

BELGIAN CONGO



STUDY CIRCLE

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**BULLETIN 127**

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**CONTENTS**

**Page(s)**

The Editor's Ramblings	Ron Strawser	2
Laurence G. Green	E. M. Lavitt	2
Presidential Thoughts	Hal Hoyte	3
E-mail Address Change		3
New Member		3
Members Questions		3
Advertisements		3
Annual General Meeting		4
Thysville and Albert Thys		4
Recent Auction Highlights	Ron Strawser	4-12
Ponthierville and Pierre Ponthier		12
15 Centimes, Combination III4+B3 of the 1910 printing	Stuart S. Smith	13-14
Prices Realized – Auction 2003 (1)		15
Auction 2003 (2)		Supplemental pages

## **The Editor's Ramblings**

Look, a Bulletin that got out on time! In order to keep future Bulletins on schedule I will need to have more material, so write that article you've been thinking about or send an illustration of a favorite cover. There are a few of you who have sent me items in the past that have not appeared yet in the Bulletin. Your patience is greatly appreciated, and rest assured they will appear in the Bulletin.

In this issue is the obituary of Laurence Green, the last of our founding members. We owe a debt of gratitude to Laurence and the other founding members of the Study Circle. We have all benefited from their work and studies of Congo philately.

I have a question for the members of the Study Circle. How many of you would like to receive your Bulletin electronically if this were possible? It may be possible that I could have the entire Bulletin in Microsoft Word. This could then be e-mailed as an attachment to the members that have the capability to receive it in this manner. We would of course continue to provide the hard copy Bulletin to those who wanted it. This could save costs to the Study Circle and hopefully save the Editor (publisher and general lackey...me in other words), time. What do you think? Write or e-mail me.

### **Laurence G. Green OBE, FCA**

It is with great regret that we report the death of Laurence Green on 10 February 2003. He was the last of our founding members and his passing marks the end of an era lasting over 50 years (the first meeting of the Circle having been held in April of 1951). He was born in London in 1915 and, in due course of time, attended the Sherborn school in Dorset England. Ultimately he went on to become a Chartered Accountant.

When the war broke out, in 1939 he volunteered for service, (although he would have, according to his son, because of his profession, been exempt from military service). He entered as an enlisted man serving in the Royal Artillery in the defense of London in the Blitz. He went on to become a Commissioned Officer in the Royal Marines and served in many areas of conflict. He was mentioned in dispatches (a singular way of the British to honor meritorious service in a particular action) for action in Sicily. Later he was active in Belgium. In February he met the woman who was in March of that year to become his wife. (Parenthetically, his new bride was immediately packed off to England as the Nazis were threatening to take the Belgian city in which they were located. Laurence's mother then greeted her new daughter in law who spoke only French and she spoke only English). Following the end of his military service, where he had achieved the rank of Captain, he entered the employ of Brooke Bonds Tea Company rising to the position of deputy Chairman at the time of his retirement. His work took him all over the world, Africa, India, the United States, Australia and elsewhere which led to a man of global, rather than, parochial thought. His interests were legion. He served for over twenty years as a Governor of the Moorfield Hospital for which he received an OBE (Order of the British Empire) from the Queen. He was a keen fisherman and birdwatcher and, so long as his legs permitted was a 'walker'.

His contributions to the Society were varied and of great value. He was an ardent student and collector of the CONGO BELGE overprints and was extremely knowledgeable in this field. He served as our President in 1981 and 1982. He became our faithful Secretary-Treasurer in 1990 and served for many many years. He assisted Ray Keach in managing auction bids (a most daunting task) and was an erudite contributor to our Bulletin. To mention a few I refer to his 3 part article on Great African Mysteries which appeared in Bulletins 51, 52 and 53 and more recently his study of the Grosse Barbe issues which was of particular interest.

In our time together, at Esher, at Tadworth, traveling together to Belgium, over lunch, at tea, and more recently in our telephone conversations, his philatelic knowledge, his great sense of humor and his positive outlook on our world were manifest. His person and his contributions to the Belgian Congo Study Circle will be greatly missed by your writer and by us all. I have extended the condolences of our members to the family. E. M. Lavitt

### **Presidential Thoughts**

Laurence Green – a personal tribute from President Hal Hoyte

The first Study Circle meeting I attended – if I've got my facts straight – was at Laurence's home at 'Anvers', 29 New Road, Esher in 1957, and certainly not the last.

I shall always remember his outstanding knowledge of Congo philately and his quiet authority which helped to make the Study Circle what it is today. I remember an outstanding display he gave of the 5 franc Mols, a particular favorite of his.

