IMPERIAL AIRWAYS GAZETTE

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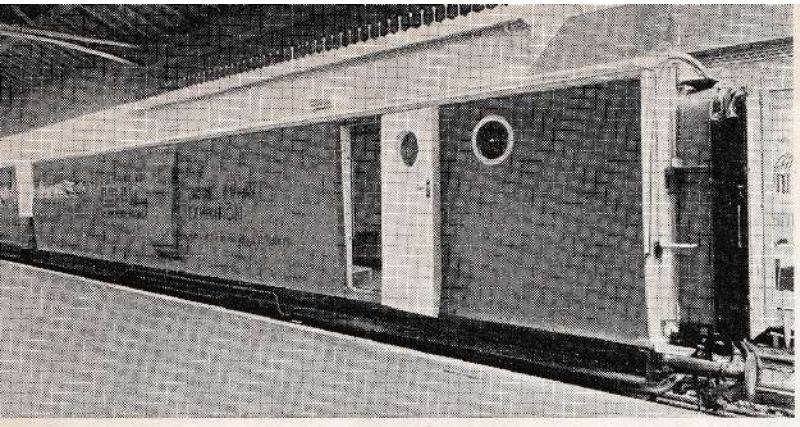


The Empire Airways Exhibition Train [Fox Photos

EMPIRE'S AIRWAY EXHIBITION TRAIN

The Exhibition Train is continuing to draw large crowds of people and we give below a further itinerary of this train :—

Sept.	24-26	Blackburn
,,	27-Oct. 1	Glasgow
Oct.	1-6	Edinburgh
,,	7-9	Newcastle
,,	10-13	Sunderland
,,	14-16	Middlesbrough
,,	17-20	Harrogate
,,	21-23	York
,,	24-27	Hull
,,	28-30	Leeds
,,	31-Nov. 3	Bradford

FLYING THE NORTH ATLANTIC 32 YEARS AGO ! THE LATE MR. RUDYARD KIPLING'S PRESCIENCE

A WONDERFUL STORY

Although the North Atlantic Ocean has been crossed now many times by aircraft, we believe that many of our readers may not know that the late Mr. Rudyard Kipling wrote some 32 years ago a very prescient and wonderful story depicting the operation of a transatlantic air service by airships.

The story is all the more noteworthy because at the time when the story was written only a few airships had been built (the first Zeppelin airship was commissioned in 1900) and only two years previously had the first man ever flown an aeroplane, namely, on 17 December 1903 when Wilbur Wright made the first flight from Kill Devil, North Carolina.

The story *With the Night Mail* was published in 1905 and appeared in Mr. Kipling's book, *Actions and Reactions*. Mrs. Rudyard Kipling has graciously given to us special permission to publish some extracts from this story—and these are given below—but we strongly advise all our readers to read the whole story which they will find most entrancing.

WITH THE NIGHT MAIL

' At nine o'clock of a gusty winter night I stood on the lower stages of one of the G.P.O. outward mail towers. My purpose was a run to Quebec in " Postal Packet 162 or such other as may be appointed " : and the Postmaster-General himself countersigned the order . . .

' The Captain of " 162 "—Captain Purnall, and his relief, Captain Hodgson. The one is small and dark ; the other large and red ; but each has the brooding sheathed glance characteristic of eagles and aeronauts . . .

' On the notice-board in the Captains' Room, the pulsing arrows of some twenty indicators register, degree by geographical degree, the progress of as many homeward-bound packets. The word " Cape " rises across the face of a dial ; a gong strikes : the South African mid-weekly mail is in at the Highgate Receiving Towers . . .

' Hissing softly, " 162 " comes to rest as level as a rule. From her North Atlantic Winter nose-cap (worn bright as diamond with boring through uncounted leagues of hail, snow, and ice) to the inset of her three built-out propeller-shafts is some two hundred and forty feet. Her extreme diameter, carried well forward, is thirty-seven . . .

' The dial shows 4,300 feet.

' " It's steep to-night," he mutters, as tier on tier of cloud drops under. " We generally pick up an easterly draught below three thousand at this time o' the year." . . .

' " Five thousand-six, six thousand eight hundred "—the dip-dial reads ere we find the easterly drift, heralded by a flurry of snow at the thousand fathom level. Captain Purnall rings up the engines and keys down the governor on the switch before him. There is no sense in urging machinery when Aeolus himself gives you good knots for nothing. We are away in earnest now—our nose notched home on our chosen star. At this level the lower clouds are laid out, all neatly combed by the dry fingers of the East. Below that again is the strong westerly blow through which we rose . . .

' " I remember the old days . . . One could get lost coming home then, an' have some fun. Now, it's like driving down Piccadilly." . . .

' Cork Light (green, fixed) enlarges as we rush to it. Captain Purnall nods.

' There is heavy traffic hereabouts—the cloud-bank beneath us is streaked with running fissures of flame where the Atlantic boats are hurrying Londonward just clear of the fluff. Mail-packets are supposed, under the Conference rules, to have the five-thousand-foot lanes to themselves, but the foreigner in a hurry is apt to take liberties with English air . . .

