

BELGIAN CONGO STUDY CIRCLE

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Bulletin No. 29

April 1977

OBITUARY NOTICES

It is with the deepest regret that we have to inform members of the deaths, within the last few months, of three fellow-members:

J. RICHIR

M. Jules Richir, who died in August, 1976, had been a member for a little more than one year. Unfortunately most of us had not had the pleasure of meeting him.

E.H. WISE

Mr. Ernest Wise, who died on 26 January, had been a member for a number of years. His principal philatelic interest was in Scandinavia, of which he was very knowledgeable and on which he had written several philatelic handbooks.

Although his Congo stamps were of only secondary importance to him, he took a keen interest in the Mols Issues and their varieties, an interest which developed when his wife ceased collecting Congo and he took over her collection. Mrs. Wise was, at one time, one of our members and our condolences and special sympathy have been sent to her.

W.J. THRASHER

Mr. William Thrasher, who died on 16 January, was one of our founder-members. An architect by profession, Mr. Thrasher was an artist of some note and, last summer, there was an exhibition of his works.

Mr. Thrasher was a very keen student of the stamps of the Congo and was particularly interested in the typographed CONGO BELGE overprints, being, we believe, the first collector to study them in detail. The results of his research appeared in a Bulletin many years ago.

Although his interest in stamps had waned in recent years, Mr. Thrasher maintained his interest in the Study Circle and was always very willing to help when he could. The drawing of the date stamp included in this Bulletin was his last service to us.

William Thrasher was a good friend and one of nature's gentlemen and we shall sorely miss him. We are particularly glad that he was able to attend our Silver Jubilee meeting last October.

CORRIGENDUM - BULLETIN NO. 28

The Editor regrets that there was a typographical error on Page 13 of the last Bulletin. In the table of combinations of plates of the Mols 50 centimes, an amendment should be made as follows:

Bilingues

1915

III3 + A4 (not III2 + A4 as stated)

LAST MEETING

Our last meeting was on 5 February, at Tadworth, where Mr. Keach gave a most interesting display of "Varieties on Engraved Stamps" and spoke in detail about the causes and appearances of the different types of varieties.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be on Saturday, 21 May. Mr. Compton has kindly invited us to his house at East Horsley for the afternoon and the display will be provided by Mr. S.S. Smith.

CANCELLATIONS OF THE NORMAL POST OFFICES

For members who have a copy of the preprint of the above, Addenda and Corrigenda No. 7 is enclosed.

POSTAGE STAMPS IN THE MAKING

The Hon. Secretary has lost or mislaid his copy of Melville's book and wonders if another member has borrowed it. If so, please advise.

EXTRACTS FROM THE PERIODICALS.

Postal History International: January and March, 1977.

The "definitive" publication of "The Cancellations of the Normal Post Offices of the Belgian Congo 1886-1960 and Ruanda Urundi 1917-1962" by A.I. Heim and R.H. Keach continues in serial form.

GENERAL BUSINESS

It is hoped to deal with a number of business items before the display at the May meeting. This meeting will thus constitute the equivalent of an Annual General Meeting for the Study Circle. For this reason, the main items of business, so far as these are known in advance, are noted hereunder. Members who are unable to attend the meeting may thus have the opportunity to send any relevant ideas or comments or, indeed, any further proposed Agenda Items, to the Hon. Secretary, prior to the date of the meeting.

- 1) Programme - in the past, we have been rather lax in arranging our programme of activities far enough in advance. It is hoped, during the meeting, to map out activities for at least one year ahead. Any proposals for venues or content for future meetings will be welcome.
- 2) Expert Committee - This has now been set up and all that remains to be done is to approve the form of certificate and agree a charge for expertising. The Committee is expected to meet twice annually and the date of its first meeting will also be discussed.
- 3) Changes to Study Circle Committee - current members of the Committee were elected in November, 1975. Members may feel that this is long enough and that they would like to see some changes.
- 4) Dealer Membership - up till now we have not admitted dealers to membership of the Study Circle. Several requests for such membership have, however, been received and members present feelings on this subject are earnestly sought. It need hardly be stressed that, even if the principle of

permitting dealer membership is agreed, any dealer who wishes to apply will be most carefully vetted before being admitted.

- 5) Any Other Business - please advise the Hon. Secretary of any further items which you would like discussed in May or at any future date.

THE POST OFFICES AND POSTMARKS OF ZAIRE

M. Georges Celis is very interested in the postal history of modern Zaire and he has provided the Bulletin with such information on the post offices as he has been able to acquire.

Largely because of the inadequacy of the present postal authorities, he finds it exceedingly difficult to obtain information as to which post offices still exist, and this in spite of his writing to the post offices themselves and to nearby mission stations.

M. Celis would be grateful to know of any cancellations from the following post offices during the period 30 June, 1960 to 31 December, 1970:

