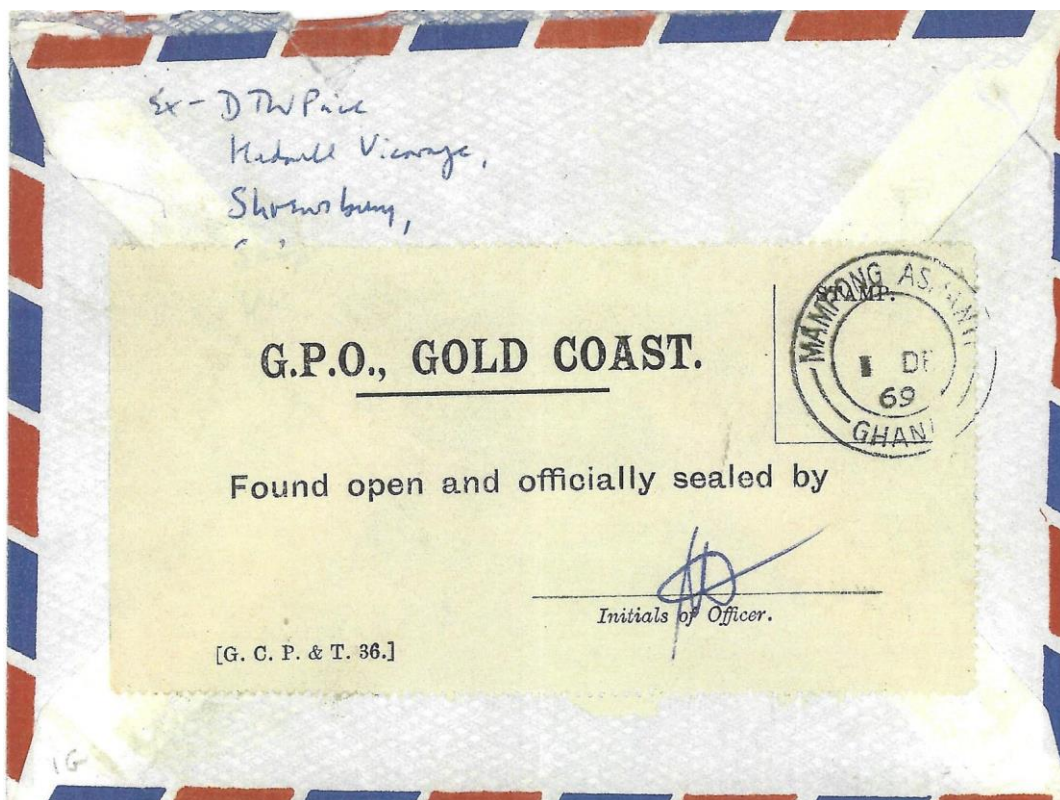


CAMEO



The Journal of the West Africa Study Circle



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WHOLE NUMBER 109

JANUARY 2020



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Front Cover

This Gold Coast post office label (G.C.P. & T. 36.) was applied at Mampong Ashanti to re-seal a cover from Shrewsbury, UK. 12 years after Independence some Gold Coast postal material was still in use.

Ex – Jeremy Martin FRPSL

Editor's Notes

Welcome to a new decade and to the start of my 21st year editing *Cameo*. It has been a privilege to learn so much from so many contributors and I must thank you all for the many and various articles you have researched, prepared and submitted for publication in that time. The content you have provided for publication in our journal has been a key reason for the recognition of *Cameo* by philatelists well beyond the scope of West African philately. I also take this opportunity to thank my fellow editor, Barry Burns for taking on one of our three issues per annum and for stepping in to publish a complete year in 2005 when I was under excessive work pressure. Barry wishes to apologise for the lack of St Helena in this issue. We have swapped "ownership" of the June and October issues so expect more Atlantic Islands articles in June.

The next issue will be edited by Barry Burns, datelined June 2020 and the copy deadline is 30 May 2020

Rob May

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Editorial Policy

The editors have the final say over content in *Cameo* in the interests of balance and relevance to the readership. Space in each *Cameo* may be limited as compared with the volume of material submitted by all the authors. The editors retain discretion over punctuation, spelling, grammar, use of colour for illustrations and whether to reduce the size of illustrations to fit the space available, but should not change wording, delete text or delete illustrations without full knowledge and permission of the author. If the editors consider amendment or deletion of text or removal of illustrations to be necessary, they will discuss it with contributors. If contributors are then unhappy with proposed changes they can withdraw their items.

Scope

The West Africa Study Circle studies the postage stamps and postal history of The Gambia, Gold Coast/Ghana, the Nigerias, Sierra Leone, Cameroons and Togo, together with the South Atlantic Islands of St. Helena, Ascension, Tristan da Cunha and Gough and the British Postal Agencies in Madeira, Tenerife, St Vincent and Fernando Po.

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From 2016, until further notice, a subscription of £10 per annum will provide all members with an electronic copy of *Cameo* via the WASC website three times a year. Alternatively, members can choose to receive a printed copy of *Cameo* by post for £20 per annum. The cost of postage to overseas members unfortunately means that those who prefer to receive *Cameo* in print format will need to pay WASC a further charge of £7.50 to Europe or £12.50 to the rest of the world. There is no entry fee. The subscription term is for calendar years.

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Webmaster is Ray Harris; contact harris6@which.net



Should anyone wish to reply to any of these letters, please do so through the Cameo editor in the first instance to enable a consolidated follow-up to be published in conjunction with the study editors as appropriate.

Correspondence on any subject is always most appreciated. Any form of contact is welcome, whether by letter, telephone or email.

The joint editors' addresses are listed on the front page of all Cameo issues.

Rob May & Barry Burns

 Inverted triangle handstamp 1905

Dear Rob

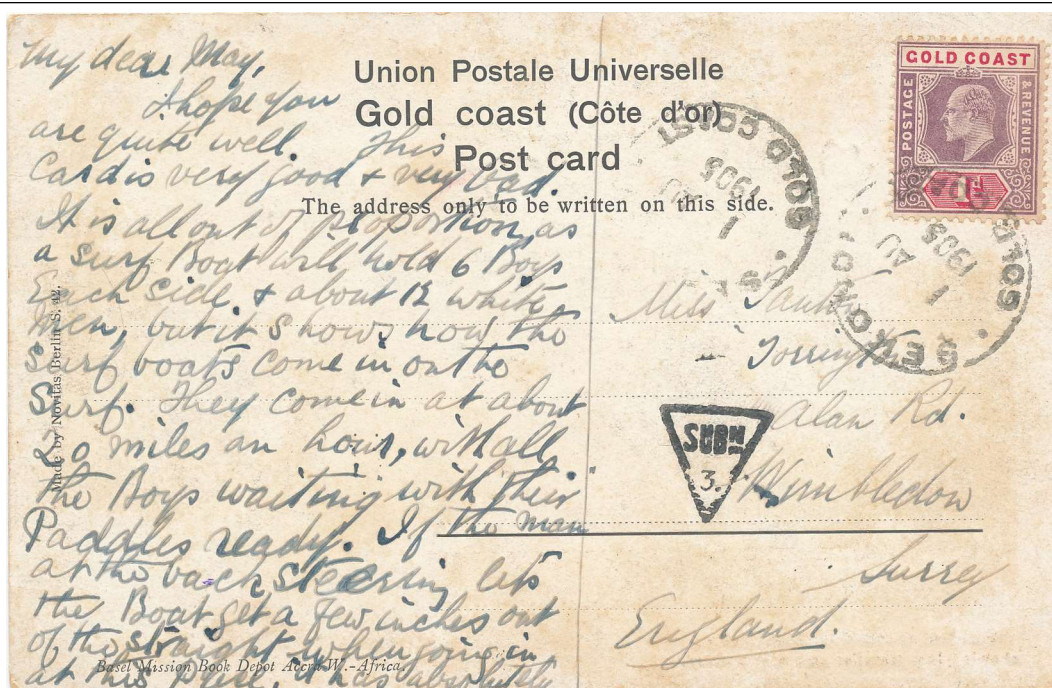
I have just bought another used copy of the popular surfboat postcard which appears on page 17 of Terence Dickinson's book under reference BAS6. (and on the cover.)

The previous director of CamPost had large quantities printed of the Buea monument 100fr and 125fr, and of the Kribi deep sea harbour 500fr at the French post printing house PHIL@POST. However, we do not know the exact numbers printed. The bureau at Douala has run out of stock of most of the older commemoratives and definitives.

What is this triangular marking for? Was it applied in the Gold Coast or in the UK? I am hoping that some member of the Study Circle can advise me.

Paul Dunn
Sevenoaks, Kent

Marc Parren
Cameroun



Sierra Leone “Blood Diamonds”

Dear Rob,

With much interest I read David Horry's June 2018 article on the secret service activities related to diamond smuggling and the use of 'skeleton' postmarks. When reading, it immediately came to my mind the fact that this 'secret' trade continued in our present millennium related to the September 11 events. Very few persons will be aware that Osama bin Laden struck deals with Charles Taylor, in 'blood diamonds' originating from Sierra Leone, worth over \$20 million in the months before the attacks of 11 September 2001 (Fig. 1).

Bin Laden's network first realised the potential advantages to be reaped from Sierra Leone when, in September 1998, a young man called Abdullah Amend Abdullah initiated a \$100,000 arms-for-diamonds deal. In 2000, a safe house was set up in Monrovia and in March 2001 two 24-year-old al-Qaeda members, a Tanzanian and a Kenyan, moved into the house. Soon after couriers took weekly flights from Antwerp on the Sabena airline to Abidjan. There, they hired light planes from the Weswua airline to fly to Monrovia. These couriers arrived with suitcases full of banknotes and left with diamonds. Next these diamonds were smuggled to Pakistan or Afghanistan where Osama bin Laden was residing. After the September 11 attacks these diamonds enabled al-Qaeda to continue its operations despite the international agreement to freeze bank accounts with suspected links to the terrorist group. Since Mumbai is the third largest diamond cutting centre in the world, after Antwerp and Tel Aviv, it was easy to exchange these diamonds into cash again.



Fig. 1. Adhesive of Charles Taylor on a letter franked \$25 sent 18th December 2000 to the Netherlands

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1. Anon. "Bin Laden's \$20m African 'blood diamond' deals". *Guardian* 20th October 2002.
2. Horry, David. "'Skeleton' Coast Security in West Africa". *Cameo*, Vol. 19, No. 2, June 2018, pp. 72-83

Marc Parren
Cameroun

WASC Study Editors are also available for queries and to help edit articles

- Airmails – Barbara Priddy
- Ascension – Bernard Hughes
- Biafra – Tony Plumbe
- Cameroons – Marty Bratzel
- Gambia – John Russell
- Ghana – Ian Anderson
- Gold Coast – Peter Duggan
- Maritime – John Hossack
- Nigerias to 1914 – Simon Heap
- Nigeria post 1914 – Tony Plumbe
- St. Helena – Bernard Mabbett
- Sierra Leone to 1961 - Frank Walton
- Sierra Leone post 1961 - Peter Rolfe
- Togo – Jeremy Martin
- Tristan da Cunha – Richard Moss

Publications Committee Chairman Peter Richards

Gambia: STATION H.Q. R.A.F. YUNDUM

Dear Rob,

This cachet (fig. 1) appears on the reverse of a stampless cover from Bathurst dated 11 September 1948 to the UK, authorising free postage.

It does not seem to have previously been recorded by Duncan and Oliver in their Gambia postmark handbook.

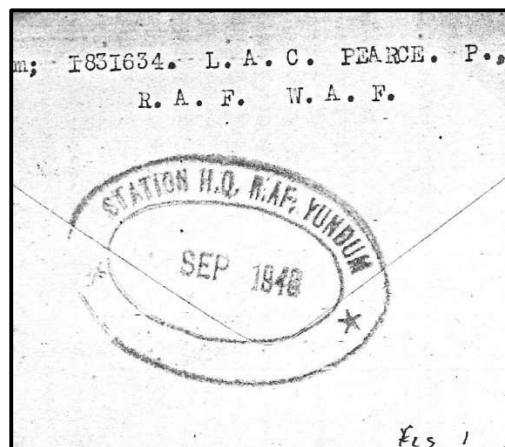


Figure 1

Reference

1. Duncan S.P. & Andrew O., *The Postal Markings of the Gambia 1858-2000*, WASC, Dronfield, 2006

Jeremy Martin
Salisbury, UK

📧: The challenge of preventing illegal stamp issues

Dear Rob,

Thanks to the passion of tens of millions of philatelists and stamp collectors, philately and stamp collecting as the “king of hobbies” and “hobby of kings” flourish even in the farthest corners of the globe. However, to ensure the continuity of this passion for stamps for future generations, philatelists and stamp collectors, as custodians of the cultural heritage and identity of nations, need to be increasingly vigilant concerning the authenticity of stamps they wish to acquire, in particular, those of many developing nations.

Indeed, it is unfortunate that the majority of the countries that are included in the ambit of the West Africa Study Group are victims of illegal stamps produced in their name: namely, Ascension Island, Cape Verde Islands, Cameroun, The Gambia, Ghana, Nigeria, St Helena, Sierra Leone, Togo and Tristan da Cunha. Cameroun and The Gambia officially denounced illegal stamps in 2007 and 2003 respectively. Many other developing countries around the world also, unfortunately, continue to be victims of illegal stamps.

Combating the illegal stamps of the West Africa Region and recovering a positive image of the countries concerned, are particularly important in view of the fact that a Universal Postal Congress will be organised in September 2020 for the first time in a sub-Saharan African country, the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire. This Congress will also decide on new international rules and regulations aimed at strengthening the position of authentic stamps.

The Worldwide Philatelic Observatory, a non-profit group of concerned philatelists from various countries, is working on increasing awareness globally about the dangers to the survival of philately brought on by an ever larger number of illegal stamps produced in the name of more and more countries. If anyone should have any queries about the stamps they wish to acquire and/or to confirm the authenticity of stamps already in their possession, for example, stamps destined for exhibition purposes, they should not hesitate to contact us at the address below. It will also be valuable for us if you can share your contacts with postal authorities and philatelic experts and partners of your countries in order that we may work together with them to improve and revive the image of philately of their countries.

Ms. Maria Zofia Libera,
Manager, PROGRESS Market Research (PEM)

Coordinator, Worldwide Philatelic Observatory (WPO)
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4070 MSAKEN, TUNISIA

Email: m.zofia.libera@gmail.com /
phil.obs@progress-marketing.tn

📧 Nigeria overprints on British postal orders

Dear Rob,

In 2011 Michael Wright sent me a copy of a letter he had sent to a WASC colleague about Nigeria overprints on British postal orders. As well as details of his collection, one paragraph in this letter says that he also had photocopies of 3 other items, though did not say where he got them from:

1. 1/- with “2½d” overprinted over “TWO PENCE” poundage, issued at Lagos on 2 May 1966 (“66 / 2 MY”) with serial number B8/45 123 035;
2. 3/- with “3½” overprinted over “THREE PENCE” poundage, issued at “? / BARRACKS / PA” on 27 April 1963 (“27 / AP / 1963”) with serial number D7/87 139 561;
3. 6/- with “4d” overprinted over “THREE PENCE” poundage, issued at “Onitsha BO / 587” on 26 March 1962 (“* / 26 MR / 62”) serial number G4/84 075 475.

Michael did not send me copies of these photocopies though he did send me pictures of his own items. If a member of WASC has these 3 items, or photocopies/scans of them, please could you email them to me on jmgstamps@jgledhill.me.uk or post them to me for inclusion in the forthcoming edition of the very big 2nd edition of the “Directory of overprinted GB Postal Orders”. Without the images these 3 items cannot be included as they are “not verified” without the picture.

Thank you

John Gledhill,
4 Valletta Way, Wellesbourne, Warwick CV35 9TB

📧 The challenge of preventing illegal stamp issues

Dear Rob,

As an example of an illegal stamp issue, here is a much-reduced image of a “Nigeria” sheetlet I found in November 2019 on Ebay in a standard search for Nigeria. The vendor was Italian, as one might expect from the Ferrari racing subject-matter.



Ray Harris
Swanley, UK

Obituary: Richard Beith

A personal tribute from John Wilson.

When Richard passed away on 9th October 2019 the world of philately and postal history lost one of the noblest of men. Others will write the formal obituaries, but I want simply to write about my own memories of Richard Beith. Like many of us, I have known Richard for more years than I care to remember; from his days in Cheshire to his return to Scotland.

Richard was, in my opinion, one of the greatest writers of philatelic texts there has ever been. Everything he wrote, on a wide variety of topics, was a model of clarity and accuracy. His list of published monographs and articles covers an astonishing range of topics, from “LATI airlines” and “British South American Airlines” to “Czechoslovak Forces in the UK” and “The Czechoslovak Independent Armoured Brigade in France”. Not that UK was left out; his studies on “Yorkshire Air Mails” and “Scottish Air Mails” are equally concise, accurate and a joy to read.

A “Renaissance Man”, Richard had a keen interest in music, particularly that of Dvorak and the Middle European composers. He compiled the official tribute to the pianist Rudolf Firkusny and also a 300-page volume on the conductor Vilem Tausky for the Dvorak Society. We frequently combined philatelic and musical subjects in our regular contact, and tragically his last message to me just a few days before his passing referred to how much he had enjoyed a performance by the Scottish Chamber Orchestra in the previous week.

As a mentor, Richard was unparalleled. Always ready to advise and comment, but never in a critical way, Richard gently corrected my wayward prose into a more organised form. I can never emulate him, only hope that something of his guidance will stay with me. In common with so many people who knew him, I shall miss Richard terribly. We have all lost a great man and a great friend.

I would like to add my own appreciation. I never met Richard Beith, as far as I know, but when I was drafting my December 2006 article for London Philatelist on World War II airmails from West Africa he put me right on many facets of this study, pointed me towards obscure references (some of which he copied to me for my archive) and encouraged me to expand it as far as possible knowing, I think, that it might act as a catalyst for further research by other philatelists. That turned out to be true beyond all expectations. He was a brilliant mentor who not only made a lasting contribution to philately in his own right but guided another generation of philatelists to give of their best.

Rob May

Gold Coast: Obuassi via Prahsu to Germany, 1901

Jeremy Martin FRPSL

The cover shown as figures 1 and 2 started its journey at Obuassi on 21 April 1901, but the post office there did not open until 29 October 1901 (Ref. 1). The oval date-stamp shown in figure 1 is probably that of the Ashanti Gold Mining Company.

The 35 miles to Prahsu took two days by runner. At Prahsu the scarce type 5b date-stamp shown at figure 2 (Ref. 2) was applied on 23 April 1901. It took six more days by runner to reach Cape Coast on 29 April. The cover arrived on Germany on 26 May 1901, travelling via London.



Figure 1: reverse of 1901 cover from Obuassi to Germany, showing oval date-stamp of Obuassi



Figure 2: the front of the same cover, showing 9d postage, postmarked at the post office of Prahsu

The postal rate is a puzzle. The franking comprises an 1884 2d, plus a 6d and a pair of ½d 1898 key-plates, making a total of 9d. The registration fee was 2d and the foreign letter rates was 2½d per half ounce. A 1oz letter would thus cost 7d but the next weight step would be underpaid by ½d. Comments welcome.

Acknowledgment

John Powell has been a great help in the preparation of this article

References

1. Anderson I., *Gold Coast Postmarks 1875 to 1957*, p136, WASC, 2012
2. Idem, p146

Post Offices in the north of Cameroun

Marc Parren

During the first half of 2018 I lived a couple of months in the north of Cameroun which gave me the opportunity to visit some of the remote post offices as well as the different sub-post offices present in Garoua the capital of the North region and Ngaoundéré the capital of the Adamawa region. At the time the security situation in both regions was precarious because of the possible raids in the border area with Nigeria by Boko Haram that required security clearance for visiting Guider and Mayo-Oulo, while the civil war in the Central African Republic made security clearance likewise necessary for the visit to Rey Bouba. Ngaoundéré saw a wave of banditism in town and violence by cattle thieves in the surroundings. With the diminishing use of postal communications, we hardly see covers any more from these remote areas, unlike the colonial days or the first decades after independence when there was a thriving correspondence originating from these areas.

Garoua

Garoua is the capital of the North region and the birthplace of the first president Ahidjo, who invested heavily in the town. It has a large port on the wide Benue river, that can only operate during the rainy season and a thriving range of industries. Trade links with Nigeria and Chad are vibrant. Garoua evolved in the 18th Century after the first people began to settle in the area followed by Fulani herders in the 19th Century who built defences around the town to dispel invaders. Then other Muslims settled including Hausa and Shua Arabs (Bassoro & Mohammadou 1980).

A postal agency was in existence in the German and French administrative periods which was upgraded to full post office status in 1929 (Bratzel et al. 2014). The town is also identified as Garoua Benoue to distinguish it from Garoua Boulai in the East Region. Next I will discuss the two existing post offices in Garoua:

- (1) Garoua Recette Principal (General Post Office) and
- (2) Garoua Aeroport.

