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BULLETIN 150

April 2009

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The Study Circle website
www.belgian-congo-study-circle.be

Receipts and payments account
Year to 31st December 2008

Income	Year to 31 Dec. 2007	Year to 31 Dec. 2008
	£ Sterling	£ Sterling
Subscriptions received (#1)	437.99	240.10
Subscriptions in advance	21.60	75.00
Commission on stamp/auction sales (#2)	1040.20	1,132.69
Books and document sales	36.30	5.50
Bank interest	23.98	40.16
Total income	1560.07	1493.45
Expenditure		
Bulletin, Auction list		
UK Rest of World production, printing & distribution	363.86	143.63 237.71
Cost of sales and new book purchases	164.55	14.96
Annual meeting, AGM, incl. refreshments	324.96	447.06
Officers expenses	241.12	250.00
Secretarial & Librarian – postages, stationery, etc.	124.14	89.95
Insurance	142.07	119.75
Total Expenditure	1,361.70	1,303.06
Surplus/Deficit	198.37	£190.39
Balance on hand at start of period	£1,089.86	£1289.23
On hand at end of period (#3)	£1,289 23	£1,479.62

I certify that the 'Receipts and Payments Account' is a complete account of all transactions for the year ending 31st December 2008.

Stuart S. Smith
Honorary Treasurer

Notes to the accounts

1. **Subscriptions** – In 2007, the total included a contribution of £200 from the American membership account. *Belgian and American subscriptions are banked in Belgium and the U.S.A. respectively. These are used to fund their Bulletin reproduction and distribution. Any surpluses are transferred periodically. None were received in 2008.*
2. **Commissions** are made up largely as transfers from the Belgian 'Auction account'.
3. Balances held on deposit at 31 December 2008 - in Belgium To be reported to A.G.M.
- in U.S.A. \$1065.63

Events 2009



MonacoPhil 2009

4th – 6th December 2009

Belgian Rarities Exhibited at MonacoPhil 2009

As part of the international exhibition ‘**MonacoPhil 2009**’ and in conjunction with the traditional exhibition of ‘*100 timbres et documents philatéliques parmi les plus rares du Monde*’ (100 of the world’s rarest stamps and philatelic documents).

The event, being held in the Principality from 4th to 6th December 2009, will also witness the publication of a fully illustrated anthology written in several languages. This work, a veritable touchstone for this theme, will highlight Belgium’s best material in terms of historical interest, rarity and quality.

Any member wishing to attend this outstanding event will be pleased to note that ‘Club de Monte-Carlo de la Philatélie’ has been able to negotiate special concessionary terms with some Monaco hotels. Members attending will be able to benefit from these deals by returning the annexed ‘Reservation form’ accompanying this Bulletin or separately posted by e-mail.

From the Editor



The Bulletin and Auctions

In the last Bulletin it was indicated that the publication frequency of the Circle’s Bulletins and Auctions, was to be reconsidered. The matter was discussed at the A.G.M. and finally agreed that both the Bulletin and Auction should be produced and made available quarterly, if at all humanly possible.

In addition to the work load and time involved, it is apparent that there are serious financial and administrative difficulties in management of the Auctions. It is anticipated that a new set of rules will have to be put in place to avoid such problems in the future and this is now under review with volunteered help from Ludo Achten.

Annual meetings in Bruxelles

The annual meetings were again well attended and a report of the A.G.M. will appear in the next Bulletin. There were a few rearranged and new ‘Officer appointments’, notably the position of ‘General Secretary’ has reverted back to Stuart Smith and Dr. Charles Lloyd has taken over as ‘Honorary Treasurer’. John Kelland will take over as U.K. Packet Secretary when the present one has completed its circuit.

Accounts 2008

The accounts for 2008, as summarised on page 2 above, were approved.

A message from the President

While reviewing my notes on statements made at the annual meetings over the last several years, I realised that on every occasion I have appealed for more help in assisting the Circle's officers and the situation rarely changes. It is nearly always the same members giving of their time and skills in promoting and helping to maintain the Circle's high standards. We are doing well with 86 pages published in the bulletins last year as well as over 700 lots in our auctions and I know we will hear more from the other officers at the annual general meeting in March.

Once again I ask that if you feel you can give any additional support in any way, please do let us know and we will welcome you with open arms.

Both our Bulletin editor and Auctioneer have indicated their wish to reduce the frequency of their contributions to three times a year. I understand their position and the time and effort they have to commit, but regret their decision and some help will be welcome.

94 of our members have e-mail addresses and I am not pleading for a formal program as such; but if we knew and had records of other members interests, I feel it would be helpful in as much that those with similar collecting interests could be more easily in touch and perhaps offer and exchange duplicates and scans. We have on a number of occasions published in the Bulletin, lists of our wants. I would like to see this facility more widely used and by way of a prompt will be declaring some things I am looking for, in this issue. See 'can you HELP'.

Thanks to everyone for the contributions made to the study of the foreign censor marks and labels on Belgian Congo covers. I am still working on the 'Censure Militaire' inscriptions on covers during the first period 1916 to 1921 and would like to catalogue the Officers who were responsible for censoring the mail during this period. Some members, like the incorrigible Alan Morvay, have already given me their full support but a lot more has to be studied before I can publish.

If by any chance you are working in any field of study, please let us know by a note to the Bulletin editor and I can guarantee that other members will give their support and help.

Your membership is important, and I hope you will play a more active role in the Study Circle. I wish you every success on your favourite Belgian Congo subject and good health during 2009.

Walter Deijnckens. February 2009

The 'Index'

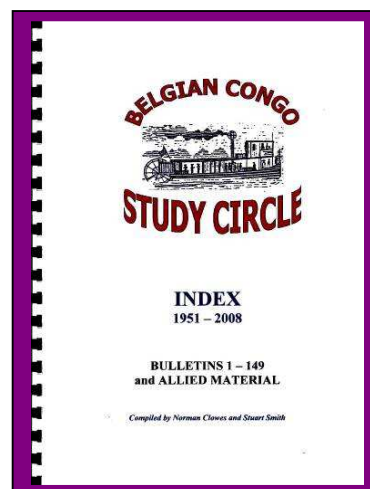
As reported in and since publication of the last Bulletin, I was able to complete the 'Index' and it has been distributed electronically to all members who receive their Bulletins, etc. by e-mail. It is of course 'free of charge' to all able to receive it by this medium but should any member like to receive a bound printed copy, there has to be a charge for duplication, binding and postage.

Refer details given below.

So that the preparation can be completed 'en bloc', the closing date for orders will be 31st May.

It is my intention to post out printed bound copies during the second week in June, to all those from whom a request and payment has been received

As stated previously, there will be no charge for any member requesting to receive by email.



U.K. members - £4. Send cheque payable to S.S. Smith
All Belgian members – 5€ to Emile Hoorens.
All other European members – 5€ cash to S. S. Smith
Rest of the World members – *Recommend having bound locally*
U.S.A. members – *Recommend having bound locally*

Membership News

New Members

We extend a warm welcome to four more new members. **António Borralho, Luc Smalle, Ian Potterton** and **Eric Coulton**. As always we hope they enjoy and are all able to benefit from our common interests.

<i>Portugal</i>	António Borralho;	Av,25 Adril, 27-60D 8500-611 Portmat. e-mail: aborralho@kanguru.pt
<i>Rep. South Africa</i>	Luc Smalle;	P.O.Box 862 Delmas 2210 e-mail: lnlsmalle@gmail.com
<i>U.K.</i>	Eric Coulton;	16 Crugan Avenue Kinnel Bay Rhyl North Wales. LL18 5DG e-mail: ericcoulton@aol.com
<i>U.K.</i>	Ian Potterton;	13 Suggits Orchard Cleethorpes Lincolnshire. DN35 7LN e-mail: i_potterton@yahoo.co.uk

Residential and e-mail address changes and additions

Belgium - **Deruyck, Jozef;** e-mail: jozef.deruyck@telenet.be

Zimbabwe - **Joan Soriano;** 7, Knight Bruce Road
off Bishop Gaul Avenue
Milton Park
Harare.

Patrick Maselis. We offer our congratulations to Patrick Maselis who was in the news again, having been appointed as the new President of the very prestigious ‘Club de Monte-Carlo de la Philatélie’. Rumour has it that President Sarkozy’s application for membership had been declined, but it may only be gossip!

Snippets, Questions, Answers and can you Help?

Walter Deijnckens – is looking for Ruanda-Urundi and Belgian occupation in German East Africa material.

