THE LATEST SUPPLEMENT TO THE STANLEY GIBBONS CATALOGUE INSIDE

GIBBONS STAMP MONTHLY

MARCH 2026

£5.35

THE FIRST CHOICE FOR STAMP COLLECTORS SINCE 1890

PUBLISHED BY STANLEY GIBBONS

GERMAN STATES



The postal history and first stamps of Schleswig-Holstein

ROYAL REVENUES



Identifying the fiscal issues of the Indian Princely States

PRESTIQUE

Britain's pioneering self-adhesive stamp trials





THE 1935 SILVER JUBILEE AIRMAILS

Routes, rates and surviving covers from Kingsford Smith's ill-fated Trans-Tasman flight

PLUS: PANORAMA · DEFINITIVE WATCH

03
9 770954 808212

END OF A DREAM: KINGSFORD SMITH'S 1935 TRANS-TASMAN FLIGHT PART 1

By Neil Donen and Peter Gilmour

This two-part study by Neil Donen and Peter Gilmour revisits Kingsford Smith's ill-fated 1935 Silver Jubilee Trans-Tasman flight, a pivotal episode in Australasian aerophilately. Drawing on newly uncovered archival lists and contemporary press reports, it clarifies mail numbers, routes, rates and surviving covers – especially concerning the 'saved mail' that reshaped understanding of covers from the Silver Jubilee Trans-Tasman flight.



Fig 1 A blank postcard with an 8d. 30th Anniversary of first Trans-Tasman flight stamp. The postcard shows the *Southern Cross* with Sir Charles Kingsford Smith in the inset (Reduced)

Previously in *Gibbons Stamp Monthly*, Neil Donen had highlighted the range of collecting options and interests associated with the King George V 1935 Silver Jubilee issue. In this two-part article we will cover another area, the first associated with the end of one person's dream to acquire the rights to carry airmail between Australia and New Zealand, the second involving the heroic achievements of an individual and finally, the unlocking of an 90-year-old postal history story.

The articles also serve the purpose of assisting new and regular collectors of Trans-Tasman mail in identifying numbers mailed from points of origins and their destinations. As most of the information contained in these two articles comes from archival and newspaper sources, we have chosen to list key archival references, all available online from the National Archives of Australia (NAA) and the digital newspapers of past issues provided by the National Libraries of Australia and New Zealand. We believe that accessing these sources of information provides an opportunity for either selecting or confirming areas of collection. This may include such possibilities as one-way mail, return mail, mail from or to specific destinations, etc. Finally, we hope it will provide a perspective on advertisements for so-called 'rare Silver Jubilee Trans-Tasman flight covers'.

Background and context

In June 1928 Charles Kingsford Smith, the Australian aviator, achieved international fame with the first Trans-Pacific flight in his tri-motor plane, the *Southern Cross* (*Fig 1*). He subsequently undertook a number of notable flights, including the first flight across the Tasman Sea from Australia to New Zealand in September 1928. Between 1928 and 1934 he undertook six further flights between the two countries. He was knighted for his services to aviation in 1932.

In early 1935 a British delegation met with the two governments to discuss the extension of the Imperial Airways All-Empire Air Mail scheme to include the Australia-New Zealand section using flying boats. Lobbying both governments to support an Australian initiative for this leg, Kingsford Smith was able to obtain permission in late April 1935 for a special bi-directional Trans-Tasman flight in recognition of King George V's Silver Jubilee. This was to be the seventh Trans-Tasman flight for the *Southern Cross*. For the flight Kingsford Smith was to be paid 4d. per mail item (parcels were not included in the proposed mail). A number of additional arrangements were put in place, including some potential philatelic 'firsts'. These will be discussed in this and the subsequent article.

Flight preparation

Planning for the flight began immediately following approval.

a) Postage: Special arrangements were put in place. For mail going only one-way, stamps from the originating country had to be used. Either Australian or New Zealand stamps were eligible for postage use for mail to be returned in either direction. This included mail from New Zealand which was to be flown from Australia.

Table 1 provides a detailed breakdown of the postage rates. Note the differences in the calculation of the total airmail rate applied by the two postal administrations. There was also a different surface mail rate. Additionally, a separate 3d. registration fee was applied for each direction of the mail routing, as well as an internal 3d. per ½ ounce (oz) Australian airmail fee.

Table 1: Applicable postage rates

Descriptor	Rate
Trans-Tasman: Australia to New Zealand air	Air fee = 5d. per ½oz plus 2d. per oz surface rate
Trans-Tasman: New Zealand to Australia air	7d. per ½oz inclusive fee
Surface Mail (per oz)	New Zealand-Australia 1d.; Australia-New Zealand 2d.
Internal airmail/per ½oz (Australia)	3d.
Airmail to Britain – per ½oz	1s.6d (Australia and New Zealand rates the same)
Registration Fee	3d. (additional fee applied for each leg of flight)

Routing restrictions were placed on returning mail that had originated in Australia. Surface mail could be forwarded to any destination. However, forwarded airmail had restrictions placed on their routings and destinations. Airmail could be forwarded either to anywhere in Australia, routings along the Australia-Singapore-London route or the Papua-New Guinea air service.

b) New Zealand Airmail stamps: On 4 May 1935, the New Zealand Post and Telegraph Department (NZP&T) issued a new set of airmail stamps (the Australian 1935 Silver Jubilee stamps were issued two days earlier, i.e., 2 May). Initially they were only available for sale at major centres in the country. Concomitantly, the set was also issued in Australia. This marked the first occasion that New Zealand (NZ) had placed stamps on sale on their first day of issue in a foreign country's post offices (in 1934 New Zealand stamps were sold through the New Zealand Government offices in Melbourne and Sydney for Charles Ulm Trans-Tasman flight of 11 April). Departing Wellington on 30 April, the stamps arrived in Sydney via the SS *Maunganui* on 4 May. The number of stamps sent were 1d. (30,000), 3d. (15,000) and 6d. (30,000). Half of the number of each value were assigned to the New Zealand Tourist Bureaus in Sydney and Melbourne, the other half to AP&T. *Table 2* provides details of their use by AP&T.

