

# IMPERIAL AIRWAYS GAZETTE

DECEMBER 1938 • NO 12 • VOL 10





## THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF IMPERIAL AIRWAYS

EXTRACTS FROM THE SPEECH OF THE CHAIRMAN  
SIR J. C. W. REITH, G.B.E., D.C.L., LL.D.

The fourteenth Annual General Meeting of Imperial Airways was held on Monday, 14 November, at the Hotel Victoria, London. We give below extracts from the speech of the Chairman to the Shareholders.

### LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

'The year under review was one of transition from one major policy to another. The Company's agreements with the Government, based on the carriage of passengers, surcharged mail and freight, were due to expire between 1937 and 1939. The *Empire Air Mail Scheme*, accepted in principle in 1934, provided for the carriage of letter mail without surcharge. This involved a great increase in activities and an alteration in the relative amounts of mail, passenger and freight traffic.

'The *Empire Air Mail Agreement* displaces other agreements for the operation of Empire services, leaving the European agreement to expire on 31 March 1939.

'Its first stage began on 29 June 1937, when letters with 1½d. stamps and no air mail label were carried on the Africa route. On the India route they were surcharged till 23 February 1938, when the first 1½d. letters to India and Malaya left England.

'The scheme was not completed in the year under review as Australian and New Zealand 1½d. letters were not carried till 28 July 1938. In the period therefore, unsurcharged mail was carried over part of the routes part of the time.

### TRAFFIC AND OPERATIONS

'The route miles open to traffic increased from 20,329 to 22,395, i.e. 10%; the miles flown from 5,231,655 to 6,223,968, 19%; the traffic ton mileage from 5,171,504 to 8,353,618, 61.5%.

'At the end of the Company's first year there were 1,760 miles of route open to traffic. At the end of the year under review there were 22,395. The mileage flown has increased from 853,042 to 6,223,968 per annum, and the traffic ton miles from 391,032 to 8,353,618 per annum. With unsurcharged mail a new phase has opened.

### EUROPEAN SERVICES

'The European services have been operated under severe handicap. New aircraft were ordered in 1934, and at the General Meeting last year it was reported that the first of them was then over a year late. Not one was delivered in the year under review and in fact the first has only now been delivered—four years after the order. Instead, therefore, of having new aircraft, larger, faster and more comfortable than those of its competitors, the Company with its old aircraft has had to compete against the new aircraft of foreign companies and of British companies using foreign aircraft. And that is why the European services did not expand; in the circumstances it was satisfactory to have carried the same number of passengers as in the previous year.

### AFRICA SERVICES

'As a result of unsurcharged mail more than twice the capacity was operated on the Africa route than in the previous year. Passenger traffic increased by 28% and mail loadings by 280%.

'This route has been operated practically throughout the year by the flying-boats which have earned high praise from passengers. They are the finest flying-boats in the world and their builders, Messrs. Short Brothers, are to be congratulated on an outstanding contribution to air transport and on the speed with which they produced a fleet of thirty.

'The change-over from landplanes to boats, involving a change of route from the Equator to the Union of South Africa, was a considerable undertaking. Its smooth accomplishment shows the care with which the preparatory work was done and the Company gratefully acknowledges the co-operation received from authorities along the route.

'The change of route necessitated the establishment of feeder services for Kenya, Tanganyika, Northern and Southern Rhodesia, and the Associated Companies, *Wilson Airways* and *Rhodesian and Nyasaland Airways* working in co-operation with *South African Airways* have successfully dealt with the traffic in these territories.

'The branch service from Khartoum to West Africa, extended to Lagos in October 1936, was further extended to Accra in October 1937, by the Associated Company *Elders Colonial*

*Airways*. This service is showing encouraging results. In its early days, passenger traffic was hampered by restrictions of the public health authorities on account of yellow fever. Precautions are necessary to ensure that aircraft land only at aerodromes in uninfected areas; that passengers from infected areas do not join until they can satisfy the health authorities; and that no mosquitoes are carried in the planes. The Company's Medical Adviser and the Experimental Department, in conjunction with the medical authorities interested, have produced an apparatus which exterminates mosquitoes in aircraft without inconvenience to passengers. This apparatus may be an important contribution to the control of insect-borne disease.

### INDIA, AUSTRALIA AND FAR EAST SERVICES

'Only just over one month of unsurcharged air mail is covered, but during the year traffic from England to Karachi increased satisfactorily. 60% more capacity was operated than in the previous year, and the same proportion of capacity offered was sold. Passenger traffic increased 48% and letter mail 75%.

'It had been expected to extend the *Scheme* to India and Malaya much earlier but the continued delay in delivery of the land aircraft ordered for *Indian Trans-Continental Airways* and the Company made it impossible. Delivery of the landplanes required for the two England-Calcutta services by way of Malta has still not been made. Meantime, these two services are run partly by flying-boats and partly by existing landplanes, not calling at Malta.

'From Karachi to Singapore traffic increased by 28%, due mostly to mail. From Singapore to Australia the service is operated by the Associated Company, *Qantas Empire Airways*. Since the end of the year under review the service of landplanes operated by that company to Brisbane has been replaced by flying-boats and extended to Sydney. The first service by flying-boat operated through to Sydney on 26 June and unsurcharged mail was carried from 28 July. With the same type of aircraft used by *Imperial Airways* and by *Qantas Empire Airways* on the England-Australia service, and with the aircraft operating from end to end of the route, come the economy and convenience so desirable in the operation of the world's longest air service.

'At the Meeting last year, it was announced that it was hoped, with the co-operation of the Siamese Government, to change the route to Hong Kong, leaving the main route at Bangkok instead of Penang, to allow of operation in shorter stages with less fuel and more traffic on board. This alteration was effected in December 1937, and the route now passes via Udorn, Hanoi and Fort Bayard. The benefit of the shorter stages applies for only three months of the year under review but passenger traffic was 26% and letter mail 95% above the previous year. The load factor was 86.9%.

