

# Development of Airmail Services in South Africa

## Scheduled Airmail Flights

1911 to 1934

### **Background**

The first airplane flight was on December 17, 1903, at Kill Devil Hills near Kitty Hawk, North Carolina, USA, by Orville Wright, piloting the Wright Flyer. This ground-breaking flight lasted 12 seconds, covered 120 feet, and marked the first time a heavier-than-air machine achieved powered, sustained, and controlled flight. This first flight inaugurated the aerial age, though it took time for the achievement to gain universal recognition.

With the development of air travel in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century so the conveying of mail, and later the transport of passengers and cargo became more viable. The first scheduled aerial mail flight took place in the United Kingdom in September 1911, although non-scheduled flights carrying mail had occurred earlier. The first scheduled passenger flight occurred in January 1914, when the Mayor of St. Petersburg on a flying boat from St. Petersburg to Tampa, Florida, USA. Both these flights paved the way for modern commercial aviation and the delivery of mail between major cities around the world.

South Africa was at the forefront of both aviation and the introduction of scheduled airmail services. The first non-scheduled airmail flight took place in 1911, while the first scheduled airmail service, all be it on an experimental basis, commenced in 1925. This development ushered in a mail service which, when compared to surface mail, focused on speed, reliability, and global reach. While often more expensive, it is essential for time-sensitive or international correspondence.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this exhibit is to illustrate the development of aerial post in southern Africa, and South Africa in particular, using postal stationery. The introduction of regular scheduled flights carrying mail to Africa and other parts of the world led to a dramatic increase in the speed of delivery of mail which enhanced global and domestic connectivity, overcoming geographic barriers that limited land and sea transport.

### **Treatment**

This exhibit is a chronological record of the development of airmail from the first "lighter than air" aerial flight in 1903, the first aerial post flight in the Commonwealth to the demise of Union Airways in 1934. This development is illustrated with the use of covers issued to commemorate each of the different inter-city scheduled aerial flights undertaken specifically to transport mail between across South Africa. Postage stamps issued for use as payment for the airmail service are included to record the involvement of the Post Office in the development of an airmail service in South Africa during the Union period.

● All items marked with a red dot above or alongside the description are regarded as scarce.

### **Outline of Exhibit**

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### **References**

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## First Aerial Post Flight Allahabad to Naini, India February 1911

The first known aerial post flight occurred on 17 February 1911 when Fred Wiseman carried letters, newspapers and groceries a distance of 24 kilometres (15 miles).

A day later, the first officially sanctioned airmail flight was made when Frenchman Henri Pequet flew 6,500 letters and postcards a distance of 10 kilometres (6 miles) from Allahabad to Naini in India to raise funds for a new flying school. This flight is considered the world's first airmail service and featured special magenta cachets on the mail articles. This pioneering flight paved the way for later airmail services worldwide.

## First Scheduled Aerial Post Flight Hendon Aerodrome to Windsor Palace, London

On his return to England from India in 1911 Captain Walter Windham (later Commander Sir) organised the First United Kingdom Aerial Postal Service to commemorate of the Coronation of King George V on 9 September 1911.

The aeroplane was piloted by Gustav Hamel and flew from the Hendon Aerodrome to Windsor Palace to deliver the first officially recognized aerial mail. Approximately 300-400 letters and 800 commemorative postcards were carried on the 34 kilometre (21 miles) journey, thus marking the world's first scheduled airmail delivery via aeroplane.

### Commemorative Cover

#### First UK Aerial Post Cover

1911 United Kingdom Aerial Post commemorative envelope. Printed brown-red. 1d Mackennal tied with Die 2 postmark SP 14 1911. Addressed to Crief in Perthshire



#### Official Cover Insert

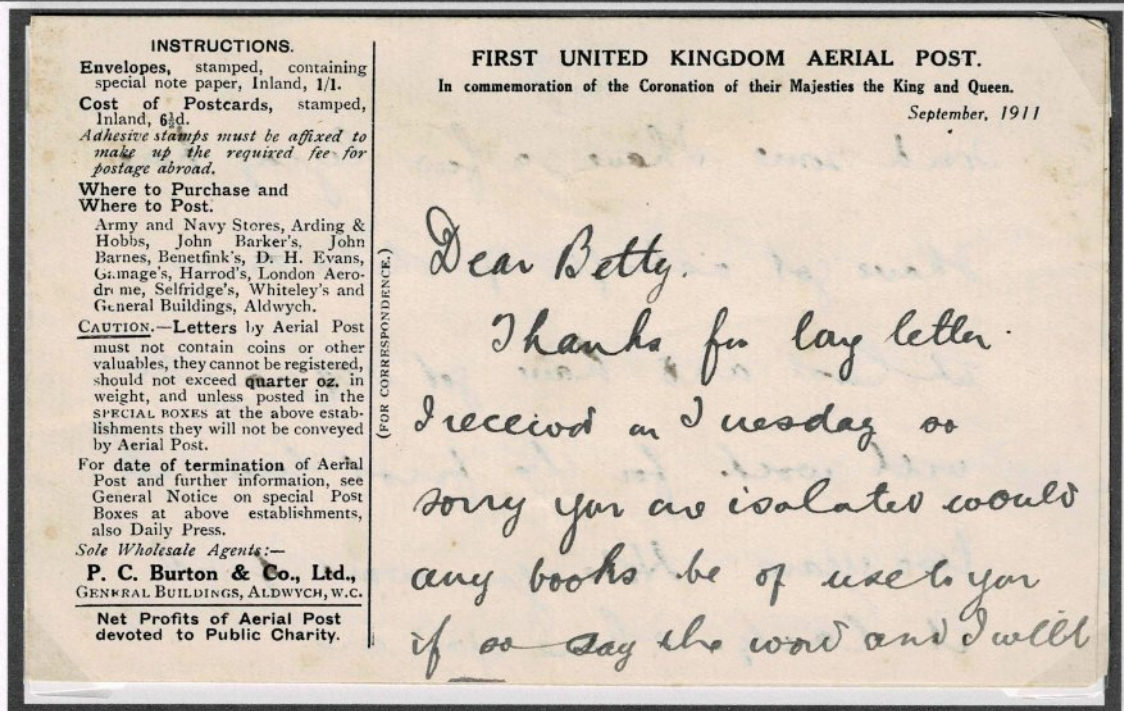
The official cover included a folded insert stating that this was the "First United Kingdom Aerial Post" with the sub-text:

*"In commemoration of the Coronation of their Majesties the King and Queen"*

The insert covered details of the service and instructions on how to use the Aerial Post service.

The senders message includes the following paragraph:

*"What think you of the aerial post? Keep this as a souvenir. May be valuable 200 years hence"*





**First UK Aerial Commemorative Cover**

Commemorative cover conveyed from Croydon, London to Windsor, London on 11 September 1911. Addressed to Edinburgh. London die 3 postmark. Printed in deep green



**First UK Aerial Postcard**

Commemorative postcard addressed to Battersea Rise, London. Conveyed on first Croydon to Windsor flight. Cancelled London with die 2 special canceller. Printed in dark olive with 1/2 d. King stamps.



**First UK Aerial Postcard**

Commemorative postcard sent to Roodepoort, Transvaal. Carried on first Croydon - Windsor flight on 11 September 1911. Arrived Roodepoort on 12 October 1911. Printed in dark brown.

## Pioneering South African Flights

Prior to the First World War a number of pioneering flights were made in South Africa. Although these flights did not carry any official mail they are worthy of being recorded as having contributed to the development of aviation, and hence the airmail service in the country. In most cases the flight carried letters from the mayors of the departing town to the mayor of the destination town. Some of these flights included:

- East London trial flight 1909
- John Weston Aviation Company public demonstrations, 1911
- Pretoria Agricultural Society Festive Week, 1911
- African Aviation Syndicate, 1911 (which coincided with the 1<sup>st</sup> South African Aerial Post between Kenilworth & Muizenberg.

## First South African Aerial Post Flights

### Kenilworth - Muizenberg

Towards the end of 1911 members of the African Aviation Syndicate arrived in Cape Town and introduced an "Aviation Fortnight" exhibition at Kenilworth Race Course from 21 December to 3 January 1912. During the exhibition they made representation to the Minister of Posts and Telegraphs who gave his consent to a feature of the "Aviation Fortnight" to convey aerial post between Kenilworth and Muizenberg. Mail was limited to special copyright postcards depicting a monoplane in flight over Cape Town with Table Mountain in the background.

### First Kenilworth - Muizenberg flight 27 December 1911

The first aerial mail flight took place on the 27<sup>th</sup> December 1911, leaving at 19:15 and returning from Muizenberg later that evening. The flight to Muizenberg took 7½ minutes.

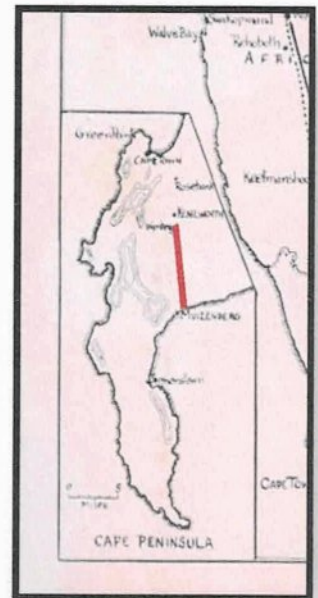
The return aerial flight carrying a mailbag with mail collected between Muizenberg and Simon's Town. The flight took 12 minutes, landing at Kenilworth Race Course at 20:15 the same evening.

### Second Kenilworth - Muizenberg flight 2 January 1912

A second flight from Kenilworth was arranged for New Year's Day, 1912 with the plan to carry mail to Muizenberg. Unfavourable weather led to the postponement of the flight to the following day. With improved weather the flight departed Kenilworth at 19:38 on Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> January, arriving at Muizenberg at 19:56.

Due to unfavourable weather conditions the return flight was delayed until the next morning. On approaching Kenilworth dense fog was encountered and after several attempts to locate the landing area was forced to return to Muizenberg. During the flight the fabric of the monoplane was damaged forcing the cancellation of the return flight the following day. The aircraft was then towed back to Kenilworth by truck.

The commemorative cards from the second flight were sorted at Muizenberg the following day. The cards received the ordinary Muizenberg postmark of 3<sup>rd</sup> January 1912, in addition to the 30<sup>th</sup> December cachet (the closing date of the airmail).



Map of the route of the 1911 first air mail flight between Kenilworth and Muizenberg.



### Souvenir Card from 2<sup>nd</sup> flight between Kenilworth and Muizenberg.

Franks Transvaal 1d.  
King Edward VII tied  
'Kenilworth Aerial Post  
Dec 30 11' cachet with  
similar cachet for  
Muizenberg.  
Due to poor weather  
this flight only took  
place in the late  
afternoon of 2<sup>nd</sup>  
January 1912.  
Muizenberg normal  
postmark, addressed  
to England.

