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IN THIS ISSUE

Meters on Private Wrappers

Hutt River Province

Coffs Harbour Jetty

The 1870's forgeries: The End of a Myth (III): Part IV

The Large Oval Parcels Cancellations – Part 2

Palestine Pictorials Part - 5

Hand-Held Date-Stamp Notes

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Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| Editorial | 3 |
| From the President | 4 |
| Meters on Private Wrappers <i>Dr John K. Courtis FRPSL</i> | 5 |
| Peeps at the Empire | 10 |
| Hutt River Province <i>Brian Fuller</i> | 11 |
| Coffs Harbour Jetty <i>John Young</i> | 13 |
| Hutchinson Bros. Ltd. <i>Tony Lyon</i> | 14 |
| Abbotsford, Victoria <i>John Young</i> | 15 |
| The 1870's forgeries: The End of a Myth (III): Part IV <i>Gerhard Lang-Valchs</i> | 16 |
| The Large Oval Parcels Cancellations – Part 2 <i>Brian Fuller</i> | 21 |
| Hawaiian Postcard to Naples, 1902 <i>John Young</i> | 25 |
| Palestine Pictorials Part - 5 <i>Tony Lyon</i> | 26 |
| Back Page <i>John Young</i> | 32 |
| Front Cover: <i>John Young</i> | |
| Hawaiian Postcard to Naples,1902 Story and picture side on page 25 | |

Editorial *Tony Lyon*

Once again, enough material was available to produce this journal on time for your enjoyment. It is thanks to those contributors who continue to support and have sent interesting articles and short items for which the editor is most grateful.

Coming up in the May members' meeting is an opportunity to show work in progress (WIP). You never know if someone may have some helpful hints or advice. At the February meeting Ian Sadler gave a display of Rajasthan stamps and Postal History part of the Princely States in British India.

A princely state (also called native state or Indian state) was a nominally sovereign entity of the British Indian Empire that was not directly governed by the British, but rather by an Indian ruler under a form of indirect rule, subject to a subsidiary alliance and the suzerainty or paramountcy of the British crown. Wikipedia: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Princely_state accessed 25/2/2024.

Did you watch Mr. Bates vs the Post Office? Could be costly! Makes a few watches seem like child's play.

Until next time ciao.

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From the President

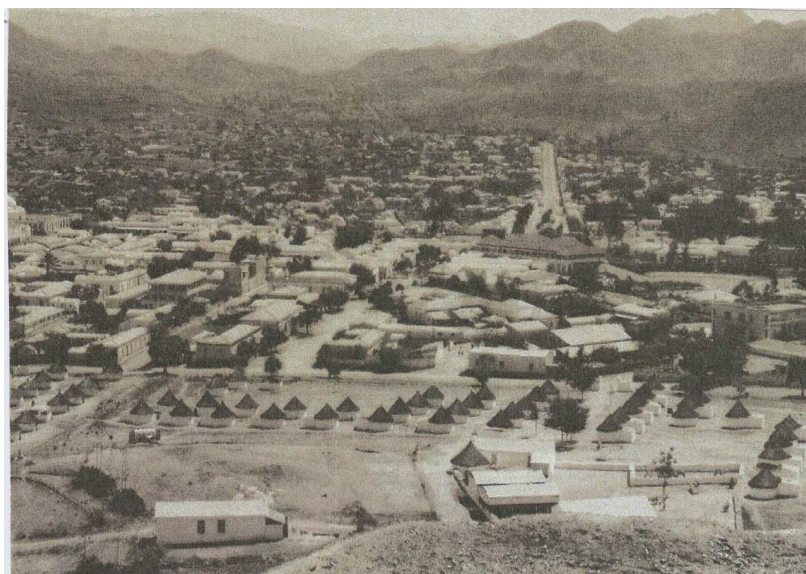
Post card from Eritrea

Eritrea borders the western side of the Red Sea, Sudan and Ethiopia. It was one of Italy's colonising enterprises, becoming part of the Italian empire in 1893. It remained in the empire until 1942 when British armed forces ended Italian occupation. British military occupation ended with military administration in 1948, until Eritrea was incorporated into Ethiopia in 1952. Within about nine years the Eritrean people began agitation for separation from Ethiopia, which was achieved on 24 May 1993.

Later in 1993 an Australian traveller sent back a post card from Eritrea. He had visited Catholic Vincentian fathers in the capital, Asmara, and remarked on the beautiful Italian structures in Eritrea. The card's picture was of the town of Karen, 40 km northwest of Asmara. The picture had been taken by a British photographer in 1949.



The franking on the post card was 3 Birr 70 cents. The 3 Birr stamp [partly obscured] was issued in 1991 for the 30th Anniversary of the agitation for liberation of Eritrea, two years before independence in 1993. Apparently, the stamp, one of five on the liberation theme, is scarce if the catalogue valuation is anything to go by. It is interesting that it predates independence, when presumably a rudimentary Eritrean postal service existed, and the Ethiopian service had possibly been displaced from Eritrea. The card's unusual origin and destination add to its interest.



Picture side Town of Karen

Meters on Private Wrappers

Dr. John K. Courtis FRPSL acapiajic@friends.cityu.edu.hk

Collecting postmarks is a well-developed field with advanced literature and helpful assistance from postmark societies, including the Meter Society. While there are tens of thousands of different postmarks worldwide, only a small percentage of these appear on wrappers. The survival rate of Post Office postal stationery wrappers has been estimated to be in the ratio of 1:25,000. The survival rate of non-Post Office wrappers cannot be estimated. There are no published statistics on the print runs of private wrappers for different organizations. Only some newspapers have a small corpus of overprinted private wrappers. The majority of those in the database are one-of-a-kind for a particular user and therefore they are scarce until proven otherwise.

The late Frank Walton was heard to remark during a Q&A session after a presentation of covers from West Africa that the hardest type of cover to find was one cancelled with meters, "There just aren't any." That comment piqued my interest to see just what has appeared on the popularist internet platforms over the past 16 years, limiting the search to private wrappers. The sample analysed was 10,300 private (i.e., non-Post Office) wrappers, the images hand-collected daily from internet listings since 2006. Of these, 227 were identified with *readable* meter cancels, and these were spread across 41 countries. Because of the limited scope of the analysis, results are indicative only of what are extant. Nevertheless, it does provide insights into the distribution of metered wrappers and alerts the collector as to what countries appear to be elusive. The Table summarises the countries with meters from this sub-sample and the number of metered wrappers attributable to each. Poorly inked meters were excluded, as were identical meters appearing on the wrappers of the same user. Even so, inking of meters for some countries in the sample were disappointingly too light. The figures in the Table are not absolute amounts of what is extant because the sample is limited to private wrappers and does not examine meters on other covers.

Countries with Metered Cancellations on Private Postal Wrappers

| Country | No. | Country | No. | Country | No. |
|-------------------|-----|--------------------|-----|---------------------|------------|
| Argentina | 2 | Great Britain | 24 | New Zealand | 1 |
| Australia | 1 | Germany | 89 | Norway | 4 |
| Austria | 6 | Gold Coast | 1 | Palestine | 1 |
| Bangladesh | 1 | Hong Kong | 4 | Poland | 1 |
| Belgian Congo | 2 | India | 13 | Romania | 2 |
| Belgium | 3 | Indonesia | 1 | Russia | 2 |
| Bohemia & Moravia | 1 | Ireland | 3 | Solomon Islands | 1 |
| Burma | 2 | Israel | 2 | Spain | 1 |
| Ceylon | 2 | Italy | 8 | Straits Settlements | 1 |
| Czechoslovakia | 4 | Jamaica | 1 | Switzerland | 2 |
| Denmark | 3 | Malaya | 2 | United Nations | 1 |
| Egypt | 3 | Malta | 1 | USA | 1 |
| Finland | 1 | Netherlands Indies | 14 | Vatican | 3 |
| France | 5 | Netherlands | 8 | | 227 |

Of these 227 metered private wrappers, Germany, and Great Britain account for 113 or exactly half. Of the 41 countries included in the list, 16 had only one metered wrapper, another nine had two and five had three. These 30 countries account for 73% of the total countries, and overwhelmingly support Frank's comment, at least with respect to this class of mail. Separate papers could be written on Germany and Great Britain. The exposition here has focused mainly on countries with only one or two examples in the database as a toe-wetting exercise to the topic. That there are only small numbers of examples for these countries may imply scarcity, but caution is warranted without a knowledge of meter usage on other types of covers. Illustrations have been cropped to best show the metered section. A few countries were omitted because

the resolution of the meter was too inferior (e.g., Indonesia, New Zealand, Solomon Islands, USA). Pairing in the figures is alphabetically based.

Countries/Postal Entity: Single Meter

It is important to remember that this analysis of meters is restricted to those that have appeared on non-Post Office wrappers and were listed on the internet in the past 16 years. A study of meters would include other classes of mail and inevitably have a wider pool of meters for each of the countries illustrated in these sections. A collector of meter postmarks would have knowledge about this, but from this limited source, there is some indication of relative scarcity. If only one metered wrapper has appeared during the data-collection period, there should be some relationship between quantity and scarcity, or at least elusiveness. The other matter is that a comparison of the meters from different countries reveals their diversity. It is not difficult to understand why postmark collectors are eager to venture down this rabbit warren.

The pairing is a matter of exposition convenience and not to reflect any similarity in meters. That only one metered private wrapper appears in the database for some countries was a surprise and warranted a second scrutiny of the database to confirm singularity. Figures 1 -6 illustrate 12 meters from 12 countries. Thematic collectors can also benefit from a close inspection of the indicia.



