



West Africa Study Circle

"Legitimate West Africa stamps
'Appendixed' by Stanley Gibbons.
And those that aren't given this
treatment but perhaps they ought
to be"

Graham Mytton

The countries of West Africa? Several different definitions. I am using this map from Britannica, and add Sao Tome and Principe



20 countries, all of them independent. I have excluded Ascension, St Helena and Tristan

This is how I have done my analysis:

1. I used Gibbons Simplified 2022.
2. And Stamp World online
3. In each case I have used the period from independence to 2009
4. All my calculations are based on this period for each country, c 1960 to 2009
5. Why 2009? That is the date when most postal activity in West Africa dropped to near zero.
6. However, stamps are still being produced in vast numbers. Postal services are in terminal decline. But stamps still proliferate!
7. If you don't already do this, do use Stamp World. It has a mostly brilliant search engine which can find almost any stamp by denomination, topic, date of issue, colour and more, and in mere seconds!

<https://www.stampworld.com/en>

Gibbons has a policy of appending stamps if they have not been on “sale in reasonable quantities” and are issued in “excess of demand”.

Far too many stamps are issued. Printing catalogues that can be handled without personal injury has become almost impossible. The future has to be online. But surely some stamps are absurd, never seen on mail and are phoney at worst or just horrible at best!

Mostly I am in sympathy with Gibbons but they are wrong, unfair, inconsistent and practice outrageous bias in favour of some of the guiltiest postal administrations, including Royal Mail. . And these faults are especially highlighted in West Africa.

My analysis excludes Postage Dues, Officials and others not in the normal or main lists of both SG and SW

		Number of stamps that SG lists fully	SG lists in Appendix	% appended	Number of stamps listed by SW
1	Sao Tome	34	904	97%	938
2	Equatorial Guinea	307	1082	78%	2279
3	Guinea	1593	1857	54%	7219
4	Liberia	1046	789	43%	5146
5	Chad	1010	632	38%	2446
6	Guinea Bissau	952	324	25%	4190
7	Burkina Faso (Upper Volta)	1889	254	12%	2624
8	Mali	1622	87	5%	2629
9	Togo	2090	101	5%	3181
10	Niger	1229	58	5%	2015
11	Benin (Dahomey)	1726	28	2%	2219
12	Ivory Coast	1117	15	1%	1322
13	Mauritania	935	8	1%	1023
14	Gambia	5079	23	0.5%	5992
15	Cameroon	910	0		936
16	Cape Verde	526	0		595
17	Ghana/Gold Coast	3596	0		4088
18	Nigeria	779	0		736
19	Senegal	1586	0		1913
20	Sierra Leone	4473	0		5139

The difference between totals by SG & SW is mostly because the former lists MS's as one stamp while SW lists all stamps in MS's as single stamps.

1. To list only 34 stamps for Sao Tome since independence in 1975 is clearly wrong
2. Equatorial Guinea is famous for its phoney issues that are never seen on mail. Their appending by SG is mostly fair.
3. But while Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Chad and Burkina Faso do over-produce, so also does Sierra Leone and Gibbons lets them off!

I have selected São Tomé and Príncipe and Sierra Leone to display today. São Tomé has 904 stamps disallowed. Sierra Leone has 0. The latter, in my view from some 60 years of experience, produces far more questionable issues!

São Tomé and Príncipe

- Portuguese colony since the 16th century, it achieved independence in 1975, following the overthrow of dictatorship in Portugal.

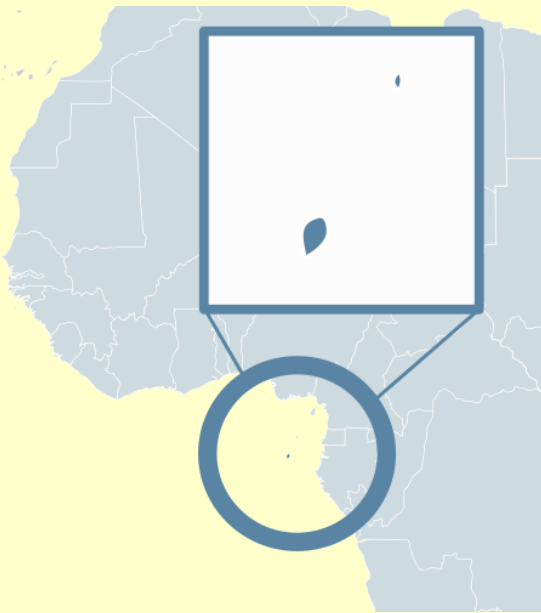
All other four Portuguese colonies in Africa became independent between 1973 and 1975.

