

---

# Castellum

---



Luxembourg  
Collectors Club

3304 Plateau Drive  
Belmont, CA 94002  
U.S.A.

E-mail: [lcc@luxcentral.com](mailto:lcc@luxcentral.com)

Web: <http://www.luxcentral.com/stamps/LCC/>

Gary B. Little, President ([gary@luxcentral.com](mailto:gary@luxcentral.com))

Edward H. Jarvis, Secretary-Treasurer ([edja@aol.com](mailto:edja@aol.com))

---

Vol. 6, No. 2 (whole #22) 2002 Luxembourg Collectors Club and contributors

September 2002

---

## President's Message

by Gary Little

A few weeks ago, I came across a very interesting postcard sent from France to Luxembourg in 1907. The picture side, which shows the steamer *Sussex* entering the port of Dieppe, bears a 5c French stamp postmarked in Dieppe. The message side, shown below, has a triangular "T" marking and a manuscript "10" indicating the amount of postage due. (I assume the card was underpaid by 5c and the amount due was double the deficiency.)

Note the bold Roodt postmark on the 10c Luxembourg postage due stamp affixed (Scott J2). It is dated August 21, 1907, making this a very early use of this stamp, which is from a set that was issued two months earlier on June 15. Interestingly, a note on the card reads *Refusé pour cause de la taxe* — Refused because of the tax. I have no idea why the postage due stamp was affixed if the addressee refused delivery. Can anyone suggest an explanation?



Postcard from France to Luxembourg with 10c Luxembourg postage due stamp.  
The Roodt postmark is dated 21.8.07.

---

## 150<sup>th</sup> Luxembourg Postage Stamp Anniversary

by Gary Little



Luxembourg #1 and Luxembourg #2  
(DIX CENTIMES and UN SILBERGROS)

September 15 marked the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the official day of issue of Luxembourg's first postage stamps — the *dix centimes* and *un silbergros* engraved stamps of 1852, which feature a portrait of 35-year-old Grand Duke William III.

William III, also King of The Netherlands, ruled Luxembourg from 1849 until his death in 1890. Since he had no male heir alive at his death, the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg — until then a personal possession of the King of The Netherlands — passed to the House of Nassau-

Weilburg and its leader, Adolphe of Nassau. This House still rules Luxembourg today.



Earliest known use of Luxembourg #1 — September 14, 1852.  
(Image from Goebel's Catalogue Spécialisé de la 1<sup>re</sup> Émission.)

These first two stamps are beautiful works of art, designed by Jacques Wiener of Brussels and engraved by J.H. Robinson of London. Robinson is better known as the engraver of England's famous Penny Black, the world's first postage stamp; he also engraved Belgium's first stamp.

#1 and #2 were printed by Luxembourg printer François Barth-Wahl. Altogether there were eleven different printings of the 10c stamp and eight printings of the un silbergros between 1852 and 1858. (Un silbergros is equivalent to 12 1/2 centimes. #2 is the only Luxembourg stamp ever denominated in this currency unit.) As a result of the large number of printings, many color and paper variations of these stamps exist, making them very popular with specialists. The Prifix catalog, for example, lists eleven color shades for #1 (black, greenish black, bluish black, etc.) and ten shades for #2 (blood red, brown red, red brown, ...). It is best not to be color blind if you're trying to distinguish these shades! Note that Scott #3 is simply a color variant of #2.

By the time the typographic coat-of-arms stamps of 1859 replaced them at the post office, a total of 2,122,200 copies of #1 were printed and 716,800 of #2. They were valid for franking until the end of 1905, but you rarely see copies used after 1859.

Many specialists also like to collect used specimens of #1 and #2 with different types of cancellations. Although town cancellations are fairly rare, there are many different mute cancellations that are easier to hunt down. A common cancellation is made up of three concentric circles with a central dot (see above). Much rarer is the same cancellation but with the central dot

actually piercing the stamp; this cancellation was used for only two months or so in 1852 until the central spikes on the cancellers were filed down to prevent damage to the contents of letters. Be on the lookout for copies of #1 and #2 with this prized cancellation — you sometimes see them offered at spacefiller prices even though the damage actually enhances the value of the stamp.

Many other mute cancellations exist: circle of bars (eight different), rectangular rural cancellations, “colossus” cancellations, lozenges, dice, and so on. Some examples are shown below:



*Several different types of mute cancellations are shown on these copies of Luxembourg #1 and #2. (rectangular rural, three broken concentric circles, and three different circles of bars)*

Over the years, P&T Luxembourg has had several opportunities to commemorate milestone birthdays of the first two postage stamps. Although nothing special seems to have occurred in 1902 for the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, commemorative stamps were issued for the 75<sup>th</sup>, 100<sup>th</sup>, 125<sup>th</sup>, and 150<sup>th</sup> anniversaries. In addition, major international postage stamp exhibitions were held in Luxembourg 1927 and 1952, as were special balloon and helicopter flights.

