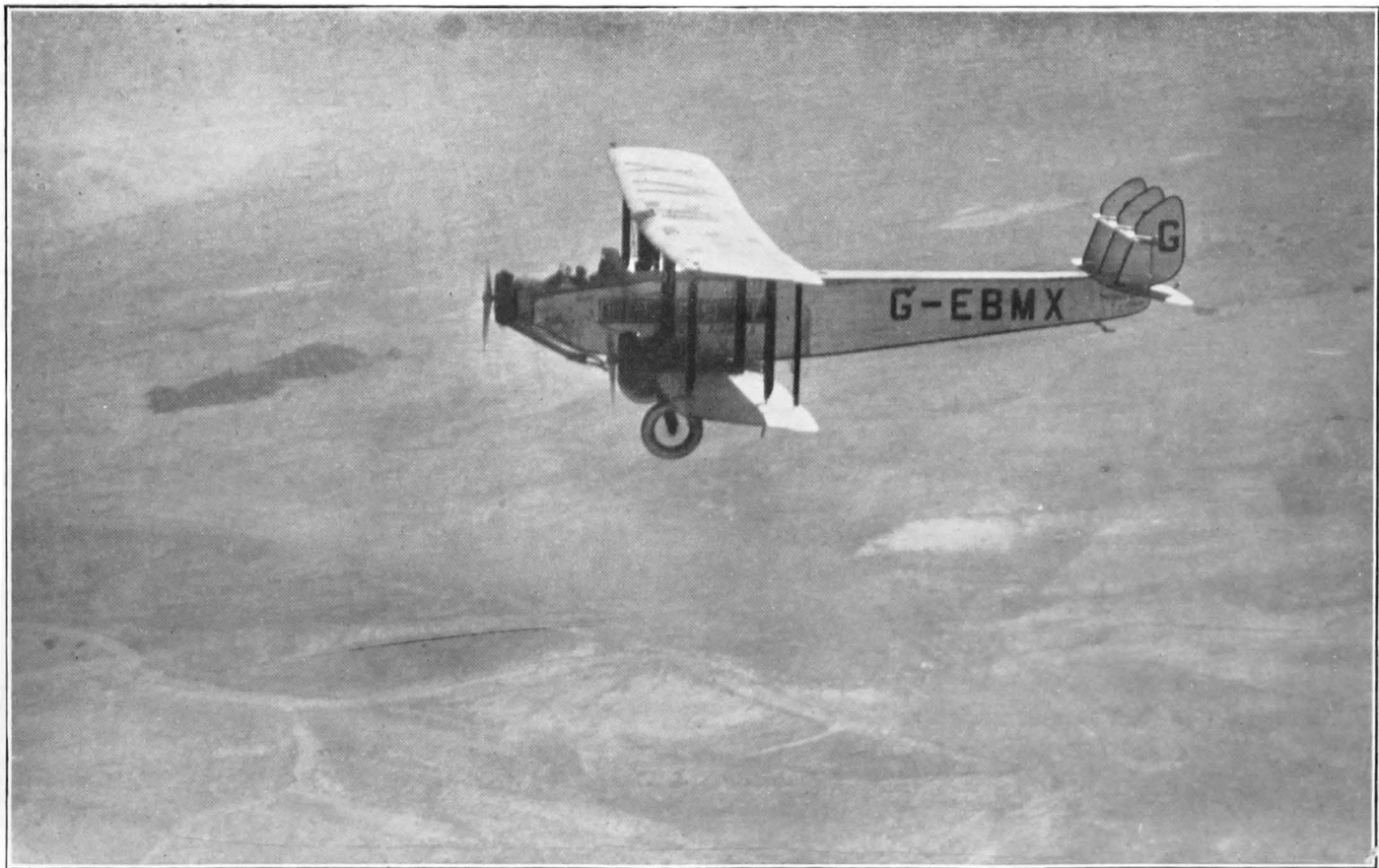


MAP OF THE ROUTE

INDIA BY AIR



THE "CITY OF DELHI" IN FLIGHT

'INDIA BY' AIR

BY
THE RIGHT HON.
SIR SAMUEL HOARE, Bt.
G.B.E., C.M.G.

