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4/1/92

Dear M' Nield,

Following our

chat I am sending you a
chapter from my book 'The War
and the N' (also never published)
which recounts my experiences
as a Captain with BOAC's
Boeing F-light in 1945.

It also explains why
unlike the old soldiers, the
flying boat was doomed to
die after the war & not just
fade away.

I also include the
photograph of me taken
off from Poole Harbour
in August, 1945 en route
to Foyers, Ostwood &
Baltimore.

I very much hope
that Ken Killest will
find them of some interest.
I certainly enjoyed 'Night-
over Water' & brought back
many memories.

I was amazed that he
was able to put together a
rather technical subject with
such skill.

Yours sincerely
Daird Bruce

PAN MACMILLAN

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2 January 1992

Ken Follett
92 Cheyne Walk
London
SW10

Dear Ken

Happy New Year!

I thought the enclosed would be of interest to you. We are keeping Mr Brice's name and address on file as he might be useful in publicising the paperback of NIGHT OVER WATER.

Best wishes,



MARTIN NEILD
Director of Marketing Development

RECEIVED 9 JAN 1992



Pan Am Clipper.

CHAPTER 8

Baltimore and the Boeings

1945 was a momentous year for the human race. The German Army surrendered on 8th May to General Montgomery and the war in Europe came to an end, and then on 14th August, after atom bombs had fallen, the Japanese agreed to unconditional surrender. Peace had returned to the earth.

It was a momentous year for me too, not because hostilities had ceased, since the ending of the war did not affect me in any way at all. I still went on doing the same job for the same salary as during the latter stage of the war, and since the bombs had long since stopped dropping on London, my life was curiously unaffected. In that I suppose, I was very fortunate since if anything, the war had advanced my career enormously which was a hell of a lot more than most people could say.

But now as 1944 turned into 1945 at the stroke of midnight, I had my sights on what initially seemed an impossible dream. I wanted to get a posting to the Boeing Clipper Division of B.O.A.C., based in Baltimore, U.S.A.

The reason that this was unlikely, was that this division was the elite of the corporation. True, there were other pilots with similar qualifications and experience flying on other routes, but those on the Clippers were a match for anyone, and I couldn't really say the same for myself either in technical qualifications such as a First Class Navigators Certificate or in my length of command experience. I was a comparative newcomer to the ranks of the airline pilots and much younger.

The Technical Manager at Baltimore, was a giant of a man, Captain

Jack Kelly Rogers. A bluff red faced Irishman to the bone with a booming voice that would have done credit to a Sergeant Major on the Parade Ground. He exercised firm control and a high standard on his seven Captains. Bernard Frost, Denis Peacock, Tony Lorraine, Roly ~~Anderson~~ ^{ALDERSON}, Tommy Farnsworth, Oscar Burgess, and Gordon Store. Two of them had University Degrees, and their intellectual ability in most cases was certainly superior to mine.

Vernon Crudge was the Regional Director and Ross Stainton his Personal Assistant. Ross, one of the original band of Imperial Airways Trainees in the early 1930's, later became famous and unique since he was the only airline employee to rise right through the ranks to the Managing Director and Chairman, and then to receive a richly rewarded Knighthood. ~~It always seemed to me absurd that he was forcibly retired at the age of 65.~~ Charlie Abell was the genial Engineering Manager and later became my boss on another route.

~~As had happened before, I took my problem to Jacky Harrington who had now been promoted to Deputy Operations Director for B.O.A.C., and had been replaced as Manager of the Poole No. 3 Division by Jimmy Alger.~~

Once again, fortune favoured me, since it so happened that quite coincidentally, with the end of the war in sight, and the prospect of new routes opening up, Kelly Rogers had advised Head Office that he needed 3 more Captains, and since I'd sort of ^{STAKED} ~~stated~~ my claim before this happened, I was put on the list. I couldn't believe it.

Then on a certain day in April, I stepped off the jetty at Poole into the vast hull of Clipper "Bristol" en route to Baltimore as a passenger by way of Foynes ^{AND} ~~of~~ Botwood in Newfoundland. It was a great occasion.

The Clipper was in fact officially known as the Boeing A-314, and the romantic name by which it was known around the World, was coined by Pan American Airways who owned 9 of them and who had pioneered their development.

In B.O.A.C., they were known as "Bristol", "Bangor" and "Berwick".

These magnificent machines had a wing span of 152 feet. They were 106 feet long, and reared up 28 feet into the sky. Their maximum take off weight was 87,000 lbs, and they had an endurance of about 24 hours and a cruising speed of 170 knots. They were powered by four Wright Cyclone engines developing 1,600 HP for take off and they were unique in that the wing roots were deep enough for the Flight Engineers to have access to the engines during flight, and in fact two could work in their nacelles at the same time. A facility I could well have used in later years in rather more sophisticated aircraft.

The 314s had certainly the most spacious flight deck ever devised for a crew, and compared to it, the Jumbo Jet cockpit looks like a shoe box. It measured $21\frac{1}{2}$ feet by $9\frac{1}{2}$ feet, and it was 6 feet $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches high, which was more than enough for my meagre 5 feet 8 inches.

A crew of 12 was carried by B.O.A.C. A Captain and First Officer, 2 Navigators, 2 Radio Operators, 2 Flight Engineers, a Purser and 3 stewards, and on the North Atlantic, we carried 22 passengers plus mail and freight. Needless to say we never made a profit, but we didn't have to because it was war time, and nobody paid any fares.

Never before or since have passengers had it so good, except perhaps in the airships. Each had a bed and a seat at the same time, and the life style for them was as for the crew, like being on a ship. There was even a so called bridal suite in the tail, which was self contained, and was used by Churchill when ^{HE} flew back from Bermuda in 1943 but he was obviously more interested in sipping his brandy and smoking his cigars, then ^A dwelling on the romantic possibilities of this accommodation, whilst ~~I on a much later trip did avail myself of this situation, but nothing like to it's fullest extent.~~ It so happened

that I was very friendly with Francis Day, the famous musical comedy star, and had known her well for sometime. On one trip in the Autumn of 1945, I was surprised and delighted to find that she was on the passenger list, and having seen her before departure, I went up to the flight deck and she went back to her suite.

Some two hours after departure on a dark and peaceful night, Gordon Bullock, our Purser, came up to the flight deck with a smirk on his face to announce, "Miss Day presents her compliments and would be grateful if you would join her in her suite for a coffee", which of course I did. But you can imagine the looks I got from the crew when I returned! But a Captain was supposed to look after his passengers wasn't he?

