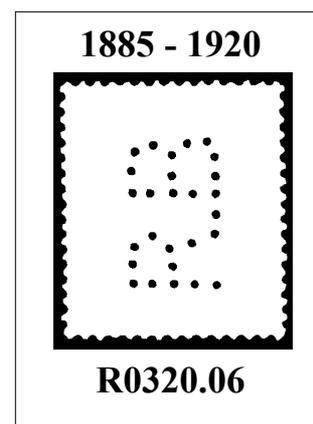


RUSSIAN BANK OF FOREIGN TRADE

John Marriner



Illustrated above is a superb cover from London to Szczekociny in 1893. The 2½d QV jubilee is cancelled by a Lombard Street C.D.S. April 29th 1893. The stamp is perfinned R.B – R0320.06 which is known to have been used by the London branch of the Russian Bank for Foreign Trade. Interestingly the contents of the envelope were written in French! The bank only used the one perfin die during its period of operation in London although with the multiple unidentified “RB” currently listed in the Gault Catalogue it is possible that there is an earlier die that predated R0320.06.



The route to be taken for delivery of the letter is outlined on the front of the envelope so no detective work required. First it was sent to

Berlin Kattowitz, then to the closest railway station at Myszkow and then lastly onto the destination of Szcokociny in Russian Poland.

The Russian Bank for Foreign Trade was a private bank established in St. Petersburg in 1871. At this time St. Petersburg had the status of the largest banking centre in Russia and was also beginning to play an important role as an international banking centre. By 1877 the Russian Bank had set up offices in London at 40 Lombard Street before moving to 32 Lombard St. By 1895 the bank had moved to 61/62 Gracechurch St where they remained

The bank was one of the biggest in Russia and invested significantly in the development of heavy industrial enterprises, especially during the industrial boom of 1909 – 1913. Its influence was felt most of all in the machine-building and railway construction industries. The bank also served as an intermediary between foreign money markets and Russian entrepreneurs. Before the outbreak of the First World War the bank had 76 branches in Russia as well as foreign branches in London and Paris. The Russian Bank for Foreign Trade was nationalized in October 1917 following the Russian revolution and use of the perfin seems to have ceased at this time.

