looking landing spot, had them check it for rough areas, and give him the wind direction.

Powell's opinion is that this unit, reasonably well installed, should give excellent communication up to at least fifty miles. More information will be available at a later date.

# INTERESTING GLIDERS

By PETER M. BOWERS

Long-distance glider tows became commonplace during the war, some even being towed clear across the Atlantic Ocean in a single hop, and no one today is impressed by mere distance in connection with a glider operation.

Back in 1930, however, things were different. Aero towing was almost unheard of, having just been introduced into this country from Germany, where it had first been tried in 1926. Frank Hawks, a world-famous speed pilot employed by the Texas Company, began to tire of setting transcontinental and inter-city speed records, and took up gliding as a diversion. Being a sharp publicist as well as the contemporary "Fastest Human", he decided to see if he couldn't publicize his employer's product (gasoline) while flying his glider.



The scheme that he worked up was a dilly, a coast-to-coast flight in a glider! Once the Company had been sold on the idea that a motorless aircraft could plug gasoline, plans for the expedition got underway. A special version of the most up-to-date American glider, the new Franklin, was obtained. This ship was one of the first featuring a welded steel tube fuselage. While the standard Franklin was a utility type, Hawks' special version, the second one built, was more nearly a sailplane, since the original straight wings had been increased from 36 to over 46 feet, and were tapered. In addition, a closed canopy replaced the open cockpit of the standard version.

Finally, on March 30, 1930, the expedition got under way from San Diego, California. "Eaglet", as the Franklin had been christened, took off behind a Waco Ten powered with a 220 HP Wright J-5 Whirlwind, and headed east. After suitably publicized stopovers en route, the cavalcade reached New York, 2860 miles and 36 hours and 47 minutes of flying time later, the vanguard of a widely publicized fleet of sky trains that to this day has not materialized.

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