

THE JOURNAL OF THE FRANCE & COLONIES PHILATELIC SOCIETY



A sheet of the twelve labels for the 1943 Paris Airmail Exhibition depicting French musical works of the 19th and 20th century.

Row 1: *La Damnation de Faust* (Berlioz), *Faust* (Gounod), *Carmen* (Bizet), *Sylvia* (Delibes)

Row 2: *Manon* (Massenet), *Le Roi d'Ys* (Lalo), *Samson et Dalila* (Saint-Saëns), *Gwendoline* (Chabrier)

Row 3: *Louise* (Charpentier), *Pelléas et Mélisande* (Debussy), *Masques et Bergamasques* (Fauré), *Boléro* (Ravel).

See Roy Reader's article and request for information on page 54

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**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 by email or to the President: C J Hitchen, 36 Everton Road, Croydon CR0 6LA

2023 Annual Subscription Rates

United Kingdom: £16.00, Europe: £23.00, Elsewhere: £27.00.

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

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Contributions should be sent by email to Chris Hitchen at treasurer@fcps.org.uk

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

Auction and Exchange Packet Sales

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

D G Parmley, 40 Kenyons Lane, Lydiate, Liverpool L31 0BR (email: dparmley@jhgl.co.uk; tel: 07464 926250) according to instructions.

Material for circulation in booklet form is welcomed but please contact the appropriate secretary with details before sending items.

France: R N Broadhurst, 47 Bolton Gardens, Teddington TW11 9AX (tel: 020 8943 1421). (email: francestamps@tiscali.co.uk).

Colonies: R Gent, 17 Malmains Way, Beckenham BR3 6SA (email: Rodney.gent1@outlook.com; tel. 020 8650 7695).

The Magazine Circuit

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

For further details contact the circuit organiser:

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* * *

When writing to an officer of the Society, for security reasons please do not mention the name of the Society in the address.

Postal requests for information should be accompanied by a stamped addressed envelope.

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

The Journal of the France & Colonies Philatelic Society

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CENSORSHIP OF CIVILIAN MAIL IN MADAGASCAR DURING WORLD WAR TWO - HANDSTAMPS AND LABELS

By John Parmenter, Alain Hurpet, Colin Spong, Joh Groenwald, Etienne Coré

A4 wirebound, 32 pages in full colour. Laminated card cover.

Price £10 (plus postage)

U.K. £2.20 Payment: U.K cheque or Paypal. Europe £4.00 Payment: Paypal or cheque in Euro (Euro 15 in all)

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Available from P.R.A.Kelly. Paypal address and all enquiries to Peter Kelly: peterkelly35@btinternet.com

Extracts from the publication were featured in Journals 297 and 298, with Michael Round's review in Journal 293.

SOCIETY NOTES

New Members

The Society is pleased to welcome new members 1517 **Keith Brandon** (North Yorkshire), 1518 **Simon Richards** (Wallingford), 1519 **Philip Feakin** (London), 1520 **Derek E Monkhouse** (Surrey).

Members Resigned or Retired

1508 **Raymond Abela**, 976 **M J Berry**, 1322 **Robert Binner** Munich Philatelic Library, 1468 **Mark Brookes**, 925 **Alan Carter**, 1330 **C A C Cowling**, 807 **I R Jones**, 1511 **Roger Lawson**, 511 **John Lucaci**, 568 **Ken White**, 1457 **Dr A J Baum**.

Members Deceased

It is with great sadness that we have to report the deaths of members: 935 **Henry Filipuik**, 73 **Raymond Hill**, 1047 **John Parmenter**, 1378 **F M Turner**.

Future Society Meetings

The Northern Group will hold meetings on 15 July, and 14 October at Ravenfield Parish Hall, Birch Wood Drive, Ravenfield, Rotherham S65 4PT. Times and displays to be advised. When more details come to hand they will be advertised on the website, Should you wish more information contact Steve Ellis by email

F&CPS Website

The Website will show selected images for the forthcoming Auction in May. The next five Journals - whole numbers 290 - 294 will be uploaded before the August edition. All financial information will be redacted. All past presentations of Zoom meetings are available to view at: www.fcps.org.uk/index.php/meetings/zoom-meetings

Zoom Meetings

The Society has re-established Zoom meetings. The first, on 17 January, was presented by **Ed Grabowski** on the '1 centime stamp and its usage in France and the Colonies'. On 21 February eight very diverse displays were given in 'Show and Tell'.

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS: All meetings are scheduled for 14.30 GMT. Tuesday 18 APRIL **Loïc Dufresne de Virel** - Group Type: Bisect, Uncut, or Badly Perforated Stamps, an Overview of Poorly Documented and Seldom Seen Varieties. Tuesday 20 JUNE **Ed Grabowski** - Philately and International Mail Order Fraud - Professor A Victor Segno and the American Institute of Mentalism Success in the European African Colonies. 18 JULY **Steve Ellis** - The Fell Railway

Nothing has been offered for May, if anyone has a display or wishes to be informed of future meetings please contact Chris Hitchen by email.

Forthcoming Exhibitions

ESSEN Germany (25 – 28 May 2023) <https://ibra2023.de>

MIDPEX 2023 (1 July) Warwickshire Exhibition Centre.

THE NORTHERN NATIONAL STAMP COMPETITION AND COIN FAIR (21-22 July 2023) at the York Stamp and Coin Fair York Racecourse. Entry deadline: 1 July.

STAMPEX (27-30 September 2023) including a national exhibition and competition. Entry deadline: 31 July.

Further information can be found at the APBPS website: www.abps.org.uk/forthcoming-exhibitions/

A new exhibition at **THE POSTAL MUSEUM: THE KING'S STAMP**. Early on 8th February, the Royal Mail unveiled the first King Charles III's definitive stamps, which will be placed on sale from 4th April.

Exhibition highlights include:

- The first chance to see a sheet of King Charles III's definitive stamps.
- One of only two sheets in the world of Edward VII 'Tyrian Plum' stamps.
- Read original letters revealing past monarchs' influence on stamp designs.
- See your silhouette on a stamp and guess the cypher with hands-on exhibits.

The exhibition runs from 8 February to 3 September.

West Indies Philatelic Study Group auction 29 April 2023

There is much of French interest in the next auction by the West Indies society. Details of the auction at the Royal on 29 April are now on the Society website. It includes a decent amount of Graham Booth's Guadeloupe and Martinique material, much of which was owned by Brian Brooks.

The Society has merged with its American counterparts and has rebranded as the West Indies Philatelic Study Group.

You do need to be a member to bid successfully but electronic membership is just £8 which can be added to the auction invoice. The link is <https://wipsg.org/auction>

And the full listing is at <https://wipsg.org/wipsg-auction-2023>

Belgian Websites

Belgian philatelists have been very active with web productions which they have very generously made freely available to everyone. Three sites are currently in operation, all with strong connections to French philately.

- www.philafrika.be/CONGOLATRES
- www.philafrika.be/MAGHREBOPHILA/
- www.philafrika.be/BELGOLATRES/

The website www.philafrika.be provides access to all or one could use the individual links.

John Parmenter 1938-2022

John was born in Loughborough in 1938 but his early days were peripatetic as his father was involved in improving efficiency in wartime munition factories and the family moved frequently. As a boarder at Sibford School, near Banbury, his interest in natural history and collecting may have been fostered by the focus of the Society of Friends responsible for that school. As a day pupil, later, at Reading School, he began studies in Geology, his mother (a teacher) having introduced him to the subject. 'A' Levels were followed by two years' National Service in the RAF. From 1960 to 1963 he studied Geology at Kings College London where he met his future wife, Gina. He moved to University College London after his BSc for a Masters in Micropaleontology.



Throughout this period, collecting of some kind had always featured prominently, including butterflies and fossils, with stamps and philatelic history emerging after a family member gave him a collection of 'penny red' stamps to sort and 'plate'.

A temporary summer job with Esso in 1964 resulted in a permanent post as an Exploration Geologist. This was when the Southern North Sea gas discoveries were being made but he was also involved in onshore exploration in the UK. A move to Norway as Production Geologist in 1974 revived an interest in fishing with philately resuming on his return to the UK in 1977. He became Chief Geologist, then General Exploration Manager for Premier Consolidated Oilfields in 1977. This involved worldwide exploration activities.

Having acquired a house in London with a dedicated study, there was sufficient room to develop his postal history interests, initially through 'sideways duplex' postmarks. His collecting was closely linked to his love of research and his desire to share his discoveries with fellow philatelists. Indeed, although maintaining a consultant status with Premier Oil, his early retirement in 1996 gave him sufficient time to focus on a diverse range of philatelic interests and publishing. He was a prolific author and in the Royal Philatelic Society's library there are twenty-eight titles attributed to him. The 'Numeral Cancellations of England and Wales' in six volumes (some as a co-author) and 'GB Used Abroad' with Ken Gordon which ran to a second edition are probably his best-known works. He was heavily involved with the London Postal History Group.

His love of French postal history, especially that of former French colonies in Africa, was linked to both acquiring a holiday home in the Cevennes as well as wanting to know more about the post in the French colonies after a visit to Cameroon by a family member. John joined the France & Colonies Philatelic Society in 1996 and became a member of the committee in 2002. In 2016 he took over the responsibility of Publications Officer, a job that he was made for. He was an outstanding researcher and compiler and would spend hours if not days collecting data in the *Archives nationales d'outre-mer* in Aix-en-Provence. Although his publishing on French subjects was on a small scale compared to his output on GB it was just as important. His tabulating of colonial rates was a true *tour de force* and his willingness to share the results of his research was boundless. Many members of the F&CPS will be indebted to him for his revelations about the CFA postage rates in French Africa especially those of the French Somali Coast. His last publication in 2020, 'Censorship of Civilian Mail in Madagascar during WW2' co-written with Colin Spong and others, was generously offered for part serialisation in the Journal a year later.

John is remembered with great affection – "a quiet and unassuming man", "a true Francophile", "a 'proper' philatelist who turned me from a stamp collector into a postal historian", "a great researcher and collator always helpful and generous", "a pleasure to listen to and to talk to" and "so helpful. May he rest in peace".

We shall long remember John, not only for his legacy of philatelic works but also for the congenial and illuminating conversations that we shared with him accompanied, of course, by a bottle of red wine - *français, naturellement*.

MLB

Underpayments on foreign mail from France after 1849

Chris Hitchen

Much research has been done on postage dues and in-depth studies provide vast amounts of detailed information. This article simply aims to outline the changes that took place once postage stamps appeared and how the ways of dealing with underpayments evolved.

Rates in France were often expressed in décimes, 1 décime comprising 10 centimes.

Before stamps became available all postage rates were calculated by a post office employee, either a clerk in a post office or sometimes a postman. Errors were unusual but if they did happen were the responsibility of the post office not the sender. That all changed with postage stamps when for the first time senders could calculate the postage required on their letters and apply the appropriate amount. For the first time underpayment could now be the fault of the writer of a letter.

No allowance is made for the value of any stamps applied
Whilst postage stamps were first issued in France on 1 January 1849 they were only allowed to be used on foreign mail to a small number of countries to begin with from 1 August 1849. It was always made clear that should senders be uncertain about franking their own letters they could still pay in cash at a post office. The various postal conventions

that France had with other countries simply continued in force. None of these of course made any mention of underpayments. Letters franked for foreign destinations were to be struck with a stamp PD: paid to destination (*port payé jusqu'à destination*). If underpaid then a stamp *timbre insuffisant* would be applied instead. It was later felt that such wording might be insufficiently clear so in October 1858 *affranchissement insuffisant* was used instead. In such cases the stamps applied would then simply be disregarded and the letter treated as an unpaid one. The recipient would then pay the full postage and the value of the stamps simply lost (Figure 1).

The value of the stamps applied is taken into account

New postal conventions were regularly negotiated to update procedures as postal systems evolved. That agreed with Great Britain, effective from 1 January 1857, included for the first time that allowance would now be made for the value of stamps applied on underpaid letters. Underpaid items would be charged the unpaid rate and the value of the stamps applied deducted. Similar agreements with other countries followed, Austria on 1 January 1858, Belgium on 1 April 1858, Bavaria on 1 July 1858 and others in due course.



Figure 1

A letter posted at Paris office E in the Place de la Madeleine for Belgium 19 May 1856 at the second weight step but franked 60c instead of 80c

The foreign section of the Head post office has stamped it AFFRANCHISSEMENT/ 15 INSUFFISANT 15

In Belgium it has been charged the full rate of 80c

The value of the French stamps applied is simply lost

In most cases postage rates were now made higher for unpaid letters than those prepaid. Where the postage paid was now taken into account the formula for calculating postage due can be expressed as:

The unpaid rate due in the country of destination less the amount of postage paid in the country of origin.

The usual practice with letters above the first weight step was to mark the number of rates due on the left hand side of the envelope.

Post offices now needed to know currency exchange rates in order to calculate the value of the postage applied in the country from which a letter came. With Great Britain that was quite simple, as 1 penny equalled 10 centimes. Postage rates from 1 January 1855 until 30 June 1870 were –

France to Great Britain, rate per 7 ½ grams:
prepaid 40c unpaid 80c

Great Britain to France, rate per 7 ½ grams:
prepaid 4d unpaid 8d (Figures 2 and 3).



Figure 2

A second-weight-step letter to France from Great Britain posted on 26 January 1870 and underfranked at 4d

The PD stamp has been annulled

The unpaid rate in France is 16 décimes second weight step Sterling/ centimes conversion rate 1/10

Postage applied 4d converted to centimes: $10 \times 4 = 40$ centimes (4 décimes)

Postage due is 16 décimes less the 4 décimes paid = 12 décimes



Figure 3

A second-weight-step letter from France to Great Britain on 23 September 1869 underfranked at 40c

The PD stamp has been annulled

Postage applied 40c converted to sterling: $40 \times 1/10 = 4d$

Postage due 16d the unpaid rate less 4d = 12d or 1 shilling

On 1 July 1870 the rates were reduced to 30c paid and 60c unpaid per 10 grams (Figure 4).

We are much indebted to the late Guy Prugnon for his books which give these conversion rates.

With some countries the calculations are rather more involved but quite understandable. That in figure 5 runs to 12 decimal places but of course was rounded for simplicity.

One should have great respect for 19th century postal clerks. Without the benefit of calculators or Excel spreadsheets

they had to perform quite involved calculations.

Figure 5 is a letter posted at the Paris suburban post office of Les Batignolles on 29 August 1874 to Budapest in Hungary. That was then of course part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. It is franked 50c instead of 60c so 10c underpaid.

France to Austria (tariff of 1 January 1858),
rate per 10 grams: prepaid 60c, unpaid 80c

Austria to France, per 10 grams: prepaid 25 kreuzer
unpaid 32 kreuzer.



Figure 4

A second-weight-step letter to Great Britain, 21 August 1871, underfranked at 30c.

The number of weight steps, 2, is written below the postage stamps

Postage due 12d less 3d ($30 \times 1/10$) = 9d due



Figure 5

29 August 1874 to Budapest underpaid 10c

Austrian unpaid postage rate 32 kreuzer

Kreuzer/centimes conversion rate 21/52

Postage applied 50 centimes converted to
kreuzer: $50 \times 21/52 = 20.19k$

Deduct that from the unpaid rate of 32k = 11.81
rounded up to 12 kreuzer postage due

Figure 6 shows a letter into France from Hamburg on 10 June 1870 franked at four and two third groschen so underpaid by four and one third groschen for the second weight step. At the top left a 2 in blue indicates the number of rates due. The *Boîte Affranchissement insuffisant* stamp would have been applied on the French

travelling post office.

France to Prussia (tariff of 1 July 1858), rate per 10 grams: paid 50c, unpaid 60c

Prussia to France rate per 10 grams: prepaid 4 ½ groschen, unpaid 5 groschen.

Figure 6

10 June 1870 a letter from Hamburg to Bordeaux entering France at Forbach
French unpaid postage rate 1 franc 20 centimes second weight step
Groschen /centimes conversion rate 1/12.37
Postage applied 4 ⅔ groschen converted to centimes 57.73
rounded up to 58 which a postal clerk, probably French, has noted on the front
Postage due is 1F 20c less 58 = 62 rounded up to 7 décimes due



The United States

Not all treaties adopted this new principle for underpaid letters. The most notable exception was the United States. The treaty of 1 April 1857 for the first time allowed full payment of letters all the way for payment by the sender or the recipient. Paid or unpaid the rate was the same, 80 centimes or 15 US cents. However if a letter was only partly paid the value of the postage was entirely lost and the letter treated as an unpaid one. When the treaty expired at the end of 1869 it was not renewed. Underpaid

letters were then sent via Great Britain and continued to be treated as if unpaid.

An underpaid letter (**Figure 7a and 7b**) from Paris office 15 in the rue Bonaparte was posted on 28 March 1867 and sent by the French Line. Fortnightly sailings went from Le Havre with a call at Brest en route. This travelled on the St Laurent and was picked up at Brest. The reverse has a Line H stamp of 30 March 1867. The postage applied has simply been lost and full postage collected in New York.



Figure 7

Paris to New York underfranked at 60c instead of 80c.

The postage paid has been disregarded and the letter treated as an unpaid one.

15 cents due in coin or 20 in US notes, the 12 at the top right is the amount due to France



A new treaty with the United States went into force on 28 April 1874. This finally allowed the value of postage applied to be taken into account on underpayments. Unpaid letters now cost more than those prepaid, the difference being referred to as a fine.

Paid letters were now 50 centimes or 9 US cents and unpaid 75 centimes or 14 US cents

A letter (Figure 8) from San Francisco sent via New York on January 27 1875 to Paris by Cunard steamer *Russia*

After Germany had annexed Alsace and Lorraine in 1871

following the Franco Prussian war it took quite a long while for many to realise that letters to these areas were now foreign and required 40 centimes foreign postage. It is not uncommon to see letters paid at the 25c inland rate to these destinations.

The German rate for an unpaid letter was 5 groschen

Figure 9 is a letter from Paris 39 rue des Ecluses Saint Martin on 5 July 1874 and franked 35c

The amount due of $2\frac{3}{4}$ groschen would seem excessive.



Figure 8

San Francisco to Paris
27 January 1875 paid only the
US inland postage of 3 cents

French unpaid rate 75
centimes

US cents/ centimes conversion
9/46.8

The postage of 3 US cents
equates to 15.6 centimes

Postage due 75c less 15.6 =
59.4 rounded up to 6 décimes



Figure 9

Paris Office 39 to Morhange in the Moselle 5 July 1874

German unpaid postage rate 5 groschen

Groschen /centimes conversion rate 2/25

The 35c paid should equate to 2.8 groschen, so 2.2g due. How that becomes $2\frac{3}{4}$ due is difficult to understand

Figures 10 and 11 are two letters to Belgium both franked just 25 centimes. Both correctly have the postage value noted as 25 centimes. The first posted on 31 December 1875 has not been charged extra by the Belgians, but the second

follows the guide lines exactly. Now that the unpaid rate was double that for those prepaid the amount required on underpaid letters could be rather excessive. A deficiency of just 5 centimes results in fivefold postage due of 25 centimes.



Figure 10

Paris Office 20 to Bouillon in Belgium
31 December 1875

A handstamp AFFR. INSUFF P.20 has first been applied and then the new GPU tax mark T
The Belgians simply ignored these and did not charge any postage due



Figure 11

Paris Office 1 Place de la Bourse to Brussels 14 May 1876

The amount of postage paid has been correctly marked besides the postage stamp – 25c
The Belgians have then used their unpaid rate of 50c and deducted the 25c to arrive at a postage due rate of 25c

The Universal Postal Union

This change of name resulted from the Paris Congress of 1878 and came into effect on April 1 1879. No deviation from the recommended 25 centimes per 15 grams for letters was now allowed. That was no longer a problem for France. Inland rates had been substantially reduced on 1 May 1878 and the foreign rate dropped to 25 centimes at the same time. Maritime surtaxes were removed entirely in October 1881.

The treatment of underpaid mail changed significantly. A handstamp T for tax and the number of rates due continued to be required. However if an item was underpaid the deficiency was now to be noted in centimes. The receiving office then doubled that to calculate the amount to be collected from the addressee. This was then rounded up to the nearest 5 centimes.

The use of postage due stamps instead of handstamps to show the amount of postage to be collected for any deficiency was effective from 1 October 1882. Double deficiency to calculate underpayments was not extended to

the inland regime until 16 April 1892. There were thus two methods of dealing with underpayments for some thirteen years, depending on whether an item was inland or from abroad (Figures 12, 13, 14 and 15).

