

BELGIAN CONGO STUDY CIRCLE

Bulletin No. 18

February, 1966

MEETINGS - 1965

Two meetings were held during the year. The first, in May, was at Tadworth. The future of the Study Circle was discussed and a brief report is given elsewhere in the Bulletin. After the formal matters were dealt with the Secretary showed his "Congo Belge" overprints on stamps and stationery.

The second meeting was held at Southfields when Mr Thomson showed a fine collection of Postal Stationery including many used pieces.

THE FUTURE OF THE STUDY CIRCLE

There was a good attendance at the May meeting to discuss the future of the Circle. Several of those unable to attend sent helpful suggestions and comments.

The possibilities of extending the scope of the Circle's activities to include adjacent countries, with the hope of further recruitment, and of approaching the Belgian Study Circle (our Parent) with a view to amalgamation, were considered very carefully. Of these possibilities the latter was preferred but complete independence was thought very desirable if was possible to continue in that manner.

It was finally decided to endeavour to maintain the Circle much the same as it has been but to do everything possible to:

1. Increase the membership at home and abroad.
2. Produce the Bulletin at more frequent intervals.
3. Circulate a packet at least once a year.

All members are asked to approach known Congo collectors, whether specialists or enthusiastic learners, to encourage them to join.

The Bulletin is a problem. It is the only link with our few overseas members and is essential for a healthy organisation. Unfortunately the Secretary is almost the only contributor, his fund of information is nearly exhausted and his opportunities for further studies rather restricted. Help from other members in the preparation of articles and editorial matter is essential if there are to be further issues.

FINANCE

It was regretfully reported to the May meeting that, once again, our balance is negative. A call for 10/6 from members was approved.

NEXT MEETING

A meeting will be held at Mr. Compton's house on 21st May, 1966. Mr. Heim is coming over from New York and will show slides of the collection of which he disposed a few years ago. At the same time, we hope that he will bring with him a few sheets of his great cancellation collection.

If anyone who will be attending the meeting has a projector for the standard photographic transparencies, perhaps he will be so good as to let the Secretary know.

CIRCULATING PACKET

A packet started on its course in December, rather later than originally intended. It should complete its circuit in June if the present rate of progress is maintained. If any member has not taken from the packet all the items that he wants and would care to see it a second time after the circuit is completed, perhaps he will let the Secretary know.

CORBISIER DE MEAULTSART

It was with the greatest regret that we learned of the death, in September last, of M. le Chevalier E. Corbisier de Meaulsart, our first Honorary member. Corbisier, although not for many years a collector of Congo, took a great interest in our activities. In our early days, he regularly sent us batches of modern covers which were distributed at our meetings and on one occasion we had the pleasure of welcoming him in person.

M. Corbisier was a philatelist of international repute, regularly on the juries of the greatest exhibitions. He was a Fellow of the "Royal" and on the Roll of Distinguished Philatelists.

FORGERIES

Members are warned to exercise great care before purchasing any stamps or covers bearing an "authenticity" mark thus:

Jmy

All seen by the writer, including a number previously accepted as genuine, are undoubted forgeries. Overprints and cancellations are or were the specialities of this forger; Brussels handstamps, Tombeur overprints and rare cancellations are particularly dangerous.

It is believed that the author or distributor of these fakes, a Belgian dealer, is still offering his works to the unsuspecting collector.

THE IDOLS ISSUES

Addenda and Corrigenda

The Designs

Mr. Lomax has referred the writer to a book, "African Sculpture Speaks" by Ladislav Segy, published in 1952 by A.A. Wyn Inc. New York. Included in the book are many illustrations and details of Congo masks and fetiches, some identical with the pictures on the stamps, others photographs of very similar masks or figures.

It appears certain that all the illustrations used for the stamps are of pieces in the Musee du Congo Belge, Tervuren, Belgium.

