

AERONAUTICAL EVENTS AT THE TIME OF THE FORMATION OF AIR-BRITAIN

Extracts from the pages of "The Aeroplane", "Flight" & "The Aeroplane Spotter"

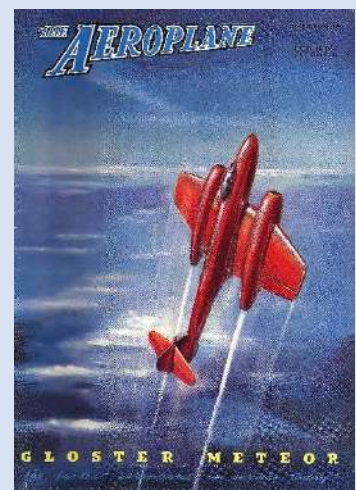
Highlight of the first "At Home" to be held by Hereford Aero Club on June 26 was the magnificent show put up by Mr W.L. Jennings in a Newbury Olympia Sailplane. A demonstration of the Reid and Sigrist Desford was given by Squadron Leader J.A. Hart, who did aerobatics well within the circuit area of the comparatively small airfield on the racecourse site. Mr J. Bennett, C.F.I. of Gloucester Aero Club kept the crowd happy with aerobatics in a Tiger Moth. The public earned three flights for height and speed-judging competitions, although one optimist put the speed of the Tiger at 260 mph! There was a good attendance of visiting aircraft, including Gemini, Messengers, Austers, Tigers and an Aeronca flown in by Lt. Cmdr S. Sproule from Gosport.

Thirty-nine people were killed in a mid-air collision near Northolt Airport on July 4. An R.A.F. Avro York and an S.A.S. Douglas DC-6, while orbiting in bad weather awaiting landing instructions, collided and crashed near Harefield, a few miles to the north of the airport. Aboard the DC-6, which had come from Copenhagen, were 25 passengers and a crew of seven; in the York, besides the six crew, was one passenger, Sir Edward Gent, High Commissioner for the Federation of Malaya. Reports indicate that the two aircraft had been over Northolt for about an hour in conditions of low cloud and rain. The aircraft were stacked in the normal way with a height separation. The DC-6 captain told Control, about 16.15, that he was going back to Amsterdam because of the bad weather, and shortly afterwards the aircraft collided. As they were in the immediate vicinity of Northolt,



both aircraft were under the instructions of Approach Control, Northolt, who had instructed the DC-6 to fly at 2,500 feet, and instructed the York to fly at 3,000 feet. On a routine flight from the Far East, the York would normally have landed at Lyneham, but because of the importance of the passenger, it was instructed to land at Northolt. S.A.S. began using DC-6s on the Scandinavian-U.K. service on June 22.

After covering 5,000 miles in 60 flights totalling 26 hours' flying time, the Gloster's civil Meteor Mk.7 demonstrator G-AKPK, returned to Moreton Valence on June 21. The main object of the tour was to demonstrate the Trainer to members of the Turkish Government and Air Force. Ten days were spent in Turkey and demonstrations were given at Eskisehir, Istanbul and Izmir. Many Turkish officers and the Turkish President's son were given 600 mph experience. On the return journey, a demonstration was given at Athens, where H.M. the King of Greece – who is a pilot himself – inspected the Meteor. Another interested spectator was ex-King Michael of Roumania. Further demonstrations were given at Rome Aerodrome for members of the Italian Air Force and finally at Bretigny, near Paris. The Meteor was flown by Squadron Leader W.A. Waterton, A.F.C., and he was accompanied in the pupil's seat by Mr F. Cook, a Gloster Service Engineer. A Rolls-Royce service engineer and other Gloster personnel were carried in Gloster's Dragon Rapide.



At the Milan works of Societa Italiana Ernesto Breda, the prototype of a new long-range, four-engined landplane, of much the same class as the American Constellation, was completed recently. Powered by four Bristol Centaurus engines, the BZ 308 is a low-wing monoplane with a tricycle undercarriage, designed for economical operation, and provides a high standard of comfort for passengers, as well as good flying characteristics and a high degree of safety. With an all-up weight of 101,600 lb, the BZ 308 fulfils the requirements of an Atlantic transport, and at 88,400 lb all-up weight it is suitable for European routes. It is interesting that the weight of the Atlantic version is almost identical with that of the Constellation 749.