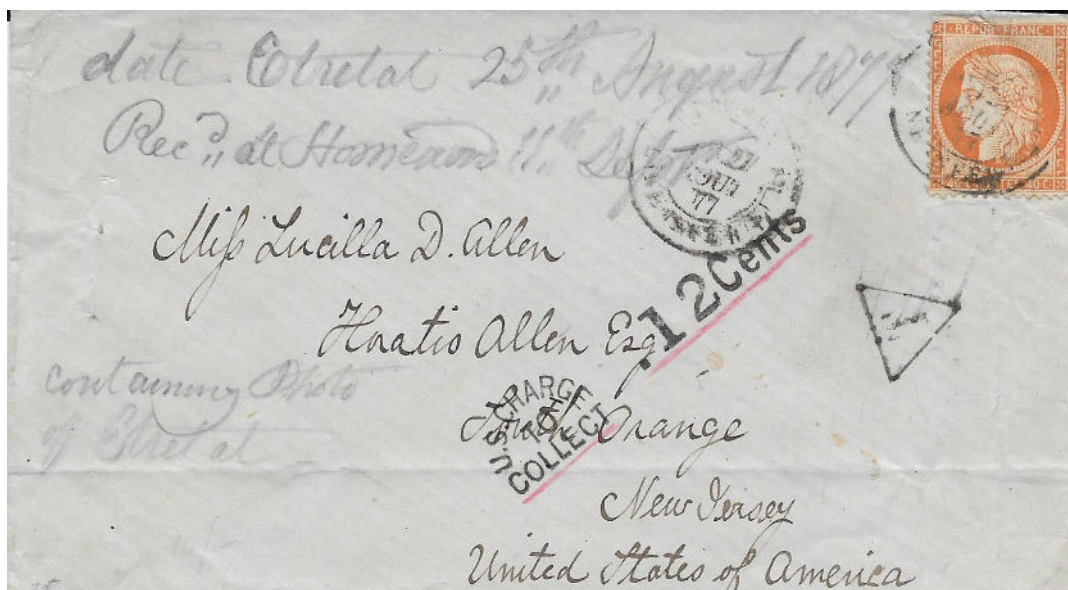


Figure 12

Paris to New Jersey August 1877 paid at the single GPU rate of 40 centimes

United States, rate per 15 grams or half an ounce: paid, 5 cents; unpaid 10 cents

US cents/ centimes conversion 9/46.8

The French postage of 40c equates to 8 US cents rounded up

Postage due 20 US cents second weight step unpaid less 8 cents leaves postage due of 12 US cents

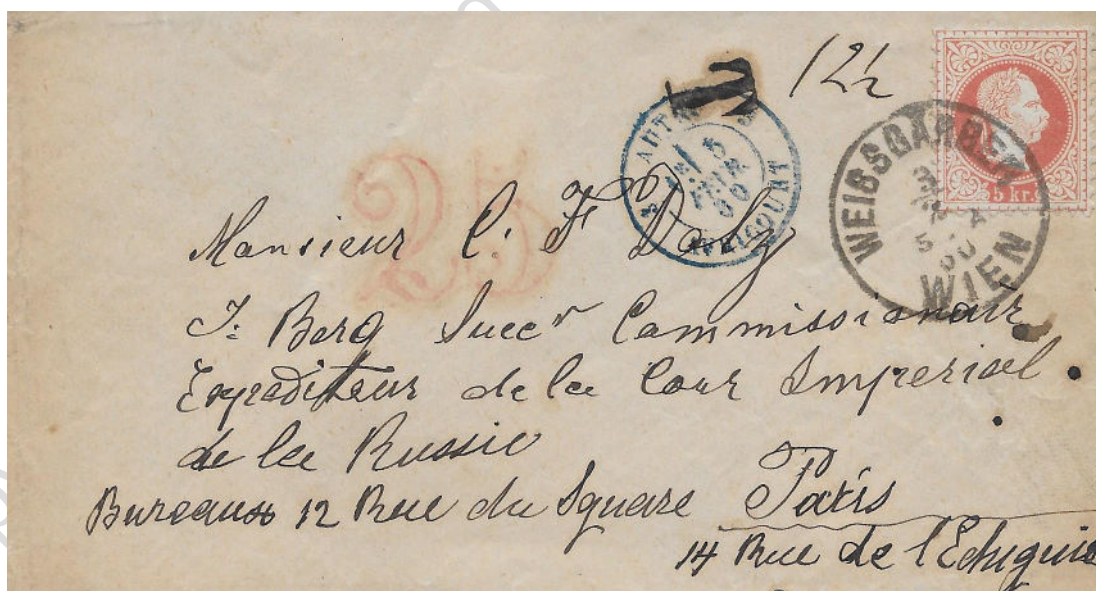


Figure 13

Vienna to Paris 3 February 1880

10 kreuzer = 25 centimes. Postage paid of 5 kreuzer instead of 10

The 5 kreuzer deficient equals 12½ centimes which is marked alongside the stamp

That has been doubled to 25 centimes as shown with the use of an old 25 double-lined handstamp

Figure 14 (reduced by 10%)

20 pfennig = 25 centimes
Posted in Mulhouse, then in
Germany, on 27 March 1885
as a local letter paid 5
pfennig

It was then forwarded to
Épinal and finally Paris

For a foreign letter from
Germany it was 15 pfennig
short which equates to 18¾
centimes

Épinal has doubled that to
37½ and rounded it up to 40
centimes postage due. That
was annulled when it was
again forwarded to Paris

In Paris Passy it was treated
as an unpaid foreign letter
and charged 50 centimes



Figure 15

12 centavos = 25 centimes Argentina to Paris 9 April 1886

8 centavos paid instead of 12. The deficiency of 4 centavos equates to 10 centimes when rounded and
is shown on the right below the stamp impression

In Paris 20 centimes postage due has been charged

Bibliography

- *Affranchissements insuffisants et taxes complémentaires dans les échanges de lettres ordinaires entre la France et les pays étrangers* (1849/1875) by Guy Prugnon
- *Taxes et modalités de taxation de la lettre ordinaire dans le régime international* (1876/1975) by Guy Prugnon
- *Les Chiffres-Taxe au Type Duval 1881-1900* by Jack Blanc
- *Documents Philatéliques* 196 in 2008 contains an article on postage due in the Republic of Argentina from 1878, particularly its relations with France and other foreign countries, by Robert Abensur

The 1944 Liberation stamps of Montreuil-Bellay

Mick Bister

Part 2: The 'Département' RF Overprint in black

The design of the local *Maquis* overprint studied in Part 1 of this article was not in accordance with the directive received from Angers which had clearly stipulated an RF overprint for use in the *département* of Maine-et-Loire. The Commandant of the *Gendarmerie Nationale* in Montreuil-Bellay therefore notified the postmaster of the need to overprint his stock in accordance with Regional Commissioner's instructions.

On the 4 September, the notification was expressed as follows:

"At 9 a.m. on 4 September in the year one thousand nine hundred and forty-four we, the undersigned, Pierre Letort, Head of the Criminal Investigation Department and (name illegible), Representative of the Public Prosecutor, by virtue of Articles 48 and 49 of the Code of Criminal Investigation, following the deliberation of the Resistance Committee of Montreuil-Bellay on 2 September, 1944, notify the Postmaster of Montreuil-Bellay of the Order from the Commissioner of the Republic dated 15 August, 1944 for the application of a patriotic RF overprint to the stamps issued by the illegal Vichy government.

Signed and sealed in Montreuil-Bellay on the day, month and year above."

Three days later, on the 7 September, the Commandant of the *Gendarmerie Nationale* and other interested parties drew up an inventory of the stamps requisitioned or 'donated' and which had been duly overprinted RF.

The signatories were the Commandant of the *Gendarmerie Nationale*, the postmaster of Montreuil-Bellay, a Major in the FFI, the Mayor of Montreuil-Bellay and the printer Pierre Richou (Figure 1).

The inventory is divided into two parts. The first part consists of the brief statement that the printer had been "supplied by the Head Postmaster of Montreuil-Bellay, 9000 copies of the 1F50 with Pétain's portrait in chestnut brown, brown and dark brown". The second part lists the "stamps supplied by the Montreuil-Bellay Resistance Committee" comprising both Pétain and Mercury issues, amounting to a total of 165,000 stamps with the addendum that "the 20c, 30c, and 40c Pétain issues are donated to the Resistance Committee by Mme Amy, the widow of Gaston Amy, Mayor of Montreuil-Bellay." The document also records that "the 9,000 copies of the 1F50 Pétain overprinted RF will be sold over the counter on 8 September at the Montreuil-Bellay post office. The stamps provided by the Resistance Committee are intended to be used for patriotic purposes in memory of the Liberation." There is no reference to any exchange of payment in the acquisition of these stamps or at what price they would be sold.

Le Commandant de la Brigade de Gendarmerie de Montreuil-Bellay.

REPUBLIQUE FRANÇAISE

PROCES-VERBAL

Le Sept Septembre l'an mil neuf cent quarante quatre, en donnant suite à l'arrêté C.R. N° 27, signé JACQUIER, Commissaire de la République à ANGERS, nous avons fait apposer la surcharge R.F. sur les timbres-Peste suivants:

1.- Timbres fournis par M. le receveur des Postes de Montreuil-Bellay 9.000 pièces à 1.50 surbrun, brun et brun foncé, effigie de Pétain.

2.- Timbres fournis par le Comité de Résistance de Montreuil-Bellay

Les timbres de	Valeur	Type	Nombre surchargés
0.20; 0.30 et 0.40 à l'effigie de Pétain sont offerts au Comité de Résistance de Montreuil-Bellay, Chef actif de la Résistance, arrêté par la Gestapo, déporté en Allemagne et mort au camp de WEIMAR, à l'âge de 34 ans, après 3 mois de tortures.	0.20	Pétain	10.000
	0.30	Pétain	5.000
	0.40	Pétain	5.000
	0.60	Pétain	5.000
	0.70	Pétain	5.000
	1.--	Pétain	5.000
	1.20	Pétain	5.000
	2.--	Pétain	1.000
	3.--	Pétain	1.000
	4.--	Pétain	1.000
	4.50	Pétain	1.000
	0.80	Pétain	1.000
	0.10	Mercur	30.000
	0.50	Mercur	30.000
	0.40	Mercur	30.000
	0.50	Mercur	30.000

M. le Receveur des Postes de Montreuil-Bellay

l'Officier Commandant la Place

Le Maire de Montreuil-Bellay

M; Richou Pierre-Imprimeur.

Nota: Les 9.000 pièces de 1.50 avec l'effigie de Pétain et surchargées R.F. seront mises en vente le Huit Septembre au guichet de la poste de Montreuil-Bellay M.-et-L.

Ceux fournis par le Comité de la Résistance sont destinés à être utilisés dans un but patriotique en souvenir de la Libération.

Figure 1

Unsigned draft of the inventory. The signed copy can be viewed on the website of 'Timbres de la Libération du Maine-et-Loire'



Figure 2 (reduced)

1F50 Pétain and other issues overprinted RF and with
'textes patriotiques' and cancelled 8 September 1944

© Alain Camelin Collection

The 1F50 Pétain and other Pétain and Mercury values were duly overprinted RF by the Imprimerie Girouard & Richou in Saumur and delivered to Montreuil-Bellay. Their legitimacy was recorded on a document which also explained the motive for the overprinting and an example of each stamp was individually tied to the document by the cancellation, 8 September 1944 (Figure 2). The 1F50 Pétain, now officially vested with its RF overprint (Figure 3), was dedicated, according to the document, to the Fourth Republic. A set of Mercury issues and a set of low-value Pétain stamps bearing 'textes patriotiques' in the gutter margin, (more than likely another Vassileff initiative), were dedicated to the liberation of the territory south of the Loire

and to the liberation of Montreuil-Bellay respectively. A group of predominantly higher Pétain values was dedicated to the memory of Gaston Amy and distributed to members of the Diplomatic Corps, local dignitaries and members of the Amy family. The signatories were the Mayor of Montreuil-Bellay, the Commandant of the *Gendarmerie Nationale*, and a member of the Resistance Committee. Although not represented on the document, the 1F50 Pétain is also encountered with the patriotic texts (Figure 4). All the stamps had been overprinted on the reverse with the same *garantie d'authenticité* as the previous *Maquis* printing in either violet or blue ink (Figure 5).



Figure 3

Blocks of the *Département* RF overprint with normal overprint and *surcharge déplacée*



Figure 4

Patriotic texts in the gutter margin from top to bottom

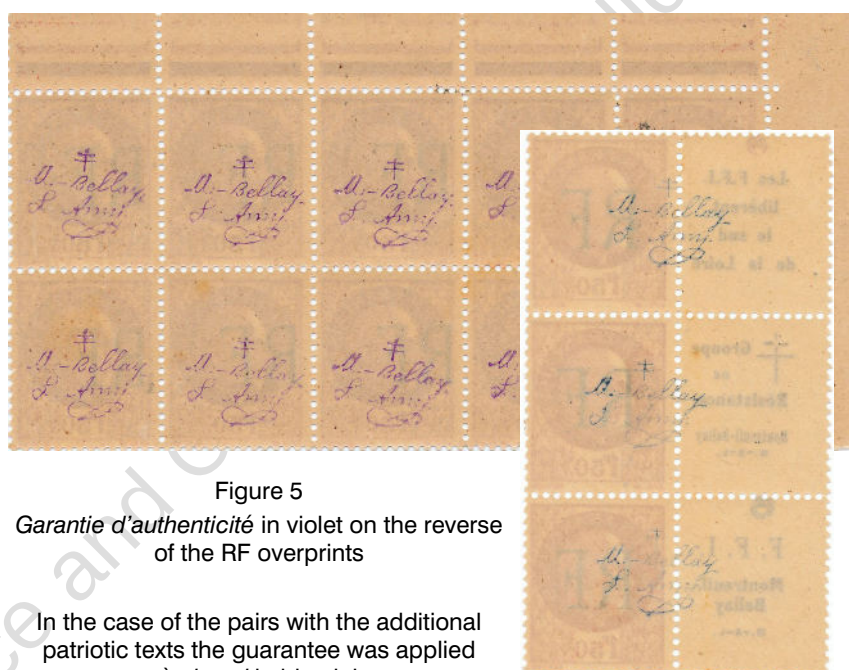


Figure 5

Garantie d'authenticité in violet on the reverse of the RF overprints

In the case of the pairs with the additional patriotic texts the guarantee was applied *à cheval* in blue ink

Evidence of Use

According to the inventory, the 1F50 stamps were put on sale at Montreuil-Bellay post office on the 8 September, just one week after the town had been liberated. There is little evidence that a full postal delivery service was operating at the time as the bulk of covers encountered are clearly philatelic souvenirs, often unaddressed or with addresses added after the event. Furthermore, if all the mines had not yet been cleared from the roads it is unlikely that the original *Maquis* delivery circuit had been significantly extended other than to Saumur. Indeed, few covers are known cancelled on the first day of sale.

I have only seen three covers cancelled on 8 September, which was a Friday, all timed at 18h00; if there are more, they rarely appear on the market. Perhaps there was only sufficient time to service a token number of covers at the

end of what had been a very long working day. The cover in my collection is handstamped with the mayoral cachet in purple and the FFI cachet in black (Figure 6); another cover I have seen, addressed to the Laiterie Gaston Amy, shows the FFI cachet in purple. The ensuing cancellations are from the beginning of the following week when a large quantity of covers can be found cancelled on Monday 11 and Tuesday 12 September. (Figures 7 and 8).

The production of souvenir covers resumed in October before all the Pétain stamps were demonetised on 1 November 1944. They invariably bear the two superfluous linear cachets 'MAINE-ET-LOIRE' and 'MONTREUIL-BELLAY', are dated 7 October (Figure 9) and appear to be an attempt by Georges Vassileff to dispose of his surplus stock.



Figure 6

Cover with Mayoral and FFI cachets addressed to Lyon and cancelled 8 September 1944.

It is conceivable that the cover was not sent, but later dedicated, to Roland Claude, the celebrated fighter pilot who joined the Free French and flew in the Battle of Britain. He was shot down over the Mediterranean in 1943 when attached to *HMS Indomitable* during the invasion of Sicily. Fittingly for a French hero, he died on 14 July. On the other hand, it may have been sent and the addressee's name is just a coincidence.

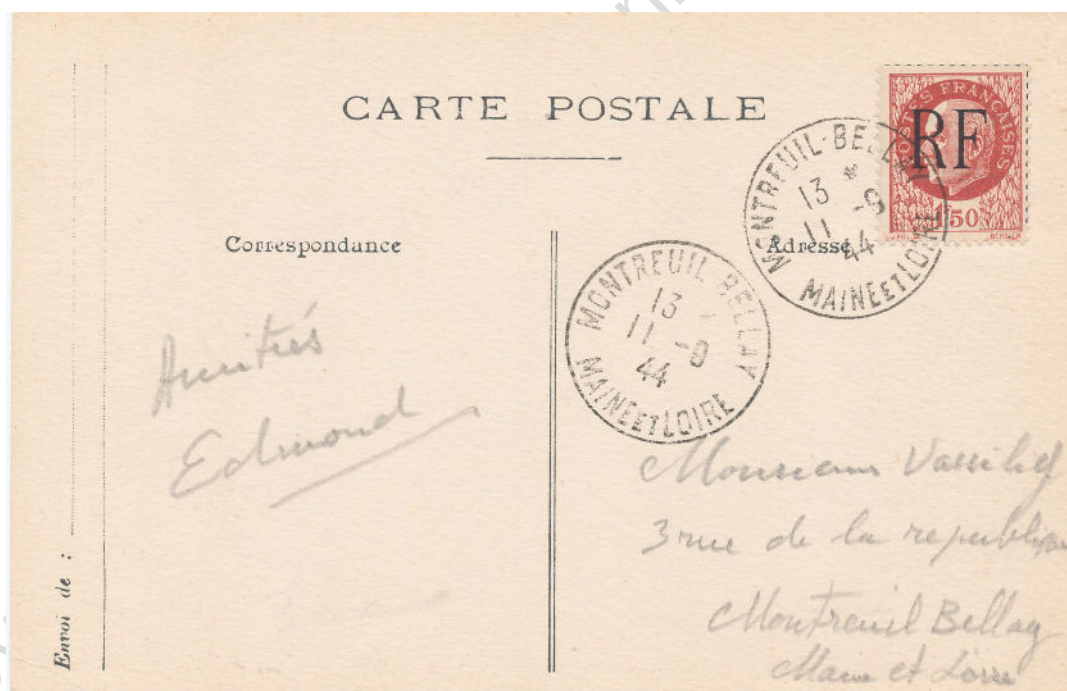


Figure 7

Postcard to Georges Vassileff, initiator of the overprints, cancelled 11 September 1944

Varieties and Imperfections

The Montreuil-Bellay issues are renowned for the number of so-called varieties but to what extent were they accidental or intentional? A week after completing the RF overprints, the Saumur printers, Girouard & Richou, issued an attestation dated 9 October (Figure 10) certifying their work and explaining the presence of the various anomalies.

“Black ink was used for the printing; we can distinguish two qualities: glossy and matt. Some overprints can also be found which to some degree are oily, smudged, heavy, thin, fine, overinked and others which are visibly pale, approaching grey. All these inking and printing varieties are unintentional and are due to the poor inks, typeset and material

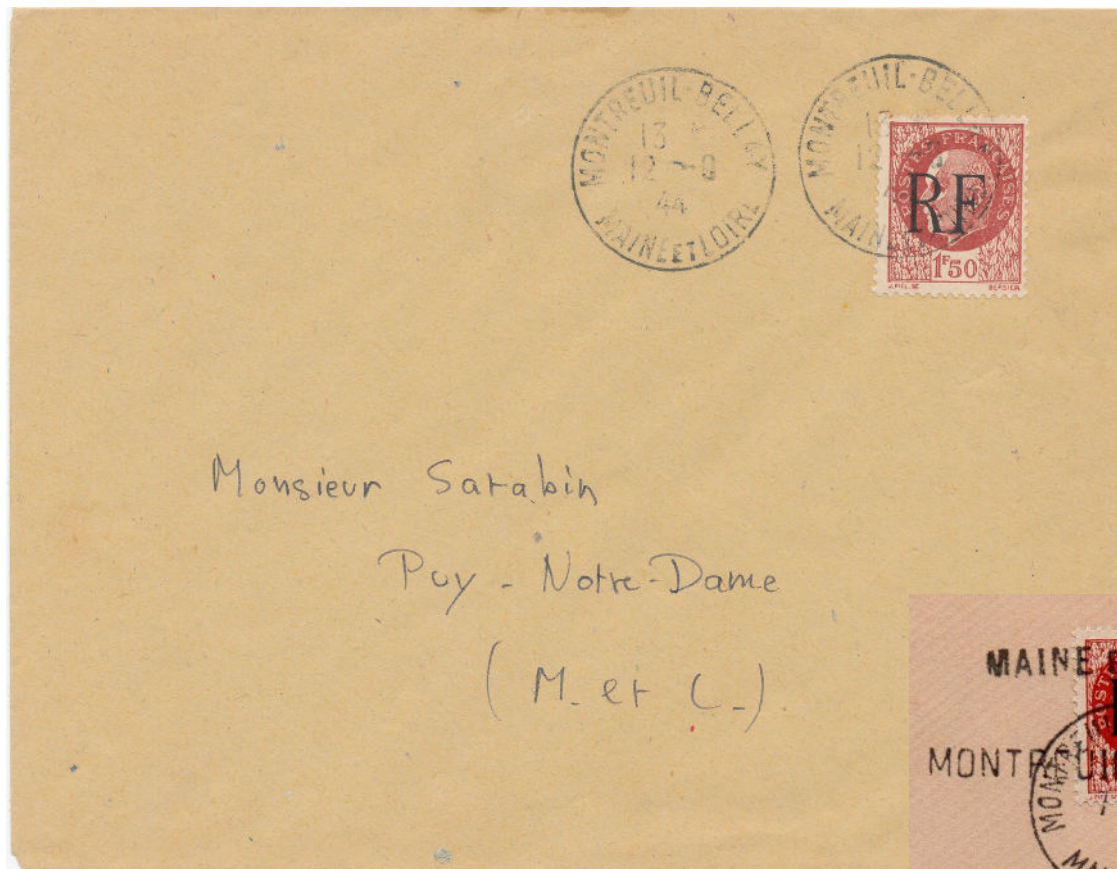


Figure 8

Letter to Puy-Notre-Dame, one of the communes on the *Maquis* postal delivery circuit, cancelled 12 September 1944



Figure 9

Straight line cancellations of 7 October 1944

that were not adequate for a proper job. The overprinting was applied using a forme of 10 and a forme of 15 clichés (Figure 11). The printing was achieved by nine impressions¹, the characteristics of which are indicated in the accompanying pages. There are four *tête-bêche* pairs for every hundred stamps (Figure 12)."

