

IMPERIAL AIRWAYS LIMITED

1924 – 1940



Talk and display given to
The Collectors Club of New York
3rd October 2012

Barry Scott FRPSL
Auckland, New Zealand

Introduction

This collection has been built up over a period of some twenty – five years and started life as an exhibit of New Zealand commercial air mails. Over a period of years it has developed into the display that you see before you, that of Imperial Airways Limited.

I am interested in commercially flown air mails and how the Air line developed the air mail system to take into account the vast distances imposed by the extended British Empire and the wishes of the British Government at the time of the Air line's inception.

It is a work in progress and over the years has had some very interesting items added to it and this has continued to this day, with a number of longstanding gaps being filled only recently in the past two or three months. Again recently I have been lucky enough to acquire original Post Office documents to support the beginnings of the "Empire Air Mail Scheme" to various parts of the Empire. These documents together with original documents produced by the Air line have helped to establish with accuracy when and where the Air line and its staff of dedicated people ensured that the air routes were expanded in a logical fashion.

My primary interest in the air mails is not so much the advent of first flight covers, but rather the commercial mails that prove that the mails continued to be flown over certain routes, whilst others required detailed descriptions as to how the mails got to their destinations via such and such a routing is not always clear. For instance mail from Argentina to New Zealand in 1939. With a lot of help from friends in Buenos Aires I have been able to state with certainty how the cover reached Wellington on Imperial's route system using other Air lines flying via Africa and southern Europe.

Unfortunately I am unable to show the whole exhibit, which comprises some 256 pages of material and related documents. However with this in mind I trust the details that follow backed by illustrations are of interest and add enjoyment to our hobby.

General History

Imperial Airways was formed after advice from a British Government select committee formally known as the "Hambling Committee" who reported to the House on 15 February 1923. This report stated that the existing private Air line companies should be merged into one company that could create and develop an external air service for Britain and the Empire. The report also stated that a subsidy of one million pounds be offered over a ten year period should this merger take place.

An agreement was reached between the President of the Air Council and the Foreign and Colonial Corporation on 3 December 1923 and a company known as the "Imperial Air Transport Company" was to acquire the existing private air transport companies in the United Kingdom. As a result of this agreement Imperial Airways Limited was formed on 31 March 1924 and on 1 April 1924 took over the aircraft, services and assets of, Handley Page Transport Limited (3 Handley Page W88 aircraft), Instone Air Line Limited (1 Vickers Vimy Commercial and 4 de Havilland DH34 aircraft), Daimler Airways (3 de Havilland DH34 aircraft, and British Marine Air Navigation Company Limited (2 Supermarine Eagle flying boats).

Thus Imperial Airways inherited nearly 2,000 miles of cross-channel air routes and a collection of aircraft of which most were obsolete and 5 being unserviceable at the outset. As the "Chosen Instrument" of the British Government's air mail plan, this was not an auspicious start as they were charged with reopening the European air routes plus developing plans to extend the air services to the Empire. Industrial problems beset the air line from the start, with the pilots delaying the operation of service until 26 April 1924 when a daily flight between London (Croydon) and Paris (le Bourget) was commenced. Expansion of the European air routes were started progressively i.e., Southampton to Guernsey on 1 May, London to Brussels, Ostend and Cologne on 3 May, plus a summer air service London to Basle and Zurich via Paris.

Beginning of the Empire Routes

The Royal Air Force had been operating an air service between Cairo and Baghdad and return from early 1921. Staff of Imperial Airways completed a survey of the route on 1 October 1925 and with the large increase in the company's fleet with the addition of Handley Page W9 and W10 aircraft the company was looking to expand its operations to the Empire. The company had also ordered new de Havilland DH 66 aircraft to operate the air route to India and on 20 December 1926 the first aircraft departed Croydon to start the route from Egypt to India.

Imperial Airways formally took over the route between Cairo and Baghdad from the RAF on 1 January 1927 and immediately added Basra to the route. This new route was in keeping with British Governments instructions to open up air routes firstly to India, secondly to South Africa and later still to the Empire countries beyond India namely Australasia.

Further links to this initial air route were added on either end of the service until 30 March 1929 the Short S8 flying boats became available to operate the Mediterranean sectors of the long distance routes from the United Kingdom to Australia and South Africa. The first stage of this route was from Basra to Karachi and later still on to Jodhpur and Delhi.

During April 1930 the route survey from Egypt to South Africa was completed and on 28 February 1931 the first weekly service from Cairo to Mwanza in Tanganyika was operated. On 1 April 1931 the Air line operated the first of the experimental flights to Australia via India, Burma and Singapore. This flight was undertaken in conjunction with Australian aircraft operating the Koepang, in the Netherland East Indies to Sydney sector.

During this period of expansion the company introduced the first of the four engine aircraft to the fleet. Firstly three Short S17 flying boats were added to the Mediterranean sectors and secondly the Handley Page HP42 aircraft operating the Cairo to Cape Town sectors.

The first of the monoplanes were introduced during 1932, the Armstrong Whitworth AW15's of which eight were ordered and operated which increased the speed and comfort of the passengers utilising the services offered by the Air line. During this period the Air line completed 10 million miles of flying passengers and cargo on the Empire air routes.

Further route expansion

On 18 January 1934 the Australian Air line QANTAS was inaugurated and thus began an association between the two Air lines which continues to this day. The object of the two Air lines was to operate in conjunction with one another with similar aircraft and route structures. To this end on 8 December 1935 the route from Singapore to Brisbane came into being with QANTAS aircraft carrying the mails and passengers to and from Singapore to Australia.

These new services lead to the introduction of further new aircraft the de Havilland DH86 to operate the QANTAS sectors of the air service. Also on 14 March 1936 this aircraft operated the new air service to Hong Kong from Penang. The company was also interested in opening up services in Africa and on 13 October 1937 operated another new service between Lagos and Accra on the Gold Coast. Nigeria and the West African services had also been operated during this period, together with other feeder services operated in conjunction with Imperial Airways between East Africa and the operational sectors serviced by the company.

The Empire Air Mail Scheme

Having its beginnings in 1934 the scheme proposed to carry the mails with a subsidy provided by the various Empire Governments at a greatly reduced rate per $\frac{1}{2}$ ounce. This scheme leads to introduction of the hugely successful aircraft the Short S23 Empire class flying boat. This aircraft changed the face of air transport in comfort and speed, the first of which was introduced 30 October 1936. These aircraft were later to be superseded by the later version the Short S30 flying boats.

The EAMS air mail was introduced on 29 June 1937 when the first service was undertaken to East Africa from the United Kingdom. Also during 1937 the Air line undertook the survey flight between Newfoundland and Ireland. This survey flight was carried out in a record time of 10 hours, 36 minutes.

