

# Advertising and the Belgian Post Office

## Part 3

By

Chris Howe

### Promotional or Advertising Stamp Issues

A quick analysis of Belgian “commemorative” or non-definitive stamp issues produces the surprising conclusion that there were very few of them until the 1960s. From 1910 up to the present time there have been regular issues that fall into the category of charity or semi-postal and a very few issues that the Belgian “Catalogue Officiel de Timbres-Poste” (COB) calls “Propaganda”. For these issues perhaps the word “Promotional” or “Advertising” would be more appropriate and they include the Belgian Post Office’s first foray into advertising.

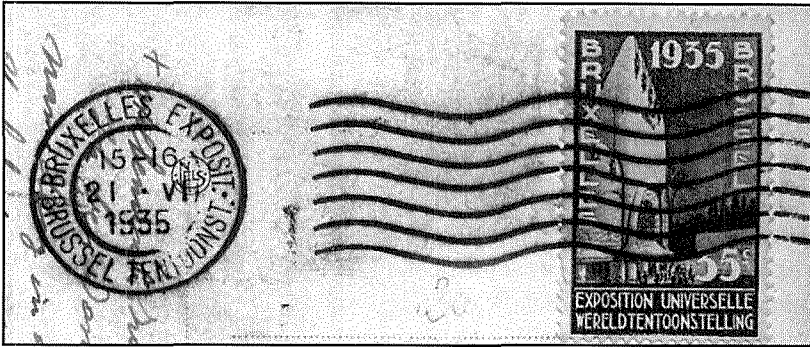
As regards the first such issue, the situation is not clear-cut as the first ever non-definitive issue of 20<sup>th</sup> February 1894 was for the Antwerp International Exhibition of that year. This issue of 3 stamps was both commemorative and promotional and consisted of 3 stamps of the same design; 5 cents in blue on rose paper, 10 cents carmine on blue paper and 25 cents blue on rose paper



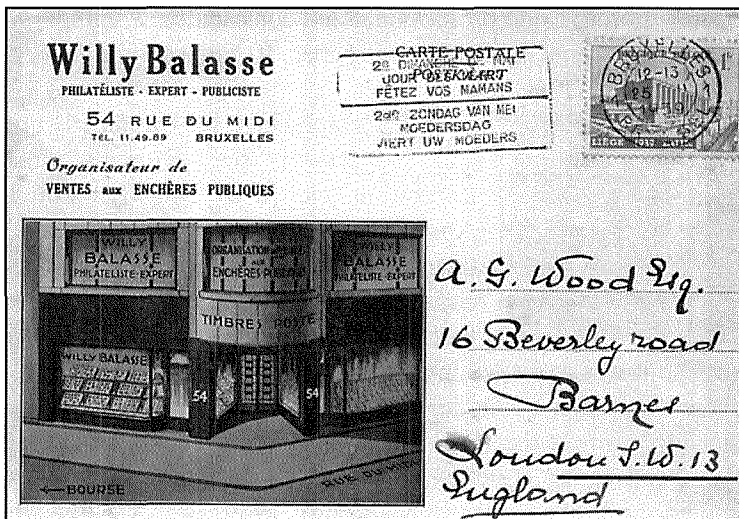
The second such issue was clearly promotional and advertised the Brussels International Exhibition opened by King Leopold II on 23<sup>rd</sup> April 1897. The stamps were issued on 15<sup>th</sup> October 1896, well in advance of the event, and consisted of 2 stamps of 5 and 10 cents. The first printing of the 10c stamp in brown was unsatisfactory so it was re-issued in January 1897 in pale ochre-brown.

There were no further advertising issues until 1<sup>st</sup> July 1934 when 4 stamps were produced to promote the 1935 Brussels Exposition each depicting a view of Brussels. Another 4-stamp issue on 31<sup>st</sup> October 1938 followed the 1934 stamps. These promoted the Liege Water Exposition of 1939. Both sets featured stamps value 35c & 1 Franc (Foreign Picture Card rates), 1,50F (Foreign Post Card rate) and 1,75F (Foreign Letter rate). A long break followed ending in 1955 with a promotional issue for Ghent Flowers on 15<sup>th</sup> February, a theme for subsequent commemoratives up to the present day. On 17<sup>th</sup> April 1957 a 4-stamp set promoted the 1958 Brussels Universal Exposition. On 10<sup>th</sup> October 1970 and 1971 two surcharged 3-stamp semi-postal sets promoted and supported the philatelic exhibition Belgica 72 these were followed by a single stamp on 25<sup>th</sup> March 1972.

