

IMPERIAL AIRWAYS GAZETTE



Clare, the Airways Corporation flying boat, disembarking passengers and crew after her flight to Canada and America and back.

Contents

Editorial 1

More “Caledonia” covers 2
By John Symons and Peter Wingent

Imperial Airways’ 1939 trans-Atlantic services 3
By Peter Wingent

First trans-Atlantic air service to the Arctic 12
By John Symons

Inclusion of Lusaka on the I.A. London – Cape Town service in 1935 15
By Dave Morton and Peter Wingent

B.O.A.C. 1940 trans-Atlantic services 23
By Peter Wingent

Your questions and answers 30

Ernest Rigglesworth Hatchett 32
By Mike Stephenson

Forced landing at Jinja 36
Material provided by Duncan Crewe

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Editorial

Another December edition, so I take this opportunity to wish you all a very Happy Christmas, a healthy New Year and happy collecting in 2013.

First of all, I would like to congratulate our member Ed Wolf for publishing a new book: "The Flight of the Old Carthusian." It has been reviewed very positively in the November "Air Mail News" and so I will just repeat here that if you would like to obtain a copy, contact Ed at eswolf@optusnet.com.au.

A quick scan of the Contents page will reveal that just over half the pages of this edition relate to the Imperial Airways and B.O.A.C. trans-Atlantic services. It was during a very pleasant meeting of the BAMS North-West group, held at Sue and Duncan Crewe's house this summer, at which there were approximately six members of the Gazette group, that the discussion turned to trans-Atlantic services. The general consensus was that the trans-Atlantic services had not been featured often in previous Gazettes and that this December edition should be an 'Atlantic' one. It has not turned out to be an entirely 'Atlantic' edition but it certainly has that bias. For those interested, the following is a listing of the few articles relating to Atlantic services which have appeared in previous Gazettes:

No. 16	Dec. 1999	App.1, page 1	Mercury 1938 flight.
No. 24	Dec. 2003	pages 13 – 16	Bermuda service.
No. 25	June 2004	pages 3 – 7	Bermuda service.
No. 39	June 2011	pages 30 – 31	Mercury 1938 flight.
No. 41	June 2012	pages 20 – 21	Caledonia 1937 flight.

For those of you who receive the Gazette on disc, which is all but two, no doubt you will have noticed when you opened it that there are two extra folders (in addition to the Word and pdf versions of the magazine). These are a bonus and are there for the following reasons: the first, named "John Symons cards" contain jpegs of the complete set of fifty Lambert and Butler cigarette cards which John kindly sent me. I tried to fit them to pages of the Gazette in both portrait and landscape format but I could not manage to obtain a good layout, nor do it without using up a large number of pages. Therefore, I decided that I would simply add them to each disc and you can do what you like with them! The second folder (named "Lady Young lost") is an excellent article relating to Lady Young's forced landing and rescue which is referred to in Dave Morton's article on Lusaka (see pages 16 & 22). The article is by an organization called "Our Rhodesian Heritage" and is a very full and lively account of Lady Young's adventure. I'm afraid it is in Word format only. On page 22 Dave wrote that the article could be obtained from me on request, but I decided that the simplest thing to do would be to add it to each disc. So I hope you enjoy these bonuses.

Given the recent rise in postage costs I have decided I must raise the subscription fees for next year, albeit by a very modest one pound. Please remember to send me your cheques and **please note the increased rate.**

Finally, as per usual, I have to ask for contributions to future Gazettes. Of the twenty four members, only nine made contributions to the two 2012 editions of the magazine. Those nine I thank most heartily and to the others I point out the following: without contributions, the magazine will not exist. If you remain a subscriber, you are expected to make at least a small contribution each year. I would like each edition to consist of forty pages but the June one was 36 and this one is 37. Of these, I wrote articles taking up 10 pages in the June edition and 16 in this. I did so in order to make the magazines a reasonable size but I don't intend to keep doing so next year. So please just send me something; I'm sure that everybody is able to send at least a single page showing an interesting cover or an item of ephemera, or something!!!

****** Very important ~ please note the following: ******

Being December, it is the time to remind you that the subscription for 2013 is due. The subscription rates are as follows:

For a disc version: **£4** for UK residents; **£6** for residents outside UK. (Cheques payable to me please)

For a paper version: **£10** for UK residents; **£13** for residents outside UK.

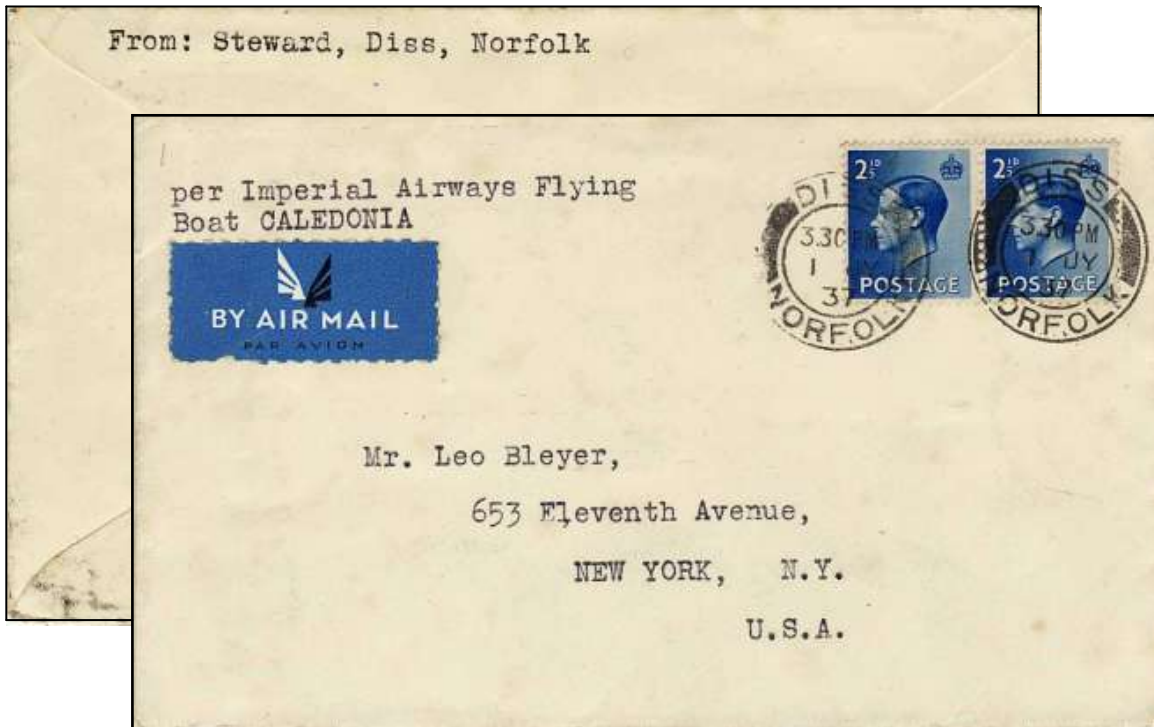
(Residents outside UK may pay via PayPal, using my email address shown opposite.)

I'm afraid that yet again in this editorial I am going to be very grumpy by saying that if I do not receive your subscription, I shall assume that you have decided you no longer wish to receive the Gazette.

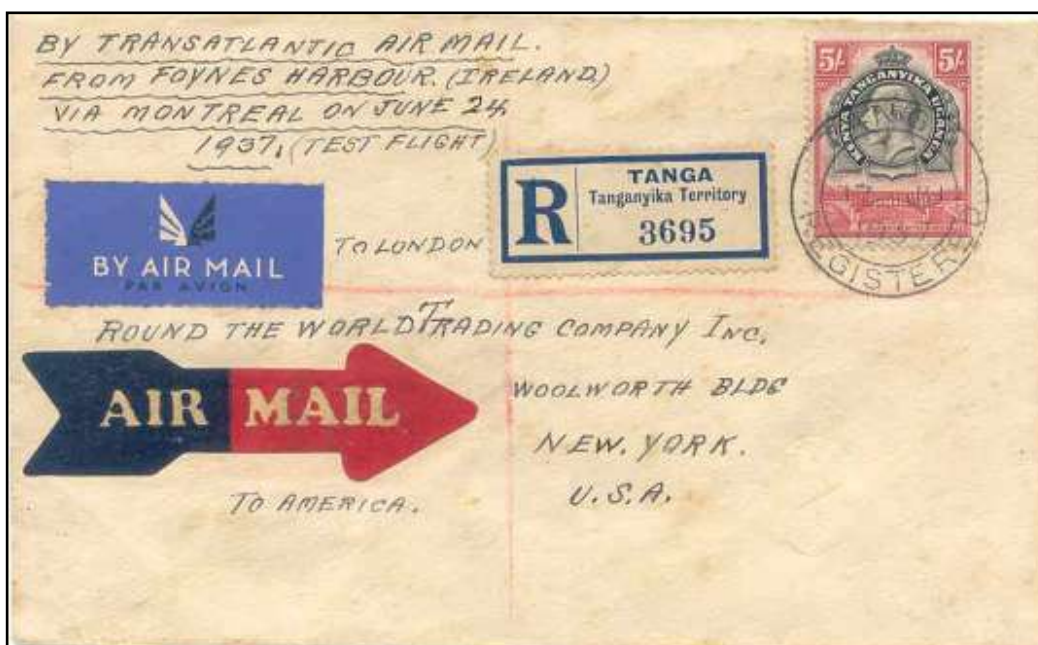
More "Caledonia" covers

By John Symons & Peter Wingent

Following on from the feature on *Caledonia's* first trans-Atlantic flight in the last edition of the Gazette (pages 20-21), John Symons sent the cover illustrated below. Without an arrival datestamp it cannot be certain the cover was carried on the *Caledonia* but never-the-less it is an unusual I.A. trans-Atlantic item.



Peter Wingent's cover below most certainly was not carried on *Caledonia*, which must have greatly disappointed the sender who paid the considerable sum of 5 shillings, no doubt hoping that it would be sufficient to secure trans-Atlantic carriage. The reason it can be stated with certainty that it was not flown is because the reverse has New York arrival marks dated 2 July and the flight took place on the 5th and 6th. The cover, posted at Tanga on 17 June, has a Nairobi backstamp of the same day, indicating it was flown there by Wilson Airways to connect with I.A. service AN456, which arrived Southampton 23rd. It was then sent to New York on the Cunard Line ship *Berengaria*, which sailed 26 June and arrived New York 2 July.



Imperial Airways' 1939 Trans-Atlantic Services

By Peter Wingent

Introduction:

The purpose of this article is to provide what is possibly lesser-known information regarding the 1939 services and not to repeat details of the first flights which have already been recorded by such authors as Simms [1] and Wingent [2]. By drawing on primary sources such as the Imperial Airways' aircraft movement charts, documents held at the British Postal Museum and Archive, and reference to U.S. and Canadian Post Office notices, information regarding the service timetable, itineraries of all eight flights and postal rates from the countries involved will be given and in addition, a little background to the design of first flight covers.

Background:

In the summer of 1939, Imperial Airways operated a series of eight once-weekly trans-Atlantic services. The official flight number prefixes were NAW (North Atlantic Westbound) and NAE (North Atlantic Eastbound). The first westbound flight (NAW1) left Southampton on 5 August 1939 and the last (NAW8) on 23 Sept. The services were operated alternately by two Short S30 flying boats *Caribou* and *Cabot*.



The Short S30 flying boat Caribou taking off from Southampton on 5 August 1939, piloted by Capt. Kelly-Rogers, on the first regular westbound I.A. trans-Atlantic service flight to New York.

The timetable:

On 24 July 1939, Imperial Airways wrote to J.J. Herbertson, Deputy-Director of Overseas Civil Aviation [3]. Attached to the letter was the timetable shown on the next page which the writer, whose signature is indecipherable, explained had been drafted in consideration of flight refuelling and the necessity for avoiding night landings and take-offs. He considered the westbound flights more or less straightforward but the eastbound schedule was more difficult due to the necessity to ensure arrival at Botwood was sufficiently early to complete flight refuelling during daylight and departure for Foynes to be made before dark. For these reasons, it was arranged to leave New York at 20.00 G.M.T. on Wednesdays with a night stop at Montreal. Departure from Montreal would then take place shortly after dawn on Thursdays, with an arrival at Botwood in sufficient time for refuelling and departure for Foynes to take place that night.

The timetable included the following information:

Sunset Montreal September 30th - 23.00 G.M.T.
Sunset Botwood September 30th - 21.24 G.M.T.
Sunset Foynes September 30th - 18.34 G.M.T.

TIMETABLE FOR ATLANTIC SERVICES - 1939WESTBOUND

			G.M.T.	L.S.T.
Hythe	dep.	Saturdays	13.00	14.00
Foynes	arr.	Saturdays	16.00	17.00
Foynes	dep.	Saturdays	18.00	19.00
Botwood	arr.	Sundays	10.00	06.30
Botwood	dep.	Sundays	12.00	08.30
Montreal	arr.	Sundays	19.00	14.00
Montreal	dep.	Sundays	20.00	15.00
New York	arr.	Sundays	23.00	18.00

EASTBOUND

			G.M.T.	L.S.T.
New York	dep.	Wednesdays	20.00	15.00
Montreal	arr.	Wednesdays	23.00	18.00
Montreal	dep.	Thursdays	11.00	06.00
Botwood	arr.	Thursdays	17.30	14.00
Botwood	dep.	Thursday	20.30	17.00
Foynes	arr.	Fridays	09.00	10.00
Foynes	dep.	Fridays	11.00	12.00
Hythe	arr.	Fridays	14.00	15.00

The flights:

In the following record of services, the flight information is taken from aircraft movement charts [4], except where indicated otherwise.

The weights of mail carried have been obtained from an internal British G.P.O. memo [5]. Columns 6, 7 & 8 in these tables are a breakdown of mail despatched from or to the U.K. Thus column 9 (the total of U.K. mail) is the sum of columns 6, 7 and 8. Column 10 gives the weight of transit mail through the U.K. The sum of the figures in columns 9 and 10 will provide the total weight of mails carried on each flight. The figures serve to indicate the comparative scarcity of covers to and from termini, points of call and onward destinations.

All times given are G.M.T. (as given on the movement charts). As the services were operated in the summer, B.S.T. applied in U.K. and Ireland.

B.S.T. = G.M.T. plus 1 hour.

Local time at Botwood = G.M.T. minus 3½ hours.

Local time at Montreal and New York = G.M.T. minus 5 hours.

To save space, arrival and departure times and dates have been grouped. The following example may aid interpretation:

In service NAE 7, the entry for Montreal is – arr./dep. 22.30/11.06 20/21 Sept. This should be read as:

Arr. 22.30 20 Sept.

Dep. 11.06 21 Sept.

SERVICE NO. NAW 1**1939**

<i>Aircraft</i>	<i>Place</i>	<i>Dep./Arr.</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Weight of U.K. mails carried to:</i>			Total weight of U.K. mails (lb.)	Additional transit mails via U.K. (lb.)
					NewfnInd. (lb.)	Canada (lb.)	U.S.A. & beyond (lb)		
Caribou	So'ton.	dep.	13.14	05 Aug.	30	226	574	830	132
	Foynes	arr./dep.	15.05/18.03	05 Aug.					
	Botwood	arr./dep.	13.30/15.50	06 Aug.					
	Montreal	arr./dep.	22.10/23.07	06 Aug.					
	New York	arr.	01.48	07 Aug.					

SERVICE NO. NAE 1**1939**

<i>Aircraft</i>	<i>Place</i>	<i>Dep./Arr.</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Weight of mails to U.K. carried from</i>			Total weight of mails to U.K. (lb.)	Additional transit mails via U.K. (lb.)
					NewfnInd. (lb.)	Canada (lb.)	U.S.A. & beyond (lb)		
Caribou	New York	dep.	20.38	09 Aug.	32	378	244	654	69
	Montreal	arr./dep.	22.26/11.36	09/10 Aug.					
	Botwood	arr./dep.	16.35/21.32	10 Aug.					
	Foynes	arr./dep.	09.22/11.27	11 Aug.					
	So'ton.	arr.	13.35	11 Aug.					

SERVICE NO. NAW 2**1939**

<i>Aircraft</i>	<i>Place</i>	<i>Dep./Arr.</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Weight of U.K. mails carried to:</i>			Total weight of U.K. mails (lb.)	Additional transit mails via U.K. (lb.)
					NewfnInd. (lb.)	Canada (lb.)	U.S.A. & beyond (lb)		
Cabot	So'ton.	dep.	12.55	12 Aug.	5	53	273	331	86
	Foynes	arr./dep.	15.37/17.34	12 Aug.					
	Botwood	arr./dep.	10.08/11.54	13 Aug.					
	Montreal	arr./dep.	18.45/19.55	13 Aug.					
	New York	arr.	22.25	13 Aug.					

