

Chapter 6: Subsequent *Horseshoe* Services: June – July 1940

6.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the services *NE 2 – NE 7* and *WS 2 – SW 7*.

The first *Horseshoe* dispatch from Britain was on 19th June and connected on 10th July in Durban with *NE 4* and arrived in Sydney on 24th July. The New Zealand Post Office refused to send mail to the UK on the early *Horseshoe* services (although mail was sent to intermediate destinations) with the first New Zealand mail to the UK connecting in Sydney with the 6th *Horseshoe* service on 24th July.

6.2 Second flights between Durban and Sydney

The second flights left on 26th June from both Durban and Sydney and arrived in Sydney on 8th July and Durban on 9th July. According to [CW], the *Stirling Castle* left South Africa on 12th July and arrived in Liverpool on 29th July while [NA] shows it as disembarking in Liverpool on 28th July and Proud [Pr] shows the arrival date as 30th July. It carried the mail from *WS 2* as the dates fit with covers shown below and so Sydney – London took 35 days.

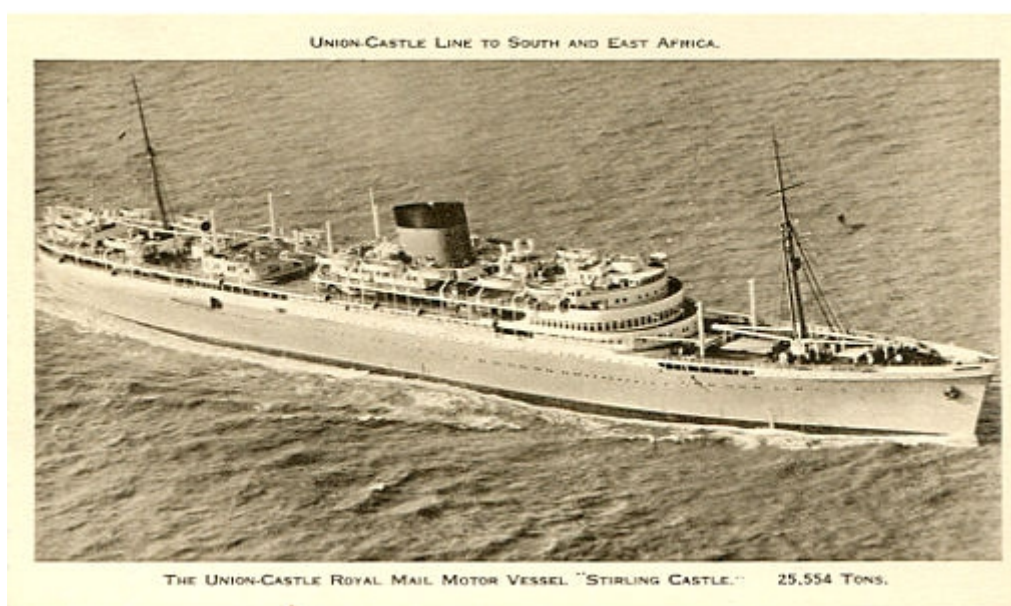


Figure 6.1 *Union Castle* mail ship *Stirling Castle* carried 2nd *Horseshoe* mail from Cape Town to UK.

NE 2				WS 2			
Durban	dep	26 Jun	Corsair	Sydney	dep	26 Jun	Circe
Mozambique	o'n	26-27 Jun	Corsair	Townsville	o'n	26-27 Jun	Circe
Kisumu	o'n	27-28 Jun	Corsair	Darwin	o'n	27-28 Jun	Circe
Khartoum	o'n	28-29 Jun	Corsair	Sourabaya	o'n	28-29 Jun	Circe
Cairo	o'n	29-30 Jun	Corsair	Singapore	o'n	29-30 Jun	Circe
Basra	o'n	30/6-1/7	Corsair	Bangkok	o'n	30/6-1/7	Circe
Karachi	arr	1 Jul	Corsair	Rangoon	o'n	1-2 Jul	Circe
Karachi	dep	2 Jul	Caledonia	Calcutta	o'n	2-3 Jul	Circe
Calcutta	o'n	2-3 Jul	Caledonia	Karachi	o'n	3-4 Jul	Circe
Bangkok	o'n	3-4 Jul	Caledonia	Bahrein	o'n	4-5 Jul	Circe
Singapore	o'n	4-5 Jul	Caledonia	Tiberias	o'n	5-6 Jul	Circe
Sourabaya	o'n	5-6 Jul	Caledonia	Cairo		6 Jul	Circe
Darwin	o'n	6-7 Jul	Caledonia	Khartoum	o'n	6-7 Jul	Circe

Townsville	o'n	7-8 Jul	Caledonia	Kisumu	o'n	7-8 Jul	Circe
Sydney	arr	8 Jul	Caledonia	Mozambique	o'n	8-9 Jul	Circe
trans-Tasman	11 Jul	Awarua		Durban	arr	9 Jul	Circe
				By sea to UK 12-29 Jul Stirling Castle			

The airmail cover in Figure 6.2: has a *Field Post Office 121* postmark in Palestine on 27th June 1940 and was flown on *WS 2* from Tiberias or Cairo on 6th July and redirected in Edinburgh on 1st August.



Figure 6.2: Palestine – Edinburgh flown on *WS 2*.

The cover in Figure 6.3 was postmarked in Alexandria on 27th June 1940 and was opened and passed by the Egyptian censors. It would have missed *WS 1* which was in Cairo on 28th June and have been flown from there on *WS 2* on 6th July. It was first redirected in Sutton Coldfield on 1st August and again in Birmingham on 5th August.

The cover in Figure 6.4 is postmarked at Kirkuk, Iraq on 1st July and Baghdad on 2nd July and flown from Habbaniya on 5th July on *WS 2*. Manuscript on the front that it was delivered in London on 31st July. Franking is 70 fils (15 fils surface plus 55 fils air mail fee) that had been introduced for the Horseshoe Route [AJ]. The surface rate was increased to 20 fils on 24th July 1940.

A cover postmarked in Perak on 28th June was redirected in Glasgow on 1st August.



Figure 6.3: Postmarked Alexandria on 27th June, redirected in UK on 1st August. Flown on *WS 2*.

