

*How to prepare a book
or article for
publication
by Rob May MA, FRPSL*

Based on his 2023 book

Internal Mail Routes of Nigeria 1900-1960



Philatelic CV

FRPSL for work merging the NPS Library with the RPSL Library

Long-standing collector of Nigeria postal history

Former chair of Publications for WASC, arranging printing for other authors

Author of book "The Wreck of SS Jebba" and joint author of book on Sterling Definitives of Nigeria 1961-1972

This is my first major book



How did it start?

Robert Nelson displayed his Nigeria TPOs at a WASC meeting in 2013 before putting it up for sale

I asked him to scan it for possible publication

I started setting it up for publication as laid out on album pages by Robert.

Michael Wright passed to me Jack Ince's archive of cuttings from the Nigeria Gazettes and other Nigerian Official Publications

I then realised that combining research from that archive with Robert Nelson's images could make a much better book.

I show here one of Jack Ince's pages

No. 1276.] **Lagos Railway.**

THROUGH BOOKING OF MERCHANDISE TO
AND FROM STATIONS ON BARO-KANO
AND LAGOS, RAILWAYS.

On and from 1st January, 1912, through booking will be established between the undernoted stations on the Lagos and Baro-Kano Railways.

LAGOS RAILWAY STATIONS.	BARO-KANO RAILWAY STATIONS.
Iddo.	Kaduna.
Aro.	Rigachikun.
Lafenwa.	Zaria.
Ibadan.	Kano.
Oshogbo.	
Offa.	
Ilorin.	
Jebba.	

Through rate lists, which have received the approval of His Excellency the Governor in Council, and have been the subject of a temporary agreement between the Governments of Southern Nigeria and Northern Nigeria and which are subject to revision at short notice, may be obtained on application to the Traffic Superintendent, Ebute Metta.

Quotations for through rates to and from any other stations on the two Railways may also be obtained on application to the Traffic Superintendent.

The through rates quoted in Notice No. 1185 Gazette No. 87 of 29th November, 1911, will remain in force until 31st December 1911, only.

F. BEDFORD-GLASIER,
General-Manager.

General Manager's Office,
Ebute Metta, 14th December, 1911.

No. 1277.] **Lagos Railway.**

Notice is hereby given that on and from 1st January, 1912, the section of the Lagos Railway, from Jebba North to Minna will be opened for all descriptions of Passenger and Goods bookings.

Names of stations are scheduled below, viz:—

Jebba North.
Mokwa.
Charati.
Gierkin.
Wuterrie.
Zungeru.
Beji.
Minna Junction.

Goods and Passenger rate lists will be exhibited at all the above mentioned stations, and may be

obtained shortly on application to the Traffic Superintendent, Ebute Metta.

F. BEDFORD-GLASIER,
General-Manager.

General Manager's Office,
Ebute Metta, 15th December, 1911.

Primary sources – official publications

Nigeria Weekly Gazette: published 1914 to 1960+ (except 1939-1944)

Southern Nigeria and Northern Nigeria also published weekly gazettes from before 1900 to the end of 1913

Nigeria Colonial Annual Reports

Nigeria P&T department annual reports

Nigeria Marine department annual reports

Nigeria Ports and Waterways annual reports

Nigeria Aviation annual reports

Nigeria Handbooks. These were produced at irregular intervals of years.

Secondary sources – other books and articles

Always use primary sources if available; other books and articles are secondary sources.

That is because other authors might have missed some sources, misread or interpreted primary sources.

Significant philatelic books used in my research:

- McCaig
- Ince & Sacher "The Postal Services of the British Nigeria Region",
- Jack Ince
- Proud "The Postal History of Nigeria", 1995
- Redhead "Collecting Nigerian Cancellations", 2021 and updated on-line

Are covers a primary source? YES

For historians, letters are a primary source

For postal historians, the envelopes and postal markings on entires can also be

I have tried to illustrate at least one cover with origin and transit postmarks for each route

In my mind there is a ranking order: official document first, then a cover to show that the official announcement was implemented.

Take care about a route that sender or recipient has written on the cover

Literature review

It is important to read any relevant research that has already been published

For this topic, the relevant philatelic books were already well-known to me

I searched for articles in the English-speaking philatelic press using RPSL's library catalogue on line

I checked the reference lists in previous books and philatelic articles

I admit that I only discovered books of autobiographical reminiscences and biography as I was writing. I should have searched the catalogues of the deposit libraries at the start.

I searched Wikipedia for related topics and checked their reference lists. This was particularly useful on transport topics: railways and ships.

Software

Commercial printers need a PDF digital print-ready file but authors need a more flexible format than PDF to write the text and place images.

I use Microsoft Publisher (as does Cameo) but Word or Word Perfect would do.