If you can help and have any material for sale please write or email him.
[Refer title page for address details]

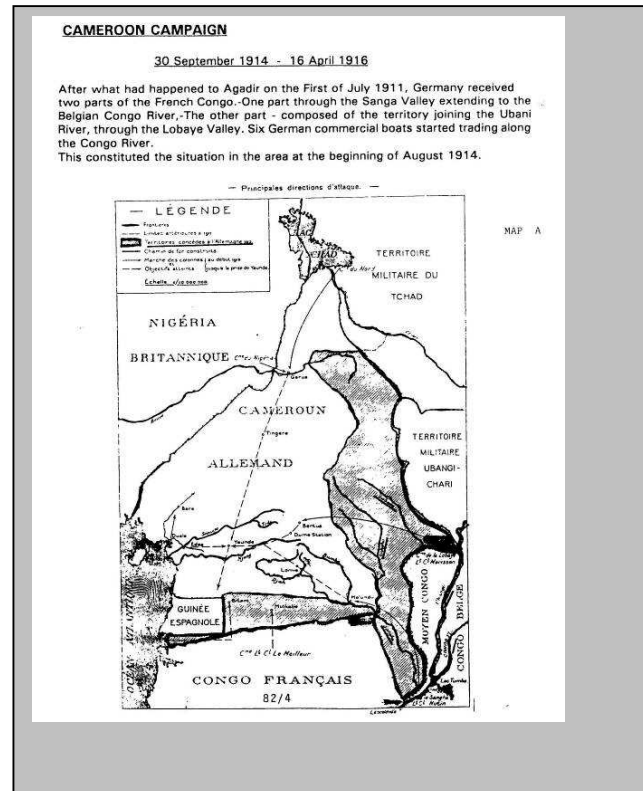
Invasion of Cameroon, 1914-1918

Michael Wright reminds us that in Bulletin 82, December 1991 we featured an article by André Vindevoghel about the deployment of Belgian Congo troops during World War I, who helped the French to conquer Cameroon. The article summarises the campaign but there appears to be no specific reference to anything philatelic.

Questions

Have any covers from that operation and period survived? Is there any material that can be identified as originating from either the French or Belgian Congo troops?

[Replies either to Michael Wright or the editor who will pass them on]



Airmail Postal Historians – FAM 22

In the last Bulletin, Walter Deijnckens and I had written an article about the 'U.S.A. Clipper Service' to the Congo during World War II. It related very largely to what is known as service FAM 22, and was prompted by new information obtained from articles written by Bob Wilcsek and John Wilson in 'Airpost Journal' and 'Cameo'.

I am now appreciatively indebted to our Belgian member Jozef Deruyck who has copied to me a further article by Bob Wilcsek which was published in the January 2009 edition of 'Airpost Journal'. It expands extensively on our previous knowledge about this and other related FAM services to the west coast of Africa and is indeed a very thorough contribution - arguably completing the story and explaining all! I commend it to you.

With the author's permission to reproduce from it, the following extracts will wet the appetite of members who have a particular interest in airmail services to the Congo.^[1]

" The problem is that (after December 1942) it was FAM18 that carried the mail across the Atlantic, not FAM22"

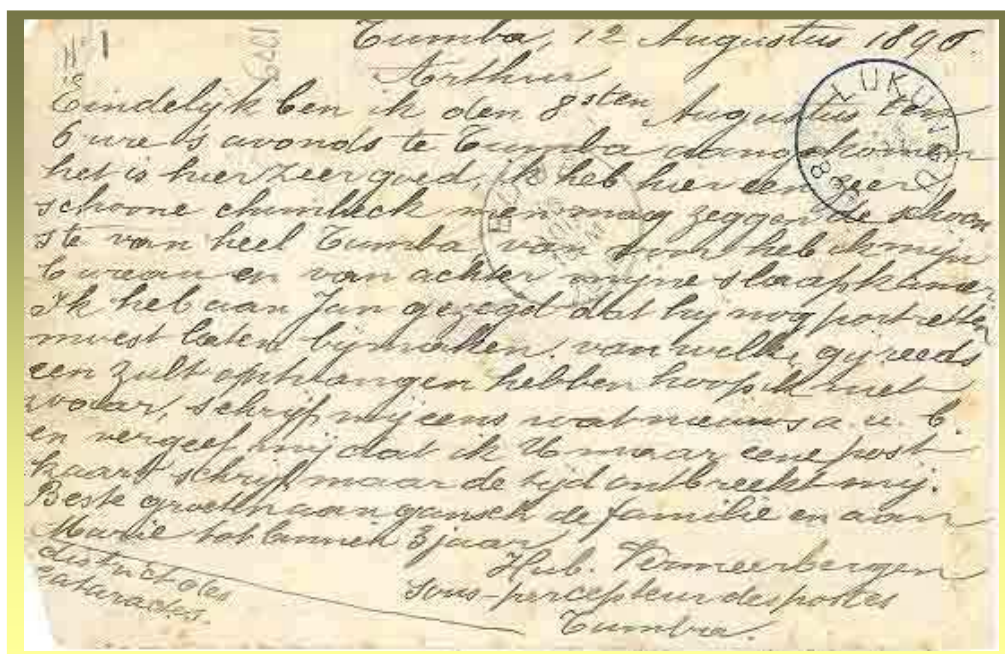
" Over its short life, FAM22 did nothing much at all. It provided cover to the existence of a military supply route, (poorly) It eventually gave cover to a little-used through connection to Leopoldville. This connection would prove invaluable in moving early uranium ore samples from the Belgian Congo to Chicago without creating excessive Axis interest."

" . there was the 'Veil of Secrecy' concept that gave an excellent rationale for keeping the pretence of a working FAM22 route alive as a security measure."

1. Bob Wilcsek, Airpost Journal, January 2009

Tumba - Postal History in the making

Just occasionally and out of the blue some item of correspondence turns up with a bit of real documentary 'Postal History'. Charles Stockmans recently had the good fortune to acquire such an item which he shares with us here.



It is a card confirming that the future Postmaster had arrived safely and was seriously pleased with the accommodation provided. For those who don't read Dutch, here is an extract of the really interesting part:

I ave finally arrived here in Tumba on 8th August at 6 in the evening. It is very good here and I have very good accommodation, at the front I have my office (the future post office?) and at the rear, my bedroom.

.....
Hub Vermeerbergen
Sous percepteur des postes
Tumba

Just 3 months later on 26th November, all was in place and the 'Tumba Sous-Perception office' opened - presumably under the direction of Hub Vermeerbergen.

TUMBA type 4 canceller

Postmarks are not my forte unless related specifically to some topic of personal interest, but this one is intriguing because I don't understand the logic of its declared exclusion from the Heim Keach reference book. It was shown at the recent meeting in Bruxelles by Walter Deijnckens and by sheer coincidence another member present had an example with him also. That illustrated here has been computer enhanced to give a clearer reproduction.

Question - If type 3B 'Railway Station' canceller is included in Heim Keach classification, why isn't type 4?

Would someone like to make a study on 'Railway station marks/cancellers' and share the findings with the rest of us, in the bulletin?



Editor

We are indebted to Graham Mark of the 'Civil Censorship Study Group' who copied the following extract to me from '*History of the Postal and Telegraph Censorship Department, 1938-1946*' housed in the National Archives, Kew. Ref. DEFE 1/333

Censorships in Allied Countries

(1) BELGIAN CONGO

1529. Establishment and scope of Liaison Post

Co-operation between Censorship in the Union of South Africa (controlled by the Union's Postmaster General) and Censorship in the Belgian Congo (conducted by Belgian Congo Senior Postal Officials) was at the outbreak of war a natural sequence to the good relations established in peace-time, because the Union Postmaster General was creator of the Pan-African Postal Conference at which contacts were made between officials of all postal administrations in Africa.. Belgian Congo Post Office officials frequently visited Cape Town and discussed problems with Censorship Headquarters. This continued until 1942, when the Belgian Congo Security Service seems to have assumed control of censorship. In 1942, members of the Belgian Congo Security Service visited Capetown and Johannesburg. There followed requests made through the Belgian Minister in South Africa for copies of Censorship Directives used in South Africa. Some of these were supplied but it became clear that advice as to censorship practice was required and that a visit by a South African censorship official to the Belgian Congo would be most helpful. There was evidence of lax censorship in the Belgian Congo in regard to the use of intermediaries for sending correspondence to enemy and enemy occupied territory and correspondence and parcels to Belgium. In April 1943, the Union's Assistant Chief Censor spent a week at Elisabethville, where he discussed censorship problems. It was not until he reached London in September 1943 that this officer was aware that the Chief Censor, Lagos, was on a similar mission to Leopoldville at the very time he was at Elizabethville. In this year censorship of all mails to and from the Belgian Congo, transit as well as terminal, was concentrated at Johannesburg. Certain information that the Belgian Congo Censorship wanted could not be supplied by South Africa until sanctioned by the United Kingdom Censorship authorities. Consequently the appointment of a South Africa Censorship Liaison Officer was deferred in order that he should not face an embarrassing situation. In June 1944, this question of supplying information to the Belgian Congo Government was settled and in September 1944, General Smuts himself directed that liaison should continue and that a Belgian Congo Censorship representative should be invited to the Union to discuss censorship matters of mutual interest. A member from Belgian Congo Censorship arrived at Capetown on 19th October 1944. He subsequently visited Johannesburg and the visit terminated at Bulawayo on 4th November. Further contact took place between a Belgian Congo Censorship Officer in Johannesburg in January 1945, but it was finally agreed that in view of the progress of the war no useful purpose would be served by having a Resident Liaison Officer at Leopoldville.

1530. Postal Censorship Questions

The Belgian Congo Censorship agreed in April 1943, (i) to ensure, with certain exceptions, censorship of all outward mail not normally transiting British territory and (ii) to attempt to censor all inward mail not bearing a British Censorship label. Previously, terminal mail had received only partial attention in the Belgian Congo.

1531. Travellers censorship

The Belgian Congo Security Officers were interested in the Union's pre-censorship scheme for travellers, but it is not known to what extent they applied it after receiving a copy of the British instructions in May 1943.