Garoua Recette Principal (General Post Office)



Figure 1. The GPO building with the EMS office inside left from the counters, April 2018.

Photo – Marc Parren.

The GPO lies in the city centre and along with serving the general public it houses a sorting office and the Express Mail Service (EMS) (Fig. 1). The officers at the counter and the receveur still make use of the postmarks with R. CAMEROUN, in which the U is excised, and R. CAMEROUN below in the postmark. The most common type around is the one with R. CAMEROUN below in the postmark of which several devices are still in service. I have measured several strikes applied on registration slips applied by the different ladies at the counter and they all measure 27.5 mm in diameter. The one used by the receveur and applied on International Reply Coupons by him measured 27 mm in diameter. There is one device with the U excised which is an unreported type as it is 26.5 mm in diameter but does not resemble the one described by Bratzel et al. (2014) since in this case R-G $\approx 7\frac{1}{2}$ mm and not $\approx 9\frac{1}{4}$ mm (see Fig. 2).



Figure 2. Garoua R with U excised canceller 26.5 mm (top right), Garoua R. Cameroun 27.5 mm (below right), and an International Reply Coupon with the Garoua R. Cameroun 27 mm.

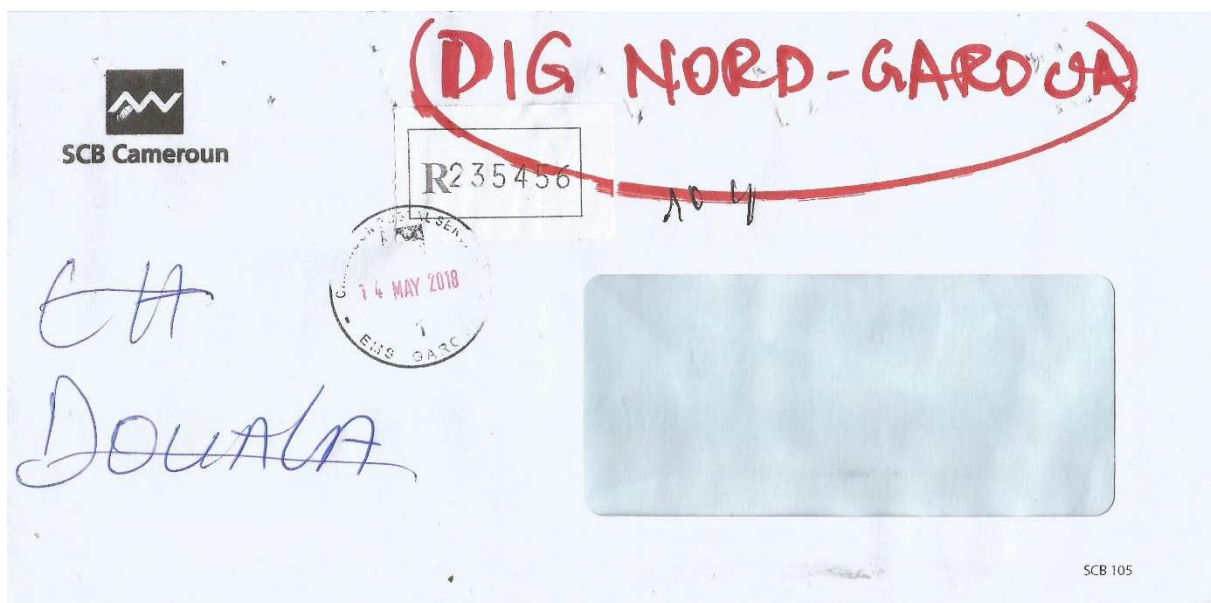




Figure 3. Garoua GPO cancellers introduced in the last few years: (1) Shiny ‘COURRIER 2’ postmark (above left), (2) ‘EMS GAROUA 1’ (above middle) and (3) ‘EMS DOUALA-AKWA 3’ (above right) seen on an EMS dispatch destined to a bank branch in Douala (previous page).

On a rare occasion I would drop a letter just in the slit in the wall of the GPO next to the post office boxes without passing by the counter. Such a cover would be dealt with directly by the sorting office and I have noticed that in that case the Shiny self-inking postmark inscribed ‘CAMEROON POSTAL SERVICES/420 * GAROUA-BENOUE’ with ‘COURRIER 2’ would be applied, seen used between 16 MAR 2018 and 16 JUL 2018. These devices normally measure 30 mm in diameter but this one measures 32 mm as it was damaged in the course of duty. While visiting my bank I was able to obtain a cover sent by EMS with a Garoua EMS postmark proving to be the Shiny self-inking postmark inscribed ‘CAMEROON POSTAL SERVICES/EMS GAROUA’ with number ‘1’ with, on the reverse, a postmark reading ‘CAMEROON POSTAL SERVICES/EMS DOUALA-AKWA’ with number ‘3’ of 17 May 2018 was applied (Fig. 3). What is striking is the use of a registration label instead of a barcoded label for trace and tracking purposes.

Garoua Airport



Figure 4. The Garoua airport (right) with the post office inside (left), July 2018. Photo credit – Marc Parren.

Construction of this airport that can handle wide-bodied airplanes started in 1979 and it started operating in 1982. Bratzel et al. (2014) reported that the Garoua Aeroport post office was opened between 1985 and 1989. The only postmark seen so far is the one with R.U. CAMEROUN below in the postmark, just seen used on 21.8.1989, while the postmark with R. CAMEROUN below has been seen used between 27.8.1990 and 8.6.2001. Since then, no postmarks have been noted until the author visited the airport in July 2018 (Fig. 4). There are hardly any postal clients for this post office since there are barely any flights, often just three days a week, and there are car access charges. So, this should be considered a very elusive postmark. When I requested the postmistress to register a letter she refused at first and told me to go to the Garoua GPO under the pretext she had no material to do so. I told her she could still use the old-fashioned paper registration labels and that at the GPO they would apply the barcoded registration label. Only after she made a phone call with the receveur of the GPO, whom I knew personally for some time, she agreed to do so. It was to be the first registered cover in many years with the Shiny postmark inscribed ‘CAMEROON POSTAL SERVICES/15011 * GAROUA-AEROPORT’ with ‘GUICHET 1’ applied on 12 July 2018. The postmistress used a paper registration label with number 4506, while at the Garoua GPO they affixed the barcoded registration label. There are no backstamps on this letter (Fig. 5).



Figure 5. Registered cover sent on 12 July 2018 Garoua Aeroport Guichet 1 to the Netherlands with the registration slip (top).

Guider

Guider is a town along the Route Nationale 1 that connects Garoua with Maroua and is located on the border with Chad. The name Guider is derived from the Guidar ethnic group that straddle the border between Cameroon and Chad. Cotton is the main cash crop produced in the surroundings but onions with an annual average production of 9,000 tons is one of the most important of the north. A cotton ginning plant of SODECOTON started operating in March 1973 creating large employment opportunities.

A postal agency was opened by the French in 1937 which was upgraded to full post office status in 1955 (Bratzel et al. 2014). Most covers or postmarks on postage stamps seen are those of the colonial period or the first decades after independence with the country name CAMEROUN or R.U. CAMEROUN below in the postmark until as recent as January 2012. What is striking is that no postmark with the U excised is known to have been in use from this post office unlike most elsewhere. The single circle postmark with CAMPOST-CAMEROUN below is seen between 23 April 2008 and 3 January 2012. A single strike of the 30mm double circle postmark inscribed 'GUIDER/Cameroun Postal Services' without an index number below has been noted for 8 August 2014. Currently they use a Shiny self-inking postmark inscribed 'CAMEROON POSTAL SERVICES/15230 * GUIDER' with 'GUICHET 1' seen used 15 MAR 2018 (Fig. 6). The cover sent that day

arrived in Garoua the next day, backstamped on that day by the Garoua Arrivee postmark, then it reached Yaounde on 19 March 2018.



Figure 6. The double circle 'GUIDER / Cameroon Postal Services' postmark (top left), Guider Shiny 'GUICHET 1' postmark (below left) and the Post Office building along the Route National 1 (right), March 2018. Photo credit – Marc Parren.

Lagdo

Lagdo is a town along the Benue river, and became only of importance with the construction of a dam between 1978 and 1984 by the China International Water & Electricity Corp., when Lake Lagdo was created. It lies some 25 km east of Ngong. With the arrival of the dam large scale irrigated rice production started downstream in the Benue valley. The hydrodam with a capacity of 72 MW also provides electricity to the entire north of Cameroon, the Extreme-North region, North region and Adamawa region, but in the dry season the water table in the lake often becomes too low so certain days the power is shut in rotation. Next to the electricity plant where there is the water outflow a gathering of hippopotami (*Hippopotamus amphibius*) can be seen as the turbines cut fish passing which are devoured by them (Fig. 7).



Figure 7. View of lake Lagdo and hydrodam constructed between 1978-1984, March 2018. Photo credit – Marc Parren.

According to Bratzel et al. (2014) the Lagdo post office was opened between 1986 and 2000 (Fig. 9). Finding postmarks of this town is not easy as the accessibility is limited and Lagdo can hardly be considered a town but rather a village. The only postmark seen before my visit was the one with R. CAMEROUN below in the postmark, known to have been in use between 4.2.2003 and 22.10.2009. While visiting Lagdo in March 2018 another postmark with R. CAMEROUN below in the postmark was seen but with LAGDO GUICHET N°1 at the top and no longer used since 9.6.2016 (Fig. 8 left). Two self-inking postmarks of the Shiny Ideal V34R type inscribed 'CAMEROON POSTAL SERVICES/15040 * LAGDO' with either 'COURRIER 1' or 'GUICHET 1' were brought into service on 1 June 2016 (fig. 8, centre and right and fig. 10). Mail departing and heading for Ngong-Garoua is picked up on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 10.00.



Figure 8. Lagdo cancellers introduced 1 June 2016 and the Shiny ‘COURRIER 1’ postmark with corrected date from 15 into 19 by pen applied on an ordinary letter to Yaounde.



Figure 9. The Lagdo Post Office building March 2018. Photo – Marc Parren.



Figure 10. Registered cover sent on 19 March 2018 Lagdo Guichet 1 backstamped 23 March Garoua Chargements to the Netherlands (reduced to 75%)

Mayo-Oulo

Mayo-Oulo is named after the stream that passes the town, as Mayo means river. It lies some 40 km westwards of the town of Guider and around halfway along the road that leads to the border with Nigeria. It is an important groundnut-growing area, and a traditional sesame producing area, although the latter at a much smaller scale. Mayo-Oulo is located along the main transit route for sesame that connects the main production area in Chad with Lagos, Nigeria where the seeds are exported to the Middle East and Asia (Roulon-Doko 2005). The town is the administrative centre and surrounded by isolated mountains (Fig. 11).



Figure 11. Mayo-Oulo Post Office, March 2018. Photo credit – Marc Parren.



Figure 12. Registered cover sent on 13 March 2018 Mayo-Oulo backstamped 16 March Garoua Chargements to the Netherlands

According to Bratzel et al. (2014) the Mayo-Oulo post office was opened between 1976 and 1985. Finding postmarks of this town is not easy as the accessibility is limited and the population living over there is scant. The only postmark seen so far is the one with R.U. CAMEROUN below in the postmark, known to have been in use between 15.10.1992 and 15.3.2002. I visited the post office in March 2018 and I found a canceller in use of the type which was introduced in 2012 in Cameroon. Because of its extreme vulnerability to wear it was replaced in most places long before 2018. It creates a 29mm double circle postmark inscribed 'MAYO-OULO/Cameroun Postal Services' and with an index number below, in this case the number 1. It is also the only type and index number I found to be present. However, with such small volumes of mail handled in Mayo-Oulo it was not deemed necessary to replace this canceller. I have seen an incoming cover with this postmark as arrival mark dated 5 March 2018 (Fig. 12). Mail departing and heading for Guider-Garoua is picked up at Monday, Wednesday and Friday at 9.30 hr, while mail arrives at 14.30 hr on the same days.

Mbé

Mbé is a village along the Route Nationale 1 that connects Ngaoundéré with Garoua and falls just within the boundaries of the Adamawa Region. It gets its status as a council by decree No. 082/455 of 20 September 1982. The word Mbé means 'Two tall hunters' in the local Dii dialect. The Dii historically left in several waves from Rey Bouba, located to the north-east, fleeing tribal wars, forced labour and enslavement. The existing post office building was constructed in 2005 (see Fig. 13). Mbé is a rural community where agriculture and small commerce are the dominant economic activities (AJLC 2014).



Figure 13. The Mbé CAMPOST-CAMEROUN postmark (upper left), the Mbé Shiny 'GUICHET 1' postmark (bottom left) and the Post Office building along the Route National 1 (right), March 2018. Photo credit – Marc Parren.

According to Bratzel et al. (2014) the Mbé post office was opened between 1986 and 2000. A single strike of the postmark with R. CAMEROUN below and reading MBE-DEPART is known used 13.1.2004. In addition, a strike of the single circle postmark with CAMPOST-CAMEROUN below has been seen used 30 NOV 2007. Since then, no postmarks have been noted until the author visited Mbé in March 2018. It concerns a Shiny self-inking postmark inscribed 'CAMEROON POSTAL SERVICES/10120 * MBÉ' with 'GUICHET 1' seen used 27 March 2018 (Fig. 13). The cover sent that day arrived in Ngaoundéré 2 April 2018 as it was backstamped on that day by the 'CAMEROON POSTAL SERVICES/910 * NGAOUNDERE-RP' with 'COURRIER 2' postmark and it reached Yaounde on 3 April 2018.

Ngaoundéré

Ngaoundéré is the capital of the Adamawa region and lies at the northern end of the railway to Yaoundé that was completed in 1973. The city serves as an important communications hub, linking the south of Cameroon with the northern part of the country. From here cattle and cotton is transported by railways to the south. The town has a mixed population with a majority of Muslims from the northern regions but also a considerable population of southerners which are Christians.

A postal agency was in existence in the German and French administrative periods which was upgraded to full post office status in 1923 (Bratzel et al. 2014). Next I will discuss the three existing post offices in Ngaoundéré:

- (1) Ngaoundéré Recette Principal (General Post Office),
- (2) Ngaoundéré Guichet Annexe Gare (annexe railway station) and
- (3) Ngaoundéré Université (university).

Ngaoundéré Recette Principal (General Post Office)



Figure 14. The GPO building with the EMS office entrance to the side, March 2018.

Photo credit – Marc Parren.

The GPO lies in the administrative quarter and next to serving the general public it houses a sorting office and the Express Mail Service (EMS) (Fig. 14). So far only the Shiny self-inking postmark inscribed 'CAMEROON POSTAL SERVICES/910 * NGAOUNDERE-RP' with 'GUICHET 1' is known dated 19 APR 2016 and the 'CAMEROON POSTAL SERVICES/910 * NGAOUNDERE-RP' with 'COURRIER 1' dated 16 JAN 2017. The personnel were not very helpful so I was only able to post one letter but not inspect any cancelling devices. The posted cover after arrival showed the Shiny self-inking postmark inscribed 'CAMEROON POSTAL SERVICES/910 * NGAOUNDERE-RP' with 'COURRIER 2'. However, there should be many more postmarks in use at this GPO. While visiting the Mbé post office I was able to obtain an EMS dispatch label with a Ngaoundéré EMS postmark proving to be the Shiny self-inking postmark inscribed 'CAMEROON POSTAL SERVICES/EMS NGAOUNDERE' with number '1' that had been signed off by the postal officer in charge at the EMS office on 29 December 2016 (Fig. 15).



Figure 15. Ngaoundéré GPO cancellers: (1) Shiny ‘COURRIER 1’ postmark seen on a meter franked cover to the Netherlands, (2) Shiny ‘COURRIER 2’ postmark seen on a letter to Yaounde and (3) ‘EMS NGAOUNDERE 1’ seen on an EMS dispatch for the Mbé post office.

Ngaoundéré Annexe Railway Station



Figure 16. The Ngaoundéré Annexe Railway Station post office (right) opposite the railway station (left), March 2018. Photo credit – Marc Parren.



Figure 17. Ngaoundéré Guichet 2 canceller introduced 27 December 2015 (top right) and a registered cover sent on 29 March 2018 from the Ngaoundéré Annexe Railway Station post office to the Netherlands.

This annexe post office located opposite the railway station has operated since 29 January 2014. A self-inking postmark of the Shiny R-532D type inscribed ‘CAMEROON POSTAL SERVICES/910 * NGAOUNDERE-RP’ with ‘GUICHET 2’ was taken into service on 27 December 2015. This post office hardly has any demands for international registered service, like most post offices in the north, so here the postmaster used a domestic

barcoded registration label starting with the DA identification letters which he changed by hand into RR for international service. There are no backstamps on this letter so most likely it was sent by air in a closed bag from the Ngaoundéré GPO directly to Douala for further dispatch to Europe (Fig. 17).

Ngaoundéré University

Bratzel et al. (2014) reported that the Ngaoundéré University post office was opened between 1986 and 2001. The post office is not located on the university campus although it is extremely large, but on the Route Nationale 1 on a roundabout opposite the university entrance (see Fig. 18). Probably this is to facilitate the mail delivery as it is located on the outskirts of town towards the direction of Garoua where mail vans ply daily.



Figure 18. The Ngaoundéré University post office (right) opposite the university entrance (left), March 2018. Photo credit – Marc Parren.

I can report that the post office must have been opened after 19 January 1993 when the university was created by presidential decree n° 93/028. The post office was at least operational in February 2001 which we can deduce from this cover with a 'NGAOUNDERE-UNIVERSITE' registration label (Fig. 19). However, it was cancelled by a 'NGAOUNDERE / R.U. CAMEROUN' postmark 27¼ mm in diameter, a type of cancellation also in use at the G.P.O. This resembles the actual situation at the Ngaoundéré Annexe Railway Station post office where no postmark mentioning Ngaoundéré Gare is presently in use.

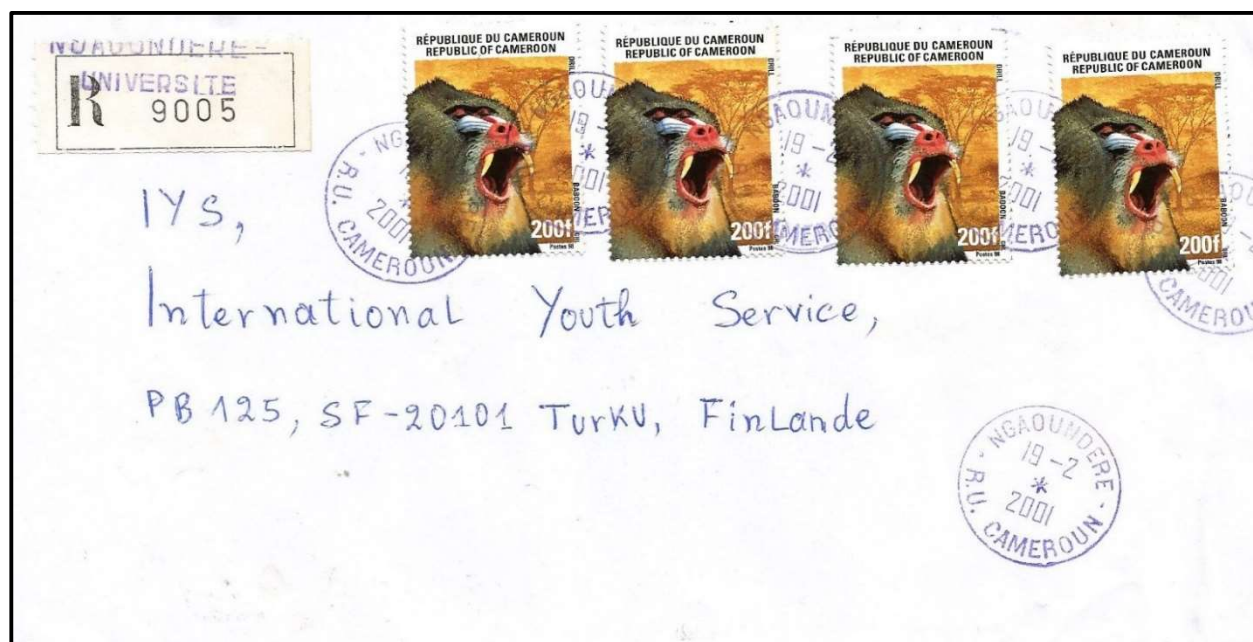


Figure 19. Registered cover sent on 19 February 2001 from the Ngaoundéré University post office with a 'NGAOUNDERE / R.U. CAMEROUN' postmark to Finland

The first postmark seen with the wording university is the one with R. CAMEROUN below in the postmark, and NGDERE-UNIV.-GUICHET N° 1 seen used on 6.2.2007. Here I can also present for the first time the

current postmark in use. It concerns a self-inking postmark of the Shiny R-532D type inscribed 'CAMEROON POSTAL SERVICES/10111 * NGAOUNDERE-UNIVERSITE' with 'GUICHET 1' seen used 29 MAR 2018 (Fig. 20).



