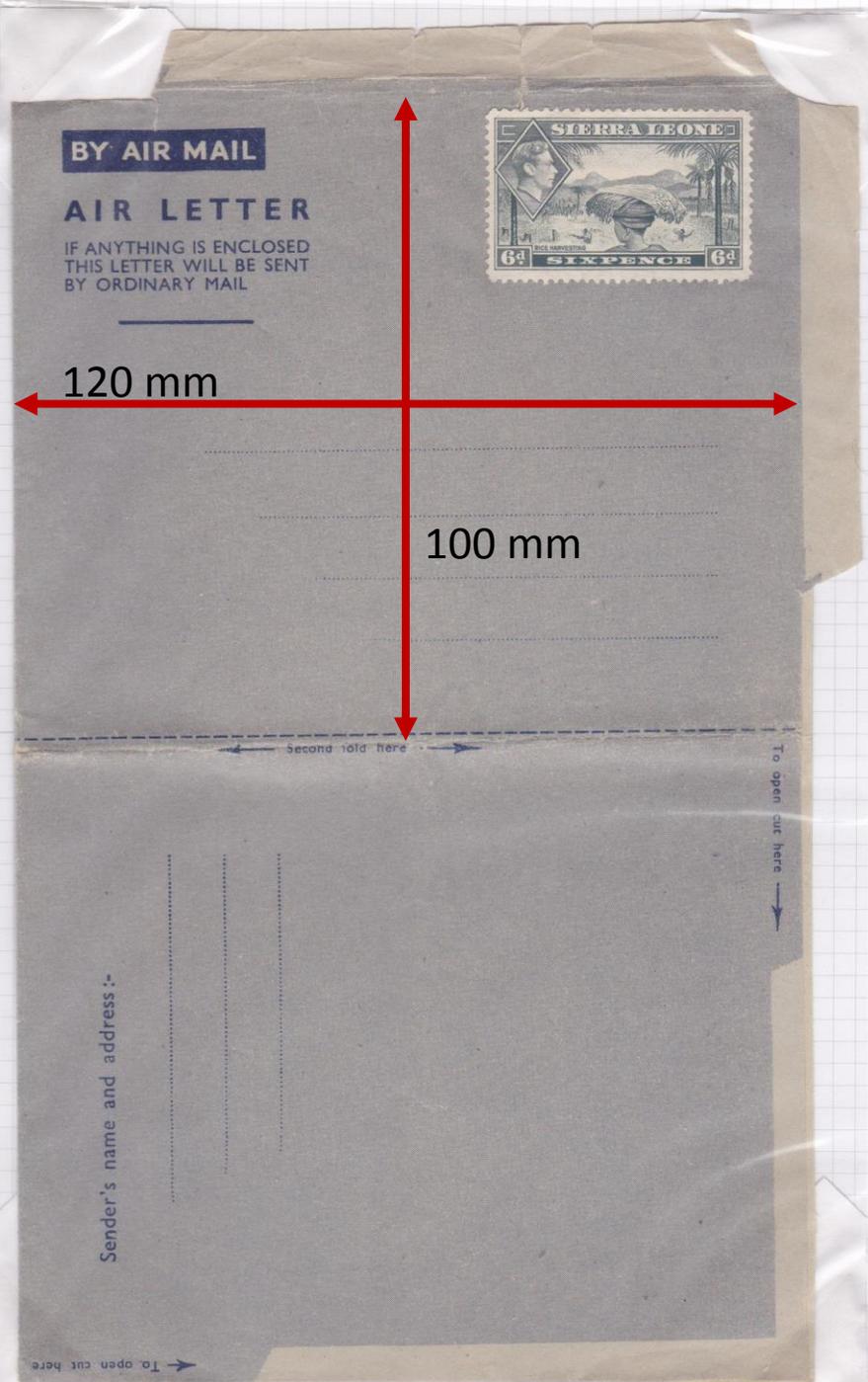


Formular Air Letters of Sierra Leone – part 2

Peter Rolfe

(presented by Philip Quirk)



