



Founded 1911

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Hon Life President: David Sinclair President 2020/2022: Ida Potgieter

Hon Sec: Victor Millard (royalphilct@gmail.com)

Meetings for November will be held at the Athenaeum, Campground Road, Newlands on the 2nd & 4th Mondays at 7.30 for 8pm

Covid 19 rules apply

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Important Notices

1. We invite exhibits for the 2021 syllabus; contact hugh.amooore@uct.ac.za
2. Meetings will be held under Covid19 conditions: **Face masks and hand sanitizing will be compulsory. Seating arrangements in the Newberry Hall will ensure social distancing. For safety reasons only the Librarian will be allowed inside the Library**
3. Society Auction: there will be an auction on 25 January 2021. If you have material for this auction, please bring this to a meeting in the next two months or deliver it to Hugh Amoore before year-end.

Dates to diarise Meetings as follows:

1. 9 November 2020:
 - (a) **Alan Rogers GB King George V** (Alan will show the exhibit he was to have shown at London 2020; AND
 - (b) **Competition evening**: All members are urged to enter an exhibit (or more than one) for the Crocker Shield (one frame/ 15 or sixteen standard sheets); or a postal history exhibit; or a thematic exhibit; or an exhibit by a member who has not showed competitively at a national before.
2. 23 November 2020
A special evening devoted to:
 - (a) **A short special general meeting** (agenda to follow in November)
 - (b) **Displays** by two senior members to mark their 50 years as members of the Society: Life President **David Sinclair** and **Brian Fenemore** joined the Royal in 1970 and will each give a display illustrative of just some of their philatelic interest and collections.
 - (c) **A tribute to Jenny Siebert**, who joined the Society in 1959, and has been a member since then!!
3. 14 December 2020: **President's Evening**: displays by the President and members of the RPSCT Committee
4. 25 January 2021: **Society Auction**
5. 22 February 2021: AGM and Displays (tbc)
6. 9-13 November 2021 **Cape Town 2021**

Editorial

Philately and Covid19

World-wide dealers and auctioneers have reported renewed interest in philately, evidence perhaps of two things we need to be conscious of: first, how wonderful the hobby is that we are able to devote more time to it during the pandemic lockdown; and second, that philatelists, by-and-large, have not been the hardest hit by the economic disaster that has come in the wake of covid19, or put differently, that philatelists, by-and-large, are better off than most.



This Permit-mail user has introduced an amusing, Covid19-related, illustration to enliven the otherwise, uninteresting permit-mail indicium so often found on mail instead of adhesive postage stamps, but one aimed at bringing home the Covid19 message.



Austria's postal service has united two aspects of the coronavirus pandemic in a stamp printed on three-ply toilet paper (a reference to the unnecessary stockpiling that took place early on during the pandemic) and the need for social distancing. The €2.75 euro "corona stamp" comes in sheets 10 cm wide, or a tenth of the 1 metre that the government advises members of the public to keep apart from each other. The stamp is a semi postal (€ 2.75 postage plus € 2.75 for covid19 relief) and is sold with an attached label advising social distancing. Here is the image of the stamp.

It is a sad commentary on the state of postal services, and on how little use is made of the postal service in the South Africa of 2020, that were our Post Office to issue a covid19 propaganda stamp or stamps, it would be so little used as to be ineffective.

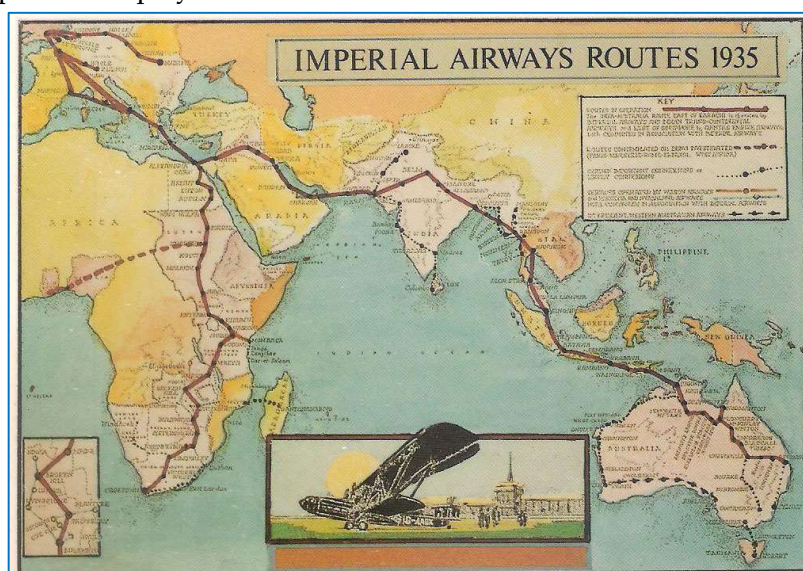
A challenge to philatelists: write letters (or even postcards) and send them through the post. The impact you make will surprise you.

