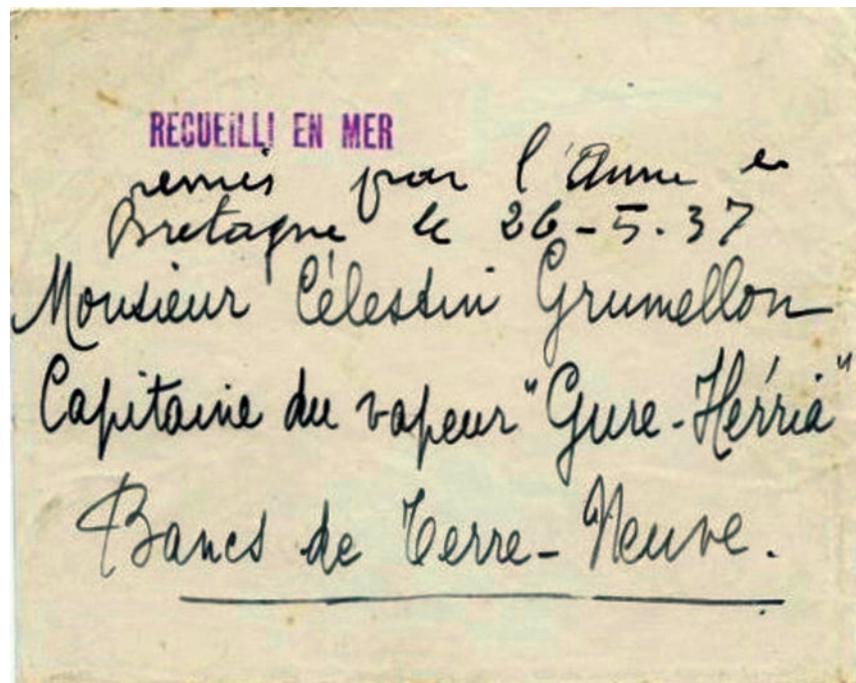


# The Journal of the France & Colonies Philatelic Society



**A very rare occurrence of fisherman's mail being transferred twice on the high seas**

The letter is from May 1937, and was carried from France to the Grand Banks by the French fishing boat *Anne de Bretagne*, transferred there onto the *Saint Yves*, a French navy ship protecting the French North Atlantic fishing fleet, and finally delivered by the *Saint Yves* to the captain of the second fishing vessel, the *Gure Herria*. The purple strike "RECUEILLI EN MER" and handwritten date were applied on board the *Saint Yves*.

*(Shown by Henk Slabbinck at the Charlecote Weekend; image reduced to 80%)*

Volume 65 ● Number 2

June 2015

Whole Number 276

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

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

**Officers**

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**The Society**

The Society was founded in 1949 and is affiliated to the ABPS. Its affairs are managed by a Committee comprising President, Officers and Committee members, elected annually.  
All inquiries about and applications for membership should be addressed to the General Secretary.

**2015 Annual Subscription Rates**

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

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

Sterling, Euro and US dollar bills are accepted but overseas cheques must be drawn in Sterling. The Society has a PayPal account for the use of overseas members, but please add 4% for bank charges, and email to [treasurer@fcps.org.uk](mailto:treasurer@fcps.org.uk).  
Bank transfers to HSBC account name France & Colonies Philatelic Society sort code 40 07 31 account n° 71019325.

**The Journal**

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**Auction and Exchange Packet Sales**

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

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

according to instructions

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

France: R G E Wood, 51 Longstombs Avenue, Chelmsford, Essex CM2 9BY (Telephone 01245 267949).

Colonies: J C West, 5 Highbanks Road, Hatch End, Pinner, Middlesex HA5 4AR (Telephone 0208 428 4741).

**The Library**

The Society's substantial library, as detailed in the Library List (2004) originally distributed to all Members but now available in PDF format on the Society website, is being disposed of, with members having the first opportunity of acquiring certain items in an auction.

**The Magazine Circuit**

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

R N Broadhurst, PO Box 448, Teddington TW11 1AZ (email: [stock@fcps.org.uk](mailto:stock@fcps.org.uk)); tel. 020 8977 9665.

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\* \* \*

When writing to an officer of the Society, please do not mention the name of the Society in the address. Requests for information should be accompanied by a stamped addressed envelope.

Data Protection Act. Members are advised that their details are stored electronically, for use on Society business only, e.g address label printing.

# The Journal of the France & Colonies Philatelic Society

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## SOCIETY NOTES

### Editorial

This is the first of the Journals to be sub-edited by the new pan-global team announced in the previous edition. The final editing has been overseen by Maurice so you should not see any changes in the lay-out or composition. Once you have read this Journal we trust that you will approve what has been achieved.

However, no matter how enthusiastic and competent the team is, we cannot proceed to the next edition without more material. At the moment there are only a couple of articles in the in-tray so we urgently need more contributions. Even if it is only a single page it will be very welcome. We are sure that all of you have in your collections an item with a story which merits publication in our magazine. Please send all contributions to Mick Bister at [m.bister@btinternet.com](mailto:m.bister@btinternet.com) using Word text and attaching illustrations separately as jpegs scanned at 300dpi.

Thank you and here's to the next edition.

**Mick Bister**

I would just like to add my sincere thanks to the team who have taken over so much of the preparatory work for this issue of the Journal, and in particular Mick Bister who has acted as Journal Manager, organising the sub-editors and sorting the material that has been offered for publication, and Peter Allan who has turned most of that material into articles on the page. All that has been left for me to do is to shuffle those pages and insert them in reasonable order into the shell of the Journal, adding a final proof-reading and tidying up of loose ends. I leave it to our members to judge just how successful this collaborative effort has been.

**Maurice Tyler**

\* \* \*

### New Members

The Society is pleased to welcome the following:

1440 John N Barton (Berkshire), 1441 Andrew Cresswell (Kent), 1442 Nigel Borlase-Hendry (Wiltshire), 1443 Christopher J Hughes (Gibraltar), 1444 Nobuto Ariyoshi (Japan).

\* \* \*

### Members Deceased

It is with great sadness that we have to report the death of long-standing member 216 **Michael Ensor**. Michael was an acknowledged expert on the history and postal history of West Africa. He worked over there as part of the British colonial department and had a lot to do with the delimitation of national boundaries after the last War. He was a fount of information but sadly never committed much of it to writing and all that knowledge dies with him.

In March we reported the death of **John Yeomans**. John was a very accomplished postal historian having formed fine collections of India and Mauritius. He came to French philately relatively late in life after having purchased Robert Johnson's collection of French Congo which was a sound basis for expansion. He used to visit me regularly at home and we spent many happy hours discussing the intricacies of postal communications in Africa.

Each of them was a real gentleman and will be greatly missed. We offer our condolences to their families.

**Peter Kelly**

\* \* \*

### Resignations

The following member has recently resigned, owing to ill health:

1300 William Stephens.

\* \* \*

### Future Events

In line with the other regional groups the **London Group** will be holding full day meetings on Saturdays from 11.00am to 4.00pm in place of the former Wednesday evening meetings. The first of these will be held at the Calthorpe Arms, 252 Grays Inn Road, London WC1X 8JR on Saturday 1 August when Len Barnes, Ray Downing and Bob Larg will be showing French Aviation (1869-1930), *Marianne de Dulac* and Anti-TB Labels & Exhibitions respectively.

The **Wessex Group** will meet at the Scout Hall, Lower Street, Harnham, Salisbury at 10.30am on Saturday 27 June when convenors Alan Wood and Peter Kelly will show a range of material from Morocco and sub-Saharan Algeria.

The next **Northern Group** meeting will be held at The Barn, Heaton Royds, Shay Lane, Bradford, BD9 6SH on Saturday 11 July from 2.00 to 5.00pm. Members are invited to bring their own displays. Free parking is available and light refreshments will be provided.

Later in the year, a **Northern Group** meeting will be held in the Village Hall, Mill Lane, Adlington, Macclesfield, SK10 4LF on Saturday 10 October 2015 from 1.30 to 4.30pm. It is an 'All Show' afternoon for members to display and share their material with others. Refreshments will not be available so please bring your own or avail yourself of the facilities of the local hostelry, the Legh Arms. Further details can be obtained from John Morton on 01457 864610 or at [morton1213@talktalk.net](mailto:morton1213@talktalk.net)

\* \* \*

## Appeal for a new General Secretary

Those of you who attended the AGM on 9 May will have heard Peter Kelly give notice of his resignation from the Committee and from the position of General Secretary with effect from May next year. Peter has been a very active member on the committee and a stalwart in his post as Secretary. He will be sorely missed but we do have twelve months in which to find a replacement.

The position entails a variety of responsibilities of which the major ones are as follows;

- Dealing with general enquiries. On occasions when such enquiries cannot be answered by the Secretary, they can be forwarded to other officers or members better qualified to answer.
- Responding to membership enquiries and applications.
- Advising the committee, via information memos, of details of new members and their requirements, deaths, changes of address etc.
- Preparation of agenda for Annual Committee Meeting and AGM. Attendance is not mandatory.
- Liaison with officers and collection of their annual reports to compile report of AGM for the Journal.
- Discussion of Society business with committee as issues arise; all discussions take place on line other than the two main meetings above.

We need the reassurance that we will have a replacement by next year so if you feel that you could fill this important post please contact the President as soon as possible. Should you require further information please contact Peter. E-mail addresses for both can be found on Page ii.

A full report of the AGM will appear in the September edition of the Journal.

\* \* \*

## From the President

I am sure that members join our Society for a number of reasons. Some like the information they obtain via the excellent Journal; some like the wide range of material which enables them to add to their collections through the packets and auction; some like the opportunity for meeting with fellow collectors of French stamps or postal history. For myself this has been a significant benefit over the years. Not only have I enjoyed meeting and talking with some very friendly people, but also the Society meetings have given me the opportunity to learn – both from seeing others' collections and gaining knowledge from experts. Whether those displays are within my own collecting area or not does not matter; it is always a pleasure to learn something new. In addition, I have enjoyed building up a display and then showing it to others. No matter that my initial efforts contained mistakes and were incomplete; in this Society no-one has ever criticised my offering but instead offered advice and support.

Sadly, as age catches up with us, many find it increasingly difficult to travel to attend meetings and attendance numbers are undoubtedly in decline. But I would urge

those who are able, to support the Society's meetings, be they the annual weekend at Charlecote or the regional meetings in Bradford, London, Salisbury and Adlington (Cheshire). All these locations have meetings coming up between July and October and it is for this reason that we have decided not to hold a special autumn meeting (as we did in Stoke-on-Trent last year). There will be some good displays plus the opportunity to meet socially – please put the dates in your diary and support them.

Steve Ellis

\* \* \*

## London Group Programme

I confirm the change of approach for the London Branch meetings. In future the branch programmes will take place on Saturdays from 11.00am to 4.00pm rather than Wednesday evenings.

We have found that members no longer work in London and therefore do not attend the Wednesday evening meetings after work before going home. We have therefore decided to have three full day meetings a year at the Calthorpe Arms, having our lunch at the pub. I have received several encouraging statements from members who feel it would be worthwhile coming up to London for the whole day whilst they are not prepared to make the effort for a couple of hours in the evening.

The future programme will therefore be:

Sat 1 Aug 2015

11.00am: Len Barnes

2.00-2.30pm: Ray Downing

2.30-4.00pm: Bob Larg

Sat 3 Oct 2015

Sat 6 Feb 2016

Sat 7 May 2016

11.30am: AGM

2.00pm: Auction

Sat 6 Aug 2016

Sat 1 Oct 2016

Please note that I have not arranged for anyone to display at meetings after August 2015 and would appreciate it if some of you would like to be involved. Why not use our meetings to display new material before really going public?

I have noticed that the Society's membership is divided into two – one half is very precise and academic whilst the other half is more of an ordinary philatelic society standard. I am hoping that our Saturday meetings will be a mixture to accommodate both sets of interest and that I shall not find that the greater part of the membership will bypass the meetings because half of the day will be spent on the area not quite to their liking. I am wondering whether the other two branches of the Society are having the same response as I am obtaining. Our biggest problem is that unfortunately we have an aging membership and we are not attracting younger new members into the Society.

Len Barnes

\* \* \*

## A quartet of displays given at the RPSL by members of the F&CPS

The 2015 programme of the Royal Philatelic Society of London began with a succession of diverse and informative displays given by FCPS members Peter Kelly, Steve Walske, Iain Stevenson and Mick Bister.



Peter Kelly



Iain Stevenson

On 15 January, **Peter Kelly** gave a magnificent 52 frame display entitled '*France - l'émission Type Sage*'. All aspects were covered including cancellations of which there were rare essays, reduced rate items, French Post Offices abroad, maritime mail, and exhibition items and routes and rates to the colonies and foreign destinations including some that were very exotic – 'a master class in late 19th century French postal history' as one member of the Royal put it. A substantial handbook accompanied the display which is now available to members of the F&CPS (see Book Review on Page 35).

On 12 February, **Iain Stevenson** gave the Sir Daniel Cooper Lecture. His chosen subject, '*The Telegraph Stamps of Great Britain*' covered the development of the telegraph services within the UK and with links overseas. He described the competition between privately funded companies and how others were created by Royal Charter or through

the provisions of the Joint Companies Act of 1856. Iain referred to the various telegraph forms and adhesive stamps, including some very rare examples, that were present in his 12 frame display and concluded with a brief account of his own interpretation of the so-called 'Stock Exchange' forgery mystery.

On 26 February, **Steve Walske**, one of our USA members, presented '*North American Blockade Run Mail, 1775 to 1815*'. His 12 frame display and PowerPoint presentation followed on from an article he had published previously on the subject in *The London Philatelist*. The periods included both the Revolutionary War of 1675-1782 and the War of 1812 and each cover was meticulously explained with details of the events, markings, routes and rates. The material shown was of great rarity including an item of special interest to the France collector, an 1814 letter from Charleston to Edinburgh which ran the British



Steve Walske



Mick Bister

Blockade to reach Spanish Florida whence by Spanish ship to Havana and Cadiz, overland to Bayonne (receiving an ESPAGNE PAR BAYONNE entry mark) and onwards to London and Scotland.

Finally, on 26 March, **Mick Bister** gave a 12 frame display and PowerPoint presentation on 'The Postcode Programmes of France - the Experimental Years 1958 to 1978'. The display was the result of extensive and detailed research and concentrated on the development of mechanised letter sorting focusing on the evolution of the coding

desk languages employed and the interpretation of the barcodes which featured on treated mail. The PowerPoint presentation traced the origins of the postcode, described the postcode campaigns launched by *La Poste* and examined some of the problems experienced by the coding desk operators.

Thanks are due to the RPSL photographers John Ray (also a member of F&CPS) and Michael Pitt-Payne for the reproduction of their photos of our members with the RPSL President, Chris King.

MLB

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## LIST OF RECENTLY PUBLISHED ARTICLES

Compiled by Colin Spong and Maurice Tyler

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

N° 151 1<sup>er</sup> Trim 2015: Les Épreuves de Guyane [cont & end] (Puech); Les Marques Postales de Tchad [cont & end] (Venot); Le Certificat d'Origine pour les Coloniaux (Flotte); Étude du 1c Type Groupe de Madagascar (Richard); Incidents d'Impression en Nouvelle Calédonie (Bessaud).

### *L'Écho de la Timbrologie*

N° 1893 Mar 2015: Carnavals, tout est permis...les vignettes y compris (Grosse); La dernière mission de Joseph Roig (Albaret et Latécoère); Des courriers éclectiques, des radioamateurs et des îles désertes (Venturini).

N° 1894 Apr 2015: Commémorer en philatélie, Albert Lasserre (Albaret et Latécoère); Des plis tout feu, tout flamme...Réunion et Île Crozet (Venturini); Les prisonniers de la Seconde Guerre mondiale (Grosse); La mémoire de l'aéronautique au xx<sup>e</sup> siècle (Albaret).

### **France & Colonies Philatelist**

Whole N° 318 (Vol 70 N° 4) Oct 2014: Foreign Censorship on World War II French Equatorial Africa Mail [Part 2] (Morvay); Formulating a One Frame Exhibit: "The Saga of the 15 centimes Sage Goes to Sea" (Luft); Douala Cameroun Telegraph and Radio (Bratzel, Jr).

Whole N° 319 (Vol 71 N° 1) Jan 2015: Caveat Emptor – It always applies (Grabowski); Free French Forces in the Sudan (Morvay); Karikal, French India - The Boxed INDE cancellation (Grabowski); Favourite Covers (Rasmussen); Sorting out the different Tunisian Coat of Arms issue (Rasmussen).

### **The Indo-China Philatelist**

Vol 45 N° 1 (Whole N° 216) Jan 2015: Allied Participation in Vietnam Conflict (Crenshaw); Caveat Emptor – A rare Indochina overprint on cover (Grabowski).

Vol 45 N° 2 (Whole N° 217) March 2015: Unusual Items for Lao King's Funeral Issue of 196 (Dykhouse); Join the Army and See Indochina (Bentley); Unknown Cambodian Booklet (Wiart).

### *Timbres Magazine*

N° 165 Mar 2015: Claude Haley, un graveur

autodidacte (Nowacka); Le Marion-Dufresne à Kerguelen et Amsterdam (Julien); Une lettre exceptionnelle des îles Kerguelen Couesnon); Les variétés et la 9<sup>e</sup> colonne du panneau D3 du 25c Cérès dentelé au type I (Marion); Monsieur le directeur, je vous prie, en grâce (de La Mettrie); Les premiers timbres fluorescents datent de 1960! (Gomez); Sabine: confections et combinaisons (Rucklin); Un palais pour le poste Droit à l'insolence (Zeyons); L'emploi de l'encre bleue (Prugnon); Oran, novembre 1942: navires interceptés ou coulés (Chauvin).

