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POSTAL HISTORY NOTES ON ANGORAM, AMBUNTI,
AND KAVIENG, TERRITORY OF NEW GUINEA

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POSTAL HISTORY NOTES ON ANGORAM,AMBUNTI, AND KAVIENG , TERRITORY OF NEW GUINEA

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Fig. 1

I recently acquired two items of interest to students of the postal history of the Territory of New Guinea. The first of these is a new handstamp from Kavieng not listed by Powell (1964). Whether this is an unlisted genuine handstamp or a forgery is not presently known. It is found on a copy of a 1931 one pound Air Mail overprint (Fig. 1), and measures 30 mm in diameter. The handstamp is unusual in two regards. First, it bears a tiny inscription of "TERRITORY OF" above "NEW GUINEA". No other known New Guinea handstamp carries this inscription (Powell, 1964). Secondly, the "W" in "NEW" is set sloppily above the level of the adjacent "E". If this is a genuine handstamp, then this poorly set "W" may have been a reason for discontinuing use of the handstamp shortly after its introduction.

Interestingly, the date of 6 March 1932 might tie in with this theory. Prior to 1932 the Kavieng post office only used handstamps that mentioned only Kavieng in the CDS without mentioning New Guinea (Powell CDS types 40-44). (Fig. 2). The last handstamp mentioning only Kavieng was Powell CDS type 44 which was in use as late as 30 August 1932. The first handstamp listed by Powell that mentions New Guinea in the CDS appeared in 1932 or 1933 (Powell type 45 - earliest known date not recorded). (Fig. 2). This Powell type 45 handstamp is somewhat similar to the new one reported in this article, but has a well-aligned "W" in "NEW", and lacks the tiny inscription "TERRITORY OF". It seems possible that the new handstamp recorded here was introduced in about March 1932 as the first CDS with the country name inscribed in addition to the town name. Originally, the whole country name of "TERRITORY OF NEW GUINEA" was used, but the poorly set "W" and the unattractive and difficult-to-read tiny inscription of "TERRITORY OF" may have caused the handstamp to be rapidly withdrawn. It was then apparently eventually replaced in late 1932 or early 1933 by the improved Powell type 45 handstamp. While awaiting the arrival of this new handstamp, the post office probably used primarily the Powell type 44 handstamp.



Fig. 2

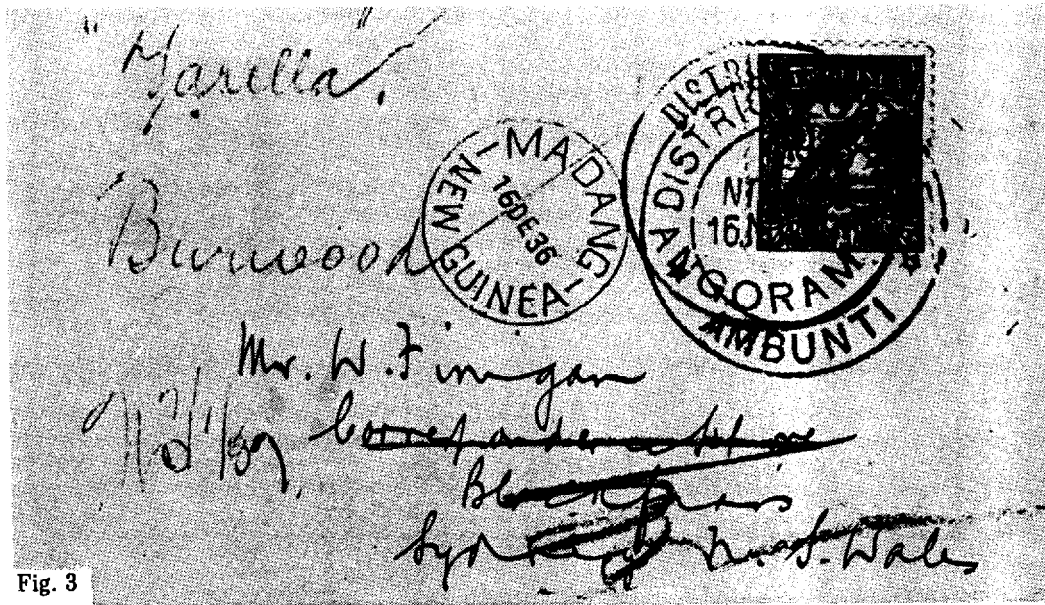


Fig. 3

It is also conceivable that the CDS reported here could represent a forgery, but in my opinion the first theory is more plausible. Any further data or comments by other collectors are welcomed. If this CDS were to be found on a low-value issue this would help confirm its genuine status.

The second item of interest is a cover mailed from Ambunti to Sydney bearing a 2½ pence 1932 issue. (Fig. 3). It is postmarked 16 November 1936 at Ambunti, using a District Office handstamp Powell type 104. Powell notes that the Ambunti post office was closed in 1934, but that the type 104 CDS continued to be used as an arrival mark until 1937. This cover demonstrates that evidently some mail could still be mailed out of Ambunti as late as November 1936, though perhaps the office was temporarily closed during 1934 and 1935. The cover also bears transit marks from Angoram (late November 1936) and Madang (16 December 1936, Powell CDS type 24), as well as an arrival mark on the back for Chippendale, NSW (7 January 1937). There is additional hand docketing on the front dated 7 January 1937 forwarding the letter to "Marella", Burwood. The transit mark from Angoram (Fig. 4) is of interest as it is also unlisted by Powell. The CDS measures 38 mm in diameter and is struck in purple ink. The upper inscription probably reads "DISTRICT OFFICE", but the second word is not visible on the strike. The date is unusual in that both 1935 and 1936 appear in the CDS, indicating the use of a wheel dater set improperly. In addition, no day date appears on the strike. Powell lists two types of District Office handstamps for Angoram. One of them is CDS type 123 which he illustrates as a double-lined 40 mm handstamp. (Fig. 5). The other is an uncatalogued type that he describes as being a

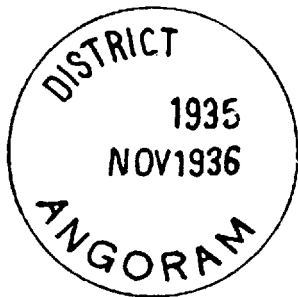


Fig. 4

single-lined 36 mm diameter handstamp with inscriptions similar to the new one described in this article. He does not illustrate it, and indicates that he has seen only a single copy of it on a piece dated August 1936. Though Powell's uncatalogued handstamp and the one described in this article could be the same one, the 2 mm difference in diameter is significant in a well-struck CDS, and in my opinion they may well represent different handstamps. Once again, any further data or material from other collectors would be of interest.

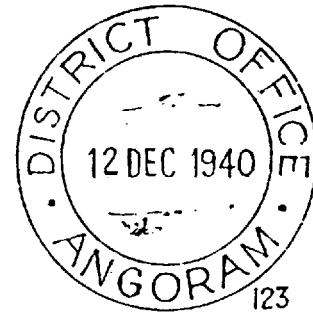


Fig. 5

Reference: Powell, J.H. 1964 : The postal history of the Territory of New Guinea from 1888 to 1942. Melbourne : Hawthorn Press.