



# "Helvetia"

SOCIETY FOR COLLECTORS OF SWITZERLAND

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## Philatelic Calendar

- Jan. 18 ----- Helvetia Society monthly meeting, Fair Lawn Arts Center, 12-56 River Road, Fair Lawn, N.J., 8 p.m. Program: A.P.S. slide program "Collecting Postal Stationery" Part I.
- Jan. 27 ----- SASS New York Chapter monthly meeting, Collectors Club of New York, 22 E. 35 St., NYC, 8 p.m. Program: Swiss postage due rates and covers by Werner Elias.
- Mar. 11-13 -- Helvetia exhibit in BEPEX club competition, Paramus, N.J.
- Apr. 15 ----- SASS regional meeting hosted by Helvetia at SOJEX, Atlantic City, N. J.

## Helvetia to Mount BEPEX Exhibit

Helvetia Society members at their Jan. 18 meeting will select 1934 Swiss philatelic material for their BEPEX club competition exhibit. BEPEX is limiting the content of the club exhibits to 1934, the year of its founding, to foster competition among the member clubs. Helvetia has won the competition the past five years on the strength of specialized Swiss and Liechtenstein material. Eligible material for the exhibit in March includes stamps issued in 1934 and covers post-marked in the same year. All members are urged to bring any suitable material in view of the small number of stamps that Switzerland issued that year.

## SASS New York Chapter Elects Officers

The New York Chapter of SASS, which organized in October, has elected officers for 1972. They are Harlan Stone of Summit, N.J., president and program chairman, and Dr. Max Schneck of New Rochelle, N.Y., secretary-treasurer. Members at the December meeting also established \$3 as the annual dues and voted to receive the monthly newsletter published by the Helvetia Society. A preliminary count shows that the chapter has about 15 members.

## News Briefs

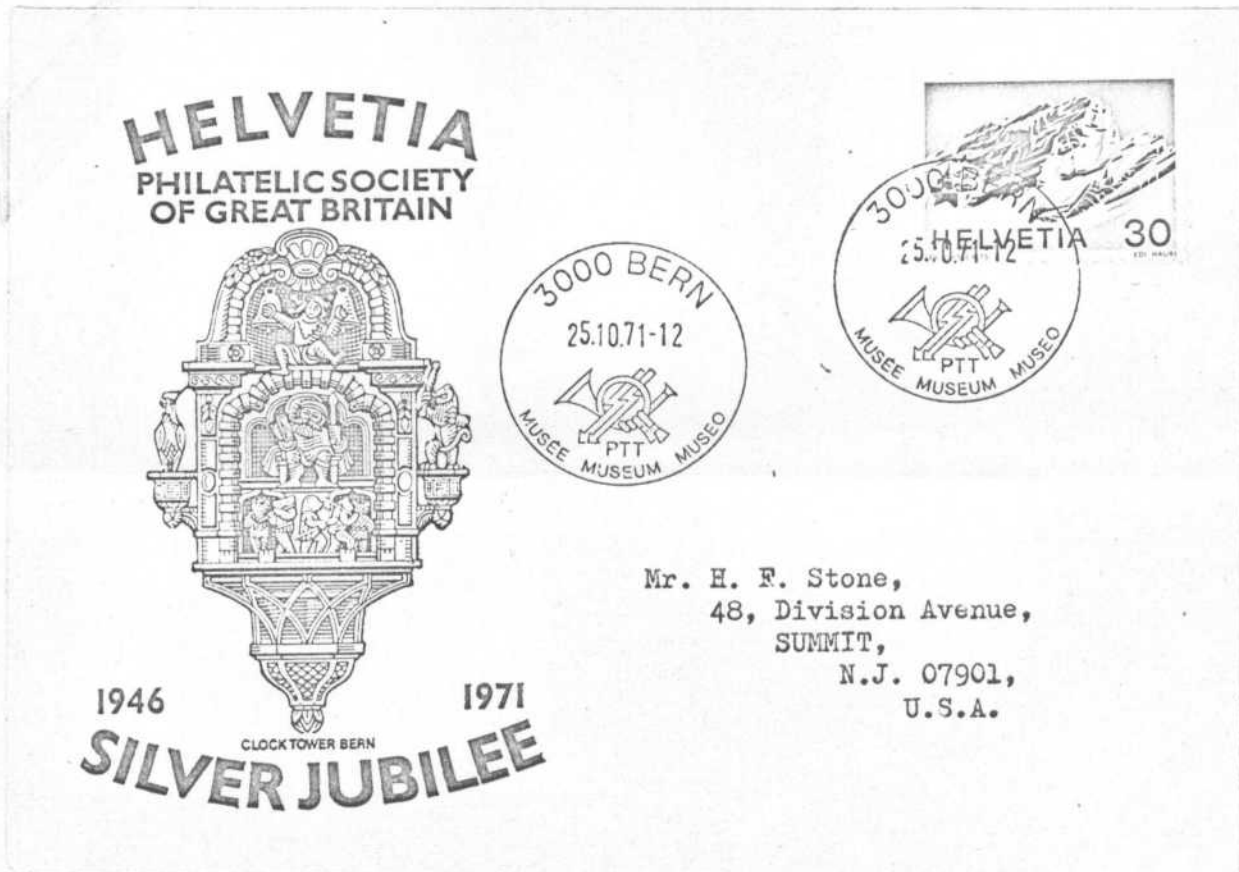
George Wettach, Helvetia treasurer, reports that the distinctive Helvetia membership cards have been temporarily misplaced. He assures new members that he will distribute their cards as soon as possible.

