

C A M E O



JOURNAL OF THE BRITISH WEST AFRICA STUDY CIRCLE

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EDITORIAL

London 1980 has closed but memories remain. The Circle Luncheon was a friendly and informal gathering with old friendships renewed and new ones made.

The displays were outstanding even if difficult to locate. And the choice of material at dealers' stands was wide-ranging. Your editor took the opportunity to visit some of the American dealers and was pleased to purchase, among other items, several aerogrammes which are not always easily obtainable in the U.K.

This CAMEO will probably be one of the biggest yet produced and it is hoped that members find the contents of interest. The next issue should include an introductory article on W.W.I. censorship in Sierra Leone and background information on some crash covers.

H.M.S. THALIA, WEST COAST OF AFRICA, 1836

Mr. A. Rawlings, a fellow member of the Postal History Society, has provided your Editor with transcripts of early letters from West Africa. Although generally not dealing with postal matters, it is hoped that the background information will prove of interest. The letters are lengthy and extracts only are being reproduced.

The first was headed "H.M.S. Thalia, Off the Mouth of the River Benin," and dated September 2nd, 1836. The entire was addressed to Mrs. Col. Macpherson, Mains of Ardersier, Invernesshire, N.B. A manuscript 6 was deleted and replaced by 1/7d. The recipient endorsed that she received the entire on February 12th, 1837.

"My Dearest Mother,

Here we are anchored about four miles off the river waiting for two boats which we have sent up it to blockade it as there is a slaver up it which is daily expected out, but I am afraid we do not stand much chance of catching her if she sees what we are for I should think she will not throw herself in our way: however, if we do I hope I shall go up in her as second in command to Sierra Leone where all the slaves are liberated and the vessel condemned.

Nothing has happened of any consequence since I last wrote when at Ascension, from whence we sailed on the 15th August, and after cruizing about looking

out for slavers, we arrived at Accra on the 24th. We have since been cruizing on the Bights of Benin and Biafra, but have only seen one vessel in the shape of a slaver, and she was an empty Portuguese with which we have no treaty, which authorizes us to take vessels fitted for slaves as we have with Spain, so that the Spaniards on coming to the Coast go to the Cape de Verds and get Portuguese papers.

Sept. 8th. We left the River Benin yesterday having received our boats without the slaver, as she has landed her slaves after making four unsuccessful attempts to come out of the River. We have left the Curlew to blockade the river and I hope she may be successful. The merchants up the river were very kind to Mr. Grenfell the officer who commanded the boats and to the crews, one in particular who's name is Hope frae Edinbro town. He is the agent for a mercantile house in Liverpool. He is in the receipt of two thousand a year, and he says enjoys perfect good health.

Sept. 27th. We arrived at George's Bay, Fernando Po, on the 11th where we went to procure a supply of water. It is a very pretty bay, thickly wooded but here and there a clearance so that it puts me in mind of Mount Edgecumbe, only it is much more beautiful: there are no Europeans in this part of the island in fact they have had very little intercourse with them. The people are very disgusting looking, covered with red clay camwood, a red dye and palm oil. When any of us went on shore they kept pawing us all over, in fact you had great trouble to get rid of them. They would not allow any of us to enter their villages and on some of my messmates disregarding their signs and trying to force a passage, they lifted them in their arms and carried them back.

Sept. 29th. We sailed from Fernando Po. on the sixteenth and fell in with the Buzzard with whom we sailed for the River Bonny. However, ... on the 18th we saw two sails and chased them in company with Pylades and Buzzard. They were a Brigantine and schooner but as we were by far the best sailor, we sent Buzzard in chase of the latter while we chased the Brigantine, and having run both rebels out of sight captured the Portuguese Felix, with 615 slaves on board. The largest vessel which has been taken for a long time on the Coast but our luck did not end here, for on the following morning we saw the Buzzard and schooner and captured her. She was a Spaniard named the Atalaya and had 119

slaves on board, so that we shall not return to the Cape empty handed.

(Oct.) 25th. We are now within twelve miles of Ascension and all in a bustle as we return stores there and the Captain says we shall not remain longer than six hours so that even if there should be a letter for me I shall not have time to answer it.... In great haste Love to Father, brothers sisters and all. The letter bag is just going to be closed.

Tell them all to write to me,

Willy".

Extracts from a later letter will be given in a future CAMEO.

THE WEST AFRICA STATION

By courtesy of Mr. D.A. Boyd, your Editor is able to reproduce part of the auction catalogue of the March 20th, 1980 sale conducted by Phillips, Son and Neale.

The "Long" correspondence

The following 13 lots comprise a find of envelopes and enclosures written by Midshipman John Long to his mother and father in Arundel, Sussex. Midshipman Long served on H.M.S. Archer commanded by Captains Bythesea, Cochrane and Martin and the letters tell of two visits to Ascension Island. There is an insight into the life and times with many of the officers succumbing to fever and John Long's repeated requests for items of clothing and boots.

<u>Lot</u>		<u>Realised</u>
16	1863 (8th July) envelope with enclosure from Cape Coast Castle "sent out by mail of Aug. 24th" reporting "the crew were in a very mutinous state" and "the Ranger commanding Ratislaw is here waiting for the commodore to go Home. She has only had two prizes but a midshipman's share is £150", envelope a little ragged, charged "6" due and endorsed on arrival.	£92
17	1863 (10th Aug.) envelope with enclosure from Cape Coast Castle "this is a very miserable hole", "we have study every morning and seamanship in the afternoon", "The Rattlesnake came in on the 10th and we are going with her and the Ranger to Ascension", "I expect we will get lots of prize money on that Station", the	£80

<u>Lot</u>		<u>Realised</u>
	envelope franked with six 1 d's cancelled "51" and the flap torn away.	
18	1863 (27th Aug.) envelope and enclosure written "From C. Coast Castle to Ascension" with paragraphs added on 1st, 3rd and 5th September (last two from Ascension) "arrived at Ascension it is a curious place", "I send you a track chart (enclosed) of our passage out and a sketch of C. Coast Castle" (enclosed), "rather weak and not out of the list - feeding in the Wardroom", the envelope endorsed "officer's letter", very tatty with five 1d's (one other torn away).	£95
19	1863 letter from Owen J. Llewellyn (surgeon) "H.M.S. Archer, Ascension", assuring Mrs. Long that her son is recovering. Also envelope addressed by John Long with six 1d's which may have contained this enclosure.	£200
20	1863 (11th Oct.) envelope and enclosure from "N of Congo River" with "I passed the other day for midshipman, I had a very easy examination", "court martial...an engineer who had gone to sleep on his watch", "the gunner was tried today for drunkenness, he got turned out of the service", envelope with six 1d's cancelled "466" at Liverpool and showing red PAID/LIVERPOOL/BR PACKET" c.d.s. flap torn away.	£300
21	1864 (9th Jan.) envelope with enclosure from "Congo River", with "I cannot say much for St. Paul's de Loando it is a dirty Portuguese place", "a court martial...I was midshipman of the court...a boatswain for swearing at his Captain he was dismissed with disgrace", note on inside flap "I have got no stamps", cover charged "6" due.	£78
22	1864 (6th Feb.) envelope with enclosure from St. Paul de Loando "as usual they tell us about half an hour before the mail goes so that I have not much time to write", envelope roughly opened with two "CAPE PACKET/DEVONPORT" c.d.s. and charged due "6".	£160
23	1864 (29th Feb.) envelope with enclosure from H.M.S. Archer at Ascension with "captain ... very ill with first fever and then dysentery (sic)... sent him up to the mountain hospital where he was invalided as well as captain Barnard who has charge of the Island... our first	£210