São Tomé has been well-governed, democratic and stable. Like other island states in Africa, its people are mainly the descendants of those who came to work on plantations, many of them as slaves. There are many who are of mixed ancestry.

It has a mostly well managed postal service.

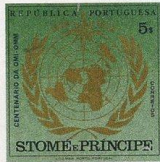
It produced, according to Stamp World, 3,908 stamp issues between 1975 and 2009. It is true that many of these have been for the philatelic trade. Many of them may not have been “available to the public in reasonable quantities”, and certainly were in the later period, “in excess of postal need”.

Gibbons mentions only 935. It lists with SG numbers a mere 34. The remaining 904 have been appended! Gibbons’ policy here is obviously absurd.



97% of São Tomé's post independence stamps that Gibbons lists in its catalogue are in the appendix. But Gibbons also leaves out thousands of others. Of the total 3,908 stamps issued, according to Stamp World, Gibbons leaves out more than 99% of them. Here are some of them. Three pages from my collection of 110 stamps of Sao Tome from the early colonial days until the mid 2010s. Only four in the post-colonial period have SG numbers. I have 70 from this period, all of them from actual mail





80 WMO Emblem

1973. Centenary of World Meteorological Organisation.
470 80 5e. multicoloured 85



81 Flags of Portugal and St Thomas and Prince Islands

1975. Independence.
471 81 3e. multicoloured 30
472 81 10e. multicoloured 90
473 81 20e. multicoloured 1-80
474 81 50e. multicoloured 4-40



82 National Flag

1975. Independence Proclamation.
82 1e.50 multicoloured 20 10
82 4e. multicoloured 35 15
82 7e.50 multicoloured 65 30
82 20e. multicoloured 1-80 80
82 50e. multicoloured 4-50 2-50



83 Diagram and Hand

1975. National Reconstruction Fund.
83 1e. multicoloured 10 10
83 1e.50 multicoloured 15 10
83 2e. multicoloured 20 10

1975. Optd Rep. Democr. 12-7-75.
48 10c. Joao de Santarem
62 20c. Infantry officer, 1788
- 30c. Pedro Escobar (No. 418)
- 35c. Infantry sergeant, 1788
- 40c. Infantry corporal, 1788
- 50c. Fernao de Po (No. 419)
- 1e. Alvaro Esteves (No. 420)
- 2e.50 Rebello da Silva (No. 459)
73 2e.50 Escobar and Santarem
- 3e.50 Martim Fernandes (No. 422)
- 4e. Manoel Gate (No. 460)
- 5e. WMO emblem (No. 470)
- 7e.50 Infantry sapper, 1833 (No. 450)
- 10e. Compass rose (No. 432)



85 President Pinto da Costa and National Flag

1975. First Anniversary of Independence.
2e. Type 85 25 10
3e.50 Proclamation of Independence, 12 July 1975 30 15
4e.50 As 3e.50 45 30
12e.50 Type 85 90 50
1977. Second Anniversary of Independence. No. 439
optd Rep. Democr. 12-7-77.
20e. multicoloured 2-30 1-10
81a 135x115 mm. No. 501 10-00 8-00

This is all that SG lists for São Tomé between 1975 and 2009, the years since independence until the end of most mail.

More space is devoted to listing the "appendixed" items than the rest!

APPENDIX

The following stamps have either been issued in excess of postal needs or have not been available to the public in reasonable quantities at face value. Such stamps may later be given full listing if there is evidence of regular postal use.