Anyway, I arrived in Baltimore on this occasion, to a rather guarded reception from Kelly Rogers, partly because I'd made a joke about him, walking on water when he boarded his Clipper in my column "In the Air" a facetious illusion to the aura of grandeur which seemed to surround him and also because I think he had genuine doubts about my ability to match his high standards and the skills of his other Captains.

But I worked hard for some 2 months learning about the aircraft, it's engines, and above all, about the handling of this very different type of flying boat to anything which I had ever encountered before. Jack Kelly Rogers and Tony Lorraine were my principal instructors.

The Boeing 314 was quite different to the ~~Empire~~ flying boats, the Sunderlands, and the Golden Hind, although it had something in common with the Catalina, not only because both were American, but because they both had ^{FLAT} planing hulls, which contrasted with the deep V profile of the British Boats. This meant, that they were more susceptible to cross wind pressures when on the water, and were

therefore less manoeuvrable. The Boeings were ^{also} different from anything that I had experienced before, since they did not have wing tip floats to give one the stability that one needed on the water.

Instead they had hydrostatic stabilizers or sponsons. These were attached to the hull extending some 20 feet either side and they carried the bulk of our fuel supply. They also provided a walkway for passengers to get from the mooring jetty or a motor boat to the water tight doors into the spar compartment, and they gave us a certain amount of lift when getting airborne due to the water pressure on their undersurfaces, ~~and~~ they also gave us some lift when in the air due to their aerofoil design, but as the sole means of our maintaining our lateral stability on the water, they were pretty hopeless. In any situation, where we were forced to taxi across wind to reach our buoy, such as in a river or a narrow waterway, then immediately we began to have problems. We had of course to approach the buoy slowly enough so that our Mooring Officer didn't pull his arm out of his socket, when he caught the buoy with his boat hook or missed it altogether, and that's where all our troubles began.

We would be coming up to our moorings slowly, gently through the water, and then slowly, gently our lee wing tip (the opposite side to where the wind was coming from) would start to tilt more and more, until eventually it would go so far over that it would end up in the water. Imagine that you had flown 22 passengers 4,000 miles across the North Atlantic to Baltimore and now as far as they are concerned, they seemed to be sinking with one wing tip disappearing beneath the waves. Very worrying!

This could, and did happen, and it was all covered in our operations manual, but we only had a limited number of remedies.

Firstly, just as yachtsmen in a strong wind, all hang over the side, ^T windward, to counteract the tilt, so we had our hollow wings with their walkways to the engine nacelles and these could be used to counteract the same effect, and it was quite a common practice to order a certain number of crew members into the wing as a counterbalance to this sort of condition.

I remember on one occasion, entertaining a rather beefy V.I.P. gentleman in the cockpit, whilst coming up to a mooring in Baltimore, and then finding myself in the sort of situation outlined above.

I interrupted my dialogue with the V.I.P., ^{my} ~~he~~ bellowed over my right shoulder, "Everyone in the starboard wing", and having established that this had corrected the situation, turned to resume the conversation only to find that our V.I.P. was disappearing into the wing root behind the rest of the crew. All I could see, was one large backside.

But we had another trick up our sleeve and that was high speed taxiing. This ^{involved} opening up the throttles, so as to achieve a speed of about 35 knots, and this was just sufficient to give one aileron control and thus keep the wings level. In a way this was rather fun, like driving a speed boat, and if one was very skilful one could approach a mooring across wind in this fashion, and at the last moment ^{HAUL} ~~cut~~ back on one outboard throttle, so that the boat slid round, which it did very quickly, and there would be the buoy dead ahead. Again, rather like the yachtsman approaching his mooring on the beam under full sail, then applying full helm, dropping all sails simultaneously so that all way is lost by the time the buoy was reached.

But if ever the term, easier said than done applied, it certainly did in this case.

Any error of judgement on the part of the Boeing Captain, would mean a wing tip in the water and this time, not slowly slowly, but very quickly and quite deep so that by the time, all throttles were full back the aileron might have been damaged (but not often fortunately) but a secondary result was, that during it's brief emergence a lot of sea water would enter the wing tip, and as the boat righted itself, this water would rush down the whole length of the wing, and into the hull and thereby drenching the passengers in the spar compartment.

Not very funny or downright hilarious depending on where you were sitting!

But after a while, I learnt to cope with all these vagaries and after quite a lot of flying training, both by day and night and ^{MUCH} ~~alot~~ of time spent in the hangers with engineers, I sensed that there was a grudging but growing opinion that perhaps I wasn't too bad, possibly even alright, and maybe after I had passed ^{THE} ~~one~~ technical examinations it was time for me to fly a scheduled service but very much under supervision.

I did two trips across the North Atlantic by way of Botwood and Foynes to Poole, one with Oscar Burgess as the Check Captain and the other with Gordon Store and to my relief they both gave me the thumbs up, and at last I was a fully qualified Boeing Pilot, which by then was July.

But it hadn't been all that easy and to emphasise this, I might add that the other two Captains who had been posted with me had still not checked out as Trans-Atlantic Skippers by the time I left at the end of the year to take up yet another significant assignment.

But in the meantime, the war in Europe had ended. I had always said many times, that when peace was declared, I was going to have the mightiest piss-up of all time. I was going to be drunk for days but when I first heard the news on the radio, I was 4000^{ff} up in a Beechcraft^c over Baltimore, doing Radio Range beam practise and we just carried on doing that for the rest of the exercise.

The next day, I went to my favourite bistro in New York, El Morocco, where I was good friends with John Perona the owner, and whiled the way the night with a beautiful girl dancing to such tunes as "June is busting out all over", from the musical show Carousel. Thirty years later, I was to create a travel company with the same name, Carousel Holidays. We had a wonderful evening and for the rest of the world it was one of the biggest blessings of the century.

B.O.A.C. had lost many pilots and many aircraft in nearly 6 years of war, but it had flown more than 57 million miles, carried 280,000 passengers, most of them safely plus cargo and mail. It had operated an assortment of 160 aircraft and its route mileage amounted to 54,000 miles. We the pilots had done a great job for Britain and the war but the majority of us got no medals for it. We were deemed to have done our job and that was it.

Eventually the day of my first trip in sole command drew close and whilst I

relished the prospect, there was something lurking in the background which caused me a certain amount of disquiet. The first hurricane of the season had formed in the Carribeans, way to the south, lashed it's way NorthEast through Bermuda and was now South East of Newfoundland ~~and~~ although it was losing its tropical ferocity as it swung into cooler climes.

