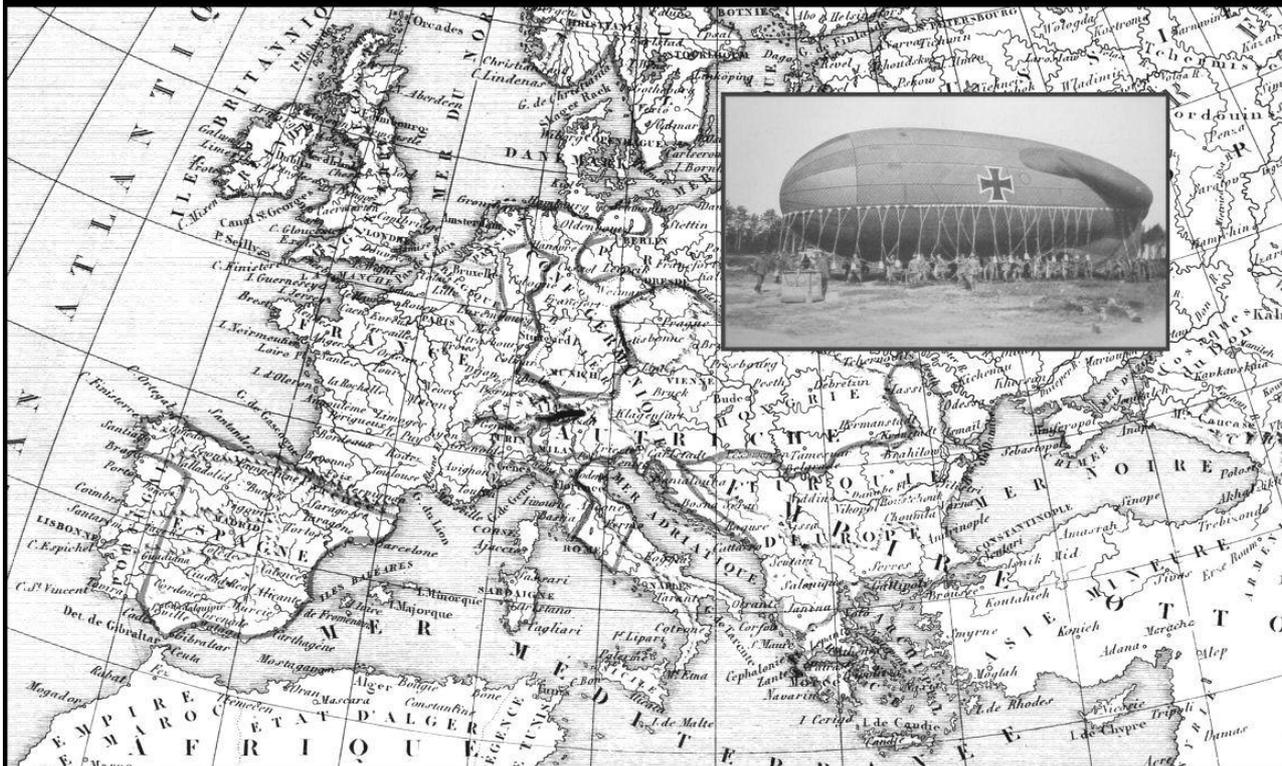


The Ankh of Chephren – The Skies of Fire

ADVENTURE: THE ANKH OF CHEPHREN - PART TWO

THE SKIES OF FIRE

- BY CLIVE OLDFIELD



THE Skies of Fire

Synopsis

This is the second part of the Ankh of Chephren, the adventure that began in *This Blessed Plot*. The action from *This Blessed Plot* should leave the PCs with a complete Ankh of Chephren and a good idea of how to use it. The ankh will lead then to Egypt.

This part is all about the trip from London to Cairo. It is designed to be a menu from which to pick and choose encounters and events rather than a set adventure wherein everything must get done.

En route the PCs should get approached peacefully and ambushed violently by various parties with an interest in finding the Hollow Earth. They can make alliances and enemies, get blown out of the sky or blow others out of the sky.

When the PCs arrive in Cairo, they can begin the events described in the third part of the Ankh of Chephren series, *The Sands of Time*.

More HEX stuff connected to the adventure can be found at www.chumley.co.uk/hex/.



The Ankh of Chephren – The Skies of Fire

Old Faces

The adventure uses a number of characters who appeared in the previous part. There is no knowing whether they survived or if it would make sense for them to turn up again. This adventure will use their names but if it does not make sense for them to be here, the GM could make equivalent PCs to perform similar roles. Although, he should be wary of several identical characters turning up during the course of the adventure, all playing the same role; players will begin to feel that their actions might make no difference.

Getting There

After the events of *This Blessed Plot* the PCs should probably want to get on the trail of the Hollow Earth as quickly as they can. In the hands of a psychic or magician the ankh, when complete, acts as a guide to the location of the gateway. All the PCs really need to do is follow where the Ankh takes them.

The ankh will lead them directly enough to the gateway, but it will not be accurate enough to take a bearing from or attempt some sort of accurate triangulation, especially from many miles distance. Even when used by a very sensitive psychic, it will only really point to within about ten degrees. So the PCs will need the ankh with them at all times. And of course as they get closer to the gateway, the ankh will become relatively more accurate.

There are a number of ways to get from England to Egypt but as this is HEX this adventure assumes that they go by airship. If they choose other means then the adventure will need to be amended to suit, or the GM should use subtle methods to convince the PCs that by airship is the best way to travel.

There are a number of places to get an airship. They could already own one. The GM might encourage a starting PC to have access to one as a resource. The PCs could have got hold of Malvern Hedges' *Merlin*, there is a good opportunity for this at the end of *This Blessed Plot*. Lord Brockhyrst's *Valkyrie* could also fall into their hands if they thwart him at the right times. Perhaps, if they are on

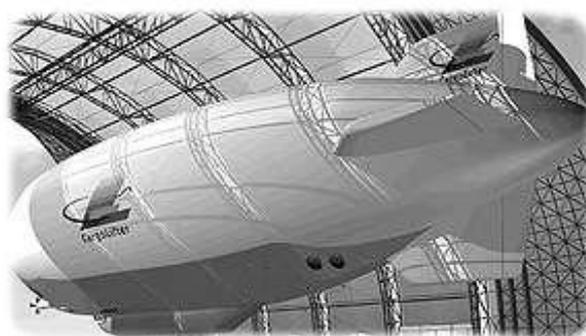
good terms with Fiona Featherstonehall (and they should be) she could give the PCs a lift in her 'Bebe.' This would suit her, too, as she has already inveigled herself into the party's affections and this would be the ideal way for her to keep an eye on them.

