

# CAMEO



The Journal of the West Africa Study Circle





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See paper by Michael Oliver, page 84

# Editorial

As readers will see in the letters page of this issue and at the top of page 65 there has been feedback from some WASC members pointing out errors in articles published in the last two issues of *Cameo*. As *Cameo* aims to be a publication of record, all published articles need to be able to stand up to expert scrutiny. Whilst debate about the interpretation of factual evidence is welcome because it can be the catalyst for deeper investigation, as has happened over the last few years on the topic of World War II airmails, the factual basis for such debate needs to be accurate. When article authors move from fact to supposition, the difference needs to be clear. Factually “right first time” is obviously desirable so that future readers do not have to search for corrections in subsequent *Cameos*.

Consequently, the editors have decided to implement a selective pre-publication peer review process by other WASC members when we have any concern about accuracy of articles that fall outside the editors’ expertise. Our first contacts will be the country and topic editors listed in the box on page 57. Other members may also be contacted for a pre-publication review from time to time.

The Benin booklet referred to in the January 2015 editorial is no longer going to be published by WASC, but the other two publications are now available and Colin Tabear’s “*British West African Mail Packets to 1900*” can now be pre-ordered. The second edition of *Sierra Leone Postmarks* is also imminent.

**The next issue will be edited by Barry, datelined October 2015, and the copy deadline is 31 August**

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 & Togo together with the islands of St. Helena, Ascension, Tristan da Cunha & Gough and the British Postal Agencies in Madeira, Tenerife, St. Vincent and Fernando Po.

## Annual Subscription

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## Letters to the Editor

*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*



### **Ken Lawrence article 1941-1942 Bathurst Flight Covers Revisited (Cameo January 2015)**

Dear editors

While it is difficult to know where to begin, and I will *not* go into a point-by-point rebuttal of this confrontational piece, I will simply state that errors abound, errors resulting from an attempted explanation of a complex subject using limited, incomplete and obsolete knowledge.

I for one do not particularly like philatelic airmail due to all the plastic rules used to prepare it, especially if the effort did not go as planned and the mail was returned for additional markings. Mail from the inaugural flight of what is sometimes called "FAM 22" is exceptional in the number of ad hoc changes made to the designated itinerary and subsequent tricks used to legitimize it. After all, we must ask what is the accepted UPU protocol for applying phony back-stamps to international airmail, and just who is an expert on these procedures? Frankly, there are very good reasons why these items are typically found in dealers' \$1 cover boxes. They are irrelevant to any subsequent service, and thus moot.

One passage best demonstrates my overall complaint about the article (however there are many others): Paragraph 8, page 44 states:

*"If that had occurred, why do first flight covers from Bathurst to Port of Spain have 15 January 1940 arrival back-stamps instead of 2 January 1940, the date of Trip 482 censorship at Trinidad?"*

To begin with, we have to assume the date of "1940" is meant to be "1942." However, in context the passage has much more to it than just a date mistake. *Careful* reading of Wilson's article [Ref.6; the object of this particular comment] shows that each leg of the Bathurst mail was treated separately by both postal authorities and Wilson. The quoted comment is in the Bathurst-Natal section of the article, and refers only to mail posted for that leg. Later on (2 pages later), in the Bathurst-Port of Spain and Bathurst-San Juan section, Wilson offers NO specific flight to or from Port of Spain that might be suggested by the 15 January back-stamp. What is conveniently omitted is that Wilson *also* points out that San Juan covers have a complementary (to the Port of Spain) back-stamp of 14 January, suggesting delivery by a *southbound* carrier. This is hardly Trip 482, "FAM 22" or any other legitimate recorded flight.

I find this a self-serving omission used deliberately to obfuscate the facts. In sum, all Wilson is saying is that these covers have transit marks that are not likely connected to Trip 482's known itinerary. Period. Either way, they are examples of phony, return "FAM 22" airmail, complete with post-dated back-stamps from this new, failed service. For all we know, this mail may have arrived by boat (however unlikely, ...but NOT impossible!).

If you have gotten this far, well done! I have to assume most readers have glazed over by now. I am not going any further in spite of the temptation, but suffice it to say I do not regard this article as worthy, and it is not a rebuttal to anything, let alone the five (5) fine Wilson articles cited (only as targets). One must wonder just why such a polemic piece was prepared? The good news is that this article was so poorly written on a such complex topic that we can easily determine just who has the expertise. I am certain WASC members know where to go to get their answers.

Bob Wilcsek, San Diego, Calif

 **Response to Lawrence article *Bathurst First Flight Covers revisited* in *Cameo* Jan 2015**

Dear Rob and Barry,

Readers of *Cameo* may be puzzled by the Lawrence article, since it was a commentary on a text that was never published in *Cameo* but in *Air Mail News* and shows a lack of courtesy towards the British Air Mail Society on the part of the author. A copy of the original Wilson & Priddy article can be sent to interested readers via the Editors of *Cameo*.

This article, "*FAM-22 First Flight covers – or are they?*" addressed the question of what happened to the FAM-22 "First Flight" covers that were abandoned at Bathurst in December 1941 when the Pan American aircraft *en route* from Leopoldville failed to call, and returned to America leaving the covers behind. The question was simple, as was the answer, but Ken Lawrence has picked up the ball and run off in quite the wrong direction. This seems to be a classic case of someone deciding on a conclusion and then selectively "adjusting" the evidence to reach that pre-determined conclusion. Having digested the original text, readers can then make up their own minds as to the relative merits of the authors.

John Wilson, Builth Wells

 **Cameo editorship**

Dear Rob and Barry,

In addition to my formal response to the article by Lawrence in January *Cameo*, supra, I feel it necessary to make a personal statement by letter so as to ensure that my views are independent of the journal.

*Cameo*, from Jeremy Martin's first issue in January 1975 has advanced over the intervening forty years to become one of the most respected and admired Society journals in the world. Reputation, which takes such a long time to establish, can be quickly destroyed by a lapse of standards, and the article by Lawrence could be just such a lapse.

This was written by a person who, despite a distinguished background in traditional philately, is not a member nor has ever been a member of the West Africa Study Circle; whose first article on the topic of wartime West African airmail was published in January 2014 in the *American Philatelist*; an article that caused such adverse comment in America that the editor of "AP" felt it necessary to place the following statement in the

June 2014 issue:

*"The AP has had several expressions of concern that interpretations of facts presented by Ken Lawrence's articles on US Foreign Mail Route No. 22 (AP issues of January and February 2014) are incorrect. The issues are complex and would take more space to unravel than the original articles. We are informed that it would be useful for those interested in FAM 22 to read additional material on that subject that has recently appeared in The Airpost Journal of the American Air Mail Society; specifically issues from October 2008 to December 2013. Copies may be obtained from the American Philatelic Research Library.*

*Barb Boal, Editor"*

The Lawrence article in *Cameo* is little more than a thinly veiled attempt to denigrate my own research work and that of Barbara Priddy. I have been a member of WASC since March 1972; Barbara for a little less. Our research is well known, has been peer reviewed and analysed in great detail on both sides of the Atlantic, and I believe is valid. Barbara, as the compiler and editor of one of the definitive books on West African Airmails is respected not only within WASC but in other fields including French Colonial Airmails.

Let us have no more of this nonsense. Save the pages of *Cameo* for the fine standards of writing we have seen from members over the last forty years and maintain the journal's reputation that has been much enhanced by your own joint editorship.

John Wilson, Builth Wells

*Dear John*

*Thank you for your kind words about the effort Barry and I put into creating each issue of Cameo. We intend that the journal should be a publication of record, so it is vital that all the articles we publish should be accurate and fully-referenced. That does not prevent authors expressing their opinions about the significance of factual evidence that has been fully referenced for readers to read for themselves, so long as a clear distinction is made between facts and such opinions.*

*From my limited knowledge of this air mail route I was puzzled why ATC's very limited land-plane capacity might be used to help Pan Am uplift from Bathurst philatelic mail that was clearly of no significance to the war effort. Even the pilot of the FAM22 first flight, Capt. Masland, expressed his opinion that that this mail was a waste of trans-Atlantic cargo space!*

*Rob May*

**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 – Oliver Andrew
- Ghana – Ian Anderson
- Gold Coast – Peter Duggan
- Maritime –
- 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

**The Publications Committee Chairman  
is Rob May**

 **4/6d “Double Atlantic” rate from UK to  
Africa**

Dear Rob and Barry,

Covers exist showing the use of a postal rate of 4/6d on airmail sent from the United Kingdom to West Africa via the United States “Double Atlantic” during WW2. This was an unadvertised rate and no Post Office documentation has been found which refers to it, but in Barbara Priddy’s “West African Airmails” she makes reference on p.32, sheet 54 of the Porter collection, to an extract from the minutes of Lagos Chamber of Commerce in which a member of the Chamber pointed out that whilst the postage rate from Nigeria to UK was 5/-, the rate from UK to Nigeria was only 4/6d.

Few covers have been located, and I have details of eight; seven held by UK members of WASC and one by an American member. Before trying to draw any conclusions as to when, why and where this 4/6d rate applied it would be helpful if we could determine if there are any more covers not yet seen. Knowing the usual procedure within WASC I am expecting my old friend Jeremy Martin to tell me “I have several of these covers”.

Could I ask anyone having any covers bearing the 4/6d rate UK-Africa to let me have details so that we can put together a definitive text as a record for future collectors? Two fine articles [Refs.1&2] have been written by WASC members which contain details of the same cover showing the 4/6d rate but the topic now needs a little more focus.

Thank you in advance,

John Wilson, Built Wells

Reference

1. May, Robert, “*West African Airmail links with Europe after June 1940*”. (London Philatelist, December 2006)
2. Richards, Peter. “*Air Mail Services from the United Kingdom to West Africa during the Second World War*”. (London Philatelist, May 2010).



**“Received / Gambia” postmark 1908**

James Bendon sent the following two images of a Gambia cancellation on a Japanese stamp and PS cut out to John Sacher asking if he knew anything about them. Frank Walton speculates that they may be UPU specimens that were held in the Gambian Post Office, rather than cancellations on incoming mail.



みほん



Dear Rob,

I don’t know whether anyone has ever seen a use like this. I have not. I always assumed that the ‘RECEIVED’ mark was intended for use on incoming mail, although it was applied to mail posted in the Gambia. I have recorded use of the mark with the ‘C’ index from 3.10.1884, so they could theoretically be genuine usages. Logically this canceller could have been used on un-cancelled incoming mail, but these stamps must have been on letters which passed through at least one major office on the way to Africa, so it is strange that they were not cancelled sooner. It is even odder that they are both dated the same and that the first ‘8’ clearly has the centre missing on both strikes.

Does any reader have a thought?

John Sacher, Dorchester



## Ascension: FPO 777

Dear Barry,  
The recently published third edition of the Censorship book (Ref. 1) includes much more detail of Field Post Offices (FPOs).

FPO 777 is recorded in red with an asterisk as the code. I have recently found an example in black dated 2 May 1986 on a postcard from Ascension.

Jeremy Martin FRPSL, Salisbury

### Reference

- 1 Martin J., Walton F. & Harris R. *West African Censorship*, p150, 3rd edition, WASC.



## Lagos Postmarks

Dear Rob and Barry,  
Following the welcome publication of a revised listing of Lagos postmarks by Svein Vikhamar in the last *Cameo* (No. 94, January 2015, pp14-18) of Ince and Sacher's original listing of Lagos Colony cancels from Lagos and surrounding villages and towns, I want to report as WASC Study Editor that there has been a flurry of activity by a few members to further revise the listing. For example, Paul Redhead has been active, while I have added a dozen changes to the list.

As Svein is no longer a WASC member, I note you were put as contacts, but that could be a bind for you. I offer to be the contact person.

Best wishes  
Simon Heap, Oxford

# Crown Agents Stamp Bulletins

## Jeremy Martin FRPSL

*This article was first published in the London Philatelist number 1425 of May 2015*

In the British Library Philatelic Collections there are several largely complete sets of Bulletins with varying titles. Generally these were issued by the Crown Agents to dealers to notify them of new issues and new printings to enable them to order such items.

It was not possible to check which countries were involved but the Bulletins start in 1920.

The Bulletins are

- 1 The *Crown Agents Stamp Bulletin*, issued by the Crown Agents for the Colonies, 29 volumes bound in blue numbered 1-377 (1920-1964) and without numbering to 1971.
- 2 *Crown Agents Gazette*, three volumes in blue numbered 1-12 (1972-1983)
- 3 *Crown Agents News*, volumes 1-7 in binder, 1977-October 1983
- 4 *Trade Circular*, four binders and three volumes bound in black c.1968-1983
- 5 *Crown Agents Press Releases*, 26 volumes bound in green, 1981-2001
- 6 *CASCO Philatelic Services*, one volume bound in red of trade circulars, 2007-2008
- 7 *New Issue Information from the Crown Agents Stamp Bureau*, loose 2002-2005
- 8 In addition to the items detailed above, bound and loose issues of the same titles can also be found in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office collections. These include the *Crown Agents Stamp Bulletin* 1920-1971, the *Crown Agents Gazette* 1972-1983 and some trade circulars 1980.

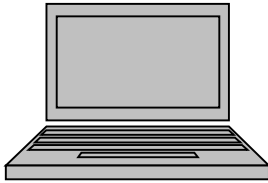
It seems that Bulletins were issued a few months after the stamps were released. For the researcher it is possible, for example, to check values on requisition orders with descriptions in the Bulletins.

Those interested should contact the British Library Philatelic Collections, current Curators Paul Skinner FRPSL and Richard Morel. My thanks to David Beech MBE FRPSL who advised and corrected a draft when he was Curator before his retirement.

### Access to the internet?

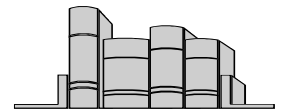
Then visit the West Africa Study Circle Web Site at: <http://www.wasc.org.uk>  
Webmaster is Ray Harris - contact: [harris6@which.net](mailto:harris6@which.net)

There are now direct links to our advertisers and other websites  
Other recent additions include documents by WASC members including information on  
Air Routes and Nigerian Postmarks, with extra material frequently added




## Sources

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 *Trans-Atlantic & Trans-Africa Mail Service of the United States Army Air Forces Ferrying Command, Air Transport Command, & contract air carriers during WWII: A Selection of U.S. Post Office Dept., Civil Aeronautics Bd & Air Force Docs.* Ken Lawrence, ed. Two Volumes, 400 pages, 9x11 in., Plastic Comb, \$800. Self Published, Amazon (2014). Review by David Crotty.


For decades collectors and historians were led to believe that Trans-Atlantic and Trans-Africa mail during World War II was carried by one flying boat operating between Miami and Leopoldville on a U.S. Postal route known as FAM22 with BOAC and other carriers taking the mail onward. A continued search of Pan American Airway records held at the University of Miami opened up a much wider story. But the most important evidence was found in U.S. Army and Air Force records held at several locations in Washington, D.C., Pennsylvania, and Alabama. This set of books contains the results of Mr. Lawrence's search through some 27,000 pages of military microfilm images for reports that discuss the carriage of mail. Some of these pages were obtained through his freedom of information request.

The documents demonstrate clearly that the Post Office Department in December 1941 re-defined, at the request of the U.S. military, the FAM22 mail transport authorizations to include all of Africa, the Middle East and Asia through to Singapore. Other tabular documents list the amounts of cargo, passengers and mail that the Army ATC (Air Transport Command) and its several contractors carried throughout Africa, city by city, during the war. The contractors included Pan American, Eastern, American and TWA and several others. The listings show how much mail was carried by ATC and the contractors and how much was transferred from and to BOAC. Much of the ATC transport before May 1943 was carried by the massive network of land based aircraft, and after May 1943, when the Boeing 314 shuttle ended, all of it was. Numerous other related subjects are discussed in these findings. Maps of ATC mail routes again redefine the scope of the U.S. Army ATC operations.

This work represents a Herculean effort that reminds me of my own work cataloging Pan American Airways Atlantic operations during the war. These pages redefine what we thought we knew about transportation during World War II. It is an indispensable reference for war historians and philatelists.

 *British Intervention in War-torn Sierra Leone 1997-2015* Michael Dobbs, 32pp monograph, no illustrations. Published by the West Africa Study Circle, 2015. Available from the author at 52 Leamington Avenue, Bromley, Kent BR1 5BL (Michael.dobbs@ntlworld.com) ISBN 978-1-905647-20-0, price £4 (WASC and FPHS members) + £1.25 p&p (UK) Reviewed by Geoff Hanney

This is an interesting book on the British Military involvement in Sierra Leone during the period of the civil war in that country and the Ebola crisis. I believe this is going to be one of those forgotten interventions to general history as it pales into insignificance against the Iraq and Afghanistan Wars. The book gives information on the British Operations that were run in the country to support both the UN effort and train the Sierra Leone Armed Forces. The majority of the British troops were deployed in small or partial units, the details of which are given in the book. It also gives a breakdown of the Royal Naval vessels that were involved in the operations and visited the country with their associated BFPO information. The book has top level detail of Operation Barras which was the rescue mission of British troops taken captive by rebel forces, which was led by Special Forces and a detachment of 1 Para in September 2000. It is good starter for someone trying to collect postal history of the Sierra Leone conflict from a British Force point of view and has the source reference for further research, although I personally would have liked to have seen more information on the forces postal services.

