



BNAPS News March 2020

BNAPS News Vol 10 Iss 2 – March 2020

B-N Islander Restoration Milestones 2010-2020

Looking at key milestones in the course of the restoration work over the past 10 years acts as a reminder of what has been achieved by the restoration team to date after the remains of B-N Islander G-AVCN were surveyed in March 2010 and then taken into safekeeping on 10 July, 2010:

March 2010
Survey of Islander G-AVCN



July 2010 Transport to
Harbour Farm



December 2011 Harbour
Farm workshop ready



October 2014
Fuselage painted



June 2015
Fuselage at Islander 50



March 2016 Move to
Brickfields



December 2018
Wing painted



June 2019
Wing and fuselage joined



October 2019
Engines installed



March 2020 Final assembly of Islander G-AVCN continues.....

In this issue of BNAPS News:

**Latest news of Islander G-AVCN's restoration and future directions
B-N Islanders and the London-Sydney Air Race
Plus more news of Islanders and Trislanders around the World**

BNAPS Chairman's Update – March 2020



Dear BNAPS Supporter,

Final assembly of Islander G-AVCN has progressed steadily over the past two months with many detailed finishing off jobs completed as parts have become available. BNAPS has continued to receive much help from our friends at the Falkland Islands Government Air Service. The latest part to arrive was the backing plate for attachment of the spinner which will allow one of the propellers to be installed.

Work is continuing to fit out newly acquired Islander fuselage section to act as a "starter" flight simulator. However, the processor unit of the flight simulator suffered a power supply failure and the monitor has developed a fault and action is under way to replace these items and reload the software.

BNAPS Trustees have continued to engage in discussions related to finding a permanent home for VCN on the Isle of Wight. At present the plan is to remain at the Brickfields workshop at least until the end of September this year. This will allow the final assembly of VCN to be completed, less rigging of the controls. BNAPS has received a preliminary offer of secure under cover storage at no cost and it is now envisaged that VCN will be dismantled and transported for storage to another Isle of Wight location in the latter part of 2020 as an interim measure.

However, the current COVID-19 emergency situation means that our workshop sessions have been temporarily discontinued. The emergency situation restrictions and advice have also curtailed the planned workshop open days and group visits that we had hoped would take place over the coming months. These arrangements will be reinstated at the earliest opportunity.

In view of this funding is of even greater concern, particularly rental for our workshop. The workshop open days would have helped raise funds. Also a number of local organisations have been contacted regarding interest in a workshop visit and it was anticipated that about six visits would take place in the coming months. This would also have helped with fund raising.

BNAPS is indebted to our BNAPS Supporters Club members for their interest and help in making the restoration project a success.

For more information regarding the above please contact BNAPS by email bob@bnaps.org.uk or Telephone 01329 315561.

Yours sincerely,

Bob Wealthy, Britten-Norman Aircraft Preservation Society Chairman

Airliner World Article about BNAPS and Islander G-AVCN

BNAPS has recently been contacted by Airliner World magazine's assistant editor Martin Needham as follows: "Airliner World is preparing to celebrate its 250th issue, on sale April 9, with an increase in page count which will include a Preservation News section. Our plan for this is to celebrate commercial aviation's rich history and those who are working to preserve it for future generations. As part of this, we would be extremely interested to feature the on-going restoration of Britten Norman Islander, G-AVCN, in our new section. The May issue will feature an article about Anguilla Air Services, which operates both the Islander and Trislander".

First Flight of New Build Islander for FIGAS – 2 March 2020

New build Islander c/n 2316, G-CLHR, made a first flight at 1208 from Solent Airport on Monday 2 March 2020. It returned at 1500 and not long after departed to Bournemouth for painting.

Islander c/n 2316 is a BN-2B-26 type and is the first of two new builds to be delivered against a recent order from the Falkland Islands Government Air Service (FIGAS).



Above left: Islander G-CLHR on the ramp outside B-N's final assembly facility on 25 February for pre-flight preparations (Ian Wikberg)

Above right: Islander G-CLHR engines runs in progress on 27 February in the run up area alongside Solent Airport's runway 05/23 (Ian Wikberg)



Above: Islander G-CLHR landing after its first flight at Solent Airport on 2 March (Richard Davies)

Right: The first view of the Islander in its new FIGAS colours and bearing registration mark VP-FMC (FIGAS)



FIGAS Press Release 17 March 2020

The new FIGAS Islander, now with its new colours and VP-FMC registration mark, returned from the paint shop in Bournemouth on 18 March. Its southbound flight is now delayed by the global COVID-19 situation. Its arrival will bring the fleet back to a total of five.

The aircraft is named for Sir Miles Clifford and the last two letters of the registration are his initials. Sir Miles was the Governor who can be considered as instrumental in the formation of FIGAS back in 1948.

Development and Commercial Services portfolio holder MLA Barry Elsby said the new aircraft is a very important investment. "FIGAS is one of the keys to keeping our islands connected. Also we have the growing demands from tourists arriving for longer periods and wanting to experience the outer islands."

FIGAS passenger use continues to grow, rising from 5,800 in 2011/12 to 9,300 in 2018/19. Its anticipated numbers for the current season will be approximately 10,000 and it's expected the new air link via South America will further boost demand over time.

G-AVCN Restoration Progress Report January 2020 – March 2020

1. Final Assembly:

Temporary installation of the wing to fuselage fairings has continued.

2. Fuselage:

The port side nose section black cheat lines were masked and painted. However, when the masking was removed it was evident that the paint had not adhered properly, most likely due to the low temperature and humidity in the workshop. The black paint had to be removed and the yellow painted area affected repainted when conditions improve. Masking of the black cheat lines on the starboard side continued and will be painted later on.

Paul Thomasson has constructed a jig for moulding a set of plastic door surrounds. The first batch made has given an excellent result

3. Wing and Engines:

Work has continued to fit the modification to allow fitment of the flap motor. Fabrication of a fairing between the inboard side of the top engine cowlings and the leading edge droop section is under way.

4. Ailerons, Flaps:

Installed

5. Tail plane, Elevator and Elevator Tab:

Installed.

6. Fin, Rudder and Rudder Tab:

Installed.

The alignment/fit between the dorsal fin and the rudder is being investigated to see how best to make an improvement.

7. Landing Gear:

Wheel trims have been made by Keith Winter.

8. Engine cowlings:

Work is progressing on achieving a satisfactory fit between the upper and lower cowlings and between the cowlings and the wing.

9. Installation of Navigation Lights, Landing Lights and Strobe Light:

Landing lights have been installed.

10. Missing Items List:

The list is regularly updated by Bryan Groves and Bob Wealthy.

11. Donation of Parts:

Very many thanks go out to Kurt Whitney and Morgan Goss at FIGAS for their generous donation of more parts to the project. The latest items are a cross over exhaust section, a flap position indicator, one of the propeller spinner backing plates and an exhaust pipe support bracket.

G-AVCN Restoration Progress Report January 2020 – March 2020 (continued)

The following series of captioned photographs show the results of some of the work undertaken in the last period:



Picture 1

After masking the black cheat line on the port nose section was painted



Picture 2

After removal of the masking all looked well but on closer inspection it was found that the black paint had not adhered properly and would have to be removed



Picture 3

The port side nose section after the black paint had been removed. The yellow area will be repainted when temperature and humidity conditions in the workshop are more suitable.

**G-AVCN Restoration Progress Report
January 2020 – March 2020 (continued)**



Picture 4

The cross over exhaust section for the port engine donated by FIGAS.



Picture 5

The flap position indicator donated by FIGAS.



Picture 6

*The propeller spinner backing plate donated by FIGAS.
As the available spinners are of an earlier design, the backing plate will need to be adapted to suit.*

G-AVCN Restoration Progress Report January 2020 – March 2020 (continued)



Picture 7

Trial installation of the starboard engine cowlings is seen here under way. This work has been led by Mark Porter.



Picture 8

Bob Ward is seen here helping with the trial installation of the starboard engine cowlings.



Picture 9

Mark Porter inspects the starboard engine cowling fit after a trial installation. As the lower edges of the top cowlings have suffered damage to the fibreglass that is difficult to repair a 25mm wide aluminium strip has been made to finish off the edge.

G-AVCN Restoration Progress Report January 2020 – March 2020 (continued)



Picture 10

Paul Thomasson has made new door aperture surrounds from a standard plastic section by heat forming the material using a specially made jig.



Picture 11

The TV used for our workshop open days has received a major upgrade thanks to Rita Edgcumbe donating her unwanted folding top table. This is a great advance on the previous arrangement that involved balancing the TV on a couple of old chairs.



Picture 12

General view of VCN and the workshop as a reminder of what we will return to after the stand down due to the current emergency declaration.

Islander VQ-SAC Fuselage Section Progress Report March 2020



Picture 1

Bernie Coleman is seen here installing a skin panel that he made to cover a gap in the roof of the fuselage section.