1977

400th Birth Anniversary of Rubens. 1e, 5e, 10e., 15e., 20e.,

150th Death Anniversary of Beethoven. 20e., 30e., 50e.
Centenary of UPU Surch on Navigators and Military Uniforms issues of Portuguese administration. 1e, on 10c., 3e, on 30c., 3e50 on 3e50, 5e, on 50c., 10e, on 10c., 15e, on 3e50, 20e, on 30e, on 30c., 35e, on 35c., 40e, on 40c.
Christmas. 5d., 10d., 25d., 50d., 70d.
60th Anniversary of Russian Revolution. 15d., 30d., 40d., 50d.
First Death Anniversary of Mao Tse-tung. 50d.

1978

Nobel Peace Prizes to International Organisations. Surch on Navigators and Military Uniforms issues of Portuguese administration. 3d. on 30c., 5d. on 50c., 10d. on 10c., 15d. on 3e50, 20d. on 20c., 35d. on 35c.
Third Anniversary of Independence. 5d.x3.
Third Anniversary of Admission to United Nations. Surch on Military Uniform issues of Portuguese administration. 15d., 30d., 40d., 50d.
International Stamp Exhibition, Essen. 10d.x5.
Centenary of UPU. 5d.x4, 15d.x4.
First Anniversary of New Currency. 5d.x5, 8d.x5.
World Cup Football Championship, Argentina. 3d.x4, 25d.x3.

1979

World Cup Winners. Optd on 1978 World Cup issues. 3d.x4, 25d.x3.
Butterflies. 50c., 10d., 11d.x4.
Flowers. 1d., 8d.x4, 25d.
Telecommunications Day and 50th Anniversary of CCIR. 1d., 11d., 14d., 17d.
International Year of the Child. 1d., 7d., 14d., 17d.
450th Death Anniversary of Durer. 50c.x2, 1d., 7d., 8d., 25d.
History of Aviation. 50c., 1d., 5d., 7d., 8d., 17d.
History of Navigation. 50c., 1d., 5d., 8d., 8d., 25d.
Birds. Postage 50c.x2, 1d., 7d., 8d.; Air 100c. 120
Fish. Postage 50c., 1d., 5d., 7d., 8d.; Air 50d.
Balloons. 50c., 1d., 3d., 7d., 8d., 25d.
Airships. 20c., 1d., 3d., 7d., 8d., 17d.
Olympic Games. 50c., 11d.x4.
Death Centenary of Sir Rowland Hill. 50c., 1d., 8d., 20d.
Tenth Anniversary of First Manned Moon Landing. 50c., 1d., 14d., 17d.

1981

Olympic Games, Moscow. Optd on 1977 Mao Tse-tung issue. 50d.
Olympic Games, Moscow. Overprint on 60th Anniversary of Revolution. Either silver or black. 15d., 30d., 40d., 50d.x2
Mammals. 50c.x2; 1d., 7d., 8d.
Shells. 50c.x2; 1d., 1d.50, 11d., 17d.
Philately. 81, Frankfurt, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe Commemoration. 25d.
Josip Broz Tito Commemoration. 17d.x2
Wedding of Prince Charles and Lady Diana Spencer. Overprint in white on Ludwig von Beethoven Commemoration issues of Portuguese Administration. 20d., 30d., 50d.
Chess. 1d.50x4; 30d.x4
Chess. Overprint in red on Chess. 30d.x2
Birth Centenary of Pablo Picasso. 14d., 17d.x4; 20d.x2
Paintings of Dogs. 1d.50x5; 50d.x2
Paintings of Cats. 1d.50x5; 50d.x2
Central African Games. 17d.x4; 50d.
Fruit. 11d.x3; 30d.x3 208