1532. Telegraph Censorship

All telegrams leaving the Congo were examined by the Belgian Congo Censorship. Although all messages to and from Leopoldville Wireless Station were examined, the Belgian Congo Security Officers informed the Union Censorship that they believed their own control was not 100 percent effective.

A History of the Antwerp – Congo Mail-boat Service

By – Charles Stockmans and Roger Gallant

Translated from

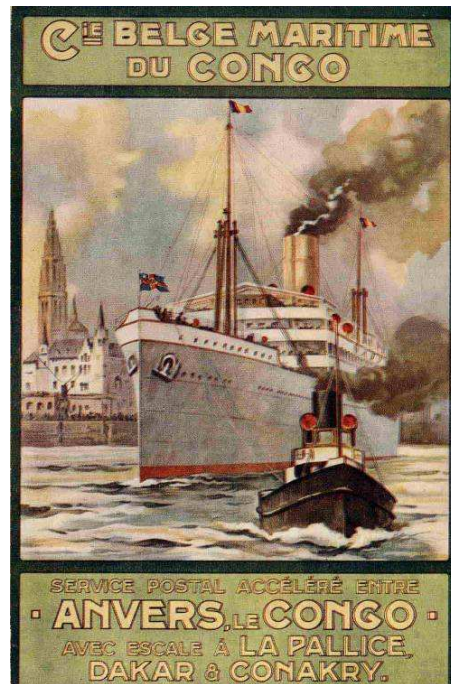
“Le Mouvement Géographique 8th year, No.4 - 28th February 1891, page 16”

Mail for the Independent State can may sent

1. By the Royal Portuguese Mailboat leaving Lisbon on the 6th and 21st of each month. The address and ‘*Via Lisbon*’ must be indicated on mail to be transported by these ships and be delivered to the Central Post Office, Brussels, at least four days in advance, that is by the 2nd and 17th of the month. This method is the most reliable as the ships always leave on time.
2. By British shipping lines out of Liverpool leaving Antwerp about the 18th of each month. The name of the ship and ‘*Via Antwerp*’ must be written on the cover. This mail must be received at the Central Post Office, Brussels, at least two days before departure of the steamer. Dates of departure are published in our “Nouvelles et Informations”

Part 2. 1914-1960

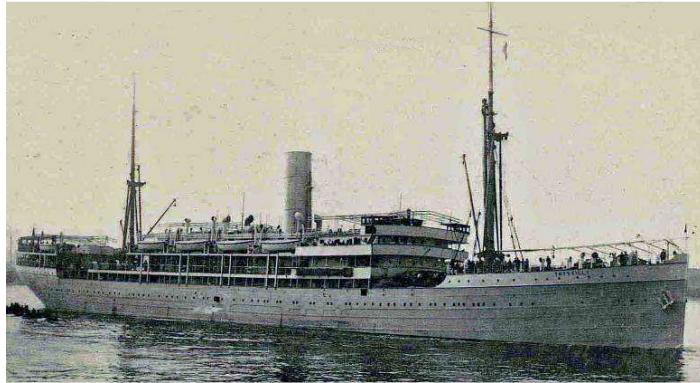
The invasion of Belgium in 1914 compelled ‘*Compagnie Belge Maritime du Congo*’ to transfer its organisation to the offices of ‘*Agence Maritime Walford*’ in London and the ‘*Elder Dempster*’ offices in Hull. From 1915 the company operated its three liners from Liverpool to the Congo. Later these embarked and disembarked passengers at Falmouth and their cargo at Hull. For the duration of the war the company retained links, as regular as possible, with the Congo and in support of the Allies. During the three year campaign and in addition to any normal traffic, its ships carried most of the 700 Belgian officers and other ranks sent from Europe to Africa to reinforce the ‘*Force Publique*’, as well as considerable quantities of hospital equipment, medicines and other provisions for both the European and native population. On the return leg, they brought back clothing, camping equipment, ammunition, weapons, tools, copper and palm oil. In providing that support, the ‘*Compagnie Belge Maritime du Congo*’ paid a heavy toll succumbing to submarine attack with the loss of its steamer *Elisabethville (1)* on 6th September 1917 near ‘*Belle Island*’ off the Brittany coast.



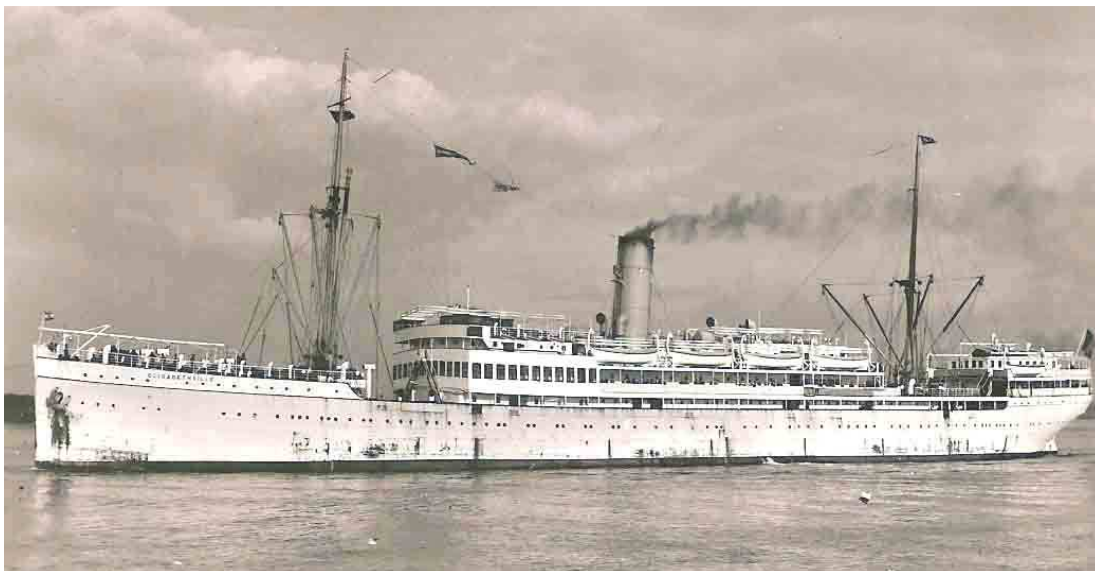
With the end of hostilities there were also significant problems in the restoration of a normal trading relationship between the motherland and its colony. One was in transporting urgently, the enormous stock of colonial products accumulated in Africa which Belgium needed for the recovery of its industry. Necessary measures were put in place and from 1919 they entrusted the management of the ‘*Agence Maritime Internationale*’, a powerful body set up on 3rd March of that year, to resume the activities of the ‘*Agence Maritime Walford*’. The ‘*Agence Maritime Internationale*’ managed the assets of the ‘*Compagnie Belge Maritime du Congo*’ as well as its agencies abroad. Meanwhile the maritime links between Antwerp

and the Congo intensified with the purchase of three ships, one after the other. They were the *Uromi* (941 tons) renamed *Kinshasa*, the *Mateba* (5,500 tons) and the *Matadi* (3,097 tons).

These were transferred to the '*Compagnie Africaine de Navigation*' at its formation on 31st January 1920 whilst still under the management of '*Agence Maritime Internationale*'. The *Albertville* (4) was sold to a foreign buyer and replaced in 1922 with the magnificent *Elisabethville* (2) [8,178 tons] and built in the John Cockerill shipyard at Hoboken.



Thysville (1)



Elisabethville (2)

In the same year and from the same yard, the superb *Thysville* [8,176 tons] joined the fleet as well as the *Stanleyville* (2), [6,612 tons] built this time by John Brown and Co. at Clydebank.

These major investments quickly relieved pressure on the Congo river ports and the movement of passengers and merchandise resumed under much better circumstances. The colony was of significant importance by way of its contribution to Belgium's economy, and the role played by '*Compagnie Belge Maritime du Congo*' was also equally important. It had become one of the major national shipping companies with its decision to increase the size of its fleet even further by ordering the sumptuous *Albertville* (5) from '*Ateliers et Chantiers de la Loire*' at Saint-Nazaire.

The *Albertville* (5) started operating on 28th February 1928 and the *Leopoldville* (5) joined the line in October 1929. A new tug, the *Cambier*, joined the *Colonel Thys* on the river Congo whilst there were nine new big barges, four smaller ones and several whaling boats called '*Baleinières*'.

'*Compagnie Africaine de Navigation*' was taken over by the '*Compagnie Belge Maritime du Congo*' on 11th July 1929. In February 1930 the company took over '*Lloyd Royal Belge*' which had been founded on 26th June 1916 at La Panne, with the aim of transporting supplies destined for Belgium from the

U.S.A. to neutral ports, mainly in Holland. At the end of World War I, the 'Lloyd Royal' replaced German companies which were no longer serving Antwerp. The company, whose 'raison d'être' was its links with the Congo, became the first national company to diversify by opening a service to America. It changed its name to 'Compagnie Maritime Belge [Lloyd Royal]'.

With the 1930's economic crisis, no more liners were ordered except for the luxurious *Baudouinville (1)* in 1937 with State help. She was delivered in 1939 and was to make only three trips before the start of the Second World War, during which she came to a sad end.

