

POST-WAR AIRLINES OF INDIA



Due to the size, climate and topography of India, transport communications have always been difficult. MAURICE WICKSTEAD describes how a handful of airlines took on the challenge of opening air services before the war, with independence and a supply of war-surplus airliners seeing the industry blossom once stability returned to the region.

PART ONE - Early scheduled carriers

Over the decades India has developed a rich and vibrant heritage of using propeller-driven airliners in commercial aviation, but comparatively little of this history has emerged. Between the 1930's and 1970's, twenty or so companies came and went, contributing to the country's development, both economically and socially, with good airline links becoming essential over this vast country. In the years leading up to the Second World War, most types were sourced in the United Kingdom (de Havilland, Miles & Percival) or the United States (Beech & Waco), but after the war the variety of different types was staggering, with new de Havilland Doves, Vickers Vikings, Avro XIXs and Bristol Freighters coming head to head with surplus Dakotas, Beech 18s, Noorduyt Norseman, Stinson Sentinels and numerous other war veterans. Indian skies were certainly colourful, and this was a turbulent time in Indian history. Independence from the rule of the British Raj came at midnight on August 14 1947 when Jawaharlal Nehru became the first Prime Minister of an independent India. Partition of the country and the formation of Pakistan took place coincidentally, and while the Dominion of India became a republic in 1950, the Dominion of Pakistan became the Islamic Republic of Pakistan in 1956. Throughout this period there were many airlines formed to exploit the opportunities offered in this rejuvenated country, and the story of these pioneering companies is now spotlighted by Maurice Wickstead, who served with India's national carrier during the seventies.

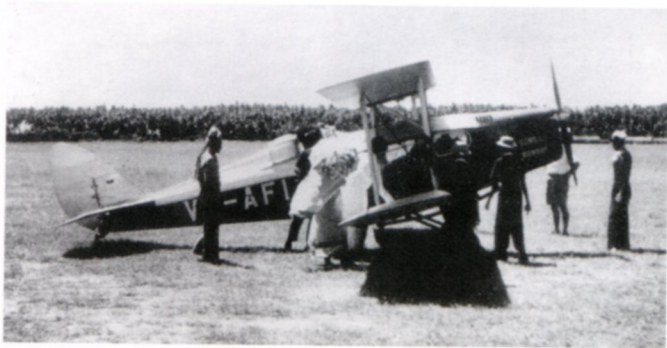
EARLY TRAIL-BLAZER

Home grown air transport came late to the sub-continent, and it was not until 1932 that the first small airline took to the skies. By the time that civil flying resumed on January 1 1946, India already possessed three viable air carriers, which had formed the backbone of the country's developing air transport network in the thirties, and who were now poised to face the challenge of a new world order.

HEADING PHOTOGRAPH: Timeless scene on the apron at Schiphol Airport, Amsterdam, one day in 1951. Bharat Airways Douglas C-54A Skymaster VT-CZT (c/n 10419) takes on fuel from a typical Esso fuel bowser of the era. This gorgeous picture was taken by Koos Mak, air traffic controller at the airport.
(With thanks to Ron Mak)

Graphics courtesy of the collections of Dacre Watson and Craig Morris from the timetableimages.com website.





One of Tata's first aircraft was de Havilland DH.83 Fox Moth VT-AFI (c/n 4081) purchased in 1934, and which flew well into the war years before impressment.
(Ed Coates Collection)

Of these, the most prominent was **Tata Air Lines**, founded as the Aviation Department of Tata Sons Ltd., in July 1932. Its creation had come about on the initiative of former RAF pilot, Neville Vincent, whose idea was to carry incoming mail onwards from the Imperial Airways terminus at Karachi all the way to Colombo. Teaming up with Jehangir R.D. Tata, himself a pilot who was later known and respected as 'JRD' in airline circles, the pair created the Aviation Department. Heir apparent to the giant family iron and steel concern, JRD persuaded his seniors to provide the necessary capital for the purchase of two de Havilland Puss Moths, with which to begin services. These got underway on October 15, when JRD flew a Puss Moth (probably VT-ACZ) southbound from Karachi to Bombay (Mumbai), via a fuel stop at Ahmedabad, carrying 55lb of mail. Vincent took over for the second leg to Madras (Chennai) via Bellary (Ballari, Karnataka), returning northbound two days later.