<u>Lot</u>		<u>Realised</u>
	Lieut. Mr. Hammond has been made Acting Commander in charge of the Island", there is also a list of the ten officers invalidated from the ship, envelope with flap torn, shows "CAPE PACKET/DEVONPORT" c.d.s. and mss "6" due.	
24	1864 (1st Apr.) envelope with enclosure from Ascension "and gone up the Green Mountain which is quite like England... and the walk up there quite knocked me up", envelope with "CAPE PACKET/DEVONPORT" and mss "6" due.	£165
25	1864 (19th Apr.) envelope and enclosure from Sierra Leone with "I have had another attack of Fever", "left Ascension on the 8th April under Acting Captain Cochrane - he came in on the 5th as Commander of the "Sparrow" gunboat", envelope stained and tatty with "PACKET-LETTER" and mss "6".	£60
26	1864 (11th May) envelope with enclosure from H.M.S. Archer at Achra (Accra) "they thought we were one of the steam slavers.... fired two blank cartridges...we hoisted our colours", "we are going to leave Capt. Cochrane here" (C.C.C.), envelope damaged and stained, mss "6".	£24
27	1864 (5th June) envelope with enclosure from Fernando Po, "I like capt. M. Martin very well as yet but cannot tell how he may turn out", envelope a little stained with mss "6" and red inspector's mark.	£240
28	1864 (17th July) envelope with enclosure from St. Paul's de Loando "I had just got my foot over the edge of the hatch when the ladder being taken away it being Saturday they were cleaning ship, I fell down from the upper deck to the hold and broke my leg", "I am now going to St. Helena in the Griffon", "I take this opportunity to send this letter by a ship going home and will post it at Glasgow", envelope with ld., handstruck "ld" and red "SHIP LETTER/LONDON" c.d.s. (across flat).	£165

REPLY COUPONSM. St. J. WRIGHT.

Reply coupons have been almost totally neglected by philatelists. They do not fit into the usual concept of postal stationery; unlike postal markings, or such items as censorship labels or air mail etiquettes, they do not appear on the outside of items sent through the post. And yet they are certainly an aspect of postal history and are, in many ways, similar to stamps (adhesive or imprinted), which are still surely the centre of philately.

Like stamps, they are a receipt for the pre-payment of a postal service (and in practice are transferable between one person and another before use). Their purpose is to enable the sender of a letter from one country to pay the postage on a reply coming from another country. The stamps of another country are not normally available, nor does a business-reply service exist (1). An earlier method of achieving this was the international reply postcard, introduced in the early 1880s. This did not offer confidentiality or the possibility of much correspondence or any enclosures, and was finally abandoned in 1971. Ideas were advanced, and proofs made, of reply stamps and reply-paid lettercards (as used internally by one of the Australian colonies) but none of these were adopted by the UPU. Instead, at British urging, the international reply coupon was adopted at the Rome Congress of the UPU in 1906, the Convention coming into effect on 1st October, 1907.

Their great difference from stamps is that they are only a form of interim receipt; they cannot be affixed to a piece of mail but must be exchanged in the other country for a stamp (or possibly the 'stamp' on an aerogramme if of no higher value). When used they disappear back into the post office (like stamps on a telegram form). They are rather like a postal order of a fixed denomination (though this is nowadays in terms of service, rather than a fixed monetary value; that can vary according to the country, and time of exchange - they are a hedge against inflation!) They travel inside mail rather than on the outside, but unlike a postal order the exchange must be for a stamp rather than cash. The basic validation technique is also similar, in that an unused coupon should bear one issuing postmark while a used one bears a second, cancelling one.

Under the first Convention, which lasted right up to the end of 1921, the scheme was operated only by those countries which wished to do so; thereafter all UPU members had to exchange them, though not necessarily to issue them. Most major countries started at once in 1907 or soon afterwards, but the practice of the colonies varied. The territories covered by our Circle began to issue them as follows (2):

Gold Coast	on 1 Oct. 1907
Sierra Leone	between 1 July 1909 and 1 Oct. 1909
Southern Nigeria	between 1 Oct. 1911 and 1 Jan. 1912
St. Helena	around 1935
Gambia	around 1937
Nigeria	around 1941.

Overprinted coupons of Nigeria remained on sale in the Southern Cameroons (like postal stationery) in the 12 months of the overprinted 'CAMEROONS UKTT' stamps. It has been suggested that St. Helena coupons have been on sale in Ascension, but I have no definite evidence of this.

All International coupons have been printed by Benziger & Cie, Einsiedeln, Switzerland. The back and basic front design and text is printed first in bulk on specially water-marked paper, and then separate 'country of issue' details are added separately. The basic language is French, but a local language (or languages) of the title and text could be added on the front if required. Over the years there were three separate designs on that basis (but 21 or more distinguishable varieties, as the basic text was often revised at UPU Congresses, or there were other printing changes). From 1975 however a new system was devised, in which coupons no longer include any name for the country of issue, or local language, on the front of the coupon. A local selling price may be added (by Benziger or locally) but not even that is obligatory, so often only the postmark distinguishes the country of origin. Coupons were originally printed by letterpress, but later mainly by offset-lithography - although sometimes the 'country details' were still added by letterpress for small orders. These can be very small; for example St. Helena ordered 100 coupons in 1972 (and no more for three years).

Before the First World War, the UPU prescribed rigid international postage rates and the value of coupons was expressed as 25 centimes; they set a minimum selling price of 28 centimes. When varying rates become inevitable (still within a prescribed range) after the war the minimum price was always set at the same as the maximum exchange value, (both expressed in gold centimes). This has changed up (and sometimes, between the wars, down), in various conventions and the value of local currencies in terms of gold caused further changes in local selling prices. In sterling the initial selling price was 3d, while the coupons of other countries could be exchanged for 2½d. After the First World War the selling price in British territories generally rose to 6d; this soon fell back to 4d; but it rose to 6d again after the departure from the gold standard in 1931. The next rise followed devaluation in 1949, when the price became 8d.

Soon afterwards the UPU occasioned an increase to 9d and, in 1959, to 1s. Thereafter the currencies in the BWASC territories became too diverse to summarise the prices here.