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
LADY MAUD HOARE, D.B.E.

*WITH 35 ILLUSTRATIONS
AND MAP OF THE ROUTE*

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DEDICATION

TO MY MOTHER WHO AT THE AGE OF EIGHTY
WAS WITH DIFFICULTY DISSUADED FROM
MAKING A FLIGHT WITH ME IN A
SOUTHAMPTON FLYING BOAT AND WHO
CLOSELY AND SYMPATHETICALLY FOLLOWED
EVERY INCIDENT OF THE JOURNEY DESCRIBED
IN THIS LITTLE BOOK.

S. H.

Sidestrand
August, 1927.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

I AM greatly indebted to many friends for their help in the preparation of this book, particularly to Mr. Geoffrey Lloyd for his patient kindness in reading the proofs, and to Mr. C. Ll. Bullock and the Royal Air Force for most of the photographs.

I should add that for such of these photographs as are derived from official sources the copyright is reserved by the Crown.

S. H.

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INTRODUCTION

BY LADY MAUD HOARE, D.B.E.

JUDGING by the number of questions asked, the point of most interest about the flight was whether we were frightened during its course. And we have answered invariably, and I hope truthfully, 'No.' I remember wondering rather sadly on our bumpy journey to Dijon, the first morning, if it was going to be as rough the whole way and whether I should get used to it, as I was not, and am not, a perfect air sailor. And in murky and stormy weather the next afternoon along the Italian coast it ceased to be of great interest whether we arrived in Naples or not. But when we were in the air during the dust storm in the Persian Gulf, which probably was a period of some danger, we were too much interested to be frightened. The increasing gloom, the descent to within 20 feet of the sea, the sudden appearance of land on the opposite side of the machine to where it was last seen, the stampeding of some camels as we passed

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just over their heads, made up a chain of incidents, puzzling perhaps, but far too interesting to be alarming at the time. And afterwards, admiration for the technical skill of pilot and navigator, and pride in the mechanical perfection of the engines left no room for any other feeling.

There was clearly some risk in crossing the Mediterranean in the winter in a land machine. But we had equipped ourselves with the latest pattern of life-saving waistcoats, made of hydrogenated rubber. And having arranged our affairs so that our little all was not devoured by legal arguments trying to prove who had died first in a crash, it was a risk we were prepared to run.

But in the weeks before departure, fear of illness or of fog at Croydon to delay our start was a worry. After all, 7.30 A.M. on Boxing Day was a severe test of friendship on the part of those seeing us off and a postponement might have meant an overstrain. Whilst a sprained ankle would have made an inaccessible peak of the three-foot-high step into the machine, and an outbreak of mumps would have been tragic. One of the objects of the flight was propaganda, and my conviction that any ordinary woman could easily do a long-distance flight needed proof. So delay at the start, from whatever cause, would have been disastrous.

Another point of interest, apparently, was how we passed our time in the machine. And the

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answer that, besides looking out of the windows, reading, and repairing our short nights, a considerable amount of time was spent in writing, has astonished many people. Travellers by road and rail particularly do not seem to realise the delightful absence of vibration which to my mind is one of the greatest advantages of air travel. This book is entirely based on the notes written in the machine whilst flying. Another favourite occupation was map-snatching. The admirable map of the route thoughtfully provided by Imperial Airways was in such constant use that repair was needed before the return flight began.

Naturally enough, weight was of critical importance, and from the beginning of the preparations for the journey the luggage bluff was superb. To begin with, we wanted to know how much luggage we could take, and Imperial Airways wanted to know how little we could do with. Then prestige came in, and it became a question of who was entitled to most, the Great Man, the Only Lady, the A.O.C. India, or the Organiser? (The Organiser, I may say, was Mr. C. Ll. Bullock from the Air Ministry, the impresario of many flying tours.) On this three things should be recorded. The A.O.C.'s allowance was cut to the bone because he was not flying home with us, though, as we had all sent 'luggage in advance,' the logic of the arrangement was not very apparent

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to him. The only hat-box was a man's. And when an extra passenger joined us at Alexandria, *my* dressing-case fittings were not sacrificed. I can only hope that the complete figures of first and of final weights will never be published or our reputation for truth will have a crash, probably a fatal one.