SERVICE NO. NAE 2**1939**

<i>Aircraft</i>	<i>Place</i>	<i>Dep./Arr.</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Weight of mails to U.K. carried from</i>			Total weight of mails to U.K. (lb.)	Additional transit mails via U.K. (lb.)
					NewfnInd. (lb.)	Canada (lb.)	U.S.A. & beyond (lb)		
Cabot	New York	dep.	20.00	16 Aug.	8	123	256	387	49
	Montreal	arr./dep.	?/10.52	16/17 Aug.					
	Botwood	arr./dep.	?/20.05	17 Aug.					
	Foynes	arr./dep.	08.00/09.37	18 Aug.					
	So'ton.	arr.	12.01	18 Aug.					

Times shown in italics in service NAW 2 were obtained from "Southern Daily Echo" report of 14 August 1939.

SERVICE NO. NAW 3**1939**

<i>Aircraft</i>	<i>Place</i>	<i>Dep./Arr.</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Weight of U.K. mails carried to:</i>			Total weight of U.K. mails (lb.)	Additional transit mails via U.K. (lb.)
					NewfnInd. (lb.)	Canada (lb.)	U.S.A. & beyond (lb)		
Caribou	So'ton.	dep.	?	19 Aug.	7	71	317	395	98
	Foynes	arr./dep.	15.16/17.42	19 Aug.					
	Botwood	arr./dep.	09.00/11.45	20 Aug.					
	Montreal	arr./dep.	17.45/18.46	20 Aug.					
	New York	arr.	21.25	20 Aug.					

SERVICE NO. NAE 3**1939**

<i>Aircraft</i>	<i>Place</i>	<i>Dep./Arr.</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Weight of mails to U.K. carried from</i>			Total weight of mails to U.K. (lb.)	Additional transit mails via U.K. (lb.)
					NewfnInd. (lb.)	Canada (lb.)	U.S.A. & beyond (lb)		
Caribou	New York	dep.	20.00	23 Aug.	5	144	242	391	47
	Montreal	arr./dep.	22.42/11.02	23/24 Aug.					
	Botwood	arr./dep.	16.31/20.20	24 Aug.					
	Foynes	arr./dep.	10.30/12.22	25 Aug.					
	So'ton.	arr.	15.06	25 Aug.					

SERVICE NO. NAW 4**1939**

<i>Aircraft</i>	<i>Place</i>	<i>Dep./Arr.</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Weight of U.K. mails carried to:</i>			Total weight of U.K. mails (lb.)	Additional transit mails via U.K. (lb.)
Cabot	So'ton.	dep.	12.25	26 Aug.	NewfnInd. (lb.)	Canada (lb.)	U.S.A. & beyond (lb)	435	130
	Foynes	arr./dep.	15.14/19.05	26 Aug.					
	Botwood	arr./dep.	08.42/10.58	27 Aug.					
	Montreal	arr./dep.	16.29/?	27 Aug.					
	New York	arr.	19.45	27 Aug.					

SERVICE NO. NAE 4**1939**

<i>Aircraft</i>	<i>Place</i>	<i>Dep./Arr.</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Weight of mails to U.K. carried from</i>			Total weight of mails to U.K. (lb.)	Additional transit mails via U.K. (lb.)
Cabot	New York	dep.	20.00	30 Aug.	NewfnInd. (lb.)	Canada (lb.)	U.S.A. & beyond (lb)	864	31
	Montreal	arr./dep.	22.32/10.58	30/31 Aug.					
	Botwood	arr./dep.	16.35/19.04	31 Aug.					
	Foynes	arr./dep.	07.13/09.11	01 Sept.					
	So'ton.	arr.	11.33	01 Sept.					

SERVICE NO. NAW 5**1939**

<i>Aircraft</i>	<i>Place</i>	<i>Dep./Arr.</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Weight of U.K. mails carried to:</i>			Total weight of U.K. mails (lb.)	Additional transit mails via U.K. (lb.)
Caribou	Poole	dep.	12.30	03 Sept.	NewfnInd. (lb.)	Canada (lb.)	U.S.A. & beyond (lb)	381	70
	Foynes	arr./dep.	?/?	03 Sept.					
	Botwood	arr.	12.40	04 Sept.					
	Montreal	arr./dep.	?/?	04 Sept.					
	New York	arr.	?/?	04 Sept.					

SERVICE NO. NAE 5**1939**

<i>Aircraft</i>	<i>Place</i>	<i>Dep./Arr.</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Weight of mails to U.K. carried from</i>			Total weight of mails to U.K. (lb.)	Additional transit mails via U.K. (lb.)
Caribou	New York	dep.	?	06 Sept.	NewfnInd. (lb.)	Canada (lb.)	U.S.A. & beyond (lb)	447	16
	Montreal	arr./dep.	?/11.06	06/07 Sept.					
	Botwood	arr./dep.	15.59/19.36	07 Sept.					
	Foynes	arr./dep.	?/?	08 Sept.					
	Poole	arr.	11.15	08 Sept.					

SERVICE NO. NAW 6**1939**

<i>Aircraft</i>	<i>Place</i>	<i>Dep./Arr.</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Weight of U.K. mails carried to:</i>			Total weight of U.K. mails (lb.)	Additional transit mails via U.K. (lb.)
Cabot	Poole	dep.	11.20	09 Sept.	NewfnInd. (lb.)	Canada (lb.)	U.S.A. & beyond (lb)	274	5
	Foynes	arr./dep.	15.06/17.45	09 Sept.					
	Botwood	arr./dep.	10.09/?	10 Sept.					
	Montreal	arr./dep.	?/?	10 Sept.					
	New York	arr.	?	10 Sept.					

SERVICE NO. NAE 6**1939**

<i>Aircraft</i>	<i>Place</i>	<i>Dep./Arr.</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Weight of mails to U.K. carried from</i>			Total weight of mails to U.K. (lb.)	Additional transit mails via U.K. (lb.)
Cabot	New York	dep.	?	13 Sept.	NewfnInd. (lb.)	Canada (lb.)	U.S.A. & beyond (lb)	448	20
	Montreal	arr./dep.	?/?	13/14 Sept.					
	Botwood	arr./dep.	?/15.35	14 Sept.					
	Foynes	arr./dep.	?/?	15 Sept.					
	Poole	arr.	14.54	15 Sept.					

SERVICE NO. NAW 7**1939**

Aircraft	Place	Dep./Arr.	Time	Date	Weight of U.K. mails carried to:			Total weight of U.K. mails (lb.)	Additional transit mails via U.K. (lb.)
					NewfnInd. (lb.)	Canada (lb.)	U.S.A. & beyond (lb)		
Caribou	Poole	dep.	10.25	16 Sept.	2	32	216	250	3
	Foynes	arr./dep.	?/13.55	16 Sept.					
	Botwood	arr./dep.	08.59/?	17 Sept.					
	Montreal	arr./dep.	17.53/18.52	17 Sept.					
	New York	arr.	20.32	17 Sept.					

SERVICE NO. NAE 7**1939**

Aircraft	Place	Dep./Arr.	Time	Date	Weight of mails to U.K. carried from			Total weight of mails to U.K. (lb.)	Additional transit mails via U.K. (lb.)
					NewfnInd. (lb.)	Canada (lb.)	U.S.A. & beyond (lb)		
Caribou	New York	dep.	20.05	20 Sept.	8	236	339	583	45
	Montreal	arr./dep.	22.30/11.06	20/21 Sept.					
	Botwood	arr./dep.	?/?	21 Sept.					
	Foynes	arr./dep.	07.55/12.45	22 Sept.					
	Poole	arr.	15.10	22 Sept.					

SERVICE NO. NAW 8**1939**

Aircraft	Place	Dep./Arr.	Time	Date	Weight of U.K. mails carried to:			Total weight of U.K. mails (lb.)	Additional transit mails via U.K. (lb.)
					NewfnInd. (lb.)	Canada (lb.)	U.S.A. & beyond (lb)		
Cabot	Poole	dep.	12.00	23 Sept.	4	78	398	480	2
	Foynes	arr./dep.	?/14.20	23 Sept.					
	Botwood	arr./dep.	08.03/11.20	24 Sept.					
	Montreal	arr./dep.	18.32/19.37	24 Sept.					
	New York	arr.	?	24 Sept.					

SERVICE NO. NAE 8**1939**

Aircraft	Place	Dep./Arr.	Time	Date	Weight of mails to U.K. carried from			Total weight of mails to U.K. (lb.)	Additional transit mails via U.K. (lb.)
					NewfnInd. (lb.)	Canada (lb.)	U.S.A. & beyond (lb)		
Cabot	New York	dep.	?	28 Sept.	28	261	395	684	54
	Montreal	arr./dep.	?/11.25	28/29 Sept.					
	Botwood	arr./dep.	?/?	29 Sept.					
	Foynes	arr./dep.	?/?	30 Sept.					
	Poole	arr.	16.15	30 Sept.					

Postage rates:**1) Rates from Britain:**

The following notes and rates are reproduced from a draft of a notice for publication as a supplement to a British P.O. Circular [6].

“After the despatch by the United States trans-Atlantic air service via Marseilles on Saturday, the 29th July, the arrangements in connection with the North Atlantic Air Mail Service will be as follows:

There will be two direct trans-Atlantic air mail services each week, i.e. the existing United States’ service on the route Southampton – Botwood – Shediac – New York and a British service on the route Southampton – Botwood – Montreal – New York. Correspondence (except that for the Azores) will no longer be despatched by the United States’ trans-Atlantic air service via Marseilles.

Correspondence intended for transmission by the British or United States’ trans-Atlantic air services must be prepaid at the rates shown below. A blue air mail label must be affixed to the top left hand corner of the envelope which also should be inscribed “North Atlantic Air Service.”

Destination	Letters per half ounce		Postcards	
	s.	d.	s.	d.
United states of America; Canada; Newfoundland	1	3		7
Azores		6		3
Bahamas	1	8		10
Barbados	2	3	1	1
Bermuda; Cuba; Jamaica	1	9		10
Bolivia; Brazil; Chile	3	6	1	7
British Guiana; Colombia; Dutch Guiana; Dutch West Indies; Ecuador; French Guiana; Peru; Venezuela	2	9	1	4
British Honduras; Costa Rica; Dominican Republic; El Salvador; Guatemala; Haiti; Honduras Republic; Leeward Islands (Antigua); Mexico; Nicaragua; Panama; Porto Rico; Trinidad	2	0	1	0
Sandwich Islands	2	6	1	2

“The rates for the Azores cover air transmission to the Azores; the rates for the other destinations cover air transmission to North America and thence by any available air mail service to destination.

The correspondence will be despatched by either the British or the United States service, whichever offers the earliest outlet, except in the case of that for the Azores which will be forwarded via Marseilles.”

Although undated, I am sure this draft was prepared in early August, at which time P.A.A. were operating two trans-Atlantic services per week: one from Southampton via the ‘northern route’ and one from Marseilles via the ‘southern route,’ which included a call at the Azores. Hence the earlier statement that mail from Britain, except for the Azores, would no longer be despatched via the service from Marseilles. (This situation changed on 6 September from when the P.A.A. ‘southern’ service flew from Lisbon and the ‘northern’ service from Foynes and calls at Southampton ceased due to the outbreak of WWII).

2) *Rates from Canada:*

The Weekly Bulletin for 22 July and the Monthly Supplement for August 1939, published by the Canadian Post Office [7], contained the following announcement:

“Trans-Atlantic Air Mail Service – Northern Route – Imperial Airways Limited:- A regular weekly trans-Atlantic air mail service from Montreal to the United Kingdom, via Newfoundland and Eire, to be performed by the Imperial Airways Limited will commence early in August next.

The air mail rate including postage from Canada to destinations in the United Kingdom and Eire and in Europe is 30c. per half ounce or fraction. This rate will also include conveyance over Canadian domestic air routes when necessary, as well as to places in the Empire beyond England served by the British Empire Air Mail Scheme.

The air mail rate from Canada to Newfoundland for conveyance by trans-Atlantic planes will be 10c. per half ounce or fraction, prepaid with Canadian postage stamps.

Such air mail should be endorsed ‘Via trans-Atlantic Air Mail.’”

Rates to non-Empire countries are not included in the announcement above and thus are not known to the writer. In September 1939 it was announced that air mail matter to “Empire Countries” which had been paid for transmission by trans-Atlantic flights at 30 cents per half ounce, would be sent on from the U.K. by air without additional charge. In addition, the 30 cents per half ounce rate continued to apply to European destinations. However, mail via the trans-Atlantic service to places in Africa and Asia not served by the EAMS were to be charged 55 cents per half ounce. This fee included *“fees for all available services.”*

3) *Rates from the United States of America:*

Rates from the U.S.A. were published in a Supplement to the August 1939 edition of the U.S. Postal Guide [8]. The Guide published a table of air mail fees for letters sent by steamship to Europe, then onward conveyance by air to destinations. The rates for the trans-Atlantic service were covered in a note reading, “*The rate for through service from points in continental United States via the trans-Atlantic air route and onward air despatch from Europe, shall be 30 cents per half ounce plus the fee for onward despatch from Europe to the respective countries.*” In the following table, in the interest of providing as much information as possible, both the rates by air from Europe only and the trans-Atlantic rates are given but it must be noted that in the case of the by air from Europe rates the ordinary surface postage had to be added, whereas the trans-Atlantic rate was inclusive of ordinary postage.

Destination	Trans-Atlantic air mail fee per ½ oz.	By air from Europe only air mail fee per ½ oz.	Destination	Trans-Atlantic air mail fee per ½ oz.	By air from Europe only air mail fee per ½ oz.
Algeria	33c.	3c.	French Guinea	50c.	20c.
Libya	33c.	3c.	French Sudan	50c.	20c.
Morocco	33c.	3c.	Gold Coast	50c.	20c.
Tunisia	33c.	3c.	Italian Somaliland	50c.	20c.
Egypt	36c.	6c.	Ivory Coast	50c.	20c.
Sudan	40c.	10c.	Liberia	50c.	20c.
Dahomey	45c.	15c.	N. Rhodesia	50c.	20c.
Kenya	45c.	15c.	Nyasaland	50c.	20c.
Mauritania	45c.	15c.	P.E.A.	50c.	20c.
Niger	45c.	15c.	S. Rhodesia	50c.	20c.
Nigeria	45c.	15c.	Gambia	55c.	25c.
Senegal	45c.	15c.	Portgse. Guinea	55c.	25c.
Tanganyika	45c.	15c.	S.W. Africa	55c.	25c.
Togoland	45c.	15c.	South Africa	55c.	25c.
Uganda	45c.	15c.	Angola	60c.	30c.
Zanzibar	45c.	15c.	Fr. Somaliland	60c.	30c.
Belgian Congo	50c.	20c.	Madagascar	60c.	30c.
Camerouns	50c.	20c.	Mauritius	60c.	30c.
Eritrea	50c.	20c.	Reunion	60c.	30c.
Ethiopia	50c.	20c.	Sierra Leone	60c.	30c.
French Equatorial Africa	50c.	20c.	USSR in Asia	45c.	15c.

The following notice was included in the September 1939 U.S. Postal Guide Supplement:

“A considerable number of air mail articles for despatch by the trans-Atlantic air route and destined for countries beyond Europe (Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Palestine, etc.) are being received at New York with only 30 cents per half ounce postage paid.

Mailing post offices should instruct patrons that the postage on articles to be carried via the trans-Atlantic air route to destinations in countries beyond Europe is 30 cents per half ounce in addition to the air mail fee prescribed for air service from Europe to destination. The air mail postage for destinations in any country in Europe is 30 cents per half ounce.”

The October 1939 U.S. Postal Guide announced that the Imperial Airways’ trans-Atlantic service was discontinued for the season after the flights which left England on Sunday, 24 Sept. and New York on Wednesday 27 September. The Canadian P.O. October Supplement announced the I.A. weekly experimental trans-Atlantic service terminated with the departures from Southampton and New York of the 23rd and 27th of September respectively.

Interestingly, the U.S. date of 24th is incorrect and the Canadian date of 23rd is correct. However, the date of departure from New York of 27 Sept., given in both Supplements is incorrect! The P.Os. must have used the timetabled date of departure but the I.A. aircraft movement chart shows that departure from New York was on the 28th: one day late due to bad weather.