N° 166 Apr 2015: Marc Taraskoff: Littérature, musique et amitié (Julien); Sur les traces de Nungesser et Coli [SS Pierre et Miquelon 1927 biplane missing] (Toulemonde); Bernard Decré, infatigable chercheur (Decré); Le mandat à l'épreuve des cours pratiques (Rucklin); La télégraphie sémaphorique (Loëdec); D'Orléans de 1695 à 1863 (de La Mettrie).

### *Le Collectionneur Philatéliste et Marcophile*

N° 171 (Mar 2015): Bande d'envoi pour un catalogue du Bazar de l'Hôtel de Ville (Flotte); Courriers d'Oubangui-Chari (I) (Vialatte); Jean-Baptiste Croze, commandant de la Canonnière n° 218 (Giletto); Introduction à l'histoire de la poste à Jérusalem (I) (Ezraty); Étude sur l'évolution des marques d'arrivée d'initiative locale en Maine-et-Loire avant 1830 (I) (Beck); Janka et Stanislas Goldstein (I) (Neimark); La liaison fluviale Saumur-Châtellerauld (Long); Que penser de cette lettre? [1870 Schirmeck to Sainte-Marie-aux-Mines] (Lasserre); 4 Siècles d'histoire de la Poste à Aix-en-Provence (Marchot, Fiandino, Duverne).

### *Les Feuilles Marcophiles*

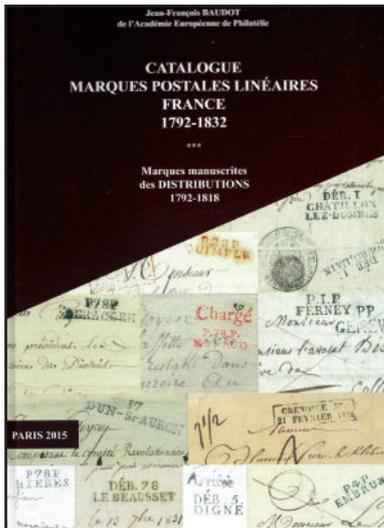
N° 360 (Mar 2015): Paris 1885: le rajout du numéro de bureau dans les timbres à date (Hitchen); Des traces d'acheminements souvent négligées avant le 1er juillet 1832 (II) (Douron); À propos de la marque Troyes-Rebuts (Baudot); Les parcours parallèles des ballons montés «Ville de Paris» et «Général Chanzy» échoués en décembre 1870 en Allemagne (Martin); Le Corps de la Gendarmerie de France de Louis XIV à Louis XVI (I) (Boueyguet); Lettres à charger ou à recommander remises à la main à des facteurs jusqu'en 1911 (II) (Kelly & Pinhas); Timbres «APRÈS LE DÉPART» (I) (Guillard & Abensur); L'incohérence d'un système destiné à éviter la spoliation des envois (Eresse).

# BOOKSHELF

Compiled by Michael Round

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

**Catalogue Marques postales linéaires. France 1792-1832. Marques manuscrites des distributions 1792-1818**, by Jean-François Baudot. 260 pages, €150 (eurozone postage paid), from Jamet-Baudot-Pothion, 24, rue de Gramont, 75002 Paris. Tel. : 01-42-96-51-12; email [jametbaudot@free.fr](mailto:jametbaudot@free.fr)



Worthy successor to the works of Pothion, father and son (warmly acknowledged in M. Baudot's own preface), this volume covers manuscript and handstamped markings relating to postage payable and paid, date stamps, *marques de distribution* and much, much else... covering the pre-adhesive period, as the title makes clear. A total of 23,000 descriptions is accompanied by a 'scarcity' pricing index that ranges from 1 (€2) to 39 (€7,000-plus). An exhaustive resource, and vital to serious collectors of the period.

**La cote des Coins Datés des Timbres de France en Euros par la So.Co.Co.Da.Mi.** 114 pages. €25 to non-members. Consult the SoCoCoDaMi website for details of availability - [www.sococodami.com](http://www.sococodami.com)



The happy French custom of using two-letter rather than single-letter acronyms certainly makes them easier to pronounce. It's encouraging, too, that a whole society - the *Société de Collectionneurs de Coins datés et Millésimes*, founded in 1936 - exists purely for collectors interested in what some of us might consider fringe interests. Its latest catalogue covers French stamps denominated in euros; its prices - using an ingenious coefficient scale - are shown for blocks of 4, 6, 8 or 12 stamps (the larger blocks are required to display, for instance, the *Marianne de Lamouche* and *Beaujard* definitives). The scope includes all relevant *Marianne* issues, commemoratives, airmails, precancels, UNESCO and *Conseil d'Europe* issues. Colour illustrations throughout. A companion volume exists, of course, for stamps denominated in francs: full details, as always, from the *Société's* website.



## Books Noted

**La Poste Française en Terre Sainte: Jérusalem, Jaffa, Caïffa 1846-1914** by Raphaël Livnat; pub Académie de Philatélie; soft cover, 400pp A4 (120 in colour); price €65 inc p&p; available from Robert Abensur, 8 rue des Fossés, 54700 Pont-à-Mousson.

[The establishment and operation of the French Post Office in this region during the period of the Ottoman Empire, based on a thorough consultation and analysis of the available archives, and illustrated by a large number of rare letters.]

Maurice Tyler

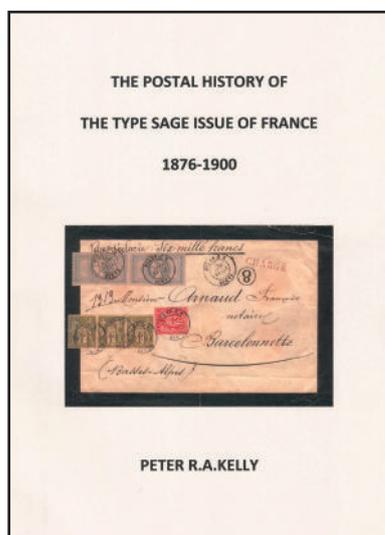


## Book Review

### by Chris Hitchen

*This review has been slightly adapted from one published in The London Philatelist of the Royal Philatelic Society London.*

**The postal history of the Type Sage issue of France 1876-1900** by Peter R. A. Kelly published in 2014 and available from the author by emailing peterkelly35@btinternet.com. Price: UK £45.50, Europe £50 (€70), World Zone 1 £55.50, World Zone 2 £56.50. (Prices include postage)



This work is a detailed account of the period which leads us from the classic period of French postal history towards more modern times. It covers not just the use of the *Type Sage* issue which was in use for most of this period but every other facet of this complex period. The starting point is when France joined the G.P.U and began the process of modernising its postal services.

1 May 1878 saw France reform its postal rates reducing and simplifying the rate structure. With the aid of numerous illustrations from the author's collection all rates are carefully explained both before and after this key date. New services that developed in the course of this period are included as appropriate – pneumatic post, express, cash on delivery and debt collection services and postal orders.

The structure of the French post office and a careful examination of its working practices in various fields takes many chapters. The way the French post office worked in Paris and other cities contrasts with the rural post which is a vast subject in its own right. Railways, maritime mail, post offices abroad exhibitions and unusual destinations all find their place.

Those interested in the cancellations of the period are catered for with an account of the postmarks and other handstamps used as well as experimental marks and the earliest machine cancellations.

Whilst of enormous help to French collectors and postal historians many French books up to now have concentrated on detailed listings of postmarks used for particular services or communication methods or various geographical areas. One has had to delve into many sources to obtain an overall picture. This work provides a clear and accessible explanation of all the many and varied topics involved in this key period for the French postal services.

The book is filled with illustrations selected to demonstrate particular points and this makes it so much easier to understand how things worked. Each cover presented is accompanied by clear and succinct comments.

Useful annexes include a glossary of French postal terms, tables of the use of the Sage stamps and a comprehensive bibliography.

Clearly and carefully written this should prove of great value to both specialists and non-specialists alike.

# “House of Slaves” or “Paris of the Caribbean”: Post Office Postal Stationery Wrappers of the French Colonies

John Courtis

A study of the used post office postal stationery wrappers of the French Colonies is an enthralling revival of a colonial past. An analysis of the postmarks of 21 copies in the author’s image database reveals extant usage in four locales: Martinique (1), Reunion (1), Senegal (3) and Indochina (16). Printing quantities and usage was likely small as well as having a low survival rate explaining the low incidence of listing appearance of these wrappers on the main internet site eBay. As discussed in previous articles on wrappers, the author’s database of images of used worldwide wrappers is about 38,000 hand-collected daily from listings over the past 11 years. Nevertheless, the total of 21 is small compared with 38,000 and it does indicate that these wrappers are hard to find at least on this Internet site.

### Post Office Issues

In January 1889 a series of five wrappers was printed in France and issued for use in French Colonies inscribed *Colonies Postes* at the top and *République Française* beneath the value tablet. Most countries issued two values basically for domestic and overseas usage, so it would be useful to learn the underlying rationale for the five denominations.

A major question is for what French Colonies were these wrappers intended? There is nothing inscribed on the indicium or wrapper to indicate the actual colony for which these wrappers were intended. A Google search of French Colonies suggests that for the period in question there are many other potential users of these wrappers in French West Africa, French Equatorial Africa, French East Africa, Oceania and French India. Another 16 postal entities appear to have been eligible.

The indicia are identical in design except for denomination and colour changes and they are shown as **Figure 1** with the kind permission of Jan Kosniowski taken from his forthcoming catalogue (2015). The “E” numbers assigned to post office postal stationery wrappers are taken from the Higgins & Gage Catalogue of Worldwide Postal Stationery.

There were two Specimen wrappers issued also with additional overprinting to indicate to the public that these wrappers were on sale in batches of ten with a premium of 5c and 7c. These are shown as **Figure 2**, again taken from the forthcoming Kosniowski catalogue. Apparently these overprinted wrappers were on display in the Indo-China Post Office, presumably at Saigon.



Figure 1  
Indicia of French Colonies Post Office Wrappers

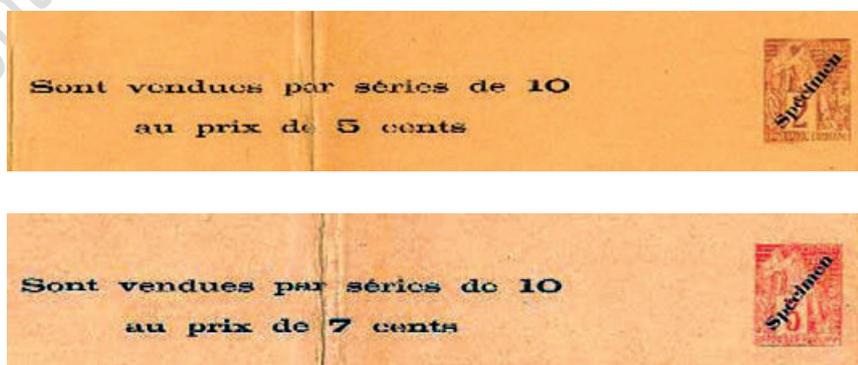


Figure 2  
Specimen Wrappers for French Colonies  
(reduced in size)

## Supply & Demand

This paper is based on an eBay-based study, and while founded on a large database, it should not be interpreted as the only source of these wrappers over the past 11 years. The French eBay site may have listed and sold these wrappers during this period as well as other sites, dealers and traditional auction houses. The 21 examples noted are distributed across all five issues more or less evenly.

It is necessary to examine the postmarks on these wrappers to determine their colony of use. Four colonies are identified: Indo-China (Saigon, Chaudoc and Tonquin/Tonkin), Senegal (Gorée), Reunion (St Denis) and Martinique (Saint-Pierre). As mentioned above, perhaps another 16 colonies may have used these wrappers.

Of the 21 wrappers, 62% were mailed to local destinations within their own colony while eight wrappers were sent to non-domestic destinations, six to Germany and two to Great Britain. Only three wrappers were uprated. For the most part the wrappers of the French Colonies are unremarkable.

With one exception, none have postage due or auxiliary markings. The exception is a copy of an E4 wrapper sent registered to Leipzig, Germany. The uprating paying the registration fee has been removed from the wrapper and the postmarking is TONQUIN HAIPHONG. There is a maritime marking LIGNE N PAQ. FR. No 10 with likely 22 SEPT 95 to accord with the departure of *SS Sydney* from Saigon (*Ron Bentley, private correspondence*).

**Table 1: Frequency of Appearance on eBay of PO Wrappers of French Colonies**

H&G #	Brief Identifier	Colony	Number listed	Up-rated	Domestic Destinations	Non-domestic Destinations
1	1 c black	Indochina (5)	5	1	4	Germany 1
2	2c red brown	Indochina (4) Senegal (1)	5	1	4	Germany 1
3	3c red	Indochina (4)	4	0	2	GB 2
4	4c violet brown	Indochina (3) Reunion (1)	4	0	2	Germany 2
5	5 c green	Senegal (2) Martinique (1)	3	1	1	Germany 2
<b>Totals</b>			<b>21</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>Germany 6 GB 2</b>



With regard to the sales of these wrappers there were 17 instances recorded between March 2006 and February 2015. Unfortunately no record was kept of the specific colony of usage so it is not possible to match realized prices to specific colonies. Clear postmarks and those for non Indo-China colonies might explain the notable price differentials. French colonies' wrappers appear to be highly sought after with strong bidder interest. There was only one sale with a sole bidder.

The bidder profile was two transactions each with ten bidders, one transaction with seven bidders, five transactions with four bidders each, eight transactions with three, no

transactions with two, and one transaction with a sole bidder. Every wrapper type shows an average bidder score in excess of 2.5 which is used as the rule-of-thumb "tipping point" for interpreting the strength of bidder behaviour. The overall weighted average bidder score was 4.23 and this is consistent with a strong bidder interest.

82% of sales were for more than \$20. The mean overall sales price was about \$40. The author's annotations show that the E4 wrapper that was registered was sold for \$73.62 with four bidders and the highest E2 realized price of \$76.60 was for the only uprated example with three bidders.

**Table 2: eBay Sales of Wrappers of French Colonies: March 2006 – February 2015**

H&G#	Sales Details (Ranked Low to High in USD) & Number of Bidders per Sale	# of Sales	Mean Sale Price	Mean # of Bidders
1	9.00 (1), 10.50 (10), 27.00 (3), 42.00 (4), 71.00 (4)	5	31.90	4.40
2	15.20 (7), 26.00 (3), 33.00 (3), 46.00 (3), 76.60 (3)	5	39.36	3.80
3	22.16 (10), 30.00 (3), 43.20 (4)	3	31.78	5.67
4	49.60 (3), 73.62 (4)	2	61.61	3.50
5	45.00 (4), 65.76 (3)	2	55.38	3.50
<b>Total</b>		<b>17</b>	<b>40.33</b>	<b>4.23</b>

**Postal History Interest**

Examples of use in each of the four colonies identified are shown as **Figure 3** bearing in mind these are Internet images and some loss of quality in reproduction is to be expected.

**(1) Cochinchine**

Cochinchina is a region encompassing the southern third of Vietnam whose principal city is Saigon or Prey Nokor in Khmer. It was a French colony from 1862 to 1954 and in 1887 it became part of the Union of French Indo-China. Cochinchina was occupied by Japan during World War II (1941-45), but was restored to France afterwards. In 1955, after the First Indo-China War, Cochinchina was merged

with southern Annam to form the Republic of Vietnam (South Vietnam) (*Wikipedia*).

This example of a *Cochinchine* postmark appeared on a wrapper addressed to a firm in London, England. It shows a double-ring postmark SAIGON-CENTRAL 2E/23 JUIL 90 COCHINCHINE.

There were two examples of a CHAUDOC postmark and two of TONQUIN HAI-PHONG. Cancelled-to-order French Colonies cutouts have appeared on another auction website showing HANOI-CONGES 28 AVRIL 83 TONKIN and THUAN-AN 25 AVRIL 94 ANNIM.

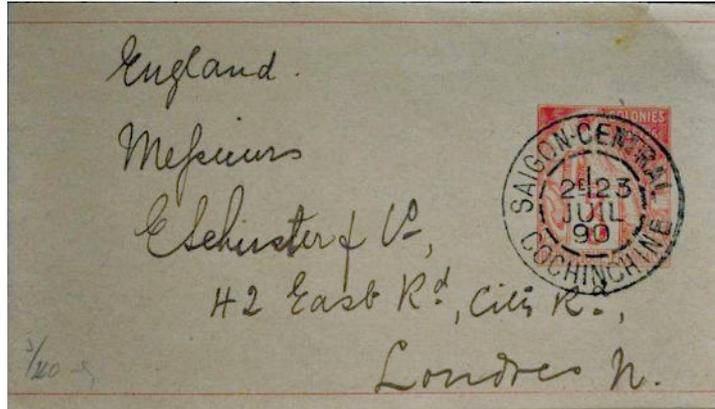


Figure 3  
French Colonies Wrapper Used in Cochinchina



**(2) Martinique**

Martinique is an island in the Lesser Antilles in the eastern Caribbean Sea. One of the Windward Islands, it is directly north of Saint Lucia, north-west of Barbados, and south of Dominica. Martinique is one of the twenty-seven regions of France (being an overseas region) and an integral part of the French Republic.

Saint-Pierre is a town and *commune* of France's Caribbean overseas *département* of Martinique, founded in 1635 by

Pierre Belain d'Esnambuc. Before the total destruction of Saint-Pierre in 1902 by a volcanic eruption, it was the most important city of Martinique culturally and economically, being known as "the Paris of the Caribbean" (*Wikipedia*).

The Martinique usage of this wrapper (**Figure 4**) is the only one recorded in the database. The postmark appears to be SAINT PIERRE 25 JANV 89 (year unclear) MARTINIQUE. The uprating is the 1886 5c overprint on France 20c brown on greenish (Scott 1).