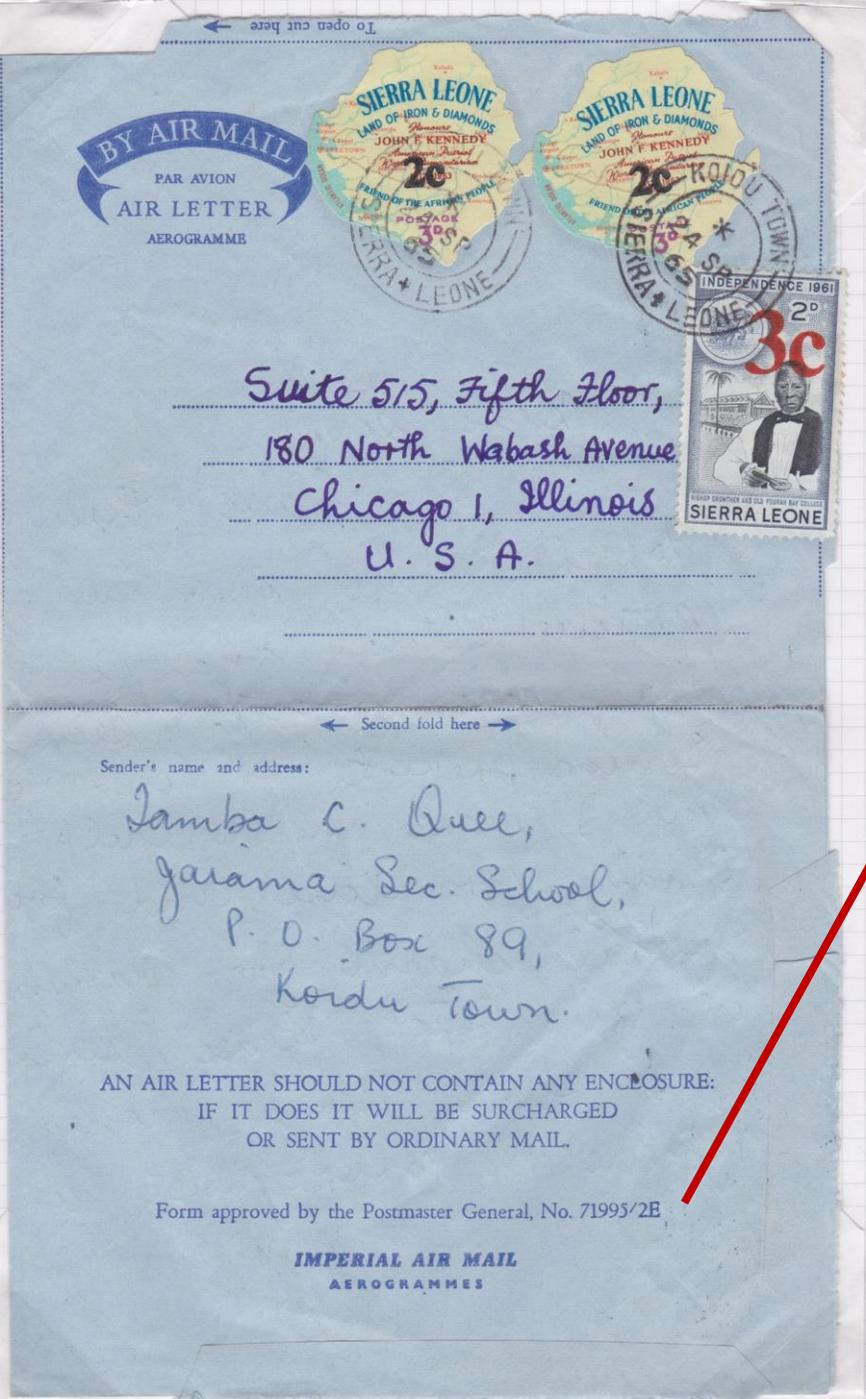
Sierra Leone formular air letter

The form was quarter folded to 120 x 100mm, with two flaps.

Air letters, both with and without indicium, were produced to this format until the end of the 1960s.

Imperial Air Mail, 1965

There was a licence system, allowing firms to produce formular air letters for overseas sale or their own use.



Form approved by the Postmaster General, No. 71995/2E

IMPERIAL AIR MAIL
AEROGRAMMES

Sender's name and address:
Jamba C. Quee,
Jarama Sec. School,
P.O. Box 89,
Koidu Town.

AN AIR LETTER SHOULD NOT CONTAIN ANY ENCLOSURE:
IF IT DOES IT WILL BE SURCHARGED
OR SENT BY ORDINARY MAIL.

Form approved by the Postmaster General, No. 71995/2E

IMPERIAL AIR MAIL
AEROGRAMMES

The 'APSLEY' Air Letter
A John Dickinson Product
Form approved by Postmaster General No.—71995/1Z

Proposed format change

From the Postal Museum Archives, a series of files headed by 122/11304 explains the circumstances.

In planning for mechanised handling of mail, the Post Office decided on a new format for air letters: folded into thirds, each 150 x 107mm, with three flaps, so that there was no unsealed edge.

Proposed format change

In August 1966, the GPO wrote to John Dickinson (envelope manufacturer), Wiggins Teape (paper makers), R.T. Tanner (paper merchant and envelope manufacturer), Smith & Young (envelope manufacturer) and the manufacturers' association EMMSA (Envelope Makers' and Manufacturing Stationers' Association (UK)), advising them of the proposed changes and giving 1 July 1968 as the date for implementation.

Some of the companies affected by the proposed format change

STATIONERY AND PRINTING



REG'D TRADE MARK

LION BRAND

John Dickinson & Co. Ltd.
PAPER MAKERS & MANUFACTURING STATIONERS
30/34 NEW BRIDGE ST., LONDON, E.C.4

BRANCHES: Belfast, Birmingham, Bristol, Cardiff, Dublin, Edinburgh, Exeter, Glasgow, Leeds, Liverpool, Manchester, Newcastle, Nottingham

WORKS: Apsey, Clevedon, North, Home Park, (in Herefordshire), Bardon Works (Battersea) and Kirkby Works (Liverpool)

EXPORT BRANCHES: India, Pakistan, Burma, Ceylon, Singapore, Egypt, South America, South Africa, Southern Rhodesia, Australia, New Zealand, Canada

STAND No. M46 (OLYMPIA)



SMITH & YOUNG
ENGRAVED STATIONERY LTD

Telephone: CENTRAL 7051 (8 LINES)



Telegrams: TANNER, FLEET-LONDON.

R · T · TANNER & CO · LTD

PAPER MERCHANTS, ENVELOPE MAKERS,
& Manufacturing Stationers.

Factories & Warehouses:
19, DORSET STREET, E.C.4.
39, HUTTON STREET, E.C.4.
22, 23, 41, PRIMROSE HILL, E.C.4.

DUR REF. YOUR REF.

G.T.B.

SALISBURY SQUARE
: FLEET STREET :
LONDON E.C.4

Proposed format change

John Dickinson objected to the proposed date, since new machinery would be required.

The GPO had only held preliminary consultations with McCorquodale, who produced the GPO's own aerogrammes!

It was eventually decided to proceed.

A memo dated 20 March 1969 refers to the issue of new form licences and includes a list of 135 firms.

Proposed format change

Licence numbers seen on old-format air letters used between 1969-71 may relate to the list of 135 firms.

