



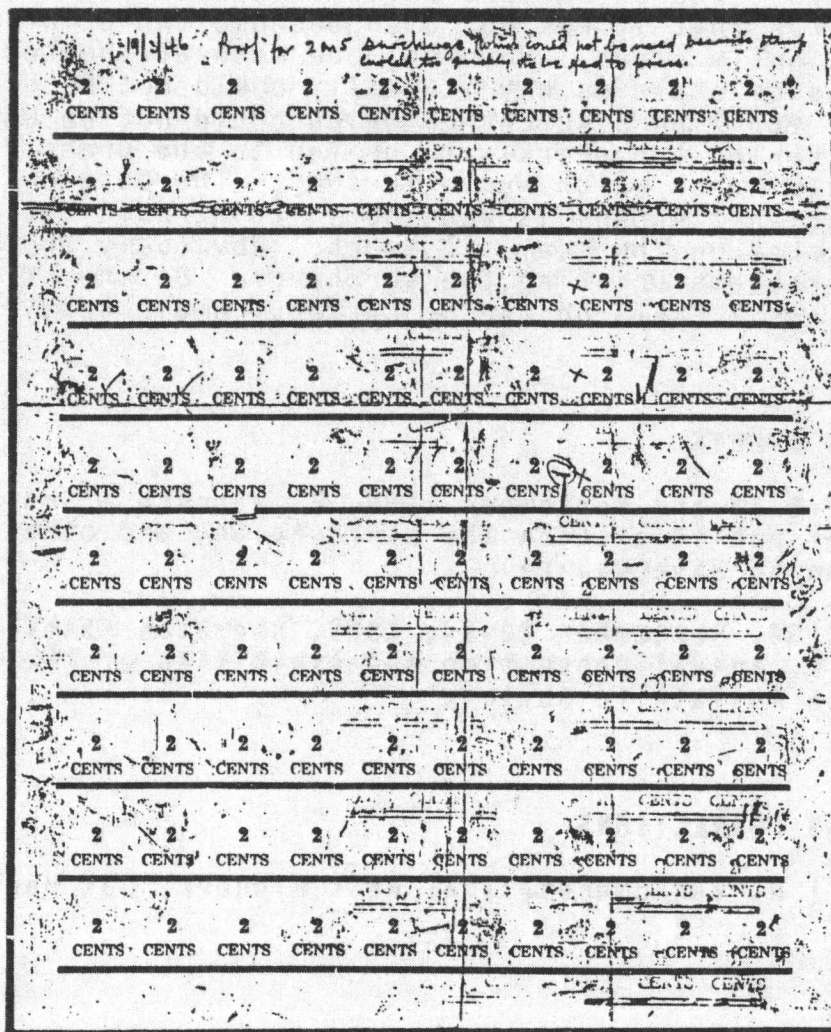
THE NEWFIE NEWSLETTER

of the Newfoundland Study Group of BNAPS

Number 22

March/April 1989

THE TWO CENTS SURCHARGE OF 1946



When the TWO CENTS surcharge on Memorial University issue appeared in the spring of 1946, there were rumors that the 5¢ Caribou was to be used as the base for the surcharge. When nothing materialized, the rumors faded away. Now forty years later and out of some lost and almost forgotten papers of one of our study group members, comes a proof impression of a 2 CENTS setting for the five cent definitive in 1946. This proof along with proofs of the setting of the TWO CENTS for the 30¢ Memorial University were purchased many years ago and because of their

large size were put away somewhere safe and promptly forgotten about. The proofs were recently rediscovered and their significance remembered.

Why wasn't the 5¢ Caribou definitive used for the surcharge? The rumor was that it was not used because the printing was not sufficiently clear. However, the note at the top of the proof impression explains why it really could not be used. It says "Proof for 2 on 5 surcharge which could not be used because stamp curled too quickly to be fed to the press." The proof is dated 19 March which was a Tuesday. The date on the TWO CENTS setting (not shown) is Wednesday, 20 March. The surcharged stamp was issued on Thursday, 21 March. Obviously there was no time to have problems printing the surcharge. Do any of the trial printings 2 CENTS on the 5¢ Caribou remain today? Who knows?