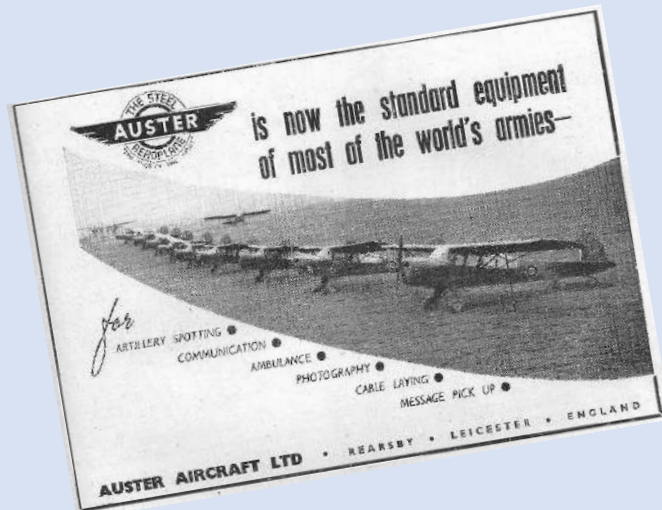


Despite a veering, gusty beam wind of 20 knots, Squadron Leader Basil H. Arkell, of the Fairey Aviation Company, succeeded in establishing a British National Speed Record and, subject to homologation, the first F.A.I. 3 kilometre International Class G Record in the Leonides-powered prototype Fairey Gyrodyne, G-AIKF, at White Waltham on June 28. His best average speed over two directions was 124.3 mph. Flying at a gross weight rather less than 4,500 lb, with only 20 gallons of 100 octane, he completed four runs which worked out at 117.3, 133.1, 117.7 and 129.0 mph, at an altitude of about 150 feet. These results were observed by the Royal Aero Club stewards and timekeepers under Colonel R.L. Preston, C.B.E. As there are several tall trees close to the straight-line course laid out along the Maidenhead-Reading railway line, it was necessary to restrict the boost to 41 in. Hg (instead of 47 in. Hg) to allow some power should the pilot need to climb suddenly. First cross-country flight of the Gyrodyne was made on June 26, when Mr L. Massey Hilton, the Fairey director responsible for rotating-wing development, was flown from Heston to White Waltham. The pilot was Squadron Leader Arkell, who

has flown the Gyrodyne on every trip since its first free flight on December 7 last. The remarkable performance by a prototype rotating-wing aircraft of entirely novel design is a great tribute to the Fairey Aviation Company which has built the Gyrodyne as a private venture.

London Airport Notes – On Saturday June 26, the 100,000th visitor to London Airport this year was presented with the “freedom” of London Airport – for one day. This visitor was Mrs Cooke of Harlington, who was accompanied by her husband and son Russell. Included in the “freedom” was a free flight in a Dragon Rapide of Island Air Services Ltd., and a tour of the Airport. All three took part in the “freedom” celebrations. The day before, the first helicopter landing at London Airport was made by special arrangement. This was G-AJHW – Westland’s demonstration Sikorsky S-51, flown by test pilot Alan Bristow, who landed on the grass between the main runway and the disembarkation apron, to pick up special passengers from a scheduled SABENA service. Resident public-enclosure broadcast commentator, Mr R.B. Grant, left London Airport on the week ending Saturday July 3. Mr Grant had been the “voice” since the inception of this broadcast feature earlier this year. At the moment this post remains vacant.





Blanketing rain clouds rolled away from Rearsby airfield, near Leicester, on Sunday July 11, and the second annual rally of the Auster Flying Club was held in good local weather. Mr Bernard Lynch parachuted from a Tiger Moth at 1,500 feet, and the highlight of the flying display was "Prune's first solo" in the same machine. Other low-level displays were given by Air Commodore Oliver in the Goodyear Duck; Mr Ron Paine of Air Schools Ltd., Wolverhampton, in a Miles 'Speed Six'; and Squadron Leader Ranald Porteous, C.F.I. of Derby Aero Club, in a Chilton. Auster's latest product, the Auster 7, was demonstrated by Mr G.N. Snarey, chief test pilot.

