

INDIAN MAIL VIA AIRSHIP & CATAPULT FLIGHTS

BACKGROUND

No Airship or Catapult mail flights ever reached India. India was neither a 'participating country' nor a 'treaty country' for carriage of such mail. There are very few examples of mail handled by the Indian Postal System which found their way aboard such flights. These are all Rare/Very Rare.

SCOPE AND PURPOSE OF THIS EXHIBIT

This exhibit showcases a selection of mail handled by the Indian Postal System to demonstrate the amazing diversity within such a narrow field.

- Inward & Outward mail
- Mail flown within Europe and across continents to the East & West of Europe
- Mail actually carried on Zeppelin, Catapult and Pendulum (combination Zeppelin + Sea Plane) flights
- When and Why mixed franking was used. USA + India; Britain + India, and French India + British India.
- Mail posted on the R-101 trial and scheduled flights.

IMPORTANCE

This is the first recorded exhibit covering such a topic. There has never been a comprehensive attempt made to address this subject. Given the unique items displayed here, this exhibit cannot be replicated.

RARITY AND CONDITION

The exhibit includes 2 unique items and 10 rare items with less than 10 recorded examples. This represents years of effort and other challenges in acquiring these items and the material selected is in the best available condition.

Almost all the material in this exhibit is Very Rare (less than 10 known examples). Rare items are marked with a red border and the Unique items have been additionally highlighted with a red medallion. Items with certification have been marked with a (c) and certificates have been provided at the reverse of the respective sheets.

TREATMENT

The exhibit is arranged topically with an emphasis on chronology to give a sense of the evolution of these services, all the way to the end of such flights.

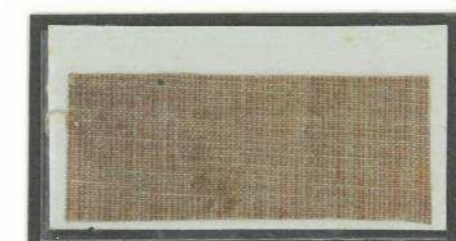
Much of the information provided here is the outcome of careful research. New evidence is produced, which will fill gaps in knowledge and provide information which was not previously available.



Leaflet promoting the DLH Zeppelin & Catapult service to South America with the 1934 time table on the reverse



Postcard of the Airship R-101 leaving her mast at Cardington. This was the only Airship ever intended to reach India.



A piece of the fabric stripped from the airship when she was lightened.

EXHIBIT PLAN

Section	Description	Page
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5	Ship to Shore and Combi Flights	5
6	Catapult Mail Flights	6
7	The ill-fated Airship R.101	7
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- Indian Airmails, Published in 1995 and later updated - Jeffrey Brown
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- Commercial Zeppelin Flight to South America - John Duggan & Jim Graue
- German North Atlantic Catapult Airmail Flights 1929-1935 - James W Graue
- The Orient Flight LZ 127 - Graf Zeppelin - Fred Blau & Cyril Deighton
- R-101 - An article by Lieutenant Colonel V. C. Richmond
- Indian Airmail Postage Rates until 1956 - Jeffrey Brown
- Indian Airmails, Development and Operations (1911-1942) - Pradeep Jain
- https://www.indianairmails.com/zeppelin-catapult.html & https://www.indianairmails.com/airship-r-101.html

INDIAN MAIL VIA AIRSHIP & CATAPULT FLIGHTS

ZEPPELIN LZ 10 - SCHWABEN & ZEPPELIN LZ 13 - HANSA

ZEPPELIN LZ 10 - SCHWABEN

The Zeppelin LZ 10 - Schwaben was built in 1911. It was first flown on 26 June 1911 is considered as the first commercially successful passenger-carrying aircraft.

ZEPPELIN LZ 13 - HANSA

The Zeppelin LZ 13 - Hansa was built in 1912 and was the first international passenger flight. Mostly used between Hamburg, Postdam and Dresden, it also visited Denmark and Sweden.

JUNE 10-23, 1912 AIRMAIL WEEK IN RHINE AU MAIN



Air Post Card addressed to The Hon. Sir Charles Stewart Wilson, Director General Post Office, India.

