

SUDAN OFFICIAL PERFIN : DIE 1

By Mike J. Burrows

Perfin : S.G. 14,12 9½mm

When Lt. Colonel John Raymond Danson 112.C., T.D., M.A., passed away on 18th June 1976 the philatelic world mourned the loss of yet another of that all too rare type of philatelist who believes in sharing, through publication, the knowledge they have gained through study of their possessions which others less fortunate are unable to acquire. The dispersal of the Sudan portion of the DANSON collection was entrusted to the Robson Lowe organisation who in 1977 conducted two sales. One held in Geneva on

In the catalogue of the Geneva sale it is lot 844, which with the excellent illustration, is of great interest to the student of the first official perfin of the Sudan. This lot was a block of 20 (5 x 4) of the 5m issue of 1897 for Egypt, which was printed by Thomas De La Rue & Company Limited in sheets of 240, divided into 4 panes of 60 (6 rows of 10), and is thought to be the largest mint piece in existence. The issue was later overprinted in Arabic and French for use in the Sudan and released perforated on the 8th February 1900

Study of the half-tone photograph of this block confirms, as had been originally stated* that it was perforated on a single die hand operated machine. The examination reveals that the first row has the perfin reading correctly. The second row is inverted/reversed. The third row is reversed and the fourth inverted. From this it will be realised that the various positions came about by folding the block in half, perforating one side, then turning the whole around and perforating the other side. Specialists in this issue have identified each row of the overprint by its various characteristics. So it might be possible to determine exactly from which position of the original plate this large block came from.

When it came to bidding this, at present unique item, sold for 425 Swiss francs.

In the same sale, a similar item, a block of 12 (4 x 3) was either unsold or withdrawn. This same piece appeared as Lot 2200 in the sale in London in November, where it was considered to be of sufficient importance to warrant an illustration. Although from a different pane position, the perfin appears as before. The first row normal, the second row inverted/reversed, and the third row reversed. The block sold for £50.

Single stamps on cover were on offer at both sales, with covers originating from BERBER, KHARTOUM, OMDURIVIAN and WADI-HALFA CAMP.

*See page 71 of S.E.P.S. Officials Catalogue (Now out of print)

Of the 1m brown and pink, watermark Quatrefoil, issued perfinned in January 1901, a complete pane of 12 x 5 of this famous camel issue was unsold. In the various lots of mint and used the c.d.s, for FASHODA was noted. A collection of 45 used sold for £135. Whilst two covers, one cancelled KHARTOUM and the other ARMY/B 14 11 02 N/TELEGRAPHS, made nearly twice the valuation and eventually went for £105 the pair.

No example of the companion 5m watermark Quatrefoil was in evidence. In the S.E.P,S, catalogue previously mentioned two copies of the 5m with Die 1 perfin are recorded as being in the COLONEL HEBBERT collection. This collection was incorporated into the November sale, the vendors being Gonville & Caius College, Cambridge, to whom it had been presented. The purpose of selling was to establish the 'H.E. Hebbert Trust' for studentships at that college.

In 1912 D.B. Armstrong gave a figure of 500 for the 5m perfin. Presumably this appeared in his handbook published by Messrs. Bright & Son, part of a series entitled Bright's Philatelic Library. As both the 1m and 5m were printed by De La Rue in sheets of 120 stamps, arranged in two vertically disposed panes of 60, containing 5 rows of 12 impressions, it would seem logical that 480 might be the correct figure. Although Armstrong can never be accused of being given to error, a figure divisible by either 120 or 60 would seem to make more sense.

ERRORS AND OMISSIONS

A couple of mistakes were made in our last issue whilst transcribing from manuscript. These were:

SUDAN OFFICIAL : In the first paragraph the final sentence is incomplete. It should read, "One held in Geneva on 28th & 29th April followed by the London sale on 10th November.

THE NAME GAME : Montagu was created Baron Swaythling in 1907 and not 1894 as stated. He was created a Baronet in 1894 and raised to the peerage as Baron Swaythling of Swaythling, co. Southampton, on 18th July 1907.

We apologise for these errors. Perhaps members would correct their copies to put the record straight.