

AIR MAIL NEWS

QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF THE BRITISH AIR MAIL SOCIETY

(Incorporating the Bulletin of the BAeF)

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Please note that all correspondence relating to *Air Mail News* following receipt of this issue should be directed to Roger Stanley-Smith, 58a Parklands Road, Hassocks, West Sussex BN6 8JZ (roger_gs_smith@hotmail.com)

Our President's Message.

Dear Members,

I am writing this message in the vain hope that at least some of you will read it.

I have been trying very hard since I took over as your President to obtain some assistance from yourselves in the running of our Society but with a few highly appreciated exceptions it seems to have fallen on deaf ears. This may, of course, be due in some ways to my poor ability to get the message across.

I now feel that the British Air Mail Society needs a new President, someone with more experience or more drive to take our Society forwards.

I would like to see as many of you as possible at the King's Head on 1st June for this important Annual General Meeting. There are some very important issues to be addressed at this meeting.

Your President,

Eddie Spicer.

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EDITORIAL

The Treatment of After-Delivery Manuscript and Other Markings found on Air Mail Covers and Cards.

There is a well-known saying: 'Great minds think alike, BUT fools never differ.'

It was purely coincidental, I can assure you, that when thinking about what sort of message I should leave you with when writing my final Editorial before I 'ride off into the golden sunset' - I had decided I should mention something that is, or should be, of some concern to all our readers, namely, how to deal with manuscript markings on covers – when I read in a recent issue of the "*Air Post Journal*" (Vol. 90, No. 2 (February 2019) pp. 72-75) an interesting article by a **Jim Grau**, a former President of the American Air Mail Society, entitled "*Markings' in Aerophilately.*" I will be the first person to defend Jim should anyone call him a 'fool' as he has a first-class mind and everything he writes concerning our hobby is to be very carefully read, to be digested, to be thought about. The corollary of the saying mentioned above, however, that Jim and I share the attributes of great minds I leave you to judge. As far as I am concerned Jim is one collector most of us would strive to emulate with little hope of success.

The tenor of Jim's article, however, is not what I currently wish to emphasise. Jim is an expert collector of German aerophilately, and he explained in his article how certain manuscript messages found on some pre-war German transatlantic air mail covers were important in affording correspondents claim reimbursement on overpaid letters. What I am dealing with here is a related matter – How should one deal with manuscript, or other markings that were applied to covers after delivery?

I am going to repeat what Jim said: "*There are some markings on covers that demand special attention; among these are manuscript markings i.e., hand-written. These can be numbers, letters, symbols, notes, notices, etc.*"

The first step for the cover collector is to determine the intent and significance of such markings. The objective is to separate postal markings from any and all markings made after postal delivery. The latter are subject to removal with one exception: recipient's docketing, a recipient's notation of the date (and, with luck, also the time) of receipt. Business mail is more often docketed than mail to individuals. Stand-alone or annotated docketing, often applied to the front, is as good as a backstamp (postmark or postal date stamp showing place, date and time of arrival), usually applied to the reverse side of a cover.

With docketing now excepted, all post-delivery markings are blemishes that compromise condition. These should be carefully erased or otherwise removed, if possible, without adverse consequences. The objective here is restoration, not repair of physical damage. Be careful! If one is not certain what a mark is or why it is there, leave it alone until someone with expertise can provide the certainty needed. Covers (depending on origin) may be highly likely to be marked with weight (grams or ounces), rate information, routing, censor number, delivery attempts, etc. It is imperative that such marks be preserved. If there is any doubt, leave it as found."

I doubt anyone could have expressed this better. I always remember what one member of our Society, **Ian Nutley**, once said to me: "If you don't understand what a pencil mark on a cover means leave well alone." That is good advice I have always tried to follow. As a one-time judge at local society and philatelic federation level I was often horrified to find in front of me, exhibits of mouth-watering cards and covers, clearly the exhibitors' pride and joy, yet they still bore dealers' marks, often the price paid for such material. What an absolute let-down! Nothing was more designed to put me in a bad frame of mind when evaluating such exhibits to find the exhibitors had not even obeyed the basic rules of competition by not removing references to the value of the items on show. Years ago, you would regularly see references to prices paid for material shown in national and international competitions. I kid you, not! Thankfully those days are now long gone and informed collectors now understand the importance of removing such post-delivery manuscript markings.

Of course, the guilty parties responsible for most of these extraneous markings are our dealer fraternity. We understand and appreciate some dealers need to price their wares using pencil markings, and most do at least use soft pencils and write on the backs of covers, thus doing little harm. It is the minority who decide to annotate each stamp with catalogue number and price who can greatly disfigure covers, sometimes making restoration almost impossible. And we will pass over those dealers who disfigure covers using ink, using the dreaded biro in particular! Nowadays many of us buy covers from internet auction houses such as eBay, and our hearts can fall to our boots when we receive important items in unexpected disfigured states. Recently, for instance, I bought a cover which in the illustration had arrows pointing to the more interesting facets. Imagine my disappointment when I received said cover to find the arrows were not used for illustration of the cover by the vendor but had been stuck down years ago by some old-time collector and could not now be removed. Thank God the use of 'arricators', so popular years ago for display and competition purposes, are no longer very acceptable.

There is however another kind of blemish that may occasionally be found, deliberately applied by well-meaning collectors such that subsequent owners would be alerted to the fact the covers were fakes or not what they might at first seem to be. I show for instance one highly prized cover from my Costa Rican air mail collection which illustrates this very point. During the winter of 1928-1929 severe storms hit Central America and the vital railway line between San José and the Atlantic port of Puerto Limón was severed. U.S. military fliers from the Canal Zone provided a much-needed relief air mail service in the spring of 1929 and analysis of covers in my collection indicated that this service was operated on Fridays only. Unfortunately, one of the covers I used for this research was 'defaced' by some well-meaning, possibly self-appointed expert through applying "FAKE-FAUX-" markings on front and back. The cover in question was endorsed by the sender "**VIA LIMÓN POR PRIMER CORREO AEREO**" (= by first flight via Limón). The well-meaning former owner of the cover stated on the back that this was not a first flight cover of any kind and he was perfectly right. There had been earlier flights between San José and Puerto Limón. Unfortunately, the 'expert' had not fully understood the possible other interpretation of the Spanish-language inscription. What the sender intended the inscription to be interpreted as was "By the first available flight via Limón." Thus, this was not a forgery of any kind, but a valuable piece of genuine



evidence adding something of significance to our knowledge concerning the Costa Rican 'flood flights'. I have exhibited this cover many times, always taking pains in my 'write up' to ensure the judges knew this cover was not a forgery.

The bottom line here is that we should all be extremely careful when analysing markings on covers and be prepared to erase those applied after delivery with the exception of those indicated by Jim Graue. For those entering the rarefied arena of competitive aerophilately, not to do so will almost certainly lead to loss of marks. Exhibitors are expected to demonstrate their expertise and the retention of after-delivery postal markings may only serve to indicate great ignorance.

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This is the last issue of *Air Mail News* that I will have the honour of editing. May I take this opportunity of thanking so many of our readers who have supported me over the years through supplying articles or offering advice. I trust you will now offer the same level of support to **Roger Stanley-Smith** who is now to assume the role as Editor. From past experience I am confident that this journal is now in safe hands and will go from strength to strength. I wish Roger every success.

Richard Saundry.

OBITUARY
HANS EDUARD AITINK
(1931 – 2019)

Hans Aitink, the noted Dutch aerophilatelist and Society member died on 14th January 2019 at Enschede in the Netherlands. We send our sincere condolences to the Aitink family and to his friends, philatelic and otherwise.

I corresponded with Hans Aitink over a number of years, particularly on our shared interest in transcontinental air mails during World War II. Not only was he a dedicated researcher with his friend the late Egbert Hovenkamp, but they both believed that the ultimate object of their research was to publish their findings for the benefit of the wider philatelic fraternity. They published both Dutch-language and English-language volumes. The most important text was the 2005 English-language '*Bridging the Continents in Wartime: Important Airmail Routes 1939-1945*'. This 228-page A4 volume was very well illustrated with colour reproductions of flown covers complete with an analysis of the route and the franking, airline posters, maps and tabulated lists of mail carrying flights. The print run was less than 1,000 and it was not long before it became out of print. To the best of my knowledge his last publication was a Dutch-language study of the rebirth of the KLM service from the Netherlands to the Dutch East Indies (later Indonesia) in November 1945: '*De Indiëlijn van der KLM Herboren 1945-1950*' (2011)

The memory of Hans Aitink will live on through his publications.

Richard Belth FRPSL

Letters to the Editor.

Errata.

Dear Richard,

January 8th 2019.

As testimony to the fact that I do actually read "*Air Mail News*," I feel I should point out a couple of typographical errors in my article on LAN Chile (pages 27 and 24 of the February 2019 issue of the journal).

The final cover illustrated in the article should show an interdepartmental fee of 40 centavos (not 4) giving a total of 1.60 Pesos which is the value overprinted on the provisional air mail stamp.

On page 24, the date stamp on the cover from Vallenar to Valparaiso clearly shows November 19th 1932, not November 14th as shown on the caption.

I am not sure whether the typo errors crept in at my end or yours (not that it matters) but this should soothe John Wilson's fears about people not reading the journal.

As an aside, I confess to preferring hard copy for my issue of "*Air Mail News*." On my bedside table I usually have a couple of philatelic magazines to browse through before I turn in. One of them is usually "*Air Mail News*."

Kind Regards,

Martyn Cusworth.

The "Aeroletter"

Dear Richard,

Tuesday January 1st 2019.

I found the February issue of *Air Mail News* in my inbox this afternoon; that is quick work. I read with interest your comments regarding the 'Aeroletter.' If memory serves me, and that is questionable these days, the Aero Society of South Africa folded in 2013. At one stage I was also President of that Society, but that was many, many years ago. I joined in 1994.

Neville Polakow, a pharmacist, took over from me. Most of the content of the 'Aeroletter', however, was compiled by **Dave Morton**, who lived in Cape Town. Neville then had a professional graphic designer do the rest. When Dave Morton died suddenly of a heart attack that was the end of the 'Aeroletter' and the Aero Society. Neville still lives in Port Elizabeth and I hear from other members of the Port Elizabeth Philatelic Society that he is not in the best of health and rarely attends meetings. The major problem we experienced with ASSA was the spread of members across the country which meant holding meetings was next to impossible.

I have been asked a number of times to revive ASSA, but I'm just too involved with other aspects of philately in South Africa. Currently, as member of the Editorial Board of the '*South African Philatelist*' I'm trying to push for more aero articles and have written several myself, with more in the pipeline. Aerophilately in South Africa is usually treated like a poor cousin from the farm! If you are interested, you are always more than welcome to reprint any of these articles. All we need is a brief acknowledgment. Just let me know.

Regards,

David Wigston.

Editor: Thanks David for this information, and more importantly for your kind words. We sympathise with South African collectors who are now deprived of their society through the demise or retirement of the very few active members who ran ASSA. BAMS is in real danger of folding if we don't eventually find volunteers to take on some of the many tasks necessary for the smooth-running of our organisation. This 'old timer' feels aggrieved at the perceived selfishness of too many collectors who nowadays just wish to take but put precious little in. We all recognise the great benefits that the world wide web and the internet bring us, but far too few are willing to sit down and write articles or assume some of the duties we sometimes all too easily take for granted. In this 'throw away' age far too many of just want to scan philatelic works using our browsers, move on and then quickly forget. Well, the philatelic world will soon find it convenient to forget us. What then could we say about the future of aerophilately?

The Captain Smye Covers.

Dear Richard,

Friday January 11, 2019.

I read, with interest, the comments made by Julian van Beveren and yourself about Capt. Smye in the last issue of *Air Mail News*. Whereas I agree that there may be no evidence that he ever "fraudulently improved a cover", I do think that he liked to make his covers stand out from the crowd by giving them a little extra appeal. I attach a couple of covers I have which illustrate this.

The first flight to Cyprus is postmarked 15 AP 31. This was an error, but by whom? The flight was on 15th April 1932.



The Khedivia Mail Line cover, though not an air mail, is a good example of a “tarted up” cover. The postal stationery card used was intended for use only within Cyprus. Three kings are portrayed in the franking. The card is in mint condition with no other markings.



I have no evidence to show he was an Army captain, but I think that if he had been a Navy captain he would have used the letters RN after his name.

Best wishes, and a belated Happy New Year,

John Sims.

.....

Dear Richard,

Wednesday January 30th 2019.

Further to the contents about Captain Smye in the last two issues of *Air Mail News*, details of a cover which he did not get flown as he had hoped are attached below,

Further to collectors of British air mails, many people collect some aspects of such air mails, usually connected with a particular route, an airline such as Imperial Airways or another country or continent which involves collecting incoming mail from Britain. Thus I collect the RAF Cairo-Baghdad service, Imperial Airways and air mails to and from Australia and New Zealand.

Best wishes,

Laurence Kimpton.

Laurence writes:

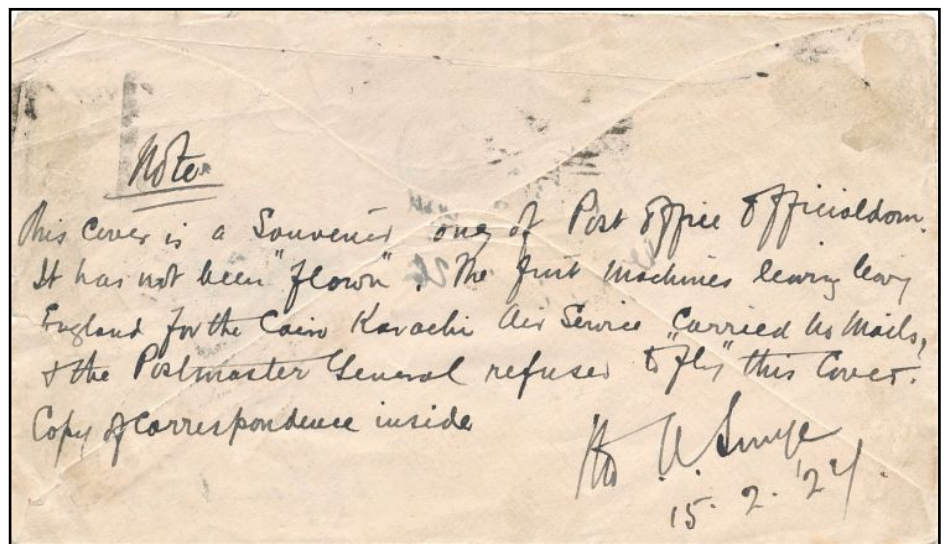
A case of Captain Smye getting angry with the Postmaster General.

In December 1926 Captain Smye attempted to get some covers flown on an Imperial Airways DH66 Hercules which was flying out to Egypt in readiness for the inauguration of Imperial Airways' Cairo-Baghdad-Basra service in early January 1927. On 18th December 1926 Imperial Airways DH66 Hercules G-EBMW left Croydon for Cairo, with Sir Sefton Brancker, Director General of Civil Aviation, on board. Two days later, on 20th December, a second Hercules, G-EBMY, followed. On 26th December 1926 a third Hercules, G-EBMX, left Croydon on a survey flight to India, with Sir Samuel Hoare, Secretary of State for Air as a passenger.



Captain Smye wanted to send mail on the 18th December flight from Croydon and prepared and posted some covers. The cover illustrated, addressed to Abadan, Persia (close to Basra, Iraq) was posted by Captain Smye at Gosport on 12th December 1926 and was cancelled again on the same day at nearby Portsmouth. The first line of Smye's instructions on the pink label is illegible, the next two lines read: "...leaving England about 18th Dec." His plans were thwarted by the Post Office. On the back of the cover (see illustration) he has written:

Note. This cover is a souvenir of Post Office officialdom. It has not been 'flown'. The first machines leaving England for the Cairo Karachi air services carried no mails & the Postmaster General refuses to 'fly' this cover. Copy of correspondence inside. T A Smye 15.2. '27." The 'correspondence' inside is a carbon copy of a handwritten Post Office letter. Unfortunately, the quality of the Post Office's carbon ink was of poor quality and so the writing has faded considerably and is partially illegible. The following can be deciphered:



"General PO London EC11 16.12.26. Sir, I am directed by the Postmaster General to refer to the communication of 20th October last from PO of Iraq and to inform you that the Cairo-Karachi Air Mail Service Furthermore, I am to return the enclosed 51 covers (49 addressed to yourself c/o PM Cairo and 2 to H V Donaldson at Abadan, Persia marked for transmission by the proposed flight to Egypt this month Informed that it is not proposed to dispatch mails by this or other similar special flights."

So Captain Smye's plans came to nought and his time spent on preparing his covers and a total of 5s. 11. spent on postage for 51 covers was wasted.

(A few covers were carried as unofficial mail on the 18th December flight to Cairo. Captain Gladstone who travelled on this flight carried eight letters which were then flown by him from Khartoum to Kisumu. Also, a cover signed by Brancker and flown to Cairo has also been recorded).

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Editor: **Julian van Beveren** in a letter responding to Q. 549 (see his letter in full elsewhere in this issue), Julian included the following sentences:

“It was alleged in the previous *Air Mail News* that the well-known collector Capt. Smye was apt to enhance his air mail covers, an accusation new to me. What is known to many Dutch collectors is, that our erstwhile ultra right wing “Wheeler Dealer” **Thoolen** was very much of that ilk, with many serious collectors not wishing to touch his airmailed offerings with a very long Dutch barge pole.”

BAMS Society Auctions?

Dear Richard,

Monday January 28th 2019.

Sorry to trouble you but you are far in the know than I am about the present situation concerning the BAMS generally and the Society Auctions in particular.

I have been asked by a friend to dispose of a small collection of, essentially, crash material, although there are a few items, of little value, which might find a home if offered, particularly if the price was cheap enough.

Before I try this lot out at Messr. Corbetts or Grovesnor, *etc.*, please let me know if there is likely to be a BAMS auction coming up and who will be running it?

Sincerely,

Nicholas Arrow.

