



*Capt. H.L. Farquhar in the Beech, Mexico City, 1935.
(Photo - Farquhar)*

Westwards To England

By PETER BERRY

Introduction

At 1:50 p.m., August 26th, 1936, a British-registered floatplane, G-ADLE, flown by owner-pilot Capt. Harold L. Farquhar with Fritz Beiler, took off from North Beach Airport, New York, and set course to the northwest. After some 154 flying hours and 21,332 miles later, this Beech B-17R landed at Heston, England at 2:45 p.m. on October 29th, 1935.

This around-the-world "pleasure cruise," by what were unkindly alluded to as "spare amateurs," was in fact a most notable flight by two adventurous gentlemen, using a new, high-performance biplane over some of the most forbidding country in the world.

My interest in this flight occurred during research to assist Robert T. Smith of Georgia, USA, with his task of completing a book relating the story of the Beech 17 biplane. The story of this successful flight has not, until now, been written in detail; but with the kind co-operation of Sir Harold Farquhar's son, Adrian, who supplied photographs of his father and uncovered the actual diary kept during the flight, this account has been prepared.

Valuable assistance was also received from Miss Phyllis Macpherson, Foreign Office, London; A.J. Jackson, Leigh-on-Sea, Essex; Cliff Barr, "Middlesex Chronicle", Hounslow; John A. Bagley, B.Sc., Farnborough, Hants; Hans Kofoed, Denmark; John H. Blake, Royal Aero Club, London; Bill Rhode, New Jersey, USA; Robert T. Smith, Georgia, USA; Sandor Kvassay, Beech Aircraft, Kansas, USA.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

A member of AAHS since 1956, Peter Berry has also been a member of the United States Aircraft Research Group of Air-Britain for the past 20 years, and has co-operated in several published books and monographs, both in the U.K. and the U.S.A.

He served in the Air Traffic Towers at Farnborough and Bedford 1948 to 1965, and his present assignment is the Airways and Oceanic Control Centre, Prestwick, Scotland.



Route Flown by Capt. H. L. Farquhar in Beech B-17R Seaplane G-ADLE. August 26th to October 29th 1935

		<u>Distance (Statute Miles)</u>		<u>Time (Hours + Mins)</u>							
N. Beach N.Y.	<u>450</u> 3:40	Toronto	(350 + 650) <u>1000</u> 8:20	Lac Du Bonnet	(380 + 450) <u>830</u> 7:00	Ft. McMurray	(400 + 475) <u>875</u> 6:45	Ft. Norman	(390 + 550) <u>940</u> 8:15	Fairbanks	
	<u>560</u> 3:45	Nome	<u>180</u> 1:45	Uelen	<u>520</u> 4:00	Anadyr	<u>510</u> 4:20	Olyutorsk	<u>630</u> 5:30	Nogaevo	
						Markovo					
	<u>270</u> 2:00	Okhotsk	<u>520</u> 4:05	Nikolaevsk	100 + 420 <u>520</u> 6:15	Nijne Tambovkoie	<u>200</u> 1:30	Khabarovsk	<u>653</u> 4:45	Harbin (Floats Off)	
	<u>730</u> 6:30	Peking	<u>665</u> 3:32	Shanghai	<u>875</u> 4:42	Hong Kong	<u>630</u> 3:36	Hanoi	<u>735</u> 4:40	Saigon	
	<u>450</u> 2:25	Bangkok	<u>1183</u> 5:45	Calcutta	<u>1040</u> 5:51	Jodhpur	<u>555</u> 4:00	Poona	<u>623</u> 4:40	Larachi	
	(290 + 989) <u>1279</u> 8:30	Basra	<u>152</u> 1:00	Baghdad	<u>750</u> 5:00	Cairo 750 5:00 Luxor	(748 + 523) <u>1271</u> 8:22	Tripoli	(415 + 598 + 228) <u>1241</u> 7:45	Lyons	
	<u>495</u> 4:40	Heston									

