
Castellum



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Vol. 10, No. 4 (whole #40)

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March 2007

President's Message by Gary Little

This is the 40th issue of *Castellum* which means we've reached an important milestone — 10 years of publication! The first meeting of the Luxembourg Collectors Club was held on June 5, 1997 at the Pacific 97 World Philatelic Exhibition in San Francisco. The first issue of *Castellum* was published later that same month and we've published new issues, regular as clockwork, four times per year ever since.

We have been the model of consistency over the years. Ed Jarvis and I have served as officers of the club for the entire period and I have been *Castellum* editor for all 40 issues. In addition, the membership dues have never changed — they have always been \$12 per year. I wonder if any other organization has been as stable!

About 30 avid Luxembourg collectors showed up at our inaugural meeting in 1997 and heard an excellent presentation by Jos Wolff, President of the Federation of Luxembourg Philatelic Societies, on the history of organized philately in Luxembourg. (He is still the President a decade later.) Over the years we have included dozens of interesting articles in *Castellum* by a variety of authors on a wide range of topics — everything from the plating of the first issue to the history behind many of the stamps issued by the Grand Duchy.

I believe that most members have been very satisfied with *Castellum*. One enhancement request we have resisted, however, has been to publish *Castellum* in color. A great idea, but with our tiny print run, the cost would be prohibitive — about 8 times higher than our usual black & white costs.

We now have a solution. To mark our 10th anniversary, we have posted *Castellum* in full color on our Web site at lcc.luxcentral.com. In fact, all 40 issues have been posted there. The files are in the standard PDF format so everyone should be able to view them using the Adobe Reader program which is available for free from www.adobe.com.

So get out your computers and enjoy looking at all those colorful back issues.

Calculating International Postage Due After the 1964 Vienna UPU Congress

by Allan F. Wichelman

The Vienna UPU Congress of 1964 abolished the use of gold centimes to indicate postage due on international correspondence, substituting instead a new system using a fraction. This system required the country of origin to mark an underpaid item with a fraction, with the numerator showing the postage due in its currency (usually double the deficiency) and the denominator showing the country's then-current minimum UPU letter rate. The fraction as a whole therefore represented the number of (supposedly standard) letter rates to be charged, and multiplying the fraction by the destination country's then-current minimum foreign letter rate gave the amount of postage due to be collected on delivery. There no longer was any need for the country of origin to convert the deficiency to gold centimes or for the destination country to reconvert the gold centimes to its own currency. This method of international postage due calculation took effect on January 1, 1966 (see Fig. 1 & Fig. 2).

