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 \*\* ADEN - A NEW LOOK AT SOME EARLY HANDSTAMPS & CANCELLATIONS \*\*  
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by MURRAY GRAHAM.

I get the impression from Mrs. Shaw's article in 'India Post' for Oct/Dec 1985 on pages 155 to 157, that she is apparently not aware of my earlier listings of Aden's postal markings of which the one relevant to her article appeared in 'India Post' for Oct/Dec 1976. The preamble told the reader that this Part i contained all the Aden markings dealt with in the first six instalments towards the handbook which I had then hoped to have completed under the auspices of the Robson Lowe organisation. These instalments appeared in 'The Philatelist' for October 1975 to February 1976 & April 1976, of which only the last two issues dealt with the postal markings covered by Mrs. Shaw's article.

On a point of nomenclature I would plead that we stick to the place-names in use at the relevant time and not to introduce as here 'Crater' for Aden Town. Crater did not appear in any Aden postal marking until 1959, though it did come into common usage for the district several years previously. During the early years after the British occupation in January 1839, its postal markings were simply inscribed ADEN; there being only the one post office in the town in the crater. Steamer Point in Tawahi on the western side of the Aden peninsula came into being to accommodate the coal-dumps needed for re-fuelling the steam-powered vessels which were too large for the small and shallow anchorage on the eastern side, known as Front Bay. By analogy, the larger western bay was called Back Bay, though this title was soon replaced by the Arab name of Bandar Tawahi. I hope that this outline sketch map (see next page) drawn some years ago for me by Lou Dearlove for the projected handbook will enable the reader to orientate himself correctly.

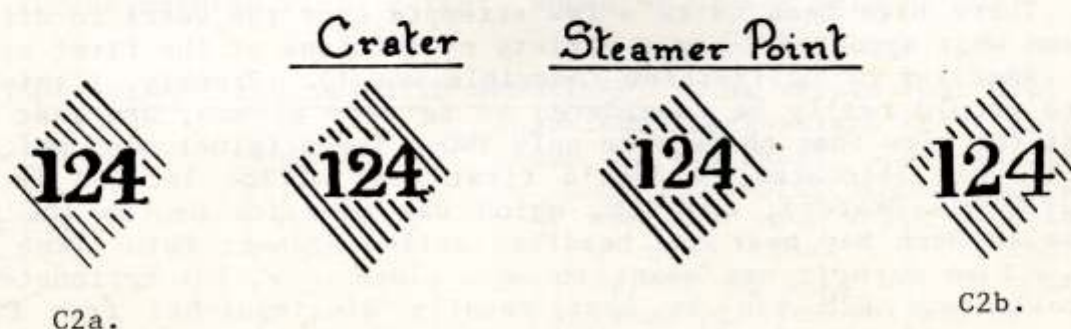
Some details on Aden's early post-offices may well be found helpful:

