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BULLETIN 159

November 2011

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Librarian

Refer to editorial comment, page 3

Other useful addresses – refer page 24

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

Annual subscriptions - 2012

Subscriptions for 2012 remain unchanged as follows.

U.K.	£10	(£8 for those receiving the Bulletin, etc. by email)
Belgium	10€	
Other European	10€	
U.S.A.	\$20	(\$15 to those receiving the Bulletin, etc. by email)
Rest of the World	£12	(£8 to those receiving the Bulletin, etc. by email)

All 'Eurozone' membership subscriptions.

All 'Euro zone' membership subscriptions should be paid directly into the Study Circle's bank account:

Study Circle Bank account is with 'BNP Paribas Fortis'

IBAN BE51 0016 0051 5962

BIC GEBABEBB

U.S.A. membership subscriptions.

There is no change to the existing arrangement and payment should be made to David Schaubroeck.

U.K. and Europe outside the "Euro zone" & 'Rest of World'.

'U.K.' and 'Rest of World' subscriptions can be made by electronic bank transfer in 'Pounds sterling' to:

Belgian Congo Study Account

Sort code: 11-01-26

Account: 00647356

Note: A 'foreign bank' transaction charge may be applied by your bank

When using this method, confirmation of your transfer is presently necessary. Confirm to the Treasurer - Charles Lloyd by email to:

Charles.lloyd@blueyonder.co.uk

Subscriptions paid by cheque drawn on a UK bank should be sent to:

Dr. Charles Lloyd

18 Linefield Road

Carnoustie DD7 6DP

Scotland

As has been the practice, you can still send 'Pounds sterling', or 'Euro' banknotes by post to Charles Lloyd, the Treasurer.

Saturday 17th March 2012 General Meeting and A.G.M.

at

Hotel ERASME,

Route de Lennik 790 Lenniksebaan

B-1070 Bruxelles

Telephone: +32 (2) 523 62 82

Fax: +32 (2) 523 62 83

0900 - Tea and Coffee will be served

0930 - AGM

10.30 approximately – Members presentations and displays

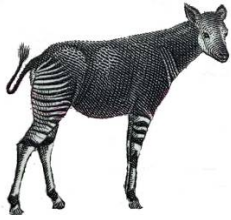
12.30 approximately - lunch in the hotel dining room

1400 approximately – Members presentations and displays

1600 - Close

*This popular and convenient venue offers accommodation at attractive rates.
The hotel is 300 metres from the 1B Erasme/Erasmus Metro terminus - a
short rail link into the city.*

From the Editor



Thank you to Philippe Lindekens and Hal Hoyte who have contributed to this bulletin which on this rare occasion will be distributed before the end of the year and just prior to Christmas. I wish you all a happy and successful 2012.

Your attention is drawn to the Annual General in March which will take the usual successful format and remind everyone that the annual subscriptions are now due. Details are as presented on page 2 above.

The Library and librarian

A statement on the situation was made in the previous bulletin and it is with regret I have to report that whilst the problem which existed has still not been resolved, some possible progress is being made with regard to a transfer of our '*library held*' bulletins to Charles Lloyd.

However we are still looking for a volunteer to house the collection of books and a willingness to provide a library loan service to members. I fear that unless this can be resolved it is a matter which will have to be addressed at the annual meeting in March.

The question arises as to whether it would be sensible to break up the collection, donate to a philatelic library or sell by auction to members. I don't like the idea – but we have to do something?

As things stand, those wishing to receive copy of any previously published article in the bulletin should still make their request to:

Dr. Charles Lloyd
18 Linefield Road
Carnoustie. DD7 6DP
Scotland
Email: charles.lloyd@blueyonder.co.uk

The actual cost will in practice need to cover that of duplication and postage. Until we have established the exact facts and know what those expenses will be - anyone requesting copy will be advised accordingly before despatch.

The U.K. circulating 'Packet'

On a happier and more successful note, our Packet Secretary John Kelland, has successfully organised the circulation of another 'Packet' which is expected to complete its circuit by the end of 2011.

Will those who have contributed accept special thanks with a reminder to all that with your help it is hoped to repeat the exercise in the autumn of 2012.

The Auction - We do need material for the next auction!

Accompanying copy of this bulletin will be another member's auction *however* there is no stock of material for another. This is a serious problem and plea that those with material to offer should please submit to Thierry Frennet [contact details provided on page 24] to enable us to continue this very popular service to our Study Circle.

Membership News

John Bruhn.

On behalf of all who know and/or have had occasion to communicate with our British member John Bruhn, I extend our good wishes to him in his retirement from the Study Circle.

John wrote to me during September announcing his intention, following problems after a serious accident and a need to relinquish some responsibilities. However, we are pleased to hear that he isn't abandoning all stamp collecting interests, will be keeping and probably still displaying his Congo material locally and continue with his other love, 20th century Hungarian postal History.

John - we are sorry you are leaving us but do understand it is with good intent and wish you many more happy years with the hobby.

Stuart. (Hon. Secretary)

New Members

With this issue we extend a warm welcome to two new Belgian members and as always, it is hoped they are able to enjoy and benefit from their association with us.

Belgium - **Eric Boderet** Rue du Fondry, 6
5651 Walcourt
Email: eric.bedoret@skynet.be

- **Jude Murison** Korte Leemstraat, 40
2018 Antwerpen
Email: jude.murison@gmail.com

Residential and email changes

Belgium - **Rudi Vertommen** Zeeptstraat, 26
3140 Keerbergen
Email: rudi.vertommen@telenet.be

- **Marc Oblin (Dr.)** Rue Saint Pierre, 61
7100 La Louvière

U.K. - **Andrew Ramsey** 126 Savick Way,
Lea, Preston
Lancashire
PR2 1XA

The Autumn meeting in Roeselaar

*Celebrating 60 years of the Study Circle
and Patrick Maselis' 50th*



Saturday 19th November 2011

Appearing in person: Vincent Schouberechts,
Johan Delbeke, J-P Flamand, Laurent Bierny,
Bruce Lockhart, Thierry Frennet, Patrick Maselis,
Charles Henuzet and Bart Willekens.

Cross-Border Mail between Belgian Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo, Katanga, Zaire and Northern Rhodesia/Zambia

Hal Hoyte

This particular study of Cross-border mail is focussed on the *private transfer* of correspondence from an address on one side of a national border to a location in the neighbouring territory, in order to take advantage of a quicker and/or cheaper postal service.

Some was carried by travellers across the border on an *ad hoc* basis, whilst others with a greater volume of mail instituted a private mail runner service. Typically, the missionary Dan Crawford whose mission 'Luanza' was on the Congo side of Lake Mweru, used to send selected mail across the border for posting in Rhodesia.