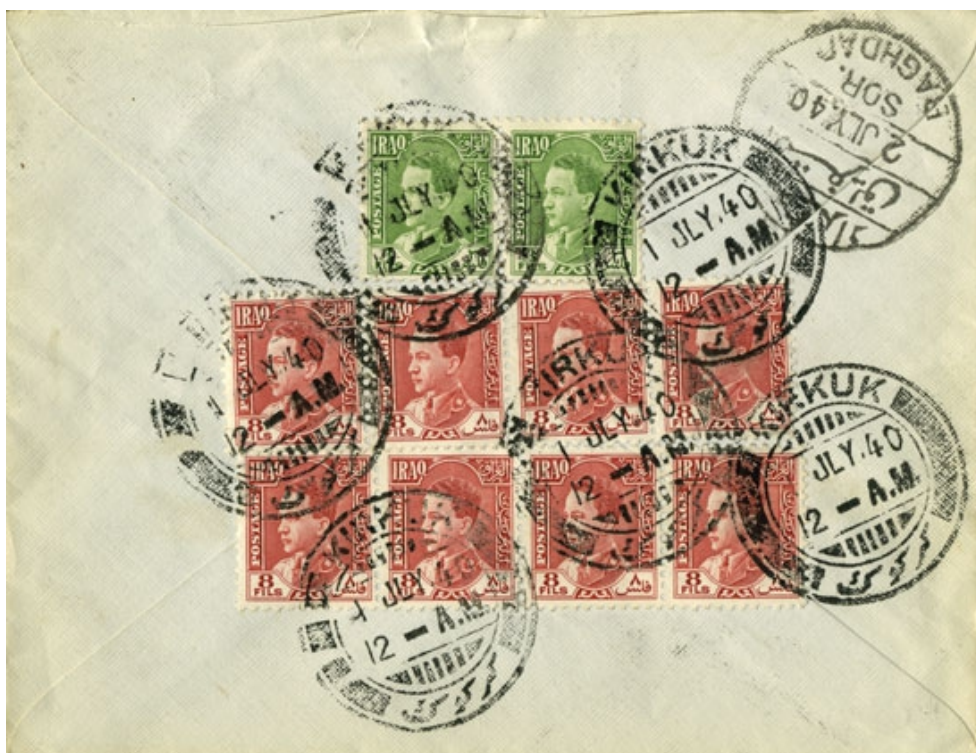


Figure 6.4: Postmarked at Kirkuk, Iraq on 1st July and Baghdad on 2nd July. Flown on *WS 2*.



Figure 6.5: Cover postmarked in Singapore on 29th June and backstamped in Bombay at 8 am on 6th July.

The dates on the cover in Figure 6.5 fit with *WS 2* which left Singapore on 30th June and arrived in Karachi on 3rd July.

The cover has a *Passed for Transmission Singapore* handstamp and was opened and passed by the censor in Bombay (*C 18*). It is franked with 55c which was the air mail rate from Malaya to Empire countries.

The cover in Figure 6.6 is postmarked in Dar es Salaam on 4th July 1940 and is addressed to a passenger on the *Warwick Castle* at Cape Town. It would have been flown from Dar es Salaam to Durban on *WS 2* on 8th – 9th July. It has the cachet *Received too late for delivery at Cape Town* on the back. It was opened by the censor in South Africa and has a Cape Town datestamp on 13th July.

The *Warwick Castle* sailed from Southampton to Cape Town on 27th June – 12th July and left Cape Town for Durban on 13th July. As this cover was dealt with the censors, its delivery was delayed until the 13th which was too late to connect with the passenger although the mail from *WS 2* had arrived in Cape Town in time to connect with the *Stirling Castle* that left on 12th July.

It was returned to Dar es Salaam perhaps by sea from Durban where it was backstamped on 3rd August. It was then sent via Beira (where it was datestamped on 14th August) to Umtali, Southern Rhodesia and has datestamps there on 16th and 17th August.

A cover to Bombay postmarked in Penang on 22nd June with a Calcutta backstamp on 3rd July and a Bombay backstamp on 5th July likely missed *WS 1* at Penang on 23rd June and was sent on *WS 2*.

Figure 6.7 shows an active service cover sent from Egypt to South India on *NE 2* that is postmarked on 24th June and has an arrival datestamp on 5th July.

A cover postmarked in Durban on 24th June and addressed to Batavia has a Singapore censor mark and datestamp on 4th July and was subsequently opened by the censors in Batavia with a 9th July datestamp. It would have been sent from Durban on *NE 2* which arrived in Singapore on Thursday 4th July. The *KNILM* flights from Singapore to Batavia were on a Wednesday and Thursday and so the next flight was on 10th July [SN]. Hence after being offloaded in Singapore, it must have been sent to Batavia by surface.

Australia - Hong Kong - USA/Canada

It had been possible to send air mail from Australia to the USA or Canada via Hong Kong using the *IA* services to Bangkok and Hong Kong and the *Pan American* trans Pacific service from Hong Kong since 1937. In 1940, the rate was 4s 8d to USA and 4s 7d to Canada. On 20th June 1940, the

Australian press announced that this service would also be available for mail to the UK. The rate was 6s 5d for air all the way and 4s 7d if the Atlantic crossing was by sea in which case the routing had to be *Australia – Hong Kong – Canada*. The first dispatch was on *WS 2* to Bangkok. The service did not last long as a cheaper and faster air mail service to the UK via Auckland was set up in July and the *BOAC* Bangkok – Hong Kong service ended in October.



Figure 6.6: Dar es Salaam to Cape Town flown on *WS 2*, but received too late for passenger on ship.

A registered cover to Britain sent from Queensland on 24th June franked with 5s 0d, i.e. 4s 8d plus 4d registration fee, the USA rate instead of the correct Canada rate, has a Brisbane transit on 25th June and a Sutton Coldfield, Birmingham cancel on 5th August. It would be sent Brisbane – Bangkok on *WS 2* on 26th – 30th June and Bangkok – Hong Kong on *BH 249* on 1st July. It would then be flown Hong Kong – San Francisco on 14th – 21st July [AH] before being flown to New York and then the UK by sea. Interestingly, it arrived in the UK later than the *Horseshoe* mail on *WS 2*.

Another cover to the USA was postmarked in Bombay on 26th June and has a Hong Kong transit on 4th July. It would have been flown Karachi – Bangkok on *NE 2* on 2nd – 3rd July and then Bangkok – Hong Kong on *BH 250* on 4th July.



Figure 6.7: Egypt - India, postmarked 24th June flown on NE 2 from Cairo to Karachi.

6.3 Third flights between Durban and Sydney

The third flights in both directions left on 3rd July and arrived in Sydney on 15th July and Durban on 17th July. *WS 3* was delayed in Sorabaya due to mechanical trouble and that meant that its mail made a very tight connection with the *Arundel Castle* which left Cape Town on 19th July and arrived in the Clyde on 5th August. According to Proud, the mail arrived in the UK on 6th August.

NE 3				WS 3			
Durban	dep	3 Jul	Cambria	Sydney	dep	3 Jul	Corinna
Mozambique	o'n	3-4 Jul	Cambria	Townsville	o'n	3-4 Jul	Corinna
Kisumu	o'n	4-5 Jul	Cambria	Darwin	o'n	4-5 Jul	Corinna
Khartoum	o'n	5-6 Jul	Cambria	Sourabaya	o'n	5-8 Jul	Corinna MT
Cairo	o'n	6-7 Jul	Cambria	Singapore	o'n	8-9 Jul	Corinna
Basra	o'n	7-8 Jul	Cambria	Bangkok	o'n	9-10 Jul	Corinna
Karachi	o'n	8-9 Jul	Cambria	Calcutta	o'n	10-11 Jul	Corinna
Calcutta	o'n	9-10 Jul	Cambria	Karachi	arr	11 Jul	Corinna
Bangkok	o'n	10-11 Jul	Cambria	Karachi	dep	12 Jul	Clifton
Singapore	o'n	11-12 Jul	Cambria	Basra	o'n	12-13 Jul	Clifton
Sourabaya	o'n	12-13 Jul	Cambria	Cairo	o'n	13-14 Jul	Clifton
Darwin	o'n	13-14 Jul	Cambria	Khartoum	o'n	14-15 Jul	Clifton
Townsville	o'n	14-15 Jul	Cambria	Kisumu	o'n	15-16 Jul	Clifton
Sydney	arr	15 Jul	Cambria	Mozambique	o'n	16-17 Jul	Clifton
trans-Tasman	18 Jul	Awarua		Durban	arr	17 Jul	Clifton
				By sea to UK	19 Jul – 5 Aug		Arundel Castle

The cover in Figure 6.8 is postmarked in Hong Kong on 2nd July and has a Bombay censor mark and delivery datestamp on 12th July. It was flown to Bangkok on *HB 251* on 3rd July and would be flown Bangkok – Karachi on *WS 3* on 9th – 11th July before making a surprisingly good connection to arrive in Bombay by 12th July.