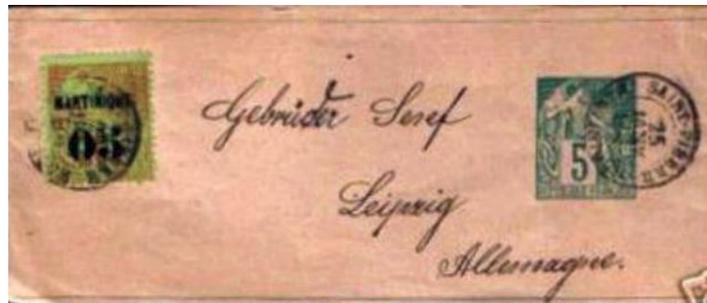


Figure 4  
French Colonies Wrapper Used in Martinique



“House of Slaves”  
(Wikipedia)



“Door of No Return”

**(3) Sénégal**

Senegal is a country in West Africa. In 1677, France gained control of what had become a minor departure point in the Atlantic slave trade — the island of Gorée next to modern Dakar, used as a base to purchase slaves from the warring chiefdoms on the mainland.

Gorée is a small island sheltered by the Cape Vert Peninsula. It is known as the location of the House of Slaves. Built around 1776, the building was the home in the early 19th century to one of a class of wealthy colonial Senegalese Métis woman traders. Despite the shrine-like status of

Gorée Island, historians have argued only 26,000 enslaved Africans were recorded having passed through the island, of the 12 million slaves that were exported from Africa. Others have argued that there is evidence that the building itself was earlier built to hold large numbers of slaves, and that as many as 15 million people passed through this particular Door of No Return (Wikipedia).

There are three examples of the GOREE SENEGAL postmark. The one shown as Figure 5 is postmarked 8 NOV 93. The other two examples show unreadable postmark details both on copies of E5.

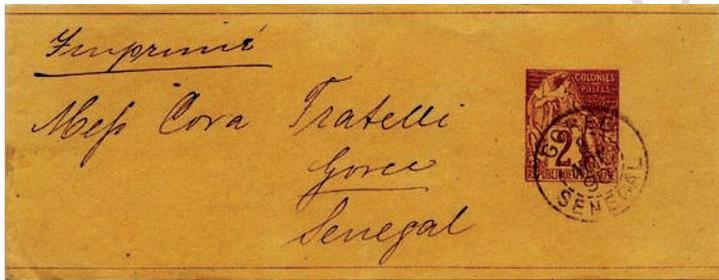


Figure 5  
French Colonies Wrapper Used in Senegal



**(4) Réunion**

Reunion is a French island located in the Indian Ocean, east of Madagascar, about 200 kilometres south-west of Mauritius, the nearest island. Previously known as the Mascarene Islands, it became a stop on the route to India for the French East India Company. In 1848, the island was finally called *La Réunion*.

The opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 reduced the importance of the island as a stopover on the East Indies trade route. Saint Denis is the administrative capital (Wikipedia).

The postmark on the sole example (Figure 6) is a double-ring REUNION 5 AOUT 94 ST-DENIS. The wrapper was used locally and addressed to St. Paul west of Saint-Denis.



Figure 6  
French Colonies Wrapper Used in Reunion



La Réunion

### Conclusion

Only 21 cases of French Colonies wrappers have been listed on the main eBay site in the past 11 years. There is no inscription on the indicium to indicate for which colony the wrappers are intended. Postmark details are often difficult to read from Internet images but it appears that there are extant wrappers from at least four colonies: Cochinchina, Martinique, Senegal and Reunion. That these wrappers might have been used in another 16 postal entities should pique the level of collector interest.

There were five wrapper denominations printed in France in the same design and issued in January 1889. Each of these types has been listed for sale with frequencies between three and five. These low quantities translate to appearances every 26-44 weeks on average, which makes them some of the most elusive wrappers to be listed on this site.

There were 17 sales recorded in the database since March 2006. At the time of recording these sales it was not appreciated that the postmarking details differentiate these colonies. Grouping them all together is like aggregating all

six Australian colonies. However, on the basis of what was recorded, bidder interest showed an overall score of 4.23. While this number may not seem particularly significant, when compared with 65 other specific countries it is ranked sixth behind the Cayman Islands, Greece, Sudan, Finland and the Philippines. While the collector base may be small, those interested in the wrappers of the French Colonies have demonstrated a preparedness to pay sums that rank these wrappers tenth in overall highest average sales (in dollars) out of the 65 other studies.

### Reference

Kosniowski, Jan (2015 forthcoming), *Newspaper Wrappers: Catalogue of Postal Stationery Newspaper Wrappers of the Whole World*, StampDomain.

### Acknowledgements

Allan Gory read and commented on an earlier draft; Maurice Tyler and Ron Bentley deciphered the postmarks on the Tonquin Hai-Phong registered wrapper. I thank them all most sincerely for helping to improve the paper

# The Bogus Artwork of Louis-Oscar Roty and Luc-Olivier Merson

Ashley Lawrence

Just over a year ago I was sent some drawings for comment. The sender had acquired them on the internet, in the belief that they had been drawn by Louis-Oscar Roty (1846-1911), the designer of *La Semeuse*, and by Luc-Olivier Merson (1846-1920), the designer of *Type Merson*. The drawings are illustrated below as **Figures 1, 2, 3 and 4**.

A novel feature of these drawings is their purported provenance. Apparently at one stage in their existence they were held in the Maurice Burrus collection, and had been sold at an auction held by Shanahan's Stamp Auctions of Dublin, Ireland, in August 1959. According to pencilled notes on the back, some of the drawings had been authenticated by Raoul Lesgor, an American authority on French stamps, in August 1960.

It may be instructive to put this in context. Maurice Burrus (1882-1959), a tobacco magnate, was one of the world's greatest general collectors of postage stamps. He was fascinated by stamps, and his considerable wealth enabled him to purchase many rare items. The disposal of his many collections involved some seventy-five separate auctions or private sales over a period of five years. The provenance *ex Burrus* was generally regarded by philatelists as a guarantee of quality.

Shanahan's Stamp Auctions were at the heart of a financial scandal which broke during the late 1950s and convulsed the philatelic world for many years afterwards. The company had encouraged members of the public to invest in rare postage stamps. A mysterious robbery of valuable items which had not been insured, and sensational revelations about fictitious transactions and funds held in foreign bank accounts, led to the investigation of the company by the Garda. Directors of the company were arrested on charges of fraudulent conversion of investors' funds, and the ensuing litigation lasted for years.

I had bought similar drawings to those illustrated below, some years ago, and show them overleaf as **Figures 5 and 6**. They purport to be essays or original artwork for Roty's design of *La Semeuse*, but they are nothing of the sort. They are bogus artists' drawings, which may well have emanated from the USA during the 1940s or 1950s. My drawings did not bear the Burrus cachet, but for me, as a collector of the Sowers, they had a certain curiosity value, and I included them among the Collectibles in my book, *The Sower, a Common Little French Stamp*.

Many readers will also recognise **Figure 5** as the illustration on the front cover of Geoff Gethin's excellent account of *Fakes & Forgeries of 20th Century French Postage Stamps*, published by the Society.

Our members and other collectors have been warned on previous occasions to beware of such bogus artwork. In September 1977, an article by the late George Barker appeared in *Newsletter* N° 25 of the France & Colonies Philatelic Society under the heading 'Warning – Bogus Artist's Drawings'. I will quote from the article, and the illustrations from 1899 and 1906 are shown in **Figures 7 and 8**.

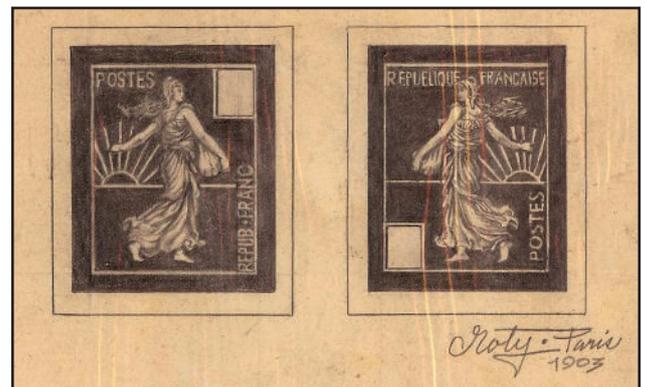
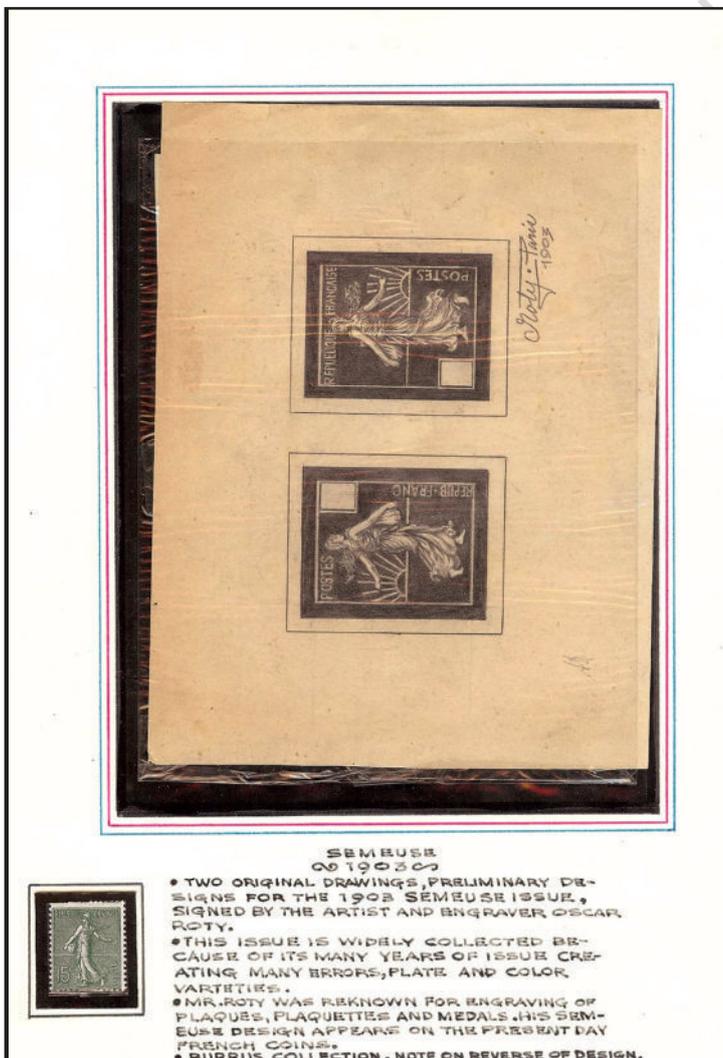


Figure 1 with detail

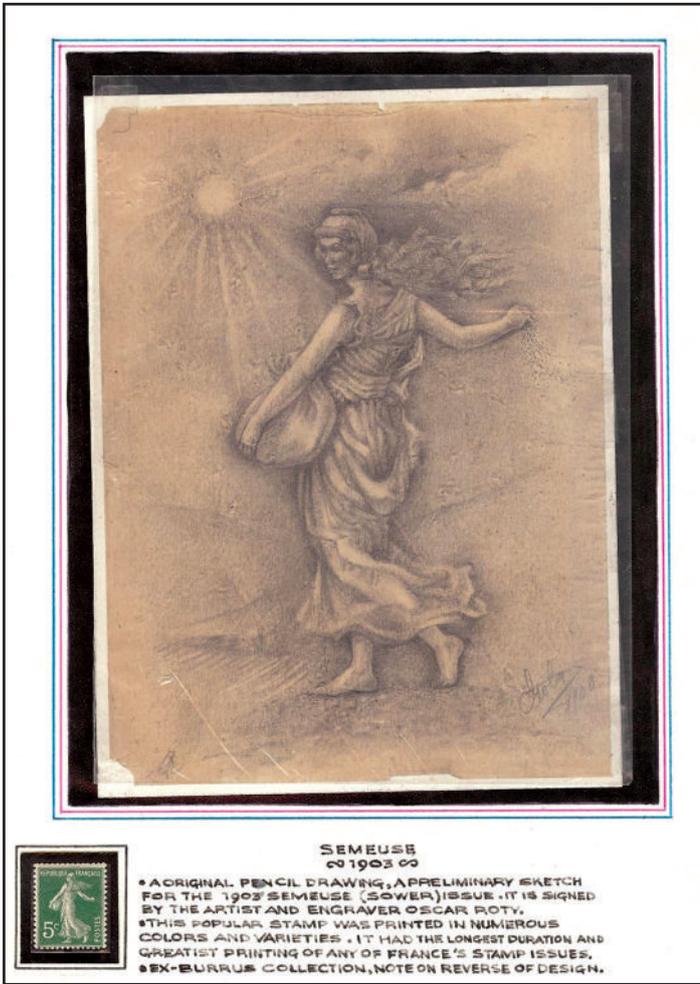


Figure 2

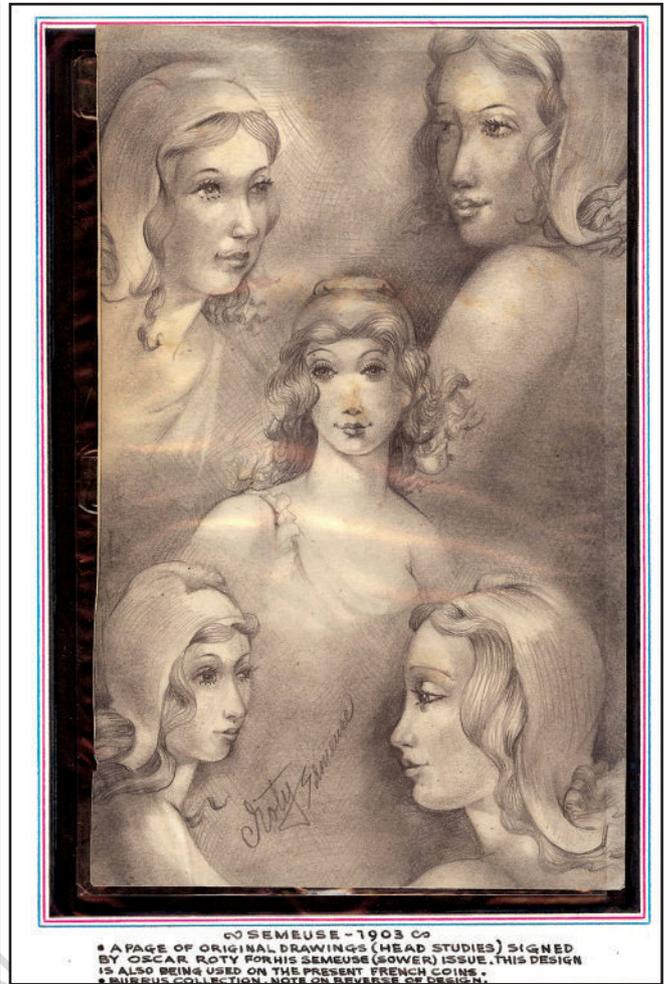


Figure 3

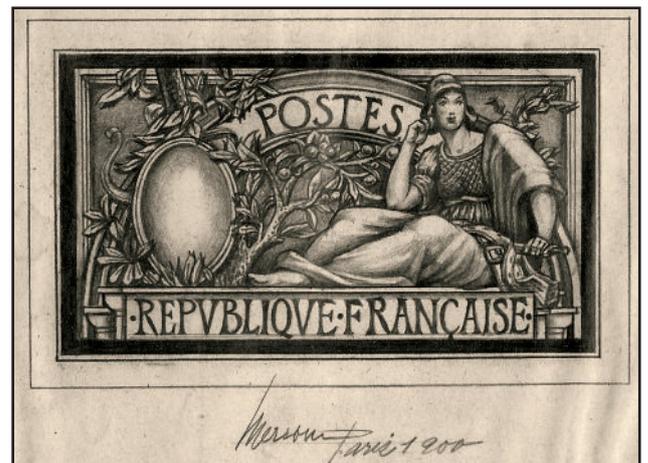
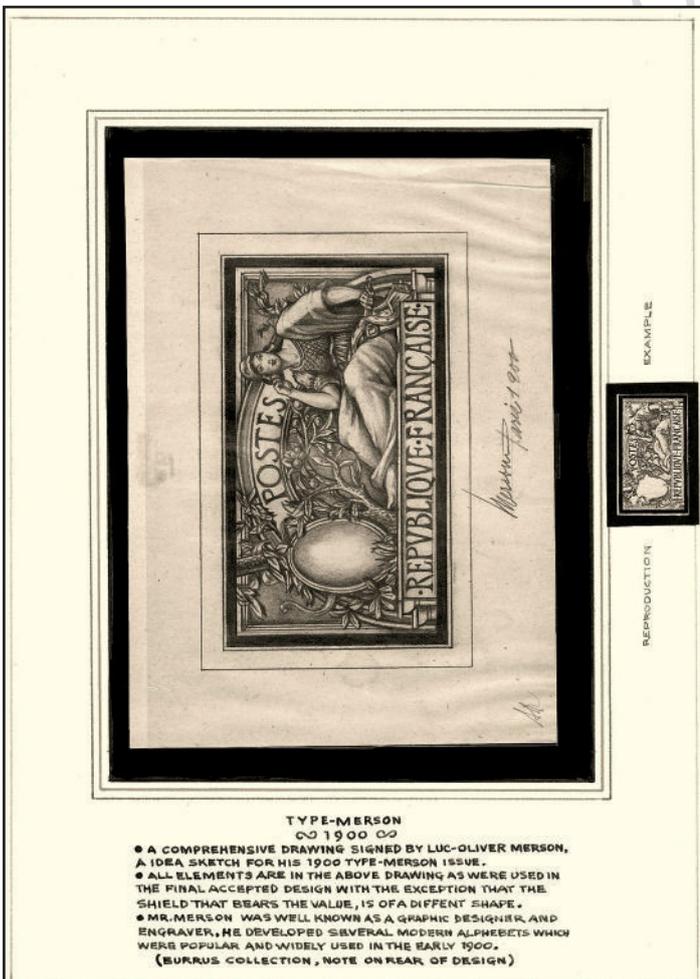


