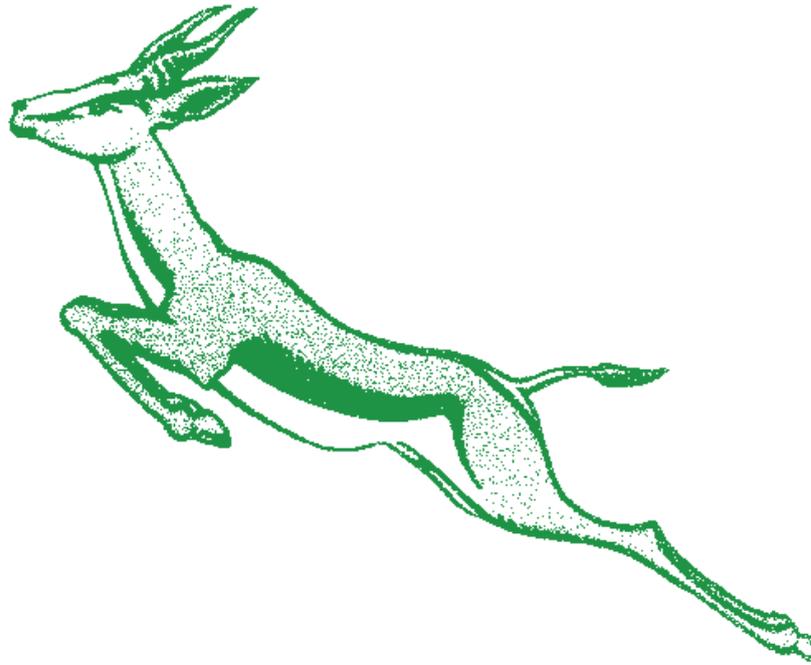


# ***THE SPRINGBOK***



**SOUTH AFRICAN COLLECTORS' SOCIETY  
QUARTERLY**

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# The Springbok

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*The Springbok* is published quarterly for the benefit of Members of the South African Collectors' Society. It is not available to non-members. Contributions in the form of letters, notes, reports of SA related activities, articles, etc., are always welcome and should be sent to the Hon. Editor. All correspondence including a SAE will be acknowledged.

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#### Editorial Panel

E. Bridges  
C. Oliver  
J.L. Shaw

## Events for your Diary 2011

London Meetings commence at 1.30 pm  
Carlisle Meetings commence at 10.00 am

19th Feb.	SACS London meeting	Subject: Commemoratives
26th Mar.	SACS Carlisle meeting	Subject: TBA
16th Apr.	SACS Joint meeting with Cinderella Club at the "Royal" London	
21st May	SACS London meeting	Subject: Large War Effort Issues
28th May	SACS Harnham Salisbury	Subject: (full day meeting)
16th Jul.	SACS Leicester meeting	Subject: Open meeting
17th Sep.	SACS London meeting	Subject: More WWII
24th Sep.	SACS Carlisle meeting	Subject: TBA
25th Sep.	SACS London meeting	Subject: SA in WW II
26th Nov.	SACS London meeting	Subject: London Pictorials

**11-13th Nov. Southern African Societies Convention Falstaff Hotel Leamington Spa**

### Other Events for 2011

23-26th Feb.	Spring Stampex, Business Design Centre, Islington, London.
24-26th Feb.	Spring Philatex, Royal Horticultural Halls, Vincent Sq. London
5-8th May	A.B.P.S. Show at Sheffield
11th June	Swinpex in Swindon
16-19th June	British Philatelic Congress at Portsmouth, Hampshire
2nd July	Midpex, Coventry
14-17th Sep.	Autumn Stampex, Business Design Centre, Islington, London
3-5th Nov.	Autumn Philatex, Royal Horticultural Halls, Vincent Sq. London.

**For further details, please contact the secretary. We have several joint meetings in the year.  
Please support these events.**

### From the Editors Desk

Well, another year has come to an end. I have noticed a distinct decline in articles for *The Springbok* over the past year or so and some appeals for articles have been met with mixed reactions. Part of the problem is also that some of our regular contributors have closed their albums and we have not found replacement contributors. I do not want to make *The Springbok* my personal sounding board for my own research into the Union issues. Time has also been somewhat in short supply these last 18 months or so.

On a positive note we have a first time contributor in Nicholas Lindstrom who is an enthusiastic collector and researcher of the Unions issues. He shows that there is still life in the Union issues and something new always seems to turn up.

2012 also sees our 60<sup>th</sup> year of continuous publication of *The Springbok* as well as the 10th Anniversary of our annual Leamington get together. It feels like only a short time back that Brian Trotter and I decided to arrange these annual conferences after the joint Southern African meeting we had in Chester. I know the current organiser, Simon Peetoom is looking at publishing something for this years conference in Leamington. Do the members feel that we should do something for the 60th year of the Springbok? If you have any proposals or would like to take on some of the work, or contribute an article or two, please let myself or Chris Oliver know.

I wish all our members a peaceful festive season and a fruitful collecting year in 2012.

**Eddie Bridges**

**Please also note my new address and telephone number on the inside Front Cover.**

**Email address remains unchanged.**

## Membership Matters

By Chris Oliver

**We welcome the following new members:**

No new members reported this quarter.

**Please note:** New contact details for your *Editor* as published in the inside front page as well.

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***The full programme will be published in the new year as soon as I have all the details from our secretary.***

# South Africa South West Africa

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For those with other interests, we have separate lists for The Rhodesias including Nyasaland; Basutoland, Bechuanaland & Swaziland, East Africa, Tanganyika, Zanzibar & K.U.T. and Nyasaland Field Force.

## Godfrey Mellor – 1937 -2011

Godfrey was born on the 11th of October 1937 and he passed way on the 24th of August 2011. He has been, in the North West, always involved heavily in philately at regional and local levels. Every year he attended many stamp societies exhibitions traveling all over the U.K. to show one of his great passions: South African collecting. He was a true ambassador not only for South Africa but as well for British philately.

He was a leading light in the Northern group of the S.A.C.S. and was the architect to the success of the A.B.P.S. Chester 2002 Convention; his work in this area was first class and an example to all those undertaking such important voluntary tasks. He was made an honorary life member of our society two years ago, an honour richly deserved.

Godfrey's main interests in Union philately were the commemorative issues and the Christmas and Easter seals. It was with great pleasure that, about five years ago, I was able to "broker" a deal which enabled Godfrey to purchase the late Dr Bill Fincham's Christmas and Easter Seals intact; the first consignment was two boxfiles, sent by post, and this gave him immense pleasure. Then, to his surprise, I delivered the balance, known as the "treasure chest" to him at our Carlisle meeting – he was almost dancing for joy to receive this! It also gave Godfrey the basis for extensive study on these seals – and he soon became the authority on them.