From this modest beginning, the network grew over the next six years to take in India's major cities and Colombo, using Wacos and a variety of de Havilland types, including Fox Moths, Dragon Rapides and even two second-hand DH.86 airliners. At this stage, Tata Air Lines, as it had become, boasted a fleet of fifteen aircraft, flying scheduled services covering over 1.6 million miles annually whilst achieving an average 99.4 per cent despatch reliability.

During the early days of World War Two, Tata's DH.86s and Rapides were requisitioned by the Indian Government for coastal patrols and courier duties. For the next five years a substantial part of the airline's resources were directed towards the war effort, providing military co-operation flights, casevac, overhaul and flight testing of RAF aircraft, as well as participating in the evacuation of refugees during the Japanese invasion of Burma. The fleet was reinvigorated towards the end of 1941 by five Stinson Model A Trimotors obtained from US-based Marquette Airlines. Two 14-seat Douglas DC-2s were also supplied by the government in the autumn of 1941 with which an unscheduled service linking Karachi and Baghdad via Jiwani, Sharjah and Bahrain, was initiated in the following November. Tragically, Vincent was killed returning from the UK in a Lockheed Hudson that disappeared without trace over the Bay of Biscay in January 1942. By the end of hostilities, Tata had reinstated most of its network, and was allocated ten war-surplus Dakotas ready for the return to a full commercial programme.

One of two DH.86s flown by Tata, VT-AKM (c/n 2306) was purchased from QANTAS in September 1938.



FOLLOWING TATA'S LEAD

Alongside Tata, two other major carriers that had commenced operations in the thirties survived to continue flying after World War Two. Most prominent was **Indian National Airways**, which had come into being in May 1933, backed by the Govan Brothers substantial trading business, with technical support being provided by Airwork Ltd. Among the early directors were celebrated British aviator Freddie Raynham, whose interest in India derived from his Indian Air Survey & Transport company, for which Tata's Neville Vincent also flew.

Indian National Airways (INA) opened a supplementary weekly Calcutta-Rangoon service in conjunction with IAL/ITCA from December 1933 using de Havilland Dragons. Simultaneously, a daily passenger, mail and freight service was opened between Calcutta and Dacca (Dhaka). A year later, INA launched a mail-only service over the route Lahore-Sukkur-Karachi to connect with the IAL trunk route, maintained primarily with Percival Gulls and de Havilland Fox Moths. In order to cope with the increasing volume of mail, which by 1938 was exceeding 35,000lb annually, INA experimented with night-flying operations, and by the year's end had completed 435 hours.

Much of INA's and indeed, India's route network development was down to Chief Pilot, Captain P.D. Sharma, who tragically lost his life in a mid-air collision with another INA aircraft in February 1939. The Karachi to Lahore route was extended to Delhi, and eventually back to Calcutta, with the Beech 17 making six intermediate stops. INA continued flying throughout World War Two, adding new destinations including Dinjan, terminus of the wartime trans-Himalaya 'Hump' route, Madras and Rawalpindi/Peshawar in West Pakistan, with the longer sectors now flown with Douglas twins. But with increasing unrest in Pakistan, all operations west of Karachi were terminated in June 1945.



DH.89A Dragon Rapide VT-ARK was one of four aircraft shipped to India aboard the Fort Camouson, arriving on September 23 1943. She is pictured here in wartime camouflage being flown by Air India.

(Ed Coates Collection)

A third significant airline company entered the Indian commercial scene in September 1936, when **Air Services of India** was created to promote services to the relatively remote Kathiawar peninsula, north of Bombay. Operations began in November 1937 with a four-times weekly Bombay-Bhavnagar-Rajkot-Jamnagar-Porbandar run at fares slightly above second-class rail travel. In the first month of operation almost one

(Peter Keating Collection)



Indian National Airways Douglas DC-3 VT-ARH (c/n 4851) was delivered to the airline on June 26 1943 after initial wartime service with the Royal Air Force. Later flown by Dalmia Jain Airways and Indamer, she was written off near Lamaking, Assam, on August 26 1957 after crashing while making an aerial food drop in the area, with the loss of eight lives. (BOAC photo via Peter R. Keating Collection)

thousand passengers boarded the aircraft. Types used were Percival Gulls, a de Havilland Dragonfly, a Fox Moth and Dragon Rapides. In November 1938 a new route was opened linking Baroda with Amreli, and from January 1940 the Kathiawar service was extended north to Bhuj under subsidy from the Kutch princely state. Despite good load factors, the airline was always under-funded, and operations were suspended in February 1941, only to be restarted under new ownership after World War Two.

