

UPDATED KGV ERA POSTAL STATIONERY NO. 1
ONE PENNY ENVELOPES & LETTERCARDS
FORWARDED VIA THE EMPIRE AIR MAIL SCHEME

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During the New Zealand summer of 2010, we published a Study Paper describing the half penny issues and prevailing postal rates of New Zealand during the reign of King George VI⁽¹⁾. One interesting facet of New Zealand postal history during this period is the use of adhesive postage stamps to uprate postal stationery, either to meet a higher rate for Overseas destinations or in the interregnums following increases in postal rates and the dates supplies of postal stationery denominated at the higher rates were available to postal users. Section 5 of the Study Paper describes twelve different categories of uprated postal stationery during the King George VI era with many of the categories having numerous possible combinations of “In Period Use” of half penny adhesive stamps and items of postal stationery.

As our research evolved, we were surprised to discover there were a number of combinations that appeared to be quite scarce, or at least, not seen by the authors or commonly available in dealers stocks. This was particularly so in the case of One Penny Postal Stationery Lettercards and Envelopes which would have required a half penny adhesive stamp affixed to meet to new 1½d. “All-up” Empire Air Mail Service rate. At the time of publication of the Study Paper in February 2010, we were not able to identify any examples of this category of uprated postal stationery.

New Zealand and the “All-up” Air Mail Service

New Zealand became a participant in the “All-up” Empire Air Mail Service (EAMS) effective July 26, 1938. The new rate for all letters to the Great Britain and other British countries that participated in the service became 1½d. per ½ ounce or fraction thereof. Letters sent from New Zealand via the EAMS did not require any special markings or labels indicating the letter was to be sent “Airmail”. Britain discontinued the All-Up airmail service in early September 1939 upon the commencement of hostilities in Europe.

The Post & Telegraph Official Circular issued September 16, 1939 indicated that letters to British Empire destinations by air mail was now 1s. 6d.⁽²⁾. The September 1939 Official Circular goes on to state:

“All correspondence paid at the rate 1½d. for each half-ounce will be forwarded by surface transport as opportunity offers. This rate - 1½d. each half-ounce - remains unaltered.”

It would seem from this statement that the Post & Telegraph Department were mindful of the general increase in rates that were about to come into effect October 1, 1939 where surface letters to British Empire destinations would become 2d. for the first half ounce, and 1d. for each additional half ounce

thereafter⁽³⁾ . Given these circumstances, there was little point in returning to the former Empire rate for surface transport of 1d. for each ounce or fraction thereof thereafter that had prevailed prior to the introduction of the EAMS. So, while air transport of letters via the EAMS at the 1½d. per ½ ounce rate ceased in early September, in fact mail forwarded to Empire destinations by surface means would still require payment of 1½d., a fee which remained in effect through September 30, 1939.

During this (EAMS) period, there were two postal stationery lettercards in current use, the 1935 1d. Kiwi Lettercard up to May 4, 1939 and the 1939 1d. George VI Lettercard, issued May 5, 1939 for the balance of the period (September 30, 1939)⁽⁴⁾ . There were also four postal stationery envelopes in current use during this period, the 1936 1d. George V Envelopes until November 1938 (Commercial and Social sizes produced using the 1d. Australian Note and Stamp Printer Die⁽⁵⁾)and the 1938 1d. George VI Envelopes (Commercial and Social sizes) thereafter to September 1939.

The adoption of the EAMS meant that postal users of these Lettercards and Envelopes would need to affix a ½d. GVI Green stamp to make up the 1½d. EAMS rate. Examples of these uprated One Penny Lettercards and Envelopes appear to be quite scarce and, in the case of the social sized Envelopes, there may well be no surviving examples if indeed they ever existed in the first place.

Table 1. One Penny Postal Stationery Lettercards & Envelopes uprated for delivery via the “All-up” Empire Air Mail Service (July 26, 1938 - September 30, 1939)