COMING EVENTS

May 17 & 18 and September 1989, R. Maresch & Son of Toronto will sell at public auction the Newfoundland and other BNA collections of John S. Siverts.

BNAPEX '89, September 22-24, 1989, Sheraton Hotel, Hamilton, Ontario, annual convention and exhibition of the British North America Philatelic Society

ADDRESS CORRECTIONS

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WANTED

Articles for the Newsletter. If you have any items you want to showoff, questions about something you don't understand, opinions you would like to express, or ideas for an article that you want to test, this is the place. So send a photocopy of your favorite item, your question, your essay, or your trial balloon to me and I'll use it in the newsletter.

THE ALCOCK & BROWN FLIGHT JUNE 1919
By: Bertram C.J. Warr, Jr.

This article deals with the events leading upto the first succesful crossing of the Atlantic by airplane by the two British aviators and RAF pilots, Captain John Alcock, and Lieutenant Arthur Whitten Brown. Although slight mention is made of other aviators present in Nfld at this time and also trying to fly the Atlantic, the main thrust of this article concerns the flight made by Alcock & Brown on June 14/15, 1919.

EVENTS LEADING UPTO THE FLIGHT: PART 1

With the invention of the aeroplane and mans desire to fly came the great challenges of the turn of this century by the London newspapers for man to successfully fly the Atlantic Ocean non-stop. In 1913, Lord Northcliffe owner of *The London Daily Mail* made the offer of a prize of 10,000 pounds to any man who could accomplish this feat. There were several entries received but all had to be postponed with the outbreak of WW1 in 1914. After the war the offer was again made but this time there were some conditions attached. The feat had to occur between some point in Canada, Newfoundland, or the USA and Great Britain. The flight must be carried out in under 72 hours and must be non-stop. The vast majority of entrants for this flight decided to fly from west to east to take advantage of the prevailing westerly winds.

THE FIRST TRANS-ATLANTIC ATTEMPTS:
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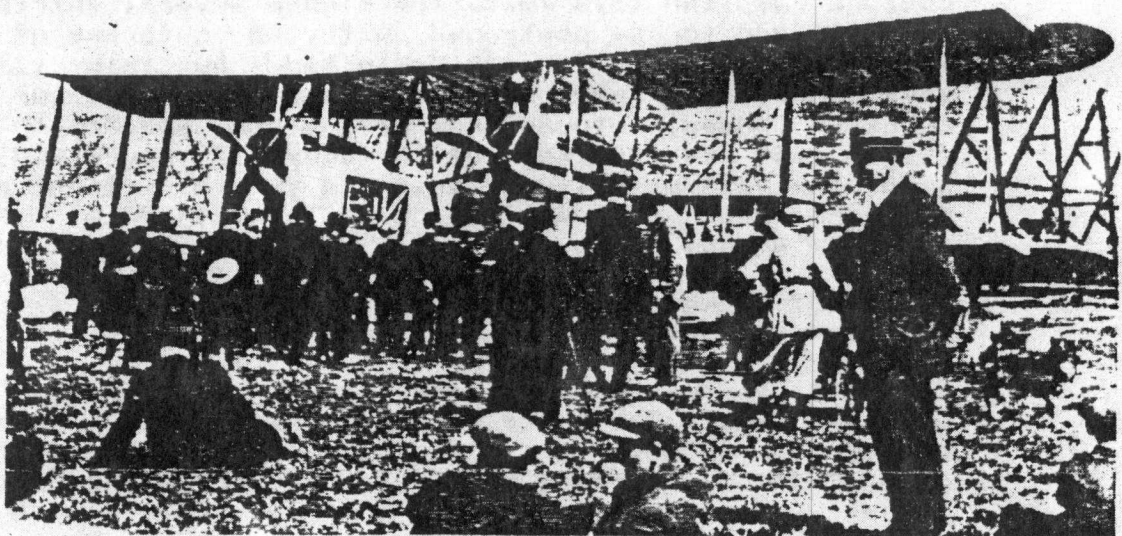
The first of these pilots, Lieutenant Harry G. Hawker along with Lieutenant Commander K. Mackenzie Grieve who navigated the plane, to attempt to fly the Atlantic left St. John's on May 18th, 1919. Their plane was the Sopwith Biplane named *Atlantic*. The attempt ended in failure when the two pilots crashed just west of the Azores. They were picked up by a Danish vessel. The plane along with the mail carried by the aviators was salvaged by the American vessel *S.S. LAKE CHARLOTTEVILLE*. The Newfoundland post office issued a specially surcharged stamp to be used on the mail carried on this flight, it was Newfoundlands first airmail stamp Scott # C-1, ("The Hawker").

