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BELGIAN CONGO



STUDY CIRCLE

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BULLETIN 102

DECEMBER 1996

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**EXHIBITIONS—PAST AND FUTURE
CAPEX—PACIFIC 97—BELGIUM @
CHARLEOI 23-25 MAY 1997**

Our member **Regis Hoffman** must be congratulated on receiving a Large Silver Award at the **Capex** show in Canada in June of this year for his Exhibit featuring World War I material of the Belgian East Africa region.

Of great interest is his report that when he first submitted the exhibit it was rejected. Later the Committee asked if he were still interested and when he sent the material—voila—a Large Silver. Such are the vagaries of stamp shows.

His exhibit has been accepted for display in the **Pacific 97** show.

The Exhibit of **Ron Strawser** of Belgian Congo Postal Stationary has also been accepted for **Pacific 97**.

Members interested in a mini-meeting at **Pacific 97** should contact **Ron Strawser** 19811 Brandon Oaks Way, Katy TX 77449.

USA and UK members interested in a meeting at the **Belgian show at Charleroi, May 1997** should promptly contact **S. S. Smith**, Lychgates Pinfold Hill, Curbar Sheffield S30 1YL. Belgian and other members notify: **E. Hoorens Ave. Eugene Ysaye** 105, Bte 1 Brussels

**THE SAME MISTAKE
(APPARENTLY) 70 YEARS APART**

On the next page there is illustrated a postcard which your Editor bought at a recent bourse. When I saw the card, which is view number 59, I assumed it was **Stibbe** number 43. That issue was demonetized (no longer valid for postage) January 1, 1922. Accordingly the date of origin viz: 18 June 1926 would lead one to expect a postage due mark on the cover and the postage due to be collected in Belgium.

However when I examined the cover closely under a magnifying glass I found it to be **Stibbe** number 54 viz: 30c on 10c. The postage paid was valid and correct.

The postmark covered the “30” I missed it and 70 years ago the postman missed it. He collected 40c postage due.

R H Keach had the following observations with respect to this cover.

“Your post card was posted at **NIANGARA**, in the north-east corner of the Congo. The sender was **Eugene Desquenne**, Cotonco (the name of the company for which he worked) at **DINGILU**. I have been unable on my large-scale map to locate **Dingilu** although I found **Dingba**, about 20Km south of **Niangara**. The **Niangara** post office had a catchment area then of something like 10,000 square miles so it is not surprising that I cannot find **Dingilu**, probably a small village maybe not even on my map. The nearest route to Europe was via **Sudan** and **Egypt** so, to prevent the card taking the long route via the Congo river, the writer marked it “via **Redjaf**”, a port in **Sudan** on the River Nile and which previously was in the **Lado Enclave**. In 1926 the post card rate to **Belgium** was 30c so there was no need for postage due to be paid and the Congo post office did not add its “T” to indicate underfranked. My guess is that the Belgian post office did not notice the 30 surcharge, (as I also did not *Ed*) obscured by the cancellation and thought that it was for 10c only, and there for demanding 40c postage due—the 20c under franked and a fee of 20c—My reading of the message is “My dear **Juliette**, I think that I have sent recently the same view (card) to your landlord (or perhaps landlady). Very tender kisses **Eugene**.”

The card bears an encircled 5 which was the postman’s cachet.

Does anyone know what sort of Company or business was conducted by “Cotonco”? Does anyone know where “Dingilu” was or is located?

Please send answers to your Editor for which he will be most grateful:

Edwin M. Lavitt
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Expédition
Cotonou
Dingida

Congo Belge - Belgique
Carte Postale - Postcard



102:2

Correspondance - Briefwisseling

Dingida, le 18 juin 1926.
Ma chère Juliette,
Je crois que j'ai adressé
dernièrement la même vue à
tes propriétaires.
Bien tendres baisers

Erzine

Mme Juliette M. Carage,

58, rue des Eperviers,

Bruxelles

Belgique

Via Redax

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FORGERIES AND CERTIFICATES OF AUTHENTICITY

Your Editor recently attended two Auctions in New York City at which Belgian Congo "collections" were offered and sold. I was told that in each instance the purchaser was a dealer who, it is presumed will break up the groups and sell off the individual stamps at auction or at various philatelic shows.