### BERMUDA—NEW YORK SERVICE

'This service which is operated by the Company and by *Pan American Airways*, began on 16 June 1937. The two companies work in harmony but, on account of United States anti-trust legislation, do so independently and without the normal agreement on fares, schedules, etc. It was originally intended that the companies should operate alternate services, and during the holiday season two services a week were operated by each company. Thereafter *Imperial Airways* reverted to once weekly, but *Pan American Airways* continued twice weekly. The increase of traffic as the service has become known has been satisfactory.

'Unfortunately, however, the heavy reduction in the level of passenger fares caused by competition on the American domestic lines, led *Pan American Airways* to reduce their Bermuda fare, and the Company had to follow suit. The revenue from the service, therefore, failed to reach expectations. New American legislation is expected to permit more satisfactory co-operation in the future, and the Air Ministry has agreed on a revision of the agreement in view of the altered conditions.

### DEVELOPMENT OF LONG RANGE SERVICES

'In addition to the progress of the services already mentioned, the Company did a considerable amount of flying in connection with further developments.

'During the summer of 1937, ten trips across the North Atlantic between Southampton and New York, via Eire, Newfoundland, and Montreal, were carried out by *Caledonia* and *Cambria* under the command of Captains Wilcockson and Powell.

'Later, a survey flight was undertaken to Lisbon and the Azores. In December, *Centaurus* left Southampton on a flight



to New Zealand and back, 30,000 miles, carried out to schedule under the command of Captain Burgess. The flight and the aircraft made a good impression in New Zealand and Australia. The arrangements between the Governments of New Zealand, Australia and the United Kingdom for the establishment of a service between Australia and New Zealand are now nearing completion, and the services should start early next year.

The Company has continued its experimental Atlantic flights, but owing to delay in the delivery of aircraft, has not undertaken as many flights as had been intended.

Last year the satisfactory results obtained during individual trials of the two components of the *Short-Mayo* composite aircraft were mentioned. Since then the trials have been brought to a successful issue, and the advantages to be obtained by launching heavily loaded aircraft in flight have been demonstrated by long range flights to Canada and South Africa. The flight to Canada was made non-stop to Montreal and was the first on which a commercial load was carried by aeroplane across the North Atlantic.

In October *Mercury* flew non-stop from Dundee to South Africa, a distance of approximately 6,000 miles, and secured by a margin of nearly 800 miles the world's long distance record for seaplanes, previously held by Germany. *Mercury* was launched in flight at a combination of wing and power loadings which had not previously been approached, and the significance of the achievement may be judged from the fact that had *Mercury* been required to fly for 3,000 miles instead of 6,000 a commercial load of three tons could have been carried. Captain Bennett was in command of *Mercury* on both these flights.

While it is not the Company's policy to embark on record-breaking attempts, valuable results have been obtained from these demonstration flights.

The Company has also co-operated in the application to flying-boats of the scheme for fuelling in flight. This experimental work, which is promising, permits long flights to be accomplished carrying greater loads than are possible in normal circumstances.

#### ASSOCIATED COMPANIES

In the establishment of the *Empire Air Mail Scheme*, involving a fourfold expansion in carrying capacity on the Empire routes, the Company has the co-operation of its Associated Companies, *Qantas Empire Airways*, *Indian Trans-Continental Airways*, *Elders Colonial Airways*, *Wilson Airways* and *Rhodesian and Nyasaland Airways*. They reconcile the interests of their respective territories with Empire interests as a whole. The relationship with these companies is excellent, and *Imperial Airways* is grateful for the understanding and helpful way in which they deal with all the problems that arise.

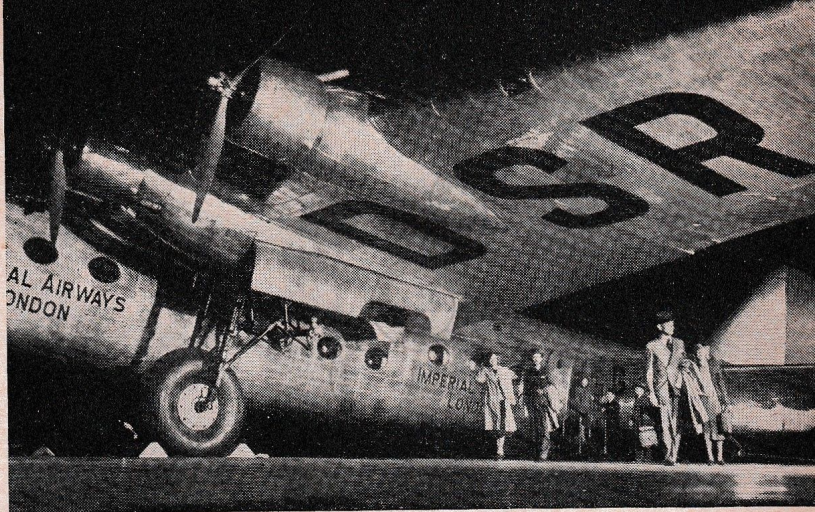
#### AIRCRAFT

As mentioned earlier, European services have been severely handicapped by failure of delivery of aircraft ordered four years ago. The completion of the *Empire Air Mail Scheme* was delayed for the same reason, and the Company is even now operating these services with assistance from aircraft that in normal circumstances would have been replaced with the more modern type. The *Hannibal* class in particular has a record of reliability and safety of which its designers and constructors may well be proud.

The Company also placed orders for more flying-boats, some of which were to be used for experimental flying across the Atlantic. These also are somewhat overdue. Similarly, the Air Ministry placed orders for two high speed land aircraft with which the Company was to do additional ocean flying. One of these has now been completed but too late for the necessary preliminary flying before winter. Others of this type adapted for short haul services are also late in delivery. Hitherto the Company has bought only aircraft and engines designed and built by British manufacturers, but the difficulties in obtaining delivery in accordance with contractual terms may force the Board to apply for permission to adopt some variation of this policy.