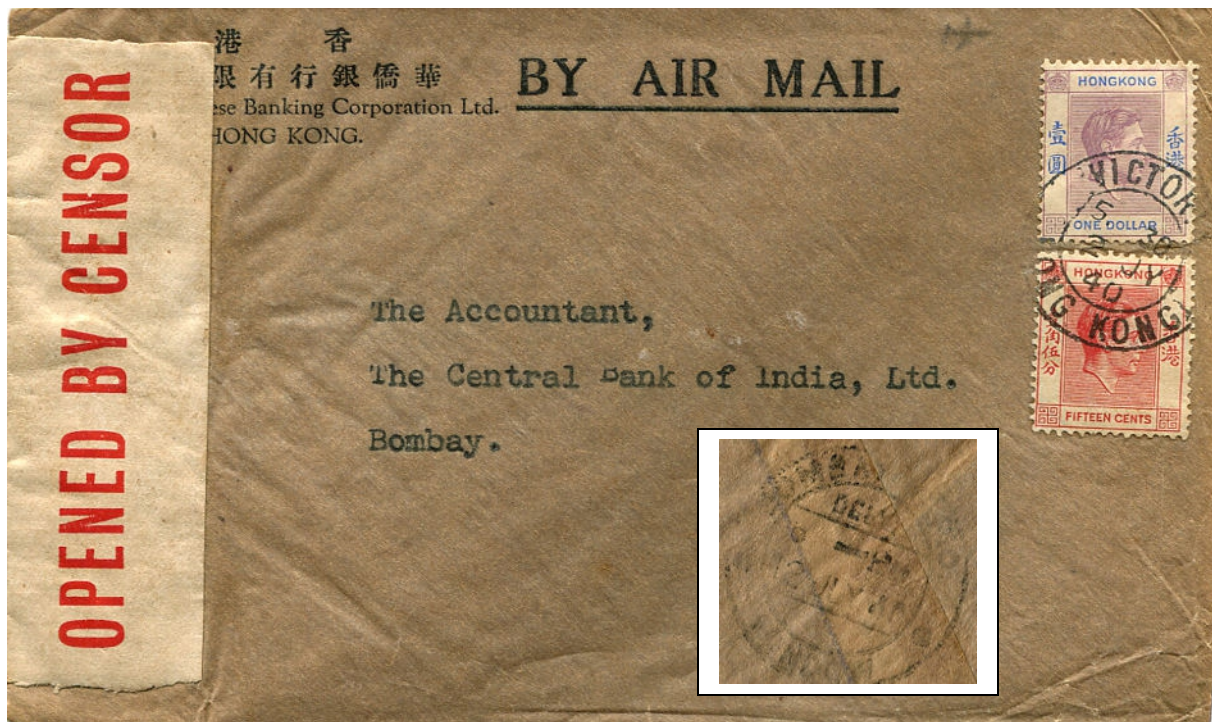


Figure 6.8: Hong Kong – Bombay postmarked 2nd July flown on *WS 3*.

Due to censorship delays, the cover from Jerusalem in Figure 6.9 is likely to have missed *WS 2* in Tiberias on 6th July and been sent on *WS 3*. There is a *Recd 8th Aug 1940* in manuscript on the front that would suggest that it arrived on the *Arundel Castle*. A cover postmarked in Cairo on 8th and 10th July that was redirected in Wales on 10th August also fits with *WS 3*.



Figure 6.9: Postmarked in Jerusalem on 4th July and addressed to Northampton with *Recd 8th August 1940* in manuscript on the front. Correctly franked with 60 mils.

Crewe [Cre, Cre3] shows a cover postmarked in Hong Kong on 6th July that would have been intended for *WS 3*, but it has a London redirection on 14th August and so arrived a week later on the *Warwick Castle*. There were problems with the Hong Kong – Bangkok service at this time, and service *HB 252* did not take place due to Japanese pressure on the authorities in Indo China and so

its mail was flown Hong Kong – Rangoon by *CNAC* where it missed the connection with *WS 3* and was flown on *WS 4*.

Although New Zealand did not accept mail for the *Horseshoe Route* until the middle of July, some of their alternative services made use of part of the route. A cover to the UK postmarked in Auckland on 26th June has a Hong Kong transit on 10th July and so was sent Auckland – Sydney on 1st July, Sydney – Bangkok on *WS 3* on 3rd – 9th July and Bangkok – Hong Kong on *BH 251* on 10th July. It would then have been flown by the *Pan Am* service *FAM 14* to San Francisco and then to the UK via New York and Lisbon. It is franked with 8s 0d, the rate to the UK via Hong Kong. Although Crewe shows *BH 251* as being suspended in his book [Cre], that is corrected in a later article [Cre2].

The weekly air mail service had great difficulty in coping with the demand. There was a report in the *Sydney Morning Herald* on 16th July that no mail had been received by the *AIF* in Palestine for six weeks. The *West Australian* on 8th August reported that the Post Office procedure was to send air mail for the *AIF* to an army post office in Melbourne to check the records to ensure it had been correctly addressed to Palestine or Britain. It was then returned to the Post Office for dispatch. That could introduce a significant delay.

At this time the *Horseshoe Route* was faster than sending mail by surface. I have seen a registered surface cover postmarked in India on 6th July that has a UK backstamp on 19th September while the *Horseshoe* mail had arrived in the UK on 5th August.

6.4 Fourth Flights between Durban and Sydney

a) First service from UK to connect with Horseshoe Route

Although the first dispatch on the *Horseshoe Route* from the UK was on 19th June, the availability of the service was not announced in the UK newspapers until 28th June. The *Post Office Circular* of 3rd July announced:

“Air mail correspondence for the undermentioned destinations may again be accepted. It will be forwarded by surface route to South Africa and thence, within the limits of the available aircraft accommodation, by air. Consequently the acceleration which will be afforded over transmission by ordinary mail is not likely to be as considerable as formerly. Applicants should be informed accordingly.”

It then lists a series of countries in East Africa, Middle East, Far East and Australasia.

Legg reproduced a letter dated 28th August 1940 from *BOAC* to the *GPO* giving, for the first six UK dispatches, the dates of dispatch, the ship and the flight connection at Durban [Leg1]. It shows that the dispatch of 19th June was sent by the *Arundel Castle* and connected in Durban with *NE 4* on 10th July. That means that London – Sydney was 35 days. The *Arundel Castle* left Southampton on 20th June and arrived in Cape Town on 7th July.

