



may we fly for you?



Templewood Aviation (International) Limited
Tempair International Airlines Limited
Transasian Airlines Limited
Air Transcontinental Limited

by Michael Zoeller

Introduction

Templewood Aviation, Tempair International Airlines, Transasian Airlines, Air Transcontinental . . .

What's the interest in a group of companies which operated a mixed fleet of high-time Boeing 707s - as well as other types - for less than a decade in the late 1970s early 1980s?

Much the same as my interest in Aeroamerica (qv) it all started for me in 1975, in November of that year, at the age of 15, I decided to extend my 'aircraft spotting' circle beyond Gatwick and Heathrow and so headed north to Stansted Airport, Essex to catch up with the action at this remote former war-time airfield. Movements were nonexistent, but the airfield had an area for storage of old airliners and a local maintenance company, Aviation Traders Engineering Limited (ATEL) which supported mainly Boeing 707s, 720, CL44s and Britannias. Foolishly I walked from Bishops Stortford to Stansted Airport and on to ATEL's Hanger 4 on the north west side of the airport. In those days access to hangers and ramps was less restrictive than it is now, so a quick "Excuse me, can I look inside your hanger please" got me into ATEL's facility and allowed me to clamber all over a JT-4A powered Boeing 707-331, a model of 707 which was almost mandatory at Stansted in those days. On that particular day there were examples owned or operated by Aeroamerica, Jet Power, THY, Aeropa and a particularly smart example in the colours of Tempair. I think from that day on my obsession with early model 707s was set, I spent many a day afterwards at Stansted and Luton in search of these gas-guzzlers and ventured to the US on numerous occasions to their natural habitat's, Miami International Airport and the storage facility at Marana, Arizona.

Over the years I have toyed with the idea of writing a brief history Templewood Aviation and it's successors, I was encouraged when I found an old Tempair marketing brochure at an aero-jumble, a few visits to the loft unearthed some old *Flight International* magazines which held a wealth of information and have acted as a good starting point. In the summer of 2008 I decided to put pen to paper. I hope you find this article of interest.

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With thanks to:

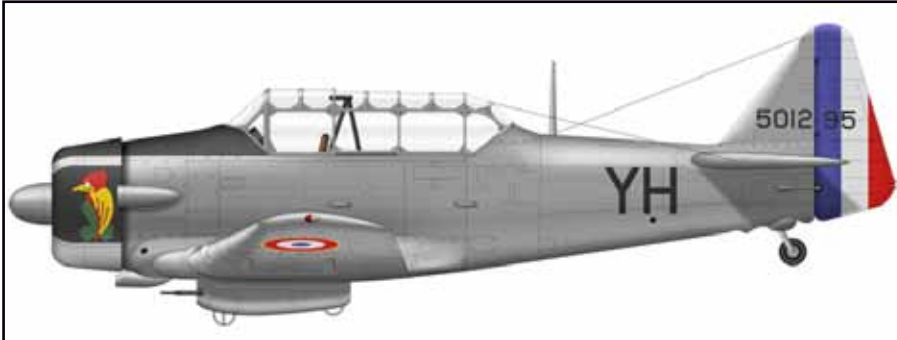
Many thanks to the following people who have provided me with information over the years: Mike Draper, Chris Cotes, Sean Lee, Dave Welch, Maurice Wickstead and especially Paul Carter.

The following magazines, newspapers and publications: *Aviation Letter*, *Flight International* misc. editions 1968-1982, *Aircraft Illustrated*, *Aviation News*, *British Independent Airlines Since 1946* by Tony Merton-Jones, *The Boeing 707, 720 and C-135* by Air-Britain/Tony Pither, *Boeing 720* by John Proctor and *The Boeing 707* by BUCHAir USA Inc.

And thanks to: The FAA at Oklahoma City, www.airliners.net, www.airlinehobby.com, Air-Britain Information Exchange, www.pprune.org and many others.

The start of Templewood Aviation

Templewood Aviation Limited was established on 1st November 1967. Formed as an aircraft brokerage company specialising in the sale and lease of large four-engined transport aircraft, by two aviation consultants, Anthony Griffin and John Snedden at 3 High Street, Windsor, UK. Snedden was based in Geneva, possibly

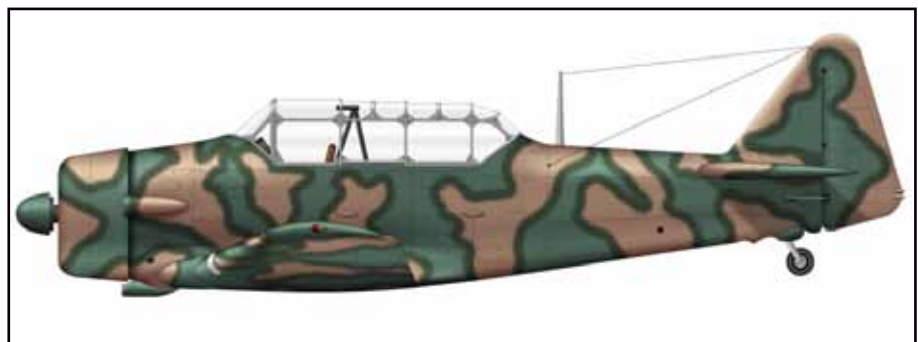


Left: French Air Force Texan, similar to the aircraft acquired by Templewood. Source: © Claveworks Graphics

with Swiss-based associate Textel Sales & Services, and it was from Switzerland where financial deals were set up.

Initially Templewood supplied 12 ex-French Air Force NA T-6G Texans to Austin Okwesa as part of the Biafran war effort. Each aircraft was to cost US\$12,000 with delivery taking place in batches commencing 3rd December 1967 though they did not actually leave France for Lisbon till March 1968. Due to political situation only one of the Texans made it to Biafra, with the majority ending up as scrap at Cascais/Tires, Portugal.

Right: The sole Biafran Air Force T-6G Texan. Source: © Claveworks Graphics



Further activity in Biafra

Early 1968 Austin Okwesa approached Templewood with the idea of acquiring jet fighters for the Biafran Air Force. Discussions initially centred around the F-86 Sabre but this idea was dropped in favour of the Hawker Hunter. The proposed Biafran Hunter contract was a straight forward sale and purchase deal involving four Mk.4 variants procured from the Swedish Air Force. Templewood acted as broker and agreed to supply the four aircraft at the unit price of US\$230,000 the price including delivery to São Tomé and on to Biafra. A full ground servicing and maintenance equipment facility, together with a 15% spares holding was also agreed upon at an additional cost of US\$250,000. Templewood also arranged for the aircraft to be fully crewed. The contract also included the projected sale of a DH.114 Heron 2E, this was for onward 'gifting' to Jack Malloch of Air Trans Africa, Malloch's own Heron having been captured by Federal Nigerian forces.

The Hunter deal was financed by a private Swiss banker who put up US\$200,000 in promissory notes and which were lodged with the African Continental Bank. The financial deal was completed on 11th April 1968 and was dependant on one main factor - if the aircraft failed to leave Sweden the monies advanced would be returned in full. The aircraft did not leave Sweden, not due to any financial irregularities but due to the fact the Swiss money-man unexpectedly died and as a result the affair became public and the deal collapsed.

Templewood urgently sought to find replacements for the no-show Hunters and soon discovered that the Austrian Air Force was starting to retire its fleet of Fouga Magisters. Up to five aircraft (in two shipments) were involved in the Austrian deal with two examples making up the first shipment. By now Templewood was dealing directly with Christopher Mojekwu (Biafran Government representative) who had fired Okwesa. The Magister deal became complex as time progressed... The contract between Templewood and Mojekwu basically involved Biafra paying a total of US\$258,800 for all five aircraft (plus armament) to be taken from Graz

to São Tomé for delivery to Biafra by early July 1968. Permission was granted from the São Tomé authorities to assemble the Magisters and permission given for them to fly out only, i.e. not return. Initially the first two Magisters only go as far as Lisbon, the fuselages were then transported to São Tomé by Aer Turas Bristol Freighter and the wings (plus Templewood Aviation pilot-cum-engineers) by Hank Wharton in a Constellation, the fuselages made it but the Connie was destroyed



Above: Austian Air Force Fouga Magister. Source: Davide Olivati

along with the Magister wings at Bissau. An attempt to get the remaining Magisters out of Austria was made in February 1969 and an Aer Turas Bristol Freighter and DC4 were dispatched to Graz to collect the aircraft for onward shipment to São Tomé, however the Austrian authorities would not grant export licences and the aircraft remained at Graz. It is not clear if payments were made for the first two Magisters.

Templewood and the proposed Biafran national airline

The gathering of dealers at the Pousada Geronimo, São Tomé, on 16th August 1968, was hugely significant. Senior Biafran government negotiators had, despite the most senior Minister suffering acute malaria, openly invited tenders to operate on behalf of the Biafran government. Most of the tenders involved leases by a number of American operators. At least one offer, and probably the first to be received, came from a British operator as part of an overall bid to launch a Biafran national airline once the fighting had stopped.

The plan involved a pair of British Midland Airways Canadair C-4s, G-ALHS and G-ALHY. Retired by BMA, both aircraft were officially sold, on 19th

1968

Templewood

October 1968, to a hitherto unknown British operator, Chartwell Aviation. In fact, Chartwell had no connection with aviation at all; it was simply a Kent-based car retailer who agreed to put up a guaranteed sum of money to cover the purchase price of the two C-4s. The responsibility for operating the two aircraft rested with the broker, Templewood Aviation Ltd, whose Operations Manager had, on 6th September, already applied to the Board of Trade for an export licence covering the two aircraft.

On the strength of an agreed lease/charter arrangement with the Biafrans, Templewood hired four ground engineers (Ashcroft, Russell, Moore and Lameroa) and two complete flight-crews. The latter included Captains Bailey and Norman, plus two First Officers, Don Bullock (who had just left the bankrupt Air Ferry) and the Dutchman, Peiter Dezeeuw who had joined Templewood as part of the frustrated deal to supply the Biafrans with a number of Swedish Hunter jets. Since the Hunter deal had collapsed Dezeeuw had enrolled with the Bedfordshire Air Centre at Cranfield during August 1968 to gain an American CPL rating. The cost of the course was born by Templewood Aviation, although in the event Dezeeuw failed to complete the course.

The agreement between Templewood and the Biafrans involved two separate operations. Firstly, a return Lisbon-Bissau-São Tomé-Uli flight for which the Biafrans would be charged US\$13,000 for each round trip, conditional on a minimum of ten trips. The other option involved the aircraft being permanently positioned to

providing that they completed a minimum of twenty shuttles to Uli.

The first of the C-4 Argonauts to depart the UK should have been G-ALHS, on Sunday 21st October 1968. Its flight plan simply showed a positioning flight to Zurich but its ultimate destination was widely believed to be Lisbon. There was also a suspicion that the plan was to fly to Lisbon via either Prague or Vienna where the aircraft would uplift an undisclosed cargo.