Alan Drysdall and Paul Peggie have written an important new book – *Cross-border Mail via Northern Rhodesia*. It is published by the Rhodesian Study Circle as '*Hand book Memoir N^o. 18*'^[1] and details the private transfer of mail between Northern Rhodesia and all its neighbouring territories - Belgian Congo, Angola, German East Africa and South West Africa (Caprivi Strip) and Mozambique.

Based on covers in my own collection, this present study is intended to supplement the Belgian Congo section of '*Memoir 18*', dealing with the later period from the early 1920s to the 1970's including examples from the period of the Katanga Secession, 1960 to 1963.

I begin with the Plymouth Brethren missionary and author Dan Crawford whose mission 'Luanza' was on the west shore of Lake Mweru, some 20km from Pweto and about 370km NNE of Elisabethville. Several covers from this source feature in Drysdale's *Memoir 18* and Crawford's letter heading illustrated here as figure 1, shows the two addresses used.



Crawford's '*Luanza Mission*' home



Figure 1.

Figure 2 shows an envelope franked with a British South Africa Company (BSAC) Rhodesia ½d adhesive at the Printed Paper rate for his magazine, with a return address as “.. via Elisabethville, Belgian Congo”. The datestamp is obscure, but from its size and design, was probably applied at Bulawayo. The BSAC ½d ‘Admiral’ adhesive has been identified^[2] as being from the 1922 printing so the cover was posted not earlier than mid 1922 and not later than 1st May 1925, when the stamp was demonetised. The cover was probably carried by Crawford himself or a fellow-missionary to Elisabethville, thence by train and posted en route at Bulawayo.

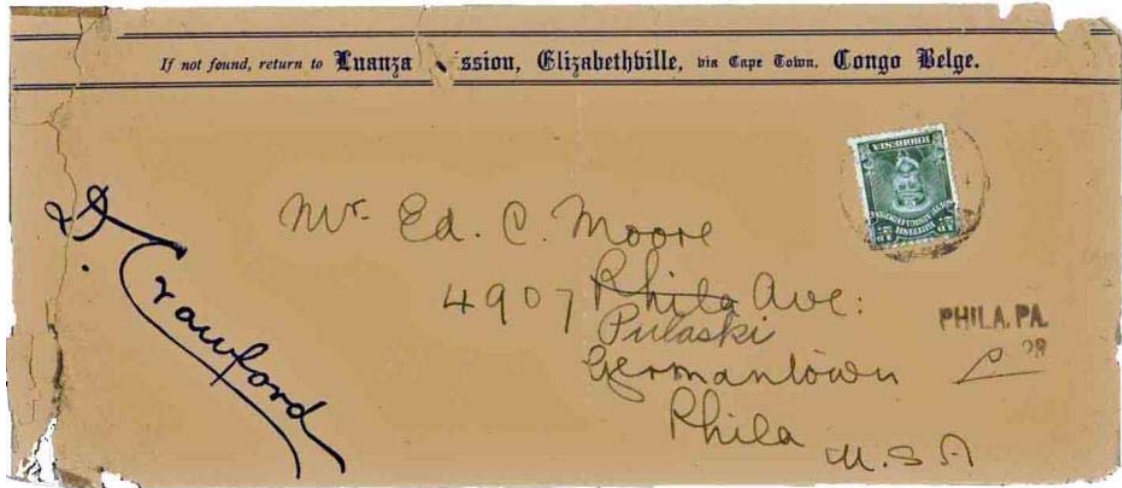


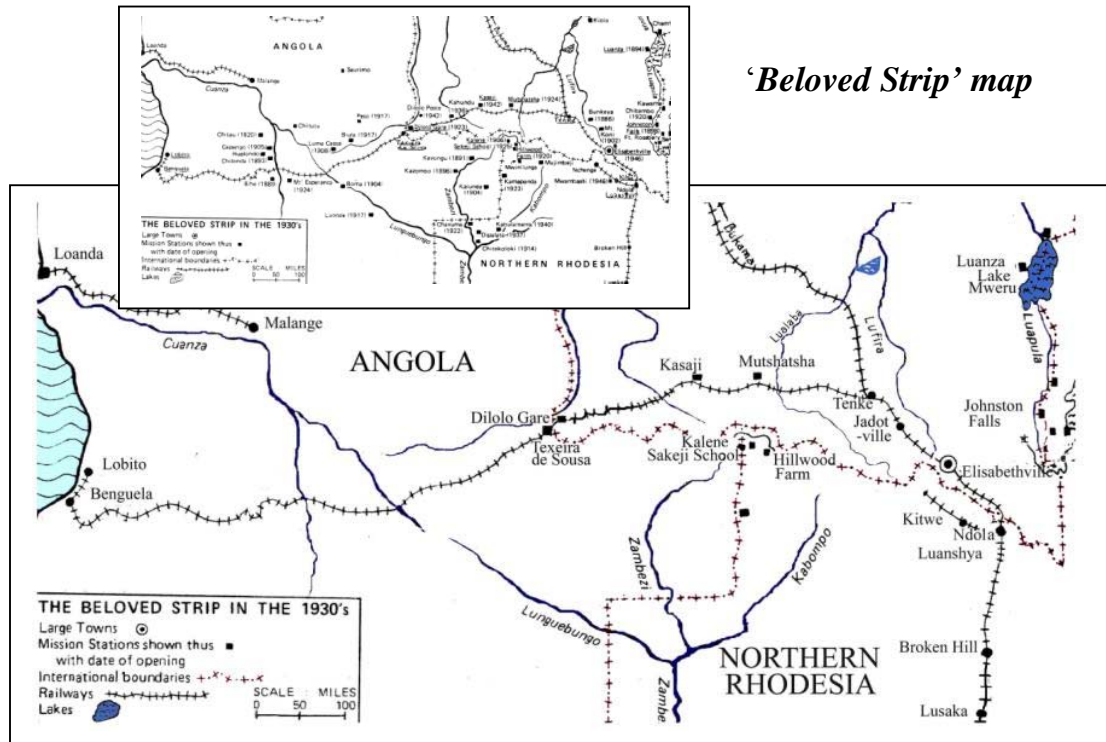
Figure 2

A similar arrangement, but in the opposite direction, was instituted by ‘ffolliott Fisher’ [1898-1966], second son of Dr Walter Fisher, the founder of the ‘Kalene Hill mission’. Kalene Hill is in Zambia (formerly Northern Rhodesia) some 42 km south east of the meeting point of the boundaries with the Congo and Angola. ffolliott Fisher served in the trenches during World War 1 and was invalided out. He used his gratuity towards setting up Hillwood Farm in 1920, a cattle ranch 13km south of Kalene Hill. ffolliott Fisher and his neighbours had a lot of correspondents in the Belgian Congo, which at that time was not so easily reached by the Rhodesian mail service. The local Kalene Hill post office closed in 1922 and mail was then serviced via Mwinilunga, so he set up a ‘*Sac Privé*’ at the Elisabethville post office.