The Strubeli stamps will be the subject of a special study session at the March meeting of Helvetia. Program chairman Harlan Stone urges members to start preparing now to bring appropriate stamps, covers and literature.

Helvetia members who are officers in BEPEX are playing a leading role in the organization of the March exhibition. President Ben Wood is general exhibition chairman and in charge of the program, Vice President Walter Reimann is in charge of special awards, and Treasurer Werner Vogel is exhibition treasurer and the receiver of all the entry forms. Albert Adams is a member of the exhibition committee.

Great Britain's Helvetia Issues Anniversary Cachet

In honor of its 25th anniversary, the Helvetia Philatelic Society of Great Britain has prepared commemorative covers with a special cachet showing the famous clock tower in Bern. Although the society was unsuccessful in obtaining a special Swiss cancellation for the occasion, the PTT did apply its Bern postal museum postmark to the covers. (See illustration)



Switzerland's Sitting Helvetia Issues 1862-83

By Harlan Stone

Switzerland's "Sitting Helvetia" stamps, long neglected, are recognized today as the country's first modern issue. New postal rates gave the postal authorities the opportunity to introduce these stamps with perforations, true safety paper and the neutral Latin word "Helvetia" in place of the previously used German, French and Italian inscription. As a result of the improvements in production, these stamps cost much less than the preceding "Strubeli" issue. They also bore larger, more distinct figures of value and provided a critical public with a more attractive representation of Helvetia.

J. P. Riess, engraver at the Bavarian Mint, designed the Sitting Helvetia stamps after Switzerland's coins and engraved the design. The Swiss postal authorities printed the stamps at Switzerland's Federal Mint in Bern. There the stamp paper was gummed, embossed printed, impressed with a safety control mark to guard against counterfeiting, and finally perforated 11 3/4.

The control mark shows the Swiss Federal cross in a double oval. A plate impressed this mark simultaneously on every stamp in each sheet of 400. All control marks on the Sitting Helvetia stamps are a "wide" version. Later stamps also bear a "narrow" version which conforms to the heraldic specifications for the Swiss Federal cross.

The Swiss postal authorities created a great variety of now scarce Sitting Helvetia proofs during extensive laboratory tests to develop printing and cancelling inks that would prevent the cleaning and reuse of used stamps.