The *GPO Overseas Mail Branch Report (OMB) 41* of 22nd June [OMB40] also gives the date of the first dispatch from the UK as being 19th June. It gives the capacity of the Durban – Sydney flights as 2,200 lb per flight while the *Empire Service* before 10th June had been carrying 6,000 lb per week. There were therefore concerns that the demand would be too high for the available capacity and so mail was sent on various alternative services both before and after 19th June. *OMB 40* on 15th June reported:

“In the meantime any air mail correspondence for countries normally served by the Empire air services coming to hand will, with the exceptions mentioned below, be despatched by surface route.”

The exceptions are listed in Section 6.8. Hence much of the mail posted after 9th June was not held back to be posted on the first *Horseshoe* dispatch.

A cover to Juba in Sudan was postmarked in Cheshire on 12th June and was backstamped in Juba on 12th July and so was on the first service [Win 9]. At least some of the mail for India was held back. The cover in Figure 6.10 is postmarked in Falmouth on 10th June and has a Lahore backstamp on 16th July and a cover postmarked in Peebles, Scotland on 11th June has a Simla, India datestamp on 17th July. They were therefore flown on *NE 4*. A surface mail cover from Peebles postmarked on 12th June and sent to India did not arrive until 1st August.



Figure 6.10: Postmarked 10th June, sent to India on first dispatch and flown on *NE 4*.

The cover in Figure 6.11 was postmarked in the UK on 18th June and is addressed to Saigon in French Indo China (now Vietnam). Unfortunately the cover has a stamp missing to the left of the top stamp. It has a Hanoi transit on 20th July and a Saigon arrival mark on 22nd July. These dates prove that it was sent on the first UK dispatch and connected with *NE 4* which arrived in Bangkok two days late on 19th July. It would have been sent on the *BOAC* Bangkok – Hanoi – Hong Kong service *BH 254* on 20th July [Win3]. The Hanoi transit on another cover to Saigon that was postmarked in the UK four days earlier on 14th June is not until 26th August and so was sent at least some of the way by sea.

The cost of the service was debated and *OMB 41* states:

“As the air mails must be carried by surface route to South Africa, thus greatly reducing the acceleration afforded, it has not been considered expedient to increase the air postage rate beyond the already high rate of 1/3 a half ounce previously charged for the service.”



Figure 6.11: Cover to Saigon sent on first dispatch from UK on *Horseshoe Route*.

The report of the arrival of the first mail in Palestine is given in the edition of the *Palestine Post* of 15th July [PP]. It reports:

“The first English mail to reach this country since Italy’s entry into the war was distributed yesterday. Consisting of matter posted as airmail only ... it was taken to Tiberias by flying boat. ... Most of the mail was posted during the second week in June.”

Horseshoe mail for Adelaide, Melbourne, Hobart and Perth was off-loaded in Darwin and flown from there by internal Australian air mail services rather than being flown to Sydney. At Adelaide there was a connecting service to Melbourne and Hobart which meant that *Horseshoe* mail arrived in these cities on the same day as it arrived in Sydney.

NE 4 had been delayed in Jaipur due to mechanical trouble. There were complaints in the Australian press on 22nd July that the *Guinea Airways* flight from Darwin to Adelaide which had been due to

leave on 21st July had been held up until 23rd July because: “*the mail from overseas did not arrive in time*”.

NE 4 arrived in Sydney on 24th July. The next trans-Tasman flight was scheduled for Thursday 25th July, but was delayed for two days by bad weather [AS] and so the date for the first arrival in New Zealand of mail flown on the *Horseshoe Route* was 27th July. It therefore took 38 days. I am not aware of any mail from the UK to Australia or New Zealand being positively identified as having been carried on this service although there have been many erroneous attributions as described in Chapter 3.

b) To UK

WS 4 arrived in Durban on 23rd July and its mail connected with the *Warwick Castle* which left Cape Town on 26th July and disembarked passengers in Liverpool on 12th August [NA]. A cover postmarked in Singapore on 13th July was redirected in Cornwall on 15th August while Crewe [Cre] lists a cover from Hong Kong postmarked on 14th July which must have been flown on 14th July on *HB 254* to connect with *WS 4* in Bangkok as it has a London transit on 14th August. That means that Sydney – London took 35 days.

Sea from UK Dispatch 19 Jun Arundel Castle 20 Jun-7 Jul

NE 4				WS 4			
Durban	dep	10 Jul	Ceres	Sydney	dep	10 Jul	Cameronian
Mozambique	o'n	10-11 Jul	Ceres	Brisbane	o'n	10-11 Jul	Cameronian MT
Kisumu	o'n	11-12 Jul	Ceres	Townsville	o'n	11-12 Jul	Cameronian
Khartoum	o'n	12-13 Jul	Ceres	Darwin	o'n	12-13 Jul	Cameronian
Tiberias	o'n	13-14 Jul	Ceres	Singapore	o'n	13-14 Jul	Cameronian
Basra	o'n	14-15 Jul	Ceres	Bangkok	o'n	14-15 Jul	Cameronian
Karachi	arr	15 Jul	Ceres	Calcutta	o'n	15-16 Jul	Cameronian
Karachi	dep	16 Jul	Corsair	Karachi	o'n	16-17 Jul	Cameronian
Jaipur	o'n	16-17 Jul	Corsair MT	Basra	o'n	17-18 Jul	Cameronian
Gwalior	o'n	17-18 Jul	Corsair	Tiberias	o'n	18-19 Jul	Cameronian
Calcutta	o'n	18-19 Jul	Corsair	Wadi Halfa	o'n	19-20 Jul	Cameronian
Bangkok	o'n	19-20 Jul	Corsair	Port Bell	o'n	20-21 Jul	Cameronian
Singapore	o'n	20-21 Jul	Corsair	Kisumu	o'n	21-22 Jul	Cameronian
Sourabaya	o'n	21-22 Jul	Corsair	Mozambique	o'n	22-23 Jul	Cameronian
Darwin	o'n	22-23 Jul	Corsair	Durban	arr	23 Jul	Cameronian
Townsville	o'n	23-24 Jul	Corsair	Sea to UK 26 Jul-12 Aug Warwick Castle			
Sydney	arr	24 Jul	Corsair				

trans-Tasman 27 Jul Aotearoa

A cover postmarked in Bombay on 10th July and addressed to New York has a Hong Kong transit mark on 20th July. It would have been flown from Karachi to Bangkok on *NE 4* on 16th – 19th July and from Bangkok to Hong Kong on *BH 254* on 20th July. It would then have been flown by Pan American on the trans-Pacific *FAM 14* service to San Francisco.

6.5 Fifth flights between Durban and Sydney

a) Second *Horseshoe* service from UK

The dispatch on 26th June was sent on the *Warwick Castle* which left Southampton on 27th June and arrived in Cape Town on 12th July and was flown from Durban on *NE 5* [Leg1]. The transit time for London – Sydney was 33 days. The postcard in Figure 6.12 is postmarked in London on 22nd June and is addressed to Bandoeng, Java. It was likely sent on this service, the second *Horseshoe* dispatch from the UK, arriving on 26th July

A cover to Indo China postmarked in London on 22nd June would have gone on this dispatch arriving in Bangkok on 24th July. It has a Hanoi transit on the 25th July showing that it connected with the Bangkok – Hong Kong via Hanoi service *BH 256* on 25th July.



