

A Pair of Accidental Airmails

Michael Wilkinson

18th June 2022

Thistlethwaite cover



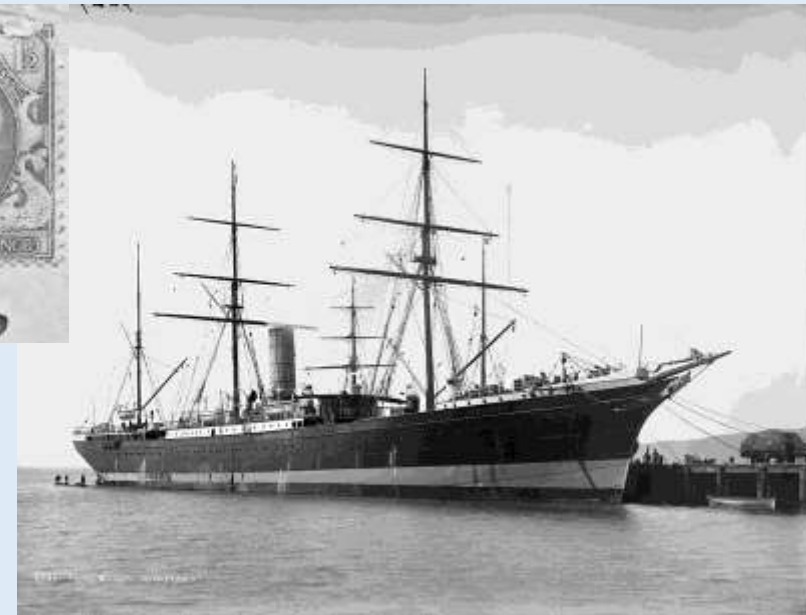
The addressee: **Arthur Henry Thistlethwaite**

- Born 6 June 1871 in Whitby
- Sailed from Plymouth on 3 May 1890 on the RMS *Rimutaka* via Cape of Good Hope and Hobart
- Arrived Port Chalmers on 18 June 1890 - “the passage was uneventful”
- Settled in Tauranga and farmed at Oropi
- Married Edith Eleanor Kensington (1882-1947) in 1 March 1904 in Tauranga
- Died in Tauranga on 22 November 1961



The cover

- Postmark HOLCOT, 7 DE 34 : arrival TAURANGA 27 DE 34, OROPI 28 DE 34
- In 1939 the Reverend Clifton William Thistlethwaite, one of Arthur’s brothers, was Rector at Holcot, near Northampton – so maybe he was the sender of the letter
- $3 \times 1\frac{1}{2}d = 4\frac{1}{2}d$ paid : airmail rate was 1s 3d per $\frac{1}{2}oz$: so 10½d unpaid : double deficiency 1s 9d



The New Zealand Shipping Company’s
Rimutaka at Port Chalmers in 1890

Simpson cover



The cover

- Postmark LONDON W1, 6 DE 34
- $3d + 5d = 8d$ paid : airmail rate was 1s 3d per $\frac{1}{2}$ oz : so 7d unpaid : double deficiency 1s 2d

The addressee

The *Northern Advocate* for 4 November 1941 reported that Mr F Simpson, Superintendent of the Invercargill Fire Brigade, and his colleagues were in dispute with the Chief Inspector over the servicing of fire alarms and threatened to strike.

But what do these covers have in common?

- They were both franked substantially below the airmail rate of 1s 3d per ½ oz – did the senders think their mail would go by a surface route?
- Were the recipients pleased to pay a substantial sum for their letters?
- Both covers travelled on the first regular airmail service from the UK to Australia.
- This left on 8 December 1934 and arrived in Sydney on 21 December:



- This backstamp was applied only to mail continuing to New Zealand (Stapleton/Shand 113).
 - Nearly 90 years later, they are reunited on adjacent pages of my Postage Due collection.
-