

BRITISH HONDURAS – Items of Interest

Dr Ian Matheson

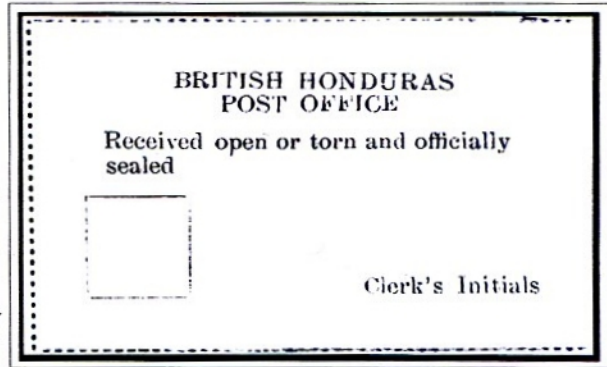
The exhibit shows a number of unusual items from British Honduras, about which little has been written in text books.

Note that all pages shown are photocopies. If any member wishes further details about any item please contact me in person or at ian@cdi.biz.

COMPULSORILY REGISTERED

It was against regulations to post cash without registering the letter. Montgomery Ward was a mail order company so this letter probably contained cash and was "compulsorily registered". The letter was opened by the PO to confirm this and was surcharged to meet the registration fee.

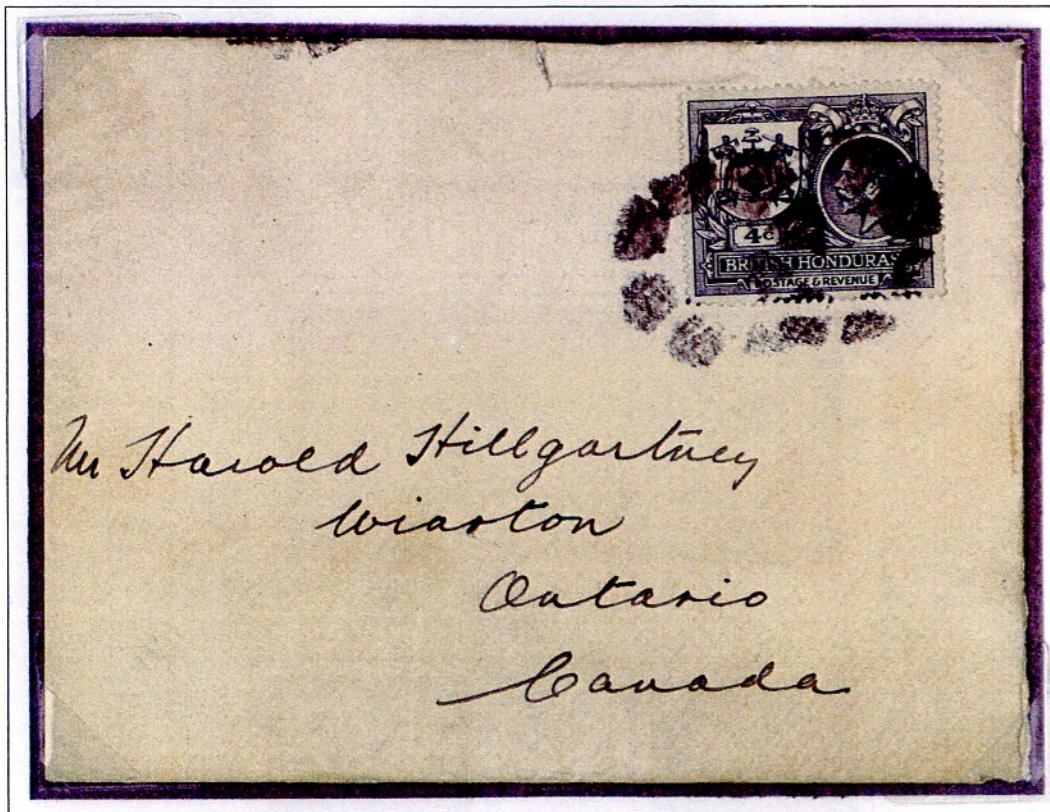
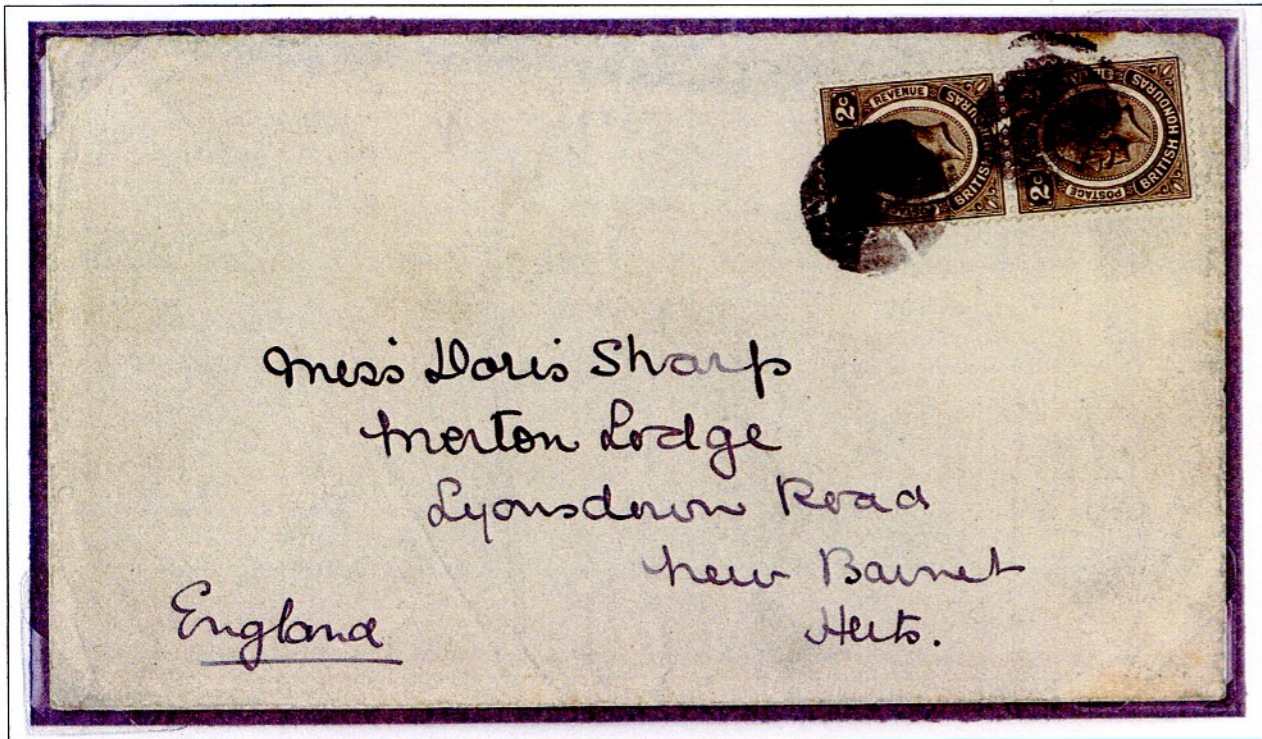
Belize Post Office Re-sealing Strip →