Picture 2

Steve Cooley has made an instrument panel blank in MDF and installed the coaming.



Picture 3

Centre console made by Steve Cooley has been installed. The desktop multi-function joystick and screen will be positioned to allow operation of the flight simulator from the left hand seat.

G-AVCN Work planned Q2 and Q3 2020

As of 17 March 2020 BNAPS Trustees have decided that restoration workshop will be closed until further notice due to the COVID-19 emergency restrictions.

Islander G-AVCN Restoration Work Items

1 Wing and Engines:

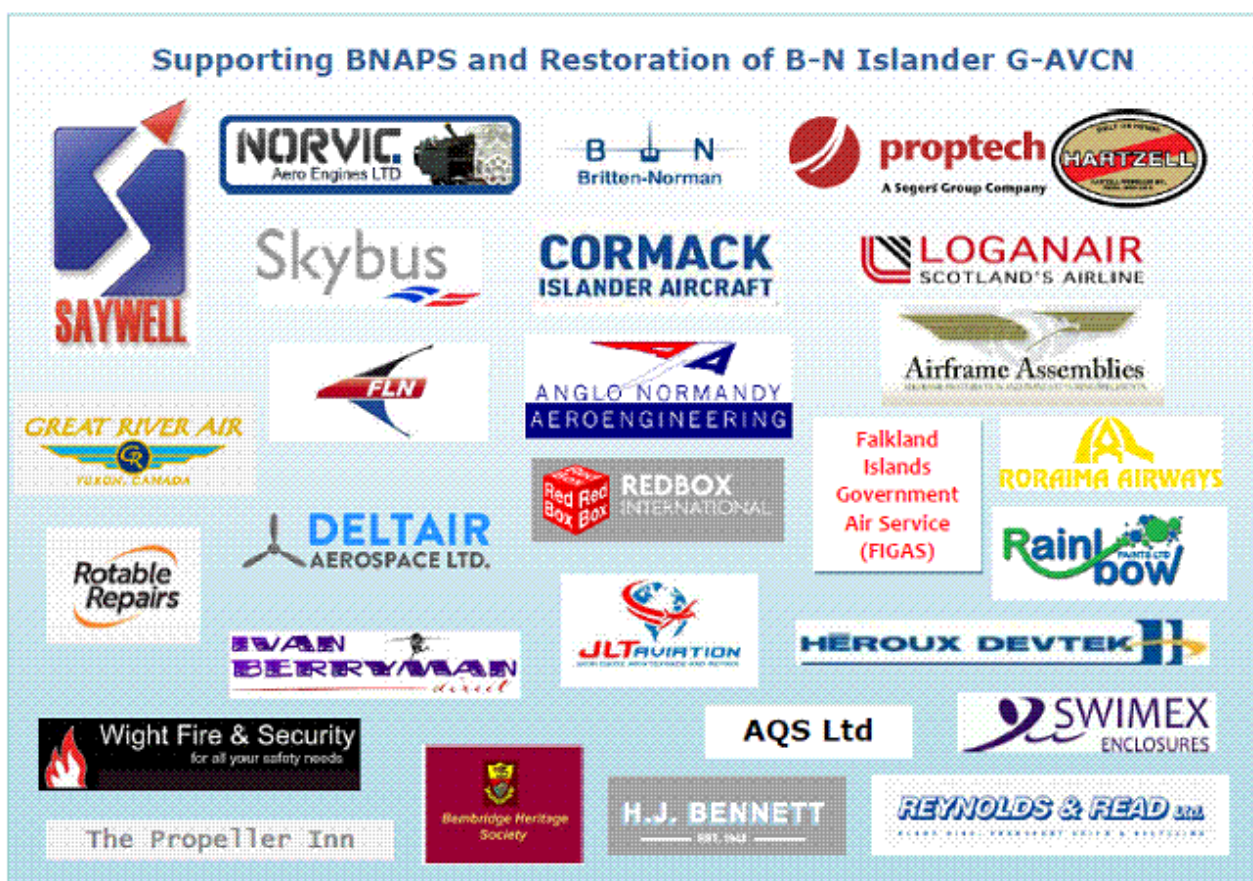
Complete the height adjustable wing support trestles including profile boards.
Complete engine dressing.
Fit propellers complete engine cowls and fairings fitting and paint.

2 Fuselage:

Ongoing internal trimming work.
Continue application of the cheat lines.
Complete the wing to fuselage fairings temporary fit

Islander VQ-SAC Fuselage Section Work Items:

- 1 Prepare exterior surfaces and etch prime
- 2 Install windows in fuselage and doors
- 3 Fabricate door hinges and install doors
- 4 Fabricate and install door trim panels and sidewall trim
- 5 Fabricate and install instrument panel blank and centre console
- 6 Install coaming
- 7 Install desktop flight simulator equipment
- 8 Install electrical earthing connection for fuselage structure
- 9 Commission flight simulator



1968 Order for B-N Islanders by Aerial Tours Opened Up a New Era of Aviation in New Guinea

One of the most significant orders received by Britten-Norman in the early days was from Dennis Douglas's Aerial Tours Pty Ltd company based in Port Moresby, New Guinea for ten Islanders. The first Islanders, c/n 28, VH-ATI and c/n 29, VH-ATK, were delivered on 5 October, 1968 closely followed by Islander c/n 36, VH-ATS, on 25 November, 1968.



Dennis Douglas had become aware of a new type of utility aircraft and made a visit to Bembridge early in 1968 to see what was on offer. As a result of meeting John Britten and Desmond Norman and seeing the Islander an order was placed without delay. The handover and certification of the first Islander delivered was announced in the March/April 1969 issue of the company newspaper Britten-Norman News:

Factory certification for New Guinea aircraft

Britten-Norman
News Number
Five March/April
1969

YES, it is possible! The Islander has achieved a "double first" . . . the hand-over of the first Islander (VH-AT1) for scheduled service in New Guinea; and the first to leave the Britten-Norman factory already certified on the Australian register.

At a joint ceremony to mark this event, Dennis Douglas, owner and managing-director of Aerial Tours, Port Moresby, received the log books and keys from Desmond Norman and the Australian Certificate of Airworthiness from Ian Perry, Civil Aviation Liaison officer of the Australian Government in London.

Aerial Tours Pty, Ltd., offer the most extensive aerial services in Papua and New Guinea covering an area as big as the British Isles. They currently operate four twin-engined and

four single-engined aircraft, employing 32 European staff which includes 12 pilots.



Handing over of the Islander for Aerial Tours Pty. Ltd., of Port Moresby, New Guinea. Left to right: Peter Hicks, Ian Perry, Gerry Maynard, Dennis Douglas, and Desmond Norman.

A further news item about Aerial Tours and its B-N Islanders appeared in the company news paper Britten-Norman News issue Number Seven Autumn 1969:

AERIAL TOURS PTY LTD. - The 10 Islander Airline

Based at Jackson International Airport at Port Moresby in New Guinea, Aerial Tours Pty. Ltd. (ATPM) began Islander operations in October 1968 with two BN-2 Islanders. In January 1970, ATPM will be operating ten Islanders over an expanding scheduled route network throughout the whole of the Territories of Papua and New Guinea.

Aerial Tours began charter operations in 1965 in support of a jointly-owned construction company which has large Government contracts in the interior. Scheduled operations began in 1968 with the first two Islanders. They were joined in December 1968 by a third and by a fourth in June 1969. Islanders five and six were delivered in September.

Scheduled services link Port Moresby, Vanimo and Wewak with Daru, Karema, Pagei, Imonda, Amanab and Green River six days a week. Dennis Douglas, dynamic Owner of ATPM, comments: "We could not operate our scheduled services until we got the Islanders."

By January 1969, the first three Islanders had flown over 800 hours on scheduled services. Dennis Douglas re-ordered another four Islanders. The conditions under which the Islanders operate in New Guinea are the most severe to be found anywhere. The Islander scheduled services and charter work throughout the Territory are flown from very narrow, short and wet jungle strips. During the rainy periods the surfaces deteriorate into liquid mud. The Islander's STOL performance and the low footprint pressure of its double-wheeled fixed undercarriage enable it to operate safely from all these strips.

The Islander flies Government officials, contractors' personnel, building labourers, local inhabitants and a wide range of freight. Under charter to the building contractors, the Islanders haul 10-ft. corrugated iron roofing sheets, cement bags, piping and cabling, generators and engine driven pumps. All food and supplies have to be air transported.

Aerial Tours' pilots like the Islander and consider it particularly suitable for their short-strip operations. Chief Engineer Ray Shaw believes that "the Islander is admirably suited for short haul operations of the type which exist throughout Australasia".



Ian Parry (left) Civil Aviation Liaison Officer at the Australian High Commission in London hands the Australian Certificate of Airworthiness for Aerial Tours Islander c/n 100 VH-ATV to John Britten. Centre is Britten-Norman's Chief Inspector, Reg Hobbs.

