D.

UPPER BONGOLAND

PHILATELIC EXHIBIT BY

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The Philatelic Society of Greater Southern Africa

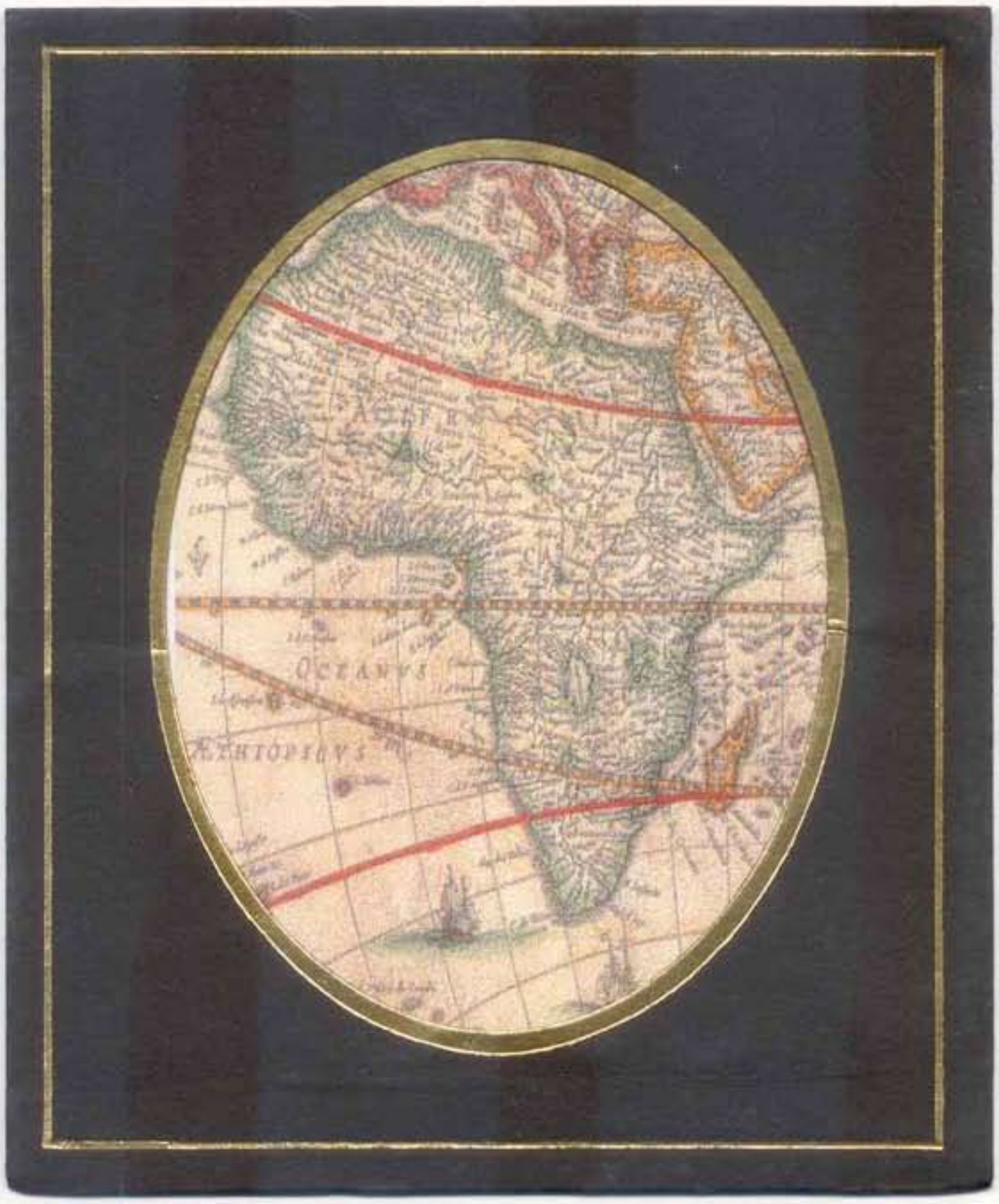
UPPER BONGOLAND

A Study Of The 15 Bongos Value Of The 1865 First Issue

Following the well documented 1858 Civil War, and the overthrow of the Monarchy, the Kingdom of Bongoland was constituted into the Federation of Bongoland with three provinces: Upper, Lower and Central Bongoland.

In 1864 Upper Bongoland seceded from the Federation. At that time, the Federation postage stamps were declared invalid in the former province and, after a brief emergency period, in 1865 Upper Bongoland released its first issue comprising the single 15 bongos adhesive stamp. This value, or fractions and multiples of it, served all the postage rates then in effect.

The issue was originally printed in England and supplied to the main Post Office in the capital, Nodnol. Subsequently, the stamps were reprinted in Nodnol and in Upyurs, the country's commercial center.

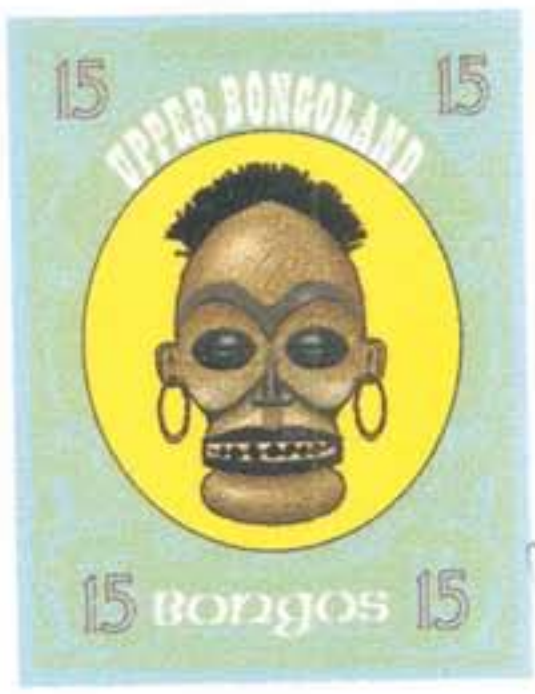


1641 map of Africa by Henry Hondius showing the Kingdom of Bongoland

While frequently referenced in the world's philatelic literature, issues of Upper Bongoland are seldom displayed. This exhibit presents a study of the first issue, and includes many rare and unique items.

Essays for the 15 Bongos Issue

Multicoloured essays on board, approximately two to three times linear dimensions of proposed issue. All initialled XN (Xela Noxid, brother of the owner of Nitram Noxid & Co., State Printers located in Nodnol).



The issued design

The Charles, Kipper & West (U.K.) printing, progressive proofs on chalky paper.

Largest recorded block of the Charles, Kipper & West (U.K.) printing

ex Kaspare

The advanced Giono press used by Nitram Noxid & Co. in Nodnol used a multi-plate process, one plate for each of the CYMK colours. This required colour separation of the original design. These unique and extremely rare plate proofs are from each of the four plates used to produce the 1867 15 bongos locally printed issue.

From cyan ink plate

From yellow ink plate

The composite colour issue

From magenta ink plate

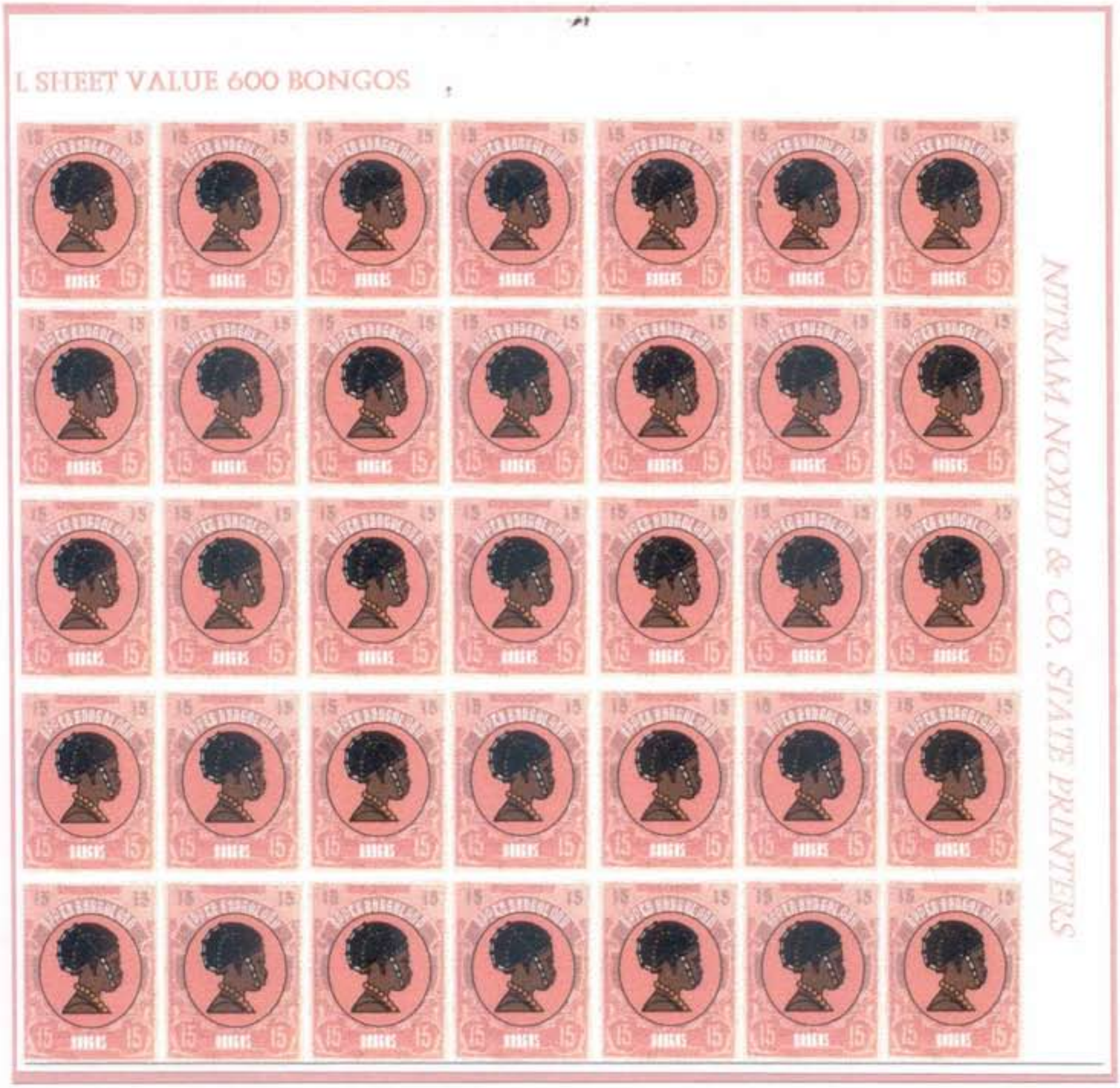
From black ink plate

Printed on both sides

Double print

Pair used for 30 bongos overseas rate cancelled with stepped-box UPJURS/UPPER BONGOLAND handstamp

Printed in sheets of 40 subjects in Nodnol by Nitram Noxid & Co., on local deckle-edged paper using imported 660Cse press



ex Swashbourne

From lower margin showing partial impression of bottom row

Inverted centre variety

Inverted frame variety

Second Charles, Kipper & West (U.K.) printing with wide setting

Missing centre variety

Missing frame variety

"Cracked Plate" Variety

"Missing Necklace Bead" Variety

"Missing UPP" Variety

The paper used by Charles, Kipper & West for the 1867 Upper Bongoland 15 bongos issue was prepared especially by Yorkshire Paper Mills Limited. The paper was made with the Upper Bongoland "multiple stars" watermark. Stamps can be identified with the watermark in different orientations.

