

CAMPBILL SITE FOR 1954 WORLD CONTEST

Derbyshire and Lancashire Gliding Club's site, where this year's International Championships are to be held, has been variously called after Great Hucklow (the nearest village), Bradwell Edge (the main soaring slope) and Campbill, a lonely farmhouse used as the club headquarters. The flying field, two-thirds of a mile from north to south and one-third of a mile from west to east, has been created by knocking down a lot of stone walls which formerly separated small fields; their roots are still liable to ooze up out of the ground here and there, but a man is at present being employed rooting them all out in preparation for the contest.

The field is on a plateau 1,300 feet above sea level, near the southern end of the Pennine mountain chain which forms a "backbone" to the northern half of England. The photograph on page 5 shows just over half of the total area, looking from a point above the north end. Part of Bradwell Edge shows up well on the right. It is $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles long, faces west, and drops 600 feet to the valley below; beyond that the ground slopes up again to 1,400 ft. three miles away, but this does not cause any noticeable blanketing of west winds, and the soaring is as good as anyone could expect. In the photo. the opening in the wall on top of Bradwell Edge is for shock-cord launching; between it and the wind sock there is now a small brick hut housing a new two-drum winch which will be used at the contest for winds between S.W. and N.W.

Eyam Edge, facing south, is seen from behind in the photo; it is three miles long, but drops only 300 feet to the ground directly below, and strong winds are needed to produce good lift. At the bottom of the wooded bluff where the two "Edges" join is Great Hucklow, with one tiny village store, or "shop" as we call it. Tideswell, four miles away, has several shops, and the nearest big towns are Buxton and Sheffield, each about 12 miles away.

As to the meteorological conditions for soaring, they are as variable as the English weather, and perhaps the best way to show what is likely to be served up would be to describe briefly what sort of soaring was done at each of the seven National Contests so far held at the site, each of which lasted about nine days.

The club was formed by the amalgamation of a gliding club at Derby with a gliding section of the Manchester Branch of the Royal Aeronautical Society. It started operations in 1936, and at that year's contest in early September, Philip Wills was the only pilot to go across country, using cumulus clouds and a vigorous secondary cold front. It was the only good-looking cross-country day of the contest, and he found, as many have found since, that on such days the thermals are often much better over the low ground to the east, which starts 15 miles away, than around the site.

The 1937 contest, likewise held in early September, was notable for three successive days of magnificent cloud streets. One pilot got away as early as 10.01 B.S.T., which was actually 8.53 a.m. by local solar time. But the stiff W.S.W. wind wafted everyone quickly towards the coast, less than 80 miles away, and pilots of present-day standard would have found it frustrating to be brought up sharp, so early in the day, with so little time to work across the wind direction.

Soaring at the 1939 contest, held in the second week of July, was none too easy; there were several days of cumulus in westerly winds, followed by three days of light winds and cumulo-nimbus clouds difficult to reach from winch launches. Chris Nicholson did best with 160 miles to Southend, on the north bank of the Thames estuary. Several pilots have reached the Thames from Campbill since then, but few have been able to cross it. Wills was brought down on the same day by damp fen country round The Wash (an east coast inlet); but the fens do not always behave like that, for during the 1947 contest they were sending up excellent thermals.

Of the four post-war contests held in Derbyshire, that of 1949, in late August, produced far the worst weather. The main trouble was light winds, which meant that the Derby-

shire hills manufactured their own local weather instead of sharing that which the rest of England was enjoying. It is curious that, on days when the only hope was to catch thermals from winch launches, the periods of thermal activity were apt to start at intervals of almost exactly an hour.

There were two days of cumulo-nimbus. On one, their bases sat on the hilltops; on the other, they rapidly covered the sky and shut off their own thermals, and the only hope was to catch one early, and get away to regions where there were sunny gaps between the cu-nim masses. On one ridiculous day, visitors from other gliding clubs reported glorious cumulus everywhere else in England until they approached the competition site. Then there were two days of weak thermals, on one of which up currents rose from the hills but not the towns, and on the other, from the towns but not the hills.

In spite of all these frustrations, quite a lot of cross-country flights were made, mostly of less than 100 miles. An interesting point is that on one day, with an east wind, it was possible to glide from the top of the launch to an east-facing hill called Mam Tor, where some fifteen pilots waited comfortably in the slope lift till a big thermal came along and carried them all away.

Each of the remaining three contests, held in late July, has been blessed by several days of excellent soaring weather. It might be of interest to mention two flights in which the pilots tried to make good distance across the wind direction when it was blowing towards the sea, one by going north, the other south. Each flew a Weihe.

Don Brown, in 1951, decided to try for Edinburgh, 200 miles to the N.N.W., but owing to the sparse thermals was blown off course to the coast after going 90 miles. His main frustration was the sight of a magnificent lenticular cloud in the lee of the

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