Souvenir envelopes:

Two totally different envelopes were printed and distributed. The first, shown in Fig. 1, was designed by Edward McKnight Kauffer (1890 – 1954) who was a graphic designer and poster artist. His design featured only the British and U.S. flags and the exclusion of any reference to Canada, Newfoundland and Eire offended the authorities of the latter three countries and their objections caused the envelopes to be withdrawn at a very late stage.

Imperial Airways then turned to Theyre Lee-Elliott (1903 – 1988) who was a designer from whom they had commissioned work many times during the 1930s. He produced the design shown in Fig. 2.

My thanks go to John Symons for sending scans of the covers, which are from his collection. Both artists included their initials in the designs and these have been arrowed by me. The McKnight Kauffer cover was flown from Montreal by the second eastbound service (NAE2).

Figure 1



The red arrow points to the initials of the designer: "McKK".

The Lee-Elliott cover may not have been flown at all. John says he has looked through contemporary lists of covers for sale in Phillips' "Air Mail News" and has not found any for the Southampton – Foynes leg. Similarly, I have looked through a J. Stephen listing and found nothing. In addition, the G.P.O. mail weights shown on page 5, do not include Foynes as a destination. Although not conclusive, the existing evidence indicates the cover was not flown to Foynes.

Figure 2



The red arrow points to the initials of the designer: "L-E"

Duncan Crewe kindly sent me the scan shown right from a page of "The Aero Field," Aug. – Sept. 1939 edition, in which Francis J. Field clearly expresses his displeasure with a number of aspects relating to souvenir envelopes prepared for and sent via the first Imperial Airways' trans-Atlantic services.

Aug.-Sept. 1939 The Aero Field. 151

Mr. F. J. Field.
SUTTON COLDFIELD,
England.

Imperial Airways issued a commemorative envelope which was sold at the exorbitant charge of 3d. each, with no reduction for quantities or dealers' discount. They were on sale at London, Montreal and New York, but the release date was so late that many dealers were seriously inconvenienced. We understand that the first design to be prepared was scrapped at the eleventh hour because the design did not recognise the part played in the service by Foynes, Botwood and Montreal. No arrangements appear to have been made to make the souvenir covers available in Newfoundland and owing to the late release, the only method of getting supplies there in time to be despatched by the first service was to consign them by air via the American service at 1/3 per half ounce! It will be interesting to see how many were prepared to make this sacrifice, for as no cachet was applied in Newfoundland, ordinary covers are most unattractive.

No cachet was applied to British or American despatches, but Canada again prepared three cachets, two of which are illustrated. As we close for press, covers from the first return flight have just arrived, but the outward despatches are not yet to hand. We are therefore uncertain as to whether a cachet was applied to Eire despatches, but if this was so it will be illustrated next month (together with the other Canadian variety) when we shall also summarise all the flown cover varieties. From a cover carried on the round flight, it appears that mail was backstamped at New York so there will be proof of flight on this occasion.

References:

- [1] Simms, Phillip, E., *Adventurous Empires*, Airlife, 2000. pp. 145 – 158.
- [2] Wingent, Peter, *Imperial Airways' Empire Flying Boat Services*, Author, 1997. pp. 148 – 159.
- [3] British Postal Museum & Archive, Post 121/382. *Trans-Atlantic air mail service: proposals for and subsequent introduction*.
- [4] British Airways Archive, Heathrow, London. Imperial Airways' aircraft movement charts.
- [5] British Postal Museum & Archive, Post 121/382.
- [6] *ibid.*
- [7] Whitely, David, H., *Official Air Mail Rates to Foreign & Overseas Destinations as Established by the Canadian Post Office: 1925 – Dec. 1942*, DHW Publications, 2000. pp. 37 - 40.
- [8] Groten & Harris, *International Air Mails*, The Printer's Stone, pub. date unknown. p. 201.

First trans-Atlantic air service to the Arctic

By John C. Symons

At 14:14hrs. BST on 5th August 1939 Imperial Airways' S23 Empire C class flying boat G-AFCV *Caribou* lifted off from the calm surface of Southampton Water on its inaugural trans-Atlantic flight to New York, via Foynes in Eire, Botwood in Newfoundland and Montreal. There were no passengers, her payload being mainly mail, much of which was philatelic, collectors seeking a record of this auspicious first flight by a scheduled British aircraft across the North Atlantic. There were some 25,000 covers specially printed by Imperial Airways, and many more unofficial covers prepared by dealers and individual collectors, plus commercial mail. But one cover was exceptional, if not unique. It was posted in Banbury on 4th August, and was charged 1s 6d: 1s 3d postage and 3d. registration fee, probably philatelic in intent given the endorsement:

By Imperial Airways Ltd
First Trans-Atlantic Air Service.

The writer was also very concerned with the routing, adding:

Via Southampton – Montreal
Edmonton – Aklavik



Figure 1: Banbury to Fort Ross.

It was that final name, coupled with the address that would surely have set this cover apart from the remainder of the mail carried. The probability of another cover addressed to the remote Hudson Bay Company's outpost at Fort Ross, some 380 miles north of the Arctic Circle in Northern Canada being carried on that flight must be as remote as the address itself (Figure 1). This article traces the history of this cover from its departure from Banbury, Oxfordshire to its return to Britain, for as can be seen it was NOT CALLED FOR.

There were two cancellations applied to the cover at the point of departure, the acknowledgement of the payment of the registration fee, and the despatch postmark, the latter figuring on both the obverse and reverse of the cover (Figure 2). From Banbury the cover would have been forwarded by rail to London, there it would have again been sorted, and sent to Southampton with the rest of the trans-Atlantic mail, again by rail.

After a brief stop in Foynes, *Caribou* took off at 19:00hrs. BST and following in-flight refuelling, set course for Botwood, which was reached at 11:00hrs. Newfoundland Standard Time on 6th August. Again following a brief stop, the aircraft departed for Montreal at 13:20hrs local, arriving at 07:08hrs. Eastern Standard Time (EST), and in accordance with the manuscript instruction, the cover was offloaded and placed into the care of the Canadian postal authorities, who applied the transit cancellation illustrated in figure 3.

From Montreal the cover was flown to Lethbridge, Alberta. It was carried by Trans-Canada Air Lines (TCA) on their daily Montreal to Vancouver service designated Trip No.1. It departed from St. Hubert airport at 21:15hrs. EST on 6th August, scheduled to arrive at Lethbridge the following day at 08:55hrs Mountain Standard Time (MST) the following day, and from there was forwarded to Edmonton, via Calgary, on TCA's daily feeder service Trip No. 7. This departed later the same morning at 09:15hrs. MST, scheduled to arrive some two hours later at 11:25hrs. MST on 7th August.¹ At Edmonton the cover received a second transit cancellation (Figure 4), while it awaited the next stage of its carriage to the north. It is at this point the route taken becomes more and more difficult to determine. The next postal marking to be applied is an arrival cancellation at Aklavik, dated 18th August. Aklavik is located on the Arctic coast at the mouth of the Mackenzie River in Canada's North West Territory. The most likely route taken was via Fort McMurray to where Canadian Airways Ltd. operated a weekly service, flight 2-A, departing on a Wednesday. Therefore the cover would have left Edmonton on 9th August, arriving at Fort McMurray the same day.² Chronologically, the next cancellation is that recording the cover's arrival at Aklavik (Figure 5), which is dated 18th August. In 1931 the first mail deliveries were made to the settlements along the Mackenzie River terminating at Aklavik by W.R. 'Wop' May's company Commercial Airlines. Towards the end of the decade the contract was taken over by Canadian Airways Ltd. However, there is no readily available evidence to confirm that Canadian Airways carried this cover to Aklavik. The only readily accessible timetable, that of May 1937, shows no service that fits with the dates on the Edmonton and Aklavik postmarks. Of course a timetable contemporary with the cover could easily contradict this conclusion. The other possibilities are that it travelled up the Mackenzie River, or it was flown by an ad hoc charter or supply flight.

The cover remained for some time at Aklavik, but by early December it was decided it could not be delivered, and should be returned to the sender, whereupon the informational NOT CALLED FOR and instructional RETURNED TO cachets were probably applied. However, before proceeding to describe the cover's return to England it is appropriate to ascertain why the cover could not be delivered. Its final destination, Fort Ross, was a Hudson Bay Company's trading post situated 378 miles north of the Arctic Circle on the south east corner of Somerset Island, and not Boothia Peninsula as per the address on the cover. Additionally, it was some 1,000 miles from Aklavik. The post was established in 1937, but due to the difficulties experienced with resupply it was evacuated in 1948. For administrative purposes Fort Ross was designated part of the western region of the Hudson Bay Company's operations, and supported from the company's offices in Aklavik. It was from there the annual supply ship, a schooner also named *Aklavik* would depart. An exact departure date is not known, but arrival at Fort Ross was usually planned for early September, any later and the post would be cut off by the arrival of the ice-pack, preventing the *Aklavik* from reaching her destination. An indication of the departure can be gleaned from the other supply vessel, the RMS *Nascopie*, which served the eastern half of the Company's outposts. In 1936 she sailed from Montreal on 14th July; it would therefore seem reasonable to conclude the *Aklavik* departed on and around the same time.³ Put simply, the cover missed its connection. It is ironic that one of the passengers on the *Aklavik* was William Gibson, the cover's addressee, who was on his way to Fort Ross to take up a new appointment as post manager.⁴

Exactly when the cover commenced its return journey is not known, but was most probably early December, for by 12th December it had arrived back in Edmonton, confirmed by the transit cancellation illustrated in figure 6. The normal procedure for the return of a cover to the sender was for it to be carried by sea and overland as appropriate. In this instance it was likely the cover would have been flown to Fort McMurray given the difficulty in overland travel, before being carried forward by rail to Edmonton. From Edmonton the cover continued its carriage across Canada, arriving at Montreal on 13th December, confirmed by the partial cancellation illustrated in figure 7. This very indistinct cancellation has been identified as reading MONTREAL B & F MAIL/18/ DEC 13/ 39, where B & F is an abbreviation for British & Foreign.⁵ By this time of year Montreal would be inaccessible to the trans-Atlantic liners, and the cover would have been forwarded to Halifax, Nova Scotia, the winter terminal for the liners, being placed aboard one of the Canadian Pacific Steamship Company's liners destined for Glasgow, Liverpool and Southampton. At which port the

¹ Björn Larsson and David Zekria, *Airline Timetable Images*, Trans-Canada Air Lines timetable, 1st January 1940. <<http://www.timetableimages.com/timages/complete/tc40/tc40-2.jpg>> (17 Mar 2011)

² Björn Larsson and David Zekria, *Airline Timetable Images*, Canadian Airways timetable, May 1937. <<http://www.timetableimages.com/timages/complete/caw37/caw37-3.jpg>> (17 Mar 2011)

³ COCKBURN R H, 'Prentice G. Downes's Eastern Arctic Journal, 1936', *Arctic*, Vol. 36, No. 3 (September 1983) pps. 232-250

⁴ Gibson, William "Paddy", Record of Service, Hudson's Bay Company Archives, Winnipeg.

⁵ email communication Denny May, 17th March 2011.

cover was offloaded is, of course, not known, nor to what extent the route would have been modified, for by the date of sailing Europe was at war, following Germany's invasion of Poland, and Great Britain's and France's declaration of war on 4th September 1939. Regardless of the port at which the cover was offloaded, it was forwarded to Northampton, arriving there on 27th December, and no doubt delivered that or the following day (Figure 8).

Thus ended the carriage of a cover destined for a trading post deep in the Arctic regions, which failed to reach its destination having "missed the boat" for that year, only to be returned to an address in Northampton 145 days after it had been posted in Banbury, and to a country which was at war with its European neighbour.



Figure 9. The reverse side of the cover.



Figure 2. Banbury postmarks.



Figure 3: Montreal transit cancellation.



Figure 4: Edmonton transit cancellation.



Figure 5: Aklavik arrival cancellation.



Figure 6. Edmonton transit cancellation



Figure 7. Montreal transit cancellation



Figure 8. Northampton arrival cancellation

Inclusion of Lusaka on the Imperial Airways London - Cape Town service in 1935.

By Dave Morton and Peter Wingent

Introduction:

When Imperial Airways extended their East African service to Cape Town in December 1931 the route through Northern Rhodesia went via Mbeya and Broken Hill and it did not include Lusaka or Livingstone, the latter at that time, was the capital of the territory.

On 5th May 1934 an experimental flight from Bulawayo to Ndola, via Livingstone and Broken Hill, was undertaken by Capt. Miles B. Bowker [1]. A small amount of unofficial mail was carried by favour and the return flight was on 8th May. None of the letters passed through the post although some were inscribed as having been carried by the plane and autographed by the pilot. Others had stamps affixed and posted at Ndola (Fig. 1) and also from the other points of call en route. Only one experimental flight was made and no regular service ensued. This flight by R.A.N.A. may well have been made to test the feasibility of including Livingstone in future routing plans which were probably aborted, due to the pending transfer of the capital of Northern Rhodesia to Lusaka in 1935. [2]



Fig. 1 – D.G. Morton collection

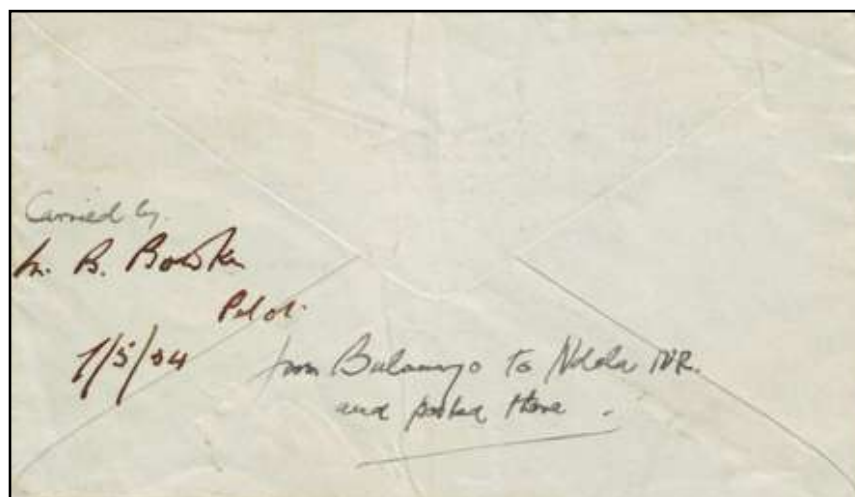


Fig. 1a - Reverse of cover posted at Ndola and signed by Capt. Bowker

Opening of Lusaka Airport:

Lady Young, wife of Sir Hubert Young, Governor of Northern Rhodesia, formally opened the new airport at Lusaka on 30th May, 1935, during a week of celebrations held in honour of the transfer of the capital from Livingstone on the 28th. An article in *The Aeroplane* [3] recorded that “*His Excellency the Governor was prevented from being present as he had to fly to the Copper Belt to investigate native labour disturbances*” and in her acknowledgement speech Lady Young commented, “*I don’t know whether you realise that you are standing on the windiest aerodrome in Africa.*” She went on to say that “*...one of our main Imperial air routes has begun to make Lusaka a port of call*” and “*... when it is finished (Lusaka will have) the most up-to-date terminal building south of Cairo*”.

Sir James McDonald, the representative of the Beit Trustees, who had most generously provided the funds for the aerodrome and the terminal building, presented Lady Young with a silver model of her (recently crashed) Gypsy Moth aeroplane – see *An early Rhodesian Air Crash* below.