But it meant that Botwood was out as a staging post, which meant a refuelling stop in Bermuda instead, with a consequent very much longer haul to Foynes, ~~and~~ more fuel consumed and ~~less~~ therefore for any diversion at the other end. It was also highly possible that that the weather in the eastern Atlantic would be adversely affected by the storm but this of course was all some way away as far as time was concerned.

At 28, I was a pretty confident fellow but I wasn't stupid, so I went to see Kelly Rogers the afternoon of my departure which was scheduled for 8 o'clock in the evening and voiced my apprehension and sought his advice. But he was not forthcoming. "David", he said, "You're the Captain, do what you think best, that's what you're paid for". With a broad smile, he shook my hand and wished my Bon Voyage.

And it was a fact and a tradition in B.O.A.C. that the Captain had the final responsibility for his flight, and there fore the final word. No one could tell him to go and noone could tell him to cancel, not even his Chairman and his Board of Directors. So I decided to go.

That evening at about 7.45 everyone was aboard and all four engines started up, and after a warm up period, I gave the signal for our bow and stern lines to be slipped from the bollards of the jetty and slowly a motor launched, eased us away into the murky waters

towards the line of flares which marked our takeoff area.

After running up all four engines to make sure that they were functioning, I positioned myself at the beginning of the flare path, called out to the crew to stand-by for takeoff and we were away.

There was a light drizzle falling with mist and fog patches and an estimated cloud ceiling of 500 feet, but none of this bothered me so I eased the four throttles forward until we were getting full power and the boat rose up on its step as it gathered speed. All seemed well until my peace was totally shattered when the First Officer shouted "No air speed indication". There we were, rushing over the murky water, and a quick glance at the air speed indicators showed that as far as they were concerned we were stationary.

By this time it was too late to abandon the takeoff and I was committed to easing the control column back as the last flare disappeared under the port wing.

I was now flying by the seat of my pants trying desperately to climb the aircraft up through the clouds to avoid the many obstructions surrounding Baltimore Harbour and trying to avoid flying too slowly

since otherwise we would have stalled. ~~Thank God it was!~~

Fortunately the low stratus covering the bay was thin and at 2,000 feet, we broke into a black hazy sky with a few stars visible.

For me, it had been a traumatic climb out, relying solely on the rate of climb indicators to give me a sense of air speed, and I kept as near as possible to a climb of 500 feet per minute, which was about right with our load.

Having survived the first crisis, the next problem was what to do next. Radio aides for an instrument landing at Baltimore were almost non-existent and the thought of trying to land anyway without knowing our air speed seems suicidal, although I did achieve this feat in a Stratocruiser 8 years later quite successfully.

But like all my earlier problems, it came right in the end.

The operation of an air speed indicator depends on a hollow pitot head or in our case 2, which pointing in the direction of the aircraft's path measured the pressure of the outside airstream, and thus, the faster we flew, the greater the pressure and this was reflected on dials on our instrument panel, to give us our air speed.

It occurred to me that our pitot heads may have been knocked off by birds ~~but~~, fortunately they were situated above the cockpit roof, and therefore we were able to see them quite clearly with the aid of a torch, but what we saw was rather horrific.

When the Clippers were moored or in the hanger for maintenance, the pitot heads were covered by canvas shields which were tied together with laces, and someone had simply forgotten to take these canvas shields off, before our departure, ^{this} ~~which~~ was the joint responsibility of the ground engineer and our flight engineers, but nevertheless, these 2 sleeves were firmly in place, which explained the situation but did not offer a solution.

It was a crew member called Hannah, who came to the rescue; he retrieved a boat hook from the foreward mooring compartment, grabbed the Chief Stewards only bread knife and tied both together.

Then with engine ~~st~~hrottle) back to reduce the speed, and flaps partially down, I held Hannah by his haunches whilst he periously leant out of the cockpit window and began sawing away at the strings tieing on the cover to the port pitot head. It seemed like ages but probably only took about 5 minutes before he had achieved success and with the cords cut, he managed to push the cover foreward and off. Minutes later, he had done the samething for the First Officer.

Relief ~~s~~aturated me as I saw the air speed indicators swinging from zero to 130 knots and we were back to normal.

There was a song in those days about the Salvation Army commemorating sister Anna holding her banner. You can guess what we called our gallant crew member from then onwards.

Apart from this, our flight to Bermuda was uneventful and as the passengers had their cocktails below unaware of the problems upstairs, I considered the latest weather charts which we had collected from the met office in Baltimore and wondered about the hurricane Annie. They were always named after girls.

Our great circle course from Bermuda to Foynes would be well south of it's center but it was obvious that it was going to affect the weather in Ireland, but to what extent, we would have to wait about ²⁰~~20~~ hours to find out.

Refuelled to our maximum capacity at Hamilton in Bermuda, we took off without incident with a 19 hour 15 minute flight plan to Foynes and set off on the very long Atlantic crossing on a course of 060°

and then settled down to a watch keeping system of 3 hours on and 3 hours off, for all the technical crew. The Purser and the Stewards made their own arrangements.

I have mentioned the amenities provided for the passengers which were unique, but those for the crew were equally splendid. We actually had a crew's dining saloon and six crew bunks, which were extremely conducive to sleep as I can personally testify.

Life went on as on board a ship, except that we were 9,000 feet above the Atlantic waves, and cruising at 165 knots, instead of about 25 knots.

Initially the problem was, that the sky was totally overcast and therefore our sextant was useless. Not an unusual situation but we had no radio ^{A.95} to help us and after 6 hours, we had no positive idea where we were, except for an estimated position, and we were now out of radio contact of any ground station.

But there were weather ships stationed at intervals across the North Atlantic and they could give us navigational systems and weather reports.

After 12 hours flying, the overcast had cleared enough for the navigator to get a sun sight with his sextant, and a radio loop bearing taken on a weather ship beacon, gave us a fixed showing as 45 minutes behind the flight plan. As we had to endurance of about 24 hours, this was not too significant assuming that Foynes weather was going to be as forecast, wind south-west, 15-20 knots, scattered cloud at 1,500 feet with occasional rain.

But this was not to be, 2 hours later, we received a gale warning for our estimated time of arrival in Ireland. South-westerly winds, 35-40 knots, continuous rain, ceiling 1,000 feet and with Foynes relatively unprotected from the Atlantic sea, ~~was a serious situation~~.

