

The Journal of the France & Colonies Philatelic Society



Representing not only a rare French acceptance on an airship flight but also a scarce example of the 10F *Merson* used alone, this cover from Strasbourg was transported by the LZ-127 *Graf Zeppelin* on the special Christmas flight from Friedrichshafen to Buenos Aires, 8 December 1934. (See the London Meeting Report for full details of Len Barnes' display on 'French Colonial Aviation', page 146)

Volume 66 ● Number 4

December 2016

Whole Number 282

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

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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.

2016-17 Annual Subscription Rates

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

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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.

Bank transfers to HSBC account name France & Colonies Philatelic Society sort code 40 07 31 account n° 71019325.

The Journal

The Society's Journal is published in March, June, September and December.

It is printed and distributed by Joshua Horgan Print & Design, 246 Marston Road, Oxford OX3 0EL
from the Editor's PDF copy.

The price is included in members' subscriptions.

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

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The Society subscribes to two French philatelic magazines, and has circuits organised for those who wish to read them.
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* * *

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Volume 66 Number 4

December 2016 ● Whole No 282

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SOCIETY NOTES

Editorial

As you have come to expect, you will find within your copy of the Journal not only more high quality articles (with a big thank you to the contributors from the editorial team) but also the regular news and reports of our regional meetings as well as an account of the extra autumn meeting held in Bournemouth. You will also find enclosed your fourth auction catalogue of this year and details of the forthcoming and very popular Annual Weekend in Charlecote. Meanwhile, the two packets continue to circulate giving pleasure to both vendors and buyers. In other words, the Society's officers, committee members and convenors are continuing to work hard to provide a full service for its members.

Furthermore, our secretary **David Hogarth**, supported by members of the committee, has been revising the Society Rules the new version of which will be presented for adoption at the Annual General Meeting on 6 May 2017. Every rule and clause has been scrutinised and where necessary updated to make it more applicable and relevant to the times we live in and to our current circumstances. Special attention has been given to Financial Matters, Voting, Electronic Communications and, somewhat pessimistically, the Dissolution of the Society. With the changing and aging demography of our Society, the subsequent fall in membership numbers and the failing health of some of our officers we have to face the fact that we have arrived at a watershed where unless we get more volunteers the Society will struggle to survive. At the time of writing this editorial, the final touches are being made to the Rules which will be published in the next edition of the Journal together with the official notice of the AGM.

You will also find enclosed your subscription renewal form. Please support the Society with the renewal of your membership but as well as sending us your cheque, do seriously consider how you can contribute your talents and time too. May I remind you that I shall be offering my resignation as Journal Manager at the AGM so if you value the Society's Journal and you think the role would suit you please contact me at m.bister@btinternet.com. Thank you.

Mick Bister

* * *

Important Auction Update

Steve Ellis will be taking the February auction lots to the York Stamp Fair on Friday 20 January for members to view. Members will have to make prior arrangements to meet up with Steve by contacting him at the latest by 17 January (his contact details are in the auction catalogue). He will also be taking the lots to the Wessex Group meeting when he gives his display on 11 February.

* * *

New Members

The Society is pleased to welcome members 1451 Hans Peter Kirstein (Germany), 1452 Gary Maloney (Yorkshire), 1453 Sam L Abram (USA), 1454 Vincent King (Sussex) and 1455 Alexander Hay Porteous (Edinburgh).

* * *

Members Deceased

It is with great sadness that we have to report the death of three of our members: 580 J Sacher, 771 R J Downing and 1106 E J Hastings. We offer our condolences to their respective families.

* * *

Exhibition Successes

Our apologies for not including **Yacov Tsachor** in the World Stamp Show NY 2016 Palmarès published in the last edition of the Journal. Congratulations are due to Yacov for his exhibit entitled 'The Perforated Cérés, Rates, Routes and Postmarks 1871-1878' which was awarded a Gold Medal.

In order to avoid similar omissions in the future I would be grateful if members would email me at m.bister@btinternet.com with details of their exhibition successes. I shall continue to trawl through the published Palmarès but information received directly from competitors will be reassuring and cause less embarrassment.

* * *

Future Events

The next **London Group** meeting will be on Saturday 4 February 2017 from 11.00am to 4.00pm at the Calthorpe Arms, 252 Grays Inn Road, London WC1X 8JR. In the morning **Barbara Priddy** will be giving a display entitled 'Part II West African Airmail Surprise'. As usual, the afternoon will be available for members to show a selection of their own material particularly their latest acquisitions and projects.

The next meeting of the **Wessex Group** will take place on 11 February 2017 at the Scout Hall, Lower Street, Harnham starting at 10.30am when **Steve Ellis** will show 'Marseille: Maritime Mail'. The two subsequent meetings have now been fixed for 1 July and 7 October 2017.

The next meeting of the Northern Group will be held at Broom Methodist Church, 195 Broom Lane, Rotherham on Saturday 25 March 2017 starting at 10.00am for 10.30am, with a display from the President, **Steve Ellis**, followed in the afternoon by members' displays. For further details please contact **Roger Clapham** (tel. 01709 527673).

* * *

F&CPS Annual Weekend

Once again we return to Charlecote for our annual weekend in 2017. The cost is slightly increased this year to £258 for two sharing a room and £180 for singles for dinner, bed and breakfast for two nights.

Peter Kelly and I have been arranging this meeting for some fifteen years and we have been at Charlecote now since 2003. The excellent meeting room is the big attraction and by and large we have always received good service from the hotel. Over the years the management has changed a number of times and the hotel is now run by Shearings. That created a little extra complication for the organisers because they insist on advance deposits and payment of all hotel charges in advance which adds to the work of the treasurer. It takes two Excel workbooks to control everything! (They are available on request if anyone wishes to look.)

Like most hotel chains they try to maximise room occupancy and so offer extremely attractive deals for two people sharing a room. The downside of that is that singles are penalised with a single room supplement that has now risen to a rather eye watering £64.50 for the

two nights. In most years our attendance is roughly half couples and half singles. I feel rather uncomfortable about our single members paying half as much again as couples though there is nothing I can do about Shearings's ways of working.

Fortunately, as we count as a group we do receive a group reduction of three nights' stay (£129 x 3) and I have always used this to provide a small reduction to the price we charge for singles. For 2017 the true cost for singles should be £193.50 but we are only asking for £180.00. This is the treasurer's pragmatic way of doing things and whilst far from perfect seems fair.

That said our members could now well be getting rather weary of the same organisers and ways of doing things and it might be that an alternative venue would be preferred. We would both be quite content to hand the organisation of the weekend to new faces for 2018 and anyone who wishes to volunteer should contact me in the first place.

Chris Hitchen
F&CPS Treasurer

Members' Displays

The following members of our Society offered displays at the meeting of the *Cercle International de Rencontres Philatéliques* at Souillac on 16 and 17 September 2016:

Jérôme Castanet: Règles d'affranchissement et de taxation des cartes postales dans le régime international

Michèle Chauvet: Les lettres non distribuables

Jean-Pierre Magne: Les timbres pour lettres par Express de l'Île Maurice

And the following members gave displays at *Marcophilex XL* in Jurançon on 15 and 16 October 2016:

Chris Hitchen: La Grande Poste à Paris au XVIII^e siècle

Peter Kelly: Utilisation des timbres à 1 centime au Type Sage seuls ou en multiples (1876-1900)

* * *

* * *

Website Management

We are delighted to confirm the news first announced in the June issue of the Journal, that Jan Gane, one of our members in Australia, has now taken over the management of our website. She has some experience at running websites and will be doing her best to keep ours up to date.

However, in order to do this successfully she does need input from our officers and regional organisers. If you have new dates of meetings or other events, or other information to be published on the Web, send all the details to her by email (see the inside front cover of this Journal for her email address).

LIST OF RECENTLY PUBLISHED ARTICLES

Compiled by Colin Spong and Maurice Tyler

Bulletin de la COL.FRA

N° 157. 3^{ème} Trim 2016: La Période Française de l'Île Maurice (Marion); Congo Série Gravure de 1900, nouvelles découvertes et mise à jour (Strobel); Le Legs de Jean-Xavier Goetz à la Philatélie du Cameroun (Collet); Le Crash du Dewoitine F-AQBB le 23 Mars 1938 (Mercier); Quelques oblitérations de Stations de Madagascar (Mercier).

Cameo

Vol 17 N° 3 Whole N° 99 2016: A Prisoner of War Mailing from Duala, Cameroon in WW1 (Maddocks); WW2 Internment Camp at Batschenga, Cameroun (Maddocks); Batschenga Internee Camp, Cameroun in WWII (Martin); Disparate Frankings on *Paquebot* Mail SS *Albertville* 1916 (Maddocks); Mueba – Another Postal Agency in the Camerouns during British Administration (Bratzel); Cameroun – the Sterling Issue of 1961: Numbers printed (Bratzel); Camerouns – A New Victoria Postmark (Bratzel).

The Collectors Club Philatelist

Vol 95 N° 6 November-December 2016: The Era of the French Colonial Allegorical Group Type: French India (Grabowski).

Documents Philatéliques

N° 229 3^e Trim 15 July 2016: Les levées exceptionnelles, des lettres transatlantiques: Marques «paquebots» de la gare Saint-Lazare [1930-1939] (Platzer & Estel); Un timbre fiscal oublié de Monaco (Maier); 1805, Cadix-Vinça. Une lettre purifiée à la fin de l'épidémie de fièvre jaune de Cadix raconte une bataille navale célèbre (Dutau); Les relations avec l'Allemagne et l'application des accords de l'Union postale européenne à l'été 1944 (Bonnefoy); Le bureau vaudois des Diligences et Messageries à Genève 1^{ère} partie (Barnier et Voruz).

L'Écho de la Timbrologie

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

N° 1909 Sept 2016: L'OP 4 2015 du *Marion Dufresne* [calling at Crozet, Kerguelen and St Paul & Amsterdam, Mauritius returning to Réunion] (Venturini); Les utilisations du 25 centimes bleu au type Mouchon (Lavigne); Le 70c *Paquebot Pasteur* sans surcharge (Brun).

N° 1910 Oct 2016: La Pharmacie du Siècle des Lumières aux Temps Modernes (Aronis); Le courrier de la Campagne Océanographique (Venturini); Le temps des Grands Raids et des records (Albaret); Les utilisations du 25 centimes bleu au type Mouchon (Lavigne); Rachel et Sarah Bernhardt, Deux grandes dames du théâtre (Rosenberg); Les Rencontres du CIRP en images (-).

N° 1911 Nov 2016: L'OP 1-2016 du *Marion Dufresne* (Venturini); Valeurs déclarées du Tarif intérieur français, du 1^{er} juillet 1892 au 15 avril 1906 (Lavigne); L'histoire postale grand format en terres de Béarn (-).

France & Colonies Philatelist

Whole N° 325 (Vol 72 N° 3) 2016: French West Africa 1947 Pictorial Issue Maximum Cards (Schroedl); Gleanings from the Group Type (Grabowski); Unpaid Forwarded Mail Taxed Postage Due France to Algeria: Revisited (Kelly); A Censored Postmark [Tunisia] (LaBlonde); Tunisia to the Netherlands by Airmail (Rasmussen); NY: 2016 A Personal Observation on the Exhibits from Saint Pierre & Miquelon (Grabowski).

Whole N° 326 (Vol 72 No.4) 2016: French Covers sent to FDR: Postal History from 1932-1939 (Holland); *Cameroun Français* 27.8.40 – the 50 centimes Stamp with Inverted Overprint – Bogus (Bratzel); Mystery solved – Non Postal Cameroun Datestamp identified (Collet & Bratzel); Two Early Paris Commune Covers and Beyond (Grabowski); St Pierre & Miquelon Le «4x4» serait arrivé dans l'archipel en 1892 (Tillard); Marque postale utilisée en Algérie à la fin de la 2^e guerre mondiale par les «Forces Françaises Libres du Levant» (Morvay).

Gibbons Stamp Monthly

Vol 47 N° 5 October 2016: The Central African Republic (Round).

Timbres Magazine

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

N° 181 Sept 2016: L'ultime navigation *Pourquoi-pas?* (Toulemonde); Les affranchissements de la poste française de Jérusalem (Livnat); Une lettre qui chemine lentement (de La Mettrie); Retour à l'expéditeur un peu abrupt mais sans équivoque (Loëdec); Les camps militaires des XVII^e et XVIII^e (Baudot); Messieurs les Anglais nous voici! [1^{re} partie] (Veglio); Les Semeuses lignées (Singeot); Mais où sont les fermes d'antan? (Zeyons); Quand les petits timbres font la grande Histoire [AEF] (Melot); Dateur ou cursive et croix à la main (Prugnon).

N° 182 Oct 2016: Du Bénin au Dahomey (Pellinec); Quand le timbre est à la fête (Singeot); La luminescence: terminologie et applications à la philatélie (Gomez); Les «remplaçants» du 25c Cérès nous réservent encore de belles surprises! (de La Mettrie); Le millésime 2015 des TAAF (Dreyfus); Patrick Lubin, un style particulier [Gravure] (Nowacka); «La mort noire» (Coutant); Les débuts à Madagascar du C.N.E.P. (Monteret); Des lettres à LIRE (R.R.); Des relations avec le Portugal enfin simplifiées (Prugnon).

N° 183 Nov 2016: Le type Sage: une mutation économique et technique (Gomez); Ces variétés présentes à la fois sur les timbres non dentelés et sur les timbres dentelés (Marion); Les cartes-lettres illustrées d'Algérie (Chauvin); Service postal secondaire (de La Mettrie); Vive la république! (Zeyons); Deux marques découvertes! (Baudot); Saint-Pierre et Miquelon, la surcharge clandestine «5» du XIX^e siècle (Tillard); Parité monétaire et taxes postales (Prugnon).

Continued on page 128

Paris instructional marks from 1837 to 1950

Part 1

Chris Hitchen

Delivery of mail in Paris

Instructional, sometimes referred to as auxiliary markings, are those marks applied when letters for some reason required special treatment in the course of their journey from sender to recipient. As the term implies they provide instructions on problems encountered such as insufficient payment, difficulty with addresses, delays and so on. In France and particularly in Paris they often include the identification of the post office or postman dealing with the item.

To understand the instructional and ancillary marks on letters handled by the postal service in Paris one must know how mail was delivered in the capital. Much has been written on these subjects over the years and much published, particularly in that most valuable journal '*Les Feuilles Marcophiles*' produced by the *Union Marcophile*. However some of this will not be easily accessible to English readers and this is intended as a brief guide to the subject.

The wall of the Farmers-General completed in 1791 formed the boundary of the capital until 1860. It was an unfortified wall intended to control the collection of tolls and taxes on goods coming into Paris and its course is closely followed by Metro lines 2 and 6 today. The fortified wall that is the present city boundary was constructed between 1841 and 1844 when Thiers was prime minister. The area between the walls did not form part of Paris until 1860 when the suburbs were annexed but this had no immediate effect on mail delivery in *ancien* Paris. The demolition of the customs

wall was set in train in 1860 and the fortified wall began to be dismantled in 1919 after the First World War.