 [www.wasc.org.uk/WASC4\\_addl\\_pubs.html](http://www.wasc.org.uk/WASC4_addl_pubs.html). On line research resource: *History of the Air Transport Command in Central Africa and the Middle East*.  
Uploaded by John Wilson

Recent discovery and analysis of documents held in the Pan American Airways archive at the Richter Library, University of Miami, has widened our knowledge of the then secret wartime flights and missions carried out by Pan American crews and aircraft flying the Atlantic routes between the United States and Africa. Less was revealed about the operations of Pan American Airways (Africa) in setting up and operating air transport services between African countries and also West Africa to Middle East routes. Even less was known about the events leading to, and subsequent takeover of the Pan American Airways (Africa) operations in late 1942 by the US military Air Transport Command.

A previously-unrecorded complete history of the Air Transport Command has been located. One author, Ken Lawrence, has extracted sections from it and included these in a self-published compilation of these and other document copies in a plastic comb-bound format. This was first advertised in *Air Post Journal* in November 2014 and used as a major reference in a *Cameo* article in January 2015. (*also reviewed on page 59—ed*) This comes at a considerable cost - \$800 (eight hundred dollars), plus all shipping costs.

This flies in the face of my own belief that information found during personal research should be made freely available to other researchers, best demonstrated by my making available the *Report on the Progress of Civil Aviation* and the entire original records of Pan American wartime operations (The Trip Summaries) as free-to-download files on the WASC web site. Accordingly, and using my established research contacts in the United States, I have purchased the ATC History documents as microfilmed images and have now digitally processed them so that they too can be made available on the WASC web site. I have received permission to do this from the United States Air Force Historical Research Agency, the source of the information, and I express my thanks for their readiness to help.

The three-part report occupies some 2000 pages and although some of the sections may not seem to have direct relevance to postal history, another of my principles is that it is best to have an entire document rather than selective extracts which might “skew” the original meaning. For those of us who have lived and worked in West Africa there are some parts that will raise a knowing smile (WAWA), but overall the information is astonishing in its detail and scope. One advantage of using computer technology is that it can make documents electronically “searchable”, so here is what I have done to process the original images.

As received from AFHRA the image of each page is a reproduction of a microfilm reduction of the original document. These images are quite poor, varying from being hard to read to virtually impossible to decipher. I took each image individually and processed it for legibility and alignment, then cropped it to remove all unwanted boundaries and restore it to a proper size and format. Having done that for all 2000 images I assembled them into PDF (Portable Document Format) files for each of the three sections of the report, followed by further optimisation and Optical Character Recognition (OCR). OCR can only recognise and interpret reasonable images of typefaces, and the recognition software can have difficulty in finding every occurrence of a word or phrase from the poor images in this report. However, intelligent use of “partials” can help. As an example, I find the location Habbaniya spelled in the report as:

Habbaniyeh, Habbaniyah, Habbanaya, Habbanyia and Habbaynia,

so searching for our modern spelling of the complete word misses all of these. On the other hand, searching for “Habb” picks up all of them. One learns the tricks, and it is certainly an improvement on visually searching each of two thousand pages.

The complete report comprises three sections and I propose to make each section a stand-alone PDF document with an introductory index and explanation of relevant sections written by me as an aid to use. I will place no interpretation of my own on the report text, since each user and reader should be free to make their own analysis according to their particular interests and knowledge.

This information source provides a massive advance in our knowledge base and will answer many of the questions about how air transport services in Africa and the Middle East were developed by the United States military after December 1942. And it is now free to search and use, as I think it should be.

## Michael de Normann Ensor OBE, CMG (1919 – 2015)

*One of our long standing and active members Michael Ensor passed away earlier this year. Because of his involvement with the Study Circle over many years and holder of a number of offices I decided to research his life aided by a memoir which Michael completed for his family around the time of his 80<sup>th</sup> birthday. A substantial part of his life was spent working in Africa, much in the areas where our members collect and study, so this obituary is perhaps longer than the norm reflecting the interest which all will discover.*

*John Powell*

Michael was born on 11 June 1919 in a smart nursing home in Chelsea. His mother was secretary of the Theosophical Educational Trust and father a Captain in the Canadian Army and at the time of his birth still engaged in the Murmansk campaign against the Bolsheviks. He was brought up as a vegetarian which he says contributed to his good health. In the early years they lived in a flat in Abbey Road, in St Johns Wood, NW London. Early recollections are of a large house in Letchworth where his mother was headmistress of St Christopher's school. His father had left Northern Ireland at an early age to go to North America and was serving in the NW Mounted Police at the outbreak of War. After the War he left for South Africa and bought 8,000 acres of land in Cape Province.

At the age of 7 he was sent as a boarder to Abinger Hill preparatory school and later to L'Ecole de l'Humanite at Uccle, a suburb of Brussels. Family separation having gone on long enough his mother moved to the farm in South Africa and Michael was sent as a boarder to Diocesan College near Cape Town. It was here he was taught the basics of rugby. When his mother had to return to England he was offered a bursary at Bryanston School in Dorset. At this time his father died in South Africa from Typhoid and his mother returned to run the farm. Michael continued his education and took Higher Certificate in History, French and Latin. His Greek enabled him to read Aristophanes and Sophocles. Later he was accepted as a Commoner at St John's to read mediaeval history.

Just before he went down he added his name to a college notice board list for people interested in joining the Colonial Service – he had an uncle who had been in Nigeria. In 1940 he was told to report to Brock Barracks in Reading for basic training but shortly afterwards was summoned to the Colonial Office and after declining Hong Kong and the Solomon Is (both being overrun by the Japanese six months later) said he would be interested in the Gold Coast. He received an offer of appointment as an Administrative Cadet. At just over 21 he was demobilised and had the good fortune to be appointed to a permanent and pensionable job. His pay was £400 a year for two years from arrival in the colony. He embarked on the Elder Dempster vessel *Abosso* in August 1940. On arrival he opted to join the Secretariat in Accra which was the main support of the Colony's Chief Executive, the Governor. His 18 month tour consisted by no means only shuffling files and when the Home Guard was formed he was given command firstly of a platoon and later a company. At this time he was secretary (unpaid) of the Victoriaborg Golf Club – with no club house and only nine holes.

In February 1942, as the end of his 18 month tour approached, he learned his mother in South Africa had been taken seriously ill and was in hospital in Cape Town. He urgently wanted to reach her but there was no regular sea or air connection with South Africa at the time. His route started with a plane to Lagos followed by a Sabena aircraft to Leopoldville via a stop at Port Gentil caused by a thunderstorm. He then travelled seven days up the Congo and Kasai rivers to Elizabethville where he joined the railway network and took the long journey to Port Elizabeth. By now his mother had returned home fully recovered. He later returned to the Gold Coast by a French ship.

His next posting was at the Resident Minister's office; part of the Home & Colonial civil service. In May 1944 two young ladies arrived from Whitehall to be private secretaries – one being Mona Blackburn. Michael accompanied the Minister when he flew back to London in a RAF Dakota via Bathurst, Rabat and Gibraltar. He returned after a month to start his third year in the service with his salary increasing to £500 a year. Michael and two colleagues pooled their resources to buy a beach hut at Labadi which proved a splendid investment and when the other two left he was able to buy out their shares and become the sole owner of one of the best beach huts within easy reach of Accra.

Gradually he found himself becoming fond of Mona Blackburn and in December 1944, while sharing the back seat of a car, he asked her to marry him and her acceptance made him very happy. They were married by the Chaplain of Achimota College and managed a mini-honeymoon at Accra's waterworks at

Weija. The office wound down in 1945, with the minister leaving to contest the General Election. The news of the atomic bombs dropped on Japan reached him while at Takoradi and so ended his Second World War.

Michael and Mona left for Cape Town and then on to meet his mother; Mona and his mother getting on famously. After a few weeks' leave the pair returned to the Gold Coast by the *MV Calabar* and was posted to Ada 70 miles east of Accra. His job was to be District Commissioner where his functions included magistrate, coroner, collector of revenue and registrar of marriages. The DC's bungalow was more or less on the beach facing the sea with no electricity and the only fresh water was that which had fallen on his roof in the wet season, being kept in a tank under lock and key. The station consisted of the DC's office and court, police station and a Post Office. From there the launches left to go up and across the Volta. They had only been in Ada for less than three months when Mona became pregnant and as the European specialist in Accra did not believe European women should give birth on the coast she left to join her parents in Bournemouth. In early December came a telegram to say Mona had given birth to a fine boy who was to be called Patrick.

Later Michael was transferred to Keta a more important and bigger district and all Ewe-speaking. After a spell of leave in the UK Mona, Patrick and Michael reported to one of the Nissen huts at Heathrow in January 1948 and flew in a converted Lancaster across the Sahara to Kano and Accra. He was told he had been posted to the Secretariat where the most important question was soon to become the international implications of British Togoland. In an attempt to defuse discontentment among the Ewes in the two Togolands an Anglo-French joint commission was set up and Michael accompanied the Governor to the first meeting in Lome as Assistant British Secretary and Interpreter. Mona became pregnant again and their second child called Jeremy Mark was born while Michael was on business in Lome. After a spell of leave they returned to Accra in January 50 where the task of being Clerk to the Executive was added to his duties which meant attending meetings of the Council presided over by the Governor. By 1950 Togoland became a more important part of his job and included working as part of the UN Trusteeship which involved a fortnight in New York.

After ten years service, leave was spent in South Africa where Patrick was boarding at school because there was at this time no international school in Accra. In 1954 the Trusteeship Council was taking much of Michael's time which included another trip to New York. Leave in 1954 was a prolonged tour of Europe in a new car. Back in Accra, Michael was transferred to Government House with acting rank of Administration Officer Class 1 and an office in Christiansborg Castle – this following the new ministerial constitution of 1954. The Togo plebiscite was planned for May 1956, the result being a substantial majority for going into independence as part of the Gold Coast although a large area in the South opposed this. The result of the plebiscite would go to the United Nations General Assembly and Michael joined two Ministers on another trip to New York and, although Michael did not address the assembly, he was active in the lobbies. Soon after this a general election was held which led to March 1957 being fixed for the country's independence and the important task in Accra for the department to become a fully fledged Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Michael's award of an O.B.E. was announced in the 1957 New Year honours. Knowing that he was planning to spend only another year in Ghana he was found a special job in the Ministry of Local Government. It was at this time Michael took up stamp collecting.

The family returned to London and Michael went to work in Parliament Street to head the Foundation for Mutual Assistance in Africa South of the Sahara; including in 1959 a long tour of Africa involving 13 countries south of the Sahara. An offer for a flat in house 12 in The Paragon in Blackheath was accepted at this time. Michael's employers FAMA decided to move to Lagos and he agreed on the offer of improved terms of service and the move took place in April 1960. Nigeria's independence was looming and Mona joined Michael for the celebrations. Terms were agreed for a second three year contract; at the end of which the organisation was breaking up and member governments decided to hand the set-up to the Organisation for African Unity which involved him leaving Lagos. In London the Colonial Office closed down and Michael was appointed temporary Principal in the Department of Technical Cooperation.

Before long a General Election had returned a Labour Government which created a Ministry of Overseas Development with Barbara Castle as Minister. Michael only dealt with a part of East Africa and the highlight of this period was an aid mission to Uganda which included being taken as an honoured guest to the two main National Parks. In 1970 he was transferred to the UN Department as desk officer for UNCTAD and UNIDO who held meetings in Geneva and Vienna. After three years of UN Department came promotion to Deputy Establishment Officer and then Head of Recruitment followed by Head of Organisation Department.

In 1975 he was summoned to the office of his Under-Secretary and asked if he would be willing to go to Nairobi as head of the Ministry's Development Division for Eastern Africa. Mona agreed with the posting and they were provided with first class air tickets and a fine furnished house. The function of the division was planning and supervising financial aid to Kenya, Ethiopia, Somalia, Mauritius and Seychelles. During his last year in Nairobi the Development Division was asked to visit Uganda after the country's liberation from the Idi Amin regime to see what aid would be appropriate. They found the country still very tense and in a terrible mess with acute shortage of medicines and hospital stores. There was little that could be achieved during this initial visit.

Michael reached normal retiring age for the Civil Service of 60 half way through his second two-year tour of East Africa but was allowed to complete it. Before returning home they took a holiday in South Africa by way of Mauritius. Soon after his return he received a letter from 10 Downing Street asking him if he wished his name to go forward for appointment as Companion of the Order of St Michael and St George in recognition of his overseas service; he replied affirmatively and his name appeared in the Birthday Honours. Michael, accompanied by Mona and Patrick, went to Buckingham Palace to be invested by the Queen with the insignia of C.M.G.

Michael continued to live at the Paragon in Blackheath during his retirement years and there followed a series of holidays and cruises and early spring visits to Paris where he would visit the stamp market. In 1987 and 1990 they visited Patrick and wife Judith who had moved to New Zealand, combining the trips with world tours. Golf gave Michael a great deal of pleasure, exercise and pleasant company over many years, in West and East Africa and at the Royal Blackheath Golf Club. Mona had a successful year as Lady Captain. He was also a member of the Travellers Club (where the WASC held its meetings for a number of years through his good offices).

During his final years in Ghana he took to collecting stamps and this interest continued and developed, becoming a major occupation in his retirement years. Membership of three philatelic societies covering his main areas of interest was of great help: The West Africa Study Circle, the East Africa Study Circle and the France and Colonies Philatelic Society. He was secretary of the first for six years (1983-1989), its President (1994-1996) and Assistant Gold Coast Editor for about 20. In this last capacity he worked on and off for years, with the assistance of a number of collaborators, on what became the book *The Postal History of the Gold Coast 1901-1957*, of which he was the editor and the book appeared in the autumn of 1998. He was awarded the Study Circle's medal in 1998, the fifth member to be so rewarded. He was a friend, gentleman and helpful philatelist and will be sorely missed.



## Kamerun CEF 4d. Quadruple Overprint

Marty Bratzel

In previous issues of *Cameo* (January 2014, pages 11-13 and January 2015, pages 34-36), we discussed the C.E.F. 4d. on 40 pfennig Kamerun yacht stamp with quadruple overprint, three albino. Another copy of this variety was offered as Lot 1955 in the Corinphila Auction Catalogue No. 196 on May 28, 2015. The auction house, located in Zurich, kindly provided scans. The stamp, pictured here, is in abysmal condition: toned, blunted perfs, almost detached corner, partial gum, and hinge remnant. The stamp is signed by Hoffmann Giesecke and is accompanied by a Peter Holcombe certificate.

Using the scans, I conclude that the stamp is from the same half-sheet as the previously discussed and illustrated examples; further, that the stamp is from the upper right portion of that half-sheet. At some future point, time permitting, I will nail down the exact position.

Upon comparing scans, this stamp was previously offered as Lot 1177 in the Spink Auction No. 6031 on November 8, 2006, when it sold for £600, plus commission. For the record, the stamp sold this time for the starting bid of 1,000 Swiss francs, plus 20% commission.

Out of 50 quadruply overprinted stamps, the existence of 12 are now confirmed.



# Sierra Leone Avis De Reception Envelope

Frank Walton RDP FRPSL



*Crest and postmarks on the reverse*

One of the more elusive facets of West African postal history is mail that was sent under the Advice of Receipt service. It often goes by its French name of *Avis de Reception* as it is known in UPU terminology. Either expression is normally reduced to 'AR'. There have been a couple of articles in *Cameo* on this topic (Refs. 1 & 2), but neither mentioned the return of the advice of delivery to the originator.

The envelope illustrated is an envelope that was clearly designed for the sending of the acknowledgement of delivery. This example has the text *On Her Majesty's Service*, *Avis De Reception* and *Acknowledgement of Delivery* pre-printed on the front, as well the official colony arms impressed on the flap of the envelope.

This particular example was sent from Freetown on 15 December 1904, with transit marks in London (29 Dec 1904) and New York (1 Jan 1905). There was an arrival mark applied in Baltimore, USA on 8 January 1905. In many years collecting, it is the first example of this type of envelope that I have seen. Note that this letter itself was treated as a registered letter. This service is sometimes referred to as 'Double Registered' rather than 'AR' by Americans; this expression can readily be understood due to the special handling of the acknowledgement.

## References

1. Frank Walton, "Sierra Leone: Payment of Advice of Receipt Fee", *Cameo*, Volume 8, No. 2, p107, January 2004.
2. Philip Quirk, "Three Sierra Leone AR Covers from the 1890s", *Cameo*, Volume 12, No. 1, pp11-13, January 2011.

## The Voyage of the *SS Teneriffe*—a correction

Robert Nelson has contacted the editors to point out that the article by Gary Wayne Loew in the October 2014 issue of *Cameo* pp 155 –163 contains a geographical error. The map on page 158 places Addah on the Ivory Coast, whereas it is on the Gold Coast. The table of miles between stops is therefore also incorrect as the first stop after Half Jack was probably Elmina, and the stop at Addah would have been the last of the six stops on the Gold Coast, southbound.



### Pan American Airways first service from Gold Coast and Gambia 1942

John Wilson

In a recent article in *Cameo* (Ref, 1), Ken Lawrence raised the possibility, based on articles written in 1942 and 1945, that the first all-air service to the United States from Bathurst on December 30 1941 and the first service from Gold Coast on January 2 1942 were in some way connected and may have been simply two flights of the same “Land based” service. Previous queries I had from John Powell of WASC regarding the lack of information on the Gold Coast first service route led me to investigate more closely in order to end this apparent confusion.