Unfortunately, I have not been able to gain access to all the above mentioned "accompanying pages" to study and elucidate on the so-called "characteristics".

At the bottom of the first page of the attestation, under the heading "Setting up, Printer's Waste and Errors", the report continues with the admission that "During the printing, imperfections occurred ...". As mentioned earlier, I have yet to come across the subsequent pages of this text which would reveal details of these printing "imperfections". What can be learned though from material seen on the philatelic market is that many values, in particular the Mercury series and low value Pétain issues, were targeted by the creative mind of one of the operators. In addition to *tête-bêche* pairs there are overprints that can be described as

sideways, inverted, double impression, double-inverted, partial, vertical and horizontal shifts, *recto-verso*, *à cheval*, and even negative.

I can but assume that these are the "imperfections" that the printers are referring to on the evasive second page. Some of these fabrications are listed in Mayer's *Timbres de la Libération* as 'variétés' or 'non-émis'.² Fortunately, other than the reported *tête-bêche* pairs and minor shifts, such "imperfections" are not found on the 1F50 Pétain stamp and therefore, do not warrant an in-depth study in this article (Figure 13). Although there is no firm evidence to support my supposition, the presence of so many varieties has all the hallmarks of Georges Vassileff's involvement.

Back to Georges Vassileff

As I said earlier, there is a reference to Georges Vassileff in *Le Patrimoine du Timbre-Poste Français* edited by J-F Brun, which was misinterpreted by Les Konzon. Shown on page 331 is an illustration of a poster with the commentary "This poster is not entirely as it seems. It was inspired by M. Vassilev (sic), a stamp collector, who was the originator of the Montreuil-Bellay overprint".

¹ To achieve the composition of the sheets in nine impressions would suggest that they were overprinted as follows: five times with the forme of 10 without an inverted RF, twice with the forme of 10 with one inverted RF (position 8) and twice with the forme of 15 with one inverted RF (position 12)

² Martine Mayer, *Timbres de la Libération*, 12th edition, 2021, Page 55

MAISON FONDÉE EN 1671

TYPOGRAPHIE

- RELIURE -

Impressions
Commerciales
et Administratives

LITHOGRAPHIE

Imprimerie GIROUARD & RICHOU

SAUMUR — 4, Place du Marché, 4 — SAUMUR

TÉLÉPHONE 1-95

C.P. 154-28 Nantes
Pour les règlements par Chèques Postaux et Bancaires,
prière de libeller ceux-ci au nom de Pierre RICHOU

C.O.I.A.C.L. 31.0852

Rép. des Producteurs : 709 M. et L.
R.C. Saumur 3437
SAUMUR, le 9 octobre 1944

CERTIFICAT DE TIRAGE

Je soussigné Pierre RICHOU, déclare avoir imprimé les
initiales R.F. sur les timbres suivant :

Timbres à l'effigie de PÉTAINE :

20 c. Violet	quantité	15.000	pièces
60 c. Violet	"	15.000	"
70 c. Orange	"	15.000	"
1 fr. Carmin	"	15.000	"
1 fr. 20. Marron	"	15.000	"
1 fr. 50. "	"	15.000	"
2 frs. Vert	"	12.000	"
3 frs. Rouge orange	"	12.000	"
4 frs. Bleu (Type imprimerie)	"	12.000	"
4 frs 50 Vert (Type imprimerie)	"	12.000	"
<u>Timbres (Type mercure) sans République Française</u>			
10 c. Bleu	quantité	30.000	"
30 c. Rouge	"	30.000	"
40 c. Violet	"	30.000	"
50 c. Bleu pâle	"	30.000	"

L'impression est faite à l'encre noire; on peut distinguer deux qualités : encre brillante et matte, on peut rencontrer aussi des impressions plus ou moins grasses, empâtées, lourdes, maigres fines trop encrées, et d'autres sensiblement pâles, tirant sur le gris. Toutes ces variétés d'encre, de foulage sont involontaires, à cause des mauvaises encres, caractères et matériel insuffisant pour faire un travail soigné.

Le tirage est fait par bloc de 10 et de 15 timbres. La composition comporte 9 reports dont les caractéristiques sont indiqués dans le ci-joint fascicule.

TÊTES-BÊCHES

Il y a quatre têtes-bêches pour chaque centaine de timbres.

MISE EN TRAIN - DÉFAUTS - DÉCHETS

Au cours de l'impression se sont produites les imperfec-

.....

Figure 10

Printing attestation drawn up on 9 October by the
Imprimerie Girouard & Richou

© Alain Camelin Collection

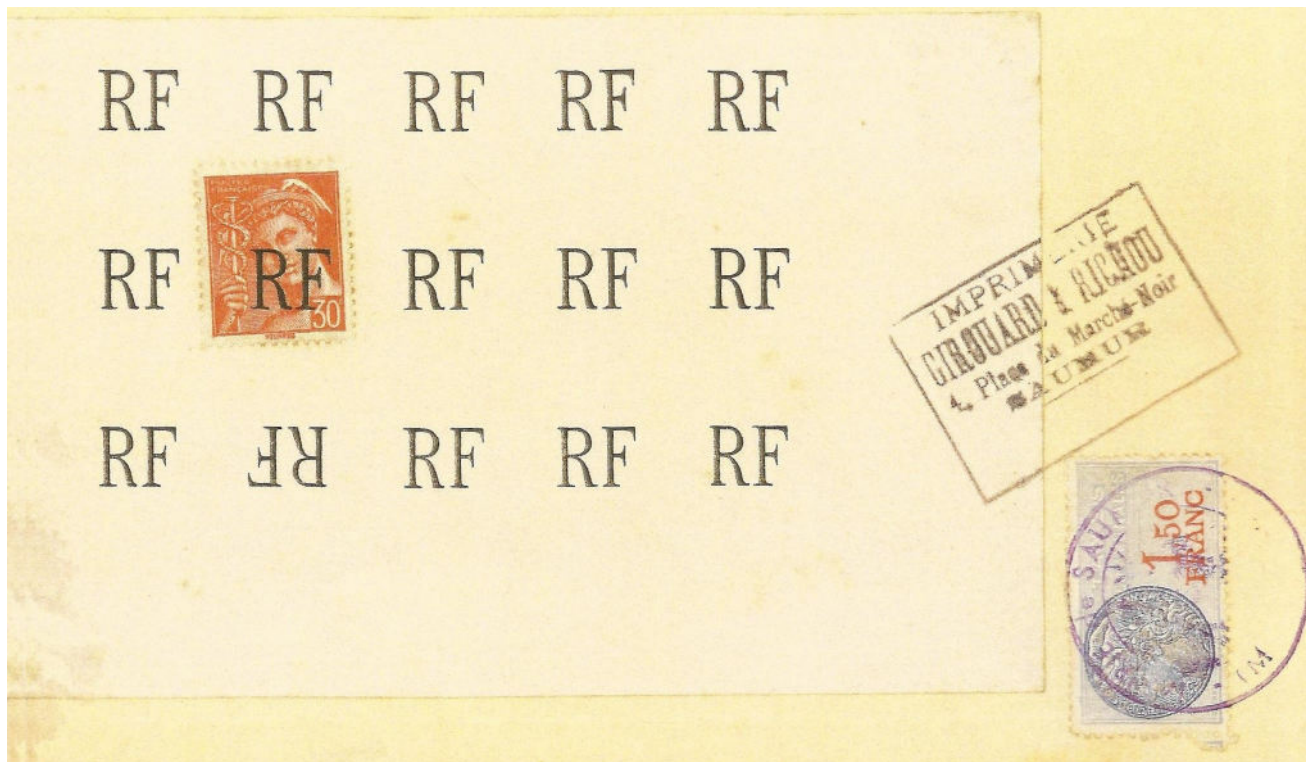


Figure 11

Imprimerie Girouard & Richou proof of the forme comprising 14 clichés with the upright RF and one cliché (Position 12) with the inverted RF.

This and other proofs and specimen overprints were signed and submitted to Saumur Town Hall on 23 November 1944

© Alain Camelin Collection



Figure 13

Two examples of the fanciful 'imperfusions' which thankfully do not appear on the 1F50 printings



Figure 12

One of the four tête-bêche overprints in a sheet of the 1F50 Pétain

Vassileff did not inspire or initiate the national campaign, only the overprints for Montreuil-Bellay, such as those described above. He was also responsible for the production of the poster promoting the Liberation issues which was likewise printed by the Imprimerie Girouard & Richou. After the printing, the posters were adorned with one or several cachets of the FFI, the *Gendarmerie Nationale* and the Mayor and were displayed around the town to promote the sale of the RF stamps, ostensibly, in aid of *Maquis* funds. The poster (Figure 14) reads:

**MONTREUIL-BELLAY
LIBÉRÉE**

Fellow patriots, avoid using stamps with Petain's effigy.
From now onwards, only use issues inscribed with the letters RF:
the patriotic overprint of the Maquis of Montreuil-Bellay

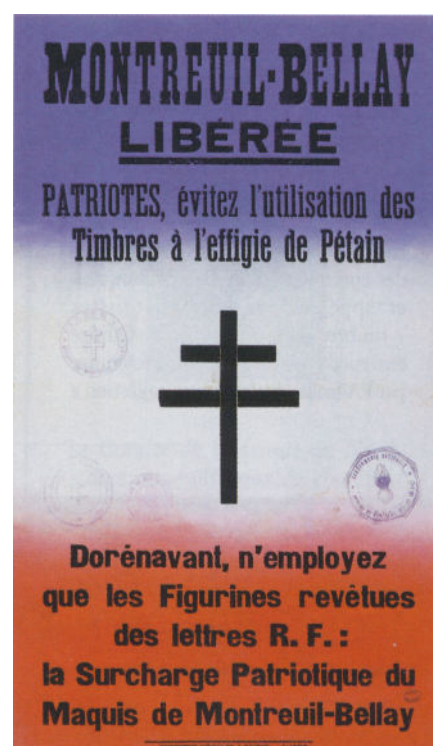


Figure 14

Montreuil-Bellay poster promoting the sale of RF Liberation stamps

In Part 1, I mentioned that Montreuil-Bellay boasted one of the only airstrips in France that was still intact and operational. It was located on a plain between Méron and La Motte-Champagne, approximately six kilometres east of Montreuil-Bellay, and was unknown to the German occupiers. Thanks to this airstrip, the British and the FFI were able to conduct numerous night missions transporting agents to and from France in addition to parachuting arms and ammunition to the Resistance workers. La Motte is now known as La Petite-Champagne and is the location of a nature reserve for the little bustard.

Georges Vassileff, being the patriot and the philatelist that he was, is credited with the creation of a special overprint to honour the role played by the commune of La Motte-Champagne. The forme for overprinting the stamps consisted of just a single row of five clichés, the first four with the text TRAFIC CLANDESTIN AÉRIEN - LA MOTTE CHAMPAGNE - OPÉRATION DE NUIT and the fifth cliché with the second and third words transposed viz TRAFIC AÉRIEN CLANDESTIN. The overprint was only applied to the 1F50 Pétain and cancelled items are dated on or around 11 September (Figures 15 to 17).



Figure 15

'Trafic clandestin' overprint, enlarged to show text



Figure 16

'Trafic clandestine aérien' overprint impression (enlarged) taken from the forme showing the transposed text 'aérien clandestin' in position 5



Figure 17

'Trafic clandestine aérien' and 'Trafic aérien clandestin' as a se-tenant marginal pair, cancelled 11 September 1944 on a quasi-FM postcard and self-addressed by Georges Vassileff.

© Delcampe

Conclusion

Much ink has flowed on the subject of the Liberation overprints, particularly on the motives behind them. Can we be sure they were produced in response to an outpouring of patriotism or did philately and financial profits become the dominant forces? As early as 22 November 1944, the PTT made an attempt to add some credibility to the deserving issues and published its rationale by reporting that "the Postal Administration has investigated the

conditions in which the operations of overprinting have been authorised and effected, as well as the means adopted to put the overprinted stamps at the disposal of the public. It has been possible to establish a list of stamps which have been overprinted on the instructions of authority qualified by circumstances and which have been wholly placed on sale over the post office counters of the locality or region concerned".

To what extent did Montreuil-Bellay comply with these conditions and circumstances?

- 1) The order to overprint the stamps was given by Michel Debré, Regional Commissioner of the Republic. His instructions were received by the mayor of Montreuil-Bellay who forwarded them to the postmaster.
- 2) The mayor of Montreuil-Bellay was certainly in a position to authorise the overprinting but decisions seem to have been influenced by the stamp dealer, Georges Vassileff, who held no office at all.
- 3) Most of the 1F50 values were put on general sale at the post-office in Montreuil-Bellay and possibly in Saumur. However, stamps were also sold at the dairy of Gaston Amy and cancellations indicate that the availability was irregular. Furthermore, many stamps, if not most of them, were used to create philatelic souvenirs rather than fulfilling any commercial postal usage.

Montreuil-Bellay failed the criteria and the town's issues were therefore relegated to semi-official status. As one contemporary stamp writer, Albert H Harris, said: "Such high functionaries (the Regional Commissioners) were fully qualified to make such decisions. Others with less authority, in assuming the initiative, gave a bad example to those less qualified, with the result that in some cases - principally south of the Loire – the enthusiasm with which 'Liberation'

overprints were made was by no means disinterested³." It is understandable but unfortunate that some collectors will show disdain and therefore consider them less worthy of being in a collection.

However, let us not be too judgemental but reflect instead on the stirring preface with which Major S E Myns (BLA) opens his article on the Liberation overprints⁴ in 'Stamp Collecting' of February, 1945.

"To express the relief from foreign oppression, to show the world again that eternal France still carries in the forefront of freedom her banner of 'Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité', commissioners, postal officials, local leaders and presidents of philatelic societies in various towns and districts of France vied with one another in hastening to obliterate the face of the Leader of Shame with some triumphant symbol, or simply RF."

"Not all these issues have been, or will be, officially accepted by the catalogues, or by the seeker after issues with impeccable records, but I am sure that their attraction will be felt by thousands of collectors the world over."

"They are a manifestation of the excitement and colour of the times in which we are privileged to live."

A loud amen to that!

Acknowledgments

I am deeply indebted to **M. Franck Dénéchère**, member, and **M. Alain Camelin**, president and secretary of the *Association des Collectionneurs des Timbres de la Libération*, who have generously provided me with advice and information for both parts of this article and who have granted me permission to reproduce images from their websites and items from their collections. This article would not have been possible without their valuable assistance.

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Présentation de quelques timbres et lettres: Les timbres de la Libération: Montreuil-Bellay

Georges Vassileff | Association Philatélique de Rueil-Malmaison (philatelie-rueil-malmaison.fr)

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³ Albert H Harris, *'Liberation Overprints of France'*, Philatelic Magazine, 9 February 1945

⁴ Major S E Myns (BLA), *'Maquis Overprints of France'*, Stamp Collecting, 17 February 1945

The precursor postcards of France 1873 -1878

Peter R A Kelly

Part 2

The French term '*repiquage*' applies to postal stationery printed by the Administration or sub-contracted by them on which the user has carried out a separate printing on the back of the card. This was quite acceptable provided that no change of any kind was made to the front.

The previous article explained the attraction of postcards for commercial and social interests because of the lower cost of postage and general ease of use. The message sent on the card could be in a simple handwritten form or could show the name and address of the sender by means of a rubber

stamp or label. As some businesses and social organisations saw the advantages of using the cards, they began to print their particular requirements and to design their own printed templates. The category of user and their particular requirements are infinite. An attempt to catalogue these has been made by Storch and Sinais in their book (see bibliography) on the precursors but many more exist.

Below are shown some examples. Only the backs of the cards are shown. All of them are printed on standard cards printed by the Administration (See Figures 1-5).



Figure 1

Card of 22 June 1878 produced by the Office of the Royal British Commission at the Paris Universal Exhibition of 1878 and addressed to London giving notice of a jury meeting

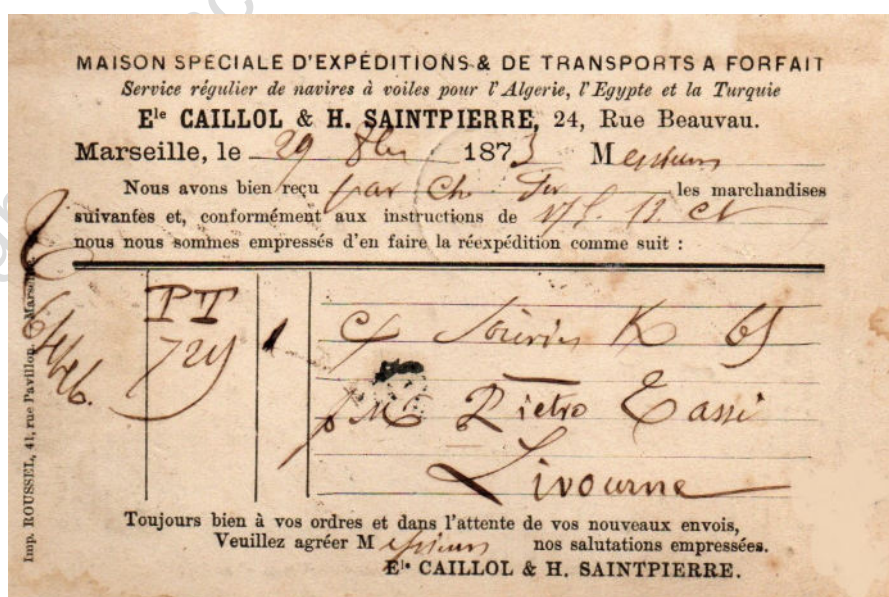


Figure 2

Card of 29 October 1873 produced by forwarding agents Ele Caillol et H. Saintpierre of Marseille, confirming having forwarded goods to Livorno, Italy. The *repiquage* was added by the Imprimerie Roussel of Marseille

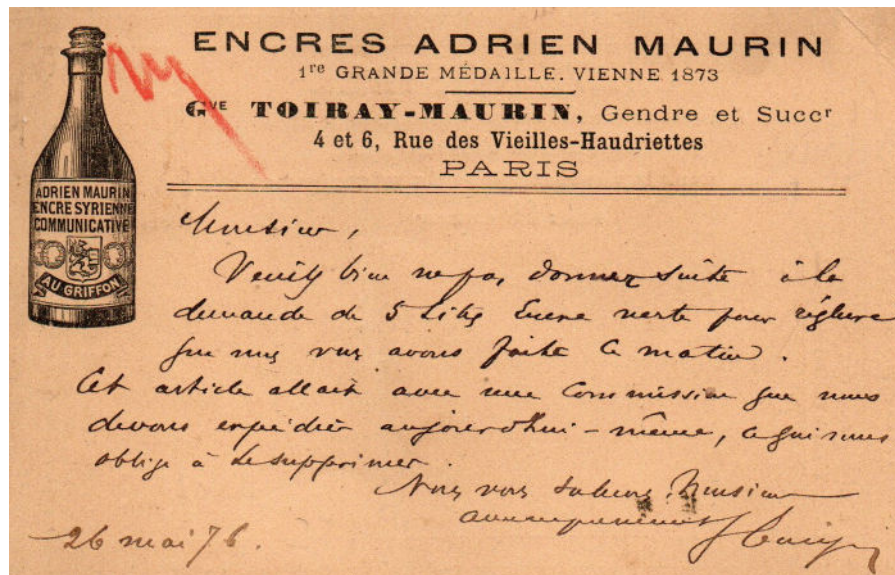


Figure 3

A local card sent within Paris on 21 May 1876 by ink manufacturer Encres Adrien Maurin giving printed information about the company and a commercial medal awarded to them together with an illustration of one of their products

Figure 4
A card dated 24 December 1878 from Palmer Morgan a shipping company in Dieppe advising dispatch by rail of a consignment of coal to Paris and that they had drawn a bill on Tebbit & Cie, merchants at Paris in respect of transport costs. Incidentally, this would relate to coal shipped out of Cardiff

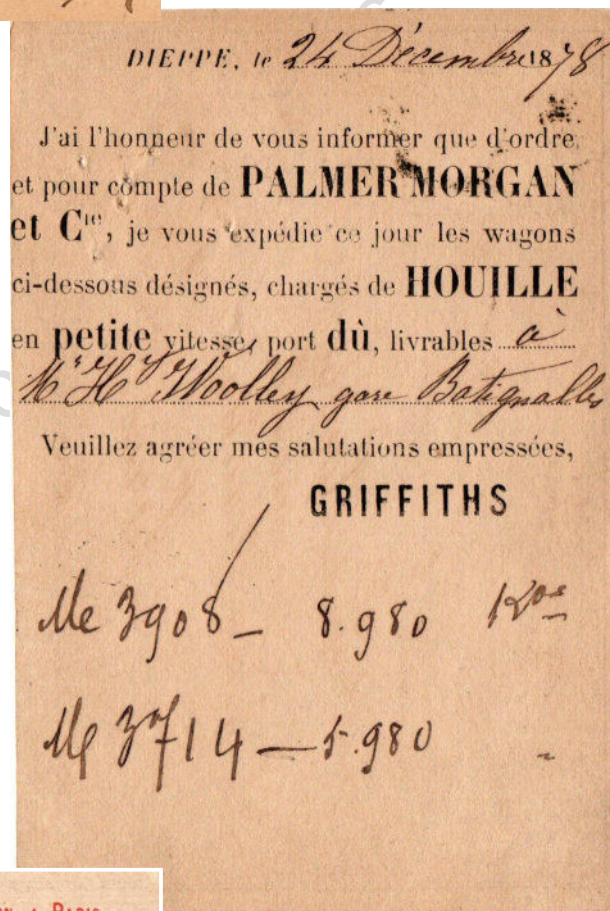


Figure 5

A card dated 13 June 1878 sent by Charles Avril, Grande Tuilerie de Bourgogne, Montchanin-les-Mines requesting a quotation on various products. There was no bar to the use of coloured inks

Privately printed cards

With effect from 7 October 1875 (*Arrêté* contained in Instruction 174, Bulletin *Mensuel* 79) authorisation was given for cards to be printed privately; up to this point their production was carried out exclusively by the Administration.