c) Envelopes: As part of his publicity campaign, Kingsford Smith designed a special lightweight (airmail weight) envelope. These were distributed free at post offices in Australia and New Zealand. Some 50,000 envelopes were produced in Australia and were coloured either white, blue or old gold (*Fig 2*). An additional 25,000 were produced in New Zealand. These were slightly larger and heavier with a different coloured script i.e., chocolate or blue, on a cream cover (*Fig 3*). They were printed in Australia and delivered to New Zealand on the SS *Wanganella*, arriving in Wellington on 8 May.

d) Special Melbourne-Sydney flight: On Sunday evening 12 May, the Melbourne GPO discovered that two mail bags from Hobart had not been included with the Jubilee mail that left on the afternoon railway express to Sydney. Arrangements were made for a special flight to carry these articles to Sydney, leaving the next morning. Taking advantage of this arrangement, the Melbourne postal officials also flew an additional locally mailed 239 items (229 ordinary and 10 registered) that had been received after the departure of the Sunday train. The items would have been cancelled either on 12 or 13 of May and are much sought after. These were included in their respective Melbourne 'destination' bags in Sydney. Thus, some of these items survived the

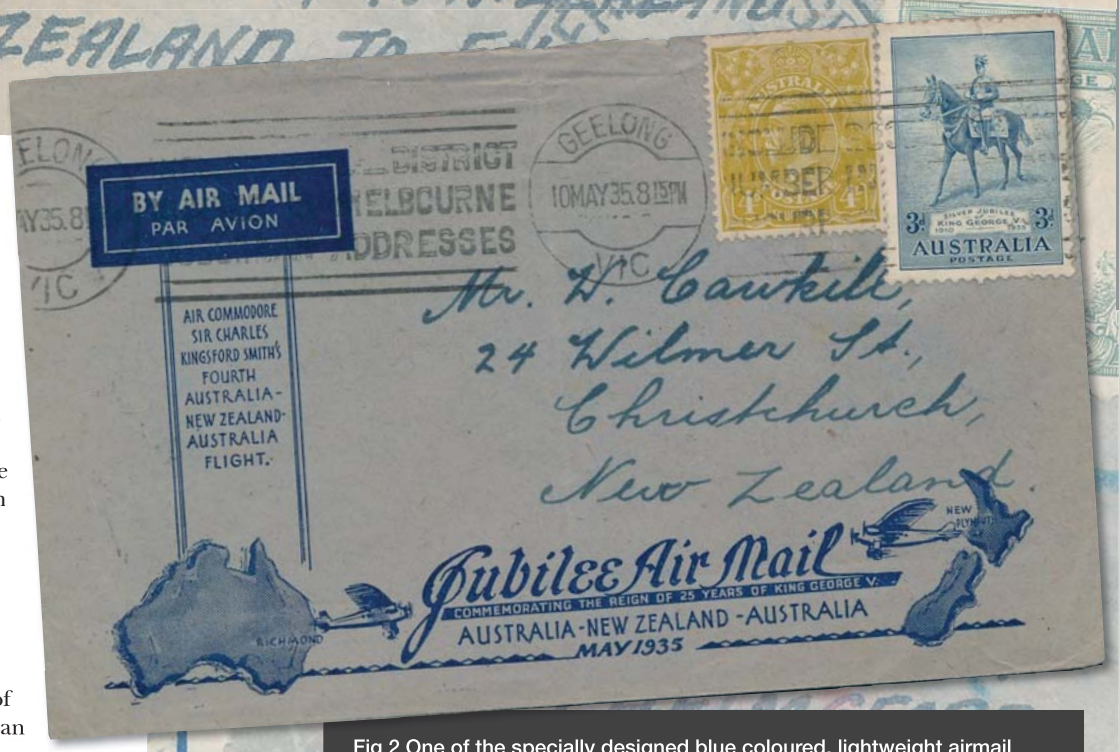

Fig 2 One of the specially designed blue coloured, lightweight airmail envelopes produced for the 1935 Trans-Tasman Jubilee air flight. This example was mailed from Geelong, near Melbourne to Christchurch, New Zealand. The two stamps pay the special one-way airmail rate of 7d. per ½ oz. The cover has the special Wellington receiving cancel on the back



Fig 3 Jubilee airmail covers such as this were made available free at post offices in New Zealand. The chocolate script covers were slightly larger and heavier than the Australian lightweight covers. The applied postage pays the special 7d. one-way airmail rate to Australia and 2d. surface return rate back to Christchurch. Note the cancellation of stamps by the respective postal authorities (Reduced)

Table 2: A summary of sale of New Zealand airmail stamps in Australia – 1935

	New South Wales	Victoria	Queensland	South Australia	Tasmania	Totals
1d.						
Number provided	9000	3750	1000	1000	250	15,000
Number sold	6317	1568	527	1000	181	9593
3d.						
Number provided	4500	1875	500	500	125	7500
Number sold	2709	856	271	500	96	4432
6d.						
Number provided	9000	3750	1000	1000	250	15,000
Number sold	5295	148	363	861	125	7792
Total sales (£)	£192 11s.2d.	£45 18s.8d.	£14 13s.2d	£31 18s.10d.	£5 1s.7d.	£290 3s.5d.

flight. Finally, a decision was also made to include, on the special flight, 33 other mail items on which New Zealand stamps had been used to pay postage for the Trans-Tasman flight.

The flight

On the morning of 15 May 1935, the *Southern Cross*, departed from the Sydney Mascot aerodrome bound for New Plymouth in New Zealand. Piloting the plane was Kingsford Smith. Accompanying him was Patrick Gordon Taylor (co-pilot and navigator) and John Stannage (wireless operator). Originally it was planned to use two aircraft to carry the mail to New Zealand. However, because the mail load was less than expected, it was decided to use a single plane.

A total of 28,279 mail items, in 21 mail bags and weighing 398lbs 8oz were officially carried on the departing flight. Another six covers, from Ernest Crome, the well-known Australian aerophilatelist were given personally to Kingsford Smith to be carried on the flight. Kingsford Smith was to be paid 4d. per mail item carried i.e., £471 6s.4d and, despite the abandonment of the flight the AP&T still authorised the payment which Kingsford Smith described as an 'act of grace'.