On the 1<sup>st</sup> of December 1961 the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the first aerial post flight in South Africa was commemorated with an aerial post flight from Kenilworth to Muizenberg and back. The flight was undertaken by a helicopter which carried replicas of the postcards issued in 1911 with a commemorative 3-cent stamp issued by the Post Office

**Commemorative Stamps**

On 1 December 1961 the Post Office issued a 3-cent postage stamp to commemorate the Golden Jubilee. The illustrated stamp shows an SAA Boeing jet, with 1961 above, and a Bleriot monoplane aircraft with 1911 above, flying over Table Mountain



Cancelled

**Postmarks/Cancelled**

Two postmarks were used for the Anniversary flights

**Replica Postcards**

used by the Post Office on 1 December 1961.



Commemorative Stamp

Issued by the Post Office on 1 December 1961.



**Kenilworth - Muizenberg Commemorative Postcard**

Commemorative postcard carried by helicopter from Kenilworth to Muizenberg on 1 December 1961. The front of the postcard includes a scanned copy of the original postcard.

This postcard was issued at the same time as the issuing of the commemorative stamp on 1 December 1961

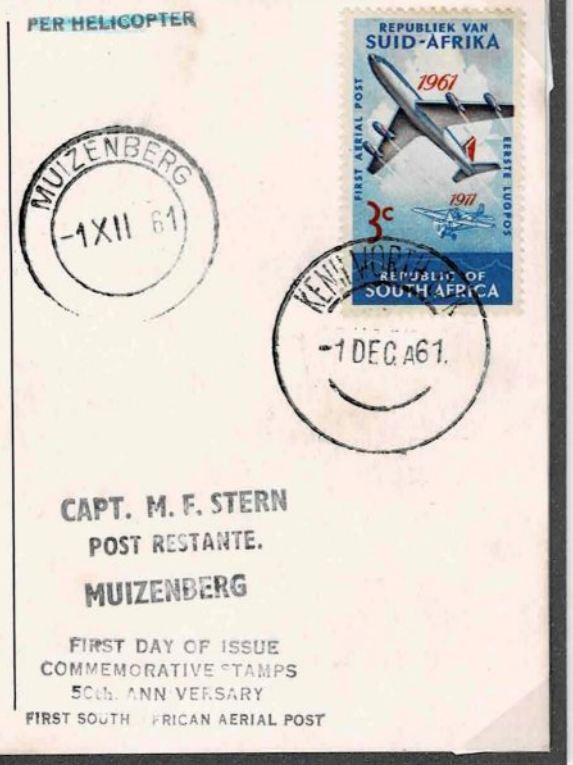
Reproduction of rare card sent by Mrs. E. Livingstone (wife of one of the members of the Syndicate), flown on the second outward flight and signed by the pilot and the other two members of the Syndicate. Wording o.

when this will reach you but when it does arrive it will have been a lovely journey and be historical some day! Best wishes to you and

The 1911 official airmails of South Africa. The African Aviation Syndicate, formed by Capt. Guy Livingstone, Mr. Compton Paterson and the South African airman, Mr. E. F. Driver, in England, came to Cape Town towards the end of 1911. Mr. Driver was one of the pilots in the 1911 British Coronation Airmail. Consent was obtained from the Minister of Posts and Telegraphs to convey an aerial post between Kenilworth and Muizenberg. The mail was limited to special copyright postcards, printed by Messrs. Whitehead, Morris & Co. Ltd., Cape Town (sold at one shilling). First flight was on December 27, 1911 at 7.15 p.m. (7½ minutes) in a Bleriot machine. Return was in 12 minutes, the plane reaching Kenilworth at 8.10 p.m. Second flight was made on January 2, 1912 and return on January 3, 1912. The Vacuum Oil Company used the flight for advertising on December 27 and printed on reverse of a few cards, "New Year Greetings from the Vacuum Oil Company. This card is carried on Pegasus (Petrol). Your car will fly if you use Pegasus". (Pegasus Petrol has since been replaced by Mobilgas). Few of these cards exist. Mail carried: December 27, 1911: Kenilworth—Muizenberg, 729 cards; Muizenberg—Kenilworth 210 cards; January 2, 1912: Kenilworth — Muizenberg 1,479 cards; Muizenberg — Kenilworth 179 cards.

**Reverse side of the souvenir postcard**

Reverse side of the commemorative postcard with details of the first official airmail flight in South Africa.



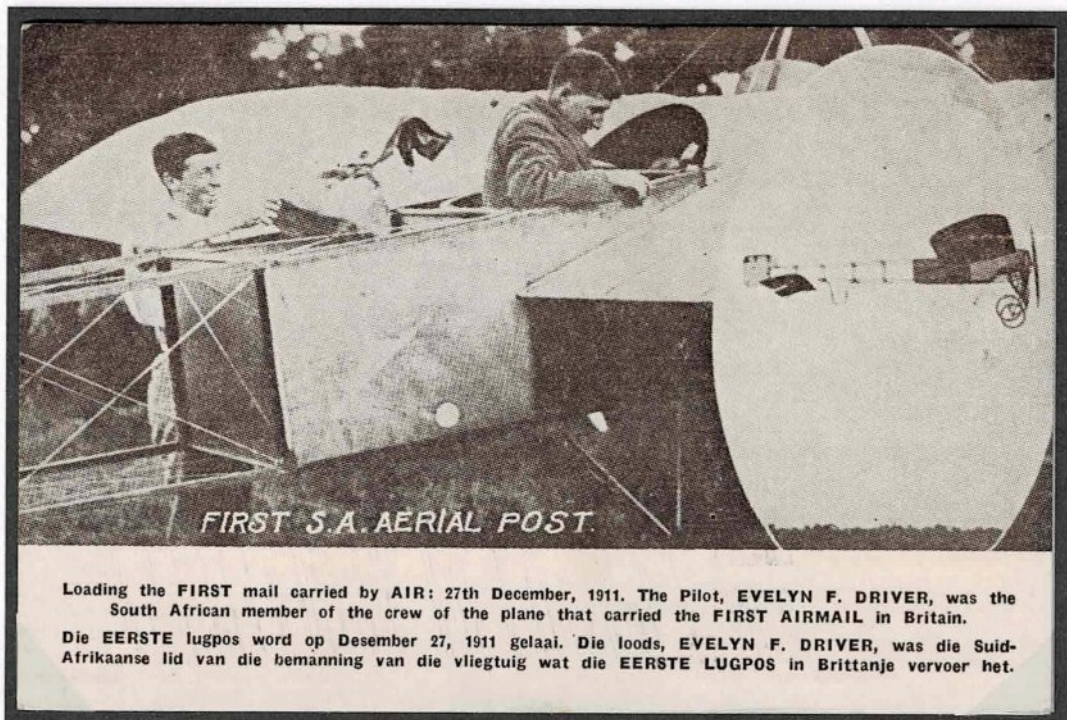
**Second 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Flight** 27 December 1961

A second 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary aerial post flight between Kenilworth and Muizenberg and back, took place on 27 December 1961. This time using an aircraft.



**Muizenberg - Kenilworth Commemorative Postcard**

Commemorative postcard carried on the second aerial return post flight from Muizenberg to Kenilworth on 27 December 1911.



**Reverse of Commemorative Postcard**

Reverse side of postcard commemorating the first aerial return post flight from Muizenberg to Kenilworth on 27 December 1911.

## Further Aerial Post Flights in South Africa

Numerous aerial post flights took place after the second flight in Cape Town. These flights were undertaken to demonstrate the "heavier than air" flight, rather than as scheduled airmail services.

- Military Exhibition flights over Johannesburg - 19 November 1911.
- Germiston Flight - 24 November 1911
- Pretoria Flight - 27 November 1911
- Benoni Flight - 30 November 1911
- Dingaan's Day Flight - Cape Town, 16 December 1911
- Christmas Flight - 23 December 1911
- New Year's Flight - 30 December 1911

## Second Aerial Post Flight. The SA Red Cross "Our Day", Cape Town 1918

A second aerial post flight in Cape Town was scheduled in 1918 to raise funds for the soldiers wounded in the First World War. The flight was to coincide with the Naval and Military Tournament to be held at Green Point. Due to the outbreak of the Spanish Influenza Epidemic it became necessary to postpone the tournament. The flight was however not cancelled with the aerial post flight leaving the military aerodrome at Young's Field for Green Point Common on the afternoon of 7<sup>th</sup> October 1918.

Postcards known as the "Make Your Sixpence Fly" and copies of the special "Aerial Post" were carried on the flight. The postcards cost 6-pence each, of which ½d. was used to cover the postage fee and the balance contributed towards a fund for soldier injured in WW 1.

Two distinct issues of the postcards were produced. The first was printed on pure white glossy surface card, the second on a slightly smaller dull cream-white card of inferior quality. The Post Office also produced a "Aerial Post" date-stamp.



### South Africa 1918 Large Wing Aerial Postcard

Unused souvenir postcard issued to commemorate the "Our Day" Red Cross Aerial Post, 1918 in Cape Town.

### South Africa 1918 Large Wing Aerial Postcard

Used souvenir postcard issued to commemorate the "Our Day" Red Cross Aerial Post, 1918 in Cape Town.

### Souvenir Envelope

A souvenir envelope with an Our Day commemorative Cinderella stamp was produced by the organisers to raise funds.



● **Our Day Souvenir Envelope**

Souvenir envelope produced to raise funds for the "Our Day" fund.

### Commemorative Cinderella

A 3d. cinderella was sold to the public to raise funds for the Red Cross.



● **Cinderella**

Commemorative cinderella sold to the public to raise funds for the "Our Day" fund.

### Promotion Poster

A poster was produced and distributed throughout Cape Town to encourage members of the public to purchase and post-Christmas Aerial Postcards to be carried between Wynberg and Green Point Common on 23<sup>rd</sup> December 1918 and New Year Postcards on 30<sup>th</sup> December 1918.

The Christmas flight left Wynberg at 14:55 and dropped the mail from the sky over Green Point Common at 15:00

The New Year's flight was the sixth and final flight of those arranged in 1918. As with the previous flights the mail was carried from Wynberg and dropped from a height of 50 meters over Green Point Common.

**Promotion Poster**

Scan of a poster distributed throughout Cape Town to encourage members of the public to purchase and post the postcards on the Red Cross "Our Day" flight.  
(Reduced in size)



## Johannesburg "Our Day" Peace Celebrations November 1918

In November 1918 Johannesburg staged an exhibition at Wanderers Ground to commemorate the armistice that marked the end of World War I. The exhibition was organised by the Red Cross to raise funds for the injured soldiers returning from the front lines.

On 19 November leaflets were dropped from an aeroplane over the city, promoting the event and encouraging the public to buy special Red Cross postcards. As part of a Red Cross promotion the postcards were flown from Johannesburg to Pretoria on 27 November 1918, and was the beginnings of air travel demonstrations in the region:

### Commemorative Postcards

The postcards were of a different design to those used in Cape Town although they also used the "Make your sixpence fly" slogan. The design included the words "By Aerial Post" with a red cross and the "small" RAF wings in the centre. The postcards cost 6-pence and had a clear back for a message to the recipient. The 1/2d. King George V stamps were cancelled with a special Aerial Post canceller which included the date of the flight to Pretoria.



