

A Science Service Feature

? WHY THE WEATHER ? Mailed December 5, 1927

By Charles Fitzhugh Talman
Authority on Meteorology

ROGER ASCHAM ON WIND STRUCTURE

EDITORS: Please substitute the following note for the note : "A PILOT CHART FOR AERONAUTS" intended for release Dec. 9, 1927 which should be killed.

The complexities of "wind structure" have assumed great importance in our times because of their effects on the flight of aircraft. There are various ways of observing them. Here is one described by the 16th century scholar Roger Ascham in his book "Toxophilus":

"To see the wind with a man's eyes, it is impossible, the nature of it is so fine and subtle; yet this experience of the wind had I once myself, and that was in the great snow which fell four years ago. I rode in the highway betwixt Topcliff-upon-Swale and Boroughbridge, the way being somewhat trodden afore by wayfaring men; the fields on both sides were plain, and lay almost yard-deep with snow; the night before had been a little frost, so that the snow was hard and crusted above. That morning the sun shone bright and clear, the wind was whistling aloft, and sharp. according to the time of the year; the snow in the highway lay loose and trodden with horse feet, so as the wind blew it took the loose snow with it, and made it so slide upon the snow in the field, which was hard and crusted by reason of the frost overnight, that thereby I might see very well the whole nature of the wind as it blew that day. And I had a great delight and pleasure to mark it, which maketh me now far better to remember it. Sometime the wind would be not past two yards broad, and so it would carry the snow as far as I could see. Another time the snow would blow over half the field at once. Sometime the snow would tumble softly, bye and bye it would fly wonderful fast. And this I perceived also, that the wind goeth by streams and not whole together."

(All rights reserved by Science Service, Inc.)

SCIENCE SERVICE,
21st and B Sts.,
Washington, D.C.