Stamps promoting future events effectively came to an end with a single stamp on 15<sup>th</sup> February 1975 promoting the Themabelga philatelic exhibition in December 1975.



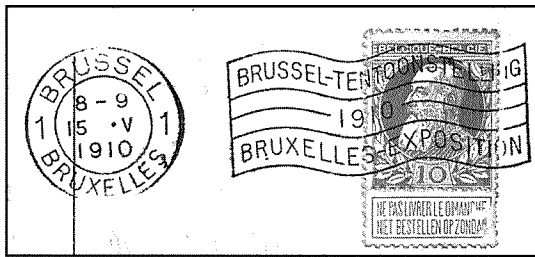
One of the stamps promoting the 1935 Brussels Exposition, the cancellation was applied at the post office inside the exhibition and it should not be confused with promotional cancellations discussed later.



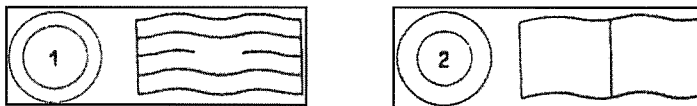
Dated 25<sup>th</sup> February 1935 and franked with the 1F stamp from the 1938 issue that depicts the Exposition Palace; this advertising postcard from Willy Balasse, a well-known Brussels stamp dealer, was sent to the late Mr A G Wood a founder of the UK Belgian Study Circle. The “flamme” slogan, “2<sup>e</sup> DIMANCHE DE MAI JOUR DES MÈRES FETEZ VOS MAMANS 2<sup>de</sup> Emzondagnvan MEI MOEDERSDAG VIERT UW MOEDERS” promotes Mothers’ Day.

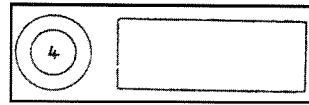
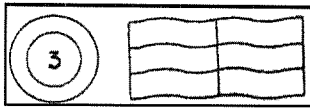


The miniature sheet both promoting and financially supporting BELGICA 72.



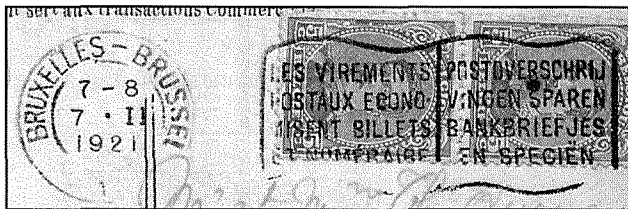
The introduction of machine cancellations with the CDS at the side of the stamp and the stamp itself cancelled by wavy lines provided the impetus to the development of slogan or advertising cancellations. This flag like type of cancellation (Fig 1.) is known as a "flamme" or flame. It appears that the "Flamme" was used at a limited number of locations on just three occasions before the first World War, the Expositions at Brussels 1910, Charleroi 1911 and Ghent 1913.



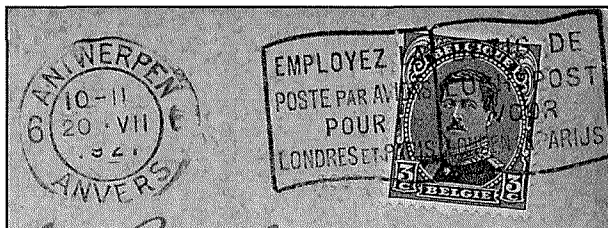


Slogans returned after the war initially with two different types of “flamme”. The type as Fig 3 was limited to a single bilingual slogan drawing attention to postal cheques “PRENEZ UN COMPTE DE CHÈQUES POSTAUX/NEEMT EENE POSTCHECK REKENING” Fig 2 had slightly wider application but the boxed slogan as Fig 4 became the norm in various forms with the slogan either to the left or right of the CDS.

The boxed slogan is still called a “flamme” by Belgian collectors.



“LES VIREMENTS POSTAUX ÉCONOMISENT BILLETS ET NUMÉRAIRE/ POSTOVERSCHRIJVINGEN SPAREN BANKBRIEFJES EN SPECIËN” the first slogan of just two Fig 2 formats promotes postal transfers to save notes and currency was used in two Brussels’ post offices from 1920 to 1925.