Upright (normal) watermark

Inverted watermark

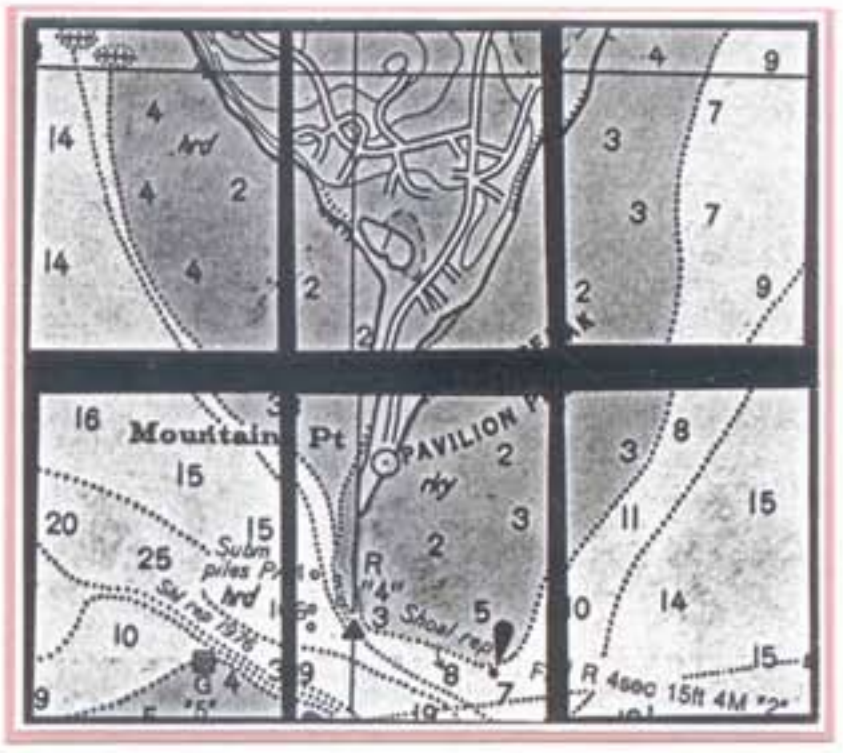
The "multiple stars" watermark

Sideways to left watermark

Sideways to right watermark

Emergency printing on reverse of map paper following paper shortage resulting from blockade of Nodnol; Nitram Noxid & Co., as State Printer, had earlier been commissioned to provide territorial maps

"Plated" block of 15 bongo issues to reconstruct portion of map



Xerographic copy of reverse of six stamps at left to show reconstituted map

Unique block of 23 of the 15 bongos *Ivory Head* variety
Largest recorded block of this variety

RBPS Certificate
No. 4589½

ex N'Na Elggirt

Two examples of the 15 bongos Ivory Head varieties used
wrong side up to pay single weight letter rate to Europe

Strip of five 15 bongos issue, overprinted ПОЧТА/3К. (Post/3 Kopeks), for use at the Bongoland Overseas Post Office in the Russian South Squeegee Islands.

Bongoland maintained an office in this major trading partner's territory, to which it annually exported in excess of 452 tonnes of *Nux sensualis*, which the Squeegeans believed to have aphrodisiac properties.

Note se-tenant inverted overprint, which is apparently unique

The only recorded cover from the Bongoland Post Office in the Russian South Squeegee Islands

ex Alberich von Fafner

Compact Cambridge

STAMPS ON OTHER SIDE

Where User-Friendly Just Got Friendlier
1-800-843-7751

№ 907530

THE ROYAL BONGOLAND PHILATELIC SOCIETY
NODNOL

26b Kwazei N'Banga Street
Nodnol, W1N 1PE

- 5 SEP 1990
Meeting of .....

In the OPINION of The **EXPERT COMMITTEE** the item submitted as

Upper Bongoland : 1865 ..... Scott № 1j .....
15 bongas opt. 3k for use in South Squeegee Islands ..... se-tenant with inverted opt. — imperf - unused — ..... is genuine. .....

.....

.....

Observations Twin spot lower right cnr. left stamp .....

.....
Chairman

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Submitted by D. Kwame Obeng-Asiwa .....

Upper right corner of pane/sheet with selvedge

Longest recorded strip of the Charles, Kipper & West (U.K.) printing

ex Kaspare

Se-tenant clichés (sheet positions 7/4 and 7/5)

Pair used to pay single overseas (Europe) letter rate

Sheet stamps were issued imperforate. Coil issues for both vertical and horizontal delivery were issued with roulette perforations.

Paper join

Coil pair (rouletted) used for 30 bongos overseas rate tied with double circle NODNOL*UPPER BONGOLAND* handstamp in red. Note stepped box handstamp also in red

Emergencyissue on map paper printed in error on map side

Experimental printing in deep shades of brown and pink

Printed on mauve tinted paper

Printed on native semi-digested paper (RRR)

ex W. D. W. Naganaga

1867 overprinted (revalued to 20 bongos) issue

1867 revalued issue with inverted overprint

The Upper Bongoland government agencies used the regular 15 bongos issue stamps overprinted as appropriate to identify the Department or special purpose of the stamps.

Overprints were applied locally by Nitram Noxid & Co., at the State Printing works, using movable type Gütenberg Press imported in 1702 from Germany.

Inland Revenue (1867 to 1870)

Inland Revenue (1871 onwards)

Office of Works

Government Parcels

Upper Bongoland Army

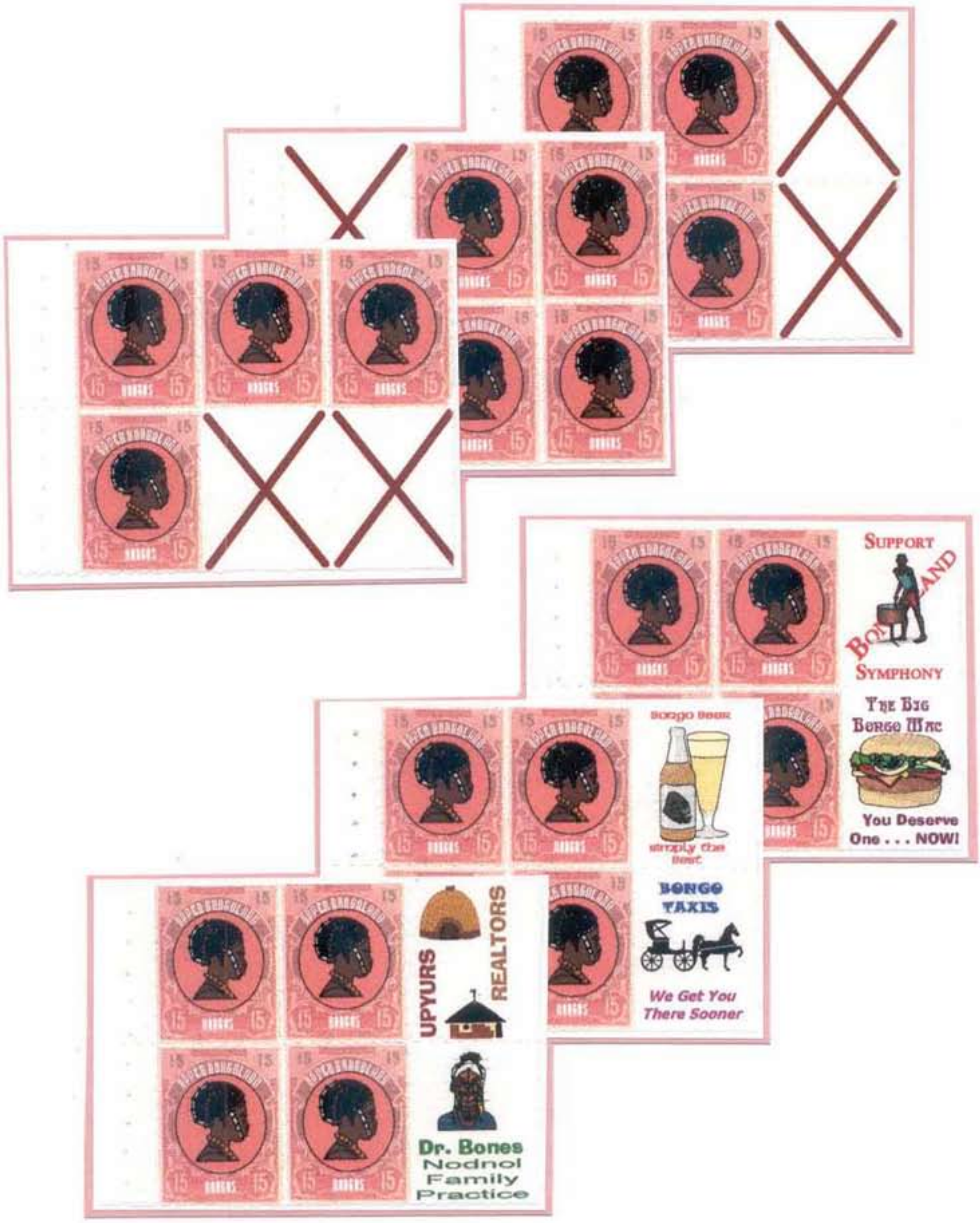
Board of Education

Upper Bongoland Admiralty

Royal Household

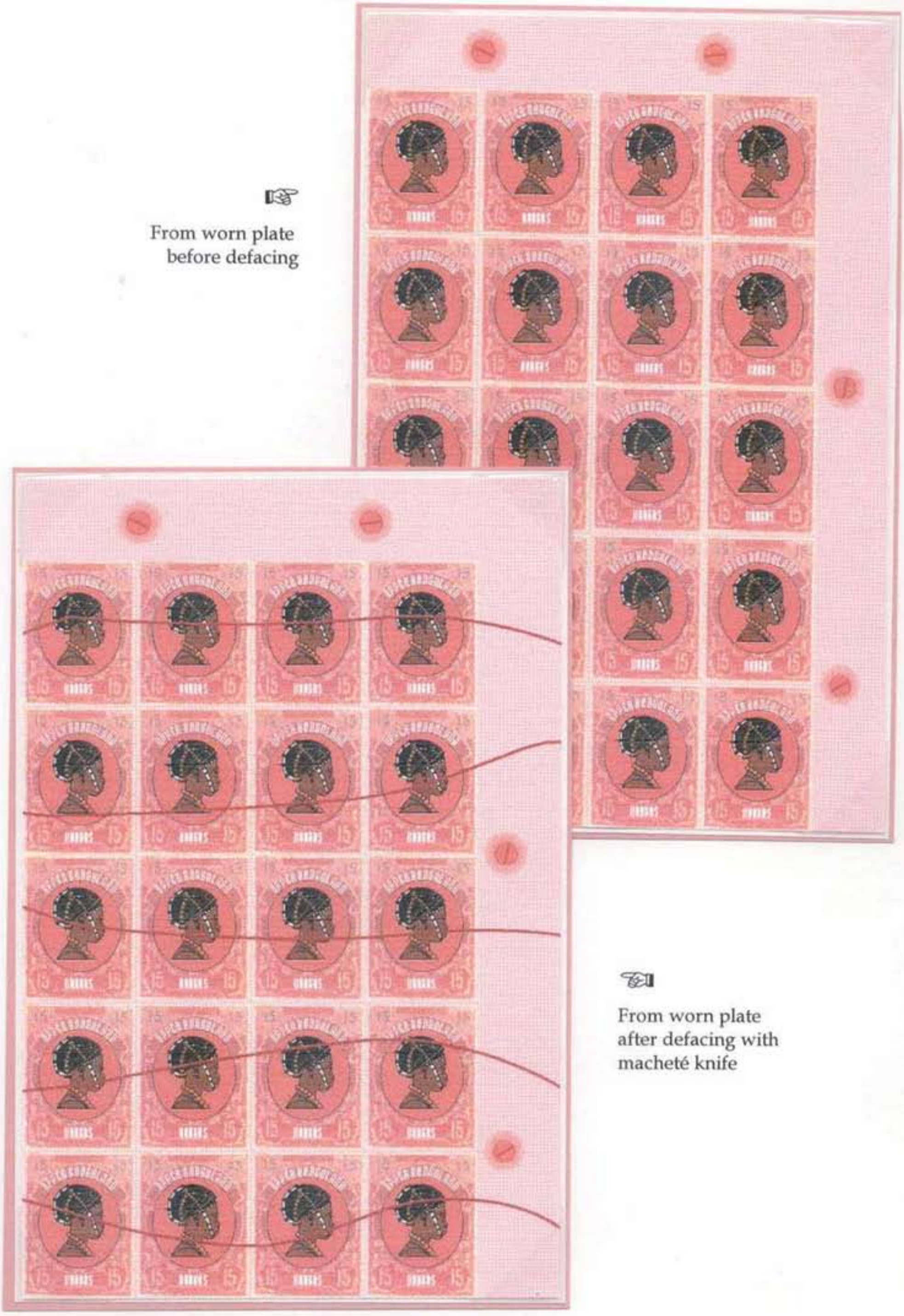
War Tax (for use during War of Secession)

Stamp booklets comprised two panes of six 15 bongos stamps, and two panes of four 15 bongos stamps plus two "labels" (see next sheet). ***Booklet panes were line perforated 10½ by hand.*** In early booklets (Series A), the labels were printed with St. Andrew's crosses in brown. The position of the labels on the pane varied. For later issues (Series B), the labels were printed with advertisements for local businesses.



