

BOOK REVIEWS

AUSTRALIAN AIRMAILS ACROSS THE PACIFIC OCEAN, 1937 – 1951

By Laurence Kimpton

Reviewed by Ken Sanford



Published May 2021. 140 pages, over 220 illustrations (almost all in colour), A4, laminated card cover.

Price: UK£20.00. Order from Laurence Kimpton: 20, Greytrees Crescent, Dorridge, Solihull, B93 8SL, United Kingdom: l.j.kimpton@blueyonder.co.uk

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Over the past 35 years or so there has been increased interest in the airmails of the Second World War, encouraged by the research of various aerophilatelists and postal historians. About 20 years ago Bill Legg, member of The British Society of Australian Philately (BSAP) and the British Air Mail Society, acquired copies of various Tables of Air Mail Charges, Air Mail Schedules and Air Mail Notices of the Australian Post Office dating from 1939 to 1945. It then became possible to work out air mail rates on covers flown across the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans, often with high franking. This led the author to write articles for the BSAP's *Bulletin* (in 2006) and the British Air Mail Society's journal *Air Mail News* (in 2016 and 2017) on Australian airmails across the Pacific Ocean to North America and Europe between 1937 and 1945.

This book is a revised and considerably expanded version of the articles in *Air Mail News*, with much additional information and many more illustrations. Much more consideration is given to incoming mail and mail in transit through Australia. Content also includes mail which was sent across the Pacific to USA or Canada by ship and then forwarded by air to Europe. Also, the subject has been extended to consider mail carried on survey and other special flights, American forces mail and the restoration and development of trans-Pacific services from Australia in the immediate post war period.

Besides the Australian Post Office's tables and notices, for mail to and from the United Kingdom, the GPO's Overseas Mail Branch's Weekly Reports and the Air Ministry's Civil Aviation Intelligence Reports Summaries (compiled by Peter Wingent) were very useful sources. Research on New Zealand airmails, particularly by Robin Startup (author of *Airmails of New Zealand, Volume 3, International Airmails 1940-1970*) and by Robert Clark (compiler of the website www.nzstamps.org.uk) has also provided much information relevant to Australian airmails. A variety of aerophilatelic and aviation history books have also been of help in producing this book, especially in providing details of survey and other special flights.

The covers are in full colour and are very good quality. There are a number of maps, charts and airline timetables, which are very useful. There are also seldom seen photos of some of the aircraft involved.

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The book is very well written and will be essential for collectors of trans-Pacific airmails for the period covered.