Figure 20. NGDERE-UNIV.-GUICHET N° 1 canceller (top right), CAMEROON POSTAL SERVICES/10111 * NGAOUNDERE-UNIVERSITE' with 'GUICHET 1' (below right), and registered cover sent on 29 March 2018 from the Ngaoundéré University post office to the Netherlands

Ngong

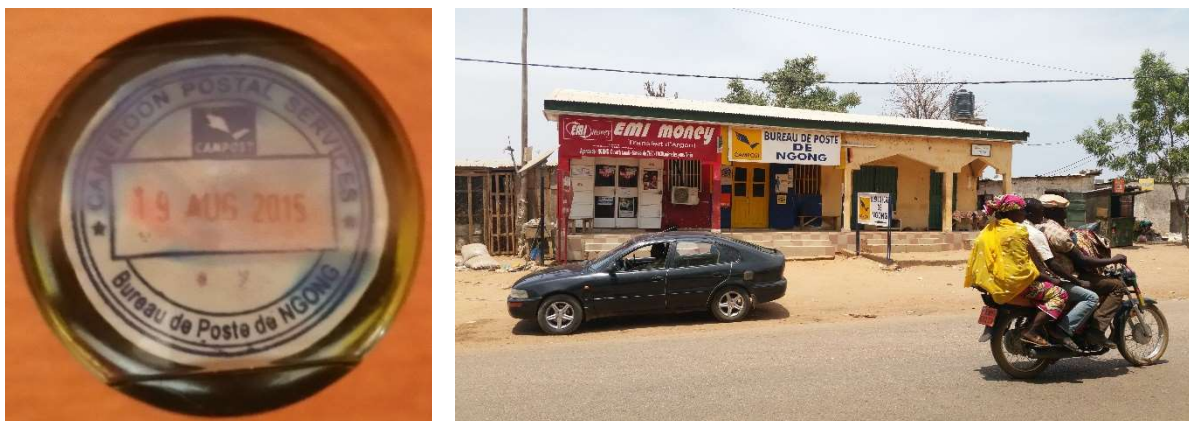


Figure 21. Ngong canceller introduced 19 August 2015 and the Post Office building along the Route National 1, March 2018. Photo credit – Marc Parren.

Ngong was a small village until the end of the last millennium. However, a large influx of farmers looking for new arable land has attracted incomers from all corners of Cameroon. Since the Boko Haram troubles, more migrants are fleeing the Extreme-North region as well. This has led to it becoming a major town along the Route National 1, some 40 km south of Garoua. Ngong is an important trading centre in agricultural products and is especially known for its groundnut production. Before the introduction of cotton, groundnut cultivation was made obligatory in colonial days and aimed for exports as being the best adapted crop for the north of Cameroon. With the introduction of cotton cultivation in 1951 the farmers gradually turned their attention to this crop because groundnut cultivation was less profitable. However, the state cotton company SODECOTON promoted a rotation with groundnuts in the plains, as from the early 1980s, that made that the groundnut output increase again. Cameroon is nowadays the 9th largest groundnut producer in the world with ca. 750.000 tons, while exports are very limited. Around one third of the output is auto-consumed by the producers while around half is sold on the market (Noiraud et al. 2018).

Bratzel et al. (2014) did not report the Ngong post office as it was opened as recently as 19 August 2015. The only canceller in use is a self-inking postmark of the Shiny R-542D type inscribed 'CAMEROON POSTAL SERVICES/Bureau de Poste de NGONG' (Fig. 21). Originally this was a bi-coloured postmark with the date in red, but because of the lack of red ink it became an entirely black canceller over time. This post office hardly had any demands for registered service, like most post offices in the north, but Ngong did not even possess any barcode registration labels so the postmistress used a paper registration label from her registration letter book, still in use for national registration letters (Fig. 22). In this case two days later it was replaced by a barcode registration label applied inside the Cabine de Chargements, for registered letters, at the Garoua G.P.O. However, from an ordinary letter posted the same day to Yaounde we know that all letters were deposited already the next day at the Garoua G.P.O. as it was backstamped on that day by the Garoua Arrivee postmark. The code E01-293 is one applied normally on postal mandats.



Figure 22. Registered cover sent on 21 March 2018 Ngong backstamped 23 March Garoua Chargements to the Netherlands

Poli



Figure 23a. Tourism notice board mid-way along the Poli road in the middle of nowhere indicating that 95 km ahead the Alantika mountains are to be found on the border between Cameroon and Nigeria, June 2018.
Photo – Marc Parren.

Figure 23b. Mount Alantika and the Faro river photo taken in 1920.

The Route National 1 (RN1) crosses the entire North region from north to south. Poli is a small town located along a dirt road that branches off the RN1 at the northern edge of the Benue National Park created in 1968 which measures 1,800 km². Poli lies some 35 km westwards and around halfway on the road that leads to the 3,300 km² large Faro National Park created in 1980 on the border with Nigeria. Here on the border we also find the Mont Alantika, meaning "mountain only known to the gods" (Fig. 23).

Important mammals of these savanna reserves are the elephant, lion, leopard and hippopotami (*Hippopotamus amphibius*). The black rhinoceros (*Diceros bicornis longipes*) roamed here but disappeared since 2004, and with that the last known population of this West- Central African rhino subspecies (Hiol Hiol et al. 2015). The area shows a very low human population density. Before reaching Poli the road winds around some mountains and climbs along stony hillsides. Poli itself is located in a valley surrounded by mountains of which the highest peak reaches over 2.000 m altitude.

A postal agency was opened by the French in 1931 which was upgraded to full post office status in 1953 (Bratzel et al. 2014). Finding postmarks of this town is not easy as the accessibility is limited and very few people live over there. Most covers or postmarks on postage stamps seen are those of the colonial period or the first two decades after independence with the country name CAMEROUN below in the postmark. The postmark with R.U. CAMEROUN below is known have been seen used between 17.1.1985 and 28.5.1985, while the same postmark with the U excised is known to have been in use between 25.2.1986 and 14.6.1994. Ever since no postmarks have been noted until the author visited Poli in June 2018 and found use of a Shiny self-inking postmark inscribed 'CAMEROON POSTAL SERVICES/15110 * POLI' with 'COURRIER 1' seen used 21 JUN 2018 and one inscribed 'CAMEROON POSTAL SERVICES/15110 * POLI' with 'GUICHET 1' seen dated 31 OCT 2016 (Fig. 24).



Figure 24. Poli Shiny postmarks (left) and the Post Office building with postmaster on the doorsteps, June 2018 (right). Photo – Marc Parren.

Rey Bouba

Rey Bouba is a town located along a dirt road that branches off the Route National 1 at the northern edge of the Benue National Park some 70 km eastwards and around halfway on the road that leads to the 2,200 km² large Bouba Ndjida National Park created in 1968 on the border with Chad. It is the seat of power for the Lamidat (sultanate) of the same name. The rulers are Peul that migrated from present Mali in 1799 and installed their hegemony in the north of Cameroon during the 19th century in a class society that until recently also engaged in slavery. The main building of interest is the Palace of Rey Bouba which was built under the Ngjidda reign (1798 - 1866) between 1805 and 1808 and it was added to the UNESCO World Heritage Tentative List in 2006. The name Bouba is derived from the word Baba that signifies Sultan, while Rey or Ray Bouba signifies the Ray sultanate (Sa ĩbou 2005).



Figure 25. The old Rey Bouba post office temporarily closed, April 2018. Photo – Marc Parren.

According to Bratzel et al. (2014) a postal agency was operational in 1951 and 1952 but not in 1953 while the Rey Bouba post office was opened between 1986 and 1993. The only postmark seen so far is the one with R. CAMEROUN below in the postmark known to have been in use between 22.6.1993 and 20.9.2002. Ever since no postmarks have been noted until the author visited Rey Bouba in April 2018. The old post office was found closed and under renovation (Fig. 25) and a temporary post office was operational elsewhere in town (Fig. 26). It proved to be that the postmaster applied a Shiny self-inking postmark inscribed ‘CAMEROON POSTAL SERVICES/15320 * REY-BOUBA’ with ‘COURRIER 1’ seen used 09 April 2018 (Fig. 26). The cover sent that day arrived in Garoua 12 April 2018 as it was backstamped on that day by the by the Garoua Arrivée postmark and it reached Yaounde on 17 April 2018.



Figure 26. The Rey Bouba Shiny ‘COURRIER 1’ postmark (left) and the temporary Post Office building, April 2018. Photo – Marc Parren.

Acknowledgement

I like to thank Marty Bratzel for providing some earliest and latest known use of postmarks and for sharing information over the years.

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Gambia Imperial Censor update

John Wilson

Thanks to the sharp eyes of Graham Mark (Civil Censorship Study Group) I was recently able to add another Gambia Imperial Censor cover to my collection. Sent from Bathurst to Freetown by air in October 1942, the cover had been opened and re-sealed by Examiner 7219, one of the team of five Imperial Censors sent to the Gambia in February of that year in order to examine transit mail being carried by the Pan American "LATI substitute" flights between Natal, Brazil and Lisbon.

As we know (Ref. 1) the Censor function was only partially successful, and censor activity was transferred to San Juan, Puerto Rico at the end of July 1942. The censor team remained in Bathurst until December 1942 when they were transferred to Lagos, at which point their censor numbers vanished never to be seen again. From August to December the Imperial team busied themselves assisting the local censorship by examining terminal mail, and the cover shown here is just such an item. I have not seen another example of mail from Gambia to Sierra Leone examined by Examiner 7219; in fact, I have not seen any similar cover Bathurst-Freetown showing examination by an Imperial Censor.

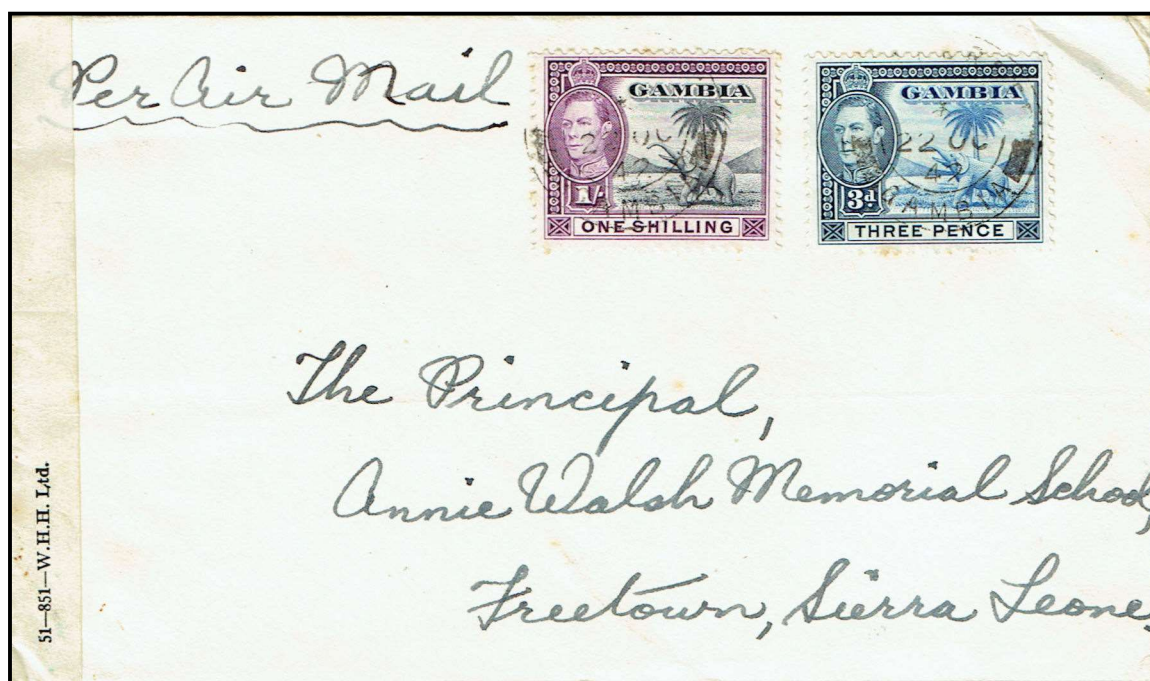


Figure 1a; Posted Bathurst 22 October 1942.

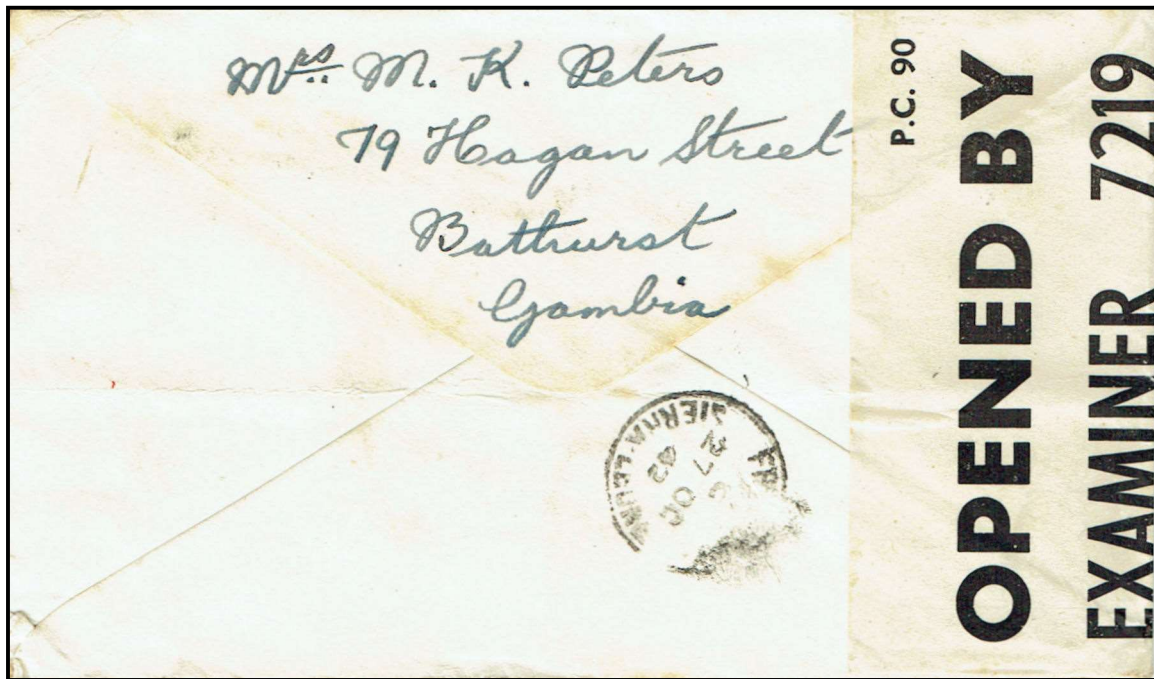


Figure 1b: Received Freetown 27 October 1942.

The cover became even more interesting when I investigated how it might have been transported. I had imagined that the Pan American Airways (Africa) service flying from Accra to Bathurst would have carried this mail but as I showed in an earlier article in “Cameo” (Ref. 2), PAA (Africa) issued a schedule dated 16 September 1942 in which the service to Bathurst had been discontinued. According to Intelligence Summary 168 issued on 2 September 1942 the service ended on 30 August and was taken over by the Royal Air Force using a “borrowed” DC-3. See the rather poor copy here:

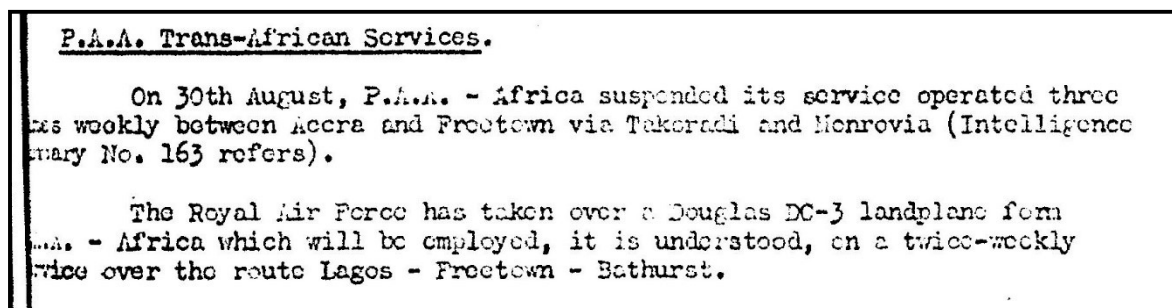


Figure 2: Civil Aviation Intelligence Summary 168. 2 September 1942.

It seems unlikely that the cover could have travelled by surface from Bathurst to Freetown, so one must assume that it was carried on the R.A.F. twice-weekly DC-3 service?

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The Untold History of Efut Postal Agency, Nigeria

Edet Akpan

I met Chief Edet Bassey Okon, the Muri-Elect of Efut Nyong Edem Clan in 2018 in for a 5-day conference at Gboko – Benue State, Nigeria. We both travelled from Calabar to the Conference. He briefed me during the

conference on the structure of the Efut Clan since the 50s to date. So when I wanted to research the story behind the Postal Agency of Efut, in August 2019, he gladly assisted me to trace the location and the accompanying history behind the Agency which he had personally used in the 80s before its closure in 1992 for postal transactions. Archival materials from the National Archives Calabar supported most of the stories gathered in Efut about the existence, operations and closures of the Postal Agency in Efut- Calabar.

Edward B. Proud's "Postal History of Nigeria" (Ref. 1) states that Efut Postal Agency was established on 21 March 1953, though the first cancellation he had seen was dated 29 May 1953. Efut Postal Agency was located at No. 44 Edgerley Road Calabar (though archival material bears No. 45 Edgerley Road) starting in the charge of Mr. J. I. Akaya in 1951. There were occasional closures in-between until the death of the last Postal Agent Mrs. Obo Ndem in 1992, whose grandchild spoke with me during my visit to the premises that housed the Agency up to 1992. Some elders of the community I spoke with said Mrs. Obo was only selling stamps on the veranda of the PA. This claim was confirmed by Mrs. Obo's grandson who now lives in the building with his family.

Mr. Akaya, the first agent, sent a Resignation Letter to the District Officer, Post and Telegraph on 2 July, 1954 because he was dissatisfied with the annual allowance of £24 paid to him. The Calabar District Surveyor had, on 25 June 1954, informed Mr. Akaya that the statistics of business transacted at Efut PA at the moment did not warrant a higher allowance and that Mr. Akaya was well aware of the fact that annual allowances are based on the volume of business done at the Agencies; which are reviewed every year. At the end of it all Mr. Akaya ceased to be the Postal Agent of Efut with effect from 1 August 1954 and, because no substitute could be found, the Efut Postal Agency was closed temporarily according to the department policy on 31 July 1954 at 12noon.

Surprisingly, on 9 August 1955 a year after the closure of Efut PA, Mr. J. I. Akaya of 6 Bassey Duke Street reapplied to be Postal Agent of Efut PA. Though the Calabar Urban District Council had no objection to the re-opening of Efut PA the Surveyor, Calabar District wrote on 5 September 1955 to say that his Headquarters advised that re-opening the Efut Agency cannot be approved in view of the approval already given for the opening of Henshaw Town Agency. This did not go down so well with Mr. Akaya who wrote on 14 October 1955 to the Authority, with reference to the Authority's memo 930/251 of 5 September 1955, to narrate the injustice done to him which very likely led to his earlier resignation.

His complaint, according to Mr. Akaya's memo to the District Officer on 14 October 1955, was that in March 1942 he was called to take over the then Duke Town Postal Agency from Henshaw Town. He did take over on 1 April 1942 and ran the Agency up to 1951 when he was asked to remove the agency to Efut after the completion of "the present Post Office" owing to its nearness (so it is clear that Efut PA most likely started operation in 1951). In my submission, this "present post office" according to Mr. Akaya is most likely the current Calabar General Post Office along Calabar Road, opposite the African Club. According to him, after having spent so much to bring the new Efut Postal Agency up to suit the purpose and provided himself a safe, he found his allowance actually reduced to 20/- whereas the Rent alone was 25/-, so he resigned the post.