There is no doubt at all that the first flight from Bathurst on December 30, 1941 was made by a diverted Pan American Route 4 flight (482) from Lisbon en route to Trinidad and New York, carrying mail on the “FAM -18” route. The reason for this diversion to Bathurst was to pick up the first flight covers from the Route 6 “FAM-22” service from Leopoldville which had been abandoned at Bathurst when the aircraft on that flight failed to call. The entire Bathurst mail was carried via Natal and Belem to Trinidad where it was off-loaded for examination, after which it was carried as a single shipment to Miami by local Pan American service, arriving there on January 8 1942. How that mail was then treated was the subject of an article in “*Air Mail News*”, and reference should be made to that article (Ref. 2).

There were never any plans for the Pan American trans-Atlantic “Clippers” to land at the Gold Coast, and since all flights, including the mythical “FAM-22” were actually military “Special Missions” devoted to carrying military supplies from America to West Africa for onward shipment to Allied Forces in the Middle East, and occasionally to India and beyond, carriage of civilian mail was done on an “as and when” basis. The only connecting point between land planes and flying boats on the West African coast apart from Leopoldville was at Lagos until a land airfield was constructed and opened at Fisherman’s Lake in June 1942. [Ref. 3]

Thus, airmail from the Gold Coast had to be conveyed by DC-3 aircraft belonging to Pan American Airways (Africa) flying daily from Takoradi via Accra to Lagos; these flights then carrying on to Cairo via Kano, Maiduguri, Fort Lamy, Geneina, Fasher, Obeid and Khartoum. The flight from Accra to Lagos took little more than two hours, and the schedules held in the Pan American files at the University of Miami show that the mail would have arrived in Lagos at approximately 9am on Friday January 2 1942. Having arrived at Lagos, there it had to wait for the next Boeing flying boat to come along.

The first (philatelic) flight from Leopoldville had passed through Lagos on December 14 before over-flying Bathurst, but fortunately the next “Special Mission” flight, SM6 had left New York on December 20 1941 bound for Calcutta carrying three and a half tons of aircraft spares addressed to “Commanding General U.S. Troops Australia” (From actual manifest) and was returning via Karachi, Khartoum and Leopoldville, arriving in Lagos on January 7 1942. The same manifest shows that this aircraft carried 58 kg of mail into Lagos and flew 56kg on to Trinidad, and one could conclude that the Gold Coast first flight mail was part of this. Can we prove it?

	<u>Khartoum</u> <u>Leopoldville</u>	<u>Leopoldville</u> <u>Lagos</u>	<u>Lagos</u> <u>Natal</u>	<u>Natal</u> <u>Port of Spain</u>
<u>Charterer</u>				
Passengers	-	-	-	-
Baggage	-	-	-	-
Mail	-	-	-	-
Express	-	-	-	-
<u>P. A. A.</u>				
Passengers	679	679	679	679
Baggage	99	99	99	99
Mail	-	1	5	5
Express	-	-	-	-
<u>Other</u>				
Passengers	366	366	479	479
Baggage	127	127	281	281
Mail	-	15	58	56
Express	-	-	-	-

Figure 1: sectioned weight manifest from Special Mission 6

The flight records show departure from Leopoldville on January 7, transit Lagos January 7, transit Natal January 8, Trinidad January 9 and then direct to New York, arriving on January 9. Note that the aircraft, in accordance with standard practice did not fly to Miami; any mail for Miami being examined at Trinidad and conveyed onward by Pan American Caribbean flights. Comparing actual covers with this flight data does confirm the mail carriage and provides an answer to the question about how Gold Coast mail was transported to America.

The cover below was posted at Luputa, Belgian Congo on December 18, 1941. Endorsed "Via Clipper Leopoldville - New York ou Miami" (note the "ou" showing that the route was not exactly defined) it arrived in Leopoldville on December 23 and then had to wait for the arrival of Special Mission 6 on January 7 since there were no other flights. 15 kg of mail was picked up at Leopoldville and this mail, off loaded at Trinidad, arrived in Miami on January 12 after the customary transit delay through Trinidad mail examination. There are no Trinidad transit markings because at this early date the censors were accepting Belgian Congo censorship as secure, and covers were passed without opening and re-sealing. Later in 1942 this procedure was changed after Congo censorship was not recognised as valid, and instructions issued for Congo mail to be re-examined at British censor stations (Ref. 4).



Figure 2: front of a cover posted from Belgian Congo Dec 18, 1941 by airmail to Baltimore, USA



Figure 3: reverse of the cover shown at figure 2

Letter 3391 in [Ref. 4] reads:

*“...I took the opportunity of discussing the matter with Major Fox during his last visit here.....Until shortly before he left Lagos, Leopoldville mails carried on the Pan American Line had not been intercepted there (i.e. at Lagos, JW) in accordance with instructions, but a little before leaving, on learning that censorship in the Belgian Congo was weak, he had arranged for outward mails to be over-labelled for Trinidad.”*

The following letter in the file (3391A) dated 6 July 1942 carries on:

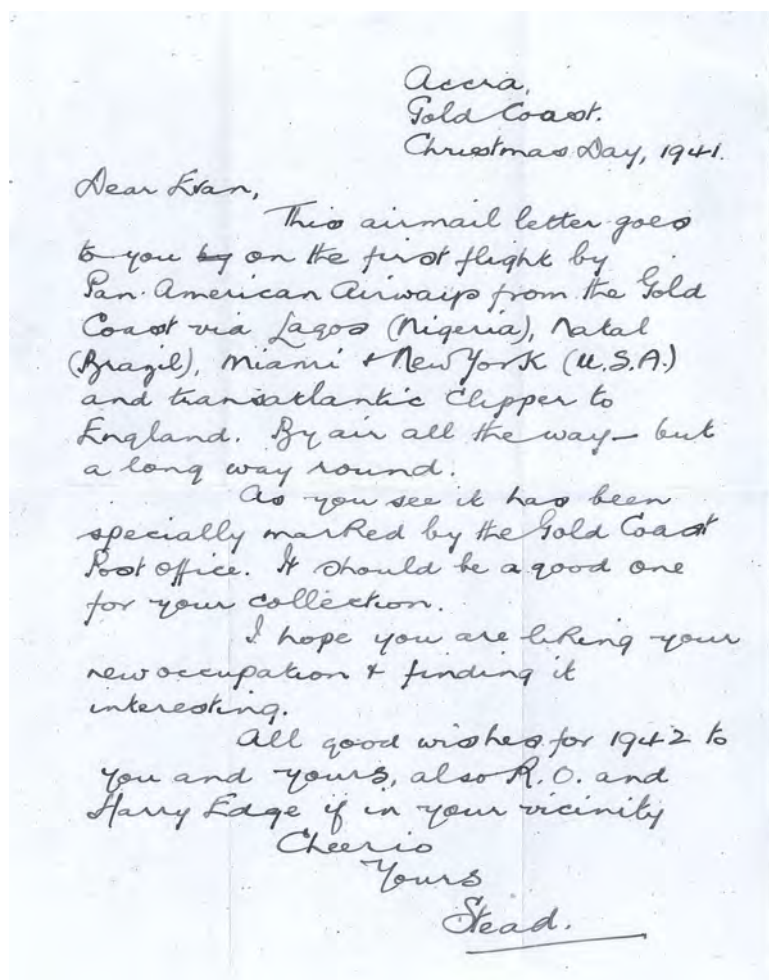
*“The attached report from Fox on his visit to the Belgian Congo tends to confirm the views we have always held about the Belgian Congo Censorship.....We must I think instruct our Overseas Station to re-examine any letters which have gone through the Belgian Congo Censorship”.*

“Aha” you say; this has nothing to do with the Gold Coast, but Barbara Priddy has a cover that does:



Figure 4: “First Clipper Flight” specially-printed cover from Gold Coast to Barbados via Pan Am

There can be no doubt that this is a first service cover from Gold Coast and, having been addressed not to America but to Barbados, it was off loaded with the other mail in Trinidad and forwarded. The clear date of the Trinidad cancel is January 9 1942 and this conforms exactly to the date of arrival of Special Mission 6 in Trinidad.



Finally, from another of my close friends in WASC, I received the letter shown at figure 5 as confirmation of how the Gold Coast mail travelled. Enclosed in a "First Flight" cover the letter was written by Stead Pope who was, as we know, the Postmaster General of Gold Coast. He should have known the route taken by the mail, so read the letter.

Figure 5; letter written by Stead Pope from Accra on 25 Dec. 1941 which was enclosed in a Pan Am first flight cover to the UK

#### Conclusions:

- 1) First service mail from Gold Coast was conveyed by DC-3 of Pan American Airways (Africa) to Lagos, arriving there on January 2 1942 awaiting connection with Special Mission 6 returning from Calcutta via Leopoldville. Mail was then transferred at Trinidad and conveyed to Miami by local services for onward transmission, arriving Miami on January 12, 1941.
- 2) First service mail from Gambia was conveyed by a diverted Route 4 routine flight from Lisbon on December 30, 1941, transferred at Trinidad and conveyed to Miami as normal practice, arriving Miami on January 8 1942.
- 3) There is no connection between these two services as suggested in Ref. 1.

#### References:

1. Lawrence K. "1941-42 Bathurst First Flight Covers Revisited", Cameo, January 2015
2. Priddy, B. and Wilson, J. "FAM-22 First Flight covers - or are they?". Air Mail News, Vol. 55, No. 221, May 2013
3. Wilson, J. "Fisherman's Lake - Into the unknown", Cameo, Vol. 15, No. 2, June 2014
4. File DEFE 1/266, "Belgian Congo Censorship", National Archives, Kew, London.

# Kamerun Yacht Stamps – Shifted C.E.F. 1d. Black Overprint

Trevor Williams

Robert Gibbs (Ref. 1) recorded the 1d. with C.E.F. overprint misplaced in black (No. 3Ae). Articles by Marty Bratzel in the July 2000 *Cameo* (Ref. 2) and the January 2001 *Cameo* (Ref. 3) shed further light upon this variety. This included a report that the misplaced overprint also occurs in blue.

After corresponding with Marty, I can now confirm the existence of the misplaced overprint in black occurring on a second sheet (Fig. 1). The overprint is shifted up so that the C.E.F. straddles the perforations. Note, however, that there is no C.E.F. across the bottom perforations of the two lower stamps. This indicates that the stamps are from rows 9 and 10 of the sheet. The block plates to Positions 83-84 and 93-94. This is confirmed by the broken lower arm of the E in C.E.F. at Position 83.



*Figure 1: Newly discovered C.E.F. 1d.  
with shifted black overprint,  
Positions 83-84 and 93-94.*



*Figure 2: Gibbs C.E.F. 1d.  
with shifted black overprint,  
Positions 93-94-95.*

Proof that this block comes from a second sheet is confirmed in two ways. First, Positions 93-94 from the sheet discussed by Gibbs, previously illustrated in Ref. 3, is shown again here in Fig. 2. The positions are confirmed by the location of the imprints in the bottom sheet margin. Second, the overprint on the stamps illustrated by Gibbs (Ref. 4) is angled slightly upward from left to right across the sheet. On the block illustrated, the overprint is angled very slightly downward from left to right.

In addition to this newly reported block of 4, Marty has recorded 33 copies of 1d. stamps with shifted black overprint. All 33 are without doubt from the sheet discussed by Gibbs – the overprint on each is angled slightly upward. No other examples of stamps with the misplaced overprint angled very slightly downward are recorded, but I am sure that some are out there somewhere!

## Acknowledgements

I would like record my thanks to Marty Bratzel without whose help and extensive knowledge this article would not have been possible.

## References

1. Gibbs, R.M. *G.R.I. The Postage Stamps of the German Colonies Occupied by the British 1914-1918*, pp 218-219. Christie's Robson Lowe, London, 1987.
2. Bratzel, Marty. CEF Overprints on Kamerun Yacht Stamps, *Cameo*, Vol. 6, No. 7, July 2000, pp 326-327.
3. Bratzel, Marty. CEF Overprints on Kamerun Yacht Stamps - A Further Update, *Cameo*, Vol. 7, No. 1, January 2001, pp 40-41.
4. Gibbs, R.M. *G.R.I. The Postage Stamps of the German Colonies Occupied by the British 1914-1918*, p 201. Christie's Robson Lowe, London, 1987.



# Cameroons C.E.F. ½d Reply Postal Stationery Card

**Peter Hørlyck**

The 1915 C.E.F. Sterling overprinted Kamerun postal stationery issue has previously been the topic of articles in *Cameo* by Maddocks (Ref. 1) and Cobb (Ref. 2). Focus has been on the two different overprints of the ½d reply card first described by H. G. Porter in 1956 (Ref. 3), i.e. the ½d reply card exists with a short (or smaller) “1” in ½ with a small thin straight top serif whereas the normal “1” has a thick curved serif at top.

Porter describes the 1d card as being without watermark whereas both the ½d single and the ½d reply cards are on buff coloured card having a diamond pattern watermark with letters I D R interwoven. I will refer to this watermark as DR I.

According to Porter the numbers overprinted are: ½d: 20,700; ½d reply: 2,000; 1d: 1,000.

Another difference mentioned by Maddocks is that on the ½d single card the “1” is normal and the fraction bar thick whereas the fraction bar is thin and 1mm shorter on the ½d reply card.

Gibbs (Ref. 4) speculates that the short “1” is in fact a damaged “1” where the top has been broken off, but Cobb points out that Porter accurately describes "a small thin straight top serif" on the short “1”, so the short “1” is in fact not broken. Cobb instead argues that two different forms (or settings) were used for the ½d reply card, and further settings for the ½d single and 1d cards, i.e. four settings in total. Both Gibbs and Cobb estimate the short “1” being as common as the normal “1”.

This issue has always intrigued me. My first acquaintance with it was from the 1991 edition of the Michel German Postal Stationery catalogue (Ref. 5). The illustration therein is with the same seriffed C.E.F. as on the stamps, so when I the first time saw the cards (in mint condition) in an auction with heavy sans-serif C.E.F. I was very doubtful as to their status. But nevertheless I bid on them and won them. Later it turned out that the illustration in Michel was wrong as they really do have a heavy sans-serif C.E.F. as described by Porter and others. Apart from listing the three postcards mentioned above Michel also listed a 1d reply card, which according to Gibbs is also listed by many authorities such as the Robson Lowe Encyclopaedia and Borek, but which definitely does not exist as proven by Bratzel (Ref. 6).

I have since 1991 acquired further mint examples of the cards when I encounter them at a reasonable price.

I have also been looking for the cards in used condition but these are very scarce. However, in 2006 I first acquired the ½d reply card with short “1” (Fig. 1) and later the 1d card in used condition.

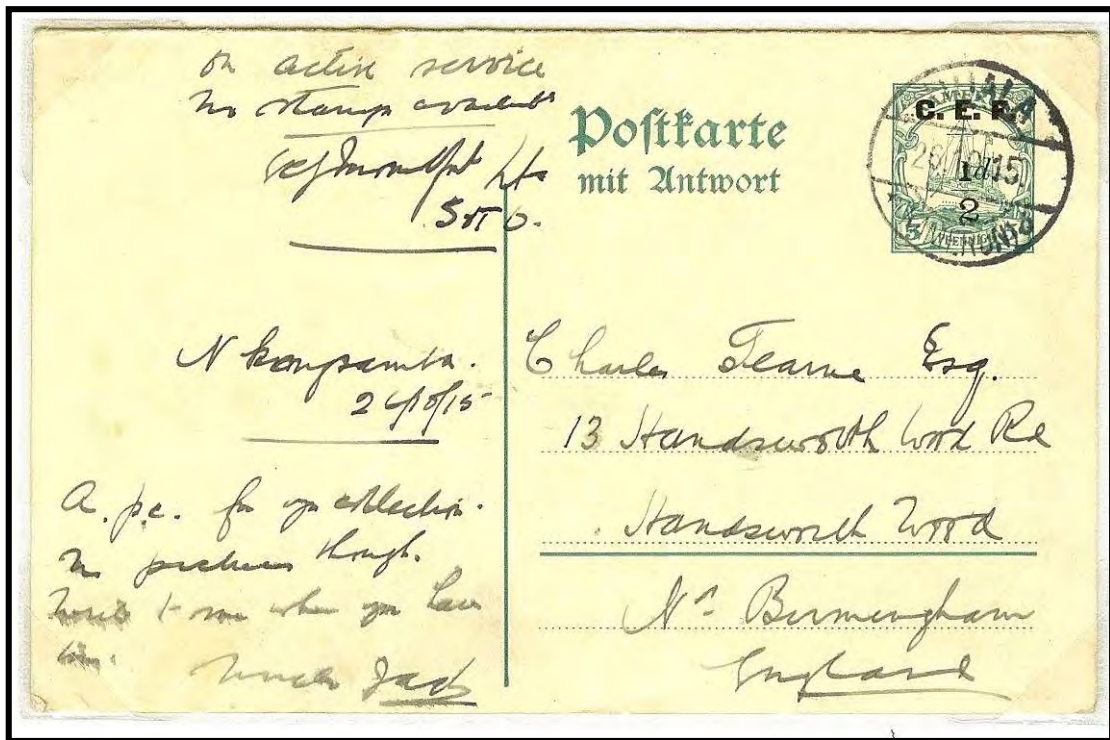


Figure 1: CEF ½d reply card used Duala, 26 Oct 1915, endorsed on active service / no stamp available

Then in 2007 came the Afrika 2007 postal stationery catalogue edited by Norbert Sehler (Ref. 7). This catalogue was much more detailed than my old Michel catalogue and included information about different watermarks on the Kamerun cards. For the C.E.F. issue it repeated the non-existent 1d reply card but more interestingly it stated “many forgeries” and that the ½d reply card exists with either watermark DR I or DR 9 II where the former are always forgeries.

