

# THE STORY OF THE BRABAZON

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*A Comprehensive Appraisal of Britain's Greatest Airliner : Vicissitudes of Development : Prototype and Operational Versions Studied*

**S**UCH is the compass of the Bristol Brabazon project that even now, with flight-testing in progress, numerous aspects of this vast national venture are unfamiliar, even among people who have assisted daily towards its fulfilment. The purpose of this supplement, therefore, is to survey at adequate length the history and characteristics of the Brabazon. Fittingly prefacing the study are some observations, set down expressly for our purpose, by Lord Brabazon of Tara, chairman of the originating committee, and Sir Miles Thomas, chairman of B.O.A.C., to which Corporation the Brabazon II will be entrusted.

Persistent and heavy demands on public funds appear largely to have obliterated the memory that the Brabazon was conceived as a money-making proposition. Some £6½ millions for the Mk. I and Mk. II prototypes, and about £5½ millions for the Filton assembly hall and runway, represent about four times the estimated cost of the two prototypes alone; but, granted an adequate operational life, a small fleet of Mk. II Brabazons may yet earn millions in dollars.

## From Lord Brabazon of Tara P.C., M.C., F.R.Ae.S.



**T**OWARDS the end of the war, the Secretary of State for Air and the Minister of Aircraft Production set up a committee to voice users' requirements as to the future types of civil aircraft required. It was a very talented committee, and I was privileged to be its chairman. It held, I think, something like sixty meetings and made recommendations as to the necessity of building five new types.

After so many years have passed it is interesting to see what has been evolved from the recommendations of the committee.

Starting at the wrong end, so to speak, the Brabazon recommendation No. 5 has produced the Dove, which was 5A, and the Marathon, which was 5B. Brabazon recommendation No. 4 was for a full-jet transport machine which has just been flown and is, of course, the wonderful Comet. Brabazon 3 was never ordered but was, in fact, a recommendation to produce new four-engined civil machines of about 100,000 lb weight, to replace the bomber types. It has, however, recently been ordered by the Ministry, but very late. Brabazon 2 produced the Ambassador. In Brabazon 1 we desired a machine which would fly non-stop New York to London—that was its job, and nothing else. Technical reasons forced this machine to be ultra-big to take its useful load and fuel and it was, indeed, not one step forward in size but about three steps forward.

All the time we had in view the possibility of gas-turbine propulsion instead of piston engines. Much research work has been done on the Bristol machine which will be common to all big aircraft. A new gas turbine is being evolved, a new airfield has been put down and vast, much needed hangars constructed, with the result that the bill, all put down to the building of this machine, has swollen to a vast size. The Bristol Company has tackled the project with painstaking care, and it is the hope of everyone in this country that this pioneer experiment in great aircraft will be the success it so richly deserves.

## From Sir Miles Thomas D.F.C., M.I.Mech.E., M.S.A.E.



**F**OLLOWING the decision in 1943 by M.A.P. and the Air Ministry to order prototypes of the Bristol 167, B.O.A.C. was asked to associate itself closely with the design and development; this association would include advising M.A.P. and the Bristol Aeroplane Company on the layout of the aircraft and its equipment. Before mentioning the more outstanding examples of the collaboration, it is necessary to refer briefly to the broad approach followed by B.O.A.C. in seeking the objectives of safety, performance and earning power.

The original conception of the Brabazon Committee was largely based upon the prestige value of a direct London-New York service coupled with the