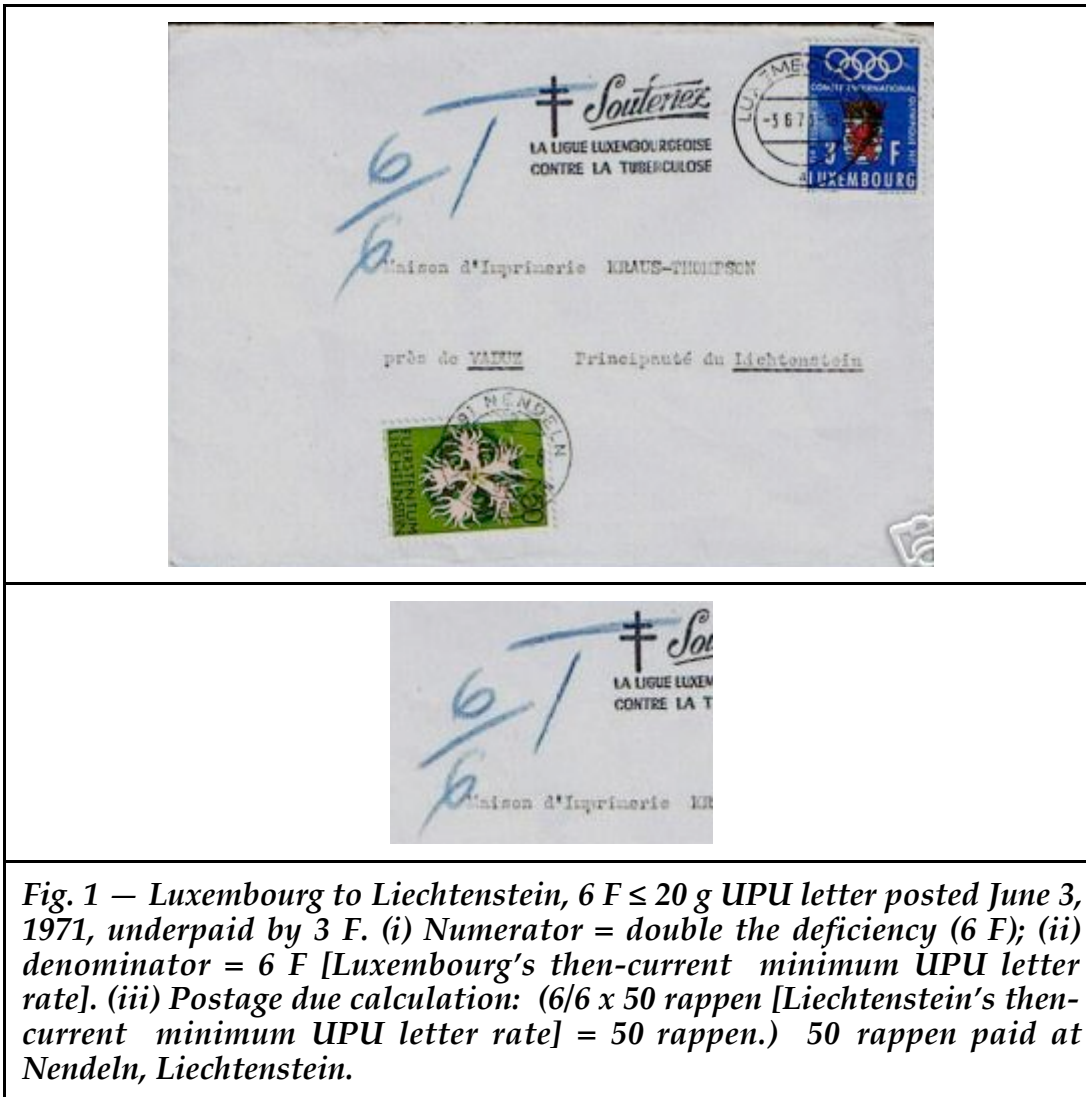


Fig. 1 – Luxembourg to Liechtenstein, 6 F ≤ 20 g UPU letter posted June 3, 1971, underpaid by 3 F. (i) Numerator = double the deficiency (6 F); (ii) denominator = 6 F [Luxembourg's then-current minimum UPU letter rate]. (iii) Postage due calculation: (6/6 x 50 rappen [Liechtenstein's then-current minimum UPU letter rate] = 50 rappen.) 50 rappen paid at Nendeln, Liechtenstein.