South Africa 1918  
"Small" Wing Aerial  
Postcard

Souvenir postcard issued to commemorate the "Our Day" Red Cross Aerial Post, in Johannesburg 27 November 1918.

### Canceler

The Post Office also used special an "Aerial Post" canceler for mail carried on the "make your sixpence fly" flights.



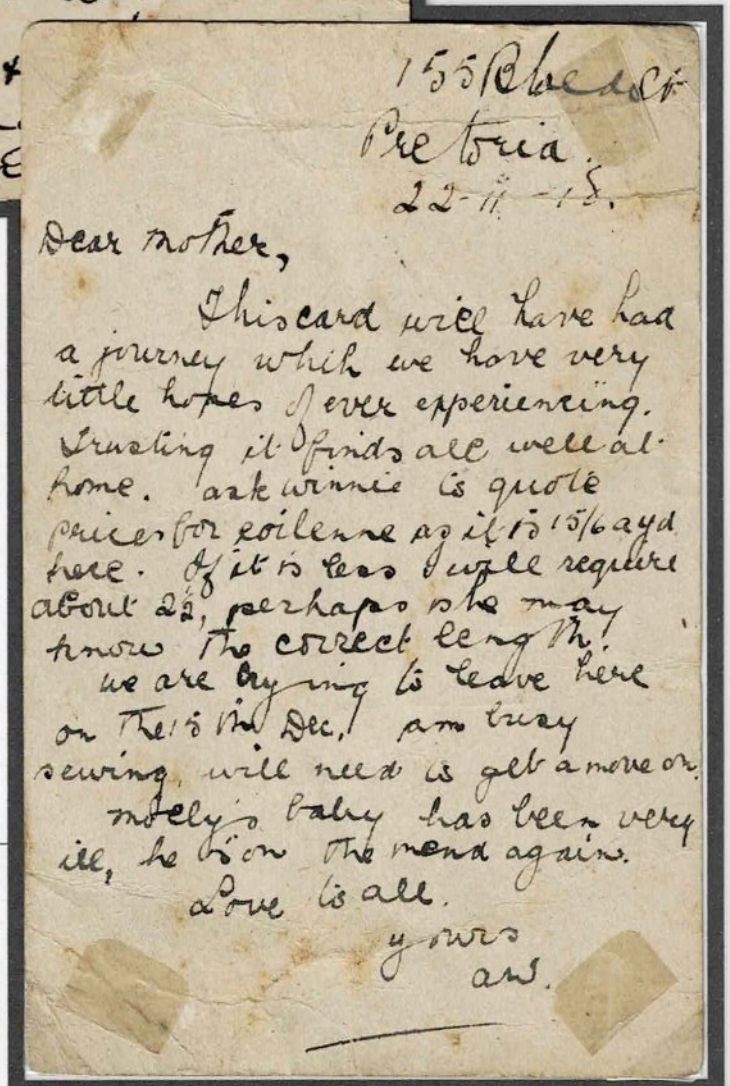
Aerial Post Canceler

Scan of the special canceler used by the Post Office on mail carried on the "Make your sixpence fly" flights.

### Aerial Postcard

Message on the back of a souvenir postcard.

The writer, writing to his mother, wrote:  
"This card will have had a journey which we have very little hope of ever experiencing"



Dear mother,

This card will have had a journey which we have very little hopes of ever experiencing. Trusting it finds all well at home. ask Winnie is quote prices for toiletry as it is 15/6 a yd here. If it is less I will require about 22, perhaps she may know the correct length. we are trying to leave here on the 15th Dec. am busy sewing. will need to get a move on. molly's baby has been very ill, he is on the mend again. Love is all.

yours  
aw.

## Peace Treaty Celebrations Pigeon Post August 1919

In July 1919 the Union Government proclaimed Friday the 2<sup>nd</sup> and Tuesday the 5<sup>th</sup> August as public holidays to celebrate the Peace Treaty which brought an end to the 1<sup>st</sup> World War. Peace Doves carrying messages of peace and goodwill were released in Cape Town. "Pigeongrams" with messages of no more than 24 words were sent from the balcony of Cartwrights Corner in Adderley Street. They were later delivered by the Post Office to the addressee.



Picture Postcard of 1918 Midday Pause

Crowds gathering at the corner of Adderley and Darling streets, Cape Town to celebrate the Peace Treaty, signalling the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> World War. Doves carrying 'Pigeongrams' were released from the balcony of Cartwright's Corner.

## London - Cape Town Pioneering Flights 1920

Post-World War 1, Jan Smuts the then Prime Minister of the Union of South Africa was instrumental in initiating a pioneering flight between London and Cape Town. The opportunity to do so arose after the Royal Air Force surveyed the Cairo to Cape Town route and the British Air Ministry declared the route open to civil aviation.

### Van Ryneveld & Brand 4 February, 1920

Pierre van Ryneveld and Quintin Brand were seconded from the Royal Air Force to the Union Defence Force to undertake the London to Cape Town trip. The first flight left London on 4 February 1920. En route they experienced a number of mishaps resulted in them having to use three different aircraft.

The "Silver Queen" was the first aircraft with which they left London but was badly damaged during an emergency night landing at Korosko in Sudan. A new Vickers Vimy bomber "Silver Queen II" was then provided to continue the journey. On take-off from the Bulawayo, the "Silver Queen II" struck a tree and was completely wrecked. The South African Government then agreed to provide the two pilots with a D.H.9 bombing machine, one of 100 aircraft gifted to South Africa by the British Government after the First World War. This aircraft was christened "Voortrekker" which then completed the trip to Cape Town arriving on 20 March 1920 - 45 days after leaving London.

### Cockerell & Broome 24 January, 1920

The London Times newspaper financed a pioneering flight from London to Cape Town, leaving London on 24 January 1920 - 11 days before Van Ryneveld and Brand. The aircraft was captained by Cockerell and Broome with a famous scientist, Dr Chalmers Mitchell as passenger. On leaving Khartoum the aircraft crashed with the crew being unscathed. The crew then proceeded to Cape Town by road and rail, arriving in Cape Town two days after the arrival of Van Ryneveld and Brand.



Van Ryneveld

Scanned photograph of Pierre van Ryneveld.

### Cockerell & Broome

Scanned photograph of Stanley Cockerell and Frank Broome posing in front of Vickers Vimy commercial G-EAAV aircraft in which they commenced their pioneering flight to South Africa.




**The Hadley-Page Flight** 15 February, 1920

The Hadley-Page Company South African subsidiary was established in late 1909 to establish regular services between major towns in the Union of South Africa and link up communications with other British colonies at Cairo. Following successful trials, the first flight, which was authorised to carry mails left Wynberg, Cape Town for Johannesburg on 15 February 1920. The plane experience numerous problems *en route* to Johannesburg. 50 mile short of Sutherland the aircraft ran out of fuel. The service recommenced the three days later, stopping at Laingsburg and Beaufort West. On Thursday 19 February the plane crashed 8 minutes after taking-off from Beaufort West.


A total of 422 letters were carried on the flight, of which approximately 18 exist today.

**THE HANDLEY-PAGE FLIGHT, 1920**

The Handley-Page Company towards the end of 1919 established a subsidiary company in South Africa, "The Handley-Page South African Transport, Ltd." for the purpose of establishing regular services between the principal towns in the Union of South Africa and ultimately to link up communications with Europe at Cairo. Two huge Handley-Page 16-passenger aeroplanes (converted war bombers) were assembled at Young's Field, Wynberg, Cape. Major H. Meintjes, M.C., A.F.C., was appointed the Manager and Chief Pilot of the Company. The other pilots were Capt. (later Lieut.-Col.) C. J. Venter, D.F.C., and Lieut. (later Major) C. W. Meredith, A.F.C. A successful trial flight was made on February 7, 1920. The P.M.G. authorised mails on February 11, 1920. At 6.30 a.m. February 15, 1920, the "Pioneer" with crew of three, Major Meintjes, Capt. Venter and Mr. Askew (engineer) and seven passengers, with mail, left Wynberg for Johannesburg. This was Sunday and on Monday it was reported that the plane was missing. Due to shortage of petrol a landing was made at Blaauwheuvell, 50 miles from Sutherland. On Wednesday the flight was resumed and Laingsburg reached. Then on Thursday morning the plane left and arrived at Beaufort West shortly before 11 a.m. At 1.30 p.m. the flight was resumed and eight minutes later crashed. Number of letters carried were 422, of which approximately 18 exist today, thus one of the rare items. Postage was 2s. 1d. for half ounce. Besides the wording "Per Aerial Post", there were a cachet "Carried by Aeroplane" in block letters and a circular cachet inscribed "Handley-Page South African Transport Ltd., Aerial Post" (this latter cachet is usually very faint). Passenger flights were carried out and the Company went into liquidation.



**CAPT. M. F. STERN,**  
**C/o. POSTMASTER,**  
**BEAUFORT WEST, C.P.,**  
**SOUTH AFRICA.**



(Kindly cancel at right - 19 February 1920, and return to Capt. M. F. Stern, P.O. Box 3654, Cape Town, C.P.)

**Hadley-Page Flight Commemorative Postcard**

A commemorative postcard issued to commemorate the 50 years since the crash of the Hadley-Page "Pioneer" plane just outside Beaufort West on 19 February 1920.

RSA 2-cent stamp cancelled Cape Town 15 February 1970 with receiving date-stamp dated 19 February 1970.

**Air Taxis 1925 - 1929**


The history of air taxis in Cape Town, is closely tied to early aviation in South Africa, particularly the South African Air Force (SAAF) *Diamond Mail Service* that began in 1925 with regular mail flights between Maitland Aerodrome (Brooklyn), Cape Town and Alexander Bay. While this was a military operation, it established a history of aviation activity that would later be a foundation for civilian aviation, including air taxi services.

**AIR TAXIS AT ANY TIME TO ANYWHERE**

'PHONE  
5-1935

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**AIR TAXI CO. (PTY.) LTD. MAITLAND**



Messrs. Ewing & McDonald, Inc.  
 101 West 31st Street,  
NEW YORK, N.Y.

**Air Taxis**  
 Cover addressed from Maitland, Cape Town to New York.  
 Dated 3 October 1938

## 1925 Experimental Air Mail Service March 1925

In 1925 the Union Government instituted an experimental air mail flight between Cape Town and Durban, largely to transport mail arriving from England on the Windsor Castle passenger liner. After a rehearsal flight was conducted, the first flight left Cape Town on 2<sup>nd</sup> March 1925. The flight stopped at Oudtshoorn, Port Elizabeth, East London and then Durban. The flight was completed in 8 hours and 15 minutes.

### Postage Stamps

Special airmail postage stamps were produced by the Post Office for use on all mail items sent by airmail. The stamps were required to pay for the airmail service which was charged in addition to the standard surface mail rate.



1d. air post  
postage stamp  
SACC 25



3d. air post  
postage stamp.  
SACC 26



6d. air post  
postage stamp.  
SACC 27



9d. air post  
postage stamp.  
SACC 28

### Postage Rates

These stamps had to be purchased and affixed to the mail in addition to the standard postage that applied at that time. The following airmail fees were applicable (in addition to the ordinary rate of 2d. per ounce):

	<u>Inland</u>	<u>Overseas</u>
Letters	3d. per ounce	6d. per ounce
Postcards	1d. each	3d. each
Parcels	6d. per pound	9d. per pound

### Airmail Labels

Special orange airmail labels were also issued and used for the service.