Partly because of the high price of 6d there arose in the early 1920's a demand for a lower priced coupon to take advantage of the lower rates applied to Imperial postage. This idea was pushed by Australia, and in April 1927 (although by then the International coupon had reverted to 4d) the Imperial coupon was introduced. These were first priced 2½d (and in Great Britain were exchanged for 1½d), but this was usually raised to 3d after the departure from the gold standard. It generally remained there in British territories (though the exchange value grew in some countries to a considerably higher amount, so you could make a profit out of them!) until 1959 when it became 5d.

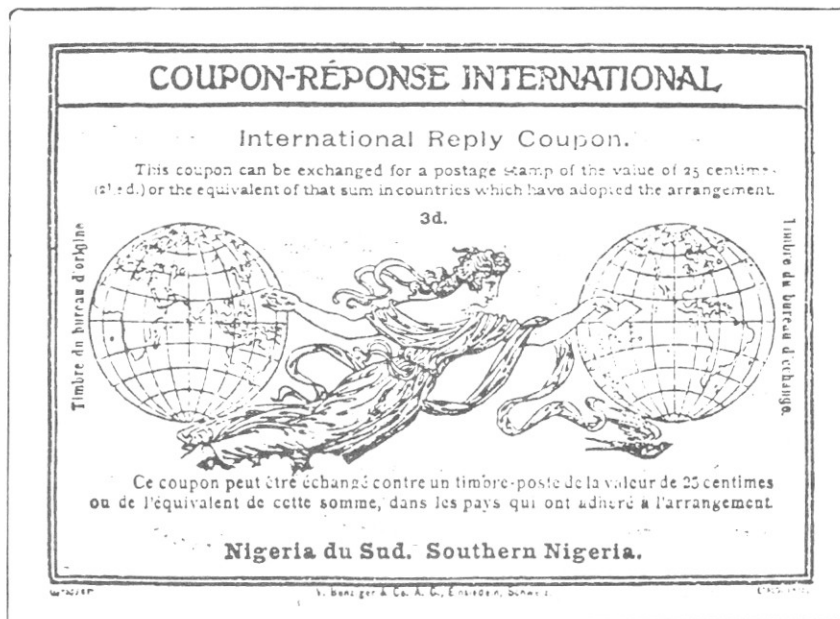
These Imperial coupons were printed for all our BWASC territories; originally by Waterlows, later by Harrisons. They were always lithographed, but with the country name and selling price originally added by letterpress, though latterly sometimes by lithography.

A new design, entitled "Commonwealth Reply Coupon" was introduced by 1953. Preferential Imperial/Commonwealth rates were confined (except briefly just before the Second World War) to surface postage and, therefore, they and the coupons became less significant as airmail took over the business. Preferential rates were phased out by Commonwealth countries, and the coupons became more restricted in their exchangeability in the 1970's, and finally Great Britain abandoned the concession with little protest in 1975 and Commonwealth coupons ceased to be issued anywhere. Although International reply coupons suffer from the same problem that a single one is usable only for surface postage, two are usually more than enough to cover the higher rate - and there are considerable areas (like British mail to Europe) where the basic exchange value of a single coupon in fact ensures air mail postage.

If any member is interested, I would be happy send (3) them some sheets detailing the different types of International and Imperial/Commonwealth coupons that have been produced, and listing the coupons known to have been issued by BWASC territories. Please send me a stamped addressed envelope, large enough to enclose folded A4-size paper - or an International reply coupon. I should also be grateful if all members could draw my attention to the opportunity to buy from them (or from anyone else they know about) reply coupons of any country issued at least 20 years ago.

Footnotes:

- (1) Such a scheme was introduced experimentally by the British Post Office with the U.S.A. and the Netherlands a few years ago, but has been abandoned.
- (2) The dates to 1912 are taken from the then-quarterly British Post Office Guide. From this I also learnt that Northern Nigeria did not belong to the UPU. After the union of Nigeria in 1914 it stated that only the Southern provinces belonged - until January 1918 when the whole colony was listed as not belonging; this note was not dropped until 1929. Perhaps there is an interesting story for the reader (and consequences?) of these events. Somewhat similarly, Northern Rhodesia was not a member in 1907, although Southern Rhodesia was. The stamps in use were common to both territories, inscribed British South Africa Company/Rhodesia, but a coupon was issued inscribed Southern Rhodesia some 17 years before that name appeared on stamps. Similarly, the Southern Nigeria coupon may have remained available up to 1917 without being in any way obsolescent.
- (3) (a) Three pages of Types of I.R.C.s and Imperial/Commonwealth R.C.s and (b) pages listing as much detail as possible of the issues of individual countries.



Rome: Type IV.

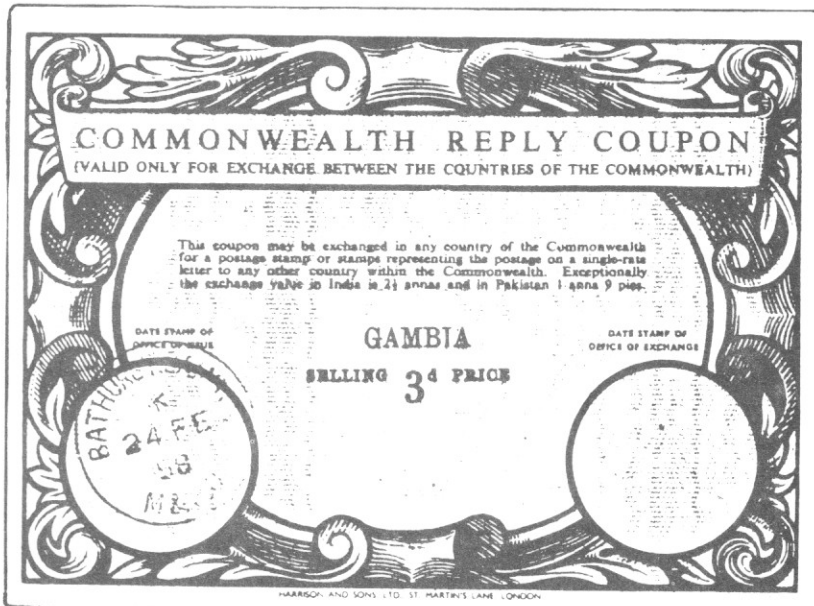
(Named after the Convention that introduced them).



London: Type XI.



Vienna: Type XX.

Commonwealth:
Type IX.

LONDON 1980

Five members of the British West Africa Study Circle were represented by exhibits in the great show at Earls Court that was London '80..... and every one of them was a medal winner.

The quality of the exhibits was, not surprisingly, extremely high. Much less surprising was the fact that the Study Circle contingent which visited the exhibition on 10th May tended to concentrate their attentions on the displays produced by our own members.

