

The Stuart Rossiter Memorial Lecture 2008

The Belgian Colonies

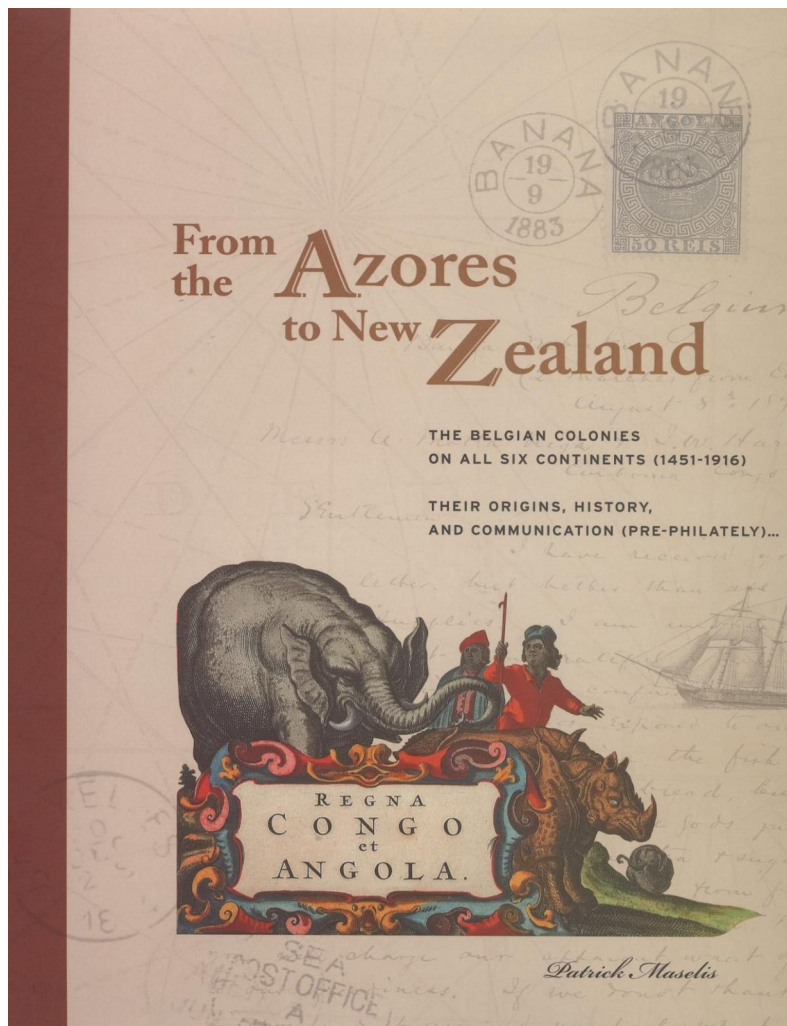
The research, funding and production of the book

"From the Azores to New Zealand" By Patrick Maselis

October 31st 2008

Royal Philatelic Society 41 Devonshire Place London

To order a copy, please contact: info@maselis.be



Patrick Maselis described the processes he used to research, create and publish his magnificent lavishly illustrated book, in 5 languages, which describes the 14 Belgian Colonies.

Because of the scale & high design cost of the book which has hundreds of illustrations, it had to be produced in two printings, in total 10,000 copies. It was offered at a very low price of 37.5 € so that it could be attractive to both philatelic and non-philatelic audiences. By the date of the Lecture, 8,850 copies had been sold. The Stuart Rossiter Trust Fund paid for the translation into English and Pro Post assisted in the translation costs.

The book covers every place in which Belgians settled. Belgium only came into existence as a state in 1830. Prior to that the country comprised the principality of Liege, the country of Flanders, and the duchies of Brabant & Hainault. Settlements by people from any of these four areas are regarded as 'Belgian' colonies.

Patrick described the economic structure of the publication. There were two printings, each of 5,000 copies.

The first print of 5000 copies

There were 160,000 € fixed costs, and additional variable costs of 6€ per copy. The breakdown of the fixed costs was: Development 50,000 Translation 40,000 Copyright fees 20,000 Print set up fixed 50,000 Total 160,000

The first printing cost 190,000€ [160,000€ fixed, and 30,000€ variable]. There was a net

The second print of 5000 copies

The second printing cost 80,000€ [50,000 fixed and 30,000€ variable]. There was a net profit of 70,000€ on this printing after revenue of 150,000€

The overall result will be a profit of 40,000€ when all copies are sold. The breakeven point is 8,666 copies, which has been passed! 8700 copies were sold by approx. mid 2008.

Currently, in October 2008, there are 1,150 copies to be sold, which will be the 'profit' on the entire publication. At this point it has passed the break even point.

The copies in stock comprise, by language: 150 each, English, Spanish, Portuguese [total 450] 250 French, 450 Dutch Total 1,150

Marketing the book was a major undertaking. Fortunately Patrick has very substantial business experience.

The book was launched on 1st November 2005, and the first 5000 mainly sold out by 15th December 2005. 2005 was the 175th Anniversary of the creation of the Belgian state, so the content was suitable and topical. It was therefore decided to print a further 5000 copies.