It is worth pausing to look at this situation and reflect on why ffolliott Fisher came to set up this cross-border mail arrangement. Hillwood Farm was not only a successful commercial venture, but also provided valuable support for the local missionary work.

In 1925, ffolliott’s father Walter Fisher founded the ‘Sakeji School’ for missionaries’ children, so that they no longer needed to be sent abroad for their primary education. The school is just 3km from Hillwood, on the Sakeji River, an early tributary of the Zambesi. The school’s catchment area comprised *Brethren missions* as far apart as Bihé in Central Angola to Johnston Falls on the Luapula in north-east Rhodesia. This vast area extended over 900 miles from east to west and about 300 miles from north to south. The majority of pupils came from Angola and the Congo, and an efficient postal service for ‘letters home’ was clearly vital!

The area enclosing the Brethren missions was known by them as ‘*The Beloved Strip*’^[3] and was born of the idea of their early pioneer Fred Arnott, to evangelise the vast area through gaining the favour of ‘Msidi’, King of much of the Katanga region; Msidi was never converted, but recognised the benefits brought by the missionaries. ‘*The Beloved Strip*’ also enclosed an important ancient East-West trading route, originally of slaves to the Atlantic coast, thence to Brazil.



The important railway links

From the beginning of the 20th Century 'The Beloved Strip' became the area served by the CFB, *Camhino de Ferro de Benguela* - the Benguela Railway. It was built with British capital and with a George Pauling in charge. Construction started in 1903, working its way westward until in 1929 it reached the border town of Texeira de Sousa, now renamed Luau, before crossing the Luau River/Congo border to Dilolo. Dilolo was to become the exchange station with the Katanga railway network.

Meanwhile, work had started on building a connection to Dilolo from Tenke, on the existing CFK *Chemin de Fer du Katanga* which here turns northwest and then north into Northern Katanga. Tenke had been the nearest railhead for 'Hillwood Farm' and Kalene Hill – some 220km east. The rail network gap between Tenke and Dilolo was finally closed in 1931, linking the Benguela Railway with the entire Southern African railway system. Amongst other benefits, this provided the means for Northern Rhodesian and Katanga copper to reach the nearer port of Lobito.

All these developments of course affected the Kalene Hill/Hillwood area, formerly a remote outpost near the Zambesi source, now with a vital connection to the outside world, and the railhead at Mutshatsha only about 55km away.

Figure 3. Of particular interest to us, the question remains - when did ffolliott Fisher establish his 'Sac Privé' at Elisabethville? The earliest cover addressed as such, dates from 1938, but from the foregoing it may have happened much earlier, possibly as soon as 1926 after the Sakeji School had been established, or when the railways were linked about 1929 to 1931.



Figure 3.

This was found in a small accumulation of covers and stamps on piece collected by the late Ethelwynne Fisher, ffolliott's widow, and passed on to me by their son Paul Fisher. It dates from 1938 and consists of half a cover addressed in the distinct handwriting of his younger brother Dr Charles Fisher - who had been appointed Chief Medical Officer at the Roan Antelope Mine at Luanshya in March 1936.

Presumably addressed to **ffolliott**, the rest can be reconstructed as '(Sac P)rivée [sic]/ (Elisa)bethville/ Katanga'. It is franked at the foreign rate, 3d and was cancelled LUANSHYA , 26 MAR 38. On the reverse is the imprint of the 'Roan Antelope C(opper Mine?)/ Limited?/ Luans(hya)/ N.Rhod(esia), with transit mark of NDOLA, 28 MAR 38.

The letter is unusual in having been posted from Northern Rhodesia to Congo and thence conveyed by private arrangement back into Northern Rhodesia. How it finally reached Hillwood is uncertain, but it probably involved the Elisabethville post office putting the 'Sac Privé' on the train to Mutshatsha, Hillwood's nearest railhead. It was probably collected from there by ffolliott's representative.

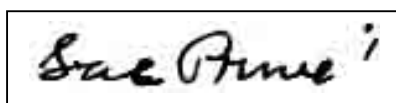


Figure 4 is a more complete fragment, with the correct internal rate of 2f.50, posted at Elisabethville on 11 March 1947 and addressed to one of the ffolliott Fishers at 'Sac Privé / Elisabethville'.

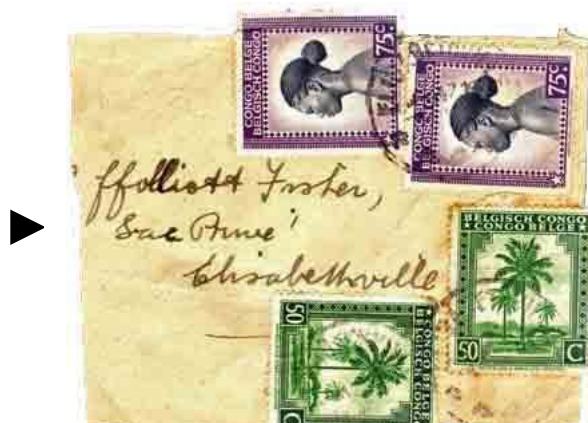


Figure 4.

Figure 5 is a cover with some stamps removed as the 30c franking is too low for even the minimum unsealed rate, and it has been sealed anyway. Posted at the 'Elisabethville 2' sub post office, the date is unclear though it is most likely 5-6-52; but as such this presents a problem.

It is addressed to 'Mrs F or S? ffolliott / c/o Hillwood Farm Sakeji / Via Mutshatsha / N. Rhodesia', with no mention of Elisabethville. Mutshatsha (nearest railhead to Hillwood) had its own 'Bureau Auxiliaire', (Postal Agency) from 21 June 1954^[4] and it is apparent from figure 6 that Hillwood and Sakeji shared the same PO Box at Mutshatsha; **but what happened in 1952?**



Figure 5.

If '52' for year was an error, it has been found that errors of date rarely vary by more than a digit, whether it be the day, month or year. '52' for '53' is possible but '54' is very unlikely. Perhaps some local trader at Mutshatsha may have acted as an agent for the Elisabethville post office. There is a possible explanation as it is known that ffolliott Fisher arranged for mail from Angola - *and also probably from Congo post offices west of Mutshatsha, namely Dilolo and Sandoa* - to be sent via a trader at Mutshatsha, called Peter Raftofolous of 'Raftofolous Freres', for forwarding to Hillwood and Sakeji.

Figure 6. This 1958 letter from Doba in French Equatorial Africa was addressed to Mr. and Mrs. ffollott Fisher after the opening of the Post Office at Mutshatsha in 1954. It probably travelled to Elisabethville by air, and thence by train to Mutshatsha. The form of the address is interesting; ‘Hillwood Farm / Hillwood-Sakeji / Mutshatsha / par Elisabethville / Congo Belge’, suggesting a joint arrangement between the Farm and Sakeji School.