First flight of the Vickers Viscount was successfully accomplished on July 16 at Wisley in the hands of Captain J. "Mutt" Summers, the company's chief test pilot. This flight, indeed, represents a milestone in aeronautical progress in this country, as the Viscount is the first civil transport in the World to fly which has been designed from the start to be powered by airscrew turbines. According to reports, this initial flight, which lasted 20 minutes, indicated that the aircraft is exceptionally smooth in the air. With accommodation for 32 to 40 passengers in a pressurised fuselage, the Viscount is powered by four Rolls-Royce Dart engines, and is expected to have a still-air range of 1,725 miles at 20,000 feet with a cruising speed of 276 mph.



During the past fortnight, air transport has been called in to supply food and fuel to Berlin after road, rail and canal traffic had been stopped by the Russian ban. R.A.F. Transport Command and the U.S. Air Transport Command were initially engaged for "Operation Carter Paterson". Civil air charter companies are ready to help. Wunstorf airfield, west of Hanover, is being used as the main base of the R.A.F., Yorks and Dakotas; preparations here were begun on Sunday June 27, and in the following three days, a considerable number of Dakotas arrived and took off again for Gatow airfield, Berlin, after loading supplies of food. The first Yorks arrived at Wunstorf on July 1, and on the following day two of them carried out a proving flight to Gatow, in the British sector of Berlin, where the 2,000-yard runway is not yet complete. Sunderland flying-boats are also to be used, flying from the River Elbe to a lake in Berlin. From July 5 British European Airways are running a daily shuttle service with Vikings from Hamburg to Berlin, in addition to a daily London-Hamburg-Berlin service, and a Dakota freight service now goes to Berlin twice a week. At Tempelhof, in the American sector, more Dakotas landed to bring supplies and a number of Skymasters are understood to be on their way across the Atlantic from the United States. The U.S. Air Transport Command aircraft brought supplies to Tempelhof from



the large American base at Rhein Main airfield, Frankfurt, and over 150 landings were made between midnight and 7 pm on Friday July 2. The number of R.A.F. landings at Gatow from 7 pm on Thursday July 1

to 7 pm on July 2 is given at 90. It has been proposed that coal should be carried by air to Berlin, and dropped from bomb releases into a large open space, but this plan has apparently been cancelled because of the danger to the civil population.

On July 17 and 18, 60 U.S.A.F. Boeing B-29 Superfortresses arrived in Great Britain, officially for a "routine training mission", but their arrival cannot be dissociated from the present trouble in Berlin – and indeed up to a few days before their arrival their crews did not know where they were going. After about a month at East Anglian bases the B-29s are expected to proceed to Germany, temporarily to join Major-General Curtis E. Lemay's U.S. Air Force in Europe. The bomber force, accompanied by 10 Douglas C-54 Skymaster transports, is under the command of Colonel Stanley Wray, and is composed of the 28th and 307th Bombardment Groups. Neither of these units has visited Britain before. For the present stay, the 28th Group flew from its base at Rapid Falls, South Dakota, and is accommodated at R.A.F. Scampton. Flying from Florida, via Bermuda, the 307th has one squadron (10 aircraft) based at R.A.F. Waddington and two squadrons (20 aircraft) at R.A.F. Marham, the Central Bomber Establishment.



Lancashire Aircraft Corporation Ltd., which has been flying visitors from the public enclosure at Northolt since the end of May, reports that it has been carrying an average of 800 passengers a week. Sunday is the main passenger-carrying day and is responsible for most of the weekly total. Dragon Rapides are used chiefly, but Airspeed Consuls are sometimes put into service when the traffic is particularly heavy. One of the company's Handley Page Haltons took 18 tourists to Zurich on July 3, followed by a similar flight on July 17.

Westminster Airways Ltd., has chartered a DC-3 to the United Nations for two months. The aircraft left Blackbushe on July 4, picking up 14 passengers at Geneva, before flying on to Basra and Karachi. Flown by Captain G. Mahoney, the aircraft will be required to fly to all parts of India and Pakistan at the wish of the delegation.

Mexican competitors for the Olympic Games arrived in London on July 8 aboard an Aerovias Guest SA Lockheed Constellation. Altogether, four contingents of athletes have now arrived from Mexico by air. Panair do Brasil increased its once weekly Constellation service from London to Buenos Aires to two each week on July 15.



