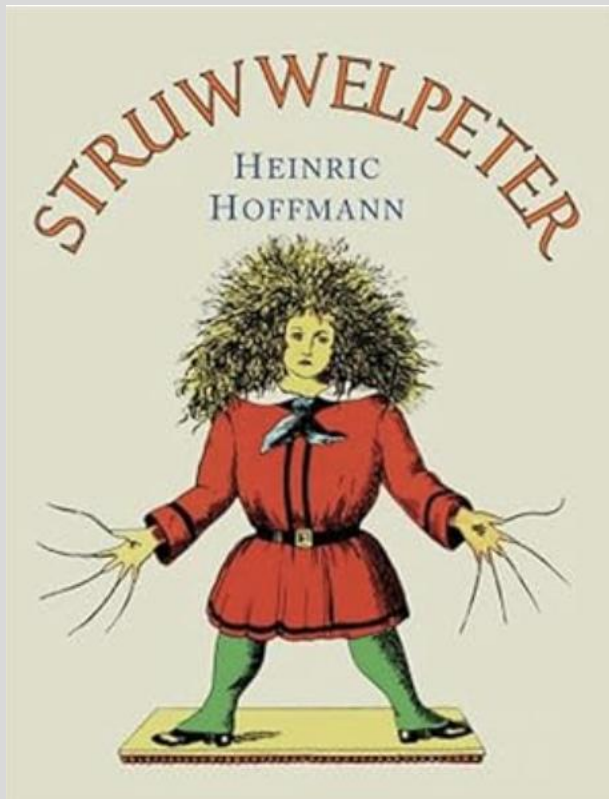


Collecting Switzerland's Strubels – The Imperforate Sitting Helvetia Stamps of 1854-1863



Why are they called “Strubels”?



Der Struwwelpeter ("shock-headed Peter") is an 1845 German children's book written and illustrated by Heinrich Hoffmann.

The Swiss public's reaction to Helvetia's image on the stamps led to their nickname "Strubels"

Why Collect them?

- **“Classic”** Imperforate series of the 19th century
- **Interesting** uses provide opportunity for “Context” philately & social historical research
- **Lengthy** primary period of use – 1854-1863
- **Plenty** of varieties, production anomalies, cancels, color shades
- **Changing** rates and variety of postal services and destinations
- **“Challenging”**

Research Resources

- Sitzende Helvetia Ungezähnt by Urs Hermann
 - Can be borrowed from the APRL
 - German Language with English Chapter Summaries
- Zumstein Specialized Switzerland Vol. I, 2000
- Swiss auction catalogs such as Corinphila & Roelli

Background of the Issue

- Economic Necessity inspired the Swiss post office to seek a cheaper method of stamp production
 - The previous 1850-1854 “Rayon” stamps were printed by lithography in up to three colors



- Up to three printing passes with challenging color registration
 - Lithographic stones had short lives and required frequent replacement
- Strubels only printed in one color per denomination
- Strubels printed by letterpress with sturdy embossing cliches

Inspired by Bavaria

- Swiss post office turned to the Munich-based Johann Georg Weiss University Printing Works



- The square Bavarian stamp design was elongated vertically
- The borders were narrowed and the texts were changed
- The numerals in the corners were replaced by rosettes
- The central numeral was replaced by the image of the seated Helvetia

Inspired by Trinidad

- Swiss post office officials visited Perkins Bacon searching for a suitable printer and saw:



- The seated position of Britannia is largely replicated for Helvetia
- Helvetia's appearance on stamps in 1854 followed her adoption on Swiss Federal coinage in 1850

Silk threads for security

- First patented by John Dickinson and used for production of early English postal stationery, paper embedded with silk threads was used in the production of Bavaria's first issue, and so naturally was used in the production of the Strubels.