From the start of the local post (*la Petite Poste*) in June 1760 each district office carried out deliveries within its own area. That meant initial sorting in each office to separate letters to be delivered by themselves and those for other areas. In February 1837 it was decided it would speed things up by sorting and delivering everything from the Head Post Office in the rue Jean-Jacques Rousseau. The postmen would be taken to and from their walks by horse bus. These buses had 16 places and since the most walks or *quartiers* any district had at this time was 15 that worked well. The existing delivery areas based on those served until then by the district offices remained as the basis of the organisation though not always precisely the same. They were now referred to as *arrondissements de distribution*. Each had from 9 to 15 walks or *quartiers*. There were nine offices at this point marked in red on the first map (**Figure 1 next page**) and their exact location in 1837 is set out in the table below. Some of these streets have been renamed or are no longer on modern maps; the comments below indicate where they can be found on today's maps.

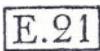
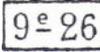
After the revolutions of 1848 the Special offices which had been allocated to government institutions became public offices. The office of the King's Household, the Chamber of Peers and the Chamber of Deputies were re-designated K, L and M respectively. These are marked on the map in blue.

| Office | Address | Comments |
|--------|----------------------------------|--|
| A | 2 rue Lenoir Saint-Honoré | now the extreme north end of rue Bourdonnais |
| B | 13 rue Saint-Louis | now the rue de Turenne (southern end) |
| C | 4-6 rue des Vieilles Haudriettes | now simply rue des Haudriettes |
| D | 23 rue de l'Échiquier | |
| E | 24 rue de Sèze | |
| F | 2 rue de Beaune | on the corner with the rue de Lille |
| G | 61 rue Saint-André-des-Arts | |
| H | 35 rue des Fossés Saint-Victor | close to the junction of the rue Thouin and rue Cardinal Lemoine |
| J | 4 place de la Bourse | |

Undelivered and redirected mail in the 1840s

The catalogue numbers for the various marks referred to in this article are taken from A Rochette and J Pothion (R&P) *Catalogue des Marques Postales et Oblitérations de Paris*. A more recent version of part of this is in *Marques Postales et Oblitérations de Paris de 1700 au 31 12 1848* by Vincent Pothion.

Delivery area marks (R&P 1147 1162 1175)

| | | |
|--|---|---|
| Delivery office area and day of the month | Office E on the 21 st of the month |  |
| Delivery <i>rayon</i> and the day of the month | <i>Rayon</i> 9 on the 26 th of the month |  |

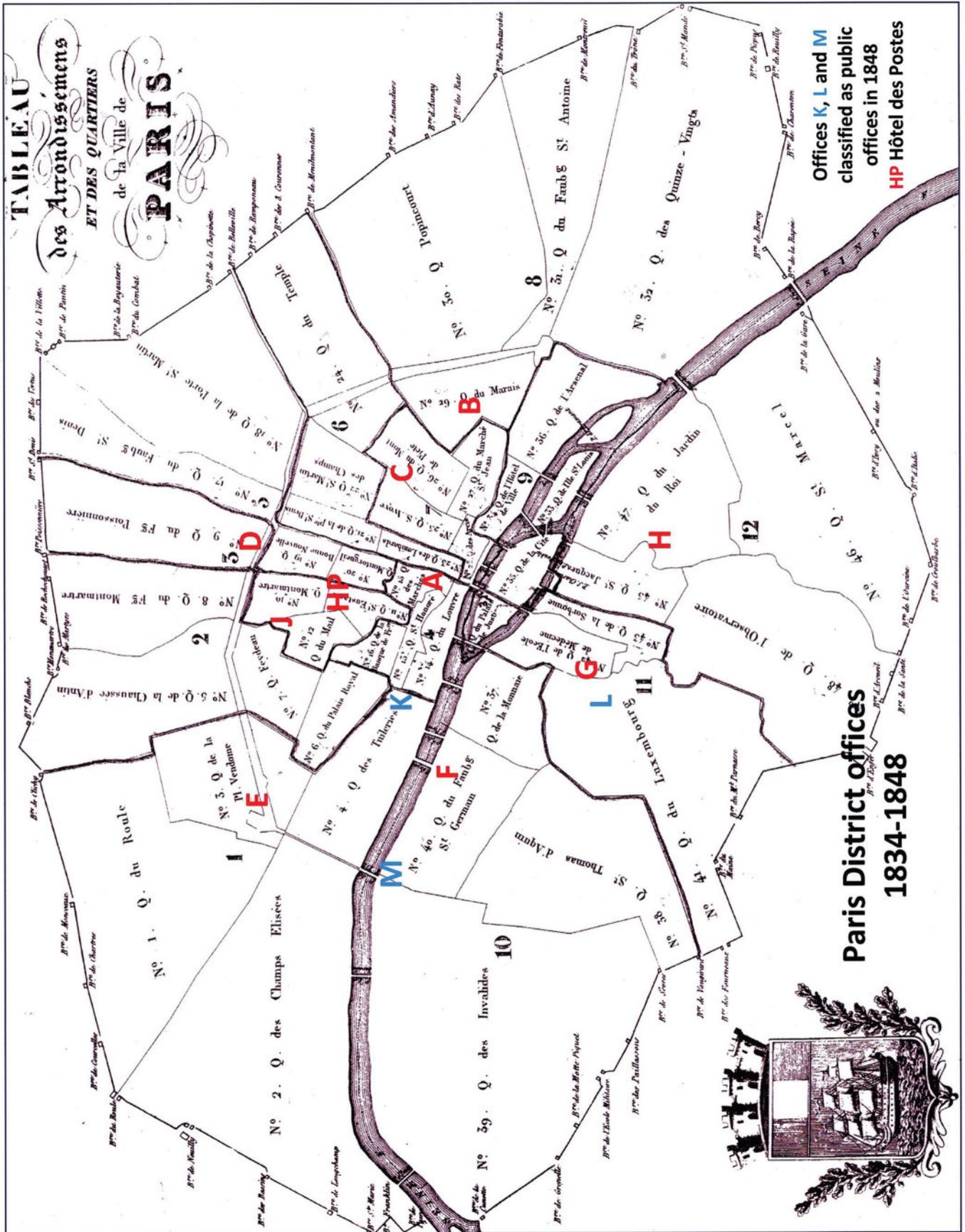


Figure 1
Paris District Offices 1834-1848

Postman marks (R&P 1180 1180 bis 1183 1183 bis)

| | First shift postman | Second shift postman | Third shift postman (after 1857) | Fourth shift postman (after 1876) |
|---|---------------------|----------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Office delivery area (pre 1850) the letter is that of the office and the number is that of the postman's walk | D 8 | 8 D | | |
| Rayon delivery area (1850 onward) the top figure is the <i>rayon</i> and the lower the postman's walk | 10 10 | 9 5 | 10 11 | 1 17 |

Supernumerary postmen (reserves for the regular personnel) (R&P 1184 1184 bis)

| | First reserve | Second reserve |
|--|---------------|----------------|
| The top figure is that of the <i>rayon</i> and the lower the postman's personal number | 1 4 | 6 2 |

The service for correcting addresses was numbered 6. Its marks had the delivery area office letter, the day of the month and its service number 6 (R&P 1181).

| | |
|--|--------------|
| Applied to a letter directed to the Office E area on the 22 nd of the month | E 22 6 |
| Applied to a letter directed to the Office F area on the 27 th of the month | F 27 6 |

Figure 2 shows the back of a letter of 1843 with the various marks applied on misdirected letters.



Figure 2
Postmen's marks on a letter of 1840

The letter has been posted on 19 November 1840 to 13 rue des Banquiers (off the Avenue des Gobelins near the Place d'Italie). The address was at the southern end of the delivery area of office H and lay just within the city boundary which was then the Boulevard Vincent Auriol. Three attempts were made on the 20th and 21st by both postmen serving walk 10 but without success. It was then sent to office A to try the Halle au Cuir in the rue Mauconseil on the 22nd and was handled by the first postman of walk 6 but again unsuccessfully. The service for correcting addresses has also applied marks for delivery areas H and A.

To make it clearer who had handled a letter which had encountered problems in the course of delivery the postmen were issued with their own handstamps in April 1839. These had the number of the walk served and are

usually referred to as postman's stamps. Between 1837 and 1850 all these various marks would have been applied at the Head Post Office, albeit they still carry the delivery office area designatory letter.

It was under the July monarchy in the years from 1834 to 1846 that France began to experience the beginnings of its industrial revolution. A railway system started to be built and by 1849 all the main stations in the capital had opened. This brought people in from the countryside and saw considerable population growth. This expansion was not of course uniform across the city and some areas grew rather more rapidly than others. The postal reforms of 1849 also substantially increased the amount of mail in circulation. New *quartiers* were needed in some areas but the capacity of the horse buses meant that it was not possible to create more than 16 walks in one delivery area. New *quartiers* were therefore added to those areas which had less postal activity which therefore began to weaken the links between the principal offices and the delivery areas supposedly based around them.

1850 the creation of *rayons* to organise deliveries.

The links between the district offices and the delivery areas became increasingly tenuous and in 1850 a full investigation of how matters could be better managed was undertaken. It was noted that in a number of cases a post office was no longer actually within the delivery area nominally linked to

it. The decision was made to create a 10th delivery area and to avoid possible confusion with the municipal *arrondissements* to replace that designation with the term *rayon* and to simply number these dropping all reference to the District offices. The rearrangement is set out in the table below.

The second map¹ (Figure 3 next page) is the only accurate representation of the *rayons* before 1901 of which I am aware, though the sketch on page 24 of *Les Feuilles Marcophilles N°234* is basically sound. Those to be found in Pothion's various handbooks are unfortunately inaccurate. Figure 3 shows a *rayon* 11 which was created in 1863 to take some of the pressure off *rayon* 10 in the busiest commercial part of the city. The adjustments made before 1850 to try and achieve a balance in the number of walks in different *arrondissements* can be clearly seen. *Rayon* 7 was based on the area served by Office H in what is now the 5th *arrondissement* on the left bank but it added parts of the right bank now in the 4th going northward to the rue Saint-Antoine because it served a relatively poor area and only needed some 9 walks on the left bank.

1 *Les Feuilles Marcophiles* 241 page 11 article by Pierre Lux

| | | |
|---|--|-----------------|
| <i>arrondissement de distribution K</i> | | <i>Rayon 1</i> |
| <i>arrondissement de distribution E</i> | | <i>Rayon 2</i> |
| <i>arrondissement de distribution D</i> | | <i>Rayon 3</i> |
| <i>arrondissement de distribution A</i> | | <i>Rayon 4</i> |
| <i>arrondissement de distribution C</i> | | <i>Rayon 5</i> |
| <i>arrondissement de distribution B</i> | | <i>Rayon 6</i> |
| <i>arrondissement de distribution H</i> | | <i>Rayon 7</i> |
| <i>arrondissement de distribution G</i> | | <i>Rayon 8</i> |
| <i>arrondissement de distribution F</i> | | <i>Rayon 9</i> |
| <i>arrondissement de distribution J</i> | | <i>Rayon 10</i> |

Instructional and ancillary marks used by the delivery service now included the appropriate *rayon* number (Figures 4 to 6).



Figure 4

A letter damaged in transit to the rue de Seine in 1869. It has been re-sealed by the post office with a wax seal reading *Distribution des Lettres Paris 8* and the hand stamp of *Rayon 8* applied alongside.

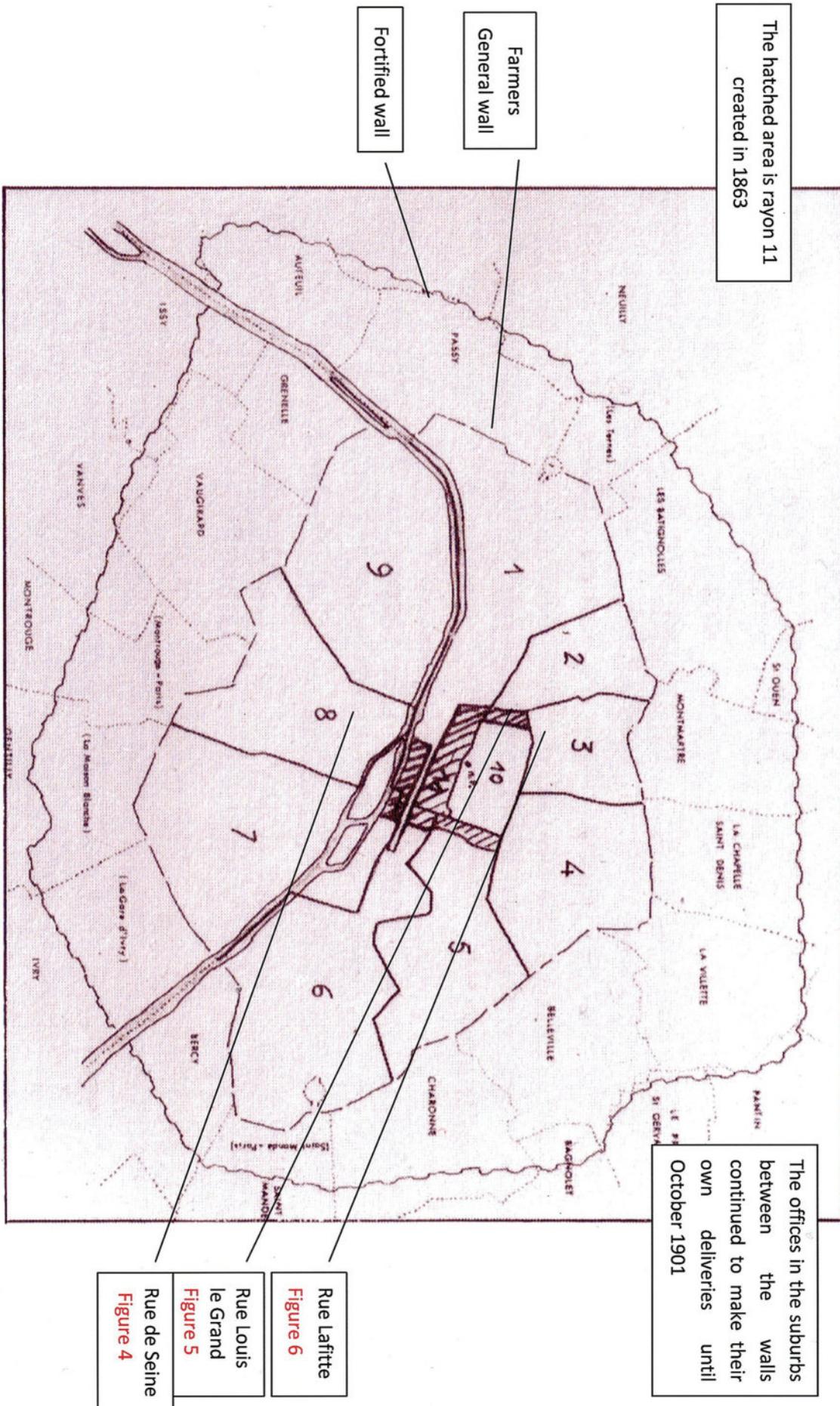


Figure 3
Delivery rayons in Paris 1850 to 1901



Figure 5
An underpaid letter to the rue Louis le Grand with a rate of 4 *décimes* to pay and the handstamp AFFR. INSUFF. R.2. applied.



Figure 6
An underpaid letter from the Papal States with the rate adjusted from 10 to 20 *décimes* due. Rayon 3 has applied its handstamp – TAXE RECTIFIÉE R.3.