Thus 1937 closed as a record year for the company and British air transport in general with the largest fleet of commercial aircraft and the longest air route in operation between the United Kingdom and Australia (15,000 miles).

The year 1938 was to open with further expansion by the company, with accelerated flight schedules and services being the order of the day, with record figures of mail, passengers and cargo carried on all services.

The Trans-Atlantic route

This posed an insurmountable barrier due to the vast stretch of ocean between Ireland and the North American landmass. Imperial Airways experimented with a number of ways to counter this problem. The main problem was to get a heavily loaded aircraft in the air with a short take-off and still have enough fuel to last the immense distance involved. Mid-air refuelling experiments were carried out.

Other efforts involved the use of a piggy-backed aircraft the Short-Mayo composite, in fact a flying boat with 4 engines plus a smaller seaplane on its back. Neither of the ventures was completely successful and the idea did not proceed further after these trials.

The problem did not go away and in 1939 the Short S26 class flying boats became available to the company and this was utilised in operations between the United Kingdom, Canada and the United States. Added to this route were the operations between Bermuda and the United States which had begun during 1937.

The end of Imperial Airways, amalgamation and name change

In comparison to other European Air line operators such as the Germans (Deutsche Luft Hansa), the Dutch (KLM) and the French (Air France), Imperial lagged behind in its services to the European centres and it was mooted that the Airline pass its operations and services there to another Air line British Airways Limited which had more modern aircraft and a better infrastructure. This idea was ratified and the two Air lines merged into a new state-owned Air line, British Overseas Airways Corporation (BOAC) in November 1939. Thus on 31 March 1940 Imperial Airways ceased to exist and after 16 years of faithful and undiminished service the Air line that had contributed so much to the movement of the air mails to and from the United Kingdom and the Empire at large was no more.

Talk and display arrangement:-

Frame 1 - British forerunner Air lines and services, July 1919 – April 1924

Frames 2 & 3 - Imperial Airways takes over the European routes, April 1924 – September 1939

Frame 4 - RAF forerunner flights in the Middle East, July 1921 – December 1926

Frame 5 - Imperial expanded routes in the Middle East, January 1927 – March 1929

Frames 6 & 7 - Services to the Indian Sub-Continent and beyond, March 1929 – September 1933

Frame 8 - Cairo to the Cape and East Africa services, February 1931 – October 1936

Frames 9, 10 & 11 - The Far East, Australasia and Oceania, September 1933 – October 1936

Frames 12, 13, 14 & 15 - The Empire flying boats and the Empire Air Mail Scheme, October 1936 – September 1939

Frame 16 - The Trans-Atlantic route, June 1937 – September 1939

Frame 16 - The final chapter, September 1939 – March 1940

Frame 1 - Forerunner Air lines



London to Paris 21 May 1920

Letter travelled on the afternoon flight of Aircraft Transport and Travel's aircraft on 21 May, and delivered the next morning in Paris.

Backstamping confirms the air mail travel times and dates of delivery.

Unfortunately AT&T declared bankruptcy in late 1920 and was no longer a party to the nationalised takeover by Imperial Airways in 1924.

With the Postmaster-General's Compliments.



SUMMER SEASON, 1922.

TO THE LONDON BUSINESS MAN.

THE AIR MAILS to PARIS,

} *Special Air fee*
2d. per oz.

ROTTERDAM & } *Special Air fee*
AMSTERDAM, } *3d. per oz.*

offer the following advantages:—

FOR letters posted in the evening too late for the ordinary Night Mail, DELIVERY in each of these CITIES next afternoon. If an express fee of 6d. is prepaid, delivery may be obtained in PARIS soon after mid-day. Late letters for certain PLACES NEAR PARIS and for MOST PARTS OF HOLLAND should be delivered next evening.

FOR letters posted in the morning after the opening of business, DELIVERY in PARIS, ROTTERDAM and AMSTERDAM the same evening, and a GAIN of up to 24 hours in delivery of letters for SPAIN, AUSTRIA, JUGO-SLAVIA, BULGARIA, GREECE,

(17) WEA5X549 50000 7-22 B-P.3.16. 422

[P.T.O.]

Published and distributed during June 1922 the above notice issued by the Postmaster-General's office details the air mail services to the European capitals, together with times of delivery.

TURKEY (via Paris); GERMANY (north and central),
CZECHO-SLOVAKIA, NORWAY (east and north), SWEDEN
and FINLAND (via Amsterdam).

Note. By the use of the second Air Mail to PARIS (closed at the
General Post Office at 11.10 a.m.) a letter for central Paris can be both
posted and delivered (if an express fee of 6d. is paid) within business hours
on the same day.

PARCELS

For PARIS, BRUSSELS and ANY PLACE in HOLLAND, if
forwarded by Air Parcel Post, are normally delivered **several days**
earlier than if they are sent by the ordinary parcel post.

THE CAIRO-BAGHDAD } *Special Air fee 6d. per oz.*
AIR MAIL
and
THE TOULOUSE-CASABLANCA } *Special Air fee 3d. up to*
AIR MAIL } *½ oz., 6d. up to 3½ oz., 6c.*

offer a saving of **up to 20 days** in the transmission of letters for IRAQ
and PERSIA (West and North), and of **several days** in the case of
those for MOROCCO.

ANY DISTRICT or BRANCH POST OFFICE will supply on
application an AIR MAIL LEAFLET giving full particulars of all
the Air Mail Services. Some AIR MAIL LABELS should be obtained
at the same time.

Rear of the previous sheet detailing other services available to the London businessman including the Cairo to Baghdad air mail service by the Royal Air Force.

Frames 2 & 3 – Taken over European routes and services



The journey begins Imperial Airways “Hercules” aircraft over Croydon Airport, 1924.



The interior of Imperial Airways aircraft, note the cane seats for passengers, not I would suggest very comfortable for long air journeys.



1926 (May) London to Moscow via Berlin operated by a service of Imperial and Derluft.



1928 (December) United Kingdom to Egypt, flown London – Marseilles by Imperial, then P&O regular mail steamer service to Port Said.



1933 (January) to Buenos Aires, Imperial to Paris, Air France to Dakar, Aviso dispatch vessel to Natal, Brazil and Compagnie Geneale Aeropostale to Buenos Aires.