Apart from his Union interests, Godfrey also collected Tristan da Cunha and he realized a lifelong ambition three years ago when he went on a voyage to visit the island, along with many other interested collectors. Sadly, one of the first subscribers to that voyage, Alec Page, had died some six years before so Godfrey could not share his company.

A regular delegate at Leamington, Godfrey was always easy to get along with, and good company. With the old mafia of Bill Branney, Max Whitlock, Roy Ross and the late Franz Heymann, our Northern group was blessed with a fine team, and he will be a great loss to them.

Despite his unassuming air and non-confrontational manner, Godfrey was also well known nationally, as one of those able and willing volunteers who could be relied upon to do a first class job in organizing national and regional philatelic events. His work in this area was recognized in 2003 when he was awarded the A.B.P.S. Award of Merit – a rare but well-deserved honour.

I always regarded Godfrey as a gentleman, a good student of our hobby and totally straight. It was always a pleasure to talk to him and I feel I was privileged to have known him. Our condolences go out to his family, and may he rest in peace.

John Shaw



**Godfrey's Funeral Wreath**

# Report on the Meeting held at the County Hotel, Carlisle on Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> September 2011

By Malcolm Ridsdale

Attendees – 9 Members, Colin Moore, Bill Branney, David Haig, Max Whitlock, Vaughan Stone, Roy Ross, John Ahmad, Jim Grassom and Malcolm Ridsdale

Apologies – Giovanni Palazzo, Albert Moffatt, Eric Hammond, Simon Peetoom and David Briggs

David Haig opened the meeting in the Chair and welcomed everybody to the 39th meeting. In memory of Godfrey Mellor the meeting rose to reflect on the passing of an esteemed member of the SACS.

## Items through the Chair

The 2012 meetings have been provisionally booked to be on the 29<sup>th</sup> March and the 29<sup>th</sup> September at the County Hotel, Carlisle. The topic of the meeting would be none specific with attendees encouraged to bring any aspects of SA stamp collecting that appealed to them.

## Other Officer Report

### Malcolm Ridsdale

Reported that there continued to be a trickle of interest in the library contents. As MR has now retired he is now working through the library contents to update the list and make it available to everyone.

### Max Whitlock

Reported that Eddie Bridges had been able to put The Springbok together but had been unable to print it. MW had sourced a printer in Middlesbrough who would be able to undertake the printing. MW had been waiting for The Springbok to send out the Leamington auction list with it. The meeting agreed that MW should send out the auction list as a priority if The Springbok wasn't going to be available during the next few days.

MW advised that no cover packets were in circulation currently but some more would be going out shortly.

## Around the Table

### John Ahmad

JA reported that he had recently put an article in the Boer War Study Society magazine on POW camps.

### Roy Ross

RR is continuing his study of the missing gold on the "Gold Mine" stamps.

### Jim Glasson

JG had recently seen a number of items relating to station postmarks in EBay which had interested him.

### Vaughan Stone

Concentrating on modern SA material and was having some problems with the SA Philatelic Bureau which he personally hadn't experienced previously.

### Bill Branney

Had been using EBay to dispose of his surplus material.

### Colin Moore

Had brought some FDC's and cards to sell and had some queries within his collection for members to help him with.

### David Haig

DH is in the process of rewriting his Boer War collection which has been expanding rapidly.

He advised that he was to be showing his Goldfields thematic display to the Glasgow Philatelic Society shortly.

## Displays

### David Haig

DH displayed SA aerogrammes from Union issues in the 1950's into the Republic era including shade and subtle size differences used both internationally and internally. The later aerogrammes included colourful illustrations and phosphor band variations and issues from private organisations.

### Colin Moore

CM displayed various definitive issues which included queries which he hoped members would help him with.

## Max Whitlock

MW showed 1920's airmail issues both used and mint and in blocks. He also displayed forgeries of the 1925 air mail issue.

The meeting closed at approximately 2.45pm

---

## Report on the November 2011 Meeting in London

By John Shaw

Our final London meeting for 2011 was again held at the Calthorpe Arms public house in Holborn. Those attending were John Archer, Eric Day, Tony Howgrave-Graham, Tony Johnson, Christopher Oliver, David Osborne, Simon Peetoom and John Shaw, with apologies from, Eddie Bridges, Nicholas Lindstrom, David Page, Richard Barnett and Brian Trotter. There was discussion on the future of the Tony Chilton Trophy and the provision of miniatures and Wicks Award medals, supplies of both of which had run out. It was agreed to continue the Tony Chilton Trophy competition at our regional conference, and that 10 replacement miniature trophies be provided from conference funds. 20 Wicks medals would be provided at £45.00 each plus VAT, to be paid from society funds. Regarding the copier for Max Whitlock, it was agreed he should continue to use the present copier until it got beyond economical repair, then to seek purchase of a high-quality "showroom-used" replacement. Chris Oliver advised that the annual cost to UK members requiring the South African Philatelist would now be R380 per annum (approx £38) and that members would be advised accordingly. London meetings for next year will be on 21st April; 26th May and 15th September 2012 with no November meeting. We agreed on these subjects to include RSA 1st issue; Airmails; Francis Kiddle on Postage Dues; and (in reserve) Revenues.

**Abell Trophy.** With the business side of the meeting finished the Abell Trophy competition (9 pages) was held, and there were three entries:

Christopher Oliver – World War censorship, with exotic and unusual markings

Tony Howgrave-Graham – Kings' head used study, with watermark varieties including 10/- with inverted watermark, 1/3d inverted block of four, 5/- with "UNI" missing from the design and high values used in SWA

Eric Day – Imperial Airways 1931-32 flights, wonderfully presented, with several "Speedbird" covers, Croydon Aerodrome postmarks and 1931 Christmas flights

The outcome was a close-run thing and with David Osborne and John Shaw acting as tellers, the trophy was awarded to Tony Howgrave-Graham and the medal presented by John Shaw.