TRICKY

This was ~~bad~~ enough, but the forecast from Plymouth and Poole showed similar deteriorations, and we were still falling behind on flight plan, with lighter tail winds than forecast. It was impossible to return to Bermuda so there we were, a very small dot in hundreds of thousands of square miles, of inhospitable ocean with nowhere to go, at least safely.

To say that I was in a dilemma on this, my first trip, would be to under state the situation.

It so happened that Jimmy Alger, my last boss at Poole was on board, but he had ~~even less experience than I had~~ ^{MC} on Boeings, and the Atlantic, and in any case, I would not have burdened him with my problems, and he in turn would not have expected it, and certainly would not have proffered any advice to me.

But far away to the south, there was a ray of hope. Horta, in the Azores, a small chain of islands in mid-Atlantic belonging to Portugal. This ~~space~~ ^{BASE} had long been used by Pan-American Airways on their route from Lisbon to the ~~Azores~~ ^{BERMUDA}, but it was notorious for it's Atlantic swells. The official maximum swell allowed for a Boeing 314 operations was $3\frac{1}{2}$ feet, if one can imagin^e that, only the height of a 4 year old child. Anything higher could create a dangerous situation with landing or taking off.

Noone in B.O.A.C. had ever landed there before, and the information in our flight manual was sparse.

Miraculously, our senior Radio Operator was able to contact a Pan American Clipper which had left Horta 3 hours before en-route to Bermuda, and he reported swells from the west at about 3 feet, but the wind was light and recommended a landing straight into the harbour

mouth. Shades of Gibraltar!

So we turned away from the rising sun, and headed south, and did as Pan American suggested. It wasn't that difficult, in spite of the fact that I had obviously never seen the place before, and we splashed down right outside the harbour entrance, and surged inside to the calmer waters.

The ground staff of Pan American were somewhat surprised to see us, but gave us a wonderful refuelling assistance and advice and after 2 hours, we were back in the sky on our way to Lisbon.

Five hours later, I collapsed into my bed at the Hotel Palaccio in Estoril, and passed out.

But the gales persisted in England and we were marooned in Portugal for another 20 hours, and I eventually got fed up with the weather and decided to go anyway. It was a comparatively short flight ^{any} ~~so~~ we could carry enough fuel to end up in all sorts of places in Europe, if Poole was inaccessible.

So we finally arrived in England, and it was rough, and the launches had considerable difficulty in getting the passengers ashore, but they managed in the end.

Oscar Burgess was on the jetty to greet me, as he was due to take-off for Foynes en-route to Baltimore on the return trip that afternoon, but then decided to delay it for 24 hours.

So that was my maiden voyage. In retrospect, it might have been right to continue onto Foynes, but it might have been more right to go to Horta. No one will ever know, but it was a case of 2 rights not making a wrong, and our passengers arrived safely and back in Baltimore no one queried my decision in the matter.

A later trip provided us with more drama of a different kind. On my previous trip to London, I had met and was enamoured by a

beautiful girl called Audrey. When I got back to Baltimore, and knew my next flight schedule, I sent her a cable which said, "Can't think of anything more wonderful than having you meet me in the Orchid Room (~~The A. G. E. Club~~) 9.30 next Thursday for dinner". Very romantic I thought since this was London's latest night spot.

The day before this tryst, we set ^{off} on schedule for Botwood, landed in the early afternoon, were warped up to the jetty so we could all disembark and have lunch in the nearby hutted camp. We were in no hurry, as Bangor was fuelled up to maximum capacity, but during a rather leisurely lunch, I realised that by looking at the trees that a wind was getting up rather suddenly, and soon Denis Bustard the B.O.A.C. Station Manager arrived and we had a consultation. "We've got a lot of wind outside Captain", he said, "and we've had to take Bangor off the jetty to avoid damage and put her on a buoy. Met now say that these squalls will go on for sometime, and suggest an indefinite delay".

"Nonsense", I replied, "we'll put the passengers on by launch, and then we'll be off".

But easier said than done. When we went down to the lake, a fierce wind was whipping up the water into angry waves and embarking the passengers over the sponsons in the normal manner was clearly impossible because they were awash. The only alternative was through a foreward hatch high up in the nose on the port side and normally used only for mooring purposes. It seemed a bit of a tricky operation but Audrey was waiting and I was determined to go. A number of trips were made in a motor boat with small groups of passengers and as the boat rose and fell on the choppy seas, the passengers were embarked on the upward rise of the boat onto a small platform, and so down into the hull and into the cabin and the crew followed.

The ground crew at Botwood must have thought I was either mad or possessed with tremendous zeal to maintain the reputation of B.O.A.C. for punctuality. I can't imagine what my crew thought but we had a tremendous take off, banging and banging on the white capped waves, before we got airborne and then we were away off to Poole. Needless to say I made my date on time and Audrey was there, and generally speaking, everybody was happy in the end.

Whilst eastbound crossings with more or less perpetual tail winds were no problem for the Boeings, the westbound flight could be a nightmare since the winds that had blown you over eastbound were to blow you back westbound.

A typical flight time to Botwood was about 20 hours, and whilst we had alternative landing areas, if Botwood closed down with low cloud, which it did any time the wind blew from the North East, these were quite a long way away such as Stephenville on the west coast of Newfoundland, ^{but} ~~and~~ it took so long to get there, that you had to watch very carefully that you didn't exhaust your fuel supply first.

Sometimes, one would fly halfway across the ocean, and when you reached what we called the Point of No Return, the Navigator would calculate that we had insufficient fuel to make Newfoundland and then we had no alternative but to turn round and head back to Foynes, much to the irritation of passengers and crew alike. Frequently we would have to make the crossing at about 1,000 feet to escape the ferocity of winds at higher altitudes and it was hard, bumpy and uncomfortable work.

Undoubtedly, the most uncomfortable ride I have ever had, was when I developed a carbuncle on my backside. At first it seemed only a troublesome boil, something to be disliked but endured, but

when we reached Botwood, I was in such discomfort, that I went to see the camp doctor, who diagnosed it differently as a carbuncle, and suggested that I have it lanced and possibly stitched.

This could well have rendered me non operational as flying was concerned and ^{with} the prospect of the boat and everyone in it being delayed at Botwood, for perhaps 24 hours, I refused his offer and we set off on a 5 hour trip to Baltimore.

It so happened that in the Summer we wore Khaki drill uniforms and it also so happened that during our flight my problem burst its banks, and I arrived at Base with my trousers soaked in blood. Not a pretty sight, and I was reduced to wearing my raincoat in the sweltering Baltimore summer heat until I got to my apartment. The next day a doctor in the outpatients department of a nearby hospital, yanked out my carbuncle which was the shape and size of a two pronged wisdom tooth. I still bear the scar.

