

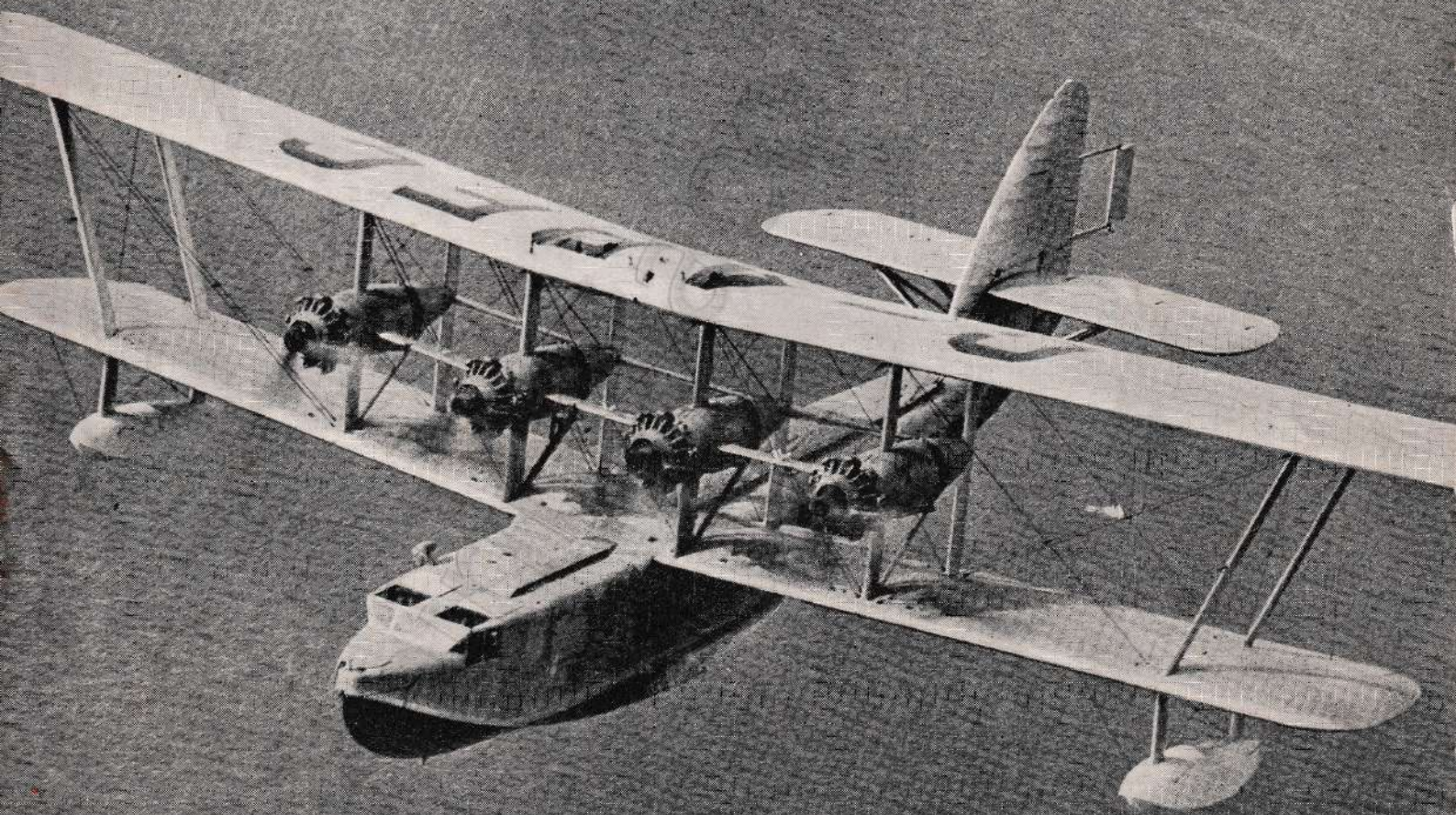
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NOW ON TO CHINA!

OCTOBER 1935 · NO 10 · VOL 7

IMPERIAL AIRWAYS GAZETTE



SIR MACPHERSON ROBERTSON ON IMPERIAL AIRWAYS

In a recent issue of the *Sunday Times* Sir MacPherson Robertson (the donor of the prize for the recent air race between London and Melbourne) paid the following tribute to British Civil Aviation in general and Imperial Airways in particular.

'There is very little wrong with British civil aviation, whether one regards its actual achievements or the policy by which those achievements have been attained. That is the fixed impression I shall take back with me to Australia after an investigatory tour of the air centres of Europe.

'In a sense, I actually feel that I have been indirectly responsible for much of the discussion which has revolved around the topic of British civil aviation prestige during the past few months. It is an odd thing—and yet perhaps, knowing the calculated contrariness of the modest Briton, not so odd—that the criticisms levelled against British commercial flying become more numerous after the London-Melbourne Air Race, which I had the honour of inaugurating and financing. The fact that you won the race seems to be overlooked altogether, and instead the achievement of every nation but your own was sung and invidiously enlarged.

'The British public, with all respect, has still to be educated to the technicalities of its air services, and the impact of these criticisms on the malleable public mind led to a sense of inferiority and might well have damaged the patronage of British routes and the sale of your machines.