AVISO

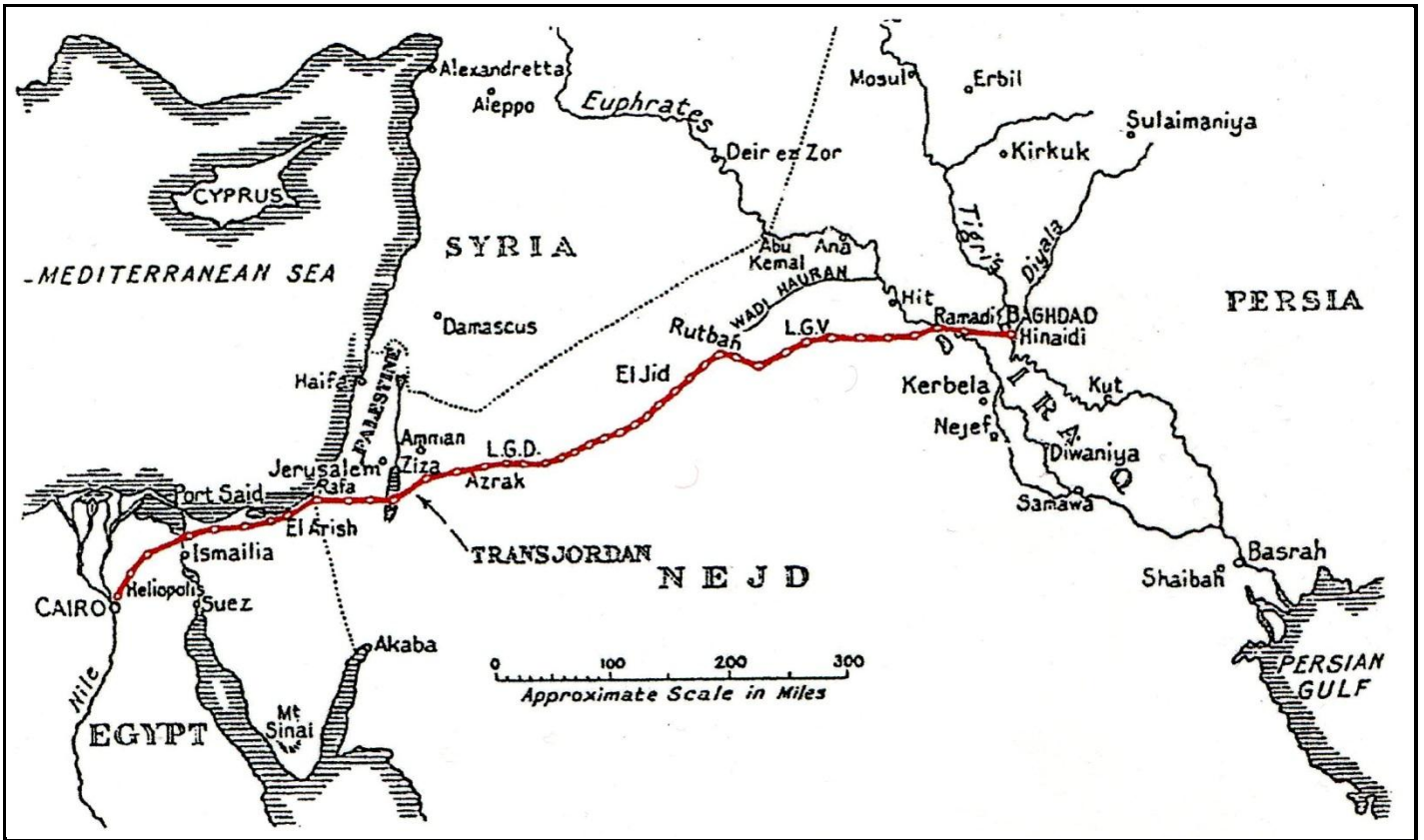
A type of dispatch boat or advice boat particularly in use with the French Navy, they are considered to be the equivalent to the modern sloop. Avisos are described as “small boats designed to carry orders or advices”.

French WWI and WWII avisos had a displacement of 300 to 700 tons, a speed of 13 to 20 knots, with main armament of two 100mm guns, two 138mm guns or four 100mm guns. In the British Navy there are referred to as sloops. Colonial avisos such as the “Bougainville class” intended for overseas service were larger.

The Portuguese Navy also operated avisos to operate in there Colonial Empire. First Rate Portuguese avisos such as the “Afonso de Albuquerque class” were 2,400 tons displacement and the Second Rate avisos of the “Goncalo Velho and Pedro Nunes classes” were 1,200 to 1,700 tons displacement. The “Flower class” sloops of the Portuguese Navy are classified as Second Rate avisos.

Modern avisos have grown to become combat-capable ships, smaller in size than a corvette, but larger than patrol ships. These ships have roles in anti-submarine warfare and coastal defence. NATO classification lists them as corvettes.

Frame 4 – RAF forerunners

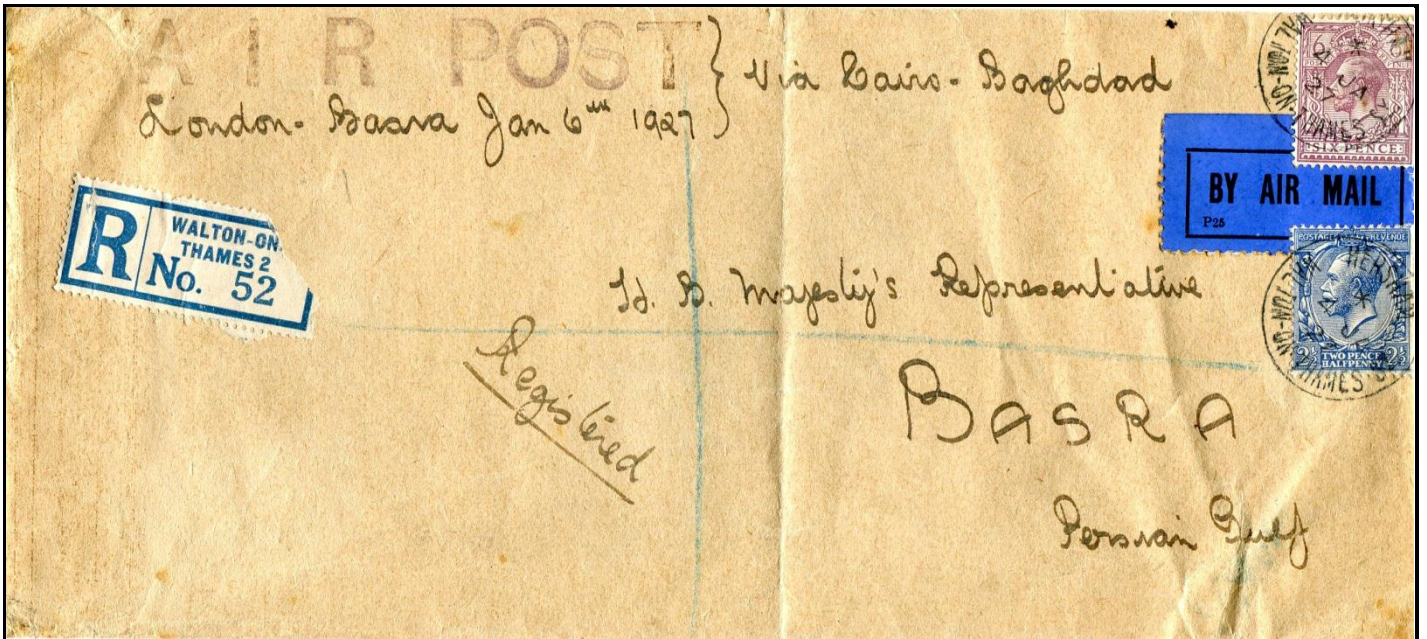


Map illustrating the route flown by the RAF aircraft between Cairo and Baghdad during the period July and December 1926, prior to the takeover of this service by Imperial in January 1927.