Figure 4 with detail



Figure 5

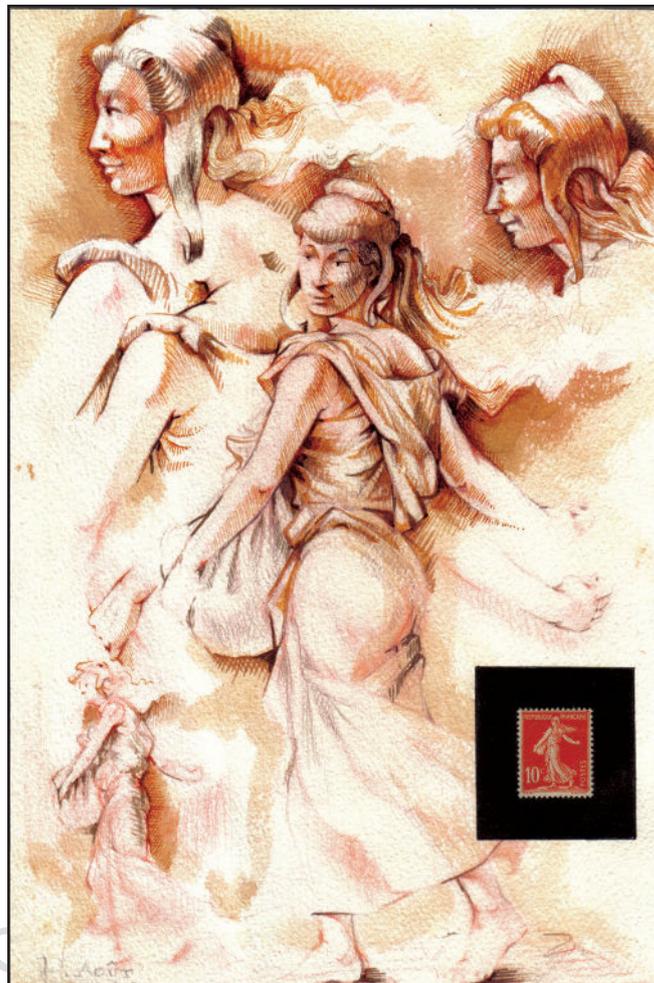


Figure 6



The '1899' Drawing

Figure 7



The '1906' Drawing

Figure 8

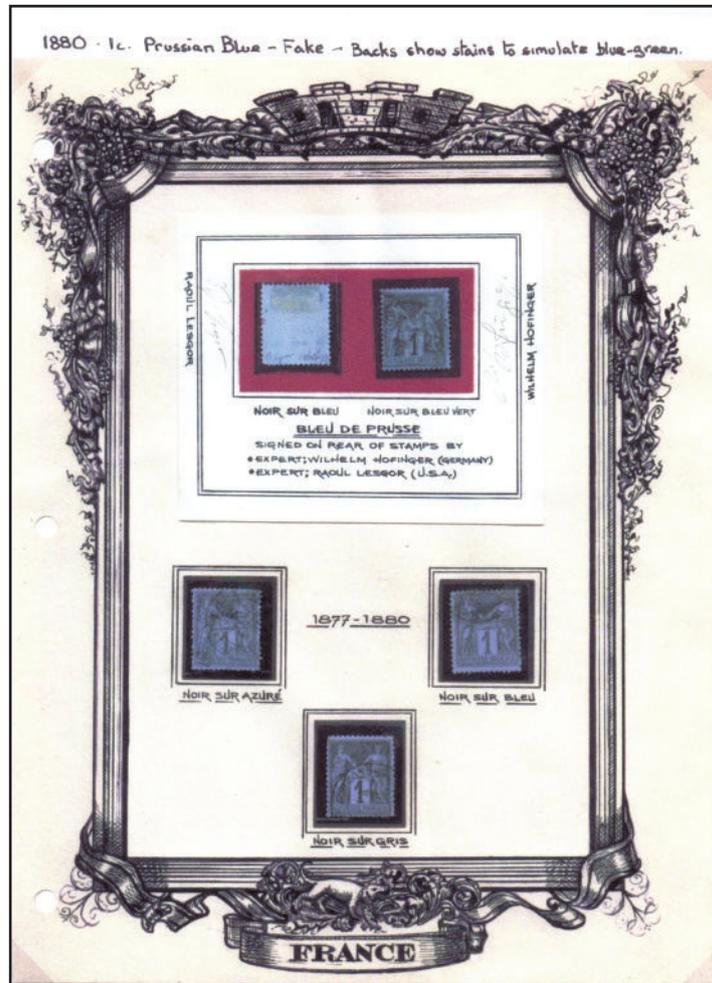


Figure 9

"Some of you may have seen the article by our member J.-F. Brun in 'Le Monde des Philatélistes' for July / August 1977 describing forged documents purporting to be the original artist's drawings by O. Roty of essays for the Sower design. There are several types (see illustrations), some dated 1899 and others 1906, with a 'signature' of O. Roty and an 'expert' counter-signature of W. Hofinger. I have been asked by Dr. J. Storch to give further publicity to these fakes, which have apparently flooded the market. J.-F. Brun describes how Mr. Izoulet, the Paris dealer, has withdrawn examples from sale.

"J.-F. Brun remarks that the fakes probably come from the U.K. (perhaps because they have captions in English). From the copy in my possession, and other captions I have seen, I am of the opinion that they originate from the U.S.A, because of the use of the 'hash' mark (#) in place of the word 'number' or the abbreviation 'no.'; this is an American usage. If any member has any further news on this subject, please let us know."

Note the similarities in the format and descriptions on some of the drawings. The frame around Figure 5 is identical to that surrounding fakes of the 1c Bleu de Prusse of Type Sage of 1880 illustrated in Figure 9, mounted on

card and 'signed' by experts, Wilhelm Hofinger (Germany) and Raoul Lessor (USA).

The fakers had taken care to select respected names for the alleged authentication of their handiwork, and the fraud assumed an international dimension. Wilhelm Hofinger was well known in philatelic circles, and expertised French stamps between 1954 and 1975. Raoul Lessor was the co-author, with Meade Minnigerode, of *The Cancellations on French Stamps of the Classic Issues 1849-1876*, published by the Nassau Stamp Company in New York in 1948. The addition of their names to the confections, and the mention of the renowned Burrus Collection, made such material irresistible to stamp collectors.

I advised the sender of the designs purported to be by Roty to send them to the *Musée Oscar Roty* for authentication. The Musée, at 3, Place du Petit Cloître, 45150 Jargeau, France, holds the Roty archive. I suggested that he should write in French, as in my experience such enquiries have a better chance of receiving attention if they are written in French! The Director of the Musée would be able to identify any of the drawings which really were made by Roty, and those which are bogus.

If any reader has further information, or examples of such bogus drawings in their collection, I would be very interested to hear from them.

# “*Les travailleurs*” who helped win World War 1

David Trapnell

The purpose of this paper is to draw attention to an aspect of the postal history of the First World War in France that seems to have been virtually ignored. This is intended to be a “taster” for what could be a study as large as it is fascinating.

The First World War was characterised, perhaps more than any other, by appalling loss of life. France and its empire recruited 7,500,000 men of whom at least 1,385,000 were killed and 4,266,000 wounded, totalling 75% of those enlisted<sup>1</sup> – a greater proportion than any other country involved. As the war proceeded it became increasingly clear that, such were the casualties, victory would only be possible if more people, even if they were unfit for fighting at the Front, could support the war effort behind it.

So it became a matter of strategic importance to enlist the help of men and women who were able to do essential work such as making munitions, laying and repairing roads and railways, building bridges, docks and trenches. Of course, many men were recruited from France itself. It was to assist this work that France asked the Italians for help. In March 1918 they sent 60,000 men as T.A.I.F.<sup>2</sup>

A far greater number of men were recruited from the French colonies, particularly those of North and West Africa and Indo-China, and the French protectorate Tunisia. From Algeria alone 80,000 men came to France 1916-1918. Of some 90,000 Indo-Chinese who supported the Allies, more than half came as *travailleurs*, the remainder as troops. In addition, in 1918 there were also soldiers from Russia who came as *travailleurs*. When the Soviet army surrendered to the Germans in March 1918, following the revolutions of 1917, Russian troops had several options, none particularly attractive. One of these was to go to France to assist the fight against Germany. This was the choice made primarily by those with “white” traditionalist Russian sympathies and who were opposed to those supporting the “red” Bolsheviks who had taken over control of their homeland.

I have been unable to find any article on the postal history of the *Travailleurs* as a general group, although there is some literature relating to the Indo-Chinese in this role.

## Organisation

The men lived in army-style barracks and were organised on a military pattern. Thus there were battalions, companies and groups. There were a few French officers to organise the work and a few French guards (as much to ensure that the *travailleurs* did not try to escape as to protect them). The pictures I have been able to locate, like the few shown here, suggest that there was a happy collaboration between them all, but perhaps the photographs would not have been taken if relationships were otherwise!

<sup>1</sup> *Casualties of World War 1* (Internet 2012). Wikipedia cites even greater losses.

<sup>2</sup> *Troupes Auxiliaires Italiennes en France*. David Trapnell (2013). Italian Forces in France in World War 1. *Journal of the France & Colonies P.S.* N° 267, p. 20.

## Postal arrangements for *Travailleurs*

*Travailleurs* had the privilege of *franchise militaire* just like the soldiers serving at the front. Because the majority of them were far from military post offices, their mail mostly had to be posted into the civilian system. Their entitlement to free postage required authentication by their unit, in the same way that many items of mail from other services supporting the war effort also had to be<sup>3</sup>.

Many of the men were uneducated and some unable to write. So it is no surprise to find that much of the mail bearing the authorization handstamps of units of *Travailleurs* was from the officers in charge.

The following examples illustrate the varied national origins of these key workers, their locations in France and the kind of work that they were doing.



Figure 1

The sender of this cover has helpfully given his status, lower left. He was the Commanding Officer of the 4th Battalion of *Travailleurs* attached to the 70th Territorial Infantry Regiment. His authorizing handstamp, top left, has *Liberté* seated in the centre. Unusually, because it was not strictly necessary, a 2nd authorising handstamp has been applied - that of the Postal Service of the same group of *Travailleurs*. There is no date stamp.

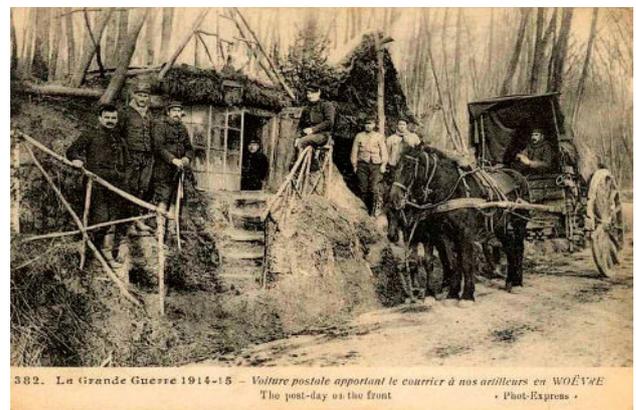


Figure 2

A rustic horse-drawn cart delivers mail to artillerymen near Woëvre (c.25km north-west of Metz). Since the year was mentioned, the card was presumably printed in 1915.

<sup>3</sup> David Trapnell (2011). *French military posts and railways 1914-1918. The authorizing handstamps*. “A special edition published by the Forces Postal History Society.” 40pp, A4



Figure 3

Authorising handstamp of the 4th Company of *Travailleurs* based at the Artillery Park, Gravanches, near Clermont-Ferrand, where the letter was posted, 8.2.1918. "CM" (top) = *Correspondance Militaire* (free post).



Figure 4

The bleak military-style barracks at Gravanches.



Figure 5

Authorising handstamp of the Commanding Officer of the Group of Colonial *Travailleurs* attached to the 2nd Artillery Regiment at Versailles. Handstamps, like this, were often applied to the picture side of a card in addition to the other side.

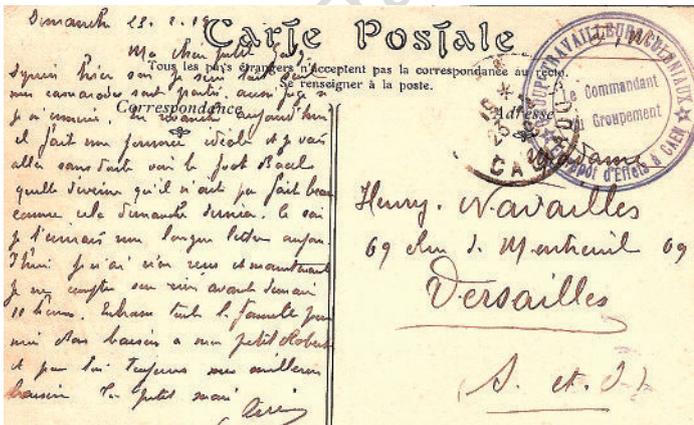


Figure 6a

Handstamp of the Commandant of the Colonial *Travailleurs* Group working at the Caen clothing store.



Figure 6b

Reconstructed handstamp of the Commanding Officer

Figure 6c

Double straight-line address handstamp showing that the men were from North Africa. The sender was Sergeant Navailles.





Figure 7a  
 Red authorising handstamp reading  
 TRAVAILLEURS MILITAIRES RUSSES / IX REGION /  
 OFFICIER RÉGIONAL.  
 The date stamp is that of  
 TOURS / INDRE ET LOIRE / 27.7.1918.

Figure 7b  
 Letter within the cover shown  
 in 7a from the Regional Officer,  
 Lieutenant Roederer,  
 authorised and confirmed  
 by the same handstamp.  
 The letter concerns transportation  
 of a Russian soldier without escort  
 after payment.  
 Evidently he showed  
 no sign of absconding.

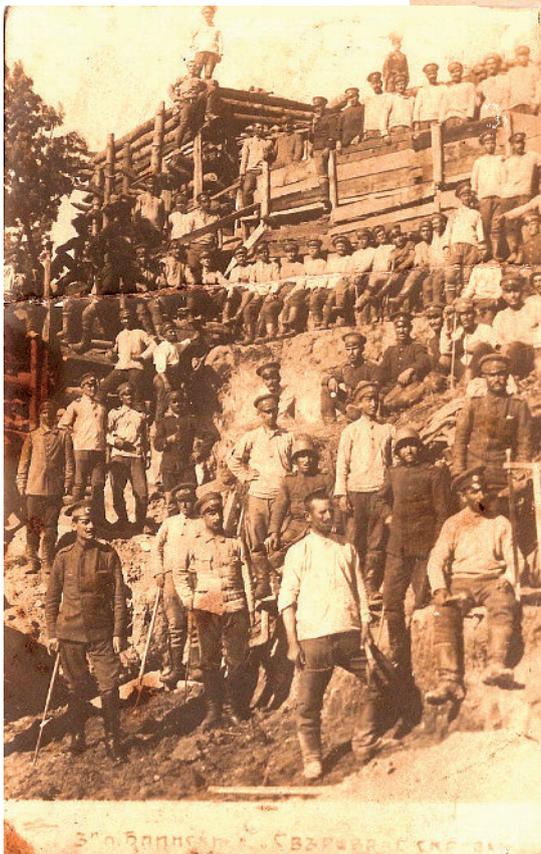
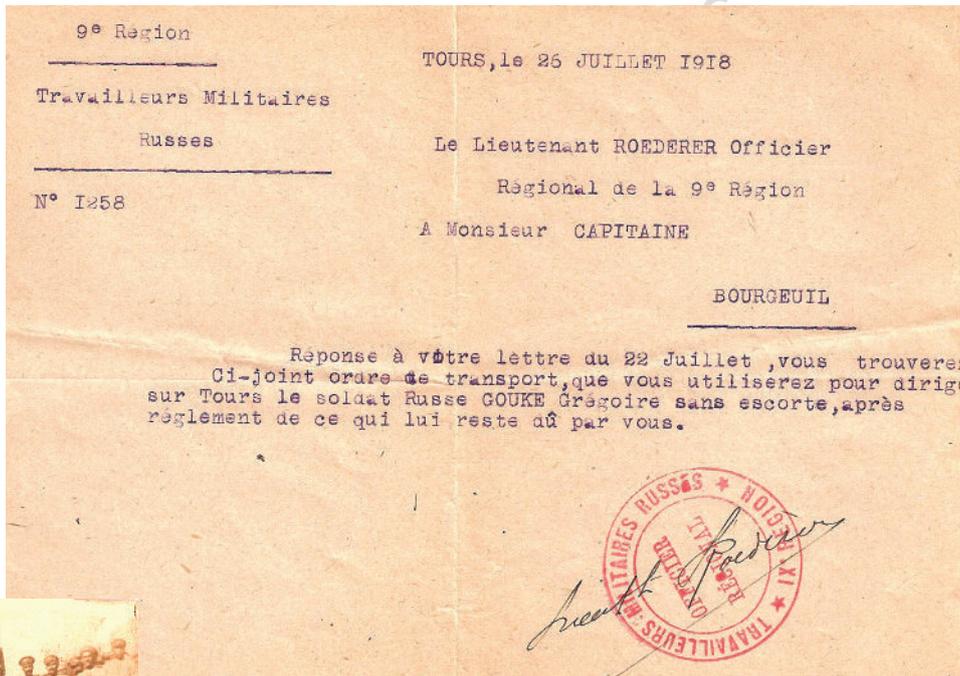


Figure 8  
 Original photograph showing a large group of men in military uniform  
 said to be "les travailleurs russes".  
 In the foreground, at the foot of the fortifications,  
 which the men have built (presumably),  
 are two guards wearing French-style steel helmets  
 and two men with swords who appear to be officers.  
 Since the caps of each are similar  
 and like those worn by many of the men,  
 even though their uniforms are different,  
 they are probably both Russians.  
 Alas, there is insufficient detail shown to be sure.  
 Description in Cyrillic text is too faint to read.