ABA AKETI AMADI ANGO BABONDE BAFWASENDE BAMBESA BANALLIA
 BANANA BANZVILLE BARAKA BASANKUSU BELINGO BENA-BENDI
 BENA-TSHIADI BENGAMISA BENDERA BILI BINGA BISHUSHA BLUKWA
 BOMILI BONGANDANGA BOSOBOLO BUKAMA BULUNGU BUNIA BUNYAKIRI
 BUSU-DJANOVA BUSU-MELO BUSU-SIMBA CHARLESVILLE DAKWA DEKESE
 DEMBA DIBAYA-LUBUE DILOLO DJALASIGA DJELO-BINZA DJOLO DJUGU
 DONGO DORUMA ELISABETHVILLE 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 FARADJE FESHI
 FIZI GETI GOMA 2 GOMBARI GOMBE-MATADI GUMBA-MONGALA GUNGU
 IRUMU KABAMBARE KABARE KABONGO KABUNGA KAHEMBA KAILO KAILOLE
 KAMANA KAMINA 2 KAMINA- BASE MILITAIRE 1 KAMPENE KAMUPINI
 KANUTSHINA KARAWA KASANGULU KASENYI KASESE KASONGO 1 and 2
 KASONGO-LUNDA KATAKO-KOMBE KATANA-LWIRO KATENGA KAYNA-LUOFU
 KAZUMBA KIANZA KIKWIT 2 KIGULUBE KILEMBE KILOMINES KIMPESE
 KINDU 1, 2, 3 and 4 KINGOMA KINTAMBO KINYEZIRE KIPAKA-LUTSHI
 KIPUKU KIRI KILOTSHE KIRUNDU KISENGE KOLE(KASAI) KUNGU
 LEVERVILLE LIGASA LIKATI LIMETE LOKANDU LOKOLIA LOMELA LOWA
 LUBEFU LUBUTU LUKALABA LUKULA LULINGU LUOZI MADIMBA MAHAGI
 MALELE MALEMBA-NKULU MAMBASA MANONO MATEKO MBUJI-MAYI 3 MIABI
 MIKWI MINOVA MITWABA MOANDA MOERBEKE MOMPONO MONDOMBE MONGA
 MONGBWALU MOTENGE-BOMA MPUFI MUNGBERE MUSHIE MUTWANGA MWEKA

MWESO NANGOSIRA NDU NIANGARA NIOKA NIZI NKARA NKOLE
NYA-NGEZI NYUNZU OPIENGE PANGI PONTHERVILLE POPOKABAKA
PORT-FRANCOIS PUNIA RUNGU RUTSHURU RWINDI SAMBA SAMBILI
SENTERY SHABUNDA SONGOLOLO TAPILI THYSVILLE 1 and 2 TITULE
TOLO TSHENGERERO TSHIKAPA TSHILENGE TSHIMBULU TSHUMBE-STE-MARIE
TSUPU VISTA VUHOVI WEMBO-NYAMA WOLTER YAHILA YAHUMA YAKOMA
YANGAMBI 1 YATOLEMA ZOBIA.

If members have examples of such cancellations, will they please inform M. Celis (B.P. 1630, Lubumbashi, Zaire) giving the dates; alternatively, inform the Hon. Secretary and he will pass composite information to M. Celis.

THE "SMALL CIRCLE" DATE STAMPS - R.H. Keach

M. Paul Jacquemin has very kindly sent for inspection two 19th century Congo cancellers, one of BANANA and one of MATADI. These are of the "small circle" type, what we call Type 1, normal at that period. Strikes have been taken from the date stamps and actual cancellations taken therefrom are shown:



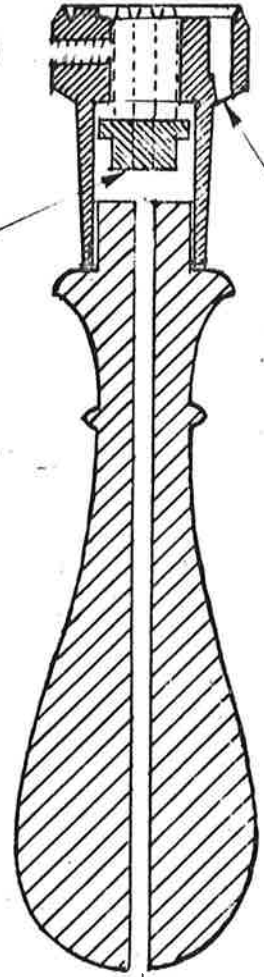
The late Mr. Thrasher examined one of the date stamps and kindly prepared the attached full-scale drawing showing both the outline of the canceller and its detailed construction. He also provided additional notes which are included in this article.

The provision of a hole through the length of the handle and the inclusion of the loose metal "Backing Piece" within the body of the canceller shows considerable ingenuity in the design of the date stamp.

thumb screw to secure date component.



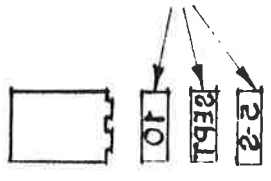
free moving circular metal backing piece.



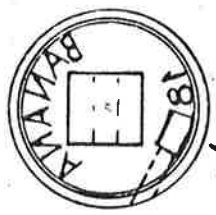
hole for thin rod to press backing piece down and obtain true face alignment of components whilst the thumb screw is tightened.

hole for ensuring alignment of year component with loose pin, whilst set screw is tightened.

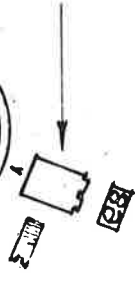
SECTION



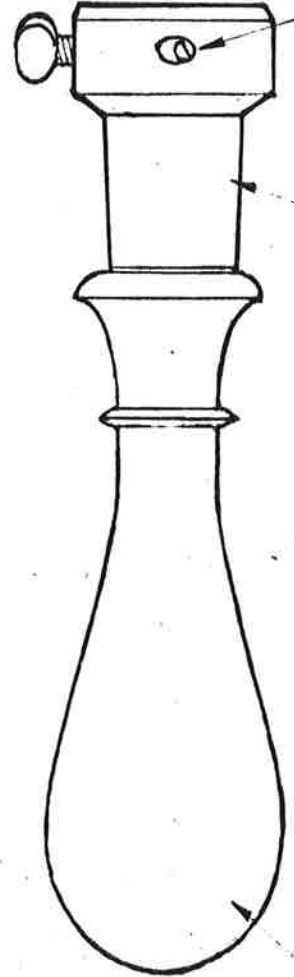
components (three) for:- date - month and time.



view of cancelling face showing 'cast-in town name and numerals, with slots for changing components.



component for date change, one for two numerals.



box or pear wood handle.

metal holder.

