



AN AERIAL VIEW OF THE ISLAND

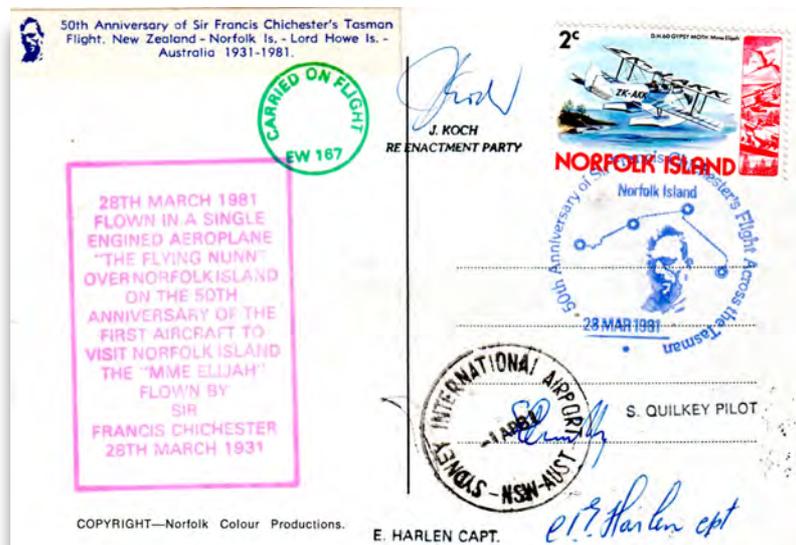
Sir Francis Chichester

by David Ransom

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I decided to put this little article together to show a special postcard from Norfolk Island, and on researching, I have discovered some interesting information including a UFO sighting described by Sir Francis himself on YouTube*.

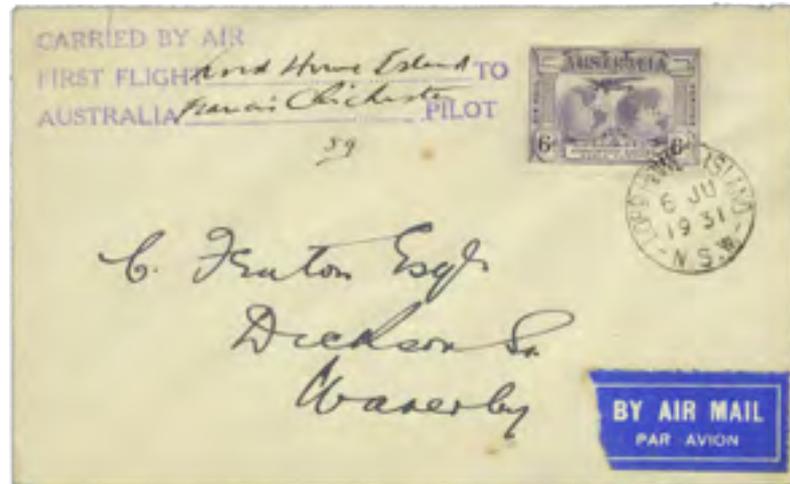
The postcard shows a nice view of Norfolk Island from the air, but the back has been produced as a souvenir of the 50th



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anniversary flight to commemorate Sir Francis Chichester's first flight across the Tasman Sea from New Zealand to Australia when he landed at both Norfolk Island and Lord Howe Island.



Grosvenor Philatelic Auctions, May 2011, Sale 65, Lot 1064. Australia: Covers: 1931 (June 6) Francis Chichester Lord Howe Island-Australia flown cover, signed by him and numbered "59". A.A.C. 184a. Photo. Price Realised £200

The following information is taken from Wikipedia:

Sir Francis Charles Chichester KBE (17th September 1901 – 26th August 1972), aviator and sailor, was knighted by Queen Elizabeth II for becoming the first person to sail single-handed around the world by the clipper route, and the fastest circumnavigator, in nine months and one day overall.