One of the assemblages had a great number of 5F lilac of 1886, 5F violet of 1887, and 10F yellow ochre issued 1/1/1891 as well as some Colis Postaux (Cat Officiel #5).

I identified some forgeries among the Congo Belge handstamped overprints. The variations in colour in the two 5F issues and the 10F issue (although not necessarily indicative) and other variations led me to believe that a number of these items might very well be forged. Certainly forgeries abound in these issues and one is forewarned today before adding copies to ones collection.

I know the feeling of learning that a prized 10F yellow ochre of the 1887 issue, held in ones collection for years, is a forgery—it has happened to me—but it need not happen again.

Stamps from the two lots will come on the market and one or more of our members may well be interested. **Protect yourselves—use our Expert Committee—**if you buy any of these or other valuable overprinted stamps—buy them on "Extension" for expert opinion—reputable dealers take no offense when one does this today—accordingly—for :

Certificates of Authenticity:

Stamps etc. for which certificates are required should be sent to R. H. Keach, 25 Kingswood Road, Tadworth, Surrey KT20 5EE UK to be received not later than February 15, 1997.

With the advent of the new year members are reminded that they are entitled each year to two free certificates for single stamps or equivalent. Otherwise charges are £1.50 for single stamps but rather more for

multiples, post cards, covers etc. depending on the size of the photograph required. Moreover when, apart from the free allocation, five or more subjects are submitted at one time there is a 20% discount on the bill. If an item proves to be a forgery the charge for the certificate is halved. Return postage is extra.

EML

MODERN COMMUNICATION

We should make greater use of the communication capabilities of our members. Our computer specialist member Regis Hoffman has volunteered to prepare a list of E Mail and Fax addresses and numbers for the membership.

Will members who do have E Mail and Fax capability send the information to Regis Hoffman whose E Mail address is: rmh@k2t.com.

The list will be published in a later Bulletin.

EML

EDITORS NOTES—BELGIUM IN SEPTEMBER

When Ray Keach and I went to Belgium in September M. Emile Hoorens and the Belgian members made us most welcome and for which they have our sincere thanks. We had a long and most informative visit with the Abbé Gudenkauf which was for me a particular pleasure. We spent a day at a stamp fair in Antwerp where we were inundated with Belgian Congo material of all kinds and were joined one evening at dinner in Brussels by Belgian Members: Bilmans, Celis, Deynckens, Frenay, Lindekens, Hoorens, De Ruyck, Schouberechts, Van der Veken and from the U. S. Mr. H. Maulding.

Mr. Hoorens had privately shown Mr. Keach and myself a most interesting group of covers and at the dinner meeting Lindekens and Schouberechts as well as others informally displayed varied and most unusual material all of which should be the subjects of later Bulletin Articles.

Your Editor assures the membership a mini meeting in Belgium in May will be most pleasurable.

EML

A. Geoffrey Wood

It is with the greatest regret that we record the death on 14 October of Geoffrey Wood while in hospital. He had been suffering from heart problems for about six months.

Geoffrey was a founder member and past president of the BCSC and always very enthusiastic about our activities; very rarely did he miss one of our meetings.

His life-long interest was in the stamps of Belgium, particularly the 1915 issue on which he was an accepted authority. For him the stamps of the Congo were a side-line but one which he took seriously and he accumulated a formidable study collection of the Mols issues, making several important discoveries which had eluded other students with more impressive collections.

He was very interested in the methods of printing of all stamps and the imperfections in the stamps that resulted. He was always very ready to share his knowledge and over many years was invariably helpful to all of us. He wrote many erudite articles for our Bulletin.

Geoffrey was a Fellow of the Royal Philatelic Society and curator of its museum and archives for very many years; it will be difficult to find a suitable replacement. He was awarded the coveted Society's Medal, a rare honour, for his outstanding services to the society.

