

Travel Grant - Report

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Thanks to the travel grant generously provided by the Centre for European Studies, I was able to visit Brussels and London and perform archival research crucial to the completion of my Ph.D. dissertation and related research papers. The subject of my dissertation concerns the development of transatlantic civil aviation, specifically in the North Atlantic, the world's busiest international flight corridor, from its inception to the point where it became routine, and the relevant political, economic, and technological factors that underpinned this process. This necessitated a thorough investigation of several European sources in order to provide a balance to the North American sources that are also being consulted.

Over the course of my trip I spent one week researching records at the European Commission archive in Brussels. This was important both for providing perspective on the role of international organizations, in this case the European Community, on the growth of civil aviation in general while also noting how EC countries cooperated and prioritized civil aviation as an industry. The efforts to unify European civil aviation, successful and otherwise, are valuable since they demonstrate how important the field was to the governments of the countries involved. The North Atlantic was typically the most important component of international flights outside of the EC and as such was frequently discussed among the sources consulted.

Three further weeks were spent in London, divided into roughly equal amounts between the British National Archives and the archives of British Airways. The National Archives of Britain were especially useful among European archives for this dissertation due to the central role that the British played in transatlantic aviation. During the Second World War it was Anglo-American cooperation that proved to be the defining factor in setting up much of the infrastructure that would later be used in civil flights across the ocean. Furthermore, after the war concluded it was Britain that saw the greatest volume of transatlantic travel among European countries. As for the British Airways archive, the entire record of the former British Overseas Airways Corporation, forerunner to British Airways for all non-European international flights, is held in their collection. Understanding the corporate priorities, challenges, and developments of this important airline and how building transatlantic links shaped it (and was shaped itself in turn) is a fundamental part of my research.

I would sincerely like to thank Joan DeBardeleben, Brigid Bedard-Hinz, and the staff of Carleton University's Centre for European Studies for providing me with the resources and support necessary to make this research trip. The work accomplished during my time abroad was vital to the completion of my dissertation and could not have been done without their generous contribution.