The regulations applied to the privately printed cards were strict and had to be complied with. Any breach of them would result in the card being treated as an unpaid letter and, up to 1 May 1878, would be taxed at 40c less the value of any franking and 30c thereafter. Insufficiently paid cards would be taxed at triple deficiency as per the standard rate.

The size of the card had to be the same as the standard cards printed by the Administration for the Post Office - 12 x 8cm.

The wording on the front of the card had to replicate exactly that on the standard cards without any additions. This would include the rate for local and office to office destinations throughout France and Algeria and also the 15 and 20c foreign rates. The only addition would be the name and address of the recipient.

There was some discussion with regard to the design of the frame and in a subsequent Notice (BM 85 of April 1876) the Post Office confirmed that they did not consider the frame an essential element of the card and the design or lack of it was at the discretion of the private printers. This is worth mentioning here because the different designs of frames used and the ink colour, which was not restricted to black, are very much a feature of the privately printed cards.

The back of the card, in the same way as the '*repiqué*' cards mentioned above, was at the total discretion of the user. The only condition stated was that nothing be attached to the card. This would not apply to name and address labels but there was little need for these as the details could be included in the printing. What it most certainly did apply to was the attachment of samples, generally pieces of textiles, cloth designs etc. The reduced sample rate in the category of printed matter did not apply to cards and any such usage would result in the card being taxed at the letter rate.

Although the number of companies and other organisations who printed their own cards was extensive (these were listed by Storch and Sinais) it is perhaps surprising that there were not many more and it has been suggested that perhaps the procedure was unnecessary or too much trouble when simple *repiquage* would do.

Three examples are illustrated here that give an idea of what could be achieved within the parameters allowed (Figures 6, 7 and 8).



Figure 6

A privately printed card for Forges de Champagne sent from Saint Dizier (Haute Marne) to Chamouille (Haut Marne) on 27 March 1877 as an acknowledgement of receipt of an order received. Franked 15c for the territorial rate

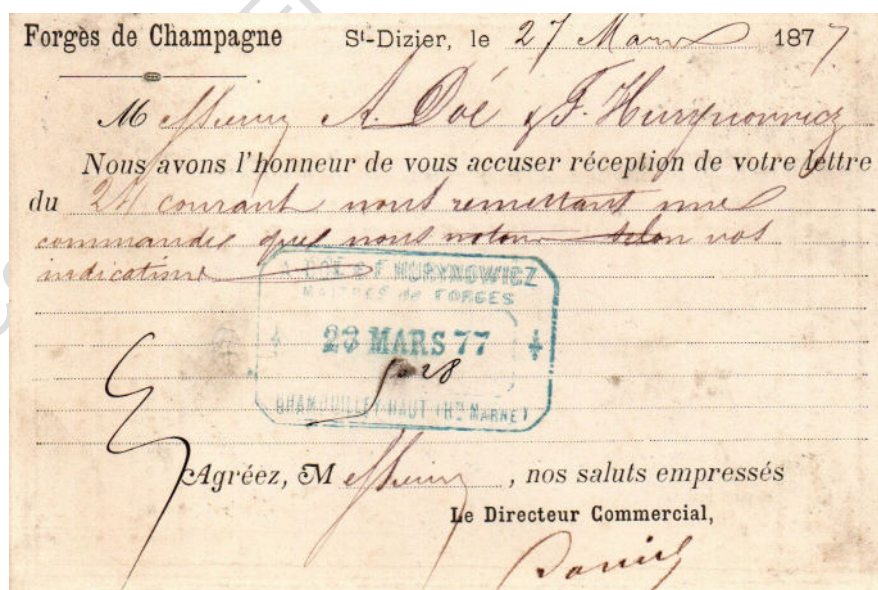




Figure 8

A privately printed card produced for and addressed to Georges Delaporte, Service de Vérification et d'Entretien des installations du gaz, Paris. 19 April 1876. A customer reporting a gas leak and asking someone to come and see to it as soon as possible. Franked 10c for local rate

Nom de l'Abonné : G. Goguelat

Adresse : 11 rue de la République

(1) Indiquer le jour et l'heure.
(2) Indiquer ce qui fonctionne mal ou le travail à exécuter.
(3) Signature de l'Abonné ou de son représentant.

Les cartes postales annonces

Following on from the *repiquages* and bearing in mind that there was no restriction on what could be either written or printed on the back of the card, it is not surprising that the commercial advantages that were so evident would be of interest to advertising agencies. These organisations considered that the open nature of the card would provide an ideal and relatively inexpensive format for multiple advertisements.

As far as the postal regulations are concerned, this eventuality was covered by the Circular of 16 June 1873 that was repeated in *Bulletin Mensuel* 85 page 208 (Vol VII) of April 1876. The Decision of the *Ministère des Finances* of 24 March and 4 April 1873 confirmed that authority could be given to those applying for them to place at the disposal of the public, cards at a price that was lower than the value of the stamps affixed. This related not only to the post cards (*cartes postales annonces*) but also but also envelopes and letters.

It also stated that the normal discount on sales at the rate of 1% would not be applicable and that such cards had to be controlled by the Administration who reserved the right to terminate the Agreement if and when they deemed it necessary.

A further Ministerial Decision of 3 June 1873 determined that those authorised to distribute the *Cartes Postales Annonces*, either free or at a rate lower than the value of the stamps affixed, could not sell through the intermediary of tobacconists or anybody officially authorised to sell postage stamps. This procedure was to be monitored closely and every authorisation given by the Post Office had to be recorded and a return had to be made to the Administration.

In the event, the concept appeared to have attracted only two agencies. The first one, *Les Cartes Postales Annonces* who used the printer Contal of 7, Place de la Bourse, Paris, initially and later 14 Faubourg Montmartre, Paris and a second

printer Boyer, 21 Boulevard Sebastopol, Paris. It is quite easy to identify these cards as the name, Contal appears on the left-hand side of the card, together with a serial reference number. These have been studied in detail by Storch and Sinais and are listed in their book. Judging by the number of blanks in the sequential series numbers there remains opportunities for further research.

The second Agency was *Les Cartes Annonces Postales* of 49 Chaussée d'Antin who used two printers, Pelletier & Fils 65 rue Saint André des Arts, Paris and Berthier Richard, Passage de l'Opéra, Paris.

Generally, the Contal adverts appear in a block on the left-hand side of the card while the others can appear on all four sides leaving the centre blank for the message. The very similar names of the two agencies can also give rise to confusion.

In Figures 9,10 and 11 examples of the Contal and Boyer *repiquage* printing are given. These show the variety of goods and services advertised together with the commercial messages contained in them. The advertising is thus brought to the attention of the sender (as well as a free or reduced-price card) and to the recipient. The oath of privacy meant that the contents of the card are entirely private and the Post Office was restricted to processing the card through the indications written on the front and that alone.



Figure 9

The back of a *carte postale annonces* sent within Paris on 15 July 1873. Printed by Contal with advertising covering hair dye, education and pocket letter scales

Figure 10

The back of a *carte postale annonces* sent by an architect within Paris on 29 September 1873. Printed by Contal with advertisements for furniture, the large store, Maison de la Belle Jardinière, and a firm of dyers and cleaners

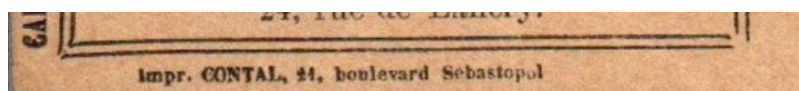
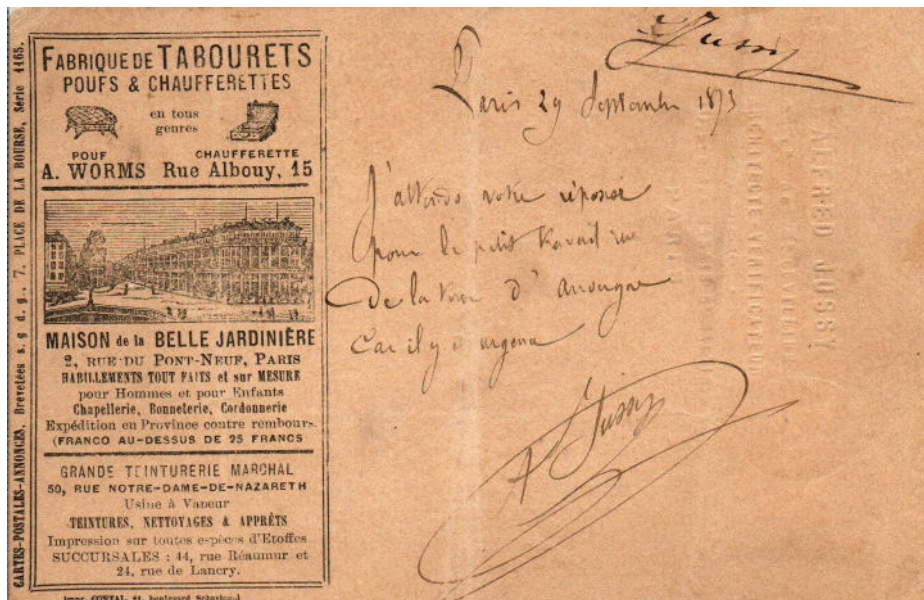
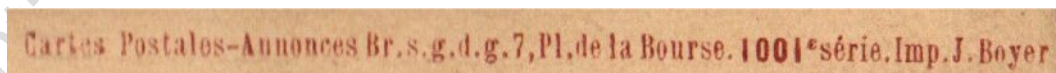


Figure 11

The back of a *carte postale annonces* sent from Paris to Boulogne-sur-Mer on 11 June 1873.

Printed by Boyer with advertisements for Mignon shorthand, sewing machines, photography and sales at Grande Magasins de Nouveautés, all based in Paris.



The punching of postage stamps affixed to the cards

It soon became apparent that the postage stamps on the cards purchased at a discount or given free, could be soaked off the cards and used for other purposes at their true value. A solution to preventing this possibility can be found on some of the Contal printed cards. The cards were sold or given with postage stamps of 10c or 15c depending on local or territorial use and before they were issued the card with its stamp was dry punched. Any attempt to remove the stamp subsequently would result in it coming off in pieces.

There are three models of the punches recorded, Monogram CA (Figure 12), four horizontal lines (Figure 13) and Monogram BC (Figure 14).

Not surprisingly there was disapproval in some quarters with this initially permitted procedure. Arthur Maury (*Histoire des timbre-poste français*, 1907) expressed the opinion that the Post Office considered the punch marks to be a form of cancellation. However, the Decree of 20 December 1873 (Circular 119 effective 1 February 1874) prohibited their use but a further Decree of 15 November 1876 cancelled the prohibition and allowed the procedure to start again.

Cards that were punched and posted during the period of prohibition were taxed as unpaid letters with no recognition given to the value of the postage stamp (Figure 15).



Figure 12
15c Cérès with CA monogram punched on card from Montpellier to Paris dated 15 September 1874



Figure 13
10c Cérès with four horizontal lines punched on card sent and delivered within Paris. Date indistinct

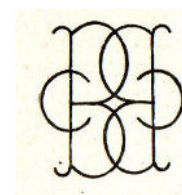


Figure 14
15c Cérès with highly ornate CB monogram punched on card from Caen to Longueville, 9 May 1876

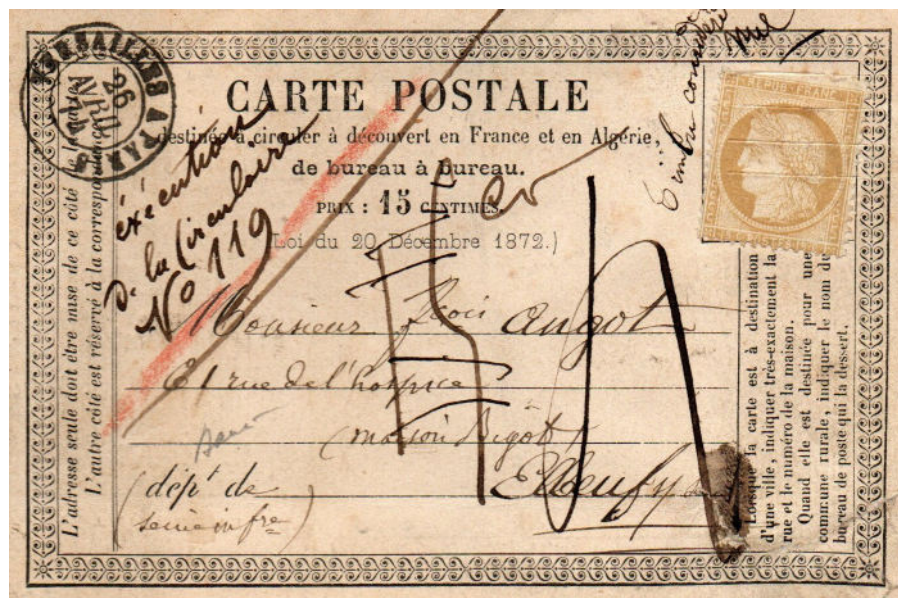


Figure 15

A carte postale annonces, Contal printing, dated 26 April 1874 and posted on the Versailles to Paris ambulant (TPO).

The sorters noticed the four-line punching used during the period when the practice was banned and taxed it.

Around the stamp is written "timbre considéré nul" and a tax mark of 15c was added and deleted, replaced by 4 (décimes), the unpaid letter rate. The reason for the taxation was added "Exécution de la circulaire No 119"

Foreign use

Although the information on the front of the cards quoted the foreign rates, Instruction 174 indicated that these would not be applicable until 1 January 1876, the date that France became a participating member in the General Postal

Union. The point was also made that under GPU regulations unpaid and partly paid postcards were not acceptable. The initial postal rates were 15c for Europe and 20c for the USA (15c + 5c maritime surcharge).

Sources

- Jean Storch & Bertrand Sinais 'Catalogue des Cartes Postales Précurseurs de France et des Colonies'. Sinais, Paris 2006
- Jean-Louis Bourguoin 'Cartes Postales: Réglementation et tarifs postaux du 15 janvier 1873 au 3 août 1914'.
- Arthur Maury 'Histoire des timbres-poste français'. Maury, Paris 1907.
- 'Bulletin des Postes', Bibliothèque Nationale de France / Gallica.

All the illustrations are of items in the author's collection

Marianne de Muller

Mick Bister

Part 4: the 12 franc issue (YT 1010)

The background

With the issue of the *Marianne de Muller* design, the PTT entered a period of technical innovation. We have already witnessed it in the aborted attempt to print the 15F value as a bi-coloured issue and in its introduction of the *distributeur automatique* to coincide with the production of the 6F coil. A third innovation was the concept of a folding booklet which was designed to be more compact than the standard booklets of 20 stamps. The new booklet would fit easily in a wallet or a purse and, as with the 6F coil, its sale would be promoted in areas of tourism. In an appendix to the *Bulletin Officiel*, a Circular dated 22 June 1955 announced the initiative as follows:

“With the aim of providing new facilities for the public and simplifying counter sales operations, the administration has printed booklets of ten 12F postage stamps, the face value being that of the internal postcard rate. These booklets, specially intended for post offices in tourist areas and in health and seaside resorts, will also be on sale at other offices.”

The Circular emphasised that the booklet would not be available in the overseas *départements* unlike the 15F booklet of 20.



Figure 1

Extract from the *bon à tirer*

© Archives of the *Musée de la Poste*, Paris

The proofs and essays

In his study of the *Marianne de Muller* issue, Jean-Luc Trassaert makes two curious assertions. Firstly, he claims to have seen a 12F die intended for a bi-coloured printing like the 15F trials. This I have yet to get substantiated but, if there is any truth in the claim, he would have seen two dies, one for each anticipated colour. Secondly, he describes the *bon à tirer* as being a 12F *épreuve de luxe*. Again, he is mistaken. In fact, the *bon à tirer* is represented by a colour proof of the 6F issue, printed in Lefranc ink N° 303, which is invariably described in catalogues as *vert-jaune* or yellow-green. As both the 6F and 12F values were being prepared simultaneously it is not surprising that the colour proofs for the two issues were pulled from just one of the dies, in this

case the 6F, and in a sufficiently wide range of shades to be able to select the two required colours. In order to avoid any confusion between the values, the 12F *bon à tirer* has been endorsed three times with the figure 12F in manuscript before being signed by the *Ministre des PTT*, Édouard Bonnefous, on 26 May 1955 (Figure 1). This is the same date as he signed the 6F *bon à tirer*. Shown in Figure 2, for comparison, is the *épreuve de luxe* of the 12F which is quite distinct from a die proof or colour proof inasmuch that the imprint *Atelier de Fabrication des Timbres-Poste PARIS* is printed in the bottom right-hand corner in the same colour as the stamp.



Figure 2
Épreuve de luxe of the 12F value with the imprint *Atelier de Fabrication des Timbres-Poste PARIS*

Jean-Luc Trassaert describes in his study three booklet essays on which only the stamps have actually been printed. On the blank half of the sheet, to the right of the stamps, has been pasted the text printed in black, red or green. With all the illustrations in his book being printed in black and white, he understandably did not include illustrations of the essays. I have tried very hard to compensate for this omission and locate these essays myself at the *Musée de la Poste* but with no success. Madame Marthe Bobik, the indefatigable curator with responsibility for the philatelic archives, has diligently searched for the essays on my behalf but has been unable to find them. I am afraid therefore that I can only reproduce the illustrations that were published in '*Carnets de France Période 1940 à 1965*' by Yvert & Tellier in

2016. They are more than adequate though and show the support essay with the blank margin and the three working essays with the text in red, black and the adopted green (Figure 3).

Jean-Luc also refers to the different papers used in the printing of the issued booklets but his descriptions are not totally accurate. There are indeed two qualities of paper. Until 1955 all booklets were printed on normal matt paper but at one stage during the production of the 12F *Marianne de Muller* a whiter paper was introduced with an optical brightening agent (*azurant optique*) added to the pulp. Printings of the booklet can therefore be encountered on both matt and treated paper. The latter is easily identifiable by its reaction when placed under an ultra-violet lamp.

¹ De Lizeray, Blanc and Leblond, '*Timbres de France Vol 7*', Bulletin Philatélique du Midi, 1963



Figure 3

Essays with superimposed text in three different colours

© Archives of the *Musée de la Poste*, Paris and '*Carnets de France 1940-1965*' Yvert & Tellier, 2016

The *Musée de la Poste* holds two sheets of uncut booklets, one imperforate with the sheet number 48974 and one perforated, with the sheet number 48964. The latter served as a *feuille-modèle* (Figure 4). Within the blue oval cachet is recorded the stamp's accession number 9006 and its date of registration 20 June 1955. The black rectangular cachet records its withdrawal on 14 September 1957 and details of the stamp replacing it, in this case, the 12F *Coq Gallois*. In the central margin is the abbreviated manuscript annotation '*carnets spéc.*' (*special booklets*).

The first printing

The first day of printing is unknown but, clearly, from the information recorded on the *feuille-modèle* it was no later than 20 June 1955. Each revolution of the printing cylinder produced eight booklets with the sheet number appearing underneath alternate panes on the left-hand side. It is assumed that the date of printing would have been printed as normal on the right-hand side but it would have been removed during the guillotining process to separate the booklet panes.

