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# The Journal of the France & Colonies Philatelic Society



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# THE FRANCE & COLONIES PHILATELIC SOCIETY OF GREAT BRITAIN

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

## 2004 Subscription Rates

United Kingdom: £10.00, Europe: £12.00, Elsewhere: £15.00.  
Treasurer: C J Hitchen, 36 Everton Road, Croydon CR0 6LA.  
The Society's Girobank account number is 39 784 9001.

## The Journal

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Northern Group: J P Maybury  
Wessex Group: P R A Kelly

\* \* \*

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# The Journal of the France & Colonies Philatelic Society

Editor: M S Tyler, 56 Mortons Fork, Blue Bridge, Milton Keynes MK13 0LA  
E-mail: editor@fcps.org.uk

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## SOCIETY NOTES

### New Members

The Society is pleased to welcome the following:

1244 Dr D Richards (Surrey), 1245 T Green (Wirral), 1246 P R Twiddy (Nottingham), 1247 Jerold M Massler (USA) [welcome back!], 1248 Mrs Jackie Simpson (Renfrewshire), 1249 R J Maddocks (Shropshire).

\* \* \*

### Members Deceased

We are saddened to hear of the death of the following members, and offer our sincere condolences to their families:

55 T H Rumbold, 427 E M Cohn, 594 W Gibbs.

\* \* \*

### Displays by Members

**Peter Maybury** displayed "The rise and fall of Napoleon III" to Bradford P S on 27 January 2004 [*sic - this entry should have been published last June, but was inadvertently overlooked!*].

It would be helpful if all members who display to local or national societies could send full details to the Editor, who will be happy to publish the information (when he does not forget!).

\* \* \*

### Auction Secretary

This is a final appeal before the AGM to try and find a new Auction Secretary to take over from Mick Bister from the beginning of 2006. Every help will be given to any member who feels that he/she has the time to devote to this very rewarding task, and the job can easily be adapted to suit the knowledge, experience, skills and time available of a willing candidate.

Emergency measures are being considered by the Committee that would ensure that some form of auction will continue next year, but if no volunteer is forthcoming this will inevitably be on a much reduced scale. It must also be borne in mind that greatly reduced income from this source will probably mean a rise in membership fees.

Please help if you can! Contact the President, General Secretary or present Acting Auction Secretary (addresses on the inside front cover of this Journal) in the first instance.

\* \* \*

### Exhibition Successes

**Steve Walske** gained a Vermeil Medal at Napex 2004 (McLean, Virginia, June) in the Literature Class for his handbook on US Civil War mail, and Prix d'Honneur at APS Stampshow 2004 (Sacramento, California, August) for "Transatlantic Packet Mail between the USA and France 1840-1875" as well as the Grand Award and a Platinum Medal for "Transcontinental Pony Express".

\* \* \*

### Washington 2006

Dave Herendeen FRPSL, who is the current President of the France & Colonies Philatelic Society in the USA, has expressed a desire to have some kind of closer co-operation between our two groups, particularly in a social way. He has approached us with the suggestion that we might have a joint meeting at the Washington 2006 international show, although he emphasises that this would not involve any financial outlay on our part, apart from travel and accommodation of course – to be privately and individually arranged by us.

He says that he is planning for their FCPS to have a table at the show (unmanned for the most part) to display membership information about our two societies (and possibly COL.FRA) and perhaps to have copies of our journals available. Getting a table, he adds, for one or two hours would allow a meeting to be scheduled, not for "displays" in the traditional sense, but allowing our respective members to meet and get to know each other. If there is enough interest and time, we could perhaps have several presentations, possibly just using slides or overhead transparencies. Or we might provide a list of research areas that are being pursued so that those with similar interests could compare notes.

Dave reiterates that there would be no cost to our society other than shipping (or bringing) materials to be distributed. He would, however, like to have some idea how many of our members might be considering going to Washington 2006 (27 May to 3 June 2006) in order to facilitate possible arrangements. Would those members who might welcome such a gathering and who would consider attending the show next year please contact the Editor in the first instance.

\* \* \*

### Philatelic Honours

The Association of British Philatelic Societies held its Congress last year in October at Winchester, with the theme of "European Philately". Appropriately, therefore, Chairman of Congress was our Programme Secretary, **Ashley Lawrence**, who also presented a display on the "Sower". It was announced in the last issue of our Journal that John Hammonds was on the same occasion the recipient of the Congress Medal for 2004.

\* \* \*

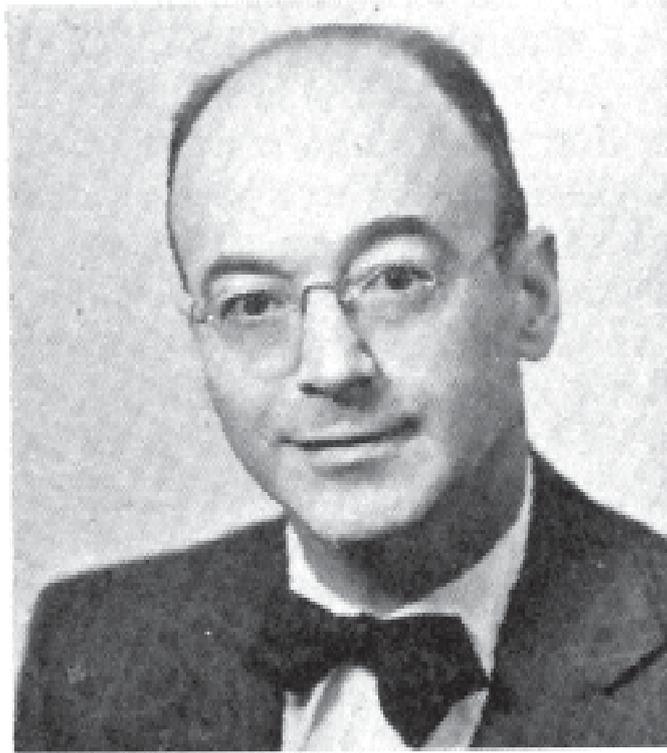
### Change of Telephone Number

**Colin Spong**, Organiser of the Southern Group, would like members to know that his telephone number has now changed to: 01903 709404.

\* \* \*

**Continued on page 14**

## OBITUARY



### **Ernst Cohn** **1920 - 2004**

Ernst M Cohn, long-time member of the France & Colonies PS, the renowned student of the Franco-Prussian War – or Franco-German War as he preferred to call it – died in his sleep at Dothan, Alabama, the night of 29-30 December 2004, aged 84 (older than many of those who knew him thought), following a short illness.

He was born in Mainz in the Rhineland on 31 March 1920 and escaped to America from Hitler's Germany in the mid 1930s. He served in the US Army in World War II, including for a time participating in the Nuremberg trials. He trained as a chemical engineer, obtaining a master's degree at the University of Pittsburgh in 1952. For many years he was a senior scientist and administrator for the US Bureau of Mines in Pittsburgh, then in Washington, ending up as Manager of the Solar & Chemical Power Division of NASA. He retired from scientific life quite early and devoted much of the last forty years to philately. He was married twice, his second wife Doris, to whom he was devoted for the twenty-three years of their time together, dying of bone cancer almost exactly one year before him on 28 December 2003, a loss from which he never fully recovered. He had no children.

He was quite young when he first took an interest in philately and quickly became particularly interested in the

stamps of Scandinavia, which were attractive and had modest production programmes of new issues. This developed into a strong interest in their postal markings and postal history which then broadened into a passion for postal history in general, for balloon mail, for the mail of besieged towns and fortresses, covert censorship of mail, the detection of faked or enhanced covers, and the eccentricities of national and international exhibiting and judging. He also had ardent views on the waste of the world's resources, especially in the USA. Some of his strong views brought him into conflict with other forthright people, both in science and philately, and certain of his views on judging and exhibiting were not shared by all other judges.

Eventually his restless energy for philatelic research drew him to the Franco-Prussian War and the Siege of Paris balloon mail in particular, and his continuing work on this topic led him to become the foremost student of this most fascinating part of postal history. He was acknowledged and respected everywhere for his ceaseless and diligent researches, even though not all other students always agreed with his findings. Perhaps sometimes his enthusiasm led him into print before the facts fully backed one of his theories changing the accepted views, but in the end he usually managed to prove that his modifications or reversals of previously documented 'facts' were themselves the new

correct view. He believed in returning as far as possible to original sources and he scoured the libraries, small newspaper offices and local government archives all over Europe, for primary information on the voyages, landings and pilots' adventures of the many Siege balloon flights. Early on he found it an inconvenience to be struggling to discuss points or read documents in French or German, so he set about making himself fluent in both those languages, so much so that he regularly wrote articles in papers for foreign language publications in their own language.

He conducted a great many correspondences with like-minded – and some unlike-minded – philatelic students across the world, diligently hammering out his letters on ancient typewriters, until he eventually discovered the computer in the mid-1990s. It is said that, once on his correspondence list, it was very difficult to get off it, and experienced 'pen pals' would wait until at least three long letters had arrived, before answering all three with one measured response.

Ernst always believed in sharing his discoveries and researches, and he wrote a very large number of papers over his working life and during his 'retirement', both scientific and philatelic. As well as the several hundred articles, pamphlets and short notices he produced, a good many on the Franco-Prussian War, he wrote four or five major works, for example:-

*Die Papillons von Metz oder die beiden Ballonposten von Metz*, ArGe Frankreich, Munich 1976

*The Flight of the Ville d'Orléans*, Collectors Club 1978

*A Book of Postal History*, Triad Publications 1988

*Ordinary Mail by Diplomatic Means during the Siege of Paris*, James Bendon 1995

*Unusual Mail in Occupied France 1870-71*, James Bendon 2000

For our Society he wrote *The Other Homing Pigeons of 1870*, F&CPS 1977, and for several years he has contributed the long series of articles appearing in our Journal as *Amazing 1870-71 Wonder Stories*.

He exhibited his collections of the Siege of Paris balloon mail a number of times but always suggested it was for educational purposes rather than to win high awards. Awards received by him, however, included the American Philatelic Congress Boehret Award, the APS Luff Award

for Distinguished Philatelic Research in 1995, and the Lichtenstein Award from the Collectors Club of New York in 2004. He belonged to many Societies, being a corresponding member of the *Académies de Philatélie* of France & Belgium, an Honorary member of the *Académie Européenne de Philatélie* (formerly *L'Académie d'Études Postales*) the Postal History Society (of America) as President and Editor, the APS, the France & Colonies Society, both the UK & the US ones, and other societies in USA & Europe.

Ernst was a fount of knowledge and an inspiration to anyone who wanted to know more about the fascinating events of 1870-1. He always enjoyed questioning the conventional wisdom of any subject, testing the evidence, and encouraging others to do the same. He would never rely on what had been written or stated in the past, but needed to re-prove to his own satisfaction that what was accepted as fact was indeed the case. Whilst he probably never considered himself an expert, which of course he was, nevertheless he was always happy to challenge the experts, to prove to him that their statements of fact were indeed right.

In recent decades there have been a number of high profile collectors and students of this period, and their numbers are dwindling. Victor Chanaryn, Ruth & Gardner Brown, Raymond Pittier and now Ernst Cohn, have left us. All these were distinguished members of our France & Colonies Society. Mrs Yvonne Newbury has now retired from active balloon collecting, and two of the other main collectors in our membership have sold large parts of their collections, and thus the Society has less impact in this field, although there are two or three other still very active members. For some thirty-five years the collecting of this topic has been curiously dominated by British and American collectors, but this era is now passing and with the departure of Ernst we can say it has probably now come to a close.

We shall many of us very much miss his dry wit, the sharp smile, his broad knowledge, his willingness to help and guide fellow enthusiasts, and his regular outpouring of information. We shall not now see *Amazing Wonder Story* N° 100.

**Stephen Holder FRPSL**

with acknowledgements and thanks for the advice and helpful additional notes from George Barker, Ashley Lawrence, Mrs Yvonne Newbury, Ken Sanford & Stanley Luft.

# Airmail Letter Rates from French Equatorial Africa to France 1930-45

Bob Picirilli

[This article is also being published in the "France & Colonies Philatelist" (USA)]

The work of the informal study group researching airmail rates in use in French colonies prior to 1946 continues to make steady (if not speedy) progress. At this point we have produced three major articles dealing with rates from French West Africa (AOF) to France, to the United States, and to the rest of Europe<sup>1</sup>. This article will treat rates from French Equatorial Africa (hereafter AEF) to France. As used here, AEF included the colonies of Gabon, French (Moyen) Congo, Chad, and Ubangi-Chari, though this form of the federation was not officially finalized until 1936.

I am not an aerophilatelic historian, and my purpose does not include details about the history of airmail between AEF and France; I will focus on formally established rates. I can mention, however, that there were a few flights before 1930, in and out of Chad and French Congo, though most of these were within Africa and/or experimental flights (*essais*), including one in 1929 from Madagascar to France with a stop in Fort Lamy, Chad (as listed by Pierre Saulgrain<sup>2</sup>). The 15 March 1930 issue of the *Journal officiel de l'Afrique Equatoriale Française* (hereafter *JOAEF*) announced an airmail service via a return flight by Captain Goulette (from Madagascar, via Brazzaville) to France, with further stops scheduled for Bangui (Ubangi-Chari), Ft. Lamy (Chad), Lisbon and Paris; the airmail *surtaxe*, in addition to "normal" (basic surface) postage, was 3F per 10 grams *quelle que soit leur destination* ("whatever the destination").

Regular flights were established soon thereafter. As indicated in earlier articles, franking on airmail letters in French colonies typically represented a combination of at least two rates: the regular surface letter rate (which I call "basic" since it applied whether a letter went via surface or air) plus the airmail *surtaxe*. If there were other charges, such as for registration, these were added. For mail exchanged within the French community – whether interior, intercolonial, or Franco-colonial – basic was usually lower; I call it "domestic basic." Basic for mail to non-French-community destinations – international (or UPU) – I call "foreign basic".

The rate information given in this article, for the most part, reflects three sources: (1) *Les Tarifs Postaux Français 1627-1969* by J-P Alexandre, C Barbey, J-F Brun, and G Desarnaud, ed. Dr R Joany (2<sup>nd</sup> edition, Brun & Fils, 1989), which I will refer to as Alexandre; (2) issues of the *JOAEF*, published on the first and fifteenth of each month, 1930-45, examined in the Library of Congress; and (3) a database of information (including photocopies of most) from more than 4,000 French colonial airmail covers (245 from AEF to France) being built as part of the research of our study group.

Here follows a table of most of the rates pertinent to this article (/10g means per 10 grams or fraction thereof). Important notes follow immediately. (The reader should know that the basic postal and registry rates would apply not only to France but to any part of the French community. That is *not* true of the airmail rates.)

Beginning Date	Basic to 20g	Basic 20-50g	Basic 50-100g	Registry	Airmail
9 Aug 1926 <sup>(1)</sup>	50c	75c	1F	1F	—
2 Oct 1929 <sup>(2)</sup>	"	"	"	"	3F/10g
1934/35? <sup>(3)</sup>	"	"	"	1F25	"
Mar 1935? <sup>(4)</sup>	"	"	"	"	2F/5g
12 Jul 1937 <sup>(5)</sup>	65c	90c	1F30	1F50	"
15 Sep 1938 <sup>(6)</sup>	"	"	"	"	3F/5g
17 Nov 1938	90c	1F20	1F60	1F60	"
1 Dec 1939 <sup>(7)</sup>	1F	1F30	1F80	2F	"
1 Jan 1944 <sup>(8)</sup>	1F50	2F	3F	3F	—
1 Nov 1944 <sup>(9)</sup>	"	"	"	"	6F/5g
Apr 1945? <sup>(10)</sup>	2F	3F	4F	4F	"

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> "Airmail Letter Rates from French West Africa to France to 1945", in both *FCP* N° 257 (July 1999), pp. 75-85, and *JFCPS* N° 212 (June 1999), pp. 91-103; "Airmail Letter Rates from French West Africa to the United States before World War II", *FCP* N° 269 (July 2002), pp. 67-74; "Airmail Letter Rates from French West Africa to the UK and other European Countries before World War II", *JFCPS* N° 223 (March 2002), pp. 13-21; see also "Airmail Rates from French Indochina to France prior to World War II", *The Indo-China Philatelist* N° 159 (September 2003), pp. 427-431.

<sup>2</sup> *Le Service Postal Aérien dans les Pays d'Expression Française* (Roumet, 1996), pp. 163, 265.

(1) I did not confirm the date for this change in domestic basic (given in Alexandre) in the *JOAEF*. It is the date for the change in France, but rates did not always change as soon in the colonies as in France. But for the purposes of this article, the precise date does not matter: these rates were definitely in effect on 1 Jan 1930.

(2) This is Alexandre's date for the change in France, which I could not confirm in the *JOAEF*. But this rate was publicized in the *JOAEF* for 1 Feb 1930 (Fig 1).



Figure 1 -  
19 Mar 1930, Brazzaville (Congo) to Xures @ 4F55, registered (1F postage on reverse).  
Basic 50c + 1F registry + 3F/10g airmail (5c overpaid).  
Experimental flight by Captain Goulette: note cachet.  
Courtesy John Parmenter.



Figure 2 -  
 30 Nov 1933, Brazzaville (Congo) to Paris @ 1F75.  
 Basic 50c + 1F25 airmail from Léopoldville to Boma; surface on to France.  
 Courtesy Robert Johnson.