Figure 6.12: Postcard to Java sent on second *Horseshoe* dispatch from UK

b) To UK

The *Durban Castle* left Cape Town on 2nd August and arrived in the Clyde on 19th August. It carried the mail from *WS 5* as *The Straits Times* reported on 25th August that the mail from Singapore of 19th July had arrived in London on 22nd August [SN]. That gives a Sydney – London transit time of 36 days. Crewe [Cre] lists a cover with a Hong Kong postmark on 20th July with a London transit mark on 20th August, i.e. earlier than the Singapore data. It would have been flown to Bangkok on *HB 256* on 21st July to connect with *WS 5*. A cover sent from Assam in India on 16th July with a *Not opened by Censor* mark in Calcutta was redirected in Stafford on 21st August while a cover postmarked near Sydney on 15th July was delivered in Exmouth also on 21st August [Win3]. This supports the date given by Crewe.

Figure 6.13 shows a registered cover to Zurich postmarked in Moshi, Tanganyika on 15th July 1940 that has a Tanga transit on 19th July, a Dar es Salaam transit on 25th July, a Madrid transit on 23rd August and a Zurich arrival datestamp on 28th August. It must therefore have been flown from Dar es Salaam on 28th July on *WS 5*, sent by sea to UK arriving on 19th August and then flown to Lisbon on the flight of 21st or 22nd August. It may then have been flown to Madrid before completing its journey to Zurich by surface.

Sea from UK Dispatch 26 Jun Warwick Castle 27 Jun-12 Jul

NE 5

Durban	dep	17 Jul	Coriolanus
Mozambique	o'n	17-18 Jul	Coriolanus
Kisumu	o'n	18-19 Jul	Coriolanus
Khartoum	o'n	19-20 Jul	Coriolanus
Cairo	o'n	20-21 Jul	Coriolanus
Basra	o'n	21-22 Jul	Coriolanus
Karachi	o'n	22-23 Jul	Coriolanus
Calcutta	o'n	23-24 Jul	Coriolanus
Bangkok	o'n	24-25 Jul	Coriolanus
Singapore	o'n	25-26 Jul	Coriolanus
Sourabaya	o'n	26-27 Jul	Coriolanus
Darwin	o'n	27-28 Jul	Coriolanus
Townsville	o'n	28-29 Jul	Coriolanus
Sydney	arr	29 Jul	Coriolanus

trans-Tasman 1 Aug Aotearoa

WS 5

Sydney	dep	17 Jul	Corio
Townsville	o'n	17-18 Jul	Corio
Darwin	o'n	18-19 Jul	Corio
Sourabaya	o'n	19-20 Jul	Corio
Singapore	o'n	20-21 Jul	Corio
Bangkok	o'n	21-22 Jul	Corio
Calcutta	o'n	22-23 Jul	Corio
Karachi	arr	23 Jul	Corio
Karachi	dep	24 Jul	Ceres
Basra	o'n	24-25 Jul	Ceres
Tiberias	o'n	25-26 Jul	Ceres
Khartoum	o'n	26-27 Jul	Ceres
Kisumu	o'n	27-28 Jul	Ceres
Mozambique	o'n	28-29 Jul	Ceres
Durban	arr	29 Jul	Ceres

Sea to UK 2 – 19 Aug Durban Castle

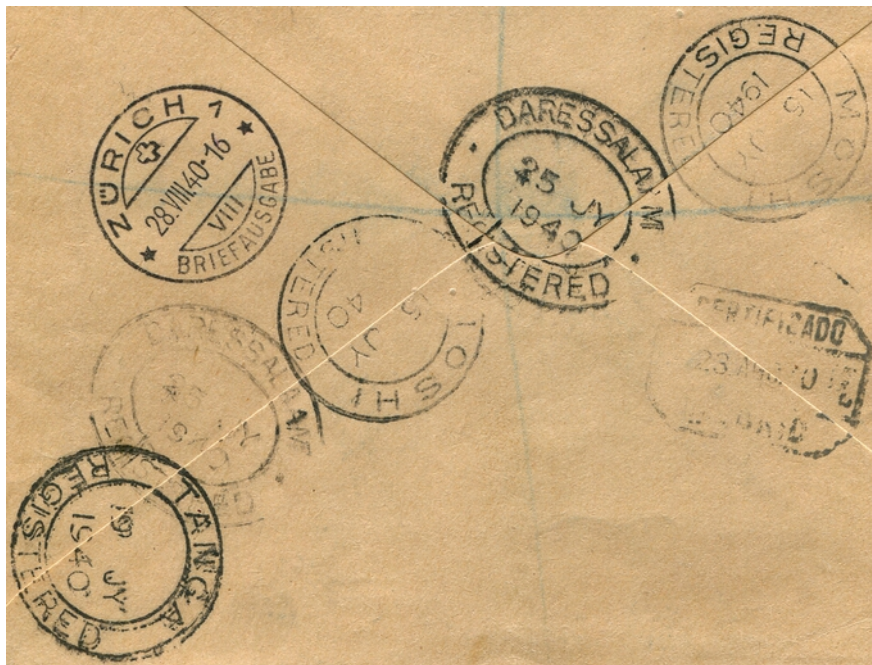


Figure 6.13: Registered air mail cover from Tanganyika to Switzerland flown on WS 5.

Two airmail covers to Switzerland postmarked in Egypt on 19th and 20th July have Zurich redirection datestamps on 13th and 12th August respectively. They therefore arrived too soon to have been sent on the *Horseshoe Route* and were likely sent by rail & road to Aleppo, then on the *Taurus Express* to Haydarpasa across the Bosphorus from Istanbul and on the *Orient Express* to Switzerland. Another scan is of a cover to Zagreb, Yugoslavia postmarked in Sydney on 16th July with Zagreb

backstamps on 20th August. It would have been offloaded in Egypt and sent via Turkey on the *Taurus Express*.

The cover in Figure 6.14 was postmarked in Melbourne at 9.30 pm on 16th July. The *Horseshoe* mail closed in Melbourne at 7 pm on 16th July and so it is reasonable that it was not cancelled until 9.30. It would then be flown to Adelaide on 17th July and then from Adelaide to Darwin by *Guinea Airways* later that day. It would then join *WS 5* in Darwin.



Figure 6.14: Air mail cover from Australia flown on *WS 5*.

6.6 Sixth flights between Durban and Sydney

a) From UK

This was the first *Horseshoe* dispatch from the UK after the official announcement of the service and *OMB 42* for the week ending 29th June states: [OMB40]:

“In view of the publicity given to the existence of the once-weekly air service from Durban to Sydney ... it was decided that notwithstanding the limited accommodation for mails, and the consequent risk that the loads might exceed the mail capacity, the service should be advertised ... drawing attention to the fact ... that the acceleration afforded is not likely to be as considerable as formerly.”

This warning about the speed of the service was repeated in the announcement in *The Times* on 29th June which stated:

“As the correspondence will be forwarded by steamer to South Africa, the acceleration over transmission by ordinary mail is not likely to be as great as formerly.”