In his words *Now about June this year (1955) I was sent for by the Honourable Mr. O. Ndem (I think Mr. O. Ndem was the husband of Mrs. Obo Ndem. the last Postal Agent of Efut PA) who asked me to re-apply for the Agency and that he thought things will be a bit better than before. Any way I reluctantly applied and after my application has passed through all channels the reply to me is that the Agency has gone back to Henshaw Town. This can induce a caw man to suspect that something is going wrong somewhere. I therefore wish the District Officer to probe into the matter. I have the honour to be, Sir, Yours obediently, J. I. Akaya.*

On 20 October 1955 The District Officer followed up the matter and explained why he decided the reopening of Efut PA should not be refused due to closeness to other postal facilities, thus;

- i. *The proposed agency at Efut is 2 miles from the main Post Office and more than 2 miles from the Henshaw Town agency which is only 1 ½ miles from the main Post Office.*
- ii. *The Efut area has a population of 14,622 as against Henshaw Town's 7,928 and is expanding at a rapid rate.*
- iii. *The applicant (Mr. Akaya) has had a previous experience of the working of the agency and would therefore be an asset to your department.*

2. *An early reply would be appreciated. District Officer.*

On 16 February 1956 approval was received for the re-opening of Efut Postal Agency with Mr. J. I. Akaya as the Postal Agent with sureties on a Bond of £100. The agency was scheduled for re-opening on the 14 April 1956 but a few months later the agent had to contact the Postmaster at Calabar to say that the Agency was burgled on the night of 4 October 1956. Mr. Akaya's handwritten report to the District Officer on 12 October 1956 read thus:

With deep regret, I have to report to you that on my arrival to my agency, on the morning of 4th October 1956, I found my door opened, on my entering I saw my safe lock damaged and the contents cleared. I ran to the police and reported. A.S.P, Chief Inspector and a Corporal S. accompanied me to the agency, who after having inspected asked me to come to the station for my statement. I went and did so. He stated in detail what was stolen.

The f. Asst. Postal Controller, Post and Telegraph, Calabar District replied to Mr. Akaya's theft report same day 12 October 1956 Thus

A check conducted on Efut Postal Agency as a result of a report from Mr. J. I. Akaya the Postal Agent, that the Agency was burgled on the night of 3rd/4th October 1956 reveals a total loss of £30. 11. 3d – made up as follows:-

Unsold Postal Order – £1. 1. 4d

Unsold Postage Stamps – £10. 19. 9½d

Cash – £18. 10. 1½d

2. It will be appreciated if you arrange to pay this amount to the Postmaster, Calabar who will issue you with an official receipt.

I am, Sir;

Your obedient Servant,

(Sgd) B. C. Onwuta,

f. Asst. Postal Controller, Calabar.

CC:

Mr. G. I. Oranye,

53 Ekondo Street, Calabar

Mr. Paul Okorafor Okoro,

105 Calabar Road, Calabar.

Information was sent to Mr. Akaya's Sureties for a speedy recovery of the amount lost"

The PA was shut down the day it was Burgled on 4 October 1956. A request by the f. Asst. Postal Controller to The Ass. Supt. of Police, Calabar for a report on the Police investigation on 26 October 1956 has no archival record.

Mr. Akaya summoned courage on 12 November 1956 to reply to the f. Asst. Postal Controller's letter calling on him to refund the loss £30. 11. 3d to the Postmaster. Mr. Akaya's sad reply goes thus;

May I point out sir that I have been a Postal Agent for the past fourteen years and have not at any time been queried or otherwise in running the agency. This shows that I have not been negligence over my duty. I am therefore surprised to be called upon to make good the loss of an amount which was not due to my negligence or fault. You may be interested to know that the matter is in the hands of the Police and the result of their investigation has not been released. My being called upon to pay this money appears to me to be indirect way of holding me responsible for the loss. My monthly allowance of £2. 6. 8d minus £1. 8/- rent left me only 18/8d, petty shortages made good notwithstanding, and this has not placed me in a good financial position to pay for the loss I am called upon to make good. I Pray, Sir, that if it is absolutely necessary that I should pay for the loss before the result of the Police investigation, I should be given something to do for earning to enable me comply with the order. My long years' experience in postal matters has placed me in a good stead to understand many postal transactions.

I wait with hope your favourable reply,

Yours faithfully,

J. I. AKAYA.

CC: District Surveyor, Enugu,

The Surveyor, Calabar

The Snr. District Officer, Calabar.

Consideration for the re-opening of Efut PA surfaced in a document addressed to the Senior District Officer, Calabar by the Head Postmaster on 18 February 1958. On 2 April 1958 a confirmation memo was sent to the Senior District officer stating the recovery of the lost amount of £30. 11. 3d in Efut Postal Agency on 4 October 1956 with Mr. Akaya as a Postal Agent. Mr. Akaya had paid for the loss as nothing is recorded of the Police investigation after two years. On 9 September 1958 the Head Postmaster sent a report of an inspection carried out in Efut PA and the necessary arrangement put together for the re-opening of Efut Postal Agency for postal transactions on Monday, 15 September 1958.

A PUBLIC NOTICE DATED AT CALABAR THIS 12TH DAY OF SEPTEMBER 1958 announces the re-opening of EFUT POSTAL AGENCY on MONDAY THE 15TH OF SEPTEMBER, 1958.

A handwritten letter with the address 5 Bassey Duke Street on 6 May 1958 to the District Officer Calabar stated thus

I am writing to report that I have got the key of my safe right now. I will be very grateful to know the further step to take. I have the honour to be Sir, Yours obediently. AKAYA.

On Monday 15 September 1958 Mr Akaya was back to work as the Postal Agent at Efut Postal Agency.

In summary

- Efut PA opened 1951 (no exact date), closed due to resignation of the Agent on 31 July 1954
- Opened again 14 April 1956, closed due to burglary on 4 October 1956
- Opened again 15 September 1958

The more recent history could also be confusing. I visited Egerton Rd with Chief Edet Bassey Okon and Mr. Okon Akpabio (a member of Nipost Staff who once worked for the Nigerian Post Office at 39 Edgerley Rd in the 1980s). Documents found in the Archive at Calabar show that postal agencies could be upgraded to full post offices if the business at the postal agency reached a critical mass. At some time after independence the postal agency at 44 Edgerley Rd closed because a full post office opened very close by; at 39 Edgerley Rd, on the ground floor of a three-storey building, within only 10-15 metres distance. I also found a colonial post box in the front of a shoe shop in the same radius from both buildings. I took photographs of both buildings and the post box, all shown here.



Efut postal agency building at 44 Edgerley Rd, Calabar



Colonial post box in a shoe shop at Edgerley Rd



Former full-service Efut post office at 39 Edgerley Rd, Calabar

Reference

1. Proud E.B., *The Postal History of Nigeria*, p348, Proud Bailey, Heathfield 1995

Cameroun – Plating the Sterling Issue of 1961: the 4d on 15-Franc Stamp – Plate B

Marty Bratzel

Introduction

This article is the 14th in a series dedicated to the study and characterization of Cameroun's 1961 stamp issue. On 1 October 1961, Cameroun introduced 12 then-current postage stamps revalued with sterling currency, ½d through £1, for use in West Cameroon. These overprinted stamps remained in use until May 1962, when the currency conversion was completed and stamps in CFA francs were introduced.

Plate A of the 4d on 15-franc stamp was discussed in the previous article in this series (Ref. 1). The characterization and plating of Plate B, discussed in this article, completes the detailed examination of each stamp in the series. For details about the basic 15-franc stamp and the determination that two overprint plates were prepared for this denomination, please refer to the article about Plate A.

When was Plate B Prepared?

As previously discussed, stamps from Plate A were available on 1 October 1961, but what about Plate B? The Carter accumulation (Ref. 2) contains numerous used singles and multiples up to six stamps that are from Plate B. The earliest recorded date for a stamp from Plate B is 30 January 1962 and the latest 7 May 1962. Examination of additional used copies may well push the earliest date back. The date that Plate B was prepared

cannot be established with certainty but the evidence presently to hand indicates that Plate B was prepared no later than mid-January 1962.

Comparison of Overprints from Plates A and B

The same black ink which was used to overprint the stamps on both plates adhered reasonably well to the engraved stamp, which facilitated characterization of Plate B and comparison with Plate A.

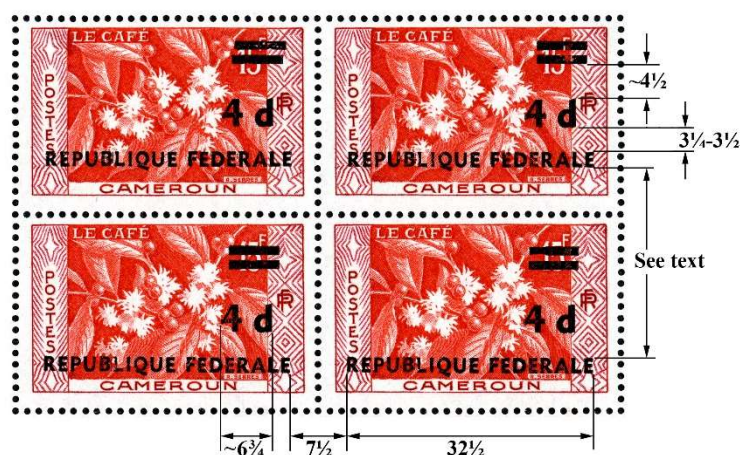


Figure 1. Measurements for the 4d on 15-franc Plate B overprint.

Detailed measurements describing the overprint on Plate B are shown in Figure 1 and can be compared with the corresponding measurements for Plate A presented in Ref. 1. There are essentially no differences in the relative placement of the components of the overprint on any given stamp from either plate; except for Position 38 on Plate A, stamps from the two plates are indistinguishable. Even if there are systemic differences in the relative placement of the components on the two plates, these are overshadowed by slight differences arising from the manual composition of both plates. To see differences, one must examine the characteristics and the relative positioning of the bars at each position and to look for possible broken letters in REPUBLIQUE FEDERALE.

Characterisation of the Positions in Plate B

Two half sheets of stamps from Plate B, plus a mint block of ten and many mint and used singles or multiples of up to six stamps were available for study. In addition to a millimetre scale, the overprints were examined first with an ordinary magnifying glass, then under 30X magnification.

Alignment

Alignment of components down each column of stamps is good, but alignment of REPUBLIQUE FEDERALE across a row is somewhat uneven, as has been observed for other denominations in the series. Unlike for Plate A, however, the overprint is not significantly angled across each row. The only significant difference is the vertical distance between REPUBLIQUE FEDERALE in adjacent rows:

- Between rows 1-2: ~25 mm
- Between rows 2-3: ~23 mm
- Between rows 3-4, 4-5, 6-7, 7-8, 8-9 and 9-10: ~23½ and 23¾ mm, with some positions ~24 mm
- Between rows 5-6: ~24¼ mm

The Bars

The bars are replete with distinctive characteristics and, coupled with the relative alignment of each pair of bars, it is possible to plate most positions with an ordinary magnifying glass. A picture is worth a thousand words. The bars for all 50 positions are shown in Figure 2. To help the reader who wishes to plate his / her stamps, many of the positions in the figure are annotated to point out distinguishing characteristics. For those

positions that are not annotated, differences in ink adherence notwithstanding, careful consideration of the bar alignments and the more subtle shapes of the bars – e.g. squared, rounded, or tapered ends – should allow their plating as well.

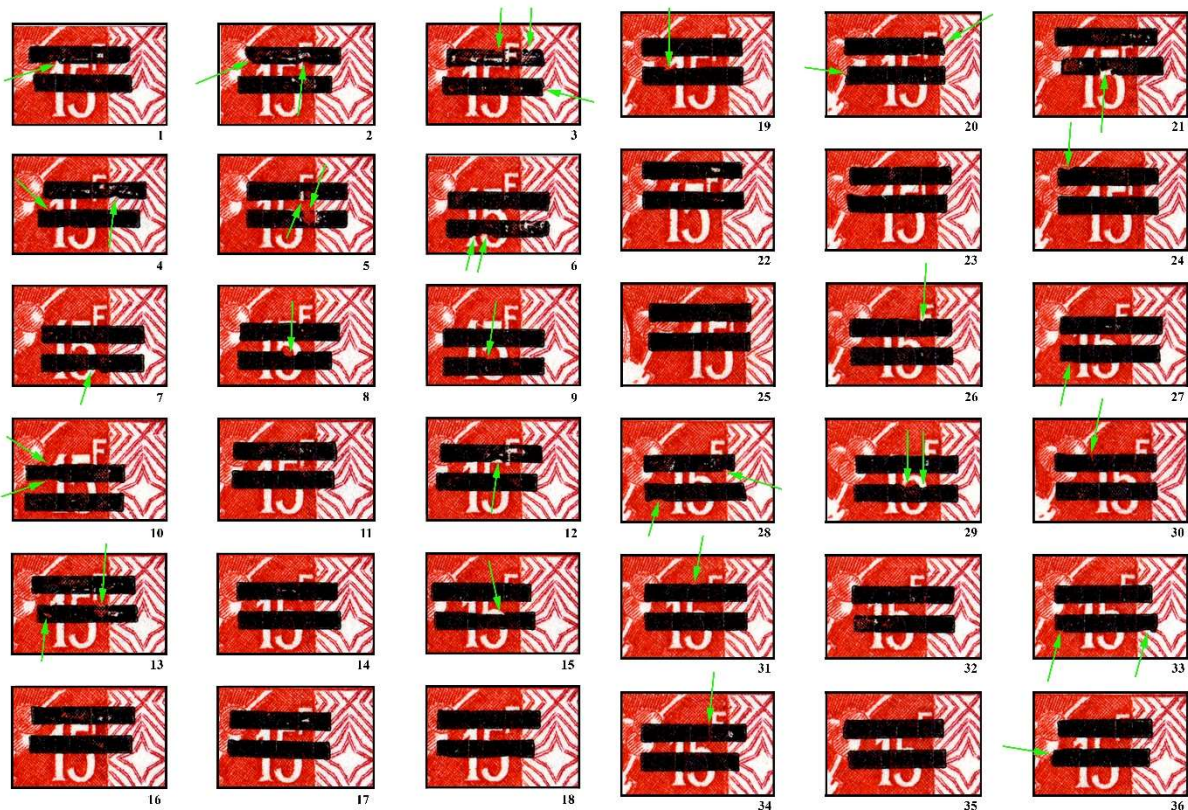


Figure 2A.

Bars for Positions 1-18.

Figure 2B. Bars for Positions 19-36.

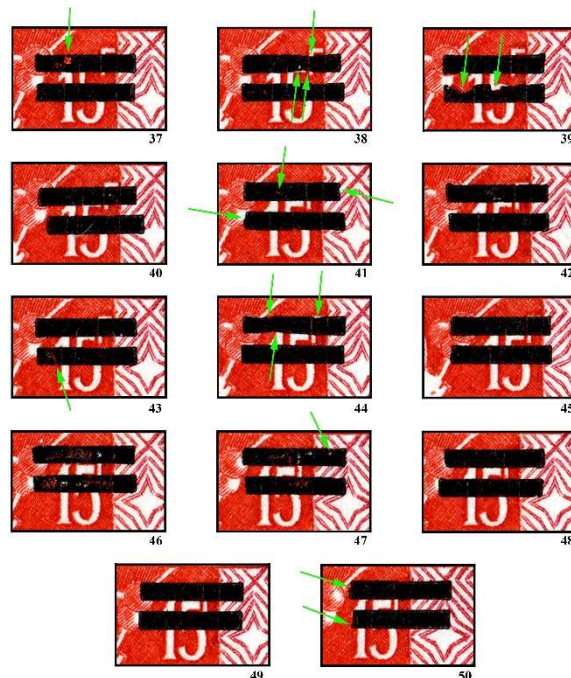


Figure 2C.

Bars for Positions 37-50.

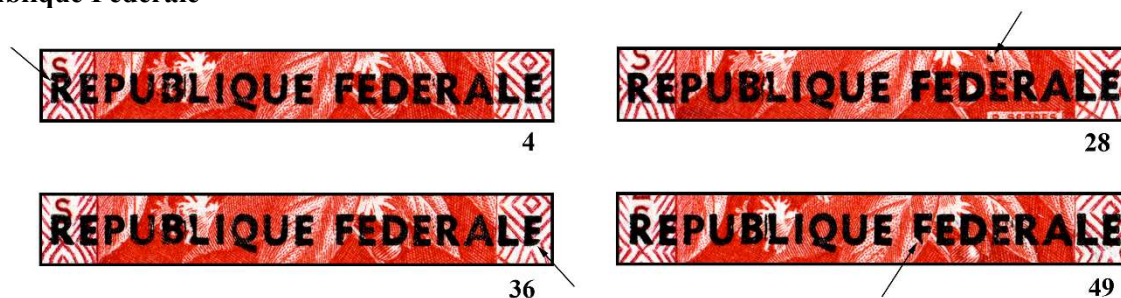
Republique Federale

Figure 3. Broken Letters in REPUBLIQUE FEDERALE and ink spot.

The length of REPUBLIQUE FEDERALE is uniform on all stamps. As shown in Figure 3, and akin to Plate A, a thin black vertical line is present to a greater or lesser extent between letters at many positions, and the left side of the L is often only partially inked, giving the impression of a broken letter.

The only confirmed broken letters are found at Position 4 – the R in REPUBLIQUE, at Position 36 – the last E of FEDERALE, and at Position 49 – the F of FEDERALE (Figure 3). Broken letters may also exist at other positions but, like for Plate A, what is observed for the stamps to hand may be artefacts related to the extent of ink adherence. Examination of additional stamps may identify or confirm additional broken letters.

At Position 28, there is a black ink spot above the second E of FEDERALE.

4d

There are no distinguishing characteristics for the “d” at any of the 50 positions but, again like Plate A, the 4 can be found without defect, or with a small bulb or hook on the nose, or with a broken nose (Figure 4). The size of the bulb or hook varies, and the presence of a broken nose may be a characteristic of the type, or reflect the amount of overprint ink, or be a combination of both. The characteristics of the “4’s” are not considered further.



Figure 4. Comparison of the 4’s.

Comparison with Other Stamps in the Series

Comparing the overprint bars with other stamps in the series shows no correlation, indicating that this plate – nor any portions thereof – was not used to prepare any other denominations.

Conclusions

Two plates were used to overprint the 15-franc coffee stamp. The overprints from the two plates are for all intents and purposes identical. Stamps from both plates were available at postal counters in West Cameroun, and both were likely to have been available from the philatelic bureau in Paris. Those from Plate A were placed on sale on 1 October 1961. The date of preparation of Plate B has not been established, but the earliest confirmed postally used stamp from Plate B is dated 30 January 1962. The reason for two printings is not known but probably supplies to hand were insufficient to meet postal and philatelic demand. The

characteristics of the overprint bars allow determination of whether stamps are from Plate A or Plate B and also the position of stamps within each plate. Plate B is not associated with preparation of any other stamps in the series.

Acknowledgements

As for Plate A, thanks are extended to Wolfgang Strobel, Rob May, Michael Wright, Peter Hørlyck, Robert Nelson, Brian Lythgoe, and others who provided stamps and scans, without which this study would not have been possible.

References

1. Bratzel, Marty. Cameroun – Plating the Sterling Issue of 1961: the 4d on 15-Franc Stamp – Plate A. *Cameo*, Vol. 19, No. 3, October 2018, pages 134-141.
2. The Carter accumulation is a large quantity of used Cameroun stamps that the late Nick Carter acquired “on the streets” in Lagos in 1961-62. Nick passed away on September 11, 2008. His stamps have been, and will continue to be, available for study. Additional articles based on his accumulation are published periodically in the philatelic literature.

Nigeria 1961 UPU Missing Colour

Tony Plumbe

Nearly 60 years after its issue, a variety of the 1d UPU issue of 1961 (SG 102) has surfaced. This comprises just the red-orange background colour with the blue colour omitted, printed on FN watermarked paper and perforated $14\frac{1}{2}$ as per the normal issue. On the variety, there is the slightest hint of the blue 1d denomination and horizontal lines in the left-hand side of the ellipsoidal globe. The red-orange background is also a slightly brighter hue of red-orange compared to the normal stamp. The example to hand is a right marginal mint example suggesting that at least a whole sheet failed to be printed correctly and evaded the manual print checkers, or alternatively, given the hue difference, the variety is from a trial print run of a sheet using just the one colour.



Figure 1: Variety

(both at c. 150% actual size)

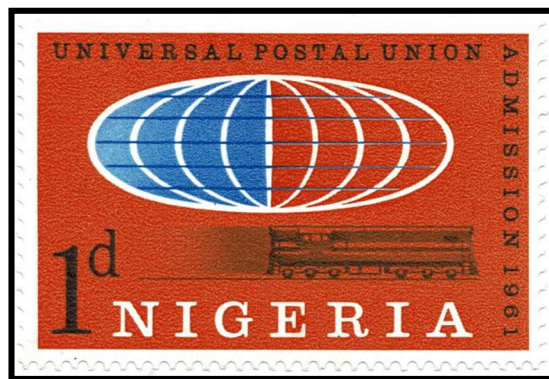


Figure 2: Normal

Some “Lost” Dale-Lichtenstein Gambia Rediscovered

Rob Schneider

The past few years have offered a wealth of rare Gambia material starting with the Spink Empire sale in July 2016, to the “double header” of John Sacher’s West Africa pre-UPU postal history and Cavendish’s sale of Elliot Leibowitz’ traditional collection that December, to most recently Grosvenor’s sale last September of the late Brian Davies’ excellent collection. The last offered a number of pieces from the historic major Gambia collections, including most interestingly for me rare 1880-81 CC watermark perf Cameo sheets from Dale-

Lichtenstein that had been originally included by Harmers in mixed lots and not photographed. I'd been frustrated in constructing a database of important Cameo pieces, only being able to note these without having an image to refer to, so that now we have generally available, photographic records of them.