1982

Birth Centenary of Josip Broz Tito (1992). Overprint on Josip Broz Tito Commemoration. 17d.x2
World Cup Football Championship, Spain. 15d.x4; 25d.x2
PhilexFrance 82 International Stamp Exhibition. 15d.x2
Centenary of Robert Koch's discovery of TB Bacillus. 75d.
150th Death Anniversary of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. 50d.
21st Birth Anniversary of Diana, Princess of Wales. 75d.
75th Anniversary of Scouting Movement. 15d., 30d.,
Birth Centenary of Igor Stravinsky. 30d.x2
250th Birth Anniversary of George Washington. 30d.x2
Dinosaurs. 6d., 16d.x4; 50d.
Navigators. 50c., 18d.x4; 50d.
Second Anniversary of Trabalho Assembly. Overprint in silver on Argel Accord issues of Portuguese Administration. 3e., 10e., 20e., 50e.
Third Trabalho Assembly. 8d., 12d., 16d., 30d.
Pablo Picasso Commemoration. 18d.x3, 25d.x2
Railways. 9d., 16d.x4, 50d.

1983

Paintings by Peter Paul Rubens. 16d.x2, 18d.
Pascoa 83. Painting by Peter Paul Rubens. 18d.
Painting by Rembrandt. 16d.x2, 18d.
Paintings by Raphael. 16d.x2
Pascoa 83. Paintings by Raphael. 18d.x2
Brasiliana 83. Airships. 25d.x2
Centenary of Montgolfier Brothers' First Flight. 18d.x4, 20d.x3
UPU Congress, Hamburg. Overprint in gold on Centenary of UPU. 15d.x4
Christmas. 30d.x2
Cars. 12d.x4, 20d.x4
Medicinal Plants. 30c., 1d., 5d.50, 15d.50, 16d.; 20d., 46d., 50d.
Olympic Games, Los Angeles. 16d.x4, 18d.x4
Birds. 50c., 1d.50, 2d., 3d., 4d., 5d.50, 7d., 10d., 11d., 12d., 14d., 15d.50, 16d., 17d., 18d.50, 20d., 25d., 30d., 42d., 46d., 100d. 319

1984

Lubraxe 84, Lisbon. 16d., 30d.
25th Anniversary of UN International Maritime Organisation. 50c.x3, 7d.x3, 8d.x3, 15d.x3
UPU Congress, Hamburg. Overprint in black on 25th Anniversary of UN International Maritime Organisation. 50c.x3
Eradication of Malaria. 8d., 16d., 30d.
International Food Day. 8d., 16d., 46d.
Fungi. 10d., 20d., 30d.
Christmas. 30d.

1985

Conference of Portuguese Countries in Africa. 25d.

First Anniversary of Reinstatement of Flights between Lisbon and St Thomas. 25d., 30d.
Flowers. 16d., 20d., 30d.

1986

Halley's Comet. 5d., 6d., 10d., 16d.
Fungi. 6d., 25d., 30d.
World Cup Football Championship, Mexico. 25d.x4
Olympic Games, Seoul (1988). 25d.x4
Cars. 50c., 6d., 16d., 30d.
Railways. 50c., 6d., 20d.
International Year of Peace. 8d., 10d., 16d., 20d.
Lubraxe 86, Lisbon. 1d.x2, 2d., 46d.
Christmas. 50c., 1d., 16d., 20d.

1987

Flora and Fauna. 1d.x4, 2d.x4, 10d.x4, 20d.x4
Sport. 50c., 20d., 30d.
500th Anniversary of Christopher Columbus' voyage to the Americas (1992). 15d., 20d.x2
Fungi. 6d., 25d., 30d.
Railways. 5d., 10d., 20d.
Christmas. 1d., 5d., 15d., 20d.
Scout Jamboree, Australia. 50c. 400

1988

70th Anniversary of October Revolution. 25d.
World Cup Football Championship Winners. Overprint in gold on World Cup Football Championship, Mexico. 25d.x4
Fungi. 10d.x4, 20d.
Medicinal Plants. 5d.x3, 10d., 20d.
Electric Locomotives. 10d.x6
150th Anniversary of Ferdinand Graf von Zeppelin. 10d.x5
Butterflies. 10d.x3
Automatic Telephone Exchange. 10d., 25d.
Scout Jamboree, Australia. 10d.x3
125th Anniversary of International Red Cross. 50c., 5d., 20d.
Sport. 50d.x4
Winter Olympic Games, Albertville. 5d.
Italia 90. 50d.x3
Christmas. 10d.x3, 30d.

