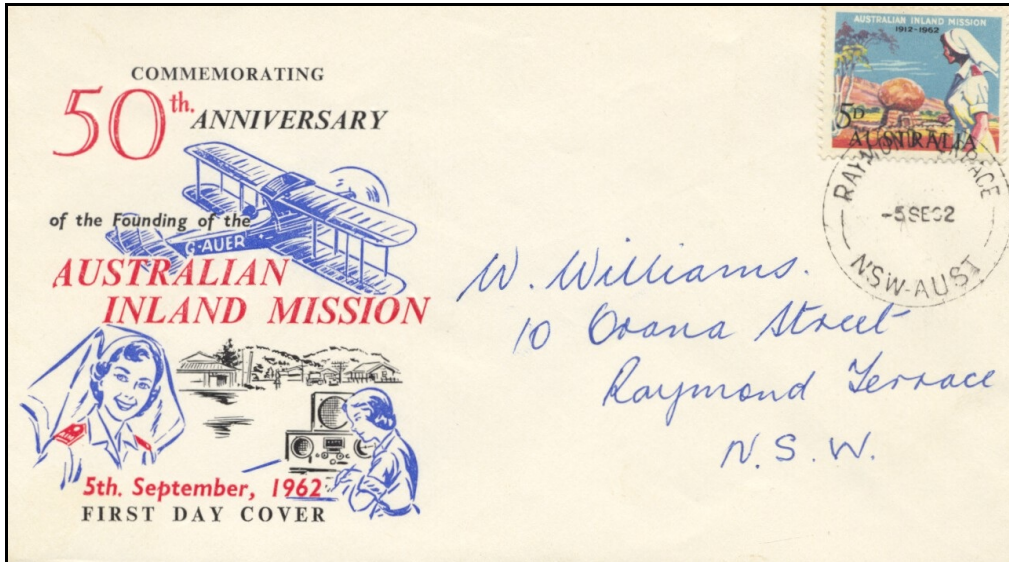


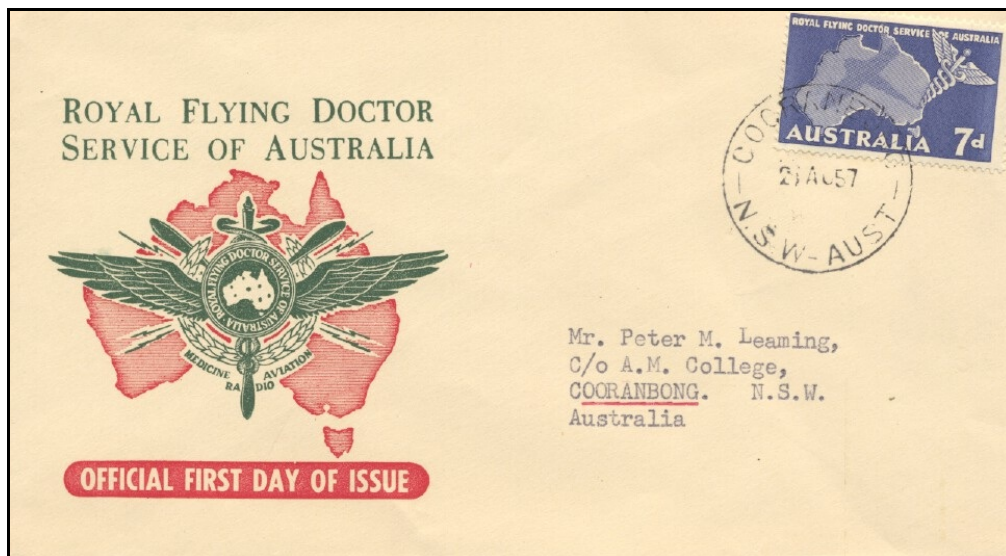
Australian Inland Mission and Radio

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When I first saw this first day cover celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Australian Inland Mission, I wondered just what the Australian Inland Mission was. I assumed that the “woman with radio” part of the graphic

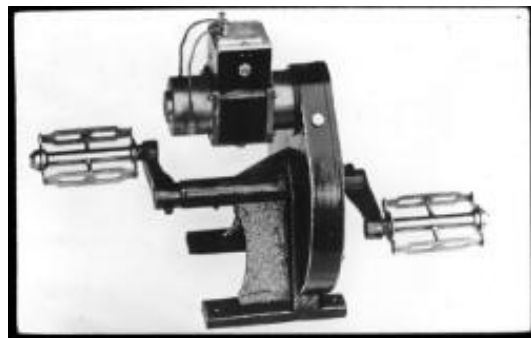


was related to the need for radio in order to communicate with whoever was “inland,” a la the better-known Royal Flying Doctor Service.



A little time with “the Google” turned up the answer. The Australian Inland Mission was a Presbyterian project designed to meet the spiritual needs of both Indigenous and European persons in remote parts of the country. Founded in 1912, and based on the work of Rev. John Flynn, AIM focused on pastoral care, counseling, and, most important, medical services. There is a large collection of photos related to AIM in the [National Library of Australia](#) collection online (click “Browse this Collection”). AIM went through many organizational changes through the years, becoming the [Frontier Services](#) in 1977. (When the Royal Flying Doctor Service, originally the Aerial Medical Service, was founded in 1928, it was part of AIM.) John Flynn’s picture is on the Australian \$20 bill.

The radio connection? We all know about Trevor Baylis’s windup radio. But did you know about the pedal radio? As the name suggests, the pedal radio was a radio—specifically a transceiver—powered by a pedal-operated generator. It was invented in 1927 by Alfred Traeger of Adelaide and adopted by AIM to address a fundamental problem: the absence of a convenient way for remote homesteads to contact AIM, or the Aerial Medical Service, for help. Pedal power solved the problem. It permitted use of the radio by a single operator, who could both work the radio with the hands while at the same time providing power with the feet. Morse code was used, and in 1931 Traeger added a letter keyboard, which eliminated the need to know Morse.



For more on the pedal radio, read the article by Richard Begbie, [The Pedal Radio of the Great Outback](#), in the July 1999 issue of *Antique Radio Classified*.