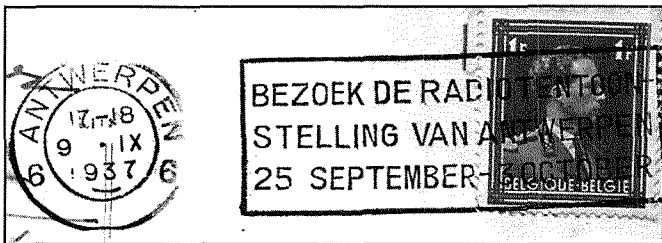


The second and slightly different Fig 2 format promoted airmail to London and Paris “EMPLOYEZ LA POSTE PAR AVION POUR PARIS ET LONDRES/ BEZIG DE LUCHTPOST VOOR LONDEN EN PARIJS” at two Brussels’ post offices in 1921/22 and at Antwerp 6 in 1921/22 and 1924.

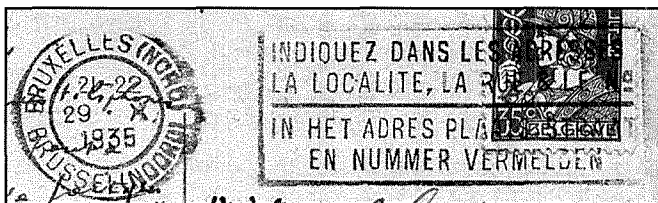
The fig. 4 format exists in many guises as a simple box or with the box divided into two vertically or horizontally; the two parts thus formed are not always the same size and sometimes the dividing line is incomplete. The box may contain

symbols or pictures and up to WWII almost 40 different box formats were used.

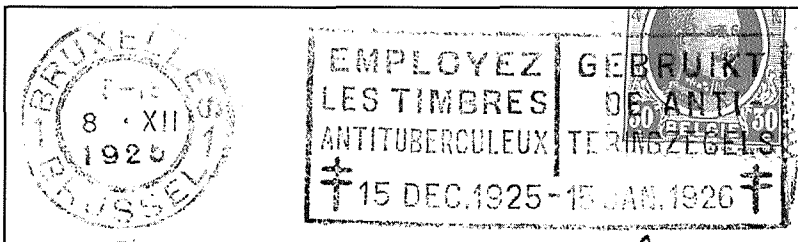
Simple  
box type.



Bisected  
horizontally.

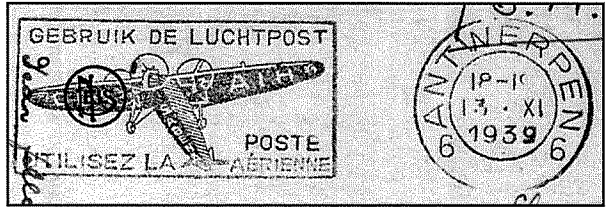
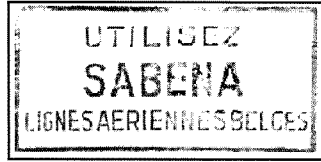
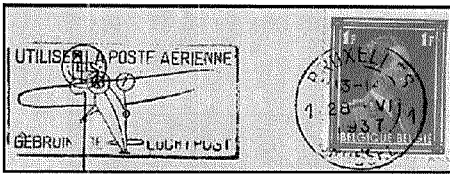


Bisected  
vertically.

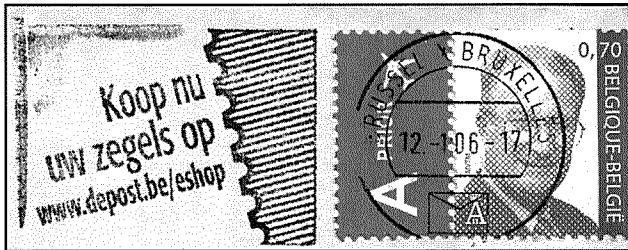


The fight against tuberculosis, through the purchase of special surcharged stamps, was the subject of an advertising campaign lasting from 1925 to 1965.

Promotion of the airmail service was a frequent subject up to WWII and after the war single language boxes promoted the national airline.