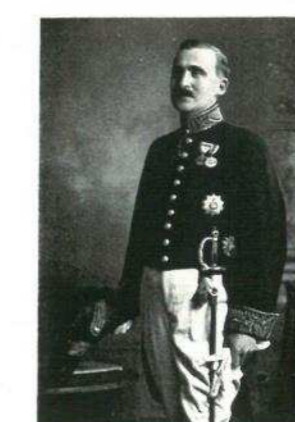
OCTOBER 1913 FROM DRESDEN TO HAMBURG



Official Delag (Deutsche Luftschiffahrts-Aktien-Gesellschaft) Post Card posted on board the LZ 13, Hansa addressed to Bombay and further redirected to Karwar.



Postmark cancellation reads Flugpost am Rhein u am Main / Darmstadt / 14.6.12



Sir Charles Stewart-Wilson, KCIE, was the Director-General of Posts & Telegraphs India. A prominent philatelist, he was the first President of the Philatelic Society of India and a Council Member of the Royal Philatelic Society London.



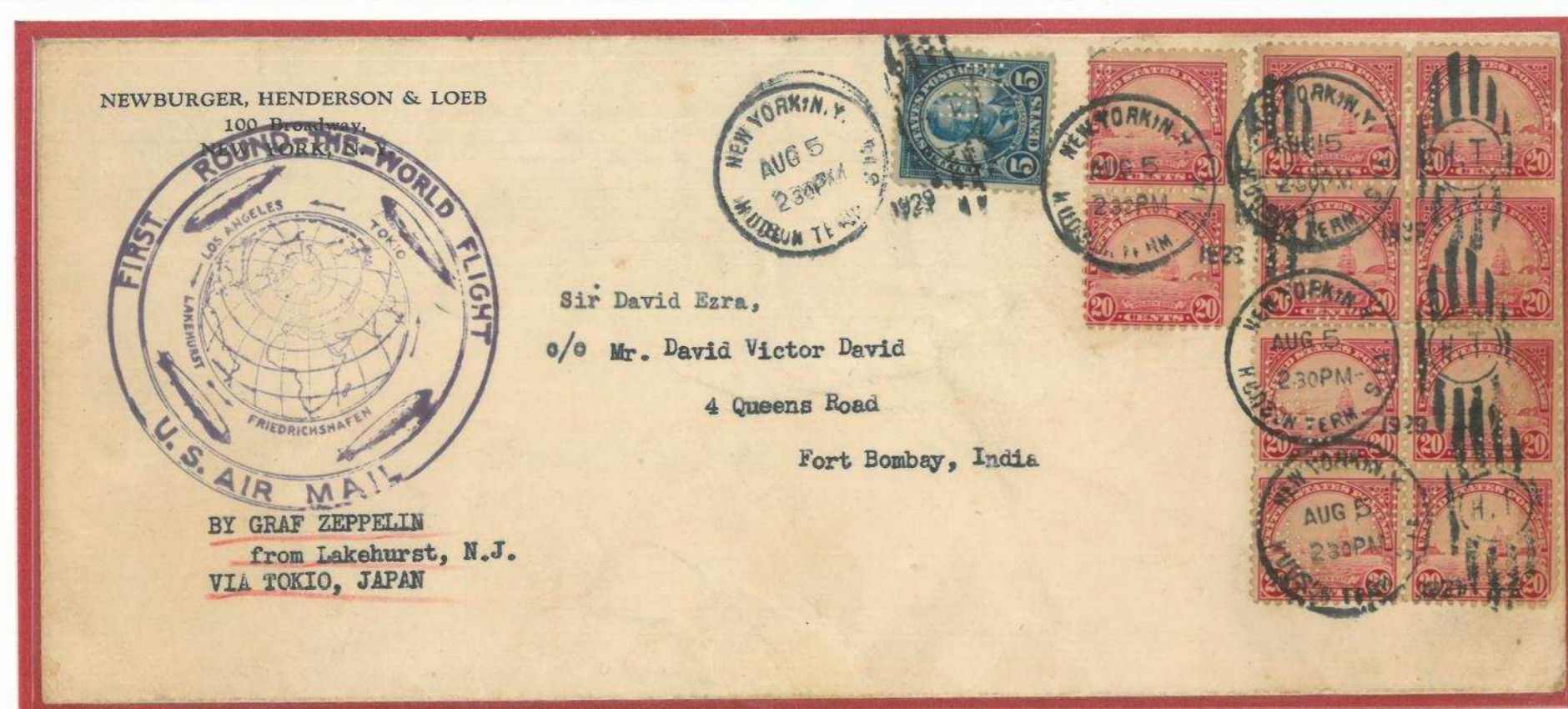
LUFTPOST HANSA 28.10.13 on board cancellation mark.