To my dismay my used ½d reply card had watermark DR I as did all my mint examples except one. I subsequently submitted both my used cards to the expert committee of the RPSL and got them back with clear certificates.

At that time I had only seen the short “1” on cards with watermark DR I whereas I had the normal “1” with both watermarks, so naturally I was eager to find a short “1” with watermark DR 9 II. Unfortunately auction houses or eBay sellers never specify the watermark, or are acquainted with them when enquiring about them. But then I discovered that my card with watermark DR 9 II was in a deeper green shade than the cards watermarked DR I, and using this information I was soon able to track down a short “1” with watermark DR 9 II. So all four combinations of watermark and short and normal “1” exist. (figure 2)



Figure 2: CEF ½d reply card types

The only other used reply card I have seen is a philatelic "Thon" card sent registered from Buea in 1917 and franked with a lot of CEF stamps. I don't know the watermark on this one but it also has the short "1". The colour of the scan is not conclusive.

With four different versions of the ½d reply card each version is much more scarce than the total of 2,000 overprinted cards would suggest. It is also my belief that the short and normal "1" are just as common - at least when it comes to watermark DR I. The cards with watermark DR 9 II appear to be much scarcer, and here I am not able to offer an opinion on the distribution between short and normal "1".

Looking at the un-overprinted 5pf reply card and its associated single card these were issued in 1912/16 according to both Michel 1991 and Afrika 2007. The single card numbered P16 by both Michel and Afrika 2007 is with watermark DR I so this watermark is indeed a contemporary watermark, whereas the reply card P17 has the watermark DR 9 II. According to Afrika 2007 the reply card with watermark DR I was released (in Berlin) in 1917. My earliest single card is used in 1913 so I assume this was issued in 1912. But the date 1916 given in the catalogues is a mystery to me. In both catalogues the used reply card is priced similar to earlier used reply cards, but in the more than 20 years I have been looking for this I have only managed to find one example – the message part used as an ordinary card in February 1914. This indeed has watermark DR 9 II. All my examples of the basic reply card have the darker green shade for those watermarked DR 9 II compared with those watermarked DR I, so clearly the differently watermarked cards represent at least two different printings.

The overprinting of the cards was done in Freetown, Sierra Leone on stock seized from a captured German liner "*Professor Woermann*" coming from Germany (Ref. 1). In that case the 5pf reply cards were drawn from two different print runs, resulting in a mixed shipment containing both watermarks DR 9 II and DR I.

The "many forgeries" stated in Afrika 2007 is also a mystery to me. Apart from the crude forgeries with a "Klein Popo" (in Togo) postmark and reversed overprints (½d on 10pf and 1d on 5pf) shown in *Cameo* (Ref. 8) and which should trick no one, I have never seen any other of these cards stated to be forgeries.



Figure 3: CEF ½d reply card used in London in 1926

I have a ½d reply card used in England in 1926 and cancelled with a contemporary machine slogan postmark and additionally franked with a British Edwardian 1d stamp (Figure 3), i.e. the card has been used

as a "blank" postcard franked appropriately. This card also has watermark DR I but it has the normal "1". On the back is a long message that appears genuine and including the sentence "Please keep the postcard carefully", so apparently somebody wanted to create a philatelic souvenir. I find it very unlikely that this card is a forgery.

So all in all I believe that there is ample unequivocal evidence pointing to the ½d reply card with watermark DR I not being a forgery. Two years ago I contacted the author of Afrika 2007 and presented my findings and queried where he had his information from. He claimed it came from another member of the BGSV and promised to pass on my email, but in the meantime the other member has unfortunately passed away.

**To summarise:**

1. The ½d reply cards are found with two different watermarks, DR I and DR 9 II, and the latter have a darker green shade compared with the former. The watermarks and shades indicate two different printings of the basic card.
2. The normal and short "1" in ½ is found on reply postcards with both watermarks. This indicates that the shipment aboard the "*Professor Woermann*" was drawn from existing stocks of two different printings of the basic card.
3. The short "1" is not a broken "1". The opinion is that two forms were set up to overprint the reply cards.
4. One must be careful not to unquestionably accept published literature at face value, as the information presented may not be correct.

I wish to thank Marty Bratzel for reviewing my article and offering suggestions for improvements.

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3. Porter, H.G.: *The Cameroons. The Philatelist*. Extended series published in 1956 and 1957. The C.E.F. overprints on postcards are discussed in 1956, p 223.
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8. Bratzel, M.P., CEF Overprints on Kamerun Yacht Stamps. Update Number 4. *Cameo*, Vol. 11, No. 6, October 2010, pp 397-400.



## **Inward Air Mail to The Gold Coast in 1935**

**Peter Wingent**

The two covers which are the subject of this article were posted before Imperial Airways' Khartoum to Kano feeder service opened in February 1936. Coming from Mauritius and Northern Rhodesia, the only air services by which they could be carried were via Europe, resulting in their carriage by a variety of airlines over circuitous routes. Of added interest are the other various modes of surface transport employed on some of the stages.

**Vacoas (Mauritius) to Accra:**

The front and reverse of a cover posted in Vacoas on 25 Sept. 1935 are shown in fig. 1. It is franked at the correct rate of R1-50c. per 10 gr. for air mail from Mauritius to The Gold Coast, plus 20 cents overseas registration fee.

It was first sent approx. 14 miles on the Midland Line of the Mauritius railway from Vacoas to Port Louis from where it was carried to Durban by the Koninklijke Paketvaart Maatschappij (KPM) ship *Bontekoe* which sailed on 28 September and arrived 5 October. The cover's journey is shown in detail in the map in fig. 2.



Figure 1



List of backstamps:

- Marseilles ~ 17 Oct.
- Cotonou ~ 21 Oct.
- Lomé ~ 23 Oct.
- Keta ~ 24 Oct.
- Accra ~ 26 Oct.

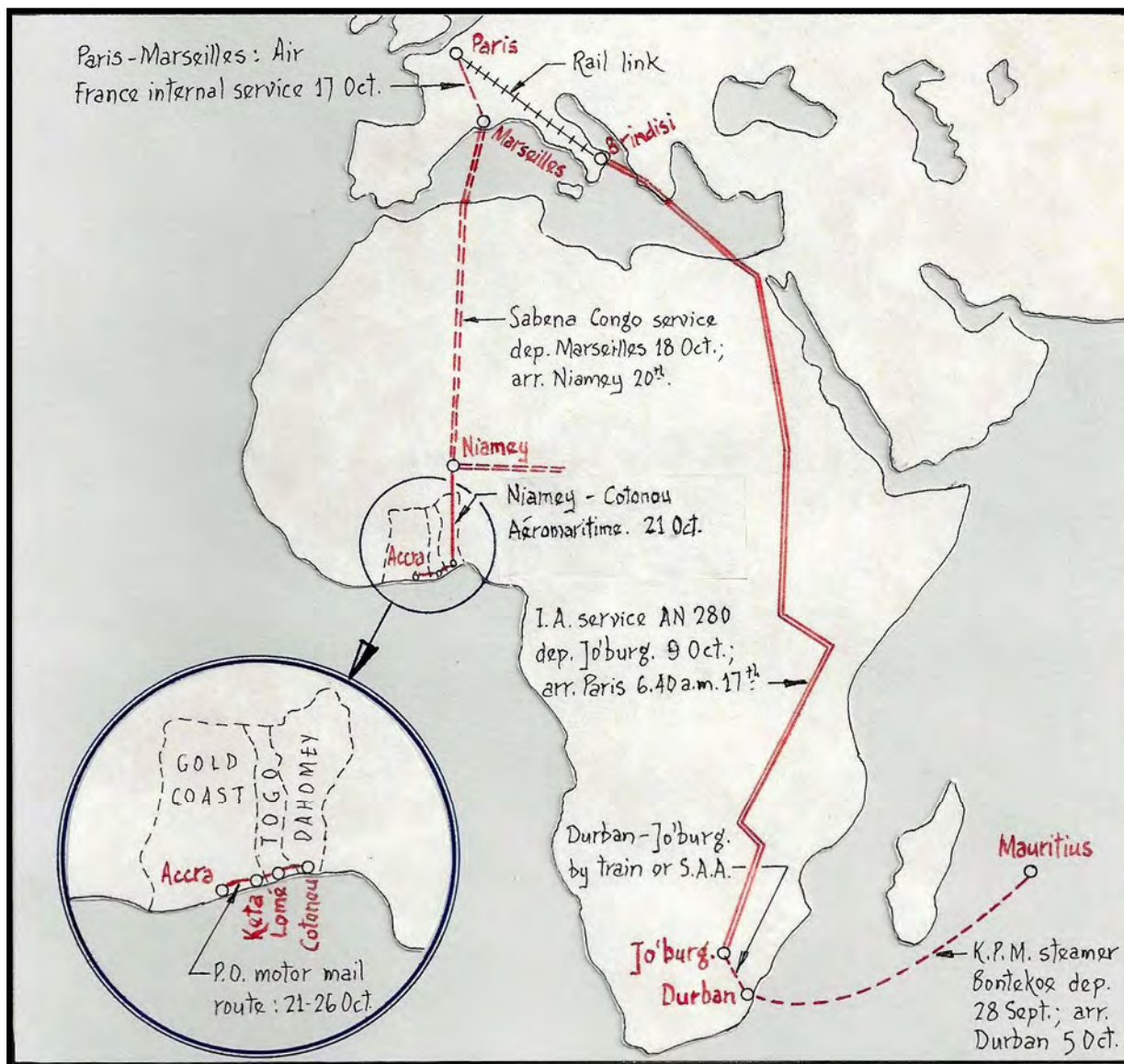


Figure 2

An account of the final stages of the journey from Lomé to Accra has been made particularly interesting thanks to the enormous amount of help I have received from John Powell, who very kindly and patiently explained the route the cover would have taken and provided me with timetables taken from his copy of "The Gold Coast Post Office Handbook" of 1933. The timetables for each section of the route are given below and a map is shown in fig. 3.

**Lomé to Keta**

*Departmental bicycle service*  
 Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays  
 Lomé dep. 14.00  
 Keta arr. 17.00

**Keta to Ada**

*Motor and launch service*  
 Tuesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays  
 Keta dep. 13.00  
 Ada arr. 18.00

**Ada to Akuse**

*Launch service*  
 Wednesdays, Fridays, Mondays  
 Ada dep. 08.00

**Akuse to Accra**

*Motor service*  
 Thursdays, Saturdays, Tuesdays  
 Akuse dep. 07.00

Akuse arr. 17.15

Accra arr. 12.30

Although these timetables are from the 1933 P.O. Handbook, it appears that they still applied in 1935 because the backstamps of Lomé, Keta and Accra on the cover prove it travelled as follows:

Having arrived at Lomé on Wednesday 23 Oct., the cover was due to depart there the same day at 14.00 via the bicycle service and to arrive at Keta at 17.00, a journey of approx. 28 miles (see fig. 4). It was backstamped at Keta the next morning when the cover was due to depart via a P.O. van at 13.00 and to arrive at Ada at 18.00 after being carried by launch across the mouth of the River Volta on the final stage. On Friday, 25 Oct. it was carried approx. 53 miles up-river by launch from Ada to Akuse (see fig. 5) and on Saturday, 26th it completed its journey by P.O. van from Akuse to Accra. (Note that the four sections of the route were operated on consecutive days, except no services on Sundays).

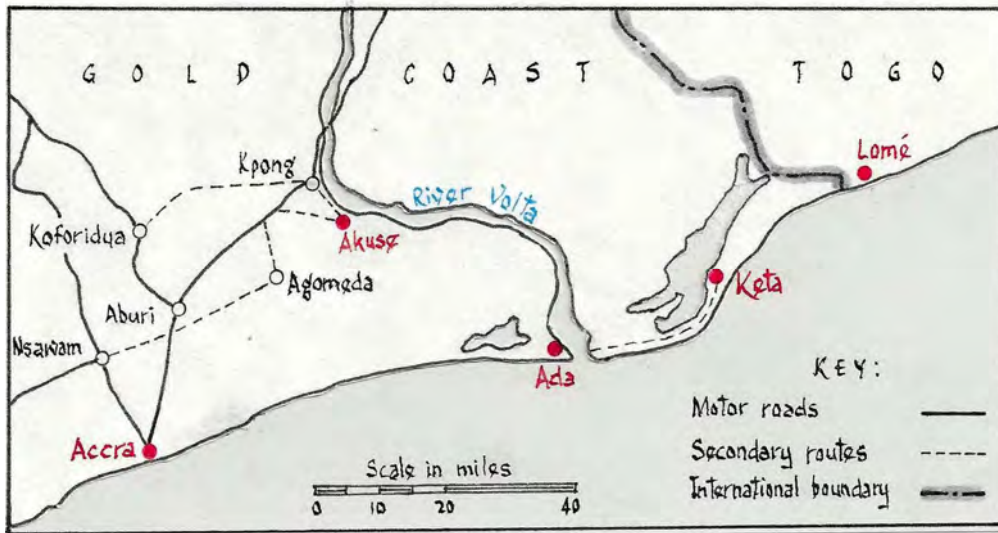


Figure 3

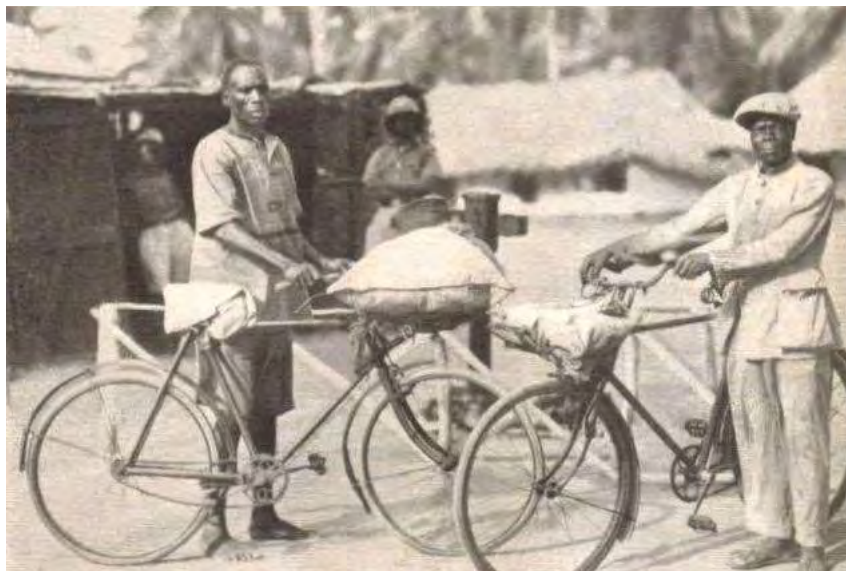


Figure 4. British and French cycle mail-carriers exchange mails on the Gold Coast – Togoland frontier. (Courtesy of John Powell)

Figure 5. 1910 post card showing the launch which operated on the Volta River between Ada and Akuse.

John Powell believes this postal service commenced in the late 19th century and continued until WWII. (Courtesy of John Powell)



**Broken Hill to Tarkwa:**

Figure 6



List of backstamps	
Athens	~ 03 May
Berlin	~ 04 May
Marseilles	~ 08 May
Cotonou	~ 13 May
Lomé	~ 15 May
Keta	~ 16 May
Accra	~ 18 May
Sekondi	~ 19 May
Tarkwa	~ 20 May

The front and reverse of a cover posted in Broken Hill on 27 April 1935 are shown in fig. 6. It is franked at the correct rate of 1/9d. per ½ oz. for air mail from Northern Rhodesia to The Gold Coast.

The cover's journey is shown in detail in the map in fig. 7 and it is interesting to make some comparisons to the routing of the cover from Mauritius. Both covers were flown northwards through Africa by Imperial Airways but unlike the Mauritius cover, which was carried by this airline to Brindisi, the Broken Hill cover was offloaded at Athens and carried by D.L.H. to Berlin. In the summer of 1935 this service operated daily, except Sundays, and was timetabled to depart Athens at 06.15 and to arrive in Berlin at 17.15. The Athens and Berlin backstamps prove that the cover was flown by this service on Saturday, 4 May. The D.L.H. service was advertised as expediting mail destined for Yugoslavia, Hungary, Austria, Germany the Baltic States and the Scandinavian countries. Thus it is puzzling why this cover was routed that way.

The second comparison relates to the Niamey – Cotonou service. This cover was flown on that service by Compagnie Générale Trans-Saharienne (CGT) which operated the service weekly in connection with the arrivals and departures of the joint Sabena/Air Afrique Europe – Congo services. However, CGT flew the last service to be operated by that company on 4 June 1935, after which it was taken over by Aéro-maritime. Hence the two maps of the routes in figs. 2 and 7 name the two different airlines operating the Niamey – Cotonou section.

The Lomé, Keta and Accra backstamps prove that the cover travelled the same route as the Mauritius cover and, coincidentally, on the same days of the week as that cover so I shall not repeat the itinerary in detail here.

