

THE KIWI

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THE OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE NEW ZEALAND SOCIETY OF GREAT BRITAIN

Affiliated to BRITISH PHILATELIC ASSOCIATION and PHILATELIC CONGRESS OF GREAT BRITAIN

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VOL. XXII No. 3.

APRIL, 1973

WHOLE 119

THE NEXT MEETING WILL BE HELD ON

WEDNESDAY, 2nd MAY, at 6 p.m.

at The Shaftesbury Hotel, Monmouth Street, London.

Our Speaker for the May (Congress) Meeting will be Dr. K.J. McNaught, now on a visit to this Country from New Zealand. The title of this meeting as shown in the programme in the January KIWI is most inadequate, for Dr. McNaught is to discuss "some unsolved problems in stamps and postal history of New Zealand", supported by a display. This should prove to be the display of the year, one not to be missed under any circumstances, so come along and give this most eminent Speaker our full support.

EDITORIAL.

Our Society has been founded 21 years and during that period the KIWI has been published by the same firm, The Elmer Publicity Service. This has been no mean task and we are most grateful to Miss Elvish for the work she has done so admirably. It is with regret that due to health and other reasons this firm has informed us that they are closing down at the end of April. We cannot praise too highly the excellent work done by them on behalf of the Society. We take this opportunity of wishing Miss Elvish and her partner Miss Merchant, many happy years in retirement, and our grateful thanks.

(continued overleaf..)

I have been fortunate in finding a new printer and the July issue will be printed by Photolitho, offset printing. The size will be the same but at a later date this may be altered due to the paper sizing being altered. This will mean that we can reproduce any drawings and covers at no extra charge and will, I hope, make a better job than the Electric stencils we have had to use in the past.

21st ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION.

Owing to the work carried out to date by the small sub-Committee dealing with the matter, it is now possible to offer a few details with regard to this great event. The venue will be the "Pavlovs Arms", Page Street, London. S.W.1 - the date, 6th October, 1973. Enter this into your diary NOW. A rough estimate of the cost per ticket at the moment is £3.50 - members of the Sub-Committee are working hard to see that it does not rise above this sum, in fact, they hope to offer a slight reduction. Further details will follow as available.

BRITISH PHILATELIC EXHIBITION.

New Zealand Day at the British Philatelic Exhibition will be held on Saturday, 3rd November, 1973.

In addition to the normal B.P.A. awards, there will be a special award, donated by this Society, for the best New Zealand entry, to be awarded at the discretion of the Judges.

Support, in the manner of entries by Members, is at the present, moderate. Will any members desiring to enter as from now, please let our Chairman have details and he will arrange for an entry Form and all other literature to be sent to each applicant - it is as easy as that.

Details to - Mr. P.L. Evans, 73, Blenheim Road, North Harrow, Middlesex.
HA2 7AQ.

We offer to our very enthusiastic member, Francis Kerr-Cross, our hearty congratulations on winning for the third year running the "Norwood" Cup. His entry was the 1935/47 Pictorials and the President of the Norwood P.S. in making the award said that it was "away and above any of the others".

Well done, Francis, keep up the good work. Let us hope that you will now try your hand at the B.P.E. and Stampex.

Editor.

RESULTS OF THE ANNUAL COMPETITION.

CLASSIC SECTION.

Stacey Hooker Cup.	<u>Winner</u>	M. Burberry
Book Ends	<u>Runner-up</u>	E. Ward.

MODERN SECTION I.

Noel Turner Trophy	<u>Winner</u>	P.L. Evans.
John Evans Trophy	<u>Runner-up</u>	A.H. Rose

MODERN SECTION 2.

Kiwi Shield	<u>Winner</u>	E. Hossell
Cigarette Box	<u>Runner-up</u>	F. Hughes

POSTAL HISTORY SECTION.

John J. Bishop Trophy	J.D. Riddell
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ERIC BARTON BOWL

P. Marx

MEMBERSHIP.

NEW MEMBERS.

Miss J.T. Donovan	238, Croham Valley Road, South Croydon. CR2 7RD, Surrey.
Mr. B.J. Wilson	13, Higher Drive, Banstead, Surrey.
Mr. K.J. Barker,	43, Holland Road, Exmouth. EX8 4AY, Devonshire.
Mr. C.D. Phillips	68, Joydens Wood Road, Bexley. DA5 2HT, Kent.

LAPSED.

Mr. & Mrs. E.G. Aldous,	"Highover", Manor Road, Swanscombe, Kent.
R.D. Anderson,	"Glenholm", 25, Rathlin Road, Ballyloughan, Ballymena, Co. Antrim, N.I.
A. Bhimani,	217, Harvist Road, London. N.W.6 HN6
Dr. A.A. Clark	"Springfield", Duntocher Road, Dalmuir, Glasgow.
D.H.F. Forbes,	"Myecroft", New Road, Southam, Cheltenham, Glos.

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LAPSED

G.W. Giffiths	8, Hurst Close, Gossops Green, Crawley, Sussex.
Miss M. Roscoe	6, Jenner Road, Barry, Glam. CF6 8HG
E.J. Smith	57, Lent Rise Road, Burnham, Bucks.
K. Willington	6, Three Corner Drive, Old Catton, Norwich. NOR 99N

SOCIETY DISPLAY.

Before a large and appreciative audience a team from this Society displayed a fine cross section of New Zealand material. Michael Burberry, as Leader, displayed his well-known "Pigeongrammes"; Mrs. Rita Gilders gave her "New Zealand Cocktail"; Roy Mercer offered "The Travelling Post Offices"; Laurence Neel showed a small collection of "Air Mails", and Captain Pratt gave a study of "King George VI" issue. We offer our thanks to those Members for their efforts on behalf of the Society.

ASIDE LINES.