N.Y. - Harbin (with floats) - 8,658 - 71:55 = 120 mph
 Harbin - Heston (wheels) - 12,674 - 80:58 = 156.5 mph

20 U.S./Hr. 21,332 - 152:53 = 138.2 mph

The Aircraft

The Beech negative-stagger biplane, G-ADLE, was the 50th Model 17 to be built at Wichita, Kansas. The wing span was 32 ft., length 24 ft. 5 in., height 8 ft. 2 in. The wing area was 267 sq. ft., the initial rate of climb 1600 ft./min. and ceiling was 22,000 ft. An Approved Type Certification No. 579 was issued for this Model at a gross weight of 3615 lbs. and Vne 225 mph. Both standard and long-range tanks were installed in G-ADLE: forward fuselage — 42 US, upper wing roots (2) — 23 US each, lower wing roots — 23 US each, a total of 162 US gallons. It is of interest to note that the gross weight of the seaplane was reached before the 162 US/990 lbs. of fuel was taken aboard. This fuel load gave an endurance of some 8 hours, and a still air range of some 960 miles as a seaplane and 1250 miles as a landplane.

Power was one Wright R-975-E3 Whirlwind, 9-cylinder supercharged, air-cooled radial engine, serial 12791 and authorized by Dept. of Commerce licence No. 125. Take-off power was 420 hp at 2200 rpm at 1400 ft. Compression ratio, 6.3:1. Dry weight, 685 lbs. Fuel was 80 octane and consumption some 20 US gal/hour.

Preparations

In 1934, whilst serving as First Secretary at the British Legation in Mexico City, Capt. H.L. Farquhar purchased a Beech B-17L biplane XB-AIZ (c/n. 10). The following year he exchanged this Beechcraft for the new, more powerful Model B-17R and travelled with his friend, Fritz Beiler, a World War I German pilot living in Mexico, to Kansas, to take delivery of the new aircraft. At Wichita the two friends met E.F. Ross, a staggerwing pilot for the Loffland Brothers Company, who remember Farquhar "as a very nice fellow."

The Beech B17R G-ADLE, was finished blue overall with white trim, red markings outlined in silver, delivered by Beech on July 18th, 1935, to be immediately flown to Michigan where it was displayed at the Detroit Air Show held July 19th to 28th, 1935. Here it attracted a good deal of attention when it was learned that this standard production biplane was to make a 'round-the-world' cruise across North America, Siberia, S.E. Asia, the Middle East, North Africa and across Europe to London, England. After the Detroit Show, G-ADLE was flown to Mexico City where final preparations for the flight were made.

The Flight

The flight was flown in three stages: as a landplane from Mexico City to New York, as a seaplane from New York to Harbin, Manchuria (the 8,658 miles were flown in 71.55 flying hours — 120 mph), and as a landplane from Harbin to Heston, England (the 12,674 miles were flown in 80.58 flying hours — 156.5 mph).

The flight commenced from Mexico City on August 16th, 1935, when the British Certificate of Airworthiness was issued for Capt. Farquhar's new biplane. The first legs were flown at a leisurely pace and they arrived at North Beach Airport, New York (today called La Guardia) at 12:05 p.m. on August 22nd, 1935.

Since part of the trip was necessarily over long stretches of open water, it had been decided to install float gear, G-ADLE was flown to the College Point plant of the Edo Aircraft Company and fitted with a pair of Model 39-4000 floats with water rudders. This was the third Beech 17 floatplane. A most interesting feature of this installation was that the normal landing gear and tail wheel were not removed, but were retracted into the fuselage and the floats attached. This feature allowed the aircraft to be readily converted to a landplane at a later stage of the flight. Many items of additional equipment were installed, including a Lear radio directional compass and associated loop.