INDIAN MAIL VIA AIRSHIP & CATAPULT FLIGHTS

ZEPPELIN LZ 127 - GRAF ZEPPELIN - Inward mail to India

The LZ 127 - Graf Zeppelin was a hydrogen filled airship that flew from 1928 to 1937. By far the most successful airship in history, it flew over 1.7 million Kilometers.

ROUND THE WORLD FLIGHT, 7 - 29 AUGUST 1929, LAKEHURST NY - FRIEDRICHSHAFEN - TOKYO - LOS ANGELES - LAKEHURST NY



Cover posted in New York on 5th August 1929 and reached Tokyo on 19 August. The onward to Bombay by surface to Tokyo.

ORIENT FLIGHT, 25 - 28 MARCH 1929 FRIEDRICHSHAFEN TO EL RAMALE & BACK



Cover mailed in Asuncion, Paraguay and flown on the South American CONDOR service connecting with the Zeppelin service at Buenos Aires to Friedrichshafen and then onward by regular airmail to India.

4TH SOUTH ATLANTIC RETURN FLIGHT 10 - 18 AUGUST 1933



Cover posted on board the flight LZ 127 Graf Zeppelin, and dropped at El Ramale. Then sent onwards to Karachi by Imperial Airways. Canceled with an on-board postmark (BPS) LUFTSCHIFF GRAF ZEPPELIN, 25.2.1929.

INDIAN MAIL VIA AIRSHIP & CATAPULT FLIGHTS

ZEPPELIN LZ 127 - GRAF ZEPPELIN - Outward mail from India

Mail for carriage by Zeppelin was accepted from Participating Nations (those to which the airship flew) and Treaty Nations (those who had a contract with the German post office). India was not a Treaty Nation, but mail from India is known to have been carried on Zeppelin flights to South America.

4TH SOUTH ATLANTIC FLIGHT 5 - 8 AUGUST 1933

India - Brazil Postal Rates		
Postage for the first 1/2 oz. 1931-1941		
Ordinary Letter Rate		3a 6p
Printed Matter Rate		9p
Registration Fee		3a
Airmail Fee per 1/2 oz.		
Dec 31 - Mar 36	6a	This was for service to Europe only and further journey by surface
Mar 36 - Mar 41	46a	By air all the way, combining Imperial Airways to Europe and DLH/Air France onwards

(See cover on pg. 5 for an example of the 46a rate usage)

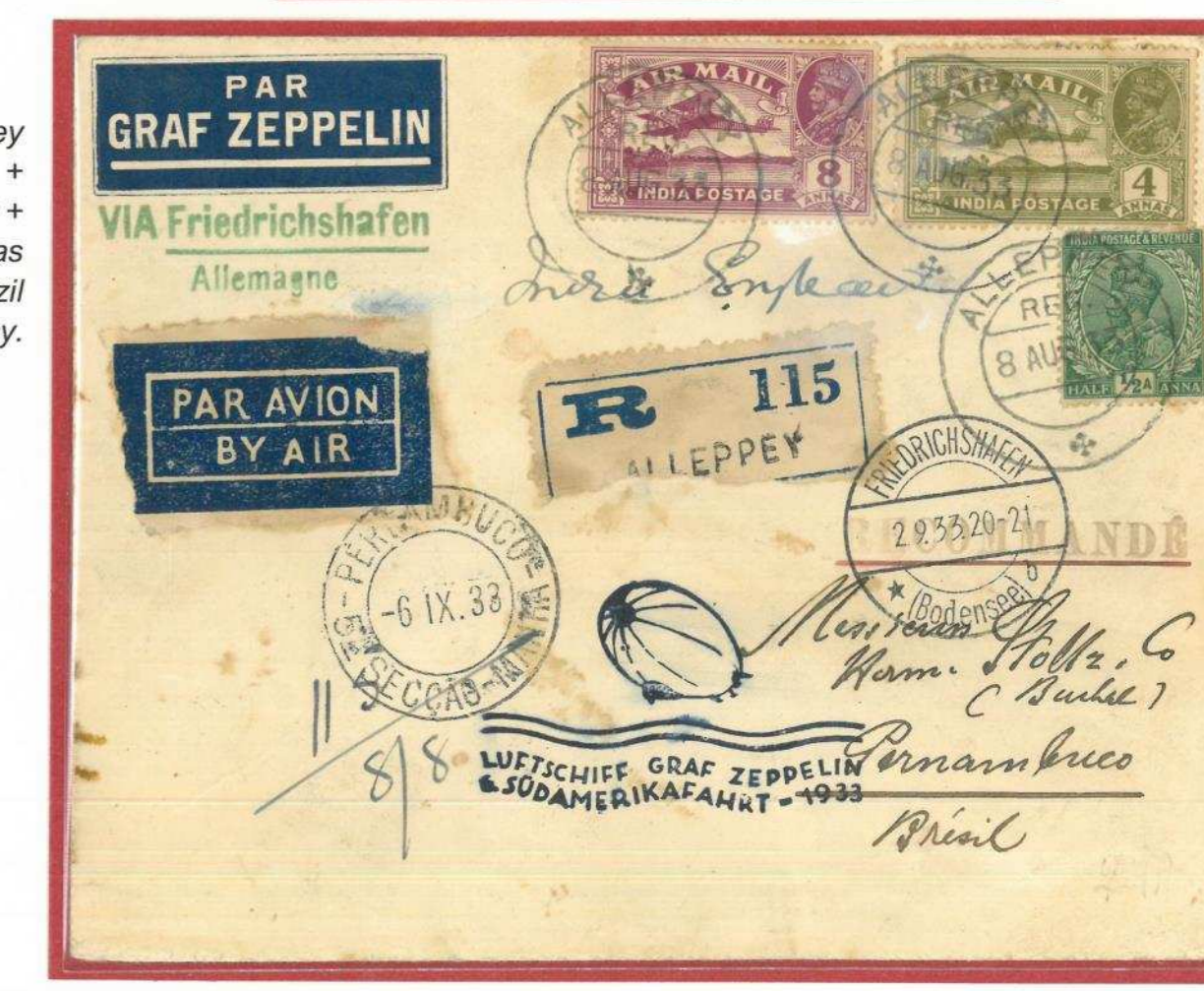
Cover bears British stamps to the value of 10d (the printed matter rate at the time) and was therefore part of the British acceptance on that flight. The Indian postage of 9a 9p (comprising 9p printed matter rate, 6a air fee and 3a registration) would only have paid for transmission by air to Europe and from there by sea to Brazil.