Figure 6.

Figure 7. The next cover is an example of a cross-border mail arrangement which had been suspended due to the political situation. The Belgian Congo territory was granted independence on 30th June 1960, but only eleven days later on 11th July 1960, Katanga Province disagreed with the constitution and declared itself an independent state.

Katanga borders the whole of the northern border of Northern Rhodesia from near Kalene Hill in the west to Lake Mweru in the east. Because of the universal unrest in the newly-independent Congo, the border with Rhodesia was closed shortly after 30th June 1960.

The letter is written to my parents from Kasaji, (which is the next town West of Mutshatsha on the railway) by Mrs Kitty Fisher, daughter in-law of Walter Fisher, who co-founded a mission at Kasaji with her husband Singleton in 1943. It was written on a Rhodesia & Nyasaland 6d franked airletter of 1955, showing that the Kasaji missionaries made use of the Rhodesian postal services via a cross-border link. The letter ends “*We are sending letter over to be posted at Ikelenge*”, (the nearest PO in Rhodesia) but because of the border closure, the letter had to be sent via the Congo mails.

The impression on the airletter has been overlaid by an 8 Franc adhesive of the 1953 Flower issue overprinted ‘CONGO’. The letter is dated 13th July 1960 and the KASAJI postmark reads 24-8-7. My father has endorsed its arrival in the UK as 21st July 1960, which makes the ‘24th’ impossible, but if we imagine that the whole of the date on the central roller of the canceller was given an extra turn by mistake, then the real date was probably 13-7-60, which coincides with that of the letter.



Figure 7.

The letter vividly describes the troubled situation, and welcomes the Katanga breakaway. It seems that it was only after Kitty Fisher had sealed the letter, she discovered it could not be sent over the border and

therefore applied the Congo stamp. It is not known whether the border closure was just local, or applied elsewhere along the Congo/Northern Rhodesia border.

During September 1961, at a time when UN forces were involved in trying to sort out an escalation of unrest in Elisabethville, there was a suspension of normal postal services in south-eastern Katanga. To deal with this suspension, a private arrangement was made to convey mail across the border, presumably with payment to Post offices in Northern Rhodesia, from whence they were forwarded and usually cancelled with a 'Postage Paid' mark - although Rhodesia & Nyasaland adhesives are known to have been applied. Kitwe is the town mark most often found, but Bancroft has also been recorded, dated 21 September 1961.

Figure 8.

A typical example of the arrangement made, is the cover illustrated here addressed from Jadotville to Belgium and cancelled with 'Postage Paid Kitwe' dated 11th December 1961. It is not known which other Katanga towns were affected and for how long before normal postal services were resumed.



Figure 8.

Figure 9. The final cover in this story is another example of a 'Cross border arrangement' which was suspended due to the political situation, this time an insurrection in Katanga. The province had been renamed 'Shaba' by the Mobutu regime, in the hope that it would make the problems go away!

The letter was posted from Mitwaba, in Eastern Shaba and is cancelled 28 February 1977. It is addressed to two brothers, who were pupils at the Sakeji School and which now had a 'Boite Postale' at the Mutshatsha Post office. The border was closed and the cover is endorsed in red 'Voir (sic) Ikelenge Zambia'.

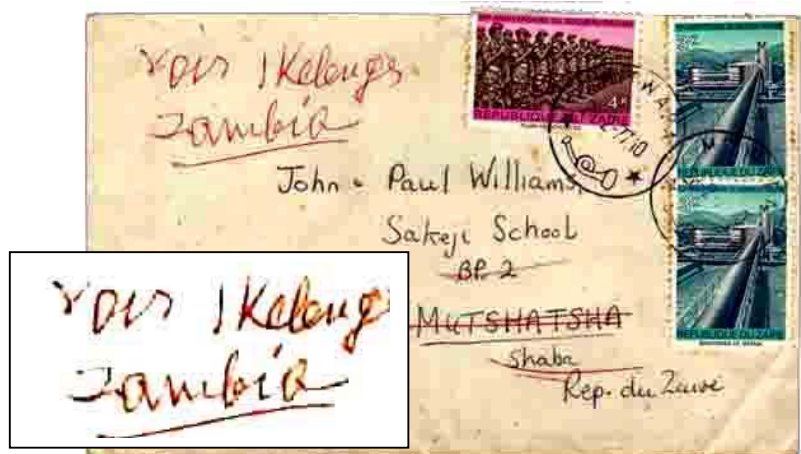


Figure 9.

It is not known whether the Sakeji/Hillwood Post Office Box at Mutshatsha was restored after the rebellion ended; perhaps it was, but with the Angolan Civil War continuing nearby and affecting the

whole area, normality in the shape of friendly relations across borders would seem an idealist dream. I hope I'm wrong.

Members who have any similar privately arranged 'Cross-border' covers are asked to contact the Editor or myself, so we can build up a more complete picture".

1.

'Hand book, Memoir 18' is available to U.K. and other European members at £14 and those in America £17. The price includes postage and packing.

Payment is by 'Sterling' cheque in the name 'Rhodesian Study Circle' and should be sent to the RSC Publications Officer-

Mr. Brian Coop,
13 Forest Crescent
Harrogate
North Yorks. HG2 7EU

Email: gra_bri@btinternet.com

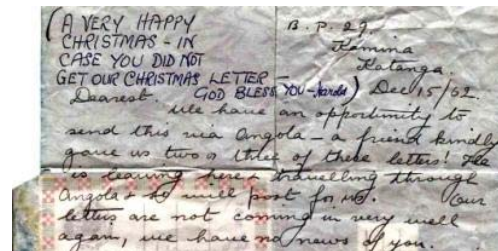
Recognising that a 'Sterling cheque' payment by overseas members will be a problem to most, arrangements are in hand to pay by credit card with a 5% transaction charge. For further information contact Brian Coop directly.

2. Arnold Berman, Rhodesian S.C.
3. W. Singleton Fisher and Julyan Hoyte. *'Ndotolu, the Life Stories of Walter and Anna Fisher of Central Africa'*. Paperback, Lunda-Ndembu Publications, 1987. Originally published in 1948 by Pickering & Inglis as *'Africa Looks Ahead'*.
4. Heim Keach *'Cancellations of the Normal Post Offices of Belgian Congo 1886 -1960'*.

Postscript

Stuart Smith

In answering Hal Hoyte's request and by way of a small contribution, illustrated is a cover from Kamina dated 15th December 1962 explaining the circumstances of its routing via Angola and Lisbon.



Kamina
Katanga
Dec. 15/1962

"Dearest

We have an opportunity to send this via Angola - a friend kindly gave us two or three of these letters! He is leaving here and travelling through Angola and so will post for us. Our letters are not coming in very well again.