But now the Summer was coming to an end, Botwood and the whole of Newfoundland was icing up, the westerly winds were increasing, and whilst we could still operate to Foynes and Poole by way of Bermuda there was no way that we could return the same way.

So every year Bangor, Bristol, and Berwick took their winter sunshine holiday. Through Lisbon and Bathurst in West Africa, Natal and Belem in in Brazil, Trinidad, Bermuda and back to good old Baltimore. It took just over three days with sunsets going down, sunrises coming up and frequent and regular trips to the crews sleeping and dining quarters. We actually changed crews at Bathurst which meant a week idling on the lovely sandy beaches and swilling endless cans of beer, but it was much easier then flying across the rude North Atlantic.

15 JULY

In fact it was quite a pleasant ride flying over the ~~Belem~~ south Atlantic, with a different constellation of stars to see through our sextant, fluffy cumulous cloud instead of the dense mass of frequent storms and no headwinds to speak of meant a very welcome change for us. I remember there was light relief in other quarters from time to time, once in Natal the health inspector came aboard, and insisted on spraying the cabins with some noxious fluid, emitted from an antique flit gun (pre-aerosol spray) and eventually being overcome by his own fumes and ~~having~~ ^{HAD} to rush to an open door to be sick.

Another time, I was ~~down~~ ^{DIMINISHED} in the garden of a dilapidated hotel we used in Belem, this city once beautiful in the days of the natural rubber boom in the early part of the century was now decaying and falling apart. Located near the estuary of the mighty Amazon river, it still had character, but it was becoming a ghost town.

During my first course, I felt something nuzzling ~~in~~ my left shoe, and thinking it was a dog or cat took no notice for a few minutes until it became more persistent, and I was horrified on looking down to see a real live crocodile. True it wasn't very big, only about 18 inches long, but a perfect reflection of it's mother who was probably 18 feet long. In some trepidation, I hurriedly called a waiter since I was certainly loathe to kick it away with those jaws. But the waiter was unconcerned and merely picked it up and plopped it back into an ornamental fish pond in the centre of the garden restaurant, which was it's normal home.

Once between Trinidad and Bermuda, I was intrigued by the amount of fruit salad which my crew were consuming during lunch, and which I refused. Finally I ventured a taste out of curiosity only to find it heavily laced with rum. Thereafter it was confined to the passengers menu.

At the beginning of October, I was amazed and delighted to receive a note from Kelly Rogers, ^{TELLING} ~~to tell~~ me that I had been selected to operate the first post war service of the Baltimore - Bermuda shuttle. It was to take place on the 18th October 1945. I considered this to be a great honour, and why he should have selected me, ~~the youngest and~~ ^{THE} least experienced of his eight captains, was quite beyond me, but he did.

The route from New York to Bermuda had been opened in 1938 by Captain Bill Cummings with the Empire Flying Boat Cavalier and operated successfully for a while before disaster struck. On January 25th 1939, she encountered heavy icing problems which caused two engines to fail and there was no alternative but to ^{LAND} ~~ditch~~ the aircraft in the open sea. This was accomplished successfully but before long she began to break up and by the time the rescuers arrived, ten hours later, two people had died from exposure and one had drowned, seven survived.

It should be pointed out here that the popular theory amongst many who regarded this particular area as one of continuous sunshine and zephyr breezes is often ~~belied~~ ^{belied} by storms of extraordinary ferocity and intensity, which makes this route one of the bad weather runs of the world airways ^{IN THE WINTER.} The source of all this activity is surprisingly the gentle Gulf Stream which wending it's leisurely way from the Gulf of Mexico to Iceland and the British Isles, does so much to give us a temperate climate which contrasts very strongly with other land masses in our latitude such Canada, Scandanavia and Russia.

Cold fronts of air, moving eastwards across the United States ^{MAY BE} ~~made~~ a relatively stable ^{W A E N} ~~one~~ over the mainland but when they crossed ^{ADIA B A T I C} the warm waters of the Gulf Stream, the consequent lapse rate is so steep as to favour the formation of cloud structures up to 30,000 and 40,000 feet with considerable cumulo nimbus activity. On many occasions such weather had to be dealt with by the expedience of flying at 1,000 feet or less and even at this level of supposedly low turbulence activity the ride could be very rough.

As we were based in Baltimore it was not possible to duplicate the pre-war service out of New York but it was felt that the wartime concentration in Washington would provide sufficient loads for our service. It was arranged that this first flight should be in the nature of a publicity excursion and our twenty seven passenger list consisted almost entirely of a newspaper men and women amongst whom were such ^{JOYENS} ~~loyal~~ ^{of} ~~to~~ the Press, as Stanley Burch, Chief Editor or Reuters, ^{E 1} ~~of~~ New York Agency, Ronald Shackford, of the United Press, George Dickson of the Washington Times and Martha Kerney of the International News Service, Merlin Mickel, Editor of Aviation News and Charles Egan of the Washington Star.

BOAC gave each of these a press release which stated that during the Summer of 1945 our three Boeings had ~~been~~ operated four times a week across the North Atlantic carrying 3,311 passengers. These schedules were kept with a regularity of 98%.

The press release went onto say "On this inaugural flight, the Commander of 'Bristol' is Captain David Brice, who whilst being the youngest Captain at twenty eight to be in command

of these aircraft is no newcomer to trans Atlantic flying having already completed fifty crossings. Captain Brice is in addition a well known and regular contributor on technical and operational subjects to the Aeroplane and other British Aviation Publications".

On the day of our inaugural flight we were blessed with a fair weather forecast and in view of the catering arrangements, which had been planned on board everyone was very relieved. We were due to leave Baltimore at 11.00 hrs local time and arrive at Bermuda, which ^{was} ~~is~~ one hour ahead of Eastern Standard Time, at 18.30 hrs.

All went well on the departure and our passengers were soon aboard having embarked by a gangway from the dock onto our port~~s~~ Sponson and then down a short flight of steps into the main cabin. The door was closed and the engine started and the order was given for our stern line and then our ^{bow} ~~bow~~ line to be cast off. We drifted slowly out of the dock before taxiing out into the main shipping channel.

Of the flight itself there is little to say, everyone on board with the exception of the crew had a ^{WHALE} ~~wait~~ of a time!. We flew over at 9,000 feet, which was sufficient to top the fair weather cumulus which drifted over the route. We were a little early on our schedule having flown the 750 miles from Maryland in four and three quarter hours at an average speed of 157 m.p.h and we touched down at 18.09 in the Coral Lagoon by Darrells Island.