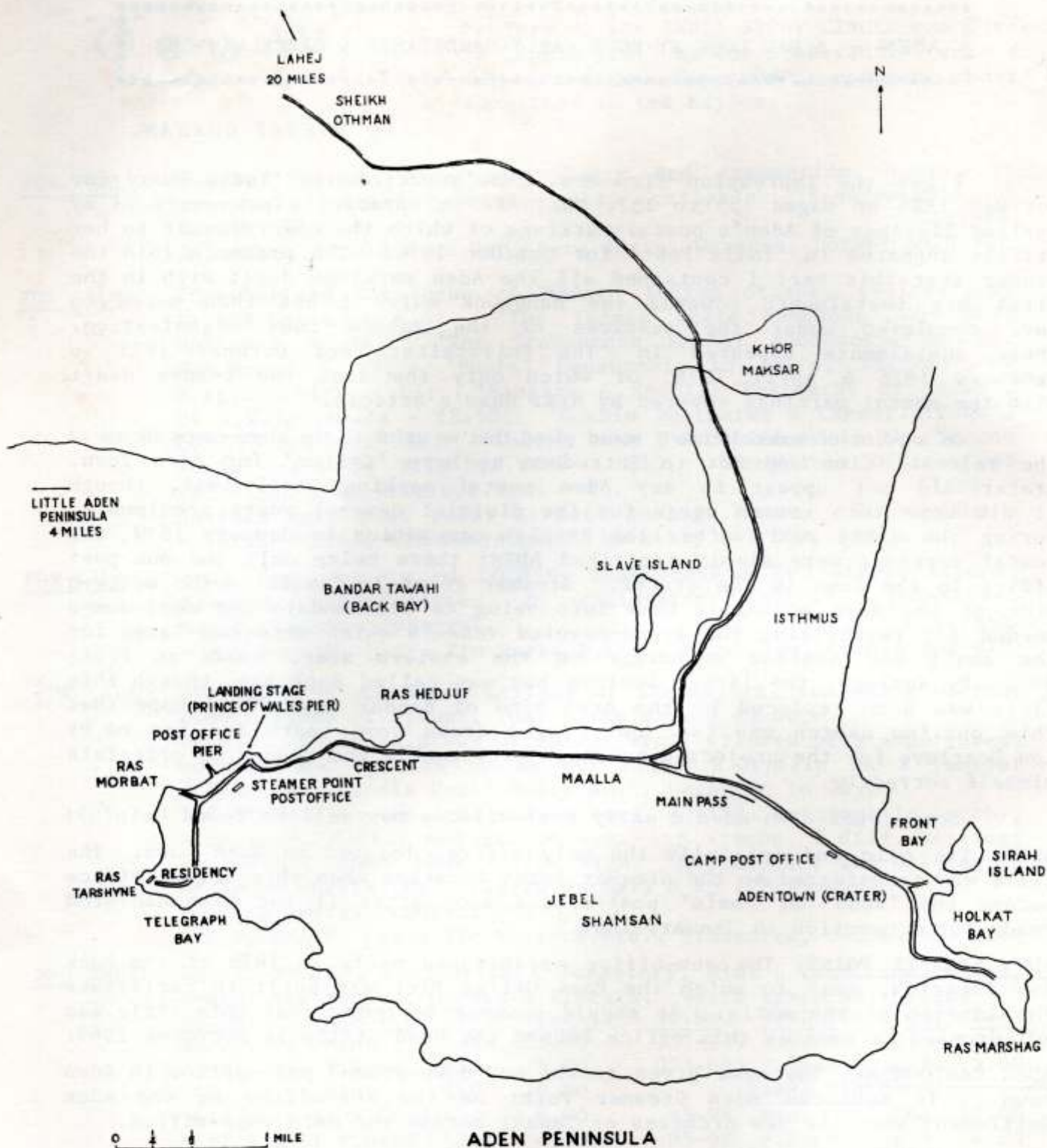
ADEN: The main and initially the only office, located in Aden town. The title was transferred to the Steamer Point location when this latter office became the 'head' or 'main' post-office soon after it had been declared ready for occupation in January 1869.

ADEN STEAMER POINT: The sub-office established early in 1858 at the Back Bay location, near to which the Post Office Pier was built to facilitate the landing of the mails. It should however be noted that this title was NOT dropped as soon as this office became the head office in December 1869.

ADEN CANTONMENT: The name given to the now down-graded post-office in Aden town. It replaced Aden Steamer Point as the sub-office in the Aden Settlement when the new premises at Tawahi became the main post-office.

"124" CANCELLATIONS:





ADEN PENINSULA

There have been quite a few attempts over the years to differentiate between what appeared to be a variety of versions of the first specifically Aden canceller or obliterator (horrible word!). Frankly, I think that the debate should really be considered to be over by now, and that one should accept the view that there were only TWO. The original one, which I listed as C2a, was allocated to Aden's first post office located in Aden town (Mrs. Shaw's Crater), and C2b, which was made for use by the first sub-office in Back Bay near the headland called Steamer Point (see the sketch map). I am sure it was meant to be a close copy, but fortunately (?) for us collectors C2b can be most readily distinguished from C2a by the larger triangle in the figure '4'. The illustrations given here make the distinction quite clear, in my opinion. The only other distinct difference

I have noticed is the number of lines making up the 'diamond'; eleven for C2a and ten for C2b. This difference is not as useful as would at first appear to be the case, in that the outermost lines often come out so weakly that one might believe that one or even both of them were not there, except on close and careful examination. Moreover, because surviving impressions tend to have been imperfectly applied, I have found it dangerous to try to establish distinctions in measurements of the order of  $\frac{1}{2}$ mm and less. The originals for C2a & C2b were drawn by the late 'Gog' Horsman, working from clear, full impressions. I have set Mrs. Shaw's illustrations alongside to show where she has sadly gone astray. I hope she will not take my strictures too personally!

B.P.P. HANDSTAMPS. I am glad to be able to say here that I have found on examining the four examples I have of the PAID version that they all support Mrs. Shaw's hypothesis. Fortunately on one the adhesives were cancelled by the Aden Town '124' (C2a), whereas the other three's adhesives by the Aden Steamer Point '124' (C2b). My Aden Town example, in fact, is on the early 'Registered Letter' cover which formed the basis of my article in 'India Post' on page 26 of the Jan/Mar 1985 issue, where we see that the vertical of the 'B' falls exactly below the bottom of the right-hand stroke of the 'A', and that the 'P' of Paid lies to the left of the B's vertical.

In my Steamer Point examples, the vertical of the 'B' lies more or less directly below the apex of the 'A' of Aden, while the 'P' of Paid falls directly below the 'B'. All of these covers carry on the back impressions of the ADEN STR.POINT PAID c.d.s. in red.

