

AIR MAIL NEWS

QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF THE BRITISH AIR MAIL SOCIETY

(Incorporating the Bulletin of the BAeF)

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**Would members please note that copy date for the
May 2019 issue of *Air Mail News* will be 15th March.
Items arriving after this date will not be accepted.**

Our President's Message.

My I take this opportunity to wish you all a very Happy New Year.

The Annual General Meeting of our Society will be held at the King's Head in Marylebone on Saturday 1st June. The change of venue is due mainly to the relocation of the Royal P.S. which will be taking place at this time. I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible, especially our regional representatives, as there are some important issues to discuss regarding the future of the Society.

In October I attended our South Coast Regional Meeting which was held in conjunction with the Ardingly Stamp Fair and I must thank **Josh Spoor** for organising this well attended and very interesting event. I also recently attended this year's Stuart Rossiter lecture given very expertly by our member **Frank Walton** on the subject of the '*Classification of Air Mail Exhibits*' which I found most interesting. I must confess, however, that I now no longer understand if my collections are aerophilately or postal history. This, however, will only affect those of us who enter competitions competitively.

Some of you may have noticed that I have been writing a series of articles based on my German Catapult collection. This is my first attempt and I have kept it relatively simple in the hope that some of you have found it interesting. I am sure that our Editor would welcome other members' contributions and I hope that my attempts will encourage some of you to do the same. So, give it a try.

I am still trying to encourage members who would be willing to assist in the running of the Society but it would seem to be a thankless task. Members must realise that the Society is run purely on a voluntary basis and relies solely on contributions from our members. If you enjoy our hobby and also the advantages of being a member of BAMS, then please offer your assistance. Any help, however small, would be much appreciated.

Eddie Spicer.

Editorial

ACCESS TO AEROPHILATELIC JOURNALS

. One of the greatest pleasures I have is the chance to meet and share with other members views about our hobby. Over the years I have been fortunate enough to have been able to attend meetings not only here in the UK but overseas in Europe and in the United States. Occasions when I was able to meet and greet like-minded members and the chance to empathise or chew the fat with other collectors will always remain indelibly printed on my mind. I have made many good friends and acquaintances over the years. Most importantly there have also been the chance to attend a goodly number of talks and displays and this has served not only to broaden my mind through helping me see horizons I would never otherwise have dreamt of, but to occasionally talk with collectors whose interests largely overlapped my own, thereby helping develop my own collections. At many meetings there were chances to participate though giving displays of parts of my collections. All experienced collectors will no doubt affirm my contention that you get far more back from your hobby if you are prepared to put something in. Be prepared to show some parts of your collections at meetings. It is amazing once you have taken the plunge and started showing your collection, word of this will spread, and others will contact you offering advice, information and sometime the opportunity to acquire pieces for your collection. You will of course make mistakes but the feedback you will receive from invariably friendly and appreciative audiences, and the friendly help given by others will more than repay the effort of assembling your displays.

One of the great advantages of being a member of the British Air Mail Society is the chance to attend regional group meetings. Currently we have Group Meetings held in various locations around the country. For a number of reasons not all of you will be able to attend your local group meetings, through pressure of work, through clash of dates with other important commitments you already have in your diaries, or you may be too infirm or unwell to attend. Lack of transport may be a real problem for you, but if there is a meeting you would desperately like to attend, contact the Group Convenor (contact addresses on inside back page of this issue) and I am sure somebody would be more than willing to organise something for you.

Recently I have been making the effort to attend the Wessex Group Meetings which have been held in the Scout Hut at West Harnham, Salisbury. Held approximately twice per year, the Wessex Group Meetings, organised by **Peter Wingent**, invariably begin with an invited display in the morning, followed by members' displays, only interrupted by a mass exit to a local hostelry for liquid refreshments and lunch. Other Groups do things differently – read reports in *Air Mail News*. If you have never been to a regional group meeting you are missing a treat.

At a recent meeting of the Wessex Group one member, whose name I no longer recall, was clearly downsizing and had brought with him a number of publications, folders and magazines which he wished those attending might like to take away with them. I picked up a run of an aerophilatelic journal that I hitherto was largely unaware of. This was a complete run of fifteen issues of the “**Aeroletter**”, official organ of the Aerophilatelic Society of Southern Africa, ranging from issue No. 91 (March 2005) through to issue 106 (July 2013). Readers should note that the name of this aerophilatelic society is the Aerophilatelic Society of *Southern* Africa, not South Africa, and as such contains much good meat, information and original articles about the air mails not only of South Africa, but the Portuguese colonies in SW Africa and Angola, the Rhodesias, Nyasaland, Madagascar, the Congo and other places loosely covered by the umbrella title of Southern Africa. I must tell you, this acquisition has proven most worthwhile. I have spent many happy hours dipping into these publications, reading and learning about areas of collecting I had hitherto not really given more than a cursory glance.

I take my hat off to **Neville Polakow**, Editor of these *Aeroletters*. The standard of production of these superbly produced full-colour A4-format journals I am particularly jealous of. They really do put the production of *Air Mail News* to shame. There are lessons to be learnt here: the ASSA seem to have acquired sponsorship over the years for certain periods (I note our good friends in Holland also obtain sponsorship from the Dutch PTT for production of their quarterly journal, *Die Vliegende Hollander*) to help defray printing costs, and many members have dibbed in through sponsoring printing of designated pages within their 60-page issues. Just a thought, but has BAMS Council ever explored the possibility of sponsorship for *Air Mail News*, either from commercial firms or from individuals?

One thing that does come to mind following from this sudden windfall of issues of the *Aeroletter* is that it would seem issues of this worthwhile journal have not recently been mentioned in *Air Mail News*. I doubt we have ever explored the possibility of exchange of journals between BAMS and the Aerophilatelic Society of Southern Africa in the same way we have arranged exchange of journals with other organisations, and I doubt this journal can be found on the shelves in the BAMS Library. I shall be passing on this current batch of Aeroletters to Barbara to add to our repository of aerophilatelic journals. Members then will have the chance to access them, as members always have had the privilege of affording access or borrowing issues of journals we have in our Library. Barbara is generally more than willing to photocopy articles for members, thereby avoiding expensive postal charges. As part of my duties as Editor I have been sent many journals over the years and these I always pass on to Barbara.

I note contributors to the *Aeroletter* include many British members of BAMS. The bottom line here is, and this is a general plea, if you belong to specialist societies or have access to specialist air mail journals not regularly featured in *Air Mail News*, and which you believe might not be found in our Library, please let us know. Most importantly please do not dispose of through your local amenity waste disposal systems journals that might well be of great value to the wider aerophilatelic community, in particular your fellow members of BAMS.

Richard Saundry.

Arrangements for the May 2019 and subsequent issues.

Please note that **COPY DATE** for the May issue of *Air Mail News* will be **15th March** and submissions received after that date will *not* appear in that issue. The May issue of *Air Mail News* is always difficult to compile, particularly because it invariably is jam-packed with notices pertaining to our Annual General Meeting and other reports.

Readers should be aware that I am relinquishing my role within BAMS as Editor *Air Mail News*, and the May issue will be the last one that I will have the dubious honour of editing. Submissions for insertion in subsequent issues of our journal should be made directly to our “Editor-in-Waiting”,

Roger Stanley-Smith (58a Parklands Road, HASOCKS, West Sussex BN6 8JZ
(Contact: 07711 556296, E-mail roger_gs_smith@hjetmail.com)

Letters to the Editor.

The Size of Sheets used at National Philatelic Exhibitions.

Richard,

Sunday 30th. September 2018.

I have just read the latest *Air Mail News* and like good wine it gets better with age. It's unfortunate that we all have to give up our efforts on behalf of our Society at some stage.

Being sited at the tip of England, however, you are unaware that new frames have been designed and purchased and were used at the February Stampex in an A frame configuration. They hold 16 A4 sheets. These frames have now been modified to stand vertically (allowing more frames in the vertical space) and tested at the last Stampex, but it was found that competitors had trouble mounting their exhibits when they were using flimsy protectors. Thus, as I am one of the mounting and glazing team, please inform prospective exhibitors to make sure that their sheets have stiffeners or thick protectors to avoid sheets falling out of the frames whilst both mounting and taking down. Note: These frames will be used from now on and at the London 2020 exhibition.

Regards,

Peter Lister

[*Editor:* It certainly was news to me to learn that at our national philatelic exhibitions provision was being made for exhibitors to use A4-format sheets. Our readership in North America, and possibly elsewhere in the world, may be perplexed what A4-format sheets are. In the UK, and presumably the whole of Europe, the standard size of letter sheets of paper, (297mm. x 205mm) are taller and less wide than the standard 'Legal' format letter sheets (279mm x 215mm, 11 ins x 8.5 ins) used in, presumably, the rest of the world. I think it fair to say that the international philatelic establishment have always encouraged exhibitors to use the US legal-size letter sheets, or sheets approximating to that recommended size, for mounting in frames for display purposes. In the past exhibitors using A4-format sheets might well have encountered difficulties when entering the competitive arena. It is good that here in the UK we are catering for exhibitors who prefer to use A4-format sheets, but since presumably we are still obliged to slot into the internationally acceptable norm for exhibiting, does that mean provision for A4-format sheets is to be provided elsewhere? I presume, not having personally seen these new frames, exhibitors in the UK will still be able to mount other than A4-format sheets in them?

I guess the reason Peter sent this information was that he was responding to my plea in the November issue of *Air Mail News* asking help to source US Legal size sheets or card here in the UK? I think he missed the point. It was personally very important that I should source these sheets for two reasons: firstly, the wider US Legal-size sheets facilitate the mounting of covers that would otherwise be too wide to mount using the narrower A4 sheets; secondly if I had been forced to alter the format of my sheets, I would have had to remount the whole of my collections, something probably way beyond my feeble declining energy levels.

I will always be eternally grateful to our Romsey, Hampshire member **Alan Whittaker** who, well beyond the call of duty, sourced a printer friend of his who was able to provide sheets cut to the requisite size. Alan also arranged their safe despatch to my home address. Why, oh why? I am bound to ask when, in this day and age, few serious exhibitors choose to house their collections using stamp albums, that British purveyors of philatelic sundries have seemingly never thought of marketing a range of loose stiff pages suitable for exhibition purposes. Am I the only person who has come across this particular problem, or are there commercial sources of display sheets that I have as yet never heard of?]

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The following is a transcript of an exchange of emails subsequent to a request from Dominique Petit, President of the Circle de Aérophilatélique Française, asking your Editor's help by putting him in touch with members of BAMS who might be able to collaborate with our French friends in writing an article on the Paris-London air mail service 1919-1923. Readers might find the following exchange of correspondence of great interest, providing much food for thought. I trust nobody will take umbrage through my revealing this correspondence, much of which was sent me without expecting it to appear in print:

Does Anyone Ever Critically Read Articles? Do BAMS Members collect Early British Air Mail Covers?

Good morning, Richard,

Friday 2nd. November 2018.

John Symonds and I have often observed that regular writers of articles (and of course that includes you) never receive any comments, positive or negative, following publication. This would suggest that no-one actually reads what we have so laboriously compiled and researched. That this is true is shown by a glaring error in my "*Brazilian Air Mail Rates*" article in *Air Mail News*. I am currently rewriting it in a different form and came across a cover illustration in the original article showing a cover for which I confidentially stated that the rate was 9000 Reis + 1500 Reis making a total of 10,500 Reis. Trouble is, the cover clearly carries 10,400 Reis which makes my calculation and subsequent statements as to rate entirely wrong. How are the mighty fallen? But it does show that no-one noticed. Quite dispiriting.

Regards,

John Wilson.

Dear John,

Sunday 4th November 2018.

I sympathise whole heartedly with the observation that few readers of aerophilatelic journals bother to read articles published therein. I sometimes wonder why we bother. I will publish your letter in the February issue of *Air Mail News*. Incidentally, if you wish to send me an amended version of your Brazilian rates article, please remember my period of tenure as Editor is shortly coming to an end and I cannot guarantee that my successor, Roger Stanley-Smith would wish to publish it.

If readers of journals are guilty of not critically reading articles, what about Editors such as myself? At one time the BAeF decided to assemble a panel of experts in different collecting areas to peer review manuscripts before they were published in *Air Mail News*. When the list of 'Experts' leaked out (not by me) it caused an almighty rumpus because so many pompous heavyweights complained because they thought they were the 'experts', not those on the list. I thought it prudent to drop the whole idea of automatic peer reviews. Certainly, if I receive some submission nowadays that I do not understand I usually seek advice from other members. The great problem with BAMS with so few members and with such a wide range of collecting interests it is often the case we cannot find anyone else who collects the same material. A case in point is that last night I received a request from our French counterparts for contact with BAMS members who might collect early Paris-London air mails. I just don't know any members who seriously collect British Air Mails. In fact we rarely get any articles relating to British Air Mails. A sad state of affairs for our national aerophilatelic society that so few of our members seem to be interested in British Air Mails, I think you would agree.

What currently does concern me is the realisation that with the ever-increasing use of the internet, few people want hard copy versions of our journals. What then will be the legacy of digital journals for those wishing to do original research if hard copy versions are not lodged in libraries? It appears we no longer send copies of *Air Mail News* to the American Philatelic Library in Bellefonte, Pennsylvania. I fully understand why those responsible for making these decisions decided for financial reasons to reduce exchange copies with other societies and libraries, but we are, in my view, doing a great disservice to those who come after us. I think those who decided to only send digital copies of journals were mean spirited.

What do you think?

Richard Saundry.

Richard,

I may not have any early UK-France material, as my focus is primarily British internal services of which I have a comprehensive collection from 1935 through to circa 2000 including near complete coverage of GWR Air Services Ltd., International Airlines (Western Air Express), Provincial Airways, Portsmouth Southsea & IoW Aviation Ltd., Midland & Scottish Air Ferries Ltd., London Scottish & Provincial Airways Ltd., Highland Airways, Railway Air Services Ltd., Hillman's Airways Ltd., IoM – West Coast Air Services Ltd. & United Airways Ltd., Lundy Air Mail, Jersey Airways Ltd. & Guernsey Airways Ltd., Northern & Scottish Airways Ltd., Aberdeen Airways Ltd., Allied Airways (Gander Dower) Ltd., North Eastern Airways Ltd., and Scottish Airways. To all intents and purposes these are complete with

representative flown covers in their coverage of services operated. In addition, I can add Great Western & Southern Air Lines, British European Airways (BEA), BEA Helicopter Ltd. Services and British Airways internal UK services, Loganair Ltd. And other provincial airlines.

Richard, don't you think that can be called a serious and comprehensive collection.

Best wishes,

John Symons.

Good afternoon both,

Sunday 4th November 2018.

The SPH, (Society of Postal Historians), has an officer known as the "Curator" whose duties are (according to the Rule Book): "To maintain a register of members' interests and if required will put any member of the Society in touch with others who share the same interests or who have access to sources of information on particular subjects."

Seems like a good idea (it is) and I have used the services of the Curator quite often. John; you may be interested to know that the current curator (and for many years) is Frank Bennett, and he has been very active in compiling the lists complete with photographs of the members. He brings/takes the thick file with him to every meeting he attends and it's very effective, particularly in being able to recognise people from the photographs.

Probably too late in the day to compile such a record for BAMS??

John Wilson.

The Captain Smye Challenge.

In the November 2018 issue of *Air Mail News*, Vol. 61, No. 243, page 41., under the "Current Magazine References" column, when indexing articles that had appeared in recent issues of "*La Catastrophe*", journal of the Wreck & Crash Mail Society, your Editor remarked that in one issue of *La Catastrophe* **Ronny Vogt**, commenting on an article in that journal by Tony Dunn, "1929 Ireland to New Zealand Captain Smye Mystery Cover", said "My guess is that it has nothing to do with any crash, and that it is a Capt. Smye phantasy, making the best out of a damaged item. I don't like these cards and (so far) I have refused to buy one. Capt. Smye was notorious for "enriching" some of his covers." Your Editor who has a number of Capt. Smye covers in his collection, remarked that he was totally unaware that Capt. Smye had ever been accused of "tarting" up his covers and cards. Ronny's contention might prove of some interest and be alarming to many readers of *Air Mail News*. We invited Ronny and all readers of *Air Mail News* to send in comments about Capt. Smye and his covers for possible publication in a future issue of *Air Mail News*. Julian van Beveren has now risen magnificently to catch the bait and writes:

"Dear Richard,

Thursday 22nd November 2018.

Rather like you, I was surprised to learn that Capt. Smye had been accused of falsifying a 1929 crash/interrupted "mystery" air mail cover from Ireland to New Zealand and as he is no longer with us cannot answer in his defence. In the U.K., thankfully, any person who stands accused remains innocent until proved otherwise and I for one, in the few Smye covers from various collections have no example or evidence to throw at this collector to prove that that he was guilty of fraudulently improving a cover.

Many of the covers in his collections were of his own making, so to speak, sent care of various post offices around the world to be returned to his Gosport, Hampshire, England address, a common practice that many collectors and dealers did for collating first flights and the



Figure 1.

like. These forerunner collectors' names are well known to us all and if these philatelically produced items had not been made by these early collectors and we were to be reliant on purely commercially sent air mails, today many collectors' examples of early pioneering airline flights would be considerably thinned out.

I include a few examples of Captain Smye's covers and, indeed the first is also an Irish one sent from Baile Atha Cliath, (Dublin), on the 22nd June 1929 for the commencement of the first reciprocal Stockholm / Amsterdam night flights by KLM and ABA, and which up to the 28th June carried no air mail tariff. This example, showing that it was carried on Night Flight number 17, (NATTFLYVNINGS. TUR 17. 24.6.29). From Amsterdam it would have had an air mail connection to London and on to Gosport by surface means. Embellished? Well yes, with a rather fine Irish tricolour, methinks, top left of the envelope.

For the Imperial Airways new route from the U.K. to India, Smye sent a cover, (Figures 2 and 2a), dated 28th March 1929 from London S.W.1., franked using a pair of 1½d. and a 1d. King George V postage stamps, as far as Alexandria, Egypt. The letter would have left Croydon by air on 30th March for Paris and Basle, train to Genoa, then further onward



Figures 2 and 2a.

transmission by air to Rome, Naples, Corfu, Athens, Suda Bay, Tobruk and finally Alexandria, where we see its post mark of arrival at Heliopolis on 9th April. No embellishments here.

I now show (Figures 3 and 4), a pair of Capt. Smye "send offs" from Hampshire that were made on the 2nd April 1931 for the first Imperial Airways flight out to Australia, from Portsmouth to c/o G.P.O. Batavia and from Gosport to the G.P.O. Singapore. More questionable embellishments? Hardly, although he did use a rather nice pre-printed George V ½d. postal stationery envelope for his sending to the Dutch East Indies, and a commercial Imperial Airways vignette circa 1930 was affixed to his cover to Singapore. The vignette was promoted by Imperial Airways to encourage customers.

Lastly, (Figure 5), I show one of Capt. Smye's cover flown on I.A.'s leg from Bahrain to Akyab G.P.O. (Burma), date stamped 27th September 1933 which arrived in Akyab on the morning of the 1st October. This cover seems as honest as the day is long, though if anyone can show any issue with it, pray tell.

Whilst there may well have been a few deceitful army captains about, I have no evidence to say that Capt. T.A. Smye was one of them.

Regards,



Figure 3.