15 October 1925. Cover sent from Belize to USA. 4c franking for normal USA rate. Struck with "BUY BRITISH GOODS / AND GET THE BEST" cachet. The cover was opened for examination and is endorsed in manuscript "Unmailable matter. Opened by Colonial Postmaster" and is initialed and dated by the Postmaster H.W.Beaumont. The re-sealing strips (3) are datestamped and also initialed by the Postmaster and by the clerk. The cover is endorsed "Compulsorily Registered" in manuscript, a registration label was applied, and the cover was struck with two hexagonal tax marks. Backstamped in New Orleans (20 Oct) and Chicago (21 Oct).

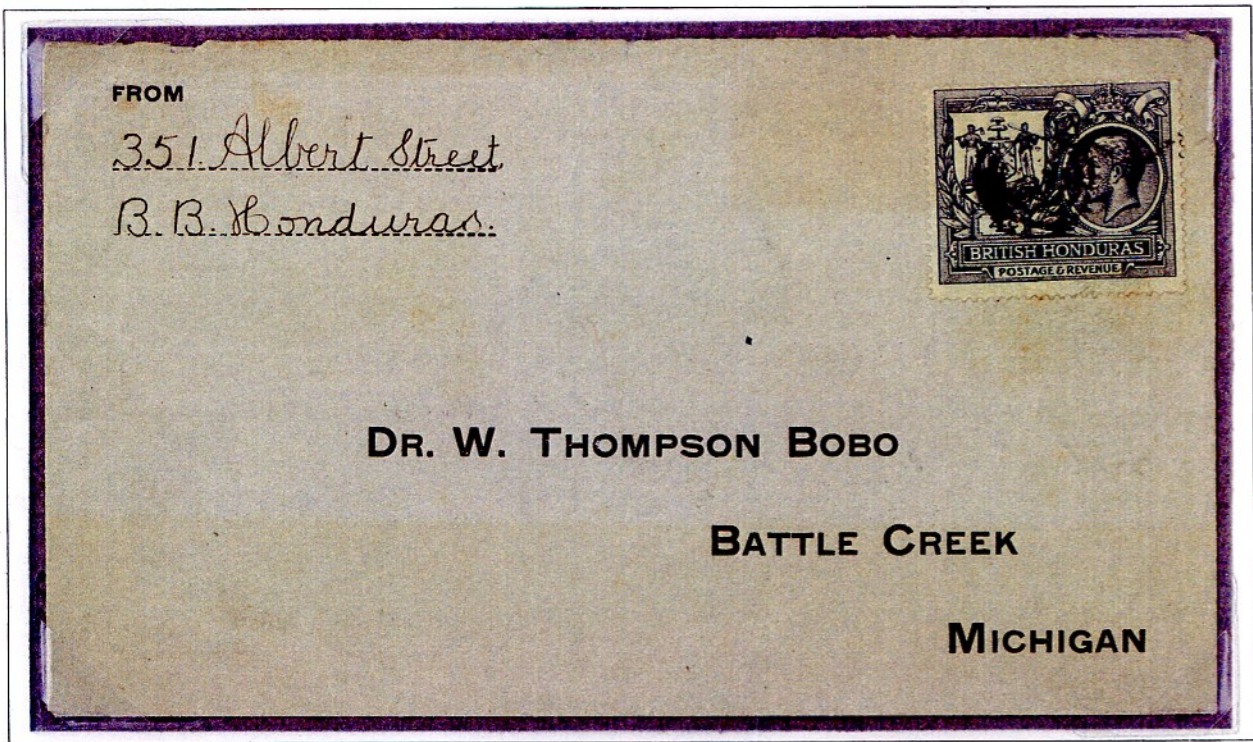
DUMB CANCELLATIONS

It has been claimed that these markings were used on British Navy ships operating in the Caribbean in the 1921-1925 period. Some were possibly US marks, but few have dates or locations to provide further clues.