10 Centimes

The figure is a statue of one of the kings of the Bushongo tribe, of which there were 120. A total of seventeen generally similar statues are known.

The one in the British Museum (that illustrated in the book) is of King Shamba Balongongo. 1600-02 A.D., who introduced the custom of carving wooden images of the rulers. The British Museum figure is 21 $\frac{1}{2}$ " high.

In the hand is a ritual sword, at the foot an emblem of royal authority, a drum, an anvil or a human or animal figure. In the case of the stamp the emblem appears to be a drum.

15 Centimes

The figure is the head of a sceptre. A very similar figure, illustrated in the book, is 14" high and originates from the Batshroko tribe.

20 Centimes

The piece of wooden sculpture, a kneeling figure with a bowl, 18" high, is from the Baluba tribe. Only eight such figures are known.

It probably represents the figure of maternity. When a woman was in childbirth the figure was placed outside her dwelling, inviting alms from passers-by. There may have been other uses.

40 Centimes

This is a mask, 14" high, of the Bakuba tribe, used at initiation ceremonies when, at puberty, boys and girls were admitted to the tribe or secret society. The ceremonies, which covered an extended period, included circumcision, marking of the skin and feats of endurance. The mask is ornamented with shells, beads and raffia work in geometrical patterns.

1,50 Francs

This mask, 16" high, is from the Bakuba tribe. It consists of a flat face of antelope skin, a wooden nose and raffia beard fixed to a webbed cloth base and is ornamented with beads and cowrie shells. The masks were worn by chiefs and other dignitaries to commemorate ancient heroes of the clan. They were invented by Bo Kena, the 75th king, in 1350 A.D.

At the present time the secret character of the masks is lost and they are used by professional dancers for entertainment.

6,50 Francs

A mask with horns, 18" high, of the Bakuba tribe; only two are known. It was used in the "Dance of the Mask" when a tribal chief died, when a new chief was appointed or when there was an important visitor to the village.

There is in the book no illustration similar to the two-headed figure on the 25 Centimes value. It is believed to be a ceremonial drinking vessel.

Constant Plate Varieties

20c. Ruanda: No. 3 has the upper right leg partly doubled to the left.

25c. Ruanda: The re-entry on No. 25 is confirmed. The statement that there are re-entries on Nos. 9, 3, 22, 23, 24, 31, 32, 33, 34 and 41 is unfortunately not true and the apparent doubling on the specimens examined is probably due to over-inking.

40c. Ruanda: The quoted re-entry on No. 31 may be an inking flaw; a second copy is not available to confirm.

70c Congo: Contrary to what was written in the original article, there are many interesting retouches.

Examination of No. 41 discloses the fact that the diagonal shading to the immediate right of the figure is, in many places, very weak and, in some, non-existent. On every other impression some of these lines were much thickened by retouching. The lines retouched and the extent of the retouched vary from position to position and it is possible to plate the stamp by these retouches alone.

2,50 Fr. Ruanda: No. 25 exhibits very clear retouching, over a short length, of four of the diagonal lines of shading, 3 mm. below slightly to the left of the R of "RUANDA".

20 Fr. Congo Frame: The statement that there is a re-entry on No. 12 was incorrect. There is no such variety.

2,50 Fr. Centres: Nos. 37, 27 and 17 have a roller variety, a large blob of colour, normally in the top margin above the EL of "BELGE" or above the second A of "RUANDA". This variety does not exist on the 1,20 Fr. centres.

1,50, 3 Fr, 10 Fr, and 50 Fr. Centres: No. 14 also has a large spot of colour above and to the left of the centre of the hat.

The errors in the original article due to incorrect observations on the 25c. Ruanda, on the 20Fr. Congo and possibly on the 40c. Ruanda are very much regretted. All other varieties described have been confirmed with at least two copies in each case.

CENTRE PLATES

Referring to the sixth paragraph on page 4 of Bulletin No. 17, one plate was used for the 1,20 Fr. centres and a second plate for both 2,50 Fr. centres.