The next dispatch was on 3rd July and was 970 lb [OMB40]. The *Durban Castle* left Southampton on 4th July and arrived in Cape Town on 20th July. The mail was flown from Durban on *NE 6* [Leg1] and the London – Sydney transit time was 32 days. A cover postmarked in Peebles, Scotland on 2nd July was backstamped in Saharanpur, India on 1st August.

A cover from *Middle East Forces FPO1* postmarked on 24th July 1940 is shown in Figure 6.15. It possibly joined *NE 6* in Cairo on 27th July. It appears to have a 10 mills stamp missing as I assume that it was originally franked with 70 mills Egyptian stamps (10 mills surface + 2 x 30 mills air mail) [Sta]. The *NZEF* Postal Service is described in [NZE].



Figure 6.15: Cover from *Middle East Forces FPO1* which possibly joined *NE 6* in Cairo on 27th July.

b) to UK

The next mailship was the *Windsor Castle* which left Cape Town on 16th August and arrived in the Clyde on 1st September carrying the mail from both *WS 6* and *WS 7*. The airmail cover in Figure 6.16 is postmarked in Colombo on 24th July was redirected in England on 5th September. It would be flown from Colombo to Karachi by *Tata Airlines* where it joined *WS 6* on 30th July.

Sea from UK Dispatch 3rd July Durban Castle 4-20 July

NE 6			
Durban	dep	24 Jul	Carpentaria
Mozambique	o'n	24-25 Jul	Carpentaria
Kisumu	o'n	25-26 Jul	Carpentaria
Wadi Halfa	o'n	26-27 Jul	Carpentaria
Tiberias	o'n	27-28 Jul	Carpentaria
Basra	o'n	28-29 Jul	Carpentaria
Karachi	o'n	29-30 Jul	Carpentaria
Calcutta	o'n	30-31 Jul	Carpentaria
Rangoon	o'n	31/7-1/8	Carpentaria
Singapore	arr	1 Aug	Carpentaria
Singapore	dep	2 Aug	Coorong
Sourabaya	o'n	2-3 Aug	Coorong
Darwin	o'n	3-4 Aug	Coorong
Townsville	o'n	4-5 Aug	Coorong
Sydney	arr	5 Aug	Coorong

No mail from UK for New Zealand

trans-Tasman 22 Jul Aotearoa

WS 6			
Sydney	dep	24 Jul	Caledonia
Townsville	o'n	24-25 Jul	Caledonia
Darwin	o'n	25-26 Jul	Caledonia
Sourabaya	o'n	26-27 Jul	Caledonia
Singapore	arr	27 Jul	Caledonia
Singapore	dep	28 Jul	Canopus
Bangkok	o'n	28-29 Jul	Canopus
Calcutta	o'n	29-30 Jul	Canopus
Karachi	o'n	30-31 Jul	Canopus
Basra	o'n	31/7-1/8	Canopus
Tiberias	o'n	1-2 Aug	Canopus
Wadi Halfa	o'n	2-3 Aug	Canopus
Port Bell	o'n	3-4 Aug	Canopus
Mombasa	o'n	4-5 Aug	Canopus
Mozambique	o'n	5-6 Aug	Canopus
Durban	arr	6 Aug	Canopus

By sea to UK 16 Aug - 1 Sep Windsor Castle

A cover postmarked near Sydney on 22nd July was delivered in Exmouth on 7th September [Win3], a cover postmarked in India on 28th July to UK with a Calcutta censor mark was redirected in

England on 8th September and a cover from Kenya postmarked on 27th July in Nairobi, where it was opened by the censor, was redirected in Edinburgh on 6th September were also likely on this service. A cover to Bombay postmarked in Penang on 20th July and flown to Calcutta where it was backstamped on 30th July is shown in Figure 6.17. Although *WS 5* was in Penang on 21st July, the Calcutta date indicates that it was flown on *WS 6*.



Figure 6.16: Cover from Ceylon to UK flown on *WS 6*.

c) Horseshoe Mail from New Zealand

The New Zealand Post Office did not accept mail to the UK on the *Horseshoe Route* until the second half of July.

On 11th June, 1940 the *Evening Post* of Wellington published a statement from the *Australian Associated Press* that [EP]:

“Imperial Airways is suspending its services to Australia for the present. Air mails from London will go via American air services till an Imperial Airways reserve route is operating.”

They do not seem to have realised that *Imperial Airways* had been replaced by *BOAC* on 1st April 1940.

A statement on the suspension of the Empire air mail service from the UK Postmaster General was published by the *Evening Post* on 12th June. That was the last date that their daily *Mail Notice* listed the 1s 6d *Empire Air Mail Service* to GB. On 13th June, the listing was changed to: “Empire countries (not Great Britain), also Egypt and Irak” and on 15th June to: “Egypt, Africa and intermediate Empire countries”.

According to Startup, New Zealand postmasters had been informed about the suspension of the air route to the UK on 14th June and that the alternative route was by sea to Honolulu, from there by air to New York and then by sea to the UK at a rate of 1s 9d (or 4s 0d if the trans-Atlantic leg was by

air) [Sta]. In an *Evening Post* report published on 15th June, it was stated that the New Zealand – Honolulu sea connection was twice every four weeks.



Figure 6.17: Cover to Bombay flown from Penang to Calcutta on WS 6.

On 19th June, the *Evening Post* published an article stating that mail intended for the Empire air mail route via Australia would be sent by surface. As well as details of the alternative air mail services via Honolulu, the air mail service via Australia, Hong Kong, trans-Pacific, USA and transatlantic to Lisbon at a rate of 8s 0d is described.

The first air mail service by *Pan American Airways* from Auckland to San Francisco started a month later. Figure 3.4 in Chapter 3 shows an air mail letter to UK postmarked in New Zealand on 15th June which presumably went by surface.

Sinking of the Niagara

Early in the morning of 19th June 1940, the *RMS Niagara* hit a mine shortly after leaving Auckland on its way to Vancouver. Although, it sank quickly, all the crew and passengers were saved. It was reported in the *Evening Post* on 20th June that the *Niagara* had been carrying three weeks of mail for the USA, Canada and Honolulu and that this included 700 letters from New Zealand to the UK that were to be forwarded by air from Honolulu [EP]. Hence the first dispatch from New Zealand to the UK via Honolulu at the 1s 9d rate after the closure of the Mediterranean was lost [Cla4].

The next dispatch was scheduled to be on the *Mariposa* on 24th June, but on 2nd July, *The West Australian* announced that the mail from Australia which was due to arrive in New Zealand on the *Mariposa* on the 24th June did not arrive in New Zealand until 1st July due to the discovery of further mines [Tro]. The delay of the *Mariposa* means that the first successful dispatch of mail on this route was not until 1st July. The cover in Figure 6.18 is postmarked on 24th June and so would have been on that dispatch.



Figure 6.18: NZ – UK at the 1s 9d rate postmarked on 24th June. Sea to Honolulu and then flown.

Sublime disregard of the facts

As late as 4th July, the *Evening Post* [EP] published an article with the statement:

“With a sublime disregard of the fact that there is now no air route available for Empire mails between Egypt and the United Kingdom, many New Zealanders continue to post mail matter granted at the rate of eighteen pence per half ounce...

