

# The Journal of the France & Colonies Philatelic Society



*Vive la République! Vive Marianne!* The latest design chosen by President Emmanuel Macron and entitled *Marianne l'engagée* was issued on 20 July 2018. She represents, according to the press release, the energy, determination and progressiveness of France. See Richard Broadhurst's report on Page 129.

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Whole Number 288

**THE FRANCE & COLONIES  
PHILATELIC SOCIETY OF GREAT BRITAIN**

**Society Website: [www.fcps.org.uk](http://www.fcps.org.uk)**

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**The Society**

The Society was founded in 1949 and is affiliated to the ABPS. Its affairs are managed by a Committee comprising President, Officers and Committee members, elected annually.

All inquiries about and applications for membership should be addressed to the General Secretary.

**2018-19 Annual Subscription Rates**

United Kingdom: £18.00, Europe: £26.00, Elsewhere: £30.00.

Treasurer: C J Hitchen, 36 Everton Road, Croydon CR0 6LA (email: [treasurer@fcps.org.uk](mailto:treasurer@fcps.org.uk)).

Sterling, Euro and US dollar bills are accepted but overseas cheques must be drawn in Sterling. The Society has a PayPal account for the use of overseas members, but please add 4% for bank charges, and email to [treasurer@fcps.org.uk](mailto:treasurer@fcps.org.uk).

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**The Journal**

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Text must be submitted in Word and images attached separately as jpegs scanned at 300dpi.

**Auction and Exchange Packet Sales**

Lots for sale through the Society auctions, held 2 or 3 times a year, should be sent to the Auction Secretary:

S R Ellis, 22 Burton Crescent, Sneyd Green, Stoke-on-Trent ST1 6BT (email: [auction@fcps.org.uk](mailto:auction@fcps.org.uk))

according to instructions.

Please send material for circulation in booklet form to the appropriate Exchange Packet Secretary, viz.

France: R N Broadhurst, 47 Bolton Gardens, Teddington TW11 9AX (Telephone 020 8977 9665).

Colonies: D J Chalcraft, 2 Woodfield Road, London W5 1SJ (Telephone 020 8997 0622).

**The Magazine Circuit**

The Society subscribes to two French philatelic magazines, and has circuits organised for those who wish to read them. For further details contact the circuit organiser:

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\* \* \*

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# The Journal of the France & Colonies Philatelic Society

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## SOCIETY NOTES

### Editorial

First of all thank you to those members who have responded with articles for the Journal. I am delighted that amongst them there are several new names to add to those of our regular contributors. Believe me, there will be some mouth-watering material to read about in the next edition.

In this edition we have the second part of **Marc Parren's** article on the 'Post-independence postmarks of Brazzaville' and **Chris Hitchen's** account of the '*Relais Poste Urbain*'. Like many articles published in the Journal both of these are the fruits of original research but what makes these so different is that they have both been enriched by on the ground investigation with a camera at the ready.

Please continue to send me articles or contact me if you wish to discuss a potential contribution.

Thank you

**Mick Bister**

\* \* \*

### Resignations

We are sorry to lose member 761 **Mavis Pavey** who has advised us that she will not be renewing her membership next year. Mavis was Packet Secretary (France) from 1989 to 2007, convenor of the Scottish Regional Group from 2005 to 2011 and was a regular attendee at the Society's philatelic weekends. Mavis contributed immensely to the development and success of our Society and we shall miss having her as a member. We wish her health and happiness in her retirement.

\* \* \*

### Members Deceased

It is with great sadness that we have to report the death of member 1338 Prof Michael Parniak (USA). We offer our condolences to his family.

\* \* \*

### Future Events

Please do not forget to support your regional groups. All members are welcome to attend whether you bring material to display or not.

The **London Group** will be meeting on 9 February 2019 from 11.00am to 4.00pm at the Calthorpe Arms, 252 Grays Inn Road, London WC1X 8JR when **Len Barnes** will be displaying 'French Aviation between the Wars' in the morning. After lunch, members are invited to show their own material.

The **Northern Group** will be holding its next meeting on 23 March 2019 at Broom Methodist Church 195 Broom Lane, Rotherham, S60 3NW from 10.30am to 4.30pm. Further details will be circulated later.

The **Wessex Group** will be holding its next meeting on 2

February 2019 at the Scout Hall, Lower Street, Harnham starting at 10.30 am. Details of the morning speaker will be circulated later. After lunch, the afternoon will be devoted to members' displays.

\* \* \*

### 2019 Annual General Meeting

Notice is hereby given that the Annual General Meeting of the Society will take place at the Charlecote Pheasant Hotel, Charlecote (during the Annual Philatelic Weekend) at 9.20 am on Saturday 2 March 2019.

Any member wishing to raise matters or put proposals to the AGM should submit them in writing to the General Secretary, David Hogarth, 12 Moyness Park Drive, Blairgowrie, Perthshire PH10 6LX or by email to [secretary@fcp.org.uk](mailto:secretary@fcp.org.uk) at least one month prior to the AGM.

Members who may wish to put themselves forward to serve on the Committee or otherwise assist the Society are encouraged to contact the General Secretary.

\* \* \*

### Christmas Quiz

In the spirit of *Entente Cordiale* at Christmas **Richard Broadhurst** has generously organised a little quiz for our members.

From 1965 to 2015 eight commemorative stamps of France have featured a Union Jack in some form or another. Can you spot them? They are all stamps of mainland France, no colonies, and they are all listed in *Yvert & Tellier Tome 1 France* catalogue.

Please send your answers which can either be the Y&T catalogue number or the year and name of the issue to Richard Broadhurst, 47 Bolton Gardens, Teddington, TW11 9AX.

The member with the most complete answer drawn on 31 January 2019 will win a copy of the new *Marianne l'engagée* miniature sheet. The winner and answers will be posted in the next edition of the Journal.

*Bonne chance!*

\* \* \*

### French Magazines for Sale

We have a quantity of back issues of *Timbres Magazine* and *L'Echo de la Timbrologie* from 2015 to date for sale.

These are good used copies from the magazine circuit which are a great source of information on French and World stamps and postal history. They are available in bundles of six at £10 per bundle including postage, UK only. Additional bundles *pro rata*.

Please send a cheque payable to France and Colonies Philatelic Society to Richard Broadhurst, Magazine Organiser, 47 Bolton Gardens, Teddington, TW11 9AX.

\* \* \*



## Displays by Members

The following members contributed to the displays at Marcophilex XLII in Vertou on 1-2 December 2018:

**Chris Hitchen:** “*Paris le Bureau Central (1852 à 1869)*”

**Peter Kelly:** “*Exploration et bureaux de poste dans les régions sahariennes du Soudan et du Niger*”

**André Métayer:** “*Les prisonniers de guerre anglais détenus en France au cours des guerres révolutionnaires et napoléoniennes*”

\* \* \*

## Exhibition Successes

Congratulations to our members who have participated in the following exhibitions

<b>PARIS-PHILEX 2018, Exposition nationale, Paris 7-10 June 2018</b>		
<b>Jean-François Gibot</b>	<i>Les 40 centimes de l'Empire utilisés seuls ou en multiples</i>	Gold and Grand prix de l'exposition
<b>Jean-François Gibot</b>	<i>Des femmes, des ânes et du lait (cartes postales)</i>	Large vermeil and Prix spécial
Guy Dutau and Jérôme Castanet were members of the jury and Jean-Pierre Magne was consultant to the jury.		
<b>PRAGA 2018, Exposition mondiale spécialisée, Prague 15-18 August 2018</b>		
<b>Brigitte Abensur</b>	<i>Quand les 'Empire dentelés' voyagent hors de France</i>	Gold
<b>Jean-François Gibot</b>	<i>Les 40 centimes de l'Empire utilisés seuls ou en multiples</i>	Large vermeil
<b>Jean-Pierre Magne</b>	<i>Les relations postales de la Russie impériale vers la France de 1858 à 1875</i>	Large vermeil
<b>Rainer von Scharpen</b>	Perfins of the French Colonies and Post Offices Abroad (Part IV: Black Africa - Asia - Post offices Abroad - Mandated Territories)	Large Silver
<b>Yacov Tsachor</b>	France: 1871-1878, perforated Cérès: Rates, Routes and Postmarks	Large Gold

\* \* \*

## Robert Abensur RDP



**Robert Abensur**  
signing the Roll of Distinguished Philatelists  
on 27 July 2018  
at the Assembly Rooms in Newcastle upon Tyne  
during the Philatelic Congress of Great Britain  
(© Dane Garrod)

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## *Le Relais Poste Urbain*

### A major change in the post office network in France

Chris Hitchen

*Le relais poste* provides postal services in non-post office premises staffed by non-post office employees. They have been a feature in the countryside for a number of years located in shops, supermarkets, tobacconists, tradesmen premises and even town halls. That model is now being rapidly extended to towns and cities across France.

Like all postal administrations the amount of traditional letter post is dropping continually in the face of electronic communications of all types. The revenue required to run the traditional network of offices is simply not there. In September 2013 Philippe Wahl was appointed President and chief executive officer of *La Poste*. His background is that of banking and very quickly he announced a programme intended to save some 500 million euros by 2020. Whilst trying to identify new sources of revenue he has also seen the need to drastically trim the post office network and the number of its employees. If one googles the term '*Relais Poste Urbain*' one can find a great deal of information on the broad lines of what is taking place. However it is extremely difficult to find any detail. French industrial relations are quite fragile and trade union activity still quite strong (see the CGT website). Clearly *La Poste* is reluctant to announce future post office closures too publicly and

too far in advance. The post office website does provide a useful facility to find one's nearest post office or one in any location. If one enters Paris one can obtain a list of all current offices and by monitoring that over time it is possible to track the opening and closure of offices. It is not entirely accurate and office closures are sometimes simply temporary and later they fully reopen, but one can build up a picture of what is happening.

By law apparently *La Poste* must maintain 17,000 points of contact (a postal establishment of some sort), such that 90% of the population is within 5 kilometres of one or 20 minutes by car. At the moment in urban areas 85% live within 500 metres of a post office and in Paris that figure rises to 96%. At the end of 2015 there were some 185 post offices in Paris.

In 2013 Reims was one of the first to see the new structure rolled out. Two of the five post offices in the city closed and *Relais Poste Urbains* (RPU) opened in supermarkets to replace them. In Paris the process began in the summer of 2014. At lunch time on Saturday 12 July 2014 the Paris Van Loo office at 155 Avenue de Versailles (**Figure 1**) in the 16<sup>th</sup> *arrondissement* closed its doors for the last time. The following Tuesday 15 July the first Paris RPU opened in



Figure 1

The Paris Van Loo office at 155 Avenue de Versailles in the 16<sup>th</sup> *arrondissement*. The photo was taken on 5 August 2013, less than one year before its closure.



the Franprix supermarket on the other side of the avenue at 136 Avenue de Versailles (Figure 2). It is known as Paris Exelmans Relais Poste AP (the AP is short for *Agence Postale*).

The following year 2015 saw changes in the rue Montévidéo

also in the 16<sup>th</sup> *arrondissement*. Office 78 had opened at number 19 in 1935. To the end it clung onto its office number (no longer in use since 1987) and the outdated PTT logo (Figure 3). Sometime between April and November 2015 it was closed and the Franprix supermarket opposite at number 10 became home to *Poste Relais Montévidéo*



Figure 2

The Paris Exelmans Relais Poste AP in 2016 located inside the Franprix supermarket 136 Avenue de Versailles.



Figure 3

Office 78 in the rue Montévidéo in the 16<sup>th</sup> *arrondissement*. The photo was taken on 5 August 2013, two years before its closure



AP (Figure 4). The closure notice in the old office (Figure 5) makes matters clear for the public. Postal services are available in the RPU but other postal activities, particularly post office banking, can only be provided in a traditional post office.

Looking to the future and alternative sources of income, postal banking is seen as important and so too is the parcel business generated by internet trading or e-commerce as it is sometimes referred to. The next RPU to open in the capital was in a Pickup Store in the Gare St Lazare



Figure 4  
The Poste Relais AP at 10 rue Montévidéo inside the Franprix supermarket in 2016



Figure 5  
The closure notice in the former Office 78 in the rue Montévidéo



around November 2015 (Figure 6). As the name suggests these Pickup Stores facilitate the collection of parcels by customers who are not at home to receive them. Adding an RPU extends the range of services.

In the spring of 2016 a number of new RPUs suddenly appeared in the list of offices in Paris. By May six had been announced and by August the number had risen to fourteen. It is not possible to be absolutely sure of the

opening dates because they are often listed some weeks prior to actual commencement of operations. Most are in Franprix supermarkets but Carrefour City is also involved. The RPU designated Campo Formio was first destined for the Dia supermarket (part of a Spanish chain) at 135 rue Jeanne d'Arc but before it was able to open there it was relocated to Carrefour City at 107 Boulevard de l'Hôpital.

The closure of older post offices has started but one can



Figure 6  
Relais Postal Urbain located at a Pickup Store in the Gare St Lazare

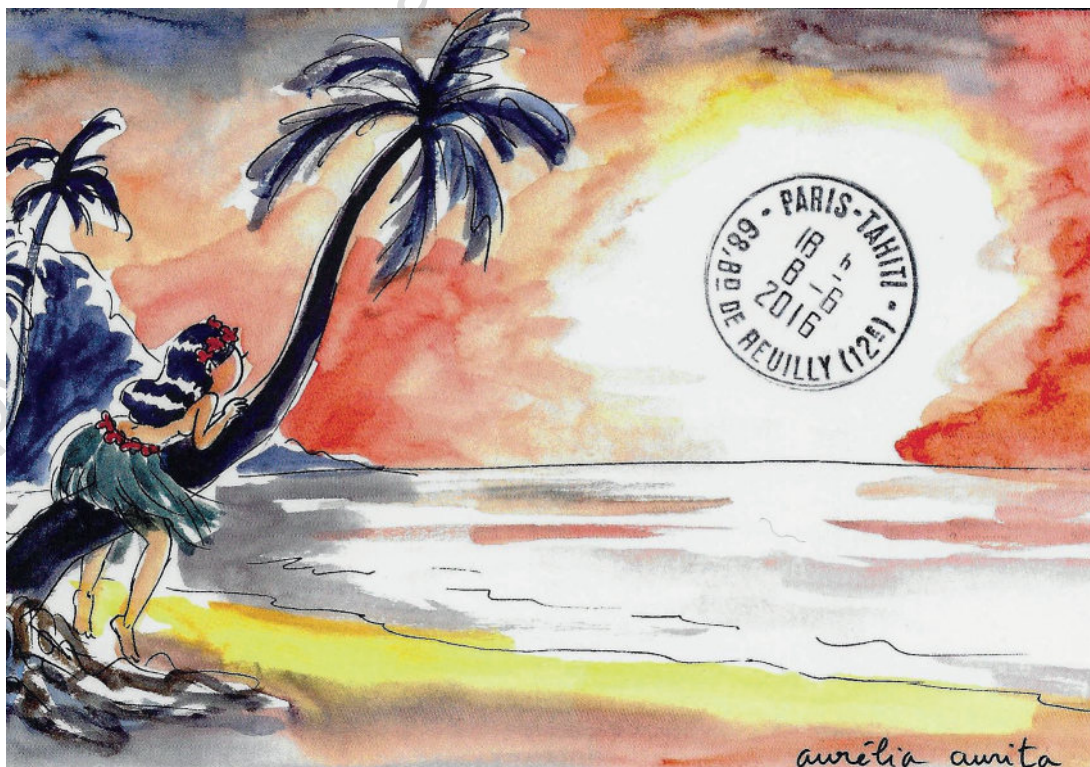


Figure 7  
Souvenir postcard marking the closure of the Paris-Tahiti post office on 8 June 2016

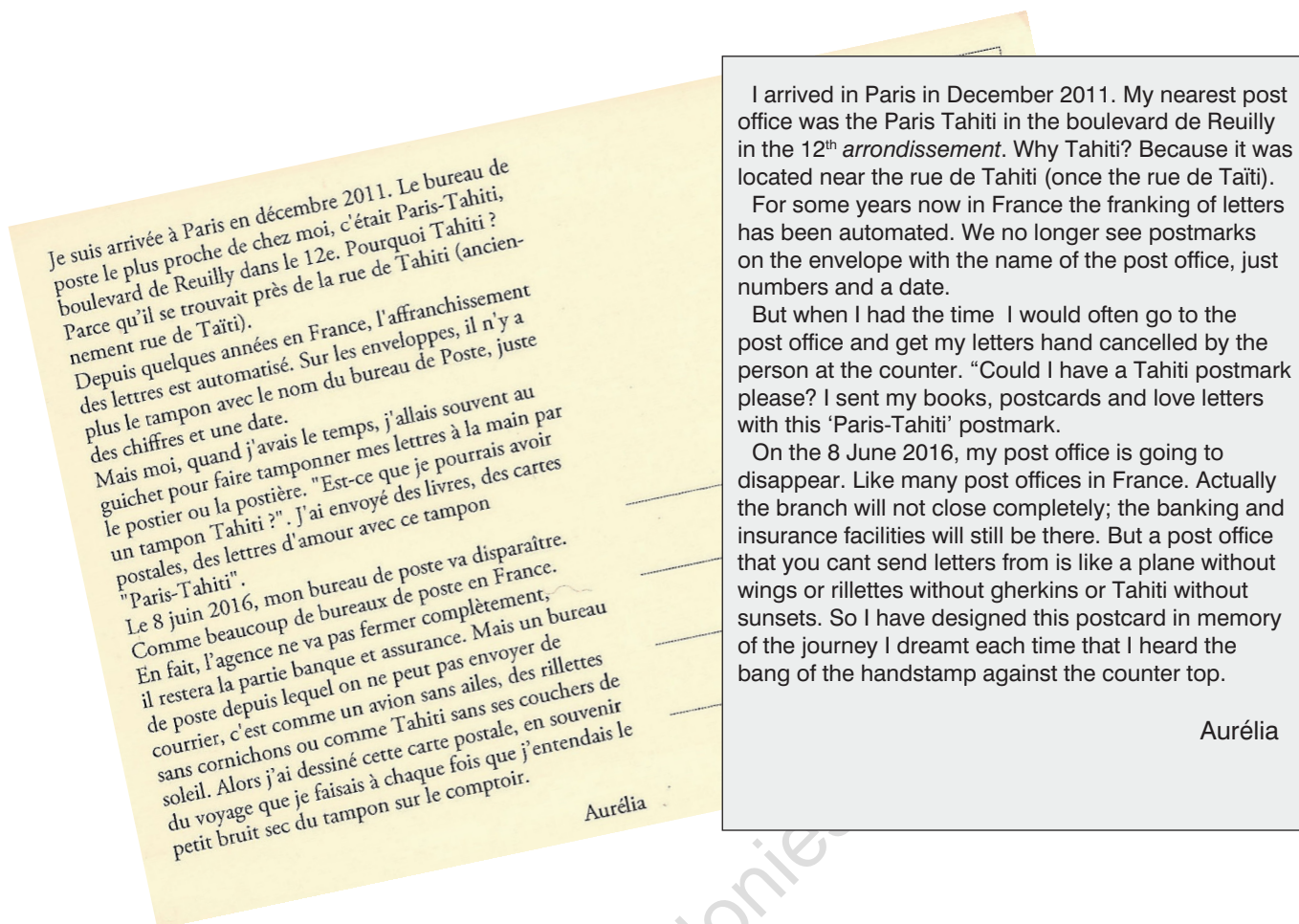


Figure 8  
Reverse of souvenir postcard with text bemoaning the loss of the Paris-Tahiti post office

only be sure of these when they disappear from the post office lists. Any public announcement must be made very locally, nothing seems to be more widely available. To make these changes more acceptable to the public the extended opening hours of the shops housing these RPU is frequently emphasised. Not long after the RPU Campo Formio was listed the old office at the Gare d'Austerlitz vanished from the listings of Paris offices. Clearly others will close as the RPUs expand. There must be a detailed program within *La Poste* regarding these changes but it is obviously not available for public dissemination so one can only follow events as they unfold. No targets have been set (at least not officially) but from what has been written it would seem that around a third of offices could well be switched to RPUs. Between now and 2020 a lot is going to happen.