Guide Lines

The strong vertical lines, noted on the francs values, are found on at least some of the centimes values. Of very many examples of some values examined no identical positions of these lines have been observed. It appears certain that they are not lines scored on the plate. The only reasonable explanation for the presence of the lines appears to be that the blade, used for wiping surplus ink from the printing plate before transfer of the ink to the paper, was damaged and a nick in the blade left a trail of ink to be transferred to the paper. If in modern automatic printing such a blade is accurately located laterally with the plate, one could expect that the position of the resultant line would be constant on successively printed sheets of stamps until the imperfection on the blade was noticed and thought worth correcting.

Unfortunately the writer is not sufficiently familiar with modern recess-printing methods to comment further on these curious lines.

1942 ISSUE

The writer has had the opportunity to study a few complete sheets of this issue and records his findings. The sheets were of the 5c, the 15c, 30c and 75c inscribed Congo Belge/Belgisch Congo and the 10c, 20c and 60c inscribed Belgisch Congo/Congo Belge. The main object of the study was to find any interesting varieties; the result was disappointing.

The sheets are of 100 stamps, 10 wide by 10 high. Each sheet has a cross in the centre, between Nos. 45,46, 55 and 56, horizontal lines near the selvedge between Nos. 41 and 51 and between Nos. 49 and 59, and vertical lines near the selvedge between Nos. 5 and 6 and between Nos. 95 and 96. In the case of the bicoloured stamps the cross and lines are in the colour of the frame. These markings are presumably to aid or check the centring of the perforations; it is difficult to see what other purpose they served.

Re-entries and Retouches

15c. French - There is evidence of retouching of the left or right frame line on many impressions, usually a thickening over part of its length. On No. 4, however, both frame lines are doubled over their whole length and slightly obliquely; this could well be due to re-entry. No. 14 has the right frame line and No. 15 the left, doubled over their whole lengths and, again, slightly obliquely. Nos. 70, 80 and 90 have the right frames doubled, again obliquely. It appears likely that the doubled frame lines are due to re-entry and not to retouching; they are certainly not the remains of guide lines.

60c. Flemish - There is some evidence of retouching. No. 12 has two parallel lines of cross-hatching across the upper serif of the N of the upper "Congo".

Scratches

Some of the sheets have clear indications of scratches on the plates, suffered during their long service. The centre plate of the 75c value, used also, presumably, for the 1fr and 1,25fr values, had many such scratches. However, these and other trivial imperfections are not sufficient to reconstruct sheets from single copies but may serve to position blocks.

The sheets all have serial numbers, the highest of the few seen being 493.

GIBBONS' CATALOGUE, 1968

The Editor would be interested in our views on the existing cataloguing of Congo and Ruanda, with the possibility of revision in 1968. The Hon. Secretary has sent, on circuit to members in the United Kingdom, possible improvements with the request for further comment, criticism and alternative suggestions.

BOGUS DIE PROOFS, 1894 ISSUE

In their sale of 24 March, Harmer, Rooke are offering a purely bogus die proof of the 5fr. value, comprising centre and frame, both in black, side by side on the same sheet of paper. Careful inspection shows very clearly that it is not a "pull" from an engraved die; the impression is flat and blurred.

This and similar "die proofs" of other values of the 1894 issue were produced by photo-lithography from the issued stamps with the object of fleecing the collector; they are believed to have appeared on the philatelic market in the early 1930's.

Harmer Rooke have withdrawn the lot from the sale.

LA REVUE POSTALE

Will members who wish to receive copies of this journal during 1966 please send to the secretary stamps to the value of 3/-.

BIBLIOGRAPHY OF BELGIAN CONGO AND RUANDA URUNDI

In the absence of another volunteer, the secretary will attempt to produce a bibliography with a brief summary of the contents of each book and article.