For those who were unable to share their very real pleasure, the following notes are intended as a report and also as a matter of record for the Circle of this memorable occasion.

The only member of the Circle to be awarded a Gold Medal - and what an achievement that is! - was John Sacher with a truly excellent study of the postal history of West Africa which included a number of items of great rarity.

His exhibit sought to trace the development of postal services to and from West Africa by ship, letter, packet and regular steamship service, paid and unpaid, pre-adhesive and stamped. Though letters must have been sent back since the first settlers arrived, the earliest in this exhibit (from Old Calabar) was dated 1751. Traders and missionaries formed the majority of the earliest correspondents with military mail featuring from the period of slavery suppression onwards, especially during the time of European expansion. These and the later development of a fast and reliable mail service were all reflected in this display.

Items considered of particular interest were as follows. From the Gambia: letter dated Jan. 4 1840 via "JERSEY SHIP LETTER" in red (unrecorded by Robertson but similar to Guernsey S.I.); 6d deep blue (SG 3) cancelled "A GAMBIA AP 19 69" in red on cover to London; pair of 6d blue (SG 3a) cancelled "A GAMBIA DP 15 69" in red on cover to Dublin; reg. cover with mixed franking of 4d pale brown (SG 6) and four ½d (SG 11) all cancelled "GAMBIA PAID C JY 28 81" in red to Washington and endorsed "Register No. 21" in red manuscript.

From the Gold Coast: 1/6th of 6d orange (SG 8) cancelled "556" in black at Cape Coast (27.3.84) on cover to Accra; cover of four ½d olive green (SG 4) and two 1d blue (SG 5) all cancelled with ADDAH seal in black (about 17.4.81 to Milan); cover bearing ½ of 2d green (SG 6a) and ½ of 6d orange (SG 8a) cancelled by WINNEBAH seal in black (to London 15.3.83); ½ x 2d green (SG 6a) cancelled "556" (Cape Coast) 16.5.84 on military concession cover to BELIZE, British Honduras; cover dated Porto Seguro (later in Togoland) 28.4.59 via Cape Coast, 12.6.59 to Genoa.

From Fernando Po: cover dated Fernando Poo 13 Jan. 1859 with red crowned "PAID AT FERNANDO-PO" to St. Cruz de Teneriffe, 29.6.59.

From Lagos: cover dated Porto Novo (later in Dahomey), 12.8.70 via Lagos, 14.8.70 to Marseilles.

From Oil Rivers/Niger Coast Protectorates: cover from Old Calabar dated Dec. 7, 1751 to London; reg. cover bearing ½d (SG 1), 2½d (SG 4)

with provisionals "½d" in red on half of 1d (SG 7) and "HALF PENNY" in green on two 2½d (SG 33), all cancelled "OLD CALABAR A AP 12 94" in black to Freetown.

From Sierra Leone: cover dated 15.4.1831 via unrecorded "STH SHIELDS SHIP LETTER" in black to London; cover bearing 4d brown (SG 33) cancelled "POST OFFICE MANOH SALIJAH SIERRA LEONE" in red with cds, 5.7.86 to London; cover dates Isles of Loss (then under British administration, later part of French Guinea), 19.7.61 via Sierra Leone to Bordeaux (21.8.61).

By British Mail from adjacent territories: cover from Brunswick (Maine) bearing USA three 10c (SG 35) and 3c (SG 28b) paying 5c local postage and 28c overseas rate Via Boston Br Pkt (3.4.61) and Liverpool (16.4.61) to Loanda Angola (9.6.61); cover from Liberia to Bristol (Maine) bearing 6c (SG 1) and 24c (SG 3) cancelled "HARPER LIBERIA" via Liverpool, 11.10.61.

Next - in alphabetical order for fairness' sake! - come the silver medallists and, first, Robin Bavington-Jones' display of early Gambia, covering the pre-stampy period and the four Cameo issues, including proofs, specimens and covers.

The first frame comprised 12 sheets with early covers, the rest consisting of original proofs, cancelled overprints, manuscript specimens and printer's samples. The second frame dealt with the two imperforate issues. Frame three (and part of four) showed the 1880 issue with the latter frames presenting the 1883/93 issue.

Items of particular interest included the entire from Captain Huntley, a cover with French 20c and 30c stamps, the 6d proof in blue, ex de la Rue (all on Frame 1), the 4d (1869) block of nine and the 6d (1874) block of four (both on Frame 2), the sheet of the 6d in its first printing, 2d (second printing), unused blocks of four of the 4d, 6d, and 1/- and the "near" specimen set (i.e. one value missing) which is mostly ex Marcus Samuel (these on Frame 3 and first part of 4).

Outstanding from 1883/93 were the proofs (possibly the only copies of the values shown), the de la Rue colour scheme (with notes), and (one of Robin's own particular favourites), the 1d on cover showing early use of the penny postage.

Philip Beale, our secretary, showed Sierra Leone. His display opened with four entire letters, the first dated 1819 from a missionary, the second routed via Barbados, the third showing the use of the Paid mark in 1854 and the fourth, an unpaid letter to France after the introduction of the 6d stamp but before 10d in stamps was available for that postal rate.

The first 6d was shown with a die proof and three different Specimen overprintings. The Sperati facsimiles of the die proof and stamp were also included. For the 1872 and 1874 issues, the Proofs, without values, from the De La Rue records were displayed together with a die proof and other proofs with values. The first issue of the 6d and some of the later values were shown on cover.

All the catalogue values of the 1893 overprinted ½d were displayed, the copy of SG 38a used being possibly unique. The long revenue stamps were introduced by the artist's essay and the die proof. Examples of all

the overprint types on the 3d, 6d and 1/- were shown as also a 2/-. The 1894 1d overprint was shown on cover, a stamp which had postal use though it is not catalogued as such. For the 1896/97 issue, the essay with handpainted value for the 1/- introduced two sheets of imperforate Proofs, the issued stamps and the Specimens. Other unusual 19th century items included the Essay for the 2½d stamp of 1891 and the unissued Specimens for SG 29 and 32, almost certainly unique as they originate from the official records.

In the 20th century section was shown the Essay for the KG V large format stamps which shows the head of Edward as that for King George had not then been approved. There was also a coloured die proof of SG 120. The Rice Fields issue showed Proofs of different stages of the design in different colours from the issued stamps and two Essays by De La Rue which were rejected. The Wilberforce issue was represented by the set of Essays submitted by De La Rue and also the issued Specimens. The display concluded with KG VI Proofs of stationery cards. To Philip's Silver Medal were added "with the felicitations of the jury".

Next of the silver medallists was Edward Hibbert, who displayed the Postal History of St. Helena. This illustrated the postal rates from the island and the handstamps used in the 19th century as well as the censor marks used for mail from the Boer POW camps on the island from 1900 to 1902.

The first frame included a letter showing the oval Packet Letter handstamp used in April 1819 with various letters and covers showing the oval date stamps in red, blue, and black and the postal rates between 1865 and 1870.

