

THE JOURNAL OF THE FRANCE & COLONIES PHILATELIC SOCIETY



Jean-Luc Raffel gives us an in-depth story of the adoption of stamp vending machines in France on page 89. Shown here is the '*Système de distributeur automatique avec publicité combinée*' or combined automatic post office and advertising kiosk

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**THE FRANCE & COLONIES
PHILATELIC SOCIETY OF GREAT BRITAIN**
Society Website: www.fcps.org.uk

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The Society

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

All inquiries about and applications for membership should be addressed to the General Secretary by email or to the President: C J Hitchen, 36 Everton Road, Croydon CR0 6LA

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

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

Auction and Exchange Packet Sales

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

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.

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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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Philatelic Weekend 2024 Advance Notice

See page 110 for details of the 2024 Philatelic Weekend.

Accommodation bookings for the Charlecote Pheasant Hotel are required before 7 December 2023.

Limited rooms available.

SOCIETY NOTES

New Members

The Society is pleased to welcome new members 1521 **Malcolm Moodie** (Oxfordshire), 1522 **James McLeod** (Shropshire), 1523 **Nicholas Pertwee** (Reigate) (rejoined), 1524 **Alex Candy** (Kent), 1525 **Lewis Webb** (NSW Australia), 1526 **Ian Mark Marshall Dalton** (Co Durham), 1527 **Tom Dang** (California USA) 1528 **Bob Adams** (Glasgow), 1529 **Arivan Aruli** (Pondicherry India).

Members Resigned

1283 **Guy Dutau** (France), 1306 **J-P Magne** (France), 1420 **Sally Ellam** (Plymouth), 1457 **AJ Baum** (Kent).

Members Deceased

It is with great sadness that we have to report the deaths of members: 180 **H V Hilton** (Wolverhampton), 1395 **Trevor Smith** (Immingham).

Condolences

Brigitte Abensur Many of you will have met **Brigitte Abensur** at our weekends at Charlecote and also elsewhere. She had been ill for a little while and we learnt that she has passed away.

Annette Tyler On 20 April 2023 after 62 years of marriage Annette Tyler passed away. Many of you will have met her at Charlecote and appreciated the help she gave to the Society on the bookshop at our weekends and elsewhere.

Our condolences go to Robert and Maurice and their families.

Future Society Meetings

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

Zoom Meetings

The April and May Zoom meetings saw **Loïc Dufresne de Virel** display his comprehensive 'Group Type: Bisect, Uncut, or Badly Perforated Stamps, an Overview of Poorly Documented and Seldom Seen Varieties'. In June **Ed Grabowski** gave a fascinating display of 'Philately & International Mail Order Fraud, Professor A Victor Segno and the American Institute of Mentalism - Success in the European African Colonies'. We have no other offers of displays on Zoom but if anyone wishing to present a display of 30 to 40 slides please let **Chris Hitchen** know at treasurer@fcps.org.uk However, subject to sufficient offers we will run another Show and Tell meeting details for which are on page 112 of this Journal.

Joint Meeting of F&CPS and WASC

On 4 March 2023 our Society joined forces with WASC (the West Africa Study Circle) at the Royal Philatelic Society building, and contributed a generous proportion of the day's 12 displays. A report will follow in the December Journal: members who cannot wait that long may consult WASC's own very full report published in the newsletter accompanying CAMEO, the West Africa Study Circle journal, for May 2023 – and/or view the whole thing on YouTube by checking out the various links below.

Morning displays:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x_keBTB9jSo

Afternoon displays (Part 1):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pKL1GvyVFYc>

Afternoon Displays (Part 2):

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z_OKsPW6Pfg

Michael Round

France Exchange Packet

Currently I am able to take on new members for the France Packet. For those who have not received the packet before this is an good opportunity to try it without obligation. The packets contain a great variety of material, mostly stamps with some occasional postal history. Stamps of all periods are included from classic issues right up to the most recent.

Please contact me with your interests and I will see if I can assist you to fill any gaps in your collection. Tel: 020 8943 1421 email: francestamps@tiscali.co.uk

Richard Broadhurst

France Packet Secretary

F&CPS Website

Selected images for the forthcoming Auction in September, seven Journals - whole numbers 290 - 297 with all financial information redacted, and all past presentations of Zoom meetings are now available to view.

Timbres Magazine

Michael Round would like to remind writers to *Timbres* magazine that the email address timbresmag.com is obsolescent and not to be used. The current address is timbresmag@gmail.com *Bonne chance!*

Forthcoming Exhibitions

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

LONDON SPRING EXHIBITION 2024 (28-30 March) to be held at the Royal Philatelic Society London. This is particularly aimed at those seeking to qualify for forthcoming international competitions. Details www.abps.org.uk/forthcoming-exhibitions/

Yokadouma, Cameroun – Moving the Mail to, from and within the Middle of Nowhere

Marty Bratzel

Occasionally you find a stamp or cover that is so interesting that you just have to write it up so others can enjoy it as well. But what do you do when 19 of them ambush you all at once? Surrender and take pen to paper or, in my case, two fingers to the keyboard. Enjoy! ...



Figure 1

Middle Congo and Cameroun. Map circa 1927

But first: In the discussion below, spellings for towns are either German or French, depending on the administration, and spellings for postmarks are as given on the date stamps. And, information about steamships and traffic at the port of Douala is taken from Salles (Ref. 1) and from the *Journal officiel des territoires occupés de l'ancien Cameroun* (Ref. 2). Also, all the covers discussed below were sent between 1918 and 1922. During this time period the postage paid on each of the envelopes is correct: 15 centimes through 31 July 1920 and 25 centimes from 1 August and after (Ref. 3).

Postal Facilities, Routes and Schedules

Yokadouma is situated near the southeast corner of Cameroun in the middle of nowhere (Figure 1). Prior to World War I, the Germans opened a postal agency at Jukaduma on 12 December 1912 (Ref. 4). Mail was routed from the port of Duala by rail and road to Jaunde, thence by runner via Akonolinga and Dume to Jukaduma. The route extended further to Nola which was in Neu Kamerun, a territory acquired from France in 1911. A German postal agency was opened at Nola on 1 March 1913 (Figure 2).

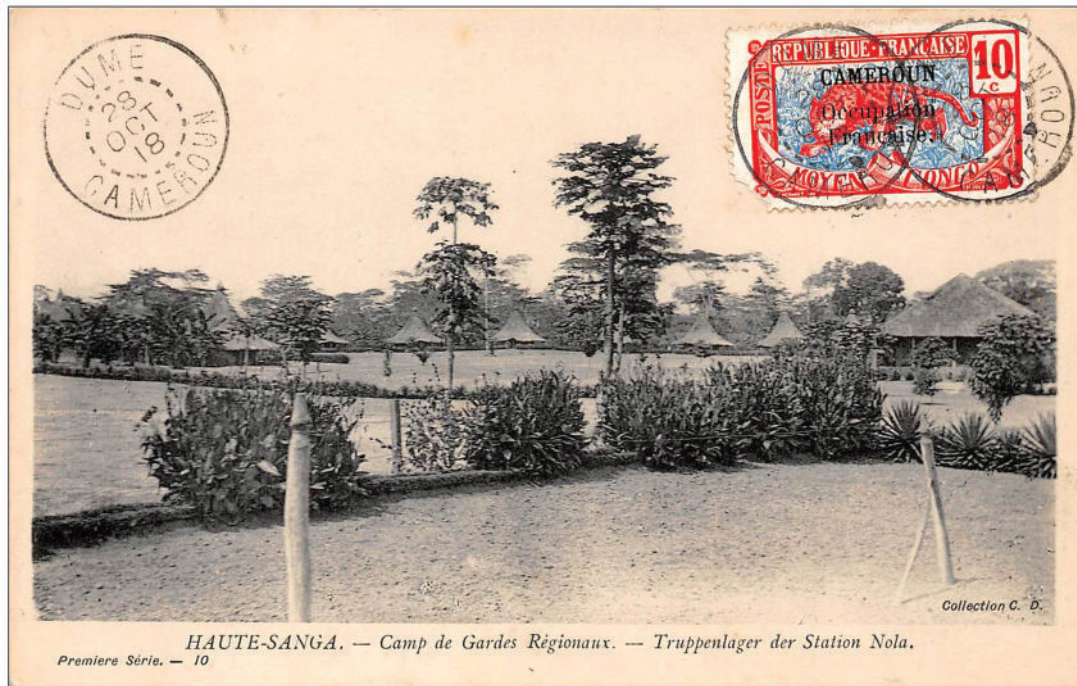


Figure 2
Regional Security Force Camp, Nola, circa 1914

With the advance of French forces early in the war, the postal agency at Nola closed on 17 October 1914 as did the agency at Jukaduma at the beginning of February 1915.

After the war, Neu Kamerun reverted to French administration and Nola became part of Moyen Congo. Today, Nola is in the Central African Republic.

The French opened a postal agency at Yokadouma on or about 7 February 1917 but “temporarily closed” it about three months later, circa 21 May, along with a number of other postal agencies (Ref. 5). The reasons cited were a shortage of qualified personnel; inadequate infrastructure, for example, to transport mail; and the lack of any real economic or commercial need for a postal presence. The Yokadouma postal agency was reopened about 22 July 1920 and has remained in continuous operation ever since. The postal agency was converted to a post office circa 1933.

With some modifications, the French had endeavoured to follow and maintain the same routes and modes of transport

as established by the Germans. The postal route became Douala - Eseka - Yaoundé - Akonolinga - Doume - Lomie - Yokadouma - Moloundou. As under the prior German administration, a postal connection was apparently maintained between Yokadouma and Nola. The author does not know the date when the French opened (or reopened) a postal agency at Nola but a permanent postal date stamp was in use in 1919.