Our arrival happened to coincide with a strike of porters and dockers at the Marine Base but with slack water and no wind it was a simple task to ^{UNLOAD} ~~walk~~ in the RMA Bristol alongside the dock and disembark our passengers for another party in the terminal building. A party of which this time the crew got

into, if only on the sidelines.

That night the Bermuda Trade Development Board gave a dinner at the Belmont Manor Hotel and it was a very good party. I attended but in view of a 09.00 departure next morning I had to leave early and was not able to enjoy the festivities to the full.

The next morning Tim Morrissey, whom I had last seen in Gibraltar, was there to see us off as we left the newspaper men and women and headed back to Baltimore with at least the satisfaction of knowing that the Bermuda Shuttle was once more in being. X

From that day onwards a twice weekly service was operated and was very popular. In keeping with the tradition of the boats a water borne coach service was run at Bermuda for the convenience of the passengers and an advertisement of that period which appeared in the Bermuda Mid Ocean News carried the information that the BOAC Launch would leave Hamilton at 08.00 on Fridays and Sundays and would call at Hodson's, Salt Kettle, Darrells, Belmont and Spithead from which point it would deliver the passengers to the aircraft.

This operation which went perfectly was a wonderful accolade ^{FOR ME} from the elite division at Baltimore and understandably gave me immense

pleasure and satisfaction.

The Japanese war had ended on 14 August which was obviously far more important to the Americans than to most of the British except those fighting in the Far East, and their loved ones.

I happened to be staying with a friend Gussy Miesegaes in Quorgue on Long Island and on a certain evening, we went over to the home of Pete Kriendler, one of the brothers who owned the famous 21 Club, certainly one of the finest restaurants in the world, which had started in the 1920s as a "speakeasie" during prohibition days.

There were about 150 people milling around the garden waiting for the barbeque to begin, when at 8.30 a Reuters 'flash' came over the radio, the Japanese had surrendered. Everyone went crazy and Pete's numerous staff disappeared into the bowels of his great mansion and emerged with case after case of champagne. The preparations for the great celebration were almost complete when another 'flash' came over the Radio, "Sorry folks", it said, "False alarm, no news yet" and to everyones amazement and disappointment, all the champagne was quickly and efficiently carried back to the cellars unopened. Unfortunately, I wasn't around when the news became official, the next day, but it must have been a great party.

A few days later, I had a smaller matter to celebrate for on 22 August, I was elected an Associate of the Royal Aeronautical Society, and henceforth could add the letters A.R.Ae.S. after my name.

But with the ending of the two wars^s and my conquest of the Boeing myth, I felt that it was time that I moved on, although I was very happy in Baltimore. I had got on well with my colleagues and their wives, I had a ^{MAGNIFICENT} beautiful apartment, a Studebaker Coupe and several beautiful girlfriends in New York. I was well paid with my overseas allowance on top of my salary, and as a bachelor had money to burn.

Nevertheless, as far as I was concerned, my career came first and I felt I had a long way to go but not in America. So at the end of December, I shook hands with my friends, most of whom I was going to see again many times in the next 10 years, kiss ^{ed} their wives and my girlfriends goodbye, and flew back to ~~the~~ war weary Britain to begin a new chapter in my ambitious life.

ENDING

My flight home in 'Berwick' albeit as a passenger ended my career as a Flying Boat Pilot and historically it was at a time when the end of the Flying Boats was also in sight. I did not know then that three months later the three Boeings were to be withdrawn from service on the Atlantic and most of their crews, management and ground staff moved to Montreal to form the Post war Western Division of BOAC and to which I was to return six years later after many vicissitudes, whilst those left continued to fly to Bermuda.

I was saying goodbye to those wonderful machines which had carried me to East Africa, the Middle East, India and the Far East, to West Africa and South America, across the North Atlantic and to the Carribean over a long period of six years. At least long in the lives of pilots of those days between 1939 and 1945.

The Demise of the Flying Boats was mourned by many and still is today although it took several more years before they finally vanished.

Some years ago the B.B.C. screened a series on the Flying Boats which aroused an enormous public interest and which was repeated. Quite why the general public were so fascinated was not clear to me but it is obvious that to most people they had a great romantic appeal.

I certainly found an emotional excitement in flying boats perhaps because I have a deep down instinctive feeling about the sea. I haunt fishmarkets, love the scream of seagulls over the cliffs and rocks and have a real desire to go down deep in a submarine and because of this somewhat primeval love of the sea I enjoyed the challenge of flying this hybrid, half boat and half aeroplane.

The casting off from the dock or a rubber buoy in calm air or rough seas knowing that until a certain ~~amount~~ ^{POINT IN} time I was at the helm of a sea going vessel, in every sense of the word.

And then the take off, throttle pushed forward slowly to avoid swinging and then as full power came on, that wonderful sensation when you ~~can~~ ^{could} feel your machine rising up on it's step going faster and faster until the message came through the control column, straight from the heart of the boat that ~~she was ready to fly~~ ^{TO GO} you could now ~~fly~~ ^A ease back and she would fly off leaving behind a straight creaming wake of curling water and the hazards of the sea.

But these high excitements did not deter me from seeing the fallacy of any commercial future for the flying boat in the post-war period. In mid June 1946, Bill May flew into Heathrow in the first of BOAC's Constellations after a flight of just over eleven hours direct from New York.

It ushered in a new era of airline transportation with it's high altitude operation above most of the weather, fully pressurised, with an ability to fly with two engines stopped on one side and with a range and speed to fly long distances in a manner which hitherto had been impossible. The days of the flying boat for airline use had become numbered and they would eventually run out of time, but not quite yet.

On October 9th, 1947 I wrote an article entitled "The Flying Boats" for Flight Magazine, which brought down the wrath of many gods of aviation upon my head. 'Flight' were not only prepared to print it but also to pay me for it, which was rather extraordinary because they were very pro-flying boats and in the middle of the first page of my article was a small frame, in which they stated their position:

TOWARDS THE FLYING BOAT

"The attitude of this journal [^] is well known but we are always willing to listen - and give space - to quote the other fellows' point of view.

Captain Brice paints a gloomy picture of the handicap suffered by the flying boats. ^{his} logic however does not always appear faultless. For instance the flying boat has, as he admits, done good work in spite of the absence of proper bases. The land plane could not have done that. ^{and} why assume that the operator must always continue to foot the bill for marine bases?. There are other points which can be challenged ^{but} ~~and~~ doubtless our readers will not need to have them pointed out".