A warning to philatelists. If you are tempted to buy a stamp issue from the Republic of Mevu in the Antarctic, pick up your album and run. A New Zealand based organisation circulated a philatelic bulletin said to be issued by Mevu's Ministry of Trade, Communications and Foreign Relations. The stamps, it said, had the approval of President Lermuth Babi and the Legislature of a new Constitution. Don't believe it. Neither Mevu nor its President exists.

"Daily Express" 26.2.73.

From: A.E. Harrad.

NEW ZEALAND SPECIAL ITEMS.

Following the success of our advertisement in last month's KIWI, we list below a number of fresh items - all new to our stock.

1d. NEWSPAPER STAMPS.

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Price: £30.00

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S.G.329 Perf. 11×14
Pair - Price: £1.50

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Price: £4.00

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Price: 0.60p

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EDWARD VII.

$\frac{1}{2}$ d. pair cancelled Fanning Island on piece. There are cancellations on both stamps and in addition a very fine cancellation clear of the stamps on the piece itself, dated Jan. 20th 1915.
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NEW ZEALAND WRECK MAILS

By B.R. Peace

Addenda and Corrigenda No. 2.

A flood of new information has arrived following the September issue of "The KIWI" with the second part of my article. I am really indebted to Carl Hardeman Smith of Solihull, who has sent me a mountain of photocopies, cuttings and notes which I have attempted to embody in the following text. Mr. A.G. Mathieson has turned up another wreck of a mail-carrying vessel (the ELINGAMITE) and I thank him for his research. Generally the response to this article, and a short query which appeared in "The BULLETIN" of the British Society of Australian Philately, has been most encouraging - members really do read their society publications after all! I should also like to acknowledge the wealth of information, particularly relating to Accidents on Land, contained in "The MAIL COACH" (monthly journal of The Postal History Society of N.Z. Inc., P.O. Box 1605, Auckland - subs. £1.88 per annum). Much has been written by Robin Startup, Hon. Editor of "The MAIL COACH", on the subject of Accidents on Land in New Zealand and no work on this subject (or for that matter any subject dealing with New Zealand Postal History) can be published without acknowledgement to him. "The MAIL COACH" continues to be the best (and now the only) publication in its field.

WRECKS AT SEA

1881 29th April "Tararua".

"The MAIL COACH" gives the following details of mail carried, salvaged and forwarded after rubber stamping:-

	LETTERS	BOOKS AND PARCELS	NEWSPAPERS	REGISTERED LETTERS
On board	4681	232	2411	74
Salved	2520	140	1564	37
Forwarded	2154	-	-	21

Apparently most of the newspapers and packets were too heavily saturated by sea water to be re-addressed and forwarded.

1894 29th October "Wairarapa".

A large photograph of the wreck appears in a newspaper article forwarded by Carl Hardeman Smith. The article records the part played in salvage operations by Adam Blackwell, an eighteen year old self employed captain who owned a small mullet boat called the Wave. On hearing of the wreck of the "Wairarapa" on Great Barrier Island, Blackwell's birthplace, he realised that a small boat may be of assistance in such a tricky situation and he set out immediately for the scene of the wreck. Blackwell and his boat were commandeered on arrival by the attendant police sergeant and Blackwell was, in fact, the first white man to set foot on the "Wairarapa" after the wreck

also at P.O. BOX 5535,
AUCKLAND, NEW ZEALAND.

He assisted the police in picking up the bodies and salvaging the mail. The recovery and salvage operations lasted three weeks and Blackwell was called upon to attend every inquest.

1897 23rd February "Oratava".

I should like to hear of any New Zealand mails that were on board the steamer "Oratava" when she went ashore on Scilla Shoal, near Perim Island in the Red Sea. I have a cover addressed to Coolgardie, Western Australia similar to the one illustrated in Hopkins (on page 45), and other covers are known addressed to Australia. They bear a violet rubber handstamp "Damaged through/stranding of "Oratava"" or are sealed with explanatory labels. The screw steamer "Oratava" was completed in 1899, for the South American service of the Pacific Steam Navigation Co., by the Barrow Shipbuilding Co. She was a steel screw steamer of 5857 tons (gross register) driven by triple expansion engines giving her a service speed of 16 knots. After only one or two trips to South America she was transferred to the Australian route (London via Suez to Melbourne and Sydney) commencing her first voyage on 6th June, 1890. In 1896 she capsized and sank in her berth at Tilbury with the loss of four lives but she was re-floated and refitted in time to re-enter the Australian service in February 1897. She was on her first voyage after refitting when she was stranded in the Red Sea on 23rd February. The "Oratava" was re-floated on 4th March after which she reloaded her cargo and completed her voyage. The route followed was London - Gibraltar - Naples - Port Said - Suez - Colombo - Albany - Adelaide - Melbourne and Sydney.

1899 28th February "Labrador".

I have a card from New Zealand to Surrey which, I first thought, may have been on board the Dominion liner "Labrador" when she ran onto the Mackenzie Rock in the Hebrides on the morning of 28th February, 1899, in dense fog and was totally wrecked. The arrival mark of WEYBRIDGE MR 21 99 would be about right as Carl Hardeman Smith knows of covers received and backstamped in Glasgow from March 11th to March 22nd, 1899. My card has no Glasgow marking, but has the boxed violet DAMAGED BY IMMERSION/IN SEA WATER identical to that illustrated in Hopkins (on page 48). The AUCKLAND 17 FE 99 cancellation convinced me that the card could not be what I thought; it was impossible for mail to average over 40 mph half way around the world. Perhaps the cachet was applied to mail recovered from the docks after a mail bag had been dropped? The only alternative I can imagine, is that the card has been "doctored".

1902 9th November "Elingamite".