#### Air Mail Label

The orange air mail label issued by the Post Office and applied to mail destined on all experimental airmail service flights.

### Special Cache

The Post Office made use of a special rubber airmail cache which included the date received at the despatching post office. These were supplied to each of the airmail centres to frank correspondence despatched on the service and applied in purple. This cache was used in addition to the ordinary date-stamp as it did not include the name of the post office from which it was sent.



#### Special SA Air Mail Cache

Scan of the special cache used by the Post Office and applied to mail destined on all experimental service flights.

### Date Stamp

Mail posted in Cape Town for the first flight bears the canceller with the dates of either the 26<sup>th</sup>, 27<sup>th</sup> or 28<sup>th</sup> February, or 2<sup>nd</sup> March.

The mail from England which arrived by sea on the "Windsor Castle" was cancelled with the Cape Town cancel dated 2<sup>nd</sup> March, before being transferred to Wynberg and the waiting aircraft.



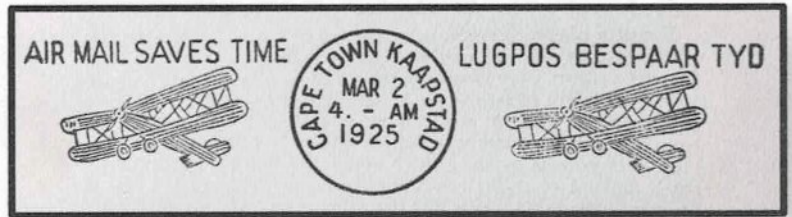
#### Date Stamp

Scan of the Cape Town date-stamp used by the Post Office and applied to mail destined on the first experimental service flights.

**Slogan Machine Postmarks**

"Air Mail Saves Time" slogan machine cancellers were used in both Cape Town and Durban. These postmarks were mainly applied to non-air mail correspondence, but were occasionally applied to airmail letters.

Two different slogan machine postmarks were used in Cape Town. One has CAPE TOWN KAAPSTAD in the top the circle from 8 am to 4 am. The second has CAPE TOWN at the top and KAAPSTAD at the bottom of the circle.



**Machine Slogan**

An "Air Mail Saves Time" slogan machine postmark applied to surface mail by the Post Office to promote the airmail service.



**Airmail Cover**

Airmail cover sent from Cape Town to Durban on the first experimental airmail service. The type 1 slogan machine postmark dated 28 February 1925 was used.

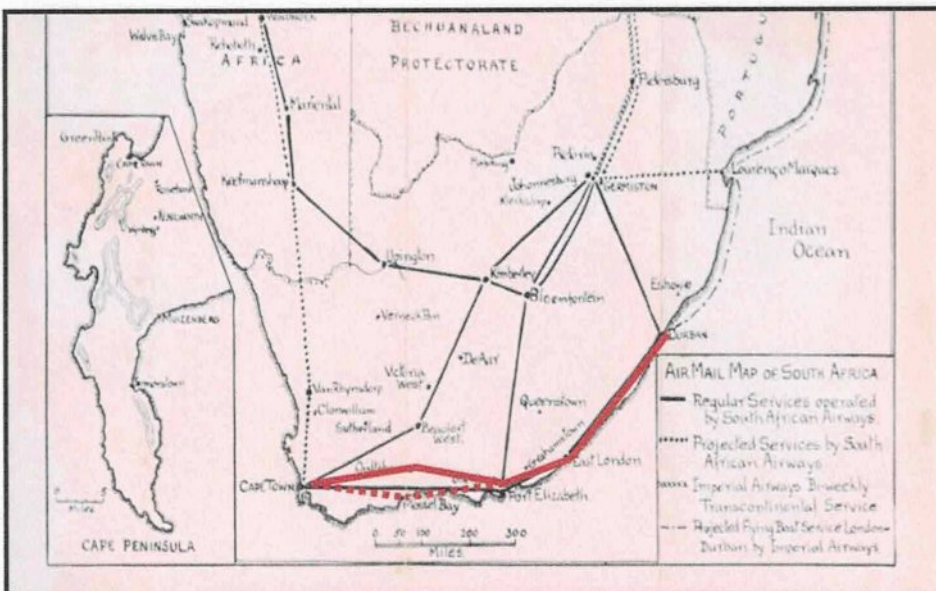
The cover also has the special S.A. AIRMAIL/S.A. LUGPOS cachet applied in purple.

The correct postage of 2d. for ordinary postage and 3d. for airmail was applied.

**Experimental Air Mail Route**

The experimental air mail route from Cape Town went via Oudtshoorn, Port Elizabeth, East London and then Durban. Two DH.9 military aircraft flew each of the legs of the route with different aircraft for each leg. The route was thus flown in relay rather than by a single pair of aircraft between Cape Town and Durban.

During the rehearsal flight a few days before commencement of the service, the prevalence of coastal fog led to Mossel Bay being abandoned as a staging post and moved to Oudtshoorn.



**Experimental Air Mail Route**

Map of the route of the 1925 experimental air mail service between Cape Town and Durban.

The dotted line indicates the original planned route to Port Elisabeth via Mossel Bay which was changed to go via Oudtshoorn after bad weather was experienced in Mossel Bay during the rehearsal flight.

Source: *The Airposts of South Africa* by L.A. Wyndham.

- Experimental Air Mail Route
- ..... Original route via Mossel Bay

### Experimental Air Mail Schedule

The experimental air mail service between Cape Town and Durban was run weekly in each direction to coincide with the arrival (on Monday's) and departure (on Friday's) of the Union-Castle mail ships in Cape Town. Air mail postal items which arrived on the mail ship were first transferred to the Central Post Office for sorting. This mail, in addition to locally posted mail was then conveyed to Wynberg and then loaded on the awaiting planes. Air mail for the inaugural service on 2 March 1925 was transferred from the "Windsor Castle" mail ship.

#### Windsor Castle Mail Ship

Picture postcard of the Winsor Castle, the first mail ship to carry airmail from Southampton, UK to Cape Town



#### Military Aircraft Used

Following the 1<sup>st</sup> World War the British Government donated 100 D.H.9 war time aircraft to the South Africa. Eleven of these aircraft were allocated by the Union Defence Force for the experimental airmail service. Two different DH.9 wartime aircraft were flown on each of the 4 "legs" of the journey.

- Cape Town - Oudtshoorn DH.9 113 and 127
- Oudtshoorn - Port Elizabeth DH.9 136 and 110
- Port Elizabeth - East London DH.9 137 and 138
- East London - Durban DH.9 106 and 101



**DH.9 Military Aircraft**

Scanned photograph of the D.H.9 Military Aircraft used on the Experimental Service.  
Source: Wikipedia

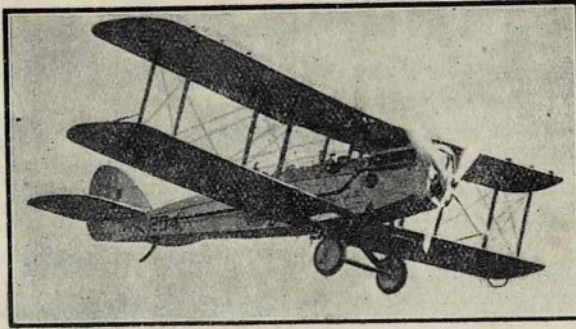
**Information Pamphlet**

A bilingual information pamphlet was produced to inform the public about the experimental service. The pamphlet was issued prior the decision to abandon Mossel Bay with Oudtshoorn selected in its stead.

**Information  
Brochure**

Copy of the brochure produced and distributed to the public prior to commencement of the 1925 experimental service.

**UNIE VAN SUIDAFRIKA.**



# Lugposdiens

TUSSEN

**KAAPSTAD en DURBAN,**

VLIEGTUIE DOEN AAN BY

**MOSSELBAAI, PORT ELIZABETH EN  
OOSLONDEN.**

STUUR U POSSTUKKE

PER LUGPOS

EN

BESPAAR TYD.

Deur die "Lugpos" te gebruik word besigheidsmanne van Durban,  
Port Elizabeth, Ooslonden en Mosselbaai op gelyke voet  
geplaas met die handelaars van Kaapstad.

PRETORIA

GOEWERMENTSDRUKKERY EN KANTOOR VAN SKRYFBEHOEFTE

1925

**Inaugural Cape Town - Durban Service**

2<sup>nd</sup> March 1925

After a rehearsal flight was conducted, the first flight left Cape Town on 2<sup>nd</sup> March 1925. The flight stopped at Oudtshoorn, Port Elizabeth, East London and then Durban. The flights were completed in 8 hours and 15 minutes, leaving Cape Town at 07:45 and arriving in Durban at 15:55.



**Cape Town to Durban Mail**

Postcard sent on the inaugural Cape Town - Durban flight on 2 March 1925. Imprinted 1d. King George V stamp and 1d. Air Mail stamp to cover the additional airmail charge, cancelled 28 February 1925. Special S.A. Airmail cachet applied in purple.

**Cape Town - Durban - Johannesburg Service**

Mail destined for towns not on the scheduled route were transferred to the railways for forwarding to the respective towns.



**Cape Town to Johannesburg Mail**

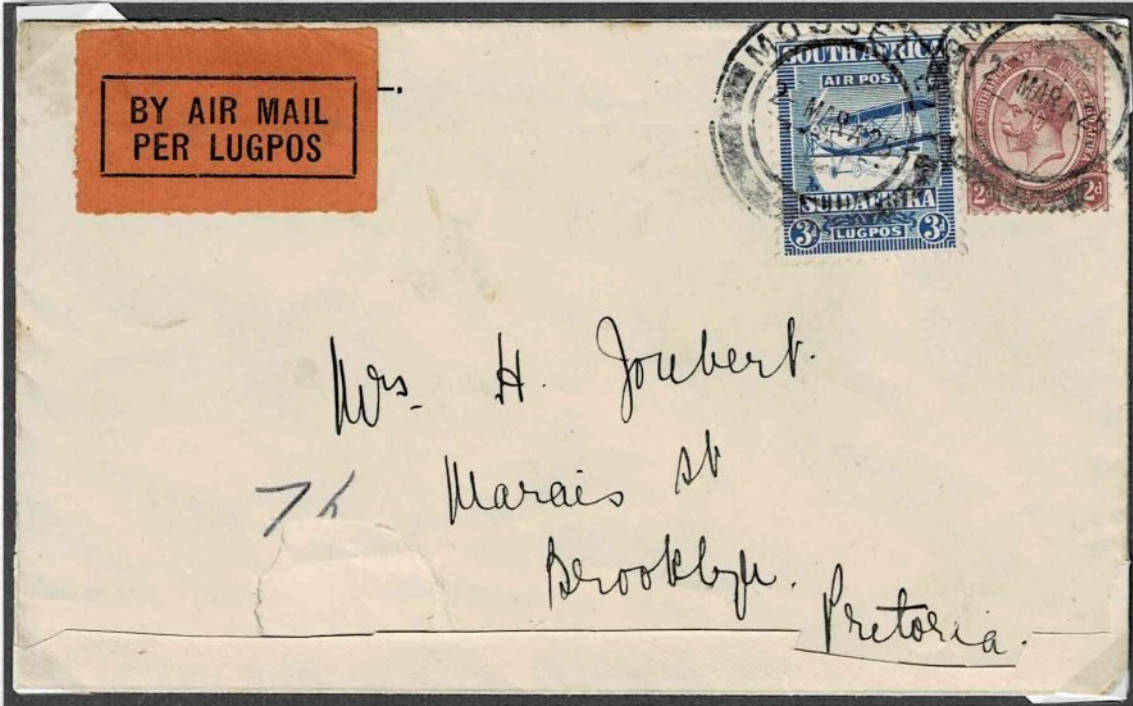
Postcard addressed to Johannesburg. The postcard was sent to Durban on the inaugural Cape Town - Durban flight on 2 March 1925, and then sent by rail to Johannesburg. Imprinted stamp covered with 1½d. and ½d. coil King George V stamps. The 1d. covered the standard postcard rate and 1d. covered the air mail charge. Cancelled 27 February 1925 together with a special S.A. Airmail cachet applied in purple.