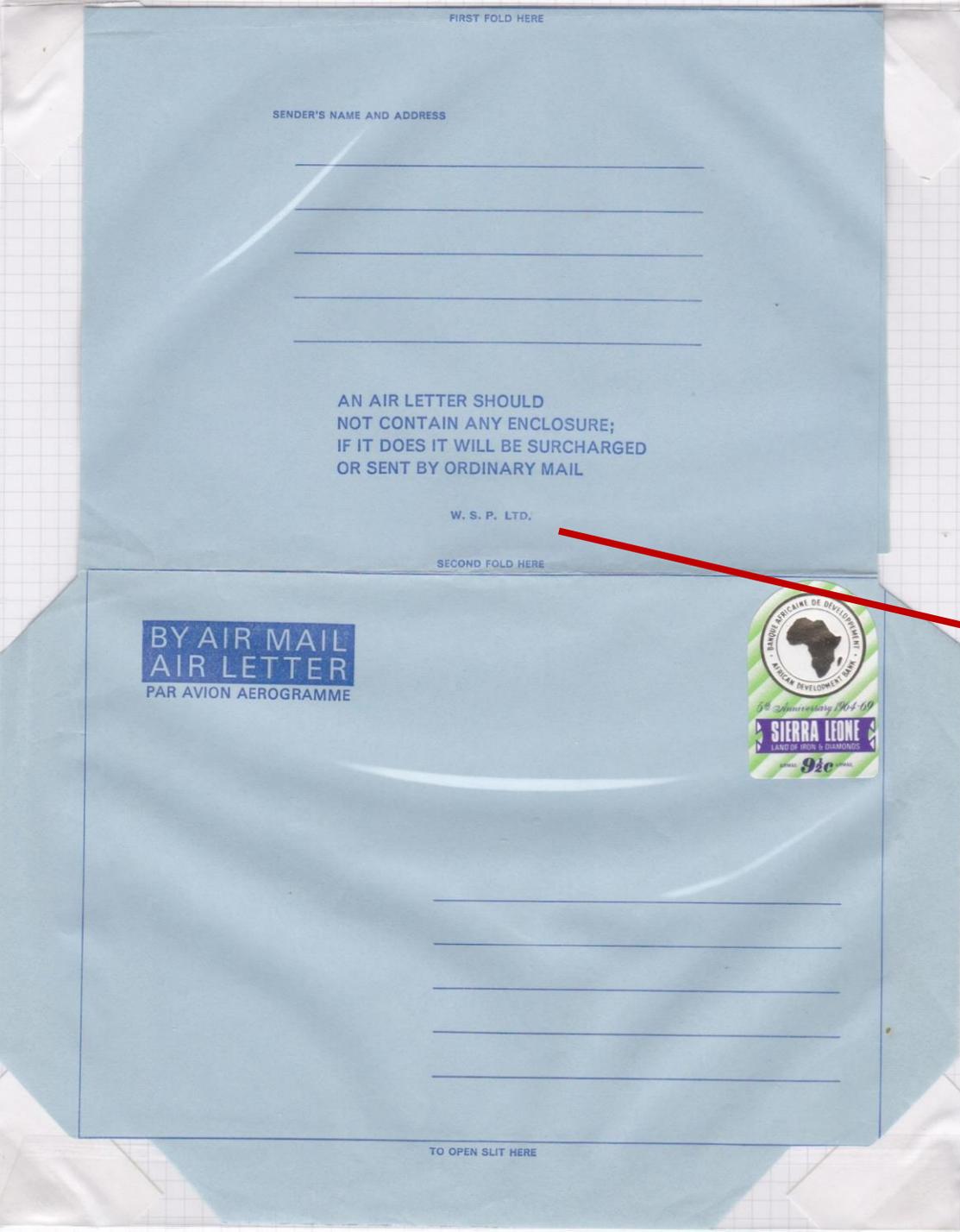
Form approved by the Postmaster General, No. 91.A

AIR LINE
AEROGRAMMES

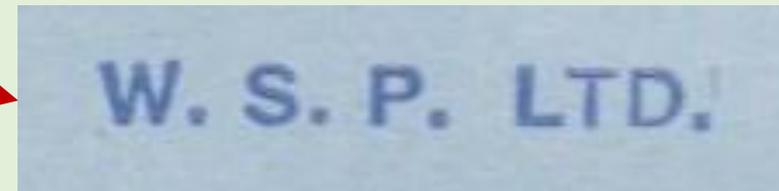
Form approved by the Postmaster-General No. 99

A Newton Mill Production
MADE IN ENGLAND

FORM APPROVED BY THE POSTMASTER GENERAL No. 116



New format air letters
This air letter was produced by Walsall Security Printers (W.S.P.), who also printed the self-adhesive stamps used by Sierra Leone between 1964 and 1971.