Receipt backstamp on reverse 4 December 1922, Warton, Ontario.

DUMB CANCELLATIONS



"TAKEN OUT"

Cachets applied to letters, probably in connection with the delivery service.

FIRST POSTMAN
Type TO-1



SECOND POSTMAN
Type TO-2



24 March 1923. Front from Guatemala to Belize. Sent from Guatemala City on 19 March. The "TAKEN OUT" datestamp is illustrated above, and appears to be inscribed "FIRST POSTMAN".



12 February 1923. Cover from Guatemala to Belize. Franked on the reverse with an additional six 25 centavos adhesives. The date of sending is not clear. The cover bears a Belize postmark (12 February) on the reverse and a violet strike of the "SECOND POSTMAN / TAKEN OUT" datestamp as illustrated above on the front.

UNDELIVERED MAIL

Cachets applied to undelivered mail in British Honduras.

Type RTS-1a

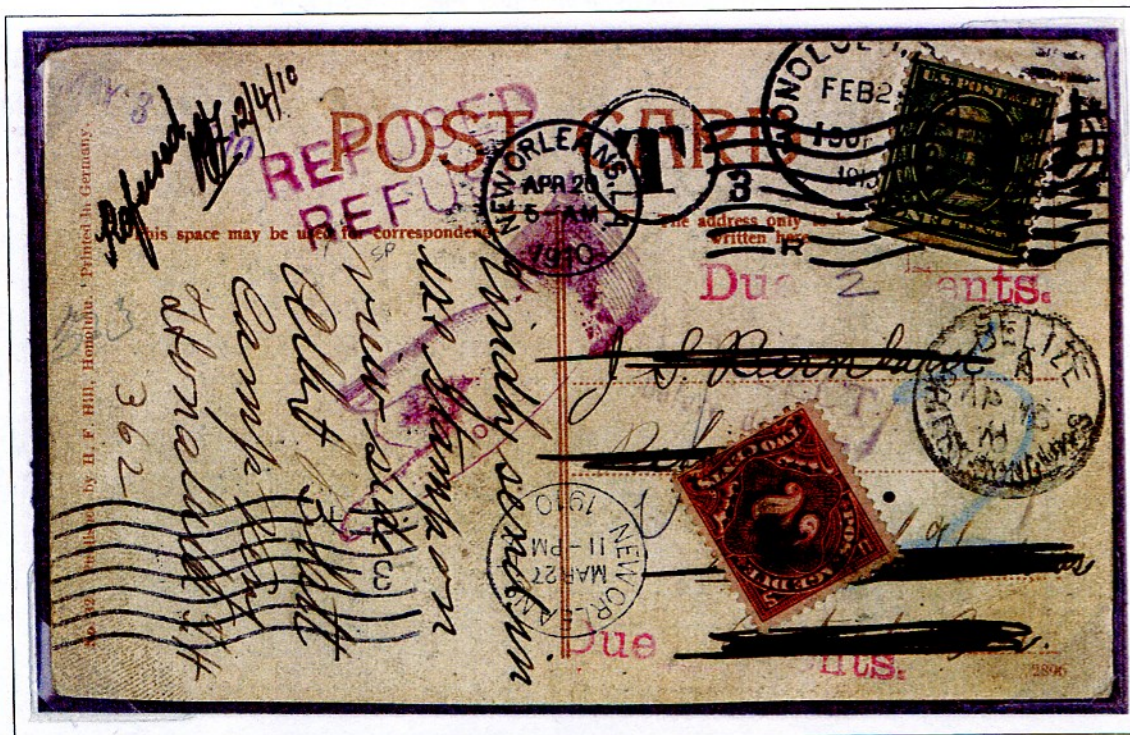
UNCLAIMED



10 June 1903. Cover to Belize from Canada, sent on 27 April 1904 and received in Belize on 3 May. It is endorsed "Deceased" in manuscript on the reverse and is struck with the type RTS-1a "UNCLAIMED" handstamp over a 10 June Belize datestamp, whence it was returned to the Ottawa Dead Letter Office (received 25 June 1904).

Type RTS-1b

REFUSED

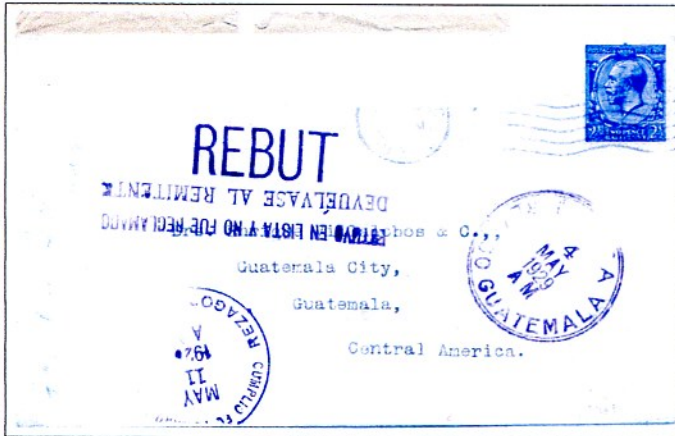


15 April 1910. Postcard sent from Honolulu to Belize on Feb 28 1910, underpaid with a one cent adhesive. The card was refused by the addressee, who signed the top left of the card to this effect. The card was then struck with the Belize "REFUSED" handstamp and returned to sender on 15 April. The original sender had to pay the postage due on receipt.