POST-WAR REVIVAL

Together with the other established carriers that had maintained vital air services during the war, Tata was well placed to survive, and by 1947 was carrying one in three of all passengers on the internal routes, serving most of the country's major cities. Now based at Bombay's Santa Cruz Airport, the company became a public corporation under the title **Air-India Ltd.**, in July 1946 with a capital of £3.75 million. Sufficiently confident of its status, and with independence on the horizon, the company invested in the latest generation of British commercial transports with the purchase of eight Vickers Vikings, the first of which arrived in April 1947. This new equipment enabled Air-India to reduce its reliance on the transitional fleet of DC-3s and Beech 18s while at the same time markedly increase frequencies on its prime trunk routes. However, it was an Air-India Douglas DC-3 (VT-ATI), commanded by Captain A.C. Gazdar, which first carried the new nation's flag overseas, transporting the country's Ambassador to the USSR to Moscow in August 1947. In the same month, India finally achieved independence, but the great social and political turmoil following the partition with Pakistan, saw Air-India heavily involved in the evacuation of displaced refugees, with twelve aircraft and almost 200 personnel committed to the Kashmir relief operation alone. Thereafter, although the network remained largely unchanged for the next few years, declining revenues caused especially by travel restrictions on the Karachi route, meant that the airline went through a tough financial period in 1949/50. Despite a consistent 75 per cent load factor seeing passenger figures approaching 120,000 annually over a 4,100-mile unduplicated network comprising eight trunk routes, the company was, at best, only breaking even.

Indian National Airways was taken over by the Dalmia Jain charter company in July 1946, and re-capitalised to the tune of 10 million rupees (approximately £750,000), but continued to operate under its own name. Most of its routes were flown under the banner 'Indiaman', such as the 'Khyber Indiaman' linking Delhi with Lucknow. After partition INA reportedly lost forty per cent of its traffic, and it would be some time before stability was achieved, with a small profit of £2,730 eventually being recorded in 1952. Its large fleet of Dakota aircraft began giving way to more modern types in the shape of Vickers Vikings, which took over the east-west trunk routes, while several Bristol Freighters were also used for a short period. With the failure of Indian Overseas Airways, INA temporarily assumed their role in the Indian Night Mail service until the contract was awarded to Himalayan Aviation in mid-October 1949. Rawalpindi and Peshawar were main centres of operations, with services to Srinagar and Kathmandu, and during 1950 it supported the military garrison at Ladakh, flying services with an oxygen-equipped Dakota.

The assets of Air Services of India were acquired by the

Scindia Steam Navigation Company in 1943; the airline's post-war president being Lord Ronaldshay, former Governor of Bengal and Secretary of State for India. Now known as 'The Scindia Line', operations recommenced in May 1946, with a daily service between Bombay, Jamnagar and Bhuj, later extended to Karachi. A DC-3 service connecting Bombay with Delhi via Indore and Gwalior began in April 1949, and from July a second route linked Bombay with Indore, Bhopal, Kanpur (Cawnpore) and Lucknow. By early 1949 it had returned to its old stamping ground, with flights to Keshod, Rajkot and Porbandar, and later a southerly route was opened serving Poona (Pune), Belgaum, Bangalore and Cochin. However, in common with the majority of its smaller counterparts, it recorded continuous losses, which by 1951 amounted to around £7,500 annually, despite receiving a subsidy of £30,000. Apart from the usual selection of DC-3s and Dragon Rapides, one unusual type, a French SNCASO Corse, briefly joined the fleet late in 1949.