6TH SOUTH ATLANTIC FLIGHT 2 - 5 SEPTEMBER 1933



Franked 12a 6p at Alleppey (3a 6p Ordinary letter rate + 6a Airmail fee to Germany + 3a Registration). Letter was carried by Zeppelin to Brazil as a courtesy.



Franked 1fa 12ca French India + 9a British India at Mahe. (1fa 12ca Ordinary Letter Rate + 6a Airmail fee to Germany + 3a Registration). Letter was carried by Zeppelin to Brazil as a courtesy. A rare example of mixed franking.

INDIAN MAIL VIA AIRSHIP & CATAPULT FLIGHTS

SHIP TO SHORE AND COMBI FLIGHTS

Airmail services were highly competitive and operators would innovate to save even a day in trans-continental transmission of mail. Two such innovations were Ship to Shore flights to facilitate early arrival and Combi-Flights to allow one day late mailing.

SHIP TO SHORE - 23 JUNE 1934



Confirmation stamp indicating carried by catapult flight from ship to shore on 23.6.34

COMBI-FLIGHT (ZEPPELIN & DEUTSCHE LUFATHANSA) 13 - 16 AUGUST 1936



Confirmation stamp with the image of a Zeppelin and Sea-Plane indicating that the cover was carried on a combi-flight.

Cover from New York to Southampton by German vessel (S. S. Europa) and launched by catapult seaplane when a few hundred miles from the shore to save one day in transit. Addressed to Kalimpong, India the cover was franked again in India and mailed back to the USA.

In order to accommodate upto one day late posting of mail, DLH operated an airmail service from Frankfurt to Montelimar where mail was picked up by the Graf Zeppelin using a wire basket and ferried onward to Recife, arriving on 16 August and then again by DLH to Rio de Janeiro. Franked 49a 6p being the new 46a airmail rate to Brazil + 3a 6p ordinary letter rate.

INDIAN MAIL VIA AIRSHIP & CATAPULT FLIGHTS

CATAPULT MAIL FLIGHTS

By 1934 aircraft started to prove faster and more reliable than airships, but lacked the range necessary to cross the S. Atlantic. Launch Ships had to be stationed at either end of the ocean where aircraft could refuel and be catapulted at take-off velocity even with a full load. These proved very successful and entirely replaced airship services in just a few years.