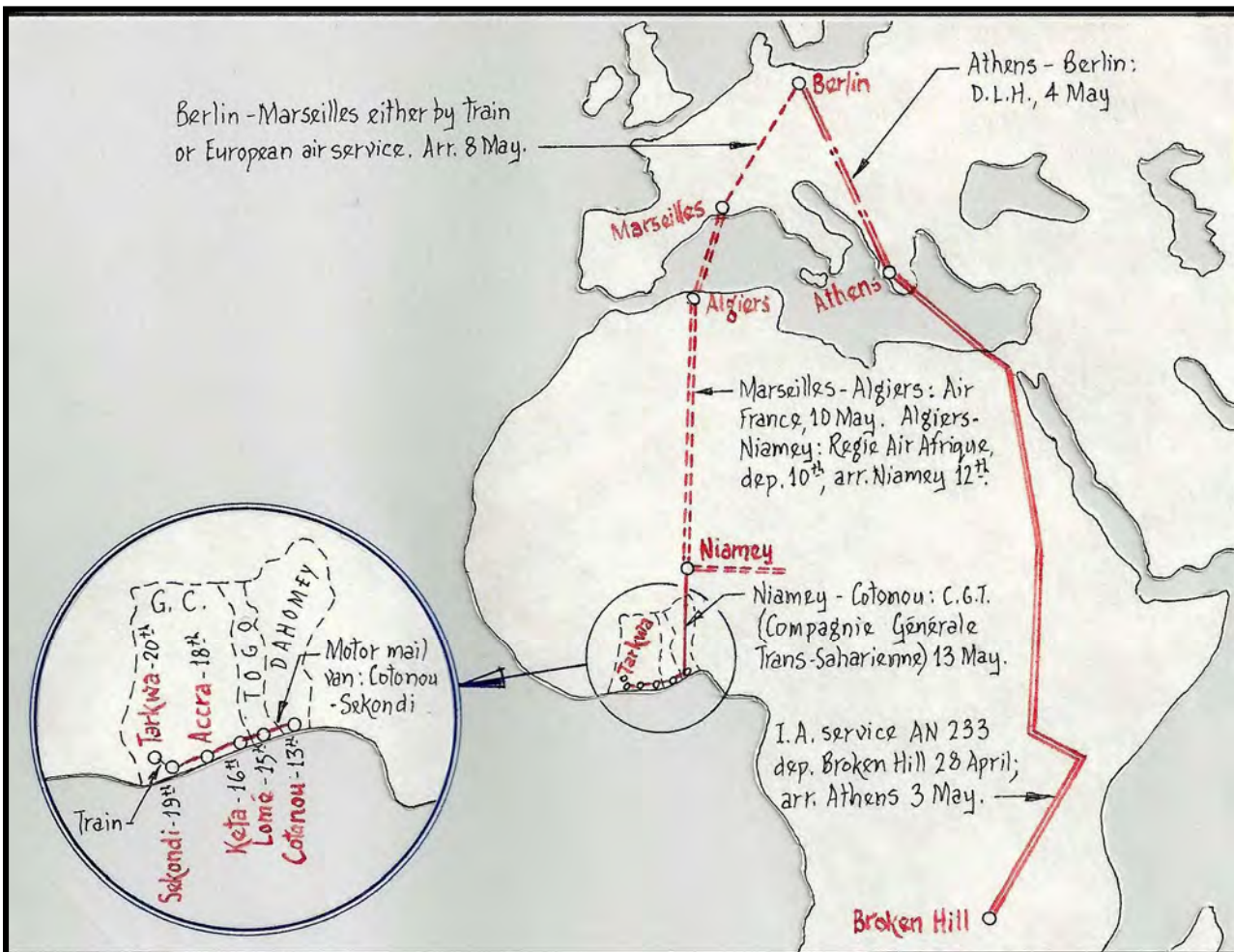


Figure 7

I have been unable to find a timetable for the Accra to Sekondi section of the cover's journey but some readers may find the following information interesting and perhaps useful in the future:

Once again John Powell consulted his 1933 "Post Office Handbook" and informed me that the Accra to Sekondi motor route was divided into three sections, viz. Accra – Winnebah; Winnebah – Cape Coast and Cape Coast – Sekondi, leaving Accra at 09.30 on Tuesdays and Fridays and arriving Sekondi at 16.20 on Wednesdays and Saturdays after an overnight stop at Winnebah. As backstamps show, the cover arrived Accra on Saturday, 18 May 1935 and Sekondi the next day; clearly the 1933 timetable had changed by mid-1935.

Many years ago I found in the National Archive a 1937 timetable of the motor mail van service, shown in fig. 8, which was published in the Gold Coast Government Gazette (Ref. 1). It shows a thrice-weekly service operating from Accra to Sekondi on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. It is numbered route no. 44. The 1933 services were allocated three different route numbers: one for each section. Unfortunately, the 1937 timetable does not fit with the back-stamps on the cover and so both John and I wondered if it had been sent by train from Accra but the Sekondi back-stamp of 19 May is a Sunday and John is certain that there were trains every day, *except Sundays!* In fact from the timetables seen, there appears to be no postal services operating on Sundays! Puzzling!

Figure 8

MOTOR MAIL VAN.		THRICE WEEKLY.		No. 44.	
Leave Accra ...	Mon. Wed. Fri.	6 a.m.	Leave Sekondi ...	Tues. Thur. Sat.	6 a.m.
Arrive Nsawam ...	do.	6.55 a.m.	Arrive Inchaban ...	do.	6.15 a.m.
" Adeiso ...	do.	7.35 "	" Shama ...	do.	6.35 "
" Swedru ...	do.	8.40 "	" Beposo ...	do.	7.10 "
" Afransi ...	do.	9.10 "	" Kusi ...	do.	7.40 "
" Abodum ...	do.	9.35 "	" Elmina ...	do.	8.15 "
" Bobikuma ...	do.	9.50 "	" Cape Coast ...	do.	8.40 "
" Ochiso ...	do.	10.10 "	" Anamabu ...	do.	9.30 "
" Ba ...	do.	10.25 "	" Saltpond ...	do.	9.50 "
" Ajumako ...	do.	10.35 "	" Mankessim ...	do.	10.20 "
" Esiam ...	do.	10.45 "	" Enyanmen ...	do.	10.35 "
" Enyanmen ...	do.	11.10 "	" Esiam ...	do.	11.00 "
" Mankessim ...	do.	11.25 "	" Ajumako ...	do.	11.10 "
" Saltpond ...	do.	11.45 "	" Ba ...	do.	11.20 "
" Anamabu ...	do.	12.15 p.m.	" Ochiso ...	do.	11.35 "
" Cape Coast ...	do.	12.50 "	" Bobikuma ...	do.	11.55 "
" Elmina ...	do.	1.30 "	" Abodum ...	do.	12.10 p.m.
" Kusi ...	do.	2.5 "	" Afransi ...	do.	12.35 "
" Beposo ...	do.	2.40 "	" Swedru ...	do.	12.50 "
" Shama ...	do.	3.15 "	" Adeiso ...	do.	2.10 "
" Inchaban ...	do.	3.35 "	" Nsawam ...	do.	2.45 "
" Sekondi ...	do.	3.55 "	" Accra ...	do.	3.55 "

It would seem most likely that the cover was sent by a motor service for which we do not have a timetable. If any reader can provide a 1935 timetable, it would be very much appreciated.

Over the final stage of its journey the cover was sent by train, leaving Sekondi at 09.18 and arriving Tarkwa at 11.34 on Monday, 20 May.

**Acknowledgements:**

My grateful thanks to John Powell for sharing so readily his detailed knowledge of the geography and postal services relating to the south-eastern area of The Gold Coast and also for the remarkable photographs of the Post Office cyclists and launch in figs. 4 and 5.

**Reference:**

1. The National Archive, *Gold Coast Government Gazette*, 9 January 1937 edition, p27. Ref CO99/65

Cameroons: Ndop skeleton canceller —  
yet another variant  
Plus a Postal Stationery Variant

Marty Bratzel



Figure 1:  
Aerogramme  
postmarked  
Ndop P A Nigeria  
15 JA 1958.

The 1½d. Nigeria aerogramme depicted in Figure 1 provides two additional pieces to the mosaic of the postal history of the Cameroons under British administration, first the postmark and second the aerogramme itself.

### The Postmark

The skeleton canceller used at Ndop in the British Cameroons had its problems. Between 1953 and 1960, three different arrangements have been recorded for the position of the letters comprising NDOP P A NIGERIA (Ref. 1). The A in P A has also been recorded inverted. Even after the wording was altered to NDOP BAMENDA, inverted letters have been recorded, specifically the P in NDOP and the D in BAMENDA.

The aerogramme in Figure 1 is postmarked Ndop 15 JA 1958. To improve clarity, the image has been enlarged and the brightness and contrast adjusted using Photoshop (Figure 2). Significantly, Nigeria is spelled NIGEIRA and the A is inverted. More significantly, the positions of the letters do *not* match any of the three recorded arrangements. Using the numbering scheme previously developed to identify the positions of the letters in the device, the positions for the now four variants are summarized in the table.

Wording		No. 104	No. 104-1	New – No. 104-3	No. 104-2
		E: 7 AU 1953 L: 6 AP 1956	E: 30 JU 1956	E: 15 JA 1958	E: 3 DE 1959 L: 10 NO 1960
NDOP	Position	25-26-1-2	25-26-1-2	25-26-1-2	25-26-1-2
P A	Position	4 & 6	6 & 8	5 & 7	5 & 7
NIGERIA	Position	11 through 17	11 through 17	11 through 17	10 through 16



Figure 2: enlarged and enhanced postmarks.

For comparison, postmarks No. 104, 104-1 and 104-2 are depicted in Figure 3.

The newly identified variant is assigned No. 104-3. One wonders ... will other variants be identified?



Figure 3: Ndop postmarks No. 104, 104-1 and 104-2.

### Postal Stationery Envelope

We turn now to the postal stationery envelope itself. We previously reported the use of a Nigeria air letter sheet on grey paper with an imprinted 1½d. stamp in green accompanied by the wording “If anything is enclosed this letter will be sent by ordinary mail” imprinted in four lines on the front beneath Air Letter and in two lines on the back (Ref. 1). The aerogramme in Figure 1 is on olive green paper with an imprinted 1½d. stamp in green, but the accompanying wording is “If anything is enclosed this letter may be surcharged at standard postage rates.” The 5-line imprint on the front is under the 4d adhesive stamp but is clearly visible atop a light box. The imprint on the back is three lines.

What will we find next? Readers – keep your eyes peeled!

### Reference

1. Maddocks, R.J. and M.P. Bratzel, Jr. *The Postmarks and Postal History of the Cameroons under British Administration 1916 - 1916 – Supplement*. MPB Canada, Windsor, Ontario, Canada, 2007. 115 pages. ISBN 978-0-9694026-5-7.



## Cameroons; Kumba T mark

John Cooper



The cover illustrated on the previous page was shown during my 1937 Coronation display to the Spring 2015 WASC meeting. The cover was sent from Kumba on 12 August 1937 franked 2½d when the correct rate was 3d for surface mail. There is a back-stamp of Victoria dated 13 August 1937 and no other markings. The postage due is indicated by an unusual T mark offset in an oval frame using a tool which seems have been quite crudely made in the Territory.

Bob Maddocks has illustrated another example (Ref. 1), again on a cover from Kumba, dated 1 Nov 1936. I am told these are the only two examples recorded so far — unless any one knows better. Comments will be welcome.

#### Reference

1. Maddocks R.J. & Bratzel M.P., *The Postmarks and Postal History of the Cameroons Under British Administration 1916-1961 Supplement*, p73, MPB Canada 2007



## Gambian Aerogramme Rates

Oliver Andrew & Jerry Kaspar

We have tried to follow the same format as that adopted by Peter Rolfe and Jerry Kaspar in their *Cameo* article on Sierra Leone aerogrammes (*Cameo*, Vol 10 No.4, Whole no. 73, January 2008, pp232-233).

Rate	Earliest recorded date	Latest recorded date	Stamp design	Notes
6d	10 Feb 1948	15 Nov 1963	Elephant & palm	
7½d	16 Feb 1964	3 Jan 1967	Queens head, or no stamp	a
8d	23 Feb 1967	30 Sep 1970	Coat of arms	a
10d	30 Sep 1970	10 Mar 1972	Coat of arms	a
20b	17 Apr 1972	10 Jan 1974	Coat of arms	d
25b	12 Aug 1973	28 Aug 1975	Coat of arms	e
30b	3 Jan 1976	2 Feb 1980	Coat of arms	a
40b	9 Mar 1981	13 Apr 1981	Coat of arms	a
50b	18 Aug 1981	?? Jul 1982	Coat of arms	
60b	16 Jun 1982	13 Nov 1984	Coat of arms	b
75b	22 Feb 1986	22 Jun 1992	Coat of arms	b c(i)
1D 50	7 Apr 1992	30 Jun 2000	Coat of arms	a b c(i)
3D 50	20 Dec 2001	30 Sep 2005	Coat of arms	b c(ii)
15D	4 Jul 2006	4 Feb 2008	Coat of arms	b c(ii)

#### Notes

- Early examples have the previous aerogramme form with additional adhesives
- Early examples have the previous aerogramme form with a surcharge
- Illustrated on the back (i) canoe passing James Island, (ii) Wassu stone circles
- Not a change of rate, a change of currency of equivalent value
- Early examples have the previous (20b) aerogramme form, plus 4b in adhesives, it being impossible to make up an extra 5b in the denominations available at that time.

# The Imperium Essays

Michael Oliver FRPSL

The printers, Thomas De La Rue & Co. were, by 1880, close to monopolising stamp printing ordered through the Crown Agents for the Colonies. The previous year they produced their second key and duty plate type, initially for the Leeward Islands Presidencies. When later employed for another five colonies it was called the General Key Plate (Fig. 1).



Figure 1



Figure 2

In 1881 Great Britain issued the first unified stamp (Fig.2), subsequently resulting in requests from colonies for similar stamps. The General Key Plate had no wording and De La Rue attempted to overcome this by various methods as shown in figure 3. In December 1887 they submitted artist's drawings of new key plate designs to the Crown Agents. Design A was inscribed POSTAGE/POSTAGE, design B POSTAGE/REVENUE and design C (in May 1889) REVENUE/REVENUE. These designs were unique in that name and duty tablets were in the same position thereby permitting one duty plate to be available to print stamps for all three purposes if required, as illustrated in figure 4.



Some methods adopted by De La Rue to overcome the lack of wording.

Figure 3



Figure 4

The key plates in 120 forme were to be provided at no charge. A colony paid £12 for each 60-set duty plate plus printing costs as set out in their Schedule of Prices sent to the colonies (Fig. 5, next page) . De La Rue, in discussion with the Crown Agents, clearly anticipated a large demand for these economical, security-

**SCHEDULE OF PRICES**  
OF  
**ADHESIVE STAMPS, STAMPED ARTICLES, DIES, PLATES,**  
**EMBOSSING PRESSES, OBLITERATING INK, &C., &C.,**  
SUPPLIED TO  
**THE CROWN AGENTS FOR THE COLONIES**  
BY  
**THOS. DE LA RUE & CO. LTD., LONDON.**

**PRICE OF SURFACE-PRINTED STAMPS,**  
**EXCLUDING WATERMARKED PAPER.**

Stamps printed by the key plate system, of the size noted in the margin.  
For Stamps of any one kind, ordered at one time—

Tables 4 5 6	Prices inclusive of Paper, 2d. per 1000 extra.	DESCRIPTION.	TABLE 4. 60-Set Key. 60-Set Overprints.		TABLE 5. 120-Set Key. 60-Set Overprints.		TABLE 6. 240-Set Key. 120-Set Overprints.	
			When a Rm. or more is ordered.	When less than a Rm. is ordered.	When a Rm. or more is ordered.	When less than a Rm. is ordered.	When a Rm. or more is ordered.	When less than a Rm. is ordered.
			<i>s.</i> <i>d.</i>	<i>s.</i> <i>d.</i>	<i>s.</i> <i>d.</i>	<i>s.</i> <i>d.</i>	<i>s.</i> <i>d.</i>	<i>s.</i> <i>d.</i>
		Singly Fugitive, overprinted in Singly Fugitive (price per thousand)	2 4	3 4	2 1	3 1	1 8	2 3
		Doubly Fugitive, overprinted in Singly Fugitive (price per thousand)	2 6	3 6	2 3	3 3	1 10	2 5
		Doubly Fugitive, overprinted in Doubly Fugitive (price per thousand)	2 8	3 8	2 5	3 5	2 0	2 7

Stamps printed from the "Universal key plates," of the size noted in the margin.

The "Universal key plates" comprise a "Postage" key plate, a "Postage and Revenue" key plate, and a "Revenue" key plate.

The three "Universal key plates" are so arranged that the same overprint plates are available for all of them. A Colony, having incurred the initial expense of 60-set overprint plates (see Table 50), can therefore obtain either "Postage," "Postage and Revenue" or "Revenue" Stamps, no charge being made for the use of the "Universal key plates."

The "Universal dies and key plates" remain the property of the Company, it being open to the Crown Agents to require their destruction at any time, in the presence of their Officer.

For Stamps of any one kind, ordered at one time—

Table 7	Prices inclusive of Paper, 2d. per 1000 extra.	DESCRIPTION.	TABLE 7. 120-Set Key. 60-Set Overprints.	
			When a Rm. or more is ordered.	When less than a Rm. is ordered.
			<i>s.</i> <i>d.</i>	<i>s.</i> <i>d.</i>
		Singly Fugitive, overprinted in Singly Fugitive ... (price per thousand)	2 1	3 1
		Doubly " " " " " " " "	2 3	3 3

OVERPRINTING ANY OF THE ABOVE SURFACE-PRINTED STAMPS (TABLES 1 TO 7).  
Overprinting Stamps, 6d. extra per thousand for each Overprint. Temporary Overprint Plates, £3 3s. 0d. each.

