

# TRIMOTORS over the CHANNEL

Situated off France's Normandy coast, some 100 miles south of the British mainland, the Channel Islands presented a highly attractive proposition for Britain's inter-war airline pioneers, who took advantage of the safety and economical benefits of three-engined aircraft to establish services across the English Channel, as **MATTHEW WILLIS** relates

**RIGHT** A splendid contemporary advertisement poster for Portsmouth, Southsea & Isle of Wight Aviation Ltd's air ferry service between Portsmouth on the mainland and Shanklin and Ryde on the Isle of Wight, featuring the company's specially modified Westland Wessex trimotor, G-ABVB.

TAH ARCHIVE

**BELOW** Only two Saro Windhovers were built, Jersey Airways acquiring the second, G-ABJP (c/n A.21/2) in May 1935 from the Hon Mrs Victor Bruce, who is seen here in the aircraft preparing for one of her several attempts on the world flight-refuelling endurance record in 1932.

VIA AUTHOR



FARES	SINGLE		RETURN	
	FROM SHANKLIN	10/6	19/6	19/6
FROM RYDE	-	6/-	10/	

Children under 12, half-price from Ryde only.

**O**N MAY 31, 2017, the last few passengers stepped out of a small 18-seat airliner at Guernsey Airport and brought to an end one period of history that had lasted since 1971, and another that went back to the mid-1930s. As Aurigny Air Services' Britten-Norman BN.2A Mk III Trislander G-BEVT discharged its passengers and freight, it represented what was in all probability the last piston-engined trimotor to serve the Channel Islands.

The distinctive sight and sound of the Trislander and its three Lycoming O-540 flat-four engines had been an intrinsic part of the Channel Islands landscape since the first of the type in service flew its first scheduled trip until it was finally — after many attempts — replaced with turboprop-powered aircraft from 2014. The link between piston-engined trimotors and the Channel Islands, however, dates back to a time long before Aurigny, the States-owned airline for the Channel Islands, recognised the value of the Trislander in the early 1970s. The relationship goes back to the early days of the air link between mainland England and the first permanent aerodromes on the islands.

The first scheduled air service to the Channel Islands began in 1923. There were no suitable airfields on the islands at the time,