As Packet Secretary, I appreciated his contributions and his moral support for me as President, and I was touched when he was able to come to the AGM last year.

We shall miss him and we will always be grateful for what he has done for us.

### **E-mail Address Change**

Will all members please note the change of Allan MacLaren's e-mail address which now reads: Allanjdmaclaren@blueyonder.co.uk

### **New Member**

The Study Circle would like to welcome its' newest member: Gordon Graham, 39 Ashbourne Road, Hazel Grove, Stockport, Cheshire, SK7 6DX, England.

### **Members' Questions**

Does anyone know of the existence of Belgian Congo postal cards (other than Stibbe #3) with specimen overprint, other than those that were in the Stibbe collection? Having obtained most of the specimens from the Stibbe collection I will show them in exhibits with the notation "Only reported copy" unless I hear of other ones. E-mail me at: strawser5@cox.net or write to me at 4 Amhurst Court, Midland, TX 79705 USA.

### **Advertisements**

I am trying to plate COB #49 and 49PT and would be interested in buying positions that you have available (preferably used). I also need position #17 for COB29. Please e-mail first if possible: xverbeck@earthlink.net Xavier Verbeck, 2 Cedar Lane, Staatsburg, NY 12580 USA

**A.G.M. – Comfort Inn, Route de Lennik, 1070 Brussels,**  
**Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2003, 9.30 for 10am**

Will all members note that the Annual General Meeting of the Study Circle will be held at the Comfort Inn, 790 Route de Lennik, 1070 Brussels. It is a venue we have used previously, very conveniently situated, easy to get to and offers modestly priced accommodation for those wishing to stay overnight.

Whilst the display program hasn't been finalised, I can assure all attendees that it will be well supported by our Belgian members and you can be sure to see some fine exhibits. Anyone wishing to give a display should let Emile Hoorens know so that it can be accommodated in the program, - phone (+32) 02 522 1626,.

The event is expected to follow the usual pattern – coffee from 9.30am, AGM starting at 1000 hrs. and concluding as soon as possible but definitely before lunch - displays during the late morning/afternoon period. There will be the usual tea/coffee breaks and lunch is available. For those staying overnight – Friday and or Saturday, an evening meal at a local restaurant will be arranged. The choice is yours. Wives/partners are most welcome but keep us informed.

Any member considering attending and wishing to book overnight accommodation should contact the hotel direct and as soon as possible. Only a few rooms are left.