As mentioned above, the airport still appeared to be in the process of being completed when the first mails from London were flown to Lusaka on 8th May, 1935 [4]. Stern also mentioned that “*Imperial Airways ‘dropped’ a bag of mails at Lusaka on May 18th and this was conveyed on the service which opened between Lusaka and Bulawayo on 19th.*”



Opening of Lusaka Airport 1935

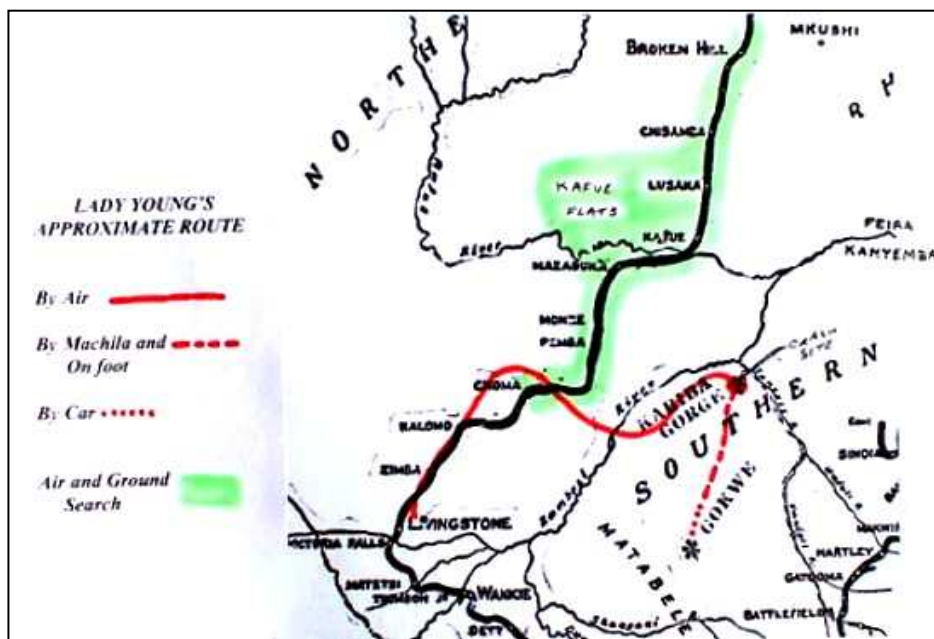
Acknowledgements to Mitch Stirling – co-author of They Served Africa with Wings [8]

Competitions and flying demonstrations were held during the opening of the aerodrome. The two RAF Vickers Valentias from 216 Squadron, based in Eastleigh, Nairobi, which attended the opening ceremony, are featured in the photograph above. Five Wapitis from the South African Air Force were also present.

An early Rhodesian Air Crash: [5]

Lady Young was in fact a pilot in her own right and, on 28th February, 1935, accompanied by the Senior Government Medical Officer, Dr T. R. F. Kerby, she took off from Livingstone in her own Gypsy Moth to join her husband in Lusaka where he was attending to the transfer of the capital of Northern Rhodesia from Livingstone. When she did not arrive at the scheduled ETA, a search party was initiated, including a Puss Moth of the Katanga Aero Club in Elisabethville and an Imperial Airways Atalanta. It was not until 4th March that it was determined that she had made a forced landing at a native village, close to the Kariba Gorge in the Gokwe Tribal Trust Land on the Southern Rhodesia side of the river. Although the aircraft was badly damaged, they both survived but only found help four days later after she walked about 70 miles on foot from the crash site (Fig.8).





Lady Young's crash site - 28 February, 1935

First Lusaka Air Mails from England:

In a letter from Francis J. Field dated 14th July, 1935 (Fig. 3), he recorded that of the fifty pieces of mail carried by Imperial Airways on the first Air Mail despatch from London to Lusaka, only ten items were of philatelic interest – the others being of an ‘official’ nature. These would have been carried on service AS238 which left Croydon on 8th May, 1935, arriving at Lusaka on 15th.

Baldwin mentioned on two occasions [6 & 7] that on 15th May, 1935 the “Imperial Airways mail from London first **dropped** at Lusaka.” Our understanding is that as the landing ground was still under construction when AS 238 arrived, the pilot circled and had the mail bag thrown out to the waiting ground staff. The cover in Fig. 2 was back stamped Lusaka 15MAY35 and is one of six to twelve recorded (see comments in conclusion).



Fig. 2 – Cancelled at the WILTON ROAD HUDSONS PLACE Post Office (Terry Hare-Walker collection)

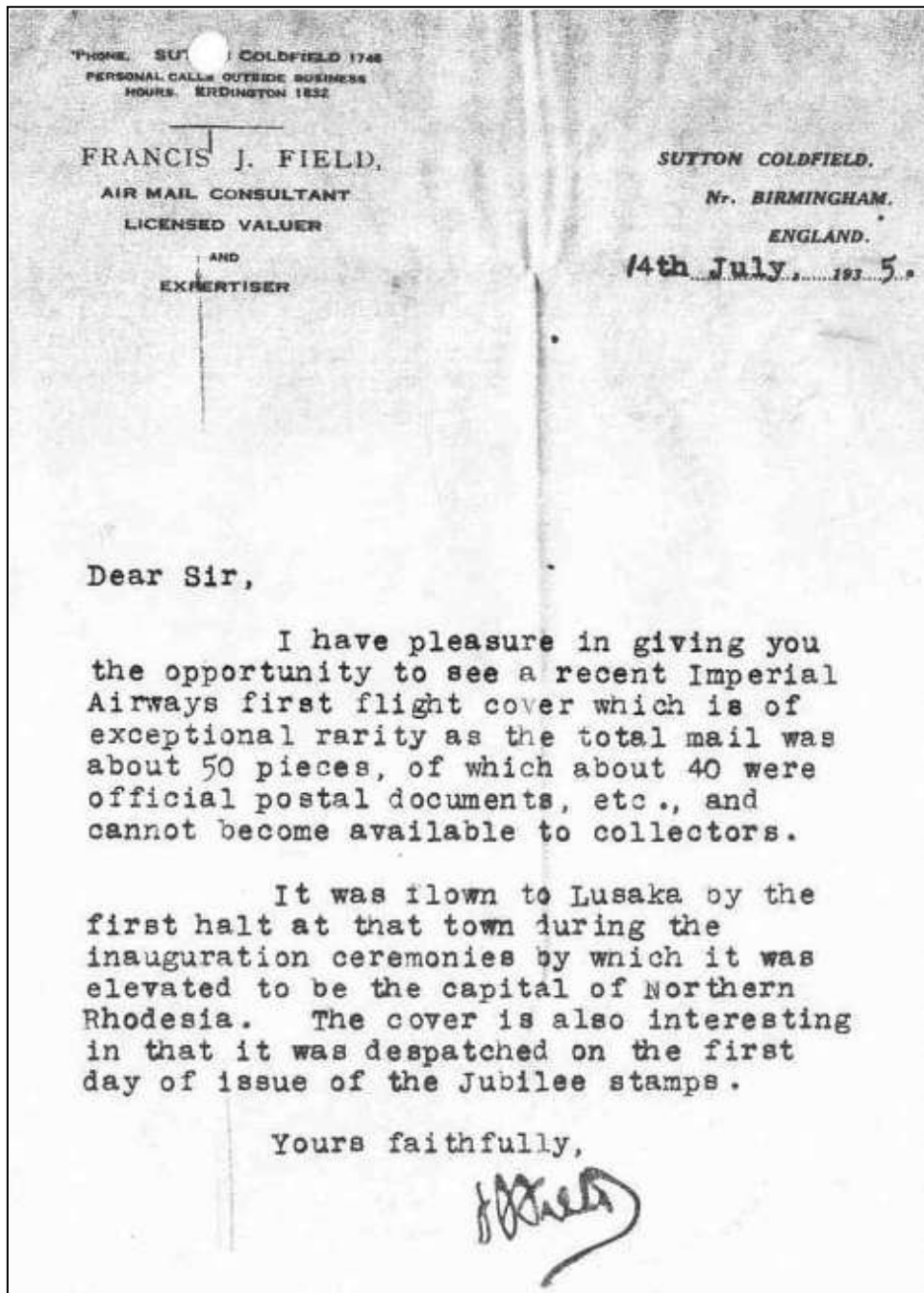


Fig. 3

First Lusaka Air Mails from Southern Rhodesia:

The first direct air mail from Southern Rhodesia to Lusaka was flown by service AN239 (*Andromeda*) which departed Johannesburg 06:00 on 18th May and arrived at Broken Hill the same day at 17:35. The cover in Fig. 4 was posted at Bulawayo on Friday 17th and was only backstamped at Lusaka on Monday 19th. This flight via Salisbury, is understood to have called at Lusaka en route on Saturday 18th but, as the cover in Fig. 4 was only back stamped at Lusaka on Monday 19th, as were the first southbound mails from England, it is possible that these mails were in fact taken on to Broken Hill and returned by road the next day. Very few covers from Southern Rhodesia have been recorded.

Once the aerodrome at Lusaka had become fully functional after its opening on 30th May 1935, Imperial Airways services in both directions called at Lusaka and Broken Hill. Although 'official' 1936 timetables issued to the public made no mention of a stop at Lusaka after departing Broken Hill, both the 1936 summer and winter internal Imperial Airways' timetables clearly indicate that a call was made at Lusaka as well as Broken Hill. Of course, calls at Salisbury and Bulawayo still continued.

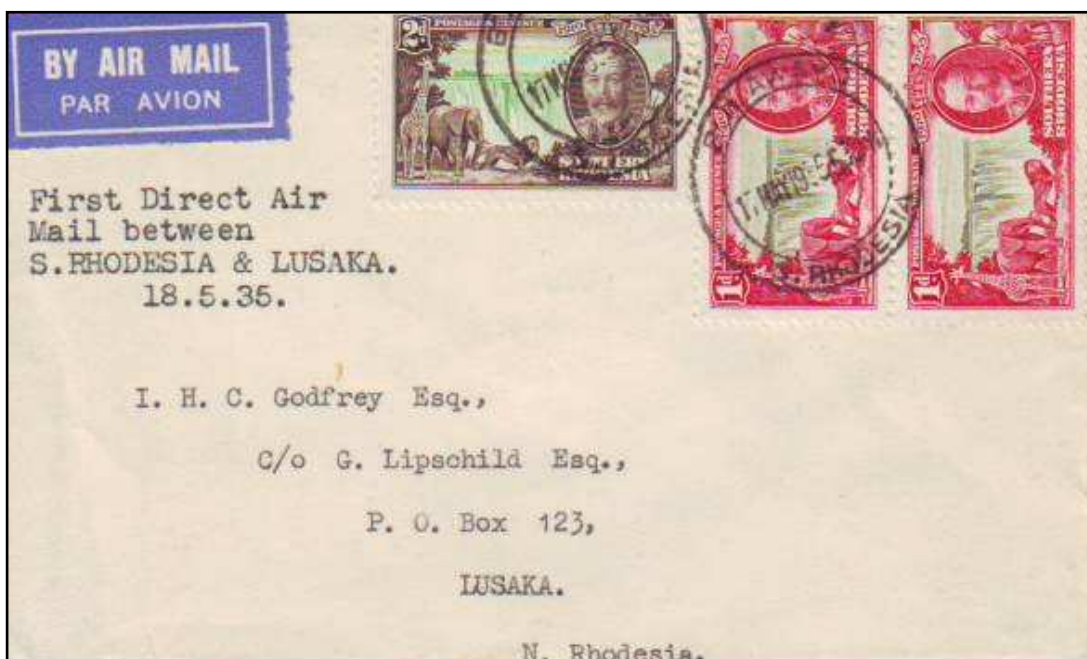


Fig. 4 – D.G. Morton collection

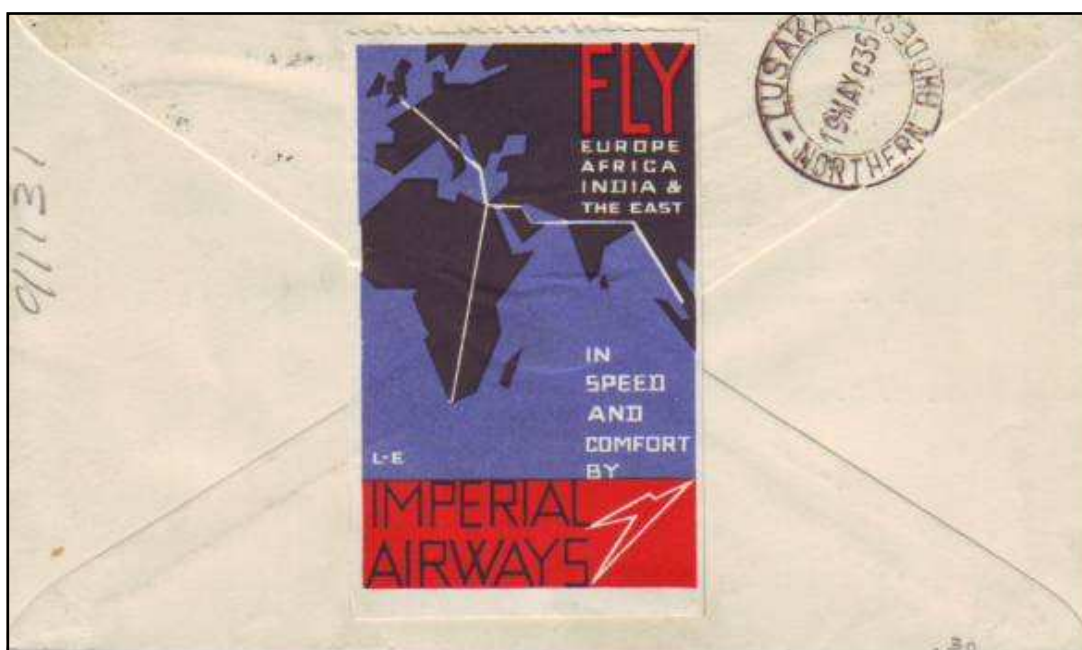


Fig. 4a – D.G. Morton collection

First Lusaka Air Mails from Umtali and Beira:

When R.A.N.A.'s feeder service from Beira was established on 3rd August 1935, mails from Beira to Lusaka connected at Salisbury with IA service AN261. Although the actual number of Lusaka covers carried is unknown, it is believed that there were probably no more than 15 in total (Fig. 5).

Covers from Umtali are equally scarce and the example in Fig. 6 (ex the Keith Hanman collection) was part of the same despatch as the Beira cover shown in Fig. 5.

First Lusaka Air Mails to Umtali:

The first southbound covers from Lusaka which were addressed to Umtali, connected at Lusaka with IA service AS382 on Friday 2nd August 1935 and connected at Salisbury with R.A.N.A.'s first Salisbury-Beira flight via Umtali on Monday 5th. The cover in Fig. 7 (ex the Keith Hanman collection) is also considered to be scarce with no more than about 15 known (see comments in conclusion).

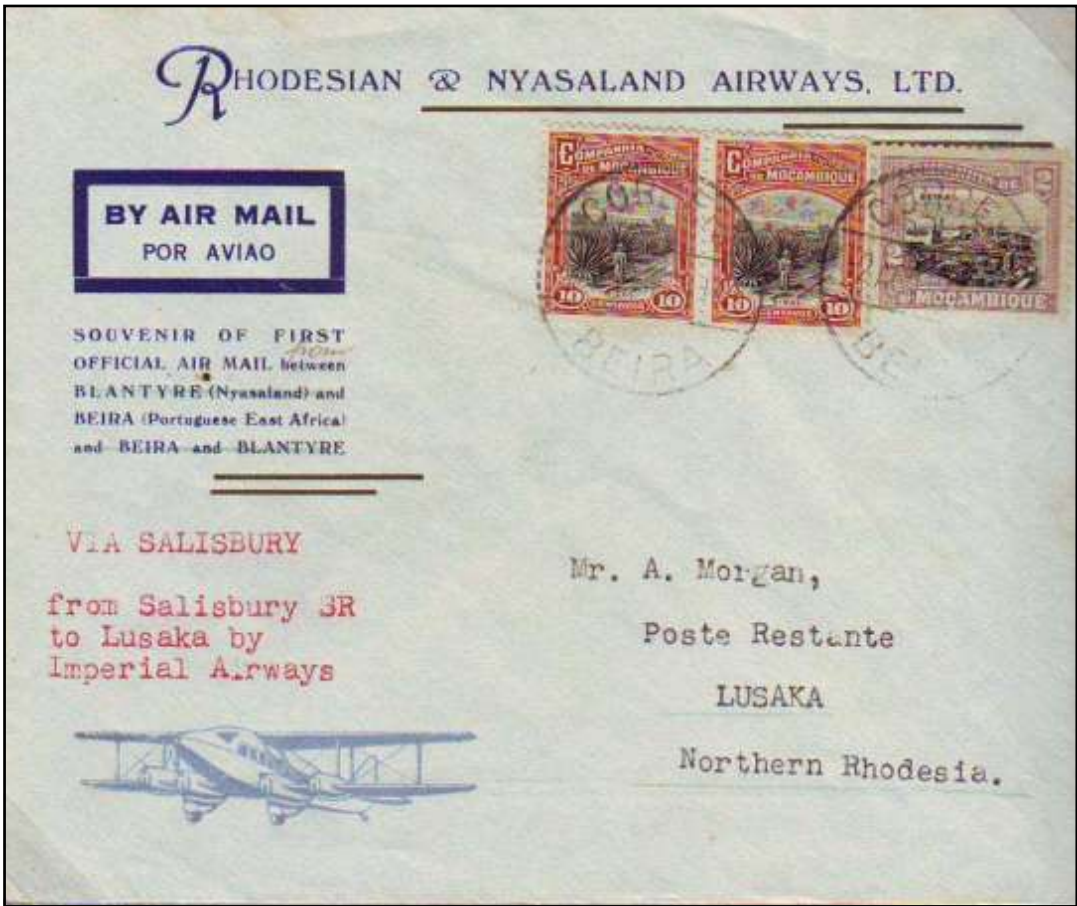


Fig. 5 – D.G. Morton collection



Fig. 6 - Ex K. Hanman Collection



Fig. 7 - Ex K. Hanman Collection

Conclusion:

Whilst various published articles that we have been able to access give some information regarding the inclusion of Lusaka on Imperial Airways' route in 1935, it is hoped that this summation successfully consolidates all the relevant aspects of the entire event, including the subsequent flights in August and October between Lusaka, Umtali and Beira.