The suburbs between the walls

The suburbs between the walls became part of Paris in 1860. The 16 post offices in this area, however, retained their numbering in the lists of provincial post offices with *gros chiffre* numbers and retained responsibility for their own deliveries. In 1872 a further 5 offices opened in these areas. Their postmen's marks had the initials of the office and followed the same pattern as those in *ancien* Paris. April 1878 saw the merger of the post office

and telegraph services. Some two years later, partly as a consequence of this, a revision of the numbering of post offices in Paris took place and the existing suburban offices, now some 25 in number, were finally included in the Paris listing with numbers from 53 for Auteuil to 77 for La Villette 2. The four opened in 1879 probably did not have delivery functions and so are not included in the table below.

| Office | <i>Gros Chiffre</i> number | Office initials | Paris office number from July 1881 |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------|------------------------------------|
| Auteuil | 241 | A | 53 |
| Les Batignolles | 347 | BA | 54 |
| Belleville | 432 | BV | 55 |
| Berc | 445 | BC | 56 |
| La Chappelle Saint-Denis | 892 | LC | 58 |
| Charonne | 904 | CH | 59 |
| Clignancourt ex Montmartre 2 | 6122 | MT 2 | 60 |
| La Gare d'Ivry | 1625 | GI | 63 |
| Grenelle | 1715 | GI | 64 |
| La Maison Blanche | 2170 | MB | 65 |
| Monceau ex Les Batignolles 2 | 6121 | BA 2 | 66 |
| Montmartre | 2488 | MT | 67 |
| Montrouge | 2523 | MR | 69 |
| Passy | 2793 | P | 70 |
| Passy 2 | 6120 | P 2 | 71 |
| Plaisance ex Vaugirard 2 | 6124 | V 2 | 72 |
| Saint-Mandé | 3739 | SM | 73 |
| Les Ternes | 3921 | T | 74 |
| Vaugirard | 4116 | V | 75 |
| La Villette | 4277 | LV | 76 |
| La Villette 2 | 6123 | LV 2 | 77 |

Return to sender

Retour à l'expéditeur marks, for mail which could not be delivered, were issued to all French post offices in June 1866 and those in the provinces included the *gros chiffre* number as identification. The offices between the walls followed the same

pattern, although two are known with such marks identified by the initials of the office – Montmartre 2 (P.MT.2^o) and La Villette 2 (P.VI.2^o) (Figure 7). The latter also used a standard one with its *gros chiffre* number 6123 (Figure 8).



Figure 7

An 1878 registered postcard from a Rouen insurance company to the Boulevard de la Villette. It has postmen's marks for the 3 shifts of the suburban office La Villette 2 and the return to sender's mark PVI.20°.



Figure 8

A returned letter with RETOUR A L'ENVOYEUR 6123 of La Villette2.

In *ancien* Paris these marks were the same for all delivery areas (Figure 9) until mid-1891 when the *rayon* number was added (Figure 10). At around the same time all Paris offices were given such return marks with their Paris office number (Figure 11). Since the offices in *ancien* Paris were

not involved in delivering letters the marks from these offices are usually found in circumstances when they were collecting mail – pneumatic, registered, *Poste Restante* and when items could not be accepted for onward transmission (Figure 12).



Figure 9

A letter from the *Juge de Paix* in Belleville returned with the Head office RETOUR A L'ENVOYEUR * and postmen's marks of Charonne, rayon 6 and Belleville

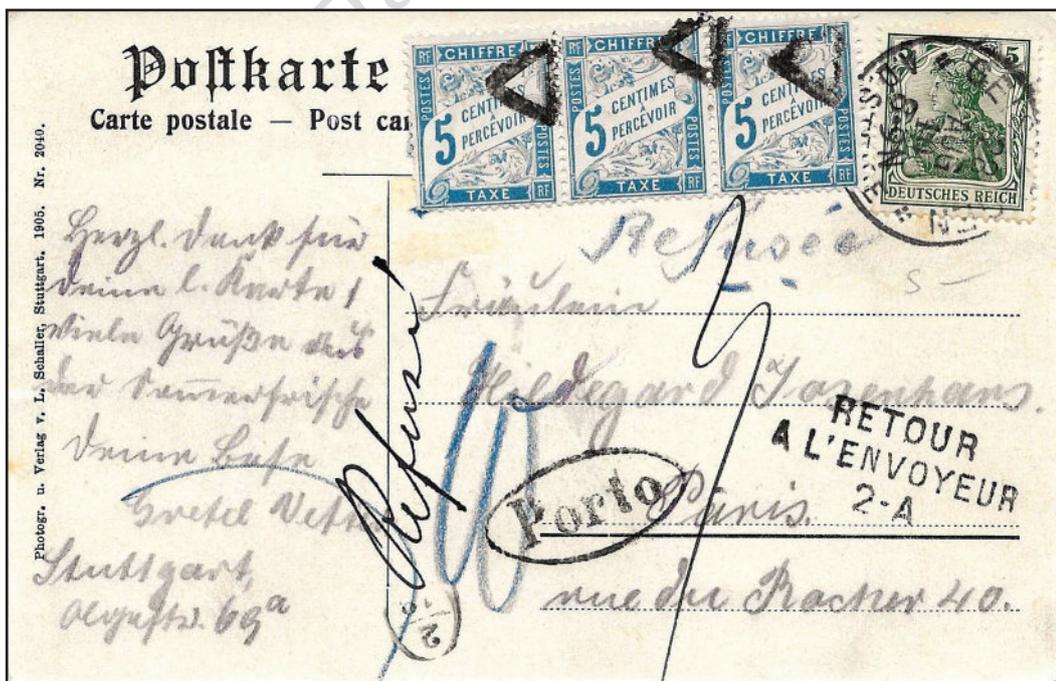


Figure 10

An underpaid postcard from Germany in 1910 refused because of the postage due with a return to sender and postman's mark of rayon 2.



Figure 11
RETOUR A L'ENVOYEUR P54 from the suburban office of Les Batignolles now in 1894 simply titled office 54.



Figure 12
RETOUR A L'ENVOYEUR P14 on a postcard on which the address has been omitted and so could not go into the postal system.

The concluding part of this article will appear in the next issue of the Journal.

Letter Tracking

Derek Richardson

An advice of delivery (*Avis de Réception*) service has of course existed since the very start of the postal service in France, but its use is limited to senders of registered or insured letters. The business community had for a long time wanted a low cost service that would make the date of delivery of an ordinary letter accessible to the sender, but this could not be provided because the necessary technology did not then exist. It was the invention of the internet and of the barcode reader that eventually led to the creation of a working system. The key to this system was the unique barcode affixed to every tracked object. This was scanned by barcode readers twice - firstly to record the date of posting, a copy of which was kept by the sender, and secondly at the destination office to record date of arrival. The letter would then be delivered to the addressee's letter box without the need of a signature. The sender could subsequently access the date of arrival by means of either a telephone call (paying) or the internet (free).

Distingo

From the start of the project it was known that tracked letters had to be clearly seen as such, and this meant designing a series of postal stationery envelopes for this use alone. To test the feasibility of this project, trials had to be done, and on 4 November 1991 *La Poste* introduced a new service called *Distingo*. This was announced as a 'collect, carry and deliver' operation for important documents. This document-carrying service was not advertised nationally,

its use being confined to a number of chosen companies. The carrying was done in pre-franked envelopes in one of two sizes, C5 to carry up to 12 sheets of A4 paper, folded, for 20F and C4 to carry up to 30 sheets of A4 paper, flat, for 25F. They were made of a material that was required to be waterproof and uncrushable. Used examples of these two envelopes are not hard to find, nor is it difficult to see that they both have a 'dry' impression identifying the manufacturer - "Tyvec Luxembourg" on the C4s and "HDPE" (high-density polyethylene) on the C5s. **Figure 1** shows an example of a C5 envelope, used in 1996. The franchise mark was a six-colour geometric composition by the artist Charles Bridoux. *Distingo* remained in service until 31 December 1999. All tracking containers made since then have had a Tyvec impression.

Distingo Suivi

Experiments and studies carried out in the 1990s enabled *La Poste* to announce¹ on 16 May 2000 the launch of the tracked letter project and to set out a programme of tests that were to take place during the rest of that year. It was designed to cover the 'up to 1 kilogram' part of the urgent letter weight range, which meant the first seven weight steps. The service was to operate in metropolitan France and Monaco and also in and between French overseas *départements*. For each

¹ Lancement de la Lettre Suivie La Poste internal communication DC.DMV.A.00-009 of 16 May 2000.

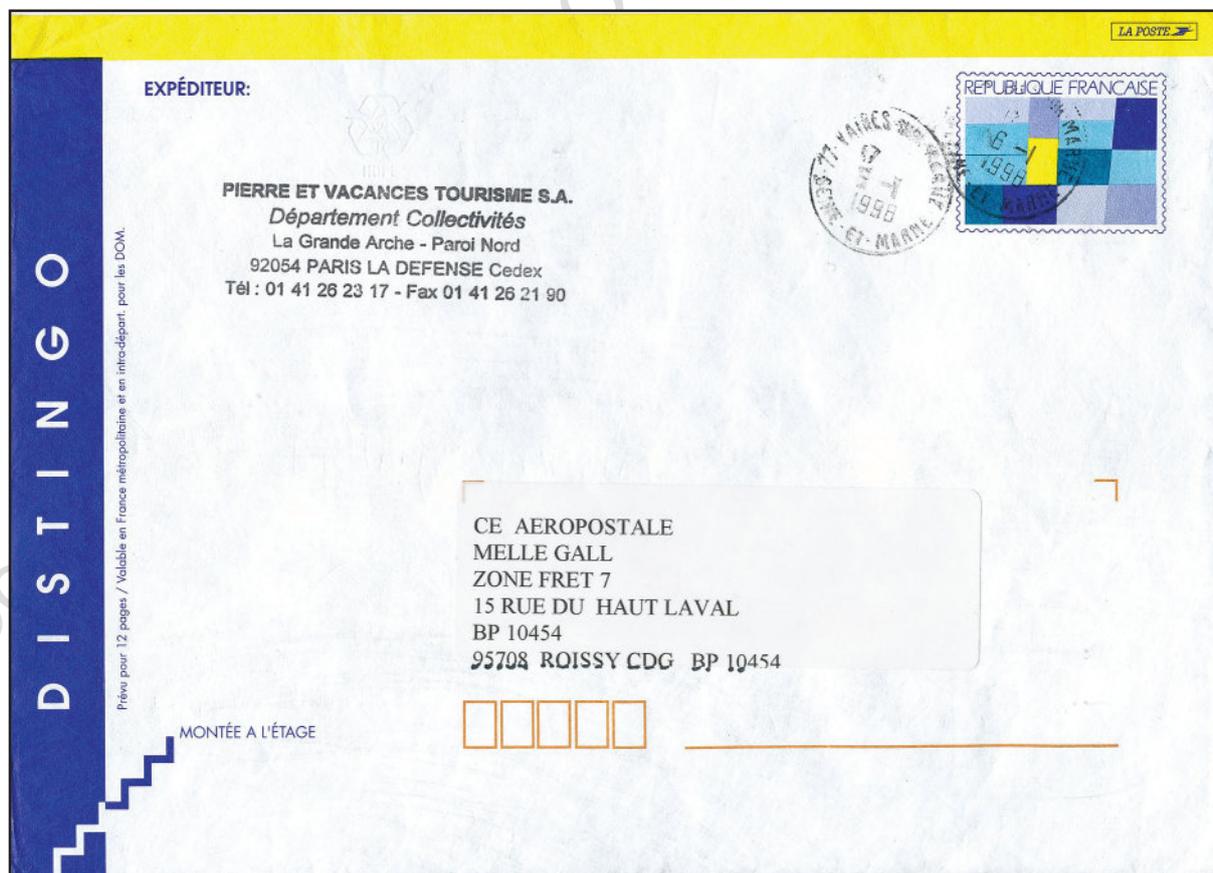


Figure 1
Trial *Distingo* envelope, used from 1991 to 1999
Paris-La-Défense to Roissy, 6 January 1998

weight step, a Tyvec container of an appropriate design was ordered which was to form part of a series of pre-franked postal stationery *Prêt-à-Poster* items, named *Distingo Suivi*. These were to be priced at the postal rate plus the cost of the *Prêt-à-Poster* plus a tracking charge.

Unfortunately, the design and production of the containers were subject to delays. The first to be delivered (for the 100 gram, the 500 gram and the 1 kilogram steps) went on sale on 29 November 1999. The 20 gram and 50 gram containers arrived six months later on 29 May 2000. The portfolio was finally completed by the addition of the 200 gram and 350 gram containers on 2 May 2002. These were bubble-wrapped to afford extra protection for articles such as DVDs and cassettes. **Figure 2** shows the appearance of a 100 gram envelope. Importantly, all *Distingo Suivi* containers have a double circle with the words *COURRIER – SUIVI* in blue. The same mark, in different colours, appears on all subsequent *Prêt-à-Poster* containers issued.

The formal launch date of this tracked letter service was 2 January 2001², but because of the delays in the production of the containers, the first public announcement of the service called *Distingo Suivi* was delayed until the appearance of the *Principaux Tarifs Postaux*³ dated 1 June 2003. The service was for the use of business customers with franking machines and the capability of recording the unique barcode on each letter. These letters were then to be posted directly in street collecting boxes. **Table A** gives

2 *Commercialisation de la Lettre Suivie*, La Poste internal communication DC.DMV.A.00-042 of 12 December 2000

3 Current *Principaux Tarifs Postaux* are available in French post offices.

the *Distingo Suivi* postal rates. The rates are nominal, as generous discounts applied according to how many were ordered at a time.

Lettre Suivie

An entirely separate service created for the use of the general public was introduced in March 2001 (under the initially provisional title of '*la Lettre Suivie*') by means of which any member of the public with a pre-franked urgent letter could 'upgrade' it to a tracked letter by buying a tracking etiquette with barcode for 6F (0.91€ after 1 January 2002) and affixing it to his own package and handing it in to be scanned. Again, the price of 0.91€ was nominal, with reductions for quantity. The introduction of this service had been trialled during a staff training period from June to the end of August 2000. **Figure 3** depicts an envelope that was employed in that trial. A decision to end the sale of these tracking etiquettes was taken in January 2005 but as they were of permanent validity their use continued for some time.⁴

It was around this time that reports of non-delivery of tracked letters began to appear in social media. More such reports continued throughout the year. We have no information about the investigations that followed, but what we know for certain is that they revealed an error in the *Distingo Suivi* system which led to the cancellation of the service. This was announced half-way through the year 2008. The postal stationery was withdrawn from sale, but, being of permanent validity, later examples are sometimes found.