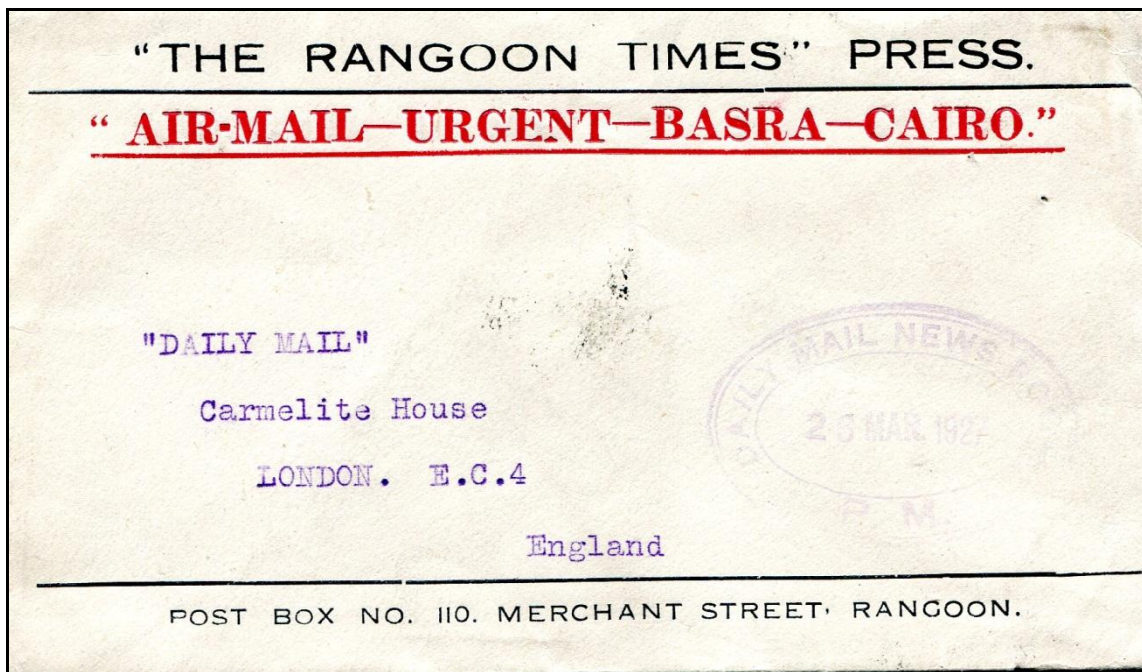
1922 (July) Baghdad – Cairo via air service W-20, railed to Port Said from Cairo and P&O regular mail steamer to United Kingdom, arriving 17 July, transit time of 8 days.

Frame 5 – Expanded routes and Middle East



1927 (January) London to Basra flown by Imperial to Marseilles, P&O mail steamer to Port Said, rail to Cairo then Imperial service E-1 to Basra.

Imperial Airways had taken over this air service from the RAF on 8 January 1927 and extended it to include Baghdad to Basra to connect with the mail steamers to India and beyond.



1927 (February) Rangoon to Basra via P&O mail steamer, Imperial to Cairo, rail to Port Said, P&O mail steamer to United Kingdom, transit of 29 days from Rangoon.

Frames 6 & 7 – Expanded services to India and beyond



On the 30 March 1929 Imperial Airways extended the air route from Basra to Karachi. The service now took a total of 8 days from the UK to India, flying all the way.

1929 (June) Melbourne to Perth air service, Perth to Calcutta via P&O mail steamer, rail to Karachi, then Imperial service IW-16 arriving London 27 July 1929.



1929 (December) Singapore to Bombay via mail steamer, rail to Karachi, then Imperial service IE-39 arriving London 9 January 1930.

Imperial Airways Short S.8 Calcutta Flying Boats "City of Alexandria", G-EBVG and "City of Athens", G-EBVH Crash at Mersa Matruh, Egypt.

Imperial service IE 31 departed Croydon for India on 26 October 1929, with the Short S.8. "Calcutta" flying boat "City of Alexandria" uplifting the mails at Naples on 28 October. On alighting at Mersa Matruh on 30 October, a refueling only stop on the Mediterranean due to lack of fuel the aircraft struck a harbor buoy nearly capsizing and badly damaging a wing. The passengers and mail were transferred to the "City of Athens" which on attempting to takeoff struck a reef inside the breakwater, tearing the bottom out of the hull and sinking in shallow water.

The waterlogged mails were transferred to the "City of Baghdad" which reached Karachi on 4 November, Bombay and Calcutta on 7 November 1929.



HERNE BAY KENT 3.15 PM 25.OCT.29

Both stamps and air mail label have been washed off the envelope. Receiving backstamp Calcutta G.P.O. DELY. 7.NOV.29 9-AM D.B.N. Listed in Nierinck as type 291026.

None of the mails involved in this double crash were marked with cachets indicating that they were "crash mail". The only indicator is the water damaged condition of the mail and the receiving datestamp.

One of few recorded and known covers from this double crash delayed mails.