#### HOME BASE

Last year reference was made to the deadlock over the establishment of the combined marine and land airport at Langstone Harbour, Portsmouth. It is not the Company's responsibility to provide this base, but the Company suffers the inconvenience of its absence. Here, as with late delivery of aircraft, the Company is prevented by circumstances outside its control from giving the service it should, but every



Passengers disembarking from one of the Ensign class air liners at Croydon Airport

effort is being made to ensure that the most suitable base available is obtained.

The boats operate from Southampton where the limited shore accommodation and repair and maintenance facilities available constitute a considerable handicap and inconvenience to staff. The early co-operation of the Southampton Harbour Board and the Southern Railway has continued, and the Company is glad to acknowledge it.

The new London Terminus and Head Office should be in use in March next. The building will give much needed accommodation of reasonable standard for the staff, and will provide a terminal with adequate accommodation for dealing with passengers, baggage, mail and freight.

#### THE CADMAN REPORT

I have now something more personal to say. In the autumn of last year a feeling that British Civil Aviation in Europe was falling behind that of other countries led to criticisms in Parliament and elsewhere, and the Secretary of State for Air

The new London Terminus and Head Office at Victoria which is now nearing completion





appointed a Committee of Enquiry under Lord Cadman. The Committee's report dealt with Government policy, Air Ministry organisation, the aircraft industry, and with operating companies, notably Imperial Airways. It stated that British Civil Aviation could not compete with foreign civil aviation unless it were comparably subsidised.

'Although the Committee were satisfied that the Company had done many things very well, certain criticisms were made of the management. They recommended that the Company should concern itself primarily with the Empire services, a few other long distance services and Continental short haul services, but that European development generally should pass to *British Airways*, the London-Paris service being operated by a joint company. It was further recommended that the Chairman should devote his whole time to the Company's business, and be aided by one or more other whole-time Directors.

'Sir George Beharrell being unable to give up his responsibilities elsewhere, the directors invited me to become Chairman. Sir James Price, who has had great experience of staff and labour problems generally, also joined the Board. At the end of June, Mr. Woods Humphery's long managerial control of the Company ceased with his resignation.

'Now it was almost inevitable in a business of short establishment but of vast and rapid expansion that some things were not done which might have been done, and that some things were done which might have been done differently. But it is easy to see such things after the event and the Company, through its Directors, Managers and Staff all over the world—but pre-eminently owing to Mr. Woods Humphery—has achieved magnificently against great difficulties, and has deserved well of the community. Its achievements have not received the commendation they merited, while its faults were magnified, as faults usually are, till there seemed little else to tell.

'It is not a compact organisation easy of control. The staff has increased from 1,200 in 1933 to more than 3,600 to-day. It operates in thirty countries and a great variety of climates; its business is conducted in a score of languages and in twenty-five currencies. Growing as quickly as it did, it is perhaps not surprising that there were loose ends of organisation here and there, and that conditions of employment were not everywhere in keeping with the standards of well-established businesses. The position is being examined generally and in detail. Some revisions have already been made and others are under consideration; it is inevitable that overheads will rise.

#### STAFF

'In all grades and in all parts of the world there is a hard-working and devoted staff—employed in the air, on the ground, in works and in offices. Many of them have been upset by the attacks made on the Company but it is to be hoped that the past is past.

#### THE FUTURE

'The Cadman Committee advised that the dividends of subsidised air transport companies should be limited as is the case in many public utility concerns. This, put into effect by itself, would be unfair to shareholders who accepted the risks of pioneering a new means of transport and who have received on the average only a modest return—a little over 4½%. It must also be remembered that the Hambling Committee pointed the end which they thought Civil Aviation should seek; it was so to order its affairs that as quickly as possible it was to be self-supporting.

'This, in the judgment of many is incompatible with the ideal of ensuring that the airways of this country lead the world in air service, which implies the progressive development of speed beyond its economic utility to travellers. Development to-day is so rapid that any large aircraft is almost out of date before delivery, and to base the provision for obsolescence on anything approaching the real life of aircraft will defeat the aim of air leadership; indeed, if such a policy is to succeed financial support must of necessity be substantial. There is to-day a body of opinion actuated not by political considerations, but by straightforward problems of efficiency, which favours a non-commercial constitution for many of the great public undertakings and certainly for those which require in one way or another the support of the State.

'*Imperial Airways* is a national service of first importance, and it must know where it stands in the political and economic life of the nation. The present position is neither commercially

nor constitutionally satisfactory. The Company is neither wholly free nor wholly secure. Relations with the State were not as they should be. In every activity much depends on the personalities involved, but it was the system far more than anything else which in this case provoked dissension. Those there are who on occasion secure, or think they secure, what is termed the best of both worlds. Here the boot was on the other foot, and that is where I found it.

'There is still time—though time presses and competition is intense and increasing on every foreign hand—still time to order outlook and procedure, so that (in Mr. Bridges' phrase of another but cognate agency) the "globe-spread net of speeded intercourse" shall be of British weaving, and that through the seven skies, if seven there be, as once upon the seven seas, British craft may ply supreme.'

\* \* \* \*

After the above speech went to print came the Air Minister's announcement last Friday:—

'The Government has had this question (*the future relations between Imperial Airways and British Airways and between those two Companies and the Government*) under consideration with a view to the creation of the most suitable instrument for developing our overseas civil aviation communications.

'The House will recall that under the Air Navigation (Financial Provisions) Act which was passed earlier this year the statutory limit on the aggregate amount of subsidies was increased to £3,000,000 and that it is intended to devote the greater part of this to overseas development.

'Large additional payments would consequently fall to be made to the companies selected by the Government for this purpose and in the light of the opinions expressed by the Cadman Committee that dividends of subsidised air transport companies should be restricted to public utility rates and of the Government agreement in principle that public money should not be used for raising dividends to undue levels, it appears desirable to take steps to ensure that the large additional capital needed for development should be raised on terms which would not prove unduly expensive to the Exchequer.