4 Paul HUBERT in *Marianne*, journal of the *Cercle des Amis de Marianne* (N° 73, 4th quarter 2006).

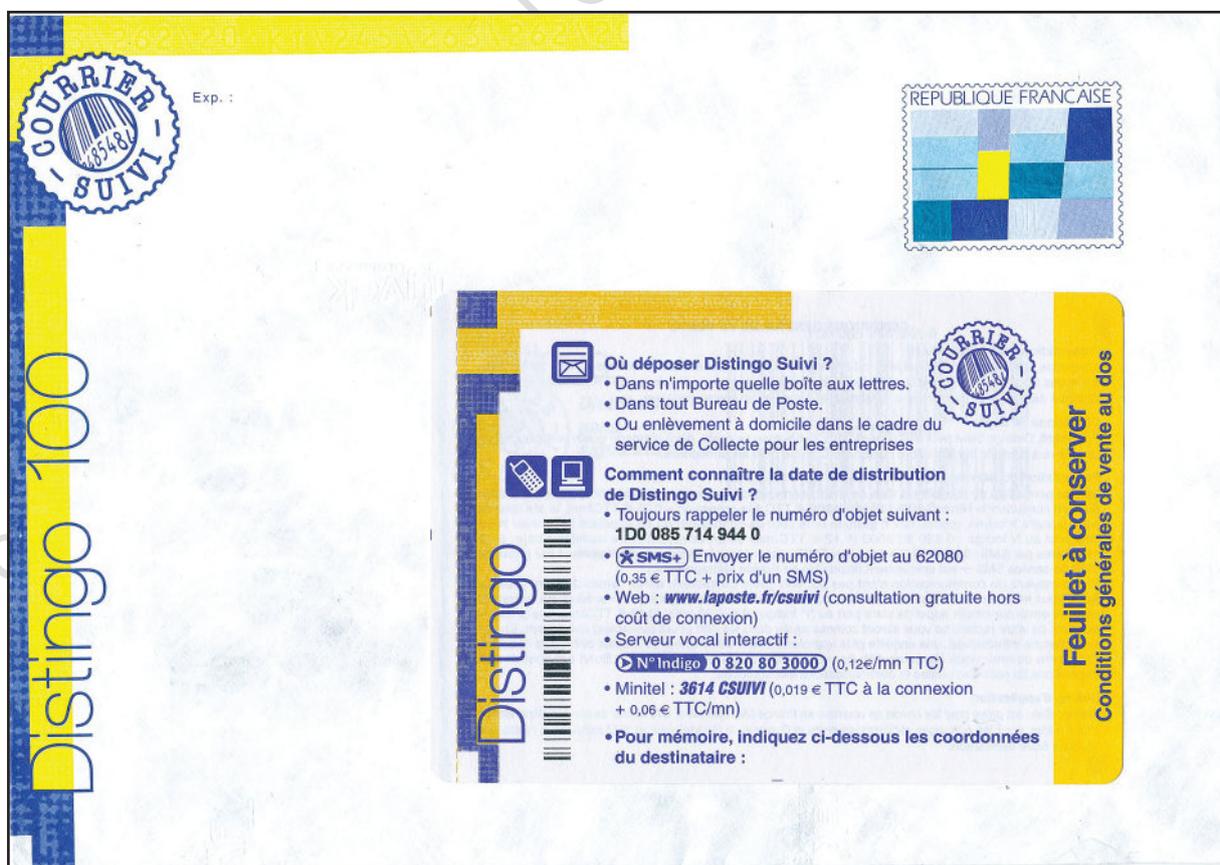


Figure 2

Distingo Suivi envelope for items up to 100 grams inscribed *Courrier-suivi* and with tracking barcode

| Up to (g) | 20 | 50 | 100 | *200 | *350 | 500 | 1000 |
|------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 29.11.1999 | | | 15F | | | 25F | 33F |
| 29.05.2000 | 9F | 12F | “ | | | “ | “ |
| 01.01.2002 | 1.37€ | 1.83€ | 2.29€ | | | 3.81€ | 5.03€ |
| 02.05.2002 | “ | “ | “ | 4.00€ | 4.50€ | “ | “ |
| 01.06.2003 | 1.53€ | 2.05€ | 2.56€ | 4.49€ | 5.04€ | 4.27€ | 5.63€ |
| 01.10.2006 | 1.66€ | 2.21€ | 2.77€ | 4.87€ | 5.45€ | 4.60€ | 6.11€ |

* bubble-wrapped

Table A
Distingo Suivi postal rates

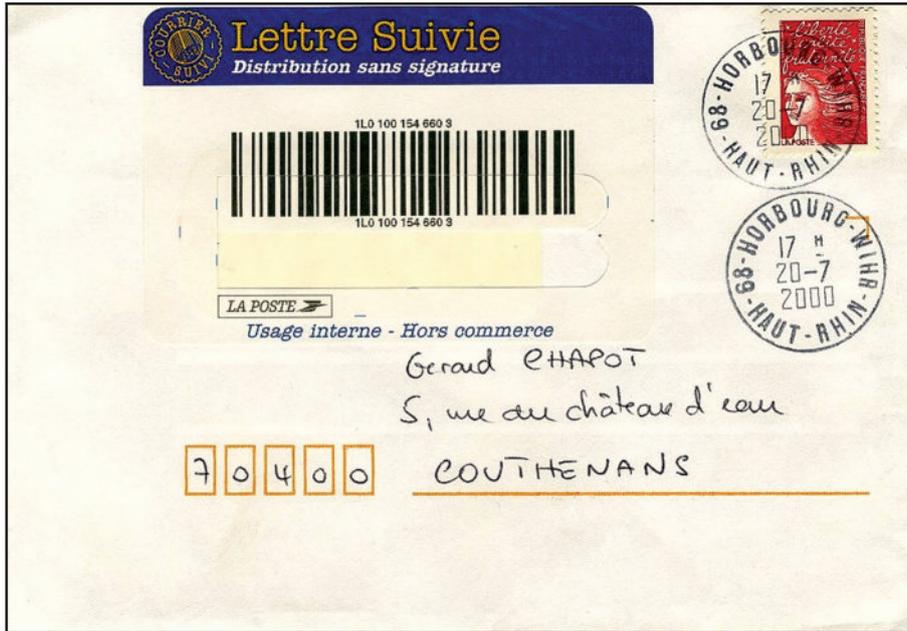


Figure 3
Lettre Suivie etiquette inscribed Usage interne: Hors commerce applied to private mail during trials Horbourg-Wihr to Couthenans, 20 July 2000



Figure 4
Lettre Max postal stationery container for up to 20 grams Thoissy to Troarn, 9 March 2010

| Up to (g) | 20 | 50 | 20 | 50 | 100 | 250 | 500 | 1kg A | 1kg B | 1kg C | 1kg D | 2kg | 3kg |
|------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|----------|----------|----------|----------|------|------|
| 03.11.2007 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 3.15 | 4.15 | 5.15 | 6.15 | - | - |
| 27.04.2008 | 2.10 | 2.40 | - | - | - | - | - | 3.15 | 4.15 | 5.15 | 6.15 | - | - |
| 02.03.2009 | 2.10 | 2.40 | | | 2.57 | 3.65 | 4.90 | 3.15 | 4.15 | 5.15 | 6.15 | 6.65 | 7.70 |
| 01.07.2010 | 2.15 | 2.45 | | | 2.57 | 3.65 | 4.90 | 3.25 | 4.25 | 5.30 | 6.30 | - | |
| 01.07.2011 | 2.18 | 2.50 | 1.44 | 1.92 | 2.66 | 3.74 | 5.01 | 3.30 | 4.29 | 5.39 | 6.30 | - | 7.68 |
| 01.01.2013 | 2.18 | 2.55 | 1.48 | 1.98 | 2.77 | 3.92 | 5.19 | 3.35 | 4.35 | 5.50 | 6.45 | - | 7.89 |
| 01.01.2014 | 2.22 | 2.62 | 1.51 | 2.04 | 2.90 | - | 5.39 | 3.48 | 4.48 | 5.70 | 6.79 | - | 8.26 |

Table B
Lettre Max and Lettre Suivie Postal Rates (in euros)

Lettre Max and revised Lettre Suivie tracking service

3 November 2007 saw the introduction of the *Lettre Max* service for tracking voluminous documents weighing up to 1 kilogram that were not more than 19 millimetres (3/4 of an inch) thick. On 27 April 2008, the service was extended to include items weighing up to 20 and 50 grams. A new design of *Prêt-à-Poster* container was introduced, an example of which is depicted in **Figure 4**. Container contents were not restricted to paper alone but could include any small item. The cost of these containers was somewhat elevated because *Lettre Max* terms of sale included indemnity for loss or damage – for example, 5€ for a MAX20g item and 8€ for a MAX50g item. Business users were required to employ what was referred to in the introductory announcement as a *machine à affranchir intelligente*. One thing that was different was that franked letters could no longer be

posted in street posting boxes but had to be taken to a post office where a fixed tracking charge of 0.40€ per item was payable.

A year later, on 2 March 2009, a revised version of the *Lettre Suivie* service came into use. It covered the extended weight range of up to 50g, 100g, 250g and 500g, plus the new 2kg and 3kg weight steps. A new design of container was used for *Lettres Suivies*. In appearance it was violet on a white background with some lettering in red (**Figure 5**). In 2011, there was a notable change in the condition of use. The delivery target of the tracking service was changed from “next-day” to “next-day-plus-one” (French “J+2”). This was to conform to the government’s “Green” environment policy, including the non-use of air transportation for internal mail. To reflect this change, two new sets of containers with added green colour were produced (**Figures 6 & 7**).



Figure 5
Lettre Suivie postal stationery container for up to 50 grams



Figure 6
Lettre Max postal stationery container for up to 20 grams
inscribed *Marchandises* and printed in environmental green
Triel-sur-Seine to Lagny-sur-Marne, 7 July 2014



Figure 7
Lettre Suivie postal stationery container for up to 50 grams
inscribed *Documents* and printed in environmental green
39289A (Lesquin) to Warsy, 23 December 2013

| Up to (g) | 20 | 50 | 100 | 250 | 500 | 1000 | 2000 | 3000 |
|------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Urgent letter rate | 0.76€ | 1.25€ | 1.90€ | 3.05€ | 4.10€ | 5.35€ | 6.80€ | 7.30€ |
| Tracking charge | 0.32€ | 0.30€ | 0.25€ | - | 0.20€ | 0.10€ | - | 0.20€ |
| Container cost | 0.46€ | 0.61€ | 0.91€ | - | 1.46€ | 1.69€ | - | 1.62€ |
| Prêt-à-Poster charge* | 1.54€ | 2.16€ | 3.06€ | - | 5.76€ | 7.14€ | - | 9.12€ |

* when bought singly, and after VAT is paid, and being the sum of the three lines above.

Table C
Breakdown of *Lettre Suivie 2015* charges

Table B contains the France to France rates in euros (tracking charge not included) payable by members of the public for these two services. They are single-item prices, but with reductions available for quantity. The 1kg containers were available in four sizes: A=142x135x19, B=192x137x19, C=254x175x19, D=304x234x19 millimetres. *Lettre Max* prices are shaded blue.

Lettre Suivie 2015

From 1 January 2015 onwards, objects more than three centimetres thick were not allowed to be sent by this or by any other letter service but by the *colis* (parcel) service instead. Details are listed in **Table C** above.

Destinations

The tariffs mentioned so far were applicable to France, Monaco, French military personnel serving abroad and in and between French overseas *départements*.

In 2011, the service was extended to foreign destinations. Any letter that was correctly franked for abroad could be converted to a tracked letter simply by affixing an etiquette. The charge for these etiquettes was 2.80€ on 1 October 2012, 3.00€ on 1 July 2013 and 3.20€ on 1 January 2014 and applied to all destinations, but not all destinations were equally well served. Twenty countries that had comprehensive internet systems received the full service but the remainder did not, letters to those countries being tracked only as far as the point of departure from France.

Sources and acknowledgements

All table data has been drawn from *Annexe IIIb1 - Tarifs des Prêts-à-Poster* to be found at http://www.timbres-barres-phosphorescentes.fr/V2_Annexe/V2_AnnexeIIIa6.html

Laurent Bonnefoy (*Académie de Philatélie*) provided valuable source material and advice.

LIST OF RECENTLY PUBLISHED ARTICLES

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Les Feuilles Marcophiles

N° 365 (2^{ème} trim 2016, Jun 2016): Essai sur le courrier d'État, «Les dépêches ordinaires du dedans du royaume» de François 1^{er} à Louis XVI: Lettres closes portant la signature du monarque et la mention du destinataire (2^e partie) (Barrère); Le timbre BM (dans un ovale) sur les lettres acheminées par voie de terre 1867-1880 (2^{ème} partie) (Lissarrague); Les problématiques de la mise en place du service rural: La fabrication et l'entretien des boîtes aux lettres (Pinhas & Reynaud); Histoire de la double relation postale du Principat d'ANDORRA - Chapitre I (suite 4^{ème} partie): Les débuts entravés du télégraphe électrique (Dupré); Timbres «RETOUR A L'ENVOYEUR» (3^{ème} partie) (Guillard & Abensur).

N° 366 (3^{ème} trim 2016, Sept 2016): L'épopée du sous-marin «Turquoise» (Expédition des Dardanelles 1915-1916) (Cournety); Abus de Franchise à la Convention Nationale (Courtois); Histoire de la double relation postale

du Principat d'ANDORRA - Chapitre I (5^{ème} partie): Les débuts du télégraphe et son apport au fonctionnement du service du courrier (Dupré); Les marques de censure de la Libération en Bretagne (Le Grel & Specht); Le timbre BM (dans un ovale) sur les lettres acheminées par voie de terre 1867-1880 (3^{ème} partie) (Lissarrague); Les levées exceptionnelles (juin 1863 - novembre 1939): Étude des tarifs (Schaff & Donnadieu); Une nouvelle ligne de bateaux à vapeur (Le Montagner & Reynaud).

Le Collectionneur Philatéliste et Marcophile

N° 176 (Nov 2016): La Bataille des Frontières au mois d'août 1914 (III) (Geubel & Van Dooren); Le courrier de Cul-des-Sarts pendant la Grande Guerre (Monfils); Un marin français vichyste interné par les gaullistes au Cameroun (Berthier); Introduction à la Marcophilie et l'Histoire Postale (III): l'histoire postale dans la 1^{re} moitié du XIX^e siècle (Morat).

Algeria: Post Office Postal Stationery Wrappers

John Courtis

Miss Fairless, Hotel Royal, Biskra, Desert of Sahara, Algeria was the address on a GB post office postal stationery wrapper, an exciting find because it represented only the third GB wrapper with an Algeria destination recorded on eBay in the past 12 years (see Figure 1). In researching this wrapper the tourist role of Biskra, its

connecting railway from Constantine, the grandeur of the Hotel Royal and aspects of Victorian life were revealed (Courtis, 2013). Writing up this wrapper and tracing the routing was an interesting and preliminary anecdote to a study of the post office postal stationery wrappers of Algeria itself.

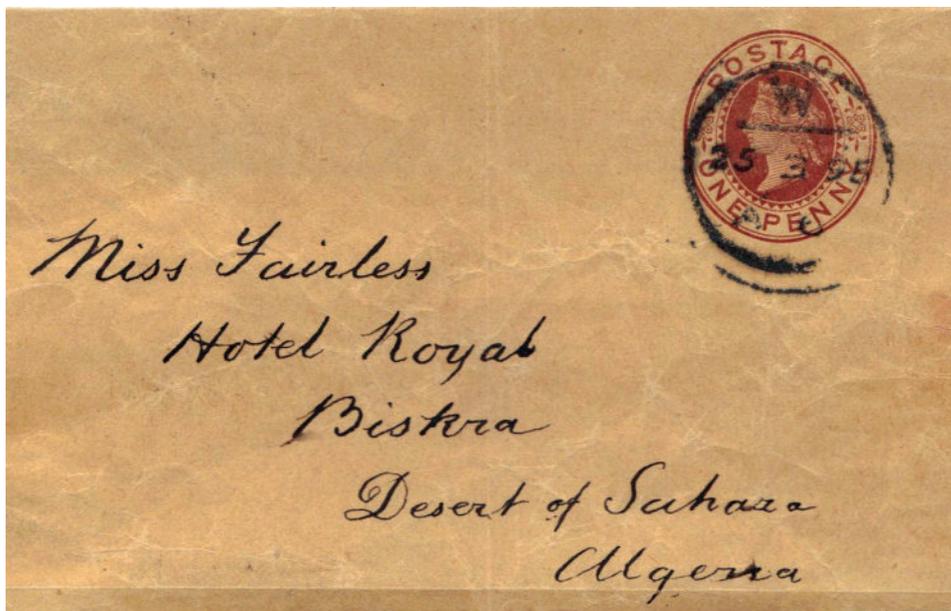


Figure 1
: GB Type E6 PO Newspaper Wrapper addressed to Biskra

Post Office Issues

The wrappers of Algeria were initially those of France but overprinted *ALGÉRIE* in red or black in 1924. Three years later in 1927, Algeria issued its own wrappers of which there were two basic indicia. More specifically, the first issue in 1924 comprised 1c grey-black (E1 using the Higgins & Gage “E” catalogue numbers) overprinted *ALGÉRIE* in red on France E4 *Type Blanc*, 2c brown-violet (E2) on France E5 *Type Blanc*, 5c orange (E3) on France E7 Sower and 5c green (E4) on France E8 *Type Blanc*.