During the German invasion of Belgium on 10th May 1940 the company gave orders that all ships at dock in Antwerp should leave and sail for French ports as it was considered their defensive capabilities were better than those of British ports.^[1]

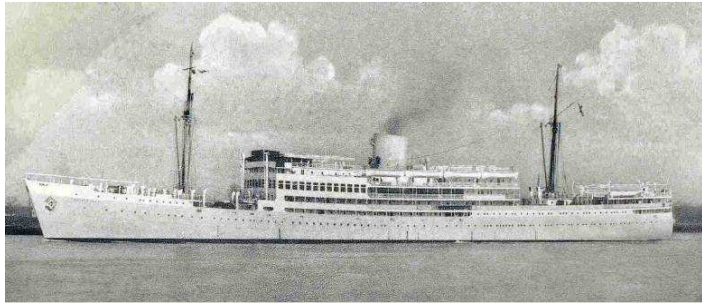
The *Elisabethville (2)*, *Albertville (5)*, and *Baudouinville (1)* sailed from Antwerp with passengers including members of the management and company staff. The ships sailed for La Pallice and then on to Bordeaux. The *Elisabethville (2)* arrived at La Pallice on 14th May and then sailed for Great Britain on 6th June.

The French navy requisitioned the *Albertville (5)* and sent it to Le Havre where it was sunk by the German air force. The *Baudouinville (1)* remained at Bordeaux, later to be transferred to Nantes where the retreating Germans scuttled it on 10th August 1944.

To this toll must be added the loss of 294 sailors on the *Leopoldville (5)* which was torpedoed on 24th December 1944. Of the company's 31 ships, 23 were lost.

During the first four months of the war, the *Leopoldville (5)* operated the 'Great Britain → Congo line' whilst the *Thysville* and *Elisabethville (2)* provided the U.S.A. → Congo line service.

On the 20th September the entire fleet was requisitioned and the three liners were allocated as troop carriers.



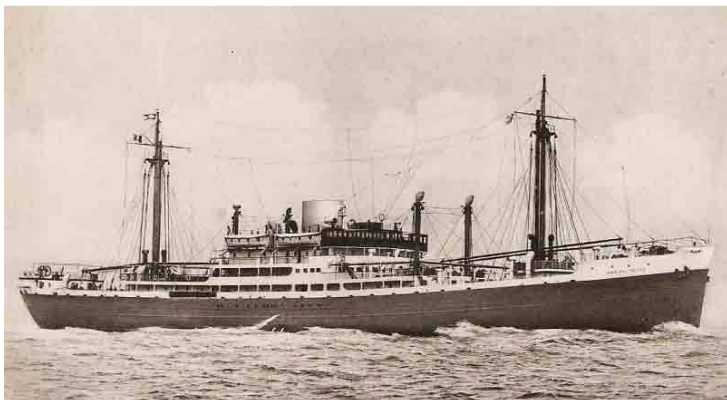
S.S. Leopoldville (5)

Following liberation, seven of the company's ships had survived among which was the *Elisabethville (2)* and *Thysville*. The *Thysville* was the first of the fleet to berth in Antwerp on 23rd September 1945.

The problems of 1945 were similar to the ones faced in 1918 and despite the colony's lack of equipment there were enormous quantities of merchandise in the Congo ready to be shipped to Belgium. Many colonials wanted to return home while replacements were waiting to depart for the colony.

In 1945 the company made sixteen voyages to the Congo; but that was insufficient to fulfil its needs and for that reason three cargo ships, the *Alex Van Opstal (2)*, *Armand Grisar* and *Gouverneur Galopin* as well as two 'Victory ships', the *Steenstraete* and *Tervaete*, were converted to carry passengers.

Two ships, the *Mar del Plata* and *Copacabana* – originally intended for the America's service, were rescheduled to the Congo line, a service which was re-opened on 25th October 1945.



Mar del Plata

At about the same time, in August 1945, the company ordered three liners from the Cockerill at Hoboken yard, each of 10,350 tons. These, the *Albertville* (6) and *Leopoldville* (6) started operating in 1948 while the *Elisabethville* (3) began a year later. These new liners were able to make the voyage in two weeks compared with three weeks before the war. In 1948 the company ordered two dual purpose liners (cargo and passengers) from Cockerill each of which could carry up to 216 adults and 24 children. They were the *Baudouinville* (2) which entered service in 1950 and the *Charlesville* in 1951.

In 1947 the cargo shipments returned to normal and the *Copacabana* and *Mar del Plata* reverted to their originally intended Americas service. In 1949 the *Steentraete* and *Tervaete* were withdrawn and the *Thysville* and *Elisabethville* (2) were sold.

In 1952 the *Copacabana* and *Mar del Plata* rejoined the invigorated service to the Congo. The *Copacabana* was sold to an East German company in 1958.^[1]



Elisabethville (3)

In 1953 'Compagnie Maritime Belge [Lloyd Royal]' ordered two new liners, the *Jadotville* [13,724 tons] from the Saint-Nazaire shipyard of Penhoet-France and a few months later the *Baudouinville* (3) [13,876 tons] from the Cockerill shipyard. These were powered by steam turbines, capable of speeds up to 17 knots and carrying 325 passengers. They began operating in 1956 and 1957 respectively and were the last ones commissioned before the Belgian Congo became independent in 1960.



Thysville (2) formerly Baudouinville (2)

*Alphabetical list of the Compagnie Maritime Belge Mail
boats operating between Belgium and the Congo*



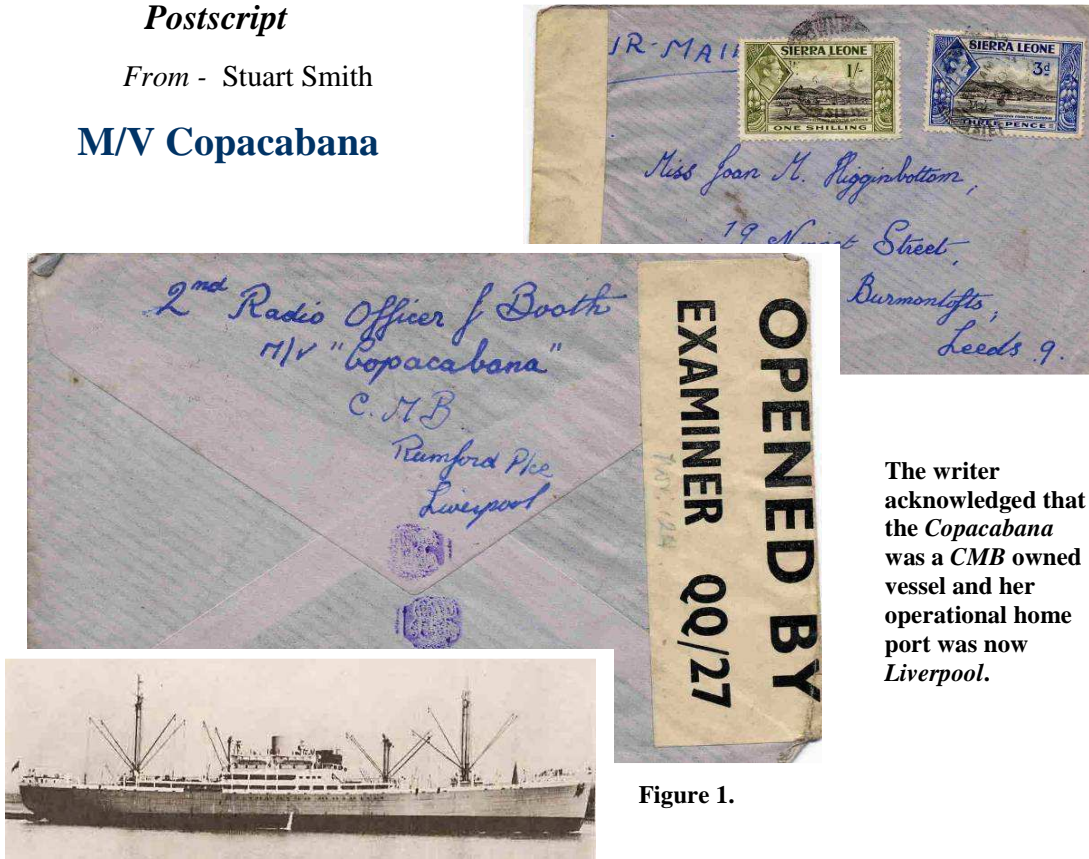
Name	Period	Number of Voyages
Albertville 1	07.07.1896 - 06.06.1898	8
Albertville 2	06.09.1898 - 02.05.1904	26
Albertville 3	09.08.1906 - 02.05.1911	25
Albertville 4	22.03.1913 - 23.03.1923	45
Albertville 5	28.02.1928 - 21.11.1940	69
Albertville 6	12.06.1948 - 15.07.1960	79
Anversville 1	18.05.1899 - 16.04.1906	35
Anversville 2	24.08.1912 - 27.09.1938	133
Baudouinville 1	15.07.1939 - 08.12.1939	3
Baudouinville 2	19.09.1950 - 24.05.1957	50
[renamed Thysville 2]		
Baudouinville 3	02.11.1957 - 29.06.1960	20
Bruxellesville 1	06.05.1898 - 20.12.1900	11
Bruxellesville 2	15.03.1906 - 11.04.1909	18
Bruxellesville 3	22.04.1909 - 23.09.1912	20
Charlesville	06.03.1951 - 10.07.1960	69
Copacabana	18.05.1945 - 28.06.1957	64
Elisabethville 1	04.02.1911 - 06.09.1917	29
Elisabethville 2	02.02.1922 - 15.06.1946	104
Elisabethville 3	10.01.1949 - 24.06.1960	81
Gouverneur Galopin	08.06.1946 - 19.09.1952	40
Armand Grisar	01.12.1945 - 29.08.1952	47
Jadotville	23.07.1956 - 26.06.1960	29
Leopoldville 1	06.02.1895 - 02.02.1897	8
Leopoldville 2	07.02.1897 - 05.03.1901	16
Leopoldville 3	21.04.1904 - 15.11.1908	26
Leopoldville 4	26.11.1908 - 24.06.1913	25
Leopoldville 5	08.10.1929 - 29.07.1940	53
Leopoldville 6	14.09.1948 - 08.07.1960	82
Mandigo - ex Philippeville		2
Mar del Plata	14.02.1946 - 25.10.1957	55
Nigeria		2
Philippeville	12.10.1899 - 29.07.1906	34
Stanleyville 1	16.12.1899 - 08.05.1902	12
Stanleyville 2	04.12.1926 - 10.01.1930	11
Steenstraete	26.04.1947 - 28.11.1948	13
Tervaete	24.05.1947 - 22.01.1950	18
Thysville 1	04.11.1922 - 01.06.1940	103
Thysville 2 - ex Baudouinville 2	24.08.1957 - 29.07.1960	22
Alex Van Opstal 2	18.01.1945 - 21.03.1950	29

