

REPORT OF MEETING

A meeting of the Study Circle was held on Saturday, 7th February, at 12, Avenue Mansions, London, N.W.3. and there were present Mr. Wood (in the chair), Mrs. Green and Messrs. Compton, Cresswell, L.G. Green, Loader and Keach. Apologies for absence were received from Messrs. Thrasher, Turner and Wright.

The Secretary drew attention once again to the shortage of material for the Bulletin and pressed those members present for contributions thereto. He reminded members that the section books were very slow in appearing, those of the 15, 25, 40 and 50c. values still being in the embryo stage.

A copy of a recent edition of *II Collezionista Italia Filatelica* included an article on the early postal history of the Belgian Congo written in French by M. Jacques du Four. M. du Four had sent the magazine to the Secretary offering to supply any further copies that members might require; several of those present expressed their interest.

There being no other formal business, Mr. Wood spoke on the subject of the 1 franc value of the Mole Issues. Mr. Wood gave special attention to the history of the plates used in the printing of this value with reference to the plate varieties occurring thereon. Points of particular interest were the multitude of re-entries in the frame of the 1894 Issue, the frame plate retouches on the top and bottom rows of the 1910 - 1915 Issues, and the many frame plate re-entries, particularly at the bottom of the stamp in the later printings of the 1915 Issue. Unfortunately on this occasion only one complete sheet was available for inspection. An item of particular interest was a superb cover to England bearing a copy of the 1 franc black and violet of 1894. Such covers must be exceedingly rare.

It was agreed that the 5 franc value of the Mols Issues should be considered at the next meeting and subsequently Mr. Green agreed to accept the duty of principal speaker.

At the close of the meeting members expressed their gratitude to Mrs. Green for her generous hospitality in allowing the Study Circle to meet once again at her house.

RE-ENTRIES AND RETOUCHES

Mr. Wood has written a short article on the correct nomenclature for plate varieties on recess printed stamps with special reference to the Mols Issues. A copy of the article is attached. Members' comments will be appreciated.

INTERESTING COVER

Mr. Heim has sent a cutting from the *Western Stamp Collector* of 27th December, 1952, consisting of a description of one of his Congo covers addressed to Coquilhatville. It is franked with the 5c, 10c and 15c stamps of 1915 and these stamps are tied to the cover with the normal small circle cancellation of Coquilhatville dated 24th May, 1919, and with the "TAXES" cancellation. In addition, it has the "T" cachet and "DECEDE" in a rectangle. This last indicates that the recipient was deceased but there is no indication of the cover having been re-addressed. Mr. Heim offers the following possible explanations:-

1. The cover may be a fake.
2. The cover may have been posted without stamps, those on the cover having paid normal postage due. The "DECEDE" marking may just be a coincidence or mistake.
3. There may have been a charge in the Belgian Congo for the return of a letter addressed to a deceased person. If so, Mr. Heim wonders why were not additional stamps added to show payment of this charge; and how could the Post Office know to whom the cover was to be returned since there was no return address? There is no evidence that the envelope was opened to identify the sender and then resealed. Perhaps, Mr. Heim comments, Colquihlatville was such a small place in those days that all letter-writers were known to the people in the Post Office.

U.S. AUCTION SALE

Mr. Heim has sent the catalogue and list of prices realised at a recent specialised Congo and Ruanda Auction Sale and some of the more interesting items are listed elsewhere in this Bulletin. Generally speaking, and particularly for the modern issues, prices are rather higher than those obtained in London auctions. One unusual lot consisted of five values of the 1931 Issue overprinted "Detachment U.S.A. AIR MAIL" and new value in cents. It would be interesting to know if members have heard of the existence of these stamps.

1921/30/10c NO DOT VARIETY

Mr. Wood has a large block of the 30/10c value of the Recovery Issue in which the dot under the righthand "C" is missing on No. 19. That on No. 39 is also missing but Nos. 36 and 37 are not included in the block (they would presumably have missing dots). The Secretary has seen a second block including the variety on No. 19 so that it may be considered as constant and is presumably found only in the last overprintings.

NEW ISSUES

5th January

The last values of the Belgian Congo flowers comprising 1 fr 25, 8, 10, 50 and 100 franc values were issued on 5th January. The 50 and 100 francs are in slightly larger format than the lower values.

On the same date there were issued two stamps, 3 francs red with black centre and 7 francs blue with brown centre, commemorating the Kivu Festival. These stamps were recess-printed by De la Rue.