Frame 8 – Expansion from Cairo to the Cape



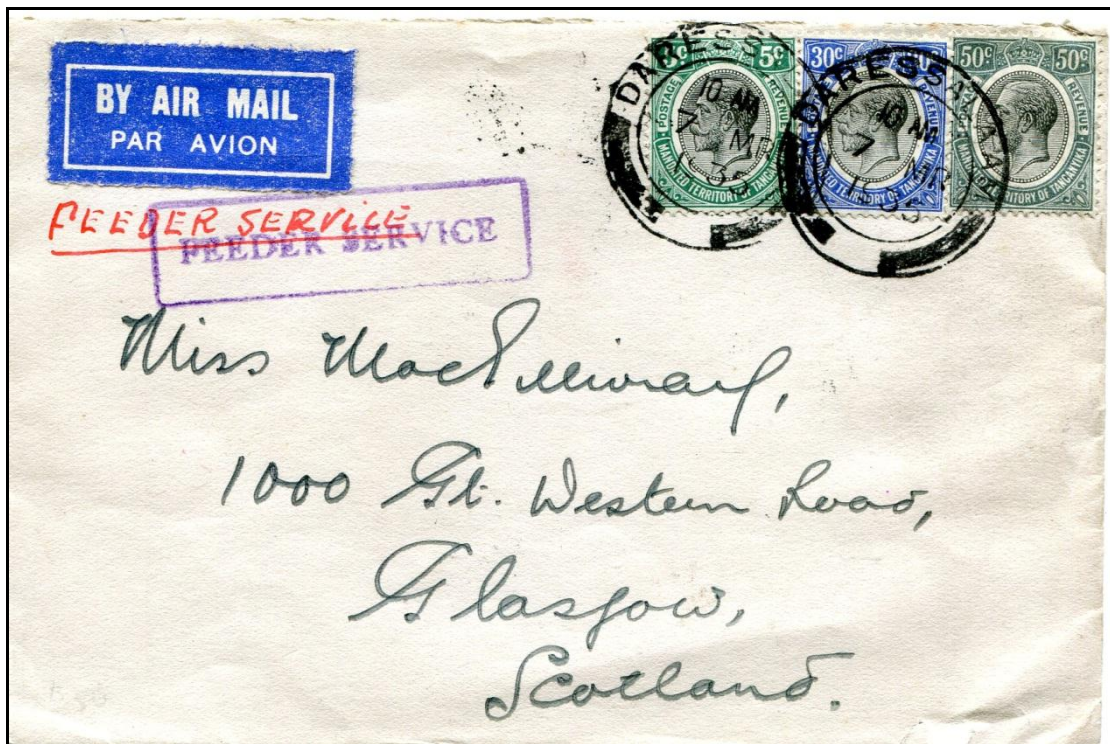
1931 (September) Nairobi to Germany, Wilson Airways feeder air service to Kisumu. Imperial service AN-29 to Athens, then Lufthansa air service to Berlin and surface to destination within Germany.



1933 (July) Mombasa, Kenya to UK with "LOCAL AIR FEE PAID" cachet applied. Nairobi to London Imperial service AN-124, arriving 29 July 1933.



1933 (March) Belgium Congo to Broken Hill via rail, then Imperial service AN-105 to London and Imperial service to Brussels, Belgium.



1935 (March) Dar es Salaam to UK via Feeder air service (Wilson's) to Nairobi, then Imperial service AN-219 to London, surface to destination in Scotland. Arriving 22 March 1935.

November, 1934.

SPECIAL NOTICE.

DIRECT AIR MAIL SERVICE TO AUSTRALIA.

Commencing with the service leaving London on Saturday, the 8th of December, the England—India—Malaya Air Mail service will be extended to Australia. The service will also be available for correspondence for New Zealand, and for the Dutch East Indies. Correspondence for Australia sent by the service leaving London on the 8th of December should be delivered in time for Christmas.

The first service in the homeward direction will leave Brisbane on Monday, the 10th of December and will be due to reach London on Monday, the 24th of December. Thereafter the aeroplane will leave Brisbane on Wednesday and will be due to reach London on Monday, 12 days later.

Particulars of the air postage rates and the acceleration afforded, are given below :—

Country of Destination.	Rates of Postage.			Post-cards.	Latest time of posting unregistered correspondence in the Air Mail Letter Box outside the Head Post Office, London, E.C.1. (For latest times of posting elsewhere, enquiry should be made at the local Head or Branch Office.)	Approximate time of transmission from London and acceleration afforded.
	Letters.		First Half Ounce.			
	Each additional Half Ounce.	Post-cards.				
1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	
Australia Fiji Islands. New Caledonia. New Guinea. Papua. Solomon Islands, etc.	<i>s. d.</i> 1 3	<i>s. d.</i> 1 3	<i>s. d.</i> 0 6	} 10.45 a.m. Saturday	12 days to Brisbane : 20 days' gain. 13 days to Melbourne : 17 days' gain. 13 days to Sydney : 18 days' gain. 13 days to Perth : 13 days' gain. 14 days to Adelaide : 15 days' gain. 14 days to Hobart : 19 days' gain.	
New Zealand ...	1 3	1 3	0 6			
Dutch East Indies ...	1 0	1 0	0 6			17 to 18 days : 12 to 23 days' gain. 9 days to Batavia : 13 to 18 days' gain.

ø Correspondence can be handed over the counter at Imperial Airways, Ltd., Hudson's Place, Wilton Road, S.W.1 (outside Victoria Station, Continental Departures) or posted in the Air Mail Letter Box at the Charles Street, Haymarket, S.W.1., Post Office up to 11.15 a.m. on Saturday.

On the introduction of the through service the present Air Mail service to Australia and New Zealand (by sea to Fremantle and thence by air) will be discontinued.

GPO London "special notice" issued November 1934.

N.B. last sentence at bottom of notice regarding Australia and New Zealand mails.



1936 (September) New Zealand to Sydney via mail steamer, rail to Brisbane, then Imperial service IW-485, arriving Brindisi 14 October with surface transport to Rome.

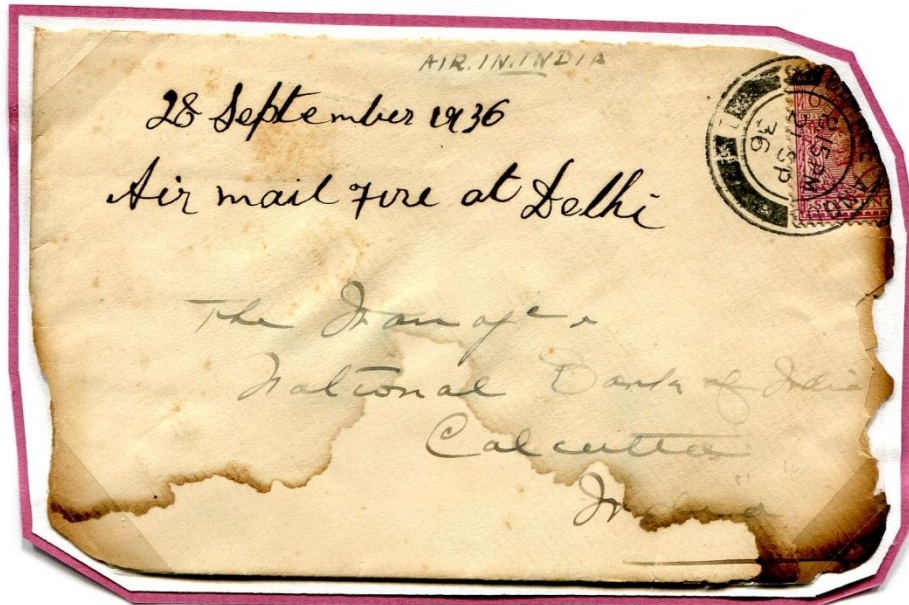


1936 (August) Singapore to Paris via Imperial service IW-472, then Air France and Lufthansa to Denmark.

