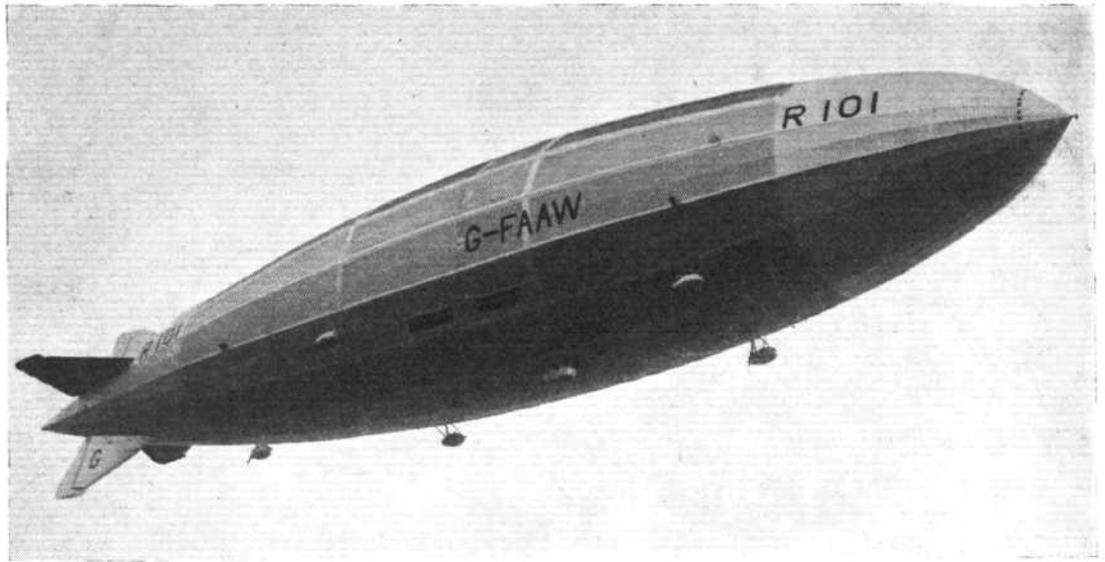


Well Away: In this view R.101 is in free flight shortly before heading for London.

("FLIGHT" Photo.)



ship is Flight-Lieut. L. C. Irwin, with Lieut.-Commander N. G. Atherstone as first officer and Flying Officer M. L. Steff as second officer. Major G. H. Scott is in charge of all airship flying, and will in due course put R.100 also through her test flights. During the period at the tower, the ship was allowed to rise, and then hauled down again by the winch and made fast. Everything worked as well as could be desired. It was then felt that a trial flight could be undertaken.

The First Flight

Monday, October 14, was a grey day with moving clouds and some mist, but not at all a bad day for flying. Major Scott again took command of R.101, and at 11.19 a.m.