'The rapid expansion of overseas services, coupled with the great technical advances which are being made in this sphere, moreover call under present circumstances for the pooling of resources and the strengthening of administrative and operating organisations to the fullest possible extent.

'In these circumstances the Government are of opinion that the most satisfactory instrument for the development of overseas civil aviation would be provided by the association of the two chosen instruments—*Imperial Airways, Ltd.*, and *British Airways, Ltd.*—in a single public corporation.

'The Government therefore propose to recommend to Parliament legislation setting up a Public Corporation which will acquire the existing undertakings of *Imperial Airways* and *British Airways*. Before the Bill is introduced, the Government hope to fix with the directors of the two companies a fair and reasonable price for each undertaking which can be submitted to the shareholders for approval, and, if agreed, can be inserted in the Bill. If agreement cannot be reached, the Bill would provide for the price to be fixed by an independent arbitral tribunal.

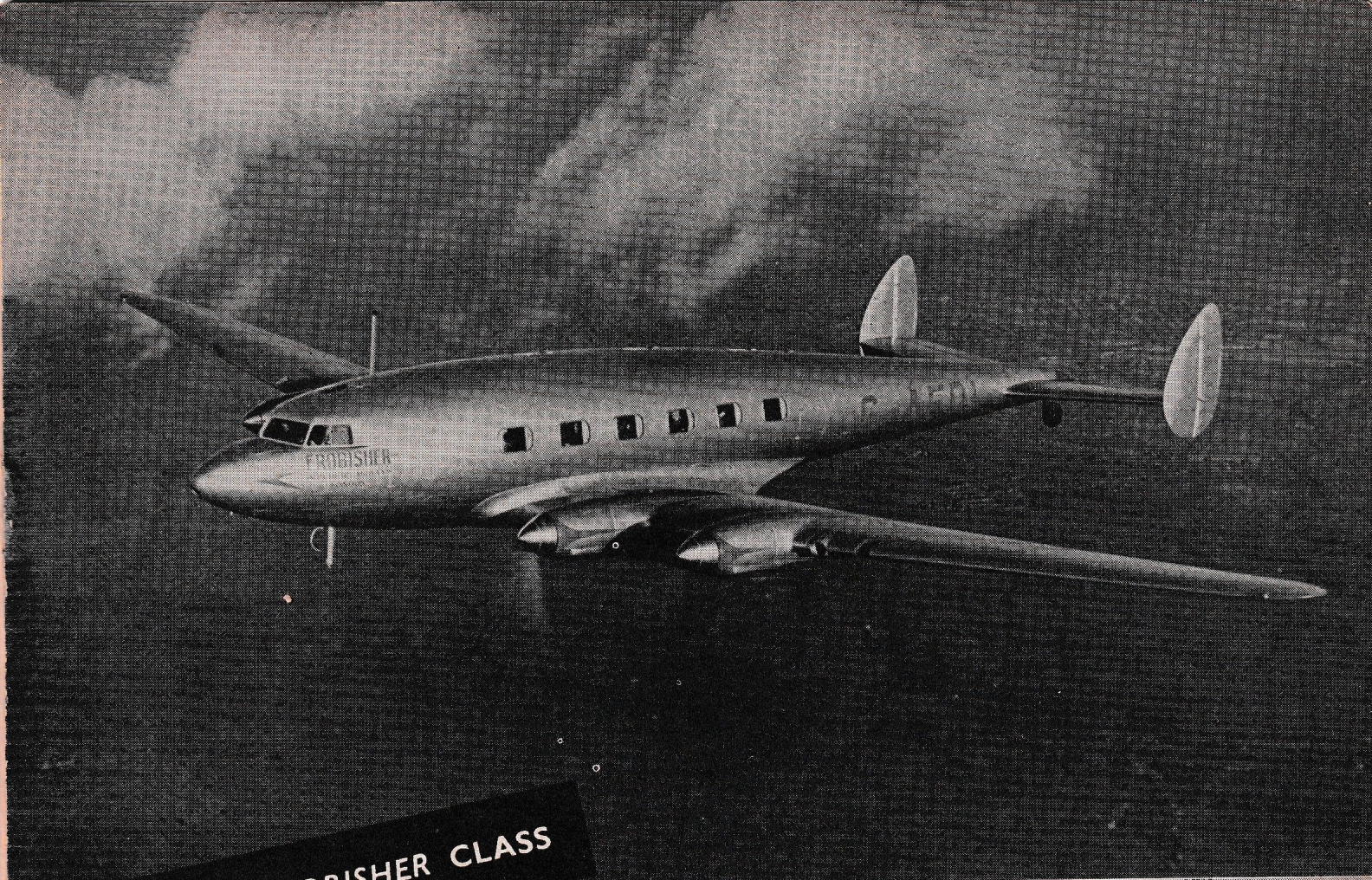
'It is proposed that the new Public Corporation should obtain the funds for the purchase of the two existing undertakings and for its further capital requirements by the issue of fixed interest stocks guaranteed by the Government.

'Full details of the proposals will be contained in the Bill which I hope will be available at an early date.'

'At this stage there are only two observations to be made. The Minister referred to the need in this Company as well as in *British Airways* for large additional capital for development purposes. This is a matter which has had the Board's attention for some time and which, in view of the assistance given the Company by way of Government subsidy, has necessarily been discussed with representatives of the Government. Apart from any other issues involved, any alternative to the Government's plan would entail either a great increase in ordinary share capital or the creation of shares with rights ranking in front of the existing shares.

'The second comment is that the Board, whatever its legal powers under the Articles of Association, will not agree to any price for the sale of the undertaking without calling another meeting of shareholders.'