The transport of mail from Douala to Yokadouma was slow and arduous. The following weekly schedule, published in the *Journal officiel des territoires occupés de l'ancien Cameroun*, was dated 15 February 1919 (Ref. 5 and 6). The route was maintained even though there were no postal agencies at Lomie, Yokadouma, or Moloundou at the time. Europeans were there and there was still a need for communication.

Douala - Moloundou

Douala	Depart	jeudi matin / Thursday morning
Eseka	Arrive / depart	jeudi soir / Thursday evening
Yaoundé	Arrive	dimanche / Sunday
	Depart	lundi / Monday
Akonolinga	Transit	mercredi soir / Wednesday evening
Doume	Arrive / depart	lundi / Monday
Lomie	Transit	vendredi / Friday
Yokadouma	Transit	mercredi / Wednesday
Moloundou	Arrive	lundi / Monday

Moloundou - Douala

Moloundou	Depart	mercredi / Wednesday
Yokadouma	Transit	lundi / Monday
Lomie	Transit	jeudi Thursday
Doume	Arrive	mardi / Tuesday
	Depart	samedi matin / Saturday morning
Akonolinga	Transit	lundi / Monday
Yaoundé	Arrive	mercredi soir ou jeudi matin / Wednesday evening or Thursday morning
	Depart	jeudi matin / Thursday morning
Eseka	Arrive	mardi / Tuesday
	Depart	mercredi matin / Wednesday morning
Douala	Arrive	mercredi soir / Wednesday evening

Douala - Eseka	174 kilometres
Eseka - Yaoundé	135 kilometres
Yaoundé - Akonolinga	125 kilometres
Akonolinga - Doume	250 kilometres
Doume - Lomie	185 kilometres
Lomie - Yokadouma	225 kilometres
Yokadouma - Moloundou	15 kilometres

The transport time from Douala to Yokadouma was three weeks, and almost four weeks to Moloundou, the end of the route. The approximate distances between locales are shown in the table above.

Mail from Douala to Eseka was transported by rail. The mode of transport between Eseka and Yaoundé is uncertain but was undergoing relatively rapid improvement. There were no roads beyond Yaoundé, only *pistes* / trails, and the mail was carried by a relay of runners, requiring 16 days to reach Yokadouma (approximately 785 kilometres from Yaoundé) and 21 days to reach Moloundou (approximately 1,000 kilometres). About the same time was required for the return journey. The runner relay would have to have averaged about 40 kilometres per day. Since the trails meandered, the actual distances traversed by the runners were greater than the approximate distances given above.

Arduous indeed, considering that even today, for example, there is no connection whatsoever between Lomie and Yokadouma.

Adding in the approximately four weeks required for the transport of mail from France to Douala in the years immediately following the war, the total time for a letter from France to reach Yokadouma was about seven weeks, assuming that all connections were made in a timely manner and that the runners did not encounter weather-related and other obstacles. Yokadouma was indeed in the middle of nowhere (and Moloundou a bit further).

A revised, enhanced schedule for service between Douala and Yaoundé, published in the *Journal officiel des territoires occupés de l'ancien Cameroun*, was dated 25 May 1919 (Ref. 5, 7).

Douala - Yaoundé

Douala	Depart	lundi matin / Monday morning	mercredi matin / Wednesday morning	vendredi matin / Friday morning
Eseka	Arrive / Depart	lundi soir / Monday evening	mercredi soir / Wednesday evening	vendredi soir / Friday evening
Yaoundé	Arrive	mercredi soir ou jeudi matin / Wednesday evening	vendredi soir ou samedi matin / Friday evening or Saturday morning	dimanche soir ou lundi matin / Sunday evening or Monday morning

Yaoundé - Douala

Yaoundé	Depart	samedi / Saturday	lundi / Monday	mercredi / Wednesday
Eseka	Arrive	lundi soir / Monday evening	mercredi soir / Wednesday evening	vendredi soir / Friday evening
	Depart	mardi matin / Tuesday morning	jeudi matin / Thursday morning	samedi matin / Saturday morning
Douala	Arrive	mardi soir / Tuesday evening	jeudi soir / Thursday evening	samedi soir / Saturday evening

The enhanced schedule hastened the transport of mail between Douala and Yaoundé. By December 1921, with the extension of the construction line railroad to Makak and the introduction of *voitures automobiles* / motorised vehicles between Makak and Yaoundé, the transit time between Douala and Yaoundé had been reduced from three-to-six days to two (Ref. 8) and, with completion of the railroad in 1927, would eventually be reduced to one. These improvements did not, however, impact the time for runners to transport mail between Yaoundé and Moloundou and points in between. Nonetheless, “efficiencies” were being made to the runners’ routes and schedules, especially between Yaoundé, Akonolinga, Abong-Mbang and Doume and, by early 1923 – or sooner – the time between Douala and Moloundou was reduced to about two weeks (Ref. 9).

Let us turn now to mail to and from Yokadouma and environs between 1919 and 1922. All of the covers illustrated and discussed here are associated one way or the other with Jacques Planteau who was the agent for the *Compagnie Forestière Sangha-Oubangui* (C.F.S.O.). His distinctive handwriting identifies which letters he sent, generally to relatives in France. Other letters were sent to him. One of the recipients, Madame E. Planteau, may have been his mother. Three of the letters have *Vve* associated with her name, the abbreviation being *veuve*, that is, widow. Judging from the various locations where his letters were posted, and given the return address on many of the

envelopes, it would appear that M. Planteau travelled a lot but that his base was Yokadouma, Cameroun.

Mail Along the Route Douala - Yokadouma

The cover in Figure 3, postmarked Dume on 18 December 1919 – a Thursday – was addressed to the C.F.S.O. agent at Yokadouma. At that time, there was no postal agency at Yokadouma. According to the schedule above, the transit time from Doume was nine days, entirely by runner. The courier would have departed Doume on Monday 22 December and arrived on Wednesday 31 December.

Like the preceding cover, the cover in Figure 4 is postmarked Dume in early December 1919 (day unclear), arrival Douala 20 December. The sender was M. Planteau. At the date of posting, the nearest postal agency to Yokadouma was Doume, which had opened about 8 November 1916. We do not know if M. Planteau was at Doume when he mailed the letter or whether it was carried there by runner from Yokadouma for posting.

When the letter departed Douala is uncertain. The next French *paquebot* was the *Tchad* which departed almost a month later, on 17 January 1920. Alternatively, the letter could have been transported aboard the Elder Dempster steamship *Accra*, which departed Douala for Liverpool on 2 January. Only one other homebound ship called at Douala during this time, a freighter of Danish registry, and it is unlikely that that ship would have carried the mails. Connections with Europe left something to be desired.



Figure 3

Cover postmarked Dume 18 December 1919 to Yokadouma

The cover in **Figure 5**, like the preceding, entered the postal system at Dume, on 19 February 1920, transit Jaunde 23 (or 25) February, arrival Douala 28 February. M. Planteau gives his return address as Yokadouma via Douala, Yaoundé and Doume. Again, we do not know whether he was at Doume or whether the letter was carried by there by runner.

Using the schedules in the tables above, the letter should have arrived at Douala on 2 March, but it arrived three days earlier, on 28 February. If the runner had arrived at Yaoundé a day early, on Tuesday 24 February, the letter would have departed Yaoundé on Wednesday 25 February and indeed arrived at Douala on 28 February. The faster transit time from Doume to Yaoundé likely reflects improved service between these two locales. Not all schedule information was published in the *Journal officiel* but revised schedules were no doubt publicised.

In any event, the letter would have been carried on the next paquebot, the *Europe*, which departed Douala on 12 March and arrived at Bordeaux on 3 April. Adding in the time for the runner to reach Doume from Yokadouma, almost eight weeks was required for the letter to reach France.

The cover in **Figure 6** is again postmarked Dume. The date is not legible but, considering the Douala backstamp dated 26 June 1920, it must have been posted in early June. There is no return address and, like the two preceding covers, may have been carried by runner from Yokadouma to Doume.

The letter would have been transported to France aboard the *Europe*, which departed Douala on 8 July and arrived at Bordeaux on 31 July.

As noted above, a postal agency was opened at Yokadouma on or about 22 July 1920. The Yokadouma postmark on the cover in **Figure 7** is the earliest recorded to date. Struck in violet, the day is 10, the year 20, but the October month slug is absent. The Douala transit postmark on the back is 31 October, which would give a transit time of three weeks. Like the cover in **Figure 5**, if the runner had arrived at Yaoundé a day earlier than what the schedule indicates, then the letter would have departed Yaoundé earlier and arrived at Douala on Saturday 30 October, consistent with the arrival postmark of 31 October. The letter would have been transported to France aboard the *Asie*, which departed Douala on 30 November and arrived at Bordeaux on 19 December, an apparent delay at Douala of about a month. However, the November 1920 port traffic summary published in the *Journal officiel* is a bit garbled, and earlier transport aboard the *Tchad*, which should have called at Douala on or about 5 November, is not listed. If the letter had been transported aboard the *Tchad*, it would have arrived in Bordeaux on 26 November.

One observation about the address on the cover: it is to Madame *Ivè* Planteau, who was probably M. Planteau's widowed mother.

