

Fatal Accident in Luxembourg

On Saturday 28th August Philip Hutchins died in an accident while giving a tethered display at the European Championships in Luxembourg. (An appreciation is being prepared for AEROSTAT by his friend since schooldays, Simon Faithful).

The facts are briefly as follows: weather conditions were calm, but very thermic, at about 3 pm and a number of balloons were making tethered displays. Phil Hutchins had been tethering with the J & B bottle special shape equipped with a specially designed chair rather than a basket. He was at ground level and had unstrapped himself.

Very suddenly a thermal of quite unusual intensity swept through the site. The J & B bottle was lifted up, and the jerk as it reached the end of its tether line caused the pilot to fall out. He fell a distance of twenty feet or so and although medical assistance was immediately available he later died from his injuries.

The thermal wind generated a spiral cloud of dust, and broke the tethers of several balloons which were swept towards the crowd.

The Luxembourg Authorities have apparently decided to make no enquiry. The BBAC main committee have asked Kevin Meehan and Don Cameron to carry out a brief enquiry and to produce a report, and this will be covered in a later issue.

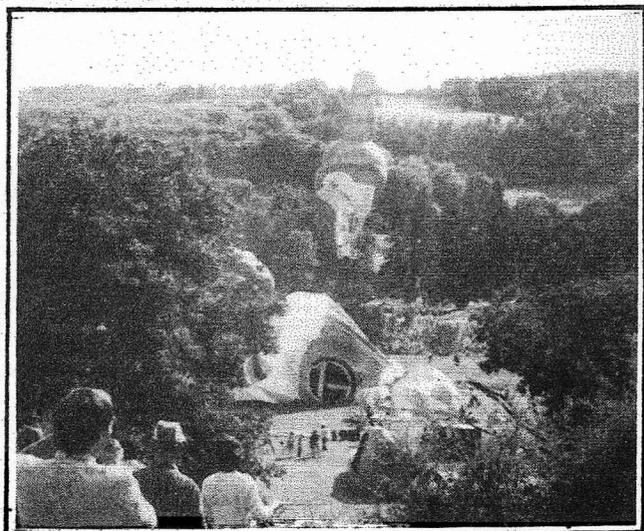
Don Cameron

ERNST KRAUER

Anthony Smith recalls two stories about Ernst Krauer who was killed in a recent ballooning tragedy (full story in Aerostat, Aug. 1982.

Two small stories about Ernst may help to demonstrate the style of his personality, and what we have lost. At the St. Niklaas balloon meet of 1970 Ernst failed to persuade Malcolm Brighton that his forthcoming trans-Atlantic attempt would be a disaster. Not knowing what else to do, Ernst then took a smiling photograph of him, a copy of which Ernst distributed to all of Malcolm's friends when the flight proved to be a disaster 3 weeks later.

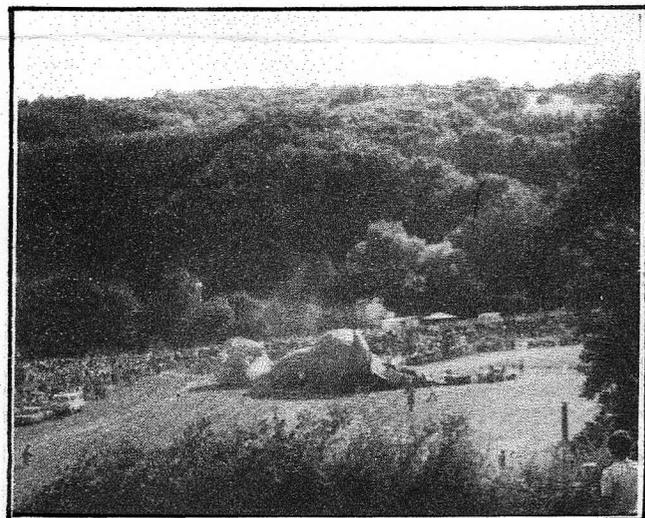
Secondly, when the St. Niklaas authorities switched (against the wishes of all the gas balloonists) to helium after years of success with hydrogen, Ernst registered his disgust by refusing to fly there. He requested that the considerable sum of money which St. Niklaas would have spent on filling his balloon should instead be donated to charity. At his funeral, and in keeping with this sentiment, his family asked that no money should be consumed on flowers but gifts could be made to a local, special school.



1) The Thermal catches J&B. (Photographic sequence by Erwin A. Sautter)



2) Talbot also tries to lift-off. Note the deformation of the bottle



3) The thermal passes. In the foreground spectators rush to help Phil Hutchins.