I noticed in preparing my bids for the Davies sale a CC upright watermark line perf ½d sheet (without any indication of provenance),¹ of which I had recorded only two – the Leibowitz example (ex McCaig, Bavington-Jones) and the unphotographed Dale-Lichtenstein one included in lot 109 of the Harmer's October 1990 London sale - and wondered whether it might be the latter. My suspicions were pretty much confirmed when I connected the 1880-81 comb perf 6d upper left corner block of four with the misaligned perfs in Mr Davies' collection (Grosvenor lot 1440) with its prior appearance in Dale (Dale lot 119, photographed). On updating my records after the Grosvenor sale, I similarly discovered that both Dale-Lichtenstein and Davies had two comb perf ½d inverted watermark sheets, with the Dale sheets the only ones listed in my records of a stamp I consider very elusive² which was also in the same Dale-Lichtenstein mixed lot as the line perf sheet, further confirming my suspicions of the Dale-Lichtenstein provenance. I also noticed that Mr Davies' two 1d line perf sheets were not the two – of the only four I record – I have photos of,³ with the other two again from the Dale-Lichtenstein collection, and have concluded likewise they are in all likelihood the latter.

The following in tabular form are the rare ex Dale-Lichtenstein 1880-81 Cameo sheets in the Davies collection I've "tentatively" identified, on which I have also noted the number of sheets in total extant that I have recorded, indicating their immense rarity.⁴

Sheet	Dale/ Harmer Lot No.	Davies/ Grosvenor Lot no.	Total Number of Sheets RS Records
1880-81 CC Cameos Upright Wmk. Line Perf (2nd printing)			
½d sheet of 15	Lot 109	Lot 1431	Two
1d sheet of 15	Lot 110	Lot 1435	Four
1d sheet of 15 (<i>nb</i> while not illustrated in the Grosvenor printed catalogue, is illustrated in electronic catalogue on their website)	Lot 110	Lot 1436	
1880-81 CC Cameos Upright Wmk. Comb Perf (3rd printing)			
½d inverted wmk sheet of 15	Lot 109	Lot 1433	Two
½d inverted wmk sheet of 15	Lot 109	Lot 1434	

Notes

¹ The Grosvenor catalogue did not list any provenance on the items in this article, as Mr Davies apparently did not note them on his pages. In fact, before the auction on noticing this sheet, I'd asked Grosvenor about the vendor with a view to speaking with him and was advised unfortunately that it was an estate.

² The ½d was in fact the last of the singles I got to complete my set of the 1880-81 comb perf inverted watermarks.

³ Ex Bavington-Jones, Leibowitz and Sacher, Bavington-Jones, respectively.

⁴ I started to construct a database of rare and important Gambia Cameo pieces after the Leibowitz sale based principally on the later auction records I had available, including John Sacher's sales, Bavington-Jones, "Athenian," Dale-Lichtenstein, Weldhen, John Rose etc. I unfortunately do not have access to the older auction catalogues and welcome anyone who wants to collaborate on the record – in fact one other serious collector has already provided additional information – or has a better record and I can help them.

Nigeria's Destruction of Old Stamps and Postal Stationery, 1914 and 1917

Dr Simon Heap

It is clear from the archival records of the printers and Crown Agents as to how many of a particular stamp was produced, but far more difficult to calculate with any degree of accuracy how many stamps were withdrawn from circulation and destroyed. Yet files in the Nigerian National Archives in Ibadan reveal precisely how many sheets of Northern Nigeria stamps and Southern Nigeria sheets and loose stamps were left to be destroyed during the early period of the successor colony of amalgamated Nigeria.

1914

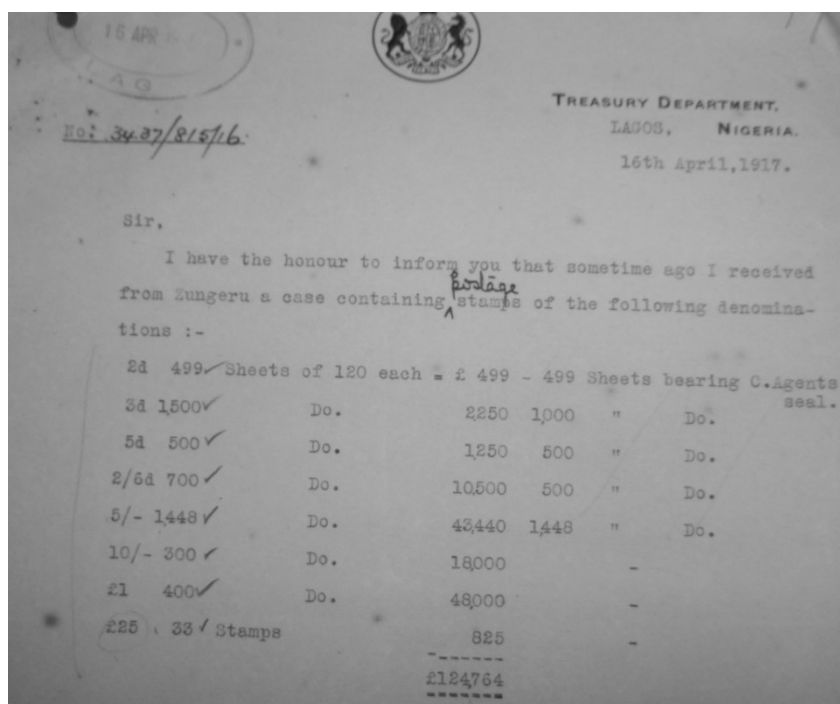
In July 1914, Nigeria's new Postmaster-General James Somerville wrote to the Government, requesting: *A Board may be sanctioned for the destruction of a number of soiled and turn unused postage stamps now in the hands of the Accountant at Lagos. The Board consists of Mr A. W. Nolan, Treasury Assistant and Mr A. [Alan] Burns, Junior Assistant Secretary, Central Secretariat* (Ref. 1). They met at the Accountant's Office in the GPO at 8.30am on Monday 27th July 1914 to carry out their task. The following were destroyed:

Denomination	Total number	Value
Stamps		
½d	170	7s 1d
2d	29	4s 10d
2½d	10 sheets & 12 stamps	£12 12s 6d
4d	1	4d
6d	2 sheets & 26 stamps	£6 13s
1s	2 sheets	£12
2s6d	3 sheets & 48 stamps	£51
5s	1 sheet & 102 stamps	£55 10s
10s	52	£26
£1	112	£112
Postcards		
½d	11	5½d
1d	63	5s 3d
2d	16	2s 8d
Envelopes		
H 3d	24	6s
K 4d	9	3s
Grand Total		£277 5s ½d

Later in the year, on 18th November, another Board of Destruction assembled for the purpose of destroying 1,255 old Lagos postcards (valued at £10 9s 2d) and 3 spoilt Northern Nigeria 1s stamps (valued at 3s). The Board met at the GPO, Lagos, led by Major W. H. Beverley and assisted by W. A. Flacke and, again, A. W. Nolan (Ref. 2).

1917

On 16th April 1917, W. S. MacGregor, the Treasurer in the colonial government, reported that "some time ago I received from Zungeru a case containing postage stamps" of Northern Nigeria (Ref. 3). What a treasure trove that must have been! In fact, apart from the £25 stamps, the case contained only complete sheets of 120 stamps, with many still bearing the Crown Agents seal.



Denomination	Total number of sheets	Sheets bearing the Crown Agents seal	Total value
2d	499	499	£499
3d	1,500	1,000	£2,250
5d	500	500	£1,250
2s 6d	700	500	£10,500
5s	1,448	1,448	£43,440
10s	499	499	£18,000
£1	400	400	£48,000
£25	33 stamps	-	£825

Apart from the £25 stamps of 1904 we cannot be certain as to which set of Northern Nigeria stamps they belonged to. Indeed, they might have derived from more than one issue. Nonetheless, given the general colonial thrifty practice of using up old stamps before putting new issues in post offices, it seems highly likely that most of the stamps were from the George V issue of September 1912.

Several things can be calculated and concluded from these figures. First, with a very large paper value of £124,764, there was a lot of Northern Nigeria stamps left over, despite being sold at post offices after incorporation into amalgamated Nigeria in the first months of 1914, when the first order of the new colony's stamps was still being printed in London. The old stamps continued to be used up until exhausted and then the new stamps took over. The enormous value of left-over stamps could also have been a security and financial risk, if those stamps had been stolen and used legitimately, exposing the colonial authorities to the liability of honouring the posting of massive amounts of stamped mail.

Second, with only complete sheets in the case, this suggests it came from the central post office stores of Lokoja and Zungeru. The timing of 1917, when Kaduna took over from Zungeru as the new colonial capital of the Northern Provinces of Nigeria may well not be coincidental, possibly occurring when the old stores were being moved to their new storage home and a decision made not to keep such historical items of the old colony.

Third, the lack of the smaller denominations – halfpenny and penny, as well as 3d, 4d, 9d, and one shilling – suggest those values were kept in post offices and used up over time. Of course, anything less than a complete sheet of the other values (apart from the £25 stamp) was also similarly used up.

Fourth, a large amount of the high denomination stamps never entered circulation, with notable totals for the five shillings and £1 stamps.

In the case of the five shillings, it can be noted that the George V print run produced 1,015 sheets, and so the 1,448 sheets destroyed must have stretched back into the Edwardian issue of 1910 when 1,476 sheets were printed. Given the two issues totalled 2,463 sheets, the 1,448 sheets destroyed represents a considerable 58.9 per cent of all that denomination across two reigns.

In the case of the £1 stamps, which were only ever issued in the George V set of 1912 when 506 sheets were produced, a significantly large number of 400 sheets, or 79 per cent, were incinerated.

Last, but just as importantly, with 33 of the £25 stamp listed and subsequently destroyed, it means further calculations can be made based on the fact that just 50 mint stamps remained after the burning of most of the £25 stamps in February 1909 (Ref. 4). Therefore, 17 were sold between the two burnings, and that total exactly matches the 17 sold up to February 1909. A grand total of 34 £25 stamps were purchased as mint copies for collectors or actually used.

MacGregor had the case of stamp sheets opened and reported:

I do not recommend keeping them any longer. They are all "Northern Nigeria" stamps and are now obsolete. I suggest that a Board consisting of three officers (one audit, one Treasury and another) be appointed to destroy these stamps by burning them at the Apapa Saw Mill [Lagos].

It might of course be possible to sell them at their face value to stamp dealers but I am doubtful if this course would meet with the approval of the Secretary of State [for the Colonies] (Ref. 5)

Postmaster-General James Somerville agreed with this statement for two reasons:

I think all the 'Northern Nigeria' and 'Southern Nigeria' stamps should now be destroyed. We have sufficient 'Nigeria' stamps on hand and the old stamps are not in good condition. (Ref. 6)

However, given the hectic nature of administering the new colony of Nigeria during war-time conditions, nothing happened for several months. In October 1917, Somerville then added a stock of Southern Nigeria stamps and postal stationery to be destroyed, with *some old stamps on hand in the General Post Office Strong Room*. (Ref. 7) Though nowhere near as large a total as those of Northern Nigeria, there were some notable numbers of sheets for destruction for certain denominations: the 2d, 5d, 9d and 5s values. The large number of unused 5s stamps made up over two-thirds of the total face value. Again, we cannot be certain regarding from which set of Southern Nigeria stamps they came, but the same reasoning as above can be applied.

Denomination	Total number	Value
Stamps		
½d	8 sheets & 61 stamps	£2. 2s 6½d
1d	10 stamps	10d
2d	896 sheets & 14 stamps	£896 2s 4d
2½d	10 sheets & 17 stamps	£13 13s 6½d
3d	1 sheet & 94 stamps	£2 13s 6d
4d	9 sheets & 16 stamps	£18.5s 4d
5d	670 sheets & 2 stamps	£1,675 0s 10d
6d	24 sheets & 55 stamps	£73 7s 6d
9d	460 sheets & 2 stamps	£2,070.1s 6d
1s	85 stamps	£4 5s 0d
2s 6d	5 sheets & 59 stamps	£82 7s 6d
5s	434 sheets & 58 stamps	£13,037 0s 0d
10s	1 sheet & 71 stamps	£95 10s 0d
£1	1 sheet & 1 stamps	£121 0s 0d
Envelopes		
"G" Envelopes (2½d each)	2	5d
"H" Envelopes (3d each)	2	6d
Grand Total		£18,090 11s 4d

Eventually, in November 1917, the Nigeria government appointed a Board of Destruction consisting of again Alan Burns from the Secretariat, Assistant Auditor F.W Langley and Treasury Assistant Arthur Darnell to oversee the process.

They certified that at 8.30am on 13th November 1917 they received the obsolete Northern Nigeria stamps at the Treasury, as well as old and damaged Southern Nigeria stamps from the Postmaster-General. Their very short report concludes that

All these stamps after being checked were taken by us to Apapa where they were completely destroyed by burning. (Ref. 8)

References

1. Nigeria Archives, Ibadan (NAI), Chief Secretary's Office (CSO) 19/2/N.2733/14, James Somerville, Postmaster-General, to Charles Lawrence, Acting Central Secretary, 10th July 1914.
2. NAI, CSO 19/2/N.4221/1914, W. Stone, for PMG, to W. Scott Evans, Central Secretary, 7th November 1914.
3. NAI, CSO 19/5/N.1024/1917, William MacGregor, Treasurer, Lagos, Nigeria, to Donald Cameron, Central Secretary, Lagos, Nigeria, 16th April 1917.
4. Simon Heap, 'The Burning of Northern Nigeria's £25 Stamps, 1909', *Cameo*, October 2010, pp.415-16.
5. NAI, CSO 19/5/N.1024/1917, MacGregor to Cameron, 16th April 1917.
6. NAI, CSO 19/5/N.1024/1917, Minute by Somerville, 4th May 1917.
7. NAI, CSO 19/5/N.1024/1917, Somerville to Cameron, 6th October 1917.
8. NAI, CSO 19/5/N.1024/1917, The Board of Destruction to Cameron, Lagos, 13th November 1917.

Ascension WWII - the postal service and censorship arrangements

Graham Mark

In Rod Vousden's article in *Cameo*, October 2019, p131-135, (Ref. 1) he surprised me with his expression, near the top of p132, "*As a result it appears the Ascension censor stamp ceased to be used ...*".

I mentioned my reservations concerning this to Wilf VEVERS and said to him that the official history makes it quite clear that a decision was taken to suspend censorship of civilian mails because there was so little of it. There is a comprehensive history of the British Empire censorship during WWII - it is the *History of the Postal and Telegraphic Censorship Department 1938-1946*, (Ref. 2). Copies of the relevant paragraphs for all the Atlantic Islands are attached as figures 1 and 2.

(2) ASCENSION ISLAND

1222. Postal and Telegraph censorship was introduced on 1st September, 1939. Cable and Wireless Limited had an important cable station on the Island and at the beginning of the war the Island was inhabited solely by their employees, numbering about 130, and a British Military Unit consisting of two officers and about 26 other ranks. It was decided in March, 1940, that the outgoing mail from Ascension was so small and unimportant that postal censorship could be discontinued. In the Spring of 1942, the question of re-imposing censorship arose, as the United States had decided to establish an air base on the Island, and sent a party of about 1,300 military engineers. Arrangements were made whereby the British and American Unit Censorships examined their respective Army mail, but postal censorship of civil mail was again undertaken by the Medical Officer of Cable and Wireless. There was no external telephone circuit in use.

(26) ST. HELENA

1429. Censorship was imposed from the beginning of the war. The organisation consisted of two officers, namely the Government Secretary, who acted as Postal and Press Censor, and the Manager of Cable and Wireless Ltd., who acted as Telegraph Censor. There was no external telephone circuit in use. Instructions for Censorship in Ascension Island were routed via St. Helena for onward transmission.

Figure 1; text relating to Ascension and St Helena

(10) FALKLAND ISLANDS

1315. The wooden town hall which contained the Censorship office was completely burned down in April, 1944, and none of the records could be saved. The Censorship Officers consisted of two persons, namely the Chief Censor and the Assistant Censor, this latter post being held by two clergymen in succession. The Assistant Censor was responsible for routine telegraph work on week days with the Chief Censor as referee when necessary, and active on Sundays. The Postal Censorship was always concentrated into a period of a few days before the steamer sailed. It had to be arranged to close the mails a day or two before sailing. The steamer which ran between Stanley and Montevideo called about every three weeks. All letters carried were terminal to the Falkland Islands, no transit mail being examined there. As this vessel took all the outward mail it was not considered necessary to have inward censorship as it was thought that the outward mail clearly showed the nature of the preceding inward one. Customs and Excise personnel boarded the vessel and searched the crews for letters. A heavy fine was imposed on members of the crew who were found to carry letters and the senders or addressors were also dealt with sternly. On the other hand there was no prosecution resulting from the breach of censorship Regulations.

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The radio station in the Falkland Islands was taken over by the Navy who were in complete control, and who passed to the Chief Censor any messages which were considered to interest the Censors. No transit messages were received by the Chief Censor. There was no external telephone circuit in use, and no testing for secret writing.

1316. South Georgia

In the dependency of South Georgia the Magistrate or the Deputy Postmasters acted as Censors. There was practically no secure communication with South Georgia, which therefore had to manage its own censorship. The dependency, however, received condensed censorship instructions which the Chief Censor of the Falkland Islands drew up. The sole business of South Georgia was the whaling industry.

Figure 2: text relating to Falkland Islands and South Georgia

Clearly an executive decision was taken, whether in London or on St Helena is not stated, but I am confident it would not have been taken on Ascension Island. Moreover Martin & Walton (Ref 3), stated; *Civil censorship was discontinued in March 1940 ..*” so they appear to have seen the official history.

In a survey of mail not marked by any censorship device it seems unusual to pick three items which appear to have been addressed by the same hand. These simply reinforce the theory that a known handwriting of a trusted civilian was sufficient for such mail to be passed unexamined. Can the writer of these letters be identified? It seems unlikely that his surname was McNair as, of two of the covers shown, one was addressed to Miss **McNair**, the other to Mr **MacNair**. I doubt that would be a spelling mistake a family member would make.

In his penultimate paragraph Mr Vousden makes an assumption that *letters were censored on board a ship ...* with which I take issue. Censors of civilian mail were appointed, and no other individual was so authorised. I quite accept that military and naval mails might be subject to different rules, but it must be born in mind that those mails were subject to censorship prior to reaching the Post Office. Civilian mail was extracted from the postal stream for censorship and then handed back to the Post Office. The Post Office then made up bags, which were sealed, before passing them to whatever transport facility (truck, railway, ship or aircraft) was to be used and the seals were inspected to check they were unbroken upon arrival at the destination Post Office. So, I believe that censorship on board a ship en route to West or South Africa can be eliminated from any discussion unless documentary evidence can be found.

Turning to Martin and Walton (ref. 3) - they state that the colour of type 3 handstamp (boxed crown / PASSED / XX/...) corresponds with the route of the mail. This could reflect different individuals handling the mails as much as whether the mail was going north or south. I do not know how much censored mail is in collectors' hands but, unless there are a few hundred covers with the type 3 handstamp available, I suggest it is difficult to come to firm conclusions unless the local Ascension 'instructions to censors' can be located. As Ascension was a dependency of St Helena, does a similar pattern appear there on outbound mail?

References

1. Vousden R., "Ascension – the Postal Services and Censorship Arrangements that Operated during the Second World War", *Cameo*, Volume 20 p131, WASC, October 2019
2. *History of the Postal and Telegraphic Censorship Department 1938-1946*, (Ref. 2). 2 volumes xiv + 658 and iv + 339pp, published by the Home Office 1952, National Archives Kew reference DEFE1/333 and 334.
3. Martin J.J., Walton F.L & Harris R., *West African Censorship*, p15, WASC, Princes Risborough 3rd Edition 2015

An Odd Registration Etiquette from Sierra Leone

Peter Rolfe

A recent purchase shows an odd variation to a registration etiquette from Sierra Leone. Two examples of registered letters, to Finland with a Freetown postmark, have etiquettes printed GERIBUN in upper case (see figure 1), then overwritten "F2". Both are dated June 1990 with a Freetown Counter 7 postmark.



