

FOYNES - THE CENTRE OF THE FLYING BOAT WORLD

Foynes, Co. Limerick, has been an important seaport since the middle of the last century. But during the late 1930s and early 1940s, this tranquil town on the Shannon Estuary was transformed into a major international flying boat base. Foynes became a fulcrum point for air traffic between North America and Europe. Passengers travelling, for example from New York to London, had to pass through Foynes. International businessmen, famous politicians, film stars, service men and refugees from the war in Europe, travelling from anywhere in Europe to anywhere in North America, had to come to Foynes. For a few years Foynes was the centre of the Western World.

After two years of proving flights, the summer of 1939 saw the inauguration of the scheduled commercial passenger and airmail service between North America and Europe.

On June 28th, Pan American Airways Flight 607A - YANKEE CLIPPER (Boeing B 314) - landed at Foynes to inaugurate the first scheduled airmail service on the Northern route, New York-Southampton via Canada, Newfoundland and Ireland. This plane was piloted by Capt. H.E. Gray and, in addition to mail, carried 20 invited U.S. Government and Pan American Airways observers, including Mr. Juan E. Trippe, President P.A.A.

YANKEE CLIPPER, this time piloted by Capt. A.E. La Porte, landed again at Foynes on July 8th with 17 passengers, to inaugurate the commercial passenger service, using the Northern route, between New York and Southampton.

Then on the 5th August, Imperial Airways (later BOAC, and now British Airways) flying the CARIBOU (Short S.30) and piloted by Capt. J.C. Kelly-Rogers, landed at Foynes with a complement of mail in transit from Southampton to New York to inaugurate their North Atlantic service.