Original DELAG postcard showing the Schwabenland which along with sister ship Westfalen was stationed at either end of the S. Atlantic. The catapult launcher and Dornier seaplane are visible at the stern.



Cover intended for Zeppelin but flown on DLH Catapult flight L 119 from Stuttgart to Pernambuco between 31 October - 2 November 1935. Overstamped by 1a 3p.

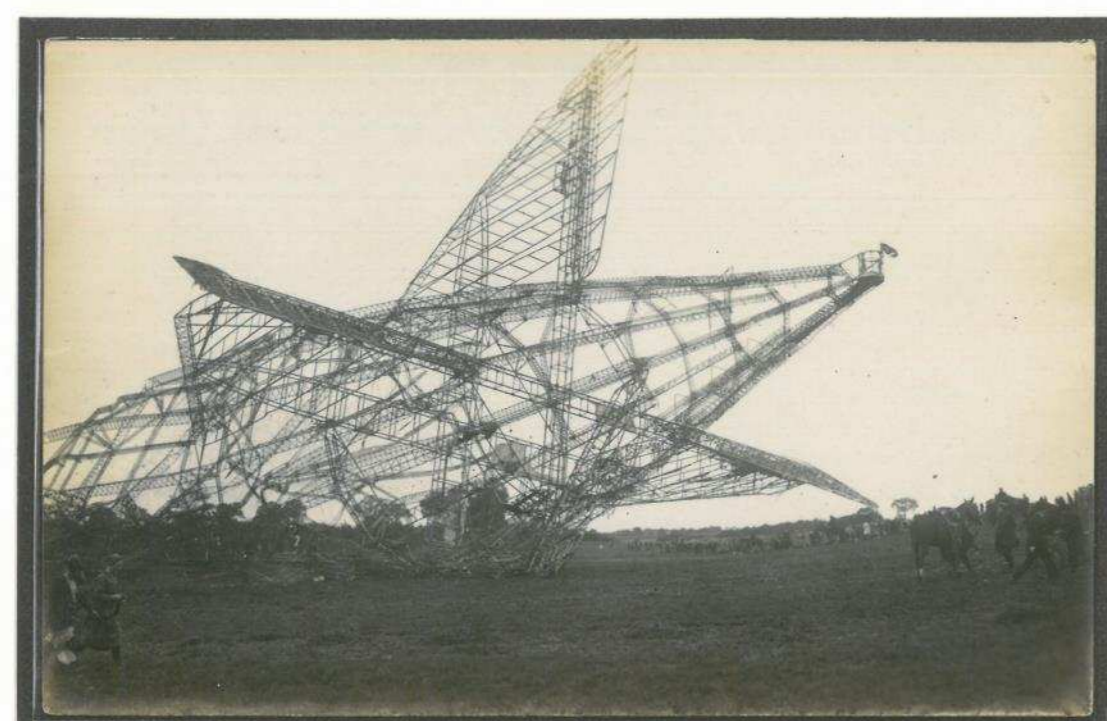


Incoming from Brazil, Condor from Rio de Janeiro to Pernambuco, and DLH Catapult flight L 132 to Marseilles between 16-19 January 1936. Onwards to India via Air France (Marseilles-Saigon service) between 23-29 January. Notice the Condor/Zeppelin cachet defaced with an X by red crayon (like a jusqu'a) indicating the end of the Condor/DLH stage.

INDIAN MAIL VIA AIRSHIP & CATAPULT FLIGHTS

THE ILL-FATED AIRSHIP R.101

Britain embarked on her Airship program in the early 1920s, and the R.101 was meant to be the crowning glory. Intended to fly England-Egypt-India, this service was to be later extended to Australia. The R.101 crashed on its maiden voyage, mere hours after take off. Despite previous plans, no ordinary mail was allowed to be carried, and just 12 lbs of mail was listed on its manifest.



Just five hours after take off, the R.101 crashed into a hill near Beauvais in northern France. Only 8 of the 54 souls on board survived, bringing an end to the British plans for Airship transportation. Picture postcard shows the wreckage after the crash and subsequent fire.