British Midland had officially withdrawn G-ALHS on 16th October 1968 and G-ALHY on 6th November, but in the event neither aircraft ever left East Midlands airport. As the first of the two Argonauts was preparing to depart for the first stage to Zurich, officers of HM Customs, having received an earlier tip-off in Switzerland as to the precise intention of the group involved, successfully convinced the captain to return to the ramp area. The aircraft was detained and the crew questioned. In fact, no charges were brought against either the crew or indeed against Templewood. All that the Customs wanted was a signed declaration that neither of the two aircraft were destined to operate the airlift into Biafra. Templewood was not prepared to give such an undertaking in writing and abandoned any further attempt to fly the aircraft out of the UK. Eventually, both aircraft were scrapped at East Midlands airport during 1970.



Above: G-ALHS with British Midland in the mid 1960s. Source: www.airlines-airliners.de

São Tomé from where they would complete two shuttles into Uli each night at a charge of US\$5,800 per trip

Other activities in 1968

Templewood offered for sale in July 1968 three Boeing 707-120C aircraft (sic), available for immediate delivery seating 153 passengers for a package price of US\$5,400,000, available for inspection in Europe. I can't think what these could be ... possibly IAI TWA 707-131 conversions, or a typo?

Also in July two Britannia 100 series were offered for sale for delivery in November 1968, price was US\$165,000. They were probably Laker Airways aircraft which went to Indonesia via Aero Leasing.

Templewood advertised a Boeing 707-320C available for immediate delivery in early August, the aircraft had just been delivered from the manufacturers. Also offered was a DC9-30 for US\$3.9M. Later in the month four Boeing 727-100s were offered with a December and January 1969 delivery, each aircraft had an average of 10,000 hrs, at the same time a Templewood advert in *Flight International* stated 'We are still looking for a good condition Heron Mk II aircraft for our principles in the USA' - no doubt in connection with the aircraft destined for Rhodesia (above).

Also in August an executive Convair 300 series was offered for only US\$210,000.

On 3rd October two former Royal Australian Air Force low-time Convair 440s were offered for US\$325,000 in *Flight International* magazine. One was



Argonaut aircraft plus full spares holding at an extremely low price" I assume these would have been the former BMA aircraft mentioned above.

Finally in late October Templewood advertised again in *Flight International*, this time offering two Boeing 727s for US\$4.8M each.

Left: Convair 440 N912PS shortly after sale to Philip Sharples in Philadelphia.

Source: www.aussieairliners.org

sold as N733E to Omni Investments who in turn sold it to Comisión Federal de Electricidad in Mexico as XC-DUZ. The other was sold to a Mr Philip Sharples then General Development Air Services as N912PS. The same advert mentions "[We] are also offering two

Templewood Aviation and the Biafran Meteors

Templewood's involvement in Biafra continued in 1969: In the middle of that year Templewood was involved in yet another Biafran procurement, to acquire three Meteor jets to be exported from the UK with a potential export of five being involved. In July 1969 Rolls-Royce was leasing a HS125 as a company hack from Transair a Swiss company, the lease was through Templewood. Templewood was asked as to the market value and sales potential of the Meteor NF.14 G-ASLW which the HS125 was replacing. Not only could Templewood supply an estimated value for the Meteor they could even offer Rolls-Royce a potential buyer. On 4th July Tony Griffin went to the Rolls-Royce facility and by the end of the day the Meteor had been purchased for a total of £5,500 by an associate Tony Osborne. By early July the Meteor had found it's way down to Faro, Portugal



Left: Both the Meteors in the company of a C47 and some Cessnas - probably at Faro. Source: <http://lae.blogg.se/category/biafra.html>

via some rather devious means which are beyond the scope of this article. A second ex-RAF/RAE Meteor was acquired (by Tony Paris of P.B. Export Sales, an acquaintance of Templewood) at the end of August and registered G-AXNE, like G-ASLW she made her way to Faro by rather interesting means. G-ASLW attempted a flight to Bissau from Madeira on 28th September but ran short of fuel and had to ditch in the Atlantic, while G-AXNE which had already made it to Bissau had the full weight of British diplomatic effort thrown at it to stop it ever getting to Biafra, it was still there in January 1972 in poor condition.

This is an shortened version of the whole Meteor saga which can be found in Mike Draper's book 'Shadows'.

Templewood Aviation and Union of Burma Airways

Templewood acted as brokers for an ex-Hughes Air West Boeing 727-193, the aircraft was acquired for Union of Burma Airways on 9th July 1970 and registered as XY-ADR. The contract for this aircraft also included the provision of flight crews, the maintenance of the aircraft, and the conversion training of Burmese pilots.



*Left: XY-ADR Boeing 727-193 seen at Bangkok in September 1974.
Source: R.A Scholefield*

May 26th 1970 was the date for the hearing held at Windsor following the arrest of A J Osborne, A H Griffin, A D Paris and R H G Kingsmill, accused of illegally exporting the two Meteors to Biafra in 1969. All four were remanded on bail. At this time Paul Carter joined the company at the request of Tony Griffin. Carter was appointed to look after the UBA business and a deal with Frontier Airlines in the USA (What deal?) should Griffin go to jail. As it transpired Griffin et al were only given a fine and Carter stayed with Templewood till 'the end' in 1980.

Later in the year Templewood offered a Boeing 707-320C for sale or lease, the aircraft was just two years old and unusually was offered for sale in sterling at £3,420,000.

In September two three-year-old BAC 1-11-400s were offered for dry lease at £17,800 per month each.

1971

Templewood Aviation and Chiang Kai-shek

Towards the end of 1971 Templewood Aviation brokered a Boeing 720B-051B from Northwest Orient for President Chiang Kai-shek. The aircraft was modified with a VIP interior consisting of a 6-seat luxury cabin, a 39-seat staff cabin, bathroom and secret service office by Dee Howard at San Antonio, TX. This was Dee Howard's first executive conversion of a jet airliner. Acquired in September she was delivered Minneapolis St Paul-Taipei/Taiwan on the 5th of December 1971 to the Taiwanese Government as '18351'. Today this aircraft resides at an air force museum in Taiwan.



Above: 18351 Boeing 720-051B of the Taiwanese Air Force - preserved at Kangshan AFB, Taiwan seen November 2005. Source: S.L.Tsai

Interesting times in Indonesia and other business

With the opening of its Hong Kong Office (run by Tony Griffin's first brother-in-law, Freddie Pilditch) Templewood Aviation Limited became known as Templewood Aviation International Limited.

In September Templewood negotiated the lease of a former American Airlines BAC 1-11-401AK (N5032) to Merpati. The aircraft was leased for 3 months while a -400 which MNA had acquired (via Templewood) underwent engineering modifications with American Airlines.

The arrival of the 1-11 in Indonesia coincided with the arrival of Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands, who was on a state visit, naturally he was not happy seeing the 1-11 far preferring it to have been a Fokker

F28! Presumably diplomatic pressure was placed on MNA and the import licence was revoked shortly



Above: A FlightSim rendition of the MNA BAC 1-11 N5032. Source: www

after and before the 1-11 could enter service. The aircraft was returned to the USA and the option on the second aircraft was not taken up. As a consequence Templewood was offering the 1-11's for sale at £860,000 or for dry-lease at £14,000 per month. This situation left MNA in a bit of a dilemma - they wanted Electra's as a second alternative (they were proven in Indonesia) but none were available. However Air Holdings had a fleet of Vikings just coming on line and a deal was later struck with them. The fact that Tony Griffin's father was a former Vanguard Merchantman Flight Manager may have been a deciding factor.

Also in September five Boeing 737-200s were offered for immediate deliver at US\$3,300,000.

In October 1971 Templewood Aviation International Ltd offered for sale a convertible DC-8-61CF for US\$7,650,000, the aircraft was a low-time example which had accumulated only 13,400 hrs. Dry lease was also offered at US\$105,000 p.m.

The formation of Tempair International Airlines Limited and the Merpati contract

Tempair

Tempair International Airlines was formed as a subsidiary of Templewood Aviation International in 1972 (date?) based in Windsor, UK. It was established to provide aircraft, crews, engineering and operating expertise on a contract basis to airlines, particularly in the 'Third World', who were unable to establish their own services. Tempair was set up to be more than just a 'rent-a-plane service', the concept was to establish the local carrier with up-to-date equipment and then to train indigenous staff over a period of five to seven years. At the end of that time Tempair would be able to sell the aircraft to the carrier and leave in the knowledge that the operation, based on British practice, would be safe and self-sufficient. In the early 1970s many of the main stream operators of first generation jets were placing some their aircraft on the market, in particular Pan Am and TWA were offering large numbers of Boeing 707s for sale or lease. The complexity and high resale value of these types (circa US\$1.8M for a JT4A powered 707 at this time) dictated deals involving finance as well as training and initial operations, and it was apparent that both the developing and established airlines often needed a more comprehensive service than that offered by the brokers such as F B Ayer. Tempair was formed in response to this demand and as a result of Templewood's brokerage experience. Initially no aircraft wore Tempair colours, instead Tempair fully integrated itself into the customer's operation assuming all aspects of the customer airlines identity and operations. Although Tempair was a British-registered company, it did not hold a UK Air Operator's Certificate or any UK licence, being licensed instead by the national authorities under which it operated. Emphasis was stressed on the use of British crew licences, which Tempair regarded as the finest in the world. Pilots, flight engineers and maintenance engineers were all required to hold the highest UK licences; these were then validated by the appropriate foreign authorities.

Merpati Nusantara

The Merpati Nusantara Airlines (MNA) operation began in March 1972, initially using one former Air Canada

Vickers Vanguard 952 for nine months. CF-TKE was leased to Templewood from Air Holdings from February 1972. She was delivered on sub-lease (with Air Holdings crew) to MNA as PK-MVW, named 'Wijayakusuma' on 11th March 1972, she returned directly to Air Holdings on 19th December 1972. Two further Vanguards were acquired one was from BEA in the form of G-APEF, acquired by Templewood on 28th April and delivered on lease to MNA as PK-MVJ named 'Tidar' on 17th May. The other Vanguard was



Above: Mrs Santoso, wife of the President of MNA christens PK-MVJ 'Tidar'. Source: via Michael Zoeller

G-BAFK leased from Air Holdings (Sales) Limited to Templewood for onward sub-lease to MNA as PK-MVR named 'Burung Dedali'. MVR departed from Southend, where pre-delivery checks and painting had been carried out by ATEL, for Indonesia on the 23rd November, she returned directly to Air Holdings on 17th March 1974. It is noteworthy that this aircraft initially got as far as Singapore on delivery but was not granted permission to go on to Jakarta due to the fact that Tony Griffin had not transported a 'diplomatic bag' from the Indonesian embassy in London to Jakarta (One hazards a guess as to what was contained within the bag). A five-day stand off took place in Singapore while MNA became more and more desperate. Eventually aircraft was released and Griffin's Indonesian visa revoked for three years. Two further Vanguards were leased one in 1973 the other in 1974 though no more than three were ever in service at one time.

