

January 2005

Submitted by Egil Thomassen
Former Chairman, FIP Commission for Aerophilately
Commission Delegate from Norway

Commercial Airmail Cover



([Click to enlarge](#))

For a long time it was assumed that Norwegian airmail was carried only on regular air routes, and not on charter flights. However, during research in the Norwegian postal authority's archive, I found a contract between the then charter company Braathens SAFE and the Postal Authority concerning the carriage of mail on flights to the Orient. (I am sure the aviation company was safe, but the abbreviation is short for South America and Far East.) Braathens SAFE was later to run regular air routes both inland and abroad and in 2003 was merged with SAS (Scandinavian Airlines System).

What is interesting about the letter, in addition to the transportation, is the weight. Heavy air mail letters are scarce. Such letters were quite often "slaughtered" by keen stamp collectors, or discarded due to the size.

Sent 25.4.1952 by air Stavanger-Oslo, then Oslo-Amsterdam-Geneva-Rome-Cairo-Abadan-Karachi-Bombay-Calcutta-Bangkok-Hong Kong by Braathens SAFE and forwarded from Hong Kong to Hobart, Tasmania by Qantas. Weight 620 grams. (21.87 ounces or 1.367 pounds)

1952 airmail surcharge 125 öre per 5 grams = 155.00 NOK, foreign postage rate in 1952 was 55 öre per first 20 grams, 30 öre for the following 20 gram steps = 9.55 NOK, total 164.55 NOK.

Let us compare 164.55 NOK with today's prices. In 1952, the Norwegian inland postage rate for letters less than 20 grams was 30 öre. Today it is 600 öre, i.e. 20 times more than the 1952 rate. If we adjust the cost of the letter accordingly, the postage rate would now have been 3.291.00 NOK, which is equivalent to c. \$ 530. It must have been a very important letter.