B-N Islander c/n 100 (VH-ATV) is the sixth Britten-Norman Islander for Aerial Tours Pty. Ltd., of Port Moresby, New Guinea and the eighth for Australian territories. The sale of Islanders in Australia is handled by Islander Aircraft Sales Pty. Ltd., of Sydney.

The Islander order from Aerial Tours and Dennis Douglas' initiative in introducing the Islander into operation in the demanding environment of New Guinea opened up the Far East market for the type. Islander deliveries hit the headlines when Dennis Douglas entered two of his Islanders in the 1969 London-Sydney Air Race – A description of the Air Race based upon contemporary reports follows and thanks to material contributed by Janetta Douglas the story of Dennis Douglas's Islander order and involvement in the air race and what happened after the race can be told

The 1969 London-Sydney Air Race and Race Winning B-N Islander c/n 132, VH-ATZ

Introduction

The race was organised jointly by the Royal Aero Club and the Federation of Aero Clubs of Australia. It was to commemorate the first flight from England to Australia and the feat of two Australian brothers, Keith and Ross Smith, who made the first flight into the Commonwealth during November/December 1919. It would also mark the bi-centenary of the discovery of Australia by Captain Cook in 1770. Seventy aircraft left Gatwick for Australia via the control points of Athens, Karachi, Calcutta, Singapore, Darwin, Alice Springs, Adelaide, Griffith and Sydney.

B-N Islander Participants

B-N gained much useful publicity when three Islanders entered the 1969 British Petroleum (BP) London-Sydney Air Race as the first major air race in which B-N aircraft had participated.

The Islander entrants were c/n 132, race number 72, which was due to be delivered to Aerial Tours Pty, Port Moresby, Papua-New Guinea, c/n 81, race number 68, which was to be delivered to Port Augusta Air Services, Adelaide, and c/n 119. None of these entrants was officially entered by the manufacturer and were normal production aircraft prepared with standard long range ferry fuel systems.



The eventual race winner B-N Islander c/n 132, G-AXUD, race number 72.

Islander c/n 132 was re-registered G-AXUD to Captains Bright and Buxton who had

had been contracted to deliver the aircraft to Papua New-Guinea.



The second B-N Islander to enter the race was c/n 81, G-AXSN, race number 68. This Islander finished 7th in the race.

Islander c/n 81, wearing British marks G-AXSN, was crewed by the Hon Hugh Astor, Sir William Dugdale and Mr Marian Jankiewicz.

The third Islander, c/n 119 VH-ATU, was withdrawn prior to the start as the new owner Aerial Tours was desperate to get the aircraft into service.



Originally a race entrant, B-N Islander c/n 119, VH-ATU departed the UK on its delivery flight to Aerial Tours in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea when the race started.

Race Timing and Organisation

Departures had been timed to make arrival in Adelaide for all competitors at approximately the same time. In fact 63 aircraft completed section one, Gatwick to Adelaide. On arrival and completion of the

first part of the race, organisers re-calculated the handicaps, taking into account full throttle performance and prevailing conditions for the section to Sydney, and it is a tribute to their skills that all the 58 finishers crossed the finishing line within twelve minutes.

B-N Islander G-AXUD Overall Winner

Islander, G-AXUD, race number 72, completed the first stage of the race having flown approximately 11,500 miles in an elapsed time of 76hrs 41mins, at an average block speed of 151mph and making only two additional stops. This was even more remarkable as the total flying time was 71hrs 50mins against a handicapped time of 83hrs 59mins.



Capt. Bill Bright and Capt. Frank Buxton with the victorious Islander G-AXUD, race number 72.

Islander G-AXUD Flight Times

Islander G-AXUD's times and speeds over the various sections of the route were:

London-Adelaide

Flight time 71 hrs 50 mins Handicap time 83 hrs 59 mins Average ground speed 159 mph

Adelaide-Griffith

Flight time 2 hrs 13 mins Handicap time 2 hrs 47 mins Average ground speed 192 mph

Griffith-Sydney

Flight time 1 hr 40 mins Handicap time 1 hr 32 mins Average ground speed 180 mph

Overall Flight time

75 hrs 43 mins Handicap time 88 hrs 18 mins Average ground speed 160 mph

Excellent times recorded in the second part of the race resulted in a total of 15,617

points being amassed which meant that G-AXUD had won the race overall and three major prizes:

1st Prize, Prime Minister's Trophy and BP Australian Prize (25,000 Australian Dollars) for the highest number of points scored in the two sections of the race.

1st Prize, South Australian Government Trophy and Ross and Keith Smith Prize (10,000 Australian Dollars) for the winner of section 1 of the race.

Daily Express Prize (5,000 UK Pounds) for the fastest handicap between London and Sydney for a UK resident pilot flying a British Commonwealth built aircraft.



The three trophies won by the Islander (left to right) are: South Australian Government and Ross and Keith Smith Prize; Daily Express Challenge Trophy and the Prime Minister of South Australia's Trophy.

The total overall flight time for London-Sydney was 75hrs 43mins against a handicap of 88hrs 18mins and an elapsed total of 80 hours 33minutes. At the end of the race no. 72 was one of only nineteen finishers to better their handicap. Meanwhile no. 68 had also impressed coming in a very commendable 7th overall; making two more stops than no. 72; these two Islanders were among only five non US built finishers.

News of their success was greeted with euphoria at the factory. John Britten said that he felt "the Islanders are not race aircraft and stood no realistic chance against specially prepared sports aircraft and the 1st and 7th places were not expected".

**CHAMPION SPARKS
THE WINNERS OF**



**LONDON—SYDNEY
AIR RACE!**

1st Britten-Norman Islander BN2A
flown by Capt. W. J. Bright and Capt. F. Buxton

2nd Cessna 310
flown by J. A. Masling and G. Williams

3rd Piper PA30 Twin Comanche 'C'
flown by B. C. Holland and H. C. Shaw

4th Piper PA30 Twin Comanche 'C'
flown by D. Parsons and A. Wignall

**DEPENDABLE
CHAMPION
SPARK PLUGS**

*Whatever you drive or fly
always fit dependable Champions...*

... the world's favourite spark plugs on land, sea and in the air.

Apart from the prizes, the race served to demonstrate the reliability and maturity of the Islander and its ability to operate anywhere in the world.

Islander VH-ATU Goes to the Aid of Air Race Competitor Sheila Scott

Islander VH-ATU, flown by Captain Keith Sissons, was to compete in the race on its delivery flight to Aerial Tours Pty Ltd based in Papua New Guinea. Plans had to be changed because Dennis Douglas the owner of Aerial Tours urgently wanted to get the aircraft into service. Islander VH-ATU got caught up in the event, despite the fact that plans for its entry had been cancelled.

So a somewhat disappointed Capt. Sissons found himself setting off from Gatwick in Islander VH-ATU among a gaggle of race competitors on 18 December 1969.

At Singapore Captain Sissons learned that Miss Scott's Comanche was grounded at Sumbawa in Indonesia. He signalled Bali that he would drop fuel for

her at Sumbawa. Halfway across the Java Sea, however, he discovered that she had been able to take off for Bali after a local airline had brought in a drum of fuel for her aircraft.



Sheila Scott's Piper Comanche G-ATOY

Miss Scott's aircraft still had radio faults, though, and they arranged to leave together for Darwin. A fairly regular three-way relay of conversation between the two aircraft and Darwin helped to relieve the monotony of the 7-hour flight.

Capt. Sissons continued his journey to Port Moresby. Within hours of finishing the 77-hour flight, the Islander was being stripped of its ferry tanks and inspected prior to joining Aerial Tours' charter operation.

Interview with Dennis Douglas of Aerial Tours Port Moresby, New Guinea after the London-Sydney Air Race

The owner of Aerial Tours was Dennis Douglas and in 1968 he had placed a significant order for 10 Islanders with B-N as he recognised that the type was ideally suited to the type of operations undertaken by his company in New Guinea.

The following interview published in Flight International in February 1969 gives a good impression of the situation at the time and some of the thinking behind the selection of the Islander for operation with Aerial Tours in the region.

**Equatorial Islanders
FLIGHT International, 26 February**

1970

To lay claim to be the company operating the largest fleet of Islanders in the world is a fair feather in any company's cap; that such a claim can fairly be made by a company which did not even exist five years ago is remarkable. Aerial Tours Pty of Port Moresby enlarged their fleet of Islanders to ten when Bill Bright handed over the London-Sydney race-winning aircraft in January.