The postcard in Figures 7 and 8 was a fortuitous purchase on Delcampe in August 2016. It confirms what is going on and how abruptly these changes are being made. In April 2016 the Paris Tahiti office was still functioning as a normal post office at 68 Boulevard de Reuilly. By 8 June it had closed. It also demonstrates the pitfalls of the post

office website listing. Offices that are purely for postal banking still feature on the website lists, and on the first page no indication is given that they do not deal with postal services. Only by clicking on a particular office can one find its range of services and opening hours. Others are marked closed but remain on the website.

### Conclusion

At the time of writing there are now some 42 of these establishments in Paris. 20 opened in 2017 and some 7 so far this year. Since 2015 at least 30 full offices have closed. The initial target was substantial savings in costs by 2020 so it would appear that there is still quite a long way to go with the expansion of the *Relais Poste* at the expense of the traditional post office.

It is also noteworthy that the post office seems to be quick to react where new ideas do not work. In the Gare St Lazare the pickup store has now been abandoned. The facilities in most supermarkets are quite basic, usually just a small counter with no particular staff allocated to look after them. Changes can be made with minimal cost.



### Post offices closed in Paris since 2014 (no longer on *La Poste* website)

OFFICE	ADDRESS	DATE CLOSED (APPROXIMATE)	DISTRICT
PARIS BEAUBOURG	90 RUE SAINT DENIS	around 1 January 2017	1
PARIS FORUM DES HALLES	1 RUE PIERRE LESCOT	around 1 January 2017	1
PARIS MUSÉE DU LOUVRE	PASSAGE DU GRAND LOUVRE	November 2016	1
PARIS CENTRE GEORGES POMPIDOU	19 RUE BEAUBOURG	1 December 2015	4
PARIS ILE DE LA CITE	1 BOULEVARD DU PALAIS	by August 2018	4
PARIS ILE ST LOUIS	16 RUE DES 2 PONTS	around 1 January 2017	4
PARIS MOUSSY	10 RUE DE MOUSSY	8 January 2017	4
PARIS SÈVRES BABYLONE	3 RUE DUPIN	by August 2018	6
PARIS ORSAY	3 RUE DE COURTY	1 August 2016	7
PARIS SEGUR	5 AVENUE DE SAXE	by January 2015	7
PARIS TOUR EIFFEL	TOUR EIFFEL	1 February 2016	7
PARIS CHAMPS ELYSEES	71 AVENUE DES CHAMPS ELYSÉES	closed by June 2014	8
PARIS EUROPE	10 RUE DE VIENNE	by August 2018	8
PARIS LA TREMOILLE	24 RUE DE LA TREMOILLE	by August 2018	8
PARIS CONSERVATOIRE	2 RUE DU CONSERVATOIRE	1 January 2017	9
PARIS DROUOT	19 RUE CHAUCHAT	by August 2018	9
PARIS OPÉRA	8 RUE AUBER	20 to 28 December 2016	9
PARIS GARE DU NORD	8 RUE DE DUNKERQUE	around 1 January 2017	10
PARIS ROQUETTE	17 RUE DE LA ROQUETTE	November 2016	11
PARIS GAMMA	193 RUE DE BERCY	1 December 2015	12
PARIS TAHITI	68 BOULEVARD DE REUILLY	June 2016	12
PARIS AUSTERLITZ	26 BOULEVARD DE L'HÔPITAL	1 August 2016	13
PARIS TOUR MONTPARNASSE	33 AVENUE DU MAINE	1 September 2016	15
PARIS BEETHOVEN	64 AVENUE DE NEW YORK (2 RUE BEETHOVEN)	1 February 2016	16
PARIS CHAILLOT	1 B RUE DE CHAILLOT	by 20 December 2016	16
PARIS ÉTOILE	73 RUE LAURISTON	November 2016	16
PARIS MOLITOR	35 BOULEVARD MURAT	1 November 2016	16
PARIS MONTEVIDEO	19 RUE MONTEVIDEO	1 November 2015	16
PARIS VAN LOO	155 AVENUE DE VERSAILLES	Saturday 12 July 2014	16
PARIS CARDINET	132 RUE DE SAUSSURE	around 1 January 2017	17
PARIS BESSIÈRES	81 BOULEVARD BESSIÈRES	around 1 January 2017	17
PARIS LAMARCK	74 RUE LAMARCK	by August 2018	18
PARIS TRISTAN TZARA	29 RUE TRISTAN TZARA	5 January 2017	18
PARIS CURIAL	218 RUE DE CRIMÉE	by August 2018	19



### Location of *Relais Poste Urbains* in Paris at August 2018

DESIGNATION	ADDRESS	SITE OCCUPANT	DATES	DISTRICT
PARIS RPU LOUVRE RP	44 RUE DU LOUVRE - 75001 PARIS	Franprix supermarket	recorded 30 November 2016	1
PARIS RPU MARENGO AP	2 RUE MARENGO - 75001 PARIS	Franprix supermarket	recorded Spring 2016	1
RPU PARIS SAINT LOUIS RP	37 RUE DES DEUX PONTS - 75004 PARIS	Le Saint Louis	recorded 20 August 2017	4
PARIS RPU JARDIN DES PLANTES AP	4 BOULEVARD L HOPITAL - 75005 PARIS	McDonalds	recorded 13 February 2017	5
PARIS RPU EBLE AP	13 RUE EBLE - 75007 PARIS	Franprix supermarket	recorded Spring 2016	7
*PICKUP STORE GARE SAINT LAZARE AP	13 RUE D'AMSTERDAM EN FACE VOIE 27 - 75008 PARIS	DPD Group Pickup	November 2015 to 15 January 2017 approx.	8
*LA POSTE RELAIS CLICHY RP	53 RUE DE CLICHY - 75009 PARIS	Supermarché Diagonal	15 June 2017 to 23 January 2018 approx.	9
PARIS RPU GEOFFROY MARIE AP	5 RUE GEOFFROY MARIE - 75009 PARIS	Franprix supermarket	recorded 17 June 2016	9
PARIS LPR FRANPRIX RUE MONTREUIL RP	63 to 69 RUE DE MONTREUIL	Franprix supermarket	recorded 17 July 2018	11
PARIS RPU ROQUETTE AP	25 RUE DE LA ROQUETTE - 75011 PARIS	Franprix supermarket	recorded 6 June 2016	11
PARIS RPU MICHEL BIZOT AP	126 RUE DE PICPUS - 75012 PARIS	Franprix supermarket	recorded Spring 2016	12
PARIS RPU CAMPO FORMIO AP	107 BOULEVARD L HOPITAL - 75013 PARIS	Carrefour city supermarket	recorded 28 June 2016	13
PARIS RPU CAMPO FORMIO AP	135 RUE JEANNE D'ARC - 75013 PARIS	Dia carrefour Bio	recorded March 2017	13
PARIS STATION F BP	60 RUE EUGENE FREYSSINET - 75013 PARIS	A start up campus for new businesses	recorded 17 July 2017	13
LPR DELAMBRE RP	11 RUE DELAMBRE - 75014 PARIS	Dietetic shop	recorded 20 April 2017	14
LPR GENERAL LECLERC RP	121 AVENUE DU GENERAL LECLERC - 75014 PARIS	Franprix supermarket	recorded 4 July 2017	14
PARIS RPU RAYMOND LOSSERAND RP	186 RUE RAYMOND LOSSERAND - 75014 PARIS	Franprix supermarket	recorded 12 August	14
**PARIS LPR MORILLONS RP	101 RUE DES MORILLONS - 75015 PARIS	Franprix supermarket	recorded 20 August 2017	15
PARIS RPU SAINT CHARLES RP	154 RUE SAINT CHARLES - 75015 PARIS	Carrefour city supermarket	recorded 22 June 2016	15
PARIS RPU VAUGIRARD RP	327 RUE DE VAUGIRARD - 75015 PARIS	A 2 pas Auchan	recorded 8 December 2016	15

PARIS LP CORNER PALAIS TOKYO RP	13 AVENUE DU PRESIDENT WILSON - 75016 PARIS		recorded 17 July 2018	16
PARIS EXELMANS RELAIS POSTE AP	136 AVENUE DE VERSAILLES - 75016 PARIS	Franprix supermarket	opened Tuesday 15 July 2014	16
PARIS RPU FOCH AP	142 AVENUE DE MALAKOFF - 75116 PARIS	Carrefour city supermarket	recorded Spring 2016	16
POSTE RELAIS MONTEVIDEO AP	10 RUE DE MONTEVIDEO - 75116 PARIS	Franprix supermarket	around September 2015	16
PARIS RPU PAUL VALERY RP	37 RUE LAURISTON - 75016 PARIS	Franprix supermarket	recorded 22 June 2016	16
PARIS RPU BERTHIER RP	108 BOULEVARD BERTHIER - 75017 PARIS	Le Pressing (Dry cleaners)	recorded 10 October 2016	17
PARIS RPU BESSIERES RP	25 BOULEVARD HENRI BESSIERES - 75017 PARIS	Franprix supermarket	recorded 10 October 2016	17
LA POSTE RELAIS COURCELLES RP	159 RUE DE COURCELLES - 75017 PARIS	Monoprix supermarket	recorded 22 July 2017	17
PARIS RPU JONQUIERE RP	10 RUE BARON - 75017 PARIS	Franprix supermarket	recorded 25 July 2016	17
PARIS RPU PORTE DE CLICHY RP	183 TER AVENUE DE CLICHY - 75017 PARIS	Intermarché	recorded 10 October 2016	17
PARIS RPU SAUSSURE AP	134 RUE DE SAUSSURE- 75017 PARIS	Franprix supermarket	recorded 17 June 2016	17
*PARIS RPU LP CORNER COLIS WAGRAM RP	66 RUE PRONY		recorded 10 October 2017	17
PARIS RPU FRANPRIX GUERSANT RP	38 RUE GUERSANT	Franprix supermarket	recorded 19 October 2017	17
LPR PARIS FRANPRIX LAMARCK RP	116 RUE LAMARCK	Franprix supermarket	recorded 17 July 2018	18
PARIS RPU MARCADET	110 RUE MARCADET - 75018 PARIS	Vival by Casino	recorded 1 February 2017	18
*PARIS RPU TRISTAN TZARA RP	29 RUE TRISTAN TZARA - 75018 PARIS	Maison de la Presse	10 October 2016 to summer 2017	18
RPU PARIS MAC ORLAN RP	5 PLACE PIERRE MAC ORLAN - 75018 PARIS	Franprix supermarket	recorded 20 August 2017 (succeeds above)	18
PARIS RPU FRANPRIX CAULAINCOURT RP	44 RUE CAULAINCOURT	Franprix supermarket	recorded 10 October 2017t	18
PARIS RPU PAPETERIE DEL SARTE RP	6 RUE ANDRE DEL SARTE	Papeterie (Stationers)	recorded 10 October 2017	18
PARIS RPU FRANPRIX POISSONNIERS RP	76 RUE DES POISSONNIERS	Franprix supermarket	recorded 13 December 2017	18
*LP CORNER COLIS NOEL 3 FRERES RP	30 RUE DES TROIS FRERES		19 October 2017 to 23 January 2018 approx.	18

PARIS RPU CORENTIN CARIOU RP	155 AVENUE DE FLANDRE - 75019 PARIS	Carrefour city supermarket	recorded 30 November 2016	19
PARIS FLANDRE RPU RP	35 AVENUE DE FLANDRE - 75019 PARIS	Franprix supermarket	recorded 10 October 2016	19
BP-PARIS MACDONALD BP	201 BOULEVARD MACDONALD - 75019 PARIS	Separate post office in a row of new shops	recorded 20 April 2017	19
RPU PARIS PRESSING CRIMEE RP	244 RUE DE CRIMEE	Le Pressing (Dry cleaners)	recorded 5 December 2017	19
PARIS LPR MONOPRIX JAURES RP	118 130 AVENUE JEAN JAURES	Monoprix supermarket	recorded 2 May 2018	19
PARIS RPU HAXO RP	1 RUE HAXO - 75020 PARIS	Franprix supermarket	recorded 12 August	20
LPR PARIS RELAIS PYRENEES RP	181 RUE DES PYRENEES - 75020 PARIS	un air de Clopes (electronic cigarettes)	recorded 26 March 2018	20
PARIS LPR MONOPRIX PELLEPORT RP	131 141 AVENUE GAMBETTA	Monoprix supermarket	recorded 17 July 2018	20
PARIS MY AUCHAN CHEVREAU RP	40 RUE HENRI CHEVREAU	Auchan supermarket	recorded 17 July 2018	20
*No longer in operation ** See <b>Figure 9</b>				

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\*Coût de connexion selon le fournisseur d'accès. LA BANQUE POSTALE - S.A. à Directoire et Conseil de Surveillance au capital de 4 046 407 595 €. Siège social et adresse postale : 115 rue de Sèvres 75275 Paris CEDEX 06. RCS Paris 421 100 645. Code APE 6419Z. Intermédiaire d'assurance immatriculé à l'ORIAS sous le n° 07 023 424.

Figure 9

Flier distributed in the Franprix supermarket in the rue des Morillons (15<sup>th</sup> arrondissement).  
It promotes the new *relais poste* in the supermarket and the services available.  
But it also mentions that all post office services can still be found at the nearest full post office in the rue de Vouillé.



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'La face cachée de La Poste. Enquête sur un service public en péril', by Séverine Cazes and Valérie Hacot. Flammarion, 350 pages, 22,90 euros.

Google maps is a very useful source; enter the exact address including street number to get street view pictures showing the relevant shops.

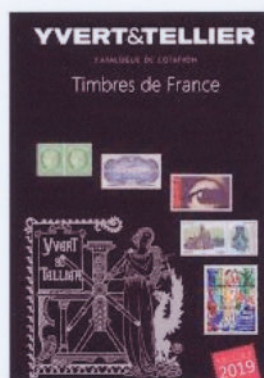
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# Newspaper Wrapper from Great Britain to Saigon via Brindisi

Dr John Courtis FRPSL



Figure 1

Queen Victoria ½d blue-green newspaper wrapper from Manchester to Saigon, 7 June 1901

In examining more than 10,000 used post office postal stationery wrappers of Great Britain over the past 14 years only two examples have been observed where Saigon has been the destination. The first example was listed on eBay on 11 February 2008 (WP16/E9) and addressed to Speidel & Co. and uprated ½d with a FB (foreign branch) cancellation – I missed buying that wrapper. A second example, which is examined here, was acquired recently, also with the same address (Figure 1). It provides enough detail for investigating the wrapper's back-story. The wrapper in question is the 1901 Queen Victoria ½d blue-green without text admonition<sup>1</sup> and is chamfered at top (WP18/E11). It is cancelled with a 25/15mm MANCHESTER 1 30.PM JU 7 01 double circle date stamp. There are two single-line purple handstamps at top left reading via Brindisi and Printed Matter.

## The Destination

Now called Ho Chi Minh City, Saigon was the formal name and largest city in Vietnam. It was the capital of the French colony of Cochinchina. In the 1850s, persecution of French missionaries gave France an excuse to expand their colonial empire into Vietnam. In 1859, Saigon was conquered by France. After France forced the Nguyen emperor to sign over control of Vietnam, the colonialists embarked on an ambitious building spree in Saigon, using Vietnamese labour to fill canals, pave wide boulevards,

build elegant government and residential buildings, and even erect a European-style cathedral. French soldiers, businessmen, officials and their wives shopped for the latest Parisian fashions at boutiques along Rue Catinat, gathered for cocktails at the Cercle Sportif, read week-old editions of *Le Monde* on the veranda of the Continental Hotel - and insulated themselves as much as possible from the poverty of the rest of the city's 100,000 inhabitants



Figure 2

French Indo-China

<sup>1</sup> Prior to wrapper E10, there was a 5 or 4 line text printed on the wrapper cautioning users that if anything was contained within the enclosure of the nature of a letter then the wrapper would be charged at the letter rate. By the time E10 was issued in 1900 the caution to the public was felt to be no longer needed and it was not included on Post Office issues after that date.



By 1901, the date of the wrapper, France controlled Vietnam (comprising Tonkin, Annam and Cochinchina), Laos and Cambodia, which it referred to as French Indochina (Figure 2) and which became one of France's most lucrative colonial possessions. Vast swathes of land were seized and reorganized into large plantations of rice and rubber with 25 gigantic rubber plantations in Cochinchina. The French also constructed factories and built mines to tap into Vietnam's deposits of coal, tin and zinc. Most of this material was sold abroad as exports.

French missionaries, officials and their families opened primary schools and provided lessons in both French and Viet languages. Colonialism produced a physical transformation in Vietnamese cities with traditional local temples, pagodas, monuments and buildings replaced with buildings of French architecture and style. The Vietnamese names of cities, towns and streets were changed to French names. Significant business, such as banking and mercantile trade, was conducted in French rather than local languages. If not for the climate and people, some parts of Hanoi and Saigon could have been mistaken for parts of Paris, rather than a south-east Asian capital.

### The Addressee

The addressee is Walter Speidel & Co. which was a German kerosene and mercantile company in Saigon. The company was founded by German investor Theodore Speidel in 1868, a few years after the French established control over Saigon and nearby provinces. It was one of the first foreign companies opened in Vietnam. Theodore Speidel became a member of the Saigon Commerce Department in 1882. He died in Paris in March 1909, leaving the CEO position to F. Walter Speidel who served as the consular representative of Germany, Belgium and Denmark in Saigon. Walter had first come to Saigon in 1871 to work for insurance company Engler & Co. of Albert Engler, another famous German trader in town. Walter Speidel earned a great deal of respect within the commercial community of Saigon, thanks to his support of Vietnamese traders as well as migrants from the UK, Netherlands, Denmark, the US and China.



Figure 3  
Wick thumbwheel on oil lamp inscribed Speidel & Co./ Hanoi-Saigon-Haiphong

At the turn of the century, the city counted only 100 non-French businessmen of which many Germans were working for Speidel & Co. which was one of the biggest German businesses in the city – trading oil lamps (Figure 3), oil, and providing services ranging from rice milling, to imports, exports, shipping and marine insurance. By 1908, the company had four ships trading into Haiphong, the Karl Diederichsen, the Holstein, the Koenigsberg, and

the Triumph. Speidel was well connected with Saigon rice merchants, and founded the Orient and Union rice mills at Cholon.

Although outside the period of the delivered wrapper, the story of the company ended in Saigon when Germany declared war with France on August 3, 1914 and attacked

France via Belgium. The UK declared war on Germany the next day. News travelled fast to Saigon and the French began organizing demonstrations against Germany on the streets starting on August 6. The crowds ransacked Speidel's company office and the Saigon police ordered all Germans to close their shops on 6 August 1914. The Germans were forced to leave the city on the Norwegian ship Solveig early the next day without time to make arrangements for their businesses. The ship left for Dutch-controlled Indonesia where F. W. Speidel settled in Sukabumi in West Java. There is no further record of his life. No images of the company appear to be extant probably due to the destruction of any records relating to German businesses.