Account of the meeting held on 26 October 2020: Victor Millard's

Imperial Airways 1 April 1924—31 March 1940

Victor Millard's display (augmented by an excellent set of slides) told the story though some excellent, and some rare, flight covers of how *Imperial Airways* provided an increasingly affordable airmail service to the Empire in the decade before WW II.

His story began with the formation of *Imperial Airways* on 1 April 1924 by the amalgamation of *British Marine Air Navigation*, *Daimler Airways*, *Handley Page Transport*, and *Instone Air Line*. At the outset there was no airmail service connecting Britain from other parts of the Empire, and a fledgling airmail service to continental Europe. But by 1935 Imperial Airways was providing the airmail service Victor showed by including this map in his display:



Victor explained that the first early airmail service between Cairo and Bagdad had been run by the RAF since 1921 and was taken over, and extended to Basra, by *Imperial Airways* in 1927. His title page included this rare 1927 cover, flown by the RAF:



The first route was from the UK (Croydon) to India (Karachi, pre-partition) and we were shown covers from the first flight. In 1931 *Imperial Airways* began its penetration into Africa, in the wake of pioneering effort by the RAF which set out airfields for its use. The first flights on the service from Croydon to Mwanza (in the then Tanganyika) were illustrated by a series of covers, addressed to places en route (usually, and conveniently, backstamped on arrival and sometimes in transit); the mail left Croydon on 28 February 1931 and arrived in Mwanza on 6 March 1931.

At the same time experimental flights sought to connect Britain with Australia, and we were shown this cover, flown by Kingsford Smith from Darwin, 27 April to Akyab, 3 May, where it transferred to an *Imperial Airways* DH66 Hercules 'City of Karachi' to Delhi, and thence by the *Indian State Air Service* to join the regular *Imperial Airways* service from Karachi to Croydon via Alexandria.



It was towards the end of the same year, 1931, that *Imperial Airways* was ready to extend the Africa route to South Africa. And so, on 9 December 1931 the experimental flight (since known as the Christmas flight as it was timed to being mail to South Africa for Christmas) left Croydon. Flight covers showing its path though the Sudan, Tanganyika, and Southern Rhodesia augmented by such items as the less well-known airmail label booklets illustrated this flight:

A rare booklet of airmail labels used at the time of these early flights



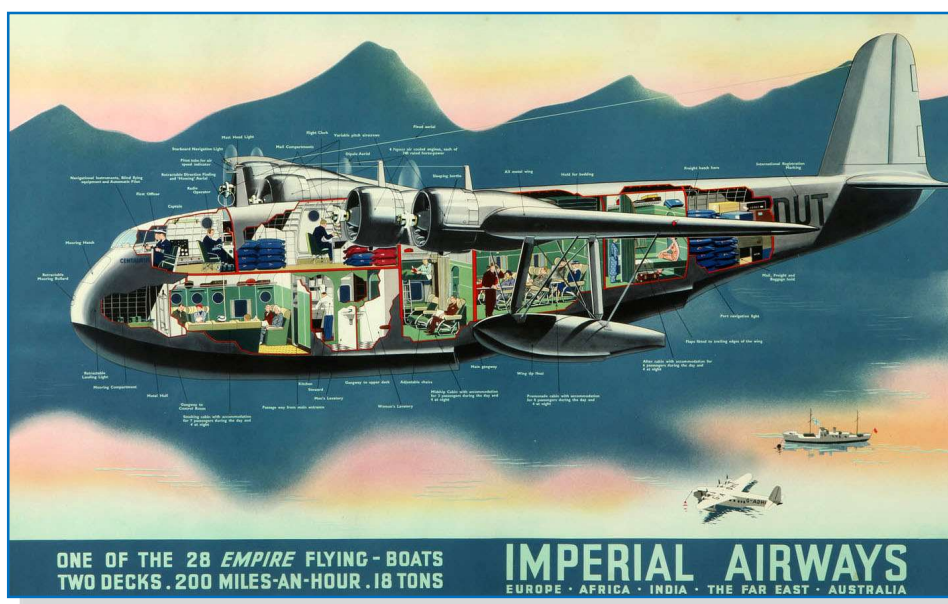
The display continued with selections of flight covers from the inaugural regular North-South and South-North flights between London and South Africa. The rate at the time (1931) was 1/- per ½ ounce. It was soon to reduce to 10d (1934) and 6d before the dramatic reduction affected by the Empire Airmail Scheme (or EAMS as it was to become known) to 1½d per ½ ounce.