Editor: I replied that after retiring as Editor of this journal I was planning on taking a back seat regarding the running of BAMS. In any event I was rarely informed about what was going on these days, possibly very little if at all. I suggested Nick referred his query directly to our President, Eddie Spicer who should have been able to tell him exactly what the current situation was regarding BAMS auctions. Do our members wish to show air their concerns regarding this aspect of our Society's activities, or should I say inactivity?

Massive Increase in the Value of Early GB Internal Air Mail Covers?

Good Morning,

Saturday February 23rd 2019.

I thought that the membership who collect these items [two GWR air mail covers plus a number of proofs of labels used by Provincial Airways] might be interested (and amused) by these two items spotted on eBay today. My reasonable offer for the GWR items was dismissed with contempt and apparently he [the vendor in Kenya] will expect more than £100 each for any such cover! Who is buying this, or is any member aware of any forgeries out there?

Regards,

Mark le Breton.

Editor: For reason of possible infringement of copyright I didn't think it wise to re-publish scans of lots offered on eBay. Buyers of lots from eBay quickly learn that descriptions and prices set by vendors do not necessarily reflect true market valuations. Speculators often over-describe lots and describe as rare items covers which the informed collector recognise as relatively common. It is always disappointing when offering a very high bid for a cover you ordinarily would expect to equate to a 'buy bid', to find someone outbids you at the very last minute. The problem we now have with eBay is that more and more vendors are asking astronomical prices for items that are not placed as auction lots but for set prices with the invitation to make offers. It is all getting rather silly! With the covers noted by Mark we have a vendor who I suspect has no idea of the true value of the items and is testing, nay abusing, the market to find what they are actually worth. The danger is with asking high prices for relatively common covers, as is this case, of the order of several thousand pounds, this might attract the attention of the forger. Do our members agree with this analysis?

Page Dimensions.

Richard,

Thursday January 24th 2019.

Further to your Editor's remarks regarding page sizes in the February 2019 issue of *Air Mail News* (Vol. 61, No. 244, pages 4 and 16), I would like to comment further on acceptable page sizes at UK national and international exhibitions. First, though, it is appropriate to correct your comment about the size of A4: it is 297 x 210 mm, not 297 x 205 as you state.

I am chairman of the organising committee for London 2020 where the same new frames will be used as are now utilised at each Stampex. In the London 2020 exhibition regulations (known as the IREX), it is stated in paragraph 11.1:

Sizes and Allotment of Frames. There will be approximately 2,750 competitive frames, with capacity for 16 sheets not exceeding 30 cm tall by 24.5 cm wide, in four rows of four (4 x 4) contained in transparent protectors. The sheet width can be greater than this so long as the total width of the sheet(s) on each row does not exceed 990 cm. Sheets of a height greater than 30 cm may be accepted but must be pre-notified and approved by the Organising Committee.

I personally have just developed a brand new exhibit, with each page measuring 28.5 cm tall by 31.0 cm wide. This is colloquially known as 'one and a third' wide, as there are three broad pages per row in a frame. This format has a great advantage if you are trying to show larger covers.

Whilst writing, I can confirm there will be an aerophilately class at London 2020. Application forms are now available on the website (www.london2020.co). Please contact the UK Commissioner, Mike J.Y. Roberts, via email to UKcommissioner@london2020.co if you require any further details. The closing date for applications is 30 June 2019.

Best wishes,

Frank Walton, RDP, FRPSL

Editor: I would be intrigued to learn for collectors such as myself living out in the 'Sticks' how one might obtain card to size to be able to write up these 'one and a third' sized sheets, and what sort of printer is available to allow printing these larger pages?

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Dear Richard,

Thursday February 26th 2019.

I was reading the discussion about exhibit page sizes in the February *Air Mail News*. It refers to the U.S. 8½ x 11 inch pages as "legal" size, but that is wrong. 8½ x 11 are considered normal size, and legal size pages are 8½ x 14. Nobody in the U.S. would use legal size pages for exhibits, as they would not be able to fit 16 pages into a display frame.

Regards,

Ken Sanford.

NEWS FROM THE WORLD OF AEROPHILATELY

AeroBerlin 2019

We have been informed by **Stefan Bruylants**, Secretary General for FISA, that the FISA Congress 2019 will most definitely go ahead on April 27th 2019 in Berlin.

Because of the late-running alterations to the Rathaus Schöneberg, the Organising Committee have had to find a new location for the AeroBerlin exhibition. The exhibition plus Congress will now take place from 26th to 28th April in the Russischen Haus der Wissenschaft und Kultur, Friedrichstrasse 176-179, 10117 Berlin.

SAVPEX 2019

The South African Philatelic Federation are once again holding a Virtual One Frame Philatelic Exhibition in 2019 and exhibitors from the UK are invited to participate.

Entry is simple because accepted entries take the form of a scan of your exhibit which you upload and fees can be paid via PayPal.

The IREX (regulations) and the entry form in both PDF and MS Word formats were sent as attachments to a letter provided us by Michael Smith, AABPS Exhibitions & International Committee Member (mikesmith.philatelist@gmail.com)

Entries must reach the SAVPEX 2019 Secretary, Jook van der Merwe, via email at jnc1@vodamail.co.za no later than 31st May 2019. Entry fees are 250Rand or US \$30.

Michael Smith has requested should you decide to enter, please to cc him when you send in your entry form.

SOCIETY NEWS

The 16th. Bi-Annual NZ National Philatelic Literature Exhibition.

Alan Tunncliffe, redoubtable Editor of the '*New Zealand Air Mail News*', bulletin of the New Zealand Air Mail Society, writes to invite BAMS to participate in the forthcoming 16th bi-annual NZ National Philatelic Literature Exhibition which will take place at the end of September. The judging commences at the end of June. Alan has requested we enter a run of issues of *Air Mail News* into the Digital Class. Last time, in 2017, they received a total of 75 entries in the various classes from all round the world.

There is no charge to enter. They usually ask for the most recent two years' worth of any given journal. We have been invited to add the current issue of *Air Mail News* to the four issues of 2018, plus the issue for February 2019, which they already have.

It is not the place of the retiring Editor of *Air Mail News* to agree or, indeed, to arrange this entry on behalf of Council of BAMS. In any case, modesty forbids! We forwarded the original invitation from the organisers directly to our President for possible action. For others wishing to enter other aerophilatelic literature into competition, Alan Tunncliffe's contact address is: alant@snap.net.nz

Book Offer for Members of BAMS.

Susan McEwen, a Trustee Member of the Stuart Rossiter Trust has written to say that in 2009 the Stuart Rossiter Trust published "*Iraq Postal History 1920s to 1940s*" by Douglas Armitage FRPSL and Robert Johnson RDP, FRPSL.

Much of the book is about the development of air mail, as Iraq was pivotal in the development of the routes between Europe and the East.

The original price for this book was £38 per cope (plus P & P). Ten years on and the Stuart Trust still have a stock of this reference work and are happy to offer them to members of BAMS at less than half price, *i.e.* £15 (including P & P).

More information about the book will be found on the Trust's website www.rossitertrust.com under bookshop, but orders should go directly to John Jackson: john.w.jackson@care4free.net to get the reduced price, mentioning you are a member of BAMS.

Brian Asquith is still 'Flying the Flag' for Aerophilately!

On 22nd January, our patron **Brian Asquith** gave his remarkable display "*On Dragon's Wings – Chinese Air Mails*" to a rapt audience of the Croydon Philatelic Society. The notes of Croydon P.S. say:

"The dragon looms large in Chinese mythology. Early aircraft were thought of as dragons in the sky and Chinese air mails could therefore be described as being carried on their wings. Brian's display opened with a forerunner in the shape of a 1901 cover addressed to the Commanding Officer of the British Balloon Section which was based in China at the time of the Boxer Rebellion. There then followed pioneer, experimental and other internal flights from 1920 onwards including mail carried by the following airlines: China National Aviation Corporation (owned by Pan Am and the Chinese Government), Eurasia Aviation Corporation (owned by Lufthansa and the Chinese Government) and South Western

Aviation Corporation (owned by Kwangtung Provincial Government). Also displayed were attempts to speed the mail internationally such as d'Oisy and Carol's record breaking flight Paris to Peking of 11th June 1926, and special flights on which mail was carried by authority of the Chinese Post Office, including De Pinedo's China to Japan flight in 1925.

The World War II Period, 1939-1945 was covered including some route changes necessitated by the war and Japanese invasion, directional markings and postal markings such as the Hami-Alma Ata route through Russia and 'En Dépêche Closé'.

Examples of mail between 1946 and 1949 covered the Communist Revolution and the high inflation rates during this period. Brian expressed

his thanks to Croydon Philatelic Society member **Gregory W.K. Loh MBE** for his translations, over many years, without whose help he could not have put the collection together.

The President of Croydon P.S. **Graham Harker** thanked Brian for his impressive and informative display and for his interesting commentary on the material."

We are pleased that Brian, possibly now the oldest member of BAMS, is still flying the flag for aerophilately.



Dates for your Diary.

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. See agenda on outside back cover.

(see the Annual Financial Statement on the following page)

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

A. 549. The 1939 KLM "First Flight" Cover Rotterdam to Manchester.

Richard Beith showed an interesting KLM cover, the property of **Ray Welland**, which was described as a 'First Flight Cover' Rotterdam, the Netherlands 17th April 1939 to Manchester (backstamped 18 April). This did not fit with information given by most reliable sources. How could this be? Our redoubtable correspondent **Julian van Beveren** has sent us the following detailed reply:

"Dear Richards B. & S.,

I dove into TSchroots new tome, "**Luchtvaart en Luchtpost encyclopedie vol. 2, 1936 – 1945**" to see if any further light could be thrown on the mystery "**Eerstvlucht Rotterdam Manchester**" (First Flight) cover from Rotterdam – Waalhaven to Manchester dated 17th April 1939. According to TSchroots there was air mail also sent on these summer flights between Holland and the North of England from 16th April to 31st August 1939 and I copy the extract from his reference book (page 1442).

In translation the extract reads:

BRITISH AIR MAIL SOCIETY
(formerly known as the British Aerophilatelic Federation)
INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st DECEMBER 2018

2017		2018
£	INCOME	£
3,160	Subscriptions & Donations	3,452
640	Auction Profits	718
792	Advertising	175
80	Meetings	75
2	Miscellaneous Sales	-
<u>4,674</u>		<u>4,420</u>
	EXPENDITURE	
2,599	AMN - Printing Magazine & C.D.'s	1,577
150	Auction Catalogue, Bid Forms, Subscription Notices	48
1,290	AMN - Catalogue & Index/Library List - Mailings	428
426	Meetings	439
227	Regional Expenses	217
58	Post, Telephone etc.	87
259	Fees, Subscriptions etc.	232
103	Insurance	103
49	Internet Website	81
5,161		3,212
-487	Surplus/(Deficit) for the year	1,208
<u>4,674</u>		<u>4,420</u>
	<u>BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2018</u>	
8,604	Funds at beginning of year	8,117
-487	Surplus/(Deficit)	1,208
<u>8,117</u>		<u>9,325</u>
	REPRESENTED BY:	
4,236	Bank account (Main)	7,266
4,299	Bank account (No. 2) Auction Float	3,001
	<u>Add Debtors and Prepayments:-</u>	
50	Bank account - Deposit/Prepayments	70
-	Bank account - Debtor	-
160	Stock of badges	160
<u>8,745</u>		<u>230</u>
		10,497
	Less Creditors	
215	Main Account - subscriptions received in advance	874
15	Auction Account	-
398	Regional groups and other creditors	298
<u>8,117</u>		<u>1,172</u>
		<u>9,325</u>

G.C. Boutle, Hon. Treasurer

February 2019

AUDITOR'S REPORT

I have audited the above Income and Expenditure Account and Balance Sheet and confirm they are in accordance with the Society's accounting records which have been properly kept.

P. J. Wood.

G.C. Boutle

Approved

18 February 2019

2 **Dienst II-1939 Amsterdam-Manchester-Liverpool**
 16-04/31-08 Amsterdam-(Doncaster)-Manchester-Liverpool v.v. werkdagen 859
verzending: brief- en pakketpost voor Noord Engeland, Schotland, Noord Ierland en het eiland Man. Met uitzondering van brieven en briefkaarten moeten alle stukken zijn voorzien van een etiket: Per luchtpost, Par avion

Service II – 1939 Amsterdam – Manchester – Liverpool

16-04 / 31-08 Amsterdam – (Doncaster) – Manchester – Liverpool v.v. [visa versa] week days [service order] 859

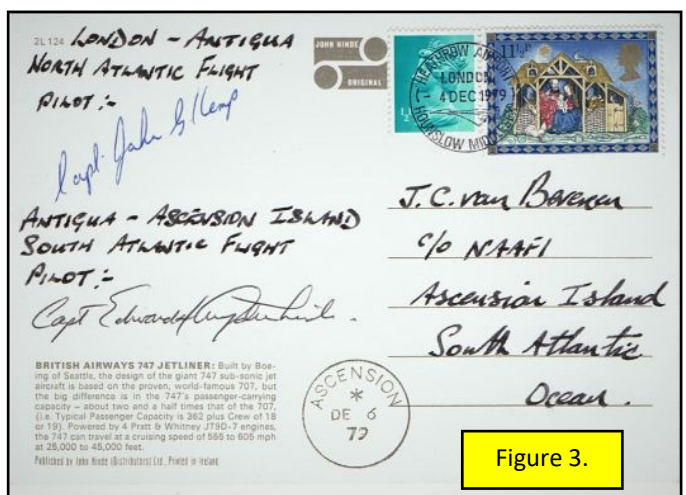
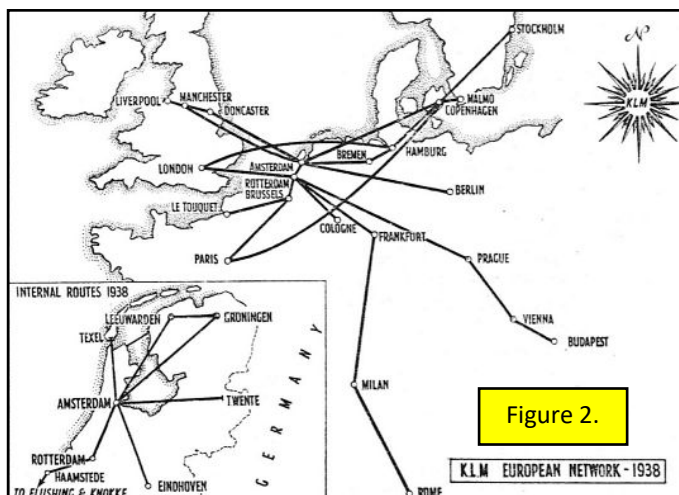
Sending: Letters and parcel post for North of England, Scotland, Northern Ireland and the Isle of Man. Without exception the letters and postcards, all items must be seen to have an etiquette : Per Luchtpost / Par Avion.

It was alleged in the previous “*Air Mail News*” that the well-known collector Capt. Smye was apt to enhance his air mail covers, an accusation new to me. What is known to many Dutch collectors is, that our erstwhile ultra right wing “Wheeler Dealer” *Thoolen* was very much of that ilk, with many serious collectors not wishing to touch his airmailed offerings with a very long Dutch barge pole.

What the cover shown to us by Richard Beith and Ray Welland, which is purporting to be a first flight from Rotterdam to Manchester, would seem to be a cover taken with the second or rather third flight from Amsterdam to Manchester, having the arrival date in Manchester of the 18th April. [This would have been the resumption] of those summer flights for the year 1939, the first one being two days before on the 16th April according to TSchroots.

The **ROTTERDAM – WAALHAVEN** handstamp and date stamp at 14.00 hrs. on the 17th April would indicate that it was to catch the following day’s plane on the 18th April to the U.K. from Schipol, Amsterdam. So this was most definitely not a first flight cover for 1939. Notice too that there is no evidence of the statutory air mail label on the cover that was shown us.

I am conscious myself of contrivance. On a posting in 1979 to the remote island of Ascension in the South Atlantic, and on several postcards I sent from London to the island, (see the illustration No. 337 in Frans van Beveren’s book “*Introducing Combi-Mail Aeropostal History*”, and you will see what I mean). I had the postcards, Figure 3.), cancelled at the Heathrow P.O. counter, asked for them back and after having the pilot of the British Airways Boeing 747 to St. John, Antigua sign the postcard, also asked the pilot of the C.141 MAC night flight from there to Ascension do the same. I then had the postcards date stamped on arrival by George, the Post Master in Georgetown. Again, tut-tut, no air mail etiquette!



The map, Figure 2, shows the internal and U.K. KLM routes from 1938 onwards until the outbreak of war with Germany in September the following year and is taken from Roy Allen’s book, ‘*Pictorial History of KLM Royal Dutch Airlines*.’ [Editor: I hope Julian has not contravened copyright rules through sending this!]. It can be seen there was no direct connection from Rotterdam to the North of England by the airline, albeit an internal one between Rotterdam and Amsterdam, though the cover here could just as well have gone surface from Rotterdam to Amsterdam, Schipol after cancelling.”

Editor: We thank Julian for this explanation, and in particular, for warning us about the confection devised by the Hague dealer G.A.G. Thoolen. As an avid collector of Balkan air mail covers, I very quickly became aware that putative first flight covers prepared by Thoolen and sent from the Netherlands to Romania or Bulgaria, were not what they at first seemed to be. In the pre-war years air service to the Balkans was seasonal and he tried to sell covers sent the resumption of service in early spring, advertising these as ‘first flight’ covers which clearly they were not.

A.550. More on Jamaican BSAA First Flight Covers.

