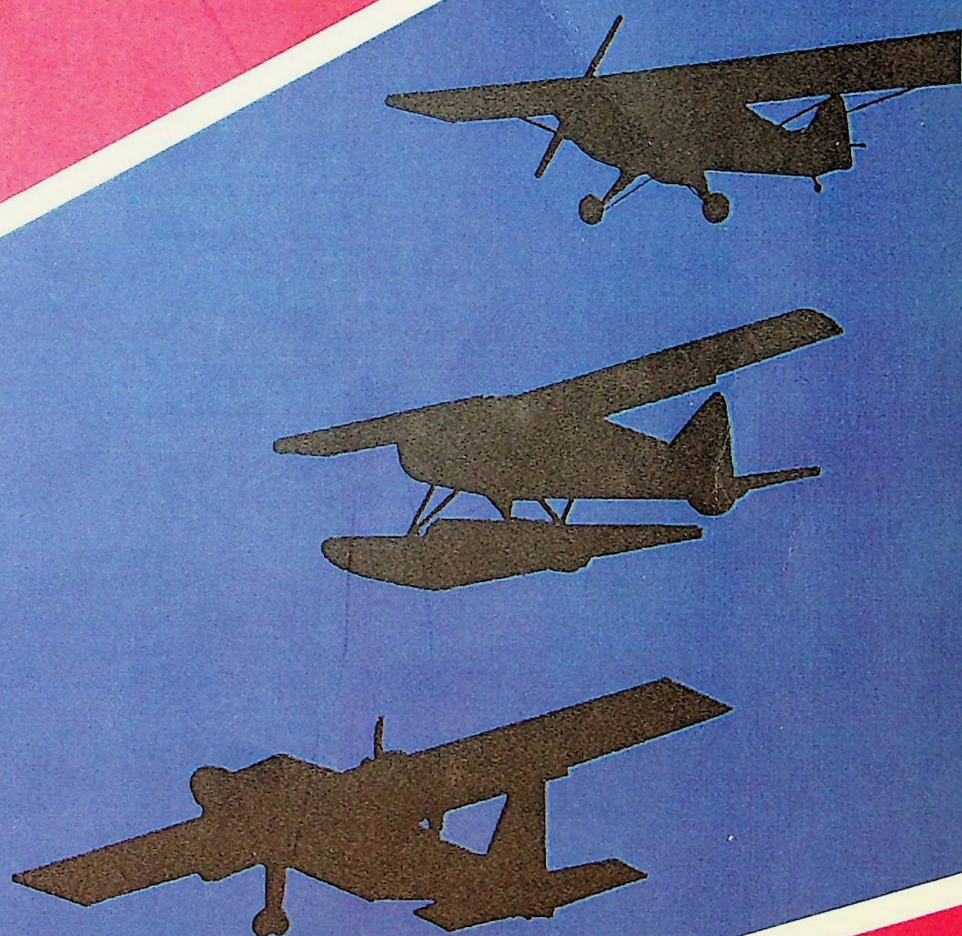


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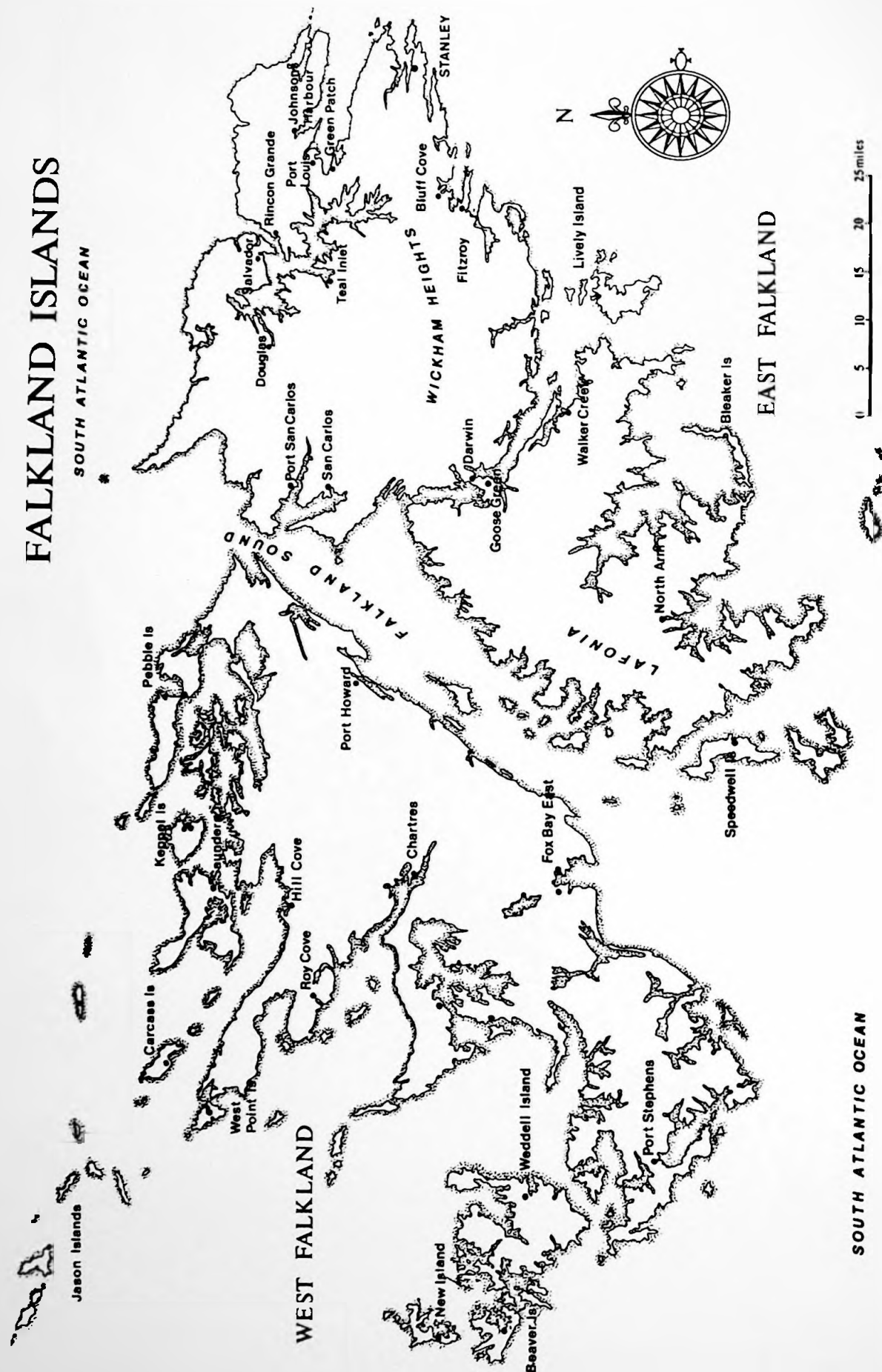


**FIFTY  
YEARS ON**



# FALKLAND ISLANDS

SOUTH ATLANTIC OCEAN



SOUTH ATLANTIC OCEAN

0 5 10 15 20 25 miles

**FALKLAND ISLANDS  
GOVERNMENT  
AIR SERVICE**

**FIFTY YEARS ON**

**BY**

**VERNON STEEN**

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My sincere thanks are due to all the people who furnished information and help to make this booklet possible.

I am particularly indebted to Douglas Rough and the late Sir Miles Clifford for the use of their previously published material, which puts the fifty years of FIGAS into perspective.

## FOREWORD

*by The Honourable Richard Cockwell*

I was very honoured to be asked to write a foreword to this booklet commemorating the 50th anniversary of FIGAS operation. My immediate thoughts were: What can I say that could be of interest to anybody? However it was then I realised I had been flying with FIGAS for over a third of a century.

My first experience of FIGAS was as a new arrival to the Islands when I flew to Fox Bay East which was to be my home for the next thirty four years. I well remember arriving at the Hangar and seeing the two Beaver aircraft standing high above the rather cold and windswept slipway looking rather ungainly on their wheels attached to the floats. The noise of the radial engines being warmed up by Maurice and Dave (the engineers) made conversation almost impossible, so each passenger waited with his or her own thoughts anticipating the journey in front of them. There was no weighing of the passengers, but baggage was weighed carefully. Nobody even mentioned tickets!

After a while the engines were run down and switched off, the engineers donned green chest waders and the passengers and baggage were loaded on to their designated aircraft. The aircraft were then carefully manoeuvred down the kelp strewn slip into the water (an operation which was watched critically by Ian Campbell the pilot who was standing on the float). The engineers - now up to their armpits in the cold sea - removed the wheels and pushed the Beaver into the wind. Finally the pilot climbed in, the engine coughed into life, he opened the throttle and soon we were speeding across the water heading for the West Falkland.

It is difficult to describe, but nobody who experienced it could ever forget the feeling when these hardy aircraft taxied and took off; the wallowing in the swell as the pilot manoeuvred into the wind, the roar of the engine and the bouncing over the choppy sea which seemed to become harder as speed increased followed by a smoother ride when the floats went up on the step and then the feeling of relief and exhilaration when the Beaver was free from the sea and became a flying machine.

Today we board the Islander aircraft with a nonchalance bred from familiarity become irritated if the aircraft is half an hour late taking off, but we forget the days when winds over twenty five knots prohibited flying and one might have to wait for two or three days for a flying day listening each morning to the R/T as weather reports came in. We forget the difficulties of climbing on to the float from a bobbing dinghy or even the problems of getting into the dinghy off a high slippery jetty when the tide was out!

FIGAS today is run under a very different set of rules than they did fifty years ago and even thirty four years ago. The operation is now very polished and efficient which is credit to the expertise of the engineers, pilots and ground staff who make it all appear so easy. There are days when I look back fondly to the era of float planes and the fun that many of us had flying in them, however I also remember the days when it was difficult to even get a small packet of freight carried and mail being dropped in a weighted sand bag once a month! Despite all this I feel privileged to have known those times.

We must always remember the pioneers of aviation in these Islands who made possible the smooth efficient organisation which exists now. Many of us will never forget Ian Campbell who lost his life in tragic circumstances while serving with FIGAS.

I wonder if any of the early pilots ever imagined the Service that they pioneered would, 50 years on, be flying seven days supplying the ever changing needs of Camp and the emerging tourist trade while also carrying out extensive and essential fisheries patrols. One wonders what it will be like in another fifty years.

All I can say is congratulations to everybody who has helped build FIGAS to what it is fifty years from that first emergency flight of the Auster aircraft. A unique service of which all Falkland Islanders should rightly feel proud.

## BORN TO THE FALKLANDS – AN AIR SERVICE

*By Vernon Steen*

A racecourse, a plane and a pilot. The pilot was Captain Vic Spencer; the plane was the Auster, and the flight test was from Stanley Racecourse. This historic first flight took place on 19 December 1948 and from this simple beginning, the air service in the Falkland Islands was born.

The need for an air service had been recognised in 1938 by Governor Sir Herbert Henniker-Heaton. Over the years prior to 1948 much investigation and discussion on the viability of an air service had taken place, involving, among others, the Manager of the Falkland Islands Company Captain David W Roberts, and a representative of De Havilland Mr Ballantyne.