A feature of the early services was how they connected to feeder airmail services that extended the airmail service to subsidiary routes. These were operated by smaller, independent airlines; among those shown, and explained were the *South West Africa Airline*, *South African Airways*, and *RANA* (*Rhodesia and Nyasaland Airways*). The final sheets in the display contained many fine covers showing *RANA* services that would have been of special interest to Rhodesia specialists.

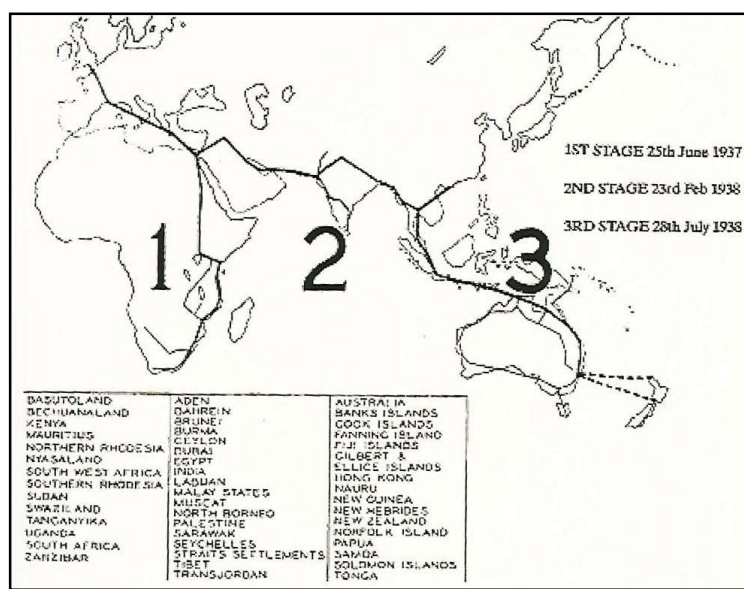
The display then showed how the service was extended to the east; for example, in December of 1933 to Singapore, illustrated by this delightful cover, from SWA, South Africa via Egypt, Basra, Karachi, Calcutta and Rangoon.



The aeroplanes used to carry the mail did also carry passengers. Some idea of the comfort and romance of these flights was given by images in Victor's display, of which this is one.



By 1934 *Imperial Airways* was able to begin regular flights to Australia. And in the following years routes were opened to West Africa. This was all a prelude to the bold experiment at was the *Empire Air Mail Scheme*, or EAMS, which sought to provide an airmail service between points in the Empire at the rate of 1½d per half ounce, as radical an idea as the penny post of January 1840. This was introduced in four stages, of which the first three are shown in this diagram:



The final stage extended the EAMS to Canada in 1939.

The EAMS came to an end with the outbreak of WWII, and thus ended the experiment. *Imperial Airways* became *BOAC* in early 1940.

In thanking Victor, Brian Fenemore, on behalf of the members present, remarked on the quality of the display and in particular on the excellent presentation (on A3 sheets), with comprehensive maps and route charts that made following a complex subject possible.

The new weekly *RANA* service in January 1939 between Lusaka and Mongu Lealui was illustrated by this rare flight cover.