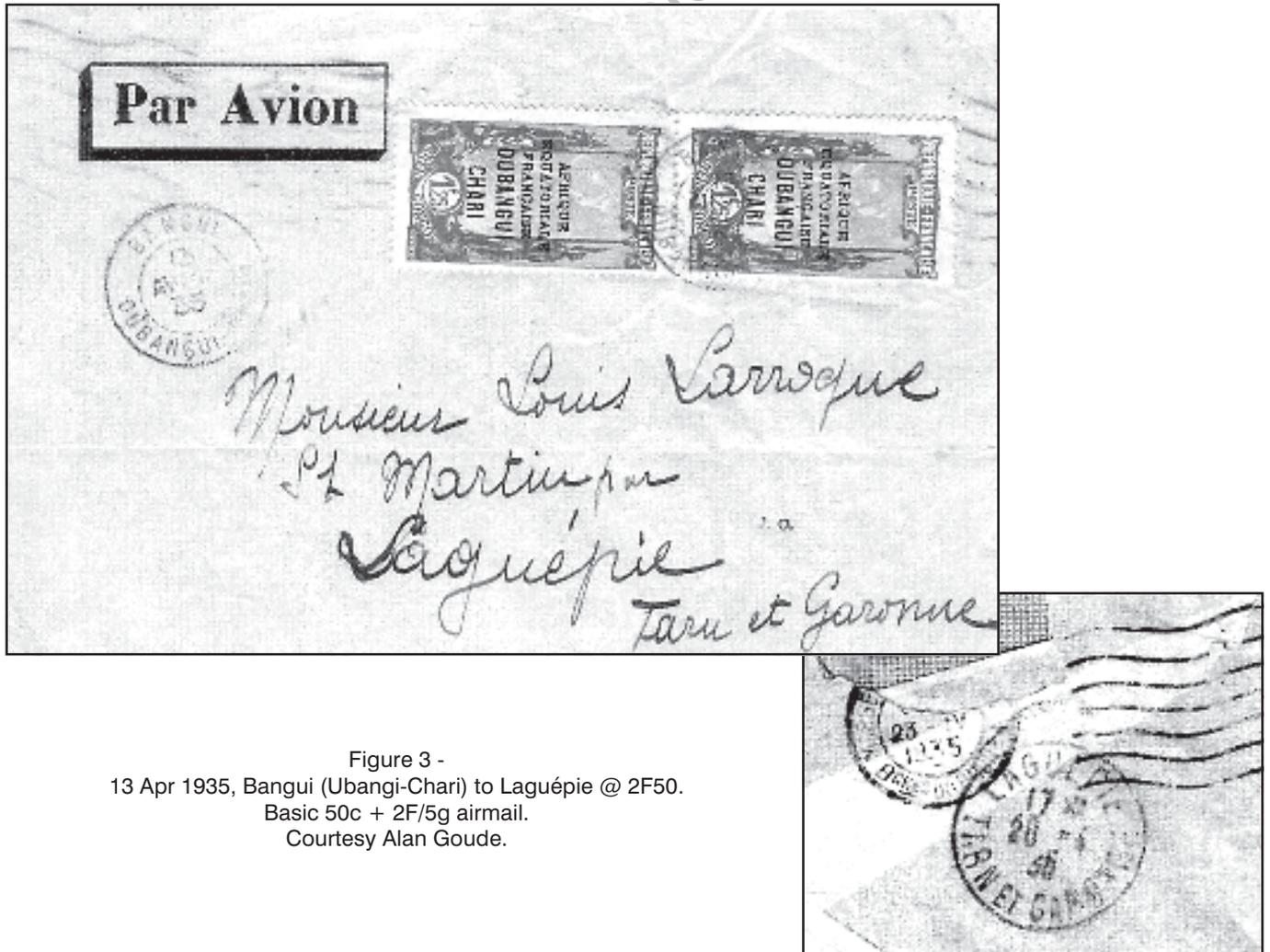


Figure 3 -  
 13 Apr 1935, Bangui (Ubangi-Chari) to Laguéprie @ 2F50.  
 Basic 50c + 2F/5g airmail.  
 Courtesy Alan Goude.



Society

Figure 4 -  
9 Jun 1935,  
Bangui (Ubangi-Chari)  
to La Guiche @ 5F75,  
registered.  
Basic 50c  
+ 1F25 registry  
+ double 2F/5g airmail.  
Courtesy Roger Gilruth.

(3) Alexandre dates this change at 18 Jul 1932 in France. Cover evidence for the registry rate is sparse, but such as I have indicates that this change to 1F25 *did not go into effect in AEF that early* (Fig 2). One cover dated 31 Jan 1934 seems still to be paying 1F registry; the next registered cover is dated 9 Jun 1935 and is paying 1F25 (as are several thereafter). The problem is that the *JOAEF* for this period does not announce changes in basic, so I cannot be sure of the date this change took effect.

(4) Alexandre gives the date for this airmail rate as 1 Sep 1935. But both the *JOAEF* and cover evidence indicate that it was established earlier. The 1 May 1935 issue of the

*JOAEF* lists it as the “current” rate, and covers as early as March seem clearly to pay 2F airmail (Figs 3 & 4).

(5) Alexandre gives this date for the change in France, which I cannot confirm in the *JOAEF*. The earliest cover in the database sent at 65c basic is 22 Aug 1937, which is not much later (Fig 5).

(6) This is the effective date as officially stated in the *JOAEF*. (Alexandre gives 13 Aug as the date.) The earliest cover in the database is dated 16 Sep (Fig 6).

(7) The 1939 rate in this table extended until official relations between France and AEF were suspended on or about 2 May 1941. At this point AEF cast its lot with de Gaulle and the

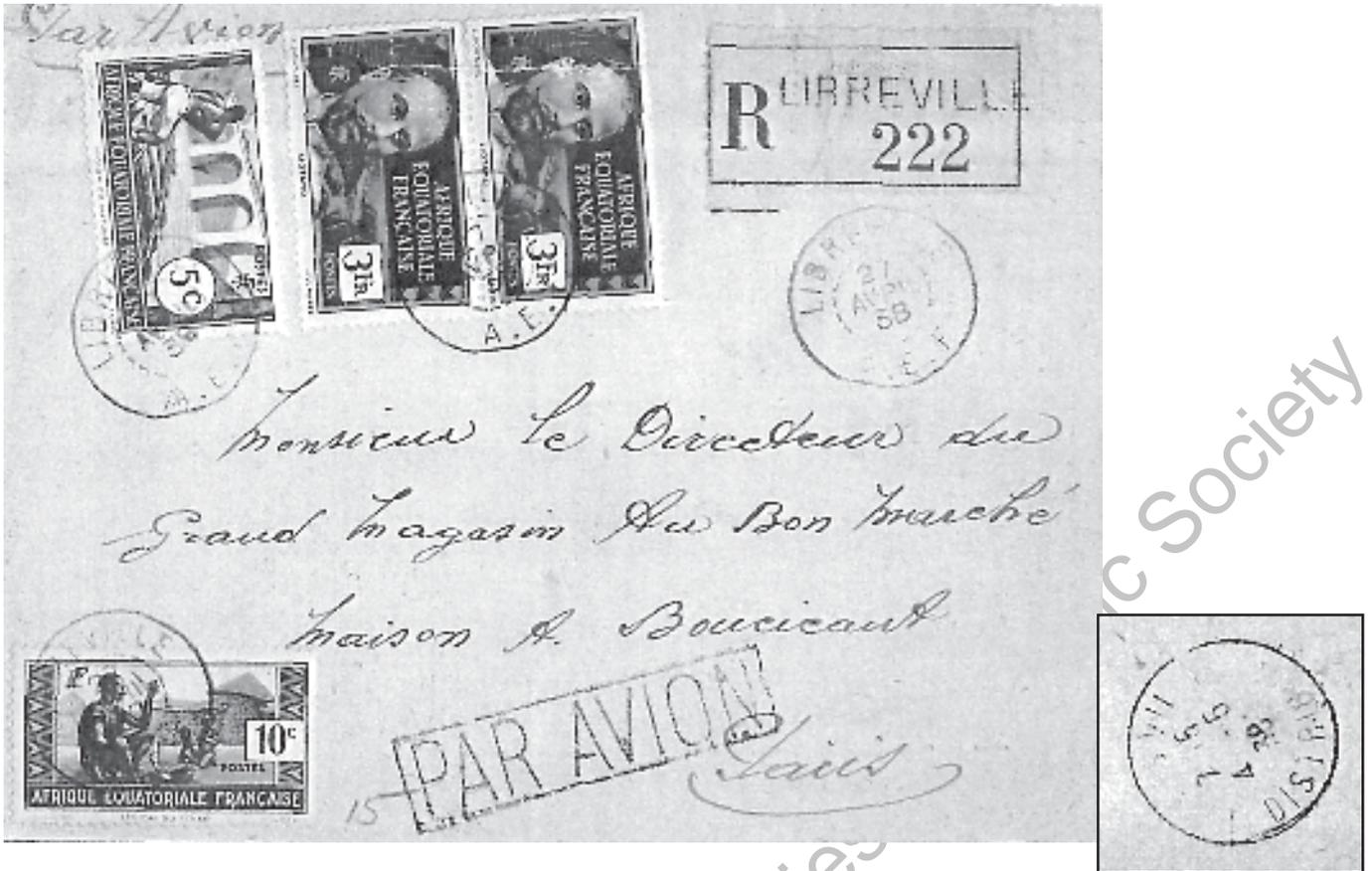


Figure 5 -  
 27 Apr 1938, Libreville (Congo) to Paris @ 6F15, registered.  
 Basic 65c + 1F50 registry + double 2F/5g airmail.  
 Courtesy Greg Cykman.

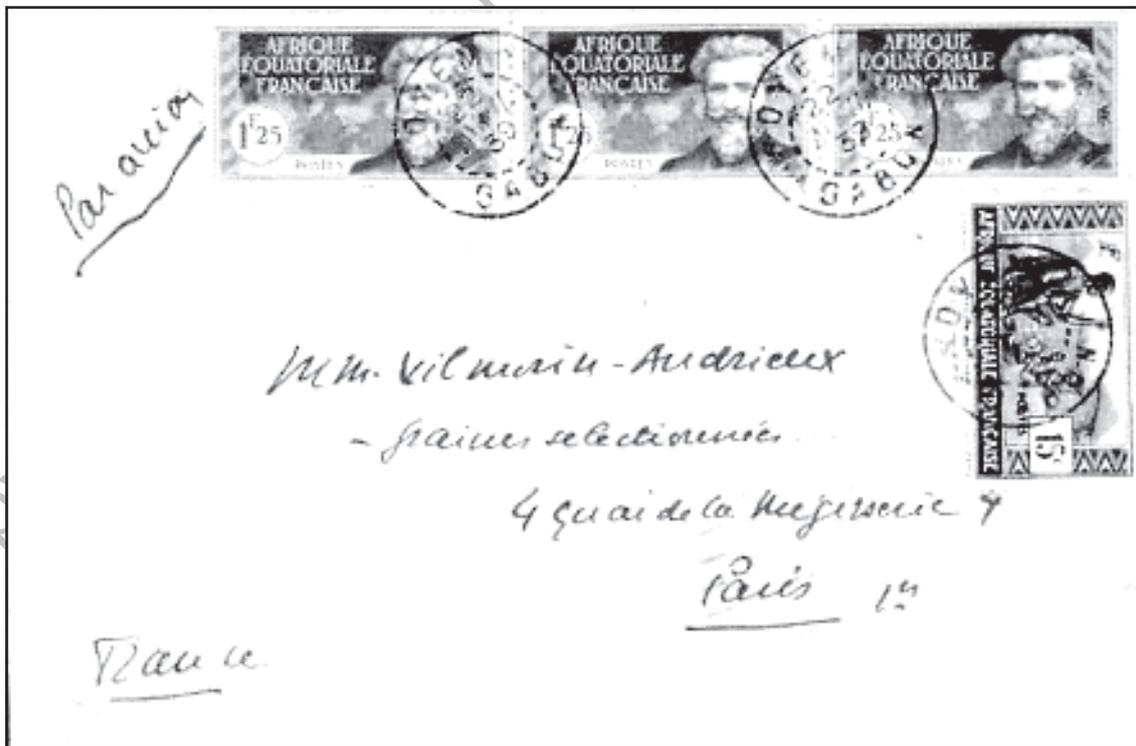


Figure 6 -  
 22 Apr 1939, Oyem (Gabon) to Paris @ 3F90.  
 Basic 90c + 3F/5g airmail.  
 Courtesy Peter Wingent.



Figure 7 -  
17 Apr 1940, Abeche (Chad) to St. Etienne @ 3F.  
Basic waived (note "F.M." and military cachet); 3F/5g airmail.  
Courtesy Barry Newton.



Figure 8 -  
5 Jan 1945, Libreville (Gabon) to Castelsarrasin @ 7F50.  
Basic 1F50 + 6F/5g airmail.  
Courtesy Tony Brooks.

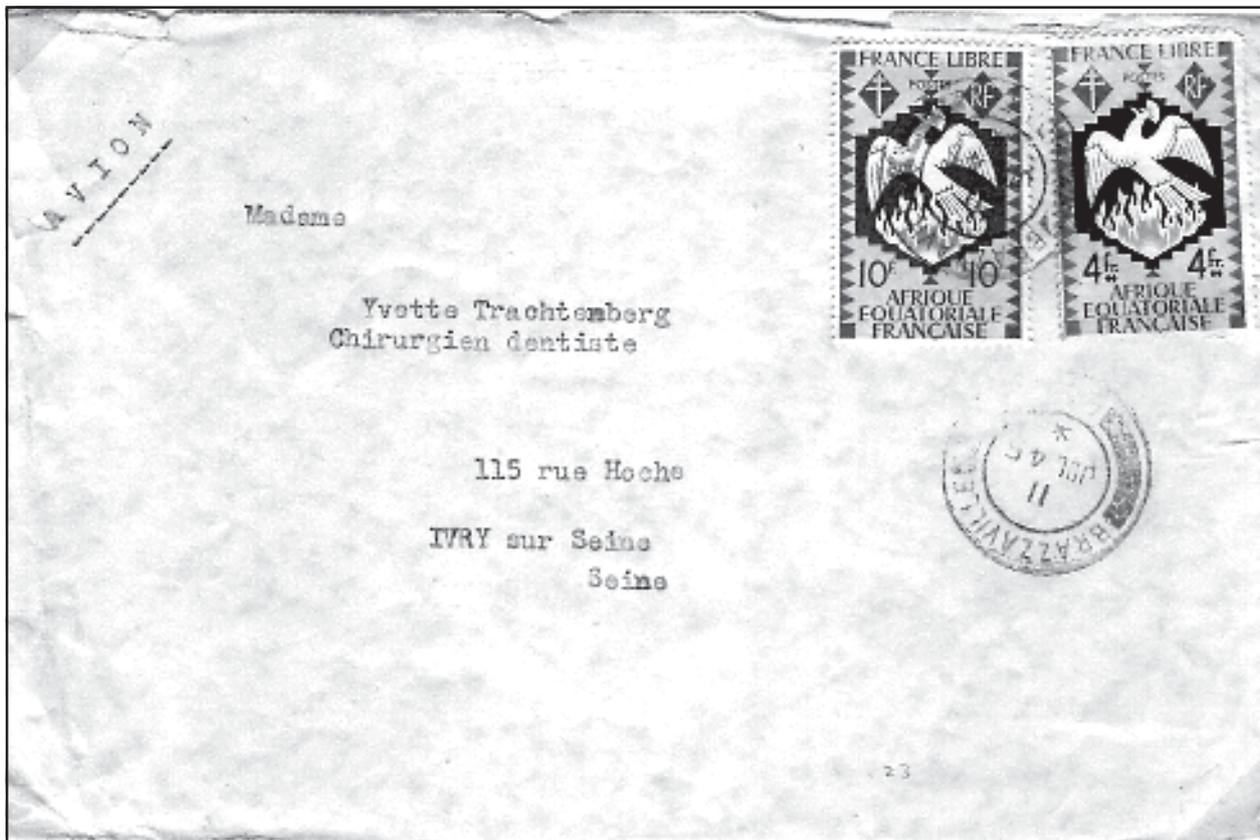


Figure 9 -  
 11 Jul 1945, Brazzaville (Congo) to Ivry-sur-Seine @ 14F.  
 Basic 2F + double 6F/5g airmail.  
 Courtesy Robert Johnson.



Figure 10 -  
 9 Feb 1935, Fort Lamy (Chad) to Paris @ 50c (basic).  
 Flown *exceptionnellement* (at least to Algiers) with no airmail surtaxe paid.  
 Courtesy Paul Larsen.

Free French government in exile (in the UK) rather than with the French government at Vichy. From that time on, airmail letters did not routinely go from AEF to France until 1944, when France was falling rapidly into the hands of the Allies. The last cover in the database before this break is dated August 1940, and the next September 1944.

(8) This is listed as the “current” rate in the *JOAEF* for 1 Nov 1944, not an effective date. The change in basic took place in Vichy France in 1942 but was not adopted in AEF until about this time. The *JOAEF* for 1 Jan 1944 says it was agreed to at a session on 1 Dec 1943, so it might have gone into effect as early as that. The earliest cover to France (after 1940) in the database is dated 16 Sep 1944 and appears to pay the 1F50 rate.

(9) This is listed as the “current” rate in the *JOAEF* for 15 Nov 1944, not an effective date. Alexandre dates it on 10 Mar 1945, but cover evidence (Fig 8) shows that it was applied in late 1944, probably as early as the 16 Sep 1944 cover mentioned in note (8).

(10) Alexandre dates this change in basic as of 1 Mar. I could not confirm it in the *JOAEF*, but cover evidence tends to say that it did not apply in AEF until at least 1 Apr. The earliest cover that is clearly at 2F basic is dated 10 June, but covers for this period are sparse (Fig 9).

### Special Circumstances

There are some special circumstances that affect the franking on a number of covers. Four, in particular, need to be mentioned here.

1. The first refers to covers sent without an airmail surtax charged, apparently to promote the use of airmail. Most of these are stamped *Transportée Exceptionnellement* and are characterized by the fact that the franking pays only the basic rate (Fig 10). We have noted more of these from AEF to France than from other colonies, and they are especially prominent during the early period. Among the covers in the database, 16 are franked either 50c (which was the basic rate) or 60c, obviously paying no airmail surtax. These range in date from December 1934 to February 1936; interestingly, nearly all of these were sent by or to Monsieur Leralle, a French dealer and philatelic finagler. This may explain the fact that many of these were franked at 60c instead of the 50c basic.

2. *Franchise Militaire*, usually indicated by “F.M.”, involved the waiver of basic for those on military duty. Thus covers will occasionally appear that pay *only* the airmail surtax (Fig 7) (or airmail plus registry). They will often, but not always, have F.M. written in manuscript and/or some written identification of their status and unit. A few covers show that official mail from government agencies sometimes enjoyed such a *franchise*.

3. Another special circumstance arises in the fact that airmail flights between Leopoldville and Boma, both in Belgian Congo, were established early. Leopoldville lay immediately across the Congo River from Brazzaville in French Congo, and Boma was near the coast and convenient for shipping. The *JOAEF* announced early that mail bound

for France could be paid to fly that leg from Leopoldville to Boma; of course it would go the rest of the way by steamship, but presumably this would speed the letter on its way. The airmail surtax for this leg, when it was established (according to Alexandre, as of 31 Jan 1928), was 1F25/20g. By 1 Mar 1932 (date of publication in the *JOAEF*) an 80c/5g rate was available for this leg, but perhaps only for mail to be flown by Sabena.