Figure 1 – Australia, flag, 16 April 1864; Bangladesh, Bengali Sanskrit, 4.11.58



Figure 2 – Bohemia & Moravia, “Der Neue Tag”, 9.10.40; Finland, Seura, 11.5.45



Figure 3 – Gold Coast, University College, 8 XII 54; Jamaica, crown, 26 I 73

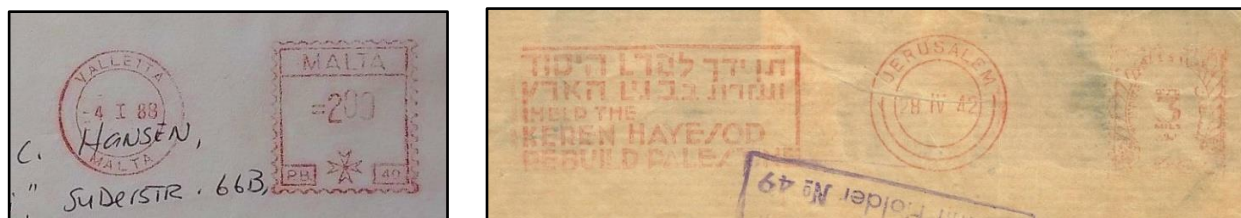


Figure 4 – Malta, Maltese cross, 4 I 88; Palestine, Hebrew, 28 IV 42



Figure 5 – Poland, open-winged eagle, 15 11 37; Spain, Semana, 7 IX 72

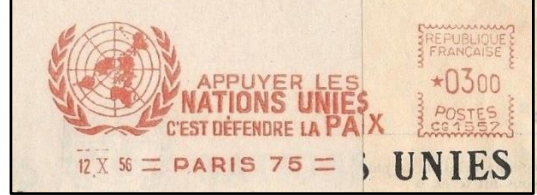


Figure 6 – Straits Settlements, slogan, 7 VI 36; United Nations, world & laurels, 12 X 56

Countries: Two Meters

Whether one or two meters are extant is immaterial, meters on private wrappers of these eight countries are uncommon, elusive, and perhaps even scarce. Figures 7- 10 illustrate the meters of another set of countries. Of the two choices, the meter was selected with the better resolution.



Figure 7 – Argentina, Revista Sud-Americana, 28 IX 27; Belgian Congo, Impakivu, 30.8.53



Figure 8 – Burma, The Burma Times, 29 IX 38; Ceylon, Times of Ceylon, 18 VI 42



Figure 9 – Israel, Hebrew, 22 III 68; Singapore, The Singapore Chamber of Commerce, 5 II [18]89



Figure 10 – Romania, sport, 25 VII 32; Russia, "ПРАВДА" 5.7.52

Countries: Three Meters

Three meters provides more choice in selection of which is the most readable but does not imply that the meters of these four countries shown in Figure 11 are “common”.



Figure 11 – Belgium, Le Soir, 25 IX 67; Denmark, Mental Health slogan, 20 5.59; Egypt, Arabic, 2 V 52; Ireland, unique indicium, 19 I 73

There are some countries with enough examples of meters to allow comparison in their indicia.

India & Netherland Indies

India has 13 examples of meters in the database and Netherland Indies has 14. Two from each country were selected for illustration in Figure 12.



Figure 12a – India: Times of India, 28 VI 42; News from Israel, 14 7 49



Figure 12b – Netherland Indies: De School, 12 10 35, Gimborn's Titanol, 16 10 35

Great Britain

Of the 24 examples of Great Britain, four were selected for illustration in Figure 13.



Figure 13a – Coronation Year 1937, Tamplin's Coronation Ale, 18 V 37; Marks & Clerk 3 XII 32



Figure 13b – Savoy Stamps Albums, 27 IX 40; First Voyage Queen Mary 26 V 36

Germany

The country with the largest number of meters on private wrappers is Germany with 89 examples. Six have been selected for illustration in Figure 14. A surprisingly large number of meters are under-inked or lightly inked. How to analyse some German cancellations can be found in Geurts (2022).



Figure 14b – Franke & Co., eagle wings unfolded, 3 7 40, Drupa (Inter'l Fair Print & Paper) 1954, 4 8 53



Figure 14b – Fraktur: Lesen sie (Read more), 11 11 36; swastika, 7 12 35



Figure 14c – Richard Boren (private indicium), 13 4 51; Veb Stickstoffwerk Piesteritz, 1954

Summary

A comment by the late Frank Walton indicated the degree of difficulty in finding metered mail for West Africa for the period of his study. The study reported here is narrow in scope as it examines only meters on worldwide private wrappers. An examination of 10,300 images of these non-Post Office wrappers identified 227 with readable meters across 41 countries. Of these, 16 had only one example of a metered wrapper in the database, another nine had two and five had three. These 30 countries account for 73% of the total countries and are prima facie evidence of their elusiveness, even scarcity. Many of these wrappers are one-of-a-kind and the meters, while not unique to specific wrappers, may be uncommon, especially for a specific period. Great Britain and Germany account for half of all extant meters on private wrappers.

A selection of 38 meters have been illustrated for 28 countries as indicative of what postmark collectors can find on these wrappers. Notations in the captions add potential thematic interest. One matter that should be kept in mind is that while there are 41 countries listed in the Table, according to the United Nations website, there are 197 independent states in the world today, including 193 fully recognized members of the United Nations. Private wrappers are not confined to countries that issued Post Office

postal stationery wrappers. There is no evidence of meters on private wrappers for 156 countries, so there is opportunity for research and an interesting chase for wrapper-cum-postal meter collectors.

References/Additional Reading

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Acknowledgement

Allan Gory read and commented on an earlier draft.

Peeps at the Empire

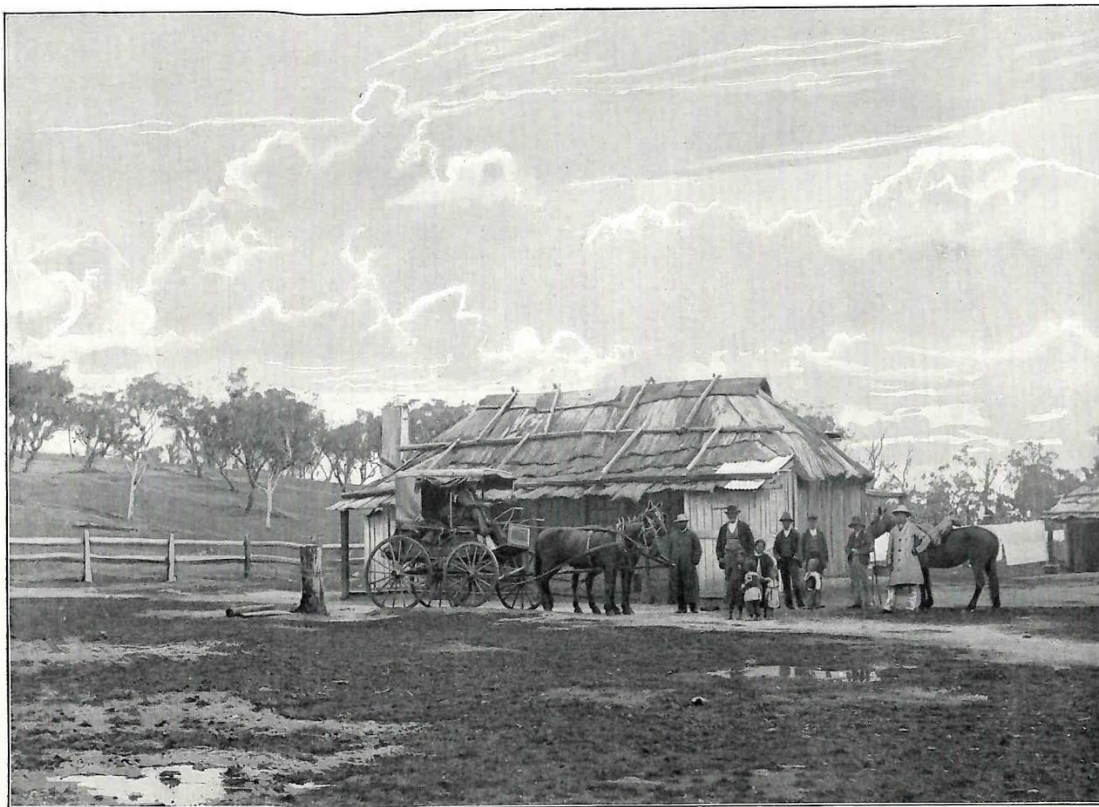


Photo : Henry King, Sydney.

HER MAJESTY'S MAILS IN NEW SOUTH WALES.

New South Wales is enterprising and it is prosperous, it is also very big; and though immense sums have been spent in railway construction in the country, there are still vast territories which must be traversed on horseback or in carriages. We see here the Mail Coach changing horses at a wayside station. Neither the vehicle nor the team is quite up to the standard of the spanking mail coaches with their four horses and their red-coated guards which spun along the English roads at the beginning of the century. But doubtless splendour will follow efficiency, and by the time the post-house has become a large hotel, as it very likely will in a couple of years, the style of the turn-out will also have improved.

Hutt River Province

By Brian Fuller

This document is not to be a treatise on Hutt River (HR) that was in WA. I say "was" as it disbanded on 3AUG20 after many issues. Some I suspect were ill health/death related and others with the Covid scare diminishing visitor numbers.

Princess Shirley, Prince Leonard's wife passed away on 7JUL13 and the prince himself (Leonard Casley), joined her on 30FEB19. The property was sold off and everything "obliterated".

Richard Breckon (RB) advised a person in Germany has apparently produced a catalogue of HR stamps and tally to 300.

The stamps were produced in two sequences the first seemingly under the direct control of the prince, and the second tranche by Hutt River Province Stamp Sales, PO Box 419, BURLEIGH HEADS QLD 4220. The alleged gap is 1990 – 92. I have covers with in-between dates. The catalogue may clarify this apparent anomaly.

I ceased collecting HR circa 1990 but was aware of the QLD source. Out of curiosity I enquired but the availability, and especially the price and quality soured my interest.

As the material was readily available at the local stamp auctions, I amassed a quantity having realised that differences existed in the cancellations, papers used, and associated documentation etc.