' There is no cloud on the Atlantic, and faint streaks of cream round Dingle Bay show where the driven seas hammer the coast. A big S.A.T.A. liner (Société Anonyme des Transports Aériens) is diving and lifting half a mile below us in search of some break in the solid west wind . . .

' The three engines are H.T. & T. assisted-vacuo Fleury turbines running from 3,000 to the limit . . .

' I peer from the fore end of the engine-room over the hatch-coamings into the coach. The mail-clerks are sorting the Winnipeg, Calgary, and Medicine Hat bags . . . We held to the St. Lawrence (it is astonishing how the old water-ways still pull us children of the air), and followed his broad line of black between its drifting ice-blocks, all down the Park that the wisdom of our fathers—but every one knows the Quebec run.

' We dropped to the Heights Receiving Towers twenty minutes ahead of time, and there hung at ease till the Yokohama Intermediate Packet could pull out and give us our proper slip . . .'

FLYING THE ATLANTIC

BY CAPT. A. S. WILCOCKSON

SOUTHAMPTON TO NEW YORK AND BACK IN THE *CALEDONIA*

We continue with the second of the articles written by Captain Wilcockson which appeared in a recent number of *News of The World*, to which we make due acknowledgment.

' The basis of the first commercial flight across the Atlantic in July was co-operation between Imperial Airways, whose Short *Empire* flying-boat *Caledonia* I had the honour to command, and Pan American Airways, whose Sikorsky *Clipper* ship was commanded by Captain Harold Gray.

' Both companies attached great importance to the plan for a joint flight in which both flying-boats would take off on the same evening—the one from Ireland and the other from Newfoundland—and arrive respectively in the New World and the Old at about the same time.

' This co-operation had been planned for diplomatic, no less than for commercial, reasons.

' Full reciprocity was the keynote of the policy of Imperial Airways and of Pan American Airways. It is co-operation of the happiest augury, which is going to do much to cement strongly and enduringly the close friendship of Great Britain and America.

' Thus, while my crew and I were preparing the *Caledonia* at the air base at Hythe, Southampton, for the first commercial flight to America, Pan American Airways were preparing their *Clipper* ship at Port Washington, the base for New York, for their east-bound trip to Canada, Newfoundland and England. . . .

' We were all ready then at Southampton on Sunday, 4 July, after many wireless and fuel tests had been carried out, to start off on our great adventure.

' We were satisfied that everything possible had been done to

Our front cover. A typical Captain of Imperial Airways—Commander of the Cavalier flying between Bermuda and New York. Like many other Captains he is a Master Pilot who has been flying for over twenty years, has spent many thousands of hours in the air, is the holder of a first class Navigator's Certificate and of decorations awarded on active service [Margaret Bourke-White Photograph by courtesy of *Life*

ensure success. Engines, wireless, and navigational instruments had all been checked, and were found to be working perfectly.

'It was 9.30 a.m. G.M.T., under an overcast sky, with a poor weather forecast between Southampton and Land's End, that we "set sail."

'(I shall quote all times from my log in terms of G.M.T.—that is, Greenwich Mean Time—as these flights are all planned on G.M.T.)

STRAIGHT ACROSS THE IRISH SEA

'It was raining very heavily, with low cloud and a fresh westerly wind as we reached Portland. I had decided to make an additional wireless test on our way to Foynes, some 350 miles from Southampton. This would give the wireless station on the Shannon at Foynes an opportunity of working with us to prepare everything for our departure for Newfoundland, scheduled for the evening of 5 July.

'We passed Land's End at 11.34 a.m., about two hours after leaving Southampton, and set course across the Irish Sea for Fastnet Rocks. Over the sea the weather improved, and we ran into a clear sky with good visibility.

'At 12.30 p.m., much to our surprise, we passed a large flying-boat bound towards England. We were unable to contact it by wireless, and even now I feel rather intrigued to know who it was, flying serenely along in the middle of the Irish Sea on a Sunday afternoon.

'Fastnet was passed at 1 p.m. where we sighted the liner *Scythia* ploughing her way below, bound for the Atlantic and America. I circled her twice, for I estimated she might be useful for a navigation check to us in mid-ocean.

'At 2.20 p.m. we arrived over Foynes, the flying-boat base which the Irish Free State has provided at the mouth of the River Shannon. Everything had worked splendidly, and after alighting and mooring, we went ashore. The Irish authorities, who had turned out specially on a Sunday afternoon to greet us, gave us a very warm welcome.

'We were now at the jumping-off place for the actual 2,000 miles ocean crossing, and I think it was at this time that we all felt our first real thrill.

'All the work we had done, all the organization and the little worries seemed to disappear in face of the great fact that the *Caledonia* was actually here on the Shannon, all ready to test the efficiency of those services which were to enable her to link the homeland with Canada and the U.S.A. by the newest method of transport.

'Instructions were given for the refuelling of the *Caledonia* to its full capacity. This consisted of eight tanks able to hold some 2,000 odd gallons of petrol—sufficient to enable us to complete our 2,000-miles journey against a continuous head wind of up to 40 m.p.h.

