

Customs Duty / Douane Stamps of South Africa

In 1906 the South African Customs Union included a customs duty tax to be paid on incoming price lists and catalogues sent through the post. This duty was collected by permitting the businesses to prepay the customs duty using stamps. At first, these were cancelled in manuscript, or using a rubber handstamp. Transvaal and Natal also provided special customs duty labels, on which the stamps were affixed. The only revenue stamp used was the Orange River Colony 6d. The Post Office generally cancelled them on arrival to prevent them being re-used.

Eventually, colonial stamps still in use after the formation of the Union were overprinted 'Customs Duty', as were the first two issues of South African stamps. The stamps used were either dual purpose stamps, or postage stamps. Subsequently, the overprint was changed to 'Douane'.

When the customs duty was not prepaid by the sender, the duty was often collected from the recipient by the use of postage dues.

Few of these stamps were collected as they were not regarded as postage stamps thus they are scarce and usually found as singles. Pairs or mint stamps with gum, especially for the earlier issues, are extremely scarce.

In this display I show the various issues grouped according to Hagger's 1991 classification, with the addition of a 'Forerunners' group, together with a few overprint and plate varieties, a few examples on cover as well as cachets and a taxed item referring to the collection of the customs duties.

Select references

- Hagger, S.J. 1991. The customs duty hand stamps and overprints of the Union. The South African Philatelist 67(3): 66-67.
- Jacobson, L. 2014. Customs Duty/Douane update. The Springbok 62(3): 92-95.
- Kamffer, G. 2019. The Union of South Africa: Customs Duty / Douane stamps Part 1: stamps used over the period 1910-1961. The South African Philatelist 95(1): 12-15.
- Kamffer, G. 2019. The Union of South Africa: Customs Duty / Douane stamps Part 2: rates and usage of these stamps. The South African Philatelist 95(2): 48-50.
- Palazzo, G. 2014. Customs Duty stamps: some comments and new varieties. The Springbok 66(2): 54-59.

"FORERUNNER" PERIOD

Manuscript annotations or large single line handstamps

ORANGE RIVER COLONY



Large format revenue stamp endorsed in handwriting 'Customs Duty'

TRANSVAAL



Postage/revenue stamps endorsed in handwriting 'Customs Duty'



Postage/revenue stamps cancelled with a single line handstamp 'Customs Duty'

GROUP 1

Circa 1908. Handstamped 'Customs Duty' in two lines

NATAL



Late combined usage with Cape of Good Hope overprinted issue

TRANSVAAL



GROUP 2

Circa 1908 - 1913. Overprinted 'Customs Duty' in two lines. An interesting variety is to be found on this overprint. The last 'S' of 'CUSTOMS' is in a different font on all the first stamps of each row.