The collection has sat unattended for many years but at the Royal Philatelic Society of Victoria (RPSV) recently Richard Breckon gave a potted postal history of HR and with it the unenviable record of no accompanying display.

Richard being an eminent philatelist does not collect HR, so it says reams about my collections such as specializing in machine cancels, mail centres, weird philately, and micronations within Australia.

My collection has sufficient material to split the HR material into stamps, postal stationery, and postal history. Now that HR is defunct collecting the province in its entirety is probably infeasible. A major auction house in Melbourne had an extensive collection of HR from WA withdrawn, probably when it was part described, "as a hoot". Very sad as I was seeking to purchase it.

Covers with Canadian stamps

I wrote to Prince Leonard many years ago to ascertain whether my detective work on the postal history was correct. He wrote back and corrected many aspects as best he could recall. The whole shebang at HR must have occupied an immense amount of his time even though he was assisted by many of his family in key business posts.

The item of specific interest is the period mail was sent from Canada to try and circumvent Australia Post (AP) blockade of his using HR stamps, an independent nation, on the front of his envelopes without having to add AP labelled "Australia" stamps. He certainly used COCOS((KEELING)ISLANDS stamps to supplement his own and these were placed on the front of the covers that were despatched via Northampton or Como post offices (PO). I will explain aspects of why Como PO is significant in HR postal history.

On the 24FEB03 when Prince Leonard responded to my: "The covers from 21NOV75 – 3JAN76 all have uncanceled Canada Post stamps on reverse. There is a mixture of postal rates reflecting the large letter rate for AIRMAIL. Presumably these are covers Canada Post rejected albeit from Mar76".

The Sun newspaper 6MAR76 p20 indicated the prince did not know of the Canada Post rejection. Canadian postal officials have advised (WHO not specified) that these mailings also contravened Canadian postal laws. The letters are being returned (BY WHOM?) to Canada.

Prince Leonard responded: "We do not know of any rejection by Canada, a court case in Australia ruled that HR & postal service legal & valid. So, we ceased using Canada." He sent me a copy of the WA court finding.

The court was Commonwealth Court Findings Perth before Mr Rasmussen SM 12FEB80, Charge No 15452 – 61/79. From the published information I suspect he was being fanciful.

From the samples below please draw your own conclusions as to what occurred.

| HR dates | Canada actions | Technique |
|----------|-----------------------------|----------------|
| 21NOV75 | 5DEC75 | MACHINE CANCEL |
| 1DEC75 | 5DEC75 | MACHINE CANCEL |
| 1DEC75 | 5JAN76 | CDS |
| 21NOV75 | 5DEC75 | MACHINE CANCEL |
| 29DEC75 | 7JAN76 | CDS |
| 21NOV75 | UNCANCELLED stamps affixed. | |
| 20DEC75 | UNCANCELLED stamps affixed. | |
| 3JAN76 | UNCANCELLED stamps affixed. | |

With the limited samples I have acquired over the years I found it difficult to decide just what occurred. I suspect he was hoping to have them cancelled in Australia using HR stamps and CDS, then send them overseas in bulk to a friend who put some into the Canadian Post system and were cancelled. Others went to different POs for mailing to avoid large quantities drawing suspicion for Canadian postal officials. Some were processed but other weren't.

Why Canada? Australia is obliged under the UPU to onforward mail from overseas to their destination unimpeded.

None of my dates tally with the events in the newspaper let alone Prince Leonard's response.



Why Como PO?

Most mail was despatched to customers via Northampton PO as it was the closest facility to HR.

I have two covers which were to be sent to Germany by an Australian in QLD. Apparently, they were according to the handstamp intercepted by WA "Postal Services Division Assistant Directors Office 30APR75 Perth WA 6000". In script, "Inadmissible for overseas postal transmission".

How did AP know that mail was going to be there? Are there other covers? Why was the mail sent via WA (Como PO) from QLD? Was the sender at HR not QLD? One cover has a typed address the other in script.

The story, possibly from Richard B, that it was done at the Como PO and the staff threatened revolution if they did not leave. The officials beat a hasty retreat. I am unsure if there are other postal dates or markings.

Other Postal History aspects

A myriad of postmarkers, machine cancels and for POLAR PHILATELISTS flight over the AAT.

Summary

Prince Leonard is to be admired for his stance against bureaucracy and the establishing of a micronation that lasted 50+ years from 21APR70 – 3AUG20.

I suspect he was one of the first to establish a micronation in Australia and many have since replicated his declaration. A few have issued “stamps” but none survived for an extended period. There are now three Aboriginal micronations and at least one other, Atlantium - based in Sydney.

Micronations are a worthy challenge to the postal historian!

Coffs Harbour Jetty

John Young

The town of Coffs Harbour, NSW, is about 2.5 km inland from Coffs Harbour beach where the jetty and yacht club reach out seawards. The railway line runs close to the beach and the jetty had a spur line from the 'Coffs Harbour Jetty' railway station. A short way from the railway station there is a small shopping centre, where the post office was found. It continues as a licensed post office.

Coffs Harbour is a popular tourist spot, and many post cards have featured the Big Banana attraction. In contrast to the usual style of post card, Murray Views published a cut-away, double-size post card in the 1970s. One of them is shown here, sent by air mail [35 cents, zone 1 rate] to England [zone 5] in 1980. It is date stamped Coffs Harbour Jetty on 1 October 1980. Mrs Williams wrote to daughter Mandy, c/o Bush House, London, saying she had raced up to the hills and bought 28 avocados.



Hutchinson Bros. Ltd.

Tony Lyon

Hutchinson Bros. Ltd., during World War II packed and forwarded items to service men and women serving in the armed services. In each parcel was packed a post card which they requested the recipient returned to their PO Box in Auckland.

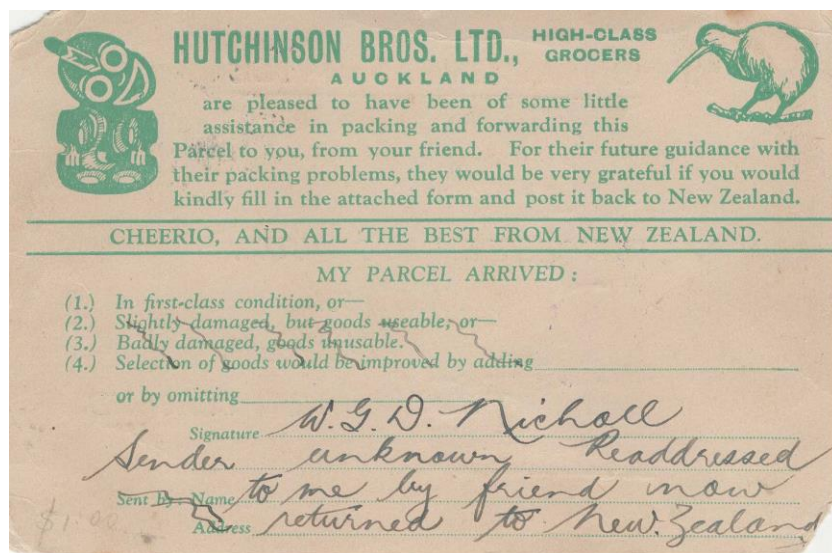
Hutchinson Bros Limited was registered on 18 Dec 1906. It is still in business today.



OAS post card posted through MPO KW 5 3 AP 1945 located at Forli, Italy 27.11.45 – 8.3.45.

A crown over shield censor 6205 has been signed by 2 Lieutenant Albert Thomas Gilmour Ross 223979.

6205 was used by 26th Battalion.



Corporal William George Duncan Nicholl 090611 has responded confirming the goods have arrived in 1st class condition.

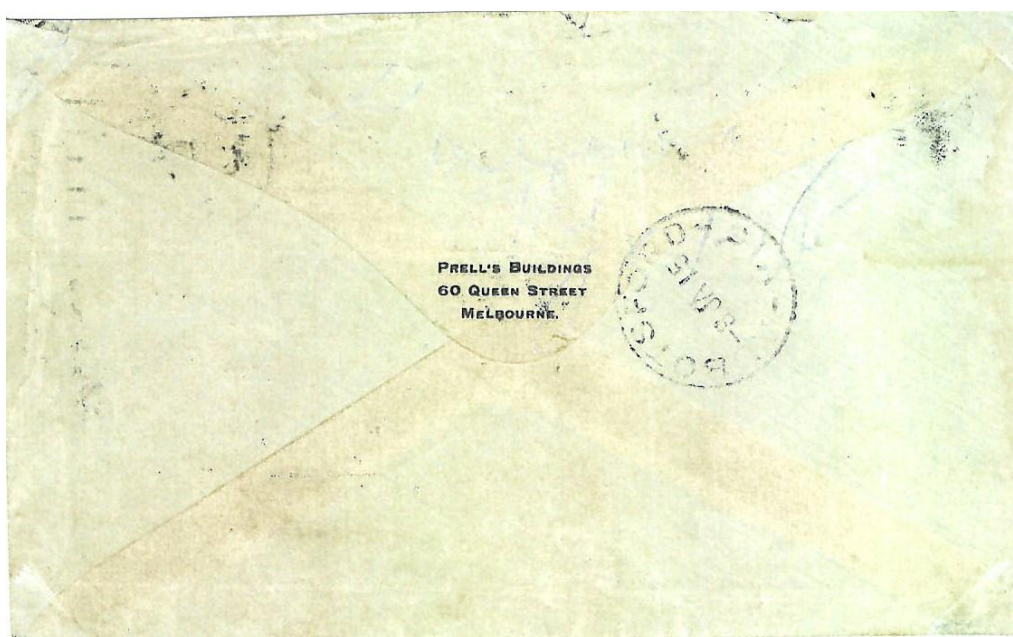
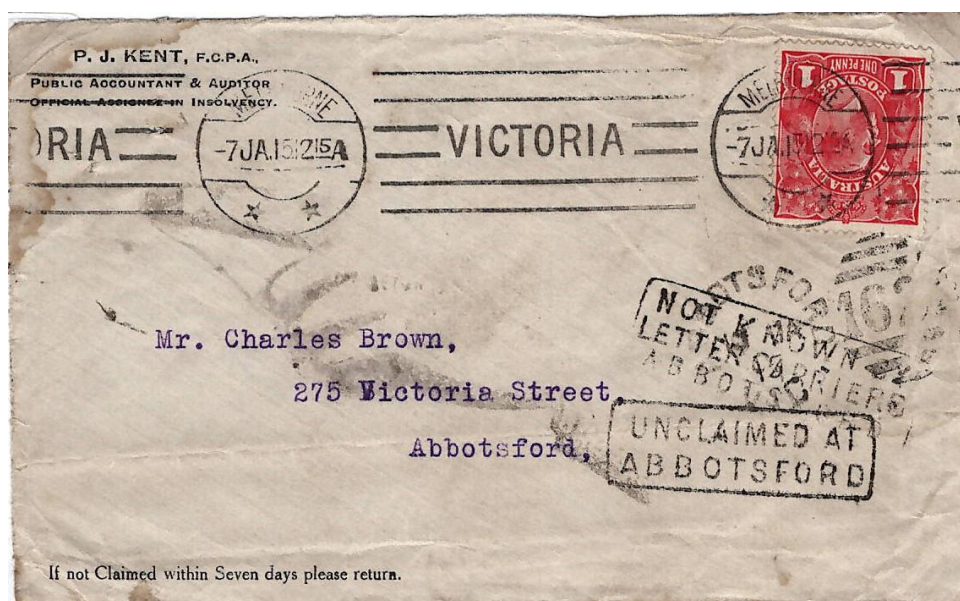
Abbotsford, Victoria