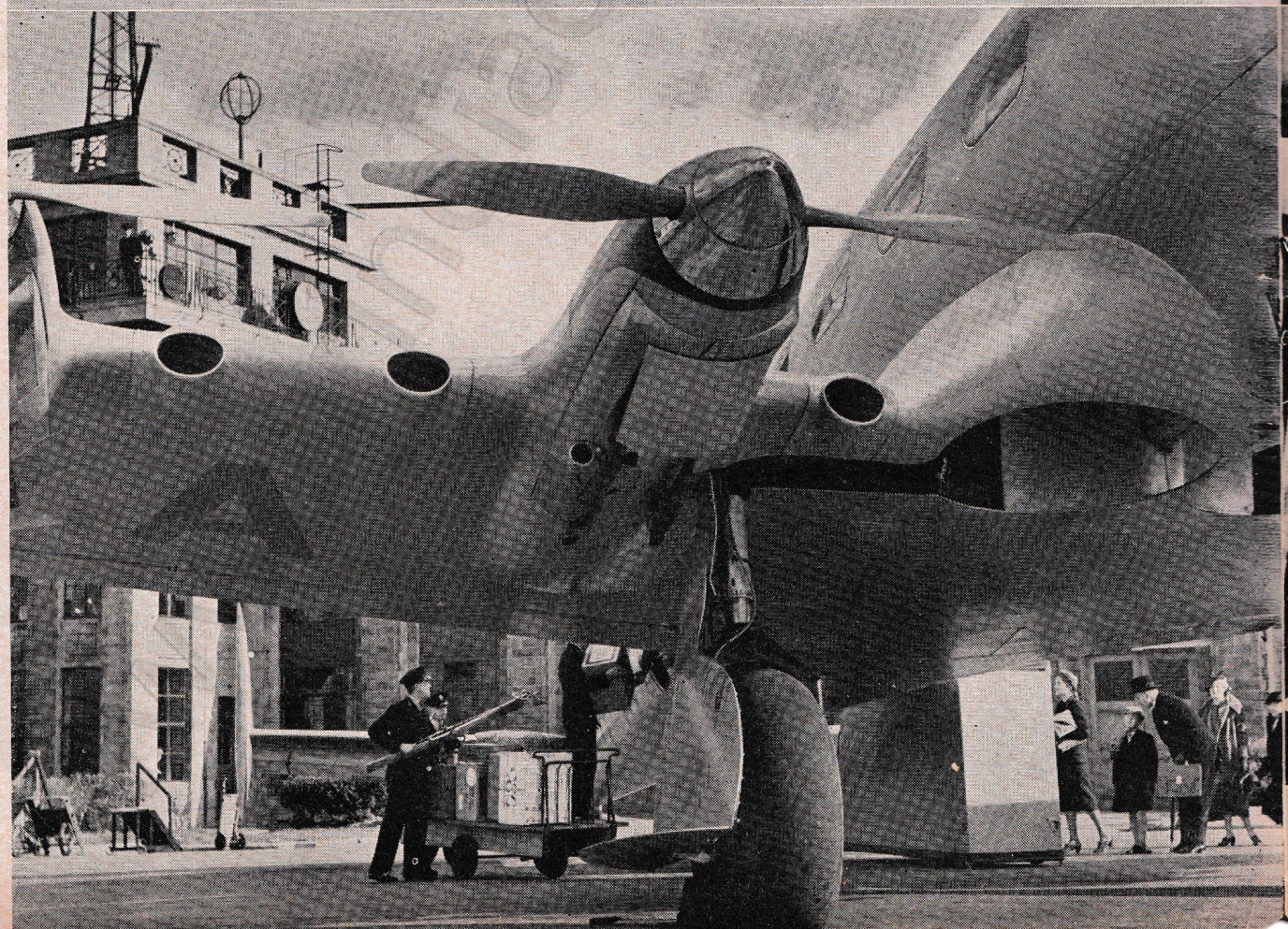
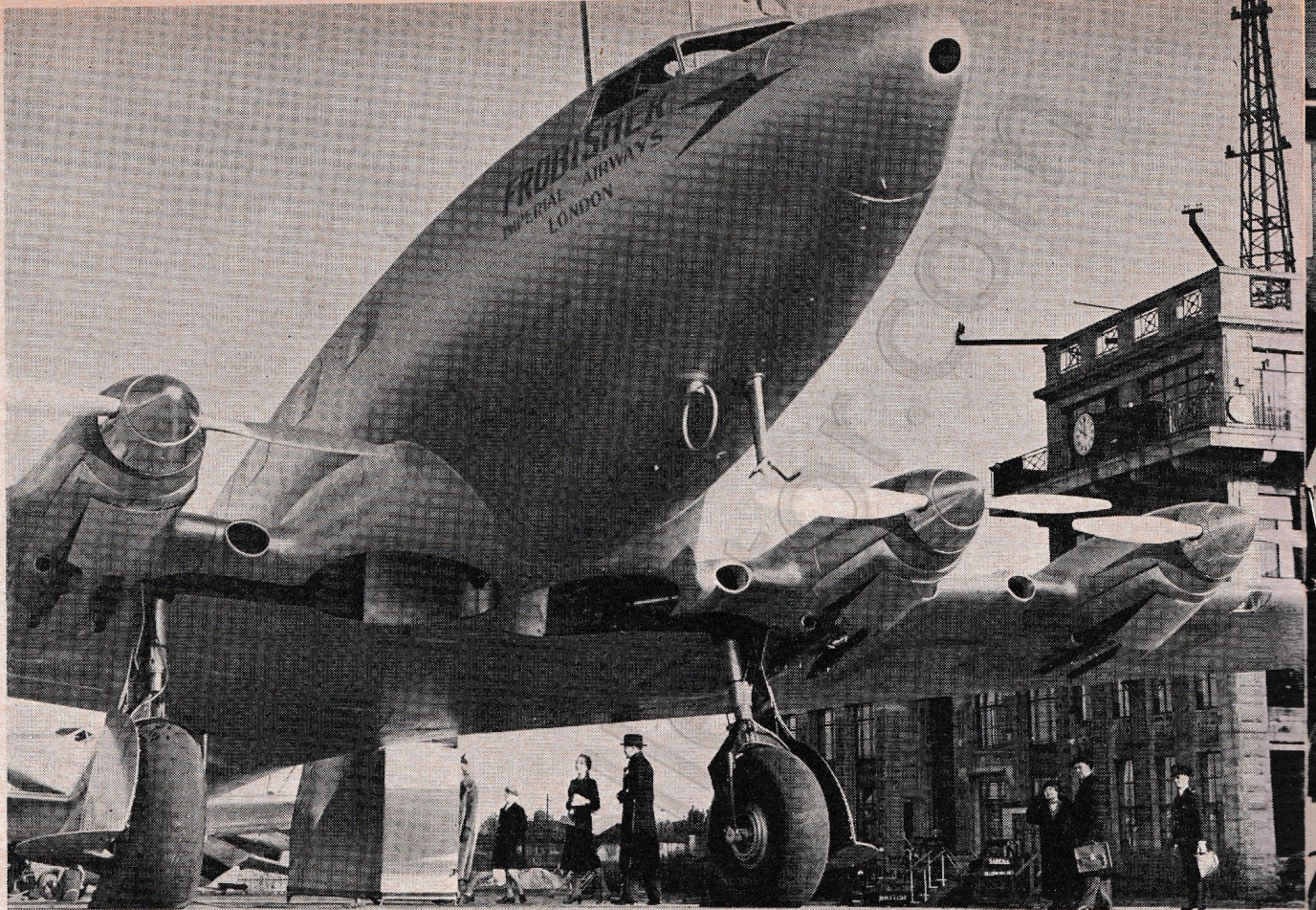