The PCs could simply want the next commercial airship flight out of Croydon, and as luck would have it the Britannic is leaving later that day. It's not as fast as flying by aeroplane, of course, but it has so much more style. The GM might even consider awarding style points for it.

If the PCs cannot find an airship the GM should perhaps be creative and even brazen about presenting them the opportunity to get hold of one. Perhaps a mad scientist needs his new invention test-flown; he'd have to be mad to just give it to the PCs. Or one of the PCs uncles could send a telegram asking him to look after the family airship for a couple of weeks.

The PCs should be given a sense of urgency. They should be aware that others, more powerful adversaries, are after them, and that unknown threats lurk. They should realise that rushing to the source of the ankh is in their best interests, and every day wasted in England will be a chance for their enemies to catch up with them. If need be, the GM can construct an encounter or two that will convince them of this. They can sense people watching them. They can get mugged, or perhaps Mrs. Leaky (see below) can be put on their trail.

The Merlin



Size	Def	Strc	Spd
12	4	12	80
Han	Crew	Pass	
-2	3	3	

The Ankh of Chephren – The Skies of Fire

The Merlin is Winstanley Malvern Hedges' personal craft. While a very pragmatic craft, it does have some home comforts. There are a number of books on board that may give an avid reader some basic grounding in the Hollow Earth. There is a copy of Secrets of the Pharaohs, and others with titles such as The Pyramids of Seven Continents, Search for Shangri-la, Incan Ruins Incan Gold, Civilisations on Top of the World. Anyone ploughing through them on the journey should be allowed to pay experience to increase any relevant knowledge skills (perhaps at a reduced cost).

The ship is well constructed and maintained and should give the PCs a good flight. Even so, there are always bits and pieces that might go wrong, small engine parts that might fail, and such like, that might require the PCs to land occasionally. The Atlantean Robots crewed the ship, but now the PCs will have to do it on their own, unless they managed to work out a way to turn one of the robots to their side.

Amongst the charts and navigation equipment, in the bridge there is a mysterious looking orange gem that glows occasionally. There are four runes seemingly etched into facets of the gem. These runes will be seen to change periodically if the airship is in flight. It should be very difficult to ascertain the significance of the runes without a lot of flying and testing and a few good ideas from the players. But it might be possible for them to work out, eventually, that the thing is actually a GPS. The Atlanteans used an entirely different system of coordinates, of course, but it might be possible to work them out.

The ship is armed with a single Browning machine gun. It is mounted in a turret below the gondola giving it excellent line of sight on anything at the level of the ship and below.

Browning M1919

Dmg	Str	Rng	Cap
3L	*	100 ft.	250(b)
Rate	Spd	Wt	
A	A	30lb.	

If the GM wishes, Malvern Hedges has installed an old Atlantean device known as a Quadlaser in the defence turret of the Merlin. It seems to be a mechanism for focussing four intense beams of light at a target.

Quadlaser

Dmg	Str	Rng	Cap
6L	*	200 ft.	∞
Rate	Spd	Wt	
A	F	20lb.	

Bebe

Size	Def	Strc	Spd
8	4	8	60
Han	Crew	Pass	
-2	1	3	

Fiona Featherstonehall's airship is unusual in that it does not have a semi rigid envelope around the gasbags, just rope netting. Also, the gondola is suspended beneath the bags. So it looks a lot like a conventional balloon. This also makes it a lot less streamlined and susceptible to buffeting by the weather.

However the four engines are more than strong enough to power the craft, and the separate gasbags makes it possible to affect spectacular emergency landings, by simply cutting one of the bags away.

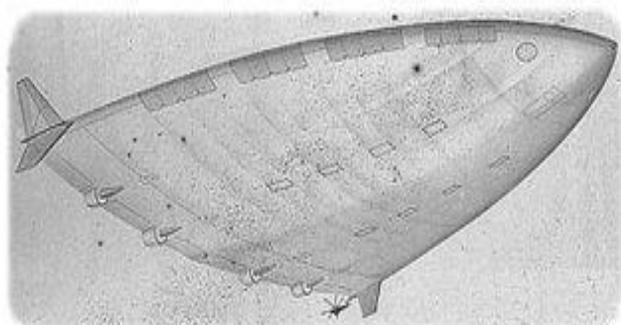
Internally, the ship has definitely been given 'the woman's touch.' Lace curtains, a tea cosy, antimacassars, a framed 'Home Sweet Home' embroidery make the cockpit look more like a middle-aged English spinster's country cottage than a state of the art aircraft. A kettle is kept on one of the engines so there is always a chance of a cuppa.

If the PCs accept a lift from Fiona then they may get the impression that the lady has a more than passing interest in their business. She will probe gently but firmly as to what they have discovered. It's plain she is itching to be in on it. The PCs are welcome to invite her along, but beware that she has a tendency to be bossy. And, when all is said and done, she has no intention of sharing the prize with anybody.

If given the opportunity she may just leave the PCs behind and steal their ankh, but it would have to be a perfect opportunity. She is more likely to carefully bide her time, knowing that for now she will have a better chance of success if she keeps the PCs on her side. If pressed though, by other agencies, she might double cross them.

The Ankh of Chephren – The Skies of Fire

The Valkyrie



Size	Def	Strc	Spd
10	4	12	90
Han	Crew	Pass	
0	6	0	

The Panzerluft class airship is a new German design. It is wedge shaped which makes it more aerodynamic, and thus faster. It is also built with a strong emphasis on saving weight so that the envelope is smaller than most ships of that much power and equipment.

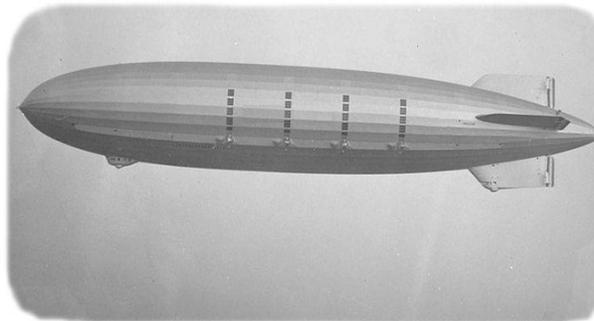
Many have now been commissioned by the Luftwaffe and plans exist in Berlin wherein fleets of Panzerluftens carry Panzer battle tanks quickly to strategical positions, hopelessly out manoeuvring any opposition. A number have also been purchased by the Ahnenerbe for use on polar expeditions. Lord Brockhyrst originally purchased his in order to get English engineers to copy it, and make an improved English version, but he enjoys flying it around so much that that plan has been temporarily shelved.