1989

Fruit. 50c., 1d., 5d., 10d., 25d., 50d.x2, 60d., 100d., 250d., 500d.
Bicentenary of French Revolution. 10d.x3
Orchids. 20d.x2
Hummingbirds. 20d.x3
Italia 90. 10c.x3, 20d.
Olympic Games, Barcelona (1992). 5d.x3, 35d.
Ships. 20d.x5
Railways. 20d.x5
Butterflies. 20d.x5
25th Anniversary of Bank. 25d.
International Telecommunications Day. 60d.
Christmas. 25d.x4

1990

70th Anniversary of Arthur Eddington Expedition to St Thomas. 60d.x3
Orchids. 20d.x5
Railways. 5d., 20d., 25d.x3
Italia 90. 25d.x4
Butterflies. 15d.x5, 25d.
Fungi. 20d.x5
Christmas. 25d.x4
70th Anniversary of Swiss Confederation. 20d.
Death Centenary of Vincent van Gogh. 20d.
Art. 10d.x6, 25d.x2 501

1991

Flora and Fauna. 1d., 5d., 10d., 50d.x2, 70d., 75d.x4; 80d., 100d., 250d., 500d.
Railways. 75d.x6
Birds. 75d.x4, 200d.
Art. 50d., 75d.x2, 100d., 200d.
Fungi. 50d.x2, 75d., 125d., 200d.
Flowers. 50d.x2, 100d.x2, 200d.
50th Anniversary of Christopher Columbus' voyage to the Americas (1992). 50d.x2, 75d., 125d., 200d.
Philippino 91 International Stamp Exhibition. Butterflies. 125d.x2
Fauna. 25d.x6
Castles. 25d.x6
Butterflies. 125d.x4
Postal Express. 3000d. 600

1992

Marine Mammals. 450d.x4
Visit of Pope John Paul II. 120d.x8, 150d.x8, 180d.x4, 200d.x8, 250d.x4
Flora and Fauna. 1000d., 1500d., 2000d., 2500d.
Environmental Protection Conference, Brazil. 65d., 110d., 150d., 200d., 275d.
Olympic Games, Barcelona. 50d.x6
Fungi. 75d., 100d., 125d., 200d., 500d.
Birds. 75d., 100d., 125d., 200d., 500d.
Olympic Games, Barcelona. 50d., 300d.x6
Olympic Games, Barcelona. 300d.x2
Railway. 75d., 100d., 125d., 200d., 500d.
Birth Centenary of Marcelo da Veiga. 10d., 40d., 50d., 100d.
Butterflies. 75d., 100d., 125d., 200d., 500d.

1993

Fungi. 800d.x5
Butterflies and Flowers. 500d.x5
Birds. 500d.x5
Railways. 800d.x5 701
Flora. 500d.x5
World Cup Football Championship, Atlanta. 800d.x8
Dinosaurs. 500d.x6
U.C.C.A. 100d., 150d., 200d., 250d.x2; 300d., 350d., 400d., 500d.
Olympic Games, Atlanta. 800d.x8

1994

World Cup Football Championship, Brazil. 500d.
60th Birth Anniversary of Elvis Presley. 10d.x18
Marilyn Monroe Commemoration. 10d.x9
UPU Congress. 1000d.
Butterflies. 1200d.x5
Cinema. 100d.x9
Independence. 350d.
Horses. 1000d.x9
Flowers and Fruit. 350d., 370d., 380d., 800d., 1000d.

Crafts. 350d.x2, 400d., 500d.x2, 1000d. 801
United Nations. Overprint in black on Crafts. 350d.x2, 400d., 500d.x2, 1000d.
Railways. 1000d.x6
Cats. 1000d.x9
Dogs. 1000d.x18
Orchids. 1000d.x9
Art. 100d.x9
New Year. Year of the Rat. 1000d.x9
Fungi. 1000d.x15
Christmas. 750d.x9 904

Note that Gibbons stops at 1994! That is 31 years ago and certainly accounts for much of the discrepancy between Stamp World's count of 3,908 issues and Gibbons' number of 935.

