

The reprinting (?) of Waterlow & Sons Postal Stationery cards with views from the Belgian military campaign in East Africa, 1914 to 1916 (Stibbe 11, 12, 17 & 18) as postcards

In this short contribution, for brevity:

- 1) I shall refer to the Waterlow & Sons Postal Stationery Cards as “Waterlow Cards”.
- 2) I shall refer to postcards that have the same images as “Reprinted (?) Cards”. I’ve inserted (?) because I do not know whether they predate or postdate the printing of the Waterlow and Sons’ postal stationery. However, a reprinting does seem to be the more reasonable choice.

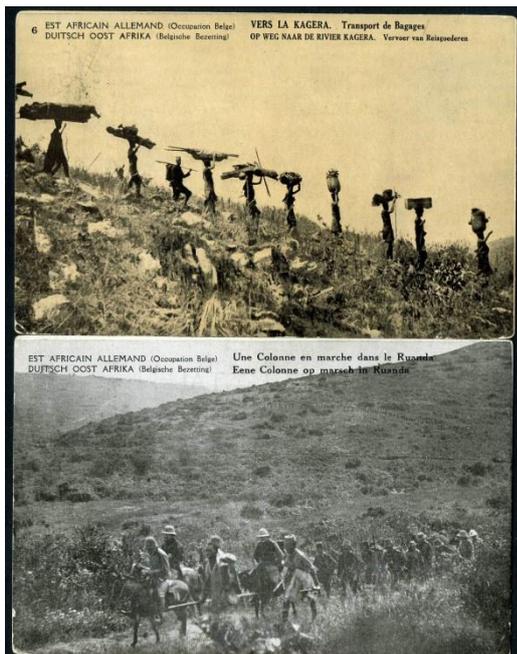


Figure 1: The view side of the cards
Top: A Waterlow Card
Below: A Reprinted (?) Card
(Waterlow view N° 5)



Figure 2: The reverse side
Top: A Waterlow Card
Below: A Reprinted (?) Card

Scotex, an annual Scottish philatelic dealers’ fair, was held in Perth in October 2013. I heeded the advice that Marc Oblin gave us at the 2013 AGM, to visit postcard dealers’ stands as well as those of stamp dealers. I’m glad I did. (Thank you, Marc!) At one of these stands, in a box labelled “Africa – East” that was not receiving any attention, I found a number of World War 1 view cards. There were about twelve. As usual, simple views (such as the Kagera River) were the cheapest (£1.50) while cards showing soldiers (such as those in Figure 1) were priced more highly (£4). They are not the postal stationery cards catalogued in Stibbe, although they have the same views. I bought seven of the more interesting. They are:

<u>(Waterlow Number)</u>	<u>Inscription (French)</u>
(5)	Un Colonne en march dans la Ruanda
(16)	Marais de la Kagera
(29)	En Caravane vers Tabora

- (31) Gottorp La Saline
- (32) La Kagera
- (41) Les Positions de la Sabea, vues du Mont Mitoko
- (45) Pont de Fortune sur la Livone (Ruanda)

I had never seen these post cards before, but then, I had never looked! Since this purchase, I have searched the internet and found a few examples for sale. All were unused. Has any Study Circle member seen any used examples?

To the naked eye, there are very obvious differences:

Waterlow Card

Chamois coloured card
 Ink on the image appears brownish black
 Imprinted stamp (Figure 2)
 Waterlow attribution
 View numbered

Reprinted (?) Card

Pale cream coloured card
 Ink on the image appears black
 Different reverse, no stamp (Figure 2)
 No printer's name
 View not numbered

The image on the Reprinted (?) Card appears to have greater contrast.

However on the microscopic scale, there are significant similarities.

