

Returning to the main subject, the future format of the JOURNAL. I think it a pity that articles of such historical interest as the reminiscences referred to above, should only appear once a century!

Finally, Mr. A. D. Munro's suggestion for a correspondence column receives my full support, although I should perhaps seldom have the temerity to contribute to it.

A. J. HAND, *Student*.

23rd May 1966

AS a past (time-served) member of the one-time aircraft industry of Great Britain, I feel that some comment be made to the letter of A. D. Munro in the May JOURNAL.

Firstly, congratulations on the Centenary issue. In my opinion, the events recounted therein, and in subsequent issues, will stand retelling long after the trivial blunderings of today have been forgotten.

I would like to assure Mr. Munro that a very large number of today's members regard the period ending in about 1950 as that in which all the *real* work was done, and all the real progress made.

These were the times, of course, when the industry had a preponderance of doers rather than talkers (Executives, I believe, is the term preferred by the latter group). Please keep the JOURNAL up to its present high standard. This is a technical Society, and I for one would deplore any tendency to reduce the JOURNAL to a chatty forum for inconsequential correspondence.

The "doers", in any case, would have little time to spare for this kind of thing.

It is also unlikely that these people will be much concerned with the exact time or date of arrival of their JOURNAL.

There are, I feel, too many abstract or scientific papers included, however (the late Mr. C. G. Grey could express himself pungently on this); and more with a practical design bias would, perhaps, result in a more effective JOURNAL.

Finally, may I make a brief comment on the extremely interesting article by G. Bryer, "Ship Planes in the Grand Fleet" in the May issue? I have an original photograph of a Fairey Flycatcher (entered service in 1924) flying off "B" turret of HMS *Ramillies*. My father was serving in this ship at this time, and recalls that the pilot was a very well-built man, who had almost to be fitted into the cockpit with a shoe horn!

It would seem that the Panther flight from *Hood* was not, in fact, the final effort with this method.

Once again, thank you for your efforts in this Centenary year; keep up the good work!

A. C. RATTLE, *CEng (Assoc. Fellow)*.

24th May 1966.

E. W. PIKE's letter in the May issue criticises the JOURNAL for neglecting operational aspects. Discussion cannot be free in respect of space and defence aeronautics, which form the bulk of the industry's products with Government the only customer. This disadvantage, accentuated by cumbrous Departmental machinery, may in some measure account for the post-war shortcomings of the industry and for a narrowing of the field that the JOURNAL covers.

Similar restrictions do not, however, apply in the case of air transport. There are many, who have become expert through study and experience on matters in this field pertaining to air safety, aerodromes, electronics and traffic control and ground handling, now outside the Society's fold. It would seem advantageous for the Society here to widen its scope and for the JOURNAL to reflect a wider outlook.

In the determination of optimum size, for example, there are other considerations besides the aircraft capital and running costs. We should not perhaps forget the impact that a real European Customs Union might have, that the first airbus concept, Hillman's DH Dragon, which from a small aerodrome undercut the State service to Paris, ushered in the short-range air transport developments of the thirties and that it was the small, reliable, robust and economical aeroplane that gained a world-wide reputation for our industry before the war.

G. L. GANDY (*Associate*).

23rd May 1966.

#### The DH103-Hornet

WITH reference to the interesting paper by Mr. Harper in the April 1966 JOURNAL, I would like to comment on his remarks about the DH103-Hornet (p 477).

It may well be that the Hornet was the fastest piston-engined aircraft to see service in the RAF or RN, but it was not the fastest ever built. The Supermarine Spiteful had a maximum level speed of 494 mph. A published reference to this is in *The Aeroplane* of 26th December 1947, but I have a personal memory of this figure also, as I was a member of the Flight Test team which made the performance measurements on the Spiteful.

R. A. HARVEY (*Assoc. Fellow*).

22nd April 1966.

#### Material strength—Information required

I HAVE felt for a long time now that certain statistical estimation techniques could be very useful to design engineers in the rational assessment of factors of safety based on known variation of material properties and logically derived confidence levels for structural and material integrity. Some work of this nature has been done at RAE Farnborough, based mainly on aircraft materials and constructional types, but little, if any, has been available for general engineering purposes.

Recently, I have started trying to collect from various sources such information as may be available on variability of material strength, elongation and elasticity properties for materials to general engineering specifications, and have discovered that quite a lot of this information exists, but that it is hidden away in odd corners. My aim, ultimately, is to try to collect such information as I can obtain, and to make it available to a wider engineering public.

I would very much like to hear from any of your readers who may have any such information available, or from anyone who may be attempting the same task.

M. J. CLARKE,

10th May 1966

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