The three MG34 machine guns, mounted on each corner of the ship, gives it excellent protection from aerial attack..

Dmg	Str	Rng	Cap
3L	*	100 ft.	50(b)
Rate	Spd	Wt	
A	A	26.5lb.	

*Tripod mounted

The Britannic



Size	Def	Strc	Spd
16	4	18	70
Han	Crew	Pass	
-2	20	32	

If the PCs do not have any airship to get them to Cairo, the next one leaving from Croydon is the Britannic. There won't be another one for a week or two, so the PCs should be encouraged to get it.

The Britannic is a luxury airliner of the Teal Star company. It makes regular passages between London to Cairo stopping in Rome. Its sister ships the Atlantic, Gigantic, and Olympic fly other prestigious routes in and out of Croydon. Teal Star is a relatively new company famous for the opulence of its vessels and the quality of service on board its ships.

Commercial airship is the luxurious way to travel, and Teal Star is famous for the luxury of its liners, so needless to say the PCs will travel in comfort. If the PCs take this method of getting to Cairo they will be rubbing shoulders with the wealthy and well born.

If they do choose this method then the nature of many of the encounters they might have during the journey will be quite different. As they are not the only ones aboard their vessel, and they do not have control of it, simply threatening to blow the ship up, for example, will not work for some of their adversaries. On the other hand they will be accessible to other travellers, so some of the fellow passengers can be dangerous opponents who will have several days to bide their time before making a play for the ankh.

The Ankh of Chephren – The Skies of Fire

The Britannic only stops in Rome, so any coming and going the GM requires must be done then (unless it has to stop somewhere else, of course at the whim of the GM). Any sizeable organisation will have the resources to get an agent to Rome in time to meet the airship there.

THE JOURNEY

Any number of encounters can happen on the way to Cairo. The GM should choose which will work best with the game, using all of them might be too many.

It should be more fun to have two or three of these events all happening at the same time, giving the PCs more things to deal with, and creating a more interesting set piece action sequence.

In general the going should be pretty good with fine weather, good visibility, and plain sailing. The party might choose to land over night, or make better, but slightly riskier time by flying through the darkness. If they do land the GM might want to try an encounter whereby someone tries to sabotage the berthed airship, rather than using the direct attacks described below. If they travel through the night then the GM can change some of the encounters to night time ones if appropriate. But remember, everyone wants the ankh. It doesn't do anyone any good to have the PCs destroyed in a fireball above the sea.

There should also be the question of whether to fly over Germany, Italy and Austria. The ankh would seem to point that way (or near enough), and this would be reasonable as some PCs might have already guessed they should be heading towards Egypt. If the PCs avoid flying over fascist countries then their journey will be much longer and their navigation less sure.

If the PCs want to be entirely sophisticated then they could do a proper tour of some of the continent's greatest cities. They could, of course, stay with the airship at all times, landing only when necessary, and journeying through the night. But, how stylish is that when they could go London, Paris, Monte Carlo (or Milan), Rome, Athens, Rhodes, Cairo. The GM may wish to consider giving

out Style Points over the group's agreed itinerary.

Remember it is a long journey from England to Cairo. The PCs will fly over a great variety of countries and landscapes. Some of them quite hostile. Where these encounters occur can colour their natures just as much as the antagonists. Ditching in the Libyan desert to make a few minor repairs to an engine, is an entirely different proposition than doing the same thing just outside Paris.

The Sons of Odin

If the Sons of Odin are in any state to launch an attack on the PCs then they will do so at the earliest opportunity. The Valkyrie is a fine airyacht and extremely quick, so the PCs would have no chance to outrun it, even if they see it coming.

Lord Brockhyrst will personally control the attack from his airship, with Gloria Travers at his side. He will make a few strafing runs across *the Merlin's* path and signal for them to land their airship. If they refuse he will send every parawinger he has left, across in a single wave. They will attempt to land on the top of the airship and then use grappling hooks and ropes to scale the sides and make entry to the cabin.

This should be a serious attempt to thwart the PCs. Brockhyrst sees this as his last best chance to retrieve the ankh, and by now, he really hates the PCs. There should be too many parawingers for the PCs to easily cope with, so they might actually lose the battle.

There will also be Captain Marks, a tall very blond parawinger in a cuirass, who will direct the attack. This will give the PCs a figurehead to focus on and perhaps negotiate with. He will know what he is doing and command his troops well.

If the Sons of Odin win the battle then they will take control of the ship and land it. Brockhyrst will land, too. Once he gets the ankh he will think of some imaginative and convoluted way to kill the PCs, while he flies both airships to Egypt and starts looking for the gateway to the Hollow Earth.

If the PCs are taking public transport then the Sons

The Ankh of Chephren – The Skies of Fire

of Odin will fly an agent to Rome (Remember Gloria Travers can scry this sort of information at the GM's convenience) who will board the ship there. They might choose to send Mrs. Leaky, one of their most inconspicuous agents (see below). If they do not get the opportunity to use her in Rome, then she could always bump into the PCs in Cairo.

Witch Power

Perhaps Gloria Travers and her witches can perform a ritual that teleports one of the witches onto the bridge of their airship and then after a suitable pause, teleports her back again. For dramatic effect this should be done in full view of the PCs, giving the impression they are dealing with powerful forces.

Or, it might be better to simply have Gloria perform a ritual that projects her image onto the bridge. That way she can give the PCs a lecture, and have a nice bad guy rant at them from the safety of the grotto at Claverley. She also might inadvertently let slip clues as to the nature of the Sons of Odin and what their plans might be.

"I can see you. I can see you. So, you think you can hide from me. You think you can hide from the Sons of Odin. You should know by now that nothing escapes my gaze. Nowhere is out of reach of my mind. You have what we want and we will stop at nothing to get it back. Know that we pursue you unto the ends of the earth. Give us the ankh. Give it to us, for if you do not, it will be the last mistake you ever make."

Terra Arcanum

The Terra Arcanum at this stage, thanks to Malvern Hedges' mishandling of his charges, have probably been out manoeuvred. Malvern Hedges will try to redeem himself by getting to Cairo and organising things there, but for now he is out of the game.

Although he is part of a powerful and far-reaching organisation he will not want to demonstrate his failure so clearly as to ask for help from other members of the Terra Arcanum. This will be to the PCs' advantage and give them a fighting chance.