N.B. the large routing cachet applied to the top of the envelope is an unlisted handstamp.

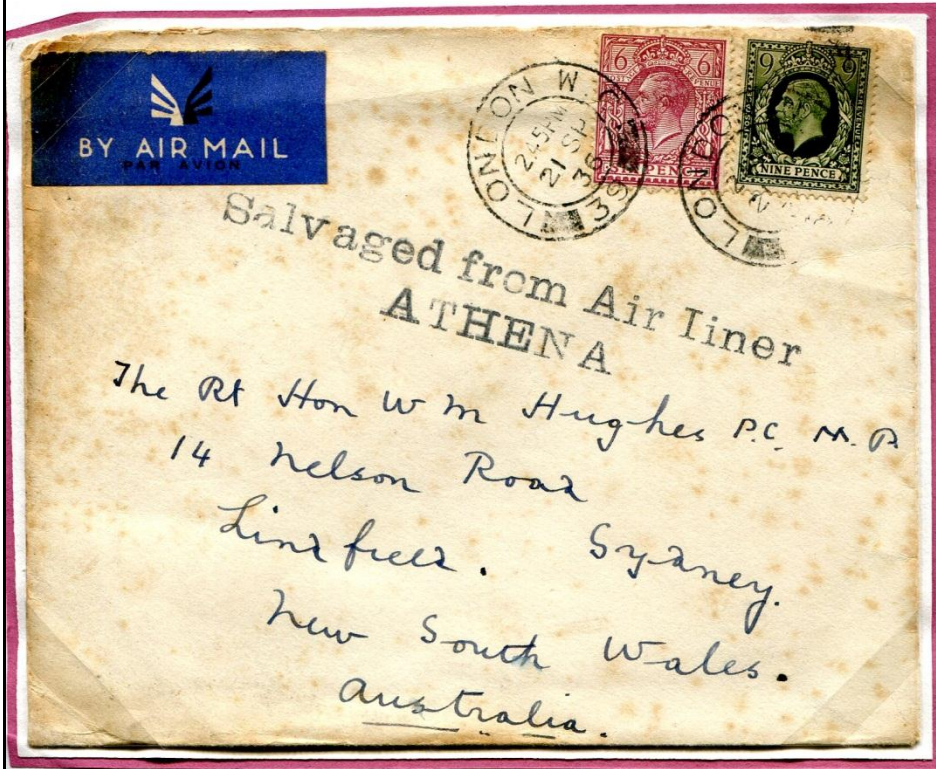
Imperial Airways Armstrong Whitworth AW XV Aircraft "Athena" G-ABTK Fire at Delhi, India

Outward bound from Karachi to Singapore sector with mails uplifted from intermediate stations between the United Kingdom and India the eastbound airliner "Athena" was destroyed by fire. The fire was caused when the engines were being started in readiness for takeoff. The two passengers and all crew members hastily escaped the burning aircraft with little injuries being sustained. The aircraft was carrying 113 bags of mail plus 93 packets, with all but 35 mailbags destroyed in the subsequent fire. Much of the salvaged mail was charred but decipherable and were sent on to their destinations with explanations and/or cachets attached.



DUNDEE ANGOB 8,15PM 21 SP 36

Badly charred envelope bearing UK 6d adhesive to India. Front bears two manuscript notations, "AIR IN INDIA" plus "28 September 1936 Air mail fire at Delhi". Nierinck records various manuscript notations as type 360929 a. This manuscript was applied on arrival at Calcutta.



**LONDON W. C.
2.45PM
21 SP
36
39**

Cover has UK 1/3 postage applied for delivery in Australia.

Nierinck type 360920 c double straight line cachet applied to front.

Backstamped on arrival in Australia with,
**LINFIELD
9.30A9OC36
N.S.W.**

Total of 35 mail bags were salvaged in a burnt condition of the 113 bags of mail onboard at the time of the fire and subsequent destruction of the aircraft on the tarmac at Delhi.

Frames 12, 13, 14 & 15 – Empire flying boats and the EAMS



1937 (April) Suva, Fiji to Sydney via Burns Philp mail steamer, rail to Brisbane, then Imperial service IW-543 to Southampton. Surface to USA from UK, note 2 large red bars cancelling the air mail vignette applied in London.



1937 (April) Imperial service IW-535 to Penang, the Imperial feeder air service FEE-56 to Hong Kong.

N.B. cachet applied "PER IMPERIAL AIRWAYS MAIL" unlisted handstamp.



SOUTH AFRICAN MAIL

ALL YOUR LETTERS,
LETTER PACKETS
AND POSTCARDS to
the following countries
are now sent by air :—

ANGLO-EGYPTIAN SUDAN KENYA
UGANDA TANGANYIKA
ZANZIBAR MAURITIUS
NORTHERN & SOUTHERN RHODESIA
NYASALAND UNION OF S. AFRICA

NEW RATES OF POSTAGE :—
Letters 1½d. per half ounce
Postcards 1d.

OTHER CLASSES OF CORRESPONDENCE for these countries, namely, printed papers, commercial papers, samples, etc., will continue to be sent by surface transport. The postage rates for these remain unchanged.

EVERY DAY IS MAIL DAY. Instead of one mail a week, there will be three despatches each week to East Africa and two to South Africa. It is important to maintain an even flow in the posting of your correspondence. There is now no need to save it up for special mail days ; post it as soon as it is ready.