More pages from my collection

All of them from mail



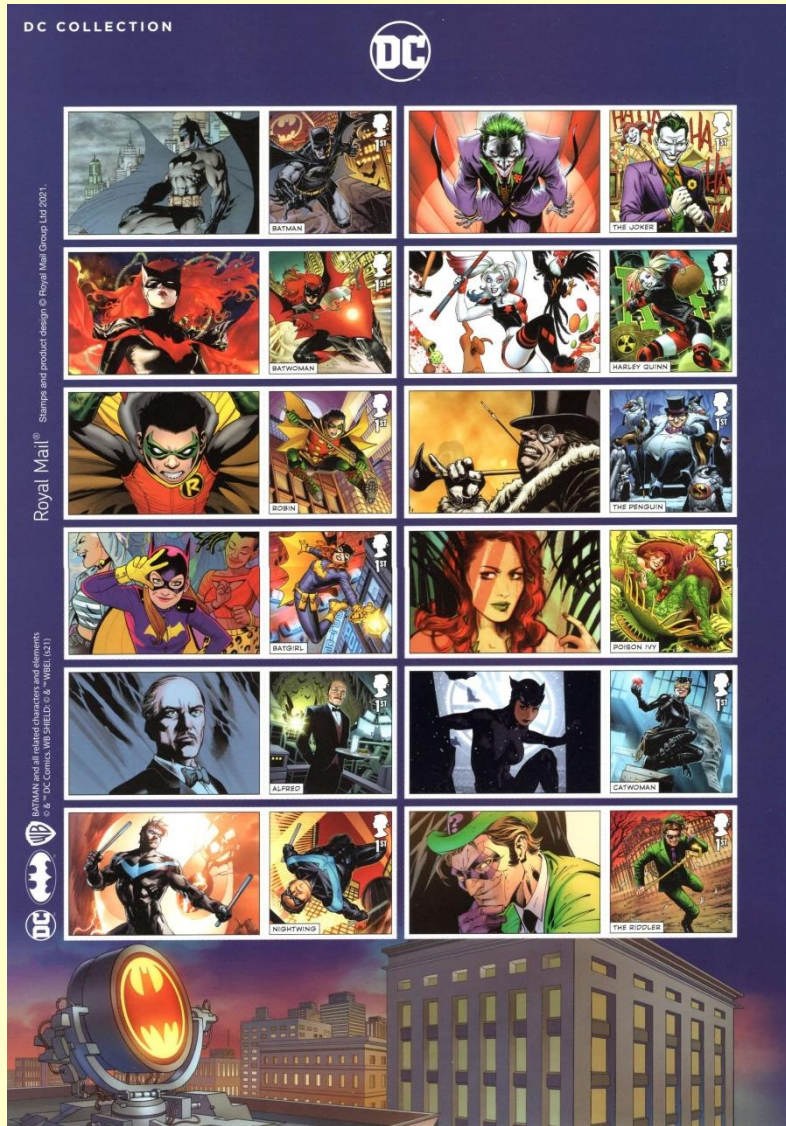
In a personal opinion, some issues deserve to be “appendixed”, such as this mini sheet of 1997.

I am almost certain that it was never used on mail and may even have not been on sale in the country. The postmark however is legitimate. But the sheet I have has gum on the reverse! I bet nobody ever licked any of these!

(Actually this mini sheet is not even in SG’s naughty corner!!)