Equipment for the woman was a problem on which no one could throw much light. Clothes for the visit to India were easily sent in advance. But during the flight provision had to be made for sun and rain, heat and cold, deserts and drawing-rooms, all within the limits of a suitcase and a dressing case. I blessed the inventors of aluminium and stockinette. To begin with, my ordinary dressing-case weighed 11 pounds empty, so one with unstiffened top and bottom was substituted, which, with its equipment of erinoid brushes and combs, weighed only $5\frac{1}{2}$ pounds. Then, glass bottles and china pots being heavy as well as breakable, there began a great hunt for lighter fittings, and aluminium solved the difficulty. But when catering for air travel becomes a business proposition, I hope manufacturers will realise that an unfair handicap is placed on would-be purchasers, when requests for 'aluminium bottles' produce either an infant's feeding-bottle or a thermos flask—'muff-warmers' being the right term. Also 'picnic butter tins' as receptacles for

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face-powder and bath-salts do not suggest themselves save to a very persistent inquirer. The Christmas present of a practical friend, too, came into prominence when I handed my roll-up shoe-shine round the cabin preparatory to our arrival at Karachi.

My actual wardrobe consisted of a stockinette coat and skirt, with crêpe-de-Chine jumper worn most days, and a woollen jumper and tweed skirt as a change. Then, in layers according to temperature, woollen cardigan, leather coat, and fur coat. The felt hat matched the coat and skirt, and gum boots were occasionally most useful on wet aerodromes. A black lace evening dress for formal dinner parties—one night we met the Emir Abdullah at Amman, and the next night King Feisul at Baghdad—and a demi-toilette completed the visible list; but my most cherished possession was a Shetland wool dressing-gown, light, warm, and uncrushable! This met all requirements of comfort, and, I hope, of suitability too. For on arrival at Delhi, when we went straight into luncheon at Viceregal Lodge without unpacking, an old friend greeted me with: 'But of course you have changed out of your travelling clothes.' He appeared amazed when I told him that, as he saw me, so had I left London.

To have been the first woman to fly to India and to fly so long a distance was a wonderful gift

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of fortune, and one for which I shall always be grateful. Many had the wish and only one the opportunity. All my friends were envious ; some, perhaps, more envious after the flight than before it, but with most the envy was genuine. And they were willing to come in any capacity. One serious offer came from a woman-pilot to maid me, pack for me and call me at any unearthly hour necessary, if only she might come. The offer also implied a willingness to fly the machine when required, but as unfortunately our numbers were limited, I had regretfully to say 'No.' That she would have been an agreeable addition I have no doubt ; but even in her absence we were a very happy and harmonious party. And the Organiser allows me to say that I only lost three pocket handkerchiefs, and was never seriously late during the journey in spite of the absence of the flying maid.

Two outstanding impressions remain with me. First, there is the wonderful interest aroused by the flight, and aroused not only amongst our own people. For the whole way along, foreigners and native tribes, veiled women, priests, and officials all flocked to visit the machine and to talk to the travellers. The moment the machine landed, the barest desert was crowded, and I can remember no landing-ground without the click of many cameras.

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To our own people the thrill undoubtedly was the hope of a closer connection with home, a quicker mail and a shorter journey. The other impression is of great kindness and most understanding tact from many and various hosts and hostesses of all nationalities. For instance, the Governor of Malta, the Italian Governor-General at Benghazi, the High Commissioner of Iraq, the British Resident in the Persian Gulf, the officials of the Indo-European Telegraph Co. at Jask, and the Maharajah of Jodhpur, to mention only a few. All these, and many others too, provided us with warm welcomes and delightful memories for which we cannot be sufficiently grateful. One and all, from London to Delhi, they gave a delightful background to all the many interests of a unique journey.

M. H.

August 1927.