

Class B.

Royal Empire Society.

Bandra Williams.

18 Redan Street.

Mosman

Sydney.

North Sydney Girls' High School

Pacific Highway.

New South Wales.

Australia.

Around the British Commonwealth
by air.

Dear Judy,

It seems a good idea to keep a diary and send it to you so that you will know exactly what it is like to fly round the British Empire. It seems so strange that only yesterday we were together, and now I am about 4,040 miles away from you.

Well, you wanted to hear the whole story from the beginning, so I will shall start now here.

Father hired a taxi to get us out to Mascot aerodrome. After about half an hour, we saw our 'plane land, and after much bustling, we boarded her and.

found our seats.

We flew straight across Australia to Darwin. When just over the Darling River, I fell asleep, but before then I watched the country underneath—straight over the Dividing Ranges and then over the flat plains. The Ranges were green—the colour of gums, but the plains beyond made me think of Dorothea Mackellar's poem "My Country" and the lines,

.....a sunburnt country,
A land of sweeping plains."

On the slopes of the Ranges there were many trees, but the plains were bare. Every now and then ~~we~~ I saw a township—they looked so tiny from the air. Do you remember the models of different parts of France that we saw in the War Memorial in Canberra? Well, they looked like that.

We spent the night in Darwin at a grand hotel especially ~~built~~ provided for air travellers. I did not see much of Darwin because we arrived late and left early, but when we were in the air I saw what a good harbour Darwin stands on. Father says it

is one of the best in Australia, but because Darwin is so sparsely populated the harbour is not better known. It is interesting to note the tide here falls as much as 20 or 25 feet. The country around seemed very dry, but then this is the "dry" season.

Now we are flying over ocean - for hours deep blue has been our scene, but soon we shall land in Singapore. There is a library on the plane, and I have been looking for something about our ports of call. So far I have learnt that Singapore is called the "Gibraltar of the East". Well, I shall have a look at it, and see what I think of it.

Between Singapore and Calcutta.

Oh Judy! I wish you had been with us two days ago. Father arranged for us to visit a rubber plantation, just out of Singapore, and we watched rubber being collected from the trees by brown coolies.

The city and island of Singapore are just at the tip of the Malay Peninsula. Singapore is a great trading centre and coaling-station.

We flew over to Hong-Kong and back. Hong-Kong is a island at the mouth of the Canton

River. It was given to the British about 100 years ago by the Chinese government, when just a barren island. Now it is a flourishing port.

Between Calcutta and Karachi.

We had just left Calcutta and oh! - it is so hot! Calcutta is a very big city - the second largest in the Empire. It is at the mouth of the Ganges River and is the centre of manufacture and the port from which all manufactured goods are exported. The city has many fine buildings. We visited one of the two cathedrals in it. I bought you a pair of sandals. Everyone wears them there.

I think this letter is long enough, so I will post it at Karachi.

Please give my love to everyone,
And lots of it to ~~you~~
Sandra.

Vancouver.

Friday.

Dear Judy,

Here I am half way home - and I have quite neglected you and my diary, but to tell you the truth I have not had much spare

Time. England is so full of beauty and interest, I must save the details until I return. We stayed in London where we had a feast of concerts and theatres and visited the Art Galleries and many historic spots. We saw Buckingham Palace and even saw the Royal Family leaving in state for an official function. Then we went to Edinburgh and had a wonderful week in Scotland including 2 days among the lochs and 4 at the famous Trassachs.

Did you know that we went to South Africa and spent a week in Cape Town? It is a large and well-built city with beautiful buildings and parks. By way of the aerial cableway we went to the summit of Table Mountain, and had the most wonderful view of Capetown - the sea shore and the numerous resorts along its edges.

Now we are in Vancouver, after travelling three-quarters of our way round the empire.

~~In~~ Instead of coming straight across Canada we first called in at ~~Willes~~ Kingston, the capital of Jamaica - the chief island of the British West Indies. The city stands on a big harbour, and Father

told me it is an important naval base. It is very hilly country around Kingston, with great timber forests of cedar, logwood, mahogany and ebony. Most of the people are negroes and only comparatively few are white.

Our next stop was Halifax. It is the capital of Nova Scotia, and has one of the finest harbours in the world with accommodation for the largest ships of the transatlantic line.

We flew straight across Canada, stopping only at Winnipeg. The prairies are shielded from moisture laden westerly winds by the Rockies mountains. They are vast rolling plains flat and treeless. A man on the plane told me they were very different from season to season - fresh green in spring to parched brown in autumn, and in the north - a white expanse all winter.

Canada is sometimes called the granary of the world, used to be the greatest wheat producer in the world, but now Argentina exceeds her. On the fertile soil of the central ~~The slopes of~~ plains the wheat grows and ripens very quickly in the hot summer. Winnipeg is the important centre of industry.

for from there the wheat can be easily transported by rail and boat - either to the Pacific and the Atlantic. Further west we flew over the Great Central Plain, which affords excellent pasture for herds of cattle.

The slopes of the Rockies covered with pine and fir forests looked wonderful from the air, with snow covering the tips of the peaks. These forests make the timber industry rank next in importance to agriculture. A lot of the timber we saw is made into pulp and then into newsprint and other paper.

I am writing in the writing-room of our hotel in Vancouver. I wish you could hear Canadian people speaking. They have such soft sounding voices. All the people we have met have been very kind to us.

Over 80% of Canadians are of British and French origin, and most of the others belong to some European race.

In two days we leave Vancouver and fly first to Honolulu, then to Noumea, Suva, New Zealand and home.

Please give my love to everyone I know.
Sandra.

Auckland.
Friday.

Dear Judy.

This should reach you only a few days before we arrive home.

This is the loveliest town, set on Waitemate Harbour, an arm of the Haurahi Gulf. I love the sound of the Maori tongue. Do you?

Yesterday we went to Rotorua and saw the hot springs. Around Lake Rotorua were clouds of steam and there was a strong smell of smell of sulphur in the air. As we walked by, I saw Maoris having hot baths in the lakes, washing their clothes and cooking their meals in bubbling cauldrons of natural rock, for in some places the water is boiling and potatoes can be cooked just as quickly as on our stoves. Just imagine being able to walk out into your back yard and cook your potatoes - or have baths, in hot water.

The geysers sound very weird - a hissing sound, while from deep down

in the earth comes a dull thudding and strange gurglings and gasping.

I did not tell you about Suva. It is set on a pretty harbour on Viti Levu, one of the islands of the Fiji group. As the climate is very warm and moist, tropical fruits are produced in profusion, and sugar is an important product.

I have been reading about New Guinea. Mother and Father will fly there as soon as we reach home, but I will not go with them. Papua is part of the British Commonwealth. It is a vast unexplored territory, very mountainous. The inhabitants are natives with very dark skins and curly hair. Port Moresby is the chief town and port.

Well, now you know all about our trip through the British Commonwealth. It is scattered throughout the globe - so is indeed an empire on which "the sun never sets". It has been a wonderful experience and I feel more proud than ever that my passport will always be British.

Lots of Love,
Sandra.