NATAL



ORANGE RIVER COLONY



'S' variety

TRANSVAAL

Overprinted in black



Overprinted in red



'S' variety

CAPE OF GOOD HOPE



1913. UNION OF SOUTH AFRICA

Overprinted in black



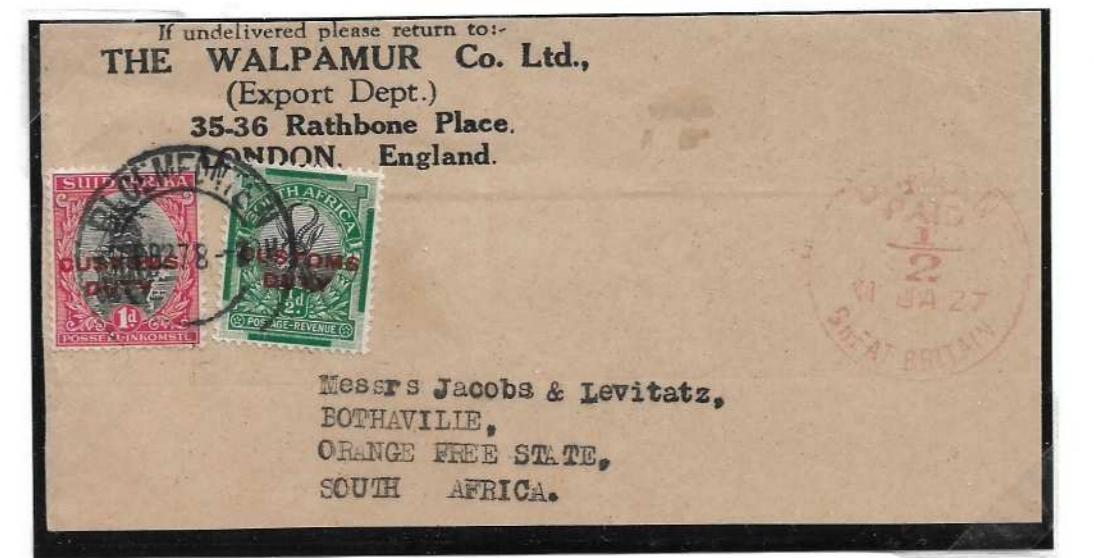
'S' variety

Overprinted in red



1926-7: London printings

Overprinted in red



Perf 14 x 13 1/2 up

Perf 14

Perf 14 x 13 1/2 down



'S' variety

Overprinted in black



'S' variety

1927 Pretoria printing



Overprinted in red



'S' variety

Overprinted in black



'S' variety

GROUP 3

From this point, stamps were overprinted 'DOUANE' in black

1926-27 London printing



Note: No stop after 'DOUANE' (2/1)



1927: Pretoria printing



1 Dec 1930: Customs duty of 3d levied on printed matter less than 1oz

1930. Unhyphenated rotogravure issues



Plate varieties:
Tag on ear (1/1)
\$ for S in SOUTH (1/3)

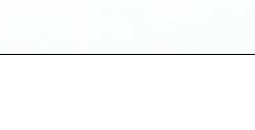
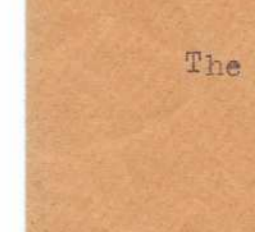


Plate variety: Green line bottom left



Plate variety: Snail on chest

No stop after DOUANE

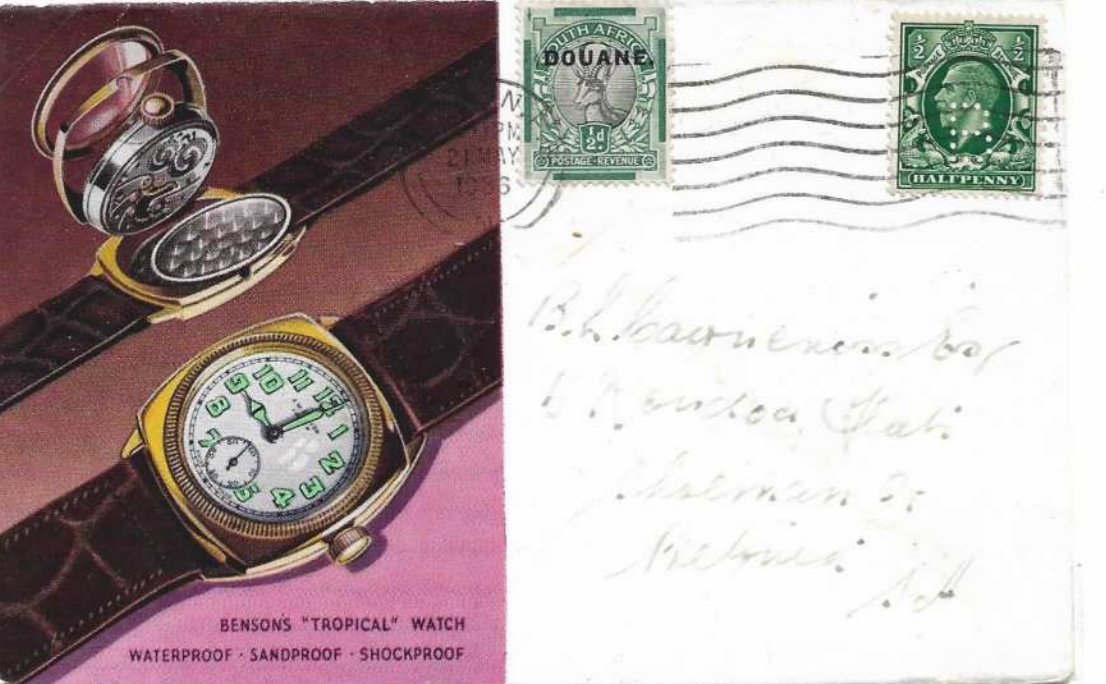


Orange in right frame

DOUANE

Plate variety: Green line left of tree

Contd. Unhyphenated rotogravure issues



Customs duty 3d on printed matter less than 1oz. Stamp with green arrow top left corner variety.