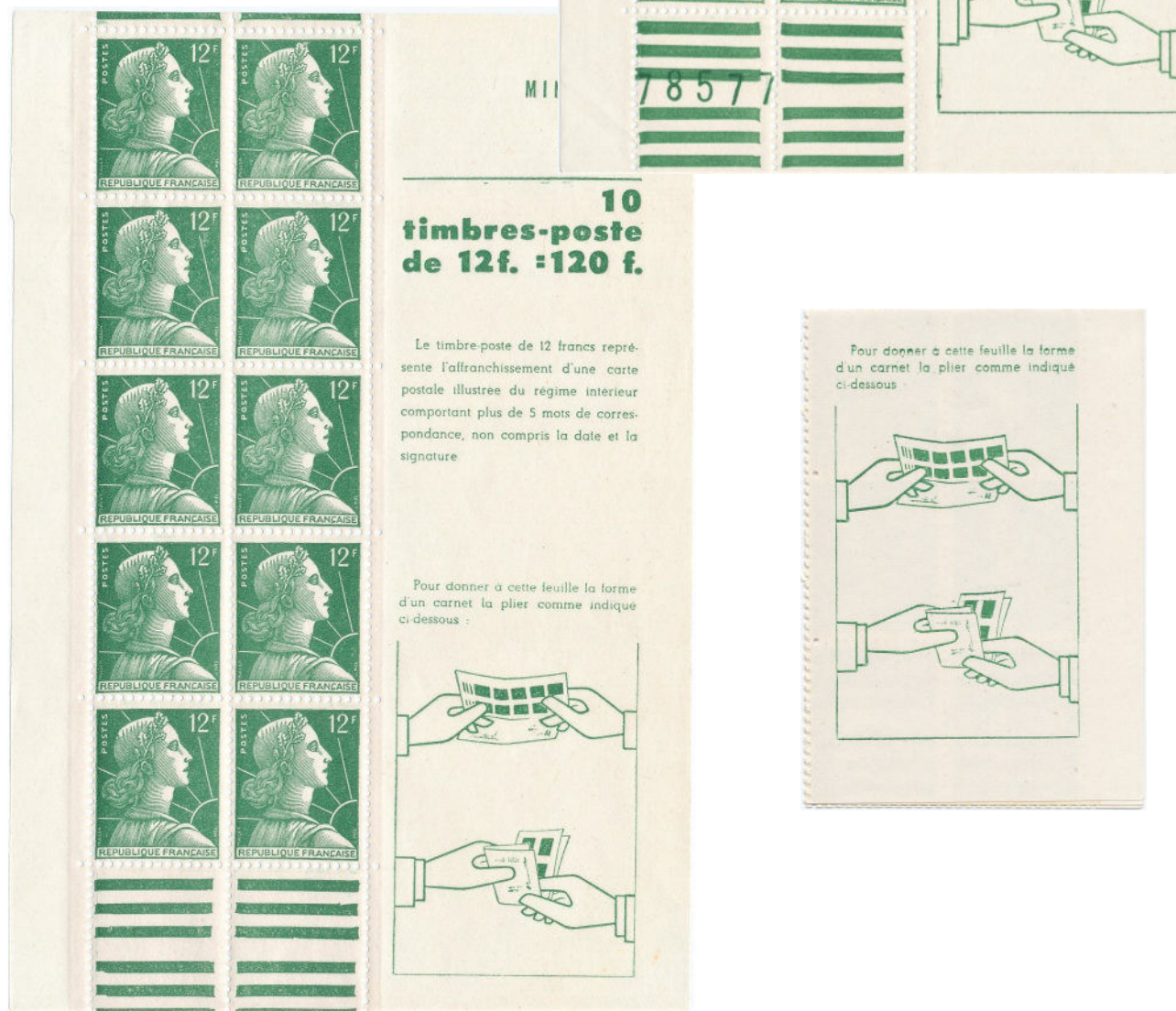


Figure 4 (reduced)

Feuille-modèle

© Archives of the Musée de la Poste, Paris

Figure 5
First printing of the 12F 'Les Mains' booklet
shown before and after folding



Prudent guillotining placed all six rows of marginal bars within the space of one stamp at the bottom of the sheet thereby allowing the booklet to be folded symmetrically.

The first printing, issued on 7 July 1955, is known by collectors, dealers and cataloguers alike as '*Les mains*' due to the depiction of hands in the illustrated folding instructions. The printing was on both matt and optically

enhanced paper and the ink ranges from light to dull yellow-green (Figure 5). The type of gum varies too. The shades are graciously referred to as 'yellow' and 'white' and identified by Yvert & Tellier as *Carnets* YT 1010-C1 and 1010-C2 but, to be frank, I have only encountered what I would more honestly term as 'buff' and 'cream' (Figure 6).



Figure 6
First printings with so-called 'yellow' and 'white' gum

The PTT redirection of mail campaign

In July 1955, the PTT launched a campaign to promote its redirection of mail service which was free of charge to customers until May 1965. The core motif featured in the campaign was the representation of a family jauntily setting off on holiday; they appeared in a slogan postmark, on PTT fliers and in the second printing of the 12F *Marianne de Muller* booklet. The motif was designed by the caricaturist René Chagnard (alias 'Chag') who worked for the PTT publication '*Postes et Télécommunications*'. He later became well known for designing the '*Père Noël*' reply cards sent to children by the PTT in response to their letters to Father Christmas.

The slogan postmark (Figure 7) was first used on 7 July 1955 which was the very day when the '*Les Mains*' booklet was put on sale. Initially applied by Secap machines in the sorting offices of Paris XIII, Paris XIV, Limoges and Bar-le-Duc, its use was extended to other offices in Paris and the provinces. A two-sided flier measuring 10 x 15cm was available from post-offices (Figure 8) and the front bore the signature of René Chag. On the reverse of the flier were instructions on how to use the special *enveloppes de réexpédition N° 717* (Figure 9) available free of charge from local post offices.

Figure 7 (right)
Redirection of mail campaign slogan postmark
applied at the Annecy RP office on
22 July 1955, the first day of its use in the provinces



Figure 8 (below)
PTT flier promoting the redirection of mail service

POUR VOS LETTRES, CARTES POSTALES

Vous avez intérêt à utiliser **les enveloppes de réexpédition**. Elles sont :

- **Pratiques.**
 - plusieurs plis peuvent y être insérés sans risque de perte;
 - elles peuvent, indifféremment, être déposées dans une **boîte aux lettres**, confiées au **facteur** ou remises à la **poste**.
- **Avantageuses.**
 - elles sont délivrées **GRATUITEMENT**, sur demande, par le facteur ou le bureau de poste.
- **Sûres.**
 - vous y indiquerez **vous-même**, avant votre départ, votre adresse de vacances.

POUR VOS JOURNAUX

La réexpédition des journaux n'est pas gratuite. C'est pourquoi, en indiquant **votre adresse de vacances** au journal auquel vous êtes abonné :

- vous éviterez une réexpédition journalière : gain de temps;
- vous n'aurez pas de surtaxe à payer : économie d'argent.

Suivez les conseils des P.T.T. : Votre courrier vous parviendra rapidement et sûrement !

IMPRIMERIE NATIONALE

N° 717. POSTES - TÉLÉGRAPHES - TÉLÉPHONES. Bureau réexpéditeur

Arrêté du 23 avril 1914.
J. A. 600049.

ENVELOPPE de RÉEXPÉDITION
exclusivement réservée aux correspondances, à l'exception des journaux, à destination de la **France**, de l'**Algérie**, de la **Tunisie**, des **Colonies françaises** et des **Bureaux de la zone française du Maroc**, ayant déjà circulé par la poste et régulièrement affranchies.

Cette enveloppe doit être remise au facteur ou au guichet d'un bureau de poste.

Courrier réexpédié à M^{elle} R. Devaux
Villa St Agnès
2 rue St Louis
Vichy Allier

CAMBRAI-PRINCIPAL
217
1952

Figure 9
Enveloppe de réexpédition
forwarding mail from Cambrai to a guest at the Villa Ste Agnès in Vichy in 1952. The same model of envelope continued to be used during the 1950s and hence during the campaign. With the service being free of charge stamps were not affixed

The second printing

The second printing is referred to as '*Les voyageurs*' for obvious reasons and the same family group created by Chag is featured. As with the '*Les mains*' booklet, we do not know the first day of printing and can only assume that they were issued as and when stocks of '*Les mains*' became depleted.

One can only assume that it was an inadvertent incident but the horizontal guillotining was inaccurately aligned resulting in the stamps not being correctly positioned within the pane. The consequences are that the marginal bars are shared between the top and bottom of the pane and the

sheet number is frequently sliced as shown here at the top (Figure 10). Furthermore, if the folding instructions are followed two of the stamps are left partly exposed and subject to damage in a purse or pocket. The fault was never corrected and the printing run, if the catalogue and market prices are anything to go by, was about 50% of the first.

Records indicate that 1,921,000 booklets were printed in all. They were withdrawn from sale on 14 September 1957 having been trialled for two years and any plans to repeat the format were abandoned.



Figure 10
Second printing of the 12F
booklet, '*Les voyageurs*',
shown before and after
folding

Postal Stationery

The only item of postal stationery available to the public was the 12F postcard which was printed in various shades of yellow-green ink and on card of mixed quality and hues. Catalogues list '*chamois*' and '*paille*' – buff and straw-yellow – but other shades can be identified. An example of a card printed in light yellow-green ink on *paille* and signed by the engraver Jules Piel is shown in Figure 11. Although the booklets were not available in the overseas *départements*, the stationery cards were overprinted ALGÉRIE for use in Algeria (Figure 12). A number of cards were customised by companies with a *repiquage* applied by a local printer.

Figure 13 illustrates such a card with the address printed in a yellow-green ink to complement the stamp. On the reverse, likewise in yellow-green ink, is a price list and order form for health and beauty products.

A quantity of '*timbré sur commande*' or 'stamped-to-order' cards have been recorded. An unusual example is the postcard commissioned by Ciné-Publicité which is on *chamois-rosé* card and features the 12F stamp with a simulated perforation (Figure 14).



Figure 11 (left)
Standard postcard
signed by the engraver
Jules Piel

Figure 12 (below)
Standard postcard
overprinted for use
in Algeria

Figure 13
Miscut standard postcard
and reverse (inset) with
repiquage and uprated 3F
for use after the tariff change
to 15F on 1 July 1957

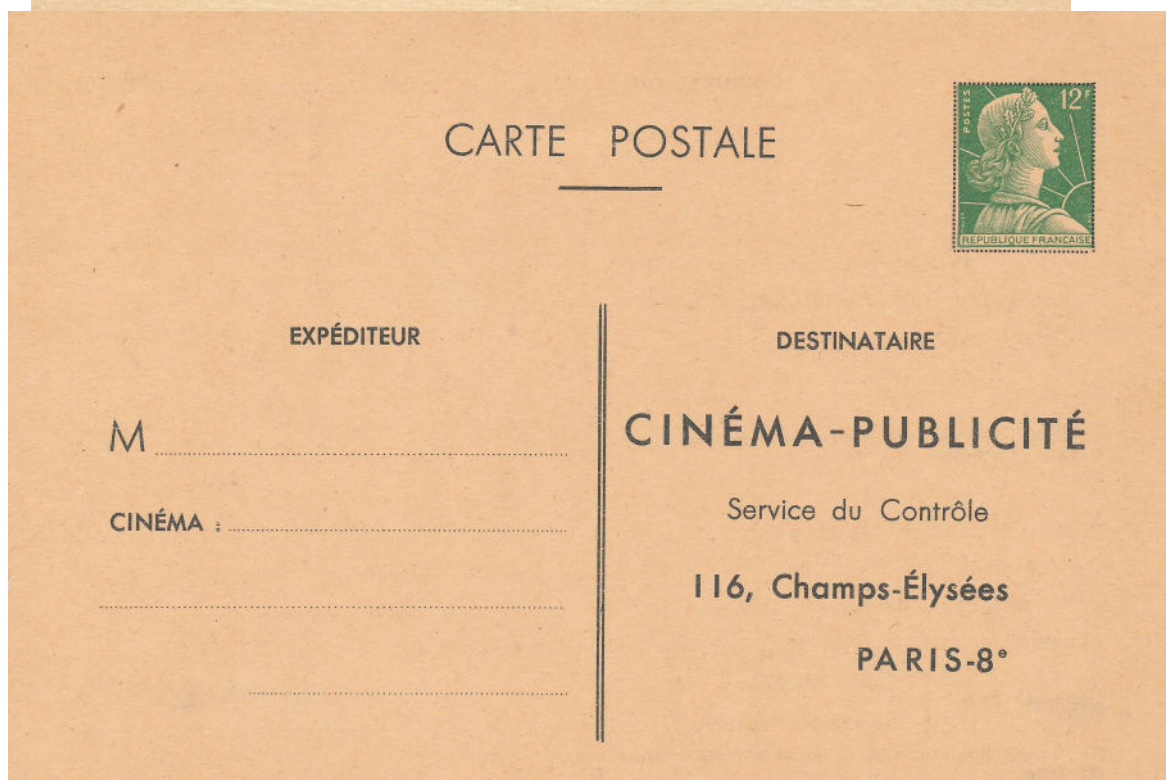


Figure 14 (left
and above)
Stamped-to-
order postcard
with simulated
perforation

Fictifs sans valeur

As reported in Part 2 (Journal N° 299) vignettes inscribed 'SANS VALEUR' and printed in the same colour as the stamp they represented were supplied to P.T.T. *Centres d'instruction* (postal training schools) for trainees to use in practical sessions (*cours pratiques*). A vignette representing the 12F *Marianne de Gandon* was printed on 14 January 1950 but stocks were sufficient for its use to be continued, despite the inconsistency between the colours, during the

period of the 12F *Marianne de Muller*. (Figure 15).

The cover below (Figure 16) bears a single copy of the 12F *fictif* applied to a genuine PTT *contre remboursement* (cash on delivery) card and cancelled DIJON COURS PRATIQUES 26 July 1955. Sent to the training school at Lyon as part of the exercise it has received upon arrival the datestamp LYON 28 July 1955.



Figure 15
Vignette used to
represent the 12F
Marianne de Muller



Figure 16
12F *fictif sans valeur* representing the 12F *Marianne de Muller* during a *cours pratiques* exercise conducted at the Dijon training school in 1955

Postal usage – *seul sur lettre*

As we know by now, the 12F value was issued to meet the inland postcard rate. From 6 January 1949 to 30 June 1957, it franked postcards with over five words - a usage which lasted 725 days. Examples are very common. However, the booklet was not withdrawn until 14 September 1957 so for a further 76 days (1 July – 13 September 1957) its use was relegated to

franking postcards with up to five words³. (Figure 17) Other common uses of the 12F used alone were for sending invoices and various categories of visiting cards and printed matter. It can occasionally be encountered on a *contre remboursement* (cash on delivery) card (Figure 18).



Figure 17

Postcard with text of up to 5 words franked at 12F, from Macon to Villeurbanne, 8 August 1957, and cancelled by the redirection of mail campaign slogan postmark associated with the second printing of the booklet

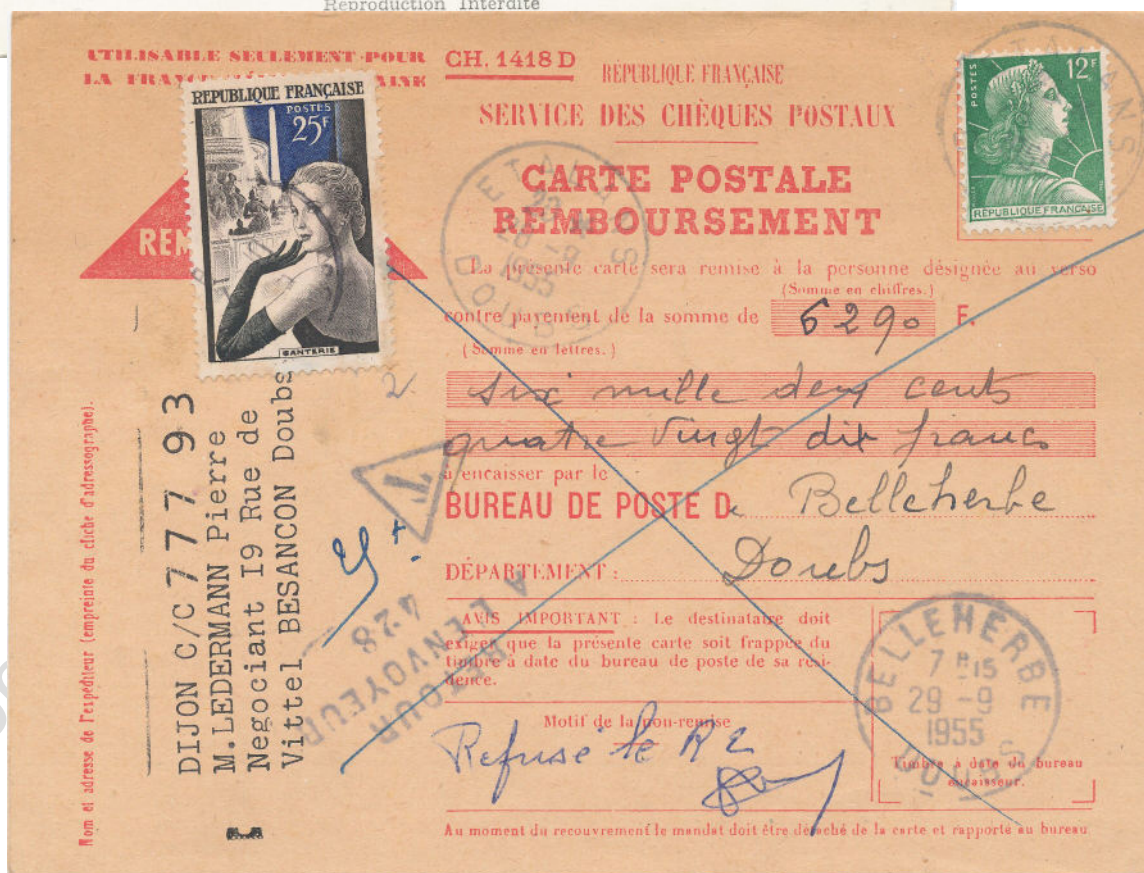


Figure 18

Contre remboursement (cash on delivery) postcard franked with 12F *Marianne de Muller* cancelled Étals, 28 September 1957 to Belleherbe where it was refused and hence liable to a presentation tax of 25F represented by the 25F *La ganterie*

³ 'Catalogue des timbres de France seuls sur lettre 1849-1960' Robert Baillargeat

Postal usage – multiple frankings

Multiple frankings are few and far between as 24F, 36F, 48F etc do not readily equate to the tariffs of the time. If multiple

frankings do appear they are either philatelic ones⁴ or on an overfranked item of mail as shown below (Figure 19).



Figure 19

1956 airmail letter from Châlons-sur-Marne to Léopoldville, Belgian Congo, and redirected to Thysville.

30F Foreign Letter Rate + 25F France-Central Africa Airmail Fee = 55F

Having used a block of 5 x 12F the sender has overfranked the item by 5 francs

³ Visit www.car12Flettire.jpg (650×444) (j257.fr) to see a 1955 registered cover from Paris to Germany franked with a complete booklet sheet. Postage (40-60gr): 66F + Registration Fee: 45F = 111F therefore overfranked by 9 francs.

There's No Business Like... Show Business – Connections on French Stamps

David Parmley

Part 3

To introduce this part let us borrow some words from Cole Porter's 1948 show *Kiss Me Kate* which featured another show business anthem:

"It's curtain time and away we go!
Another op'nin'
Just another op'nin' of another show"

JULES AUGUST MURAIRE (RAIMU) (1883-1946)



YT 1304 / SG 1534

A 1961 series featured five French comédiens (taken in this context to mean actors and actresses – for the non-woke). The first three values depicted Marie Champmeslé (1642-98), Françoise-Joseph Talma (1763-1826) and Rachel Félix (1821-58) so they all fall rather outside the show-business parameter.

One 50c value showed Raimu who worked primarily in comedy productions, some at the Folies Bergère, and also in films including *Le Blanc et le Noir* for Sacha Guitry. He was considered the ultimate actor by no lesser authorities than Alec Guinness, Marlene Dietrich and Orson Welles.

GÉRARD PHILIPPE (1922-59)

The other 50c value showed this icon of French cinema who appeared in 32 films between 1944-59, many of which were very successful, and who is remembered by a street – Rue Gérard Philippe – in the 16th arrondissement of Paris; a number of theatres and schools; a film festival; a Paris theatre prize and a cultural centre in Berlin. He also performed on Broadway in *El Cid* and *Lorenzaccio*.



YT 1305 / SG 1535

In his sole English-language film – *Lovers, Happy Lovers* (AKA *Knave of Hearts*) his co-star was Valerie Hobson who married John 'Jack' Profumo, one-time MP for Stratford-on Avon and who, as Minister for War, provoked a scandal, oft dramatised and filmed, which brought down the British government in the election of 1964.

CANNES FILM FESTIVAL

Raimu and Philippe were the first film actors from the sound era to appear on French stamps and as the origins of the festival are contemporaneous with their careers it would



Figure 1
1946 Festival
International du Film,
Cannes cover
bearing 20F Journée
de l'Air vignette



Figure 2
1946 Festival
International du Film,
Cannes airmail cover
bearing limited edition
'96' of 220 Par Avion
etiquette and 150F
Journée de l'Air
vignette



YT 2212 / SG 2535

seem appropriate to deal with it at this point. The introduction of sound placed French (and other foreign-language) films at a considerable disadvantage in a world dominated by English-language films, principally from the USA, Britain and the much larger English-speaking audiences. Indeed the Oscar ceremonies did not recognise foreign-language films as a competitive category until 1956, although earlier judges had made discretionary awards.