### Main Display.

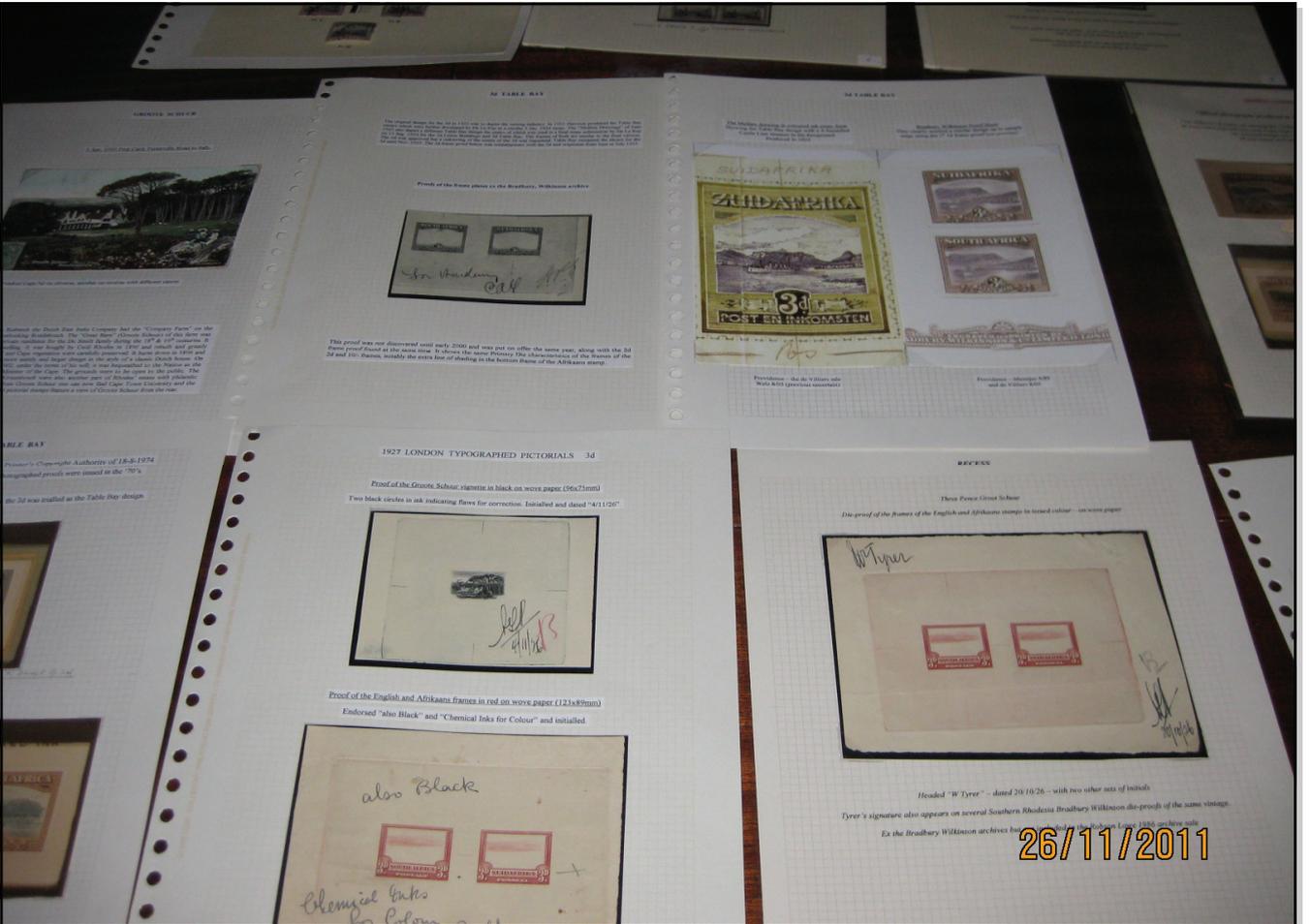
Tony H-G and John Shaw combined forces to show the Bradbury Wilkinson recess-printed first pictorials. Proof/essay material from this issue is difficult to find, but the combined effort provided four die-proof cards, a 4d, two 3d and a 3d with the frame of a 2d stamp and, not least, 15 different specimen perforated colour trials. The issued stamps, apart from the 10/- inverted centre were all there, the inscriptional pieces from all values in all perforation groups, a specimen set in horizontal pairs, the 2d and 4d inverted watermarks (the latter in a glorious top-left corner block) and the 2d "split d" variety in both Group II and Group III perforations. Tony's material also included the BW archive complete set of printings which included some oval perforation varieties. Finally, as well as all the known inter-panneau pieces, mint, there was a lovely commercially used strip of the 3d inter-panneau. Apart from the part sheets from the De Villiers sale, there are no inter-panneau pieces known from the 2/6d, 5/- and 10/- values, which makes allocating pieces to the left or right panes an impossible job.

The last time the BW pictorials were shown in such depth was at our 1973 meeting at the Holborn YWCA, but this display was the more comprehensive and thoroughly enjoyed by all.

Following recent poor attendances, this was a good turn out and most welcome.



Members attending the November Meeting in London. Photos courtesy Chris Oliver.



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# USING ROTARY BLADE DAMAGE TO STUDY UNION STAMPS: FOCUSSING ON THE SCREENED 5/- UHB 52B

By Nicholas Lindstrom

## Summary

Hagger states in the Union Handbook (1986 Edition) that the panes A and B of the second screened 5/- (UHB 52B, SG122a) "gave no indication of which came from the top and which came from the bottom".

This article makes the case that Pane B was printed above Pane A. If this is correct the naming convention of Pane A and Pane B should probably be reversed, i.e. the control block with "Suid-Afrika" at the bottom right should be reclassified as Pane A and the control block with "South Africa" at the bottom right should be reclassified as Pane B.

The primary source of the information relied on for this article are the marks left by the different blades that were used to separate the sheets of this printing.

## Terms used in this article:

*Rotary Blade: this is the term used for the blade that cuts sheets apart in the normal course of the printing operation. For the 52B printing this is the blade that split the initial sheets into sheets of 120 stamps. In this printing the stamps of 120 were separated by a horizontal gutter, with 60 stamps above and 60 below this gutter. The cut by the rotary blade may be referred to as the first cutting operation.*

*Guillotine Blade: the term used for the blade used to cut across the horizontal gutter, splitting Pane A and Pane B into two separate mini sheets of 60 stamps each. This cutting operation came after the rotary blade cut so may be referred to as the second cutting operation.*

*Pane A: refers to the Pane A as listed in Hagger, and is the Pane in which the bottom right corner stamp is printed in English*

*Pane B: refers to the Pane B as listed in Hagger is the Pane in which the bottom right corner stamp is printed in Afrikaans*

## The case suggesting PANE B was printed above PANE A

### 1. The different blade types left different marks on the paper edge

#### **Margins below bottom right corner stamp of Pane A damaged by a blade.**

One of the blades used in the two cutting operations left clear "damage" on the bottom paper margins of Pane A on at least the majority of the printings of the 52B value. This damage shows up as a chewed edge to the paper and clear examples are found in the bottom margins below the stamps in column six. That this damage was caused by the blade separating the sheets is evidenced by the damage that also occurs on the paper margins above stamps in column six of Pane B. Examples of the damage to sheet margins at the bottom of Pane A are shown in *Exhibit 1* and *Exhibit 2*. *Exhibit 2* shows a detailed view of the quality of the bottom margin edge below the stamp in column six.

#### **Margins below bottom right corner stamp of Pane B do not show this damage. The margin edge is sharp and clean.**

One of the blades used in the cutting operations delivered a much cleaner cut at least to the majority of printings of the 52B value. This can be seen by the absence of damage to the paper margin below the stamps in column six in Pane B (and similarly to the paper margin above the stamps in column six in Pane A). Examples of the sharp margin edges are seen in *Exhibit 3* and *Exhibit 4*. *Exhibit 4* shows a detailed view of the quality of the bottom margin edge below the stamp in column six.