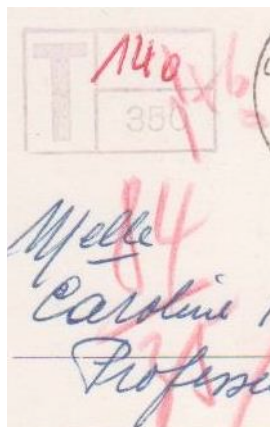
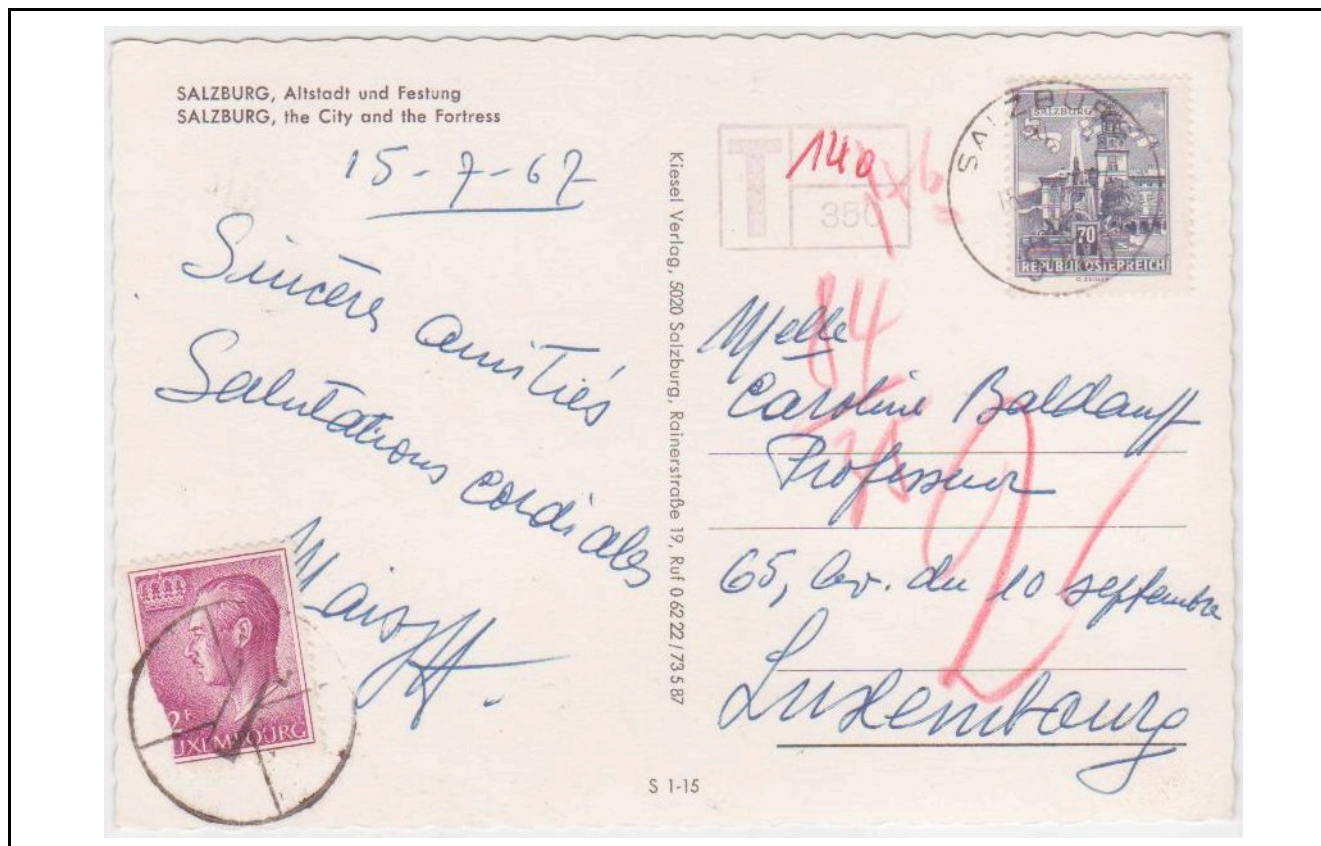


Fig. 2 — Austria to Luxembourg, 1.40 shilling UPU picture postcard posted July 16, 1967, underpaid 0.70 shilling. (i) Numerator = double the deficiency (1.40 shilling); (ii) denominator = 3.50 shilling [Austria's then-current minimum UPU letter rate]. (iii) Postage due calculation: $140/350 \times 6$ [Luxembourg's then-current minimum UPU letter rate] = $84/35 = [2.4]$ rounded down to 2 F and paid at Luxembourg-Ville with a 2 F GD Jean definitive cancelled with a circular T cancel.