The Vanguards were operated in a 135 seat layout and soon proved to be ideal for Merpati's routes. From Djakarta, the Vanguards flew passenger schedules to Medan and to Biak where they connected with the airline's West Irian services. The Vanguards were also used for the carriage of foreign tourists to Bali and other popular resorts, and Tempair's contract to operate the Vanguards was extended to 1978. (Tempair ceased

before 1978 so assume Templewood provided crew etc?). In 1976 Tempair stated that it hoped that it would by 1978 be operating 707-320Cs for MNA, of course this was not to be, but MNA did lease 2 707-100B series from Transasian in 1978 and 1979.



Above: Pages from MNA's 10th anniversary booklet.
Source: via Michael Zoeller

ceased operations before delivery could take place.

Two convertible DC-8-55Fs were offered for sale by Templewood at US\$5,600,000 in *Flight International* magazine in February. Later on in the year in May a low-time Boeing 727-100QC was offered at £2,240,000.

Orientair

Early 1972 saw Templewood acting as a broker for another former American Airlines BAC 1-11-401AK (G-AZMI, registered on 20th January), this time for a new British charter start-up Orientair. The first of two aircraft was due for delivery on 15th March while the second was due on 17th May. Former Channel Airways director, Peter Lockwood, formed the airline to perform charters for German tour operator GUT from Berlin to European holiday destinations. Sadly there were problems in obtaining a full operator's licence, and although the first aircraft was painted in full Orientair colours the airline folded before operations began. Orientair's 3 year GUT contract was sold to Dan-Air.



Above: G-AZMI at Hurn minus Orientair titles and logo. Source: www.bac1-11jet.co.uk

Other Transactions

Early in 1972 Templewood handled the purchase of a former SATA Switzerland Viscount 800 for Air International, a small UK based carrier who owned one Viscount 700 and had plans for a Boeing 707-321 or 720B. The Viscount 800 underwent checks with Aer Lingus at Dublin prior to delivery in March... however the airline

By 1973 Templewood was expanding, along with the headquarters in Windsor there were also associate offices in Hong Kong and Rio de Janeiro

Bangladesh Biman

Bangladesh Biman was formed in January 1972. In June 1973 Bangladesh Biman leased via Templewood Aviation a Boeing 707-331 from Air Manila International. Registered S2-ABM she was delivered on the 17th June in full Biman colours with the first service commencing on the 19th June. The lease was relatively short with S2-ABM returning to Air Manila on 12th December 1973. The aircraft's principal route was a scheduled service between Dacca and Heathrow via Bahrain. A Bangkok service was added in August. While Templewood supplied the aircraft, Tempair supplied all the required personnel to support its operation within thirty days of the original contract being signed, Tempair also commenced a massive training programme on behalf of Bangladesh Biman. The intention for Biman was to replace S2-ABM with former the Malaysia Southern Cross 707-321(9M-AQD) in December, however the deal did not take place. So S2-ABM was replaced in late 1973 by a Boeing 707-351C registered S2-ABN was acquired from Northwest Orient via Templewood (a deal that was somewhat fraught for Templewood as the Dollar/Sterling exchange rate did not work in their favour), scheduled for delivery on 1st December she was actually delivered via Heathrow on 29/30th December.

Some reports say the 2nd 707 was acquired by Templewood and sold to Biman?

Merpati Nusantara

In May Templewood was appointed as general sales agent by MNA for UK and Eire, Templewood formed a new general sales agency division under the title of Tempair General Sales to undertake this new operation.



Left: Templewood press advert in Flight International magazine, October 1973. Source: Michael Zoeller*

Merpati received a further Vanguard in 1973. Templewood leased G-AZNG, a former Air Canada aircraft from Air Holdings, she was sub-leased to MNA as PK-MVC and departed Southend for Indonesia on 29th August 1973, replacing PK-MVJ which was broken up in July. She returned to Templewood and subsequently Air Holdings on 15th April 1974.

The long term wet-lease for the purpose of establishing new routes was bringing in most business for Tempair. A typical contract involved the supply of an aircraft in the carrier's colours, complete with flight crew, cabin crew, and operations and maintenance staff, what is now referred to as ACMI. During the lease the carrier's own staff were trained up and the contract progressively "dried out". Ultimately the carrier might buy the aircraft concerned, Merpati was an example of this kind of operation, in which the Vanguards were latterly operated very successfully with Indonesian flight and ground crews as the training programme was concluded. The 135-seat Indonesian-registered Vanguards averaged 2 hr sectors (the longest being 5.5 hrs) and achieved an annual utilisation of about 2,000hr (monthly 150-180hrs).

FAT!

Also in August 1973

Templewood acquired from Iberia two SE.210-6R Caravelles, EC-ARJ and EC-ARL, both were acquired on the 7th of the month. They were quickly sold to Commander Aircraft Sales of Ireland (Desmond McCarthy) and were allocated

Irish registrations (EI-AVY and EI-ATR) for political reasons to facilitate their delivery from Madrid to Taipei (via Rome-Ciampino and Bahrain). They were both sold immediately on the same day to Far Eastern Air Transport of Taiwan as B-2501 and B-2503 respectively.



Above: Caravelle EI-ATR landing at Ciampino in August 1973. Source: © Alberto Storti via Peter J Hornfeck

Yakerty Yak

Templewood ordered a Yak-40 in August 1973 for delivery in October 1974, and placed an option on a further two aircraft. The sale was reported at the Cranfield airshow, it is unclear what the purpose of the proposed acquisition was, however the orders were later cancelled as a C of A was not issued for the type and so no Yak-40 appeared on the UK register.

British Airways 1-11s

On 7th September British Airways took delivery of the former Orientair BAC 1-11-401AK in a transaction conducted through Templewood Aviation, the aircraft was registered G-BBME. A second BAC 1-11-401AK was also supplied to BA via Templewood at the end of November, it was registered G-BBMF and came from Bahamasair, it was originally N5032 which Templewood had negotiated for MNA in 1971.

Busy Times

In 1973, before the days of high fuel costs and greenhouse emission concerns, Templewood was claiming in press ads that it had six executives constantly travelling world-wide!

*Press advert in *Flight International* October 1973 shows the following aircraft as being part of the Templewood club:

Trans Brazil 1-11

FAT Caravelle

Inex-Adria DC9 - I have no information on this BMA Herald

Templewood brokered a deal between BMA and Trans Brazil which involved selling BMA's BAC 1-11s to Trans Brazil and BMA taking their Herald fleet in part exchange. At the time, with rising fuel costs, BMA was finding the 1-11 costly for their domestic operations.

More Merpati

A further Vanguard was leased to MNA at the beginning of 1974. G-APEN was acquired by Templewood from British Airways on 18th December 1973, by 31st December she was in full MNA colours, registered PK-MVE and named 'Wijayakusuma'. She departed Heathrow on 4th January to Indonesia.

Somali Airlines

The company's next major contract was won in the spring of 1974 when, in competition with Alitalia, Tempair was awarded a eighteen month contract by Somali Airlines for the operation of a Boeing 720B on scheduled services from Mogadishu to Abu Dhabi, Cairo, Hargeisa, Jeddah, Nairobi, Rome and Sana'a. Following two years of discussion with the Somali's, the services began in April 1974 using an Invicta Boeing 720-023B registered G-BCBB, which was leased by Templewood for sub-lease to Somali Airlines. The Boeing arrived in the UK in early March from Beirut where she had been stored following an unsuccessful lease by American Airlines to MEA, she departed Luton on 12th April in full Somali Airlines colours which, it must be said, were very similar to those of Biman and Tempair's house colours! Tempair impressed its client sufficiently for the contract to be extended to a total period of two years. During this time, Tempair was also responsible for the training of a number of flight crew and cabin staff for Somali Airlines. Three crews were involved in the operation, two at Somali Airlines' Mogadishu base and the

days of servicing every six weeks; provision for this was built into the timetable.

Boeing 707-321s arrive

At the end of 1974, Tempair acquired two former THY Boeing 707-321s from Greyfin (Nassau) Ltd through one of its associated companies in Hong Kong. The first of these aircraft, 9G-ACB arrived at Stansted from Bournemouth Hurn on delivery to Tempair on October 21st 1974. The second arrived from Hurn on 6th



Above: 9G-ACD in the initial colour scheme worn by this aircraft, which was basically an over paint of the former THY colours. Wearing 'Geminair - Operated by Tempair' titles. Source: Internet

November and initially wore the registration G-BCRS before later becoming 9G-ACD. Both aircraft were to be leased to a new Thai operator, Bira Air and were to have been registered in Thailand, however the Thai Aviation Authorities did not grant the proposed airline the necessary certificates and the airline never commenced operations.



Left: G-BCBB outside Monarch Engineering at Luton. Source: Internet

other in London. Crews were rotated fortnightly and the aircraft returned to Luton to Airline Engineering for two

1974

Templewood



Above: 9G-ACB seen at Jeddah in 1974 operating Hadj flights for Geminair/Nigeria Airways. Source: John Wegg

In November 9G-ACB emerged from ATEL's hanger at Stansted in a new blue and gold colour-scheme reminiscent to that of Singapore Airlines, she wore Geminair titles with small 'Operated by Tempair' titles and was named 'Romulus'. G-BCRS now registered 9G-ACD, was rolled out of Airline Engineering's hanger at Luton (she was ferried from Stansted to Luton shortly after arrival from Hurn) at the beginning of December with a dark blue tail and a dark blue cheatline over the old THY red cheatline and was (naturally)

flights. Tempair's two Boeings returned to Stansted to await further work in early 1975. 9G-ACD must have been painted into full Tempair colours in early 1975.

1974 was a difficult year for Tempair and the world's airlines alike. In the UK alone we saw the spectacular collapse of Court Line as well as the closure of Donaldson International, it was a year in which "everybody lost faith in us except ourselves," according to Jim Davis, Tempair's Deputy MD. "We were a young company struggling for survival and at one stage we needed (and got) support from our clients." Traditional brokers did not make big money, perhaps making as little as a 1.5% cut of any deal; those adding for example training, maintenance and ticketing could be making as much as a 4% cut, though these figures are really 'guesstimates' as few brokers revealed their exact cut publicly. So in the case of Templewood they were perhaps better positioned than some.



Left: A rare sight, Tempair 707-321 in full colours.

Below: Rarer still, both Tempair 707s in ATEL hanger at Stansted.

Source: Templewood Aviation

named 'Remus'. Tempair, although operating to UK standards, paid Geminair for the use of their Ghana AOC operating on a sub contact basis through Geminair.