A BLUEPRINT FOR CHAOS

Benefitting from the inherited wartime infrastructure, when civil flying resumed on January 1 1946, India emerged with eleven reasonably modern airports, together with established meteorological, navigation and wireless aids. As early as 1943, Sir Frederick Tymms, prominent colonial aviator and latterly India's Director-General of Civil Aviation, had conducted a study which recommended the licensing of no more than four airline companies to service the country's post-war air transport needs. The Air Transport Licensing Board, formed in October 1946, concurred, but the minister responsible deemed otherwise and granted permits to no less than eleven companies, including the three established airlines; a recipe for vast over-capacity and subsequent failures. Indeed, within the first couple of years at least three of the smaller airlines had fallen by the wayside. The uncertainty caused by allocation of routes on a year-to-year basis stifled investment, and was not resolved until 1949 when the government began granting licences to airlines for a full ten-year term.

Complementing the pre-war survivors, the new companies flying services in India were:-

Airways (India) Ltd., based at Calcutta, was registered in September 1945, and early operations comprised charter services, flying training and a non-scheduled mail service into Assam using an Airspeed Consul. Scheduled services were launched in September 1947 over the multi-stop Calcutta-Madras-Bangalore line. Dacca was added in June 1948, and in February 1949 routes to Assam were licensed for scheduled operation, making the airline the first to provide tourist services to this region from Delhi. A second trunk route to Bombay via Nagpur was also flown, as were flights down to Burma. The fleet comprised DC-3s, a Catalina and a pair of Doves, one of which was unfortunate enough to be struck by a vulture at Calcutta, and later peppered with bullets on the ground in Burma. One of the airline's DC-3s crashed in the Khasi Hills on April 14 1953 with the loss of three lives. VT-AUJ was operating a cargo charter from Gauhati to Calcutta carrying two elephants and some tea chests, and was destroyed after making a number of sudden and violent manoeuvres which led to structural failure. After nationalisation in August 1953, Airways (India) Ltd., received approval to continue to operate non-sched-

Douglas DC-3 VT-COI (c/n 13137) was registered to the Indamer Company on August 23 1947, and is seen here sporting the livery of Bombay-based Ambica Airlines. (Charles Holland Collection)

uled flights until September 1955.

Ambica Airlines, a subsidiary of the Shri Ambica Steam Navigation Company, commenced operations in March 1947 over routes to the north of Bombay. It was particularly unfortunate that six of Ambica's aircraft, including two Dakotas, were damaged at Juhu Airport by a cyclone that struck Bombay late in November 1948. The airline appeared to lack proper financial support from the parent company, and was seriously under-capitalised. Unsurprisingly, it ceased operations and was liquidated in February 1949. Services largely mirrored those of other carriers, extending from Bombay to Ahmedabad, Calcutta, Amritsar and Madras employing Dakotas, Beech 18s and sundry smaller types.

Bharat Airways – one of India's more adventurous post-war carriers – was formed by the Biria industrial group in August 1945 with a capital of £3.75 million. Headed by Basani Kumar Biria, operations began in June 1947 with a thrice-weekly DC-3 service connecting Calcutta, Gaya and Lucknow. The network was gradually extended northwards into Assam, and down as far as Chittagong. The airline also took delivery of Bristol 170 Freighter Mk.IIA VT-CGX in December 1946, which remained with the airline until 1950. One of the airline's DC-3s, converted by Scottish Aviation, was supplied in VIP configuration with a pressurised sub-cabin controlled by airlocks, for use by top government officials. However, the conversion took rather longer than expected – former RAF Dakota G-AJLX arrived at Prestwick on February 25 1947, and finally aspired to her C of A on July 28 1949, becoming VT-DDK in service with Bharat.

Following a survey flight in March 1949, Bharat's Douglas



Bharat Airways Douglas C-54A Skymaster VT-CZT (c/n 10419) on a visit to London Airport circa 1953. (Frank Hudson)

DC-4s opened a fortnightly run between Calcutta and Bangkok. Three aircraft were acquired, comprising VT-CYK, VT-CZT and VT-CZW, with 'YK' being lost in a forced landing in Pakistan in December 1949. Plans to serve Saigon, Hong Kong and Shanghai were curtailed by regional instability and the civil war in China. In 1951 the airline reported a loss of circa £45,100. In September 1952 Bharat Airways introduced a weekly DC-4 schedule linking Bangkok, Singapore and Djakarta, while the DC-4s were often used for charters, with one example being the carriage of sixty Indo-Jewish emigrants to Cyprus for onward transfer to Jerusalem. Other charter flights saw the DC-4s undertaking charters to western Europe, with visits recorded to London, Amsterdam, Athens and Paris. An Act of Parliament in May 1953 dictated that Bharat Airways would be taken over by Indian Airlines Corporation in August 1953, following which the airline disappeared from the skies of India.