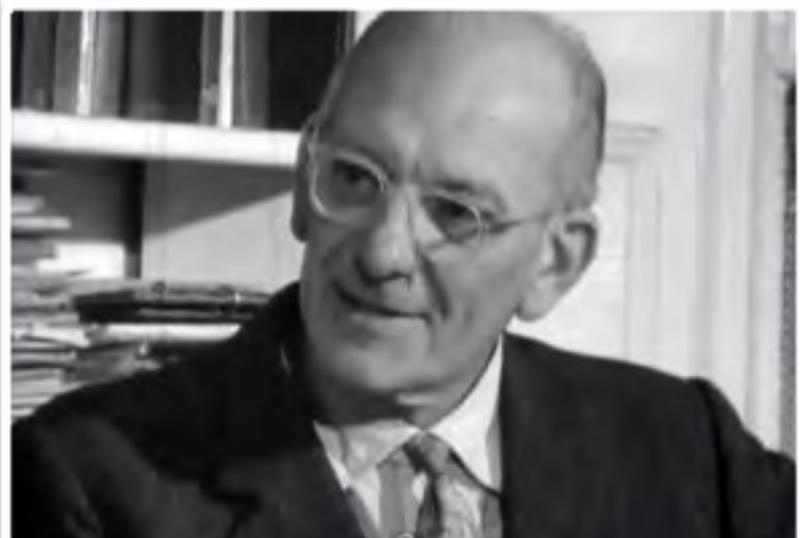
Chichester was born in Barnstaple, Devon, England, and was the son of a clergyman of the Church of England, Charles Chichester. At the age of eighteen, Chichester emigrated to New Zealand, where in ten years he built up a prosperous business in forestry, mining and property development, only to suffer severe losses in the Great Depression.

After returning to England in 1929 to visit his family, Chichester took flying lessons at Brooklands, Surrey, and qualified as a pilot. He then took delivery of a de Havilland Gipsy Moth aircraft, which he intended to fly to New Zealand, hoping to break Bert Hinkler's record

solo flight back to Australia on the way. While mechanical problems meant that the record eluded him, he completed the trip in 41 days. The aircraft was then shipped to New Zealand. Finding that he was unable to carry enough fuel to cross the Tasman Sea directly, Chichester had his Gipsy Moth fitted with floats borrowed from the New Zealand Permanent Air Force, and went on to make the first solo flight across the Tasman Sea from East to West (New Zealand to Australia). He was the first aviator to land an aircraft at Norfolk Island and Lord Howe Island. Again, the trip was delayed: after his aircraft was severely damaged at Lord Howe, he had to rebuild it himself with the help of islanders.

The following is an extract from *The Lonely Sea and the Sky*, Sir Francis Chichester (1964) in which he discusses an event which took place on June 10th 1931:

Suddenly, ahead and thirty degrees to the left, there were bright flashes in several places, like the dazzle of a heliograph. I saw a dull grey-white airship coming towards me. It seemed impossible, but I could have sworn that it was an airship, nosing towards me like an oblong pearl. Except for a cloud or two, there was nothing else in the sky.



I looked around, sometimes catching a flash or a glint, and turning again to look at the airship I found it had disappeared.

I screwed up my eyes, unable to believe them, and twisted the seaplane this way and that, thinking that the airship must be hidden by a blind spot. Dazzling flashes continued in four or five different places, but I could not pick out any planes.

Then, out of some clouds to my right front, I saw another, or the same, airship advancing. I watched it intently, determined not to look away for a fraction of a second: I'd see what happened to this one, if I had to chase it. It drew steadily closer, until perhaps a mile away, when suddenly it vanished. Then it reappeared, close to where it had vanished: I watched with angry intentness.

It drew closer, and I could see the dull gleam of light on its nose and back. It came on, but instead of increasing in size, it diminished as it approached. When quite near, it suddenly became its own ghost - one second I could see through it, and the next it had vanished. I decided that it could only be a diminutive cloud, perfectly shaped like an airship and then dissolving, but it was uncanny that it should exactly resume the same shape after it once vanished.

I turned towards the flashes, but those too had vanished. All this was many years before anyone spoke of flying saucers. Whatever it was I saw, it seems to have been very much like what people have since claimed to be flying saucers.

Weblinks:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Francis_Chichester

http://grosvenorauctions.com/PDFs/65/pdf_65.php

* <http://www.abovetopsecret.com/forum/thread600397/pg1>