In the 1930's French films had suffered from bias, generated by the fascist dictators, at the only international film festival held in Venice. This persuaded France to inaugurate its own event – *Festival International du Film* – which was originally scheduled for September 1939 and for which a host of American stars arrived courtesy of an ocean liner chartered by MGM. Whilst the opening gala night was held and featured *The Hunchback of Notre-Dame*, the remainder of the event was cancelled owing to the onset of war. Although universally referred to as the *Cannes Film Festival* this was not recognised in the official designation until it was changed in 2003 to *Festival de Cannes*.



YT 3040 / SG 3359

Two covers bearing labels for the first festival in 1946 are presented (Figs 1 and 2) as the first commemorative was not issued until 1982, a 2F30 value depicting an illustration of the film *Amarcord*, ostensibly celebrating the 35th festival. As the event was not held in either 1948 or 1950 the 1982 renewal was indeed the 35th. A further issue (1996) of a 3F value depicting cinematic paraphernalia celebrated the 50th festival, but, whilst it was the 50th anniversary, it was actually only the 49th festival. More recently the 2020 renewal was cancelled owing to Covid 19.

PIERRE DE MARIVAUX (1688-1763)

One of the most important French playwrights of the 18th century, his works included numerous comedies. He was depicted on one of the 30+10c values in the 1963 Celebrities series marking the bicentenary of his death. There have been ten foreign-language adaptations of his works for film and television but the eleventh adaptation – *The Triumph of Love*, starring Mira Sorvino and Ben Kingsley – was made in English in 2001; whilst this was not a commercial success, a musical treatment had enjoyed a brief Broadway run in 1997.



YT 1372 / SG 1599

PAUL ABRAHAM DUKAS (1865-1935)

A 40+10c value from the 1965 Celebrities series featured Paul Dukas: composer, music critic and Professor of Composition at the Conservatoire de Paris and the Ecole Normale de Musique. He is remembered for his musical interpretation of Goethe's poem *The Sorcerer's Apprentice*

which, as referred to under the earlier entry on Faust, was used in the principal part of Disney's *Fantasia*. To borrow from the parlance of pop music he was a "one-hit wonder".



YT 1444 / SG 1669

Clearly an able teacher, his pupils included the Chinese composer Xian Xinghai and Spanish composer and piano virtuoso Joaquín Rodrigo Vidre. Although blind from the age of three and never having mastered the instrument Rodrigo's 1939 guitar concerto (known as the *Concierto de Aranjuez*) is world-famous and the definitive work in the classical guitar repertoire. Much performed and adapted, recordings include jazz treatments by such as Miles Davis and Al Jarreau; pop and rock treatments by The Shadows, Led Zeppelin, Herb Alpert, Demis Roussos and French singer Richard Anthony; a 1976 single released by Geoff Love (in the guise of Manuel and his Music of the Mountains) reached number three in the charts. The film *Brassed Off*, starring Peter Postlethwaite, included a brass-band interpretation humorously referred to as *Concierto d'Orange Juice*.

As well as orchestral, choral and other guitar works Rodrigo also wrote specifically for the cello, violin, flute, harp and piano. This versatile musician, the recipient of several prestigious awards, was elevated to the Spanish nobility as Marqués de los Jardines de Aranjuez in 1991.

VALENTIN LOUIS GEORGES EUGENE MARCEL PROUST (1871-1922)

Depicted on one of six 30+10c values in the 1966 Celebrities series, Proust was one of the most influential authors of the twentieth century. His seven-volume *À la Recherche du Temps Perdu*



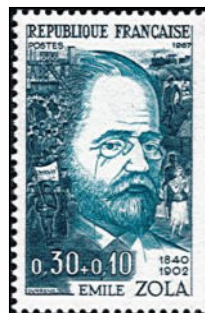
YT 1472 / SG 1704

was published between 1913 and 1927 and dealt at length with homosexuality; this was originally translated as *Remembrance of Things Past* and then, when revised, as *In Search of Lost Time*. The work was filmed in 1999 as *Time Regained* starring Catherine Deneuve, Emmanuelle Béart and John Malkovich and also as a 2011 television film under its original title.

Like Zola, who follows, Proust campaigned vigorously to exonerate Dreyfus.

EMILE ZOLA (1840-1902)

A prolific novelist, journalist and playwright as well as a major figure in the political liberalisation of France (including the exoneration of Alfred Dreyfus), Zola is featured on one of the four 30+10c values comprising the 1967 Celebrities series. His major work, the 20-volume series *Les Rougon-Macquart*, covered the fortunes of a French family during the reign of Napoléon III and represented over half his output. Other works have



YT 1511 / SG 1737

provided the basis of over 30 films notably *Nana* (six versions), *Germinal* (3) - the 1993 version starring Gérard Depardieu being at that time the most expensive film ever produced in France - and *Thérèse Raquin* - the 1955 version starring Charles Boyer and Martine Carol - which was also serialised for television in 1980 with Kate Nelligan and Alan Rickman; a Korean version in 2009 was released as *Thirst*. He was also the subject of a 1937 biopic *The Life of Emile Zola* starring Paul Muni.

ALBERT CAMUS (1913-60)

Another subject from the 1967 Celebrities series, Camus was born in a poor area of French Algeria and studied philosophy at the University of Algiers; in Paris at the time of the invasion he was unable to flee and joined the French Resistance editing *Combat*, an outlawed newspaper. With his celebrity status he lectured around the world and although he won the 1957 Nobel Prize for Literature his works have provided the basis for only a handful of foreign-language films and the 1992 joint Argentine-French-British production of *The Plague* (*La Peste*), made in English and starring William Hurt and Robert Duvall.



YT 1514 / SG 1738



YT 1558 / SG 1793



YT 1594 / SG 1830

ALAIN-RENÉ LESAGE (1668-1747)

A French novelist and playwright, he featured on a single 40c value of 1968 commemorating the tercentenary of his birth. Included in the interests of fair play, his contribution is principally the film *Una Aventura de Gil Blas* - a Franco-Spanish production in French based on his novel *Gil Blas*.

ANDRÉ PAUL GUILLAUME GIDE (1869-1951)

Depicted on one of six 50+10c values in the 1969 Celebrities between the 18th and 20th centuries series Gide was a prolific author, winner of the 1947 Nobel Prize for Literature and rated the greatest French writer of the 20th century. Some of his works have been used as the basis for films such as *Les Faux Monnayeurs* (*The Counterfeiters*).

THE CIRCUS

Those readers who have been following the chronology and have not yet been bored stiff (as was Mr Josiah Buckley of Merton Park) by now may have noticed that YT1588A, a 1F value in the Art series, shows a reproduction of a scene from a circus. Whilst it is intended to cover this aspect of show business, the exercise requires a lengthy essay which cannot be accommodated at this stage. For those who may be interested, the marvellous Stanley Baxter as Ripper of the Yard (and playing all the other parts) solved the mystery of Buckley's death in the sketch *The Annals of Scotland Yard* preserved on YouTube.

PROSPER MÉRIMÉE 1803-70

Featured on one of six 40+10c values in the 1970 Celebrities series, Mérimée was a pioneer of the novella (a short novel or a long short story – now there's a conundrum) and is principally remembered for *Carmen* which was the basis for Bizet's opera (covered earlier). His works formed the basis for a dozen or so films including the 1950 Howard Hughes production *Vendetta*, which starred Faith Domergue and George Dolenz.



YT 1624 / SG 1858

Incidentally George Dolenz was the father of Micky Dolenz who, as a child star, played the eponymous role in *Circus Boy* – a 1950's children's television series – in which he looked after the elephants in the circus. With that background it is unsurprising that he was chosen to play the "drummer" in a manufactured pop group, The Monkees, stars of an eponymous 1960's television series which provided the vehicle to promote the group's records. Numerous hits emerged, the best of which was undoubtedly *Daydream Believer* – written by John Stewart (late of The Kingston Trio) in the Americana style and reflecting on the drudgery of urban life. This US number one sold a million copies in USA but sales of over 600,000 only provided a number five slot in UK. The song was resurrected in 1979 when, beautifully sung by Canadian country singer Anne Murray, it was again a hit.

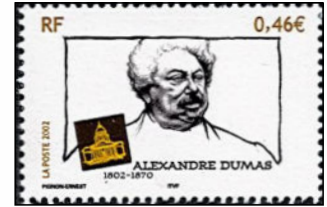
ALEXANDRE DUMAS (1802-70)

Another personality featured in the 1970 series and again in a 46c of 2002 commemorating his birth bicentenary, he was born Dumas Davy de la Pailleterie, his noble background assisting his career. Originally a playwright, he developed into a novelist, and many of his historical adventures, such as *The Count of Monte Cristo*, *The Three Musketeers* and *Twenty Years After*, were first published in serial form à la Dickens.

He was also a prolific writer of non-fiction, mainly history and travel to faraway places with strange-sounding names, and, reflecting his interests as a gourmet and expert cook, an encyclopædia of cookery which was published posthumously. His published works ran to more than



YT 1628 / SG 1862



YT 3536 / SG 3871

100,000 pages and have been translated into more than 100 languages making him the most widely read French writer.

Dumas' adventure stories have provided the basis for around 200 films including animated, comedy and musical treatments. They include about 50 versions of *The Three Musketeers*, about 30 of *The Count of Monte Cristo* and a dozen or so of *The Corsican Brothers*. These have provided leading roles for a veritable galaxy of star actors including (in alphabetical order to avoid disputes over billing) Don Ameche, Noah Beery Jr, Jean-Paul Belmondo, Raymond Burr, Gabriel Byrne, Leonardo di Caprio, John Carradine, Richard Chamberlain, Alain Delon, Gérard Depardieu, Robert Donat, Trevor Eve, Douglas Fairbanks, Frank Finlay, John Gilbert, Richard Greene, Richard Harris, Louis Hayward, Charlton Heston, Ian Holm, Trevor Howard, Jeremy Irons, Emil Jannings, Richard Johnson, Louis Jourdan, Gene Kelly, John Malkovich, Jean Marais, John Mills, Patrick McGoohan, Donald Pleasence, Oliver Reed, Ralph Richardson, George Sanders, Simon Ward, John Wayne, Orson Welles and Michael York. Surely no other figure featured in our story could claim such a comprehensive and varied cast list.

But, in addition, there are the actresses who also featured (again listed alphabetically as some divas could be very bitchy about billing) including Dawn Addams, Isabelle Adjani, Jenny Agutter, Claudine Auger, Theda Bara, Joan Bennett, Geraldine Chaplin, Faye Dunaway, Yvonne Furneaux, Olivia Hussey, Milla Jovovich, Elissa Landi, Virna Lisi, Vivienne Merchant, Michèle Mercier, Jeanne Moreau, Ornella Muti, Pola Negri, Kate Nelligan, Gloria Stuart, Lana Turner and Raquel Welch.

ALEXANDRE DUMAS fils (1824-95)

Although not featured on a French stamp, and in view of the importance of this section to our story, the presumption that the father/son relationship (albeit illegitimate) is a legitimate connection has been adopted to validate his inclusion.

He is best known for his 1848 romantic novel *La Dame aux Camélias* which was adapted for the theatre and subsequently used by Verdi as the basis for his opera *La Traviata* (*The Fallen Woman*). Over twenty films based on the book have been produced, the most significant under the title *Camille*. The first, made in 1912, starred Sarah Bernhardt and a 1921 version starred Rudolph Valentino and Alla Nazimova (a leading theatre actress whose film career started at the age of 37 in 1916!). In 1936 moviegoers were treated to a production starring Garbo and Robert Taylor but the 1926 version produced by and starring Norma

Talmadge is the one which attracts our interest.

Norma Talmadge was born in poverty in New Jersey and became one of the greatest stars of the silent era, making over 50 films as well as numerous short features. Her two younger sisters, Constance (another major star) and Natalie (to a lesser degree – but she married Buster Keaton), were also in the movies. The three sisters were quick to realise that the coming of sound would be the kiss of death as their New York twangs were incompatible with the elegance and glamour they brought to the screen. Fortunately their mother had managed their finances diligently and each had a trust fund to cushion the blow. Another casualty of the sound era was the major star John Gilbert, a popular leading man dubbed “The Great Lover” and rivalling Valentino. Studio politics and jealousy conspired to record his rich voice in a squeaky manner as if he had been inhaling helium gas (evidently currently a popular pastime with our youth so he was, perhaps, ahead of his time!). His career quickly evaporated.

Camille receives a mention in that great show business anthem *That's Entertainment!* which was written by Arthur Schwartz and Howard Dietz to be performed by Jack Buchanan in the 1953 musical film *The Band Wagon* (not to be confused with *Bandwaggon* – a 1940's BBC radio romp (later also a film, with Arthur Askey and Richard Murdoch). It was also used as the theme and title of the three-part 1970's MGM compendium extravaganza of excerpts from the studio's musicals. For this purpose a third refrain was added including the lines:

“No death
Like you get in *Macbeth*
No ordeal
Like the end of *Camille*
This goodbye
Brings a tear to the eye
The World is a stage

The stage is a world of entertainment”

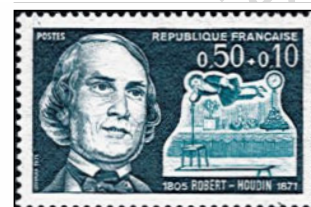
The song is also interesting from a technical aspect. Intellectual copyright subsists in the words and music of songs. This accounts for the seemingly endless stream of plagiarism claims which enrich the legal profession and allow alleged experts to pontificate on the arrangement of eight notes or perform intricate analyses of words and phrasing and then the doubt while the jury is out it's almost as bad as two tarts squabbling in a libel action over some social media gossip (and *that's* being dramatized for television – well did you evah!). However, no copyright subsists in song titles so The Jam could appropriate the title for their 1980 hit with impunity.

JEAN-EUGÈNE ROBERT-HOUDIN (1805-71)

One of only two 50+10c values in the second Celebrities series of 1971 depicts Robert-Houdin performing a levitation trick. The second part of his surname derives from his first wife's family name and it was from this that Erik Weisz, the Hungarian-American escapologist and magician, derived his stage name Harry Houdini.

On completing his education he began to train for the law but preferred to follow his father's profession of clockmaking and to this end ordered a two-volume treatise on horology; in error he received two volumes entitled *Scientific Amusements* which he studied assiduously and learned the rudiments of magic. He maintained his attachment to clockmaking and is credited with the invention of the mystery clock – a timepiece in which the clockface is supported on a tall pillar with no apparent connection to the movement which is concealed in the base of the instrument.

Alongside this, and under expert tutelage, he developed his career as a magician. His earliest illusions drew on his clockmaking expertise and involved automata: clockwork singing birds, an



YT 1690 / SG 1918

android which could write messages and the Marvellous Orange Tree - an illusion in which, amidst all manner of hocus-pocus, mixing of potions and smoke, a sapling grows into a tree, blossoms and bears real orange fruits which he distributes to the audience.

In order to present his shows, Robert-Houdin rented a suite of rooms in the Palais Royal (once owned by Cardinal Richelieu – see earlier) and with the aid of a 15,000-franc loan created the Théâtre Robert-Houdin where he performed in contemporary evening dress as opposed to the flowing robes usually adopted by magicians. Following the 1848 coup which ended the reign of King Louis-Philippe all theatres were closed, so Robert-Houdin took the opportunity to tour Europe including a command performance before Queen Victoria. Returning, once restrictions were lifted, he resumed performances and the theatre was later removed to the Boulevard des Italiens. He became known as the father of the modern style of conjuring, transforming it from a lower-class diversion associated with fairgrounds etc. into entertainment for the wealthy. This later venue was eventually sold to Georges Méliès, as reported earlier.

His illusions were not confined to those based on mechanical devices. Another popular trick involved the use of a thin portfolio from which he extracted images of animate and inanimate objects, showed them to the audience and then produced the real thing apparently from within the portfolio. The act culminated in the production of his own young son from it! This brings to mind Jimmy James' Cardboard Box comedy sketch in which the stooge clutches a small box which he claims contains two man-eating lions, a giraffe and an elephant in a cage (the uncaged elephant apparently being too large to be contained!). You will be delighted to learn that this hilarious piece of nonsense is preserved on YouTube for your delectation.

His children also featured in other illusions based on telepathy and levitation (the latter as depicted on the stamp) as well as behind-the-scenes roles in creating the

atmosphere and the presentation of the illusions.

Retiring at the age of 48 he devoted himself to his inventions, especially with electricity; his home, “Le Prieuré”, was filled with technological advancements. However, in 1856, he was recalled from retirement to be commissioned by Louis-Napoleon to help pacify local tribes in French Algeria. Religious leaders were creating unrest by their faux magical tricks and it was Robert-Houdin’s task to demonstrate that French magic was stronger and hence suppress any possible rebellion. This was achieved and he became on friendly terms with the Arabs. One trick employed in this mission was The Light and Heavy Chest where a chest was produced which could be easily lifted by a child but which task defeated the strongest natives. This was achieved by use of a strong electromagnet which, when activated, created a strong attraction to the chest.

Author’s note: I had been previously unaware of this particular stamp and only discovered it when writing this article; quite coincidentally on the day I was writing the article I received a book on illusion, previously ordered for another purpose. Perhaps the hand of Robert-Houdin was at work.....

THÉOPHILE GAUTIER (1811-72)

Pierre Jules Théophile Gautier, depicted on one of the two 50+10c values of the second Celebrities series of 1972, was a poet of great repute as well as playwright and novelist. His adventure story *Captain Fracasse* was the basis for six films; a few others were based on his works including *Avatar*, a now-lost Italian production from 1916.



YT 1728 / SG 1954

The title was resurrected for a 2009 James Cameron sci-fi epic featuring a wide range of digital and 3-D special effects. This became the largest grossing film of all time taking US\$2.9bn at the box office. Given that it cost about US\$300m to produce and another US\$150 in promotion it has recovered about seven times its cost. Monetary comparisons over time are meaningless and apparently if the actual US\$393m of *Gone With the Wind* is adjusted for inflation it is equivalent to US\$3.44bn. One encounters these inflation adjustments in a variety of circumstances and a factor of ten covering 1939 to the present appears unreliable. More relevant is that *Gone With the Wind* recovered its production cost of US\$3.85m over 100 times.

Avatar was nominated for nine Oscars and won three whilst *Gone With the Wind* was nominated for thirteen and won eight plus two further special awards.

SIDONIE-GABRIELLE COLETTE (1873-1954)

Almost always known by her nom-de-plume, Colette (sometimes Colette Willy) is depicted on one of five 50+10c values in the first Celebrities series of 1973 commemorating

her birth centenary. Regrettably this gaudy caricature accorded little credit to a beautiful woman. In 1893 she married Henri Gauthier-Villars, a noted author and publisher who wrote under the pseudonym Willy; he was also a notorious Parisian libertine and introduced Colette to avant-garde society as well as encouraging her sapphic tendencies. Whilst he allowed her to write, Willy dictated



YT 1747 / SG 1992

the titillating themes and the four volume *Claudine* series was published in his name.

Separated in 1906, and with no access to the earnings from *Claudine*, Colette was obliged to act in music halls, often playing *Claudine*, before becoming seriously involved in journalism. During this period Colette had a number of relationships with women until re-marrying in 1912.

1920 saw the publication of *Chéri*, a love story about the relationship between a younger man, Chéri, and Lea, an older woman and wealthy courtesan. The affair falls apart when Chéri marries a woman of his own age. This was filmed in 2009 as a romantic comedy-drama starring Michelle Pfeiffer.

Generally acclaimed as France’s greatest female writer, Colette’s best known work is *Gigi*, a 1944 novella. Filmed in 1949 as a French comedy, it was adapted for the stage in 1951 for which Colette selected the unknown Belgian-born actress Audrey Hepburn for the title role. The story revolved around the training of a young girl as a courtesan and consequently required some Hollywood-compliant toning down for the Vincente Minnelli-directed 1958 MGM musical film starring Leslie Caron, Louis Jourdan and Maurice Chevalier. Alan J Lerner provided the screenplay and lyrics, Frederick Loewe the music and André Previn the arrangements and conducting. The film won all the Oscars from nine nominations which was a record clean sweep until 2004 when a *Lord of the Rings* film won eleven out of eleven. The film is notable for being the first Hollywood production to film in actual Parisian locations including Maxim’s, the Eiffel Tower and the Tuileries Gardens. *Gigi* was further adapted as a stage musical, opening on Broadway in 1973 and in the West End in 1985.

After the war, despite being crippled with arthritis, Colette became a famous public figure and was, among other recognition, created a Grand Officer of the Légion d’Honneur in 1953. She was given a state funeral, being refused a religious funeral on account of her divorces. She has been the subject of two biopics, namely *Becoming Colette* in 1991 (starring Mathilda May) and *Colette*, a 2018 production with Keira Knightley in the title role.

So that’s it for now – the party’s over and it’s time to call it a day until the next time.

SHORTER ITEMS - INCLUDING QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Meyo-Centre and Bipindi, Cameroun – Mail from *un établissement de distributeur postal*

Marty Bratzel

To meet the evolving postal needs of the populace, the Cameroun PTT began in about 1950 to offer a range of postal services through a variety of establishments and arrangements that did not slot into the classifications of post office or postal agency. The term *autres établissements postaux* was introduced to encompass these facilities and mechanisms. The category included *bureaux auxiliaires*, *correspondants postaux (courrier par valise)*, *postes de coupure et de distribution*, and *établissements de distributeurs postaux*. There may be some overlap among these classifications, as terminology and services evolved. The last is defined and described in some detail in the *Journal officiel du Cameroun* (Ref. 1); a summary is presented here.