He was a founder member, long time secretary and, at the time of his death, president of the Belgian Study Circle. He probably gave more of his time and energy to the wellbeing of the BSC than has any other member.

He was a founder member and past president of the Waterlow Study Circle and will be sadly missed there.

Geoffrey had interests other than philately. He played rugby football until he was more than 40 years old. He was an active archeologist, taking part in many "digs" in England although his prime interest was in the Byzantine period.

He spent all his working life with the Bank of England. When he retired after 40 years service he said that his ambition was to receive his pension for a further forty years. Sadly that ambition was not realized.

We have expressed our great regrets to Ruth, his widow whom many of us know. They were married for 56 years

RHK

THE CANCELLATIONS OF BURUNDI

The next four pages are the beginning of the extensive Article on the Cancellations of Burundi by Dr. Georges Celis as translated by Norman Clowes. In the light of the upheavals in that area the postal history of the region is particularly timely. We will publish the work over a period of time and in subsequent installments include photo reproductions of covers which will illustrate the various cancellations therein described. *Editor*

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE CANCELLATIONS OF BURUNDI 1962 - 1996

Georges R Celis

Translated (with occasional paraphrasing) by Norman Clowes

Dr Celis' opening remarks acknowledge the help given by employees of the Burundian Post Office and by Mr R.H. Keach of the Belgian Congo Study Circle.

Although modestly classed as 'An Introduction to' the original work (with 34 pages of text and 28 pages of illustrations) is very helpful and detailed. It follows therefore, in practice, that the rendering in English will have to appear in stages in future Bulletins and that illustrations will, regrettably, have to be selectively reduced. At this point, readers may wish to know that the pattern to be followed is:

I INTRODUCTION

- (a) The German colonial period
- (b) The Belgian colonial period prior to the Milner-Orts Convention (15 March 1921)
- (c) The Belgian colonial period after the M - O Convention
- (d) After independence (1 July 1962)

II DATESTAMPS USED IN BURUNDI

- (a) Ruanda-Urundi datestamps in use after 1 July 1962
- (b) Offices opened after 1 July 1962 but supplied with equipment manufactured before independence
- (c) Burundian datestamps, Types BU.1 to BU.11
- (d) Summary of Burundian post offices
- (e) Arrival and transit marks

III BIBLIOGRAPHY

I INTRODUCTION

Somewhat smaller than Belgium, Burundi is a mountainous country, sharing with neighbouring Rwanda an unusual social structure. The population lives scattered over hillsides, forming neither villages nor even hamlets. The country is one immense jigsaw of rural holdings, generally small because of overpopulation. The result is that here a commune (= parish) is just a locality administered from a simple building in an area where there are public facilities.

Until independence, on 1 July 1962, Usumbura (renamed 'Bujumbura') was the capital of Ruanda-Urundi. That date saw the territory divided in two, Rwanda and Burundi, each country again established roughly within its pre-colonial frontiers. So Bujumbura (with about 100,000 inhabitants in 1962 but 500,000 nowadays) inherited an administrative infrastructure, which Rwanda did not.

The post offices are often built in the vicinity of a communal building: on occasion they are set up in a small room there, as it is. In general, counter positions (1 or 2, rarely more) are outside and customers are protected from bad weather by a porch roof. In some places everything is set up outside, counters and post office boxes (there are no postmen), which boxes rarely exceed a hundred in number, except in the main centres.

There is no doubt about the reliability of the Burundian post offices but their management is found wanting as regards cancellations and stamp issues. We should bear in mind that philately is a luxury beyond the reach of most Burundians. In line with the mental attitude of the country the Post Office administration is always a little reticent in giving information, which has not made easy the study of stamps and cancellations.

Clearly the structure of the country, the very slow growth of urban areas and of the educational system have not helped the development of Post Office services.

(a) The German colonial period

At the time of colonization by the Germans Burundi was part of German East Africa, with two post offices:

Usumbura	open from 22 Sept 1902 to 3 July 1916
Urundi	open from 1 July 1913 to 6 July 1916.