We can find no official record of the actual number of covers carried on any of the flights and we are unable to confirm or deny the various quantities that have been recorded over time. It is important to note, however, that one should really only believe that quantities stated in literary sources are correct if they have been obtained from official Post Office sources. To illustrate this, in a letter written in June 1935 by a dealer who originally sold the cover in Fig. 2 it was mentioned that six covers were carried on the London-Lusaka flight. In an auction in 2005 a dealer stated that twelve were carried on this flight and the F. J. Field letter (Fig. 3) says 50 were carried, of which 40 were official P.O. letters. The Field quantities are most likely to be the correct figures because he probably obtained them from the Post Office.

If anyone can throw more light on this, we would be pleased to hear from you. Judging by the number of covers that have surfaced over the years, however, it is clear that very few seem to exist, so those that reside in various collections today that we know of can be considered to be fairly rare.

As a final comment, it is interesting to note that Lady Young subsequently became President of the Flying Club in Lusaka and, when it held its first rally in 1937, it was ironic that she won the Landing Competition considering the forced landing and crash she experienced in February 1935!

Acknowledgements:

This article was inspired by Peter Wingent following a query I raised with him regarding my Bulawayo-Lusaka cover in Fig. 4. Little did I realise that it was an item that even Peter had not seen before and after we had dug deeper, it was felt that we should share our findings in the Gazette. *[From this it will be evident that Dave did all the hard work, i.e. wrote this article, and I just fed him a few emails – Peter W].*



Our Rhodesian Heritage (compiled and administered by ORAF's), which has past associations with the Rhodesian Air Force, have kindly given me authority to use their 2012 article on Lady Young's 1935 crash in Rhodesia in her Gypsy Moth and I would like to acknowledge the excellent work being done by **Eddy Norris** who is responsible for recording much of ORAF's history. Also **Mrs Dorothy Marr**, daughter-in-law of Native Commissioner F. Marr, who provided much of the information. The full article can be obtained from Peter by anyone who may be interested.

I would also like to acknowledge the Umtali material which **Keith Hanman** shared with me before it was sold at the recent Argyle-Etkin auction.



Lady Young's Gypsy Moth – 28 February 1928 (Fig. 8)

References:

1. *S. A. Philatelist* - June 1934 and April 1940 editions.
2. *Southern African Airmails* by D. G. Morton (page 48).
3. *The Aeroplane* –July 17, 1935 edition (page 98).
4. Extract from *History & Development of African Air Mails* by Stern as published in the *South African Crafts & Hobbies* September 1955 Magazine.
5. *Our Rhodesian Heritage* - 2012 Article by Lewis Walker.
6. *British Airmails* by N.C. Baldwin
7. *The Air Mails of the Rhodesias and Nyasaland* by N.C. Baldwin
8. *They Served Africa with Wings* by Mitch Stirling and John House

B.O.A.C. 1940 trans-Atlantic services

By Peter Wingent

In the summer of 1940, B.O.A.C. operated five trans-Atlantic services but it is likely that more than this were envisaged originally. On the 19th March, 1940, E.V Dolby of Imperial Airways (still I.A. until 1 April) wrote to E.P. Bell at the G.P.O., London, to inform him that the tentative date fixed for the resumption of the North Atlantic service was 15 May [1].

On 3 April 1940, the B.O.A.C. Commercial Officer, A.M. Green, wrote to Bell giving the proposed timetable for the service [2], which was as follows:

<u>Westbound</u>				<u>Eastbound</u>			
POOLE	dep.	Sat.	13.00	NEW YORK	dep.	Wed.	20.00
FOYNES	arr.	Sat.	16.00	MONTREAL	arr.	Wed.	23.00
	dep.	Sat.	18.00		dep.	Thurs.	11.00
BOTWOOD	arr.	Sun.	10.00	BOTWOOD	arr.	Thurs.	17.30
	dep.	Sun.	12.00		dep.	Thurs.	20.30
MONTREAL	arr.	Sun.	19.00	FOYNES	arr.	Fri.	09.00
	dep.	Sun.	20.00		dep.	Fri.	11.00
NEW YORK	arr.	Sun.	23.00	POOLE	arr.	Fri.	14.00

(All times are G.M.T.)

On 17 April, Dolby wrote again to Bell saying that the estimate of the inaugural date of the Atlantic service had turned out to be optimistic and that it was unlikely to start before the beginning of June [3]. However, this revised estimate also turned out to be optimistic and finally, on 31 July 1940, in a letter from W. Burkett of the Air Ministry to J.A. Irvin of the G.P.O. [4], the actual start date of the service was given as 3 August. The letter also stated that the total payload of the aircraft was a little over 800 lbs. but it was impossible to say what, if any, of that accommodation would normally be available for mails but the Air Ministry would arrange to find room on each flight for a small amount of mail (10 – 12 lbs. per week) to be conveyed to Newfoundland.

The letter stated that the Eire Authorities did not raise the question of carrying mail for the Eire Post Office. (This would seem to imply that mail from Eire was not carried officially).

Other points included were that Departments (*presumably Government Departments*) would be given an opportunity of sending a small amount of really urgent official correspondence by bag in charge of the pilot. Correspondence posted by them as ordinary air mail would not be guaranteed to be conveyed by the B.O.A.C. flying boats.

Also, it was not intended that any publicity should be given to the flights before the arrival of the first one “on the other side.” Then a few bald facts would be released. Burkett went on to say that the least said about the flights the better and that the Eire Authorities had asked, in view of their delicate position as neutrals, publicity should be as far as possible suppressed. Burkett suggested to Irvin that if the Post Office felt that an announcement must be made, it should read: “The Postmaster General announces that advantage will be taken of the series of flights which are being made by British flying boats across the North Atlantic to convey some of the air mail correspondence at present despatched by the Pan-American Airways trans-Atlantic air service.” Burkett went on to say that the Air Ministry was avoiding any suggestion that the flights would be in the nature of a regular service and that in the circumstances under which they were operated, it was impossible to guarantee regularity and they were more in the nature of experimental flights.

The British Post Office considered a suggestion that letters carried on the British flights to the U.S.A. should be marked officially to show they had been carried on a British service. After a series of internal notes between the P.M.G., the Director of Postal Services and the Deputy Director General, the P.M.G. concluded that “a special marking would probably be a good deal of trouble” and the proposal was dropped. Thus we collectors were deprived of an invaluable means to identify mail flown by B.O.A.C. as opposed to by P.A.A.

The flights:

All flight data has been obtained from B.O.A.C. aircraft movement charts [5].

The notes given under the summer 1939 flights re G.M.T. and equivalent times (page 4) also apply here .

The total weights of mail carried have been obtained from an internal British G.P.O. memo and the breakdown of totals given for services NAW 9 and NAW 10 from Overseas Mail Branch Reports No. 48 of 10 August and No. 49 of 17 August respectively.

There are two notes of interest in the G.P.O. memo:

The first, referring to all five eastbound flights, states that, "No air mail from U.S.A. was received as no capacity was available for these mails."

The second, referring to all five westbound flights, states that, "In each case all the air mail for Newfoundland was despatched by these flights. The remaining capacity was used for mail for Canada, on hand, together with a very small amount for the U.S.A." However, this statement is contradicted by the quantities given in the O.M.B. breakdown for services NAW 9 & 10 which shows that the majority of the mail was for the U.S.A.

SERVICE NO. NAW 9**1940**

Aircraft	Place	Dep./Arr.	Time	Date	Weight of mails carried			
Clare	Poole	dep.	13.08	03 Aug.	NewfnInd. (lb.)	Canada (lb.)	U.S.A. & beyond (lb)	Total (lb.)
	Foynes	dep.	18.42	03 Aug.				
	Botwood	arr./dep.	10.48/12.05	04 Aug.				
	Montreal	arr./dep.	19.10/21.10	04 Aug.				
	New York	arr.	23.44	04 Aug.				
					2	16	100	118

SERVICE NO. NAE 9**1940**

Aircraft	Place	Dep./Arr.	Time	Date	Weight of mails carried			
Clare	New York	dep.	18.51	08 Aug.	A total of 30 lbs. was conveyed to the U.K. from Canada and Newfoundland.			
	Montreal	arr./dep.	20.50/?	08/09 Aug.				
	Botwood	dep.	19.52	09 Aug.				
	Foynes	arr.	08.25	10 Aug.				
	Poole	arr.	13.41	10 Aug.				

Times shown in italics in service NAW 9 and NAE 9 were obtained from "Flight" magazine, 15 August 1940 edition.

SERVICE NO. NAW 10**1940**

Aircraft	Place	Dep./Arr.	Time	Date	Weight of mails carried			
Clare	Poole	dep.	13.05	14 Aug.	NewfnInd. (lb.)	Canada (lb.)	U.S.A. & beyond (lb)	Total (lb.)
	Foynes	arr./dep.	16.01/18.05	14 Aug.				
	Botwood	arr.	11.20	15 Aug.				
	Montreal	arr./dep.	19.55/21.20	15 Aug.				
	New York	arr.	23.40	15 Aug.				
					3	49	128	118

SERVICE NO. NAE 10**1940**

Aircraft	Place	Dep./Arr.	Time	Date	Weight of mails carried			
Clare	New York	dep.	18.46	18 Aug.	A total of 145 lbs. was conveyed to the U.K. from Canada and Newfoundland.			
	Montreal	arr./dep.	?/11.15	18/19 Aug.				
	Botwood	arr./dep.	17.17/20.43	19 Aug.				
	Foynes	arr./dep.	10.35/12.56	20 Aug.				
	Poole	arr.	15.38	20 Aug.				

SERVICE NO. NAW 11**1940**

<i>Aircraft</i>	<i>Place</i>	<i>Dep./Arr.</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Weight of mails carried</i>			
Clare	Poole	dep.	13.20	26 Aug.	NewfnInd. (lb.)	Canada (lb.)	U.S.A. & beyond (lb)	Total (lb.)
	Foynes	arr./dep.	14.30/15.45	26/30 Aug.				
	Botwood	arr./dep.	08.41/11.45	31 Aug.				
	Montreal	arr./dep.	?/?	31 Aug.				
	New York	arr.	23.35	31 Aug.				
					?	?	?	100

Clare was delayed 4 days at Foynes by bad weather and engine trouble.

SERVICE NO. NAE 11**1940**

<i>Aircraft</i>	<i>Place</i>	<i>Dep./Arr.</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Weight of mails carried</i>			
Clare	New York	dep.	18.40	04 Sept.	A total of 75 lbs. was conveyed to the U.K. from Canada and Newfoundland.			
	Montreal	arr./dep.	?/?	04/05 Sep.				
	Botwood	arr./dep.	?/?	05 Sept.				
	PMD *	arr./dep.	?/10.41	06 Sept.				
	Poole	arr.	11.45	06 Sept.				

Clare departed New York 1 day late due to engine trouble.

* PMD = Pembroke Dock.

SERVICE NO. NAW 12**1940**

<i>Aircraft</i>	<i>Place</i>	<i>Dep./Arr.</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Weight of mails carried</i>			
Clare	Poole	dep.	13.15	13 Sept.	NewfnInd. (lb.)	Canada (lb.)	U.S.A. & beyond (lb)	Total (lb.)
	Foynes	arr./dep.	16.33/18.10	13/15 Sep.				
	Botwood	arr./dep.	11.35/13.55	16 Sept.				
	Montreal	arr./dep.	19.35/20.50	16 Sept.				
	New York	arr.	22.50	16 Sept.				
					?	?	?	110

Clare was delayed 2 days at Foynes by engine trouble.

SERVICE NO. NAE 12**1940**

<i>Aircraft</i>	<i>Place</i>	<i>Dep./Arr.</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Weight of mails carried</i>			
Clare	New York	dep.	15.38	21 Sept.	A total of 130 lbs. was conveyed to the U.K. from Canada and Newfoundland.			
	Montreal	arr./dep.	18.05/08.48	21/22 Sep.				
	Botwood	arr./dep.	?/17.08	22 Sept.				
	Foynes	arr./dep.	06.38/09.10	23 Sept.				
	Poole	arr.	11.45	23 Sept.				

SERVICE NO. NAW 13**1940**

<i>Aircraft</i>	<i>Place</i>	<i>Dep./Arr.</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Weight of mails carried</i>			
Clyde	Poole	dep.	09.58	04 Oct.	NewfnInd. (lb.)	Canada (lb.)	U.S.A. & beyond (lb)	Total (lb.)
	Foynes	arr./dep.	14.10/18.00	04 Oct.				
	Botwood	arr./dep.	09.37/11.19	05 Oct.				
	Montreal	arr./dep.	17.40/18.45	05 Oct.				
	New York	arr.	21.11	05 Oct.				
					?	?	?	78

Clyde dep. Poole on 03 Oct. at 11.15 but returned at 12.05 due to bad weather. Departure on 04 Oct. was 1 day late.

SERVICE NO. NAE 13**1940**

<i>Aircraft</i>	<i>Place</i>	<i>Dep./Arr.</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Weight of mails carried</i>			
Clyde	New York	dep.	16.42	09 Oct.	A total of 120 lbs. was conveyed to the U.K. from Canada and Newfoundland.			
	Montreal	arr./dep.	19.13/11.25	09/10 Oct.				
	Botwood	arr./dep.	17.19/20.08	10 Oct.				
	Foynes	arr./dep.	08.14/10.24	11 Oct.				
	Poole	arr.	14.29	11 Oct.				

Clyde called at Pembroke Dock at 11.46 on 11 Oct.

The first flight of 1940:

The following pages from the 15 August 1940 edition of "Flight" magazine provide a detailed account of the first flights in each direction.

138

FLIGHT

AUGUST 15, 1940

TRANS-ATLANTIC AGAIN

Recreation of Last Year's Flights



OFF FOR AMERICA Clive, "on the step," about to take-off from the South Coast base.

THE first direct trans-Atlantic crossing of 1940 from the British Isles to the North American continent was made on August 3-4. The flying-boat Clive, Captain J. C. Kelly Rogers, made a perfect take-off from the home terminal in the presence of Sir Archibald Sinclair, Secretary for Air, the Hon. Clive Pearson, chairman, and the Hon. Walter L. Runciman, director-general, of the British Overseas Airways Corporation.

By the engineers and operational staff, and indeed by the crew themselves, this flight was regarded rather as a continuation of the service which went regularly with mails during last August and September, than as the historic occasion which it undoubtedly was. The wartime headquarters of the British Overseas Airways flying-boat fleet had a peacetime air of bustle and preparation. The commander and navigator were in close conference with meteorological officials on the best route to be flown. Baggage and passengers were being weighed, parcels and newspapers addressed, in fact all the hundred and one details of routine activity were being seen to. Out in the bay the big boat was lying at its moorings, with men about making the final adjustments.

Captain Kelly Rogers is the pilot who brought the damaged Corsair back from the Belgian Congo last January. It was just a year to the very day since he had taken Corsica across the Atlantic on the first flight of the British airmail service to North America. Captain Edward Roeburn, the second pilot, was making his first crossing. The navigating officer was Captain E. R. B. White. Of the two radio officers, C. E. Wilcockson and J. L. Burgess, the latter made the trip in Corsica with Captain Rogers a year ago.

Clive was previously named *Australia* and was intended for service at the other side of the world on the trans-Tasman route. Punctually to the minute scheduled for

the take-off, her engines started up and racing parallel with her as she gathered speed was a launch bearing the Secretary of State for Air. From the control cabin the commander waved a hand—and Clive had taken the air in just under half a minute. She gained height, turned, came back over the Minister's launch, and set her course west.