I like the flexibility of Publisher to choose to connect or not connect text boxes

A two-page Master for each chapter, with headers for the page number and titles

Wrote a chapter at a time, each with its own Publisher file

Running headers for page numbers and titles

Each chapter printed to PDF when finished

Then the series of PDFs was merged into one PDF file using PDF24 software

References

Each chapter has its own list of references

ALWAYS cite references so that readers can go back to your sources to check their understanding and to dig deeper for their own interests, as I did in literature review.

ALWAYS log the references as you write the text. I made the mistake of not logging some references early on - then I could not find where I got the information!

The reference numbers in my text are out of sequence because I added new text into prior text when I found new sources. I found I was not expected to re-sort the references at the end of each chapter to put them in number order through the text.

Indexing

An index is vital to the readers and difficult to prepare

I found software called T-Extract which harvests all key words and phrases from any PDF file

It produces a very long list, some of which is superfluous, so I asked for help from experienced indexers

I separated out of the list all place names in Nigeria to create a "place-name index"

Then the rest (a "topical index") was weeded and sorted, so for example railway references were all grouped as sub-headings under "railway".

Bibliography and proof-reading

This was the last element, compiled from the references at the end of each chapter

Bibliographical titles could then be removed from the index

It is very useful to recruit a proof-reader who understands the subject. Ray Harris did so and made many useful comments

I also had the benefit of a non-specialist reader (Rex Dixon) commenting on my use of punctuation, capital letters, captions etc. consistently across the chapters

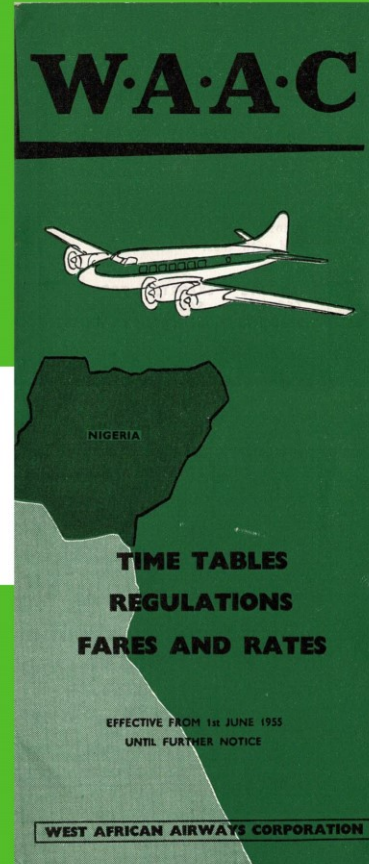
I lost count of how many cycles of corrections I went through. Painful but necessary!

So, did my research find anything new?

Ince & Sacher covered mail routes before 1914 very well

But it seems that nobody has published a comprehensive review of routes 1914-1960