Approximately eight hours into the flight and over the Tasman Sea the starboard engine propellor was damaged and the engine had to be shut down. Kingsford Smith was forced to turn back and jettison most of the mail (14 mail bags) and freight to lighten the load for the overheated engines. Taylor, in one of the most dramatic events in aerophilatelic history, saved the plane and crew by climbing out on to the wing struts and transferring oil from the dead starboard engine to the overheated port engine. He received the Empire Gallantry Medal (called the George Cross today) for this act of bravery.

Landing successfully in Sydney, it was discovered that seven small mailbags, with 1277 mail items had been overlooked by Stannage and were still on board. These items were transported by ship to New Zealand, receiving a specially prepared cancel on arrival (*Fig 4*). New Zealand mail items scheduled to be on the return flight to Australia (approximately 13,000), were sent to Australia by sea. All of these items, except those that were to be carried onwards by air, were cancelled on arrival in Sydney (*Fig 5*).

The saved mail

On return of the *Southern Cross* to Sydney, the Director-General of Australia Posts & Telegraphs (AP&T), Harry Brown, took the unusual step of listing the names and addresses of the recipients of the saved mail. This list (found in the first listed reference) together with the saved mail was despatched to New Zealand via the SS *Wanganella*. The list, which was only recently uncovered, opened the door to a more detailed analysis of destinations of the mail on this special flight. This is the only commemorative flight we know of where there is a list of the addressees and one can identify the final destinations of the covers, i.e., it is unique.

The mail was transported overnight from Auckland to Wellington, arriving there on 23 May, where a special relief (skeleton) receiving cancel was applied (*Fig 4*). This cancel is the only documentation on the cover that the mail item was carried on the aborted flight. Note the special cancel was not applied to those mail items being forwarded to the United Kingdom or elsewhere, where all the stamps on the cover were Australian (see *Fig 8*). NZP&T followed up by mailing each of the locally delivered items in an OHMS envelope accompanied by a letter from either the Director-General or the Chief Postmaster of the District.



Fig 4 A special Wellington relief receiving cancel was applied to all saved mail from the Trans-Tasman flight, except to airmail forwarded beyond Australia where all stamps are Australian. This postmark is the gold standard used to confirm the cover was actually on the flight



Fig 5 A Sydney receiving machine cancel of 4p.m. 20 May. It was applied to mail leaving New Zealand on 17 May and carried on the SS *Monowai* and SS *Monterey*. The mail items had been expected to be flown on the return flight of the *Southern Cross*. It was not applied to those items which were to be forwarded by airmail beyond Sydney

Table 3: Details of the Trans-Tasman Mail

Dispatched From	Mail Lost			Mail Saved (7 bags)	
	Unregistered	Registered		Unregistered	Registered
Sydney (New South Wales) + NZ*	21,927	977		0	0
Melbourne (Victoria)	2269	408		344	19
Adelaide (South Australia)	810	218		86	8
Brisbane (Queensland)	157	2		641	87
Perth (Western Australia)	124	18		0	0
Hobart (Tasmania)	88	4		0	0
Launceston (Tasmania)	0	0		58	34
Total	25,375	1627		1129	148

*** = It is estimated that approximately 7000 mail items from New Zealand were included in the Sydney mailbags.**
Total mail items: 28,279 (Ordinary mail 26,504, Registered mail 1775)

Table 4: Destinations of 1277 Saved Mail Items by City of Dispatch

To/From	Brisbane	Melbourne	Adelaide	Launceston
Australia				
- Queensland	343 / 51			
- Capital Territory	- / 3			
- New South Wales	8 / 1			
- Victoria	1 / 1	5 / -		
- South Australia			- / 1	
- Tasmania				13 / 11
New Zealand				
- North Island	225 / 14	7 / -	86 / 7	31 / 1
- South Island	11 / -	332 / 19		11 / 22
Great Britain	32 / 16			3 / -
USA	14 / -			
Elsewhere	7 / 1			
Total	641 / 87	344 / 19	86 / 8	58 / 34

Note: Mail numbers are listed as unregistered/registered items in this table.



Fig 6 A 'boomerang' cover paying the airmail rate of 7d. per ½oz. each way. Note the Brisbane cancellation of 11 May 1935 on the Australian 1935 Silver Jubilee stamps and the special Wellington cancel used on the New Zealand stamps. The New Zealand airmail stamps were probably purchased in Brisbane. The back of the cover has the Wellington receiving cancel of 23 May and a Brisbane receiving cancel of 28 May (Reduced)

Table 3 provides information on both the lost and saved mail from the flight. Note that all mail carried in Sydney mailbags were lost. This included an estimated 7000 mail items from New Zealand that had either travelled from New Zealand in closed mail bags on the SS *Wanganella* or had been mailed directly under cover to the General Post Office in Sydney. The mail bags from Perth and Hobart were among those thrown overboard, each weighing less than 3lbs. It should be noted that there were in fact a total of 33 mail bags on the flight, with 12 bags placed in one of the Sydney or Melbourne bags.

We have included additional information on the destinations of the saved mail as well as their dispatch cities. This is shown in *Table 4*. Note that all mail destined to the United States of America and 'Elsewhere' originated in Queensland. The eight items to 'Elsewhere' comprised mail to Czechoslovakia (2), Egypt (2), South Africa (1/1), Canada (1) and Peru (1). *Figure 2*, *Figure 6* to *8*, and *Figure 10* are all examples of mail flown originating in Australia. The figure descriptions provide information on the various postage rates applied.

Approximately one-sixth of the mail saved was addressed to just six people (see *Table 5*). The bulk of the covers were contained in the two Brisbane-Wellington bags with two addressees, Mr B J Grace and Mr B Blumenthal, responsible for 163 of the 216 covers. All 75 of Mr Grace's New Zealand bound covers were addressed c/o S. Curtis & Co, Ashhurst, near Palmerston North (*Fig 8*). The list of saved mail generated by APT identified a further 13 covers sent to the company (six from Brisbane and seven from Launceston). It appears that Mr Curtis was well known in Australian aerophilatelic circles as someone to whom first flight covers could be sent to.