1. Refer *Postscript* – ‘M/V Copacabana’

Postscript

From - Stuart Smith

M/V Copacabana



The writer acknowledged that the *Copacabana* was a CMB owned vessel and her operational home port was now *Liverpool*.

Figure 1.

To the best of my knowledge very little has been written of the whereabouts or contribution made by those Compagnie Maritime Belge (Lloyd Royal) ships serving the ‘Allied’ cause during World War II. Perhaps this is because our primary interest is philatelic with matters ‘postal’? However, a recent acquisition has prompted an appetite for further information about the activities of the M/V *Copacabana* at this time.

According to ‘CMB 100 A Century of Maritime Enterprise’^[1] and other sources^[2]

- “During the German invasion of Belgium on 10 May 1940, the company gave orders that all its ships at dock in Antwerp should leave and sail for French ports as it was considered their defensive capabilities were better than those of British ports”!
- “In July 1940 six ships including the ‘Copacabana’ were to provide a service from Great Britain via Lisbon to Matadi.”
- **1940-1945 ? ? ? ?**
- Two ships, the ‘Mar del Plata’ and the ‘Copacabana’, originally destined for the American service, reinforced service to the Congo which was reopened on 25th October 1945.”

How were the ships employed, 1940-1945?

I have not yet established the *Copacabana*’s exact location at the time when the original instruction for the CMB ships to disperse was declared in May 1940, but one thing seems clear in that it was not in Antwerp. As the ship operated on the South America route, she was possibly on either an outward or return Atlantic crossing journey. However, I now know that in returning to the U.K. she began

operating to and from the west coast of Africa, finding her way via Freetown (Sierra Leone) to Milford Haven (Pembrokeshire, Wales) where she docked about the 9th September 1940.

The *Copacabana* had been built as a mixed cargo and passenger vessel and continued in this capacity throughout the war. I suspect it was this dual capacity role that made her operationally most useful. Whilst gaps remain in our knowledge of her sailing schedules, I am able to list some of her movements. From the same information source ^[3] I have also tried to establish any recorded activity of the other four vessels that survived the war - namely the Astrida, Elisabethville(2), Leopoldville(5) and Thysville; but have only found one convoy reference to the Thysville in May 1943 and one for the Elisabethville(2) in October 1944. There is no mention of either the Astrida or Leopoldville (5) from which it is suggested that they were not commercially operational in the northern hemisphere or simply operated as troop carriers, as and when required. (*This is conjecture and has not been verified as fact.*)

Liverpool and Freetown were both assembly points for convoys setting out on their journeys to and from the south Atlantic coast. Where other ports are named, these were simply the starting or final destination from/to which the Copacabana sailed; in those instances, the precise arrival dates are unknown.

M/V Copacabana

Convoy Reference	Port of departure and date	Port of arrival and date if known	Passengers and Cargo
SL 44	Freetown, 18.8.1940	Milford, 9.9.1940	136 passengers, Cereals
SL 83	Freetown, 5.8.1941	Liverpool, 28.8.1941	107 passengers, <u>28 mail bags</u>
OS8	Milford, 3.10.1941	Freetown, 26.10.1941 → Capetown	Stores
OS32	Clyde, 20.6.1942	Lagos, 8.7.1942 → Matadi	Government stores
SL121	Matadi, 3.9.1942	*Mersey, 21.9.1942	114 passengers, Produce?
HX225	New York, 30.1.1943	Liverpool, 13.2.1943	83 passengers
OS44	Liverpool, 6.3.1943	Freetown, 24.3.1943 → Matadi	{ 136 passengers, { Government stores { Planes -?
SL130	Takoradi, (Ghana) June 1943	*Mersey, 21.6.1943	11 passengers, <u>214 mail bags</u>
SL137	Freetown, 23.9.1943	*Mersey, 17.10.1943	161 passengers, <u>85 mail bags</u>
OS57	Liverpool 27.10,1943	Freetown, 19.11.1943 → Matadi	
SL146	Freetown, 12.1.1944	*Mersey, 2.2.1944	140 passengers, <u>93 mail bags</u>
OS72	Liverpool, 23.3.1944	Lagos, 14.4.1944 → Matadi, April 1944	
OS84	Belfast, 2.7.1944	Freetown, 10.8.1944	Fuel and salt
OS110	Liverpool, 1.2.1945	Freetown, → Lagos, → Matadi	142 passengers, General stores

Convoy reference SL operated out of Freetown with Liverpool as the final destination.

Convoy reference OS operated out of Liverpool with Freetown, Sierra Leone as the destination.

Ships starting or finishing outside these two ports joined or left the convoy variously.

* 'Mersey' - estuary including the Liverpool docks and several others.

It is worth reporting that on all convoys, the Copacabana was at least modestly armed with a variety of guns and whilst this information is available, it has been omitted by me as of little relevance to this article. The number and type of passenger carried (civilian or military) varied as did the cargo, typically Cereals, Government stores, Plane parts, etc. Where there is reference to passenger numbers and the conveyance of mail, this has been stated – **the latter as of philatelic interest!**

During the war, Paquebot cancellers were not used, nor was it appropriate to apply ship identity straight line marks. As in the case of the cover illustrated in figure 1, correspondence would only bear an office of posting - or of arrival, when posted aboard.

Not until after 1945 was the ships circular postmark reintroduced – reported as seen in both black and violet. The postmark illustrated here differs from the pre-war 'M/S COPACABANA' stamp illustrated in Abbe G. Gudenkauf's book 'Mailboat Services from Europe to the Belgian Congo'.



According to the table of CMB 'Mail-boats' providing a postal service between Belgium and the Congo, [2] the Copacabana was the first post war ship to sail in that capacity from Antwerp on 18th May 1945.

A S/S COPACABANA straight-line ship Identity and Promotional cachet was similarly introduced, and in the case of the cover illustrated as figure 2, [W.D.] had already been applied on the face before the letter was written - presumably as 'memorabilia stationery' sold or freely available on board? Prior to registration in Matadi, it was further applied on the reverse. It had no Post Office authority or recognition.



S/S. COPACABANA

Figure 2.

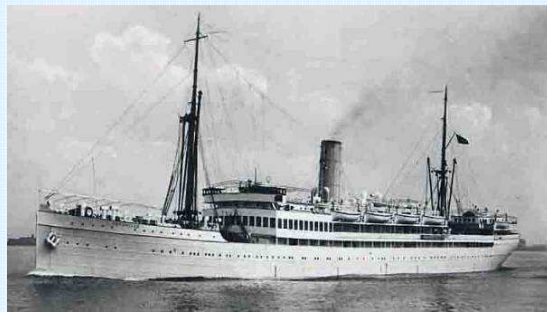


In conclusion, it is interesting to provide a few anecdotal notes on the *Copacabana's* further history, albeit no longer a ship in the ownership of CMB. ^[4]

In 1958 she had been sold to an East German company and re-named *Theodor Korner*. Under that flag she is recorded as having been of concern to the American's when spotted leaving the Baltic Sea en route to Cuba, and in the company of two Russian ships. During November of that year the U.S. Navy was instructed to trail and intercept her. The two Russian ships had been located and followed by U.S. warships, but the *Theodor Korner/Copacabana* had disappeared. Finally she was spotted and boarded, and found to be carrying 240 tons of steel – but no nuclear weapons!

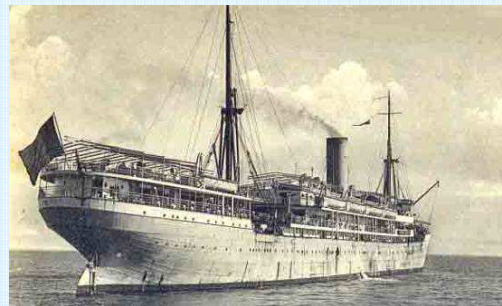
She was eventually sold to a Dutch company and remained in service until 1972 when broken up for scrap in Kaohsiung, Japan.