### The Sender



Figure 4  
Sender's cachet

There is a blue oval 42/33mm merchant mark on the flap of the wrapper that identifies the sender as MERTTENS, SCHEIDLER & CO. LD. MANCHESTER with partial date inside 7 01 which coincides with the month and year of the postmark (Figure 4). Tracing the firm of Merttens, Scheidler & Co. proved to be a more difficult task as no direct internet information could be found for a firm with that name. However, a Frederick T. Merttens appears as president of the Manchester Statistical Society with the address 76 Newton Street. 'Slater's Manchester, Salford



Figure 5  
Picture postcard of Rothley Temple near Loughborough

and Suburban Directory' for January 1903 has a listing for Merttens & Co. Limited at this address and lists the company as Merchants – which unfortunately does not identify the nature of the business. Further investigation found the firm to be a general commission and Manchester shipping and cotton merchant. His home was at Rothley Temple, Loughborough, an old manor house.

Another extract about Merttens, in connection with the ownership of Rothley Temple (Figure 5) informs us that:

*"It was purchased by Frederick Merttens, a German émigré and*



successful Manchester cotton merchant. He set about developing both the house and the grounds, building a new wing and a garden front to the house. A new gate lodge, turret, piers and gates were constructed (now Grade II listed) and a formal path and a fountain were installed, leading from the house to the Rothley Brook. At this time, there were three gardeners. Merttens set about planning a new housing development, Rothley Garden Suburb which formed part of a growing national movement for garden cities. This was to be on his lands to the north and north-west of the Manor. The business model was based on selling individual plots of land but only allowing the erection of houses according to conditions in keeping with the required ethos of the project. The Great Central Railway was completed in 1899 and Merttens had persuaded the railway to build a station at Rothley, close to his estate, rather than at Swithland. The plans included a golf course, Rothley Park, to the west of the Manor, and this was opened in 1912. However, in 1901, Merttens was advised by his doctor to move abroad for his health and further development of Rothley Court ceased."

Tracking down the partner's name 'Scheidler' has proven to be more difficult. How Scheidler and Merttens came into business together requires further research. As noted above, Merttens was advised to move away from the area in 1901, presumably soon after the date on the wrapper (June 1901). The firm then became Mason, Scheidler & Co. Ltd. in 1902 by amalgamating the businesses of Herman Mason and Alexander F. Scheidler. They were known as shipping merchants with offices at Bridgewater House, Whitworth Street, Manchester.

### The Route

One difficulty in reconstructing the route of newspaper wrappers is that there are no corroborating transit markings because newspapers were despatched to their destination address in closed bags. Newspapers were bulky items and were sent by the post office at the lowest cost. The wrapper bears the handstamp Via Brindisi thereby requesting that the post office route the wrapper via rail to Brindisi and onward via the Suez Canal to Saigon. If this route was followed, the most likely route would have been rail from Manchester to London and onward by rail and ferry to Calais, Paris and onward arriving at Brindisi, Italy on 10 June. Mail for Saigon went abroad the next available P & O mail steamer to Singapore via the Suez Canal to Aden and Colombo, sailing on the S.S. Britannia on 10 June. The mail was transferred to the S. S. Bengal arriving at and leaving from Colombo on 23 June for Penang and Singapore (arriving 29 June). Mail for Saigon was then transferred in Singapore to a steamer of the French Line and delivered to Walter Speidel Esq. at the Speidel Co. address in Saigon circa 1 August. There are no transit or arrival markings.

### The Content

Equally difficult is to identify the nature of the enclosure. The wrapper was not uprated so the contents weighed no more than 2 oz. thereby limiting its size to one sheet folded. There is a purple handstamp identifying the

contents as Printed Matter, so it is not a newspaper *per se*. What enclosure would therefore be a reasonable fit with a two to four-page enclosure? A catalogue would likely contain more than four pages and be heavier and require an uprating to the next weight scale. Around the turn of the century many companies were sending current price lists to suppliers and clients. Because both the sender and addressee had mercantile interests in common, it can be speculated that the enclosure was possibly some sort of price list for cotton to be shipped from Cochinchina to Manchester via Saigon.

### Linking the Dots

Saigon is an uncommon destination for a post office postal stationery wrapper from Great Britain. Only two examples have been noted in 14 years of daily hand-collecting data on listings on the internet site eBay, a database of some 50,000 images worldwide of used wrappers. The wrapper analysed is a copy of the 1901 Queen Victoria ½d blue-green with Manchester 7 July 1901 postmark and merchant handstamp and other auxiliary markings requesting transit direction and advising the post office that the contents qualify for the printed paper concessionary rate.

The wrapper was sent by the Manchester firm Merttens, Scheidler & Co., cotton commission merchants to the German firm Speidel & Co. in Saigon. This addressee was a German kerosene and mercantile company and it is the shipping connection that seemingly links the sender and addressee. Speculatively, a feasible reason for the contact between the two parties was to buy cotton from Cochinchina through Speidel & Co. and have them ship the cargo to Manchester.

While an elegant story linking the dots would be satisfying, one of the reasons for undertaking a destination study of this kind is to reveal issues that remain to be resolved. Postal historians studying the rates and routes of covers are frequently aided by transit marks and arrival dates. With regard to post office postal stationery wrappers the study of routes is more difficult because normally these transit and shipping marks are not present. Nevertheless, newspaper wrappers were transported from Great Britain to all corners of the world, travelling by rail and ship. A tentative story can be composed based on what facts are known. If additional pertinent information becomes available the story can be corroborated or amended.

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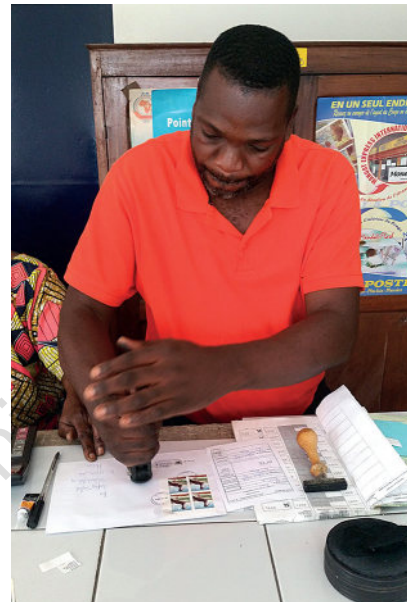
# Post-independence postmarks of Brazzaville

Marc Parren


## Part 2

### BRAZZAVILLE KINSOUNDI

Brazzaville Kinsoundi Post office opened March 2010 to replace the branch at Brazzaville Makélékélé which closed the same month.




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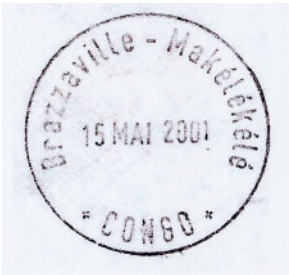
<p>1.</p> 	<p>Single circle 29 mm Earliest: 22 JUIL 2016 Latest: 20 AVR 2017</p>	<p>CONGO between 8-pointed stars</p>
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### BRAZZAVILLE MAKÉLÉKÉLÉ

The Brazzaville Makélékélé Post Office was located in proximity to the Bacongo branch and closed in March 2010 when Brazzaville Kinsoundi opened nearby on the edge of town.


<p>1.</p> 	<p>Single circle 30 mm Earliest: 14 APR 1992 Latest: 12 NOV 1998</p>	
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<p>2.</p> 	<p>Single circle 31 mm  Earliest: 14 MAI 2001  Latest: 30 JUIN 2008</p>	<p>CONGO between crosses</p>
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### BRAZZAVILLE MFILOU

The Brazzaville Mfilou Post Office, in the neighbourhood located behind Maya-Maya airport, was no longer operational in 2016 when the author was stationed in Brazzaville. Date of closure unknown.

<p>1.</p> 	<p>Double circle 30 mm with bridge  Earliest: 7.10.1989  Latest:</p>	
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### BRAZZAVILLE MOUKONDO



Brazzaville Moukondo Post Office was still operational in 2016, but no postmark was available as the device was unreadable. All correspondence accepted would be franked and transported to the Brazzaville *Recette Principale* office where it would be cancelled awaiting onward transport.

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1.		Single circle 30 mm Earliest: 26 OCT 1992 Latest: 9 DEC 1996	
2.		Single circle 31 mm Earliest: 13 SEPT 2004 Latest: 24 FEV 2005	CONGO between crosses

### BRAZZAVILLE NKOMBO



Brazzaville Nkomo Post Office © September 2016.Marc Parren

1.		Double circle 40 mm with SOPECO above and Brazzaville Nkomo below (here upside down) Earliest: 14 SEPT 2016 Latest:	Only noted in black ink Straight line Brazzaville-Nkomo 43 mm long 03810 12 mm long
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<div>2.</div> <div>NKOMBO BRAZZAVILLE CONGO</div>	<div>60 mm long</div> <div>Earliest: 14 SEPT 2016</div> <div>Latest:</div>	
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BRAZZAVILLE ORGANISATION MONDIAL DE SANTÉ



Grounds of the World Health Organisation in the Djoué neighbourhood



Brazzaville Organisation Mondiale de Santé Post Office located in the grounds of the World Health Organisation  
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Left: a handstamp 30 or 31 mm in diameter that has yet to be reported used on a cover or postage stamp  
© September 2016 Marc Parren



Right: Type 3 OMS handstamp  
© September 2016 Marc Parren

1.		Double circle 30 mm with bridge Earliest: 17.2.1989 Latest: 17.9.1998	
2.		Single circle 28 mm Earliest: 18 MAR 1996 Latest: 30 MAI 1996	
3.		Single circle 31 mm Earliest: 01 JUN 2016 Latest: 13 SEP 2016	Seen entirely in blue ink 23 AUG 2017






## BRAZZAVILLE OUENZÉ



Brazzaville Ouenzé was one of the larger post offices operational in 2016 but no postmark was available at the time as the device was unreadable. All correspondence accepted would be franked and transported to the Brazzaville *Recette Principale* office where it would be cancelled awaiting onward transport.

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1.		Double circle 29 mm with bridge Earliest: 1.4.1985 Latest: 3.1.1995	
2.		Single circle 27 mm Earliest: 14.2.1978 Latest: 7.7.1999	Variation in diameter measured 26.5x27 mm, 27x27 mm, 27.5x27.5 mm, 28x28 mm. Could be all different postmarks
3.		Single circle 31 mm Earliest: 27 MAR 1996 Latest: 17 MAR 1997	



4.		Single circle 30 mm Earliest: 19 AVR 1996 Latest: 16 JUIL 2008	CONGO between crosses
5.		Single circle 29 mm Earliest: 27 JUIN 2002 Latest: 12 MAI 2005	CONGO between 8-pointed stars
6.		Double circle 33 mm with CONGO Earliest: 17 MAI 2010 Latest: 30 JAN 2012	
7.		Double circle 39 mm with SOPECO Earliest: 3 SEPT 2014 Latest: 05 SEPT 2016	Only noted in blue ink

### BRAZZAVILLE PLATEAU DE 15 ANS



Brazzaville *Plateau de 15 ans* Post Office was operational in 2016 but accepted no registered mail which was directed to the Brazzaville *Recette Principale*. Hardly any letters are cancelled here anymore.

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1.		Single circle 29 mm Earliest: 11 AOU 2003 Latest: 10 SEP 2010	CONGO between 8-pointed stars
2.		Single circle 30 mm Earliest: 28 AVR 2016 Latest:	CONGO between crosses

### BRAZZAVILLE PLATEAU QUARTIER ADMINISTRATIF

The Brazzaville *Plateau Quartier Administratif* Post office, located next to the presidential palace and a number of ministries, was closed in June 2016 and subsequently demolished.

1.		Double circle 29 mm with bridge Earliest: 12.10.1981 Latest: 25.11.1986  B - E = 20 mm	
2.		Double circle 29 mm with bridge Earliest: 16.5.1987 Latest: 5.9.2006  B - E = 11.5 mm	
3.		Single circle 27 mm Earliest: 26.2.1980 Latest: 19.2.1987	Variation in diameter measured 26x26 mm, 26.5x27 mm, 27.5x28 mm. Could be all different postmarks
4.		Single circle 30 mm Earliest: 10 JUL 2000 Latest: 30 JUIN 2005	CONGO between crosses



## BRAZZAVILLE POTO-POTO

Poto-Poto means in Lingala 'muddy' as the neighbourhood was built on marshy terrain



Brazzaville Poto-Poto  
Post Office  
© July 2016 Marc  
Parren

1.		Double circle 30 mm with bridge Earliest: 1.4.1966 Latest: 1.3.1996  C - O = 13 mm	Text extends well beyond lower bar, font 3 mm CONGO 13 mm
2.		Double circle 29 mm with bridge Earliest: 13.2.1985 Latest: 16.6.1986  C - O = 14 mm	Text extends slightly beyond lower bar, font 2½ mm CONGO 14 mm
3.		Double circle 29 mm with bridge Earliest: 22.4.1975 Latest: 26.12.1996	Text almost on lower bar, CONGO 10 mm
4.		Double circle 30 mm with bridge Earliest: 3.8.1976 Latest: 17.4.1984  C - O = 12 mm	Text almost on lower bar, CONGO 12 mm
5.		Double circle 30 mm with bridge Earliest: 3.8.1976 Latest: 17.4.1984  C - O = 12 mm	Text almost on lower bar, CONGO 12 mm

**BRAZZAVILLE TALANGAI**

Brazzaville Talangai Post Office was no longer operational in 2016 when the author was stationed in Brazzaville. Date of closure unknown

1.		Double circle 29.5 mm with bridge Earliest: 2.7.1990 Latest: 10.4.1997	
2.		Single circle 29 mm Earliest: 30.3.1990 Latest: 8.11.1990	
3.		Single circle 30 mm Earliest: 29 SEP 1999 Latest: 10 JUIL 2002	CONGO between crosses
4.		Single circle 29 mm Earliest: 21 DEC 2005 Latest: 8 JUIL 2008	CONGO between 8-pointed stars



# German Directional handstamps on the mail of WW2 French POWs in Germany

David Trapnell

Postal historians are indeed fortunate! It is very difficult for a philatelist to discover for the first time a new postage stamp, let alone a set of them. Postal history, even of events in the life-time of many readers of this article, offers researchers entirely new topics, let alone single items like handstamps. Here, I suggest, is a new topic for further research.

## Introduction

Following its invasion of Poland on 1 September 1939, on 3 September 1939 France and Great Britain declared war on Germany (see [Table 1](#) below). For some eight months almost nothing happened – hence the German name ‘Sitzblitz’ and the English ‘phoney war’. On 10 May 1940 Germany invaded France via neutral Belgium, Luxembourg and The Netherlands. French resistance collapsed and the government fled from Paris in June 1940. In little more than one month more than 1,800,000 French soldiers were taken as Prisoners of War (POWs). Initially this huge number of prisoners had to be held in France but they were soon moved into Germany, more than half of them to work in farms, factories and mines<sup>1</sup>. The letters surviving from such a large group must surely be numerous.

The Germans soon occupied the whole of the strategically important northern part of France, together with the

forces, and the so-called Unoccupied Zone, under Vichy French control. Thus there were two differently organised zones, each called "France". To simplify the distribution of POW mail to France, Germany issued special handstamps for their mail indicating Occupied or Unoccupied zones. Later in the war, in addition, letter sheets and cards were printed with boxes indicating the choice of zone for the sender to delete the inappropriate option. In practice, I have found, they often did not use this. Handstamps were applied whether or not the correct option had been selected by the writer. This study has shown (apparently for the first time) that, by October 1940<sup>2</sup> special German handstamps were in use at POW camps directing mail to the Occupied and Unoccupied zones.

From these facts it might be supposed that French POWs in Germany can only have had their mail stamped for the Occupied or Unoccupied zones of France from 10 July 1940 until not long after 11 November 1942. From that time forward there were no strictly unoccupied parts of France. The Vichy government, although in theory independent and neutral, actually soon became the willing tool of the Germans. However, it will be shown that mail from POWs to France continued to be separated into the occupied and unoccupied zones – at least until June 1944 (see [Table 2](#)

TABLE 1 - Summary of key dates

3.9.1939	Great Britain (GB) & France declared war on Germany
10.5.1940	Following the phoney war Germany invaded France via (neutral) Belgium, Luxembourg and the Netherlands
10.6.1940	Italy joined the Axis forces and declared war on GB & France
24.6.1940	France surrendered to Germany
10.7.1940	Vichy Government established in the Free (unoccupied) Zone, Germany holding all the northern and western coastlines and the north of France (Occupied Zone or <i>Besetztes Gebiet</i> ) – in all, about two thirds of France
11.11.1942	Following the Allied landings on the North African coast on 8.11.1942, in order to prevent an Allied landing in France, on the anniversary of the end of WW1, the Germans rushed to occupy the Mediterranean coast and the Unoccupied Zone up to approximately the line of the river Rhône, and from Lyons to the Mediterranean. Italian Forces occupied most (but not all) of the area south and east of the Rhone.
3.9.1943	The Allies landed on the Italian mainland and at two other places on 9.9.43.
8.9.1943	The Kingdom of Italy surrendered.

coastal strip on the Atlantic coast, together forming their Occupied Zone (*Besetztes Gebiet* or *zone occupée*). Following the French surrender, on 10 July 1940 a new French government was established under Marshal Pétain, based at Vichy in the northern part of the remainder of France – the Unoccupied Zone (*Unbesetztes Gebiet* or *zone libre*).

Nearly two million French POWs in Germany had the right to send mail home, most of it destined for “France”. But there were really two very different parts of France – the Occupied Zone, under the direct control of German

following page). The fact that the French recognised the value of marking mail for the two separate zones is briefly described but no details given in a paper on the internet<sup>3</sup>.

The Germans allowed all the former French colonies to be included in the Unoccupied Zone. Surviving POW mail to these is uncommon. Presumably this is partly due to the fact than some could not write or read and partly because those to whom they wrote did not preserve the letters that did reach them.