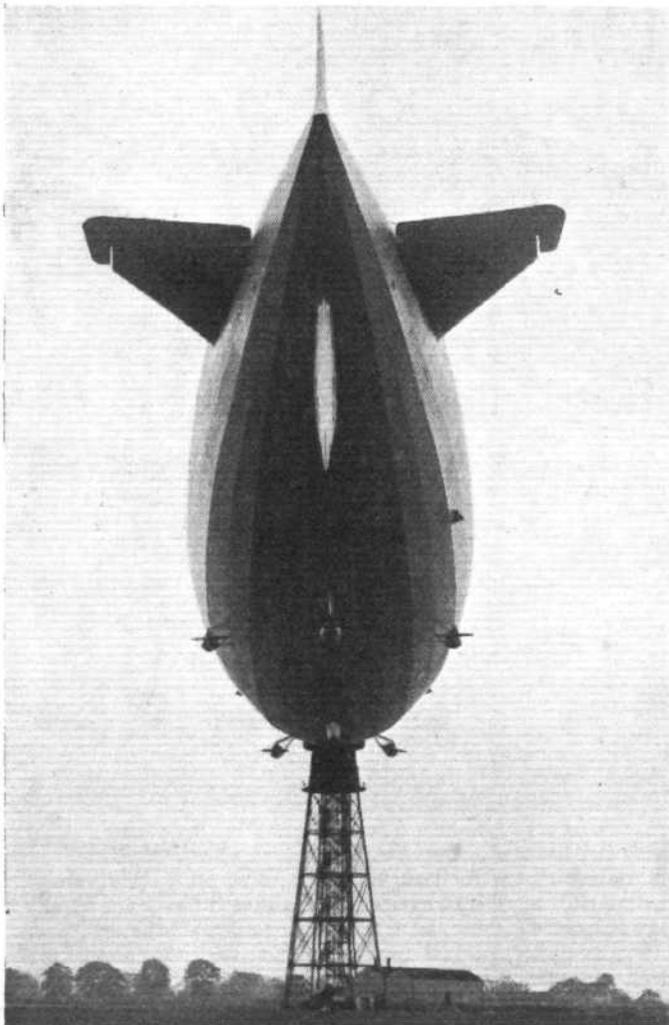
she was slipped from the tower. The intention was to make a flight of five hours, flying very gently and getting the feel of the ship. She soared away gently from the tower, and then turned up wind. It was not expected that anything would go wrong, and as a matter of fact nothing did go wrong, but it was prudent to make the first move up wind, so that if the unexpected happened the wind would help her home. When all was found to be going well, the ship was put about and headed for London. About 1.30 she came in over Hampstead Hill, and then moved on, very stately and slow, to Buckingham Palace. It seemed a pity that T.M. the King and Queen were at Sandringham, for they would certainly have enjoyed the wonderful sight as much as millions of their subjects enjoyed it. During the week-end at the tower, it is reckoned that nearly a million people found their way to Cardington to see the airship, and the police said that the traffic congestion on the roads was worse than on a Derby Day.

R.101 seemed to move imperceptibly as she passed over London, and at times some of her propellers were quite still. From Buckingham Palace she passed on over Westminster, and then over the City. At 2.30 the watchers on Hampstead Heath got a last, but quite long view of her as she vanished in the direction of her home. On the way back the speed was increased for a space to more than 50 m.p.h., which was not too bad for the first flight. By 4 p.m. she was over Cardington at a height of some 2,000 to 2,500 ft. She dived slowly, and at 4.15 she dropped her mooring cable, which was rapidly coupled to the tower's cable, as before. She was then hauled down very slowly, and at 4.49 the tower's coupling was snapped round her mooring cone. From dropping the cable to being made fast took just 34 minutes. This time can doubtless be improved with practice, and when all concerned are more completely familiar with the ship. The comparative leisureliness of the proceeding is all in keeping with the cautious policy which has been followed with this airship. But at the worst, half an hour over mooring is not a tremendous time for even an impatient passenger to wait. *Moi qui vous parle* have waited an hour in the Royal Scot outside Euston station.

After disembarking, Major Scott, speaking in his quiet way, and with his typical moderation, said that everything had gone well. The noise of the engines had only been very slightly heard in the passenger saloon. There had been no engine trouble. In fact, no trouble of any sort. Everything was most satisfactory. She had handled nicely and answered her controls well. Then, apparently remembering the criticisms which have been made about the shape and size of the ship, Major Scott added with some emphasis, that her ease of control promised well for the future of the big airship.

A progressive series of flights will be undertaken, and in due course the ship will be put through full-speed trials. Not until all the trials have been successfully accomplished can we pronounce R.101 to be a complete technical success. But she has certainly made a good start, and so far as the first flight goes, Col. V. C. Richmond and all his helpers deserve the heartiest congratulations.

F. A. de V. R.



"Tail Well Up": A somewhat curious view of R.101 at the mooring mast at Cardington.

("FLIGHT" Photo.)

As we are about to go to press it is announced that another flight will be made on October 17.