The "Elingamite", a 2585 ton single screw steamer built by Swan and Hunter in 1887, picked up a cargo of railway sleepers at Newcastle, N.S.W., 136 passengers at Sydney and left that port on 5th November, 1902, bound for Auckland. Subsequent ports of call were to be Gisborne, Napier, Wellington, Lyttleton and Dunedin. At 10.40 a.m. on Sunday, 9th November, 1902, the "Elingamite" was totally wrecked after striking the West King (one of the Three Kings Islands) in thick fog; she went down in twenty minutes. Eighty four persons took refuge on the Middle King and a lifeboat with 52 more survivors reached Houhora. A whaleboat was rowed thirty miles out to sea to

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intercept the "Zealandia" (the "Elingamite's" sister ship which left Sydney later) and send it to the Three Kings. H.M.S. "Penguin" and the "Clansman" also joined in the search and the former found a further eight survivors on a raft sixty miles to the north east of the wreck. In all 45 passengers and crew, out of a total of 189, lost their lives and the large cargo of railway sleepers, timber, six thousand gold coins and one and a half tons of silver was lost. Twenty bags of mail destined for Auckland and Gisborne also went down with the ship and were never recovered. The Three Kings Islands were wrongly charted and this proved disastrous in the case of the "Elingamite". The full story of this wreck and the subsequent unsuccessful attempts to raise the treasure in silver are chronicled in "THE ELINGAMITE AND ITS TREASURE" by Wade Doak (Hodder & Stroughton, Sydney, 1969).

1913 "Manaroa".

"The MAIL COACH" reports that mail was recovered from the wreck of the "Manaroa" and that explanatory markings were applied. Information required.

1924 "Ngahere".

Again "The MAIL COACH" reports that explanatory markings were applied to mail from this wreck. Information required.

1940 21st December "Arahura".

Seven out of fourteen bags of mail for Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch were seriously damaged in an outbreak of fire amongst mail bags in the hold of the "Arahura". The "Arahura" was in passage between Nelson, which she left on the evening of Saturday, 21st December, 1940, and Wellington when the fire broke out. The damaged mail comprised four bags containing parcels, two containing letters and one containing packets and newspapers. The parcels included smokers' supplies for soldiers, hams and hampers. The majority of the letters were re-forwarded without difficulty but some of the parcels in two bags had the addresses burnt off.

A cover in the Hardeman Smith collection is roller-cancelled NELSON 21 DE 1940 and addressed to Sandringham where it received a circular datestamp SANDRINGHAM 24 DE 40. The cover bears an unboxed purple cachet "Damaged by fire/21.12.40" overall size 54 x 9mm. This rubber handstamp is obviously made up from a printing outfit as traces of the block are evident.

1945 February - Unknown Vessel.

Carl Hardeman Smith has shown me a most interesting registered cover from his collection addressed to the French Consul in Wellington. The cover, from the Governor's Office, Papeete (Tahiti), is cancelled PAPEETE 20-2 45 ILE TAHITI, and has a single-line unboxed "Damaged by Sea Water in Transit". An accompanying letter from the Auckland Chief Post Office, dated 31st May, 1945 explains:-

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AUCKLAND 1

NEW ZEALAND

"I have to inform you that the mail under notice was received via Fiji, the damage occurring at some point between Papeete and Suva. The name of the conveying vessel and the cause of the accident are unknown".

As this incident occurred during the Second World War, it is unlikely that details of the vessel and the incident will ever be known; any information would be appreciated.

1968 10th April "Wahine".

Fifty- one people died when the nearly new 9100 ton inter-island ferry "Wahine" was wrecked at 2.22 p.m. on Wednesday, 10th April, 1968 during a severe tropical gale. The "Wahine", bound for Wellington from Lyttleton, was carrying 614 passengers and a crew of 101; also on board were 54 bags of 2nd class and 60 bags of parcel mail from the Christchurch area (40 bags being for Auckland or Wellington) but this mail was lost when the ship sank. I have no details as to whether or not any or all of this mail has been recovered. A good concise half-page account of the disaster appears in "The MAIL COACH" for May, 1968 (Vol. 4 No. 9).

ACCIDENTS ON LAND

Following comments from several philatelists, I have decided to include accidents on land.

1893 28th October - Train Wreck.

New Zealand mails of October 4th from Dunedin and October 8th from Auckland probably were involved, along with Australian mails, in a railroad accident in Nevada, U.S.A. No special markings are known although much of the mail was badly charred.

1897 July - Stratford Post Office Burglary.

Hopkins reports a cover addressed to New Plymouth and datestamped 28 JL 97. It has a double-line boxed cachet reading:-

One of 600 Letters stolen
from Stratford Post Office by
burglar and subsequently
recovered.

The cachet is 68 x 28mm, the place of origin of the cover is not decipherable and further information concerning this incident would be appreciated. An illustration of the cachet appears on page 516 of "The Postage Stamps of New Zealand" Volume III.

1913 26th July - Found Under Floorboards

A cover of unknown origin reached the post office at Wairate on 26th July, 1913. During sorting the cover was dropped onto the floor and worked its way between the floorboards where it remained until 21st March, 1961.

The cover was found when alterations were being made to the post office.
The manuscript endorsement reads:-

Found under Floorboards at Post Office Wainate
when new private Boxes were
being installed on 21-3-61

(Signed)

The cover is in the Carl Hardeman Smith collection.

1946 20th August - Manawatu River Train Wreck.