Left to right – Capt. Bill Bright, Capt. Frank Buxton, Desmond Norman and Dennis Douglas

Aerial Tours was incorporated as a company on May 10, 1965, with Mr Dennis Douglas as managing director and with two additional shareholders who were subsequently bought out by Mr Douglas. The company rapidly acquired a variety of light aircraft including a Cessna 337, three Cessna 206s, a Dornier Do28 and three Barons, all of which were initially employed in the full spectrum of charter operations. The first Islander was delivered during 1968 and with its advent, coupled with the emergence of a potential route structure, regular third-level operations were started. The company's fixed base is at Port Moresby but the network of routes extends into north-east New Guinea and is steadily pushing westward across the island. In the not-too-distant future there is every hope that regular services can be provided westward across the Indonesian islands as far as the Celebes. A minimum of four Islanders are dispersed across the island and these aircraft will not normally return to Port Moresby more frequently than every third 100hr inspection. All intervening 25hr inspections are carried out in the field. The operation is essentially day VFR, understandably enough considering the tropical weather conditions, lack of radio aids and the existence of the spinal ridge of

mountains which lies along the length of New Guinea, rising in places to 16,000ft. Stages vary in length depending on the region, the longest at present flown regularly being 170 miles. This compares with the distance of some 420 miles flown when ferrying an aircraft from Port Moresby to a forward base such as Wewak on the island's northern coast. All routes are operated at least daily and the company reports an overall 75 per cent load factor—clearly the Islander fulfils just as much of a need in the remote New Guinea territory as it does nearer home around the Scottish islands.

The company's base at Port Moresby has been, and continues to be developed rapidly. Already a comprehensive radio overhaul shop has been erected, and this will shortly be followed by an engine overhaul facility. Talking to Flight recently, Mr Douglas stressed the cooperation he had received from the Australian Department of Civil Aviation. He felt that their requirements, though stringent were reasonable, and that, although the amount of route and base training that was called for was extensive, they were particularly appropriate to the company's dispersed operations. The pilots had to be of the highest quality to operate reliably away from base in this manner.

Asked about his fare structure, Mr Douglas said that prices varied considerably across his routes, largely as a result of the varying cost of fuel at the more remote strips. Whereas at Port Moresby fuel cost 29 cents a gallon, up-country at Kianga the same commodity cost the company A\$1.25 a gallon. Thus passenger charges varied over the routes from 5 cents to 17 cents per passenger-mile.

Future development seems more than ever assured now that the Export Refinance Corporation (ERC) has taken a 25 per cent equity in the company. Since ERC is now associated with Britten-Norman in the marketing of the Islander in the Far East, it would be reasonable to expect that Aerial Tours might take a distributorship, and Port Moresby could well become a maintenance base for the increasing number of Islanders in the region. Mr Douglas was reluctant to enlarge on this possibility and said that,

for the time being, he was content to develop the base simply from the aspect of running a fully self-contained company.

The story continues.....

Air Tours was renamed as Douglas Airways in 1976 after Papua New Guinea gained independence from Australia in 1974. BNAPS has been contacted by Janetta Douglas, wife of Dennis Douglas. Janetta Douglas has pursued a campaign to revive interest in the "forgotten air race", what it meant to Aerial Tours, the importance of Dennis Douglas's original order for Britten-Norman and to promote a local initiative to recover the remains of Islander P2-ATZ (formerly registered as VH-ATZ when delivered in 1970). After winning the race in 1969, this Islander served with Aerial Tours and Douglas Airways until it crashed in an inaccessible region of Papua New Guinea in August 1988.

Thanks go to Janeeta Douglas for allowing her account of the origins of the 1969 air race and the unique insight into the development of aviation in Papua New Guinea.....

Search on for winner of 1969 Air Race

By Janetta Douglas

October 25, 2019 The National Weekender Australia Post tells the story of the first delivery of mail by aircraft from London to Australia on its recent issue of stamps commemorating the event.

This story tells of the effect that this 1919 flight by Keith and Ross Smith had on Australia's colony of Papua and New Guinea and how in 1969, a Papua New Guinea aircraft would go on to win the 50-year re-enactment of the race from London to the Smith brother's home town of Adelaide.

The Keith and Ross Smith aircraft is on display at the Adelaide Airport. The hunt is now on to track down the remains of the winner of the 1969 race which crashed near the Kokoda Track in 1988.

Today it is all too easy for any of us, if we have the money, to ring up Qantas and book ourselves a seat on a flight to London secure in the knowledge that in the hold beneath our feet, our luggage will be

stacked amid Piles of cargo and bags of parcels and mail destined for Europe. It therefore seems incredible that it is less than 100 years since an aircraft even flew from London to Australia and that was only because in 1919 the then Prime Minister of Australia "Billy" Hughes, offered a £10,000 prize for the first aircraft to carry a bag of mail between the two countries in less than 30 days.

17,800km flight into unknowns

At that time it seemed like an impossible dream. It was only 16 years since the Wright Brothers had first bunny hopped their 'Kitty Hawk' aircraft up into the air in 1903 for the world's first ever powered flight and although aircraft design had improved greatly during the First World War of 1914 and 1918, a 17,800 km flight from London to Australia seemed out of the question.



Route of the 1919 London to Sydney Flight

Where would the pilots land? Where would they buy the special BP (British Petroleum) fuel for their engines? How could they find their way over such vast oceans and continents without the aid of radios or navigational aids that were still to be invented and what if they developed engine failure?



View of the send off for Vickers Vimy G-EAOU at Hounslow Airport, 12 November, 1919.

The problems seemed overwhelming but the response was immediate. Six aircraft entered the race all to be flown by ex-air force pilots and all of them taking off from Hounslow Airport near London on Nov 12, 1919, heading for Darwin.



Welcoming party for Vickers Vimy G-EAOU on arrival at Darwin, 10 December, 1919.

News of their progress was sketchy. Nobody really knew what was actually happening to them until 28 days later a 'Vicky Vimy' aircraft piloted by two brothers from Adelaide, South Australia, Ross and Keith Smith and crewed by their two engineers, Jim Bennett and Wally Shiers, limped onto an airstrip at Fannie Bay near Darwin and were able to hand over their mail bags to Lieutenant Hudson Fish, hero of Australia's 1915-18 Middle Eastern Campaign...and soon to be a co-founder of Qantas Airways (Queensland and Northern Territory Air Services) based in Longreach.

Future uses of planes endless

Newspapers trumpeted their triumph although only two aircraft had completed the race. The world seemed to have suddenly become a smaller place. If mail could be flown half way around the world in just four weeks instead of taking the normal three months by sea, the future uses of aircraft seemed endless.

And nowhere was this more apparent than in a country of 230,000km² with its impenetrable jungles and endless swamps called 'The Territory of Papua and New Guinea'. This air race had proved that aircraft were not just a fair ground attraction or an instrument of war. Aircraft seemed set to become the 'work horses' of the future and Sir Hubert Murray who was the Lieutenant Governor of the Territory of Papua and New Guinea between 1908 until his death in 1940, was quick to take note.

By 1919 his kiaps' (administration officers) had established patrol posts throughout the former British colony of Papua and Murray was encouraging them all to think seriously about getting their villagers to hand-build airstrips adjacent to their patrol posts and the nearby Christian missions.

In the same year, the League of Nations had given Australia the responsibility of administering the affairs of the former German colony of New Guinea and Sir Hubert began administrating that too. Airstrips began being built everywhere.

Lifblood for growth and exploration

Aviation quickly became not only an instrument of pacification of the 700 warring linguistic nations of TPNG but the life blood of its economic development and exploration.

By 1927 for instance, an Airline called 'Guinea Gold' had established itself in Lae to help develop gold mines in Bulolo and Wau. Their job was to carry every nut, bolt and spar needed to build eight huge dredges needed for the job and this including the 7000 pound weight of "tumblers" needed to crush the rock onto the riffle tables.



Junkers G.31s operated by Guinea Airways in the 1930s (Graham Goodall).

By 1928, 'Guinea Gold Airways' and their fleet of six, mostly German built "Junker" aircraft, one of which is now on display on Independence Hill in Port Moresby, was carrying more freight by weight than the rest of the world combined - an absolutely incredible achievement.

And then came World War 2 and American Marines began building massive cement or Marsden matting covered airstrips for their heavy bombers and fighter aircraft from Manus island to Milne Bay and all ports in between. By 1954, Qantas was using them

for their weekly flights between Australia and Port Moresby and Lae and these flights had connections in Sydney with their 'Viscount' aircraft bound for London.



Ju 52/3M operated by Gibbes Sepik Airways in the mid 1950s (Robert Blacklie).

Meanwhile in PNG a rag tail fleet of timber and wire ex-air force aircraft and gung-ho ex air force pilots were carrying passengers, freight, mail and coffee out of every isolated mission and patrol post and into the main TPNG towns. Sir Hubert's dream had become reality but the mortality rate was equally impressive. It was time for the TPNG Department of Civil Aviation to flex its muscles.