SIDE VIEW

set screw to secure 'year' component.



view of canceller face completed.

W.J.T. delt.

Without doubt, these features were used to locate the loose date data (day, month and hour) on the same level as the circle and the letters of the town name. The canceller would have been placed face-down on a flat surface and a long metal rod, perhaps like a steel knitting needle, pushed through the hole in the top of the handle. This would, through the loose backing piece, push the loose date data down to the flat surface to the level of the circle. The thumb screw would then have been tightened and the date data kept in position.

The loose metal backing piece is missing from the MATADI canceller although the handle is bored with a hole as is that illustrated and it is presumed that, at some time in its life, the date stamp was fitted with a new handle and the backing piece omitted.

Cancellations are not infrequently found with one or more elements of the date data (day, month and time) missing. It is clear from the design of the date stamp that the thumb screw could not be tightened if any one of the three elements was missing and the other elements would have simply fallen out. Missing data in a cancellation must have resulted from the element or elements not being pressed down to the level of the circle, perhaps because the "knitting needle" was not available or the clerk just did not bother to use it.

The existence of an inked rectangle in place of any element of the date data, usually the time, is clearly due to the component being inserted upside-down with the flat end on a level with the face of the other type. At times, this would undoubtedly have been an error by the clerk but it was so frequent in some post offices that one wonders if it was not intentional. If, for example, the 5-S component was lost or mislaid, any other similar component with a different time could have been used and, inserted upside-down, would at least not have given the wrong time. The second of the BANANA strikes included above has the time element inverted to give the "inked rectangle instead of time" variety.

There is a hole, much shorter than that through the handle, in the head of the canceller through which the needle could be passed to position the last two figures of the year, also a loose element and positioned independent of the day, month and time elements. This was retained in position by means of a grub screw. Cancellations are frequently found with the last two figures of the year missing. This would have occurred if the two figures were not fitted in the date stamp, if the grub screw was missing or if the needle had not been used to position the element.

It is pleasing to know that our conclusion that, for the vast majority of small circle date stamps, the first two figures of the year were an integral part of the canceller and not a loose element was correct.

The date stamps have cleared up another small mystery, the occasional finding, on a cover or piece, of a blob of ink above, and perhaps a half-inch outside, the circle of the cancellation and this blob constant for each such cancellation on the document. This clearly was an impression of the head of the thumb screw which, in certain positions is at about the same level as the surface of the type and would have been inked by the ink-pad and the ink transferred to the envelope to which the cancel was applied. A very small variation in the thickness of the date data components or a slight tightening or loosening of the thumb screw would have avoided the mark.

We are told that these two cancellers were never issued to post offices in the Congo but were kept in reserve in the government stores in case they were needed. This is supported by the fact that the design of the date stamps is identical to the Belgian cancellers of the same period in the Brussels Postal Museum.

A strange thing now comes to light: we have examples from both these cancellers on single stamps. Because they had not been seen on cover, they were presumed to be forgeries, the BANANA cancellation being that described as Forgery Type G in Bulletin No. 23. The BANANA cancellation has been seen on four stamps of the first two issues, with varying dates from 1886 to 1889 but in each case the month is MAI. Of the MATADI cancellation, only two have been noted, both 11 JANV 3-S 1895, on the 5c blue and 10c brown of 1894.

It has been quite categorically stated that cancelled-to-order stamps were never supplied by either the Independent State of the Congo or the Belgian Governments, apart from kindly disposed postmasters. If this is true, the BANANA and MATADI date stamps can have been applied to stamps only with the connivance of the keeper of the store that held them or after they, in some way, fell into private hands.

"CONGO BELGE" - THE TYPOGRAPHED OVERPRINT OF 1909 - Roland Ingels

Except for that contained in the basic work, "Congo - Cinquante Ans d'Histoire Postale", one has to search diligently for information on the typographed overprints. The late Mr. Thrasher published his study in 1959; in 1972 we learned from the Abbe G. Gudenkauf the differences between the ordinary and the Princes' issues; yet many questions remain unanswered. Thus we read and verify what has already been written and then, where possible, add to this body of knowledge some new information.

Each sheet which had to be overprinted consisted of 50 stamps. It was thus necessary to reproduce the basic overprint at least 50 times. These reproductions were assembled into a so-called "overprinting plate" in such a way that each could be removed (or moved) separately. In order to assemble the plate it was necessary to take into account:

- 1) the measurements of the stamps themselves
- 2) the distances between adjacent stamps

and what about the measurements of the complete sheets? - well this does not necessarily relate to the assembly of the overprinting plate, but is of obvious importance during the overprinting operation; the careful positioning of the sheet relative to the overprinting plate. (In its withdrawn position, the overprinting plate was almost vertical in the machine. The sheets would be placed on the bed of the machine either by hand or semi-automatically. During printing, the bed and overprinting plate were brought into contact with such force that the profile of the overprint was impressed through the paper into the gum. We should also remember that the sheets of stamps had already been perforated and could not simply be slid over one another without risk of damage; they were thus lifted in some other way).

The measurements of the Stamps and Distances between Adjacent Stamps

The measurements of the stamps must be taken only from unused copies. It is surprising to discover that, even on the same value, these measurements can show wide variations, as can the distance between stamps. It also becomes apparent that the edges of stamps on the same sheet are not always parallel so that the distance can differ depending on whether it is measured at the top edges or at the bottom edges.