It is possible he could pull a few strings, and have the PCs have to deal with some local officialdom. If the PCs land in an official aerodrome somewhere, they could get their ship grounded and even impounded for some petty bureaucratic reason concocted by agents of the Terra Arcanum. If this occurs then the PCs will have to find a way around it, or steal back their own ship from the authorities. This will make them wanted men in that state, but as they are leaving anyway, that won't be too much of a handicap.

Malvern Hedges could even be hiding on board his own ship, if the fight in the hangar in part one went a certain way. If this is the case then the GM should play it by ear. He might stowaway under some deck plates for the entire journey. He could try to retake his ship in mid flight (preferably just as the Sons of Odin make their attack). He could creep out when the PCs have landed and try to get them all arrested for stealing his ship.

Anouk Khaleel

Featured in more detail in *The Sands of Time*, if the PCs are using a commercial airline then the GM could bring Anouk into the plot sooner as a seemingly random passenger, provided the Cult of Bast would have the time to get her on board in pursuit of the PCs. Her getting on good terms with a PC early will give her a greater chance of bringing him to her point of view later, in Cairo.



The Ankh of Chephren – The Skies of Fire

MRS. LEAKY

*“Oh, we simply must have a cup of tea, dear.
Lovely lapsang souchong, it's to die for.”*

Archetype: Little Old Lady **Motivation:** Money
Style: 3 **Health:** 5

Primary Attributes

Body: 2 **Charisma:** 4
Dexterity: 3 **Intelligence:** 4
Strength: 2 **Willpower:** 3

Secondary Attributes

Size: 0 **Initiative:** 7
Move: 4 **Defense:** 5
Perception: 7 **Stun:** 2

Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	Average
Brawl	2	1	3	(1+)
Melee*	4	1	5	(2+)
Firearms	3	3	6	(3)
Larceny	3	4	7	(3+)
Medicine	4	2	6	(3)
Performance	4	3	7	(3+)
Pilot	3	2	5	(2+)
Con	4	4	8	(4)
Stealth	3	3	6	(3)
Streetwise	4	1	5	(2+)

Talents

Innocent Looking
***Bold Attack**

Resources

None

Flaw

Psychotic

Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	Average
Hat Pin	2L	0	7L	(2+)L
Pistol	2L	0	8L	(4)L



Mrs. Leaky is a hired assassin who no one would suspect. She seems to be the quintessential little old lady. But appearances can be deceiving, Mrs. Leaky holds upon a frail-looking body at least half a dozen ways to kill. She has strict moral values however and will only kill for money. Or to silence witnesses. Or to aid her getaway. Or if you annoy her. Or if you're French.

Her sharpened hat pin contains a vial of cyanide which can be broken open with a twist. One of the teabags in her handbag contains a large dose of strychnine (the dangerous bag is marked extremely subtly). Into the hem of her dress is sown a wire garotte. She has a pistol secreted in her bustle. If the GM needs her to have a handy murderous tool, then she probably has it.

The Sons of Odin have hired her to do away with a PC or one of their allies. It's up to the GM when best to use her. She is listed here as a possible passenger on the Britannic airship, but she can be used in any civilised place.

The Ankh of Chephren – The Skies of Fire

FADIL RAMAS

“You see? There is truth behind the folk tales and substance to that which you dismiss as myth.”

Archetype: Patron Motivation: Assistance
Style: 3 Health: 5

Primary Attributes

Body: 2 Charisma: 3
Dexterity: 2 Intelligence: 4
Strength: 2 Willpower: 3

Secondary Attributes

Size: 0 Initiative: 6
Move: 4 Defense: 4
Perception: 7 Stun: 2

Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	Average
Brawl	2	1	3	(1+)
Melee	2	1	3	(1+)
History	4	4	8	(4)
Philosophy	4	4	8	(4)
Diplomacy	3	3	(6)	(3)
Linguistics	4	4	8	(4)
Geology	4	2	6	(3)
Survival	4	1	5	(2+)

Talents

Atlantean Language

Resources

The Brotherhood of Man

Flaw

Trusting

Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	Average
Fist	1N	0	4N	(2)N

If the PCs stop over at some half civilised place, then they will receive an invitation by messenger boy. It invites them to meet Fadil Ramas at a nearby restaurant or hotel. Of course if Fadil is already dead, the GM will need to replace him with another member of the Brotherhood of Man.



If the PCs turn up Fadil will explain how he came to be in the same place as the PCs. Basically, he hired a two-seater biplane to tail them, but the exact details of his trail will depend on what the PCs have been up to. The Brotherhood of Man could have a number of contacts who have spied the PCs, especially as they take their intelligence directly from Terra Arcanum. So it is reasonable to think that Fadil could find the PCs.

Fadil will go into some detail (but not too much) of what the Brotherhood of Man stands for. He will not name the Terra Arcanum, when he does this, but will refer to them as 'the powers that be.' Whether he manages to convince the PCs that he is telling the truth or not is not that vital at this time. He knows the PCs will continue what they are doing, and that the more they find out the better it suits him.

He will give the PCs an address in Cairo and tell them to look him up when they get there, and that he knows many people who will be able to help them with their quest. The PCs do not need to trust Fadil and take his advice, but their attitude towards him should colour the adventure a great deal.

The Ankh of Chephren – The Skies of Fire

BAST CAT BURGLAR

Archetype: Ninja Motivation: Duty
Style: 3 Health: 5

Primary Attributes

Body: 3 Charisma: 2
Dexterity: 4 Intelligence: 3
Strength: 3 Willpower: 2

Secondary Attributes

Size: 0 Initiative: 7
Move: 7 Defense: 7
Perception: 5 Stun: 3

Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	Average
Melee	3	4	7	(3+)
Brawl	3	4	7	(3+)
Archery	4	4	8	(4)
Blowgun			9	(4+)
Acrobatics	4	4	8	(4)
Larceny	4	6	10	(5)
Athletics	4	4	8	(4)

Talents

Dual Wield
Climb
Dodge

Resources

The Cult of Bast

Flaw

Inscrutable

Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	Average
Blowgun*	1N	0	10N	(5)N
Cat Claws*	3L	0	10L	(5)

*See Bast Cultists in *This Blessed Plot*.

The Cult of Bast will send one of their best women to steal the ankh. She will sneak on board at any reasonable point that the ship landed. The cult have been following the airship as best they can by car, and by phoning ahead. They have one or two agents in various of the biggest European cities. But they are by no means a large organisation with huge resources and manpower.