Figure 5

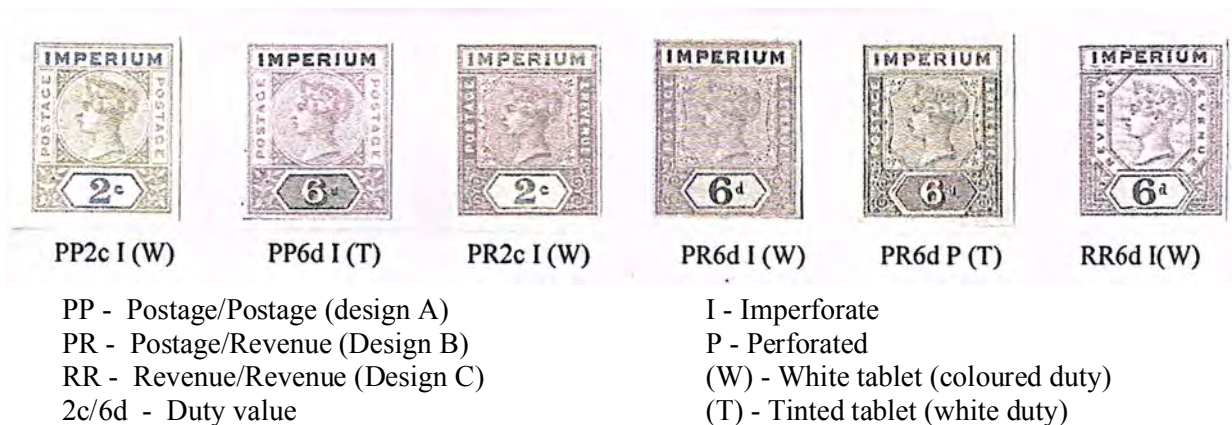


Figure 6

printed, unified designs. To assist the Crown Agents in promoting them, they produced samples with an IMPERIUM (Empire) name tablet and duties of 6d and 2c, some imperforate, in both white and tinted tablets (Fig. 6). Many other essays were produced with the colony name, some hand-painted over IMPERIUM. These are outside the scope of this article.

De La Rue rather optimistically called these the Universal Key Plates when only some 60 million stamps had been printed by 1901, but justified later when some 1,400 million stamps for 21 colonies had been printed by 1936.

On 29 December 1940 De La Rue's head office at 110, Bunhill Row, London, and most of their other works were destroyed by enemy action, such that the Company could not print a single stamp. Although No. 110 was a shell, awash with water after the London Fire Brigade's efforts, Mr G.L. Newman, their archivist, collected together almost every Correspondence Book and Day Book, some fire- and water-damaged. Over the next 12 years or so he re-mounted them with typewritten extracts to form a collection of some 3,500 sheets of proofs, essays, colour trials and other items to produce an almost complete record of the Company's dealings with the Crown Agents over the past 80 years.

In 1974 De La Rue appointed Robson Lowe to sell their archive of colonial stamp printing, the bulk of which was Mr. Newman's collection. Staff took 35mm colour films of the complete collection which were stored in tin boxes before most of the collection was cut down into single or matching pairs of items. The films were not developed until 2007 by the BPMA, where the De La Rue archive is housed (Ref. 1). The quality of colour reproduction of copies of the digitised films is generally poor.

Robson Lowe published a booklet entitled *The De La Rue Keyplates* in January 1979 (Ref. 7), recording the Imperium essays. He held an auction in London on 15 November 1979 with the same title (Ref. 8), comprising all items and Appendix sheets recorded in the booklet. Unfortunately there are some discrepancies between them.

Archive material has been available on the London market since the mid-1950s. The earliest Imperium essay that I have recorded was auctioned in 1966. It seems very probable that items were removed from Bunhill Row over a number of years before Robson Lowe was appointed. He sold some Imperium essays and Appendix sheets by private treaty before he published his booklet and I have recorded a number that do not correspond with his published listings. Hence, my record of Imperium essays is doubtless incomplete. However, from Robson Lowe's record the following Appendix sheets of Imperium essays for the West African colonies are:

**Gambia:** A7 and A8 of 24 August 1897 (fig.8 and front cover respectively). Sent when the colony replaced their 15 sheet issue, after requesting stamps in sheets of 60. Similar essays had been sent in 1894 when the colony was informed that their existing 15-forme plates would soon have to be replaced. A large order at the time would provide four years' supply.

**Gold Coast:** A11 of 8 February 1898 (Fig. 9). An alternative sent for overprinting the existing key-plate (Fig. 7) for the high values primarily for conveyancing charges but to be available for postal purposes. The Universal POSTAGE/REVENUE key plate was selected: - the first order.

A12, Appendices A & B of 1 February 1899 and C & D of 6 February 1899, Reqn. 10/99 (figs. 10-13). 45 essays overprinted JUDICIAL, 41 in black and four in red on Appendix B. Seven of the essays are on red paper (*ed-which reproduces very poorly in the images; my apologies to the author*)

**Northern Nigeria:** A14 to A17 of 15 September 1899 and 13 January 1900 (figs. 14 & 15). Requested by the Crown Agents for stamps of the new colony formed in 1900 to have duties and colours corresponding with those of the Gold Coast.

So far as is known all these Appendix sheets are still intact. I do not have illustrations of A14 and A15.



*Figure 7: September 1889; the first order from the Universal keyplates.  
It totalled 1020 stamps for the three duties (only one sheet of the 20s)  
and SPECIMENS for the UPU exceeded the number dispatched to the colony.*



Figure 8. Gambia sheet A7 of 24 August 1897

0000001

*Feb. 5<sup>th</sup> 1898.*

GOLD COAST

# *Appendix*

This scheme was submitted to meet the request of the Crown Agents for specimens printed on white paper and on yellow paper in black ink like the Hong Kong \$1.

A £5 stamp, for which these colour combinations were printed, was not, however, ever issued.



Figure 9. Gold Coast sheet A11 of 8 February 1898

00000005

Feb 1<sup>st</sup> 1899

Gold Coast - Reg. 10/99

Appendix A



Colour scheme requested on January 27 1899, and recommended with other combinations for consideration on Appendix B. The scheme was however rejected in favour of the method submitted on February 6th, Appendices C & D, as requested by the Crown Agents (2.V.)

1899

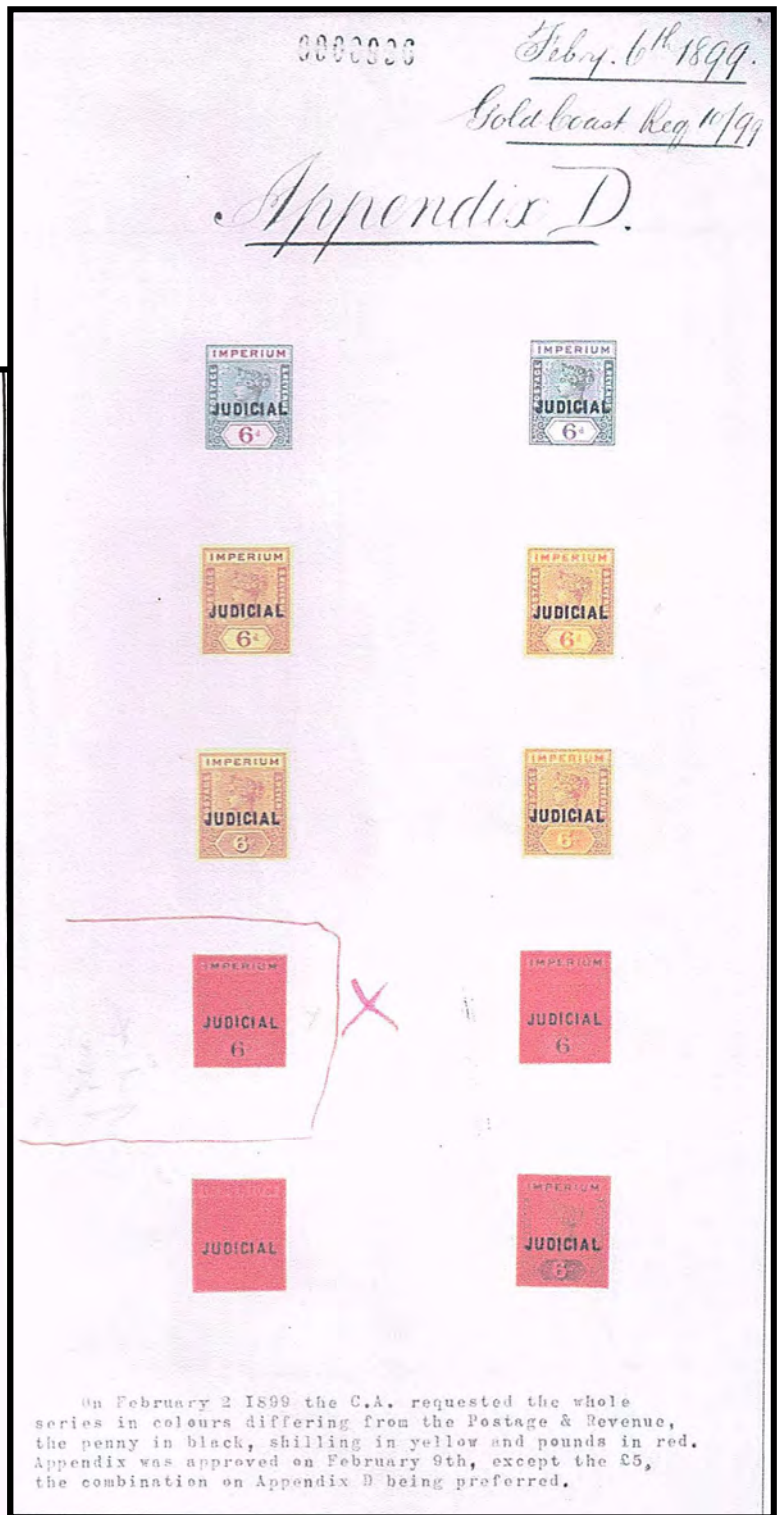
Figures 10 & 11.  
Gold Coast A12,  
appendices A & B  
of 1 February 1899

Febry 1<sup>st</sup> 1899

Gold Coast - Reg. 10/99

Appendix B





Figures 12 & 13:  
Gold Coast A12,  
appendices C & D  
of 6 February 1899

Jan'y. 13. 1900.  
Northern Nigeria  
 Reg. 87/1899.

Appendix A.

Gold Coast

Northern Nigeria

Gold Coast

N. Nigeria



Figure 14:  
 Northern Nigeria  
 A16 of  
 13 January 1900



## Acknowledgments

This article is based on the author's own article first published in the British West Indies Study Circle Bulletin (Ref 5) re-edited for a West Africa Study Circle readership. Some of the images in this version of the article are reproduced courtesy of Spink.

Appendix Sheet Reference numbers between A1 and A17 in the text of this article are the author's own, per the original BWISC Bulletin article.

## References

1. British Philatelic Museum & Archive—the De La Rue Archive, 2007
2. Easton J., *British and Foreign Postage Stamps*, RPSL 1958
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5. Oliver M.N., BWISC Bulletin Dec 2014 and March 2015 *The Imperium Essays*.
6. Oliver M.N., *London Philatelist*, July-August 2008 *The Universal Colour Scheme*
7. Robson Lowe, *The De La Rue Keyplates* (booklet) Robson Lowe, January 1979
8. Robson Lowe, *The De La Rue Keyplates* (auction) Robson Lowe, November 1979
9. Walton F., *The De La Rue Collection*, RPSL, 2014 (illustrations are copyright Spink)
10. Sothebys *The Gawaine Baillie sale Vol IX*, 2006

*Figure 15: Northern Nigeria  
A17 of 23 January 1900*



# Gold Coast: Victorian Postal Stationery Postcards Part 2: Halfpenny and Penny Cards

Peter Newroth

## Introduction

De La Rue and Co., London, (DLR) printed four types of Victorian period Gold Coast Colony postal stationery postcards; Penny Halfpenny (1879), Halfpenny (1889), One Penny (1892) and One Penny Return. Sacher (Ref. 1; pp. 199-203) reviewed their printing history, but gave little detail on usages.

In Part 1 I described DLR printings, dates of use and markings on Penny Halfpenny postcards (Ref. 2). This Part 2 article provides information about Halfpenny (Section A), Penny (Section B), and Penny Return cards (Section C). Dates and numbers invoiced by DLR for these cards are shown in Table 1.

Date of Invoice	Number of Halfpenny Cards	Number of Penny Cards	Number of Penny Reply Cards
7 November 1889	1020 (plus 400 Specimens)	-	-
16 January 1891	1200	-	-
21 October 1891	1008	-	-
31 December 1891	3000	-	-
13 July 1892	-	4080 (plus 400 Specimens)	1000 (plus 400 Specimens)
2 February 1893	3036	-	-
3 July 1893	-	1020	-
16 January 1894	2064	1020	-
20 June 1894	1500	1500	1002
15 October 1894	1524	1524	-
31 December 1894	1500	1500	-
22 March 1895	1524	1524	-
12 June 1895	1524	1524	-
27 August 1895	1500	1500	1032
11 December 1895	1524	1524	-
10 February 1896	1424	1412	-
30 June 1896	1524	1524	1032
10 September 1896	1512	1512	-
9 December 1896	1524	1524	-
11 March 1897	1524	1524	-
24 June 1897	1524	1524	1032
9 August 1897	1512	1512	-
11 December 1897	1524	1524	-

*Table 1. DLR Archive records of Gold Coast printings: Halfpenny, One Penny and One Penny Reply Postcards.*

25 February 1898	1524	1524	-
28 May 1898	1524	1524	1038
5 September 1898	1524	1524	-
30 November 1898	1524	1512	-
2 February 1899	1524	1512	-
15 June 1899	1524	1524	1032
11 September 1899	1524	1524	-
8 January 1900	1524	1536	-
26 February 1900	1512	1512	-
26 June 1900	1524	1524	1026
24 September 1900	1512	1524	-
29 December 1900	1524	1524	-
26 February 1901	1524	1524	-
14 June 1901	1524	1500	1014
22 August 1901	1512	1524	-
30 October 1901	1512	1512	-

*Table 1 (continued). DLR Archive records of Gold Coast printings: Halfpenny, One Penny and One Penny Reply Postcards.*

Here I describe usages of cards, often with human and historical interest. My Victorian Gold Coast cards were collected mainly showing postal routes within Gold Coast and to foreign destinations. But in addition to illustrating the mechanics of postal systems, early cards also may reveal views of personal lives and society at the time. The versatility, practicality and low cost of prepaid cards led to their use by people in diverse walks of life, including merchants, travellers, missionaries, soldiers and native people, including postal officials. An especially interesting and historic usage of a Penny Halfpenny card by the African explorer G. A. Krause was recently described (Ref. 3).

### **Section A. Halfpenny Postcards**

Halfpenny cards were first introduced in late 1889 or 1890. Figure 1 shows the earliest use I recorded on a card from the first printing, sent from Cape Coast to Axim and dated 19 June 1890. This card demonstrates the “design usage” for this rate of card – between offices within the Colony. I have seen other Gold Coast cards attempting to give some privacy of communication. In this card, a code was used by the writer (see Figure 2, message in French) to help conceal identities of people described on the card.

Uprating Halfpenny cards with Queen Victoria or King Edward VII adhesives was apparently condoned by Gold Coast postal officials. In about half of my collection of over 30 Halfpenny cards, a Halfpenny stamp was added to make the Penny rate for mailing outside Gold Coast. Occasionally a Penny stamp was used.

Figure 1. 1890 -  
Early use,  
Halfpenny card  
from Cape Coast  
to Axim.



Figure 2. Message side of card in Figure 1  
(partly written in code).

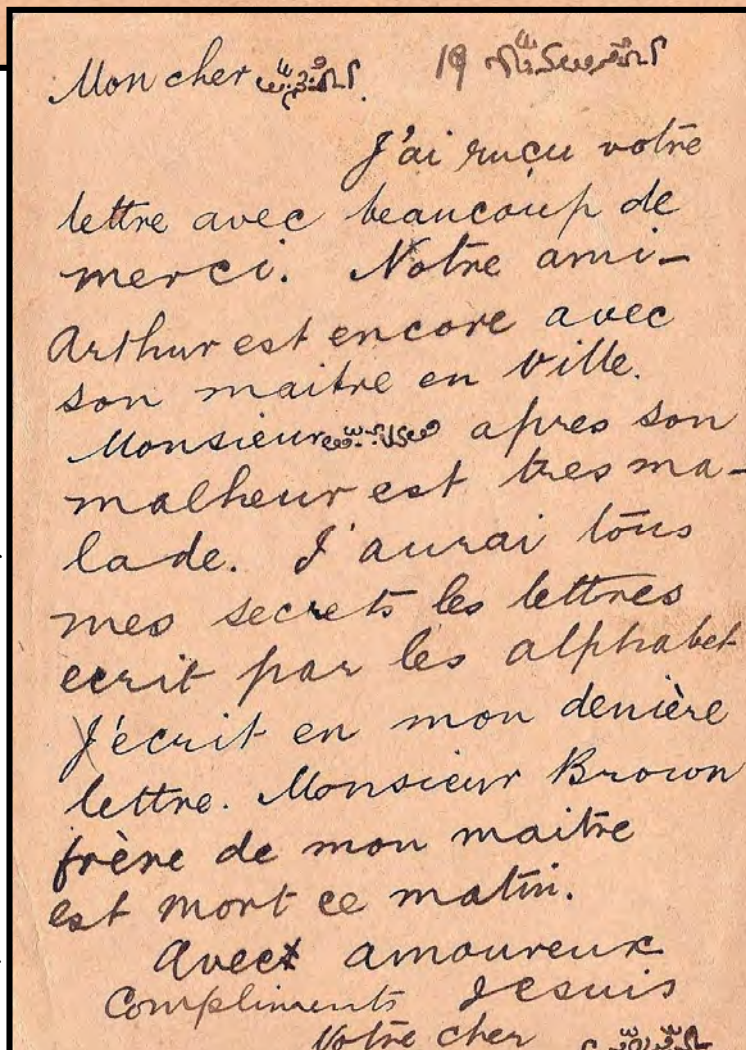


Figure 3 shows an exceptional overpayment using a Four Pence stamp. This card was written in Abetifi (dated February 2, 1892; see Figure 4, message side in German) but not postmarked in Accra until February 8, 1892. The writer of this card was the Reverend Fritz Ramseyer, a famous Swiss missionary and photographer (this card to Germany relates to photo supplies). Much is written about him and his wife Rosa, captives of the Ashanti from 1869-1875. He served in the Gold Coast with the Basel Mission from 1869 until 1914 in mission stations including Anum, Abetifi and Kumasi (Reference 4). Interested readers may access the Basel Mission Archives on the internet, which allows remarkable views of the past (including many Gold Coast photographs by Ramseyer) in their photo archives at [www.bmarchives.org](http://www.bmarchives.org)

I have recorded late usage of Halfpenny cards up to 1913.