I have only one example of the BEARING handstamp. In it, the position of Bearing matches that in Mrs. Shaw's Crater illustration. The accompanying 'double-ring' ADEN c.d.s. is dated JU 14 1858, indicating an Aden Town usage (i.e. it pre-dates the opening of the first sub-office at Steamer Point).

"INDIA PAID" & "INDIA UNPAID" HANDSTAMPS. Mrs. Shaw's findings are in accord with the descriptions given in my Chapter 5 instalment, which appeared in 'The Philatelist' for April 1976 on pages 199 et seq. See my HS7a & HS7b for the two framed "India Paid" and HS12a for the only "India Unpaid" handstamps. I too would like evidence of an "India Unpaid" handstamp for the Aden Town office. Maybe there was one but it was not used, because un- or under-paid letters posted in that office could have been more readily held back for return to sender - likely to have been Aden residents. Much of the mail handled by the Steamer Point office came from shipping passing through, which would have sailed away before the post office could have taken remedial action.

I should like to learn more about the unframed "India Unpaid" which Mrs. Shaw mentions. I assume it to be the handstamp I list as HS12b, which was, I think, once owned by Mr. Croft. Mr. Proud ascribes this handstamp to the Abyssinian Field Force; would he please tell us why?

SINGLE-RING CIRCULAR DATED HANDSTAMP. I am afraid that Mrs. Shaw's



HS15



HS14

ingenious observations about this handstamp are mistaken. There is, in fact, an ADEN STR<sup>R</sup> POINT handstamp, exactly like the ADEN one, which came into use at the same time. Illustrations of both appear on page 201 of the April 1976 issue of 'The Philatelist' and in my 'India Post' series on page 115 of

the Oct/Dec 1976 issue. They are repeated here. The date ranges known to me are 18 JY 61 to 28 AU 69 for HS14 (Aden Town) and 10 OC 60 to 10 OC 68 for HS15 (Aden Str. Point). Mr. Croft, who managed to examine far more examples than have come my way, concluded that "the day and month parts were juxtaposed quite indiscriminately throughout the date ranges for these two c.d.s.'s". Occasionally both appear on the same cover (I have one from Liverpool with both strikes dated 24 AP 68; it also happens to have been underfranked by 2d., according to the Deficient Postage handstamp applied on its way through the London G.P.O.). I know of impressions struck in red for both these Aden handstamps for the period 1867 to 1869 - Mrs. Shaw's "time of chaos".

DOUBLE-RING CIRCULAR DATED HANDSTAMP. I think this handstamp's



story has been reasonably well documented. It is the only one of Aden's early handstamps which was supplied by the British authorities - the strike in the G.P.O. Proof Book is dated SE 10 1855. However, its earliest use at Aden I know of is OC 16 1855. It continued in use at the Aden Town office into the early 1860's, overlapping the introduction of the ADEN single-ring c.d.s. discussed above.

It was resuscitated in 1868 for use at the Steamer Point office, when it is known struck in red and blue. I have an example in red dated NO 18 1869, where it was used as a transit mark on a cover from Calcutta (superscribed via Bombay) to Mauritius. Another example, this time in blue, dated FE 28 1870, unfortunately only on a piece from the back of an envelope, applied alongside two 2-anna East India adhesives, which had been cancelled by the Aden Post Office intaglio bag-seal in the same colour. I suspect that this second phase of usage was in some way linked to the extra postal activity engendered by the needs of the large force assembled for the Abyssinian Campaign, which used Aden as its base.

ADEN STEAMER POINT "PLAIN" DUPLEX CANCELLER. By way of a post-



script I would like to report the second example of the use of this previously unique duplex canceller, which was recently brought to my attention. It is dated 24 MA 68 cancelling an East India 6s.8ps. on a cover which originated in Zanzibar and was addressed to England via Marseilles. This cancellation has intrigued me for many years (I reported the first example in 'The Philatelist' for January 1965, pages 76-7). Renouf, on page 505 of R.L.'s Encyclo-

pedia, Vol.III, quotes the 1873 Indian Postal Manual as prescribing a simple barred obliteration without number for "experimental" post offices. As far as I am aware, this is the only example of such an experimental duplex canceller to have been made for use in any post office under Indian administration. I shall be delighted to receive details of any other examples of the use of this canceller; or details of the existence of any other plain duplex canceller. The dated left-hand part has been found cancelling loose adhesives - 4 MA 68 on an 1860 Mauritius purple-brown being the earliest (has anyone come across the accompanying adhesive(s) cancelled by the plain diamond of lines part of this duplex?). It is also known used as a backstamp in black and red on covers; those emanating from Aden have the adhesives cancelled by the Steamer Point '124' (type C2b).

It would be churlish of me to close without paying a sincere tribute to Mrs. Shaw for her thought-provoking essay, and the encouragement it has afforded me to take a fresh look at my own material.

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