(Left to right, Mr. J. L. Burgess (radio), Capt. E. Roeburn (2nd. capt.), Capt. Kelly Rogers (commander), Capt. E. R. B. White (navigator) and Mr. C. E. Wilcockson (radio).

Leaving from the South Coast on August 3, Clive flew to Foyers and left there at 7.45 p.m. (B.S.T.). The crossing to Montreal was completed at 11.40 a.m. on August 4, an elapsed time of 16 hours 05 mins. Bordeaux was left at 1.05 p.m. and Montreal reached at 8.10 p.m. After spending two hours there, the flight to New York was resumed and this last leg of the journey covered by 12.45. (All times B.S.T.)

Landing at the terminal on the south coast last Saturday afternoon, Clive completed her return crossing "without incident," as Captain Kelly Rogers said when he disembarked with the four other members of the crew. There were six passengers, of whom Sir



STRICTLY UTILITARIAN. A view of the pilots' cockpit on Clive.

AUGUST 15, 1940

FLIGHT

133



AT REST AGAIN: After the return crossing, Clive goes to roostings again.

Frederick Phillips and Mr. T. K. Bewley were British. The other four were American pilots, one of whom, Mr. L. S. King, said they were under contract to the British Overseas Airways Corporation to ferry aircraft from the production line to squadrons. (The Corporation handles the organisation work of the Air Transport Auxiliary, the body charged with this duty.)

But Mr. King's next statement did not confirm this, as he said that they were informed that they would be directly responsible to Lord Beaverbrook's organisation (which is the Ministry of Aircraft Production and which is concerned with the delivery of the bombers over the Atlantic). With Mr. G. W. Moraga, he had just left commercial aviation in California. The other two, Messrs. A. A. Crane and F. W. O'Hendon, were instructors in the C.A.B. pilot training scheme. All had over 2,000 hours to their credit. Surprisingly, they travelled without passports and were held by the security police until a phone call to London obtained their release.

Technical Features

In the prevailing fashion of wartime camouflage, Clive looked drab as she lay at her moorings after her long flight. With nothing shining about her—even her air-screens were painted a dull black—it was easy to forget the precision work that had gone to her making. Her exterior was more suitable for a coal bulk than for a conqueror of the Atlantic, and it was only with an effort of mind that one recalled the engine fits, correct to "half-a-thou," and the fact that the air-screens were balanced to so minute a degree that when they are jointed the joint must be applied evenly.

The navigator's dome projecting from the upper part of the hull could be seen, this being a feature of long-range aircraft which depend on astronomical navigation. Of moulded-transparent plastic, the dome is about two

feet high and three feet in diameter, and enables the navigator to obtain an unobstructed view to use his sextant.

Another noticeable feature was that all four exhaust pipes were taken from the collecting rings into the leading edge of the wing before ending in a short vertical stack which discharged the exhaust above the wing. And the air-intakes under the engine cowlings had small screens in front of them (no doubt the enrichment of mixture due to an ungalloped seagull might have surprising consequences).

The departure was made from the flying boat base at La Guardia Field, New York, at 2 p.m. New York time on Thursday afternoon, August 8, and the flight to Montreal took 2 hours. Next day the Montreal-Boston stage was flown in 5 1/2 hr. and after a stay there the Atlantic crossing of 2,750 sea miles (2,900 land miles) was flown overnight. The elapsed time on this stage was 12 1/2 hours, giving a speed of 140 knots (161 m.p.h.). The crewless but rather unaccommodative crew seemed to indicate that there was nothing to speak about on the flight, but as one said, "We flew over icebergs near Newfoundland." Though no details could be given of radio communication, this was "satisfactory."

Clive is one of the "strengthened C class" boats, that is, she is the same size as the "C class" but can be loaded up to 48,000 lb, for ordinary take-off instead of the 40,500 of that class. If later refuelled in the air, the strengthened class is capable of carrying 55,000 lb gross. Clive's present empty weight is 29,250 lb.

Captain Rogers described the La Guardia Field airport as "magnificent," and said that there are already 440 scheduled arrivals and departures each day. (It would seem that this must be about the capacity of the airport since one arrival or departure each five minutes, for 24 hours, only adds up to 172. In fact, one would think that it had more than it could deal with comfortably already.) The boat carried a letter from Mayor La Guardia, of New York, to Sir William Cross, Lord Mayor of London, as well as mail and some freight. While at the New York base, the boat aroused great and friendly interest and was placed under a very strong police guard to ensure its adequate protection.

Cuttings of U.S. papers describing Clive's arrival were carried back by the crew. They indicated that in the trip across three passengers were carried, Mr. C. R. Fairley, Mr. Joshua Curdille and Col. W. J. Donovan, who is emissary for Mr. Frank Knox, U.S. Secretary for the Navy, and had arrived in this country in July. Messrs. Fairley and Curdille went to Boucherville, Quebec.



Discussing the flight with Capt. Kelly Rogers and Mr. T. K. Bewley and Mr. Frederick Phillips.

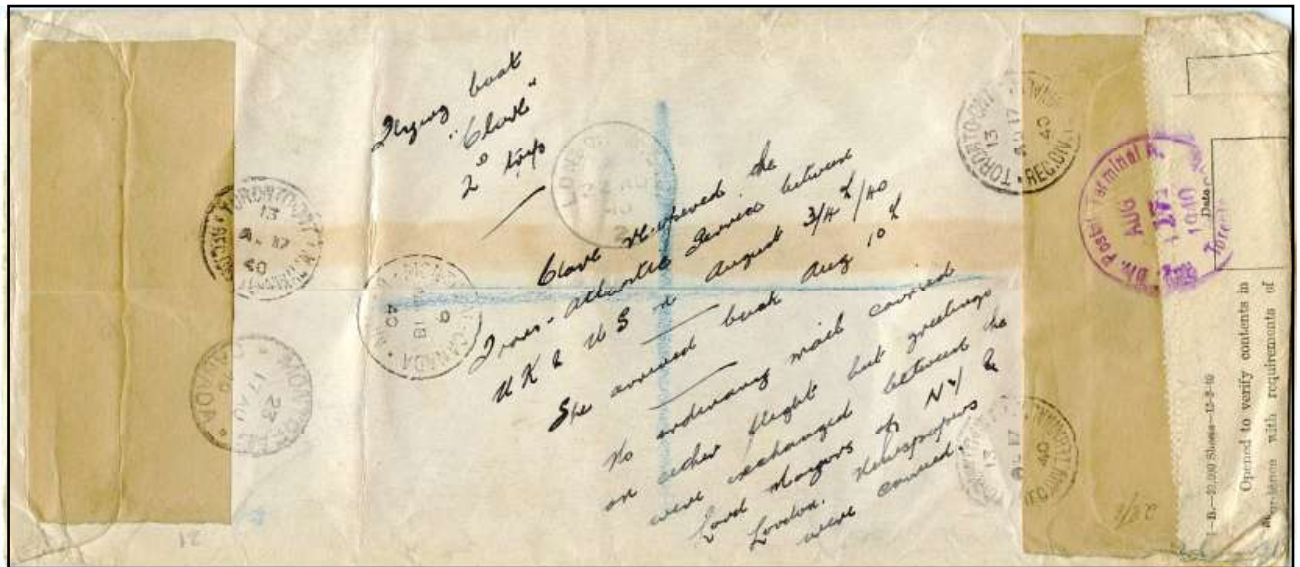
Souvenir envelopes:

Three members have sent me scans of covers carried by the 1940 B.O.A.C. trans-Atlantic flights. One from John Symons is shown in the 'Questions and Answers' section. The second, from Duncan Crewe, is shown below. It was flown by *Clare* on the first 1940 service (NAW9) which departed Poole and Foynes on 3rd August and arrived at Botwood the next day. It signed by Capt. J.C. Kelly Rogers.



The third cover was sent by Laurence Kimpton who writes, "Datestamped Toronto 17 August (also date of purple censor cachet at right). Canada censor seal. 'Passed for export' cachet at left - needed to get mail onto Clare's flight? Possible contents, samples to a textile company. High multiple rate franking of \$2.50; air rate at the time via PAA was 30c. per half ounce. Montreal backstamps 17 & 18 Aug. London backstamp 22 Aug."

This cover would have been flown by *Clare* operating service no. NAE10.



References:

- [1] British Postal Museum & Archive, Post 121/382. *Trans-Atlantic air mail service: proposals for and subsequent introduction.*
- [2] *Ibid.*
- [3] *Ibid.*
- [4] *Ibid.*
- [5] British Airways Archive, Heathrow, London. B.O.A.C. aircraft movement charts.

Your questions and answers

Following on from the previous article, shown below is the front and reverse of another and very attractive cover flown by *Clare*, sent in by John Symons. It was posted in Montreal on 8 August 1940 and flown by service NAE9, which departed on the 9th and arrived Foynes 08.25 on the 10th. It has a Dunmurry/Belfast backstamp of the 13th and John is not sure if it was offloaded at Foynes and sent from there to Belfast or if it was carried to Poole and returned from there. The fact that the 'Examiner 5040' censor label covered the Dunmurry backstamp proves it was examined in Belfast.

What really puzzled John was the C. 201 censor label because in many books on censorship it appears that the code letter C was assigned to Bermuda! Clearly IA service NAE9 did not go anywhere near Bermuda. Luckily I am able to solve this puzzle because in the past I had been confused by a similar code C label applied to a cover from Khartoum to Toronto. The answer is to be found in a book which is part of the excellent series, "British Empire Civil Censorship Devices World War II," published by the Civil Censorship Study Group. The volume by Christopher Miller entitled, "Canada and Colonies in the Caribbean and North and South America," published in 2006. Miller wrote that, "*It was not until the spring of 1942 that the Imperial Censorship introduced a uniform range of censor codes and Canada was allocated code DB. Because of the large number of labels already printed with the previous code C, they were in use throughout the war [usually with] suitable alteration. In the range of codes Bermuda was given Canada's previous code of C.*" Thus the 'C.201' label was applied in Montreal.

After I received John's question, I sent him a similar answer but have included it here because the cover is such a beauty and also because the 'code C' question might be of interest to other members.



Duncan Crewe poses the following 'Wartime puzzle:'

The cover in Fig .1 would have left Hong Kong on 5 June on board *Denebola* operating service HB 243. At Bangkok this connected with SW 246 which was operated through to Alexandria where it arrived on 10 June. In response to Italy's entry into the war the service was terminated there. The question is how did this cover get from Egypt to Britain in time to receive a Dorridge cancel on 18 June when it was redirected.



Fig. 1

The possibilities that have been considered are:

- Forwarded by sea through the Mediterranean but correspondence with Bob Clark suggests that there was a block on shipping until the end of the month.
- Flown via the Saharan route. The first aircraft left Britain on 15 June and there is a reference in *Merchant Airmen*ⁱ to *Lafayette* making the journey in the reverse direction soon afterwards. However it was believed that no civilian mail was forwarded by this route.
- Forwarded from Egypt by the Air France flight that had left Hong Kong on 8 June and was diverted via the Sahara and Gao to Marseilles where Proudⁱⁱ says it arrived on 17 June. It seems unlikely that the cover would have reached Britain from there in time to be re-directed at Dorridge next day.
- That the Hong Post office dispatched the cover via the Pan American Trans-Pacific and Trans-Atlantic services. The *California Clipper* left Hong Kong on 4 June and reached San Francisco on 11 June. The *Dixie Clipper* departed New York on 13 June and reached Lisbon next day. Proudⁱⁱⁱ says the mail reached London on 17 June which would fit the Dorridge re-direction. However Webb^{iv} gives the starting date for Hong Kong mail by this route as 18 June 1940 and the rate was \$5 per ½ oz. In addition the Hong Kong authorities would not have known that Italy was about to enter the war and would have had no reason to dispatch mail this way. If it was simply a case of the cover having been wrongly bagged then I would have expected an American *Missent* marking to have been applied.
- Finally Bob Clark suggested that the post office clerk in Dorridge simply made a mistake and inserted the JU date slug instead of the JY one. Even this poses a further problem for the cover had arrived in Britain before the first Horseshoe service so must presumably have been sent by surface.

What would be really interesting would be if any other members of the group have covers that were stranded in Alexandria on 10 June but arrived in Britain by 18 June! All help gratefully received.

ⁱ *Merchant Airmen* HMSO 1946 p.48

ⁱⁱ Proud, E., *Intercontinental Airmails* vol.2, p.820

ⁱⁱⁱ Proud, E., *Intercontinental Airmails* vol. 1, p.67

^{iv} Webb, F.W., *Hong Kong Airmail* p.31

Extracts from the autobiography of the unlikely-named
Ernest Rigglesworth Hatchett,
a wireless operator/pilot with the R.A.F., I.A., and B.E.A./B.O.A.C.

By Mike Stephenson

While on holiday for a few days in Hay on Wye I chanced on a small book entitled "Chopper" which turns out to be quite interesting. This is the nickname of a man called Hatchett (got it?) who served in the R.A.F., I.A., and B.E.A./B.O.A.C., mainly in the Middle East in the 20s and 30s, as a radio operator and later as a pilot and stores organiser. From the eighty pages of the book, the following is a brief summary.

He is not listed on Google/Wikipedia, although an oil painting of his came up for auction in the 70s (London Bridge...). He asserts that the National Geographic told him that The Furrow, which he helped plough, has moved about a mile south from its original position, which I can't believe.

Born in 1902 at Hythe, Hants., Chopper's early career in the R.A.F., interest in radio telegraphy and the Arabs and stable marriage all contributed to an interesting career with Imperial Airways between 1926 and 1960.

The R.A.F. period started as a Trenchard Brat (1919) and included postings to the Middle East, desert experience with ploughing The Furrow, contact with Lawrence of Arabia ("ruthless and cold") and obtaining a Sergeant Pilot rating while on Reserve Training in Egypt. He was radio operator to the Furrow ploughing team which started from Amman (Jordan) in 1921, to meet the westbound team (from Baghdad) at Rutbah Wells, a sort of Beau Geste desert fort. No.47 Squadron's equipment for this operation included three Rolls-Royce armoured cars, six Crossley tenders, two Peerless lorries and a Fordson tractor with snow plough. He says the route opened on 23rd June 1921 and the first airmail from Baghdad to London was on 28th July 1921.

His desert experience led to an interest in the Arabs he encountered, and he learned to speak their tongue, which skill was to serve him in very good stead later. The Bedouin tribes were generally friendly and co-operative and Chopper continued to develop his Arab language capability. All aircrew, however, were issued with Arab language "Goolie Chits" which promised ten gold sovereigns to the less friendly Kurds, who practised unmentionable mutilation to captured infidels, if they would leave their captives intact and help them return to base.

He mentions in addition that the Squadron provided radio-equipped armoured car escort for Miss Rosita Forbes (1893-1967) to visit the ancient ruined city of Petra, rediscovered in 1812 by a Swiss explorer, and air transport for Gertrude Bell (1868-1926) the famous Arabist, and first woman to get a first in history at Oxford.

In late 1924 the R.A.F. began weekly trial flights between Cairo and Baghdad via Palestine and Jordan. He describes the wonder of approaching by air the undamaged golden domes of the Kadimain Mosque at Baghdad, and rather ineffective retaliatory air raids on Kurds. Pilots were still rejecting enclosed cockpits, although the DH 66 had a heated passenger cabin.

Chopper endured several desert forced landings, but was unhurt and generally surprised the natives by speaking to them in their own tongue with the obligatory exchange of customary pleasantries which are a prelude to conversation in Arabic. If the landing happened near an oasis, a brace of duck might be obtained for the pot while awaiting the necessary spare parts or fuel being sent, a shotgun proving more useful than the Lewis gun on these occasions. The ability to run out a ground aerial and contact base by radio turned a crisis into a pleasant diversion.

His expertise in radio transmission caused radio manufacturers to consult him and keep him informed on new equipment, and his experience soon assured him a job with I.A. on release from the R.A.F., and thus he became the very first civil aircraft licensed aeronautical radio operator.

Brackles (Major Brackley) interviewed him and assigned him to the crew of the Empire Air Route inaugural flight (26th Dec 1926) with a navigator and a flight engineer. Sir Samuel Hoare was to be accompanied by the Lady Maude, the great Air Vice-Marshal Sir Geoffrey Salmond, who was taking up command of the R.A.F. in India, Christopher Bullock (Secretary to successive Air Ministers), a press photographer and a valet. Pilot

of the DH66 was Barnard (1895-1927) as far as Aboukir in Egypt, then Wolley-Dod (1893-1937) with I.A. Managing Director Woods Humphery (1893-1963).