STRIKING FACTS

'What are the facts? Britain operates regularly and with great safety and comfort a longer mileage than any other country with the exception of America. Imperial Airways alone fly two-and-a-half million miles a year—an impressive figure.

'Economically the running of British services is sound. This appeals to me particularly as a business man, and if it were not serious I would find something risible in the oft-quoted argument that you should provide the same financial facilities to your aircraft as America, where the whole system is being overfed from a very large bottle.

'I wonder what the British taxpayer would say if called on, as the Americans are, to find an air subsidy amounting to nearly £5,000,000 a year? In fact, to put British civil aviation on the same financial footing would cost more than six millions. It makes it impossible, too, for air lines to develop, as Britain is doing, a policy of self-support.

'Last year 50,000 travellers left Croydon on British machines, and the mail load amounted to 16,000,000 letters, the operation of route mileage in the Empire alone for these passengers and mails being nearly 37,000 miles. I challenge any country in the world to produce figures such as these and to point a similar financial return.

'The consistent endorsement of your policy of comfort and regularity is infinitely better and infinitely more sane than the policy adopted by some other countries of speed and still more speed. On long distances the saving of an hour or two at the cost of comfort is bad psychology as well as bad finance. Here I might observe, however, that your machines, some of the latest of which have a top speed of 170 miles an hour, compare favourably with those even of America.

'On this subject of machines, I also find a disposition in this country to overlook the fact that the British article is without a shadow of doubt the best in the world.

CRITICISM SHOULD BE INFORMED

'Another point in this little list which I am presenting to British critics is this: When criticising British services it must be remembered that it is one thing to operate a service over a country like America, which has no national boundaries, but quite another to operate, as Britain does, over four continents and 30 countries, each with economic barriers and, what is more, a mesh of political entanglements which constantly change and which have constantly to be surmounted.'

ATLANTIC AIR SERVICE

The operation of an air service across the Atlantic Ocean is a subject which is of interest to most people. Few, however, appreciate the many problems which have to be faced and over-

come before such a service can hope to become an economical success.

Recently *The Times* newspaper devoted a leading article to the subject, which we reproduce with acknowledgment to that paper, in the belief that our readers will find it interesting and informative.

OCEAN AIR ROUTES THE CHOICE OF BASES

Unfruitful speculation in several quarters concerning a probable base of the widespread seaplane operations which may be expected within the next few years has lately caused some agitation in the great seaports and may even lead to speculation of a more material kind. A variety of unauthorized statements has been in circulation during recent weeks. One chose Portsmouth, another Southampton as the centre to which the British marine aircraft fleets operating the Empire routes will gravitate. Another asserted the superior claims of a site of a seaplane base at the mouth of the Thames. The Corporation of Liverpool opened negotiations with a promoter who proposed to manufacture ocean-going seaplanes alongside the city's airport—a project which seemed to imply the need of a seaplane base in the Mersey beside the flying field. The scramble to find the right spot and take a hand in its development marks an enterprising interpretation of the situation which may arise within the next two years, but a sound interpretation cannot be reached at present. It is known that Imperial Airways will have a big fleet of flying-boats ready for service some time in 1937 and that those seaplanes will probably operate most of the route between England and the Cape, and possibly the whole of the route between England and Australia.

What is not known is the point on the coasts which will be considered most suitable by the Air Ministry and Imperial Airways, taking into account the needs of passengers and mails for further transport to the centre of distribution in London. The existence of a seaplane base will not determine that choice, and the preparation of such a base by private enterprise on such an assumption would be a highly speculative proceeding. This is not to say that Great Britain must be restricted to one great seaplane base for its commercial flying or that all its marine aviation will be concentrated in the hands of the one great operating company entrusted as at present with the carriage of Empire mails. Other seaplane routes will be opened and, as air traffic grows, other companies may operate services along them just as has occurred on sections of the land routes. Hence the apparent attractiveness of the idea of linking projects for oversea air services with proposals for the establishment of seaplane bases. The speculator concerned with this type of enterprise has always before him the very large traffic which should offer when a sound air service across the Atlantic can be provided in the first place for urgent freights and afterwards for passengers. An air service across a piece of sea or a stretch of desert on a well-used route has been proved to be a profitable service on a small scale in several instances, and should yield a still greater reward when it can be efficiently worked on a big scale. It is not forgotten that the most successful home air line at present is the one between London and Jersey and that the enterprise which founded it came from a coach-builder who brought to the undertaking no personal experience of commercial flying. By analogy it might be concluded that similar enterprise on the Atlantic route will yield the speculator a similarly encouraging reward. The analogy does not hold good because the Atlantic route is not ready for early operation and is not free to all as a home air route is free.

THE CHOICE OF ROUTES

Of the two routes across the Atlantic which are most likely to be used, that which touches the Azores and Bermuda offers the fewer meteorological difficulties; but at present there is not a satisfactory seaplane base at either place of call. A scheme for the provision of one at Bermuda is in hand, and a joint arrangement has been made between Imperial Airways and Pan American Airways for reciprocal facilities in Bermuda and the United States. Any other company desiring to use this route would have to arrange terms with the United States. On the more northerly route between England and Newfoundland there is also no seaplane base at the westerly end. Again, steps are being taken to provide one, and in this instance it is proposed to give a lease to Imperial Airways which will

virtually make that company the controlling authority. This may be a natural safeguard for the company which is being helped by the Government to discover a practical solution of the Atlantic problem, but it will place the independent operator in the position of having to seek permission to use the Newfoundland seaplane base of the company with which he proposes to compete for business.