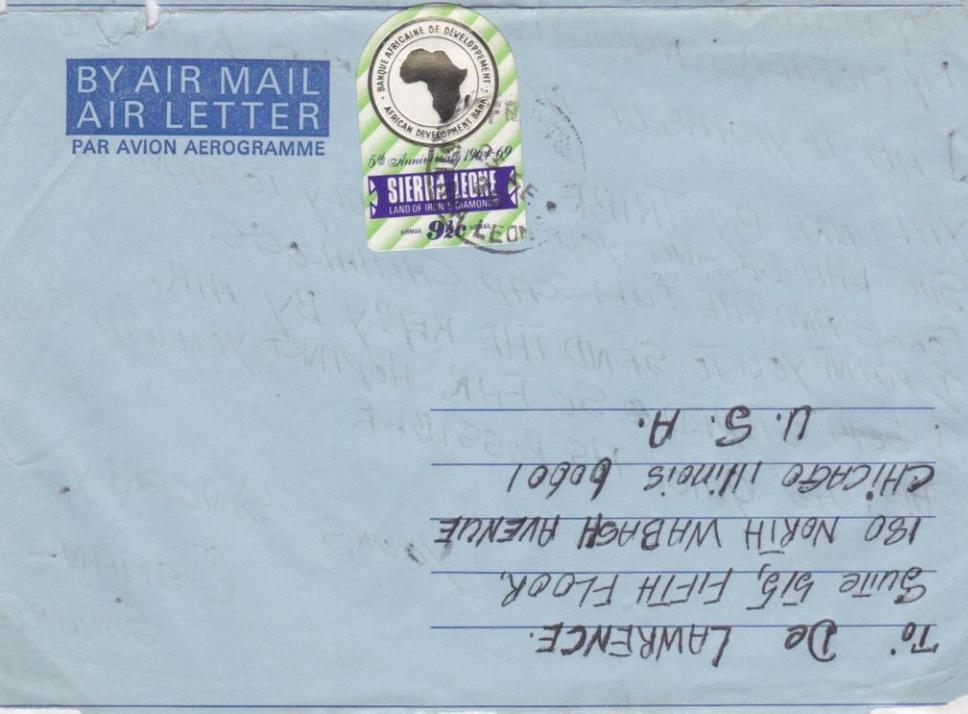
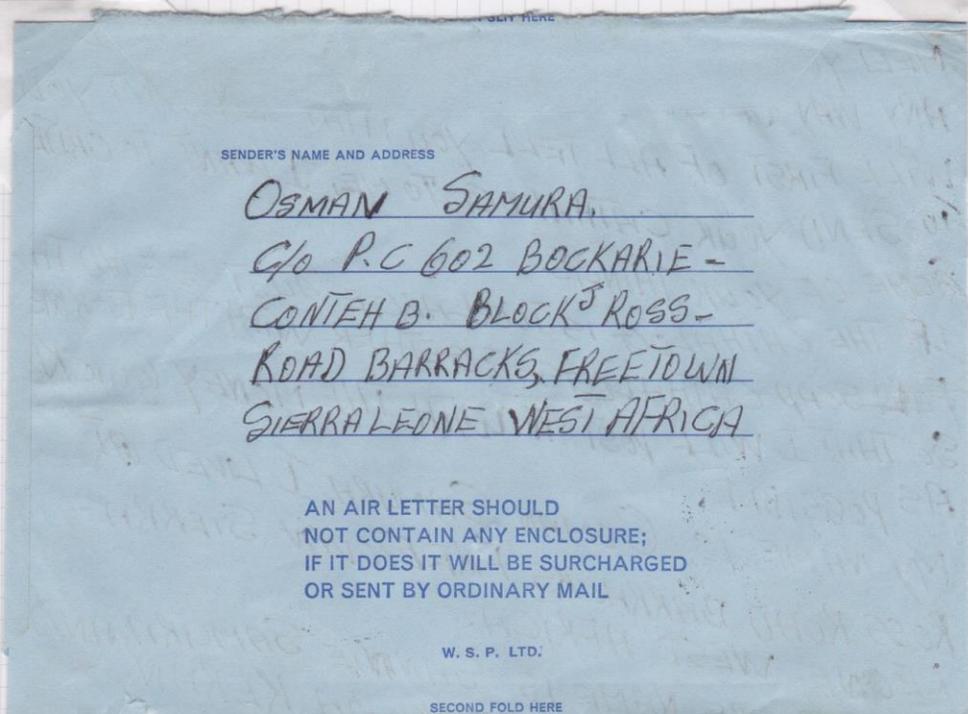


The African Development Bank stamp was issued in September 1969. It may have been affixed at a post office before the air letter was sold.



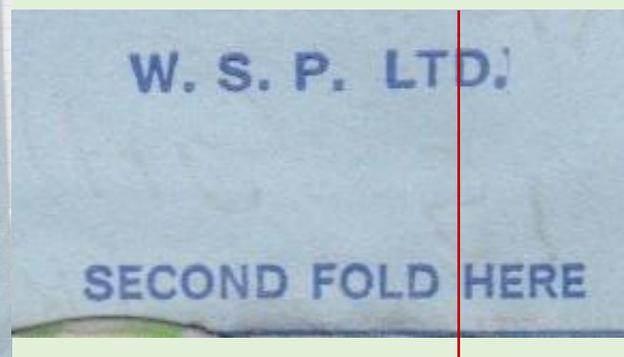
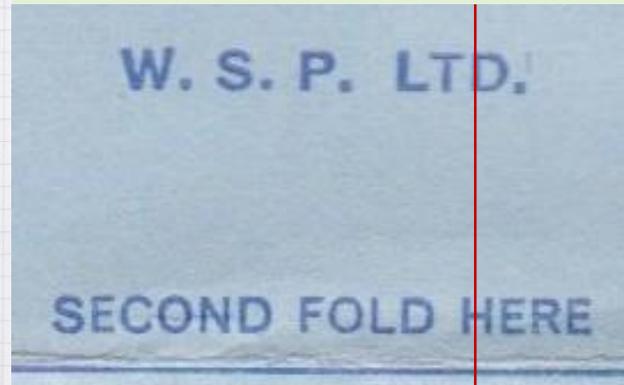
New format air letters

The dimensions of the Walsall air letter match the GPO proposal: folded into thirds, each 150 x 107mm, with three flaps.



New format air letters

It is probably safe to assume that this air letter did not have the stamp affixed in advance!



There are minor differences in alignment between the WSP and Second Fold inscriptions in the mint and used air letters, which may come from different positions in the master forme.

TO OPEN SLIT HERE

SENDER'S NAME AND ADDRESS

1971 AUGUST 15 10 30 AM

AN AIR LETTER SHOULD NOT CONTAIN ANY ENCLOSURE; IF IT DOES IT WILL BE SURCHARGED OR SENT BY ORDINARY MAIL

The 'APSLEY' Air Letter

A John Dickinson Product

Form approved by the Post Office (United Kingdom) No. 1.