After this rather daunting introduction I went on to say, "Losing causes have always had their champions and flying boats are no exception. Right now, many people and Flight are raising the flag and in doing so are rather obscuring many of the almost insuperable problems which confront this type of aerial carriage.

May I as one who has spent quite a few years flying marine ^{C boats and} aircraft of all shapes and sizes from Boeing A 314's, ^{and} G Boats to Catalinas and Calcuttas, point out just a few of snags.

To ^{BEGIN} ~~being~~ with, you can always build an airfield where you want to or in other ^{words} where the traffic demands one. It has yet to be proved that you can construct an artificial marine base. Thus the flying boat has always followed the lakes and rivers and the passengers ^{HAVE} ~~had~~ followed in buses and trains.

This fact eliminates most of the Capital cities of the world from convenient flying boat services. The land plane on the other hand is amply supplied with airfields.

Apart from this there are few good flying boat bases in the world. No greater fallacy exists in aviation than the one which

insists that since a greater portion of the world is covered by water the flying boat has an infinite number of alighting areas to choose from. ~~which means~~ To begin with you cannot land a large flying boat in the open sea except on the few occasions when the sea is calm and believe me the open sea is seldom calm.

Those who really believe that the mammoth flying boat will be able to ignore the swell and twelve foot seas should watch a thousand ton ship coping with such conditions at a steady ten knots and then visualise a 200 ton aluminium flying boat doing the same thing at 100 knots. No flying boat could stand it.

As an example ^{of} ~~to~~ the sort of sea with which a normal flying boat can safely contend the 87,000 ^{POUND} Boeing A314 had a swell limitation of three and a half to four feet and Freetown ^{IN WEST AFRICA} (which was adequate for Catalinas and Sunderlands) was banned to Boeings because the alighting area was in a river which was open to the sea and consequently had frequent swells.

The sea therefore must be excluded from all considerations of all year round flying boat bases except in a very few cases such as Athens, Singapore and Southampton. This leaves us the rivers, the lakes and the harbours.

With a large boat the harbour is obviously 'out', ~~As~~ for rivers, in most cases they would be quite inadequate because they seldom possess the necessary width in which to turn round. True, reversible air ^{WILL} screws greatly increased the manoeuvre-ability of flying boats but you still can't just ~~back~~ ^{back} up, like a goods train, because you can't see where you are going. Similarly, turns in a narrow river would not be practical and apart from this the bow wave put up by a 200 ton boat would drown all the local inhabitants who were unfortunate enough to be living on the banks.

This leaves us the lakes and the inland or sheltered waters such as Rio de Janerio or Kasfr^{EREIT}~~reigh~~ on the Suez Canal.

Just to prove how many headaches this would give an airline operator let us look at the suitable bases from here to Singapore. Southampton is okay, except in strong northerly or southerly winds and then Southampton water might do, providing the south westerly swell wasn't running. Marseilles (Lake Marignam) is okay, Augusta (Sicily) is okay, Rod-el-Farak in Cairo is on the Nile and would be too narrow but Kasfr^{EREIT}~~reigh~~ sixty miles away would be alright.

The next good base is Habbaniya in the Iraq Desert which is not very near anywhere. Basra~~m~~ is no good since it is on a river ^{but} ~~and~~ Bahrein would be alright. In India things are bad, Karangi Creek at Karach^a might just do, but elsewhere there is not much. ^{THE} Hooghly River, Calcutta would not be suitable but Bangalore in Southern India has a good inland lake and Madras is 'possible'. Any passengers then on a mammoth flying boat to India would have a lot of connecting travel to do ^{BECAUSE} ~~and as~~ I have listed all the bases suitable for a 200 ton flying boat for all the year round operation.

East of India, the Irrawaddy at Rangoon might just do, Akyab ^u farther ^{JUST} North is a possible and Panang ^E ~~in~~ ^{AND} Singapore would be alright. Bangkok would be no good.

At first glance it seems like a lot a bases, until you learn that these are the only bases, ~~No~~ others exist. ^{YOU'RE} ~~So, you are~~ bit short on alternatives and very short of bases near to where people want to go.

Take the North Atlantic, Foynes is al^rright, Botwood and ^{Pit} Ste^venville are al^rright, New York and Baltimore are good, at least in the Summer. In the Winter ~~anywhere~~ north of New York is iced

up including New York on many occasions. In the heyday of the boat, when it was the only aerial machine operating across the Atlantic from the USA, they stopped the service in October and re-opened in May.

All these bases except Baltimore have another very serious snag. There's nobody there!. So an operator who reverted to boats would have to provide launches, dock facilities, personnel, control housing, engineering facilities, nightflying equipment, radio equipment and communications.

Compared with a twelve pound, twelve shilling landing fee at London Airport for a more fortunate York with SBA, control, tarmac, telephones, radio, met and refuelling bowsers all thrown in, the boat operator is going to find life expensive.

True if there were enough airlines operating boats, they could all share the expense or at least make it worth the while of the appropriate State to provide facilities. But there aren't any airlines except BOAC, DNL, and possibly Air France who are operating boats or even intend to. So it is an expensive hobby for an operator to indulge in wishful thinking and modify his balance sheet with overheads borne by fictitious competitors.

The plain fact is that BOAC has almost entirely unaided, to provide the facilities for it's flying boat operation.

Then there is the problem of blind approaches. No successful blind approach system is in operation which permits the flying boat to land safely in a half mile visibility and a hundred foot ceiling. With SBA, SCS 51, GCA, or ILS experienced land planes can land with safety under these conditions.

The snag is that any device on the water is an obstruction and whilst a landplane can safely run over a runway light or a guiding line, a flying boat might be badly damaged if it hit a similar obstacle

moored on the water. Remember also that the points of contact of a landplane are few and that oleo legs lift the fuselage clear of most obstructions. A flying boat hull provides a lot of area both below and directly above the water and anyone who can construct a line on the water which pilots could follow in bad visibility would be doing BOAC a great favour.

So it is not so easy as the uninitiated and the fanatics would have us believe. To talk of indiscriminate landings on any likely water as a suitable alternative is crazy.

Many is the time when with some snag developing in a flying boat I have thought enviously of the lucky landplane pilot with alternatives all over the place and me with none at all except a piece of water near the coast for which I have no large scale charts, ~~and~~ which is probably stiff with submerged rocks and sand banks and where even if I effected a safe landing I would have to swim ashore ^{from the} for assistance, walk 50 miles to the nearest telephone and then find that there was no road or rail communications and the nearest supply of one hundred octane fuel was 200 miles away in a bowser on wheels!