Alexandre does not give this rate at all, and there are two covers in the database dated in May and November of 1933 that are franked at 1F75, marked “Léo-Boma,” clearly still paying the 1F25 airmail surtax for this leg (+ 50c basic, of course) (Fig 2). At any rate, all this means that some airmail covers pay basic plus this smaller airmail surtax only, and they will typically be marked “Léo-Boma”.

4. As just intimated, there were apparently some different rates announced in the *JOAEF* for 1 May 1934 (and again on 15 Nov 1934) for airmail being carried by Sabena or Imperial Airways. This airmail *surtaxe* was 2F50/5g “to Europe” if dispatched from Brazzaville and taken across the river to Leopoldville for flight from there, or 1F75/5g if dispatched from Bangassou (further north in Ubangi-Chari) to be taken across the border to Buta (also in Belgian Congo) for flight from there. Whether this “Europe” could have included France as a destination is not indicated. No covers in the database during this period appear to have paid this rate, and Alexandre does not mention it (though he is listing only rates from France to AEF, we must remember). All airmail covers in the database for 1934 (and beyond) appear to have been flown by either of the three routes that involved French lines for at least part of the way: “Transsahara” from Congo to Algeria, or via Dakar, or Léo-Boma (and then surface, as just described). The first cover to indicate Sabena service is dated 4 Mar 1935, cacheted for the inauguration of regular airmail service from Brussels (via Marseille) to Belgian Congo on its return flight (5 Mar), and addressed to France (backstamped Marseille and Paris). But it paid only the established 2F/5g airmail surtax. My conclusion, then, is that this 1934 2F50 rate was little (if at all) used for mail from AEF to France.

### Appeal

The study group whose work lies behind this article continues to benefit from and needs further help from collectors who have airmail covers from any French areas (not France itself) to anywhere prior to 1946. Generous-spirited collectors have enabled the database to grow greatly, but there are many gaps. Please send photocopies of all such covers (front and back) to the author at 301 Greenway Avenue, Nashville, TN 37205, USA. I may also be contacted at [repic@access4less.net](mailto:repic@access4less.net).

I have selected a number of covers to illustrate the various rates and information given in this article; a special thanks to the collectors who have graciously provided permission and copies of their covers for use in this article, and to Marty Bratzel and Bill Mitchell for reading a draft of the article and offering a number of helpful suggestions.

# Use of the Handstruck “3” during the First Period of the *Type Sage* Issue 1876 to 1 May 1878

**Peter Kelly**

The “3” (décimes) handstamp was originally used to indicate postage due during the period of 1862 onwards up to the tariff changes in 1871 on territorial as opposed to local mail and letters from Paris to Paris. 30c was the unpaid rate for letters sent from one office to another. The rate for unpaid territorial letters increased to 40c in 1871 and remained in force into the Sage period, beginning in mid-1876, up to 1.5.1878.

Until 1882 the situation with regard to the taxation on unpaid and insufficiently paid mail was that postage due stamps, “*chiffres-taxe carrés*”, were required to be used on all local mail, moveable box and *convoyeur* (TPO) mail, while the postage due payable on territorial mail was indicated by a variety of handstamps or manually. This continued until 1882 when new postage due stamps were issued (*type Duval*) to cover all aspects of postage due. The

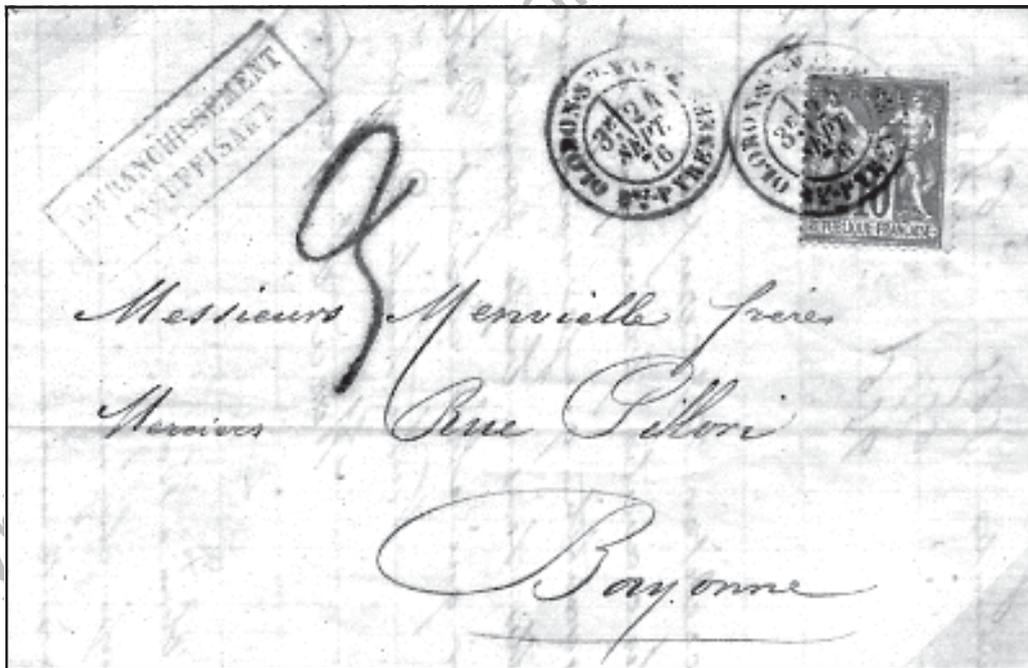
postage due payable on insufficiently paid letters during the period to 1.5.1878 was calculated at the unpaid rate less the value of the stamps affixed (this continued until 1892).

The position as far as foreign mail to European destinations was concerned followed the UPU regulations brought in on 1.1.1876, with unpaid or insufficiently paid letters being taxed at double the deficiency. Thus an unpaid letter would be taxed at 30c X 2 = 60c.

It can be seen from this that there were few opportunities for the use of the 3 décimes handstamp between 1876 and 1.5.1878 and, no doubt, they found their way slowly to the back of the drawer.

However, their use was possible, although exceptional, and two examples are shown below relating to both international and territorial use.

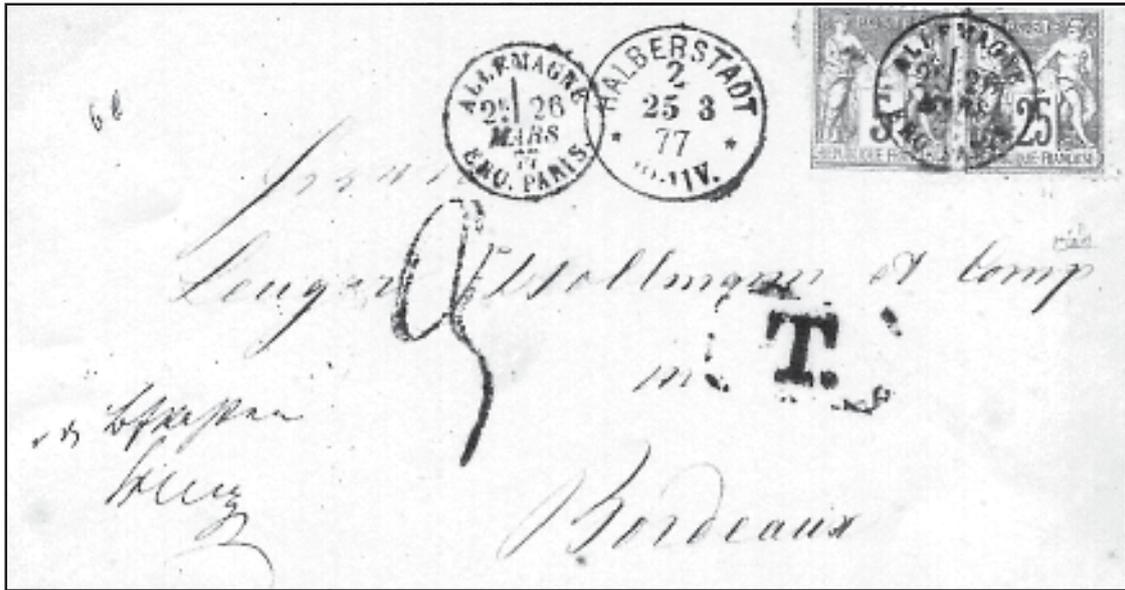
## 1. Use on territorial mail



This letter was sent from Oloron-Sainte-Marie in the Basses Pyrénées to Bayonne on 24 September 1876. For some wholly inexplicable reason it was franked with a single 10c Sage, and

was marked “*Affranchissement insuffisant*”. The Bayonne office correctly taxed it at 30c (unpaid letter rate of 40c less 10c paid = 30c) and stamped it with the “3” handstamp.

2. Use on foreign mail



This is an example of a French stamped letter posted abroad. Perhaps the sender forgot to post it in France and remembered at a later date once he was in Germany. The commercial letter is franked with a 25c and 5c Sage to make up the Tariff 1 basic letter rate for mail to Europe of 30c. It was posted in Halberstadt, Prussian Saxony, on 25 March 1877, far from the French frontier, and was addressed to a company in Bordeaux.

Halberstadt did not cancel the adhesives, placing their date stamp alongside and adding a tax mark. The letter entered

France on the Erquelines to Paris TPO which was one of the locations for the exchange of mail between the two countries. The entry mark "ALLEMAGNE / ERQ PARIS" was applied by the Bureau Central in Paris (in blue) and they also taxed the letter "3" (décimes) in blue by means of a handstamp. This was calculated on the basis of the unpaid rate of 60c (double deficiency) less the 30c already paid = 30c.

The use of an entry mark as a canceller of French postage stamps can only happen as a result of exceptional circumstances and as such is seen infrequently.

**SOCIETY NOTES**

**Continued from page 2**

**Lectures**

At the *Championnat de France de Philatélie* and the *Congrès de la FFAP*, held at Nancy 5-8 May 2005, the following lectures are being given (on Saturday 7 May) by the Académie de Philatélie in the Salle Gallé of the Parc des Expositions de Nancy-Vandœuvre:-

- 2.30pm Jean-François Brun: Impressions Philatéliques
- 3.45pm Guy Dutau: L'exposition coloniale de 1931
- 4.45pm Robert Abensur: Pot-Pourri au Type Merson

\* \* \*

**Northern Group Programme 2005-6**

- 17 Sept. 2005 Members' Choice
- 22 Oct. 2005 North-West Area Meeting
- 5 Nov. 2005 Bernard Lucas: Pneumatic Mail
- 21 Jan. 2006 An hour with Stephen Holder followed by Members' Choice

- 18 Mar. 2006 Members' Choice: All Day Meeting?
- 15 Jul. 2006 "Bastille Day" at Heaton Royds

Meetings are held on Saturdays, usually in the Board Room at Leeds General Infirmary, Great George Street, Leeds LS1 3EX, starting at 1.30 pm.

If an All Day Meeting takes place (as on 19 March 2005 this year) this will probably be 10.30 am to 4.30 pm with a break for lunch.

The NW Area Meeting will be in the Village Hall, Adlington, North Cheshire. Details to follow.

The "Bastille Day" Meeting will take place at the home of the Chairman, Stephen Holder, in Heaton Royds, Bradford.

For Members' Choice Meetings please work on a maximum 3 frame display (27-36 sheets) and not more than 10 minutes' speaking.

\* \* \*

# The 1 Franc *Cécogramme* Rate OR *A la recherche du tarif perdu*

Mick Bister



1 franc *cécogramme* rate on 1949 cover

In a recent auction I was delighted to acquire for my *Cérés de Mazelin* collection a very special and unusual item I had been seeking for some years. It was an example of the 1F *Cérés de Mazelin* used alone to pay the concessionary internal rate for printed matter written in Braille.

This item belongs to a category known as *cécogrammes* or *imprimés pour aveugles* created specifically for items sent to or by the blind and partially sighted. The category lasted

for nearly half a century but surviving examples rarely surface, and even though the cover was a little dilapidated I was thrilled to learn I had won it in the auction.

When it arrived, it appeared to fit all the criteria. It consisted of a sheet of Braille text measuring 25 x 32cm that had been folded twice, it was addressed to the *Association la Lumière par le Livre* in Paris and franked by a 1F *Cérés de Mazelin* cancelled 16 June 1949.

The time came to mount the cover and write it up, a relatively simple exercise that would be neither cerebrally demanding nor time consuming. How wrong could I be?

First of all I needed to check my facts and confirm the rates and conditions relating to the sending of *cécogrammes*. I had access to two articles:- '*L'affranchissement des cécogrammes*' by Dr R Joany published in *Documents Philatéliques* N° 68 in 1976 and '*Les cécogrammes ou imprimés pour aveugles*' published anonymously in *Timbroscopie* N° 176 in 2000. In addition, I was able to consult three books containing the relevant rates namely '*Les Tarifs Postaux Français 1627-1969*' by Alexandre, Brun *et al* published in 1982, '*The Regular Issues of France according to their Normal Postal Usage 1944-1959*' by S J Luft published in 1979, and the '*Catalogue des timbres de France seuls sur lettre 1849-1960*' by Robert Baillargeat published in 1996.

In the last mentioned book, I turned to page 268 and found the reference I was looking for viz. '*1 franc / cécogramme ordinaire / 6.1.1949 - 5.1.1959*'. According to Baillargeat, however, the stamp designated for this rate was not the 1F *Cérès de Mazelin* which had officially been withdrawn from sale on 11 March 1949 but its replacement the 1F *Blason de Savoie* issued on 11 May 1949. Evidently there had been two months when a 1 franc value was not officially on sale but no doubt remnants of the 1F *Cérès* and other issues were tucked away in counter stock books and hence were still available for use. The important fact though was that, irrespective of the stamp used, this entry in Baillargeat's book confirmed the 1F rate on my cover.

However, being cynical by nature I decided to seek a second opinion. I consulted S J Luft who informed me on page 14 of his book that the 1F *Cérès* 'was retained for newspapers and as a complementary value until replaced by the Arms of Savoie in May 1949' and later, on page 46, that the 1F *Savoie* was used, in a subordinate capacity, to

frank 'printed matter for the blind per 1000 grams (domestic and foreign)'. So, I had discovered that the 1 franc rate was not just applicable to internal mail as illustrated by my cover; the same rate served mail going abroad too. Did I need to mention the dual rate in my writing up? I turned to Joany's article in *Documents Philatéliques* and the dual rate was indeed mentioned there on page 68. 'By an act dated 31 December 1948, a single common tariff for both internal and foreign mail was established for *cécogrammes* irrespective of their weight.....' However, according to Joany the 1 franc rate did not last until 5 January 1959 but only until 30 April 1951!

I needed now to clarify the '*loi du 31 décembre 1948*' and pulled out my copy of '*Les tarifs postaux français*', turning first to the section on internal rates. I found indeed a reference to the act in question on page 154 where the authors stated that the act had modified a range of rates introduced on 6 January 1949, but there was no mention of a 1 franc *cécogramme* rate amongst them. I therefore turned to the section on foreign rates and found no reference to the 1948 Act at all. Instead, according to Alexandre, Brun *et al*, it was three years earlier when the Act of 29 December 1945 determined a foreign rate of 1 franc for *cécogrammes* to be effective from 1 February 1946 to 30 April 1948. As for a 1 franc internal rate for *cécogrammes*, Alexandre, Brun *et al* claim on page 159 that it was only on 1 July 1957 that such a rate came into being and that at the time of my cover in 1949 the interior rate was still only 10 centimes. Needless to say, I was completely confused.

Joany, in his article, had summarised the rates in tabular form. I decided, therefore, to produce similar tables by extracting the data from '*Les tarifs postaux français*' and from the '*Catalogue des timbres de France seuls sur lettre*' to see what other differences would emerge. The results are shown below:

### Comparative Tables for *Cécogramme* Rates

Joany: <i>Documents Philatéliques</i> N° 68 1976					
Date of Application	Internal Rates				Foreign per 500g
	20g	100g	500g	+500g	
1.08.10	-	5c	10c	5c	
1.04.20	2c	3c	5c	5c	
1.04.21					5c
1.04.24					10c
1.07.38					per kilo 20c
5.01.42			per kilo		
1.02.42				10c	
					30c
Internal & Foreign Single Tariff					
6.01.49				1F	
1.05.51				3F	
6.01.59				free	

<b>Alexandre, Brun et al: Les Tarifs Postaux Français 1982</b>					
Date of Application	Internal Rates				Foreign per 500g
		100g	500g	+500g	
13.07.11* <sup>1</sup>	-	5c	10c	5c	
	15g	50g			
28.02.12* <sup>2</sup>	2c	3c			
	20g	100g	500g	+500g	
1.04.20* <sup>3</sup>	2c	3c	5c	5c	
1.04.21					5c
1.04.24					10c
				per kilo	
1.10.25					20c
1.02.26					25c
1.08.26					30c
1.07.30					20c
9.04.31			2c	5c	
				per kilo	
1.01.35					15c
1.08.37					20c
5.01.42				10c	
1.02.42					30c
1.02.46					1F
1.05.48					2F
1.12.48					3F
1.07.53					free
1.07.57				1F	
6.01.59				free	

\*<sup>1</sup> in unsealed envelope \*<sup>2</sup> under wrapper \*<sup>3</sup> in unsealed envelope or under wrapper

<b>Baillargeat: Timbres de France seuls sur lettre 1994</b>					
Date of Application	Internal Rates				Foreign per 500g
	15g	100g	500g	+500g	
13.07.11		5c			
28.02.12	2c				
	20g	100g	500g	+500g	
1.04.20	2c		5c	5c	
1.04.21					5c
1.04.24					10c
1.10.25					-
9.04.31			2c		
				per kilo	
1.08.37					20c
			per kilo		
5.01.42				10c	
1.02.42					30c
1.02.46					-
1.12.48					3F
6.01.49				1F	-
1.07.53					-
6.01.59				free	

The table based on Baillargeat's book is incomplete as the author only refers to *cécogrammes* when he believes a stamp has been issued specifically to meet the rate in question. The other tables are complete but contradictory. I will leave the reader to analyse the tables in detail, but right from the beginning we see differences of opinion. Joany states that the *cécogramme* rate was introduced on 1 August 1910 whereas the other authors quote 13 July 1911. In contrast, Joany does not refer to the revised rates of 28 February 1912 whereas the other two do. At the end of the table, Joany quotes a common date for the introduction of free postage for both internal and overseas

*cécogrammes*; Alexandre, Brun et al claim that postal franchise was granted to overseas mail two years before internal mail benefited from it.