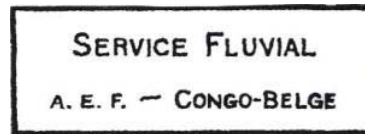
..... Things are so uncertain here, we have no idea how long we can stay. Our cases are all packed in case we have to move out quickly."



Belgian and French Congo Postal Relationships

Postscript

Stuart Smith



In the previous three issues of our Bulletin, Philippe Lindekens wrote and illustrated examples from his collection relating to the cross border transfer of both local and internationally originating correspondence. Most involved a crossing of the *River Congo* border.

For those of our members unfamiliar with the formalised mail carrying service provided by the French on the river Congo, the following may be of interest.

Whilst there was an established requirement to carry mail, between the two colonies by river boats calling at places on both banks – a specific formal arrangement was introduced apparently at some time in the late 1920's. A special undated boxed canceller was created as reproduced above and illustrated again in figure 1.



Figure 1.

According to Du Four^[1] this service covered the 1300 km upstream area from Brazzaville to the mouth of the river Ubangi and as far as Bangui itself. The canceller was to be applied to mail which had not previously entered the postal system and also to correspondence actually posted on the French colony steamers plying upstream and between Brazzaville and Leopoldville.

All such items are said to be rare; but the few I have seen originate from the same source and use the same style envelope as that from my collection in 'Figure 1'. They are certainly not common but whilst genuinely used, the formal commonality suggests to me that they fall into the category as being 'Philatelic'.

Much rarer is the superb commercial item shown in figure 2. I need to thank someone for copying this to me but cannot now trace the origin. Thank you who ever you are – *and I wish it was mine.*



Figure 2.

River boat steamer accidents

Accidents did occur and whilst not an example of cross border mail in this instance, it is almost certain that some correspondence to the Belgian Congo would have been involved.

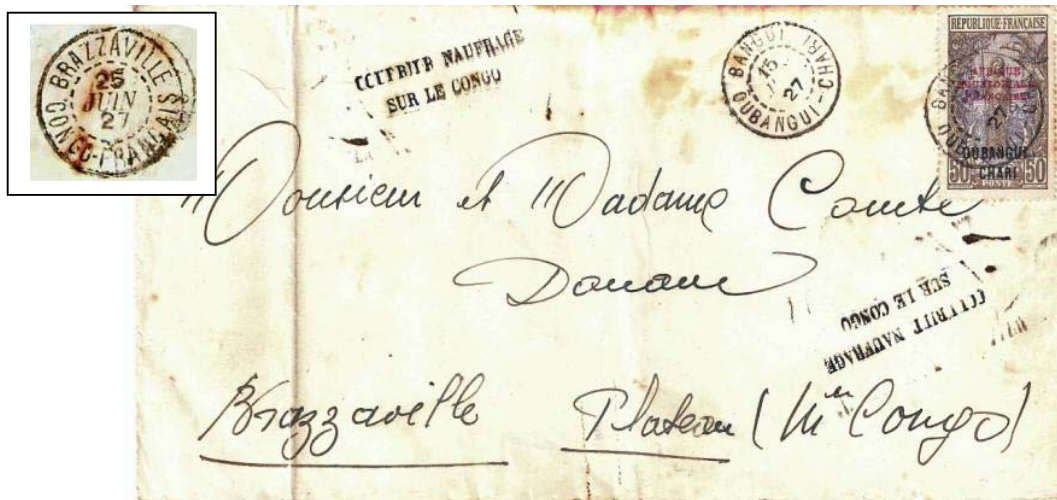
**ACCIDENT NAUFRAGE
SUR LE CONGO**

Figure 3. The 'S.S. Largeur' was one of the French Congo river boats in regular use and frequent visitor to Leopoldville. This vessel ran aground near Brazzaville on 23rd June 1927 and whilst little is known of the incident, it was carrying mail which was inevitably delayed. In common with many accidents involving such delays, a special cachet was made and used on covers being carried to confirm the reason any damage or late delivery.



Figure 3.

Figure 4. Such covers are rare but with thanks to John Yeomans^[2] I am able to illustrate this fine item from his collection



The letter had been posted 15th June and carried from Bangui on the S.S. *Largeur* which eventually ran aground near Brazzaville on 23rd June. It is water damaged and this may have occurred either directly from the recovery or in transit to the harbour. On the back it bears the Brazzaville cds receiving office stamp June 25 1927.

I too have an example apparently emanating from Dongou in French Middle Congo and posted 9 June 1927. The arrival mark at Brazzaville 'Moyen Congo' is dated 24 June, a day earlier than the above. Sadly the status of this cover is questionable and whilst bearing genuine 'marks' – it was probably created for the philatelic market.



Inward mail from French Congo

As a final contribution I am again indebted to John Yeomans ^[2] for this inward mail cover and the information provided.

Whilst bearing Tchad postage stamps at the correct 10g surface mail rate to a foreign country of 1f 50c, the letter actually originated in the 'French Congo' having been posted aboard the steamer 'Foucault' of the 'Chargeur Réunis' operated *Ligne Postale de Bordeaux a Matadi*, when it called at Libreville about 10 April 1931.



PAQUEBOTS

← 30 x 8[ht] mm →



The ship was en route from Bordeaux and bound for Matadi, where it arrived on the 14th. The 'Foucault' didn't have a postal authority aboard and the boxed PAQUEBOTS marks would have been applied in Matadi. The omission of a Matadi receiving office canceller is perhaps surprising. However this situation was regularised when the letter arrived two days later, and the just discernable Leopoldville cds of 16th April was applied.

1. Du Four, *Congo Cinquante Ans d'Histoire Postale*
2. Yeomans, John. FRPS, *France and Colonies Philatelic Society (UK)*

A change in Postal rates - the transitional period *1st April to 31st December 1910*

Philippe Lindekens

On 1st April 1910, Congolese postal rates were modified once again to bring them into line with those of the UPU. Notably for 'letter' correspondence the unit weight was increased from 15g. to 20 gms and the basic cost of sending postcards was reduced.

The most important of these were as follows:

Letter to international destinations - 25c. for each unit of 20g (previously 15g)

Letter for inland delivery - 10c. per unit of 20g (previously 15g)

Postcard to international destinations - 10c. (previously 15c)

Postcard for inland delivery - 5c. (previously 10c)

Registration fee, both inland and international - 25c. (No change)

The '*Inland*' preferential postage rates to neighbouring countries was terminated and reclassified as foreign '*International*'.

The stamps in circulation at this time were :

Mols stamps of the Congo Free State overprinted *CONGO BELGE*

The 1909 Unilingual issue - issued 15 June 1909

The 1910 Bilingual - issued 1 February 1910

All these stamps retained their validity until 31 March 1916 as there was no requirement for any new issues. However, there was a new issue of postal stationery cards which became available in post offices on 1 April 1910 - classified by *Stibbe* ^[1] as numbers 28 - 35

To facilitate the using up of existing stock, some of the postcards still in circulation were overprinted - specifically those classified by *Stibbe* as numbers 20 - 25.