Almost all the references are previously unpublished



Internal Mail Routes of Nigeria 1900-1960 : Volume 1

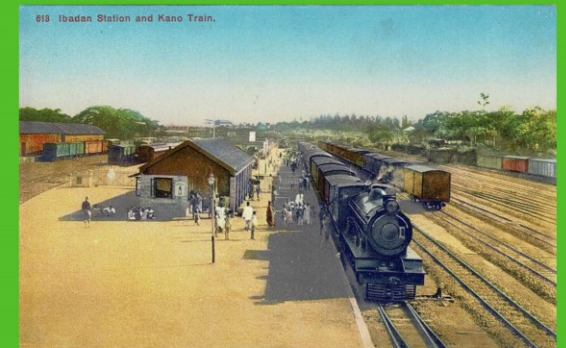
R.F. May



Internal Mail Routes of Nigeria 1900-1960

Volume 1: by Water, Rail and Air

R.F. May FRPSL



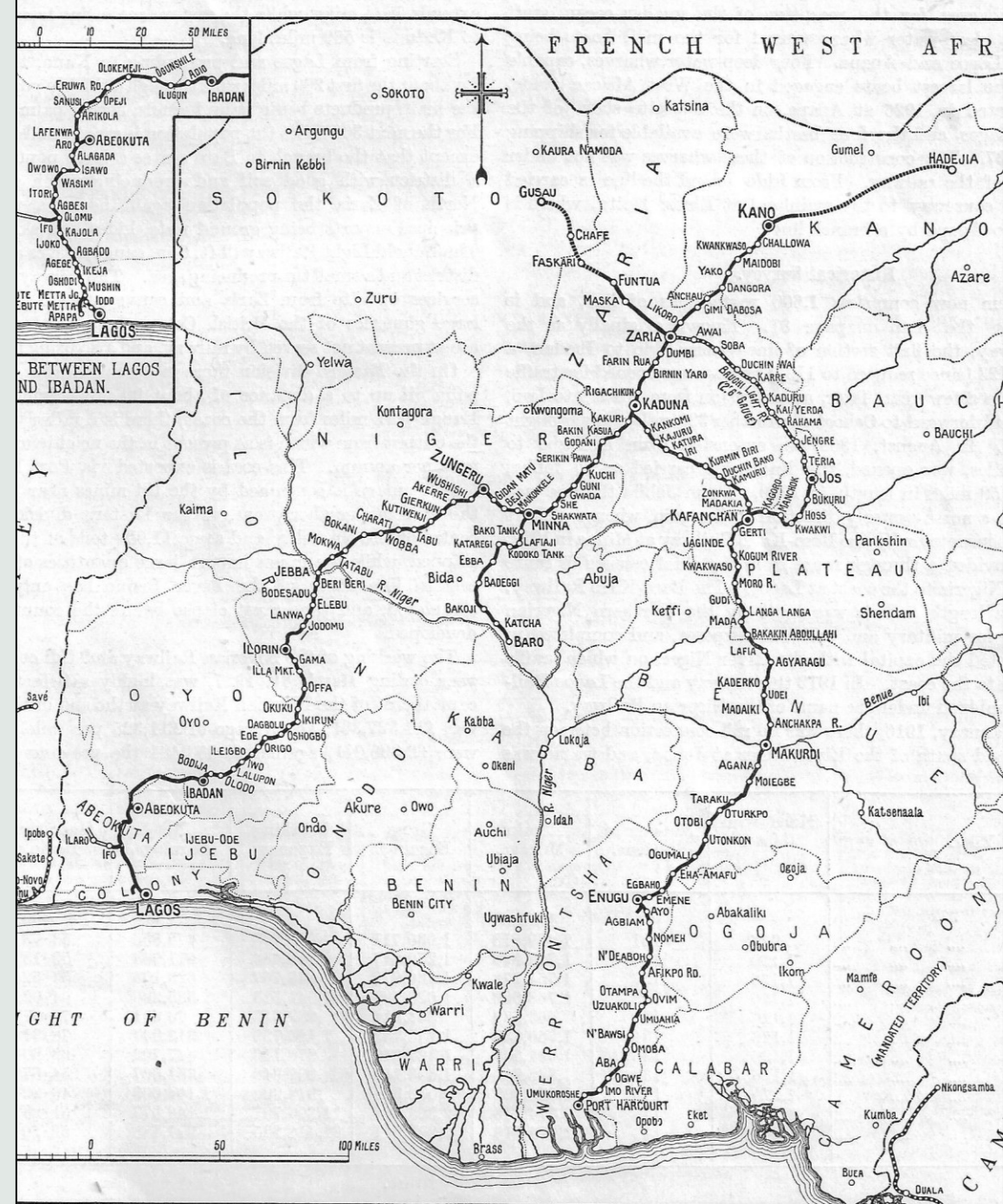
Mail by rail

The chapters I wrote first

- Lagos Government Railway and the Western Line
- Baro-Minna-Kano Railway
- Eastern Railway

..because I had good maps, as shown here, reference covers and text from Robert Nelson and a railway section of Jack Ince's archive

These three chapters set my model for the other chapters



Map of the Nigerian Railway, showing 1,600 Route-Miles of Line.