A 1 franc 50 value in black and blue also issued on 5th January commemorated the 4th Centenary of St. Francis Xavier's death in 1552.

St. Francis Xavier, 1506 to 1552, was a Jesuit missionary. Born a younger son in a noble family in Navarre he read Philosophy and Theology at the University of Paris and was ordained priest in Venice in 1537. He decided to become a missionary and from 1541 to 1545 was station at Goa in Portuguese India during which time he visited many other parts of India and Ceylon. In 1545 he went eastwards to Malacca where he stayed until 1549 and then on to Japan until 1551, he being the first missionary to that newly-found country.

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St. Francis died at Malacca on his way to China in 1552 and was canonised in 1622.

It is difficult to see the Saint's connection with the Belgian Congo. He may well have passed the mouth of the River Congo during his sea voyage to the Far East but there is no evidence to show that he set foot in the country and certainly, in any case, he spent no considerable time there.

A similar 1 franc 50 stamp was issued for Ruanda Urundi.

1st March

Ruanda Urundi has followed the Congo's example in producing a new series of flowers. Apart from the inscription these are identical with the equivalent values of the Congo series but Ruanda has not as yet produced her 50 and 100 franc values. Presumably these will follow.

RECENT AUCTION REALISATIONS

Vessey - 21st February

214C Mint 20/-d; 226, Mint Vertical Pair, Surcharge omitted on lower stamp 70/-d; Air 17C1, Mint block of four 60/-d; Air 17C1, Mint 23/-d; Air 17C2, Mint Horizontal Pair 35/-d; 225C1, Mint 33/-d; R44, Mint 40/-d; R114C1, Mint Vertical Pair 60/-d; R115C1, Mint Vertical Pair 60/-d; R116C1, Mint 20/-d; R118C1, Mint 27/-d; Postage Due R15C1, Mint 37/6d.

Vessey 28th March

214/224C1, Mint £2. 6. Od; 214C2, Mint imperf. horizontally, 20/-d; 226, Mint vertical pair lower stamp with 5 c omitted, 42/-d; 227, Mint pair one stamp without surcharge 72/6d; 227, Mint with surcharge double, 25/-d; AIR17C1, Mint vertical strip of four, 72/6d; R117C1, Mint 25/-d, R114/5C1, Mint 42/-d; R115, Mint block of four imperf. between, 50/-d; R118C1, Mint 15/-d; R121C1, Mint 20/-d; R121, Mint pair with badly misplaced surcharge, 13/-d; R116C1, Mint 17/6d.

Vessey 16th April

226, Mint vertical pair with "5" missing on lower stamp, 38/-d; 225 C1, Mint 30/-d; R114C1 and R115C1, Mint 42/-d; R116, Mint vertical pair, overprint misplaced 28/-d; R118C1 24/-d; R121C1, Mint 21/-d.

Vessey, 14th March

Air, 17C1, Mint - 21/-d; R114C1 and R115C1, Mint - 42/-d; R115, Mint pair, imperforate between - 42/-d; R116C1, Mint - 22/-d; R118C1, Mint - 20/-d; R121C1, Mint - 23/-d; Postage Due R15C1 - 30/-d.

Ruppert, U.S.A., 24th March

The prices given for these lots are in U.S. Dollars. Balasse 5 Mint 18.50; 13 Used 9.50; 13E1 - 85.00; 13a and b E1 - 3.90; 37L used - 3.25; 39L Mint - 4.75; 30LC2 - 36LC1 inclusive Mint 10.25; 1915 booklet panes 3.10; 64 - 71E1 - 7.00; 64 - 71E2 pairs - 45.00; 57C1 Mint - 6.00; 87A Mint - 18.00;

87BS1, Mint - 11.00; 1922 booklet sheets - 12.00; 95C2, Mint - 12.50; 100C1, Mint 4.00; 104C1 & 105C1, Mint 3.75; 1937 booklet panes 3.00; 1937 booklet complete 11.00; 173E3 17.00; 177E3 16.00; 177E3 block of four 48.00; 177aE3 17.50; 178aE3 16.00; 226C1, Mint 6.50; 227C1, Mint 6.00; 228 - 248E2 84.00; 72 - 80 Mint, 15.00; 72 - 80E1 pairs 37.00; 271 - 4 Mint, 6.30; AIR13E1, 14.00; AIR booklet panes 4.50; AIR17C1, Mint 5.00; Dues 67 - 72E1, 15.00; Dues 73 - 76N1, Mint 0.75.