As previously reported, the *Thysville* and *Elisabethville* (2) are both included in the list of ships making up the convoys referred to. ^[3]



Thysville (1)

Convoy Reference	Port of departure, date	Port of arrival, date	Cargo and Passengers
OS.48KMS	Liverpool, 20 May 1943	Freetown, 7 June 1943	Stores?



Elisabethville (2)

Convoy Reference	Port of departure, date	Port of arrival, date	Cargo and Passengers
OS.92KM	Liverpool, 15 Oct. 1944	Gibraltar, not known.	Not known

1. Greta Devos & Guy Elewaut. '*CMB 100 een eeuw martiem ondememersschap*'
2. Ibid. Stockmans & Gallant.

3. Arnold Hague et al. – ‘www.convoyweb.org.uk’
 4. Web - Kelvin Davis.
- [W.D.] Cover from Walter Deijnckens collection.

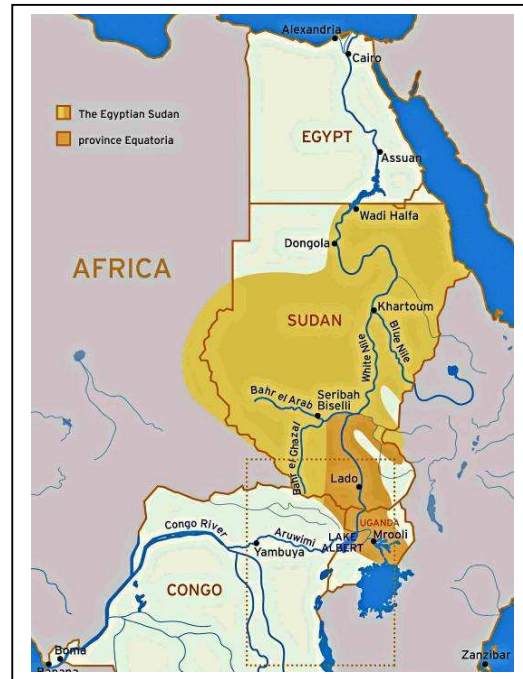
Early mail from Equatoria - *the Egyptian Sudan* 1840 – 1888

By – Patrick Maselis

Part 1

Introduction

Equatoria embracing the territory familiar to us as ‘Lado’, was formerly the southernmost province of the Egyptian Sudan, and contained parts of present-day Sudan, Uganda and Congo. Although an Egyptian expedition had explored the territory as early as 1840, it was not until 1871 that Equatoria was annexed and incorporated into the Egyptian Sudan. In 1882, Sudan was struck by the Mahdi rebellion, an anti-colonial Islamic revolution, and the Egyptians withdrew. The governor of Equatoria, Emin Pasha, could not flee in time and so was trapped in the province.



In 1887, the ‘Emin Pasha Relief Expedition’ was organised, led by the famous explorer Henry Morton Stanley. At the end of 1888, Emin Pasha was freed and Equatoria abandoned. After having analysed more than 100 books and articles, we believe that only 108 Westerners visited or lived in Equatoria between 1840 and 1888. They were explorers (46), missionaries (26), traders (13), civil servants (13), or members of the Emin Pasha Relief Expedition (10).

We shall now take a closer look at each of these five categories of Western visitors and residents, and specifically at their correspondence. A separate section will be devoted to Emin Pasha, as he had to use alternative ways to send his mail out of the country.

1. Explorers

The Exploration of Equatoria started with an Egyptian Expedition, which left Khartoum in 1839 and reached Equatoria in 1840. It included two Europeans among its members - the Frenchman G. Thibaut, who had converted to Islam under the name of Ibrahim Effendi, and the German, Ferdinand Werne.

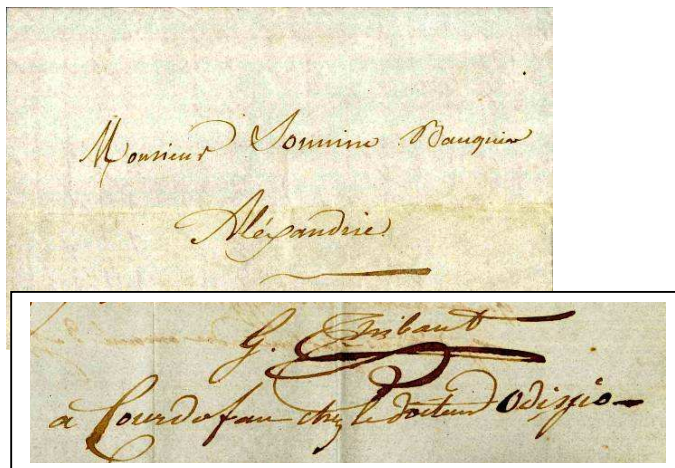


Figure 1

Figure 1.

Last year saw the discovery of a cover written at Dongola by Mr Thibaut, on the way back from the expedition. Although Dongola is outside Equatoria, it was decided to include this exceptional cover because it is not only a testimony of a historically important expedition, but also one of the earliest known from the Sudan.

The period after 1840 was to see a great number of expeditions. These expeditions were motivated by the obsession among nineteenth century geographers with being the first person to discover the source of the Nile, and not so much by the interest in the region. Amongst other things, this involved, following the Nile by boat up to the point at which it became un-navigable, somewhere around Gondokoro in Equatoria.

One of these was the von Tinné expedition to the River Bahr El Ghazal financed by a very wealthy Dutch widow, Mrs von Tinné. Among others, she was accompanied by the German explorer von Heuglin, and the Frenchman Baron d'Ablaing. Unfortunately, during the dry season, her ship became hopelessly bogged down in the River Bahr El Arab at Seribah Biselli, from April 1863 to January 1864.

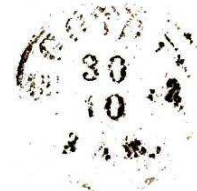
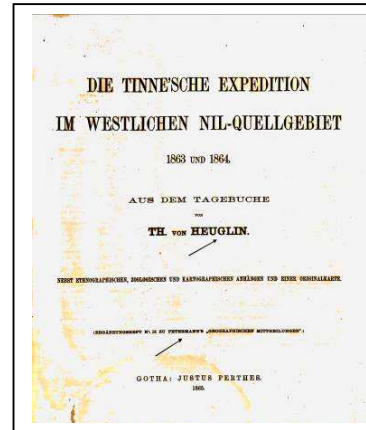


Figure 2

Figure 2.

We know of one cover which we believe to be connected to this Dutch expedition, for the following reasons:

- 1) It was very probably written by Mr von Heuglin because the addressee, Dr Petermann, was his editor. Dr Petermann published von Heuglin's letters.
- 2) The date 25th June 1863, coincides with the time of the expedition.
- 3) There is an annotation at the bottom left of the cover which when translated into English reads "to the care of the French Consulate in Khartoum and the Consulate General of Holland in Egypt". Since Mrs von Tinné was the only Dutch explorer in that area at the time, this is compelling evidence.

The cover, written at Seribah Biselli on 25th June 1863 was carried by a runner to the French consulate in Khartoum, where the circular stamp 'Vice-Consulat de France-Khartoum' was applied. From there it

probably travelled in the diplomatic bag to the Dutch consulate general in Alexandria, where it was posted in the French Post Office - circular date stamp: ALEXANDRIE/ 20/ OCT/ 63/ EGYPTE). Also in Alexandria, the weight was written on the front of the cover: 20.5 g equivalent to '3 ports'. It travelled on the *Carmel* of the Egyptian Line - 'Messageries Impériales'. This vessel left on 20th October for Marseille.

The circular transit date stamp on the reverse 'Méditerranée à Lyon' is dated 27th October 1863, which was the date of arrival at Marseille. In Paris the boxed **F 39** mark was applied to the cover: "Article 39 of the French-Prussian convention of 1858 - tariff for all non specified overseas countries = 6.9 groschen per 7.5 g."

From Paris the cover continued its journey by rail to Frankfurt. There it was taxed at 25 gros - 'for France 3 x 6.9 plus 2 x 2 groschen for Germany'. The cover was triple rate for France and double rate for Germany at 2 loth; one loth being 15.6g

The circular date stamp arrival mark in Gotha is dated 30th October 1863.

Whilst not originating from Equatoria, this cover did travel through the province to reach its destination, and for that reason is considered appropriate to include here.

2. Traders

In the Sudan, there was a great deal of money to be made. Highly valuable commodities, such as ivory, animal skins and even live animals, were sent back to Europe via the Nile. Around this time most European countries were in the process of establishing and stocking their first zoos. The Sudan has always been a very important source of 'Gum Arabic', a product used in the pharmaceutical, food and textile industries. In 1845, the first trader to set up a trading post in Gondokoro was the Savoyard, Jacques Antoine Brun-Rollet whilst the most successful of these enterprising traders was an Austrian, Franz Binder.

All the traders sent their mail from Khartoum where they lived, but no correspondence from within Equatoria has yet been recorded.

3. Missionaries

In 1849, the Austrian bishop of Khartoum, Ignaz Knoblecher and two fellow missionaries sailed south along the Nile to the point where the river becomes un-navigable at Gondokoro. Gondokoro was the southernmost point which any European had reached at that time and was therefore, literally, the frontier of the known world.