Abt. 2.2.92

Lieber Herr Ganz!

Mit Schreckt wurde ich  
 auf dem Guerny. Verschluss  
 den ich Ihnen voriges Jahr  
 hat reparieren zu lassen.  
 Dauf ich <sup>si</sup> bitten in freundschaft  
 zu sein & ihm umgehend  
 per Postpaket (durch Frösting  
 Verwaltung) zu schicken.  
 Haben Sie meine Briefe  
 erhalten? Entschuldigen  
 Sie dass ich mir erlaubt  
 dies zu schreiben.

freundschaft grüßend  
 Ihr F. Ramseyer

Schreibe dies auf  
 inland Karte, muss nicht  
 ob die Bahn post kommt.

Figure 4. Message side of card in Figure 3, written by F. Ramseyer.

Figure 3. 1892:  
 Halfpenny card to  
 Germany, with  
 Four Pence  
 uprating



### Section B. Penny Postcards

One Penny cards were first introduced in 1892; my collection of over 40 Penny cards includes cards to Germany (16 items), UK (7), Switzerland (6), United States (4) and seven other colonies or countries.



Figure 5. 1892 - Early use, One Penny card to North Dakota

Figure 5 shows my earliest One Penny usage from Saltpond in December, 1892, via Liverpool and New York to Fargo, North Dakota, USA. This card was written by an African trader enquiring about payment for his shipment of 300 stamps. I have seen several early cards written to the UK and other countries by Africans soliciting trade samples and some cards record commercial transactions (see below).



Figure 6. 1904 - One Penny card, Registered To Fiji.

My collection included a rarely seen registered card, sent from Kwitta to Fiji in 1904 (Figure 6) and uprated using a 2d Edward stamp for registration. The message conveyed New Year greetings.

Figure 7 shows the only One Penny card I have recorded used within Gold Coast, when a Halfpenny card would have sufficed. The markings indicate that it was received the day sent, a remarkable efficiency. It has added interest as it was effectively official postal service correspondence from Postmaster Rowland Cole in

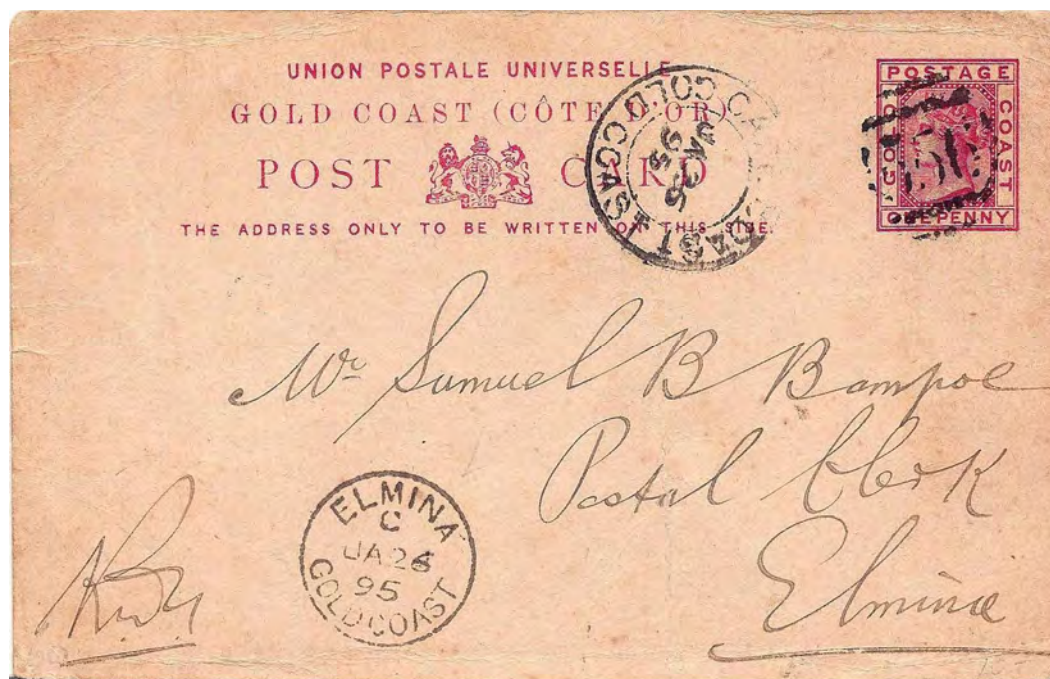


Figure 7. 1895 - Local use of One Penny Card, R Cole to PO Clerk Bampoe

Cape Coast (initials on the front) to S. B. Bampoe, a postal clerk serving in Elmina. Records of Gold Coast Post Office staff at this time show they worked together for some years.

Apparently opportunities existed for business trading by postal workers. Another One Penny card from Bampoe, written in November 1894 to L.O. Bowman in Philadelphia (a postage stamp dealer), records shipment of 500 English and Gold Coast stamps. In February 1896, Bampoe wrote a card to A. E. J. Ackerman in Banbury, UK, mentioning shipment of beetles and fruit from Gold Coast. Considerable correspondence is found from West Africa addressed to Ackerman in the 1890s. I have as yet been unable to learn details of trading pursued by Ackerman with Africans. UK Census records of 1891 record Ackerman (then 17 years) as a Solicitor's Clerk.

Cole was the first Postmaster of the Gold Coast (1870), appointed after beginning his career in the Queen's Advocate Office in Sierra Leone. He and his two brothers (Alfred Augustus and Gladstone) came to Accra from Freetown. All were merchants — Rowland Cole owned the Busy Bee Store in Accra (Ref. 5).

I have seen a One Penny card used as late as 1908 (to Switzerland).

### Section C. Penny Return Postcards

One Penny Return cards, with a detachable half, were produced in relatively small numbers, and used examples of either half are most elusive! Probably Reply Cards were less popular than cards of other denominations and were not continued past the Victoria period.

Figure 8 shows the front section of a reply card from Accra on January 15, 1896, addressed to the "Tsars Village" outside St Petersburg, Russia, and marked "TOO LATE". I have also recorded another virtually identical card with the same addressee and dates, also with the late marking. Probably these were sent as souvenirs, with no message.

The card shown in Figure 9 is a Reply portion ("REPLY" struck through by the writer) sent from Northern Territories (Gambaga, January 2, 1899), routed through Kintampo (January 19), Kumasi (January 30) and Cape Coast (February 8). The writer was Percy M. Dove, a career English officer of "The Sherwood Foresters", attached to an expedition under Colonel Northcote (1897-98). He was writing to his tailor to order a dozen white shirts — a mundane message, from the hinterlands of West Africa.

Dove also served in Rhodesia, South Africa, Sudan and France where he was killed in action in May 1915, age 43 years (biography from Memorials of Rugbeians, internet).

### Acknowledgements

Research supporting this article was performed in London, UK archives (DLR, held by Royal Mail) and the Library of Congress, Washington, DC. I wish to thank the staff who assisted me, and acknowledge support from the Julian Chapman Memorial Scholarship, administered by the Royal Philatelic Society London.

I write this in tribute to the late Michael Ensor, a WASC friend with whom I spent happy hours discussing the “old” Gold Coast of colonial times.

### References

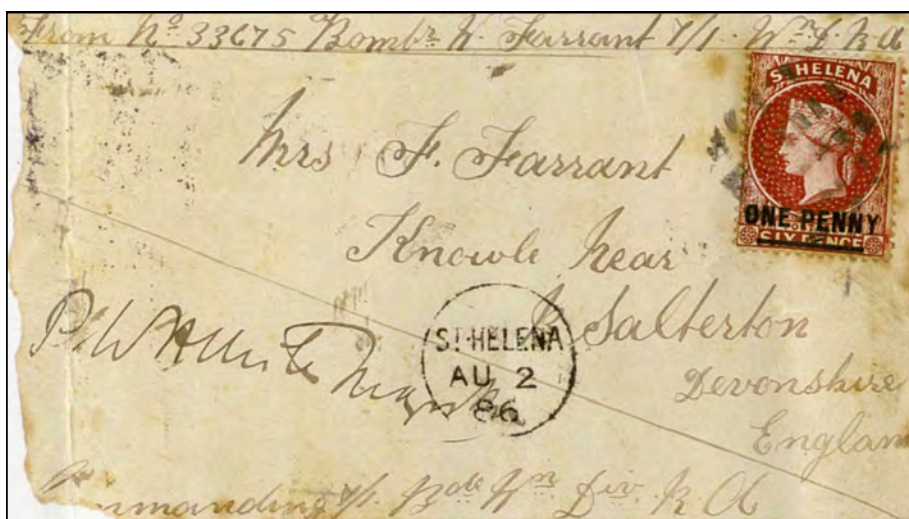
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## Soldier's Letter from St Helena 1886

Malcolm Lacey

I illustrate a soldier's letter from St Helena to Budleigh Salterton, Devonshire sent at the concessionary rate of one penny.



It is from 33675 Bombardier H. Farrant to presumably his mother or wife and bears a 1880 1d lake with St Helena Type 1 c.d.s of 2 August 1886 on the cover. It is countersigned by his Commanding Officer as required for this concessionary rate.

Any information on the sender or his regiment would be appreciated.

# St Helena 5d Value 1927 - 1936

**John Aslett**

I have been looking at many examples of the five pence value, mainly mint, of the St Helena 'Badge' set of 1922 - 1937 (Multiple Script CA).

Gibbons (Ref. 1) has two listings for the basic 5d stamp; SG 103 Green and deep carmine/green (1927) and SG 103d Green and carmine-red/green (1936). Stanton and Thorpe (Ref. 2) show there were three printings of this value, the first invoiced on 23 July 1927 (29,760 stamps), the second on 9 April 1936 (6,300 stamps) and the last on 15 June 1936 (15,050 stamps).

Studying the colour of the border plate on all these 5d stamps, there is no difficulty in identifying those examples from the 1927 printing. But when studying the dozen or so remaining stamps, whilst they can all clearly be categorised as carmine-red (SG 103d), two of the examples depict a slightly brighter shade of carmine-red, which are clearly not as deep as the 1927 carmine.

Is it possible that these two stamps, showing this slightly brighter shade, derive from a different printing to the more common shade listed as SG 103d? In which event, what I would be keen to find out, is from which of the two 1936 printings the brighter shade derives. Not having access to a piece including a plate plug, I find it impossible to match these two shades, described above, to their respective 1936 printings.

If any information in this respect is forthcoming from readers of *Cameo* then it would be greatly appreciated.

## References

- 1 Stanley Gibbons *Commonwealth Stamp Catalogue, St Helena, Ascension & Tristan da Cunha*, p36, Stanley Gibbons Ltd., Ringwood 2014
- 2 Stanton R. & Thorpe W.E., "*The George V Badge Issues of St Helena and Ascension, A Study of the Printings and Plate Varieties*", p16, WASC, 2012

*Bill Thorpe replies:*

*I have about 200 single 'spares' and about another 250 singles from positions 1 to 60 plus a full sheet and a large number of blocks and marginal copies with plate plugs, and about half of these are from the 1936 printings.*

*If you look closely at the 1936 printings there are probably at least 3 variations in paper colour, and I could probably find at least six shade variations for both April and June. You can also find stamps from the 1927 printing that look similar to the 1936.*

*John is basing his findings from a "dozen or so" stamps. Trying to tie a single stamp to a printing is impossible unless you have a plate plug, but unfortunately he doesn't have any. There are always bound to be some variations in shade during a printing – if you look at the 3d and 8d values (both invoiced 22 December 1922) for example, you will find quite significant variations, and no-one has ever suggested that there were 2 separate printings. All the large printings were done in several print runs, which can give examples of over and under inking.*

*If any readers can offer further advice on differentiating the five pence printings then please respond to me or the *Cameo* Editor, but unfortunately I don't think we can take this any further – shades will always exist, but they are not easily definable.*

# Tristan da Cunha 1961 - A New Discovery

Richard Moss

On 10 October 1961 Tristan da Cunha was evacuated after the volcanic eruption. A limited number of postal items were taken off the island; with all those recorded to the end of 2014 being postmarked 11 October 1961, the date a scheduled ship was due to arrive.

I have studied the major works on Tristan da Cunha (Refs. 1 to 3). The last of these are regarded as the new standard works, particularly for post-1938 Tristan philately. None of them refer to mail postmarked between 1 June 1961, used on some mail from the previous departure, and 11 October 1961. Three leading collectors also confirm that they have no knowledge of any mail postmarked during this period. It was known that some stamps had been cancelled to order (c.t.o) 31 August 1961 (Figure 1) but none had been recorded on cover.



Figure 1  
c.t.o. stamps dated  
31 August 1961

In January 2015, more than 53 years later, this item came up for sale from the stock held by a Belgian auction house, and is the first cover dated 31 August 1961 (Fig. 2) to be recorded, and with an arrival date in the USA of 23 October 1961 (Fig. 3), clearly shows it was taken off during the evacuation.



Figure 2 31 August 1961 cover, front

This means that currently this cover is important on three counts:

- i) the only recorded cover dated 31 August 1961
- ii) the only recorded item taken off the island during the evacuation and NOT dated 11 October 1961
- iii) the only recorded registered item taken off during the evacuation



Figure 3 31 August 1961 cover, rear, showing USA arrival c.d.s. of 23 October 1961

A letter was enclosed in the envelope (Fig. 4) signed by the wife of the Agricultural Officer which explains how the addressee's money had been used and that the stamps used on the envelope were to the value of the correct postage rate.

It is also clear that the recipient was not the person who ordered the c.t.o. stamps as there was not enough money sent to cover these. As a result of this, one has to assume that at least one more registered cover was prepared but what happened to it or if it (they) will eventually emerge is anybody's guess.

This certainly makes you realise that important new items can occasionally be spotted even in a subject as popular as the Tristan volcano period of 1961 to 1963, providing you have done the necessary study on the subject.

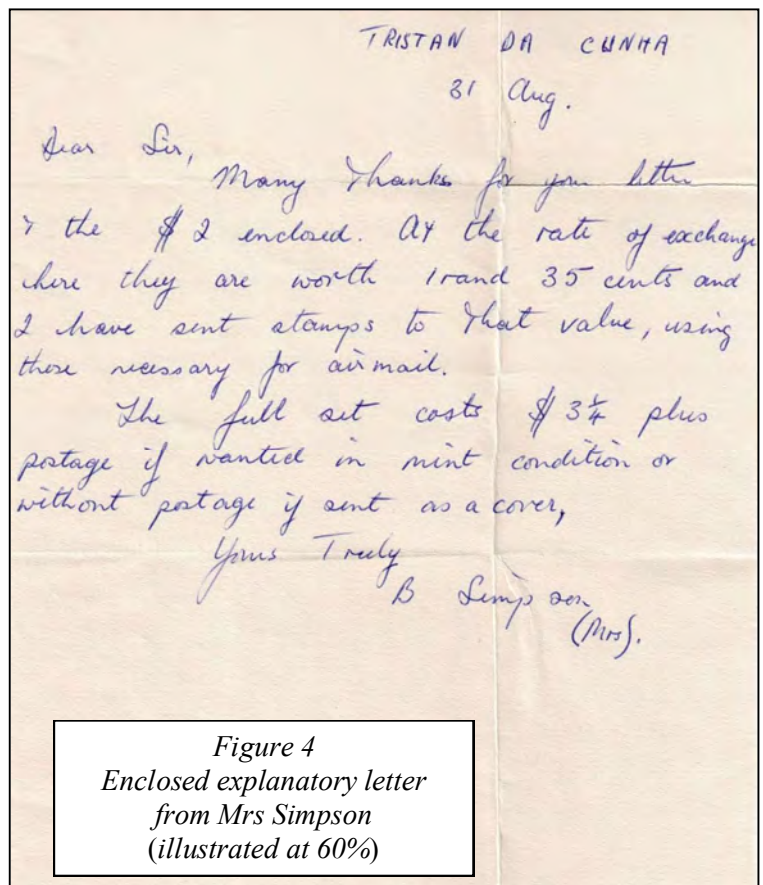


Figure 4  
Enclosed explanatory letter  
from Mrs Simpson  
(illustrated at 60%)

### References

- 1 Crabb G., *The History and Postal History of Tristan da Cunha*, 1980
- 2 Peck R., *Handbook of Modern Tristan da Cunha Philately: Part 2 Postal History and Cinderellas*, 1992
- 3 Taylor R., *Tristan da Cunha Monographs*, (A series of individual monographs privately published between 2001 and 2010)

# Amazing Discovery for Gold Coast Postal Orders

John Gledhill

In mid-December the GB Overprints Society received an enquiry from a collector about something he had just found in an auction lot of stamps he had bought. On the back of one of the pages in an album was neatly mounted a British postal order, overprinted for use in Gold Coast. He contacted the GBOS to ask if it was anything interesting for collectors of such matters. As I am also the assistant auctioneer for the Postal Order Society the question was referred to me, and I assured him that it was definitely 'interesting', and might be worth a bit.

