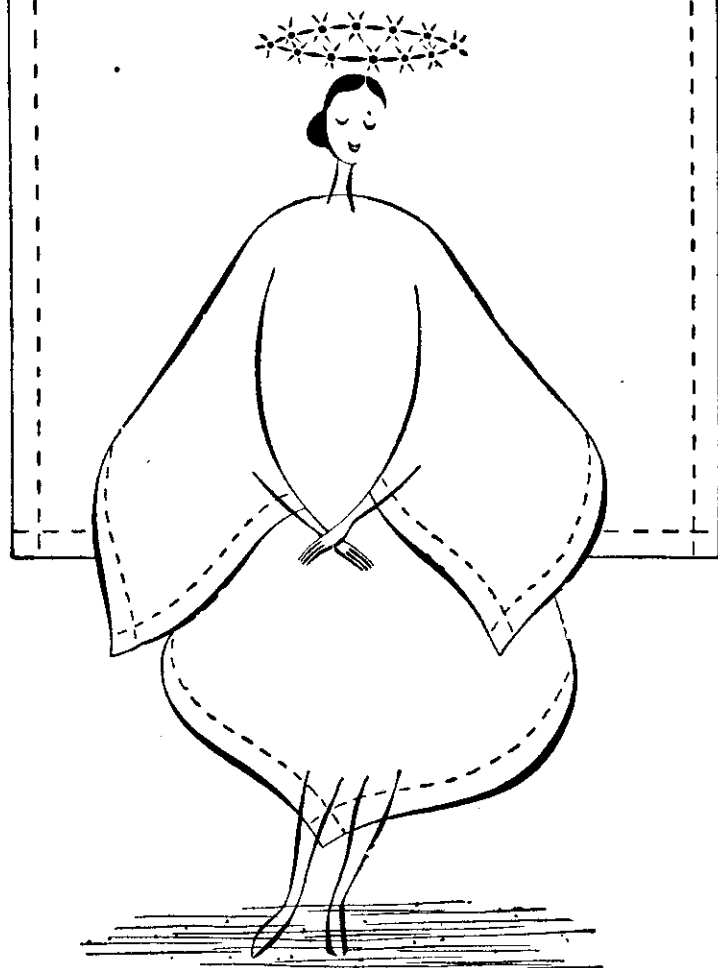



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BOOKS (CONT'D.)

FROM A TO Z BY AIR

THE ABC AIR GUIDE* is a fascinating book of some 250 pages, published monthly, and indispensable to anyone who wants to fly anywhere—from Aalborg, Aberdeen, and Abidjan, to Zinder, Zomba and Zurich—but also a nice thing to have at home on a wet week-end, if you never intend to fly anywhere. It has three big maps, The World, Europe, and the United Kingdom, and every air route shown has a figure which refers you to the time-table for that route. In the Alphabetical section you just look up the name of the place you want to go to, and the entry will tell you what country that place is in, where you change after leaving the U.K., and where to look for the time-tables of the lines that take you there. For instance, the first entry under J reads like this: Jackson's Bay, New Zealand. From U.K.—change at Sydney (Tables 11, 14) Auckland, (Table 625) Wellington, (Table 645) and Greymouth (Table 646). Airline from Greymouth, Table 647.

You can gaze at the maps for a long time and still be learning something: that Nome, Alaska, is the farthest North you can fly by any existing air service, and Invercargill is the farthest south. That Africa is more thickly covered with airlines than any other continent, excepting presumably the United States. That England and Scotland have no internal mainland airlines, except as feeders to services which go out to sea. That Russia is one vast white Terra Incognita (you can fly to Moscow or away from it, but apparently to nowhere else in the USSR). That if you are in Budapest, Sofia, or Bucharest, you can fly to Moscow, but to nowhere else.

Airline to H.3

We've told you how the alphabetical section works, but it's something to know that there is a place called H.3. It's in Iraq, and you can fly there on Tuesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays, and Sundays, leaving Baghdad at 6.20 a.m. local time and arriving in H.3 at 8.25 a.m. There's also a place (in Tanganyika Territory) called S.H. Club, and you can fly there on Thursdays.

Incidentally, although the U.K. doesn't fly around much inside itself (probably because the railways are so good and the airports are so far out of town), a lot of towns have airfields available for charter aircraft. These places are shown in the ABC, which also gives you the telephone number to ring for permission, e.g., Yeovill 1100. You may land at Stornoway (in the Hebrides) if you ring Stornoway 256 first.

Charter aircraft, by the way, are cheaper in England than taxis in New Zealand. Seven companies offer two-seaters at 1/- a flying mile, and you can have a Swallow (from Cambrian Air Services) for 9d. A 14-passenger DC2 costs 6/6 a flying mile.

In the time-table section, there's everything from the four-day London-Sydney trip, which costs £300, to the 15-minute hop from Jersey to Guernsey,



which costs 15/-. You can take excess baggage from Jersey to Guernsey for a penny a lb., but anything over 66lb. on the London-Sydney trip will cost you about 26/- a lb. The ABC or Alphabetical Air Guide weighs seven ounces, so it could be quite an item, if you had to fly round much, and you already had 66lb. of Absolute Essentials.

The "Gen"

Naturally the baggage costs mean you have to plan carefully, so the ABC guide prints sample free allowances for men and women in temperate and tropical climates. The Light Dressing-Gown in the Men's List for Tropical Climates is half-a-lb. heavier than the Temperate Climate one, but a woman's bathing suit and cap weigh only eight ounces wherever she is going.

All this is in the General Information section, which also tells you to empty your fountain pen (there is an advertisement just opposite for one that never leaks at any altitude), not to be frightened if your ears feel queer, not to tip the airline staff, and what to do with any matches or explosives you have in your pockets.

The time-tables tell you how far out of town the airport is, and where to wait for the motor transport which will take you there. For instance, going to the Isle of Man from Manchester, you wait at the Gas Showroom in Albert Square, and they drop you at the bus depot in Douglas. Sometimes (as New Zealanders know) you spend more time in road transport than you do in the air. For the 15-minute flight from Jersey to Guernsey, you spend 45 minutes travelling on Jersey and 30 minutes on Guernsey. Incidentally, you can fly from Land's End to the Scilly Isles nowadays. It takes 20 minutes.

Of all the journeys in this book we would like to take, we might mention the Air France Service in Africa, which will take you to Ouagadougou. You go first to Dakar, and from there you can leave on alternate Sundays, calling at Kaolak, Kayes, and Bamako on the first day, and at Bobo Dioulasso on the second. If you feel under any compulsion to leave Ouagadougou, you can do it on alternate Thursdays.

Another place with a name that fascinates us is Rottneist Island. This seems to be somewhere near Perth, W.A., because planes get there from Perth in 15 minutes, and apparently do so every day, heaven knows why.

But the one piece of information we like best in all this book is just opposite the entry about Rottneist Island. It is testimony to a sense of the Fitness of Things which governs Australian National Airways. In the table for the Cairns-Cooktown-Thursday Island service, the "Frequency" note reads as follows: "From Cairns to Cooktown, Monday, Thursday and Saturday; to Thursday Island, Thursday."

* THE ABC or ALPHABETICAL AIR GUIDE, 1946. Thomas Skinner and Co. Ltd., London.