On 22 February 1942, Governor Henniker-Heaton wrote to the Secretary of State:

*"The question of an air service for civil purposes was seriously raised in 1938 but the expenditure to be incurred was considered an insuperable barrier to its inauguration.*

*"However in October 1940 a Mr Ballantyne of the De Havilland Company was in Stanley and advantage was taken of his visit to obtain further information."*

There is an appendix to the dispatch, submitted by Mr Ballantyne entitled, "Analysis of Approximate Costs for Operating One DH "Dragon-Rapide" Seaplane in the Falkland Islands." This gives costings based on an annual utilisation of 450 flying hours. Initial Costs were estimated at £7400 and Operating Costs of £4200 per annum were projected. Mr Ballantyne recommended that:

*"This type of aircraft should prove very suitable for the duties of a medium-load carrying machine. It is operating in many parts of the world, and has been developed in Canada under hard winter conditions, and is used there for passenger traffic, forestry fire patrol, seal spotting, ambulance, and aerial survey."*

It is interesting to note some of Governor Henniker-Heaton's comments on Mr Ballantyne's analysis, which in his opinion was too conservative, and that he estimated the cost of setting up an air service to be much higher, with Initial Costs of £18660 and Operating Costs of £7695. He commented:

*"It is obvious that one plane is of little value and at least two if not three would be necessary. It must also be remembered that Mr Ballantyne's estimate does not include air connection with Montevideo, a distance of 1000 miles and that his operational figures were based on a 350-mile voyage.*

*"As matters are today the shorter trans-oceanic route to the continent to Puerto Gallegos is ruled out owing to the intransigent attitude of the Argentine. So, that no benefit on account of mail services, except local, could be obtained. The last point would be of utmost importance, as a purely local service would cater for a mere all-in population of 426 in West Falkland and 702 in East Falklands."*

In a draft dispatch of late 1942, that was to be read as supplementary to his of 22 February 1942, Governor Henniker-Heaton in his summing up recommended that:

- (a) *the establishment of a local air-service of floatplanes;*
- (b) *its extension to Puerto Gallegos, an essential preliminary being a settlement of the political dispute with the Argentine, and, failing such a settlement*
- (c) *the provision of a flying boat service to Montevideo with an extension to South Georgia.*

The Colonial Secretary Mr. Kenneth Bradley wrote on 12 January 1943 to Governor Henniker-Heaton commenting: "The one safe assumption seems to me to be that air services will be provided." Bradley's minute dealt with "two distinct services." These were an "inter-insular service" and an "overseas service". Of the inter-insular service he wrote:

*"I have had a lot of experience with these machines and they were ideal for our purposes here on pre-war standards. But after the war there will be innumerable service aircraft (and spares) for disposal which can be adapted for civilian purposes. Presumably they will be available to Colonial Governments either very cheaply or even gifts in recognition of the contributions of the Colonies in the war effort. Similarly, we shall have materials available at little or no cost for a hangar and staff houses. For the sake of argument, I reduce the figures for these items of capital cost by 50%. This gives us a total capital expenditure of say £9000. Recurrent costs may as well be left at £7000. Against these recurrent costs, however, can be offset the following: -*

Medical Service. *This could be centralised in Stanley from where a doctor could reach any settlement more quickly than by surface transport from Fox Bay, Stanley or Darwin. SMO agrees that we could reduce our establishment of Medical Officers from (a potential) 4 to 2 and cut out our Fox Bay and Darwin stations altogether. The FIC would still have to pay us their contribution now under discussion. We can put the annual savings at £2000*

Mail subsidy to FIC. *On a normal total of say £6000 at least £500 must be in respect of the inter-insular mail-service and would be withdrawn. Saving £500*

With reference to the Overseas Service he wrote:

*"We have no data about this and can only discuss its possibilities in the most general terms. Even the feasibility of setting up a service from Montevideo to South Georgia via Stanley might not be so improbable as it seems at first sight because the whaling companies might be willing to make generous contributions in order to get quick and regular mails and supplies of fresh food."*

An observation by Kenneth Bradley is probably still relevant today. He wrote:

*"The question might be raised as to whether establishment of a local air-service might not reduce the value of the proposed road as to kill that project altogether. I do not, however, think it has been found generally desirable to abandon road construction intended for development purposes merely because of the establishment of parallel air routes. A road has such wide social potentialities, and the small distances*



*involved in our case do not lessen them. Only for instance, by means of the road can the amenities of the town be brought to the door of the countryman and the drift to town (one of our most fundamental problems) be stemmed*

A note appended to this minute states *"The reply to this (referring to Post War Development of Civil Aviation) can await the Berridge Report which will undoubtedly cover the question of air services."*

I am unable to advise on the content but it is thought that 'The Beveridge Report' was a lengthy document relating to the colonies, dealing with, among other things, the question of air services. As the thinking in the Falkland Islands was *"we must ask ourselves not whether air services should be established, but how"* then it must have been felt the report would have some bearing on the way forward.

On 21 May 1945 Captain David W Roberts, Manager of the Falkland Islands Company Limited wrote to The Colonial Secretary proposing, *"to ship out a DH 84 6-seater during 1945 with the intention of running trial flights between November/February '45/'46."* This appears to pinpoint the shift from envisioning a sea-based service to the reality of a land-based service in 1948. A move that reversed in 1951 to sea-based and finally back to land-based in 1979. Captain Roberts wrote in his letter:

*"It was realised sometime back that an air service between the Islands would be of great benefit to the life of the Colony by providing quicker transit for passengers and mails. It would also simplify the medical problem by quick transit of hospital cases and might lead to a reorganisation of the Camp Medical Service.*

*The matter was under consideration in 1938/9 but the war necessitated it being shelved. In September last (1944) it was taken up again with the De Havilland Company who arranged for the Managing Director to visit Scottish Airways Ltd., which Company maintain regular services between Inverness, Orkney, Shetland, Stornoway and between Glasgow and the Western Isles. The operation of this Company have been continued throughout the war and have proved of great benefit to these Islands and have convinced us that the possibility of providing services in the Colony is well worth investigation."*

Captain Roberts estimated the expenditure of the project at £5000. He requested *"that Government will consider making a grant of £2000 towards it."*

I have been unable to uncover any further correspondence in the Archives that deals with the period up to the arrival of the first Auster during November/December 1948. Because of the war and the subsequent erosion of the Colony's reserves, the implementation of the Air Service had to be postponed due to economics. Governor Clifford was able, in the better economic climate of the post war era, to carry things forward. He had misgivings about the success of a roads programme being the answer to communications and while in London on business in 1948 he arranged the purchase of two Auster land planes. The Austers were purchased specifically to serve as the Colony's air ambulance. Captain Vic Spencer was the first pilot appointed to the new service and Maurice Smith the first engineer.

Never could a service have been more timely inaugurated. On 24 December 1948, word was received from North Arm that a child was seriously ill. Doctor Slessor requested the services of the aircraft to fly the patient to Stanley with all possible haste. Captain Spencer, having only recently arrived in the

Falklands, carried out the flight and had the patient in Stanley Hospital within the hour. This flight was made the subject of a documentary by the BBC World Service.

The first official flight was carried out on 6 March 1949. This carried Mr K Luxton from Stanley to Chartres.

Throughout my search of the records in the Archives, I have been unable to find any reference to the official naming of the service Falkland Islands Government Air Service. Reference to FIGAS began to appear in correspondence during 1950. Captain John Huckle in a recent letter refers to a meeting of Legislative Council at which the name was officially discussed. He writes:

*"I (very mischievously) suggested that it might be "Falkland Islands Air Service Corporation" (this was in the days of 'British Overseas Airways Corporation' – BOAC). One or two members seemed to think this was a good idea, but fortunately, Clifford saw through my ploy, and over a gin together afterwards he said, "That was naughty of you John. If you think I'm going to have my air service called 'FIASCO' then you can think again!"*

Considerable history is steeped in the name FIGAS. When the fifty years of service are celebrated on 19 December 1998, it will be with fond memories of those who pioneered the service and the first flight by a civil registered aircraft in the Falkland Islands.

Fifty years on, the service goes from strength to strength. I take this opportunity to pay tribute to the many people who, over those fifty years, have made a valuable contribution to the Air Service and the community of the Falkland Islands, and wish FIGAS every success for the next Fifty Years.

Vernon Steen  
General Manager  
FIGAS  
14.11.98

## THE BIRTH OF AN AIR SERVICE

*By Sir Miles Clifford*

I arrived on the Falklands on the 26 November 1946, and spent the next few weeks on a detailed study of needs and priorities from which I derived little comfort. In military parlance it had been "a tactical exercise without troops" for while the needs were crying out the means of providing them were almost non-existent; the Colony's reserves had been seriously eroded during the war years and the budgetary outlook was grim. This then, was the first hurdle but paradoxically the least of my worries for I had calculated that a world shortage of oils and fats and wool must - in the short term - produce an early and significant rise in the market for these commodities and that the introduction of a small, sliding-scale export duty on them would get us out of our difficulties. And so, indeed, it proved.

Second in my list of priorities and my most immediate concern was the appalling isolation of our people in the Camp on whose exertions the Islands' economy depended and for whom - so far as I could see - all too little had been done. By the end of February, travelling in the "Lafonia", I had visited most of the farms and had ridden back over the East Falkland to Stanley. This had served only to reinforce my misgivings for, with much experience of road making elsewhere, it was obvious to me that the building and maintenance of motor roads in the Camp was neither practicable nor financially feasible. What to do?



*Sir Miles Clifford*

In March I chartered the little "Fitzroy" for my first trip to the Antarctic. It was a Friday the 13th of the month and we carried a pig and a parson (the Colonial Chaplain bound for South Georgia); I could only hope that these traditional nautical ill-omens would cancel each other out - they didn't, but that is another story. I took with me a packing case full of books and magazines for the boys down South and this was stowed on the bunk above my own. Two days out and we ran into very dirty weather, so bad that we were hove-to for 36 hours and life aboard was highly disagreeable. With "Fitzroy" bucking like an untamed colt, I was virtually marooned in my cabin and perched precariously on the side of the bunk was mulling over some of the problems I had left behind. Suddenly, responding to an especially violent upheaval the book-box took off and missing my head by an inch spilled its contents over the floor. Idly, I picked up a copy of the Readers' Digest and was soon deeply immersed in an account of the Flying Doctor Service in Australia; here, I recognised at once, lay part of the answer to my problem.



When the weather abated we set off on a round of the Bases where I was intrigued by the "windmill" generators which charged the batteries for their W/T sets; for which an average wind speed of 15 knots in the Falklands here, surely, lay the solution to the second leg of the communications problem.