Ministry of Supply has cleared the Avro Tudor IV for operation on the 2,143-mile route from the Azores to Bermuda, and the only ban on the route is that imposed by B.S.A.A. This follows the general grounding of these aircraft on February 3. However, B.S.A.A., the only air line using the Tudor, has decided that in the immediate future this aircraft will fly the North Atlantic route to the Caribbean, but the South Atlantic route will be opened later. While the Corporation is satisfied that the Tudor can operate the Santa Maria-

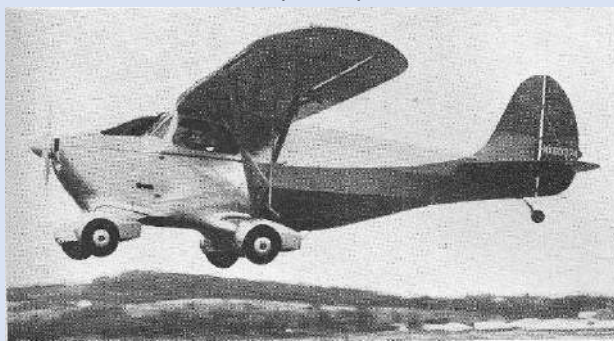
Kindley Field stretch, it will fly to the Americas through Shannon and Gander, 1,975 miles.





Tribute is due to the "Daily Express" by all interested in the welfare of aviation for the success of the Air Pageant which that paper organised at Gatwick on July 10. The show started at 14.30 after the helicopters and assorted light aircraft had done some curtain raising. The low unbroken cloud ceiling made it obvious that the opening turn by formations of Meteors and Vampires would have to be severely restrained. By way of contrast the next item was a flypast of civil types – Viking, a KLM DC-6, a BSAA Tudor IV and Air France four-engined Languedoc, but there was no Constellation. Next big aircraft to arrive was a Solent with both starboard propellers feathered, and just to show how easy it was the big boat was turned against the running engines. An Olley Air Service Dove followed suit with its starboard airscrew feathered. The RAF Coastal Command Sunderlands failed to appear as they were busy carrying food into Berlin. Six R.A.F. Avro Lincolns flew over in close formation, followed by four Vampires. Twelve Spitfire Mk.XVI aircraft of the Royal Auxiliary Air Force, flown by pilots of Nos.601 (County of London) and 604 (County of Middlesex) squadrons then gave a show up to the pre-war Hendon displays. A Stinson Reliant

and a Miles M.18 piloted by Squadron Leader R.L. Porteous then displayed, while later items included a Sea Fury, a pair of Sea Hornets, an airborne demonstration of a Martin-Baker ejector seat by a Meteor, and a flypast by the Nene-powered Avro Lancastrian. One of the most unusual participants was the Fulton Airphibian from Danbury, Connecticut, which converts from a car into an aeroplane. Powered by a single 150 hp engine driving a three-bladed wooden propeller, the aircraft demonstrated was the second prototype NX74104. The show concluded with an airborne assault, with three Dakotas from the R.A.F. Parachute Training School at Upper Heyford dropping 12 instructors, followed by three Airspeed Horsa gliders landing together with a Hadrian.



The first cross-Channel car ferry by air was inaugurated by Silver City Airways, in conjunction with the Automobile Association and the Royal Automobile Club, on Tuesday July 13. A Bristol Freighter is now stationed at Lympne Airport, near Folkestone, for this ferry and we were privileged to take part in the inaugural trip. The object has been to keep the flight as short as possible, and Le Touquet was therefore chosen as the French terminal.

Two cars can be carried in the Freighter's hold, and within 25 minutes of taking off from Lympne we touched down at Le Touquet, a distance of only 42 miles. The inclusive cost of a single charter trip is £32 for the car and up to four passengers. Flights were operated throughout the summer months by G-AGVC, with regular services commencing on July 14.