Figure 9  
 Authorising handstamp of the Testing Section of  
 another Company of Russian Travailleurs





Figure 13  
Workers are filling 340mm shells with explosive in conditions that do not look particularly safe.



Figure 14  
20mm shells being stacked "après vernissage"

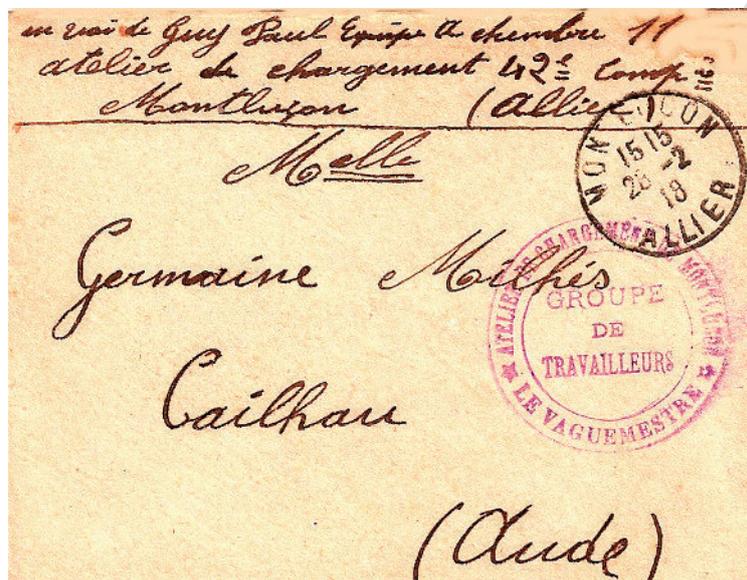


Figure 15  
The violet authorising handstamp of the Military Postmaster (*vaguemestre*) reads ATELIER DE CHARGEMENT DE MONTLUÇON / LE VAGUEMESTRE / GROUPE DE TRAVAILLEURS. The cover was posted into the civilian post at MONTLUÇON (Allier) 25.2.1918. The sender gave his address as Room 11, *Atelier de Chargement*, 42 Company, Montluçon (Allier).



Figure 16  
The "Atelier de chargement", part of the very extensive armaments factory at Montluçon



Figure 17b  
Reconstruction of authorising handstamp reading RÉGIMENT DE TIRAILLEURS ALGÉRIENS / GROUPE DE TRAVAILLEURS KABYLES / LE COMMANDANT

Figure 17a

Cover from the Montluçon armaments factory.

As Fig.17b shows, the Kabyle *Travailleurs* were attached to the Algerian *Tirailleurs* (infantry) Regiment. The cover, marked "F.M." (*franchise militaire* = free post) was posted at Nantes, 2.11.1918, shortly before the end of the war.

Kabyles came from inland Algeria.

There is a space before GROUPE, presumably for manuscript insertion of a number.



Figure 18

A group of Kabyle *Travailleurs* outside one of the buildings at Montluçon.

There is no evidence of any officer or armed guard.



Figure 19a

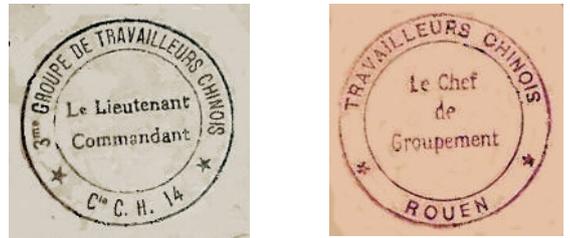
An unusual oval handstamp of one of the Groups of Indo-Chinese *Travailleurs*, posted 10.7.1918.



Figure 19b

Reconstructed handstamp of the military Postmaster, the First Group of Chinese *Travailleurs*. The term CHINOIS was applied both to Chinese and Indo-Chinese.

Figure 20  
Two examples of the handstamps of other Chinese *Travailleur* groups



Finally, two cards with *Travailleur* handstamps from near Dunkirk, northern France:

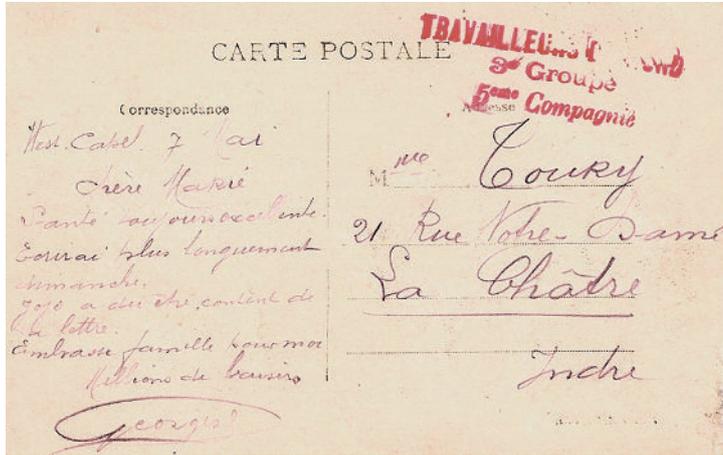
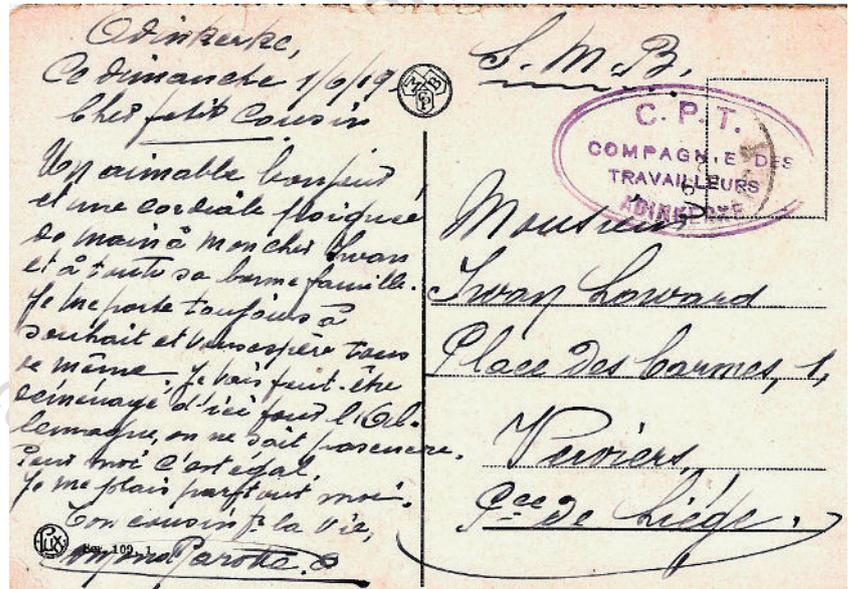


Figure 21  
Dated by the sender "7 May" but without year or date stamp, this card bears the three-line authorisation handstamp of the 3rd Group of the 5th Company of TRAVAILLEURS (DU NORD). The sender gives "West-Cappel" as his address, a small town c.8km south-east of Dunkirk. The year was almost certainly 1918.

Figure 22a (right)  
Card, headed by the sender ADINKERKE 1.6.1919, bears the oval handstamp of a Company of *Travailleurs* evidently still at work in Belgium, close to the French border and Dunkirk, eight months after the end of the war. The sender endorsed the card "S.M.B." = Service Militaire Belge. The practice of authorising free military post posted in the civilian postal system in Belgium was the same as in France.



Figure 22b  
Reconstructed double-oval handstamp. "C.P.T." may stand for *Compagnie de Parc des Transmissions*



**Conclusions**

In the First World War –

- 1 *Travailleurs* were entitled to the privilege of free military post in the same way that soldiers were.
- 2 Their administrative organisation was based on the military model – Brigades, Companies and Groups.
- 3 When posted into the civilian postal system (the norm, even when they were working closely with military units), their mail had to be shown to be entitled to free post by the presence of the unit authorising handstamp.
- 4 The great variety of handstamps suggests that there was no official pattern but the design was left to the units to determine and have their stamps made locally.
- 5 Groups of *Travailleurs* worked in many different parts of France, from Marseille to Dunkirk.
- 6 They came from France and most of the French colonies and the Tunisian Protectorate.
- 7 Their work was mostly associated with the making of munitions or the construction and repair of railways, roads, bridges etc .
- 8 As judged by the absence of literature on this subject, the postal history of *Travailleurs* has been unjustly neglected. They played a vital part in winning the war.
- 9 This paper is intended as an "appetiser" to encourage more study of a subject which deserves it.

# Rare Letters to the Marianas Islands and the Strange Tale of the Hoaxing of François Lanfrey

Peter Kelly

Two letters were purchased by the author as part of his collection of the postal history of the *Type Sage* period, representing as they do an exceptionally rare example of mail sent from a *convoyeur* station to Agagma (or Guam as it is now called). It was not until he had received them and read the contents of the letters inside that curiosity overtook him and he searched the names of the writer and addressee on the Internet. What follows is a précis of articles published in the *Journal de l'Ain* and *Le Gaulois*. Only by reading these do the letters make any sense, and one has to have some sympathy for the poor gullible Lanfreys who, little by little, came to realise that the whole great adventure was a hoax. As stated in the *Journal de l'Ain*, "This affair is a new and monstrous example of human vanity and folly."

## Part 1: The events

During 1876 a young man named François Lanfrey, aged 18 and at that time a student of the *école normale* at Grenoble, received in the mail a series of documents appearing to come from a Royal Chancellery informing him that he had been called upon to reign over the Marianas Islands.

The first document, bearing coats of arms, consisted of a Royal Assent signed in the name of Ferdinand, the most recent king of the Marianas Islands in the north-west Pacific Ocean, who had apparently died without direct issue. The explanation given is that Ferdinand was the last in line of the senior branch of the Lanfrey family who emigrated to the Marianas at the time of the Wars of Religion (1562–98). In this document Ferdinand, before his death, called on François Lanfrey to succeed him to the throne, being the last descendant of the junior branch of the family. Such succession was, however, subject to the express condition that François marry Princess Marie-Augustine, Ferdinand's great niece. In order to allow the future king to agree to all this and come into his rights, a provisional regency had been established whereby Louise de Coutelmont, niece of King Ferdinand and mother of the young princess, had been appointed as Regent to ensure that, with Lanfrey *père* (see next paragraph), the destiny of the people of the Marianas was safeguarded during the period of interregnum.

The second document was a letter allegedly from the same King Ferdinand addressed to the father of the young Lanfrey. In this letter Antoine Lanfrey *père* was asked, in his (by then) capacity as "Royal Highness", to accept in the name of his son – a minor – a crown that would forever hallow the standing and importance of his family. Finally, accompanying these documents was a petition from the Regent herself entreating the future king to come promptly to receive from her hands the sacred trust that she held in obedience to the wishes of the dead king<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> The document stated that the offer of the Crown would lapse if formal acceptance was not received by a date (unclear on examination by the author of this article) in June 1877 as this could cause "serious

The text, handwriting, presentation and grammatical errors in these documents should have been sufficient to arouse the suspicions of any reasonable and clear-thinking person to suggest that they could only have been the work of a shameless hoaxer. Nonetheless, the Lanfrey family, who lived in poor circumstances in the *commune* of Tencin, believed that they had been called to the highest level of fame and fortune. Antoine, a modest country gardener, had some doubts from the start; but the mother and son, already basking in the dreams of their imagination, had only got one thought in mind: to resolve the serious material problems that could prevent them from realising their aspirations as quickly as possible.

Shortly after the receipt of these documents and their acceptance, the Lanfrey family received a visit from the author of this hoax, namely M. Lanfranchi, with his accomplice M. Bidot, masquerading as the Minister of Justice of the islands and the Duc de Bouillon respectively. They came to confirm the Royal Assent and Will establishing the young François's right to succeed King Ferdinand. Needless to say, these supposed nobles were treated with the utmost respect.

Either by indiscretion or by reason of a new plot by the author of this strange hoax, the local newspapers announced that the student Lanfrey, of the *école normale* of Grenoble, was destined for the throne of the Marianas<sup>2</sup>. Although the majority received this news with a smile of incredulity, there were some who bowed before the majesty of the young sovereign. Lanfrey was the object of requests and demands of all sorts. It did not take long for there to appear a band of people of a lower social condition who, in a mood of excessive vanity, became active in the search for honorific titles even if they were completely sham, and after them came specialist wrongdoers trading on the naivety and credulity of the public.

Investigative work by members of the French justice system uncovered the originator of this hoax to be Lanfranchi, who could not be traced. In court his place on the bench of the accused was taken by two miserable defrocked priests, Bidot and Sabatier, and a young newspaper seller called Tategrain<sup>3</sup>.

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prejudice to the monarchy", and that the Prince should not extend his stay abroad (ie, in France) beyond four months after acceptance. This appears to be all part of the hoax in order to put pressure on the family. (See *Le Gaulois, Chronique des Tribunaux*, 24 August 1877.)

<sup>2</sup> This is at odds with the *Chronique des Tribunaux*. The documents called for Prince François and his family not to tell anyone about the terms of the will and any details concerning the whole issue. This was an act of prudence on the part of the originators of the hoax, with a view to ensuring that the "*pauvres paysans de Tencin*" were shielded from any curious eyes.

<sup>3</sup> During the court hearing, Léonie Tategrain, the sister of Tategrain the accused, stated that Bidot involved him in the plot because of a "particular affection" he had for him that was not of a paternal nature (*Chronique des Tribunaux*).

The court heard how the conspirators were in Paris when it became known through various publications that Lanfrey was to take the throne of the Marianas. Bidot was already in contact with Lanfranchi and through him was able to get in touch with Lanfrey. Bidot made the family's eyes sparkle at the prospect of being able to receive, through an estate in Canada, a fortune of several million francs – although this sum was said to be blocked in a London bank. To give some substance to this claim, he visited London and, from there, wrote to Lanfrey that he had met the British Queen and that she had promised her protection to the King of the Marianas.

In exchange for services promised and rendered, Bidot had been showered with honours by the young and naïve François. Already calling himself the Duc de Bouillon, Bidot assumed the titles of Primate Bishop of the Marianas, General Administrator of the Catholic Faith, and Crown Counsellor; moreover, he was awarded the Grand Cross of the Order of St Sauveur, as well as being conferred with university and other titles. The two acolytes, Sabatier and Tategrain, were not forgotten in the distribution of honorifics and both received prestigious-sounding titles. These titles were used by them as a means of currying favour and carrying out a number of swindles and shady deals, which eventually brought them to the attention of the police and ultimately into court. All of them were, in fact, practised criminals in one way or another, with the exception perhaps of Tategrain.

The hoaxers had failed to obtain from the family the sum of 9,000 francs that Bidot had asked for – money that was supposedly intended to cover the effort he had already expended on behalf of them in making his visit to Queen Victoria in London. And once the hoaxers realised that the family had little money and could not be exploited to any further advantage, they disappeared and were not seen again until they appeared in Chamber 10 of the Court – with the exception of Lanfranchi, who could not be found at all and evaded justice.

The court case itself involved a substantial number of witnesses who had been defrauded, as well as crimes against the Church relating to the actions of the two unfrocked priests. Towards the end of the trial, François Lanfrey was called as a witness and questioned by the President of the Court:

President: *What is your name?*

Lanfrey: *Lanfrey, student at the école normale.*

President: *It is you who are the King of the Marianas Islands?*

Lanfrey: *Yes, Sir.*

President: *How did you get this kingdom?*

Lanfrey: *I don't know anything. One day I received a letter from a Captain Marius<sup>4</sup>, who told me about it. Then M. Bidot came and confirmed the story and, in exchange for this news, he asked for titles that I could not refuse giving him.*

<sup>4</sup> It is not clear who Captain Marius was. In one of the letters reference is made to "Captain Framet", who is presumably the same person – who, according to Lanfrey, posted the letters supposedly given to him by Louise de Coutelmont. We know from the court case that the letters were in fact sent to the family by Lanfranchi, in Paris at that time.

Lanfrey added that he had been asked to lend, either to Lanfranchi or Bidot, the sum of 2,000 francs – he could not remember the details.

The president recalled the facts mentioned previously and the mysterious documents received by Lanfrey:

President: *You have high station?*

Lanfrey: *Yes, Sir.*

President: *What happened between you and Bidot? He wrote to you, he counselled you, he directed you?*

In reply, Bidot claimed to have written once or twice to thank Lanfrey and nothing else.

Finally the President called on François Lanfrey's mother – referred to as the 'Queen Mother'. She replied: "For a certain length of time I believed that the royalty of the Marianas Islands was real. M. Lanfranchi asked me for the sum of 1,000 francs to allow him to bring back nine million, and then we had to equip a ship to take us over to the kingdom." The President replied that she would not be made a fool of again.

The Court condemned Bidot to five years in prison, Sabatier to two years and Tategrain to 15 months, with each also being fined 50 francs.

## Part 2: The Lanfrey Letters

First letter (from Antoine Lanfrey to Louise de Coutelmont) – see Fig 1:

Tencin, Canton de Goncalin, Département de l'Isère

24 February 1877<sup>5</sup>

*Your Royal Highness,*

*In accepting from your Royal Highness the Will made in our favour and passing our Acceptance to the Captain who has come from the Marianas we intend to leave without delay and within the time you have indicated; but as Lanfrey Père has been taken ill it has been impossible for us to leave France for where providence awaits us and it is only now, your Royal Highness, that we can take the necessary steps for departure, but as we have received no reply to our Acceptance we cannot be certain whether this document has been given to you. We have not heard anything from Captain Framet who came to the seaport of Marseille and sent us the documents from your Royal Highness through the post, requiring a prompt answer as he was setting sail for the Marianas the following day.*

*We would request your Royal Highness to reply to us promptly so that we know that you have received the Acceptance and sent a vessel to fetch us at Marseille so that we can leave with certainty.*

*In the meantime and awaiting the pleasure of getting to know you, please accept our best wishes to her August Person and to her child, well beloved Marie-Augustine and the respectful wish to be yours.*

*The good brother<sup>6</sup>*

*Lanfrey Antoine (Père)*

<sup>5</sup> The dates of both letters match the dates of dispatch on the envelopes.