TECHNICAL PROBLEMS

These difficulties are perhaps less immediate than those associated with the actual flying of the route. Meteorological information from the Atlantic is too sparse at present to serve the aeroplane. The range of the flying-boat in its latest form is too short to allow it to make Atlantic crossings with a profitable pay-load. In seaworthiness, too, it is no match for Atlantic waves. There are some who argue that the question of seaworthiness and pay-load should be attacked simultaneously by the construction of a very big flying-boat of perhaps 500 tons loaded weight. A boat of this kind they say could ride any but the worst storms and would help to solve the question of load because increase in size does not appear to involve a proportional increase in structure weight. Those who advance these suggestions admit that the expense could not be borne by any firm of constructors. The idea would involve the commissioning of engine designers to produce high-powered engines and the placing of a big contract with a flying-boat constructor. A moderate estimate of the cost is £500,000, and the Air Ministry has turned from that sort of proposal towards one which assumes that the Atlantic aeroplane will not need to descend on the sea in the course of its journey between the two continents.

Accepting these premises, all that remains is to build a comparatively small seaplane capable of high speed, load it more heavily than a commercial aeroplane has ever been loaded before, provide it with a porter aeroplane to help it into the air, and then assume that after a journey of 2,000 miles it will have used so much petrol that it will be lightly enough loaded to make a safe descent in the harbour. That theory will be tested early next year. [*Imperial Airways has under construction an aeroplane embodying this principle.*—ED.] All these matters are receiving attention, and solutions in certain cases may proceed on unorthodox lines; but there can be little doubt that the enterprise, towards which these efforts tend, is not yet ripe for speculation of the more serious sort.

BRUSSELS UNIVERSAL AND INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION

We mentioned in the August issue of the *Gazette* that Imperial Airways was taking a stand at this exhibition.

The exhibition itself has been a very great success for over 16 million people have visited it since its opening in April until the end of August. The Company's stand has aroused a good deal of attention and in the *Architectural Review* of July the statement is made, *inter alia*, that it 'is one of the best pieces of display in the Exhibition. Enlarged photographs have been used with skill; pictorial statistics have been used with imagination. Not an inch of the wall space is congested; not an inch of the display material is dull.' In a leading article the statement was made that the stand did a great deal 'to suggest that the British Empire is a proud and vital and magnificent force in the world.' Imperial Airways has now been informed that it has been awarded a 'Diplôme d'honneur' by the International Jury of Awards for its stand.

GUIDE TO IMPERIAL AIRWAYS' AFRICA ROUTE

For the guidance of our agents, readers and potential travellers, we have prepared a series of notes on each stopping place along the Africa and India and Eastern routes. The first section of these notes covers the Africa route. Notes on stations north of Khartoum have appeared in previous *Gazettes*, beginning with Alexandria in the April issue.

KHARTOUM

3,458 miles from London, 4,405 miles from Cape Town.

HISTORY

Khartoum, founded by Mohammed Ali in 1822, quickly became prosperous as an outpost of Egyptian trade. In 1883,

the Nubian tribes of the Sudan led by the Mahdi rebelled against Egypt.

After the annihilation of the two Egyptian forces, General Gordon was sent to withdraw the garrisons of the Sudan. Arriving in Khartoum, he heroically defended the city from February 1884 until his defeat and death in January 1885, just before the arrival of the British relief expedition.

The Mahdists reduced Khartoum to ruins. The Egyptian frontier was withdrawn to Wadi Halfa until 1896, when Kitchener began punitive operations against the Mahdists once more. In 1898, with an Anglo-Egyptian force, he inflicted a crushing defeat on the dervish forces at Kerreri and entered Omdurman, which had been the Mahdist capital since 1884. Lord Kitchener designed a new Khartoum, of wide streets and squares.

CLIMATE

From November to March the climate is temperate. From April to October it is hot. It is dusty during the months April to June and July and August are the wet months.

CURRENCY

The monetary unit is the Egyptian pound of 100 piastres. £1 English = 97½ piastres (approx.). There are coins of 50, 20, 10, 5 and 2 piastres, and of 10, 5, 2, 1 and ½ milliemmes. 10 milliemmes = 1 piastre.

HOTELS

Grand Hotel, Gordon Hotel, Royal Hotel.

SIGHTS OF INTEREST

By permission of the Governor-General the Governor-General's Palace is open to visitors most mornings. It is built on the foundations of the building in which Gordon lived and fell in his defence against the Mahdi. Trophies of Gordon's expedition are on view.

The mosque at Khartoum is the largest in the Sudan. This is open on all days except Fridays.

South of the city are a series of huts known as the *Deims*. Here pilgrims of many African races gather in the process of their long journey to Mecca.

Fifteen minutes by car across the river from Khartoum is Omdurman, one of the greatest African native cities. Omdurman was the Mahdist capital from 1884 to 1898 (see *History*). During this time it was the scene of terrible cruelties and extravagant orgies.

Kerreri, on the left bank of the Nile, six miles north of Omdurman, is where on 2 September 1898 Kitchener defeated the dervish forces at the battle of Omdurman.