Deccan Airways was originally formed as the Air Department of HEH the Nizam of Hyderabad's State Railway, founded in 1938 to offer India-wide charter services. Deccan Airways came into being in September 1945 with a capital of 2.5 million rupees (circa £188,000) divided between the State Government (71%) and Tata Sons Ltd and other investors (29%). The General Manager was Air-Commodore H.A. Fenton, DFC., recruited from the UK on a three-year contract. Deccan's first aircraft was a Dragon Rapide registered VT-CBY, and there is some evidence that this was used to operate over the route Hyderabad-Bangalore-Madras-Delhi from May 1946 onwards. Three Dakotas were acquired at a cost of around £7,500 each and, after conversion, one of these aircraft commanded by the Operations Manager, Captain P.M. Reddy, inaugurated passenger service between Madras, Hyderabad and Delhi in July 1946. Frequency was initially thrice-weekly, with the schedule being completed in a total time of just under twelve hours with three en-route stops. A second route commenced between Hyderabad and Bangalore, and was flown twice weekly. Deccan conducted its first Hadj charter flight to Jeddah in October 1946, and four months later opened a



second trunk route directly to Bombay.

Due to a shortage of locally-trained crews, four ex-RAF Polish pilots and others from Commonwealth air forces were taken on for the first two years of operations. Later, Deccan Airways employed India's first female commercial pilot, Prema Mathur, who subsequently flew the Birla Corporation's executive Dakota. In September 1947, two aircraft were requisitioned by the government to provide refugee flights in the aftermath of the partition of India and Pakistan. These aircraft operated between Delhi, Lahore, Karachi, Rawalpindi and Quetta at the rate of 200 rupees (£15) per person carried. Meanwhile, a third aircraft was stationed at Delhi for similar operations in Kashmir. Eventually fourteen Dakotas were bought by Deccan. Further relief flights were also undertaken in the wake of the Assam earthquake and flood disaster of 1951.

Between early July and mid-October 1948 all Deccan Airways services were halted due to political unrest surrounding the semi-autonomous state's incorporation into the Republic of India. The airline's engineering department won a contract from the Indian Air Force to maintain their Harvard trainer fleet, and there was an unverified report from 1949 that suggests Deccan ordered four Airspeed Ambassadors. From June 1951 onwards, Deccan Airways participated in the Night Mail Service, which also carried passengers onward to Calcutta. In February 1952, the Central Government acquired the Hyderabad Government's majority shareholding, and in November 1952 a thrice weekly Bombay-Aurangabad service was opened, primarily to serve the tourist area of the famous Ellora and Ajanta caves. In January 1953 services from Bangalore were extended further southwards to Mangalore. In 1952/53 Deccan Airways covered more than two million miles carrying 43,200 passengers, 905 tonnes of cargo and 1,770 tonnes of mail, but was still recording annual losses in the region of £200,000. Like Bharat Airways, Deccan Airways was absorbed by Indian Airlines Corporation in August 1953.

Himalayan Aviation Ltd., was founded in May 1948 largely through the involvement of Boris Lissanevich, celebrated as the 'Father of Nepalese Tourism'. Lissanevich, a white Russian émigré and former star dancer with Diaghilev's acclaimed 'Ballet Russe', settled in Calcutta in the late thirties. Here he set up the '300 Club', the only such establishment in the city that remained open 24 hours a day and catered for both European and Indian clientele without discrimination. As a result of his contacts, he was to play a significant part in restoring the deposed monar-





chy to Nepal, and later settled there to become proprietor of the renowned Royal Hotel in Kathmandu.

During an early post-war visit to the Maharajah of Cooch Behar (Assam), Lissanevich was flown in a chartered aircraft by Stefan Bujakowski, a Russian-speaking Pole and former RAF pilot. Bujakowski persuaded Boris to use his influence with General Mahabir Shamsher Jung Bahadur, a displaced Nepalese prince, to buy a surplus Dakota. Two more followed to form the nucleus of Himalayan Aviation in 1948, with General Mahabir becoming Chairman and Bujakowski his Operations Manager. With its headquarters in Calcutta, Himalayan Aviation also offered a photographic service and undertook the sale and repair of aircraft and engines.