Government control

In 1967 the department chose three of the more responsible air charter operators of "STOL" (short take-off and landing) aircraft namely 'Territory Airways' (later called "Tulare" operating in the Highlands of PNG), "Crowley Airways" operating out of Lae and Rabaul and the third, "Aerial Tours Ltd" (later renamed as 'Douglas Airways') operating in Papua and the Sepik). The department gave them exclusive rights to operate scheduled, ticketed air services out of the main TPNG towns while flying "milk runs" in their tiny planes carrying less than 10 passengers out into the hundreds of tiny grass and mud strips that surrounded them.

The stipulation was that pilot training and first class maintenance facilities were a condition of keeping their licences and their owners responded appropriately. The fatality statistics plummeted and any pilot who could claim to have flown 90 hours a month in such tortuous conditions, could get a job flying anywhere in the world.

More importantly, any ailing PNG villager knew that if he/she could get to an airstrip they could be in a hospital in a main town within minutes...not days/weeks of agonising walking or paddling and all at the Department of Health's expense. Aviation had truly revolutionised life on outstations as well as the development of PNG's economy.

Search for aircraft and the race

Finding suitable aircraft for the job was always difficult but the owner of Aerial Tours, Dennis Douglas got lucky when he spotted an article in an aviation magazine about an experimental twin engine, 10-passenger aircraft with STOL capabilities being built on the Isle of Wight in England by a company called Britten-Norman.

He was so impressed he went to England with his accountant and chief engineer Ray Shaw to take a look and they ordered 10 of them. This new fleet for Aerial Tours was in the process of being built and ferried to PNG when in 1969 BP and the Australian Government offered prizes and trophies to the value of almost \$100,000 for the winners of what they called "The Last Great Air race" to commemorate the 50th anniversary of that first mail delivery from London to the hometown of Keith and Ross Smith's in Adelaide, with an additional leg from Adelaide to Sydney to commemorate the 200th anniversary of Captain Cook's first landing in Australia in 1769.

Dennis Douglas immediately entered two of his new aircraft in the race planning to fly one of them himself with the other being ferried out by his regular ferry operator. Around 80 other aircraft entered the race, ranging in size from a tiny Tiger Moth to much larger jet aircraft. It was to be a handicapped start with all aircraft expected to arrive at the various finishing lines within minutes of each other. Unfortunately the aircraft that Dennis had chosen to fly hadn't been finished by the time the race started but ferry flight pilots, Keith Buxton and Bill Bright took off in the other one from London and after a flight time of only 71 hours and 50 minutes arrived in Adelaide to be declared the winner of the London-Adelaide section of the race with trophies being presented by the elderly twin sisters of Keith and Ross Smith. The PNG plane then went on to win the bicentennial race to Sydney and was declared the overall winner of the race.

B-N

CONGRATULATIONS.....

BILL BRIGHT AND FRANK BUXTON

outright winners of the England-Australia air race,
flying a standard production 10-seat Britten-Norman
ISLANDER with ferry tanks.

total number of points: 15,617

Winners:

The Australian Prime Minister's Trophy and the B.P. Australian prize.	outright winners.
The South Australian Government Trophy and Sir Ross and Sir Keith Smith prize.	winners - first leg.
The Daily Express prize.	first British Aircraft and Crew.

AND CONGRATULATIONS ALSO TO.....

The Hon. **HUGH ASTOR, SIR WILLIAM DUGDALE** and Capt. **M. JANKIEWICZ**
placed 7th in the race, also flying a standard Britten-Norman **ISLANDER**.

total number of points: 12,553

BRITTEN-NORMAN LTD.,	Telephone:	Bembridge 2511
Bembridge Airport,	Telex:	86277
Isle of Wight.	Cables:	Britnor Bembridge

B-N took a full page advertisement in Flight International magazine congratulating the winners of the 1969 London-Sydney Air Race.

In the following days, Dennis and Keith and the two jubilant designers of the aircraft, Des Norman and John Britten flew back to Moresby in the plane to be met by a huge crowd at the Aerial Tours hanger with the PNG Police Band under Inspector Shacklady, belting out the tune of Those Magnificent Men in their Flying Machines.

Islander Alpha Tango Zulu

Within days of finishing the race Islander G-AXUD had been stripped of her ferry gear and had been registered for flying in PNG as VH-ATZ (Alpha Tango Zulu) and put to work.



The race winning Islander, G-AXUD, c/n 132, is seen here in Douglas Airways markings as P2-ATZ.

For nearly 20 years she continued to service her country well until on August 8, 1988, she tragically crashed at Kwainj in the Kokoda Track area, killing one passenger and injuring two others. Dennis was devastated. His company had been renamed Douglas Airways Ltd at Independence in 1975 and held a record of nearly 10 years without a fatal accident and Dennis was immensely proud of his pilots and engineers and the safely record that they had established. The DCA finding that pilot error had caused the fatal crash didn't improve his mood.

For a year or more this gallant little airplane lay dead where she had fallen being used as accommodation by the opportunistic owners of the garden she had destroyed. Meanwhile the winner of the 1919 Air race had been put on display at the Adelaide Airport. A rescue mission was mounted by PNG Aviation enthusiasts. A helicopter was engaged: ropes were attached; she was lifted out of her mud bath; she was free again; she was up in the air again and in her excitement she proudly tried to fly off by herself; the helicopter was in danger; the ropes had to be cut and off she went flying straight and level on her next big adventure. Where did she go? Where did she land?

A prize is now being offered by her admirers for information and photographs leading to the recovery of all or part of this Britten-Norman Islander registered P2-ATZ painted in her distinctive blue, black and white livery. This year marks the centenary anniversary of the Keith and Ross Smith flight. There is no better time to begin the search.

Janetta Douglas March 2020
Port Moresby Papua New Guinea

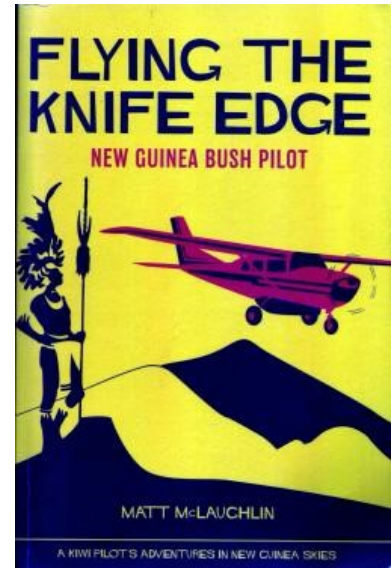
Thanks go to Janetta Douglas for all the help given to BNAPS in recounting the story of the how a B-N Islander won the 1969 London-Sydney Air Race and for granting permission to use the article that was published in the National Weekender. Let us all hope for a successful outcome to the efforts in Papua New Guinea to recover Islander Alpha Tango Zulu.

Bush Flying in Papua New Guinea

A recently published book, "Flying the Knife Edge", written by New Zealander Matt McLaughlin is a colourful and absorbing account of his life in aviation and in particular his experience of bush flying in Papua New Guinea in the 1990s.

After an untimely exit from the Royal New Zealand Air Force, Matt McLaughlin took a leap into the unknown, travelling to Papua New Guinea to work as a missionary pilot. He soon switched from the missionary work and spent over three years as a bush pilot, building up the necessary experience to chase his goal of becoming an airline captain. The book recounts living on a knife edge in one of the world's most dangerous flying environments - a rollercoaster ride of adventure, risk, near misses and tragedy.

The book was published in 2015,
ISBN 978-988-14036-0-5



Bush Flying Scenes in Papua New Guinea

The views here show Islanders operating in Papua New Guinea. Generally termed "bush flying" pilots have to contend with extremely variable weather conditions, mountainous terrain with blind valleys, short air strips with at best semi-prepared surfaces, not to mention locals and wild life venturing on to the airstrips to catch out the unwary.



Co air Islander P2-COD, c/n 883 at a remote airstrip Mount Tawa, Southern Highlands.



Islander at Baindong airstrip .



Local villagers turn out to greet SIIL Aviation BN-2T Islander P2-SIV, c/n 2138.



Islander on approach to a remote airstrip, Mount Tawa, Southern Highlands.

