



The 36ft Mystery at Dumblecott

BY DORIS TURNER

I STOPPED, stared and rubbed my eyes . . . and stared again. It was there all right. A giant silver rocket, set on a "launching pad" in a field alongside the Charlwood-Newdigate road.

It proved to be the Dumblecott Rockette, a 36ft, 2½cwt "missile" pointing rather ominously in the direction of London. Set in the grounds of Dumblecott, the country home of Charles and Mary Cardell, the rocket has already caused quite a sensation in the district. "Is this Surrey's riposte to the

Greater London Plan? I wondered, and decided to investigate the mystery.

After inspecting the two trident signs at the entrance to Dumblecott—promising "water for man or beast"—I knocked at the door of the attractive lodge set discreetly back from the road. After an exchange of pleasantries with Mr Cardell and his charming sister, I dared to ask some pointed questions about the "space traveller on the launching pad" in the field adjoining. Warmly invited to look for myself, the mystery deepened.

Completely dwarfed by the giant contraption, I stood and gazed upwards at the glamorous "astronaut" who manned the rocket.

No ordinary pilot this, but a gorgeous witch ("all witches are beautiful if you know where to find them" whispered a voice in my ear) gowned in black, flowing draperies outlining proportions of a "body beautiful". With flowing golden tresses she sported a pearl necklace as a space charm before scorning to use her outmoded broomstick

and choosing the latest in air travel!

The Count-down, I was informed, was due to take just two weeks, long enough for Charles Cardell to get that generator working to floodlight the Dumblecott Rockette.

Two weeks to build

The construction of the silver missile was left a mystery—too high for me to reach with its long, delicately tapered nose pointed skywards.

Why did he build it? "I wanted everyone to see Bella Cotta the witch," said Mr Cardell. The broomstick is quite outmoded so we put her on a rocket."

The "missile" took 72-year-old Mr Charles Cardell all of two weeks to build. From his workshops at a secluded thicket out of sight of the busy road, and out into the night to the front field. He waited all next day for reactions. He got them!

But poised to avenge the rape of Surrey by the Greater London Plan, the Dumblecott Rockette will vanish as quickly as it came—in the night.

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