

BELGIAN CONGO SPECIALISTS' STUDY CIRCLE

Bulletin No. 5

January, 1952

The fourth meeting of the Belgian Congo Specialists' Study Circle was held at 12, Avenue Mansions, Finchley Road, London, N.W.3., on Saturday 12th January, 1952. There were present Mr. O. Loader (in the chair), Mrs. D.M. Green and Messrs. C.H. Compton, P.G. Oreswell, L.G. Green, R.H. Keach, J. Wright and A.G. Wood. Apologies for absence and good wishes to all members present were received from Messrs. Castiaux, Knight and Thrasher. Mr. Heim also sent his good wishes to members of the Circle.

The Secretary reported that General Jean du Four had joined the Study Circle since the last meeting.

The Study Circle having been running for a year the Secretary felt that he should have made some statement of accounts. He regretted that he had not done so but hoped to make amends at the next meeting. Although the cash in hand was small there were considerable assets and a further call for funds was not necessary.

Major Corbisier de Meaultsart had very kindly sent the Study Circle a number of modern covers and these were distributed to those present at the meeting. Appreciation of Major Corbisier's kindness and thought was expressed by those present. A number of copies of the "Congo Belge" Ladder had also been obtained through the goodwill of Major Corbisier de Meaultsart and these were available for members who required them.

Mr. Loader gave his address on the 15 centimes value of the Mols Issues, the first half dealing with the history of the value through the various issues. All members present being familiar with the normal stamps. Mr. Loader found it unnecessary to illustrate this part of the address. The second and more detailed section of the talk dealt with the story of the printing plates used for the value by reference to the multitude of re-entries, retouches and blemishes on the plate and stamps showing many plate varieties were presented.

An interesting side line on this value is the use of its design for the postal stationery of the country from 1897 to 1942 and Mr. Loader showed a selection of cards bearing the palm tree design.

On the conclusion of the address the meeting was open for general discussion and for the display of stamps by other members. Noteworthy amongst these were two items forming part of Mr. Wright's contribution. Firstly a very interesting series of die proofs of the 1896 issue, showing how the design of the frame was gradually improved and secondly a practically complete sheet of the Princes' printing.

During the course of his address, Mr. Loader referred to the Princes' printing and gave food for thought in questioning the Countess of Flanders tradition. Presenting a section of the family tree of the house of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha he showed that in May 1909 the Countess' children, Leopold, Charles and Marie Jose, were only eight, six and three years old respectively at which ages their philatelic experience cannot have been very extensive. Mr. Loader thought it probable that there is a less romantic but more practical solution to the problem of the reprinting.

At the conclusion of the meeting it was arranged that the next meeting should be at 3 p.m. on Saturday, March 15th, and that Mr. Wright should address the meeting

on the 25 centimes value of the Mols series. Mrs. Green, once again, offered the use of her flat for the meeting and all members expressed their sincere gratitude for her kindness.

THE LADO ENCLAVE

Referring to the synopsis in the last bulletin of Colonel Danson's article in "The West End Philatelist", Mr. Heim has sent a photograph of an 1896 15 centimes stamp in his possession cancelled with three black ellipses more or less in the centre of the stamp and with the Lado manuscript cancellation. It will be interesting to learn more of this cancellation.

1928 STANLEY ISSUE

The Secretary has acquired a used copy of the 10 franc value of this issue perforated 14 normally on three sides but the bottom is perforated 15 $\frac{1}{2}$. The stamp is shorter than the smaller size of the normal stamp which suggests that the perforations at the bottom were damaged and the stamp was perforated again in order to make it saleable. But who would take that trouble for a stamp priced at only one shilling and threepence in the Gibbons Catalogue?

TELEGRAPHIC CANCELLATIONS

At a recent meeting of the Circle the octagonal telegraphic cancellations were mentioned and the belief was expressed that these were not used for ordinary postal use and that stamps found with these cancellations had been removed from old telegrams. Evidence to the contrary has been produced by Mrs. Green; she has a postcard bearing a 1900, 10 centimes stamp and cancelled with the octagon.