'Even if we met that, we knew we should still have a considerable margin of fuel left unused on alighting at the waters of Botwood, Newfoundland.

MAKING THE FINAL DECISION

'The afternoon was spent in conference with the meteorological offices of our Air Ministry and of the Irish Free State. Weather reports and forecasts were studied. I decided to give the 24-hours warning that we would start as planned next day, Monday, 5 July, at 6 p.m. G.M.T. (7 p.m. Irish Summer Time—same as B.S.T.).

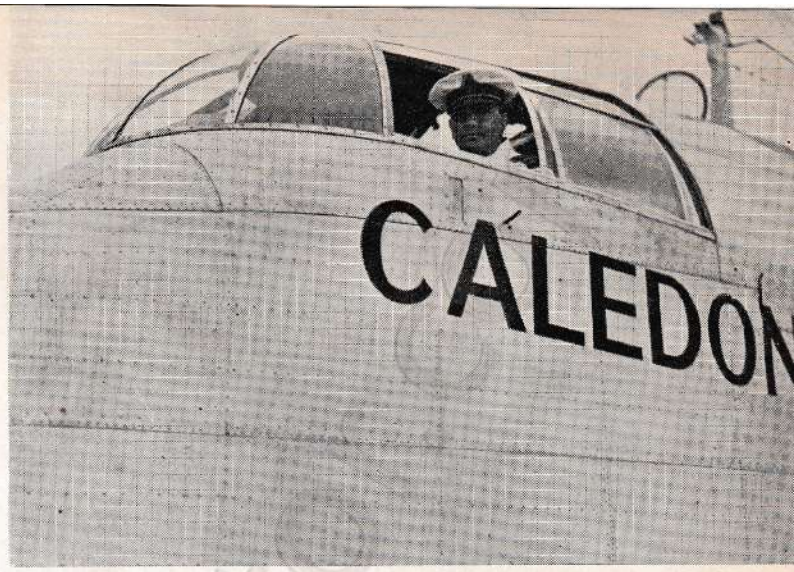
'The Irish authorities immediately notified Newfoundland, where the Pan American Airways *Clipper III* flying-boat was waiting, and received his signal of intention to start on 5 July also.

'We retired early to make up for the sleep we expected to lose on the following night.

'Mid-day on the fifth found us all gathered at the meteorological office again to take a final decision. The "met." officers looked decidedly pleased. They produced quite a favourable forecast.

'It showed unpleasant weather for the first 400 or 500 miles from Foynes with a fairly strong head-wind, but conditions improving afterwards all the way to Newfoundland, with wind gradually lessening. They predicted an average head-wind of 20 m.p.h.

'On this report I gave orders to make all ready for a start at 6 p.m. I estimated my time of crossing would be 16 hours. *Actually, it was 15 hours 6 minutes.* The fact that we kept so near to estimate may be recorded as due to the success of the "met." forecasters.



Captain Wilcockson before the start of the first crossing of the Atlantic

'At 5.30 p.m. my crew and I were gathered at the jetty ready to board the *Caledonia*. Ireland was wishing us a very wet farewell indeed, as it was raining quite heavily, but this had no effect on the spirits of the Irish people, who had been waiting for several hours to witness the start of this historic flight.

'We were specially honoured by a visit from Mr. Eamon de Valera, President of the Irish Free State, who had interrupted his election campaign, then in full swing, to pay us a visit and to wish us God-speed and good luck in the name of Ireland and of the Irish people. . . .

CROSSING THE OCEAN ON CHOCOLATE CAKE

'We took on board the *Caledonia* two large thermos jugs, one containing coffee, the other water. We also took several varieties of sandwiches; tinned fruit and cream; dry and sweet biscuits; and last, but not least, the now famous chocolate cake produced specially for the occasion by my First Officer, Mr. Bowes. . . .

'At 6.43 p.m. I gave orders to start the engines, and two minutes later the *Caledonia* slipped moorings and, to the cheers of those in the launches following and on shore, many of whom had played their parts in bringing an Atlantic air service into being, the ocean flight began.

'We taxied slowly down the channel between the mainland and Foynes Island into the broad reach of the Shannon itself. A strong westerly wind was raising quite a choppy sea, and I noticed the launch rolling considerably. The *Caledonia*, thanks to her large size, was making easy work of it.

'Each engine was tested at full throttle. I turned into wind with the whole stretch of the river before me and, opening the throttles to their fullest extent, with the boat gathering speed rapidly, I lifted her from the water.

'The time was 6.58 p.m. The first scheduled Atlantic air service had started.

'Course was set down the River Shannon. It was raining with low cloud and rather poor visibility. We passed Loop Head at 7.14 p.m. It was to be our last glimpse of land for 2,000 miles.

'We all sensed a distinct feeling of relief as we saw Ireland fading to a dim grey line in the rain. All the work of preparation and organisation was over. It was now up to the *Caledonia* and her crew to bring the flight to a successful conclusion.

'The cloud came ominously lower as we proceeded. At 7.30 p.m., I came down to 200 feet and was still flying in cloud. This lasted for only a short time, and by 8 p.m. I was able to fly at 800 feet, but it was still raining.