My cover remains in its protective envelope in my stock book. Will it ever get written up? Perhaps a fellow member of the Society has access to more reliable sources and can clear up this conundrum for me so that I can achieve my goal. I suppose I could ensconce myself in the library at the Musée de la Poste and trawl through all the *Bulletins Officiels* and *Fiches Techniques* ..... but then, isn't that what the aforementioned authors have already done?

# LIST OF RECENTLY PUBLISHED ARTICLES

Compiled by Colin Spong

## **Cameo: Journal of the West Africa Study Circle**

Vol 8 N° 5 Whole N° 64: January 2005: Cameroun: Early airmails & Aéromaritime (Mitchell); Bathurst to London with French Censor (Duncan); Cameroun: Earliest airmail acceptance? (May); The French Operation in Nigeria 1942-43 (Martin); Gold Coast Reg. PSEs overprinted for Togo (Mayne); Cameroun: French Handstamps of WWI (Cobb); French Censorship in Togo (Martin); French Liaison Officer, Gold Coast (Martin); French Censorship in London during WWI (Mark); Togo Mail collected by Belgian Ship (Mayne).

## **Bulletin de la COL.FRA**

N° 110 4<sup>ème</sup> Trim 2004: Quand les timbres viennent à manquer. Bureau de Phnom Penh, Cambodge, 1948 (Wiar); Cameroun: Pénurie de figurines en 1921 (Cobb); Guadeloupe 1904, variété du n° 52 Yvert (Bessaud); Identification des Faux de Fournier au type «Groupe» (Buchheit); Compléments aux Hors-série n° 25-1: Guyane, Essai de classification des oblitérations (Simon); n° 23-1: Haute-Volta, Essai de classification des oblitérations (Bouérat); n° 26-1 Laos, Essai de nomenclature des oblitérations (Tallet); Compléments aux articles parus: La poste aérienne à Memel (Jusserand); Majunga: Surcharges de 1895 (Varin, Drye, Desnos); Océanie: cartes familiales interzones (Drye); Zanzibar: Timbres taxe (Delpy).

## **Documents Philatéliques**

N° 183 1<sup>er</sup> Trim 2005: L'expédition de 1828 à Madagascar (Varin); Anatole Hulot & l'exposition universelle de Londres de 1851 (Langlais); Guillaume Tell (Barnier); Rapport entre la ferme générale des Postes et le personnel dirigeant des bureaux de Poste (Wallart).

## **France & Colonies Philatelist**

Whole N° 278 (Vol 60, N° 4) Oct 2004: Postal issues of the 1925 Paris Decorative Arts Exposition II "Le Potier" (Broadhead); A Pierrais Soldier writes home [1944-45] (Allen); Senegal - dating a World War II cover (Mitchell); The Valenciennes Local Post of 1914 (Luft); Amazing 1870-71 Wonder Stories 87 (Cohn); Postal History Projects and proposals (Brazel); The "Faux" Pétain (Luft); Some Aspects of Foreign Mails during the Franco-German War of 1870-71 (Johnson).

## **L'Écho de la Timbrologie**

Permanent features: Anomalies, Variétés, Flammes et Oblitérations, Livres, Maximaphilie, Thématique.

N° 1780 Dec 2004: Prêt-à-poster Florilège de PÀP (-); Le report lithographie (-); La Marianne et le Coq (Jamet); «Postes» médiévales (Hella); Une lettre abusivement taxée ... (Prugnon); Le graveur aux mille timbres - Czeslaw Slania (Mangin); Les étonnantes surcharges de Majunga [1895] (Desnos); Le congrès de l'UPU à Bucarest (Emmenegger).

N° 1781 Jan 2005: Prêt-à-poster Florilège de PÀP (-); Les jouets de La Poste (Hella); Décodage: Une lettre

insuffisamment affranchie (Prugnon); Le rouge-gorge (Marion et Robineau).

## **The Indo-China Philatelist**

Vol 35, N° 1 Jan 2005: Underpaid Official Mail (Bentley); Vietnam Used Abroad (Cartafalsa); Spratly Islands Update (Cartafalsa); Wartime Exchange of Personnel through Saigon (Ruggiero); Post Offices of Phnom Penh, Cambodia (Shaw); Lao Tourism Issues Series - Overview (Thompson); Samson Beach Promotional Marking (Bentley); pristine Nineteenth Century Postmarks (Bentley); For the First Girl cover (Johnson)...

## **Timbres Magazine**

Permanent features: Actualités, Actus Monaco et TOM, Cybermarché, Expertise, Les nouveautés de France, Les variétés, Manifestations, Marcophilie, Poste navale, Polaires;

N° 51 Nov 2004: Epreuve ou tirage spécial? 1<sup>re</sup> partie: les épreuves (Stéphan); Le musée de La Poste: visite au cœur de notre patrimoine philatélique, Seconde étape (Rabier); Le retour de la France en Indochine: 2<sup>e</sup> partie, la reprise du courrier aérien [1945-1947] (Chauvin); Maison Roumet: Du concepteur aux promoteurs des ventes sur offres (de Pelinec); Le Soudan français: de grandes raretés et une histoire complexe (de Pelinec); Colonies: L'affaire de l'émission Lyautey (Melot); Collection: Alger «Marianne de Fernez» (-); Destination Canton: une ouverture attendue (Aboucher); Les losanges grands chiffres dits remplaçants d'Alsace-Lorraine (Baudot); AEF: un pli bien affranchi (Chauvin).

N° 52 Dec 2004: Tirages spéciaux des épreuves qui n'en sont pas ((Stéphan); Iles de la France Outre-mer: Rendez-vous à Clipperton (Toulemonde); Les cartes postales de la GRANDE SARAH [Bernhardt: légende du théâtre] (Zeyons); Les palais impériaux (Baudot); Décryptage: De la poste aux armées chinoise à l'Annam (Chauvin).

N° 53 Jan 2005: Entrez dans l'univers des Bateaux à vap. (Apaire et Sinais); Colonies: Le Soudan français des timbres à rechercher (-); La République de Counani: terminus des mégalomanes (Michaud); Les dangers de la GAO et la naissance de l'Art du timbre gravé (Albuisson); Tirages Spéciaux des épreuves qui n'en sont pas [fin] (Stéphan); La publicité postale sur les anciens carnets (PJM); Les paquebots de la Méditerranée [1<sup>e</sup> partie] (Baudot); 1942: de l'AEF à Londres via Sabena et BAOC (Chauvin).

N° 54 Feb 2005: Louis-Napoléon Bonaparte, cet inconnu (Michaud); L'Algérie: Les premiers carnets surchargés (PJM); La deuxième série fleuve des établissements français de l'Océanie (Beslu); Timbroscopie du 5F Alechinsky (Apaire); Cartes Postales: Le Maroc: dans la tourmente (Zeyons); Les marques postales des guerres de Louis XIV (Baudot); Du courrier de l'Agence comptable des timbres-poste coloniaux (Chauvin).

**Continued on page 37**

## France - The Red Cross: Part 3

John West

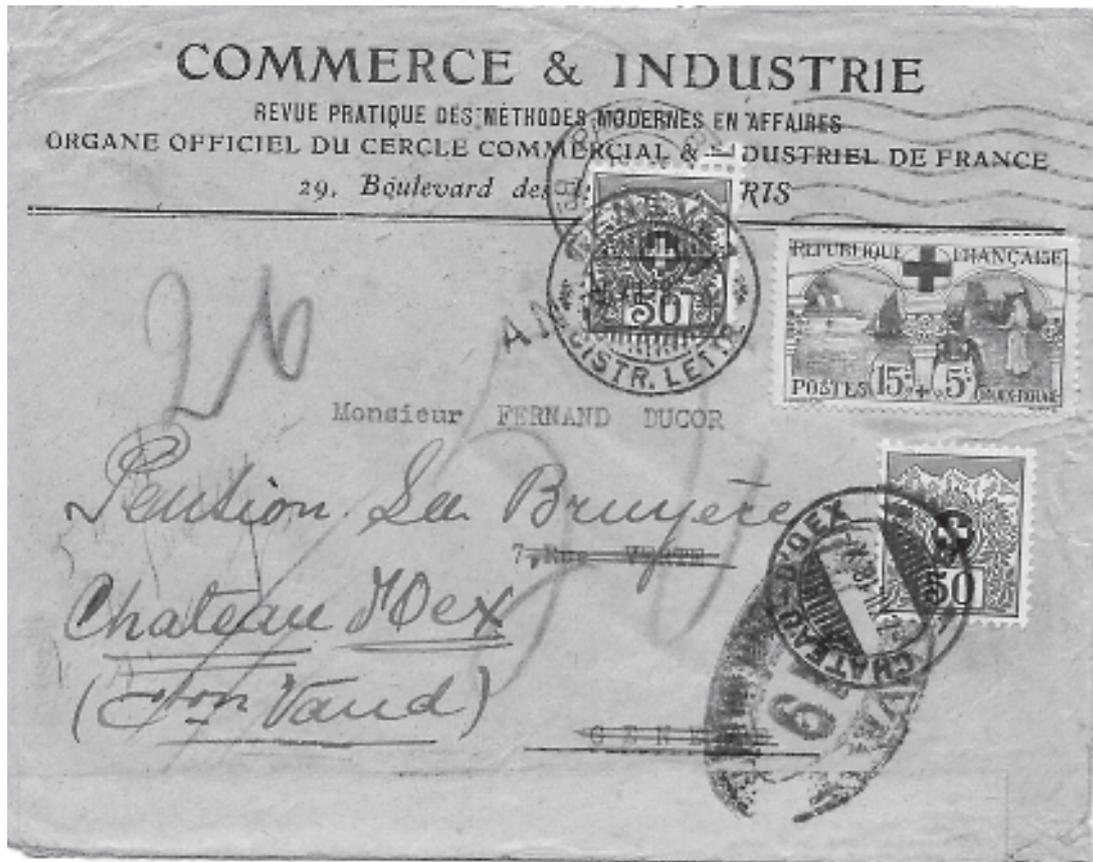


Figure 29 -

A scarce example of the 1918 Red Cross issue used in non-philatelic fashion. Internal and 'frontier' letter rates were 15c at this time, but the foreign rate was 25c, so a Swiss postage due stamp was affixed in Geneva, then cancelled by the "ANNULÉ" cachet and replaced by another stamp in Château-d'Oex to which the letter had been forwarded.

### "Sinking Hospital Ship" stamp (SG 378)

Controversy still rages about the identity of the sinking hospital ship, featured by Dumoulin in his design (See Figs 29 & 30). By common consent, it has become accepted over the years that the ship was the S.S. *Asturias* - one of the first to have been torpedoed during the war. Although it may accurately represent the incident, the design cannot be said to accurately depict the ship, which actually had but one funnel compared with the ship featured - which has two funnels. Purists continue to argue that the sinking ship is actually the S.S. *Charles Roux* (another of the hospital ships which was hit by a torpedo) - a vessel which brought many sick and wounded servicemen through the Mediterranean from the Eastern Army sector, where there were particularly heavy casualties in the Dardanelles.

The initial cost of the plates for printing the new stamps was borne by the central committee of the *Croix-Rouge Française* but, sadly, the design was to prove ineffective, the over-emphasis upon elaborate detail precluding the possibility of it being successfully reproduced in such a miniaturised form as required on a postage stamp. Additionally, the printing was poorly executed. The stamp was engraved by M. Ruffe, and printed in sheets of 150. Authorised for issue by a government decree dated 15 February 1918, it was only valid for postal packets despatched at the inland letter rate, whilst the extra money

raised by the surcharge was channelled directly into Red Cross funds after deduction of a small administration fee by the Post Office.

The stamp eventually appeared for sale on 8 August 1918, actually being distributed to the Post Offices in sheets of 75. A total of 1.5 million was printed and copies exist of this stamp in imperforate as well as the perforate (13.5 x 14) form. This was the first French stamp ever to be specifically designed for the purpose of the Red Cross and, of course, was also the first commemorative stamp of this type. Its use was to be short-lived, for it was demonetised on 1 April, 1921.

### International Red Cross Labels

During World War I it was not unusual to find items of Prisoner of War mail addressed to the International Red Cross in Geneva, bearing various adhesive labels (See Fig 31). The labels were produced and sent out by the IRCC in Geneva to people who had written in to them requesting news of prisoners or missing persons. It was then expected that, should the particular correspondent wish to make further contact with the agency concerning the same subject, any further written communication would have this label affixed to the envelope. By this simple practice identification of the section handling that particular enquiry was thereby expedited.



Figure 30 -

An unusual instance of the French Red Cross surcharged issue used in conjunction with Senegal stamps, a mixture which was prohibited by the postal authorities.

This extra 15c was either a pure confection, not needed for the first weight step, or the letter weighed more than 20g (40c postage + 35c registration).

The labels were unusually large and, therefore, unsightly when stuck on the envelope. It would seem that most, if not all, bore no adhesive and the writers were obliged to find their own gum. This results in a large number of envelopes surfacing where glue, or other adhesive agents, extrude from beneath the label - thus rendering the cover unattractive to the would-be collector. The labels were printed in a number of usually garish colours including green, blue, yellow, violet and red - each of which seems to have had its own significance.

The labels are to be found in different sizes, the smallest known being 46 x 49mm and the largest recorded at 82 x 48mm. Labels bore the Geneva address of the IRCC, a registration number and a "Franc de Port" mark. They invariably had a central perforation, the left hand half of which was detached and retained by the sender. The printing on that half read "Par toute communication ultérieure prière de coller le timbre ci-joint sur l'enveloppe" (With any further communication kindly stick the enclosed stamp on the envelope). It may be seen that these etiquettes or labels were totally valueless to anyone other than the IRCC in Geneva when put on an envelope and sent through the post.

Not unnaturally, one finds instances where the wrong half of the label has been affixed to the envelope, and there is no shortage of mail where both halves of the label have been stuck on together!

The lettering, generally to be found on these labels, falls into one of the following five categories:-

1. "ES/FF" ("Enquête Spéciale / Fichier Français") ('Special enquiry / French index')
2. "ES/FA" ("Enquête Spéciale / Fichier Allemand") ('Special Enquiry / German index')
3. "ES/FFB" ("Enquête Spéciale / Fichier Franco-Belge") ('Special enquiry / Franco-Belgian index')
4. "CIVILS" ('Civilian internees')
5. "R" ("Réfugiés - Trésoreries") ('Refugees - finances')

The French file would appear to be most commonly associated with a green label, whilst the German file used a cerise label. Civilian internees enquiries normally attracted the use of a yellow or blue label.

During the Second World War, the International Red Cross Committee still used this labelling system spasmodically. Most of the covers from France bear German censor labels and handstamps on the back. The reply labels were actually very similar in make up to those which were used in World War I, comprising two parts which were separated by a perforated line. They are to be found printed in three languages (English, French and German) and there are three varieties of the French version, namely:



Figure 31 -  
Examples of the International Red Cross reply labels,  
in peach, pink, red and green , respectively.

1. "Prière de coller l'estampille ci-jointe sur votre lettre de réponse."
2. "Prière de détacher l'étiquette ci-contre et de la coller sur votre réponse."
3. "Prière de coller l'estampille ci-jointe sur toute correspondance ultérieure concernant ce même sujet."

In every instance, the request to affix the other portion of the label to any future communication was printed on the left hand side. On the right hand side was inserted the IRCC reference, usually in typescript, but also found produced in manuscript form or even by a rubber stamp. This was the section to be stuck on any envelopes addressed to the Geneva Office, and which contained mail that referred to an earlier (or initial) enquiry.

It has to be said that, to date, these labels do not appear to have merited much study and many of the markings found on these labels have yet to be positively identified. Those recorded are few in number and provide neither uniformity nor consistency sufficient as to enable the student to positively assess the significance of certain colours and letters.

Of the limited number of labels seen thus far on cover, quite a high percentage were green in colour, although the colours of pink, purple, peach and red have all been found in use. The lettering on these labels varies but include the following:- "C.M.A.", "E.F.G.", "C.S.F.", "PS/FER", "E.F.R.", "C.C.F.", "C.M.", "C.C.B.", and "S.C.C." (all of which are on mail from France). It is possible to make assumptions, even reasonable guesses, as to what the initials might stand for but, to date, most have proved indecipherable (they are probably the initials of employees working in the Geneva office as, for example, the initials "C.M." have been found on envelopes addressed to individuals in India as well as Great Britain). Clearly, certain of the initials will identify the country of origin to the recipient but, for now, most of the lettering remains a mystery.

### The League of Red Cross Societies

The idea of creating a federation of all the national Red Cross societies (See Fig 32) was the brainchild of Henry P Davison. He was born in Troy, Pennsylvania, in the United States of America, in 1867 and, at the age of 32, had become the youngest bank president in America. Following the severance of diplomatic relations between Germany and the United States, the then President, Woodrow Wilson, chaired a meeting which proposed the dissolution of the Executive Committee of the American Red Cross, replacing it with a war council. Davison was an energetic and lively leader and under him the American Red Cross raised \$400 million in the war years.

Davison was instrumental in ensuring that the momentum of his organisation should not be lost with the restoration of peace. Toward that end, he met with representatives of the American, British, French, Italian and Japanese Red Cross societies and formally organised a committee of these societies, with its stated purpose of "preparing and presenting to Red Cross societies of the world an enlarged programme of action in the general interest of humanity." Despite initial opposition from some quarters (the English, for example, were reticent about the project as they refused

to sit on any committee with a German on it), a conference was convened at Cannes on 1 April 1919.

At this conference he urged those present to agree to the inception of a League of Red Cross societies. Once resistance from the International Committee was overcome (it was, understandably, reluctant to relinquish its unique position as leader of the international Red Cross movement), the idea was adopted, and the League was officially born in Paris on 5 May 1919. Its headquarters were immediately set up in Switzerland and within a year the organisation had expanded to embrace 28 member societies.

