

# TRAVELS WITH RED DOG

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Let no one misconstrue at the outset that this rambling narrative lodges any claims to be technically accurate, intelligently critical or especially enlightening. Indeed, if it has any point to it at all, it is simply to recount a summer of soaring activity wherein I had the good fortune to meet a host of charming people from all points of the compass, see and take part in an International, a National and a local contest, of soaring from the damp and beautiful English countryside around South Cerney to the arid and equally beautiful panorama that is Marfa, with a wayside stop at Adrian, Michigan, where I was thoroughly chastened in the U. S. National contest by a bunch of old pros.

Midnite, May 18 — Boarded TWA 707 flight to Mildenhall, England. A midnite lunch, a cat nap and presto! England! A far cry from the old ferry-pilot days in World War II. The usual chaos and utter confusion to clear customs, then a short briefing by Harold Drew who met us and escorted us to Lasham. The two Wally Scotts — Sr. & Jr., Ben Greene and I boarded Denis Burns' Ford Zodiac which Wally had contracted for as a crew car to use in the coming contest. Denis took us for a wild, hair-raising, careening drive to Lasham. I do believe Denis is a frustrated Grand Prix driver.

"How in the name of blazes do you keep from getting lost?" I asked Denis.

He politely retorted "Really quite simple, you know, one becomes accustomed to driving in this countryside."

And then he got lost forthwith.

A good night's rest at a pleasant inn near Lasham and we reported to the aerodrome for practice. The first teams we met were the South Africans and what a fine group they are. Mutual esteem and rapport were established at once with them and continued throughout the coming weeks. No language barrier there.

Next we noticed the U.S.S.R. team. They seemed to

be quite disconsolate. Ben Greene suggested we introduce ourselves to them and have a conference. "We should do a better job than the politicians do in Washington at any rate," he insisted. The language barrier did prove to be somewhat of a stumbling block in this instance but they were extremely interesting and friendly. I remember the pilots Veretennikov, Chuvikov, Suslov and Jarushevichus particularly for their good humor, friendliness and superb athletic condition. On the coldest days when we were shivering from the cold and all bundled up in extra clothing they were wearing open sandals, short-sleeved shirts and Veretennikov would be sporting his ever-present *hair net*, which simply proves my theory that a good jolt of vodka is a prime training stimuli for whatever.

With them was a lady whose name escapes me, but I was told she was the Russian counterpart of our Jackie Cochran. At any rate she inquired of Miss Cochran and shook hands with us exuberantly. After Dr. Sam Huddleston, our team physician, had examined my hand and assured me I had no crushed bones we resumed our chit chat. Boy! Did she ever have a strong grip! Seriously, she was a very nice lady and through an interpreter conveyed to us the information that their sailplanes had not yet arrived. They had had no word of them which accounted for their worried looks.

Surprisingly the weather was beautiful for the next three days, for England that is. Roughly comparable to a weak day in West Texas. Our pilots got in some very good practice flights, especially Dick Schreder. Dick's HP-12 and the Darmstadt D-36 (dubbed the "Gumme Flugel" (rubber wing) by some wag) created a lot of interest. Had some long and interesting bull sessions with "Boet" Domisse, Pat Beatty, "Bomber" Jackson, Bobby Clifford, Tim Biggs and Ted Rudnick (Capt.) of the Republic of South Africa Team. Great bunch of guys.



Reaction of the British Team at South Cerney to the news that Red Wright had negotiated the tortuous road between Stow on the Wold and Moreton in the Marsh with only seventeen wrong turns and a three-hour delay. (Nice form, Neddy!)