Because of their long period of use, the Sitting Helvetia stamps are rich in color varieties, printing plate flaws and postmarks. The chief differences among the three issues are:

First issue -- Paper: medium thick, opaque, off-white.  
1862-63            Gum: brownish.

Second issue - Paper: thin, semi-transparent, white.  
1867-78            Gum: colorless.

Third issue -- Paper: thin, granite (blue and red threads).  
1881                Gum: colorless, brittle.

In the first issue metallic inks were used to produce the two highest values. The 60 centime and 1 franc stamps have special metallic colors which the printers achieved by sprinkling the still wet stamps with special powders, then shaking off the excess. The 60c. has dark red ink covered with bronze powder, and the 1fr. has yellow-brown ink covered with gold powder. Some 1fr. stamps were mistakenly embossed on paper prepared for the 60c., resulting in a 1fr. bronze color.

From Oct. 1, 1862, the day the first four Sitting Helvetia stamps appeared, to July 31, 1863, the last day the Strubeli issue was valid, it was possible to use stamps from both issues on the same letters. This type of mixed franking became possible again at the end of the Sitting Helvetia issues. From April 1, 1882, when the succeeding cross and numeral stamps and Standing Helvetia stamps appeared, to Sept. 30, 1883, the last day the Sitting Helvetia stamps were valid, the public could use a combination of the different types.

The Sitting Helvetia stamps with granite paper remained in use only from 1881 (exact date unknown) until Sept. 30, 1883. In contrast to the stamps in the first and second issues, these are thus much more uncommon in used rather than mint condition.

The most well known printing variety involves a double impression, one inverted, of the values and words "Helvetia" and "Franco" on a few of the Sitting Helvetia stamps. More common varieties include colored shield tips, broken and split frame lines, partial control marks, and control marks impressed on the front instead of the back of the stamps.

The Swiss postal authorities overprinted the word "Specimen" on the Sitting Helvetia (and succeeding) stamps to mark them as samples for three different reasons:

To distinguish printers' proofs.

To set aside stamps to be used for the training of postal employees or for record-keeping purposes.

To designate stamps to be submitted to the Universal Postal Union or foreign postal authorities.

The overprint appears in two forms, the first large and blue or black, the second small and black.

On Oct. 1, 1883, the Sitting Helvetia stamps became obsolete. From May 14 that year, the date of the demonetization decree, to June 30, 1887, the public could exchange mint Sitting Helvetia Stamps for the succeeding issue. The postal authorities decided to sell these obsolete stamps to the public at below face value for collection purposes, and began to do so apparently before the exchange period ended.

To prevent purchasers from trading in the stamps a second time at face value, the authorities overprinted some with "Ausser Kurs" for "out of currency," using two different types of lettering.

A large number of these remainders subsequently flooded the market, and the Sitting Helvetia issues became unpopular. The postal authorities have never repeated this method of disposing of obsolete stamps.

Sitting Helvetia Cover with Mixed Franking

Switzerland allowed the use of its high value 500 centime postage due stamp to pay postage on domestic parcels beginning Dec. 16, 1879, and on foreign parcels beginning Dec. 10, 1884. This use was valid until July 15, 1893.

The illustrated cover, postmarked Les Brenets, April 9, 1882, is a packet card bearing two postage due stamps (left). The card also bears the uncommon "Sitting Helvetia" and "Cross and Numeral" stamp (lower right) mixed franking. The Sitting Helvetia stamps (a single 25 centime and a pair of 1 francs) are on granite paper.



Helvetia to Hold Swiss Auction

The date for Helvetia's first auction will be May 16 at the Fair Lawn, N.J., Arts Center during the society's regular monthly meeting. President Steve Pomex, who is auction chairman, has announced that the deadline for receiving auction material is March 1. Any collector, whether a member of Helvetia or not, may submit Swiss or related material and take part in the bidding. Steve pointed out that the auction rules and terms (see next page), developed by him and Vice President Walter Reimann, call for lots with an estimated retail value of at least \$3. Steve has established a special address for the auction. Sellers should send all material to:

Mr. Steve Pomex  
P. O. Box 402, Gracie Station  
New York, N.Y. 10028

The society will distribute the auction catalog in April to all known collectors of Switzerland in the U.S.