Although the six Vampires of No.54 Squadron left their base at Odiham on July 1, very strong headwinds prevented them from leaving Stornoway on the first trans-Ocean leg of the flight until July 12. The 662 statute miles to Meek's Field, Iceland, were covered in 2 hrs 42 mins, and on July 14 the Vampires left Iceland for Bluie West 1, Greenland, which they reached in 2 hrs 41 mins. The final leg of 783 miles, from Greenland to Goose Bay, was made on the same day, and took 2 hrs 55 mins. At Bluie West, which is surrounded by

ice-bound rock, the “safe” approach is up a 50-mile fjord less than half a mile wide at some points. Just before the Vampires arrived, cloud began to descend and to make things worse, the weather reconnaissance Mosquito flown by Squadron Leader H.B. Martin became unserviceable. One of the



advance refuelling Avro Yorks then orbited the aerodrome and gave a fix to the wind-finding

Mosquito 35 flown that was leading the Vampires, while another

Mosquito brought up the rear and was responsible for all air communications. Between the two layers of cloud which lay east of the airfield, the navigator of the York fired Very cartridges for the approaching aircraft, and shortly afterwards saw, through a gap in the clouds, vapour trails from the Vampires.



On a two-week visit to Europe, 16 Lockheed F-80 Shooting Stars of the 56th Fighter Group, U.S.A.F., accompanied by a supporting Superfortress, Fortresses with airborne lifeboats, and two Skymasters, arrived in this country on July 20. The aircraft left Goose Bay on July 17, and arrived at Bluie West on the same day, the Shooting Stars taking 1 hr 15 mins. Leaving Greenland on July 19, the F-80s reached Iceland in 1 hr 45 mins, and on the following day flew to Stornoway in 1 hr 40 mins. The Shooting Stars accomplished the 2,202-mile ocean crossing in 4 hrs 40 mins, which makes an interesting comparison with the corresponding figure of 8 hrs 18 mins for the No.54 Squadron Vampires which crossed in the opposite direction. On July 21 the Shooting Stars left Stornoway for Odiham, where a reception committee of R.A.F. and U.S.A.F. representatives and foreign air attachés awaited them.



A Lockheed Constellation left Burbank, California, on July 24 on the first part of a trans-Continental flight for delivery to the U.S. Naval Air Transport Service, which has ordered the first two prototypes. From Burbank the aircraft was flown to the Naval Air Station at Mossett Field, San Francisco, where it was inspected by senior Service officers. Next day at 08.28 Eastern Time the Constellation took-off on its 2,500 mile non-stop flight to the Naval Air Test Centre at Patuxent River, Maryland, where it

landed some ten hours later at 18.48. The Constellation is the largest landplane flying today, having an all-up weight of 184,000 lb and accommodating 168 passengers; it is powered by four 3,500 hp Pratt & Whitney Wasp Majors. As the aircraft is ordered for the U.S. Navy, passenger accommodation is undoubtedly more spartan than would be offered by air lines. If part passenger, part freight loading is required, 92 passengers can be carried in the upper deck, leaving a 7,300 cubic-ft hold in the lower deck for cargo. The prototype has completed more than 140 test flights.



Arriving at London Airport from Villacoublay, Paris, on July 25, the Nene-Viking celebrated the 39th Anniversary of Blériot's Channel crossing by covering the 218 miles in 36 minutes 30 seconds, representing an average speed of 359 mph. The time of 34 minutes 7 seconds on the outward journey is a record for civil aircraft, and this represented a speed of 384 mph. Flying at speeds approaching 400 mph, the Viking was

piloted by Captain J. "Mutt" Summers, Vickers' chief test pilot, who was accompanied by Mr George Edwards, the company's chief designer. Two Rolls-Royce Nene turbojets replaced the standard Bristol Hercules piston engines, with the undercarriage units also completely redesigned on the aircraft. Inside, the cabin is furnished with 24 passenger seats and some test equipment.

One of the first post-war products of the Fokker company is the F.25 Promotor, which is intended as a four-seat air taxi or charter aircraft, or a luxury aeroplane for the private owner. Prototype PH-NBA came to England at the end of July. A low-wing twin-boom aircraft, the Promotor is powered by a pusher-type Lycoming O-435A six-cylinder horizontally opposed engine of 190 bhp, driving a two-bladed automatically controlled Aeromatic propeller. The main wheels retract sideways into the wings and the steerable nose-wheel is raised forward into a wheelwell in the rounded nose fairing. The aircraft sells for £3,355 without radio, and is being retailed by the industrial trading company, Avio Diepen at Ypenburg.