On 10 April 1927 the Algerian post office issued wrappers with their own inscribed indicia. The 1c brown olive (E5) and the 2c brown violet (E6) show a Rue de la Casbah street scene. One year later the post office issued a 15c red

brown design depicting the Sidi Abd-er-Rahman mosque (E7). In 1930 these three 1927-28 types were reissued but without date code (E5a, E6a, E7a) of which more will be said later.

In 1938 two new values were introduced: 10c violet Rue de la Casbah (E8) and 20c carmine Sidi Abd-er-Rahman mosque (E9). This last issue was then handstamped in black in 1939 of.10 (E10) and in 1943 with an additional black handstamp 0F30 (E11). There were no Specimen overprinted wrappers of Algeria for U.P.U. distribution to member countries. These indicia are shown in Figure 2 copied from the forthcoming catalogue of Jan Kosniowski with his kind permission.



Figure 2
Post Office Postal Stationery Wrappers of Algeria

At this point it is worth noting that each wrapper was usually printed with a three digit date code located to the right of the wrapper near the flap (Figure 3). The first digit of the date code is the last digit of the year of printing and the next two digits are the week number in the year of printing (but not necessarily the same year of issue). For example, the date code number 446 is interpreted as having been printed in 1924 and 46 means the week of the year. Week 46 is the middle of November. The exact post office issue date to the public was 10 April 1927 which is approximately two years and 16 weeks later. An explanation for this delay may be that it is due to the using up of existing stocks of the 2c *Type Blanc* (E2) where the final printing occurred in 1925 in week 48 (date code 548). Why the last printing of the 2c *Type Blanc* issue occurred one year after the first printing of the 2c Rue de la Casbah seems anomalous.

For the overprinted French/Algerian wrappers the normal setting location of the date code is 30/25-35mm to the right of the indicium and the normal setting of the date code is for the number to be facing the indicium; the reverse (R) occurs when the date code number is facing away from the indicium. This is the same system that was used for the printing of the wrappers of France.



Figure 3
Example of Date Codes 446 and 646R

The addition of date codes raises the collectable number of Algerian post office wrappers from 11 basic types to 33, details of which can be seen from a listing of these date code numbers (or their absence) in Table 1.

Table 1: Date Codes for each “E” type issued

| H&G “E” | Description | Date Codes |
|---------|--|-------------------------------|
| 1 | 1924, 1c grey-black <i>Type Blanc</i> | 410, 509, 515, 548 |
| 2 | 1924, 2c brown-violet <i>Type Blanc</i> | 410, 452, 502, 548 |
| 3 | 1924, 5c orange Sower | 414, 414R |
| 4 | 1924, 5c green <i>Type Blanc</i> | 436 |
| 4a | 1924, 5c green <i>Type Blanc</i> | No date code |
| 5 | 1927, 1c brown olive Rue de la Casbah | 515R, 643R, 644 |
| 6 | 1927, 2c brown violet Rue de la Casbah | 446, 507, 642, 643R, 644, 707 |
| 7 | 1928, 15c red brown Sidi Abd-er-Rahman mosque | 630, 644, 646R |
| 5a | 1930, 1c brown olive Rue de la Casbah | No date code |
| 6a | 1930, 2c brown violet Rue de la Casbah | No date code |
| 7a | 1930, 15c red brown Sidi Abd-er-Rahman mosque | No date code |
| 8 | 1938, 10c violet Rue de la Casbah | 744, 925 |
| 8a | 1938, 10c violet Rue de la Casbah | No date code |
| 9 | 1938, 20c carmine Sidi Abd-er-Rahman mosque | 745 |
| 10 | 1939, 20c carmine Rahman mosque overprinted | 745 |
| 11 | 1943, 20c carmine Rahman mosque two overprints | 745 |

Supply on (US) eBay

The author has discussed the data-gathering technique in previous articles but a brief explanation is that the daily hand-collecting of new listings on eBay of used post office postal stationery wrappers commenced in September 2003. The database of worldwide wrappers is now 41,500. Of these, only 14 used wrappers are from Algeria making them some of the more elusive wrappers, at least from this US eBay source. However, there are keen collectors of Algerian wrappers in France and for some reason they prefer to use the French eBay. Very often sellers only allow bidders from France. Algerian wrappers appear much more frequently on French eBay where the sale prices tend to be higher

(Kosniowski, private correspondence). Nevertheless, a total of 14 wrappers listed in 147 consecutive months of data-gathering is equivalent to one listing each ten months which is a low frequency of appearance. The distribution of the 14 wrappers per post office type is shown in Table 2.

It is not normally possible to identify the presence or otherwise of the date code on these wrappers from eBay images because wrappers are normally folded with this information on the reverse. In any event it is difficult to read such fine detail from Internet images. The frequency numbers in Table 2 make no distinction between wrappers with and without date codes.

There are four E types with not a single appearance in more than 12 years: E4, E8, E9 and E10. These Algerian wrappers may have been sold on other sites and other markets, but *prima facie* they appear to be elusive wrappers if not scarce. There are five wrapper types with two appearances each during the data-recording window; this is equivalent to a listing appearance of one each seven years.

One wrapper type appeared once (E5) and one type three times (E1). Postal stationery collectors of Algeria need remarkable patience if they are to rely on the US eBay site to meet their wants. All but two wrappers were to local addresses within Algeria (usually Algiers). There were two wrappers addressed to locations in France.

Table 2: Number of PO Wrapper Types of Algeria Listed on eBay Sept. 2003 – Dec. 2015

| H&G "E" | Description | Frequency | Local destinations | Non-local destinations |
|---------|---|-----------|--------------------|------------------------|
| 1 | 1924, 1c grey-black <i>Type Blanc</i> | 3 | 3 | |
| 2 | 1924, 2c brown-violet <i>Type Blanc</i> | 2 | 2 | |
| 3 | 1924, 5c orange Sower | 2 | 2 | |
| 4 | 1924, 5c green <i>Type Blanc</i> | 0 | 0 | |
| 5 | 1927, 1c brown olive Rue de la Casbah | 1 | 1 | |
| 6 | 1927, 2c brown violet Rue de la Casbah | 2 | 1 | France (1) |
| 7 | 1928, 15c red brown mosque | 2 | 1 | France (1) |
| 8 | 1938, 10c violet Rue de la Casbah | 0 | 0 | |
| 9 | 1938, 20c carmine mosque | 0 | 0 | |
| 10 | 1939, 20c carmine mosque overprinted | 0 | 0 | |
| 11 | 1943, 20c carmine mosque two overprints | 2 | 2 | |
| | Total | 14 | 12 | 2 |

None of the 14 wrappers in the US database were remarkable. None showed evidence of auxiliary markings.

France Used in Algeria

In order to make the paper more robust and as a matter of record regarding the wrappers of Algeria, several additional images were supplied by Jan Kosniowski with supporting comments and these are included here with his kind permission. Prior to 1924 French newspaper wrappers were used in Algeria and a question of interest is how were they used? Three examples are shown in [Figure 4](#).

The first example is a cut out from the front page of a March 1903 edition of the first French language newspaper *L'Echo d'Oran*. This paper was established by Pierre

Lafonton on 12 October 1844. It was common at the time to post newspapers by writing the address on the newspaper and adding stamps of France of the appropriate postage. Postage of 6c was paid with an 1877 1c black Sage type on light blue + 1900 5c green *Type Blanc* (Scott 86,113).

The second and third wrappers are examples of the wrappers of France being used in Algeria. The E1 example was used in 1890 and postmarked ORAN KARGUENTAH, Algeria. The E5 example was used from Constantine to Philippeville in Algeria and has the date code 637 (not shown).

Uncommon Wrappers

No postage due wrappers of Algeria were recorded in the author's database. Jan Kosniowski supplied an example of an Algerian 1940 type handstamped wrapper posted in Oran on 31 January 1942 addressed to a person serving in the army. It attracted postage due in Morocco and the 40c charge was paid with a horizontal pair of 1917 20c olive green (J30) and tied MEKNES-VILLE-NOUVELLE MAROC on 14 February 1942.

An unexplained red QW handstamp appears on the reverse of the wrapper as well as a pencil 0.40 being the postage due charge. The front and back images of this wrapper are shown as [Figure 5a](#).

Jan very kindly supplied a wrapper showing a spectacular paper fold variety of the 1927 2c brown violet (without date code) and this wrapper is shown as [Figure 5b](#).



Figure 4
Examples of France used in Algeria



Figure 5a
Postage Due applied to Algeria Wrapper E10



Figure 5b
Paper Fold Variety on E6: folded and unfolded

Sales on eBay

Another database hand collected daily by the author comprises daily sales transactions of used post office postal stationery wrappers. To date there are 16,600 sales recorded of which only seven are of Algerian wrappers and details of these are shown in Table 3. Because sample sizes are small no reliable conclusions can be drawn about overall realized sales and bidder interest. There does not seem to be any overwhelming interest in these wrappers

when they are listed for sale on the US eBay, with perhaps the exception of E3 where the two sales recorded eight and six bidders respectively. If there was a strong collector base for this seemingly elusive material it might be expected that bidder interest would be stronger. The tentative conclusion from the available evidence is that while these wrappers appear to be elusive they do not seem to attract strong buyer interest.

Table 3: Sales Transactions on eBay of Algerian PO Wrappers: March 2006 – December 2015

| H&G | Sales Details (Ranked Low to High in USD) & Number of Bidders per Sale | N° of Sales | Mean Sale Price | Mean N° of Bidders |
|-----|--|-------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| 1 | 8.80 (2) | 1 | 8.80 | 2.00 |
| 2 | No sales recorded | 0 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| 3 | 11.52 (8), 23.52 (6) | 2 | 17.52 | 7.00 |
| 4 | No sales recorded | 0 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| 5 | 9.99 (1) | 1 | 9.99 | 1.00 |
| 6 | 5.13 (2), 9.80 (4) | 2 | 7.47 | 3.00 |
| 7 | 15.50 (4) | 1 | 15.50 | 4.00 |
| 8 | No sales recorded | 0 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| 9 | No sales recorded | 0 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| 10 | No sales recorded | 0 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| 11 | No sales recorded | 0 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| | Totals | 7 | 9.87 | 3.58 |

Conclusion

Post office postal stationery wrappers of Algeria appear to have little collector appeal as per the US eBay market. The first four issues were wrappers of France overprinted *ALGERIE* in red or black. The other post office types were inscribed Algeria and depicted a street scene and a mosque. Of the 14 wrappers in the database of 41,500 used wrappers only seven of the 11 post office types have appeared for

sale in more than 12 years. These wrappers displayed no auxiliary markings or especial usage. Collectors of these wrappers displayed modest response to their occasional appearance on US eBay. While the wrappers of Algeria appear to be elusive there does not seem to be much collector interest on eBay. Realized prices are modest and bidder behaviour reserved.

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Acknowledgements

Jan Kosniowski kindly read and commented on an earlier draft and supplied all images but the first from his catalogue and personal collection; I thank him sincerely for his adding to the robustness of the record.

The author, Dr John K Courtis FRPSL, is not a member of this Society and we thank him for his contributions to our Journal. He can be contacted by email on acapjajc@friends.cityu.edu/hk

SHORTER ITEMS - INCLUDING QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

“In Tahiti I Brush My Teeth”



If this letter had not been returned undelivered, what a dull cover would have resulted! It would have borne just the two Official stamps, of which only one caught what is anyway the commonest postmark in all French Polynesia: ‘Papeete R.P.’

But the letter being refused adds considerable interest to this cover in three ways. Philatelically, it bears a clear strike of Papeete’s ‘Correspondance en Retour’ cachet – and on the reverse, a postmark from Paea, quite uncommon in itself.

Best of all, for humorists among us, Papeete’s eventual receiving mark (also on the reverse) is in the form of a slogan, likely to appeal to collectors of Pretty Girls on Stamps and Teeth on Stamps alike.

The slogan itself intrigues me: in stating “In Tahiti I brush my teeth” is the girl confessing to not brushing her teeth anywhere else? (Ugh!) Or might she be a jet-lagged air passenger, struggling to match her own body clock to wherever in the world she happens to be?

Michael Round

Mystery Solved – Non-Postal Cameroun Datestamp Identified

In 2014 and 2015, Marty Bratzel asked for help to identify a previously unreported Cameroun postmark on a loose postage stamp (Ref. 1, 2). Only a portion of the wording and the date could be deciphered – *YAOUNDE CAMEROUN* 8.4.27. The wording at the bottom was an abbreviation, but of what?

The mystery is now solved. Marty in Canada and fellow member Michel Collet in France both spotted on eBay nine loose stamps with the same datestamp. Because eBay encrypts bidders' names, neither knew that they were bidding against each other! Michel was successful. He had the stamps and Marty had the scans. Independently, each member determined the wording at the bottom. Full credit goes to Michel for concluding that TR. P^B = *Trésorier Payeur*. No other postal or fiscal terminology fits. Michel's reconstructed datestamp is shown in [Figure 1](#).



Figure 1

Reconstructed YAOUNDE CAMEROUN TR. P^B. datestamp

Trésorier Payeur translates as paymaster or, perhaps more broadly, the government revenue or finance department which, for Cameroun, was headquartered at Yaoundé, the territorial capital. It makes sense that the headquarters would have its own datestamp. So, the datestamp was intended for revenue and not postal purposes. How, then, could the cancel be on postage stamps?

The nine stamps offered on eBay ([Figure 2](#)) are all from the same series of stamps (Yvert 92-100, Scott 155-163) and all have the same cancellation date – 2.12.24. The strikes are probably philatelic souvenirs. No conclusion can be drawn about Marty's original example (on Yvert 117, Scott 185), but postal or other non-revenue use cannot be excluded.

Consider the use of non-postal datestamps for postal purposes in various administrative centres throughout Cameroun. Representatives of the *Trésorier Payeur* had their own datestamps. These resembled then-current postal datestamps but the devices had a collar at the bottom with the wording *caisse d'avances* or *agence spéciale* ([Figure 3](#)). Numerous examples of postal use of such non-postal datestamps have been recorded; see, for example, [Figure 4](#). Others are shown and discussed in Ref. 3. To summarize, the regional representatives of the *Trésorier Payeur* were authorized to handle mail at locations that did not have a post office or postal agency and they used their devices to cancel stamps (Ref. 4). Also, the devices were often used after a postal agency was opened but before arrival of a permanent postal datestamp. In the case of Yagoua, the devices were used between mid-1944 and the mid-1950s, after the postal datestamp was apparently damaged or lost. At Ebolowa, in 1926 and 1927, the *agence spéciale* datestamp was used postally, concurrently with the postal datestamp.