No one can deny that flying boats have done a useful job, least of all I because I helped to do some, or that they are doing good work now or that they will continue to do so ^{FOR A WHILE.} But anyone who seriously contends that boats will compete on equal terms with the land planes of the future, has never sat at Poole because the sea was too rough or at Baltimore because of a sea fog or at Cairo waiting for the mists to lift or in some puddle at India because the monsoon closed in on Gwalior or has had to put up with any other of the innumerable snags which inconvenience flying boats whilst the landplanes

gaily circle the world with alternat^{ives}~~ives~~, blind approach aids and smooth runways galore.

And don't tell me that passengers prefer flying boats, an awful lot of people just love a sailing ship but that doesn't bother the Cunard Shipping Company!."

Three days after this article was published an amazing drama took place, a Boeing A314, named Bermuda Sky Queen, chartered by a young up and coming Travel Agent in London called Harold Bar^Mberg, from a small American Company, landed in mid Atlantic in extremely rough sea conditions. This remarkable achievement which was the result of extremely poor flight planning on the one hand since the plane was running short of fuel with a large number of passengers on board, (at BOAC we only carried twenty^{two} clients between Foynes and Botwood) combined with brilliant flying skill on the part of the pilot ended safely for all concerned, since the passengers and crew were rescued by a nearby weathership and the Bermuda Sky Queen remained afloat for twenty four hours before sinking.

The world breathed a sigh of relief and the protagon^{ists}~~ists~~ of the flying boats hurled themselves upon me from the columns of the Aviation Magazine^s!

On October 23rd, a leader article by the Editor of Flight castigated me for saying that you couldn't land a flying boat in the open sea and made the point amongst several others, that a landplane could not have floated for so many minutes. Quite so, but up to then and up to now, nearly forty years later, no commercial land plane has ever been forced to land in the North Atlantic.

A week later C G Grey ~~at~~ the ¹⁴ ~~erascable~~ Doyen of the Aviation writers, and Editor of the rival magazine the 'Aeroplane' wrote in connection with the Sky Queen episode: "It so happened that three days before the affair, Brice, a British Airline Captain who is versatile both as a pilot and a pen man ^{DE} cried in an article, 'anyone who seriously believes ^r that a large flying boat could be put down in the open sea, except on the few occasions when the sea is calm, the danger of making unqualified pronouncements in aeronautics is once again demonstrated'.

"Suppose this had happened in a Constellation, would it have been able to alight in a gale and then taxi three miles to a weather ship?. Only one large landplane needs to be forced down into the Atlantic and drown all its passengers and there would be a mighty rush of transatlantic travellers to book up for the Company operating Flying Boats".

Serious comments from an Editor and ⁷⁴ eminent journalist ~~said~~ ¹⁰⁷ in hindsight, 'what a load of rubbish!'. / Geoffrey Tyson, Chief Pilot of Saunders ~~Rowe~~ ¹⁰, and currently flight testing the new Giant Princess Flying Boats (only one of which ever flew because no one could produce engines powerful enough) sent a message from Cowes to the Editor of Flight, "Open Telegram to Captain David Brice" and don't tell us that the flying boat cannot alight in the open sea' signed Geoffrey Tyson and Dudley Travers". Dudley was one of the veterans of the Empire Flying Boat.

The correspondence endured for a surprisingly long time, mostly hostile as far as I was concerned and on December 25th, John Lancaster-Parker, veteran test pilot of Short Brothers, in Rochester, wrote a long letter to Flight, on the general subject of flying boats quoting his experience of flying the 'Shetland', the largest flying boat afloat or in the air at the time, with an all up weight of

125,000 pounds.

He wrote 'Has Captain Brice paused to consider what would be a proper commercial charge for a landing on a three thousand ~~yard~~ runway particularly on those 'en route' which ~~is~~ just as necessary as the terminal ones and equally costly, will be relatively little used?. I suggest that the fee would go a long way towards the capital sum required to make many an estuary, lake or river into a servicable sea plane base."

Well in truth I hadn't, since it was a subject of which I had no knowledge but it was interesting to note that ~~in~~ the Annual Report of BOAC for the year 1946/7, which showed a loss of over £8,000,000 mentioned that the cost of maintaining their flying boat bases and other anxillary costs amounted to over £1,000,000 per annum which was in line with what I had stated. No mention was made of the cost of landing fees which were obviously ~~in~~negligable. Many other people joined in the debate most ^{VEHIMENT} ~~vehement~~ in their support of the flying boats.

On the other hand some people did agree with me, one was Captain E P Johnson, an ex-Empire Flying Boat Pilot, who took the trouble to write from Rio de Janeiro saying; "I should just like to write and tell you how refreshing it is to read in your paper Captain Brice's article debunking Flying Boats" and then went onto agree with most of what I had said.

My last letter on the subject which effectively brought matters to a close, ended by saying 'that if one forced landing in Mid Atlantic ¹⁵ ~~was~~ going to set ^{THE} ~~a~~ criteria for the advantages of the flying boats over the land plane, then they should ask BOAC why they didn't establish a flying boat base off the end of Brighton Pier which ¹⁵ ~~was~~ rather more convenient for London than Poole harbour'.

It was an interesting debate in those immediate postwar years and passions were strong, mostly against me, but in the event as history shows, I was right and they were all wrong.

^A~~The~~ sad monument to the demise of the flying boats was to be seen for many years after that, at Calshot ^{NEAR} ~~at~~ the mouth of the River Hamble. ^{OW THE SLIPWAY} ^A ~~There,~~ at this old RAF Sea Plane base, one could see the three six engined, 100 ton, Princess Flying Boats, sitting forlornly ^{IN} ~~on~~ their beaching cradles, all alone. Designed by Saunders ^E ~~Rowe~~ to be the new generation of postwar flying boats and sponsored by the Government, they were never to fly except for one on brief test flights and were condemned to an earth bound solitude forever, kept company only by the seagulls and the ^{CORMORANTS.} ~~seagulls.~~ I always thought that it would have been nice if one could have stayed at it's moorings in Southampton water at least in one ^{OF} ~~of~~ it's elements since it couldn't fly, so that folks sailing by in their yachts and other craft could be reminded of the past glory of the flying boats. Just ^{AS} ~~like~~ the Cutty Sark in dry dock at Greenwich is a reminder for all time of the great era of the China Clippers.

But it was not to be, and one day the three Princesses disappeared and were towed quietly away to the breakers yard in the Isle of Wight,