**Note:** No Air Post stamps applied although the total of 2d. covered both the air post and ordinary postal rate.

**Mossel Bay - (Oudtshoorn) - (Durban) - Pretoria Air Post**

Analysis of the experimental flight log sheets by Wyndham indicate that no mail from Mossel Bay to Oudtshoorn was carried by air. Any mail from Mossel Bay to connect with the services between Cape Town - Durban during this period would have been sent to Oudtshoorn by rail.

Weather permitting, mail for Mossel Bay was flown from Oudtshoorn on Mondays in conjunction with the Cape Town - Durban service. A total of 8 such flights were undertaken, all but 2 of which resulted in the mail being dropped by parachute from the aircraft which returned immediately to Oudtshoorn.



**Mossel Bay - Pretoria Service**

Cover sent from Mossel Bay to Pretoria on the first Cape Town - Durban experimental airmail service.

A 3d. 1925 'Air Post' stamp in addition to a 2d. King George V postage stamp were affixed together with an orange 'BY AIR MAIL/PER LUGPOS' label.

The postcard was forwarded by rail to Pretoria from Durban.

**Port Elizabeth - Durban - Johannesburg Airmail Service** 2<sup>nd</sup> March 1925

Mail addressed from Port Elizabeth to Johannesburg was first flown to Durban via East London and then taken by rail to Johannesburg.



**Airmail Cover**

Airmail postcard posted from Port Elizabeth to Johannesburg on 2 March 1925. The cover was taken to Durban on the first experimental airmail service.

The postcard also has the special SA Airmail/SA Lugpos postmark applied in blue, an orange "By Air Mail" label, and "First Flight 2<sup>nd</sup> March '25" cache.

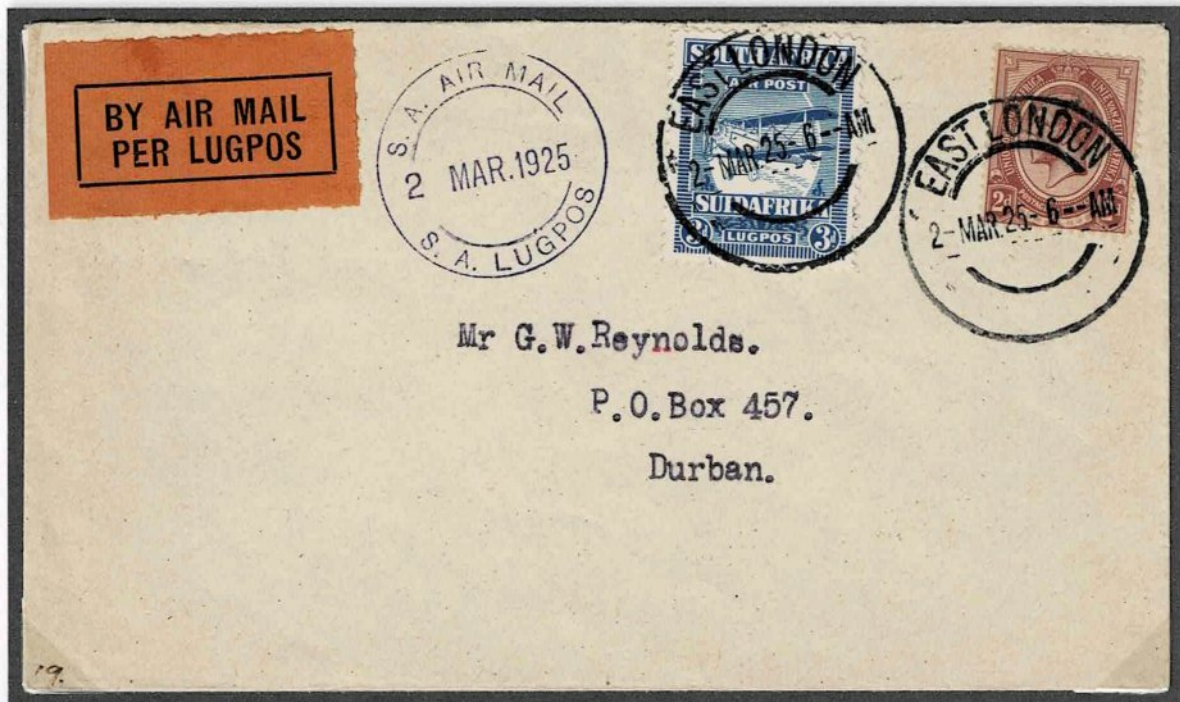
The sender applied a special cache in black with "First Flight • 2<sup>nd</sup> Mar. '25" and "Cape Town - Durban Route"

A 1d. airmail stamp was not affixed but rather two 1d. King George V coil stamps applied. The second stamp was to cover the additional 1d. for the airmail service.

East London- Durban Airmail Service

2 March 1925

The two D.H.9 aircraft from Port Elizabeth landed in East London at 13:15 where mail for East London was offloaded and mail for Durban transferred to the two aircraft scheduled to fly to Durban.



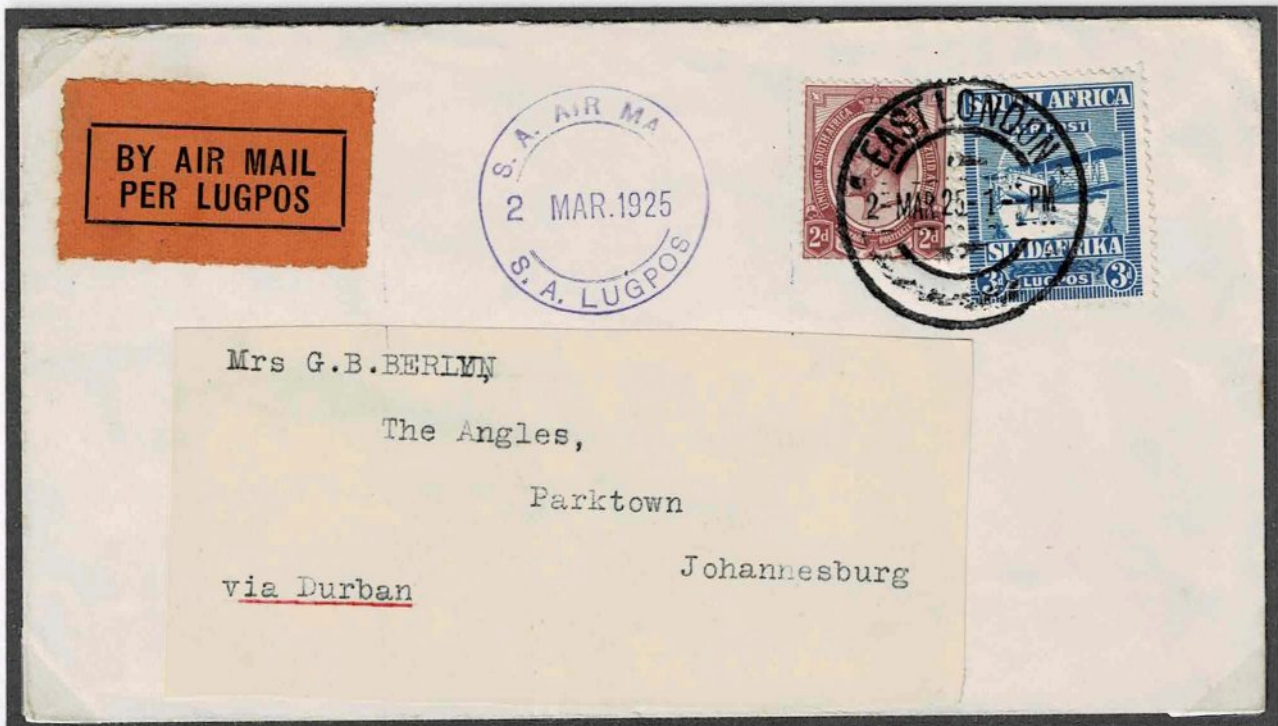
East London to Durban Airmail Cover

Cover posted from East London to Durban on 2 March 1925. The cover was taken to Durban on the first experimental airmail service. The cover has the special SA Airmail/SA Lugpos postmark applied in purple, and an orange "By Air Mail" label. A 3d. airmail stamp is affixed and a 2d. King George V stamp applied.

East London - (Durban) - Johannesburg

2 March 1925

Mail destined for Johannesburg from East London was flown to Durban and then sent by rail to Johannesburg.



East London to Johannesburg Cover

Airmail postcard posted from East London to Johannesburg on 2 March 1925. The cover was flown to Durban on the first experimental airmail service and then forwarded to Johannesburg by rail. The cover has the special SA Airmail/SA Lugpos cache applied in purple, and an orange "By Air Mail" label. A 3d. airmail stamp is affixed and a 2d. King George V stamp applied.

**Durban - Cape Town Return Service**

5<sup>th</sup> March 1925

The return Durban to Cape Town flight which left Durban on 5<sup>th</sup> March took 9 hours and 38 minutes to complete over 2 days. The first flight left Durban at 12:55 and the last flight arrived in Cape Town at 13:57 the following day. Again, two D.H.9 wartime aircraft flew each "leg".

- Durban - East London DH.9 129 and 101. Due to engine trouble D.H.9 101 had to return to Durban. A replacement aircraft D.H.9 106 was then used on this leg.
- East London - Port Elizabeth DH.9 138 and 137
- Port Elizabeth - Oudtshoorn DH.9 110 and 136
- Oudtshoorn - Cape Town DH.9 113 and 139

**Durban to Cape Town Service**



**Durban to Cape Town Airmail Cover**

Sent from Durban to Woodstock, Cape Town on the first Durban - Cape Town airmail service.

This cover was cancelled in Durban on the 5<sup>th</sup> March 1925 - the date of the flight departure.

The 3d. airmail rate was paid in addition to the standard 2d. postage rate (per ounce) postal rate.