1933-1954: Hyphenated rotogravure issues



SAHB Group II (Issue 4)



SAHB Group IV (Issues 5-13)



Misaligned overprint SAHB Group IV (Issues 5-13)



SAHB Group VII (Issues 19-22)

Contd. Hyphenated rotogravure issues



Inverted watermark



Plate variety: black dot in sunray

Round stop

Plate variety: black curved line



GROUP 4

1949-1954. Overprinted in black by stereo process, no stop.



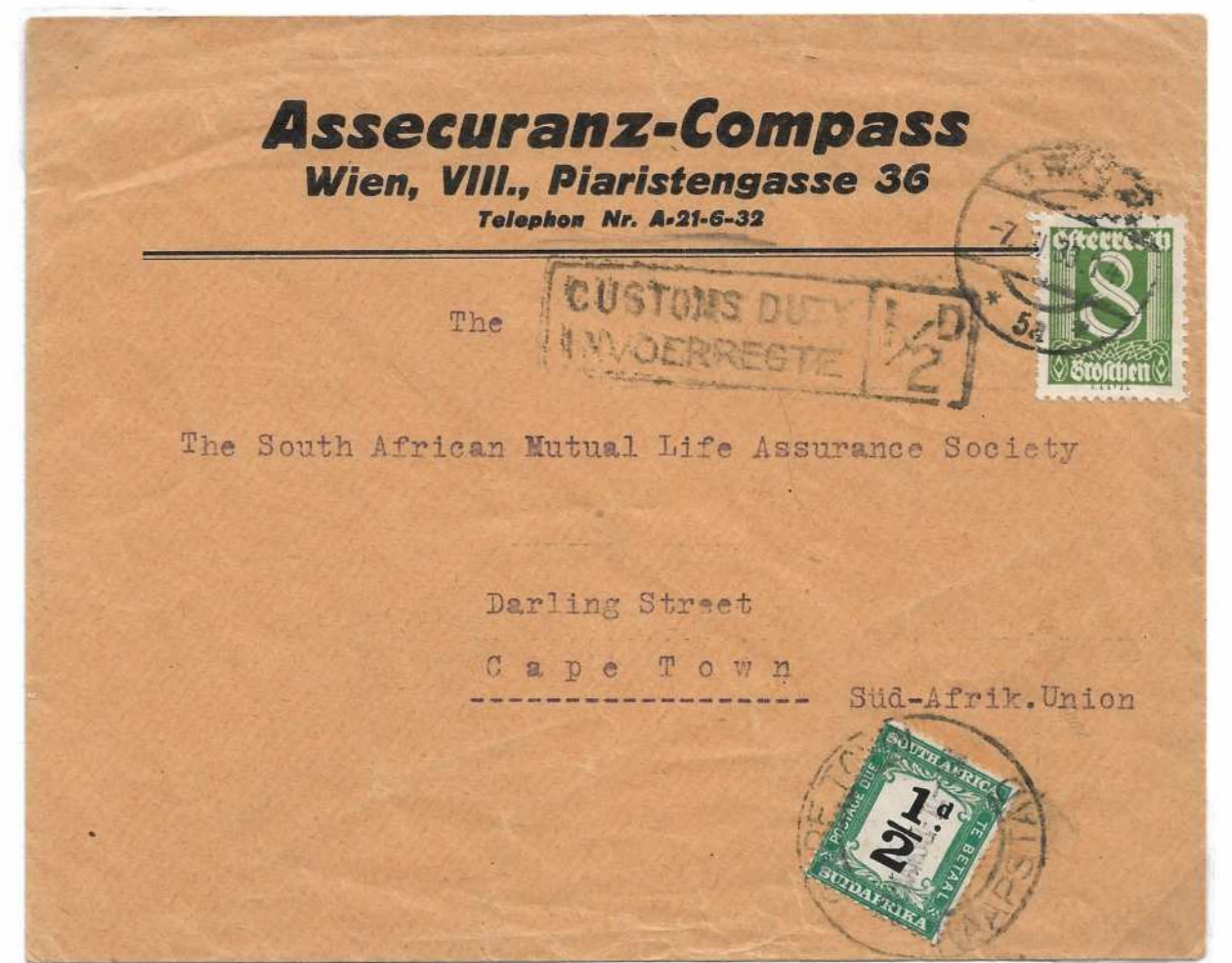
1954. Animal series



INSTRUCTIONAL CACHETS



Cachet indicating payment but without stamps. Could be part of a batch payment.



No prepayment therefore taxed on arrival with a postage due stamp

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Normal



Variety

NATAL



ORANGE RIVER COLONY



'S' variety

TRANSVAAL

Overprinted in black



Overprinted in red



'S' variety

CAPE OF GOOD HOPE



1913. UNION OF SOUTH AFRICA

Overprinted in black





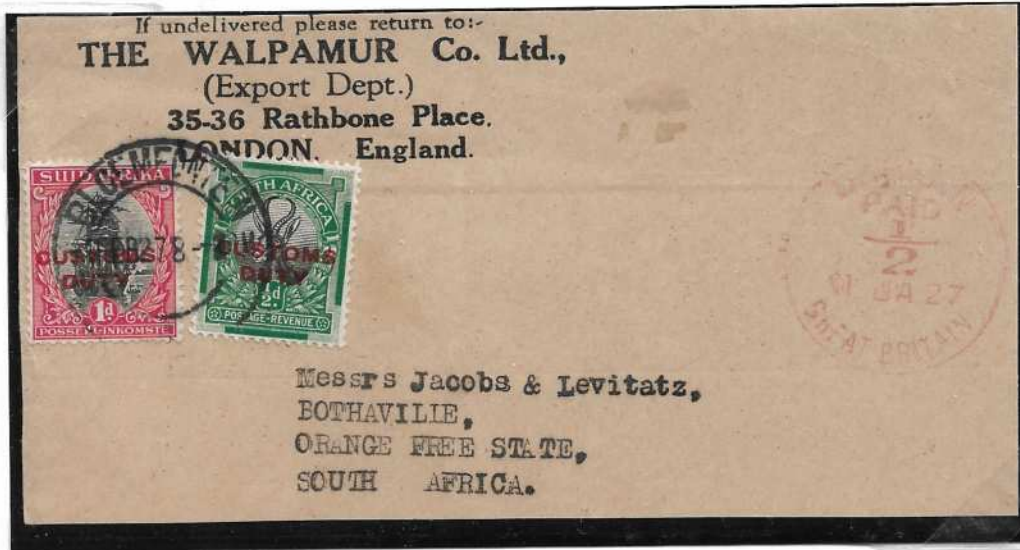
'S' variety

Overprinted in red



1926-7: London printings

Overprinted in red



Perf 14 x 13½ up



Perf 14



Perf 14 x 13½ down



'S' variety

Overprinted in black



'S' variety

1927 Pretoria printing

Overprinted in red



↑ 'S' variety

Overprinted in black



'S' variety

GROUP 3

From this point, stamps were overprinted 'DOUANE' in black

1926-27 London printing



Note: No stop after 'DOUANE (2/1)



1927: Pretoria printing



1 Dec 1930: Customs duty of $\frac{1}{2}$ d levied on printed matter less than 1oz

1930. Unhyphenated rotogravure issues



Plate varieties:
Tag on ear (1/1)
\$ for S in SOUTH (1/3)



Inverted Watermark



No stop after DOUANE



Plate variety:
Green line bottom left



Plate variety:
Snail on chest



No stop after DOUANE



Issue 1



Issue 2



Issue 2 inverted watermark



Plate variety:
Orange in right frame



DOUANIE



Plate variety:
Green line left of tree

Contd. Unhyphenated rotogravure issues



Customs duty $\frac{1}{2}$ d on printed matter less than 1oz. Stamp with green arrow top left corner variety.

