



THE HIGH ROAD TO TOMORROW

The BS-1 has played an instrumental part in the development of the modern supersailplane. Two aspects of the story of how it came to be are told here by two men who were responsible for its creation. Hellmut "Helli" Lasch is a South African industrailist and a soaring pilot of long experience. He earned his Gold badge in 1949, completed his Diamond badge the following year, and has been a participant in three World Championships. Ing. Eugene Haenle, whose Libelle has earned an enviable reputation in a very short time, undertook the structural redesign and series production of the new ship. The result is another step into the future, another bright ray in the dawn of what may be the most exciting chapter yet in the remarkable history of soaring flight.

I had some work to do in Berlin during March, 1962, and when the weekend came up I flew over to Braunschweig to visit the Akaflieg of their University to look at the SB-6 of which I had seen an account in a technical paper. This bird intrigued me very much. The boys at the Akaflieg showed me the plane and it was clear to me that something new was afoot because of its clean lines and great simplicity.

They suggested that I should meet the father of the thought, Bjorn Stender. This was the first time that I heard his name. So we went off to find him and I spent a happy day sitting with him at the local pub on the airport, talking and sketching on paper napkins, the type of plane one should make. This is how the BS-1 was conceived. When evening came I had to get back to Berlin to be on the job next morning.

After having spent the hours with Bjorn it was clear to me that here was the most unusual young man, in fact a budding genius. I rang him up the next day and said "Bjorn, you will have finished your studies in a month or two. Consider building the plane we have discussed, I will finance the project. Think about it carefully and I will call you in a week and then you can give me your answer."

I called Bjorn after a week and the answer was . . . the BS-1.

Bjorn passed his exams with distinction and moved

to Reutlingen where a friend lent him an old disused house which was to be pulled down. Here he set up his headquarters, that is to say his design office and his bedroom. The design office was furnished with a good drawing board, a second hand calculating machine and an old typewriter. His bedroom-cum-kitchen furnishings consisted of an iron bedstead and a primus cooker. Here design began in earnest on the BS-1.

Before Bjorn left Braunschweig, Hans Boetcher had also approached him about a new sailplane and before leaving for Africa I met Bjorn again with Hans Boetcher. Boetcher also ordered a plane and we therefore discussed on broad lines the financial arrangements to be made.

I was back in Europe during September of the same year and saw Bjorn who had finished the design as well as most of the fuselage. He had engaged three young men to help build the plane, apart from doing much work on it himself. Bjorn's idea was to build an automatic flap which would adjust itself to the correct position at any relative speed and this idea will one day be realized. Unfortunately, this did not work as the materials available are not sufficiently developed to achieve a sufficiently rigid flap at the high-speed end.

The BS-1 was rolled out on December 23rd into snow and flew very nicely as a Christmas present for