The second frame contained later 19th century covers, including a soldier's letter at the 1d rate countersigned by Capt. H.M. Bateman of the "St. Helenian" newspaper showing the 1d rate for newspapers and a registered cover to Leicester with the stamps cancelled with the R cancellation.

The third frame covered the Boer War censor marks, including Returned Letters and the triangular "Passed Press Censor" mark used in 1902.

Mr. Hubbard also received a Vermeil award in the Literature Class for his book on the posts of St. Helena.

Last but by no means least was the display of Biafra Postal History by Dudley Prestedge which received a silver bronze medal.

His 48-sheet presentation covered the entire period of the civil war. It included postal items showing Nigerian stamps in use immediately after the Declaration of Independence and, through the transitional period, to the use of Biafran stamps. The exhibit proved the postal use of the provisional overprints and the use of the "Postage Paid" cachets.

Also included were many examples of mail coming out of the territory, carried, initially, by relief aircraft and then, officially, by courtesy of the Gabon and France and, as internal mail, by both civilian and forces operations. Of special interest were the forces' cachets, one especially unique item being an officially produced Biafran Air Letter posted in Biafra and delivered, without surcharge, to an address in the UK.

I am sure I write for every member of the Circle when I offer all these members congratulations on their awards, thoroughly earned, as all of us know, from careful and, invariably, prolonged philatelic research. May I add in conclusion that the detail given above would not have been possible without the ready co-operation of the exhibitors.

Colin W. Graham.

THE R.B. SANDERSON SALE: APRIL 1980

J.J. MARTIN.

A full room, including many Circle members, attended the Robson Lowe sale of the R.B. Sanderson collection and other African lots. As can be imagined, bidding was keen to enthusiastic although bargains were to be found. Estimates are in brackets.

SALVED FROM/S.S. JEBBA cachets fetched from £80 to £180 according to condition. At £120 an unserializer letters example seemed cheap. Cameroons cancellations 1916-56 some philatelic, 62 covers or pieces realised £240 (£100).

The 1859 PAID AT FERNANDO PO crowned circle cover with disinfection slits was purchased at £5,000 (£1,000) which must be a record for West African postal history items.

Gambia prices were uneven. The imperforates were usually below estimate but the 1874 unused block of four was sold for £650 (£200). Basic stamps were near to below estimate. The 3/- slate purple mint of the 1922/27 Elephant and Palm issue fetched £65 (£50) and a used example £115 (£100). A 5d proof in black on wove paper, frame only, with small margins went for £23 (£30).

The 1874 cover marked "Ashanti No Stamps" with CAPE COAST CASTLE c.d.s. went to a book bid of £320 (£200). Other Gold Coast cancellations sold well, a QV collection of 303 items being knocked down for £360 (£150).

The sale included a fine array of Lagos covers. An 1872 envelope with crowned circle PAID AT LAGOS and double lined POST OFFICE LAGOS WEST COAST OF AFRICA fetched £900 (£450). Adhesives on cover also proved popular. A selection of K.E. VII stamps to 5/- (126) re-issued in Southern Nigeria realised £90 (£40).

It is difficult to do justice to Niger Coast. The 1886 envelope marked "Per R.M.S. Nubia" with G.B. 1884 6d green cancelled 466, the earliest known example of the use of British adhesives in the Niger Territories, went for £500 (£300).

An 1895 envelope with AKASSA Type 3, one of two known covers sold for £1200 (£200) and an 1898 postcard with BURUTU Type 1 als- sold for £1200 (£300), this believed to be the only known example on a 1d value. An ABUTSHI oval on an 1899 envelope (one corner cut away) realised £800 (£250), these prices underlining the strength of the market for unusual material.

One of two known covers with a four line "Forcados Niger Territories 23.6.94" in manuscript £1400 (£250). Turning to the Provisionals, prices were usually above estimate. A set of six 1894 Plate Proofs went for £130 (£150) and Printers File Sheets also fetched well below estimates.

A collection of 16 Nigerian Air Mail covers went for £70 (£30). Northern Nigeria duty plate Die Proofs of the 1912 4d fetched £65, the 9d £65 and the £1 £90, all on full card and all estimated at £75. A 1900 cover with manuscript "Post Office Jebba" and a LOKOJA oval sold for £190 (£100).

There was only one lot of Sierra Leone, nine POST OFFICE oval cancellations on stamps which went for £90 (£75).

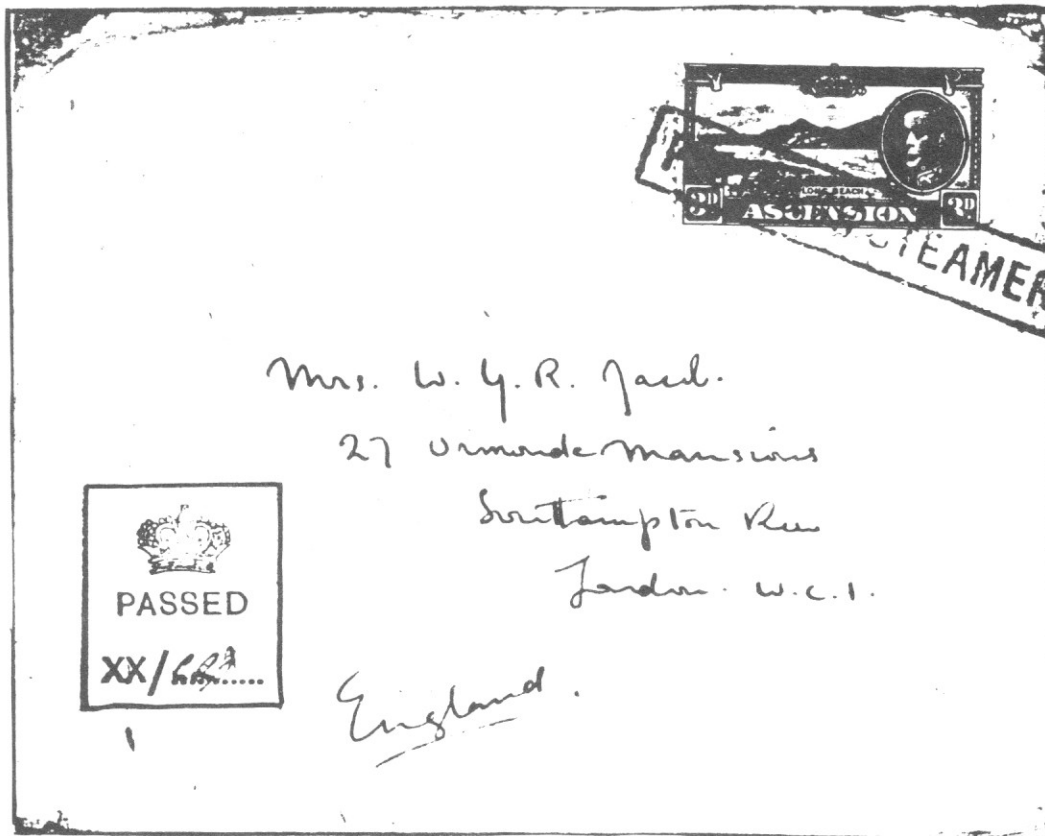
Imperforate Colour trials of the Southern Nigeria 1901-2 issue were near estimate: 6d £75 (£100); 2/6d £80 (£75) and 10/- £85 (£100).