A Palmerston North - Napier goods train of twenty-four vehicles ran into or was struck by a landslip in the Manawatu River Gorge at 4.10 a.m. on Saturday, 20th August, 1946. The locomotive and three waggons were derailed and thrown into the flooded river; the driver and fireman both lost their lives. The mail, which was in one of the derailed waggons, was all recovered and taken to Wellington for drying and re-forwarding. In all the mail comprised five bags of letter mail (one each from Wellington to Havelock North, Hastings, Napier, Wairoa and Gisborne), nine bags of newspapers and other articles, 39 parcel post containers and 33 loose parcels. The parcel mail was badly affected and some could not be preserved but the letters, being in tight bundles, were not badly affected. The salvage operations took over a week and only a small percentage of the mail was unidentifiable. Before re-forwarding the mail was stamped with a rubber explanatory handstamp in purple, a three-line cachet for letter mail and a four-line cachet for parcels:-

DAMAGED THROUGH IMMERSION
IN MANAWATU RIVER RAILWAY
ACCIDENT.

DAMAGED THROUGH IMMERSION
IN MANAWATU RIVER RAILWAY
ACCIDENT AND RE-WRAPPED AT
WELLINGTON.

An article on this train crash (by Robin Startup) from which the above is condensed appears in the "Mail Coach" for April 1979 (Vol. 6 No. 8).

1965 25th June - "Press" Van Fire.

Six bags of mail were damaged and thousands of newspapers destroyed in the early morning of Friday, 25th June when a 30 cwt. newspaper delivery truck, the property of the Christchurch Press Company, caught fire just south of Amberley. The fire was caused by the exhaust pipe pressing on the underside of the wooden part of the truck's tray. The hot pipe burned a hole through the wood and set newspapers on fire.

The truck had only done 3000 miles from new; the driver L. Enoka of Christchurch, stopped the truck when the newspapers burst into flames and roused the occupants of a nearby house. The Amberley Volunteer Fire Brigade was called at 1.46 a.m. and the fire was quickly put under control. Firemen moved the truck to the fire station and sorted the damaged load under

floodlight. Damaged newspapers were replaced by a further printing at Christchurch, and these were less than two hours late in delivery. The Post Office stated after the incident that the mail was posted on Thursday, 24th June for addressees in Parnassus, Cheviot, Kaikoura, Picton, Nelson and Blenheim districts. Some of the mail was completely destroyed by the fire and some damaged and charred; that which was unaffected or only slightly charred was returned to Christchurch for re-forwarding.

The "Mail Coach" for November, 1965, reports the use of Standard glassine envelopes printed with the usual "THE ENCLOSED ARTICLE WAS DAMAGED IN THE POST" for mail addressed to Blenheim and Seddon. Carl Hardeman Smith has a badly burned envelope postmarked BECKENHAM 24 JE 65 and addressed to Nelson; this was enclosed in a transparent envelope and accompanied by a duplicated explanatory letter as follows:-

P.NN 20/1
Chief Post Office
NELSON.

June, 1965

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am sorry to inform you that the accompanying letter addressed to you was unfortunately damaged by fire while in transit to Nelson.

Yours faithfully,

(Signed) G.F. BELL

Chief Postmaster.

S.R. Bennett in the "Mail Coach" reports a similar item and also reports covers addressed to Kaikoura and Picton. One cover to Kaikoura, with its enclosure, was contained in an Official Paid V.127 envelope with a carbon copy of a typed note reading:-

It is regretted that this letter was damaged in transit.
The Mail per "Press" car from Christchurch to Kaikoura was accidentally burned when a fire broke out in the rear of the car at Amberley this morning.

(Signed) R. EAST
Postmaster.

Another cover to Kaikoura was enclosed in a transparent envelope with a duplicated slip reading:-

It is regretted that the accompanying postal article was damaged when a mail service vehicle caught fire at Amberley on 25th June.

The cover that Mr. Bennett has addressed to Picton was charred on two edges and delivered without any covering cover or note.

Another cover owned by Carl Hardeman Smith is addressed to Woodbourne (Air Force) from Runanga and is enclosed in a cellophane envelope printed:-

NEW ZEALAND POST OFFICE

THE ENCLOSED ARTICLE WAS DAMAGED IN THE POST.

1965 24th August - Railway Van Fire.

A report in the September 1965 issue of "The MAIL COACH" contains details of a fire in a railway van containing mail:-

"Over 200 bags of parcel and second class mail were destroyed by fire early on Tuesday, 24th August, 1965. Posted in various North Island centres on 20th August the mail had been taken to the South Island by "Aramoana" and then railed south to Christchurch for distribution to the South Island. Between Waipara and Amberley the railway van containing 426 bags of mail caught on fire, the fire being brought under control at Amberley where the mail was hurriedly unloaded. Postal employees from Christchurch went to Amberley later in the morning to sort the damaged mail and to forward it to Christchurch by truck. Mail undamaged was forwarded but the Post Office faced a big task trying to identify either sender or addressee of the badly burnt parcels".

I have no information on markings applied to damaged mail. Presumably the Post Office standard glassine envelopes were used, in conjunction with explanatory notes or letters, for re-forwarding damaged second class mail.

1966 19th May - Dashwood Tunnel Train Wreck.

"The MAIL COACH" for June, 1966 (Vol. 2 No. 10) includes a useful half-page report on the derailling of the Christchurch - Blenheim express; a summary follows:-

"At 4.50 a.m. on Thursday, 19th May, 1966 the regular Christchurch - Blenheim freight & passenger express train was wrecked at the mouth of the Dashwood railway tunnel, 7 miles north from Seddon, Marlborough. The diesel locomotive heading the train was derailed and the driver killed; only one passenger was injured. Police and postal officials were soon on the spot and took the loose mailbags up the cliff to the nearby highway from where they were taken into Blenheim. By Thursday night the Nelson and Marlborough mail, and some of the North Island mail had been recovered. On receipt of the North Island mail at Blenheim it was air-freighted to Wellington where the last of the delayed mails were received on Friday evening, these being dispatched to North Island centres on Saturday morning. Mail on the train included normal second class (parcels and

newspapers) for the North Island as well as surface mails (including letters) which would have been normally air-freighted from Christchurch to Wellington, but had been sent by rail as the Bristol freighter had not been able to operate. The quantity of mail actually damaged was not as great as at first thought and, after processing at Wellington, this was forwarded to addressees".

