



Left: Round the pylon in the Norton-Griffiths race for Tiger Moths. Above: French victors in the aerobatic competition, F. d'Huc-Dressler (third), L. Biancotto (first), A. Hisler (second). Opposite page: Foreign aerobatic visitors are, from top left round the clock, Stampe S.V.4A, Sipa Minijet, Focke-Wulf Stieglitz, Bücker Jungmeister. Far right: This year's British Air Racing Champion, J. Nat Somers.

COVENTRY'S DAY . . .

Focke-Wulf Stieglitz was the last of the morning items. During the lunch interval, work progressed on the Mew Gull, Buster Paine having offered the 7ft airscrew from his Proctor as a replacement for that of the Mew, which was 3in smaller in diameter. This was fitted, and checked on a subsequent air test.

Although, unfortunately, we were not to see Gerben Sonderman as a contestant in the Lockheed aerobatic contest, he vigorously bade farewell with a dashing display in the Fokker S.14 before flying it back to Schiphol. First afternoon act of the programme proper was a potent, polished performance by six Sea Hawks of 800 Squadron, who burst in to begin a superb show, formation runs by four machines plus low individual cross-over beat-ups.

An S-51 Dragonfly of 705 Squadron, R.N., next proceeded to demonstrate its winching abilities, which were duly appreciated by the crowd—although its subsequent tendency to fly around during other items on the programme, drowning the commentary and blowing pieces of Baginton over the assembly, was not. The programme continued with appearances by four Canberras from Marham and a Shackleton from St. Eval, together with what the printed programme listed as "Event 10. Sensational aerial trapeze act by ANDRE JAN, THE HELICOPTER GIRL." Putting aside any temptation to employ such phrases as low-drag aerodynamic bodies, streamlined double-curvature fuselages and the like, we would record that the Agusta-Bell 47G from which the trapeze and Miss Jan were suspended was flown by John Crewdson.

Sharp contrast—essential for a well-balanced show of any kind—was next provided. In turn came Olympia sailplane aerobatics by George Thompson of the Coventry Gliding Club; steady runs by a B-29 of the U.S.A.F.; and a lively aerobatic performance by F/O. B. A. Clayton in a Vampire T.11.

For the 1955 King's Cup race, the top fifteen pilots in this

year's British Air Racing Championship were competing over four laps of a 17-mile circuit. The machines varied from the Tiger Moths of Vanneck, Maile and Denyer, at about 107 m.p.h., to the Mew Gull flying at twice this speed. Thus it was only as Vanneck came round the pylon, after completing two laps in the lead, that Clifford in the Mew Gull was flagged away on take-off.

The gaps continued to close, and Clifford moved up steadily, but at the final turn in towards the field Vanneck was still leading. The close group of dots gradually approached and became an assorted gaggle of aircraft with, it seemed, Vanneck a certain winner. At the last moment, however, shooting out of the grey haze and through the other aircraft like a sharp white bullet, came the Mew Gull, to win the 1955 King's Cup in one of the closest finishes this race has ever seen. Vanneck was second and Johnnie Johnston third: a special prize should certainly have gone to the handicappers. Engine trouble had forced Ogilvy to make an emergency landing just short of the finishing line. The results are listed on page 279. The finals of the aerobatic competition followed.

The Lockheed Aerobatic Competition.—Belief that the judges of the British Lockheed International Aerobatic competition would have an unenviable task was borne out in the event, which took place on the Friday evening and Saturday afternoon. The winners must all have been within a mark or two of each other.

There was admiration for Santiago Germano, who had come so far and whose Argentine-built Focke-Wulf Stieglitz only left its crate at 1 a.m. on the day of the elimination event. There was pleasure that such a wide variety of aircraft were present to compete for the international title. There was also disappointment that Gerben Sonderman was prevented from competing.

Few were present on the Friday to see Sonderman's masterly handling of a difficult situation during practice. While he was inverted, and after he had sensed some electrical trouble when his radio faded, the flame went out in his Nene turbojet. On regaining level flight he appeared to try to relight, but without success. He then brought the Fokker advanced trainer round and made a beautifully judged dead-stick landing, rolling up almost to his chocks in front of the tower. It seems that the quill-shaft driving his generator had sheared. Power was soon consumed in the batteries, and then the fuel dried up because the booster pumps faded out as he was flying inverted. Some enterprising work by friends at Coventry had the S.14 serviceable by Saturday.