Sport available includes yachting, golf, horse-racing and fishing for Nile perch. Some shooting is also available locally with duck and hares.

IMPERIAL AIRWAYS SERVICE TO KHARTOUM

There are two services a week by Imperial Airways to Khartoum, leaving London on Wednesdays and Sundays and arriving at Khartoum on Saturdays and Wednesdays, a journey of 3½ days.

TRAVEL CONNEXIONS FROM KHARTOUM

By air: Imperial Airways.

Two services a week between Khartoum and England. Services leave Khartoum for East Africa and South Africa (Johannesburg) on Sunday and Thursday, the service which leaves Khartoum on Sundays continuing to Cape Town.

By water: Sudan Government Railways' Steamers.

Points south along the White Nile to Kosti.

By land: Sudan Government Railways.

Points north to Wadi Halfa, El Obeid, Sennar and the south.

Khartoum, showing the North Railway Bridge

[Photograph, American Colony Stores, Jerusalem]





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 any *bona fide* applicant from the Publicity Manager's Office, Imperial Airways, Ltd., Airways House, Charles Street, London, S.W.1. School children must make their application through their Schoolmaster or Schoolmistress. Full information about the services of Imperial Airways may be obtained from the offices of the principal travel agents, or from Imperial Airways, Ltd., Airway Terminus, Victoria Station, S.W.1, or from Airways House, Charles Street, S.W.1. Telephone, VICTORIA 2211. Telegrams: 'Impairlim, London.' Airway Terminus is open day and night. Details of all the services of Imperial Airways and of other Air Transport Companies are given in *Bradshaw's International Air Guide*, which is published every month and may be bought from any news-agent in the United Kingdom, price 1s., or from the Proprietors at 5 Surrey Street, Strand, London, W.C.2.

AS OTHERS SEE US

Declaring that it was hardly fair to aviation that air accidents always received so much more publicity than road accidents, Admiral Mark Kerr, a former Deputy Chief of the Air Staff, told the Women's Engineering Society in London the other day: 'There is nothing in the world—no steamship or railway line—so safe as Imperial Airways, which has lost less than one life for every million miles of flight.'

EXPERIMENTAL SERVICE TO CHINA

Imperial Airways will begin on 2 October a schedule of six return voyages between Penang and Hong Kong calling only at Saigon and Touraine in French Indo-China. The service will be operated by the *Dorado*, one of the *Diana* class of air liners. The first two return flights will be surveys and three days will be taken on the single journey. The last four return flights will, however, take 1½ days and will connect with the Empire service, both eastbound and westbound, at Penang. Mail will not be carried on any of these flights.

WINTER SERVICE TO SWITZERLAND

The service operated by Imperial Airways between London and Basle and Zürich ends on 5 October, but that of Swissair continues until 31 October. There will then be an interim period as there will be no air service operated by either company over this route until 16 December, of which further particulars will be given in the November *Gazette*.

OUR FRONTISPIECE

Our frontispiece shows the *Satyrus*, one of the *Scipio* class of flying-boats, crossing the Mediterranean. This photograph was taken by Mr. Charles E. Brown, to whom acknowledgment is made.

NEW LANTERN LECTURE

THE FUTURE IS IN THE AIR

As we promised in last month's *Gazette*, we give below a list of the titles in the standard lantern lecture issued by Imperial Airways.

This lecture deals with some aspects of the organization of Imperial Airways, and the routes of the Company in Europe and the Empire. We, however, desire to emphasize that, as there is a great demand for these lantern slides, application for the loan of the set should be made at least three weeks before the date of the lecture.