BELIZE DEAD LETTER OFFICE

Dead Letter Office datestamp

ERD = 31 December 1924 LRD = 11 March 1936



Obverse of cover (reduced)



Postman's Handstamp.



9 April 1929. Cover sent from London to Guatemala. Guatemala City receipt datestamp of 30 April 1929. This letter was undeliverable as the addressee was deceased. "REBUT" (Unclaimed) datestamp and "ESTUVO EN LISTA FUE RECLAMADO / DEVUÉLVASE AL REMITENTE" (Return to Sender) cachet. The cover bears a Dead Letter datestamp of 4 May and was also backstamped "Guatemala Cartero 11" (Postman no. 11). The postman's report was affixed to the cover. This report is headed "Report of Postman 11" in Spanish, dated 11 May 1929, and marked "Falleció" (Deceased). A different Guatemalan Dead Letter Office datestamp of 11 May was applied and the cover returned. There is no forwarding address on the cover, so it appears as if it was sent under separate cover to the Dead Letter Office in Belize (datestamps of 23 May), whence it was probable returned to UK under separate cover.

BELIZE DEAD LETTER OFFICE

Dead Letter Office datestamp

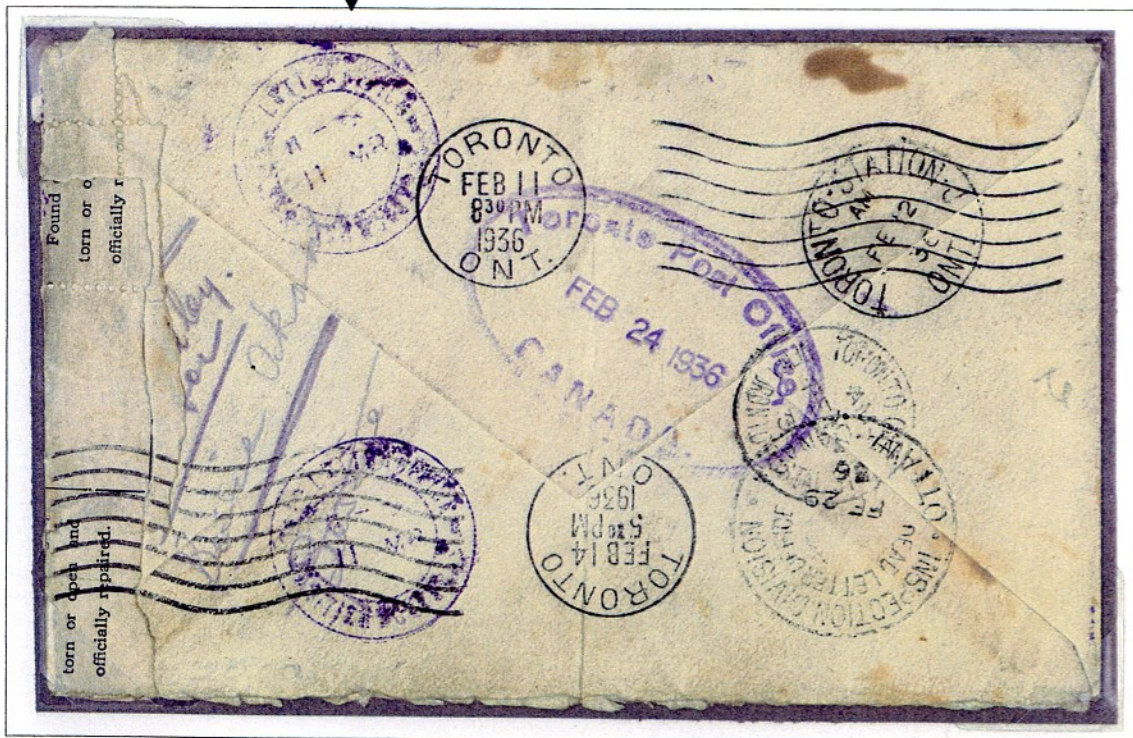
ERD = 31 December 1924 LRD = 11 March 1936



Year omitted
(Latest recorded date)



Obverse of cover (reduced)



February 1936. Air mail cover sent from Belize to Canada. Franked with 18c in adhesives to cover 3c postage + 15c air mail surcharge. Light strike of the "EAT BRITISH HONDURAS GRAPEFRUIT" cachet. The cover bears Toronto receipt datestamps of 11/2, 12/2, 14/2 and 16/2. Manuscript endorsements indicate that the letter was forwarded from no.67 to no.27 and then to no.10 to no avail. It was then handstamped "NOT FOUND" and endorsed "Opened" in manuscript. The letter was opened to determine the sender's address and re-sealed with an official label. An oval Toronto datestamp is dated 24 February and the "INSPECTION DIVISION / DEAD LETTER OFFICE / OTTAWA, CANADA" mark is dated 29 February. The stamps were cancelled with a rectangular "RETURN TO SENDER" cachet and the Belize Dead Letter Office was struck in violet on 11 March (latest recorded date).