Series A booklet with labels printed with St. Andrew's crosses in brown and Series B booklet with labels printed with advertisements.

Unique Series A
stapled booklet
RBPS Certificate No. 0737



☞

From worn plate
before defacing

☞

From worn plate
after defacing with
macheté knife

Pair of 15 bongos issue paying the single weight rate to Europe (Italy) from Nodnol
Disinfected on arrival in Italy at the Verona (?) lazaretto. Forensic examination reveals that the disinfection slits (to permit circulation of vapours) were probably made by a rusted ¾ inch chisel from Stanley Tool Company which had probably been stored in a garage.

ex L. Nosram

Pair of 15 bongos issue paying the single weight rate to Europe (Italy) from Nodnol
Disinfected on arrival in Italy at the Ragusa lazaretto by sprinkling with vinegar. Infrared and nuclear magnetic resonance spectrographic analyses indicate the the use of Balsamic vinegar from Modena, supplied by Royal Ahora.

ex W. A. Kirdnas

Individual copies of the 15 bongos issue used for overseas single weight letter rate. From Upjurs, with straightline UPJURS handstamp in mauve, UPJURS "starburst" in blue to tie issues to cover, and stepped-box UPJURS/UPPER BONGOLAND, applied in Post Office Foreign Section, in black.

ex Musca domestica

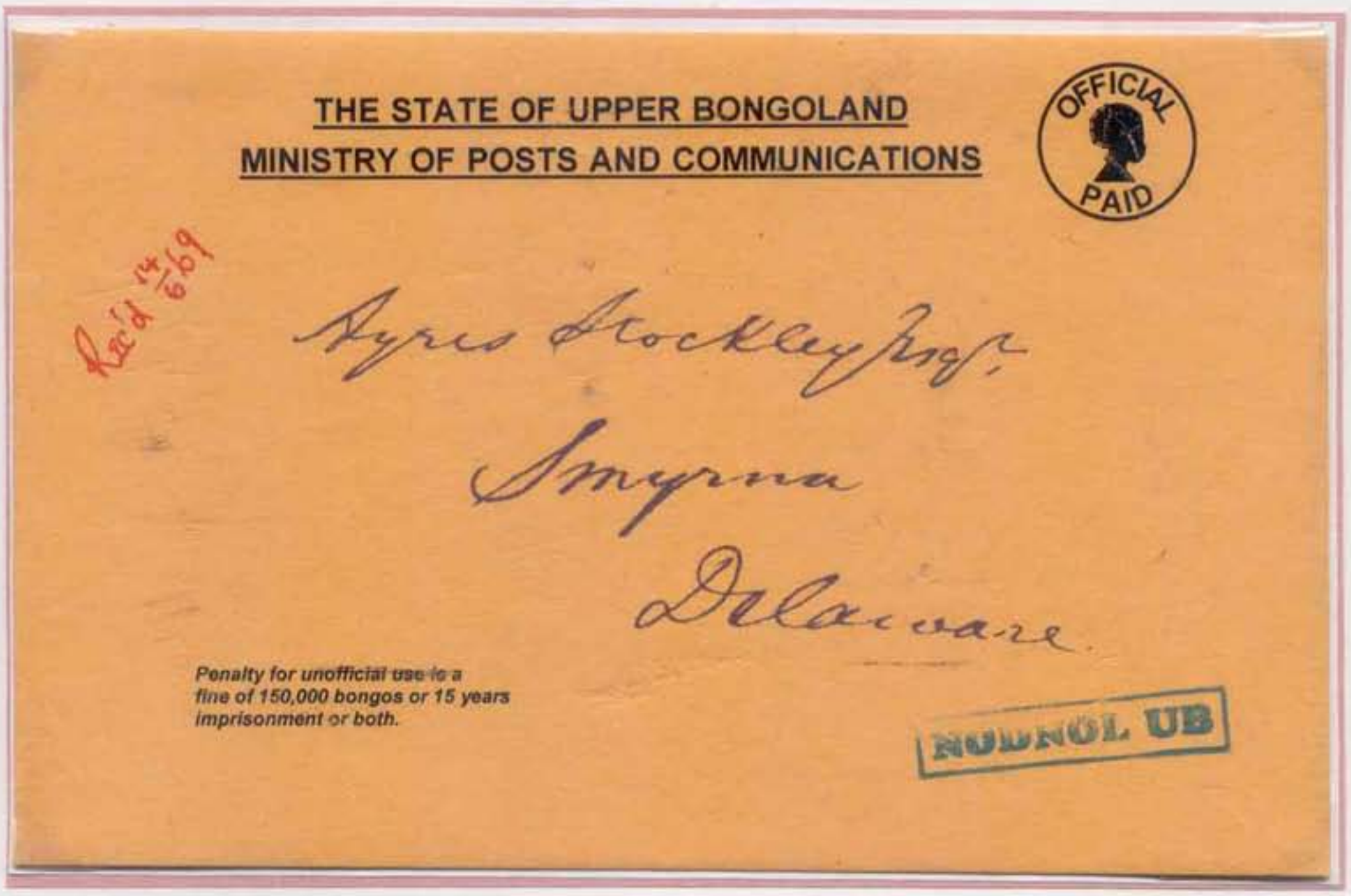
Pair of 15 bongos issue used for overseas single weight letter rate. From Nodnol, tied with two strikes of the NODNOL*UPPER BONGOLAND* double ring cancellor, with straightline double line box UPJURS UB handstamp, applied in Post Office Foreign Section, in red, UPJURS "starburst" in blue.

Block of the 15 bongos issue used for overseas double weight letter rate. From Upjurs, with straightline unboxed UPJURS handstamp in greenish black, and stepped-box UPJURS/UPPER BONGOLAND, applied in Post Office Foreign Section, in red.

Early practioners of aerial mail, using hot air balloons (*ballon monté*), the Upper Bongoland Post Office had its disappointments. On 21 May, 1869, the balloon *Kweezim II*, carrying approximately 543 letters from Nodnol, and bound for Upyurs, caught fire immediately on assent and crashed in flames. Very few pieces of mail survived, most were scorched by the fire.

ex D. A. Sonej

Ministry of Posts and Communications official, or "penalty envelope", used as an ambulance cover for the above balloon crash mail item.



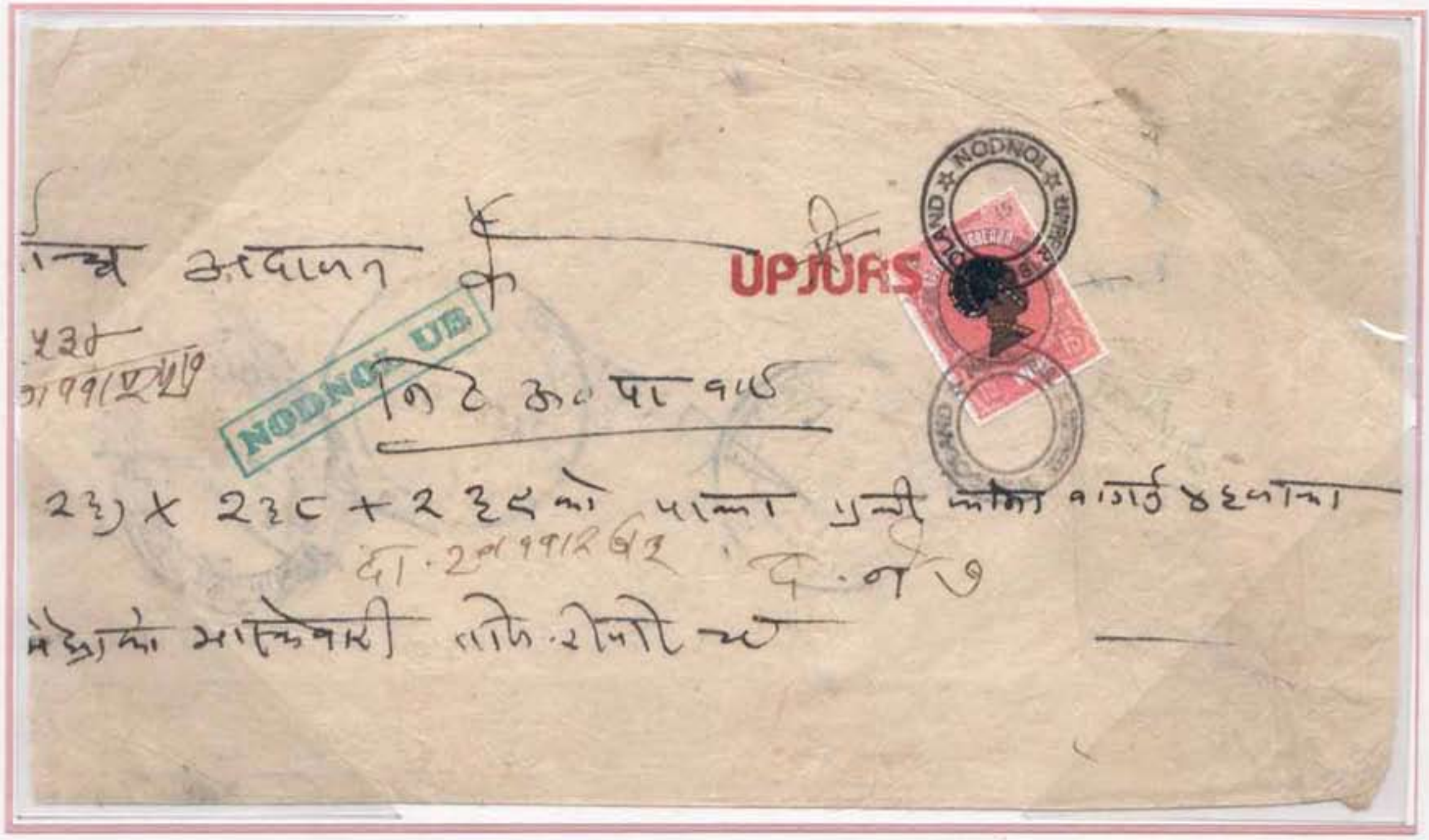
ex D. A. Sonej

Aerial mail (balloon post) cover from Upjurs to Bombay. Adhesives cancelled with special fancy Upyurs [sic] first flight commemorative cancellation of 30 September, 1869.

Aerial mail (balloon post) cover from Upjurs to Genes, France. Adhesives cancelled with special undated fancy cancellation. Received in Genes 27 February, 1885.

Diagonally bisected 15 bongos stamp used for 7½ bongos local (within city limits) rate.
Cancelled and tied with double line boxed UPJURS UB [UB = Upper Bongoland) in mauve.
Receiving office applied reversed "star burst" UPJURS handstamp in black.

Single rate inland letter requiring 15 bongos prepayment. From Nodnol to Upjurs.
Adhesive cancelled and tied with Nodnol double ring circular handstamp. Despatch office
also applied single line boxed NODNOL UB handstamp in green, and arrival
office applied straight line UPJURS handstamp in red.



