

INDIVIDUAL HISTORY

AVRO YORK C.MK.1 TS798/G-AGNV
MUSEUM ACCESSION NUMBER 75/A/725

- Nov 44 Ordered as part of contract No.6/Acft/4777/C.4 (a) for 60 passenger-cum-freight Yorks to spec 19/44 for RAF/BOAC use -works order No.9/43
- Oct 45 Completed at the Avro plant in Yeadon; given the constructors' number 1223. Of the 60 Yorks ordered in this batch, only 25 were delivered, carrying the RAF serials TS789-TS813. Delivered in overall silver with RAF roundels and serial TS798. The other aircraft in the batch were cancelled.
- 19 Oct 45 First flight from Yeadon.
- 08 Nov 45 Delivered to BOAC at Croydon Airport as TS798.
- 09 Dec 45 Issued Co A and civil registration G-AGNV, the other aircraft of the batch becoming BOAC G-AGNL-P, G-AGNR-OF and G-AGSL-SP. BOAC operated 30 Yorks in all.
- G-AGNV was used initially for training.
- 01 Feb 47 Entered scheduled BOAC service as `Morville' on the Calcutta route part of BOAC's `M' class. Photos: Propliner 23 p.14; Profile 168 (Avro York); Aeroplane Monthly Feb 93 p.65; Aeroplane March 2006 p.68; Aeroplane January 2008 p.57 (at Belvedere, Salisbury, Rhodesia).
- G-AGNV latterly operated as a 50-seater aircraft.
- 21/22 Aug 48 First of a number of flights by G-AGNV recorded in pilots logbook of Albert Robotham (RAFM X006-8901/005) Castel Benito – Kano (6.50 hours) – Kano – Lagos (2.45 hours) – Accra (1.25 hours)
- 22 Mar 49 Robotham LB – Karachi – Delhi (3.10 hours) – Calcutta (3.45 hours) – Delhi (4.20 hours) - Karachi (3.50 hours, 23 March), with co-pilot, navigator, radio operator, two stewards and one other crew member.
- 11 May 49 Robotham LB – Rome – London, flying time 5 hours 50 minutes, then on to Hurn (Bournemouth) in 40 minutes.
- 27 May 49 Karachi – Delhi, 3 hours 30 minutes – Robotham LB. Then return to Karachi – same flying time. Basra (6 hours 30 minutes, 28 May) and on to Cairo (5 hours 35 minutes) – Robotham LB.

- 10/11 Sep 49 Cairo – Basra (4.50 hours) – Karachi (6.45 hours) – Robotham LB
- 6 Nov 49 Castel Benito (Libya) – Kano (7.30 hours) – Lagos (2.35 hours) – Accra (1.20 hours) Robotham LB.
- 28 Nov 49 Castel Benito – London (7.40 hours) – Robotham Logbook
- 07 Oct 50 BOAC withdraw its last Yorks from passenger service. Around this time `GNV was converted to freight configuration with double freight doors on the port side, and operated from Heathrow. Photo: at Heathrow 1951 - FlyPast Feb 82 p.33. Also The Aeroplane 27 Jul 51 p.107.
- Dec 51 Photographed at Karachi loading elephants. Photo: Aeroplane Monthly Feb 93 p.59.
- 17-20 Nov 54 Final BOAC Flight, a ferry flight from Karachi to Heathrow. `GNV had latterly operated renamed `Middlesex'.
- 30 Mar 55 Sold to Skyways Ltd for tour and charter work - one of 30 Yorks operated by that company. Flew mainly from Stansted and Heathrow, latterly carrying spare engines for Skyways' own Lockheed Constellations as well as BOAC and Pan American Airways aircraft. Colour photo - `Vintage Glory' (A M Balch, Airline, 1994). Colour scheme –natural metal wings, engines, tailplanes and lower fuselage, natural metal propellers with yellow tips, white fuselage top with duck egg blue cheatline edged in crimson. Fins and rudders white with fuselage style cheatline, and crimson `Skyways of London' titling and registration letters.
Photos: at Heathrow, July 1958; Scale Aircraft Modelling February 2002 p.825; at Malta (Luqa) in 1959 - Aeroplane Monthly Feb 85 p.103. See also Air Britain Archive No.4 1982 p.96.
(BOAC continued to operate Yorks on freight duties until 22 Nov 57).
- May 64 Retired from use as Skyways' last York and stored at Luton. Had latterly been operated on charter to Pan American Airways, ferrying Lockheed Constellation engines around the world, including Iceland and Africa, and flown by Euravia, based at Heathrow.
- 8 Oct 64 Local Bath press at the time recorded G-AGNV flew Zurich-London – see RAF Colerne files at RAFM.
- 09 Oct 64 (Friday) Having been sold to the Skyfame aircraft collection for £600 scrap value (Founder Peter Thomas re-mortgaged his house to raise the money), made the last flight anywhere by an Avro York - escorted by two Handley Page Hastings of Nos. 24 and 36 Squadrons, RAF Colerne, Wilts `GNV flew from Heathrow to Staverton Airport, Glos to join the Skyfame collection. En route, it landed at RAF Colerne for its crew to attend a special briefing by officers of No.24 Squadron, who had flown RAF Yorks until 1952, and pick up her Hastings escort.