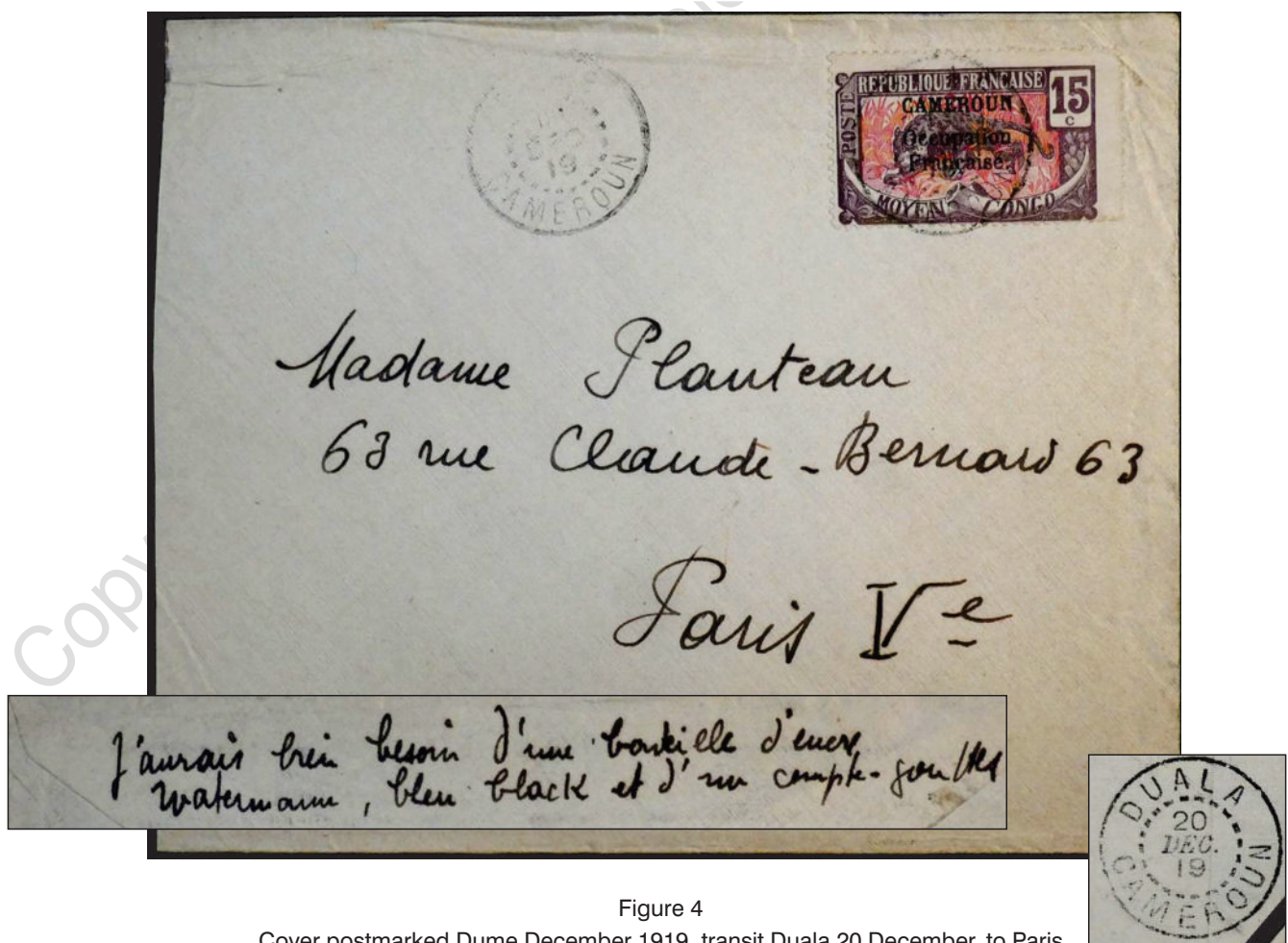


Figure 4

Cover postmarked Dume December 1919, transit Douala 20 December, to Paris

Exp: Jacques Planteau, quant C.F.S. 9
à Yokohama
par Douala, Yaoundé, Doumé
Ancien Cameroun

Figure 5
Cover postmarked
Dume
19 February 1920,
transit Yaoundé
23 (or 25) February
and Douala
28 February, to
Paris

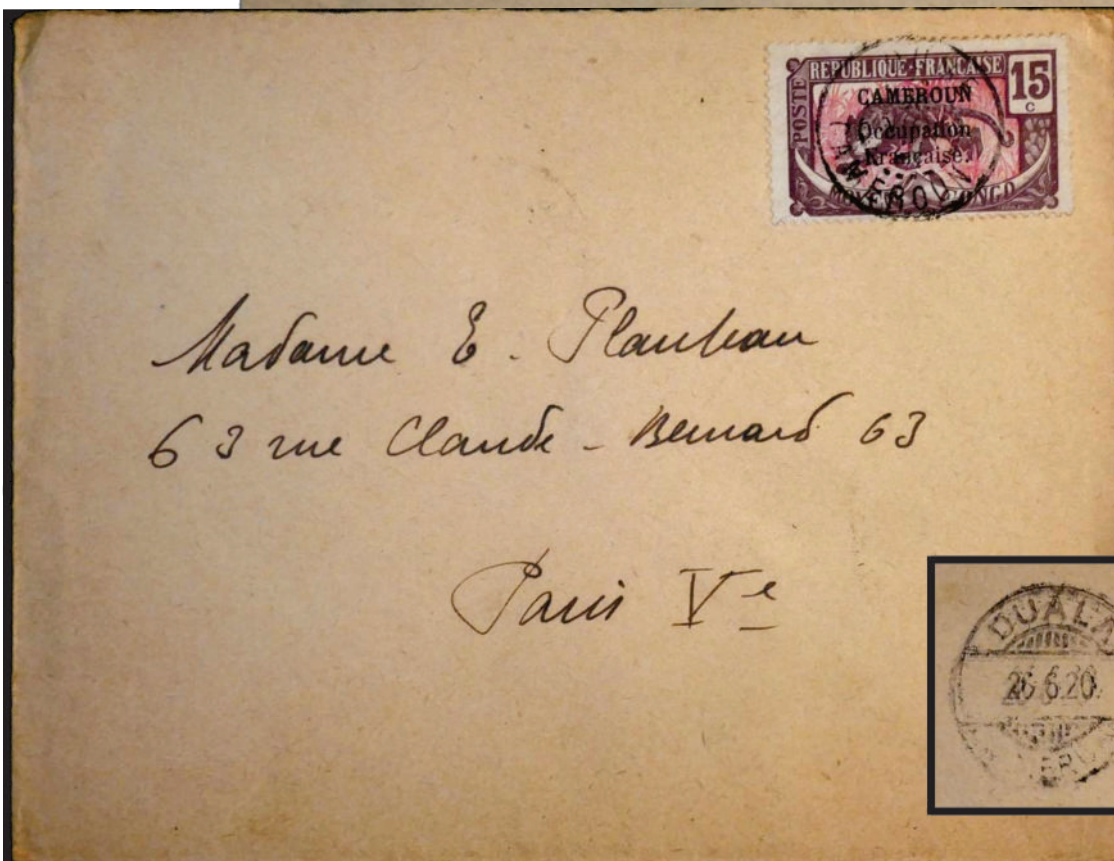


Figure 6
Cover
postmarked
Dume early
June 1920,
transit Douala
26 June,
to Paris





Figure 7
Cover postmarked
Yokadouma
10 October 1920,
transit Duala
31 October,
to Paris

The registered service envelope in **Figure 8** was sent by the *P & T Receveur* at Yaoundé to M. Planteau at Yokadouma. The postmark above his name reads Yaoundé 3 September 1920 but two strikes of a different handstamp with the same

date, reading Jaunde, were used to cancel the stamps. The back of the envelope is blank. Note the use of a registration label from the former German administration.



Figure 8
Registered
cover
postmarked
Yaoundé
3 September
1920
to Yokadouma



Figure 9
Cover
postmarked
Yokadouma
19 December
1920 to
Ste Foy la
Grande, France,
arrival
February 1921



Figure 10
Cover postmarked
Yokadouma
19 December 1920
to France

The cover in **Figure 9** is postmarked Yokadouma 19 December 1920 and reached its destination of Ste Foy la Grande in France in February 1921. The cover was routed via Douala, reaching there about three weeks later, around 9 January 1921, perhaps a bit earlier, again indicative of improved runner service. The letter would have been transported from Douala to Bordeaux aboard either the *Cap Ortegal*, which departed on 9 January or the *Europe*,

which departed on 13 January, respectively reaching Bordeaux on 2 February and 5 February. Total transit time for the letter was approaching two months.

The cover in **Figure 10** is also postmarked Yokadouma 19 December 1920 and would have been transported to France by the same steamship as the previous letter. M. Planteau wrote the Yokadouma via Douala routing for mail on the back of the envelope.



Figure 11

Cover postmarked Yokadouma 23 January 1921 to France
(reverse reduced by 25%)

The cover in [Figure 11](#) is postmarked Yokadouma 23 January 1921. In his return address, M. Planteau again noted the mail routing via Douala. Using the schedule summarised above, the letter would have reached Douala approximately three weeks later, on or about 15 February, or a few days earlier, again taking into account improved runner service. From Douala, the letter would have been placed aboard a *paquebot* for transport to France. The port records published in the *Journal officiel* list the *Asie* departing on 5 February (too early for the letter to have made this connection) but, strangely, no *paquebots* departing for Europe during the remainder of February or during March, the next listed being the *Europe* on 6 April. Apparently the *Tchad* did not call at Douala as scheduled on or about 4 March (or if it did, it was inadvertently omitted from the port traffic report) and, indeed, the *Tchad* did not make it back to France, putting into Lisbon on 25 March, in need of repairs. Whether there was an omission in the port traffic report, or the letter was transported by a freighter, or it languished at Douala is unclear. In any event, the time required for the letter to have reached France from Douala was possibly two months. A subject to pursue on another day.