The second attempt was carried out by Major F.P. Raynham and Major C.W.F. Morgan (navigator) in the Martinsyde machine *Raymor*. The plane was ready in early April and made several trial flights on April 18, 1919 but due to inclement weather conditions the plane did not attempt a Trans-Atlantic crossing until May 18, 1919 the same day the Hawker left. The plane only flew several hundred yards before crashing and all mail was confiscated by postal authorities after this unsuccessful attempt.

The post office applied a manuscript surcharged stamp to all mail carried for this flight but the stamp was never officially announced. All mail to be carried on the flight had to be handed into the mail clerk at the post office counter to have the stamp affixed and the fee of three cents paid. This was Newfoundlands second airmail stamp Scott #C-11, ("The Martinsyde").

THE ALCOCK FLIGHT, JUNE 14, 1919:
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With the failure of the first two attempts to fly the Atlantic more aviators had now appeared on the scene to compete for the prize offered by the Daily Mail. Also more money had been added to the prize by several other sponsors, 2,000 pounds by the Ardath Tobacco Company and 1,100 pounds by a Mr Lawrence R. Philips, making the total prize 13,100 pounds. This was a considerable sum in those days about \$65,000 or close to half a million dollars in todays funds.



ALCOCK AND BROWN'S VICKERS-VIMY AT LESTER'S FIELD, ST. JOHN'S

The Vickers-Vimy bomber arrived in St. John's on May 24, 1919 aboard the S.S. Glendevon. It was a twin engined bomber of WW1 vintage that had been specially modified for the long trans-oceanic flight. It was powered by two Rolls Royce 350-hp Eagle engines. The two pilots began unloading the aircraft on Monday the 26th of May and had it transported to the cricket fields at Quidi Vidi where it would be constructed in the open.

The plane was ready on Monday June 9th and carried out its first trial flight on this day. There were some slight problems with the planes wireless and these were attended to and a second

trial flight was made on Thursday June 12th where the plane was found to be in perfect working order.

THE AIRMAIL STAMP ISSUED BY THE NEWFOUNDLAND POST OFFICE:
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Dr J. Alex Robinson the postmaster general for Newfoundland made special arrangements with the aviators of both the Vickers machine and the Handley Page aircraft at Harbour Grace to carry a small mail on their attempts. This mail was to be limited to not more than 3 pounds for each machine and would be offered to the general public on a first come-first served basis. There was also a maximum of no more than two letters per person to be handed in and that the Department of Posts would take no responsibility for the non-deliverance of such mail. The fee for each letter was to be set at \$1.00 of which 50cents would be donated to the Permanent Marine Disasters Fund. The Post Office would also issue a specially surcharged stamp for the flight using the 15 cent Cabot stamp of 1897. The stamp was to be surcharged as the following, "Trans-Atlantic-AIR POST-1919,-ONE DOLLAR", in black.

Trans-Atlantic
AIR POST,
1919.
ONE DOLLAR.

The stamp was printed by The American Bank Note Company in New York in panes of 100 stamps, 10 x 10, and perforated 12. The sheets of 100 were divided into blocks of 25, 5 x 5, for the surcharging. Ten thousand of the stamps (100 sheets of 100, 400 blocks of 25) were sent to the offices of the "Royal Gazette", J.W. Withers, proprietor and surcharged in Black ink. Thirty copies were damaged during the surcharging and were destroyed by the printer leaving a total of 9,970 stamps for sale to the general public. Also 126 copies were given to the aviators of each machine (63 copies to each).

