Opening of the England-Australia airmail service- December 1934 to February 1935

The exhibit traces the period when the Qantas DH-86 aircraft lost their Certificate of Air worthiness and the actions taken to remedy the situation and restore DH86 operations. The distribution of incoming mail is also illustrated.

Post Card showing poster of Qantas Inland Routes 1935

Background: Although Qantas had won the contract to carry airmail on the England to Australia service it faced difficulties. When the service started in December 1934 its aircraft approved for the contract had lost their Certificate of Air Worthiness. As a stop gap measure Imperial Airways aircraft who should have stopped at Singapore continued on to Darwin. Between Darwin and Brisbane Qantas was able to carry the mails.

Imperial Airways took over the Singapore to Darwin sector until Qantas could use its DH-86s were available. Imperial operated four Armstrong Whitworth XVs. Two retained British registration and two had Indian registration. All four operated to Darwin. On 23rd January 1935 RMA *Melbourne* VH-USF arrived at Darwin on its delivery flight but had to return to Singapore for repairs. This aircraft operated the Opening Qantas service from Singapore on 24 February 1935.

Scope: The entry covers the period of the first service IE (India East) from London on 08/12/19345 to IE 315 the first Qantas official service arriving at Darwin on 26/02/1935. Incoming mail illustrates its distribution within Australia. British mail was bagged at London for State Capitals. Mails pick up along the route were sorted at Darwin for State Capitals

Personal Research: The dates of arrival are given. Wingent's data stops and Darwin until June 1935. The information in the entry is taken from examples of mail.

Rate: The airmail rate for a ½ oz letter from UK to Australia was 1/3d

Plan: 1-Introduction 2- Imperial Airways Advertising 3- IE 298 Qld WA mail   4-IE 298 NSW +NZ mail   5-IE 298 Qld + Vic mail   IE 6-IE 299 Qld + Tas mail   7-IE299- Vic (Taxed) 8-IE 299- NSW mail   9-IE 300 NSW mail   10—IE 301 WA + SA mail   11-IE 301 NSW +NZ
12-IE 305. Melbourne   13-IE 309 Vic mail   14-IE 311-WA + NZ mail 15-IE 313 Test Flight 16-IE 315 First Qantas Service

Bibliography: Peter Wingent- Aircraft Movements on Imperials Airways' Eastern route Vol 1 1927-1937. Self-published, Winchester, 1999

Imperial Airways First Flight Cover Promotional Document

For the extension of the airmail from Singapore to Australia Imperial Airways produced a 4 page, Foolscap size, instructional document. Covers from intermediates along the route were available. Included were location on the African route from Capetown , South Africa to Alexandria , Egypt, as well from New York with device to English by ship.

IMPERIAL AIRWAYS LTD &

QANTAS EMPIRE AIRWAYS LTD.

OCTOBER 1934

AIR MAIL DEPARTMENT,
AIRWAY TERMINUS,
VICTORIA STATION,
LONDON, S.W.1.

SOUVENIR ENVELOPES

INAUGURATION OF THE WEEKLY AIR MAIL SERVICE

BETWEEN THE UNITED KINGDOM AND

AUSTRALIA

A limited number of Souvenir envelopes will be issued in connection with the above service which will be inaugurated in December, 1934. The first service is due to leave London on Saturday, 8th December, and due to reach Brisbane on Thursday, 20th December. In the reverse direction the first service is due to leave Brisbane on 10th December and to reach London on 24th December. In both directions it will therefore be possible to send Christmas greetings by Air Mail.