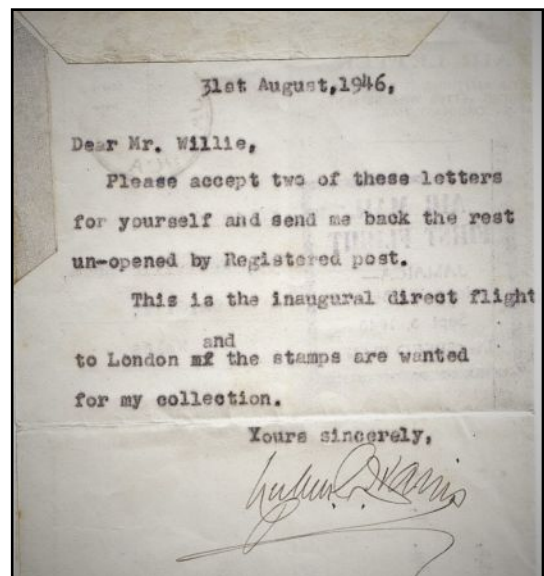
Herbert Lealman showed a BSAA first flight cover via “Speed Man” sent Kingston (Jamaica) – Hamilton, Bermuda on the inauguration of the route to London September 5th, 1946. Herbert asked if anyone could report the existence of a first flight BSAA cover from Bermuda? Your Editor is not sure that our members have understood this question, but Herbie’s query has certainly generated some correspondence:

First, **Richard Beith** has written: “Q.550: Yes, I have seen a probable Jamaica – Bermuda BSAA First Flight cover. This was illustrated in my 2004 monograph ‘*British South American Airways 1946 – 1949*’, page 22. Unfortunately, only a black & white illustration with an overlap from the cover above, but I enclose a scan from the monograph for what it’s worth. (*Editor:* in view of what has been sent in from other contributors I have decided not to reproduce that provided by Richard). It has the same boxed cachet and is franked 1s. 3d. I added a comment (overfranked?). Unfortunately there was no backstamp of receipt, hence my use of *probable* above.

As to the franking of Herbert’s cover, did the OHMS inscription cover the postage?

For the record I had sold all my BSAA collection by 2012, mostly through the May 2012 BAMS auction. Unlike my earlier volumes on Scottish Airmails and LATI, the BSAA text is still in print; A4 64 pages, some colour illustrations, (£15.00 inc. P & P – queries to randmcorum@btinternet.com)”

Secondly, **John W. Smith** has written to us from Lichfield to say that he has a similar air mail letter (the first flight Jamaica via Bermuda to the U.K.) which he acquired on eBay in 2014. John’s cover is correctly cancelled with a first flight cachet and annotated ‘Via “Speed Man”’. The cover itself is addressed to Wales, franked 6d. and cancelled 4th September 1946.



John’s air letter (aerogramme) contains the following message:

“Dear Mr. Willie, Please accept two of these letters for yourself and send back the rest unopened by registered post. This is the inaugural flight to London and the stamps are wanted for my collection.

Yours sincerely, Herbert Harris.

Dated Kingston 31st August 1946.

Julian van Beveren wrote on the 21st February:

"I rather hope that I will not be the only respondent to Herbert Lealman's question as it would be terrific to see lurking in someone's collection an example of the B.S.A.A. September flight of SPEED MAN from Bermuda. I have never seen one.

I fear that Herbie's conjecture having consulted his two Bermuda catalogues that there is unlikely to be an example is probably true, but you can never say never. If there is such an example from the B.S.A.A. inaugural flight it would be a very exceptional SPEED BIRD indeed.



My own example is also a Jamaican version flown to the UK as shown and is dated a day earlier, KINGSTON – JAMAICA SE 3 / 46 with the similar framed commemorative cachet on the reverse."

Editor: these three covers don't tell us what the correct air mail postage rate Jamaica to G.B. was in 1946. Richard Beith's cover was franked 1s. 3d., Julian van Beveren's cover was franked 2s. 2d., whereas John Smith's aerogramme was franked only 6d. What was your cover franked at, Herbert?

Q. 551. A Basel – Cherbourg Supplementary North Atlantic Catapult Connection?

John Smith has asked we place the following:

"I have a modest collection of North Atlantic Catapult Mail, including items flown from Köln to Cherbourg on the supplementary feeder service.

It is reported that due to delays with the Swiss mail, a service Basel to Cherbourg was proposed and reference is made on page 44, (K.37) of Graue & Lederer's excellent book.

Mention is also made in Stanley-Smith's book "*The North Atlantic Catapult*" page 131 :- "*The Swiss looked independently at a Basel to Cherbourg courier using the Swiss contractor Balair who organised a flight July 10th 1930 to Cherbourg connecting with the Bremen on the point of her sailing.*"

I would be interested to learn if this did in fact take place, how much mail was carried and were any special cachets employed. The dates also seem slightly suspect as there doesn't seem to have been a Bremen sailing to compliment the 10th July date above.

I have never seen a cover carried on this route. Hopefully one of our members will be able to cast some light on the subject."

Q. 552. What was the reason for this KGV ½d. Stamp?

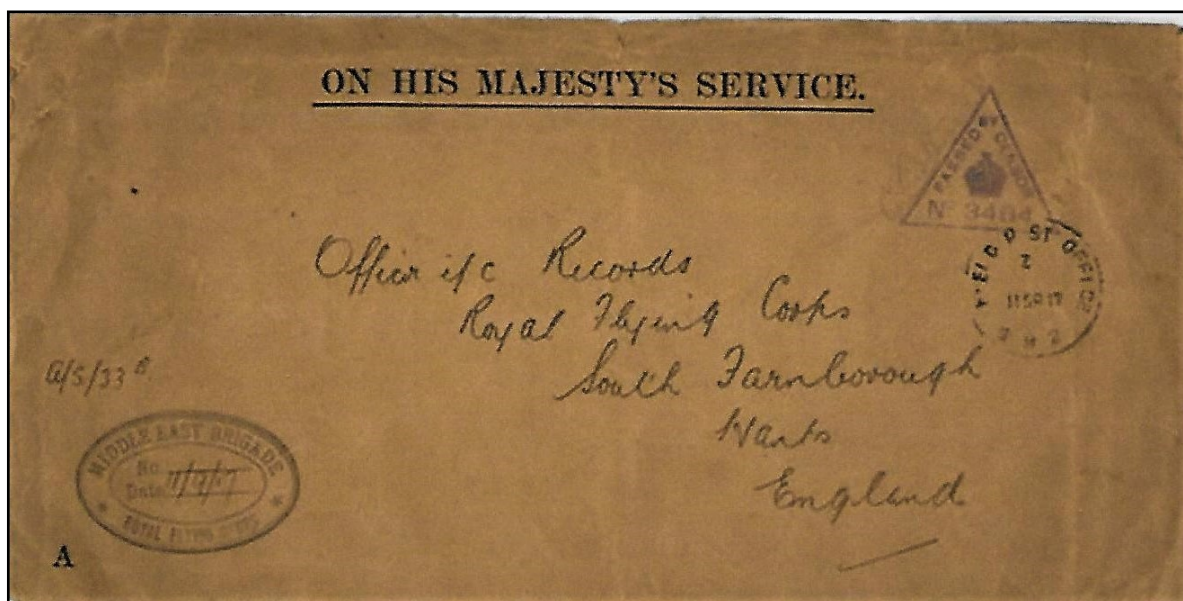
Christian Alberto Hiza has a first night flight cover Berlin to London 1st May 1929. Upon arrival at Sutton Coldfield, England a ½d definitive stamp was applied and cancelled at 11.45 PM on 2nd May. Christian would like to know what this apparent charge was for? (Cover illustrated next page)



Q. 553. Was this World War I Cover partially flown within Egypt?

Chris Lake writes:

"I recently purchased a cover with the Middle East Brigade of the Royal Flying Corps dated 11 September 1917. It has a Field Post Office GM2 Z c.d.s., which I believe to be the HQ of the Royal Flying Corps at the Savoy Hotel in Cairo. The cover is addressed to England, but according to Alexander Newall's *"British External Airmails until 1934"* ref. 16.02, it



may have been partially flown within Egypt. I am trying to find out whether this particular cover could have been flown, the departure point and destination.

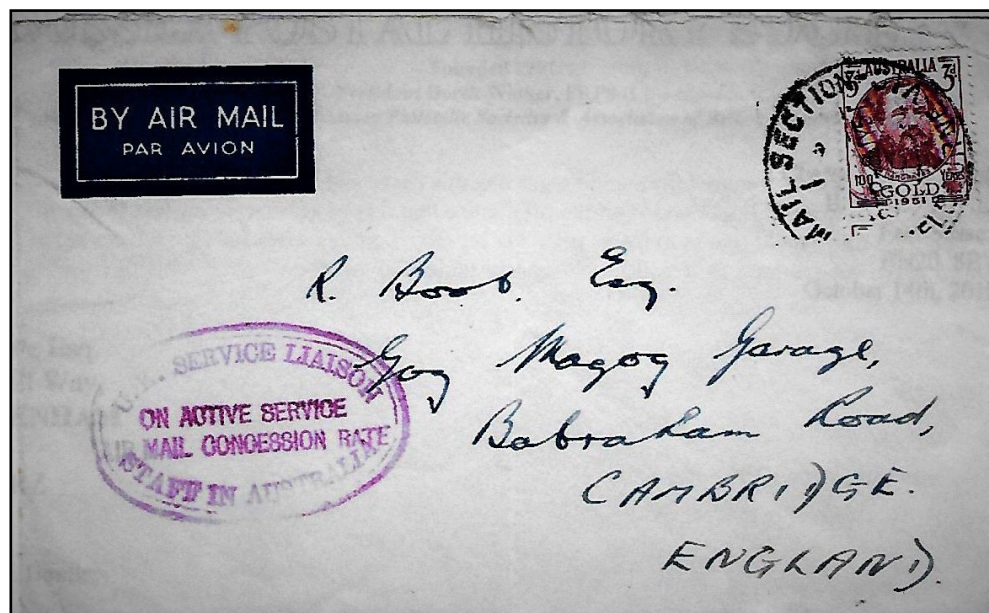
I would be very grateful if anyone can provide any information about this cover or point me in the right direction. Many thanks."

[Editor: there is no ref. 16.02 in my copy of Alex Newall's book]

Q. 554. Information Requested concerning this Australian Air Mail Cover.

At the October meeting of the BAMS South Coast Group in October, a guest at that meeting, **Lionel Jones**, (former Deputy Curator for Philately at the National Postal Museum, London, and currently Secretary of the Sussex Postal History Society) brought a cover, the property of a friend, asking members present at that meeting to help explain it. It is a sad reflection on those who run our society and on particular members and officers of BAMS, that this query should only reach me in February, together with a scan of the cover, far too late for inclusion of Lionel's friend's cover in the February issue. We will let this matter 'pass under the bridge' for now, but suffice to say it is the Editor's responsibility and nobody else to decide what should or should not appear in this magazine, not others who, using misplaced superior knowledge, decide the cover or query is not worthy of inclusion in the pages of this journal!

The cover in question bearing an air mail etiquette was posted from Melbourne, Victoria on 8th July 1951 but was only franked using a 3d. postage stamp. There is also an oval cachet: "U.K. SERVICE LIAISON / ON ACTIVE SERVICE MAIL CONCESSION RATE / STAFF IN AUSTRALIA". There is no arrival date stamp for Cambridge, England. (Incidentally this Editor remembers patronising the Gog Magog Garage over forty years ago when he resided in Cambridge. It has probably long since gone?)



Possibly this is a common run-of-the-mill cover, but what was the Forces Concessionary rate in 1951? Does the cachet carry official weight in Commonwealth countries?

If any reader would like to acquire this cover, please make enquiries directly to L Jones, 2 Cherry Garden Road, Eastbourne, East Sussex BN20 8EY. (Lionel Jones does not use the internet!)

OPENING THE CURTAIN A LITTLE MORE OVER MOÇAMBIQUE MAIL.

By David Lee.

I was fortunate recently in acquiring the cover shown in Figure 1. It was posted in the town of Mozambique at 08.00 hrs. on Monday 14th January 1935 and endorsed by the Portuguese postal authorities with the cachet in Figure 1a stating "VIA BROKEN HILL / IMPERIAL AIRWAYS". The flight by SNAeM (or Regie Malgache) from Tananarive to Broken Hill arrived the night of Sunday 13th January in Mozambique and left the next morning for Tete via Quelimane. It arrived in Broken Hill on Wednesday 16th January from Tete and the cover was taken on board Imperial Airways flight AN204 to Croydon. It was off-loaded in Paris on Thursday 24th January 1935.

Peter Wingent's article '*Portuguese East Africa – Airmail Services 1932 to 1939*' published in *Air Mail News* of February 2014 (provided as an 'extra' in the CD version, but not included in the hard copy version) gave me some information and I wrote to him asking – as usual – for some help which – as usual – he willingly provided. He drew my attention to another article he had written '*The First Air Mail from Moçambique via SNAM*' published in the August 2013 issue of *Air Mail News*, (Vol. 56, No. 222, pp.18-22). Both articles assisted me greatly in understanding my cover, but I have taken my examination a bit further and record these below for anyone who has struggled with these covers as I have.



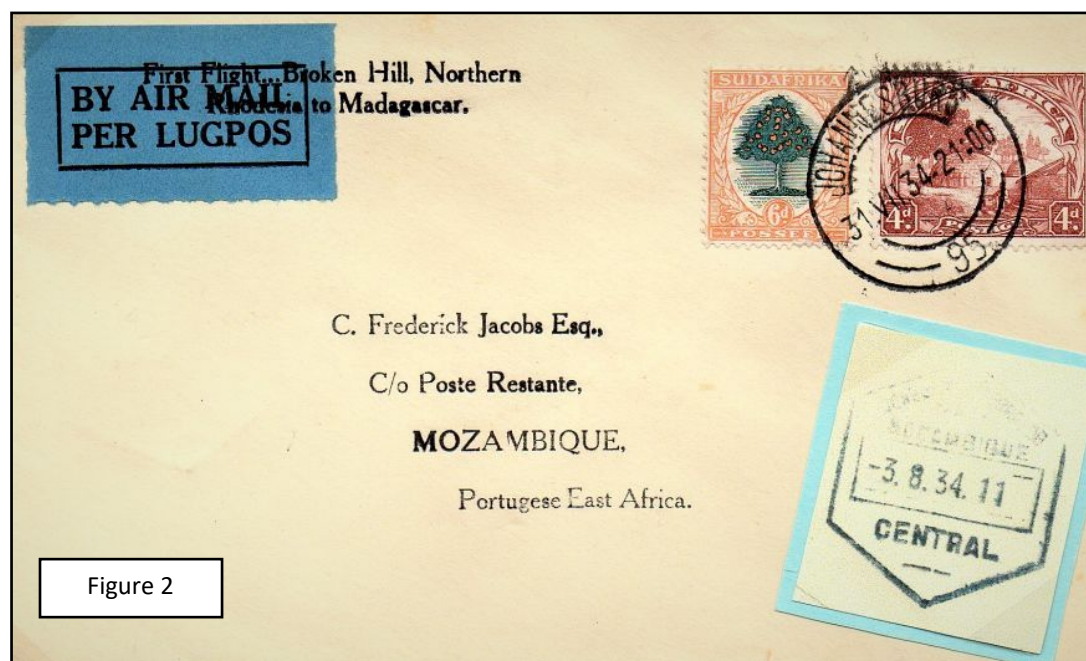
Figure 1.

Figure 1A. →

1. The Cost of Postage on the SNAeM Route. The following facts are relevant –
 - (a) As explained in the February 2014 article, the cover in Figure 1 was charged a basic postal rate to Europe (1Esc80c) plus an air mail surcharge of 1gf47 per 15gm. – gf meaning ‘gold franc’.
 - (b) There was considerable instability in foreign exchange rates between 1930 and 1934 and the Bank of International Settlements (established in 1930 to assist central banks) had initiated the gold franc with a value fixed at 0.290322 ounces of fine gold in 1930.
 - (c) In 1935 the value of gold continued to be set at US\$35 an ounce. The gold franc was therefore valued at ($\$35 \times 0.290322 =$) \$10.16. The air mail surcharge of 1gf47 was therefore $\$10.16 \times 1.47 = \$14.94$, say, \$15.
 - (d) In 1935 the French franc was traded at 15fr. to the US dollar. The gold franc cost was therefore $15\text{fr} \times \$15 = 225$ francs. This compared with 4fr per 5 gm. paid in Madagascar for air mail via Broken Hill to Europe = 8fr on this cover weighing 8 grams.

I read ‘somewhere’ that there was ‘surprise’ at how few covers carried by SNAeM from Moçambique had survived and the ‘wastage rate’ was considered higher than usual. I would suggest that the reason these covers are hard to find is more likely because it was too expensive to use the SNAeM route.
2. Dates of First ‘Official’ Despatch on the SNAeM Route.
 - (a) Mail from Madagascar was carried on the flight that left Tananarive on 28th July 1934 but no arrangements had been concluded for carrying mail from Moçambique and the first ‘official’ mail from the colony was on the 20th August. Even so, a letter postmarked 13th August 1934 in Mozambique is proved to have been carried by the earlier flight as explained in Peter Wingent’s article published in August 2013. The air mail surcharge was 1gf47 = \$15.
 - (b) Without an agreement, mail into Moçambique should presumably have been similarly delayed. The two articles on the SNAeM service do not mention mail into the colony although in his book *‘Movements of Aircraft on Imperial Airways African Route’* Peter Wingent does add a note to flight AN178 that this carried mail from South Africa to connect with the first Broken Hill – Tananarive service departing Broken Hill on 2nd. August. He has

not said, however, that this mail did actually connect and was flown, but the cover shown in Figure 2 does show that it did.



I have written this in the hope that it may stimulate readers to add their own knowledge or conclusions about this service so that we all may better understand what went on. The practice of ‘etiquette franking’ to show the air mail surcharge – and from 18th July 1937 the total postage cost – continued until 13th March 1938 so examples should have survived. There also remain questions asked in the two articles already published in *Air Mail News* –

1. Has anyone obtained an authentic record of Moçambique postal rates?
2. If there are other covers of this period in readers’ collections, please could scans be produced with clarification about the value of the postage stamps and the gold franc cost of each. Also, could the town of posting and any postmarks be explained with identification of the use of the cachet shown in Figure 1a above.

—oOo—

INSUFFICIENTLY PREPAID AIR MAIL, 1930 – 1940

by Peter Wingent.

This article was first published in the December 2004 (Issue 26) of the “Imperial Airways Gazette”, pp. 2-14.

Introduction.