LIST OF SLIDES IN THE STANDARD LECTURE

No.	Title	No.	Title
1.	Map of the European Routes.	31.	The Air Port of Paris, Le Bourget.
2.	Map of the Empire Routes.	32.	The <i>Scipio</i> flying-boat in flight.
3.	The Air Port of London, Croydon.	33.	The cabin of the <i>Scipio</i> .
4.	The <i>Heracles</i> being towed into position to 'take off.'	34.	The Corinth Canal.
5.	The equipment of the <i>Heracles</i> , a chart.	35.	Athens.
6.	Size! A motor car compared with the wheel of the <i>Heracles</i> .	36.	Alexandria.
7.	The <i>Scylla</i> , side view on the ground.	37.	The <i>Hannibal</i> ; side view on the ground.
8.	Size! The tail of the <i>Scylla</i> .	38.	The forward saloon of the <i>Hannibal</i> .
9.	The bridge of the <i>Scylla</i> .	39.	Gaza.
10.	The aft cabin of the <i>Scylla</i> .	40.	An aerial view of the Dead Sea and the Promised Land.
11.	The <i>Diana</i> class; ¾ front view of the <i>Draco</i> on the ground.	41.	View of Rutbah Wells, Iraq.
12.	The <i>Boadicea</i> class; ¾ front view of the <i>Britomart</i> on the ground.	42.	El Kadimain Mosque, Baghdad.
13.	The <i>Avalon</i> class; side view of the <i>Avalon</i> on the ground.	43.	The Arch of Ctesiphon.
14.	Engineers examining the engines of the <i>Heracles</i> .	44.	Koweit.
15.	The Captain.	45.	Sharjah.
16.	Loading the Royal Mail.	46.	Cathedral Rock, Gwadar, Baluchistan.
17.	The Control Tower at the Air Port of London, Croydon.	47.	Karachi.
18.	The wireless installation in the <i>Heracles</i> .	48.	The <i>Atalanta</i> in flight.
19.	Wireless reception at the Air Port of London, Croydon.	49.	The cabin of the <i>Atalanta</i> .
20.	Direction finding at the Air Port of London, Croydon.	50.	New Delhi.
21.	The <i>Heracles</i> in flight.	51.	A distant view of the Himalaya.
22.	Alpine scenery, Switzerland.	52.	The Jumna and the Ganges.
23.	Le Touquet.	53.	The mouths of the Ganges.
24.	Brussels.	54.	The Burma Jungle.
25.	Vienna.	55.	Rangoon.
26.	Passenger car leaving Airway Terminus, London.	56.	Bangkok.
27.	The <i>Scylla</i> in flight.	57.	Wat Aroon, Bangkok.
28.	'Into thy Empery,' Above the clouds.	58.	Alor Star.
29.	Stewards preparing lunch in the <i>Scylla</i> .	59.	Kuala Lumpur; a vertical view of the aerodrome.
30.	'To Paris while you lunch!' Passengers lunching in the <i>Scylla</i> .	60.	Street scene, Singapore.
		61.	The <i>Commonwealth</i> class of Qantas Empire Airways.
		62.	Batavia, Java.
		63.	Rice fields, Bali.
		64.	Mountains on Soemba Island, Netherlands Indies.
		65.	Panoramic view of Darwin Aerodrome.
		66.	Scrubland, North Queensland.
		67.	Hills near Mount Isa.
		68.	Brisbane.
		69.	An aerial view of the Nile.
		70.	Cairo.
		71.	Assiut, the Necropolis.
		72.	The great Temple of Amun at Karnak.

No.	Title	No.	Title
73.	The Tomb of Tutankhamen, in the Valley of the Tombs of the Kings.	87.	Kisumu.
74.	The Dam at Assuan.	88.	Lake Naivasha.
75.	The Island and Temple of Philæ.	89.	Mount Kilimanjaro.
76.	Typical scene in Upper Egypt.	90.	Native girls of the Masai tribe.
77.	Wadi Halfa.	91.	The Lion Rock, Dodoma.
78.	Khartoum.	92.	The Rest House at Mpika.
79.	Natives of the Shiluk tribe in front of the <i>Hannibal</i> .	93.	A view of Salisbury.
80.	The White Nile between Malakal and Juba	94.	A range in the Drakensberg Mountains.
81.	Sudd—in the Nile.	95.	Johannesburg.
82.	Herds of elephants—air view.	96.	The 'Big Hole' Diamond Mine at Kimberley.
83.	Juba.	97.	Cape Town.
84.	Murchison Falls.	98.	The growth of Imperial Airways; a chart.
85.	Locusts.	99.	Time saved by Imperial Airways' travel; a chart.
86.	Buffalo from the Air.	100.	Future routes, a map.

THE STORY OF EIGHT BIG SISTERS OF THE AIR

THEY HAVE CARRIED 200,000 PASSENGERS, NOT ONE HAS EVER BEEN INJURED

Recently, the air correspondent of *The Evening Standard* newspaper (Mr. William Courtenay) devoted an article (bearing the above title) to the praise of the *Heracles* and *Hannibal* class of Imperial Airways and we reproduce extracts from this article with acknowledgments to that newspaper.

'IMPERIAL AIRWAYS' eight giant 40-seaters of the *Hannibal* class are now nearing the end of their careers—on paper.

'Actually they have many active years ahead. But under the Company's agreement with the Air Ministry air liners are 'written off' in the books as obsolescent after four years' active service.

'In four years they have carried more than 200,000 passengers, have made hundreds of cross-Channel and Empire flights, have never been involved in a single mishap which has caused the injury or loss of a passenger, and are all going strong to-day.

'Four years of continuous running has failed to wear them out. They continue prime favourites of the flying public and still attract the bulk of the air traffic from Croydon to the Continent.

'Here are the names of this flying family: *Hannibal*, *Hanno*, *Heracles*, *Helena*, *Horatius*, *Hengist*, *Horsa* and *Hadrian*.

'They were built by the Handley Page Company, Britain's senior aircraft firm. Handley Page was building aircraft before the war . . . and was the firm chosen to design the first 'luxury' aircraft for Imperial Airways.

'*Hannibal* made her debut at Croydon on 11 June, 1931. On 11 June 1935 she became obsolescent—on the Company's books, but she is still flying strong. Her sisters came out one by one during the same season. In a few weeks all eight will have paid their final depreciation account. . . .

'When the sisters first appeared on the Paris route in 1931 they were the last word in aircraft safety and comfort.

'Their mighty size impressed pilots and passengers alike.

THEIR CAPTAINS

'Special long gangways had to be built to enable the pilots to climb aboard. To see the pilot going aboard was to feel that the captain was ascending the bridge of his ship to take command.

'And so it was, for with their advent the pilots were given the rank of captain and their assistants became first officers.

'Each machine was fitted with four 555 h.p. Bristol 'Jupiter' engines—a type which had already demonstrated its reliability in the R.A.F., and on long distance flights. They were the first four-engined air liners. The multiple-engine policy at once won the confidence of the travelling public.