**Exhibit 1: Pane A rotary damage in margin under stamps in column 6**



**Exhibit 2: Pane A detail scan of margin below stamp in column 6**

So we typically see the following pattern of damage to the top and bottom of the sheet margins in column six:

**PANE A**

Top margin: clear of damage  
 Bottom margin: damaged

**PANE B**

Top margin: damaged  
 Bottom Margin: clear of damage

Once it is determined which blade caused this damage, the question of whether Pane A was printed above or below Pane B can be determined. The question remains: which blade caused this damage? The rotary blade or the guillotine blade? Below it is suggested that this was the rotary blade used in the first cutting operation.



**Exhibit 3: Pane B no rotary damage in margin under stamps in column 6**

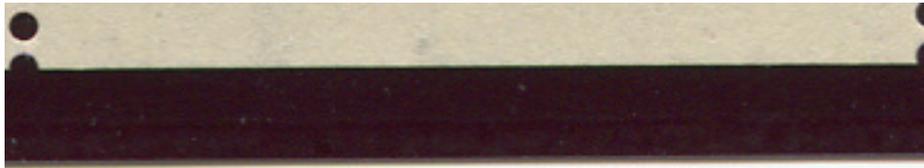


Exhibit 4: Pane B detail scan of margin below stamp in column 6

## 2. The rotary blade caused the damage

There are several arguments to support this case.

### (i) The damage seen in the top and bottom paper margins are typical of the type of damage caused by the rotary blade.

My understanding of the rotary cut is that there are two blades, the bed knife and the rotary knife. The quality of contact between the blades varies at different points and this may lead to a tearing action. In addition, the contact of the blades on each cut causes wear, loss of sharpness, and nicks.

Further when studying the edges of margins cut by the rotary blade it is seen that the top and bottom margins of sheets are regularly damaged (sometimes with marked impact). This is a theme picked up in (iii) below. And perhaps this is the most important take-away from this article. The condition of the bottom and top sheet margins may help identify different print runs within an issue by the distinctive marks left on the top and bottom margin edges. Further, they may help identify the order in which stamps were printed as the rotary damage varies during printing (see different states of damage in *Exhibit 1*).

### (ii) The damage seen is atypical of a guillotine blade.

The definition of a paper guillotine on wiki states: "The combination of a blade mounted to a steady base produces clean and straight cuts". My understanding is that it was relatively straight-forward maintaining the blades of these instruments in good order. A reason for this is that, unlike the rotary blade, the guillotine blade does not cut against another knife, but instead against a softish bed under the paper. However, I have no specific information on the guillotines used by the SA printers (any information welcome).

Unlike the typical damage caused by the rotary blade, I have not noticed similar damage caused by any guillotine operations carried out by the SA printers.

### (iii) The damage seen is nearly identical in type and position to another printing made at a similar date. And for this printing only the rotary blade was used.

Hagger lists the issue date for 52B as January 1954, the same as for the screened 2s6d UHB 51 issue 4 (one of the issues from SG 121). And the same damage that appears on the bottom margin of Pane A under the stamps in column 6 appears on the bottom margin under the stamps in column six of the 2s6d printing. Copies of this are shown in *Exhibit 5*. This would suggest that the rotary blade that caused the damage to the margins of 52B also caused the same damage when cutting UHB 51 issue 4 into sheets. So presumably the rotary blade was neither replaced nor repaired between these two printings. The guillotine blade was not used to separate the sheets of UHB 51 issue 4.

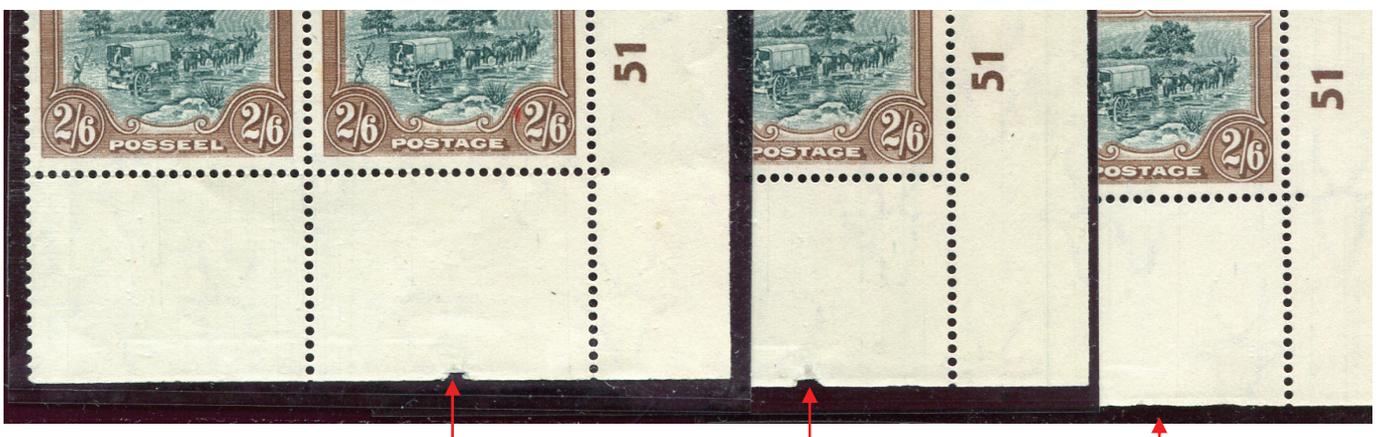


Exhibit 5: 51 Issue 4 Rotary damage in margin below stamps in column 6.

## CONCLUSION THAT PANE B WAS PRINTED ABOVE PANE A

It is suggested that the sheets that emerged from the printing process (after the first cutting operation with the rotary blade, but before the second cutting operation with the guillotine) were as follows:

### PANE B

Top margin: damaged by rotary blade

Bottom margin: clear of damage as guillotine used

### PANE A

Top margin: clear of damage as guillotine used

Bottom Margin: damaged by rotary blade

The focus of this article has been on the impact the rotary blade made on the margins of union printings. The aim of the article is not so much as to show whether Pane A was printed above Pane B or vice-versa, but instead to highlight how the damage caused by the rotary blade to top and bottom sheet margins is a useful piece of information that may be used in the study of union stamps.

## APPENDICES

OTHER EVIDENCE THAT PANE B WAS PRINTED ABOVE PANE A

***The distinctive impact of the guillotine may also be seen on the bottom margin of Pane A and top margin of Pane B.***

Using the rotary blade the bottom and top sheet margin is usually a fairly constant distance from the printed area across the entire sheet. However, at least a couple of pieces from 52B suggest that the guillotine was not always so precise. These pieces suggest that the guillotine may have occasionally cut at a slight angle which means some pieces show a greater/lesser distance between the lower sheet margin and the printed area across the bottom of the sheet. **Exhibit 6** shows one such piece. Again these pieces are from the bottom of Pane B which may support the conclusion that Pane B was printed above Pane A.