The longest sector was 390 miles from Karachi to Jodhpur, and travel was usually a gentle morning hop, lunch, and an afternoon hop, with a comfortable night stop. Wireless contact was made throughout the flight, crew and passengers being separated by an internal partition. Generally 5,000ft altitude and 100 m.p.h. speed were the norm, except across the stormy Med. where 500ft was used. Lines of Royal Navy destroyers had been strategically placed along the over-sea route sectors and Sir Samuel's message sent by radio to the O.C. destroyers was the first private radio message sent by a civil aircraft passenger. Chopper kept the draft of the message as a memento. The "Goolie Chit" carried by the Captain had been translated by the London School of Oriental Languages into five languages to stress the importance to His Most Excellent Britannic Majesty of the safe passage of the exalted personage, Principal Secretary of State Sir Samuel and his companions and entourage, with the usual promise of ample reward for assistance.

The party arrived at Hinaidi (Baghdad) after 3,800 air miles flown in 38 hours flying time. A welcome awaited from Sir Henry Dobbs, High Commissioner, a representative of King Feisal and several Iraqi Ministers. After Basra they were accompanied on the Bushire sector by an R.A.F. Vickers Vernon, which caused a diplomatic incident, being military, when they landed on Persian soil. The pilot ignored an arrest order and took off through a guard of six soldiers, which may be the source of later sanctions by Persia about overflying of Persian airspace. This being pearl-diving country, they were all given gifts of pearls, Chopper turning his into a ring for his wife.

Over the Gulf, heading for Jask (Oman), they again passed and exchanged radio correspondence with three Royal Navy sloops. Chopper was the only member of the party to be proficient in camel riding as they made their way to and from the overnight accommodation at Jask. At the next stop, Baluchistan, Lady Maud was presented with a 12ft x 18ft Persian carpet valued at £1200, Chopper's income for three years and equivalent to three small houses at 1927 prices.

On the ground at Drigh Road R.A.F. base at Karachi, Chopper spotted an airman who looked like Lawrence, but was assured by R.A.F. officers that it was only Aircraftman Shaw. Weeks later he realised the truth. At Jodhpur the entertainment became even more sumptuous as the Rajah presented each with gifts, Chopper receiving a large enamel-inlaid brass bowl and matching vases. Lady Maud was given a solid gold lady's dressing set.

Thence to Delhi, arriving on 8th Feb. 1927 to a crowded reception, three weeks of being fêted and a return flight which took eleven days to reach London. Chopper was due back on duty at Heliopolis, however, to begin his duties for I.A. in the Near East Division, where Wolley-Dod was Senior Pilot and Air Superintendent, and Sandy Baxter was Chief Engineer. Unmanned outstations kept fuel (supplied by Shell) in underground tanks to be manually pumped up by hand, a back-breaking job, even when assisted by the passengers. DH 66s were operated by a crew of two: pilot and "second dickie" (w/o, engineer, refueller, engine starter and passenger wet-nurse).

Rivalry on the European airline scene made necessary several route changes on the eastern run and Persia proved particularly difficult. In May 1928 Chopper's wife joined him in Cairo, but his job caused him to be away from home for long periods, which Eleanor seems to have borne with fortitude. His employment was in three year contract periods, interspersed with leave in Blighty. They did sightseeing in Egypt and Chopper took up water-colour painting. He was in charge of communications, aircraft maintenance, ground wireless equipment, the I.A. yacht "Imperia" moored in Mirabella Bay, Crete, and Divisional wireless personnel.

His first three-year stint involved him in two forced-landings and a crash. Over Furrow LG5 a fuel leak caused an unscheduled landing, and occasioned a meeting with Bedouin. This took the usual form of fifteen minutes of exchange of information with enquiries as to one's health, wealth, family, possessions and the blessing of Allah. They bedded down for the night, the lady passenger in the aircraft, having declined an invitation from the Sheik to join him in his tent. Gifts of goats milk, eggs and chapattis were accepted and five gold sovereigns changed hands. The lady passenger was intrigued by the experience and did not complain to I.A.

In December 1929 his 3-year contract came to an end, so with his family he took 3 months paid leave in England. In March 1930 I.A. renewed his employment. Against a background of 3,000,000 unemployed in UK, in 1932 I.A. reduced the aircrew allowance from 1d per mile to 2/6d per hour. The Far East route

switched to the Emirates to avoid Persia. The proving flight resulted in Chopper receiving from the Emir a garabea and head dress with ceremonial sheathed dagger, such was the Emir's delight at being addressed in his own tongue.

In the early 1930s the introduction of the Short Calcutta improved the I.A. service across the Med. and Chopper commissioned a new Marconi AD8 transmitter at Piraeus (Athens), flying on the proving flight via Famagusta (Rhodes). In 1932 he was issued with a company uniform in lightweight Khaki with two wavy rings on the sleeve as used by the Merchant Navy to denote a Chief Radio Officer.

An interesting interlude resulted when the R.A.F. noticed that Chopper had not done his reserve training, so he was released by I.A. to report for three weeks of training at R.A.F. Abu Sueir (Ismalia). The R.A.F. were intrigued to receive an I.A. man, and wondering what to do with him, decided to send him on a pilots' course on Avro 504s and DH9As in which he was perfectly at home following his earlier experience with the R.A.F. After a few circuits and bumps they gave him a Sergeant Pilot's Certificate. Amused, on the return journey he bought some caged quails to eat, but overnight his 3-year-old daughter let them go.

Brackles congratulated Chopper on his return and suggested that he go on a civil flying school course in UK to obtain a "B" Licence to qualify for the new "First Officer" rank being created. Back in the Middle East he flew on a Wolley-Dod flight down the Nile to collect the President of the American Wright aero-engine firm and taxi him and his party around Egypt. W-D won a couple of bottles of champagne from this trip, and Chopper remarks that that was typical of opportunist I.A. aircrew. Apparently the best bargains to be had were Persian rugs and Asmara Arab silverware made from melted-down Indian silver coins, with leopard skins and fruit from East Africa. I.A. crews were also caught out smuggling gold bars and silver coins to supplement their allowances.

Sent again to entertain the American party, Chopper arranged a desert camp meeting with a Sheik of his acquaintance at Rutbah. The overnight stay impressed the Americans greatly and the party moved on to Palmyra in Syria where a small French air force detail of three decrepit biplanes with very little petrol was stationed. They lunched with their hosts and moved on to Damascus and Jerusalem. The Americans gave them each ten gold sovereigns, equivalent to ten weeks pay.

In 1931 the HP42 did a Cairo-Karachi route inspection. The name of the French station engineer at Sharjah was A.S.Soles, and this caused embarrassment when taken as an insult by the Divisional Manager until explained. On return to Cairo Chopper was crewed on a Calcutta piloted by Capt. Cross with W-D as co-pilot and an engineer, flying down the Nile to Lake Victoria. Cross had a theory that leaving the 200ft trailing aerial out when landing on water would give early warning of altitude, but when tried at Kisumu it caused the Calcutta to drop rapidly and porpoise badly. "Mad scheme" said W-D. Cross fell into the lake when climbing into the launch, but recall of the crocodile which had been basking on the mooring buoy helped Cross's alacrity when getting out. At Juba they were delayed by a leopard and two cubs on the road.

Flying second dickie on a Wessex aircraft on a special cargo flight Chopper was obliged to assume command when the pilot (nameless) accidentally got locked in the toilet, so he carried out a perfect landing on his own, just as the warped toilet door released the captain. He was sworn to secrecy, but as is the way with such secrets, it seems to have leaked when he was later checked out on the Wessex by W-D. When he explained that he couldn't afford to pay for the "B" licence training course, W-D said he would have a word with Brackles.

Charged with setting up an airfield at Karima, Sudan, Chopper made a workmanlike job of the radio aerial installation. Eight 3ft square steel plates were cut from the rusting remains of Kitchener's river boat abandoned in 1885. These formed the guy rope anchors when buried, and the first test transmission raised Khartoum, 200 miles south, at strength R5, Abu Zabel, Cairo at strength R4, and R3 at Heliopolis, 800 miles away. Again, the ability to converse in his own tongue with the local Sheik had smoothed the way to success. A box of kippers was sent, on his return, to Mr. Chorley, the railway representative who had hosted the airfield group. A silver cigarette case resulted from a later trip with Prince Albert of Belgium.

In 1936, his contract ended, Chopper returned to UK for 3 months leave, and a visit to Brackles resulted in a promise that if he could pass the medical, I.A. would pay for his "B" licence training. Appearing before the same doctor who had passed him as fit on three past occasions, he was dismayed to be failed on below average eyesight and albumen in his urine (Prostate?).

His disappointment was countered in a few days when he was offered a job as assistant to the Operations Manager at Croydon, responsible for all aircraft radio equipment and staff, radio flight tests and delivery of flying boats from Shorts at Rochester to Southampton. I.A. was receiving many new flying boats at this time, a source of pride to Chopper, who soon became Chief Radio Engineer and spent 8 months at Hythe before moving back to Croydon, where he had bought a house. Many of the radio operators recruited had been trawler men, when fishing fleets were being laid up.

In January 1938 he was delighted to be invited to go to Rochester with Brackles for the test flight of the Short-Mayo composite. Shorts test pilot Lancaster Parker and "Boy" Bennett (1910-1986), better known later as Pathfinder Bennett, were the respective pilots of "Maia" and "Mercury". Chopper's last operational flight was to Brindisi during a strike of radio operators, where he was in trouble with the Italians for having no uniform or passport and not being on the official crew list. He briskly caught a northbound flight home.

In June 1938, Sir John Reith was appointed Chairman of I.A., following criticism of inefficiency, in place of Woods-Humphery, but the staff were intensely loyal to W-H and made known their disapproval of the move. When war was declared in September 1939, Chopper was still at Croydon and depressed at the outlook sold his 500 I.A. shares bought in 1926 at £1 each for 4/- each. When the Government soon after bought out I.A. to form B.O.A.C. it paid £1.12s. 9d each.

He moved with I.A. to the Spa Hotel, Clifton, Bristol when he was titled Assistant Communications Superintendent, and the fleet was housed at Whitchurch, the flying boats moving later from Hythe to Poole. Over 300 new aircraft were received by I.A. during the War. Chopper employed 10 radio engineers at Whitchurch on repair and maintenance of radios, and also on the installation of British radios in American fighter aircraft which arrived by sea in packing cases. He flew in an HP42 to Brittany to evacuate R.A.F. personnel from soon-to-be occupied France, the co-pilot flying out an Anson rather than destroy it, to Exeter airport.

In 1944 he received a summons to report to the R.A.F. again as a reservist. It transpired that B.E.A. was to be created to operate short-haul civil flying, as a European division of B.O.A.C., based at Northolt and Hurn for transatlantic. Chopper was deployed to Croydon as a Flight Lieutenant operating Dakotas. The Fighter pilots settled uneasily into the civil role. Chopper was tasked to obtain from R.A.F. depots all over Europe equipment needed for civil operations. A promotion to Squadron Leader helped to convince the senior officers he was stripping of supplies, and he flew an empty Dak solo to Ayr, Scotland, where they were surprised that anyone had got through the low cloud, especially without a radio operator.

After the War he reports that there were funny goings-on, when countries like Ireland had supplies of things like turkeys and empty Daks were despatched to collect a load for Christmas. In some parts of Europe anything was obtainable for a packet of fags, including Omega watches, BMW cars and even a racehorse on one occasion. The Officers' Mess at Croydon Airport Hotel bar kept a log book of such goings-on. Where is that, now, he asks?

Eventually, as Supplies Superintendent, European Division, B.E.A., Chopper was offered the choice of continuation with B.E.A. or a return to B.O.A.C., after 18 months. A lorry sent from Ostend to Germany was found at Cologne with its cargo of de-icing fluid missing. It had been taken for the manufacture of drink on the black market.

Back at B.O.A.C. Chopper provisioned the Treforest engine overhaul factory, and set up Heathrow's technical supply and stock control section for the Component Repair and Overhaul Branch of the Engineering Department. In 1960 consultants brought in to make recommendations offered early retirement and a gratuity to staff over 58. At first he refused, but on consideration took the offer, and as so often happens the duties of his post were divided into two new posts each at the same salary as he had received. After a round-the-world trip with his wife, he took an honorary job as pensioners' contact in the Welfare Branch of the Corporation.

After his wife died in 1974, a hankering for things Arabian led to an application for a residential permit to enter Jordan, which was refused, but a 90-day long term visa was granted, as a result of which Chopper was fêted by some of his old Arab sheik contacts and even had a fifteen-minute audience with King Hussein in English, a fitting conclusion to his colourful career.

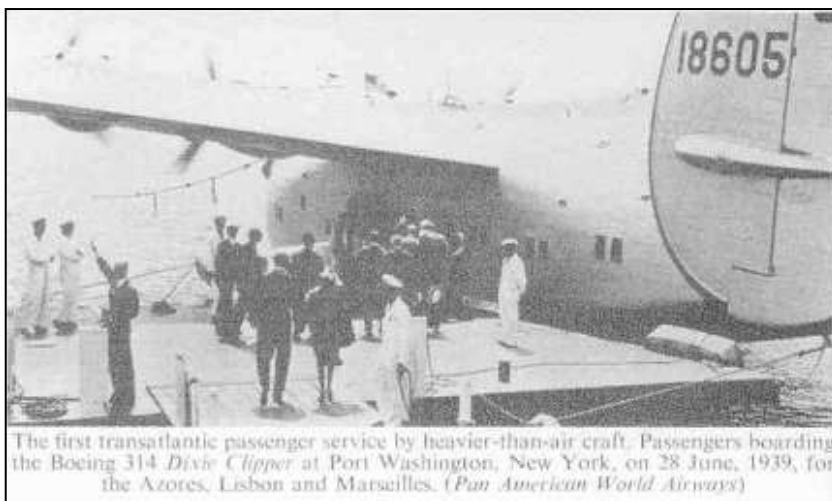
Further reading:

'Chopper' by E. Rigglesworth Hatchett. Lasermark 1988 ISBN 1-871778-00-X
Empire of the Air by Lord Templewood (Sir Samuel Hoare). Collins 1957
The Baghdad Air Mail by W/C Roderic Hill. Nonsuch 2005 ISBN 1-84588-009-9
Imperial Airways Gazette No.1 feature by Stan Wheatcroft
Imperial Airways Gazette No.28 feature by Ed Wolf
Imperial Airways Gazette No.32 feature by Bill Legg

First Bermuda acceptance for the Pan American Airways Trans Atlantic service

By Duncan Crewe

The cover below was posted in Bermuda on 8 June 1939 and was flown to New York by the Pan American service in time to connect with the *Dixie Clipper* which left on 10 June and reached Marseilles next day. This was the fourth regular trans-Atlantic service by Pan American Airways and carried the first dispatch of mail from Bermuda. The 2sh. franking was the correct 1/2 oz. rate for mail to Britain. The cover was forwarded from Marseilles to London where it was re-franked on 13 June with a 1 1/2d. Coronation stamp to pay the All Up rate to South Africa. It left Southampton next day on board *Canopus* operating DS 205 and reached Durban on 19 June, one day late after the aircraft had been delayed at Marseilles by mechanical trouble. There is a *Poste Restante* back stamp for 20 June on the reverse of the cover.



