

SIXTY YEARS OF FERRY NEWS

As mentioned in the Newsletter, the first issue of the staff newspaper Ferry News was published in March/April 1956. We thought you might be interested to read a few of the items that appeared in its pages that year.

The Shape of Things To Come at Lydd

The final stages of the second phase of Ferryfield's development plan are now in process of completion. The largest single undertaking of the scheme has been the erection of an impressive maintenance hangar that has become a new landmark on Romney Marsh. Measuring 240ft in length and 120ft in width, the hangar holds up to three Bristol 170s or Dakotas. Along its walls are the offices, rooms and stores necessary to accommodate the engineering section's entire technical and clerical staff, equipment and parts needed to keep a busy fleet of aircraft operating at the highest pitch.

By Whitsun a 6,600 sq ft self-contained terminal building for the passengers of Air Kruse will be open. The new building is an attractive two-storey structure 132ft by 50ft, containing the passenger reception lounge, a restaurant, traffic and administration sections and a staff canteen.

What do they do there? (Le Touquet)

Under this provocative banner our roving reporters intend to peer a little more closely than most into the remote outposts of our empire. Le Touquet really is an enigma to most of us. There is a small (but highly versatile!) permanent staff of half a dozen Traffic, Reservations and Operations people, at least half of them ladies. Presiding over Reservations there is Mlle. Lily Ruler, who for two years scared the daylight out of the locals coming to work on her Vespa from Montreuil, 12 miles inland. She now does it more effectively in a Renault 4CV.

There are a good two dozen controllers, Met police and Customs, and not least – the A.A. and R.A.C. contingent. The A.A. do a daily remarkable double act, tearing in madly from Folkestone, a quick change into their best barthea, a coffee and a nod to Traffic, Customs and Police, over on the 'plane and, breathless, out on to the Le Touquet tarmac, where they proceed simultaneously to greet their co-travellers in faultless French, have another coffee and shout, "Put me on the next manifest, Charlie."

Royal Visit to Lydd

The staff of the British Aviation Services group of companies were greatly honoured on Thursday, April 5, when His Royal Highness The Duke of Edinburgh visited Lydd (Ferryfield) Airport and later flew to Le Touquet in a Bristol Superfreighter of the cross-Channel air ferry fleet. The Duke flew to Ferryfield from White Waltham in a de Havilland Heron of the Queen's Flight and was received on arrival by the Chairman, Mr Eoin C. Mekie and the Managing Director, Air Commodore G. J. Powell.

At mid-day the Duke boarded Bristol Superfreighter G-AMWD, raised his personal standard – for the first time on any aircraft operated by a British independent airline - and seated himself beside Captain David Flett for the 20-minute flight to Le Touquet. Soon after take-off the Duke took over the controls, and continued to fly the aircraft until it had passed over the French coast.

What's It All About?

Probably all of you have seen, at one time or another, one or more of the Freighters or Dakotas quietly parked in the Maintenance Area – or, as the Operations Department would say, the engineers' graveyard. You may have wondered what was being done and why the aircraft was not on service. Well, if you are interested, I will tell you, and if you aren't you can always look at the photograph of Sabrina on Page 351 of this issue.

With aircraft, maintenance by mileage is impracticable, so we use flying hours as the basis. Every day each aircraft has a check-over and every 50 flying hours the engine, airframe, instruments, electrics and radio have a more thorough check. As you will see the aircraft must have enough

hours left before its check to enable it to carry out the day's operation. In the winter this is not too difficult to arrange but in the height of the season it is sometimes necessary to pull aircraft off service around mid-day or during the afternoon for maintenance; this trick is known as "Syddall's Special".

So next time you see an aircraft in the Maintenance Area, when there is three-hours' backlog and the staff are all pretending they work for Air Kruse, don't ring up the poor old engineers to complain – you will probably disturb their game of cards, and maybe the poor old Chief Engineer is holding the first decent hand he has been dealt all day.

The Ferryman's Diary

A correspondent from Blackbushe sends us a cutting from Wren's Wroundabout in The Aeroplane: "After last week's pun about the Finns travelling in Finnair they are saying that Silver City are now operating a service to Paris called Ferry Godmother. Well, we always knew their advertising was out on a Lympne, but this really put the Lydd on it."

The Suez Airlift

The B. A. S. Group has been made solely responsible for flying out the families and children of the Suez Contractors (Services), some 713 passengers in all. Aquila flying boats are ferrying them as far as Malta and Britavia Hermes are operating the sector from Malta to Blackbushe, co-ordinating these flights with the emergency air trooping requirements. One or two flying boat flights are pressing right through from Suez to Southampton. The Hermes are flying night and day on this lift, with one hour's turn-round at Malta and one and a half hour's turn-round at Blackbushe. The crews are taking only the minimum rest periods and then "on again"; in fact, just about long enough to change laundry and that is all.

Another Unusual Pastime

After covering over 30,000 miles through twenty countries in their two Land Rover Station Wagons since they left Lydd last September, the members of the Oxford and Cambridge Far Eastern Expedition – Nigel Newbery, Henry Nott, Pat Murphy (brother of Ferryfield Flight Attendant T Murphy) "B.B." Barrington-Brown and Tim Slessor – arrived at Ferryfield on August 20. The 20-minute flight from Le Touquet was the longest sea crossing in their entire journey, which was over an almost exclusively overland route never previously attempted.

The Joys of Being an Air Hostess (by the Air Kruse Beastesses)

Being an Air Hostess is universally considered to be **the** most glamorous job in this day and age. The general public is under the impression that an Air Hostess is a combination of Marilyn Monroe, Jane Russell and Florence Nightingale. She sways down the aircraft dressed in her Christian Dior creation looking positively out of this world; smiling sweetly at her passengers as she stops here and there to soothe some old man's brow, or to inspire confidence. In fact, she caters for every need.

Our visits to "far away places" are but brief interludes saying, no less than 34 times, "Goodbye, Madam, I hope you enjoy your holiday....". We then put our heads out of the door, gulp in the fresh air – that wonderful sun-soaked air, impregnated with the scent of exotic blooms – and proceed to our "Good morning, Sir. Have you enjoyed your holiday?"

So, my dear readers, next time you are waiting for your flight in the Airport lounge, don't, when wondering what your hostess will look like, gaze upon that bevy of beauty over yonder, you won't find her there; she is no beauty but a short, plump, middle-aged hag, with flat feet and fallen arches from walking all the way to Palma and back, and she looks longingly at the array of bottles behind the bar.