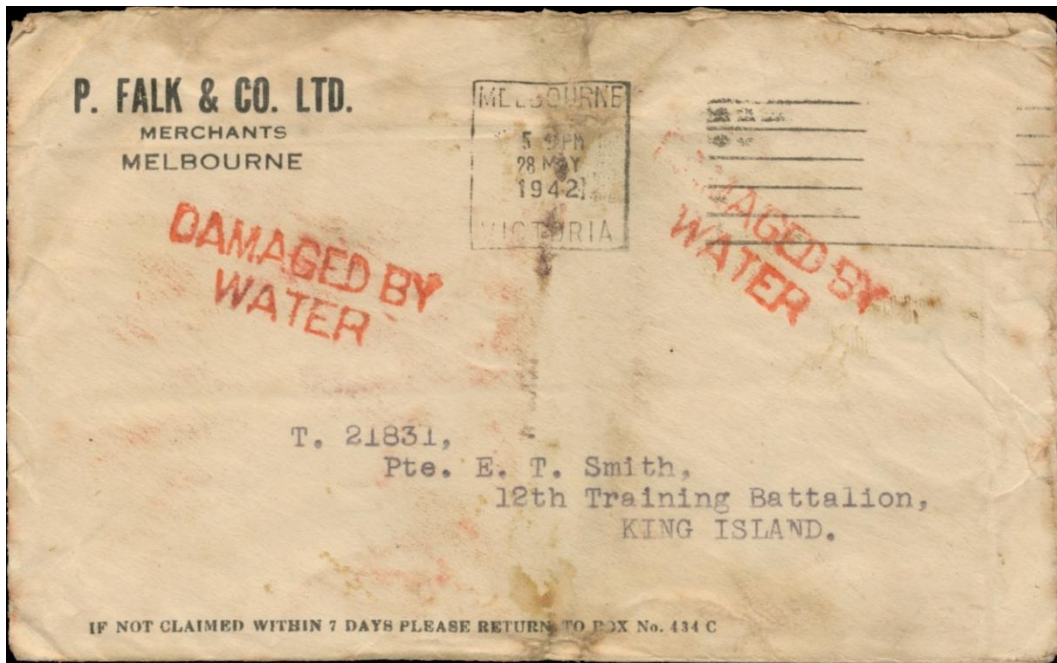


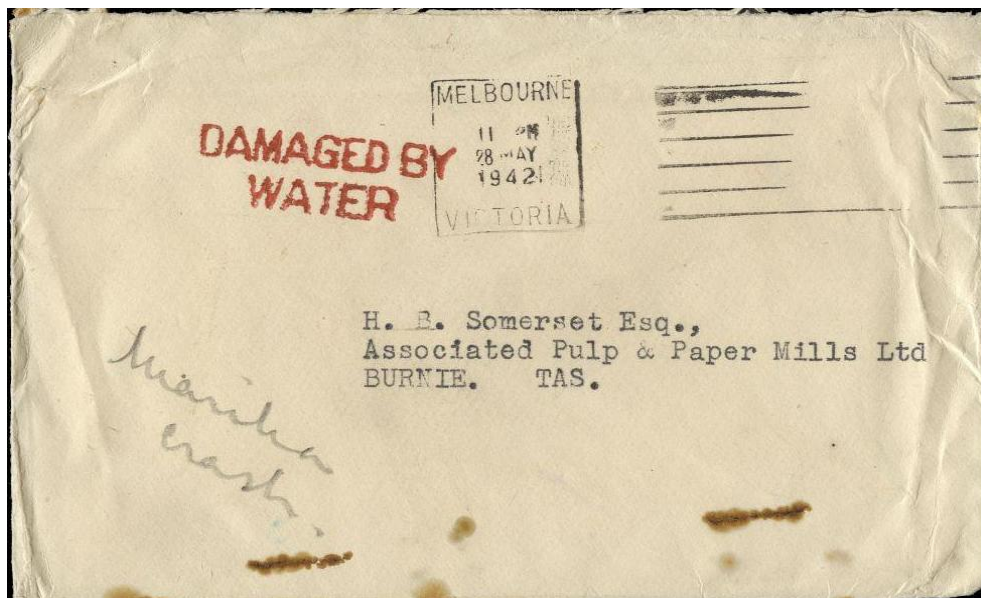
DRAGON RAPIDE RUNS OUT OF FUEL. PILOT AND THREE PASSENGERS KILLED



Cancelled MELBOURNE 545 PM 28 MAY 1942

Back-stamped CURRIE -8JE42 KING Is

When Prestige Philately offered the adjacent crash cover with two strikes of **DAMAGED BY/WATER** in their August 2010 sale, it achieved a record price for an Australasian crash item of \$5,500++. Three years later, in the Phoenix sale of Rod Perry's Australian Interrupted Air Mails (7 Jun 2013 Lot 1085), a new record of \$8,250++ was achieved for the same cover. It was extraordinary that this item had remained unattributed for 68 years



Cancelled MELBOURNE 11 PM 28 MAY 1942

What is more extraordinary is that a second cover, from the same crash, addressed to Burnie TAS, and bearing the same cachet, appeared in a Mossgreen auction on 10 December 2013 and realised only \$1,100 plus premium.