Fig 7 A registered cover mailed on 10 May from Brisbane to Chelmsford, England. The back cover has a Chelmsford receiving cancel of 10 June but no Wellington or Sydney receiving cancel. The letter is listed in the saved mail list provided to NZP&T and AP&T. It was flown on IW344, departing Brisbane on 29 May and arriving in London on 10 June. Postage applied as follows: 3d. registration for each leg of flight (1s.); 1s.2d. for bi-directional Trans-Tasman flight (7d. each way); 1s.6d. for airmail to United Kingdom. Total postage paid 3 shillings and 8 pence (Reduced)



Fig 8 One of 75 covers mailed to B J Grace c/o Curtis & Co, Umutoi, New Zealand, paying the one-way airmail rate 7d. per ½oz. It has a Wellington skeleton cancel on the back cover. All items were numbered (see the top left corner)

Mailed too late

Not all mail items were mailed in time for the flight, which departed from Sydney just after midnight on 15 May (the mail bags were actually delivered to the *Southern Cross* the previous evening). To date we have identified 13 articles that received the two purple-coloured cachets that were applied in Sydney i.e., 'Received too late for/ jubilee air mail' (85mm×13mm) and 'Deliver as Addressed by/ordinary mail' (93mm×13mm) respectively (*Fig 9*).

Table 5: Destinations of 'Bulk Mailings'

Bag	Addressee	Country	City	Unregistered	Registered
Brisbane-Wellington	Mr E Andre	Australia	Brisbane	11	
	Mr B Blumenthal	Australia	Brisbane	29	31
		England	London		12
	Mr B J Grace	Australia	Brisbane	16	
		New Zealand	Umutoi	75	
Melbourne-Dunedin	Mr W Tregea	New Zealand	Dunedin	8	2
Launceston	Mr G Dunsford	New Zealand	Napier	12	
	Mr F L McFarlane	New Zealand	Lawrence	4	16
			Total	155	61

Table 6 shows the dates of mailing, origins and destinations. None of the seven covers mailed to New Zealand have receiving cancels. As the 'Too Late' covers were not part of the saved mail, they received no special recognition on arrival in New Zealand.

The lost mail

The loss of mail from the *Southern Cross* generated enough correspondence that a separate file at the NAA was opened. Much of the public anger generated was due to the fact that AP&T refused to compensate individuals who had registered their airmail items. A total of 1627 registered mail items were lost. It seems that many of these individuals used either high value or rarer stamps on their covers (*Figure 10* is an example of a saved mailed item where more than twice the required postage was applied to the envelope). The APT's argument was based on Article 57a of the UPU regulation i.e., 'Administrations shall be relieved from all responsibility for the loss of registered articles: (a) In circumstances beyond control:'

Comments and observations

We have used this article to provide a brief overview of the flight and its philatelic implications. The references enable those who wish to pursue the topic, and their collecting interest, at a much greater depth. Even though our specific interest in the subject extends beyond ten years, we continue to find new and more fascinating covers.

Article 2 will focus on mail from New Zealand and a look at other potential areas of collecting.



Fig 9 A 'boomerang' cover mailed from Melbourne on 14 May paying 1s.4d. The cover was conveyed by overnight train to Sydney where it received the two cachets as too late for the flight. Sydney receiving postmark of 11a.m. on 15 May on the back cover

Table 6: Australian mail items with special 'Too Late' cachets

Date Cancelled	Origin	Number	Destination
14 May	Melbourne	2	Australia
	Melbourne	3	New Zealand
	Sydney	1	Australia
	Sydney	2	New Zealand
	Albery (NSW)	1	New Zealand
15 May	Melbourne	1	Australia
	Sydney	1	Australia
	Sydney	1	New Zealand
16 May	Sydney	1	Australia

Selected references

1. National Archive of Australia (https://naa.gov.au) – Use advance search and enter the item ID.
2. National Archives of Australia. *Australia to New Zealand – Jubilee Air Mail.* NAA: MP273/1, 1935/8581. Item ID: 10458184. Melbourne.
3. National Archives of Australia. *Compensation for mail jettisoned from Southern Cross Jubilee Airmail to New Zealand.* NAA: MP273/1, 1936/2843. Item ID: 10534996. Melbourne.
4. National Archives of Australia. *Sir Charles Kingsford Smith Pacific flights Australia – NZ flight 1935 accident to VH-USU 'Southern Cross.'* NAA A705 21/1/61 Part 6. Item ID: 397214. (Inquiry into accident. Summary report pages 69-73)
5. Trove - National Libraries of Australia (https://trove.nla.gov.au) – dates between 29 April and 28 May, 1935. Major sources: *Adelaide Advertiser; Courier Mail* (Brisbane); *The Argus* (Melbourne); *Sydney Morning Herald; Daily Commercial and Shipping List* (Sydney).
6. National Libraries of New Zealand (https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers) – dates between 29 April and 25 May 1935. Major sources: *Auckland Star; New Zealand Herald* (Auckland); *Evening Post* (Wellington); *Northern Advocate* (Whangarei).

Below: Fig 10 An over-paid registered cover mailed from Scottsdale on 9 May. It has a return mail cancel at Wellington dated 23 May 1935 and a Launceston receiving postmark dated 29 May (Reduced)



END OF A DREAM: KINGSFORD SMITH'S 1935 TRANS-TASMAN FLIGHT PART 2

By Neil Donen and Peter Gilmour

In this second part of their examination of Sir Charles Kingsford Smith's ill-fated 1935 Trans-Tasman Jubilee flight, Neil Donen and Peter Gilmour shift the focus to mail originating in New Zealand. Drawing on contemporary newspapers, Australian archival material and surviving covers, they explore how New Zealand mail was prepared, routed, salvaged, redirected and, in some cases, returned, following the dramatic abandonment of the flight. The article also examines postage rates, cachets, rare 'Too Late' items, onward international airmail, and the ambitious first all-air service to the United Kingdom, before concluding with the fate of the *Southern Cross* and its celebrated crew.



New Zealand—First Air Mail—England
New Series—Air Mail Stamps—New Series

THE JUBILEE AIR MAIL leaving New Zealand approximately May 17th will give the FIRST COMPLETE AIR-MAIL COMMUNICATION between the Dominion and Britain.