Paper proof demonstrating use of both yellow and red threads



Enlarged view of reverse



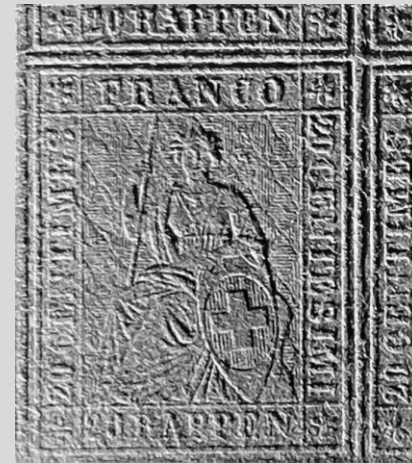
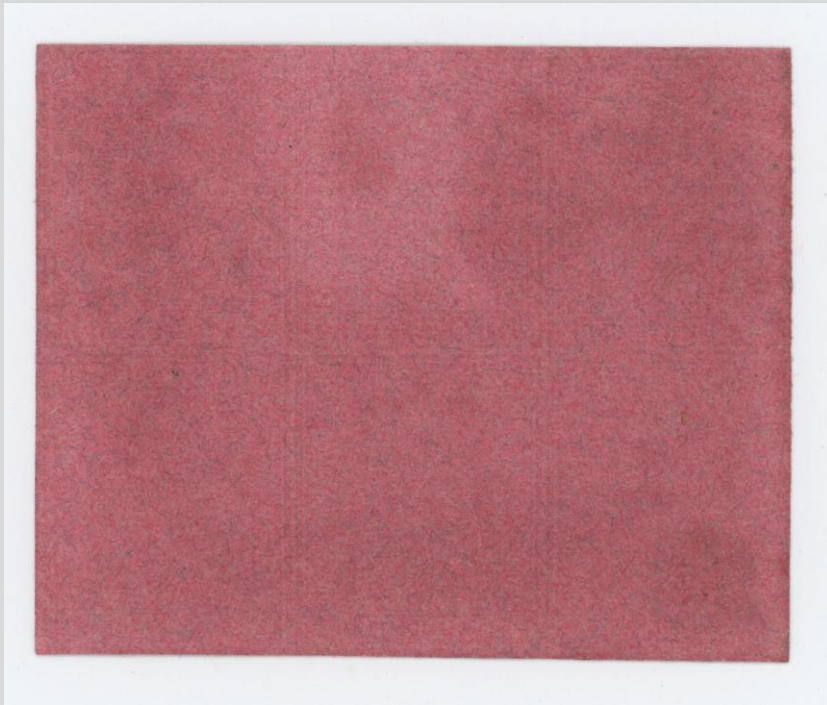
Knotted silk Thread variety



20mm thread distance

Double thread variety

Embossing Proofs



Enlarged side-lit photo of lower-left vignette more clearly illustrates the embossing.

Color Proofs



Seven Printing Periods

- A1. First Munich Period - 5, 10, 15 and 40 centime denominations
- A2. Second Munich Period – color changes
- A3. Third Munich Period – dry paper, clear prints
- B1. First Bern Period – Munich paper, 5, 10, 15, and new 20 centimes
- B1m. First Bern Period – Thin paper varieties
- B2. Second Bern Period – Munich paper, changed thread colors, new 1 franc denomination
- B2m. Second Bern Period – Thin paper varieties, 10 centime and 1 franc denominations
- B3. Third Bern Period – Zurich paper
- B3m. Third Bern Period – Thin paper variety, 10 centime denomination
- B4. Fourth Bern Period – Zurich paper, only green threads, new 2 centimes denomination for printed matter

Resulting in 38 recognized stamps before considering shades

Munich First Printing Period



These denominations pay these single weight letter rates:

5 centimes	–	local (Zone 1) domestic distance up to 2 courier hours, 9.6 km
10 centimes	–	Zone 2 domestic distance up to 48 km
15 centimes	–	Zone 3 domestic distances over 48 km
40 centimes	–	Foreign mail rates vary but 40 centimes pays for a standard letter to France

Registration fees were simply equal to the underlying postage and so could be met by a second stamp of the same denomination

Munich First Printing Period



Munich Second Printing Period



Munich Second Printing Period



Munich Third Printing Period



Munich Second Printing Period



Printed on dampened paper
Fuzzy, "swimming" ink

Munich Third Printing Period



Printed on dry paper
Clearer ink impression

Additional Denominations

Bern First

Printing Period
(from October 1854)



20 centimes

Zone 2 Registered
Letter, or to help
make up higher rates

Bern Second

Printing Period
(from February 1855)