Endorsed *Marika* in manuscript, this cover was also on board the ANA Dragon Rapide VH-UXZ which was on a scheduled service from Melbourne to Launceston via Flinders Island. The aircraft left Essendon Aerodrome, Melbourne at 08:15 on Friday 29 May 1942 for Flinders Island and Launceston. Due to land at Pat's River aerodrome, Whitemark at 10:00, a message was picked up at 09:45 by the Aeradio station at Launceston's Western Junction aerodrome, that *Marika* was flying on one engine at 600 feet, some 30 miles out from Whitemark.

No further radio transmission was received, and later in the day the wreckage was discovered some ten miles north of Whitemark aerodrome off Marriott Reef, Tanner's Bay, Flinders Island. With its tail in the air the wreckage was about 300 yards offshore in shallow water, and the bodies of the four occupants were recovered washed up on the beach in Tanner's Bay over the next few days.

One mailbag was also washed ashore during the first week of June.



Salvaged from Tanners Bay by Dale Wells and Douglas and Chris Badcock on 15 May 1991 after being located by Robert Briant when netting: *Furneaux Historical Research Association*

The dead were:

- Captain Charles R G Weston (27), married, of East Street, St Kilda (Pilot)
- Harry G Selse (47) of Sydney; employee of Amalgamated Wireless (Australasia) Ltd who was on his way to take up a position at the Flinders Island Marine Radio Station
- Private R G Giblin, married, travelling on leave
- LAC Henry David Leaman, RAAF, married, of Main Road, Hobart, travelling on leave

A coastal steamer was used to recover the wreckage, excluding the engines which had become detached, and this was taken to Whitemark for examination.



VH-UXZ at Essendon Aerodrome: *Civil Aviation Historical Society*

The DH9A Dragon Rapide *Marika*, construction number 6365, had been registered on 15 September 1937 by Australian National Airways Pty Ltd. On 20 January 1942 this aircraft, Captain A J Malpass with 6 passengers, had made a precautionary landing at RAAF Point Cook due to engine trouble whilst on a scheduled service.

The cause of the accident on 29 May 1942 was not established, but for many years there were rumours in the aviation industry that the aircraft ran out of fuel. These rumours were partly supported by the failure of ANA to recover the two Gipsy Six engines and their propellers. In 1991 the engines were discovered with both propellers in a perfectly undamaged state, indicating that they were not rotating at the time of impact, and supporting the theory that both engines suffered from fuel starvation – ie. the aircraft did run out of fuel.

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 Launceston—Arr. 10.35 a.m., 1.50 p.m.
 Hobart—Arr. 4.40 p.m.

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ISLAND-MELBOURNE.**

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SATURDAYS.**

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Wynyard	Dep. 1.40 p.m.
King Island	Dep. 3.15 p.m.
Melbourne	Arr. 4.30 p.m.

**LAUNCESTON-FLINDERS ISLAND-
MELBOURNE.**

MONDAYS, WEDNESDAYS, FRIDAYS

Launceston	Dep. 12.45 p.m.
Flinders Island	Dep. 1.55 p.m.
Melbourne	Arr. 4.15 p.m.

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 Holyman House,
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 Tel. 310. (After hours 1329)

Launceston Examiner 27 May 1942

NEW PLANE SCHEDULE

Neither Wynyard nor Smithton is included as a place of call in the rearranged schedule of Strait air services made necessary by the *Marika* crash.

Beginning from to-day, the Douglas 'plane which maintains the service between Melbourne, Launceston and Hobart will also visit King Island and Flinders Island. Leaving Melbourne at 8.45 a.m., it will fly to Flinders Island on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays and to King Island on the other days. In the other direction it will leave Launceston at 2.15 p.m. for Flinders Island on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays and King Island on the alternate days.

The Advocate (Burnie TAS): 1 Jun 1942

The air service operated by Australian National Airways between Melbourne and Launceston was daily, except for Sundays, and went via Flinders Island on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. On Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays the flight was via King Island. Following the loss of VH-UXZ *Marika* the schedule was changed as the

advert above.

Australian National Airways (1) commenced a thrice-weekly passenger service from Melbourne to Hobart in December 1930, this service carrying mails from 1 May 1931. Following the demise of ANA (1), the service ceased on 26 June 1931.

A twice-weekly service from Launceston to Flinders Island was started by L Johnson on 7 June 1932 using VH-UEE *Miss Flinders*.

In 1933 three operators started Bass Strait services: Matthews Aviation (Hobart – Melbourne via King Island); Hart Aircraft Services (Melbourne – Launceston via Flinders Island) and Tasmanian Aerial Services, later Holymans Airways (Melbourne – Launceston via Flinders Island).

On 1 October 1934 Holymans Airways launched a daily service between Melbourne and Launceston, with calls at Flinders and King Islands, and incorporating a feeder service to Hobart. Exactly one year later they upgraded their Melbourne – Hobart service to twice daily, including King Island and Flinders Island on alternate days. Holymans Airways became ANA (2) on 13 May 1936.

ANA (2) continued to operate the Melbourne to Hobart service and on 27 May 1942, two days before the loss of *Marika*, an advert in the Launceston Examiner set out their timetable from Tasmania.

It appears that the cover to King Island was put aboard *Marika* in order to catch the 12:45 flight from Launceston to King Island on the Saturday. Perhaps there was some doubt as to whether the Saturday flight from Melbourne to King Island would eventuate.