Arrangements are being made to handle these souvenir envelopes at various points along the route for collectors, and details of the charges for the covers and the handling scheme are set out hereunder.
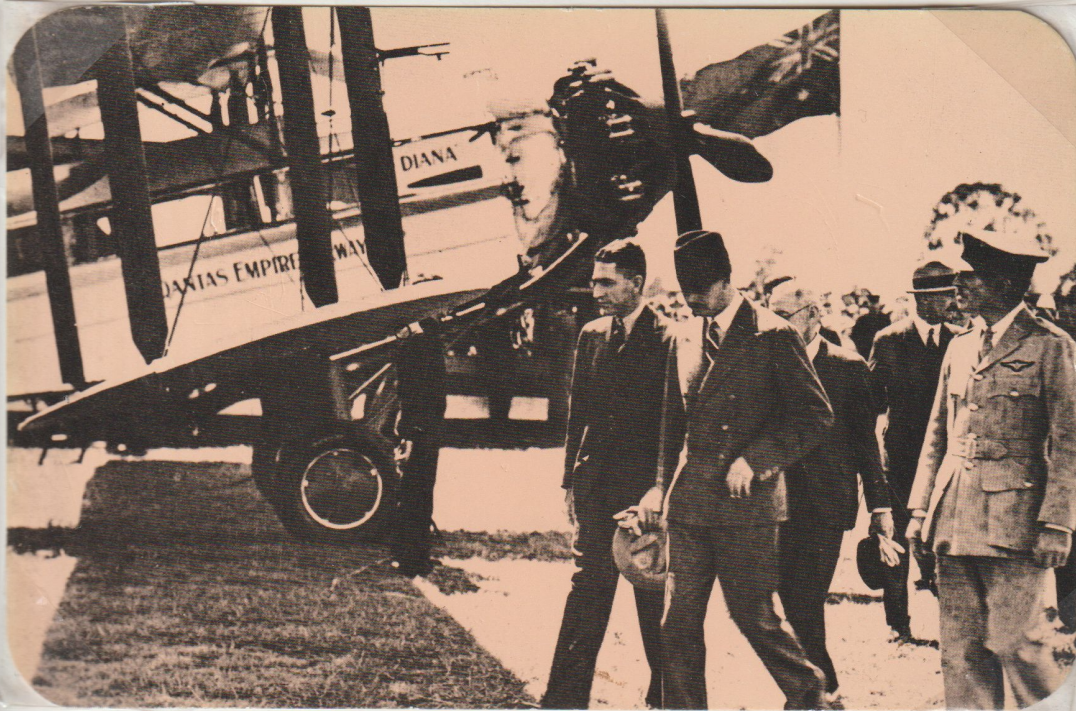
1. COST OF ENVELOPES

     1d. each

     4/- per 50

     8/- per 100

2. COST OF HANDLING

Australian mails were bagged in London for State Capitals. Two Armstrong Whitworth XV's caried the mails on the First service. From Darwin Qantas took over. WA mails were handed over to MacRobertson Miller Aviation at Daly Waters on the morning of 19/12/34 destined for Perth.

DH-61 (Giant Moth) Diana

Diana was one of two aircraft that carried mail from Darwin through Daly Waters.

Diana damaged its tail skid at Camooweal and was unable to continue

Post card produced for the 50th Anniversary of Qantas showing Diana at the opening of the Australia-England service 10/12/34

Printed photolithography, photographer not attributed

From London to Western Australia

From: London SW1 07/12/34

To: Inglewood, Perth, WA

**B/S:** MMR (Perth) 21/12/34

At Daly Waters G McCausland of Mac Robertson Millar Aviation took on 103 pounds of mail for WA addresses.

This mail arrived the same day as the mails in Brisbane and Sydney

IE 298- London 08/12/34 to Brisbane 21/12/34   NSW & NZ Mails

The large amount of mail meant that Qantas had to use two aircraft. *Hippomenes* DH-50J VH-ULG and *Diana* DH-61 VH-UJC were to carry the mails across Australia. *Diana* damaged its tail wheel at Camooweal and was unable to continue. *Hippomenes* shuttled the mails to Charleville. The Queensland mails stayed with Qantas. And other East coast mails went with Butler Air Transport. At Narrabri New England Airways took the NSW and NZ mails and flow to Sydney arriving at night
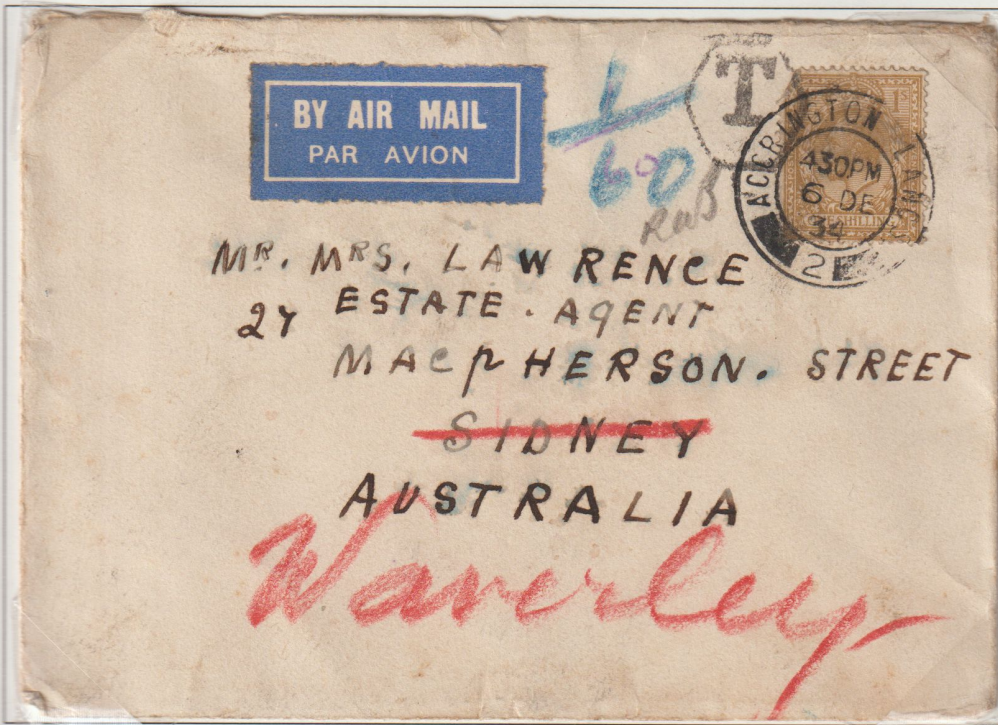
From Lancashire to Sydney