An additional observation: I have seen two examples of 52B with this greater/lesser distance between the lower sheet margin and the printed area across the bottom of the sheet. And both of these have the unusual characteristic of having c.21mm between: i) the right edge of the stamp printing in column six, and; ii) the right edge of the paper margin. This distance for the majority of stamps from 52B is c.19mm.



**Exhibit 6: Bottom margin at angle to bottom of printing**

## General Notes

Care should be taken when looking at individual pieces as these may have been “trimmed” by dealers/collectors. Some dealers/collectors may believe a corner piece appears “damaged” if it shows more advanced damage from a rotary blade. Certainly when I first saw some of the more distinct rotary damage I thought these pieces were damaged and therefore less collectable. It is a trivial matter to remove the signs of damage by trimming margins.

### On 52B:

There was likely more than one print run of 52B. This is perhaps the topic for another article, but suffice to say for now that the blade damage discussed above would not apply to printings before the rotary blade damage developed (and from *Exhibit 1* it can be observed that the damage varies during printing) and for later print runs made after the rotary blade was replaced/sharpened.

Question: I do not have a copy of a Pane A bottom right corner control block of the printing with V2 (black smudges and with a distinctive lighter centre which is now grey instead of black). Does this printing contain the distinctive damage in Pane A in the bottom margin of column six?

### On 51 ISSUE 4:

There are bottom right corner examples without the typical rotary damage in the margin under column six. And the copies I have seen without the rotary damage have a number of distinct differences to the copies with rotary damage, including: a darker (less green) centre for those without rotary damage, and different margin measurements. See *Exhibit 7* for a comparison although shade and tone differences are often difficult to discern in colour reproductions. These differences may suggest that there were at least two print runs of 51 issue 4.



Exhibit 7: Two different printings for 51 Issue 4

### Credits

Many thanks in particular to Bob Hisey for his patient answers to my questions over the years. Bob has always been generous sharing his expertise. Also thanks to the knowledge and enthusiasm of: Eddie Bridges, Tony Howgrave-Graham, and Sebastian Payne. All errors in this article are my own.

## Articles for the Springbok

Your Editor is pleased to announce that members have responded to my appeals for articles. Some have reminded me of items sent earlier in the year which had not appeared yet. Thanks for this. I have managed to trace these and they appear with this issue. Please continue to send articles as it is nice to have a bit of a buffer and the choice to balance out the content. Next year the basket is empty and I look forward to your further support with articles. Rest assured I will publish everything I get!

## Is it a First Day Cover?

By Mike Tonking



The large War Effort registered cover is, for me, a philatelic curiosity. It shows the eight values each postmarked on their respective dates of issue i.e. 1/2d-1.12.41, 1d-1.11.41, 11/2d-21.1.42, 2d., 3d., 4d. 6d-1.10.41 and 1/- 17.11.41. How did this possibly come about ?

There are, as far as I can see, two possibilities:

1. Maybe the sender had the stamps postmarked each time they were issued and finally on 21.1.41 when the 1/2d was issued posted it or...
2. Arranged with the Post Office official to alter the date stamp to the correct date of issue for each value and finally cancel the 11/2d value and post it.

If the latter occurred it could really only be the first day cover for the 11/2d value.

Maybe one of our members could comment.

# Comet Flaw Query

By Mike Tonking

## Voortrekker Memorial Fund 1933 and 1936

The SAHB records that the @Comet Flaw@ (SAHD 56 V1) on row 2/7 of the 1d value appears on the first issue printed by exterior cylinder 6922 with the watermark facing **left**. I have found the same flaw on a used stamp with the watermark facing **right**. The question is, was this issue at some stage printed on paper with the watermark facing right? Perhaps one of our members could comment?



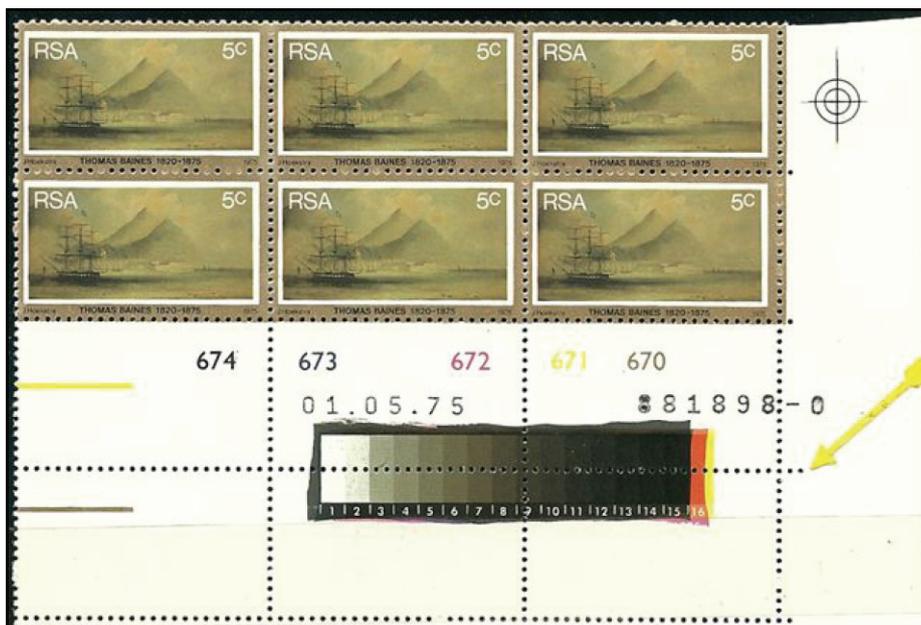
## A Correction

By Mike Tonking

Mike Tonking corrects an old error on the Baines Issue (SACC 384-7) which was repeated in the SA Stamp Study Circle Newsletter of November 2010.

This was carried over for years ever since the late Dr. H.T. Raubenheimer described them in (SAP June 1975)

It is stated that the stamps were perforated by the Grover two row appliance when in fact they were perforated by the Giori inbuilt rotary perforator. The give away is the additional extra perforation hole in the left and right sheet margins, see attached example. The additional hole was used as a marker to locate missing or damaged pins.



# The “Horseshoe Route” Part I

By Nick Arrow

The object of this series of articles is to show how the development of the Imperial Airways service developed in the 1930's unwittingly achieved a means whereby communication with the furthest parts of the British Empire was maintained during the early period of the Second World War, and restored, following a break which had become inevitable after December 1941, when Japan entered the conflict.