1 franc

Primarily to support
international letters

Bern Fourth

Printing Period
(from July 1862)



2 centimes

Domestic printed
matter

Most Common Cancellations

Early Grill Cancellations



Federal
Grill



Geneva
Grill



Luzern
Grill

Post 1857 Cancellation Types



Single
Circle
Date
Stamp



Double
Circle
Date
Stamp



Smaller
Circle
"Thimble"
Cancel



Straight
Line
Town
Name

Less Common Cancellation Types



Diamond grill
cancel unique to
Bellelay village



< ----- R^{TE}. PAYERNE Postal Route ----- >



AARAU-
WINTERTHUR



WINERTHUR-
AARAU

< ----- Railway Post Offices ----- >



World's first
rotating wheel date
cancellation



"Ticino" oval town
cancel
"Strahlenstempel"



Spa Hotel
cancel



Hand drawn
postmaster's
provisional grill

Letters with the basic domestic rates



5 centime local letter rate,
Zurich to its adjacent suburb
of Hottingen



Letter from Chaux de
Fonds to Courtelary,
distance of 22 km
(Zone 2)



Afternoon (“Nachmittag”) letter from St. Gallen to Rapperswil, distance of 204 km.
Red boxed “N.P. Schl.” marking indicates that letter
was posted after the departure of the post for the day.

Letters with domestic registration



Two 10 centime pay second zone letter rate and domestic registration fee. During the Strubel period, the registration fee equaled the single weight letter rate for the distance sent. Mailed from Spreitenbach (straight line strike) transited Baden, with a destination of Waldhäuseren.

Official notice from the Sursee Court Chancellery, Registered to Luzern, 15 centimes postage for double weight letter with second zone distance plus 15 centime (double postage) registration fee, paid by unusual combination of darker and lighter shades of the first printing. Blue SURSEE CDS and 14 line federal grills.

Cash collection letters



Cash collection newspaper wrapper used to collect fee for advertising insertion. 1856 usage of first Bern printing period 15 centime and second Bern printing period 5 centime stamp.



Interesting forwarded cash collection letter, first sent from Aarau to Baden on the 11th of June to collect 1.83 francs, paid, and then forwarded to another party in Würenlingen to collect 2.03 francs inclusive of a second 20 centime postage and collection fee. All stamps from the 4th Bern printing period

Foreign destinations - France



Triple weight (15-22.5 grams) letter from Yverdon to Strasbourg. Yverdon is 13 km from the closest border point with France and therefore not eligible for the 35 centime (10 km) border rate for letters to France. Three times the 40 centime rate paid by 2nd Bern period 1 franc stamp with black thread and 3rd Bern printing period 20 centime stamp, total 1 franc 20 centimes.

Foreign destinations – Modern Germany



Letter mailed 4th August 1861 from Geneva also bearing fourth Bern printing issues totaling 50 centimes franking to Karlsruhe. Basel transit mark on reverse dated 5th August, an oval "SCHWEIZ uber BADEN" marking and a Karlsruhe receiver dated 6th August.