WIRELESS OPERATORS BUSY

'During this first hour the wireless operators, Mr. Hobbs and Mr. Valette, were busily occupied securing wireless bearings from Foynes. These indicated that we were drifting slightly to the south of our track and corrections were soon made.

'About 8 p.m. I broadcast to the B.B.C. and settled on my course at about 1,000 feet with engines running perfectly.

'Our automatic pilot, familiarly known as "George," now did most of the flying. This left Mr. Bowes and me free for

the task of navigation. By 9 p.m. the wind had decreased slightly, although the sky was still overcast, and it was round about this time that the 6 p.m. weather forecast which Foynes had plotted was broadcast to me.

'I thus had a clear picture of what the weather would be like for the whole journey, corrected up to 6 p.m. It showed that the weather had not changed since the 1 p.m. report on which we had decided to take off, but assured us we could look for a decrease in wind strength.

'Our speed over the water all this time had not exceeded 125 m.p.h., although I had decided to keep the *Caledonia's* air-speed indicator at a steady 150 m.p.h. This meant we were meeting a 25 m.p.h. head-wind.

'Soon after 9 p.m. it was blowing from a more northerly direction, however. This cheered us up, as it enabled our pace to be increased.

PROBLEM OF HEAD WINDS

'By flying lower the worst of the head-winds were avoided, but one was denied a continuous sight of the stars.

'At 9.20 p.m. we made contact by wireless with the S.S. *New York City*, and obtained her position and a bearing of 224 degrees. We were now in an estimated position of 52.36 N. and 17.55 W.

'Regular back-bearings had been secured from Foynes for the first 300 miles or so, proving that the Free State officials and our Air Ministry staff, who remained on duty all night, were eager to give us all the aid they could. By 10.30 p.m. we estimated our position to be 51.37 N. and 20.00 W.

'During a break in the showers we had seen a steamer four miles south of us, but failed to receive a reply when calling her for her position. Evidently the wireless operator had retired and was thinking of anything but aircraft over his head.

'These smaller steamers carry only one operator, and are not able to keep a continuous watch day and night. The operator works an eight hours' shift only. I could have flown round him, but concluded that the captain might think we were in distress.

'The bearings from the S.S. *New York City*, however, fitted in well with our estimated position. They showed that by about 9.30 p.m. we had covered 290 miles.

'Everybody had now settled down to their respective duties for the night. The wireless operators were receiving splendid results. Our navigation checked extremely well.

'For the first time since leaving Foynes we felt the tension easing, and decided we could sit up and look round a little. So we decided to dine.

'Mr. Hobbs was elevated to the responsible post of steward. He disappeared below, returning shortly afterwards with sandwiches, fruit, cream, and a jug of coffee. To a passenger on board the *Queen Mary* this might not appear a very elaborate meal. To us, however, it was most welcome, my particular weakness being fruit and cream and lots of coffee.

To be continued.

THE BADGES OF THE *EMPIRE* FLYING BOATS

We give below further reproductions of the badges of some of the *Empire* flying-boats which are printed on the ships' notepaper together with their mottoes :—

Ceres

'Ceres was the first to turn the glebe with the hooked plowshare; she first gave corn and kindly sustenance to the world; she first gave laws. All things are the gift of Ceres.' *Ovid*

Challenger

'With staff in hand across the cleft
The challenger pursued his march.'
Wordsworth

Cheviot

'The stag sprung up on Cheviot Fell
Spread his broad nostrils to the wind
Listed before, aside, behind.' *Scott*

Circe

'Even Circe of the braided tresses, a dread goddess of human speech.' *Homer*

Clio

'Clio singing of famous deeds restores past times to life.' *Ausonius*

Coolin

'Fair-haired maiden.' *From the Irish*

Cordelia

'And here I take Cordelia by the hand
Duchess of Burgundy.' *Shakespeare*

Corinna

'Corinna who sang of Athena's martial shield.' *Lyra Graeca*

Cassiopeia

'Glad Cassiopeia circling in the sky.'
Sir Samuel Garth

Castor

'I saw Leda, the consort of Tyndareus: she bore him two strong-willed sons, Castor the breaker of horses, and Polydeuces who was good with his fists.'
T. E. Lawrence's translation of Homer

To be continued.

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.

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.) and Swissair, may be obtained from Imperial Airways, Ltd., Airway 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 companies.

AS OTHERS SEE US

A passenger who recently travelled on Imperial Airways England-South Africa air route has written to us saying that—'I should like to express my admiration for the excellent way in which everything was managed. The catering on the boat itself was splendid and the accommodation everywhere else good.'

CROSSING THE ATLANTIC

A MATTER OF ROUTINE!

The *Caledonia*, commanded by Captain A. S. Wilcockson, made her second crossing of the North Atlantic on Sunday, 15 August. These crossings are made so much to schedule that they are ceasing to be "news" and we reproduce the paragraph from *The Times*—its very brevity being its testimony.