## Helvetia Society Auction, May 16, 1972

### Rules for Sellers

1. Material may be submitted by Helvetia members and non-members as well.
2. To be acceptable all lots shall have a retail value of at least \$3.00 and the sales manager reserves the right to group lots to meet this requirement.
3. All material submitted shall be properly classified by the seller. Stamp lots shall include the catalog numbers, catalog value, whether mint or used, and condition description. Any defects shall be noted. Cover lots shall include a brief description of historic importance, listing special cancels, slogans, backstamps, autographs, etc., and condition of cover, stamp and/or cancel.
4. The ownership of each lot shall be clearly identified by the seller with his name and address.
5. No 'minimum bid' lots will be accepted. Owners may submit one bid on each lot entered but the usual commission fee up to \$3.00 per lot will be charged for such protection, if at least one bid deemed reasonable by the sales manager is received and the lot is not sold to another. If no bid is received, or a bid is rejected, there shall be no charge to the owner.
6. A 10% commission will be deducted from the sale price of each lot sold. Lots unsold will be subject to a return postage charge against the owner.
7. The sales manager at his discretion reserves the right to reject any material submitted for sale, for whatever reason.
8. Payment to sellers for lots sold and unsold material will be given to the seller within 30 days following the closing date of the sale.
9. All catalog references shall be assumed to mean the 1972 Scott's catalog unless otherwise stated.
10. Submission of material signifies acceptance of the above rules of participation.

### Terms of Sale

1. All lots are sold to the highest bidder at a slight advance over the second highest bid. If the case be that there is much difference between the highest and second highest bid, the lot will be purchased at as low a limit as possible. The right is reserved to withdraw any lot prior to the sale. Mailing and insurance charges are payable by the purchaser.
2. Terms of sale are strictly cash and all lots must be paid within seven days of receipt. Members of the Helvetia Society will have their lots forwarded immediately. Non-members will be notified and all lots forwarded upon receipt of payment.
3. The Helvetia Society guarantees material to be as described. Should a claim for error of description arise, such claim should be made within seven days of receipt of the lot. Mixtures and lots described as 'good' are not returnable under any condition.
4. No charges are made for executing bids. The Helvetia Society shall act in the best interests of the bidders, but responsibility is not accepted for bidder errors, omissions, or differences in judgement.

## Terms of Sale (cont.)

5. Title remains with the Helvetia Society acting on behalf of owners until payment is received and delivery made to the buyers. The society reserves the right to reject any bid believed not to have been made in good faith.
6. Bids in pennies and nickels will automatically be reduced to the nearest 10¢ level.
7. On identical bids the earlier date of receipt of the bid sheet shall take precedence; but if identical bids are received on the same day, the postmark will govern.
8. The placing of a bid shall constitute full acceptance of the foregoing terms.

## Symbols

### Condition

o=used  
\*=unused  
S=specimen  
P=proof  
E=essay  
NH=never hinged  
G=good  
F=fine  
VF=very fine  
SU=superb  
FDC=first day cover  
FFC=first flight cover  
C=cover  
SS=souvenir sheet  
BLK=block  
EST=estimated retail value  
CR=crease  
TH=thin  
OC=off center

### Catalogs

Z=Zumstein  
YT=Yvert-Tellier  
MI=Michel  
SAN=Sanabria Air Post Catalog  
SG=Stanley Gibbons  
L=Locher Swiss Soldier Stamps  
M=Muller  
AC=Amateur Collector  
AE=Andres & Emmenegger Postmarks  
TA=Tanner First Day Covers  
W=Winkler Pre-Stamp Covers  
PTT=Machine Cancellations  
SP= Pen Special Cancellation Catalog  
A=Pen Auto Post Cancellation Catalog  
PS= Zumstein Postal Stationery  
SC=Scott's