Pair of 15 bongos issue paying the single weight rate to Europe (Italy) from Nodnol.
Both adhesives cancelled with single strike of the stepped box UPPER BONGOLAND/NODNOL device in red. Also traces of the same strike in non-permitted (as barely legible by postal workers) in light blue. This cover travelled to the East Coast, thence by dhow to Durban where the Cape of Good Hope 4d. triangular of 1853 was applied and cancelled with the Durban paquebot c.d.s. of 26 September, 1869. It is presumed the cover was sent from Capetown on regular mail boat service.

ex C. J. G. Bank

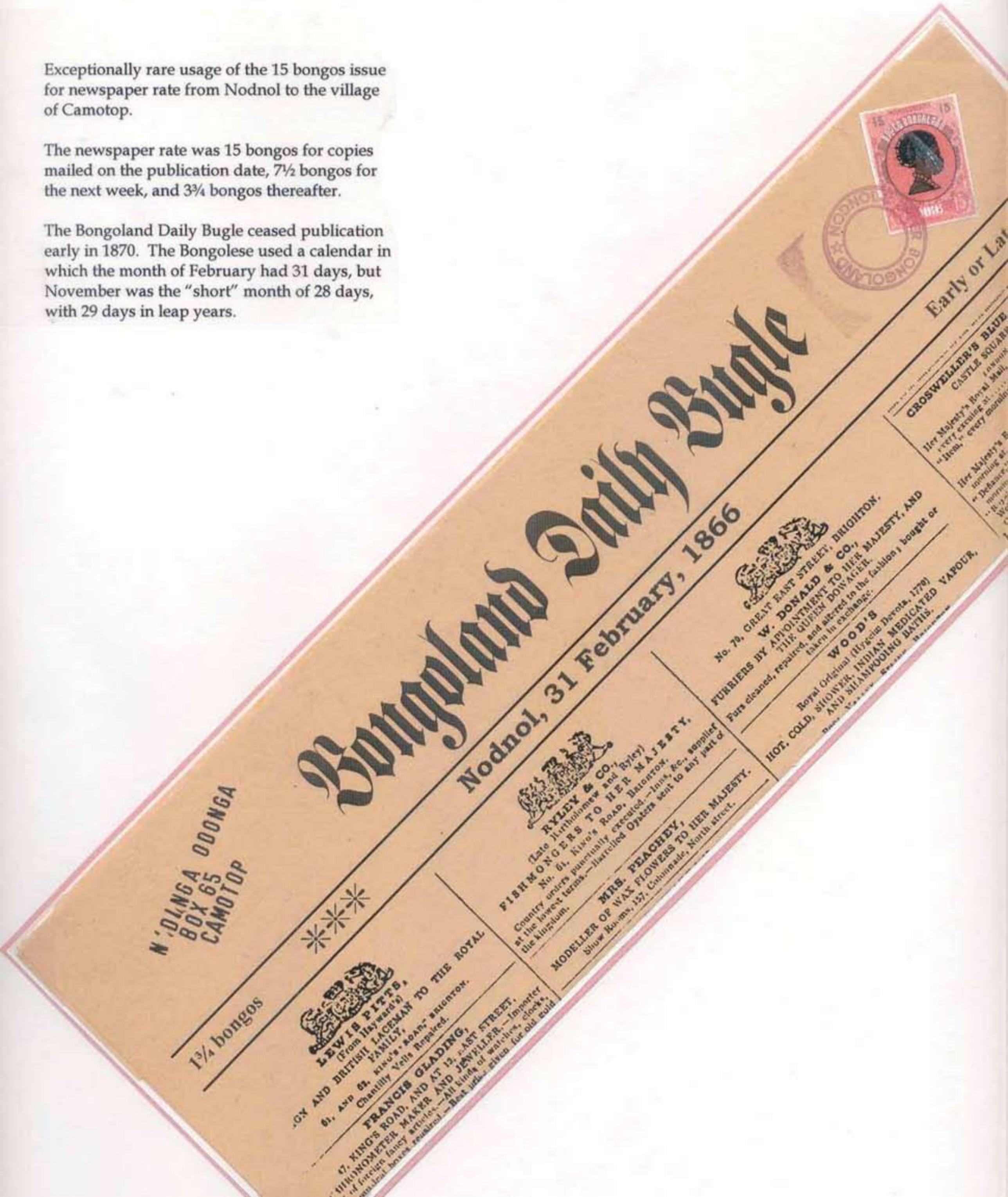
Pair of 15 bongos issue paying the single weight rate to U.S.A. (Detroit) from Upyurs
Both adhesives cancelled with boxed straightline UPJURS UB device in green. Cover travelled north to headwaters of the Nile, then downstream to Alexandria, where GB 1d. applied at British P.O. and cancelled with Alexandria duplex B01 of 19 July, 1868. Cover then went via London and New York (red arriva c.d.s.) to Detroit.

ex A. M. Wriggle

Exceptionally rare usage of the 15 bongos issue for newspaper rate from Nodnol to the village of Camotop.

The newspaper rate was 15 bongos for copies mailed on the publication date, 7½ bongos for the next week, and 3¾ bongos thereafter.

The Bongoland Daily Bugle ceased publication early in 1870. The Bongolese used a calendar in which the month of February had 31 days, but November was the "short" month of 28 days, with 29 days in leap years.



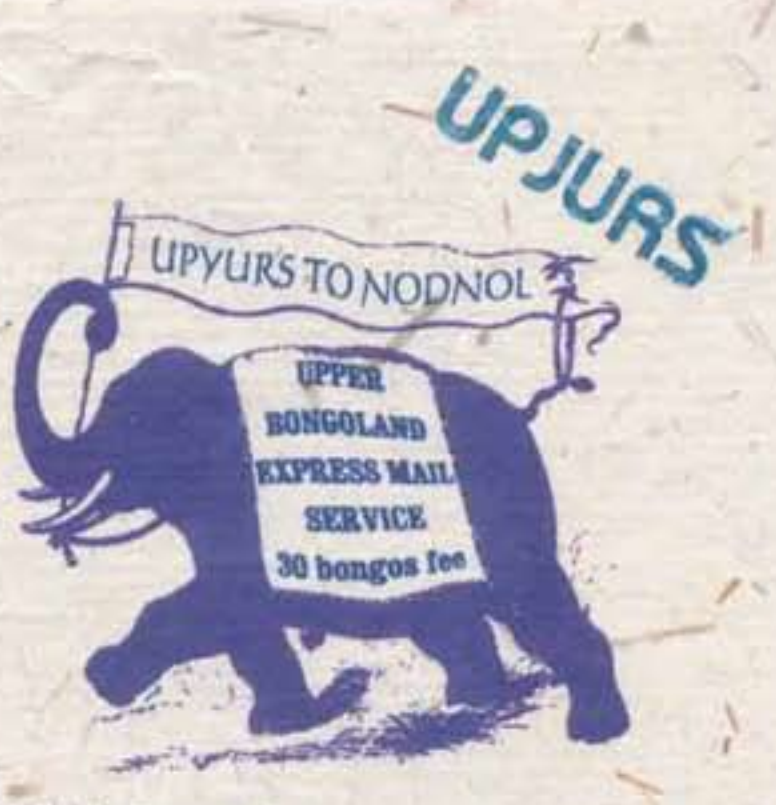
Village "Fly Speck" mail, 1870, from Notsek to Nodnol. Comparable to the Swedish *Fjäderbrev* (feather covers). In contrast to sophisticated city dwellers, villagers believed that by impressing a flying insect into sealing wax on the cover, the cover would be delivered faster (literally, flown to destination). Such covers are known as ***muscabriefs***. Bridge type c.d.s. cancellations were used in rural post; the colour of the cancellation designating the postal district (green = District 11).

ex Musca domestica

Following the 1871 outbreak of trypanosomiasis (sleeping sickness) among postal workers handling *muscabriefs*, the authorities prohibited (Post Office Reg. 71/098) the use of real insects. As a result, as with this cover from Camotep to Onearse Perorse, 1871, village mail was often embellished with hand drawn flies; the more flies, the faster the mail would travel. Annotation "HPH" = "Haste, Poste Haste"; blue cancellation is from District 5a.

ex Musca domestica

The Bongolese Post Office operated an Express Mail service between Nodnol and Upjurs.
The service utilized elephants and was colloquially known as *The Elephant Express*.
The service required a surcharge of 30 bongos above the regular single weight letter rate
of 15 bongos; no multiple weight letters, packages or other correspondence types were permitted.
The Post Office issued special wrappers for this service, printed in red for the service from
Nodnol to Upjurs, and in blue for the opposite direction. By convention, but not regulation,
cancelling devices followed the same colour scheme.



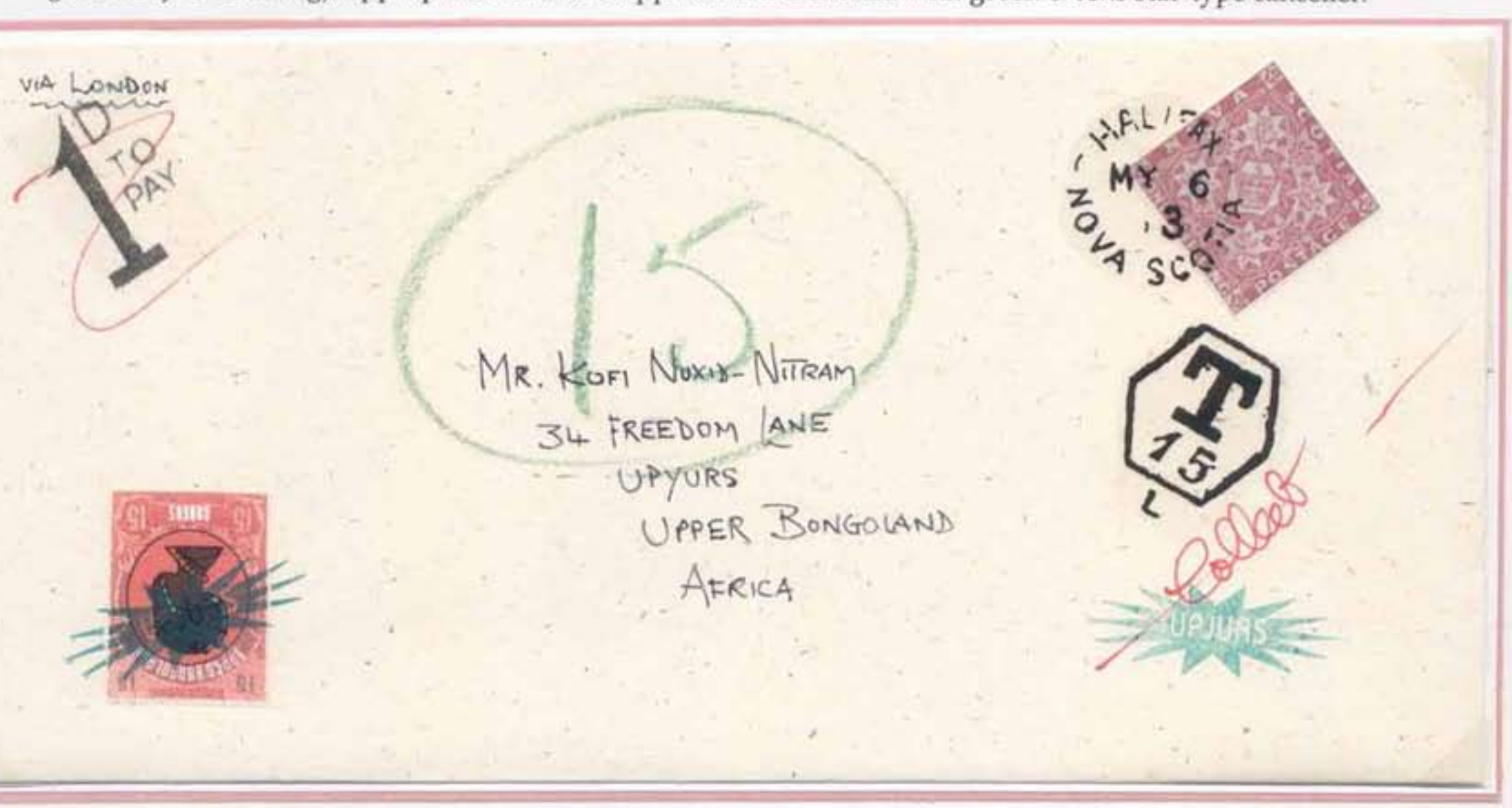
By Durabo
for Ilogeau

M'Bumbo Gongin
489 Ashantahenee Yard
Nodnol

As with the postage stamps of other countries, Upper Bongoland stamps served the dual purpose of pre-payment of mail and for the collection of postage due on underpaid items.

England to Upper Bongoland franked with GB 1d. Rated 1d. more to pay as letter was overweight (more than 1 oz.). Upper Bongoland postal service rated the postage due as 30 bongos (green crayon manuscript mark), but later revised this to 15 bongos—for which appropriate stamp applied and cancelled with boxed NODNOL UB device in red. Ship Letter handstamp applied in England at port of departure.