UNDELIVERED MAIL

Cachets applied to undelivered mail in British Honduras.

REBUTS

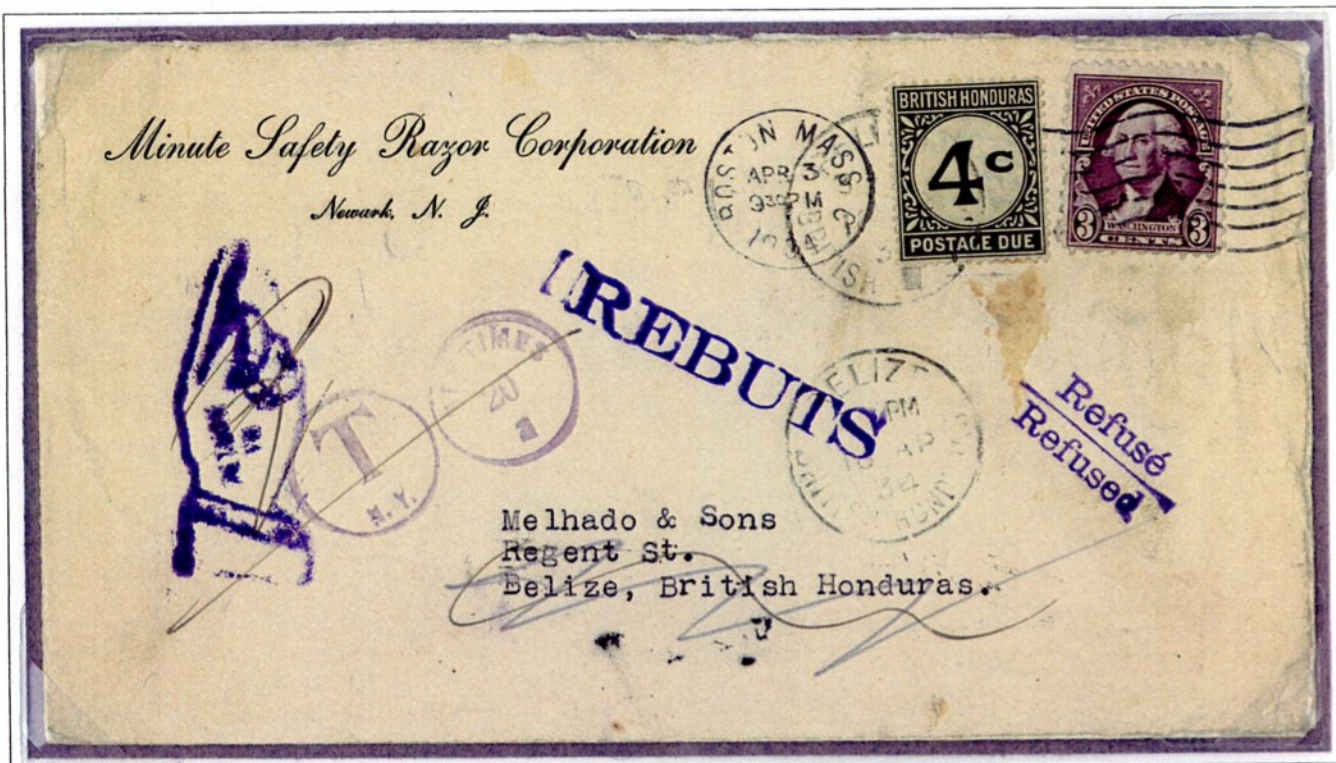
Type RTS-7

Refusé
Refused

Type RTS-5a



Type RTS-4



10 April 1934. Underpaid cover from USA to Belize. Although endorsed "Refusé / Refused" in Belize, it appears as if the 4c postage due was paid, as a postage due label has been applied, and the cover was struck with the "REBUTS" handstamp and GPO Belize pointing hand mark. There is no US receiving mark to prove that it was ever returned.



23 July 1936. Cover posted from Los Angeles to Belize franked with three cents in postage (postal rate was 5c). The "New Orleans, La. / T-20 centimes." handstamp was applied prior to arrival in Belize. Four cents British Honduras postage due label cancelled in Belize (3 August 1936). Violet "Refusé / Refused" cachet applied in Belize (**four strikes recorded**) with weak strike of pointing hand, both in violet. The cover was then returned to sender in USA. Violet "REBUTS" cachet also applied in Belize.

UNDELIVERED MAIL

Cachets applied to undelivered mail in British Honduras.

**Parti
Gone Away**
Type RTS-5b



Type RTS-4



11 April 1935. Three cents US postal stationery envelope posted from Houston, Texas to Belize. The "New Orleans, La. / T-20 centimes." handstamp was probably applied prior to arrival in Belize (but may have been applied on return to USA). Four cents British Honduras postage due label cancelled in Belize (23 April 1935). Violet "Parti / Gone Away" cachet applied in Belize (only recorded strike) with pointing hand, both in violet. On return to USA the cover received two 2c US postage due labels, which were cancelled with a US machine cancellation. It is evident that the British Honduras postage dues paid the return postage, rather than the postage due.

British troops in frontier alert

By RICHARD BEESTON
in Belize

as Union flag is lowered in Belize

BRITAIN'S last colony in continental America becomes independent today with British authorities reporting all quiet along the Guatemala frontier, but with Belizeans deeply worried about their future security.

