



TASMANIAN AVIATION HISTORICAL SOCIETY Incorporated

AIRMAIL LETTER FROM LAUNCESTON TO UK

Letter from Launceston to UK

Letter from Miss Quon to Miss Hope

Author: W Dearing, March 2021

The letter was carried as airmail on the first flight from Australia to England in November 1931. It was addressed to Mrs C Hope, Chesire, England from a Miss Quon who it is assumed is from Launceston.

What we would like to know is:

- We don't know the significance of the letter, the relationship between Miss Quon in Launceston and Mrs Hope in the UK?
- How the envelope managed to return to Australia?





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The secret to this story lies in the address, White Horse Farm. The farm was part of the estate belonging to the Egerton family who were the owners of the Tatton Park Estate. The family was one of England's great families and Maurice Egerton, born in London in August 1874, was the last Baron Egerton of Tatton. He was well known as an aviation and car enthusiast. He was also a friend of the Wright Brothers.

In November 1909 he started his attempts to fly and in December 1909 ordered a Short biplane (similar in design to the Wright Brothers biplane, build No 13), that was delivered in April 1910. In June 1910 he gained a pilot's licence, numbered 11 in the world, on the Short-Wright biplane at Eastchurch.

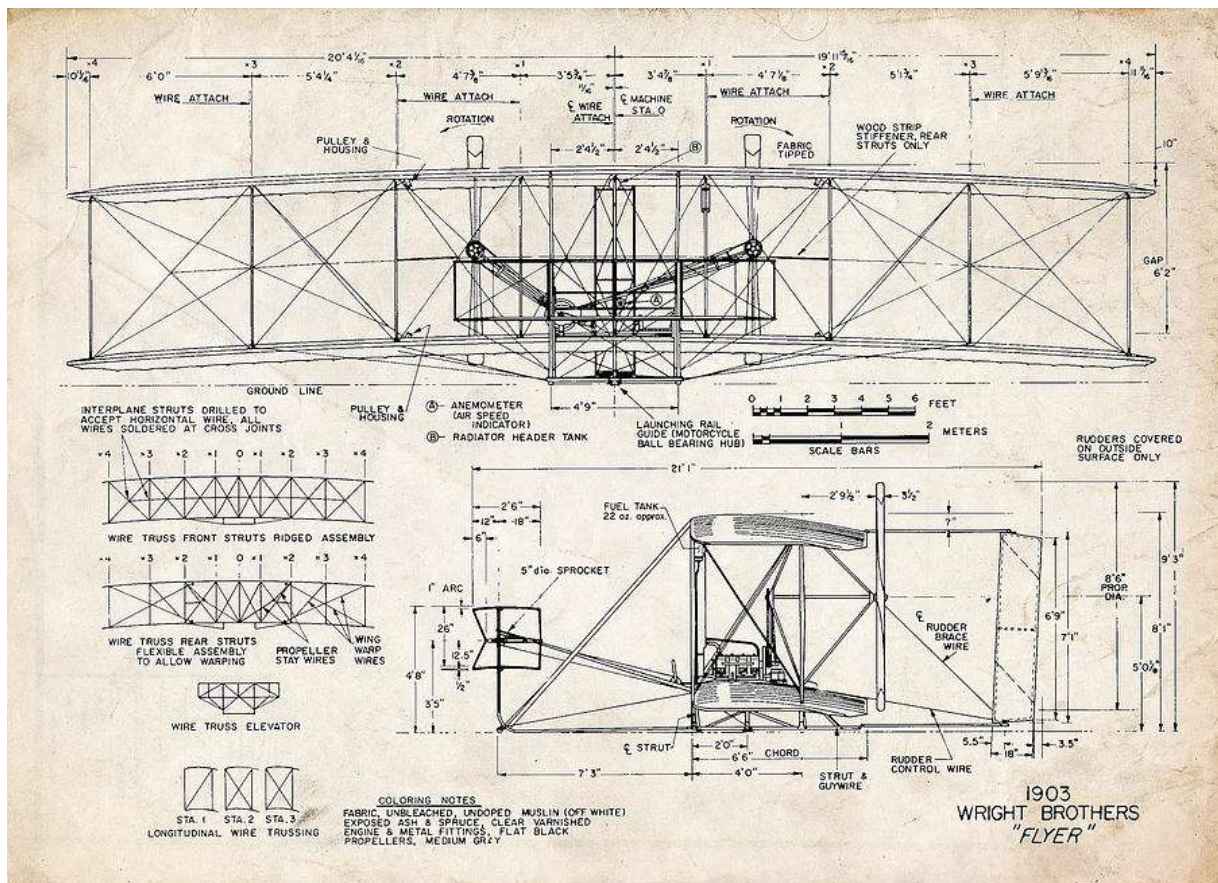


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Photo believed to be Egerton's Short-Wright biplane and below Blueprint of his Wright Flyer





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Later in 1910 he crushed two fingers in the aircraft's engine gears and when barely recovered from a serious crash, almost losing his left leg. Not to be deterred he ordered two further Short machines on March 11 1911: a Short S.35 that was delivered on 12 April 1911 and Short S.59 delivered on 25 November 1912. Whilst we still have not solved the secret of Miss Quon's letter the fact that it's address was on the property owned by Maurice Egerton, who himself was part of aviation's history, and conjures up thoughts as to whether the letter, sent 22 years after Egerton began flying, was pertinent to him, the property or aviation in general and is still a great unknown.

During the years 1909 through to 1911 Egerton was meticulous in his recording of every flight he undertook. Detailing details of the weather, wind and general course taken, particulars of aircraft maintenance and general comments on the difficulties encountered flying this somewhat flimsy aircraft. The society is in possession of this fifty-one page log book document that lists all of Egerton's flights and in itself is a fascinating document detailing his flights and challenges that faced these *"wonderful men in their flying machines"*. Obviously fifty one pages wont fit in our newsletter but anybody wishing to access this document please contact the author and we would be happy to email a copy. As for that letter, we will just keep on looking.



Maurice Egerton in his Naval Reserve Uniform