

Capt. Balfour appears to adopt a menacing attitude towards a seemingly apprehensive Brian Allen ; but he is merely inspecting the two-seater Topsy.



by Mr. D. M. Bay in a Percival Vega Gull, followed by Mr. Donald Rankin, who had undertaken to give an aerobatic display in one of the Club's Avro Cadets. After a false start caused by one of the front cockpit door flaps opening, he proceeded to reel off loops, slow rolls and stall turns—in fact a whole gamut of excellent stunts, to the intense interest of the crowd below. The various evolutions were admirably explained by Mr. W. W. Lyon-Shaw over the loud speakers.

Meanwhile, members of the Avenue Aeromodellers' Club monopolised the western half of the aerodrome with models that seemed bent on intercepting a flight of pigeons which wheeled aimlessly above.

While the competitors were lining up for the *pièce de résistance* of the afternoon—a 54-mile race over a triangular circuit—Mr. Bonar, from Luton, showed how well suited a De Havilland Tiger Moth is for aerobatics. His was a show carefully thought out for public consumption, and included loops galore, a half-roll off the top of a loop, slow rolls and a host of other tricks of the trade.

Just as he finished there came a thunderous snarling roar, and a Supermarine Spitfire streaked across the aerodrome to disappear into the haze. A second or two later it returned, to fly incredibly slowly (with wheels and flaps down) over the aerodrome—a most convincing show.

The Race

With practically no wind the nine competitors in the race were able to take off on their direct course for the first leg of the 18-mile circuit, the three turning points of which were Canewdon radio masts, the flour mill at Battlesbridge, and a partly denuded beacon in the middle of the aerodrome. Over nineteen minutes separated the departure of the limit man, N. M. Browning (Topsy) and F/O. Geoffrey de Havilland in the T.K.2. The Topsy reached the end of its first lap just as the T.K.2 was despatched. At the end of Lap 1 the starting order was unchanged, but A. R. Ward's little Chilton was obviously creeping up on the gallant old Spartan piloted by S. A. Kew. Another to forge ahead was L. Lipton in his Puss Moth. On the second lap the Topsy single-seater was still well out in front, but quite a lot of overtaking occurred on the aerodrome turn. The Puss Moth nipped in front of the two-seater Topsy, piloted by Brian Allen, while H. D. Rankin's Tom Tit followed in their wake, hotly pursued by the Leopard Moth, piloted by A. S. Lucas.

The finish provided an excellent climax. At least half the entry was in sight as the T.K.2 swept low over the aerodrome, chased by Henshaw's Vega Gull, a bare ten seconds behind. The Puss Moth nipped into third place, passing Browning's Topsy over the aerodrome boundary, to the huge enjoyment of the crowd.

Final Place.	Pilot.	Machine.	Handicap.	Time.	Speed.
			min. sec.	min. sec.	m.p.h.
1	G. de Havilland...	T.K.2 ...	Scratch	38 33	172
2	Alex Henshaw ...	Vega Gull ...	1 42	38 44	156.5
3	L. Lipton ...	Puss Moth ...	5 53	40 06	115
4	N. M. Browning...	Topsy ...	19 32	40 12	81.5
5	H. D. Rankin ...	Hawker Tom Tit ...	7 41	40 43	113.5
6	A. R. Ward ...	Chilton ...	12 22	40 45	97.5
7	A. S. Lucas ...	Leopard Moth ...	5 55	40 47	120.5
8	Brian Allen ...	Topsy Two-seater ...	11 48	42 55	93
9	S. A. Kew ...	Spartan ...	16 41	43 41	80

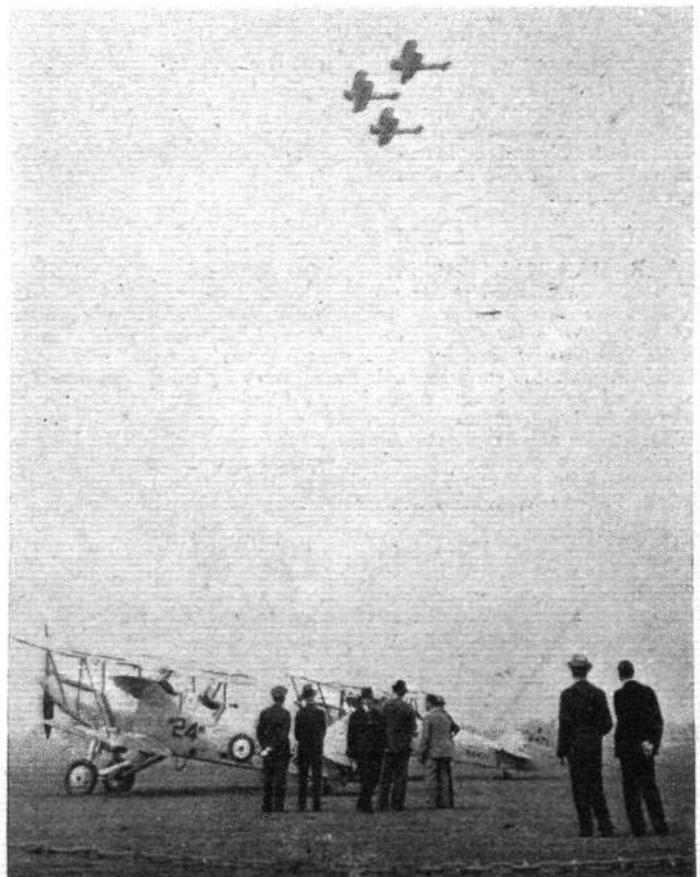
Afterwards, at the presentation of prizes, Capt. Harold Balfour emphasised in a brief speech that the occasion was the first at which he had been able to speak of the Civil Air Guard since its inception. He explained that the object of the C.A.G. was to bring flying within the reach of everyone, and thereby complete a chain of voluntary organisations which in totalitarian countries were obtained by compulsion. He went on to stress that the new movement was not a part of the Air Ministry, but was run by the clubs for the clubs, with the Ministry standing by only in an advisory capacity. He gave the assurance that everything was going on all right so far as the administration side was concerned, but delays

were bound to occur, which, he hoped, would be met with by a spirit of toleration.

No sooner had Capt. G. E. Weber replied than, with a slickness which was typical of the Southend Club's organisation, Miss Ray Clarke, made a parachute jump from approximately 2,000ft. By dint of clever manipulation of the shroud lines, she contrived to touch-down neatly in the centre of the field.

And so ended the first part of the Southend Club's At Home. One by one the visiting aircraft left to probe their way homewards through the murk. F/O. Geoffrey de Havilland disappeared in the T.K.2, bound for Hatfield, where he later took up the ill-fated Albatross. Other pilots, members and guests stayed to continue the party in lighter vein that evening.

Altogether the At Home had been a most enjoyable affair. Throughout the afternoon the programme had been run to a rigid time schedule. Individual turns were kept as brief as possible and, above all, there was plenty of variety. There was one small point which called for criticism, and that concerned the question of joy rides. Throughout the afternoon a roaring trade was done. But could not this sideline have been confined to the interval and after the programme had terminated? As it was they were most distracting, both to onlookers and to pilots



As if by way of a salute, a flight of Gloster Gladiators from No. 74 Squadron (Hornchurch) thunder overhead on the arrival in two Hart Trainers of Capt. Balfour and Mr. Henry Channon, M.P. for Southend.