Reaching Staverton at c.1515 hours, the 3 aircraft made three formation fly-bys before the York landed with the Hastings flying overhead in a final salute ('Skyfame Circuit' April 1966 p.10-11). The aircraft landed 50 feet short of the runway, 'coming to a halt amid clouds of blue smoke from one of the landing wheel brakes' according to a local press report at the time. Photos: Flight International 29 Oct 64 p.763; Air Pictorial Jan 65 p.21 and Air Pictorial May 65 p.155. Parked initially next to Dowty's factory. The aircraft was later taxied into its permanent display position, with total flying hours of some 18,100.

- 06 Mar 65 CoA expired.
- c. Spring 1965 Repainted by a team of 10 men from Avro (Hawker Siddeley) at Woodford over a 2-week period - given camouflage and markings of LV633 'Ascalon' to represent the York C (VIP) Mk.1 used by Churchill and King George VI during the war. During this work, a strike was called because one of the painters had done some work allocated to one of his mates! (Aeroplane August 2003 p.29) Photos: Air Extra No.7 p.24-5; 'Skyfame Circuit' Winter 1970 p.90; Flight International 23 March 1968 p.450; Air Britain Digest Summer 1997 p.10; Control Column Jul 76 p.103; Lost Aviation Collections of Britain (Ellis) – Colour, 1968..
- 16 May 72 Purchased by RAFM from Peter Thomas, owner of the Skyfame Museum.
- Aug 73 Moved at Staverton prior to dismantling.
- 25 Oct 73 Following dismantling, movement by No.71 MU began by road from Staverton to RAF Brize Norton for restoration. By 8 Nov. only the centre section with undercarriage remained to be moved. During restoration the aircraft was completely paint stripped and given a new overall silver paint scheme with the identity 'MW100' - the first production York in 1943, another VIP aircraft.
- Late 1975 Moved to RAF Shawbury, Salop for storage - restoration incomplete.
- Jan 76 To RAF Cosford Aerospace Museum, Salop. Photo: Wrecks and Relics 5th Edition. Has been on display at Cosford ever since, moving into the new National Cold War Exhibition building in 2006. Photo temporarily displayed outside at Cosford - Aircraft Illustrated Jan 86 p.48.

Survivors

258 Yorks were built. After the retirement of the last Canadian registered York in 1960, the last French Aéronavale York in 1962 and the last Middle East registered York in March 1963, only three Yorks remained on the UK register in 1963 flown by Skyways and Dan-Air. The last

Dan-Air York, G-ANTK made its last revenue flight on 23rd April 1964, and a final flight to Lasham, on 30 Apr 64 and is now preserved at the IWM Duxford.
Substantial parts of 2 or 3 other Yorks remain at Crash sites in northern Canada, including CF-HMX of Arctic Wings which crashed at Hall Bay, Nunavut, on 12 April 1955.

TEXT - ANDREW SIMPSON