## 1927

Luxembourg marked the 75<sup>th</sup> postage stamp anniversary with the release of a set of five stamps on September 4, 1927 (Scott B20-24). These five stamps (shown on a first day cover below) share a common design which includes portraits of Grand Duchess Charlotte and her husband Prince Félix.



*Luxembourg issued this set of five stamps in 1927 for the 75<sup>th</sup> postage stamp anniversary. Pictured on the stamp are Grand Duchess Charlotte and her husband Prince Félix.*

This set of stamps was issued on the first day of an international philatelic exhibition held in Luxembourg on September 4-8 and were sold only to those who had also purchased a 3 F ticket to the exhibition. (One set per ticket purchased.)

This was a grand exhibition, featuring 235 exhibitors showing frames of stamps worth, at the time, over 30 million francs. As usual for the era, many special social events were organized for attendees: a visit to the Clausen brewery, a tour of the wine cellar of Champagne Mercier et Cie., a bus trip around the country with dinner in Diekirch, and a dinner on the Moselle in Remich.

The spectacular closing event was a balloon flight leaving the square in Limpertsberg, but with no apparent target destination! Special commemorative cards were sold at the exhibition and were carried in the balloon's basket, making this Luxembourg's first air mail flight. The postmark used to cancel the stamps on these cards reads "PAR BALLON / EXP. PHIL. LUXEMBOURG / 8 Sept.1927". The balloon flew until the winds died down and it fell to earth in a field near Roodt-sur-Syre. The mail was then hustled off to the local post office where Roodt 8.9.27 cancellations were applied to the cards before they were placed in the regular mailstream.



*Special card carried on the balloon flight for the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations. This particular example is unusual because it is franked with Luxembourg's first three semi-postal stamps rather than the Charlotte definitive stamps that were usually used on these cards.*



*Special label published by the Union des Timbrophiles Luxembourg to promote the 1927 Exposition Internationale de Timbres-Poste. It shows the old buildings of the Grund huddled beneath the sheer rock face of the upper town, St. Jean Church in the right foreground, and, in the distance, the Castle Bridge and the Bock rock. Compare with the view shown on Luxembourg's 20 F Ville Basse stamp issued four years later in 1931 (Scott 197).*