Comfort Inn, phone # (+32) 02 523 62 82. Stuart S. Smith

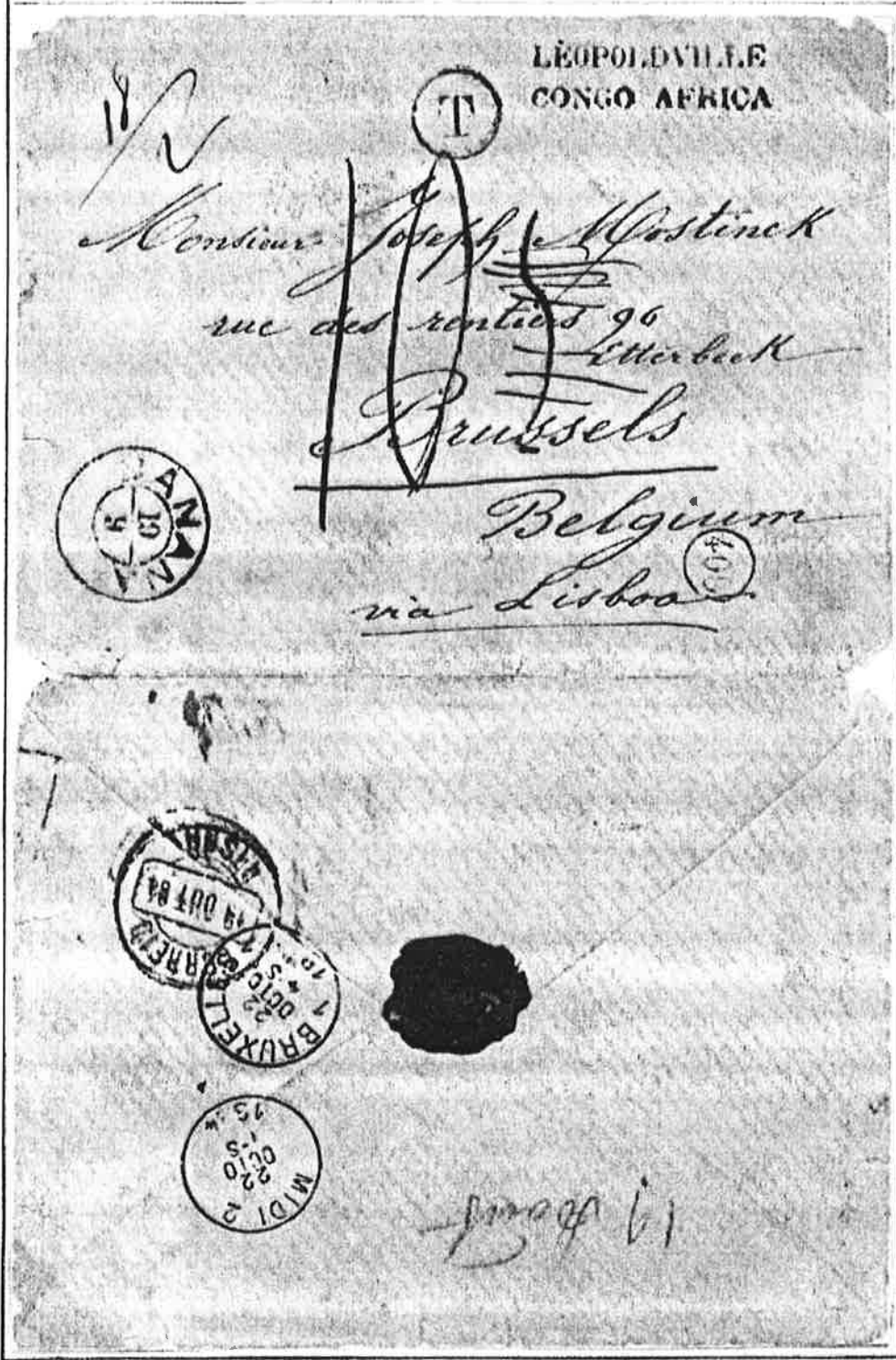
**Thysville and Albert Thys**

This is the fourth in a series of biographies prompted by the question of Roger Nailer in Bulletin 122 who asked who various towns in the Belgian Congo were named after. Thysville was named after Albert Thys (1849-1915). Once again thanks to our member Charles Stockman from whose website (<http://users.skynet.be/chst/>), this information was obtained. Any translation errors are the editor's.

Student at the War School. He was attached in 1876 to the military household of Léopold II with the mission of protecting(?) the secretary of colonial affairs. Within the framework of the Committee of studies of the Upper Congo, he was the assistant of president Strauch. The King sent him to England to propose to Stanley a new expedition in central Africa on behalf of the African International Association. He took an active part in the organization of the majority of the expeditions. In 1887, he embarked for the Congo and became convinced that it was necessary to lay a railway line from Matadi to Léopoldville whose official inauguration took place in 1898. He was an exceptional businessman, whose activity was centered on the development of Congo via the Company of Congo for the Trade and Industry that he founded on December 27, 1886 and of his many subsidiary companies which he suggested creating: the Railroad of Congo, the Company of the general stores, the Belgian Limited company for the trade of High-Congo, the Company of the products, the Company of Katanga. In 1904, the station of Sona Qongo accepted the name of Thysville. (Denoël Thierry, the new dictionary of the Belgians, the Cry 1992)

**Recent Auction Highlights**

In the recent Omphi auction some rarities and cancellations brought some remarkable realizations. Because most of us will never own such items (or just in case some of us do!), it was thought that it would be worthwhile to illustrate some of them.



Lettre non affranchie  
du 19 août 1884

Marque d'origine:

**LÉOPOLDVILLE  
CONGO AFRICA**

(taxée (2 ports) 10 lieues)