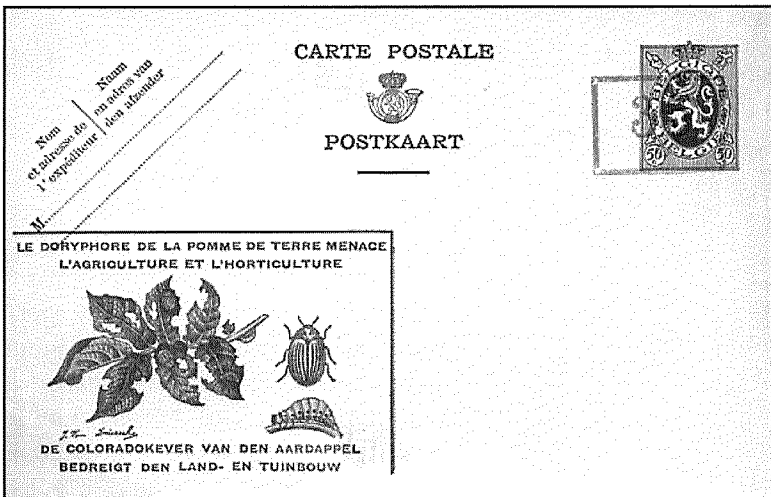


Between the wars the same slogan would often be used year after year and approximately 250 different ones have been recorded. In general the slogans related to official or semi official events or services, public service messages, tourism, charities and the correct use of postal services. This focus continued after the war, new methods of printing expanded the variety of cancellations exponentially but the promotional direction remains essentially the same.

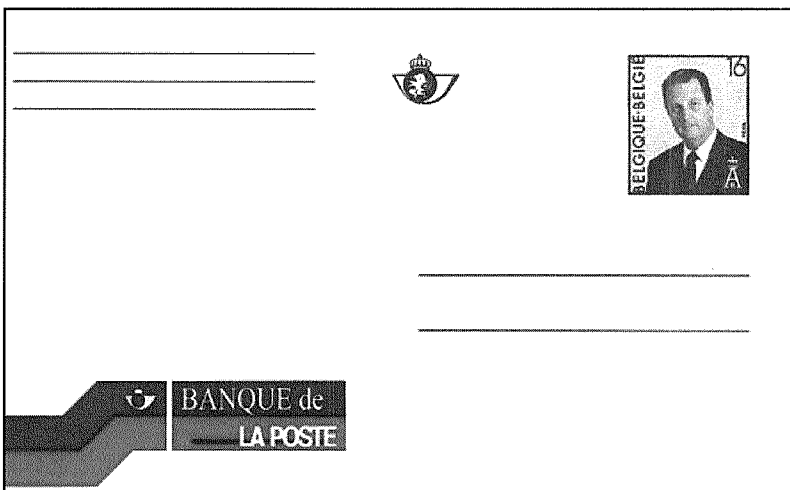


Above a recent Flemish language “flamme” used in 2006 reading “Koop nu uw zegels op (buy your stamps now on) [www.depost.be/eshop](http://www.depost.be/eshop)”.


The previous section of this article, relating to Publibel cards, showed that postal stationery did not escape the attention of advertising managers. A number of illustrated post cards were issued outside of the publibel system. The majority were commemorative or surcharged for charitable purposes but a few are “Propaganda”. Between 1899 and 1910 several series of cards were produced depicting Ostend-Dover ferries (paquebots). These were initially sold on the ferries and subsequently in the Ostend post office. They were briefly revived after the first war.




This 50c card, issued in 1934 and surcharged 35c in 1935, relates to a campaign against the Colorado beetle that attacks potatoes. A set of cards was issued in 1936 for the inauguration of the postal museum and, in 1948, a “Propaganda” issue for the museum.



There was a fairly long wait until in 1994 a limited series of Publicity cards, similar to the defunct publibel series was introduced that continues to the present day.


DE NIEUWE  
  
**PRIOR-ZEGEL**

**ALTIJD DE EERSTE!**



OPEN DEZE FOLDER EN ONTDEK DE NIEUWE TARIEVEN  
 DIE GELDIG ZIJN VANAF 18 NOVEMBER 2002.

PROBEER GRATIS DE NIEUWE PRIOR-SERVICE UIT.




Kruis uw keuze aan:

Nog een briefje van de voorgedrukte avond

Briefje voor de speciale kaart

Getuigenis van de postkant




DE POST 

De weegschalen zijn gratis en erf vnaar 2002

In November 2002 the post office introduced a two tier postal system and to advertise and explain this change a leaflet, incorporating a free “Prior” i.e. 1<sup>st</sup> class post card and enclosing a tariff booklet, was delivered to each household. The leaflet and booklet were in French, Flemish or German according to the area where they were distributed.