Scott #C-2b

Scott #C-2a



Scott #C-2

Scott #C-2i

VARIATIONS OF THE SURCHARGED STAMP:

There are a total of 5 variations that occur within the surcharge of this stamp. These are listed below along with a plating of a sheetlet of 25.

- (A) 16 normal stamps in sheet of 25,
(comma after POST & stop after 1919).....6,400
- (B) 6 without comma after POST.....2,400
- (C) 1 without comma after POST & stop after 1919..... 400
- (D) 1 with small comma after POST..... 400
- (E) 1 as "B" but 1919 to left & A of Air under a of Trans 400

Total.....10,000
Defective copies destroyed..... 30

Total issued for sale..... 9,970
Total given to the Aviators 126

Total for sale to General Public 9,844



THE SETTING OF THE \$1 ALCOCK STAMP

There is also a small variation in the position of the surcharge on the stamp such that it appears to be slanting. This variety appears to be quite minor but is listed in some catalogues such as the Scott Canada Specialized as Scott #C-2iii. It has been noted that one sheet was issued with the surcharge slanting in this manor and 1 cover is known franked with this minor variety.

Plated Sheetlet of 25:

A	A	A	B	A	Scott Canada Specialised Numbers are as follows: (A) Sc #C-2, (B) Sc #C-2a, (C) Sc #C-2b, (D) Sc #C-2i, (E) Sc #C-2ii, (Slanting Surcharge Sc #C-2iii.
A	A	B	A	B	
A	A	A	C	A	
A	A	B	B	D	
A	E	A	B	A	

The stamps were first place on sale at the General post office in St. John's on June 9th as per the Daily News announcement by J. Alex Robinson the Postmaster General. These stamps did not prove overly popular with the public as well over 8,700 were still on sale at the GPO on July 1st, 1919. Well over 3,000 of the stamps were sold over that summer and an order for 1,200 was placed by a well known clergyman living in Nfld at the time. In early September he walked into the GPO in St. John's and tried to procure 5,000 more of the stamps. As this number was not available he took the remainder of the post office stock less 500 that were needed to fill existing orders on hand. It has been estimated that this number is somewhere around 4,000 copies. This well known clergyman is most likely Reverend E.A. Butler of St Georges, Nfld located on the west coast of the island.



Scott #C-2



Scott #C-2ii

THE FLIGHT ACROSS THE ATLANTIC:

The plane took off from Lesters Field in St. John's on the afternoon of Saturday June 14th, 1919. They barely cleared some of the trees and rooftops as the plane was fairly heavy, having a total loaded weight of just over 13,500 pounds. The weather didn't help matters much either as it was quite windy and this tossed the plane around quite a bit. Alcock, who was an experianced pilot and instructor, managed to control the plane and get it out over the coastline and eastward on its historic

journey. The aviators did not fare much better once underway as the wireless went out just 5 minutes after the flight began.

Other problems faced the aviators as well, below them was a very thick fog, above extremely dense clouds, and they encountered a thick sleet storm to further hinder them by freezing their speedometer at 90 miles per hour. The plane flew blindly for hours with only a compass to guide them. Ice forming on the wings caused them to go into a stall and tailspin but only 50 feet from the oceans surface Alcock pulled the plane out of this with a quick manoeuvre. This went on throughout the night and storm after storm had to be negotiated with great skill on both pilot and navigators part, and lots of luck. Many a time they had to break ice from their instruments.

At 6:00 AM they found that the engines were still running well but they had no idea of their position. Alcock decided to fly up above the clouds so that Brown could take some readings and make some calculations to determine their location. He flew the plane to about 11,000 feet only to find more dense clouds and also to find that the ailerons were frozen stiff. This made the plane more out of control but with some great flying skill he managed to bring the plane under control and allowed Brown time to determine that they were near the Irish coast. Flying just a few feet above the ocean they saw two little islands and continued on toward the Irish mainland. At 9:25 AM they were just above Clifden, Ireland where a wireless station was located and they decided to make their landing here. Alcock found what appeared to be a suitable landing site in a large flat green field but it turned out to be an Irish bog.

The plane brought up on its landing gear and gave a sudden heave to both aviators and flipped over on its nose. Both aviators were shaken but appeared to be quite alright. The entire flight took a mere 16 hours and 12 minutes. The Atlantic had been crossed by air non-stop, for the very first time.