The lowering of the Union flag at Government House at midnight last night was attended by Prince and Princess Michael of Kent.

Meanwhile British troops remain at a high state of alert along the entire frontier with Guatemala.

The Gordon Highlanders are using 1,000-year-old Myan temples and secret camouflaged jungle look-out posts to keep watch on the border. Reinforcements, including light Scorpion tanks, have been moved close to the frontier.

On a trip to the frontier I visited one observation point on top of the 130ft-high Myan temple of Xunantunich, once used for human sacrifices, and thrusting out dramatically from a jungle mountain top a quarter of a mile from Guatemala.

Death squad victims

The temple overlooks a small Guatemalan town and airstrip where British troops have seen in the past Guatemalans collecting the bodies of victims massacred in the night by visiting death squads. It is part of the brutal way of life of Central America that Belizeans fear may become theirs after independence.

Besides the 1st Battalion of the Highlanders, there is a company of Gurkhas in the south. The Royal Navy frigate, Ariadne, 2962 tons, is standing off-shore and the small but formidable British force is also backed by RAF Harriers, heli-



were temporarily blacked out while the British flag came down. Then the lights came on to reveal the Belizean flag, with two additional red bands for independence, at the top of the pole.

Mr H. V. Courtney, Belize Minister of State, in a pre-independence Press conference, said that Britain still had "a lingering responsibility" to maintain security and peace in Belize. The failure of Britain to reach agreement with Guatemala on independence has been followed by Guatemala's closing of all borders to Belize.

Washington's big fear is that Belize could soon become a new Central American trouble spot and sanctuary for Left-wing guerrillas with Mr Price replaced by pro-Castro members of his Cabinet.

copters and ground-to-air missiles.

The overall cost of the force is about £25 million a year and provides the Army with some of the world's nastiest tropical forests, alive with poisonous snakes and tarantula spiders, for jungle training for British troops.

Under the independence agreement Britain says it will not withdraw its forces until "an appropriate time." But many Belizeans fear that such a moment could occur when Mrs Thatcher next decides to swing her defence cuts axe and that this would leave Belizeans to the mercy of the Guatemalans who continue to claim Belize as theirs.

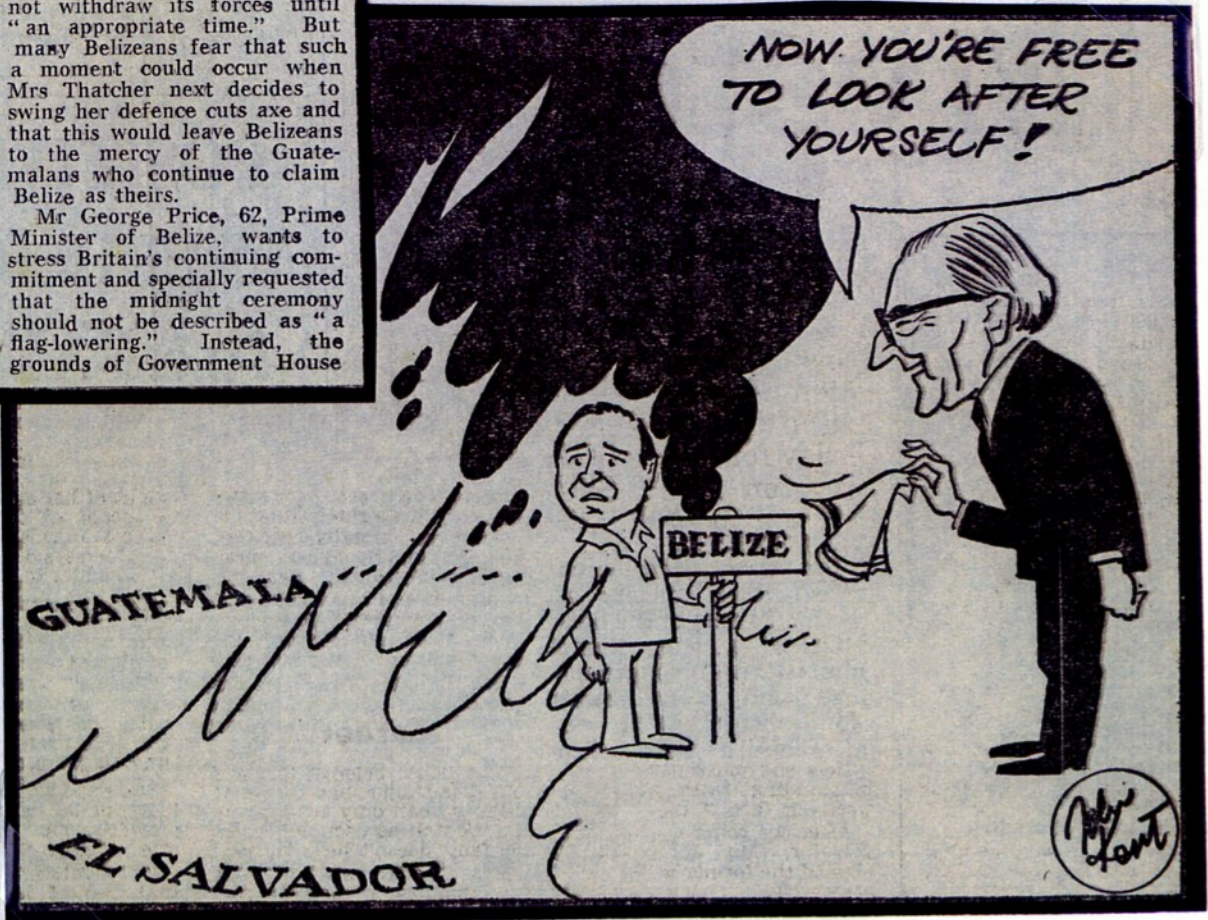
Mr George Price, 62, Prime Minister of Belize, wants to stress Britain's continuing commitment and specially requested that the midnight ceremony should not be described as "a flag-lowering." Instead, the grounds of Government House

