

The Road to Mandalay

*By the old Moulmein Pagoda, looking lazy at the sea
There's a Burma Girl a-settin', and I know she thinks of me
For the wind is in the palm-trees, and the temple-bells they say
"Come you back, you British Soldier, come you back to Mandalay."
Come you back to Mandalay, where the old Flotilla lay
Can't you 'ear their paddles chunkin' from Rangoon to Mandalay?
On the road to Mandalay, where the flying-fishes play
An' the dawn comes up like thunder outer China 'cross the bay.
(Rudyard Kipling)*

This charter is nothing to do with Messrs Crosby and Hope (although the "Burma Girl" may have borne a resemblance to Dorothy Lamour), but is a celebration of the "old Flotilla" and its short-lived aerial offspring and explores part of the coast of Burma (now Myanmar, visits Moulmein (Mawlamyine) and follows the Irrawaddy River (the road) from Rangoon (Yangon) to Mandalay.

In 1865 (the same year that Kipling was born), Robert Findlay, an East Indian merchant engaged in the Burmese teak industry, and Peter Denny, a Scottish shipbuilder, formed the Irrawaddy Flotilla Company, to move timber, freight, and passengers. 4 paddle steamers and 3 cargo flats (barges) were built by Denny at Dumbarton, dismantled, shipped to Burma by Paddy Henderson, a Scottish shipowner, and reassembled. Henderson was also responsible for the running of the new line. The Flotilla was manned mainly by Indian crews, under European (mostly Scottish) captains and officers, and rapidly expanded, becoming the world's largest river shipping line. By the 1930's it had over 600 vessels (all Clyde-built) and carried over a million passengers annually, quite apart from the teak (and oil from the Yeangyuang oilfield?). In 1942, the fleet was scuttled to prevent its use by the Japanese. After WW2, some new ships were ordered, but with Burma gaining independence in 1948, the Irrawaddy Flotilla Company became the "Government Inland Water Transport Board" (the new organisation retains the black-and-white funnels of the Flotilla).

I think flying-fishes unknown on the Irrawaddy*, but in November 1934 the de Havilland Fox Moth floatplanes of the new Irrawaddy Flotilla and Airways Company Limited started a service from Rangoon to Mandalay, via Prome (Pyigy) and Yenangyuang. By January 1935 a route from Rangoon to Moulmein and Tavoy (Dawei) had been added. The following year, the fleet had expanded to 4 Fox Moths and 2 4-engined Short Scion floatplanes, but the company was unable to maintain services, and dropped Mandalay from the schedule in 1937. They ceased operations in 1938.

*China isn't "across the bay" either, and the view from the "old Moulmein Pagoda" includes the Thanlwin River but not the sea - Mr Kipling wrote exceedingly good poems and stories, but was sometimes a little hazy on geography and natural history.

Although this charter is written for DC-3s, and I haven't created any "wet strips", XC-47 pilots who want to wet their floats are welcome to alight on the river near the airfields - especially at Magway (gravel runways and floats are a BAD combination).

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NOTAM: VYYY (Yangon) runway 21 has the only ILS approach in this charter, but it is misaligned in the default fs9 scenery - "af2_vyyy_rp.zip" from www.avsim.com solves this.

John Lawler (DC-3 Airways 852) 31st Dec 2005

Leg 1 - Dawei (Tavoy) to Mawlamyine (Moulmein)

Dawei is a rather isolated from most of Burma, and although there are magnificent beaches in the neighbourhood it has not yet capitalised on the tourist industry. It is a significant Burmese Buddhist centre and has one of the largest reclining Buddhas (74m long, 21m high) in the country. There is also a large military presence to guard the Yadana gas pipeline.