THE NEW FROBISHER CLASS













## IMPERIAL AIRWAYS NEW FROBISHERS

A friend of Imperial Airways rang up the other day to say how pleased he was to hear of the new Imperial Airways-Swissair daily London-Zurich winter-sportsman's air service. Something of a famous ski-er himself, this gentleman said, however, that he was disappointed to hear that the new *Frobishers* which Imperial Airways will use on this route, only travel at about 200 odd m.p.h. He says that most ski-ers go much faster than *that*—and without any retractable undercarriage or crew of four to help. So we invited him to Croydon to see the *Frobisher*. He was, as we expected, very impressed. Nevertheless, we were surprised the next day to get the following eulogy from our ski-ing friend:

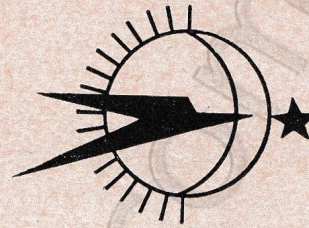
'The new *Frobishers*, Imperial Airways' 22-seater, top speed 234 m.p.h., 4-engined, 2,100 h.p., bullet-shaped, low-wing monoplanes, look like very special air liners very specially designed for the world's richest man. There's a thoroughly expensive air about them, inside and out. And with their slim, smooth, rivetless, all-wood, silver-coloured bodies; with their pointed, bomb-shaped engines, like four more miniature *Frobishers* set in the wings; with their live look of straining-at-the-leash, and with their lean and hungry look of speed, they might be almost over-beautiful but for the solid perfection of their design.

'The *Frobishers* are aerodynamically perfect outside (so every expert and any one with half an eye says) and the cabins are furnished after a luxurious style of interior-decoration which makes you feel that the Flight Steward should be called Head Waiter. There are three cabins. But cabin is a mean word to give to these three rooms, carpeted richly and deeply, not passage-shaped any more, but nearly square, with sofa-like double seats on either side of the broad walk down the middle. The three cabins have the same floor-level, and the ceiling is low—6 ft. 2 in. in the middle and rounded to the window-lined sides. Perhaps it is partly these lower ceilings of the *Frobishers* that make them still more comfortable-looking than their big cousins, the *Ensigs* and the *Imperial* flying-boats. And the dark fawn colour scheme is entirely pleasant—carpet, sofas, curtains, cloth-covered ceiling and walls are all in tones of fawn. The whole job was carried out by Imperial Airways' Battersea Factory, and you feel that some internationally-famous interior decorator must have been put to work to produce this excellent result. The semi-circular bracket light-fittings give an upward and indirect light and are made of the same fine, almost weightless, gold-coloured duralumin as all the fittings. Even the notices on the walls and doors are made to agree with this very simple decoration scheme. The central-heating is done by steam just as in any modern luxury-flat. But the Flight Steward's small 3 ft. 6 in. x 3 ft. 6 in. kitchen shames even the most modern flat. It is a perfect example for any kitchen-planning expert. Here there is a place for everything and everything in its place—big thermos containers for serving hot meals, an ice chest for drinks, cutlery, linen, china, glass, cigarettes, cards, writing-paper and the rest, all neatly stored away in next to no space at all.

'From the Flight Steward's kitchen you go forward past the Radio Officer's seat to the cockpit, where the Captain and First Officer sit. The contrast between the luxury of the passengers' rooms and the sternly utilitarian look of the crew's quarters is dramatic. Here, everything is a maze of shining instruments, and to the layman complicated enough to make him yet more respectful of that very special new breed of men—our Air Pilots. Ask one of them how the new *Frobishers* strike him. He'll certainly say: "very nice job." And that's high praise indeed.'

## IMPERIAL AIRWAYS DIARIES

In past years the demand for the Imperial Airways pocket diaries has been so great that it has been decided to place a limited number on sale. The 1939 diary follows the style of earlier years with its blue morocco cover, lightweight pages and general information about the Company which is of particular value to all interested in civil aviation. Copies, at 1/6 each, may be obtained from The Publicity Manager, Imperial Airways, Ltd., 13 Charles Street, Lower Regent Street, London, S.W.1.



IMPERII VIAE EXPLORATOR VOLITO

## IMPERIAL AIRWAYS GAZETTE

The *Imperial Airways Gazette* is published every month for the information of the agents of the company and for others who are interested in air transport. A copy will be sent free of charge every month to *bona fide* applicants from the Traffic Manager's Office, Imperial Airways, Ltd., Airway Terminus, London, S.W.1. School children must make their application through their Schoolmaster or Schoolmistress.