Julian van Beveren.



Figure 4

Editor: I know very little about Capt Smye. I once overheard someone say that he was an Irishman, and like many people of his race he had a somewhat fiery disposition. I notice that Julian has inferred he was an army captain. Living in Gosport near that great naval port of Portsmouth, I had always assumed, probably erroneously, that he was a naval captain.

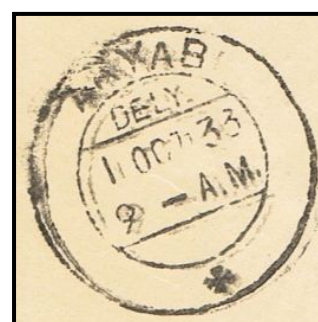


Figure 5 (left) and Figure 5a (above) of receiving date stamp on back for first flight cover 1933 Bahrain to Akyab, Burma

News from the World of Aerophilately

AEROPEX 2019

A special event to celebrate the centenary of the first aeroplane flight from England to Australia is scheduled to be held in Adelaide, South Australia in December 2019.

AEROPEX 2019 will be a specialised National Philatelic Exhibition for aerophilately and astrophilately. In addition, exhibits with an aviation theme or subject will be accepted in traditional, postal history, postal stationery, thematics, maxomaphily, revenues, youth, open, literature, first day covers, frugal, polar, Cinderella and picture postcard classes.

The exhibition is scheduled for 6, 7 and 8 December at the Torrens Parade Ground Drill Hall, Adelaide. This popular and central venue will accommodate approximately 350 frames of exhibits with extra space for dealers and meetings. This date has been deliberately chosen to coincide with the centenary of the first flight from England to Australia by Adelaide's own Ross and Keith Smith

This will be an exhibition pitched to the aviation enthusiast with special displays, guest speakers and trips to historic sites around Adelaide. To ensure we have the best possible material on show the organising committee has invited international competition.

For information on exhibiting, please consult the exhibition prospectus and entry form available from the Australian Philatelic Federation website :- <http://apf.org.au/philatelic-exhibition-timetable/>

For further information, please contact the Exhibition Secretary, Linda Welden, at PO Box 12064, Adelaide Sturt Street PO, South Australia, 5000 or e-mail lindaw3456@gmail.com

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AEROBERLIN 2019

We have received a message from **Wolfgang Porges**, President F.I.S.A. that the Schöneberg City Hall, the venue for the AEROBERLIN 2019 stamp show in April, has been undergoing major renovations. This work should have been completed before the end of March but we are now informed this date is highly unlikely which in turn might cause difficulties regarding the philatelic exhibition.

Wolfgang does tell us, however, that the **FISA CONGRESS** will most definitely still be going ahead in the Schöneberg City Hall on 27 April, and that there will still be displays of Aero/Astro exhibits in conjunction with Congress.

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THE SHORTEST SCHEDULED AIR MAIL SERVICE ROUTE IN THE WORLD

Richard Beith has shown us an excerpt from a recent issue (date not provided) of the British daily newspaper, the “i” regarding the shortest commercial flight in the Orkney Isles.

Under the by-line of Chris Green, the “i”’s Scotland Editor, Mr. Green writes:

SHORT HOPS SUIT BATTERY POWER FOR ISLAND FLIGHT

A Scottish airline could become the first in the world to operate electric-powered passenger planes as part of plans to make its services more environmentally friendly.

Loganair, which runs flights between Orkney’s islands, said that as the distances flown are so short, the service could be available within three years.

The airline operates the shortest scheduled flight in the world – just 1.7 miles between Westray and Papa Westray in around two minutes.

Loganair is working with Cranfield Aerospace on the project, and the airline said it believed it could be the first to introduce electric planes on a passenger service.

Loganair’s managing director, Jonathan Hinkles, told *The Press and Journal* newspaper: “I’m not aware of any companies with similar plans at the moment.

Orkney is a fantastic place to start this kind of development because the islands are well known for the leading role they have taken in renewable energy and embracing new developments in the sector.”

SOCIETY NEWS

Membership Notice.

Message received via the internet 2 November 2018.

As 2018 is starting its downhill journey to 2019 it follows that the membership subscriptions are now due. As well as the normal methods of payment it is also possible to use Paypal, but this is only to my e-mail address (tonynicholson@tinyworld.co.uk). There is, however, an additional charge to cover the fees levied by Paypal, which seem to vary and are not (certainly for me) easy to follow.

The rates are:

Web only subscription to *Air Mail News* £15 (Paypal £16.10)

Hard Copy version of *Air Mail News* £40 (Paypal £42.50)

As most of you will be aware, I am new to the post and so, no doubt, I shall make a few mistakes along the way. There are, however, a few things that I am looking to do as we move forward. One is to try and make my job easier and improve communications.

The membership list I have is not up to date. There are several members who have subscribed to receive a printed copy of *Air Mail News*, who have not provided a postal address and therefore nothing will have been received. There are also a large number of gaps where members have either not provided an e-mail address which will make my job rather more onerous if I need to make contact. Also, several of the current e-mail addresses I have listed are incorrect and so if you have not received an e-mail communication from me then you are one of them.

In conclusion, please provide me with your e-mail contact address, as appropriate. Just to confirm that whilst I hold the membership list with contact details nothing is either published or disclosed to third parties.

Tony Nicholson, (Membership Secretary).

The BAMS South Coast Group extend a Special Invitation: A Special Display of Scottish Air Mails.

This is a special invitation to hear and appreciate the History and Development of Scottish Air Mails. A special day has been planned for all to enjoy **Richard Francis Hewitt's** extraordinary collection. I am sure that we will all be rewarded by attending this special event, to be held in the prestigious Blatchington Windmill, on Saturday 30th March 2019. Richard will chart the beginnings, and perhaps more importantly the reasons for the development of the companies that flew the mail.

The programme:

Coffee and registration 10.30 – 11.00am

Lunch (a buffet lunch will be provided for which a contribution would be welcome)

Richard is planning to show some 200 sheets of air mail covers, plus time tables etc., so the meeting is planned to finish at approximately 3.00pm.

Please put this date in your diary, and ring or e-mail me to book your place, as this will help with catering arrangements. The meeting will be held in the museum which will be closed to the public on the day.

The venue is **West Blatchington Windmill**, 191 Holmes Avenue, HOVE, East Sussex BN3 7LH

This location is about 4 minutes (Max) off the A27, and further details and help with travel arrangements can be given. Contact: 01273 592214, joshspoor@tiscali.co.uk

Josh Spoor.

Additions to the BAMS Website.

Alan Fisher wishes to inform members that five separate documents relating to air mails in Scotland in 1937, which came on the market in the 2010s, have at the behest of the Scottish Regional Group, been forwarded to **Robert Clark**, the BAMS webmaster for posting on the website. These five documents have been posted in the public domain to afford access for research purposes:

Document 1: letter dated 4th January 1937 regarding emergency flights to Sanday, written by W.G. Thomson [North Ronaldsay?], recipient unknown.

Document 2: letter dated 28th January 1937, regarding emergency air mails to Stronsay (27/01) and Sanday/Westray/Ronsay, written by Jas. L. Hibbert, Kirkwall. Recipient unknown.

Document 3: letter dated 30th January 1937, regarding a flight to North Ronaldsay on 27th January, written by Jas. L. Hibbert, Kirkwall. Recipient was Francis Field.

Document 4: undated document, regarding 'First occasion on which Mails have been officially carried by air between Renfrew, Campbeltown and Islay' on 12th March 1937. Writer and recipient unknown.

Document 5: undated letter regarding the emergency Western Isles air mails, 12th March 1937, written by H. Laurence Patrick, Glasgow, to an unknown recipient.

Meetings Reports.

The Midlands Regional Group.

The Autumn meeting, held at Conkers, Moira on Saturday 28th October 2018, attracted an attendance of thirteen. In the morning session, after a bourse, both the single-sheet and nine-sheet competitions were held. The single-sheet competition was won by **Mike Siverns** with a large piece from a parcel, franked with a 5s. 0d. Seahorse stamp, flown as air freight from London to Karachi in 1931. The nine-sheet competition was won by our visiting speaker, **Frank Walton**, with an entry of mail from Sierra Leone flown on air mail services before World War II.

After lunch, **Frank Walton** gave his display on "*Chinese International Air Mail to 1949*." The display was in three parts, shown in two sessions. Part 1 covered services prior to World War II. After explaining how dates in Chinese postmarks can be read, Frank showed covers to Europe flown by Imperial Airways, Air France and KLM, with different rates being charged for the three airlines. Many of the covers were also flown on Chinese feeder services. Also shown were covers flown from Irkutsk over Russian services.

In Part 2 of his display, Frank showed covers to Europe and North America during World War II. Many began their journey by being flown on the hazardous route over the Himalayas to Rangoon or Calcutta. The war disrupted many routes; the most tortuous route shown was for mail to England flown via Khartoum, Lagos, Brazil and the United States. Part 2 concluded with covers flown to other destinations including Japan, (by CNAC in 1939), Australia, New Zealand, Cuba and Southern Rhodesia.

Part 3 of the display covered the establishment of new routes from China to Europe and North America in 1946 and showed mail flown over these routes until 1949. During this period there was hyperinflation in China, resulting in four successive currencies. Postal rates would change on average every ten days. Covers franked with thousands of Chinese dollars were shown, or even with millions of dollars. One cover, from November 1948, was franked \$4,000,000 and one cent. Each \$2,000,000 stamp (in pre-August 1948 currency) on the cover was worth 67 cents in November 1948, and when combined with the one cent stamp in the new Gold \$ currency made a total of \$1.35, the correct rate to the USA.

Frank's display had a very wide variety of material, much of it franked with attractive stamps and included many scarce items. It was very much appreciated by those present.

Laurence Kimpton.

N.B. Please note the date of the next Midlands Group meeting will be Sunday 31st March 2019 at Conkers (National Forest Centre), Moira, Swadlincote starting at 10.30am (speaker to be arranged).

The Scottish "North of the Border" Group.

The Autumn meeting of the Scottish Group took place at the Dewar Centre in Perth on Saturday 20th October 2018 during the annual two-day SCOTEX dealer event. Group convenor Dr. Bob Clark welcomed members to this regular venue; three presentations were given, two with a Scottish dimension.

Alan Fisher showed a selection of typed letters dealing with the history of a number of late 1930s emergency mail flights in Scotland where a number of correspondents had done their best to provide local information. It was deduced that all these had once been in the Francis J. Field reference archive. It was agreed that these letters should have a wider circulation. Digitised versions together with an introductory page by Alan will be prepared for the Society website.

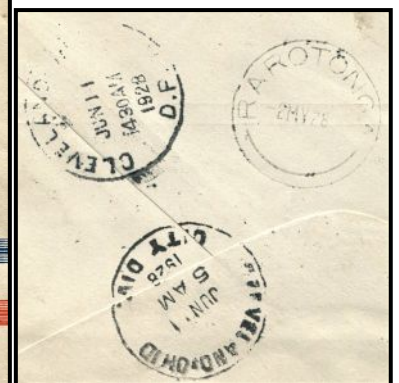
Most of the flown covers acquired by **Richard Beith** in recent years have been for his specialised historical studies. Richard showed flown mail linked to the Polish Forces-in-Exile in WWII. The First Polish Army Corps was built-up in Scotland after the fall of France. The Polish Field Post was based in Glasgow, then in Perth at the old Head Post Office and finally in Edinburgh. Mail was seen flown to Lisbon for onward surface travel to Polish internees in Switzerland and

over the Atlantic to the United States. The Second Polish Army Corps was formed from Polish soldiers captured when the Soviets participated in the 1939 partition of Poland. After the German invasion of the USSR in 1941 those that had survived were released from POW camps and the majority passed to British control in the Middle East. The cover shown here was posted in the Lebanon on 5 October 1943 to Nairobi, Kenya, and exhibits the 10d. per ½ ounce Forces concessionary air mail rate. The 1st Carpathian Infantry Brigade were sent to the Lebanon from Iraq for mountain training between 10 September and 13 October 1943. The wives and children of many of the soldiers in Soviet POW camps

had been held in Gulags; luckily they were also released to follow their husbands to the Middle East; many were sent to refugee camps in East Africa, hence the existence of a Polish Delegation in Kenya. The stamp has been cancelled with the POCZTA POLOWA 121 date-stamp of their Field Post No. 121 at Amyoun. [1]



Bob Clark showed early air mails from New Zealand to North America. Initially mail was sent trans-Pacific by steamer and then on by air to destination. Before July 1930, mixed franking was the rule. The cover illustrated here posted on 2 May 1928 in Rarotonga, Cook Islands, to Cleveland, Ohio, was franked at 3d. to cover the surface rate to San Francisco by the Union Steamship Co's *Makura* which sailed from Sydney and called at Wellington (22 May), Rarotonga (26 May), Papeete and San Francisco.



As New Zealand stamps were not then accepted for payment of the air mail surcharge within

the USA, a US 10¢ air mail stamp was applied at Rarotonga and duly cancelled at San Francisco on 8 June 1928. [2]

Bob also showed mail from Auckland to New York and to Toronto via San Francisco. The first all-the-way-by-air mail didn't leave Auckland until 2 January 1938 when Pan American Airways carried mails to San Francisco at the 4s. 6d. rate on the S-42B *'Samoa Clipper'* under the command of Captain Musick. He, and all his crew, were to lose their lives on the return trip.

Bob Clark thanked members for attending and for showing such interesting material. Bob invited us to return to the same venue on Saturday 13 April 2019 during the annual ASPS Congress which in 2019 is scheduled to run in parallel with the ABPS National Exhibition.

References:

- [1] Ryszard Wagner, *History of the Polish Army Postal Service: Middle East and Italy 1940-1948* (London, 1992)
- [2] Robert Clark, 'The Kiwi', Vol. 57, pp. 60-62, May 2008.

Richard Beith.

The South Coast Group.

Meeting held at the South of England Stamp and Postcard Fair, Ardingly, Sussex on the 13th October 2018.

This premier event, organised by the Association of Sussex Philatelic Societies, over the years has evolved to become not just one of the South of England's major events, but a national venue. Nearly fifty dealers were present, and the BAMS South Coast Group held a meeting allowing members to mount and show displays of air mails, not just to fellow members of BAMS, but also to the public. To this end the event was a great success with people popping in to sit and take in the outstanding displays provided by our members.

The displays:

"*An Introduction to Scottish Air Mails*" by **Richard Francis Hewitt**.

"*The Chinese Air Mails of 1946*" by **Brian Asquith**.

"*Directional Markings on South American Air Mails*", by **Eddie Spicer**.

"*The Blue Box*" and "*The Yankee Clipper*" by **Bill Trower**.

"*Major James B. Starr*", by **Brian Asquith** (*see addendum to this report*)

"*The 1925 Danish Air Mail issue – the development of routes*" and "*Vignettes of Scandinavia*" by **Josh Spoor**.

"*International Air Mails to and from South Africa 1931 - 1934*" by **Peter White**.

In addition to the Group Meeting, members of the South Coast Group entered the ASPS annual competitions that were also being held at Ardingly the same day. I am pleased to report that **Bill Trower** came first in the Aerophilately Class and was given a Gold Award for his one-frame display "*Flightpath Pacific*".

Eddie Spicer and Josh Spoor took the top honours by knocking off from the top spot in the prestigious Eastbourne Cup of the Worthing P.S. who have won this cup for a number of years.

The South Coast Group displays were:

"*Transatlantic Catapult Mail*" by Eddie, and "*Aspects of Scandinavian Crash Mail*" by Josh.

A great day for our Society, perhaps best summarised by our President who commented "I think that Sussex and the South East now know who the British Air Mail Society are".

Can I just personally thank all of our members, importantly one of the BAMS members who personally sponsored the day, for being with us in Ardingly, particularly those who gave displays and those who supported us by just turning up. It was so good to see you all. Thank you.

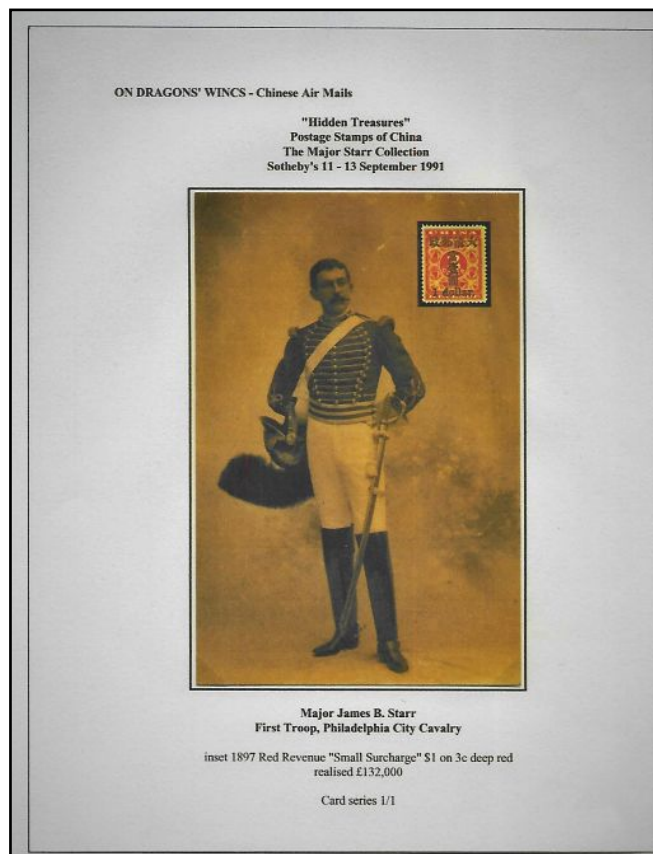
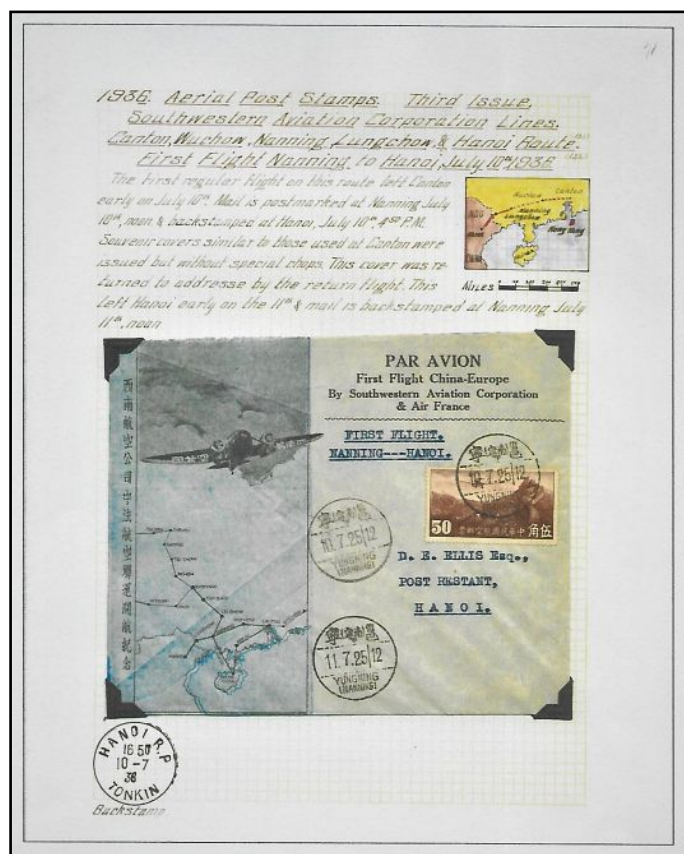
Josh Spoor.