Figure 2

Cameroun postage stamps (Yvert 92-100, Scott 155-163) with a *Trésorier Payeur* cancel

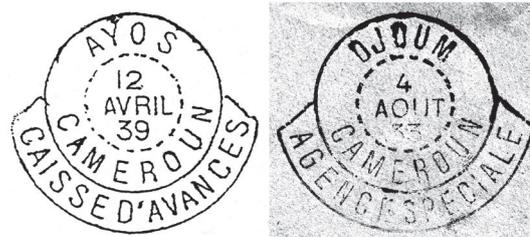


Figure 3

Cameroun *caisse d'avances* and *agence spéciale* datestamps

The regional representatives also issued and cashed money orders (*mandats*) at locales where there was no post office or where the postal agent was not authorized to do so (Ref. 4). However, for Cameroun, no money orders or money order receipts have been recorded with postage stamps affixed and / or cancelled with non-postal datestamps.

In 1927, Cameroun postage stamps were handstamped *Enregistrement* for revenue use; the earliest confirmed date of use is 3.5.1927. The first general-purpose revenue stamps (*timbres fiscaux*) for Cameroun were also issued that year; the earliest confirmed date of use is 29.5.1927. Prior to 1927, postage stamps were probably used to show



Figure 4

Postal use of the non-postal Nanga-Eboko *Caisse d'Avances* datestamp on a registered cover to France. The cancel date, 5 avril 28, is subsequent to the opening of a postal agency at Nanga-Eboko, on 27 February 1925, and prior to the receipt of a permanent postal datestamp, for which the earliest recorded date is 8 March 1930.

that a revenue fee had been collected. Documents with Cameroun postage stamps affixed to collect revenue have been recorded as early as 1929 (Ref. 5).

To return to Yaoundé, in the 1920s the Yaoundé post office had at least five postal cancellers, and the use of a fiscal datestamp on mail does not seem justified. The fiscal datestamp shown in Figure 1 was probably used primarily for collection of revenue and to datestamp official documents but, prior to 1927, in the absence of revenue stamps, postage stamps would have been affixed and cancelled. In addition to the post office, the *Trésorier Payeur* at Yaoundé also could have issued money orders. Furthermore, specifically regarding the stamps in Figure 2, the cancels are probably philatelic. Definitive answers can only be found if / when the fiscal datestamp is found on documents, letters, money orders, or used for other purposes.

Non-postal *caisse d'avances* and *agence spéciale* datestamps were used for postal purposes in several regional administrative centres in Cameroun and are therefore included in the listing of Cameroun postal datestamps. The Yaoundé fiscal datestamp has been found on postage stamps, and postage stamps may well have been used to collect revenue or on money orders issued by the *Trésorier Payeur*. Strictly postal use is unlikely. Therefore, should the Yaoundé fiscal datestamp also be included? Given its occurrence on postage stamps, we say yes.

To conclude, fiscal handstamps with the text *Trésorier*

Payeur exist in other French colonies during the same general time period. For example, shown in Figure 5 is a collared *Trésorier-Payeur* datestamp for Noumea, New Caledonia, used on money order receipts.



Figure 5
Noumea New Caledonia
Trésorier-Payeur
datestamp, 27 MAI 11

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Edmund Dulac – Commemorative Miniature Sheet

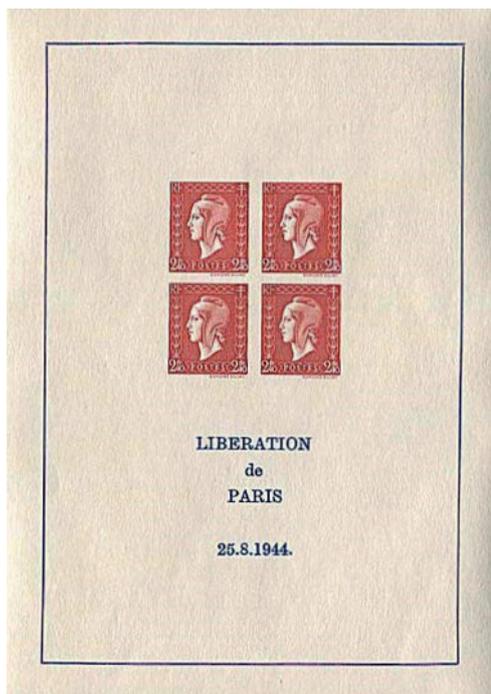


Figure 1

This miniature sheet with a block of 4 imperforate 2F40 stamps (Figure 1) was produced to mark the Liberation of Paris in August 1944, but appears never to have been officially issued. Nor is it clear when it was produced because whilst dated 25.8.1944, the issued 2F40 stamp did not appear until 17 March 1945.

The Maury catalogue illustrates the sheet giving the inscribed date, but not an issue date or any production details, whilst the Stanley Gibbons 'France' catalogue has a footnote stating that imperforate copies of the 2F40 "...

This particular item is shrouded in mystery. The Yvert & Tellier *'Timbres de France'* catalogue states that the sheet was 'printed during the war on low quality paper'. The *'Marianne Fédéral'* catalogue of 1983-1984 by Storch, Françon & Brun offers the now accepted theory that it is an essay by De la Rue produced in 1944 during the

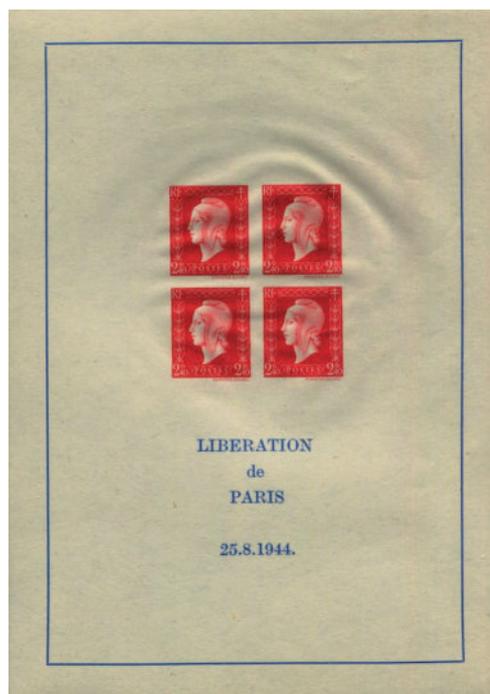


Figure 2

comes from a block of four in a miniature sheet which was not issued."

This sheet has been printed on a thick cream cartridge paper that appears to have been hand gummed, but whether it is an original or a copy is a moot point. I would like to know when the genuine sheet was printed, and by what method (was it lithography? – the issued stamps were recess printed in London by De La Rue) and finally where and by whom? I would love to know more about this fascinating miniature sheet if anyone can help.

Martin Hopkinson

preparation of the issued definitives. The sheets were discovered a year later in the archives at which point they were overprinted with the text and found themselves on the market at exorbitant prices. Dealers argue that one way of distinguishing a genuine sheet is the warping of the paper caused during the application of the gum (Figure 2).

Mick Bister

Nossi-Bé overprints



Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3



Figure 4



Figure 5

We have received from new member **Melvyn Singer** a request to help him identify the Nossi-Bé overprints (Figures 1-4) and a mysterious C*F overprint (Figure 5).

Two members have already offered their thoughts:

Colin Spong:

On checking carefully with the latest SG French Colonial catalogue, the Nossi-Bé overprint is only partly impressed and has been applied to incorrect values. The figures are very small and the lettering varies in size and is blurred. It

would appear these are forgeries.

Stephen Holder:

The C*F overprint looks like a fantasy overprint for *Congo Français* and I doubt that it is an unissued item. An alternative theory is that it could be a fiscal or company overprint. However, in this period (the 1890s) one would expect to see a manuscript mark or a company datestamp or a firm's chop applied as an anti-theft device. On balance I think that all the stamps are very dodgy.

Two 18th Century Letters to and from the City of Algiers

Background

Prior to 1830, the Ottoman Turkish Regency of Algiers was technically ruled by the sultans. The basic extent of the country was from Trara in the west across to La Calle in the east, and south from Algiers to the settlements of Ouargla and Biskra on the edge of the great desert. The area was divided into four provinces: Algiers, ruled by the *dey* and with three sub-provinces, each ruled by a *bey*; Constantine in the east; Oran in the west; and Titteri in the centre. The prime sources of income were piracy and

extortion, with seven countries paying regular tribute to the *dey* to protect their vessels and subjects. Eight other nations, including Great Britain, made donations to the *dey* in cash or kind in order to ensure neutrality – a strategy that did not work.

Letters to or from Algeria prior to the invasion and conquest by France in 1830 are uncommon, but two prior to that date are described below.

A letter of 1787

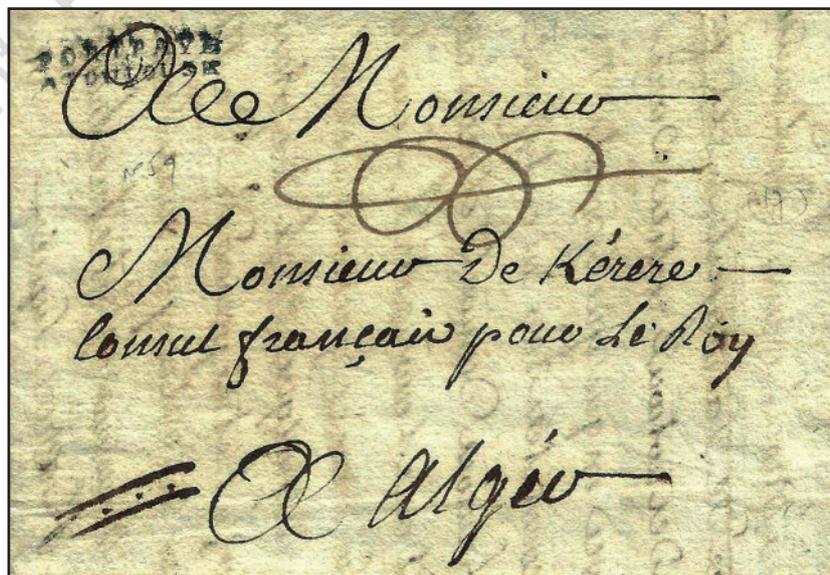


Figure 1
Face of 1787 letter

The first example shown (Figure 1) is a prepaid letter dated 13 January 1787 from Toulouse to the French consul in Algiers, with an integral copy of the previous letter received from the consul, seeking further information about a François Dastuguer of Toulouse, an ex-slave whose freedom had been purchased the previous year. The subject had deserted from the *Régiment de Flandres* in 1774 when stationed in Oran, only to be captured by the natives and then sold to the Regent of Algiers.

The postal markings on the letter comprise: a mark of origin (Figure 2); the Toulouse postmaster's initials (*paraphe*) confirming prepayment (Figure 3); and the

PORT PAYE
A TOULOUSE

Figure 2

Origin mark: recorded in use during 1771–1789 (Lenain 59)



Figure 3

Postmaster's *paraphe* to confirm prepayment



Figure 4

Indication of the 10 sols charge prepaid to Marseille

A letter of 1789

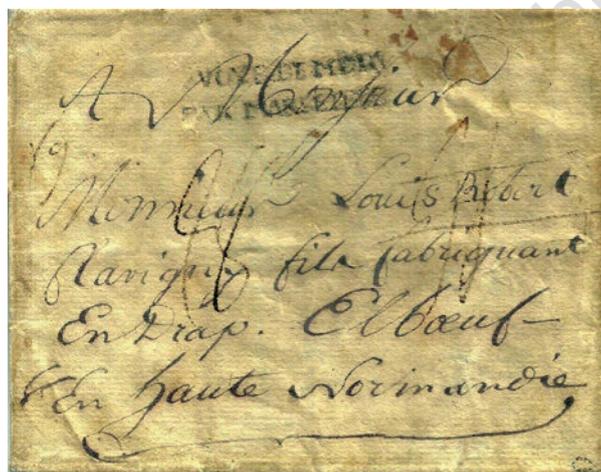


Figure 5

Face of 1789 letter

The second example (Figure 5) is a letter datelined as from Algiers on 24 May 1789 (Figure 6). It is from a man held for ransom by the Regent of Algiers, and sent to his parents in Elboeuf, seeking the funds necessary to secure his release.

Initially taxed at 21 *sols*, on arrival in Marseille the letter was re-weighed and related to 28 *sols*. The calculation appears to be on the following basis: (Marseille–Paris 10 *sols* + Paris–Elboeuf 6 *sols*) = 16 *sols*, then rated up by 50% for a weight of 3 *gros*, yielding 24 *sols*, and then having another 4 *sols* added for a sea tax (based on the tariff dating

from 1759). It should be noted that a system of accurately weighing letters was introduced in the 1760s. The single rate was fixed at $\frac{1}{4}$ *once* (2 *gros*), and letter weights were measured in multiples of $\frac{1}{2}$ *gros* ($\frac{1}{16}$ *once*, equivalent to 1.912 grams).

The postal markings on this letter comprise: a mark of origin (Figure 7), in a form recorded as being applied at Marseille between 1773 and 1800 to identify mail originating from the Mediterranean area other than Malta; and a weight verification mark for $\frac{1}{4}$ *once* + 1 *gros* (Figure 8), equivalent to 3 *gros*.

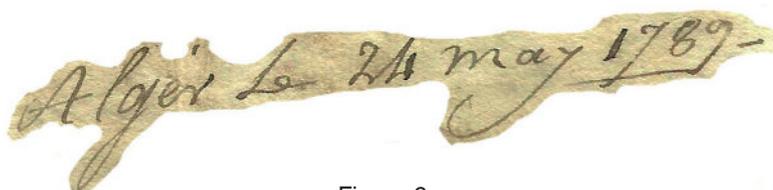


Figure 6

Dateline on 1789 letter

VOYE DE MER
PAR MARSEILLE

Figure 7

Origin mark: in use 1773–1800 (Salles 23)

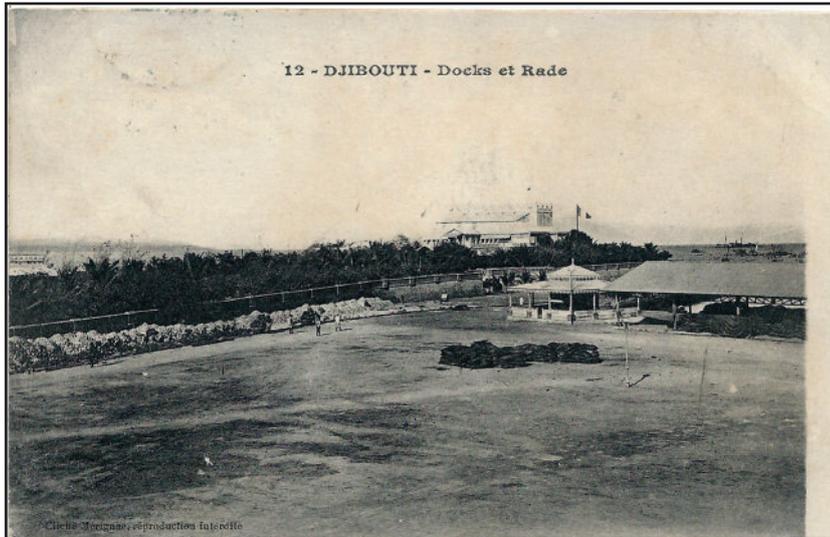


Figure 8

Weight verification for $\frac{1}{4}$ *once* + 1 *gros*

Peter Maybury

Spanish Flu in Djibouti



Djibouti flu postcard
picture side

Djibouti flu postcard
address and message side



At first, second or even third glance this looks a fairly unremarkable postcard. The view is one of the dreariest, from a region not anyway over-endowed with picturesque sights, and has been miscut during manufacture. The French Somali Coast stamp may have a certain collectable value used alone to demonstrate the inter-colonial postcard rate – but one of the Djibouti postmarks has half missed the card altogether, and the date of the La Réunion receiving mark (above and to the left of the other, complete, Djibouti cancel) is too faint to read with any confidence. The stamp is sideways rather than upright, further detracting from the appearance.

