



GLIDING



THE LONDON Gliding Club.—Sunday was a bitterly cold day on the Downs above Totternhoe, but the wind was fairly strong and in the right direction to make soaring conditions admirable. It had been so for the whole of the previous day and it was therefore not surprising to hear on our arrival that Mr. F. Buxton had broken the British duration record on Saturday with a flight of some 2½ hours. On Sunday, Mr. C. H. Latimer Needham who had, previous to Mr. Buxton's flight, held the record went up and down a short strip of the Downs until he had completed close on three hours' flying. He has presumably therefore unofficially regained his previous record. Quite what good such records do is a little difficult to see, and we feel that they must be classed with the existing craze in America for both male and female pilots to remain aloft in an aircraft until such time as it drops to pieces. Once a pilot is expert enough to sit on top of a series of uprising currents as were available during the weekend at Totternhoe there can surely be very little merit in continuing to do so for as long as the wind holds. Cross-country flights and investigation of the currents over new ground would, we feel, constitute a much more profitable line of action and we hope shortly to hear of both these pilots emulating Herr Kronfeld and flying, say, from Dover to Salisbury. Of course, these long flights were rather more meritorious than might at first be imagined, since they were made on a Prüfling, and not a really efficient type of glider, but several of the more efficient type of machines are now being built over here, and no doubt before long we shall hear more about them. One of the first of this new class is the "Scud" which as we mentioned last week has been designed by Mr. Baynes, and made by the Brant Aircraft Co. of Croydon. This was tried out for the first time on the same ground the previous week. It was out again on Sunday and Mr. Marcus Manton made several test flights on it. Aerodynamically it is undoubtedly a very interesting little machine designed on entirely different lines to anything we have yet heard of, either here or in Germany. With a loading of 3.1 lb. per sq. ft., it is some 50 per cent. higher than machines like the "Wien," but the amazing part about it is that the total structural weight has been kept down to 103 lb. It is in the form of a braced parasol monoplane with a diamond shape

inselage. The tail surfaces, that is, both elevators and rudder, are cantilever from the fuselage and naturally balanced by virtue of their rotation about a single spar. The value of such a machine as the Scud will undoubtedly lie to a large extent upon its handiness, two hand holes are provided on each side of the fuselage and it is found that four men can quite easily pick it up and carry it about. We understand

that the preliminary modifications have taken the form of gearing down both the elevators and rudder, which has had the desirable effect of making the controls a little less sensitive. Previously, owing to the shortness of the fuselage the machine was rather too touchy for any other than the most expert pilot to fly. During the afternoon several club members made excellent flights on both the Prüfling and the club Zöglings. On the latter at least two flights of nearly 3 min. duration were seen. We still, however, cannot quite see the necessity for such flights being made in an inefficient machine of this type and would have thought that its use should have been confined to very short hops from low down the gliding slope in order to familiarise pupils with the use of the controls. To shoot them off the top of such a high hill as there is at Totternhoe must inevitably result, as it did on Sunday, in crashes.

Satisfactory and great progress has been made in the club during the last few months and, in spite of the shortened time of daylight available for gliding during the week-ends, the number of flights per day has been maintained within measurable distance of that obtained during September and October. The Dagnall prize, which has been put up for the club obtaining the greatest number of "A" certificates, is causing considerable interest, and the club's score of 17 will, it is hoped, give them a good chance of winning. Six members have completed the qualifying flights for their "B" licences and are now waiting a chance to do the final tests. Five of these were trained *ab initio* by the club. As readers of FLIGHT will know, the three lectures organised by the club have been particularly interesting and well attended, and there is no doubt that members have found a great deal of benefit from these lectures. The advanced group, the formation of which was announced last week, has proved to be a great success, and the mechanical method of returning a machine to the starting point has enabled an increased number of long flights to be made. There is now a considerable number of vacancies in the Instructional Groups for those people who either have or have not had previous aviation experience, and anyone in the London district who is interested is advised to write to the Hon. Secretary, London Gliding Club, Empire House, St. Martin's le Grand, E.C.1. (National 8682).

SOUTHDOWN Skysailing Club.—On Sunday, January 11, this club carried out their usual programme of flying in spite of the fact that their club captain, Flight-Lieut. Brown had broken his leg the previous week. Several good glides were made and more and more members are increasing their knowledge of the sport.



A three-quarter front view of Brant Aircraft Co's. "Scud." (FLIGHT Photo.)