The cover in [Figure 12](#) was sent to M. Planteau, who was now in France, by a colleague in Yokadouma, as indicated by the 6 August 1921 postmark on the 15-centimes stamp.

The cover has a Yaoundé transit postmark (also applied to the 10-centimes stamp) dated 18 days later, on 24 August. The letter would have arrived at Douala a day or two later, about 26 August. However, the next *paquebot* to depart Douala was the *Asie* on 18 September which arrived at Bordeaux on 7 October. Alternatively, the letter could have been carried aboard the Elder Dempster steamship *Elmina* which departed Douala for Liverpool on 13 September. In any event, like the previous letter, it was apparently delayed at Douala.

M. Planteau posted the letter in [Figure 13](#) at Abong-Mbang on 28 March 1922 (the earliest recorded date for this handstamp). His letter ([Figure 14](#)) is datelined Abong-Mbang but his return address was Yokadouma, so he must have been travelling. Addressed to Paris, the letter transited Yaoundé on 6 April, only eight days later. In the letter he mentions the train schedule (extension of the rail line toward Yaoundé was continuing apace and even the narrow-gauge construction line was being used to move people, goods, and the mails) and a *camionnette* / motorised van. He also mentions that he would be living along the Kadei River in the company of hippopotamuses.

A later cover (not shown) postmarked Yokadouma 5 August 1922 has M. Planteau still at Yokadouma.



Figure 12
Cover postmarked Yokadouma 6 August 1921, transit Yaoundé 24 August, to France
(reverse reduced by 25%)



Figure 13
Letter card postmarked Abong-Mbang 28 March 1922, transit Yaoundé 6 April, to France

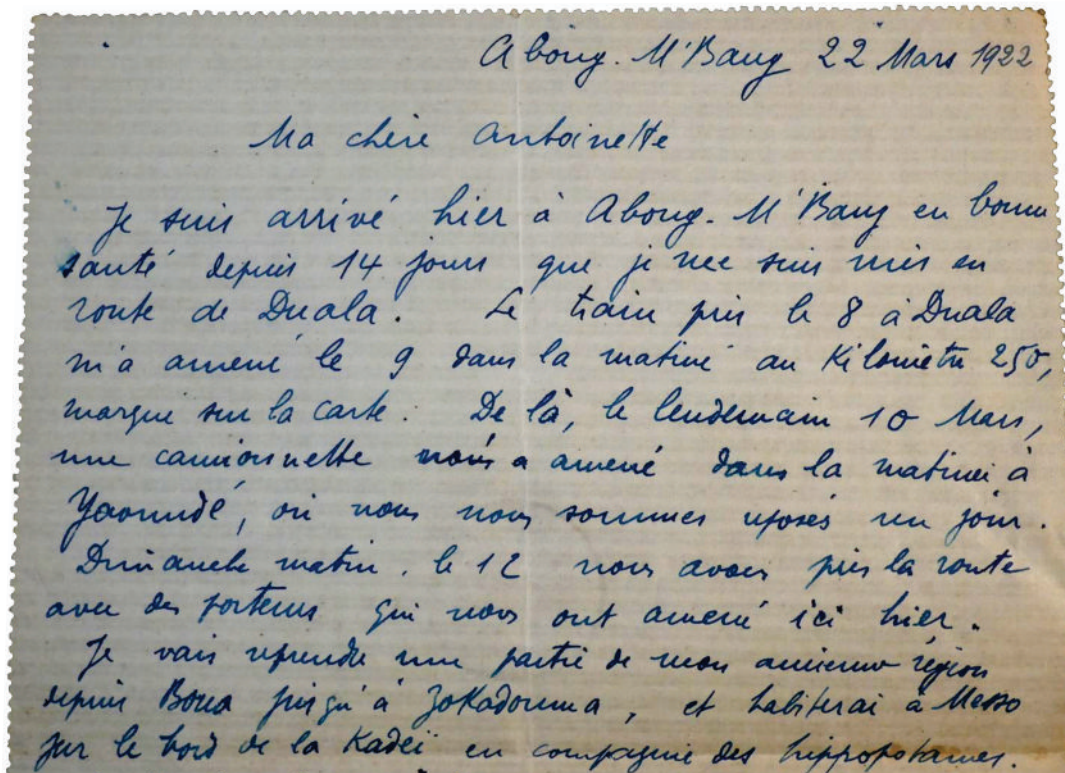


Figure 14

A portion of the message inside the letter card, datelined Abong-Mbang 22 March 1922

Mail via Routes from the French Congo

The cover in [Figure 15](#) is postmarked Mongoumba Congo Français 25 March 1920 and is addressed to Paris. The handwriting is that of M. Planteau, who gives his return address as Yokadouma via Douala, Yaoundé and Doume. Clearly he was in Mongoumba on that date. The cover is backstamped ten days later at Brazzaville 3 April 1920.

I am not familiar with mail routes in Moyen Congo in 1920 but, presumably, transport was by riverboat. Mongoumba is located on the Oubangui River, opposite Libenge, Belgian Congo. From there, the letter would have travelled down the Oubangui and Congo Rivers to Brazzaville. From the map in [Figure 1](#), for travel along rivers, the approximate distances between towns are as follows.

Congo River	Brazzaville - Mossaka	375 kilometres
Congo and Oubangui Rivers	Mossaka - Mongoumba	575 kilometres
Sangha River	Mossaka - Ouesso	450 kilometres
	Ouesso - Nola	250 kilometres

The actual distances are probably greater, as the rivers, especially the Sangha, wander.

At Brazzaville, the letter would have crossed the river to Leopoldville, Belgian Congo, for transport by rail to Matadi, near to the mouth of the Congo River to the Atlantic Ocean and placed aboard a paquebot there. The Paris arrival is 17 May. However, according to Salles, there were service disruptions and the next French paquebot in the schedule to depart from Madadi was the *Europe* on 3 July. The letter was

likely carried aboard a Belgian ship, or perhaps a freighter or a ship of another nationality.

As discussed earlier, it took several weeks for mail to reach Yokadouma from Douala. Fortunately, there was a “back door” for mail from the Congo, via Ouesso and Nola, as demonstrated by the next two covers.

The cover in [Figure 16](#), postmarked Mongoumba Congo Français 11 April 1920, was addressed to M. Planteau at Yokadouma, before a postal agency was opened. The sender added the annotation par Ouesso, and the letter transited Nola on 24 April. The back of the envelope is blank.

The letter probably travelled down the Congo River, to Mossaka (about 375 kilometres), then up the Sangha River to Ouesso (about 450 kilometres), and to Nola (about 250 kilometres). Alternatively, it could have travelled overland or via combination of river and road. From Nola, the cover would have been carried by runner about 150 kilometres to Yokadouma, which would have required three to four days. The Nola - Yokadouma route had been in place under the prior German administration and, after the transfer of Neu Kamerun, including the territory around Nola, back to France, was probably relatively easy to re-establish, as was the pre-war connection that had likely existed between Ouesso and Nola. The total time for the letter to travel more than 1200 kilometres to reach M. Planteau was about three weeks.

It is possible that the Nola transit postmark is a month later, i.e. 24 May 1920, in which case it would have taken the letter eight weeks to reach its destination. The matter rests there.