Usumbura had been a military post since 1896, located in the north-eastern corner of Lake Tanganyika and administrative seat of the Burundi military district. The Germans moved the seat to Gitega in 1913.

The 'Urundi' office (after the name of the country) was opened on the site of the present town of Gitega, right in the centre of the country, and the postmark is rare.

The two offices suspended operations when General Tombeur's Belgian troops entered Burundi.

(b) The Belgian colonial period prior to the Milner-Orts Convention (15 Mar. 21)

That part of German East Africa occupied by the Belgians was a vast territory south-west of Lake Victoria, having Lakes Kivu and Tanganyika at its western extremity. The Belgians set up their capital at Kigoma, a port on Lake Tanganyika and terminus of the German-built railway from Dar es Salaam. Being of similar size to present-day Uganda and well situated on the shores of the two largest African lakes, Victoria and Tanganyika, the territory would in different circumstances have been a more viable country than Burundi and Rwanda.

However, the British appetite for colonies forced Belgium to hand over the larger part of the lands she had conquered. The so-called Milner-Orts Convention, agreed on 30 May 1919 and finally signed on 15 March 1921, left Belgium with only Ruanda-Urundi. The capital was moved from Kigoma to Usumbura.

The cancellations (civil as well as military, being sometimes of German origin) used from 1916 to 1962 (independence year) are not detailed here.

The first cancellations to appear under Belgian administration were Kitega and Usumbura (Type KH.4 without outer circles, i.e. Type 4 in the Keach Heim detailed cancellations study). They are known from 1918 and 1917 respectively but the post offices were not officially reopened until 1 April 1921, a fortnight after the signature of the Milner-Orts Convention: perhaps it was to formalize the situation.

(c) The Belgian colonial period after the Milner-Orts Convention

After Usumbura and Kitega it was not until 23 October 1950 that a third post office was opened - at Ngozi. The appendix to Official Order 69/418 of 24 August 1959 lists 16 post offices together with rules for their operation: those which were not open before independence (1 July 1962) are in italics in the table below.

PRINCIPAL POST OFFICES	SUB POST OFFICES	AUXILIARY POST OFFICES
USUMBURA	<i>USUMBURA-AEROGARE</i> <i>MURAMVYA</i> <i>MWARO</i>	BUBANZA USUMBURA 2 NGAGARA <i>RUMONGE</i>
KITEGA	BURURI RUTANA RUYIGI	
MUHINGA	KIRUNDO	
NGOZI	<i>KAYANZA</i>	

On 1 July 1962 twelve offices were open, the names of four of which had the wrong spelling. There follows a list of these offices, with opening dates in the second column and corrected names in the third.

DUBANZA	1. 7.57	
BURURI	3. 8.53	(a)
KIRUNDO (R.U.)	27. 3.58	(b)
KITEGA	1918	GITEGA
MUHINGA	11. 4.52	MUYINGA
MURAMVYA	30. 3.55	
NGAGARA	16. 7.58	(c)
NGOZI	23.10.50	
RUTANA	17. 6.54	
RUYIGI	24.11.55	
USUMBURA 1	1917	BUJUMBURA 1
USUMBURA 2	1959 ?	BUJUMBURA 2

Notes:

(a) In the 1960s Bururi had a widely scattered population of under 1000. Before the post office was opened mail from the region sometimes left by boat for Kigoma: in such cases the stamps might have received a paquebot cancellation.

(b) 'R.U.' stands for Ruanda-Urundi in order to distinguish this post office from that at Kirundu in the Congo.

(c) Ngagara, a suburb of Bujumbura, was the first 'African city' built (in the 1950s) from durable materials. In the 1960s the post office was open for one hour each morning and afternoon.