'There were actually two duties for these giants. Half the fleet were needed for Europe and were known as the 'Western' Type. The rest operated as the 'Eastern' Type. [The former is now known as the *Heracles* class, of which there are two, the *Heracles* and the *Horatius*. The Eastern type are

called the *Hannibal* class—the *Hannibal*, *Horsa*, *Hanno*, *Hadrian*, *Hengist*, and the *Helena*.—Ed. *Imperial Airways Gazette*.]

'The former carry 38 passengers and are used on the Continent, where there is a big passenger demand, but a smaller mail and freight requirement.

EAST

'The 'Eastern' type are fitted for only 24 passengers, as passengers in the tropics require rather more room. Bigger accommodation is also needed for mail and freight. [The sizes of both classes are the same, viz., span 130' 0", length 89' 9", height 27' 3", weight fully loaded 13.4 tons. The horsepower of the engines in the *Hannibals* is 490.—Ed.]

'To-day six of these machines operate in the East with headquarters in Cairo. They never see England. They ply between Cairo and Karachi by way of the Persian Gulf on the India route and down the Nile to Kisumu on the Cape service.

'The other two, which operate the Croydon-Paris service, have since been joined by two more giants, *Syrinx* and *Scylla* [Built by Short Bros. (Rochester and Bedford) Ltd.—Ed.]

HEAVY EUROPEAN TRAFFIC

'Each of them in the busy summer season flies as many as four round trips—an eight-hour day, visiting London twice and Paris twice day by day.

'These machines originally replaced the three-engined *Argosy* types and ushered in the reign of the four-engined air liner, a policy which is to be continued with new types.

'Although since 1931 other machines have appeared on the Paris route, cutting the flying time down from two hours to one-and-a-half hours, yet they have made no impression on the air traffic which Imperial Airways attract.

'Comfort and roominess appear to appeal to the Paris-bound traveller more than mere speed, though, if the latter can be added without the sacrifice of the former, Imperial Airways will provide it in new types.'

SIR SEFTON BRANCKER

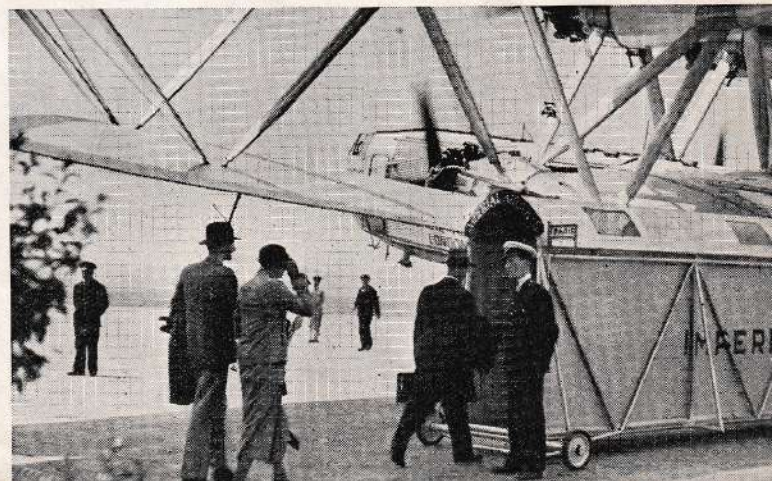
Sefton Brancker. Norman Macmillan. xxv + 491 pp. 2 illus. William Heinemann Ltd. 21s.

Few men have done more in their lives to develop aviation, both from the military and the civil side, than the late Sir Sefton Brancker who died on 5 October, 1930, in the disaster to *R101* and it is fitting that his memory should be perpetuated not only in the hearts and affections of those who served under and worked with him, but in various memorials and particularly in an official biography.

To those who have but recently joined the ranks of civil aviation Brancker is but a name, but to those of us who knew him not only in the early days of the Royal Flying Corps and during the War when he served in the field, and at home and later when he did so much to encourage the peaceful and commercial development of civil aviation, his memory will always remain with us and we shall count ourselves richer for the knowledge that we enjoyed his presence, inspiration, and his friendship.

The author of this book has succeeded not only in telling us about the various stages of Brancker's career but he has succeeded in capturing something of his hero's personality, and we suggest that every reader of the *Gazette* should get hold of a copy of this book not only to be able to appreciate better the story of British civil aviation but to understand and pay tribute to a man who did so much to build strongly its foundations.

Going aboard the *Horatius*, one of the *Heracles* class



KENYA REVISITED

FROM NAIROBI TO LONDON BY IMPERIAL AIRWAYS

By Sir Edward Buck, C.B.E.

We conclude this article, the first instalment of which appeared in last month's *Gazette*.

At 11 o'clock we leave for Kosti 200 miles ahead and fly between 3,000 and 4,000 feet over flat and uninteresting country consisting of small bush and open burnt out spaces. And suddenly we find the *Hengist* bumping and we are in desert country. We begin to descend and we are at Kosti, a very sultry spot on the Sudan Light Railway, where we again take in petrol. We fly straight above the Blue Nile which is much wider and more muddy than ever, but with more village life on its banks, and many small cultivated islands. And here I may say that the wireless operator has no idle time for he is constantly getting and sending weather reports and signalling the position of the aeroplane, both at the port he has left and at the destination ahead. Our bumping is now very slight, but the heat has increased—villages and herds of cattle, flocks of goats, strings of camels along the river bank make the traveller realise what the Nile means to the dwellers on its banks.