Enclosed is a list of books and journals, containing Congo and Ruanda articles, at present available. So that the bibliography can be as comprehensive as possible and not subject to too frequent additions, the secretary will be glad to learn of other books containing useful information and to learn where they may be seen.

ALBERTVILLE ISSUE OF 1962

A short article in "La Revue Postale" No. 65 tells of Katangan stamps overprinted "CONGO" for use in northern Katanga occupied by the Congolese National Army and used on mail leaving Albertville between mid-January and mid-March, 1962.

The overprint is handstamped. The Katangan stamps overprinted include:

Congo Independence o/p "11 JUILLET" etc. - all values except 5fr,
10fr and 20fr.

Katangan Arts - all values to 100fr.

Similar stamps are found with the "CONGO" typographed. These are not well authenticated and are almost certainly bogus.

STANLEYVILLE ISSUE OF 1964

An article in "Balasse Magazine" No. 160 lists the Congo Republic issues overprinted "REPUBLIQUE POPULAIRE" for use by the "rebels" around Stanleyville. The overprint was typographed in Stanleyville. The following are known, some being overprinted in very small numbers:

Belgian Congo Idols - 70c, 75/70c, 1,60fr, 2,40fr and 50fr.

Animals with 1964 o/p - 1fr, 3,50fr, 5fr and 6,50fr.

Flowers with 1964 o/p - 2fr, 6,50fr and 8fr.

Kasavubu with 1964 o/p - 3fr and 4fr.

Independence with 1964 o/p - 6fr.

Birds - 4fr, 7fr, 8fr, 10fr and 20fr.

U.P.U. - 7fr and 20fr.

C.E.E. - 9fr and 12 fr.

Reconciliation - 9fr and 12fr.

Lovanium - 25fr, 30fr and 60fr.

The 4fr, 7fr, 8fr and 10fr Birds exist with inverted overprint. The 7fr Birds exists with double overprint, one inverted. The 25fr and 60fr Lovanium exist with double overprint, one in phantom (no ink).

CONGO - CINQUANTE ANS D'HISTOIRE POSTALE

We all realise the debt we owe to General Du Four for publishing his book and thereby giving us all the benefit of his intimate knowledge of the stamps and cancellations of the Congo and the benefit of his researches over many years.

General Du Four would be the last to claim that his information is complete or that all his conclusions are necessarily correct. For many years new discoveries will be made to add to the store of knowledge.

To record such knowledge, to raise doubts and to ventilate opinions must be one of the major objects of the Study Circle and members are invited to send contributions for publishing in our Bulletin.

Here is a first contribution:

Page 31 - 1886 Issue

Mr. Heim had proofs (die or plate?) of the 5 centimes in ochre and in grey-green.

Page 45 - Colis Postaux

Note (3) at the bottom of the page states that the surcharge was applied only when required. If this was the case and if the overprinting was undertaken in the post offices themselves there must have been a multiplicity of handstamps in use; moreover the accounting must have been very difficult. It seems much more likely that complete sheets were surcharged in Brussels or in Boma and these distributed to the post offices. The Gibbons catalogue claims that the surcharge was applied in Brussels; if the Colis Postaux were available in the Brussels office of the Independent State as were the other stamps it would seem probable that Gibbons is correct. Is there definite evidence, one way or the other?

Page 51 - 1887 Issue

Joseph Wright had a number of values of the issue in a variety of colours, probably die proofs. They were sold by Harmers and the writer has no record of the details. As far as he recalls, all were on glazed paper.

The 10c value exists in black on gummed paper, apparently printed from the plate.

Page 55 - 1887 - 25c

A further constant plate variety, visible without a lens, exists: a coloured dot under the right end of the horizontal bar of the left figure 2; the variety is found in the left vertical column in Pane I or II. Information on its precise position would be appreciated.