Door het voor mij (en voor jou): stap met rollen.  
 Wie je het proberen? Teken deze kaart, steek beer in  
 een omslag en stuur hem mij terug. Als teken van  
 beleefte.




Deze envelop is bedoeld voor gebruik met  
 een 0,44-euro zegel van de Post  
 (0,44-euro) met een waarde van 0,44



BELEGGE: 0444

OK, ik stap!  
 Getekend:

Hulp nodig? Bel  0900 111 00

**.be**   

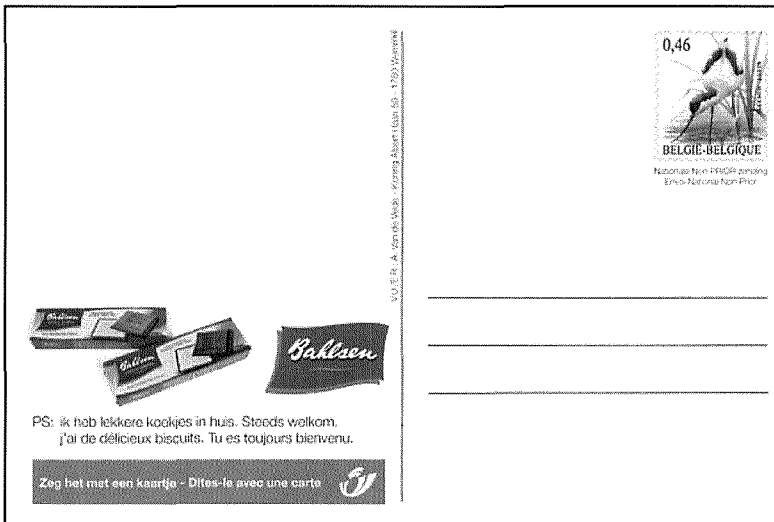
Jij, jij bent écht een heel bijzonder iemand.  
 Ik hou van je lach, van je stem en die lichtjes  
 in je ogen. En vooral van de manier waarop je  
 spaghetti eet. Ik herken je stap uit duizend, zo  
 typisch jij. Je luistert naar me, je begrijpt me.  
 Er is enkel dit: **jammer dat je rookt\*.**

\* Maar dat kan nog in orde komen, hé?

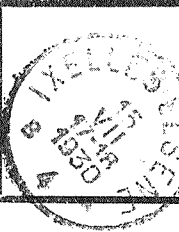
In recent years advertising post cards from a variety of sources have been available free in stations and post offices. These cards require a stamp to be affixed by the sender. A sensation was caused on 31<sup>st</sup> May 2005 by the issue of such a free card with an imprint stamp value 0,44€ featuring a House Martin from the popular “Buzin” birds definitive series.



The issue was not widely publicised and was available in a limited number of locations. It carried an anti-tobacco message in either French or Flemish (Jammer dat je rookt - Pity that you smoke). Almost immediately this was followed by sponsored cards in each of the 3 languages advertising Belgian dances to be shown on television from 12 locations on 16 July 2005. There is no space for a message on these cards that were part of the Belgian state's 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations. As there was little public awareness of this issue virtually none are known postally used before 16<sup>th</sup> July. Since this issue there have been several further examples including one advertising "Bahlsen" distributed in packets of biscuits. This is franked with an Avocet at the current 0,46€, 2<sup>nd</sup> class or "Non-prior" rate. It remains to be seen whether these issues continue; perhaps heralding a return to the "publibel" type of card.



To my mind there is little doubt that the heyday of advertising was in the 1930s. The organisation that held the franchise for stamp booklets and publibel cards included advertising on almost any item relating to the postal system.

<b>Achetez tout à l'INNOVATION</b> Rue Neuve - Bruxelles - Ixelles - Chaussée d'Ixelles	<b>Récépissé de dépôt d'un envoi</b> <i>Bewijs van afgifte eener aangeteekende</i> <b>recommandé</b> à l'adresse de <i>zending aan het adres van</i> <i>M. Receveur Communal</i> rue ..... n° ..... à ..... straat, nr ..... le ..... <i>White sand oudé</i>	<b>Achetez tout à l'INNOVATION</b> Rue Neuve - Bruxelles - Ixelles - Chaussée d'Ixelles
A remplir par l'expéditeur. <i>Door den afzender in te vullen.</i>		
	Indications de service. <i>Dienstaamwijzingen.</i>	Taxe perçue. <i>Geinde taks</i> Fr. 10
	Montant du remboursement <i>Bedrag der verrekening.</i> Fr.	Numéro de l'étiquette <i>Nummer van het etiket</i> 288
		Signature du préposé <i>à l'acceptation</i> <i>Handteeken van den aannemenden bediende</i>

This receipt for a registered letter has on the reverse an advertisement for electrical appliances.

