

## Flying Duchesses: A Pilot's Adventures with His Historic Plane

Patricia Christine McCuaig



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**Flying Duchesses: A Pilot's Adventures with His Historic Plane** Patricia Christine McCuaig "Your Grace, will you please lift up the left wing," Capt. Ken McCuaig said to the Duchess of Westminster who was at the controls of her family's plane, a Grumman Goose. Ken was a Canadian who, during the winter of 1964-65 was the first personal pilot for England's 4th Duke of Westminster. Using her father's log books, letters and diaries, Patricia McCuaig has woven an intriguing story that brings to life the historic Goose and one reclusive branch of the British Aristocracy.

The book describes Ken's professional aviation career starting with the Royal Canadian Air Force in World War II when he was posted in Loch Erne, Northern Ireland and continues with his career and personal life in Vancouver, BC, Canada

The Grumman Goose aircraft plays a central role in this story because of its flexible amphibious characteristics. The perilous flight of this tiny Goose, with Ken as pilot, across Canada and over the North Atlantic included a lengthy leg of the trip in poor weather, which had never been done before. The Duke chose the Goose as his first aircraft because of its suitability in the UK to allow his extended Grosvenor family to commute easily between their homes on Loch Erne, Dublin, Chester and Northern Scotland; business interests in London; and social engagements in other parts of the UK.

The wealthy Grosvenor family and their connection to the UK's Royal Family is explained in as much detail as Patricia could find. Ken's adventures with the various people, places, palaces, cars, and the like include depictions of the Grosvenors' family homes and Christmas dinner with a Princess Diana. As a pilot's wife, Jean, had her own aristocratic adventures. Excerpts from her diary and letters portray the hospitality of the Duchesses and Ladies of the Grosvenor family.

The rest of Ken's career, the Grumman Goose and the Duke and Duchess after 1965 conclude the book. Patricia researched her father's aviation career, the Duke and Duchess and the Grosvenor family, and the Grumman Goose and then wrote these three elements into a story. Illustrations include photographs, maps, sources, a newspaper article, and the Grosvenor Family Tree.

Historical aviation enthusiasts, ladies related to or friends of pilots, and people interested in British aristocrats would enjoy reading this book.

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