<sup>6</sup> A curious and inexplicable valediction

TYPE SAGE

DESTINATIONS

Agagna, (Guam), Marianas. Spanish Colony.



24 February 1877

Tencin, (37-Isère) to Her Royal Highness Louise de Coutelemont, Regent of the Marianas Islands

Marked "Par l'Espagne"

cds: TENCIN / CH GR / 3<sup>E</sup> (37)

Convoyeur station at Tencin on the Chambéry to Grenoble line. (24km NE of Grenoble. Pop:c800 (1885)

Transit: Grenoble 25.2; Lyon à Marseille TPO 25.6; Tarascon à Cette TPO 25.2; Cette à Bordeaux TPO 25.2

Bordeaux à Irun (Spain) TPO 26.2

There are no further post marks.

Franked F1.50. (Note: Pre UPU; Marianas joined 1 May 1877).

Given the contents, the weight exceeds 15g. Rate cannot be quantified. No rate via Spain is quoted in the Annuaire des Postes. Probably accidental but further research required.

Taxed 3 Reales de Vellon at Manila. (From Europe. Double letter ½ - ¾ oz)

Information at the time suggests that mail was carried from Spain to Manila by the P&O to Singapore where there was a link with Manila and from there by whatever vessel was available. This would mean a transfer to Gibraltar via Gerona. The next P & O to leave there would have been the *Avoca* on 13 April that called at Galle, transferring mail to *Zambezi* that reached Singapore on 16.4. and approximately 8 days to Manila.

Figure 1

## TYPE SAGE

## DESTINATIONS

Agagna, (Guam), Marianas. Spanish Colony.



13 March 1877

Tencin, 37-(Isère) to Her Royal Highness Louise de Coutelemont, Regent of the Marianas Islands  
at the Royal Palace of Agagna  
Marked "Via Gibraltar"

cds: TENCIN / GR CH / (37)

Convoyeur station at Tencin on the Grenoble to Chambéry line. (24km NE of Grenoble. Pop:c800 (1885)

Transit: Grenoble 14.3; Lyon à Marseille TPO 25.6; . Cette à Bordeaux TPO 25.2

Gerona (Spain) 15.3 Gibraltar 21.3

There are no further post marks.

Franked F1.50. (Note: Pre UPU; Marianas joined 1 May 1877).

Given the contents, the weight exceeds 15g. Rate cannot be quantified. No rate via Spain is quoted in the Annuaire des Postes. Probably accidental but further research required.

Carried by P & O *Khedive* Dep: Gibraltar 28.3 Arr Galle Point 21.4

Dep: Galle Point 22.4 Arr: Singapore 30.4

Linked with a service to Manila and by whatever means available to the Marianas.

Figure 2

Second letter (from François Lanfrey to Marie-Augustine de Coutelmont via her mother Louise de Coutelmont) – see Fig 2:

Tencin, Canton de Goncalin, Département de l'Isère

13 March 1877

Royal Highness,

*Up until now my fervent desire is to carry out the promises that I have made, me and my family, to meet as soon as possible with you and your dear mother who will be mine as well since we received the Will of our grandfather that unites us through the sacred links of marriage. So it is, your Highness, to the advantage of all that we should meet in order to resolve all the difficulties that have affected a monarchy without a monarch?. We would have been with you, your dear Highness, if my father had not been seriously ill shortly after the Acceptance but he is now in good health thanks to God and good doctors.*

*I hope that when your Highness receives this letter she will have received that of my dear father and will have been able to send a ship to the seaport of Marseille as he requested in order that we may travel in safety.*

*So, my dear Royal Highness, I cannot wait to be with you and to prove my desire to accept your hand before God's sacred altar as I have agreed to in the Acceptance that you should have received through the intermediary of Captain Framet. We would request her Royal Highness, until we have had the pleasure of meeting, to accede to our request in coming to fetch us so that we can join you, your dear Highness and future wife, and to live with you in glory and prosperity and, with these respectful wishes, your Royal Highness, I wish always to be yours.*

*The future husband*

*Lanfrey Fils*

---

7 Lanfranchi had made the point that speed is of the essence and that the offer of the Crown would lapse if François Lanfrey had not arrived in the Marianas within four months of the acceptance date. Speed was important for the purpose of the hoax.

### Part 3: Commentary

The style and handwriting of both letters seem to be the same and it is unlikely that either father or son would have had the ability to produce letters with handwriting and grammar to this standard. They would have needed someone else and obviously not the hoaxers! The obsession with honorifics or titles is evident here, and this is reflected throughout the whole sorry saga.

The letters make little sense unless one has read the newspaper articles. It can be seen here that Lanfrey père has doubts and concerns and requires the certainty of a ship sent from the Marianas to collect the family, which would give credence to the whole issue. On the other hand, young François is fixated on the proposed marriage to Princess Marie-Augustine and is desperate for that ship to arrive.

The part of the puzzle that cannot be explained is what happened to these letters. We can be certain that they reached the Philippines and there is no obvious reason why they should have been withdrawn from the postal system there. Once they reached the Marianas, clearly they could not be delivered and must have been returned to Europe – either Spain or France – in an *ambulant* cover. One also wonders what may have happened to the Lanfrey family, because it must have been difficult for them to resume their old way of life and social position.

Finally, readers should note that hoaxes of this kind – asking people to pay money up-front in the hope of substantial future gain – remain all too commonly in circulation today by telephone and email!

## SHORTER ITEMS - INCLUDING QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

### Spreading the net widely in French West Africa

Members interested in the postal history and development of the French colonies that made up the Federation of French West Africa may be interested to hear about an area of co-operation that has made it possible for colonial postal history to be exhibited publicly in those now independent countries. This has been made possible by a friendly partnership between *Col.Fra*, the French society specialising in the study of the stamps and postal history of the old French colonies and the French association, *Images et Mémoires*, whose objectives include studies of the culture and modern and past iconography of overseas countries with particular relevance to the old French colonies. This manifests itself in, amongst other things, international exhibitions incorporating photography, postcards, paintings, materials, signs, posters and postage stamps and postal history.

Following on from the success of an exhibition of postal material in Bamako, Mali (formerly *Soudan Français*)

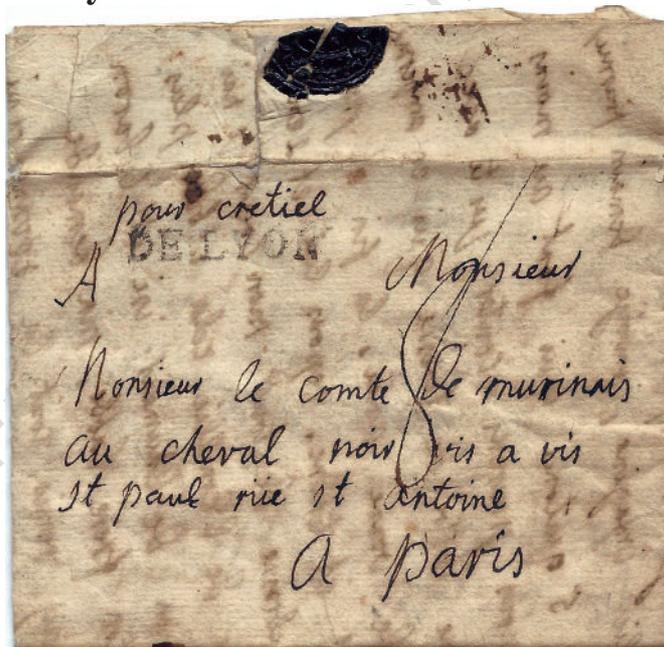
your Secretary provided the majority of the material for an exhibition of the stamps and postal history of *Haute Volta* that was held at Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso (formerly *Haute Volta* and *Côte d'Ivoire*) and that was so successful that it is being re-run at Bobo Dioulasso (also in Burkina Faso).

A new exhibition is being planned at present to be held at Gao, Mali for which one of the main strands will be the development in the 1930s of the trans-Saharan mail links with Algeria by vehicle and air and the importance of this in the context of *Soudan Français* and *Niger*.

For those of us interested in the stamps and postal history of the French colonies both *Col.Fra* and *Images et Mémoires* are important societies; the one as far as the strictly philatelic side is concerned and the other for a better understanding of the development and administration of the Colonies and some fascinating trips down memory lane. Both organisations can be Googled.

Peter Kelly

### 18th century entire from Lyon to Paris



I joined the FCPS very recently to discover and study more about French Postal History, 1738-1791.

I have a question I would like to put to members because I cannot find an answer elsewhere. Quite simply it is this:

An entire (addressed to *Monsieur Le Comte de Murinais au Cheval Noir vis a vis St Paul Rue St Antoine*) is dated 4 Janvier 1767 from Lyon (DE LYON) to Paris; in the top left corner of the obverse is the manuscript "pour cretiel". I cannot find either a translation of this or what postal meaning it may have.

Nigel Borlase-Hendry

"Pour" is used for "To" when placed in front of a place name to indicate the location to which a letter is sent. If you look at the handwritten address you will see that the sender has little or no regard for capital letters in place names, and I am 99% sure that "cretiel" is a misspelling for Créteil, now a suburb of Paris but in the 18th century a small town or village to the south-east of the capital. Why the letter from Lyon to Paris should be sent by that route or to that place is a question for the specialists in postal history, and I think it would be worthwhile publishing the query to see what details our members can come up with.

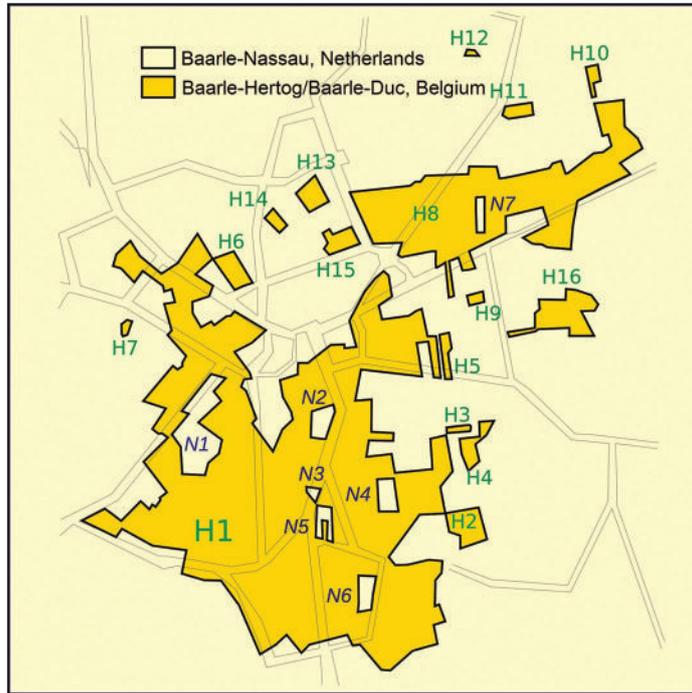
Editor

### Further information on Baarle-Hertog/Baarle-Duc

I can confirm that the virtually unused French place name of the Belgian extraterritorial village of Baarle-Hertog is

Baarle-Duc. The hybrid Baarle-Duc does not exist and has never done so.

Hans Smith



The municipality of Baarle-Hertog or Baarle-Duc, is comprised of a group of twenty-two Belgian enclaves (of which the main group H1-H16 is shown on the map) about five kilometres within the Netherlands. Its Dutch counterpart Baarle-Nassau, has two parcels of land in Belgium proper and seven Dutch counter-enclaves within the Belgian enclaves in the Netherlands (identified as N1-N7 on the map).

1843 Treaty of Maastricht (establishing the boundaries of the independent Belgium which had been guaranteed by Prussia, France, Britain, Austria, and Russia in the 1839 Treaty of London.). Land owners originally were loyal to different barons and the nationality of each of the 5,732 parcels in Baarle-Hertog and Baarle-Nassau was determined one by one.

This geographical oddity resulted from the 1648 Treaties of Westphalia (ending the Thirty Years War) and the

Below is an illustration of a clearly philatelic local cover dated 9 September 1915 with Baarle-Hertog/Baarle-Duc [sic] postmarks.

“Napoléon”



## Airmail to Tanganyika



I have acquired a cover bearing two examples of Yv 400 but I cannot reconcile the 3F50 franking with any published airmail rates.

The letter was written by a passenger aboard the *SS Bernardin de St Pierre* on the *La Réunion à Marseille N° 5* line and taken ashore at Port Said on 26 September 1938 from where it was forwarded, I assume, to Cairo for transportation by Imperial Airways to Dar-es-

Salaam. It arrived at its final destination, Kigoma, on 6 October.

One stamp alone paid the basic foreign letter rate of 1F75 so I conclude that the second 1F75 stamp paid the airmail fee. However was the 1F75 an accurate conversion of the sterling fee into francs or did the sender, in his ignorance of the precise rate, just stick on a second stamp in the hope that the amount would be sufficient?

**Mick Bister**

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## The Great Stamp Robbery

The French press reported how, on 3 February this year, thieves hijacked a delivery truck in Brie-Comte-Robert, south-east of Paris, and stole a quantity of material belonging to *La Poste*. The value of the haul was estimated to be 20 million euros and consisted of mint stamps and pre-stamped envelopes.

The 38 tonne truck had been blocked in by the thieves' truck and after removing the driver, they transferred most of its contents to their own truck and drove off.

The driver was uninjured and contacted the police who subsequently stated that the thieves must have been tipped off about the contents of the delivery truck which belonged to a haulage company contracted by *La Poste*.

It would appear that the thieves would have quite a task on their hands disposing of the haul as all sheets of stamps are now printed with considerable information on the margins including individual sheet numbers and date of production.

**Richard Broadhurst**

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## Unknown Essays



Here is a scan of a set of unadopted essays. I would like to know more about them, e.g. the artist and the date and

reason for their production. Can any of our members help please?

Peter Maybury

## Price-Hike in Algeria

A bare ten weeks before the event, Algeria's *Journal Officiel* (N° 63, October 2014) carried details of steep rises in postage costs there, the first for eleven years and taking effect from the beginning of 2015. I am indebted to *Timbres magazine* (April 2015) and contributor Med Achour Ali Ahmed, AIJP, for details.

A domestic letter weighing 20g or less (the first weight step) has risen from 15DA (dirhams) to 25DA; the same weight for overseas now costs 60DA (formerly 30DA). The registration rate, previously 50DA anywhere, doubled to 100DA for internal letters and quadrupled to 200DA for overseas mailings.

New stamps to cope with the new rates seem scarcely to have been prepared. The sole current definitives, possibly not easy to pick out as such from catalogue listings, are the

small-format 'Roses' of 2004 (Figure 1): their face-values (15, 20, 30 and 50 DA) spectacularly fail to include what will be a much-needed 25DA value. A four-value monochrome definitive set of 'Jewels' was prepared in 2008 and issued in 2009, but withdrawn after a few weeks - the whole set, that is - on account of a spelling mistake on the 5DA value (*amulettes* with two 'l's'; Figure 2). To date, the sole attempt to plug the gap has been the issue of a small-format horizontal 25DA stamp in turquoise (Figure 3), its design a redrawing of one of the 'Forts' stamps of 2005.

A TVP (*timbre de validité permanente*) issued on 20 June 2010 (Figure 4) remains valid, of course, but will henceforth be sold at 25DA.



Figure 1  
One of the 'Roses' definitives, issued in 2004 but still Algeria's most recent definitive set.



Figure 2  
The 5DA value of the short-lived 2009 definitives '*Bijoux du Sud algérien*', withdrawn (along with the other values) on account of a spelling mistake ('*Amulettes*' with two 'l's')



Figure 3  
The only new definitive of 2015 so far: Ali Kerbouche's redrawn version of K. Krim's 2005 addition to the 'Forts' series.

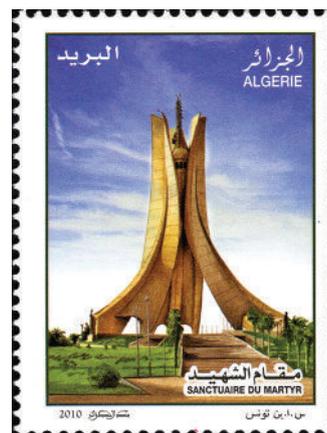


Figure 4  
The TVP (*timbre de validité permanente*) issued 20 June 2010, now costing 25D rather than its original 15DA.

Michael Round

## REPORTS OF MEETINGS

### 39th ANNUAL PHILATELIC WEEKEND 13-15 MARCH 2015

37 members and 21 guests attended the Society's Annual Weekend at the Charlecote Pheasant Hotel near Stratford-upon-Avon.

#### Friday

A Committee Meeting was held in the afternoon and after dinner Joint Organisers **Peter Kelly** and **Chris Hitchen** welcomed those attending. A minute's silence was called for two members who had recently died, John Yeomans and Michael Ensor, after which members were invited to give their short displays.