In the summer of 1948 I paid a brief visit to London on official business and while there instructed Major Pearce-Butler to look around for ex-RAF light aircraft which might serve us for a pilot scheme; two "Austers" were quickly found and a young airman, Vic Spencer, enlisted to fly them. They arrived in the Colony not long after my own return and the immediate local reaction was much as I had anticipated. "Another of HE's grandiose ideas" grumbled one critic "and what the devil does he want two for?" I explained that even with such simple machines as these, things could go wrong and if they did, we had another to fall back on. Incidentally, they had cost only £700 apiece!

The first machine was assembled and on the morning it was being flight-tested, I slipped out to watch. It was a fine day, for once, with the sun shining in a clear blue sky and young Vic was having a whale of a time putting it through its paces; after a final climb he came down in a spinning nose-dive, whereat one of the onlookers was heard to exclaim "See! What did I tell you? Bloody fool; break his bloody neck!" Vic landed on the racecourse as sweetly as an Upland Goose.

A few days later our Senior Medical Officer, Stewart Slessor, came to me with a report that a child at North Arm had an acute appendix which, unless dealt with at once, might have very grave consequences; did I think it was possible for the Auster to bring her in? I did; and recalling that there was a fine stretch of "goose green" at this station, got a telephone message through to the Manager asking him to lay out some sheep-skins to indicate the wind direction; I then put the proposition to Spencer; we had, as he knew, no proper maps or navigational aids of any sort - was he willing to have a go? "Of course" he replied, set off immediately and within the hour the little girl was on the operating table and soon safe and sound in bed: it is, I think, no exaggeration that her life had been saved.

From this moment the Colony became air-minded: FIGAS was born and has never looked back. As the wool sheds, and hence the Settlements, were all located near water I realised that floats and not wheels must provide the ultimate answer. Fortuitously, in 1949, I had to go to Canada to get a 'Norseman' built (the last that was ever built) for the possible evacuation of Marguerite Bay which, owing to particularly heavy ice, we had been unable to relieve during the previous Antarctic trooping season; these conditions might, of course, recur and as one of the party had a grumbling appendix and another a suspected ulcer, I could not gamble on getting the ship through. While at Ottawa I heard of a new float-plane, the "Beaver" designed by de Havilland's and they were good enough to fly a prototype down from Toronto for demonstration on the lakes. I was immensely impressed with this machine for its performance might have been tailor-made for our needs and I determined, then and there, that we must have one as soon as they were in production. For the moment, however, the Norseman which had served its purpose down South and could not over-winter there came to the Colony on loan and both Austers had been fitted with floats; the advantage was immediate and our problem solved.

Meanwhile, discussions between Mercer of the Posts and Telegraphs Department and Pearce-Butler had decided the characteristics of a transceiving wireless set to meet local conditions and the Crown



Agents were requested to get a quantity of them manufactured and shipped together with wind-generators and batteries. These sets were then installed at every farm in the Islands and in our aircraft; they were provided with two wave-lengths, one for daily contact, through the Stanley W/T Station, with the SMO at the Hospital and the other for inter-farm gossip with which the welkin rang. And so it was that, in a relatively short time, the isolation barrier was breached and life for our friends in the Camp became more tolerable. In 1953 we took delivery of our first "Beaver" which, as I had anticipated, served us perfectly.

I cannot close this brief account without a tribute to the splendid work of our engineers, Maurice Smith and Dave Jones, who kept these machines in good order under very rigorous conditions at that until I was able to pick up a surplus hangar at home for re-erection by the PWD at the head of the FIDS, who after completing his air training in England returned to take charge of the Communications Department which had been established to co-ordinate the activities of the aircraft and the MV 'Philomel': he also acted as relief Pilot. They were a grand team and between them made an enduring contribution to the welfare of the Colony: wherever they may be I wish them well.

*Floreat FIGAS*

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CONGRATULATIONS TO THE MANAGEMENT  
AND STAFF (PAST & PRESENT) OF FIGAS ON 50  
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# THE HISTORY OF THE FALKLAND ISLANDS GOVERNMENT AIR SERVICE (FIGAS)

*By Douglas A. Rough*

In 1943 the Falkland Islands Company approached the Falkland Islands Government on the issue of an inter-insular air service following the end of the war.

Civil Aviation was eventually introduced to the Falkland Islands in November 1948 with the arrival of two partially dismantled Austers (Mk 5 G-AJCH and Mk 4 G-AJCI) at Stanley on board the Falkland Islands Dependencies Survey (FIDS) ship RRS John Biscoe. The inspiration behind their delivery was Miles Clifford (later Sir Miles) who, on taking up his appointment as Governor of the Islands and Dependencies in November 1946, soon realised that the population living in widely scattered and remote settlements often felt isolated, especially times of serious illness or injury when the only methods of reaching hospital in Stanley were by long and uncomfortable sea or overland journeys. The Islands' small population and therefore limited finances, could not support a paved road system which left little option but to introduce a Falkland Islands Government-backed air ambulance service.

Overcoming inevitable scepticism, Clifford and his supporters arranged the purchase in the United Kingdom of two ex-military Austers and the employment of a pilot, Vic Spencer (later with Britannia Airways, and since retirement, flying vintage aircraft including his own Taylorcraft, predecessor to the Auster, which is based at a small airstrip near his home).

G-AJCH was assembled in a partially completed, roofless hangar on the perimeter of Stanley Racecourse, which was the only reasonably long and moderately flat area close to the town from which a light aircraft could take off and land. During the morning of 19 December 1948, G-AJCH took to the air in weather conditions which were so ideal that Vic Spencer had the opportunity to demonstrate in front of some as-yet-unconvinced onlookers before completing that historic first flight. It took a mere five more days to vindicate the concept of an air-ambulance service.

On Christmas Eve a little girl living at North Arm settlement in southern east Falkland contracted peritonitis and needed urgent hospital treatment. The Islands' Senior Medical Officer requested that the Auster be used to fly her out to Stanley. Vic readily agreed to carry out the mission and from a hastily prepared airstrip the youngster was air-lifted to hospital - and subsequent Happy Christmas for her and her parents. *(See photo and press cuttings).*



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The Times - 29 December 1948

## AIRCRAFT USED AS AMBULANCE

FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT

PORT STANLEY Dec 27

One of two Auster aircraft recently bought by the Falkland Islands Government brought a sick child on Christmas Eve from an outlying east Falkland settlement to Stanley for an appendix operation. The case was of extreme urgency, and it was decided to use the aircraft, which had only recently been assembled, in preference to a motor fishing vessel, which is also kept for ambulance work.

The pilot, Mr Victor Spencer, of Liverpool, took off in poor weather, flew over completely unfamiliar country, and landed and took off from an unprepared field.



*Vic Spencer carries young Sandra Short, clutching her doll for extra comfort, to urgent surgery on Christmas Eve 1948. (Photo: via V H Spencer).*





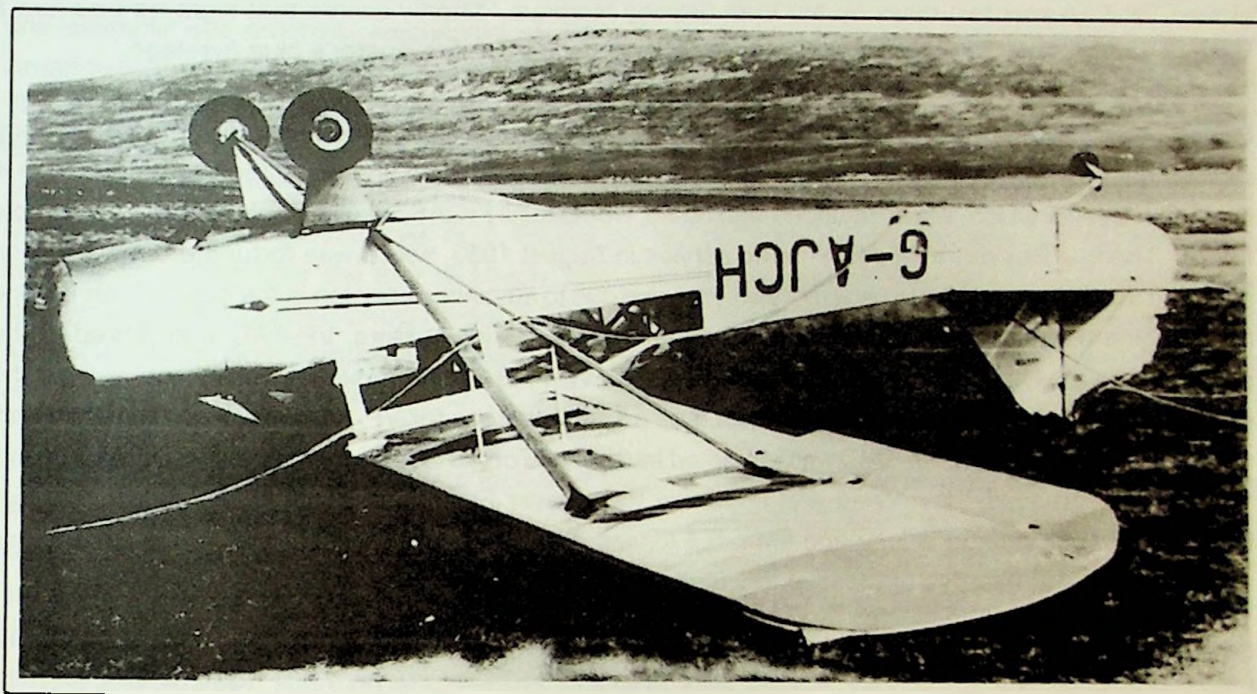
*Auster 4 G-AJCI at Stanley Racecourse landing ground on 27 May 1949 with passengers bound for Chartres, West Falkland. (Photo: V H Spencer)*



*FIGAS's first aircraft Auster 5 VP-FAA (ex G-AJCH and originally a landplane) alongside the jetty at Salvador. (Photo: R Pitaluga).*



G-AJCH was joined on 3 March 1949 by the second Auster and a few days later the two aircraft were re-registered VP-FAA and VP-FAB respectively; however, the Falklands markings were not applied to VP-FAB until nearly the end of the year, and for VP-FAA an even longer period elapsed before it adopted its registration. That was because on 7 April 1949 G-AJCH suffered a landing accident at San Carlos settlement airstrip, overturning when the main wheels sank into the soft surface. Fortunately nobody was injured but the airplane had to be shipped back to Stanley and thence to the United Kingdom for repairs and conversion to a floatplane.



*Auster 5 G-AJCH after overturning when the main wheels sank into soft surface of San Carlos airstrip on 7 April 1949. It was shipped back to Stanley and on to the United Kingdom for repair and conversion to a floatplane. Returned as such to the Islands in 1951. (Photo: V H Spencer).*

### **Value of Floatplanes**

It had been realised before the accident that floatplanes were potentially more useful in the Islands due to the lack of suitable airstrips and the proximity of all the farming communities and their wool sheds to water. Most, if not all, of the settlements had landing stages for inter-island ships, to which floatplanes could be moored to load or unload mail, passengers and a limited amount of freight. Thus, while VP-FAA (G-AJCH) was away for repair, the opportunity was taken by the Falkland Islands Government to convert it to a floatplane. VP-FAB (G-AJCI) remained a landplane throughout its life. By the end of 1949 a total of 28 passengers had been carried of whom eight were private individuals and the remainder Government officers on official business. It was a small but significant start to an enterprise which began primarily as an air ambulance service but was gradually to evolve into the Falkland Islands Government Air Service - FIGAS.