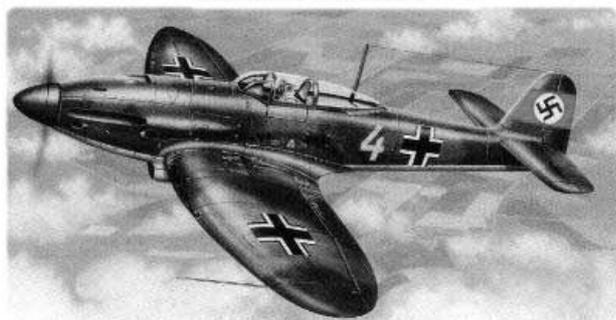
Having crept on board and hidden amongst the gas bags the burglar will await the right moment to creep down into the gondola and pocket the ankh. She will want to do this smoothly, carefully and entirely undetected. It is not her style to smash and grab.

The Burglar wears a long black 'paracloak' that can be used as an effective parachute. She should be able to make her escape by opening an exit door or simply breaking a widow and jumping out of the ship. She would hopefully have thought to leave the ship when it was over inhabited land (as opposed to the sea, or empty desert).

If the PCs do manage to capture her she will not be taken alive. She will be seen to pull a short ribbon from her clothes then fall down dead. Actually, this ribbon had been tying closed a small black silk bag. Inside the bag was an asp. As soon as the asp escaped, it bit her, unsurprisingly. Now, as well as having no prisoner, the PCs must cope with having a poisonous snake loose on their ship.

The Ankh of Chephren – The Skies of Fire

The Luftwaffe



Heinkel He112

Size	Def	Strc	Spd
2	6	8	200
Han	Crew	Pass	
-	1	0	

If the PCs are flying over a fascist country then they could get a visit from the Luftwaffe. Even if they are not, then the Luftwaffe might decide on such an important mission, to risk invading another country's airspace. They would then have the problem of what to do with the PCs' airship. Just crashing it won't help because they will not have access to the wreckage.

If the PCs are outside Fascist airspace then the planes will tail the airship for ten minutes or so, before turning back for home. They are unable to do anything else, but they might frighten the PCs a bit.

If the PCs are inside fascist airspace then four Heinkel He112 fighter planes will appear out of the sun and begin the strafe *the Merlin*. They will then fly above it and to the side making it clear they wish the pilot to turn about and land the airship. If the PCs do land then there will be a couple of truck loads of German infantry at the landing site within the hour. The PCs will be prisoners of the Reich and in a very bad place.

If the PCs refuse to land then the Heinkels will resume their strafing. It will only be a matter of time before they destroy the airship. The PCs only chance, apart from shooting down all the enemy planes, is to cross a border into a neutral country. The GM should time the attack so that they have a fighting chance to achieve this if they keep their wits about them.

Space Walk

One of the gauges on the control panel of the airship starts to play up. Someone who knows what they're doing, flying the airship, will realise that there is a fault with one of the topside gas valves. The PCs will be left with a choice. They can leave the valve as is, knowing the ship will become gradually more and more unstable as their journey progresses (going from minus 1 for piloting rolls up to as many as minus 3), or they can try to fix the problem.

Fixing it will mean a volunteer will need to climb up, on the outside of the envelope (there should be a handy rope ladder) all the way to the top of the ship. They will then have to walk along the top of the envelope until they find the stuck valve and then do some routine (difficulty 2), but precarious, maintenance. They could land the ship to sort the problem out, but it doesn't make too much sense, because someone will still have to climb up and walk along the envelope.

Engine Fault

One of the engines conks out. The PCs will need to land the craft in order to repair it. Depending on where they land, pretty much anything can happen while they're on the ground.

Fire

A fire breaks out on board. This is, needless to say, a very serious problem for a flying machine filled with explosive gas. The fire should not be a random occurrence, but rather the result of player action and abuse, such as an engine problem that has gone untended, or damage from a fire fight.

The PCs will no doubt make the fire a priority and come up with a number of ways of putting it out. If they are not successful then the campaign ends as all the PCs die in a raging fireball, so they should be given the benefit of any doubt, though they should be made to work hard, too.

The airship may have some means of fire protection such as primitive chemical extinguishers

The Ankh of Chephren – The Skies of Fire

and fire blankets, buckets of sand, a water supply, etc. having the fire start some distance from the gasbags, in an engine pod, say, and gradually creeping towards it, will give the PCs a sense of emergency, but still some room for manoeuvre and time to put it out.

Storm

There might be a severe electrical storm in the PCs' path. They should see it coming and be given the chance to land and weather the storm on the ground. This would be sensible.

If they decide to press on through the storm then they will likely get blown severely off course, and unless they fly well, be forced to make an emergency landing somewhere; the middle of the desert works. If they are unlucky then the storm could have done some permanent damage which they will need to repair to fly at full effectiveness again.

Peasants

If the PCs do have to land in some remote area then they might have to face the locals. Whether in the shadow of the Alps, the hills of Yugoslavia, the Aegean islands or the Libyan Desert, an airship will always attract a band of curious locals.

The peasants might be shy at first but if treated decently then they will soon become friendly and generous with what little they have. They will offer to help the PCs, bring them food, and attempt to get whatever they might need.

They will then invite the PCs to some important gathering, a wedding, a religious ceremony, a simple camp fire or evening meal. This should be an honour for the PCs and a mark of friendship and respect from the locals. The last thing the PCs will want to do is refuse the offer and throw the goodwill back in these people's faces, but on the other hand, the last thing they will want to do, while rushing across Europe to find the Hollow Earth, is waste a load of time on that sort of thing.

The PCs must be careful when they attend the event that they do not upset the locals with their

strange ways and customs. Misunderstandings can occur over many things. The good looking PC needs to make sure here that he does not inadvertently accept the peasant girl's proposal of marriage, because that really would offend her father, the village elder.

Bandits

Some peasants might turn out to be more desperate and less law-abiding than they could be. They will befriend the PCs and treat them similarly to how the peasants would (in fact they will be more friendly and more generous), but they will always be looking for the chance to take whatever they can get from the PCs and their aircraft.

A group of bandits will pose as ordinary locals; they might have women and children with them. They will be largely indistinguishable from their innocent counterparts, but the moment the PCs let their guard down they will be ready to rob them. They will be armed and ruthless, too.

Bureaucrats

Wherever the PCs land they could be confronted by a band of petty bureaucrats with law enforcement officers in tow demanding to see their appropriate paperwork. The PCs will have to do the right thing (whether this is bribe or argue or simply be polite) to avoid ending up down the station. If they do things badly then they should expect a night in the cells.