Mail by river

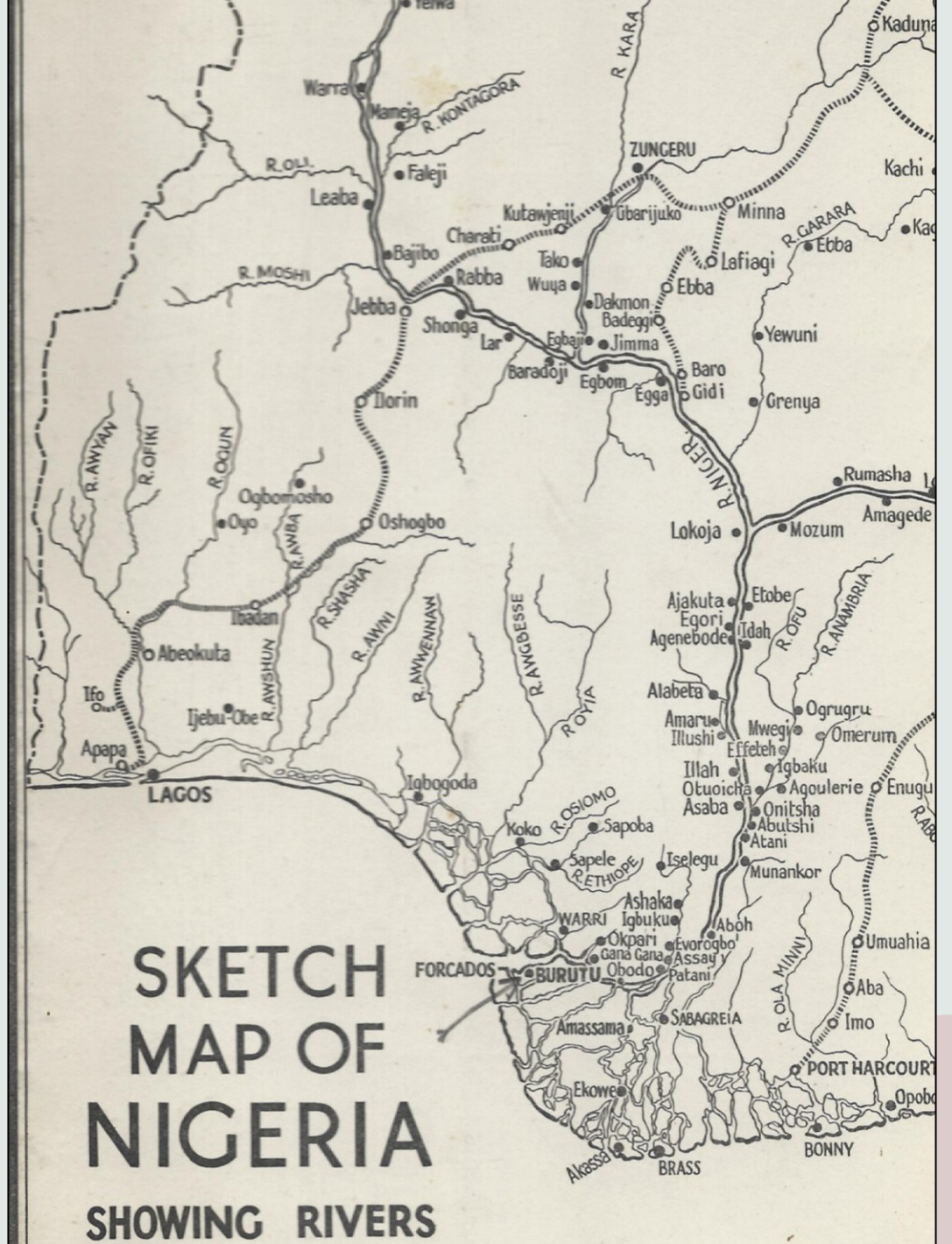
Four chapters

- Two for the Niger
- One for the Benue
- One for the Cross River

Again, good maps available

Services on the rivers were well documented in the official reports and notices

Robert Nelson collection helped with a good range of Niger TPO covers but little else