B-N Postal Covers

1969 London-Sydney Air Race

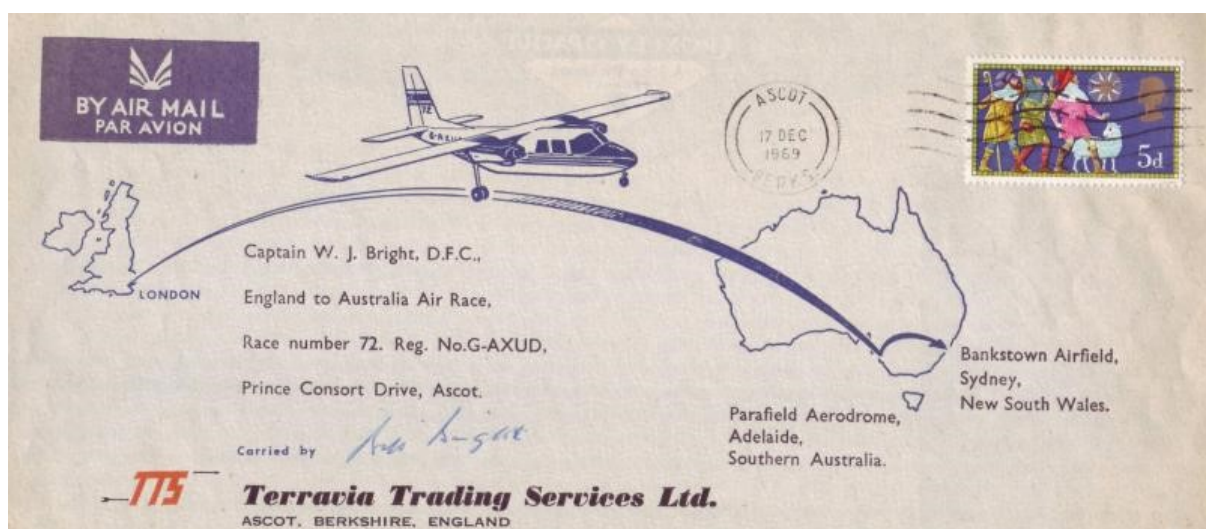
The maiden flight of BN-2A Islander, c/n 132, registration VH-ATZ, took place from Bembridge on 20 November, 1969. After further flight tests, painting and installation of additional fuel tanks, the aircraft was flown to Biggin Hill prior to customs clearance at Gatwick. By now the Islander had been registered to Terravia Trading Services Limited, the ferry company owned by Bill Bright and carried British markings as G-AXUD and the race number 72.



Postal cover issued by Smiths of Southampton carried by the race winning B-N Islander, G-AXUD. The cover had official race control point stamps on the reverse side (Norman Hobbs collection)

Smiths of Southampton produced one thousand air race commemorative covers. On the reverse side the name of each control point was stamped, namely Athens, Karachi, Calcutta, Singapore, Darwin and Adelaide. Islander G-AXUD also landed at La Baule and two more aerodromes en route to Sydney. The cover was authenticated by John Blake, Clerk of the Course and Competitions Manager of the Royal Aero Club.

Terravia produced five hundred covers which were franked on the reverse at Adelaide and Sydney and a few were signed by Bill Bright.



Postal cover issued by Bill Bright's ferry company Terravia Trading Services was carried in the race winning B-N Islander, G-AXUD, (Norman Hobbs collection).

From Sydney Frank Buxton and Dennis Douglas piloted the Islander to Port Moresby in Papua New Guinea. On 13 January 1970, Islander c/n 132 was registered as VH-ATZ to Aerial Tours. In May 1974 the registration was changed to P2-ATZ and in May 1976 transferred to Douglas Airways.

B-N Postal Covers Papua New Guinea Postage Stamp – Douglas Airways Islander P2-ATS

A Douglas Airways Islander featured on a Papua New Guinea stamp issued on 11 November 1987. The 35 Toea stamp (Stanley Gibbons ref: SG 568) depicted Islander, c/n 36, P2-ATS, flying over Hombrum Buff.

Originally registered as VH-ATS and on 8 November, 1968, took off from Bembridge on its maiden flight. It was delivered to Aerial Tours later that month. In May 1974, when Papua New Guinea was issued its own ICAO prefix, it was registered as P2-ATS and in March, 1976 transferred to Douglas Airways.



*Artwork and stamp featuring Douglas Airways Islander P2-ATS
(Norman Hobbs collection).*



Papua New Guinea Air transport stamp set first day cover (Norman Hobbs collection)

Thanks go to BNAPS Supporter Norman Hobbs for providing the above items from his postal covers collection and for contributing the write up about the air race covers and the Papua New Guinea stamps featuring B-N Islanders.

Epic Flight Celebrates 100th Anniversary of 1919 London-Australia Air Race

On 10 December 2019 Darwin celebrated its significant place in aviation in welcoming internationally recognised adventurer, Michael Smith to Darwin International Airport when he concluded his Great Air Race commemorative flight from London to Darwin.

Michael Smith flew his SeaBear amphibious aircraft over a modern-day retracing of the original Great Air Race flight path, taking into consideration geopolitical changes since the original flight in 1919. and restricted airspace considerations.



Michael Smith with an original copy of the National Geographic magazine that included a report on the original 1919 London – Australia air race.

Aerial Tours/Douglas Airways B-N Islander and Trislander Fleet Listing Compiled by Allan Wright BN Historians

ISLANDERS

28 VH-ATI Aerial Tours, Port Moresby, Papua-New Guinea. D/D 5.10.68.
 28 P2-ATI Aerial Tours, Port Moresby, Papua-New Guinea. 8.5.74.
 28 P2-ATI Douglas Airways, Port Moresby, Papua-New Guinea. 5.76.
 28 P2-DNI Douglas Airways, Port Moresby, Papua-New Guinea. 3.82.
 Written off 25.8.85.



Islander VH-ATI

29 VH-ATK Aerial Tours, Port Moresby, Papua-New Guinea. D/D 5.10.68.
 Written off Bolovip 20.11.69.

36 VH-ATS Aerial Tours, Port Moresby, Papua-New Guinea. D/D 25.11.68.
 36 P2-ATS Aerial Tours, Port Moresby, Papua-New Guinea. 8.5.74.
 36 P2-ATS Douglas Airways, Port Moresby, Papua-New Guinea. 3.76.
 Withdrawn from use pending sale 8.90.
 Sold to Sandaun Air Services, then other operators. Damaged beyond repair sometime after 2004.



Islander VH-ATS

67 VH-ATW Aerial Tours, Port Moresby, Papua-New Guinea. D/D 11.6.69.
 67 P2-ATW Aerial Tours, Port Moresby, Papua-New Guinea. 8.5.74.

67 P2-ATW Douglas Airways, Port Moresby, Papua-New Guinea. 5.76.
 67 P2-DNW Douglas Airways, Port Moresby, Papua-New Guinea. 3.82.
 Written off Kokada 30.8.85.



Islander VH-ATW

76 VH-WGQ Aerial Tours, Port Moresby, Papua-New Guinea. 28.11.73.
 76 P2-WGQ Aerial Tours, Port Moresby, Papua-New Guinea. 8.5.74.
 76 P2-WGQ Douglas Airways, Port Moresby, Papua-New Guinea. 5.76
 76 P2-DNB Douglas Airways, Port Moresby, Papua-New Guinea. 2.82.
 Withdrawn from use pending sale 4.90.
 Sold to Wewak Aviation, then other operators. Scrapped late 2010s.



Islander P2-WGQ

81 VH-ROV Aerial Tours, Port Moresby, Papua-New Guinea. 9.72.
 Leased to 6.74. No longer in use.



Islander VH-ROV

94 VH-ATY Aerial Tours, Port Moresby, Papua-New Guinea. D/D 28.8.69.
 94 P2-ATY Aerial Tours, Port Moresby, Papua-New Guinea. 7.5.74.
 94 P2-ATY Douglas Airways, Port Moresby, Papua-New Guinea. 5.76.
 94 P2-DNY Douglas Airways, Port Moresby, Papua-New Guinea. 6.82.
 Sold to Simbu Aviation as P2-SAC. No longer in use.



Islander VH-ATU



Islander VH-ATY

100 VH-ATV Aerial Tours, Port Moresby, Papua-New Guinea. D/D 15.9.69.
 100 P2-ATV Aerial Tours, Port Moresby, Papua-New Guinea. 7.5.74.
 100 P2-ATV Douglas Airways, Port Moresby, Papua-New Guinea. 5.76.
 100 P2-DNV Douglas Airways, Port Moresby, Papua-New Guinea. 8.82.
 Sold to Simbu Aviation as P2-SAB. No longer in use.

124 VH-EQT Aerial Tours, Port Moresby, Papua-New Guinea. 7.71.
 Leased to 10.71.



Islander VH-EQT (as VH-FLF - not delivered)

126 VH-ATX Aerial Tours, Port Moresby, Papua-New Guinea. D/D 23.12.69.
 126 P2-ATX Aerial Tours, Port Moresby, Papua-New Guinea. 7.5.74.
 Written off Naoro 14.8.75.



Islander VH-ATV at Bembridge (Norman Hobbs)



Islander VH-ATX

119 VH-ATU Aerial Tours, Port Moresby, Papua-New Guinea. D/D 10.12.69. Was to be flown in London/Sydney Air Race 12.69 (Race No 112), but withdrawn at last moment.
 119 P2-ATU Aerial Tours, Port Moresby, Papua-New Guinea. 8.5.74.
 119 P2-ATU Douglas Airways, Port Moresby, Papua-New Guinea. 5.76.
 Written off Klantina 5.10.79.