Un établissement de distributeur postal was managed either by a sub-agent of the PTT or by an outside person approved by the PTT. The *distributeur* was attached to a post office in the vicinity with mail transported by a closed bag between them. The *distributeur* sold postage stamps and sent and received ordinary letters, both official and private. It could also send and receive registered mail, but the transaction of outgoing registered mail was completed by the controlling post office, which verified the weight, affixed postage (if necessary), and cancelled the stamps, then sent the receipt back to the *distributeur*. Unlike a postal agency, outgoing mail was postmarked by the controlling post office and not by the *distributeur*.

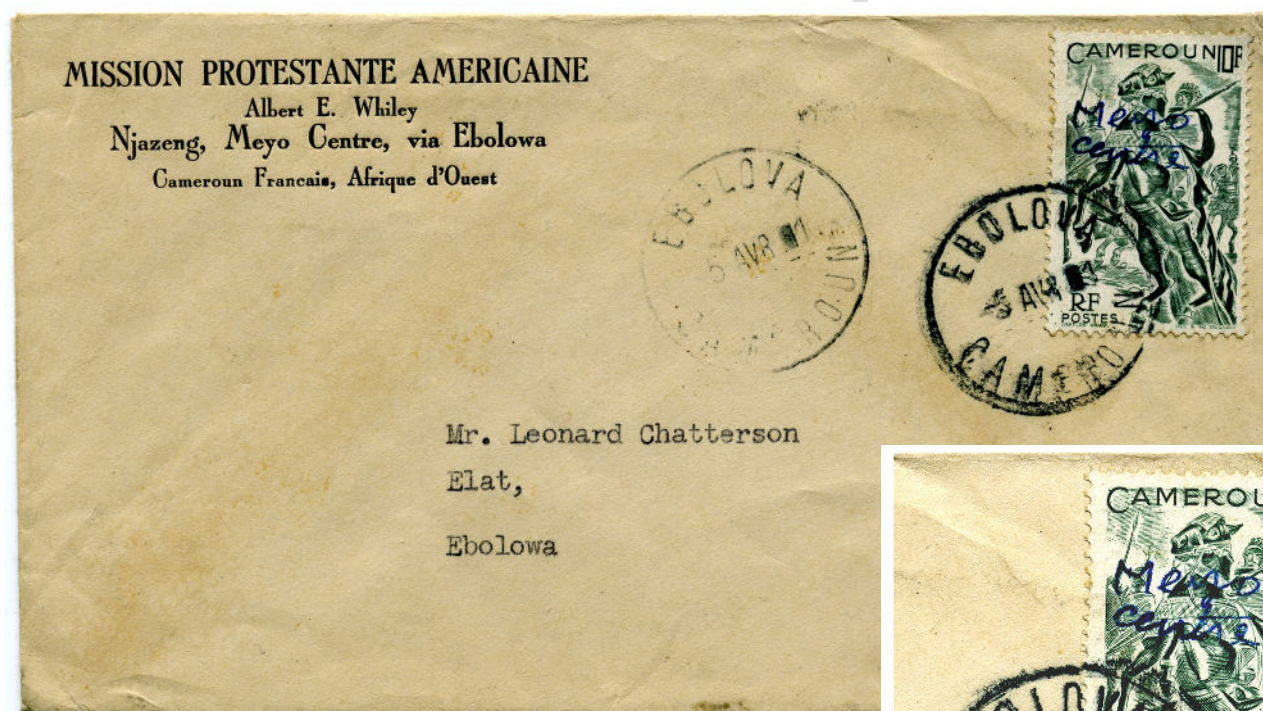


Figure 1

Cover from Meyo Centre postmarked Ebolova 5 April 1951. That the cover was handled by the distributeur at Meyo Centre is confirmed by the town name written in blue on the postage stamp (see enlargement)



Meyo-Centre

Until now, mail from a *distributeur* had been recorded only from Ngomedzap (Refs. 2-3). We can now add to that list Meyo-Centre, a small community located about 50 kilometres south of Ebolowa, on the road to Ambam. France's 1953 annual report to the United Nations listed an *autre établissement postal* at Meyo-Centre (Ref. 4). Meyo-Centre was the site of the Njazeng leprosarium, operated by the American Presbyterian mission. Many covers with a pre-

printed return address of Njazeng, Meyo-Centre, via Ebolowa have been recorded, with most postmarked Ebolowa. An example is presented in **Figure 1**, postmarked Ebolova (a spelling variant) 5 April 1951. Absent further information, there was no way to determine whether such

mail was posted at Ebolowa or at Meyo-Centre – until now. The 10-franc postage stamp on the pictured cover, locally addressed to the Presbyterian mission station at Elat, Ebolowa, has the manuscript notation Meyo Centre in blue ink (see enlargement), confirming that the letter originated at Meyo-Centre and was therefore handled by the *distributeur* there. The stamp was postmarked upon arrival at Ebolowa, the controlling post office. The same postmark with the same date was applied to the back of the envelope prior to delivery.

The 1951 postmark is two years earlier than the 1953 date in the United Nations report. Although the report advises that there was a postal establishment at Meyo-Centre, it gives no indication as to when it was opened. Postal information in the annual reports was often not complete or current, hence the importance of cover evidence. The cover clearly demonstrates that a *distributeur* was operational in 1951.

A postal agency was opened at Meyo-Centre in about 1961, soon after independence. The earliest recorded postmark is dated March 5, 1963.

Bipindi

If we maintain a watchful eye regarding the information on a cover – and look at more than just the stamps and the postmark – we may well find mail originating from other locations in Cameroon with an *autre établissement postal*, both prior to and after independence in 1960. Such is the case with the unassuming registered cover in Figure 2. Postmarked Lolodorf 6 December 1971, the cover bears a registration label hand stamped Bipindi. The Bipindi registration label and the Lolodorf postmark conform to the characteristics of a letter originating at an *établissement de distributeur postal*. The return address of the sender further confirms that the letter originated at Bipindi. The registration process was, however, completed at Lolodorf, the controlling post office, located about 45 kilometres east-northeast. Bipindi was periodically listed in the United Nations reports as either a *bureau auxiliaire* or *autre établissement postal* between 1949 and 1957 and, later, as a postal agency.

The earliest recorded Bipindi postmark is dated 7 March 1978.



Figure 2
Registered cover
postmarked Lolodorf
6 December 1971.

The Bipindi
registration label and
the sender's return
address confirm that
the cover was
handled by the
distributeur
at Bipindi



Evolution

It would appear that *autres établissements postaux* were phased out and replaced by regularly scheduled rural automobile postal services, *la poste automobile rurale* or PAR, beginning in 1973 (Ref. 5). Later, with improved roads and ease of travel, permanent post offices were opened in rural communities served by the PARs, and the PARs themselves subsequently phased out.

To conclude, in addition to the three locations discussed above, an *autre établissement postal* or a *correspondant postal* (*courrier par valise*) service was also opened during the 1950s for Dourbeye, Esse, Kobdombo, Mengong,

Mouanko, Ngoulemakong, Rey Bouba, and perhaps other locales. Kobdombo and Ngoulemakong were converted to post offices in the late 1950s, prior to independence (Ref. 3). Most of the others acquired a post office after independence (Ref. 6). The author would greatly appreciate reports of mail from these *autres établissements postaux* before they became post offices and received their own date stamps.

Thanks are extended to Brian Lythgoe for alerting me to the Meyo Centre cover. The Bipindi cover was found on Delcampe.

References

1. *Annexe à l'arrêté n° 3314 du 24 juin 1953 fixant les attributions de l'établissement de "distributeur postal."* *Journal officiel du Cameroun français*, Imprimerie du Gouvernement, Yaoundé, 1953, page 1029.
2. Bratzel, Marty. Ngomedzap, Cameroun – *un établissement de distributeur postal*. *France and Colonies Philatelist*, Vol. 73, No. 4, October 2017, pages 104-106.
3. Bratzel, M.P. Jr. *The Postmarks and Postal History of Cameroun under French Administration – 1916-1959*. MPB Canada, Windsor, Ontario, Canada, 2021. xiv + 481 pages plus 658 pages on a searchable CD. ISBN 978-0-9694026-9-5.
4. *Rapport annuel du gouvernement français à l'Assemblée générale des Nations Unies sur l'administration du Cameroun placé sous la tutelle de la France*. Année 1953. See page 374.
5. Cameroun. In: *Recueil de renseignements sur l'organisation et les services intérieurs des Administrations*. Bureau internationale de l'Union postale universelle, Berne, 1987.
6. Bratzel, M.P. Jr., Michael St.J. Wright and Marc Parren. *The Postmarks and Postal History of Independent Cameroun – 1960 to Date*. MPB Canada, 2014. viii + 58 pages plus 573 pages on a searchable DVD. ISBN 978-0-9694026-8-8.

New-issue listings from Stanley Gibbons: December 2022 – March 2023

Here are references to items catalogued in supplements to *Gibbons Stamp Monthly (GSM)*. Some of these supplement entries can be extensive, supplying much specialised information in one place. They may include the occasional older stamp, re-listed in order to show its illustration, if unavailable first time round.

Dates in brackets (month/year) after each country-name identify the last issue of *GSM* containing that country's previous update.

DECEMBER 2022

Benin (no previous update noted). (i). SG numbers 1875/1974 have been left for surcharges of 2000 and 2002, not yet seen. (ii) 2003 Slave Route Monuments – 2011 Papal Visit (SG 1975/2013)

Morocco (7/2022). 2014 Museum, 2015 Euromed (both re-listed with illustrations, SG 1405, 1428a); 2017 Tan-Tan Moussem – 2018 Human Rights (SG 1473/1520)

JANUARY 2023

Andorra (French) (11/22). 2021 Angel – 2022 Luna Park (SG F894/904)

Andorra (Spanish) (11/22). 2021 Les Valls, 75th Anniv – 2022 Plaça de Braus (SG 514/528)

Cambodia (10/21). 2020 Birds – 2021 Chinese New Year (SG 2577/657)

FEBRUARY 2023

Nothing here for France and Colonies collectors.

MARCH 2023

Burkina Faso (11/22). Intriguingly, one previous entry is now cancelled. The 2014 National Symbols pair listed in November 2022 (SG 2020/1) had already been catalogued (under SG 2015/6) and appears as such in *Stamps of the World* (2023 edition). One new stamp is added (United Nations 70th Anniversary, SG 2022) but this too has already been listed, this time in the November 2022 supplement.

TAAF (French Southern and Antarctic Territories) (9/22). 2018 Symbols (5th series) SG 855.

Michael Round

The Birth of the Precursor Cards of 1873

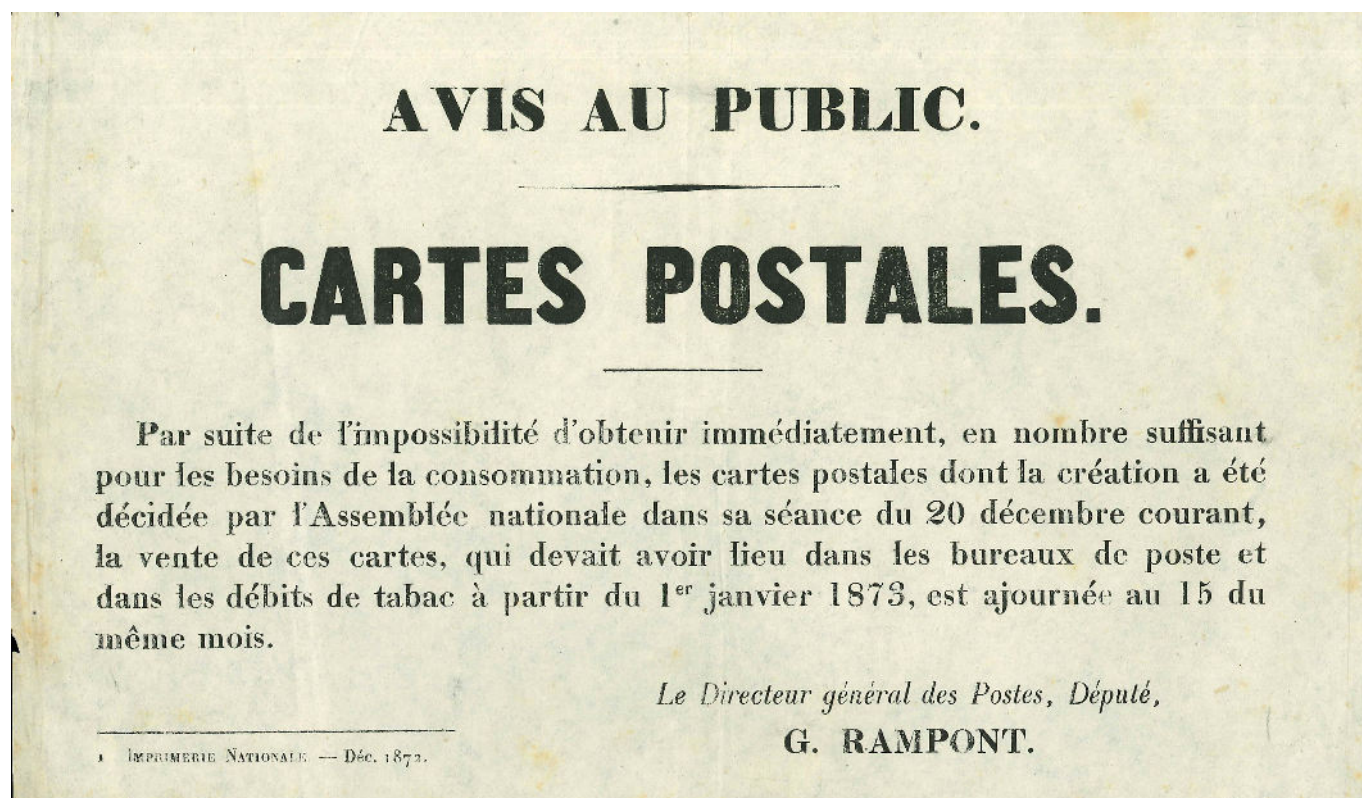


Figure 1 (reduced)

Public announcement of the deferment of the sale of postcards from 1 to 15 January 1873. It reads “Due to the current failure in obtaining, in sufficient quantities to meet demand, the post cards initiated by the decision of the National Assembly in its session of 20 December of this year, the sale of these cards, which was to have taken place in post offices and in tobacconists from 1 January, 1873, is adjourned to the 15th day of the same month.”

The precursor postcards were first introduced into the French postal service by the *Loi des Finances* on 20 December 1872 driven by the energy and enthusiasm of M. Wolowski, a *député* whose proposition was, after much discussion, passed by the *Assemblée Nationale*.

The original date for the issue of the cards was set for 1 January 1873 but, after delays, this was postponed until the new date of 15 January. Figure 1 shows the Advice to the public signed by M. Rampont, *Directeur Général des Postes*.

Figure 2 is a card sent on the 15 January 1873, the first day of issue by M. Wolowski to M. Malatre, a *Député* at the *Assemblée Nationale* at Versailles. The 10c Cérès is cancelled with the ASNA lozenge accompanied by the Type 17 date stamp of the *Assemblée Nationale*. The message on the back reads “souvenir du 20 décembre 1872” and is signed Wolowski¹. This is perhaps not quite as rare as one might think as M. Wolowski is known to have sent at least around

ten similar cards to Deputies who supported his proposal in the Assembly².

What follows is the only known example of a card posted on the eve of the issue. Figure 3 is a card which is franked with a 10c Cérès for the local rate sent within Paris. It is cancelled by a lozenge accompanied by a Paris (60) date stamp, 6th collection, delivered to Bld des Batignolles with, on the reverse, a distribution date stamp of the 7th collection of the same day. The photos have been kindly sent to me by Laurent Bonnefoy who told me that this card has been known about for a long time and came from the collection of M. Pothion. It was illustrated in an article published in *Le Monde des Philatélistes* in 1957.

The message on the back reads: “Mille amitiés à la famille de la part de son cousin. Inauguration des cartes postales, 14 Janvier 1873”³. A quite extraordinary example of a card posted and delivered on the day preceding the issue date.

¹ Source: David Feldman sale, 15 June 2022, Lot 40173

² Source: F Jorisson, postcard specialist

³ “Kindest regards to the family from their cousin. Inauguration of postcards, January 14, 1873”

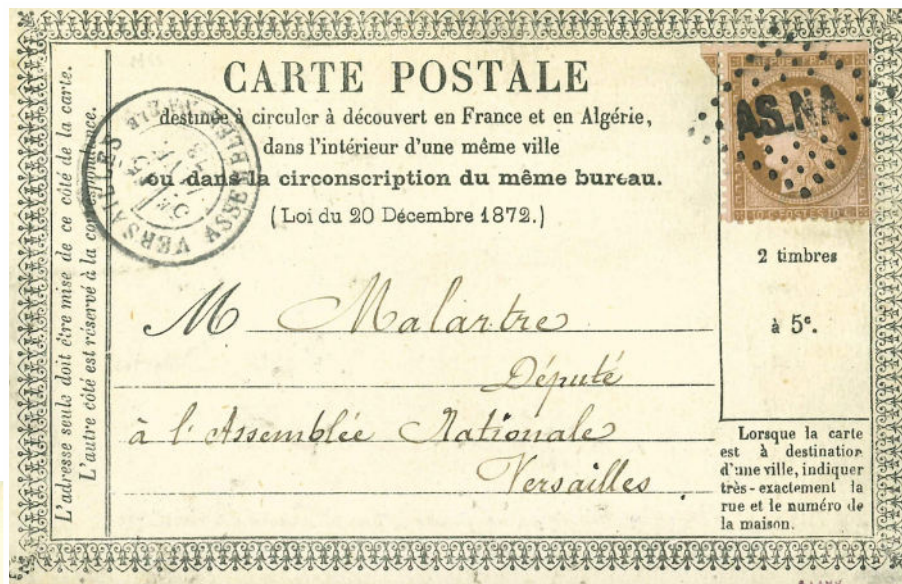


Figure 2

Front and reverse of postcard cancelled on first day of issue, 15 January 1873 (enhanced insert)

with inscription on reverse acknowledging the Act of 20 December 1872 which inaugurated the postcards.

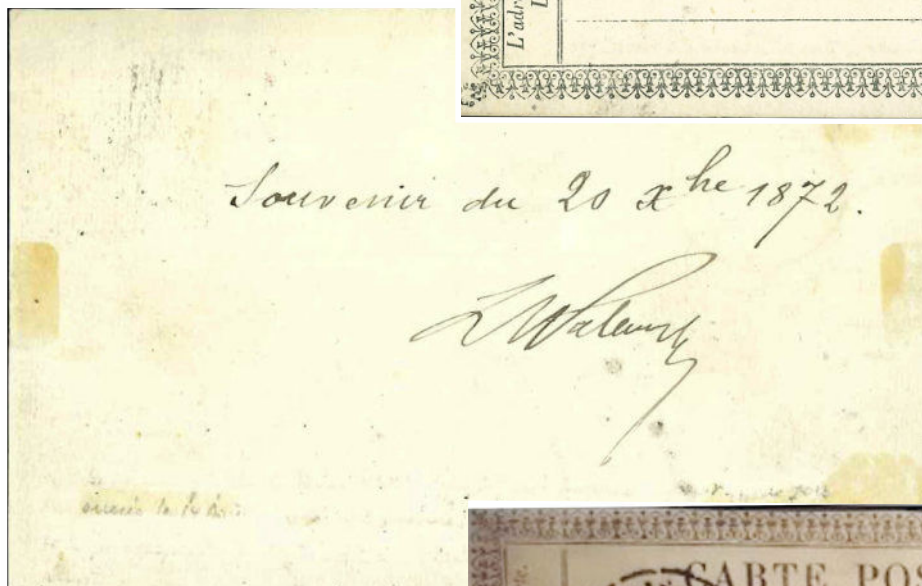
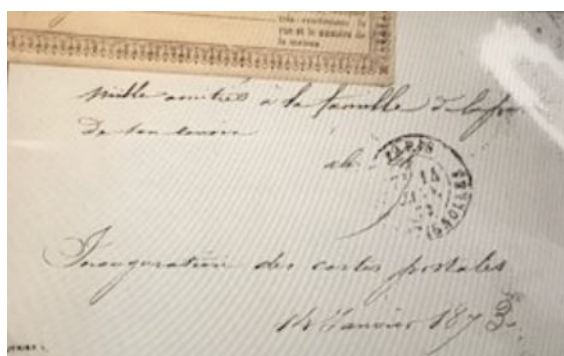


Figure 3

Postcard cancelled on 14 January 1873, the eve of the first date of issue (enhanced insert) sale of postcards from 1 to 15 January



Below: reverse of card



WW II French POW mail routed via Britain

The discovery of France to Germany correspondence

David Trapnell's article in the December 2019 edition of this journal intrigued me at the time and proved a stimulating re-read when I started sorting my own holding of this complex area of WW II postal history. The postcard scheme was a vital connection for imprisoned servicemen separated from their families, in many cases for the whole duration of the War, almost five years.

To recap. Some POW message cards sent from some German *Oflag* & *Stalag* camps to France between October 1944 and February 1945 were endorsed "c/o General Post Office via Grande Bretagne" – a bizarre routing given that the War was still very much 'hot' at this time!

No clear answer has yet surfaced but there is the odd hint in contemporary official documents that such a system may have existed – possibly transporting mail via a neutral country, such as Switzerland or Sweden, both of which continued to run air services to and from both Germany and the U.K.