Until I conducted some research at Post Office Archives in London, now named “Heritage Services” I believe: a name I cannot feel comfortable using, I had always thought that insufficiently prepaid air mail was charged double the deficiency and it was as simple as that. My findings at P.O. Archives yielded a rather more involved story and one which I hope you will find provides added interest to the collection of such material.

In this short study I intend to describe the rules governing the handling of insufficiently prepaid air mail, both as laid down by the U.P.U. and by the U.K. Post Office, the application of these rules and the ‘special agreements’ incorporated within them. In addition, examples of covers transmitted both by air and those diverted to surface transport and their associated markings will be described.

Background.

The rules governing all facets of international postal services were laid down by the U.P.U. These rules were reviewed and modifications were made to them where necessary at Congresses which were held every five years. The following Congresses were held during the period of this study:

Stockholm Congress (1924) Rules applicable from 1 October 1925.

London Congress (1929)	Rules applicable from 1 July 1930.
Cairo Congress (1934)	Rules applicable from 1 January 1935.
Buenos Aires Congress (1939)	Rules applicable from 1 July 1940.

(unadopted by many countries due to war)

Rules Governing Insufficiently Prepaid Air Mail

(applicable from 1 July 1930): Procedures prescribed under Articles 3(6) and 4(2) of the Air Post Annex:

Insufficiently prepaid air mail correspondence can only be sent by air when the amount prepaid is at least the total air fee.

Correspondence cannot be taxed in respect of deficient air fees.

Air mail correspondence can only be taxed up to the limit of double the ordinary postage payable on the article taxed.

Procedure described under Article 5 of the Convention and Article 28 of the Air Post Annex:

Administrations can mutually agree to vary the treatment accorded to underpaid air mail items.

Perhaps some elucidation of these rules is necessary at this point.

In the early 1930s, some administrations charged combined air fees and some charged ordinary postage, plus an air fee. For instance, combined air fees were introduced in Britain on 23rd February 1931 and thus when determining whether or not the air fee was fully prepaid on a cover, it is necessary to deduct the ordinary postage from the air fee. For example, the air mail rate to South Africa in January 1932 was 1s. 0d. per ½ ounce and the ordinary rate to South Africa was 1½d. for the first ounce. Thus a cover weighing up to ½ ounce franked between 10½d. and 11½d., although underpaid, could be transmitted by air because the full air fee (10½d.) had been paid. If franked below 10½d., the cover should have been diverted to surface mail. The problem with combined fees is that the ordinary postage and air fees were never advertised as separate items.

On the other hand, administrations such as India and Egypt applied a system of charging an air fee plus ordinary postage throughout the 1930s and so it is easier to determine whether or not the full air fee on a cover was prepaid because both the ordinary postage and the air fees were advertised as separate items.

The fourth bullet point above is important because the U.K. Post Office made reciprocal arrangements with many of the postal administrations of British Colonies and Dominions under the provisions of this clause.

Mutual Agreements Between the U.K. Post Office and British Colonies and Dominions.

Between 1931 and 1936 reciprocal agreements to vary the treatment of insufficiently prepaid air mail items were reached between the U.K. Post Office and many British Colonies and Dominions. These agreements were made under the terms of the London Congress as stated above and were introduced initially on an experimental basis. Following careful monitoring by the U.K. Post Office, they remained in force.

The three main provisions to vary the treatment of underpaid air mail items were as follows:

Insufficiently prepaid air mail correspondence to be forwarded by air, provided that at least some portion of the air fee is prepaid, double the deficiency being collected from the addressee

A letter refused by the addressee to be returned to the sender for payment of the amount due.

Letters paid at the ordinary rate of postage, or less, to continue as previously to be sent by surface transport.

The first such agreement was implemented between the U.K. Post Office and the India P.O. in July 1931. The next, with some of the African administrations, was made in June 1932 and then followed agreements with other administrations, all with the same conditions. A full listing is given below:

1 July 1931:	India.
1 June 1932:	Uganda; Kenya; Tanganyika; Northern & Southern Rhodesia; South Africa.
1 July 1933:	The Sudan.
1 January 1933:	Australia & Ceylon.
Circa January 1933:	Iraq & Palestine.

Circa March 1933: Malaya; Sarawak; British North Borneo; Brunei.

1 March 1933: Nyasaland.

January 1934: Zanzibar.

1

Egypt refused the U.K. offer of the reciprocal agreement. In a letter dated 11th November 1932, the P.M.G., Cairo gave the following reasons:

"... This Administration applies the disposition of para. 2. Art 4 of the Air Mail Convention stipulating that such correspondence may only be forwarded by air mail if the amount prepaid is sufficient to cover the total amount of the air fee.

I would point out that it seems to me very difficult or rather impossible to collect the double of the deficiency in postage from the senders, in case the correspondence is not delivered to the addressees, as the senders may be unknown or refuse to pay the amount claimed.

In the circumstances, this Administration regrets its inability to adhere to the proposed arrangement."

The Dutch East Indies and Siam also refused the U.K. offer and continued to apply strictly the U.P.U. rules. It should be noted that The Sudan interpreted the U.K. offer slightly differently and forwarded all except totally unpaid items by air from 1 July 1932, apparently without question from the British Post Office.

A question which bothers me, and one to which I have not found a satisfactory answer is, whilst these agreements were made between the U.K. Post Office and all the administrations listed above, did these administrations make similar agreements between themselves? I have only found three pieces of documentary evidence concerning this and they hardly begin to provide a full answer.

Firstly, in a letter dated 13th August 1935, the India Post Office Deputy Director General, writing to the U.K. Post Office said, *"I am to say that the existing arrangement with the British Post Office under which air mail articles prepaid with full postage and a part of the air fee are forwarded by air was introduced as a special measure for the convenience of the public of both our countries when no such arrangement existed between India and any other country."* [underlining added by the writer for emphasis]. This makes clear the position of India, but

The second piece of evidence comes from Post Office Notice No. 22, dated 7th June 1935, published in the Southern Rhodesia Government Gazette, including the statement that, *".....insufficiently prepaid air mail correspondence destined for the United Kingdom, Northern and Southern Rhodesia, Tanganyika Territory, Kenya, Uganda, Nyasaland and the Union of South Africa is, if prepaid at more than the ordinary postage, forwarded by air mail and double the deficiency collected from the addressee."* Thus the Southern Rhodesia Post Office has apparently made arrangements with the administrations listed in this Notice.

Finally, the South African Post Office, in a letter to the U.K. Post Office, dated 9th May 1932, accepting the initial agreement, included a final paragraph reading, *"It is desired to make similar arrangements with the remaining countries on the South African air route and I shall be glad therefore if you will advise me of the result of your negotiations thereon."* I have no further evidence to show if and when South Africa made such arrangements but I think it likely it did, particularly with Southern Rhodesia, in view of the P.O. Notice above.

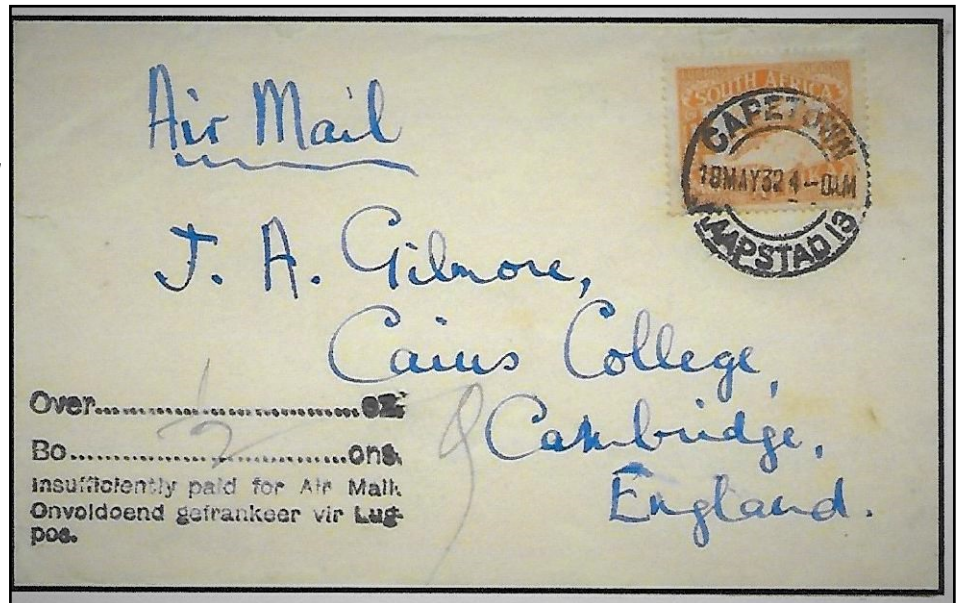
Overall, a very unsatisfactory answer to my question!



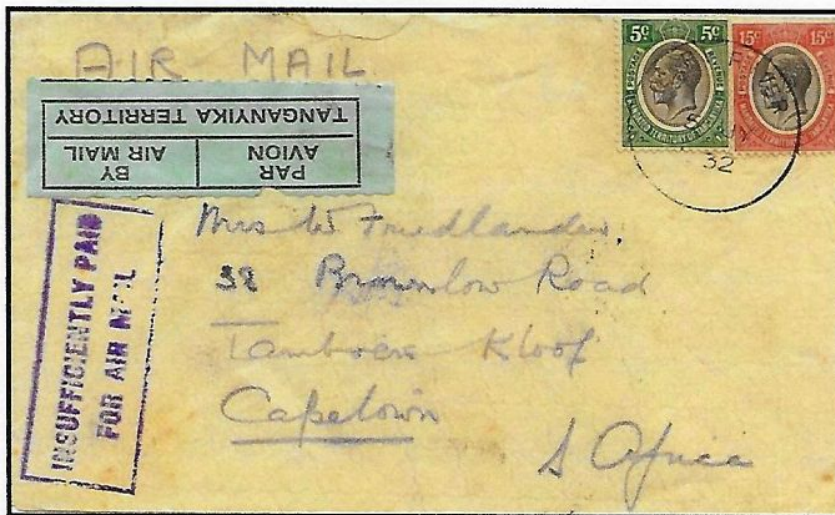
Examples of Insufficiently Prepaid Air Mail Prior to the First Mutual Agreement.

The cover is franked 35 mil. which paid the air fee in full, the rate from The Sudan to India being 15 mil. per 15 gm. (Khartoum to Cairo) + 20 mil. per 15 gm. (Cairo to Karachi). The additional 10 mil. per 15 gm. ordinary postage was not paid. Thus the boxed "T" mark was applied in Khartoum and the "DUE" handstamp in Karachi, 2 annas deficiency being charged. Because the air fee was fully paid the cover was flown: African service AN11 to Cairo, then Eastern service IE114 to Karachi, where the purple bars cancelling the label was applied, then it was sent by train to Simla.

The cover was prepaid 1s. 0d. but because it weighed over ½ ounce, it should have been franked 2s. 0d. (of which 1s. 10d. was the air fee). It was posted on 18 May 1932: just 12 days before the introduction of the mutual agreement between the U.K. and S. Africa. Because the air fee was not fully prepaid, the bilingual cachet was applied by the Cape Town post office and the cover was diverted to surface route (Union-Castle steamer). Had it been posted on or after 1 June 1932, it would have been transmitted by air.



Examples of Insufficiently Prepaid Air Mail Following the First Mutual Agreement.



This cover is franked 20 cents, this being only the ordinary Empire postage rate (for the first ounce) and as no part of the air mail fee was paid, the "INSUFFICIENTLY PAID FOR AIR MAIL" cachet was applied. It is backstamped Mbeya 6 July and Dar es Salaam 13th. Instead of being flown from Mbeya by service AS70, which arrived Cape Town on the 11th., it was correctly diverted to surface route, i.e. sent by train to Dar es Salaam and then by ship to Cape Town.

From 1 November 1933 to 26 November 1934, the air mail rate from South Africa to the U.K. was 10d. per ½ ounce. The Port Elizabeth post office applied the manuscript "Above ½ oz" and the octagonal "T/centimes" with "160" inserted in red. The cover is franked 1s. 0d. but because it weighed over half an ounce, it should have been franked 1s. 8d. Thus double the deficiency was 16d. and, as 10 gold centimes = 1d., the "1s/4d F.B." handstamp and 1s. 4d. postage due stamps were applied upon arrival in London.



Date-stamped Port Elizabeth, 8 Jan 1934, the cover was sent by train to Cape Town to connect with service AN149, operated by AW XV Artemis, which departed Cape Town on the 10th but returned with engine trouble. It departed again on the 11th. and arrived Croydon to schedule on the 20th.

Gold Francs and Centimes: An International Postal Currency.

A brief background to the introduction and the use of the gold centime is appropriate at this point. My source of information for the first paragraph is a very useful book by Michael Furfie.¹

In the 1920s and 30s charges raised on insufficiently prepaid mail were expressed in gold centimes, which was a *notional* currency used by all members of the U.P.U. Prior to WW1, standard international postage rates and charges were specified in franc currency, as used by France, Switzerland, Belgium, *etc.* Following the end of the war, several European currencies, including the French franc, became devalued and unstable. At the U.P.U. Congress held at Madrid in 1920, the U.P.U. replaced it with a currency called the "gold franc." By the time of the 1924 U.P.U. Congress, held in Stockholm, most currencies had been stabilised and this Congress defined the gold franc as having the value of 9/31 (0.2903225) grams of pure gold.

So far as insufficiently prepaid international air mail covers are concerned, the practice followed was that the dispatching office calculated the amount of deficiency in their own currency, doubled it and then converted the amount into gold centimes. They then applied a "T" handstamp and wrote the figure in manuscript next to it. The receiving office would convert the gold centimes figure into their own currency and raise the charge by applying postage due stamps of the appropriate value. That's the theory anyway! Evidence from existing covers shows that quite often charges were not raised by dispatching countries on obviously underpaid items and also receiving countries failed to raise charges on items clearly marked as underpaid by the dispatching countries.

The challenge for the collector when checking if insufficiently prepaid charges are correct on an item is to know the conversion rates from gold centimes to the currencies of the countries concerned. The list below is far from complete. If readers know of any other conversion rates, please send them for future publication.

Country	Conversion	Country	Conversion
Great Britain	1d. = 10 gold centimes	K.U.T.	5 cents = 6 gold centimes
South Africa		Zanzibar	3 cents = 5 gold centimes
N. & S Rhodesia		Mauritius	4 cents = 5 gold centimes
Australia		India	1 anna = 10 gold centimes
Egypt	2 mils. = 5 gold centimes	U.S.A.	1 cent = 5 gold centimes
The Sudan		Iraq *	3 annas = 25 gold centimes

* Iraq changed currency from Annas & Rupees to Fils & Dinars on 1 April 1932. Conversion rate for Fils not known by writer.



Cover is date-stamped Boston, Mass., 15 March 1936, backstamped Cape Town 6 April. It is franked at the correct 27 cents per 1/2ounce air mail fee for carriage by air from London, but the 5 cents for the first ounce ordinary postage was not paid. It was transmitted by air because the full air fee was paid, as per U.P.U. rules. At New York the "T_{N.Y.}" and "CENTIMES" handstamps were applied

with "50" added in manuscript. As one U.S. dollar = 5 gold centimes, the "50" represents double the deficiency and as 10 gold centimes = 1d., the "50" handstamp and stamps for the correct postage due of 5d. were applied at Cape Town. Cover sent by sea to the U.K., then flown by service AS 330 to Johannesburg, then S.A.A. to Cape Town.

U.K. Post Office Rules Governing the Treatment of Insufficiently Prepaid Air Mail.

The following rules are contained in “*Rules for Offices of Exchange, 1932*,”⁽²⁾ held at Post Office Archives, London. (Offices of Exchange are those offices which pass British mail to foreign postal administrations and receive incoming mail from them):

“AIR MAILS

258. Surcharges. – *Unpaid and insufficiently prepaid air mail correspondence must be treated as follows:-*

(a) *An article entirely unpaid must be treated as an ordinary article and surcharged and forwarded by ordinary mail, or returned to the sender in accordance with the rules applicable to ordinary correspondence. If forwarded by ordinary mail all air mail markings must be obliterated by means of two transverse strokes.*

(b) *In the absence of instructions to the contrary and insufficiently prepaid unregistered article, on which the amount prepaid represents at least (*) the amount of the air fee (which is arrived at by deducting the appropriate amount of postage at the rate for the country in question from the combined postage and air fee) must be surcharged double the deficiency and forwarded by air mail. If, however, the amount prepaid is less than the air fee so calculated, the article must be diverted to the ordinary mail, surcharged, if necessary, in respect of any deficiency in postage.”*

(*) In December 1934 this rule was modified by deleting the words, “represents at least” and substituting, “represents 25 per cent at least of.” (This will be explained under the next sub-heading).

“(c) *An insufficiently prepaid registered article which has been accepted for registration as well as for transmission by air mail, and on which the amount paid is sufficient to cover the air fee, must be forwarded by air mail without surcharge and the deficiency collected by means of form O.E.1000.”*

In May 1935 this rule was deleted and replaced by the following:

“(c) *An insufficiently prepaid registered article which has been accepted for registration as well as transmission by air mail must be forwarded by air mail without surcharge, but postage stamps representing the amount of the deficiency must be affixed to the packet and cancelled before dispatch, the value of the stamps so affixed must be entered on form P.429H. The irregularity must be reported on form O.E.13.”*

“(d) *When an unpaid or insufficiently paid article is diverted to the ordinary mail, all air mail markings must be cancelled by means of two thick transverse strokes.*

(e) *The air mail fee and postage on all air mail correspondence posted in this country must be prepaid in British stamps. If the air fee is prepaid in stamps of another country, the figure (0) must be written against the stamps – see Rule 174 – and the air mail indications must be obliterated by means of two transverse strokes and the article must be treated and circulated as an article dispatched by ordinary mail.”*

Further general rules relating to surcharges applied to both surface and air mail. These were as follows:

“SURCHARGES – GENERAL

171. Surcharges, where to be raised. *In general, surcharges must be raised only at the office of exchange which actually dispatches the correspondence to or receives it from an office of exchange abroad. Correspondence in transit must not be marked in this country for taxation.*

172. Examination of correspondence. – *Under the terms of the Postal Union Convention, it is the duty of the administration of origin to mark for taxation unpaid or insufficiently prepaid correspondence. It is, however, not necessary to make a special examination of the mails to detect such correspondence, but articles observed to be unpaid or insufficiently prepaid during the ordinary sorting or examination of outward or inward mails must be put aside for the appropriate treatment.*

SURCHARGES – OUTWARD

176. Amount of surcharge. – *The surcharge on unpaid or insufficiently prepaid correspondence when due to be forwarded is **double** the amount of the deficient postage, with a minimum surcharge of 1d. (10 gold centimes). [The minimum surcharge was changed to ½d. (5 gold centimes) in December 1934].*

177. Computation of charge. – *On correspondence taxed at double the deficiency, the deficiency in pence multiplied by 20 gives in gold centimes the amount of the surcharge to be marked on the packet.*

178. Marking the surcharge. – *Surcharged correspondence must be impressed with the “T” stamp and the amount of the surcharge in gold francs and centimes must be indicated in legible figures placed in the upper right-hand corner of the cover.”*

“SURCHARGES – INWARD.