Halifax, Nova Scotia, to Upyurs, franked with Nova Scotia 1/- issue and sent via London. In London rated as 1d. to pay and T/15 hexagonal handstamp applied to indicate 15 bongos due in Upper Bongoland. Rated 15 bongos (manuscript green crayon marking), appropriate adhesive applied and cancelled with green UPJURS star-type canceller.



Bongolese commercial enterprises were quick to adopt the Western style of product and activity promotion by the use of so-called "corner cards". These examples illustrate the diversity of design and ingenuity of advertising.

Following representation from the indigenous pygmy population, who claimed to be physiologically challenged by the use of the 15 bongos postage stamps, the Upper Bongoland authorities passed legislation (P.L. 456/67) to permit special arrangements for pygmy villages.
These arrangements centered around four factors: (a) special small-format 15 bongos stamps were to be printed, (b) these stamps had to be applied to specially prepared postal stationery which clearly showed the phrase "Pygmy Village Post", and (c) the special stamps, stationery could only be used for mail between authorised pygmy villages, and (d) distinctive cancelling devices, commensurate in size with the special stamps, were to be used.
Two types of Pygmy Village Post stationery are known, as are printings on different native papers.

From Elttil to Notsek – Type I Stationery

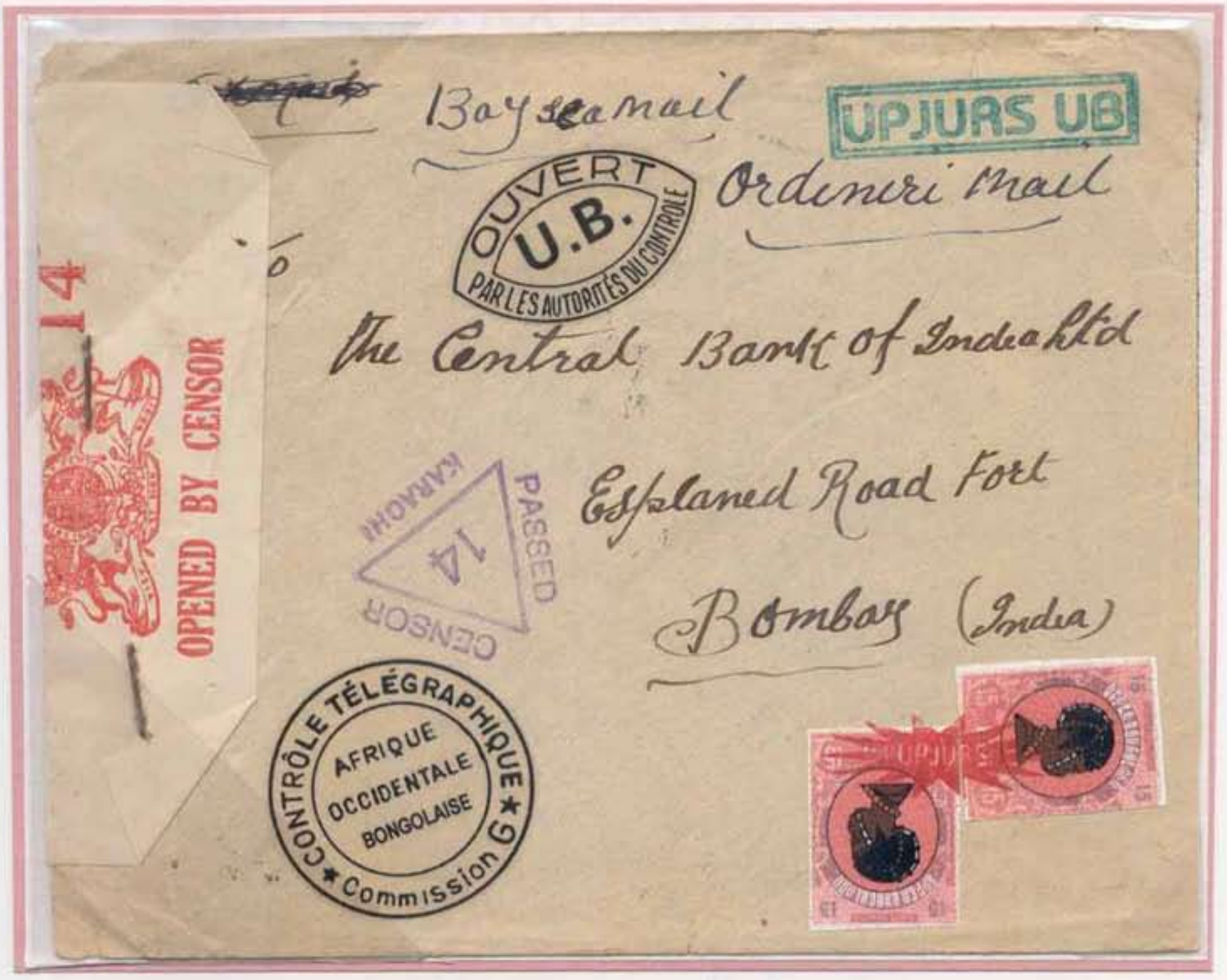
From Notsek to Elttil – Type II Stationery

Attempted use from Notsek to Nodnol, the capital city.
Returned to sender with exceptionally rare four line handstamp reading:
"STAMPS NOT VALID/OUTSIDE OF PYGMY VILLAGE/RETURN TO SENDER/Postmaster Nodnol"

From Upjurs to Bombay during the 1872 War of Sequestration between Upper Bongoland and Lower Bongoland.

Note domestic and Indian censorship marks and labels.

U.B. = Upper Bongoland



From Nodnol to New York, USA, during the 1872 War of Sequestration between Upper Bongoland and Lower Bongoland.

Note domestic and Britishcensorship marks; cover passed through England *en route* to USA.

During the Blockade of Nodnol, which took place in the summer of 1872 War of Sequestration between Upper Bongoland and Lower Bongoland, mail services were seriously disrupted as postal employees were enlisted to man the city's defenses. To abate the problem within Nodnol, the local Upper Bongoland Boy Scout troops organized an emergency mail service so as to collect and deliver mail by bicycle. Such mail, which is extremely rare (only three items are extant), required the use of regular [state] postage and a surcharge of 1 bongo for the Scout Fund.

To show payment of the Scout Fund service fee, the UBBS issued a postage stamp-like design as a photographic print. The design features Scout Master Nicholas Carter riding a bicycle. Two types of this stamp are known: (a) produced using a Kodak wet process, and (b) produced by a Polaroid dry method. When applied to the mail items, the novel "stamps" were cancelled at UBBS headquarters with a special handstamp incorporating the Boy Scout movement logo.

It is believed by many that General Robert S. S. Baden-Powell copied this idea in South Africa during the Boer War.

L

Rev. Odookingko
Saint Bartomo Cathedral
City

BY MESSENGER

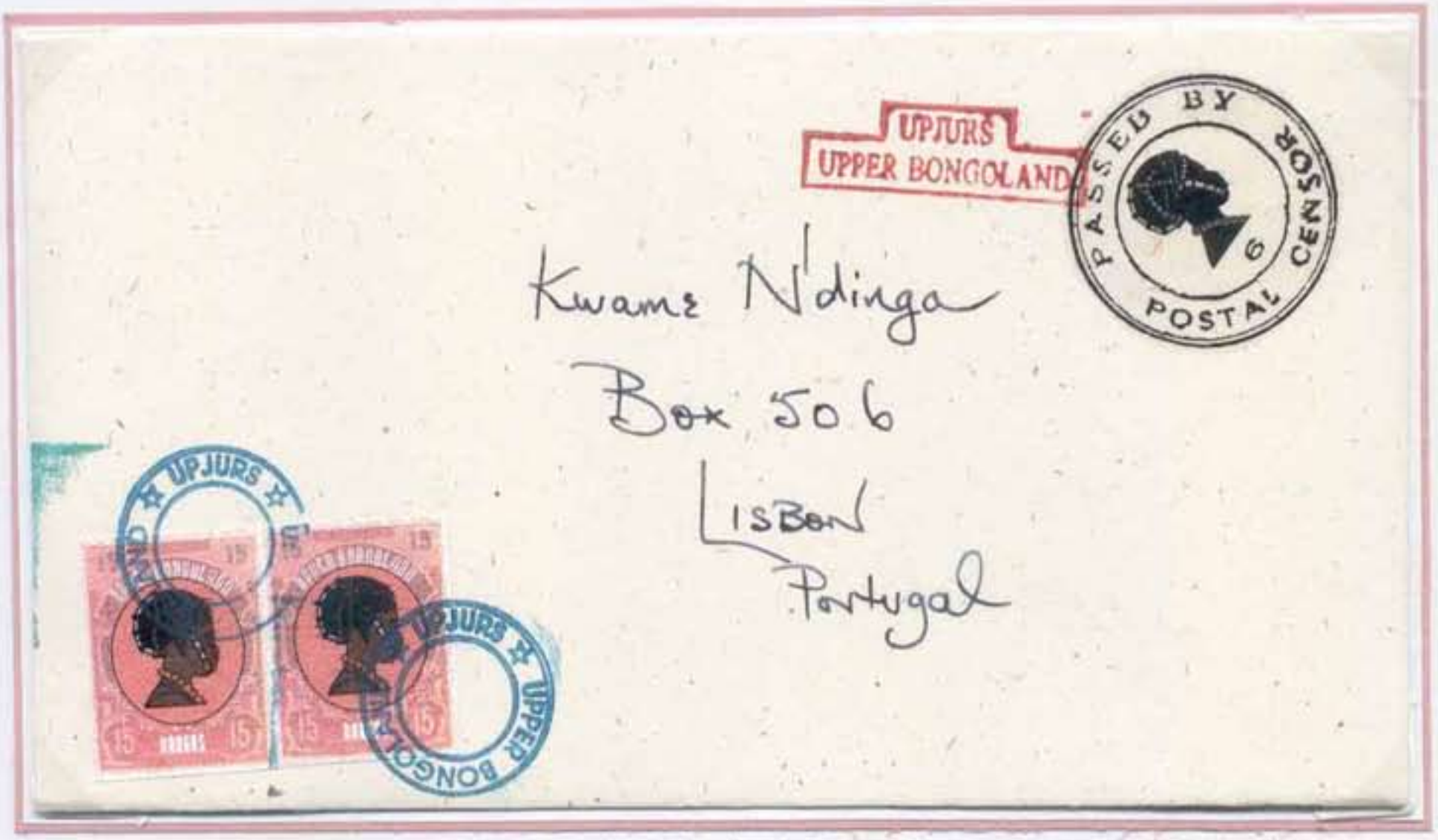
6407

ex Ferdinand Luarenz
RBPS Certificate No. 4589¼

Type I (Kodak)

Type II (Polaroid)

During the War of Secession, when Upper Bongoland separated from Central and Lower Bongoland, postal services between the territories were suspended. Communications between residents of Upper and Lower Bongoland were prohibited by decree. In order to maintain communications with family in friends in Lower Bongoland, citizens of Upper Bongoland could use the services of Bongo Express Company which maintained offices in all the territories as well as at Lisbon in neutral Portugal. The Lisbon office served as an undercover service and forwarded mail as appropriate between the belligerents.