132 VH-ATZ Aerial Tours, Port Moresby, Papua-New Guinea. 13.1.70.
 132 P2-ATZ Aerial Tours, Port Moresby, Papua-New Guinea. 7.5.74.
 132 P2-ATZ Douglas Airways, Port Moresby, Papua-New Guinea. 5.76.
 Written off Kwainj 8.8.88.



Islander VH-ATZ

133 VH-APD Aerial Tours, Port Moresby, Papua-New Guinea. D/D 8.1.70.
133 P2-APD Aerial Tours, Port Moresby, Papua-New Guinea. 7.5.74.
133 P2-APD Douglas Airways, Port Moresby, Papua-New Guinea. 5.76.
133 P2-DND Douglas Airways, Port Moresby, Papua-New Guinea. 11.82.
Cancelled 1986. Broken up 1988.



Islander VH-APD

503 P2-KAG Douglas Airways, Lae, Papua-New Guinea.
Withdrawn from use pending sale. Sold to Transniugini Airways. Written off 29.7.95.

646 G-AYSS Aerial Tours, Port Moresby, Papua-New Guinea. 6.74.
646 VH-WGT Aerial Tours, Port Moresby, Papua-New Guinea. 7.74.
646 P2-WGT Aerial Tours, Port Moresby, Papua-New Guinea. 20.8.74.
646 P2-WGT Douglas Airways, Port Moresby, Papua-New Guinea. 5.76
Sold to Milne Bay Air 7.91. Currently in use with Air Taxi Solomons as H4-AT1.



Islander P2-WGT

721 P2-TCP Douglas Airways, Lae, Papua-New Guinea.
Cancelled. Not on register 9.91; fate unknown.

857 P2-DNJ Douglas Airways, Port Moresby, Papua-New Guinea. 10.85.
Written off en route Port Moresby - Wiotape 5.7.90.

TRISLANDERS

245 P2-DNN Douglas Airways, Port Moresby, Papua-New Guinea. 10.84.

Withdrawn from use 7.90. Sold to Mapmakers 1991. Withdrawn from use 1993.



Trislander P2-DNN

Trislander c/n 245

Trislander c/n 245 was the BN-2A Mk.III pre-production aircraft. It was first flown on 6/3/71 from Bembridge Airport as G-51-245. Later registered as G-AYTU, and painted in Aurigny Air Services colours, it was used for type certification flights.



Trislander c/n 245 as G-AYTU the pre-production aircraft at Bembridge Airport in 1971 (BNAPS archive).

322 P2-DNX Douglas Airways, Port Moresby, Papua-New Guinea. 19.8.83.
Withdrawn from use pending sale 6.89.
Sold to Cape York Air Services. Currently in Guyana with Roraima Airways for spares.

372 P2-DNP Douglas Airways, Port Moresby, Papua-New Guinea. 6.9.83.
Withdrawn from use 29.8.90. Sold to Cape York Air Services. Currently stored in New Zealand.



Trislander P2-DNP

Isles of Scilly Skybus Islander Fleet Ceased Operation of Scheduled Passenger Flights on 14 March 2020

As announced at the end of 2019, the Isles of Scilly Skybus Islanders ceased operation of scheduled passenger flights from Land's End Airport on 14 March, 2020. Of the fleet of four Islanders operated by Isles of Scilly Skybus it is believed that two will be retained for freight and air ambulance commitments. Scheduled passenger services from Land's End Airport to the Isles of Scilly will now be operated by Skybus Twin Otters.



Isles of Scilly Skybus Islander fleet on the ramp at Land's End Airport (Kevin Rouncefield)

On 17 March, 2020 a new Isles of Scilly helicopter service from Penzance to St Mary's and Tresco was inaugurated by Penzance Helicopters using a 6 seat AW109 helicopter type, the larger 12 seat AW139 helicopter intended for the service is not available as its return from a contract in China has been delayed.

Competition from the helicopter service was a factor in Skybus operations to the Isles of Scilly being assigned solely to the Skybus Twin Otters.

The Skybus Islanders have served the route from Land's End Airport well for nearly 40 years and have proved capable of maintaining the service all year round and in weather conditions when the service by sea could not operate – a proud record of service.

Channel Islands Air Services

With the demise of FlyBe and the COVID-19 restrictions that are having a severe impact on air travel. There is increasing concern amongst Channel Islanders and those involved in the holiday and leisure trades that air travellers to and from the Channel Islands and between the Channel Islands of Guernsey, Jersey and Alderney are not well served at present.

Blue Islands and Aurigny Air Services are both proposing to take over some of the former FlyBe routes. Blue Islands was in a code sharing agreement with FlyBe for the Southampton to Guernsey route. Aurigny Air Services continues to operate the Guernsey to Alderney and Alderney to Southampton routes using its Dornier 228s.

As far as the provision of frequent, affordable, "walk on walk off" air services between the islands, that looked possible if Air Alderney could get to a stage where it could start this type of service, the initiative appears to be stalled at present.

Whether the original Aurigny Air Services style of operation of the late 1960s can be re-introduced remains to be seen. It could be that this type of operation, despite its proven popularity and convenience, is not perceived by some as being appropriate for air travel needs in the 21st century?

Vieques Air Links Trislander N869VL

Vieques Air Links (VAL) has one of only three Trislanders operating in the Caribbean region. The following images are of VAL Trislander N869VL, c/n 1048.



VAL Trislander N869VL receiving attention in the maintenance hangar.

Access to the tail engine by tipping the nose upwards is a convenient technique that has been used by most Trislander operators (Julio A Fuentes).

Right and below: VAL Trislander N869VL on the ramp at Isla Grande Airport under a threatening sky (Julio A Fuentes).



Right: Not to be overlooked, two of VAL's Islanders, N864VL, c/n 712, and N865VL, c/n 2125, are seen here parked ready for service (Julio A Fuentes).



Air Flamenco Islander Images

Air Flamenco is another Islander operator in the Caribbean region with services from Isla Grande including flights to the island of Culebra. Thanks go to Jose Gomez for posting the images on the BNAPS facebook page.



Air Flamenco Islander N821RR, c/n 338, on the ramp under sunny skies (Jose Gomez).



Pilot's view from an Air Flamenco Islander on approach to the airport on Culebra (Jose Gomez).

Par Avion Tasmania - Scenic Tours by Islander

Par Avion is an Islander operator based in Tasmania that provides scenic tours of the spectacular scenery of the island. The Islander is well suited to Par Avion operations due to its high wing configuration and many windows together with its ability to operate into short airstrips in the more remote locations. The images below give an insight into what can be expected from a trip with Par Avion.



For more information about Par Avion go to: www.paravion.co.au

Images of Air Tetiaroa BN-2T Islanders

Air Tetiaroa based in Tahiti operates three BN-2T Islanders to convey guests from Tahiti's airport to the Brando Island luxury resort part of the Tetiaroa atoll. Some images have been posted Jean-Brice Copolino recently that give the flavour of Air Tetiaroa BN-2T Islander operations in this exotic part of the Pacific region.



Left - Air Tetiaroa BN-2T Islander F-OKKB on the ramp at Tahiti airport.



Right - Typical view of the port engine nacelle of an Air Tetiaroa BN-2T Islander from the pilot's position.



Left - Air Tetiaroa BN-2T Islander awaits its next flight.

Right - Air Tetiaroa BN-2T Islander F-OKKB on the ramp at Tahiti airport.



Left - View of well equipped instrument panel and control of Air Tetiaroa BN-2T Islander F-OKKB

Unusual Passenger for Island Airways

Paul Welke, owner of long standing Islander operator Island Airways, reported an aviation first for him when a live eagle, that was found on the ice and had suffered an injury to its wing, was transported to the local airport where it was then taken to the Wings of Wonder non profit rehab sanctuary based in Empire Michigan.

Later reports from Wings of Wonder indicate that the eagle is expected to make a good recovery thanks to the support from the Beaver Island community, the location served by Island Airways to provide all year round air connections to the mainland.



Above- The box containing the injured eagle is seen here being unloaded from the Island Airways Islander.

Right- The eagle arrives at Wings of Wonder for the attention of a vet.



Island Airways is a long standing B-N Islander operator serving the Beaver Island community all year round from Charlevoix Airport on the shore of Lake Michigan. In the summer months traffic is increased somewhat as Beaver Island is a popular destination for visitors.

Great Lakes Air Islander N880GL

A photo posted on the Great Lakes Air facebook page shows the new colour scheme of their recently acquired B-N Islander, N880GL, c/n 2020, to good effect.

It was repainted in its striking new colours just a few days after being delivered from B-N by Full Throttle Aviation in October last year.