From: Accrington   06/12/34

To: Sidney (sic)-Waverley

B/S: Sydney Airmail Section

   GPO 21/12/34

Franked: 1/-

Deficient: 3d-Double deficiency 6d

London tax hexagon- 60 gold

From Hampshire to New Zealand

From : Hampshire 07/12/35

To: Auckland then redirected to Christchurch

B/S: Sydney Airmail section GPO 21/12/34

   Auckland 29/12/24

From Sydney the mails were taken across the Tasman Sea to Auckland by SS Monowai

IE 298- London 08/12/34 to Brisbane 21/12/34   QLD & VIC Mails

At Charleville the Queensland mails were carried on to Brisbane by *Hippomenes* and VH-UJS a DH50A. The rest of the East Mails were transferred to Butler Air Transport DH-84 VH-URV which departed with 1,050 pounds of mail. After Narrabri Butler continued on to Cootamundra for an overnight stop before flying to Melbourne with the mails for Victoria, Tasmania and South Australia

AIR MAIL.

Russell Brown,

c/o Bank of New South Wales,

BRISBANE,

Queensland,

A U S T R A L I A.

From London to Brisbane

From: London FS Airmail 06/12/34

To: Brisbane

B/S: Brisbane 21/12/34

From London to Melbourne

From: London Airmail FS 07/12/34

To: Melbourne

B/S: Melbourne 22/12/34

Although the lower stamps are partially cancelled by the machine postmark both were additional cancelled with a handstamp

As the first service was flown in from Cootamundra it is

CRITTALL METAL WINDOWS

IMPERIAL AIR MAIL.

Herbert Imison Esq.,
Crittall Manufacturing Co. (Aus.) Pty. Ltd.
666/8 Bourke Street,
G.P.O. Box 4307,
MELBOURNE,
A U S T R A L I A.

The Indian registered *Aurora* VT-AEG operated the Singapore to Darwin sector. Within Australia Qantas used *Hippomenes & Diana* to carry the mails to the mails to the East Coast. This was the first service where Butler Air Transport terminated at Cootamundra and the mails for NSW and NZ went by rail to Sydney. The Cootamundra Post Office used the out of date marking TPO 2 South 2 to show handling the mail

From Lancashire to Sydney

From: Widnes, Lanc 04/12/34

To: Sydney

B/S: Sydney 29/12/34 (Machine postmark

From ICI Chemicals, Windes.1d values are perfins

Fron London to ~~Lismore~~ Sydney

From: London NW3 14/12/34

To: ~~Lismore,~~ Sydney

B/S: TPO 2 South 2 Up 28/12/34

    Sydney 29/12/34

The TPO handstamp was used at the Cootamundra Post Office on some incoming airmail. It is usually date a day before Sydney.

The Indian registered *Aurora* VT-AEG operated the Singapore to Darwin sector. Within Australia Qantas used *Hippomenes & Diana* to carry the mails to the mails to the East Coast. This was the first service where Butler Air Transport terminated at Cootamundra and the mails went by rail to Melbourne, with a change of gauge at Albury Wodonga. Tasmanian mails were flown across Bass Straight by Holymans Airways to Launceston.

From Liverpool to Victoria

From: Liverpool 10/12/34

To: North Castlemaine, Victoria

B/S: Melbourne 29/12/34

By rail from Cootamundra to Melbourne with change of rail gauge at Albury/Wodonga.