Britain distrusted airships as a means of aerial communication. The story behind this simple fact is quite fascinating, but also wholly irrelevant to any aspect of South African philately. However successful the German Zeppelin service may have been (and it was very successful) the British wished to rely on heavier than air machines. Subject to the inevitable restrictions posed by this mindset, the development of aerial services after the First World War in England (as it was in Europe, America and most of the rest of the world) was highly successful - in South Africa, it was almost non-existent. Suffice to say that on the 30<sup>th</sup> March 1929, Imperial Airways inaugurated an aerial service which linked London via Cairo with Karachi, Pakistan,<sup>1</sup> whereas it was not until the 26<sup>th</sup> August 1929 that the first South African air service was created, linking Cape Town with Durban and Johannesburg, and then only once a week.

South Africa however was not ignored by Imperial Airways, and by 1929, Sir Alan Cobham had conducted two trial flights on their behalf to Cape Town and back, in effect surveying the possible route to link England with the Union. In February 1931, the first part of a scheduled air service was inaugurated, flying to Mwanza on the shores of Lake Kenya in what was then Tanganyika. The “Dark Continent” was finally opened up in January 1932 when the first scheduled flight between London and Cape Town was made, leaving Croydon on the 20<sup>th</sup> January and Cape Town on the 27<sup>th</sup>.

There had been a flight in December 1931 from Croydon to Cape Town, known as the “Christmas Flight”, which was to test the arrangements in hand and to ensure that the necessary aeroplanes were in position when the full service was active. Large quantities of mail were carried, both on the Christmas Flight and the inaugural flights of the scheduled service. [The first scheduled flights in each direction were not achieved without difficulty, as a result of quite appalling weather in Northern Rhodesia, but, again, a detailed description of this is outside the scope of this article.]

The service between Cape Town and Croydon did not of course exist in a vacuum. The route lay through Cairo, as did the service to India, so at a stroke South Africa was linked to Delhi, by a single service, that of Imperial Airways. It was also possible for mail to go via Cairo to the Dutch East Indies (through KLM), or to French Indo China (through French Air Orient), although such mail is scarce.

There were already a number of air services which could tap into the Imperial Airways service. Mail from Malta and Rome went through Brindisi, from Austria via Alexandria, from Zanzibar through Nairobi, from Nyasaland through Salisbury and from South West Africa through Kimberley.

This was the basic Imperial Airways service, and the purpose of this series of articles is to demonstrate how the “trunk” of this basic service grew in length, as well as growing numerous “branches” (known as feeder services), thus enabling South Africa to be linked, by various airmail services, to much of the rest of Africa and ultimately to Australia.

On the 26<sup>th</sup> August 1932, the Aero Club du Katanga inaugurated a weekly feeder service from Elisabethville in Belgian Congo to Broken Hill. Mail from South Africa is not recorded, and only about 25 letters were addressed to Southern Rhodesia and South Africa.

Tata Airlines inaugurated a feeder service from Karachi to Madras (via Ahmedabad, Bombay and Bellary) in October.

---

<sup>1</sup> Extended in December 1929 to Delhi



*A cover to Delhi, flown on the inaugural service out of Cape Town. Stamp #5 has the variety "short 'i' in 'Airpost'". It was signed by the pilot, Capt R H 'Caspar' Caspareuthus.*

Mail from South Africa, which is recorded but is extremely rare, left on the Imperial Airways service out of Cape Town on the 28<sup>th</sup> September. Mail to South Africa (by no means scarce) left Madras on the 17<sup>th</sup> October. The route of this service was slightly adjusted in May 1933, Poona being substituted for Bombay.

The service was extended eastwards three times in 1933.

The first extension was from Delhi to Calcutta. Mail from South Africa left on the Imperial Airways service of the 22<sup>nd</sup> June, reaching Calcutta on the 8<sup>th</sup> July. The return service left Calcutta on the 8<sup>th</sup> July. The route from Delhi lay via Cawnpore, Allahabad and Asansol, although the return flight did not stop at Asansol - mail from Asansol was taken to Calcutta by train and is scarce addressed to South Africa.

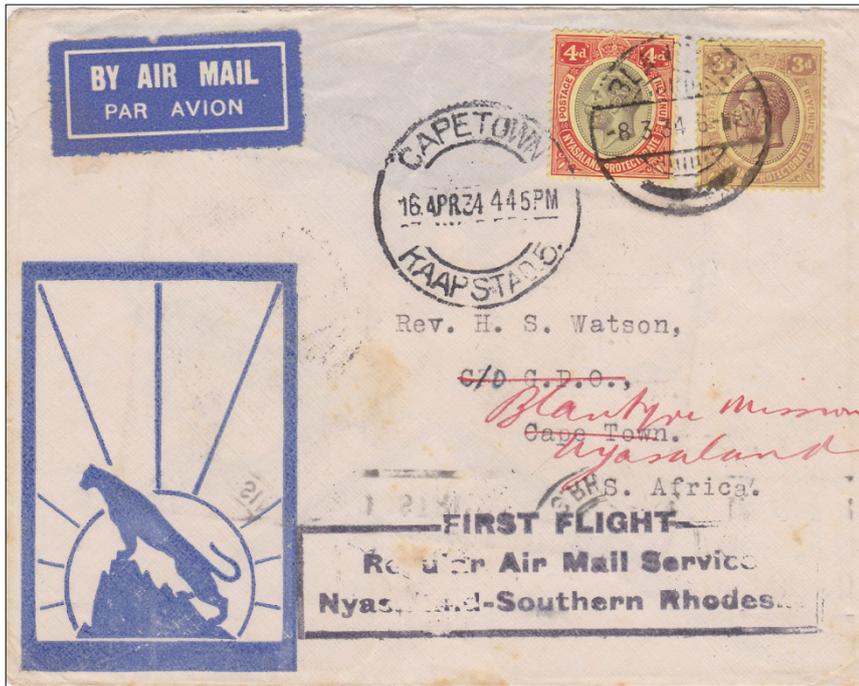
The second extension was via Akyab to Rangoon, and mail from South Africa (scarce) left on the 13<sup>th</sup> September, reaching Rangoon on the 2<sup>nd</sup> October, the same day as the return flight was started.

The third extension was to Singapore via Alor Star. Mail from South Africa is more plentiful, and left on the 6<sup>th</sup> December, arriving in Singapore on the 17<sup>th</sup>. The return mail left on the 31<sup>st</sup> December and reached South Africa on the 13<sup>th</sup> January 1934.

In 1934, more locally, Rhodesian and Nyasaland Airways (RANA) inaugurated a service from Blantyre to Salisbury, and mail to and from South Africa is quite common. That from Blantyre was carried to Salisbury on the 8<sup>th</sup> March, and the mail from South Africa left Cape Town on the 7<sup>th</sup> March. [This new service had to be suspended, when a French Company claimed to have an option of running services over Mozambique air space, between the 3<sup>rd</sup> April and 17<sup>th</sup> May, by which time the matter had been resolved.]