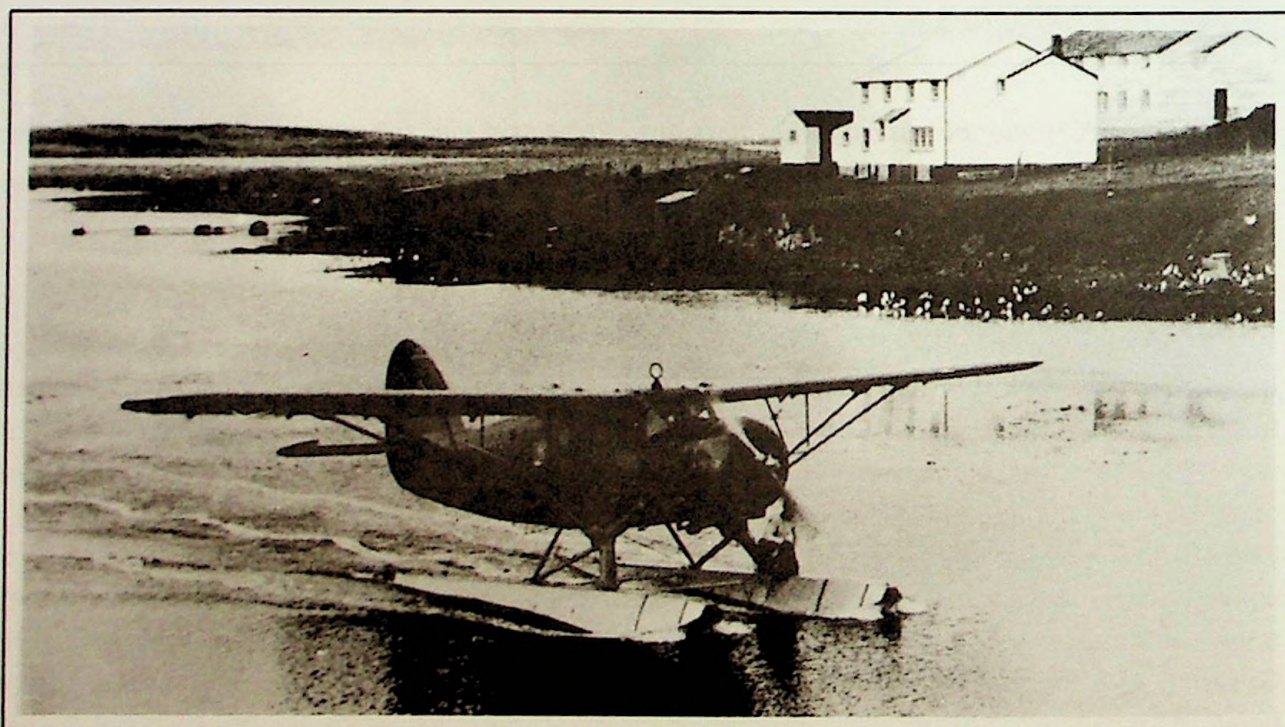
In May 1950 VP-FAB was joined by two former FIDS seaplanes, Auster 5 VP-FAC and Noorduyt Norseman 5 VP-FAD (last of its type to be built by Canadian Car & Foundry). That increased capacity,



and the arrival in mid-1951 of the renovated and converted VP-FAA enabled the fledgling air service to develop and passengers began to be carried on a slightly more regular basis than ad hoc.

The FIGAS order of priorities was, and still is, clearly defined: medical or air ambulance requirements; postal duties; conveyance of Falkland Islands Government officials; and the carriage of passengers and freight. The exact date on which the air service became known as FIGAS has proved impossible to determine, for the acronym started as an idea of Vic Spencer and was gradually adopted more by usage than by official pronouncement. The first confirmed reference to it is on 23 June 1951 when the recently arrived VP-FAA was test-flown by Vic from Stanley Harbour. Shortly before that flight he had had a 'winged penguin' motif with the letters FIGAS below it painted on the Auster's blue fuselage.

Government and FIGAS officials involved with the future of the Air Service knew that before too long replacement aircraft would have to be procured. The type selected was the rugged and reliable D H Canadian Beaver which, when equipped with floats, would fulfill FIGAS requirements for the foreseeable future. The first Beaver, VP-FAE, entered service in August 1953, which was fortunate because soon after that the Norseman had to be withdrawn from use due to advance corrosion in the main undercarriage legs, engine bearers and other metal components. Of the three Austers, VP-FAC was retired at the same time as the Norseman and for the same reason. VP-FAB had remained airworthy until at least the end of October 1951, before being dismantled as a spares source for VP-FAA which soldiered on until 1956. A second Beaver, VP-FAF, was accepted into service on 29 September 1955 and from then until 1979 FIGAS gradually developed and improved the Beaver Floatplane service. No more than two Beavers were on charge at any one time, but losses, disposals, and their subsequent replacements accounted for a further five of these sturdy airplanes being delivered between 1958 and 1979.



*FIGAS Norseman 5 VP-FAD taxiing at Goose Green, East Falkland. This plane remained in service with FIGAS until about August 1953 when advanced metal corrosion caused it to be withdrawn from service. Photograph taken from the vessel 'Fitzroy' and reproduced courtesy of VH Spencer.*

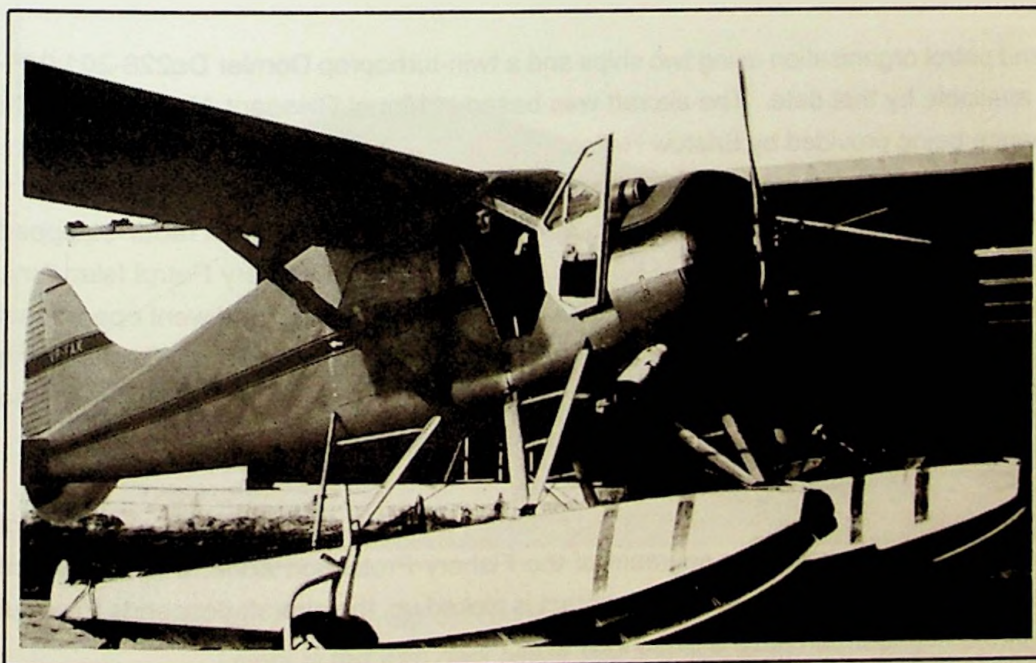


## Switch to Landplanes

In 1977 a FIGAS review committee was formed to consider suitable types of twin-engined landplanes for future operations. The possibility of adding a third Beaver floatplane to the inventory was not discounted, although there was a general, but not unanimous, feeling that the Air Service should gradually evolve into a landplane fleet using new and improved old Auster airstrips. Landplanes were considered to be more economical to operate than seaplanes and easier to maintain as they were less prone to salt water corrosion. The Britten-Norman BN-2 Islander emerged as the most appropriate aircraft and accordingly one example was ordered. Registered VP-FAY, it was flown out from the United Kingdom via South America to the Islands where it arrived at the then recently opened Stanley Airport on 4 October 1979. The Islander was hangared at the Airport but the Beavers remained based at the seaplane hangar on the south shore of Stanley Harbour.

During the year ending December 1979, FIGAS carried 3,870 passengers and load factors continued to improve from then until the end of March 1982. Numerous passengers used the FIGAS flights to connect with the Argentine LADE Fokker F.27 Friendship and F.28 Fellowship services between Stanley Airport and Comodoro Rivadavia. However, that came to an abrupt halt following the Argentine invasion of the Falklands on 2 April 1982.

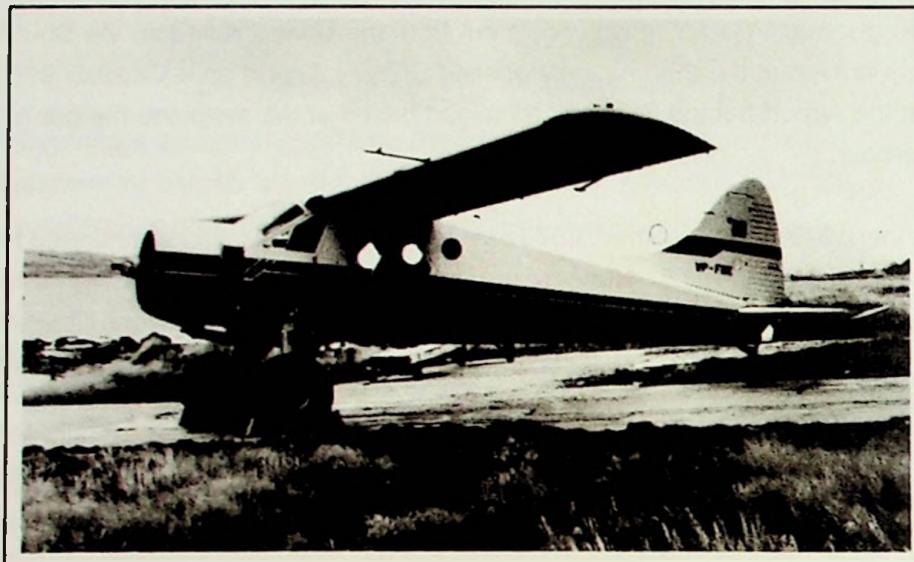
The war and its immediate aftermath took their toll of FIGAS aircraft, equipment and facilities. Initially impressed into Argentine service, VP-FAY's fuselage was severed during an attack on Stanley Airport by No. 800 Squadron Sea Harriers on 1 May and was deemed irreparable. The two Beavers in use at the time of occupation (VP-FAT and VP-FAV) were grounded and immobilised by the Argentinians. VP-FAT was demolished by British bombardments on 11 and 12 June while parked outside the seaplane hangar and FP-FAV, although assessed as repairable after the war, was blown over on to its back in a gale of 28 July that year and completely wrecked. Attempts to operate a captured Argentine Bell (UH-1H helicopter (VP-FBD) were discontinued after a few flights and it was not until January 1983 that a newly acquired second-hand Beaver floatplane, VP-FBE, enabled FIGAS to recommence operations.