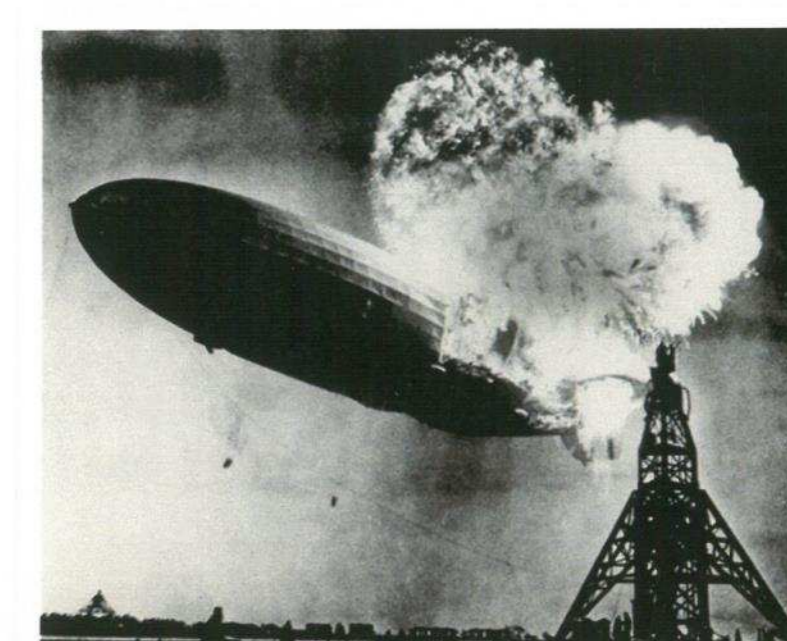
INDIAN MAIL VIA AIRSHIP & CATAPULT FLIGHTS

LZ 129 - HINDENBERG and the end of the Airship Era

LZ 129 Hindenburg was launched in March 1936 and built as the most luxurious way to fly. 14 months after use, the airship caught fire when landing at Lakehurst, New York, thus ending the airship era. This was the worst airship disaster and 36 lives were lost.



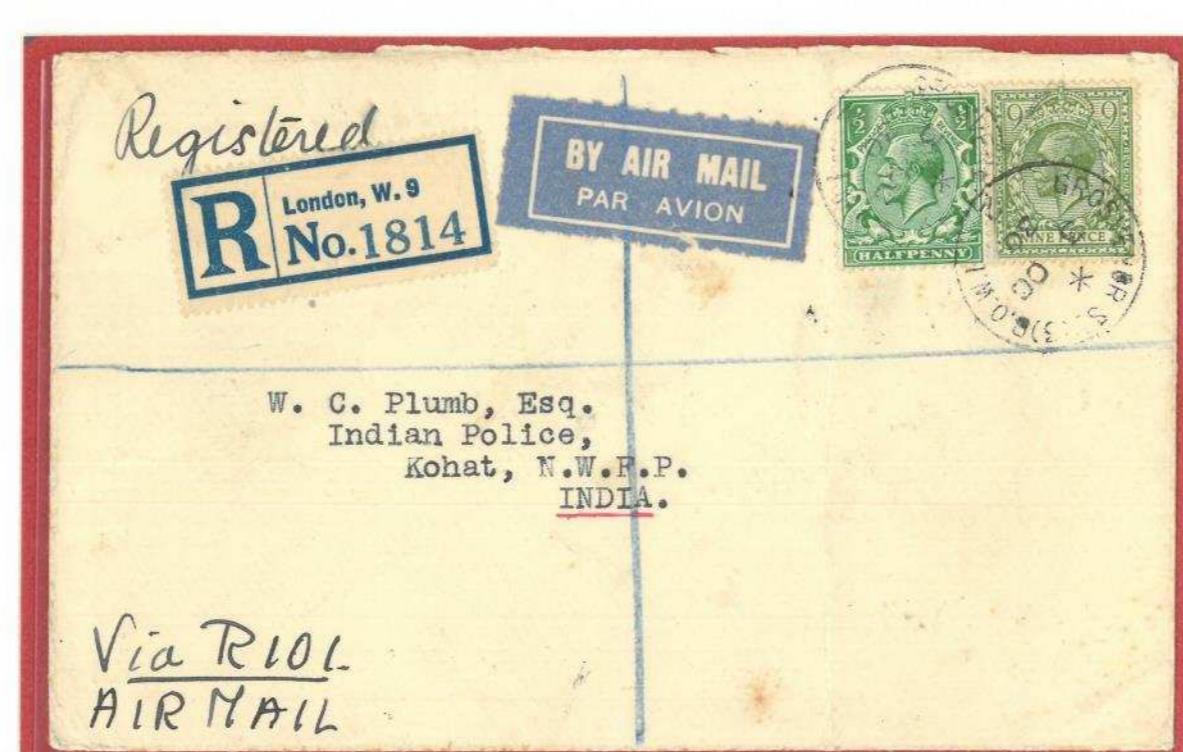
Cover posted at New York on 12 May 1936 addressed to Bombay, and carried on the first N. Atlantic flight of the Hindenburg to Frankfurt, and onward by Imperial Airways to India.