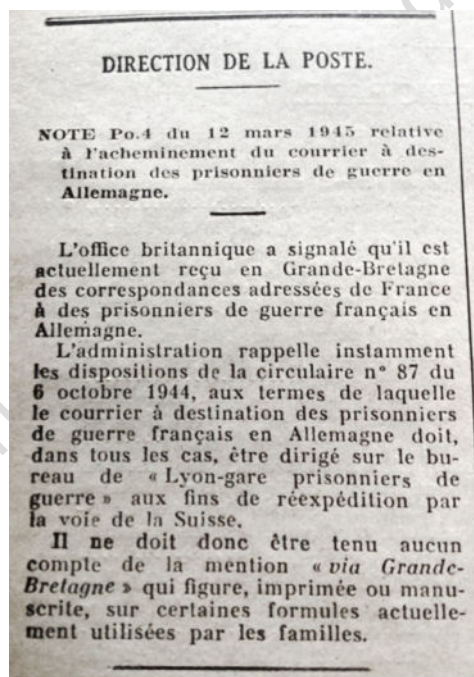
At this time the German army was increasingly hard-pressed in France following the Allied Forces' Normandy Landings in June 1944 and those in Provence during August 1944, with the consequent rolling programme of Liberation on the heels of the German retreat. The city of Lyon, location of the German control office through which POW mail had been routed, was liberated on 3 September 1944; alternative arrangements must have been under consideration in the interim.

The implication of the March 1945 PTT *Bulletin Officiel* announcement (Figure 1) was that a French-controlled system had taken over the established routing of POW mail through Switzerland but no transition date is known. There does not seem to have been any official announcement that a 'via GB' system existed. One wonders how correspondents were made aware of the opportunity – but some civilians and some POW camp authorities seem to have known. It is possible that the UK routing was one of a range of emergency measures during a period of postal disruption but only a small proportion of such mail was endorsed for this handling.

The ten examples of such cards illustrated in the original article were exclusively from POWs to families in France, although reference was made to the *BO* note that cards, addressed to prisoners, had been received in London from French civilians. Among the four examples in my collection, I can illustrate one example of such a card (Figure 2) from a French girl in Vincennes to her father in Stalag IIID (Berlin) via London.

My other cards, including the one shown (Figure 3), are 'normal' items from Germany into France – although, as David stressed, they are far from common.

There is still no definitive explanation for this eccentric routing but another piece or two may have been added to the jigsaw.



The British Office has reported that correspondence is currently being received in Great Britain from France for French prisoners of war in Germany.

The administration strongly reiterates the provisions of circular No. 87 of 6 October, 1944, according to which mail intended for French prisoners of war in Germany must, in all cases, be sent to the office of 'Lyon-Gare prisonniers de guerre' for the purpose of onward transmission via Switzerland.

No account should therefore be taken of the mention 'via Great Britain' which appears, printed or handwritten, on certain forms currently used by the families.

Figure 1

Extract from the Vichy Post Office administration
dated 12 March 1945 published in the *Bulletin Officiel* No. 8, 20 March 1945 p. 230

31/3/45 **Kriegsgefangenenpost**
Correspondance des prisonniers de guerre

Antwort-Postkarte
Carte postale de réponse

An den Kriegsgefangenen
Au prisonnier

*c/o General Post Office
Via grande Bretagne*

Vincennes

Gebührenfrei! Franc de port!

Absender:
Expéditeur:
Vor- und Zuname:
Nom et prénom
Monique Tiorville

Ort:
Lieu
Vincennes

Straße:
Rue
24 R. Montebello

Kreis:
Seine

Gefangenenummer:
No. du prisonnier
WA 53089

Lager-Bezeichnung:
Nom du camp
M.-Stammlager III D
534

Deutschland (Allemagne)

Figure 2

Vincennes (Seine) to sub-camp 534 of Stalag IIID (Berlin) reply-card written by a young child to her father the day before the postmark 24.11.44 with m/s endorsement 'c/o General Post Office / via Grande Bretagne' in the same hand as the address; camp censor struck on arrival; endorsed by the recipient '31/3/45' – ie four months spent in transit

Besetztes Gebiet
Territoire occupé

Südfrankreich
France méridionale

Nichtzustreffendes streichen
Biffer les mentions inutiles

Kriegsgefangenenpost
Correspondance des prisonniers de guerre

Postkarte Carte postale

An
A

*Madame
Pradel Louis*

Gebührenfrei! Franc de port!

Absender:
Expéditeur:
Vor- und Zuname:
Nom et prénom
Pradel Louis

Gefangenenummer:
No. du prisonnier
38984

Lager-Bezeichnung:
Nom du camp
XC
siehe Rückseite
voir au dos

Deutschland (Allemagne)

Empfangsort:
Lieu de destination
Laurens

Straße:
Rue
de la Plage

Land:
Landesteil (Provinz usw.)
Département
Hérault - France

21.45-10

Figure 3

Stalag XC (Lübeck) to Laurens (Hérault) written on 17.12.44 and postmarked 3.1.45; two-line hand-stamp 'c/o general Post Office / via Grande Bretagne' (note lower case 'g') struck in violet ink matching that of the camp censor mark, left

The 1943 Paris Airmail Exhibition

- A request for information

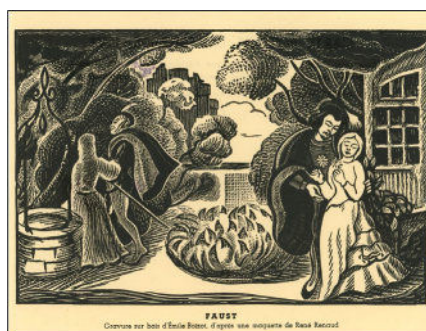
In October 1943, an exhibition was held in Paris in aid of musicians, just as there had been one held in aid of artists in 1941 and of intellectuals in 1942. At all three exhibitions, sheets of twelve labels were put on sale depicting in 1941 views of places in Paris, in 1942 scenes from French literary history and in 1943 scenes from French musical works of the nineteenth and early twentieth century. The sheets were produced both perforated and imperforate and in red (illustrated on the cover), blue, green or brown (1941-2) or red, blue, green or black (1943).

Also put on sale were postcards with wood engravings relating to the subject of the exhibition. In 1941 there were two cards showing the Paris Stamp Market in 1860 and then as it was in 1941. In 1942 there were again two cards, one depicting a

seventeenth-century postal courier and the other an eighteenth-century Paris Little Post postman. In 1943, the cards put on sale presented wood-cut copies of some of the designs on the sheets of labels being sold at the exhibition. When I came to write an account of this exhibition for F&CPS Journal No. 165 (September 1987), I assumed only two cards had been produced for that too, namely copies of the *Louise* and *Pelléas et Mélisande* labels, the only ones I had met. However, I later came across a postcard with a copy of the *Manon* label on. I wondered if any other labels had been made the subject of postcards as well. I asked for a copy of the newly found *Manon* card to be printed in Journal No. 178 (December 1990) together with a request to be informed if any readers possessed cards other than the three already recorded. There was no response.



Manon, with a *Manon* label in blue and the exhibition datestamp on a 4F stamp issued in 1942 in honour of Massenet, the opera's composer.



Postcards (reduced to 40%) depicting *La Damnation de Faust*, *Faust* and *Carmen*

More recently Mark le Breton and I found between us three additional cards, these with copies of the *La Damnation de Faust*, *Faust* and *Carmen* labels on. We are therefore now left still wondering if the exhibition organisers also produced cards with copies of the other six labels on. If any reader has in their collection a copy of any of these unrecorded cards, perhaps they could send in details for mention in a later issue of this journal. The six labels for which no corresponding card has yet been found are, in alphabetical order, *Le Ballet*

de Sylvia, *Le Boléro*, *Gwendoline*, *Masques et Bergamasques*, *Le Roi d'Ys* and *Samson et Dalila*.

Any readers with an interest in this exhibition and the two earlier ones might like to know that since my detailed accounts of these three exhibitions in 1987, François Chauvin has found more information about the background to them in the French National Archives and presented this information in the February and March 2002 issues of *Timbres Magazine*.



Louise, with a 60c Pétain definitive and the exhibition datestamp



Pelléas et Mélisande, with a 1F 20 Pétain definitive and the exhibition datestamp

Marianne l'Effacée! – Part 2

Part 1 appeared in Journal 300.

Following the reorganisation of the French postal rates on 1st January 2023, the only current *Marianne l'Engagée* definitives remaining are the *Lettre Verte* (LV), 1€ orange and *Lettre Internationale*.

The 0.01€, 0.05€, 0.10€, *Ecopli* and *Lettre Prioritaire* (LP) stamps were all withdrawn completely on 31st December 2022, even from the philatelic service (*Philaposte*). A limited edition of *Ecopli* and LP stamps were overprinted 31.12.2022 and issued in sheets of 100 (Figure 1).

The only standard letter service in France is now the LV green and remains at 1.16€ up to 20g. All previous value stamps remain valid to make up this amount including the LP red stamp which will be downgraded to an LV stamp. The service has an estimated delivery time of 3 days (*jour+3*). No compensation is being offered for the difference in value for unused LP stamps which were previously priced at 1.43€.

A new service named *Lettre Services Plus* (*Lettre Turquoise*) was introduced on 1st January. This offers an estimated

jour+2 delivery time, tracking of delivery (*suivi*) and compensation for undue delay. The stamps are available in sheet form (Figure 2), coil versions with vertical straight edge (Figure 3) and self-adhesive types (Figure 4). The stamps feature a QR code and have a detachable part with tracking number which can be used to check when the item has been delivered. Items can either be handed in at a post office or placed in a post box. The cost of the service is 2.95€.

Another new service launched on 1st January is the *e-lettre rouge*. This allows customers to email a document to *La Poste* which is transmitted to the recipient's nearest sorting office, printed out, placed in an envelope and delivered by the postman on the next day. Quite why you wouldn't send an email direct to the recipient is hard to figure! For the privilege of using this service it will cost you 1.49€ - however, there is no stamp involved. Originally no compensation was to be offered for unused LP red stamps but due to public pressure a limited exchange system has been set up which allows customers to swap LP for LV stamps plus a *suivi* sticker. This basically allows previous LP stamps to be valid for a 3 day tracked service.



Figure 1

The limited edition *Ecopli* and *Lettre Prioritaire* stamps were overprinted 31.12.2022 and issued in sheets of 100



Figure 2

Lettre Services Plus available in sheet form



Figure 3

Lettre Services Plus coil version



Figure 4

Lettre Services Plus self-adhesive version

Richard Broadhurst

Modern France 2000 - 2023

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BOOKSHELF

Compiled and Reviewed by Michael Round

L'émission "Faidherbe-Palmiers-Ballay", Pierre Rohmer.

2nd edition 2022-2023. Published by, and available from, the author. A4 card-back, pp 238. Price 35€ within France (including postage), 30€ if collected in person, 49€ post paid worldwide.

Pierre Rohmer, 15 rue des Pruniers, 67600 Selestat, France.

Email: pierre845@hotmail.com

French West Africa's 1906 "minibus" issue (nicknamed the 'Palmiers' after the middle values) is well known to us all, but little written about. To plug the gap, Pierre Rohmer has devoted a sizeable full-colour monograph to it. A full review will follow later: meanwhile, snap this up if you're at all interested, for M Rohmer has only a very few copies left.

La Poste Pneumatique de Paris, Hervé Barbelin.

A4 hardback, pp544. Available from L'Académie de Philatélie, price 50€ plus postage.

In 3 parts this book provides all one would ever wish to know about the Pneumatic Post in Paris.

Part 1: the history of pneumatic developments to 1879

Part 2: the creation and development of the pneumatic post in Paris 1879 to 1901

Part 3: Telegraphic and pneumatic offices in Paris

See the Academy website for more details and a full summary of the contents.

www.academiedephilatelie.fr/ouvrages

Le Bulletin de la Philatélie et de la Numismatique au Maroc

Journal of *L'Amicale Philatélique et de la Numismatique de Rabat* (BP 8101, Rabat, Nations Unies, Agdal 10102, Rabat. Email: apnrabat@gmail.com

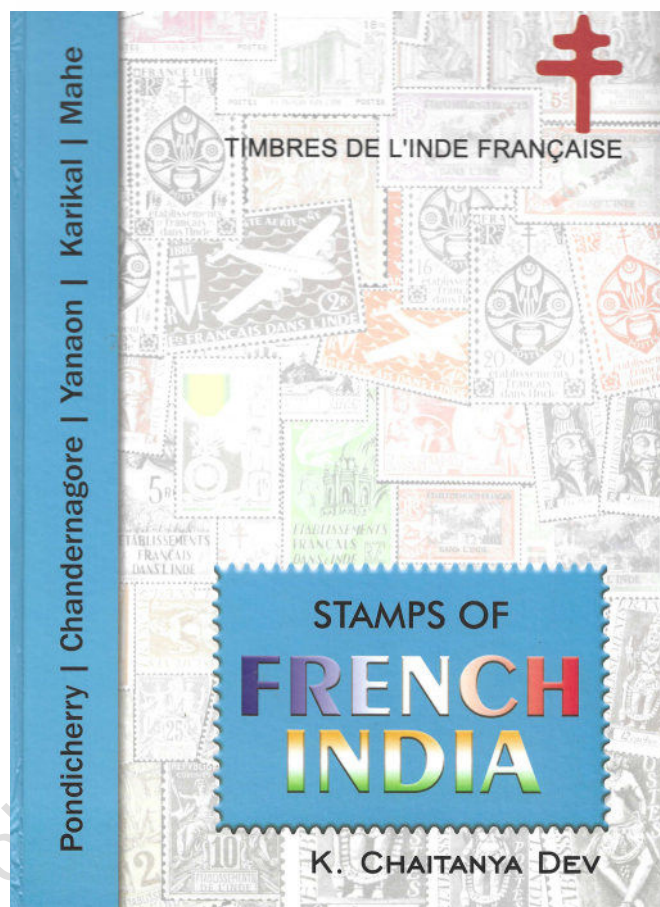
Obviously, this title is devoted to Morocco – but not exclusively. Issue No 10 (May 2022) covers new issues, SECAP slogan postmarks from Fez and Moroccan international reply coupons. More general articles cover recent Ukraine, a guide to coin quality, and a contribution intriguingly headed "*Comment manipuler et stocker les timbres.*"

We are always delighted to hear of and review new books. We are also happy to mention older books that may have escaped our notice at the time. Here's one title new to me. I am most grateful to the librarian of the Royal Philatelic Society for allowing me to inspect it.

Stamps of French India, K. Chaitanya Dev, 1st edition 2018.

Hardback, pp100. ISBN 978-93-5321-513-2. Published by the author.

All philatelic things Indian have their devotees, but it's safe



to say that French India (*Etablissements de l'Inde* in French; 'Indian Settlements' in the UK) is probably one of the least popular of French Colonies. Mr Dev's publication could redress the balance, being an enticing primer for beginners, lavishly laid out in full colour on glossy paper and containing many insights beyond the catalogue listings.

Tidily, like those of the Ivory Coast, the Indian Settlements' own first stamps were the 1892 'Tablet' issue, familiar to us all and common to 29 territories. (Mr Dev does not discuss any precursors.) Subsequent surcharges fell into no similar Empire-wide pattern: conformity resumed with the first pictorials of 1914 and continued up to the final issue, the 10th Anniversary of Liberation commemorative of 1954. En route Mr Dev lists (without illustrating) several uncatalogued shades of many of the basic stamps; he picks carefully through the mass of 'France Libre' overprints, and warns of (again without showing) forged 'France Toujours' rarities. Throughout, he illustrates minor varieties guaranteed new to many of us; a substantial appendix shows us mouth-watering deluxe proofs, die proofs, colour trials and UPU Specimens; a final section deals with Fournier forgeries of that first 'Tablet' issue.

Nothing is priced: this is a handbook, not a commercial catalogue. We hope Mr Dev will be encouraged to produce a second volume, perhaps including postal history, postal stationery, precursors and postmarks.

LIST OF RECENTLY PUBLISHED ARTICLES

Compiled by Maurice Tyler

Please contact me (maurice@fcps.org.uk) if you would like to see a particular article mentioned that you do not have direct access to. I can usually produce one that has appeared during the last 12 months, or point you in the right direction.

Timbres Magazine

N° 249 Nov 2022: Meritexell, patronne des Vallées d'Andorre, la chapelle, l'incendie du 8 septembre 1972, le nouveau sanctuaire (Louviau); La Daguin dans les colonies françaises d'Amérique (Hervé); Les cachets de bord des bateaux du Lac Léman (Emmenegger); Les timbres des Forces Françaises Libres au Levant (1^{ère} partie) (Sinais); Les cartes postales extra-lucides (Zeyons); Poste Maritime Française, additif au Tome II (de La Mettrie).

N° 250 Dec 2022: L'ACTPC de la belle époque aux années folles (1^{ère} partie) (Chauvin); Les timbres des Forces Françaises Libres au Levant (2^{ème} partie) (Sinais); Histoire et Philatélie du Tchad (Coutant); La dernière mission du navire-école «Jeanne d'Arc» (1^{ère} partie) (PJM); Les Daguin à flamme muette (Hervé); Les cartes postales photos (Bizet); Un timbre pour un tour du monde (de La Mettrie).

N° 251 Jan 2023: Rétrospective des émissions 2022; Le 90c Paix surchargé «F» pour les réfugiés espagnols (1^{ère} partie) (Sinais); Menon & Lambert et le «raccourci» d'Aden [tentative de desserte de l'Île Maurice via Aden en 1857] (Veglio); L'ACTPC de la belle époque aux années folles (2^{ème} partie) (Chauvin); La dernière mission du navire-école «Jeanne d'Arc» (2^{ème} partie) (PJM).

N° 252 Feb 2023: Le 90c Paix surchargé «F» pour les réfugiés espagnols (2^{ème} partie) (Sinais); L'ACTPC de la belle époque aux années folles (3^{ème} partie) (Chauvin); Les timbres socio-postaux d'Alsace-Lorraine (Danan); Aérophilatélie: la chute du dirigeable Pax en plein Paris 12 mai 1902 (Sinais); Survol maritime (de La Mettrie).

L'Écho de la Timbrologie

N° 1977 Nov 2022: L'histoire de la poste d'Albi à Albi: de la Révolution à la Restauration, en passant par le Consulat et l'Empire (2) (Bastide-Bernardin); Les taxes de 1918, sur le luxe et sur les paiements [Fiscaux] (Danan); L'OP2/2021 du Marion Dufresne (Venturini).

N° 1978 Dec 2022: René Coty, un sénateur de l'Élysée (Bastide-Bernardin); Fin de l'OP2/2021 du Marion Dufresne (Venturini).

N° 1979 Jan 2023: Les émissions du programme philatélique officiel de 2022 (Bastide-Bernardin); Un usage atypique de timbres-taxe sur un journal (Galagain); La poste à Albi sous la II^e République et le Second Empire (Bastide-Bernardin).

N° 1980 Feb 2023: Campagne MD 234 MAYOBS 21 et OP 3-2021 du Marion Dufresne (Venturini).

Bulletin COL.FRA

N° 182 4^{ème} trim 2022: Bureaux français en Chine timbres clandestins, privés, variétés ou... faux? (Ferrien); L'approvisionnement et la vente des timbres-poste d'outremer (Hurpet); Les bureaux du Nord-Cameroun (Parren).

France & Colonies Philatelist

Vol 79 N° 1 (Whole N° 351) Jan 2023: Vichy Issues Used in French West Africa (AOF) During and After WWII (Marra); The One Centime Banded Postcard Rate of the French Community – An Update (Grabowski).

Documents Philatéliques

N° 254 (4^e trim 2022) Oct 2022: Cartes postales de France pour les Etats-Unis du 1^{er} janvier 1876 au 31 mars 1879 (Treviso); Un des premiers télégrammes avec réponse payée de la poste pneumatique de Paris (décembre 1884) (Barbelin); Le bureau temporaire du parc d'Aulus (Desarnaud); La à l'étranger des lettres chargées, 1859-1875 (Abensur); Préparation militaire de la reconquête de l'Indochine, 1944-1945 (Goanvic).

N° 255 (1^{er} trim 2023) Jan 2023: Le tarif (Goanvic).spécial dit «de l'orage» de la poste pneumatique de Paris (1927) (Barbelin); Quand l'État céda devant les faussaires [série fiscale] (Danan); Départements du Sahara 1958-1963: une étude de C.A.S. (Goanvic).

Les Feuilles Marcophiles

N° 391 (Dec 2022): Dans le piège des rafles d'août 1942, la famille Oppenheimer (Partie 2) (Neimark); Timbre à date du Paris insolite: Le bureau de poste du Palais de Justice (Lavenas); Les nouvelles empreintes des imprimantes étiquettes et vignettes (IEV) thermiques de guichet (Guillard); Réexpéditions du courrier dans le régime international et faculté de compléter l'affranchissement de la lettre devenue insuffisamment affranchie (1850/1876) (Chouteau); Mais qui surtaxe les lettres? (Pleinfossé).

[Apologies - but space does not allow us to feature the listings for Le Maghrebophila, The Indo-China Philatelist or the Collectors Club Philatelist, all of which will be featured in the August 2023 edition. Should you wish to have the list before then it will be posted on the Home page of the website] Ed.