> **CALEDONIA'S DAYLIGHT OCEAN CROSSING**
>
> **TO BOTWOOD IN 16½ HOURS**
>
> FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT
>
> ST. JOHN'S, NF., AUG. 15
>
> The Imperial Airways flying-boat Caledonia arrived at Botwood this evening at 6.43 (E.D.T.) (9 p.m. B.S.T.), thus accomplishing the first daylight crossing by a British craft on the experimental service. The journey from Foynes, Ireland, had taken just over 16½ hours.

Between 21 and 22 August, the *Caledonia* flew from Botwood, Newfoundland, to Foynes, Irish Free State in 11 hours, 33 minutes.

On 26 August the *Cambria* (Captain J. G. Powell) made the east to west crossing in 14 hours, 24 minutes.

These two flights are the fastest crossings of the North Atlantic Ocean made in the present series of commercial flights.

NEW PUBLICITY

Imperial Airways has just published a new edition of its booklet, *Air Travel for Business*, which gives a great deal of information about the value of air transport to the business man. Supplies of this booklet have already been sent to the company's agents—but any business man may have a copy by writing to the company.

THE SHORT-MAYO COMPOSITE AIRCRAFT

For some months a great deal of interest has been aroused in a new type of aircraft which Imperial Airways is to test shortly. We refer to the *Short-Mayo Composite Aircraft* which has been designed by Major R. H. Mayo, O.B.E., M.A., A.M.Inst.C.E., F.R.Ae.S., the General Manager (Technical) of Imperial Airways.

ITS PURPOSE

The main purpose of this invention is to provide a solution to the fundamental problem underlying long range flying, namely, the difficulty of getting an aircraft safely into the air with the heavy load of fuel required.

It is this difficulty which has so greatly retarded the progress of regular long range air services over routes such as that linking Great Britain and Canada over the North Atlantic.

What the Composite Aircraft does is to eliminate the 'take-off' problem altogether. The heavily loaded aircraft which is to operate the long range service is relieved of the necessity of 'taking-off' by itself and is assisted into the air by an auxiliary aircraft to which it is rigidly attached.

ITS PRINCIPLE

The two component aircraft together form a 'composite' aircraft, which is, in effect, a biplane of normal characteristics and capable of 'taking-off' quickly and easily after a comparatively short run. For technical reasons the long range service aircraft forms the upper component of the composite aircraft and the auxiliary aircraft the lower one.

When the composite aircraft has climbed to a suitable height and has settled down to steady level flight, the locking mechanism securing the two components together is released and the components thereupon automatically separate.

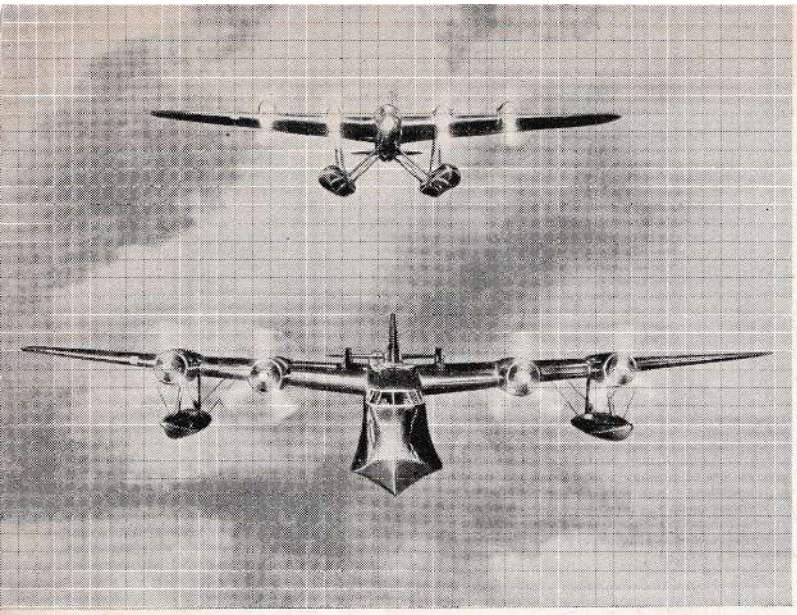
The upper component rises clear of the lower and proceeds on its long range flight, while the lower component returns to the base in readiness for the launching of another upper component, or for other service as a normal aircraft.