Sorted at the Melbourne Mail Exchange next to Spencer Street station for transfer by rail to North Castlemaine

From Southport to Tasmania

From: Southport 11/12/34

To: Hobart

B/S: Melbourne (29/12/34)

Flown by Holyman Airways (later Australian National Airways) from Melbourne Essendon to Launceston then by rail to Hobart

7

IE 299- London 15/12/34 to Brisbane 28/12/34   Taxed Mail- Vic

A large envelope posted at Kingston on Soar, Nottinghamshire at single rate 1/3d per half ounce. Assessed at Foreign section, Mount Pleasant, London as one to one and a half ounce. Deficient 2/6d, double deficiency 5/-. hexagonal Tax marking from London at 600 Gold Centimes. Postage dues applied at Clifton Hill, Melbourne.

Mail for Western Australia was bagged for Perth and off loaded at Daly Waters to by carried south by Mc Robertson Millar Aviation. The mail arrived at Perth on 04/01/1935 and transported to the south West corner of WA to the State Saw mills at Pemberton

Mail from India was picked up 20-21/12/34. The franking was 1anna sort and was taxed at Gold Centimes / 3d at Adelaide. Magill is a suburb 7 km east of Adelaide. The mails came from Melbourne overnight by rail.

From Leeds to Western Australia

From: Horsford, Leeds 21/12/34

To: Pemberton, WA

B/S: 04/01/35

Pemberton located in south West WA has forestry as its main industry. The closest rail head terminates at Northcliffe and mail for Pemberton in the 1930s would then go by road.

India to South Australia- Taxed mail

From: Agara Barracks 24/12/34

To: Magill South Australia

Franked: 6 annas 9 pies

B/S: Adelaide 06/01/35

   Magill 07/01/35

Circular T mark endorsed 30 Gold Centimes, converted to 3d at Adelaide and postage dues applied

Endorsed 'Card(ed) in pencil

Note: address 3rd Creek, Magill

IE 300- London 22/12/34 to Brisbane 04/01/34   NSW and Taxed Mail

The Singapore to Darwin sector was flown by *Arethusa* VT-AEF. Australian internal services operated by *Hippomenes* & *Diana*. English mail franked 6d under paid 9d and taxed in London 180 Gold centimes, double deficiency 1/6d (18d) applied in Sydney.

Thai mail departed Bangkok on 29/12/34. Rear sealed by Imperial Airways label, slogan Airmail/Section / GPO (Sydney.

From Thailand to Sydney

From: Bangkok 29/12/34

To: Sydney

B/S: Sydney Airmail Section GPO 05/01/35

Imperial Airways publicity label for

London to Sydney Taxed Mail

From: London FS 20/12/34

To: Sydney

B/S: Airmail Sydney 1 05/01/35

Franked 6d, deficient 9d. London hexagonal tax marking, no indication of deficiency. Red Sydney No2 tax marking endorsed 1/6d and applied in postage dues.

IE 301- London 29/12/34 to Brisbane 04/01/35   Timor Sea Night Crossing

From this service flights to Australia used odd numbers. The Even flight numbers were for a second weekly service originally terminating at Calcutta. Singapore to Darwin sector flown by *Astraea* G-ABTL Although 'Aircraft Movements' claim the service that it was late. Pilot V.G (Gory) Wilson flew the Timor Sea at night, a difficult feat for time flying with limited navigation aids. It also meant that a night crossing of the Timor Sea was possible.

First Flight Boomerang Cover returning to Australia

From Sydney 08/12/34 to London IW298

From: London 29/12/34 to Sydney IE301

B/S: TPO 2 South 2 Up 11/01/35

Chippendale 12/01/35

Sent to flown on the first service and returned on the fourth service from London

From England to New Zealand

From: London 28/12/34

To Wanganui

B/S: None

Bottom row od stamps postmarked with a double ring handstamp

IE 305- London 12/01/35 to Brisbane 04/01/35 *Melbourne* delivery flight

Melbourne departed England on 27/12/34 flown by Captain Jimmy Youell and S C Allen as first officer. At Singapore the aircraft was given a full maintenance check. The scheduled IE 305 airmail carried by *Astraea* G-ABTL arrived on 20/01/1935. The mails 21/01/25 the mails were transferred to *Melbourne* arriving at Darwin on 23/0135. At Darwin the tail post was considered defective and the aircraft flew back to Singapore on 25/01/35 as IW 307 for repairs.