1894 5 CENTIMES BLUE

Most used, and some mint copies of this stamp are bad, being colour-changelings of the 1900 stamp in green. Where the original green stamp has a type II frame (Balasse Catalogue Page 31) the forgery is easily spotted as the blue stamp does not exist with the small circle below the righthand bottom corner. Where an earlier type I green stamp was used the fake can often be detected from the Centre Plate (1894 Issue all Centre Plate A, 1900 all B). Cancellation dates are of little value although if the year is 19.. the stamp is practically certain to have been "doctored". Many forged small circle cancellations (Boma etc.) showing correct dates are found. Unused 1900 stamps were chemically treated to change the colour and were then cancelled with the fake obliterator. The Secretary has been studying his own copies of the stamp, undoubted originals, undoubted forgeries and those about which there was doubt under ultra-violet light and is sure in his own mind that he can separate the good from the bad.

Members may care to look at their own copies and if they are uncertain as to their genuineness, send the doubtful stamps to the Secretary for comparison.

SECTION BOOKS

The 5 centimes section book has now completed its home circuit and the 10 centimes book has started on its journey.

CLUB PACKET

It was thought when the Study Circle was inaugurated that a Club Packet was impracticable owing to the small potential membership of the Circle and to the trouble required in the mounting of duplicates in special books.

At the recent meeting a modified scheme was considered informally by several members chatting together and was thought worthy of trial. It is intended therefore to start a Club Packet circulating in the near future and under the following general conditions.

The Packet will circulate from member to member as do the Section books and each member will take from the Packet the stamps he requires at the prices quoted. He will add to the Packet his own spare material priced in one or more of the ways suggested below and will despatch the Packet to the next member on the list. He will complete a form listing his purchases and his own contributions to the Packet and send it to the Secretary with the money. When despatching the Packet it must be registered to the approximate value of its contents.

Stamps may be mounted in Club Books or on old album leaves etc. and priced. If several album leaves are included they should be pinned together with a front page stating the number of leaves and total value and space for members to state their purchases, more or less in accordance with standard exchange club procedure. Those who have neither the time nor the patience to mount their duplicates may place them in envelopes labelled on the outside with an overall value, eg Quarter Gibbons, Balasse Prices at 5 B. francs/1d, Mint at 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ d. per franc Face, Modern Used at $\frac{1}{2}$ d per franc Face etc. In such cases the very approximate total value of each envelope should be stated for registration purposes.

Covers, postal stationery etc. may, of course, be included.

A list of contents will circulate with the Packet and the lists will be added to by all subscribers.

There will be no deduction to cover running costs nor will there be the frantic hurry that is associated with the normal Club Packet. Unfortunately with the present restrictions on import and export in this country it will not be practicable for the Packet to be sent to overseas members.

The arrangement should permit the interchange of members' common duplicates.

POSTAL AUCTIONS

For stamps of better quality an occasional auction sale amongst members will probably be more suitable than the Club Packet and it is proposed that members be asked for suitable material when the Club Packet has started to circulate. Although valuable lots may of course be included it is hoped that there will be others worth only a shilling or so.

The Secretary will be glad to prepare with all reasonable accuracy the catalogue for circulation to members and later the list of prices realised but it may not be practicable as a general rule for lots to be sent on approval. However, lots purchased and not considered to be in accordance with the description given in the catalogue will be returnable.

Members are asked to quote reserve prices on all lots. There will of course be no deduction for expenses of running the auction. It may well be possible for overseas members to take part in this activity.

MODERN USE OF "T" OVERPRINT

The Secretary has recently acquired two air mail covers, the first from Leopoldville to London, bearing stamps to the value of 10 francs 50 cancelled 3rd February, 1947, and having two prints of a "T" which appears to be identical with that used on earlier issues to indicate postage due. There is no indication of postage due having been collected at its destination.

The second air mail cover from Busu-Djanao to London bears stamps to the value of 8 francs cancelled 28th December, 1945 (?), and has one "T" but this is deleted by pencil.

Neither cover was back stamped on arrival to indicate that it was sent by air.

INDEXES TO "LE PHILATELISTE BELGE" AND "BALASSE MAGAZINE"

Mr. Wood has indexed these two periodicals over a considerable period and kindly sent copies of the indices; these are attached to the bulletin.

NOTES FROM "THE STAMPS OF BELGIAN CONGO
and
BELGIAN EAST AFRICA" by H. MALLET-VEALE

Below is information contained in the above publication and not included in the Balasse Catalogue. Part of this information is undoubtedly incorrect and readers may be interested to express their views.