2.0 — 1976 Onward

Ten years later, following the Lausanne UPU Congress of 1974, the fraction system was modified to provide for payment of the actual deficiency *plus* a fixed handling charge. Thus, from January 1, 1976, onward, the numerator has indicated the actual deficiency, with the denominator continuing to represent the country of origin's then-current minimum foreign letter or priority mail rate. The destination country performed the calculation as before to obtain the equivalent deficiency in its currency, to which it was now permitted to add a fixed handling charge. Each

UPU country was allowed to set its own handling charge within limits set by the UPU (see Fig. 3 & Fig. 4).

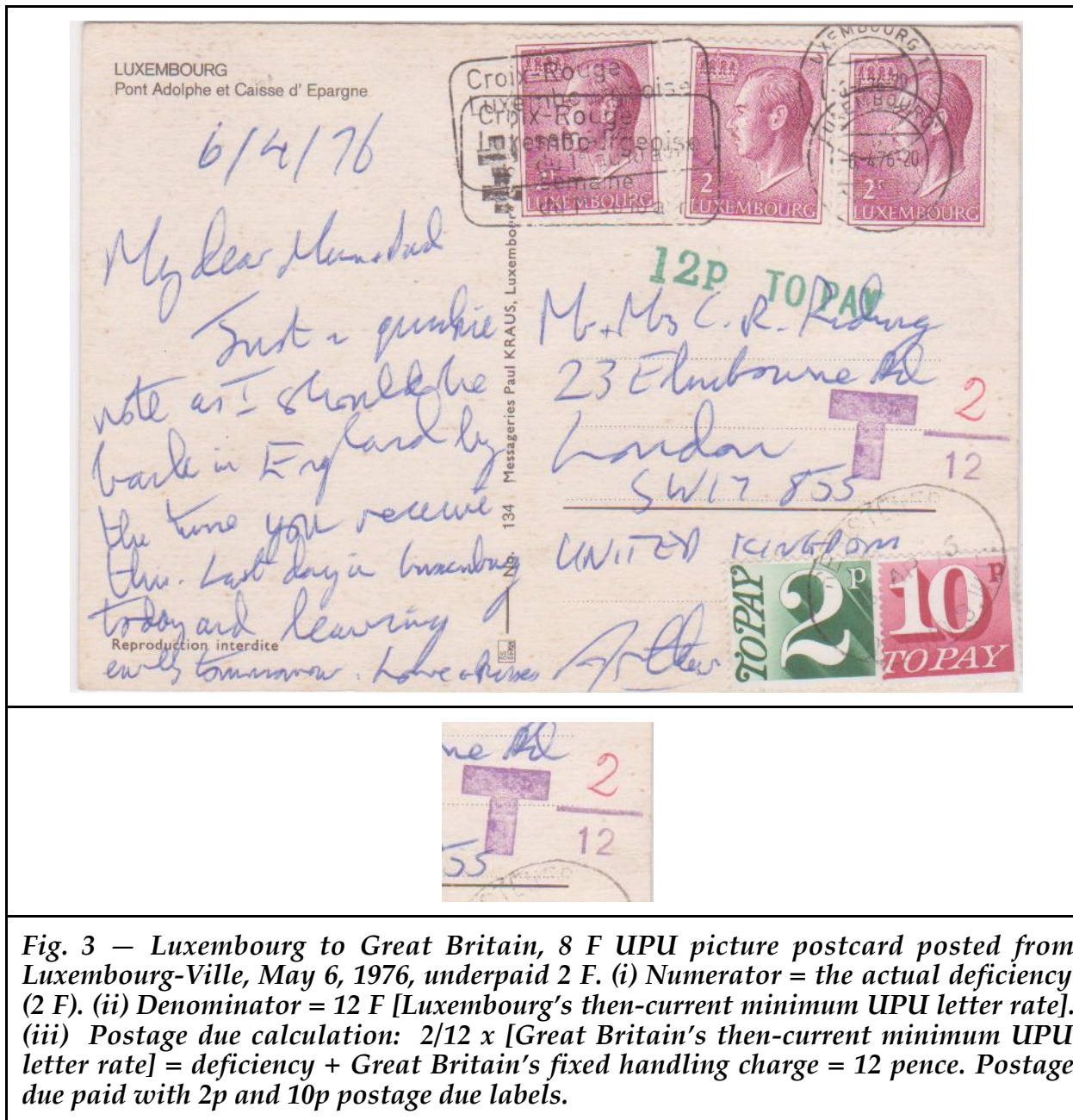


Fig. 3 – Luxembourg to Great Britain, 8 F UPU picture postcard posted from Luxembourg-Ville, May 6, 1976, underpaid 2 F. (i) Numerator = the actual deficiency (2 F). (ii) Denominator = 12 F [Luxembourg’s then-current minimum UPU letter rate]. (iii) Postage due calculation: $2/12 \times$ [Great Britain’s then-current minimum UPU letter rate] = deficiency + Great Britain’s fixed handling charge = 12 pence. Postage due paid with 2p and 10p postage due labels.



Fig. 4 – Luxembourg to the United States, 12 F ≤ 20 g UPU letter posted from Troisvierges, August 3, 1979, underpaid by 3 F. (i) Numerator = the actual deficiency (3 F); (ii) Denominator = 12 F [Luxembourg’s then-current minimum UPU letter rate]; (iii) Postage due calculation: $3/12 \times 20\text{¢}$ [United States ≤ 1 oz. then-current minimum letter rate] = 5¢ deficiency + United States 20¢ fixed handling charge = 25¢ postage due charged by the United States.

3.0 — Postal History Implications

International postal history covers and cards from the post-1966 era with postage due markings are remarkably difficult to find. While they surely exist in the hands of the recipients who had to pay to receive them (as recipients often had to in the pre-adhesive era!), most dealers don’t find it sufficiently profitable to handle this sort of material. And when they do, it usually means digging through boxes of unsorted miscellany (often erroneously referred to by dealers as “junk”) when you’d rather be enjoying a coffee or whiskey.