What the postal officials do with this optimistically stamped mail is to send it to its destination by the quickest surface route...”

That was with “a sublime disregard of the fact that” the *Horseshoe Route* had been running from Sydney since the 19th of June. It may be that the New Zealand Post Office had decided that the *Horseshoe Route* service to the UK would be no faster than the surface route which was normally via either USA or the Panama Canal and so there was no point in raising the New Zealand public’s hopes.

Such articles prompted the Dominions Office to send a telegram to the New Zealand Government on 11th July 1940 stating [EAS, Cla2]:

“It is understood that New Zealand Post Office has recently reminded public that letters for United Kingdom cannot be accepted for transmission via Empire Airmail Service. It is assumed that this advice was given owing to lack of details regarding arrangements now made here for transmission of mail by this service to Australia and New Zealand.”

It then goes on to give details of the service and ends with:

“... we do not therefore think that there need be any difficulty in accepting mail for this Service for transmission from New Zealand to United Kingdom.”

This had some effect and on 16th July, the New Zealand Postmaster-General announced that mail would be accepted on the *Horseshoe Route* and this was published in an article in the *Evening Post* of 17th July. The time estimate given is rather optimistic at 32 days. The first mention of it in the daily mail notices in the *Evening Post* was not until 3rd August [EP].

The first dispatch was on the trans-Tasman air mail of Monday 22nd July which connected with the sixth dispatch from Sydney on 24th July. According to Walker [Wal], this mail arrived in the UK 45 days later on 5th September. That is several days after the arrival of the *Windsor Castle* in Glasgow on 1st September, but the transit time supports the lack of a normal connection at Cape Town with *WS 6*. It should be noted that the second acceptance from New Zealand also arrived in the UK on the *Windsor Castle*.

The trans-Tasman flight of 22nd July also carried the mail to Australia that had been flown on the first regular *Pan American* flight from San Francisco to Auckland on 12th – 18th July.

The cover in Figure 6.19 is postmarked at 6.40 am on 18th July in Greymouth. It would be carried on the Greymouth – Christchurch express train to Christchurch where it was opened and passed by the censors (censor no 5). The trans-Tasman air mail closed in Christchurch at midnight on a Friday (i.e. 19th July) [EP]. There is therefore sufficient time for the cover to arrive in Auckland to be flown on the first acceptance from New Zealand for the *Horseshoe Route* on 22nd July.



Figure 6.19: First acceptance from New Zealand on the *Horseshoe Route*, postmarked 18th July.

6.7 Seventh flights between Durban and Sydney

a) From UK

The dispatch on 11th July was 2160 lb [OMB40]. It was sent on the *Strathnaver* which left Southampton on 13th July, but did not arrive in Cape Town until 7th August and so missed the connection with *NE 7* and *NE 8* in Durban. *The Straits Times* on 9th August reported that no air mails from Britain had been received the previous day (i.e. from *NE 7*) [SN]. The mail was eventually flown to Cairo on *XNE 8* [Leg1] where it caught up with *NE 8* making the London – Sydney transit time 39 days.

The cover in Figure 6.20 was sent on this dispatch from the UK. The arrival datestamp in Poona, India on 19th August ties in with it missing *NE 7* and *NE 8* being sent on *XNE7/XNE 8/NE 8*.



Figure 6.20: Postmarked 8th July and sent on the *Strathnaver*, missed connection with *NE 7*.

b) To UK

The cover in Figure 6.21 was postmarked in Colombo on 2nd August and redirected in England on 5th September. It would have been flown by *Tata Airlines* to Karachi where it joined *WS 7* in Karachi on 6th August. A cover sent from Colombo to the same address is shown in Figure 6.16 and was redirected on the same date as the *Windsor Castle* carried the mail from both *WS 6* and *WS 7*. It left Cape Town on 16th August, arrived in the Clyde on 1st September and its passengers disembarked in Glasgow on 1st September [NA]. A cover postmarked near Sydney on 29th July was delivered in Exmouth on 7th September [Win3].

A cover postmarked in Macau on 19th July which was opened by the Hong Kong censors was redirected in Worthing on 10 September. As that was before the *WS 8* mail was received it must have been sent on *WS 6* or *WS 7* and flown Hong Kong – Bangkok on *HB 258* or *HB 260* on 28th July or 4th August respectively.

No connection

NE 7

Durban	dep	31 Jul	Castor
Mozambique	o'n	31/7-1/8	Castor
Kisumu	o'n	1-2 Aug	Castor
Khartoum	o'n	2-3 Aug	Castor
Cairo	o'n	3-4 Aug	Castor
Basra	o'n	4-5 Aug	Castor
Karachi	arr	5 Aug	Castor
Karachi	dep	6 Aug	Corio
Calcutta	o'n	6-7 Aug	Corio
Bangkok	o'n	7-8 Aug	Corio
Singapore	o'n	8-9 Aug	Corio
Sourabaya	o'n	9-10 Aug	Corio
Darwin	o'n	10-11 Aug	Corio
Townsville	o'n	11-12 Aug	Corio
Sydney	arr	12 Aug	Corio

trans-Tasman 16 Aug Aotearoa

trans-Tasman 29 Jul Aotearoa

WS 7

Sydney	dep	31 Jul	Corsair
Townsville	o'n	31/7-1/8	Corsair
Darwin	o'n	1-2 Aug	Corsair
Sourabaya	o'n	2-3 Aug	Corsair
Singapore	o'n	3-4 Aug	Corsair
Bangkok	o'n	4-5 Aug	Corsair
Calcutta	o'n	5-6 Aug	Corsair
Karachi	o'n	6-7 Aug	Corsair
Basra	o'n	7-8 Aug	Corsair
Cairo	o'n	8-9 Aug	Corsair
Khartoum	o'n	9-10 Aug	Corsair
Port Bell	o'n	10-11 Aug	Corsair
Kisumu	o'n	11-12 Aug	Corsair
Mozambique	o'n	12-13 Aug	Corsair
Durban	arr	13 Aug	Corsair

By sea to UK 16 Aug - 1 Sep Windsor Castle



Figure 6.21: Cover from Ceylon to UK flown on *WS 7*.

6.8 Alternative Dispatches from London

As has already been mentioned, alternatives to the *Horseshoe Service* were used in the early weeks before the frequency had been increased to twice a week. These alternatives are summarised in the following table using information from the *GPO Overseas Mail Branch Reports 41-50* [OMB40].