Utilisez les Appareils Electriques

# ASPIRATEUR VAMPYR

AEG

CIREUSE                      HOBBY

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Electro-Confort S. A. Bruxelles


67, Bld. Waterloo                      Tél. 278.94




Mme Vve VALLEZ, Louis  
 Ch. d'Ixelles, 12  
 BRUXELLES

9.08.50  
*Gand Over-*

**COMPRIMÉS LA CROIX BLANCHE**



PRODUIT BELGE  
EFFICACE  
ECONOMIQUE

contre Maux de tête - Epoques douloureuses - Grippe - Névralgies


N° 1405  
 OFFICE DES CHÈQUES à Bruxelles  
 SERVICE DES POSTES EXTRAIT DE COMPTE  
 BESTUUR DER CHECKS te Brussel  
 POSTDIENST REKENINGUITREKSEL

This envelope produced for the "OFFICE DES CHÈQUES/BESTUUR DER CHECKS" cancelled by a BRUXELLES-CHEQUES BRUSSEL-CHEQUES Double-ring & "Promote the post-cheques service" Boxed bilingual slogan includes an advertisement for patent medicine and on the reverse one for BP.

# ESSENCE

## GAS FUEL

### OIL "BP" OIL



**GAS OIL**

pour

**CHAUFFAGE CENTRAL**

et

**MOTEURS FIXES**

**GAS OIL**

pour

**CAMIONS DIESEL**

et

**TRACTEURS**

**ESSENCE**

aux Pompes **"B.P."**

le long de toutes les routes  
de la BELGIQUE  
et du GRAND-DUCHÉ de LUXEMBOURG



EN TÊTE DEPUIS 75 ANS

# NESTOR MARTIN

FAITES TOUS VOS ACHATS



# L'INNOVATION

maison vendant le meilleur marché de toute la Belgique

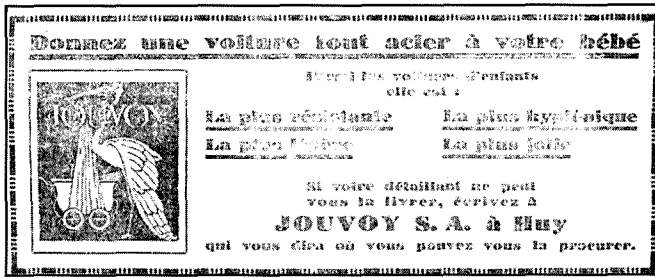
RUE NEUVE - BRUXELLES

IXELLES - ANVERS - LIÈGE - GAND - BRUGES  
VERVIERS - OSTENDE - CHARLEROI - NAMUR

The advertisements pictured above were printed on the reverse of a telegram sent from Arlon and received at Bruxelles Porte Namur on 21 April 1931.

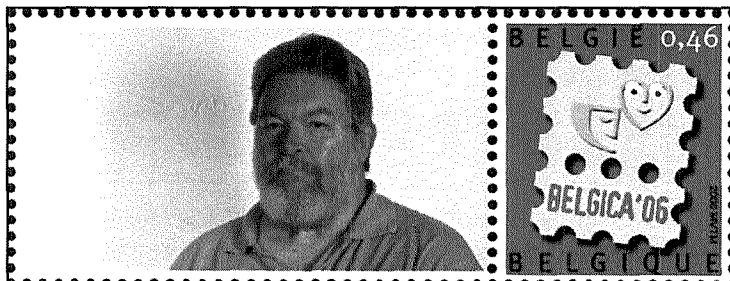
<p>MÉCANIQUE</p> <p>MACHINES A VAPEUR " CARELS "</p> <p>MOTEURS " DIESEL-CARELS "</p> <p>ET MÉCANIQUE GÉNÉRALE</p>	<p>ÉLECTRICITÉ</p> <p>MOTEURS-TRANSFORMATEURS</p> <p>APPAREILLAGE &amp; MATÉRIEL</p> <p>POUR TOUTES APPLICATIONS</p>
 <p>DOCTE ÉLECTRICITÉ ET MÉCANIQUE PROCÈDES THOMSON-HOUSTON &amp; CARELS SOCIÉTÉ ANONYME</p> <p>SIEGE SOCIAL &amp; USINES - 20 RUE DE GAND SIEGE ADMINISTRATIF - 94, RA DE CHARLEROI BRUXELLES</p> 	
<p>ANVERS - GAND - LIÈGE - CHARLEROI - LUXEMBOURG</p>	