Addendum:

Brian Asquith sent Josh the following:

My display of twelve sheets related to **Major James B. Starr**, who along with Samuel James produced a 111-page book in 1937 "*The Chinese Air-Post 1920-35*". They were both in China in the 1930s and the first sheet I showed was a postcard published when Sotheby's sold his collection in 1991.

The remaining eleven sheets were all from James Starr's collection in his own handwriting illustrated by his hand-drawn maps and hand-drawn backstamps of covers between 1921 and 1936. The page I have chosen to illustrate (overleaf)



shows the first flight on the route started by Southwestern Aviation Corporation from Canton to Hanoi to link up with Air France. This cover is only the stage flight from Nanning to Hanoi leaving Hanoi on the 10th July 1925, arriving at Hanoi at 4.30pm on 11th July, and returning to Nanning on the 11th as can be seen from the handstamps and backstamp.

The Wessex Regional Group.

Nine BAMS members met on Saturday 27th October 2018 in Harnham, Salisbury and entertained themselves with morning and afternoon displays split by lunch at a nearby pub.

Peter Wingent gave the main display in the morning which consisted of six frames, each with a different topic, these being: redirected mail, Belgian Congo connections with Imperial Airways, Portuguese East Africa, accidents and delays on Imperial Airways' African route, European routes, and mail from India/Australia services to African destinations.

Peter Richards showed Air Mails of the Gold Coast 1925-1937. The display focused on alternatives to Imperial Airways that were used to get air mail to and from the Gold Coast in the early days including the 1925 Pigeon Post and the French Dakar-Toulouse, Trans-Sahara and Aeromaritime services. The attitude of the British Post Office to such rival services was discussed including the decision to limit the use of the 'all air' service via Air France and Aeromaritime to those who specifically applied for it rather than advertising it in the usual way despite it providing a quicker alternative to the Imperial route.

Nick Arrow's display concentrated on the commercial mails which became possible once the Imperial Airways' services to Africa had been inaugurated. Covers from Danzig and to Singapore showed that postal clerks were not averse to improving on what may have been intended by the sender, and there were several items which also demonstrated delays and other minor mishaps in the service. There were also several covers to and from China and Japan, and five covers all to the same family sent just before the outbreak of war, illustrating the changes made by IA preparatory to War breaking out.

The air mails of the Dutch East Indies were the subject of **John Berridge**'s short display starting with the first flight from Amsterdam to the Indies in 1924. He followed this with five covers from the opening of the extension of the KLM/KNILM's service to Australia in 1938. These included one from Belgium, another that was returned to the Netherlands by air and an 'unclaimed' cover to New Zealand. He concluded with two items from 1940 – the first a

postcard from the Indies to London expressing concern for relatives in Holland following the German invasion in May. The second was Red Cross Mail from the Indies to Holland (censored in Batavia and by the Germans in Vienna) flown by KLM to Bagdad and then by the Taurus-Orient-Simplon Express to Geneva in October 1940.

Richard Saundry showed three frames of early Romanian air mail covers starting in 1923 and ending with the inauguration of the Polish airline LOT services through Bucharest in 1930, which brought to an end CFRNA and CIDNA's virtual monopoly of Romanian international air mail services. Richard explained Romania air mail covers from this early period were extremely elusive and many of those shown were clearly collector-inspired for reasons not now apparent, since few first flight covers seem to have been sent or have become available on the philatelic market. A number of commercial air mail covers were displayed, and these constituted some of Richard's most prized possessions.

The display finished with a frame of early Romanian internal flight covers, again mostly collector-inspired, including two bogus covers that might easily have fooled the unwary collector.

Alan Whittaker gave a short but thought-provoking display of German Feldpost covers sent from the Channel Islands. We doubt few who attended the meeting were aware that during World War II the Germans were keen to acquire British pounds sterling in order to finance wartime purchases using hard currency in certain countries where German currency was not acceptable.

John Dorrington gave a display of New Zealand air mail during WWII. The country's air mail links during this period, both eastward and westward, proved difficult, and sometimes impossible to sustain. The display using covers to and from a variety of destinations began on 16th August 1939, when the flying boat "*Aotearoa*" left Southampton for Auckland, which together with her sister flying boat "*Awarua*", provided New Zealand with the aircraft needed for a regular trans-Tasman service between Sydney and Auckland, finally completing Stage 3 of the "All-up Empire Airmail" route from the UK to NZ using flying boats all the way. The final leg was to be flown by TEAL, the airline formed jointly by BOAC, QANTAS and UNION AIRWAYS NZ on 20th April 1940. Despite wartime distractions, the New Zealanders made time to acknowledge their inheritance and John showed an air mail cover bearing stamps, making up the correct rate, from the 1940 NZ issue commemorating 100 years of British sovereignty.

With Italy's declaration of war in 1940, the flying boats were briefly re-routed along the southern Mediterranean coast, but the service was soon totally suspended, and on 14th June the 'Horseshoe route' opened. Westbound aircraft turned south from Egypt, flying via Durban to the Cape. Finally mail went onwards by sea to the UK.

Meanwhile on 12th July 1940, Pan American Airways opened their trans-Pacific service between the USA, Auckland and Sydney, FAM-19, also using flying boats. A call to Fiji was added from November onwards. All went well until the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour in December 1941. FAM-19 ceased abruptly. The last flying boat had left San Francisco on 1st December. It arrived safely in Auckland on 7th December. Its return flight, however, to New York was the 'long way round' – via Australia, Ceylon, Bahrain, the Belgian Congo, then across the Atlantic to Brazil, Trinidad and north to the USA. In 1942 the Horseshoe route closed in south-east Asia. New Zealand's only reliable wartime route for civilian mail to London was now by flying boat to Australia and by sea via the Cape. By 1944, TEAL flying boats had made over 1,000 crossings of the Tasman Sea. John's display concluded with covers demonstrating the re-opening of peacetime routes in 1946.

Alan Stevens showed the United States air mail stamp issue of 1941, including a choice array of wartime flown covers and examples of the stamps themselves.

Charles Leonard showed Aéromaritime. The French Aéromaritime service, along the west coast of Africa commenced in March 1937 and continued until the fall of France in June 1940. During the whole of this period it was completely self-sufficient, with no Government subsidy. The original route was from Dakar, where it connected with the Air France South American service, to Cotonou in Dahomey, with a stop in the Gold Coast, but in May 1937 it was extended to Pointe Noire, in French Congo. For residents of the Gold Coast, the cost of mail carried on this service was considerably more than that on the Imperial Airways Khartoum – Kano – Lago route, but was reliable, efficient and quite fast, with a transit time from Great Britain of just five days.

Peter Wingent.

Dates for your Diary.

Saturday 30th March 2019. The South Coast Group have organised a special event at the West Blatchington Windmill, 191 Holmes Avenue, HOVE, East Sussex BN3 7LH when **Richard Francis Hewitt** will entertain with his astounding display of **“Scottish Air Mails”**. Contact: Josh Spoor, 01273 592214, joshspoor@tiscali.co.uk

Sunday 31st March 2019. The Midland Regional Group will be convening at Conkers (the National Forest Centre), Moira, Swadlincote at 10.30am. Speaker to be arranged. Contact: Laurence Kimpton (01564 771851, l.j.kimpton@macunlimited.net)

Saturday 4th May 2019. The Wessex Regional Group are scheduled to meet in the Scout Hut, Harnham, Salisbury when **Sue Burn** will be the guest speaker giving her display **“Smithy and his Bus”**. Contact: Peter Wingent (01962 851780, pwingent@googlemail.com)

Saturday 1st June 2019. British Air Mail Society Annual General Meeting. In the King's Head public house, Corner of Westmoreland Street, Marylebone, London W1G 8PJ. Further details will appear in the May 2019 issue of *Air Mail News*.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Size of Sheets used at National Exhibitions.

Richard,

Sunday 30th. September 2018.

I have just read the latest *Air Mail News* and like good wine it gets better with age. It's unfortunate that we all have to give up our efforts on behalf of our Society at some stage.

Being sited at the tip of England, however, you are unaware that new frames have been designed and purchased and were used at the February Stampex in an A frame configuration. They hold 16 A4 sheets. These frames have now been modified to stand vertically (allowing more frames in the vertical space) and tested at the last Stampex, but it was found that competitors had trouble mounting their exhibits when they were using flimsy protectors. Thus, as I am one of the mounting and glazing team, please inform prospective exhibitors to make sure that their sheets have stiffeners or thick protectors to avoid sheets falling out of the frames whilst both mounting and taking down. Note: These frames will be used from now on and at the London 2020 exhibition.

Regards,

Peter Lister

[Editor: It certainly was news to me to learn that at our national philatelic exhibitions provision was being made for exhibitors to use A4-format sheets. Our readership in North America, and possibly elsewhere in the world, may be perplexed what A4-format sheets are. In the UK, and presumably the whole of Europe, the standard size of letter sheets of paper, (297mm. x 205mm) are taller and less wide than the standard 'Legal' format letter sheets (279mm x 215mm, 11ins x 8.5 ins) used in, presumably, the rest of the world. I think it fair to say that the international philatelic establishment have always encouraged exhibitors to use the US legal-size letter sheets, or sheets approximating to that recommended size, for mounting in frames for display purposes. In the past exhibitors using A4-format sheets might well have encountered difficulties when entering the competitive arena. It is good that here in the UK we are catering for exhibitors who prefer to use A4-format sheets, but since presumably we are still obliged to slot into the internationally acceptable norm for exhibiting, does that mean provision for A4-format sheets is to be provided elsewhere? I presume, not having personally seen these new frames, exhibitors in the UK will still be able to mount other than A4-format sheets in them?

I guess the reason Peter sent this information was that he was responding to my plea in the November issue of *Air Mail News* asking help to source US Legal size sheets or card here in the UK? I think he missed the point. It was personally important that I should source these sheets for two reasons: firstly, the wider US Legal-size sheets facilitate mounting of covers that would otherwise be too wide to mount using the narrower A4 sheets; secondly if I had been forced to alter the format of my sheets, I would have had to remount the whole of my collections, something probably way beyond my feeble declining energy levels.

I will always be eternally grateful to our Romsey, Hampshire member **Alan Whittaker** who, well beyond the call of duty, sourced a printer friend of his who was able to provide sheets cut to the requisite size. Alan also arranged their safe despatch to my home address. Why, oh why? I am bound to ask when, in this day and age, few serious exhibitors choose to house their collections using

stamp albums, that British purveyors of philatelic sundries have seemingly never thought of marketing a range of loose stiff pages suitable for exhibition purposes. Am I the only person who has come across this particular problem, or are there commercial sources of display sheets that I have as yet never heard of?]

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The following is a transcript of an exchange of emails subsequent to a request from Dominique Petit, President of the Circle de Aérophilatélique Française, asking your Editor's help by putting him in touch with members of BAMS who might be able to collaborate with our French friends in writing an article on the Paris-London air mail service 1919-1923. Readers might find the following exchange of correspondence of great interest, providing much food for thought. I trust nobody will take umbrage through my revealing this correspondence, much of which was sent me without expecting it to appear in print:

Does Anyone Ever Critically Read Articles? Do BAMS Members collect Early British Air Mail Covers?

, Good morning, Richard,

Friday 2nd. November 2018.

John Symonds and I have often observed that regular writers of articles (and of course that includes you) never receive any comments, positive or negative, following publication. This would suggest that no-one actually reads what we have so laboriously compiled and researched. That this is true is shown by a glaring error in my "*Brazilian Air Mail Rates*" article in *Air Mail News*. I am currently rewriting it in a different form and came across a cover illustration in the original article showing a cover for which I confidentially stated that the rate was 9000 Reis + 1500 Reis making a total of 10,500 Reis. Trouble is, the cover clearly carries 10,400 Reis which makes my calculation and subsequent statements as to rate entirely wrong. How are the mighty fallen? But it does show that no-one noticed. Quite dispiriting.

Regards

John Wilson.

Dear John,

Sunday 4th November 2018.

I sympathise whole heartedly with the observation that few readers of aerophilatelic journals bother to read articles published therein. I sometimes wonder why we bother. I will publish your letter in the February issue of *Air Mail News*. Incidentally, if you wish to send me an amended version of your Brazilian rates article, please remember my period of tenure as Editor is shortly coming to an end and I cannot guarantee that my successor, Roger Stanley-Smith would wish to publish it.

If readers of journals are guilty of not critically reading articles, what about Editors such as myself? At one time the BAeF decided to assemble a panel of experts in different collecting areas to peer review manuscripts before they were published in *Air Mail News*. When the list of 'Experts' leaked out (not by me) it caused an almighty rumpus because so many pompous heavyweights complained because they thought they were the 'experts', not those on the list. I thought it prudent to drop the whole idea of automatic peer reviews. Certainly, if I receive some submission nowadays that I do not understand I usually seek advice from other members. The great problem with BAMS with so few members and with such a wide range of collecting interests it is often the case we cannot find anyone else who collects the same material. A case in point is that last night I received a request from our French counterparts for contact with BAMS members who might collect early Paris-London air mails. I just don't know any members who seriously collect British Air Mails. We rarely get any articles relating to British Air Mails. A sad state of affairs for our national aerophilatelic society that so few of our members seem to be interested in British Air Mails, I think you would agree.

What currently does concern me is the realisation that with the ever-increasing use of the internet, few people want hard copy versions of our journals. What then will be the legacy of digital journals for those wishing to do original research if hard copy versions are not lodged in libraries? It appears we no longer send copies of *Air Mail News* to the American Philatelic Library in Bellefonte, Pennsylvania. I fully understand why those responsible for making these decisions decided for financial reasons to reduce exchange copies with other societies and libraries, but we are, in my view, doing a great disservice to those who come after us. I think those who decided to only send digital copies of *Air Mail News* were mean spirited.

What do you think?

Richard,

I may not have any early UK-France material, as my focus is primarily British internal services of which I have a comprehensive collection from 1935 through to circa 2000 including near complete coverage of GWR Air Services Ltd., International Airlines (Western Air Express), Provincial Airways, Portsmouth Southsea & IoW Aviation Ltd., Midland & Scottish Air Ferries Ltd., London Scottish & Provincial Airways Ltd., Highland Airways, Railway Air Services Ltd., Hillman's Airways Ltd., IoM – West Coast Air Services Ltd. & United Airways Ltd., Lundy Air Mail, Jersey Airways Ltd. & Guernsey Airways Ltd., Northern & Scottish Airways Ltd., Aberdeen Airways Ltd., Allied Airways (Gander Dower) Ltd., North Eastern Airways Ltd., and Scottish Airways. To all intents and purposes these are complete with representative flown covers in their coverage of services operated. In addition, I can add Great Western & Southern Air Lines, British European Airways (BEA), BEA Helicopter Ltd. Services and British Airways internal UK services, Loganair Ltd. And other provincial airlines.

Richard, don't you think that can be called a serious and comprehensive collection.

Best wishes,

John Symons.

Good afternoon both,

Sunday 4th November 2018.

The SPH, (Society of Postal Historians), has an officer known as the "Curator" whose duties are (according to the Rule Book): "To maintain a register of members' interests and if required will put any member of the Society in touch with others who share the same interests or who have access to sources of information on particular subjects."

Seems like a good idea (it is) and I have used the services of the Curator quite often. John; you may be interested to know that the current curator (and for many years) is Frank Bennett, and he has been very active in compiling the lists complete with photographs of the members. He brings/takes the thick file with him to every meeting he attends and it's very effective, particularly in being able to recognise people from the photographs. Probably too late in the day to compile such a record for BAMS?

John Wilson.

The Captain Smye Challenge.

In the November 2018 issue of *Air Mail News*, Vol. 61, No. 243, page 41, under the "Current Magazine References" column, when indexing articles that had appeared in *La Catastrophe*, journal of the Wreck & Crash Mail Society we noted **Ronny Vogt**, commenting on an article in that journal by Tony Dunn, "1929 Ireland to New Zealand Captain Smye Mystery Cover", said "My guess is that it has nothing to do with any crash, and that it is a Capt. Smye phantasy, making the best out of a damaged item. I don't like these cards and (so far) I have refused to buy one. Capt. Smye was notorious for "enriching" some of his covers." Your Editor who has a number of Capt. Smye covers in his collection, remarked that he was totally unaware that Capt. Smye had ever been accused of "tarting" up his covers and cards. Ronny's comments might prove of some interest and be alarming to many readers of *Air Mail News*. We invited Ronny and all readers to comment. **Julian van Beveren** has risen magnificently to catch the bait, and writes:

"Dear Richard,

Thursday 22nd November 2018.

Rather like you, I was surprised to learn that Capt. Smye had been accused of falsifying a 1929 crash/interrupted "mystery" air mail cover from Ireland to New Zealand and as he is no longer with us cannot answer in his defence. In the U.K., thankfully, any person who stands accused remains innocent until proved otherwise and I for one, in the few Smye covers from various collections have no example or evidence to throw at this collector to prove that that he was guilty of fraudulently improving a cover.

Many of the covers in his collections were of his own making, so to speak, sent care of various post offices around the world to be returned to his Gosport, Hampshire, England address, a common practice that many collectors and dealers did for collating first flights and the like. These forerunner collectors' names are well known to us all and if these philatelically produced items had not been made by these early collectors and we were to be reliant on purely

commercially sent air mails, today many collectors' examples of early pioneering airline flights would be considerably thinned out.

I include a few examples of Capt. Smye's covers and indeed the first one is also an Irish one of 22 June 1929 posted from Baile Atha Cliath, (Dublin), for the commencement of the first reciprocal Stockholm/Amsterdam night flights by KLM and ABA, and which up to the 28th June carried no air mail tariff. This example, showing that it was carried on Night Flight number 17, (NATTFLYVNINGS. TUR 17. 24.6.29). From Amsterdam it would have had an air mail connection to London and surface on to Gosport.



Figure 1.

Embellished? Well yes, with a rather fine Irish tricolour methinks top left of the envelope.

One of his covers was sent for the Imperial Airways new route from the UK to India. Sent on 28th March 1929 from London S.W.1., this cover has a pair of 1½d. and a single 1d. King George V stamps, and sent as far as Alexandria, Egypt. This cover would have left Croydon by air on 30th March for Paris and Basle, then by rail to Genoa, and further onward air transmission to Rome, Naples, Corfu, Athens, Suda Bay, Tobruk and Alexandria where we see it was post-marked upon arrival at Heliopolis on 9th April. No embellishments here.



Figure 2.

I now show (Figures 3 and 4, illustrated overleaf) a pair of Capt. Smye "send offs" from Hampshire that were made on the 2nd April 1931 for the first Imperial

Airways flight out to Australia, from Portsmouth to c/o G.P.O. Batavia and from Gosport to the G.P.O. Singapore. More questionable embellishments? Hardly, although he did use a rather nice pre-printed George V ½d. postal stationery envelope for his sending to the Dutch East Indies, and a commercial Imperial Airways vignette circa 1930 was affixed to his cover. This vignette was made available to encourage customers.

Lastly, I show, (Figure 5) one of his covers flown on I.A.'s leg from Bahrain to Akyab G.P.O., (Burma), date stamped 27th September 1933 and which arrived in Akyab on the morning of 1st October. It seems as honest as the day is long, though if anyone can show any issue with it, pray tell.