Both aircraft departed the UK in early December for Nigeria where they operated a number of Hadj services to Jeddah for Nigeria Airways. After successfully completing these



Continued Boeing 707-321 operations

9G-ACB returned from its Hadj flights in January. It is unclear as to what the aircraft did for the next 9 months, it may have been utilised by Geminair, what is known for sure is that she was withdrawn from use at Stansted from the end of May and by September was minus number 2 engine.

9G-ACD saw more activity after its return from Nigeria. The lease to Geminair continued through to September, but throughout the year she was sub-leased to Saudia twice and to Sterling Airways in July. Originally, 9G-ACD was contracted to fly some of Sterling's services for just three days while the Danish charter airline's own Caravelles were undergoing modification work. However, Tempair's operations were so successful that Sterling kept the aircraft for a whole month. The economic advantage of the non-fan -321 showed up on the shorter (less than 4hr) sectors, most especially Rhodes-Athens, on which it replaced two Caravelles. In September, the 707 left for Nigeria to undertake another series of Hadj pilgrim flights to Mecca, and may have seen service with East African Airways in September. The aircraft flew over 120 (240 sectors) trips between Kano in northern Nigeria and Jeddah during two three-week periods (between November 1975 and early 1976) carrying more than 10,000 Muslim pilgrims. Tempair was the only contract carrier to have a director on the spot (Kano), a move which paid off after one of the aircraft was damaged by servicing vehicles on no less than three occasions. Despite the damage Tempair succeeded in completing the contract which was worth US\$1.5 to the company.

Further large contracts

In September Tempair won a four-horse competition with QANTAS, TAA and Ansett for the right to operate PNG's international air services. Transport minister for the newly independent nation Mr Iambakey Okuk confirmed that Tempair would commence Boeing 720B services in the colours of Air Niugini on 15th February 1976, linking Port Moresby with Australia, Hong Kong, Singapore, the Philippines and Japan. As early as October Boeing 720-023B G-BCBA was leased by Templewood from Invicta International/European Ferries, though she initially sat at Luton unused. The Air Niugini deal was worth nearly £1.5M p.a. Tempair

hoped to earn about £4M in 1975 by providing full wet lease (ACMI) services a number of carriers including MNA, Somali Airlines, Nigeria Airways, Saudia and East African Airways.

On December 16th, Tempair was awarded a contract by the Mozambique national airline of DETA. This contract was for the operation of a five times weekly scheduled service between Maputo (formerly Lourenço Marques), Beira and Luanda. Boeing 707 9G-ACD was painted in basic DETA colours at ATEL Stansted over Christmas and the new year, and on Saturday January 17th 1976 this aircraft positioned to Maputo Mozambique via Lisbon.



Above: 9G-ACD fuels up prior to departure to Mozambique at Stansted. Source: Jose Vilhena

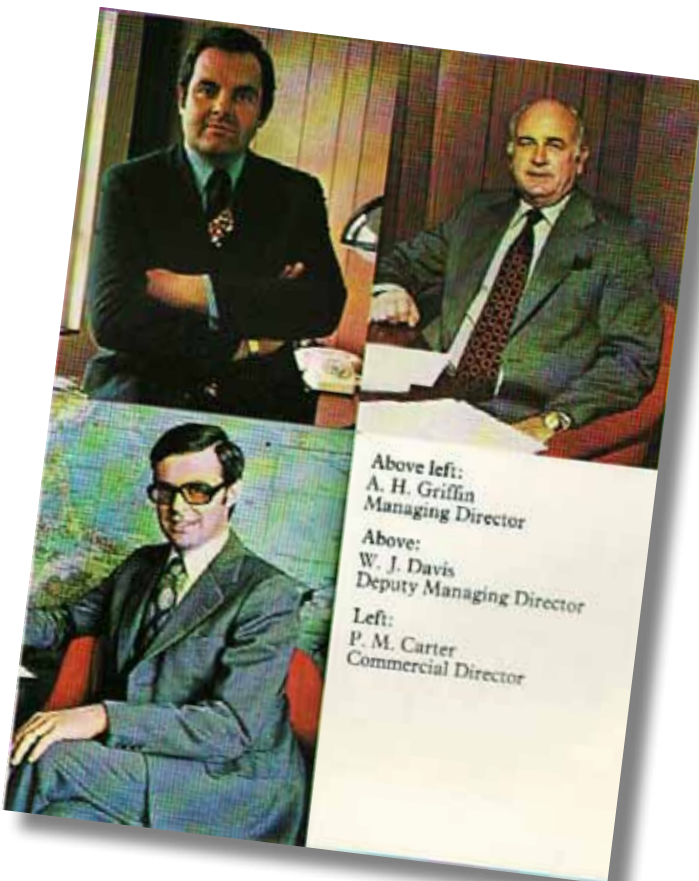
With the addition of the Air Niugini and DETA contracts, plus estimated projections for 1976 Tempair's airline business was expected to double the following year to earn £10M+ (£60M+ in today's terms) a year. Tempair was employing about 160 staff at this time, including 15 flight crews and 40 cabin staff. Salaries were £12,000 p.a. for captains, £8,250 for first officers and £8,000 for flight engineers, all with UK licences. Contracts typically provided for a fortnightly rotation of crews between home and overseas bases.

In December Templewood also was involved in talks to negotiate a lease of one of MEA's Boeing 707-320Cs during that carrier's troubles due to conflict within the region. I wonder if this aircraft may have been ear-marked for the DETA contract, as some anecdotal evidence suggested that the DETA contract was for a 707-320C not a 707-321....? At the end of the year it was announced that Tempair would be 'for the first time' be using 707-320Cs on DETA's thrice-weekly Lourenço Marques-Beira-Accra-Lisbon service in a deal

worth US\$4.5M in the first year. The contract included full wet-lease and the training of DETA crews. Aircraft were to be fitted in a 167 seat all-economy configuration. As far as I know the only 707-320C operated by DETA were leased some years later from BMA.

In 1975 avgas was still relatively inexpensive and aircraft noise foot-prints were not a major concern particularly in the 'Third World', Tempair's main sphere of operation. Boeing 707-321s were still able to operate at a reasonable profit. When comparing the -321 with the -320C, fan drag in the climb made for little apparent difference over the first two hours of the flight, but thereafter the -320C began to draw ahead. Tony Griffin expected to acquire two 707-320Cs and keep at least one -321 for some years to come, with Boeing's wing-life improvement programme an operator carrying out the mod to an aircraft with 48,000 hours or less could extend the aircraft's life to 78,000 hours.

Transasian Airlines Limited was incorporated on 20th January 1975 and Tempair International Airlines Limited was founded on 30th April 1975 apparently, I am not clear as to how this ties in with Tempair being 'created' in 1972.



Left: A page from a Templewood Aviation brochure, 1975. Source: Michael Zoeller

The end of the Boeing 707-321s

9G-ACB was leased to DETA with effect from 1st March in basic Tempair colours with DETA titles. In early June she was registered in Mozambique as C9-ARF and was painted into full DETA colours at



Above: C9-ARF Parked up at Brussels at the end of her career in DETA colours. Source: F Du Ruitter

Stansted. She was returned to Tempair (Templewood?) on 18th September when she flew Lisbon-Brussels, and there she was to end her days. By early October the DETA titles and registration had been removed. On 29th November Tempair went into liquidation. By mid 1980 she was broken up for parts.



Left: Press advert April 1976. Source: Michael Zoeller



Above: 9G-ACB wearing Somali Airlines titles and logo at Stansted. Source: Peter Marson

9G-ACD was also leased to DETA for a short period, wearing DETA titles she departed Stansted for Lisbon and Maputo on 17th January this marked the opening of DETA's first intercontinental services, she returned to Stansted in March when 9G-ACB took over the lease. Somali Airlines titles and logos were applied for a short lease from April to August replacing Boeing 720B 6O-SAU. After the Somali lease there was no activity until she flew Stansted-Heathrow on 18th October



Above: 9G-ACB withdrawn from use at Stansted January 1976 minus No.2 engine. Source: Ian Howat

wearing Bangladesh Biman titles and logo, she entered service from Heathrow on the 23rd of October on the start of a 3 month contract. 9G-ACD was returned prematurely to Templewood on 19th November at Ostend where she remained for 15 months...

The post-Tempair history of this aircraft is worth noting. On 8th December 1977 Lieutenant General Maurice F Casey, t/a Burbank International Co., Washington, DC. acquired the aircraft from Tempair International Airlines Ltd, Hong Kong, the Bill of Sale was signed by Anthony Howard Griffin. Templewood's Paul Carter was involved in the sale, payment negotiations were carried out in Miami, at one stage a gun appeared on the table and the buyers tried to pay with 'Australian Black Opals' ... On the 17th February 1978 she was ferried from Ostend to Luton for checks wearing her new registration N725CA, though not technically registered till 24th February. Casey's intention was to operate meat hauling flights between Miami and Venezuela, something of an issue with an aircraft not equipped with a main cabin cargo door, one might speculate that this was a cover operation. A special flight certificate was given to ferry the aircraft from Luton to Miami via Gander, the flight took place on 8th March. Freelance navigator, David Welch, who was on the flight described the 707 as "a flying heap of shit". Prior to departure on the 8th, N725CA undertook a test flight out of Luton

1976



Above: N725CA parked at Miami still showing signs of her former Biman colours. Source: Mick Bajcar

during which a hydraulic fluid cable broke loose and dumped it's load of fluid over new cars parked at the nearby Vauxhall plant! This made the national press who referred to the aircraft as 'The Luton Carwash Bomber'. David Welch remarks "We just managed to get her airborne (on the 8th March) before a bailiff arrived in Monarch operations intending to slap a writ on it for all that damage. Vauxhall made a £1M insurance claim against Templewood, plus a large number of the population of Luton claimed that their cars were ruined too. On the way to Gander it developed the worst Dutch roll I ever experienced twice at least. One problem was that one of the outer engines wasn't giving full power." The aircraft never moved from Miami, although \$73,000+ of repair work mainly to wing corrosion was carried out during most of 1979. A total of 3 liens were placed on the aircraft between March 1979 and October 1981 and at one stage she was nearly sold to a company in Wyoming. Finally the aircraft was sold to General Air Services in October 1981, though most of the settlement was to clear debts. She was broken up at Miami between September 1983 and January 1984.