marque portugaise

Cachet d'embarq<sup>s</sup>

BANANA  $\frac{19}{9}$

marque portugaise

Au verso

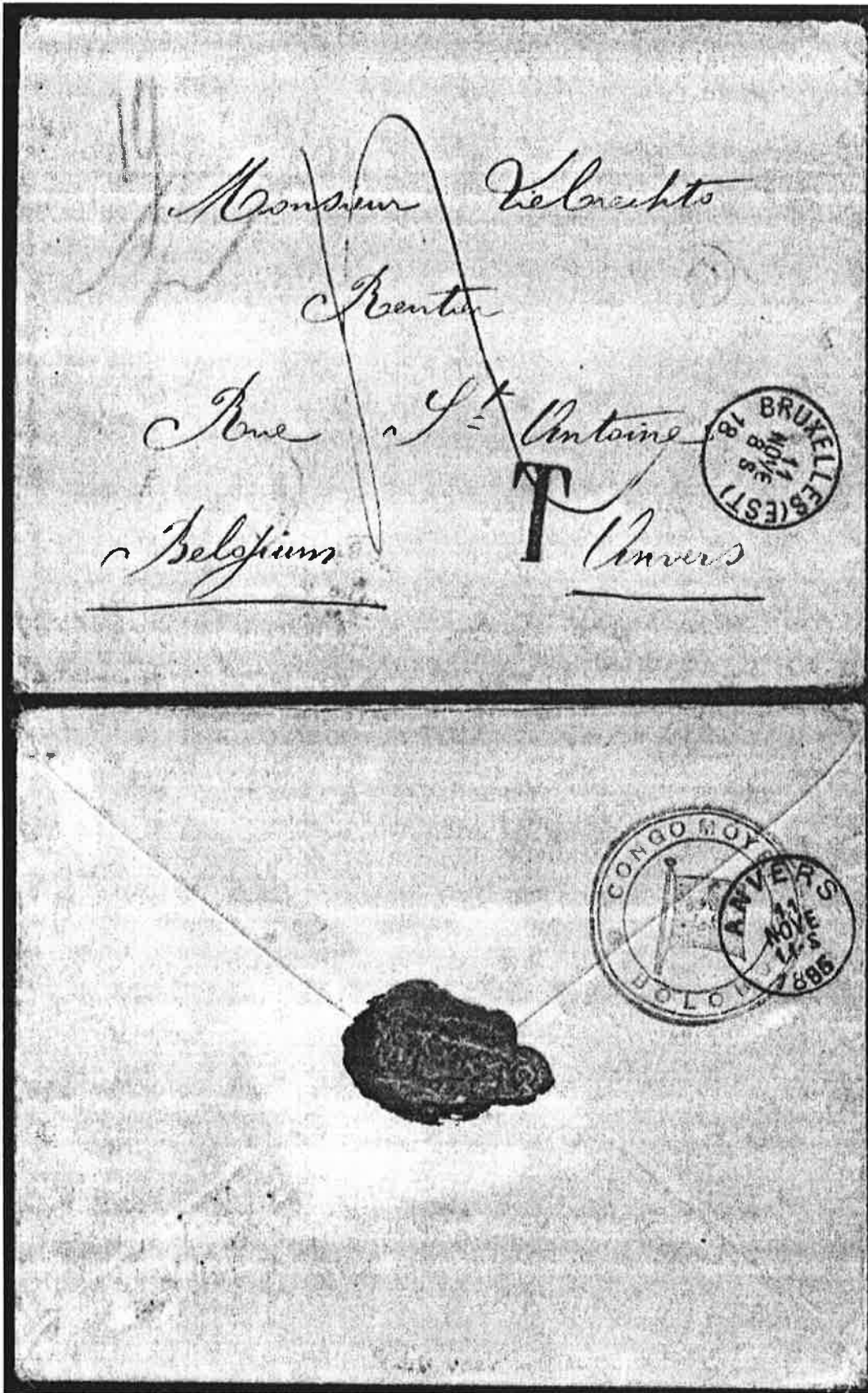
LISBOA 19-10-84

MIDI 22-10-84

BRUXELLES 22-10-84

Lettre transportée  
par paq<sup>s</sup> portugais  
à Lisbonne puis  
par chemin de fer  
à Bruxelles

Stampless letter dated August 19, 1884, with origin mark "LEOPOLDVILLE / CONGO AFRICA", transit cancel "BANANA/19/9" and Portuguese postage due mark to Bruxelles. This cover estimated at 2000 Euros was sold for 30,000 Euros!



1885 stampless double weight letter to Anvers with postage due mark and flag cancel "CONGO MOYEN-BOLOBO". Estimated at 1480 Euros. Sold for 6600 Euros.