Whilst there may well have been a few deceitful army captains about, I have no evidence to say that Capt. T.A. Smye was one of them.

Regards,

Julian van Beveren.



Figure 3



Figure 4.

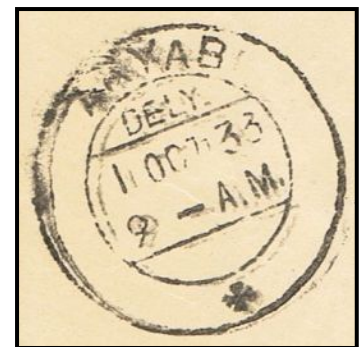


Figure 5.

Editor: I know very little about Capt Smye. I once overheard someone say that he was an Irishman, and that he had a somewhat fiery disposition. I notice that Julian has inferred he was an army captain. Living in Gosport near that great naval port of Portsmouth, I had always assumed, probably erroneously, that he was a naval captain.

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

A. 545. The Identity of A.H. Davis.

Your Editor asked help regarding the identity of the prolific Argentine air mail specialist and dealer who was active in the 1920s and 1930s. **Ronny Vogts**, an avid collector of Argentine air mail, has responded from Zurich, Switzerland to say that he also believes Davis was a dealer and that Ronny has hundreds of cards and covers prepared by him. Ronny says that he also had been trying to find more information about A.H. Davis, but to no avail. Ronny does, however, one first flight cover from Asuncion, Paraguay, dated 1st February 1929, addressed to Davis using his first name "Alfredo". This is the first clue we have ever received about his identity. Ronny also believes somebody sometime in the past said to him, or he had read somewhere, that A.H. Davis in Buenos Aires was no relation of the British dealer, John Davis of Liverpool, but unfortunately Ronny cannot recollect where he got this information.



Ronny adds that he plans to be in Argentina in November and December to meet some aerophilatelic friends. He plans to ask information about A.H. Davis when he is there.

As they say in the best of journalistic circles – “Watch this Space!”

However, to throw a probable ‘red herring’ into the mix, perusal of Brian J. Birch “*Biographies of Philatelists and Dealers*”, Vol. 1 (A-F), accessed using the internet, we read for

Davis A.H.

Stamp dealer of Birmingham, U.K. who is known to have used the following addresses:

26 May 1922. 34 Somerset Road, Handsworth Wood, Birmingham.

2 October 1922. 79 Minstead Road, Gravelly Hill, Birmingham.

10 August 1927 124 Minstead Road, Gravelly Hill, Birmingham.

It would be interesting to learn if this A H Davis in Birmingham was also the same person who later worked as a stamp dealer in Buenos Aires. It is not beyond the realms of all possibilities. Perhaps BAMS members living in the Midlands might find something out about the A H Davis who operated there in the 1920s.

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A. 546. The Italian Air Mail Cover was Correctly Franked.

We asked why a registered Italian WWII-period air mail cover to Cincinnati, Ohio sent from Abbazio on 17th February 1941 appeared to have been deliberately overpaid 25 centesimi?

Fiorenzo Longhi has replied from Italy to say that this cover from Abbazio (nowadays in modern Croatia) was, indeed, correctly franked. Fiorenzo tells us that a large number of publications list incorrect Italian postage rates, and invariably the common mistake is the registration fee which was L.1.50, and not L.1.25.

Fiorenzo gives us the relevant rates:

REGNO D'ITALIA PER L'ESTERO

Regio Decreto Legge 15 ottobre 1925 n. 1973 (validity 1.1.1926 -30.6.1930) Registration fee L. 1.25

Regio Decreto Legge 4 settembre 1930 n. 1298 (validity 1.7.1930 – 30.3.1935) Registration fee L. 1.50

Regio Decreto Legge 28 febbraio 1935 n. 185 (validity 31.3.1935 – 31.12.1941) Registration fee L. 1.50

The Italian registration fee of L. 1.50 was retained until 31.8.1944.

So practically, therefore, after 30th June 1930 the Italian registration fee remained at L. 1.50, including the period of the Second World War.

We thank Fiorenzo for this information. Referring to Giovanni Micheli's “*Le Tariffe Postali Italiane 1862-2000: Posta Aerea 1926-200*”, published by Vacari, we see (page 324) that Micheli did give the correct registration rate of L. 1.50.

- - - - -

A. 547. Field Post Office 662 was in Milan, Italy in March 1946.

In our last issue of *Air Mail News*, we showed a registered air mail cover, franked 1s.0d. on the front and with 4 Lire in Italian stamps on the back, posted from F.P.O. 662 on 13th March 1946 to São Paulo, Brazil. But where was F.P.O. 662 in March 1946?

Peter Lister has responded magnificently to provide the answer. He consulted two books. According to Crouch & Norman Hill (a small A5-format booklet published by the Forces Philatelic Society, which your Editor had not hitherto ever heard of) he learned that FPO 662 was with CMF (Central Mediterranean Forces) during the 1944 – 1947 period and was in Milan in 1945.

Consultation of Edward B. Proud's “*History of the British Army Postal Service, Vol. 3: 1927-63*” and Peter read that FPO 662 was in North Africa (allotted for use by the 1st Army 19 December 1942, then by 5 B.A.P.O. from 6 August 1944).

A.P.O. S.484 was allotted FPO 662 for use in Italy from 1st June 1945, and the period of observed usage in Milan was (6.10.45) – (29.9.46). Proud stated the date-stamp was returned to HPC on 9.9.47.

It is abundantly clear, therefore, that FPO 662 was in Milan, Italy in March 1946. I thank Peter for this helpful information. Your Editor must add that not having access to Ted Proud's book and having only received from Peter the photocopy of a single page from that work, and not being an aficionado of British forces covers, the exact meanings of the acronyms "HPC", "A.P.O. S.484" and "B.A.P.O." currently escapes us. I leave for others to work these out for yourselves, should you so wish.

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Q. 549. Can Anyone Explain this KLM First Flight Cover?

Richard Beith sent us this question. He writes:

"The very first air mail service that I collected (and still collect) was the KLM direct summer-only North Sea service between Amsterdam and the North of England from the 1930s. [1] Why did I start my time as an aerophilatelist with this route? In 1934 and 1935 the first intermediate stop in the North of England was Hull and that much-bombed city was where my parents and I settled once my father had been demobbed from the R.N.R. in 1945. My interest in all things philatelic was nourished as a very junior member of the Hull & District Philatelic Society.

The summer-only routes were:

1934: Amsterdam - Hull - Liverpool

1935: Amsterdam - Hull - Liverpool

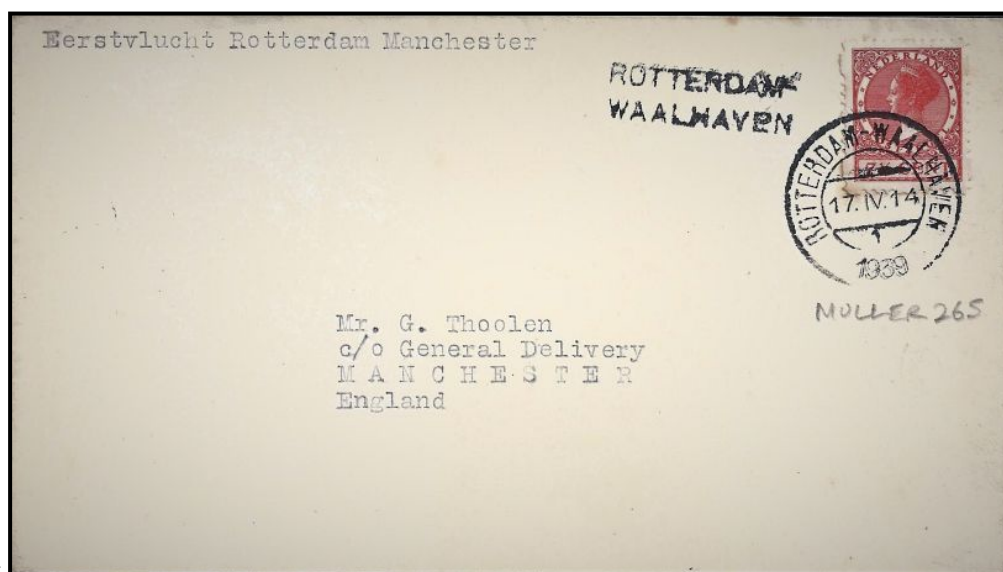
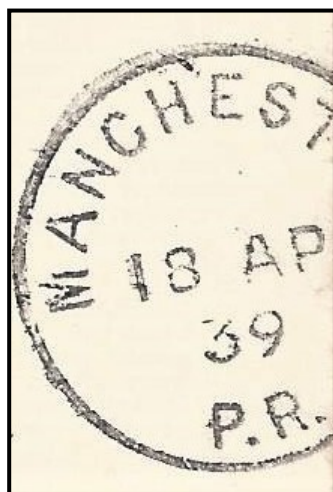
1936: Amsterdam - Doncaster - Liverpool

1937: Amsterdam - Doncaster - Liverpool

1938: Amsterdam - Doncaster (optional stop from August and omitted 3 October) - Manchester - Liverpool (mail not flown through to Liverpool)

In 1939 the passenger service resumed on 17th April as Amsterdam – Manchester – Liverpool, KLM using the Douglas DC-2 PH-AKH. No references, however, to the carriage of mail have ever been found; in my 1995 article I asked for information but received none.

Fast forward to 2018 when my good friend **Ray Welland**, a fellow member of the Caledonian P.S. in Glasgow, shared the images shown here of an apparent first flight cover flown from Rotterdam to Manchester on 17th April 1939. There



is a partial strike of the Manchester P.R. single-ring handstamp for 18 APR on the reverse (P.R. = Poste Restante). The addressee, Mr. G. Thoolen was, I understand, a dealer in air mails. At some time in the past a pencil note 'MULLER 265' was added beneath the stamp. Unfortunately, Muller 265 was a First Flight on 16th April 1939 flown by KLM from Amsterdam to Rotterdam, Bâle and Zurich. [2]

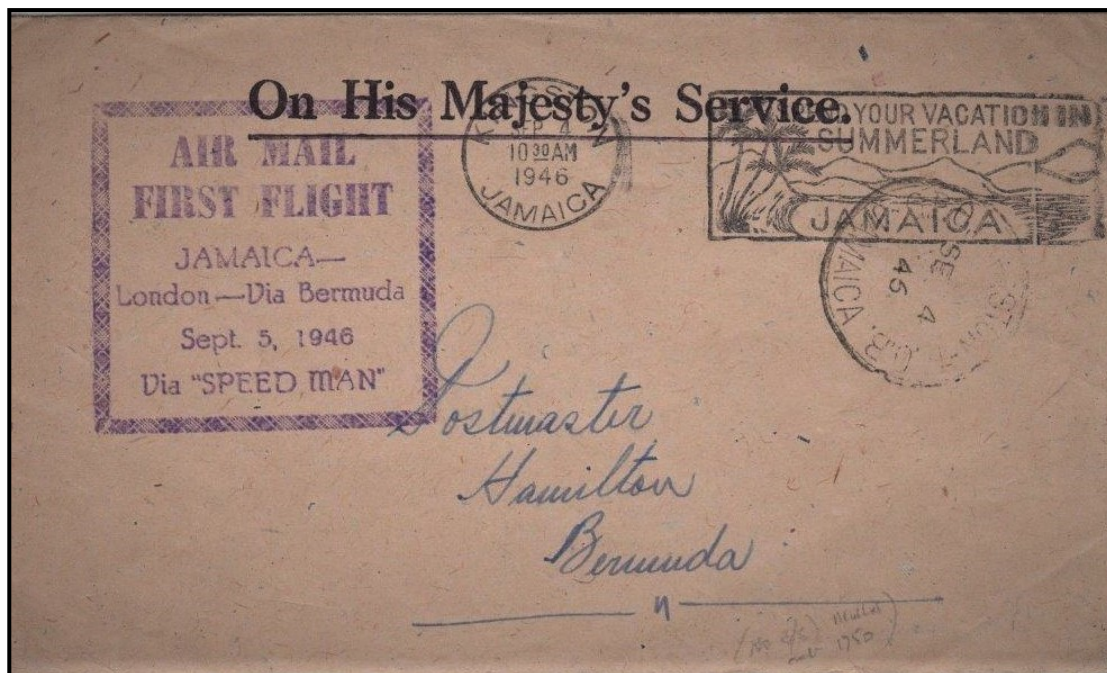
Can any of our current members throw some light on this apparent First Flight Cover?"

References:

- [1] Beith R., "The Summer Air Mail Services between the Netherlands and the North of England 1934 to 1938", *Air Mail News*, Vol. 38, No. 163 (December 1995), pp. 49-62.
- [2] Muller, F., 'Catalogue des Aérogrammes du Monde Entier', (Paris, 1950) – reprint by Editions Bertrand Sinais, 1991), page 346.

Q. 550. Has Anyone Ever Seen a Bermudan BSAA First Flight Cover?

Herbert Lealman has written to tell us that he has finally managed to track down one of the very few first flight covers despatched by the BSAA service Kingston (Jamaica) – Hamilton (Bermuda) – London. Posted at Kingston at 10.30A.M. on 4 September 1946, this cover bears the boxed cachet "JAMAICA – London – Via Bermuda Sept 5, 1946 Via "SPEED MAN" and was addressed to the Postmaster, Hamilton, Bermuda. Herbie neglected to send a scan of the back of his recently acquired cover so we can only guess the franking and if there are any Bermudan date stamps.



Herbie also tells us that two catalogues of Bermuda that he has consulted both state that no covers are known flown from Bermuda this inaugural BSAA flight. He asks our readers if anyone has ever seen such a cover, or indeed ever owned one?

L.A.N. - CHILE'S INTERNAL AIRLINE 1931-1940

by **Martyn Cusworth**

[The first part of this article appeared in the August 2018 issue of *Air Mail News*, Vol.61. No. 242, pp. 25-31]

In the second article we will examine developments in LAN following the introduction of its own postage stamps for the prepayment of internal air mail in 1931, up to the start of the Second World War.

LAN Postage Rates 1931 – 1940

60 centavos the first 10 gm. plus 25 centavos for each additional 5 gm. (decree of 1st May 1931)

\$1.20 first 10 gm. Plus \$1.00 for each additional 5 gm. (decree of 15th October 1937)

Special rates between Magallenes and Santiago:

\$3.00 for each 10 gm, or fraction thereof (decree of 7th July 1930)

£2.90 for each 5 gm., or fraction thereof (decree of 30th August 1935)

\$2.50 first 5 gm. plus \$1.80 each additional 5 gm. or fraction thereof (decree of 24th August 1937)

Collectors should bear in mind when checking the postage rates on their covers, that the interdepartmental surface fee must be added to the above air mail rates to arrive at the total fee to be paid. These fees are as follows:

20 centavos for each 20 gm., or fraction thereof (decree of April 1931)

30 centavos for each 20 gm., or fraction thereof (decree of 24th November 1933)

40 centavos for each 20 gm., (decree of 7th February 1940)

For covers going overseas the UPU and UPAC surface fees can be found in Ross Towle's book on Chilean postage rates.

On 1st May 1931 special LAN adhesive stamps were issued expressly for franking correspondence carried by LAN. From 1931 to 1967 no other stamps, whether for inland air mail or air mail destined for overseas, were recognized for the purpose. If this instruction was not followed, or the letter was underfranked, it would be sent via ordinary mail. The basic 10 gm. rate at the start of the LAN adhesive stamp period was 80 centavos total, consisting of 20 centavos (up to 20 gm.) interdepartmental fee plus 60 centavos (first 10 gm.) domestic air supplement. This 80 centavos basic air mail rate is illustrated on the 1932 cover below from Vallenar to Valparaiso:



14th November 1932
from Vallenar to
Valparaiso.

Charge: 20 centavos
interdepartmental
surface fee plus
60 centavos domestic
air supplement.

LAN introduced their own date-stamps in many of the post offices in the 1930s and these are quite keenly sought after by collectors. We have illustrated one of these below in the form of a letter from Iquique to Santiago in 1933. It is struck with a date-stamp reading "Linea Aerea Nacional Posta Iquique."

August 25th 1933 from
Iquique to Santiago.

Charge: 20 centavos
interdepartmental
surface fee plus 60
centavos domestic air
supplement.



The writer has this mark not only for Iquique but also for Pueblo Hundido, Copiapo and La Serena. In theory they should exist for other towns and cities on the route northward from Santiago.

It is also possible to find other LAN agency cachets usually struck in purple and inscribed "Linea Aerea Nacional Agencia Comercial" with the LAN logo in the middle and the name of the town/city featured within the cachet. They are not, however, date-stamps. The 1935 cover from Taltal to Santiago shown below is struck with such a cachet:

The writer has a similar purple cachet for the agency in Valparaiso on a January 20th 1937 inaugural flight cover from Santiago to Magallanes.

The total fee calculations can become rather complex for inland air mail which continues the journey overseas due to the various weight divisions which applied. Often commercial air mail can be found from mining companies in the north which exhibit complex frankings. The next example, a 70gm. packet, is a good illustration being sent from a mining company in Tocopilla to New York:



70 gm. cover sent from Tocopilla to New York.

Charges: 30 centavos UP AE surface fee for the first 20gm., plus 3 x 20gm. Increments of 30 centavos UP AE surface fees, plus 1.20 Pesos for the first 10 gm. and 12 increments of 80 centavos per 5 gm. for domestic air supplement, plus 50 centavos UP AE registration fee, plus 14 x 7.30 Pesos per 5 gm. foreign air mail supplement = **114.70 Pesos.**

N.B. Chile was a member of the Postal Union of the Americas and Spain (UPAE) and was entitled to reduced surface fees to other countries in the UP AE such as the United States of America.

With a rates structure like this it is hardly surprising that franking errors by postal clerks were quite common.

Another attractive feature of LAN air mail during the 1930s was the introduction of pre-printed envelopes specifically for LAN mail. These are not aerogrammes since there is no value printed on them, only the LAN logo plus explanatory notes on their use. They were used on LAN mail not only within Chile but also for LAN mail destined for overseas

destinations as well. The writer's experience is that these envelopes are not overly common. Illustrated below is a 1936 envelope from Antofagasta to Cheshire franked 10.90 Pesos.

Insert img. 008

1936: Antofogasta to West Kirby, Cheshire, England.

Charges:

1.80 Pesos UPU
surface fee
plus 60 centavos
domestic air supplement,
plus 8.50 pesos foreign
air supplement (flown
via Condor)
= **10.90 Pesos.**



The front of the envelope bears the foreign air mail stamp and the reverse has a further 60 centavos (basic domestic air fee) in LAN stamps plus 1.80 pesos in definitive stamps to prepay the UPU surface fee. There are various instructions printed on the envelope. The front has an inscription reading:

DEPOSITELA EN CUALQUIER BUZON

(can be placed in any letter box)

The reverse bears two further pieces of information:

NOTA: SI ESTA CARTA LLEVA UN FRANQUEO MENOR AL CORRESPONDIENTE O ESTAMPILLAS QUE NO DE LA LINEA AEREA NACIONAL, SERA EXPEDIDA POR LA VIA ORDINARIA

In addition, there is a further instruction:

FRANQUEO EN ESTAMPILLAS LINEA AEREA NACIONAL:

ESTE SOBRE CON UNA HOJA DE PAPEL DEBE LLEVE \$0.80

POR CADA 2 HOJAS DE PAPEL SIGUENTE AGREGAR \$0.25

These two instructions specified that only LAN stamps were to be used, otherwise the letter would be sent via the ordinary mail and that the envelope plus one sheet is \$0.80. Every other two sheets cost an extra \$0.25.