Celebrate this unique Jubilee opportunity by using the specially designed Air Mail Stamps available from all Post Offices. The denominations are 1d, 3d, and 6d.

Air Mail Postage: To Great Britain and Ireland, 2s 1d each half-ounce. Charges to other countries on application at permanent post offices.

TRANS-TASMAN SILVER JUBILEE FLIGHT.

The aeroplane Southern Cross will fly from Sydney to New Zealand, taking off from Richmond Aerodrome on May 14th, and leaving New Zealand on the return flight approximately May 17th.

SPECIAL FACILITIES FOR NEW ZEALAND.

New Zealanders can include souvenir letters in this Australia-New Zealand Silver Jubilee Air Mail. Their letters may be posted under cover to General Post Office, Sydney. Either New Zealand or Australian stamps can be used. Rate of postage each way, 7d per half-ounce.

Final date for posting—by Wanganella from Wellington, Thursday, May 9.

Fig 1 An advertisement that appeared in the *Auckland Star* newspaper (6 May 1935, page 14) providing details on the new airmail series of stamps, the planned Trans-Tasman Jubilee flight and the first all-air mail flight to the United Kingdom

In our previous article on the 1935 Trans-Tasman flight, we focused primarily on mail flown on the aborted flight from Australia. In this article we turn our attention to mail originating in New Zealand. We will also briefly discuss the aircrew and the final fate of the *Southern Cross*.

Unfortunately, archival records from New Zealand Post and Telegraph (NZP&T) were destroyed in a fire in 1961. Thus, there are no accurate records regarding numbers of New Zealand mail items associated either with the original flight or those to be flown on the return Trans-Tasman flight. Our sources are newspapers of the day, correspondence records of the Australian Post and Telegraph (AP&T) held by the National Archives of Australia and various articles. As we did in the first article, we plan to list only a few selected references.

To briefly summarise the story, in late April 1935, Sir Charles Kingsford Smith received permission from the Australian and New Zealand governments for a special bi-directional flight between the two countries, honouring the 1935 Silver Jubilee of King George V. Taking off from Sydney on 15 May, the flight had to be aborted due to a damaged propeller. Most of the 28,279 mail items were thrown into the sea to lighten the load. After landing safely back in Australia, it was discovered that some of the mail was still on board. They were in smaller bags pushed into voids of the airframe and had been missed when the larger tied-down mail bags on the main cabin floor were jettisoned. These 1277 items were transported by sea to New Zealand where a special relief receiving cancel was applied.

New Zealand originating mail scheduled to be flown from Australia

Unfortunately, we have been unable to uncover exactly how many mail items originating from New Zealand were carried on the aborted flight. These would have been transported to Australia aboard the SS *Wanganella* which arrived in Sydney on 12 May. Most articles quote the number at about 7000 covers. All of these covers were placed in the Sydney mail bags, which were thrown out of the *Southern Cross* into the Tasman Sea.

Soon after the announcement of the planned flight, notices began appearing in New Zealand newspapers advertising the flight and providing information regarding the posting of items (*Fig 1*). The arrangements including mailing letters 'under cover' (a specific mail item placed inside a second envelope labelled 'Postage Paid'), care of the General Post Office in Sydney. This out-of-country, postage-free mailing arrangement was another New Zealand philatelic first.

Airmail scheduled to be flown from New Zealand

As noted in our first article, 25,000 specially designed cachet covers were made available, beginning 11 May 1935, for free at major post offices throughout the country. They were transported to New Zealand on the SS *Wanganella*, making them available for the return Trans-Tasman flight.

Archival files reveal that approximately 13,000 mail items from New Zealand were scheduled to be flown on the return Trans-Tasman flight. This included mail scheduled to be flown beyond Australia. As the mail items had already been posted, NZP&T, in keeping with existing policy, decided to mail them. These were transported via the SS *Monowai* which departed from Wellington (carrying approximately 2000 items from

the South Island) and the SS *Monterey* with another estimated 11,000 mail items, departing from Auckland. Both vessels left New Zealand on 17 May and arrived in Sydney on 20 May within an hour of each other. Although no special receiving cancels, was used, all Australia-bound and international surface mail received the same Sydney machine cancel of 4p.m., 20 May (*Fig 2*). Based on our calculations (see below) we estimate that approximately 7000 covers were transported on the two vessels for either delivery in Australia or for return to New Zealand.

Saved mail from the aborted flight destined for Australia and beyond was carried back later to Australia on the SS *Wanganella*, arriving in Sydney on 27 May. Examples of the covers were shown in the first article.

a) Mail from New Zealand to Australia:

Postage for the flight from New Zealand to Australia was set at a flat rate of 7d. per half ounce (oz) by NZP&T. As noted in article 1, this differed from the Australian rates which included a supplementary Trans-Tasman airmail fee of 5d. per half oz, in addition to the surface rate of 2d. per oz. *Figure 3* and *Figure 4* are examples of New Zealand single and double rate usage on covers. The single rate cover from New Zealand to Australia is the commonest of all the 1935 Trans-Tasman covers seen.

Originally Kingsford Smith had planned to undertake the return flight to Australia on 20 May. A decision was reached by NZP&T and AP&T to instead transport this mail via sea to Australia, departing New Zealand on 17 May.

b) Mail scheduled to be flown to Australia and returned to New Zealand:

Rather than not carry the mail items already posted, NZP&T instead, offered to refund postage on any covers returned to them. While speculative, we believe this to be a prime reason for the relative difficulty in finding and acquiring Trans-Tasman airmail returned from Australia.

Return mail from Australia to New Zealand was charged 2d. per oz. It was agreed by the two postal authorities that New Zealand stamps could be used in lieu of Australian stamps to cover the postage costs. These items were carried back to New Zealand on the SS *Monowai*, arriving back in Wellington on 27 May. *Figure 5* shows such an example. Note the single New Zealand cancel.