1. 1886 Issue. These stamps were printed in sheets of 100, each sheet comprising two panes of 50. The 50 centimes and 5 franc values were withdrawn on 1st December, 1887.
2. 1887 Issue. All stamps of the 1887 - 1894 issues (Grosse Barbe) including the 25 and 50 franc values, but excluding the Colis Postaux overprints, exist imperforate. The 5 franc value was printed in sheets of 50 and not in three panes of 50 as the other values.
3. 1894 - 1898 Issues. The 5 franc value exists with frame doubly printed, the 3 fr. 50 with centre doubly printed. The 10 centimes blue and 15 centimes exist imperforate. The 10 franc value exists with inverted centre both perforated 14 and perforated 12. The 10 franc value exists with steamer facing to the left. Forgeries of the 10 franc value exist imperforate and with inverted centre (Balasse 29E3).
4. 1900 Issue. The 1 franc carmine is said to have been issued in 1902 and also to exist imperforate.
5. 1909 Overprinted Issue. All "Congo Belge" overprinted 10 franc values (Brussels, Congo and Typographed) exist with the steamer facing to the

left. The typographed overprints on 5, 10 and 15 centimes, 3 fr. 50 and 5 franc values exist inverted and on the 15 centimes and 5 franc values exist double with one inverted. The 15 and 40 centimes, 1 franc and 3 fr. 50 values exist imperforate. 10 franc value exists imperforate between. Of the stamps locally overprinted the 15 and 40 centimes, 1 franc, 3 fr. 50 and 10 franc values exist imperforate; the 5 franc value exists with and without overprint se-tenant.

6. 1909 Unilingual Issue. There is a variety of the 10 centimes value with DIN in place of DIX!
7. 1910 Issue. The 1 franc and 3 franc values exist imperforate. The 10 franc value exists with the steam boat facing to the left and also with the centre doubly printed.
8. 1921 Recovery Issue. The 10/5 centimes, 1 franc and 10 franc values exist imperforate and in the case of the 1 franc value the imperforate stamps have the overprint double.
9. 1922 Malines Overprinted Issue. (Balasse 95-99 inclusive). There were two separate overprintings, the larger in London in red or black and the smaller in Brussels in orange-red or dull black.
10. 1922 Boma Surcharges. Trial copies of the 10/5 centimes value (Balasse 100) were made with the overprint in black. The 10 centimes/ 1 franc value (Balasse 101) was sold out in 17 days. The 25/40 centimes value (Balasse 102) exists with short point to "2".
11. 1923 Elisabethville Surcharge. There exist genuine varieties of the surcharge reading 0.25 and ,25 instead of 0,25. Notes on the forgeries of these stamps:-

Brussels Forgeries

Ink intense black, figures very clear and the 0 of 0,25 round. Exists double and inverted.

Boma Forgeries.

Ink blue-black to indigo, all figures elongated and most of the copies postmarked. Tail of the "2" always curly and the top bar of "5" long. In the genuine stamps the tail of the "2" is straight and the bar of the "5" short, while the ink generally shows through the stamps which it usually does not in the forgeries. This forgery also exists double and inverted.

12. 1923 Vloors Issue. Numbers printed, including those overprinted for use in Ruanda:

Balasse No. 106 - 1,500,000; 107 - 1,500,000; 108 - 1,000,000;
109 - 500,000; 110 - 2,000,000; 111 - 1,000,000; 112 - 1,250,000;
113 - 750,000; 114 - 1,000,000; 115 - 250,000; 116 - 125,000;
117 - 125,000; 119 - 500,000; 121 - 500,000; 122 - 750,000;
123 - 500,000; 125 - 500,000; 126 - 1,250,000; 129 - 2,250,000.

The 20 centimes Balasse No. 109 was withdrawn during December, 1924, only 200,000 having been sold. E. Gunn engraved Balasse 106, 107, 109, 113 and 115, R. Savage 108, 112, 114 and 117, E. Lorgeaux 111 and M. Baldwin 116.