KHARTOUM

Approaching Khartoum we had a fine view of the new dam now being constructed over the river as well as the neat little garden town constructed near it. We overtook a paddle steamer at the same time. Landing at Khartoum we are conveyed to the Grand Hotel and are comfortably housed and well looked after. The Game Warden, Major Barker, also the Superintendent of the Zoological Gardens, courteously conducts some of us round the gardens, and shows us how to play a game of football with a young lion. The contest would have been more successful if the lion had not constantly endeavoured to eat the ball. We saw here the junction of the White and Blue Niles, admired the fine memorial to General Gordon of undying fame, and visited an open-air cinema after dinner. The next morning we left the capital of the Sudan at 5.30 a.m., having seen enough of the city rebuilt by Kitchener in the form of the Union Flag after his famous victory at Omdurman to make us confident we none of us wanted to reside there for it was hot and indeed a city in the desert with a rainfall of only 10 inches a year.

OVER THE DESERT

We proceed smoothly and steadily, but for long hours there is nothing to look at; below us the world lies hot, flat, sandy and sometimes black in the white African sunlight, and passengers lightly attired in shirts and trousers sit and read or doze in their very comfortable adjustable armchairs. It is easy to imagine being lost in this terrible desert and we recall the recent account of the four unhappy French political officials who, having missed their way, all perished on their motor journey near Wadi Halfa from want of petrol, water, and provisions. Having alighted at the unattractive town of Wadi Halfa for petrol and refreshments, our excellent pilot, Captain J. C. Harrington, takes us up to 10,000 feet where there is an absolute absence of bumping.

THE ASSOUAN DAM

We have a fine view of the Assouan dam across the Nile, and the air is quite cool as we travel across the grey rocky desert. The steward brings us a refreshing cup of tea. How many of my friends, I wonder, have drunk tea and played bridge up in the sky at 10,000 feet. The Nile looks really blue for the

Passengers embarking at Malakal, Southern Sudan



first time, it makes a great loop and we view vast patches of green cultivation beyond it. The visibility is marvellous and gradually vegetation increases along its banks and one is enabled to understand the wonderful irrigation systems of the great river, one of the longest in the world. We begin to descend and we find ourselves at Luxor. We enter taxis and after a dusty drive between fields of cotton and maize reach the fine Luxor hotel on the river bank.

TUTANKHAMEN

Within half an hour Lady Chesham insists on an immediate visit to Thebes, the Tombs of the Kings, and the site of the famed Tutankhamen excavations. So having secured a guide we cross the river by boat, risk our lives in a dilapidated motor car, travel some miles along a desolate dreary hill road and suddenly arrive in a rugged broken up terminus. Here are various stepped gattis all leading down to caves closed by barred gates with solemn black-froked guardians. The marvellous carvings, tracery on the walls, and the coloured designs decorating the tombs of the ancient kings of Egypt, have been so often described that I simply refer other travellers to that thrilling volume by Howard Carter and A. C. Mace which tells the story of how the tomb of Tutankhamen was discovered. Suffice it to say that over 30 kings have resting-places in this weird and barren spot and that we visited the tombs of King Seti II and of King Ramses VI, which were in most wonderful preservation after 3,500 years. I was personally disappointed in finding Tutankhamen's tomb of little interest as all the precious and valuable treasures had been carried away to the Museum at Cairo. These marvellous tombs made one feel very insignificant.

KARNAK

We had no time to see the great temples of Karnak and other famous Luxor ruins save from the air. After leaving Luxor we fly over the great green broad belt of cultivation irrigated by the Nile with countless villages, water channels, date palms and cotton fields.

CAIRO

We followed the river closely and after a brief halt at Assiut, noted for its huge barrage, we sight the famous Pyramids and Sphinx, while the great drab looking city of Cairo with its mosques and spires lies down away on our left. We alight at Heliopolis, the suburb about six miles from the city which latter we were all sorry not to have the chance of visiting. For miles around the country looked green and fertile. We changed here into a second air liner for Alexandria with considerable regret as we had all greatly appreciated the courtesy of the *Hengist's* Commander, his first officer and the steward.

ALEXANDRIA

A short flight and we were at Cleopatra's city of Alexandria where we alighted at the R.A.F. aerodrome at Aboukir as the civil ground was under repair. We then had quite a long motor drive to our hotel for the actual length of the sea front is something like nine miles, one of the longest existing. However, it was good to get a smell of the seaweed and the cool breeze off the Mediterranean was extremely pleasant to travellers from the burning desert. In the evening we discarded our thin suits for warmer clothing and wandered through the bazaars which teemed with people of many nationalities. We all appreciated the comfort of the Cecil Hotel where food and service were extremely good. The following morning we were conveyed to the port where we saw King Fuad's royal yacht lying as it always does with steam up ready to sail at a moment's notice, and here we embarked on the graceful flying boat *Satyrus* for Brindisi.

OVER THE MEDITERRANEAN

There was not much difference in motion between this and the ordinary plane and we flew steadily and quite low to the water over a calm sea for 370 miles to Crete, quite an uneventful journey. We alighted like a seagull in a small bay, took in petrol, refreshed ourselves with tea on the company's yacht, and then started off for Athens where we arrived about midday.