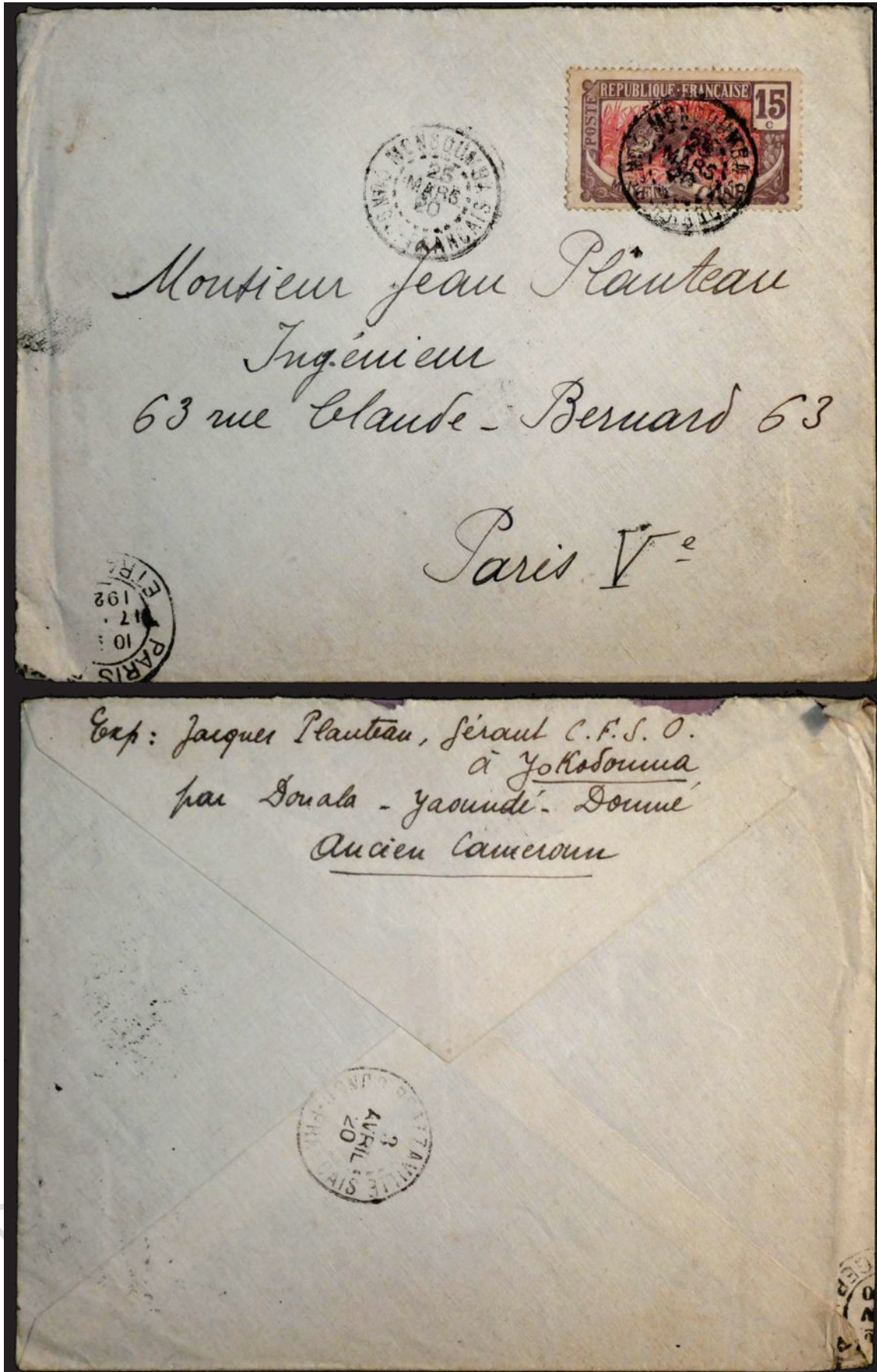


Figure 15
Cover postmarked Mongoumba
25 March 1920,
transit Brazzaville 3 April, arrival
Paris 17 May



Figure 16
Cover postmarked Mongoumba 11 April 1920,
transit Nola 24 April, to Yokadouma. Notation via Ouessou

The cover in [Figure 17](#), postmarked Brazzaville 7 August 1920, was addressed to Eugene M'Bissi, C.F.S.O. agent at the village of Matta, and was routed by Nola and Yokadouma. The Nola transit postmark is dated 9 September, almost five weeks later. The letter probably travelled up the Congo River to Mossaka, then up the Sangha River via Ouessou to Nola. Alternatively, the cover could have travelled overland or via combination of river and road. Add in the time for the runner from Nola to Yokadouma, the time from Brazzaville to Yokadouma was about five weeks. M. M'Bissi probably collected his letter at Yokadouma.

If the letter had been routed by Douala to reach its destination, it would have travelled first by rail from Leopoldville to Matadi, then by steamship to Douala, and then followed the route described earlier. The total transit time would have been about the same, four-to-five weeks. However, if this particular letter had been routed via Matadi and Douala, the actual transit time would have been much longer. Salles reported steamship service disruptions and transit would have been two-to-three months. Routing via the Congo and Sangha Rivers was preferable.

The cover in [Figure 18](#), addressed in M. Planteau's hand, is postmarked Ouessou Congo Français 18 November 1919. There is no return address and there are no transit marks on the back. If M. Planteau was at Yokadouma when he sent the letter, then it would have been transported by runner to Nola, thence by boat to Ouessou, but then the letter would

have been posted at Nola. More likely he was at Ouessou on business - he did seem to travel a lot.

Alternatively, the letter could have been carried by runner to Moloundou, which did not have a postal agency in 1919, thence along the Ngoko River to Ouessou. Mail has been recorded along this route a decade later ([Ref. 5](#)). Yet another matter that rests there.

To reinforce the Ouessou - Nola connection, the postal stationery envelope in [Figure 19](#), postmarked Ouessou 2 June 1918, is addressed to the director of the C.F.S.O. at Nola. There are no backstamps but presumably the letter was carried directly from Ouessou to Nola along the Sangha River. Looking at the map in [Figure 1](#), there was no alternative route. Note that the imprinted stamp is overprinted Cameroun Occupation Française but the envelope was used in the French Congo.

I mentioned 19 covers that prompted this study but only 16 are shown. Overkill, I'm sure! The three others, all associated one way or the other with M. Planteau, do not add to the discussion in terms of postmarks and routings, but they do reinforce the covers presented and that he travelled. Therefore, I shall not bore you further by including them but, if anyone would like scans, please contact me through the editor.

Of the 16 covers shown, the one I consider most outstanding is in [Figure 17](#), the "cross-border" cover from Brazzaville via Nola to Yokadouma. Which one or ones appeal to you, the reader, and why? Do let me know.



Figure 17

Cover postmarked Brazzaville 7 August 1920, transit Nola 9 September.
Notation Village Matta via Nola and Yokadouma

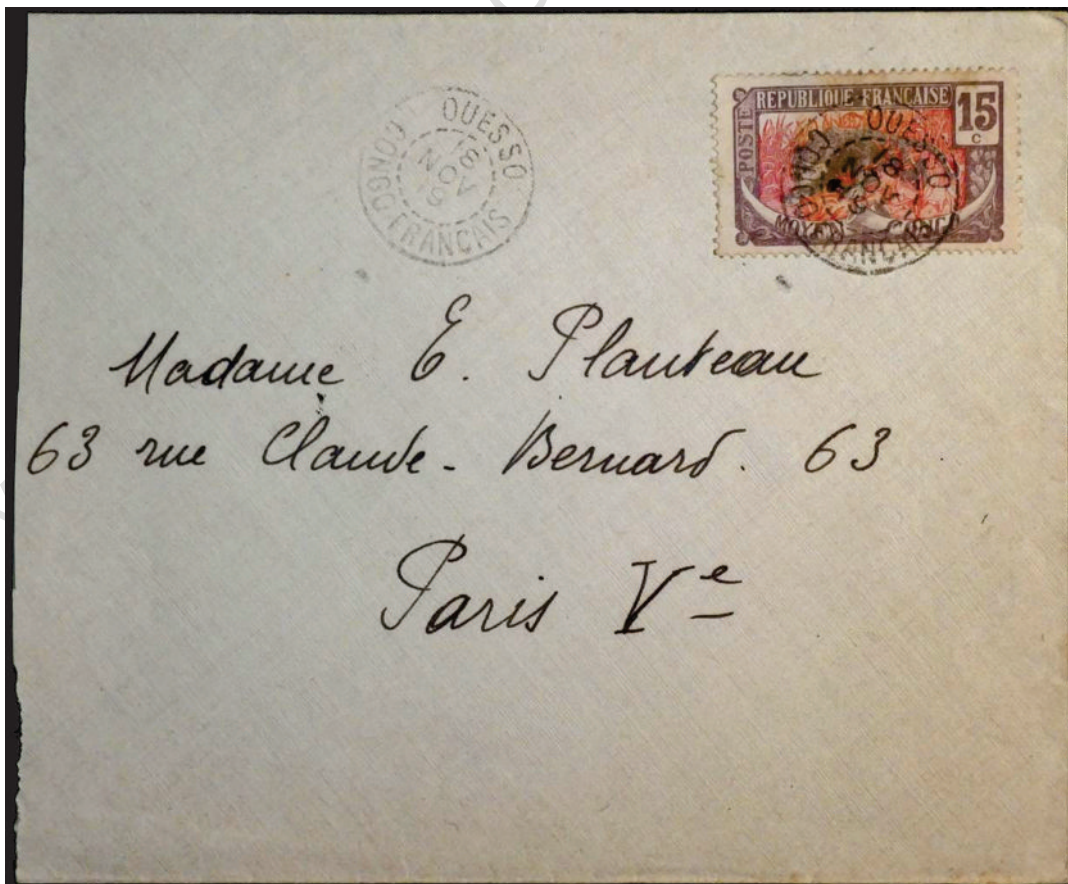


Figure 18

Cover postmarked Ouessou 18 November 1919 to France

The reliance upon runners in this part of Cameroun continued for quite a number of years, until roads could eventually be constructed and services improved. This speaks well to the tenacity and dedication of postal and public works personnel, indigenous residents, and others to ensure communication and that the mails got through.

Quite a lot, considering the cost for a letter was only 15 or 25 centimes.

Any information and further insight, especially in regard to mail transport in the Middle Congo, would be most welcome, as would information about M. Jacques Planteau and his relatives.



Figure 19
Postal stationery envelope postmarked Ouesso 2 June 1918 to Nola

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Marianne de Muller

Mick Bister

Part 5: the 18 franc issue (YT 1011A)

‘Comment voulez-vous gouverner un pays qui a deux cent quarante-six variétés de fromage?’ once asked Charles de Gaulle in sheer frustration at the difficulties he faced in uniting his beloved country. I sympathise with his frustration as I am asking myself how can I rationalise a stamp which has two, three or four different types according to which source I am consulting and, then, unite those references into a rational discourse on the 18F *Marianne de Muller*?

The genesis of the four types

The first 18F value was issued in 1956 in the form of postal stationery postcard with the stamp impression in blue. In May 1958, an 18F adhesive, printed in green, was issued in sheets. At this point, there were no complications. The two productions were totally distinguishable from one another due to the difference in format and colour. However, just a few weeks later, in June 1958 there was a second printing of the 18F green adhesive. The rationale behind this action will be discussed later. A certain Monsieur M. Fournier quickly realised that the figure 18 was different in the two green printings. These two types were reported to the doyen of philately, Pierre de Lizeray who probably

published the findings in the *Bulletin Philatélique du Midi* in 1958 although my source is in his book ‘*Timbres de France*’ Volume 3 which was published by the BPM later in 1959. Types I and II were born.

In the same volume, Pierre de Lizeray reported on the discovery of another version of the 18F, this time a trial coil in orange. He does not disclose the name of the owner but being modest it was likely to be himself. He compares the coil design to the two printings in green and concludes that it is similar to the Type I but that there are sufficient differences to establish a new type. He also concludes that the 18F orange predates the green printings. Nevertheless, he does not attribute a type number to his discovery.