Figure 1: registered envelope from Freetown Counter 7, to Finland in June 1990

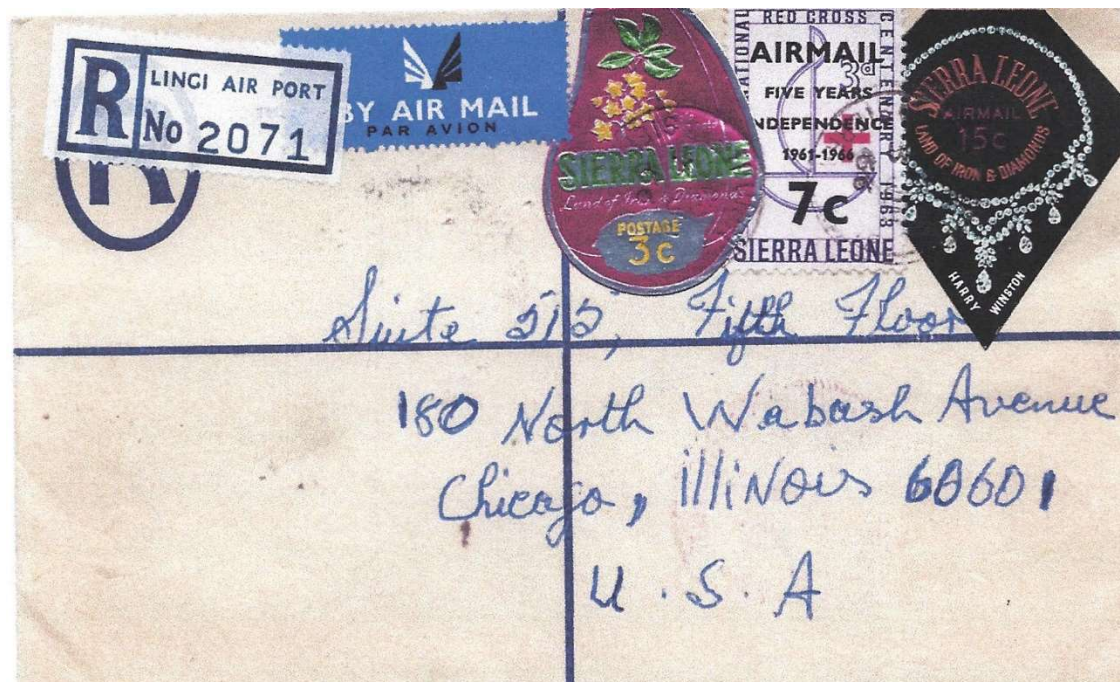


Figure 2: registered cover to the USA posted at Lungi Airport with printing error LINGI on the registration etiquette

There is no such place as Geribun in Sierra Leone, but there is a Gerihun, so it seems likely this label was misprinted. At the time it was normal for surplus stock of pre-printed registration labels to be over-written for economic reasons. I have not seen use of this GERIBUN label at Gerihun (so far), so it seems the error was noticed and put aside, later to be used at Freetown as shown here.

A similar printing error is recorded from Lungi Air Port, where several examples have been seen printed LINGI AIR PORT, used locally (figure 2).

Inter-colony air services in West Africa 1943

John Wilson

This article follows on from the one entitled Inter-colony air services in West Africa 1942 at page 35 of Cameo #106, January 2019

During 1942 Pan American Airways (Africa) established a wide-ranging air transport network from Lagos to Bathurst, from Lagos to Accra, from Lagos all the way to Cairo and also beyond through the Middle East to Karachi and Calcutta. The initial contracts for establishing this service were drawn up between the United States Government, the British Government and Pan American Airways on 12 and 14 August 1941, and from this point the entire trans-Atlantic and trans-Africa operations of Pan American Airways were a military project under the general contract references of W-535 and DA W-535.

However, the president and staff of Pan American were all steeped in the concept of “PanAm first” and from the first PanAm steps on the African continent they behaved in a totally commercial way with a view to running a civilian-style airline operation in peacetime. Official files both in the UK and US National Archives contain many references to the behaviour and attitude of Pan American employees and there was considerable annoyance and disquiet by the US military command that proper control had to be taken of the distinctly unregulated way (in a military sense) in which Pan American (Africa) was being run.

A hand-drawn map found in the PanAm Archive at Miami, reproduced here as figure 1, illustrates the Pan Am Africa network and illustrates that Leopoldville was never part of that network.



Figure 1

Matters came to a head in late 1942 when the Pan American (Africa) operations were fully militarised and the US Army took complete control. Many of the Pan American (Africa) operating staff were granted commissions and transferred into the US Army, but overall military control was established over the entire system and routes

from the United States to China. In my previous article (Ref. 1) the last PanAm (Africa) schedule of September 1942 recorded that services from Bathurst to Freetown and from Freetown to Accra had been discontinued, to be taken over by the Royal Air Force, flying directly between Freetown and Lagos with no intermediate stops (see also p23 of this *Cameo*). Interpreted literally, this effectively meant that mail from Bathurst and Freetown would be flown to Lagos but in order to connect with the trans-Atlantic service of the Boeing Clippers, such mail would then be flown back to Fisherman's Lake/Benson. This seems an unlikely scenario and clearly not the case when we read Appendix X of the "*History of Air Transport Command in Central Africa and the Middle East Part II*" (Ref. 2). This document dated 19 February 1943 lists all the routes flown by ATC, including a daily service Accra to Bathurst via Benson and Roberts Field. A detailed list of "Cities served" on this route shows Accra-Roberts-Benson-Freetown-Bathurst-Dakar, so Bathurst and Freetown did have a daily connection to both Fisherman's Lake and Accra.

Why Accra? Because this was the main base in West Africa for the developing use of C-54 (DC-4) four-engined land aircraft between Accra and Miami, many flying via the new airfield at Ascension, as the Boeing flying boats were gradually transferred back to regular Atlantic service on the FAM-18 and "LATI substitute" routes. The first C-54 came into service to Accra in November 1942 as the militarisation project came into being.

In summary:

apart from a possible short interruption of service in September/October 1942 when the Pan American (African) service was suspended and replaced by the RAF, Bathurst and Freetown remained connected by air to the North-South air links from Lagos through Accra, and later to Dakar and Oran. This means that airmail to be carried trans-Atlantic, including any "Double Atlantic" crossings would be carried from Fisherman's Lake by the Boeing 314 flying boat "Special Missions", then later from Accra by the ATC military services flying to Miami. Prior to militarisation of Pan American (Africa) services in November 1942, flights were operated on a scheduled basis. After militarisation flights were subject to military requirements; what we used to call "Exigencies of the Service".

Final observations from the "*History of Air Transport Command*" concern Leopoldville. As far as civilian airmail was concerned, in 1943 Leopoldville was simply a transit point on the BOAC Cairo-Lagos service and the terminal for the Sabena Leopoldville-Lagos service. From the military standpoint, Leopoldville was the western end of an alternative ferry route for aircraft and personnel to cross Africa towards the Indian Ocean and northward to Cairo. As soon as "Operation Torch" achieved the occupation of North Africa, and as Senegal declared for the Free French, any threat to the trans-Sahara ferry route from Axis intervention was removed. Appendix XXV to the "*History*" (Ref. 2) dated 20 January 1943 gives a full explanation of the non-status of Leopoldville and I give this text in full so as not to take sections out of context:

January 20, 1943

1. Based upon the decision of General Arnold to abandon the Southern Route, and the departure of the 812th Engineers from Nairobi to the Middle East, the following recommendations relative to buildings, equipment and supplies are submitted for your consideration:

- a) The turnover to local governments for such use by Europeans as may be possible without disturbing or altering the present construction, with the option that the United States Government may re-enter and take possession of such buildings and surrounding lands at any time deemed necessary by the United States Government in the prosecution of the War Effort.
- b) To remove all signal equipment throughout.
- c) To turn over to the British Government all supplies on the East Coast not shipped to other destinations by the United States Government.
- d) To turn over to the Government of the Belgian Congo all supplies at Elizabethville, Belgian Congo, not removed by the United States Government.
- e) To remove all supplies and equipment from Pointe Noire, French Equatorial Africa, and Leopoldville, Belgian Congo, for shipment to active ports and stations in our current operations.
- f) To maintain plane service once each week through Nairobi, Elizabethville and Leopoldville until the entire route is cleared of all military personnel and vital equipment which may be shipped by plane.

- g) *To operate a trip if, as when required, after the route is cleared, one plane weekly to Leopoldville (or special trips for inspection purposes) until all personnel withdrawn.*

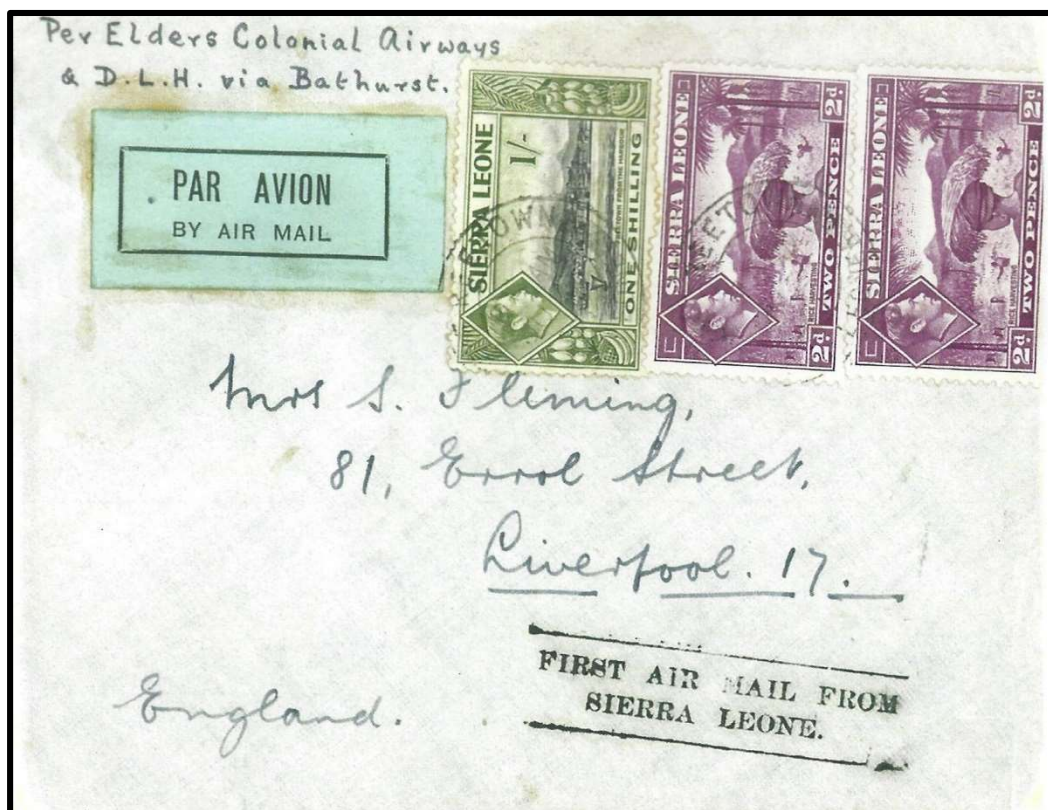
In philatelic circles the name “Leopoldville” acquired almost mystical qualities, when in fact, except for the US military in 1942 and Juan Trippe as part of his post-war planning for access to South Africa, it had little significance.

References:

1. Wilson J., “Inter-colony air services in West Africa 1942”, *Cameo*, Volume 20 p35, WASC, January 2019
2. “*History of Central African Division Air Transport Command*”. Air Forces Historical Agency. Microfilm Reel A3068. Page 1388 of 1909. (This is available as a free download on the web site of the West Africa Study Circle) www.wasc.org.uk

A letter sent by the First Air Mail from Sierra Leone

Gwyn Hughes



The letter enclosed in the above 1/4d cover to the UK, indistinctly dated, reads:

This letter is being sent by the first Elders Colonial Airways mail which leaves here by 8am tomorrow. We have succeeded in getting the service established at long last. There have been hold-ups and bickering between the Colony of Gambia and this Colony over the application of the laws governing the International Sanitation Convention. We have been held up for nearly three months.

If you remember I promised Mr. Knight that I would let him have a letter by our first air mail and I would be awfully grateful if you would let him have the envelope. The letter is, of course, all your own. I know that you do not collect stamps yourself.

W H L Hutching

Nigerian Red Air Mail Label

Jeremy Martin FRPSL



Figure 1

This registered air mail cover (figure 1) from Oshogbo on 7 SP 57 to England is franked 1/7d with 2x2d stamps on the reverse, paying the registration fee.

I do not recall seeing a red air mail label before. It could, of course, have been privately produced.

Cameroun: Internment Camps and Internees in World War II - A Correction

Marty Bratzel

In two previous articles (Ref. 1-2) we presented covers to / from Léon Pagés who, in 1941-42, was at one of the internment camps at Batschenga, Cameroun during World War II. I assumed - without basis in fact - that he was an internee. Recent information now leads me to believe that Pagés was not an internee but a soldier whose duty station was Batschenga. I have acquired two covers sent by him, the one postmarked 21 September 1939 that identifies him as a soldier 2nd class with the 10th Company of the Colonial Army at Ebolowa; and the other postmarked 4 December 1939 that places him with the *Bataillon de Milice du Cameroun* (Militia Battalion) at Yaoundé. The first cover was addressed by the same hand as the 1941-42 items presented previously. In addition to the covers discussed in our two articles and the two mentioned here, I have now also seen other covers addressed to Pagés at Batschenga in 1942.

Further investigation is warranted to unequivocally confirm his status, one way or the other, but I am now inclined to conclude that he was a soldier on active duty. My profound apologies for my mis-statements.

References

1. Bratzel, Marty. Cameroun in World War II - Batschenga and Mokolo Internment Camps and Nachtigal Military Camp. *Cameo*, Vol. 18, No. 1, January 2017, pages 35-48.
2. Parren, Marc, Michel Collet and Marty Bratzel. Cameroun in World War II - Internment Camps and Internees (Continued). *Cameo*, Vol. 18, No. 2, June 2017, pages 151-161

British Cameroons: Forces Post Office 573 Date-stamps – Update

Marty Bratzel

British troops were sent to the Southern Cameroons during the transitional period extending from just before Nigerian independence on 1 October 1960 through to unification of the territory with the former French Cameroun on 1 October 1961.

The FPO 573 Datestamps



Figure 1. Cover postmarked FPO 573 dated 10 AU 60, without index.

In our 1994 publication (Ref. 1), *The Postmarks and Postal History of the Cameroons under British Administration – 1916-1961*, we reported that two Field Post Office 573 date-stamps were used at APO Buea during 1960 and 1961. One had an asterisk above the date (No. 185 in our book) and the other an “A” (No.

186) and we described distinguishing characteristics for each device. In our 2007 *Supplement* (Ref. 2), we reported that FPO 573 postmark No. 186 (with Index A) also existed with Index B dated 22 AU 60.

We also originally reported that an FPO 573 postmark dated 10 AU 60 existed without index and that the date-stamp was the same as that with Index A. This was based on information received from John Daynes (Ref. 3) who further advised that the information had been provided to him and that he had not seen the postmark. Accordingly, we noted this variant as No. 186.

In mid-2019, a (the?) cover with a FPO 573 postmark dated 10 AU 60 without index was offered as a buy-it-now item on eBay for a modest price and was duly acquired (Figure 1). Upon examination, we conclude that the postmark is not No. 186 but No. 185, that is, the date-stamp without index is the same as the strike with an asterisk above the date. Key distinguishing characteristics are a break to the outer circle below the killer bar to the right of “573” and a small gap above the O in POST. We hereby correct our listing, 25 years later!

As an aside, strikes of the FPO 573 postmarks without index and with asterisk were re-examined. In addition to the two breaks to the outer circle noted above, it appears that the device underwent further deterioration during its use in the Southern Cameroons. The two breaks appear to have grown larger with time, and a large gap above the D in FIELD is often present. The presence and extent of apparent damage is influenced in part by the extent of inking of the handstamp, as evidenced by differences observed for multiple strikes with the same date.

The dates of the postmarks without index – 10 AU 60 – and with Index B – 22 AU 60 – deserve some mention. As previously described, a reconnaissance party carried out a 10-day study in the Southern Cameroons during May 1960. They were followed by the Civilian Works Organisation and the Royal Engineers who, in three months, constructed five permanent camps to house more than 1,300 military personnel. The first troops arrived on 14 September 1960 and assumed operational command seven days later. The dates on the two postmarks predate their arrival in the Southern Cameroons. An advance party of vehicles and troops left Lagos on LST *Empire Curlew* in early August, arriving into Tiko on 12 August. Thus, the postmark without index was struck while the advance party was en route, and the postmark with Index B after the advance party had arrived but before the main body of troops arrived.

The sender’s return address on the back of the cover deserves mention. The acronym N.A.A.F.I. stands for the Navy, Army and Air Force Institutes, a company created by the British government on 9 December 1920 to run recreational establishments needed by the British Armed Forces and to sell goods to servicemen and their families. It runs clubs, bars, shops, supermarkets, launderettes, restaurants, cafés and other facilities on most British military bases and also canteens on board Royal Navy ships.

FPO 573 Registration Label

In our *Supplement*, we illustrated a registered cover with a printed registration label reading FPO D.S. No. plus a handstamp 188. Depicted in Figure 2 is a cover postmarked FPO 573 with asterisk and dated 25 JA 61. The registration label which reads FPO D.S. No. is hand-stamped with a boxed 573, the only example recorded to date.

As always, additional information and comments are appreciated.

References

1. Maddocks, R.J. and M.P. Bratzel, Jr. *The Postmarks and Postal History of the Cameroons under British Administration 1916-1961*. MPB Canada, Windsor, Ontario, Canada, 1994. 136 pages. ISBN 0-9694026-1-9.
2. Maddocks, R.J. and M.P. Bratzel, Jr. *The Postmarks and Postal History of the Cameroons under British Administration 1916-1961 – Supplement*. MPB Canada, Windsor, Ontario, Canada, 2007. 115 pages. ISBN 978-0-9694026-5-7.
3. Letters to the author from John Daynes dated 19 February and 20 May 1992.



Figure 2; cover postmarked FPO 573 dated 25 JA 61, with asterisk. The registration label is hand-stamped with a boxed 573. Note: At first glance, the postmark date appears to be 23 JA, but the strike is partially doubled. The strikes on the back of the cover and on the accompanying registration receipt are clearly 25.

The first packet mail to Sierra Leone, 1847?

Colin Tabcart RDP

Background

The Admiralty commenced a regular monthly service to Madeira and Sierra Leone on 1 Jan 1848, as chronicled in reference 1. Prior to this Madeira had been served monthly since 1808 by the Falmouth-Brazil service, as recorded in references 2 and 3, but of course these packets did not provide a service to West Africa.

One of the most important archives for maritime postal historians to come to market is that of Madeira wine merchants trading under various names throughout their long history. Messrs Newton, Gordon, Murdoch, Cossart, or almost any permutation of these names traded Madeira wines from 1745 for over 200 years. They had a significant presence in London, which dealt with much of the administration; the majority of correspondence available on the market is between the London and Madeira offices. The archive is vast, dwarfing that of the Huth correspondence, and probably that of the other major maritime archive known to me of the American drug company of Lanman & Kemp.

One of the delights of the Newton Gordon correspondence is that the London office obviously kept a close ear to the ground as to opportunities to send correspondence, and almost invariably marked their letters with the name of the ship intended to carry the letter(s).

The Find

I was lucky enough recently to acquire a batch of 30 letters between the London office and Madeira during the 1840s and 1850s. All are annotated with the name of the ship intended to carry the letter, and almost as wonderful from a student's point of view, with filing endorsements as to when received at Madeira.

Several of the letters were endorsed to be carried by the monthly Admiralty packets mentioned above between 1848 and 1849, but when I came to write up the cover at Figure 1 I realised that it was unusual: firstly, it was prepaid packet letter rates; secondly, it was posted **before** the regular packet service started.