In conjunction with the "L'INNOVATION" as shown above this advertisement appeared on a telegram from Arlon and received at Bruxelles on 5 July 1930.

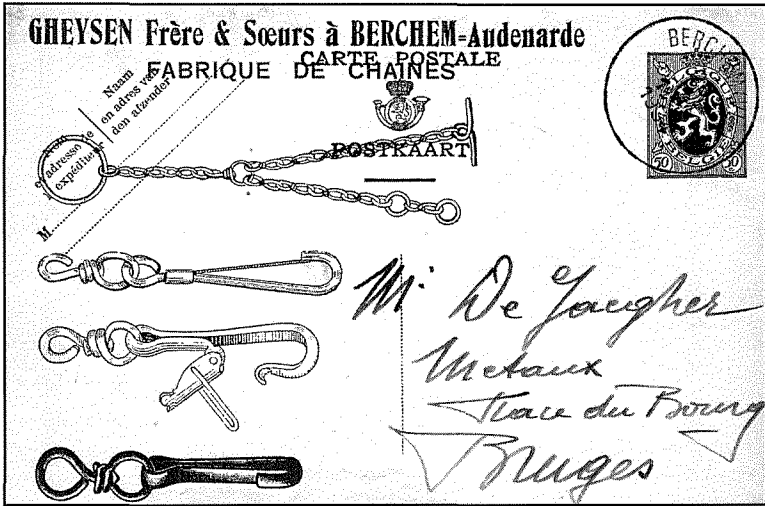


There were variations in the advertisements for particular services such as this one for “L’INNOVATION” coupled with one for “JOUVOY” on a telegram from Knocke to Brussels received on 22 June 1931.

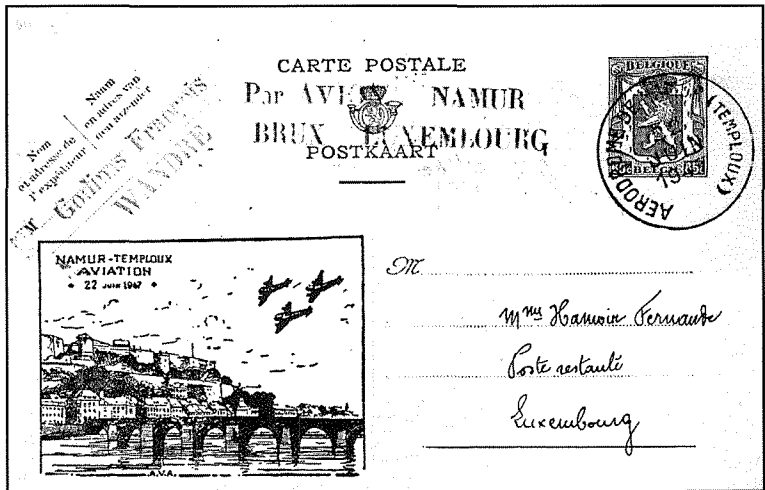
Advertising in the forms described in these three articles is not unique to Belgium and forms an integral part of the postal history of many countries. I am also sure that there are aspects of post office advertising that I have not touched upon. In 2001 stamps issued in support of the Belgica 2001 stamp exhibition included vignettes of an advertising nature. In 2003 “personalised stamps were introduced thus opening up enormous scope for individual advertising.



In addition I am aware that many companies modified postal stationery to meet their own advertising requirements a few examples of which are pictured here.



A 50c postal stationery card privately modified as an advertising card for Gheysen chain fastenings.



A 65c postal stationery card, the internal postcard rate from 20<sup>th</sup> May 1946 until 15<sup>th</sup> December 1948, privately modified to promote the opening of Namur airport on 22<sup>nd</sup> June 1947, the date of my birth, and cancelled on that date.