Page 53 - 1887 - "Les Planches"

Whereas there is no shadow of doubt that the centimes values were printed in sheets of 150 stamps, one wonders if this is true of the francs values. If so, there can have been printed only 20 sheets of the 10 francs and 73 sheets of the 5 francs violet. That the printings of these high values would be relatively small would have been foreseen and one would think that the authorities would not have gone to the expense of producing plates consisting of more than one pane of 50 stamps.

Page 57 - 1887 - 25 francs

The existence of the very clearly doubled letters on one impression of the "bloc-report" and not on the complete sheets is very curious. It seems fair to conclude that the "bloc-report" used for the reprints was not that used for the plates of 50 (or 150).

Page 59 - "Curiosite de dentelure"

Imperforate copies of the 50c brown have been sold in England in recent years, a marginal single by Harmer, Rooke on 4 January, 1959 and a block of 4 by H.R. Harmer on 1 March, 1954.

On 2 March 1949, Robson Lowe sold a marginal imperforate copy of the 10fr ochre; careful inspection would be necessary to confirm its authenticity.

In addition to the 50c grey, the 50c brown exists with double perforation. The writer has a used copy with the vertical perforations doubled and shifted to the left or right by one hole so that the horizontal perforations appear normal.

Page 401 - Specimens

Mr. Barstow Smith has the following, from the collections of Joseph Knight and Joseph Wright: as first type (framed) 50c grey; as second type (uniform capitals without frame) on: 1887, 10c, 50c brown, 5fr violet and 10fr; as fourth type (large initial letter, remainder capitals) on 1886 5c, 10c, 25c and 50c and on 1887 5c, 10c, both 50c, both 5fr and 10fr.

EXTRACTS FROM PERIODICALS

La Revue Postale No. 62 - Congo, les Vignettes Publicitaires

Baron de Moffarts continues his article with a check list of the Mols values with and without the various "SPECIMEN" overprints and lists the 1925 and 1942 Waterlow values existing for the same purpose. To complete the story he includes the 1915 issue of Belgium also used by Waterlow for publicity purposes.

Ibid. No. 65 - Emission d'Albertville de Janvier 1962

See earlier in this Bulletin for a synopsis.

Ibid No. 65 - La Post Aerienne a ses Debuts

Gives details of the Edmund Thieffry flight of 1925 and of the first regular air service between Brussels and Leopoldville in 1935.

Balasse Magazine No. 160 - Surcharge "Republique Populaire" de Stanleyville
J.L.A. Ludwig

See earlier in this Bulletin for a synopsis.

Ibid No. 161 - Contrefacons Dangereuses de Surcharges "Royaume de Royaume" et
"Royaume du Burundi" (Type I) sur Faune - Emission 1-7-1962 - J.L.A. Ludwig

A valuable article to collectors of this issue, detailing means of identification of the forged overprints, based largely on spacing of the letters and relative positions of the words.

Ibid No. 164 - Petite Histoire des Timbres du Congo - Kilo-Moto

According to an old postal official of the Congo a total of 10 sheets (500 stamps) each of the 1915 and Red Cross issues were left imperforate.

The official was in Le Havre in 1916 and states that there were no less than 8 "Ruanda" and "Urundi" overprints used in Le Havre before they were sent to East Africa; some were lost en route and not all were used for the local overprints.

Gibbons Stamp Monthly, November, 1965 - The "Idols" Issues of Belgian Congo and Ruanda Urundi - R.H. Keach

Very largely a copy of the article in the B.C.S.C. Bulletin No. 17 but with a few illustrations of the varieties.

APOLOGY

The production of this edition of the "Bulletin" and the multitude of mistakes, some corrected some not, are deplorable in spite of the fact that it has received far more typing effort and has resulted in far more scrapped stencils than any of its predecessors.

Unfortunately, at the present time, the Secretary's own secretarial assistance is not what it was. If another member, more skilled in the use of the typewriter, would volunteer to produce stencils for future Bulletins, it would be a great help.