The old reliable Boeing 707-139B N778PA

One anecdotal story mentions that Transasian acquired in January 1976 the one-and-only 707-139B N778PA which had been stored at Stansted since Aeropa's collapse in February 1975. As I understand it Transasian was not created till June 1977. What is know about this aircraft at this time is that



Left: S2-AAL basks in the Stansted sunshine wearing Bangladesh Biman titles but retaining basic Aeropa colours. Source: Internet

she was re-registered S2-AAL and delivered Stansted-Heathrow on 17th or 24th April wearing just a red cheat-line and Bangladesh Biman titles. My thoughts are that the aircraft was acquired by Biman at this time from Pan Am via Pan Ayer Geneva for an over inflated price of \$2.3M, a price negotiated by corrupt Bangladeshi Air Vice Marshal Tawib. By May she was returned to Stansted for storage and was sold at this time to a Swiss company, but formed of Hong Kong based investors, called Aktien (or Atkin) Investments who leased the aircraft to Templewood/Transasian in 1977 till 1980.

Boeing 720Bs

G-BCBA Boeing 720-023B was painted by Aircraft Engineering in full Air Niugini colours at Luton by January 1976 and was delivered Luton-Kuwait-Colombo-Bruni-Port Moresby 6th February with 50 Tempair flight crews, maintenance and ops staff and their families. On the 7th she ferried Port Moresby-Brisbane, and operated the first service Brisbane-Port Moresby-Manila on 15th February.

Flight International magazine was invited along for the delivery flight and her is the article reproduced from the magazine's 28th February edition:

"Cabin-service preparations were extensive, involving the provision of a first-class compartment with 12 seats; Air Niugini provided the galley service equipment. Nine Tempair stewardesses, all Filipinos, were selected for secondment to ANG and Brenda Newton, the company's chief stewardess, began training local girls in Port Moresby.

Part of the extensive planned spares holding filled the entire lower hold of the aircraft on the positioning

flight. Flight-crew training was required by Papua New Guinea for the validation of UK licences and this was undertaken, though not completed, in the week before departure. Tempair operational staff were meanwhile producing a flight manual to meet the requirements of the local civil aviation department.

Air Niugini's flagship arrives

Very early in the morning of February 6 Air Niugini's flagship left Luton carrying 50 Tempair flight crew, maintenance and operations staff and their families. Deputy managing director Jim Davis accompanied the aircraft, in the hope that his ability to make difficult executive decisions quickly would minimise the inevitable last minute cliffhangers. Captain Graham Egerton (Chief Pilot), Dennis Dearlove (Chief Engineer) and Albert Lee (Cabin Services Manager) were also aboard. Going via Kuwait, Colombo and Brunei and taking on a fresh crew en route, we arrived at Port Moresby 21 flying hours later, to the obvious pleasure of hundreds of local inhabitants.

Sunday was spent meeting Air Niugini staff, unloading spares and attending to small engineering matters. The highlight of the day came in the early evening, when a full route-approval evacuation drill for 12 first-class and 117 economy passengers was successfully performed in darkness before observers from the Papua New Guinea Civil Aviation Department. Twelve hours later, P2-ANG was airborne on the first of three route-proving flights to Brisbane.

Engineering base for the 720B is Brisbane. With no other 720B operating in Australia, Tempair has based four engineers in Brisbane and is using QANTAS support facilities. The normal route Pattern will be Brisbane-Port Moresby-Brisbane five times a week, with an extension to Manila on Thursday returning the following day.

Hangar servicing will be undertaken by the Hong Kong Aircraft Engineering Company; the aircraft will fly from Manila on to Hong Kong for this purpose. QANTAS, operating in pool with higher-capacity 707-338Bs, flies four times a week to Port Moresby.

Formerly the exclusive preserve of Australian carriers Trans Australian Airlines and Ansett, the Papua New Guinea domestic routes passed to Air Niugini's

F.27s and DC-3s in 1973. TAA, Ansett and QANTAS together hold 40 per cent of the shares in ANG and many key positions are held by Australians. With such a background it seemed likely that the new airline's jet equipment would be the Boeing 727, used extensively by the, Australian domestics and until this year flown on the Brisbane-Port Moresby route under lease to Air Niugini.

Knowing of these plans, Tony Griffin made a 727 tender for the contract but suggested that the 720B might be a more suitable aircraft, claiming that it would thus be possible to fly the Port Moresby-Manila route and that the 720B would be able to undertake freight charters. Flight understands that the Tempair tender of £1.25 million initially was well below the 727 bids. The contract was won on both range and cost in the face of competition from the established carriers in the area and represents a major breakthrough for Tempair.

Some resentment is apparent in the area, however, and the performance of this young British company's lone 720B is being watched closely. Like any newly independent state, Papua New Guinea wants for the time being to demonstrate its self-reliance by dispensing as far as possible with Australian help. Similar attitudes are evident in Somalia, where Alitalia's help was declined despite its 49% holding in the airline, and in Mozambique, where DETA chose Tempair and not the Portuguese flag carrier.

Jim Davis is well aware of the difficulties facing his company's Air Niugini operation: "Operating one aircraft you have in effect only half an aircraft; but with two machines you can guarantee at least one for most of the time." Rapid spares movement and mutual-aid agreements with QANTAS and the Hong Kong Aircraft Engineering Company are his chief weapons, but he points out that Tempair is always willing to provide back-up aircraft if the carrier is prepared to pay."

©Flight International

1976

Templewood

Somali Airlines Boeing 720-023B 6O-SAU returned to Luton on 12th April exactly two years after the lease had commenced, Somali replaced her with two former American Airlines Boeing 720Bs. By May she was in full DETA colours and registered C9-ARG, she was

Managing Director), Captain Jim W. Fordham (Flight Operations Director and former BOAC 707 Fleet Manager), Mr John Wilding (Commercial Manager formerly with BOAC, Lufthansa and BUA), Mr A. Rumley (Sales Director) and Captain Graham Egerton (Chief Pilot and



Left: C9-ARG in full DETA colours at Luton Source: Paul Carter

sub-leased to DETA from mid May till mid June while 707-321 C9-ARF was undergoing overhaul at Stansted. Although painted in DETA colours, this aircraft was used to carry President Samora Machel on a presidential visit from Mozambique to Moscow. After completing this charter, the 720B again returned to Luton, and in July it was commissioned for more VIP passenger work. This involved the carriage of President Mathieu Kérékou of Benin on a state visit to North East Asia. Among the destinations visited by C9-ARG while engaged on this contract were Shanghai, Peking, Pyongyang and Bucharest. The entire trip lasted for three weeks, during which time the aircraft recorded a total of over sixty flying hours. In August she was returned to the British register and registered to The Stanhope Steamship Company (a division of European Ferries) but remained on lease to Templewood who sub-leased her to Cyprus Airways until 1st March 1977.

The company February 1976

Templewood/Tempair's head office was still in Windsor but had moved to a new address at Thameside House. Tempair hoped to open an office in London's Old Bond Street which would site a general sales agent for several of its customer airlines. Overseas offices were established in Hong Kong, Cyprus, Manila and Rio de Janeiro. The company's executives consisted of Mr A 'Tony' H Griffin (Managing Director), Jim Davis (Deputy

former BOAC Senior Training Captain on the 707 and 747) (passed away early 2000s). While the share holders were Sandy Rumley, Paul Carter and Tony Griffin. Chief engineer was Denis Dearlove who had previously worked with ATEL at Stansted and Southend and was involved with getting Robert Vesco's 707-321 into Southend's 5,265ft runway on 9th September 1971, making it the first visit of a 707 to the airport. Denis died on 7th February 2001.

The following paraphrases much of a *Flight International* article of February 28th 1976, it offers an interesting insight to Tempair's business at the time:

"Completely new was the possibility of long-term wet leasing of Boeing 707-320Cs to major carriers for scheduled cargo work. Singapore International Airlines was anxious to expand in this area but was very short of flight crews; a wet-lease through Tempair was arranged (see ET-ACQ below). Tony Griffin described the -320C as "the most flexible aircraft for wet lease," with its medium/long range and convertible interior (By April 1976 Tempair was reported to have 3 Boeing 707-320Cs on order). The 720B fills a different slot and was considered to have a big future in those areas where good performance and moderate capacity is needed in hot and high conditions. The type was still reasonably economic, burning fuel at a rate of about 10,000lb/hr and returning good seat-mile costs on legs of up to about 5hr.

The company's engineering and maintenance activities, the legality of which depended on the licences of individual employees in the absence of any company approval, were based at Windsor. Chief engineer Dennis Dearlove only choose highly experienced tradesmen who are willing to work as individuals: "We must have engineers of application and capability." Twenty-four licensed engineers were employed, of whom three had combined airframe/engine licences. Aviation Traders at Stansted undertakes most of the scheduled servicing and was approved for the two 707-321 Ghanaian-registered aircraft. Under a similar arrangement Airline Engineering at Luton looked after the 720Bs on the Somali and New Guinea registers.

Tempair maintained a Stansted office staffed by an engineer, a store man and a records clerk, but Dearlove wanted to expand and was looking for better facilities (The facility at Stansted was a WWII vintage

hours. The rapid acquisition and deployment of aircraft all over the world placed a very heavy workload on the planning staff at Windsor. "Were the company buying new from a manufacturer," Dearlove said, "an army of people would think about every aspect for us."

Of Tempair's 30 stewardesses, no fewer than 27 were Filipinos. In the early days a dozen hostesses came from Air Manila, which had a surplus at the time, and they fitted so well into the organisation that more and more were subsequently taken on. Although they were slightly more expensive for Tempair to employ-they were entitled to regular holiday travel back to the Philippines-the Filipino girls were very hard-working and are not as prone to emotional problems as some of their European counterparts (Not a very PC comment!). They were recruited mainly through the office in Hong Kong, where their smart blue-and-gold uniforms with interchangeable badges were tailored."

©Flight International 1976



Left: Press advert February 1976 from Flight International magazine. Source: Michael Zoeller

Early in 1976 Tony Griffin was looking to 'go widebody' within the next two years, financing permitting. The company was in the process of getting backing from a London merchant bank which would enable better forward planning. The DC-10-30CF was considered a likely candidate though Griffin was interested in a freight-convertible Boeing 747SP option, a product that was never pursued by Boeing. Perhaps indicating Griffin's knowledge and understanding of the aviation business, with great foresight he predicted that the Airbus A300 family could be the world's most successful aircraft in the latter part of the 20th century, even out-distancing the 727-200. As it transpired Airbus overtook Boeing sales in 2006 with it's A300/319-321/330/340 range of airliners.

Nissen hut if my memory serves me correctly). He saw Tempair becoming a CAA-approved spares stockist. With such a small fleet spread throughout the world spares provisioning could be a problem, although commonality between the 707 and 720B was good. But transfers of spares between aircraft, and therefore between registers, would generate some complicated paperwork. The problem was mainly overcome by the lease-purchase of spares for each type from an American company. Dearlove drew up a list of foreseeable spares demands for two years ahead and the package was delivered immediately but paid for over the two-year period.

Service delays could normally be kept below about five

1976

Templewood

A new Fijian airline

In April a new Fijian airline Air Hibiscus reported that it would lease a 707 from Tempair for use on charter flight to the Bahamas and Europe, but presumably no contract was ever signed?

