

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

HENRY ALAN MARSH, A F C , A F R A e S

ALAN MARSH was born at Stratton, Dorchester, on 29th January, 1901. On completing his education at Weymouth Secondary School he became an engineering apprentice, and in 1918 joined the Royal Air Force as an Air Mechanic. Having qualified as an N C O pilot in 1923, he served overseas and at home in various Fighter Squadrons, joined the Central Flying School in 1929 as a Flight Sergeant Instructor and transferred to the Reserve in 1930. During the next two years he was occupied as a civil instructor with the Hampshire Aero Club, and for a few later months with the Scarborough Aero Club.

In April, 1932, he joined the Cierva Autogiro Co Ltd as an assistant pilot. He became Chief Instructor to the Autogiro Flying School, and also, in 1933 began to assist as a test pilot, subsequently, after Senor de la Cierva's death in 1936 assuming responsibility for all prototype testing. During this period he added the Navigator's (2nd Class) Licence to his other professional qualifications, and he was appointed a Member of the Guild of Air Pilots' Panel of Examiners and an Observer for the Royal Aero Club.

Having been commissioned in the R A F V R in 1936, he was called-up in January, 1940, and posted to the Royal Aircraft Establishment. In April, 1941, he assumed command of the Autogiro Radar Calibration Squadron, later known as No 529 (Rota) Squadron, which appointment he held until its disbandment in 1945. He was awarded the A F C and twice mentioned in dispatches.

On leaving the Service early in 1946 he rejoined the Cierva Co as General Manager and Chief Test Pilot. About this time he took a prominent part in founding the Helicopter Association of Great Britain, and became its first Chairman.

It was whilst flying the world's biggest helicopter, a research project—the Cierva Air Horse—near Southampton, Hants, on 13th June, 1950, that Alan Marsh met his death.

Altogether he had accumulated 6,500 hours as a pilot, of which 3,500 were on rotating-wing aircraft. He had flown 70 aeroplane types, 22 Autogiro, and 5 helicopter types. In addition to many other prototype "firsts" he put the Bristol 171 through its initial flight trials.

An excellent fuller appreciation of his life and work is to be found in the Journal of the Helicopter Association, Vol 4 No 1 page 31.

1955 Association Brains Trust

On January 14th, 1955, despite the very inclement weather conditions, a good audience gathered in Londonderry House, Park Lane, to attend the Association's third Brains' Trust meeting.

Those serving on the panel on this occasion were Messrs ARKELL, BRIE, MACINTOSH, ROBERTS and WOTTON, and Mr THURSTON JAMES, Editor of the 'Aeroplane' very kindly took the chair.

The proceedings were followed by the usual informal and enjoyable discussions.

While it is regretted that space does not permit us to record the proceedings of the Brains Trust in full in this issue of the Journal, we hope that it may be possible to do so at some later date. A full report of the proceedings is, however, available from the Association's Library should Members wish to read the details.