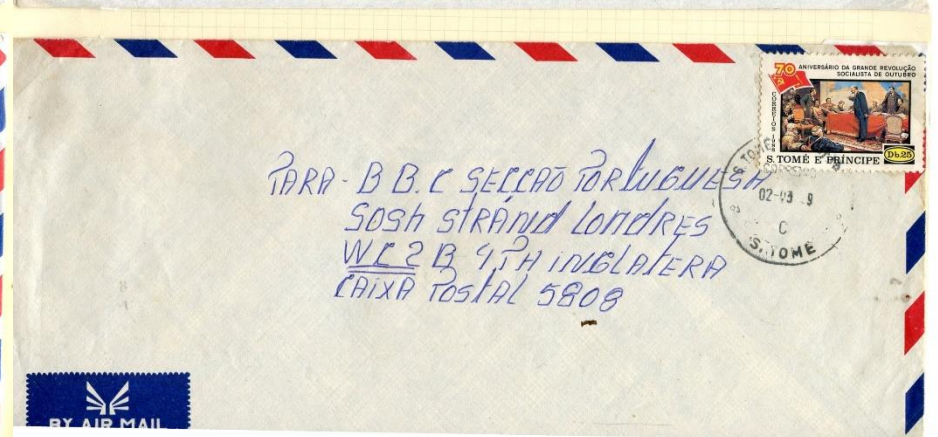
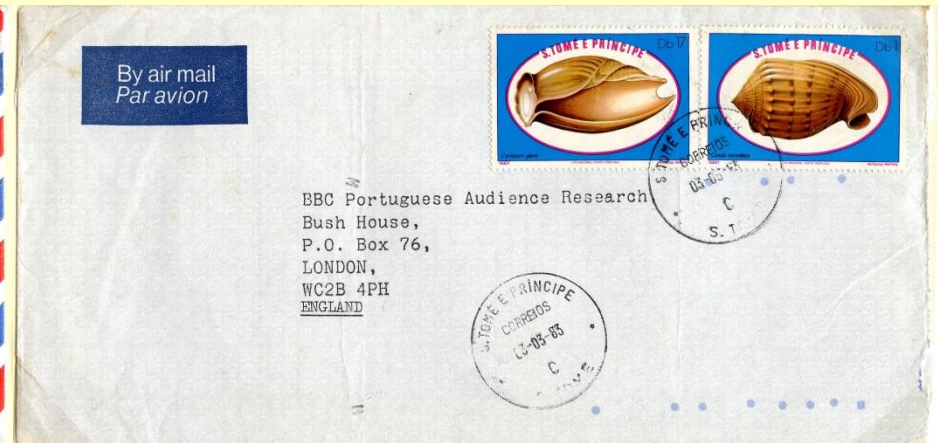


Meanwhile in GB, the birthplace of stamps, this rubbish continues to be issued. This one in 2021. Gibbons lists it. For some unknown reason it has no Appendix for GB! And yet Royal Fail [sic] issues many stamps “in excess of postal needs or have not been made available to the public in reasonable quantities at face value”.



Actually Royal Fail is worse than most others. It now sends hardly any special issues to any post offices. Why do we in Britain have a postal service (Royal Fail) that that is no longer integrated with its Post Offices?

When I first added São Tomé stamps to my collection in around 1982 I didn't at first realise that Gibbons was behaving like this. I then had no qualms about removing stamps I obtained from kiloware and envelopes. Later I realised I need to keep good evidence that very many stamps that Gibbons shunned were being used on normal mail. Here are some of them.



Now to Sierra Leone. Here Gibbons takes a very different line to the way it treats São Tomé. No Sierra Leone stamps are appendixed. Gibbons lists 4,473. Stamp World lists 5,139. The difference is caused mostly, if not entirely, by the fact that Gibbons usually assigns one number to a miniature sheet while SW numbers each stamp in the sheet if they are different.

