that, in fact, two pair of shoes rotted away here, completes
dissimilar heel (consistent with Noonan’s shoes) indicating
this place is remarkable in the extreme. The second and
on Nikumaroro. A shoe, or a pair of shoes, abandoned in
only to your canteen as your most treasured possession
leather-tough feet of a Gilbertese, good shoes are second
to time. We also know that, unless you have the broad,
administrators who visited Nikumaroro from time
July 1944 to November 1945 did not wear women’s shoes
island’s southeastern tip (another two miles away) from
shoes; that the 25 American servicemen stationed at the
lived on the atoll from late 1938 until 1963 did not wear
Earhart was wearing at the time she disappeared.
her flying shoes had replacement heels put on prior to her
departure from Miami on June 1 (see photo at right; note
clear demarkation of new bottom on left heel which is not
present in photos taken prior to first attempt).
So what do we know for sure? We know that some-
time a long, long time ago, a woman’s shoe, about size
nine, with brass eyelets, and with an American Cat’s Paw
replacement heel, ended up on Nikumaroro in a place
two miles from the island’s only boat landing. We know
that the shoe matches, in general and in particular, a
shoe Earhart was wearing at the time she disappeared.
We also know that the 50 to 80 Gilbertese islanders who
lived on the atoll from late 1938 until 1963 did not wear
shoes; that the 25 American servicemen stationed at the
island’s southeastern tip (another two miles away) from
July 1944 to November 1945 did not wear women’s shoes
with replacement heels and neither did the British colo-
inal administrators who visited Nikumaroro from time
to time. We also know that, unless you have the broad,
leather-tough feet of a Gilbertese, good shoes are second
only to your canteen as your most treasured possession
on Nikumaroro. A shoe, or a pair of shoes, abandoned in
this place is remarkable in the extreme. The second and
dissimilar heel (consistent with Noonan’s shoes) indicating
that, in fact, two pair of shoes rotted away here, completes
a pattern of circumstantial evidence so strong as to be
overwhelming. But there’s more.
In the same area we found a 2½” length of broken med-
cal thermometer and a threaded aluminum bottle cap 1½”
in diameter. No markings were left on the thermometer
which might help establish its age, but the bottle cap had
the faint remains of a distinctive logo. Through exhaus-
tive research at the U.S. Patent Office by Paul Harubin,
TIGHAR #1322, and with the help of the Warner-Lambert
pharmaceuticals company, the cap has been identified as
having come from one of three over-the-counter medica-
sions sold by the William R. Warner Co. in the U.S. in the
1930’s. These were all liquids: Agarol, a laxative; Alka-
Zane, an antacid; and Cal-Bis-Ma, for nausea. Earhart
is known to have suffered from an upset stomach during
the world flight.

Lost And Found

One of the great areas of contention among Earhart
researchers has always been what went on in Lae, New
Guinea between Earhart and Noonan’s arrival there on
June 29 and their departure for Howland Island on July
2. Why the delay? What preparations were made for the
hazardous Howland leg? How much fuel was aboard
when they left? The only reliable report has always been
an all-too-brief letter written August 28, 1937 by James
A. Collopy, District Superintendent for Civil Aviation at
Lae. The closing sentence in that letter states, “Mr. Chater
advised me that he forwarded a comprehensive report
dealing with the aircraft’s stay at Lae, work carried-out,
radio messages received, etc., to Mr. Putnam.”

Eric H. Chater was the General Manager for Guinea
Airways at Lae. The airline operated Lockheed Electras
similar to Earhart’s and their maintenance people assisted
Amelia and Fred with preparations for the flight. Chater’s
“comprehensive report” would settle the questions once
and for all, except the report disappeared. It didn’t go
to the Purdue archives with Putnam’s papers and it has
never turned up in U.S. government records nor among
the various other collections of Amelia-ana (new word) in
private hands. Eric Chater was killed when he walked
into a propeller four months after he wrote the report. The
Chater Report was lost.