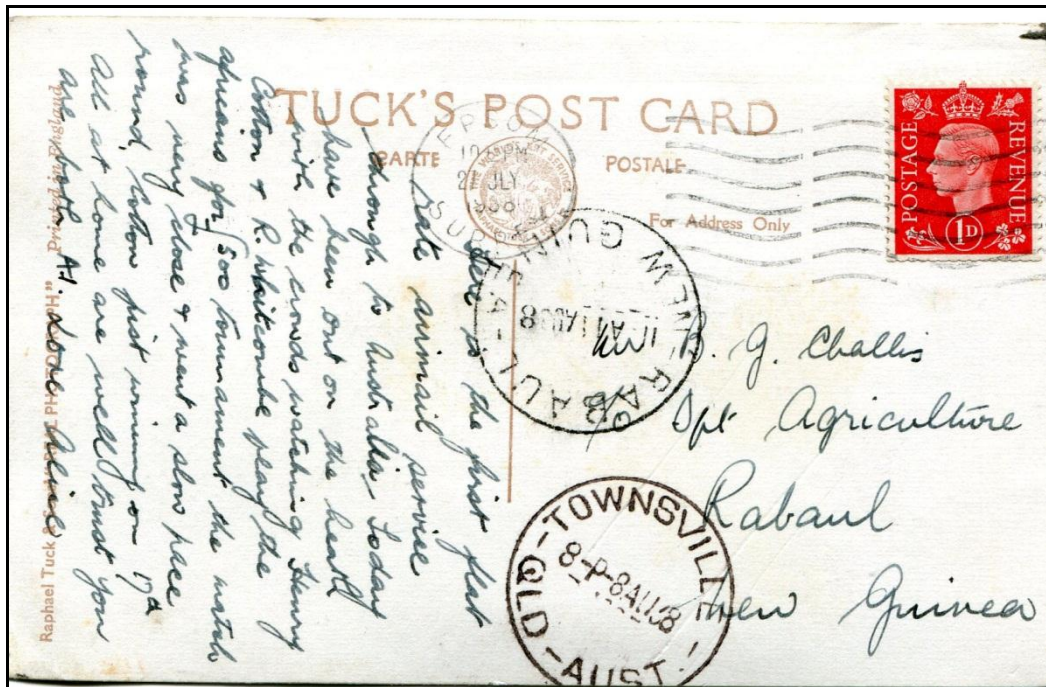
DO NOT AFFIX AIR MAIL LABELS or make any other marking to indicate air transmission for your letters and postcards for these countries.

POST IN THE ORDINARY LETTER BOXES. Letters and postcards for the above countries may be delayed if posted in the blue Air Mail boxes, which are intended for correspondence on which an Air Mail surcharge is payable.

Official notice approved by the GPO London and printed by Imperial Airways to announce the start of the "Empire Air Mail Scheme" (EAMS) first stage on 30 June 1937 to South Africa.



1937 (December) New Zealand to Japan via Australia. Mail steamer to Sydney from Wellington, then Imperial services IW-610 to Bangkok and BH-2 to Hong Kong, then Pan American service to Japan.



1938 (July) UK to New Guinea via Australia, (third stage of the EAMS).

Southampton to Townsville by Imperial service SE-3, then Burns Philp mail steamer to Rabaul.

Difficult to find the postcard rate of 1d for this EAMS air service to an Empire country.

**EMPIRE
AIR MAIL
SCHEME**

THIRD STAGE

NOW IN OPERATION

1½d FOR EACH **HALF OUNCE** POSTCARDS **1d**

ALL LETTERS, LETTER PACKETS AND POSTCARDS FOR

ADEN	MALAY STATES, FEDERATED & UNFEDERATED	PAPUA
AUSTRALIA	MAURITIUS	SAMOA (Territory under British Administration)
BAHREIN	MUSCAT	SARAWAK
BANKS ISLANDS	NAURU	SEYCHELLES
BURMA	NEW GUINEA	SOLOMON ISLANDS
CEYLON	(Mandated Territory)	SOUTHERN RHODESIA
COOK ISLANDS	NEW HEBRIDES	STRAITS SETTLEMENTS
DUBAI	NEW ZEALAND	SUDAN (Anglo-Egyptian)
EGYPT	NORFOLK ISLAND	TANGANYIKA TERRITORY
FANNING ISLAND	NORTH BORNEO	TIBET
FIJI ISLANDS	NORTHERN RHODESIA	TONGA
GILBERT AND ELLICE ISLANDS	NYASALAND	UGANDA
HONG KONG	PALESTINE AND TRANSJORDAN	UNION OF SOUTH AFRICA
INDIA		ZANZIBAR
KENYA		

NOW GO BY AIR

NOTE THE POSTAGE RATES

Letters and letter packets 1½d. for each **half** ounce
Postcards 1d.

There is no longer any special fee to pay for air carriage to these countries. Blue air mail labels or other special markings to indicate air transmission must not be used.

Do not save up your correspondence for these countries for posting on any particular day. There are frequent services: post any day—the earlier in the week the better.

Official notice approved by GPO London and produced by Imperial Airways to announce the start of "Stage 3" of the EAMS, issued during July 1938.

N.B. all the countries included in the Empire air mail notice, are the only ones that the EAMS applied to. Two other extensions were announced later during 1938.



THE EMPIRE AIR MAIL SCHEME

now extends to

IRAQ
(and Kuwait)

All first class mail—letters, letter-packets and postcards—for Iraq and Kuwait goes by air as the normal means of transmission, under the same arrangements as those applicable to other countries in the Empire Air Mail Scheme