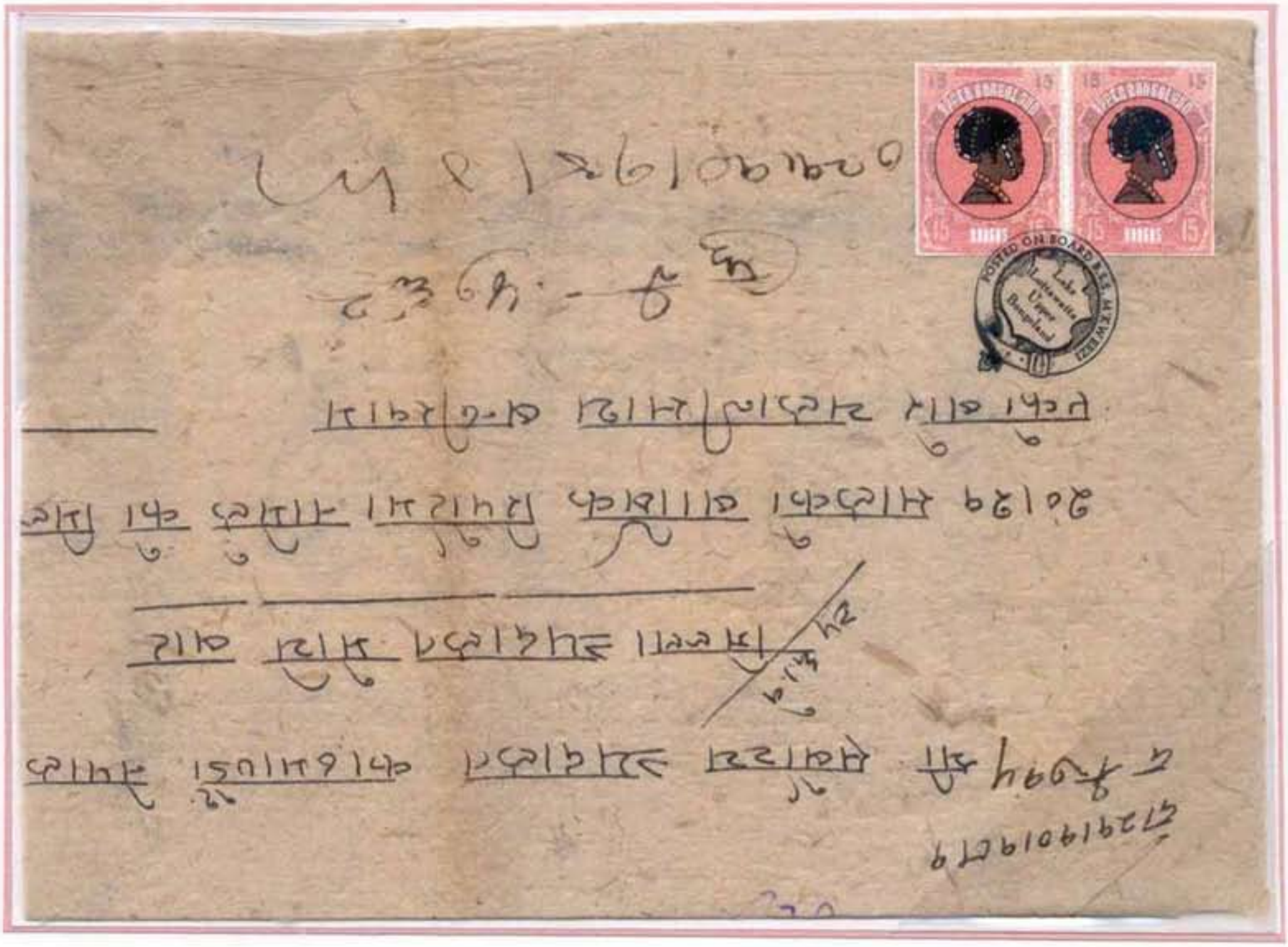
Undercover mail from Upper Bongoland to the Bongo Express Company in Portugal

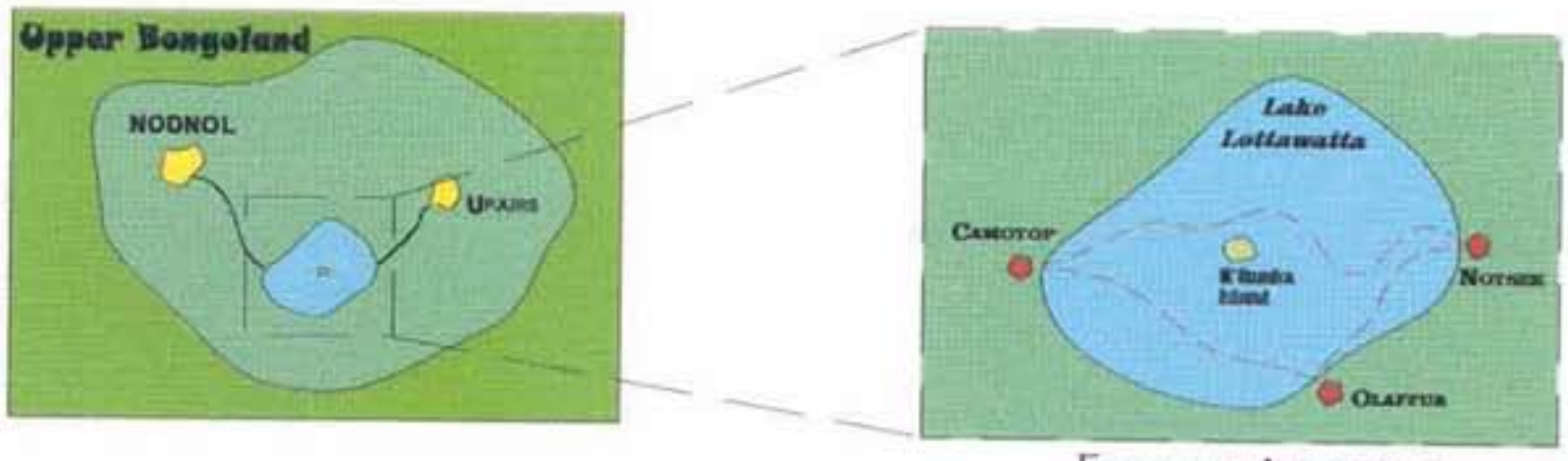
Portuguese censor handstamp on reverse applied after arrival in Madeira en route to Lisbon

Exceptionally rare and unusual Upper Bongoland Provident Society Christmas Seal on cover. Seals were produced each year between 1882 and 1897. Few are known used. A well known Upper Bongolese philatelist was the model for Santa Claus.

ex Hotchnah
RBPS Certificate No. 12590

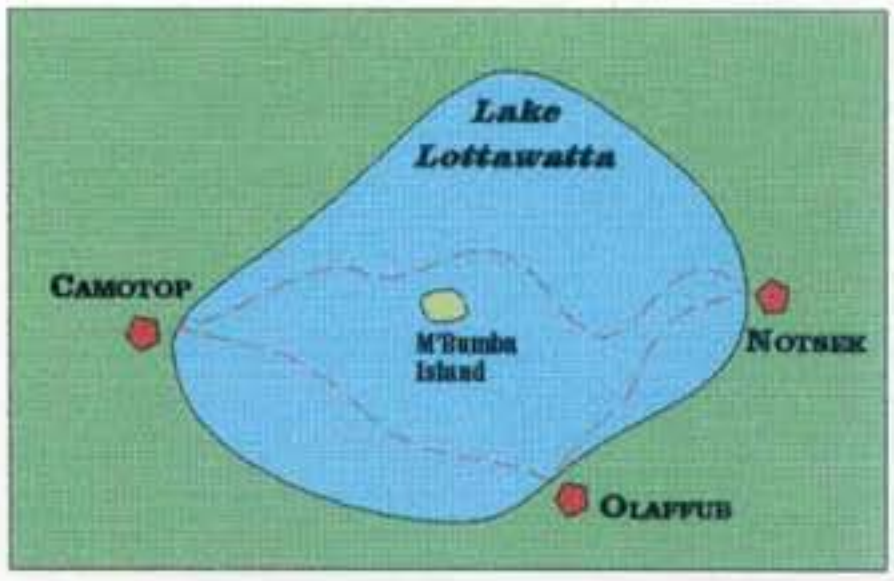
Lake mail cover posted on board the *B.S.S. M'Kweezi*.
A mail ferry service operated between the villages of Camotop, Notsek and Olaffub on the shores of Lake Lottawata.
Note the unusual, and rare, belt-and-buckle fancy cancellation.



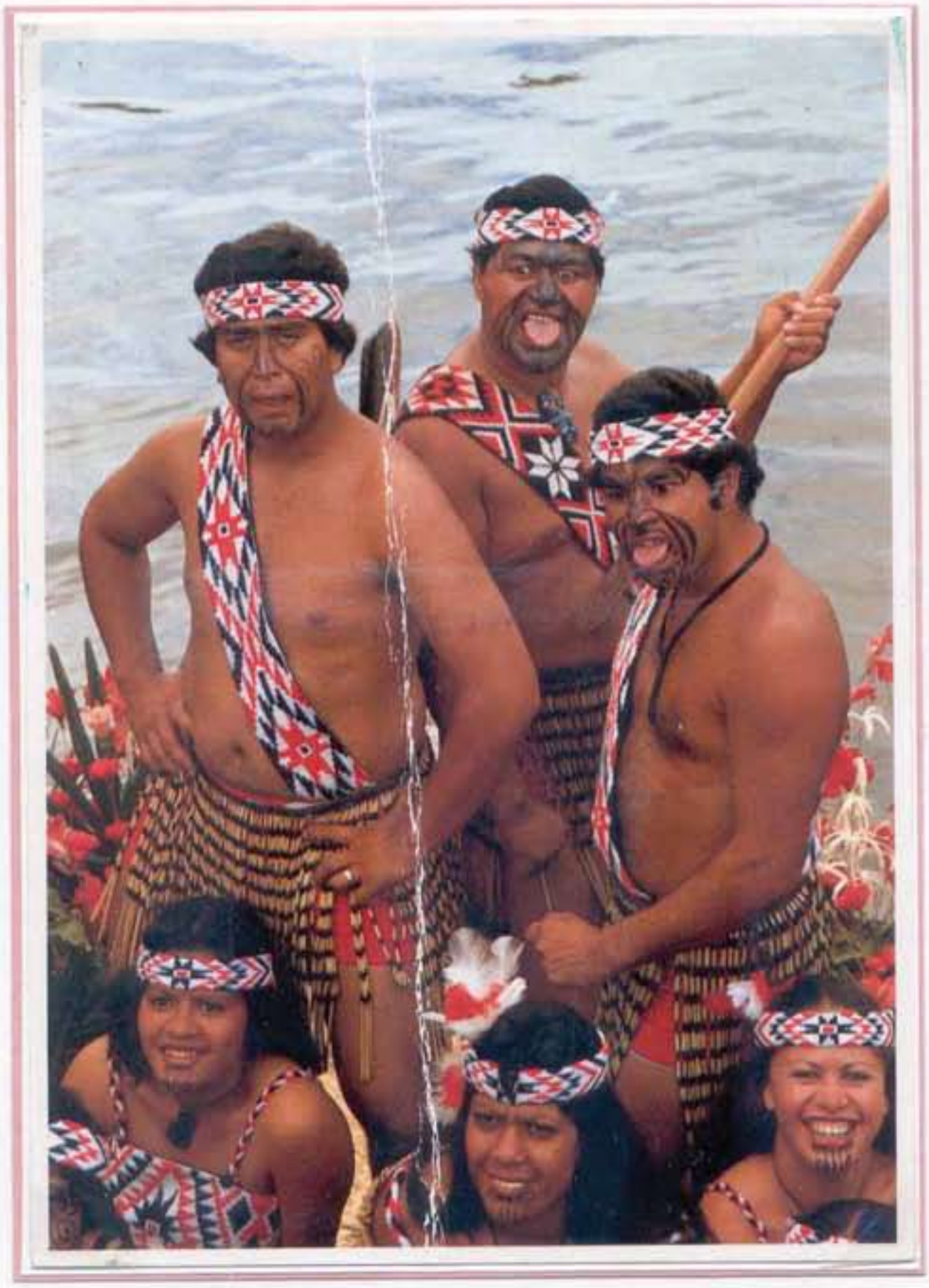


Ferry service routes

As can be seen from the map below, the ferry routes across Lake Lottawatta did not stop at the island of M'Bumba. Thus, mail to and from the island was carried to passing ferryboats by canoe. To protect the mail from rough waters, spray and inclement weather, the mail was carried in modified Campbell's Soup cans by the postal employees at M'Bumba.



So-called"Tin Can Mail" from M'Bumba Island received special cancels and other cachets. Recent reports in the *Upper Bongoland Philatelist*, infer that this mail was totally contrived and philatelic in nature. However, there is no proof of this.



Photograph taken on the Dixon-Mason Expedition (1868-1870) of the postal employees at M'Bumba.

Tin Can Canoe Mail Manager, George "Weismüller" Sellquen, is at centre, back row.