Herbert Morrisons commentary of the crash became a classic of audio history. Scan the QR code for a look and listen.



Mailed at Petersfield, dated 3 OC 30 and addressed to Peshawar, and re-posted to Baghdad adding 5a Indian franking on the reverse. Since ordinary mail was not permitted, this cover would have gone by aeroplane despite being marked BY AIRSHIP R.101.



Registered letter mailed at Grosvenor St., dated 3 Oct 30 addressed to Peshawar. The only known example of mail carried on the R.101.

The first Round the World attempt by commercial flight. Cover posted in New York with 70c franking for air journey to India. Then with 9a 6p India franking to Frankfurt. Cover was to then be re-posted for travel by Hindenburg on the second 1937 flight, but the airship had crashed on 6 May 1937. Addressed to Capt. Max Pruss, captain of the Hindenburg, this is the only known cover with Indian franking and a connector with the Round the World attempt, Hindenburg crash, and Capt. Max Pruss.



RETURN TO SENDEL.
Mr. SIDNEY C. STOUT, 220 Broadway, New York, U. S. A.
Via Trans-Pacific Route to HONG KONG.
Imperial Airways "SUNDAY."
Von Hindenburg "U. S. A."

Mr. Sidney C. Stout,
c/o Capt. Max Pruss,
c/o Air Ship VON HINDENBURG,
Frankfurt am Main,
GERMANY.

By Sidney C. Stout,
775 11th St. - Gloucester,
India Radio & Cable Communications, Ltd.,
Singapore Street,
SINGAPORE.



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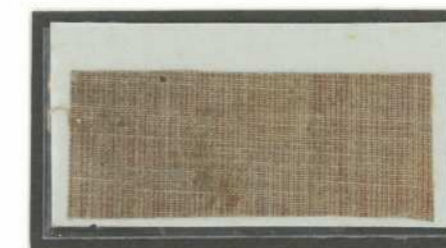
Leaflet promoting the DLH Zeppelin & Catapult service to South America with the 1934 time table on the reverse

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Postcard of the Airship R-101 leaving her mast at Cardington. This was the only Airship ever intended to reach India.



A piece of the fabric stripped from the airship when she was lightened.

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ZEPPELIN LZ 10 - SCHWABEN

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JUNE 10-23, 1912 AIRMAIL WEEK IN RHINE AU MAIN



Air Post Card addressed to The Hon. Sir Charles Stewart Wilson, Director General Post Office, India.



Postal cancellation reads Flugpost am Rhein u. am Main / Darmstadt / 14.6.12



Sir Charles Stewart-Wilson, KCIE, was the Director-General of Posts & Telegraphs India. A prominent philatelist, he was the first President of the Philatelic Society of India and a Council Member of the Royal Philatelic Society London.

ZEPPELIN LZ 13 - HANSA

The Zeppelin LZ 13 - Hansa was built in 1912 and was the first to fly the first international passenger flight. Mostly used between Hamburg, Postdam and Dresden, it also visited Denmark and Sweden.

OCTOBER 1913 FROM DRESDEN TO HAMBURG



Official Delag (Deutsche Luftschiffahrts-Aktien-Gesellschaft) Post Card posted on board the LZ 13, Hansa addressed to Bombay and further redirected to Karwar.