Date	Description
15 th June	Australia and New Zealand via US airmail (Monterey: San Francisco – Auckland, 25 th June – 12 th July)
17 th June	Australia by surface (Empire Star: Liverpool – Fremantle, 19 th June – 22 nd July)
18 th June	Australia, New Zealand, Hong Kong and China via US airmail (Monterey: San Francisco – Auckland, 25 th June – 12 th July)
19th June	1st Horseshoe Dispatch from UK
21 st June	New Zealand and Fiji by surface (Norfolk: Liverpool – Auckland via Panama, 22 nd June – 6 th August)
24 th June	New Zealand, Fiji, China and Hong Kong via US airmail (Mariposa: San Francisco – Auckland, 23 rd July – 14 th August)
26th June	2nd Horseshoe Dispatch from UK except for Fiji
28 th June	New Zealand, Fiji and China via US airmail (Mariposa: San Francisco – Auckland, 23 rd July – 14 th August)
30 th June	New Zealand, Fiji and China via US airmail (Mariposa: San Francisco – Auckland, 23 rd July – 14 th August)
3rd July	3rd Horseshoe Dispatch from UK except for New Zealand, Fiji and China – 970 lb
8 th July	New Zealand, Fiji and China via US airmail (Mariposa: San Francisco – Auckland, 23 rd July – 14 th August)
11 th July	Fiji and China via US airmail
11th July	4th Horseshoe Dispatch from UK except for Fiji and China – 2160 lb
17 th July	Fiji and China via US airmail

17th July	5th Horseshoe Dispatch from UK except for Fiji and China – 2040 lb
21 st July	Fiji, China and Hong Kong via US airmail (to Fiji on Aorangi, arrive 22 August)
24 th July	New Zealand, Fiji and China via US airmail (Aorangi: Vancouver – Auckland, 8 th – 25 th August)
26 th July	Fiji and China via US airmail (to Fiji on Aorangi, arrive 22 August)
26th July	6th Horseshoe Dispatch from UK except for Fiji and China – 2929 lb
2nd August	7th Horseshoe Dispatch from UK except for Fiji and China – 2508 lb
6 th August	New Zealand and Fiji via US airmail (Monterey: San Francisco – Auckland, ? – 6 th September)
8th August	8th Horseshoe Dispatch from UK except for New Zealand and Fiji – 2104 lb
9 th & 10 th August	Australia, New Zealand, Fiji and China via US airmail (Monterey: San Francisco – Auckland, ? – 6 th September)
13 th August	Australia, New Zealand, Fiji and China via US airmail (Monterey: San Francisco – Auckland, ? – 6 th September)
15th August	9th Horseshoe Dispatch from UK – 2478 lb
21st August	10th Horseshoe Dispatch from UK – 2717 lb
22 nd & 24 th August	Fiji via US airmail

The allocation of ships to the dispatches by sea on 17th and 21st June are pure conjecture, but the dates fit [CW]. It is interesting to note that if the *Empire Star* did carry the dispatch to Australia of 17th June, the mail arrived in Perth the same day as the first *Horseshoe* mail from UK arrived in Darwin. A cover sent from UK to Perth by surface mail was redirected there on 22nd July [Wat3] which is before the first *Horseshoe* mail arrived there. If the *Norfolk* carried the dispatch to New Zealand of 21st June, the mail arrived in Auckland only 5 days after the second UK *Horseshoe* mail.

Covers sent via US airmail on the dispatch of 15th June are shown in Chapter 3 and were identified as they arrived in New Zealand and Australia respectively before the first *Horseshoe* service. It is more difficult to positively identify later dispatches via US airmail, but the cover in Figure 6.22 is such a case [Cla9]. It is postmarked in the UK on 20th July and was redirected in Wellington on 27th August. The next *Horseshoe* dispatch from the UK was on 26th July which connected with *NE 9* and that flight did not arrive in Sydney until 29th August and so the cover could not have been carried on the *Horseshoe Route*. It must therefore have been sent via US airmail on the dispatch of 24th July.

According to *OMB Report 48*, there were UK – Lisbon flights on 24th and 26th July and their mail was subsequently flown on the *Pan American* flights from Lisbon to New York on the 26th – 29th July and 1st – 3rd August respectively. Both these services would have been in time to connect with the *Aorangi* which left Vancouver on 8th August and arrived in Auckland on 25th August and so would have carried the cover.

The frequency of trans-Pacific sailings was reduced by the sinking of the *Niagara* on 19th June. Previously there had been two sailings per month, alternating between San Francisco and Vancouver, but there was no sailing between the *Monterey* which left San Francisco on 25th June and the *Mariposa* which left there on 23rd July. Normally the *Niagara* would have provided a sailing from Vancouver between these two dates. The dispatches to New Zealand via US airmail on 24th, 28th & 30th June and 8th July would therefore not arrive in Auckland until 14th August. A cover sent from Los Angeles to Sydney by surface on 26th June has a Sydney backstamp on 16th August that confirms the disruption to the sea mail.



Figure 6.22: Postmarked on 20th July, sent UK – New Zealand via USA airmail

As the air mail service between Durban and Sydney was duplicated from 19th August, there was no longer a need for alternatives. An internal *OMB* memo (approved 19th August 1940) discusses whether use of the route via USA should be continued, but gave the following reasons why it should not [AMS, Cla2]:

- an extra load would be put on the already overloaded London - Lisbon air mail service;
- money would have to be paid in dollars to the USA;
- postage rate of 1s 3d per half ounce was insufficient to cover the costs via USA.

However, the memo also states that members of the public who made special application on the subject should be informed that the service via USA would continue for air mail superscribed: ‘*By air to North America*’. It would be interesting if any such correspondence can be identified. It is interesting that the *GPO* were loathe to increase the air mail rate from 1s 3d while, when the *New Zealand Post Office* introduced the route of surface to USA and then flown to UK in 1941, they charged 2s 6d for the service [Cla1].

6.9 Summary of flights up to NE 7 and WS 7 with sailings to / from Cape Town

The matching of sailings to flights for this period is fairly straightforward – which is not the case for later services. Sailing dates in the tables are from Convoyweb [CW].

a) From Cape Town

The following table shows the dates for *WS 1* to *WS 7*. The arrival port in UK is Liverpool unless otherwise stated.

Flights from Sydney 19th June – 7th August, 1940					
Trans-Tasman	Flight No	Leave Sydney	Arrive Durban	Ship: Cape Town – UK	London Delivery
-	WS 1	19 Jun	1 Jul	Winchester Castle 5 th – 21 st July (Clyde)	by 24 Jul
-	WS 2	26 Jun	9 Jul	Stirling Castle 12 th – 29 th July	by 31 Jul
-	WS 3	3 Jul	17 Jul	Arundel Castle 19 th July – 5 th August (Clyde)	by 8 Aug
-	WS 4	10 Jul	23 Jul	Warwick Castle 26 th July – 12 th August	by 14 Aug
-	WS 5	17 Jul	29 Jul	Durban Castle 2 nd - 19 th August (Clyde)	22 Aug
22 Jul	WS 6	24 Jul	6 Aug	Windsor Castle	5 Sep [Wal]
29 Jul	WS 7	31 Jul	13 Aug	16 th August – 1 st September (Clyde)	

b) To Cape Town

There was no connection from the UK for flights *NE 1 – NE 3*. The departures were from Southampton.

London dispatch	Ships UK – Cape Town	Flight No	Leave Durban	Arrive Sydney
19 Jun	Arundel Castle 20 th Jun – 7 th Jul	NE 4	10 Jul	24 Jul
26 Jun	Warwick Castle 27 th Jun – 12 th Jul	NE 5	17 Jul	29 Jul
3 July 970 lb	Durban Castle 4 th – 20 th Jul	NE 6	24 Jul	5 Aug
-	No connection	NE 7	31 Jul	12 Aug