These envelopes make an attractive addition to any LAN collection.

By the end of the 1930s aviation accidents were becoming less frequent but LAN suffered an incident on 17th March 1937. This crash involved an LAN Potez 5 on its way from Santiago to Lima. The plane landed at Iquique on the 26th March where it remained overnight. The next day on 27th March it took off and disappeared. The Chilean Air Force group "Grupo de Aviacion No. 1" searched for several days unsuccessfully, the last sighting of the plane being as it passed over Pisagua. Three months later, on 24th June, the plane was found at Quebrada de Higuera, on a hill called Cerro Blanco about 30 km. from Tacna in southern Peru.

All the occupants of the plane were killed and there was not much mail on board. At the Lima Post Office the Jefatura Servicio Aereo (head of air mails) had a typed note pinned to the cover and this was tied by his cachet (see above)

The cause of the crash was put down to cloudy weather and poor visibility leading to confusion by the pilot who, when descending through the cloud bank, struck the hill at Cerro Blanco. The background information on the crash came

from Sr. Alfredo Saavedra, an advanced air mail collector and member of the Sociedad Filatelica de Chile. The details came from Professor John West.

Crash air mail cover originally posted March 17th 1937 from Tourcoing (France) to Lima, correctly franked 18.50 Francs.



In 1940 there was a provisional surcharge of LAN stamps to accommodate the recent **increases** in rates to \$1.20 for the first 10 gm. plus 80 centavos for each extra 5 gm. The 20 centavos LAN stamps were surcharged 80 centavos and

the 5 pesos stamps were surcharged \$1.60. In addition, the 2 pesos of the 1931 series was surcharged \$5.10 and this is something of a mystery since \$5.10 does not fit into the scheme of air mail weight increments. All of the copies so far seen on cover by the writer have been philatelically contrived. The final cover below is a 29th November 1940 cover from Santiago to Tocopilla franked with a \$1.60 provisional surcharge stamp.



November 29th 1940 from Santiago to Tocopilla.

Charge:
4 centavos
interdepartmental fee
plus 1.20 pesos
domestic air surcharge
= 1.40 Pesos.

Covers bearing these provisional surcharge issues are not particularly common and they were soon superseded in December 1941 by a new colourful series of larger format domestic air mail stamps which I hope to be able to explore in a forthcoming article.

References:

1. Towle, Ross "Postal Rates of Chile 1766-1959" published by Chile Collector, 2003. ISBN 956-291-934-X
2. Davies, R.E. "Airlines of Latin America since 1919", Putnam Aeronautical Books, 1984.

THE EXCHANGE OF MAIL BETWEEN FRANCE AND MADAGASCAR IN SEPTEMBER 1932

By David Lee.

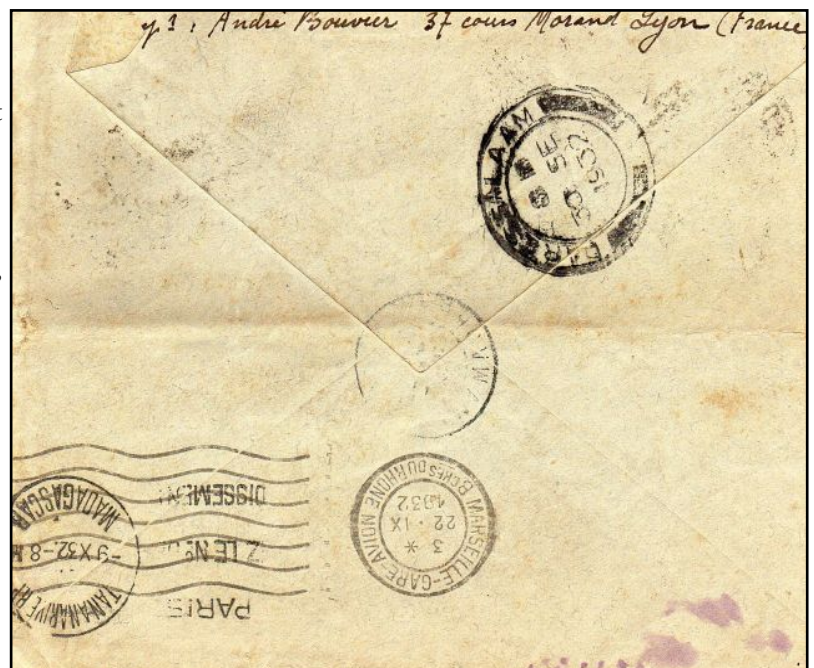
Imperial Airways opened their first service between the UK and Africa in February/March 1931 and it was extended south to Cape Town in January 1932. Nairobi in Kenya was on the route and was tantalisingly close to Mombasa and Dar es Salaam thanks to the services opened by Wilson Airways in East Africa. Those two destinations were regularly visited by paquebots of the French company Messageries Maritimes that sailed between Madagascar and Marseilles with the mail.



On 17th September 1932, the Posts and Telegraphs administration published a notice advising that mail could now be carried to and from France by the Imperial Airways service and the transit time for letters would improve by about a week. Referring to the Cornu and Collot series of publications 'Histoire Aérophilatélique des Lignes Africaines' published by the Cercle Aérophilatélique Français, and, in particular, page 18 (or page 22 in some versions) for 1932, these authors state that the first Madagascar mail carried by Imperial Airways was: -

- (a) northwards from Nairobi on 2nd October 1932 which would flight AN82; and
- (b) southwards from Nairobi on 6th October 1932 which would be AS83. Cornu and Collot state that as Wilson Airways with mail from AS83 missed the sailing of the scheduled paquebot at Dar es Salaam, mail had to wait for the next boat that arrived in Majunga on 23rd October 1932.

A cover, however, shown here, was posted in Lyon, France on 21st September 1932, has a transit stamp for Dar es Salaam on 30th September 1932 and arrived at Tananarive on 9th October. Wilson Airways flew Nairobi to Dar es Salaam on Thursdays and, to have been postmarked as it was, this Lyon cover was most certainly carried by AS82 which arrived at Nairobi one day late on the 29th September 1932. The Wilson Airways service flew to Dar es Salaam on Friday 30th, having awaited the arrival of AS82. It is clear, therefore, that Imperial Airways flight AS83 from France was not the first to have carried mail addressed to Madagascar as stated by Cornu and Collot.



“LATI” – A CAUTIONARY TALE!

By John Wilson.

My senses quickened when I was offered this cover, (Figure 1), because at first glance it had been sent from Italy to the United States having been endorsed “Via Buenos Ayres”. Sent in July 1941, and in a “LATI” envelope, could it have actually travelled “Via Buenos Ayres” by LATI before being forwarded to the United States?

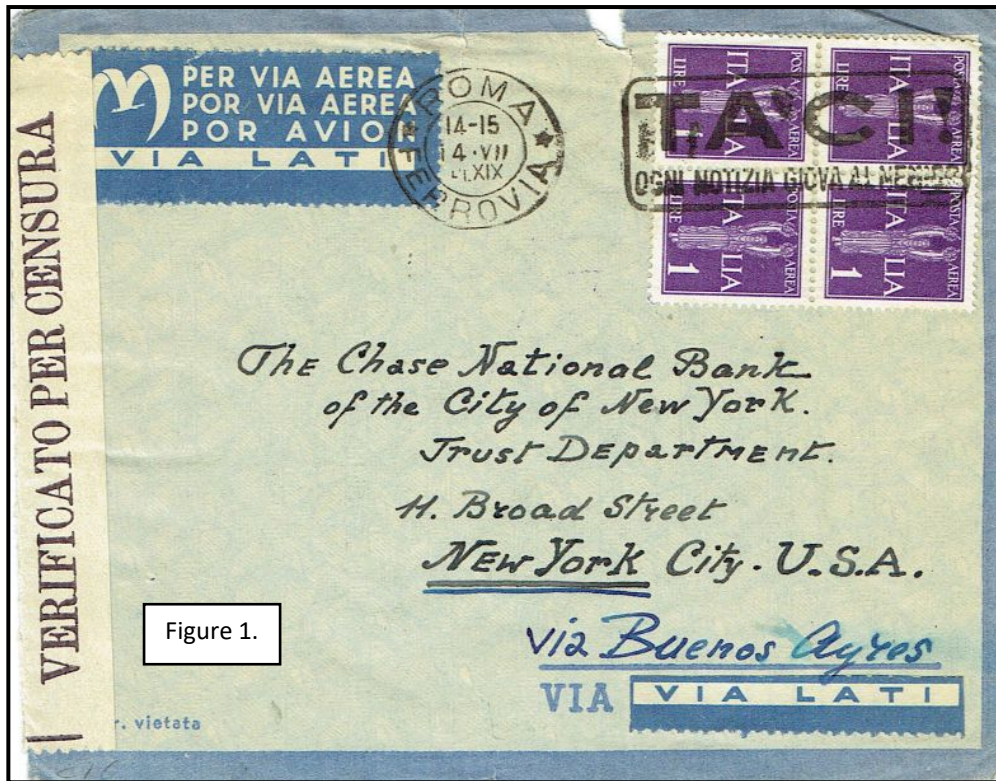


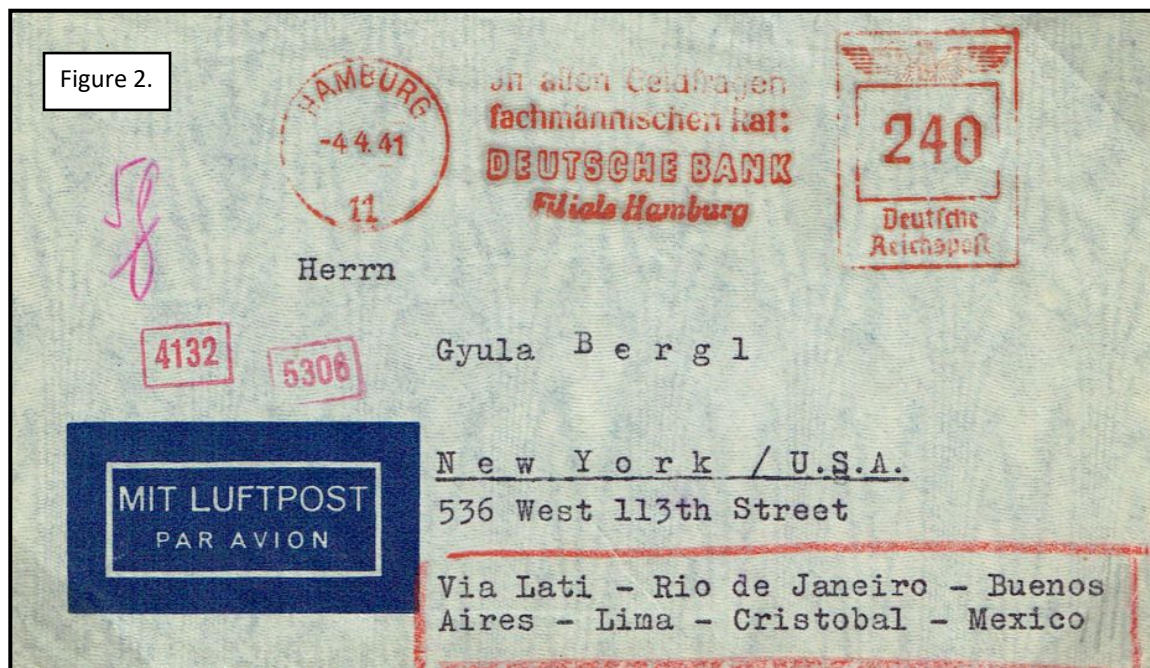
Figure 1.

Why indeed was the route so interesting to me? It's all to do with avoidance; not of income tax nor of trouble, but avoidance of mail interception and examination by the Allied censor network. With the outbreak of war in Europe in September 1939, the British censorship operation went swiftly into action, establishing censor stations in the Caribbean at Bermuda, Trinidad and later Jamaica. Mail to the United States from Germany, and later from Italy once Mussolini had joined the Axes in 1940 was routinely intercepted and examined by Allied censors. “Significant” mail was condemned and held or forwarded to the United Kingdom for detailed examination. This meant that mail which the Axis powers wanted to keep out of Allied hands had to find an unintercepted route for sensitive documents.

And sensitive documents there were; business relationships between major American companies and the Nazi Government were substantial. Companies such as Dupont Chemicals, Standard Oil (later Exxon), Ford Motor Company, ITT and General Motors were all conducting “Business as Usual” through the Chase Manhattan Bank [1]. Similar business connections existed between Germany and South America, notably Argentina, and here was the unintercepted mail route that could be used by those wishing to avoid scrutiny.

In December 1939, the Italian “LATI” service began flying between Rome and Rio de Janeiro. The route was later extended to Buenos Aires [2] and provided a pipeline free from Allied interception. By a tortuous manipulation of routes, and at considerable costs to the senders, mail from Germany and Italy to the United States in 1941 could be flown from Rome to Rio de Janeiro, across the Andes to Chile, then up the West coast of South America through Peru and Colombia, eventually to Miami and into the United States. A typical cover is shown in Figure 2, and the route endorsement is clear as is the cost. 240 Reichspfennig compared to the 65 Reichspfennig rate for the Pan American route from Lisbon was quite expensive (but at least the rate on covers tells us the route).

In the case of the cover which caught my attention initially, it is the franking which tells the story. Mail from Italy to the United States by the “Via South America” route was franked at 16.75 Lire [3] compared to the “Via Lisbon” Pan American route of 4 Lire, and one can find many covers by the Pan American route showing the 4 Lire franking.



Sadly, therefore, the cover I thought was interesting turned out to be a routine item and the cautionary tale (to myself as well) is to spend time carefully studying the evidence before jumping to a hasty conclusion. The handwritten endorsement “Via Buenos Ayres” was probably added at a later date. Caveat Emptor!

References.

- [1] Higham, Charles, “*Trading with the Enemy. The Nazi-American Money Plot*”, Barnes & Noble, New York, 1985.
ISBN 0-7607-0009-5.
- [2] Beith, Richard, “*The Italian South Atlantic Air Mail Service 1939-1941*”, pub. Richard Beith Associates, Chester, 1993.
- [3] Cusworth, Martyn, “*The Italian South Atlantic Airline (LATI)*” (Supplement No. 1),
the Italy and Colonies Study Circle, 2012 and 2016.

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EUROPEAN POST AND FREIGHT NIGHT SERVICES

By Peter Wingent

It was only very recently, whilst studying a Deutsche Lufthansa timetable, that I realised I had never tried to identify covers in my collection that were flown by a European night air service. During the 1930s most were operated by DLH but KLM, Sabena, British Airways, Swissair and the Scandinavian airlines were also involved. Most of the DLH timetables can be viewed on the excellent website www.timetableimages.com and it is from them that I have been able to identify a small number of covers which were flown by night services. The timetables include details not only of all DLH European services but also those of all other airlines. Thus they are an invaluable source of information for all European day, as well as night services.

The original timetables are very large but to give an impression of their appearance, figure 1 shows the key of the summer 1935 DLH timetable and figure 2 a small portion of the routes. From the key it can be seen that bold red lines represent the post and freight services of DLH with the route numbers prefixed by the letters PF, F or RB. PF stands for Post & Freight, and F for Freight, but I have yet to interpret the meaning of RB.

In Figure 2 the bold red line showing service PF221 is seen running from London. This service went to Berlin, via Cologne and Hannover. As examples of graphic design excellence, I think these timetables are on a par with Harry Beck's contemporary classic London underground map, which first appeared in 1933.



Figure 1.

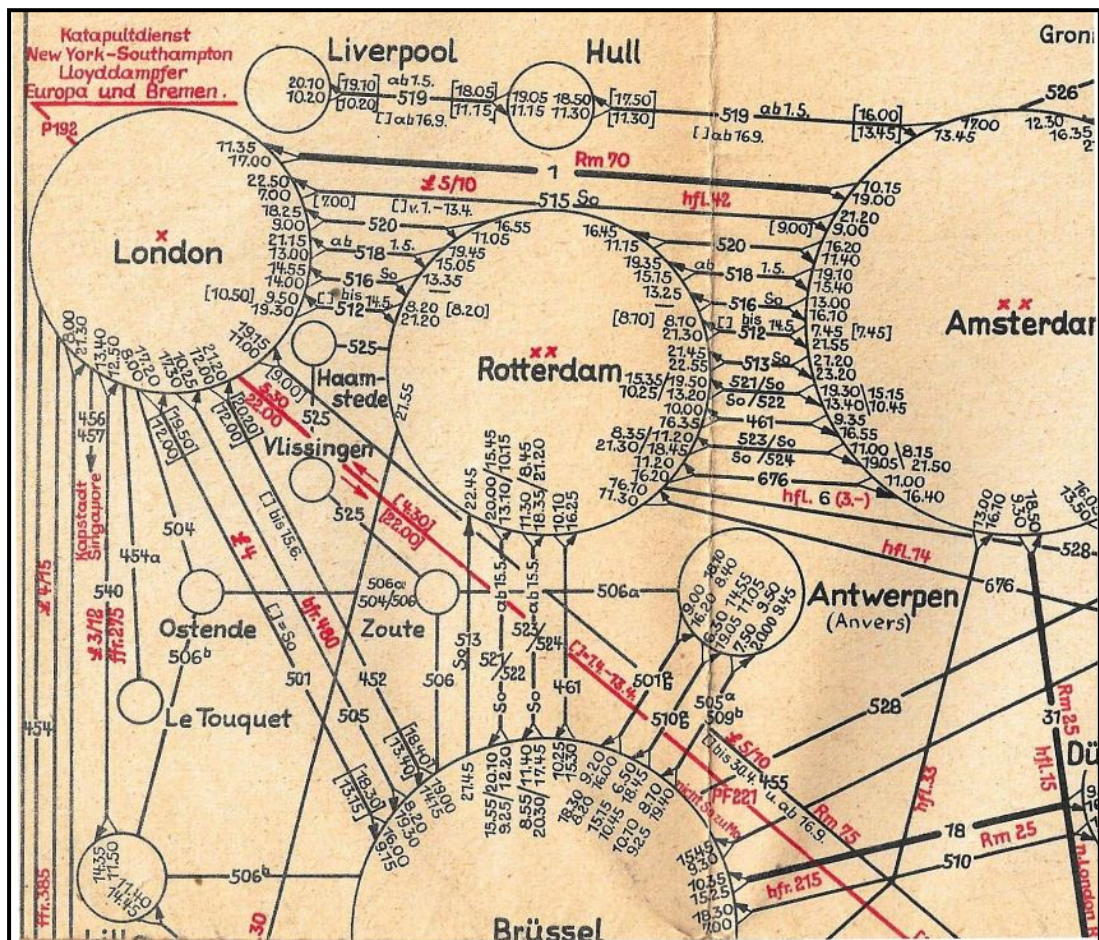


Figure 2.

Using data from the timetables, I have produced a listing of the night post and freight services between 1931 and 1939. It comprises 23 pages and thus is too large to be reproduced in the pages of *Air Mail News*, but I am happy to email a copy to any reader who would like to receive it (request to pwingent@googlemail.com).