The aviators were given a Royal welcome in England and June 16th was observed as a holiday at the plants of both Vickers & Rolls Royce. Also the recipients presented the workers who built the machine with 2000 pounds of the prize money. On June 21st, 1919 both Airmen were Knighted by King George V at Windsor Castle.

THE MAIL OF THE ALCOCK FLIGHT:

Before leaving St. John's a small mailbag was handed over to Alcock by J. Alex Robinson, consisting of the following items:

Ordinary letters bearing the special stamp.....	196
Letter Packet.....	1

Total items carried.....197

The bag had been sealed and signed by Robinson on June 13th, 1919 and passed over to the pilot on this same date in anticipation of

the flight. All Letters carried on this flight carry the postmarks of St. John's June 10,11,12,or 13th, 1919. The mailbag upon arrival in London was handed over to the Royal Aero Club by Alcock on June 17th, 1919. From here it was passed to a member of the Daily Mail for observation, and then immediately dispatched to the GPO London. All mail for London was backstamped London June 17, 1919 with the E.C. receiving postmark. Mail for other areas was not usually backstamped but exceptions do occur.

Received by P.A. & Njrd. 17820 155 Jan.

POST OFFICE
ST. JOHN'S, NEWFOUNDLAND

C
LETTER BILL

No. of Order of Mail 3
Despatched by *Western - Very Good*

No. of Letter Bags
No. of Bag Printed
Total

Stamp of
Newfoundland Office
JUN 18 1919
St. John's, Newfoundland

Stamp of
Newfoundland Office
JUN 18 1919
St. John's, Newfoundland

Mail from St. John's, Nfld., for the Exchange Office
London England
Importance of Mail *13* *15.25 p.m.*

1. REGISTERED CORRESPONDENCE
No. of Registered Articles
II. CLOSED MAIL
No. of Closed Mails
No. of Closed Mails
Observations

1919 ordinary letter
letter parcel

Relieved L.

Note Letter for Newfoundland & U.S.A. contained
in Bag connected with out going mail 8 for 14 June '19.

OFFICIAL REGISTRATION

no post to
Newfoundland

W. H. ...

W. H. ...

Postmaster's Office
P.M. General
for Newfoundland & Labrador

Receiving Office

THE HISTORIC LETTER BILL OF THE "ALCOCK" MAIL.

ALCOCK AND BROWN CHECKLIST:

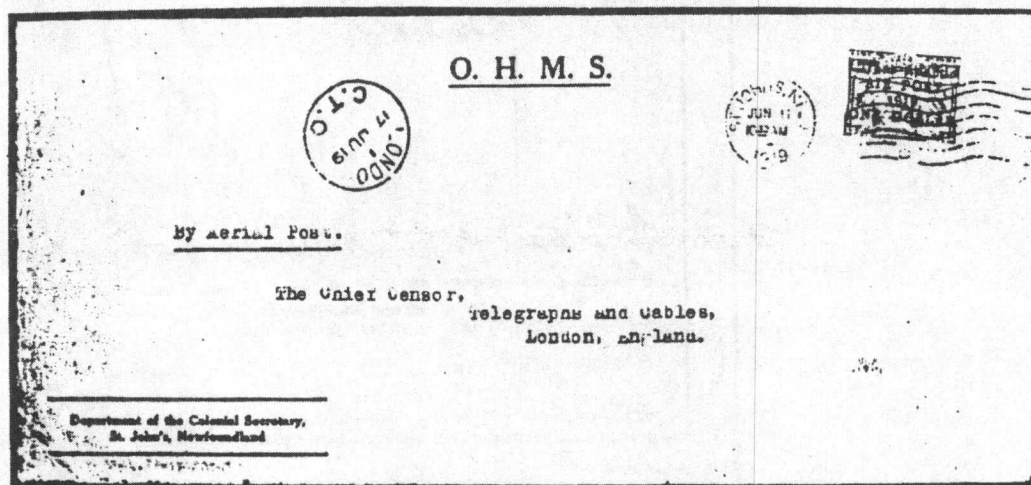
Mint Stamps:

- a. 10,000 stamps surcharged of 15cent Cabot Sc#70 at the offices of the Royal Gazette in St. John's. 30 destroyed as defective Stamps surcharged in a setting of 25 (5 x 5) 400 blocks surcharged.
 - b. 16 with the normal surcharge..... Scott #C-2 6,400
 - c. 6 without comma after POST..... Scott #C-2a 2,400
 - d. 1 without comma after POST
& no stop after 1919..... Scott #C-2b 400
 - e. 1 small comma after POST..... Scott #C-2i 400
 - f. 1 no comma after POST and A of Air
under a of Trans..... Scott #C-2ii 400
 - g. (1 sheet reported with slanting surcharge)-----
- Total 10,000

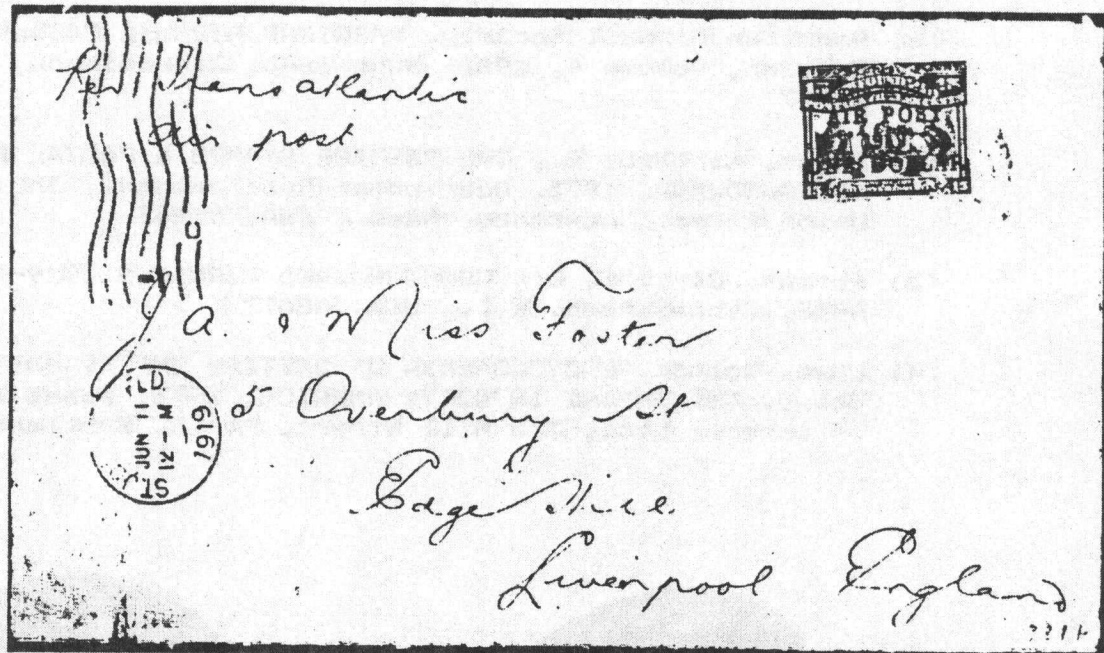
ALCOCK AND BROWN FLIGHT COVERS:

Mail Carried:

TRANS-OCEANIC RECORD FLIGHTS



- a. 196 ordinary letters surcharged with special stamp
- b. 1 only Letter Packet
- c. 1 small parcel.



ENVELOPE CARRIED ON THE SUCCESSFUL ALCOCK-BROWN FLIGHT.
COVERS ARE DATED ST. JOHN'S JUNE 10, 11, 12 OR 13



Alcock-Brown Cover (AM8c).

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- (3) Harmer, Cyril H. C., NEWFOUNDLAND AIRMAILS 1919-1939, 1984, AAMS, Cinnaminson, N.J., USA, 08077
- (4) Lowe, Robson, ENCYCLOPEDIA OF BRITISH EMPIRE POSTAGE STAMPS, Vol V, THE EMPIRE IN NORTH AMERICA, 1973, Woods of Perth (Printers) Ltd., 3/5 Mill Street, Perth, Scotland.



THE TWO SUCCESSFUL AVIATORS