These variations may be attributed to the structure of the paper and the method of printing.

In principle, wove paper can be either "long sieve" or "round sieve". It should be remembered that "round sieve" paper is printed on the upper side, whereas "long sieve" paper is printed on the sieve side.

In both cases, the paper has a layered structure and the various layers differ in composition. The lowest layer (the sieve side) is the most compact, the other layers being looser. Also in the paper is a filler, barely present in the sieve side but increasingly so on the upper side which therefore has a smoother surface. The positions of the fibres are also different, having no set orientation on the upper side but with a definite tendency to lie in one direction only on the sieve side. This is the reason for paper curling due to changes in the moisture content of the air. Moisture causes the more-or-less parallel fibres on the sieve side to swell in the direction of their width whereas the fibres on the upper side, also swelling in the direction of their width but lying at all angles, expand equally in all directions. Thus the paper curls concave to its upper side. Similarly, if the air is drier, the paper curls convex to its upper side.

The stamps in this case were printed on moistened paper and there was, therefore, a lengthening of the sheet of paper in the direction perpendicular to the length of the fibres. After printing and drying, the sizes of the stamps differ somewhat from the measurements of the impressions on the actual printing plate. If a first printing was on paper with fibres lengthways and a second with fibres crossways, there would be obtained, quite unintentionally, different sizes of stamps.

We may also wonder whether different papers were used for the different printings and whether the papers used by Waterlow and Sons were different from those used by Waterlow Bros. and Layton.

Measurements of the Stamps

3,50 Fr	:	33,75 to 34,2	x	22,5 to 22,6	mm
10 Fr (p 14 $\frac{1}{4}$)	:	33,5 to 33,65	x	22,5 to 22,6	mm
10 Fr (p 12)	:	34,0 to 35,25	x	22,0 to 22,25	mm
5 c	:	34,2 to 34,5	x	22,0 to 22,1	mm
10 c	:	34,2	x	21,9	mm
25 c	:	34,2	x	22,1	mm
40 c	:	34,2	x	22,1	mm
1 Fr	:	34,2	x	22,1	mm
50 c	:	34,2	x	22,7	mm
15 c	:	34,5	x	22,2	mm
5 Fr	:	34,6	x	22,1	mm

Thus we see that, of the stamps printed by Waterlow and Sons, a length as great as 34,5mm has been measured for the 5c and that the 50c has an extra height of 0,6mm compared to the other values. This undoubtedly had an effect on the construction of the overprinting plate. Is this the reason why the plate was made in such a way that it could be dismantled? We shall return to this point later.

Vertical Distances between Stamps

3,50 Fr. : 2,7 to 3,3 mm
 10 Fr. (p 12) : 2,7 to 3,3 mm
 Other horizontal values: 2,3 to 2,6 mm; the 50c is the exception to the rule, barely 2,0 mm. This is, however, some compensation for the additional height of the stamp, 22,7 mm.
 Vertical values : about 2,4 mm.

Horizontal Distances between Stamps

All horizontal values : 2,3 to 3,0 mm
 Vertical values : about 2,2 mm

Overall Measurements of the Sheets without the Selvedge

3,50 Fr : 179,6 x 247,5mm to 184,2 x 256,0mm
 10 Fr (p 14 $\frac{1}{4}$) : 178,3 x 247,5mm to 181,5 x 252,0mm
 10 Fr (p 12) : 180,8 x 242,5mm to 184,4 x 249,5mm

5 c : 182,0 x 241,5mm
 10 c : 180,0 x 239,0mm
 25 c : 180,0 x 239,0mm
 40 c : 180,0 x 239,0mm
 1 Fr : 180,0 x 239,0mm
 50 c : 180,0 x 244,0mm
 15 c : 183,0 x 240,0mm
 5 Fr : 183,0 x 240,0mm

There were thus clear differences in the sizes of the sheets which should have been taken into account when constructing the overprinting plate. In fact only the height, and not the width of the overprinting plate was adjusted for the sizes of the sheets of stamps.

The Measurements of the Overprinting Plate and the Adaptations

For this purpose we shall ignore the vertical stamps and consider the horizontal stamps which, it will be remembered were printed 5 x 10 - that is, ten horizontal rows of five stamps each. In all the horizontal values, the surcharges in each horizontal row were butted together and it is therefore not surprising that, for instance, we find that the overall width of the overprint is the same for the 3,50Fr as for the 50c.

CONGO BELGE CONGO BELGE CONGO BELGE CONGO BELGE CONGO BELGE

1st row :	approximately 163,5 mm	6th row:	approximately 163,0 mm
2nd row:	" 163,7 mm	7th row:	" 163,0 mm
3rd row:	" 163,5 mm	8th row:	" 163,1 mm
4th row:	" 163,1 mm	9th row:	" 162,4 mm
5th row:	" 163,1 mm	10th row:	" 162,4 mm

Owing to the fact that "spacers" between individual overprints in the overprinting plate were not adapted to the varying lengths of the stamps, the overprint on the 10Fr (p 14 $\frac{1}{4}$) always moved to the right of the stamps in the two right hand columns. This may indicate that the overprinting plate was centred on the left hand column of stamps. In any event, a horizontal displacement of the overprint on the horizontal stamps is therefore not abnormal.