John Young

This cover was mailed by P J Kent, accountant, and auditor, 60 Queen Street, Melbourne to an address in Abbotsford. In those days Abbotsford post office was in the Collingwood town hall in Hoddle Street.

The addressee, Mr Charles Brown, could not be found and the cover and its contents were returned to the sender. Quite likely it went into the accountant's archive as proof of process and did not come to light possibly for many years when the archive was culled or discarded.

The cover has plenty of Abbotsford markings. A back stamp dated the day after posting, boxed 'Not Known' and 'Unclaimed' impressions and a duplex Abbotsford 1622 of January 1915, possibly the latest recorded use. Finally, there is a faint return-to-sender finger on the front of the cover.



The 1870's forgeries: The End of a Myth (III): Part 1V

Gerhard Lang-Valchs

Continuing from AJP NO 166 December 2023 pgs. 5-10.

The new products

J. L. Behrmann's implication in the forging and selling of counterfeits had not started in the 1870's, as we have already seen. But with the end of the first timbromania about 1866/67 the production of new fakes had obviously come to a provisional end or at least a decline. The encounter with Prah! in the early 1870's and his disposition to put his artisanal skills at Behrmann's disposal, cooperating in the production (and as well the selling) of new stamp imitations, gave Behrmann the chance to reappear with new force and a renewed offer, determined to reconquer shares on the forgery market.

The dominant position of the Italian product, as far as the British market is concerned, is manifested by the almost exclusive presence of Torres/Usigli-made forgeries among the counterfeits presented during in the first year of the publishing of the Spud Papers. The first steps to change this were still done with Behrmann's old German States forgeries of the "first generation", Lübeck, Brunswick and Hanover, cancelled with his "old obliterations" (see e.g. fig. 34). Their appearance in the Spud Papers (VI, VII, XVII, XXIX, XXXIX) marked the end of the "dominating" position of the Italian product on the British stamp-market and was followed by the first samples of the "second generation", the actual "Spiro"-forgeries (XII, XXXIII, XXXIV, etc.) with their different cancels drawing level in number and finally dominating the last Spud Papers' deliveries.

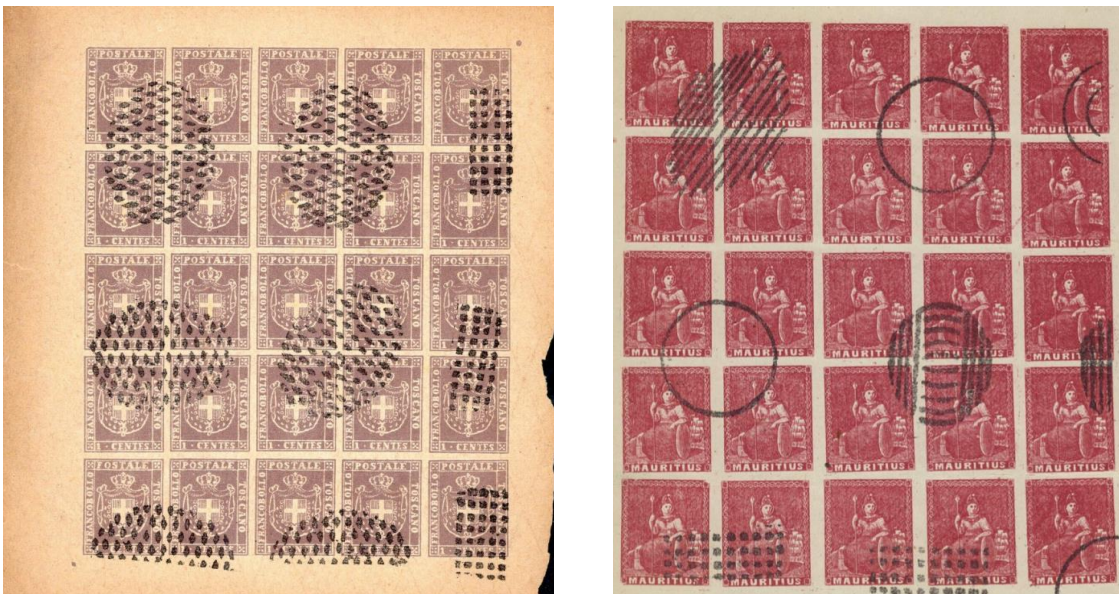


Fig. 86 & 87: Safe "Spiro"-cancels

These Prah!-drawn new imitations were thought to be a low-cost mass-product, sold wholesale at a very low price, before large quantities of the originals were available on the market. The market flooded with counterfeits of the recently issued stamps of countries like Egypt, Fiji, Guatemala, Mexico, Sierra Leone (1872), Iceland (1873) and Dominica or Gold Coast (1874). This new idea of selling those copies in mass below their real market price and even below their denomination value, was still a business.

On a technical level, the imitations were printed on un-watermarked paper of little quality that remained un-gummed. Except for the three previously mentioned cases, where obviously Italian-made forgeries had served to make the copies, no further inscription "errors" are detectable. Contrary to what various Torres/Usigli-forgeries show, there were no tête-beche samples in the sheets and no single values with

strange, deliberately produced impression-errors documented. There is no evidence of bogus values nor bogus-colours, although sometimes items like the early Paraguay-bogus, today considered phantasy-stamps, were copied. As far as I can see, the cancels did not cover more than two samples on the panes. Thus, it is rare to find two parts of the same or of different obliterations on the same stamp. The emblematic “Spiro”-cancellation is, as Atlee repeatedly wrote referring to it, “ours, but without the central characters”, in my opinion, the forger’s tribute to England and the good time he had spent there.

A very short biographical frame with some gaps ...

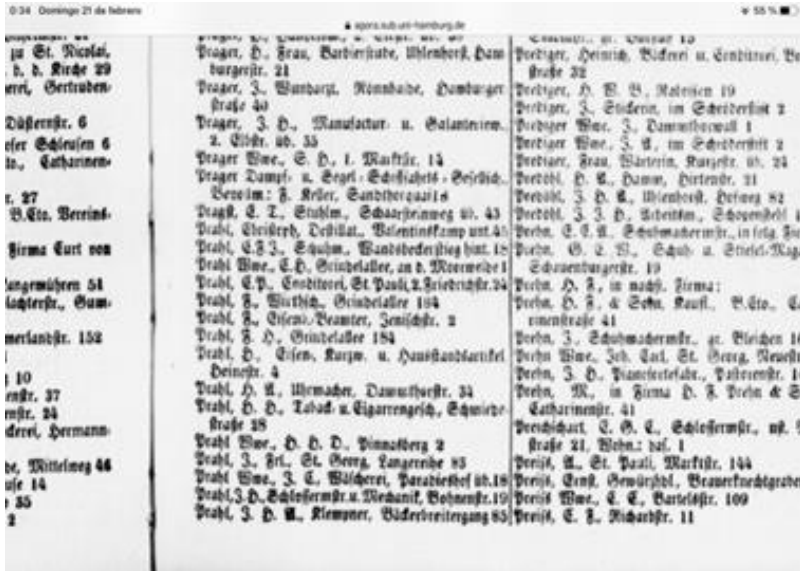


Fig. 88: Hamburg Street directory 1875

Hans Heinrich Prahls was born on December 10th of 1840 at Duvensee, a small village in the county of Lauenburg in Northern Germany, close to Hamburg. In 1872 the professional part of the Hamburg street directory lists him as the holder of a cigar-shop. In 1875/76 he moved to London, where he married in 1879 Lucy Sibley Coulcher, the daughter of a reverend. Prahls was long time working in London as an agent. After the death of his wife, he moved back to Hamburg, where he died on May 17 of 1916.

... to close now.

Let us now, despite some uncertainties and speculations, try to resolve the problem of the “Spiro”-authorship closing the most important remaining gaps. The previously explained beginning of the “Spiro”-era, as well as its end, coincide with Prahls’s time in Hamburg. There are no “Spiro”-cancel on any of the forgeries of the old German States’ issues. The first documented safe “Spiro”-cancels appears in 1872, the last safely documented “Spiro”-forgery is found on copies of 1875 issues.