General observations re flight in seaplane (noted by Capt. Farquhar at Peking). The plane was very overloaded; i.e., empty weight of 2,238 lbs. + 450 floats + extra propeller, 65 lbs. + 990 lbs. of gas + 85 lbs. of oil + 65 lbs. of reserve oil + 2 occupants or 340 lbs. + 85 lbs. spare parts +, say, 200 lbs. of baggage and anchor, ropes, tackle, etc., and rubber boat or an extra 75 lbs.; or a grand total of 4,593 lbs., i.e., 993 lbs. over the approved gross weight. It is not surprising we could only take off under ideal water conditions. ii) Performance figures estimated by Wells (Chief Engineer at the factory) were accurate. At 1900 rpm at sea level with M.P. of 27.5" we made 130 mph, at 9,000 feet, M.P. 24.5" we made 150 mph. iii) Engine worked splendidly and never gave any trouble. iv) Gas highly loaded the plane, took a long time to get onto the step. v) Leaning out the mixture at altitude gives about 3 to 4 gallons an hour more.

Whilst at North Beach Airport, G-ADLE was serviced by O.J. Whitney Inc., the northeastern distributor for Beech aircraft.

HIS DIARY . . .

THE DIARY KEPT BY CAPT. H.L. FARQUHAR

Departure Certificate

Left North Beach Airport
1:40 p.m. August 26th 1935
Beechcraft biplane G-ADLE

(Signed) J.E. McNulty Inspector of Customs
H.E. Lapham

26th August 1935

Left North Beach Airport New York at 1:50 p.m. for Canada. Picked up UTICA (100 w) 50 miles off and SYRACUSE (1000 w) ditto. Later took TORONTO (690 Kc/s at 10,000w) about 70 miles; all signals came in very strong, and selectivity very good. We used SYRACUSE as a compass check satisfactorily. Going over UTICA, signals reversed very well indeed.

Weather: good, but 20/25 headwind at 9,000 ft.; slightly less lower down.

NY-TORONTO 420 miles in 3 hrs. 40 mins. at 1800 revs, 26.2 Manifold Pressure.



Captain Harold L. Farquhar (l) and his Beech negative-stagger biplane, G-ADLE, taken at North Beach, New York, prior to takeoff.
(Photo - Beech)

27th August

Left TORONTO 7:50; bad headwind and rain (2,000 ft. ceiling) for first hour. Ground speed 120 mph. Bad conditions for take-off. Tried full load test and failed — had to take out 58 American gallons. The water conditions were bad — glassy and no wind, but in practice it looks as though in our overloaded seaplane, our range is going to be reduced considerably — about 120 gallons being as much as we should be able to carry. We flew along the N shore of Lake Huron (Georgian Bay and North Channel to Sault

St. Marie 350 miles), gassed up (this time with full tanks) and then went on via N. shore of Lake Superior over Port Arthur to Fort Frances, skirting the N. of the Lake of the Woods to Lac du Bonnet. The first 2 or 3 hours, weather moderate and rather cold. At Lac du Bonnet everyone very friendly — Imperial Oil reps had motored out from Winnipeg (50 miles) and took us to see the R.C.A.F. who gave us first class maps — 650 — days trip 1,000 miles (1,450 in all from N.Y.) Cold intense. God knows what it will be like up north.

28th August

Started in gloomy and very cold weather at 8 a.m. Northwards along the length of Lake Winnipeg and across difficult and desolate country to the R.C.A.F. Station at Cormorant Lake (380 miles), gassed up (taking 1 1/4 hrs.) and then went on across utterly desolate and uninhabited wastes of marsh and swamp via Lac la Ronge, the Churchill River, Peter Pan Lake and the Clear Water River to McMurray where we arrived in good weather. Navigation tricky. God help you, if you lost your way. 450 miles or 830 for the day.

29th August

Left McMurray where Wop May, Chief pilot of Canadian Airways gave invaluable information, and was most friendly. Up the Athabaska River to the Great Slave Lake at Resolution, and then along the Southern shore to Hay River Post (400 miles) where we gassed up and then pushed on via Providence and Simpson along the Mackenzie River as far as Norman (475 miles). I could not help being impressed and rather dismal by the terrible loneliness and desolation of these 1,000's of square miles of desolate swamps. Total for the day, 875 miles. We seem to be cruising at about 130 at 1800 revs (man. press, about 26.4).