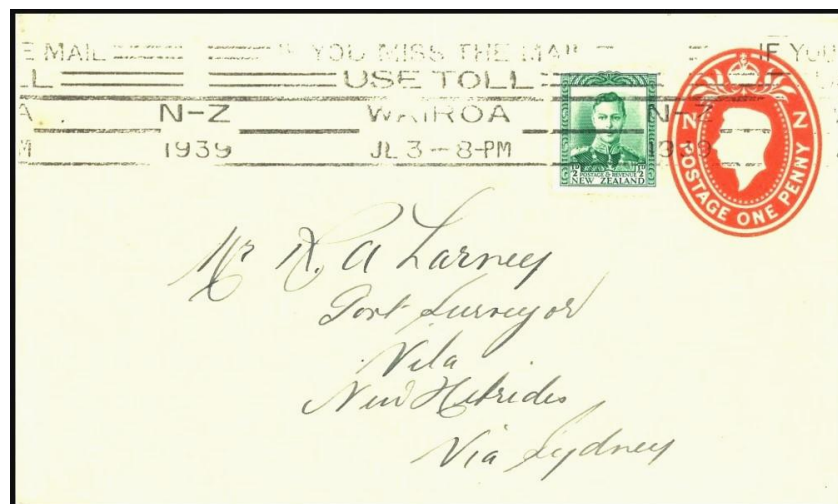
<u>In Period Use between:</u>	<u>Postal Stationery</u>	<u>Postage Stamp</u>	<u>Availability</u>
July 26, 1938 - May 4, 1939	1d. Kiwi Lettercard	½d. George VI Green	Difficult
May 5, 1939, to Sept 1939	1d. George VI Lettercard	½d. George VI Green	Scarce
July 26, 1938 - Nov 1938	1d. George V Commercial Envelope	½d. George VI Green	Scarce
July 26, 1938 - Nov 1938	1d. George V Social Envelope	½d. George VI Green	Existence ???
Nov 1938 - Sept 1939	1d George VI Commercial Envelope	½d. George VI Green	Difficult
Nov 1938 - Sept 1939	1d George VI Social Envelope	½d. George VI Green	Existence ???

Postal History “Finds” in the Past Year

As New Zealand Postal History enthusiasts of the George VI period familiarized themselves with the contents King George VI Half Penny Study Paper, a number have forwarded to us images of uprated postal stationery items that were unknown to us at the time of writing the Study Paper.

Two such items are illustrated below both 1938 One Penny George VI commercial sized postal stationery envelopes uprated with a single 1938 ½d. George VI Green postage stamp to make up the 1½d. Empire Air Mail Service rate. With these two examples now identified, we now consider the “Availability” rating for this category of covers from to be “Difficult” as opposed to “Scarce”

Cover #1, courtesy of Harry Swanljung of Finland, was mailed July 3, 1939 from Wairoa to (Port) Vila in the New Hebrides.



Cover # 1 1938 King George VI One Penny Postal Stationery Envelope mailed from Wairoa July 3, 1939 to Port Vila, New Hebrides uprated a 1938 ½d. George VI Green stamp to make up the Empire Air Mail Service rate of 1½d. per half ounce.

Cover #2 was forwarded to us by Grant Feringa of Brisbane. It was mailed on August 28, 1939 from Matawai and then postmarked in Ambleside on November 22nd upon redirection between the villages of Hawkshead to Outgate. The fact that this letter took nearly two months to reach its destination indicates that it likely did not receive “air mail” service, but rather was delivered by surface means in accordance with the Post and Telegraph Department statement appearing in the September 1939 Official Circular. Of interest, the “BY AIR MAIL” label has been struck through, possibly by New Zealand postal authorities but certainly somewhere en route for, as noted earlier, such labels were not required for mail sent to via the Empire Air Mail Service.



Cover # 2 1938 King George VI One Penny Postal Stationery Envelope mailed from Matawai August 28, 1939 to Ambleside, England uprated a 1938 1/2d. George VI Green stamp to make up the Empire Air Mail Service rate of 1 1/2d. per half ounce.

In conclusion, thanks to the contributions of two fellow philatelists, we have identified examples of one of six possible "In Period Use" combinations of One Penny Postal Stationery Lettercard or Envelopes uprated with Half Penny stamps to meet the 1 1/2d. Empire Air Mail Service rate. However, there are still five combinations where examples remain to be identified and so the search goes on. We would be most interested to learn if other members might have one or more of the missing combinations in their collection as time permits either via email at stephen.prest@gmail.com or by regular post through the kind auspices of our Editor. .

References:

- (1) King George VI – New Zealand; The Half Penny Issues and Postal Rates, by Stephen F Prest and Patrick J Skinner; February 2010, (Prest & Skinner, Auckland, NZ)
- (2) P&T Official Circular Vol LVI No 9 (September 16, 1939) p. 60
- (3) P&T Official Circular Vol LVI No 10 (October 16, 1939) pp 70-71
- (4) The Postage Stamps of New Zealand, Volume IX, 2006 RPSNZ Inc, Wellington NZ pp. 125-27
- (5) The Postage Stamps of New Zealand, Volume IX, 2006 RPSNZ Inc, Wellington NZ p. 162