Financial problems beset the League in its early stages, and by 1922 it had become evident that, with Geneva being the most expensive city in Europe to live in, it made economic sense to move away from there. Additionally, the location of the offices of both the major Red Cross organisations, within Geneva, was the cause of considerable confusion to the public. Paris, already the home of many international organisations with which the League needed to maintain regular contact, was a logical choice. Running costs and travelling expenses were immediately reduced and the time staff lost by commuting between the two capitals was also diminished.

The first meeting to be held in Paris, after this move, took place in September 1922. The offices were to remain there until the outbreak of hostilities in 1939 when - with France being a belligerent - the League officials realised that its neutrality would be jeopardised if it were to remain in that country. For the second, and final, time Geneva became home.

### "Perfins"

A ministerial decision made in November 1896 authorised 'security perforations' (widely known as "perfins") on French stamps. The device, it was decreed, should not cover more than one third of the surface, and was not permitted to encroach upon the figures of value. Provided that these simple rules were complied with, the user was not required to seek any special permission from the postal authority for defacing their stamps.

Between 1922 and 1939, whilst the League of Red Cross Societies had its headquarters in Paris, a "perfin" in the shape of a cross was introduced in an effort to minimise abuse and straightforward theft of their postage stamps. This perforation exists in two forms. The first consists of a 12 dot cross, which measures only 4mm in height. The second is a 20 dot cross, which can also be sub-divided into 2 more types, the first being 8mm in height and the second 11mm high.

These perforations appear on a number of stamps, notably the "Sower" and "Pasteur" issues - and are usually found in 'coil' stamps of those series. Information concerning these "perfins" is scarce - not even the Red Cross authorities having any records of usage - and, as correspondence was sent world-wide, it is hardly surprising to find that copies are scarce to find (either on or off cover).

The practice was finally ended by a law which was introduced on 6 December 1954, promulgated for operation



Figure 32 -  
Vignettes of the International League of Red Cross Societies

as from 21 January 1955. This banned any person from causing a French stamp to be “perfinned” and was enforced with swingeing fines (of between 2,000 and 20,000 Francs) or up to 6 months’ imprisonment. Despite this change in the law, no effort was made to prevent companies from using up existing stocks and instances of late usage (i.e. after January 1955) are commonplace.

### 75th Red Cross Anniversary



Figure 33 -  
1939 Red Cross issue  
celebrating its  
75th anniversary

During the First World War, Lieutenant André Spitz was wounded in the line of duty, whilst serving his country. He was taken to a hospital at *Mont des Oiseaux*, near Hyères, where he was nursed back to full health by the medical staff who were employed there. Spitz never forgot the care and the compassion shown by the nursing staff, under the direction of the chief matron, Mlle. Gervais. What distinguishes Lieutenant Spitz from his many colleagues, who all benefited from this treatment, is that he was able to pay tribute to their efforts in a quite unique way.

In 1938 the French postal authorities proposed the issue of a stamp to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the foundation of the International Red Cross movement (Fig 33). They commissioned one of the leading artists of the day to design this stamp - M. André Spitz, no less! In honour of Mlle. Gervais, and all that she had done to restore his health, he depicted her in nursing uniform and featured her as the centrepiece of his design for the stamp.

This stamp was engraved by M. Antonin Delzers, and was to be the first postage stamp to be printed in three colours. It was recess printed, using the rotary press method of Serge Beaune, between 2 and 17 March 1939. The total number printed was 1,404,425 of which 725,650 were sold. The stamp measures 22 x 36mm and was prepared in sheets of 25, perforation 13. Rather oddly, it was placed on

sale to the public on 24 March 1939 - a date which had absolutely no significance in the Red Cross calendar and which was in fact five months premature for celebrating the 75th anniversary. It was sold for 90c with a 35c surcharge.

Numerous catalogues, particularly in France, erroneously identify the nurse on this stamp as being Florence Nightingale. The only variety recorded is that in which the cross is on a black background. The face value corresponded to the inland rate for an ordinary letter (90c). The stamp was withdrawn from sale on 8 June 1940 to prevent a conflict with the Red Cross issue of that year - which took place two days later.

### The World War II Issue



Figure 34 -  
1940 Red Cross issue

The outbreak of the Second World War once again thrust the French into the harsh realities of fund-raising for the benefit of the various aid societies. Once more, postage stamps offered a lucrative area of income and the commencement of hostilities prompted the issue of the first pair of surcharged Red Cross stamps. By May 1940 a total of 15,000 nurses, pooled from the resources of the three French Red Cross societies, had been detailed for duty with ambulances, hospitals, ships and the recently formed automobile units. Over 190 auxiliary hospitals were established, providing 20,000 beds.

The stamps (Fig 34) were printed in identical fashion to the preceding issue, using the same recess method on the same presses as had been used a year earlier. They were prepared in sheets of 25 (perforation 13) and printing was commenced on 19 April 1940. Whilst the print run for the lower value was completed on 27 April 1940, printing of the 1F value continued up until and including 11 May 1940. The pair was issued for public sale on 10 June 1940. They were not used widely and instances of genuine commercial use on cover are scarce. The 1F value was

withdrawn from sale on 28 November 1940, but the lower value remained on sale until 15 May 1941.

The 80c green (with a 1F surcharge) reflected the minimum postcard rate of the time, whilst the 1F (with 2F surcharge) mirrored the letter rate of the day. A total of 1,675,000 of the lower value were printed - of which 960,000 were sold - but only 690,000 of the 1,717,500 copies of the higher value which were printed were bought by the public.

The 80c was designed and engraved by M. Pierre Munier, whilst the sister stamp saw the combination of Spitz and Delzers back in harness again. On this occasion Spitz chose not to rely on memories of events two decades earlier but elected to feature a wounded soldier, the face of whom was inspired by a head of Christ on a XVth century crucifix, belonging to the treasury of the Cathedral of Beauvais. The lower value portrayed a general scene of a soldier with his family, a military doctor and a nurse.

### The Red Cross Messages

The single sheet Red Cross Message forms, sent to and from Channel Islanders during the Second World War might at first glance appear to be outside the terms of reference suggested by the title of this work. It will become evident that, to the contrary, they form an integral part of the fabric from which this topic is woven.

Once France had been occupied by Germany (with the result, of course, that the Channel Isles were also invaded) every item of Red Cross mail from or destined for the beleaguered islanders was routed through Paris and Geneva, whilst some even travelled via Berlin as well. It is little wonder that many of these messages (which limited the writer to 25 words) took as long as six months to arrive at their destination.

All '*Deutsches Rotes Kreuz*' marks of the French Commission were applied at the Paris Office, and they included a range of cachets and date stamps. In all, six different cachets were used by the French Commission and they are all to be found in various colours, although it should be said that one or two of the colours to be found are the result of the residual ink on a handstamp mixing with different ink from another pad.

The markings served an identical purpose to that of all the other marks that were used - namely that the application of such a mark indicated confirmation that the message had been checked for content. Not even the innocent family matters that authors were restricted to were exempt from close scrutiny and "checks" were often done by means of a cross-shaped application of a copper sulphate wash - which was designed to reveal the presence of 'invisible ink' or any other form of clandestine message.

A detailed description of each of the cachets used is provided by Donald MacKenzie in an informative book, entitled "*The Red Cross Mail Service for Channel Island Civilians, 1940-45*", but, summarised, they are as follow:\*

**Type 1:** A 36mm diameter circle with a stylised eagle (which has a swastika on its chest and a cross as its feet) as the centrepiece.

**Type 2:** A 46.5 x 21mm box-shaped cachet, split into two sections, the upper section containing the words "*Deutsches Rotes Kreuz*". The other section contains the abbreviations '*EING*' over '*AUSG*' - meaning inward or outward respectively.

**Type 3:** Is the same as Type 2, but with the bottom section completely removed, thus leaving only the upper section boxed.

**Type 4:** The most common of the range is the 35mm diameter circle with the word '*Briefstempel*' (meaning "postmark") between two horizontal lines in the centre. In the upper part of the circle are the words "*Deutsches Rotes Kreuz*" and in the lower half the words "*Der Beauftragte in Frankreich*" (The Representative in France). All lettering is in the gothic type.

**Type 5:** Is identical to Type 4, save that the lettering is in roman type.

**Type 6:** Is a 39mm square, containing a 34mm diameter circle with similar lettering to Type 5 but with the addition of a stylised eagle in the upper segment and three asterisks in the lower part, which means that the words "*Der Beauftragte in Frankreich*" now take up 2 lines (See Fig 35).

Date stamps were, occasionally, applied - but, then only to forms originating from the Channel Isles on the outward journey - by the Paris office of the French Commission. The stamp, in black, is found at the top of the front of the message in characters that are 5mm tall. They consist of an alpha-numerical date stamp, followed by a five pointed star and a serial number.

### "The Atlantic Pockets"

On 24 August 1944 a number of German troops, retreating before the Allied offensive, withdrew to the well fortified area along the Atlantic coast which included such towns as Brest, Lorient, St. Nazaire, La Rochelle and Royan. As these towns were not considered to be high on the invading troops' list of priorities, no immediate attempt was made to liberate them. These areas became known as "The Atlantic Pockets" and both the German soldiers and the civilian population were to remain in a state of siege until the Armistice on 8 May 1945. The whole area was contained by a small force from the American 66th and 94th Divisions, aided by the Free French forces (FFI) who were unable to breach the fortifications.

Like all the 'pockets' the movement of mail at La Rochelle was very restricted - not only for the German troops, but for the civilians who were trapped there too. On 6 September 1944 the local postal authority announced that letters weighing not more than 20 grams could be sent without hindrance to any of the villages neighbouring La Rochelle, St. Jean d'Angely and Saintes. No other item could be catered for and, furthermore, no movement of any mail could be guaranteed beyond the limitation of distance already described.

On 4 October 1944 a number of postcards that had been produced locally were distributed to local inhabitants who wished to send news to their families by the auspices of the Red Cross. The organisation was responsible for obtaining authority to breach the fortified lines, thereby enabling

\* To avoid any confusion the Mackenzie type-grouping has been adhered to.

**CROIX-ROUGE FRANÇAISE**  
COMITÉ INTERNATIONAL DE LA CROIX-ROUGE

**DEMANDEUR - ANFRAGESTELLER - ENQUIRER**

79r  
Nom - Name JULLIEN LE PICQUIER Deutsche Post K.F. Brieftempel  
10 Pf. 1918  
1. Postamt  
in Straßburg

Prénom - Christian name - Vorname Suzanne

Rue - Street - Strasse des Trois Rois

Localité - Locality - Ortschaft Avranches

Département - County - Provinz Manche

**Message à transmettre — Mitteilung — Message**  
(25 mots au maximum, nouvelles de caractère strictement personnel et familial)  
(nicht über 25 Worte, nur persönliche Familiennachrichten)  
(not over 25 words, family news of strictly personal character)

Pauvre petite Jean chérie pauvre Max.  
Il me avec tout petit ange - son jardin  
tout riches  
Prière pour vous courage et force supporter  
accepter Bonne nouvelles Dinan

Date - Datum \_\_\_\_\_

**DESTINATAIRE — EMPFÄNGER — ADRESSEE**

Nom - Name SABATIER

Prénom - Christian name - Vorname MAX.

Rue - Street - Strasse \_\_\_\_\_

Localité - Locality - Ortschaft Le Kouf

Province - County - Provinz Constantine

Pays - Country - Land Algérie

**ANTWORT UMSEITIG**      **RÉPONDRE AU VERSO**      **REPLY OVERLEAF**  
Bitte sehr deutlich schreiben      Prière d'écrire très lisiblement      Please write very clearly

Figure 35 -

An example of the Red Cross message card, though this one has been used for communication between France and Algeria.

this mail to be transported out of the besieged area and released for delivery.

The cards themselves were printed on a creamy white stiff card which measured 137 x 107mm, with the cross (in red) having the words "Croix Rouge Française" (above) and "La Rochelle" (below) in black. The words "Offert par la Papeterie Marillaud - La Rochelle" appeared in red ink at the bottom left hand side of the card.

Writers of these cards urged the recipient to reply on an ordinary postcard, addressed to its destination but placed inside an envelope, properly stamped, which was to be sent to the "Croix-Rouge Département des Deux-Sèvres" - from whence the despatch of the reply cards was organised. As

far as is known, the remainder of the besieged townships, such as St. Nazaire, used the standard Red Cross message forms.

#### Exhibitions

In the post-war years the Red Cross organised a number of exhibitions in an endeavour to combine self-publicity with an attempt to encourage people to show an interest in the way that its history was intertwined with postal history. Many of these exhibitions were called "La Croix-Rouge et la Poste".

Special catalogues or brochures were published and sold on these occasions - all of which provided a wealth of information concerning the origins of the national and the

local society who would be hosting the gathering. The contents invariably included scarce illustrated material publicising the links between the French Red Cross and philately (See Fig 36). These souvenir editions were virtually books, comprising on occasions as many as 64 pages.

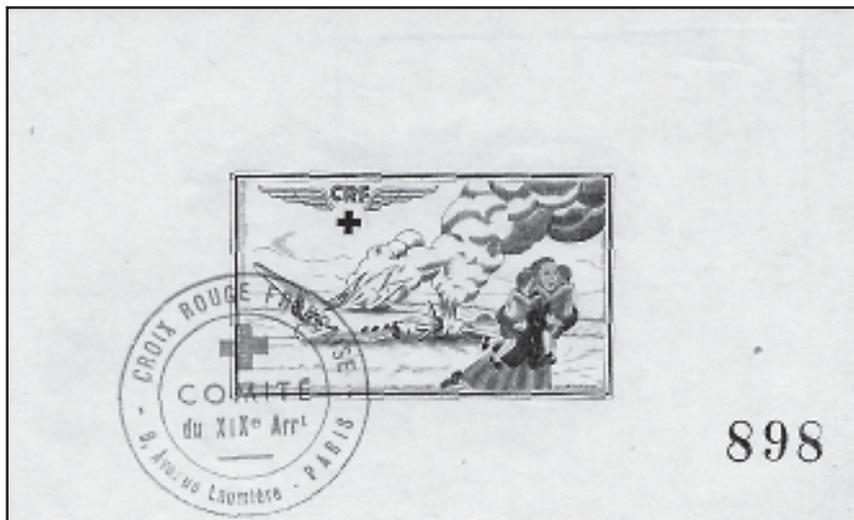


Figure 36 -

Issued at the Paris Red Cross Exhibition of 16 November 1946, this limited edition numbered proof bears a Red Cross cachet in red.

A variety of items was produced to publicise these exhibitions and at the same time enhance the sale of the Red Cross stamps which were usually released to coincide with the opening of a specific exhibition. Early “Maximum Cards” were printed - and sold in limited editions. More particularly, special handstamps were prepared and utilised at the special office which was set up at the exhibition in question. Once a venue for the annual exhibition had been selected, stamps were designed which provided a link with that town. Local arrangements had then to be made to ensure that a ‘Postal Bureau’ could be set up within the exhibition hall, to provide the illustrated hand cancellations which were to prove such an interesting subject for study.

Someone had the idea of using red ink for these cancellations, an idea which proved hugely successful. In the first instance, the first day of issue (22 December 1950) did not coincide with the date of the exhibition and thus the red ink cancellation is found with a date of 20 January 1951.

### First Day Covers

The appeal of the red handstamps was not lost on the French postal authorities, who wasted no time in adopting the idea and, to this day, the first day cancellations of the Red Cross issues are, uniquely, allowed to be franked in red ink. It should be noted that a first day cover does not attract a red ink cancellation if it is posted anywhere other than one of the special philatelic bureaux set up for that specific purpose.

The French postal authorities have a two-tiered issuing system for their new stamps. The term “First Day Cover” generally relates to a cover bearing a cancellation used on the “advance date of issue”. In general, one postal bureau

is nominated to produce all the first day cancellations, although latterly it has become increasingly commonplace to find two such venues existing. The “advance date of issue” always precedes the ‘general’ issue date by two days.

The year of 1950 saw the beginning of a regular annual issue of a pair of stamps - each bearing the symbol of the Red Cross and surcharged for



Figure 37 -  
1950 Red Cross issue

the benefit of that organisation (Fig 37). To this date, these stamps have continued to feature various aspects of the cultural heritage of France, encompassing as they do a wide spectrum of the arts, ranging from paintings to wood carvings, from sculptures to stained glass windows and from early medicine to literature, in differing forms. Not until 1984, when the French postal authorities reverted to the issue of a single stamp, did this format alter.

### Booklets

Before 1985 the only ‘commemorative’ issues to appear in booklet form were the Red Cross issues, with just one exception. In 1930 the 1F50 + 3F50 “*Le Sourire de Reims*”



Figure 38 -  
1930 “*Sourire de Reims*”

Sinking Fund issue (SG 480) (Fig 38) was issued in  *carnets*  containing a pane of eight stamps. Being a fund-raising issue, there are some who regard this as the fore-runner to the Red Cross booklets. However, these issues were so far apart in time (20 years) that there can be little dispute about an assertion that the early issue was no more than a “one-off”.

Ever since 1952, the French Post Office has augmented its sales of the Red Cross stamps by releasing them in booklet form as well as in sheet form. The changes that these booklets, or ‘ *carnets* ’, have undergone in the ensuing years have elsewhere been outlined in some detail and may provide the subject of a future article. Suffice it to say at this point that they generally contained either 8 or 10 stamps.

Initially, it is probably true to say the booklets were unpopular with collectors. Like all booklets, no-one knew

what to do with them, there were no albums available, as there are today, with pages specifically prepared to enable the collector to mount them. Indeed, to this day, no-one has produced a foolproof means of displaying both the booklet cover and its contents without damaging one or the other. Hawid strips and corner mounts had still to be discovered and the only way to display a booklet was to affix the cover to a page, using hinges - which were primitive in design and make-up, to say the least. This, naturally, led to the booklet being defaced when it was subsequently removed from the page.

Philatelists, quite understandably, resented being forced into purchasing as many as 10 copies of the same stamp, and even then it was impossible to distinguish a booklet stamp from a sheet stamp if it was examined in isolation. Possibly the greatest put down was the refusal by Stanley Gibbons to include the booklets in their catalogues. All the major French catalogues of that time did recognise them and list them but the ultimate seal of approval was not to be granted until some 20 years later when the world-renowned organisation finally bowed to public pressure and listed the booklets when they printed their first issue of the 'one-country' catalogue series, featuring France.

Philatelic observers will also confirm that in general the early booklets were somewhat bland in appearance and, with one or two exceptions, lacked visual impact. Almost imperceptibly, however, the booklets gained in popularity and became more and more collectable. The consequence of this was, of course, that the price of the early booklets spiralled dramatically. To this day, those early booklets may be considered good investment material.