SAFETY DEVICES

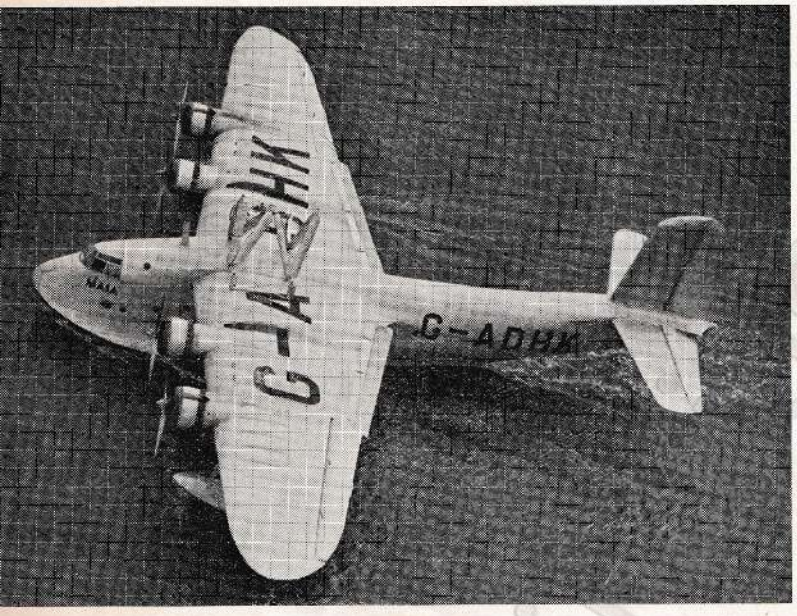
The provision of means to ensure safe separation of the two components, without risk of fouling or subsequent collision, is one of the fundamentals of the composite aircraft invention. This is achieved by the automatic generation of a powerful aerodynamic force tending to separate the two components and the provision of a special locking and release mechanism which prevents detachment of the components unless the separating force acting at the moment of detachment be sufficient to ensure their rapid vertical separation.

The release mechanism is simple yet foolproof and has been subjected to exhaustive tests to ensure its satisfactory functioning. As a result of these tests it is confidently anticipated that the separation of the components can be safely effected in all normal weather conditions and that the composite aircraft can thus be operated for regular long range services in all parts of the world. An important feature is that separation can be effected at any desired height, so that even in very bad weather conditions it should be possible to find a height at which separation can be safely effected. If, however, for any reason it is desired to return to the base without effecting separation of the components the composite aircraft as a whole can land safely as a single aircraft.

During the flight of the composite aircraft as such, control is vested solely in the pilot of the lower component, the controls of the upper one being locked. The controls of the upper component are automatically released as detachment occurs. This feature eliminates the risk of trouble due to divided control and consequent misunderstanding between the two pilots. There are many other features to ensure the safe and successful functioning of the composite aircraft, but these need not be elaborated here.

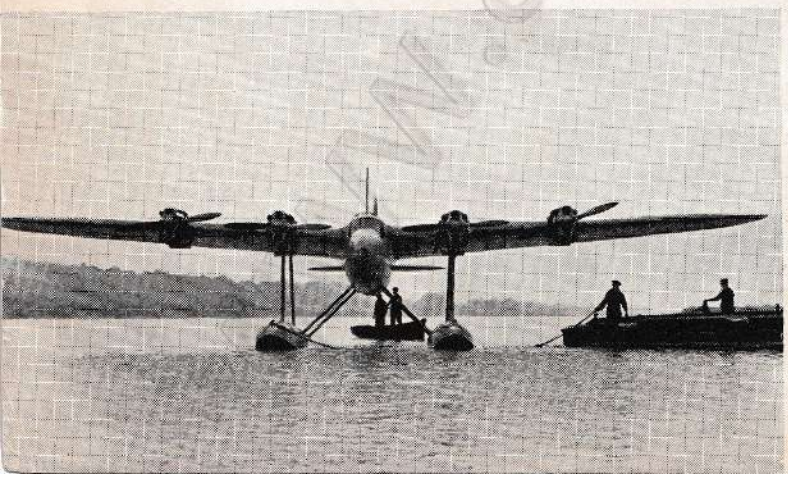


Photograph of models of the two components just after their separation



The lower component—the Maia—starting its 'take-off' run. The superstructure on the top of the plane carries the upper component [Associated Press Photo

The upper component—the Mercury just after her launch [Associated Press Photo



TECHNICAL DETAILS

The particular composite aircraft now nearing completion at the works of Short Brothers (Rochester and Bedford) Ltd., is of the marine type.

The upper component is a four-engined float seaplane designed to meet a particular specification of requirements for the North Atlantic route. When carrying a load of 1,000 lb. of mail it will have a range of approximately 3,500 miles at a cruising speed of 160 to 170 m.p.h., this being sufficient to make the North Atlantic crossing in face of a continuous headwind averaging as much as 60 m.p.h. This is a higher average wind speed than has ever been recorded. The elimination of the 'take-off' problem by the composite aircraft method enables this performance to be achieved with the very low total horsepower of 1,280 h.p.

The normal total weight of this component is 20,000 lb., of which nearly one-half consists of fuel and oil, but it is believed that this total weight can be increased, if desired, in order to provide additional range or payload. It should be noted that this upper component would be quite incapable of 'taking-off' by itself at a total weight approaching this figure of 20,000 lb.

The alighting problem is solved by the fact that the total weight is so greatly reduced at the end of the long flight that the alighting speed is reduced to the normal standard. In the unlikely event of a forced alighting before completion of the flight, the remaining load of fuel can be discharged rapidly by means of the jettison valve provided.

The lower component is a four-engined flying-boat of normal characteristics. It is generally similar in size and capacity to the *Empire* flying-boat and can be used, if desired, for normal operations when not required for launching upper components.