**Durban to Cape Town Mail**

Cover sent from Durban to Cape Town on the inaugural flight with the absence of an Air Post stamp. Stamps to the value of 5d. were applied to cover the 2d. standard postage rate and 3d. airmail rate.

The SA AIR MAIL cache was applied in black.

Note: No Air Post stamps were applied

**Durban - East London Service**

5 March 1925

One of the few events on the first Durban to Cape Town service was when the DH.9 101 aircraft experienced engine trouble and was forced to return to Durban. A replacement aircraft, D.H.9 106, was quickly arranged which then went on to East London a few hours later.

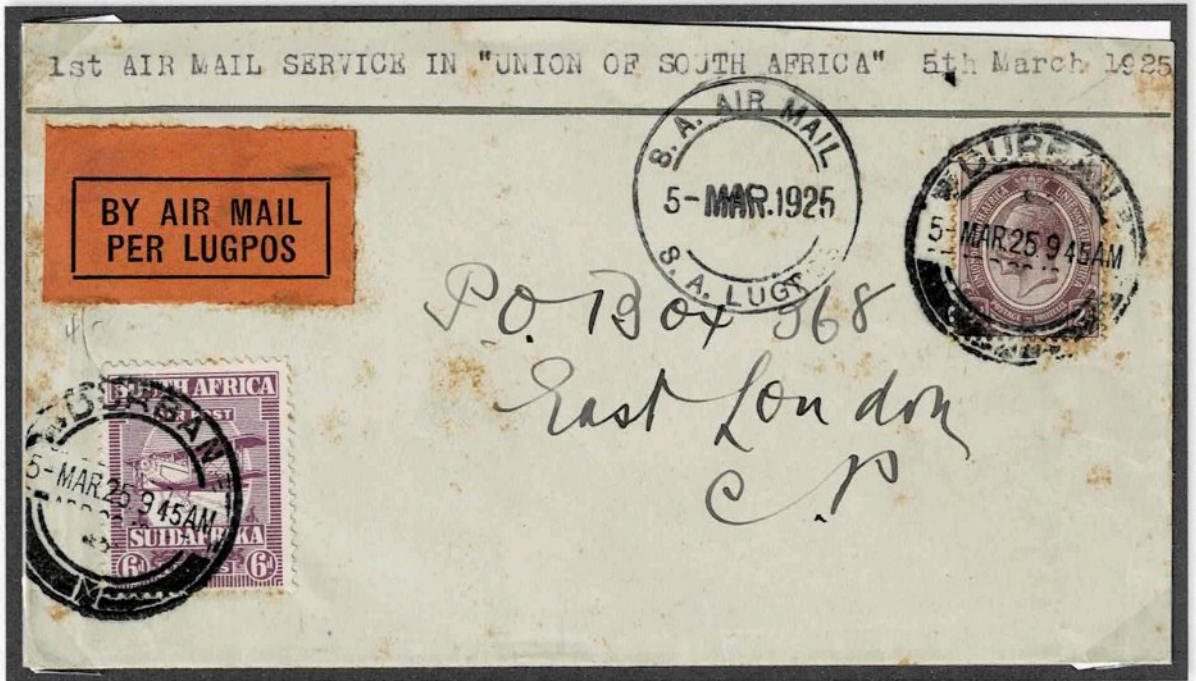
**Airmail Cover**

Cover sent from Durban to East London on the first Durban - Cape Town airmail service.

2d. King George V stamp applied for standard postage and 6d. "Air Post" stamp to cover the airmail service.

"By Air Mail" label and S.A. Air Mail" cache applied to cover.

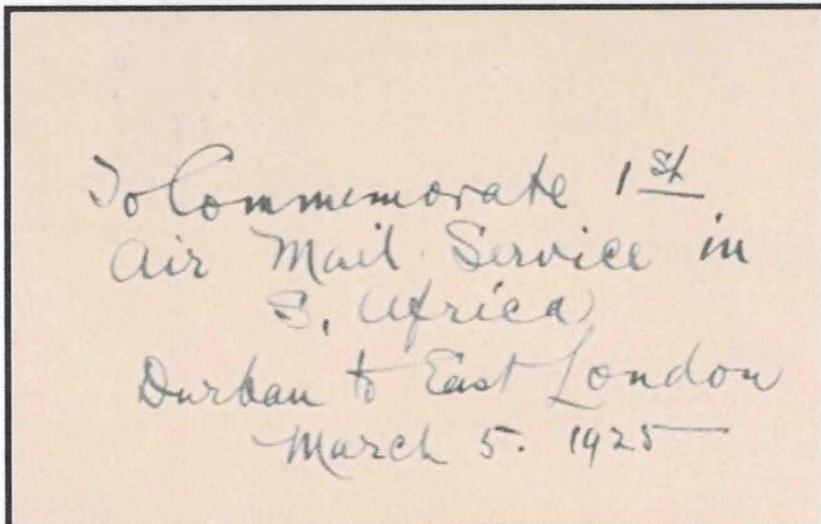
**Note:** Airmail postage rate over paid.



**Postcard addressed to East London from Durban**

on the first return airmail service from Durban to Cape Town.

1d. George V stamp for ordinary postage and 1d. "Air Post" label applied.



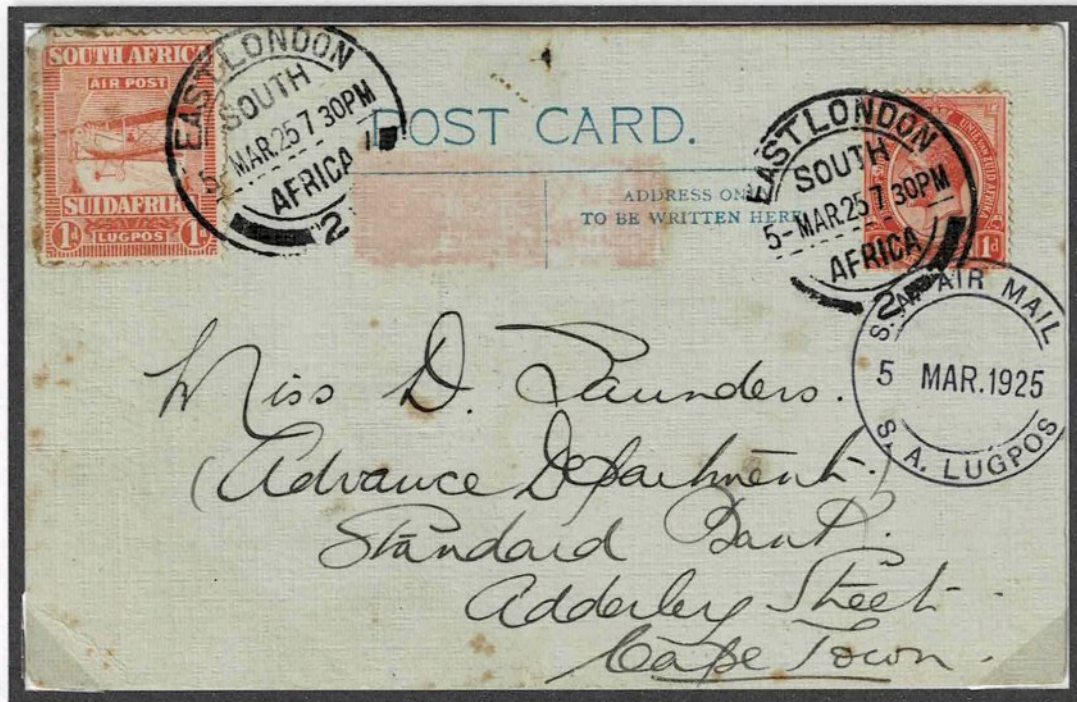
**Reverse of postcard**

Scan of the reverse side of the postcard sent from Durban to East London on the first air mail flight from Durban.

(Reduced size)

**East London - Cape Town Service** 6 March 1925

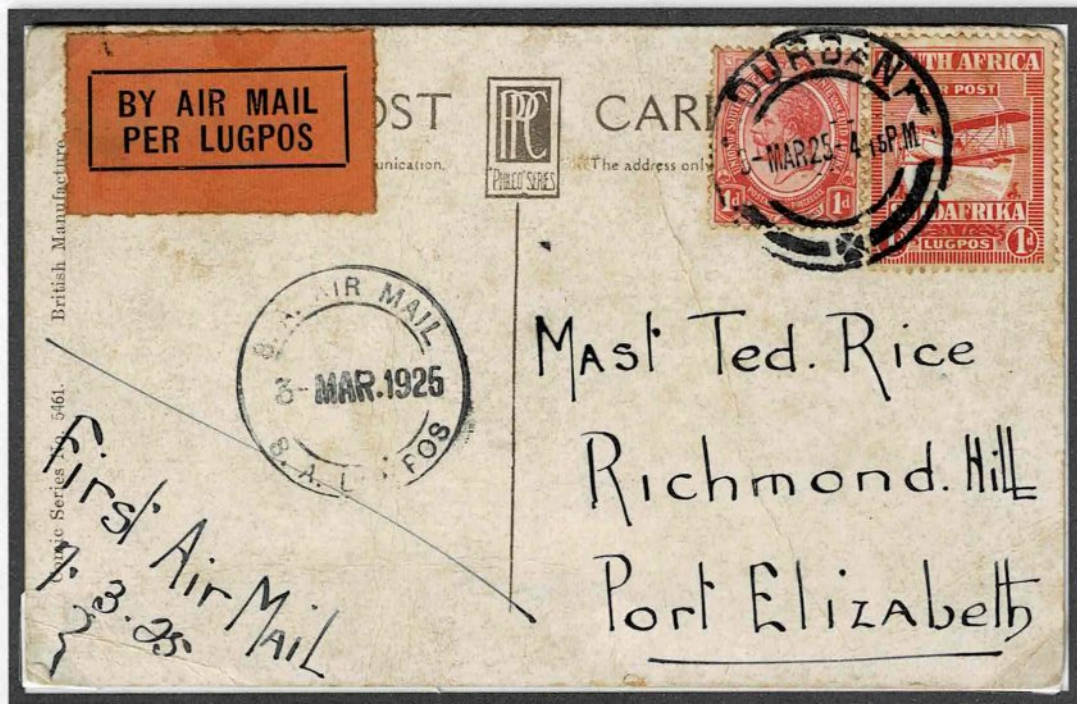
Due to the engine problems experienced by one of the aircrafts (DH.9 101) on the Durban - East London leg, the flight from East London to Port Elizabeth only left the following day.



**Postcard Addressed to Cape Town**

Cover addressed to Cape Town from East London and carried on the inaugural return airmail service. 1d. King George V standard postage stamp and 1d. AIR POST stamp applied together with S.A. Mail cache. **Note: no "By Air Mail" label attached.**

**Durban - Port Elizabeth Service** 5/6 March 1925



**Postcard addressed to Port Elizabeth**

Postcard addressed to Port Elizabeth and carried on the first Durban - Cape Town return airmail service.

1d. King George V standard postage stamp and 1d. AIR POST stamp applied together with S.A. Air Mail cache (in black) and BY AIR MAIL label.