Two further points are worthy of mention:

USUMBURA-AEROPORT-LUCHTHAVEN: this office was opened after independence (1963?) and had two bilingual datestamps (Type 13C Keach Heim)

USUMBURA 4: this cancellation is found on Ruanda-Urundi stamps overprinted 'Royaume du Burundi'. It was used exclusively (where?) for cancelling stamps after they had been withdrawn from sale, with a view to making up packets for sale to collectors. There was never any 'Usumbura 4' post office.

(d) After independence (1 July 1962)

Increasing literacy and improving communications led the Burundian authorities gradually to open new post offices. The post office classification was altered so that whereas, at independence, there was the Belgian structure:

P.P. = principal post office
S.P. = sub post office
A.P. = auxiliary post office,

it has now been reduced to two levels:

P.P. = principal post office
A.P. = postal agency.

Since independence the Post Office administration has emphasized the importance of the Bujumbura 1, Gitega and Ngozi offices, these being the only places which regularly supply new stamps in complete sets.

It may be noted that, since the end of the 1970s, the postal administration has seemed less and less particular in getting mail cancelled.:

postmarks are often illegible;
since about 1975 there have been hardly any postmarks on the back of letters, not even transit marks on registered items;
there is often no date, even on registered sendings;
the ink used varies in colour. Formerly it was black, or sometimes mauve, but now blue, red and green are also found.

(to be continued)

CANCELLATIONS HANDLIST - ADDENDA AND CORRIGENDA

*New cancellers, changed dates, and cancellers now known on cover (indicated by asterisk before dates)
= new canceller*

<u>Belgian Congo</u>			<u>Belgian Congo (cont.)</u>		
Aba	8A4	* 45-60	Luputa	8A2	* 51-6,60
Aba	8A5	* 51-60	Lusambo	1.1-DtMY	12-5
Aketi	8A4	* 46-56	Manono	10(-B)	* 53-9
Avakubi	1.2-MtDY	* 20-22	Matadi	1.4-DtMY	* 17
Banningville	8A1	* 38-50	Matadi	7C1-DmtY	33-4
Banningville	8A2	* 39-40,45-9	# Mikola	1.1-tDMY	* 11
Binga	8A1	56-60	Mutwanga	8A1	* 57-8
Bukavu 1	10(-K)	* 57-9	Mwenga	8A1	* 52-60
Coquilhatville	8A2	* 37-45	Pania-Mutombo	1.1-MDtY	* 11-2
Elisabethville	12B(J)1	* 54-7	Paulis 1	10(C)	* 58-60
Inongo	7A1	* 26-38	Poko	8A1	* 36-40,45-59
Irumu	10(-C.)	* 51-2,59	Popokabaka	1.2-MDTY	* 03,10
Jadotville	12B(B)1	* 55,59-60	Sakania	1.1-tDMY	* 11-3,17-22
# Jadotville 1	MC1-DmYt	* 60	Songololo	7A1	32-3
Kabalo	1.1-tDMY	* 15-22	Stanleyville	7A6	* 32-6
Kibombo	8A2	* 49-60	Yangambi	8A1	* 53-5
Kindu	7A4	* 34-8			
Kinshasa	1.2-TDMY	* 16,20	<u>Ruanda Urundi</u>		
Leopoldville 1	7A1	* 28-32	Kisenyi	11(B)1	* 57-62
# Leopoldville 1	MC1-YDmt	* 60	Kitega	8E1	* 51-7,60
Leopoldville 2	7A1	* 25-30	Usumbura	10(-F.)	* 57-8,62
Leopoldville 8	12B(B)1	* 57-60	Usumbura 2	11(B)1	* 58-61
Leopoldville GG	12F(-B)1	* 55-7	<u>Telegraphic</u>		
Libenge	11(B)1	* 58-60	Boma	T1C.1-DMY	* 00-1,07-9
Lomela	8A5	* 57-8	Irebu	T1C.1-DMY	* 03-4
Luali	1.3a	* 00-1,05-10	Kwamouth	T1B.1-DMY	02,07-11
Luali	1.3b	* 10-5	Yumbi	T1C.1-DMY	08-11
Luebo	8A2	* 38-49,58-60			
Luluabourg 1	12B(H)1	* 53-6			