

The Society in my opinion gives inadequate attention to flight safety. I am speaking (as are others) at a meeting held on the Society's premises by an international association this week. Even a cursory look at aircraft accidents over the last ten years shows that the cause in most cases is less to do with the construction or design of the vehicle than the environment in which or the methods by which it was operated. What is the Society doing to examine this very important question?

Air Traffic Control discussions (a most important subject these days) within the Society are usually dull affairs whereat mostly civil servants are asked to speak on government policy they are paid to implement and likely to be in trouble if they criticise.

Does the Society have any views as to whether the current expenditure of well over £100 000 000 on ATC modernisation in this country is either justifiable or being devoted to the best means of correcting its inadequacies?

Has the Society examined the current UK programme of automatic landing to consider whether we are not paying too much heed to scientists' arguments and too little attention to the pilots' reactions?

Finally, may I, with respect, suggest that the Society takes a long hard look at what it should do in the next century to advance the art and science of aeronautics and defines specific objectives in areas it proposes to investigate. So many of its debates are nothing more than interesting and sometimes amusing bull sessions at which the grinding of axes is often too poorly disguised. I believe the outcome of our major discussions should be to formulate subsequently carefully considered recommendations by the Society's Council, especially to answer some of the uninformed and ill-conceived criticism of our aircraft industry that seems these days to be the prerogative of certain outsiders whose ignorance is only equalled by their astonishing audacity.

As you will see, I am certainly amongst those who demand a new outlook for the Society to which I count it a privilege to belong.

E. W. PIKE (*Associate Fellow*)
29th March 1966

THE article concerning "The JOURNAL" in the March issue has achieved its purpose so far as I am concerned and I hope that you will accept the following remarks in the spirit in which they are intended and not as an unnecessary harsh criticism of either yourself or the Editor.

First, I must start with the centenary issue of the JOURNAL. I wonder how many members have really written to congratulate you on this issue. I would have thought very few as the general consensus of opinion, so far as the people to whom I have shown it, is the same as my own.

I think it is tragic to have to devote 66 pages to advertisements with 300 for reading matter. Even if you had needed to charge members a special price for this particular centenary copy then it should have been done so that the resultant issue could have been something really worthy of the occasion. It is possible that the current offer to bind the Centenary JOURNAL would have included for the removal of the advertisement section but from the way it is worded I very much doubt it.

Not only have I this criticism to make but with the tragedy at present overtaking the British aircraft industry, I am afraid the centenary issue provides a clue to the reasons behind it, being mainly devoted to an obsession in the past rather than being forward looking, for example: "Cloud Flying in the First World War." How many of today's members can possibly be interested—and still more

articles "held over" from the centenary issue continue to appear. Many of us who are not so closely connected with the aircraft industry at the present, often because of the lack of opportunity there, possibly feel more intensely about this situation than those still directly involved. However, it is encouraging to know the attitude of the "Graduates' and Students' Section" in the current issue (March), see page XXVI.

Is the JOURNAL really the best place for technical papers? Admittedly, they are of a high standard but most are so specialised that they can only be of interest to a very small number of readers at any one time—why not have a section in the JOURNAL devoted to a precis of perhaps a dozen papers in each issue so that your readers can apply for those that particularly interest them? The additional space then available should be used for articles of much wider interest so that the majority of your readers could really participate in each issue of the JOURNAL. Other journals, such as that of the Institute of Water Engineers do, I believe, fulfil this function to a much greater extent than does the Aeronautical Society's JOURNAL.

Another way of bringing the JOURNAL to life would be for readers to be invited to participate in a really lively correspondence section. Why, as you suggest in your article, put a page at the disposal of "prominent members"? This is restrictive in itself and perhaps the younger and less prominent members of the Society may also have something to say which is useful or provocative or, perhaps both.

Many of us, because we live away from the centre of town or away from branches, or because our work takes us away from our homes in the UK or abroad, cannot attend the meetings and this means probably that all meetings are attended by the same "hard core" of members. Hence the aliveness of the JOURNAL is, to a large extent, the mainspring of the Society.

Another constant source of irritation is the fact that the JOURNAL is never delivered on time. This is better than it used to be but there still seems little excuse for the March issue arriving last post on the 23rd March. Many have arrived long after at least half the meetings mentioned in the Diary had already taken place, again I am sure readers who might like to attend are not in the position to make last minute dates due to their business and private commitments.

At least, Mr. Baxter, your article provoked me sufficiently to write and I can assure you that my feelings have always been the same ever since I joined the Society about 20 years ago as a student. Receiving the Centenary issue, in which I was extremely disappointed, was the first pinprick and your article was the second.

A. D. MUNRO (*Associate*)
28th March 1966

"The Gap"

HE was the Project Team Leader for a very advanced supersonic new fighter for the Royal Air Force undergoing intensive flying trials in Fighter Command; I had called to see him about another recent accident connected with a spate of undercarriage troubles besetting the Squadron selected to test a full complement of these aircraft before full-scale production was started. The Air Staff—always trying to keep their dates with Destiny—were much perturbed.

As I entered his office I was immediately attracted by a disorderly pile of unopened JOURNALS on a side table which lay there just as they had been received, rolled up in their familiar buff wrappings which temptingly said on