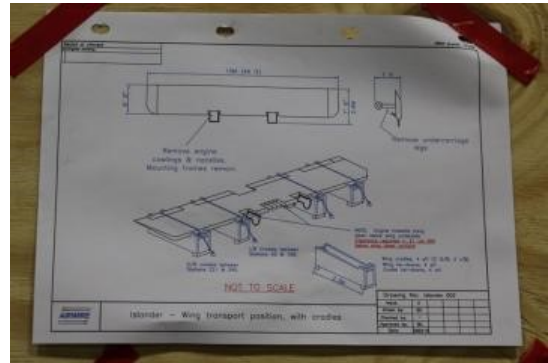
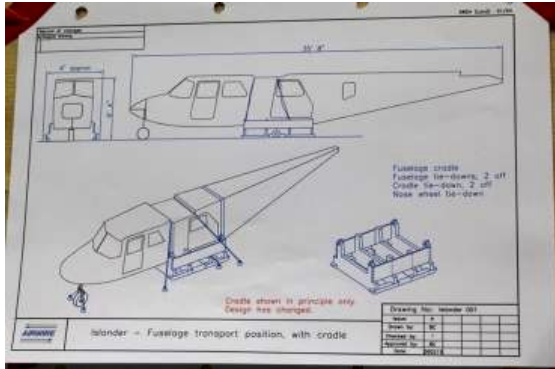


*Great Lakes Air Islander N880GL in its new livery
(Great Lakes Air)*

Islander AL.1 ZG993 at the Museum of Army Flying

Thanks go to Alistair Mellor for posting some more images showing preparations for the Army Air Corps Islander AL.1 ZG993, c/n 2202, to go on show in the Army Flying Museum at Middle Wallop, Hampshire. The end result is the dramatic sight of ZG993 as part of the new museum layout that was opened in April last year.

(Images: Army Flying Museum/Alistair Mellor unless stated otherwise)



Schemes for handling the fuselage and wing of ZG993 during transport were devised.



Fuselage of ZG993 arriving at the museum.



Display concept was evaluated using a model of the support structure. .



Wing supported on adjustable wing stands ready for joining with the fuselage.



ZG993 lifted to allow support structure to be moved in place.



Support structure installed.



Islander AL.1 now on show in the Army Flying Museum (BNAPS)

From the BNAPS Archive

1969 - BN-2 Super "Stretched Islander" Built and Flown

Following the entry of the Islander into production it was inevitable that B-N would consider the prospects for airframe growth. This growth was seen in terms of payload rather than an increase in range as normal traffic growth would allow many Islander operators to consider introducing a larger aircraft on the same routes. The key design issue was how to stretch the Islander's payload capability without detracting from its proven flying characteristics and excellent operating economy. B-N decided to evaluate the problem by incorporating a fuselage stretch into the Islander prototype G-ATWU, c/n 2, that, by late 1967, had completed the test work needed to obtain certification for the production BN-2A Islander.



B-N Islander G-ATWU in its original form when it appeared at the 1967 SBAC Farnborough Show (BNAPS archive).

The first significant change was the insertion of 33 inches in the fuselage forward of the wing, and the removal of the internal baggage area step which in both cases gained an extra double seat, increasing the passenger seating to 13 in addition to the pilot. B-N had identified the need to increase engine power for the BN-2 Super in the form of 400hp Lycoming IO-720 engines. However, the BN-2 Super in its initial configuration as the modified prototype, G-ATWU, retained the original 260hp Lycoming IO-540-E4C5 engines and was flown in this form on 14 July 1968. During a brief series of test flights it was found that although the handling was unaffected, the centre of gravity range was somewhat restricted, this being a factor in precluding further development of the BN-2 Super.



BN-2 Super G-ATWU, seen here outside B-N's experimental hangar at Bembridge Airport, about to embark on a test flight in July/August 1968 (BNAPS archive)

1969 - BN-2 Super "Stretched Islander" Built and Flown (continued)

One interesting test carried out was a straight line speed check between the BN-2 Super with standard 260hp engines and G-AVUB, (c/n 009), which had been converted for test purposes as a BN-2S, fitted with turbo-charged 300 hp Rolls Royce Continental TSIO-520-E engines by FG Miles Aviation at Ford aerodrome in Sussex under contract to B-N. Comparative tests showed that, despite the power advantage of the 300hp Rolls Royce Continental engines of the BN-2S, the stretched BN-2 Super, with an increased fineness ratio due to the increased fuselage length, was some 4 or 5 mph faster in level flight.

However, information gained from test flights with G-ATWU, together with performance analysis in relation to certification requirements for single engine performance and control, had shown that the BN-2 Super would not be a viable approach without a major development programme to address single engine certification issues and further work on the BN-2 Super was therefore curtailed. Thus, the B-N design team now had to look in new directions to devise a more capable BN-2 Islander derivative. This led to concept of the BN-2A Mk.III Islander with the fuselage lengthened sufficient to carry 19 passengers and a pilot and with a third engine mounted on the top of a new tail section. The first stage to prove the concept was initiated in early 1970 when it was decided to use the BN-2 Super G-ATWU as the basis for the BN-2A Mk.III Islander proof of concept demonstrator.



Britten-Norman company model of the BN-2A Mk.III Islander concept - note the limited fin area that was later increased as a result of flight testing (Taffy Lloyd family)

The BN-2A Mk.III Islander G-ATWU in the line up of static aircraft at the 1970 SBAC Farnborough Show having flown there on the day of its first flight on 11 September 1970. Not surprisingly it was in the "Experimental" category of aircraft exhibits (BNAPS archive)..



The 11 September 2020 will mark the 50th anniversary of the BN-2A Mk.III Islander's first flight. Although G-ATWU took up the name of Trislander, the production prototype BN-2A Mk.III Trislander did not appear until 6 March 1971 when it was first flown from Bembridge Airport as G-51-245, later taking up the registration mark G-AYTU. The September 2020 issue of BNAPS News will include a 50th anniversary tribute to the Trislander, often referred to as "a triumph of ingenuity".

Spot the Trislanders = Bembridge Airport 1971

A view of Bembridge Airport believed to be in early/mid 1971 when a build up of unsold production aircraft was parked there. See if you can spot the Trislanders amongst the large number of Islanders.



Were you there?

On 14 December 1978 a severe storm hit the Isle of Wight and a number of Islanders parked at Bembridge Airport were blown over and severely damaged with a several aircraft ending up beyond economical repair.

Were you there and have you got a story to tell?



Photos courtesy of Simon Thomson

Wight Aviation Museum

Wight Aviation Museum has announced that it will be closed until further notice due to the COVID-19 emergency situation

www.wightaviationmuseum.org.uk

Skybus Islander Prints

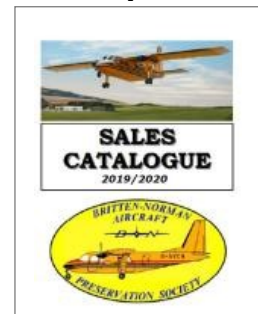
BNAPS Supporter Toby Dixon has produced a number of paintings of Islanders and Trislanders in various liveries and in Channel Islands locations. The latest painting depicts Isles of Scilly Skybus Islander G-BUBP over a typical scenic view.

Toby has kindly donated some prints to raise funds for BNAPS. The prints are 240mm x 300mm in size and suitable for framing.

If anyone would like a print please contact
bob@bnaps.org.uk



BNAPS Sales Catalogue 2019/2020



Please contact Rita Edgcumbe at BNAPS Sales to if you would like to receive the latest BNAPS Sales catalogue by email: sales@bnaps.org.uk

BNAPS on the Internet - information and back issues of BNAPS News go to www.bnaps.org.uk

Facebook - Look out for latest posts and news about Islanders and Trislanders on the Britten-Norman Aircraft Preservation Society Facebook page

More BNAPS Supporters Needed

If any BNAPS Supporters Club member knows of someone who would be interested in joining please pass on contact details to our BNAPS Membership Secretary, Rita Edgcumbe at sales@bnaps.org.uk

The principal aims of the BNAPS Supporters Club are:
"to assist BNAPS to preserve the history and aircraft of Britten-Norman through member donations and to provide assistance with the day-to-day operations of the charity"

Anyone with an interest in local aviation heritage is welcome.

As a point of clarification, whilst BNAPS has contact with B-N Group from time to time, as a charitable trust BNAPS is an independent organisation.

BNAPS

BNAPS is a Registered Charity, No. 1100735, set up to "preserve the history and aircraft of Britten-Norman with the support of members' subscriptions, sponsorship and donations"

BNAPS registered address is:
7, William Close
FAREHAM,
Hampshire,
PO14 2PQ

Trustees are Peter Graham, Bob Wilson, Guy Palmer and Bob Wealthy.
Bob Wealthy is currently the Trust Chairman.

Forthcoming BNAPS Events

Due to the present emergency situation restrictions there will be no workshop open days or opportunities for group visits until further notice.

If anyone needs more information about BNAPS and what is happening please do not hesitate to get in touch.

How to contact BNAPS:

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