Ruanda - R45C1, Mint 10.00; 65C1, Mint 7.00; 114C1 and 115C1, Mint 14.00; 121C1, Mint 4.00; 121, misplaced surcharged, Mint block of four 18.50; 126 - 147E2, 75.00; 130 - 141E1, 12.00; ditto with eight Congo sheets 33.00; 150 - 3, Mint 7.75; 152ER1, Mint 24.00; 153ER1, Mint 27.50; Dues 15 - 19N2, Mint 0.70;

R36 - 44, Mint 5.00;

There were the following colour trials all imperforate and with small diagonal overprint

Waterlow & Sons Ltd.,

Specimen

29 but violet and black, 5.00; 63 but blue and black 5.00; 124 but blue 4.50;

Also overprinted

Specimen

Waterlow & Sons Ltd.

261 but greyish green 4.00; 234 but brown 4.00; 246 but red 4.00; 247 but orange and black 4.00; R.148 but brown 5.25; R134 but green and black 4.00; R145 but violet and black 5.00;

Die proof of 1 franc 50 Idols in original colour 3.00; Die proof of 6 franc 50 Katanga, red centre, black frame 1.90.

EXTRACTS FROM PERIODICALS

*Il Collezionista Italia Filatelica - January, 1953

Les Precurseurs du Congo. By Jacques du Four.

This article, in French, includes a brief history of the early development of the Congo ending with the establishment of the Independent State. Details are given of the means of communication available in those days with particular reference of course to the postal service.

This article concludes with a description of three of the postal marks used in the pre-adhesive postal service.

This article is one of a series of two or more.

*Philatelic Magazine 13th March, 1953

The Belgian Congo is this fortnight's country in the "Touring Around the World" series. A general description of the country is given and there is very bare reference to the stamps.

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DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Study Circle will be on Saturday, 9th May, and Mrs. Green is once again kind enough to invite us to her flat. Mr. Green will address the meeting on the 5 franc value of the Mols series.

RE-ENTRIES AND OTHER VARIETIES

MET ON ENGRAVED STAMPS

Recently there has been a lot written in the English Philatelic Press on the subject of "Re-entries", how they occur and their correct nomenclature. It might be useful if an attempt were made to examine this subject as far as it concerns the Mols Issues of the Belgian Congo.

The term "Re-entry" is applied in a general sense to all cases of the doubling of lines in recess-printed stamps. It is maintained that the term of "Re-entry" should only apply to varieties which occur after the plates have been printed from: re-entries can be either coincident or non-coincident. Varieties which occur during the original laying-down of the plate and before it is printed from may be either:

- (1) Parasite transfer or errant entry.
- (2) Fresh entry.
- (3) Shifted transfer.
- (4) Stretched plate.
- (5) Accidental touching down of roller die.

1. The parasite transfers on the Mols stamps occur only on the 10c, 25c, 50c and 5 franc stamps of the 1894 issue; they are fully described by M. Maes in Balasse Magazines Nos. 27 and 30. M. Maes has shown that these parasite transfers are the result of a roll-over of the transfer roller (see also Balasse Magazine No. 81).

2. The Congress Glossary definition of a fresh entry is "A new entry which is made over the original entry at the time the plate is laid down". Examples of this occur in the 25c of the 1894 issue (Balasse 21V7) and the 10c of the 1910 issue (55V10).

3. One way in which shifted transfers occur is fully described by Brig. Studd in his article on "True Plate Varieties" in the London Philatelist No. 620 of August, 1943, Page 142.

Briefly the following is an explanation; the roller die is rocked in several times on each plate position; with good management each "rock-in" coincides with the previous ones but one way in which varieties occurred in the early days is as follows:-

As both the roller and plate surfaces were highly polished and very smooth, it was possible for the roller on a portion of its "rock-in" on the plate to suffer from inertia or "lack of traction". As a result the remaining portion of the "rock-in" was short of the full length (or breadth if side rock-in was employed) of the stamp. Subsequent "rock-ins" did not suffer from lack of traction and put down the design to the full length. The lines of design at the end of the plate position were thus doubled and appeared as a "shifted transfer" on the stamps of issue. In a letter to "F. B." dated 24th January, 1952, Messrs. Bradbury, Wilkinson & Co. stated "As to the re-entry of transfer rolls on printing plates in general, as far as we know both the roll and the plate are always entirely free". From this letter it will be seen that there is little likelihood of shifted transfers arising these days from the above cause.