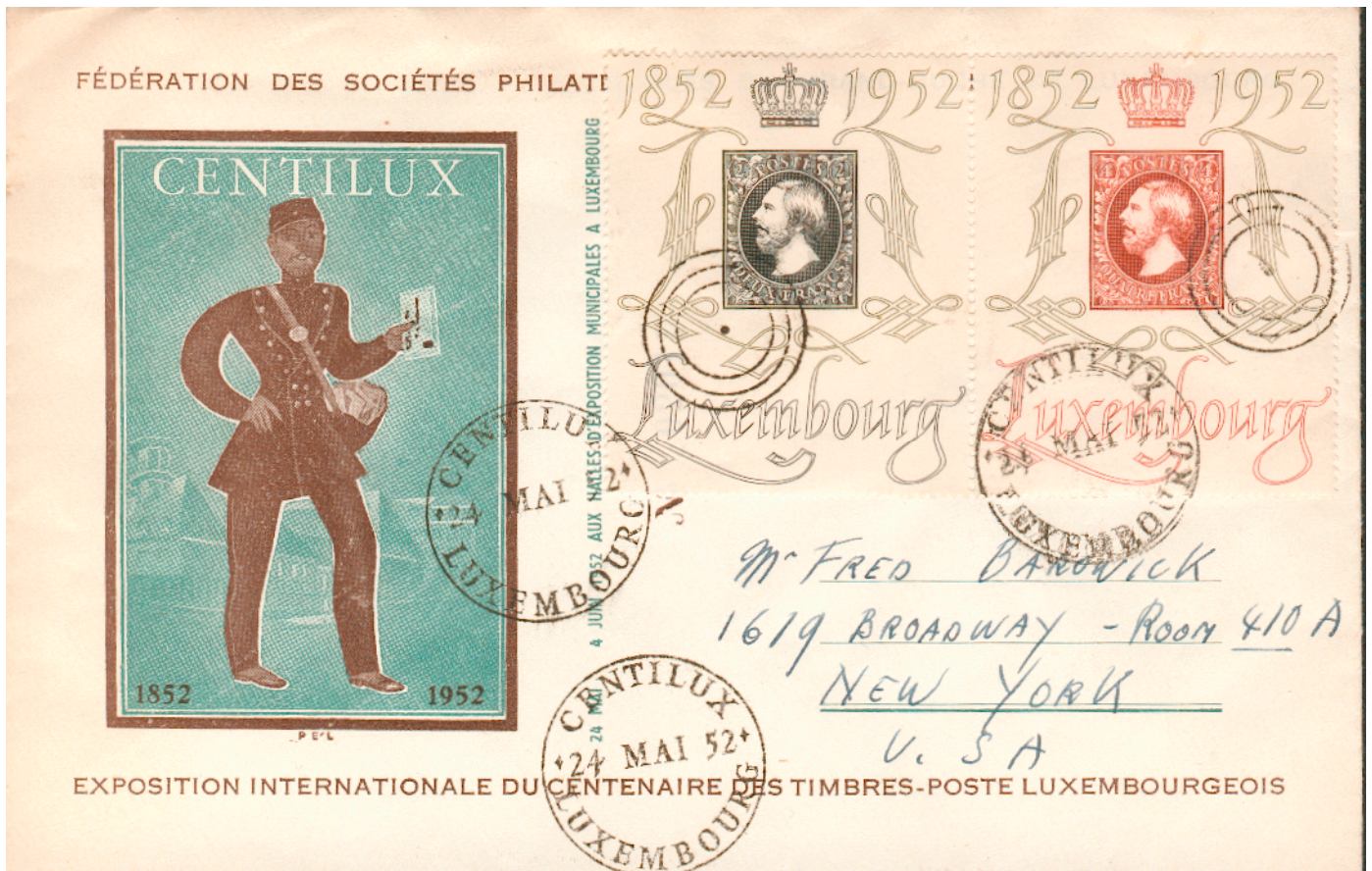
1952

Luxembourg's 1952 stamp centenary was marked by the same fervor associated with the activities of 25 years earlier. Again, several new stamps were issued to mark the centenary and CENTILUX, a major international philatelic exhibition was held on May 24 – June 4. Over 270 exhibitors showed off over 1000 frames of material and there was a large bourse as well.



*Special medal minted for the 1952 CENTILUX exhibition.*

Two new sets of stamps were issued on May 24 — two large se-tenant stamps featuring reproductions of #1 and #2 (Scott 278-279), and a set of five airmail stamps (Scott C16-C20) showing #1 and a cinderella with the same general design as the Charlotte definitive stamps of 1948-1958. Each set sold for 20 francs over its face value and included an entrance ticket to the exhibition.



*First day cover for the two se-tenant commemorative stamps issued for Luxembourg's stamp centenary in 1952.*



*First day cover for the set of five airmail stamps issued for Luxembourg's stamp centenary in 1952.*

During the exhibition, on May 31, a special helicopter flight to Strasbourg, France was organized. Cacheted cards and envelopes were sold for this flight, and they received a variety of interesting postmarks and supplemental markings (see the example below).



*Card flown on the CENTILUX helicopter flight from Luxembourg to Strasbourg, France on May 31, 1952.*

Similar mail, with cachets edited by the *Exposition Philatélique Nationale de Strasbourg*, were sent on the return flight to Luxembourg the next day. Most items were franked with the Strasbourg Council of Europe stamp issued by France on May 31.

CENTILUX also made a major contribution to Luxembourg philatelic reference material. The *Almanach CENTILUX*, edited by André Ungeheuer of Banque du Timbre, contains several interesting articles on all aspects of Luxembourg philately. In particular, there is a comprehensive 35-page article by Edg. De Ghistelles on every detail relating to the first issue of Luxembourg — printing histories, paper varieties, watermarks, and a very detailed section on postmarks.



*Ticket for the CENTILUX philatelic exhibition. A ticket was included with each set of stamp centenary commemoratives purchased (regulars or airmails). The sets sold for 20 F over face value.*

## 1977

There was no big international philatelic exhibition held in Luxembourg in 1977, but P&T Luxembourg did issue a small souvenir sheet to commemorate the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first stamps.

The sheet, shown on the first day cover below, has a face value of 40 F and its design incorporates replicas of Luxembourg #1 and #2. Note the cachet on the cover, which shows a portrait of Grand Duke William III (Guillaume III, in French).



*First day cover for the souvenir sheet issued on September 15, 1977 for the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Luxembourg's first postage stamps.*



*Souvenir sheet issued on September 14, 2002 to commemorate 150 years of postage stamp use in Luxembourg.*

This month, on September 14, P&T Luxembourg issued a large souvenir sheet (120 x 166 mm) to commemorate the postage stamp sesquicentennial. It features four 0.45 € stamps depicting scenes from daily life in the Grand Duchy in 1852, 1902, 1952, and 2002.

Each stamp also includes a portrait of the sovereign ruling Luxembourg during the corresponding time period — Grand Duke William III (1852), Grand Duke Adolphe (1902), Grand Duchess Charlotte (1952), and Grand Duke Henri (2002). The portraits used are based on those featured on definitive stamps of these eras (William III: Scott 1-2; Adolphe: Scott 70-74; Charlotte: Scott 250-260, 265-271, 292, and 337-340.)

### References

*Catalogue Spécialisé de la 1<sup>re</sup> Émission de Timbre-Poste du Grand-Duché du Luxembourg*, by R. Goebel (1987).

*Almanach CENTILUX*, edited by A. Ungeheuer (1952)