Foreign destinations – Modern Italy



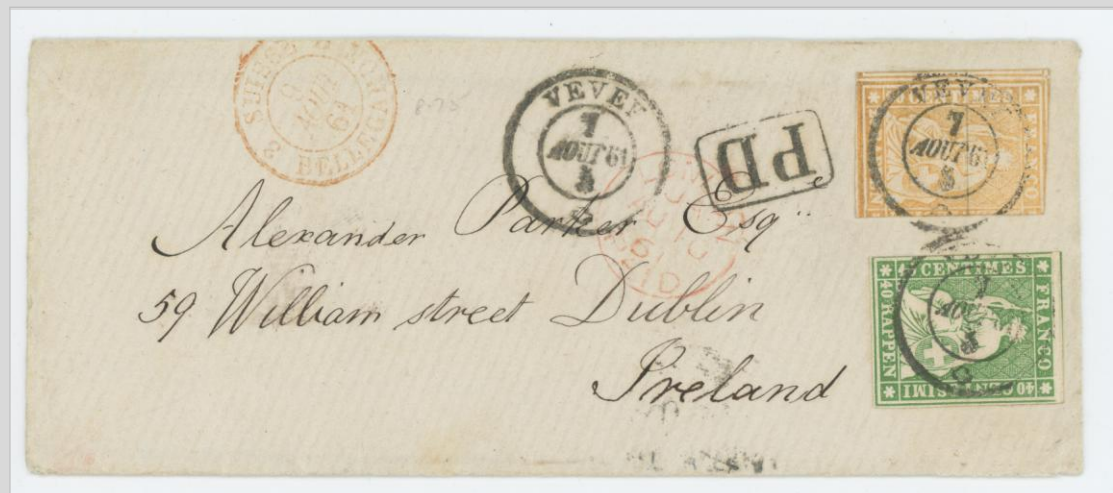
Unusual four color franking containing three stamps from the fourth Bern printing period with green silk threads and one stamp (the 40 centime green) from the 2nd Bern printing with a reddish brown silk thread. Mailed from Geneva to Rome on the 10th November 1859, the total 75 centime franking pays for the unusual Mediterranean Sea mail rate, possibly preferred to avoid the possibility of weather delays for the usual route crossing the Alps. The red French exchange office marking from Pontarlier is also dated 10th November accompanied by Marseille, Civitavecchia, and Rome markings dated 12th November (Marseille) and 15th November (Rome). The boxed RL (Rayon Limitrophe) marking was obliterated by crayon since Rome is not within the 30 km zone surrounding the Swiss border and **the highlight of the letter is the port city's CIVITAVECCHIA VIA DI MARE MALLA marking confirming the seaborne route.**

Foreign destinations – England & Ireland



First (40c) and Second (15c) Munich printing stamps frank 1855 prepaid letter to England. Mailed from Bern on 7th March 1855, letter traveled to Basel where it entered the French post office at the St. Louis exchange office on the 9th. The date of the London Paid receiver is indistinct.

Both 20c and 40c denominations are from the fourth Bern printing period and pay the 60 centime rate for a first weight level (up to 7.5g) letter to Ireland via France, rate in effect from 15th August 1859 to 30th September 1865. Mailed from Vevey on 7th August 1861, transited Lausanne the same day, entered the French post at Bellegarde on the 9th, transited London on the 10th, and crossed the Irish Sea on the Holyhead & Kingstown Packet service on the 11th. **On the Schaeffer scale of scarcity, Irish destinations achieve 11 points on a scale of 13.**



Foreign destinations – Kingdom of Denmark



The Munich first printing 40 centime stamp is accompanied by the 10 and 20 centime stamps of the first Bern printing period which together pay the 75 centime rate to Schleswig Holstein via Hamburg. At this time, Kiel was part of the kingdom of Denmark.

Mailed on 5th January 1856 and bearing a circled PD (Paid to Destination) marking, the reverse of the letter shows transit marks dated 7th January (Basel and Frankfurt) and 9th January (Hamburg) along with the mark of the KDOPA Hamburg (Danish Royal Post) exchange office, also on 9th January. **On the Schaeffer scale of scarcity, Danish destinations achieve 12 points on a scale of 13.**

Foreign destinations - Russia



Before the Russian revolution of 1917, St. Petersburg was Russia's capital and the natural location of the Swiss Consulate.

This official Justice Department letter (at the left) was mailed with registration on February 20th, 1860 from Lausanne to St. Petersburg, transiting Basel on the 21st with a German railway marking dated February 22nd, and a 16th of February arrival marking in St. Petersburg (Julian calendar). While official mail was delivered postage free within Switzerland, for foreign destinations regular postage was payable with stamps. Two second Bern printing 40 centime stamps (with maroon threads) and a fourth Bern printing 10 centime stamp paid the required postage.

Foreign destinations - Romania



Mailed August 7th, 1856 from from St. Gallen, the letter at right traveled to Vienna (August 10th) and then by Danube river steamer to its Bucarest destination, arriving on August 15th. Franked with the first Bern printing of the 5 centime stamp (green thread) and two second Bern period 40 centime stamps (maroon threads) paying the first weight level rate of 85 centimes. Established in 1852, the rate anticipated sharing of revenue between Switzerland, Austria, and the Ottoman post offices. However, during the period of the Crimean War (1853-1856), Austria controlled all steamship activity on the Danube.