*DH Canada  
Beaver VP-FAK  
outside the  
FIGAS  
seaplane  
hangar at  
Stanley.  
(Photo:  
J Wright)*



Two months later the Beaver was joined by two Islanders (VP-FBF and VP-FBG) and all three aircraft remained in service until January 1985 when the Beaver, by then operating as a landplane, was withdrawn from use and shipped to the United Kingdom for storage in Grimsby pending sale abroad. By that time the vast majority of settlements had new or improved landing strips and the subsequent increase in passenger traffic necessitated the purchase of a third Islander (VP-FBD, adopting the allocation vacated by the grounding of the captured 'Huey') which, with its sister aircraft, were based at RAF Stanley, as Stanley Airport had now become.



*FIGAS' last Beaver, VP-FBE, delivered post-conflict in December 1982. Operated initially as a float plane then as a land plane (note tundra tyres for landing on soft surfaces) before being withdrawn from use in January 1985 prior to being taken to the United Kingdom for onward sale in Canada.*

*(Photo: V Steen)*

### **Fishery Patrol**

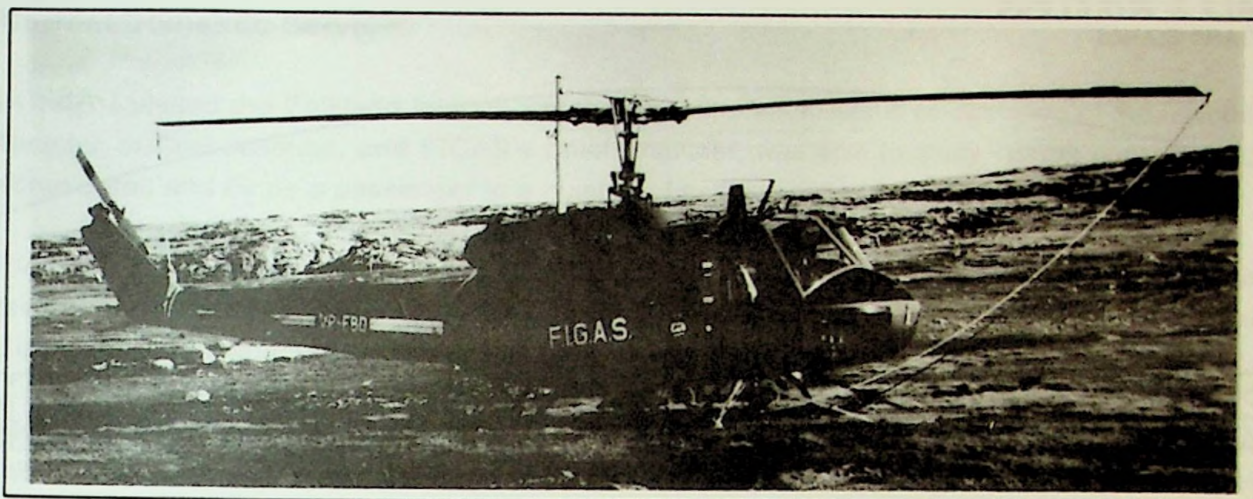
In December 1986, the Islanders' Government in conjunction with the British Government, announced their intention to implement on 1 February 1987 a 150-nautical mile radius (since modified on a number of occasions) licensed fishing conservation zone around the Falklands.

An administration and patrol organisation using two ships and a twin-turboprop Dornier Do228-201 (VP-FBK) aircraft were available by that date. The aircraft was based at Mount Pleasant Airport with flight crews and maintenance being provided by Bristow Helicopters Ltd.

The Dornier 228 remained in service until July 1990 when it was replaced by two Bendix radar-equipped Islander aircraft maintained and operated by FIGAS. The first of the FIGAS Fishery Patrol Islanders, VP-FBN arrived from the United Kingdom via Punta Arenas in Chile on 2 July 1990 and went operational on the 13th, thus allowing the Dornier 228 to depart for the United Kingdom on the 15th. The following day the second patrol Islander, VP-FBO, touched down at Stanley Airport on delivery from the United Kingdom via North and South America.

Both aircraft are in almost constant daytime use between February and May which is the busiest time of the fishing season. On a typical patrol of a segment of the Fishery Protection Zone, a radar search pattern is flown about 400ft and every time a surface contact is picked up, the aircraft descends to about 150ft so that those in the Islander can have a close look at it.





*Bell UH-1H Iroquois VP-FBD after being withdrawn from FIGAS service; it was formerly Argentine Army AE-424 of the Battlon de Aviacion de Combate 601. (Photo: Richard Gardner).*

All licensed fishing trawlers and squid jiggers are required to display their four-letter call signs on either side of each ship. These are checked by one of the aircrew against an up-to-date register and noted also is whether an investigated contact is fishing or merely transiting the area. The aircrew also maintain a close liaison by radio with fishing inspectors aboard the protection vessels. Should any fishing boat be found to be unregistered, and therefore operating illegally, the offending vessel is photographed from the Islander, as is the aircraft's navigation system (displays Lat, Long and Time); thus, if a ship's captain is to be prosecuted all the relevant evidence is available. In the months it has been operating the Fisheries Protection organisation has acquired a reputation, within the fishing fraternity, for vigilance and fairness, which is commendable bearing in mind that upwards of 200 vessels operate around the Islands at the height of the season. The revenue from licensing and fish transhipment is considerable and spent wisely the Falkland Islands should prosper from its new-found wealth.



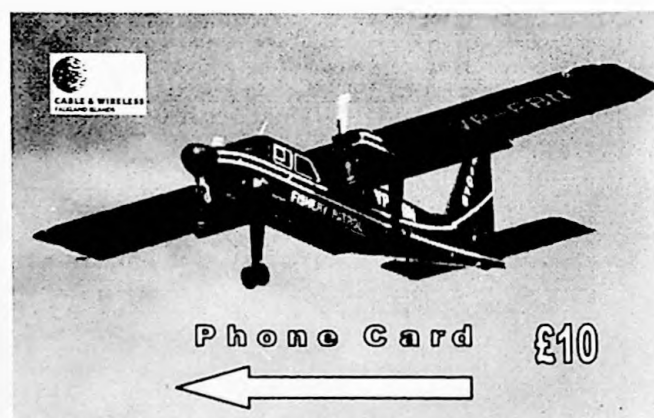
*Islander VP-FBD leaving Salvador on the last leg of its journey to Stanley in April 1987. Livery is red with dark blue cheat line and white trim. (Author's photo).*



**CABLE & WIRELESS**  
FALKLAND ISLANDS

# Cable & Wireless Falkland Islands

takes great pleasure in wishing  
FIGAS a very happy 50th Birthday



Why not collect a full set of these telephone cards  
produced specially to celebrate the occasion.



## Current Domestic Services

In 1987 I visited the Falkland Islands and thanks to the enthusiastic co-operation of the Islands' Director of Civil Aviation, and FIGAS's Chief Engineer, was able to study current operations in some detail and fly as a passenger to a number of settlements.

Even the casual observer could not fail to notice that the Air Service is an essential part of the Islands' infra-structure and it is difficult to imagine how there could have been dissenters to the late Sir Miles Clifford's farsighted proposals back in the 1940's.

FIGAS are now based at Stanley Airport, RAF Stanley ceasing to exist on 30 April 1986 when the military moved their operations to the purpose-built RAF Mount Pleasant, about 28 miles south-west of Stanley. At Stanley the temporary 6100 ft of AM2 aluminium planking which supported Phantom operations, has been removed to reveal the original 4100ft runway; this now has displaced thresholds and trenches cut across the disused sections to discourage the landing of unfriendly troop-carrying aeroplanes!

By April 1987 Stanley Airport was nearly back to its pre-war state with the terminal building and control tower having been completely refurbished and receiving the attention of painters and decorators prior to civilian occupation after a lapse of five years. The FIGAS hangar a few hundred yards away to the east of the terminal building, which had been reduced to a skeleton framework during the war has been re-clad and extended to accommodate three Islanders and associated maintenance equipment.

Since 1987 the terminal building has come into use for passenger embarkation and disembarkation, and Air Traffic Control. Portakabins which served as aircraft documentation and personnel offices have been replaced by an administration block built between the old hangar and a new one constructed to house the Fishery Patrol Islanders. One or two more permanent buildings left behind by the military are still used for storage; Spanish inscriptions on some other useful pieces of hardware reveal their source.

FIGAS aircraft are all piston-engined, which is unfortunate from the point of view of fuel; supplies of relatively cheap turbine fuel are more readily available than the more expensive AVGAS which has to be specially shipped twice a year from Britain in 45 gallon drums. In addition to Stanley Airport, re-fuelling stocks of AVGAS are held at Fox bay East and Saunders Island, with other small caches at Sea Lion Island and Chartres.

Vernon Steen (in 1987 FIGAS' Chief Engineer and now, in 1991, FIGAS' Manager) explained that the expense of purchasing and operating turboprop Islanders would be prohibitive in spite of ready access to the cheaper AVTUR used by the military and Bristow Helicopters. Also, an Islander's engines must be shut down for passenger access and shutting down a turbine means that it cannot be restarted within about 7 minutes; FIGAS turnaround times are nearly half that at most settlements. It is possible to fit free turbine brake which allow the engines to run without driving the propellers, but with the level of current operations on a limited budget they would be expensive luxuries.



