

## QUEEN ELIZABETH II AND AIR FRANCE

(David Evans)

With the sad passing of Her Majesty the Queen, I am going to look back at the day she, and her two mile-long Coronation procession, had a close encounter with Air France on 2nd June, 1953.

That month the French Government Tourist Office, in conjunction with Air France, published a tribute to Her Majesty on the front page of its monthly bulletin "The Traveller in France". Under the heading of "Vive la Reine!" it reminded its readers that no fewer than thirteen Queens of England came from France following their marriages to English Kings so it was natural for Air France staff in London to take full advantage of the location of the GBI Head Office - 52/54 Haymarket - to observe the Coronation procession as it was on the route of this magnificent display of loyalty and affection for the new monarch. To underline the importance of the Air France office location, Max Hymans, chairman of Air France, was present to observe the procession from our office windows.

Although there is no way of knowing this for sure, Her Majesty must have noted the Air France office as she passed by it in her golden coach and this would have been the "close encounter" I mentioned at the beginning of this piece.

Despite the fact that sugar, cheese, butter, margarine and meat were still on ration in the United Kingdom at this time, I am sure that the Air France staff did their utmost to celebrate this momentous day in the best traditions of French hospitality and cooking!

Now we say "Vive le Roi!" and look forward to another splendid Coronation Day in the not too distant future...