Only known letter from Switzerland to Romania during the 1854-1863 period.

Foreign destinations - Dalmatian Coast



At right, the 10 and 40 centime stamps from the first Munich printing pay the 50 centime rate to Austrian controlled Castelnuovo (now Herceg-Novi) on the Dalmatian Coast. Mailed from Bern on the 19th February 1855 the reverse bears a Castelnuovo receiving mark dated 28th February. The endorsement "per Trieste col vapore" indicates a Mediterranean steamer transit from Trieste to Castelnuovo. One of two recorded letters from Switzerland addressed to Swiss mercenary members of the Austrian Imperial Army.

Foreign destinations - China



One franc Strubel from the second Bern printing period along with fourth Bern printing period stamps of 10 and 40 centimes pay 1.90 franc total postage for this cover to China. Posted at Geneva 24th September 1861, carried by train to Marseille 25th September, and bears Hong Kong transit mark on reverse dated 11 November 1861. **Schaefer assesses 12 of 13 possible rarity “points”.**

Foreign destinations - Uruguay



1861 commercial letter from St. Gallen to Montevideo, Uruguay franked with Bern fourth printing period stamps; by rail St. Gallen to Zurich (backstamped), then to Basel where it entered France at St. Louis mail exchange office. The 95 centime rate for a single letter up to 7.5 grams from Switzerland through France, then by French packetboat to South America. **Schaefer assesses 11 of 13 possible rarity “points”.**

Foreign destinations - Brazil



At left, 1856 commercial letter from Neuchâtel to Rio de Janeiro franked with Bern first and second printing period stamps; it entered the French post at Pontarlier mail exchange office, then by rail (PARIS A CALAIS on reverse), transiting London (PAID). The 130 centime rate for a single letter up to 7.5 grams from Switzerland via England to South America was in effect from 15th December 1864 to 31st December 1866. Schaefer assesses 10 of 13 possible rarity “points”.

Foreign destinations - Mexico



Commercial letter from Chaux-de-Fonds to Mexico City, franked with Bern third printing period stamps, entering French post at Morteau mail exchange office. The 95 centime rate for a single letter up to 7.5 grams from Switzerland via England to Vera Cruz became effective 1st January, 1857. From Vera Cruz two additional reales postage due was assessed for transmission to Mexico City.

Context Philately – Gold Mining Emigrants



Written in the small village of Someo and postmarked Locarno in May, 1857 this letter transited into France at the St. Louis (Basel) exchange office on the 17th of May 1857 transiting through Paris, Lyon and Marseille, all on the 17th and arrived in Melbourne on 10th July. It bears a 15 centime stamp from the first Bern printing period and two 40 centime stamps from the 2nd Bern printing period (with red brown silk threads). The 95 centime total correctly pays the rate for a single weight letter to Australia via Marseille and Suez.

Context Philately – Wine and Cheese



Cancelled 15th January 1860, the 15 centime and strip of three 40 centime stamps from the 3rd and 2nd Bern printing periods, respectively, on folded letter from Langnau to San Francisco overpay the 1.15 franc postage required to the US during the tariff period in place from 1st May 1857 to 30th June 1862. By endorsing the letter “Via Panama”, the sender indicated a preference for the letter to travel first to Mexico and then over the Panama isthmus to catch another ship for the onward journey to California for which the franking of 1.35 Francs would have been correct. Notwithstanding the endorsement, the letter was placed on the Cunard Line’s packetboat “ASIA” in Liverpool, sailing on the 21st of January, arriving in New York on the 5th of February. The receiver’s accounting notes inside the letter dated 15th of March suggest that the letter did, in fact, travel over the slow overland route to California.

Epilogue – Introducing Perforations!



Mailed June 3rd, 1863 from Neuchatel to New York with a 1 Franc Strubel and a 10 cent perforated stamp, this letter paid the 1.10 Franc transatlantic rate for a single weight letter up to 7.5 grams (Tariff period July 1st, 1862 to April 30th 1870).

Transited into France at Pontarlier on June 3rd; Received in New York June 16th and marked PAID in red circular mark; recipient's docketing indicates receipt on June 17th.

Hermann reports that 1 franc Strubels are found used in only 2% of mixed frankings

Thank you for your interest!

Q & A