Now it has been found. Soon after TIGHAR’s return
from the Pacific, Hugh Leggatt, Manager of Corporate
Communications for Placer Dome, Inc. in Vancouver,
The Earhart Project has been covered by the media since its inception, usually in a news format. Many of you have very kindly sent us clippings from your local papers, and we hope you’ll continue to do so. Now here are some things for you to look for outside of the traditional newspaper/news t.v. format:

March 16, 1992 – LIFE magazine’s April issue goes on sale with a major article by Ric Gillespie about the Earhart Project; photos by a LIFE photographer and by Pat Thrasher. LIFE is available at all news stands and often at grocery and convenience stores.

Between April 6 and April 20 – NBC News Productions’ two hour documentary, “Untold Stories: The Search for Amelia Earhart” on Earhart and the Earhart Project will air on syndicated television in the States. Sales to Europe, Australia, and Asia are also expected. Check your local TV listings for exact day, time and channel in your area. VHS videotapes will be available in the States; PAL system tapes elsewhere. The good news is that TIGHAR will get a percentage of each videotape sale. The bad news is that you’ll have to wait for the video distribution deal to be set up to get a tape, as we’re outside that loop. We’ll keep you posted.

Other coverage possible/probable: news magazines; morning news programs on network television; news programs on radio and television in the U.S. and Canada; newspaper coverage in the U.S., Canada, Europe, Japan; talk shows on U.S. and Canadian radio programs. Help us keep track of what’s out there – if you happen to hear or see something, copy it or note the time and station, and drop us a line. Thanks!

British Columbia called to say that he had come across an interesting document relating to Amelia Earhart in the company’s old files. His description of the document made it clear that what he had was the lost Chater Report and he offered to send TIGHAR one of the two “flimsies” which accompanied the original report, and photocopies of the various telegrams and letters which document its transmittal.

The odyssey of the report goes like this: Following the failed search for Earhart, W.T. Miller of the U.S. Bureau of Air Commerce wanted to find out what had happened in Lae. He knew that his friend Frank Griffin of the Canadian gold mining firm Placer Development had connections in New Guinea where the company had a large operation so he asked Griffin to help him get information. Griffin was an old friend of Eric Chater of Guinea Airways so he asked Chater to prepare a report for the U. S. government. Chater sent his eight page report, quite naturally, to his friend Griffin who forwarded a copy to Miller at the Bureau of Air Commerce in Washington. What became of Miller’s copy is still a mystery, but the original and two flimsies remained in the Placer company’s files until recently found by Mr. Leggatt. Following TIGHAR’s announcement that the Chater letter had been discovered, author Fred Goerner told an Associated Press reporter that “he has had a copy of the report for 30 years” and was quoted as saying, “The Chater report has been around forever. Somebody finally sent [TIGHAR] a copy of it after all these years.” Yet the Chater letter does not appear as a source or as information, in any Earhart book or article TIGHAR has seen, including Goerner’s own book The Search For Amelia Earhart published in 1966.

The report itself confirms that the delay in Lae was caused entirely by difficulties in getting an accurate time check for Noonan’s chronometers. It describes a test flight AE made on July 1 in which she could not get the Radio Direction Finder to work and assumed the problem was her proximity to the ground station. And the report settles forever the question about fuel. There were 1100 U.S. gallons of fuel aboard the aircraft when it departed for Howland. Also, Earhart left without waiting for the current weather report. Although it was sent to her by radio later, there is no confirmation that she received it. All in all, the report describes a series of events and decisions which suggest that Amelia Earhart died of “get-home-itis” – a malady that has always killed impatient pilots.

First On the Scene

Critics of TIGHAR’s work have held that Earhart and Noonan could not have landed at Nikumaroro because nobody who came along later found them. It is a visit by British colonial authorities in October 1937 that has been most loudly touted as proof that TIGHAR is wrong. According to a “History of Gardner (Nikumaroro) Island” by Osborne Publisher, the visit was made by “Professor Henry [sic] E. Maude and a team of British surveyors” who “spent 3 days on Gardner, conducted a full investigation of island and lagoon”; “No evidence of Amelia/Fred was found.”

According to the official report of the trip, the British delegation that visited Gardner on October 13 – 15, 1937 was made up of Lands Commissioner Harry Maude, Cadet