Knoblecher believed this was the ideal place to establish a mission post. It took him three years to raise the necessary funds to buy a boat, the *Stella Matutina*, and to open two mission posts, the first in 1852 in Gondokoro and the second in 1854, in Kietsch or 'Heiligen Kreuz', which means 'Holy Cross'. However both these missions proved ill-fated. The climate along the banks of the Nile was extremely unhealthy and very many missionaries died from tropical diseases. In 1860 the decision was taken to abandon these two posts.

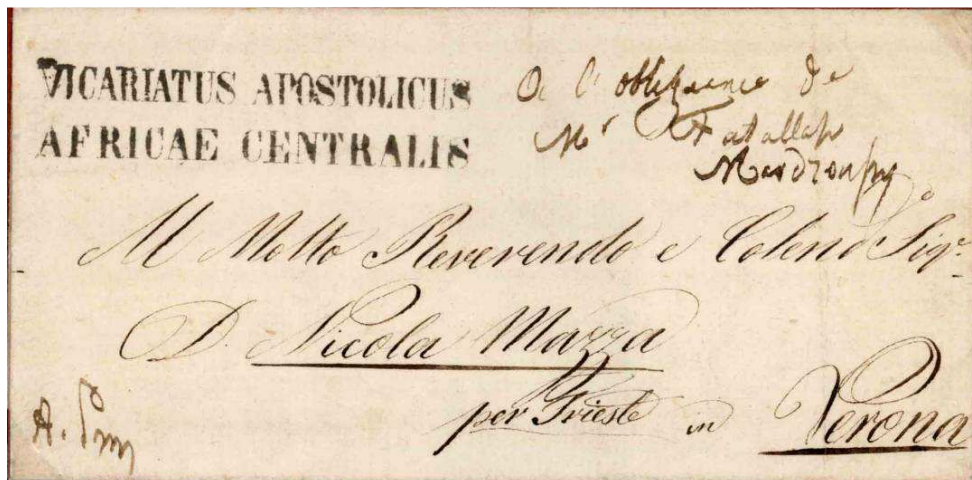


Figure 3

Figure 3. There is just one known cover in this category, probably sent from the mission post of Gondokoro. It bears an example of the Sudan’s oldest known stamp, ‘VICARIATUS APOSTOLICUS AFRICAE CENTRALIS’

This cover was the subject of an article in the ‘Collectors Club Philatelist of March-April 2007’, but we repeat here that the manuscript instruction directs “*the letter be handed in person to a Mr. Madroussy in Khartoum*”. In all probability, it would have travelled there on the steamer ‘Stella Matutina’ and in the absence of any postal marks, it is thought likely that it was then carried privately to Verona.

4. Civil servants

The Egyptian authorities often called on Westerners to take the top senior jobs in their administration. All but one governor of Equatoria were Westerners, namely - Samuel Baker and Charles Gordon from the Great Britain, Henry Bey Prout from the USA, and the German, Eduard Schnitzer, better known as Emin Pasha. In turn, these governors called on other Westerners to assist them. One of General Gordon’s closest staff members for example, was the American Chaillé-Long.

General Gordon, organised the first rudimentary mail service and had correspondence forwarded initially to Mr Giegler Pasha, the head of the Sudanese Post in Khartoum. The mail was carried in boats on the Nile in a purpose-made sealed metal container. From Khartoum, Mr Giegler organised its distribution and ensured the mail was forwarded to its final destination.

From these civil servants, several letters have survived, sent from all parts of Equatoria – that is parts of present day Sudan, Congo and Uganda. Most of the known covers emanate from General Gordon, bear no postmarks and are items of local internal mail from various locations in Equatoria to Khartoum.

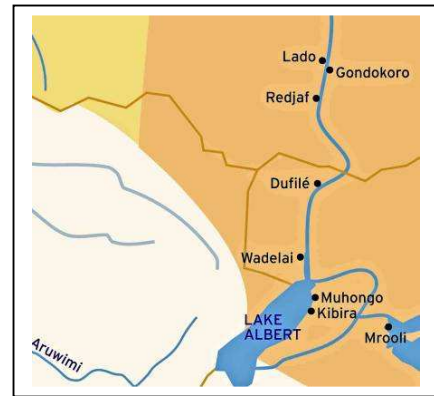


Figure 4. We have discovered mail from the following - Gondokoro, Lado and Dufilé, which are all in present-day Sudan, Mahungo in present-day Uganda and Lake Albert in the Congo Unfortunately, the cover of this last letter is missing.

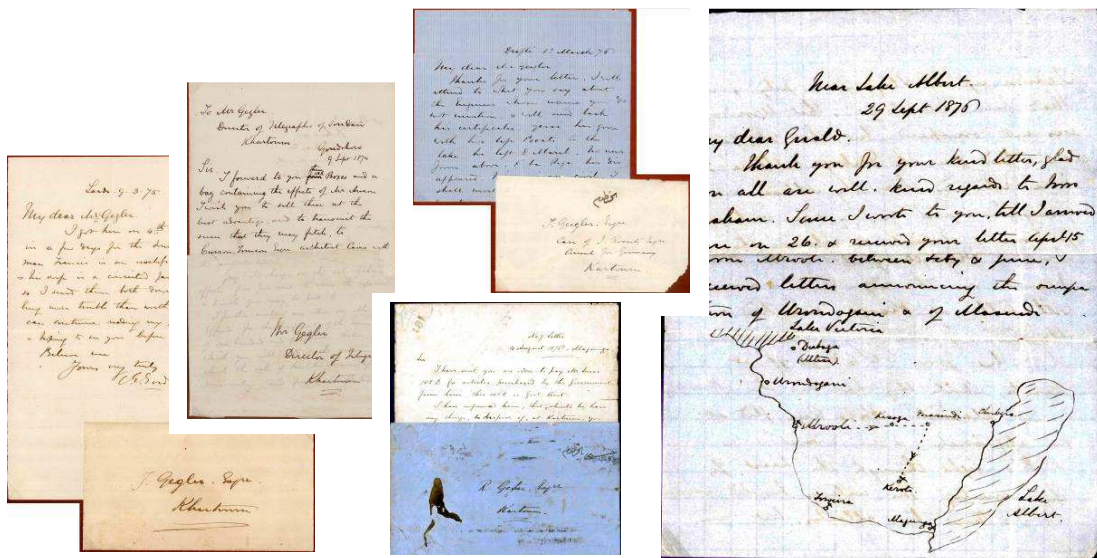


Figure 4

Most interesting are those from Equatoria to Europe and the U.S.A. Two such covers have been recorded, one from General Gordon to England and one from his assistant Chaillé-Long to the USA.

Figure 5. The Gordon cover was sent from Mrooli, now in Uganda, on August 30, 1876. It was carried by runners to Lado, where it was placed in the sealed mail container and carried by ship on the Nile to Mr Giegler in Khartoum, who affixed Egyptian postage stamps to it.

The stamps were tied by the very rare Khartoum circular date stamp with the spelling mistake **HARTOUM** for **KHARTOUM** - **POSTE EGIZIANE** / date / **HARTOUM**.

This is the only cover known with a postage stamp tied by this extremely rare handstamp. It was then forwarded by the Sudanese Camel Post to Egypt and on arrival the Egyptian transit stamp **POSTE KHEDEVIE EGIZIANE** / **SIUT** was struck on the reverse side. It continued its journey to Southampton, confirmed by the receiving office stamp '**SOUTHAMPTON / F / NO 20**'.



Figure 5

The franking is 4.5 piastres (one stamp of 2 and the other of 2.5 piastres). 2 piastres was the rate from Sudan to Egypt. The remaining 2.5 piastre is equivalent to 5 pence. The single GPU rate from Egypt to the UK was 2½ pence (up to 0.5 ounce), so this letter must have weighed between 0.5 and 1 ounce (double rate).

Figure 6. The second, the Chaillé-Long Cover, was written in Lado on 29th January 1875, and sent to Maryland in the USA. It travelled from Lado to Egypt in pretty much the same way as the Gordon cover. The only difference is that the postage stamps were not cancelled in Khartoum, but upon arrival in Cairo by the circular date stamp - **POSTE EGEZIANE – 6 MAY – CAIRO**.

In Alexandria both the transit mark **POSTE EGEZIANE – 6 MAY – ALESSANDRIA** and the linear mark **FRANCA** were added to the cover. It continued its journey first by the *Austrian Lloyd* to Trieste, then overland to Bremen, from where it travelled to New York on the *Norddeutsche Lloyd*. There is a red circular New York arrival/transit mark, **MAY / 21 / PAID**.

The franking is 7 piastre; 2 piastre for the journey from Khartoum to Alexandria, and 5 piastre or 45 'neu-kreuzer' for the international leg. In accordance with the 1868 convention between Austria and Egypt, Egypt retained '25 neu-kreuzer' and the Imperial German postal administration got '20 neu-kreuzer' 'weiterfranco' as noted in blue on the cover. Of these '20 neu-kreuzer' (equivalent to 2,5

gros), 12 was credited for the transatlantic route crossing as indicated by '12' on the front of the cover, and the remaining '8 neu-kreuzer' (or 1 gros) were due for the transit through Germany.



Figure 6

The tariff of 2.5 gros for mail to the US forwarded through Bremen or Hamburg, was specified in the official journal of the Imperial German Post, N° 33/1871.