There was another feeder service inaugurated, between Broken Hill and Madagascar. The route was from Tananarive via Majunga, Mozambique, Quelimane and Tete to Broken Hill and the first flight was on the 29<sup>th</sup> July, the return being made on the 31<sup>st</sup> July. Mail from South Africa to all the destinations is known, although not common, but to South Africa is very scarce, with a single item of registered mail being known together with, presumably, a few items which were not registered. However, as the formalities for the carriage of mail from Portuguese East Africa had not been concluded, no mail at all from Mozambique, Quelimane or Tete was carried until the 13<sup>th</sup> August (3 items from Tete), or the 20<sup>th</sup> August (7 items from Quelimane as well as a single item from Mozambique). The destination of these various items is not known and it seems highly unlikely that any of it was addressed to South Africa.

Another feeder service in India was inaugurated on the 4<sup>th</sup> December, from Lahore via Multan and Sukkur to Karachi. An estimated 8 letters were sent from South Africa on the service which left on the 26<sup>th</sup> November. The return mail left Lahore on the 4<sup>th</sup> December, reaching Cape Town on the 14<sup>th</sup> December.



*This was flown on the inaugural flight to Salisbury, then by Imperial Airways to Cape Town. It was returned to sender (see transit mark which is, unusually, to the left of the stamps on the front, but taken by surface mail to Blantyre, owing to the dispute over air space not having been then resolved.*

The final link of the chain to Australia was achieved in December. The mail left Cape Town on the 4<sup>th</sup> December and reached Brisbane on the 21<sup>st</sup>. The return flight started on the 10<sup>th</sup> December, the date being advanced by two days to enable the Duke of Gloucester, who was in Australia at the time, to perform the inaugural ceremony. As a consequence, some mail from New Zealand, intended for the inaugural flight, arrived too late and was carried on the second flight. Mail to Australia from South Africa cost 1/8, and in the reverse direction 2/9, although mail exists to South Africa franked with stamps to the value of 1/7, which was carried as far as Cairo only, going the rest of the way by surface mail, although a few items were taxed and flown the rest of the way.



*A cover to New Zealand - the rate was the same as for Australia. These special covers were of poor quality - the tatty top edge is not untypical!*



Carried on the return service, this item was signed by one of the Imperial Airways pilots. It is inadequately franked - the rate was 2/9, plus 4d for Registration, making a total of 3/1d!

Jumping ahead to 1937, the end terminals were changed when the service became "all-up", ie being taken the whole way from England to South Africa using Short 'C'-class flying boats. The terminus in South Africa was Durban and, in England, Hythe (Southampton).

This was the backbone of the Horseshoe Route which was flown between Durban in South Africa, via Cairo through Iraq etc to Karachi, Calcutta, Rangoon and finally to Sydney.

To be continued.....

## LOOKING FOR THE UNUSUAL (OR THE USUAL)



1892-4 Cape of Good Hope ½d slate/white Postal Stationery Envelope with addit. 1d KEVII red tied by manuscript WALVIS BAY 5/7/09 in black pen, to Swakopmund, with very neat arrival postmark 12.7.09.

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# SOUTHERN CROSS FUND COVERS

By Chris Oliver

Elizabeth Albrecht, a journalist, established the Southern Cross Fund in 1968 and became its chairman. The aims of the Fund was to provide facilities and support for the South African armed services who were fighting on the borders of the Republic. This was particularly, from 1975, in the border between the mandated Trust Territory of South-West Africa, now Namibia, and neighbouring Angola. In that year the Portuguese agreed to give Angola its independence after thirteen years of civil strife. Before the year-end a civil war had erupted and the South African government were concerned to ensure that unrest did not extend over the border. They also wished to protect the South African workers on a joint South African / Angolan dam project. The South African Defence Forces employed several battalions in this border area from 1976 until 1988 when Namibia gained home rule. In 1990 Namibia was fully independent and assumed responsibility for border security. Angola too was becoming slightly more stable with unified government achieved in 2002.

The protection of the borders was, in 1968, taken for granted by most South Africans who, with a prosperous economy, could visit and be visited by foreign nationals., Rudolf Albrecht, amongst others, did not share his wife's concern that a war on the borders would affect them.

Mrs Albrecht, a confirmed traveller, was appalled at the treatment, by the American government, of the U.S. troops in Viet-Nam and determined that South African servicemen and women should be treated in a better manner. She approached Mr. Sybrand van Niekerk, Administrator of Transvaal to help with this ideal. He was immediately enthusiastic and suggested the name Southern Cross Fund for the project. The Fund, based in Johannesburg, provided stationery, shoelaces, pocket knives and many other semi-luxuries to the troops. Even they were not aware of the source of these gifts. Later, when awareness grew, the parcels were nicknamed "Thanks, Auntie packets". Mrs Albrecht and her team visited the front at Mozambique and Angola on a number of occasions. She always made sure that she was beautifully dressed on these trips as she felt that the men would appreciate it. In 1989 she was voted out of her position as President of the Fund and retired to a less stressful life. The residue of the stationery provided by the Fund is seen in the pre-printed Fund covers. Twelve basic types of these have been observed but there may be more.

All covers seen [58] were used during the Angola border campaign [1977 –1985] and are 113mm. high x 159 & approximately 162mm. wide.

The main Field Post Office for all mail to and from the military operations near the Angola border was at Grootfontein. Sub-post offices to Grootfontein were established closer to the troops, in Oshakati, Rundu and Katima Mulelo, as the war developed.

The twelve types of cover can be distinguished as follows and are shown:

Type 1 – [2] Used from Grootfontein in March and May 1977

Type 2 – [1] Used in Rundu in November 1977. Green inscription 84mm. Long.

Type 3 –[11] Used from Grootfontein, Katima Mulelo, and Oshakati between July 1977 and February 1979. Green inscription 77mm. long.

Type 4 – [1] Used from Grootfontein in December 1977.

Type 5 – [1] Used from Grootfontein in February 1979. Dull green inscription 71mm long having the number W.O. 2987 above the map.

Type 6 – [11] Used in all sectors between February and November 1979. Green inscription 72mm. long with W.O. 2987 above map and 630 – JOHANNESBURG 2000 below.

Type 7 – [9] Used in all sectors between December 1979 and January 1981. As type 6 but inscription now 67mm. long in blue-black.

Type 8 – [1] Used in Grootfontein in January 1981. As type 7 but blue-black inscription now 70mm. long with "our S.A. Armed forces" substituted for "our Men at the Borders" in the text.

Type 9 – [2] Used in Oshakati in November 1981 As type 7 but with 71mm. long inscription.

Types 10 and 11 – [6 each] Used in Grootfontein and Oshakati between February 1982 and December 1985. Blue-black inscription with "our S.A. Armed forces" substituted for "our Men at the Borders" in the text. Type 10 is 67mm. long & 11 is 68.5mm. long. The number W.O. 2987 is omitted.

Type 12 – [7] Used in Oshakati between September 1982 and November 1983. As type 10 but including W.O. 2987 above the map.

Mej. D. Jacobs.  
 Meer Water.  
 P.O.K.  
 Potchefstroom  
 2520.