At the beginning of the 1870's, Prahls set up at Hamburg as a tobacco-shop merchant. As such he had the perfect job for selling stamps as a side-line. The necessary economic base to establish his business had been earned in the British capital, where he must have previously passed some time, seemingly working as well in the field of stamp dealing. At least once a year he returned to the Isles for “professional duties” and he planned and announced his definitive return and establishment in London for May 1873, just when the publicly visible part of the Hull syndicate came down. This relocation was strangely delayed until two years later.

Maybe Prahls established contact with the “father of the Hamburg forgeries”, J.H.L. Behrmann, on his own initiative, maybe it occurred the other way round and the latter contacted him directly or through an agent, maybe both met

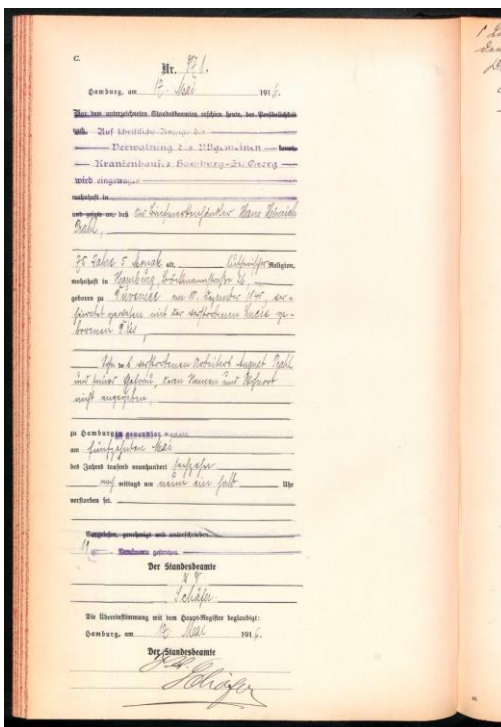


Fig. 89: Prahls’s Death Certificate (1916)

at the local stamp association, the Hamburg Philotelisten-Club, founded in 1871, fortunate for both anyway. So, as an established dealer he must have become aware of the artisanal skills and ambitions of that newcomer, who likely trained in his youth in the 1850's through an apprenticeship as lithographer, because it is extremely difficult and nearly impossible to teach oneself, how to treat lithographic stones.



Fig. 90: Prah involved in Carnivalistic activities of the Hamburg Philotelisten-Club

These activities finished in 1879 when he married the daughter of a reverend. I could not find further proofs for his selling activities. The only later document I could locate dates from 1891, when a London Street directory lists him as a registry officer.⁷³



Fig. 91: Prah-ad from London

That he had been selling stamps is substantiated by the entry in Henry Werninck's 1873 stamp dealers' directory, and his death certificate also refers to him as a stamp merchant.⁶⁹ His advertisements prove that he was more than a common reseller of stamp-imitations. He offered large numbers of stamps in his advertisements. Some of his offers were expressly aimed at dealers.⁷⁰ Once back in England, he continued his facsimile-selling activities from various locations of the British capital. Owitch's stamp dealer directory lists him in 1877/78 with a London address.⁷¹ Although he had left in Hamburg an agent before leaving Germany, he tried to engage further agents and resellers for his stamp imitations.⁷²

Prah's implication in the selling of imitations was notorious. German philatelists point to him as the source of the forgeries sold by the known stamp merchant Georg Sartori.⁷⁴ But despite all this proof of his activities, this evidence is not definitively conclusive for his "conviction" as a forger. It is based on presumptive evidence that only demonstrates that he was one of the Hamburg stamp dealers profusely selling stamp facsimiles. But already anything that could implicate him directly in the forging of those items had been presented. The prosecutor has to add some more substantial proofs.

⁶⁹ Stadtarchiv Stormarn, Personenstandsregister Kreis Stormarn, Sterberegister Nr. 371, 16. Mai 1916.

⁷⁰ ABA, 1873, Nr. 54, [p. 4(?); unnumbered pages].

⁷¹ Alexander Owitch: Universal-Stampdealer-Addressbook [OwitchAddress], Hamburg 1878, p.10.

⁷² ABA; Nr. 128, p. 3. Merkur, Internationaler Briefmarken-Anzeiger, Jg. III, mai 1879, 2. Beilage zum Merkur Nr. 15.

⁷³ Kelly's Post Office London Directory, 1891, p. 1268.

⁷⁴ VM, Nr. 1, S. 11.

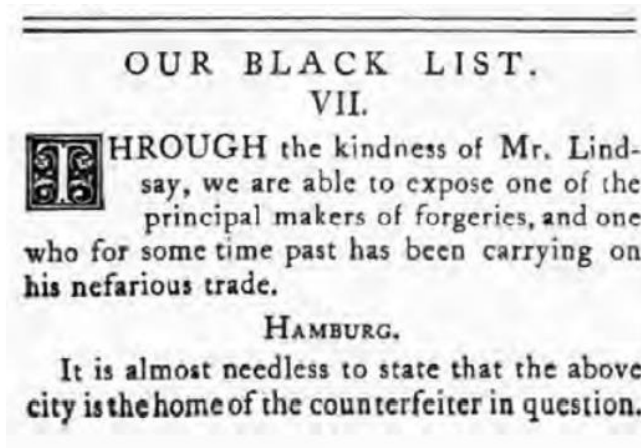


Fig. 92 & 93: Atlee reporting on Prah’s activities

This is, certainly, easier to achieve than the reader may understand because Prah made no secret of his activities. He not only offered facsimiles, but he also offered his services pointing out that he was able to copy and print any wanted stamp imitation within two weeks. It is frequently reported that he offered his services for delivering quickly and efficiently facsimiles of whatsoever stamp. These offers did not appear in any magazine, they were made in the context of privately sent pricelists and wholesale offers directly sent to potential resellers.

The most convincing definitive evidence are those lists, although at this moment, none of the corresponding documents has been found and possibly no longer exist. But despite the difficulties or the impossibility to present the corresponding documents, we have tendered two witnesses, a German and a British source, that confirm with without doubt, that they had existed. The latter source is Atlee, who documented in his OUR BLACK LIST-section of the Philatetical Journal reproducing the details of Prah’s offers (figs. 92 & 93).⁷⁵

The networks



Fig. 94: letter to Bonasi at Milan

Which fact is a deplorable one, for the presence of a few swindlers has given a bad name to the place, to the serious detriment of the respectable dealers, of whom there are many.

The gentleman to whose doings we wish to call attention is

H. PRAHL, Schmiedestrasse.

This person sends out a long list of imitations that he is able to supply at 16s. the thousand “in four hundred varieties.” As may be supposed from the quantity, almost every county has a representative, from the V.R. of Great Britain, to the lately issued Japans.

Mr. Prah sends specimens of his handiwork, amongst which are very good counterfeits of the early Saxony, and Papal 1 scudo. The coolest thing about the man is his promise to supply any fac-simile to order, upon fourteen days notice.

With these facts concerning H. Prah, we leave him to meet with his desert.

How much had the network of the stamp forgery-trade in Europe changed since the mid 1860’s? The main competitors were still on the scene. Some minor forgers had established their business as well. It was probably the new “aggressive” direct marketing strategy of Usigli’s sales manager, which gave a new stimulus to the beginning of the second wave of the timbromania. C. G. Bonasi made frequent trips through Central Europe, from France to Austria, and offered, changed and/or sold the Florence-made forgeries in all towns where known and important stamp-dealers were trading. In the British Isles, Calvert managed the business.

⁷⁵ VM, Nr. 3, S. 44; PhJ, Aug. 1872, OUR BLACK LIST VII, p.140.



Fig. 95: Bonasi-catalogue

The main change occurred in the middle of the decade when the cooperation between Torres and Usigli ended. The Italian-made forgeries continued on the market, but no new items were produced, and the direct marketing of the fakes had no new products to offer. Usigli tried with reprints of the Roman State's issue, a stamp magazine, certainly of short life, and two new editions of his 1872 catalogue.⁷⁶ The actual presence on the market was, however, decreasing. One of the last but finally failed attempts to stop the decline of the sales was the establishment of the European Stamp Union, an association of stamp dealers of different countries to promote the business. Towards 1880, Bonasi's Paris branch, obviously a letter box address, closed and, after his separation from his senior partner Usigli, Bonasi got established at Milan and later at Rome (fig. 94/95).⁷⁷

Something similar occurred with the Hamburg-forgeries when Prah! left Germany in 1875. No further safely identified "Spiro" forgeries on entire sheets or single stamps issued after this date have been documented.

Neither the Torres/Usigli-forgeries nor the Hamburg-made product disappeared from the market. Following the generally accepted published

opinion, François Fournier offered and sold many of these stamps and Spiro-sheets are being offered currently on internet selling-platforms or stamp auctions. Various quoted studies about those items, including a number still unpublished, contradict this belief and point to one or other unknown forgers in most of the studied cases.

It would defy the rules of probability that none of the other European countries had not produced other forgers. It is probable that a country like Spain would have had its own forger of philatelic stamps.⁷⁸ Between 1850 and 1870 the Spanish Postal Administration issued yearly a new series in order to cope with about one hundred discovered and described postal stamp forgeries in the second half of the century. Little is known of those forgers and their activities. They are, however, not really relevant in relation to our problem.

Final considerations

Through the last paragraphs I have presented a lot of evidence and facts, that, on one hand, question directly or indirectly some of our believed, but not necessarily certainties about the "Spiro"-forgeries. On the other hand, I was unable to find and put together all the pieces of the "forgery-jigsaw" and to present a conclusive and incontrovertible view, at least as far as the "Spiros" are concerned. As already admitted, there remain some more or less speculative elements in the suggested composition of our puzzle.

I hope, this study will receive helpful criticism. I expect as well, they will not be mere detractions and rejections of some of my arguments, but founded upon constructive objections, that, suggest a different interpretation of the explained facts and, hopefully, contribute forgotten, overseen or never documented details or even present new findings that help to elucidate what exactly happened in that field in those years.

⁷⁶ GLV: TorresBio, chap. 9.

⁷⁷ OwitchAddress, p.8.