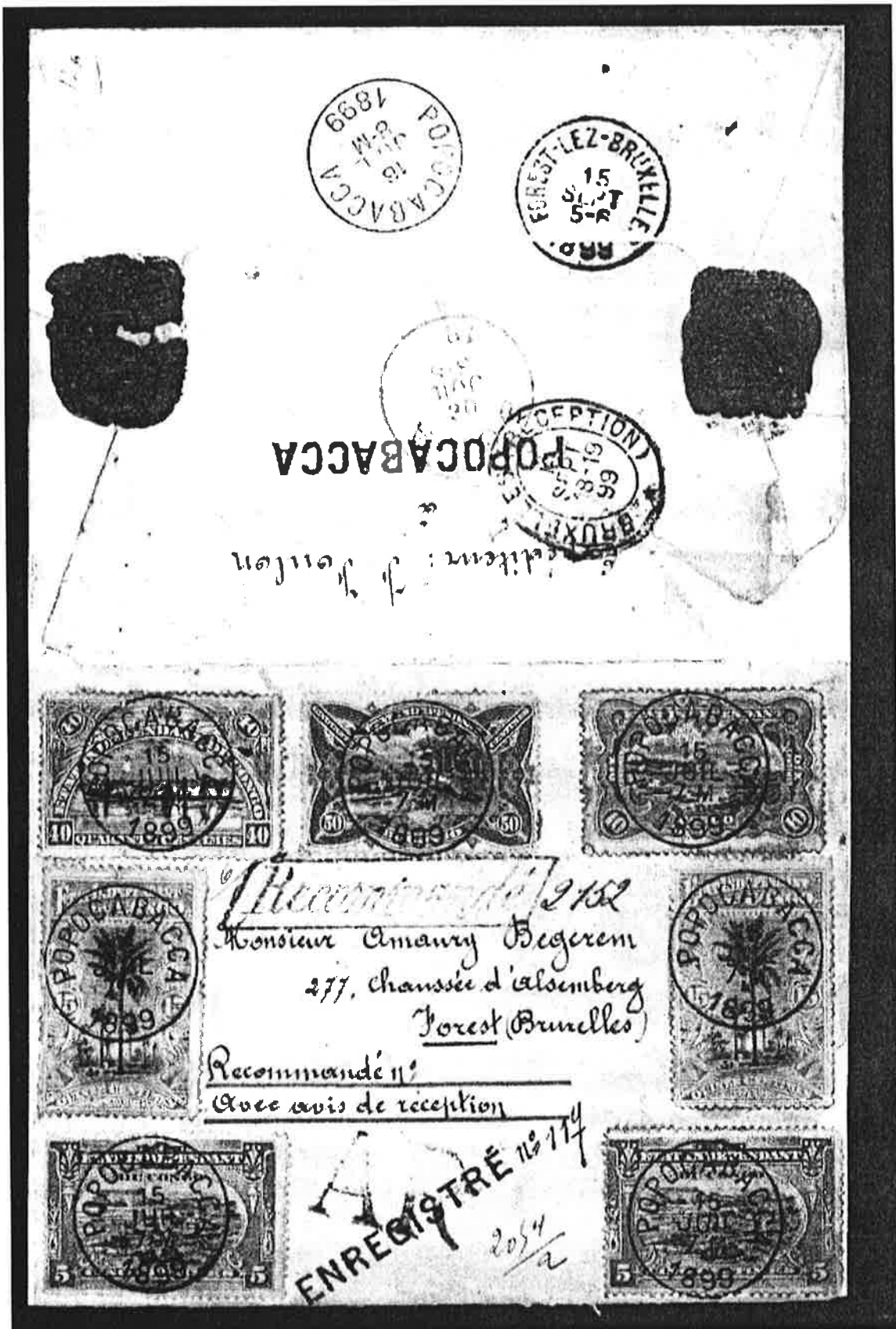


Seven small pieces or stamps with flag cancels including Inférieur/Lukunga (3) and Inférieur /Moukoumbi (2). Estimated at 50 Euros. Sold for 3400 Euros!



On the previous page is CO #19(2) + 20 + 22(2) + 23(2) + 25 + 26 on 1903 registered cover from Basongo to Anvers, with the official seal of the Congo Free State on the back. Estimated at 100 Euros it sold for 780 Euros.

CO # 15(2)+18 + 20(2) + 23 + 24 on registered letter with return receipt requested (AR), from Popocabacca to Bruxelles (Réception) the letter is slightly damaged. Estimated at 200 Euros, it sold for 1550 Euros.





Co #18B°, 10 c. blue perf 14, inverted center, + 15 + 21 + 24 + 26A, on registered cover piece. 40 inverted stamps were acquired by the Kennedy firm in 1897. The firm addressed the cover and put on the stamps and sent it to the Congo to be mailed back. Only piece known. In perfect condition. Signed SPH and G. Mertens Estimated at 30,000 Euros, it sold for 21,000 Euros.



A

ETAT INDEPENDANT DU CONGO

COPIE

PERMIS DE PORT D'ARMES

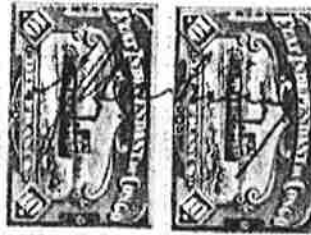
N° 90.

(1) M. Molele

(2) de Eschumbiri (mission)

est autorisé à porter les armes renseignées ci-dessous dans le territoire de l'Etat Indépendant du Congo pendant un terme de cinq années consécutives à dater du présent permis, 1<sup>er</sup> janvier 1954.