A fascinating sale and it did seem that many Circle members there were able to add to their collections.

ASCENSION: WORLD WAR II

Mr. E. Hibbert has sent in a photostat of an undated cover to London, the 3d stamp being cancelled with the rectangular POSTED ON STEAMER in black, presumably applied at Sierra Leone.

Sent from Ascention Cable and Wireless Station, the cover also received a red cachet CROWN/PASSED, XX/ , XX being the British Empire Double Letter Code allocated to Ascension.



GAMBIA: AN H.M.S. ALECTO COVER

P.O. BEALE.

Collectors of the Gambia Cameos will probably have seen one or two covers from H.M.S. Alecto sent by a Midshipman Baron. He took the opportunity to send the cameo stamps on cover both to himself and to his family in England. Most of these are not of much interest to philatelists because they

are not at proper rates being over-stamped. There is, however, one that bears a 1d stamp - the local rate - and another with a 2½d stamp - the UPU rate. Recently I obtained a cover with a 1d cameo which had been addressed to himself at Bathurst dated 25.2.98. Bathurst had subsequently been crossed off and Sierra Leone added, the writer having presumably decided that he would not be able to collect the envelope or have it delivered before the vessel had departed. The Post Office had then applied the T handstamp for underpaid mail and alongside this is a large handstruck 3 in black. This evidently represented double the 1½d deficiency on the UPU rate. The 3 was then deleted by crossing out in ink. It was presumably realised in the Post Office that sailors' mail went at a 1d rate which Mr. Baron would have known when he changed the address. The interest in the cover lies in the 3 mark. It must have been applied either in The Gambia or in Sierra Leone, the usual practice being to state the actual charge to be made at the office of receipt. Has anyone seen another postage due mark of this period applied in either Colony?

UNPAID GAMBIA CANCELLATION

J.O. ANDREW.

By courtesy of Charles Leonard of Robson Lowe Ltd. and Philip Beale, I was able to see a photograph of the rarest Gambian cancellation "UNPAID/ /2-line date/GAMBIA", not listed in Dalwick's Handbook. Struck on a 3d grey Cameo, this was at one time in the collection of R.B. Sanderson who had a B.P.A. certificate for it. The photograph shows the cancellation quite clearly though, unfortunately, the date is quite illegible.

With the photograph was a pen-and-ink sketch on which had been pencilled the date: OC 87. This I regard as unlikely since McCaig in "The Postal History and Handstamps of British West Africa" says "A 22mm datestamp reading UNPAID/ /GAMBIA was sent to the colony in March 1895". I have a partial strike clearly dated MY 16 95 on a 2½d blue.

Questions arising: Has any member any other example of this cancellation?

If the 3d is at present held by a member of the Circle, is it possible to confirm the OC 87 dating?



GAMBIA: THE MALFORMED S VARIETYP.O. BEALE.

A recent acquisition of interest was a large block of the 2½d stamp from the Gambia Queen Victoria keyplate. It shows the Plate number 2 and the position of the Plate number indicates that the block should show the malformed variety on the S of Postage. An identical positional block of the 3d shows that variety. In fact there is no variety and careful inspection shows that the letter has been corrected. The base of the S is not like that on the other letters being flatter. Now we know that all denominations exist with the variety and that those which were later printed from Plate 3 do not have the variety. The second delivery of Plate 2 2½ds was made on 24.9.98. There was only one despatch of the 1/- and this must have shown the variety. As this was made on 13.11.97 it seems reasonable to conclude that the correction to the S was made between those two dates. This would explain why the variety has not been reported from some colonies which had despatches printed from Plate 2. I have been told of examples of the variety in Seychelles and Straits Settlements. One further conclusion is that the variety is scarcer than we had previously thought.

GAMBIA: THE 1979 OVERPRINTSP.O. BEALE.

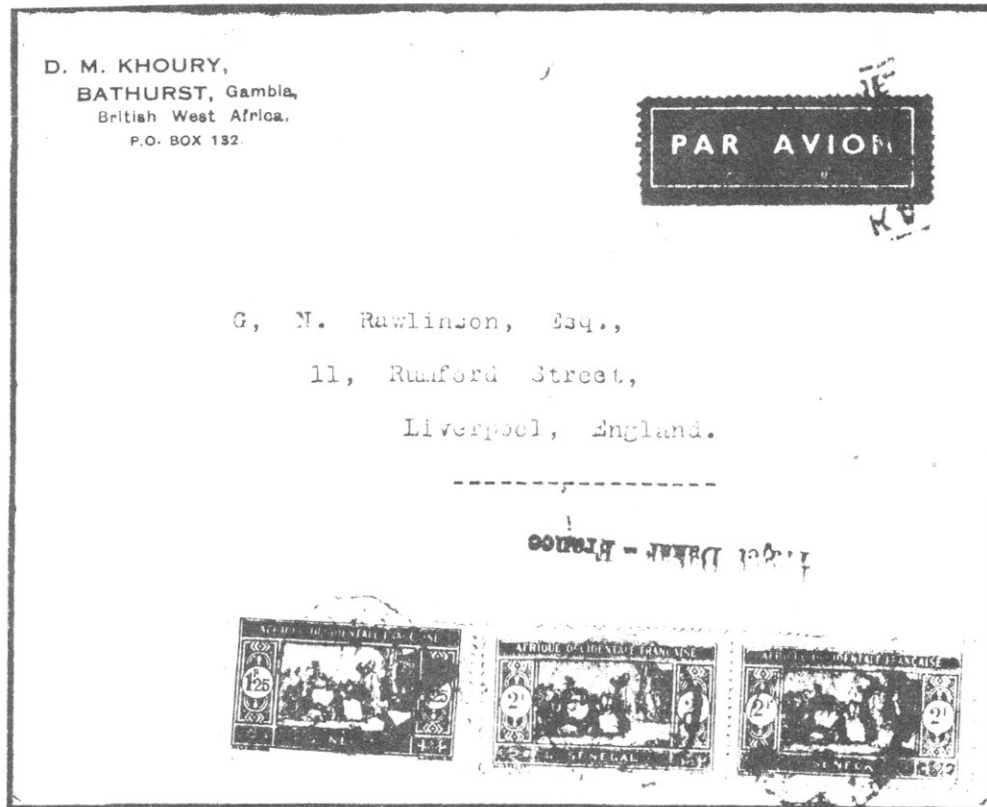
In 1979 The Gambia had to have three 25 butut value overprints, the first change of rate since the Provisionals of 1906. Crown Agents have kindly provided some details. This overprinting became necessary during the tourist season. There was insufficient time to permit a reprint and so stock held by Crown Agents of other values was overprinted 25b. The work was done in England: the 25b on 13b being released on 5.3.79, the other two values on 26.3.79. The 13b was subsequently reprinted in another colour. The Deputy Director of Posts and Telegraphs in The Gambia has kindly written to say that the total issue was about 71,500 stamps. Inspection of complete panes does not reveal any constant flaws though there are minor variations in the position of the overprint. The stamps have not been easy to obtain in any quantity and a major supplier of new issues was unable to supply any complete panes of any of the three stamps.