Mail by internal air routes

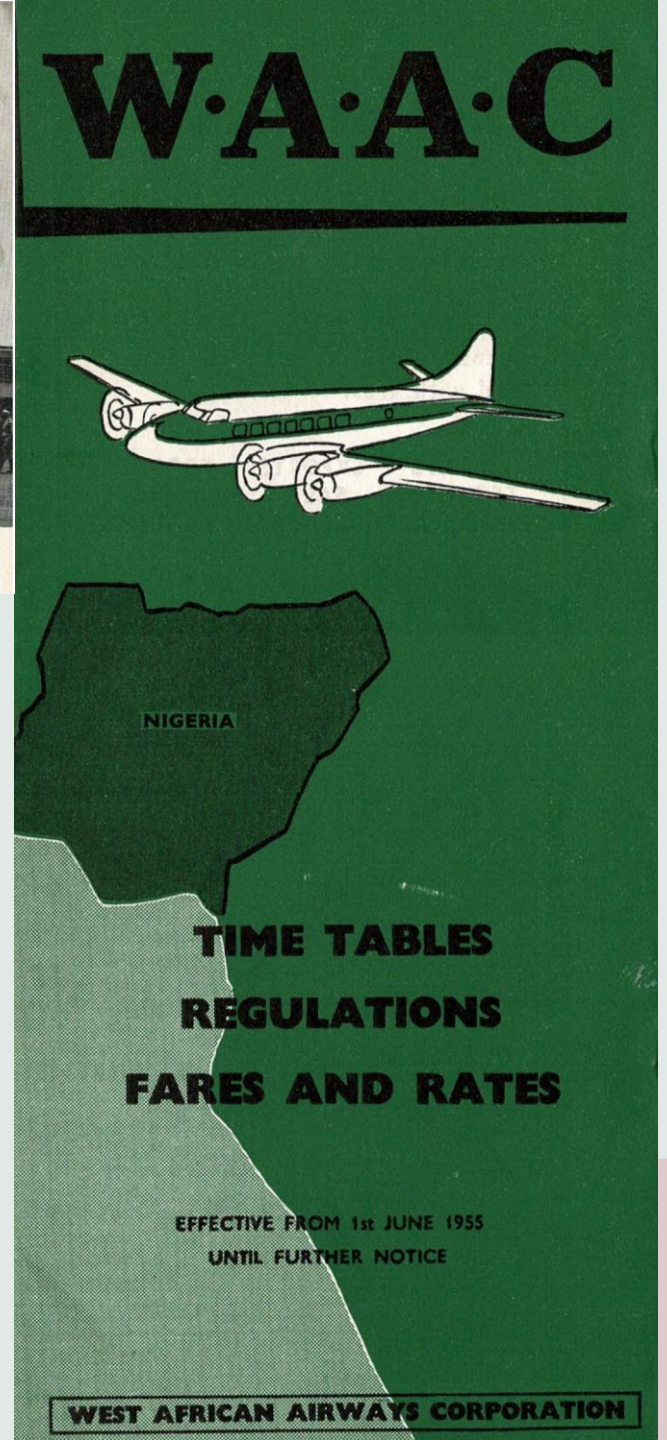


Until 1947 east-west communication was poor; handled by road because rivers and railways ran mostly south-north

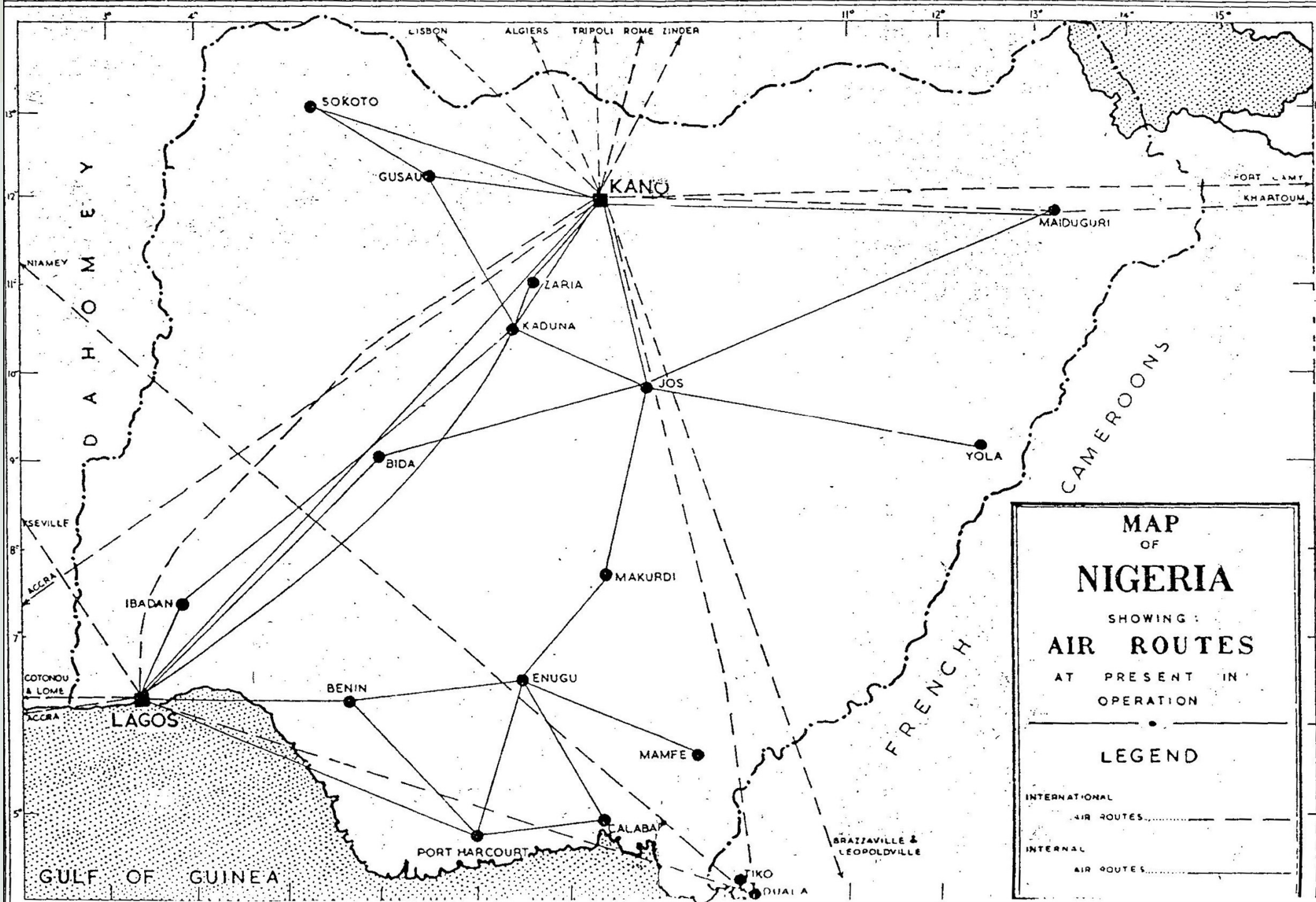
West African Airways Corporation was set up in 1947 expressly to carry both ordinary mails and air mails between airports within Nigeria, as well as passengers