The postcard overprints were as follows:

The card's imprinted stamp was surcharged with numerals '**5**' and '**10**'

Wavy lines over the text '*Service de l'intérieur et des pays limitrophes...*'

Wavy lines over '*Union Postale Universelle*' (15c+15c postcard)

Not surprisingly, provision was made such that *Stibbe* 20-25 classified postcards already in the possession of the public and which had not therefore been overprinted, would remain valid for use until 31 December 1910.

Since the introduction of the 'Mols' issues in 1896, this was the third time a period of 'validity tolerance' had been sanctioned; but on this occasion it only applied to the postal stationery cards.

The previous periods were :

25 May - 31 December 1900: these 19th century Mols stamps were accepted in their original colours until the end of the year 1900. During that 7 month period, post office staff were instructed to prioritise the sale of their existing stock in the old colours (5c brown-red, 10c blue-green, 25c orange, 50c green and 1 Fr violet). Not surprisingly therefore, the new UPU compliant stamps are relatively scarce on cover during in this period.

1 January - 31 July 1909: the Congo Free State Mols series without the CONGO BELGE overprint, were accepted during this period.

This 'tolerance period' gives us good reason to focus our attention to some of these postcards which were legitimately valid until the end of 1910 :

The very rare *Stibbe* card #20 along with 22, 24 and 25 (*Local, Typo and Princes*) were being used to meet a different set of postal rates than those for which they had originally been created.

Effectively, from 1 April 1910 onwards, all the 10c postcards previously intended for ‘Inland and neighbouring countries’ were and could now be used for ‘International destinations’. It is therefore interesting to seek out examples of the two uses to which these cards were put, especially because some of them were also used after the 1st January 1911 deadline, without being taxed or postage due collected!

10c postcard - ‘Service de l’intérieur...’ - dispatched from Lukafu on 12 May 1910 and addressed to Brussels, where it arrived on 12 June.
The sender has crossed out the ‘Service de l’intérieur...’ text to indicate that the card was being used for international delivery. The official wavy overprint was of course used for the same purpose.

Sibbe 24T (Typo overprint)



10c postcard – ‘Service de l’intérieur...’ – dispatched 31 December 1910, the last day of its validity, from Stanleyville and addressed to Brussels, where it arrived on 10 February 1911. Léopoldville transit mark of 11 January.

Sibbe 24T (Typo overprint)



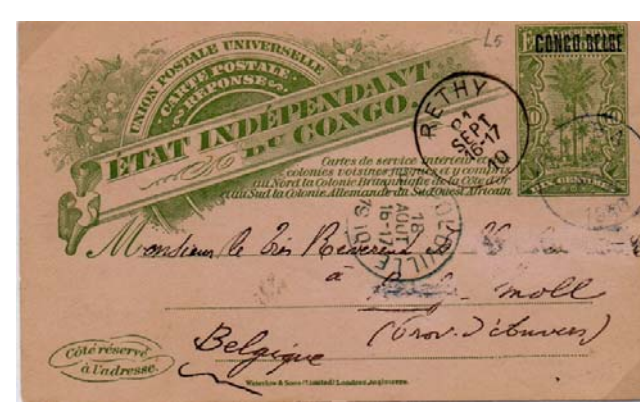
10c postcard, Princes printing with Typo overprint - ‘Service de l’intérieur...’ Sender’s portion, dispatched from Libenge on 14 May 1910 and addressed to Brussels, where it arrived 25 June. Léopoldville transit but the date is illegible.

Sibbe 25P (Typo overprint)



10c postcard – ‘Service de l’intérieur...’ Reply portion without “CARTE POSTALE INCOMPLETE”, dispatched from Ibembo on 5 August 1910 and addressed to Rethy, where it arrived on 21 September. Léopoldville transit on 18 August.

Sibbe 25L (Local ‘L5’ overprint)



Illegal use of officially obsolete postal stationery cards - used and remaining untaxed after 1 January 1911

For those cards that had not been overprinted, their permitted period of use came to an end on 31 December 1910 – any remaining were now effectively demonetised.

These postcards are clearly much more rarely found, given that we almost never look at the usage date of the postcards we buy. I acquired these two long before realising their misuse.

10c+10c Reply paid postcard
'Service de l'intérieur...'

Dispatched from Stanleyville 6
March 1911 and addressed to
Brussels, where it arrived 11
April. Leopoldville transit mark
of 18 March [inverted] 1911.

Stibbe 22L (Local L7 overprint)



15c Postcard – 'Demand' portion.
card dispatched from Matadi on
15 March 1912, by which time it
had been out of circulation for
more than 15 months. Addressed
to Brussels, where it arrived on 7
April 1912

Stibbe 23L (Local L2 overprint)



These are a few examples from this period, which is little known to collectors and yet deserves their attention. Take a look in your own and please do tell me of any more discoveries.

1. Stibbe, Jacques. *Les Entiers Postaux du Congo et du Ruanda-Urundi*

Identifying the Mols plate combinations

Stuart Smith

In this issue we have the seventh of my review and update of B. P. Hudson's original work first published in the Study Circles Bulletin and that source is acknowledged.

Colour interpretation, description and translation are subjective. With particular reference to the 'Independent State' early issues of this value, I will use that adopted by Tavano. ^[1]

Dates prefixed 'F.C.' are those of 'File Copy' sheets previously held in the Waterlow archive.

Along with the other stamps issued in 1894, the 1 franc value was based on an original painting exhibited at the Antwerp exhibition. That painting showed an elephant waving its trunk in the air and in the distance there were other elephants and tiny native figures. The native brandishing a spear was added for the stamp design.

The 1 franc stamp is quite often found, particularly on registered covers between the Congo and Belgium or other overseas countries. The following are the weight ranges in the period 1896 to 1924 for which the postal rate was exactly 1 franc.