I have not seen or heard of any mail from this accident and should like to hear of any explanatory markings, labels, letters, stickers etc.

AIRCRAFT CRASHES - EXTERNAL.

1929 26th September "City of Rome"

There is a slight possibility that New Zealand mail was on board this flying-boat which crashed off the coast of Italy during a gale. Information required.

1931 1st April "Madame Elijah"

Francis Chichester was not carrying mail when he took off from Parengarenga (New Zealand) on 28th March, 1931, heading for Norfolk Island, but he picked up mail at Norfolk Island and Lord Howe Island for Australia. He arrived safely at Norfolk Island, despite having no radio-navigation aids, navigating by sextant alone; this was a truly amazing feat, one of many that proved Chichester to be the greatest navigator the world has ever known. On 1st April he took off from Norfolk Island arriving safely at Lord Howe Island the same day. During that night, however, a hurricane wrecked his aircraft, and he spent the next two months rebuilding it with only unskilled assistance and local materials. Despite his problems Chichester took off from Lord Howe Island on 6th June, arriving at Jervis Bay, N.S.W. having flown through a typhoon. His total time in the air from Parengarenga was 19 hours 48 minutes. "Madame Elijah" (Registration ZK-AKK) was originally a land 'plane of the same name but British registered (G-AAKK); she was a De Havilland DH 60G floatplane powered by a single Gipsy I 100 horsepower engine - the floats had been lent by the New Zealand Government. A full account of the Tasman crossing was first published in "Seaplane Solo" (Faber & Faber, London, 1933) and re-published in 1966 as "Alone over the Tasman Sea" (Temple Press, London); this is Chichester's own account of events.

1931 26th November "Southern Sun".

The "Southern Sun" had an all-up weight of over 10,000 pounds, and a fuel capacity of 500 gallons (carried in wing tanks) which gave a range of approximately 900 miles; her fuselage and wings were painted dark blue. She left Hobart and Launceston on 19th November and arrived at Essendon aerodrome (Melbourne) the same day. At 4.30 a.m. (local time) on Friday, 20th November, the aircraft was wheeled from its hangar and the postal van drew alongside with the 675 pounds of mail in fourteen bags and these were quickly loaded. The passengers and crew boarded the aircraft, the engines were warmed up,

and four minutes behind schedule at 5.04 a.m. the chocks were removed and the aircraft taxied out to the runway. She was airborne three minutes later and after circling the hangar, she headed north-east for Sydney.

In "The KIWI" for July 1972 I reported that Fig. 7 was applied in purple. I now have a cover with Fig. 7 in red. This cover, addressed to London, is franked with the 3d, 4d, and 7d airmail stamps, postmarked CHRISTCHURCH 10 No 31 (first day of issue) and endorsed in manuscript "PER SYDNEY LONDON Special Christmas Air Mail". It is well known that the internal 1931 Christmas flight covers were cacheted with a similar cachet to Fig. 7 (but reading CHRISTMAS AIR MAIL 24th DECEMBER, 1931 at top) impressed in purple (at Blenheim, Oamaru, New Plymouth and Hastings), in red (at Palmerston North, Christchurch, Dunedin and Hawera), in green (at Wellington, Timaru and Wanganui) and in grey-blue (at Gisbourne). There must, therefore, be a possibility that Fig. 7 exists in green and grey-blue; my cover is authenticated by the Air Mail Society of New Zealand, so two colours of the cachet (Fig 7 are established).

1931 21st December "Southern Star".

Following the First All-Australian Air Mail, which arrived in London on 17th December, 1931, the British Post Office intended to use the return flight for the carriage of mails and accordingly issued a Post Office Notice which was extended to 22nd December, 1931. On 21st December, 1931, G.U. Allan made a forced landing near Swanley in Kent, whilst taking the "Southern Star" from Hamble to Croydon in readiness for the departure the next morning. The aircraft was considerably damaged and it was necessary to dismantle and transport it to Southampton for repair. The closing date for mails was then extended for the third time until 6th January, 1932, and, on 7th January with Kingsford Smith at the controls, the aircraft left Hamble with nearly 700 pounds of mail on board. The mail (including mail for New Zealand) was postmarked with dates varying between 17th December and 6th January.

1935 15th May "Southern Cross".

Although this incident is not an aircraft crash I think it is worthy of inclusion as being a most remarkable flight.

At the end of April 1935 the Australian postal authorities announced that arrangements had been made for Sir Charles Kingsford Smith to carry a "special Jubilee Air Mail" from Australia to New Zealand and back during May. The flight was due to depart on Tuesday, May 14th but, due to adverse weather conditions, was postponed one day and Sir Charles took off from Richmond, N.S.W. at 12.20 a.m. on May 15th with P.G. Taylor and J. Stannage as crew. Six hundred miles from the Australian coast at 7 a.m. the "Southern Cross" developed engine trouble and, after a few minutes, the aircraft was turned for home. Smithy decided against jettisoning the mail until the last minute; at 9.47 a.m. all the cargo and fourteen of the twenty-one bags of mail were dumped overboard. During the return journey P.G. (later

Sir Gordon) Taylor climbed out on to the wing and fed oil to a spluttering engine, a feat which probably saved the lives of the three aviators. At 4.13 p.m. on the same day the aircraft had departed, she staggered back to Mascot Aerodrome where the remaining seven bags of mail were taken over by postal officials. After landing seaweed was found wrapped around the wheels and the canvas covered fuselage was salt water stained. The "Southern Cross" (Registration VH-USU) was a Fokker FVIIIB-3M high wing monoplane powered by three Wright Whirlwind J5C engines, each developing 220 horsepower. She made the first successful crossings of the Pacific Ocean and the Tasman Sea in 1928, being entered on the Australian register on 4th July, 1928, as G-AUSU.