I have found that the key to identifying with certainty covers carried by PF services are the *times* shown on the despatch and arrival datestamps. The following examples illustrate the point, Figure 3 shows a cover from Cape Town (15 August 1932) to Gothenburg which was flown by Imperial Airways' African service AN76 to Athens, then by DLH to Berlin, where it received an arrival backstamp of 26 August, timed 20-21 (Figure 4). The Gothenburg arrival backstamp is dated 27 August and is timed 7-8 (Figure 5). Flown by three different night services, it is a good example of how many of them were scheduled to make connections with each other:

PF1 (DLH)	Berlin	dep. 22.00	→	Hannover	arr. 23.45
PF4 (DLH)	Hannover	dep. 02.10	→	Malmö	arr. 05.35
PF5739 (ABA)	Malmö	dep. 05.55	→	Gothenburg	arr. 08.00



Figure 3.



Figure 4.



Figure 5

The postcard shown in Figure 6 is another example:

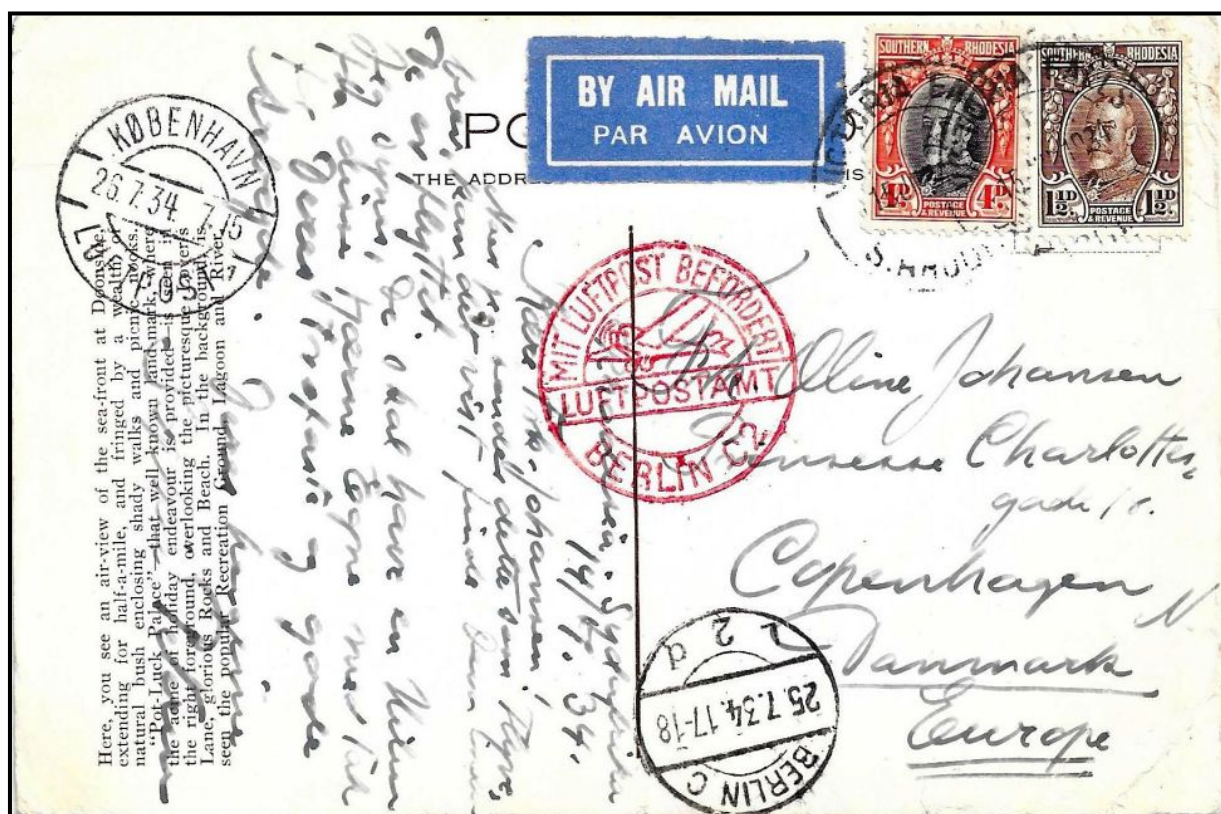


Figure 6.

Posted at Victoria Falls on 15 July 1934, it was sent by train to Bulawayo and flown from there by Imperial Airways African service AN176 to Athens. It was then flown by DLH to Berlin where it arrived on 25 July, datestamp timed 17-18. It was then flown to Copenhagen by two night services and arrived the following morning, datestamp timed 7.15. The night services were as follows:

FF221 (DLH)	Berlin	dep. 23.00	→	Hannover	arr. 00.25
PF578 (DDL)	Hannover	dep. 02.45	→	Copenhagen	arr. 04.30

A cover which travelled in the reverse direction is shown Figures 7 and 8, and was flown as follows:

FP578 (DDL)	Copenhagen	dep. 23.00	→	Hannover	arr. 01.00
PF221 (DLH)	Hannover	dep. 02.50	→	Berlin	arr. 04.10

After arrival at Berlin at 04.10 on 22 June 1935, it departed just under three hours later, at 07.00 via the DLH service to Athens, where it arrived at 19.05 the same day. It was then flown to Mbeya by Imperial Airways African service AS251, which arrived on 29 June.

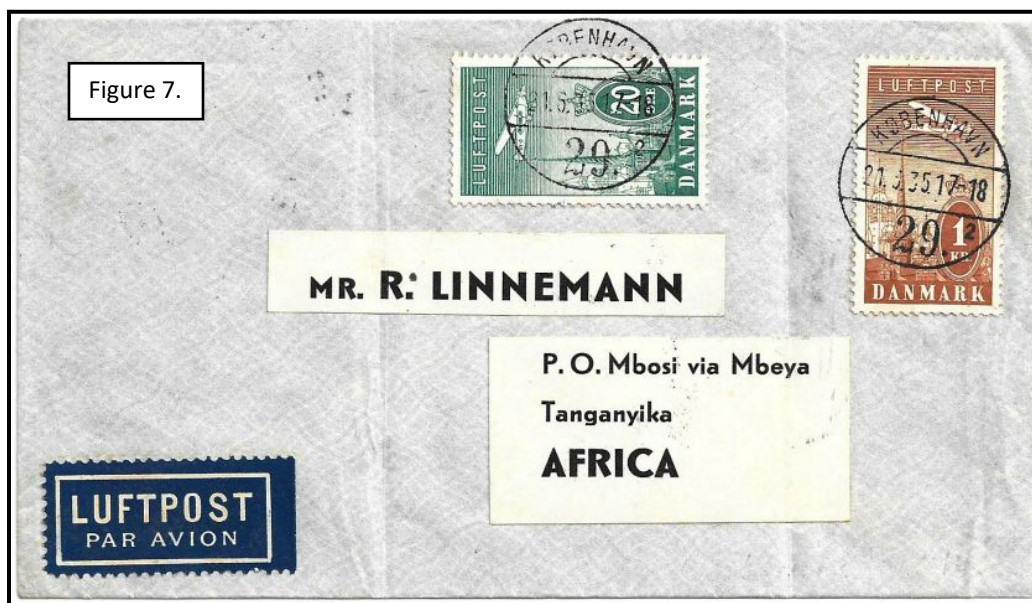


Figure 8.



Figure 9.

Figure 10.



The cover shown in Figures 9 & 10 was posted in Vryheid on 2 July 1934 and flown from Johannesburg to Athens by I.A. service AN174 (arrived 10 July). It was then flown to Berlin on 11 July by DLH (arrival datestamp timed 17-18) and from there to Munich by three night services. The Munich arrival datestamp of 12 July is timed 6-7:

PF221 (DLH)	Berlin	dep. 23.00	→	Hannover	arr. 00.25
PF227 (DLH)	Hannover	dep. 01.15	→	Frankfurt	arr. 02.45
PF223 (DLH)	Frankfurt	dep. 03.00	→	Munich	arr. 04.40

It has the bonus of a Munich arrival 'by air' cachet, giving further proof of having been flown by night services. It was readdressed to Hungary, the 12Pf. Stamp on the front paying the additional surface fee required. It is struck with a second Munich datestamp timed 8-9; just 2 to 3 hours after the arrival backstamp was applied. This was a remarkably short time for it to have been delivered, readdressed and then reposted.

The examples shown could only have been conveyed by the post and freight night services but I have a number of other covers to and from the same destinations which have TPO datestamps, proving they were not flown, and quite a number with insufficient transit datestamps to show which form of transport conveyed them.

My final cover example, (Figures 11 and 12), highlights another factor that must be considered. That is that mail destined to be flown by a once or twice-weekly inter-continental services could be sent to connect with it by more than one European air service. A good example is mail from the U.K. to South America. I discovered a detailed listing of despatches from the U.K. in correspondence relating to the crash of the "Rostock" contained the following:

"Air mail correspondence for Gambia and South America was forwarded à d'écouvert to Germany on 10th March in the undermentioned air mails:

<u>Office of despatch</u>	<u>Serial no.</u>	<u>Time of despatch</u>	<u>Destination</u>
London F.S.	238	06h.30	Berlin Zentralflughafen
ditto	240	11h.30	ditto
ditto	113	20h.30	Frankfurt (Main)
E. Croydon	19	22h.30	ditto

The above mails were the normal daily despatches."



Figure 12.

Cover posted from Tilmanstone, Sandwich, Kent on 8 March 1936. It was flown by DLH night service PF221 which departed Croydon 22.00 on 10 March, arrived Berlin at 04.05 on 11 March.

The only substantial reference I have found relating to European night air services was in "The Aeroplane" magazine,

3 June 1936 edition. As this is difficult to find, I am happy to email a copy to any interested reader. The examples of covers shown reflect my collecting interest, i.e. African air mails, but the night services carried mail to and from world-wide destinations and also internal European mails and thus I hope this short introduction will be of interest to many readers whose interests differ from mine.

The German Catapult Mail of the North Atlantic. Part 4.

by Eddie Spicer.

On the 10th April 1930, Germany requested permission from the British to land the eastbound catapult flights at Southampton for refuelling and to drop off mail addressed to England. Permission was granted on 29th April 1930. This meant that the float plane could fly from Southampton to Amsterdam and then on to Cologne.

In June 1930, the planned landings at Schellingwoude, the Dutch Naval Base at Amsterdam, were denied so the plane flew direct from Southampton to Cologne.

With the landing rights at Amsterdam refused, on 3rd June 1930 the Reichspost requested British postal authorities to collect all the catapult mail at Southampton from 21st July 1930. This request was approved on 20th June 1930. The catapult flights landed at Imperial Airways Woolston Base at Southampton and was transferred by them to Croydon Airport for onward air transmission by DLH to Germany.

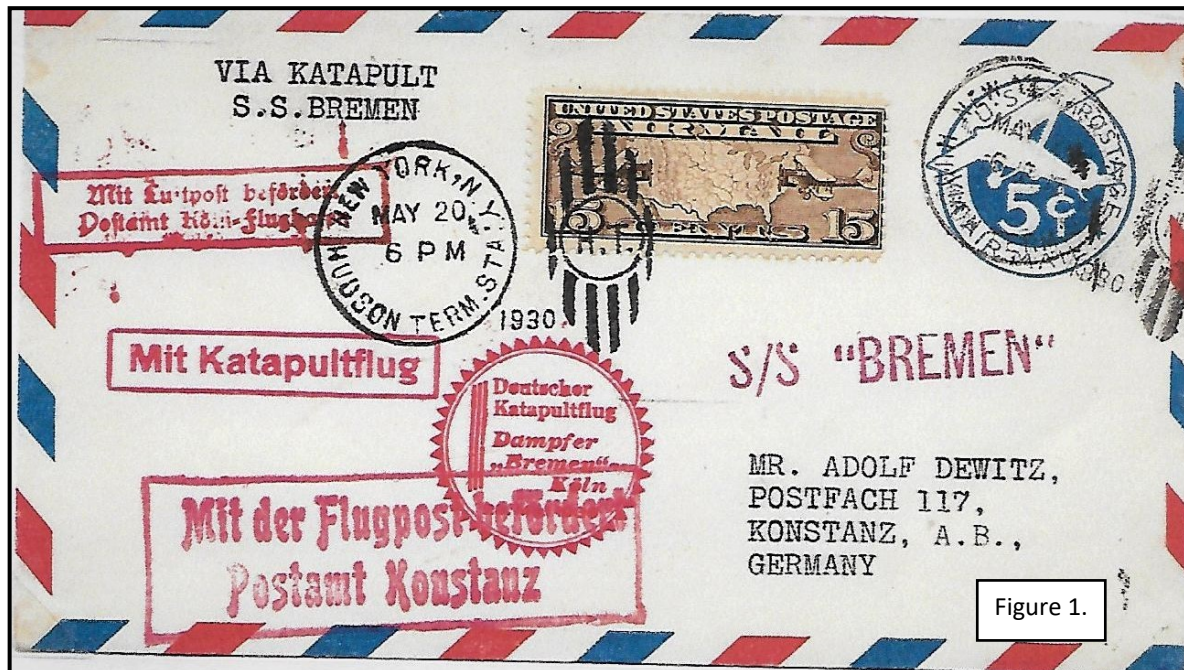


Figure 1.

The cover illustrated as Figure 1 was posted on 20th May 1930 at New York's Hudson Terminal and addressed to Konstanzt in Germany, was flown from the S.S. 'Bremen' at 09.30 on 25th May and arrived at Southampton at 16.10 having been flown a distance of 1,130 km. It was then flown directly to Cologne and from there to Konstanzt. Note the Cologne and Konstanzt arrival marks in red. The cover carries the correct postal rate of 5 cents international letter rate and 15 cents for the catapult service.

Although the S.S. "Europa" came into service on its maiden transatlantic voyage on 19th March 1930, it made nine transatlantic trips before the catapult service was operational. The first catapult service from the S.S. "Europa" to New York took on 15th September 1930. The plane used on the S.S. "Europa" was an improved Heinkel He-58 D1919. The crew at this time was Captain Jobst von Studniz and Radio/Mechanic Karl Kirchoff who had been transferred from the S.S. "Bremen". Their place on the S.S. "Bremen" was taken by Captain Fritz Simon and Radio/Mechanic V. Haargan.

This very philatelic cover, (Figure 2), was carried on the first flight from the S.S. "Europa" to New York and then returned on the eastbound return flight to Amsterdam. This flight was delayed by one day due to adverse weather conditions and was flown directly from the ship to Amsterdam. The plane was flown from the ship at 06.00 on the



Figure 2.

15th September 1930 and arrived in New York at 08.55, having flown a distance of 305 km. When the “Europa” arrived in New York the cover was put back on board for the return trip. The cover was flown from the ship at 11.10 on 22nd September, and arrived in Amsterdam at 13.50 having flown a distance of 500 km. This cover received “seapost” cancellations in both directions.

The postal rate into New York is made up of 25pfg. international letter rate and 50pfg. for the catapult service. The postal rate for the eastward journey was 5 cents international letter rate and 15 cents for the catapult service, so this cover would appear to have been 39 cents overpaid.

The S.S. “Europa” made one more successful round trip during 1930. The flight arrived in New York on 1st October and returned to Amsterdam on 9th October having again been delayed one day due to adverse weather conditions. The final catapult trip scheduled for the S.S. “Europa” was cancelled due to the plane being damaged whilst on board the ship.

The cover from the Saar, (Figure 3), (the Saar had an agreement with the Germans to use the catapult service and was known as a “Treaty State”) was due to use the catapult service for 16th October but the service was cancelled because of the damaged aircraft. The cover received the



Figure 3.

cancellation cachet in red. This was a double rate letter and the postal rate consists of 3Fr. double international letter rate and 4 Fr. double catapult service.

The S.S. "Bremen" made nine successful catapult flights during 1930 but the last two trips were also cancelled due to a damaged plane.

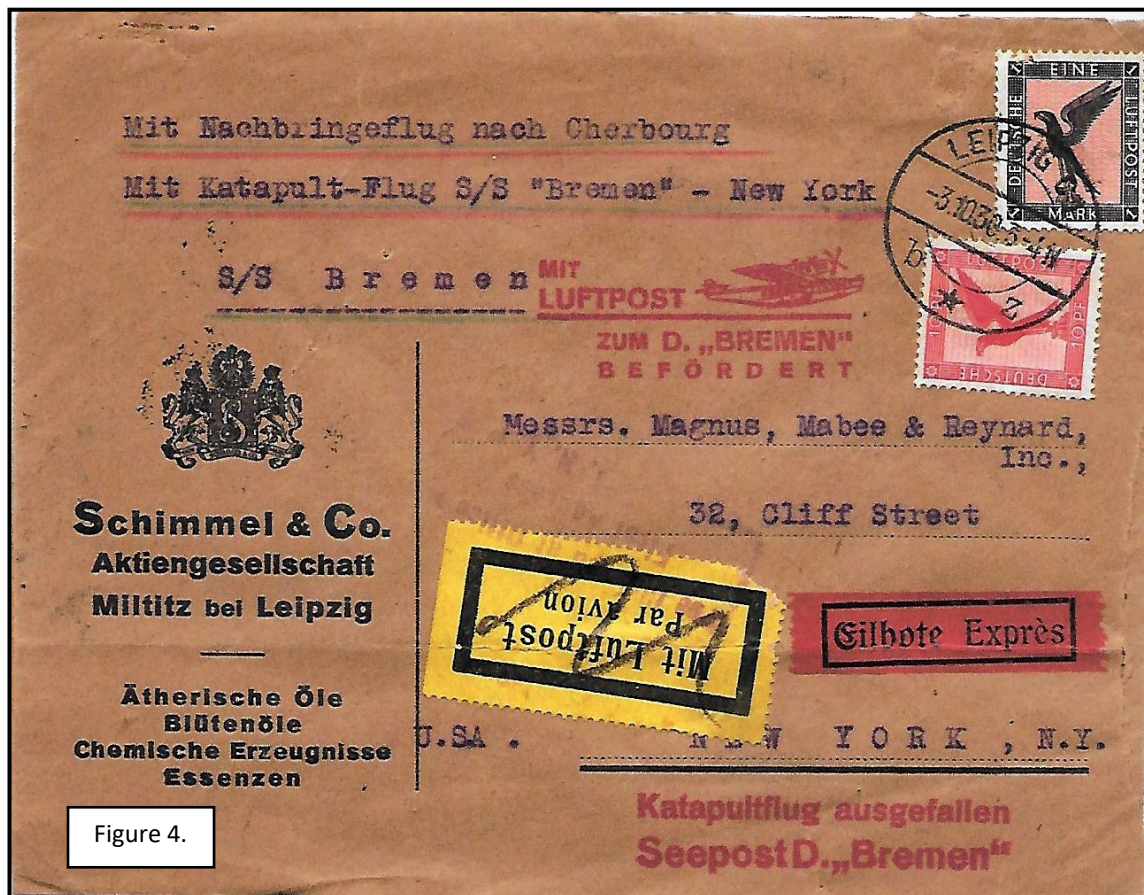


Figure 4.