LETTERS

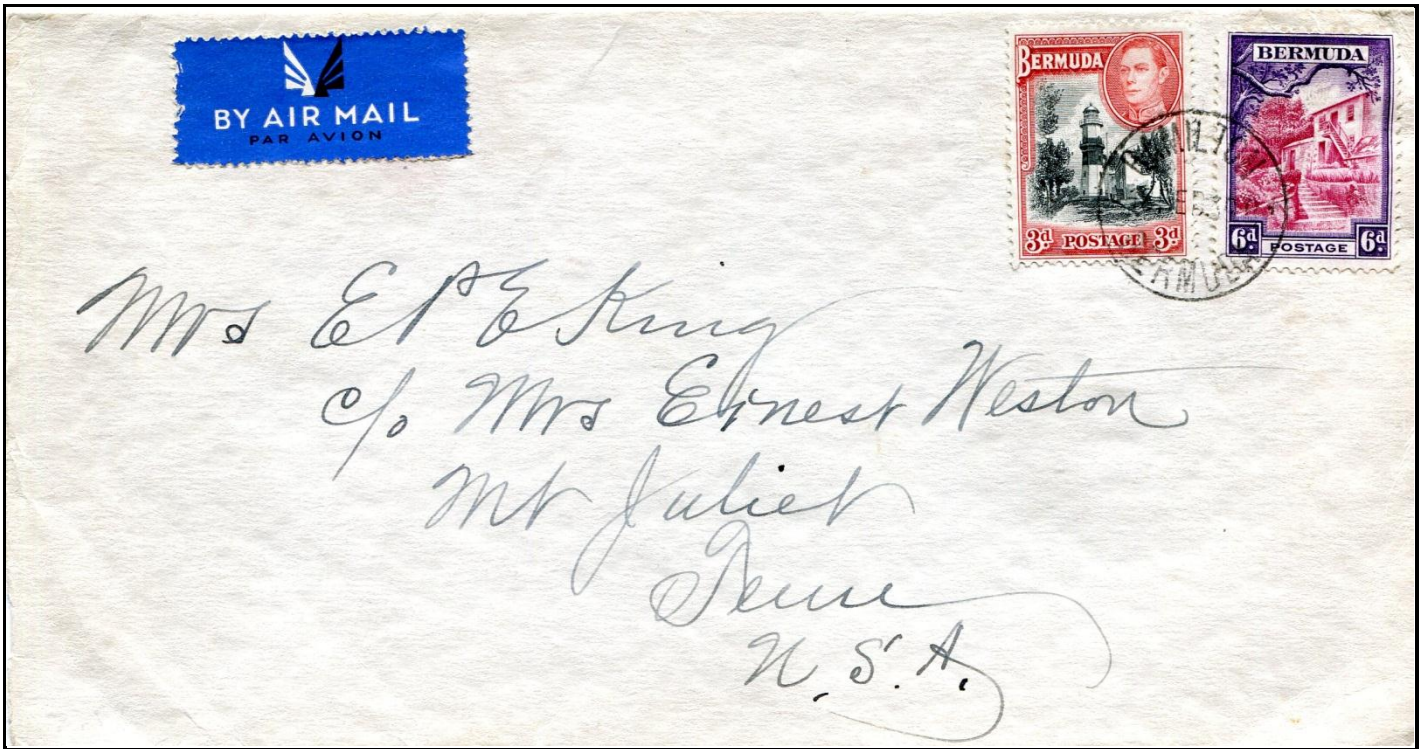
$1\frac{1}{2}$ d. for each HALF ounce

POSTCARDS 1d.

Second to last official GPO notice extending the EAMS service to Iraq and Kuwait, the last extension was to Hong Kong later during 1938.

N.B. the whole of the EAMS service was curtailed in September 1939 due to the onset of World War Two, with all air mails reverting back to the old air mail surcharge rates.

Frame 16 – Trans-Atlantic Services



1938 (February) Bermuda to USA via Imperial air service which had its services started in May 1937. The summer months the flying boat operated to New York, with the winter months operating to Baltimore from Hamilton, Bermuda.

N.B. the Flying Boat "Cavalier" G-ADUU was lost in a crash into the Atlantic Ocean en route to Bermuda on 21 January 1939.



1939 (August) UK to USA by Imperial service NAW-2 from Southampton to New York via landings in Ireland and Canada.

Frame 16 – The final chapter of Imperial Airways



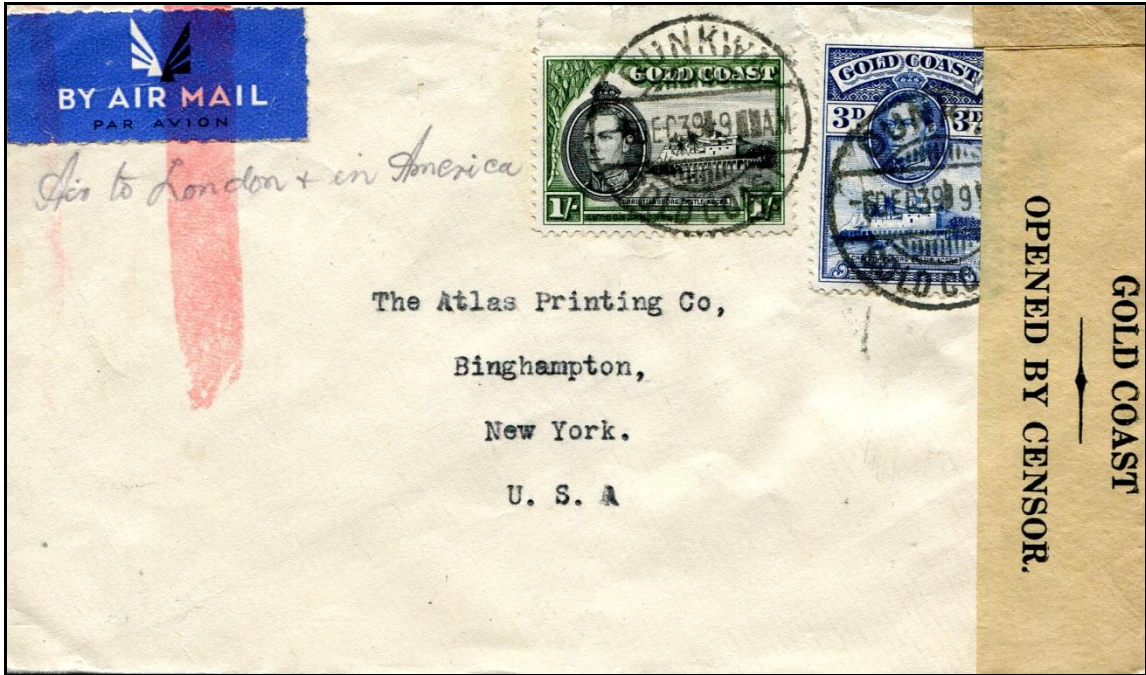
1939 (October) Wellington to UK via Australia. Wellington to Sydney by Trans-Tasman mail steamer, then Imperial air service to Southampton.

N.B. The air services went unreported as from the beginning of September 1939 due to the imminent outbreak of WWII.



1939 (October) Ireland to New Zealand via United Kingdom and Australia.

Censored in Ireland and closed with censor's pink closing label SP-1.



1939 (December) Gold Coast to USA via London. Air service is cancelled at London by 2 large red bars over the air mail vinette. Envelope has manuscript route instructions applied "Air to London & in America".



1940 (March) Goa, Portuguese India to UK. Letter railed to Karachi and then Imperial service to Southampton and rail to destination in London.

Final word

The history of Imperial Airways Limited is a fascinating subject and one that is not approached lightly. Many collectors of this subject only collect one area i.e. the mails to Australia, the crash mail of the Air line and other similar collecting interests by the various collectors of this area within aerophilately. With the collection shown here today I have approached the Air line in what I hope and trust is a holistic manner that may be understood by all who view it.

When I started to collect the material for this subject I did not try and collect first flight material, rather I was more interested in the area of commercial air mail carried by the air line which shows the route structures put in place and how the routes were expanded to meet the needs and desires of the British Government as its "chosen instrument" to have a fast, regular effective communication by air with the far flung countries and colonies of the Empire.

Many of the covers shown have jusqu'a handstamps or cachets which in themselves are uncommon; some are in the rare bracket. This together with the crash covers contained within add another dimension to the display.

One of the areas that I was asked to address was that of the air mail routes and rates to the Empire in Australasia, I trust that this has been accomplished with the material on display

My grateful thanks to Steve Reinhard of the Collectors Club for the kind invitation to display and talk on this subject.

I thank all you who are here today, my very grateful thanks for listening to my talk and viewing the displayed material which I trust it has been enjoyed.

Barry Scott FRPSL

Auckland, New Zealand

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