NOMBRE (en toutes lettres)	DÉSIGNATION ET DESCRIPTION	LETTRE ET NUMÉROS
1	un fusil à piston en bon état	E 911



Niopol, le 10 Mars 1954

Le fonctionnaire délégué par le Gouverneur Général,

L'Inspecteur d'Etat,

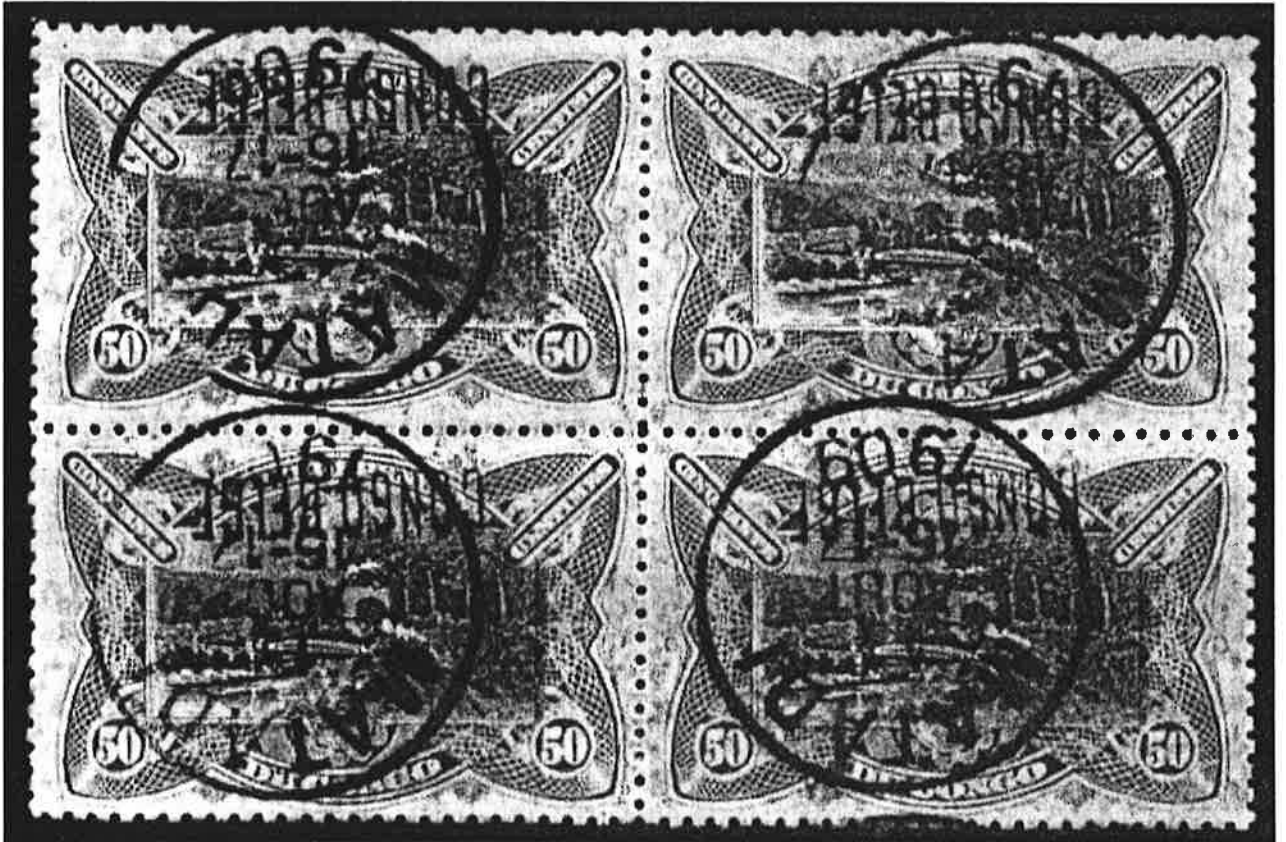
*[Handwritten signature]*



(1) Nom et prénoms. - (2) Qualité.