<sup>2</sup> Rex Dixon (2017), private communication

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.histoire-et-philatelie.fr/pages/001\\_france\\_assujettie/08\\_militaires\\_prisonniers\\_ou\\_internes.html](http://www.histoire-et-philatelie.fr/pages/001_france_assujettie/08_militaires_prisonniers_ou_internes.html)

<sup>1</sup> Wikipedia *French Prisoners of War in World War II*

**TABLE 2**  
**Camps which held French POWs and used German Directional handstamps**

**Abbreviations used.** Column 2: nd = no date visible      Column 3: O = *Offizierslager*; S = *Stammlager*  
 Column 4: B = *Besetztes Gebiet*; S = *Südfrankreich* = *France méridionale*; U = *Unbesetztes Gebiet*  
 Column 5: ns = not shown;      Column 7: xw = ex internet (so not personally examined) h/s = handstamp;

POW Camp No.	Date of posting	Camp type O(fflag) or S(talag)	Handstamp used B or U	Location of camp printed on POW card	Printed B or S not deleted on POW card - as Fig 6b	Notes
I - A	02/01/43	S	B	ns	-	
I - B	12/06/44	S	U	ns	Sud	
II - B	06/03/42	S	B	ns	-	xw
II - D	25/03/42	S	U	ns	-	
III - A	09/07/42	S	B	ns	-	
III - B	13/10/42	S	B	ns	-	
IV - A	27/12/41	S	U	Hohnstein (Sächs. Schweiz)	-	
IV - D	24/06/41	S	B	ns	-	
IV - D	12/01/42	S	U	Torgau, Elbe	-	
IV - D	04/05/43	O	U	ns	-	
IV - D	28/06/44	O	S	ns	Bes	
V - A	09/04/41	S	B	ns	-	
V - A	04/11/41	S	B	ns	-	
V - A	21/02/43	S	B	ns	-	
V - A	11/05/43	S	U	ns	-	
V - A	02/12/42	S	U	ns	-	
V - C	13/01/43	S	B	ns	-	
VI - A	14/10/42	S	U	Hemer, Iserlohn	-	to Dakar, Senegal
VI - D	19/02/42	O	B	Münster, Westfalen	-	
VI - F	26/01/41	S	B	ns	-	handstamp offers choice of B & U
VI - G	07/06/41	S	U	ns	-	
VI - J	10/06/41	S	B	Krefeld-Fichtenheim	-	xw
VI - J	21/07/42	S	U	ns	-	xw
VII - A	09/07/41	S	U	ns	-	
VIII - A	31/3/43	S	Früher U	ns	-	"Former unoccupied zone"
VIII - F	13/04/43	O	B	Mährisch-Trübau b. Zwittau (Sudeten)	-	xw
VIII - F	21/07/42	S	B	ns	-	xw
IX - A	nd	S	B	ns	-	
X - B	29/11/40	S	B	ns	-	
XII - A	1/11/43	S	B	ns	-	Frankreich in h/s
XII - B	16/12/40	S	B	ns	-	
XIII - B	01/04/41	O	B	ns	-	
XIII - B	-- 1945	S	U	ns	-	
XVII - A	03/12/40	O	B	ns	-	
XVII - A	21/05/41	O	U	ns	-	
Arbeit Batt.	16/04/41	A	fr. B	Stettin-Wendorf	-	

According to M.H.Taszarek<sup>4</sup>, there were more than 130 German prison camps. Because very few English were captured, at this early stage of the war, most of the POWs held were from France – or from the French colonies. Such POWs, it has been said, because of Nazi antipathy to black and coloured people, were deliberately left in France in camps with living conditions of a poor standard – contrary to the principles of the Geneva Convention. However, another source<sup>5</sup> suggested that the conditions in France for the 90,000-100,000 colonial POWs from the former French colonies were not as bad as has been reported. On this, like other sensitive subjects, some caution is required in trusting statements made with a view to ‘adjust’ the unfortunate (and now embarrassing) facts of WW2 history.

Having had no cause to think of the consequences for the distribution of French POW mail and having found some directional handstamps, I presumed that there would be but a few varieties of handstamp intended for the Occupied and Unoccupied Zones. I was wrong! The more examples I found, the more it became clear that the potential number of such directional handstamps was large.

There is an enormous range of shapes and designs of German WW2 camp censorship handstamps<sup>6</sup>. Evidently censorship was based in each camp – a far less efficient system than the centralised censorship practised by the British in the UK<sup>7</sup> and in the Middle East<sup>8</sup>. It is not clear whether camps arranged their own censorship handstamp design or whether they were allotted a design from central government. The variety and quality of the censorship

designs are such that I incline to the latter view.

The varieties of directional handstamps are also varied but only in the style and size of the letters and whether they were boxed or underlined - or not. So, even if the censorship handstamps were designed centrally, the Occupied and Unoccupied Zone directional handstamps for France might have been organized locally. However, since there is no evidence of an exact likeness of handstamps used in other camps, it is probable that these handstamps were also issued to them by government.

Other handstamps for the same purpose for the mail of POWs from Italy were issued after the surrender of the Kingdom of Italy on 8 September 1943 and the consequent division of Italy into two separately-administered parts<sup>9</sup>.

I suggest that the evidence presented here shows that many different varieties of the *Besetztes* and *Unbesetztes* handstamps exist for France, probably as many as there were POW camps in WW2. The accumulation of further evidence will show how correct this theory is. The purpose of this paper is not to show every variety of directional handstamp, but to demonstrate the principles behind the use of the directional handstamps and to suggest that each such handstamp was used in only one camp.

German POW camps were numbered in Roman numerals, according to the 17 military districts in which they were located. They were given a suffix letter, indicating the historical order in which the camps were opened in that district – A, B, C etc. The censorship handstamps seem always to have included the camp number.

There were several different kinds of POW camp. The commonest were the *Stammlager*, shortened to *Stalag*, for other ranks and the *Offizierslager*, abbreviated to *Oflag*, for Officers. There were other specialized camps for naval and air personnel, for senior officers and for other groups.

## Results

1. Before the French surrender on 25 June 1940 France was not divided so there was no need for (or possibility of) directional handstamps (Figures 1a and 1b).

4 (1972). Les camps Allemandes pour prisonniers de Guerre 1939-1945. *Le Mondes des Philatélistes* July 1972, p.49. Wikipedia reports that there were around 1000 POW camps in Germany, each holding about 25,000 POWs (thus holding a total of 25 million POWs)

5 Raffael Scheck (2014). *French colonial soldiers in German captivity during World War II*. Cambridge University Press

6 G. Mattiello & W. Vogt (1986). *Deutsche Kriegsgefangenen- und Internierten- einrichtung 1939-1945*. 2 vols. The books record and illustrate 2400 handstamps used by censors. There is no description of Directional handstamps.

7 David Trapnell (2016, 2017). *WW2 Italian Prisoner of War camps in the UK. Postal history corrects history*. *Forces Postal History Society Journal* numbers 308- 312

8 David Trapnell (2018). *Who goes there? The postal history of the Prisoner of War camps in the Middle East in World War 2*. Published by the Postal History Society

9 David Trapnell (2018). The directional handstamps applied to mail from Italian POWs held in Germany in WW2. *Fil-Italia* XLIV, 36-42



Figure 1a

This is the first card sent on 23.6.1940 by this new POW to report “je suis prisonnier et en bonne santé”.

Fortunately the card was censored (twice) and each censorship handstamp includes (as usual) the camp number.

The dumb date-stamp of 4.7.1940 shows that there was a delay between the prisoner writing the card and it reaching the camp postal service.

The red straight-line handstamp here, and in Figure 1b, reads *Kriegsgefangenenpost* (prisoner of war post).

Presumably camp V A did not yet have suitable stationery for use by the POWs it held.

The suffix letter “A” in the camp name indicates that this was the first POW camp in military region V





Figure 1b.

Here there is no indication of the camp number or postal address, nor is there any date-stamp.

Fortunately the sender wrote le 24-6-40 at the top of the front of his card.

Like Figure 1a, this French army card has "F.M." printed on it, indicating *Franchise Militaire* (military free post). There may have been insufficient German cards available then after the capture of so many prisoners.

2. Like their censorship handstamps, POW camps each had their own pair of directional handstamps, *Besetztes Gebiet* and *Unbesetztes Gebiet* (Figures 2a and 2c).



Figure 2a.

POW card from Officers Camp (Oflag) XVII A bearing German directional handstamp *Besetztes Gebiet* to the Occupied zone. "Geprüft" means Examined = Censored

**Besetztes Gebiet**

Figure 2b

Reconstructed handstamp, *Besetztes Gebiet*, 10 x 57mm. The fifth character is a combined "tz" of the German Gothic script.



Figure 2c

Card with *Unbesetztes Gebiet* handstamp of Oflag XVII A.

The sender endorsed the card, top right, "N.O." = *Non-occupé*.

Many different card formats were used.

On this, the camp number is printed in the front lower left corner.

3. Stalag XIII B, like other camps, had its pair of directional handstamps for the Occupied and Unoccupied zones, shown in **Figures 3a and 3b**. Unlike most other camps this one, commonly but not always, also applied an information handstamp to the card, probably before issue to the POWs. This exhorts users to write briefly and legibly in order to speed the mail through censorship and distribution. The last line says "Do not forget *la matricule!*", which here refers to the POW number.



Figure 3a  
Stalag XIII B Occupied Zone with sans-serif font matching the Unoccupied zone handstamp (3b).  
Four-line information handstamp on a card dated by the sender, 1.1.1941



Figure 3b  
Unoccupied Zone handstamp used in 1945  
(day and month not clear).  
The directional and the information handstamps are still in clean condition after four years of use.  
The clerk responsible in the camp deserves praise!

4. The directional handstamps were sometimes struck in the same ink as the censorship handstamp (**Figure 2a**) and sometimes in different colours (**Figures 2c, 3b and 4a**).



Figure 4a.  
Folded letter-sheet from Stalag VIIA endorsed by the sender, lower left, "Zone Non Occupé" and handstamped *Unbesetztes Gebiet* (boxed), 19 x 39mm.  
The "dumb" date-stamp, here (and in **Figures 2a, 2c and 4**), is typical of German WW2 security datestamps designed to conceal the camp location

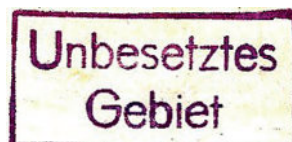


Figure 4b  
Reconstructed handstamp, *Unbesetztes Gebiet*, 19 x 39mm



5. There were more than one handstamps used by some camps (as is to be anticipated with as many as 25,000 POWs per camp). While these handstamps were of the same design and style, the dimensions sometimes varied between one and another (Figures 5a, 5b and 5c). The colour of the ink used also varied within some camps.

Figure 5a.  
Different-sized directional handstamps  
were used at Stalag IV D.



# Besetztes Gebiet

Figure 5b  
Reconstructed handstamp 9 x 98mm as in Figure 5a

# Besetztes Gebiet

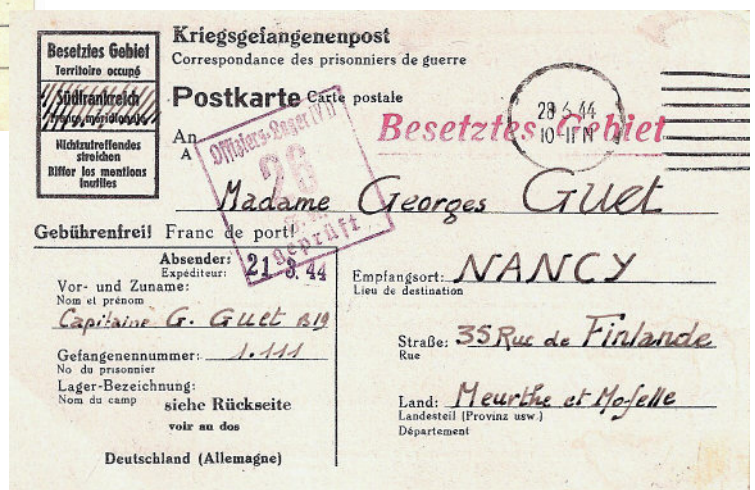
Figure 5c  
Reconstructed handstamp 10 x 101mm used in Stalag IV D

6. Different style directional handstamps were sometimes used at different times in the same camp (Figures 6a, 6b and 6c).



Figure 6a  
Folded letter sheet from Officers Camp IVD dated  
28.04.1943 with an underlined  
Unbesetztes Gebiet, 12 x 61mm.

Figure 6b  
Later in the war, some camps had cards  
with printed bilingual boxes, here top left,  
with the instruction to the sender to indicate  
whether the addressee was in the Occupied  
(as here) or Unoccupied Zone  
(referred to here in shorthand as *Südfrankreich*,  
literally Southern France)



28.6.44  
**Besetztes Gebiet**

Figure 6c

Restored Occupied Zone handstamp, 8 x 52mm, used from *Oflag IV D*, dated 28.6.44, completely different from the handstamp in Figure 6a used 14 months earlier in the same camp.

7. A very unusual directional handstamp from *Stalag VI G* in June 1941 (Figure 7).

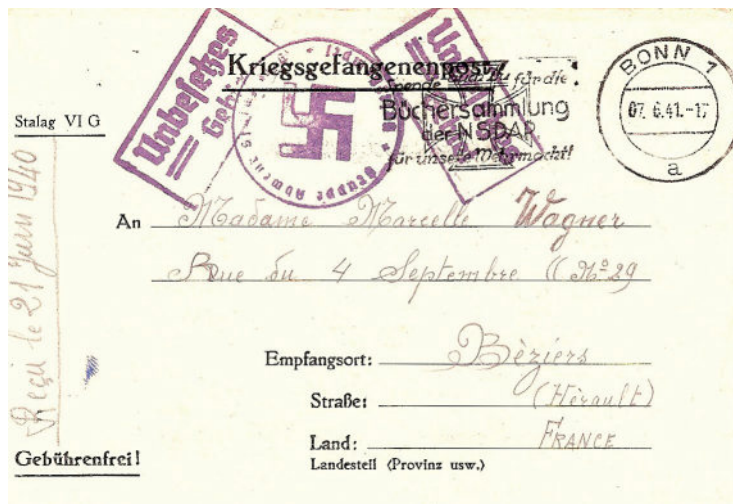


Figure 7a

The first feature of this 19 x 37mm directional handstamp is the spelling mistake - *Unbesetztes* has its "t" omitted, "tz" being one letter!



Figure 7b

Secondly, the "UN" is doubly underlined, presumably to emphasize the fact that the letter is to the Unoccupied Zone. I have seen no other Unoccupied Zone handstamp like this.

Thirdly, the handstamp is struck twice, astride the *Stalag VI G* censor's handstamp and in the same ink. The significance of this is unknown. The handstamp may also be found in red.

The machine slogan date-stamp unusually may reveal the approximate location of posting – Bonn 1.

The sender dated the inside 4.6.41 and the postmark was dated 7.6.41. The recipient recorded in pencil that the letter was received 21 June 1940 (left). Perhaps the POW's mother was getting old and forgetful?

8. This unusual handstamp offers both the Occupied and Unoccupied zone (Figure 8a). If it was applied after the sender had posted it, presumably the stamping officer had to delete the appropriate option. OR, perhaps, the cards were issued pre-stamped, so that the sender could select the correct zone.

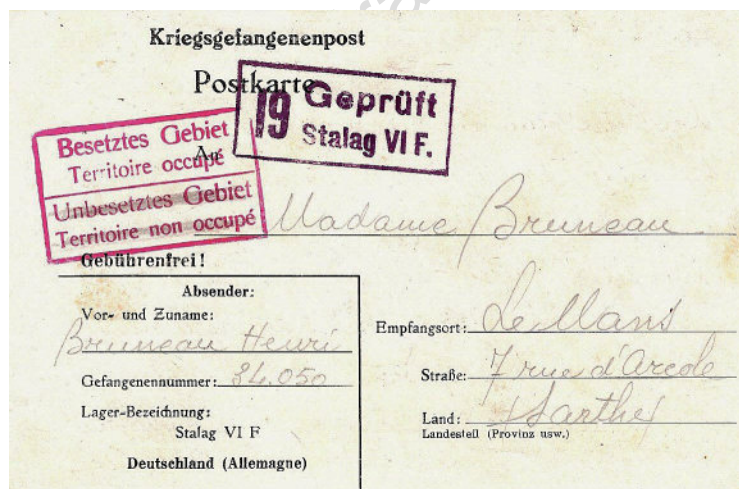


Figure 8a

The Unoccupied Zone option in the *Stalag VI F* handstamp, 26 x 44mm, has been deleted in pencil similar to the sender's addressing of the card. I have seen another almost identical to it. This observation suggests that in this camp such cards were issued pre-stamped - as the printed option cards were later (see Figure 6b).

**Besetztes Gebiet**  
**Territoire occupé**

Figure 8b

*Stalag VI F* also used a 10 x 34mm unframed, single zone, bilingual handstamp on a letter-sheet addressed to Belgium (which was totally occupied).



9. The former French colonies were included in the Unoccupied Zone. **Figure 9** shows a very scarce card from *Stalag VI A* addressed to Dakar, capital of the (then) French colony, Senegal.

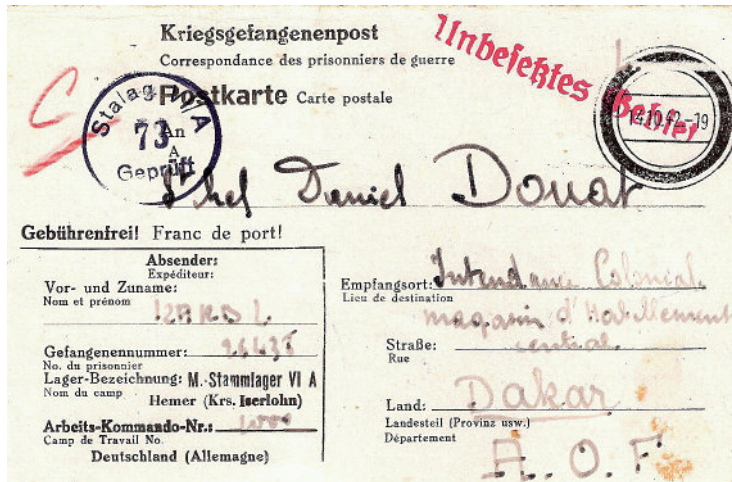


Figure 9

A rare & important card with dumb circular date-stamp, 14.10.42, ties the *Unbesetztes Gebiet* (6 x 56mm) handstamp to the card from *Stalag VI A* addressed to Dakar, "A.O.F." (*Afrique Occidentale Française*).

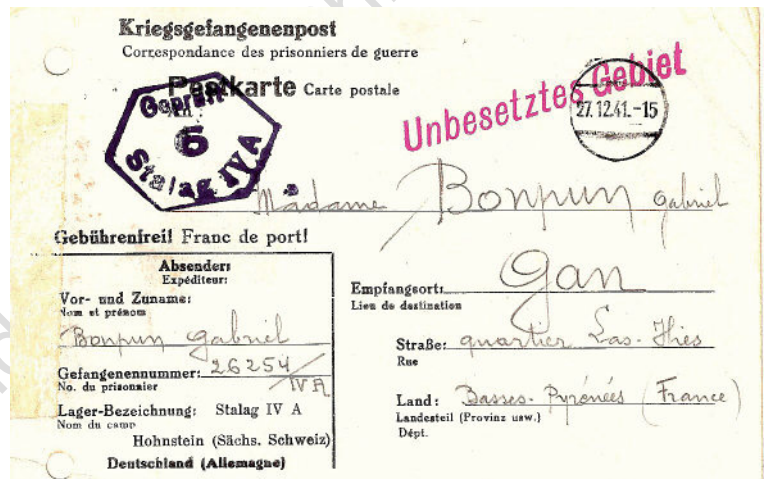
During the German occupation of France all French colonies were regarded as being in the unoccupied zone.

This POW card has the postal address of *Stalag IV A* printed on it, revealing its location (see **Table 2** on Page 121)

10. Occasionally camps printed their postal address on letter-sheets and cards to be used by POWs (**Figure 10**), even when they were taking other strenuous steps to conceal their location (by dumb date-stamp etc).

Figure 10.

This card, dated 27.12.1941, was one of the early cards printed to include the location of the camp - (printed in the box, lower left – *Hohnstein (Sachs. Schweiz)*), while the date-stamp has no place name deliberately to conceal the location! Such cards were an uncommon feature of the early years of the war.



11. A double rarity (**Figure 11a**). Very occasionally the card had the printed name of the labour battalion rather than the (more common) camp number. Its location, in this case Stettin-Wendorf, is also included (compare **Figures 9 and 10**). In addition the directional handstamp here starts with 'Fr.' for *Frankreich* (compare **Figure 11b**). This is the only card like this that I have seen.