The end of Tempair

Sadly, though, Tempair's buoyancy as a successful international airline was only short lived as in the middle of November the airline found difficulty in paying an instalment on the lease of its Boeing 707-320C. The aircraft concerned was ET-ACQ a Boeing 707-379C which Tempair dry leased from Ethiopian to for-fill a contract they had won to supply Singapore Airlines Cargo with a freighter 707 for 18 months commencing 20th July 1976. Predominantly this aircraft flew the Singapore-Bahrein-Orly-Zurich-Bahrein-Singapore, Singapore-Bahrein-Amsterdam-Bahrein-Singapore and Singapore-Hong Kong-Singapore routes. Towards the end of the year the aircraft went u/s at Ankara while transporting a cargo of exotic fish to Amsterdam. The aircraft needed a replacement engine which took an incredible 5 days to get to Ankara (from ?). The fish remarkably survived and continued their journey to Amsterdam, however the shipper refused to pay due to failure to deliver on the stipulated date, this lack of payment compounded by the lack of revenue lead to a failure of Tempair to pay one of their lease instalments. It is sad to note that this single incident which today would hardly cause any major concern, was enough to tip Tempair 'over the edge'. One must also take into account the increasingly high costs associated with operating two high-time turbo-jet powered 707-321s, which, by all accounts had been poorly maintained by previous owners. The flip side of this was that the airline was highly successful in virtually every market it had entered and had gained respect from many carriers in South East Asia and Africa as well as Europe.

A creditors meeting was called and at this meeting, which took place on 19th November 1976 (confirm?), it was decided to wind up the activities of Tempair International Airlines. At this time, the company was employing almost two hundred staff, including nineteen flight crews and over forty cabin staff. It is a sign of Tempair's integrity that their success and good reputation meant that Air Niugini happily took over the

operation of the Boeing 720B and guaranteed employment to the aircraft's crews. In addition, Bangladesh Biman continued the lease of the 707-321 9G-ACD for as long as possible, but on 29th November the decision was reluctantly taken to cease flying operations. BMA,



Above: 9G-ACD in 'full' Biman colours. Source: Internet

Tempair's chief competitor, continued its ACMI operations for many years, helped by the advantage of having its key business centred around scheduled, domestic niche services.

Tempair International Airlines' parent company, Templewood Aviation, continued in existence as an aircraft brokerage company. Ian Highley, the liquidator of Tempair encouraged Templewood to carry on together with an element of the Tempair debt unfortunately this didn't help things further downstream. Templewood continued in various guises till 1980.

Air Transcontinental Airlines Limited was incorporated on 21 July 1976.

Tail end of the 720Bs

P2-ANG Boeing 720B returned to Luton on 2nd February and I assume returned to European Ferries at about the same time. By March she was leased to Monarch Airlines as G-BCBA and was acquired by Monarch in September.

G-BCBB Boeing 720B continued its sub-lease to Cyprus Airways till 1st March 1977. She then went on sub-lease (from Templewood International) to Air Ceylon as 4R-ACS from March 1977 till December 1977, though she was not painted into Air Ceylon's smart colour-scheme until July. Like her sister-ship she was sold to Monarch Airlines and became G-BCBB in January 1978.

Right: 9G-ACJ Boeing 707-139B in full Merpati colours at Luton. Source: Paul Carter

Right Below: Same aircraft this time at Heathrow wearing Bahamas World's dolphin logo with Ariana titles. Source: Internet



An advert placed in Flight International in February 1977 by the liquidator of Tempair, I. G. Highley, offered an extensive range of 707-321 and 720B rotatable and consumable aircraft spares for sale by tender.

Enter Transasian Airlines

Transasian Airlines Limited was formed in June 1977 to operate wet-leasing services out of Manchester with 179-seat Boeing 707s, one report claims with the assistance of F B Ayer Inc. though I doubt this. The head office address was the same as Templewood, Thameside House, Windsor and the directors were familiar names: A H Griffin, A Rumley and P M Carter (Commercial Director). Capt. A C Small (Flight Operations Director, replacing Capt. Jim Fordham) and Len J Luyk (Finance Director) became directors at a later date. Transasian

was to operate on the authority of a UK CAA AOC holding licenses part 5 (a) and 5 (b) i.e. allowing them to carry fare-paying passengers.

First aircraft to be used by Transasian was Boeing 707-139B S2-AAL (formerly Aeropa's N778PA). She was leased to Transasian from Aktien Invest A.G., Kirchstrasse, Vaduz, Liechtenstein from March 1977 but spent most of the next two months undergoing major checks with ATEL at Stansted (an may have been sub-leased to International Freight Airways of Belgium via Geminair?). In June she was registered as 9G-ACJ and sub-leased to Saudia, this short-term lease was completed on the 30th July when she arrived at Luton from Riyadh. In October Airline Engineering rolled her out in full Merpati colours she was used by MNA mainly



for Hadj flights and returned to Luton by mid-December at the end of the sub-lease. By Christmas eve she was wearing Bahamas World stickers and flew a number of services for the colourful Bahamas World Airways up until the beginning of 1978.

Templewood in July 1977 took delivery of an ex-Air Canada DC-8-41 CF-TJD, which was registered 4R-ACT and leased to Air Ceylon. This aircraft was later

1977

impounded at Heathrow for 6 months by Templewood Aviation due to Air Ceylon's non-payment of fees, this caused something of a 'diplomatic incident' and place a strain on the company's finances for some time to come. I believe that Air Ceylon's DC-8-53 4R-ACQ was also impounded for a short time (date?) as a result of a court order because of a dispute with Templewood too.

Unwanted Belfasts

In August 1977 ten former RAF Short Belfast cargo aircraft were sold to a London-based trading company, Eurolatin Commercial. Initially Eurolatin had been acting as the UK agent for the original purchaser, Washington based Pan African Air Industries, but when funds did not materialise Eurolatin provided a bridging loan and took title on three of the aircraft. Later it acquired all ten aircraft. They were to be based at Manston and registered in Liberia. Templewood Aviation Sales (is this a separate company?) was to provide operations management. Templewood produced suitable Belfast flying and maintenance manuals for Liberian certification and was expected to manage technical conversion of the fleet and the employment of aircrew. The operation floundered due to certification issues, crew shortages and spares support. There must be more to this I feel?

Pan African Air Industries (President: Col. Thomas D Robinson): Pan African Air Freight-Liners, a subsidiary of Washington-based Pan African Air Industries. The company has been formed to organise a low-cost air-freight network in West Africa and expects to work closely with the governments of Upper Volta, Chad, Mauritania, Mali, Senegal, Niger, Cape Verde Islands and Gambia. These states are all members of CILSS, an organisation dedicated to the development of this region of West Africa.

In the end Eurolatin's option on the final seven aircraft lapsed in April 1978 and in early 1979 Eurolatin formed a joint operation with Transmeridian to operate the aircraft under the name of TAC Heavylift.

Transasian/Geminair link?

One odd piece of information I have received is the mention of Transasian operating Geminair's Boeing 707-430 9G-ACK for a period around August/September 1977. It was used on services to Kano and Jeddah so sounds like Hadj flights? In December 1977 I wrote to Geminair at Feltham, UK enquiring about their 707 operations, they were very cagey. My letter was passed on to their General Manager, W.H Mike-Easey who informed me that 'The Boeing 707[-430] operation mainly comes under Trans Asian (sic) and the crews in general are supplied by Templewood of Windsor' . . .



Above: A PANAF Belfast seen at Stansted. Source: Simon Barker

Continued short-body Boeing 707 operations

Boeing 707-139B 9G-ACJ served with a miscellany of airlines during the year: Bahamas World, Ariana Afghan Airlines, Aer Lingus, Olympic (in full Olympic colours), Saudia and Mandala (for the Hadj).



Left: Boeing 707-123B N7513A at Dallas Love Field, March 1978 just prior to delivery to Transasian. Source: David Welch

In March Transasian leased a newly re-skinned Boeing 707-123B N7513A from Tiger Air which arrived at Luton from Tulsa. She was soon re-registered 9G-ACN (Whos operating cert. was this?) and was sub-lease to Air Malta in their colours. There was a proposed sub-lease to Air Tanzania in July which fell through, later on in the year she was used by Saudia and Sudan Air still in her basic Air Malta colours.

A second Tiger Air Boeing 707-123B was leased in July, formerly N7524A, she was re-registered ST-AHG and immediately sub-leased to Sudan Airways for 6 months in full Sudan colours. However she returned from lease early and was sub-leased to Merpati for the Hadj in November/December and at the end of the year saw service with Air Malta.

An oddity is the operation of Boeing 707-227 N64740 which flew Hong Kong-Stansted on 16th October (though using a Air Charter s.a. call-sign) carrying Vietnamese refugees while leased to Transasian from Aeroamerica. In October she was sub-leased to Saudia, November she was parked at Luton and apparently was repossessed by the United Bank of Alaska on 8th December and ferried to Miami the same day. By all accounts the aircraft was a pig. I would like to confirm the validity of this story.

The British CAA imposed a noise dead-line for certain aircraft types registered in the UK, predominantly

effecting Boeing 707s and DC-8s, the ban was to come into force on September 30th 1978. This does not seem to have effected Transasian as they registered 707-100Bs in the UK long after this date probably being part of an exemption give to established carriers and 'those of a sound backing'.

In August Transasian Airlines announced that it hoped to fly in its own colours from mid-January 1979, operating inclusive-tour charters out of a Far Eastern base (HK?). The contracts had not been concluded, however, and the airline was unwilling to publicise the exact location in a "slightly competitive" situation. Transasian's UK application covered only substitute services.



Above: N64740 707-227 at Stansted October 1978, by the looks of things the Club Alaska titles are being removed. Source: Internet

1979

Continued and expanded Boeing 707 operations

707-139B 9G-ACJ spend the early part of the year parked at Luton minus two engines, a proposed sale to the Sudanese Government fell through. On 4th April she was registered G-TJAA (TJ being Transasian's and Air Transcontinental's two-letter designator from the CAA) to Transasian Airlines (were Transasian Airlines the actual owners?) and by June she was repainted in basic British Caledonian colours for a 3 month lease to cover for the grounding of their DC10 which effected numerous airlines at this time. By the time G-TJAA was returned Transasian was named Air Transcontinental,



Above: OD-AFX in basic TMA colours with Zaire Aero Service titles. Source: Internet

Left: Boeing 707-139B G-TJAA in British Caledonian colours at Amsterdam. Source: F De Ruiter

from September till November she flew on various leases and charters. In November she left Luton for Cairo as MS001 on lease to Egyptair no-doubt to cover for the annual Hadj services.