The evening started with **John West** who presented a *pot pourri* of covers belonging to long time member, Cliff Harman, who is currently in very poor health and who is disposing of his collection. The selection included items with insufficient franking and a variety of Paris lozenge markings. **Godfrey Bowden** showed us a selection of *Journaux* and *Affiches* issues and then stamps on newspapers tied by an *annulation typographique*. **Iain Stevenson** showed some recently acquired items culled from the one euro box of a favourite Parisian dealer. Most were Sage registered usages but the star of the show was a 1945 letter from designer and engraver Pierre Gandon on his exquisitely engraved letterhead thanking his correspondent for the gift of a goose, much appreciated by the hungry family and sending him a few *épreuves* of recent stamps. Alas, these were not present! **Paul Watkins** talked us through a WWI postcard archive illustrating the careers of two professional nurses in France and Belgium. **David Hogarth** showed us examples of internment camp mail and Spanish refugee mail (1939-1944) and examples of the demonetised 1F50 Pétain stamp on covers post-31 October 1944. **Jeremy Martin** presented mail from the Phoney War including *Feldpost* covers, Polish mail from an escapee in France and mail from the Channel Islands. **Alan Wood** displayed post-Franco-Prussian War material related to the years when France had to raise taxes to pay off German reparation demands. A fine example seen was a sheet of the 20c *Allumettes* tax. **Ashley Lawrence** introduced us to his latest book 'Besieged in Paris: An Englishman's Account of the Franco-German War, 1870-71'<sup>(1)</sup> and read extracts from the introduction. **Mick Bister** brought the evening to a close with material illustrating the sub-programmes and short-cut keys used to accelerate the coding and sorting of mail at Clermont-Ferrand in the 1970s.

#### Saturday

The morning began with the traditional Presidential Display given by **Steve Ellis** who explained that his collection of 'rail mail' would be presented in three sections. The first part examined all aspects of postal history of mail carried by rail on the PLM network (Paris-Lyon-Méditerranée) from its very early days up to more recent times. The various cancellations of the *ambulants* and *courriers-*

*convoyeurs* were displayed and explained. The second part considered the operation of one particular company, the Mont Cenis Railway, whose route over the Alps was a major British engineering achievement. It ran for just over three years before being superseded by a rail tunnel but it had a major impact on the carriage of mail, which now was carried through Italy to Brindisi, rather than to Marseille as previously. The third part looked in detail at the development of the railway network from Paris, focussing in particular on both the early railway companies and the railway stations, in addition to the cancellations. The display was also illustrated with the use of postcards, maps and ephemera, with the aim of making it attractive to a wider audience than simply postal historians.

After a period of viewing, **Mick Bister** took over with extracts from his collection of the 50c *Jeanne d'Arc* issue of 1929. He introduced it by showing his first and latest purchases, a multiple proof of the Georges Demoulin essay bought in 1974 and the original die proof of the design acquired only in 2014 both of which were now reunited on one page. He then explained the historical background to the stamp and showed its precursors dating from the late 19th century and early 20th century in the form of postal stationery, vignettes and *porte-timbres*. Examples of the competitive essays were shown together with a range of proofs and colour trials of the winning design by Gabriel Barlangue. This was followed by a frame of booklets illustrating both flat plate and rotary printings with a particular emphasis on the privately commissioned booklets of which only 1000 to 5000 copies of each were printed. Reference was also made to the *La vache qui rit* 'pubs' which were considered to be so disrespectful and offensive by the inhabitants of Orléans that they sought action to withdraw them. Mick closed with a display of covers demonstrating a wide range of tariffs from single usage for the concessionary postcard rate to Canada to a cover bearing 41 copies of the stamp in part payment of the second step registered airmail letter rate to Argentina.

**Chris Hitchen** then followed with his display entitled 'Paris 1876 to 1875 – ten years of change'. Chris began with a full range of the various rates between 1876 and 1878 when reductions and revisions were taking place. The change to using the date stamp to cancel the stamps themselves and the new stamps issued in June 1876, the *Type Sage*, were fully covered. The amalgamation of the Post and Telegraphs in April 1878 had a big impact in the capital. In July 1881 the suburban offices between the walls were included in the Paris rather than provincial listings and given Paris office numbers. New offices were opened and telegraph offices expanded to full post offices. From 1880 the Place de la Bourse office began trials of new handstamps and all were shown. At the same time quite different trials were being carried out at the head post office with machines capable of applying two strikes of a postmark at the same time. This culminated in the successful production of the Daguin cancelling machines which were first issued to a small number of offices in Paris and the provinces in

(1) For more details of the book, consult the December 2014 edition of the Journal, No 274, Page 164.

September 1884. A decision in January 1885 to henceforth include the office number in postmarks led to a number of offices receiving Type 17 postmarks with this number. A full launch of the new Daguin machines with Type 84 cancellations in July 1885 cut short the issue of this last Type 17 format which is recorded for some 30 offices.

After a break for viewing and coffee, **Stephen Holder** showed three frames of early covers from Tunisia comprising one frame of the postal services in the Turkish Province, one frame of the French post offices in Tunisia from their inception up to 1876 and one frame of the Italian post offices in Tunisia during the same period. Stephen also showed posthumously for the late George Barker extracts from his collection of Réunion, including a fine showing of the early material, including the first reprints of Réunion Nos 1 and 2, which are amongst the rarest stamps in the world, and a good display of the early stamps and covers, plus a part frame of the later CFA issues.

**Henk Slabbinck** followed with a presentation of his collection on mail from and to the French fishermen on the Grand Banks from 1899 to 1939. Firstly we looked at the *Société des Œuvres de Mer*, a non-profit organisation which organised help, support and relief for the fishermen both on the high seas and on shore. The latter took the form of a resthouse in St Pierre, called the *Foyer du Marin*. It provided food, books and shelter, but also at times acted as a forwarder of letters. To induce fishermen to send news to the home front, it provided envelopes and presumably also a postage stamp for the poorer amongst them. Several examples were shown, some of which carried the scarce label the organisation used to put on outgoing mail it handled. This label was early also used on the hospital-ships which the organisation dispatched to the St Pierre & Miquelon and the Grand Banks area from 1897. Mail was shown from all known hospital-ships: *Saint-Pierre II* (1897-1903), *Saint-François d'Assise* (1901-1917), *Notre-Dame de la Mer* (1911-1914), *Ste Jeanne d'Arc* (1921-1933) and *Saint Yves* (1935-1939). All the letters displayed a private, straight-line or round mark identifying the ship, often showing a brief explanatory text on its activity. Most of them bore a French postage stamp if outgoing mail. On display was the only postcard bearing a marking of the *St Pierre* and posted in the very small Kolfreyjustadur harbour in Iceland during its only campaign in Icelandic waters in 1902. Exceptional letters were presented illustrating incoming mail sent to the captain of a French ship sailing the Grand Banks and delivered to him on the high seas by incoming ships arriving directly from France such as the *Navire-ravitailleur Groenland* in 1932 and by the *Saint Yves* in 1937. One letter from the latter stood out for it had been twice transferred on the high seas: first from an incoming ship onto the hospital-ship (which applied its marking) and then again from the hospital-ship to the addressee's ship (**illustrated on front cover**). Concluding this part we looked at three private commercial companies which also carried mail on the ships they leased as well as transporting food, special clothing, bait and work tools to the French ships operating on the banks (*Daubeuf Frères* and the *Maison Dubois* from Fécamp, as well as *La Morue Française* from Paris). A last page then illustrated both outgoing and incoming mail brought to the banks by the *Ville d'Ys*, a military surveillance ship dispatched from 1920 until 1940 to the

Newfoundland area by the French Navy, for the duration of the fishing season. In the last part of the presentation we saw the various combinations of franking encountered on this type of mail. Examples were seen of mail bearing the stamps of the country where they were posted — St Pierre & Miquelon, Newfoundland, Nova Scotia and Canada. Less frequently seen is the mail bearing French stamps and mailed in Newfoundland (North Sydney and Halifax). Finally major rarities seen were letters from French fishermen, posted without any stamps, in small harbours such as Mose Ambrose (Newfoundland) and Louisburg (Nova Scotia) and having arrived at their destination in France, bearing duly cancelled French *timbres-taxe*.

**Brian Brookes** closed the morning session with a fine display of letters from the Napoleonic period recently acquired from Robson Lowe. All the writers held high positions under Napoléon and included members of his family. One letter dated 13 October 1806 was from Marshal Ney to Major-General Berthier informing him that he was joining the Emperor at Jena (the twin battles of Jena and Auerstedt crushed the main Prussian forces) and that Berthier's salary for four months was 13,333.33 francs. Letters were also shown from Louise Bonaparte, Joachim Napoléon, Marshal Nicolas Jean-de-Dieu Soult, General Kellerman and Marshal Augereau. Brian ended his display with a report of the second abdication of Bonaparte on 22 July 1815.

After lunch **Barbara Priddy** displayed mail from a selection of air catastrophes from 1940 to 1960. Barbara explained that although crash covers are testimonies to tragedy, they often have the advantage of retaining their contents, so it is possible to show the original cover, the ambulance cover, the contents, the accident report and an illustration of the aeroplane. Starting with October 1940, Barbara showed one of three known covers from a Dewoitine-338 flying the Cotonou-Niamey shuttle, which misjudged its height and struck a hill in a range around the small village of Carnotville in central Dahomey, killing its crew. Nearly all the mail was burnt; the few covers that were recovered were returned to Cotonou where they were repaired, annotated and forwarded to destination. Following two more wartime crashes and the sad story of the Laté-631, Barbara showed three crashes from the 1940s, and four from the 1950s, including the ill-fated Comet-1, and finished with the Lockheed Super Constellation crash at Dakar in 1960.

Barbara was followed by **Michael Rego** with his display of Paris District Post Offices 70 to 79. On 1 January 1860, the city of Paris was substantially enlarged by annexing the neighbouring *communes*. The previous twelve *arrondissements*, each having its own *mairie* (town hall) were re-arranged with the new territory to become twenty *arrondissements* each divided into four quarters. Overnight the new Paris boundary now included 19 new district offices within its walls, and eight of these eventually became Paris 70 to Paris 77, the remaining two offices were set up separately, when Paris 78 was established in 1879, and Paris 79 was founded in 1882. From 1860 little changed, but by the mid-1860s the named date stamp was changed to include the heading 'Paris'; each however retained its lozenge cancel. When in 1876 the lozenge cancels were removed from service, the named date stamp

now cancelled the adhesive and an additional strike was applied to the cover to clearly show the time, date, and office of dispatch. However the eight district post offices in this study were spread across several *arrondissements*, ie 12<sup>e</sup> (Saint Mandé), 15<sup>e</sup> (Vaugirard-1, Vaugirard-2), 16<sup>e</sup>

(Passy-1, Passy-2), 17<sup>e</sup> (Les Ternes) and 19<sup>e</sup> (La Villette-1, La Villette-2). Not until 1901 did the sequence of Paris post offices fit into appropriate *arrondissements*. The table below illustrates the movement of various offices Paris 70 to Paris 79.

DISTRICT POST OFFICES, PARIS 70 TO PARIS 79					
Paris	Year	Location	Paris	Year	Location
-	1860	PASSY-(1)-LES-PARIS (2793)	-	1860	(3502) VAUGIRARD (4116)
70	1883	4 Rue Guichard	75	1882	93 Rue Blomet
	1893	Place Possoz		1901	diverted to bureau XV
	1901	9 Rue Singer/Place Chopin. Paris 70 at the end of March, to the end of Sep. 1901 was an ordinary office.		1910	36 Rue La Pérouse (16 <sup>e</sup> )
		after that it became Paris XVI, a regional post office.	-	1860	(3637) LA VILLETTE (4277)
	1908	48/50 Rue de Buzenval (20 <sup>e</sup> )	76	1882	101 Rue de Flandre
-	1860	PASSY-2 (6120)		1883	174 Rue de Crimée
71	1882	3 Place d'Eylau		1898	86 Rue de Flandre (19 <sup>e</sup> )
	1886	3 Place Victor Hugo (16 <sup>e</sup> )	-	1860	LA VILLETTE-2 (6123)
-	1860	VAUGIRARD-2 (6124) (PLAISANCE)	77	1882	139 Rue d'Allemagne
72	1885	81 Rue de l'Ouest		1901	diverted to bureau XIX
	1972	46/52 Rue Pernety (14 <sup>e</sup> )		1901	55 Avenue des Gobelins
72 Ann.1	1931	3 Place de la Porte de Vanves		1932	21 Rue de la Reine-Blanche (13 <sup>e</sup> )
	1951	diverted to XV - annexe 1	77 Ann.1	1935	45 Boulevard Arago
-	1860	(3180a) SAINT-MANDÉ (3739)		1951	diverted to XIII - annexe 3
73	1882	36 Rue du Rendez-Vous (12 <sup>e</sup> )	78	1879	16a Rue Dufrenoy
	1977	73 Boulevard de Picpus (12 <sup>e</sup> )		1935	19 Rue Montevideo (16 <sup>e</sup> )
-	1860	(3333) LES TERNES (3921)	79	1882	3 Rue d'Allemagne
74	1882	16 Rue Bayen (17 <sup>e</sup> )		1911	3 Avenue d'Allemagne
74 Ann.1	1929	12 Boulevard Gouvion-Saint-Cyr		1914	3 Avenue Jean-Jaurès
	1932	diverted to XVII - annexe 1		1958	33 Avenue Jean-Jaurès (19 <sup>e</sup> )

**David Trapnell** showed the postal history of the two-phased Italian occupation of south-east France, between 1940 and 1943 as illustrated in his recently published book of the same title.<sup>(2)</sup> Phase 1 was from when Italy declared war on France on 10 June 1940. The main assault was on 20 June when it attacked through the Alps and along the coast. A treaty was signed on 24, effective on 25 June. An Armistice Commission supervised a 50km zone adjacent to the de-facto border. Little changed until the allies landed in North Africa early in November 1942. Then, to prevent allied landings in France, Hitler rushed German troops into the 'free' (Vichy) zone of France and, Phase 2, invited the Italians to occupy the part of France south & east of the Rhône. There has been much dispute about how much of France was actually occupied by the Italians. For the first time, censored mail going abroad was used to show whether Germany or Italy held the power in an area. The study and

material displayed showed that the Italians occupied the parts up to a line between Geneva and Toulon, but little west of that, with one exception at Pernes-les-Fontaines.

**Robert Abensur** closed the first half of the afternoon with a display entitled French Offices in the Levant 1837-1849. The material presented a complex array of rates reflecting the changing postal conventions and the diversity of currencies encountered particularly in the Italian States.

After a break for viewing and refreshments, **Iain Stevenson** showed us the development of telegraphy in France and a few colonies. He began with a 19th century map showing the location of telegraph stations demonstrating their close but not always exact relationship with railways. Winding the clock back, Iain showed a postally used printed report on the Chappe semaphore telegraph from the revolutionary period, addressed to Montpellier. He then showed two official Chappe telegrams, one reporting an assassination attempt on King Louis Philippe. Both are very rare since, before 1850, telegraphy was restricted to official business and virtually all surviving Chappe messages are in archives.

(2) For more details of the book 'The postal history of the two-phased Italian Occupation of south-east France, 1940 - 1943' by David Trapnell, consult the December 2014 edition of the Journal, No 274, Page 164.

Once the system was open to the public, in the *métropole* the Chappe network was abandoned in favour of the electric system but the semaphore persisted for a few more years in Algeria and a rare private message sent by semaphore was shown. The remainder of the display concentrated on the evolution of the stationery used, a study of the short lived stamps, a *pellicule* flown into Paris by homing pigeon, telegrams sent by post, and some interesting usages and unorthodox deliveries. Of particular interest was a *Bélinogramme*, an early form of fax of which only the delivery envelope has survived since the message turned completely black after a few days. The display concluded with a few covers sent by the Paris pneumatic system, which were of course officially telegrams, being part of Iain's ambitious project to find every twentieth century pictorial and commemorative stamp until 1984 used on a '*pneu*'.

**Brigitte Abensur** closed the afternoon with an impressive PowerPoint display of the 19th century 'F' accountancy marks which according to the *règlements de détail et d'ordre* stipulated that foreign unpaid or insufficiently pre-paid letters from certain origins to certain destinations should be struck on the front with black ink with the cachet 'F' accompanied by the number corresponding to its country of origin. There followed a detailed illustrated account of taxed mail to Brazil from a variety of sources showing the corresponding 'F' accountancy mark eg Uruguay F12, France F17 and Sweden F22.

Following dinner, the evening was open to members to continue giving short displays.

**Godfrey Bowden** continued from his display on Saturday evening. He began with the trial of 1893 where the *Type Sage* was pre-cancelled by four or five lines of print including the date and the means of identifying forgeries was commented upon. This method of pre-cancellation was found impractical as, if the stamps were not used within a set period, they were invalid, making it difficult for the customer to avoid a financial loss. This was a fault of the system even in the 1920s when just the year was shown. Later in the 1920s it was decided to dispense with any date on the pre-cancel. The display closed with a selection of forgeries and consistent faults. **David Hogarth** showed us an unusual example of an Eiffel Tower PPC from 1937 with the caption in German and overprinted in German text which had been sent by an occupying soldier to his homeland. **Paul Watkins** followed with a variety of letters with frankings of *Type Merson* stamps including unusual early airmail items, registered, express and insured letters as well as heavy printed matter and merchants' sample covers. **Peter Stockton** stepped up next with one frame of letters and cards connected with the French Army in Greece during WW1. These included *Trésor et Postes* cancellations from the '500 series' together with authorising handstamps including the *Laboratoire de Bactériologie de l'Armée d'Orient*. Some postcards depicted the damage emanating from the Great Fire of Salonika which started on 18 August 1917. The 50th Anniversary of the Armistice of September 1918 on that front was commemorated by a block of four of the 40c stamp depicting the White Tower of Salonika issued in 1968 (Yv 1571). **Steve Ellis** treated

us with a sequel to his presidential display of the morning with a look at the development of the Paris Métro through postcards and ephemera. **Peter Kelly** gave a brief account of two letters franked with the *Type Sage* issue and addressed to the Marianas Islands (see article in this Journal 'Rare letters to the Marianas Islands and the strange tale of the hoaxing of François Lanfrey' by Peter on page 50). **Alan Wood** brandished a bayonet dating from 1866 and which would have been supplied to the defenders of Paris during the 1870-71 siege. **John Hammonds** displayed advertising material for the aperitif Byrrh, including postcards and booklet stamps with Byrrh '*pubs*'. **Gina Parmenter** closed the evening promoting the advantages of accessing the library and archives of The Linnean Society website which contained large amounts of resources of interest to the postal historian.

