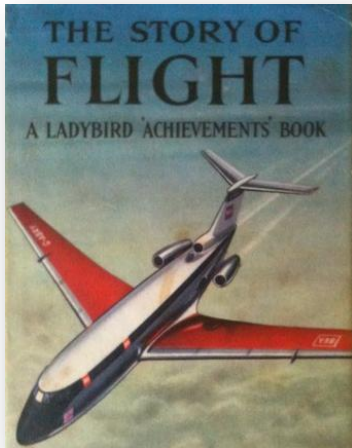
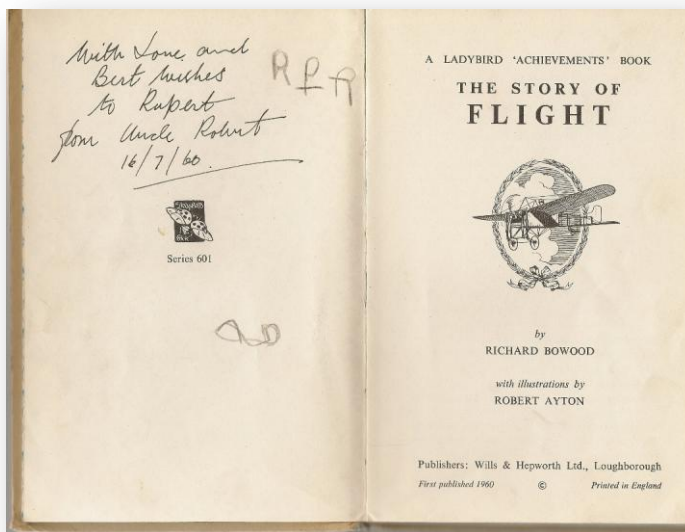


Robert Norton Ayton The Ladybird Years – Part 1

The Story of Flight



For me, the association of my uncle Robert and Ladybird begins with this book. Fifty years ago Robert gave it to me as a going away present. It was my faithful companion and I read and re-read its worn pages hundreds and hundreds of times as I grew up.



The book is also special as it points to the roots of Robert's artistic talent. As a boy growing up in the 1920s, Robert was crazy about aeroplanes. My father told me that my uncle built ever bigger and better model aeroplanes, and took them to the park to fly. They were made of wood and doped tissue and their propellers were driven by increasing numbers of thick rubber

bands.

As a child I somehow acquired a very large wooden propeller that Rob most likely made during school woodshop. I can imagine that Robert sketched his designs in great detail before embarking on their construction.



It is not surprising then to find that when Robert started work as an advertising illustrator he would once again be drawing aeroplanes. Among the few artifacts he left behind were adverts torn from the pages Flight, The Aeroplane, and Popular Flying. The pages date from 1938 to 1945 and show highly stylized illustrations of aeroplanes artistically imbued with speed and grace.