"FROM HERE, THE COUNTRY IS BAD."

30th August

Pushed on ever northwards, well into the Arctic Circle. Arrived about midday at AKLAVIK, one of the last outposts of civilization in the N.W. territories. Full of admiration for the R.C.M.P., a wonderful body of men; and for their signal corps. Everyone astonishingly kind and hospitable. These parts of the Mackenzie River, most of them 2/300 miles apart, must be grim and lonely. Gassed up in A (390 miles) and then pushed on into Alaska over the same awful country across the Northern extremity of the Rockies, at a point where the Rut River runs into the Peel River and Mackenzie River junction due West. From then on, still going W., we hit the Porcupine River which runs ultimately into the Yukon at Fort Yukon; from then S. to Circle. From here, the country is bad. For a seaplane, the best route into Fairbanks is to follow the road over hilly country. The river at F is no good for a heavily laden plane like ours. After some difficulty, we spotted Harding Lake (50 miles off) where we landed. Lost hours; bad weather. Distance 550, or days total 940. Joe Burrows of PAA very kind and did everything for us.

31st August 1935

Did nothing. Tried to get some sleep. Gave engine a check.

WINTER — 1968

1st September

Left about 1:45 p.m. for Nome, following course of Tanana River, across Norton Bay and along the coast landing at Safety Bay (15 miles off). Weather after Tanana very bad — rain, low ceiling but visibility fairly good. We tried to get to TELLER but had to turn back. 560 miles.

2nd September

Real bad weather in everyone's opinion; and I was not keen on flying off into unknown conditions on the other side of the Bering Straits. B, however, was furious at my not wanting to start, reluctantly and sulkily agreed (in face of these gloomy weather reports) to remain grounded.

3rd September

At midday, weather, although moderately better than yesterday, inspired me with grave concern, but B rightly considered it worth having a shot for Siberia. We left at 3:30, crossing the DIOMEDE ISLANDS (covered in fog) and landing at our first spot in Siberia — UELEN as dusk fell. Amazing change. In Alaska, American efficiency and modern civilization. Here, a few Eskimos (or rather Chungehi huts) and two wooden communal dwellings where were housed the authorities — lots of them and very complicated.

There is apparently (1) the local, and in this case, native rep of the local Soviet, (2) the head of the settlement, and (3) the second or 'political' head (both presumably appointed by the central USSR Govt.), and (4) the military rep, who inspected our passports, credentials etc. Fortunately, the political chief understood a few words of German; but, how much is difficult to say.

They said our arrival was unexpected. They turned out of a hut and gave us beds, gasoline, food, etc., and weren't to hear of payment for anything. (Not that we could, as we had no rubles; no other money is currency). Did their best with radio weather reports, etc. 180 miles. A few hours after our arrival, a thick mist descended. The barometer dropped steadily; visibility, not promising.

We lost a whole day by crossing the International Date line, so it is 4th and not 3rd of September.

5th September

Couldn't fly. Grounded by fog. My morale is getting low and this appalling desolation is getting on my nerves.

6th September

B, wisely made the decision to take-off, in spite of the fog. We could just see the sun coming through and managed to make ANADYR, the next outpost of human life on this desolate continent. Terrifically enthusiastic welcome from all the authorities. There was G. Lanu, a rep of Intourist who spoke English. A big factory here on the other side of the bay, where we landed, employing 750 workmen canning salmon and making caviar. Head of factory speaks German. High military commander (equal of major general) advised us to try inland route via MARKOVO to YAMSK the next day. Trip - 520 miles (counting deviations from course, owing to low ceiling).

7th September

In none too promising weather, we started for MARKOVA (rain, ceiling of about 2,500 feet but visibility always about 5 miles), grim and uninhabited tundra, following ANADYRK River. Got to MARKOVA, but decided it was impossible to get out again if we landed (we subsequently learnt the regular landing place was 18 km upstream, a fact which everyone forgot to tell us), and reluctantly returned to ANADYRK. On the way back, flew by an extraordinary coincidence, straight over the 2 year old remains of Jimmie Mattern's plane, about 50 miles from the town and about 3 miles from river; what luck he had to get out of it.