From 1947 almost all longer distance mails were flown

See network map on next slide



1955 map of WAAC air routes within Nigeria



Errors in primary sources

This air route map contains some errors

Tiko has been located in French Cameroun - it should be on the Nigerian side of the border

Fort Lamy is shown by an arrow on one of the international routes out of the eastern edge of the map. It should be on the map, south of Lake Chad

Even primary sources should be checked and cross-referenced where possible

Coast, creeks and lagoons

My last chapter, but actually chapter 2 in the book

This was far and away the most difficult chapter to write

Very complex network of creek routes

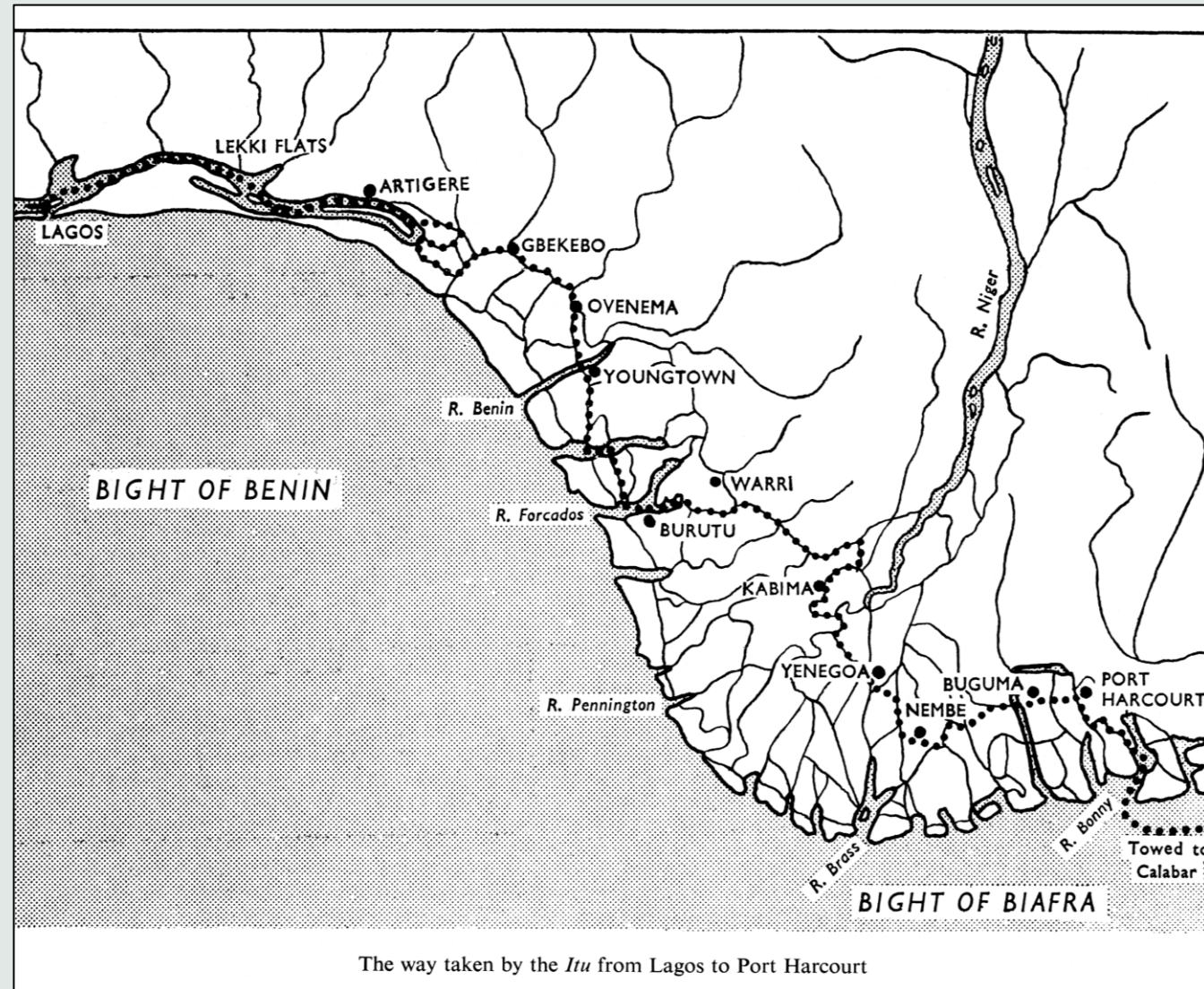
Many changes of their timetables

Initially government routes, then privatisation

Lack of information after privatisation

P&T Dept searches for quicker land routes

Lack of useful maps



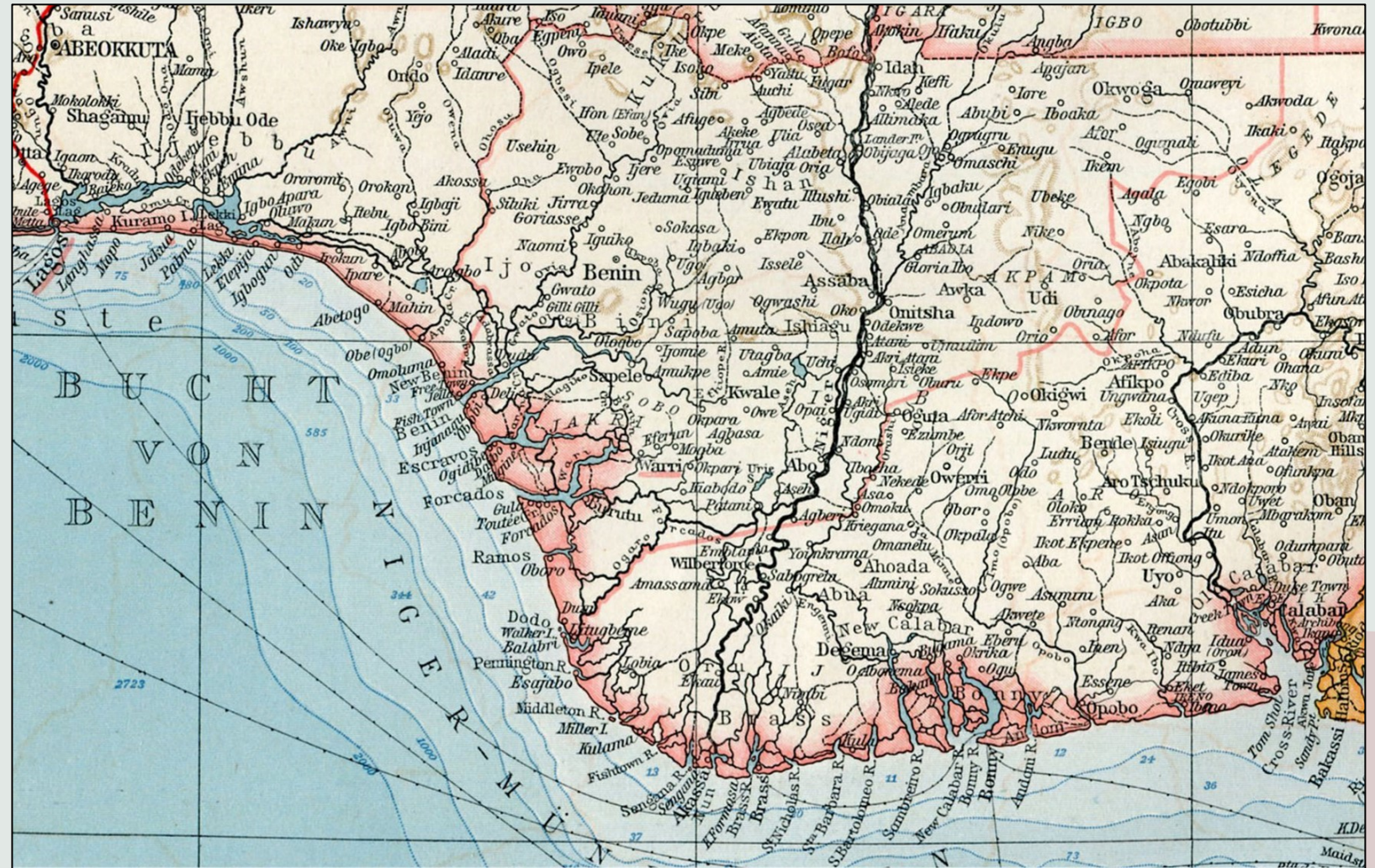
An accurate creeks map

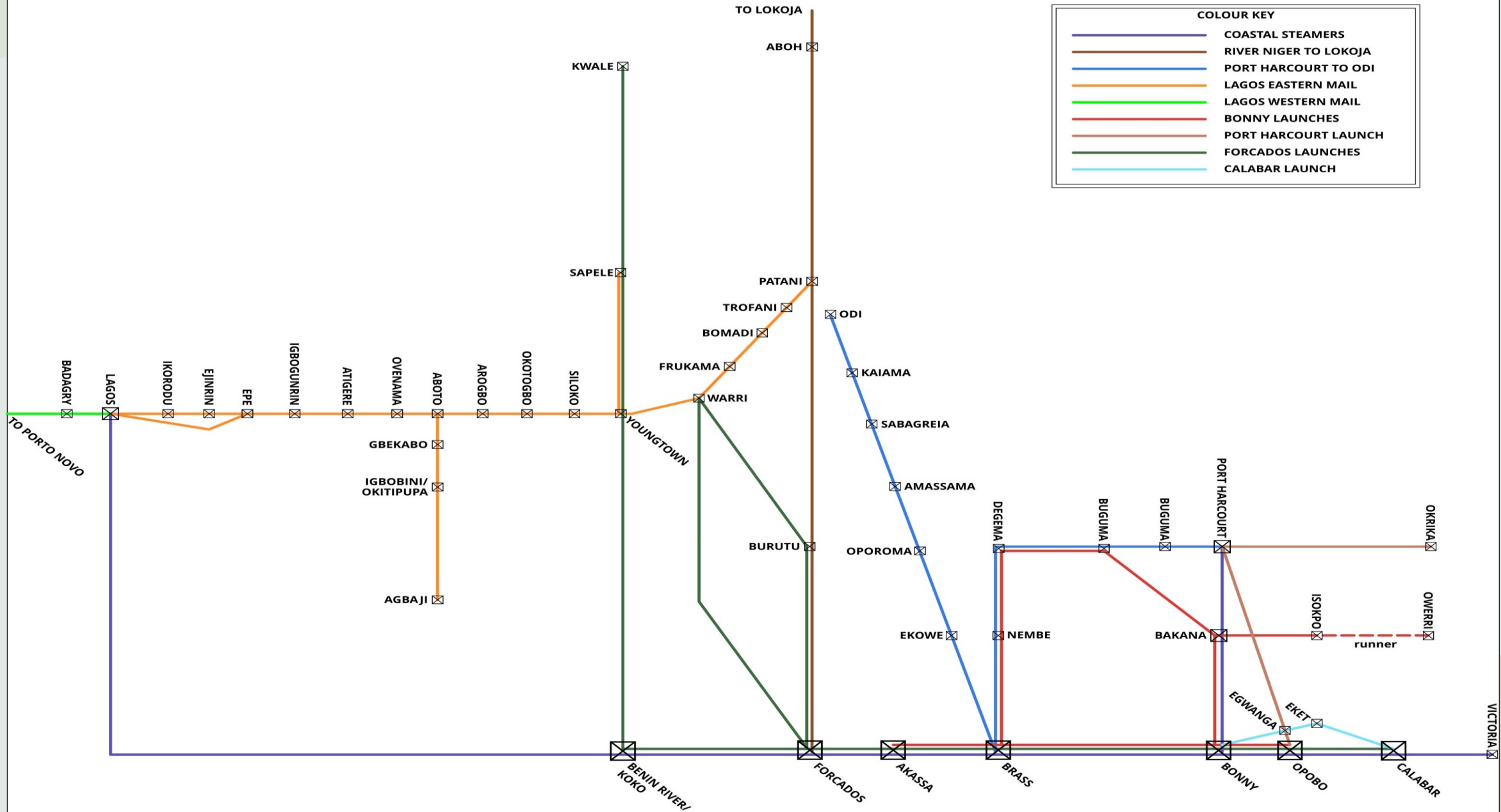
Towards the end of final proof-reading Rex Dixon found a good map in a German atlas, published 1914

But it remains difficult to trace the routes taken by creeks launches through this network of waterways running roughly parallel with the coast

I had prepared a London Underground - style map which is also in the book.

Shown on the next slide





COLOUR KEY

—	COASTAL STEAMERS
—	RIVER NIGER TO LOKOJA
—	PORT HARCOURT TO ODI
—	LAGOS EASTERN MAIL
—	LAGOS WESTERN MAIL
—	BONNY LAUNCHES
—	PORT HARCOURT LAUNCH
—	FORCADOS LAUNCHES
—	CALABAR LAUNCH

What next?

The book had reached 344 pages, with 12 pages of indexes...

but I had not yet tackled mail routes by tracks and roads.

It is now three years since I started writing it during the first lockdown...

so, I have opted to publish this as volume 1 and will now start to compile

Internal Mail Routes of Nigeria volume 2: by tracks and roads

I also welcome corrections and additions to volume 1 for a future supplement.

In the frames here, you will find a range of selected page images