## A MERRY CHRISTMAS

IMPERIAL AIRWAYS WISHES A VERY HAPPY CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR TO ALL ITS FRIENDS AT HOME, IN THE EMPIRE AND IN FOREIGN COUNTRIES

## THE SERVICES OF IMPERIAL AIRWAYS

Full information about the services of Imperial Airways, of its associated companies and those for which it acts as agents, viz. the Belgian Air Lines (S.A.B.E.N.A.), the German Airways (D.L.H.), Swissair, and the following air transport companies in the United States of America: American Air Lines, Inc., Transcontinental and Western Air, Inc., and United Air Lines, may be obtained from Imperial Airways, Ltd., Airways Terminus, London, S.W.1, or from Airways House, Charles Street, S.W.1. Telephone: VICTORIA 2211. Telegrams: 'Impairlim, Telex, London,' or from any office of the company. Airway Terminus is open day and night. The principal travel agents can also supply details of the times and fares of the services operated by these and other air transport companies.

## CHRISTMAS MAILED BY AIR

240 tons of mail to the Empire to be flown by Imperial Airways during a period of seven weeks. That is the Christmas mail problem which has exercised the traffic and operational minds of Imperial Airways during the latter half of this year.

Quantities expressed in tons or gallons or miles are frequently unappreciated by those of us who do not in the ordinary course of our lives have cause to consider statistics, and so the magnitude of the task of the Christmas mails may not be immediately apparent. Consider, however, that it was only a very few years ago when Air Mail was spoken of in numbers of letters; when the users of the Air Mail were few by reason of the high surcharge rates. Consider that the average letter weighs little over half an ounce and that the usual mail load for one of the largest aircraft is about 2 tons.

These facts should convey some idea of the problem. This carriage by air at unsurcharged rates of the Christmas mail to the Empire is certainly the greatest traffic undertaking in the history of air transport and it is, possibly, a not unamusing thought that at last the fabled delivery of Christmas letters and parcels by air is an accomplished fact.

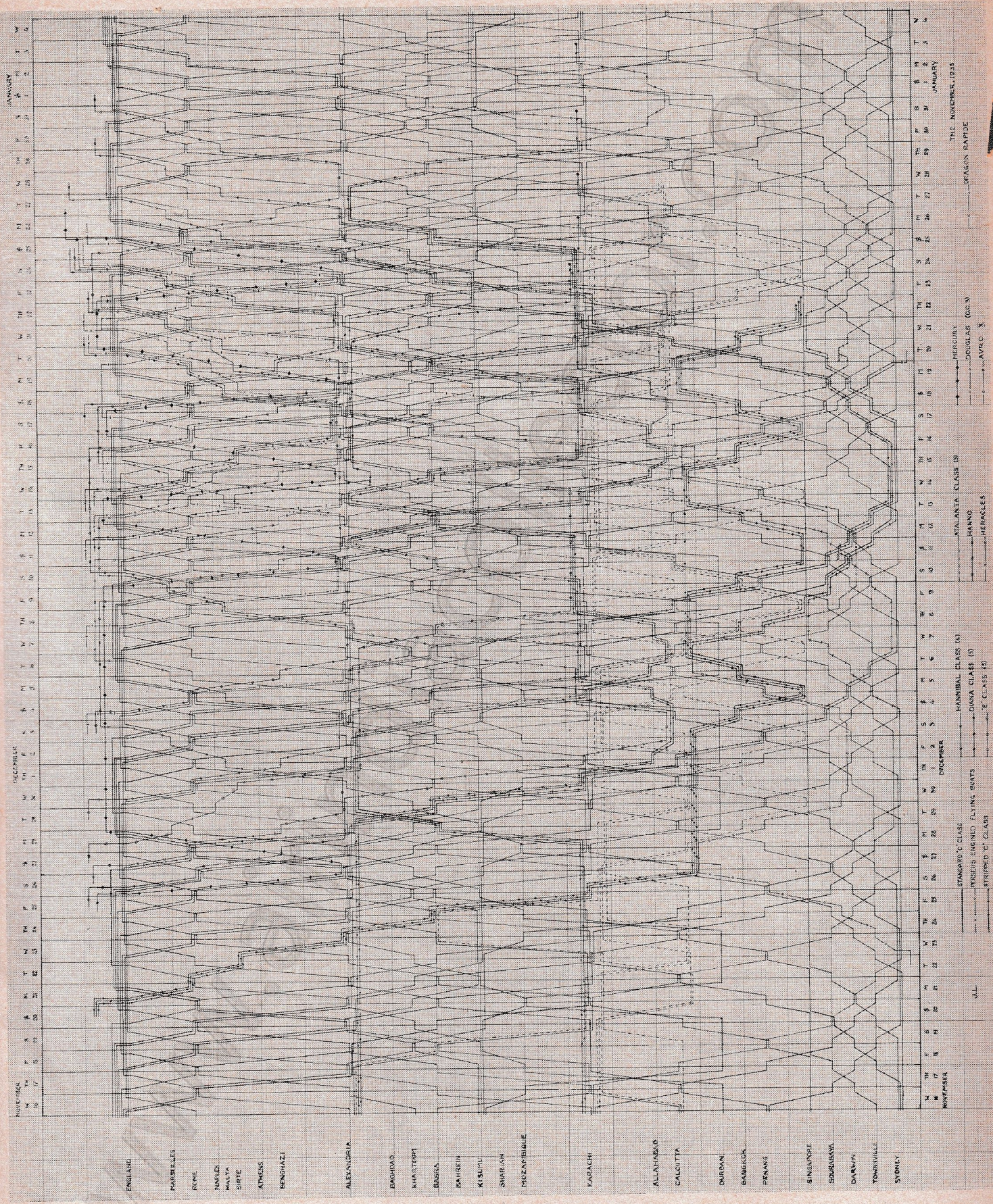
This year every letter addressed in this country to most of the countries of the Empire—provided the letters are placed in sealed envelopes—will be carried by Imperial Airways for delivery by Christmas. Further, there is the volume which the Company's aircraft must bring from the Empire to the British Isles.

