

SOARING — THE SPORT of KINGS

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Paul B. MacCready, Sr., is well known to devotees of motorless flying all over the world. He is especially well and affectionately known to tournament participants. He is the father of Dr. Paul B. MacCready, Jr., one of the world's great soaring pilots and equally famed as a soaring scientist. Acting as chief crewman for his son he has gained fame as this country's most aggressive and efficient ground crew manager. Currently Dr. MacCready serves as a Director of the Soaring Society of America, having been elected to serve on that board by the popular vote of the members of SSA.

Dr. MacCready is a surgeon practicing in New Haven, Conn. He has distinguished himself in many ways in his profession, being especially well known for his operations on the human ear for deafness. He was a graduate of Princeton University and after eight years at famed Johns Hopkins, says he was way-laid at Yale University and now carries the rank of Associate Clinical Professor of Otolaryngology at the latter university's Medical School.

The doctor is not a pilot as such, and professes to know nothing about flying or meteorology, contending this is an asset to a crewman as it does not allow second guessing his pilot. We would not argue the point of the good Doctor's knowledge on piloting and meteorology. We would say however that he has in our opinion developed an acumen for tournament soaring that is not equaled by many crewmen. Also it has been noted in many of our national contests that the Doctor's advice is much sought after by both the experienced and the novice pilots alike.

Dr. Paul B. MacCready, Sr., is a great competitor, plays the game most vigorously and gives his all to assist his team to victory.

By DR. PAUL B. MACCREADY, SR.

In the recent World's Glider Championship in England, one pilot brought his sailplane a distance of 12,000 miles to fly 30 miles in the contest. Fortunately, he has been more successful in business than in soaring so could well afford the trip. Several pilots brought their planes 6,000 miles and had only slightly more success in distances flown. Surely soaring is the sport of kings, but in a more mundane manner than is usually meant.

England is a lovely country—much like New England but much less rugged. It has hills rather than mountains and there are no forests as we see them everywhere but merely groves of trees with no underbrush. Most of the land is cultivated and divided into fenced fields. These fences in the Peak region around Camphill were all made of stone. The grass is thick and very green and there are flowers everywhere. Their roads are excellent if not especially direct and drivers are far more courteous than we see here.

The British are a delightful and hospitable people—somewhat prone to the easy acceptance of luck as a way of life, in contrast to our drive to "make the breaks." There is a great reverence for things of the past so that their country abounds in relics from the time of the Romans on. This together with a great urge toward pageantry makes England a lovely place for tourists, especially when you speak their language, more or less.

The British had spent months working out every detail for the smooth running of the meet and their administrative set-up reflected this. Can you imagine having a brand new car for your exclusive use as a tow car, waiting for you as you get off the plane? Only one who had used a Unimog with its non English speak-

ing driver and messy odor of kerosene can appreciate the thrill of a Standard Vanguard. How did the British do it? Can you imagine your reception if you went to the General Motors or Ford and asked for forty new cars for one month for a soaring meet? Yet, with all this preparation which made our stay so delightful in many respects, the British failed to make sufficient preparation for really bad weather. And they had bad weather, the worst in fifty years. They muddled through but they lost an opportunity to make this the most outstanding World's Championship that has been staged. The bad weather merely separated the men from the boys much sooner.

This is written for the U. S. audience, where soaring is a tiny molecule as compared with its status in Europe. The average U. S. pilot or enthusiast has no conception of soaring as it is seen in International competition. But we have an analogy here which everyone can understand. College football is considered an amateur sport. Yet everyone is aware of its professional ramifications—its highly paid coach who calls the signals, its scramble for talent by every subterfuge available and its tactics which just stay within the letter of the law. Such is soaring in International competition. The time when a lone pilot, no matter how skilled, can hope to win one of those meets with inadequate equipment, is a thing of the past. Unless the rules are changed very radically, we had better wake up if we hope to compete in this league with any hope of success. How long will it take before the Americans wake up to the fact that good piloting is only about half of what it takes to win one of these meets?

Of course the United States is not without blame for this trend in International competition. Until this year