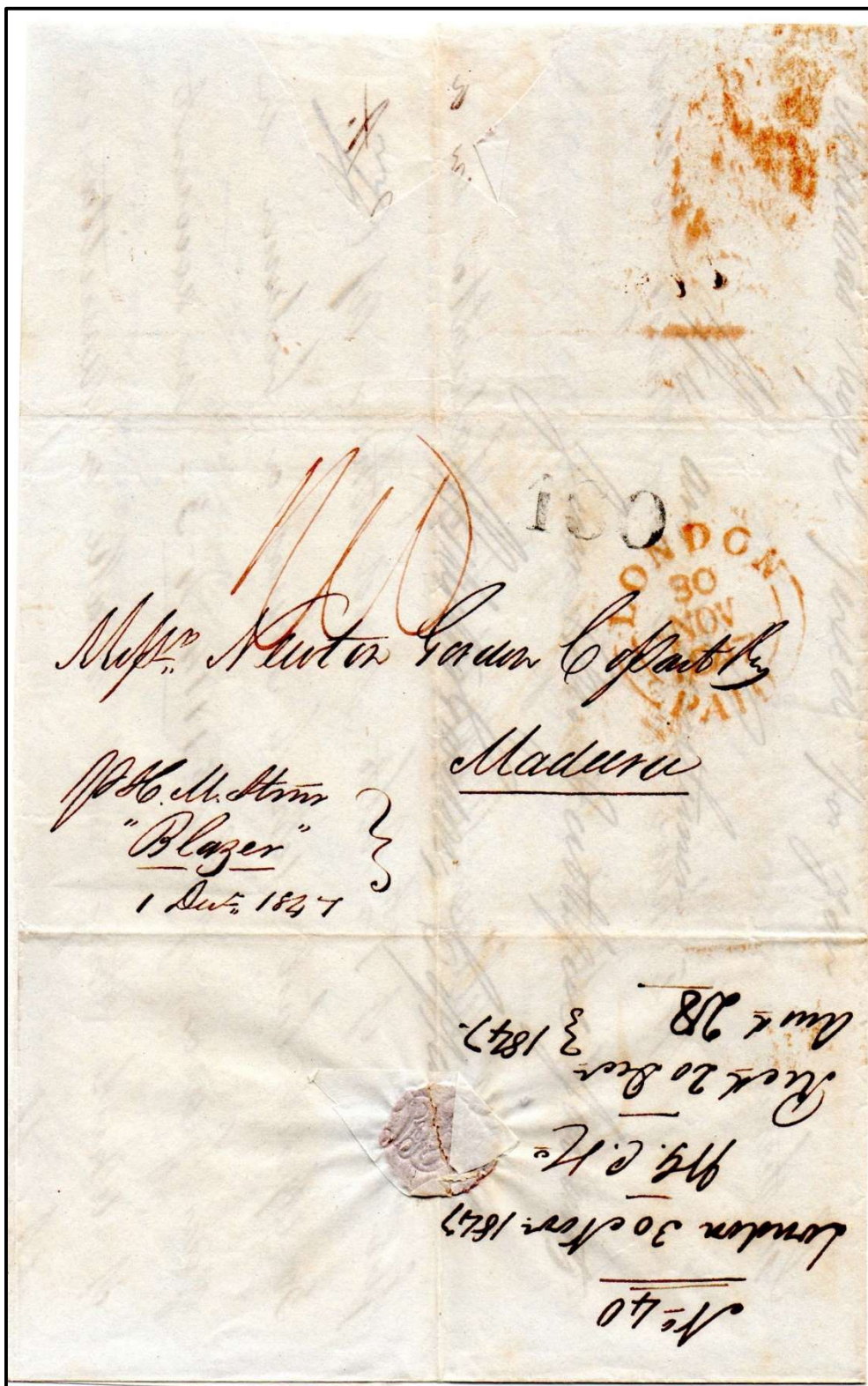


Fig 1. Letter dated 30 Nov 1847, endorsed "P HM Stmr "Blazer" 1 Decr 1847". Filing endorsement "'Recd 20 Dec".
Prepaid 1/10d packet rate to Madeira, 160 reis collect for inland Portuguese postage (= 8d sterling).

The letter should have gone as a ship letter, for 8d, but was prepaid the packet letter rate of 1/10d. So, what was going on? A search in the British Newspaper Archive quickly found the extract in the London newspaper "The Globe" reproduced below. The Admiralty had (for once) informed the Post Office of an opportunity to send mails to Madeira, Sierra Leone, and Ascension by a steam-propelled warship. Never an outfit to resist the chance of a profit the Post Office clearly decided to treat the mail as packet mail and charge accordingly.

Part of the letter reads: “We have hardly anything to add by this excellent conveyance ...” so it was clearly a one-off chance to use one of the small warships going out to the West African Coast to join the anti-slavery patrol that cost the Royal Navy so many deaths over the years.

HMS *Blazer* actually left Devonport on 1 December as advertised. She made a very slow passage of 19 days to Madeira according to the filing endorsement. It may be that she proceeded under sail, to conserve coals, or had very adverse weather (very likely in December). I do not know when she arrived at Sierra Leone – perusal of her log at the National Archives should resolve that. If any member has a cover to Sierra Leone by this voyage I would be pleased to hear from them via the Editor.

Was this the first ever packet letter mail to Sierra Leone? The timing, a month prior to the opening of the official service, suggests that this may have been an introductory voyage to test the system.

Footnote

For the sartorially inclined it may be of interest that, having been informed of a visit to his ship by Queen Victoria, the Captain of *Blazer* decided that the then standard day uniform was somewhat humdrum attire in which to greet his sovereign. Accordingly, he designed a smart double-breasted jacket with brass naval buttons that he named “The Blazer” after his ship.

at	will sail from Portsmouth on the 30th inst. Mails will	25
on	be made up for Madeira, Sierra Leone, and Ascen-	20
al	sion, to be forwarded by her Majesty's steamer	25
	Blazer. Letters for Madeira will be liable to a post-	50
	age of 1s 10d the half ounce, and so on ; and newspa-	40
	pers for Madeira will be chargeable with a postage of	12 1/4
	two-pence each. Letters for Sierra Leone and Ascen-	25
	sion will be liable to a postage of 1s each, but no	25
	charge will be made on newspapers. Letters, &c. in-	50
	tended to be forwarded by this conveyance, must be	100
	specially addressed "By H.M.S. Blazer." The Blazer	40
	will sail from Devonport, 1st December. Ship-letter	30
		15
		100
		50
		25

The Globe 27 Nov 1847

References:

1. Tabcart, Colin: *British West African Mail Packets to 1900*; 2nd Impression, West Africa Study Circle; 2019
2. Tabcart, Colin: *British Long Distance Mail Packets 1793-1815*; the Author, Fareham, 2019.
3. Howat, the Rev JNT: *South American Packets 1808-1880*; the Postal History Society 1984.

Togo: Dahomey postage dues used at Anecho

John Mayne

Chapter 5 of *Togo - the Postal History of the Anglo-French Occupation 1914-1922* (Ref. 1) includes details of Gold Coast and Dahomey issues known used without overprint. Chapter 6 then lists earliest and latest dates of town and village cancellations recorded on various stamp issues.

The German and British postal authorities did not employ postage due adhesives for the territory, but it was French practice to issue such adhesives for their colonies. In June 1914, before the hostilities, Dahomey received a supply of eight postage due values, some of which were later overprinted with a straight line “TOGO” as illustrated in that book (Ref. 2). According to Dallay (Ref. 3) these were released in Togo on 15 July 1921. The editors of the Dallay catalogue state that they are only known used cancelled to order with a postmark dated 13 January 1926. Over very many years I have assembled a collection of all eight values but they all

have indistinct cancellations. The editors make no mention of un-overprinted Dahomey postage due adhesives having been used in Togo.

In October 2017 Christoph Gaertner's auction included a cover sent from Lome in the British sector on 18 April 1917 to Anecho in the French sector, illustrated at figure 1. The standard British internal letter rate was 1d but, with no postage paid by the sender, the cover attracted two postage due stamps totalling 20c; the French equivalent of 2d. The item was treated by the French as incoming internal mail; charging double the deficiency of 1d. It is not known where the German boxed T. handstamp was applied because it is known used at both towns before the war started.



Figure 1

I question whether this cover was philatelically inspired. The sender's name is not endorsed on the back but the Catholic Mission, Anecho address suggests to me that the sender was probably also a missionary at Lome. Be that as it may, it is a notable discovery, as it is the only recorded example of Dahomey postage due issues used correctly in the French sector of Togo. Against a starting price of €100 it realised €210 plus charges and did not find its way into my collection!

References

1. Martin J.J. & Walton F.L., *Togo: The Postal History of the Anglo-French Occupation 1914-1922*, pp47 & 59, WASC, Sheffield 1995.
2. Idem pp54-61
3. Dallay Catalogue de cotations de Timbres de l'ex-empire français de l'Afrique 2005-2006

Advertising Indian Charms to Nigerians

Dr Simon Heap

A few years ago I wrote how Nigerians themselves were the subject of scams enclosed in letters from abroad, which the British colonial government called 'Charlatanic Correspondence' (Ref. 1). For a price, the letters

offered worthless medical or spiritual assistance. The postal service started quantifying the problem letters from 1928 onwards. I can now show evidence from earlier in the decade.

In 1924, the postal authorities lamented that fact that importers had continued to the use of the post to advertise the sale of charms. The problem had been made more difficult by the actions of the British Post Office returning to the country of origin any letters coming within the scope of the law, addressed to a known importer.

The Posts and Telegraphs Department reported:

A new entrant to this field came from India. The greatest difficulty is experiences in protecting would-be victims as they will resort to almost any subterfuge to get remittances to these rogues. (Ref. 2)

It went on, justifying the need to interfere with the mail in its care:

The letters written would be amusing were they not pitiable – although it is altogether against the old established practice of the Post Office to disregard the sanctity of postal matters, it has to be admitted that in a country like Nigeria interference in this direction is forced upon Government for the protection of those who err through crass ignorance. (Ref. 3)

The normal self-controlled prose of a colonial annual report was put to one side:

It is illuminating to notice the class of people from which these remittances covering applications for charms and medicines purporting to bring success in examinations, trade and amour emanate. Many of them would hold themselves grossly insulted if it were suggested to them that their ignorance was so crude as to make them the ready dupe of rogues. (Ref. 4)

References

1. Heap, 'Charlatanic Correspondence in Nigeria', *Cameo*, 11(2), no.77, June 2009, pp.96-97.
2. *Nigeria Posts and Telegraphs Annual Report*, 1924, p.7.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.

Postscript.

Interfering with validly prepaid sealed mail in peacetime seems prima facie to be unlawful. By coincidence, Rob May has found a copy of Nigerian Ordinance no. 31 of 1928, dated 6th December 1928, entitled *An Ordinance to Regulate the Powers and Duties of the Posts and Telegraphs Department* and will shortly load it in full onto the WASC website. The relevant sections authorising such interceptions are found in Part V of the Ordinance:- in particular at paragraph 24, a scan of which now follows.

24. (1) It shall be lawful for any officer of the Posts and Telegraphs Department not below the rank of assistant surveyor, if he suspects that any postal article is calculated or likely to cause the addressee or any other person to be deluded or defrauded or contains false pretences made with a view to obtain money from the addressee, to detain such postal article and to submit it to the Postmaster-General or to such other officer of the Posts and Telegraphs Department not below the rank of surveyor as the Postmaster-General may in writing appoint for the purpose; and the Postmaster-General or other officer so appointed may thereupon open the said postal article for the purposes of inspection.

Inspection of postal articles suspected to be of a fraudulent nature.

(2) If upon such inspection it appears to the Postmaster-General or other officer so appointed as aforesaid that the postal article consists wholly or partly of matter calculated or likely to cause the addressee, or any other person to be deluded or defrauded or contains false pretences made with a view to obtain money from

Disposal of postal articles found to be of a fraudulent nature.

Inspection
of postal
articles
suspected
to contain
applications,
etc., for
advertisements of a
fraudulent
nature.

Disposal
of postal
article
found to
contain
applications,
etc., for
advertisements of a
fraudulent
nature.

Return of
remittances.

the addressee, he may destroy all or any part of such postal article or otherwise dispose of the same in such manner as to him in his absolute discretion may seem expedient.

(3) It shall be lawful for any officer of the Posts and Telegraphs Department not below the rank of assistant surveyor, if he suspects that any postal article consists of or contains any application for, or reply to, any advertisement, which, if sent through the post office, would be liable to be dealt with under sub-sections (1) and (2), or if he suspects that any postal article consists of or contains any reply to any such application, to detain such postal article and to submit it to the Postmaster-General or to such other officer of the Posts and Telegraphs Department not below the rank of surveyor as the Postmaster-General may in writing appoint for the purpose; and the Postmaster-General or other officer so appointed may thereupon open the said postal article for the purposes of inspection.

(4) If upon such inspection it appears to the Postmaster-General or other officer so appointed as aforesaid that the postal article consists wholly or partly of an application for, or a reply to, an advertisement, which, if sent through the post office, would be liable to be dealt with under sub-sections (1) and (2), or of a reply to any such application, he may destroy all or any part of such postal article or otherwise dispose of the same in such manner as to him in his absolute discretion may seem expedient.

Provided always that any money order, postal order, or other remittance comprised therein shall be returned to the sender thereof unless such sender shall be the person who issued such advertisement, in which case such money order, postal order, or other remittance shall be forwarded to the addressee.

Sierra Leone 5/1d rate on first airmail to USA

Frank Walton RDP, FRPSL

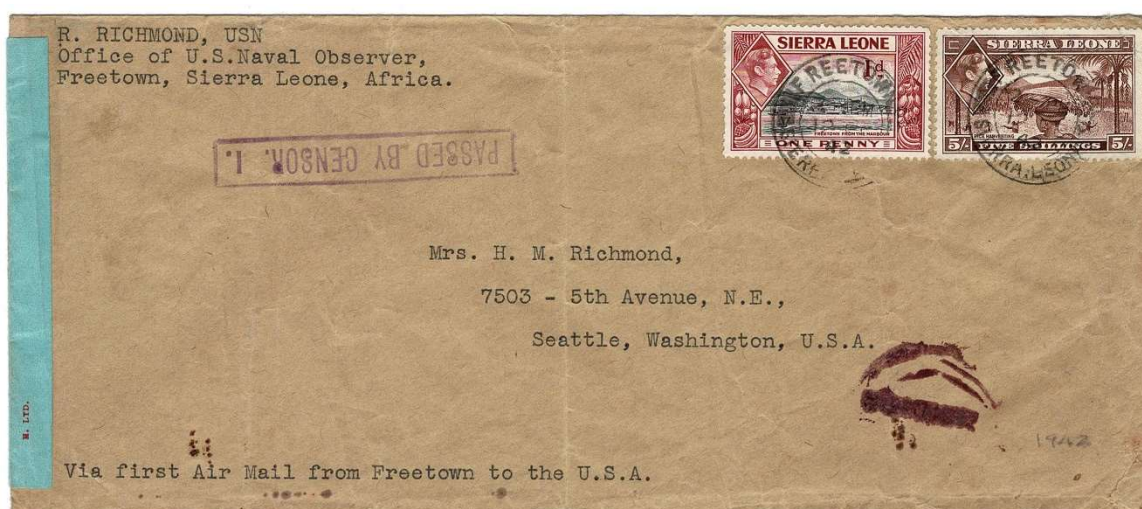


Figure 1 (reduced to 67% of actual size)

This image was sent to me by Geoff Kellow in Australia last July. The cover is dated 12 February and is endorsed "Via first Air Mail from Freetown to the USA". It predates the one illustrated in *Cameo* in 2017 and confirms the commencement of this postal rate in line with the Gazette notice shown in that article (Ref. 1).

Reference

1. Walton F., "Sierra Leone 5s1d air mail rate to USA from 1942", *Cameo*, Volume 18 pp178-179, WASC, June 2017

SS Matang in West Africa in 1944

Rob May FRPSL

The air letter shown here as figure 1 was sent from Sierra Leone to Lagos in 1944. I bought it because I like finding inter-African mails and the use of air letters between West African states is unusual. Then, when I read the letter I found that I had also stumbled upon an interesting story behind it.

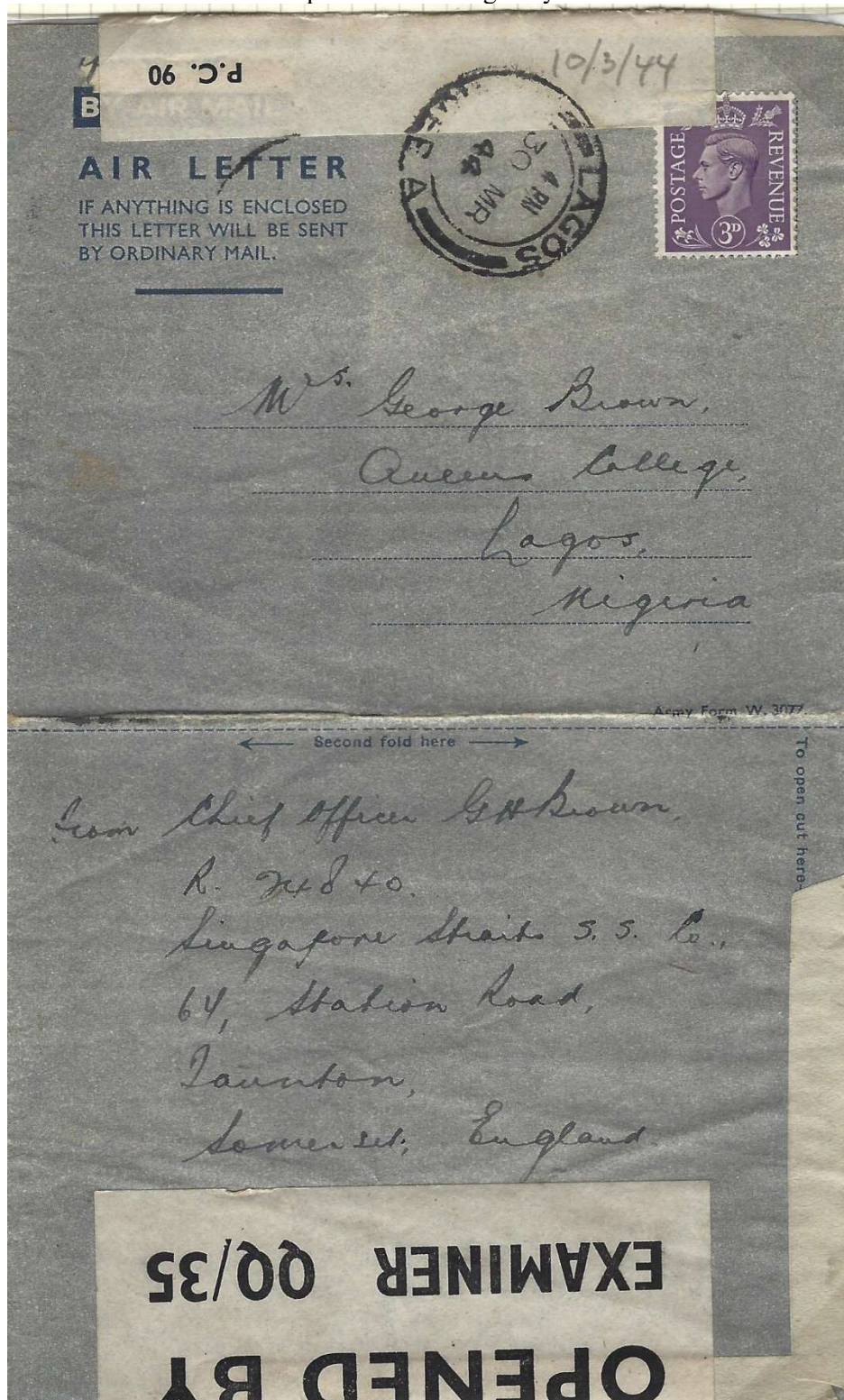


Figure 1: air letter from chief Officer G H Brown of the Singapore Straits S.S. Co. dated 10/3/44 to Lagos, arriving 30 March 1944, censored in Sierra Leone by censor QQ/35

My first question was “which was his ship”? That was quite easily answered because, although the censor excised the sender’s location by cutting a hole in the air letter, a sentence “*At present I am very busy giving the Matang a new suit of clothes*” slipped past the censor. Figure 2 gives a photo image of this ship.



Figure 2: SS *Matang*

My second question was “Was this ship stationed in Sierra Leone and, if so, what was a ship owned by the Singapore Straits S.S. Co. doing there?”

A search of the web (Ref 1) gave me the answers. The ship had been based at Singapore, plying the many ports of the South China Sea and the Bay of Bengal in command of Captain W. Phillips, who had houses in Singapore and Penang. He took his ship and his family out of Singapore just ahead of the Japanese invasion along with a flotilla of other escapees, crossing the Indian Ocean to East Africa. His ship and crew were put at the disposal of the British war effort in Africa and, as this ship had a particularly shallow draught, it was put to use carrying troops and war equipment up the rivers of West Africa, probably based at Lagos. It is clear that the ship evacuated the crew’s families on this voyage because the addressee of this air letter is Mrs George Brown, Queens College, Lagos and the letter from Chief Officer G.H. Brown starts *My Own Darling*.

Some of the more revealing excerpts from this letter are:

The censors who have been cutting windows in my mail to you deserve nothing better than banishment to these one eyed, one horse places I was telling you about.

...you may get a surprise some day soon. We are all more than pleased to have finished with this place and I can assure you there was some excitement when we received the news about returning to my home port.

But he can’t mean Singapore because that was not liberated until September 1945. I think his home port during the war was likely to have been Lagos because he goes on to say

I would like to have her [Matang] tip top in case you might be at our steps as we pass Force Road and I feel terribly excited at being really homeward bound.