INDEPENDENCE

21 September 1981

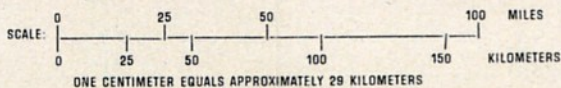


MAP-GUIDE: British Honduras is about the size of Wales, and has a population of only 88,000. Guatemala is five times the size and has 3,000,000 people.

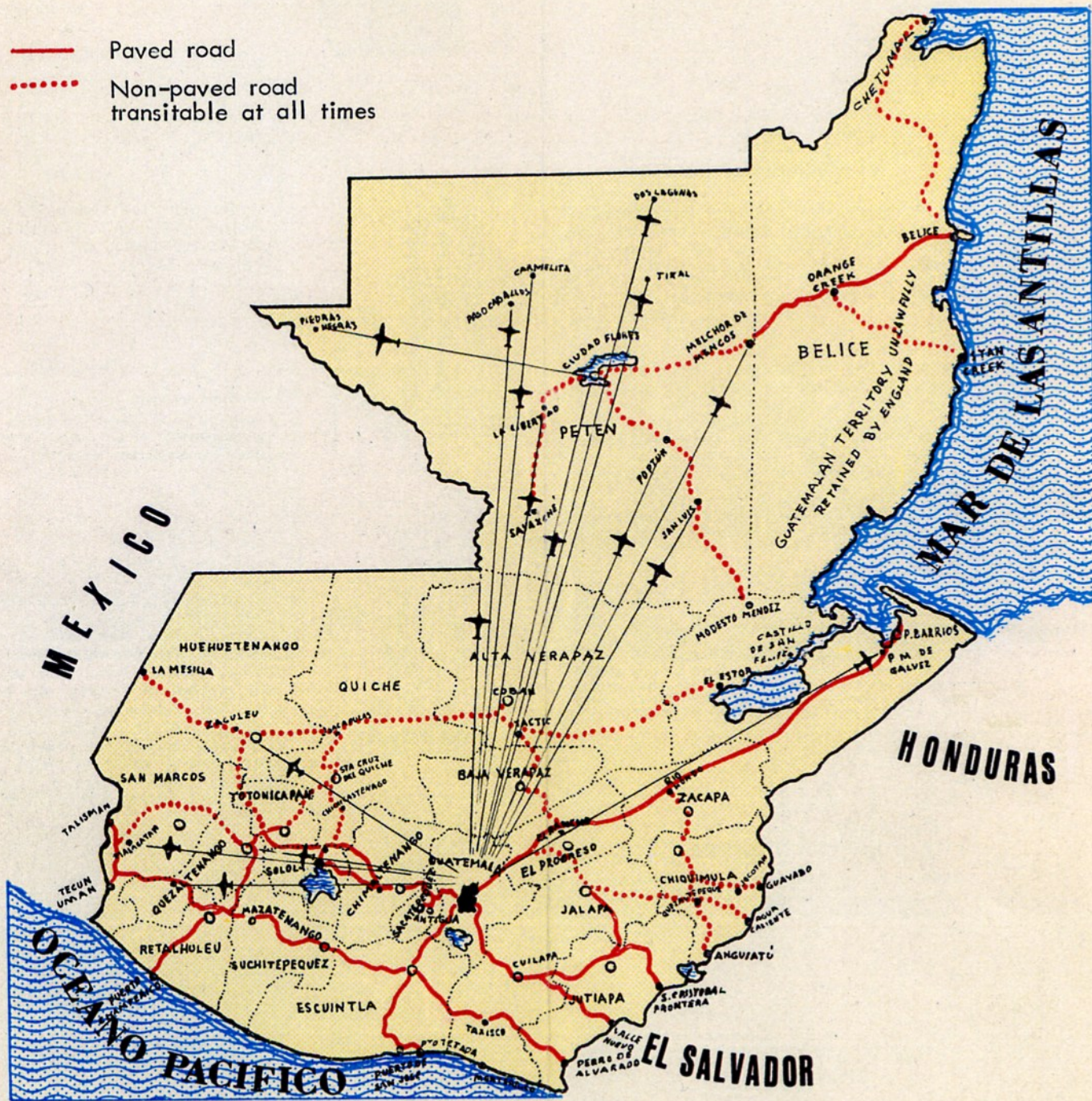


Weekend in GUATEMALA ?...SURE!!!

Just TWO hours from MIAMI !!!



- Paved road
- ⋯ Non-paved road transitable at all times



UNDELIVERED MAIL

Cachets applied to undelivered mail in British Honduras.