In the case of the vertical measurements, however, the overall heights of the five vertical columns of overprints do differ for certain values of the horizontal stamps. For the 5c, 10c, 25c, 40c and 1Fr, we measure:

CONGO BELGE			
CONGO BELGE			
CONGO BELGE	1st vertical column	:	221,1 mm
CONGO BELGE	2nd " "	:	221,0 mm
CONGO BELGE	3rd " "	:	221,3 mm
CONGO BELGE	4th " "	:	224,8 mm
CONGO BELGE	5th " "	:	220,7 mm
CONGO BELGE			
CONGO BELGE			
CONGO BELGE			

for the 50c we measure :	1st vertical column	:	224,8 mm (+3,7 mm)
	2nd " "	:	224,7 mm (+3,7 mm)
	3rd " "	:	224,6 mm (+3,3 mm)
	4th " "	:	224,8 mm (+3,3 mm)
	5th " "	:	224,0 mm (+3,3 mm)

In order to adapt the overprinting plate to suit the different height of the 50c stamps, four of the spacers between adjacent horizontal rows of overprints were changed; between the 2nd and 3rd rows, between the 4th and 5th rows, between the 6th and 7th rows and between the 7th and 8th rows. Each replaced spacer measures about 0,8 mm more than the original. In this way, a taller overprinting plate was obtained. This is significant since, as this size of overprinting plate was used only for the 50c value, it indicates that this was probably the last value of the Waterlow and Sons stamps to be overprinted. Remember also that the 50c is the only value on which genuine inverted overprints exist.

Variations in the overprinting plate for the 50c value show :

- 1) use of the "small" overprinting plate (before adjustment) with some misplaced overprints
- 2) use of the "large" overprinting plate, inverted, with "CONGO BELGE" on the words "ETAT INDEPENDANT"
- 3) use of the "large" overprinting plate with "CONGO BELGE" on the words "DU CONGO".

In the case of the 3,50Fr and 10Fr values, printed by Waterlow Bros, and Layton, additional spacers were added so that the height of each vertical column of overprints was again increased to, on average, 8,4mm higher than the original "small" state.

1st vertical column	:	229,5 mm
2nd " "	:	229,4 mm
3rd " "	:	229,7 mm
4th " "	:	233,2 mm
5th " "	:	229,1 mm

For these values, there are no misplaced overprints in the same sense as for the 50c, but the distance pieces were irregularly distributed. There are no inverted overprints, only a double overprint.

The Overprints Themselves and the Types of Overprint

The overprints can be studied in the same way as the stamps themselves. Each overprint has its own peculiarities and its own place in the plate. In studying them, differences in length are noted, undoubtedly caused by shrinkage

in casting. Each casting shrinks differently with resulting differences in length and in the characteristics of individual letters, which might show breaks, narrowings, hollowings, etc.

There are five large overprints and ten small ones; in the sheet of vertical stamps, which is arranged 10 x 5 - that is, 5 horizontal rows of 10 stamps each, we find the length of the overprint for each position on the sheet. The figures shown are lengths in mm.

17,55	17,60	17,60	17,70	17,55	17,55	17,55	17,80	17,65	17,60
17,70	17,60	17,70	17,70	17,70	17,65	17,70	17,75	17,60	17,70
17,70	17,65	17,70	17,55	17,50	17,50	17,75	17,70	17,55	17,65
17,55	17,70	17,70	17,70	17,70	17,60	17,65	17,75	17,85	17,80
17,70	17,75	17,75	17,65	17,85	17,70	17,85	17,75	17,50	17,75

The large overprints occur on Nos. 8, 39, 40, 45 and 47 on the vertical stamps and on Nos. 4, 10, 11, 12 and 43 on the horizontal stamps.

This initial work has now been completed and we can pass to a general review of the letters themselves. Some letters show peculiarities which are common to several of the overprints. As a result, many of the overprints can be subdivided into five groups or types :

- Type a : the C of CONGO is nicked or broken at the bottom left
- Type b : the B of BELGE is broken or hollowed out from the inside at the bottom right of the letter
- Type c : the first E of BELGE has a V cut-out in the vertical leg between the upper two arms
- Type d : the lowest arm of the first E of BELGE is short
- Type e : the bottom arm of the second E of BELGE is hollowed out from underneath.



For the vertical stamps, we find these varieties in the positions indicated :

.	d	d	.	.	d	d	.	.	.
a	abe	abe	be	c	ce	abe	.	.	d
c	be	c	d	d	d	.	.	d	b
d	c	c	c	c	.	c	eb	.	c
c	.	abe	be	e	.	.	.	d	.

It is curious that the Type d overprints are always independent of the other varieties. There are 11 Type d, 11 Type c, 10 Type e, 9 Type b and 5 Type a. It is believed that five initial castings were made using the Brussels Type 5 handstamp as a pattern. These five initial castings were then used as patterns for further castings until sufficient were made to make an overprinting plate.

The Abbe Gudenkauf discovered, when studying the Princes' issue, that some new overprints had been incorporated in the re-assembled plate. More than 50 overprints had therefore been cast. This is understandable; damaged ones would have had to have been replaced. In total, about 55 overprints were therefore made.

Apart from variations in length and the five types of overprint, there are about 20 overprints which are uniquely damaged or show individual peculiarities. Again with reference to stamps of vertical format, the following overprints have such varieties :

.	.	.	.	.	.	V7	.	.	.
V11	V12	V13	.	V15	V16	V17	.	V19	.
V21	V22	.	V24	V25	.	.	V28	.	V30
V31	.	V33	V34	V35	.	.	.	.	.
V41	.	V43	.	.	.	.	.	.	V50

for details of the V varieties, see page 13.

Sequence of the Overprinting

In what sequence were the sheets of stamps of different values overprinted? From the limited number of castings it was necessary to make up various overprinting plates.