Another reason for the scarcity of post-1966 postage due items is that the UPU now permits the country of origin to return underpaid items to the sender requiring the sender to make up the

deficiency or for the country itself to prepay the deficiency and collect that amount plus a handling charge from the sender. Additionally, the UPU does not require the country of origin to send onward underpaid items posted in letter boxes if the sender cannot be identified. Last, the UPU deems underpaid items not marked with a T stamp impression to have been fully prepaid. And with increasing use of electronic scanners and automated sorters to process mail, it may be that these devices simply are unable to ascertain whether an item has been underpaid, resulting in it being deemed to have been fully paid.

Post-1966 international postage due items present many research opportunities. Since the T mark [meaning *taxe* in French] is a constant and the denominator also is a constant for so long as any particular minimum UPU letter rate remains in effect, many post offices use a handstamp containing these two constants, which require only that the postal clerk fill in the numerator (e.g., see Fig. 3 (Luxembourg-Ville T handstamp) & Fig. 4 (Troisvierges T handstamp)). A listing should be developed documenting the T + fraction handstamps that have been or are being used by Luxembourg post offices. Likewise, the fixed service charges used in Luxembourg need to be identified by amount and period of use. A very incomplete account of these charges is contained in Basien & Hoffkamp, *TARIFE DER BRIEFPOST IN LUXEMBURG 1852 – 2002* at pp. 153-159, but more research is needed. Currently the guideline fixed service charge authorized by the UPU is 0.33 SDR (meaning Special Drawing Rights, the artificial “basket” currency used by the International Monetary Fund). The UPU gives members the option of charging only this fixed service charge and disregarding the actual deficiency.