8th and 9th September

S. easterly gale and flying impossible, though nerves got on edge deciding whether or not we should try. Doubtful and out-of-date weather reports from Cape NAVARIN on OLYUTORSKI Bay. Made B. very reluctantly decide it might be better to wait. Authorities continue marvellous, very friendly and kind. V/Admiral POSMOL of Nord-See Expedition came to dine and was most interesting.

10th September

Weather showed faint signs of clearing. We tried to start; back fire and conflagration in carburetor air intake. B. wisely decided on dismantling cowl and having a look; also, replacing spark-plugs, as we had been missing on R magneto. Found little apparent damage as a result of back-fire, but spark plugs not at fault; short circuit in cables from distributor on collector. We spent the whole day locating the trouble. Amazing co-operation and assistance from all concerned, especially TELETCHINUN (Party chief), IHAS-CHENKO (Head at factory), PELROK (the military and police representative); various workers and expert technicians from Arctic Sea Expedition worked whole-heartedly from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. without stopping.

We note that ordinary Russian aviation gas is 73 octane, O.K. for cruising; above 29 or 30 in. manifold pressure; however, you get pre-ignition and it makes one look unconsciously for the nearest bit of water.

11th September

The weather lifted sufficiently to allow us to make a start on the next lap of our trip. We left at 11:30 a.m., and made overland for the coast, cutting off CAPE NAVARIN. The weather got progressively worse and, when we got to CAPE OLYUTORSKI, seemed to be blowing a full gale from two directions at once. We were nearly blown against the cliffs. During the previous hour, our ceiling was about 2/300 feet, visibility at times down to 500/600 yds with cold (and unpleasant) moments of "zero-zero." We arrived at OLYUTORSKI at 3:50 p.m., after bad buffeting. Distance, 510 miles.

12th September

Left OLYUTORSKI, after the usual incredible time for filling up with gas, at 10:30 a.m. Took ages to get on the step, owing to glassy water. The first time we have seen

the sun since leaving Alaska, and first time we could afford to fly high (10,000 ft.). Temperature, at this altitude, 20°F, but cabin quite warm.

An uneventful trip over the mountain range of the peninsula of KAMCHATKA, and across 200 miles of open sea in the Gulf of PENZHINSK. We arrived at about 4 p.m. at NOGAEVO and, as usual, were marvellously treated – free gas, quarters, everything. Distance, 630 miles. Tried to gas up and push on to OKHOTSK, but it took too long.

"... NEARLY DROWNED"

13th September

Left at 12:15 p.m., after a lot of talking; suspicion that weather might be bad. Flew over the ceiling and, fortunately, found a hole over IKHOTSK. We came down to find a full gale blowing and filthy weather all around, so landed. Owing to phenomenal rise and fall of the tide (about 20/25 feet), we anchored our plane in what we afterwards found was about a 10/12 mph tide race. By 6 p.m., almost a hurricane blowing (from S.E.) and the ship was in danger (a) of dragging the anchor and (b) of the wind turning her over. B. nearly drowned, rushing out in deep water to the plane, self wet up to the waist (fortunately, my rubber boots filled with water and anchored me down). Local authorities made superhuman efforts and, eventually, placed 2 boats with stones on either side and tied the lower wings down. At about 3 a.m., the wind must have been 50 mph. Without the help of the authorities, our plane would have been lost (as it was, one float compartment was damaged and is leaking badly). Distance, 270 miles.

14th September

Weather cleared, but I felt too ill to get out of bed. (Stomach swelling at tinned food, abscess in neck, and splitting headache). Conditions very primitive. Rats all over the place (even on the bed) that night. Dear old lady who spoke 6 languages and was working there as a dentist, most helpful. Owner of the hovel gave up his bed. Hospitality and kindness of these people is amazing, if not unbelievable. It is all we can do to prevent them loading up our overloaded plane with all their winter supplies of chocolate, cigarettes, tinned foods, etc.