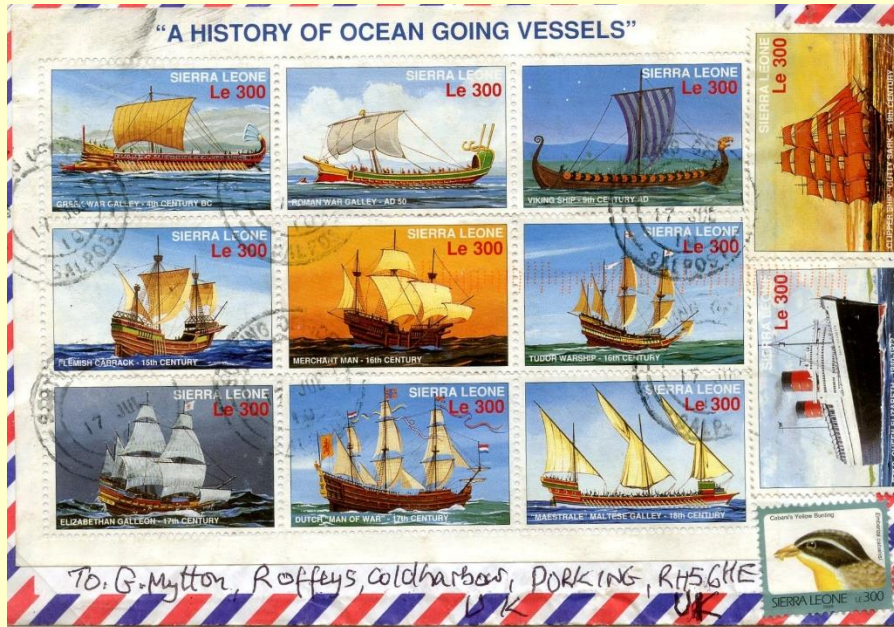
I was able to do my own research when I went to Sierra Leone between 2008 and 2010. I went to the main Post Office in Freetown. I bought stamps at one of the counters. The ones that were available were then, the current definitives, of birds. More about those in a moment. I asked the counter clerk if there were others available for sale. The clerk called the postmaster, who invited me into his office where he had very many other issues in a safe!



And here they are on covers sent to me. Note that I have in most cases made up the correct postage, mainly by using some of the definitive bird stamps I mentioned earlier.



According to Gibbons' Appendix rules surely these should also be there?



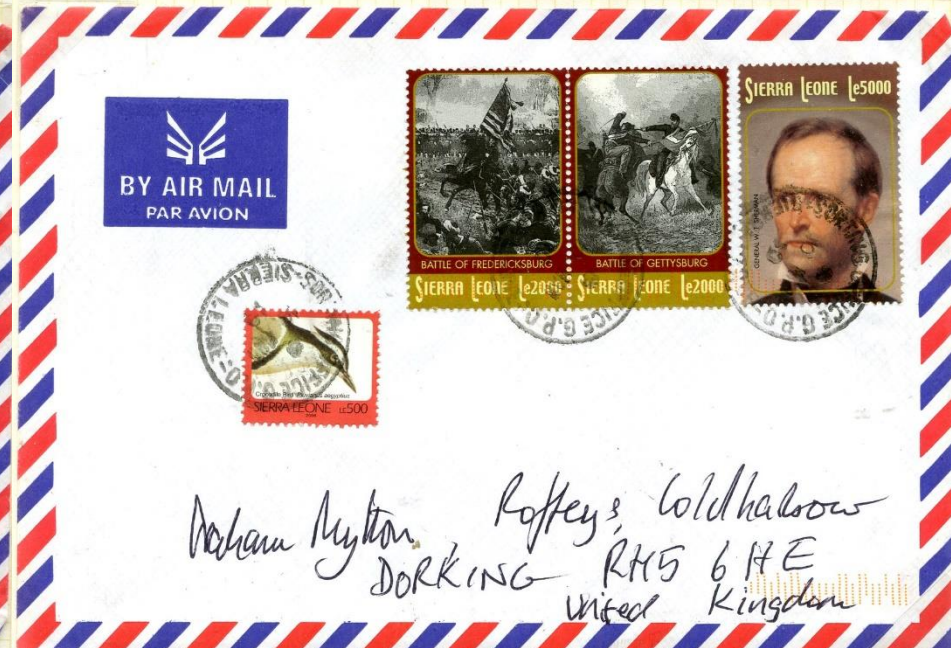
To: G. Mytton, Roffeys, Coldharbour, DORKING, RH5 6HE
UK



Graham Mytton
Roffeys, Coldharbour
DORKING RH5 6HE
United Kingdom



Graham Mytton, Roffeys, Coldharbour, DORKING
RH5 6HE United Kingdom



Graham Mytton, Roffeys, Coldharbour
DORKING RH5 6HE
United Kingdom

I bet that this was the first ever presentation at WASC involving São Tomé and Príncipe!

Thank you!