The main interest is in the message. As one nightmare (World War I) was ending, another started, namely the Spanish flu pandemic which broke out in January 1918 and lasted until December 1920. It affected 500 million people worldwide and caused the deaths of 50 to 100 million of them – that is, 3-5% of the world's total population. There is little information concerning its effect within Djibouti itself, but in neighbouring British Somaliland (as it was then), it was officially estimated that 7% of the native

population died, and one of the first people to contract the disease in (also neighbouring) Abyssinia was a certain Tafari Makonnen, who nevertheless survived and later became Haile Selassie, Emperor of Ethiopia.

Moral: it's always worth reading the message!

The postcard above is from Djibouti to a Monsieur [name illegible], St. Denis, La Réunion, 30 Nov 1918.

Text:

Votre 26 août en mains y réponds par retour du courrier. Que d'événements depuis! Enfin le cauchemare est terminé mais pas complètement puisque la grippe en est un autre. Ici on claque comme des mouches. Nous trois sommes épargnés et vous souhaitons bonne santé. [Signature illegible.]

Translation:

Yours of 26th August in hand, am replying to it by return of post. What happenings since! The nightmare is over at last, but not entirely, since the flu is another one. Here they are dropping like flies. We three are spared and wish you good health. [signature]

Michael Round

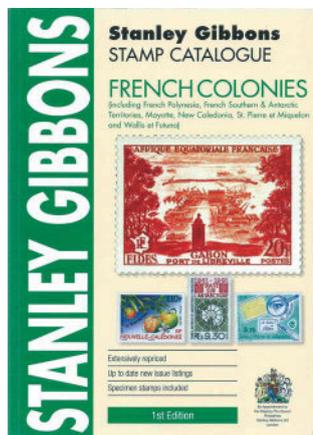
BOOKSHELF

Compiled by Michael Round

NEW CATALOGUE REVIEWED

Stanley Gibbons Stamp Catalogue, French Colonies, 1st edition 2016. xxv+517pp.

ISBN-10 0-85259-974-9; ISBN-13 978-0-85259-974-7. Price £34.95.



UK members will know, as overseas ones may not, of Stanley Gibbons' ongoing catalogue makeover, whereby the old 'Parts 2-22' foreign catalogues are being split into smaller units. Netherlands and Colonies, formerly together with Belgium and Luxembourg in Part 4 'Benelux', now have their own catalogue; Part 5 (Czechoslovakia and Poland) is now two separate volumes. Similarly, the previous Part 6 – full title 'France (also covering French Colonies)' – now has separate volumes for France, including Andorra and Monaco (reviewed here by Richard Broadhurst in September 2015) and this new 'French Colonies.'

Strictly speaking, and if memory serves, this is not in fact the first-ever SG French Colonies catalogue. I believe it was one of the many foreign 'Sectionals' briefly issued just after the war. In any event, I was relieved to see the front cover of the new catalogue in the traditional Europe-and-Colonies green: one press-release mock-up, disconcertingly, had shown it in blue!

Scope

Regular users of the old Part 6 (7th and last edition 2009) will find the scope unchanged. Colonies are complete up to independence, and include those few 1950s issues which appeared during periods of autonomy preceding full independence: Congo, Madagascar and the Mali Federation provide examples. Cameroun and Togo start with Anglo-French Occupation issues. Cut-off date for Lebanon and Syria is 1941: later issues should appear in SG's Middle East (excluding Arabia) volume (exact title to be confirmed) scheduled for 2017.

Listings of those former colonies with DOM/TOM (*Département/Territoire d'Outre-Mer*) status continue to the present day, or as near to it as press dates would allow: French Polynesia and New Caledonia to March 2016, St Pierre et Miquelon and Wallis & Futuna to February, and French Southern & Antarctic Territories (TAAF) to January. There's also Mayotte, practically a DOM/TOM although officially designated a *Collectivité Territoriale*, which issued its own stamps from 1997 to 2011, thereafter using the stamps of France. The other Comoros stop at 1975. French POs abroad are included, as are General Colonies issues, 1859-1946. New Hebrides are in, but only the French-inscribed issues, an unhappy reversion to the old days when catalogues kept English- and French-language issues in separate volumes – illogically so, given

that they were sold and used in the same place.

Items with borderline status are variably treated. TAAF's unissued 87F *Concorde* is footnoted (below SG 53) but not priced; neither are the unissued 1976 New Hebrides commemoratives inscribed '*Première Assemblée Représentative*' (below F225/7) – but their 1977 local surcharges, prepared for use but not issued, are footnoted (below F247/55) and priced (at £70 each).

Post-independence issues may be lacking – an unhappy omission to those of us who still collect them – but this is a meaty catalogue even so, at 517 pages. Paper slightly thinner than usual keeps the overall weight within bounds, and pages are firmly bound in – not always the case with this publisher.

Colours are accurately described, designers and printers are named, and exact dates of issue are all given where known, something that cannot be said for any one French catalogue. Shades are barely touched on, and their existence could perhaps be footnoted if not fully listed next time. (One should not, however, go as far as Maury/Dallay, which lists every conceivable 1892 'Tablet' – or '*Type Groupe*' - shade for every colony, regardless of the fact that in many cases they cannot exist.) Oddly, Ivory Coast SG 4a (the 5c shade) is listed, the only one anywhere among 'Tablet' issues. The very few other shades listed among later definitives (Upper Volta 9a, Madagascar 126a, 136a, etc) are all worth looking out for but by no means all there are.

Running order

Now that mainland France is in a separate volume, illustrations of those of its stamps overprinted for colonial use (North Africa '*Journée du Timbre*', Réunion CFA surcharges, and so on) have moved too, and would have been unavailable for reference had SG not helpfully reproduced them here in its introductory pages. Just three are missing: illustration Type 149, used in Indo-China; *Marianne* T 916, used for St Pierre et Miquelon; and possibly the listed-but-not-shown 'wide 4' on General Colonies Type 1, SG 19a.

Alphabetically, French Occupation (of Castelrosso) appears among, rather than before, French Post Offices; other listings appear in the expected order. I welcomed the shift from the overall heading 'French Territory of the Afars and Issas' (a designation accounting for only ten years) to the far more relevant 'French Somali Coast'. I still think Alaouites and Rouad Island, lumped together under L for Latakia, would have benefited from cross-references under A and R – and, for that matter, under S for Syria, with which they are philatelically if not politically connected. Alexandria, Crete, Zanzibar and so on are all under FP for French POs, where you will also find a complete list of relevant *grands et petits chiffres* postmarks. Indo-Chinese

stamps overprinted, whether for 'Chine' or individual POs like Canton, are all together under I for Indo-China; the 1940s Levant pictorials and FFL surcharges are under FF. Anglicisation prevails: *Oubangui-Chari* is under U for Ubangi, and *Tchad* under C for Chad.

New features

SG is unusually coy about these. The introduction rightly signals that the 1900 issue of French Congo has been rewritten, but to a far greater extent than just the addition of the 'Short Tusk' variety mentioned. (Vested interest alert: I confess I was responsible for much of this rewriting, and am grateful for the numerous extra suggestions SG took on board.) Individual stamps are now all listed and priced with this variety, though their placing below the 2c and 4c errors of colour has led to some ambiguity. (See the Addenda at the end of this review.) Elsewhere in this issue, improvements abound: watermark T 11 is now shown the right way round, perforation and paper variations are clarified, the actual date of issue is discussed, and the ordering of colours (here, and uniquely from SG, frame first, central background last) is emphasised.

The mostly "prepared for use but not issued" Vichy pictorials (like the *Quinzaine Impériale*, Pétain pictorials and earlier designs with 'RF' omitted) were previously listed together after Wallis and Futuna, and numbered through from V1 to V497. They have moved, and now appear, far more sensibly, after each individual country's listing – renumbered too, so as to start each time with V1. SG could have publicised this substantial move.

Substantial, but perhaps not complete. Numerous cross-references in the main text still footnote Vichy issues without pinpointing their (new) location in the catalogue, and often bear price quotations far at odds with those in the Vichy listings themselves. Logically, the Vichy issues should appear chronologically in the main text, dubious pedigree or no: new collectors could then scarcely overlook them, and the cross-references (contradictory pricings and all) could then be scrapped. Meanwhile, and helpfully for new collectors, many non-omnibus Vichy items are now fully illustrated, notably four pictorial sets for Réunion illustrated, I think, for the first time ever. No colours are named, however, anywhere in the Vichy listings. They are, I suppose, not vital – though it would be helpful to know, for example, what colour Ivory Coast V13 is in (the 1F definitive with 'RF' omitted). The issued versions (SG 138/40) came in a choice of three colours.

Back among "proper" issues, many sets – for example the Dulac *France Libre* pictorials of the 1940s, or the various 1946/7 definitives – were issued in separate sections, Postage and Airmail. SG used to price such sets as one: now they follow the French market (and catalogue layouts there) and – again without fanfare – price Postage and Airmail sets separately. This task is still "work in progress", and several sets still remain unseparated: Guadeloupe SG 211/30, Niger 99/114, TAAF 2/18 and French Territory of the Afars & Issas 521/33 are examples. Some set prices have dropped out altogether, presumably accidentally, among them French Congo 36/50 (not my doing!), French Guiana 117/59 and 196/214, Ubangi-Shari 42/72 and finally Réunion: 76A-B/83A-B, 195/244 and within the entire range 306/400.

SG proudly list – helpfully all together on page iv – over a hundred new numbers added, mostly overprint and surcharge errors. A few highly dubious perf 11 pictorials (Mohéli, Middle Congo and POs in China, for instance) have also crept in: search the F&CPS Journal Index for the late David Jennings-Bramly's detailed article on these. Curiously, one entire set, formerly quite respectable, has been not added but deleted, namely French Morocco's 1928 Flood Relief Fund (formerly SG 149/62), presumably on the grounds that it was only sold at double face value. Its illustration remains marooned in place (T 23).

Quietly, SG now present the 'normal' and 'wide' surcharges of 1912 on 1892 'Tablet' issues in separate lists, one under the other. Previously they were interwoven value by value; prior to that, in parallel columns for which the current page layout has presumably no room. I wonder what collectors prefer?

Many more illustrations are now in colour. Again SG, over-modestly, fails to flag up this improvement. The few still in black and white include certain French POs where unoverprinted originals simply do not exist, like Morocco and Zanzibar. (I wonder how the original black-and-white illustrations were created.)

Pricing

Collectors new to French Colonies will be puzzled, and experienced ones exasperated, by SG's routine pricing of most middle-period stamps far higher used than mint. Yes, many issues are scarce used – the Revolution omnibus (1939), *Secours National* (1941), *Entr'aide* (1944) and *Œuvres Sociales FoM* (1950), most North African charity surtaxes, the colonial 60c, 80c, 1F20 and 3F60 definitives of the late 1940s and practically any Postage Dues – but the vast majority are so much commoner than, say, used Spanish or Italian Colonies that wholesale downward correction is long overdue. Perversely perhaps, French catalogues routinely underprice used *vis-à-vis* mint, and their true value may lie somewhere in between them and SG – in mid-Channel, if you like.

As a step in the right direction, possibly, SG have now frozen many used prices, while mint generally rise, sometimes by as much as 100%. Some used items (like the 1916 French Indian Settlements Red Cross issue, SG 48/50) even fall. There are a few surprises: I am indebted to colleague Nicholas Pertwee for pointing out that among Réunion's CFA issues are three airmails that have risen hugely, both mint *and* used. These are the 1947-51 surcharges on France's Bordeaux, Marseille and Paris pictorials (SG 330/2). The three together, previously £175 UM/£244 U, are now £445/340. This whole CFA-surcharge area sees price rises dramatic enough to perhaps have been worth mentioning in the catalogue introduction. I wonder what prompted them.

Investment-minded members will rush to check French colonial "blue chips". Réunion SG 1 and 2 (the first 15c and 30c) are each £48,000 M/£28,000 U; General Colonies SG 13 (the 4c grey) £14,000/700; St Pierre et Miquelon SG 2 (the '25 S P M' surcharge on 1F) £15,000/3,250, SG 289 (the later F.N.F.L opt on the 1938 3F) £17,000/16,000 - and Ivory Coast P27d (the 1F Parcel Post in Type I, Yvert type IX), of which probably only one copy ever existed, £49,000.

A few items previously priced now are not, like French Guinea's 1915 Red Cross double inverted surcharge (SG 81a, previously £250) and various French Indian Settlements varieties like the narrow '0' surcharges – bad luck if you just bought SG 21a at its previous price, £1,500! Early booklets, from practically anywhere, show huge mark-ups; so, most surprisingly considering their dubious pedigree, do the first few Vichy pictorials of many colonies.

Conclusions

The old Part 6 was good, and will still be used with affection by many members. Sheer lack of editorial time must have been why a few of its misprints remain uncorrected, but these are small and rarely important. Given the inevitable time constraints of producing so many catalogues so often, the SG team is to be heartily congratulated on making so many improvements.

We will no doubt get used to SG's "split" catalogues in time. The old A4 size showed more stamps per view, the new 170x240mm format takes up less desk-space. But I noticed that new issues *from 1958 alone* of the five DOM/TOMs, still being churned out to satisfy a presumably continuing demand, now fill almost exactly half this entire catalogue. Since this date TAAF, for instance, has issued 750 stamps, three times as many as the Australian Antarctic Territory (over practically the same period); French Polynesia has issued 1,370, St Pierre et Miquelon around 830, New Caledonia 1,300 and Wallis & Futuna over 900. Their inclusion may make this new SG more saleable as a whole, but might we one day see them peel off and form their own catalogue? In this they would be following Yvert, who already splits pre-independent colonies and the

DOM/TOMs (plus Andorra and Monaco) into separate volumes.

Whether this catalogue remains in one volume or not, certain features could be addressed. (Of the making of improvements, as the poet might have said, there is no end.) We are told whether many of those overprints applied sideways read upwards or downwards, but not all of them – confusing when trying to identify "overprint inverted" errors. New Caledonia's small-format 'Kagu' definitives (perfect for a manageable sideline collection) were redrawn or re-inscribed five times between 1985 and 2012. These are easily overlooked among the cascade of pictorials and could usefully be cross-referenced.

