

Part 4: The Gathering Clouds of War

Narrator: The ground staff of BOAC in particular became part of the community and that company invested heavily in the development of Foynes town and harbour, building among other things a 5-star hotel in Boland's Meadow and cottages for their staff on the waterfront.

Frank Buckley: I always found the Americans to be very uppish, somehow or another. I found that the British crews were more pleasant - isn't that strange thing, now? Usually it's the opposite, the Americans are very friendly. But I found they felt they were little gods. Oh I suppose they were little gods in a way, you know? It was a new mode of transport, there wasn't too many of them around at the time.

Narrator: Foynes, in its way, became a boomtown, and even something of a tourist attraction.

Frank Buckley: Oh, it was unique! We used to have people coming in from Limerick - excursion trains coming out. They'd come down and, of course they were fascinated to see these flying boats. Naturally enough, I was a young man at the time and you'd see a nice girl... you'd say 'Would you like to see the plane?' Of course they were in their glory - you'd take them out to see the plane... by Jeez it'd be a great day!

There was no public transport in the time before the War came on. We in BOAC had our own coach - free travel... they had minibuses and staff cars. Matty Kelly from Glin was in charge of that. The original caretaker was Jackie Baker in England with whom I became very friendly, and I visited him at his home in Bristol many times.

Boland's Meadow - there was 12 houses built there for the BOAC staff. The radio officers were Irish government - they were staying in various places in and around Foynes - Jim King's, O'Malley's - different houses in Foynes.

Husbands and wives and their families would come and stay, mainly in the summertime, because the accommodation wasn't available. But, they had a hall there, a recreation centre, where we used to hold dances every week, or every month.

Interlude: Music: *Moonlight Serenade* segues to...

Dramatisation: September 1939