BELGIAN CONGO STUDY CIRCLE

COLOUR TRANSPARENCIES AVAILABLE

In the description is given the Balasse, or Yvert, catalogue number.

<u>No.</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>Description</u>
1	Map	61	24V3
2	Bal. 1	62	24, No.33 in sheet.
3	2	63	24E2
4	3	64	25, No.12 in sheet.
5	3V4	65	26a, violet
6	4	66	26, lilac
7	4V2	67	26aV1
8	1st. Issue on cover	68	26aV6
9	5	69	26E2
10	CP1	70	27V3
11	1887 Proof	71	27V4
12	6	72	28V1
13	6V1	73	28V6
14	6, variety	74	28V7
15	6, variety	75	28V8
16	7	76	28V9
17	8	77	28V10
18	9	78	28V11
19	10	79	28V12, No. 29 in sheet.
20	10V1	80	28E2
21	11	81	29V1
22	12	82	29V4
23	13	83	29C2
24	13A	84	29 colour trial, violet.
25	13B	85	30, local 1
26	CP2	86	31
27	CP4N1, wide opening, rt 5	87	CB H/S on 10c of 1909, L3.
28	CP4N2	88	41
29	CP5	89	32
30	14	90	32, local 8 in blue.
31	14V1	91	33, original top line, L1.
32	14V2	92	33, retouched top.
33	14V13	93	34, local 5
34	14E2	94	35V1, local 6.
35	14E2, different O/P	95	36, local 7.
36	15V1	96	36 violet, Brussels 3.
37	15V2	97	37, local 4 inverted.
38	15V3	98	47P, Princes inverted.
39	15V4	99	38, Brussels.
40	15V13	100	38, local 1.
41	16N1V5	101	39, local 3.
42	16N2	102	50.
43	17V1	103	51.
44	17V7, No. 25 in sheet	104	52.
45	17V8	105	53V2.
46	18	106	54.
47	18	107	55.
48	18V2	108	56V4.
49	18V7, No. 40 in sheet	109	56, essay in claret.
50	18C1	110	56, essay.
51	19	111	57V3, No. 17 in sheet.
52	20	112	58.
53	20V1	113	59.

<u>No.</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>Description</u>
54	20V2	114	60N2V4.
55	21V7, No. 14 in sheet	115	61, imperf. rt. margin.
56	21V11	116	62V2.
57	21E1	117	63.
58	21E2	118	63, essay in blue.
59	22V5	119	64N1.
60	23E2	120	64N2.
121	65N1	161	94B.
122	65, imperf. bottom (booklet)	162	95, No. 41 in sheet.
123	66N1	163	96N1.
124	66N2	164	96N2.
125	67, Centre type I	165	97N1.
126	67, Centre type II.	166	97N2.
127	68N1	167	98N1.
128	68N2	168	98N2.
129	69N1	169	99, Centre type I.
130	69N3	170	99, Centre type II.
131	70V4	171	100N2.
132	71V4	172	100N1.
133	72	173	100, III+B fake?
134	73	174	100N3.
135	74	175	100N4.
136	75	176	100N5.
137	76V4	177	100N6.
138	76, imperf. left margin	178	100S1.
139	77	179	100C1.
140	78	180	100C2.
141	79	181	100C9.
142	80	182	100C10.
143	85V1	183	100ER1.
144	85A	184	101.
145	86V9	185	102N1.
146	86ER1	186	102N2.
147	87	187	102N3.
148	87A	188	102N4V1.
149	87B	189	102N5.
150	88V5	190	102N8.
151	89V9	191	102C6.
152	89ER1	192	102ER1.
153	90V3	193	103.
154	90ER1	194	104.
155	91V2 and V10	195	104 fake.
156	91A	196	104 inverted.
157	92V2	197	105.
158	93V3	198	105 inverted.
159	93A	199	124 essay.
160	93B	200	Lado ovals.
160A	94V1		