Maximum Cards, correctly linking the image on the card with the applied adhesive (15 bongos, first issue), and with the commemorative cancellation.

Issued for the annual Miss Upper Bongoland competitions in 1872 (top) and 1873 (lower). Note the differences in placement (left and right of "pictorial" commemorative postmark) and spacing (narrow and wide) of the bars cancelling the adhesives.

As with the postage stamps of Great Britain, Upper Bongoland stamps served the dual purpose of pre-payment of mail and for payment of fiscal duties.

Documents, such as receipts for small amounts, i.e., less than 5,000 Bongos, required a 15 Bongos stamp to be applied and cancelled to prevent reuse. Most usually, this cancellation was carried out by pen, writing a name, date or similar inscription over the stamp. Manuscript cancellations for fiscal use can usually only be confirmed when the stamp is seen on the document as some smaller villages, without Post Office cancelling devices, also adopted manuscript cancellation.

THE NODNOL TENNIS AND COUNTRY CLUB

36a Ashantahenee Road, Nodnol 22, Upper Bongoland

Date: 14/7 67

Received from Mr. Kwame Obeye-Anim

The Sum of Three Thousand four hundred and Thirty – *bongos* Bs. 3430 –

For Bar/tab

For and on behalf of NTCC

N'DONO KWASI-OBOYEEOMO

Secretary and Treasurer

Upper Bongoland was one of the first countries to adopt the Postal Order system for the transfer of small sums. The First Upper Bongoland Postal Orders were for 30 bongos, with a poundage of 3 bongos (i.e., cost of the Order was 10% of the value). The 30 bongos value was chosen as it was an exact multiple of the then current postage rate. Moreover, the design of the Postal Order incorporated the 15 bongos postage stamp vignette on both front and the reverse.

COUNTERFOIL

30

Detach this Counterfoil

11797

NOT NEGOTIABLE 11797

UPPER BONGOLAND

POSTAL ORDER POSTAL ORDER

3b. ORDER POUNDAGE POSTAL

30 THIRTY BONGOS 30

To the
*POSTMASTER in charge of the MONEY ORDER OFFICE at** .....
***PAY** to** .....*at any time within*
Three Calendar Months from the last day of the Month of issue the sum of **THIRTY BONGOS**
on account of the Postmaster-General .

.....*POSTMASTER*

PAYING OFFICE STAMP WITH DATE

* Sender is recommended to fill in name of paying MONEY ORDER OFFICE and MUST fill in name of Payee before sending.

RECEIVED the above-named sum.....
Signature

ISSUING OFFICE STAMP WITH DATE NODNOL MY 2 86 NODNOL

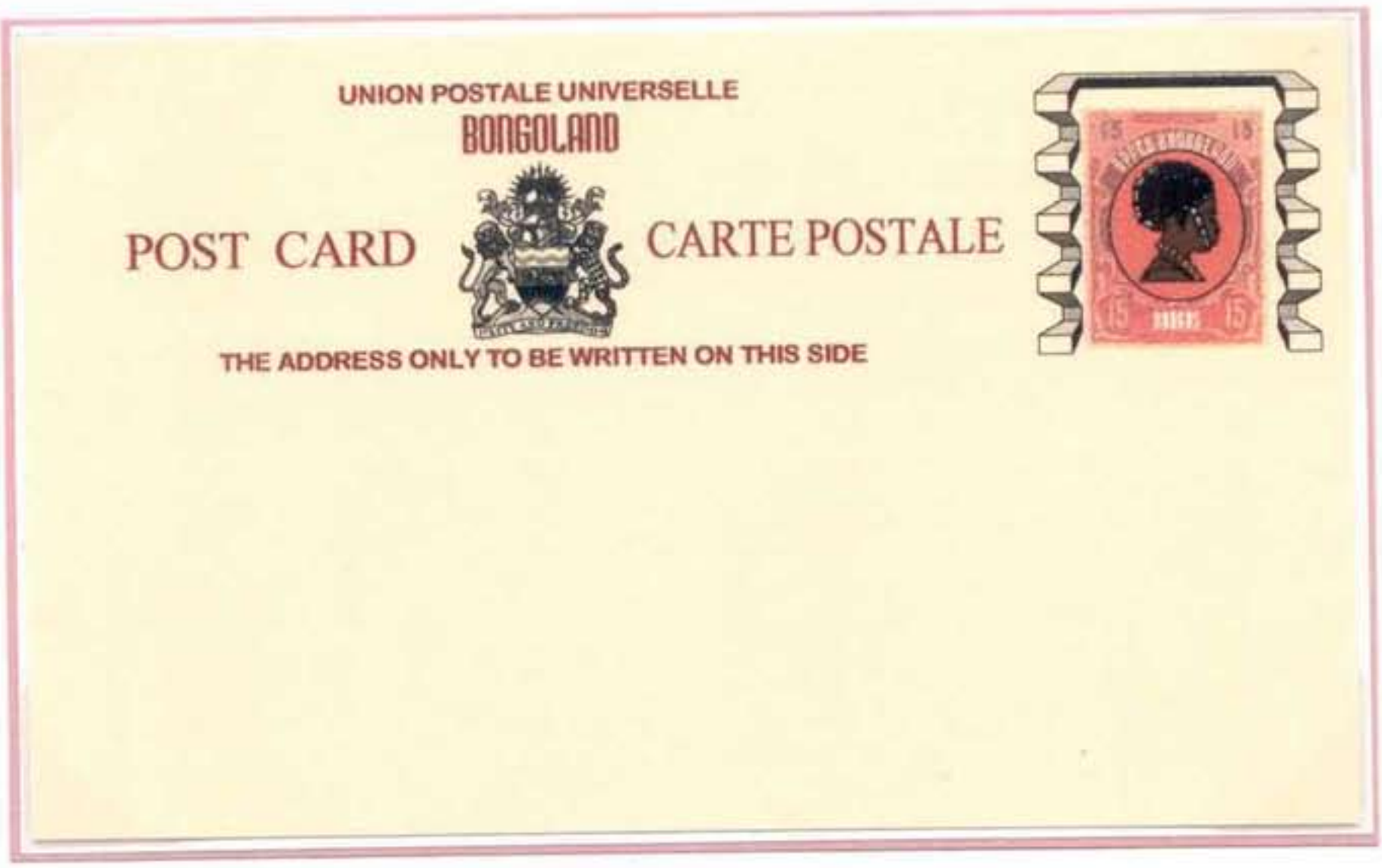
CONDITIONS OF PAYMENT

1. *CROSSED POSTAL ORDERS WILL ONLY BE PAID THROUGH A BANK.*
2. *THE SENDER MUST FILL IN THE NAME OF THE PAYEE IN INK BEFORE POSTING THE ORDER.*
3. *THE PAYEE MUST SIGN THE ORDER BEFORE PAYMENT.*
4. *PAYMENT MAY BE REFUSED IF THIS ORDER HAS ANY ERASURES OR ALTERATIONS OR IS CUT, DEFACED OR MUTILATED.*
5. *THE COUNTERFOIL MUST BE PRODUCED WHEN MAKING ENQUIRIES REGARDING THIS ORDER.*
6. *A DUPLICATE MAY BE ISSUED AFTER 6 MONTHS FOLLOWING THE LAST DAY OF THE MONTH OF ISSUE.*

The Postmaster-General, Ministry of Posts and Communications, Upper Bongoland, will not consider any applications in respect of an Order which has miscarried, or has been lost or destroyed, unless the counterfoil is produced.

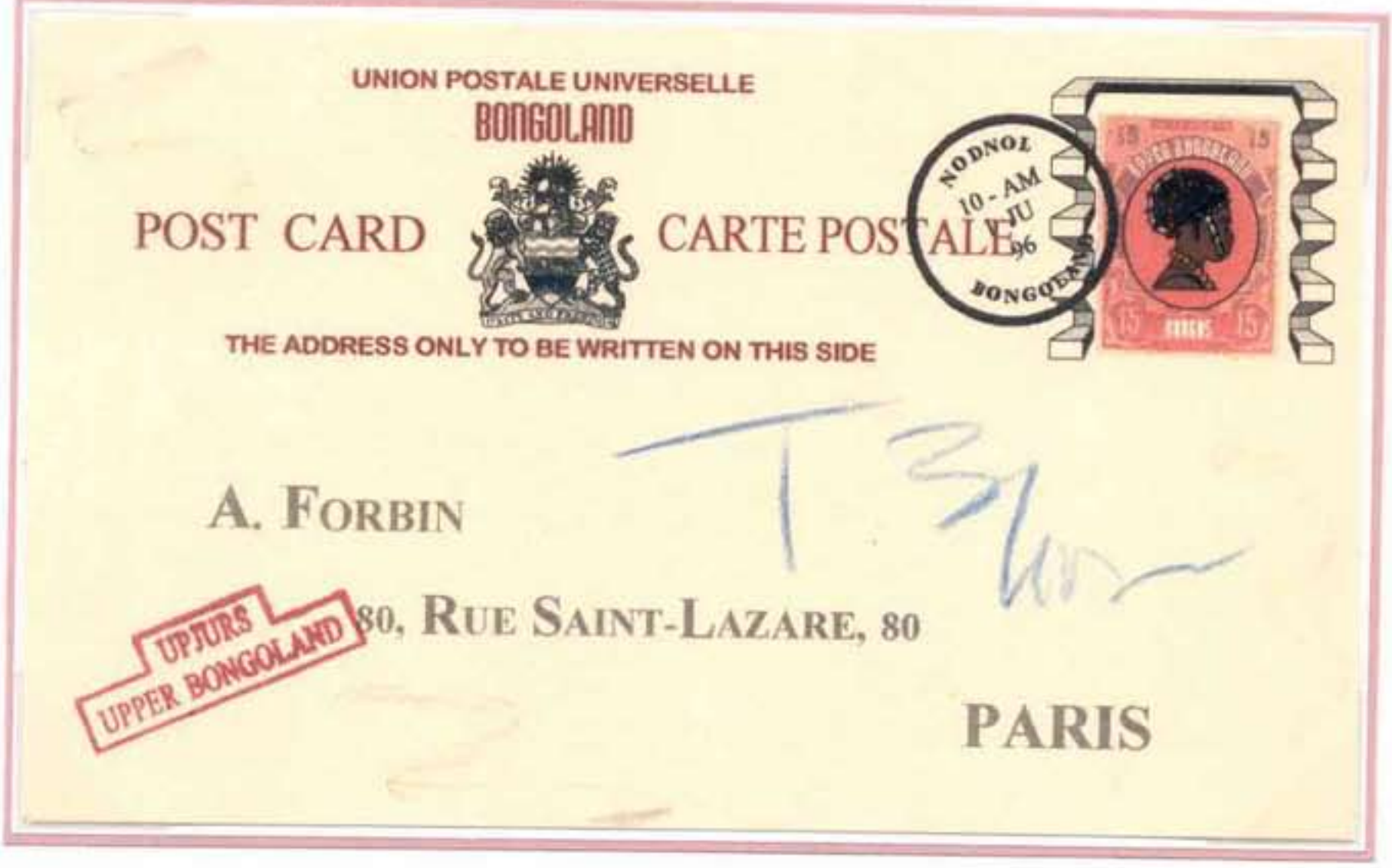
Reverse side of 30 bongos Postal Order

Unused 1882 postal stationery card showing use of the 1865 15 bongos adhesive issue cliché as indicia. Cards were intended for overseas use only..