5. Emin Pasha

In 1882, the Mahdist revolt broke out and the Nile was blocked. Emin Pasha, the governor of Equatoria at that time, was trapped in his province together with a handful of Sudanese government troops. Escaping overland through Uganda to Zanzibar was not possible. The King of Uganda was very hostile and Emin Pasha did not have enough troops to risk escaping by crossing that country. Although he was forced to remain in Equatoria, he was still able to have letters smuggled out of the province.

These letters were carried through Uganda to Zanzibar by both native runners and Arab slave traders.



We have traced a few of these letters over the years, but unfortunately, none still has its cover. Nevertheless, one of them, **figure 7**, is of particular interest for the following reasons:

- a) The arrival date is noted on it as “London, April 9, 1888”. Since it was written on 3rd September 1887, the letter travelled for over seven months!
- b) The first sentence reads: “As an occasion offers itself unsuspectedly to send a post to Uganda...” This is the proof that Emin Pasha managed to smuggle at least part of his mail through Uganda.

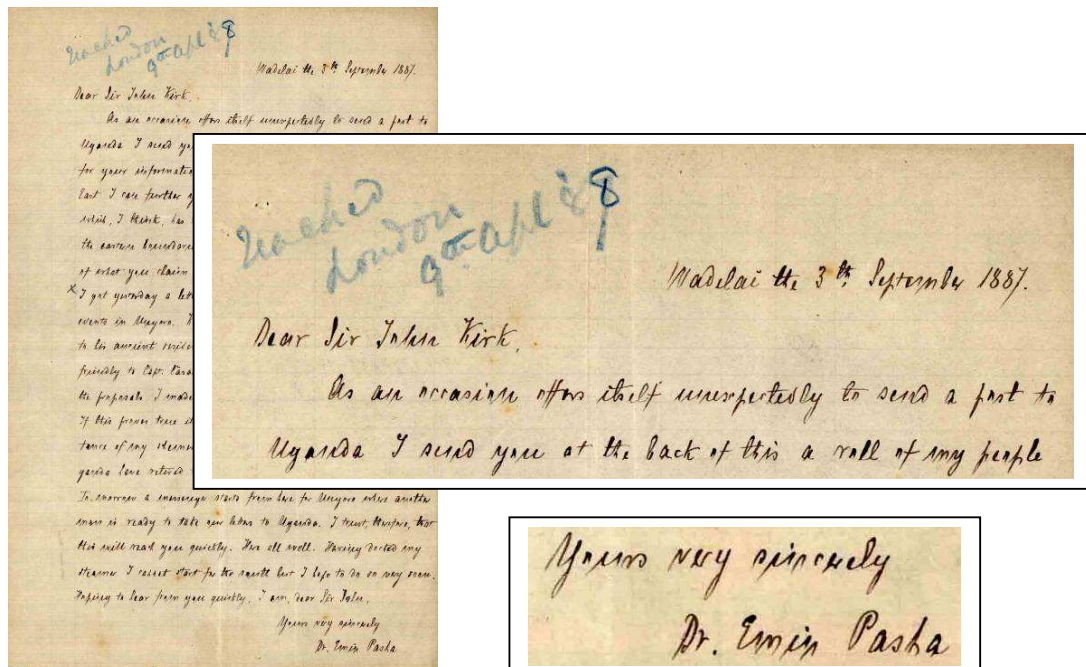


Figure 7

Figure 8. A second letter is also of particular interest, because it was written from Kibira, on the shores of Lake Albert. This implies that Emin Pasha travelled around the province while he was trapped. Through his letters smuggled out of Equatoria, the world began to hear of his fate, and public opinion in Europe pressed governments to “do something” to save Emin Pasha. Eventually, King Leopold II of Belgium (and the Congo) financed the Emin Pasha Relief Expedition.

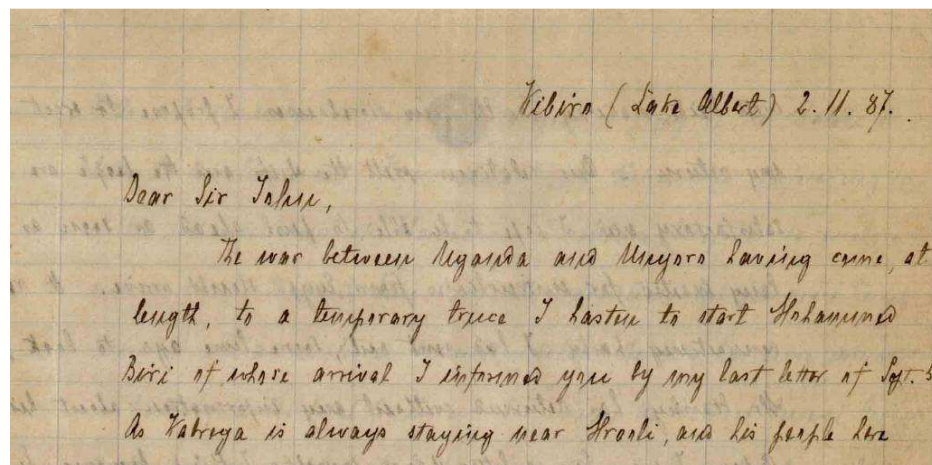


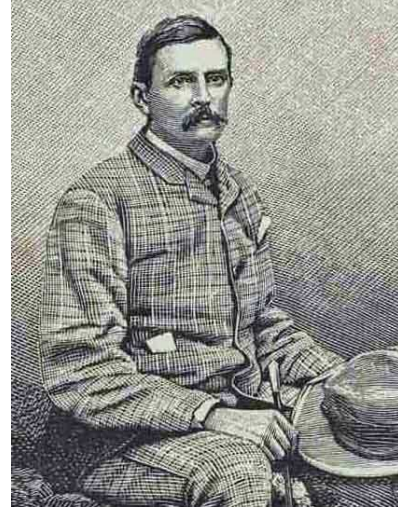
Figure 8

6. Members of the Emin Pasha Relief Expedition

This expedition was led by Henry Morton Stanley. It started in 1887 at the mouth of the Congo in Banana, crossed the entire Congo and reached Equatoria in 1888, freed Emin Pasha and accompanied him to Zanzibar, where the expedition arrived in 1889. Needless to say, this expedition was close to 'mission impossible'

Figure 9. There is one known surviving cover, written by Dr Parke, the surgeon of the Expedition. Although it was not written in Equatoria, but on the way to the province, in Yambuya (Congo) we have nevertheless included it in this overview.

The cover was sent by regular mail from Yambuya through the Congo to Boma (transit mark, circular date stamp of BOMA, August 12, 1887 in blue on the front). From there it went on a Portuguese ship to Lisbon (transit mark, circular date stamp of August 13, 1887). It was then further forwarded by boat and rail to Drumsna, his home in Ireland (arrival mark: circular date stamp of DRUMSNA, August 15, 1887).



Dr. T.H. Parke

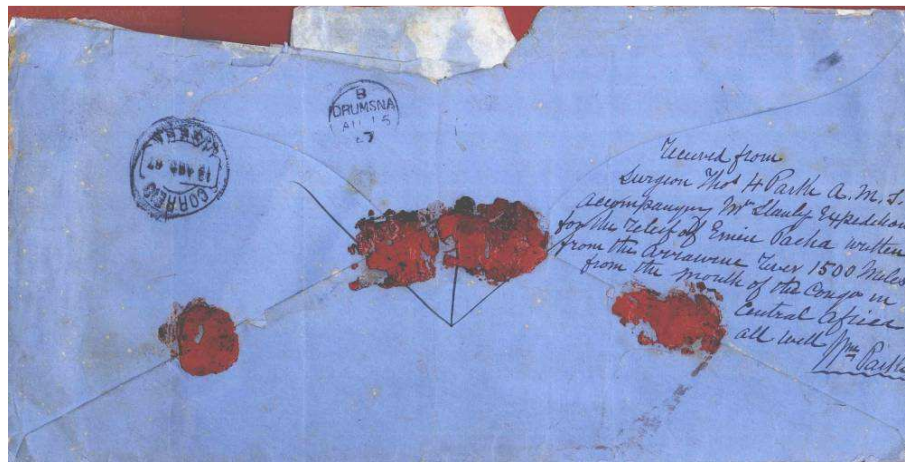
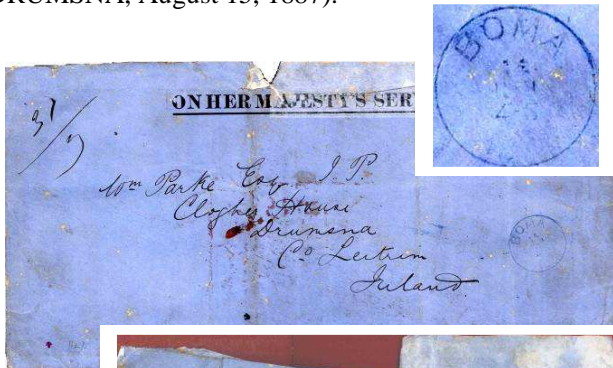


Figure 9

In conclusion, this is the first ever attempt to chart the Postal History of Equatoria. Only a handful of covers are known, thus any newly discovered covers could add to or contribute a new section to this article.

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Members of the Emin Pasha Relief Expedition

Mr. Stanley and his Officers



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Surgeon, T.H. Parke H.M. Stanley A.J. Mounteney Jepson

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