2 MIL GEBIED  
 14-3-1977  
 2 MIL AREA



**Die Suiderkruis-Fonds**  
**The Southern Cross Fund**  
 Posbus/P.O. Box 8418, Johannesburg.



The Southern Cross Fund  
 thanks  
 Our Men at the Borders



Die Suiderkruisfonds  
 bedank  
 Ons Manne aan die Grense



The Southern Cross Fund  
 thanks  
 Our Men at the Borders



Die Suiderkruisfonds  
 bedank  
 Ons Manne aan die Grense



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 bedank  
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 thanks  
 Our Men at the Borders



Die Suiderkruisfonds  
 bedank  
 Ons Manne aan die Grense

✉ 6390 - JOHANNESBURG 2000

M.A KOYD  
P.O Box 895  
PORT ELIZABETH  
6000

D PARTEMENT VAN VERDEDIGING  
VELDPUSDIENS (2.23)  
GEBRUIK DIE KORREKTE POSADRES  
27 - 5 - 1980  
USE THE CORRECT POSTAL ADDRESS  
FIELD POSTAL SERVICE  
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENCE

The Southern Cross Fund  
thanks  
Our Men at the Borders

W.O. 2987

Die Suiderkruisfonds  
bedank  
Ons Manne aan die Grense

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The Southern Cross Fund  
thanks  
our S.A. Armed Forces

W.O. 2987

Die Suiderkruisfonds  
bedank  
ons S.A. Veiligheidsmagte

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thanks  
Our Men at the Borders

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bedank  
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thanks  
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S.A.

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thanks  
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### Wanted

Large War Effort proving pieces with UHB varieties.  
Contact Eddie Bridges. Details in front of journal.

---

### Wanted

1/2d Issue 1, block with blue sheet no. and block with red sheet no.

1d Issue 3, BL corner block of 6

2d Issue 1, Bottom arrow block of 4 or 6

4d Issue 1, LL corner block of 6

6d Issue 1, LR corner block

6d Issue 3, UL and UR corner blocks

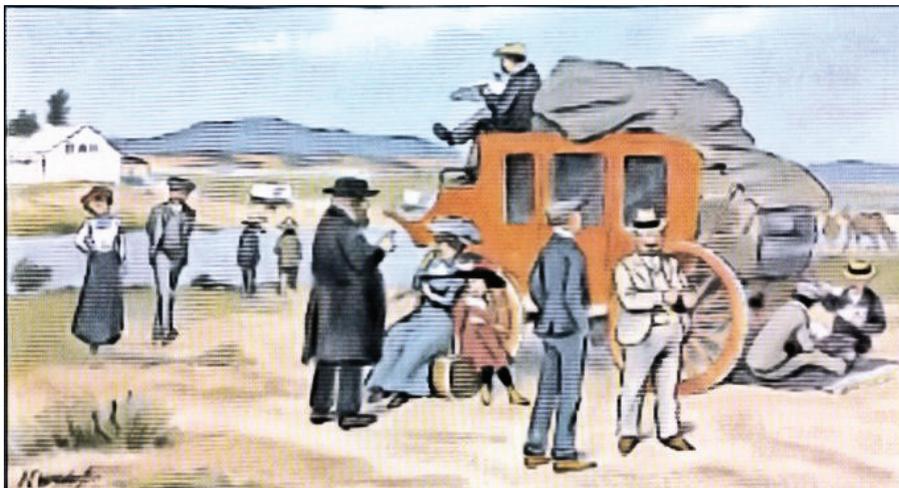
1s Issue 1, TL corner block

Contact Ken Radley ([kradley@telus.net](mailto:kradley@telus.net)) or 23 Heritage Point West, Lethbridge, Alberta, T1K 7B7, Canada.

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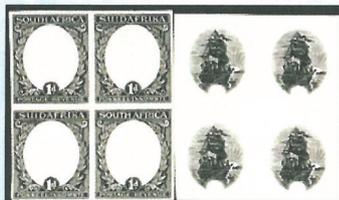


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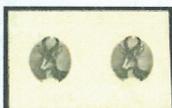
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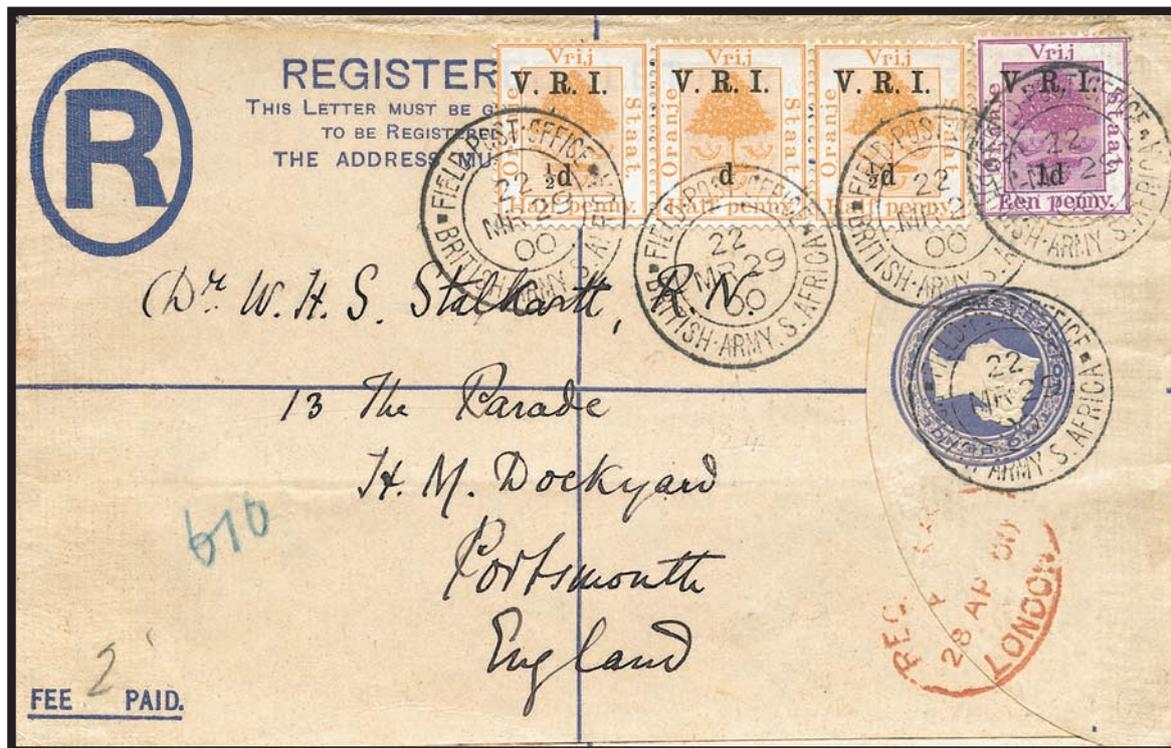
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