186. Rates of postage. – *The rates of postage for all classes of correspondence sent to the United Kingdom are shown on form P.114E. This form must be corrected from the notices which appear from time to time in the Post Office Circular and must be used in calculating surcharges on unpaid and insufficiently prepaid articles from abroad.*”

[Form P.114E gave, as well as rates and weight steps, the equivalents in centimes of the minimum letter rates. It would be an invaluable tool for many postal historians but, unfortunately, it cannot be found in Post Office Archives.]

“187. Units of weight. – *The unit of weight adopted by every country for correspondence dispatched to the United Kingdom will be found on form P.114E. It is important to notice that a single letter rate from abroad may be overweight though weighing less than 1 oz. (i.e. between 20 grammes and 28.3465 grammes) and so on for subsequent rates. This fact will be found to explain many complaints as to surcharges raised on correspondence from abroad.*

188. Articles which do not bear the “T” stamp must be treated as fully paid unless there is an obvious error. In the case of correspondence from countries using the decimal-metric system of weight, if a letter prepaid as for 20 grammes is not marked by the office of origin for taxation, a charge for insufficient prepayment must not be raised in this country provided the letter does not weigh more than one ounce.

190. Conversion of surcharge. – *On all inward correspondence marked for taxation, the surcharge indicated in gold centimes by the office of origin must be converted into pence at the rate of 10 gold centimes = 1d. In making the conversion, remainders must be dealt with as follows: 1 or 2 centimes, ignored; 3 to 7 inclusive treated as ½d.; 8 or 9 treated as 1d.*

195. Registered articles. – *Unpaid or insufficiently paid registered articles must be surcharged in the same way as unregistered articles, account being taken of the registration fee as well as the postage.”*

This rule was changed to the following in December 1934:

“195. Registered articles. – *Unpaid or insufficiently paid registered articles must be charged with the amount of the single deficiency, account being taken of the registration fee as well as the postage, or as indicated by the country of origin.”*

Rules Governing Insufficiently Prepaid Air Mail, Cairo Congress

(applicable from 1 January 1935):

The regulations prescribed by the London Congress (as stated above in the current presentation) were embodied in the rules of the Cairo Congress but an important addition to them was made under Article 5(2):

Administrations of origin may forward correspondence by air if the charges prepaid represent at least 25 per cent at least of the amount of the air mail fee.

It should be noted that this clause provided administrations with the option of forwarding underpaid mail by air but it did not require them to do so.

Renewal of the Mutual Agreements Between the U.K. Post Office and British Colonies and Dominions.

On 8th November 1934, prior to the implementation of the Rules of the Cairo Congress, the U.K. Post office wrote to all the administrations with which it had made special reciprocal agreements between 1931 and 1934 (see list given above) extracts of which follow:

“As you are aware, Article 5(2) of the Cairo Convention, which comes into operation on the 1st of January next, provides that administrations of origin have the option of forwarding insufficiently prepaid air mail correspondence by air if the amount of the charges prepaid represents at least 25% of the amount of the air fee.

The Postmaster General proposes to exercise the option in the case of air correspondence for countries with which no reciprocal arrangement, such as exists between our two administrations is in force. He is, however, anxious that the reciprocal agreement, and the reciprocal arrangements which have been concluded with many other administrations, should continue in operation after the 1st of January next without modification and he trusts that you will feel able to agree with this course.”

During November and December affirmative replies were received from all administrations concerned, with the exception of the Indian Post Office.

The Indian Post Office Declines the Offer to Renew the Reciprocal Arrangement.

Although the U.K. offer was made in a letter dated 8th November 1934, the Indian Post Office did not respond until the 13th August 1935. In a letter of that date, the Deputy Director General of the Indian Posts and Telegraphs Department wrote to the G.P.O., London, saying:

"I am to say that the existing arrangement with the British Post Office under which air mail articles prepaid with the full postage and a part of the air fee are forwarded by air was introduced as a special measure for the convenience of the public of both our countries when no such agreement existed between India and any other country. The position has changed with the coming into force of the new provision in Article 5 (2) of the Air Mail Convention of Cairo. This administration now proposes to make reciprocal arrangements with Empire countries for the exercise of the option allowed by Article 5(2). When this arrangement is made with other countries air mail articles on which the charges prepaid represent at least 25% of the air mail fee can be forwarded by air. The continuance of the existing arrangement with the British Post Office will thus put the public of both our countries at a disadvantage in the matter of exchange of insufficiently prepaid air mail articles between India and the United Kingdom as compared with the proposed arrangement between India and other Empire countries.

The Director General would therefore be obliged if the British Post Office will reconsider the question and agree to a reciprocal arrangement for the exercise of the option allowed by Article 5(2) of the Air Mail Convention of Cairo."

Further correspondence followed culminating in an internal U.K. Post Office memo, dated 7th March 1936 in which the authorities finally surrendered:

"It will be seen from the foregoing correspondence that it has unfortunately not been possible to persuade India to adopt the arrangements whereby all insufficiently prepaid air correspondence is sent by air, double the deficiency being collected from the accordance with the provisions of Article 5(2) of the Air Mail Regulations.

It will doubtless be noted that henceforth insufficiently prepaid air correspondence from India for this country will be forwarded by air only if the charges prepaid represent at least 25% of the air mail fee; and arrangements will no doubt be made for insufficiently prepaid correspondence from this country for India to be treated similarly."

In a letter dated 21st April 1936, the U.K. Post Office wrote to the Director General of the Indian Post Office agreeing to the treatment described above of underpaid air mail between the two countries.

Perfidy of the British Post Office !

In August and September 1932 the British Post Office considered it desirable to modify the reciprocal agreements it had made with India and some African colonies by dispatching insufficiently prepaid air mail correspondence by air irrespective of the amount prepaid. A survey of the amounts of mail involved was conducted for the India mail of 24th September 1932 and the Africa mail of the 21st. The results were tabulated as follows:

<i>Destination</i>	<i>No. of letters surcharged and forwarded by air mail</i>	<i>No. of letters diverted to ordinary route because only the ordinary postage or less was prepaid.</i>
India	290	23
Sudan	11	1
Uganda	2	0
Kenya	19	1
Tanganyika	6	1
Rhodesia	4	2
South Africa	13	0
Totals	345	28

Concluding that the return indicated that only very small amounts of correspondence would be affected, an internal memo to the Controller, dated 18th October 1932, ordered:

"In future all correspondence for India, the Sudan, Kenya, Uganda, Tanganyika, Rhodesia and South Africa which is marked for transmission by air should be forwarded by air, surcharged double any deficiency, even if only the ordinary postage or less is prepaid." [Writer's emphasis].

It is clear from another internal memo, dated only October 1932, that the U.K. Post Office was wary of the likely response of the Indian Post Office to the action it was taking:

“As regards the diversion to the ordinary route of air mail correspondence for India which is only prepaid at the ordinary rate of postage or less, it is possible that India may not be disposed to agree to a reciprocal arrangement under which such correspondence would be sent by air in both directions. The amount of outward correspondence involved is, however, very small and it might be sent by air from this country even if India prefers to continue the present practice in the reverse direction.”

There then followed a gap of **three years** until, on 26th September 1935, the U.K. Post Office wrote to the P.M.Gs. of South Africa, Northern and Southern Rhodesia, Kenya, Uganda and Tanganyika as follows:

“Subsequent to the introduction of our reciprocal agreement, effective from 1 June 1932, an arrangement was introduced in this service, and is still being applied to items addressed to your country, whereby all unpaid and insufficiently prepaid air mail correspondence, and not merely letters on which at least the ordinary postage had been prepaid, was forwarded by air, double the amount of the deficiency being collected from the addressee. As returns indicated that the amount of air correspondence prepaid only to the extent of ordinary postage or less was negligible, you were not asked to agree to the addition of this modification to the original arrangement on a reciprocal basis. [Writer’s emphasis]. The Postmaster General would be glad if you could see your way to agree to the adoption of the latter arrangement in the service with your country on a reciprocal basis.”

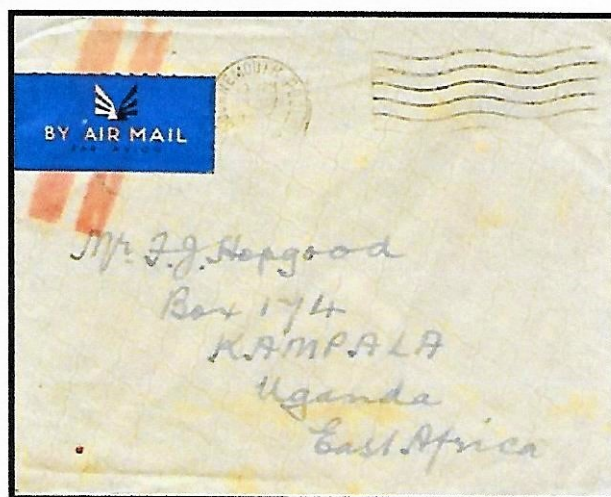
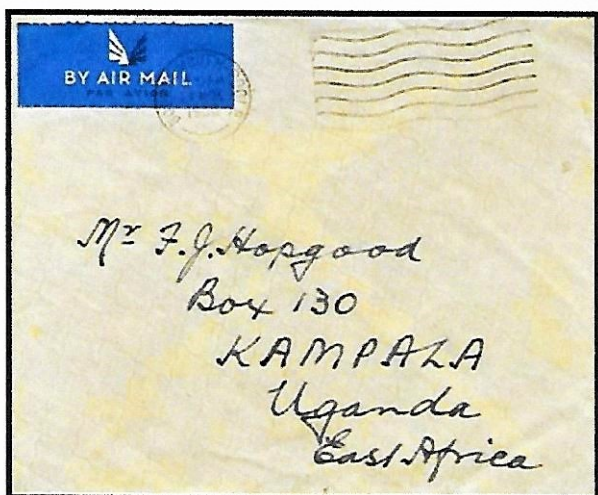
During October 1935 the administrations wrote to the G.P.O., London, agreeing to the new arrangement.

As already noted, The Sudan had interpreted the original agreement slightly differently from the other administrations concerned. The interpretation is described in the letter which follows, dated 10th March 1936, from the Postal Services Department, G.P.O. London, to the Director of Posts and Telegraphs, Khartoum:

“I am directed by the P.M.G. to refer to your letter of the 20th June 1932, notifying the introduction of the arrangement whereby all insufficiently prepaid, except totally underpaid air correspondence posted in Sudan for this country is forwarded by air, and to say that arrangements are now in operation between this office and a number of administrations on the Imperial air routes, whereby all insufficiently prepaid, including totally unpaid, air correspondence is forwarded by air, double the amount of the deficiency being collected from the addressee. The P.M.G. would be glad if you could see your way to agree to an extension of the arrangement between our two administrations to include unpaid air correspondence.”

The reply from Khartoum, dated 30th March 1936, agreed to implement the new arrangement forthwith.

Examples of Incorrect and Inconsistent Treatment by the U.K. of Unpaid Air Mail.



Both covers were posted in Bournemouth, on 21 March 1936 (left) and 28 May 1936 (right). The left-hand one was sent by air and has a Kampala backstamp of 29 March. The right-hand cover was diverted to surface route, the air mail label being cancelled by the two red bars of London, and on the reverse the addressee wrote, “Posted 28th May 1936. Received 24th June 1936. Posted for Air Mail without stamps & received by ordinary mail without surcharge.” According to the rules and agreements already described, both covers should have been sent by air mail, both should have had charges raised in London by the application of a “T” mark and an inscription of “120 c” representing 120 gold centimes (double deficiency of 6d. per ½ ounce air mail rate to K.U.T.). At Kampala, postage due stamps to the value of 100 cents (5 cents = 6 gold centimes) should have been applied.

Agreements Between the U.K. Post Office and Hong Kong, Nigeria and The Gold Coast.

On 7th May 1936 the British Post Office wrote to the P.M.Gs. of Hong Kong, Nigeria and The Gold Coast:

"I am directed by the Postmaster General to say that as you are aware, postal administrations have the option under Article 5(2) of the Air Mail Regulations of forwarding insufficiently prepaid air correspondence by air if the charges prepaid represent 25% at least of the amount of the air mail fee.

Arrangements are however in force in the air mail service between this administration and most of the other Empire administrations on the Empire air routes whereby all unpaid and insufficiently prepaid air correspondence is dispatched by air, double the deficiency being collected from the addressee. This arrangement, which is regarded as permissible by virtue of the provisions of Article 5 of the Postal Union Convention and is more favourable to the expeditious treatment of air correspondence than that contemplated in Article 5(2) of the Air Mail Regulations, has been found to work satisfactorily in practice and the Postmaster General would be glad if you could see your way to agree to its adoption in the service between this country and yours."

Both Hong Kong (in a letter dated 23rd May) and Nigeria (in a letter dated 20th May) consented to the arrangement but the P.M.G. of The Gold Coast raised objections and stated a different intention in a letter dated 4th August:

"The Gold Coast Colony is unable to accept the arrangement that letters posted in The Gold Coast unpaid should be forwarded by air.

Insufficiently prepaid correspondence bearing postage of at least 50% of the gross postage including the air mail fee will be accepted and forwarded by The Gold Coast. This proportion is necessary to safeguard the Air Mail Service against abuse.

A large proportion of the present ordinary surcharged correspondence forwarded to the United Kingdom is refused by the addressees and returned to this Department for return to senders."

The British P.O. response, contained in an internal memo of 24th August 1936, was as follows:

"It is not proposed to press further for adoption by The Gold Coast Colony of the arrangement whereby all insufficiently prepaid correspondence is forwarded by air and the position will thus be that in the service to the Colony all insufficiently Although the Cairo Clause 5 allowed administrations 50% of the combined postage and air fee will be so forwarded."

Example of a Cover from Egypt:

The Egyptian Post Office continued to adhere to its policy of forwarding by air insufficiently prepaid air correspondence only if the air fee was paid in full. The cover (below) is an example.

The cover was posted at Abu Butt on 15 September 1936. The air mail rate from Egypt to the U.K. was 15 mil. per 20 gm. ordinary postage + 13 mil. per 20 gm. air fee. It was correctly franked for a letter below 20 gm., but it must have weighed above that and thus the fees should have been 30 mil. ordinary postage + 26 mil. air fee. Because the air fee was paid in full (cover was franked 28 mil.) it was dispatched by air, the boxed "T" mark and the manuscript "s/70" were applied in Egypt. The deficient postage was 28 mil. and only single deficiency was charged. As 2 mil. = 5 gold centimes, $14 \times 5 = 70$, and thus the U.K. post office raised a charge of 7d. and affixed postage due stamps to that value on the cover.



Example of Southern Rhodesia Applying Strictly Clause 5 of the Cairo Congress.

Although the Cairo Clause 5 allowed administrations the option to dispatch insufficiently prepaid air mail correspondence by air if the amount prepaid was at least 25% of the air fee, Southern Rhodesia is an example of an administration which chose not to exercise this option, proved by the following extract from Postal Notice No. 22 of 1935, dated 7th June, and published in the Southern Rhodesia Government Gazette:

"All insufficiently prepaid air mail correspondence addressed to countries other than those named above () is transmitted by air and double the deficiency collected from the addressee if the charges prepaid represent at least the amount of the air mail fee. The air mail fee is regarded as the difference between the combined air postage fee and the ordinary postage rate.*

All other insufficiently prepaid air mail correspondence is sent forward by surface transport."

(*) The countries named were the United Kingdom, Northern and Southern Rhodesia, Tanganyika Territory, Kenya, Uganda, Nyasaland and the Union of South Africa.

The cover, posted at Victoria Falls on 7 April 1937, is franked 9d. The air mail fee from Southern Rhodesia to the U.S.A. at this time was 1s. 2d. per ½ ounce to all places other than New York. The air mail fee would have been calculated at 11d. (1s. 2d. combined air fee minus 3d. for the first ounce ordinary postage). Thus the air fee was underpaid by 2d. and the cover was diverted to surface mail; the black handstamp, reading "CONVERTED TO SURFACE MAIL FOR REASON STATED" and the manuscript inscription, "Insufficiently Prepaid" added, it is believed, at Bulawayo after arrival there by train from Victoria Falls.



Possible Acceptance by Australia of Clause 5 of the Cairo Conference.

The cover shown (on the next page) indicates the possible application of the option by the Australian Post Office contained in Clause 5 of the Cairo Congress. It is under-franked by more than the difference between the combined air fee and the ordinary postage but was definitely transmitted by air mail. I have no documentary evidence, however, to prove whether or not Australia applied the option to transmit such mail by air.

In March 1938 the Australian P.O. issued Air Mail Leaflet No. 3 (extract below) giving the rate to South Africa as 2s. 3d. per ½ ounce, as per the franking on the cover. I believe this was an error, since it was less than the rates to Nyasaland and Rhodesia and that the 2s. 9d. per ½ ounce rate (in force from November 1934) for carriage by air to Cairo and in Africa, remained in force until August 1938.