13. 1918 Red Cross Issue. The overprint exists on all values in red and in orange-red and on each value with each colour of overprint there exist two types of overprint one being larger than the other. There are two dies (presumably centre) each of the 5 plus 10 centimes, 10 plus 15 centimes, 25 plus 25 centimes, 40 plus 40 centimes and 1 plus 1 franc values distinguished by the shading of the sky and each die exists with each of the four types of overprint. The issue is very complicated and twelve different sets can be made (even if the above is true I cannot make it more than eight sets - Sec.).
14. 1916 East African Occupation Issue. Three printings were made "Cancelled by Favour" stamps are common and generally bear the Kigali postmark. One copy of the 10 centimes value is known imperforate and cancelled Kigali 22nd December, 1916. The 5 centimes value with type A overprint and 10, 15, 25 and 40 centimes and 1 and 5 franc values with type B overprint exist reading "OCOUPATION". The 5 centimes value with type B overprint has a small R in "AFRICAIN" on Nos. 1, 3 and 8 of the fourth row and large H in "DUITSCH" on No. 3 in the seventh row (presumably vertical rows. Sec.).
15. 1922 Malines Surcharges on East African Issue (Balasse R.45 - 49 Inclusive) There are two separate overprintings of this surcharge as in the corresponding Congo issue, (see above).

Numbers overprinted:-

Balasse No. R.45 - 10,500; R.46 - 45,000; R.47 - 38,000; R.48 - 30,800; R.49 - 85,000.

16. 1924 Vloors Issue for Ruanda.

Numbers printed:-

Balasse No. 50 - 225,000; 51 - 250,000; 52 - 250,000; 53 - 250,000; 54 - 300,000; 55 - 225,000; 56 - 225,000; 57 - 175,000; 58 - 100,000; 59 - 10,000; 60 - 10,000; 61 - 10,000. Balasse No. 52 was withdrawn from sale on 31st December 1924.

17. 1926 Vloors Issue for Ruanda

Numbers printed:-

Balasse No. 73 - 50,000 of which 30,000 were supposed to have been destroyed; 74 - 150,000.

NEW ISSUES

Mr. Heim has written stating that he has what he believes to be a first day cover from Leopoldville bearing the two new values 1 fr. 50 and 3 fr. of the Abolition of Slavery issue and dated 29th July, 1951. He asks for information on the first days of issue of the Idols series. Can anyone help?

EXTRACTS FROM PERIODICALS

The Secretary has copies of all articles that have been reviewed in Bulletins 1 to 4. In the future, extracts will be marked with an asterisk if the Secretary has a copy and they are, of course, available to any member wishing to see them.

* Western Stamp Collector, December 8th, 1951.
The "Congo Belge" Overprints - A.I. Heim

Mr. Heim gives the history leading up to the overprinting of the current stamps, describes the three main types of overprint and gives the numbers printed. He also refers to the Princes' reprinting including the resetting of the typographed overprint.

He states that the local hand stamps were intended for use as follows:-

- Type I. Controller of Posts at Boma.
- Type II. Banana
- Type III. Matadi.
- Type IV. Boma.
- Type V. Leopoldville.
- Type VI. Thysville.
- Type VII. Bumba.
- Type VIII. Congo Railway Company at Matadi.

The article serves as a very useful English translation of information that has appeared only in Belgian publications.

* Le Philatelite Belge. Nos. 56 & 57, November 1951 - February 1952.
Les Timbres du Congo Belge - Dr. H. Avidon.

This series of articles is continued with a list of the post offices in the provinces of Katanga, Kasai and Kivu.

* General du Four has sent copies of "La Sottimana Filatelica" Nos. 12, 13 & 14, dated 20th & 27th March and 3rd April, 1949, containing his series of articles in French on the Inverted Centres of Belgium and Belgian Congo.

There was a short but interesting article in the TIMES REVIEW OF INDUSTRY for January, 1952, entitled "Developing Communications in the Belgian Congo". There was information on present communications by river, rail and road and a list of future developments to give speedier communication between the various parts of the country.

AUCTION REALISATIONS

Vessey, 12th December - Balasse 80 mint	...	£3. 7. 6d
Harmer, 17th December - Balasse CP1N1, unused with slight crease and CP4N1, unused, both off centre	£17. 0. 0d
Balasse 91A mint	£13. 0. 0d

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

As stated earlier in this Bulletin, the next meeting will be at 12, Avenue Mansions, on Saturday 15th March.