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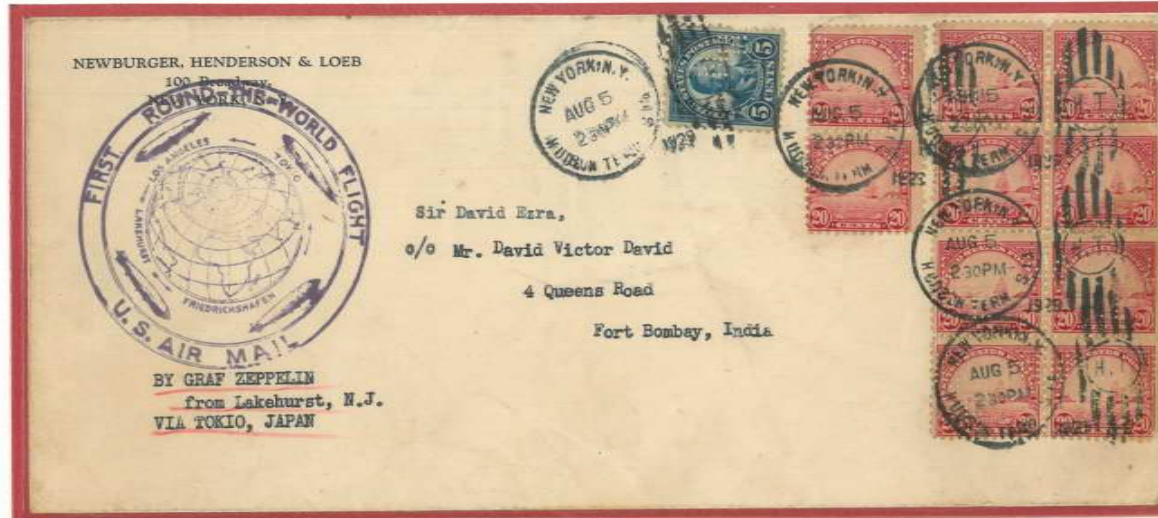
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ROUND THE WORLD FLIGHT, 7 - 29 AUGUST 1929, LAKEHURST NY - FRIEDRICHSHAFEN - TOKYO - LOS ANGES - LAKEHURST NY



Cover posted in New York on 5th August 1929 and reached Tokyo on 19 August. The onward to Bombay by surface to Tokyo.

ORIENT FLIGHT, 25 - 28 MARCH 1929 FRIEDRICHSHAFEN TO EL RAMALE & BACK



Cover posted on board the flight LZ 127 Graf Zeppelin, and dropped at El Ramale. Then sent onwards to Karachi by Imperial Airways. Cancelled with an on-Board postmark (BPS) LUFTHANDE GRAF ZEPPELIN, 25.2.1929.

4TH SOUTH ATLANTIC RETURN FLIGHT 10 – 18 AUGUST 1933



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India - Brazil Postal Rates	
Postage for the first ½ oz. 1931-1941	
Ordinary Letter Rate	3a 6p
Printed Matter Rate	9p
Registration Fee	3a
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Dec 31 - Mar 36	6a This was for service to Europe only and further journey by surface
Mar 36 - Mar 41	46a By air all the way, combining Imperial Airways to Europe and DLH/Air France onwards

(See cover on pg. 5 for an example of the 46a rate usage)

Cover bears British stamps to the value of 10d (the printed matter rate at the time) and was therefore part of the British acceptance on that flight. The Indian postage of 9a 9p (comprising 9p printed matter rate, 6a air fee and 3a registration) would only have paid for transmission by air to Europe and from there by sea to Brazil.



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Confirmation stamp indicating carried by catapult flight from ship to shore on 23.6.34

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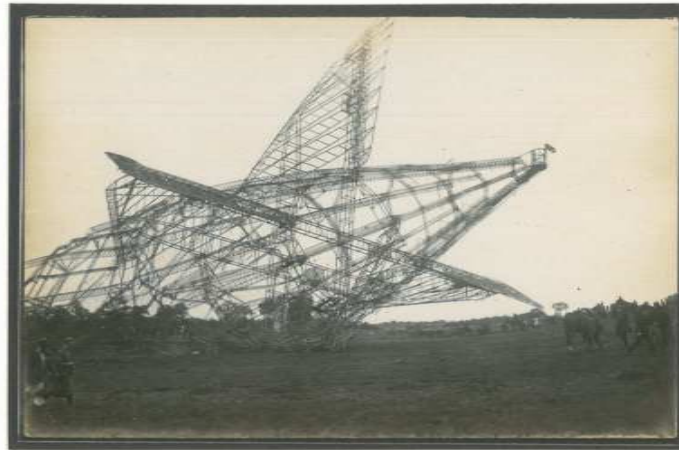


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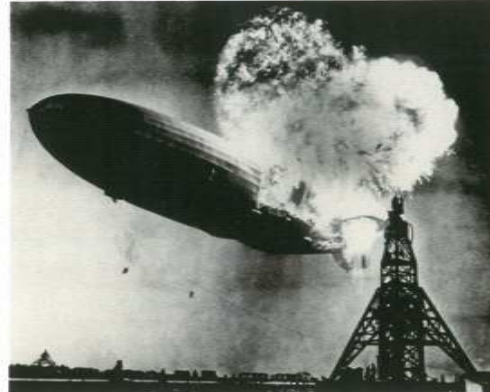


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