ATHENS

The city looked huge but rather uninteresting, though we got a fair view of the Acropolis and the Parthenon. We should have loved to stay and wander among its ancient temples, but we only halted for half an hour. All the way from Crete the island scenery had been very beautiful, but the Gulf of Corinth was to provide us with the most enchanting scenery of the

trip. They lay like jewels circled with silver white sand and shaded with ancient olive trees those Grecian isles 'where burning Sappho loved and sang.' Brown barren mountains rose on either side of us, the *Satyros* bucked at times, but no one seemed to mind, and we flew steadily at some 3,000 feet towards Corfu, above the clouds in glorious weather. The sea here is shallow and we see the rocks on its bed, very distinctly marked.

BRINDISI

At length we reach Brindisi, we quickly pass the Customs, we spend an hour or two in a hotel which cannot compare with some of those on the other side of the Mediterranean and in the evening after dinner we entrain for Paris. We wake early and refreshed to find ourselves really in Europe and we all enjoy the smooth run up the Italian coast with the blue sea still close by, while we pass through an extraordinarily neat, clear and smiling country. The stations are full of oleanders and other sweet-smelling flowers, there are various officials in gorgeous uniforms, and on all sides thrifty peasants are working among the vineyards and green crops or in their tiny gardens. Judging from the huge stacks the wheat and barley harvest appears to be excellent and the gleaners are apparently doing well for themselves. We enjoy cherries, peaches and apricots with our morning tea and the sandy wastes of the Sudan begin to feel very far behind us. And so we pass through Ancona, Bologna where we lunch, and reach the fair city of Milan at half past three in the afternoon.

MILAN

Here we all admire the majestic proportions and decorative appearance of the great railway station, second to none in Europe we are told. We hire a taxi and dash off to view the superb cathedral of which the city is so justly proud. Tea at the Excelsior Hotel and we are soon passing through enchanting scenery and many of us wishing we owned one of the beautiful villas with which the lovely lake of Maggiore is surrounded. This is without doubt the most delightful day of our trip. We presently dash through the Simplon tunnel and emerge into Switzerland and the Rhone valley with snow-capped mountains on either side of us.

PARIS

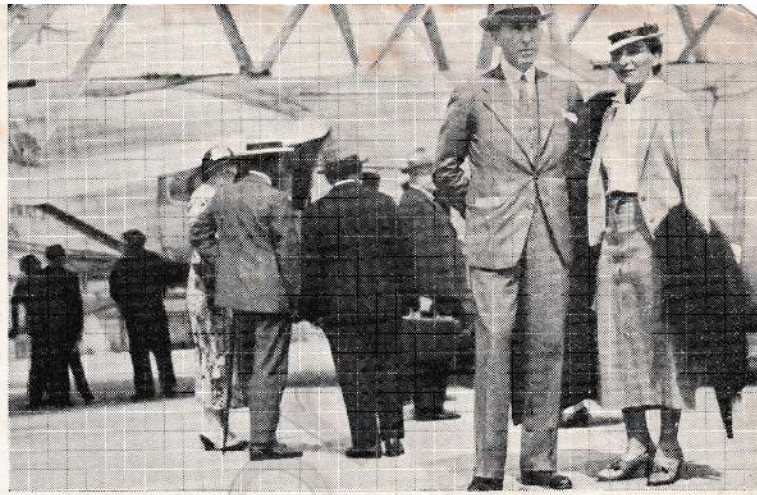
Dinner and bed and we wake to a dull and wet morning at Paris and feel we have truly said good-bye to the sunny south. After breakfasting there is a long drive across the city to the fine air port of Le Bourget and we are quickly up in the sky once more, and bound for London. For a short time we admire la belle France and we get a brief glimpse of the Channel, but we rapidly rise above the clouds to 4,000 feet and see really nothing of England till we alight at Croydon. Our last hop is over and a motor drive to the Victoria Terminus completes our wonderfully interesting 7 days' air journey from Africa to Europe.

A TRIBUTE TO IMPERIAL AIRWAYS

And now for a few remarks on the advantages of air travel and this trip in particular. The courtesy of all Imperial Airways' officials I cannot praise too highly, while the organisation is perfect. All one's baggage is taken care of from the start and transferred from place to place with excellent promptitude, the hotel fare is quite good and above all there is no tipping whatever. The company issues its own coupons at five shillings each which are cashable at every halting station. The adjustable chairs in the *Hengist* which allowed one to recline and sleep in comfort were universally appreciated and should be fitted in all future aircraft. Finally, one travels speedily and smoothly and saves much valuable time, sees and learns more of world conditions than is possible on a journey by steamer or train, and one really experiences no personal trouble of any kind whatever.

DISTINGUISHED TRAVELLERS

Among the distinguished passengers travelling on Imperial Airways' services during the last month were Sir Montague de P. Webb, the owner of the *Karachi Daily Gazette*, and one of the leading newspapers of that city, and a leading authority on silver; Douglas Fairbanks (Senior), the film star, who has travelled many times on the Company's services; and M. and Mme. Caranfil. M. Caranfil is the Secretary of State for Air for Rumania.



M. and Mme. Caranfil at Le Bourget on their way to London



Sir Montague de P. Webb, owner of the *Karachi Daily Gazette*

Mr. Douglas Fairbanks (Senior) the film star at Le Bourget



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