AIR MAIL CHARGES. (Australia-Singapore-England Service)—continued.						
Country of Destination.	Superscription Required, Preceded by the Words "By Air."	Inclusive Air Mail Charges.			Route of Surface Transport when Air Service not used for Whole of Journey.	
		Post Cards.	Letters, &c.			
			First Half Ounce.	Each Additional Half Ounce.		
		s. d.	s. d.	s. d.		
NYASALAND	Australia-Egypt-Nyasaland	1 3	2 5	2 5		
RHODESIA	Australia-Egypt-Rhodesia	1 3	2 5	2 5		
SOUTH AFRICA ..	Australia-South Africa	1 2	2 3	2 3		



Cover is date-stamped Sydney, 9 March 1938 and the postage dues are cancelled Johannesburg 26 March, proving it was conveyed by air. It is franked 2d. 3d. and was deemed to be 6d. deficient. The Sydney P.O. applied the boxed "T / centimes" handstamp and wrote "120" to charge 120 gold centimes, equivalent to 12d., this being double the deficiency. The Johannesburg P.O. applied the circular "1/-" handstamp and the 2 x 6d. postage due stamps.

Insufficiently Prepaid Air Mail and the Empire Air Mail Scheme.

From July 1937, when the first stage of the E.A.M.S. was introduced, the U.K. Post Office ran a continuing publicity campaign to educate the public of the correct postage rates and, in particular, that the E.A.M.S. rates were per HALF ounce and not per ounce, as the earlier surface mail rates had been. Whilst it is beyond the scope of this study to go into detail about the effect of the E.A.M.S., an example of an underpaid cover to Uganda, with a U.K. rate advertising cachet on the reverse is illustrated below

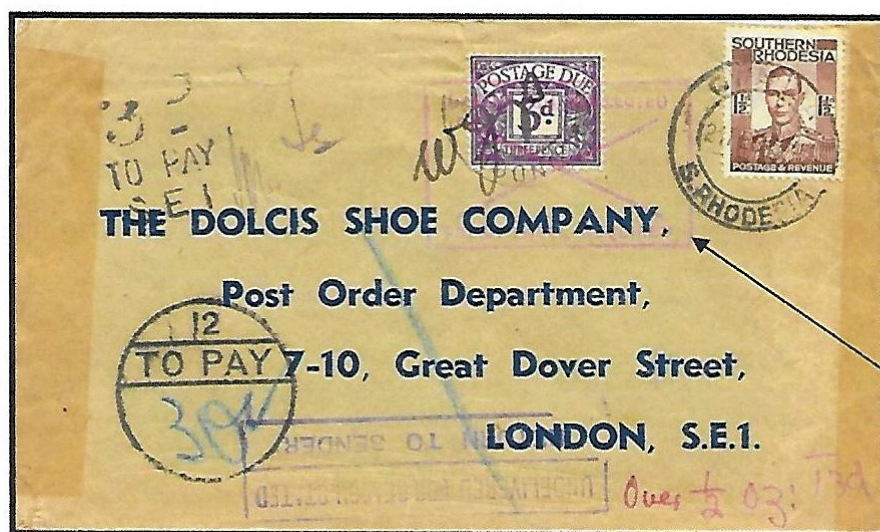
The cover is franked at 1½d. per ½ ounce E.A.M.S. rate but was over the minimum weight so the U.K. Post Office raised a charge of 30 gold centimes = 1½d. deficiency x 2. Postage due stamps to the value of 25 cents were applied at Entebbe, as 5 cents (Uganda) = 6 gold centimes. The U.K. advertising cachet on the reverse of the cover has been superimposed.



PLEASE ADVISE SENDER THAT
LETTERS SHOULD BE PREPAID
1½d FOR EACH HALF OUNCE

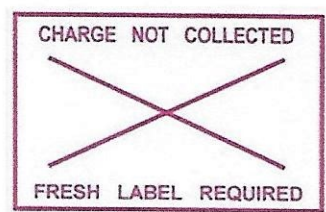
Insufficiently Prepaid Air Mail Refused by the Addressee.

Under the terms of the U.P.U. Conventions, it was a right of addressees to refuse to pay the charges on underpaid air mail letters. In this event the rules prescribed that the underpaid item was to be returned to the sender who should pay the charges which had been raised. An example of such an item is illustrated



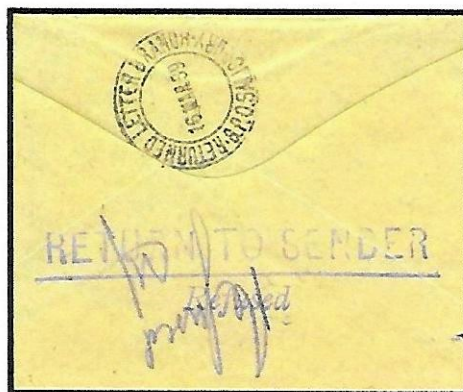
Faint impression of the
"CHARGE NOT COLLECTED/
....." purple handstamp.

The cover is date stamped, Gwanda, 21 February 1939. It was sent by train to Bulawayo then flown by RANA to Beira to connect with I.A. service DN173, which departed 23 February, and arrived Southampton on the 28th. The E.A.M.S. rate of 1½d. per ½ ounce applied at this time. Because the letter weighed over ½ ounce, the Gwanda post office applied the red manuscript marking and the circular "12 / TO PAY" with "30c" in blue manuscript inserted, being double the deficiency in gold centimes. Upon arrival at the London S.E.1 post office, the "3d / TO PAY / S E 1" handstamp was applied together with a 3d. postage due stamp. When delivery to the Dolcis Shoe Company was attempted, the letter was refused and, according to correct procedure, the delivery officer, in this case "WJP", and the purple handstamp "CHARGE NOT COLLECTED / FRESH LABEL REQUIRED" was applied over the stamp. In such cases, letters were to be returned to sender for payment of the charge and hence the "RETURN TO SENDER / Refused" handstamp was applied to the reverse and the "UNDELIVERED FOR REASON STATED / RETURN TO SENDER" handstamp applied to the front. The letter would have been opened to ascertain the sender's address (hence the resealing tape). Upon arrival at Salisbury, the "RETURNED LETTER BRANCH / G.P.O. SALISBURY / 16 MAR. 39" handstamp was applied to the reverse.



Above: Facsimile of the "Charge not Collected/ ..." handstamp.

Right: Copy of part of reverse showing the markings applied.



Conclusion.

A long and complex story but one which I hope will arouse the interest of readers in insufficiently prepaid air mail. Please send me copies of covers in your collection for future publication which either comply or break the rules described in this study, particularly from countries not featured here due to my African bias!

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1. Michael Furfie. "British Postage Due Mail, 1914 – 1971." Published by the author. 1993.
2. "Rules for Offices of Exchange." 1932 Edition held at Post Office Archives, London. (Post 68/412)
3. "Air Mail – Insufficiently prepaid correspondence. Treatment." Files held at Post Office Archives, London (Post 33/M 4505/1933)

THE PAN AM AIR MAIL TEST LETTERS OF 1946

by Richard Saundry.

At a recent meeting of the Wessex Group in Harnham, Salisbury, those members present were treated to an absorbing display by Alan Stevens of air mail covers franked using the United States air postage stamp issue of 1946 (SG 901-907, Scott C26-C41). These stamps are commonly known by aficionados of this issue as “the Transports” since the common design featured a transport aircraft, really a composite of several US transport aeroplanes, thus not of any specific model. During his display, Alan showed covers franked using the 10 cents value used on 1946 test letters to countries in South America, which on arrival were reposted and returned by air to the senders in the United State. Alan said he knew very little why such covers were ever devised. In 1998 the current writer in a former existence as Editor, the Latin American Air Mail Study Group, published in the US quarterly journal, the “*Jack Knight Air Log*”[this journal ceased publication years ago], wrote an article explaining the reason for these covers. I am taking the liberty of republishing much of what I wrote there since with a new generation of collectors not only here in the UK but also in the USA seemingly not knowing very about these covers, this article, hopefully, will serve to explain why these covers were ever sent.

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On 1st November 1946 the US Post Office introduced a reduced uniform air mail tariff of 10 cents per half ounce to all countries of Central and South America, and to the Caribbean. The exceptions to this new ‘Hemispheric Uniform Air Postage Rate’ were mails sent to Canada, Cuba and to Mexico. The reason for these exceptions were that an even lower postage rate of only 5 cents per ounce had already been introduced, (1st October 1946), for mail despatched by air from the United States to Canada and Mexico, and as early as 29th June 1945 a reduced air mail rate of 8 cents per half ounce had been introduced for mail flown to Cuba. This reduced “US Composite International Airmail, Letter, Letter Package Rate”, aka “the Hemispheric Uniform Air Postage Rate”, remained in force until 1st July 1961 after which the rates were hiked to 13 cents for letters sent to addresses in North and Central America, and to the Caribbean, and to 15 cents to South America.

Background.

The US Post Office Department, (usually written as USPOD), on Wednesday 23rd October 1946 released two bulletins for use by the morning papers. The first of these two bulletins referred to the increase in patronage of the US domestic air mail services following the recent introduction of a uniform 5 cents rate: figures for mails carried during the first 15 days of October compared with the first half of September showed an increase of 26.5%. As Postmaster General Robert E. Hannigan so aptly put it:

*“Experience has proven that by offering a good service at reasonable cost, the public will utilise that service in ever-increasing volume. We are confident that this will be true of nickel air mail.....From **October 27 to November 2 we are celebrating Air Mail Week** to bring to the attention of the American people the advantage of air transport. The President of the United States has added to the significance of this event by proclaiming this period as National Air Mail Week.”*

But it is the second bulletin that is of interest to us. To encourage use of the impending 10 cents air mail rate to the West Indies, Central and South America on 1st November it was announced:

“a public test of the speed of air mail facilities between these countries has been arranged.

For one day only, November 1, persons desiring to participate in this test may do so by addressing an envelope, pre-paid with a 10-cent stamp, to “Pan American World Airways System, Air Mail Test” at any of the capital cities in the countries listed here [at the end were listed twenty-eight capital cities]. The sender’s complete return address must be placed in the upper left-hand corner of the envelope.

The envelope can be mailed in the regular way on November 1. Upon arrival in the country of destination, the date of receipt will be stamped upon it. Return postage will be paid by Pan American World Airways and the envelope mailed to the sender through regular air mail channels. The return address must be within the continental United States and only one letter should be sent to each country.”

Thus the rules set out in this press release seem very clear and precise and there was little scope, you would think, that things could go wrong. In fact the system seems to have worked excellently and covers seen see, almost without exception to have been handled without any problem, and the senders seem to have abided by these very simple mailing

instructions. [An interesting instance of something that did go wrong has been noted by the current writer since composing this article in 1998. On page 117 of G.H. Davis' *"The Transports"* (ISBN 0-930412-25-7, published in 1999 by the Bureau Issues Association, Inc., Reston, Virginia) we see usage of the 10 cents Transport stamp on a failed attempt to send a test letter to Georgetown, the Cayman Islands. This destination was not among the 28 capital cities that were listed since the Cayman Islands was a postal dependency of Jamaica and the envelope was duly returned to sender duly franked with Jamaican postage stamps but with manuscript explanation why this had to be. Thus this failed attempt did serve to create possibly a unique 1946 Pan Am test letter].

The Pam Test Letters.

I now show a selection of successful Pan Am test letters that travelled the mails in accordance with the senders' wishes. My first two examples (Figures 1 and 2) are typical of test covers franked using the 10 cent *"Transport"* stamp. The cover posted from Brooklyn, New York at 4PM on 1st November addressed to San José, Costa Rica was franked 45 centimos and re-posted on 5th November, the day after it has arrived. The other cover, also franked with a 10 cent stamp and posted from Westfield, Massachusetts to St. John's, Antigua was franked by the Pan Am organisation using 10d. Antigua

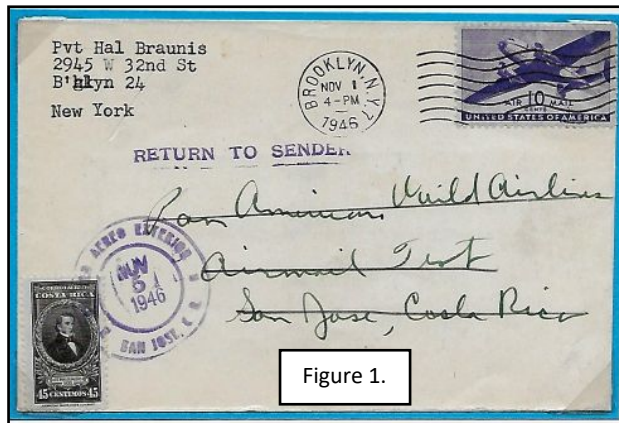


Figure 1.



Figure 2.

stamps was also re-posted 5th November the day after it arrived in St. John's (4th November arrival date-stamp on back).

An interesting variant of the more often-encountered covers bearing the US 10 cent *"Transport"* stamp was the sender from Parkersburg, West Virginia who elected to use a 5 cents postal stationery envelope, (Figure 3), uprated to 10 cents through use of a 5 cents air postage stamp (issue of 25 September 1946 showing the DC-4 *"Skymaster"*). Addressed to Lima, Peru the envelope which reached the Peruvian capital on 3rd November was not delivered to Pan Am until



Figure 3.

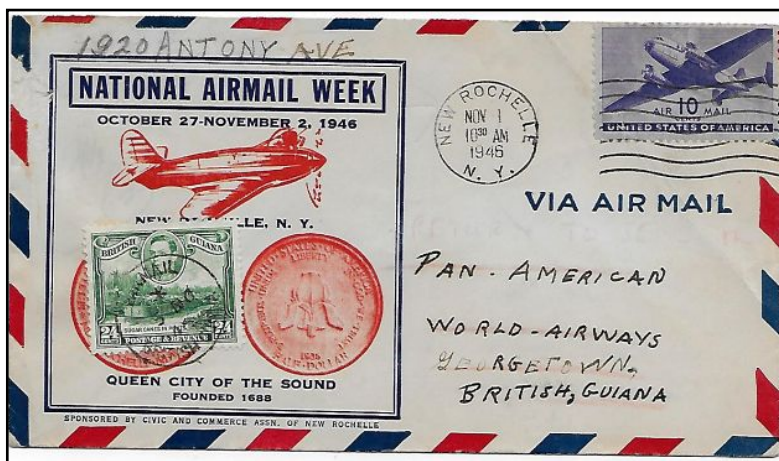


Figure 4.

the next day 4th November, but having been franked 70 cts was immediately sent by air back to presumably a very satisfied collector.

My final example, (Figure 4), is also an example of use of one of the 10 cents *"Transport"* air postage stamps, but the sender from New Rochelle, New York State, elected to use an eye-catching pre-printed eye-catching envelope commemorating National Airmail Week. Posted 10.30AM to Georgetown, British Guiana, it arrived there on 3rd November, was delivered to

the Pan American World Airways office on 4th November, was franked 24 cents British Guiana stamps and posted back to the United States on 5th November.

Scarcity.

There was, however, apparently one little “fly in the ointment”. You will no doubt have already spotted that the intervening period between sending out the press release of 23rd October and the date for sending the test letters 1st November was exceedingly short. No doubt this short period of notice precluded many collectors sending their covers. In the 2nd November issue of “*Stamps*” (a US philatelic journal, not the one with same title currently published here in the UK), (Vol. 57, No. 5, page 240) we read a repeat of the notice as given by the UDSPD, but followed by the Editor’s note:

“We publish the above just as it was received from the Post Office Department, for the record, although once again the notice arrived too late for collectors to get covers. It is unfortunate that collectors are being deprived of the opportunity to get covers aboard the many first-flights that are taking place today.....If you have a complaint, please send it to the Post Office Department, for they only can remedy the situation, if in fact it can be remedied. There may of course be some legitimate reason why more advanced notice cannot be given, but only the Post Office Department can answer that question.”

From the above there arises the question of scarcity of these Test Letters. In fact this possible scarcity factor was more recently been voiced in the March 1996 (pp. 209-210) issue of the ‘*American Philatelist*’, part of an intriguing article devoted primarily to a discussion of the “*Transport*” air mail Series of (US postage stamps) of 1941. In this latter article another air mail test letter of 1946 (sent to Lima, Peru) was illustrated which was stated to bear the receiving mark on the back in Peru of 3rd November (as does the example illustrated here, Figure 3). The writer of the article in the “*American Philatelist*” added

“Although this is plainly a souvenir cover (referring to the cover sent to Peru) of a specific event that documented an important new rate, it is not listed in the American Air Mail Catalogue. With APRL Librarian Gini Horn’s assistance I learned why it is not ... (then followed the same USPOD notice of 1946) ... That should have provided a fine opportunity to participate in National Air Mail Week, but it turned into a disappointment. So the illustrated cover (the one sent to Lima) is a lucky survivor and an exceptionally nice Transport Series usage.”

The implication here is that any such Air Mail Test Letter of 1946 is a relatively scarce and desirable item. I am bound to say, however, that as a UK collector my impression is that such covers are relatively common. I have never made a conscious effort to collect these covers, but only added examples when encountered if addressed to countries I was actively collecting, i.e. Costa Rica, Venezuela, Argentina. Some years ago now, at a local stamp fair in Kent I encountered one small-time local dealer who had a general stock of foreign air mail covers including those of the USA and he had several such test covers to destinations all over South America priced at the time at about £10 (US\$15) each. Currently as I re-jig this article in 2019 we find many examples of these 1946 Pan Am Test Letters offered for sale at knock-down prices on eBay and other internet auction sites. So, if price is any kind of reflection of scarcity this suggests to me these covers are not scarce at all. It might well be that many of those collectors who had read the original USPOD announcement and had time to prepare their covers may well have sent covers to more than one destination, possibly one to each of the twenty-eight specified capital cities, thus increasing the overall volume and making this class of cover relatively common. I do note, however, all my examples were devised by collectors resident in the Eastern part of the United States. It may just be happenstance that this is so. There should be no reason, however, why collectors living in the Western States could not have devised their respective covers. It would be interesting to learn whether collectors living in, say, California posting their air test letters on 1st November 1946 experienced as fast a turn-around of their envelopes compared to those devised by collectors living in the in the East. Perhaps time for air transmission from, say, San Francisco to Miami, where presumably the Pan Am flights started from the USA, might have taken longer than for those of collectors living in, say, New York?