Normally there are eight Imperial Airways services a week out of Southampton, five of which go to India and three to Central Africa. Of the former three go on to Australia and, of the latter, two on to Durban. There are naturally the same number of homeward bound services each week. There are

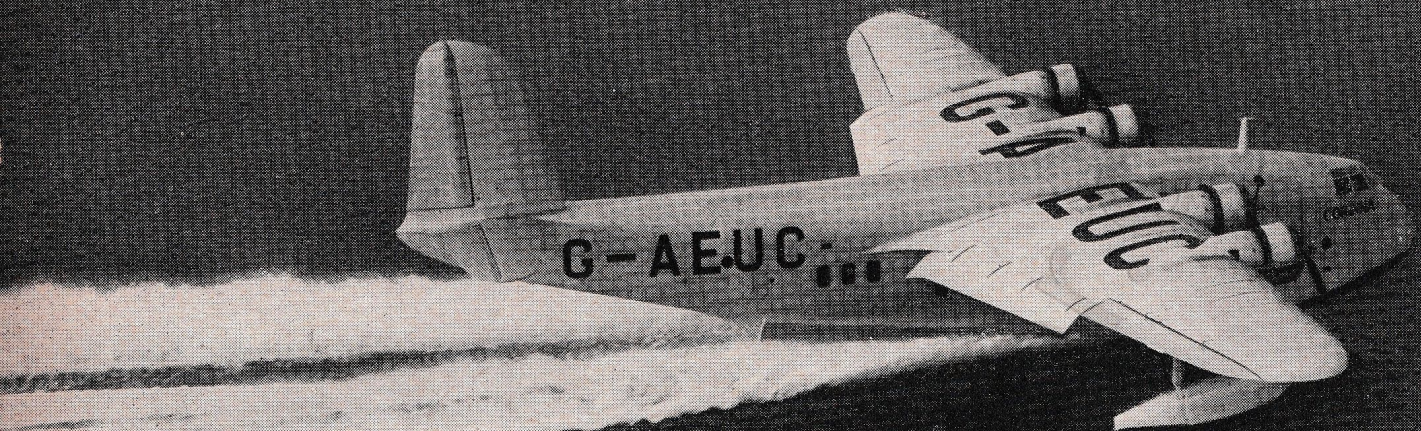


# CHRISTMAS MAILS 1938 Plans for Flying-boat and Landplane operations

D E C E M B E R I 9 3 8







no landplane services leaving England for the Empire under existing schedules.

During the four weeks beginning 27 November, there will be 12 extra flying-boat services out of Southampton and no less than 15 landplane services will leave Croydon during that period with Empire mail.

The *Mayo-Composite* marine aircraft is also being pressed into service and the *Mercury* will fly 5 non-stop services from Southampton to Alexandria carrying about a ton of mail on each flight. She will, as in her previous long-distance flights, be assisted into the air by the *Maia*.

In addition to the extra services from England there will be 10 extra landplane services leaving Alexandria for points along the main India-Australia route, 4 extra from Basra, 4 from Karachi and 12 from Calcutta—all eastbound. Many of the services will be operated in tandem—that is by two landplanes instead of one.

There are other fascinating arrangements such as that for overcoming the difficulty of the Tiberias-Habbaniyah bottleneck by 'operating supplementary landplane aircraft between Alexandria and Basra in tandem with flying-boat services,' but, as only the very few who have lost pounds of weight and nights of sleep can really understand all these seemingly myriad arrangements, we refrain from their enumeration. We only ask you to look at the operations chart on page 9, marvel at the ingenuity and patience of our traffic, operations and air mail staffs, think what it means to the engineers and flying personnel AND POST EARLY.

## SWITZERLAND IN THREE HOURS

Reports from Switzerland say that the snow is already in perfect condition and that the volume of air traffic is increasing daily. Swissair already have their new Winter Schedule in operation with the famous *Douglas* air liners and it is expected that Imperial Airways service with the new *Frobisher* air liners will come into operation immediately after Christmas.

By air is surely the easiest way to go 'winter-sporting' as now Zurich is only three hours away from London and travel by either Imperial Airways or Swissair eliminates all the petty annoyances of changes, customs examinations and eating unexpected meals in strange places.

The comfort of the *Douglas* air liners is already well-known and the pictures in this issue of the *Gazette* of Imperial Airways' new *Frobisher* class will give an accurate impression

of the luxurious and efficient service which is shortly to be operated by Imperial Airways.

## THE ENSIGN GETS INTO HER STRIDE

The *Ensign* has now been operating regularly on the Paris route for over a month and has been carrying good loads of passengers considering that this is one of the quietest seasons of the year.

Everywhere one hears praise for her comfort and for the greatly accelerated service that she is operating. She has been doing the trip regularly in the scheduled time of 1 hour and 20 minutes and one of our pictures in this issue shows her disembarking passengers at Croydon on one of her return trips.

The terrific size of *Ensign* is still a topic of conversation among air travellers and one of the diversions on the London-Paris route has now become that of standing in the Observation Corridor and watching the huge wheels of the under-carriage being either tucked up into the wings or lowered a few minutes before landing.

## THE WORLD'S AIRWAYS

By Robert Finch : published by University of London Press ; 224 pages, illustrated, 5s.

This book fills a gap that has long been noticeable in the library of civil aviation. At last there is a comprehensive survey of the great airlines of the world written by a man who is not so close to the subject that he becomes lost in a welter of technicalities. Robert Finch's book is essentially for the layman and particularly for the British schoolboy. Pleasantly and unobtrusively he has packed all the broad facts into 224 pages, yet found ample room for the colour and romance of air transport. The book is lavishly illustrated and, if some ten of the twenty-five chapters deal with the air activities of this country and the Empire, who will complain? British air transport has suffered from uncalled-for and unwarranted modesty. The book is an ideal Christmas present for any boy.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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