SECOND FOLD HERE

BY AIRMAIL
AIR LETTER
PAR AVION
AEROGRAMME



Mr. R.D. Mathews,
Association for Commonwealth,
Literary and Language Studies,
Carleton University,
Department of English,
Ottawa 1, Canada.

Apsley, 1970, Licence No.1

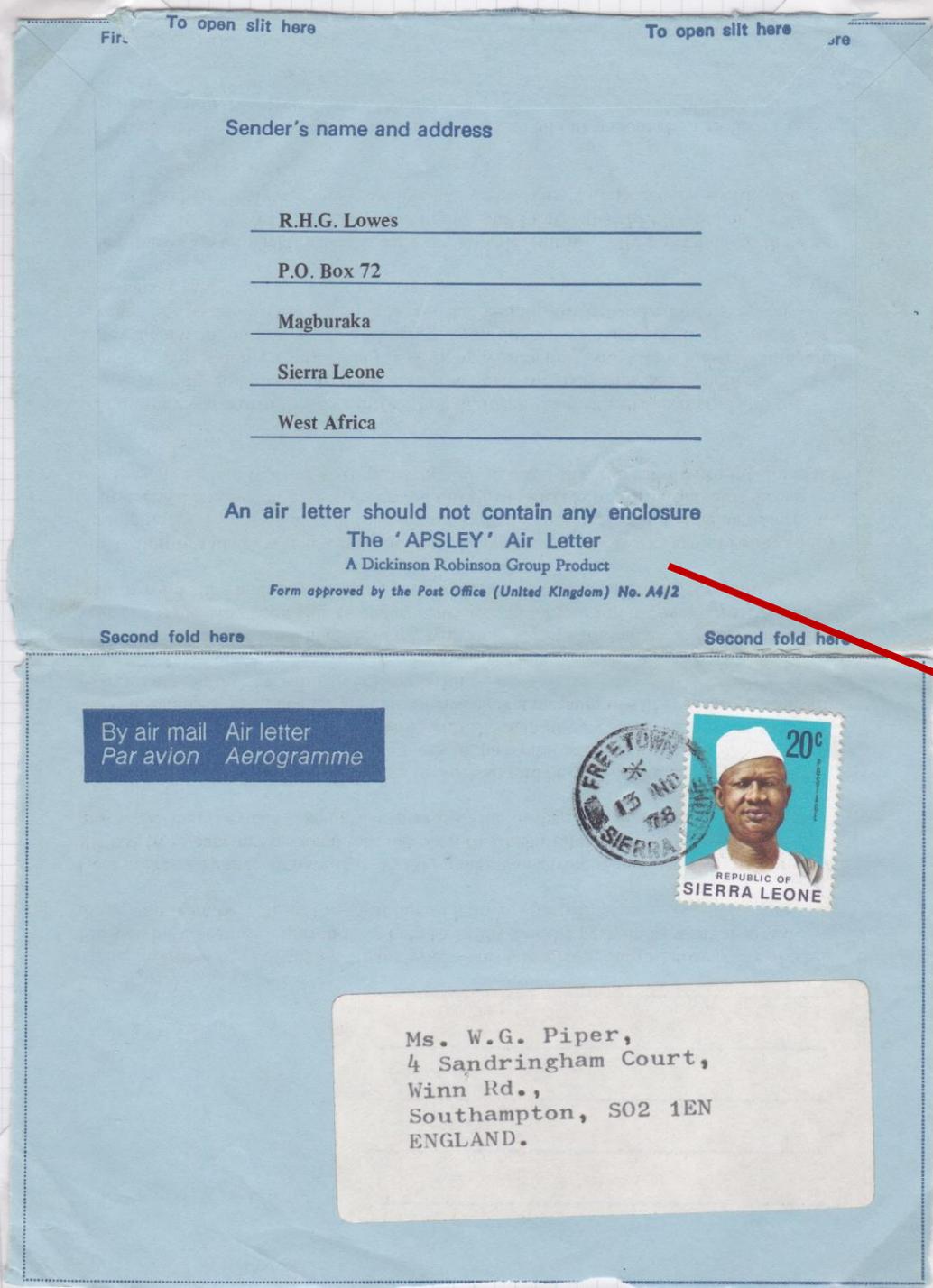
A third type of Apsley brand air letter. The other two had the old format and were shown in part 1 of this presentation.

The 'APSLEY' Air Letter

A John Dickinson Product

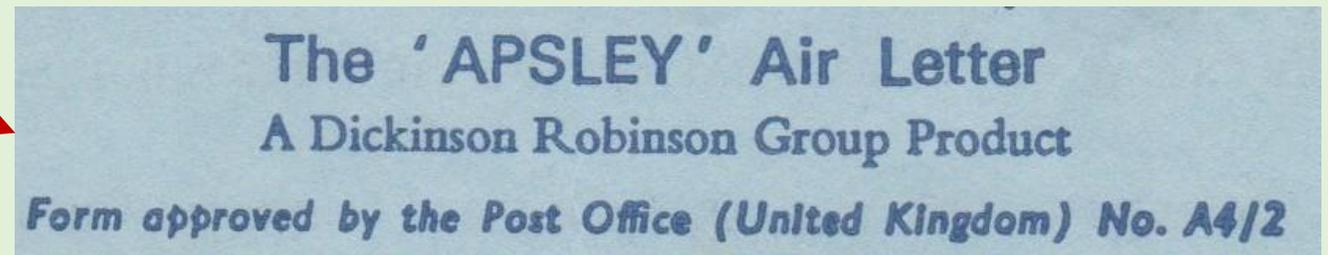
Form approved by the Post Office (United Kingdom) No. 1.