But there is plenty here even for hardened old Colonials to learn: notes on Lebanese forgeries from 1944-55, for instance; French Polynesia's unissued 'Medical Days' pictorial of 1973; the two printings of Canton's 1906 surcharges (SG 33/49). SG deal admirably with New Caledonia's cumbersome and hard-to-describe Christmas and Pacific Franc issues of 1994/5 (SG 1028 and 1036), and patiently spell out differences in Lebanese 1930-36 printings despite the cheapness of the material. So, and essentially so for members not fluent in French, this is the perfect resource for what in pre-1970 days was called "the French Group" – and for its updated prices alone (not to mention the new French Congo 1900 listing, of course!) it is most highly recommended.

To close, here are a few further comments. I respectfully offer them for editorial consideration next time, and in the meanwhile to members as a list of unofficial 'Addenda' to the catalogue we now have.

Addenda to the 'Stanley Gibbons Stamp Catalogue, French Colonies, 1st edition 2016'

INTRODUCTION

Add a note, "Many shades exist throughout the pre-1950 period, particularly among the lower values."

GENERAL ISSUES

SG 13 (Cérès 4c grey). Add to footnote, "This value was only sent to Cochin-China and genuine used examples should bear cancellations from there."

ALGERIA

34/70 (1926-41 definitives). Add footnote, "A flaw resembling an extra tree exists on all values in Type 6 [the Bay of Algiers type]." (French collectors refer to this item as the '*cinquième arbre*')

CAMEROUN

16/30 (the *Occupation Française* overprints). Add footnote, "The gum on this issue is usually tropicalised."

36/50. The price for SG 37c (2c Short Tusk) refers to the variety on the basic stamp (37), not the error. However, the price for SG 38c (4c Short Tusk) refers to the variety on the error, not the basic stamp!

153/183 (the 27-8-40 overprints). Add footnote, "N^{os} 153a and 155a [the 2c and 4c overprinted in black] are now considered to be essays." (Source: Dudley Cobb, world expert on this issue.)

FRENCH EQUATORIAL AFRICA

Below 163 (the '*Afrique Française Libre*' overprints). Because of huge price differentials between similar-looking items, consider adding the following footnote, "N^o 112a should not be confused with N^o 149, nor N^o 118 with N^o 163." In-situ descriptions already clarify further.

FRENCH GUIANA

104/116 (the 1924 "New colours and values" definitives). Add footnote, "N^{os} 115 and 116 [the 10F and 20F] also exist on chalky paper."

FRENCH SOMALI COAST

168/84 (the 1915 definitives). Yvert may state that the 10c also exists on ordinary paper. It does not.

193 (the '1922 of 10' surcharge). This exists on both ordinary and chalky paper.

A. OBOCK

1/11, footnote. The measurements re the 4c reprint should be reversed. The original overprint measured 4.5mm high, the reprint (due to shrinkage of the rubber from which it was made) 3mm.

D21/24. Add POSTAGE DUE to the heading.

FRENCH WEST AFRICA

End of historical preamble, add note, "Surcharged stamps of Mauritania (N^{os} 125/9) and Senegal (N^{os} 219/27) [issued 1944] were valid throughout French West Africa and may be considered as the first issues for the combined territory." [Full marks to the US Scott catalogue for already acknowledging this.]

INDO-CHINA

115/135 (1922-23 definitives). Amend footnote to read [slightly more informatively than the current note] "The 4, 5, 10, 11 and 12c values exist with CENTS in thick or thin lettering."

D197/213 (1931-41 Postage Dues). Add footnote, "Some values also exist in rose on yellow (same prices)."

INDO-CHINESE POST OFFICES IN CHINA

Types (1) and (2) (Indo-China stamps overprinted 'Chine'). A further distinction may be made [these are hard to tell apart otherwise]: "Type 1, E of CHINE with outward-sloping serifs; Type 2, E of CHINE with vertical serifs."

MADAGASCAR

B. DIEGO-SUAREZ

1/5. Add footnote: "Warning: the surcharges on SG 1/5 dissolve if moistened."

E. MADAGASCAR AND DEPENDENCIES

Box below 38/52, 3rd para. The 1904-06 provisionals (inscribed '*Affranchissement spécial, faute de figurines*') can be collected used on piece but are not yet priced thus. Prices already in the first column [called, though not headed, 'Column A'], for items uncanceled on cover, are about the same and can therefore serve both conditions. Revise the existing note to advise catalogue users of this.

N^{os} 133/176 (the 1935-41 Map and Plane definitives). These came in three instalments, some values reprinted; the noteworthy results could be summarised as follows:

Add a N^o 171a, [12F] scarlet and pale brown-purple (24.2.41), 65p M, £6.00 U.

Add a footnote to it, "On N^o 171a the figure '2' is in thinner strokes."

Then add a further footnote, "Those values dated 1941 were at first only placed on sale in France, though postmarked copies are known. The same values, apart from the 90c and 12F, were reprinted in 1943 in duller colours and placed on sale in Madagascar in 1945."

NEW CALEDONIA

Illustration Type 2 (the large triangular cachet of 1876) shows a fake. Genuine strikes should have a break in the bottom frame-line either below the 'CE' of "S^{CE}" or below the 'AL' of "CALED^{IE}".

NEW HEBRIDES

For collector convenience, and in the interests of logic, English-language issues should be reinstated. The closing preamble to the country also claims Vanuatu successor issues (from 1980) to be listed in SG Part 1 (Commonwealth to 1970 [*sic*]). This is patently not the case. They actually appear in the Commonwealth *Western Pacific* volume, along with the New Hebrides again, this time in both languages – so if this area is all you collect, then *Western Pacific* is the only SG catalogue you'll need.

SENEGAL

64/80 (1914-17 definitives). Add footnote, "Specialists recognise three types of centre to T 33 [the 'Market' design]." These would be fiddly and space-consuming to list in full but their existence is well worth mentioning. [The current Maury catalogue has exhaustive detail.]

WALLIS AND FUTUNA ISLANDS

1/17 (first overprints on New Caledonia stamps). Add footnote, "Type 1 may be found with letters W, A, S, N and final A in narrower type, and with letter S inverted, either separately or in various combinations. The 1c also exists with 'et' omitted."

18/28, 29/32 (*idem*, new colours and surcharges). Add footnote, "The note below N^{os} 1/17 also applies here."

Michael Round

BOOKSHELF Continued on page 147

REPORTS OF MEETINGS

BOURNEMOUTH DAY MEETING OF 8 SEPTEMBER 2016

A disappointing attendance of seven at the Bournemouth day meeting on 8 September did not detract from some excellent displays, good food and beer, convivial fellowship and an enjoyable venue at the Dean Park Inn.

Displays were offered by the following:

Paul Watkins: 'Anglo-French mail (1830-70)', which included small POs including Rural Box, 'OR' covers and 'BM' rural carrier's mail, *bureau de distribution* cursives, plus UK small sub-office and receiving house mail.

Sally Ellam: '*Marianne de Beaujard*' followed by other *Marianne* issues, all beautifully presented.

Godfrey Bowden: a fascinating and unusual 'time-line' display of French definitives used to pay the letter rate.

Maurice Alder: unusual '*Sabine*' material.

Steve Ellis: 'Cross-Channel Rail Mail' and 'The French *Ambulance*'.

Some unscheduled evening entertainment occurred when a team of 'Philatelists' entered the inn's quiz competition and although they failed to win (there weren't too many philatelic questions!) one member of the team won the 'playing card bingo' event which followed!

SRE

NORTHERN GROUP MEETING OF 8 OCTOBER 2016 AT ADLINGTON

The Northern Group meeting at Adlington, Cheshire was organised by **Peter Stockton** and attracted an attendance of ten people who were treated to an exceptional display by our very own distinguished international philatelist **Stephen Holder**. Divided into four distinct sections on the Franco-Prussian War, it encompassed the War itself, the Siege of Paris and the Armistice, the aftermath of the Siege and finally the War and the German occupation of Northern France 1870-72. Accompanied by Stephen's lucid explanation, the display contained some real gems covering virtually every aspect of this fascinating period of French history and postal history.

Continuing broadly the 1870-72 theme **Paul Watkins** then showed items of Anglo-French mail and **Steve Ellis** showed

items on the Mont Cenis Railway. Finally, **Peter Rooke** displayed material from Italy under Napoléon (1796-1814).



Stephen Holder mounts his display

SRE

WESSEX GROUP MEETING OF 8 OCTOBER 2016

The autumn meeting of the Wessex Group took place at Harnham, Salisbury on 8 October. The invited display was given by **Peter Kelly** who showed 'Aspects of *Type Sage* – a series of projects in progress'. The object was to consider in more detail everyday use of the operations of different categories of post offices, in this case, the *bureaux* and *recettes auxiliaires*, the workings of the rural posts, post boxes, mail handed directly to postmen, moveable boxes and relationships with the railway system.

Another case study was that of the background to the financial services offered by the post office under the heading of the *articles d'argent* and the various uses noted with this particular handstamp. The *avis de réception* of registered and insured mail was also considered with the

different methods used following changes in the UPU arrangements. Another subject was the *avis de réception* of goods received at railway stations with the different forms used by the various rail companies and those relating to the postal parcels with their particular forms and stationery. The display finished with a short cameo of the *Type Sage* and the Boer war, correspondence to South Africa and then to prisoners on St Helena and Ceylon together with patriotic cards and support for Kruger.

In the afternoon a variety of short displays was provided by **Ingrid Swinburn**, **Chris Hitchen**, **Jeremy Martin** and **Alan Wood**. Also present were Tony Swinburn (guest), Brian Weekes, and John Foskett (on his first visit as a member).

PRAK/AJW

LONDON GROUP MEETING OF 1 OCTOBER 2016

Len Barnes: French Colonial Aviation 1925-1955

Len Barnes opened the first part of his display with two frames of maps and colonial stamps to assist us in the location and identification of the colonies and outposts of the French colonial empire.

Len proceeded with a brief history of Pierre-Georges Latécoère's pioneering aviation company from its creation in 1918 as the *Lignes aériennes Latécoère* and through its rebranding as the *Compagnie générale d'entreprises aéronautiques* (CGEA) and the *Compagnie générale aéro postale* until it was dissolved and merged with other aviation companies to form *Air France* in 1933. We were then shown material relating to flights to and within South America including 1925 proving flights from Rio de Janeiro to Buenos Aires and from Pernambuco to Rio and Columbian covers from Paris bearing the Columbian Air Transport Service issues overprinted 'F' for France. We also saw a 1931 cover from Venezuela to Trinidad and a crash mail cover from a 1932 flight from Saigon to Beyrouth. The next two frames were mostly devoted to mail flown out of Guadeloupe between 1935 and 1939 including internal mail and foreign destinations such as Dutch Guiana and the USA. The frankings were varied and colourful and accompanied by illustrations of the flying boats of the period such as the Latécoère 'Lieutenant de Vaisseau - Paris' and the Air France 'Saigon'.

The second part of the display began with examples of Zeppelin covers to Buenos Aires with French acceptance. These included a 1932 cover franked with a splendid pair of the 1926 5F + 1F *Orphelins* and a 1934 cover franked with a 10F *Merson* used alone, a prized cover for the 'seul sur lettre' enthusiasts (see front cover). Len returned to the

French West Indies with a range of covers from Martinique and Guadeloupe between 1937 and 1955 and from the opposite side of the world we saw covers flown between New Caledonia, New Hebrides and Tahiti. The remainder of the second display was devoted to first flights, from 1948 onwards, to and from France by a variety of piston-engine aircraft.

The star of the third and final part was a 1936 'Hindenberg' Zeppelin cover from Orange, France, to St Pierre-et-Miquelon via Marseille, Berlin, Frankfurt, Lakehurst (NY) and Canada. Len then showed a cross section of flight covers via various airlines to French colonies especially those in Asia. The display closed with a magnificent array of mint airmail etiquettes in multiples, rarely seen, from colonies including Madagascar, Morocco, French Somali Coast, Senegal, Syria and French Sudan.

After a fine lunch, members reassembled for the afternoon session devoted to members' displays.

Chris Hitchen stepped up first with a miscellany of Paris related items which started with examples of postcards printed by the Bénédictine Company for the 1900 Paris Exhibition. The exquisite detail and fine engraving were much admired. Then followed a selection of provisional 'jour de l'an' cancellations including examples of an office number, PP, anchor, lozenge and Paris star strikes and a fine dumb cds. An exceptional item was a cover cancelled by the rare *Paris Seine Bureau N°21* oval strike. Chris then explained the economic turmoil after the French Revolution and the creation of paper 'assignats' as currency. By 1796, hyperinflation had made the *assignat* worthless and only hard currency was accepted by the postal service. A cover



Figure 1

A paid letter dated Hanover 23 Germinal an 13 (13 April 1805) addressed to Paris and with two hand stamps of Napoleon's army in Hanover:

BAU GL ARM D'HANOVRE in red and

BAU GL PORT PAYÉ ARM D'HANOVRE in black.

On arrival in Paris on 30 Germinal an 13 it has received a paid arrival stamp – P.P. in a rectangle; postage of 7 décimes was prepaid.



Figure 2
Progressive proof of the 30c *Blason de Paris* designed by Robert Louis in 1963
and engraved and signed by André Barre.

from that year illustrated such a cash transaction with the red cachet *en numéraire*. Chris closed his display with a selection of Napoleonic Wars material (Figure 1) followed by Paris Paid transit marks including a Phrygian bonnet, PPPP (*Port Payé en Passe Paris*) and the inscrutable P^{SPS} (*Port Payé jusqu'à Paris*).

To close the afternoon **Mick Bister** showed several frames from his Coat-of-Arms collection combining dated corner blocks and covers illustrating their postal usage. The display

contained both items illustrated in his article¹ together with newly acquired material (Figure 2).

Members Present: Maurice Alder, Len Barnes, Mick Bister, Chris Hitchen, Hugh Loudon, Barbara Priddy and Maurice Tyler.

1 'The Coat-of-Arms Issues of France: 1943-1966' by Mick Bister, Journal N° 281, September 2016, pages 75-84

MLB

BOOKSHELF Continued from page 144

Books Noted

The Post Book, 500 Years of History/La Poste, 500 ans d'histoire (bilingual) by Vincent Schouberechts; 208pp 240 x 280mm; price 34.99€; available on Amazon. [History of European postal system from origins to 1878, based on 50 illustrated documents.]

Courrier des prisonniers français en Angleterre/Mail of French prisoners of war in England: 1744-1815 (bilingual) by Jacques Renollaud; 266pp; price 50€; available from author (jacques@renollaud.com). [Historical background and POW letters during this period.]

Michel Nordafrika 2016/2017; details from Image Document, 72 avenue de la Bourdonnais, 75007 Paris. [Catalogue essentially of Mediterranean coastal countries and Horn of Africa.]

Catalogue des cartes-maximum de France 1901-2016, pub. Yvert & Tellier; 1512pp; price 44.90€; available from publishers or in bookshops.

Yvert & Tellier 2017: Tome 1, Timbres de France; 1206pp; price 21.90€; available from publishers or in bookshops.

Yvert & Tellier 2017: Tome 2-1, Colonies Françaises; 150 x 210mm; price 29.99€; available from publishers or in bookshops.

Comores indépendantes - Mayotte : Histoire postale et philatélie 1975-2015 by Olivier Bergossi; 388pp; price 50€; available from Col.Fra (colfra-publications@orange.fr); payment by PayPal possible, to paypalcolfraa@gmail.com

Postage costs should be added to all prices quoted above.

Maurice Tyler

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