The full mail on board the "Southern Cross" weighed 398½ lbs and was contained in 21 bags; the total of 28,279 articles was made up of 26,504 ordinary and 1775 registered letters. The seven bags returned contained about 1,000 letters and had obviously been saved because of their light weight. They were made up of:-

Brisbane - Wellington	2 bags	Melbourne - Dunedin	1 bag
Adelaide - Auckland	1 bag	Melbourne - Christchurch	1 bag
Brisbane - Auckland	1 bag	Launceston - Wellington	1 bag

When it was realised that the flight was definitely abandoned, the surviving mail was sent to New Zealand on the steamer "Monowai", departing May 18th. All the letters from New Zealand intended for the return flight were sent by sea arriving in Australia before the end of May. The Australian Postal Department did not pay any compensation in respect of lost registered mail, by reason of international postal regulation which stated that compensation was not payable when losses were due to causes beyond control. The surviving mail sent by sea arrived at Wellington and was backstamped with a special relief postmarker. My cover is the specially printed blue envelope franked with Australian stamps totalling eightpence and New Zealand stamps totalling twopence. The cancellation SHIP MAIL ROOM 12 MY 35 MELBOURNE is applied to the Australian stamps, and WELLINGTON/23 MY 35/1/NZ (the circular relief canceller) is applied to the New Zealand stamps and as a backstamp.

1935 31st December "City of Khartoun".

Another cover to New Zealand is recorded in "The MAIL COACH" (June 1967). This cover was postmarked on receipt at Auckland on 4th February, 1936 and a boxed rubber stamp marking was applied in purple reading DAMAGED BY WATER IN/TRANSIT FROM LONDON/VIA ? (last word is unreadable). Special labels were affixed to some salvaged mail at Abadan, Iran. These read "Received open ex "City of Khartoun" sealed in Abadan" and are accompanied by a backstamp - Abadan 15th January, 1936. I do not know whether New Zealand mail was so treated or whether this label was just for mail destined for Iran. Divers recovered most of the mail from the submerged aircraft during salvage operations to save the engines; the rest of the machine was finally abandoned in deep water. Carl Hardeman Smith has submitted a cover from Solingen (Germany) to Auckland which bears

an unboxed violet cachet 59 x 10 mm RECEIVED AT G.P.O. MELBOURNE/DAMAGED BY WATER. The cover also has, on the reverse, an Officially Sealed sticker cancelled MELBOURNE 20 JA 36. Other covers are known addressed to New Zealand and sealed with Officially Sealed labels bearing the unboxed "Received at Christchurch/in damaged condition".

1936 22nd August "Scipio".

Mr. A.B. Johnstone of Edinburgh has sent me a photocopy of a "Scipio" crash cover. This is postmarked AUCKLAND ? AUG 36 and is addressed to Edinburgh. The cover has a black handstruck 60 x 14 mm unboxed cachet on the reverse - DAMAGED BY/SEA WATER - in a setting I have not seen before, and is sealed with an Officially Sealed label (Ref. RLS 54) size 96 x 33 mm.

Carl Hardeman Smith has a cover addressed to Hamburg which has been sealed on the reverse with a four-line printed sticky label in German. The translation reads (to the best of my limited knowledge):- "Salvaged from the aircraft which crashed near the Island of Crete. The mail arrived saturated. Officially sealed. Munich". The label is 90 x 40 mm. and the black lettering, which is in Gothic type, is 71 x 23 mm. overall; the label was applied at Munich Railway Station Post Office.

Another cover in the Hardeman Smith collection is addressed to Paris and has a magenta strike 87 x 8 mm. reading "Accident d'Avion". This was applied at Paris.

1937 24th March "Capricornus".

New Zealand mails were on board the Imperial Airways Short "C" Class flying-boat "Capricornus" (Registration G-ADVA) when she crashed on her maiden flight, during a snowstorm, near Macon in the French Alps. All the mail was salvaged and forwarded by air to its destination without special markings.

1937 4th December "Cygnus".

The crew consisted of Captain Mollard (sixteen years flying) (Acting Captain); F.U. Hollins (First Officer); R. Mountain (Second Officer); E.C. Barnes (Radio Operator); F.G. Hanscombe (Flight Clerk); F.L. Stoppani (Steward - killed). There were eight passengers on board, one passenger Captain W. MacDonald Farquhar of Charleville, Queensland was killed, six other passengers were injured as were all the crew (the steward fatally).

Mr. F.J. Holmes has shown me a cover with a boxed purple cachet size 55 x 19 mm. This cachet is in three lines, the top line reading DAMAGED BY SEA WATER, the second and third lines are blank except for traces of two letters on the bottom line. This cachet was originally used in 1930 when mail was stamped DAMAGED BY SEA WATER/ON/SS. COMORIN: the last two lines were cut out so that the stamp could have further use.

Carl Hardeman Smith has produced a very battered airmail cover and enclosure, heavily repaired, which was undeliverable and was therefore returned to the sender in New Zealand. The reverse is taped up with a G.P.O. white P.480 label struck with the black cachet (Fig. 8D) presumably in London; the front bears a white typewritten stuck on label which reads:- "This letter was among the mail/salvaged from the wreck of the/Imperial Airways flying boat/"Cygnus" which crashed at Brindisi/ on the 5th December, 1937". This label (105 x 42 mm) was, I should think, attached at Wellington as the cover was returned to the sender in a buff OHMS ambulance cover by the Dead Letter Office, Wellington. The ambulance cover is postmarked WELLINGTON 4 FEB 1938 but the delay is not surprising in view of the various processes through which undeliverable mail had to go.