The final cover that I show, (Figure 4), posted from Leipzig, was carried on the supplementary flight service from Cologne to Cherbourg to meet the S.S. "Bremen". It was due to be flown from the ship on 3rd October, but the flight was cancelled. It received the cancellation cachet in red. As a consequence of this, the cover was assigned express delivery status and the red special delivery label was affixed to the cover on board the ship.

References

James W. Graue, "German North Atlantic Catapult Airmail Flights 1929-1935", 2nd. Edition.

R.G. Stanley-Smith, "The North Atlantic Catapult", Parts 1 and 2.

ASPECTS OF THE R.N.A.S. (ROYAL NAVAL AIR SERVICE) OFFICIALLY FLOWN MAILS FROM THE WESTERN FRONT DURING THE GREAT WAR.

By Julian van Beveren.

In its embryo state a Naval Wing was established as part of the Royal Flying Corps, (R.F.C.) as early as November 1911, and on the 27th February 1912 the Naval Wing was formed at the naval flying school, Eastchurch. It was initially intended that the R.F.C. whose Royal Warrant was issued on 13th April 1912 should operate as two wings, Naval and Military in one service. Their Lordships at the Admiralty never much liked this arrangement and on 6th April 1914 regulations were issued for a separate Royal Naval Air Service and was officially recognised with effect from 7th July 1914.

I should begin by saying that officially flown covers by the R.N.A.S. are for the most part fairly plain documents carrying the prescribed, 'On His Majesty's Service', but can contain their interesting censorship markings and

signatures when sending to their HQ in Charing Cross, London. See the sheet in figure 1 which shows some of the marks. Alternatively, some of the flown covers by the R.N.A.S. will bear the post mark of the Army Post Office 'S. 5' which was close to Paris and sometimes can be the only indication that the correspondence was flown to England. To benefit from this quick service, letters were sent under separate cover to the A.P.O., (Army Post Office), and I will show some of these examples. Additionally or separately they may also have the French circular date stamp of 'VENDOME / LOIR ET CHER'.

Later on in the war when the Royal Flying Corps became the Royal Air Force, officially signed notes were carried by the pilots, signed by their officer commanding, to the effect that in the case of a forced landing, all assistance was to be given to the pilot in carrying the mails, sending them to the nearest post office to enable the quickest means available for onward transmission. See a rather well-worn copy of these requested instructions in Figure 2, and there is every reason to believe that similar standing instructions were carried by both the R.F.C. and the R.N.A.S.

Figure 2.

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN.

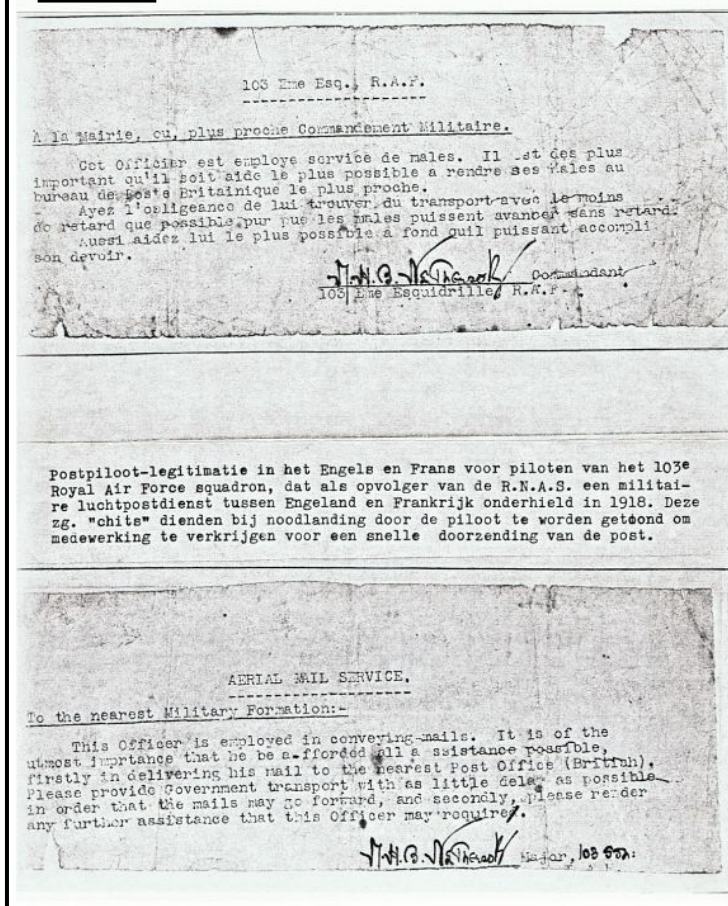
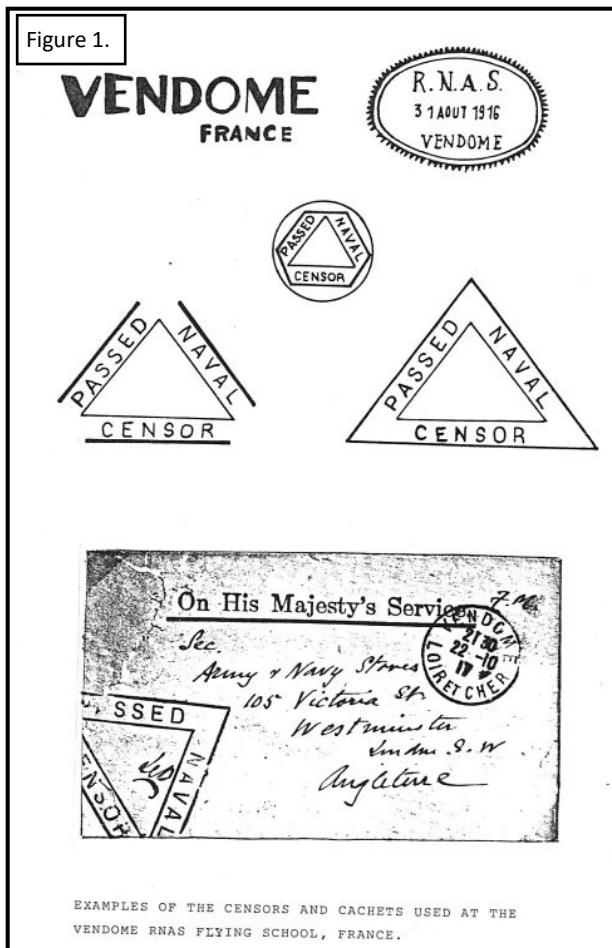


Figure 1.



Flying in this war as we have all been made well aware, was a dangerous and fragile undertaking and the lives of pilots could be very short, due in the main to a lack of flying hours and experience and I show at Figure 3 one such event that cut short the fighting career of Flt. Lt. Bernard Crossley-Meates, R.N.A.S., not ended luckily by being shot down but by an emergency landing on the wrong side of the wire in neutral Holland.

No. 3 Wing of the R.N.A.S. was formed in February 1916 at Luxeuil, (Belfort), and was placed directly under the control of the French Army H.Q. The *Directeur*, the French officer in charge was also responsible for liaising with the British Royal Flying Corps authority that retained jurisdiction of their own units. Most of the official mail of the No. 3 Wing was flown to England through St. André or St. Omer on aircraft returning for major maintenance or repairs unable to be completed in France. C

In Figure 4 is an officially flown cover by the R.N.A.S. to their HQ in Charing Cross, London, with the violet cachet of **SERVICE DE L'AVIATION NAVALE ANGLAISE / NO 3 WING** and the scarce confirmation of the arrival in London of their circular date stamp **NAVAL AIR SERVICE MAIL OFFICE - LONDON 14 NOV**. The other framed cancellation in black ink was the standard postal direction, **RECEIVED FROM H.M. SHIP / NO CHARGE TO BE RAISED**. Used on much incoming mail received from H.M. Forces, though in this particular case the mode of transportation was an aircraft, for which there was no equivalent handstamp for **H.M. AEROPLANE** at this time.

Postcard from M.de Bruijne, 14 Rgt. 1st Btl. Camp 4, Kruiningen.

Flt.Lt. Bernard Crossley-Meates, R.N.A.S., his bi-plane impounded.

The postcard below shows the problem of landing in the wrong place. This postcard made just a fortnight or so after this incident, was sent to the wife of the above mentioned soldier guarding the aircraft awaiting collection. Marked up Militaire, thus free of postage, has the circular date stamp of KRUININGEN 14.4 15.

The text in English reads: -

"The landed English military aircraft at Kruiningen 24th March 1915 impounded."

This was the fate of any aircraft that mistakenly lost their way or inadvertently had to make an emergency landing and flew over the border into neutral Holland. The aircraft be it French, Belgian, British or German met with the same outcome with the occupant marched off to an internment camp. In this case the pilot was Flt. Lt. Crossley-Meates, R.N.A.S., who was taking part in an air raid on German submarines under construction at Hoboken, near Antwerp. Having descended down to a 1000 feet and dropping his four bombs on the boats and dockyard, he was obliged to make an emergency landing due to engine trouble.

Kruiningen lies inland from Holland's river delta area of Zeeland, directly east from Middleburg at the mouth of the East and West Scheldt estuary and on a misty March morning would be quite easy to lose your bearings.



Figure 3.

ON HIS MAJESTY'S SERVICE.

The Accountant of
R.N.A.S.
Randvoll House
Charing Cross Road
London W

Figure 4.

Scarce letter home from Sub Lt. Frances R.N.V.R.

SERVICE DE L'AVIATION NAVALE ANGLAISE * NO 3 WING *



Number 3.

Formed February 1916 at Luxeuil (Belfort), possibly after short spell at Manston, for strategic bombing. Due to be raised to 100 planes but shortage of equipment led to 62 planes being transferred to RFC at one point. Later equivalent to three squadrons. Wing directly under control of the French Army GHQ. One squadron withdrawn in February 1917, a second in April and the remainder disbanded in May 1917.

(3 Wing replaced by the Independent Force formed from 41 Wing-RFC late in 1917 for the bombing of Germany. Became VIII Brigade on 28th December 1917, being at Nancy from 6th June 1918. Then consisted of 41 (day bombing) and 83 (night bombing) Wings. 83 Wing then included 215 and 216 Squadrons).

PASSED BY CENSOR.

Mr Bell
4 Oxberry Ave.
Fulham
London
England

Figure 5.

Figure 5 shows an equally scarce copy of a cover from No. 3 Wing to England with these similar markings and an actual such cover in the collection of a letter home, signed by Sub Lt. Frances R.N.V. (Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve) to Fulham, London, England.

The Training Flying School at Vendôme was opened in November 1916 by the R.N.A.S. just west of Orleans. Flying conditions in France were thought to be better than in England. The school also trained some RFC pilots and in return for which the RFC School in Egypt trained R.N.A.S. pilots. Some French and American pilots were also trained at Vendôme though the British pilots and those from the Dominions still returned to the officer training college at Cranwell for graduation. The Canadian cover, as we can see in this scarce survivor from Manitoba, sent to Moorgate Hall, London with the equally scarce circular date arrival strike on the reverse side of, **NAVAL AIR SERVICE MAIL OFFICE * LONDON * 10 MAY 1918** and the faded red **VENDOME / FRANCE** directional handstamp which is seen in Figure 6.

Figure 7 shows a picture postcard of a group photograph of some non-commissioned gallant pilots, observers and ground staff, together with the rather scarce and unassuming cover example, with the mandatory **S.M.** superscription to the HQ of the R.N.A.S. and violet **REPUBLIQUE FRANÇAISE** handstamp in this case of, **Le Directeur / SERVICE AÉRONAUTIQUE DE L'ARMÉE** and very likely flown.

Another flown example to their HQ at Randvoll House in Charing Cross is to be seen in Figure 8 with their rather faint violet Vendôme serrated oval R.N.A.S. date stamp dated **31 AOUT 1916**, together with the **VENDOME / LOIRE ET CHER 15 20 / 31 -8 / 16** date stamp. Arrowed and even more faded is the arrival strike of the **NAVAL AIR SERVICE**



Figure 6.



Figure 7.

MAIL OFFICE – LONDON / 2 SEP 1916

two day later over the officer's censoring signature signed in France as was permitted. A similar larger cover is shown in Figure 9 with the same type of oval, **R.N.A.S. / VENDOME** date stamp, this one for the **9.SEP 1916** and on reaching London, this time in black ink, their very faded receiving circular date stamp of **NAVAL AIR SERVICE MAIL – LONDON / 12 SEP / 1916**. Again, it has been censored in France by the sending naval officer to left and inscribed **Service / militaire**, top right, though in this case it has no French postal date cancellation. After September 1916, the year date on the Naval Air Service Mail Office – London on their circular dated handstamp was dropped.

The next two R.N.A.S. covers **ON HIS MAJESTIES SERVICE**, in Figures 10 and 11 do not have a notable receiving date stamp apparent on the envelope but that is not to say that they were not flown by them to their HQ in Charing Cross Road. In the example with the **VENDOME LOIR ET CHER / 21 30 / 18 -1 / 17** date stamp we see an example of their initialled and encircled **PASSED NAVAL CENSOR** applied in Vendôme prior to forwarding to the



Figure 8.

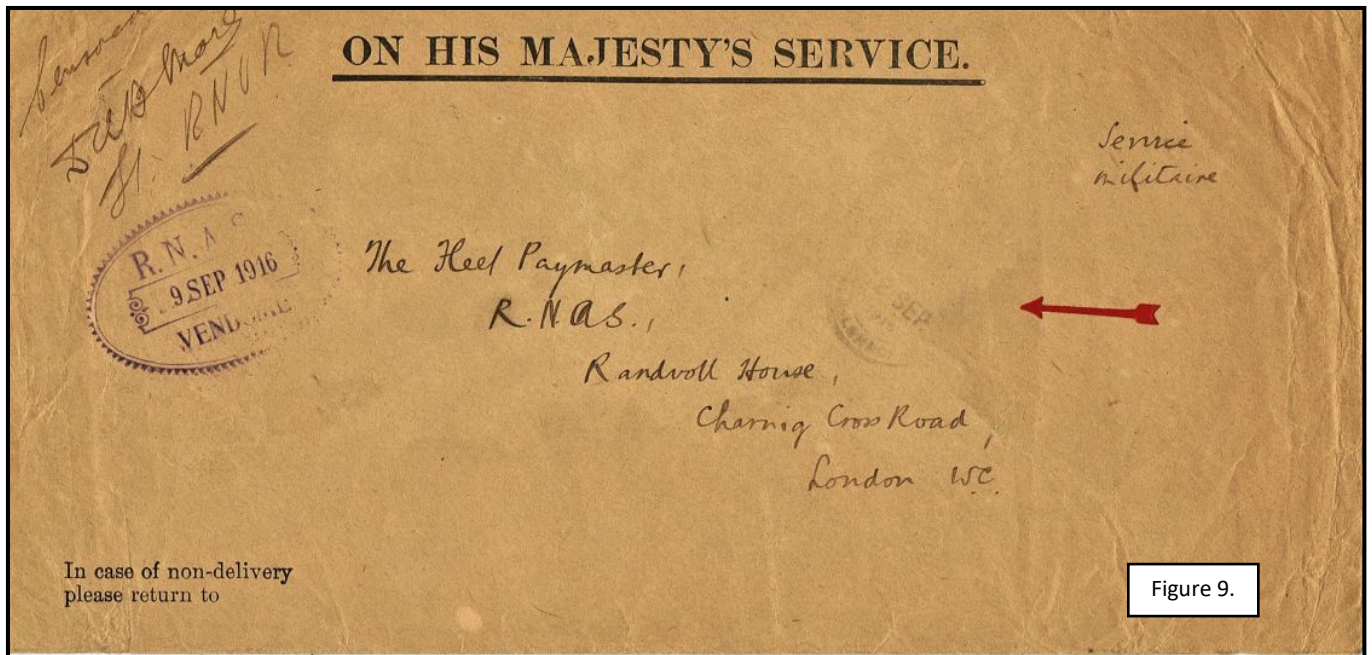


Figure 9.

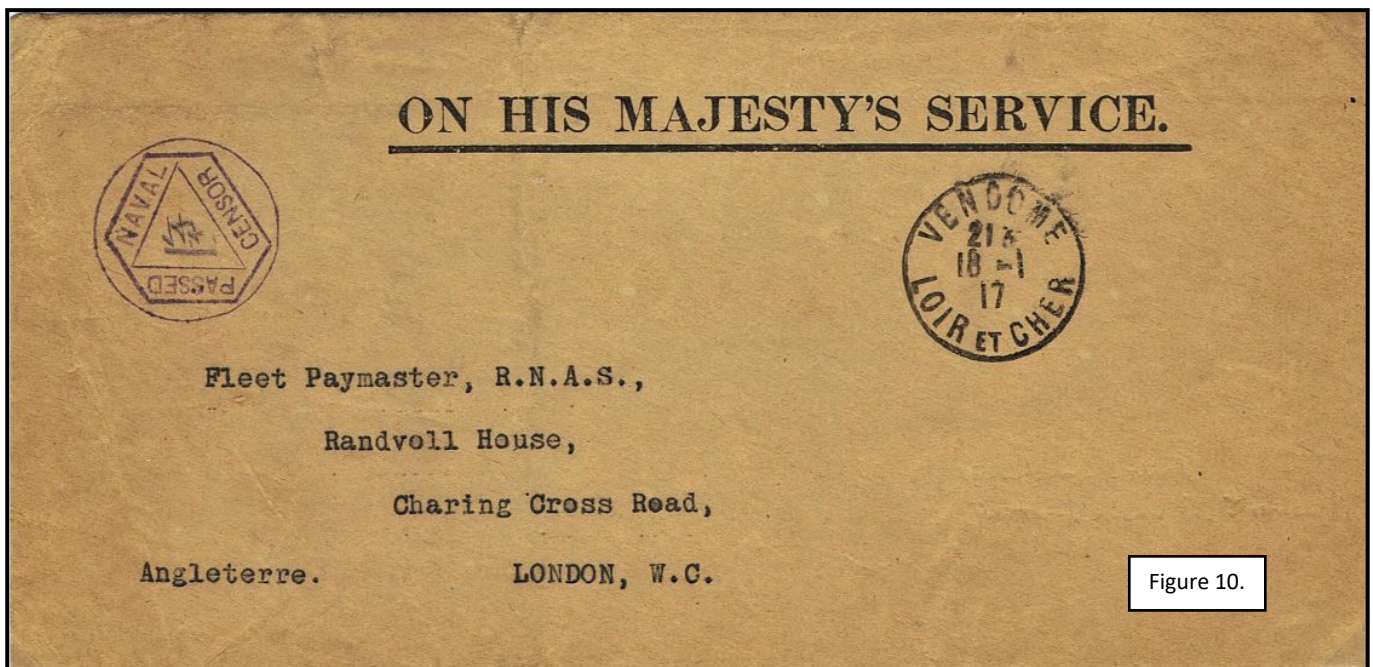


Figure 10.