For many years, collectors, authors and catalogues alike recognised only the Types I and II of the 18F sheet printings in green. For some inexplicable reason, in the Yvert & Tellier catalogues the Type II is given precedence over the Type I in the classification. In reverse chronological order Type II is listed as Y&T 1011A and Type I is listed as Y&T 1011Aa (Figure 1). ‘*C’est un non sens!*’ exclaimed the esteemed philatelist Jean Boblique.



Figure 1

Identification of the Types I and II in the 2015 Yvert & Tellier Catalogue. Note that in the listing Type II supersedes Type I. The anomaly remains unchanged in the 2023 edition.

Eventually, recognition was given to the original 18F blue as a distinct type in its own right. Although chronologically inaccurate, it was designated as Type III in the catalogue of the *Association des Collectionneurs d’Entiers Postaux* and fully described in ‘*bleus*’ de *Marianne de Muller*’ by Jean Boblique, published in *L’Echo de la Timbrologie* in April 1969. To my knowledge, nothing was further said about the coil issue until Storch & Françon published ‘*Les Roulettes*’ in 1977 and, later, in their catalogue ‘*Marianne 1983-1984*’ in which they referred to a coil trial in blue, not orange, and designated it Type I!

Even Jean-Luc Trassaert, in his seminal *étude* published by *Le Monde des Philatélistes* in 1983, referred only to the two types of the 18F sheet printings in green. However, he compensated for this in the September 1995 edition of *Le Monde des Philatélistes*, when he published an in-depth study of the 18F *Marianne de Muller* entitled ‘*Le 18F “Muller” et ses quatre types*’. Trassaert completely tore up the previous nomenclature and established a new listing of the four types. They were the Type I - the unissued coil printing in orange, Type II - the postal stationery postcard in blue,

Type III - the first printing in green of the adhesive and Type IV - the second printing of the adhesive.

Despite what the major catalogues still proclaim, it will be Trassaert’s radical reclassification that I shall adhere to in my article. It served me well when I exhibited my *Marianne de Muller* collection at Autumn Stampex in 2003 and at St Petersburg in 2007 and I still have every confidence in it now. The published diagrams in the Yvert & Tellier catalogue and other reference books and articles only offer vague representations of the types and hence the following illustrations (Figure 2) and others are not reproduced from previously published works but created afresh from material in my own collection.

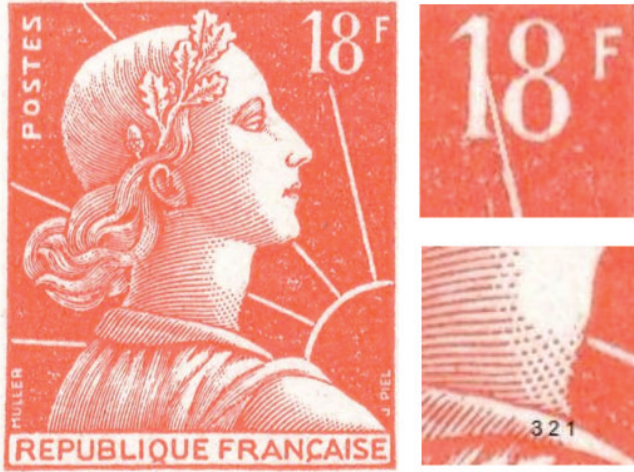
Type I: 18F Unissued coil

Unfortunately, there are no records or preparatory material of the unissued Type I coil in the archives of the *Musée de la Poste* and all examples of it appear to be in dealers’ stocks or in private hands. I possess a die proof in turquoise (Figure 3) but, unfortunately, the ink colour reference number does not feature on it as it would have done on a colour proof. I

¹ ‘How can you govern a country which has two hundred and forty-six varieties of cheese?’

Figure 2

The four types of the 18F Marianne de Muller



Type I

- Figure 1 has a bold, well-defined serif and a foot extending to the right
- The top of the figure 1 slopes down to the right
- The extended sun ray touches the middle of the figure 1
- Three lines of white cross-hatching emerge from the collar
- Left tail of the letter Q of REPUBLIQUE is broken



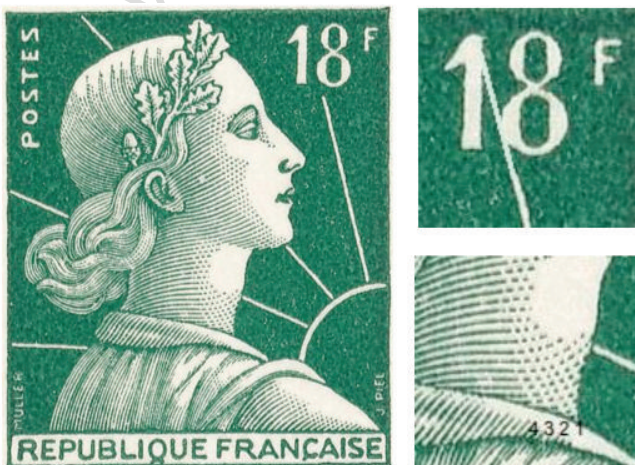
Type II

- Figure 1 has a slightly concave serif and one foot extending to the left
- The top of the figure 1 is horizontal
- The extended sun ray almost reaches the top of the figure 1
- Three lines of white cross-hatching emerge from the collar; the third one is very weak
- The letter Q of REPUBLIQUE is normal although on the proofs its right tail is broken



Type III

- Figure 1 is narrow, has a weak serif and one foot extending to the right
- The top slopes down to the right
- The extended sun ray touches the middle of the figure 1
- Four lines of white cross-hatching emerge from the collar.
- Letter Q of REPUBLIQUE is normal but left tail appears broken on lighter printings
- Height of stamp: 21.5 mm



Type IV

- Figure 1 has bold serif, is shorter and has no feet. The top is horizontal
- The extended sun ray touches the top of the figure 1
- Four lines of white cross-hatching emerge from the collar
- The letters R and A in FRANÇAISE are joined together
- Height of stamp: 21mm



Figure 3
Die proof in turquoise of the unissued 18F Type I

have seen what I believe to be Type 1 colour proofs on the philatelic market printed in Lorilleux inks N° 122Lx deep blue and N° 604Lx sage green. Trassaert, in his article *'Le 18F "Muller" et ses quatre types'*, illustrates two colour proofs printed in Lefranc inks N° 303Lc green and N°103Lc pale blue. I also possess an ungummed and imperforate block of four in orange extracted from the test printing (Figure 4); it shows at the top a faint rendering of the marginal bars indicating that it was printed off the master electro of 50 clichés (Figure 5)². A fellow collector in France though possesses what the French would call an *'aristocrate'* in the Muller family – a unique horizontal strip of 6 from this plate (Figure 6). This strip does not appear in Trassaert's *étude*

published in 1983 although he refers to its discovery by his contemporary, Pierre de Lizeray; it is, however, illustrated in his 1995 article.

On the 20 June 1957, the 15F internal letter rate was increased to 20F for which the new 20F *Marianne de Muller* value was issued in sheets, booklets and coils. The fact that the orange printing has been found in a horizontal strip of six means but one thing: it came from a sheet printed without a central margin which was intended for the production of coils. Furthermore, the fact that proofs exist in a variety of colours suggests that the 18F value had been a strong contender for a future internal letter rate but was it for 1957 or earlier. The jury is out.



Figure 4
Block of four of the unissued Type I in orange showing part of the marginal bars at the top of the sheet

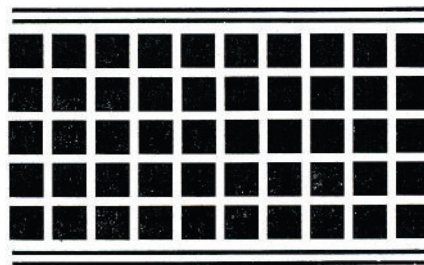


Figure 5
The configuration shown here is the 'master electro' from which the coil printing was made. It is flanked at the top and bottom by marginal bars and is without a gutter margin, hence the ability to extract a horizontal strip of 6 stamps

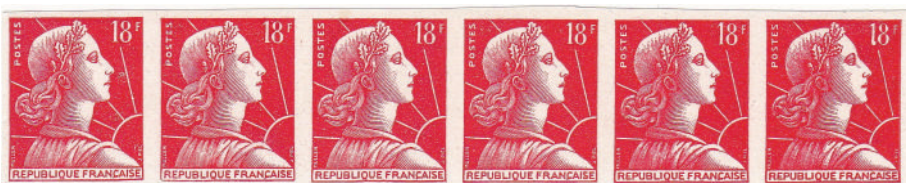


Figure 6
Horizontal strip of 6 of the Type I from the test coil printing
© Philippe Lanier collection
The scanner employed to copy this image has enhanced the red pigment

² Had full production of the coils proceeded, four copies of this 'master electro' would have been made, the marginal bars removed, the plates curved and, finally, butted together on the rotary press cylinder. The continuous coils would then be printed.

Type II: 18F Postal Stationery

The 18F postal stationery postcard with the stamp printed in blue was issued to meet the foreign postcard rate which operated from 1 May 1951 to 30 June 1957. It replaced the 18F *Marianne de Gandon* postcard issued in 1951.