*Typical Falklands scene - Passengers disembarking from Islander VP-FBD at Fox bay east after a flight from Stanley and Pebble Island in April 1987. Note drums of av-gas kept at the airstrip to refuel the Islands if necessary. (Authors photo).*

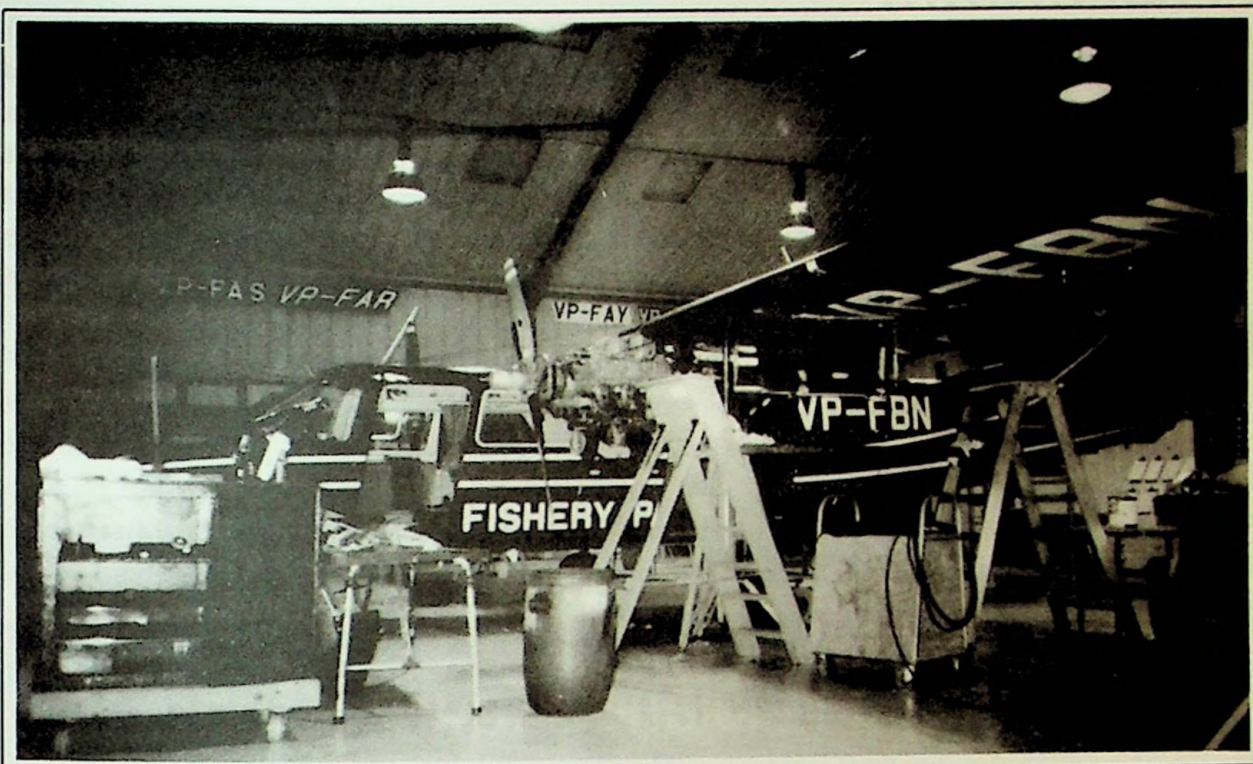
With the exception of Stanley and Mount Pleasant airports and a few potential beach landing sites, the settlements in the 'Camp' have grass airstrips of varying quality, the poorer maintained of which take their toll of undercarriages. In 1987 there were thirty-seven airstrips in regular use with one or two more due to be completed

The Director of Civil Aviation's responsibility, on behalf of the Civil Aviation Department, is to regularly inform all farm owners, managers and airstrip controllers of deficiencies which if rectified would help reduce aircraft maintenance and make easier flying into and out of the strips. He recommends that landing areas should be inspected regularly with ruts, depressions and damaged areas being rolled as soon as they develop and worn grass areas re-seeded or patched with turf together with the application of fertiliser. The minimum recommended runway length and width are 520yd and 30yd with 30yd overruns in all directions. All landing areas are designated by markers and all airstrips have windsocks and fire cover (usually associated with a Land-Rover). Many airstrips have sturdy sheds which serve as terminal buildings and storage room for safety and other equipment.

At every site somebody is designated as the Airstrip Controller and it is his or her responsibility to make sure that the windsock is raised, the runway inspected and the wind speed and direction (using an ingenious cheap and cheerful device) passed by radio to the pilot of an inbound aircraft. The same person helps the pilot with the unloading and loading of passengers, baggage, mail and freight. The whole operation is impressive by its simplicity and effectiveness.

FIGAS engineers can undertake most day-to-day airframe, hydraulics and engine maintenance but engines, components or avionics requiring overhaul have to be sent to Britain, which is both expensive and time-consuming. Two aircraft are normally available for use with the third on scheduled maintenance. However, in the most unfortunate of circumstances, as happened in 1987, FIGAS were unable to provide any service other than for vital flights or emergency air ambulance cover. On 24 June 1987 one of the Islanders, VP-FBG, crashed on take-off from Brookfield Farm near Green Patch settlement on East Falkland. Fortunately nobody was injured but the aircraft was a write-off.



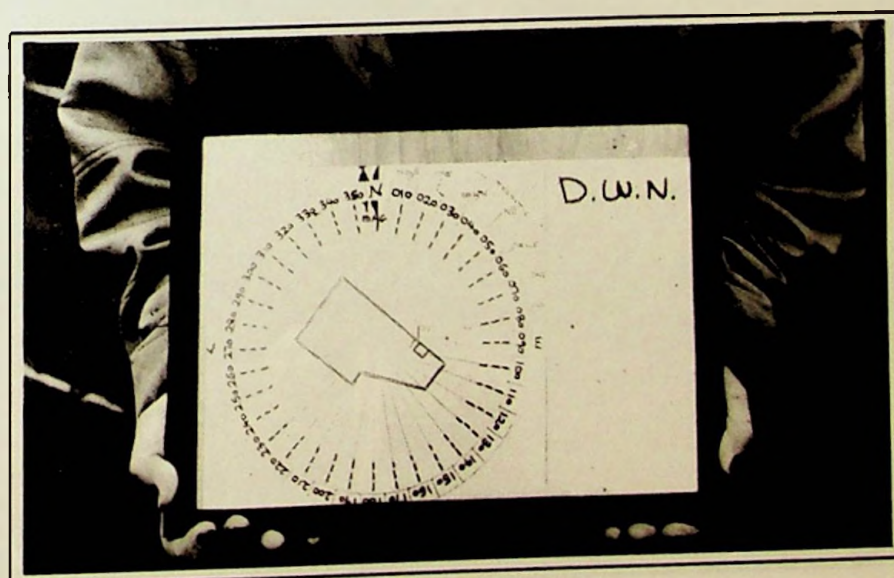


*Fishery Patrol Islander, VP-FBN, under maintenance in Mid-1991 in the well-equipped and heated new hangar. What a contrast to the days of Racecourse Auster operations. Note the registration panels from Falklands aircraft destroyed in the 1982 conflict. (Photo: V Steen)*

At that time another Islander was dismantled on a scheduled 1,000 hour inspection and the remaining aircraft had a few flying hours left before it became due for servicing. In spite of great efforts by their engineers to get the on-overhaul aircraft into service as soon as possible, FIGAS had no option but to suspend normal operations. Fortunately Bristow Sikorsky S-61Ns based at Mount Pleasant Airport were able to provide a twice-weekly service to outlying settlements until an Islander became available. A replacement Islander (VP-FBI) was purchased but in the intervening period the Air Service had to make do with only two aircraft, VP-FBD and VP-FBF.

*Card used to determine wind direction and thus the landing runway.*

*The Airstrip Controller lines it up with the windsock, reads off the magnetic heading and relays that by radio to the pilot of an incoming aircraft. (Author's photo).*



THEN.....



The Falkland Islands Tourist Board  
warmly congratulates  
FIGAS on 50 years  
faithful service to this community.

THE FALKLAND ISLANDS TOURIST BOARD, WEST HILLSIDE, STANLEY. (500)22215  
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VP-FBI was delivered to FIGAS in November 1987 and in May 1989 the arrival of another new-build Islander allowed the long serving VP-FBF to be sold in Canada. The two Fishery Patrol aeroplanes which joined FIGAS in July 1990 can, if required in exceptional circumstances (eg. the situation existing in June 1987) be configured to the passenger/freight role. However, to date, this has not been attempted because the less than ideal surfaces of camp airstrips could well critically disturb some of the more delicate fishery-related cockpit instrumentation which, of necessity, would have to remain in the aircraft.

FIGAS operate on an 'On Demand' basis which makes it more like a sophisticated air taxi service than an airline with air ambulance and postal delivery commitments. Although there have been numerous proposals to establish scheduled services, it has proved easier in theory than in practice. That does not mean to say that Islanders are dispatched without thought all over the Islands to pick up individual passengers and odd items of freight. Evolution has produced as near an ideal method of transport as any air traveller could wish for, but whether an 'On Demand' system can be sustained for ever more is questionable.

FIGAS is of vital importance to the regular routine of everyday life in the Falkland Islands. It is exceptional for a passenger not to make his or her flight on the day requested in spite of the vagaries of the weather and priority ambulance flights.

Although more common in earlier years, letter mail in 1987 was occasionally delivered to remote community by the aircraft, en route to somewhere else, making a slow pass over the settlement while a passenger dropped a weighted hessian bag of mail to the ground through a partially open door. Other important items flown to settlements are medical supplies in specially prepared packages. Where necessary the pilot will land in order not to damage the contents. By 1991 'mail dropping' from a slow and low flying aircraft had ceased.

With the arrival of the British Armed Forces on the Islands, civilian contractors and tourists, FIGAS chartered out aircraft at weekends so that those who wished to see something of the Islands, including famous battle areas, penguins, seal and other wildlife colonies, could have the opportunity to do so. Such flights proved to be popular and weekend flying is now commonplace.

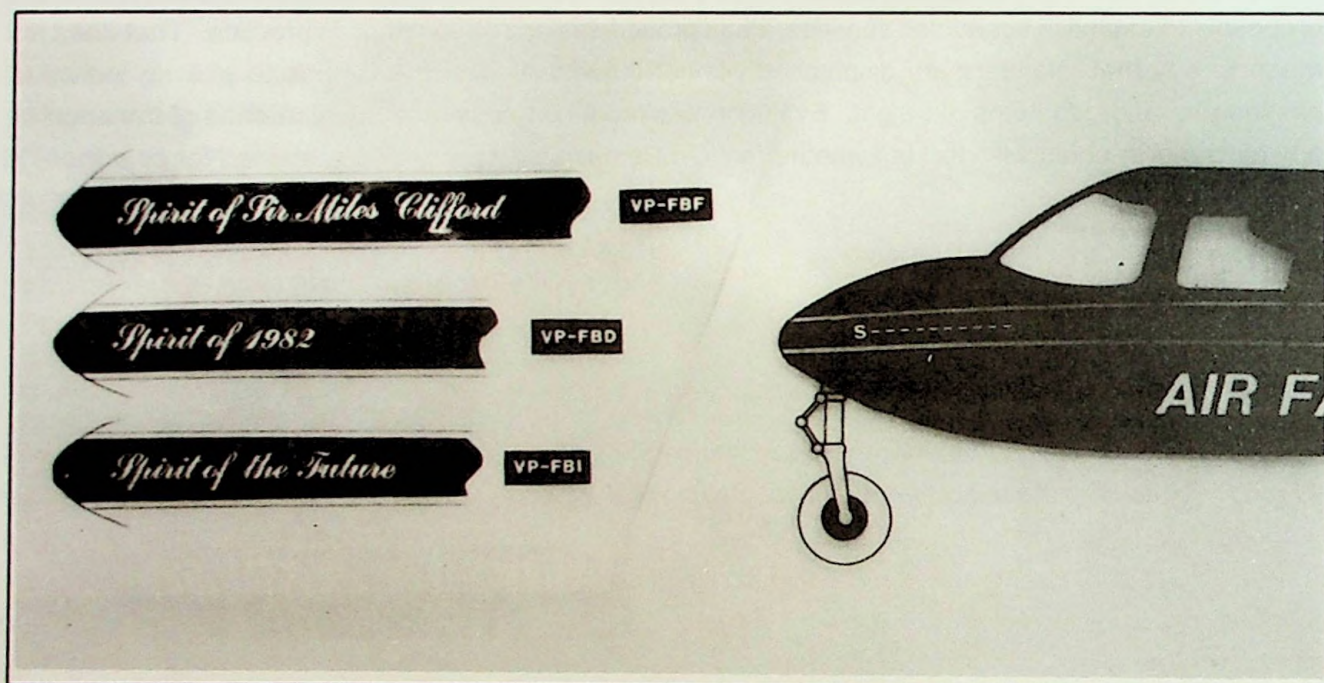
During the years immediately after the 1982 conflict, there was a large British military presence and an influx of tourists and civil contractors involved in such projects as Mount Pleasant Airport. Commensurate with this FIGAS passenger and freight load factors increased accordingly. Although there has been a gradual reduction over the last few years of military and contractors' personnel, tourism is doing well, the situation has now stabilised and it looks as if 6,000 passengers and 63,000 lbs of freight per annum will be about the norm. The former figure equates to each member of the resident population of the Islands, averaging approximately 3 flights per year with FIGAS. As the number and quality of roads on the Islands increases, the need for an air service to some settlements will gradually decrease, especially on East Falkland.