From – To	<u>Flight Description.</u> "Allocated runways and related information may change when flying online or using Real Weather"				Course (Leg)	Distance (Leg)	ETE(leg) HH+MM
	Dep. Rwy – 33	Init. Hdg - 329	Init. Alt – 4500ft	Apt Elev. – 85ft			
Dawei (VYDW), Myanmar To Mawlamyine (VYMM), Myanmar	Tune ADF to DWI NDB, 310.0. Tune VOR1 to TAK VOR/DME, 116.70, OBS 054deg Depart rwy 33 (330deg). Length - 5100ft, width - 50ft, surface – bituminous						
	Continue runway heading to 600ft (Fix01)				330deg	2.1nm	00+01
	To Fix02. Turn right to 352 deg. Waypoint reached when ADF reads 165deg ...				352deg	3.8nm	00+03
	To YYWE (Ye airport). Track 345deg from DWI NDB				345deg	69.3nm	00+28
	To Fix03. Turn right to 350deg. Tune ADF to MM NDB 330.0 and track to MM NDB. Waypoint reached when VOR1 centres				350deg	50.6nm	00+20
	To MM NDB. Descend to 2000ft				350deg	18.7nm	00+08
	Descend to 1500ft, slow to 120kts, and fly left-hand circuit to runway 4				310deg	1.7nm	00+01
					220deg	5.9nm	00+03
					130deg	2.0nm	00+01
	Land rwy 4 (040 deg). Length – 5400ft, width – 150ft, surface – bituminous ...				040deg	6.0nm	00+03
Flight No. 852-02-01	Arrival Airport Elev. – 150ft		Estimated totals for flight>>>			160nm	01+08

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Leg 2 - Mawlamyine (Moulmein) to Yangon (Rangoon)

Moulmein was the capital of British Burma from 1827 to 1852 and became the main port for the export of teak. In shipping terms it now comes third to Yangon and Patheingyi. The city is sandwiched between the Thilashin River and a ridge on which its principal *stupas* (pagodas) stand. The "old Moulmein Pagoda" is probably Kyaikthanlan Paya, the tallest and most conspicuous of the stupas, although the "Burma girl's" view would have been of the Thilashin River, not the sea. To the north, near Shampoo Island, is the 2 mile long Thilashin Bridge, only completed in 2004 (there is freeware scenery for it on www.avsim.com).

	<u>Flight Description.</u> "Allocated runways and related information may change when flying online or using Real Weather" NOTAM: In the default FS9 scenery, runway 3 at VYYY is CLOSED.				Course (Leg)	Distance (Leg)	ETE(leg) HH+MM
	Dep. Rwy – 4	Init. Hdg - 040	Init. Alt – 4500ft	Apt Elev. – 150ft			
Mawlamyine (VYMM), Myanmar To Yangon Intl (VYYY), Myanmar	Tune ADF to YGN NDB, 265.0. Tune VOR1 to BGO VOR/DME, 112.60, OBS 310deg. Tune DME to VOR1 Depart rwy 4 (040 deg). Length – 5400ft, width – 150ft, surface – bituminous						
	Continue runway heading to 650ft				040deg	2.1nm	00+01
	To Fix 02. Turn left to 23100deg for 2nm				310deg	2.0nm	00+01
	To Fix 03. Turn left to 277deg. Waypoint reached when VOR1 centres				227deg	4.0nm	00+02
	To BGO VOR. Turn right to 310deg and fly the inbound radial to BGO				310deg	78.5nm	00+32
	To YGN NDB. Turn left to 229deg, and descend to 2300ft – the RMI will point backwards at first. Tune VOR1 to IYGN ILS 109.90. Fly direct to intercept ILS glideslope for VYYY runway 21 at YGN				229deg	21.7nm	00+09
	Turn right to Slow to 120kts, and descend glideslope -						
	Land rwy 21 (213 deg). Length – 11228ft, width – 200ft, surface – concrete.....				213deg	11.0nm	00+07
Flight No. 852-02-02	Arrival Airport Elev. – 108ft		Estimated totals for flight>>>			120nm	00+52

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Leg 3 - Yangon (Rangoon) to Pyay (Prone)

Yangon (originally Dagon) was quite an unimportant town until the mid-18th century, when it became an important seaport. The present layout of the city centre dates largely from it's rebuilding by the British following the 2nd Anglo-Burmese War (1852). The principal stupa, the Shwedagon Paya, stands 2 miles north of the centre and totally dominates the skyline and is MUST for tourists. Myanmar's capital. Yangon comes across architecturally as a mixture of the picturesquely dishevelled and the half-finished, and bustles with entrepreneurial energy. The airport is currently being enlarged (which may account for runway 3 being closed).