#### The Bas-Reliefs of the Fountain of Bouchardon



Figure 39 -  
1949 National Relief Fund series,  
showing the Four Seasons bas-relief  
from the Bouchardon Fountain in Paris

A set of four stamps (Fig 39) was issued on 19 December 1949 which were surcharged for the benefit of the French Red Cross organisation. They were unexceptional and, indeed, were only one of a series of issues all of which had been surcharged for the benefit of the National Relief Fund and various other charitable institutions. Few collectors distinguish any of these series from each other.

It is perhaps understandable that the majority of collectors, including the specialists, do not include this set amongst their collections of 'Red Cross' stamps – after all, none of the stamps even bore the Red Cross symbol which had been a feature of every stamp issued for the sole benefit of that organisation before (and was to be a feature of every stamp issued afterwards too). No other issue, for instance, (before or after) comprised a set of four stamps. Even wartime issues (when demand for funds would be at its highest point) were restricted to a pair at best. Additionally, the majority of philatelists will point out that the Red Cross was but one of several charitable organisations who benefited generally from the surcharge levied upon numerous of the post-war French issues. They would, unsurprisingly, be reluctant to single this issue out from any one of a number of other issues of that period.

There can be little doubt, however, that they were a fore-runner to the regular issue that was to commence the following year. The set, which featured bas-reliefs of the fountains of Bouchardon (in the rue de Grenelle, Paris) was issued just prior to Christmas - when any charity can take the maximum advantage of the more benevolent mood that people find themselves in at that time of the year. It cannot be coincidence that, for many years thereafter, successive Red Cross issues all appeared at the identical time of year.



Figure 40 -  
1952 Red Cross issue, showing  
sculptures from the Basin of Diana, Versailles

There are marked similarities between the 1949 set and the 1952 Red Cross issue (Fig 40) and, additionally, it may be observed that the 1949 issue set a precedent for the use of 'The Four Seasons' as a subject. This theme re-appears in 1968 (Fig 41), 1969, 1974 and 1975.



Figure 41 -  
1968 Red Cross issue:  
representations of "Spring" and "Autumn"

## Essential Philatelic Literature

In Journal 230 of December 2003 we took up a suggestion by Michael Meadowcroft that members might like to draw up a list of 10 (or fewer) books that could be considered essential reading for philatelists and offered as guidance to comparative newcomers to our hobby who share a specialised interest in France and her colonies. Disappointingly, after a reminder and a wait of over a year, only 4 members have taken up the challenge, but we offer their lists here as a possible discussion topic. Any comments on these lists will be considered for possible publication in the Journal.

\* \* \* \* \*

**Alan Wood** writes that as a basic library for a collector of French philatelic material the following ten books should prove to be of interest and in the long term a good investment:

1. An up-to-date catalogue chosen from
  - (a) **Stanley Gibbons Part 6 France** [printed in English, illustrated in black and white, includes French Colonies, Andorra and Monaco]
  - (b) **Cérès** [printed in French, illustrated in colour, includes Europa, booklets, parcel post and Liberation issues, does not include French Colonies, Andorra or Monaco]
  - (c) **Yvert** [printed in French, numbering system accepted as a reference for French stamps]
2. **AA Road Atlas of France** [scale 4 miles to 1 inch, has comprehensive index]
3. **Tables of French Postal Rates 1849 to date** (2nd edition) by Derek Richardson (F&CPS)
4. **Catalogue des Timbres Fiscaux et Socio-postaux de France** (Yvert et Tellier, Paris 2004)
5. **Billig's Philatelic Handbook Vol. III** (New York) [printed in English, lists numeral cancellations for Paris Offices, provincial towns, Algeria and offices abroad, TPO routes, Siege of Paris balloons and French Moroccan locals]
6. **Billig's Philatelic Handbook Vol. 29** [French philatelic facts (of classic issues)]
7. **Introduction à l'Histoire Postale des Origines à 1849** by Michèle Chauvet (Brun & Fils, Paris 2000) [comprehensive listing of postal rates]
8. **Catalogue des Estampilles et Oblitérations Postales de France et des Colonies Françaises** (Yvert, Amiens 1929) [reprinted in USA by Postilion Publications, extensive listing of postal markings]
9. **Marques de Passage** by James van der Linden (Soluphil 1993) [world-wide but an invaluable reference work for the French postal historian]
10. **Histoire des Timbres-Poste Français** (Maury) [a veritable mine of information]

\* \* \* \* \*

**Mick Bister** offers his Top Ten recommended books, adding that although he had put some thought into it he could only think of books which were useful to him personally and related to his own interests – which was likely to be the problem for every contributor. He had tried to come up with books that could interest most people but even then realised that some were still specialist or out of print!!!

1. **Tables of French Postal Rates - 1849 to date** by D J Richardson (F&CPS)
2. **L'oblitération française - Initiation** by Jean Pothion (La Poste aux Lettres)
3. **Timbres de France - Catalogue 2004 et seq** (Yvert & Tellier)
4. **Catalogue Spécialisé Tomes I & II** (Yvert & Tellier)
5. **Le Patrimoine du Timbre-poste Français** (Flohic)
6. **Lexique Philatélique - Anglais-français/Français-anglais** by R Stroh (Le Monde N° 134)
7. **Catalogue des Oblitérations Mécaniques de France** by G Dreyfuss (Yvert & Tellier)
8. **L'Impression des Timbres-poste par les Rotatives** by Baron de Vinck de Winnezele + supplements (SO.CO.CO.DA.MI.)
9. **Les Entiers Postaux** by Storch & Françon
10. **Catalogue des Publicitimbres des Carnets de France** by Dr J Braun (A.C.C.P.)

\* \* \* \* \*

**Bill Mitchell** comments that thinking about the “reading advice for beginners” exercise had been something of a problem as (a) he is primarily interested in the colonies and there is really nothing suitable in that field, and (b) he is more interested in postal history than stamps, which will probably be the prime concern of beginners. So, on postal history he suggests the following —

1. **L'Oblitération Française (Initiation)** by Jean Pothion
2. (a) **France Oblitérations (sans Paris) 1849-1876** by Jean Pothion  
(b) **Paris Oblitérations 1849-1876** by Jean Pothion [both more detailed, but for a very limited period]
3. **The Cancellations on French Stamps of the Classic Issues 1849-1876** by Lesgor and Minnigerode (1948) [for readers whose French is not too good (like mine), and still useful as an introduction]
4. Wilfred Bentley's four articles in **Stamp Collecting** (1950-1954) [again, still useful]
5. **Cachets à Date Manuels** by Lautier [probably the most useful classification for subsequent marks]
6. **Le Guide de l'Oblitération Mécanique** by Nouazé [very helpful and quite easy to follow]
7. I can't suggest anything on stamps — apart of course from a good semi-specialised catalogue, possibly the new **Dallay** which I haven't seen
8. **Fundamentals of Philately** by the Williams Brothers [on the technicalities of stamp printing, both erudite and easy to understand (it isn't primarily concerned with French practices, of course, and it isn't in the Library)]
9. **La Fabrication des Timbres-Poste Français** by R Pouget [n° 267 in the Society Library List]
10. **How Postage stamps are made, at the French Stamp Printing Works** [n° 268 in the Society Library List – I haven't seen these last two (is one a translation of the other?), but they may be worth borrowing]

\* \* \* \* \*

**Peter Maybury** says that his Collector's Library would be:—

1. **Cérès Catalogue Timbres-Poste France**
2. **Yvert & Tellier Catalogue Spécialisé Tomes 1 & 2**
3. **Introduction à l'Histoire Postale** by Mme. Chauvet
4. **La Poste de l'Ancienne France** by Louis Lenain
5. **La Poste Maritime Française - 8 vols.** by Salles
6. **Tables of French Postal Rates** by Derek Richardson
7. **France Oblitérations 1849-1876** by Jean Pothion
8. **Marques Postales Linéaires 1792-1832** by Jean Pothion
9. **Baedeker's Handbooks - France and Paris**, 3 vols.
10. The best French Dictionary you can find, such as **Collins Robert** in 2 vols.

\* \* \* \* \*

Many thanks to those who have taken the time and effort to offer such valuable advice.

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## POSTAL HISTORY SALES

**My postal sales lists offer wide selections of France & Colonies postal history material, including maritime, military, aviation and POW items.  
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## BOOKSHELF

### ***La Poste en Moselle 1940-1945: Volume 1***

by Alain and Stéphane Demeraux; published by SPAL. 356 A4 pages; ring-bound yellow card covers protected by clear plastic sheets. Available from André Lader, 52 rue de Monswiller, 67700 Saverne, France; price 30€ + 10€ p&p for UK.

Collectors of the postal history of the German occupation of Lorraine in World War II will be pleased to know that their hitherto bible by Charles Michel is being updated and superseded by this latest publication from SPAL (*Association des Spécialistes en Marques Postales et Oblitérations d'Alsace-Lorraine*). So far only Volume 1 has appeared. It is devoted to the cancellations and registration labels used by the various post offices.

It begins with an outline of the main historical events of the period and then, in a guide to the catalogue, goes on to outline the main developments in the use of cancellations (original French cancellations, use of German cancellations of the 1871-1919 period, introduction of temporary handstamps with just the name of the locality, the introduction of the first definitive date stamps sometimes inscribed 'Lothr.', the later introduction of those inscribed 'Westmark', roller cancellations, machine cancellations, commemorative and publicity cancellations, field post cancellations, changes of cancellation due to fusion of localities, etc.). It goes on to list the French and German names of the various localities having a post office and then to give a map of the region.

The catalogue section of the book is very user friendly. Each post office has one or more pages to itself. Each office is introduced by its name in French, its date of re-opening after the German occupation (as given by Michel)

and then the name or names given to it by the Germans. This introduction is followed by a full-size illustration of each type of cancellation used at the office with only a very tiny number of exceptions. After this all the cancellations known to have been used at the office are listed.

For each cancellation the precise wording is given, then its type, colour, first and last dates of use actually seen (even if not so early or late as those indicated by Michel) and, lastly, valuations depending on whether it was used in the days before the introduction of the Hindenburg stamps overprinted 'Lothringen', after the introduction of these stamps, after the withdrawal of these stamps in favour of the standard Hitler definitives or after return to French administration following the Liberation. Finally, for each office, there are illustrations of the types of registration labels known to have been used there. Some of the offices are accompanied by an illustration of an item of mail cancelled by them.

Volume 2 should be appearing shortly. Its contents will include TPO cancellations, franking machines, *Dienstpost* mail, the Hindenburg stamps overprinted 'Lothringen', postal rates, valuation of the different kinds of mail, postal stationery, stamps pre-cancelled 'Metz 3', prisoner-of-war camps, various postmarks and markings indicating exemption of postage, censored mail, post offices of the United States Army and, finally, the liberation overprints of Metz and Forbach.

Roy Reader

### **A Postal History of the Prisoners of War and Civilian Internees in East Asia during World War Two. Volume 3: Burma, Thailand and Indochina, 1942-1946: "The Railway, the River and the Bridge"**

by David Tett; BFA Publishing, Wheathampstead, 2005; ISBN 0-9544996-1-1. 380 A4 pages, plus 22 pages prelims; hardbound, with illustrated dust cover; 397 illustrations, mostly in colour. Obtainable from the author at BFA Publishing, PO Box 34, Wheathampstead, Herts. AL4 8JY; price £35 + £6 p&p.

Members may have noticed that I have already reviewed the first two volumes of this monumental and intensely interesting work (see *Gibbons Stamp Monthly*, July 2002 and January 2005) which described the history and postal history of Japanese prisoners who were held in Singapore, Malaya and the Dutch East Indies. Volume Three has now appeared, and this latest part deals with the internment camps which were set up in Burma, Thailand and Indochina. Here, I shall concentrate mainly upon the Indochina aspects, which are likely to be of greater interest to our members.

Use of Indochina for Japanese prisoners arises from arrangements made between Japan and Vichy France after the fall of France and before Japan had entered the war. The Japanese at first only demanded the right to build

airfields, but by the summer of 1941 it had occupied the whole country and had built up considerable forces there. Then, from 1942, labour forces of prisoners were transported from Malaya, and later from Burma and Thailand. Their mails were normally directed to Thailand, and Thailand is normally found on their cards as their address.

So identification is difficult, because the internment camps at Saigon and elsewhere were never specified on mail in either direction during the war, and one needs to find other evidence to establish the fact. This can be difficult, if not impossible, unless the prisoner recorded his whereabouts after the war was over, or his name can be found among the list of those transferred from Singapore to Saigon, or his mail shows the handstamp of a Japanese

ensor who is known to have functioned in Indochina. It therefore follows that identified mail to or from Indochina is very scarce and hard to find. David Tett comments that POWs in Saigon were allowed to send four, or possibly five, cards during their captivity, but there is no easy way of distinguishing them from cards sent from Thailand.

And as for the Japanese censor markings, one notices that this topic in Chapter 9 shows 79 handstamps, only eleven of which are known to have been used on mail from Indochina. So, enthusiasts for Indochina postal history need to be warned that forming a collection of this material will not be a simple task. Nor was it for the family of a British Captain who sent his love to Lisa Long, hoping his family would ignore the two Ls and solve the anagram

explaining that he was held in Saigon! Furthermore, there is very little known about any civilian internees in Indochina, and the author has, so far, traced none of their mail.

Most of this fine volume relates to the POWs who became slave labourers in Burma and Thailand, were forced to live in very unhealthy conditions and were generally treated with great cruelty, as a result of which many failed to survive. Such postal facilities as they had were very sparse and infrequent, though the author has managed to discover more material than one has any reason to expect. Also included are some really vivid personal reminiscences of a few of those who managed to survive. And there is a lengthy chapter dealing with the arrangements for the repatriation of prisoners after the end of the war.

Ian McQueen

## Books Noted

*Les Empreintes des Machines à Affranchir Utilisées en France depuis 1999* by Laurent Bonnefoy & Luc Guillard; pub. L'Union Marcophile; 280 pp. in colour, 1100 illustrations; details from L Bridelance, 19 avenue du Châtelet, 77150 Lésigny; price 70€. [All the most recent types known of franking machines used in France; this volume follows that published in 2000 on the period 1924-1998.]

*La Poste en Haute-Saône, boîtes mobiles des courriers d'entreprise (1865-1911)* by Bernard Augustin; 32 A4 pp. in b/w & in colour; available from Bernard Augustin, 11 rue de Saint-Prix, 95320 Saint-Leu-la-Forêt; price 12€ + p&p. [16 BM circuits in 4 large sectors are reconstituted for this département.]

*La Poste dans le département du Var - la Poste rurale, arrondissement de Draguignan* by Robert Gregnac-Daudemard; available from the author at Collines, boulevard des Arbousiers, 83120 Sainte-Maxime; price 10,50€ + p&p. [Updated photocopied files on the Var département.]

*La Poste dans le département du Var, tome VI: 1904-1966* by Robert Gregnac-Daudemard; 54 A5 pp. in b/w; available from Cercle d'histoire postale, Musée régionale du Timbre et de la Philatélie, BP 51, 83340 Le Luc-en-Provence; price 7,50€ + p&p. [Types of cancellations in use in this département in the first half of the 20th century, together with a list of offices created during this period.]

*Mémoire d'Algérie - Une génération de postiers raconte* ed. Muriel Le Roux; 124 pp. 150 x 210mm in colour; available from Comité pour l'histoire de la Poste, 44 boulevard de Vaugirard, 75757 Paris; price 13,72€ inc. p&p in France. [A history of the postal service in Algeria 1942-1962, as witnessed by 26 postmen.]

*The postage stamps of the Republic of Independent Guyana - Republic of Counani - Amazonia locals* by Wolfgang Baldus; 66 pp. 145 x 210mm in colour; available from the author at Heilwigstrasse 85, 81827 Munich, Germany; price 20€ inc. p&p. [The story behind the fantasy issues produced by adventurers in French Guiana and north Brazil in the late 1880s.]