Fig 2 The Sydney receiving machine cancel of 4p.m., 20 May 1935. This was applied to mail leaving New Zealand on 17 May and carried on the SS *Monowai* and SS *Monterey*. It was not applied to those items which were to be forwarded by airmail beyond Sydney



Fig 3 A cover mailed from Auckland on 16 May 1935 to Manly, New South Wales, paying the special one-way Trans-Tasman postage rate of 7d. per ½ oz. It has a Sydney machine receiving cancel of 20 May on the reverse side

All covers shown reduced



Fig 4 A cover mailed from Springfield, New Zealand (South Island) to Freemantle, Western Australia, dated 14 May 1936. The sender paid the double mail rate 1s.2d. (base rate 7d. per ½ oz). There is no datestamp on the back cover



Fig 5 A 'boomerang' cover from Christchurch, dated 14 May 1935, paying the special 7d. per ½oz New Zealand-Australia air rate and 2d. per oz surface rate from Australia to New Zealand. A Sydney 4p.m. 20 May machine receiving cancel was applied on the back

Figure 6 includes both New Zealand and Australian stamps. Attention is drawn to the cancellation marks which were applied by the respective postal authorities to their own stamps only. The cachet cover is also unusual and is the only such example we have seen.

c) Mail destined outside of Australia and New Zealand:

As part of its policy put in place for the 1935 Trans-Tasman flight, AP&T agreed to transport mail items to other countries. However, all airmail items had to connect with routings used by either the Brisbane-London or the Papua-New Guinea air services. Many New Zealanders were able to make use of this arrangement and covers to many destinations can be found. We have included two examples. The first is an airmail cover to Kodaikanal in South India (*Fig 7*). The cover to the United States of America was scheduled to be flown to Australia with subsequent transmission by sea (*Fig 8*). The back of the covers also reflected the policy of applying the Sydney receiving cancel to onward surface transmission, but not to out-of-country destinations using airmail.

First 'all-air' flight New Zealand to the United Kingdom

During the planning process of the proposed 1935 Trans-Tasman flight, NZP&T saw an opportunity to use the flight as part of the first all-air mail flight between New Zealand and the United Kingdom (UK). This was possible as, at this time, there were already regular weekly flights between Australia and the UK. Following agreement by AP&T, planning began almost immediately. It was also agreed that mail originating in Australia, that would be flown on the return flight and onward to the UK, could use Australian stamps. These covers were to be placed in special mail bags so that the Sydney GPO could forward them with airmail items destined for the UK.

As part of their planning NZP&T decided to design a special commemorative cover for the flight. This was available for free at most major post offices in the country (*Fig 9*). On 6 May an announcement appeared in various New Zealand newspapers providing details of the proposed all-air mail flight (see *Fig 1*). The details included the availability of the special souvenir envelopes, date of departure of the flight from New Zealand (17 May), postage cost (2s.1d. per ½oz, inclusive of the New Zealand-Australia Trans-Tasman flight) as well as the application of the blue airmail label affixed to the cover and the superscription of the name of the flight i.e., 'New Zealand-England air mail'.



Fig 6 An unusual cachet cover commemorating the return Trans-Tasman Silver Jubilee flight and the eighth crossing of the *Southern Cross*, paying the correct postage rate for the flight and return mail. Mailed from Carterton (near Wellington) 14 May. It has a Sydney receiving cancel of 4p.m. on 20 May on the reverse side of the cover. The front cover shows Australian stamps cancelled in Sydney at 5p.m. on 20 May with a different cancel. Note the cancellation application by the respective postal authorities to their own stamps only



Fig 7 A cover mailed from Christchurch on 14 May to Pernambut, South India, redirected to Kadaikanal. Postage paid covered the 7d. per ½ oz Trans-Tasman air fee plus the 1s.2d, New Zealand-India airmail rate. Note the airmail manuscript endorsement of the first 'All Air connection, New Zealand-India.' It has a transit postmarks of Calcutta and Pernambut on the back and a Kodaikanal receiving cancel of 1 June



Fig 8 A cover mailed from Napier on 13 May to Fort Wayne, Indiana, USA. It has a Sydney machine postmark of 4p.m. on 20 May on the reverse but no other marks. Postage includes 7d. for the Trans-Tasman fee plus 1d. surface rate to the USA (correct New Zealand surface rate). It was originally taxed 40 centimes as the twice deficiency of 2d. (the Australia surface rate to the USA was 3d). Subsequently cancelled

Subsequent articles appeared in New Zealand newspapers indicating that special arrangements had been made with the New Zealand High Commissioner in London. For an additional 2d. (prepaid in New Zealand stamps), any letters addressed to the High Commissioner's Office would be mailed back by ordinary mail to any address written on the back of the envelope (*Fig 10*). Because of the absence of any British postmarks,

we believe these items were placed in diplomatic mail pouches and returned to New Zealand for mailing. The usual routing for this mail from the UK to New Zealand was via North America (either via Vancouver to Wellington or via San Francisco to Auckland). Covers which also have the actual return receiving cancel date (5–8 August) are relatively scarce.

While the number of airmail items mailed for this first flight are unknown, we are able to make some rough estimates based on the number of items and their weight originally carried on the outward-bound flight of the *Southern Cross*. Our calculations also included the mail bag weight information provided by NZP&T to AP&T for airmail beyond Australia. The calculations would suggest that about 1000 mail items were mailed to intermediary countries and approximately another 5000 items to the UK!

'Too Late' Mail originating in New Zealand

New Zealand residents were offered the opportunity to have covers flown from Australia, i.e., the initial leg of the bi-directional flight. Newspaper clippings suggested two possible options. The first option was to mail the item under cover, 'Postage Paid' to the General Post Office in Sydney. This could be prepaid in either New Zealand or Australian stamps. The second option was for mail to be accepted at the local Post Office for inclusion in the planned flight. All the various arrangements indicated that the Australia-bound mail would be carried on the SS *Wanganella*, departing Wellington on 9 May, arriving at Sydney on 12 May, three days before the departure of Kingsford Smith's flight.

To date we have identified five covers originating in New Zealand, three of which were from the North Island (*Fig 11*). In addition to the cachets, these five covers share additional common characteristics, i.e.:

1. Only New Zealand stamps are present on the cover.
2. A Sydney number 39 receiving cancel, with a 3p.m., 20 May 1935 date mark is present.
3. A New Zealand receiving cancel of 28 May at their respective destinations.
4. Application of the two purple cachets ('RECEIVED TOO LATE FOR/JUBILEE AIR MAIL' (85mm×13mm) and 'DELIVER AS ADDRESSED BY/ORDINARY MAIL' (93mm×13mm)) in Sydney.