	Belgium Registered	Belgium unregistered	Other overseas registered	Other overseas unregistered
1894-1910	up to 15g	15 to 30g	up to 15g	15 to 30g
1910-1920	30 to 45g	45 to 60g	30 to 45g	45 to 60g
1920-1921	80 to 100g	-	40 to 60g	60 to 80g
1921-1924	20 to 40g	60 to 80g	up to 20g	20 to 40g

1 Franc

'Elephant Hunter'

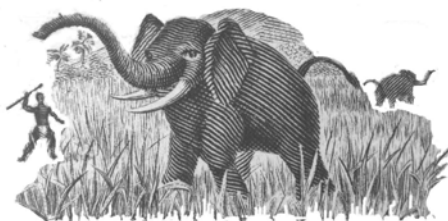


Plate combinations

COB	SG	Date of issue			
26A	22	1894	Violet [p.14, p.15]	I1+A1	Original frame and centre plate
26Aa			Deep violet [ditto]		
26B		1896	Lilac [p.15]		
26Ba			Very Deep lilac [p.15]		
26Ba			Deep lilac [p.15]		
26C	34	1899	Lilac-Carmine [p.14]		
26	35	1901	Carmine	I2+A2	Frame Lay marks added
26a			Carmine [p.15]		
26b			Carmine [p.16]		
60	66	1910	Carmine	III+A3	New frame plate; centre lay marks added
			Carmine-Rose		
			Deep carmine		
			Carmine-Lake	III+A4	Centres re-entered
70	76	1915	Olive	III+A4	
			Olive	II2+A5	Frames retouched; centres re-entered
			Olive	II3+A5	Frames re-entered (EAA overprint only)
			Olive	II4+A5	Frames re-entered
			Olive	II5+A5	Frames re-entered
			Olive	II6+A5	Frames re-entered
			Olive	II6+A6	Centres re-entered
			Olive	III+A7	New frame plate; centres re-entered
77	84	1918	Red Cross	III+A7	
101	110	1922	Boma surcharge	II4+A5, II5+A5, II6+A5	

Identification

“The 1 franc violet, lilac and carmine of 1894 to 1900 were not separate issues in the sense of being the subject of decrees by the Postal Ministry, but were simply shade changes of the same issue. The changes were so marked that they have always been regarded as separate stamps.

Very often differentiation between ‘Lilac-Carmine’ and the other shades/tones of lilac is in question, however that is easily resolved as ‘Lilac-Carmine’ is perf.15 and the other ‘Lilacs’ are perf. 14.”

1894. Violet in various shades II+A1 [F.C. ‘Violet’ 2.10.1894, 11.4.1895
‘Deep lilac’ 10.11.96
‘Lilac’* 15.12.97 * ‘Rose lilac - Hudson & Keach
‘Lilac’ 16.3.98
‘Lilac-Carmine’ 10.1.99]

1901. Carmine I2+A2 [‘Carmine/Carmine-rose’* F.C. 25.4.1901 * variously described
‘Carmine’ 2.12.002]

Frame plate ‘I2’ was created by the addition of lay marks in the form of a vertical line between 38, 39, 43 and 44, and a dot between 8, 9, 13 and 14. The centres were re-entered.

‘Princes’ I2+A2

Princes printings can be recognised by the brighter shade of the frames and by the centres which are ‘brownish-black rather than ‘grey-black’ as in the 1900 issue. They are always perf.14.

CONGO BELGE overprints

All Congo Belge ‘typographed’ overprints were applied to stamps from combination I2+A2.

Bruxelles hand overprint - combination I1+A1:	- B1 [lilac-carmine] B1, B2, B4, B6 [violet]
Bruxelles hand overprint – combination I2+A2:	B1, B2, B5, B6, B7.
Princes – combination I2+A2:	B2 and B5.
Local – combination I2+A2:	L1 to L7.

Forged overprints are common.

1910. Carmine III+A3 and III+A4 [No File Copy sheets]

The new frame plate has lay marks in the form of a vertical line between 38, 39, 43 and 44 and a dot between 13 and 14; in ‘A4’.

Since there are only slight differences between the two centre plates, the best and easiest way to differentiate between them is by the shade. Stamps from III+A3 vary from pale to deep carmine while those from III+A4 are distinctly different in depths of Carmine-Lake.

III+A4. No used examples exist and is uncommon without the 1921 overprint.

Frame ‘III’

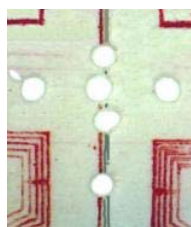
The frame plate has (red) lay marks in the form of a vertical line between 38, 29, 43 and 44 and a dot between 8, 9, 13 and 14.

Centre ‘A3’ has a (black) vertical line in the same position and a dot between 13 and 14.

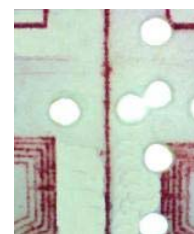
Centre ‘A4’ retains the black dot between 13 and 14 but the black line between 38, 39, 43 and 44 has been erased.



III+A3,4,5,6,7



Centre plate ‘A3’



Centre plate ‘A4’

1915. Olive III+A4 [F.C. 20.4.1915],

II2+A5, II3+A5, II4+A5, II5+A5, II6+A5, II6+A6 and **III+A7** [F.C. 28.11.1916]

The 1fr olive of 1915 is a complicated stamp which went through eight plate combination stages, though identifying most is not as difficult as might be supposed.

II1+A4. The combination is that used for the 1910 carmine-lake printings and the first place to look is the small circle and surrounding scrollwork at the centre top frame line. If the top lines of the circle and scrolls are weak or worn away, the combination is 'II1+A4'.



II2+A5. 'II2' was created by retouching of the outer lines of the top central ornament which are continuous and thickened a little unevenly.



II3+A5 to II6+A6. If the top lines or other parts of the top frame line show signs of doubling, the frame plate is II3, II4, II5 or II6.



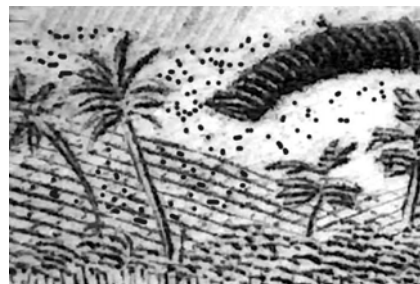
'II3+A5' only exists with the EAA overprint.

Because of the extensive nature of doubling of the column bases, the following is worth recording. The left base is doubled in 1, 2, 3, 20, 21, 26, 32, 36, 41, 43 and 48. The right base in 8, 9, 10, 15, 17, 18, 20, 22, 25, 28, 29, 30, 34, 36, 37, 38, 39, 42, 43, 44, 47 and 48.

'II4+A5 to II6+A5'.

The differences between 'II4, II5 and II6' are slight and for individual stamps it is essential to have a reference sheet of each. However I do believe the following centre plate features, will assist and facilitate a good chance of identifying the combination, most likely.

The main conspicuous change in *general appearance* of these combinations shows itself on the centre plate. There is a development of black corrosion dots, dense in many positions, less so in others – in the area around the end of the elephant's trunk and the two palm trees on the left. The corrosion has presumably been caused by the plate becoming wet. A clear boundary to the corrosion is indicated in that in many positions it was burnished out *but not* in the immediate vicinity of the trunk and palm trees as that would have risked erasing part of the design itself.



Corrosion associated with 'A5 and A6'

In comparison with centre plate 'A4' – centre 'A5' shows signs of extensive doubling of the hillside in very many positions and the plate's condition gets progressively worse from one combination to the next. The illustrations below should give the reader some indication of what to look for, though the definition does vary by stamp position.