This particular composite aircraft has been designed and constructed for the Air Ministry and Imperial Airways to establish the principles of the composite aircraft. If the forthcoming trials achieve the success which is anticipated these principles can be immediately applied to other designs of composite aircraft. The composite aircraft principle is, of course, equally applicable to land type aircraft; in fact, either component may be of land or marine type according to the requirements of the particular service.

The upper component of the composite aircraft nearing completion will have sufficient range to link together every part of the British Empire without having to alight on, or even fly over, foreign territory. In subsequent versions of the composite aircraft considerably greater range and much higher speeds can be achieved and it is hoped, therefore, that this type of aircraft will be able to play in the future an important part in the system of Imperial air communications.

The lower component, the *Maia*, has already been tested and the upper component, the *Mercury*, has begun its flying trials, and Imperial Airways hopes that in the next few weeks a launch of the combined unit will take place.

FUNDAMENTAL DIFFERENCES

In view of certain statements which have been made in the Press, we think it desirable to state that the principle of the *Short-Mayo Composite Aircraft* is fundamentally different from all other means of assisted flight which have been tried or suggested in the past.

THE SHORT HISTORY OF THE EMPIRE'S AIRWAY

Some months ago we published some principal dates in the history of Imperial Airways. Since then we have received a large number of requests for a fuller history of the company and for information where detailed history and specific matters may be obtained.

Starting with this month's issue, therefore, we are going to give the principal events in the history of the company and its associates and subsidiaries. The subject is such a big one that it is not possible, within the limits provided, to give every important date but we hope that the information which we shall supply will be of value to historians and to others interested in the development of air transport.

We shall give some details (especially of the immediate post-war years), that may not seem at first sight entirely relevant,

but as we continue with this history those who are interested will see the importance of these particular dates.

A large number of books has been published relating to the history of British Air Transport. Many of these, however, are not accurate and the authorities which we shall quote are chiefly from Government publications or from memoirs of proven accuracy. Some of the 'white papers' and 'blue books' mentioned are out of print and can only be seen in libraries. Others may be obtained from the various branches of His Majesty's Stationery Office in this country.

1909

The French jurist, M. P. Fauchille, discussed the state of the law relating to aerial transport. He said, *inter alia*, that 'From the point of view of property, we cannot speak of aerial territory; there is simply terrestrial territory, which comprises, with the ground, the cultivated areas and the buildings which cover it' and 'The air is in fact . . . something which belongs to nobody and which may be used by all. The State will therefore be obliged, in order to safeguard its existence, to limit for others the free use of the air. But it will only be able to claim over the air those rights which are indispensable to its defence.'[1] ●The legal aspect is of great importance in the studying of the history of air transport.

1910

18 May-28 November — First *International Conference on Aerial Navigation* assembled to discuss matters relating to Aerial Navigation. This was held in Paris under the presidency of M. Louis Renault, a famous jurist, and was attended by delegates from Great Britain, Germany, Italy and Switzerland. The German delegate, Dtr. Johannes Krieg, desired the adoption of the declaration that navigation of the air above all foreign countries should be free. This proposal met with severe opposition and the discussion became so acrimonious that the Conference had to be adjourned twice and then *sine die*. The British Foreign Office sponsored the resolution that 'no regulations should be framed which in any way exclude or limit the right of any State to prescribe the conditions under which the air above its territories should be navigated.'

Arising out of this Conference the *Aerial Navigation Bill*, 1910 was drafted, the preamble to which ran that 'the air above all parts of His Majesty's Dominions and the territorial waters adjacent thereto are inviolable.' This is analogous to the Common Law doctrine *cujus est solum ejus est usque ad coelum* which, freely translated, means that the possessor of land owns the air above him to infinity as well as the soil beneath him.

1911

2 June — *The Aerial Navigation Act* received the Royal assent. This was 'An Act to provide for the protection of the public against dangers arising from the Navigation of Aircraft' and dealt solely with the 'Power to prohibit navigation of aircraft over prescribed areas.'[2]

9-26 Sept. — Opening of the First United Kingdom Aerial Post Service in Great Britain from London (Hendon) to Windsor to commemorate coronation of King George V—'by sanction of H.M. Postmaster-General.' The pilot was Gustave Hamel who piloted a Blériot monoplane. Specially issued envelopes and postcards marked '*For Conveyance by Aeroplane from London to Windsor. No responsibility in respect of loss, damage, or delay is undertaken by the Postmaster-General*,' were sold at 1s.1½d. and 6½d. each respectively, already franked for inland postage. One bag of 'privileged' mail was carried on 9 September and the public mail on 11 and 26 September.

Although this was the first official Air Mail in Great Britain, it is not the first British acceptance of mail for transmission by air. For on 18 November 1870, letters for Paris, which was then being besieged by the Prussians, were accepted by the General Post Office for transmission by pigeon post service between Tours and Paris; the service continued until 28 January 1871.

16-18 Sept. — Return service from Windsor to Hendon. During the life of this service about 13,000 letters and postcards were carried.