### Sunday

The Sunday morning programme began with a presentation by **Peter Kelly** on reduced price items from 1876 to 1900. On 1 January 1876, the Post Office was operating five different tariffs for reduced price items to which a sixth could be added if one includes postcards. Peter explained that the date of 1 January 1876 was significant in that it was the moment when France became an active member of the General Postal Union. It can be said that the rates in force between the beginning of 1876 and 1 May 1878 represented the end of the classic period. The letter rate and printed matter rate still recognised the differential between local (mail received and distributed within the circumscription of the same office) and territorial mail with separate rates. The only change in January 1876 that affected the inland use of reduced price items that actually reflected GPU benchmarks was the tariff for business papers. The reason for this was that the previous rate was considered excessive (30c per 50g for business papers and 15c per 50g for samples). The argument was that the price was too high where the weight was substantially less than 50g. Although the GPU/UPU rules do not apply to inland rates in general terms, they do influence matters where postal charges are deemed to be excessive. The result was that the business paper rate was reduced to 5c per 50g and this was exactly the same as the GPU rate. This did leave an anomaly in so far as the printed matter rate was concerned. Thus, a 10g printed matter envelope could be sent within France (territorial) for 10c whereas the same item could be sent to a member country of the GPU for 5c. The great postal reform of 1 May 1878 certainly brought the classic period to an end. The effect of this was to reduce the postal rates overall but, more significantly, to do away with the two tier system leaving a single territorial rate. The study of printed matter post in 1878 is of interest to the postal historian because although the rate never changed during the Sage period, the breadth of application certainly did and one can see the introduction of new elements almost yearly, mainly bearing on handwritten additions to printed forms such as, for example, the forms advising receipt of goods at railway stations that could incorporate a handwritten description of the goods or even lottery tickets. Full details of the rates covered are given in the table opposite.

## REDUCED PRICE RATES, 1876-1900

## Categories of mail.

What is it all about

**Tariff 1** Newspapers. Political and social economy.**Tariff 2** Newspapers / periodicals. Letters, arts, science, industry, agriculture.**Tariff 3** Circulars and prospectus, books, engravings, lithographs,

bound or otherwise, circulars, electoral circulars, voting forms, everything in tariffs 1 and 2 but all under wrapper.

**Tariff 4** Business samples with or without printed matter, printers proofs and corrections, all types of business or legal papers, documents relating to the carriage of goods, insurance matters, musical scores, fiscally stamped papers with no actual or personal correspondence.**Tariff 5** Printed matter, births, deaths, marriages, prospectus, circulars, catalogues, visiting cards, photographs, portraits, sent in the form of letters open on one side.**6.** Postcard and reply paid cards and illustrated cards, sent at full, imprimé, and under wrapper rates.**7.** Registration rates.

DATE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1.1.1876	L, 2c 40g 3c 60g 4c 70g T 4c 40g 5c 50g 6c 60g 7c 70g.	L 1c 20g 2c 40g 3c 60g 4c 80g T 2c 20g 3c 30g 4c 40g	2c 5g 3c 5-10g 4c 10-15g 5c 15-50g 10c 50-100g	5c per 50g	L 5c per 10g T 10c per 10g	L 10c T 15c	25c
1.5.1878	L 1c 20g 2c 50g ½ c per add. 25g S & O 1c 25g 2½ c 50g ½ c per add. 25g T 2c 25g 5c 50g 1c per add. 25g	Merger 1 & 2	1c 5g 2c 5-10g 3c 10-15g 4c 15-20g 5c 50g 5c per add. 50g		5c per 50g	10c	
1.1.79						Reply 2x10c	
1.6.1895	L 1c 50g ½ c per add. 25g T 2c 50g 1c per add. 25g						
1.4.1898							10c
11.1899						Full 10c Imp. 5c Wrapper 1c	

**Note 1.** "L" = limitrophe. i.e. Distribution in department of publication or adjoining one.

"T" = National distribution. "S &amp; O" = Seine et Oise. Law of 1856. No reduction for "Limitrophe" distribution.

**Note 2.** Printed matter. The interest in this category of mail is the many additions to what is considered to be eligible for inclusion as an "imprimé" during this period.

**John Hammonds** followed with his display entitled 'An incomplete history of balloons'. John began with the exploits of the Montgolfier Brothers and related attempts with unmanned and tethered balloons and experiments with the transportation of animals as the trials were too hazardous for humans. John continued with details of the first manned flight by Pilâtre de Rosier in 1783 and the contributions made by Jacques Charles and the Robert brothers with the development of the hydrogen balloon and rubberised silk. Accounts of significant flights were related including that by Charles who landed in a field only to be attacked by peasants and that of Blanchard and Jeffries who used paddles to assist navigation during their flight across the Channel. John continued with descriptions of military use of balloons in 1795 at the Battle of Fleurus and of their use for the transportation of mail during the Siege of Paris. Finally we were shown examples of promotional material for balloon flights which became a popular event at fairs and festivals across France.

After viewing, **Bob Larg** showed four mint picture postcards of the Eiffel Tower depicting the stages of construction of the tower, followed by fifty-seven cards showing differing views of the tower all posted between 19 June 1893 and 16 September 1990, plus an attractive souvenir envelope adorned with many cachets and labels.

**Maurice Porter** followed with an attractive display of South America airmails.

**John West** gave a display illustrating the alarming proliferation of Red Cross related material produced by *La Poste* during the past five years. There were Philatelic Documents, philatelic souvenirs, *gravures*, miniature sheets, vignettes, booklets and the attendant first day covers. He warned members that things would only get worse over the next few years.

**Paul Watkins** followed with a variety of letters with frankings of the *Type Merson* stamps including unusual early airmail items, registered, express and insured letters as well as heavy printed matter and sample covers.

After time for viewing and refreshments **Alan Wood** showed French Empire stamps and postal history from 1853. The highlight was a cover of 1873, franked with three 5F Napoleon stamps and a 40c Paris printing to cover the cost of the triple weight postage rate of 70c, the registration fee of 50c and the insurance charge of 14fF20 for a declared value of 7087 francs.

**Héloïse Mitchell** showed French postal markings and cancellations between 1760 and 1881, starting with straight-line markings, both *port dû* and *port payé*, and moving on to entry marks, maritime and railway mail, a *lettre chargée*, postage due markings and a telegram with a Marseille telegraph date stamp. Items of interest were a framed AV (*affranchissement vérifié*) handstamp in red of 1828, an oval V.P.M. (*Voie Paquebots Méditerranée*) transit mark of 1852 and a cover of 1867 pre-printed '*Per Overland via Marseilles*' which was carried across the desert by the single rail link, the Suez Canal not having been completed, and then by rail across France towards its destination in Hampshire.

**Ashley Lawrence** gave a colourful display of *porte-timbres*. These were decorative borders or frames for postage stamps, which became popular in the years leading up to

and during the First World War. They carried patriotic slogans, advertised a variety of products, celebrated historic events, and promoted social and political causes as diverse as Breton culture, the War against Alcohol, and Return of the Monarchy. It was amusing to contrast the many advertisements for Champagne, Cointreau and the Wines of Anjou with the serious campaign slogans warning against Alcoholism and the evils of the Demon Drink! Printed and distributed privately, the *porte-timbres* were often controversial and divisive, as when they sided with Church against State, or with Monarchists against the Republic. Tobacconists objected to the unfair competition, as the booklets of stamps were often sold at a discount. The postal authorities also complained because the florid decorations flouted UPU regulations. However, the popularity of the *porte-timbres* re-emerged during the Great War of 1914-1918: patriotic *porte-timbres* appeared in profusion, with portraits of the Allied leaders and arrays of the national flags. This enthusiasm diminished after 1918, and their impact was gradually replaced during the mid-1920s by the appearance of advertisements on the covers and on the '*pubs*' of stamp booklets, and by the ubiquitous slogan postmarks, the *flammes illustrées*. Because of their variety, *porte-timbres* are a boon to thematic collectors.<sup>(3)</sup>

**Alf Taylor** gave a three frame display of stamps and postal history. His first frame displayed the famous 'Art on Stamps' series of the 1960s and 1970s each accompanied by a description putting the artwork into context. His second frame was devoted to airmail and maritime mail and his third frame illustrated postmarks between 1800 and 1830.

**Brian Brookes** closed the morning session with a display of Guadeloupe postal history from 1759 to 1857 starting with a letter dated 10 May 1759 from a British soldier describing how they torched all the villages and fields. Other covers included a Guadeloupe straight-line mark of 1770, a 'BT' of Basseterre used in 1777 and a small 'GUADELOUPE' on a 1783 cover. Then followed three covers used between 1788 and 1790 with different Pointe-à-Pitre strikes and a further selection from 1794 to 1814 with the GUADELOUPE 1810 and GUADELOUPE straight-line marks. An attractive cover of 1853 franked in French stamps paying the double rate was noted. The display closed with material sent by the British Packet Office including an 1857 cover from Bordeaux to Pointe-à-Pitre at the double letter rate.

After viewing, **Steve Ellis** awarded the Society Literature Prize to **Peter Kelly** for his "Postal treatment of journals and periodicals in France 1876-1900." In a very close contest the runners up were the late John Yeomans ('Gabon: the development of the postal services 1862-89') and David Trapnell ('French forces and the airmails of Tunisia 1919-56'). Thanks were offered to the judges Paul Miller, Colin Pease and Ken White. Gratitude was expressed towards all those who had contributed to the success of the weekend not least the convenors **Chris Hitchen** and **Peter Kelly** and the ladies **Marian Bister**, **Jean Hammonds** and **Annette Tyler** who had managed the Bourse with such efficiency.

(3) Readers who wish to know more about this fascinating subject should see Ashley's detailed account in '*The Sower, a Common Little French Stamp*', published by the Society and available from the author.

the following members attended all or part of the weekend:

Robert Abensur	Héloïse Mitchell
Maurice Alder	John Parmenter
John Allison	David Parmley
Mick Bister	Maurice Porter
Godfrey Bowden	Barbara Priddy
Richard Broadhurst	Michael Rego
Brian Brookes	Derek Richardson
Hamish Clifton	Henk Slabbinck
Steve Ellis	Gerald Small
John Hammonds	Iain Stevenson
Chris Hitchen	Peter Stockton
David Hogarth	Alf Taylor
Stephen Holder	Maurice Tyler
Peter Kelly	Paul Watkins
Bob Larg	Brian Weeks
Ashley Lawrence	John West
Graham Lenton	Alan Wood
Lesley Marley	Bob Wood
Jeremy Martin	



President Steve Ellis (left) presents Peter Kelly with the Society Literature Prize

*See further photos on cover pages iii and iv.*

MLB

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## WESSEX GROUP MEETING OF 21 FEBRUARY 2015

**Peter Todd: Mayenne & Maritime Mail**

**Mike Berry: *Ballons Montés***

In the morning session we had two invited speakers. The first display was given by **Peter Todd** with 90 sheets covering his various collecting interests. He started with a selection of letters from the *département* of Mayenne which were accompanied by an interesting description of the *département* and some of its notable features. He then moved on to a selection of maritime mail, touching on the transatlantic and Mediterranean destinations. He ended with some album pages of early stamps, many passed on to him by his father.

Our second display was given by **Mike Berry** who showed Siege of Paris balloon mail. We saw a wide range of flights with an emphasis on quality. These were accompanied by details of each flight and the full text of each letter. This provided a fascinating insight into the life and hard times of those who were besieged and cut off from the outside world.

After our usual lunch at the Old Mill we resumed with displays by members present. **Richard Stupples** started with French trade cards from the 1900 Exhibition and Sower stamps including a Memel set. He was followed by **Peter Kelly** who presented marks of the rural post from 1876 to 1900, local and rural boxes and mail with OR and OL marks handed to postmen on their rounds. Peter continued with examples of BM moveable boxes and registered mail accepted outside the post office.

**Tony Howgrave-Graham** then followed with a selection of transatlantic mail. **Ashley Lawrence** showed us souvenirs of the Siege of Paris including medallions made in Norway out of the lamp of the 'Ville d'Orléans', medallions commemorating the balloon and pigeon posts, a picture of the monument erected to commemorate the pioneers of the balloon post and later demolished by the Germans in WWII and, finally, one of the Letts simile balloon letters.

**Peter Lawrence** related the story of his penpal and put up some of the stamps that encouraged his interest in the hobby. **Jeremy Martin** offered us a display of postcards depicting postmen from different countries with their various uniforms. **Chris Hitchen** showed Paris stars from offices 8 to 18. The stars and new date stamps were not issued together; the earliest use of the stars was shown with the old date stamp still in use.

**Chris Griffiths**, on his first visit to one of our meetings, gave a complete display of post office training stamps with, alongside, the 'real' stamps they were designed to represent. This was really well laid out and the first time we have seen a representative display of this kind since the days of the late Stan Bidmead. **Alan Wood** closed with a range of pre-stamp covers from the French colonies.

11 members attended and everyone contributed a display.

PRAK/AJW

## LONDON GROUP MEETING OF 15 APRIL 2015

Mick Bister: *Marianne de Muller and Marianne de Cheffer*

The first half of the display was devoted to the *Marianne de l'Espérance* issue or, as it is better known by collectors, the *Marianne de Muller* issue which first saw light in 1955 and comprised six values in old francs followed by two values in new francs.

Mick began by showing a selection of artist's proofs of the 15F value which included an example printed in two different shades of blue. For many decades it was believed that this was an essay for a bicoloured postal stationery printing but only as recently as 2010 was it realised, upon the discovery of a bicoloured dated corner block, that the design had been intended for adhesives. Other 15F items on display were booklets of 20 including one overprinted ANNULÉ and the Provins promotion booklet of 10. Mick explained the changes in booklet cover design and showed a proof printing of a sheet of covers from one of the last series. The 6F value was unique inasmuch that it remains the only French stamp to have been printed solely in coil format.

Mick showed die proofs and test coils, a repaired coil and a coil remnant still with the blue 'fictif' attached which had held the end of the coil to the bobbin. The 12F followed, again unique in its format, being issued only as a folding booklet of 10. However, the concept was flawed and the format abandoned. In the case of the 18F value, Mick explained how to identify the four known types. Type 1 was intended for a coil format but remained unissued, Type 2 was for the 1956 postal stationery postcard (foreign postcard rate) and Types 3 and 4 were for successive printings in 1958 of an adhesive for the domestic invoice rate. Moving on to the 20F value Mick showed a wide range of colour trials, dated corner blocks including the rare 1962 printing for the overseas *départements*, Type 1 and Type 2 booklets and usage of the 20F *Cours Pratiques* issue. The 25F was represented by examples of the Sunday printings and the development of the first machine booklet of 8. The first half closed with a selection of postal stationery expressed in new francs, a die proof of an unissued 0,30 value and die proofs and printings for Algeria.

The second half was devoted to the *Marianne de Cheffer* design which was first issued in 1967 and comprised five values. It had been designed by Henry Cheffer in 1955 but had been rejected in favour of the *Marianne de Muller* issue. However, Cheffer's design was recalled in 1967 and Mick demonstrated with overlays how the original artwork was updated for the new issue. Cheffer died in 1957 and never saw the fruition of his Marianne design but in 1967 he was posthumously awarded the *Grand Prix de l'Art Philatélique*. Mick emphasised how the *Marianne de Cheffer* issue witnessed not only the changes in stamp production and technology but also the social and political events of the late 1960s and early 1970s. We saw the use of the TD-3 and TD-6 presses, the development of EEC postal rates, the introduction of phosphor bands and covers treated during the early experiments with mechanised letter sorting. Colour changes were introduced with the launching of first class (red) and second class (green) mail and in accordance with the government's decentralisation programme printing presses were transferred from Paris to Périgueux. Mick also showed covers bearing evidence of the events of the times - the infamous 1968 'événements de mai', the 1969 Douglas DC4 air crash at Orly, the 1973 Australian embargo on French mail following nuclear tests in the Pacific and the 1974 postal strike.

Mick closed his display with one frame of the 0,30 and 0,50 *Code Postal* issue which, for a short period in 1972, had been printed simultaneously with the 30c *Marianne de Cheffer* and the 50c *Marianne de Béquet*. Proofs and colour trials were shown in different shades of red and green in accordance with the new colours assigned to segregate first and second class mail.

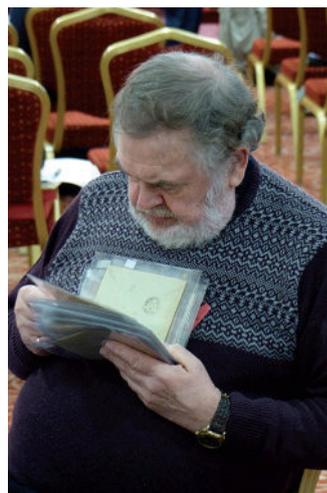
After plenty of time had been allowed for viewing and questions, Chris Hitchen gave the vote of thanks, commenting on the diverse facets of philately that could be enjoyed in the study of modern definitives such as those we had seen and the possibilities still of discovering rarities and unusual material.

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# F&CPS PHILATELIC WEEKEND AT CHARLECOTE 2015



Richard Broadhurst  
managing the Society bookstall



Iain Stevenson  
searching for a bargain



Marian Bister, Annette Tyler and Jean Hammonds  
in control of the Bourse



Peter Kelly and Henk Slabbinck  
in discussion



An appreciative audience



Alan Wood brandishing  
his Siege of Paris bayonet

*Photos by Mick Bister*

# F&CPS PHILATELIC WEEKEND AT CHARLECOTE 2015



Brigitte Abensur



Michael Rego



Henk Slabbinck



Steve Ellis



Mick Bister



John Hammonds



Stephen Holder



Robert Abensur



Héloïse Mitchell

*Photos by Maurice Tyler*