Initially the company flew non-scheduled passenger and cargo services mainly into Assam, which had become increasingly isolated after the creation of neighbouring East Pakistan in 1947. In October 1949 Himalayan Aviation took over the Night Mail contract after the failure of the previous contractor, Indian Overseas Airlines. Himalayan then maintained the service until June 1951, when it passed to Deccan Airways. After the ousting of the ruling oligarchy in Nepal and return of the monarch, Himalayan began flying into Kathmandu on a regular basis, whilst also operating cross-country to Allahabad and Kabul via Karachi, Zahedan (Persia) and Kandahar, with a view to regular operations. The inaugural flight took place early in December 1951 with a Dakota carrying five passengers including the Indian Air Attaché to Afghanistan, but the aircraft was detained by the authorities at Karachi, and forced to return to Jamnagar. Thereafter, some services were flown over this route, but operations were intermittent due to political instability in the region.

Indian Overseas Airlines – title assumed late in 1947. Originally formed as Mistri Airways early in 1946 by Rusi Mistri with a paid-up share capital of £600,000. Douglas DC-3 VT-AZC was registered to Mistri in March 1946, while a large fleet of eighteen Noordyn Norseman and six Douglas DC-3s were registered to Indian Overseas Airlines in the same month, followed by two more DC-3s in April. Mistri's other interests encompassed Asian Air Associates, Industrial and Commercial Trust, Great Indian Combine and Aeronautical Corporation of India. Percival Proctor V VT-CEP was bought in May 1946, and was followed by five further examples during the coming months. Based in Bombay, full operations were launched with a fleet of Dakotas in September 1946 linking Bombay with Nagpur and Calcutta. Circa late February 1947, the airline opened a Nagpur-Jubbulpore-Allahabad-Kanpur-Lucknow service, and in the same month began operating through RAF Masirah in Oman twice or three times monthly.

Traffic figures for June 1948 saw the carriage of 1,186 passengers, 16,798kg of cargo and 647kg of mail, with 83,394 miles being flown. Indian Overseas inaugurated the Night Mail service over the routes Delhi-Nagpur-Bangalore-Madras and Bombay-Calcutta with DC-3s, and the average monthly mail uplift amounted to 21,818kg. Long-range services to East Africa and Australia were planned by the airline, for which two Douglas DC-4s were ordered, but in the event only one aircraft was registered – C-54B Skymaster VT-DAW. By May 1949 the company, now reportedly backed by the Exchange Bank of Africa & India, was in serious financial trouble, such that it was forced to stop flying Delhi to Madras services in May, followed by the termination of the Bombay to Calcutta route just a month later. Thereafter, all commercial operations ceased in September 1950, and a winding-up petition was made in November. One Indian source reports that the commitment for DC-4s was taken over by Bharat Airways, which went on to develop services to the Far East shortly afterwards.

Jupiter Airways was founded in Madras in October 1946 by South Indian textile industrialist and philanthropic educationalist Dr (Sir) R.M. Alagappa Chettiar with a capital of £400,000 and a fleet of nine Douglas DC-3s registered VT-CHA to CHI. The company's title was derived from another of Chettiar's businesses, Jupiter General Insurance, and employed the slogan, 'By Jupiter, it's quick'. Scheduled services

Rare photograph of Jupiter Airways Douglas DC-3 VT-CHF (c/n 11810) "Sarasvathi", which was sold to Deccan Airways in June 1949, before being taken over by Indian Airlines. (Ed Coates Collection)

Deccan Airways Douglas DC-3 VT-AUP (c/n 19151) "Rani of Jhansi" showing signs of her former USAAF wartime colours.

were flown between Madras, Vizagapatnam, Nagpur and Delhi, while Hyderabad and Bhopal were also served. However, the company was badly undercapitalised and was wound up in March 1949.

Kalinga Air Lines came into being in 1946 and was licensed to conduct scheduled services between Calcutta and Agartala (Tripura – W. Assam). By 1952 these had grown to eight round trips daily by DC-3, and a Catalina was also employed. One of the airline's DC-3s, VT-DFN, crashed and caught fire shortly after taking off from Agartala on April 10 1952 while operating a freight flight to Calcutta, and sadly all four crew members died in the tragedy. After nationalisation in 1953 Kalinga was reconstituted as a private charter airline.