The GPO list of 135 firms has John Dickinson as number 1.

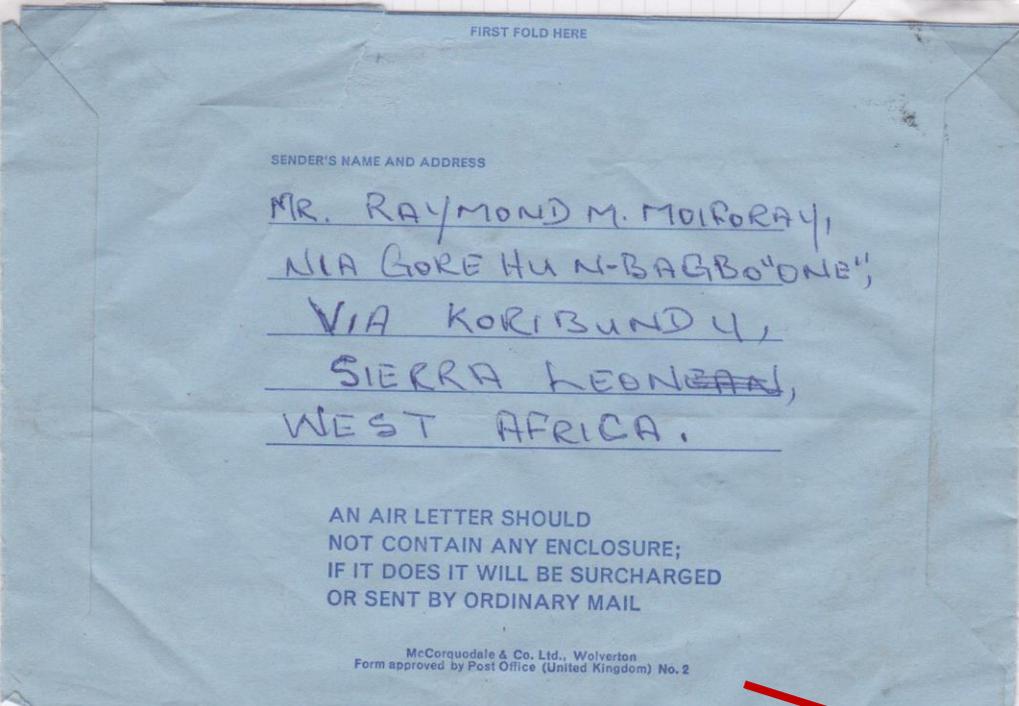


Apsley, 1978, Licence A4/2

A fourth type of Apsley brand air letter, with an improved design of the printed airmail etiquette.