But, of course, prices must ultimately reflect supply and demand, and if most collectors are not generally well informed what these covers are about, that they are very desirable, possibly few people would bother to collect them. So, if you want a tip, next time you see one of these covers buy, buy, buy. Their true scarcity value might be recognised one day and soar in value, so they must represent some kind of small worthwhile investment. The test covers of 1946 are most certainly not philatelic confection, but were deliberately organised through collaboration between the USPOD and Pan American World Airways to seriously document speed of air communication in the post-war period, and should have an honoured place in our collections.

A Practice Air Mail Test Letter.

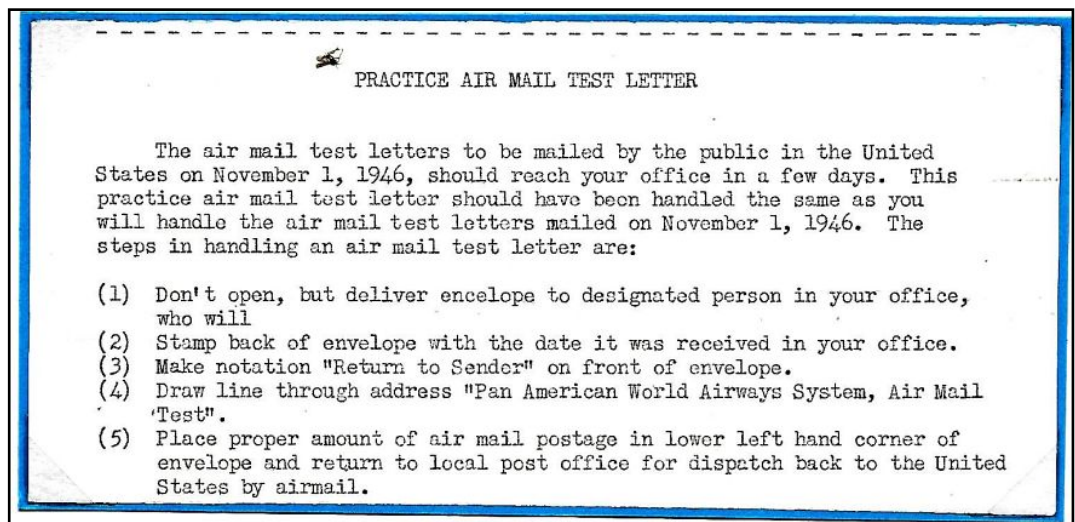
Now, if you are still wondering why I had chosen to launch forth so much on the U.S. Test Flight Letters of 1946 when there seemingly are so many other interesting things to write about, certainly to collect, this is because having had my interest in such covers

aroused by Neal West, a US collector of Nicaraguan air mail covers, I had a look at the one and only cover I thought I already had in my aerophilatelic collection of Costa Rica, (I was essentially a one-country collector of all things Costa Rican in the 1990s). And Joy, oh Joy! What bliss! I found I was sitting on a little gem that I had hitherto not recognised, (Figure 5).

That which I thought was just another Test Cover turned out to be a pre-Test Cover. This was the letter sent from Head Office, Pan American World Airways, New York, to San José, the capital city of Costa Rica, but was sent 28th October 1946 and returned on 31st October. I found the original instructions inside the envelope, (Figure 6), which

was not as I first thought to be the standard instructions to the US public and which a putative helpful

collector had left inside. It turned out to be the actual instructions to the Pan American Airways agent in Costa Rica how to deal with the expected flood of letters that would probably arrive a few days later. This cover was exactly what it said it was, a "Practice Letter for the forthcoming Test Letters of 1st November", and not just another "run-of-the-mill" collector's item. I guess there would have been at least one such practice letter sent to each of the other twenty-seven capital cities, most likely only one to each. Such items, if they have survived, are mostly likely as not to have remained in collections or dealers' stocks unrecognised for what they truly are. Incidentally before I relocated to West Cornwall, I lived near London, acted as the General Secretary of the National Philatelic Society which occupied part of the premises of the British Philatelic Centre in Charterhouse Street, near Smithfield. Many members of the NPS volunteered to work as custodians of the building on Saturdays when visiting philatelic societies held meeting there. One Saturday in 1999 I officiated when the King George VI P.S. held a meeting. I remember distinctly that on the day when I joined their members looking at the display material, there right in front of us was a large display of Jamaican covers including one such practice test flight cover sent to and returned from Kingston, Jamaica. I am not sure that the exhibitor of this cover was truly aware of its true significance.



Figures 5 (top) and 6 (bottom) of Pan Am Practice Letter for the forthcoming Test Letter Exercise of 1st November 1946. Posted from New York 28th October 1946, returned from San José, C.R. 31st October, with original enclosure informing Pan Am staff how to deal with such mail.

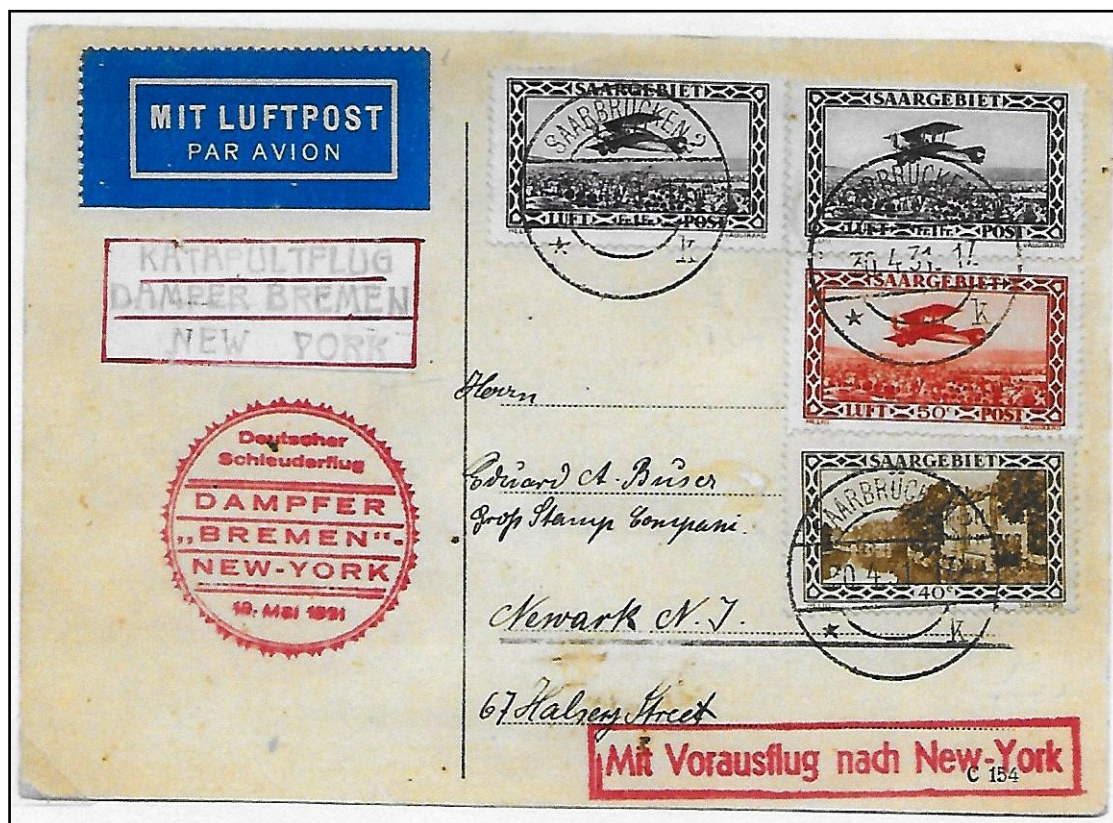
The true Test Covers were all posted and cancelled on 1st November 1946, but look closely at any such covers that might come your way. If they were posted before 1st November they might well prove to be practice air mail test letters. There was probably only one such letter sent to each of the twenty-eight capital cities. I confirm two of these were known in the late 1990s, probably all twenty-eight still do. Good hunting!

The German Catapult Mail of the North Atlantic. Part 5.

by Eddie Spicer.

The start of the 1931 season brought a few changes. The unpopular “Mit Katapultflug” directional marking cachet was replaced by the new “Mit Vorausflug nach New York” and “Mit Vorausflug nach Southampton” cachets, (see Figures 1 and 2). And the aeroplane used from the “Bremen” was the Heinkel He-12 D-1917 named “New York” and the flight crew consisted of Captain Fritz Simon and radio mechanic Rudolf Wagenknecht. The aeroplane used from the “Europa” was the Heinkel He-58 D-1919 named “Bremen” and the flight crew consisted of Captain Jobst von Studnitz and radio mechanic Karl Kirchoff, but later the Captain was changed to Joachim Blankenburg. The first flight of 1931 was from the “Bremen” to New York on 10th May 1931.

Figure 1.



This postcard addressed to Newark was posted in Saarbrücken on the 30th April 1931. It was most likely transported by surface means to Bremerhaven to meet the “Bremen”. It was flown from the ship at 14.56 hrs. and arrived in New York at 15.45 hrs. having flown a short distance of 112 km. This was the first use of the new directional cachet “Mit Vorausflug nach New York”.

The postal rate of 2fr.90c. is made up of 90c. international postcard rate and 2fr. for the catapult service. The Saar had an agreement with Germany to use the catapult system and was known as a treaty state. There were just 18 acceptances recorded from the Saar during 1931.

Figure 2.

This cover, addressed to San Francisco was posted at the German post office on board the “Bremen” on 13th May 1931 on its return journey to Southampton and is known as a sea post cover. It was flown from the ship at 14.00 hrs. and arrived at Southampton at 18.00 hrs. having flown a distance of 760 km. It was then transported to Croydon for the



flight by DLH to Germany. The cover was inscribed "via Germany". It then went by surface means back to New York and eventually to San Francisco. The postal rate is made up of 25 pfg. international letter rate and 50 pfg. for the catapult service. This was the first use of the new cachet "Mit Vorausflug nach Southampton".

Figure 3.



This cover addressed to New York was posted in Cologne on 11th May 1931. It was flown by DLH on the supplementary flight from Cologne to Cherbourg to meet the "Europa" (note the special cachet in red for this service). It was flown from the ship on the 16th May at 11.00 hrs. and arrived in New York at 18.05 hrs. having flown a distance of 715 km.

The postal rate is made up of 25 pfg. international letter rate and 50 pfg. for the catapult service.

Figure 4.

This cover addressed to Cologne was posted in New York on 18th May 1931. It was carried on the eastbound return voyage of the "Europa" to Southampton. It was flown from the ship on the 24th May at 06.00 hrs. and arrived Amsterdam at 13.20 hrs., having flown a distance of 880 km. This was an unscheduled Sunday flight direct to



Figure 4.

Amsterdam as there was no service from Croydon to Germany on a Sunday at this time. The cover was then flown by DLH to Cologne arriving 15.16 hrs. Note the Cologne Airport arrival mark in red.

The postal rate is made up of 5 cents international letter rate and 25 cents for the catapult service.

Possible Evidence that Romanian Air Mail via Lisbon to North and South America during 1941 was flown a Different Route from that taken by Bulgarian Air Mail.

By Richard Saundry.

With this presentation, I am flying the proverbial kite. I invite experts in the field of German, Italian and Hungarian wartime air mail services to either confirm or demolish my theory that Romanian wartime air mail sent in 1941 to Lisbon to connect with the north transatlantic air service (FAM-18, operated by Pan American Airways) or to Italy to connect with the LATI service to South America, was probably flown via Budapest, Belgrade or Zagreb to Venice and consequentially did not have to transit Vienna. By way of contrast Bulgarian air mail, sent to either North or South America, was always flown directly towards Greater Germany, and was subject to inspection by the German censorship authorities in Vienna.

When hostilities broke out in Europe in September 1939, important things happened that affected the circulation of mail originating from the Axis side of the conflict. Some of these changes impinged on the forwarding of mail to the neutral Western European countries of Spain and Portugal, and onwards to both North and South America. Initially, with the onset of fighting between Germany and France, French air space was precluded for transit by aircraft operated by Deutsche Lufthansa, and the direct service linking Germany with Lisbon, (LH Route #22), was severed and not re-activated until after the capitulation of France (June 1940): first only as far as Madrid, but from November 1940 the whole way to Lisbon. The scission of the direct route to Lisbon meant that an alternative roundabout route Germany to Portugal had to be found. Italy remained neutral until after the fall of France then became an ally of Germany. The Italian airline Ala Littoria operated routes (IATA Routes #405/409) connecting Rome with Barcelona and Lisbon, and Rome was directly reached by a daily service from Berlin, jointly operated by Lufthansa/ Ala Littoria (LH Route #9), which according to the Deutsche Lufthansa *Flugplan* ⁽¹⁾ for November 1939, followed the route Rome-Munich-Venice-Rome. This meant that for the early part of the war much Axis mail addressed to either North and South America, could connect with PAA's north transatlantic European air terminus (FAM-18) in Lisbon, through being flown a convoluted route via Italy. Furthermore, beginning 15 December, 1939 the Italian airline LATI, (Linee Aeree Transcontinentali Italiane), initiated regular service over the South Atlantic route Rome to Recife, Brazil, thereby providing an alternative air mail route to South America that largely avoided the possibility of mail being intercepted *en route* by Imperial censors in Bermuda, Trinidad or Jamaica. This made air mail service through Italy even more attractive for Axis correspondents.

With the outbreak of hostilities in Europe in September 1939, all the air mail services operated by Air France and the Polish airline LOT, which before the war had been heavily patronised by both the Romanian and the Bulgarian Post Offices, no longer existed, leaving only Lufthansa and the Italian airline Aviolinee Italiane as the major international airlines operating in S.E. Europe. LARES, the Romanian national airline, Malert, the Hungarian national airline, and Aeroput, the Yugoslav airline, offered additional services, but their contribution to Axis air mail services was both sporadic and limited, depending largely upon permission from Germany to operate routes and most importantly limited availability of aviation fuel. The Lufthansa route network naturally tended to “funnel” mail towards Germany. Indeed, much Romanian wartime air mail was flown the jointly operated route Lufthansa #117/ Malert #1406 / LARES #1370 (Bucharest-Arad-Budapest-Vienna-Prague-Berlin).⁽⁷⁾ In like fashion, Bulgaria’s international air mail requirements were largely satisfied through carriage over the thrice-weekly operated Lufthansa route #17 service (Athens-Salonica-Sofia-Belgrade-Budapest-Vienna-Berlin). Importantly both these routes transited Vienna. It should be mentioned in the passing that Lufthansa’s feeder route LH #107 provided a connection between Istanbul and Sofia, thereby the means for air communication between Turkey and the Axis countries.

One would guess, therefore, because of the availability and reliability of Lufthansa Route #17 and #117 services, that air mail correspondence emanating from *both* Bulgaria and Romania, addressed to destinations in Portugal, Spain, and to North or South America, would most likely first be sent towards Germany, possibly from thence via Italy – **but see below**. It should also be noted that both Romania and Bulgaria initially desperately tried to retain a state of neutrality, but by the time the United States entered the fray on the side of the Allies in December 1941, both countries had become militarily involved on the side of the Axis powers. [In October 1940 Romania joined the Tripartite Pact (between Germany, Italy and Japan), and Bulgaria signed in March 1941. Subsequently Romania became an enthusiastic participant with Germany in the attack against Russia, whereas Bulgaria’s level of participation was more lukewarm preferring not to commit forces beyond its borders other than to occupy parts of Greece thereby helping release German troops for the anti-Soviet invasion.] The status, however, of both Romania and Bulgaria at any given time, irrespective of or not they were neutral or active supporters in the war on the Axis side, seems to have had little or no bearing on air mail service to Lisbon, and consequently will not be discussed further here.

The most important thing, aerophilatelically speaking, that happened following the outbreak of war was that Germany instigated military censorship of the mails. Various censorship stations were set up, one of which was in Vienna. The Vienna censorship station examined all mail arriving from Bulgaria, Greece, Hungary, Romania, Turkey, parts of Yugoslavia, and mail in transit. The various German censorship stations through which mail passed can be readily identified through use of censorship hand stamps and censorship re-sealing tape incorporating identification code letters. Vienna was allocated code letter ‘g’, and those collectors who

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study wartime air mails of the Balkan area will, no doubt, already be familiar with Wehrmacht censorship code 'g' postal markings. German censorship markings often prove useful to postal historians in helping determine over which routes letters may have travelled since, for obvious reasons of security, wartime letters were rarely otherwise postmarked *en route*.

Significantly, the Germans seem to have adopted a policy of letting diplomatic, consular and official mail, plus mail addressed to neutral countries, pass through their censorship stations without examination of the contents. To show that such mail had passed through given censorship stations without examination, the address sides of letters were often struck using a circular postmark comprising a large letter "A", the "A" standing for "Auslandbriefprüfstelle" (= Foreign Mail Examination Office), together with a small code letter to identify the censorship station. Thus, mail from the Balkans addressed to neutral countries is found struck in Vienna with an "Ag" handstamp.

I deliberately repeat what I have just written above, that if Romanian and Bulgarian air mail were to be sent to either North or South America from Lisbon, one would logically expect such mail to have to pass through Vienna on its journey towards Germany, thence via Italy before November 1940, and after November 1940 by more direct means from Germany. It follows, therefore, that envelopes from both Balkan countries addressed to neutral transatlantic destinations ought to be found struck with "Ag" postal markings, confirming the letters had been allowed to pass through unopened by the German censorship authorities in Vienna.