Orient Airways was formed at Calcutta on October 23 1946 by the Ispahani brothers from the notable textile family, primarily to serve the needs of the local Moslem community. The company was largely formed on the initiative of Al Jinnah, later to become President of Pakistan, and charter services were launched in April 1947 with a fleet of six Douglas DC-3s comprising VT-CIC, VT-CIE, VT-CIF, VT-CIG, VT-CIH and VT-CIJ and a single Stinson Sentinel. Two months later, in June 1947, scheduled flights were opened between Calcutta and Rangoon via Chittagong and Akyab, and these apparently enjoyed a good reputation. The airline's managing director was none other than T. Neville Stack, a famous British pilot from the pre-war era who had flown to Karachi in a Moth in November 1926. He died in tragic circumstances in February 1949 when he suffered an aneurism and fell under a truck.

After partition, Orient Airways was re-registered in Pakistan



Orient Airways Douglas DC-3 VT-CIJ (c/n 12089) joined the airline in February 1947. (Charles Holland Collection)

and moved headquarters to Chittagong in East Pakistan on August 1 1948, and later to Karachi. Thereafter, it remained in business mainly operating the important trunk route linking Karachi with Dacca, latterly with a small fleet of Convair 240s in addition to the DC-3s. One of the Convairs was lost on March 13 1953 when it crashed into a mountain peak in the Tripura region of India whilst en-route from Delhi to Dacca. The cause was later attributed to the pilot descending in poor visibility whilst trying to establish his position. Sixteen passengers and crew perished in the disaster, and Orient Airways ceased operations shortly afterwards, with its fleet being absorbed by Pakistan International Airlines.

An anomaly existed in the Portuguese territory of Goa, effectively blockaded by India in the post-independence years. Following a study by the Portuguese Air Force, several airports were constructed and **Transportes Aereos da India Portuguesa (TAIP)** was created to provide vital communications with the outside world. Two de Havilland Herons (CR-IAA & CR-IAB) were purchased, and in August 1955 CR-IAA, flown by a military crew, opened the first service from the capital Dabolim to the regional town Diu, followed by a service to Damão a fortnight later. The short-range Herons proved unsuitable to fulfil international ambitions, and as a result two Vickers Vikings (CR-IAC & CR-IAD) were obtained with which a service to Karachi was commenced around May





Passengers disembarking from TAIP Douglas C-54B Skymaster CR-LAE (c/n 10446) at Bahrain in January 1961.

(Albert Day)

1956. Early operations were not without hazard, since the Indian military had sited anti-aircraft batteries within a mile of the air corridors. One of the Vikings was also damaged when CR-IAD crashed into a building while landing at Karachi inbound from Goa on November 2 1957. As a result of this accident, the aircraft was retired from service.

Reduced to a single Viking, and with aspirations to establish an air connection to the mother country, TAIP purchased two former United Air Lines Douglas DC-4s via Californian aircraft broker Steward-Davis late in 1957 to open a twice-monthly service to Lisbon via Karachi and Bahrain (later Beirut and Damascus). Douglas C-54B Skymaster CR-LAE and C-54A Skymaster CR-LAF joined the airline in December 1957, and very quickly broadened the airline's horizons. A number of cargo charters were also undertaken between Jeddah and Lahore. A second overseas route was later inaugurated to Lourenço Marques (Maputo), staging via Aden, Mombasa or Dar-es-Salaam and Beira. Rather surprisingly, TAIP's Viking arrived at Wymeswold on August 18 1959 for overhaul by Field

Aircraft Services. It was a leisurely affair, with the Viking eventually departing to Lisbon via Birmingham on September 14 1960. Two Douglas DC-6Bs (CR-IAG & CR-IAH) joined the fleet in September 1961, but just two months later in mid-December, following increasingly hostile action by Indian air and sea forces, TAIP was forced to cease flying. The airline's remaining aircraft were flown to Lisbon carrying government officials and their families, and these aircraft were subsequently transferred to the Portuguese Air Force, TAP and SATA. Goa itself was officially annexed by India in March 1962.

Part Two of Airlines of India will feature in the 2020 Annual, and will cover the period following nationalisation in 1953.

With thanks to Eddie Coates for providing several rare photographs from his extensive collection.