Prestwick Peeking – a Spotter's Report – Since the opening of the public enclosure at Prestwick Airport after Easter, it has been well patronised, especially at weekends. Apart from normal aircraft movements, the chief attractions are the Irvin-Bell 47B two-seat helicopter in flight and the turn-round servicing of Trans-Canada Airlines "North Stars", which is now carried out in close proximity to the public enclosure by Scottish Aviation's Servicing Section. Short pleasure flights at weekends over Ayr and the Firth of Clyde by Scottish Airlines' Airspeed Oxford G-AHDZ at ten shillings per person have had a ready demand. Two recent additions to the normal trans-Atlantic aircraft calling at Prestwick were T.C.A.'s Canadair DC-4M CF-TFH and B.O.A.C.'s sixth Lockheed Constellation G-AKCE "Bedford". Some interesting aircraft movements have included the Maharajah of Baroda's de Havilland Dove VT-CEH, a Beech JRB-4 of U.S. Navy (90538), three U.S.A.F. Douglas A-26 Invaders (434429, 434492 and 434431) and a Douglas C-47 of John Mahieu Aviation (OO-APC). David Reid, Ayr, Scotland.

Cranfield Collection – another Spotter's Report – Some little time ago I paid a visit to the College of Aeronautics at Cranfield. In the first hangar there were G-AIXG, G-AIXI, G-AIXJ Tiger Moths; G-AJFH and G-

AKFN Argus; G-AIPA, an Anson fitted out for measuring the amount of trim tab and aileron movement; G-AIPC, G-AIPD Ansons and G-AIPB, a cannibalized Anson; and G-AJZE and RG238 (which is to become G-AJZF), two Mosquitos for B.E.A. gust research. In the second hangar were G-AITC, G-AILO and PP332, Halifax VIIIs, and a Kirby Tutor BGA473 and an S.G.38. The outboard motors of PP332 are to be replaced by Nenes in 28 ft 10 in cowlings, of which a mock-up is being built. In a hangar that is now a laboratory were several Tempest fuselages and a Fortress fuselage. In the "Museum" were Tempest LA607, Spitfire XII EN224, Corsair KD431 and Liberator G-AKAG registered for the purpose of flying it to Cranfield. Also present was Fw190 191659, the second prototype Lincoln PW932, a Lancaster fuselage, as well as several unrecognisable pieces and the nose of a mock-up of "Willit", which has been designed by the students. N.H. Ellison, Luton, Bedfordshire.

LONDON AIRPORT – TUESDAY ARRIVALS – SUMMER 1948

08.50	KLM Skymaster	Amsterdam
08.50	SABENA DC-3	Brussels
09.55	Air France Languedoc	Paris
10.35	BOAC Avro York	Accra
11.10	SABENA DC-3	Brussels
11.20	KLM Skymaster	Amsterdam
12.00	SABENA DC-3	Brussels
13.10	SABENA DC-3	Brussels
13.20	KLM Skymaster	Amsterdam
13.25	American Overseas Constellation	New York
14.20	Pan American Constellation	New York
14.35	Trans-Canada North Star	Montreal
14.45	BOAC Liberator	Montreal
14.55	Air France Languedoc	Paris
15.15	BOAC Constellation	New York
15.20	KLM Skymaster	Amsterdam
16.55	Air France Languedoc	Paris
17.00	BOAC DC-3	Cairo
17.30	KLM Skymaster	Amsterdam
18.30	BOAC Constellation	Montreal
18.35	Pan American DC-3	Vienna
19.00	BSAA Lancastrian	Santiago
19.10	SABENA DC-3	Brussels
19.10	CSA DC-3	Prague
19.20	KLM Skymaster	Amsterdam
19.25	BOAC Avro York	Dar-es-Salaam
19.55	Pan American Constellation	Istanbul
19.55	Air France Languedoc	Paris
20.15	BOAC Lancastrian Freighter	Johannesburg
20.55	Air France Languedoc	Paris
21.40	KLM DC-3	Eindhoven
22.20	KLM DC-3	Prague
22.20	KLM Skymaster	Amsterdam
22.40	SABENA DC-3	Brussels