Maurice Tyler

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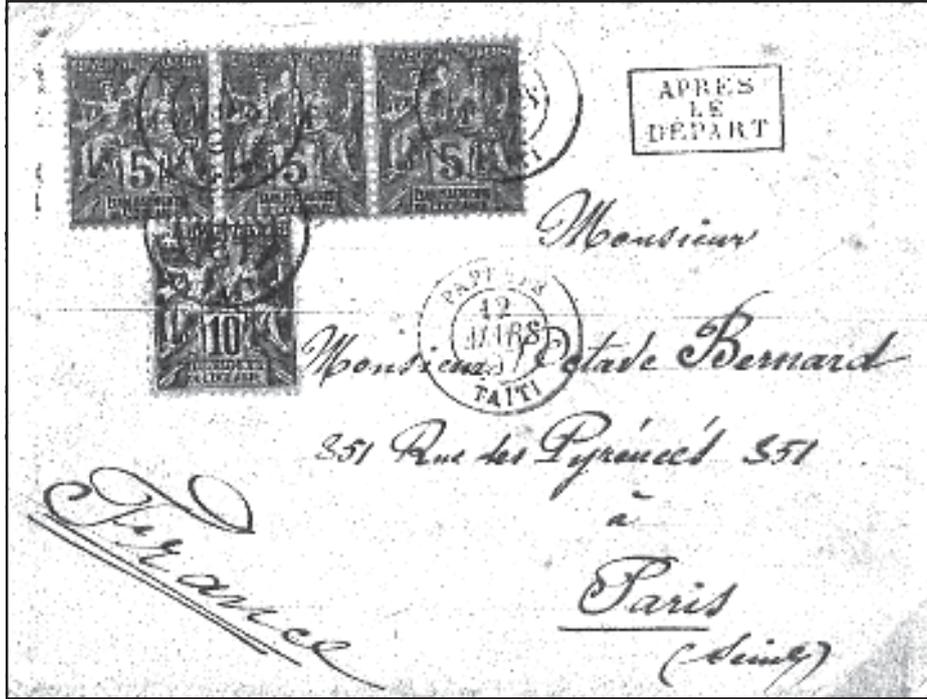
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# SHORTER ITEMS - INCLUDING QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

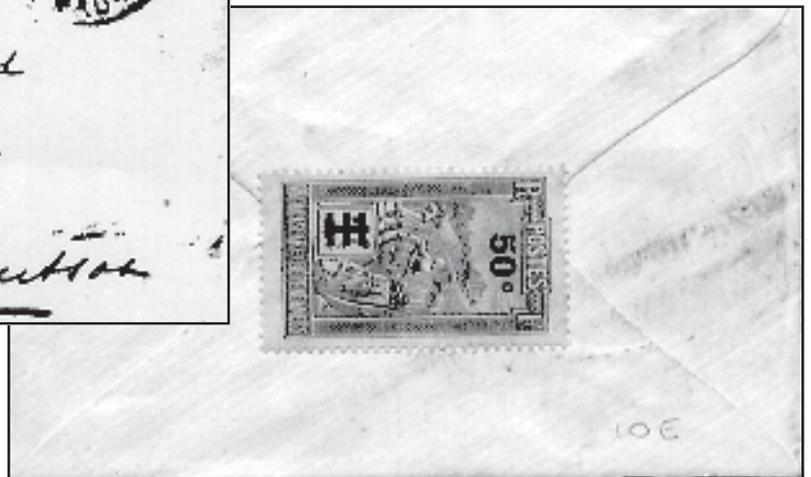
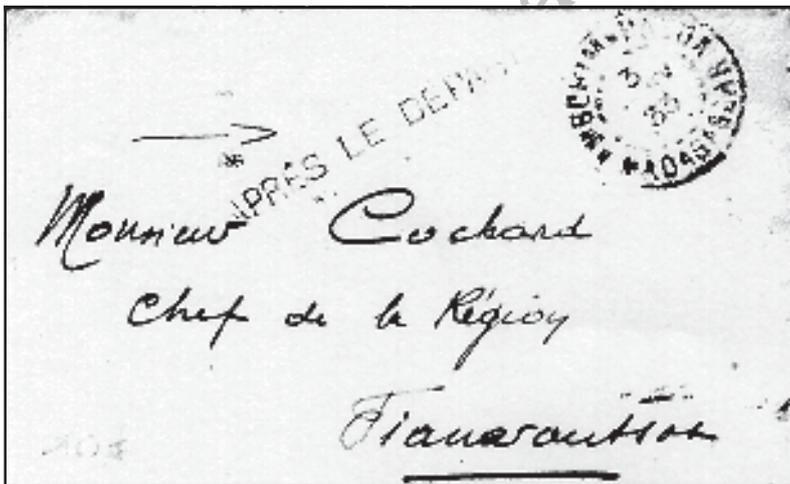
## *Après le Départ* Marks used Overseas

[See Journals 190, 191, 197, 199, 202, 230 and 231.]



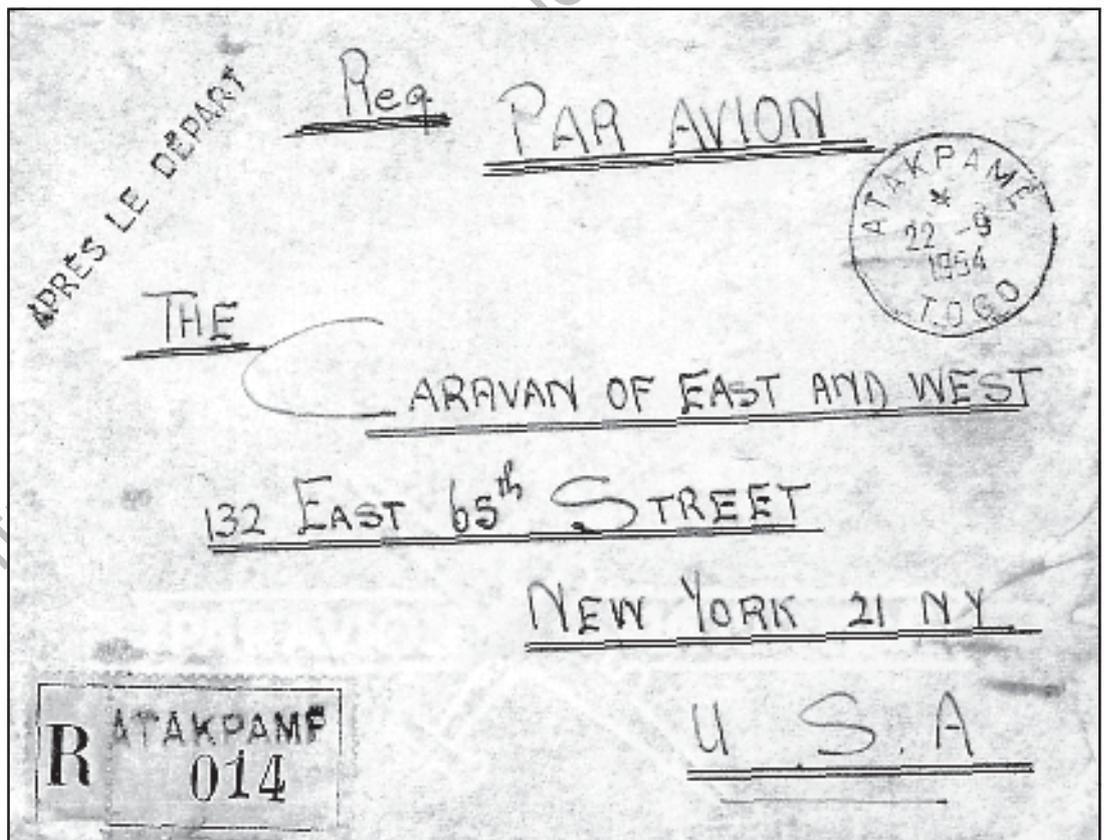
Readers might be interested in another example of *APRÈS LE DÉPART*, from the collection of Tony Eastgate. This strike is on a cover dated 12.3.1897 originating from Tahiti and arriving in Paris 20.5.1897.

John Yeomans



Here is yet another example of the *APRÈS LE DÉPART* mark used in Madagascar. The cover has been sent from Ambohimahasoa, dated 3.1.1933, to Fianarantsoa and the stamp has been affixed on the reverse.

Colin Spong



I can report the recent discovery of two further examples of the *APRÈS LE DÉPART* marks on mail from West Africa. The first is a cover from Conakry, French Guinea, dated 15.1.1954, with French West Africa 15F value (Yvert 40) to Kankan and backstamped there 19.1.1954. The second is a registered cover

from Atakpamé, Togo, dated 22.9.1954 and sent airmail to the United States with four stamps on the reverse side, Togo Yvert A18, A22, 243 and 248, backstamped in New York 29.9.1954. Both strikes of the cachet are type 5, and the latter is the first example recorded on mail from French Togo.

John Mayne



Here is a latest acquisition for the *APRÈS LE DÉPART* stockpot. It is only the second one I have for French Congo, and only the second one I have seen so far. It is a

standard type, but may be worth adding to a schedule of covers. It is dated 27.12.1935 and has been sent from Pointe-Noire to Johannesburg in South Africa.

**Robert Johnson**

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### A Register of the 1920 Bisects of Dahomey

For a brief period from September to December 1920 (possibly to January 1921) Dahomey experienced a shortage of 25c stamps, needed to meet the new rate for first step letters internally and within the French Empire. Consequently, the use of 50c stamps (Yv/Cérès 55) bisected either vertically or diagonally to create 25c stamps was officially authorised (the use of other values was not permitted although many fancy frankings exist).

The West Africa Study Circle is compiling a record of examples of this emergency bisecting, both correct and incorrect. To date, 41 (25 of which observe the prescribed conditions) have been noted; no doubt many more exist. Those listed include items from the collections of members

of our Society who are also members of WASC; details of any further examples — correctly franked or not — owned by our members will be welcomed. We need to know the date of posting, the stamp (or stamps), how bisected and where posted. If possible, photocopies will be appreciated.

Three examples from Bopa, all dated 8 January 1929, of the 1 franc (Yv/Cérès 78) bisected to meet the then current 50c rate have also been noted. They were not authorised but do not appear to be philatelic and may have been improvised to meet a sudden shortage. A note of any others will be welcome.

Please write to me at 41 Graemesdyke Avenue, East Sheen, London SW14 7BH. Thank you.

**Bill Mitchell**

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### Togo: The 1921 “Mandate” Issue — More Earliest Recorded Dates

I published an updated list of the earliest recorded dates of use for these stamps in an article published on page 115 of Journal 225 for September 2002.

A correspondent, Dr William Owen Nixon Scott of Baton Rouge, Louisiana, has now reported two new dates as follows —

40c (Yvert/Cérès 111, SG 47) – ?2 December 1921 (previously 2 September 1923); 50c (Yvert/Cérès 113, SG 49) – 2 February 1922 (previously 24? July 1922).

Readers may like to annotate my previous list of dates accordingly. I am grateful to Dr Scott for this additional information.

**Bill Mitchell**

## Togo in World War I — The French Occupation Issues (Earliest Dates of Use, an Update)

The response to our request for help in updating the data held by the West Africa Study Circle (Journal 228, June 2003) has, we are afraid, been very disappointing. Although the exercise was extended to France and the United States, only two replies were received. M. Vincent Longin of Rezé (Loire-Atlantique) enabled us to give a precise date for the 4c “Occupation” stamp of 1916 (Yv/Cérès 86, SG 22) on ordinary paper — previously recorded only as “? ??? 1917”, we can now revise this to “3 March 1917”.



And Greg Cykman of San Francisco reports a second example of the 1906 Dahomey “taxe” issue used in Togo, this time the 5c value (Yv/Cérès T 1, SG D 33) with the German cancel of ANECHO dated 1 January 1917. The part strike is faint but clear; unfortunately only the “O” of “ANECHO” can be seen but there can be no doubt about the attribution — the only other cancel of this type ending in “O” is from PORTO SEGURO, and the position of the “O” relative to the “O” of “TOGO” makes it clear that the much shorter place-name is involved (see the examples above of the two cancels taken from the Martin/Walton book on Togo Postal History 1914-1922 published by WASC in 1995). It is unfortunately impossible to say

whether the two stamps so far recorded were postally used or cancelled by favour. Possibly sufficient stocks of these obsolete stamps were available to meet the limited use that was expected; a cover (or covers) would no doubt help to determine their status. Our thanks to our two correspondents.

In our brief historical note we wrote that while the British authorities issued stamps of the Gold Coast appropriately overprinted as stamps of the German “Yacht” type became exhausted as early as May 1915, the French “were not quite so quick off the mark”; stamps of Dahomey similarly overprinted did not appear until the following year. John Mayne begs to differ. He writes

“Mail volumes in 1913 were low, only 360 Europeans, educational standards poor. Mail from Togo to Germany was less than 3% of ALL colonial mail to Germany. Volumes fell August 1914, to about 10% [of the 1913 level, presumably]. Maybe 25/30,000 letters 1915 in all. Mail from the British sector [which included Lomé] was thought to be about seven times that from the French. . . . With the Yacht issues EQUALLY divided French stocks lasted a year longer! No need for Dahomey stamps to be overprinted earlier.”

Our thanks to John for correcting this misunderstanding on our part. Incidentally, John will now be the co-editor, with Jeremy, of the forthcoming WASC book on Togo stamps of the occupation period. This is in place of Frank Walton, who is now the editor of the *London Philatelist*.

Jeremy Martin & Bill Mitchell

## French India – A Problem Cover

I have for some time, and so far without success, been seeking views on the correctness or otherwise of a cover seeming to originate from the Pondicherry settlement in

French India. I would like to draw on the thoughts and wider expertise of the members of this Society, and attach my notes as they stand on the sheet in question.



Fiscal stamp surcharged “POSTES / 0,05”

Cérès N° 24 issued **1903**

paying the correct rate for printed paper in an unsealed envelope.

“INDE / PONDICHÉRY” date block inverted.

Year date appears to be **1894**

– four numeral year date not known to me on a French post office cds from a settlement in India.

Broken cancel line and doubling of both strikes of the cds and touching in of the line

at the lower part of the cds tying the stamp.

No receiving or transit marks.

Signature appears to be of the name “Constant”.

Destination – The *M.M. Magellan* was launched as the *Indus* at La Ciotat on 29 August 1897

and operated on the line to the Far East and China until transferred to the Marseille-Buenos Aires

line in 1903 and renamed *Magellan* –

continued on that line until 1912

and the expiry of the contract.

John Yeomens

# Benin – Lagos *Vapeur* Service

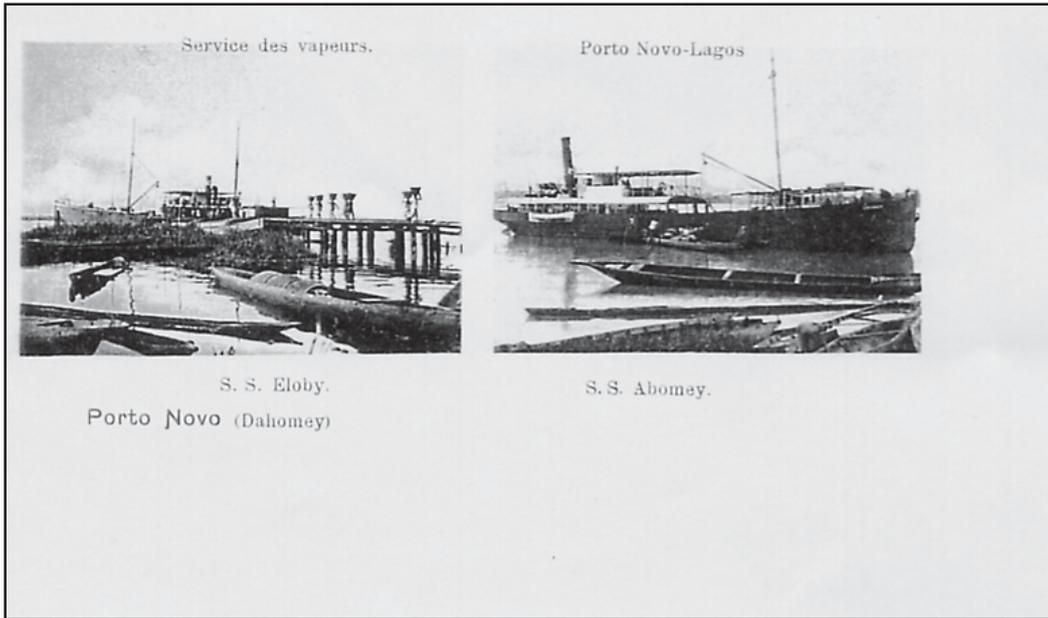


Figure 1



Figure 2

This piece is a supplement to the article by Bill Mitchell and Laurence Lambert 'French West Africa — Benin -- The Early Years' in Journal 230 of December 2003.

Members know from previous articles of my interest in Togo 1884 to 1922; I do however from time to time stray across the borders into Dahomey and Gold Coast!

I hold items from Togo 1884-1914 passed by hand to Dahomey for collection by Chargeurs Réunis or Fraissinet et C<sup>ie</sup>. I also hold mail from Togo to Lagos which passed through Dahomey – this I thought passed by hand throughout its journey. The article by Bill and Laurence stated that mail was carried amongst the lagoons by *pirogue* — dug-out canoe — and this partially explained how mail passed so quickly.

At the International Postcard Fair in August I bought a mint postcard (Fig 1) illustrating two ships, S.S. *Eloby* and

S.S. *Abomey*, which operated a *Vapeur* Service between Porto Novo and Lagos. This was news to me! I suspect the card was printed in the early 1900s.

The purchase coincided with the arrival of Lugdunum Philatélie auction catalogue, which showed a Benin 10c single postal stationery card (Fig 2) from Porto Novo 28.3.1898 to the wife of M A Denton, Governor of Lagos (I hold Togo cards to the same address!), and endorsed *per S.S. Eloby*.

Unfortunately my bid proved too low: it realised 79€ against a starting price of 60€. The illustration is from a copy provided by the auction house, to whom I am indebted.

John Garner has written about the *Vapeur* service in the Mekong Delta in Indo-China, but I had not appreciated that a similar service operated in this area of West Africa. I believe a service may have operated in Senegal but I have seen nothing to confirm that.

**John Mayne**

# The National Archives

*[This official notice originally appeared in the Insurance and Banking Philatelic Society Newsletter N° 209 of March 2004, and we thank the Editor, Brian Sole FRPSL, for permission to reproduce it (provided for us by Colin Spong).]*

From April 2003, the Public Record Office (PRO) officially joined with the Historical Manuscripts Commission (HMC) to form a new organisation The National Archives. The one main change will be that the HMC search rooms in Chancery Lane, central London, will be transferred to Kew, West London, before the end of the financial year, March 2004. The HMC search rooms include lists of the contents of private archive collections held in record offices, universities and other organisations throughout the UK.

**Visitors and readers** Orientation tours will show new readers how to use the combined information sources of both PRO and HMC.

**Writers, researchers and publishers** If you are using PRO or HMC sources, either documents or images, for publication of any kind, then you will have to credit the PRO or the HMC in footnotes or as sources. For information about the right way to credit the National Archives please visit the online catalogue at [www.pro.gov.uk/leaflets/Riindex.asp](http://www.pro.gov.uk/leaflets/Riindex.asp)

**Records managers and archivists** For information about how the National Archives will work with the records management and archive profession subscribe to our free newsletter at [archivista@pro.gov.uk](mailto:archivista@pro.gov.uk)

**What is The PRO?** The PRO looks after state and central court documents from the Domesday Book to the present,

making them available at its reading rooms in Kew for anyone who wishes to see them. The PRO also provides access to certain documents online. The PRO works with the central government to help select documents now, which will be opened to the public in 30 years time, and also provides advice for central government records officers, certain archives, and increasingly for local government to ensure these records are looked after in a way which will guarantee their preservation for future generations.

The National Archives (PRO), Kew, Richmond, Surrey TW9 4DU; e-mail [enquiry@nationalarchives.gov.uk](mailto:enquiry@nationalarchives.gov.uk); website [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk); tel. 020 8392 5200.