In their article "Seeing Double" in Stamp Collecting, January 9th, 1953, Page 575, Messrs. L. N. & M. Williams say of shifted transfers that strictly speaking the term should be confined to varieties which result from imperfection in the transfer press itself permitting a true shifting and causing part of the entry to be rocked-in not quite parallel to the remainder of the entry. A typical example occurs on the frame of stamp No. 41 of the 1 franc 1910 Issue.

4. Stretched Plate. It might be noted, however, that the term "shifted transfer" has been used to refer also (indeed mainly) to varieties which result from the flowing of the metal of the soft plate under too great pressure or too rapid rocking-in of the transfer press; these varieties exhibit duplication at the end or ends in the stamp design and are caused not by a shifting of the transfer roller but by a stretching of the plate; stretched plate is an unambiguous term for them describing their cause and distinguishing them from true shifts. I think that many of the varieties of the 1 franc, 1894, come under this heading but it is difficult to distinguish the first type of shifted transfer from the stretched plate.

5. Accidental touching down occurs when the roller die is applied in the wrong position, pressure being applied but no rocking-in taking place. An example occurs in the centre plate of the 25c 1910 Issue, 44th stamp; this variety is described and illustrated by M. Maes in Balasse Magazine No. 27.

As has been seen already re-entries are made after the plate has been printed from and may be coincident or non-coincident. The first variety is difficult to detect but Messrs. L. N. & M. Williams do give an instance in the Ceylon 1938/49 3 cents. Non-coincident re-entries are much easier to pick out and examples occur in the frame plates of the 10c Etat Independent as described by General Du Four in the 10c Section Book.

TOUCHING-UP AND RETOUCHING

As we are dealing with definitions, it might be as well if we applied the term "touching-up" to all revision done to the plate before it is printed from and "retouch" to any work other than re-entering done to the plate after it has been printed from. From this it will be seen that the frame plates of the 5c and 25c of the 1910 Issue were, in fact, "retouched". I cannot think of an example of touching-up in the Mols Issues but all the retouches on the medallion issues of Belgium are in fact touchings-up.

F.J. Melville said that "The details of such processes in stamp printers' shops rarely become matters of general or even philatelic knowledge" but the following points may be of interest and may throw some light on our problems:-

1. It would appear that Waterlows now use copper plates which are faced electrolytically with chromium and that it is possible to strip the facing electrolytically and then to reface them. It is not known how long Waterlows have been using this process but further enquiries are indicated (see Gibbons Stamp Monthly, January, 1953, Page 57). This may account for the several states of some of the centre plates of the 50c and 1 franc values of the 1894 and 1910 Issues.

Re-entering has been a common practice from the beginning of stamp production. Plate 1 of Gt. Britain 1d. of 1840 was re-entered to produce Plate 1B but only 10% of the stamps show non-coincident re-entries. In their letter of the 24th January, 1952, to F.B., Messrs. Bradbury Wilkinson & Co. said "The accuracy of the re-entry depends entirely on the skill of the transferrer who is able to "feel" the roll into its correct groove on the printing plate. It is this high degree of skill together with that required for similar operations which necessitates a transferrer serving an apprenticeship of seven years before he becomes fully qualified".

This may account for the persistence of Balasse variety 16V13 in stamps of Type I and Type II, the Type I plate could have been re-entered with Type II roller. It could also account for the same varieties which occur in the centre plates Types I and II of the 40c 1915 Issue.

If the re-entering was done by an unskilled workman a multiplicity of non-coincident re-entries could occur as happened in one of the frame plates of the 1 franc 1915 Issues.

Articles referred to in the above are:-

"True Plate Varieties" by Brig. Studd, London Philatelist, No. 620, August, 1943.

"These Re-entries" by Ian T. Hamilton, Gibbonsstamp Monthly, June, 1952, Page 112.

"The Practical Aspects of Re-entry" by "F. B.", Gibbons Stamp Monthly, November, 1952, Page 30, and subsequent correspondence in the January, 1953 issue, Page 57.

"Seeing Double" by L. N. & M. Williams, Stamp Collecting, January 9th, 1953, Page 575.

A. G. WOOD