II2+A4 [#29]



II2+A5 [#29]



II6+A5 [#29]



II6+A6 [#29]

II6+A6. Whilst we have both new centre and frame plates, it is again the centre plate which helps identify the combination – albeit comparative to what had preceded it.

In centre plate ‘A6’, the area with 2 palm trees above the natives head has been lightly entered and is generally cleaner and more complete in appearance.

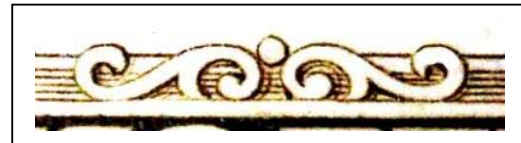


Centre ‘A5’ [#46]



Centre ‘A6’ [#46]

III+A7. If the circle and scrolls are clear and neat the combination is ‘III+A7’. This is accompanied by fine clear centres unlike the variously corroded centres of ‘A4’ to ‘A6’.

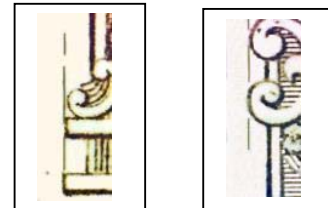


Although centre plate ‘A7’ was a re-entry of ‘A6’ rather than a new plate, most of the flaws in ‘A6’, including the corrosion round the palm trees, have completely disappeared and the plate presents a clean appearance.

Approximately half the stamps in the sheet show a thickening of one of the horizontal lines in the right hand vertical panel. If this line is thickened, the stamp comes from rows 1, 2, 3, 9 or 10, or from position 36.



If one is unable to see the top scroll work clearly and a stamp is apparently either ‘II1+A4’, ‘II2+A5’ or ‘III+A7’, but shows sections of a vertical guideline in the left margin, then it is definitely ‘II1+A4’. This feature whilst extensive, is not of course applicable to every stamp in the sheet.



Centre ‘A4’ with typical guide lines

Those with complete sheets which show doubling can identify them as follows.

If the bottom right column base on #32 is not doubled, the frame plate is ‘II3’. If the right column base is doubled on #32 but not on #31, the plate is ‘II4’. If the left vertical frame lines on #16 and #41 are doubled, the plate is ‘II5’ or ‘II6’. If the right frame line of #41 is doubled and the left column base of #48 is trebled, the plate is ‘II6’.

1918 ‘Red Cross’. III+A7 [F.C. 27.12.17]

Combinations recorded on surcharged/overprinted ‘Belgian Congo’ stamps.

1916 Tombeur (Ruanda Urundi)	1916 East African	1921 Recuperation	1922 Boma
II1+A4 K	II2+A5 S	I2+A2 (Typo)	II4+A5 [rare]
II2+A5 G	II2+A5 L1 (.)	I2+A2 (Princes)	II5+A5 [common]
III+A4 H	II2+A5 L1 (o)	II1+A3	II6+A5 [uncommon]
	II3+A5 L1 (o)	II1+A4	
	II3+A5 L2		

* Kigali, Grysolle and Havre.

1. Tavano & Henuzet. *État Indépendant du Congo, l’Émission Mols – Van Engelen. 1894-1908.*

I am again greatly indebted to Léo Tavano for ‘Peer reviewing’ the original draft and providing helpful reminders, amendments and suggestions.

Bateau Poste – canceller No.?

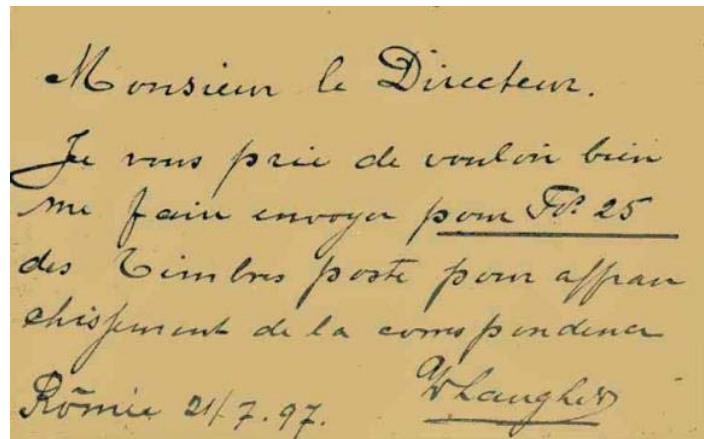
Stuart Smith



I recently had the good fortune to acquire in auction an example of a *Bateau Poste* cancelled postcard addressed to Kinshasa, dated 20 July 1897 and described as 'N^o. 9'.

Whilst always dubious about the 'N^o. 9', I am nevertheless pleased to finally have an example of a *Bateau Poste* canceller on cover.

As there will surely have been others with an interest in the card, I thought it appropriate to confirm the situation with regard to its description and assure our members that the existence of a No. 9 canceller has still to be recorded.



According to Gudenkauf^[1] the "*Bateau Poste* canceller No. 9 is unknown" and consequently the boat to which it had been allocated is also unknown. What follows is based on Abbé Gudenkauf's published research, as I know of no more recent work or update on the subject.

The card is addressed to Kinshasa and in the absence of any other postal or transit mark it was apparently posted and cancelled on board one of the mail boat steamers plying the State's rivers.

At first sight and under a magnifying glass, it was perhaps understandably described as N^o. 9, albeit a number never previously recorded. It is in fact N^o. 2, confirmed by magnified copy, printed on transparent film and superimposed on that of an authentic N^o. 2. It fits perfectly and is in my opinion another example attributable to the '*Ville d'Anvers*'.



Magnified image of canceller



Magnified image of authentic 'No. 2' cancellation

The message as well as the recipient indicates that both were employees of S.A.B. (Société Anonyme Belge) and it is worth noting that it was only in the previous year that the same company had sold the paddle steamer 'Ville d'Anvers' to the Congo Free State, along with seven other of their vessels. At the time of this correspondence, it was one of several operating on the Leopoldville to Stanley Falls (Kinshasa) river section, and quoting Gudenkauf - "the round trip taking about 50 days and the return leg being twice as fast as the ascending one."

It is known that the 'Ville d'Anvers' departed from Leopoldville for Stanley falls on 19 June 1897 and assuming an uninterrupted 50 day round trip, the steamer would have arrived in the vicinity of Stanley Falls and Kinshasa, about the 19th or 20th July. This would tie in nicely with the cancellation of the card.

The main query is **Rōmie 21/7.97.**



Could this be an indication of it having been *hand delivered* to or received by/at **Rōmie**? It is known there was a small settlement and Government station at 'Romee/Romé', about 50 km down stream from Stanley Falls. Could this have been where "Le Directeur de la S.A.B" was?

Any suggestions?

1. Abbé G. Gudenkauf. *Mailboat Steamers on Congo Rivers and Lakes. 1896-1940*

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