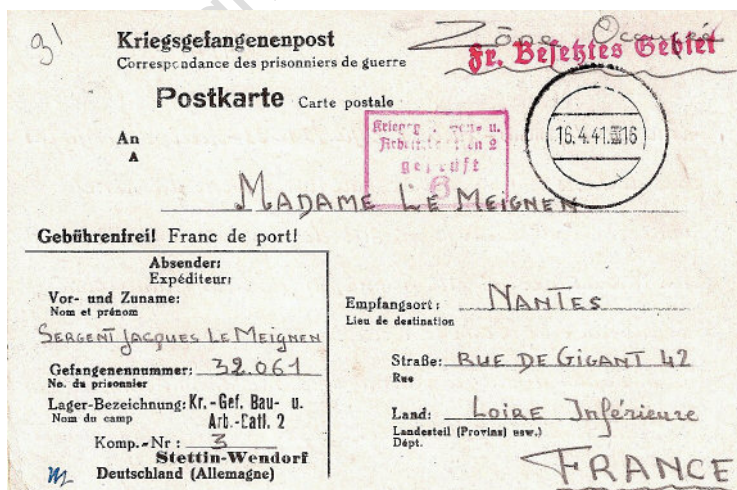


Figure 11a

Card showing the name of the labour battalion and its location printed on the face of the POW card (lower left). The cachet measures 5 x 49mm.

Figure 11b

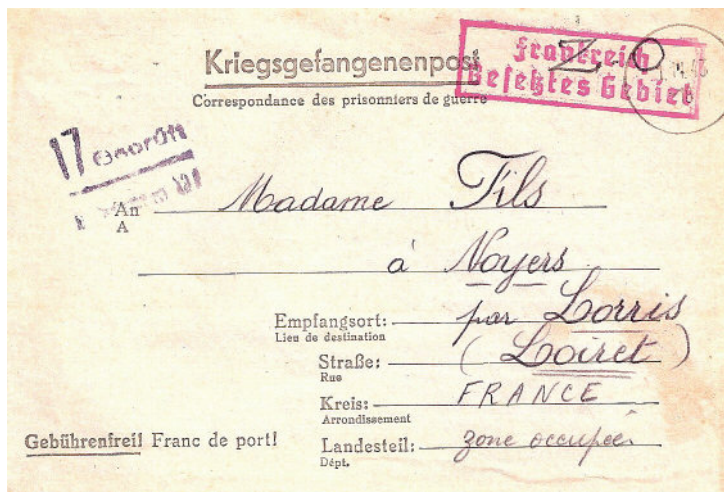
Camp XIIA used a (boxed) variant of the labour battalion directional handstamp where 'Frankreich' is included unabbreviated, thus meaning 'France occupied zone'.

The sender has confirmed this by adding to the address *FRANCE zone occupée*.



Figure 11c.

Restored directional handstamp  
15 x 48mm



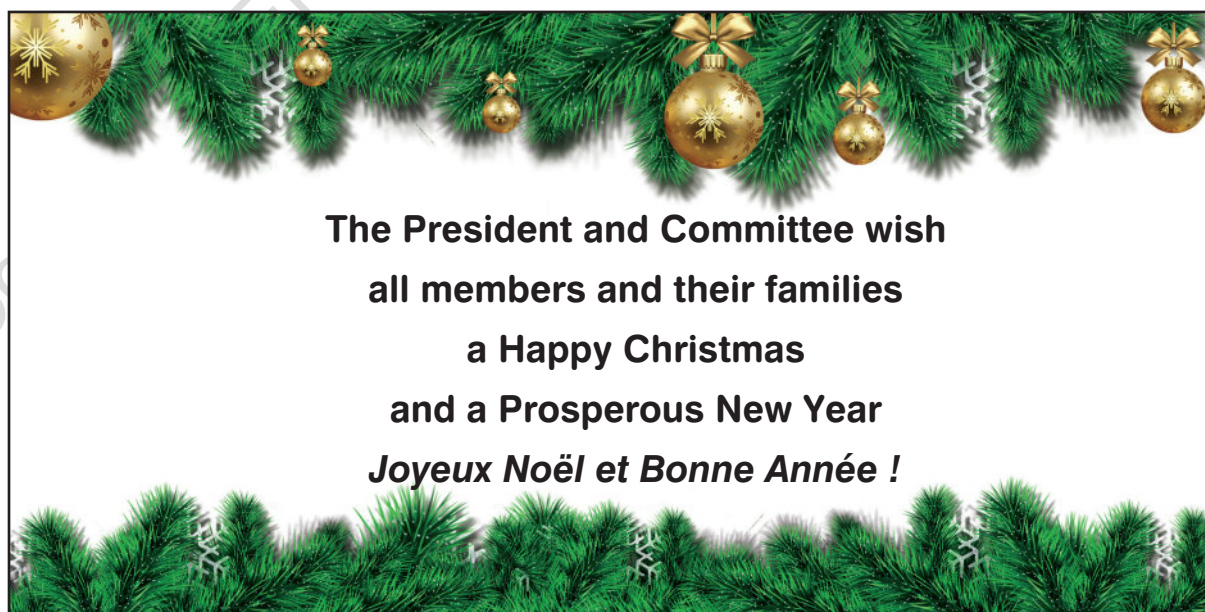
Directional handstamps from Camps in military regions XV and XVI seem to be uncommon. I have not knowingly seen any mail from them.

### Conclusion.

German prison camps holding French POWs issued cards and letter-sheets for their use in a wide variety of types. These were often (but not always) stamped with one of two site-specific handstamps held by each camp to direct mail to the Occupied Zone or the Unoccupied Zone. French POW mail to the French Colonies (which were regarded as being in the unoccupied zone) seems to be scarce.

### Acknowledgements

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## SHORTER ITEMS - INCLUDING QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

### *Marianne l'engagée*



The arrival of a new *Marianne* definitive issue has been awaited with much anticipation by collectors of modern France. The latest design chosen by President Emmanuel Macron was issued on 20 July 2018. This will be the 17<sup>th</sup> *Marianne* issue since the first *Marianne* (*d'Alger*) appeared in 1944 and the 9<sup>th</sup> *Marianne* to be issued since 1971 during which time the UK has continued to use the same Machin design for its definitives.

The attractive design, known as *Marianne l'engagée*, represents, according to the press release, the energy, determination and progressiveness of France. The designer is the street artist Yseult YZ Digan and the issue is engraved by Elsa Catelin. The stamps are printed by *taille-douce*.

At the time of writing only nine different value types have been issued. In line with the previous issue, *Marianne de*

*Ciappa et Kawena*, the *timbres validité permanente* (TVP) no longer display the 20g weight limit. The values issued are the inland *Lettre Prioritaire* (1<sup>st</sup> class), *Lettre Verte* (basically 2<sup>nd</sup> class), *Ecopli* (economy delivery within four days) and two *Datamatrix* 2D double size stamps for Europe and Worldwide.

In addition to the individual stamps there is a miniature sheet (*bloc*) containing all five TVP stamps (see front cover) and a set of four *blocs-souvenir* in a folder comprising the full issue of nine stamps.

Unlike earlier issues, so far only four stamps with face values have been issued: 1, 5, 10 centimes and 1 euro (Figure 1). In contrast the previous *Marianne de Lamouche* and *Beaujard* issues each comprised around twenty-five different values. Higher weight step stamps above 20g have yet to be issued.



Figure 1

As well as the gummed versions all the stamps including *roulette* versions of *Lettre Prioritaire* (LP) and *Lettre Verte* (LV) (Figure 2) are also available in self adhesive format. Self adhesive stamps are generally only available in full sheets of 50 or 100 from the Philatelic Bureau so they are often overlooked in completing a collection of an issue – hence the premium in catalogue values.

There are booklets of LP and LV self adhesives: 12 stamps for counter sale and 10 stamps for Sagem automatic distributors. The LP is also available in a 20 stamp version for DAB distributors. Additionally a six stamp self adhesive counter booklet containing the datamatrix Europe stamp is on sale. Finally an entire postal LP card and a *document philatélique* were also issued.

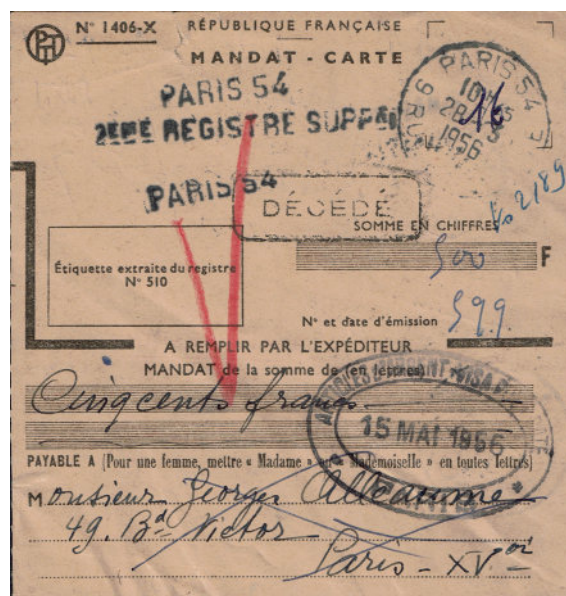


Figure 2

In time a number of different face values and other items will no doubt appear and as with any new definitive issue it is a good opportunity to be in at the beginning to form a new collection at a relatively small outlay.

**Richard Broadhurst**

## Visa pour Date



Illustrated is a so-called 'mandat-carte' number 1406 (money order), which was issued on 15 May 1956 for an amount of 500 francs in favour of Mr Georges Alleaume. The issuing office is untraceable. The name is largely hidden under the 40F stamp and only the last three letters '... sio' are readable. The beneficiary lived in Paris. The office, 54 rue Mariotte, received the money order on 28 March from the issuing office and placed its date stamp in the upper right hand corner. On 1 June, another person by the name of Alleaume, a certain 'Ch.', collected the amount of 500 francs at another office. The office of payment was Paris XV, rue d'Alleray. This office charged 46 francs which were accounted for by affixing a 40F and a 6F stamp. So the question now is what explains the amount of 46 francs which had to be paid in stamps.

The use of stamps would not have been required for the issue of this money order, because since 1 January 1942 these costs had to be paid in cash ('en numéraire') at the counter of the post office. The amount of 46 francs in stamps matches the cost of a money order of 500 francs during the tariff period of 1949-1957. 45 francs was the fixed charge while 1 franc was due for the proportional rate of 1 franc for every 1,000 francs on the *mandat-carte* up to a maximum payment of 200,000 francs, so 46 francs in total. Surely, that amount is related to the 46 francs of stamps affixed to our card. But how, that is the question.

To fully comprehend what is going on here, we have to picture ourselves in the position of someone who owes 500 francs corresponding to the amount of the money order. This person pays a visit to the post office where a 500 francs deposit is made, plus the 46F cost of the issue of a money order. The debtor asks that the sum of 500 francs be payable in favour of the creditor on the card. This way the debtor will have met his payment obligation. The office of issue of this money order sends this to the office that is nearest to the beneficiary's residence for the payment. The office will either send the postman to pay the amount due to the beneficiary or will send a written message to the beneficiary with the request to report to the office of

payment in person. In our example, the postman went to pay out the money order at the recipient's residence ('à domicile'). The postman has recorded his visit on the back of the money order on 9 April. There he learned, perhaps from a neighbour, that the beneficiary had died, hence the handwritten inscription of the word 'décédé' on the card. He returned to the post office with the card, which was subsequently sent to the Paris office XV at the rue d'Alleray which happened to be a district office. This office was larger than Paris 54 at the rue Mariotte. The money order was struck with a boxed 'décédé' mark on the front under the date stamp of the Paris 54 office where it was to be stored for the time being. If no one were to collect the card, it would be returned in due course to the office where it was originally issued which would have to refund the amount to the debtor.

Apparently, a certain Ch. Alleaume responded to the message which was left behind by the postman which had informed him that the intended beneficiary Alleaume was not found at his residence at the time of delivery. Ch. Alleaume reported in person on 1 June (seven weeks after notification) at the Paris XV post office and requested that the amount be paid out to him. In return, Ch. was confronted with a procedure relating to the validity of the *mandat-carte* and whether it had not already expired and he was probably also confronted with the question was he indeed the right heir of the deceased? Money orders have an expiry date and when that date is passed, the money order needs to be renewed for which the post office, of course, charges a certain amount of money. This procedure is called in French 'visa pour date', which translates roughly as 'revision date'. This is to be seen in the oval-shaped double-ring mark which has been applied to the front of the card. The top part of this mark reads: 'Articles d'argent visa pour date', while the bottom part reads 'PARIS' in capital letters and the date 15 May 1956 in the centre.

The validity of money orders has fluctuated throughout time. Other factors which were of influence on the period of validity were for example distance (was the money



order issued far from home like in the colonies?) or more disturbing events such as war which extended the validity also. Prior to WWII, the validity for domestic money orders was one month while the colonies had an additional month. During WWII, the validity for domestic orders was extended to two months.

Starting 1 January 1952 the lead time on the expiration date was set on one month for money orders which were issued as of that date. The old rules still applied to money orders which were already circulating prior to this date. In the case of our card it was valid during the month of publication in March, with one month lead-time into April. On 15 May, the date was verified and it became clear that the expiration date had been exceeded by one month. The rule that applied was that for every month in excess of the expiration date, the initial tariff (in our case, 46 francs) had to be paid to extend the period of validity, which in effect is the same as 'renewal' because the French term for this tax is '*Taxe de renouvellement*' ('renewal tax'). In contrast to the moment of publication of the card when cash money had to be paid (instead of using stamps), the amount for the extension of the validity had to be met by affixing stamps. And as per the rules, this applied to our case on 1 June in the office Paris XV.

It could have been much more expensive for the new beneficiary in the event this person would have chosen to

be paid at the address of his residence ('à domicile'), as a so called '*taxe de factage*' ('pro-portionnal handling tax') would have applied. It can be said that a '*taxe de renouvellement*' on a *mandat-carte 1406* is pretty rare. These cards typically circulated solely in the postal circuit from the office where it was issued to the office of payment. In other words, there was hardly any delay between the moment of creation and the moment of payment. In our case, the delay can be attributed to the departure of a beneficiary, which is not a common phenomenon when a payment is due.

So called private money orders circulated as well, next to the *mandat-cartes 1406*. Granted these had to be collected at a post office, but they were issued by a private person and subsequently sent to a beneficiary. These are the so-called '*mandats-poste*.' The recipient of such a money order would rather easily overlook these or simply forget about them while he was not summoned by the post office to come and collect his money or was visited by a postman at his address to be paid. When the owner of such orders finally found them, there must have been a relatively high number of unexpected renewal cases at the post office. Such money orders show the mark '*taxe de renouvellement*' more often, even though they are also very limited.

I close with a note of gratitude to Laurent Bonnefoy, Pierre-Henri Cotte and Frans Jorissen who were of great assistance with the completion of this article.

**Edwin Voerman**

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## Andorra Update

As we all know, Andorra issues separate stamps for both the French and Spanish post offices there. I reported in the last F&CPS Journal (Ref. 1) that, as from the beginning of 2018, new-issue subscriptions were no longer being offered to collectors of just one area (French or Spanish) rather than both.

Following up a letter from a disgruntled would-be collector of just the French issues, *Timbres magazine* queried this change of direction in an interview with Gilles Livchitz, director of Phil@poste (Ref. 2). M Livchitz's response was that many collectors and societies – on both the French and Spanish sides of the fence, as it were – had, on the contrary, expressed a preference for collecting both French and Spanish issues together. He expressed pride in the fact that this was the first time, historically, that two European postal agencies had combined commercially in

this way, adding that collectors not wishing to take both – and M Livchitz doubted there were any (!) – would be free to cancel their subscriptions and buy what they wanted elsewhere, either through dealers or individually via the Phil@poste website.

The interview also queried the limited quantities issued of the '*Marianne verte*' overprinted '2013-2018'. M Livchitz replied that the occasional scarcity, curiosity or surprise kept philately alive! Discuss, perhaps...

### References:

1. 'Andorra insists!' F&CPS Journal, Vol 68 N° 2, August 2018, p. 81
2. '*Le timbre au cœur de l'actualité*', *Timbres magazine* N° 203, September 2018, p.30

**Michael Round**

## The Winged Victory of Samothrace

Following Edwin Voerman's article "The Winged Victory of Samothrace" in Journal 287 of August 2018 (pages 63-66), I

can offer several examples of usage of the Samothrace issues of which the following (Figures 1-4) are illustrated below.

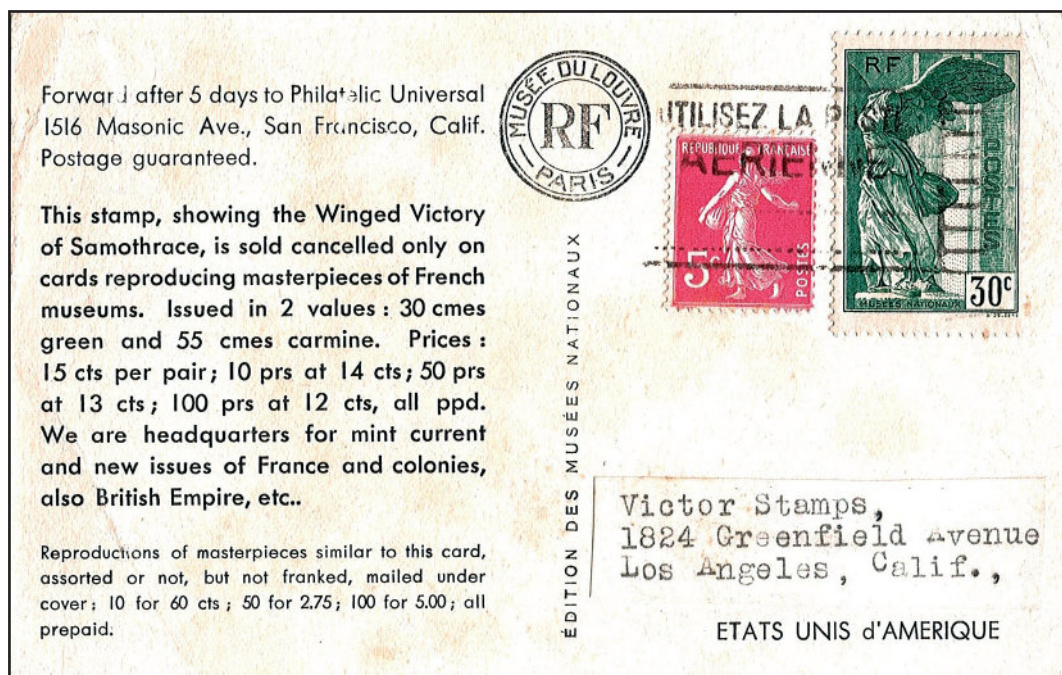


Figure 1

Louvre card with 30c uprated with Yv 278B 5c *Semeuse camée* to make 35c rate for printed matter to USA. The card has been privately printed with the dealer's offer for the stamps. The slogan cancel is unfortunately undated but presumably before the regulations were changed as his offer states "sold cancelled only on cards...". 100 sets offered at 12c (US) per set post paid totalling USD12 (£2.8.0 at the prevailing exchange rate or £2.40 in decimal) – looks a considerable bargain nowadays! Incidentally the cost of 100 sets was FFr225 (including the premium); the prevailing rate was FFr122/GBP so £1.16.10 0 or £1.84 in decimal.