We believe all five covers missed the 9 May sailing of the SS *Wanganella* and were included in the mail sent to Australia on 17 May. Although both the SS *Monowai* and SS *Monterey* (departing Auckland) were also carrying mail originally destined for



Fig 9 A specially designed cover by New Zealand Post & Telegraph for the planned first all-air New Zealand-England mail. The design is in one colour only and the cover was heavier than the lightweight covers provided by Kingsford Smith. This cover was mailed at 10a.m. on 17 May, catching the 3p.m. departure of the SS *Monterey* to Sydney. Paying the correct postage (7d. for Trans-Tasman flight and 1s.6d. for airmail to England), the cover was transported on flight IW342, arriving in London on 3 June



Fig 10 A cover mailed airmail (2s.1d.) c/o New Zealand High Commissioner in London, which was to be returned to the sender. The back includes the additional 2d. required for the return of the item. Note the sender's address and the Carterton receiving cancel of 6 August



Fig 11 A 'Too Late' cover mailed from New Zealand with special Sydney cachets. Note the straight-line 'disfiguring' cancels and the Sydney transit cancel of 20 May, indicating the item missed the 9 May sailing of the SS *Wanganella*. The back cover has a Greenmeadows receiving cancel

the return Trans-Tasman flight and arrived in Sydney on 20 May, these five covers received a different Sydney cancellation in addition to the purple cachets.

The crew and the plane

a) *The Plane:* The *Southern Cross* is a Fokker F.VIIb/3m trimotor monoplane (see *Fig 1* in our first article). Originally it was two planes used for Arctic exploration. Following crashes the parts were used as a rebuild for a single plane in 1928. It achieved international fame and recognition following the first successful Trans-Pacific flight to Australia later that year. Other successful first flights included the Trans-Tasman flight to New Zealand in 1928 and the completion of first East-West circumnavigation of the world through various flights. By 1935 it was probably the most famous and well-known plane in the world.

b) *The crew* (*Fig 12*): Charles Kingsford Smith was born in Australia in 1897. After seeing action at Gallipoli in World War I, he joined the Royal Flying Corps where he was awarded the Military Cross in 1917. After the war he continued working as a pilot. Apparently bored by the tedium of routine commercial flying, he embarked on many successful pioneering flights. In 1930, he and Charles Ulm, who had accompanied him on the first Trans-Tasman flight, formed the Australian National Airlines. In 1932 he was knighted for these flights.

Patrick Gordon ('Bill') Taylor was born in Australia in 1896. Like Kingsford Smith, he joined the Royal Flying Corps and was awarded the Military Cross in 1917. After working for various airline companies, he joined the Australian National Airlines. He worked closely with Kingsford Smith and became the second pilot and navigator on many of Kingsford Smith's pioneering flights.

John Stannage was born in South Africa in 1905. Trained as a wireless operator he joined Kingsford Smith in 1930, accompanying him on many of Smith's flights. In 1932 he married Kingsford Smith's niece.

Both well-known Australian aerophilatelists, Ernest Crome and Nelson Eustis, sought to capitalise on the Jubilee Trans-Tasman flight, extracting a fee for obtaining signatures of the crew members (*Fig 13*). One such example is shown in *Figure 14*.

Summary table and ships schedules

The number of different dates and vessel sailings often produces a confusing picture. The summary table has been included so as to permit the reader a dated guide to the events. It is recommended that this be referred to regularly when reading the two articles. We have also included a schematic showing the dates of departures and arrivals of the various vessels (*Fig 15*). It should be viewed when using the summary table. As with the summary, its regular viewing is recommended.

Summary of Events: 1935 Trans-Tasman Flight

6 April (Saturday)	**24 April Wednesday)**	**30 April (Tuesday)**	**4 May (Saturday)**
Proposal submitted for Trans-Tasman Jubilee flight	Australia and New Zealand Post & Telegraph approve plan. Formal announcement 29 April	SS *Maunganui* (A) leaves Wellington with New Zealand airmail stamps.	SS *Maunganui* (A) arrived in Sydney. SS *Wanganella* (B) leaves Sydney with Jubilee flight envelopes
8 May (Wednesday)	**9 May (Thursday)**	**12 May (Sunday)**	**13 May (Monday)**
SS *Wanganella* (B) arrives Wellington **TTM:** 16.00 Auckland mail closes. Train to Wellington departs 19.00	**TTM:** Mail from Auckland arrives 09.40. SS *Wanganella* (C) departs Wellington 12.45 with New Zealand mail for originating flight	**TTM:** SS *Wanganella* (C) arrived Sydney	New Zealand PMG: All NZ mail reaching Auckland by 18th to be accepted for return Trans-Tasman flight (planned for 20 May).
13 May (Monday)	**14 May (Tuesday)**	**15 May (Wednesday)**	**17 May (Friday)**
Special flight Melbourne to Sydney. Carries Hobart and late Melbourne mail Sydney mail closes 16.45. **TTM** mail transferred (14 bags) to RAAF Richmond.	Storm in Tasman Sea. Flight delayed till 15/5. Additional 7 mailbags received	**00.20: Depart Richmond** **07.00: Starboard prop damaged** **~12.20: Taylor's heroics × 6** **~12.50: mail jettisoned** **16.10: Land at Mascot**	**NZM:** *SS Monowai* (D) departs Wellington (~2000 items from South Island). Also, original 'Too Late' mail **NZM:** SS *Monterey* (D) departs Auckland (~11,000 items from North Island) 3p.m. (Both carry mail scheduled for return flight to Australia)
18 May (Saturday)	**20 May (Monday)**	**21 May (Tuesday)**	**22 May (Wednesday)**
TTM: SS *Wanganella* (E) departs Sydney with saved mail from aborted flight	**NZM:** SS *Monowai* (D) arrives in Sydney 15.00 **NZM:** SS *Monterey* (D) arrives in Sydney 16.00 Special receiving cancel applied (not applied to 'Too Late' mail	**OCM:** Train Sydney to Cootamundra **Note:** Through airmail did not receive special Sydney cancel. Similar to onward airmail in Australia	**OCM:** Butler Airways Cootamundra to Charleville (IA: *IW341*) **TTM:** SS *Wanganella* (E) arrives Auckland. 06.30 15.00: Railway Express Auckland-Wellington
23 May (Thursday)	**24 May (Friday)**	**OCM – *IW342***	**27 May (Monday)**
TTM: Railway Express arrives in Wellington Special receiving cancel applied.	**TTM:** SS *Wanganella* (F) departs Auckland (carries saved mail scheduled to be flown on return flight) SS *Monowai* (G) departs Sydney with return mail to NZ.) includes 'Too Late' mail	**22 May:** Departs Brisbane **29 May:** Arrives Karachi **31 May:** Arrives Alexandria **3 June:** Arrives London	**TTM:** SS *Wanganella* (F) arrives Sydney SS *Monowai* (G) arrives Wellington
28 May (Tuesday)	**OCM – IW344**		
OCM: Train Sydney to Cootamundra **Note:** Through airmail does not receive special Sydney cancel. Final New Zealand delivery of original New Zealand 'Too Late' mail	**29 May:** Departs Brisbane **5 June:** Arrives Karachi **7 June:** Arrives Alexandria **10 June:** Arrives London		