By this time readers may be wondering why I have deliberately decided to limit the current discussion of Balkan air mails to only the year 1941, and not include mail flown earlier during the war? The reason is simply this. Doubtless when war broke out in 1939 the German authorities quickly put in place all the censorship apparatus that they deemed necessary. It seems, however, that initially much Bulgarian and Romanian air mail transited Vienna without any evidence of having ever been examined. Mail from both Balkan countries during the early part of 1940 addressed to Greater Germany rarely shows signs of censorship re-sealing tape or censorship markings. As 1940 progressed, however, the volume of mail from both countries that show signs of having been examined increased until by the end of the year essentially all mail addressed to Germany shows clear signs of having been examined. Probably the standard source for information about German censorship during the Second World War is Riemer ⁽²⁾. Riemer apprises us of one interesting fact that seems to have escaped many of us. The German censors did not introduce the "Auslandbriefprüfstelle" handstamps until the latter part of 1940, and Riemer states on page 134 of his monograph ⁽²⁾ that the 20mm diameter "Ag" handstamp used at the Vienna censorship office did not make its appearance until August 1941. Here I must take issue with Riemer. He is most definitely in error regarding this August date. I have several examples in my collection of Balkan area air mail covers addressed to neutral Sweden (mail from these countries also had to transit Vienna and Germany) that were struck with the "Ag" handstamp that pre-date the date given by Riemer. I also have Bulgarian covers with "Ag" markings that were sent to the USA indicating a period of usage much earlier than Riemer suggested. The earliest date that I can confirm for use of the handstamp is January 4, 1941. It is likely, therefore that use of the "Auslandbriefprüfstelle" handstamp in Vienna began at the beginning of 1941, possibly even earlier! The salient point, however, is that this handstamp only appears on Balkan air mail covers that transited Vienna in or after 1941, none so far found for 1940. For this very reason, I have had to confine my attention to air mail covers posted during the narrow window of 1941 up to such time the United States entered the war on the Allied side (in December), thereafter no longer being a neutral destination.

Most surprisingly, air mail covers posted in 1941 indicate that whereas Bulgarian air mail covers addressed to the Americas are invariably found bearing the "Ag" handstamps, Romanian covers seem never to have them.

I have seven Bulgarian air mail covers sent to the United States or to South America in 1941, all of which bear the expected "Ag" hand stamps proving they transited Vienna. I show, (Fig. 1), a 'Clipper' air mail cover from the US Legation in Sofia sent March 24,

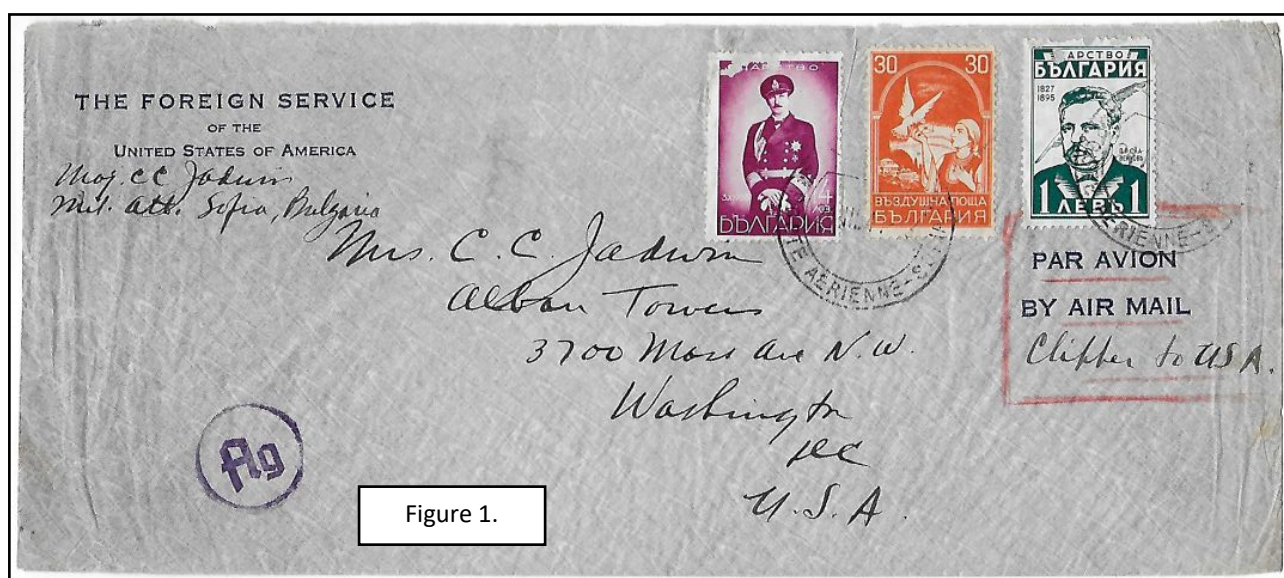


Figure 1.

1941 to Washington, D.C., correctly franked 45 Leva (38 Leva per 5 gm. air + 7 Leva UPU surface letter rate). This cover reached Vienna the evening of March 24, but because it was not sent as a registered letter there are no further transit or arrival postal markings. A second example, (Fig. 2.), was sent as a registered air mail letter from Sofia July 2, 1941, arriving New York on 18 July, with transit postal markings for Vienna July 3. During transit, the cover was intercepted by the Imperial censors in Bermuda and the envelope re-sealed using a P.C.90 type CL9a “OPENED BY EXAMINER 5472” censor tape. Examiner 5472 is recorded ⁽³⁾ having been active in Bermuda from at least November 23, 1940 until March 12, 1943. The franking of 52 Leva (7 leva surface + 7 Leva registration + 38 leva per 5 gm. air) and transit markings confirm this being a *bona fide* air mail letter intercepted in transit in Bermuda during the transatlantic leg of the journey. Crucially, both Bulgarian covers bear the circular “A_g” marks. Without added postal markings we cannot know whether, after November 1940, Bulgarian covers transiting Vienna reached Lisbon via an Italian routing or were flown by Lufthansa directly Germany to Portugal over the now re-activated route LH #22.

In contrast to the seven Bulgarian air mail covers in my collection addressed to the Americas, all of which were struck with “A_g” hand stamps, I have five Romanian air mail covers posted during 1941 addressed to North or South America, and one to Portugal, *none* of which have the “A_g” hand stamp. I

show, for instance, (Fig. 3a, b), a registered air mail cover from Bucharest to New York posted 2nd June 1941, arriving 27th June. This cover has all the hallmarks of a cover flown the north Atlantic by Pan Am over FAM-18: on the back is a Lisbon transit mark for



Figure 2.



Figure 3a.

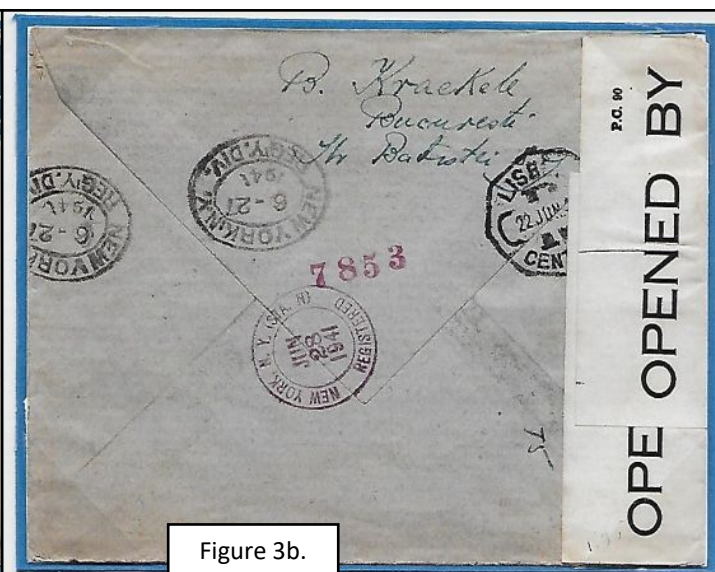


Figure 3b.

Lisbon (22nd June) and the envelope was opened for examination by Imperial censors in Bermuda (P.C.90 “OPENED BY CENSOR 6168” re-sealing tape). Censor 6168 is recorded ⁽³⁾ operating in Bermuda in the period August 19, 1940 to 15 July 1942) The Romanian postage of 167 Lei (16 Lei surface + 16 Lei registration + 3x5 Lei per 5 gm. air to USA (rate 10 April 1941 – 14 April 1942) was correct for air service to the United States⁽⁴⁾

A second Romanian example, a cover to South America, (Fig. 4a, b) was sent as a registered air mail letter from Bucharest October 25, 1941 to Santiago de Chile, arriving November 22nd. Correctly franked 136 Lei (20 Lei surface + 20 Lei registration (UPU rates July 1941 – April 1945) + 96 Lei per 5 gm. air to Chile).⁽⁴⁾ The routing through New York is unambiguous since the back shows transit date stamps for Lisbon November 5 and New York November 18, and the letter was censored in transit in Bermuda, as shown through the Type CL9 P.C.90 “OPENED BY EXAMINER 5175” censorship re-sealing tape. Censor 5175 is recorded active in Bermuda during the period 27 June 1941 – 5 October 1943⁽³⁾. 27 days in transit suggests this Romanian cover was probably flown over most, if not all the legs, of the route Romania to Chile.



Figure 4a.

plus a further Romanian cover addressed to Portugal, available for the present study, it is possible this very small sample might eventually be shown to be atypical. Bulgarian covers might eventually be found that, as with all the Romanian covers examined to date, were not struck with the Vienna censorship “Ag” handstamp. My heart nearly stopped when evaluating my collection. I thought I had one Bulgarian cover to the United States that did not have the “Ag” postmark, but on closer inspection I saw that the Vienna censor mark had been applied so faintly that it was all too easy to overlook. Conversely Romanian air mail covers to the United States or South America might ultimately be found bearing the Vienna “Ag” handstamp which would serve to debunk my shaky theory. In the absence of such contrary evidence, however, I choose to assume as a working hypothesis that, unlike the case for Romanian air mail, it was normal practice for Bulgarian air mail letters, whether forwarded via Italy or directly from Germany towards Portugal and on to the Americas, to be struck with the Viennese “Ag” censor markings. I conclude all Bulgarian letters were flown in 1941 via route #17 towards Germany, thence to Lisbon.



Figure 4b.

The second possible explanation, that the Vienna censorship station treated Bulgarian air mail differently from Romanian air mail, is easily disproved. Romanian and Bulgarian wartime air mail covers addressed to neutral Sweden *had* all to pass through Germany and covers from *both* countries to Sweden are invariably found struck with “Ag” postal markings. Thus, it is quite clear from the viewpoint of the German censorship authorities in Vienna that mail emanating from either Balkan country was to be treated without distinction. From this I conclude, therefore, the reason for the presence of “Ag” censor markings on Bulgarian air mail covers, as opposed to the absence of “Ag” markings on Romanian covers, had nothing whatsoever to do with any policy of treating mail differently occasioned by the country of origin.

This leaves us only with the third explanation, that mail from Romania travelled to Lisbon by a different route compared with the mail from Bulgaria, such that Romanian mail did not pass through Vienna. How can we explain this?

It is fair to assume that Romanian mail did not avoid transiting Vienna through being carried to Italy by surface means. If that were the case, then Bulgarian covers should also have travelled by surface means. We must bear in mind that Sofia is a lot closer to Italy, as the “crow flies”, than is Bucharest

So, what is the reason for the apparent different treatment of Bulgarian and Romanian air mail letters? There are three possible explanations that must be explored: (1) the number(5) of Romanian, and (7) Bulgarian covers in my collection may be insufficient to allow valid conclusions to be drawn; (2) from the point of view of the Wehrmacht censors in Vienna mail from Bulgaria might have been treated differently from mail from Romania; and (3) mail from Romania addressed to either North or South America travelled a different route from the Bulgarian mail and did not transit Vienna. We will examine these three possibilities in turn.

With only seven Bulgarian and five Romanian air mail covers to the Americas,

There were some wartime air mail services that functioned intermittently linking Romania with Italy, or even only part way as far as Belgrade, Yugoslavia. For instance, during 1939 a joint LARES / Avioleone Italiane / Aeroput service (560/425) had been operated over the route Constanta (Romania)-Bucharest-Belgrade-Zagreb-Venice-Milan-Turin. This service, believed to have ceased in October 1939, was re-activated during 1940, being suspended 23 October 1940⁽⁷⁾. Furthermore, during the early part of 1940, Ala Littoria Route #425 operated the route Constanta-Bucharest-Belgrade-Rome. We are not sure when this route was suspended, but Marinescu⁽⁷⁾ suggests both these routes did not operate beyond October of that year.

Direct air mail service between Romania and Italy became impossible for most of 1941. In October 1940, Italy declared war against Greece. Initially Greek forces repelled the Italian invasion such that Germany was obliged to come to the rescue of its ally, and invaded Greece through Bulgaria, at the same time invading Yugoslavia. All air mail routes through Yugoslavia were suspended.

The existence of a Bucharest-Belgrade-Zagreb-Venice service (Route #560), is confirmed in the Deutsche Lufthansa summer flight plan for 16 August 1940, but as explained above its absence from the July 1941 flight plan is entirely as expected. Furthermore, service over Route #560 is not shown in any of the four subsequent flight plans which were scheduled to come into effect on 24 November 1941, 6 April 1942, 29 March 1943, and 31 January 1944.

All the above information would tend to debunk any notions of air mail routes operative during 1941 linking Romania with Italy. What may prove significant, however, is that shown in the Lufthansa summer flight plan of August 1940, there is another candidate routing that might well have been used to fly mail out of Bucharest towards Italy. There was a direct air mail route, (#572), linking Budapest, Hungary with Venice that did not stop at intermediary points within Yugoslavia. Furthermore, there was also a joint LARES/Malert Route #1370 which connected Bucharest with Budapest via Arad (Romania). Route #572 is, as expected, absent from the flight plan map for July 1941 because if it had operated it would have involved overflying Yugoslavia during the Italian/German invasion. Route #572 does, however, make its re-appearance in the flight plan map of November 1941, by which time Yugoslavia had been subjugated. In the November 1941 plan the route is shown as Budapest - Zagreb - Venice now avoiding Belgrade and seems to have been flown in each direction three times per week.

What I would like to suggest is that the key to the conundrum as to why Romanian air mail seems not to have transited Vienna on its way to Lisbon, whereas Bulgarian air mail covers always seem to have gone via Vienna, is that there was some arrangement between the Romanian and Hungarian post offices such that mail arriving in Budapest, probably over Route #1370, was transferred to Route #570, later Route #572, service aircraft and flown on to Venice to connect with Route #9 southbound services Berlin-Venice-Rome. Such connections were always problematic and erratic, and subject to the vagaries not only of unforeseen weather fluctuations, but during the ebb and flow of fortunes during the war the availability and frequency of service depended upon availability of aircraft and most importantly the availability of precious aviation fuel. The Swiss P.T.T. listed German and Italian services⁽⁸⁾ that were operational throughout the war, and though the Swiss P.T.T. listing is not by any means complete, this list gives a snapshot of what routes and services might have been available to the Romanian Post Office and gives details of change of numbering of available routes.

Finally, I should add that I have neither systematically collected or studied Bulgarian or Romanian air mail covers addressed to Switzerland. Switzerland was always regarded as the epitome of a neutral country. I would expect mail passing through Vienna addressed to Switzerland also to be struck with "A_g" postal markings. None of the, admittedly very few, Romanian or Bulgarian wartime covers in my collection addressed to Switzerland bear German censorship markings. Does the evidence given by these very few covers invalidate the whole of my thesis? Perhaps mail addressed to Switzerland automatically passed through German censor stations without even a cursory examination?

Conversely the two 1941 Bulgarian air mail covers addressed to Italy that I have in my collection both bear "A_g" handstamps. Clearly these Bulgarian covers to Italy were carried to destination via Vienna as were Bulgarian covers sent to the Americas. To date I have not been successful in locating any Romanian air mail covers sent to Italy in 1941 to allow comparison.

If my explanation for the different treatment of Bulgarian and Romanian air mail covers sent to either the North or South America is substantially correct, I would suggest Italian mail to Romania flown the reverse direction should likewise not show evidence of having passed through Vienna. Similarly Hungarian air mail covers addressed to either North or South America should show no evidence of having passed through the Vienna censorship office (I have two such covers). I await response from my fellow collectors who with greater understanding than I, will be able to shed light on the possible wartime air mail routes linking Romania on the one hand, and Bulgaria on the other, with Iberia and with North and South America.

Acknowledgement.

I am exceedingly grateful to Richard Beith who kindly furnished me with photocopies of Lufthansa wartime timetables and flight maps for November 1939, August 1940, July and November 1941, April 1942, and for January 1944. These documents proved invaluable in helping crystallise this presentation.

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Literature Review.

Cachets Applied to Interrupted New Zealand Airmail: Aeroplane Trip cancelled; Air Service Interrupted. Brian R Peace and Robin D Gwynn

This book is a detailed study of the cachets applied to covers when New Zealand internal air mail services were interrupted or cancelled, primarily due to bad weather. All known examples are described. The majority of the covers (87) are dated between 1936 and 1938 although there is a reasonable number of examples (47) between 1939 and 1947 and then a very small number of further examples (16) up to 1967. It does not deal with cancellations due to earthquakes, floods and crashes.

The information has been collected by the authors over 30 years and colour scans are given of most examples together with detailed descriptions and information from contemporary newspapers about the reason for most of the service cancellations. As most New Zealand newspapers up to 1945 are now online at the Paperspast website, readers will be able to find further details for themselves.

Regular internal air mail services by Cook Strait Airways and Union Airways were started in New Zealand in March 1936 linking the North and South Islands and the great majority of the interruptions and cancellations were due to bad weather over the Cook Strait that separates the two islands. As you would expect, in the 1930s, aircraft were much more affected by adverse weather conditions than modern aircraft which is why most of the covers are from 1936-38. In virtually all the cases only one or two example covers are known and I assume that a major aim of the book is to encourage collectors to examine their collections for further examples.

The book gives a brief history of the different airlines together with detailed listings of their aircraft together with photographs of aircraft and airports. The aircraft listings and their allocation to companies will be of great interest to all collectors of New Zealand internal air mail of the period.

The book has 109 pages and is published by Mowbray Collectables, Wellington, New Zealand. Available for NZ\$35.00 + P&P (john@mowbrays.co.nz)

Reviewed by *Robert Clark.*