Figure 7

Extract from the *bon à tirer* using a colour trial in Lefranc ink N° 134 Lc bleu and enlargement identifying its distinguishing features

© Archives of the Musée de la Poste

A new die, Type II, was required as the printing would be from flat plates. The *bon à tirer* (Figure 7) authorising the postcard's production was issued on 6 November 1956. It was created using a Type II colour proof in Lefranc ink N° 134Lc bleu and annotated 'Authorisation to print the 18 francs postcard'. It is signed by a member of the 5th Bureau of

the *Direction Générale des Postes* but I have not been successful in attributing his name to a particular official. At the time, the *Secrétaire d'État aux PTT* was Eugène Thomas but the signature does not appear to be his, but maybe that of a junior minister. The insert indicates the principal features of Type II as described earlier in Figure 2.



Figure 8

From left to right: i) extension illustrated by ACEP, ii) extension superimposed on the *bon à tirer* printing, iii) extension superimposed on the postal stationery printing and iv) a comparison between the ACEP and computerised extensions

A close examination of both the stamp on the *bon à tirer* and the stamp printed onto the postal stationery postcard reveals a discrepancy in the description of this type as published in previous works in France. According to the *Association des Collectionneurs d'Entiers Postaux*, a group of specialists in French postal stationery, the most significant feature of this type is the theoretical extension of the sun ray below the figure 18. In its handbook, the ACEP states that

the extension reaches the middle of the figure 1 and illustrates it in an accompanying drawing (Figure 8i). However, with the more accurately computerised extensions which I have superimposed on scans of the stamps themselves (Figures 8 ii and iii), it is quite clear that the extension almost reaches the top of the numeral. Figure 8 iv confirms the discrepancy; in the ACEP drawing the dotted extension can clearly be seen veering off course.



Figure 9
Colour proof in carmine-rose
© Jean-Paul Fournier collection



Figure 10
Die proof in black

According to one source which I am unable to substantiate, the colour blue was selected from twelve different colour proofs. A fellow collector in France has such a colour proof in Lorilleux ink N° Lx 451 rose-carminé (Figure 9) which was the ink used for the 15F value. In my own collection I possess a die proof in black (Figure 10). Both of these items clearly display the sun ray extension reaching the top of the figure 1. We do not have an official date of issue for the postcard but it would have been printed and put on sale between the date of

the *bon à tirer* and that of the *feuille-modèle*, 30 March 1956 as shown in the oval handstamp (Figure 11). For some reason, certain sources still insist it was issued in 1955 which would predate the *bon à tirer*! The *feuille-modèle* records in the rectangular handstamp that the postcard was withdrawn on 2 July 1957 and replaced by the 20F postcard. The *feuille-modèle* and the postcards themselves were printed on what is described as *carton jaune* but there were also printings of the postcard on a buff card referred to as *carton chamois* (Figure 12).



Figure 11
(above: reduced 40%)
Feuille-modèle printed
on *carton jaune*
© Archives of the
Musée de la Post

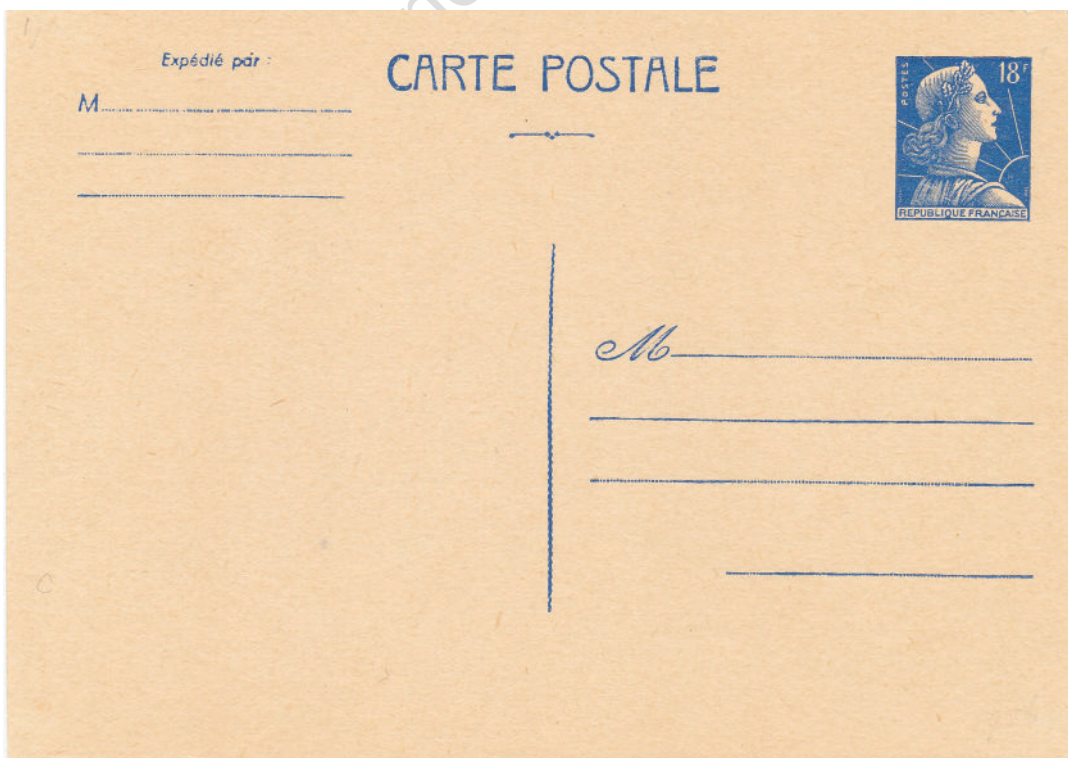


Figure 12
(left)
18F stationery postcard
printed on *carton
chamois*

Type III: 18F First Sheet Printing

The first 18F sheet printing in green was issued to meet the internal invoice rate from 1 July 1957 to 5 January 1959.

The *bon à tirer* (Figure 13), issued on 7 May 1958, is a colour proof pulled in Lefranc ink N° 316Lc *vert foncé*. The signature, again, is not easily identifiable but could be that of the *Secrétaire d'État aux PTT*, Eugène Thomas.

What can be readily observed is that the features of the stamp printed on the colour proof applied to the *bon à tirer* do not correspond to those of the stamp printings that it later spawned. Over the page, for comparison, are enlargements (Figure 14) of the *bon à tirer* stamp (left) and of a stamp from the first sheet printings (right).



Figure 13

(Left edge cropped to fit page width) Extract from the *bon à tirer* using a colour proof in Lefranc ink N° 316 Lc *vert foncé*
© Archives of the *Musée de la Poste*

There is no doubt that the die used to print the colour proof is not the same as the one used to create the plates for the sheet printings. In fact, what we have here is a Type II proof displaying all the features of the postcard printing. But why? The only conclusion that I can reach is that as a considerable variety of colour proofs had already been pulled from the Type II die for the postcard printing there were sufficient choices remaining from which to choose a colour for the Type III sheet printing. After all, it was the colour, not the type, that was being authorised by the *Secrétaire d'État aux PTT*.

It is worth noting that there is a strong similarity between the Type I and Type III designs but the defining difference is that

there are only three lines of cross-hatching above the collar in Type I yet four in Type III.

The production of the 18F *Marianne de Muller* was announced in the *Bulletin Officiel* on 5 May 1958. It would be sold to replace the larger format 18F *Beynac-Cazenac* which had been issued in October 1957, likewise intended for the internal invoice rate. The smaller format of the *Marianne de Muller* definitive was welcomed by the public. The authorisation to print the stamps was given on 7 May 1958 and printing commenced on 19 May 1958 and, after only a very short run, ceased on 30 May. The stamp was issued on 22 May. Dated corner blocks of the first and last day of



Figure 14



Bon à tirer

- Figure 1 has a slightly concave serif and one foot extending to the left.
- The top of the figure 1 is horizontal.
- The extended sun ray almost reaches the top of the figure 1.
- Three lines of white cross-hatching emerge from the collar; the third one is very weak.
- The right tail of the letter Q of REPUBLIQUE is broken

Issued stamp

- Figure 1 is narrow, has a weak serif and one foot extending to the right.
- The top of the figure 1 slopes down to the right.
- The extended sun ray touches the middle of the figure 1
- Four lines of white cross-hatching emerge from the collar
- The left tail of the letter Q of REPUBLIQUE is broken (but only apparent in light printings)



Figure 15

Dated corner blocks of the first and last days of printing of the Type III 18F *Marianne de Muller* both from Electro A of Cylinder A+B

printing are shown in **Figure 15**. Only one cylinder was used, Cylinder A+B on Press 9. During the printing process it was realised that the stamp was fractionally too tall, 21.5 mm instead of the normal 21 mm, which created problems when perforating the sheets afterwards. Moreover, the individual clichés were not always aligned correctly reducing further the space for the rows of perforation. A block of four stamps from an imperforate printing dated 20 May 1958 illustrates the problem (**Figure 16**).

Type IV: 18F Second Sheet Printing

Neither the Type III die nor the clichés on the cylinder could be reduced in size by simply filing down the top and bottom frames as such action would have encroached on the value at



Figure 16

Imperforate block from a sheet printed on 20 May 1958 illustrates the inconsistent spacing between the rows of stamps at positions 49, 50, 59 and 60. The dot in the right margin is known as a *point d'étoquiau** which is the impression left by one of the sprung bolts situated at intervals to cushion the impact between the printing cylinder and the impression cylinder.

* Occasionally spelt 'étoquieau'

the top or the inscription at the bottom. A new die, Type IV, was created and a new cylinder assembled which produced stamps with a reduced height of 21mm thus providing a wider path for the perforation.