15th September

At last, a sunny day. Took off at 12:10 p.m. (tide finally high enough) and only just got unstuck, with 135 gallons on board. (We keep our 28 gallon tank with 80 octane gas solely for take-off). A quiet and uneventful flight via AYAN and the SHANTARSKI ISLANDS (150 miles of open sea) to NIKOLAEVSK on Amur. With the exception of AYAN, no sign of life for the whole distance. We arrived at N. at 4:15 p.m. – distance, 520 miles. Usual wonderful welcome (though we landed at the military airport) and every possible kindness and hospitality shown. We were recommended not to waste our time looking for the frontier town of PETROVSKAYA, which we have never been able to locate on any decent large scale map, but to report at KHABAROVSK.



*Beech B-17R G-ADLE, complete with Edo Model 39-4000 floats, New York, 1935.
(Photo, Larkins - Jackson)*

16th September

Got off at 9:30 a.m. (unaccountably bad and long take-off), and hearing the weather was bad along the Amur River, tried to beat it by going inland, i.e., westwards and flying high. This didn't come off and, after touring round the country (uninhabited and mountainous) for 3 hours, we were lucky striking the Amur (after we had decided to return to NIKOLAEVSK) at a place called MASCRISK – only 100 miles South of our point of departure. The production of my passport, and laissez-faire, induced the local authorities to unearth some gas and we pushed on in the evening to NIUNE TAMBOVSKOIE, half-way to KHABAROVSK. Distance flown, 520 miles.

Everyone friendly and charming, as usual. At 10 p.m., received a charmingly worded message in English from the authorities of KHABAROVSK welcoming and asking us to stay there. Country quite different. Wooded slopes, more friendly than the ghastly "tundra" we looked at from UELEN to IKHOTSK. 17 days without a bath; almost lousy.

17th September

Uneventful flight to KHABAROVSK, where we arrived in 1-1/2 hr. (30 mph tailwind). Terrific welcome at airport: all the chief authorities, mayor, Chief G.P.U. and woman correspondent of TASS agency. Huge meal at hotel at 4:30 p.m., which went on 'til about 10:30 p.m. Everyone very merry and the evening got somewhat confused. Soviet authorities offered to give motor a check and did

it extremely well. They use 1st rate mechanics and had no difficulty, whatsoever, in coping with a Wright motor with which they were not familiar. 200 miles.

18th September

Awful weather. We couldn't start. Authorities presumably resting and we could not make ourselves understood at the hotel (where we could, of course, order nothing and pay for nothing, being guests of the Soviet Govt.).

19th September

Got off at 11:45 a.m. in filthy weather: visibility 1/4 mile, ceiling about 500 feet, heavy rain. After an hour, it cleared up and we were able to fly at our correct height – 10,000 ft. Arrived at HARBIN at 4:30 and had a row with an impertinent little junior customs official. Fortunately, a Japanese Col. (head of the Jap. Air Force) came to my rescue and, thanks to the good offices of the Consul-General Jamieson (who was most helpful), we got to the hotel – the first real touch of civilization since Fairbanks, Alaska, at about 6:30 p.m. Dined with Consul. 653 miles.

20th, 21st, 22nd September

After reading telegram from C-G, Tientsin, warning against water condition there, it dawned on us that we would be well-advised to convert into a land plane. We faced a 600 mile stretch of dry land, no chance of gas for about 800 miles. I put the problem up to the Japa-

nese colonel who was most understanding and helpful. He placed the whole of his force 60+ coolies, at our disposal, hauled the ship onto a mud flat, very cleverly built a sand wall round the lower wings, carefully removed the floats, and made a runway on the mud flat in the middle of the river on which (with no load) we easily took off and went to the airport, where everything was put in order. A very clever bit of work by Jamieson; the Japanese authorities and one Neville, an air-minded resident ex R.A.F. officer, most helpful.

23rd September

Left at 9 a.m., after official goodbye (presentation of silver cigarette case from Japanese!). 1st hour bad weather, then ceiling good. Flew at 10/11,000 ft. to MANCHUHO. Chinese frontier at CHANGCHUN, then along Great Wall and reached Peking at 3:30 p.m. Chinese most obliging, no trouble with customs. Distance, 730 miles (as flown).

