

## Inaugural exhibition

### The world of securities – from the beginnings to the present day

**Wertpapierwelt, the first museum worldwide to exhibit historical securities, welcomes you. Come and join us on a journey through four centuries of economic history documented by selected historical shares and bonds from 63 countries.**

Our journey through time and space has its point of origin in Europe, the cradle of the public limited company; more precisely, in the Netherlands. It was there that the East India Company, the world's first public limited company, was founded on 20 March 1602. The exhibits include a bond of the Dutch East India Company, designed to raise funds for its projects, as well as a share of the English East India Company, an enterprise launched some years later by the English in an effort to emulate the Dutch example. Not by accident, it was from England that the Industrial Revolution conquered the Old World. Public limited companies with the purpose of exploiting inventions, fostering railway and mining companies and infrastructure corporations as well as the first industrial giants saw the light of day in those times. In our exhibition, you are not only likely to encounter the names of still existing companies with a long-standing tradition. We also have some surprises in store for you: a blend of securities with an extraordinary visual appeal, bearing witness to corporations or branches of industry of former glory.



#### East India Company

The English waited for the Dutch model to stand the test before they launched their first public limited company.



#### La Hispano Suiza

Spanish automobiles built with Swiss engineership.

Imagine the United States of America without great economic pioneers such as Rockefeller, Vanderbilt, Astor or Wells and Fargo ... Their endeavours, not always above reproach, made of the USA what it is today: the most powerful industrialised nation of the world. They all immortalised themselves on shares with their original signatures; the same goes for the exceptionally gifted inventor Thomas A. Edison and the great icon of the silent film: Charlie Chaplin. These North American shares are no doubt among the absolute highlights of the exhibition.



**The Chaplin Studios**

Founder's share no. 1 of the Chaplin Studios. Signed by Charlie Chaplin himself, at a time when the pictures in Hollywood started to become animated.

The South and Central American shares are the silent testimonies to ancient colonies, rich natural resources and tropical plantations – but also to the disaster suffered by the French during the construction of the Panama Canal. Once again, the economic history of an entire continent can be documented by means of a selection of securities.



**Compagnie Universelle du Canal Interoceanique de Panama**

The project of Frenchman Ferdinand de Lesseps to build a canal failed miserably and embarked on a financial disaster.

Africa did not appear on the stage of global economy before the imperialist era, when the European powers established their colonies on the black continent. Countless public limited companies were founded with the aim of exploring the continent and exploiting its natural riches. The itinerary takes us all through the economic past of Africa - from the Suez Canal up in the North down to the diamond mines in the South. More often than not it was not merely profit thinking but also, to a substantial degree, politics that left an indelible mark on the development of those companies and hence had a sustainable impact on entire regions. To quote but one example: Cecil Rhodes founded the British South Africa Company, enabling him to annex vast areas of Southern Africa on behalf of the English Crown. Rhodes modestly named the annexed land Rhodesia.



**The British South Africa Company**

With the aid of the British South Africa Company, Cecil Rhodes took possession of North and South Rhodesia.

The stunning variety of public limited companies originating in the huge Asian continent is reflected in a selection of securities, too. The exhibition covers a thematic array ranging from agricultural projects in the Middle East financed by public limited companies on to crude oil exploration endeavours in Iran and textile manufacturing in India; from the banks of Japan to the railways of China, whose ancient bonds again represent "hope value" today. The Bagdad Railway Company, an enterprise founded by Germans to explore Asia by land – thus bypassing the Suez Canal – also deserves special attention.



**Section of a Chinese Railway bond**

Most Chinese foreign bonds were deemed non-performing after the rise of the communist regime. Nevertheless, owners of these securities have not buried their hopes for a debt refund to the present day.

As early as in the 19th century, the public limited company had advanced to the most remote corners of the world: Australia, New Zealand and the South Pacific Islands. New Zealand was populated with the help of a public limited company, not much different, in principle, from the colonisation of Africa earlier on. In the 1850s, Australian gold lured thousands of adventurers from all over the world to what used to be an English penal colony. Europeans exploited the natural resources and agricultural products of the colonial islands – an effort unimaginable without the institution of the public limited company.

**The British Australian Gold Mining Company**

In 1851, a settler was the first person to find gold in New South Wales. What followed was a genuine gold rush with uncountable adventurers invading the country.



If this fascinating journey through the world of securities has whetted your appetite, two desktops with access to the collection's database are provided on the spot to satisfy your curiosity. The database includes the front and backside displays of the more than 7,000 securities comprised in the collection, representing one of the world's most comprehensive archives of historical securities.