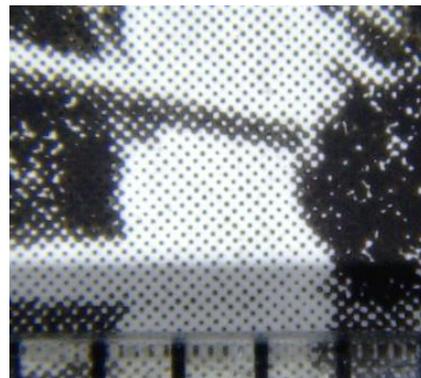
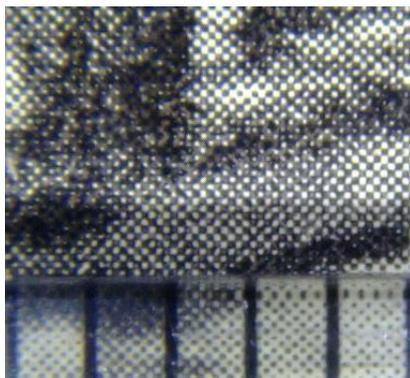


Figure 3
Digital microscope images (x9) (Scale = mm divisions). [NB the ruler on which the scale is engraved casts a shadow, producing a darker strip above it.]

a) Waterlow Card N° 21.

Area = part of the pirogue that is in midstream.

b) Reprinted (?) Card with the Waterlow image N° 45

Area = pole between the officer and an African soldier in the river.

The images on both cards are printed by the halftone process, in monochrome. In this process the original photograph is reproduced by copying it as rows of equally spaced dots. Each of these dots is given the appropriate shade of grey. A greyscale is created by the area of ink in the square area of the card surface in which a single “dot” exists. [In practice, mid-grey is created by alternating black and white squares in both horizontal and vertical directions, giving a chessboard appearance – e.g. see the pirogue hull in Figure 3a. Shades lighter than this are created by a variable size black dot in a white square – e.g. see Figure

the Waterlow Cards and 4.6 mm on the Reprinted (?) Cards. On the Reprinted (?) Cards, less care was taken with consistency for its positioning. The coefficients of variation for these are 19% for the Waterlow Cards and 28% for the Reprinted (?) Cards.

These Reprinted (?) Cards raise a number of questions. If this knowledge exists, it can be shared through correspondence in future issues of the Bulletin and I would appreciate comments from fellow members.

1: I have assumed that these images were printed first as postal stationery and then some time later reprinted in the form of postcards. It is a reasonable assumption, but not proof!

2: Who were the printers of what I have called the Reprinted (?) Cards and when were they printed?

3: Because of printing similarities in the image and the inscription on it, did Waterlow and Sons exploit the popularity of these postal stationery cards by privately printing the postcards for direct sale or on order from a card retail company? (Once the cost of creating the halftone plates has been paid, large numbers of cards can be printed cheaply and quickly – a profitable venture.)

4: Is it possible that Waterlow and Sons sold their plates to another printer who produced the postcards?

5: Who were the target customers? Were these postcards intended for postal use or for sale to collectors? (Earlier, I asked if anyone has seen postal used examples).

6: Why are there no numbers? Could it be that only a selection, possibly the more popular images, were reproduced? In which case, the presence of numbers, with some “missing” from the set of postcards, would have caused confusion.

7: Who owned the copyright to these images? Was there a breach of copyright? In his excellent book on the war in East Africa (*Tip and Run*, Wiedenfeld & Nicolson, London, 2007), Edward Paice includes image N° 50 *Entrée des Belges à Tabora* without the inscription. He writes that this picture appeared in a contemporary publication but he had not been able to find who held copyright. On the internet, A-B Ergo (*congo-14-18-partie-1.doc*) shows Waterlow images 13, 14, 22 and 33 without inscriptions. Here, also, copyright is not acknowledged. It is possible the over period of 90+ years this information may have been lost or is buried in an inaccessible dusty newspaper archive.

Our late Editor, Stuart Smith, was quite correct when he reminded us that if we are to retain the words *Study Circle* in our name, we must publish research that is evidence based rather than articles with conclusions formed by opinion. (That said, an opinion may be offered in the absence of firm evidence, but it has to be stated clearly that it is an opinion.) Philatelic research may differ from scientific research, but the same degree of rigour is desirable. Without proof we are not entitled to overstate our conclusions. For this contribution, identical images, the use of halftone printing with the same point spacing, identical inscriptions and font allow me to conclude that both types were created using the same plates. I am not entitled to conclude in which order they appeared or that Waterlow printed both types. As a communal effort, others might provide additional evidence to confirm my conclusions or propose alternatives.