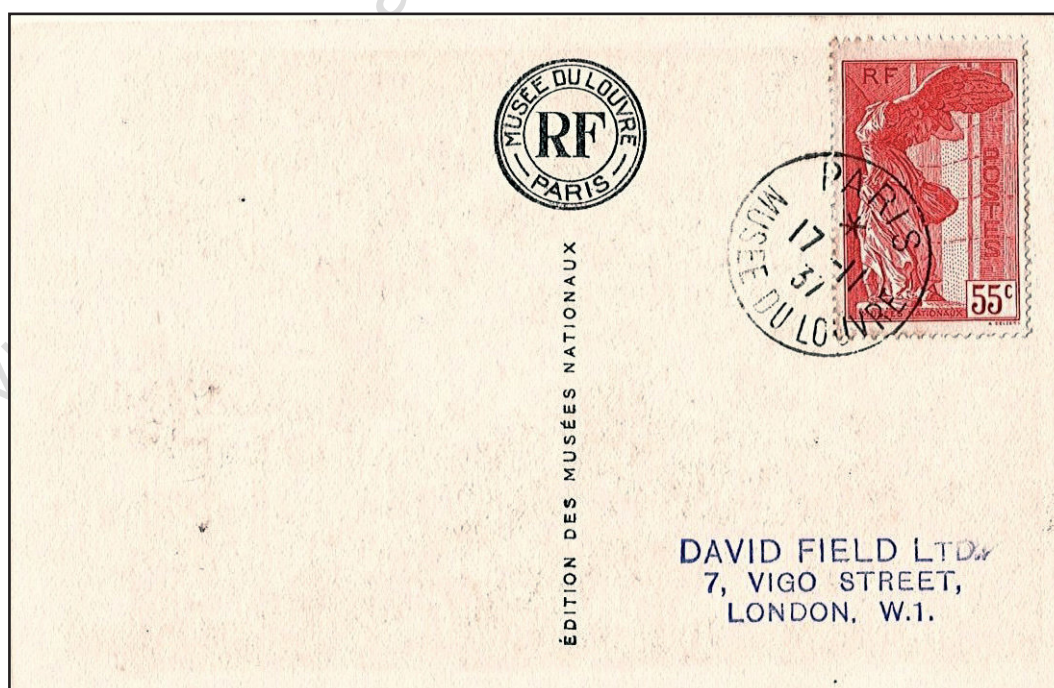


Figure 2

Louvre card with 55c value cancelled 17 November 1937 (the day after the stamps were taken off sale) and handstamped with a London dealer's name and address although it seems unlikely it passed through the post.





Figure 3

Louvre card with 30c value cancelled at the Louvre on 9 October 1937.  
 Taxed with a 35c Belgium postage due cancelled Bruxelles 10 October 1937 accompanied by small *Taxe* mark.  
 The deficiency is 5c, the equivalent of about 5 Belgian centimes, so tax calculation looks odd.



Figure 4

Louvre card with 55c value updated to FFr 1 with pair of Yv 279 10c *Semeuse camée* and Yv235 25c *Semeuse camée*  
 – representing the UPU rate for a postcard with over 5 words, cancelled Paris 12 November 1937.

Something which has always intrigued me regarding these surcharged or premium price issues is the amount actually raised. It is difficult to believe that the premiums on the “sinking fund” issues could have actually contributed anything material to the French exchequer.

In the case of the Samothrace issues the catalogue tells us 150,000 sets were prepared so that if all were sold the total

raised for the museums would have been FFr210,000 which at 122FFr/GBP would be about £1720 – not a great deal to contribute to the upkeep of the museums of France, even in 1937.

Or perhaps in those days you could pick up a Monet or two have a night on the town and still have change from half a crown.....or perhaps not!

David Parmley

## Dogba Revisited

It is interesting and rewarding to see the continuation of interest in Simon Binsted's original article on the Dogba office (Journal 286 of April 2018, pages 29-33). This time, additional information has been provided by our friend Ed Grabowski (Journal 287 of August 2018, pages 80-81). It is always a pleasure to hear from Ed who has, over many years, put together the seminal collection of the colonial "Type Groupe" issue. Over the years we have exchanged a great deal of information as well as trying to unravel many conundrums.

The letter that Ed refers to is strange in that it does appear to be philatelic but, against this, lacks a personal addressee or name of the sender on what appears to be an insured letter from an important trading company in Dahomey to a Paris bank.

As far as the rate is concerned I agree with Ed that the insurance element is 80c based on 4 steps of 20c per 300g on a value of 1000 francs. This was the rate applied by France on outward mail from 1892 and is confirmed by the rate applicable in Dahomey in 1907 (source: *Postes et Télégraphes en Afrique Occidentale* published by the Government General for the Marseille colonial exhibition). The manuscript marking indicates that the letter has been franked by the sender and as the rate is correct then it must be to do with the stamps used, or, more specifically, the 25c

*Dahomey et Dépendances* cancelled at Porto Novo. This stamp was replaced in December 1900 for the purpose of a colour change and its use in 1903 might well be seen as irregular although it was certainly not demonetised and colonial stamps are frequently seen used subsequent to their replacement.

It is difficult to explain how the stamp was not cancelled at Dogba. It cannot have been accidental because of the manuscript notation. Perhaps the postal employee at Dogba was uncertain as to the validity of the stamp and left it to Porto Novo, an important office, to resolve. The truth remains elusive on this.

While on the subject of insured letters in French West Africa, it is certainly the case that these are hard to come by. However, not all colonies within the Federation accepted insured mail. This was certainly the case in *Haut Sénégal et Niger* and the 1907 document quoted above states that trials were made in 1885 but were not judged to be successful and were cancelled the following year. The problem was one of security and it was considered that for three quarters of the year mails could only circulate north of Podor (on the Sénégal river) by means of local porters and in these conditions the postal service could not take responsibility for the despatch of declared value items that would have a fatal attraction for the covetousness of some.

Peter Kelly

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## New earliest cancellation reported for Cové, Dahomey



In March 2000 Bill Mitchell and Laurence Lambert published in the Journal Part 1 of their joint article 'The Post Offices of French West Africa'. It featured tabulated statistics on the post offices of Benin/Dahomey including the earliest dates known of cancellations used at each one. In September 2001, thanks to observant members, a few

of these dates were updated. Now, seventeen years later I have another update to announce. I have found in my collection a Cové cancellation dated 31 May 1927 which predates the previously recorded date of 21 February 1929 by a considerable number of months. I would love to know if other members have recorded new dates.

Jere Dutt  
of Ohio, USA



## Aspects of Anti-Communism in Vichy France

Here are four examples (Figures 1-4) of the *Légion Tricolore* issue used alone on cover to complement the illustrations

in David Hogarth's article published in the last Journal. These are rarely encountered given the high surcharges.



Figure 1

1F20 + 8F80 blue on an unsealed envelope posted in Nancy, probably an invoice if you look at the addressee (*manufacture de pantoufles*) dated 16 November 1942.

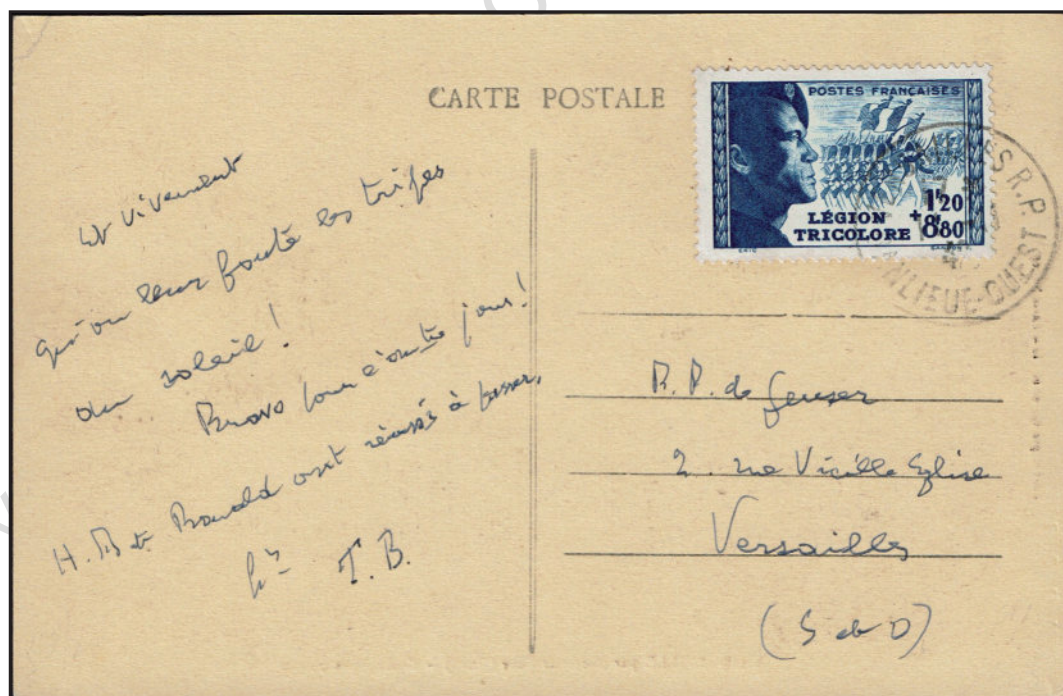


Figure 2

1F20 + 8F80 blue on a postcard to Versailles cancelled Vincennes Banlieue-Ouest, 1942, but the exact date is not clear although possibly 11 November as in Figure 3.





Figure 3

1F20 + 8F80 red on a postcard to a small village near Charroux in the *département* of Vienne cancelled Vincennes Banlieue-Ouest, 11 November 1942, the day of the armistice and the day when the Germans occupied the 'free zone'. The sender cannot fail to comment "Quelle triste ironie ...."



Figure 4

1F20 + 8F80 red on a window envelope cancelled Auxerre, 18 October 1942 containing invoices ('factures' typed in red in the top left corner).



# BOOKSHELF

## Compiled by Michael Round

*A listing in this column does not preclude the possibility of a full review later.*

### ‘Catalogue de Timbres de France 2019’

**Spink/Maury**

**Reviewed by Richard Broadhurst**

Two volumes in hardback and paperback. Size: 215 x 155mm with 1120 pages and more than 7000 illustrations.  
ISBN: 9781907427923. Publisher Spink & Son Ltd. Price £27.50 or 29.90€.

This is the second year that this catalogue has appeared in two parts: hardback for issues to 1959 and soft-cover from 1960 to date. Published in August the overall page-count is 1137, up by 23 on 2018; issues are listed up to November 2017. The UK price at £27.50 really is excellent value for money; by comparison the last Gibbons France catalogue had only 450 pages and was priced at £34.95.

Part 1 is basically a refinement on the previous Cérès, Dallay and Maury catalogues and provides a definitive and in-depth listing of the early stamps of France right through to the issues prior to the new franc in 1960. It contains an absolute mine of information regarding the classic stamps and devotes over 20% of the entire catalogue to them. Most stamps up to the Pasteur issue are given their own page with numerous illustrations of blocks, errors and varieties.

I could detect almost no price changes in Part 1 with the exception of the *millésimes* of Blanc and Mouchon. Higher-value Blanc issues have generally increased by modest amounts in the region of 30-50 euro. The highest rises are in the Mouchon issue, most notably the 1902 30c violet (Spink/YT: 128) which has increased by 750 euro to 2500 euro. It is possible that these alterations may have been prompted by the reworking of the corresponding Yvert section rather than any recent market changes.

The section on ‘*Projets Privés*’ lists the private essays of the late 1800s. Many of these have very low catalogue prices considering their age and scarcity. If you are able to find them at anything approaching catalogue value they would be a very worthwhile purchase.

Part 1 also contains most of the back-of-the-book material to date plus a superb 100-page specialised section devoted to the Marianne definitive issues which are covered in great detail. Amongst other categories listed are *Colis Postaux*, *Timbres de Grève* and *de Guerre* and *Cours d’Instruction* which lists the *annulé* and *spécimen* overprints. The section on *Coins Datés* has been reduced by ten pages and now only fully lists items to 1959; a multiplier formula is given for all later issues. However, the crowning glory must be the wonderfully illustrated section on *Carnets* and, unique to this catalogue, a complete and invaluable listing of *publicitimbres*.

The presentation and layout of Part 1 is excellent throughout. Part 2 continues in this vein until 2014 when the catalogue was acquired by Spink. Here the layout becomes confusing and lacks continuity. Illustrations

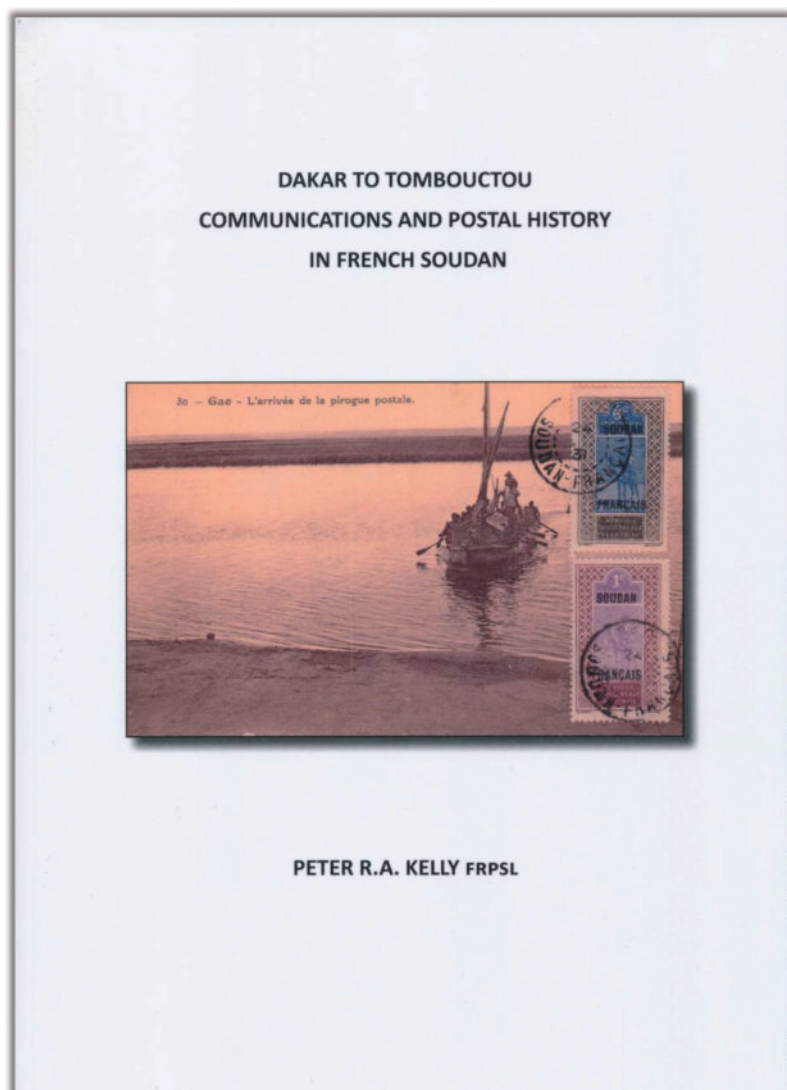
appear randomly above or below the headings and are of varying sizes, presumably to fit as many items onto a page as possible. The pricing of issues is erratic: some prices are omitted or misplaced and bizarre values quoted such as the 2016 Paris-Philex block (Spink: BF5002, YT: F5222) listed at 20 euro mint and 1 euro used and the 2017 Red Cross Marianne block (Spink: BF4970, YT: BF140) listed at 13 euro mint and 1.1 euro used. I presume that these are errors and the result of teething problems, but this section of the catalogue requires some comprehensive proof-reading and correction before the next issue.

Catalogue prices generally follow Yvert, as would be expected, with the exception of recent mint stamps. Here a multiplier of 3 x face value is applied, in contrast with Yvert who use 2 x face. Prices are also given for used (off and on cover) for most issues. As is common with all French stamp catalogues modern used prices are hopelessly low considering the difficulty in obtaining any postally used stamps nowadays. This is particularly noticeable with used miniature sheets where prices for mint and used should be at least the same, the used being much harder to find in postally used condition. Prices quoted for used are generally in the region of 60% less than their mint counterparts which makes no sense at all.

On the plus side, dates of issue are given for most issues, something Yvert still does not list, and approximate quantities issued are given for many classic issues. Cross-references are given to Yvert catalogue numbers, where permitted, which is very helpful. Illustrated tables of definitives appear throughout the volume but quite surprisingly there is no design index to commemorative issues.

Personally I would prefer to have the catalogue as one volume rather than in two parts. There are very few changes annually to Part 1 and all the new material is listed in Part 2. If you purchase the catalogue each year you end up with another virtually identical 725-page Part 1 but you only actually require the much more compact Part 2 to keep up to date with new issues. There is perhaps an opportunity here for Spink to market a simplified annual France catalogue similar to Gibbons’ ‘Collect British Stamps’, and to offer Part 1 as a specialised catalogue to those who are interested.

*Dernière heure:* As I write, the Yvert France catalogue for 2019 has just come to hand. A review will appear shortly.



*New Book by  
Society Member*

## **Dakar to Tombouctou Communications and Postal History in French Soudan**

Available from P.R.A.Kelly  
peterkelly35@btinternet.com

A4, 96 pages, full colour

**Cost: £14 or €16**

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## **Postage & Packing**

U.K. £4

Payment: UK cheque or PayPal  
peterkelly35@btinternet.com

Europe €7

Payment: Cheque in euro or PayPal

United States of America £8.50

Payment: PayPal

Other locations or payment methods,  
please contact author



## New Book Received

**Dakar to Tombouctou: Communications and Postal History in French Soudan** by Peter Kelly FRPSL (see page 138): card cover, 96pp, A4 format, fully illustrated in colour; published by the author with the support of the Stuart Rossiter Trust; available from the author: peterkelly35@btinternet.com. Price: £14.00 or 16€ plus postage and packing (UK £4.00; Europe 8.50€, USA \$8.50); payment by sterling cheque, euro cheque or via PayPal.

Author and honoured F&CPS member Peter Kelly modestly claims this book to be simply a collection of six monographs on French Soudan (now Mali), and describes it as no more than “a forerunner of a detailed examination of Saharan communications,” to appear at a later date. The most superficial examination of the actual handbook, generously furnished with tables and

luxuriously illustrated with maps and contemporary picture postcards, reveal it to be far, far more than that. It unquestionably deserves the honour of a detailed and careful review, which will appear in a future issue of the *Journal à toute vitesse*. In the meantime, members with an interest in the area who cannot wait for the review may order with confidence.

Michael Round

## The Pneumatic Posts of Paris 1879-1965, an Aid to the Collector

by Simon Peter Iredale

Reviewed by Michael Round

Card-back, 148pp, 150x230mm. Illustrated throughout in colour.

ISBN 9 781983 319822

Published 2018. Publisher, price and availability to be confirmed.

F&CPS members will need no reminding that, as this new book's back cover states, the achievement of the Paris pneumatic postal system was considerable, eventually totalling over 200km of pneumatic tubes and well over a hundred pneumatic “stations”. Our very own Mick Bister is among those who have royally entertained us on numerous occasions with entertaining and informative displays on the subject.

Such a topic could scarcely go unwritten about for long, and for English readers the “go-to” volume has long been the almost identically titled work by former doyen of the F&CPS, J D Hayhurst (ref. 1). Mr Hayhurst's work, published as long ago as 1974 by the F&CPS itself, may now be difficult to acquire as hard copy, and those of us interested in the subject owe grateful thanks to editor Stephen Holder and digital manipulator Mark Hayhurst for making the whole text (and illustrations) available on line, in three parts (ref. 2). Of the numerous texts in French, the best-known are probably those of Boblique (ref. 3) and Rykner and Gobillot (ref. 4).