⁷⁸ E. Soro, F. Graus: *Postal Forgeries of Spain*, Barcelona 1977.

The Large Oval Parcels Cancellations – Part 2

By Brian Fuller

Part 1 was published AJP 166 December 2023.

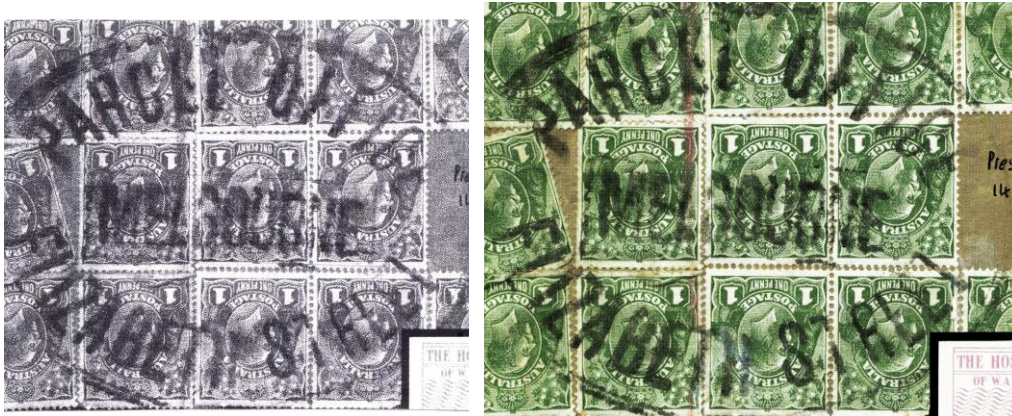
10 ☺PARCEL ☺ OFFICE ☺/BOXED MELBOURNE/ELIZABETH STREET (SRO)

Size of the order 97 x 75mm and the print 10mm and M...E 8mm. The box is 55 x 17mm. I cannot satisfactorily explain the "blobs". At least four sub types. Three sub types have seraphs but one does not.



11 PARCEL OFFICE/BOXED MELBOURNE/ELIZABETH STREET (DRO).

Approximately 105 x 85mm in size and the non-seraph print 13 with M...E 12mm. The box is 55 x 18mm. The box on the sample shown is there but faint. Appears to be three sub types.



12 PARCEL OFFICE/BOXED MELBOURNE/ELIZABETH STREET (DRO).

Approximate size 93 x 67mm and the box about 54 x 19mm. Three sub types. Print varies according to sub type. None have seraphs.



13 PARCEL(?)OFFICE/MELBOURNE/ELIZABETH STREET (?) (SRO)

This is the two remaining pieces that do NOT fit anywhere else. I concluded it must be a new type. Note the position of the E in OFFICE relative to the E in MELBOURNE. Completely different to all others. The stamps are all 1929+ usage.



14 PARCEL ☺ OFFICE & PARCEL OFFICE/MELBOURNE/ELIZABETH ST (DRO).

Very distinctive blob on one of two sub types. Also, the STREET is now ST. the size is of the order 90 x 65 for non-blob and 97 x 68 for the "blob". Non serified lettering.



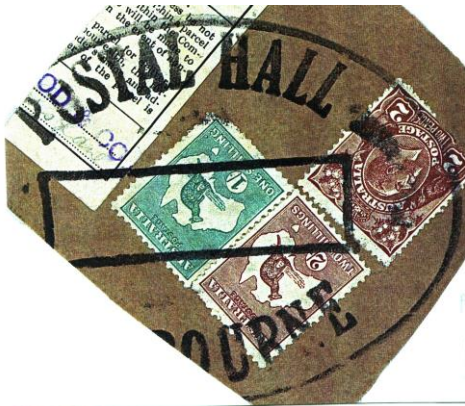
15 ELIZABETH STREET/MELBOURNE (SRO)

The format has dramatically changed. There does not appear to be a data box in the centre. I have at least two sub types. On the second sub type the "bounce" or double strike is extreme and highlights the difference between each strike. If the block was separated horizontally, it would be classed as a third sub type. Size is of the order 100 x 78mm and with different size serified print on each sub type.



16 POSTAL HALL (SRO)

Size 99 x 74mm and whilst looking similar the gap between P...L and HALL varies. 3.5mm, 4.5mm and 6mm. creating three sub types. Considering the location, one would expect lots of whole samples but not yet seen. The box varies but of the order 57 x 17mm.



17 RUSSELL STREET/BLANK/VICTORIA (SRO)

There appears to be four sub types as expected from a very busy post office. Only one sub type has bold print the remainder seraphs. The sizes of the components vary markedly as expected with its long period of usage. The lettering is generally large, and the boxes range from 55 x 16 to 70 x 20mm. On one sub type it could have very worn text within the box or the box itself is very worn and it is forming contact "blobs". The VICTORIA spreads from in line with the ends of the box to that shown. No full strikes seen.



18 PARCEL POST/BLANK/PRAHRAN (DRO).

Prahran was also a busy office and there are two sub types. Their size is of the order 90 x 62mm. The lettering is 8mm. I suspect the first postmarker was issued circa 1915 showed signs of slight wear circa 1920. Was worn out 1932 and replaced circa 1938. Again, no full strikes seen.



19 PARCEL POST(?) / VICTORIA / COLLINGWOOD (SRO)

There are three sub types known from part strikes. The top lettering is guesswork! The lettering height ranges from 10mm to 6mm. The overall size is about 95 x 74mm and the box about 55 x 18. The third and smaller lettering sub type appears to be interestingly made. The COLLINGWOOD comprises vertical lettering gradually decreasing stepping with each letter and not following the rim outline.



20 CENTRAL or RAIL (?) PARCEL OFFICE / CENTRAL SQUARE / NEW SOUTH WALES (SRO)



This item has an interesting history. As no-one responded to help when I wrote to SYDNEY VIEWS I sought help from the NSW Railways Historical Society Railway. Their Digest Editor led me to the website: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Railway_Square,_Sydney and it advised that Railway Square was thus: Railway Square was originally known as Central Square. In the 19th century and early 20th century, Central Square was the heart of the city's modern retail district, enhanced by the presence of Central railway station and its adjacent hotels, erected to serve country visitors arriving in Sydney by train was the electric train station site."

Thus, I could deduce that it was RAIL(?) PARCEL OFFICE for the top line.
CENTRAL SQUARE for the inner line, and NEW SOUTH WALES for the bottom line.

Does anyone know where Central Square PO was located? Lee St Parcel Section Office was constructed in 1913 and the CPO occurred in 1NOV1933. On 1OCT65 the CPO became RAILWAY SQUARE (D Wood). Have members seen anything like it please or have a better guess at the letters? If it is as I suspect, it is a very rare large oval postmark from NSW as none are supposed to exist.

CONCLUSION

If collectors could assist me, please with large blocks of their large oval parcel postmarks I would be very appreciative. Thank you to those who have already contributed.

If any person can provide detail on Dudley St Melbourne operations it would add immensely to the pool of knowledge.

I would appreciate further information on the NSW large oval postmark Type 20.

If any person is aware of impending sale of the postmarks, I would appreciate the details so I can get appropriate scans. I do not regard myself as your competitor!

The large postmarks were removed once the hand parcel rollers were introduced. David Wood (Phoenix fame) has a detailed record of the Victorian ones and I have the other States records. One day David and I will meld our Victorian records. If you possess hand parcel rollers, please advise.

I trust this summary of major types fulfills your need for a catalogue or target to collect! Please advise if there are major errors!

Hawaiian Postcard to Naples, 1902

John Young

The post card shown here was published by the Island Curio Store in Honolulu and depicts a government building in the Hawaiian Islands. It is designated as a private mailing card, authorized by an Act of Congress in May 1898, three months before the islands were annexed by the United States.

The card was mailed on 20 October 1902 from Adelaide, Australia, correctly franked 1 1/2 pence, addressed to Miss B Smith, SS Barbarossa, Naples, Italy. The card then pursued the addressee around the globe: Naples, SS Barbarossa [9 Dec], Sydney and finally to Clifton Hill, Melbourne. Presumably the card reached Miss Smith, rendering unnecessary the sender's message: Now if you don't get this let me know so that I can send you another.

See front cover for other side.



Picture side

Palestine Pictorials Part - 5

Tony Lyon

Continuing from AJP No 166 December 2023.

Foreign Rate

A new foreign rate applied at the period (1.6.32 – 30.6.40) at a rate of 15mm – 20gms then 9mm per 20gms. This increase was due to depreciation of sterling.

Foreign Surface Rate - USA

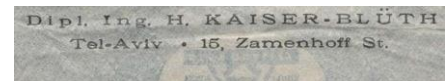


This cover is a puzzle. It is franked 15mm which was the surface rate but is an airmail envelope.

A jasqu'ā cachet has been applied but no indication that it was insufficient for air transmission.

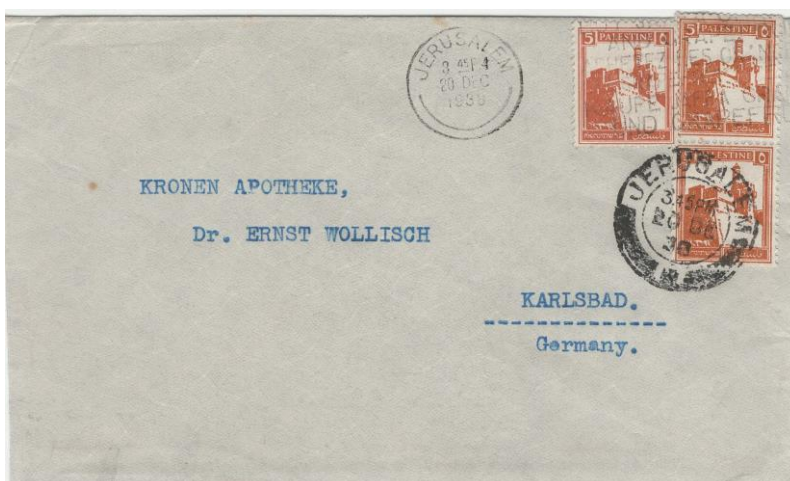
Is this what the jasqu'ā is indicating?