Do members have any more of this correspondence to or from Sierra Leone or other parts of West Africa?

Reference

- 1 <https://forum.gcaptain.co/t/matang/2534> (which also refers to a book *Home Port Singapore*, by K.G. Tregonning)

NIPOST opened a new post office at Ikot Obio Nko

Edet Akpan

On 28 June 2018 a new post office was opened for the community of Ikot Obio Nko in Akwa Ibom State, about 15km from Uyo (figure 1). I took the opportunity to give a talk on philately to the attendees at the celebration which included the Nipost zonal manager, the Uyo deputy postmaster, Uyo Stamp Club president, the village heads and groups of students who were encouraged to post their first day mails (figure 2). I created first day covers to send to my philatelic contacts, an example of which is shown at figure 3. Either the hand-stamp was not very clean or it was over-inked, because most of the first day cancels are smudged.

Opening a new post office is an unusual event in Nigeria these days, but even more unusual is that this post office was commissioned as long ago as 2000 by the Executive Governor of the State, but remained dormant for the next 18 years.



Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3

Cameroun – The 2018 Timbre Communal Stamp

Benoît Lebourcq and Marty Bratzel

Revenue stamps are used to collect a tax or a fee for a service rendered. Cameroun presently utilizes two types of revenue stamps. Fiscal stamps / *timbres fiscaux*, first issued in 1927, provide revenue to the national government. Communal stamps / *timbres communaux*, first issued in 1948, provide revenue to local governments. Communal stamps are used, for example, to pay the fee to verify documents such as a birth certificate.

Effective January 1, 2017, the communal stamp fee was raised from 200 to 600 francs for simple documents in A4 format, in part, to compensate for inflation and, of course, to provide more money for the government coffers. Pending release of a 600-franc stamp, the authorities were advised to use three then-current 200-franc communal stamps (Figure 1) on civil documents submitted for their signature: *l'affranchissement des documents d'état civil soumis à la signature des autorités administratives, du Maire et des Adjoints au Maire*

se fera au moyen de trois timbres de 200 fcfa (Ref. 1). For larger documents, the fee increased from 400 to 1000 francs. Again, multiples of the old 200-franc stamp were to be used.



Figure 1



Figure 2

However, to the best of our knowledge, no 600-franc or 1000-franc communal stamps were issued. In a communique signed January 22, 2018 (Ref. 2), the Minister of Finance authorized a reduction of the communal fee from 600 to 500 francs. A new 500-franc communal stamp (Figure 2) was to be *disponibles dans toutes les mairies et les communautés urbaines*, i.e. available in all town halls and urban communities. Presumably, the 1000-franc fee for larger documents is unchanged, thus two 500-franc stamps can be used to pay the requisite fee.

The characteristics of the timbre communal issued in 2018 are summarized here. Like its predecessors, it incorporates security measures to counteract fraud which has been reported for documents requiring a revenue stamp.

- Perf. 13 x 13¼
- Watermark multiple ITVF in single horizontal line
- Colours – green, red, black lettering, gold emblem
- Outline (½-mm wide) phosphorescent star printed *under* the red and black ink

The Imprimerie des Timbres de Valeurs Fiduciaires, ITVF, the official printer of all French postage stamps, is located in Boulazac, near Périgueux in the southwest of France. On French stamps issued since 2006, the caption ITVF has been replaced by Phil@poste. The ITVF has, apparently been retained for the watermark as an additional security measure.

As always, additional information is welcome.

References

1. www.cameroon-info.net/article/cameroun-budget-2017-cest-effectif-le-prix-du-timbre-communal-est-passe-de-200-278364.html . Article by Otric Ngon, Yaoundé, January 3, 2017.
2. www.cameroon-info.net/article/cameroun-fiscalite-le-prix-du-timbre-communal-passe-de-600-a-500-fcfa-314445.html . Article by Frédéric Nonos, Yaoundé, January 28, 2018.

Togo: the German Nuatja cancel

Jeremy Martin FRPSL

Your Togo editor rarely has anything unusual to report. However, this cover (figure 1) is of interest. The German canceller type 010.01 (Ref. 1) of Nuatja is not often seen. This internal commercial cover dated 27 January 1916 is to Lome and is franked with 2x10c Dahomey stamps. It was also censored upon arrival in Lome. The rate of 20c was correct for a letter weighing over 50gm and up to 100gm.

Reference

1. Martin J.J. & Walton F.L., *Togo: The Postal History of the Anglo-French Occupation 1914-1922*, pp47 & 59, WASC, Sheffield 1995



Figure 1

Nigeria – 1965/66 numerical perfins

Jeremy Martin FRPSL & Rob May FRPSL

In December 2018 Jeremy sent a short article to *Cameo* illustrating the perfin shown here at figure 1. In *Cameo* January 2010, whole number 79, p261 and pp263-264 both the present authors had written previously about the NRC perfins which are the only security perfins so far recorded from any Nigerian company. But Jeremy had found this 1965 1/6d 20th anniversary of UNESCO stamp in a stock book, perforated with numbers 6132 and possibly a letter U and asked for suggestions; wondering whether this was a revenue usage.

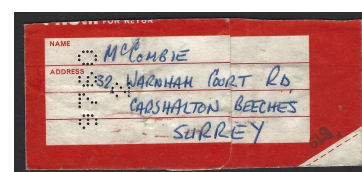


Figure 1

Figure 2, front and reverse (reduced)

Rob was able to say that this is not a Nigerian perfin and showed the piece illustrated here, front and reverse as figure 2, in which the perfin ('9760', with a '2' below) is punctured through the piece as well as the stamp. The piece is part of a special envelope used to send camera film to Kodak at Hemel Hempstead for processing, perforated by Kodak on arrival, and Jeremy's stamp is probably from another such envelope.

Gambia: the Fourteenth Chiefs' Conference 1957

Jeremy Martin FRPSL

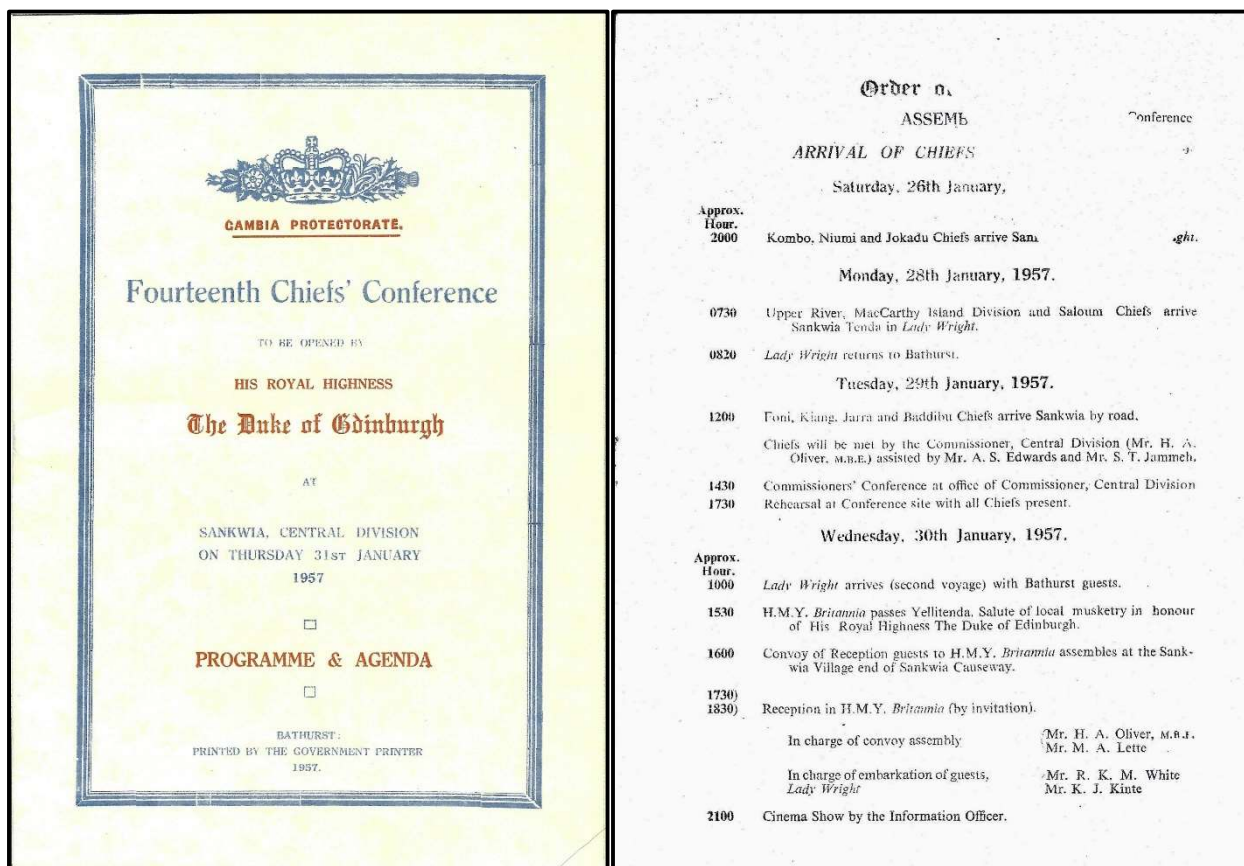


Figure 1: front cover (reduced by approx. 50%)

Figure 2: inside page (reduced by approx. 50%)

This booklet (shown in figures 1 and 2) was acquired by me a few months ago. It came in an envelope franked with excess postage of 2/6½d made up from the eight low values of the 1953 Queen Elizabeth II definitives of Gambia, cancelled with a TPO / date / RIVER GAMBIA type 205.01 (Ref. 1) of 31 January 1957 (figure 4). It is addressed to the Royal Yacht *Britannia* and within the envelope was a printed note (figure 3) presenting this whole package to a member of her crew as a souvenir of the visit to Gambia for this event.

I hope this is of interest to WASC members, especially the references to the *Lady Wright* and the River TPO.

The Government of the Gambia forwards a copy of the agenda of the fourteenth Chiefs' Conference as a memento of a unique occasion in the Gambia.

This communication has been carried to Sankwis by the river steamer which has one of the very few floating post offices in the British Commonwealth, and the envelope bears a selection of stamps of the Gambia bearing the post mark of the travelling Post Office.

Figure 3: note enclosed with the booklet

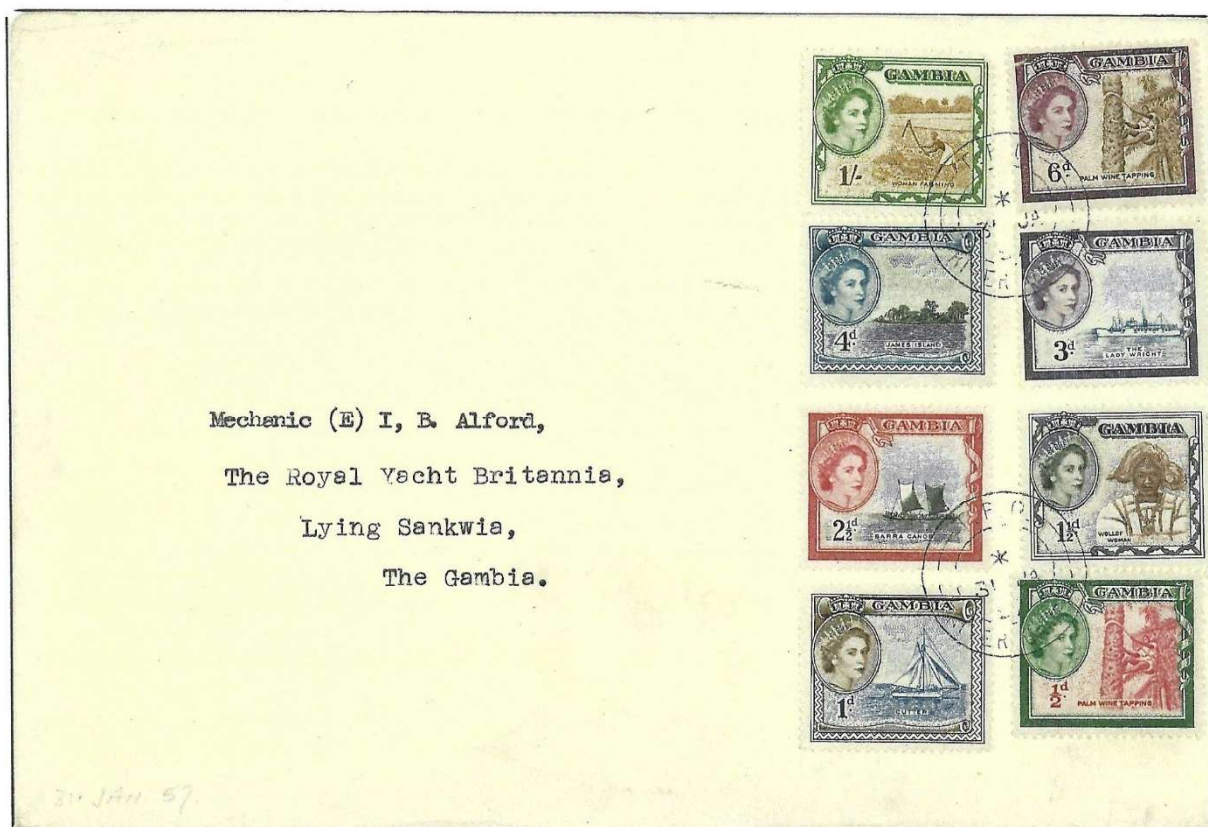


Figure 4: the envelope dated 31 JA 1957

Reference

1. Duncan S.P. & Andrew O., *The Postal markings of the Gambia 1858-2000*, p78, WASC, Dronfield, 2006

The Trans-African Ferry Route 1940-42

The editors were alerted to this article by John Powell who saw it in the Milton Keynes Aviation Society Newsletter of September 2018. The editor of that Journal had extracted the content from an obituary published in the Daily Telegraph, commemorating the wartime service of Wing Commander Richard Summers, OBE AFM who died on 7 May 2017, aged 95.

Richard Gordon Battenby Summers was born on October 18 1921 in Beverley in East Yorkshire. He was educated at Ermysted's Grammar School, Skipton. He joined the RAF at 17 and trained as an air observer.



He was assigned to No 219 Squadron equipped with the Blenheim, which was used as a night fighter. During the Battle of Britain he engaged four enemy bombers but the ill-equipped Blenheim was unable to shoot them down.

In late July 1940 he joined No 4 Ferry Pilot Pool and was soon on his way to West Africa as one of the pioneers on the newly created Trans-African Ferry Route. This began at Takoradi in the Gold Coast (now Ghana) and was crucial for victory in North Africa.

After Italy entered the Second World War in June 1940, and the Mediterranean had become a war zone, an alternative route to Egypt had to be found for the delivery of essential aircraft reinforcements. In August 1940 Summers was in a party of RAF crews and maintenance personnel who sailed for the Gold Coast to establish a base at Takoradi.

Blenheim bombers and Hurricane fighters were shipped in crates to the West African port where they were re-assembled before beginning the 3,600-mile ferry flight to Egypt via Khartoum. The historian Philip Guedalla observed that “victory in Egypt came by the Takoradi Route”.

Most of the aircraft were single-engine fighters and they were formed into small groups and led by a twin-engine aircraft carrying a navigator. Basic staging posts, manned by small parties of RAF ground crew, were established in northern Nigeria, Chad and Sudan. Summers led his first flight along the route in the autumn of 1940.

Over the next two years he flew more than 400 hours as a “convoy leader”. After delivering their aircraft, the ferry crews returned to Takoradi by civil aircraft, often flown by South African airmen.

As well as his ferry flights, Summers flew anti-submarine patrols, photographic reconnaissance sorties and survey flights along the West African coast. On June 26 1941 his Blenheim was forced to land on the beach in Liberia. The crew were interned for three weeks but managed to escape. They commandeered a boat and were picked up by the SS *Egyptian*.

Over the next few months, while leading air convoys, he survived two more crash landings along the remote route. For his two years’ service with the ferry flight, Summers was awarded the Air Force Medal and was commissioned.

Sierra Leone ‘Investigation Branch’ Cachet

Ian Sibsey

I recently sent a scan of a small collection of Official / Military envelopes to Philip Quirk. In among them was a cover with an ‘Investigation Branch’ cachet (figure 1).

The registration label, although printed JOJOIMA, has been crossed through and a manuscript 16 added; probably an abbreviation for Freetown 16. A similar situation exists on a MAHERA label (type 535.90.016.097) (Ref. 1).

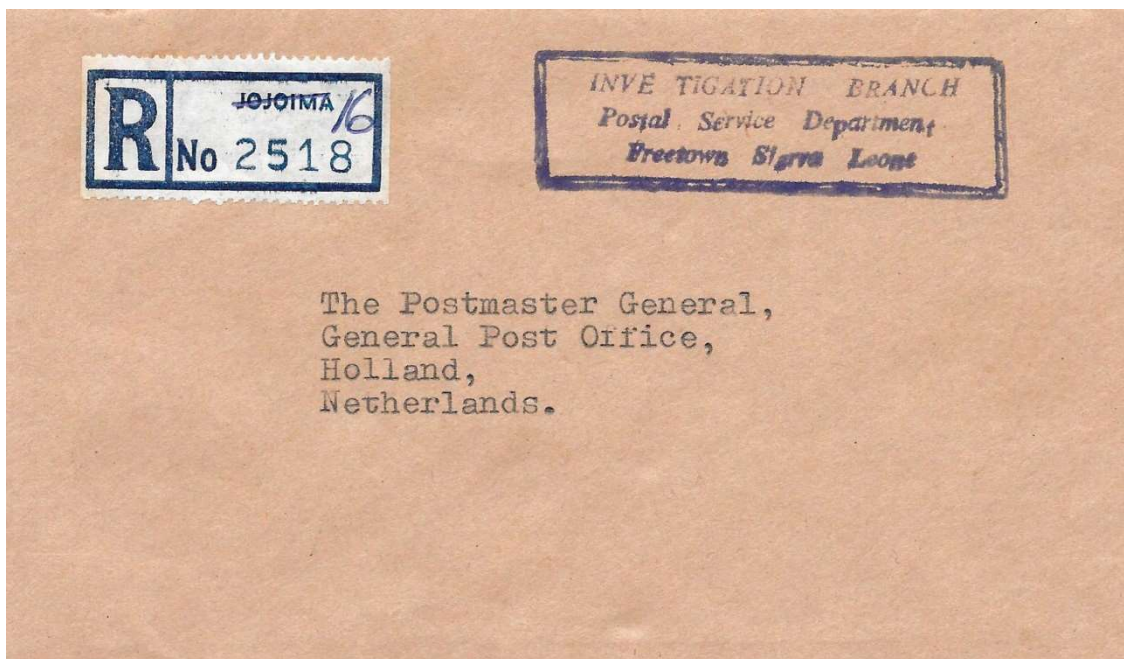


Figure 1

Reference

1. Walton F.L. & Quirk, P., *Sierra Leone Registration*, WASC, Dronfield 2010

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GAMBIA. 1887 6d corner pair with 'sloping label' (R.1/5). Unmounted mint. SG 32d/da. **£200**

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ST HELENA. 1863 4d carmine with large even margins. Very fine mint. Exceptional. SG 5. **£300**

ST HELENA. 1937 1½d deep carmine-red with 'cleft rock' (R.5/1). Very fine mint. Rare. SG 99fc. **£1100**

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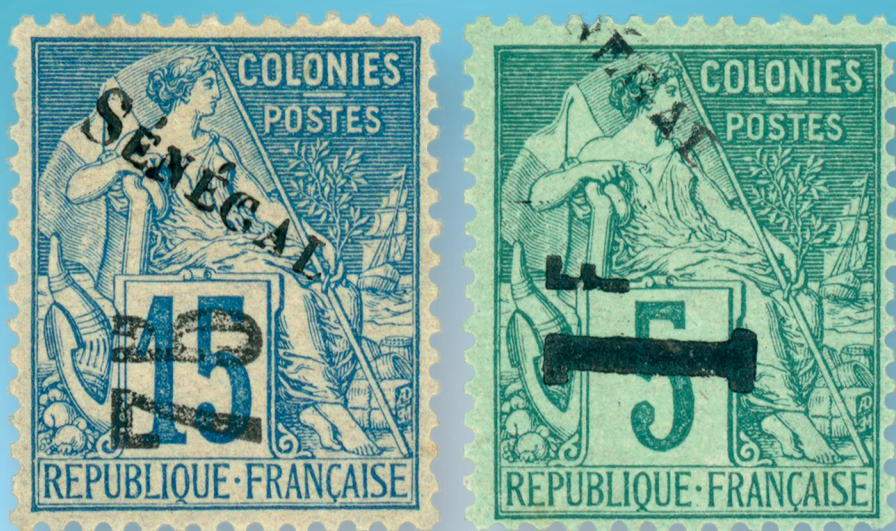
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