RETURNED TO SENDER
FOR THE REASON STATED BELOW
Stamp/s affixed bearing a
slogan which cast/s doubt
about the sovereignty of our
COUNTRY

Type RTS-12



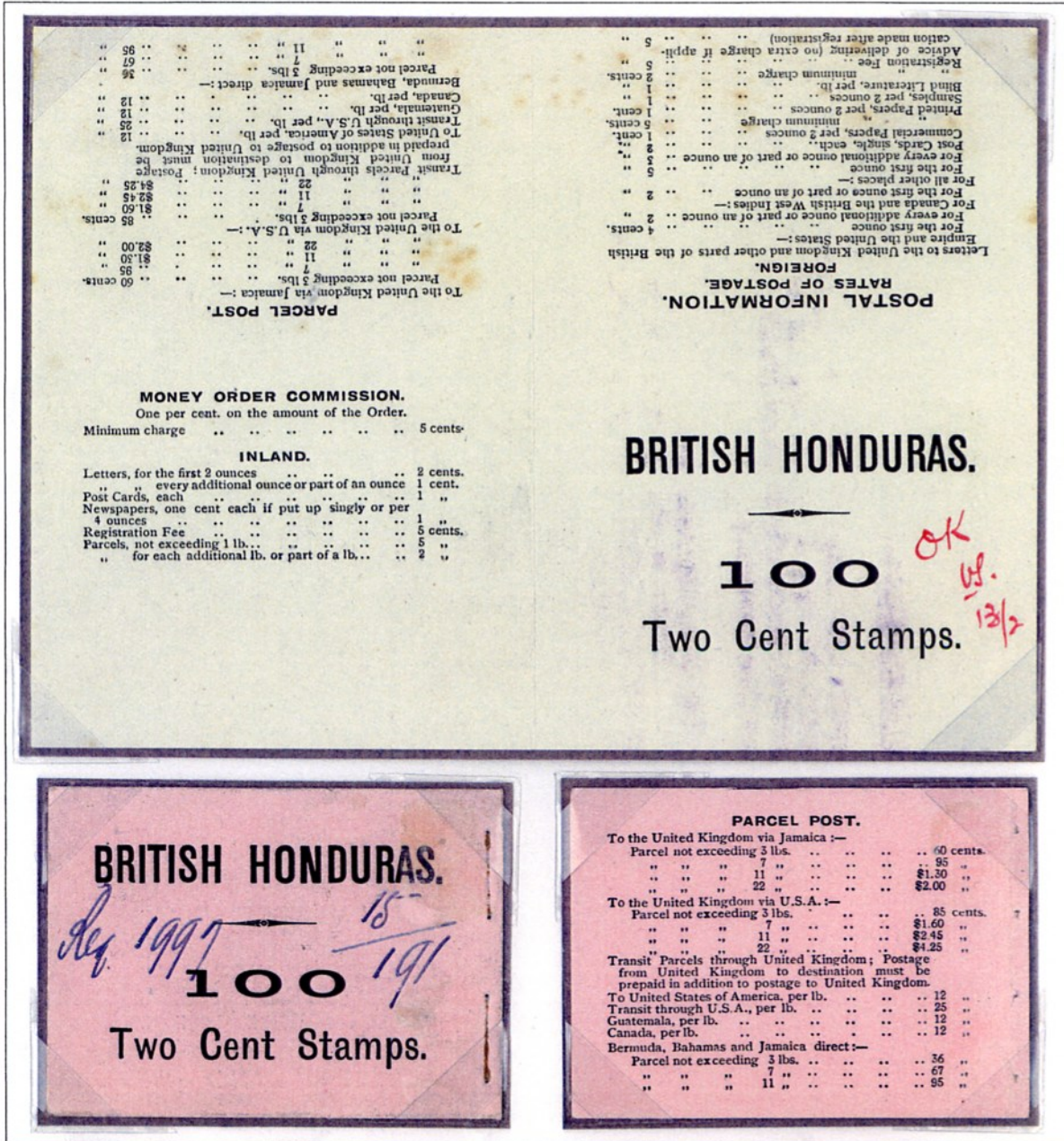
28 August 1972. Envelope from Guatemala to Belize, franked with two 1971 Guatemalan adhesives which show the Guatemalan national boundary including British Honduras territory. The adhesives were deemed offensive and the letter was returned, after being struck with a type RTS-12 cachet.



1967. 11th Cycle race. Airmail stamps inscribed "BELICE ES DE GUATEMALA", ie Belize belongs to Guatemala. The map also shows British Honduras territory as a part of Guatemala.

STAMP BOOKLETS

The two cents definitive colour was changed from brown to rose-carmine in December 1926 and the new stamps were also issued as booklets. As the international postcard rate had been reduced from 3c to 2c on 1st October 1925 the inscription inside the booklet cover had to be changed accordingly. DLR archive material for this new booklet (requisition 1997 15/191) is shown below.



Booklet pane (stapled at left) with Samuel type D18 specimen hand-stamp. A single booklet (10 panes) was hand-stamped for archive purposes.

STAMP BOOKLETS

Booklet pane (stapled at right) with Samuel type D16a specimen handstamp. A single booklet (10 panes) was hand-stamped for archive purposes. This handstamp was used for booklet archives, but it is not clear why both D16a and D18 should have been used.



1927. Issued booklet panes of ten. The panes were folded vertically (6 + 4) to fit the booklet.



The booklet panes were produced from full sheets of stamps, comprising two panes of sixty stamps (10 X 6) separated by a vertical gutter. The surplus central strips comprised horizontal gutter pairs and were sold off across the post office counter.