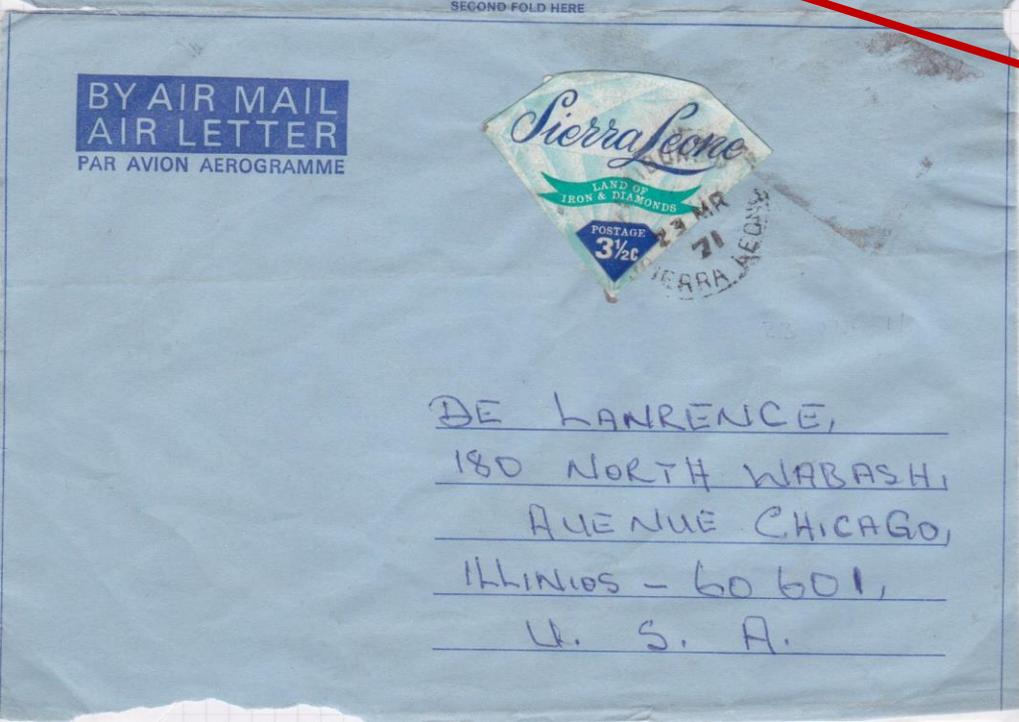


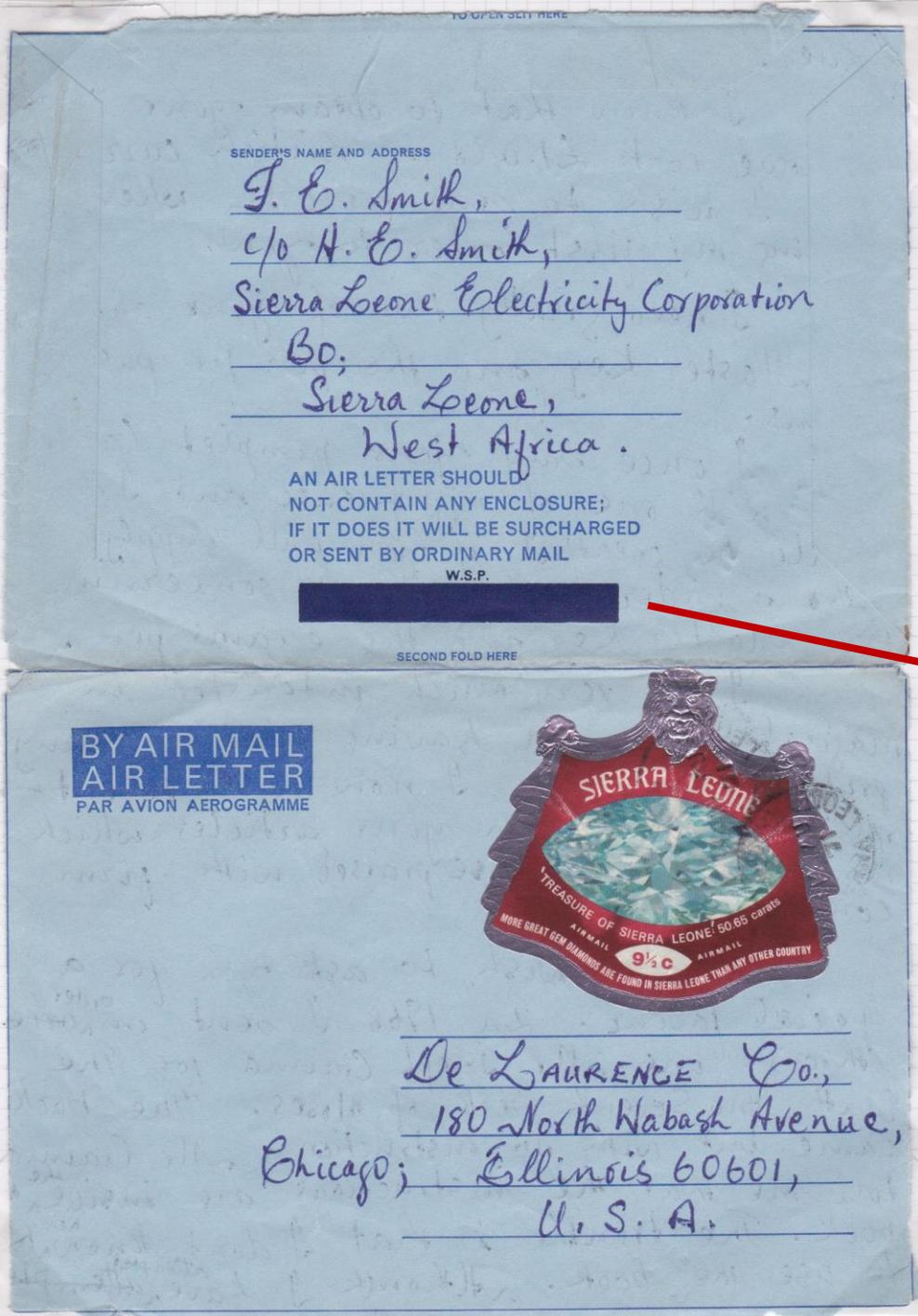
Note that the licence number has changed from 1 to A4/2.



McCorquodale, 1971, Licence No.2

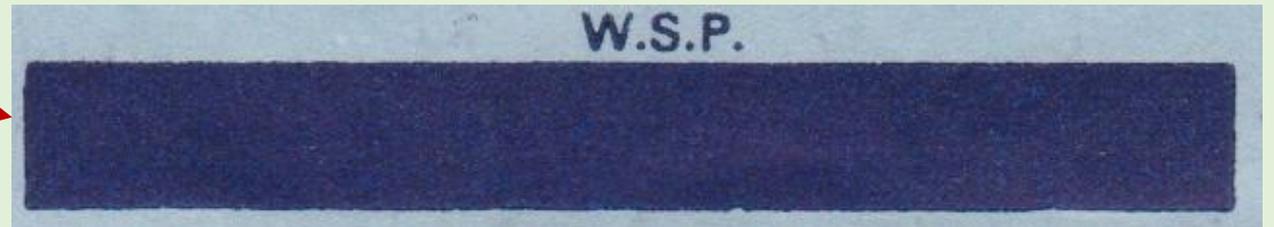
The GPO list of 135 firms has McCorquodale as number 2, again agreeing with its licence number.





W.S.P. overprint on McCorquodale form, 1971

W.S.P. has been added above a bar
obliterating the details of the original
manufacturer.



The dimensions of the bar would just
cover a McCorquodale inscription;
maybe they subcontracted some
work to Walsall?

TO OPEN SLIT HERE

SENDER'S NAME AND ADDRESS

Mr. K. Wilson Yomba (New address)
c/o Dr. D. Griffiths
Department of Zoology
Fourah Bay College
Freetown, Sierra Leone
West Africa

AN AIR LETTER SHOULD
NOT CONTAIN ANY ENCLOSURE;
IF IT DOES IT MAY BE SURCHARGED
OR SENT BY ORDINARY MAIL

McCorquodale Printers Limited Wolverton
Form approved by Post Office (United Kingdom) No. 2

SECOND FOLD HERE

BY AIR MAIL
AIR LETTER
PAR AVION AEROGARME



Dr. Jack Shaffer
California State University
Humboldt
Acrata, Calif. 95521
U. S. A

McCorquodale, 1973, Licence No.2

There were further printings of the McCorquodale form, this one using a darker shade of blue than the 1971 example and a slightly different layout.