Sent from Tel Aviv 30 DE 38 [Proud D19 usage (3.8.38) – (9.11.44)] cancels a 10mm grey and a 5mm orange wove paper. It is addressed to Findlay, OH, USA.



Reverse

Foreign Surface Rate - Germany



Letter posted at Jerusalem dated 30 DEC 38 [G&S machine cancel F7 usage 28 JA 36 to 19 OC 40 and double ring B37 usage 14 MY 38 to 21 OC 38 extends date] cancels 1 x 5mm orange vertical ribbed and 2 x orange wove paper.

It is addressed to Karlsbad, Karlsruhe, Baden-Württemberg.

Foreign Surface Rate - Germany

Letter from Nahalal dated 14 MY 1933 [Proud D4 usage (22.8.28)-(8.8.38) & (13.2.39)-(18.11.40)].

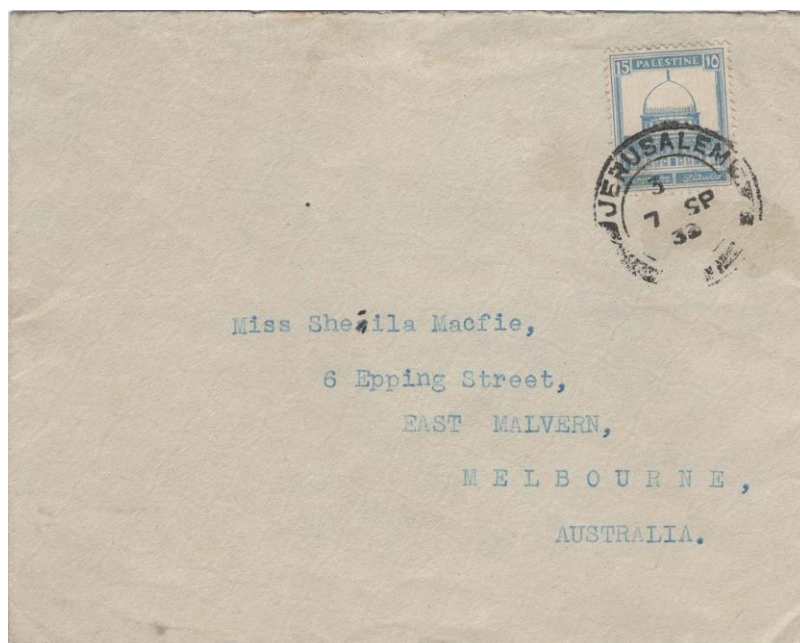
Adhesives 5 x 2mm Blue and 2 x 3 mm green on vertical ribbed paper.

It is addressed to Karlsruhe, Baden-Württemberg.

Appears to be overpaid 1mm.

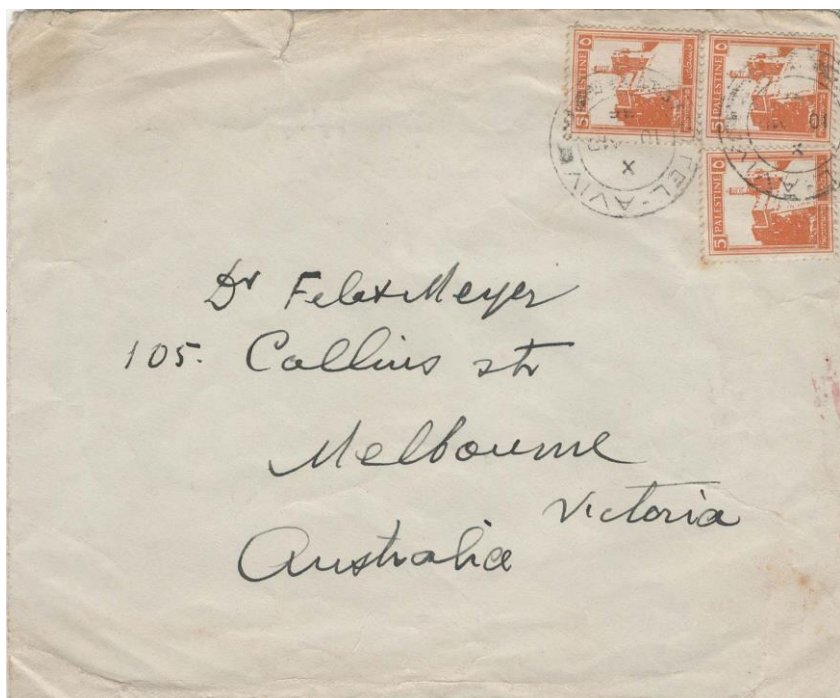


Foreign Surface Rate - Australia



Letter posted at Jerusalem 7 SP 33 [G&S B30 usage 17 JA 28 to 28 JU 34] cancels 15 mils blue vertical ribbed. The letter addressed to East Malvern, Vic, Australia.

Foreign Surface Rate - Australia



Eden Hotel, Jerusalem stationery sent from Tel Aviv 10 AP 35 [Proud D12 usage (13.3.35)-(4.12.35)] cancels 3 x 5mm orange vertical ribbed. Addressed to Melbourne, Victoria.



Reverse

Foreign Rate Changed

A new foreign rate applied at the period (1.7.40 – 30.6.43) at a rate of 15mm – 20 gms then 10mm per 20gms.

Foreign Surface Rate - Switzerland

Censored letter posted at Pardess Hanna 4 SP 41 [double circle Proud type D2 usage (28.9.33)-(30.4.48)], cancels 15mm blue vertical ribbed..

It is addressed to L'Agence internationale des prisonniers de guerre - Comité international de la Croix-Rouge in Genève, Switzerland. Opened by censor and resealed, label type Q6.¹



¹ Glassman E and Sacher M. (1982). *The Postmarks and other markings of Mandate Jerusalem (1917 – 1948)*. Pg. 141. Ze'Ev Galibov: London

Foreign Rate Changed

A new foreign rate applied at the period (1.7.43 – 14.5.48) at a rate of 20mm – 20 gms then 13mm per 20gms.

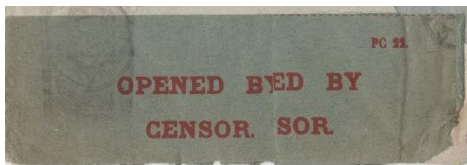
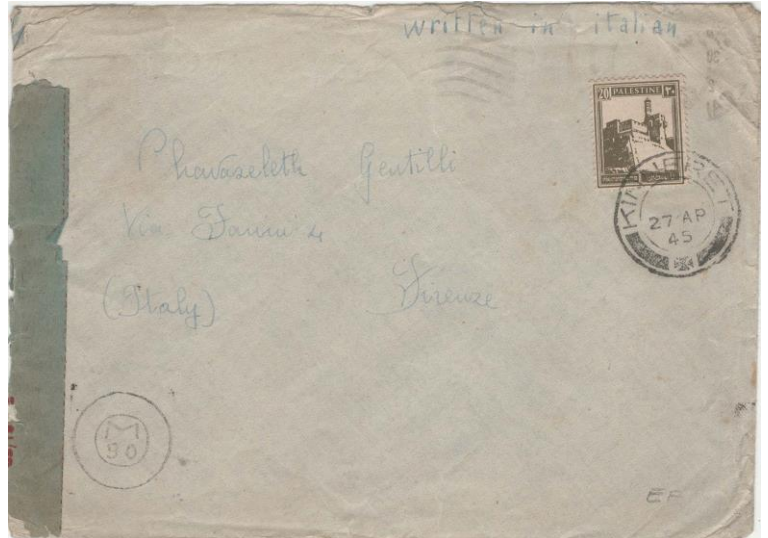
Foreign Surface Rate - Italy

Censored letter² posted at Kinneret 27 AP 45 double circle {Proud D4 usage (4.12.36)-(5.8.45)} cancels a 20mm Olive wove paper.

It is addressed to Firenze (Florence), Italy. It has been censored in Palestine PC 22 and resealed with a grey blue tape, Type Q7.³ gain in Cairo with an unsigned M 90.

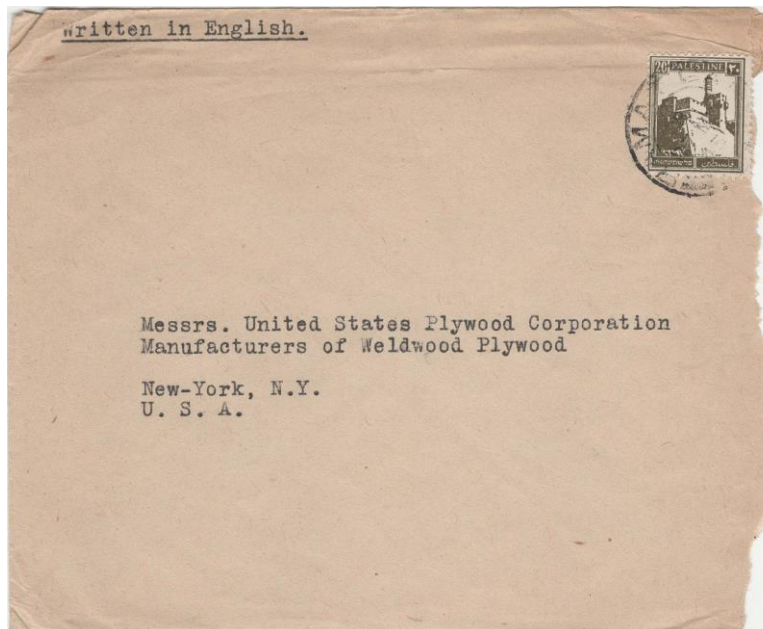
On the reverse is a Cairo machine cancel 30 AP 45.

Written in Italian.