I have made quite a study of the format of overprints used for GB postal orders in other countries, so I was highly struck by what he sent me. Firstly in that it used a style of overprint that had never been recorded before, and secondly that it turns out to be the second earliest known surviving example of an overprinted GB postal order.



As can be seen from the image shown here it was issued 2 July 1907, only two years after the introduction of overprints on GB postal orders, needed to show the different poundage depending on where in the world it was to be sold (hence the precise wording "POUNDRAGE PAYABLE IN ..."). The very earliest known GB overprint on a postal order is from Transvaal, and bears a framed overprint the same as that shown on the above example, but with the inclusion of the word 'TOTAL' before 'POUNDRAGE'; no doubt this was too cumbersome and by the time this Gold Coast item was issued that word had been dropped.

So, yes, in short, I think that this item is quite definitely 'interesting', not to say amazing; it is the only known example with this format of overprint, and the second earliest known with any sort of overprint. Before this find, the earliest known Gold Coast overprint on a postal order was from 1923, so this pushes the boundaries back quite substantially.

The item shown above is intended to be included in the 2015 auction of the Postal Order Society. By kind permission of the Treasurer and the Secretary of the Postal Order Society, this particular item (if nothing else) will be open to bids from members of the West Africa Study Circle (WASC), which includes many keen collectors of Gold Coast material, even if not at present members of the POS. Any WASC members wishing to bid should contact me (as Assistant Auctioneer) in the first instance and I will run their wish to be included (please confirm that you are a WASC member of 'good standing'); you will need to take out one year's membership of the Postal Order Society, but WASC members will be pleased to note that there is a special offer on membership subscriptions this year.

Further details from [jmgstamps@jgledhill.me.uk](mailto:jmgstamps@jgledhill.me.uk)

# Nigerian Postal Order Issued at Buea, Cameroons

Barry Burns FRPSL

*This short article has been put together from information received from Marty Bratzel, John Gledhill and Peter Hørlyck. My thanks to them for pointing out this extremely interesting item.*

The latest edition of Postal Order News contains an item that might have escaped some WASC members. It is an overprinted British postal order for use in Nigeria and, amazingly, sold on eBay in August 2014 for a remarkable £2,074! This is the highest price that John Gledhill has ever seen for an issued overprinted GB postal order.



Peter Hørlyck pointed out that it is postmarked Buea 15 January 1926. Although the postmark reads Nigeria, it was indeed sold in the British Cameroons! A remarkable item indeed.

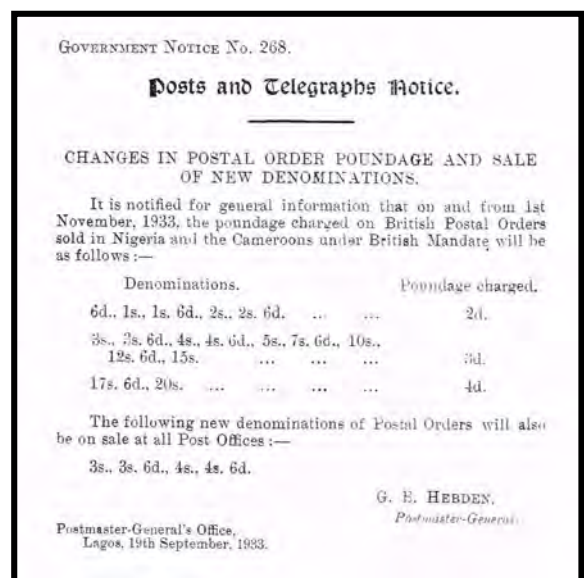
It is understood to have been purchased by a postal order collector based in the USA.



# Nigerian Postal Order New Denominations 1933

Jeremy Martin FRPSL

The *Supplement to the Nigeria Gazette* number 55 of 28 September 1933 listed existing and new denominations, and poundage charged, of postal orders for use in Nigeria and Cameroons under British Mandate.



# New variety of Nigerian 50k definitive

Massimo Galvani and Ray Harris

Collectors of modern Nigerian definitives will probably be aware of the subset of the 1973-82 set overprinted in red as School Specimens (Figures 1 and 2).

SCHOOL SPECIMEN  
NOT VALID FOR PAYMENT

Figure 1

SCHOOL SPECIMEN  
NOT VALID FOR PAYMENT

Figure 2

These are sometimes found for sale. The values overprinted and usually sold as a set, are 12k, 18k, 30k, ₦1, all litho printed and without watermark (between SG290 and 306), with an overprint as in Figure 1; and 2k, 25k, 50k, ₦2, all with watermark (between SG338 and 354), with overprint as in Figure 2.

One of the authors (MG) has these overprints on blocks of 4 and discovered that the corner block of the 50k, with remarkable sheet number 000000, does not have a watermark. (Figure 3)



Figure 3

In the original litho printing of the definitives in 1973-74, all values issued were without watermark and had a 6mm left inscription. Some values also differ from the photogravure printing by having the inscription in colour instead of black. This 50k, which has a greenish yellow imprint, is the only value not listed in that group (SG290 to 306). The change in the 50k is not noted in the catalogue until the watermarked issue (SG352), first known in September 1977.

The other author (RH) checked 140 used copies of the 50k, previously assumed all to have a watermark. Just one was without, but unfortunately it did not have an identifiable postmark. The SG catalogue has an unused number (304) waiting for this stamp. At present we surmise that a small batch of unwatermarked paper was included in the print run which produced the “normal” watermarked stamps, but it could be from an earlier small and previously unknown printing. We wonder if any readers have other copies, possibly with a dated postmark.

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# C.G.

*Please mention Cameo when responding to Advertisements*

# Biafra Specimen Pope Paul Miniature Sheet

Tony Plumbe

An unrecorded version has emerged of the second plum coloured type of the 10/- Pope Paul miniature sheet of 1969. It has been overprinted diagonally 'SPECIMEN' twice in magenta on the stamp part of the sheet. Unlike the issued miniature sheets, this miniature sheet is unnumbered. The overprint appears to have been applied by hand and is similar to that known on the stamps of the same issue. It was claimed by the seller that this Specimen miniature sheet was in the possession of Mr H A Obu, the Biafran Controller of Postal Services. It sold on ebay for £186.90 on 12/12/14 with seven bidders recorded as having shown interest.



## Forcados River Post Office and Barrels of Mail in the Niger Coast Protectorate

Dr Simon Heap

While admiring the beautiful Rhodes House Library in Oxford on its last day of opening before transferring to the New Weston Library, I looked through very early editions of the *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria*. To my surprise and delight, I found a passage on the postal service of the Royal Niger Company quoted in an article, and decided to check the original, *In the Niger Country*, by Harold Binloss, which had more description, and which is in fact on the Niger Coast Protectorate's postal service. (Ref. 1)

Binloss describes the Forcados River Post Office:

...the Jakkeries [Jekri] drove the canoe in towards the shadowy loom of forest. Soon she grounded on the miry bank, and recognising where we were, I stepped thankfully ashore in front of her Majesty's central post-office for the Forcados

district of the Niger. It was not an imposing edifice – only a little square hut, built either of cotton-wood logs or frame-boarding, I forget which; and approaching the doorway, I stumbled over the prostrate forms of a few Krooboys, apparently slumbering contentedly upon the sloppy earth. A faint voice bade me enter, and I found the interior reeking with damp, and dimly lighted by a highly odoriferous paraffin-lamp. The room contained little besides one or two vermilion painted barrels, whose use became apparent later, and various kinds of creeping things; but there was moisture everywhere, standing in beads upon the match-board, trickling down the walls, and filling the shadowy apartment with steamy discomfort.

A Krooboy crouched beside a trestle-cot at the farther end, and here a young white man stricken by the fever lay in a state of listless suffering. He soon explained matters. So far the post-office was used to some extent as a resting-place for Europeans wishing to catch the first steamer calling at Forcados, and he was homeward bound upon the morrow. The black postmaster was away on business, or more probably sick, and he had occupied the dwelling for three days. (Ref. 2)

Binloss continues:

...the longest night has an ending, and at last the longed-for dawn arrived. Then, even as I bade my host farewell, two white-painted canoes manned by naked paddlers grounded against the bank, and the negroes solemnly unloaded two big barrels painted vermilion, with yellow cabalistics, which presumably represented the letters V.R., straggling across the end. A padlocked lid, probably closed water-tight, was placed in the other end, and a little flag fixed in a socket, while the sable postman carried a staff in token of authority. This carved staff, often a work of art, is the inevitable credential of a West African messenger, and serves the same purpose that a monarch's signet ring did in the olden days...

The barrels contained her Majesty's mail, and were either to be handed to the purser of a homeward-bound steamer or transferred to some consulate launch, and the reason for carrying letters so is that the 18-inch-wide canoes come to grief by capsizing or otherwise at times. Then the floating cask with its flag ensures the safety of its contents, though, so rumour goes, the unsophisticated Jakkery has more than once appropriated a mail-cask to reverence as a new kind of fetiche [fetish].

The vagaries of the ingenuous savage frequently harass the postal authorities in various West African colonies. One Gold Coast official informed me that when the telegraph was most wanted in outlying districts, it was generally found inoperative, owing to some sable heathen having cut out a length of the talking-wire to make hammered slugs for his flintlock gun or a necklet for some dusky beauty. It is also whispered that those in charge sometimes bow down before Baal by propitiating the fetiche gods through their representatives, so as to get a "Ju-Ju" or taboo placed upon their property, when no negro dare lay hands upon it. (Ref. 3)

## References

1. A. H. M. Kirk-Greene, 'Expansion on the Benue, 1830-1900', *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria*, 1(3), December 1958, pp. 215-37.
2. Harold Binloss, *In the Niger Country*. London: William Blackwood and Sons, 1898, pp.134-135.
3. Binloss, *In the Niger Country*, pp.136-137.

## Articles of Interest Published in Other Journals

Members are invited to contact either editor by e-mail, post or telephone when they notice any article they may feel might be of interest to other members. Articles which we hope to reproduce in *Cameo* at a future date are not usually listed here.

**London Philatelist**, Volume 124, no. 1422, Jan-Feb 2015

pp30-33, *Gold Coast Postcard from G.A. Krause in Ouagadougou in 1886*, by Peter Newroth. This relates to another card, in addition to the one recently the subject of articles in *Cameo*.

Volume 124, no. 1423, March 2015

pp76-77, *St. Helena, Tristan Relief cover to Denmark* by David Horry.

Volume 124, no. 1423, March 2015

pp194-208, *Divided postcards with Postage Due 1902-1907* by Per Gustafson. Although there are no West Africa examples shown in this excellent paper, examples are bound to exist and it would be interesting to see some illustrated in *Cameo* in due course.

**Air Mail News**, Volume 57, no. 229, May 2015

pp22-25, "*Lati Substitute*" an update by John Wilson

**Journal of the France & Colonies PS**, Volume 65, no. 1, March 2015

pp5-8, *Tchad: Postal Services in the Period of Military Pacification 1900-1920*, by John Yeomans

**Civil Censorship Study Group Bulletin**, Volume 42, no. 1, January 2015

p6, *French Censorship at Senegal*, by Mike Roberts. Cover from Bathurst, the Gambia, sent to Berne in Nov 1918 which was opened and censored at Dakar, in transit.

**Postscript, Journal of the Society of Postal Historians**, volume 64, no. 4, whole no. 278, Winter 2014

*United Nations Force, Congo, 1960 to 1964*, by Gerald Marriner. There was a Nigerian Contingent of UN peacekeepers, referred to in this article.

**United States Specialist**, Volume 85, No 9, whole no. 1015, September 2014

pp423-426, *Unpublished World War II US Air Mail Rates and Routes to and through Africa*, by Ken Lawrence

Volume 85, No 10, whole no. 1016, October 2014

pp463-465, *Foreign Air Mail Route No. 23*, by Ken Lawrence

Volume 85 No 11, whole no. 1017, November 2014

pp513-520, *Foreign Air Mail Route No. 24 During World War II*, by Ken Lawrence



## Epidemics in West Africa

**Dr Simon Heap**

As the terrible Ebola epidemic in Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea has recently been of great concern, I thought the *Annual Report on the Posts and Telegraphs Department, Nigeria for the year 1918* shows that West Africa has had such waves of disease in the past.

The report explains that the 'Influenza' epidemic disorganised the Department for some time. The work at some of the smaller office was wholly suspended for between 2 and 19 days. Of the larger offices, Sapele was closed for 4 days, and Warri's daily working hours were restricted to two for a week. Kaduna post office was open for the sale of stamps and the transmission of urgent telegrams only. At Lagos the work was considerably curtailed, house-to-house delivery suspended and the Learners School closed.

Eleven African and two European staff in the Department died from Influenza, while 122 of the Native Clerical Staff were off duty for varying periods between 7 October and 11 December.

The report concludes, "The inconvenience caused to the public was greatly lessened by the willing and untiring way in which the staff worked. Many while suffering from the epidemic stuck to their posts."

## WEST AFRICA OFFERS FROM STOCK

<b>ASCENSION.</b> 1913 ½d green marginal block of twelve tied to piece by Code 'B' c.d.s. '11 AU 13'. SG Z39. £550	<b>NIGERIA.</b> 1925 ½d green vertical interpanneau pair with Die I/Die II se-tenant. Very fine mint. SG 15c. £350
<b>GAMBIA.</b> 1909 6d with 'dented frame' (R.1/6). Very fine used 'OC 7 10' oval d.s. Scarce used. SG 78a. £200	<b>ST HELENA.</b> 1871 (Perf 12½) 6d dull blue. Very fine mint. Exceptional example of this rare printing. SG 16. £575
<b>GAMBIA.</b> 1935 1/- Jubilee marginal with 'short extra flagstaff'. Unmounted mint. SG 146b. £350	<b>ST HELENA.</b> 1876 4d watermark inverted and reversed in block of four. Very fine mint. Rare multiple. SG 24y. £550
<b>GOLD COAST.</b> 1889 1d on 6d essay surcharge (smaller letters) strip of three. Unmounted mint. (SG 20). £375	<b>ST HELENA.</b> 1927 5/- Badge corner pair with 'cleft rock'. Unmounted mint. SG 109c. £300
<b>GOLD COAST.</b> 1902 2d dull mauve and orange-red in marginal block of four. Unmounted mint. SG 27b. £160	<b>SIERRA LEONE.</b> 1884 4d brown (Perf 12) 'SPECIMEN'. Very fine mint. Extremely rare with abnormal perf. SG 33sa. £500
<b>NIGER COAST.</b> 1893 ½d on half 1d lilac surcharge double (unsevered pair with normal) used on piece. Rare. SG 7e. £1500	<b>SIERRA LEONE.</b> 1912 £5 orange and green. Very fine mint. Wonderfully fresh and truly exceptional quality. SG 130. £2750
<b>NIGER COAST.</b> 1893 ½d on 2½d (Type 5 in vermilion). Very fine mint and rare thus. SG 17. £900	<b>TOGO.</b> 1915 5/- with 'CCUPATION' error. Very fine mint. Characteristic excised perfs. Rare stamp. SG H44f. £450

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Lagos – 8<sup>th</sup> June 1883 Imprinted envelope of the Danish consulate bearing 1876 6d green (4d UPU rate + 2d registration) to Ipswich. A very appealing cover ex John Sacher.

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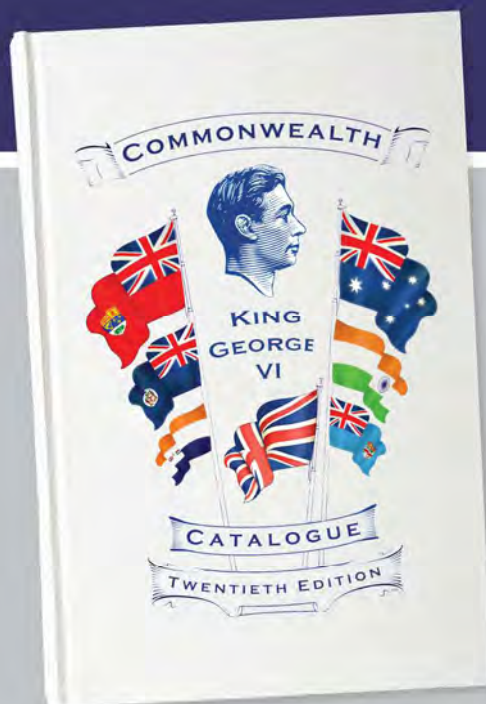
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