9G-ACN, one of the two 707-123Bs, was sub-leased to Air Malta early in 1979. In July she was registered to Transasian Airlines as G-TJAB and carried on with Air Malta but now she was leased directly from Transasian. She returned to Transasian the day before they became Air Transcontinental, 21st August, like G-TJAA she was leased to Egyptair from November till January 1980 to cover for the Hadj.

The second 707-123B, ST-AHG continued her sub-lease to Air Malta from 1978. In February she became 9G-ACO and in August, in-line with the other 707-100Bs she became G-TJAC. At some stage during the year she was acquired by Transasian/Air Transcontinental from Tiger Air but remained with Air Malta all year in Air Malta colours.

Transasian leased 707-327C OD-AFX from Trans Mediterranean from January to March. In turn she was sub-leased to Zaire Aero Service in basic Trans Mediterranean colours. It is unclear if this aircraft returned to Trans Mediterranean in March... some reports indicate



that she became 9Q-CRX while with Zaire Aero Service and was subsequently sub-leased to Air Intergulf (based at Sharjah). This information would seem to tie in with what was happening with Transasian at the time, but I have no hard and fast evidence of this lease. What is known is that OD-AFX was written off at Beirut on 23rd July 1979 while crew training. At the same time OD-AFY was also leased from Trans Mediterranean for sub-lease to Zaire Aero Service, returning to Trans Mediterranean in March 1979 after a three-month lease.



Above: 9G-ACN seen at Heathrow in basic Air Malta colours with Sudan and 'on lease from Transasian titles' (wore 'on lease to Sudan on the port side). Source: www.airteamimages.com



Left: Boeing 707-321B N762TB at Luton with Transasian titles. Source: Internet

West Bay Leasing leased an ex-Pan Am Boeing 707-321B to Transasian, registered N762TB she was delivered Tel Aviv-Luton on 26th April. She was immediately sub-leased to Sudan Airways followed by SATT (Société Antillaise de Transport Touristique) and towards the end of the year to Egyptair.

Transasian's plans

Transasian announced expansion at the beginning of 1979, two ex-TMA 707-320Cs were leased early in the year and were to be followed by an ex-Pan Am 707-321B (see above). These were Transasian's first 707-320Bs.

Air Transcontinental Airlines

Air Transcontinental was formed on 22nd August 1979 to follow on from Transasian Airlines, it was simply a re-branding operation. A full-page advert was taken in Flight International on 15th September announcing the name change, stating that aircraft livery, personnel, address, sita, telex and telephone remain unchanged. Transasian had started with one 707, taking delivery of two more in early 1978 and a fourth, N762TB, in early 1979. It was decided then that a much wider base was needed than pure wet-leasing and a decision was made to enter the inclusive tour market with particular emphasis on long haul operations. Air Transcontinental was to operate on behalf of Horizon Holidays, flying initially to Palma, Majorca. Future plans called for flights to other Mediterranean resorts as well as holiday destinations in the Caribbean and USA. Transasian's name was changed to Air Transcontinental to widen the scope and avoid the misleading impression that the airline was totally concentrating on Far East operations. Presumably

the proposed charter operations out of the Far East came to nothing?

At the same time it was announced that one Boeing 707-320C freighter aircraft and one Boeing 727-100 aircraft will be acquired for operational wet-lease by the company.

With an eye to the future Air Transcontinental ordered two 162 seat DC-9-82s in October 1979 for delivery in March and April 1982 and placed two options on -83s for delivery Spring 1983. Tony Griffin, Air Transcontinental's MD stated the DC-9-82 was chosen over the more common Boeing 737 because of lower seat-mile costs and having a different type would be useful when marketing.



Left: Rather a poor quality clipping of the announcement of Air Transcontinental's DC-9-82 intentions. Source: Flight Global

1980

The last few weeks of Boeing 707 operations

G-TJAA returned to familiar territory, Stansted Airport in January and was already withdrawn from use in ex-BCAL colours when Air Transcontinental ceased operations on January 14th. She was sold by Skyfreight Ltd. to Israel Aircraft Industries in May. After service in Israel she was eventually destroyed at Davis-Mothen AFB in 1989 when errant spark ignited fabric in the fuselage as workers were scrapping an adjacent Boeing 720B.

G-TJAB returned from the Egyptair lease in January and was stored at Luton in Air Malta colours till she was acquired by Monarch in March who continued to lease her to Air Malta.

G-TJAC returned from Air Malta and was stored at Luton in ex-Air Malta colours. Like -TJAB she was acquired by Monarch and leased to Air Malta.

N762TB which was also on sub-lease to Air Malta was returned to West Bay, arriving at Miami on 14th February 1980.

flights to Spain, Italy, Greece, the Canaries and further afield to Barbados, Freeport, Miami and Toronto for well-known tour operators like Cosmos, OSL, Intasun, Owners Abroad and Horizon amongst others.

Operations were scheduled to start from Manchester for Horizon on 30th March with a steady increase to a peak of thirty flights a week by mid-June. Plans for winter 1980/81 included a concentration on long haul, flights using the 179 seat Boeing 707s which were felt to be the right size for developing new markets.

Manchester was chosen as the base for operations because it was at the centre of a very large IT market and did not possess a home based airline at the time.

October 1979's announcement that two DC-9-82s were on order marked an investment programme in excess of £32 million. Plans were in hand by the year end to lease from Tiger Air an ex-Singapore Airlines Boeing 747-212B or 747-2K2B (TBC), rumoured to have the registration G-BTAD reserved for it. (CAA have no info on G-BTAD or TJAD).



*Left: A postcard of a Boeing 707-320B model in full Air Transcontinental colours. Also see Addendum.
Source: Internet*

The demise of Air Transcontinental Airlines

April 1980 should have seen Air Transcontinental carrying in the region of 200,000 passengers, mainly from Manchester but also from Gatwick (1 aircraft based) and Belfast, using three Boeing 707-120Bs on holiday

What went wrong?

On 14th January 1980 operations ceased and on the 28th Air Transcontinental went into voluntary liquidation following the last minute withdrawal of a major financial backer from the Middle East. Liquidation was confirmed at a meeting with creditors on 8th February and

disposal of Air Transcontinental's assets is in the hands of accountants Cork, Gully & Co and Poppleton & Appleby. Following winding-up of the company it was estimated that debts amounted to at least £2.4 million and the closure forced 14 UK tour companies to find alternative air seats for their holidays this summer.

Flight International carried this report on 16th February:

“Alexander Rumley, Air Transcontinental's sales director and a major shareholder, tells Flight that the fledgling airline suffered “two major catastrophes” last year, which led to “extraordinary losses” of £1 million. First, a Boeing 707-320B (N762TB?), which had been acquired from a US source, was discovered to have major structural damage in the wing after handover to Air Transcontinental. Although the aircraft was cleared by the FAA as airworthy, for export, subsequent inspection by Boeing uncovered the damage. As a result, the aircraft was grounded for seven weeks last summer and Air Transcontinental had to pay for replacement capacity to meet contract obligations. Second, a Nigerian contract for Hadj (pilgrim) flights to Mecca was broken by the Nigerian organisers at the last moment and Air Transcontinental has been unable to obtain legal redress.

Attempts have been made to inject £1 million of extra capital into the airline but two financing deals, with overseas and British interests, fell through when negotiations had reached a late stage. Rumley says that Air Transcontinental had booked £12.5 million-worth of business for the coming season but when it became clear that the extra capital could not be found, “we had no choice but to return the tour operators' deposits.” Cancellation fees will not be paid to McDonnell Douglas for the Super 82s because the deal had not reached a firm order, and no money had changed hands.”

One report has Templewood being liquidated on 28th January too?

So ended another small piece of British airline history virtually before it had begun.

Life goes on

Tony Griffin ran 'The Henley Rendezvous' restaurant in Henley in the 1980s calling at times on the help of Albert Lee, Tempair's former Catering and Cabin Services Manager. Griffin later ran the 'Prince of Wales Restaurant' in Manila in 1983 staffed by many former Tempair stewards.

Libyan Airbuses

Although this story is beyond the scope of my original intention to write purely about Templewood, Tempair, Trans Asian and Air Transcontinental in is nevertheless worth recounting.

In June 1986 British Caledonian had two almost new A310 Airbuses (G-BKWT and G-BKWU) available for sale or lease. The following articles are taken from *Flight International* magazine at the time, the initial article appeared on 19th July 1986:

“BCal blocks Airbus sale to Libya

British Caledonian rushed through legal proceedings at the weekend to stop two of its A310s being sold to Libya. BCal discovered last week that the aircraft were about to be sold to “a US-embargoed country”. It issued a writ in the English High Court on Saturday against Service Airlines (Tony Griffin and Alex ‘Sandy’ Rumley, joint MDs), the Hong Kong broker to which it had sold the aircraft, and started legal action in other countries to block the handover.

The European-built Airbuses are equipped with US General Electric CF6-80 engines. Under the contract of sale BCal must ensure they are not sold to any US embargoed country.

This clause was repeated in BCal’s contract with Service Airlines but, BCal says, “we have evidence that the clause in the contract that we had was not complied with”.

Service Airlines in turn sold the aircraft to a UK broker, Cobra Airways (Piccadilly, London). BCal believed the two-and-a-half-year-old aircraft were going to a Western European charter and scheduled operator.”

On 27th September 1986 *Flight* ran this article:

“Libyan A310 row continues

The saga of the British Caledonian A310s that ended up in Libya has prompted a flurry of writs from Hong Kong brokerage firm Service Airlines, reports Phillip Bangsberg.

“We are taking action to protect our name,” says A. H. Griffin, one of the firm’s two directors, after taking out a writ against the West German firm Cobra Airways and its director, Wolf Wohlmuth.

Because the aircraft are fitted with General Electric engines and US electronics they are on a list of American products not allowed to be sold or transferred to Libya. Service Airlines bought the aircraft from BCal, but sold them at once to Cobra.

When BCal discovered the identity of the end user it tried to delay the handover indefinitely. But one of the A310s was released from Jordan and reached Libya last month (Flight, August 23), and the other followed from Dubai two weeks later.

Griffin says that neither he nor his partner, Alexander Rumley, knew the ultimate destination of the aircraft.

“We would have refused to get involved if we had known that”, he says. “British Caledonian and ourselves really had the wool pulled over our eyes”.

“We merely acted as the broker in the middle. Occasionally brokers are called in to front a sale. We sold them to Cobra right there in the same office, in BCal’s presence. We didn’t ‘own’ the airplanes for more than a micro-second,” Griffin says.

His partner, Service Airlines, Cobra, and Wohlmuth have all been sued by BCal on charges of breach of contract for violating a clause in the purchase contract forbidding resale to Libya. Both Griffin and Rumley are normally resident in Manila, and are not widely known in Hong Kong aviation circles (I am surprised!). Other share-

holders are listed in official records as Elizabeth Cockcroft of Stourbridge, West Midlands, and Susan Griffin of Manila.