GAMBIA AND THE DAKAR - TOULOUSE ROUTEC. LEONARD.

I have been unable to ascertain the exact date when Gambia was offered the facility of an airmail service to England via the French "Dakar - Toulouse" route but covers are known from early 1926. This method could (but not always) effect a considerable reduction in transit time but was very much dependent on an efficient Bathurst - Dakar link. Unfortunately, this did not exist and it was in order to try and improve the service over this section of the route that the trial flight was made in 1931 by W.G. Pudney and Miss Delphine Reynolds, using a Blackburn Bluebird. Though apparently successful, no further flights were made and the Bathurst-Dakar section continued to be a "hit or miss" affair, especially so for letters into Bathurst where times of a week or more between Dakar and Bathurst are not uncommon.

The cover*illustrated is, I believe, an attempt to avoid this delay. It was carried overland, into Senegal, to Kaolack which was on a direct railway route to Dakar. Posted at Kaolack on the 17th April 1936, it arrived in Dakar on the same day and was despatched to Toulouse on the 18th.

*reduced size.



GAMBIA: NEW T.P.O. CANCELLATIONJ.O. ANDREW.

There is a new T.P.O. cancellation in use on the new Gambian ship "Lady Chilel Jawara". It was first noticed on the special F.D.C. posted on the boat.



(I have an example which, true to the T.P.O. tradition of inscrutable date-lines, is dated 81 JY).

GOLD COAST COLONY: IMPERIAL DIE USED FOR
EMBOSSING REGISTRATION ENVELOPES

J.J. MARTIN.

By courtesy of P.O. Records, I am able to reproduce a Minute to the Postmaster General dated 6th April, 1887 found under Reference 440, File No. 284N/1887.

"The Post Office of the Gold Coast Colony has requisitioned a supply of 15,000 Registration Envelopes for use in the Colony.

As the manufacture of a special die for embossing these envelopes would involve considerable expense to the Colony, the Secretary of State for the Colonies has requested the Board of Inland Revenue, in executing the order, to use the die provided for this Department and to overprint the stamp with the words "Gold Coast Colony.

There is no objection on the part of this Department to the adoption of this proposal as a temporary measure, and, if you approve, I will send a reply in that sense to the Controller of Stamps".

The Minute was "Appd H.C.R. Aug. 7 1887" and a letter sent to the Controller of Stamps on the 9th August.

LAGOS: 1850 ARTISTS DRAWINGJ.F. INCE.

In the London sale of 28th March, 1980 by Western Auctions Ltd., there was an item described:-

"1850 - a unique artists drawing (in colour) sent to the Crown Agents by an unknown artist".

This description was curious not only in its dating but in the lack of any document supporting its authenticity. It was valued at £500.

Lagos itself was not occupied by the British until 1861 although a consulate had been opened in 1851. In 1858 Treasury permission had been given for British stamps to be used for pre-payment of postage and in 1859 Mr. B. Campbell was appointed by the Post Office as Agent. However, pre-stamping of mail was optional, the rate per ½oz. being sixpence. In 1859 handstamps were introduced.

As regards the item offered for sale, it carried no date nor had the artist signed his handiwork. The design comprised a portrayal of Britannia seated on the shoreline under a palm tree with an African child at her feet, while a three masted barque is lying out to sea. In the top of the frame the words "sixpence" appear while "Lagos, West Africa" is at the foot.

Above the drawing, which was on a small folded piece of paper, was "Design of stamps required but to be reduced to the size of all other postage stamps". Below the drawing there was the instruction "To be returned to Crown Agents" R.V.C. (all in manuscript). Although there is no evidence of authenticity, and any consequent valuation is problematical, the existence of the drawing is of interest. The design is typical of attitudes of the period and the postage rate is correct. Sierra Leone introduced its first stamp (6d rate) in 1859. In 1862 Lagos took over control of its own Post Office. However, pre-payment on mail to the U.K. remained optional. In 1866 Lagos became part of the West African Settlements subject to the Governor in Chief in Sierra Leone but had its own Legislative Council. In 1868 the first enquiry for Lagos postage stamps was received by De La Rue from the Crown Agents, and an estimate was submitted by the printers on 4th June covering values 1d, 2d, 3d, 4d, 6d and 1/-. A letter from the Colonial Office addressed to the Lagos Council advised that this request had been refused, and no order was therefore placed.

No record appears in the De La Rue files of any design submitted but there must have been one for an estimate to be supplied.

Various possibilities exist which may have caused the drawing to be made (and apparently submitted) but the design of the eventual initial issue of stamps in 1874 bears no relation to the drawing. Not surprisingly, in view of the lack of any authenticating evidence, the lot was not sold and clearly the indicated date of 1850 is an error of description.

NIGER COAST: 1751 ENTIRE

J.F. INCE.

Others may have noted an item of considerable interest concerning the postal history of the Niger Coast which was in a sale by Western Auctions Ltd., in London on 28th March, 1980. The lot was described:-

"1751 entire from Old Calabar to England, this is one of the earliest letters known out of Africa. Very interesting contents re ships, wrecks and slaves".

Hitherto the earliest date for correspondence for this part of the West Coast of Africa had been that from the captain of the Dove missionary vessel of 1843. By courtesy of the Auctioneers I was able to inspect this item. It was date lined "Old Calabar, Saturday Dec. 17, 1751" and was addressed to Mr. Wm. Mason at Painters Hall, Little Trinity Lane, London, by a man who called himself "Your unfortunate brother Thos. Stocker".

He had indeed been unfortunate. He had been shipwrecked coming from St. Christopher the previous July....."Got a salvage to Liverpool", from whence, due to lack of money he had perforce to sign on the "Brooks Galley, Capt. Meadows..... where I am now very well tho' 'tis a sickly place and has been fatal to many and I myself have been very ill". He directs his brother to reply to him in St. Christopher and... "if we don't sell our slaves there, then at Jamaica".