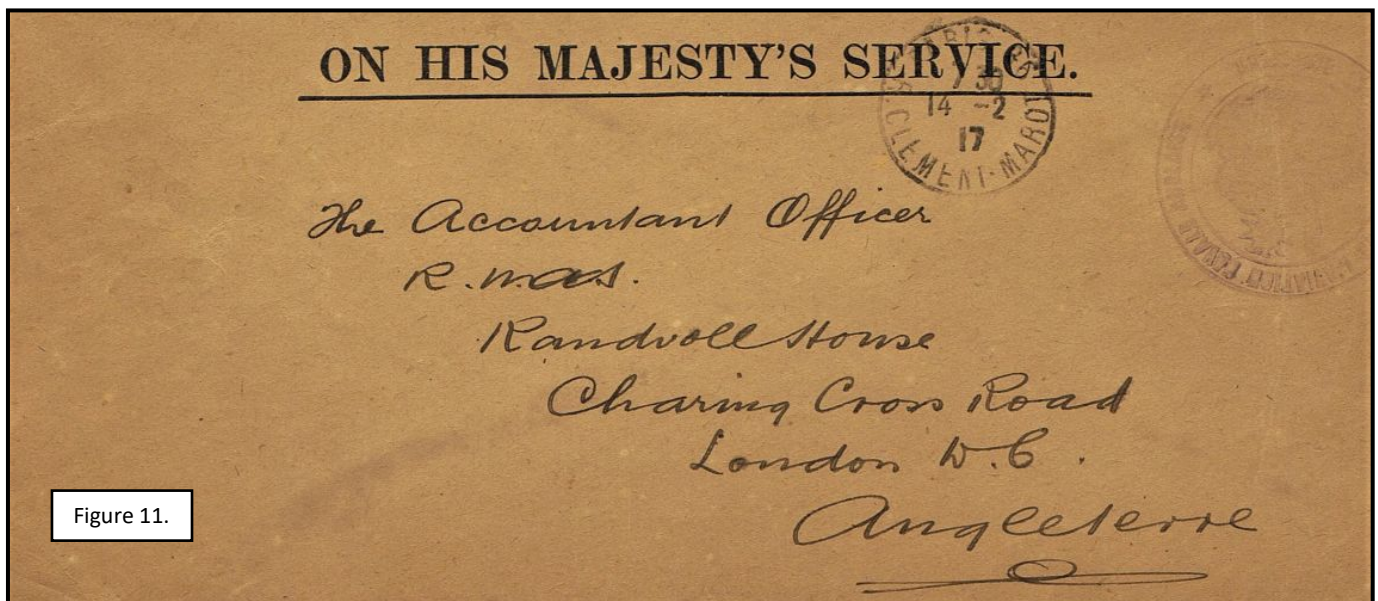


Figure 11.

Fleet Paymaster R.N.A.S. to London by air. In the second of these two examples is the circular date stamp of **PARIS R. CLEMENT – MAROT / 7 30 / 14 -2 / 17** together with the faint **REPUBLIQUE FRANÇAISE** hand stamp of **SERVICE DE L'AVIATION**

Other theatres of operation were also served with flown mails as in the example flown out to the Aegean. At Figure 12 is an **O.H.M.S.** flown cover addressed to the Commanding Officer, 3rd Royal Marines Battalion, with the red oval cachet of **Orderly Room, 3rd Royal Marine Battn. * MUDROS *** (Aegean Sea), showing the date of receipt **6/7/17** in blue

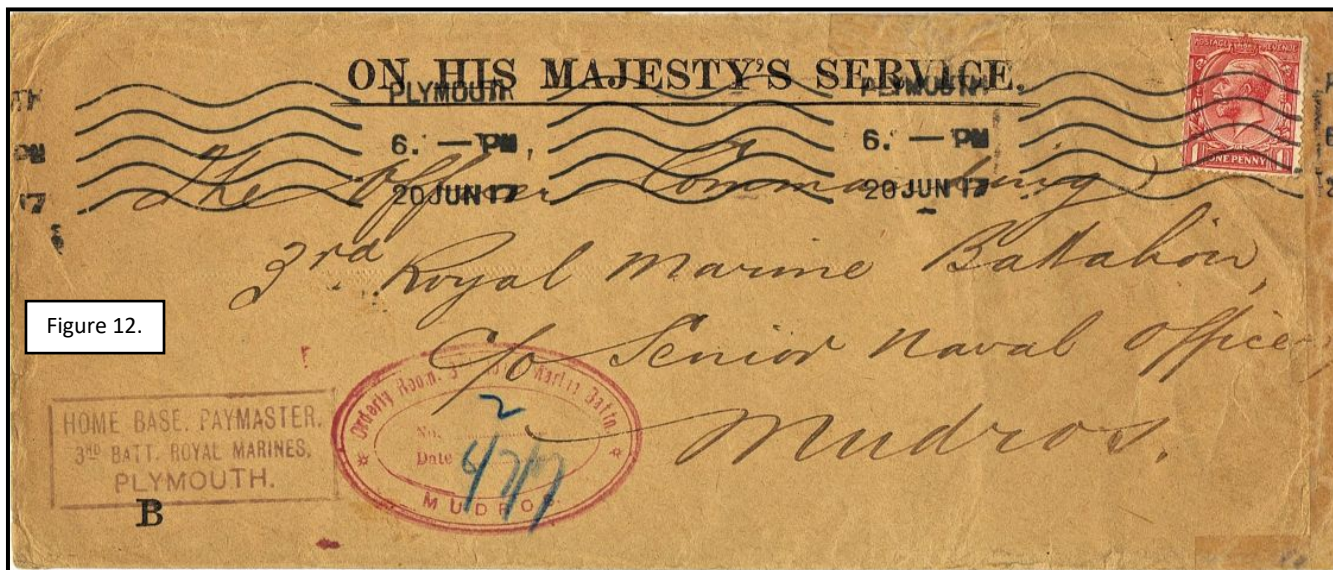


Figure 12.

aniline crayon. It also has the roller cancellation of **PLYMOUTH 6. --- PM 20 JUN 17** across the King George V red 1d. stamp. Additionally, framed in violet ink is the hand stamp of, **HOME BASE. PAYMASTER. / 3rd BATT. ROYAL MARINES, PLYMOUTH.** On the reverse side of this cover it has the rare circular date stamp of, **NAVAL AIR SERVICE MAIL OFFICE LONDON 22 JUN** struck

prior to air dispatch to Mudros. The copy of a photograph, (Figure 12a), shows a Handley Page



Figure 12a.

The arrival of HP O/100 3124 at Mudros after its flight from England, 8 June 1917.

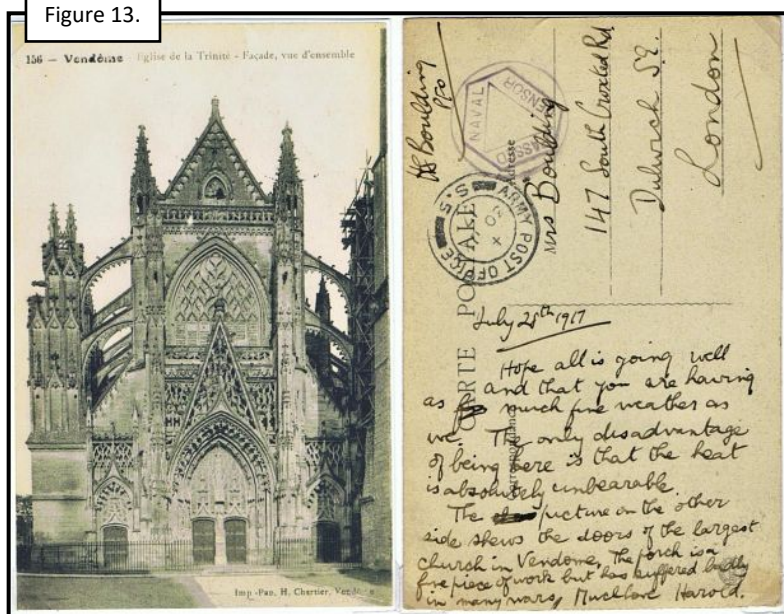


Figure 13.

HP O/100 3124 arriving at Mudros after its flight from England on 8th June 1917 some two weeks earlier.

Showing Figures 13, 14 and 14a are postcards from home showing the all-important Army Post Office S.5 date stamp, which as previously stated is the only clue to the highly likely probability of the Serviceman's post being flown home. In the first instance is a postcard showing the beautiful *Eglise de la Trinité* in Vendôme with post office date cancellation of, **30 JY / 17** together with the **PASSED / NAVAL / CENSOR** hand stamp mentioned earlier and sent by Probationary Flying Officer, H.S. Boulding to wife in Dulwich S.9., London. A similar postcard sent some three

months later showing the *Place et Colonne Vendôme* with the encircled, and often quoted quixotic reference to home, **A CORNER OF BLIGHTY IN PARIS** on the front and back. This time with the oblong army censor **5090** with crown in violet, type CM 6. Both censorship markings have been self-censored by the sender which was permitted for officers.

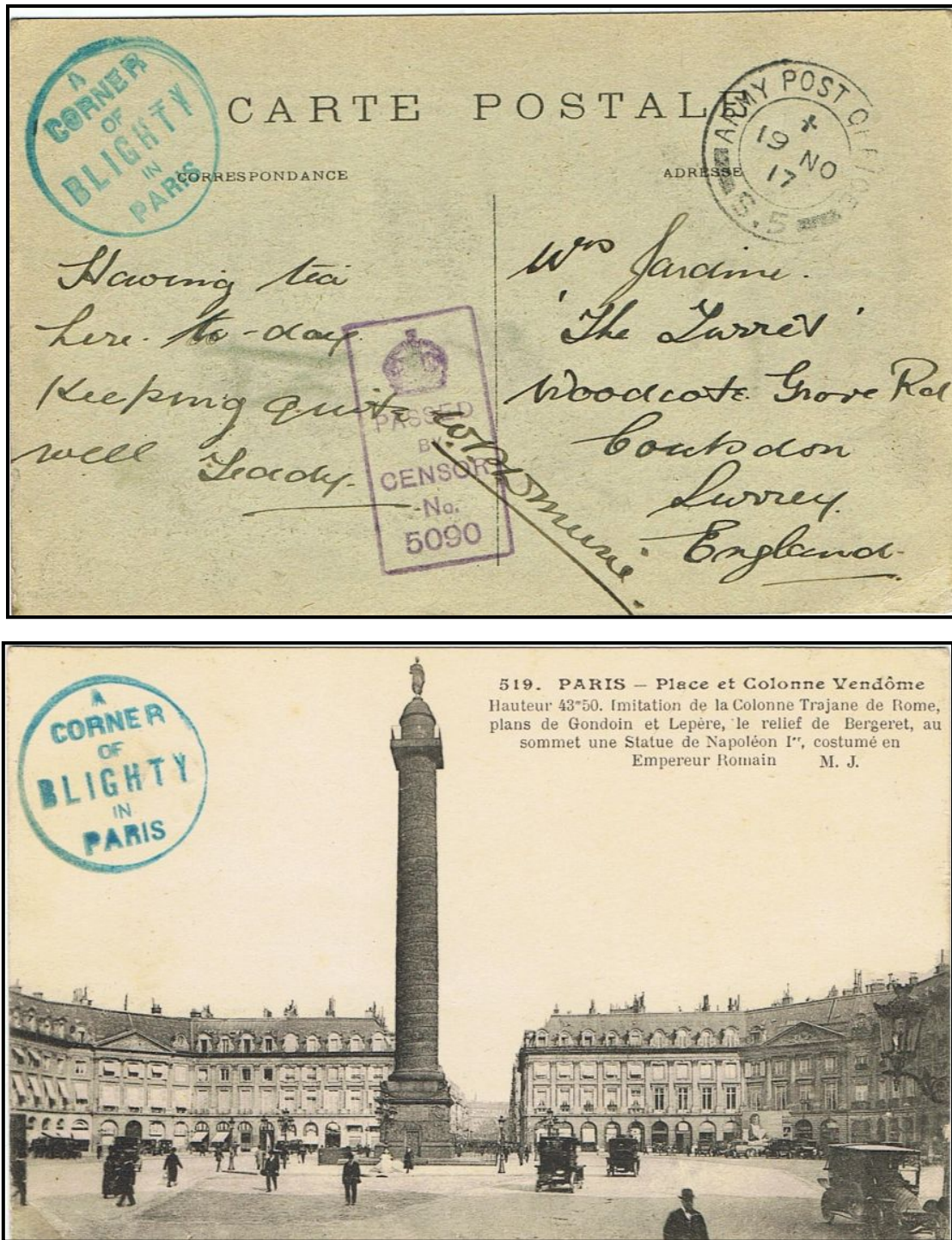


Figure 14.

The last postcard, of **TIME FLIES** in Figure 15 was one produced for the Navy Auxiliary Patrol of the Royal Naval Air Service, depicting Old Father Time, with his scythe, hanging out of the cockpit sending his good wishes in the air mail bag, flying the serviceman's post home and probably produced towards the end of hostilities if the ending line of, **(Open the Throttle) Peace in sight**, is anything to go by.

What these meagre beginnings showed, that as well as being a flying machine, the aeroplane could also be used for a fast and efficient means of transport for communications. As is well known, after these horrendous hostilities ceased, air mail started to be seriously organised as a new and efficient means of communication, and indeed much of the growth of our civil airlines came about by contracts being awarded to them by the postal authorities in which their business

customers in turn took full advantage of in order to advance their causes. As a postscript, in Figure 16, and still with a military flavour shown here last of all, is a cover showing how, in just a few short years air mail was being utilised to the full. This is a registered cover sent from London, West Central, from the Imperial War Graves Commission at the War Office, to the Imperial War Graves Commission in Berlin, and more importantly, marked up as to be sent: - "Thro' the A.P.O. S.40," (Through the Army Post Office in Cologne,

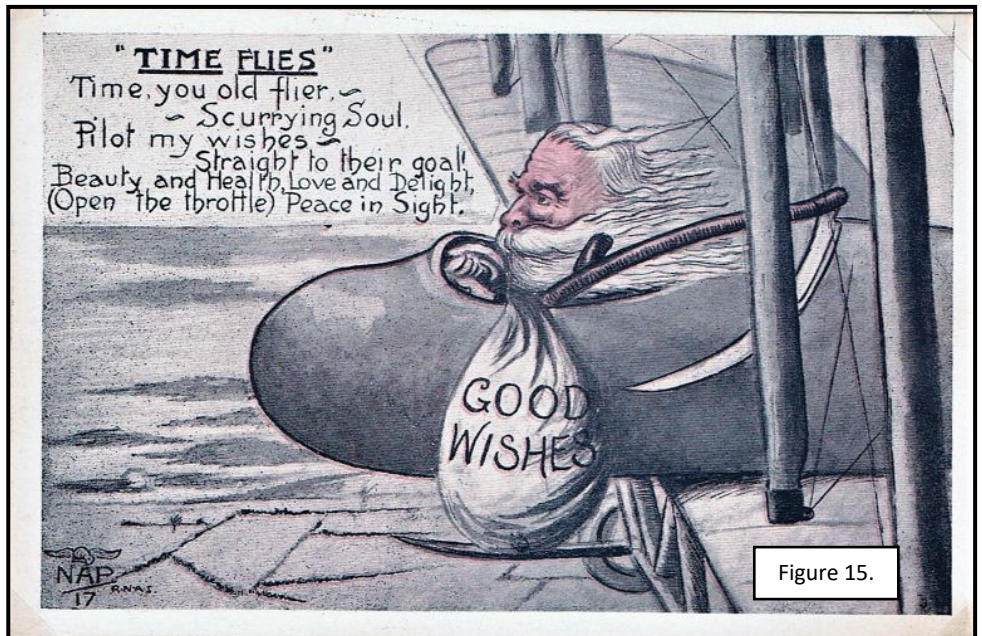


Figure 15.

S. 40). This was the major Army post office of the B.A.O.R., (being the British Army on the Rhine at Cologne). The

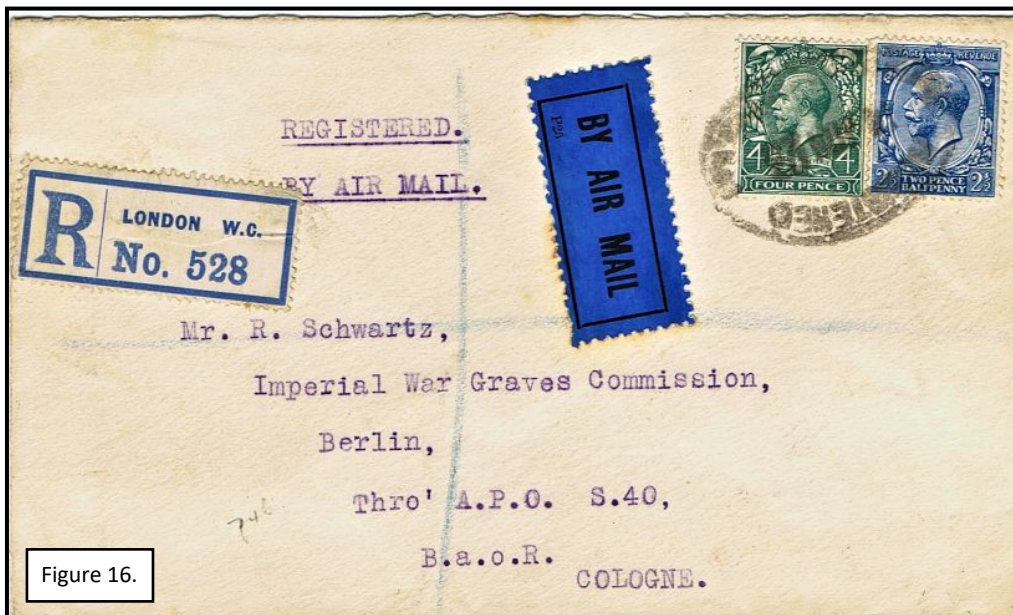


Figure 16.

efficiency of this new founding post-war air mail service is demonstrated here with the oval registered post mark to the front and back dated **4 JUN 23** and the two receiving and sending circular date stamps on the back of the envelope at the **ARMY POST OFFICE S.40** of **5 JU / 23** being their respective cancellations at Cologne of receipt and dispatch to Berlin. A further circular date stamp is on the reverse, being that of the Army Post Office at

Northolt Airfield, west of London of **+ 5 JU 23**.

Lest we forget.

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"*British External Airmails until 1934*", A.S. Newall, F.R.P.S.L., (ISBN 0951074903), pub. (date unknown) by Newall Consultants Ltd., London.

Cross & Cockade International Publications (with thanks to Josh Spoor).

The Netherlands Philatelic Circle – Display information about Flt. Lt. B. Crossley-Meates, R.N.A.S. (with thanks to Les Jobbins).

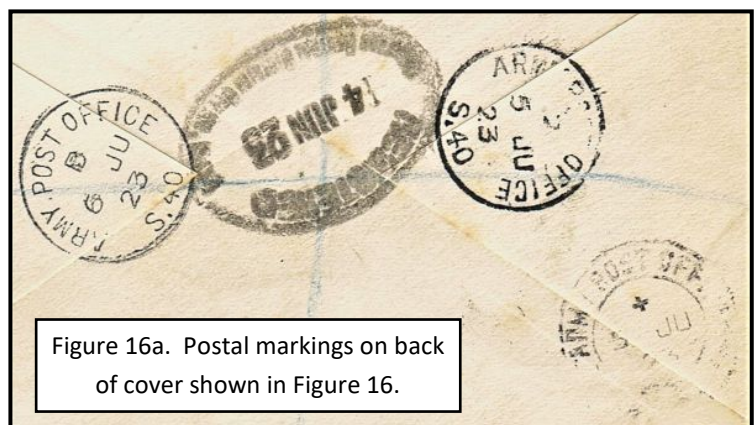


Figure 16a. Postal markings on back of cover shown in Figure 16.