

Limehouse Woman Competed In U.S.A. Powder Puff Derby



A couple of "plane janes" — Barbara Brotherton and Ruth Bliss

"The only dangerous part of flying is driving your car to the airport," observes housewife Mrs. Thomas Brotherton of Limehouse.

She should know. A veteran pilot of 10 years standing, she has flown across North America many times, has 450 flying hours and recently took part in the 23rd annual Powder Puff Derby.

The derby, officially known as All Women's Transcontinental Air Race, started in San Diego on July 4, and wound up four days and 2,515 miles later in Washington D. C.

Mrs. Brotherton, and her co-pilot, Ruth Bliss, 63, a grandmother of five, from New Jersey, won two leg prizes and \$125 each. The winner of the race, Mara Culp, of California, was awarded \$2,000 and a trip to Paris.

Flying Song

Mrs. Brotherton insists flying is safer than driving after all.

Lord, guard and guide 99's who fly Through the great spaces of the sky; Be with them traversing the air In darkening storms or sunshine fair.

starts the club song of the International Association of Women Flyers, also known as Ninety-Nines.

The BBs (Brotherton and Bliss) have flown together many times and last year placed 21st in the Powder Puff Derby.

The Limehouse pilot came to Canada in 1966 from New Jersey. Her husband, Tom Brotherton is the manager of Economy Forms Corp., of Georgetown.

Mr. Brotherton a pilot during the Second World War, taught his wife flying.

"I started by helping him read the map, then learned navigating and suddenly I was a pilot," says Mrs. Brotherton.

Started in San Diego

Ninety-two single and double engine planes took part in the recent race but only 58 finished. The derby started in San Diego, passed across Las Vegas, St. George (Utah), Salt Lake City, Rock Springs (Wyoming), Cheyenne, Kearney (Nebraska), St. Joseph (Missouri), Mt. Vernon, Huntington (West Virginia) to Washington.

Thou who dost keep with the tender night The balanced birds in all their flight Thou of the tempered winds be near That, having Thee, they know no fear.

Weather varied from 112 degrees in the Nevada Desert to thunderstorms further north, but most of the time it was warm and skies clear.

The landscape from Mrs. Brotherton's twin-engine Cherokee looked "enchanting; I could see forever. While we were flying over cowboy country, I expected to see a covered wagon any moment, but it was just an empty desert."

Sheer Pleasure

Rocky Mountains with their fir trees, glowing streams and winding roads "were a sheer pleasure to watch."

Most of the planes flew at an altitude of 10,000 feet and had to follow daylight visual flight routes which meant no flying after sundown. If the flying BBs were late, another eight minutes in the home stretch to Dallas Airport in Washington, they would have been disqualified for flying after sundown. They landed at 8:29 — eight minutes before the deadline.

Daylight flight regulations made it imperative they stop overnight in ten cities two of them (Salt Lake City and Mt. Vernon) being must stops.

Friendly Welcomes

"Wherever we went, people were gracious and hospitable. In many towns, the mayors came out to welcome us. In Washington we even had a tea party with the First Lady, Mrs. Pat Nixon."

Taking part in the race were doctors, artists, mother and daughter teams, a bartender and flight instructors. Mrs. Brotherton and two other women from Calgary represented Canada.

It took the BBs 17 hours and 48 minutes to complete the 2,515 mile route.

Control their minds with instinct fit What time, adventures they quit The firm security of land Grant steadfast eye and skillful hand.

Mrs. Brotherton, who is the vice chairman of the Georgetown chapter of International Association of Women Flyers, would like to see a coast-to-coast Powder Puff Derby in Canada, but prospects look dim at the present time.

Can't Interest Sponsors Unlike Americans, Canadian companies show no interest in sponsoring a women's air race.

The Ontario chapter has tried to get industry interested in such a happening, but so far no luck.

Mrs. Brotherton hinted that tentative plans are being made for an air race from Toronto to Nassau next May.

When she isn't flying, she looks after her spacious house

and raises two teenage sons. "They show no interest in flying" she admits, patting Charlie Chan, her Siamese cat.

She is also involved in community projects and last year taught flight theory to the girl Air Rangers of Brampton. "I promised a free flight in my Comanche for all those who passed the exams; and all of them passed."

The Piper Comanche, bought by her husband in 1965, is a 4 seater and can easily reach 240 mph.

It's a lovely little thing; of course all the planes I have flown were lovely little things" smiles the 43 year old housewife

Hobby Not Expensive

She stresses that flying is not an expensive hobby. It takes about \$600 to learn how to fly. There is a wide choice of planes which cost from \$3,000 to as much as \$15,000, or you can rent a plane at the Guelph Air Park for \$15 an hour.

It takes mechanical skill to learn how to fly, but there is no physical strain she explains.

Discussing women pilots, she says: "They are very feminine but also stubborn; they have to be stubborn to overcome pressure from relatives and friends who try to convince them flying is not for women."

"You have to be positive and confident while flying," says Mrs. Brotherton. Flying in her Comanche, you can see she is positive, sure of herself and above all capable of handling the plane no matter the circumstances.

Tucked between the meters in the cockpit is a sign which reads Don't look now — but the pilot is putting on a parachute.

But you know it's not true, for Aloft in solitude of space, Uphold them with Thy saving grace Oh God, protect 99s who fly Through lonely ways beneath the sky.



Barbecue TIME

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