1933-1954: Hyphenated rotogravure issues



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SAHB Group IV (Issues 5-13)



Misaligned overprint
SAHB Group IV (Issues 5-13)



SAHB Group VII (Issues 19-22)

Contd: Hyphenated rotogravure issues



Inverted watermark



Plate variety: black dot in sunray



Round stop



Plate variety: black curved line



GROUP 4

1949-1954. Overprinted in black by stereo process, no stop.



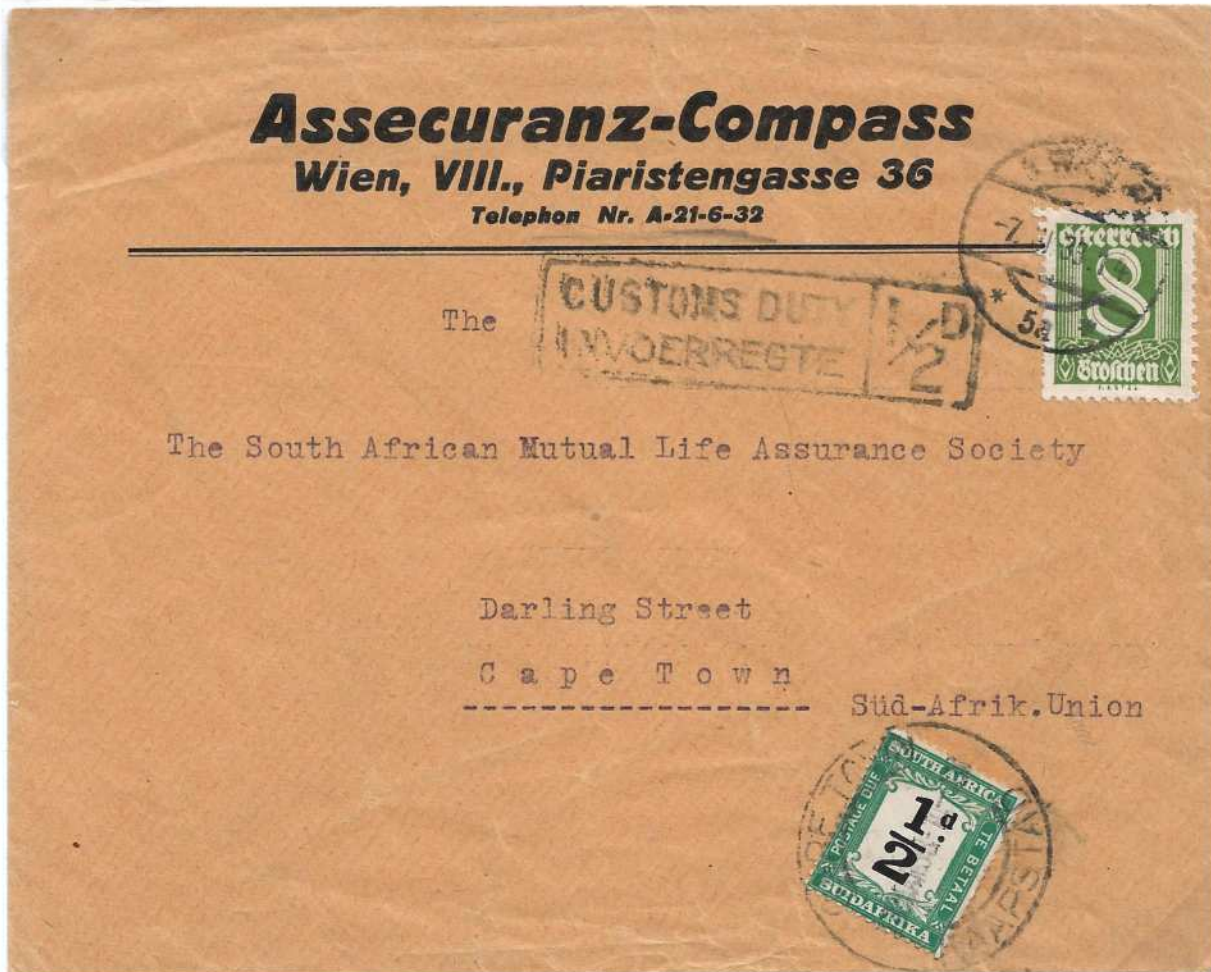
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