**Cape Town - Southampton, UK Mail Ship**

On arrival in Cape Town, mail carried from the inaugural Durban - Cape Town service and destined for overseas was transferred to the "Armada Castle" mail ship in Table Bay for delivery in England.



**Armada Castle**

Picture postcard of the Union Castle Line royal mail steamer "Armada Castle"

**Termination of Experimental Air Mail Service**

11<sup>th</sup> June 1925

Parliament voted a sum of £9,000 for the operation of the experimental service over a 3-month period. The service was thus terminated on 15 June 1925 when 4 aircraft left Cape Town for Durban *en route* to military headquarters in Pretoria. Due to strong winds between East London and Durban the flight from East London was delayed until the following day.

In total there were 16 weekly flights between Cape Town and Durban, and 15 flights between Durban and Cape Town. On only 3 of the Cape Town - Durban service did the mail not reach Durban on the same day it left Cape Town. All 15 of the Durban - Cape Town service reached Cape Town in time to connect with the outgoing mail ship to England

**Last Durban - Cape Town Service**

The last flight from Durban - Cape Town service left Durban on the 11<sup>th</sup> June 1925 with mail destined for East London, Port Elizabeth, Oudtshoorn and Cape Town.

**Last Durban - Cape Town Service**

Cover posted on 10 June 1925 and sent from Durban to East London on the last Durban - Cape Town airmail service.

2d. King George V postage stamp for standard mail and 3d. 1925 Airmail stamp applied.

**Note:** A smaller 25 cm diameter SA AIR MAIL cache was used.



Last East London - Cape Town Experimental Service

11 June 1925



**Last East London - Cape Town Postcard**

Postcard addressed to Cape Town and delivered on the last Durban - Cape town service. Imprinted 1d. postage stamp to cover standard postage fee and 1d. Air Mail for airmail service. cancelled 11 June 1925.

"By Air Mail" label attached together with S.A. Air Mail cache applied.

Last Cape Town - Durban Experimental Service

15 June 1925

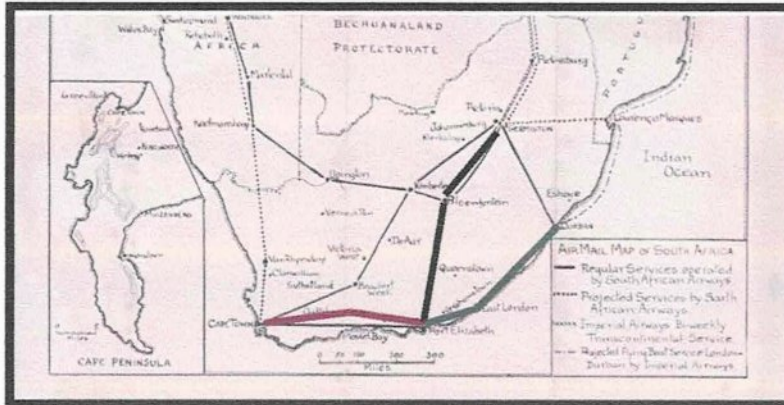


**Last Cape Town - Durban Service**

Postcard sent from Cape Town to Pretoria on the last Cape Town - Durban experimental airmail service. A full set of the 4 1925 'Air Post' stamps in addition to a 2d. King George V postage stamp were affixed. The postcard was forwarded to Pretoria by rail.

Union Airways Ltd was founded by Major Alister Miller in 1927. In 1929 the company secured a subsidy of £8,000 per annum for 3 years from the Union Government to provide a regular air mail and passenger service between Maitland (as the Cape Town terminus) and Port Elizabeth with extensions from Port Elizabeth to Durban (via East London) and to Johannesburg (via Bloemfontein).

**Flight Routes**



**Union Airways Flight Routes**

Map showing the flight routes to Johannesburg and Durban via Port Elizabeth.

- Cape Town - Oudtshoorn - Port Elizabeth
- Port Elizabeth - Bloemfontein - Germiston
- Port Elizabeth - East London - Durban

**Schedule**

The service was run weekly in each direction in conjunction with the Union-Castle mail steamship service which arrived in Cape Town on Mondays and departed for Southampton on Fridays. The flight from Cape Town was scheduled to leave at 7 a.m. on Mondays provided that the mail from the Union-Castle mail ship was received

**Airmail Stamps**

On the 16<sup>th</sup> August 1929 the Post Office issued two airmail stamps for use as a supplementary charge for mail transported on these flights.

**Postage Rate**

The supplementary airmail rate was 4d. per ounce in addition to the ordinary postal rate of ½d. per ½ ounce.

**United Kingdom to South Africa mail.**

Arrangements were made with the UK postal authorities for mail to be forwarded by air from Cape Town at the supplementary rate of 4-pence per ounce. The UK postal authorities were provided with Union 4d. stamps which could be purchased by senders wishing to make use of the airmail service in South Africa.



**4d. Airmail**  
issued on 19 August 1929 inscribed in English and Afrikaans



**1 Shilling Airmail**  
issue on 19 August 1929 inscribed in English and Afrikaans

Mail from the UK arrived in Cape Town on the Union Castle mail steamer every Monday. A pilot boat, accompanied by a Post Office official, went out to the mail steamer to collect the mail. The mail was then sent to the Central Post Office where it was sorted, before being transferred to the awaiting Gipsy Moth aircraft which flew to Port Elizabeth.

**Cover from UK to Transvaal.**

Cover sent from Folkstone, Kent, franked GB KGV ½d. plus 5d. rate by mail ship to Cape Town, plus a Union 4d. Triangular for the SA supplementary airmail rate. The cover was flown on the Union Airways inaugural flight from Cape Town on 26 August 1929



**Inaugural Cape Town - Port Elizabeth Service**

26 August 1929

The inaugural flight left Cape Town on the 26<sup>th</sup> August 1929 and took 4½ hours to reach Port Elizabeth. On arrival the mail bags were transferred to the two relay planes before they departed for Durban and Germiston, Johannesburg respectively.

**Union Airways  
Cape Town - PE  
Service**

Cover sent from Cape Town to Port Elizabeth on the first Union Airways flight on 26 August 1929.

4d. Air Post rate in addition to the ordinary postal rate of 1d. paid.



**Inaugural Port Elizabeth - Germiston Service**

26<sup>th</sup> August 1929

**Union Airways  
PE to  
Johannesburg**

Cover sent from Port Elizabeth to Johannesburg on Union Airways inaugural flight 26 August 1929



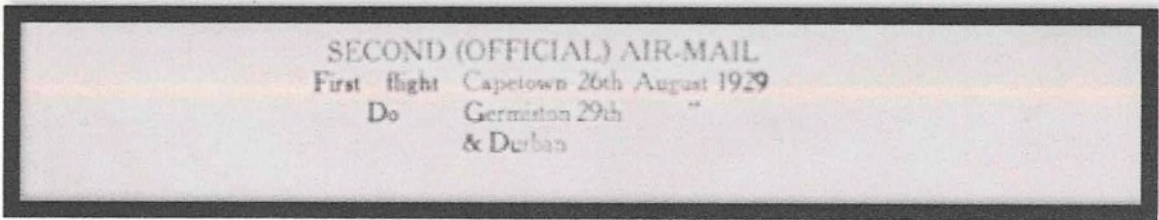
**Cape Town - Johannesburg (via Port Elizabeth) Service** 26 August 1929

Mail from Cape Town destined for Johannesburg was transferred to awaiting aircraft in Port Elizabeth and flown to Germiston the following day.

●  
Cover sent from Cape Town to Johannesburg (via Port Elizabeth) on Union Airways inaugural flight 26 August 1929. Received Johannesburg 27 August 1929  
**Note:** Use of Tete-beche pair of 1½d. King George V stamps.  
**No Airmail stamps applied.**



Scanned copy of the reverse side of the above cover with first flight dates for the return services from Germiston and Durban  
Received Johannesburg 27 August 1929



**Inaugural Port Elizabeth - Cape Town Service** 28 August 1929

The inaugural return flight from Port Elizabeth to Cape Town was scheduled to connect with the Union Castle mail steamer "Carnarvon Castle" which transported the overseas mail to Southampton.

**Union Airways PE to Cape Town**

Registered cover sent from Port Elizabeth to Cape Town on Union Airways inaugural flight 28 August 1929.

Union Pictorial 1d. "ship" and 4d. triangular stamps affixed to cover the standard postage rate.

1/- and 4d. Air Post stamps used to cover the airmail service.



**Mossel Bay - (Oudtshoorn) - Cape Town** 28 August 1929

Mossel Bay was planned as the original staging post for the Cape Town - Port Elizabeth 1925 experimental service. Due to poor weather it was moved to Oudtshoorn. Mail from Mossel Bay was forwarded to Oudtshoorn by surface mail and then transferred to the aircraft on the inaugural Union Airways Port Elizabeth - Cape Town service.



**Mossel Bay - Cape Town Service**

Cover sent from Mossel Bay to Cape Town. The cover was sent to Oudtshoorn by rail to connect with the first Port Elizabeth - Cape Town service.

A 4d. 1929 'air post' stamp in addition to a 1d. Union postage stamp and orange 'BY AIR MAIL/PER LUGPOS' label was used.

**Inaugural Durban - Port Elizabeth Service** 29<sup>th</sup> August 1929

The first return flight to Port Elizabeth left Durban on 29<sup>th</sup> August arriving in Port Elizabeth the same day. The next morning the mail was transferred to another aircraft and brought to Cape Town in time to connect with the outgoing mail steamer the "Carnarvon Castle". The plane to Johannesburg left Port Elizabeth at the same time, flying via Bloemfontein to Germiston.



Cover sent from Durban to Bloemfontein via Port Elizabeth on Union Airways inaugural Durban - Port Elizabeth flight 29 August 1929

**Durban - Port Elizabeth - Bloemfontein**

29<sup>th</sup> August 1929

On arrival in Port Elizabeth mail from Durban for Bloemfontein and Germiston was transferred to the awaiting aircraft which departed for Germiston the same day.

Cover sent from Durban to Bloemfontein via Port Elizabeth on Union Airways inaugural Durban - Port Elizabeth flight 29 August 1929



**Inaugural Germiston - Port Elizabeth Service**

29 August 1929

The first Union Airways return service from Germiston to Port Elizabeth commenced on the 29<sup>th</sup> August 1929. Mail for Cape Town and Durban was transferred to waiting aircraft which carried the mail to the two destinations.



**Return Germiston - Port Elizabeth Service**

Cover sent to Port Elizabeth on the first Germiston - Port Elizabeth Union Airways airmail service.

A 4d. 1929 'air post' stamp to cover the air mail service in addition to a Union of South Africa 1d. postage stamp were affixed together with an orange 'BY AIR MAIL/PER LUGPOS cinderella.