It could even be that the officials have been sent by the Terra Arcanum to delay the PCs until they get their agents on the scene. If this is the case then the PCs should get a whiff that something is not right. They will suspect that higher powers might be influencing things, so that when they are thrown in jail, they will realise that they need to escape pretty quickly to stay ahead of the game. The last thing the GM will want is the PCs waiting patiently in jail for three days while justice runs its course, and then the TA turn up and shoot them.

If the PCs are in a fascist country then it should be the Sons of Odin and the Thule Society behind the action, instead of the Terra Arcanum.

The Ankh of Chephren – The Skies of Fire

Mixing it

To make things more interesting and prevent the presentation of just a series of encounters, some of the events above should occur at the same time, in pairs or even in threes. The Sons of Odin turning up in the Valkyrie just as the Bast cultist tries to make a grab for the ankh, or a storm bearing down on their airship just as one of the PCs begins an in-flight walk to repair a misfiring engine, just as Luftwaffe fighters are spied in the distance...

CAIRO

As the PCs approach Cairo, the ankh will start to pull them further to the west, into the Sahara. The PCs might simply follow the ankh out into the desert but quite a bit needs to happen in Cairo before the PCs trek out across the desert and close in on the gateway. The PCs may not have an impending need, however, to go to Cairo. The Ankh of Chephren will lead them quite close to the city, but not close enough. The PCs may think they can simply fly straight to the gateway and land right next to it. This would not make a great adventure.

What needs to happen is that the PCs end up in Cairo, get some action, and then make their way overland towards the gateway. So, the GM needs to find ways to get the PCs to Cairo. After all, what's the point of flying right by one of the world's greatest cities and not even stopping.

If the PCs lose the ankh en route to Egypt then Cairo would be the obvious place to go to try to pick up the trail. The GM should try to work out what the new owners of the ankh might do, but it should be something similar to what the PCs would do, anyway.

If the PCs are interested in what Fadil Ramas has told them they are likely to want to stop off in Cairo to talk to him and get some of the aid he promised them.

If they want to find out more about the cult of Bast then Cairo University would be the best place in the world to look.

If they are travelling in the Bebe with Fiona Featherstonehall then she will definitely find it sensible to stop off in Cairo. She's an experienced explorer and knows her stuff.

Simply following the feeling of the ankh is inevitably going to bring them somewhere unexpected. It is not likely, especially considering they began the trip in England, that they are sensibly prepared for Saharan conditions already. It may need to be pointed out to the PCs that they should kit themselves out for a proper desert expedition.

Civilisation might be a good enough reason on its own to end up in Cairo. The PCs might be on the trail of amazing discoveries and untold riches, but nothing beats a hot bath.

The PCs might assume that the Pyramid of Chephren (only a few miles from Cairo) is actually the gateway for the Ankh of Chephren's key; them having the same name.

Also, most importantly, high up in an airship, ankh navigation becomes less effective the closer they get to the target. Any psychic PCs should feel that the ankh is losing power, only to feel that it is picking up the signal once more when they land. The PC will realise they are getting close to the gateway and they will need to follow the trail at ground level.

The Sands of Time

The Ankh of Chephren is continued in part three: *The Sands of Time*.