None of these previous texts had the advantage of colour illustrations. The ease with which they may now be handled has prompted Simon Peter Iredale to produce a fresh and eye-catching introduction to the whole subject, drawing freely – and with all due acknowledgement – on previous sources and presenting the facts in a most attractive and beginner-friendly manner. At least 100 pages here are devoted to clear front-and-back images of a comprehensive range of covers; further pages show maps (albeit rather cramped by the small page-size), tables and contemporary engravings of the pneumatic service in action. Mr Iredale's work is to be warmly congratulated.

On Mr Iredale himself I can find little. A writer of this name has produced thirteen books on mainly religious subjects; if this is indeed the same man (the internet does

not reveal) then it is a little surprising that his undeniably attractive and most readable 14<sup>th</sup> book should lack some features vital to professional publications and, crucially, their dissemination. No publisher is named, nor any place where it may be ordered, nor at what price. There are neither title nor contents pages; only the left-hand pages of the text are numbered (awkwardly placed, too, as footers near the binding edge) – and the quoted ISBN is currently unknown to the internet. It would be a great pity if any of these features were to inhibit the sales of what is a valuable addition to the English-language library of French philately. If I find further information, I will hasten to publicise it, and perhaps other F&CPS members could kindly do the same.

A gentle warning, to potential new collectors of the area. By their very means of transport, pneumatic covers were generally creased – large numbers were crammed into each tube for maximum turnover – and pristine covers are rarities!

### References

1. *The Pneumatic Post of Paris*, J.D. Hayhurst OBE. France & Colonies Philatelic Society of Great Britain (1974).
2. <http://www.cix.co.uk/~mhayhurst/jdhayhurst/pneumatic/book1.html>  
(this takes you to Part 1: further links within the document give access to Parts 2 and 3).
3. *Cent ans de tubes pneumatiques*, Jean Boblique. Yvert et Tellier, Étude n° 8 (1966).
4. *La poste pneumatique de Paris*, Docteur Georges Rykner and Pierre Gobillot. 2 vols, published by *Le Monde des Philatélistes*. Tome 1, *Histoire générale*: Étude n° 181 (1975); Tome 2, *Les oblitérations, les bureaux*: Étude n° 216 (1977).

## Magazine Article Noted

The Swiss society *Rhône Philatélie* (Rhône Philatélie, C.P. 143, Aigle, Switzerland: rhonephilatelie@bluewin.ch) celebrated its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2018. The June 2018 issue of its eponymous magazine features arch-forged Jean de Spérati – “*un faussaire ou un artiste?*” His story and output will be familiar to experienced collectors but is always

worth reading: pertinently for F&CPS members, it will be recalled that many of his products were French stamps. Members seeking further information may consult *Faux de Spérati en photolithographie des classiques de France* by Docteur J.M. Mazabrey (*Le Monde des Philatélistes*, Etude N° 237, 1979).

Michael Round

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## Book Noted

*La Résistance oblitérée, sa mémoire gravée par les timbres* by Laurent Douzou & Jean Novossoloff

Card cover, 176pp 21 x 26.5cm; price 24€ (+p&p); available

from Éditions du Félin, 7 rue du Faubourg-Poissonnière, 75009 Paris. [Stamps commemorating Resistance in WWII (people and places) together with anecdotes and documents.]

Maurice Tyler

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## ABPS Exhibitions Newsletters September & November 2018

### *Forthcoming National Exhibitions in the UK*

#### **Spring Stampex 2019 13-16 February 2019**

Business Design Centre, Islington, London N1

The Royal Philatelic Society London is the oldest surviving philatelic society in the world and will celebrate its 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2019.

To mark the occasion it is organising a display of up to 30 frames on the theme of ‘King George V’.

As first Duke of York and then Prince of Wales, King George V was President of the Society from 1896 to 1910.

The exhibition rules and details on how to apply are available at <http://www.abps.org.uk/>

#### **Northern National 2019 12-13 April 2019**

Dewar’s Centre, Perth

A full national exhibition will be held in Perth to coincide with the Scottish Congress for the first time since 2012, and we expect to have at least 120 frames.

Exhibits can be entered in all classes recognised by the ABPS

and all exhibitors from the UK and abroad are welcome to apply.

The rules and details on how to apply will be posted shortly at <http://www.abps.org.uk/>

#### **Autumn Stampex 2019 11-14 September 2019**

Business Design Centre, Islington, London N1

The theme at the Autumn Stampex in 2019 will be the Indian Sub-Continent, interpreted broadly.

A number of societies have offered to contribute to this and further details will be published as soon as possible.

As usual, it will also be a full National Exhibition, open to applications from all exhibitors both in the UK and abroad.

Details on the rules and application procedure will be posted early in 2019.

#### **2020**

We have been advised that the Philatelic Traders Society have decided for financial reasons not to hold a Stampex in February 2020.

However, Autumn Stampex will take place as usual in September 2020, and the British Thematic Association has kindly offered to be the lead society.

Look out for further details.



## ***Update on International Exhibitions with UK Participation***

### **STOCKHOLMIA 2019      29 May - 2 June 2019**

Waterfront Congress Centre, Stockholm

Stockholmia is an international exhibition being held to celebrate the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Royal Philatelic Society London.

It has ABPS recognition. Applications have now closed.

Full details are available on the exhibition website: <http://stockholmia2019.se/>

### **CHINA 2019      11 - 17 June 2019**

Wuhan City, Hubei Province, PRC

A General World Stamp Exhibition will be held in Wuhan with FIP patronage to commemorate the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China as well as to promote friendship and cooperation among philatelists around the world. The competitive exhibition classes will be Traditional, Postal History, Postal Stationery, Aerophilately, Astrophilately, Thematic Philately, Maximaphily, Revenue, Modern Philately, Open Philately, Picture Postcards, Youth Philately, One-Frame exhibits and Philatelic Literature.

A UK Commissioner will be nominated shortly and applications will need to be submitted by early February 2019. Further details will be published as soon as possible. In the meantime, if you would like to register to receive information about CHINA 2019, please send me a message at [ewlhedley@gmail.com](mailto:ewlhedley@gmail.com).

### **LONDON 2020      2 - 9 May 2020**

Business Design Centre, Islington, London N1

World stamp exhibition with provisional FIP patronage.

Competitive classes in Traditional Philately, Postal History, Revenues, Postal Stationery, Aerophilately, Thematic Philately, Open Philately, Picture Postcards, Modern Philately, One-Frame Exhibits, Philatelic Literature and Youth Philately.

To enable as many exhibitors as possible to be accepted, the frames will be used twice during the week with exhibits being swapped on the evening of Tuesday 5 May.

There will be about 3,000 frames available.

UK Commissioner: Mike J.Y. Roberts ([UKcommissioner@london2020.co](mailto:UKcommissioner@london2020.co)).

#### **Deadline for applications:      30 June 2019**

Further information: You can register to receive the London 2020 Newsletters.

Just go to [www.London2020.co](http://www.London2020.co) and click the "Sign up here for Newsletter" button on the home page.

Volunteers Sought! The Organising Committee are keen to recruit volunteers to help run LONDON 2020.

If you can help, please go to [www.London2020.co](http://www.London2020.co) and click the "Sign up here to Volunteer" link.

### **NOTOS 2021      19 – 22 November 2021**

Athens

We have received notification from the Organisers that NOTOS will be a Continental exhibition with FEPA Patronage and FIP recognition.

All classes will be invited.

Information is at <http://www.hps.gr/notos2021>. Further details will be published when they become available.

#### **DETAILS AWAITED**

**ANKARA 2020** 7-10 October 2020. FEPA patronage.

**MALAYSIA 2020** In Kuala Lumpur, November-December 2020. FIP patronage.

**ESSEN 2021** International exhibition to take place in Essen in May 2021.

The International Exhibitions Calendar

Further information on the full range of international exhibitions up to 2021 is at <http://fepanews.com/>

Please note that this website is now back online.

Bill Hedley, Chairman, ABPS Exhibitions and International Committee

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Our mailing address is: ABPS Exhibitions and International Committee

c/o 41 Devonshire Place, London W1G 6JY

## REPORTS OF MEETINGS

### NORTHERN GROUP MEETING OF 14 JULY 2018

#### 'Revolution'

We had a well attended meeting (a dozen members plus three apologies) with some ingenious interpretations of the chosen topic of 'Revolution'.

**Peter Rooke** produced a display of interesting material from the early Revolution (1789-1794) as did **John Morton** who went for a longer period of 1790-1802.

**Steve Ellis** showed some unusual items of the French Ambulance dating from the Franco-Prussian War whilst **Paul Watkins** gave a display of *Marianne de Briat*.

At this point in time dinner at our local intervened (we

wisely did not attempt to sing '*La Marseillaise*') and good Yorkshire food and drink were enjoyed.

After dinner we were joined by Judith and **Stephen Holder** and enjoyed Stephen's display of Memel.

The next display was by **Richard Wheatley** on mail from the Netherlands Indies to Europe during WWI – the French Connection.

We finished the meeting with a display by **Alan Goude** of the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Revolution issue.

A good time was had by all.

JWM

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### WESSEX GROUP MEETING OF 13 OCTOBER 2018

#### Chris Hitchen: 'Aspects of Paris postal history'

Our invited display was given by **Chris Hitchen** who showed an exceptional range of material from his Paris collection. In the first part we saw a fine selection of late fee mail with a wide range of material covering the life of this type of mail. The second half consisted of different categories of mail including registered, express and pneumatic letters and an unusual selection of braille items.

Unfortunately there were only two people present to view this super display, the convenor and Jeremy Martin who had kindly replaced Alan Wood, sadly poorly, to open up the Scout Hall for us and arrange lunch.

After the three of us had lunch at the Old Mill, **Jeremy Martin** put up some forgeries, some of which were difficult to spot, as well as a selection of different covers.

**Peter Kelly** displayed *Reunion 1939-45* giving details of the appalling conditions on the island caused by the blockade

and the damage inflicted on the infrastructure by two powerful typhoons; this was followed by a second display of the *Development of postal communications in the French colony of Niger*.

This was the worst turnout ever recorded in the history of our group and the Society as a whole and regular members would be well advised to make more effort to attend meetings of the group if it is to continue. Come rain or shine, the convenors have to make the effort to arrange and attend each meeting and it is disappointing to say the least to have to record this lack of support.

The other point to be borne in mind is that it is difficult for the convenors to attract quality displays if they do not have confidence in attendance levels. Alan Wood has stood down as convenor as has already been announced and Colin French will take over from now on with help from Peter Kelly.

PRAK

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### NORTHERN GROUP MEETING OF 6 OCTOBER 2018

#### Members' Day

The Northern Group day meeting was held in Adlington, Cheshire on 6 October and was attended by four members and two guests. Despite the reduced number able to attend, some excellent displays were on show which generated much discussion. Thanks are due to Peter Stockton for arranging and hosting the meeting.

**Alan Goude**: French tax stamps overprinted for use in St Pierre et Miquelon including domestic use on cover and on mail between St Pierre et Miquelon and France.

**Peter Stockton**: A selection of postal history of *Les Gardes des Voies et Communications* from the First World War. Originally established by a War Ministry instruction of 7 January 1887, its members were essentially of non-military age engaged in the guard and surveillance of railways, canals, bridges, telephone and telegraph networks. Akin to a 'Home Guard' type of operation, members were required

to live within a short distance of their guard-post. The G.V.C. were attached to the depot of their local territorial infantry regiment and organised into Subdivision, *Section*, *Groupe* and finally an individual *Poste*. The mail displayed included cachets and handstamps from all levels of the organisation including those attached to some of the main Paris stations. Manuscript endorsements by the sender would frequently confirm application of the free postal franchise. Some generic cachets provide for insertion of details of the sender's location manually on an individual basis. Cachets are frequently found in conjunction with standard travelling post office marks given the sender would be located on or close to a railway *Garde des voies*.

**Trevor Smith**: A selection from his general collection: '*Personnes célèbres*'.

**Steve Ellis**: French Transatlantic Mail.

SRE



## LONDON GROUP MEETING OF 4 AUGUST 2018

### Mick Bister: *Poste Restante* and Missent Mail

**Mick Bister** introduced the first half of his display with copies of nineteenth century engravings and early twentieth century postcards depicting *Poste Restante* scenes and their main protagonists - travelling salesmen, suspect businessmen and clandestine lovers. In truth the service was available to anyone who, for any reason, preferred to personally collect their mail from the post office rather than have it delivered to their residence..

Early examples of such mail were shown from 1785 onwards and addressed in different ways - *poste restante*, *bureau de poste*, *bureau restant* or simply the initials *PR*. From 1793 special postmarks identifying *poste restante* mail were used at the *Bureau Central* in Paris and Mick showed several types used in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century including a fine example of the International Flyer *Poste Restante* machine cancellation accompanied by a RETOUR A L'ENVOYEUR P\*R cachet on a 1931 cover. Examples were also shown of the use of initials to conceal the identity of recipients but this practice was banned from September 1914 for state security reasons.

Until 1920 no fees were charged on *Poste Restante* mail but from 1 May 1920 a 20c tax was levied on each item collected. Mick showed an example of the 20c *Banderole* postage due on a 1920 postcard cancelled METZ PORT in red, a 1924 cover with a strip of four 5c *Banderole*, two items with Sower stamps used instead of postage dues, a 1923 cover on which the sender had paid the 20c fee in advance and a magnificent 1922 cover franked with thirteen copies of the 20c *Banderole* paying the cumulative 2F60 tax on a bundle of thirteen items.

Examples of the ensuing rates were displayed as were covers from 1944 onwards with the new *Gerbes* postage due issue. The introduction of the cachet applied in red with effect from 1953 was explained and when appropriate the content of some of the correspondence was read out. One 1945 item was from a lady complaining to her lover that her mail to his *poste restante* address had been returned as uncollected. The problem was that she had been writing on her husband's headed stationery and the letters had been returned to him instead.

For the second part of the display Mick began with examples of the reduced *poste restante* fee applied to newspapers including a 1990 wrapper where the sender had prepaid the fee. Business men could take out an annual *poste restante* subscription which allowed them to collect limitless items of mail without further charge. Examples were shown of the special identity card they had to apply for first, a copy of an application form for an annual *poste restante* subscription and the annual subscription cards themselves. These were followed by examples of the various items that could be collected from the *poste restante* counter - these

included telegrams, telegraphic money orders, undelivered mail, advices of delivery and redirected mail. Finally, Mick showed examples of *Cours d'instruction* mail with *timbres fictifs* applied by the students in cases where a *poste restante* fee was applicable.

The remainder of the second half was devoted to missent or misdirected mail. Mick defined such mail as that which had been accidentally delivered to the wrong recipient. This could have been due to a mistake made by the sender when writing the address or to poor handwriting. It could also have been due to the postman's poor literacy skills or to inaccurate sorting. Early examples were shown from the 19<sup>th</sup> century with manuscript annotations (*fausse direction* or *FD*) indicating the error and the correction often preceded by the words '*bon pour*'. During the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century numerous PTT campaigns exhorted senders to write unambiguous addresses and to write legibly and Mick showed various cachets, 'chops' and slogan postmarks.

However, with the introduction of the 5 digit postcode and mechanised sorting in the 1970s, missent mail became more prevalent. Senders were ignorant of the addressee's postcode or wrote it incorrectly, coding desk operators made keying errors when treating the mail, sorting machines misread the *indexation* or barcode. The PTT instructed offices on how to respond to this escalation. All missent mail had to be identified by the letters *FD*, preferably applied by a handstamp the provision of which was the responsibility of the local sorting office. The office redirecting the item had to cancel the back of the cover to indicate its origin. If the sender was to blame for the misdirection the post office would forward it at the speed indicated by the postage paid (*Pli Urgent* or *Pli Non-urgent*). If the post office was culpable, the item of mail would be forwarded as a *Pli Urgent*. Mick showed examples of *FD* cachets, boxed and unboxed, in a circle and applied in a range of colours. In 1988 the *Administration* issued a standard 22mm *FD* handstamp which some sorting offices accepted but most continued to use their own particular device. Designs developed into straightline cachets with either just *FAUSSE DIRECTION* or *FD* with a killer pattern. These could be applied over the erroneous barcode so that it could not be scanned again. Finally larger offices used cancelling machines with slogans or killers to serve the same purpose.

Mick showed a full range of strikes to illustrate the development over a period of forty years. Unusual items included *FAUSSES DIRECTIONS* in the plural applied at La Balme-de-Sillingy to the top letter in a bundle, *FD SURCLASSÉ* applied to an upgraded item at Collonges-au-Mont-d'Or and a specially printed *FAUSSE DIRECTION* mail bag label from Saignes.

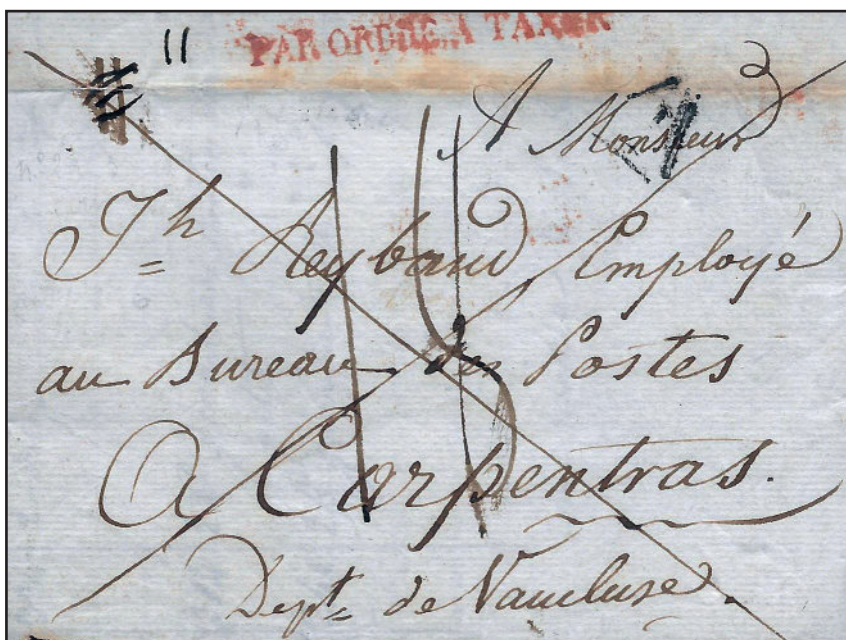


Letter from Paris to Le Havre franked with 25c *Semeuse Camée* cancelled 16 June 1922 and redirected to Bagnères-de-Luchon and then to the *Poste Restante* counter at Toulouse. The letter was collected at Toulouse with twelve accompanying items upon payment of 2F60 cumulative *poste restante* fee represented by 13 x 20c *Banderole*

After lunch, members returned to show their own material.

**Chris Hitchen** showed items concerning problems the French post office encountered before 1849 causing both losses in revenue and extra work. Infringement of the post office monopoly on the carriage of letters and abuse of the right to franchise defrauded the post office. From 1804 the penalty for such transgressions was the imposition of double postage. A further problem, though not actually entailing a loss of revenue, was failure to observe the detailed regulations regarding the sending of letters under franchise.

The penalty of double postage was in practice not routinely enforced. Efforts were made in 1822 to improve matters with the issue of two new handstamps – **DOUBLE TAXE POUR FRAUDE** and **DOUBLE TAXE CONTRAVENTION**. Examples of both were shown. Letters clandestinely carried when detected were usually penalised but private letters sent under franchise seem not to have been penalised in practice. New regulations in November 1844 gave the post office greater powers to impose double postage on the spot and labels 63, 164 and 164 bis were introduced to collect double postage in these cases.