A variety of cachets are known to have been applied to Continental mail. These include:- "LETTRE DETERIOREE/ACCIDENT AVION"; "lettre mouille pour accident/de l'Ydravion du 5 decembre"; "Beschadigd ontvangen/ van Brindisi"; "Doorweekt vliegongeval/Brindisi". These markings were applied to mail addressed to Holland, the last two cachets being applied in that country.

1938 27th November "Calpurnia".

Reproduced below is a full report of the accident as extracted from the Postmaster General's Annual Report to Parliament 1938/1939:-

"Accident to Flying-boat Calpurnia:

Imperial Airways' flying-boat "Calpurnia", which left Southampton on the 25th Nov. with mails for Australia and New Zealand, met with disaster on the 27th Nov. while attempting to land at Lake Ramadi, Iraq, during a sandstorm. Unfortunately, of the crew of five, three, including the Commander, Captain Attwood, were killed. The New Zealand mails aboard, which closed at London on the 23 and 24 Nov. included a large amount of Christmas mail from Great Britain and Ireland. After the accident, salvage operations were put in hand, and the mails, all of which were damaged by water, were forwarded on from Bhagdad at intervals as they became available.

The damaged mails were received in the Dominion over the period 19 Dec. to 9 Jan. When the bags were opened, the contents were found to be damp and more or less damaged. All articles in reasonably good condition were put in course for immediate delivery, and those that were damaged to any extent were renovated and released as quickly as their condition would allow. While the writing on most of the articles was legible, difficulty was experienced in reading addresses on a considerable portion of the mail. Unfortunately, owing to the effect of water on the gum of envelopes, the contents of a large number of letters had become separated from their covers, and in many instances the task of associating contents with covers was a hopeless one. Efforts to effect delivery of badly damaged mail

were continued until all deliverable articles were disposed of, and it is estimated that approximately four-fifths of the mail was delivered.

All registered articles of which notification of despatch had been received were accounted for and, with few exceptions, delivered. The insured articles were all delivered.

The first portion of the damaged mail from the crash arrived at Auckland from Sydney by the "Awatea" on 19th December. Letters for Australian addresses were found mixed in with the New Zealand mail so it is possible that Australian mail exists with New Zealand markings. About 80 bags of mail were recovered much of which was scattered on the water; many of the mailbags had burst open and boats from the R.A.F. Sailing Club retrieved hundreds of letters floating on the surface of the lake but complete salvage of the mails was impossible.

Carl Hardeman Smith has a badly damaged cover from Perth (Scotland) to Timaru with a duplicated sticker (87 x 27 mm) attached which reads:-

Salvaged from air-mail
liner "Calpurnia".

On the reverse is a faint violet strike of Fig. 9 and a white sealing label with a printed circular POST AND TELEGRAPH DEPARTMENT/NEW ZEALAND. This label is over stamped in violet CHIEF POST OFFICE 23 DEC 1938 TIMARU.

Much of the mail received in Australia and New Zealand from the "Calpurnia" has a black 'T' in a six-sided box (overall size 18 x 18 mm). This tax marking was applied, I believe, to covers in London which were underpaid (See Plate E September 1972 issue of "The KIWI")

1938 12th December "Coorong".

No New Zealand mail is on record as having been on board Qantas Empire Airways flying boat "Coorong" (Registration VH-ABE) when she was blown ashore in a gale whilst moored at Darwin. Three tons of mail was on board but it is believed this was all for Brisbane and Sydney. Information required please.

1939 12th March "Capella".

The Imperial Airways Short "C" class Empire flying boat "Capella" (Registration G-ADUY) struck a submerged object while taxiing to her mooring buoy in Batavia harbour (NOTE: For description of Empire flying boat see "The KIWI" September 1972 page 120). Captain H.B. Hussey was bringing her in and had lined up with three buoys and the bank, as usual, then a few moments later just as they were approaching the mooring they felt a bump. Both drogues had struck a submerged obstacle and shortly afterwards the steward reported that they were making water. The harbour was in fact full of submerged jetties and one bollard had been missed in the original survey and had this time caught "Capella". Captain Hussey attempted to beach the flying boat but the banks were too steep and she

sank until she was three quarters submerged and resting on the mud. The passengers, mail and all removable equipment were taken ashore.

The harbour and moorings at Batavia had been used many times without mishap and Captain Tapp later said that the loss of "Capella" was needless. On this part of the route the boats were operated by Qantas crews.

Singapore notified the eastbound Empire flying boat "Cooee" (Registration VH-ABF) and warned the authorities at Bandoeng. The harbour-master was requested immediately to sweep the area for submerged obstacles and have them removed or marked by a beacon. The relief flying boat "Corio" (Registration VH-ABD) arrived at Batavia at 9 a.m. (GMT) on 13th March and returned to Singapore at 10 a.m. (GMT) with the mail, freight and passengers from "Capella". The normal schedule was maintained by "Corio" making a night landing at Singapore; she departed from Singapore for Penang and England on time. The mail salvaged from "Capella" was from Australia and New Zealand - I do not know of any cachets applied to this mail and would appreciate any further information.

1939 1st May "Challenger".

I was positively amazed when Carl Hardeman Smith produced a cover from the "Challenger" crash which had originated in New Zealand. "Challenger" was another of the Imperial Airways Short "C" class Empire flying boats (Registration G-ADVD) and was bound from England with mails for South Africa, Southern Rhodesia, Nyasaland, South West Africa and Portuguese East Africa. She crashed in shallow water after striking a small boat while landing at Mozambique, Portuguese East Africa and the pilot (Captain Smith) and two crew members were killed. The cover in the Hardeman Smith collection is postmarked Timaru (date unreadable), is addressed to Cape Town and has two strikes of a framed two-line violet cachet which was struck at Durban. This reads:-

FLYING BOAT CORRESPONDENCE DAMAGED BY SEA WATER
VLIEGBOOT KORRESPONDENSIE DEUR SEEWATER BESKADIG

1939 12th June "Centurion".