Aside of Fishery Patrol work, statistics indicate that the future of the Air Service seems assured with possible slow expansion in passenger load factors and scope for greater growth in freight carrying.



Whether smaller aircraft than Islanders, especially for light freight and charter work, should also be on the inventory is as debatable now as it was in 1988 when the then FIGAS Manager, Peter Milner, initiated an in-depth review of FIGAS operations, including privatisation.

In 1988, the 40th Anniversary of the formation of FIGAS, privatisation was, in fact, very high on the agenda. The name 'AIR FALKLAND' was proposed from several quarters and indeed detailed drawings of Islanders in the proposed new company's livery were prepared. It was also suggested that each aircraft be named, for example - VP-FBF 'Spirit of Sir Miles Clifford'; VP-FBD 'Spirit of 1982' and VP-FBI 'Spirit of the Future'. See Photo.



*Proposed names for FIGAS aircraft, 1988.*

Peter Milner also sought data on the pros and cons of FIGAS operating a Cessna 206 Stationair (with double cargo doors) for freight and charter work; a Cessna 172 Skyhawk for light charter and private hire and a Cessna 152 Aerobat as the basis of a FIGAS Flying Club which would be open to both local and military membership. Additionally, serious consideration was given to using a single or twin-engined version of the Bell Jet Ranger turbine-powered helicopter either as an integral part of FIGAS or in association with a separate Islands-based operator. Fishery related shore-to-ship; military re-supply and communications; line-inspection; patrol and emergency flights were seen as the basis of the requirement especially as then, and now, the smallest helicopters available on the Islands (following withdrawal in 1987 of the Army Air Corps Gazelle AH.1 light helicopters) were the expensive-to-operate Sea King HAR.3s and similar Sikorsky S.61s of the Royal Air Force and Bristow Helicopters Ltd respectively.

To date none of the ideas have come to fruition - not even the naming of the aircraft, although I am assured that it will be done in the not-too-distant future. Privatisation, even with the Falkland Islands Government as a substantial shareholder, now seems remote.

As mentioned previously, 1988 was the 40th Anniversary of FIGAS and, at the instigation of some of the Islands population (and Robin Pitaluga in particular) early that year, an idea to celebrate the occasion gained momentum. Aside of a joint Civil/Military Air Display, the main proposal was that an Auster and FIGAS' first pilot, Vic Spencer, be brought from the United Kingdom to the Islands by early December to re-enact the first FIGAS flight from the Racecourse on 19 December 1948 and re-run the epic Christmas Eve incident involving Sandra Short (see earlier) which was made famous by the subsequent BBC Radio play based on the event, 'The Good Tidings'. Indeed the text of the play was found in the BBC archives and there was good reason to believe that the BBC Foreign Service would re-broadcast it on 'Calling the Falklands' at the appropriate time in December.

## B B C "RADIO TIMES"

December 18th, 1953

### SERVICE

M (1,151 kc/s)

#### 2.45 'THE GOOD TIDINGS'

A personal account of a desperate flight over the Falkland Islands  
in the early morning of a Christmas Day.

Written and introduced  
by Michael Hardy

Mike, the passenger .....	Michael Hardy
Vic, the pilot .....	Hugh Falkus
Senior Medical Officer .....	Robert Irwin
Camp Doctor .....	Phillip Ray
Met Officer .....	Geoffrey Wincott

Edited and produced  
by Maurice Brown

*The incident attracted the attention of the UK Press and even prompted a BBC 'Radio drama'  
five years later.*

A willing RAF serving, and Auster-owning pilot, Hugh Jones, was traced and good vibrations on co-operation were received from the Royal Air Force. Contact was made with Vic Spencer as well as Sandra Hirtle (nee Short) and Robin Pitaluga came to the United Kingdom to see the Auster (G-AHHH), meet its owner and Vic (whom he had not seen for many years) and to co-ordinate arrangements. By early September, enthusiasm for the event was at a high with sponsorships being sought and obtained.

It was with regret, and entirely due to circumstances outside the control of the organisers, that plans came to nought by the end of September. One would hope that FIGAS' 50th in 1998 will be celebrated in somewhat grander style than its 40th. The only official recognition of the 40th was a special 'first flight date' postmark issued by the enterprising Falklands' postal authorities. 50 years of excellent service to the community must be cause for celebration. Until 1998, the motto still remains, 'Fly FIGAS'!

Acknowledgements - The author is grateful for the co-operation of G Cheek, M Harrison, P Milner, R Pitaluga, G Rough, V H Spencer, J Wright and V Steen in the preparation of this article.

7 Lincoln Gardens  
Twyford  
Berkshire  
RG10 9HU

# FIGAS AIRCRAFT 1948 - 1991

Reg No	Type	C/N	Previous Identity	Remarks
G-AJCH	Auster 5	2054	TW510	On charge 19/12/48 as a landplane, allocated VP-FAA 3/49
G-AJCI	Auster 4	817	MS951	On charge 3/3/49 as a landplane, allocated VP-FAB 3/49
VP-FAA	Auster 5	2054	G-AJCH	Crashed 7/4/49. Repaired and converted to floatplane. Withdrawn from use 6/56, burned Stanley 1957
VP-FAB	Auster 4	817	G-AJCI	Withdrawn from use 30/10/51, burned Stanley 1957
VP-FAC	Auster 5	1813	TW476	On charge 7/5/50, initially on loan from FIDS. Withdrawn from use 8/53 and burned Stanley 1957
VP-FAD	Norseman 5	N29-45	-	On charge 2/6/50, initially on loan from FIDS. Withdrawn from use 8/53 and scuttled Stanley Harbour 1957
VP-FAF	Beaver	500	-	On charge 2/6/53. Withdrawn from use 6/6/67. Sold late 1967 early 1968 as N17597. Officially allocated VP-FAF as VP-FAE was allocated to DH87B Hornet Moth. Beaver c/n 500 remained marked as FP-FAE
VP-FAF	Beaver	828	-	On charge 29/9/55. Capsized and sank 2/58. Saved but scrapped. Officially allocated BP-FAG as VP-FAF had been allocated to Beaver c/n 500 Beaver c/n 828. Remained marked as VP-FAF
VP-FAF	Beaver	1129	-	On charge 19/8/58. Withdrawn from use 5/1/67. Sold late 1967 early 1968 as N17598
VP-FAK	Beaver	1664	-	On charge 13/6/67. Capsized and sank 14/10/76. Saved but scrapped.
VP-FAL	Beaver	1666	-	On charge 13/6/76. Saved but scrapped
VP-FAT	Beaver	1098	C-GUIH	On charge 8/11/76. Demolished by British bombardment 11-12/6/82
VP-FAV	Beaver	1233	C-GUHH	On charge 7/12/76. Damaged by British bombardment 11-12/6/82. Repaired but wrecked in a gale 28/7/82
VP-FAY	BN-2A-27 Islander	872	G-BFNN	On charge 5/10/79. Fuselage severed in Sea Harrier attack 1/5/82. Scrapped. Fuselage remains now in UK
VP-FBD	UH-1H Iroquois	13934	AE-424	On charge 26/8/82. Withdrawn from use 1/9/82. To UK as G-BMLA 26/5/86. Later sold in Australia as VH-UHE
VP-FBE	Beaver	1568	C-GNGN	On charge 20/1/83. Withdrawn from use 1/85. To UK 2/4/85 for sale abroad in Canada
VP-FBF	BN-2B-27 Islander	2125	G-BJEK	On charge 28/3/83. Withdrawn from use and sold abroad in Canada as C-GFBF. Left Stanley (as VP-FBF) on 28/2/90
VP-FBD	BN-2B-26 Islander	2160	G-BKJK	On charge 1/86. Current. The reg'n VP-FBD allocated to UH-1H AE-424 was never officially recognised and therefore allocated out of sequence to Islander c/n 2160
VP-FBI	BN-2B-26 Islander	2188	G-BLNI	Replacement for VP-FBG. On charge 19/11/87. Current
BP-FBM	BN-2B-26 Islander	2200	G-BLNZ	Replacement for VP-FBF. On charge 29/5/89. Current
VP-FBN	BN-2B-26 Islander	2216	G-BRFY	On charge 2/7/90 for Fishing Patrol Duties. Current
VP-FBO	BN-2B-26 Islander	2218	G-BRGA	On charge 16/7/90 for Fishing Patrol duties. Current

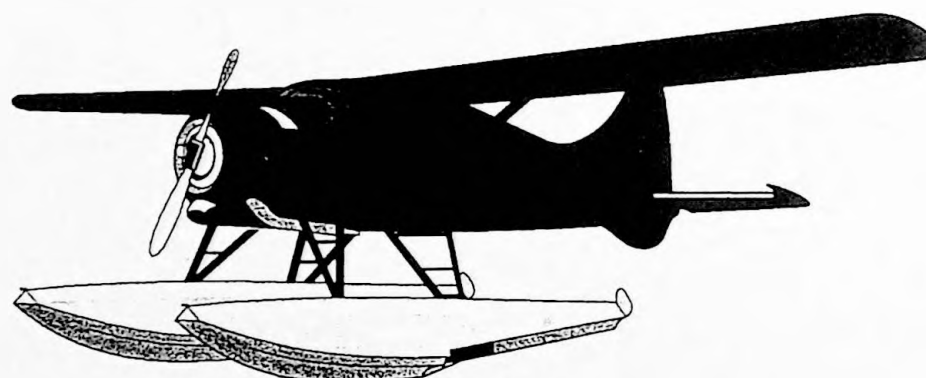




*Congratulations FIGAS  
on your 50th Anniversary*

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*Congratulations FIGAS  
on your 50th Anniversary*