Abbreviations: TTM: Australia-New Zealand airmail; NZM: New Zealand-Australia airmail, IA: Imperial Air (IW: Aus-GB) , CBM: Closed Bag mail. Sent per NZM, OCM: Out of Country (Aus) airmail. Sent per NZM



Charles Kingsford Smith



Patrick Gordon Taylor



John Stannage

Fig 12 The three air crew members of the ill-fated *Southern Cross* flight



Fig 13 Advertisements by aerophilatelists Ernest Crome and Nelson Eustis in *The Australian Stamp Monthly* offering covers signed by the three air crew members

End of a dream

Recognising its flying days were over, Kingsford Smith negotiated the sale of the *Southern Cross* to the Australian government. On 18 July Kingsford Smith, Taylor, Stannage and three others flew in the *Southern Cross* for the last time from Sydney Mascot aerodrome (renamed in 1936 to Kingsford Smith International airport) to Richmond (a Royal Australian Airforce base situated just north-west of Sydney) (*Fig 16*). Today the *Southern Cross* is housed in a special hangar near Brisbane International Airport.

The three crew members never flew together again. John Stannage moved to Auckland in 1937 where he managed his own radio broadcasting service. He died in 1970. 'Bill' Taylor continued to undertake numerous ground-breaking flights. In 1954 he was knighted for his services to aviation. Taylor died in 1966.

Although Kingsford Smith indicated he was prepared to fly the saved mail to Australia, the Australian government declined the offer and the mail was transported by sea to New Zealand. In July 1935 Kingsford Smith and Taylor submitted a proposal for a Trans-Tasman airmail and passenger service. Four months later, on 8 November, Kingsford Smith died in plane crash off the coast of Burma.

The failure of the 1935 Trans-Tasman flight and his untimely death effectively ended Kingsford Smith's dream of Australian control over airmail services between the two countries. It took another five years for airmail services between the two countries to become a reality. The failed flight provided the impetus for New Zealand, not Australia, to pioneer and take charge of the route.



Fig 14 An example of a cover signed by Kingsford Smith, Taylor and Stannage. Note the special Wellington relief receiving cancels applied to the New Zealand stamps

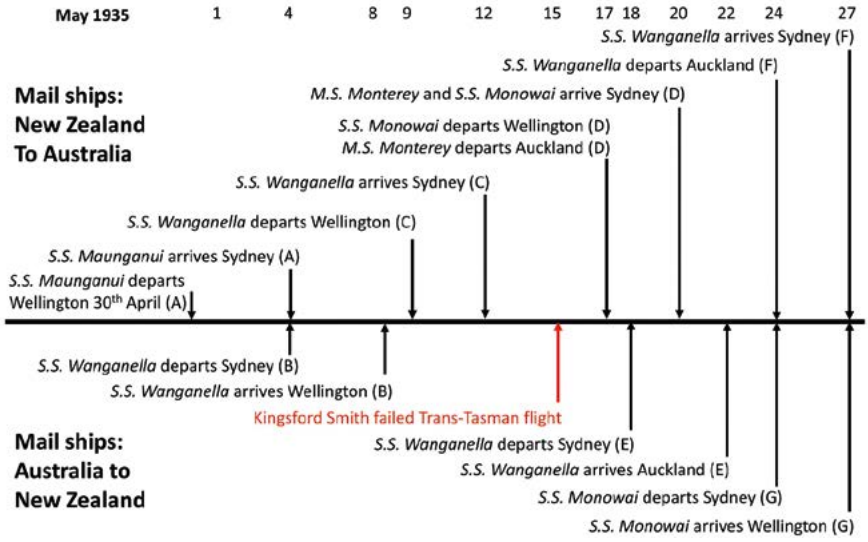

Fig 15 A schematic diagram of the movement of relevant vessels between Australia and New Zealand and vice versa during the period covered by the article. The capital letters in the brackets match with the bracketed letters in the Summary Table. It is recommended that this diagram be used at the same time when viewing the summary table

Below: Fig 16 A special cover commemorating the last flight of the *Southern Cross*. Signed by all people on board the flight. The label in the top left corner was specially designed for the flight by Ernest Crome. The total number of covers is unknown



Selected References

1. National Archive of Australia (https://naa.gov.au) *Australia to New Zealand – Jubilee Air Mail.* NAA: MP273/1, 1935/8581. Item ID: 10458184. Melbourne. (Use advance search and enter the item ID.)
2. Trove - National Libraries of Australia (https://trove.nla.gov.au) – dates between 29 April and 28 May, 1935. Major sources: *Adelaide Advertiser; Courier Mail* (Brisbane); *The Argus* (Melbourne); *Sydney Morning Herald; Daily Commercial and Shipping List* (Sydney).
3. National Libraries of New Zealand (https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers) – dates between 29 April and 25 May 1935. Major sources: *Auckland Star; New Zealand Herald* (Auckland); *Evening Post* (Wellington); *Northern Advocate* (Whangarei).