The first round of the competition started on the Friday evening. François d'Huc-Dressler led off in the Stampe S.V.4A biplane. The Renault 4PO5 engine was modified for inverted flight; and, like the other foreign competitors to follow, the Frenchman made great use of this quality in bunts, outside loops and other inverted manoeuvres. His set figures—slow roll, loop, half roll-off-the-top, were all included in a non-stop variety of unusual and composite turns, very hard to identify and evaluate separately. All were competently executed with very few errors, and it was no surprise later to find his name among those of the six finalists. He was notable for using only a small area of sky.

W. H. Bailey (Miles Hawk Trainer), G. R. I. Parker (Blackburn B.2 Trainer) and F. C. Fisher (Tiger Moth) were much handicapped by lack of power and of inverted-flying carburetors. Their displays, even allowing for this, were not such as to put them in the running.

Leon Biancotto, of France, using the same Stampe as his compatriot, snapped straight into a continuous whirl which, so far as we could see, comprised one-and-a-half flick rolls into an inverted dive, rolling into a half loop. Without pause, a stalled turn and inverted flight followed, then a bunt and Biancotto's version of a flick roll on top of a loop (closely resembling the Porteous avalanche, but less flat). His manoeuvres continued in quick succession, well positioned and most competently executed, until the yellow Very indicated five minutes up. For the final, we felt sure.

R. L. Porteous, in a very clean Auster J5L Aiglet (Gipsy Major 10) next took the arena—one of the favourites on reputation, but using a standard cabin aircraft by no means ideal for aerobatics. He opened

NATIONAL AIR RACES—FOURTH ROUND (BAGINTON) AND FINAL PLACINGS

Place	No.	Pilot	Aircraft	H'cap	Speed	Total pts.	Final place
B.A.C. Challenge Cup							
1	92	G. Marler	Falcon Six	00.00	160	50	3
2	97	P. S. Clifford	Mew Gull	2.05	195.5	53	1
3	96	R. R. Paine	Hawk Sp. Six	1.08	167.5	52	2
—	98	F. Dunkerley	Sparrowjet		withdrawn	12	4
Goodyear Challenge Trophy							
1	85	J. N. Somers	Gemini 3	02.10	161	58	1
2	80	P. Blamire	Gemini 1a	00.00	134	52	2
—	84	F. Dunkerley	Gemini 1a		withdrawn	26	3
Cemley Challenge Trophy							
1	47	J. N. Somers	Chipmunk	01.46	138	71	1
2	43	J. R. Johnston	Hawk Tr. 3	01.27	134.5	48	2
3	41	D. F. Ogilvy	Comper Swift	00.57	128.5	48	2
4	40	A. J. Spiller	Messenger 2a	00.35	125.5	21	4
5	46	W. H. Bailey	Hawk Major	00.00	117.5	6	7
—	48	D. W. Phillips	Hawk Major		withdrawn	15	6
Norton-Griffith Challenge Trophy							
1	23	J. H. Denyer	Tiger Moth	00.10	105.5	67	1
2	24	J. M. Donald	Tiger Moth	00.10	104.5	39	4
3	22	P. Vanneck	Tiger Moth	00.02	103	45	3
4	28	L. R. Williams	Tiger Moth	00.00	102.5	9	6
5	21	B. Maile	Tiger Moth	00.14	103.5	58	2
6	25	B. J. Snook	Tiger Moth	00.07	102	28	5
Drosvenor Challenge Cup							
1	9	D. Westoby	Aiglet	02.46	119	58	1
2	3	Miss F. M. Leaf	Tipsy Tr. 1	00.00	94.0	38	3
3	5	C. Gregory	T'craft Plus D	01.53	110.5	58	1
—	11	A. A. Bough	Autocrat	01.40	disq.	6	8
Air League Challenge Cup							
1	69	T. G. Knox	Proctor 3	00.00	137.5	61	1
2	68	A. Barker	Proctor 3	00.00	136.5	40	2
3	65	A. S. K. Paine	Proctor 1	00.32	142	27	4
4	67	E. N. Husbands	Proctor 1	00.05	136.5	30	3