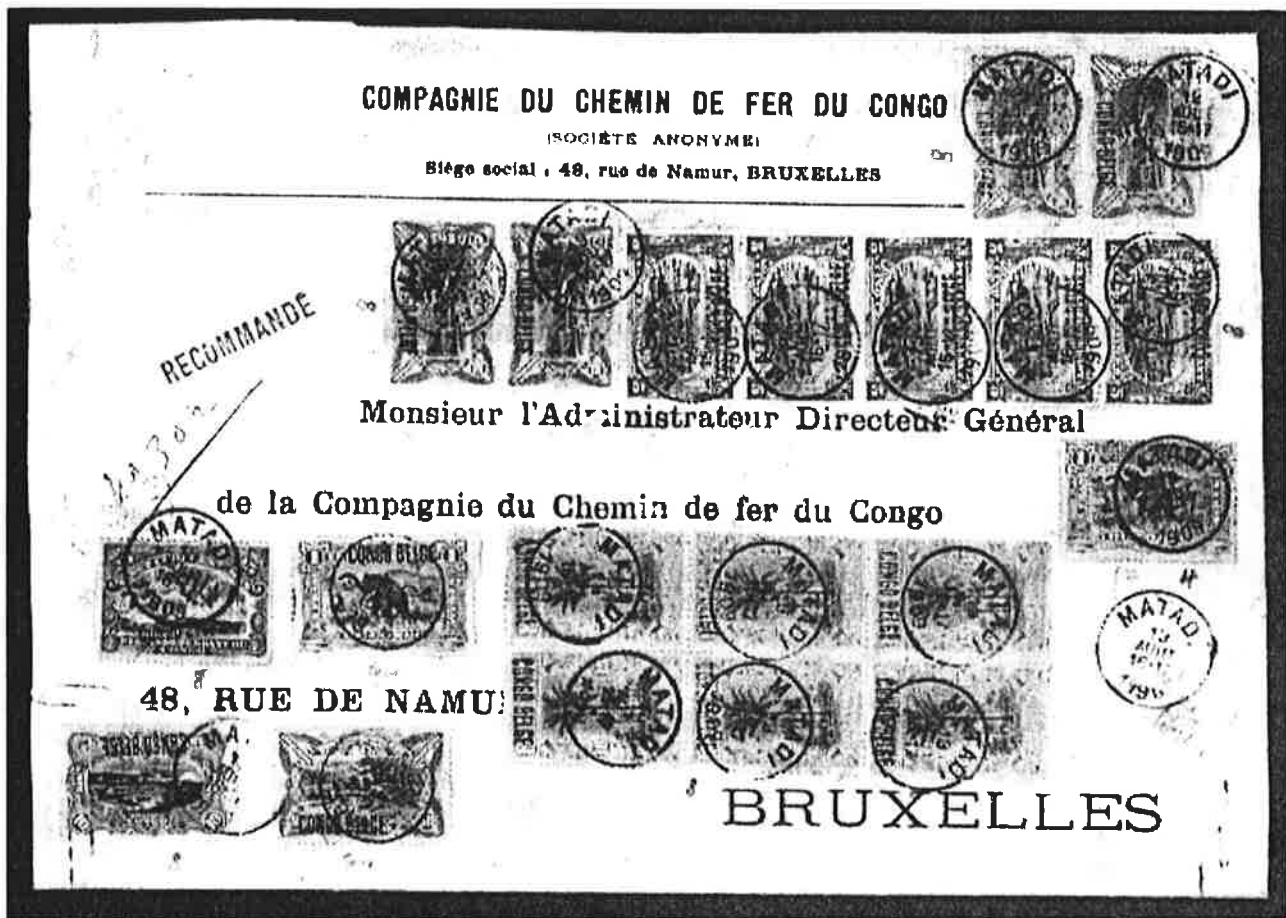
N° 29(2), 10 Fr. perf 14½, vertical pair on gun permit (type A), canceled with signature of official with administrative Stanley-Pool cancel. Estimated at 1200 Euos, it sold for 2000 Euros.

CO #35L8°(4), 50 c. olive block of 4, inverted surcharge L8, signed J. Baete. Estimated at 1200 Euros, sold for 2100 Euros



Stibbe #21L1 with flag cancel "Lubefu" sold for 350 Euros





CO #30L8(5) + 31L8 + 32L8(6) + 33L8 + 35L8(4) + 36L4 + 45 + 46 on a Compagnie du Chemin de Fer registered cover front. All the L8 surcharges are inverted except for #33L8 with the surcharge displaced. Sold for 4800 Euros versus a 5000 Euro estimate.

### Ponthierville and Pierre Ponthier

This is the fifth in a series of biographies prompted by the question of Roger Nailer in Bulletin 122 who asked who various towns in the Belgian Congo were named after. Ponthierville was named after Pierre Ponthier (1858-1893). Once again thanks to our member Charles Stockman from whose website (<http://users.skynet.be/chst/>), this information was obtained. This has been translated from the French by the editor and any errors are likely mine.

