

THE GAMBIA, GOLD COAST & SIERRA LEONE STUDY CIRCLE.

The Sierra Leone Patrol Post Cancellations.  
by Colin McCaig.

Having in mind the Gold Coast Garrison Mail canceller of a similar type, I had regarded the circular date stamp reading "PATROL POST No. 1" as having a military origin until Mr. John Forrest kindly gave me the following notes, which he had extracted from official records:-

- 1.10.1910. - From the 1st October, 1910, there was established a PATROL POST for the villages of Lumley, Goderich, Adonkia, Hamilton, Sussex, Borboh, and Kent. The service was bi-weekly. Postage stamps and Postal Orders were sold to the public by the Patrol Postman who also received letters from the public for Freetown and the intervening villages in both directions. The existing Post Offices at Goderich and Hamilton were to be closed at the end of October, 1910.
- 15.12.1912. - Postal Agencies were established at Kent and Russell, and the Patrol Post system between Waterloo and Kent was abolished on the 9th November, 1912. Letters from Benguma were to be sent to the Post Office at Waterloo.
1. 1.1931. - A Postal Agency was opened at Hamilton and it was reported that the Peninsular Postman hitherto performing the service to Sussex had been discontinued.

It is clear, therefore, that the Patrol Post was a travelling post office, and in view of the date and terrain more probably on foot than by horse or motor car. The original itinerary covered the west and south of the Peninsular, joining up with the railway at Waterloo. The alteration of 1912 restricted the circuit by omitting the southern portion to Kent, Russell, and Benguma; and possibly after further partial amendments or variations it was finally closed at the end of 1930.

I have seen strikes of "Patrol Post No. 1" with dates from 1913 to 1921, but have no record of a "Patrol Post No. 2" having been used during this period.

Since 1954, however, a "Patrol Post No. 2" has appeared and it was reported in the T.P.O. Magazine some time ago that this canceller was being used for relief trains on the railway. From the similarity of size and type I concluded that both cancellers were probably supplied at the same time and I have recently had confirmation of this from the Postmaster General, Sierra Leone, who has written as follows:-

"With reference to your enquiry of 11th January, 1958, it is confirmed that the datestamps inscribed Patrol Post No. 1 and

"Patrol Post No. 2 were originally used on a rural Postman's service round the peninsular in the Colony of Sierra Leone in which there were established various little villages with English names such as Lumley, Hamilton, York and Sussex etc. This service was discontinued many years ago when Postal Agencies were established at these villages, but the actual date and year of the cessation is not known.

"The datestamps were then used until recently by relief Travelling Mail Officers employed on postal coaches attached to passenger trains of the Sierra Leone Railways. These Officers, apart from sorting and distributing mail, also sell postal orders and stamps at whistle stops or small stations where there are no Post Offices or Postal Agencies.

"Both the Patrol datestamps were finally withdrawn from service in late 1956."

The withdrawal of the cancellers at the end of 1956 (I have a strike dated 12.12.56) may have been connected with the recent Freetown-Pendembu and Bo-Pendembu datestamps with T.P.O. at the foot which have been noted since January, 1957.

It seems reasonable to suppose that the two datestamps were originally intended to cover the two weekly Patrol Post services, but from the absence of records it is probable that the "No. 2" canceller was not in fact used at that time and I should be most interested to hear of any "No. 2" strikes noted between 1910 and 1930. I should also be glad to know whether anyone has recorded the use of the "No. 1" datestamp between 1954 and 1956.

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A map of the rural Postman's round in the peninsula is attached.

The earliest recorded date of Post No. 1 is now 28.10.1913 and the latest 4.11.1921.

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We also take this opportunity of asking you to add the following to the Check List of the Sierra Leone T.P.O. pamphlet:-

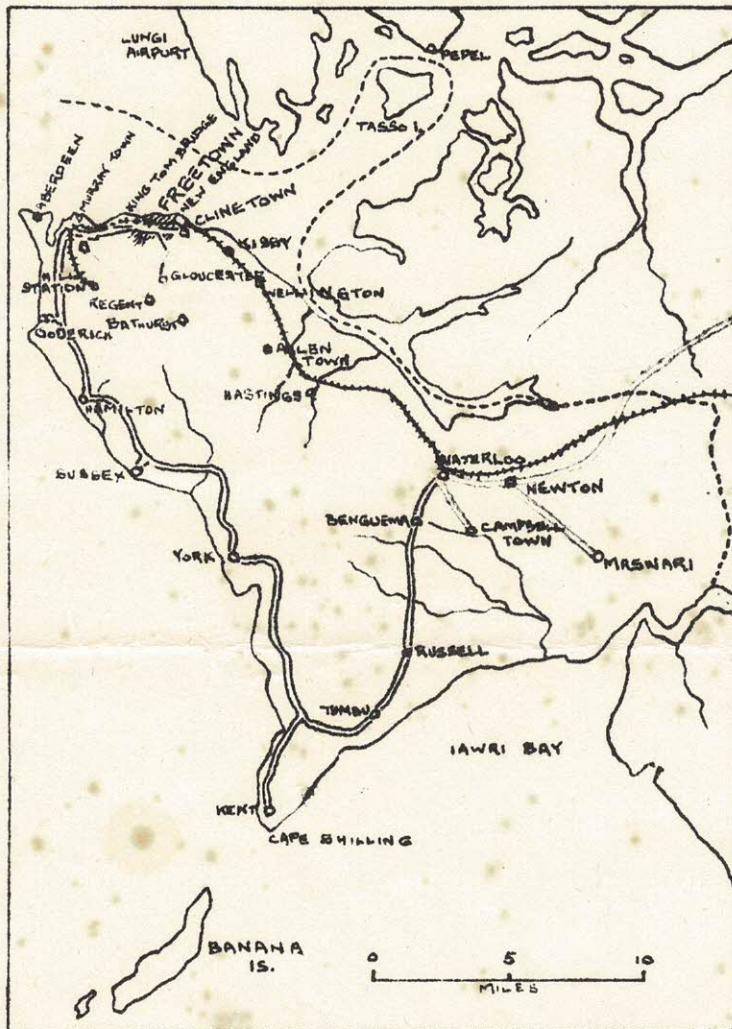
Type 6.	BO-PENDEMBU	T.P.O.
Earliest recorded date	11.1.1957.	

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1st. May, 1958.

Sierra Leone  
The Colony



The PATROL POST.

1.10.10. - From the 1st. October, 1910, there was established a PATROL POST for the villages of LUMLEY, GODERICH, ADONKIA, HAMILTON, SUSSEX, BORBOH, and KENT. The service was bi-weekly.

15.12.12. - Postal Agencies were established at KENT and RUSSELL, and the PATROL POST system between WATERLOO and KENT was abolished on 9th. November, 1912.