I am well and truly shot down in flames. The Hardeman Smith collection contains a cover addressed to the Admiralty, London, which was received from the crashed aircraft. Postmarked 31st May in New Zealand the cover bears a magenta cachet SALVAGED MAIL/EX CENTURION (Sic) - this was applied at the Calcutta G.P.O. - and a boxed DAMAGED BY SEA/WATER (Fig 8D) in black (applied on arrival in London); both the cachets are on the front of the cover.

I am told this is not the only cover from New Zealand - details of others would be appreciated. The Australian mail received from this accident usually has the magenta SALVAGED MAIL/EX .CENTURION or SALVAGED MAIL/EX .CENTURIA. There are many different 'settings' of the type and other cachets with letters missing or inverted are known.

1944 11th October "Coolangatta".

The Qantas Short "C" class Empire flying boat "Coolangatta" (Registration VH-ABB) took off from Rose Bay for Townsville with a full complement of 23 passengers and seven crew, with Captain Lester J. Brain at the controls. Approximately twenty minutes after take-off the oil pressure in the starboard inner engine started to drop and the Captain radioed that he was turning back. On the approach for landing at Rose Bay, with Captain Brain at the controls, the flying boat stalled some 10 to 12 feet above the water and on impact the planing bottom of the hull failed, resulting in an extensive breaking up of the aircraft and its destruction. She broke up and sank so rapidly that one male passenger, unable to extricate himself from the wreckage, went down with the flying boat and was drowned. The prompt and efficient work by the rescue crews saved many lives. Two patrol boats had taken station to mark the landing course for the returning aircraft, and the launch which had just returned from ferrying the passengers from the pontoon to the flying boat was made ready for another trip. Coxswain Colbert saw the accident and along with the crews of other launches they jumped into action; Colbert said:

"We called upon nine men to join our launches as we pushed off. As we sped across to the sinking "Coolangatta" some of the launch crews undid the covers and prepared the life-belts for use. All of the crews stripped themselves to their underclothing to be ready to plunge into the water to help. The passengers seemed to be struggling over a wide area. One part of the 'plane had sunk and one young woman afterwards identified as Miss Barbara Steer, was pinned by the leg in the sinking wreckage. However we were lucky to be able to get her out although her leg was cut about".

Of the crew, two were seriously hurt and one suffered severe shock. One passenger was killed, two were seriously and one slightly hurt. Practically all the passengers' luggage was salvaged along with the bulk of the airmail, including the registered letter bag. Soggy suitcases and other clothing were brought ashore and dried in the sun at the airport. A special guard from the Postal Department stood over the registered letters spread out for drying on the grass. Over 13,500 letters and postal articles included in the airmail on the wrecked flying boat were salvaged from the harbour the same day as the crash. They were taken to an army salvage depot in the city where fourteen members of the A.W.A.S. voluntarily undertook the task of sorting them out and drying them with radiators.

Two cachets are known to have been applied to salvaged mail. The first is a red boxed cachet 45 x 17 mm RECEIVED DAMAGED/BY WATER/ G.P.O. SYDNEY: the second an unboxed violet 41 x 5 mm SALVAGED MAIL. Carl Hardeman Smith has shown me a censored cover from New Zealand (cancelled AUCKLAND 9 OC 44 8 AM) to Mackay, a town on the coast of Queensland south of

Townsville. This has the red boxed cachet mentioned above, also a violet "AIR MAIL" and, on the reverse, an Officially Sealed label attached by the Postmaster General's Dept. (Ref. P.M.9). "Coolangatta" was carrying, at the time of the crash, mails for north Australia from New Zealand and south Australia.

1954 13th March "Belfast".

Carl Hardeman Smith has a most interesting registered cover from this crash. Addressed to the Bank of N.Z., London from Henderson, New Zealand (cancelled HENDERSON 11 MR 1954 N.Z.) it has a perfect strike of Ref. 12C on the front. It also has SALVAGED MAIL/SINGAPORE CRASH (Fig. 12B) on the reverse together with a second strike of Ref. 12C but with the first line (DAMAGED BY FIRE) crossed out in blue crayon.

A second cover in the Hardeman Smith collection, addressed to Paris, bears the four line boxed cachet mentioned by Hopkins. Cancelled AUCKLAND N.Z. 8 PM 10 MAR 1954 OVERSEAS the cover bears the red boxed Fig 12A on the front, and, on the reverse, the 60 x 35 mm black, boxed PARVENU EN MAUVAIS/ETAT A PARIS - AVIATION/LE 19-3-54/REPARE PAR NOS SOINS. The last line is crossed out in blue-black ink and the date "19-3-54" is inserted by hand in ink.

To date the writer has only seen Fig 12B and Ref 12C applied to registered mail. Again I have heard of two covers cancelled with Fig. 12B but both have the 'A' of 'MAIL' inserted in ballpoint pen. I have seen a different setting of Fig. 12B reading SALVAGED MIL/SINGAPORE CRASH (top line 37 mm long instead of 39 mm).

1960 24th August 1960 QANTAS Crash.

A Qantas Airways aircraft, bound for Cocos Islands and Australia, with mail from the Union of South Africa, crashed in Mauritius on 24th August, 1960, and all the mail was destroyed. There is every possibility that mail for New Zealand was also on board but I have no details.

This concludes the series of articles on Wreck Mails, and I am indebted to Mr. Peace for allowing us to publish this very extensive article, also for the many hours of research he has put into it. I hope it has been of interest to some of the members and stirred up interest in others. Editor.

E.N. BARTON
Hon. "KIWI" Editor.