From – To	<u>Flight Description.</u> "Allocated runways and related information may change when flying online or using Real Weather"				Course (Leg)	Distance (Leg)	ETE(leg) HH+MM
	Dep. Rwy – 21	Init. Hdg - 213	Init. Alt – 4500ft	Apt Elev. – 108ft			
Yangon Intl (VYYY), Myanmar To Pyay (VYPY), Myanmar	Tune ADF to MDS NDB, 397.0 Depart rwy 21 (213 deg). Length – 11228ft, width – 200ft, surface – concrete						
	Continue runway heading to 1100ft				213deg	4.2nm	00+02
	To Fix02. Turn right to 303deg. Waypoint reached after 6.7nm				303deg	2.0nm	00+01
	To Fix03. Turn right to 357deg. Waypoint reached when ADF reads 159deg				357deg	7.7nm	00+04
	To Fix04. Track 339deg from MDS NDB until signal lost. Tune ADF to TD NDB, 270.0. Continue 339deg DR. Waypoint reached when ADF reads 266deg				339deg	95.8nm	00+38
	To VYPY (Pyay airfield). Descend to 2000ft. Continue 339deg DR to airfield (which is by the bank of the river).....				339deg	17.6nm	00+07
	Descend to 1600ft, slow to 120kts, and fly left-hand circuit to VYPY runway 7 ...				295deg	2.8nm	00+01
					250deg	4.3nm	00+02
					160deg	2.0nm	00+01
	Land runway 7 (070 deg). Length – 4500ft, width – 150ft, surface – bituminous...				70deg	6.0nm	00+04
Flight No. 852-02-03	Arrival Airport Elev. – 121ft		Estimated totals for flight>>>			147nm	01+03

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Leg 4 - Pyay (Prone) to Magway

Pyay can be pronounced as either “pyay” or “pyi”. The British, presumably unable to cope with this, renamed it Prome. It’s been an important trading town for centuries, but it’s multitudes of neighbouring stupas and ruins attract more archaeologists than tourists. Shwesandaw Paya is even larger than Yangon’s Shwedagon Paya, and is claimed to house 4 strands of the Buddha’s hair. There is also a large figure of the Buddha wearing spectacles.

From – To	<u>Flight Description.</u> "Allocated runways and related information may change when flying online or using Real Weather"				Course (Leg)	Distance (Leg)	ETE(leg) HH+MM
	Dep. Rwy – 7	Init. Hdg - 070	Init. Alt – 4500ft	Apt Elev. – 121ft			
Pyay (VYPY) , Myanmar To Magway (VYMW) , Myanmar	Tune ADF to MW NDB, 305.0 Depart rwy 7 (070 deg). Length – 4500ft, width – 150ft, surface – bituminous...						
	Continue runway heading to 670ft				070deg	2.3nm	00+01
	To Fix 02. Turn left to 355deg and fly DR (keep the river on your left). Waypoint reached when ADF reads 315deg				355deg	67.3nm	00+26
	To MW NDB. Turn left to 315 deg and descend to 2300ft. Fly direct to MW ...				315deg	18.5nm	00+08
	Descend to 1800ft, slow to 120kts, and fly left hand circuit to VYMW runway 24.				215deg	2.4nm	00+01
					160deg	4.9nm	00+02
					070deg	2.0nm	00+01
	Land runway 34 (340 deg). Length – 4800ft, width – 100ft, surface – gravel.				340deg	6.0nm	00+02
Flight No. 852-02-04	Arrival Airport Elev. – 276ft		Estimated totals for flight>>>			103nm	00+45

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Leg 5 - Magway (Magwe) to Bagan

You probably won't want to stay long at Magway, but spare time to visit the Mya Tha Lun Paya, and also cross the Magwe bridge to Minbu and Nga Ka Pwe Taung (Dragon Lake).