McCorquodale Printers Limited Wolverton
Form approved by Post Office (United Kingdom) No. 2

McCorquodale & Co. Ltd., Wolverton
Form approved by Post Office (United Kingdom) No. 2

FIRST FOLD HERE

SENDER'S NAME AND ADDRESS

AN AIR LETTER SHOULD
NOT CONTAIN ANY ENCLOSURE;
IF IT DOES IT MAY BE SURCHARGED
OR SENT BY ORDINARY MAIL

McCorquodale Printers Limited, Wolverton

SECOND FOLD HERE

BY AIR MAIL
AIR LETTER
PAR AVION AEROGamme

TO OPEN SLIT HERE

McCorquodale, ca.1989,
no licence number

McCorquodale Printers Limited, Wolverton

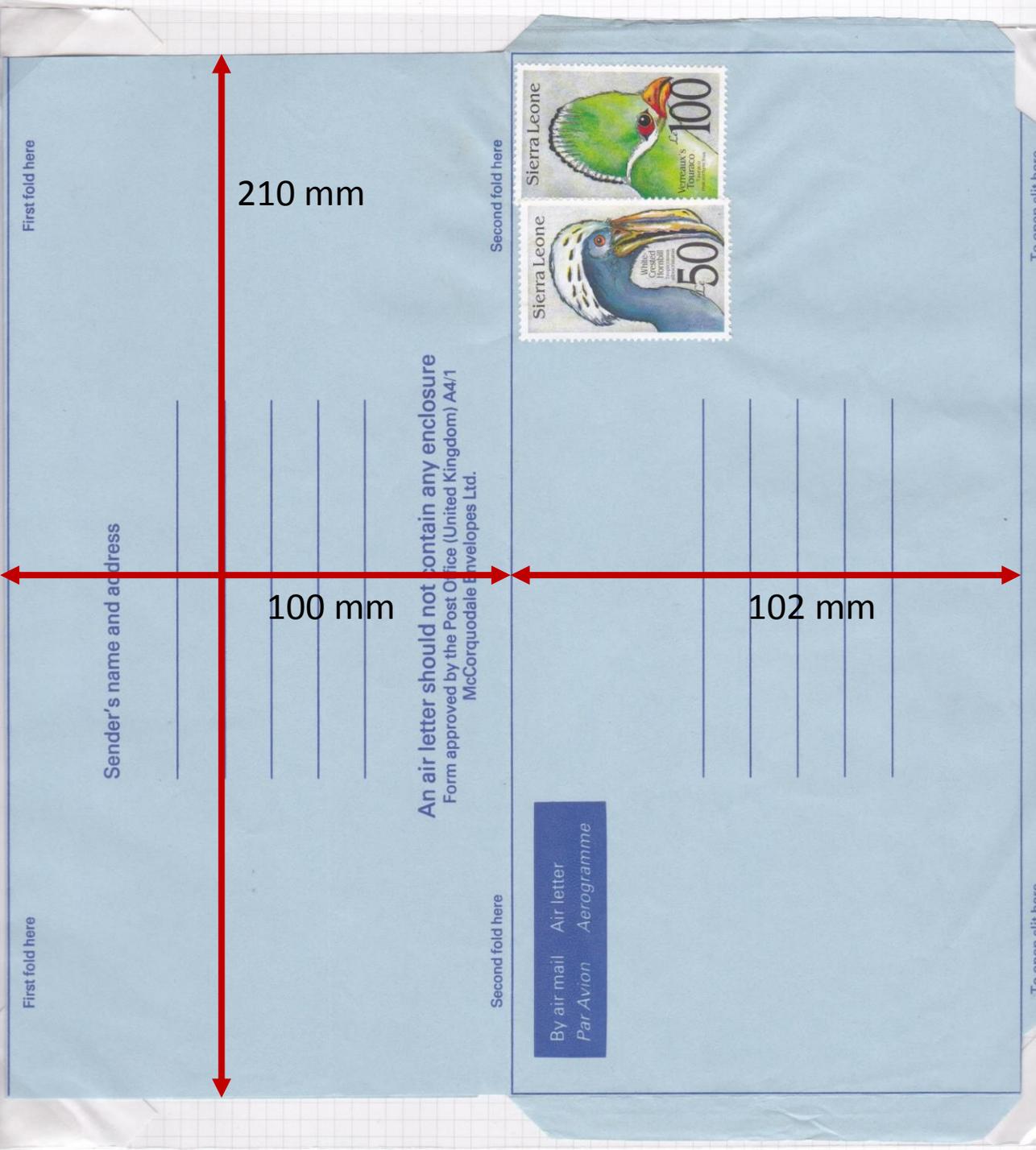
A further format change

Around 1990 there was a further change in format.

The form was still third-folding with three flaps, but the unfolded sheet size was now A4 (210 x 297mm).

Peter comments that the files relating to this change were not available in the archives at the time he conducted his researches.

Now that the GPO no longer produces aerogrammes (note, unused decimal forms are still valid!), perhaps the information will be made available at some point.



McCorquodale third format

Folded into thirds, with each panel 210mm wide. The hidden third panel is 210 x 95mm, hence the form is A4 size (210 x 297mm) when opened out, excluding the three flaps.



McCorquodale third format

Purchased at Makeni Post Office
in 1992, presumably with the
stamps pre-affixed.

An air letter should not contain any enclosure
Form approved by the Post Office (United Kingdom) A4/1
McCorquodale Envelopes Ltd.

The A4 in this licence number might refer to the size of
the unfolded form, but the 1978 Dickinson A4/2 form
was not A4 size (slide 13). Perhaps the licence list was
revised in anticipation of the change, as was seen with
some of the 1969-71 first format forms? (PQ note)

Conclusions

Although these presentations refer specifically to material used in Sierra Leone, the format changes of the air letters are also relevant to other territories and possibly also to the UK, as all the licence holders are British companies.

Research remains to be done on the third format change ca.1990.

I hope you will agree that Peter's material thoroughly deserves to be viewed!

Thank you for your attention!

Comments or questions most welcome.