Reverse

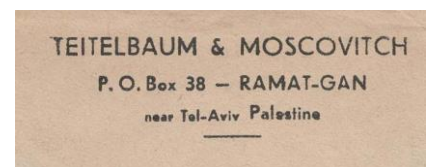
Foreign Surface Rate - USA



Letter posted at Ramat-Gan 27 MY 45 single circle [Proud D6 usage (23.2.37)-(30.4.48)] cancels a 20mm Olive wove paper.

Addressed to New York, NY, USA.

Written in English.



Reverse

² The Government Censor Board HQ was in Jerusalem with branches in Tel-Aviv and Haifa. G & S Pg 134.

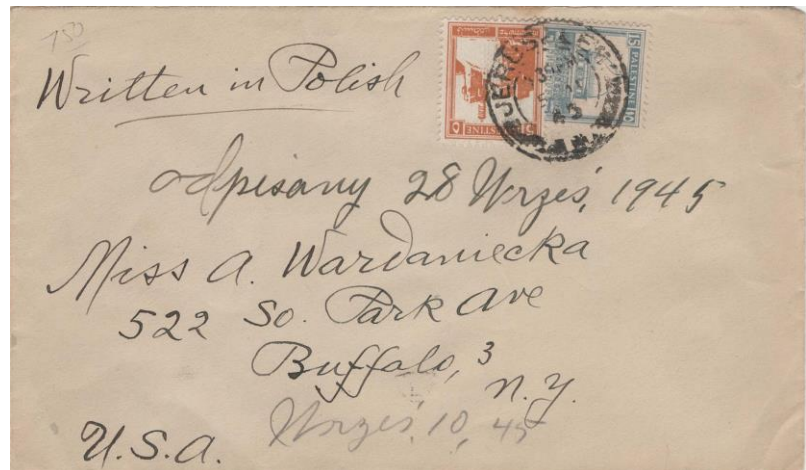
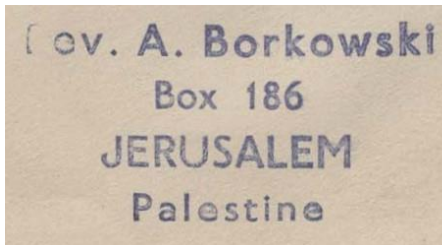
³ Glassman & Sacher. Pg 141.

Foreign Surface Rate - USA

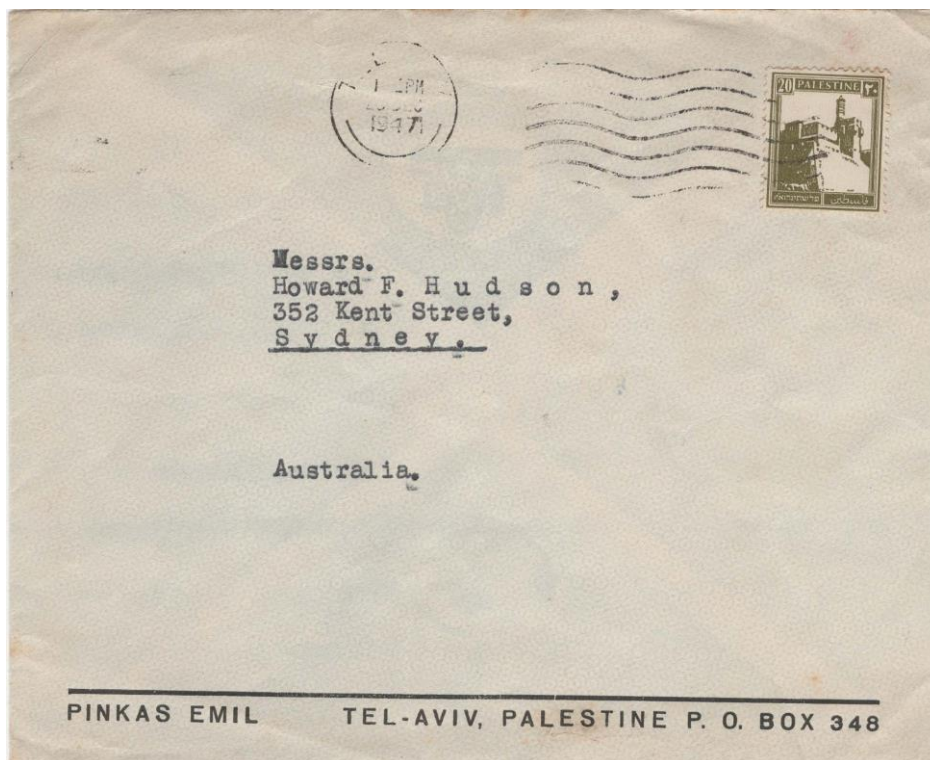
Letter posted at Jerusalem 5.11.43
[G&S B38 usage 20 JU 38 to AP 48]
cancels a 15mm Blue and a 5mm
orange vertical ribbed.

It is addressed to Buffalo, NY, USA.

Written in Polish



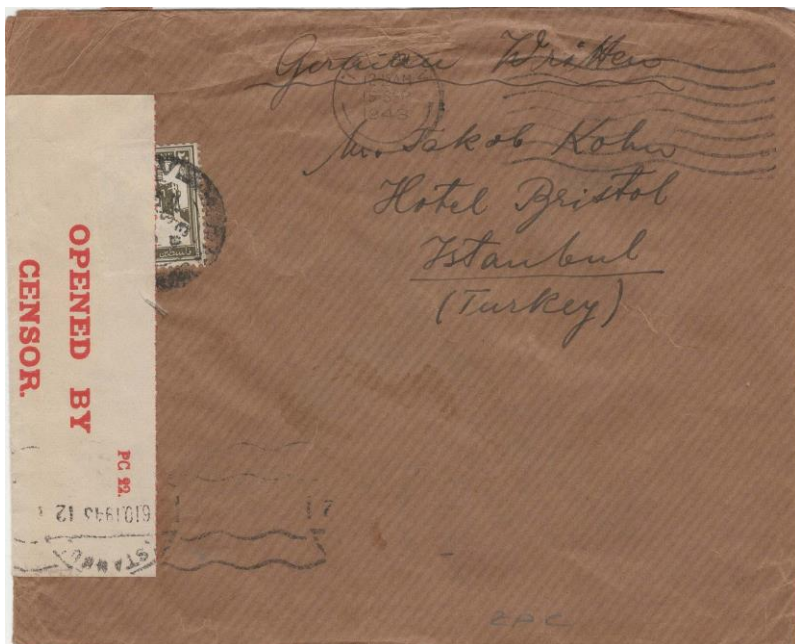
Foreign Surface Rate - Australia



Letter posted Tel Aviv 20 DEC 47 Machine cancel [Proud M2 State 1 usage (30.5.37) - (11.2.48)] cancels 20mm wove olive.

Letter is addressed to Sydney, Australia.

Foreign Surface Rate - Turkey



Censored cover Tel Aviv to Istanbul, Turkey. A 20mm Olive wove paper is cancelled 19 SEP 43 by a Tel Aviv Double circle [Proud type D19 usage (3.8.38) -(9.11.44)].

A Tel Aviv single ring machine cancel 19 SEP 43 [Proud type M2 State 1, usage (30.5.37) -(11.2.48)].

Open by Censor S & G type Q6 has received an Istanbul machine cancel 6.10.45. on the reverse a bridge type Beyoglu, Istanbul cancel 6.10.43.

Beyoğlu is a municipality and district of Istanbul Province, Turkey.

German Written



Insufficiently Prepaid by Air - USA⁴

Airmail letter posted Tel Aviv [Proud type D24 usage (6.7.47) -5.5.48], cancel 2 x 20 mm Olive wove paper.

A jasqu'ā applied and a rectangular boxed cachet in 2 lines –
INSUFFICIENTLY PREPAID –

BY AIR TOUK.....ONLY.

It went air to UK and then surface to USA.

Air Mail Services general Information March 1948 from GPO Jerusalem gives the airmail rate to USA at 65mils per 10gms.

The UK rate was 25mils per 10 grms.



⁴ Proud Edward B. (1985). *The Postal History of British Palestine 1918 – 1948*.Pg. 95. Heathfield, East Sussex: Proud Bailey Co Ltd.

Back Page

John Young

We had a mix up on the Back Page of last December's journal. The illustrations for one article on a post card to Czechoslovakia from the French Colonial Exhibition in 1931 were mixed up with the illustrations for a post card to Australia from the Paris Exhibition of 1937.

Best laid plans of mice and men; "to err is human and to forgive is divine,"

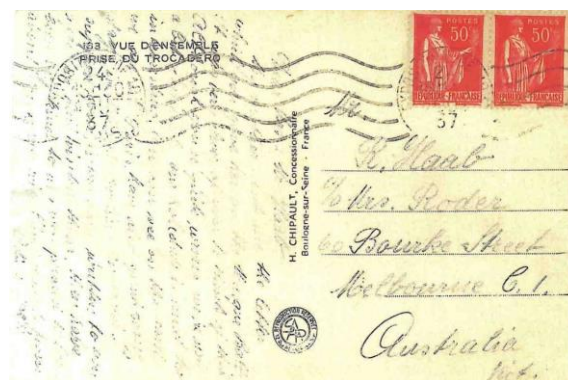
The correct texts and illustrations (in reduced size) are shown below:

The International Colonial Exposition, 1931

The International Colonial Exposition held in Paris in 1931 emphasised French colonial products and manufactures. This postcard, addressed to Czechoslovakia, is franked with two of the Exposition stamps, machine cancelled with the Exposition postmark. The card's picture side shows a replica Cambodian Ankor-vat at the Expo.



The International Exposition held in Paris in 1937



The International Exposition held in Paris in 1937 had world peace as one of its themes. The card shows the Expo's main boulevard, with German and Russian pavilions facing each other. The German eagle was contrived to be a couple of metres higher than the Russian figure on the right.

The card is addressed to 60 Bourke Street, Melbourne [a fruiterer's shop] and is machine cancelled with the Expo postmark.