

# THE HELICOPTER ASSOCIATION OF GREAT BRITAIN

## THE SIXTH ANNUAL DINNER

5TH SEPTEMBER, 1952

The Sixth Annual Dinner of The Helicopter Association of Great Britain was held at Londonderry House, and was perhaps the largest social gathering of helicopter enthusiasts yet held in this country. At the informal reception before dinner, one hundred and thirty Members and their Guests from Britain, America, Canada, France, Norway, Sweden, the Gold Coast and the Sudan were received by our President and his charming wife.

The Association's Guests of Honour were Mr REGINALD MAUDLING, M P, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Civil Aviation, with his wife, and M A V J VERNIEUWE, Vice-President of SABENA, Belgium, who had earlier read a Paper on "Helicopter Operating Experiences," which is fully recorded elsewhere in this issue. A large number of personalities of the world of aviation were also present as guests of the Association or its Members.

At the conclusion of dinner, the Vice-President, Mr J G WEIR, presented facsimiles of the original signatures to the Memorandum of Association to five of the eight Founder Members who signed that document exactly seven years ago. The Founders of our Association who were greeted with acclamation were W/Cdr R A C Brie, Mr Norman Hill, Mr J E Harper, Mr G C Turner and Mr M S P Houdret. The only other living signatory, Mr B H Arkell, was unable to be present.

Mr Weir also presented the prize cheque for the 1951/52 Cierva Memorial Essay to Mr L H HAYWARD for his Paper "A Review of Helicopter Patents" (reproduced as a Supplement to Vol 5, No 4, of the Journal).

The Assembly was then addressed by the President. Mr ERIC MENS-FORTH said that, as our Association was the youngest of British Aeronautical Societies, it was appropriate that our Dinner should conclude the week of parties always associated with the Annual Air Display of the Society of British Aircraft Constructors. After watching that Display, he felt it to be quite possible that military fixed wing aircraft would so develop their powers of mutual destruction that helicopters would soon have the air to themselves.

Helicopter development could now be considered to be entering its third stage, the first stage had been that of the Pioneers, the second that of Igor Sikorsky to the era of military success made apparent in Korea. The stage upon which we are about to embark will be that of the equally successful adaptation of helicopters to civil transportation. We of the Association assert that the next few years will discover new and even undreamed of applications for the helicopter. The President stressed the fine challenge to our determination presented by the development of the British Helicopter Industry and pointed out that the geography and dirty weather of this country make it the ideal proving ground for this type of aircraft. A lead had just been given us by the Minister of Defence when he arrived at the S B A C Display by helicopter, and earlier in the afternoon we had

listened to a most instructive talk, showing the advanced stages of helicopter application that had been reached in Belgium

Our Association is a specialist body which could and should undertake the task of educating public opinion in rotating wing matters. In that connection, the President referred to an appeal for funds which the Association intends to launch shortly, aimed more specifically at the fringes of the helicopter industry.

Mr Mensforth then formally welcomed our Guests and proposed their very good health.

Mr REGINALD MAUDLING replied on behalf of the Guests. Apologising for the fact that his Minister could not be present in person, he explained that he was that day inspecting the flood damage at Lynmouth from a B E A helicopter. He went on to outline the measures being taken by the Ministry of Civil Aviation to prepare the way for widespread helicopter operations within this country. He mentioned that these steps included the provision of a rotor station on the South Bank Site.

Mr Maudling assured us that the Government is indeed helicopter-minded and that everything possible will be done by our rulers, and more particularly by the Ministry of Civil Aviation, to encourage the rapid development of this new means of transportation. He ended on a word of warning, advising that we should not risk disappointing the public by exaggerating the probable speed of development and should avoid the error of promising to deliver too much too soon.

After the two speeches, the assembly mingled in general conversation and it was not until after 1 a.m. that the last group left.

### **Flight Lieutenant John G Minifie**

It is with the greatest regret that we have to record the death in a flying accident on the 16th September of FLIGHT LIEUTENANT JOHN G MINIFIE, R A F, who was a Companion Member of the Association.