27th, 28, 29 September

Left at 7 a.m. and arrived at Lung Wha aerodrome, Shanghai at 10:32 a.m., record for course (average of 190 mph), most friendly and courteous greeting from everyone – especially from China National Aviation Co. – controlled by P.A.A. Complete 24 hr. overhaul given to motor, fuselage polished, controls tested, etc., and countless other small jobs effected – all free of charge. Luncheon given in our honor by Shanghai R.A.F. Association. 665 miles.

30th September

Left at 7 a.m. on compass course for Hong Kong. Mountainous country and little to help as regards navigation on bad maps. We were, however, right to fly inland as it was clear that the weather along the coast was bad – low ceiling and thunderstorms. After the first 3 hours weather deteriorated but, as we had a 7/10 ceiling, we continued above the clouds at an average altitude of 12/13,000 ft., and only came down into the overcast, and very bumpy weather just before Hong Kong, the aerodrome of which KAI-TAK is very difficult to find (at least if approached by land). Very nasty downdrafts in the vicinity. We arrived at 11:42 having flown app. 875 miles against headwinds, average ground speed only about 175 mph.

A few impressions of British Aviation in Hong Kong.

(1) When we circled over the airport, we couldn't find the wind-cone (Anglice 'sock'). The civilian head of the airport subsequently explained that, although he had received my telegram announcing my arrival at 11:30, he hadn't taken the trouble to put it up, as "he was used to spare amateurs turning up 2 or 3 days late, don't 'cher know". I replied that I did not know but was fortunate in being able to judge the wind direction (a good strong wind) from the position of various craft at anchor in the vicinity.

(2) In subsequent conversation I gathered we had made a very bad landing. "Fetched the ship in with the motor," what we call "rumbled in" in England. Rather bad form, what! Sort of thing the best people in England don't do, "don't 'cher know". After all, one ought always to practice

dead-stick landings – motor might always fail." To my reply that (a) if I had to fly round the world with the idea of my motor stopping I should never leave the ground, and (b) that I never knew motors ask permission to fail only when over an airport. There appeared to be no immediate rejoinder.

(3) Pained surprise and indignation was expressed that I had flown right across (a) Mexico, (b) U.S.A., (c) Canada, (d) Alaska, (e) Siberia, (f) Manchuria and (g) China (a total of 7 countries) without a 'log-book'. Mr. Nelson insisted on taking my C of A for Export., and the British Air Ministry's telegram validating it, subsequently handing me back an incorrectly completed log-book, and losing the telegram (the first words of which were "This telegram must be carried on the ship as evidence of validation").

(4) Various leading lights in British Aviation in Hong Kong (civil and military) carefully inspected the ship when I wasn't looking or wasn't in the hangar but ostentatiously ignored it when I approached it. A few illuminating comments were made such as, "What on earth is that instrument there for?" (meaning the manifold pressure) and, "That Sperry artificial horizon can't be much good – it does not function and, in fact, is put out of order if you fly upside down". (Query: Why not say the motor is no good as it hasn't got a second and inverted carburetor to enable it to fly inverted). To judge from this and similar intelligent comments, I should imagine this to be the normal attitude, if not state of mind, of British fliers.

"THE STRETCH HONG KONG - HANOI."

(5) Couldn't get any decent maps or information about the stretch Hong Kong – Hanoi. In desperation, appealed to "Far Eastern Aviation" – a British concern who train Chinese students to fly. After being asked who the devil I was and what the hell I was doing in their hangar, I did receive some help and information.

(6) In accordance with my usual custom, I suggested paying my respects to the Governor (in all other countries I had been courteously received in person). On this occasion I was directed to a book, located in what looked more like a latrine than a sentry box, signed my name, and thank heavens, heard no more about it.

(7) Weather reports and forecasts apparently non-existent, but the Director of the Royal Observatory made great efforts, and produced a first class effort prepared specially for me by the French observatory at PHU-LIEN (near HANOI).