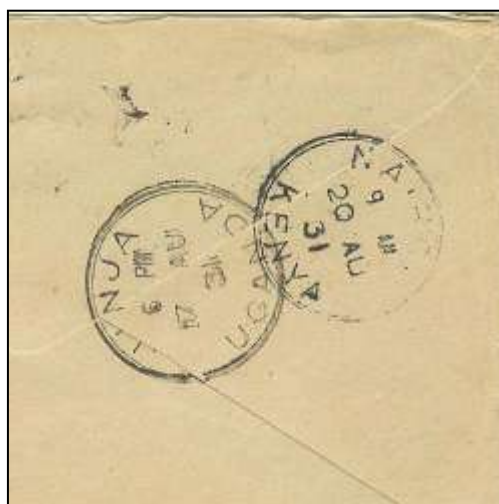
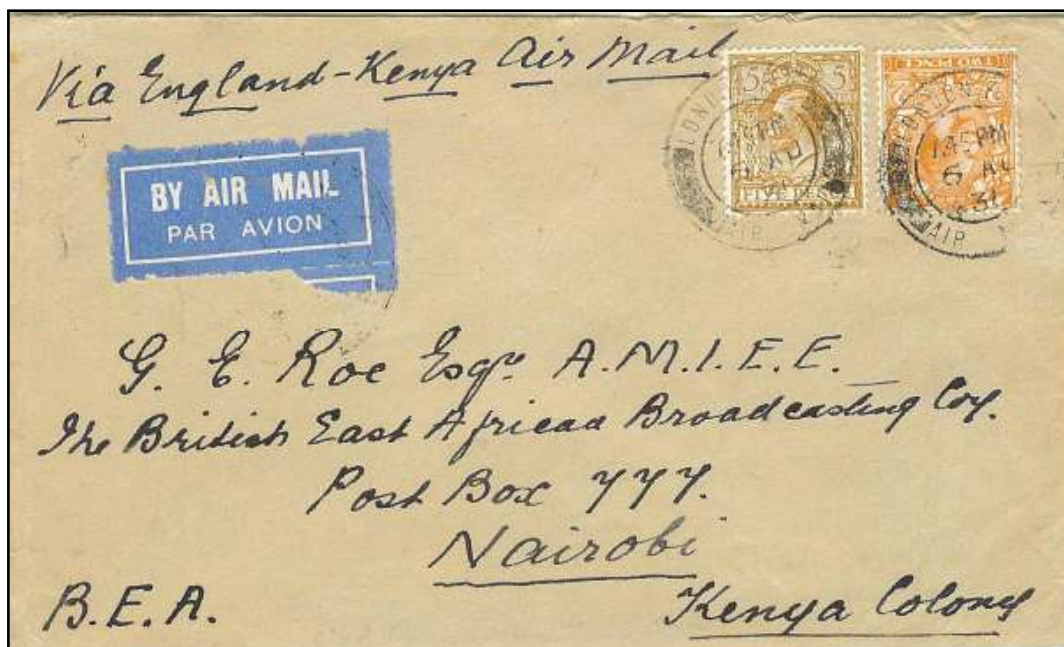
Photograph of the *Dixie Clipper* ready for another trans-Atlantic flight just three weeks after the one on which she carried the cover above.

Forced landing at Jinja

Material provided by Duncan Crewe

Duncan kindly sent the scans of the front and backstamps on the reverse of the cover shown below. It was carried by Imperial Airways' African service AS24 during which the Short Calcutta flying boat *City of Alexandria* made a forced landing at Jinja with engine problems. I am aware of two references to this incident, the first of which is to be found on page 54 (first edition) and page 44 (second edition) of Bill Colley's books, "The Airmails of East Africa." Bill wrote in the second edition, "The 'Uganda Herald' recorded that on 16 August the *City of Alexandria*, under Capt. Lumsden, made a forced landing at Jinja with a broken oil pipe. The mail was handed over to Jinja Post Office, backstamped 17.8.31 before being sent on by rail."

The second reference is to be found in D.Field's "Catalogue of Airposts of the World," 1934 edition, in which he writes that "On 16 August the plane flying to Port Bell made a forced landing at Jinja (Uganda). The air mail bags from England, Greece, etc. were handed over to the Jinja P.O. the next day. The mails were backstamped 17/8/31 and sent on to destination by rail. No mail had been flown to Jinja before."





Our Rhodesian Heritage

(Compiled and Administered by ORAFs)

AN EARLY RHODESIAN AIR CRASH

LADY YOUNG AND HER GYPSY MOTH, 28th FEBRUARY 1935



Lady Young prepares for take-off

At 08.10 on 28th February 1935, Lady Young, wife of Sir Hubert Young, the Governor of Northern Rhodesia, took off from Livingstone in her own Gypsy Moth to join her husband in Lusaka where he was attending to the transfer of the capital of Northern Rhodesia from Livingstone. Lady Young had not fully recovered from a bout of malaria, and was accompanied by the Senior Government Medical Officer, Dr T.R.F. Kerby. It was an overcast morning and visibility was very poor, but Lady Young was widely renowned as an expert pilot and there were no fears for her safety.

The distance to be flown was 291 miles, and her ETA at Lusaka was 11.00.

Shortly before 11.00, Sir Hubert and a welcoming group of friends and officials gathered at the Lusaka aerodrome eagerly scanning the sky for a first glimpse of the little aircraft. When there was neither sight nor sound by 11.15, those present began exchanging apprehensive glances. Soon afterwards, it was realised that something serious may have occurred, and immediate steps were taken to organise search parties. Messages were telegraphed and telephoned along her route, and within a very short while two aircraft and numerous Police and railway personnel were involved in the search. Patrols by rail-trolley and road were sent out, and a medical centre was set up at Monze, with a fully-equipped hospital train. .

A report was received that the plane had been seen near Choma at about 09.30 that morning, slightly to the west of the normal course, and another later sighting to the east of the course. Other reports of sightings were received, but could not be substantiated. The search continued throughout the night, using flares and torches, but to no avail. By early next morning, 1st March, 200 men of the Northern Rhodesia Regiment together with six White officers, 200 Police and 170 railwaymen joined the operation which now had about 600 men on the ground. There were in addition many civilian volunteers. An operations base was established in Choma, under control of the Governor.

As the days progressed, more aircraft joined in the search. These included a flight of six Wapitis very promptly despatched by the South African Air Force, two Leopard Moths from the Johannesburg Light Plane Club, a Puss Moth of the Katanga Aero Club in Elisabethville, an Imperial Airways Atalanta, a WACO belonging to Mr. N.D. McGill of Livingstone. and a Gypsy Moth piloted by a Mr Elton of Melsetter, Southern Rhodesia. A Westland Wessex and then a Leopard Moth, newest and fastest of the RANA fleet, entered at a later stage. At one time there were nineteen aircraft involved in the search, their names so evocative of that period.

The area from Livingstone to Broken Hill was carefully mapped, and thoroughly swept by very low-flying planes. Ground patrols operated throughout the day and using flares at night. The quest was concentrated largely twenty miles on either side of the railway line, as it was thought the plane could not have strayed much further off course than that. From Lusaka, special searches were made of the flooded Kafue Flats, as there was a possibility that the plane may have crashed and sunk in the marshy ground.

This became the most extensive ground and air search ever undertaken in Northern Rhodesia, and probably in the whole of Southern Africa at that time.

Unfortunately it was taking place far to the north of the site where Lady Young had crashed. Over a hundred miles to the north, in fact



Mr. Cameron at his trading store

After taking off from Livingstone, Lady Young encountered areas of high turbulence. Visibility was poor, but by means of her compass, she was able to keep her little plane on course. Some time later she saw below a large river which she took to be the Kafue. Lusaka could not be far away. She passed over the river, but instead of the sprawling buildings of Lusaka, she saw what she recognised as the Kariba Gorge. She was far off course and had petrol reserves for only about twenty minutes flying time. It appeared that the turbulence had loosened the locking screw of her compass, which was now wildly inaccurate. It was imperative to find a reasonably safe place in which to land.

In an extremely inhospitable terrain, the only possibility that offered itself was what appeared to be a patch of mealies. As they braced themselves for impact, Lady Young realised that it was in fact a patch of 14 foot high kaffircorn. The stalks entwined themselves around the undercarriage, and the plane toppled over, coming to rest on its back. Lady Young managed to scramble out of the wreck, but Dr. Kerby was trapped in his harness, covered in petrol. He managed to free himself, and to their great relief, they found each other still alive. The only injury was a cut on Lady Young's nose. The time was about 11.40. Shortly afterwards, some Africans appeared from a nearby kraal and told them there was a white man somewhere in the area. This was Mr. G. W. Cameron, a locust ranger and trader.



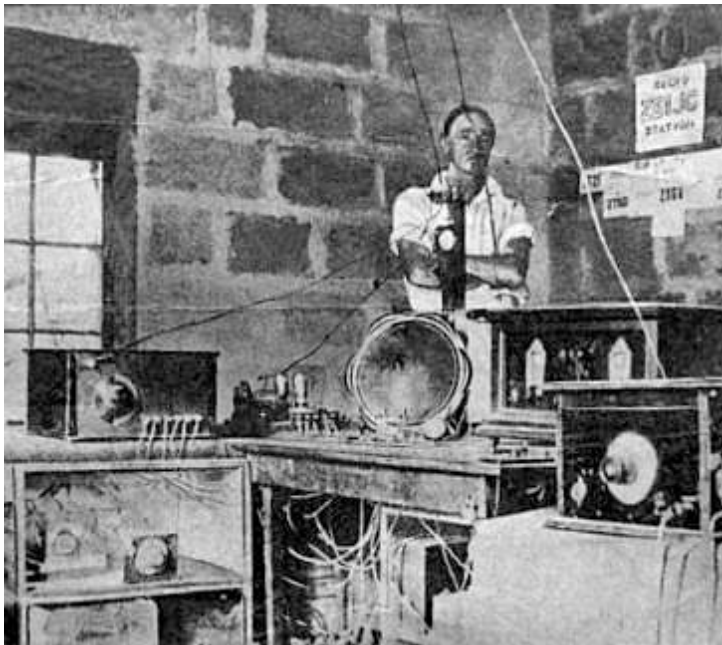
"On Guard"

Lady Young wrote a note on the back of an envelope, and asked them to take it to the white man as quickly as possible. The note read :

“Urgent. To the first white man who receives this note. Lady Young and Dr. Kerby have had a forced landing at a native village. This appears to be near the Kariba Gorge (the Southern Rhodesia side of the river). Please immediately telegraph to Sir Hubert Young at Lusaka. Lady Young and Dr. Kerby are both unhurt, but the machine is badly damaged. We are going to follow the messenger who carries this note, and shall be grateful if you will come to meet us please”.

Shortly after dusk, Mr. Cameron arrived at the village, with food, blankets, tea, a small tent and a mosquito net. He told them that he had sent their note on to the Native Commissioner at Gokwe, by runners. They spent the night at the village. The position of the crash was later estimated to be 17.3 Lat. and 28.50 Long., or 16.55 Lat. and 28.45 Long., by different flyers over the area.

It was not until 4th March that the searchers in Northern Rhodesia would learn what had happened. When the news reached them, Sir Hubert threw a party - chastely described by the Press as “sundowners” but by participants in the search, as “what a party !”



Native Commissioner Marr in his radio shack.

Soon after 5 p.m. on Monday, 4th March, a runner arrived at the Native Commissioner's camp at Gokwe, bearing the dramatic message from Lady Young. Mr. F. Marr, the NC (callsign ZELJC), immediately set about transmitting the information by Morse Code. At 5.15 he made contact with Mr. R.A.Jubb (callsign ZELJN), the Government Meteorological Officer in Bulawayo, and it was promptly passed on to the relevant officials in Southern and Northern Rhodesia. Daventry picked it up, and within minutes a message that had been carried by runners 90 miles on foot for four days through Southern Rhodesia's wildest country was flashed around the whole world.



A Native Department patrol sets out.

The N.C. despatched two messengers, Zhara and Mangwiro, to ride through the night with a message for Lady Young and bundles containing champagne, cigarettes and food. Unfortunately by the time they arrived 90 miles away, Lady Young and her party had already departed by another route.

Next day, 5th March, a Westland Wessex, first aircraft to land on the recently-completed landing strip at Gokwe, was also despatched with champagne, cigarettes, sandwiches

and other supplies for the stranded party. Gokwe appears to have held an inexhaustible supply of champagne in those days ! A message was included informing Lady Young that the N.C. was setting off in a car and a truck to cut a road through to Cameron's camp, to rescue them. Mrs. Marr, wife of the N.C. (who was coping with the sudden emergency and influx of visitors in the way of all Native Department wives), had provided bed linen for the making of parachutes in which the champagne and other supplies were to be dropped to Lady Young.



Mr. R.A. Jubb with the portable radio set used by Mr. Marr.

The pilot was unable to find Cameron's camp in that wilderness, and so returned to Gokwe. Lady Young and her party were therefore unaware that the search was under way, and set forth on foot and machila for Gokwe. Unfortunately, this was by a different route from that which was being cut by the N.C. who had with him a portable radio set provided by the 1st Battalion of the Rhodesia Regiment. This was a low-powered set, and was unfortunately unable to receive messages later sent to inform him that it had been learned Lady Young's party was proceeding by a different route. Mr Marr was able to make radio contact only when he had reached Cameron's camp, by which time the missing party was approaching Gokwe. All his efforts to cut a road through to Cameron's camp were in vain, but were very favourably commented on.

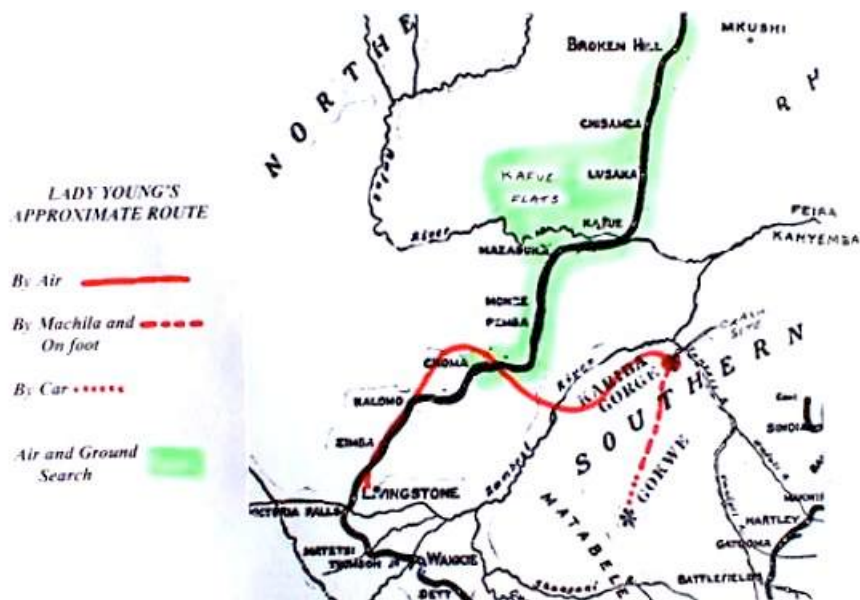


Mr. Marr transmitting at Cameron's store.

But to get back to the crash. The next morning, Friday, 1st March, Lady Young, Dr. Kerby and Mr. Cameron walked to his camp, which was about six miles from the crash. They spent the day resting there, considering their next move. Knowing how difficult their journey would be, Mr. Cameron had a machila made with branches and bark for Lady Young. They had a long way to go, and at 6.45 on 2nd March the little caravan set forth – Lady Young walking part of the way to spare the machila carriers. That day they covered about 16 miles in hot and difficult conditions, and spent the night at an African village. The next day was more difficult, and a shorter distance was covered.

Mr. Cameron arranged everything possible for the comfort of his wards. He had provided a small tent and a mosquito net for Lady Young, and they were able to bathe every day. The “bath” consisted of a hole scooped in the ground, lined with a piece of canvas, and filled with water. It was essential to keep up appearances, and the men shaved each day, Dr Kerby borrowing Mr. Cameron’s “cut-throat” razor.

On Monday 4th they made good progress, and spent the night at the village of Chief Sileya. Tuesday was very hot and the going rough. Wednesday was another good day and that night they slept in a village which they calculated was 26 miles from Gokwe. Setting off very early on the morning of Tuesday 7th March, it was not long before they heard the sound of a motor car, and near Sweswe were picked up by Capt. Bugler of the BSAP. Their long hike was over. They had walked about 70 miles.



Sketch map.

They were received by Mrs. Marr at the NC's house in Gokwe, where their first request was for a hot bath. At 4 pm they took off in the waiting Westland Wessex, arriving to an enthusiastic reception in Lusaka at 6 pm. – seven days and seven hours after their original ETA !



The Westland Wessex which took Lady Young and Dr Kerby back to Lusaka

Once Mr. Cameron had delivered his charges safely at Gokwe, he turned and quietly set off on foot back to his camp ninety miles away.

**Lewis Walter
Fish Hoek, Cape
July 2012**

End

My thanks to Mrs. Dorothy Marr, daughter-in-law of Native Commissioner Frederick Marr, for documents and information concerning him, and to Mrs. Dee Dowson for getting them safely to me. Also to Dave Newnham, Mike Hamence, Ron Jarman, Nick Baalbergen, Mitch Stirling, Tony Richardson, Bill Wiggill and Sean Morgan for information and references

The wreckage of Lady Young's plane was eventually dismantled and removed to Que Que.

She became President of the Flying Club in Lusaka, and when they held their first rally in 1937, she won the Landing Competition !

This article can also be viewed at
<http://rhodesianheritage.blogspot.com/2012/07/lady-young-and-her-gypsy-moth.html>

ORAFs records its thanks to Lewis and all those members that assisted him with this project.

Comments are always welcome - send them to Eddy Norris at
orafs11@gmail.com

Eddy Norris
Irene - RSA.