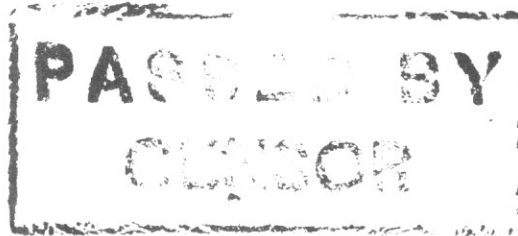
This letter does indeed bring alive something of the tribulations, not only of the slaves, but also of those who crewed the ships. The entire carried no transit or arrival marks save a bishop mark of July - presumably 1752. Did the paucity of ships sailing to England cause the six month delay or did it travel out to the West Indies before being handed to a U.K. bound ship. If so, I doubt if Thos. Stevens Stocker got his reply. The lot fetched £550.

This item is now held in the Circle.

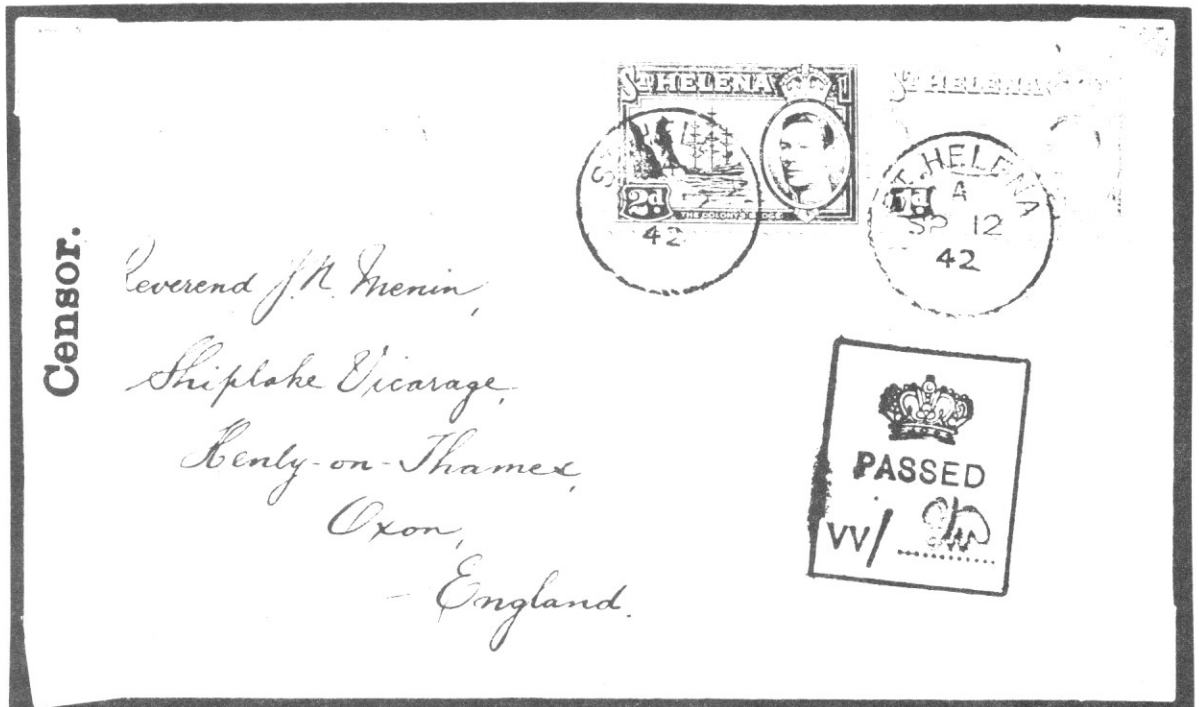
W.W.II CENSORSHIP ON ST. HELENAB. MABBETT.

After reading Mr. J.J. Martin's article concerning the St. Helena Censor Code in CAMEO 9, I decided to check through my own collection to see what I could come up with.

The first cover is dated October 28th, 1941 to South Africa. The cover shows on the reverse the 68mm x 30mm boxed "PASSED BY/CENSOR" struck in black as used on St. Helena mail at the First World War. This appears to be a civilian correspondence.



Cover No. 2 is dated September 12th, 1942 and shows the violet rectangular cachet with the crown over "VV....." plus a censor seal with the word "Opened" inverted to "by Censor". This is similar to Mayo Type I but not in capitals.



The third item is a P.P.C. to Manchester dated December 1943 which also shows the boxed crown over VV.

It would appear that St. Helena did not start censoring mail until some time in 1941 as I have a cover dated September 1940 to the same addressee as Mrs. Hibbert's cover (see also CAMEO 9) that was not censored. The boxed crown over VV cachet was in use up to February 1944 since I have another cover that has been in water. The ink from the censor mark has, unfortunately, run and smudged.

ST. HELENA AUCTION REALISATIONS

E.H. HIBBERT.

Auction sales of St. Helena material since the last report have included the following items:-

1. 1873 E.L. to Italy with 1/- deep yellow green and 4d carmine-rose (words 19mm) - £440 (Robson Lowe - 11 July 1979).
 2. 1845 E.L. from Cape Town to England with manuscript "St. Helena. 7th Oct. Recd & forwarded by Yours faithfully, T. Baker & Co." - £270 (Robson Lowe - 2 Nov. 1979).
 3. 1894 Soldier's Letter bearing 1d adhesive and counter-signed "H.M. Bateman, Capt. R.A., Comdg. St. Helena Det. R.A., St. Helena". - £325 (Robson Lowe - 7th Feb. 1980).
Cf. the similar soldier's letter of 1895 in Robson Lowe's British West Africa sale of 21 December 1978, which fetched £320.
 4. 1922 £1 used on piece with registration label - £360 (Robson Lowe - 11 July 1979).
 5. 1922 £1 mint - £420 (Robson Lowe - 1 Nov. 1979).
 6. 1922 £1 mint - £420 (Harmers - 16 Jan. 1980).
 7. 1922 15/- mint - £625 (Robson Lowe - 11 July 1979).
 8. 1922 15/- mint - £850 (Bonhams - 22 Nov. 1979).
 9. 1922 15/- mint - £1050 (Harmers - 16 Jan. 1980).
 10. 1934 Centenary set mint - £250 (Robson Lowe - 11 July 1979).
 11. 1934 Centenary mint set - £440 (Harmers - 16 Jan. 1980).
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TOGO: THE 40 PFG. WITH JANUARY 1915 OVERPRINT

As a result of your Editor's note in CAMEO 11 concerning this value, Mr. Beale has received a letter from Mr. D.J. Aggersberg, the Assistant Catalogue Editor of Stanley Gibbons Publications Ltd. Part of this is undernoted:-

"Further to Mr. Martin's comments concerning Togo number 32A, the 4Opf. of the Sansane-Mangu overprint, I can confirm that this was listed following correspondence with the Germany Philatelic Society in New York, who provided various certificates covering this item of which, I believe, only two examples are known. The certificates date from 1971 and include one from the R.P.S., London. Both known examples are postmarked Lome 9.1.15".