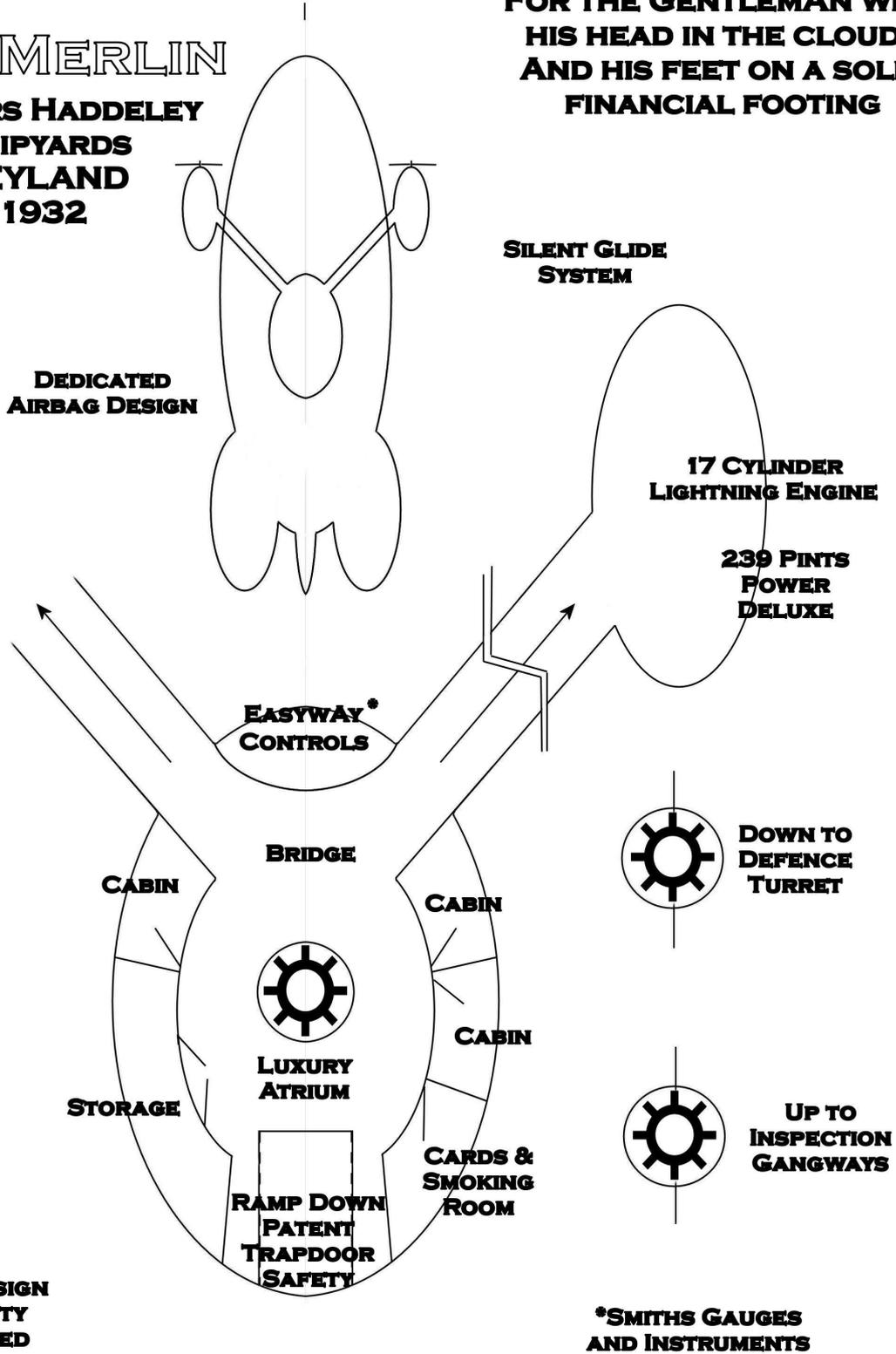


The Ankh of Chephren – The Skies of Fire

Appendix: The Merlin

THE MERLIN
VICKERS HADDELEY
SHIPYARDS
LEYLAND
1932

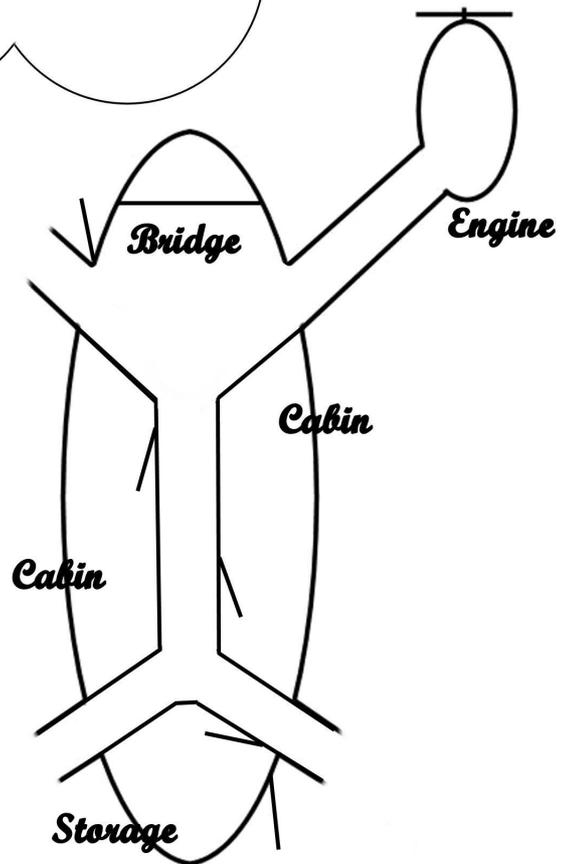
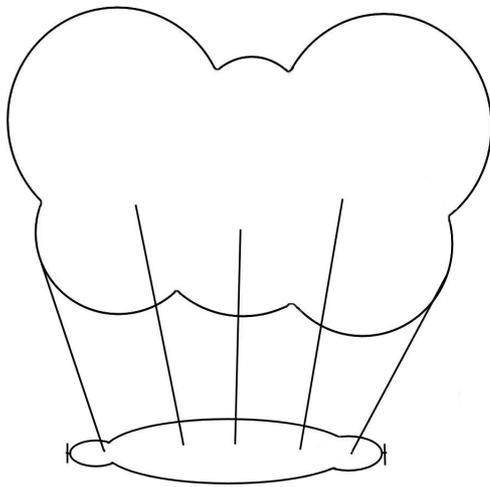
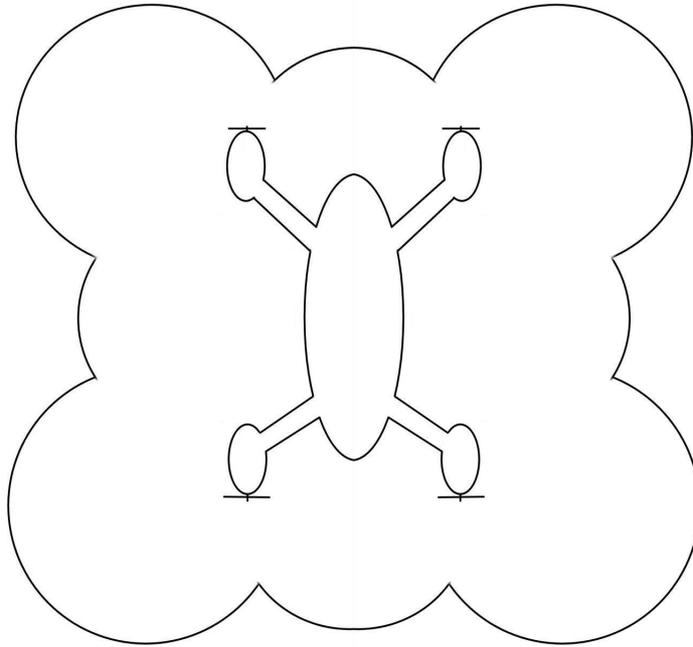
**FOR THE GENTLEMAN WITH
HIS HEAD IN THE CLOUDS
AND HIS FEET ON A SOLID
FINANCIAL FOOTING**