A start was apparently made with the 15c and 5Fr (i.e. the vertical format) values. Evidence is adduced as follows :

- 1) the second O of CONGO of No. 19 of the 15c is undamaged. On the 5Fr and on all other values (No. 32 corresponds for the horizontal stamps) there exists an easily perceptible break on the right and near the top bend of the letter O

CO CO GO B CO ONG

V 7

V 11

V 12

V 13

V 15

LGE CONGO GE NGO

V 16

V 17

V 19

V 21

LGE GO BELGE GO B

V 22

V 24

V 25

V 28

V 30

NGO GE NGO ONG ELG

V 31

V 31

V 33

V 34

V 34

ONG LGE CON ELG GE

V 35

V 35

V 41

V 43

V 50

2) on No. 24 of the vertical stamps and, in the cases of the 10Fr, 3,50Fr and 1Fr on No. 29 (the corresponding position for the horizontal stamps) the second O of CONGO is undamaged. With the other horizontal values there exists a break two-thirds up the right side of the letter.

After the vertical stamps had been overprinted, the overprinting plate was dismantled and re-assembled in order that it could be used for the horizontal values. The change was made in an orderly way; the 50th vertical stamp gave its overprint to the first horizontal stamp. Here follows a visual representation of the sequence in which the letters were transferred:

Vertical Stamps

1 46	2 47	3 48	4 49	5 50	6 45	7 44	8 43	9 42	10 41
11 36	12 37	13 38	14 39	15 40	16 35	17 34	18 33	19 32	20 31
21 26	22 27	23 28	24 29	25 30	26 25	27 24	28 23	29 22	30 21
31 16	32 17	33 18	34 19	35 20	36 15	37 14	38 13	39 12	40 11
41 6	42 7	43 8	44 9	45 10	46 5	47 4	48 3	49 2	50 1

Horizontal Stamps

50 1	49 2	48 3	47 4	46 5
41 6	42 7	43 8	44 9	45 10
40 11	39 12	38 13	37 14	36 15
31 16	32 17	33 18	34 19	35 20
30 21	29 22	28 23	27 24	26 25
21 26	22 27	23 28	24 29	25 30
20 31	19 32	18 33	17 34	16 35
11 36	12 37	13 38	14 39	15 40
10 41	9 42	8 43	7 44	6 45
1 46	2 47	3 48	4 49	5 50

Shaded : positions in the sheet of horizontal stamps
 Unshaded : positions in the sheet of vertical stamps

With these details, it is possible to allocate the great majority of the overprints to their correct positions in the sheet. The individual stamps, of course, also have their varieties. Thus by a combination of overprint varieties and stamp varieties, it is possible to say if a stamp with typographed overprint belongs to the "ordinary" or to the Princes' issue.

The full sequence of the overprinting was thus probably:

First - 15c and then 5Fr

10Fr and 3,50Fr

1Fr, 40c, 5c and 25c on the words "ETAT INDEPENDANT DU CONGO"

10c on the words "ETAT INDEPENDANT"

50c on the words "DU CONGO".

Curiosities of the Overprint

It is always possible that, during printing, temporary or unexpected irregularities occur: a not truly parallel positioning of overprinting plate and sheet of stamps; a speck of dust or other object foreign to the plate and ink; a change in the thickness of the ink. In such circumstances, there results a peculiar overprint which appears on several sheets and then disappears again, never to return. A displacement of the overprint appears when the relative positions of the overprinting plate and the sheet have not been properly adjusted.

Inverted Overprint : known only on the 50c, at the top of the stamp.

Double Overprint : appears on the 3,50Fr and the 25c. On the 3,50Fr the doubling is minimal; on the 25c the letters are very thick. The doubling is not uniform over the complete sheet; the lowest stamps on the sheet show a slight doubling, the top stamps a pronounced doubling.

Misplaced
Overprints : a misplacement is always relative. On the vertical stamps which themselves are only 24mm wide, a horizontal misplacement of an overprint of about 18mm length is not very spectacular. A real misplacement can only be said to exist when the overprint touches or is cut by the perforation. Vertical misplacement on the vertical stamps can be considered rare.

On the horizontal stamps the position is the opposite; a vertical misplacement, either to the centre of the stamp or towards the perforation, is common enough; a horizontal misplacement hardly exists.

Other Curiosities : an overprint with a so-called "frame margin"; ink marks between letters; a slanting overprint.

This is as far as the study goes, far from complete at present, but hopefully the beginning of much more to come.

THE 25c "MALINES" SURCHARGE (CONTINUED) - R.H. Keach

Bulletin No. 24 contained an article on this surcharge on the 40c stamp of 1915, based on a study of five complete sheets. As a follow-up, in Bulletin No. 25, Mr. Molander gave much practical and relevant information on the process of typography.

A further complete sheet is now available for inspection. Based on this and previous observations, it may be possible to approach more nearly the truth of the method by which the surcharging plate was prepared.

It is clear that the horizontal spacings and horizontal alignments of the new sheet, No. 43, in no way agree with those of the other sheets; there is no consistency to be seen.

Using the nomenclature of the article in Bulletin No. 24, the new sheet has the following dimensions:

<u>Sheet No. 43, Top Half</u>	A	B	C	D
Top row, horizontal spacing	28,6	27,1	28,0	28,5 mm
Bottom row, horizontal spacing	27,5	27,5	28,4	28,1
Vertical spacing	24,7	24,2	24,7	24,8
Horizontal alignment	2nd stamp low, 4th stamp high			

Sheet No. 43, Bottom Half

Top row, horizontal spacing	28,0	27,8	27,8	29,0
Bottom row, horizontal spacing	28,9	27,9	27,1	28,7
Vertical spacing	24,6	24,3	24,8	24,9
Horizontal alignment	2nd, 3rd and 4th stamps high			

Further study of Sheet No. 43 discloses that each of the five surcharges in the top row and of the five surcharges in the sixth row (top row of lower half sheet) has a large dot followed by a rudimentary hyphen to the top left of the figure 2.