A "NON RECLAM/UNCLAIMER D/ONAFGEHAA cache applied

**Springs, Johannesburg - Cape Town**

September 1929

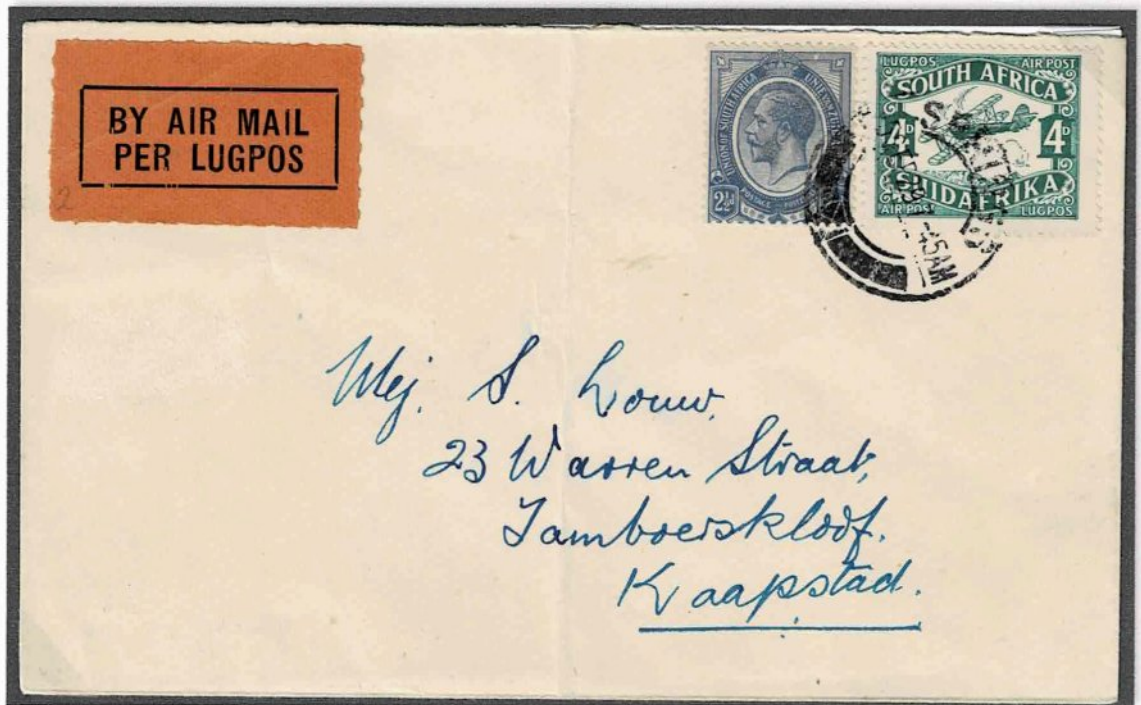
Springs located near Germiston and Johannesburg. The area's history began in the 1840's when farmers settled there, later becoming a coal and gold mining town. The town was officially founded in 1904 and named for the numerous natural fountains in the area. The town grew rapidly to become a major mining center and later a significant industrial hub in the 20th century.

**Springs to Cape Town Service**

Cover sent from Springs to Cape Town on the Union Germiston - Cape Town (via Port Elizabeth) airmail service.

Tied to a KGV 2d. stamp to cover the standard mail, and 4d. 1929 'air post' stamp to cover the air mail service.

In addition to a Union of postage stamp an orange 'BY AIR MAIL/PER LUGPOS' label was applied.



**Cape Town - Pretoria, Transvaal**

30 September 1929

Initially, the airmail services established as an experimental service in 1925 and the first scheduled airmail service in 1929, were used mainly by philatelists to record and commemorate the establishment of these services. The cover below was one sent from Cape Town to H. Reisner, one of South Africa's foremost philatelist in Pretoria.



**Cape Town to Pretoria Airmail Service**

Cover sent to well-known philatelist H. Reisner in Pretoria on the Union Airways airmail service on 30 September 1929.

The cover would have been transported on the Cape Town - Port Elizabeth and then the Port Elizabeth - Germiston airmail service. It would have then been transferred to Pretoria using surface mail.

Tied to a 1d. Union for the standard postage rate and a 4d. 1929 'air post' stamp to cover the air mail service in with a blue 'BY AIR MAIL/PER LUGPOS' label.

In 1932 Imperial Airways established a scheduled airmail service between London and Cape Town. The inaugural weekly service from London to Cape Town left Croydon Airport, London on Wednesday 20 January 1932. The aircraft carried both mail and passengers. Approximately 20,000 letters were carried on the historic first service.

The aircraft made numerous stops en route including Pietersburg, Germiston, Kimberley and Victoria West, giving the public the opportunity to send mail between Johannesburg and Cape Town using the Imperial Airways service.

**Johannesburg - Cape Town Service**

The inaugural London to Cape Town service arrived in Germiston on 1<sup>st</sup> February, departing for Cape Town the following day.

The first return air mail service from Cape Town to London was inaugurated on 27 January 1932. The route was similar to that of the London - Cape Town flight and included Victoria West, Kimberley and Germiston where mail for these destinations were delivered the same day.

**Cape Town to Victoria West mail**

Scarce illustrated cover addressed to Victoria West from Cape Town on 26 January 1932 and received on 27<sup>th</sup> January 1932. Tied to 4d. and 1/- Union airmail stamps.



**Cape Town to Johannesburg mail**

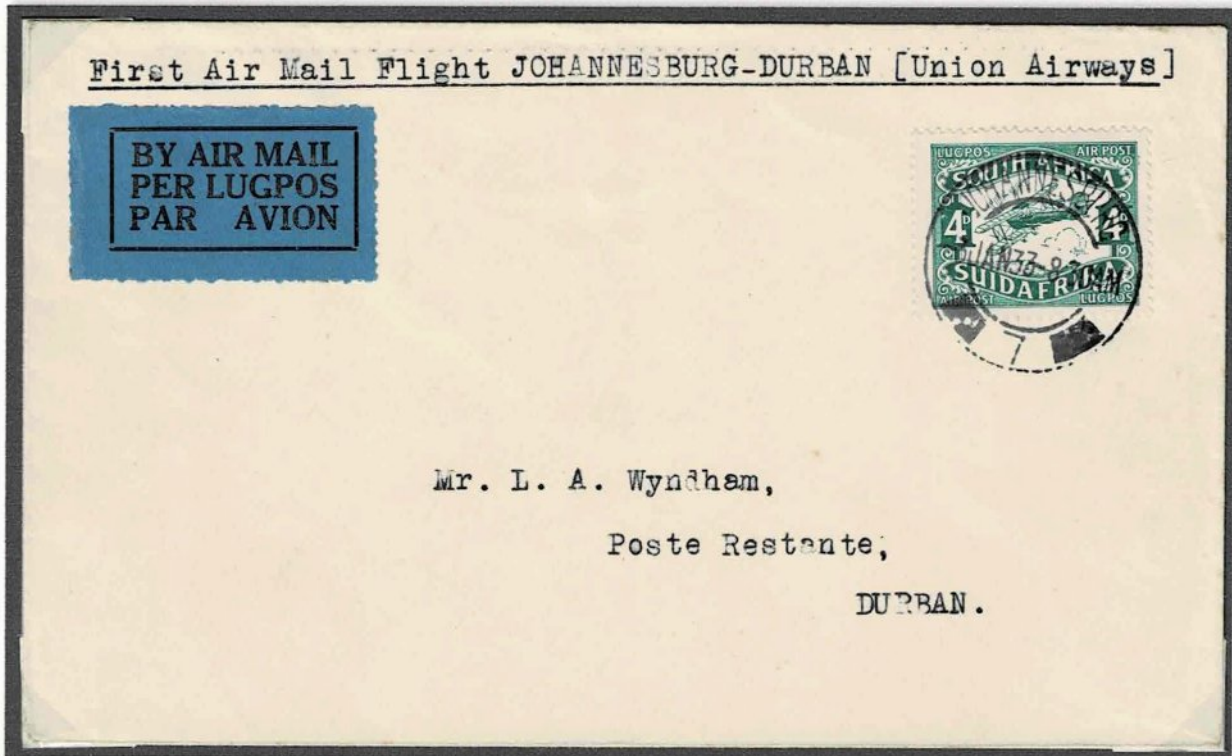
Airmail cover addressed to Johannesburg on 27 January 1932. This cover was received in Johannesburg the same day. Tied to Union 4-penny airmail stamp. No stamp for standard mail was used and not taxed accordingly.



**Inauguration of Johannesburg - Durban Air Mail Service**

3 January 1933

In January 1933 Union Airways introduced a tri-weekly return flight from Johannesburg to Durban. These flights did away with the necessity to transport mail between the two cities by rail.



**Cover sent from Johannesburg to Durban**

Cover sent from Johannesburg to Durban on the 3<sup>rd</sup> January 1933, the first of the tri-weekly flights between the two cities.  
Back-stamped Durban -3 Jan33.

4d. 1929 'Air Post' stamp postage stamp affixed together with a blue "BY AIR MAIL/PER LUGPOS" label.



**Mail from Pretoria to Durban**

Cover sent from Pretoria to Durban on the first of the tri-weekly flights between the two cities.

Back-stamped Durban -3 Jan33.

Pair of 2d. 1930-44 Roto stamps (slate-grey & lilac, inverted watermark) postage stamp affixed together with a blue 'BY AIR MAIL/PER LUGPOS' label.

**Termination of Port Elizabeth - Johannesburg Services**

May 1933

The introduction of a regular Cape Town - Germiston airmail service operated by Imperial Airways, and the establishment of a regular service by Union Airways between Durban and Johannesburg, the Union Airways' Port Elizabeth to Johannesburg (via Bloemfontein) feeder service became unprofitable, resulting in the service being discontinued at the end of May 1933

**Demise of Union Airways**

1934

In 1931 legislation was passed empowering the South African Railways and Harbours (SAR & H) to acquire and operate aircraft for the carriage of persons and goods in South Africa and neighbouring South West Africa. This essentially ensured that internal air mail services were run exclusively by the Union Government.

This policy was implemented on 1 February 1934 when the Government took over the assets and services of Union Airways, giving birth to South African Airways (SAA).

**Termination of Junkers Company's SWA Airways Services**

February 1935

On 1<sup>st</sup> February 1935 the Junker's South West Africa Airways (SWAA) was acquired by the Union Government and incorporated into South African Airways (SAA).

**Transfer of Imperial Airways' Cape Town - Germiston Service**

March 1936

In April 1936, South African Airways took over the Germiston to Cape Town route from Imperial Airways. The last "through" service to Cape Town left London on the 20<sup>th</sup> March, arriving in Cape Town on 29 March. The last Imperial Airways flight from Cape Town left on 31 March 1936. Thereafter, Imperial Airways used Germiston airport as the terminus for their regular services between the United Kingdom and South Africa.

Airmail services within South Africa then became the exclusive domain of Union Airways' successor, South African Airways.

**Rand Airport, Germiston**

Rand Airport was established in the 1920's and officially opened in 1931 in Germiston and served as Johannesburg's main airport and a hub for Union Airways, and later South African Airways (SAA).

**Rand Airport**

Picture postcard of mail being offloaded from the Royal Mail "Amalthea" at Rand Airport



Rand Airport.  
Arrival of  
Air Mails  
from Europe  
and Intermediate  
Countries.



Randse Lughawe.  
Aankoms van  
lugposte uit  
Europa en  
tussenliggende  
lande.