

THE RAILWAY STRIKE AIRMAIL FLIGHTS 1919

By John Marriner

During the latter days of September and the beginning of October 1919 there was a national strike of railwaymen and, at that time, as almost all mail was carried by the railway system, the conveyance of all "long distance" mail was halted.

As early as Saturday 27th September 1919, A.V.Roe & Co.Ltd., operating a service from Hounslow, carried mail to Bristol, Cardiff, Norwich and Birmingham. On returning the same day, further flights were made to Rugby, Hull, Eastbourne & Brighton. Other aircraft made flights to Somerset and Worcestershire.

By Monday the 29th September, mail was being flown to Paris, Belgium, Holland and Le Havre by other aviation companies.

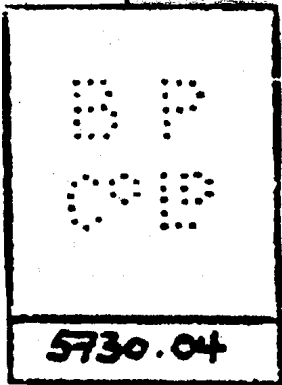
airplane Post.



The British Petroleum Co. Ltd.,
General Sales Dept.,

22, Abchurch Lane,

London: E.C. 3.



30th of September saw services between London and Birmingham, Manchester and Newcastle and Leeds to London. 1st October the mail was extended with flights from London to Glasgow.

Vickers Ltd started their own service between London, Sheffield and Barrow.

On October 2nd the Air Ministry got involved and military aircraft took over, opening up the post for public use.

The postage on these letters was the normal rate of postage plus 2/- per oz.

The railway strike finished on the 6th of October.

The letter illustrated shows a Manchester cancel for the 4th October 1919. The letter carries the two shilling fee and the normal 1½d postage which in this instance is perfined BP/C^oL^d (B5730.04) used by British Petroleum Co.Ltd., Eccles, Manchester.

As not many letters were carried by this service (thought to be some 541), presumably because of the huge air fee costs, what percentage of them are still around today, and how many carry a perfined stamp with identity?

This is an abridged version of a much larger article by John Marriner. For anyone especially interested in aviation related postal history I am sure John would be happy to send you a copy of the full 2'A A4 pages in exchange for a S.A.E. to 5 Blyth Road, Caister on Sea, Great Yarmouth, Norfolk NR30 5TG.

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