From – To	<u>Flight Description.</u> "Allocated runways and related information may change when flying online or using Real Weather" NOTAM: Pilots of aircraft approaching or departing VYBG (Bagan) near dawn or dusk should beware of hot-air balloons engaged in tourist flights.				Course (Leg)	Distance (Leg)	ETE(leg) HH+MM
	Dep. Rwy – 34	Init. Hdg - 340	Init. Alt – 4500ft	Apt Elev. – 276ft			
Magway (VYMW), Myanmar To Bagan (VYBG), Myanmar	Tune ADF to MW NDB, 305.0						
	Depart rwy 34 (340 deg). Length – 4800ft, width – 150ft, surface – gravel.....						
	Continue runway heading to 800ft				340deg	2.2nm	00+01
	To Fix02. Turn right to 004deg. Waypoint reached when ADF reads 173deg				004deg	1.9nm	00+01
	To VYLY (Lanwe airport) which you should see after crossing over the river. Turn left to 353deg and track OB from MW NDB				353deg	45.9nm	00+19
	To BGN NDB. Tune ADF to BGN NDB, 335.0. Turn right to 027 deg, descend to 1800ft and fly direct to BGN NDB				027deg	12.5nm	00+05
	Fly left-hand circuit to VYBG runway 36				027deg	2.0nm	00+01
					297deg	1.5nm	00+01
					207deg	1.8nm	00+01
					180deg	6.5nm	00+03
					090deg	2.0nm	00+01
	Land runway 36 (360 deg). Length – 5700ft, width – 100ft, surface – asphalt ...				360deg	6.0nm	00+04
Flight No. 852-02-05	Arrival Airport Elev. – 298ft		Estimated totals for flight>>>			82nm	00+38

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Leg 5 – Bagan to Mandalay

Not merely Bagan, but Old Bagan, New Bagan, and Nyaung U, and officially known as the “Bagan Archaeological Zone”, even 2 days isn’t enough to do Bagan justice. Apart from all the ruins, temples, cart rides, boat rides, balloon rides, and making a visit to the Mahagiri shrine at Mt Popa, there is the question of where to get the best sunset views of the town.

From – To	<u>Flight Description.</u> "Allocated runways and related information may change when flying online or using Real Weather"				Course (Leg)	Distance (Leg)	ETE(leg) HH+MM
	Dep. Rwy – 36	Init. Hdg - 360	Init. Alt – 3500ft	Apt Elev. – 298ft			
Bagan (VYBG), Myanmar To Chanmyathazi, Mandalay, (VYCZ), Myanmar	Tune VOR1 to MIA VOR/DME, 116.30. Set VOR OBS to 062deg. Set DME to VOR1. Depart rwy 36 (360 deg). Length – 5700ft, width – 100ft, surface – asphalt						
	Continue runway heading to 800ft				360deg	2.1nm	00+01
	To Fix02. Turn right to 083deg. Waypoint reached when VOR1 centres				083deg	4.3nm	00+02
	To Fix03. Turn left to 062deg and track to MIA VOR. Waypoint reached when DME reads 39.2nm				062deg	22.8nm	00+10
	To Fix04. Turn left to 022deg, set VOR1 OBS to 112 deg. Waypoint reached when VOR1 centres				022deg	29.9nm	00+12
	To MIA VOR. Turn right to 122deg, and fly direct to MIA. En route start descent to 1800ft when DME reads 3.0nm				122deg	25.4nm	00+11
	To Fix06. Turn left to 036deg. Waypoint reached when DME reads 9.2nm ...				036deg	9.2nm	00+05
	Turn left to 009deg, land VYCZ runway 1 (009 deg). Length – 6523ft, width – 100ft, surface – asphalt				009deg	6.0nm	00+04
Flight No. 852-02-06	Arrival Airport Elev. – 253ft		Estimated totals for flight>>>			100nm	00+44

Congratulations, you’ve made it! Mandalay was founded as recently as 1857 (on the site of several earlier towns), and was the last royal capital of Burma (the British took over in 1885 after the 3rd Anglo-Burmese War). Myanmar’s second city, it’s more laid-back than Yangon, but much dustier. While you’re here, apart from the Payas and the Palace, take a hike up Mandalay Hill, and get in some evening entertainment by visiting the house of the Moustache Brothers Troupe (they’re officially banned from performing) and the Mandalay Marionettes and Culture Show (brilliant puppetry!).

To the north and the east, the hills are now starting to close in on the river valley (I forgot to mention that it’s now called the Ayeyarwady, not the Irrawaddy), and beyond them the mountains offer challenging flying – but that is a tale for another day.