**PAR ORDRE A TAXER** applied on a letter sent on 4 June 1821 to a postal employee at the post office in Carpentras. It was probably an attempt to send a letter free of postage but in the event it has been ordered to pay normal postage (18 décimes to pay for a distance of 600 to 800 kilometres for a weight between 11 and 15 grams at the tariff of 24 April 1806)



**Richard Broadhurst** showed us the *bloc-feuillet* issued at the 2018 Salon Paris Philex depicting the *Orphelins de la Guerre* series but with values in euros and with modified designs and colours. This was followed by a selection of publicity produced by *La Poste* to promote the new *Marianne l'engagée* issue as chosen by President Macron. It was agreed that the design was superior to many previous

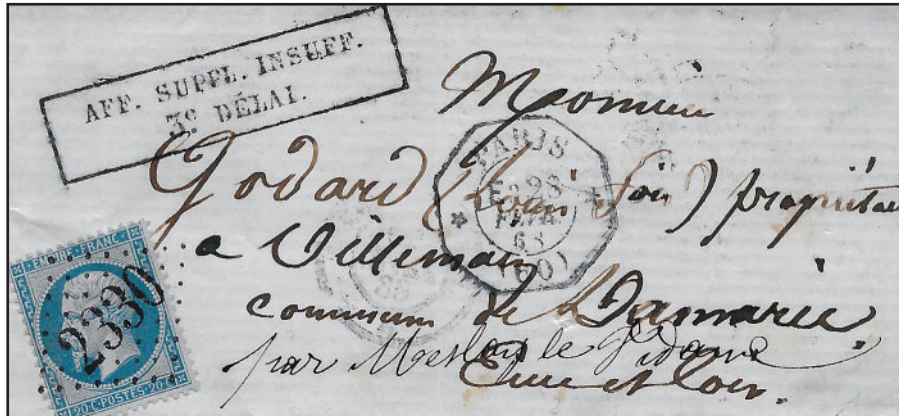
interpretations and harkened back to the classic issues such as *Marianne de Gandon* and *Marianne de Cheffer*. (For further information see Richard's article '*Marianne l'engagée*' on Page 129.)

Members present: Mick Bister, Richard Broadhurst, Chris Hitchen, Paul Miller, Barbara Priddy and Hans Smith.

MLB/CJH

## LONDON GROUP MEETING OF 6 OCTOBER 2018

### Chris Hitchen: French postal rates 1863 - 1914



28 February 1868 a letter simply franked 20 centimes, the normal letter rate, and placed incorrectly in the late fee box at the head post office for the third delay. It has therefore been marked insufficiently franked, AFF. SUPPL. INSUFF. 3° DÉLAI and sent on the next day.

The postage stamp has not been cancelled at the head post office but with the large lozenge 2330 of the destination office Meslay-le-Vidame.

**Chris Hitchen** gave the morning display with a look at various rates for late fee and express mail and a detailed look at other rates between 1876 and 1878 and 1900 and 1914.

The late fee service began in June 1863 and three offices in the commercial quarters of Paris, the head post office and district offices DS2 and J, had octagonal postmarks for the new service. The intention was to allow businesses to post letters as late as possible for the night trains leaving the capital. These could then be delivered in the morning in the provinces and neighbouring countries.

The extra charge was 20 centimes for 15 minutes after the usual collection, 40 centimes for a 30 minute delay and at the head post office only 60 centimes for a 45 minute delay. That was reduced to a flat rate of 15 centimes on 20 March 1887 and to just 5 centimes on 1 January 1896.

After the war the service was much less used. The rate increased to 15 centimes in 1920 and 25 centimes in 1926. However in August 1926 a small encouragement to use the service was made in order to enable letters for foreign destinations to be posted at the latest possible moment at the railway stations in the capital. *Le Petit Parisien* newspaper of 26 July 1926 gave full details. At the Gare P.L.M. (Gare de Lyon) a post box was placed on the outer wall of the station to accept letters, properly franked with a late fee, for Switzerland and Italy. At the Gare du Nord a postal agent was stationed close to the departure platforms to accept letters with a late fee rate for England

and northern European countries.

A little later a similar arrangement was made at the Gare St Lazare for mail intended for the trans-Atlantic service from Le Havre.

The service never actually ended but after 1936 it was no longer mentioned in information on tariffs and simply faded away. A very late use on 2 July 1937 concluded the section on the late fee service.

The display continued with a look at rates after France joined the GPU in January 1876. For foreign letters the GPU recommended a rate of 25 centimes but with latitude for countries that could not meet that. As the inland rate in France was 25 centimes, a foreign rate of 30 centimes was set. If the destination by sea was over 300 miles an extra 10 centimes could be added. With the benefit of hindsight it is clear that the French post office realised that its postage rates were significantly dearer than other countries. Whilst the inland rate remained at 25 centimes, the first weight step was raised from 10 to 15 grams. Finally on 1 May 1878 unified inland postage at 15 centimes went some way to improving matters for the French letter writing public.

The second half continued with postal rates between 1900 and 1914 including a selection of braille items. A rather attractive later cover with four copies of the *Sourire de Reims* charity stamp filled a space towards the end. As a conclusion there were three frames of express rates from the beginning of the service in 1892 until the 1960s.



27 December 1932, late fee on letter to foreign destination cancelled Paris Gare du Nord Délais.  
 Franking of 3F55 composed of foreign letter third weight step of 3F30 plus 25 centimes late fee

After lunch members reassembled for some short displays.

**Mick Bister** showed dated corner blocks of the 1F50 *Cérès de Mazelin* printed between March 1945 and August 1948. Stanley Gibbons records the ink colour as 'bright purple' at the red end of the spectrum whereas the French catalogues define it as '*lilas*' at the blue end of the spectrum. In reality, during the three years of its existence the printings oscillated between both extremes creating multiple variants in mauve, violet and magenta all of which were represented. Similarly, a selection of dated corner blocks of the 4F *Marianne de Gandon* printed between July 1946 and March 1948 displayed similar inconsistencies. Printed in 'bright violet' according to Gibbons and '*violet*' or '*violet clair*' according to the French catalogues, the main shade on display could best be described as a rather anaemic dull purple.

**Michael Round** gave a display of covers from Ivory Coast dated between 1965 and 1997. We saw beautiful multi-frankings, slogan cancellations, unusual rates such as registered express, a wide range of town postmarks and destinations such as Zaire and Nigeria. We were also shown varieties of surcharges, delightful hand-painted envelopes and the rare usage of postage dues.

**Maurice Alder** put up a couple of items with a request for further information. The first was a postcard depicting the arrival of the *facteur-courrier* at Autrans but was that the *boîte mobile* that we could see? Yes it was. The second item was an 1867 entire to Paris with a red manuscript 107 in red. The general consensus was that it was a non-postal

marking.

**Barbara Priddy** brought along three 1941 WW2 airmail covers to the UK which had been flown out of France via Lisbon. The objective was to identify some of the markings but it was the uncensored content of the letters that had a stronger appeal to the audience. The writer was describing in detail life under the Vichy régime yet somehow the correspondence had escaped the pen of the censor. An article on this correspondence will be published in a future edition of the Journal.

**Richard Broadhurst** showed us examples of the *Colis Postaux* issues of 1941 to 1945. We saw the first issues without indication of value and then those with the value incorporated into the design. The latter was achieved by either a single stage or a two stage printing. Of particular interest were the surcharged *Comité national de solidarité des cheminots* overprints of 1942.

**Chris Hitchen** stepped up again to show us recent usage of the new *Marianne de l'engagée* issue covering a range of rates.

The members present expressed their gratitude to Chris for organising such a successful meeting and in particular for yet another fine display from his collection. Members also agreed that the afternoon material had provided much interest and cause for discussion.

Members present: Maurice Alder, Len Barnes, Mick Bister, Richard Broadhurst, Chris Hitchen, Barbara Priddy, Roy Reader and Michael Round.

CJH/MLB



# LIST OF RECENTLY PUBLISHED ARTICLES

Compiled by Colin Spong & Maurice Tyler

## Bulletin de la COL.FRA

N° 164 2<sup>ème</sup> Trim 201: Le Congo Français 1893 - Un bureau de poste oublié de philatélistes (Strobel); Gabon-Congo, faux et usage de faux (Pennacchiotti); Deux Fleurons de Ligne Noguès (Ferrien); Pourquoi L'Archipel de Comores [Cont & end] (Bergossi).

N° 165 3<sup>ème</sup> Trim 2018: Les entiers postaux rectifiés de Madagascar (Hurpet); Gabon, Congo, Faux et Usage de Faux (Pennacchiotti); Madagascar Série de 1902, une affaire de virgule (Bessuad); Madagascar Série de 1902, une autre affaire de virgule (Bessuad); La poste automobile rurale au Maroc (Mercier).

## Cameo

Vol 19 N° 2 Whole N° 104 2018: Italian Internees in Cameroun and French Equatorial Africa during World War II (Bratzel); Victoria Telegraphs Cameroun Postmark (Wright & Bratzel); Sierra Leone to England by French Air Service 1935 (Martin); Cameroun, Bob Maddocks and 'China Clipper' (Wilson); Air Mail to Nigeria via Dakar, pre-1936 (Wingent).

Vol 19 N° 3 Whole N° 105 2018: Cameroun - Plating the Sterling Issue of 1961: The 4d on 15F stamp - Plate A (Bratzel); GB Post Office Wrapper to Porto Novo, Benin (Courtis); British West Africa and the French Air Mail Services: Part 1 The Toulouse-Dakar Service, Stage 1 1926-1934 (Priddy).

## The Collectors Club Philatelist

Vol 97 N° 4 July-Aug 2018: From Bône to Montpellier in 1840: a dive into history, how one letter can inspire much research (Marrot, Nilsestuen & Soulié).

Vol 97 N° 5 Sept-Oct 2018: The Era of the French Colonial Allegorical Group Type: The Stamp Dealers of N'Gomo, Gabon – a Rich Connection (Grabowski).

## Documents Philatéliques

N° 237 3<sup>e</sup> Trim 15 July 2018: La compagnie maritime Valéry et le service des dépêches avec l'Île de Sardaigne (Guigues); Les affranchissements à la demie-piastre en Indochine à partir de 1920 (Estel); Mai 1871 les provisoires de Lille, émission méconnue (Danan); Les barres phosphorescentes au type Ec et Eci (Gervais); Histoire d'une petite étoile (de La Mettrie).

## L'Écho de la Timbrologie

Permanent features: Actualités, Nouveautés, Prêt-à-poster Florilège de PÂP, Variétés, Surcharges, Cartes postales, Comment ça marche?, Flammes, Livres, Maximaphilie, Thématique.

N° 1930 Jul-Aug 2018: Deux classiques non-répertoriés de Saint-Pierre et Miquelon auraient été trouvés...(Tillard); Le courrier catapulté, une invention française (Albaret); L'utilisation du 3c Sage sur lettres (Lavigne); L'OP 4-2017 du *Marion Dufresne* (Venturini).

N° 1931 Sept 2018: Épreuves monégasques de non-émis (Bastide-Bernardin); Les bureaux français du Maroc

(Hadida); L'utilisation du 3c Sage sur cartes postales (Lavigne); L'OP 1-2018 du *Marion Dufresne* (Venturini);

N° 1932 Oct 2018: Un aperçu en cartes-maximum de la Grande Guerre sur le sol français (Savre); Épreuves monégasques de non-émis (Bastide-Bernardin); Les imprimés sous bandes [Tarifs de 01.08.1856-31.08.1871] (Lavigne); Les deux dernières escales de l'OP 1-2018 (Venturini).

N° 1933 Nov 2018: Les imprimés sous bandes [Tarifs de 01.08.1856-31.08.1871] (Lavigne); En Terre Adélie, fin de la campagne d'été 2015-2016 (Venturini); L'Aéro Club de France: une institution plus que centenaire! (Albaret).

## France & Colonies Philatelist

Whole N° 333 (Vol 73 N° 3) July 2018: Alsace-Lorraine: Provisional Registry Markings [1945-1949] (Luft); St Pierre & Miquelon: 1891 «ST-PIERRE M-on» OVERPRINTS (Taylor); View of Algiers Series of 1926-1927 (Rasmussen); Up for Auction: A French Sudan Military Franchise Letter where they missed the Point (Grabowski).

Whole N° 334 (Vol 74 N° 4) Oct 2018: Free French Stamp Booklets from St Pierre et Miquelon (Taylor); The new Face of Marianne (Rasmussen); French Postage Rates 2018 (-); Modern Postal History - Wrong Postage on Two Counts (Broadhead).

## The Indo-China Philatelist

Vol XLVIII N° 3 (Whole N° 233 May 2018: Unusual use of an Indochina Send/Reply Card (Grabowski); Weightlifter Stamp of North Vietnam, 1962 (Gebhardt); Defence & Production Socialist Ideals, North Vietnam, 1962 (Gebhardt); League of Nations Presence in Indochina (Bentley); Banknotes of the Lao Issara (Moellem); Second Anniversary of the Socialist Republic of Laos (Gebhardt); First Anniversary of the Tet-Offensive (Gebhardt); More Express Mail in Indochina (Bentley).

Vol XLVIII N° 4 (Whole N° 229) Sept 2018: Undelivered Censored letter from South Africa to Indochina (Bentley); Transition Period of Japanese Occupation and Return of the French to Indochina (Gebhardt); Surprising Varieties on Early North Vietnam Overprinted Stamp issues (Düing); TV Philately: « Music Resurrection » (Eins).

Vol XLVIII N° 5 (Whole N° 235) Nov 2018: Business Stationery Derived from Postal Stationery (Bentley); Erroneous Catalogue Listing Strasbourg Aviation Day (Weart & Bentley); Imperforate Stamps from North Vietnam /Unified Vietnam (Gebhardt); Laos Censor Mail (Dykhouse); Cover worth its price? (Düing); South Vietnam Misprint (Gebhardt); Fakes & Fantasies of the Military Free Franks of North Vietnam (Gebhardt); Signature of French Engravers and Designers (Dykhouse); Korean Military Advisor Correspondence (Dai Hung-Transl Tuyet Mai ).

## The Stamp Lover

Vol 110 N° 4 Aug 2018: French «Ambulant» Postmarks (Hill).

### Timbres Magazine

Permanent features: Actualités, Courrier des lecteurs, Club des clubs, Manifestations, Marcophilie, Les Nouveautés de France, Actus Andorre, Monaco et les TOM, Pâp, Expertise, Les variétés, Le Journal des nouveautés, Bibliothèque, Mon marché du mois.

N° 203 Sept 2018: Une Marianne résolument féminine (Toulemonde); Les timbres de Poste Aérienne de 1954: le destin d'une série mal aimée (Singeot); Du Kamerun au Cameroun (de Pellinec); Canada: quand les saisons dictaient les routes postales maritimes... (Veglio); Quand les marges font dates (Gomez); Le raid France-Madagascar du lieutenant Person [11 au 26 juillet 1942] (Sinai); En regardant d'un peu plus près nos petits bleus sur lettres (de La Mettrie); Bonjour Monsieur Mucha (Zeyons); A propos du rapport de conversion (Prugnon).

N° 204 Oct 2018: Le contrôle postal et télégraphique au service du blocus pendant la Première Guerre mondiale (Trentadue); Des carnets au féminin (Nowacka); 1515 La bataille de Marignan 1615 Les premières enveloppes (de La Mettrie); L'emploi de fiscaux d'Algérie en Corse libérée (Danan); Le millésime 2017 des TAAF (Dreyfus); Les carnets modernes: période des carnets fermés (Gomez); Luc-Olivier Merson (Mills); La république soviétique française de Jules Grandjouan (Zeyons); Avis aux marcophiles (Baudot); Franc et franc CFA (Prugnon).

N° 205 Nov 2018: Louis-Napoléon Bonaparte: L'homme qui voulait devenir empereur. (Veglio); Quand l'armée et la politique s'affichent sur le courrier: Vignettes de propagande de la Maison Delandre (Singeot); Boulazac: dans les coulisses de l'imprimerie (Toulemonde); Marie-Laure Drillet en couleurs (<http://www.marie-laure.com>); 65 ans après la fin de la Guerre du Corée: enfin la paix entre les deux Corées? [incl. membres de l'ONU 1950-1953] (Emmenegger); «Hermione collection» une impressionnante collection de semi-modernes [de Pellinec]; Le timbre, condition du visa: l'adoption par la France des timbres consulaires (Danan); La Guerre est finie! (Zeyons); Une lettre d'Honfleur pour Uddevallan (Prugnon).

## Les Feuilles Marcophiles

N° 372 (Mar 2018): Les Levées Exceptionnelles – Deuxième partie: Les timbres à date (Schaff & Donnadiou); Histoire de la double relation postale du Principat d'ANDORRA – Chap. 3 (1<sup>ère</sup> partie): Dans l'attente qu'une évolution des esprits favorise enfin l'établissement d'un service postal français performant à côté d'une Administration espagnole (Dupré); Vichy aviation 4 sept. 1932: un timbre à date «privé» utilisé par des postiers! (Flotte); Qui était Monsieur Désiré, artiste aux Bouffes-Parisiens? (Dutau); Récépissés des Chargements (Sené); Le circuit de Lecture est resté lettre morte! (Flotte); Corps d'Observation de la Gironde – 2<sup>ème</sup> période: Empire (Aka); Association d'empreintes d'un timbre OR et d'un timbre de boîte rurale sur une même correspondance: des cas prévus et d'autres inexpliqués (1<sup>ère</sup> partie) (Mingant, Douron & Lebecque).

N° 373 (Jun 2018): Les Levées Exceptionnelles – Troisième partie: Les autres bureaux de la Seine et ceux de province (Schaff & Donnadiou); Petite particularité normande (Bonney); À propos de Bordeaux-la-Bastide: Rive droite ou rive gauche? (Rey); Grèves de mai-juin 1968: l'acheminement du courrier par les chambres de commerce (1<sup>ère</sup> partie) (Fresneau); Les guerres du Consulat: Le Corps d'Observation de la Gironde (complément à l'article des FM 329) (Aka); Association d'empreintes d'un timbre OR et d'un timbre de boîte rurale sur une même correspondance: des cas prévus et d'autres inexpliqués (Seconde partie) (Mingant, Douron & Lebecque); Timbres «EXPRES» et «DISTRIBUTION PAR PORTEUR SPÉCIAL» (3<sup>ème</sup> partie) (Guillard & Abensur).

N° 374 (Sep 2018): La Semeuse qui est passée par la Sibérie (Bonnet); Communication sur un part de facteur n° 688 (Pinhas); Tous aux archives (Wright); À propos de Bordeaux-la-Bastide: Rive droite ou rive gauche? (2<sup>ème</sup> partie) (Rey); Un chef de gare et les services postaux en 1864-1865 – 2<sup>ème</sup> partie: Surprise graphologique (suite des FM 371) (Douron); Grèves de mai-juin 1968: l'acheminement du courrier par les chambres de commerce (2<sup>ème</sup> partie) (Fresneau); Les ateliers et centres de tri en France – Études des timbres à date modernes 1950-2018 (complément au n° Hors-Série 2015-02) (1<sup>ère</sup> partie) (Lavenas); Timbres «EXPRES» et «DISTRIBUTION PAR PORTEUR SPÉCIAL» (4<sup>ème</sup> partie - fin) (Guillard & Abensur).



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