From England to Newcastle NSW

From: Shepherds Bush W1 11/01/35

To: Newcastle

B/S: TPO 2 South 05/01/35

From Cootamundra by rail to Sydney then by rail to Newcastle and delivery

From Cardiff to Victoria

From: Cardiff (Wales) 11/01/34

To: Woodend

B/S: Melbourne 26/01/35

From Cootamundra by rail to Melbourne with a change of gauge at Albury / Wodonga. Sorted at the Melbourne Mail Exchange. By rail to Woodend on the railway to Bendigo

12

IE 309- London 26/01/35 to Brisbane 08/02/35 Armstrong Whitworth VX returns

With *Melbourne* under repair at Singapore the Armstrong Whitworth XV were reintroduced. *Athena* G-ABTK flew the service, it was delayed one day due to a fractured exhaust pipe at Batavia. Darwin was a grass landing field and this type of aircraft could easily be bogged. After an accident to *Diana* on IE-303 the only Qantas aircraft available to carry mail south was *Hippomenes*.

Qantas DH-50J Hippomenes VH-ULG

Built at Longreach by Qantas in 1929. Powered by a Bristol Jupiter engine. Until the introduction of the DH-86 it carried the incoming international airmail from Darwin to Brisbane.

Card produced by Qantas for its 50th anniversary in 1970 with a gold background. Originally issued with a special logo which was later removed.

Image not attributed. Printed in Australia

From London to Melbourne

From: London Airmail FS 26/01/35

To: Footscray W 11

B/S: 09/02/35

Mail from Darwin to Charleville by *Hippomenes - Diana* under repairs. From Charleville to Cootamundra by Butler Air Transport. From Cootamundra by rail with change of gauge at Albury/ Wodonga. Melbourne metropolitan delivery

13

IE 311- London 02/02/35 to Brisbane 14/02/35 Armstrong Whitworth VX returns

One of two services after the delivery flight of *Melbourne* and its return to Singapore for repairs. The service to Darwin by *Astraea* G-ABTL. Darwin to Brisbane by Qantas DH50J *Hippomenes* as *Diana* was damaged.

London to Western Australia

From: London WC 01/02/25

To: Perth

B/S: Perth 15/02/35

WC in the London machine postmark means West Central

Envelope from 'Stanley Gibbons, 391 Strand, London WC2

Southend on Sea to Wellington

From: Southend on Sea 30/01/35

To: Wellington, NZ

B/S: Sydne Airmail Section GPO 15/02/35

From Sydney by Trans-Tasman Steamer to Auckland. From Auckland to Wellington by rail

IE 313- London 09/02/35 to Brisbane 14/02/35 *Melbourne* Test Flight

After repairs to the tail fin *Melbourne* undertook a test service before becoming fully operational. She departed Singapore on 19/02/35 on a test flight reaching Darwin on 20/02/35. Mail posted from Darwin 20/02/35 arriving Sydney 23/20/35. The flight carried a British Parliamentary delegation coming to Australia and New Zealand to explain the Empire Airmail scheme which had recently been passed by the Westminster Parliament. *Melbourne* departed Darwin on 21/02/35 as IW 315 to return to Singapore to commence the first scheduled Singapore-Darwin service on 24/02/35

Darwin to Sydney internal service

From: Darwin 20/02/35

To: Sydney

B/S: Sydney Airmail Section GPO

23/02/35

The Qantas Singapore-Darwin—Brisbane service provided a weekly air connection to the Australian East coast.

Qantas DH-86

Although not authorised to carry passengers *Melbourne* brought to Australian a British delegation to explain the Empire Airmail scheme:

F G *Berran*- Civil Aviation Dpt

Sir F Williamson-Postal services

Sir E Campbell-=- Private Secretary to PMG

T Guiness- Private Secretary to

Under Secretary for Air

Printed by Photo Lithography

IE 315- London 16/02/35 to Brisbane 28/02/35 *Melbourne* First Scheduled Service

After repairs at Singapore the Qantas DH-86 *Melbourne* VH-USF took over the incoming mails from Imperial Airways *Athena* G—ABTK on 24/02/35 arriving at Darwin 26/02/35. It then then proceeded through Central Australia to Brisbane

From Germany to Sydney

From: Berlin Charlottenburg 15/02/35

To: GPO Sydney

Rate: 75 Pfg=25 Pfg UPU rate + 50 Pfg air

B/S: 01/03/35

From Italy to Melbourne

From: Genoa 13/02/35

To: Melbourne

Rate: 6.6 Li = 1.25 Li UPU Rate + 5.25 air

B/S: Melbourne 01/02/35