**What is the HMC?** HMC is the UK's central advisory body on archives and manuscripts relating to British history. Established in 1869, it is the principal source of information for researchers on the nature and location of particular records. It maintains the National Register of Archives, the ARCHON directory and portal, giving direct links to record repositories and archival research projects in progress, and the Manorial Documents Register. HMC also offers advice to owners, custodians and users of non-public records, as well as to central and local government and grant-awarding bodies. The National Archives (HMC) e-mail [nra@nationalarchives.gov.uk](mailto:nra@nationalarchives.gov.uk) and associated website [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk)

## Visiting on site The National Archives (PRO) and (HMC)

	Opening times	Document ordering times
Monday	9.00am to 5.00pm	9.30am to 4.00pm
Tuesday	10.00am to 7.00pm	10.00am to 4.30pm
Wednesday	9.00am to 5.00pm	9.30am to 4.00pm
Thursday	9.00am to 7.00pm	9.30am to 4.30pm
Friday	9.00am to 5.00pm	9.30am to 4.00pm
Saturday	9.30am to 5.00pm	9.30am to 12.00pm and 1.30pm to 3.00pm.
Closed Sundays, bank holiday weekends and the first week in December for stocktaking.		

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## LIST OF RECENTLY PUBLISHED ARTICLES

### Continued from page 18

#### The Collectors Club Philatelist

Vol 83 N° 6 Nov-Dec 2004: A Study and Plating Guide of Haiti's 10 Centimes Dumas Stamp of 1935 (Jeannopoulos).

Vol 84 N° 1 Jan-Feb 2005: Cantinières in Napoleon's Grande Armée (Adema).

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## REPORTS OF MEETINGS

### LONDON MEETING OF 24 NOVEMBER 2004

**Barbara Priddy: Africa by Air**

Barbara began her display by explaining that it represented an overview of France's efforts to establish airmail connections with her colonies in West Africa. The first half was to follow the fortunes of the lines established from 1923 onwards, concluding with the fall of France in 1940.

The French, in the person of Georges-Pierre Latécoère, thought it would be a good idea to inaugurate an air route from France via FNA and FWA to South America, resulting in a daily service to Casablanca in 1922, and in the following year came a survey flight to Dakar, which had an uneventful outward journey but took 11 days for the return. Because of political problems with overflying and landing rights for the Spanish Sahara, the regular service did not start until June 1925.

For the flight across the South Atlantic, from Dakar to Natal in Brazil, Mermoz had made some experimental flights in 1930 and 1933; but the service touched FWA at only three points, leaving a great deal of hinterland from which mail had to come by road, rail or sea. Engine trouble or bad weather often led to accidents for the pilots, illustrated by a number of crash covers 1925-1939.

Further east, the French wanted to connect with FEA and Madagascar, and the Belgians with the Belgian Congo, so, following some pioneer flights in 1925, they agreed in 1930 to develop a joint route. A number of first flight covers from the 1930s were shown by Barbara, involving companies such as Régie Air Afrique, Compagnie Générale Transsaharienne, Sabena, Air Orient, and Aéro-maritime. From the mid-1920s there were attempts to improve communications with the hinterland, including a disastrous flight by amateurs from the Congo to Soudan, and a unique flying-boat journey by professionals from Senegal to Madagascar. Further flights illustrated were those from Djibouti to Dakar (1932), and those by the military in Mauritania, Atar to Dakar (1934-7), leading to Aéro-maritime establishing a service from Dakar (1937) that called at all the French territories except Togo, first to Cotonou and later to Pointe Noire. When the war began, flights continued as before, but with censorship.

The second half of the display attempted to follow the changing patterns of airmails from June 1940 to the end of the war, and raised more questions rather than establishing the facts. With the fall of France the colonies were divided, with Cameroun and FEA rallying to de Gaulle and the Free French, but FNA and FWA staying with Pétain and the Vichy government, which meant that the latter's airmail communications with Vichy France were unimpeached – though at first they flew only the trans-Saharan route.

In March 1941 the coastal service was restarted, but via Algiers rather than Spain. Aéro-maritime was unaffected, but introduced more local services. Occasional mail appears to have reached the UK and elsewhere via Lisbon, and very rarely mail was exchanged between the Free French and Vichy French territory at Accra or Lagos.

The *Franchise Militaire* paid for the armed forces' surface postage, but the airmail had to be paid in stamps. Correspondence with occupied France was on the limited supplies of prescriptive cards despatched to the colonies. We saw examples of crashes (now fewer in number) and of the last flight out of Algiers to Marseille before the Allies invaded North Africa (November 1942), as well as a "Return to Sender" cachet.

Down in the Congo the Free French military operated a minimal and rather confused service, with the aim of avoiding having their mail carried by Sabena, which co-operated with BOAC – leading to censorship by the British. Although the French military routes were later extended and better connected within FEA and Cameroun, the aim was still to avoid French mail being carried by BOAC/Sabena or PAA. Some items were shown by Barbara that raised questions over the exact routes taken from Cameroun, and the information on airmails becomes more confused and contradictory for the period after the 1942 Allied landings in North Africa. External mail was subject to some vagaries, was sent by whatever route seemed expedient or whatever service was thought to be operating, could take months to reach its destination, and rates could be incredibly high.

At the beginning of 1944 all Free French airlines were placed under the control of the *Direction des Transports Aériens*. Services in West Africa were renamed ROTAM and reorganised. After the liberation of France direct air services were resumed in September 1944, at first on flimsy postcards. And finally, in February 1945, a direct service Dakar - Lisbon - New York was established by PAA. Thousands of philatelic covers carried on the first flight were held in the US Office of Censorship until after VE Day in June.

In thanking Barbara for her informative and detailed display, President Maurice Tyler commented on the wealth of information that had been imparted, that had included a surprising number of place-names both well known and not so well known, such as St Louis, Port Etienne, Casablanca, Conakry, Bobo-Déoulasso, Gao, Bamako, Niamey, Pondichéry, and Pointe Noire. The collection had consisted of some most attractive covers with a very legible and clearly explained write-up.

MST

## SOUTHERN GROUP MEETING OF 8 JANUARY 2005

### Members' Displays / New Acquisitions

The Organiser welcomed thirteen members on a sunny but breezy day in Worthing for the first meeting in the New Year. The following members gave displays: **Roy Ferguson** began with a collection of Maximum Cards, then **Betty Blincow** showed some latest acquisitions under the title of "Miscellaneous Bits & Pieces", whilst **Michael Berry** had added some more *Ballon Monté* items. **Bill Mitchell** followed with French Equatorial Africa and a few Cameroun covers, and **John Hammonds** had some Aéromaritime material, including maps, routes, vignettes and covers. **Lesley Marley's** display entitled "All Sorts" included the Liberty issue and issues with dolphins & whales in the design.

After a break for tea, the displays continued with **Michael Wilson** showing Cross-border Mail, **Colin Clarkson** with *Vignettes d'Affranchissement* and *Recommandés* items,

**Michael Annells** with Airmails and Balloon Mail, **John Yeomans** with French India Maritime Mail, and **Bob Small** ended the afternoon with the Napoleon III issue. Colin Spong thanked all those who had brought material, giving us a most fascinating afternoon.

Members present: Michael Annells, Betty Blincow, Michael Berry, Colin Clarkson, Roy Ferguson, John Hammonds, Bill Mitchell, Bob Small, Colin Spong, John Thorpe, Michael Wilson, John Yeomans; and Guests: Frank Blincow and Pat Spong who looked after the refreshments. Apologies from Geoff Gethin, Bob & Yvonne Larg, George Nash, Barbara Priddy, and David Worrollo.

The next meeting was arranged for Saturday 9 April 2005 when the President, Maurice Tyler was coming to display material from World War I.

CWS

## NORTHERN GROUP MEETING OF 21 JANUARY 2005

### Robert Barnes: French Indo-China

Venue: the Board Room at Leeds General Infirmary

Present: George Barker, Robert Barnes, Steve Ellis, Alan Goude, Stephen & Judith Holder, Bernard Lucas, Peter Maybury, John Morton, Tony Shepherd, Peter Stockton, Richard & Yvonne Wheatley, John Whiteside.

Apologies: Michael Meadowcroft.

Following one or two housekeeping items, Robert commenced his display by outlining the geography, natural resources / economy and history of the regions comprising the subject of the display. The earliest recorded French presence was in the reign of Louis XV, followed by the occupation of 6 Vietnamese provinces during the Napoleonic era and French and Spanish punitive expeditions in Cochjin China of 1858. Following the departure of the Spanish troops in 1859, a battalion of the newly formed French Foreign Legion arrived and established a permanent base, lasting until the French withdrawal in 1956.

Prior to the establishment of the colony in 1889, the first stamps to be used were overprinted issues of Annam & Tonkin or Cochjin-China, several examples of which were seen, including the spectacular locally made woodblock overprints of 1886 with their numerous varieties. In 1889

the 1881 colonial issues were overprinted to include the letters R - D, the initials of the Governor and the Postmaster of the colony. Then followed the Tablet issues + overprints, Grasset, pictorials etc. up to the First World War, including overprints and varieties. The 1933 first Air set, the Second World War period, with the Vichy stamps which were printed in France but never released in the colony, and the Japanese presence provided some interesting viewing.

Robert then moved on to the post offices opened in China (8), again with a number of varieties of the overprints. Consular offices, *F.M.* covers, many ppcs, postal stationery, and maritime (*Ligne N* ex Saigon) all followed, with the finale being a short study of the 1932 France to Saigon airmail service, which attracted the attention of the British in Hong Kong, as it cut the travel time from 3½ weeks to 5 days. An agreement was signed in London, and a new canceller produced: Hong Kong - Saigon - Marseille. The new service lasted only 7 months, as Britain then established a direct air link to Hong Kong.

On behalf of those present, Richard Wheatley thanked Robert for a most interesting display, which had been interspersed with anecdotes of the time Robert had spent in the Middle and Far East.

JPM

## LONDON MEETING OF 26 JANUARY 2005

### The Largs at Large: Monaco & France

**Yvonne Larg** began her display by explaining that she had originally started collecting Monaco because she had been attracted to Prince Rainier, and later Princess Grace. She also preferred a country which had well produced stamps and good postmarks, and one that had fewer experts offering to correct her statements too often!

She informed us that Monaco had several times been invaded, but was now a successful and wealthy country; and she showed us a selection of old postcards, including some of the Royal Family. We then moved on to the early stamps of the Principality, beginning with some Victorian issues and then covering such commemorative issues as the Oceanography Museum of 1922, royalty, the war dead and deported workers, and the Children's Welfare Fund.

Among some of the more unusual items were noted a proof signed by the designer, a perf 13 on cover before the stamps were issued, and the Monte Carlo Rally. A very wide selection of the series of stamps issued from 1885 onwards were on display, giving a comprehensive picture of the possibilities for this country. Yvonne showed us a particularly treasured item of hers, a card and sheet of stamps depicting tortoises sent to her by Prince Rainier. The display was brought to an end with such exhibits as a complete sheet of early stamps, some early air rally cards, some Red Cross *blocs*, and a slogan postmark cancelling the 1934 5F view of Monaco overprinted with the Blériot XI aeroplane and 1F50 surcharge.

The second half of the display was given by **Bob Larg**, who explained that he originally intended to limit his subject

matter to the Third Republic of 1870-1940, but eventually found himself concentrating on "just a chunk" of this period – 1937-1940! Taking just this segment of the philatelic history of France enabled him to show a complete run of stamps, most of them used on cover, as well as other more unusual items.

Some of the earliest items in this sequence included a menu for the 10th anniversary of the Philatelic Federation of Cannes, advertising cards and covers for Pexip 1937 accompanying the miniature sheets, covers celebrating the wedding of King Edward VIII, and late usage of the 5F Sage in 1937. These were followed by such notable exhibits as the Samothrace pair on cover, a menu card, a cover sent airmail to Shanghai and another to South Africa.

We then saw the 50F Banknote commercially used on registered cover to Brazil, 4 different cards of the UK Royal Visit to France, and a number of aviation meetings. The concluding items on show included a French cancel on a cover from Jersey, a cover to Peru, the first Philatelic Salon in Brittany (1938), and the various charity stamps of the period.

President Maurice Tyler, in his vote of thanks for a varied and extremely interesting double-header, commented on the comparatively little known attractions of the stamps of Monaco that had been revealed to us during the course of the evening by Yvonne, and the fascinating and detailed study of a short period in the postal history of France revealed by Bob. All those who attended showed their enjoyment by the lengthy viewing sessions.

MST

## May 2005 Auction - Selected Lots



1945 card to the Camp de Noé

More lots on inside and outside of back cover

## May 2005 Auction - Selected Lots



Projet Renard for postal stationery



1F Cérès red-brown



15c Sower Type VI coil issue



5F + 1F War Orphans



20c Sower stationery pc overprinted for use in Memel



1930 50c Sower dated corner block overprinted for use in Andorra

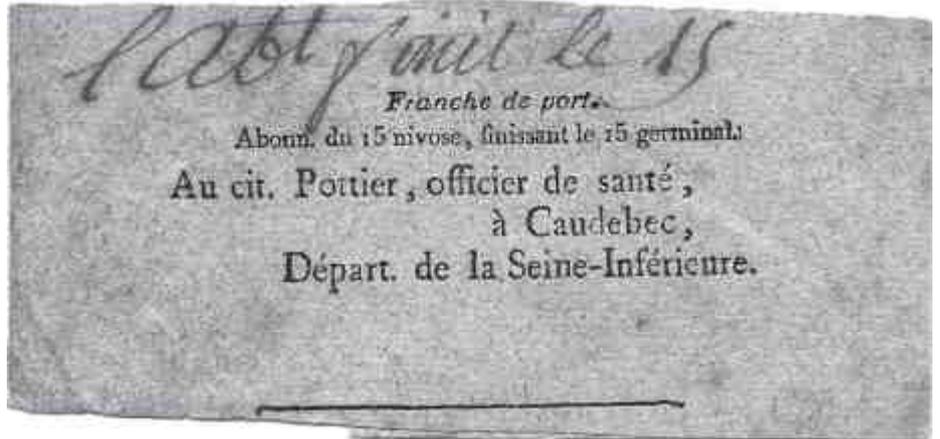


1763 Bordeaux fleur de lys mark

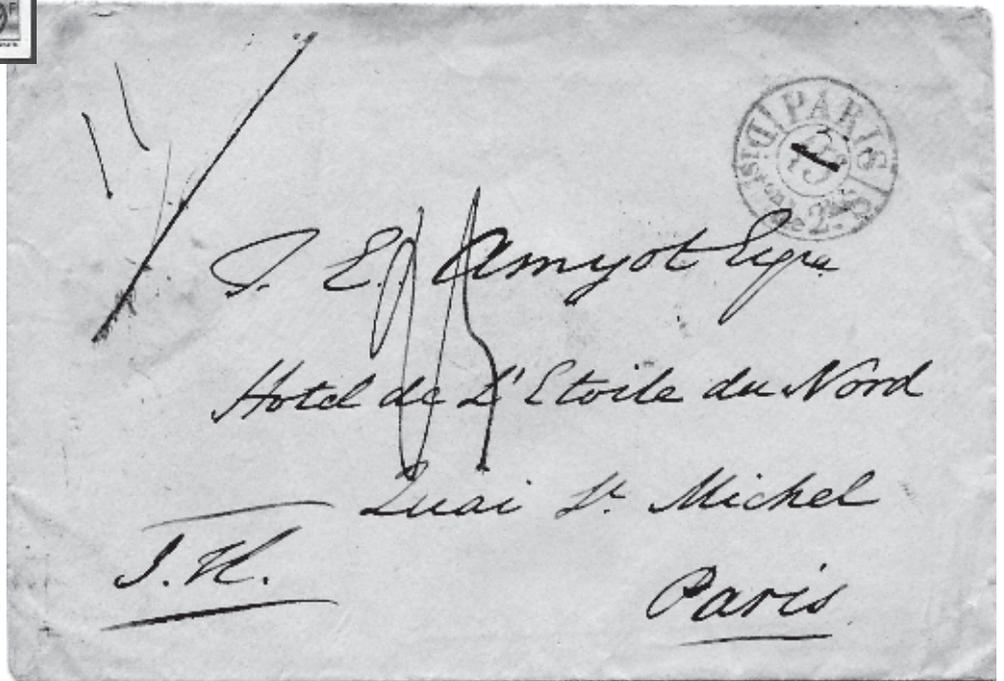
## May 2005 Auction - Selected Lots



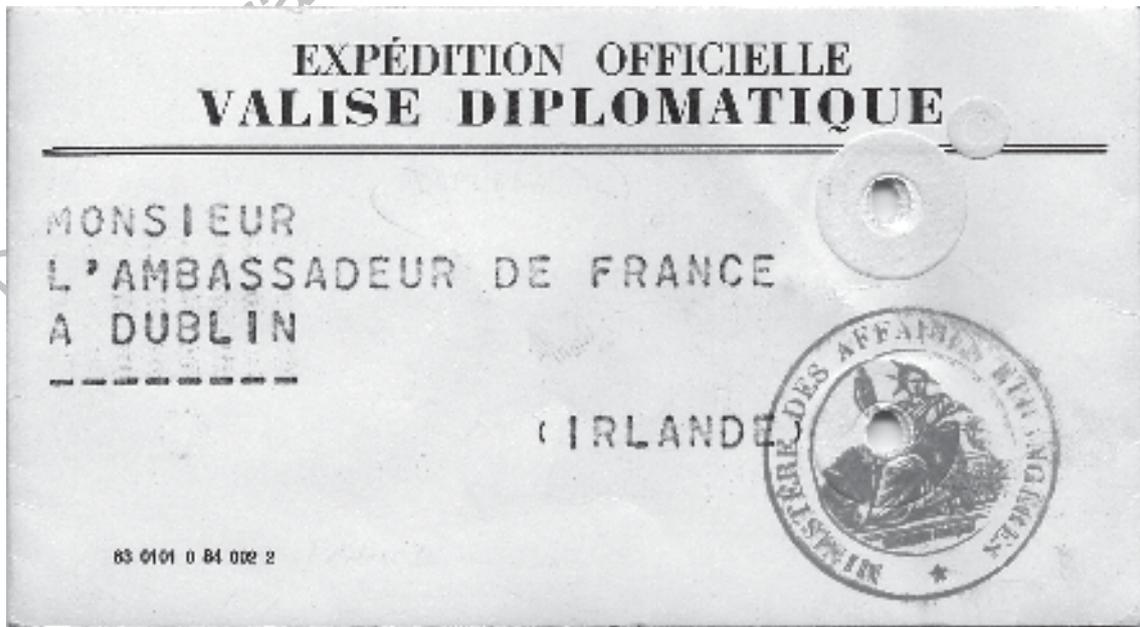
Madagascar  
Airmail Proofs  
in blue



Revolutionary Period wrapper



Paris Distribution 15c deleted and 5c substituted



Diplomatic Bag Label