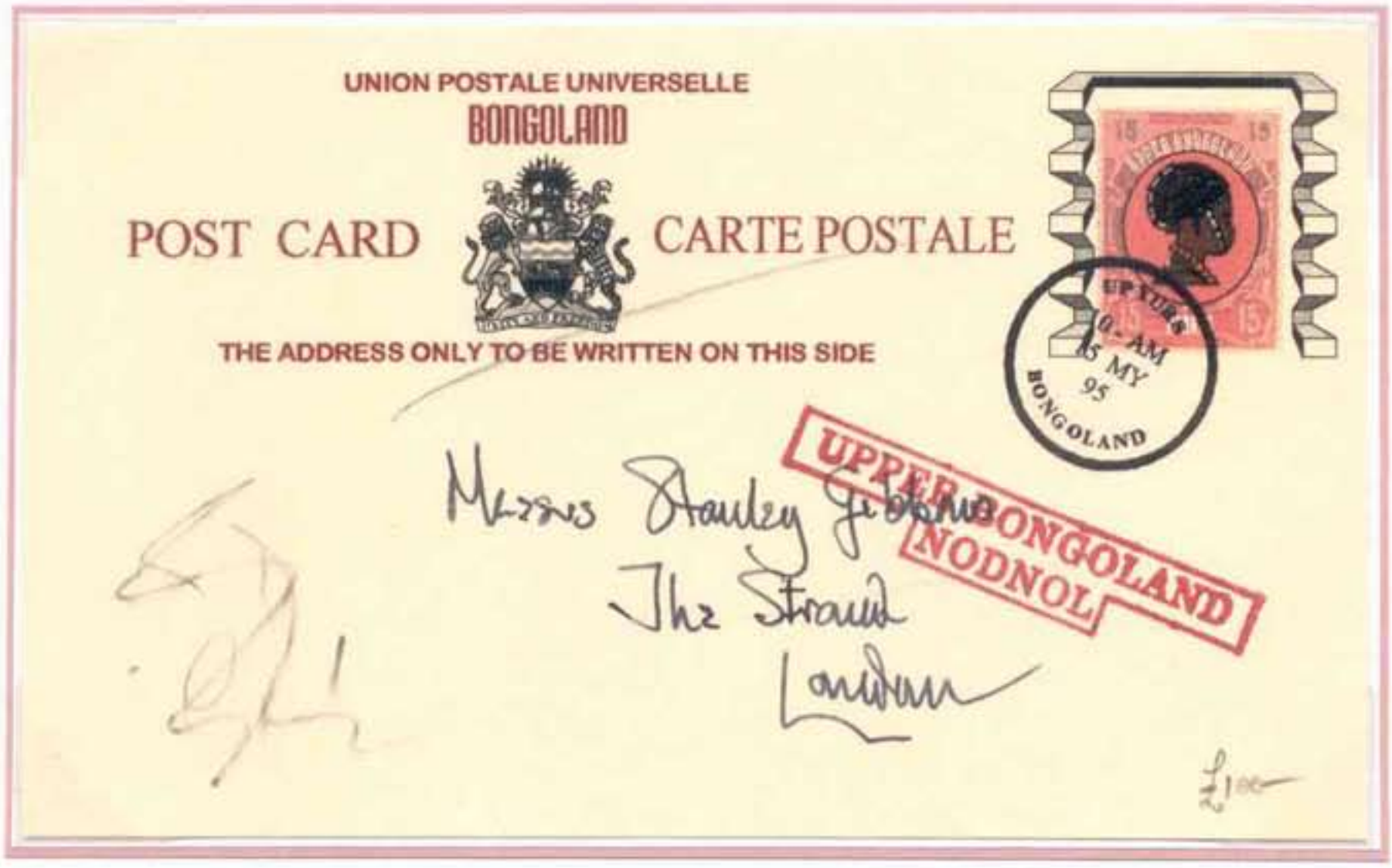
Overprinted SPECIMEN for UPU distribution.
Upper Bongoland signed a UPU protocol in August, 1868.

From Nodnol, via Upjurs, to Paris, France. Cancelled with Nodnol c.d.s. of 1 June, 1896. Taxed on arrival.
By convention in Upper Bongoland, after 1871 postal reform, handstamps of transit offices were struck in red.

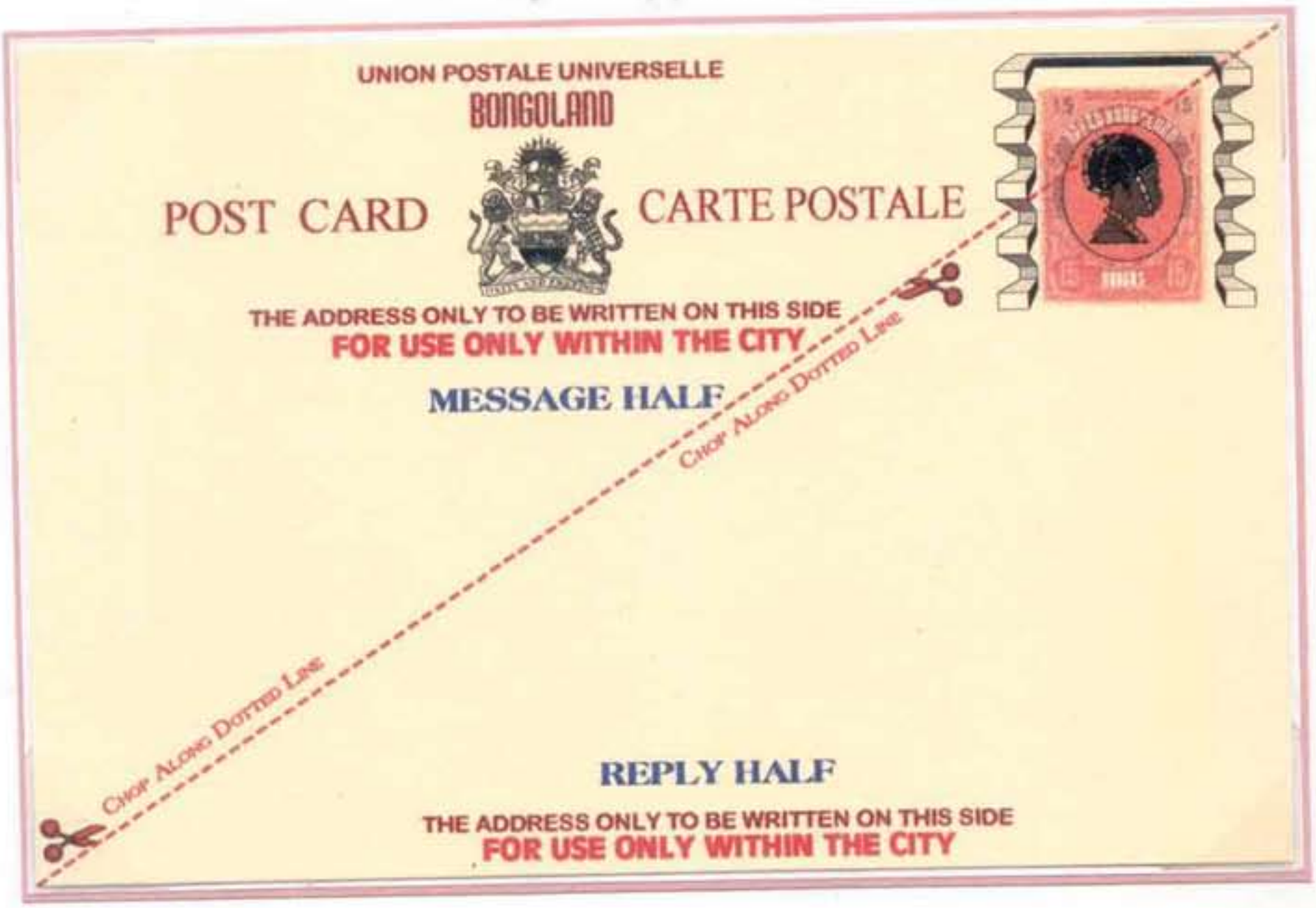


ex Shoeman

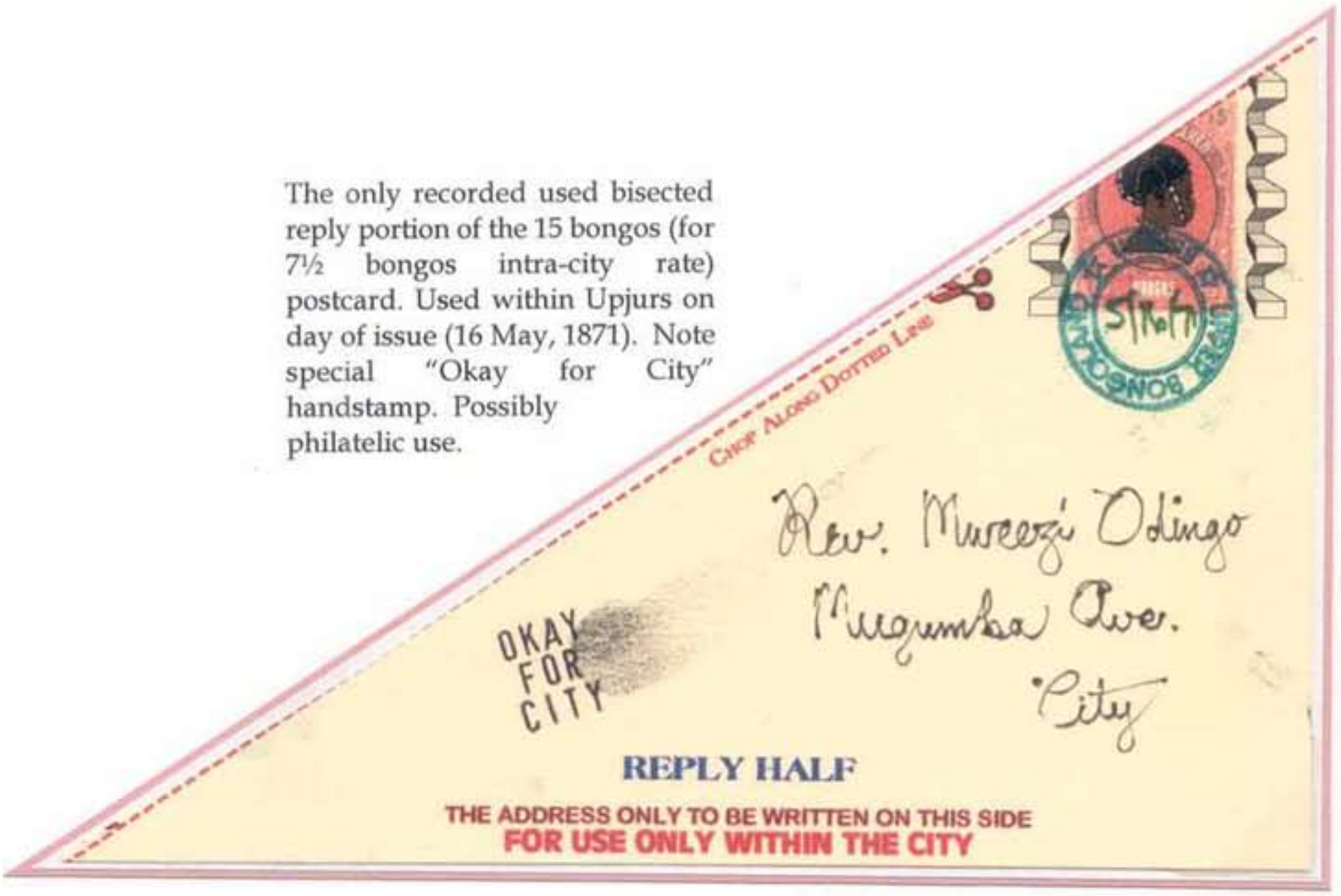
From Upjurs to London, England, via Nodnol. Note spelling of UPYURS in c.d.s. of 15 May, 1895.



Following representation from merchants complaining of the high costs of communication for brief messages, the Bongoland Post Office reduced the rate for postcards within the cities of Nodnol and Upjurs to 7½ bongos. To meet the business need, the 15 bongos 1868 postal stationery card was reissued in 1871 and overprinted to permit a message and reply when bisected.



The only recorded used bisected reply portion of the 15 bongos (for 7½ bongos intra-city rate) postcard. Used within Upjurs on day of issue (16 May, 1871). Note special "Okay for City" handstamp. Possibly philatelic use.



Quasi-official reprint (1998), from original plates, by Amos Press, successors to Charles, Kipper & West.

Three plates, each of 20 clichés, were used for the reprint.

It was found impossible to match the pigments used for inks used in the production of the original issues, nor to obtain the correct paper stock. Hence the different appearence between the reprints and the original.

Plate I

Courtesy of Retep Nitram, Amos Press

Quasi-official reprint (1998), from original plates, by Amos Press, successors to Charles, Kipper & West.

Both items courtesy of Retep Nitram, Amos Press

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Plate II

Cliché at position 2, row 2, exhibits the inverted centre variety.

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Plate III

Cliché at position 3, row 4, exhibits the missing necklass variety.

PSGSA