Looking again at some of the sheets reported on in the previous article we find:

On Sheet No. 489, each of the surcharges in the top and 6th rows has a short oblique curve to the top right of the figure 2; each in the 5th and 10th rows has a horizontally elongated dot in much the same position.

On Sheet No. ? (refer to original article), the 5th and 10th rows have, on each surcharge, a "horn" on the figure 2 at the top left.

On Sheet No. 486, each of the surcharges in the top and 6th rows has a mark to the top left of the figure 2; this is somewhat variable but appears to be an attenuated oblique curve similar to that found on Sheet No. 489. Each of the surcharges in the 5th and 10th rows has a horizontally elongated dot in much the same position.

It appears on the various sheets that the relative vertical positions of the figure 5 and the right dot vary (in this context, a fraction of a millimetre is of some consequence) but the relative height is constant for any particular horizontal row of surcharges.

Sheet No. 154 is not now available for inspection.

From the above information and that given in the previous article, certain conclusions can be drawn:

- 1) from the differing relative vertical heights of the figure 5 and the right dot, it appears that there were probably at least two basic patterns of the surcharge from which individual clichés were cast.
- 2) from the constancy of the vertical spacing of the surcharges within a single half sheet and from the constancy of minor varieties within a single horizontal row, it must be that five individual units, cast from the original patterns, were assembled, one above the other, in order to form a pattern to prepare moulds and composite castings, which strips of five were then assembled into blocks of 25 or 50.

To provide the surcharging plates used for the six sheets considered, two different vertical strips of five cliches would have been necessary as patterns for further castings, the first with vertical spacings of 24,5, 24,4, 24,6 and 24,7mm and the second with vertical spacings of 24,9, 23,0, 24,9 and 24,2mm. All of the sheets measured conform to one of these two sets of dimensions within 0,2mm; as was said in the original article, although measurements were made to the nearest 0,1mm, this accuracy is rather meaningless because of the roughness of the overprint; an error of 0,2mm is the minimum that can be hoped for.

There must therefore have been at least two overprinting plates of 50, each plate comprising ten vertical strips of five as separate units therein.

There has then to be considered the alignment of the individual surcharges in a single horizontal row (constant from row to row in a single half sheet) and the varying horizontal spacing between adjacent vertical columns. These peculiarities can well be explained by the ten strips of five surcharges (each a vertical row of five) not being tightly held within the forme (the frame) and with a certain amount of free movement possible, both vertically and horizontally

This conclusion is reminiscent of certain settings of the "Est Africain" overprint, about which the writer also commented recently.

It is intended, as far as complete sheets are available, to consider, in a similar manner, the other Malines surcharges and any member with complete sheets or very large blocks is asked to contact the writer with the object of his being able to borrow them for study and comparison with his own.

THE CENTRE PLATES OF THE MOLS 15 CENTIMES OF 1915 - P.S. Foden

Due to the numbers printed, the 15c value of 1915 presents an extremely interesting field of study, including, as it does, six recognisable combinations of frame and centre plates in the sheets of 50 and three separate printings of booklet panes. It seemed rather surprising, however, that so many new plates were introduced during the life of this one stamp. According to General Du Four's book, two completely new plates were brought into use for the frame and a further two new plates for the centre of the sheets of 50 over the period of issue. This must be considered odd in view of the number of re-entered states which exist for most other values compared to the relatively few completely new plates.

The present update is confined to the centre plates used for the sheets of 50. The original centre plate was, of course, that which had been used for the 15c of 1910 and which had gradually become extremely worn (Plate B in the General's nomenclature). In the 1915 stamp, this plate is very easily recognised due to the gap in the spine of the third frond from the left on the large palm tree and the gap between the trunk and crown of the last small palm tree on the right. In the new plate (C), the lines were greatly strengthened on all positions on the plate. It may thus be quite reasonable to suppose that, the previous plate being so worn, a completely new plate was considered necessary at that time.

We find, however, that within four years a further new centre plate has apparently been provided (Plate D). The reasons for this are less obvious since, in any case, many of the 15c stamps then being used were from booklets and, in fact, stamps with Centre Plate D appear more common unused than used.

True, the centre plate had again become worn, as Centre Plate C served also for the printing of the Red Cross issue of 1918. Nevertheless, the normal practice would still have been to re-enter the existing plate if at all possible, rather than go to the trouble and expense of constructing yet another.

Evidence is now to hand that the plate was indeed re-entered. The important position on the sheet is No. 31; it appears that, when this position was being rocked-in on to Plate C from the transfer roller, a tiny particle of metal or grit must have been between the roller and the plate. The effect of this was to leave a dent in the soft metal of the plate which, subsequently, picked up ink and printed out on the stamp as a black dot about 2mm east of the third frond from the right on the large palm tree. This dot persists throughout the printings from Plate C, including the Red Cross issue and, most important, it can also be found in the same position on No. 31 of the so-called Plate D.

After all, therefore, even though the centre plate must have been completely re-entered at the time, this one constant flaw is sufficient to identify, instead of a new Plate D, a re-entered Plate C2. The various sections of the General's book should thus be amended as follows:

for Centre Plate C, now read C1
for Centre Plate D, now read C2

The mystery of the two new frame plates still remains to be solved, but perhaps further evidence will come to light to indicate that one, if not both, of these is also a re-entered state of a previous plate.