Second lieutenant of infantry. He went to Africa in 1887. After being attached to the topographic service, he was assigned to Bangala. In 1888, he directed the station at Basoko. In 1890, selected to command the forward guard of Van Kerckhoven in upper Uele, he took by storm a camp of slave traders located between Bomokandi and Bima, and released more than two hundred and fifty slaves. Wounded in the foot, he had to return to Europe but returned in 1893 to the Congo to the Stanley-Falls area. He took part in the operations carried out by Dhanis against the slave traders. He died of the wounds received at the time of a counter-attack. (Denoël Thierry, the new dictionary of the Belgians, the Cry 1992)

## 15 Centimes, Combination III4+B3 of the 1910 printing

Please note throughout this article all references to plate combinations are those currently attributed.

In Bulletin 96/2, Ray Keach drew our attention to Peter Foden's observation of the additional frame plate 'yellow spot' between nos. 12,13,22,23 – presumably introduced to assist the printing press operators to more easily position the frame plate. As a result it became necessary for us to revise several plate combination allocations, which by way of confirmation now reads:-

1910	III4+B2
	III4+B3
1915	III5+B3
	III5+B4
	III6+B4
	III7+C1

To help those with complete sheets of the 1910 and 1915 issues, Ray included guidance notes on allocating the sheets to their respective combinations. With specific reference to III4+B3 he said –

*“If the specks of the sky to the left of the left palm tree (above the sitting natives) are doubled in a vertical direction, the sheet is III4+B3. As far as I know no complete sheet has yet been identified”*

Brian Hudson in his study on 'Plating Mols Stamps' (Bulletin 87) had previously recorded that -

*“- few stamps have been found with III4+B3, i.e. with the re-entered centres previously associated only with the first printing of the 1915 issue. They have the same shade and frame plate features as III4+B2, but the centres show additional doubling, particularly of the horizontal sky lines.”*

He also added –

*“ So far only two positions of (III3+B3) now III4+B3 - #10 and 45 – have been confirmed; both lack the doubling of the settler which is found on B4.”*

Since those contributions were made, a complete sheet of the 1910 III4+B3 has come to light and for those interested in both plating and positioning 15 centimes stamps, the following will be helpful. It should be specifically noted that as a result of this study, Hudson's last statement is only valid in respect of #45 as the settler in position 10 had already been entered/doubled in creating centre plate B3.

The summaries of my observations refer specifically to center plate B3 from the 1910 issue. Whilst obviously common to the centers of the first 1915 printings, the 1910 combination is much clearer and cleaner and further help is now sought with regard to confirmation and validation of centre plate B4.

In addition to the 'doubling to the horizontal skylines – to the left of the palm tree', referred to by both Keach and Hudson, - the most easily and specifically defined re-entries creating B3 occur in the second (#12,22,32) and last two columns (#9,10,19,20,29,30,39,49 and 50). Additionally there is a doubling of the settler and sitting natives in position #44 and of the thatched roof in #45. The following list summarizes my observations of the most easily confirmed doubling/entries. Others do exist but are not as pronounced.

## Position

- 9 Thatch of roof re-entered and the almost vertical scratch in the bottom right corner has apparently been removed.  
(This latter requires confirmation, and verification would be appreciated.)
- 10 Settler and thatch to roof and walls doubled.  
12 Settler and thatched roof doubled.  
19 Settler and thatched roof doubled.  
20 Settler and thatched roof doubled.  
22 Settler and thatched roof doubled  
29 Thatched roof doubled.  
30 Settler and thatched roof doubled.  
32 Settler and thatched roof doubled  
39 Thatched roof doubled.  
40 Settler and thatched roof doubled  
44 Sitting natives and settler doubled.  
45 Thatched roof doubled.  
49 Settler and thatched roof doubled.  
50 Thatched roof doubled.

With regard to Ray Keach's comment about the '*doubling in a vertical direction to the left of the left palm tree*' I confirm its prominence in the following positions:

6,8,9,10  
16,17,18,19,20  
22,23,25,26,28,29,30  
35,36,37,38,39,40  
44,45,49,50

Of the 1915 issue, I have only one single complete sheet with centre plate 'B' –allocated as III6+B4. With the exception of the re-entered settler in positions 35 and 45, it is now a fact that all my earlier notes confirming the center as B4, simply attribute it as (a worn state of) B3. I would welcome comments from members who have attributed 1915 stamps to B4 with their reason for doing so.

Inevitably others will now make additional observations, spot omissions and I accept this is unlikely to be the final word. But, having now also re-examined several hundreds of stamps from my plate reconstruction of B2/3, B3/4 I would reconfirm both Ray and Brian's observation that the 1910 B3 is definitely uncommon.

Stuart Smith