*Service, which is represented here by the accountancy firm Coopers and Lybrand, bought the aircraft (which were first advertised in *Flight International*) after being approached by Wohlmuth, seeking A310s. “Our stock in trade is to know what is available.” Griffin says.*

“We will strenuously resist the lawsuits against us”, he adds. Neither his company nor BCal had any indication that Cobra would sell the aircraft to Libya, says Griffin. Cobra has provided BCal with a telex signed in the name of Frenchman Georges Masurel, which says that his charter company, Europe Aero Services, was the end user of the aircraft.

Masurel has denied sending the telex, and says that someone must have forged it. BCal has Masurel under investigation under the auspices of the French court. Service was previously known as Westbury Investments, Tempair International Airlines, and Templewood Aviation International. The last is now in liquidation, according to Companies House records.

The US Government meanwhile has taken no action against BCal. Once the party which broke the embargo has been identified, the USA may start proceedings against it, although it is not clear what form these could take.

• *BCal resumed services to Tripoli after the US bombing, but has had to suspend them again because of the complications of the Airbus sale.*”

The story continued in 18th October’s edition:

“Long road to Libya for Airbus spares

The UK Customs and Excise is investigating the unlicensed export of a spares package, part of British Caledonian’s

(BCal) sale of two Airbuses which wound up in Libya.

The saga of the spares is as complex as that of the aircraft which were sold by BCal to Hong Kong-based Service Airlines and on to Cobra Airways in London before reaching Libya and breaking a US embargo on the General Electric engines.

The spares, including one engine, were flown to Dubai by Paris-based SFAir on May 29. The flight was to have gone from Gatwick, but SFAir ran into problems with air traffic rights “in the UK. The goods were sent by road to the northern French airport of Lille using four lorries, one of them a BCal vehicle. They arrived in Lille on May 27 and 28, were loaded into a Hercules L100-30 freighter, and left on May 29.

The consignment was from Service Airlines to Cobra Airways. Charlie Bravo Trade & Cargo of Zurich arranged a charter flight for \$81,000, which Michael Dym, the company’s Swiss president, describes as “quite normal”. Payment was made via UBAF Bank in London, which is one-third owned by the Libyan Arab Foreign Bank.

While loading, Charlie Bravo told SFAir that, after Dubai, the Hercules should go on to the Jordanian capital, Amman. This surprised SFAir’s management, who had assumed that the ultimate destination of the goods would be Hong Kong — Service Airlines’ base.

“We suspected there might be something wrong with the cargo. It sounded a bit curious,” says Marc Veisen, SFAir’s commercial manager. They had checked at Lille that no arms or dangerous goods were involved.

The aircraft flew to Dubai via Heraklion. On the Heraklion-Dubai leg SFAir was told that the flight would end, after all, at Dubai. The goods were off-loaded there, and that was the last SFAir knew of the matter.

At Lille, handlers found that the consignment was too heavy for the aircraft. It weighed 15 tonnes, compared with the originally agreed 10 tonnes. About two tonnes of spares, mainly galleys, were left behind and have been impounded by French customs.

The purchase of Airbus spares also included a second

engine, which was to have been shipped separately. But BCal was by then suspicious of the whole affair, and stopped this unit from leaving their Prestwick refurbishment works.

Charlie Bravo sent a telex to Cobra Airways in confirmation of the Hercules flight, addressed c/o UBAF Bank Ltd, London, attention Muad Fezzani. Fezzani, a Libyan and the bank’s general manager, says: “The bank is not a party in this at all. We were asked by the Arab Bank for Investment and Foreign Trade (an Abu Dhabi-based concern also part-owned by the Libyan Arab Foreign Bank) to pass monies to certain parties against certain documents. And that is what we did”. He refused to say whether his bank had been visited by Customs and Excise officials investigating the absence of an export licence for the spares.

Michael Dym, of Charlie Bravo, is distressed at his firm’s apparently unwitting involvement in the affair. If he had known the full facts, he says, the deal “would never have received my consent. It does me and my firm a lot of harm”.”

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Libyan Airbuses . . .

The Libyan story dragged into 1987. Then the confusing and murky world of Arab-US relations, which had initially drawn the unsuspecting Griffin and Rumley in, worked in their favour. The following was printed in *Flight International* magazine on 30th May 1987:

“BCal drops Libyan Airbus writs

With Washington embroiled in the Irangate affair and in no mood to police its sanctions against other states, British Caledonian Airways (BCal) has quietly suspended a string of legal actions against parties involved in the purchase of two of its A310s which ended up in Libya in defiance of US sanctions.

A year ago BCal sold the two aircraft to Hong Kong-based Service Airlines, which in turn sold them to Cobra Airways of London. Although BCal had been assured that the end user would be a French airline, Perpignan-based Europe Aero Service, Cobra had in fact arranged their sale to Libya. Finance for the deal was provided by the Arab Bank for Investment and Foreign Trade (ARBIFT), based in Dubai, and UBAF Bank of London. One-third stakes in each are held by the state-owned Libyan Arab Foreign Bank.

*Shortly after the sale BCal sued the two banks, Service Airlines and one of its directors, Alexander Rumley, and Cobra Airways and its sole director, Wolfgang Wohlmuth *(a West German national), claiming breach of contract.*

Although the aircraft are European-built, their US General Electric engines puts them within the scope of the comprehensive trade sanctions which President Reagan has imposed on Libya in retaliation for Colonel Gaddafi's support for terrorism. BCal's sales contract included a clause stipulating that the aircraft could not be re-sold to countries subject to US sanctions.

There were fears that the USA might take action against the UK airline, which operates profitable trans-Atlantic services. But UK Government investigations failed to reveal any complicity by BCal in the sanctions-busting operation. Whitehall was nevertheless concerned at the possible attitude of the US authorities. BCal's legal actions, it has been established, were in fact launched largely at Whitehall's behest. There were, said one UK official, “the odd whispers in someone's ears that BCal ought to look to its North American interests.” The aim was to convince the USA of the airline's innocence. The legal actions have now quietly been suspended.

The UBAF Bank said that BCal had failed to produce particulars of its claim, and that the action had therefore lapsed. It added that BCal had also shelved its actions against ARBIFT in Dubai. Alexander Rumley of Service Airlines said that BCal had “done none of the things one would expect if a serious legal action were under way”. BCal had not gone beyond filing the action in court. It has proved impossible to locate Wolfgang Wohlmuth of Cobra Airways, and BCal is not pursuing its claim against him either.”

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* - All round nasty guy carried out gun running in Angola in the 80s.

Deja vu?

A series of identical adverts appeared in *Flight International* magazine during April 1988. ‘Tempair offers for sale as owner’ went the ads, ‘one Boeing 707-351C s/n 19168, TT52,000 hrs.’ The contact telephone number was in Windsor, though neither the number of the telex or fax numbers were one of the former Tempair’s. The aircraft in question was S2-ABN of Bangladesh Biman which had originally been acquired by Biman via Templewood in December 1973. Some reports have this aircraft being sold by Biman to Aircraft Ground Services then to Tempair who leased it to Fast Cargo (Chile) in May who sub-leased it to GAS Air Cargo as 5N-AYJ. It was written off at Luxor in December 1988.

The closure of the Airbus ‘fiasco’

Flight ran just one more article covering off the Libyan Airbus story on 21st May 1988:

“BCal fined for Libyan Airbus deal

“A UK Customs and Excise investigation into the sale to Libya of two ex-British Caledonian Airbus Industrie A310s ended late last year with British Caledonian Aircraft Trading, the airline’s trading arm, quietly paying a £600,000 penalty for its role in the affair. The fine was paid just a few weeks before BCal was taken over by British Airways.

The two Airbuses, plus a package of spares which included one engine, were sold to Libya, via intermediary brokers, in 1986, at a time when BCal was in financial trouble. Libyan Arab Airlines paid £77 million for the aircraft, while BCal received £75.5 million, with the balance going to the middlemen.

The deal violated US sanctions against Colonel Gadaffi’s Libya because the aircraft, although European-built, had American-made General Electric engines. The Americans were furious, and threatened to suspend BCal’s traffic rights in the United States. Although Britain has no embargo on the supply of aircraft to Libya, the transaction deeply embarrassed London, which has proclaimed its full support for American sanctions against Tripoli.

The British Customs investigation centred on the spare parts and engine for the Airbuses, since UK regulations require no export licence for civil aircraft. The spares were sent first to France, whence they were flown to Dubai and then on to Tripoli. The £600,000 penalty is understood to have been for a Customs regulations offence known as “misdescription” of the end-user.

From the start, BCal has protested its innocence, claiming that it had been duped by a forged telex into believing that the end-user would be a French airline, Europe Aero Service. At the behest of the British authorities, who were no less anxious than the airline to appease the Americans, shortly after the sale BCal began a series of legal actions against the other parties to the deal, claiming that they had violated a clause of the sales contract stipulating that US restrictions should be respected.

Writs were issued against the intermediary brokers, Hong Kong-based Service Airlines and UK-registered Cobra Airways, against their directors, and against two banks which financed the deal, Dubai-based Arab Bank for Investment and Foreign Trade and London’s UBAF Bank. Both are one-third owned by the Libyan Arab Foreign Bank. In the spring of last year, however, the actions were quietly suspended “for lack of evidence”, according to BCal.

In France, meanwhile, Europe Aero Service sued BCal after an expert appointed by a Paris court had said that the telex naming EAS as the end user of the Airbuses might have been forged by BCal itself. EAS president Georges Masurel says that his firm is claiming damages for all the adverse publicity it has suffered. The claim is now outstanding against British Airways, with which BCal is now merged. BA has declined to comment on the affair.

The £600,000 payment was a so-called “compounded settlement” — effectively an out-of-court fine. Such settlements are subject to strict confidentiality, and HM Customs refuses to discuss the BCal payment at all. Centrally involved in negotiating the settlement was Leonard Bebchick, a Washington lawyer who specialises in aviation cases and who was BCal’s joint company secretary. However, he prefers not to discuss his role, saying: “I cannot in any way confirm or deny that I acted as counsel in this matter”.

The case was closely monitored by the Transport Minister Paul Channon and his senior officials, including Hanley Stevens, who until recently headed the Department’s International Aviation Division. However, a spokesman said that the Department “has nothing to say on this matter”. In the event, Libya proved unable to secure sufficient spare parts to keep its new Airbuses flying. After sitting idle on the tarmac at Tripoli for months, the two aeroplanes were leased to Air Algerie late last year, with whom they are now flying.”

© Flight International

Addendum

Why ‘Templewood’? I was informed by Tony Griffin that “*it had its origins in a small wood near Burnham Beeches, Farnham Common/Royal area in Buckinghamshire*”. There is a Templewood Lane in this area and one can assume that one of the formers of the company lived in this road?



Left: My rendering of the proposed Air Transcontinental 707-321B.

Source: Michael Zoeller