

APPENDIX A

BRITISH PASSENGER AIRSHIPS PRIOR
TO R.100 AND R.101

After the First World War, Britain attempted to build and operate five passenger airships: R.33, R.34, R.36, R.38, and R.80. All failed. In total these ships cost the British government £1,825,000 (\$8,690,476) and flew about 1,400 hours—an hourly rate, then, of £1,300 (\$6,200). All of these ships were much smaller than R.101, the largest being about half the volume. The volumes listed below for each ship are in millions of cubic feet. For comparison, the volume of R.101 was 5.510 million cubic feet.

R.33

First flight: March 6, 1919

Decommissioned: April 1928

Hours flown: 735

Volume: 1.950

This airship was built by the Royal Naval Air Service for use in the First World War, but was not completed before hostilities ended. In 1920 the airship was turned over to civilian authorities. When the British government halted all airship development in May 1921, R.33 was mothballed. The airship flew again in 1925 when British airship development was resumed. It was used for promotional flights and for testing. By November 1926 the airship's framework showed fatigue and so the ship was dismantled in 1928.

R.34**First flight:** March 14, 1919**Decommissioned:** January 1921**Hours flown:** 495**Volume:** 1.950

R.34, the ship flown by Major Scott across the Atlantic in 1919, flew in bad weather and struck a hill in a North Yorkshire moor in late January 1921. The impact damaged two propellers. The ship limped to the Howden Airfield on half power in search of the safety of its shed, but strong winds kept it from entering it. The crew moored the airship on the ground—Howden had no tower. Strong gusts of wind during the night battered the airship against the ground. By morning its framework was damaged beyond repair and so it was hacked to pieces and sold for scrap.

R.36**First flight:** April 1, 1921**Decommissioned:** June 1926**Hours flown:** 97**Volume:** 2.100

On June 21, 1921 Major Scott erred in landing this airship at the tower. The ship's nose collapsed. The ground crew toiled for five hours to untangle the damaged airship, but as they released it and lowered it to the ground, the wind rose. It took another five hours to reach the shed. As the ground crew moved R.36 into its shed, a gust of wind rammed the airship into the shed doors and destroyed the middle of the ship. Eventually it was determined to be beyond repair and was scrapped.

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R.38

First flight: June 23, 1921

Destroyed: August 24, 1921

Hours flown: 70

Volume: 2.724

The British intended to sell this ship to the United States. Before delivery the ship's crew wanted one more test flight. So, on August 24, 1921, R.38 sped through the air, piercing a bank of white clouds to emerge into the sunlight as the crew, in high spirits, tested the ship's controls at high speed. As it flew over an estuary of the North Sea near Hull, the ship's captain ordered the fin controls to be moved rapidly. The ship's backbone, its metal framework, snapped in two and R.38 crashed into the Humber River.

R.80

First flight: July 19, 1921

Decommissioned: July 1925

Hours flown: 73

Volume: 1.200

This was the last rigid ordered during the First World War. Construction was begun in 1917, but by 1919 the British authorities decided it no longer had military value, though they continued production for commercial use. Its last flight was in September 1921. The ship was too small to be commercially viable. After that it was housed in a shed and its framework was used for stress analysis and destructive testing. It was eventually dismantled.