Forecast sales of the second printing:

Bookstores 1,600
Christmas Gifts purchased by Petercam & Bank v.Delen & others 2,500
Philatelists [Belgium 500, abroad 300] 800
Total 4,900

Actual sales of both printings to mid 2008:

Readers Digest 500
Philatelists 1,500
Bookstores 4,200
Gifts 2,500
Total 8,700

Patrick described his motivation in writing the book. He is a fourth generation philatelist, collection prephilately, postal history & stamps. He is a member of the Royal Philatelic Society of London; Board member & treasurer of the Belgian Academy; first vice-president of the AEP; and secretary-general of the Club de Monte Carlo.

There were only a few books covering perhaps 4 - 5 of the Colonies. To present a more complete picture, a book would have to be written. Once he had the book written in his head, the actual typing etc took 7 months. [This was a part time activity, as Patrick runs a major company.] The layout was done by the lady responsible for this function in his company. Editorial & printing services, & translations comprised a substantial additional part of the book production process.

The research methodology included reading hundreds of books, consulting other philatelists, visits to museums & national archives in Belgium, Zambia, Brazil & Argentina, and mail, phone & on-line contact s with Holland, the UK, New Zealand, the Canary Islands, and the USA. The results were recorded on file cards. The book went through detailed peer reviews.

The book has won numerous awards including:

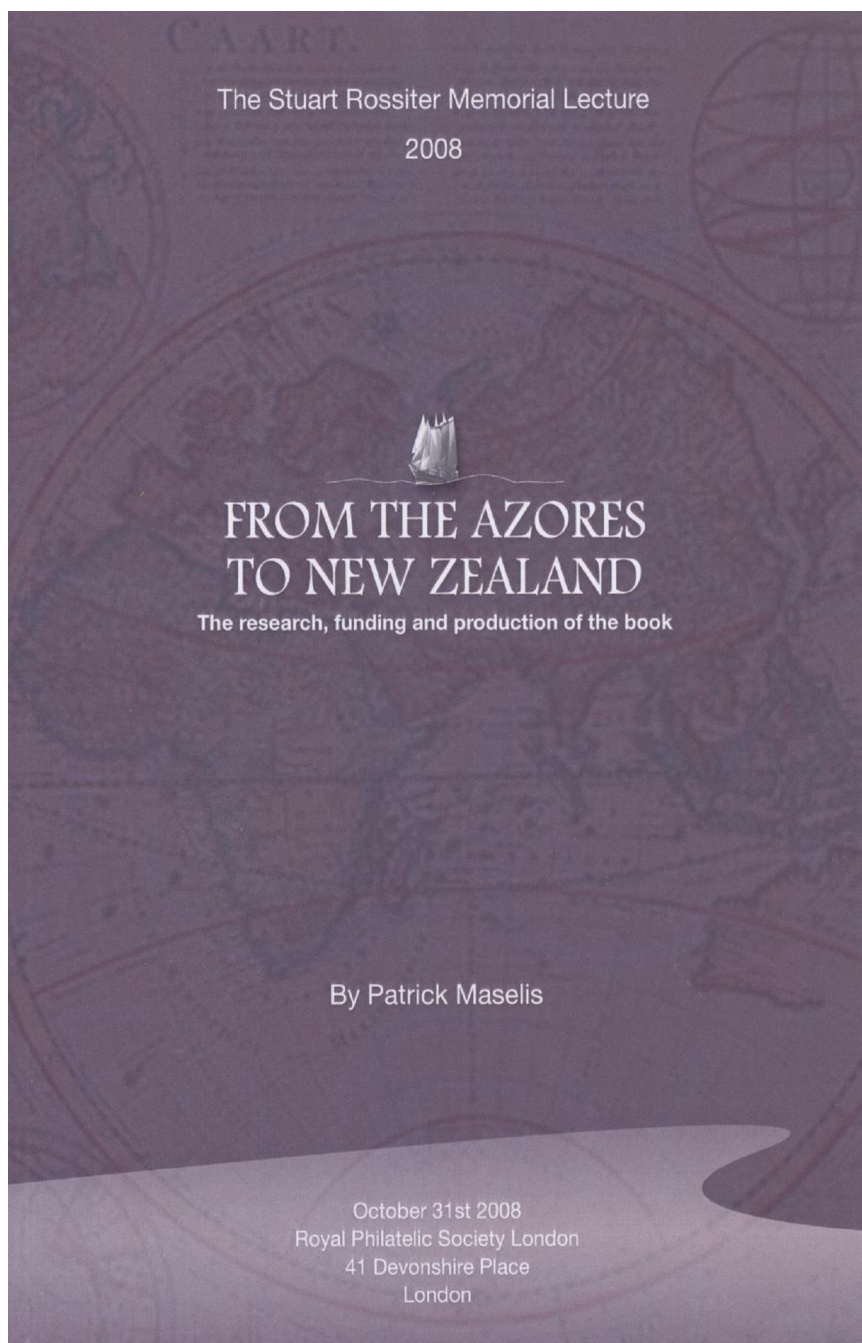
Belgium - Paul De Smeth medal

Europe - FER & AEP Medals for literature

USA - Chicagopex, Gold medal

FIP - Grand Vermeil, Valencia

An excellently produced and illustrated full colour brochure was given to all who attended the lecture. It contains a page about each of the Colonies describing the Colony, with an illustration of a cover or similar item.



From the Azores to New Zealand by Patrick Maselis.
Publisher: Roeselare [Belgium] : Roularta Books, c2005.
419 p. : ill. (some col.), maps (some col.) ; 33 cm.

Notes: "This book was produced with help from the Stuart Rossiter Trust Fund."

Includes bibliographical references (p. 410-416) and index.
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Notes by Nick Hackney