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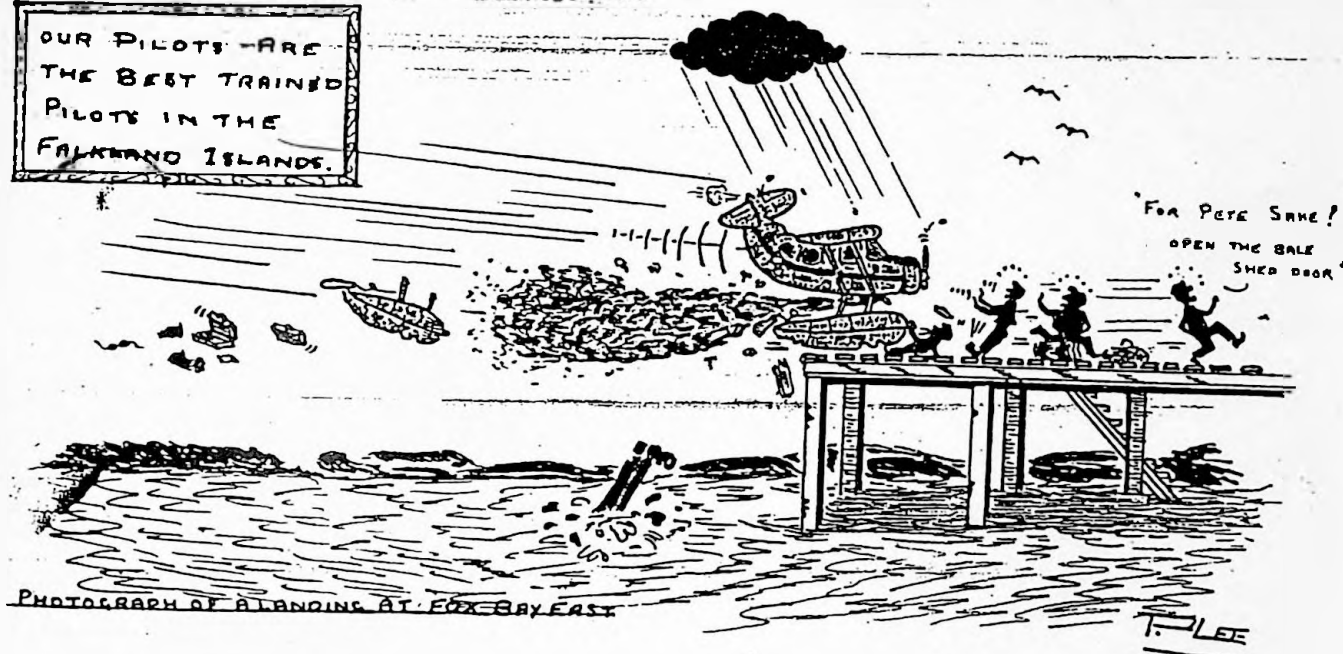


FLY

# F. I. G. A. S.

WE NOW HAVE TWO NEW BEAVERS.  
THESE PLANES HAVE COME ALL THE WAY FROM CANADA.

OUR PILOTS ARE  
THE BEST TRAINED  
PILOTS IN THE  
FALKLAND ISLANDS.

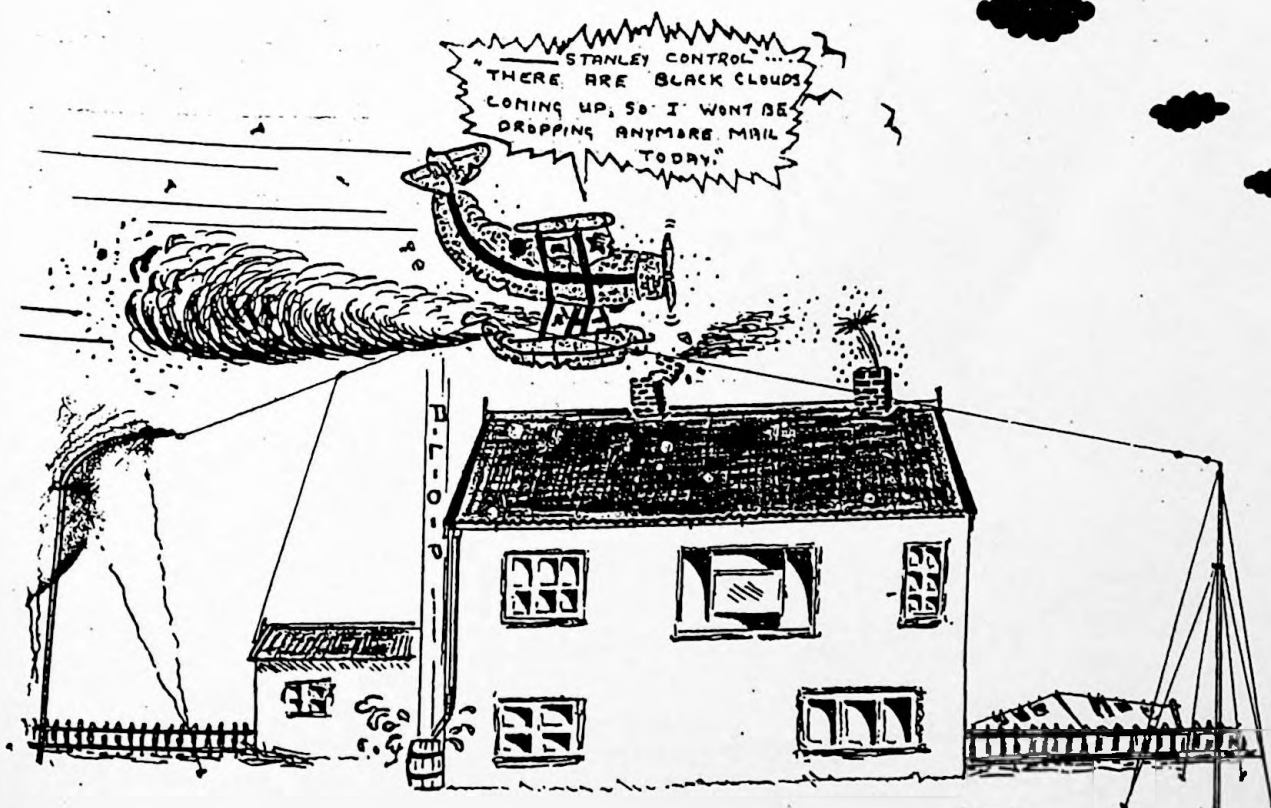


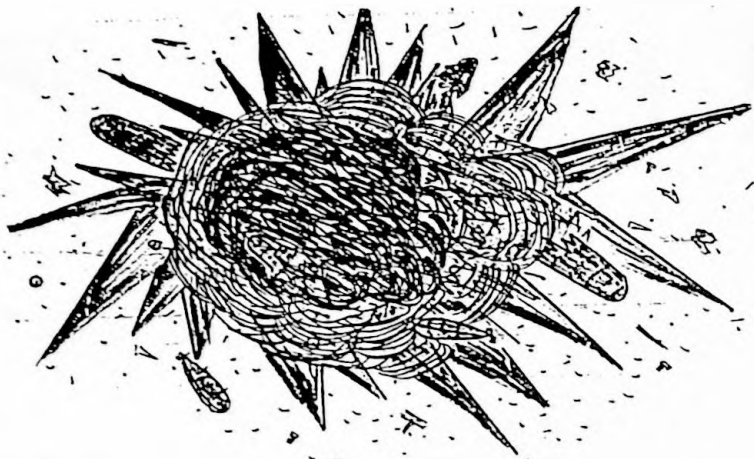
PHOTOGRAPH OF LANDING AT FOX BAY EAST

OFFICE HOURS 9.0-9.5 AM. — 2.0-2.5 PM.

CLOSED ALL DAY WED THUR. FRI. SAT. AND SUN.

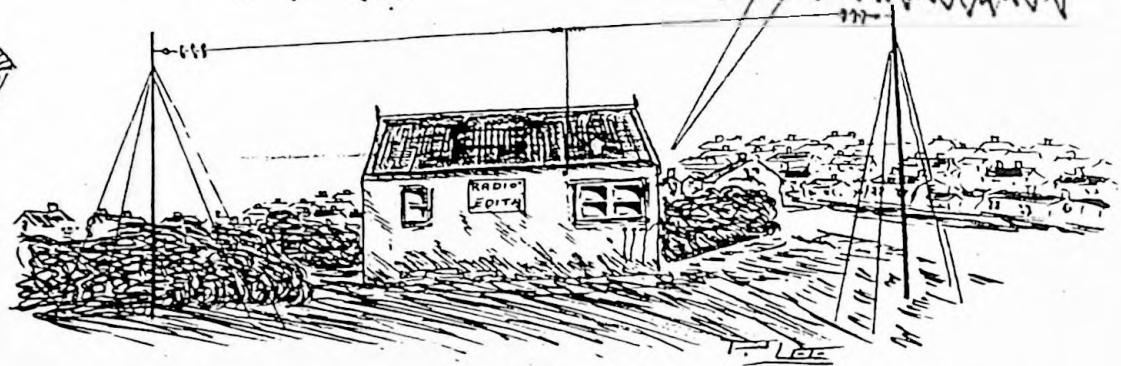
## MAIL DROPPING.



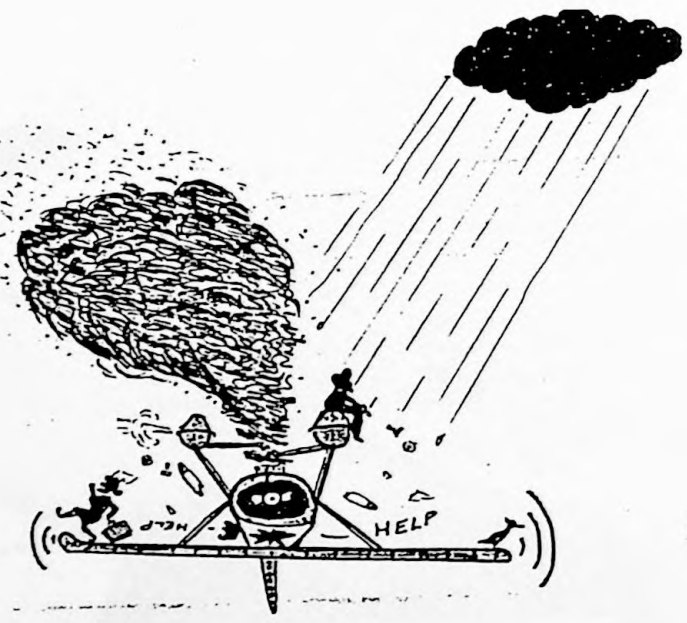


"HALLO FOX BAY.....  
NO MAY,...THERE IS NO  
FLYING TO DAY. THEY.....  
ARE TESTING THE PLANE.....  
W 0-0-0-0-OH.H.H."

HE-HE! NOW  
WE WILL  
HAVE TO GET  
THE PLANE



TESTING 1980



"I THINK HE COULD  
BE IN TROUBLE"

PILOT







With grateful thanks to Cpl. Chris Weissenborne of the RAF Photographic Section at MPA for use of this photograph.



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Stanley, Falkland Islands.**