CANCELLATIONS - SOME FURTHER INFORMATION - R.H. Keach

Avakubi Cancellation 1.1

Avakubi had two "small circle" cancellers, recognisable by the different spacings of the letters in the name of the post office. Both are represented in the "Record Cards", one of them, the one we call 1.1, being in a very poor condition at that time; instead of being circular, 23mm diameter, it is oval, 22mm high by 19½mm wide and has obviously suffered severe crushing. The date on the "Record Card" is 1914 (no day, month or time).

We presumed that either the canceller was withdrawn from use immediately after the damage was suffered or that the damage occurred after the date stamp was withdrawn from use.

We have now found a stamp bearing an impression from the damaged canceller; it is dated 21 January, 1914. Our latest example of the cancel in good condition is dated 14 January, 1913, so that it must have been between these dates that the accident happened.

Any information on Avakubi cancellations between the two dates will be welcomed.

Masi Manimba "Double Circle" Cancellation

As disclosed in the draft of the "Cancellation Manual", the postmaster at Masi Manimba, unlike his colleague at Mongbwalu who had a similar canceller, in his double circle date stamp, that we know as 6B1-, changed the index letter in the date line every calendar year. It was reported that the

letter A had been seen for years 1941 and 1946, B for 1942 and 1948, C for 1943 and 1949, D for 1944, E for 1945, G for 1951 and H for 1950. It was presumed that the missing letter F (in the sequence A to H) and the missing year 1947 (during the period 1941-51) coincided.

A 1947 date stamp has now been seen but that is lettered B, as were 1942 and 1948 cancellations.

It will be very much appreciated if members will kindly look at any copies of this cancellation that they have and advise the writer:

- 1) if of 1947 or 1948, the letter in the date line and the date of the cancellation.
- 2) if there is a letter F in the date line and, if so, the date of the cancellation.
- 3) if they have any combinations of letters and years different from those given above.

Pania-Mutombo "Small Circle" Cancellation

Mr. Ingles has discovered and sent for inspection a forged "small circle" Pania-Mutombo cancellation. It is an excellent facsimile which may be identified by the shortest distance from the loop of the letter P to the left diagonal stroke of the letter A. In the genuine cancellation the distance is $1\frac{1}{2}$ mm whereas in the forgery it is $1\frac{1}{4}$ mm. The distance measured is between the centres of the lines of the letters and is not the actual gap between them.

Needless to say, the writer found such a forgery amongst his own treasured Pania-Mutombo cancellations.

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THE CANCELLATIONS OF THE NORMAL POST OFFICES OF BELGIAN CONGO 1886-1960
AND RUANDA URUNDI 1917-1962

Addenda and Corrigenda No. 7

Page 10, penultimate paragraph, change to read:

Bukavu is in the Congo but its straight-line postmark has been seen not only on Congo stamps (Vloors) but also on the stamps of Ruanda Urundi (including occupied German East Africa). It is appreciated that Bukavu is very near to Ruanda Urundi but we wonder if this is not another example of a canceller, at some time in its life, being transferred to another post office.

Page 17, paragraph 3, change to read:

... restricted to Boga and Isangi, has ...

Page 17, paragraph 4, change to read:

... restricted to Bolobo and Usumbura, has ...

Page 24, change caption of illustration from 8C1 to 8C-

Tabulation

Bambili : change 2A to 2A1 and add in DATES & NOTES $4\frac{1}{2} \times 22$ mm. Delete rF.
Bolobo : change 2 to 2D1 and add in DATES & NOTES 5×22 mm. Delete rF.
Coquilhatville : add 2A1 and, in DATES & NOTES $4\frac{1}{2} \times 42$ mm.
Geti : add 10(B)- and, in DATES & NOTES, 54.
Irumu : change 2 to 2A1 and add in DATES & NOTES $4 \times 21\frac{1}{2}$ mm. Delete rF.
Isangi : change 2A1 to 2C1 and delete rC.
Itimbiri : change 1 to 1.1-DMY, ANGULAR MEASUREMENTS 160 295, DATES 96;
delete rC.
Jadotville : add 2A1 and, in DATES & NOTES 31 $5\frac{1}{2} \times 44$ mm.
Kabinda : change 2 to 2A1 and delete rF.
Kinshasa : add 1.1-tDMY/y.
Leopoldville : add 1.11-tDMY with dates *22.
Leopoldville 2A1 : change dimensions from 7X50 to 7X49
Luluabourg : change 2 to 2A1 and add in DATES & NOTES 14 4×30 mm. Delete rF.
add 2A2 and, in DATES & NOTES, 31 7×45 mm.
Niemba 2A1 : change dimensions from 4×22 mm to 4×23 mm and delete rC.
Sandoa : change 2 to 2A1 and delete rF.

Changed Dates :

ABA 1.1-DMt,Y *11-4; BANDUNDU 2A1 12; COQUILHATVILLE 7A2- *26-9;
DJOUJ 8A3- *48-55; GOMBE 2A1 29; KONGOLO 7A1- 27-38, 47-9;
LEOPOLDVILLE 2A1 *03-4; LEOPOLDVILLE 2 12B(A)1- *56-8; MALONGA 8A1-Dmyt
39-43; MUSOFI 2A1 08-10; N'GULE 2A1 29; NIEMBA 2A1 30; NIOKI 8A1- *52-9;
RUTSHURU *5C1-Dmyt *21-5; 29-35; RUTSHURU 5C1-Dmyt/t 23-5, 29;
STANLEYVILLE 1.1-tDMY *13-9; STANLEYVILLE 8A4- *37-41; THYSVILLE 5C1-Dmyt
*22-3, 32-5; THYSVILLE 5C1-Dmyt/t *23-5, 35.