The Ankh of Chephren – The Skies of Fire

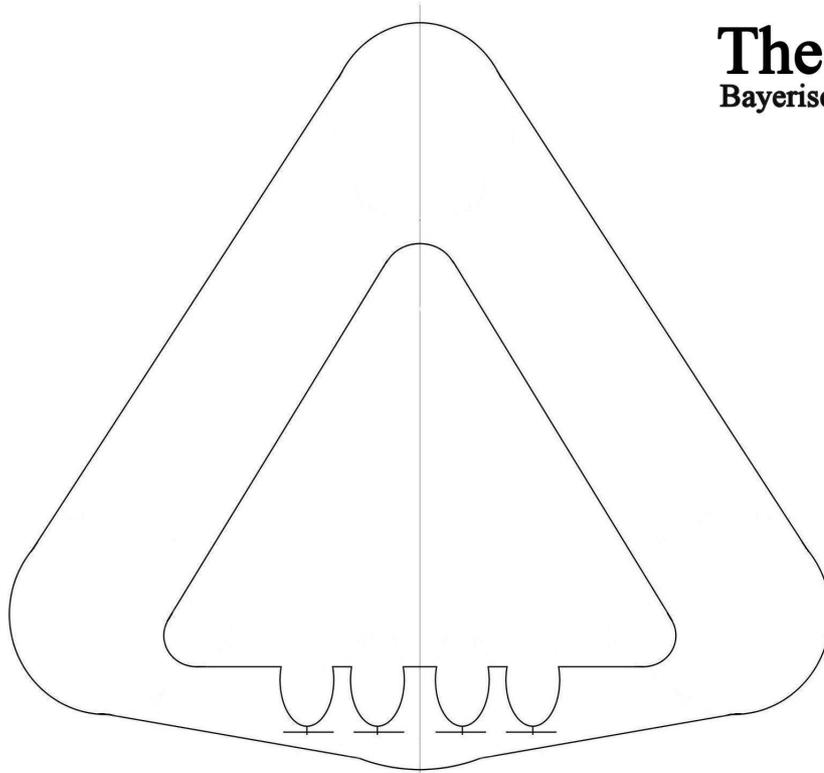
Appendix: Bebe

Bebe
Southampton



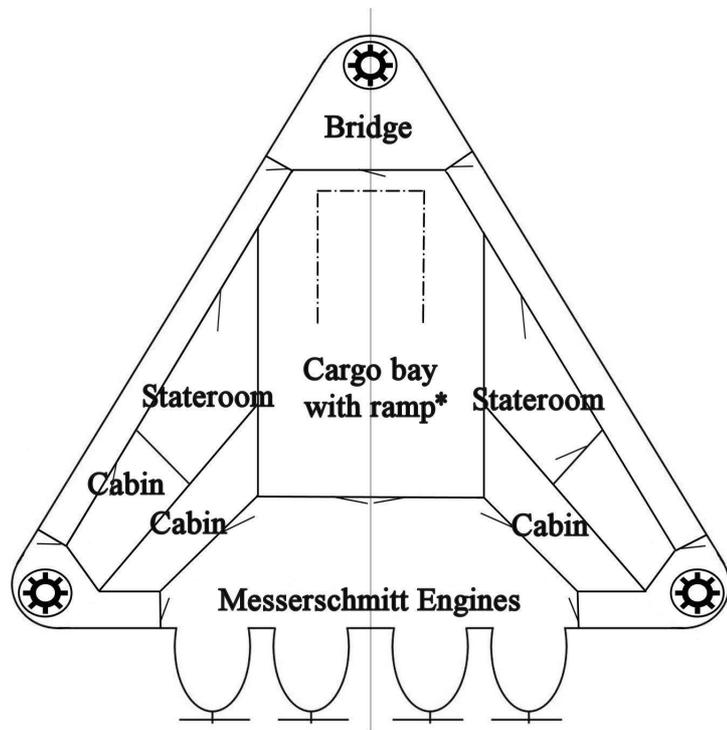
The Ankh of Chephren – The Skies of Fire

Appendix: The Valkyrie



The Valkyrie
Bayerische Flugzeugwerke
Augsburg

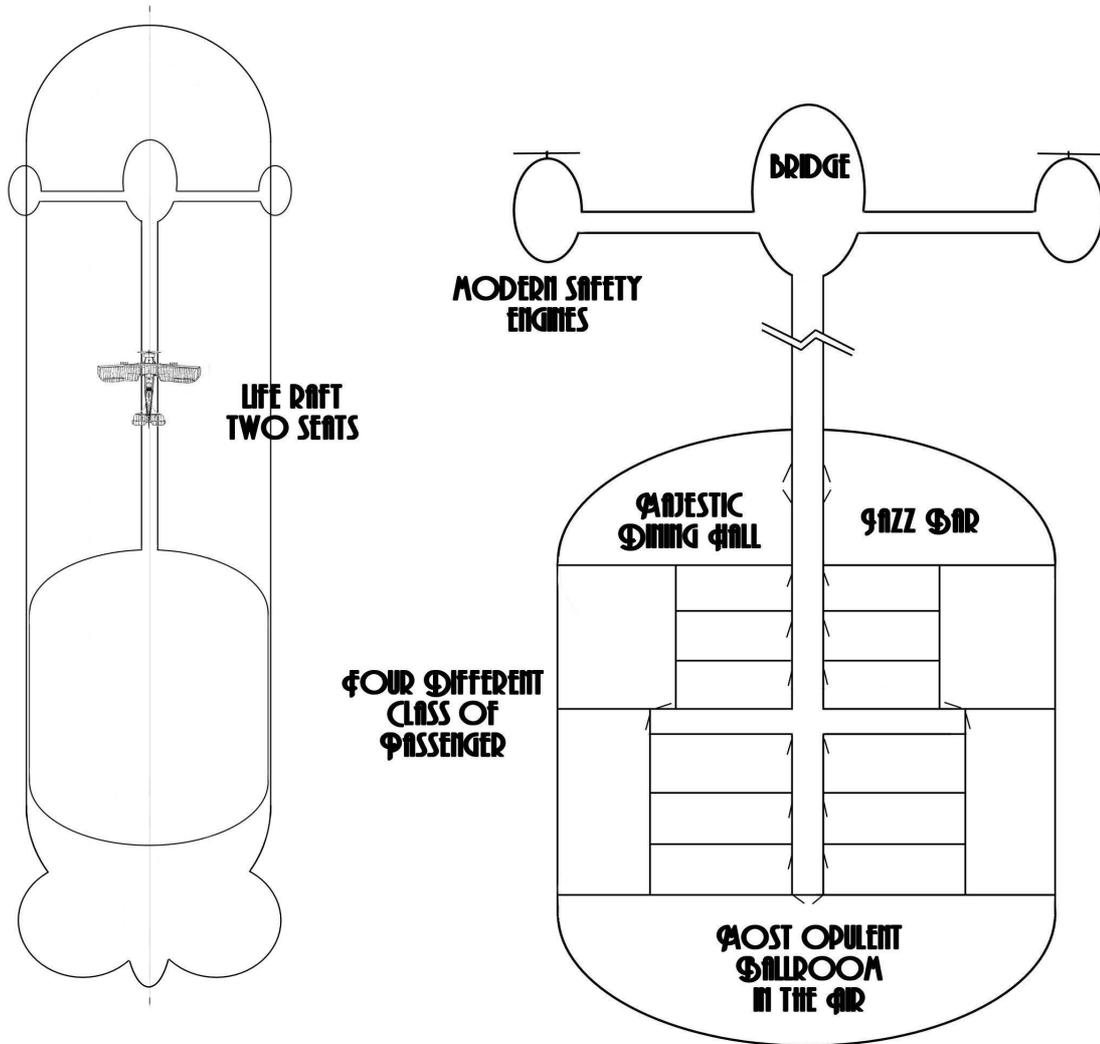
 **Maschinengewehr 34**



***Room for Panzerkampfwagen II (sold separately)**

The Ankh of Chephren – The Skies of Fire

Appendix: The Britannic



THE BRITANNIC
REAL STAR AIRLINES
CROYDON

REAL STAR AIRLINES: THE LAST WORD IN LUXURY FLIGHT