(8) For the first time since leaving Mexico, I had to pay a fee for landing (without a wind-cone) + 2 days garage fees in a practically empty hangar. Nothing was charged for the well-meaning efforts of an R.A.C. wireless expert to clean up the Lear Radio – it hasn't functioned since.

(9) An undercurrent of criticism was apparent because (a) I was getting gas from Socony-Vacuum instead of Shell, and (b) because I was hopping around in an American-built ship, and "what about it" etc . . . I could not help

retorting that in performance it was rather on par with the Comet, of which, I understood, there were not many left, and that in fact I was so far feeling fine (to use an Americanism) and had not yet felt the necessity of bailing out in the middle of the night over the desert!

2nd and 3rd September

Weather not too good but, relying on French weather report (which proved remarkably accurate), we took off at mid-day and arrived at Hanoi after 3 hrs., 36 mins. flying. Flew high as we could to observe the ground from time to time. Friendly and courteous reception at GIA-LAM Airport – head of French Air Force, rep. of Gov. Gen. and very nice and friendly head of civil aviation, M. Borjicki. (Returned call and paid my respects on Gov. Gen. at 5 p.m.)

HANOI scrupulously clean and well laid out – very fine Govt. administrative buildings, etc. There is every effort made to develop the ground organization in French-Indo-China, countless weather stations and 103 regular and emergency landing places. As an instance of efficiency, both Fort Bayard and Mont Bay reported by W/T our passage, although we were above 8/10 covered ceiling, flying at 11,500 ft.

Next morning the weather reports were very unfavorable, especially as a typhoon had swept over TOURANE and HUE (half way to SAIGON along the coast). Strongly advised by M. Bruyan of PHULIEN observatory to delay our departure till the next day – which we did.

N.B. (1) French authorities hinted at a lack of co-operation from Hong Kong over weather reports and wished that the observatory there would furnish regular data to enable them to forecast over a bigger area.

(2) For what it is worth, I repeat the following story: Some months ago some Italians were ferrying some Caproni machines to the Nanking Govt. HANOI could get no sense out of Hong Kong authorities, whose messages were distressingly brief and laconic. What might have been a disaster was fortunately averted by the French-Consul-General telegraphing urgently on his own initiative that KAI-TAK aerodrome was flooded and unsafe.

Distance flown, 630 miles.

4th October

Weather very doubtful, bad thunderstorms about, and apparently low ceiling and poor visibility. We were committed to have a shot for SAIGON, via the coast, and left at 10:30 a.m. (I offered to pay for landing and hangar charges but it was indignantly passed aside!) We proceeded south for an hour to VINH, but the weather appeared impossible there, so we turned W. to avoid a bad thunderstorm and flew on till we found weather on the other side of the Annamite Range (which seems to have a nasty reputation) and hit the Mekong river and thence flew S. at a height of about 11-13,000 ft. when we had to come down on approaching SAIGON, found conditions very bumpy and unpleasant. If we had flown low we should have had a rotten time the whole day.



G-ADLE IN FLIGHT

(Photo - Beech)

Very friendly reception; everyone very pleasant. Head of French Aero Club met us and had heard about our trip. Manager of Air France told me we had been reported twice en route. Landed at 3:20 p.m. Bad time – we must have had strong winds at altitude. I throttled back for some time to cool the engine: temperature between 60° and 70° at 10,000 feet – not surprising, as we are only 10°N.

Distance flown, 735 miles.

5th, 6th and 7th October

Motored 476 kms on an excellent road – a good tribute to French colonial administration to ANGKOR and visited the ruins. Country flooded for miles.

8th October

Good weather. Left SAIGON at 9:50 a.m. and landed at BANGKOK aerodrome at 12:15 a.m. Flew at our usual height of between 9/10,000 ft. and avoided all bumps and unpleasantness. Temperature between 60 and 70°F at that height. Oil temperature apt to exceed 170°F at 1900 revs.

Distance flown, 450 miles.