Similar research is needed on Luxembourg’s domestic postage due regulations and those for countries with which Luxembourg has or has had special postal treaties. Again the Basien & Hoffkamp treatise is a good starting point, documenting various minimum postage due charges.

An impressive one-frame, sixteen-page exhibit could be constructed around post-1966 postage due charges using incoming and outgoing postage due items, and focusing on the 1966-1976 and 1976-onward time periods and the introduction of fixed service charges. Modern postal history of this sort presents a high challenge factor that has the potential to knock the philatelic socks off stamp show judges who are more accustomed to gazing at exotic (but sometimes rather visually boring) imperforates and roulettes.

Be sure to include post-1966 international postage due items in your Luxembourg postal history collection. You can be confident that the next generation of collectors will be glad you did!

Banque du Timbre — On the Boulevard Since 1956

by Gary Little

The year 2006 marked the 50th anniversary of the Banque du Timbre setting up shop at its present location at 17 Boulevard Prince Henri in Luxembourg-Ville. Banque du Timbre is the largest and most important store for stamp collectors in the Grand Duchy and the owner, the Ungeheuer family, has been making significant contributions to philately since 1941.

The founder, André Ungeheuer, was born on December 27, 1919 in Forest, Belgium; he passed away four years ago at age 83 on April 23, 2003 in Luxembourg. He set up his first stamp business in 1941 at Mondorf-les-Bains and called it Puck-Stamps (Puck was his nickname). André was very active in the hobby and was especially interested in the Luxembourg first issue. His *Etude sur la Première Émission des Timbres du Grand-Duché de Luxembourg 1852-1859* was published by FSPL in 1946. In 1952, he edited *Almanach CENTILUX*, a collection of philatelic articles published for the exhibition marking the centenary of the first Luxembourg postage stamps.

André was also a leader in the area of editing and publishing stamp catalogs. His very first catalog of Luxembourg stamps was published in 1945 under the Puck-Stamps name. It later merged with the Prinnet catalog and eventually, in 1965, it morphed into the familiar Prifix catalog which Banque du Timbre still publishes today. New editions now come out every two years.

André moved his stamp business from Mondorf to the capital in 1947. His first location was at 19, Avenue Monterey. He remained there for almost 10 years before moving to the Boulevard Prince Henri location.

André retired in 1985 and handed over the business to his son and daughter-in-law, Serge & Marie-Jeanne Ungeheuer. They still run the business today with help from their children Tom and Lynn as well as several employees. Be sure to visit them the next time you are in Luxembourg.



This 1940 occupation cover is interesting for several reasons: (1) it is a first day cover for the overprinted Hindenberg stamp; (2) the mixed franking includes a pre-occupation Charlotte definitive; and (3) it was mailed to a 20-year-old André Ungeheuer the year before he established his first store for stamp collectors in Mondorf-les-Bains.



This is a rare October 1945 first day cover created by the Banque du Timbre when it was still located in Mondorf-les-Bains. This must have been just after the name of the business was changed from Puck-Stamps.

AUTOMNE 1945

Puck-Stamps



CATALOGUE
SPÉCIALISÉ
DES TIMBRES DU
LUXEMBOURG
AVEC PRIX NETS

ÉDITÉ PAR LA MAISON

UNGEHEUER
MONDORF-LES-BAINS
(GRAND-DUCHÉ DE LUXEMBOURG)

PRIX : 20 FRANCS LUX. OU BELGES

The first stamp catalog published by André Ungeheuer, founder of Banque du Timbre, was released in Autumn 1945, shortly after the end of World War II. At the time, his business was called 'Puck-Stamps' because Ungeheuer's nickname was Puck. This catalog is the forerunner of today's "Prifix catalogue spécialisé illustré des timbres-poste du Luxembourg avec les cotations des entiers postaux édité par la banque du timbre® sàrl".