1913

14 February — *An Act to Amend the Aerial Navigation Act*, 1911, received the Royal assent.

This Act gave powers to the Secretary of State 'to prescribe the areas within which aircraft coming from any place outside the United Kingdom are to land, and the other conditions to be complied with by such aircraft . . .' and also mentioned, *inter alia*, 'that the area prescribed may include the whole or any part of the coastline of the United Kingdom and the territorial waters adjacent thereto.'[3]

1916

5 October — *Aircraft Transport and Travel, Ltd.* formed (George Holt Thomas, Managing Director) with the object, *inter alia*, of 'establishing and maintaining lines . . . and to enter into contracts for the carriage of mails, passengers, goods and cattle by any means and either by the company's own aircraft and conveyances or by or over the aircraft . . . of others.'

Mr. Thomas, who may justly be regarded as the 'Father of British Air Transport,' was the founder of the Aircraft Manufacturing Co., Ltd., the parent of the new company.[4]

1917

22 May — *The Civil Aerial Transport Committee* appointed by the Air Board (under the chairmanship of Viscount Northcliffe) to report *inter alia* on 'the steps which should be taken' to develop 'aviation for civil and commercial purposes from a domestic and imperial and an international standpoint.'

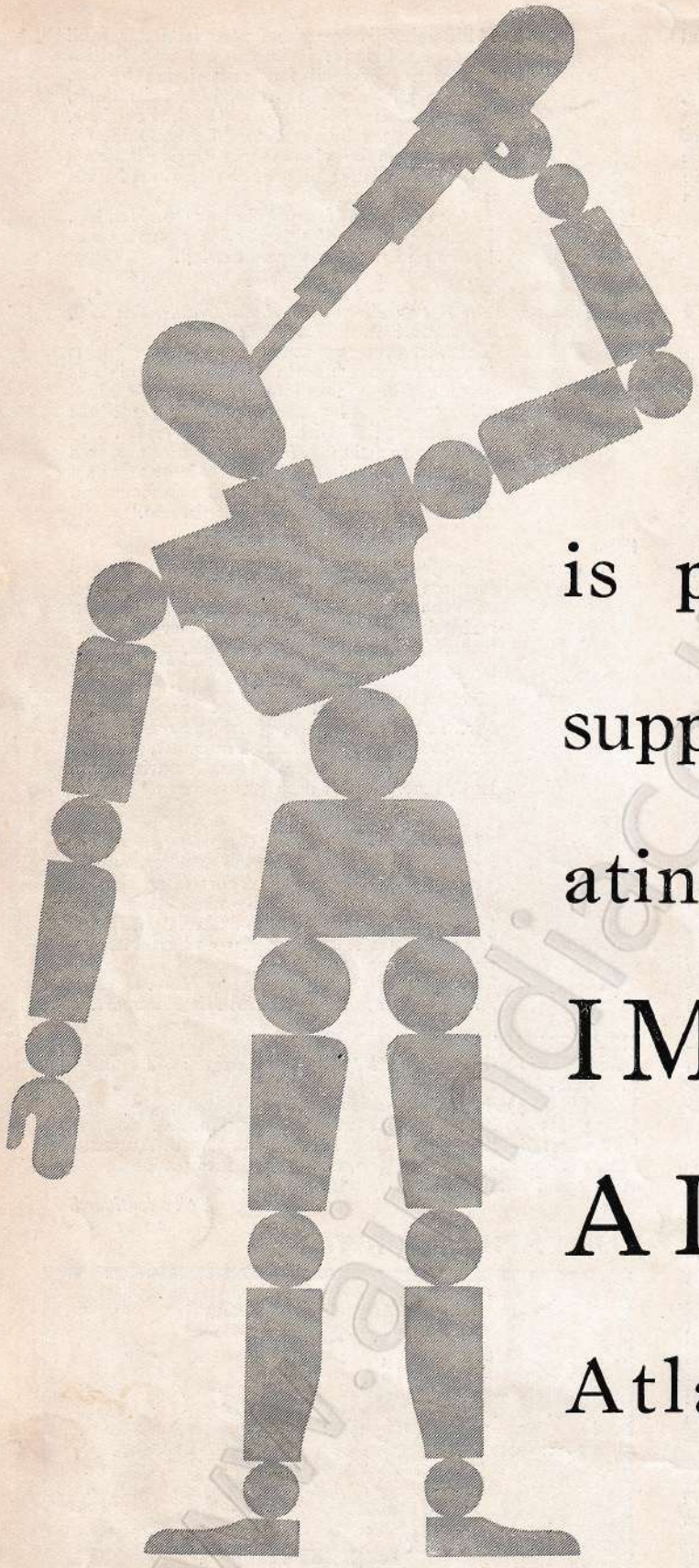
This was the first step taken by H.M. Government towards fostering British Air Transport.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

[1] *Le Domain Aérien et le Régime Juridique des Aérostats*—P. Fauchille. Paris, 1909.
[2] (122 Geo. 5) *Aerial Navigation Act*, 1911 (Ch. 4).
[3] (223 Geo. 5) *Aerial Navigation Act*, 1913 (Ch. 22).
[4] The first directors were George Holt Thomas and Augustus Fildes Thomas. Capital £50,000 divided into 50,000 shares of £1 each. Half preference, half ordinary.

To be continued.

THE EMPIRE'S AIRWAY



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