There was no requirement for a *bon à tirer* as the authorisation for the Type III printing in green could be extended to the Type IV printing. As a consequence, there was no need to produce colour proofs. There are however two 'special' printings which warrant attention. With each value in the *Marianne de Muller* series a limited number of *épreuves de luxe* were printed, ostensibly to present to



Figure 17
Épreuve de luxe pulled from the Type IV die



Figure 18
Vertical strip of Type IV from test printing

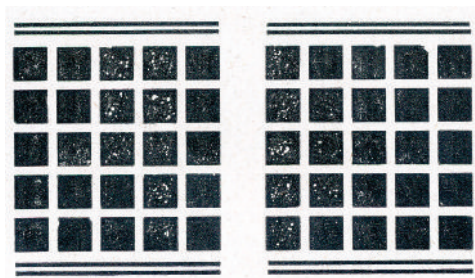


Figure 19
The configuration of the 'master electro' from which the test printing was made

dignitaries and officials, but which ultimately finished up on the philatelic market. In the case of the 18F value the *épreuve de luxe* was printed using the Type IV die (Figure 17) in a dull yellowish green. Test printings were also made in black from plates of 50 with marginal bars at the top and bottom (Figures 18 and 19).

Using the same Press 9 as the Type III issue, printing began off the newly designated Cylinder C+D on Thursday 12 June 1958 (Figure 20) but ceased just five working days later on Tuesday 17 June. The marginal bars beneath the 99th stamp were reduced from three to one presumably to render the press number more legible (Figure 21). Printing resumed on the same day and continued at regular intervals until 5 December. The colour was green rather than deep green but occasional printings were in a dull yellowish green (Figure 22) not unlike that of the *épreuve de luxe*.

A total of 112,630,000 stamps were printed (both Types III and IV) and they were withdrawn from sale on 11 April 1959. Their counterpart, the 18F



Figure 20
First day of printing of Type IV from Electro D of Cylinder C+D with full marginal bars under 99th stamp

Beynac-Cazenac was not withdrawn until 18 February 1961.

Postal Usage

As previously stated, the 18F *Marianne de Muller* was issued uniquely to meet the interior invoice rate although it is occasionally encountered on business cards where a 15F stamp would have sufficed. The Type III is much less common on cover than the Type IV and mail cancelled in May is particularly sought after (Figure 23).

I have not found any record of the 18F being officially issued in Algeria but the cover below is an example of late usage of the Type IV in the *département* (Figure 24).



Figure 21
First day of printing of Type IV with reduced number of marginal bars under 99th stamp



Figure 22
Printing in dull yellowish green

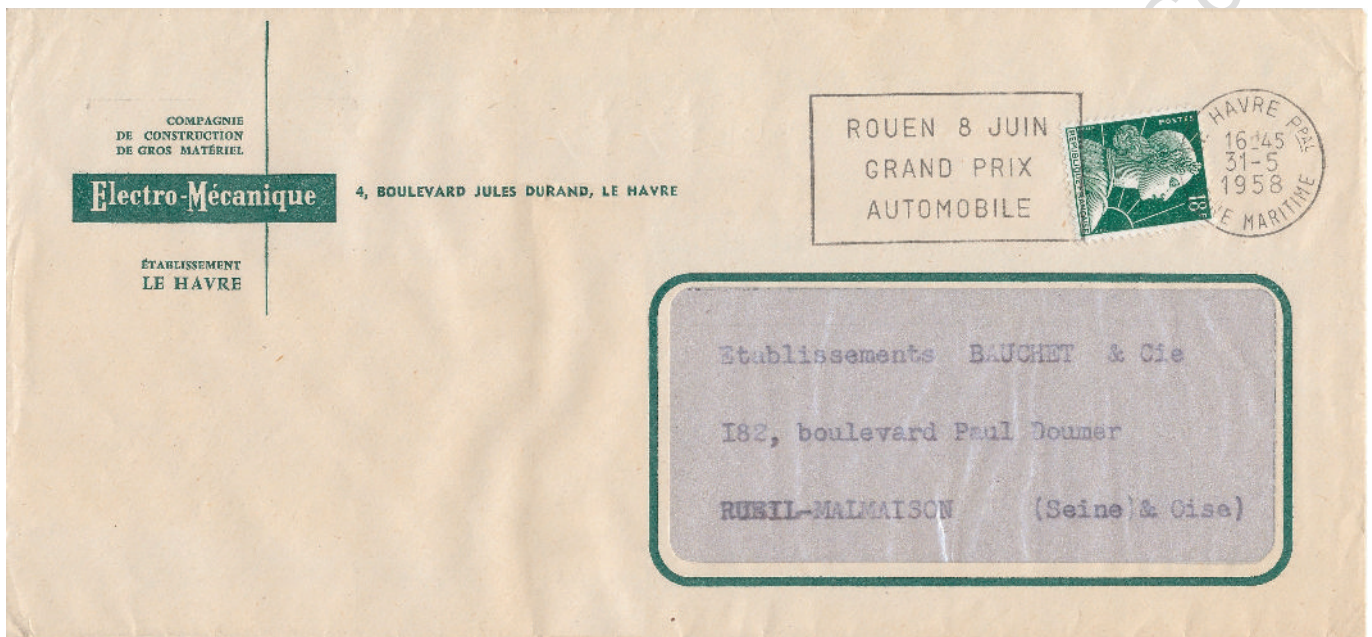


Figure 23
(reduced 20%)
Invoice window envelope franked with Type III 18F Marianne de Muller cancelled on 31 May 1958



Figure 24
Postcard from Oran, Algeria, to La Côte-aux-Fées in Switzerland cancelled 3 September 1959. The 30c Marceline Desbordes-Valmore issue pays the foreign postcard rate and the pair of Type IV 18F Marianne de Muller is in excess of the 20c airmail fee

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

David Parmley

Part 4

To open proceedings I shall borrow some words from Kermit the Frog, master of ceremonies for Jim Henson's seventies variety compendium performed by puppets with the odd human thrown in, often at the deep end.

“To introduce our guest stars
That's what I'm here to do
So it makes me really happy
To introduce to you.....”



YT 1771 / SG 2015

MOLIÈRE 1622-73

Molière was covered earlier but a single 1F value of 1973 marked the tercentenary of his death.

HIPPOLYTE JEAN GIRAUDOUX 1882-1944

Depicted on one of two 80 + 15c values in one of several 1974 Celebrities series he was an author and playwright whose works have been adapted for

film. During the occupation period Robert Bresson directed *Les Anges du Pêché* (*Angels of Sin*) and Giraudoux wrote the screenplay for *La Duchesse de Langeais* which was derived from a Balzac novel. After the war other films based on his works were *Double Destin* (*A Double Life*) starring Simone Simon (1954) and *La Folle de Chaillot* (*The Madwoman of Chaillot*) in 1969 which starred Katharine Hepburn and Paul Henreid heading a stellar cast.



YT 1822 / SG 2029

JULES-AMÉDÉE BARBEY D'AUREVILLE 1808-89



YT 1823 / SG 2030

From the same series d'Aureville was an author and poet who wrote mystery tales without recourse to the supernatural. His masterpiece is considered to be *Les Diaboliques* (*The She-Devils*), a collection of six short stories each featuring a woman who commits some form of crime. Published in 1874 this caused a public sensation and, deemed a danger to public morality, was suppressed on the grounds of blasphemy and obscenity.

Unsurprisingly first editions are rare and command prices over £5000. Several of the stories were adapted for films of little account.

Conversely his works inspired a curious 1952 Franco-Italian co-production *Les Sept Pêchés Capitaux* (*The Seven Deadly Sins*) in which a different director was responsible for each of the seven parts. No less than eleven writers were engaged for the screenplay and the sins required some reorganisation so as to incorporate an eighth. The stars included Gerard Phillips who we met in part three and the film sold just short of 2.4 million tickets.

PAUL as “HARLEQUIN”

This work by Picasso featured on the 80c value of the 1974 Europa set. “Harlequin” is one of the Zanni or comic servant characters from the Italian *commedia dell'arte* but is more generally known as a pantomime character notable for a diamond check costume and a shaved head, masked and carrying a wooden sword.



YT 1840 / SG 2077

MAURICE POTTECHER 1867-1960

A French writer depicted on a 1975 single 85c value alongside the Théâtre du Peuple which he founded at Bussang in 1895; as well as marking the 80th anniversary this was also the year in which the building was added to the list of historical monuments. The building is constructed entirely in wood, seats 1200 and has been in continuous operation up to the present day under the motto “Through Art for Humanity”



YT 1846 / SG 2085

LA FÊTE

A single 1976 1F value announced “*La Fête*” an exhibition of Summer festivals held at Les Tuileries, the gardens adjacent to the Louvre in Paris. The stamp depicts a minstrel, a harlequin and a clown. Many of these festivals are held each year and 24 events are depicted in two commemorative booklets issued in 2011 (YT C566 and SG C578); the structure of the booklets, which contain much background information, does not allow ready reproduction but the YT catalogue shows illustrations in the self-adhesive section under catalogue numbers 566-589.



YT 1888 / SG 2138

ÉMILE-HORTENSIUS-CHARLES CROS 1842-88

One of four 1F + 20c values in the 1977 Celebrities series depicted Charles Cros who began studies in medicine but abandoned those in favour of literature and science. His brother, Antoine-Hippolyte, was a pretender to the throne of the ancient kingdom of Araucania and Patagonia; his niece acceding to that realm as Queen between 1903-16.

YT 1956 / SG 2206

His work, *The Kipperd Herring*, inspired the theatrical monologue presentation. As a scientist he almost invented colour photography but had to concede to a similar process deposited with the French Academy of Sciences a year earlier. It was a similar tale with the phonograph (which he termed the Paleophone) – before he could construct a working model Edison, working independently, beat him to it. Over a number of years he was unable to persuade the French government to finance the construction of a giant mirror which could be focused to burn lines in the deserts of Mars and Venus and hence communicate with those planets.

The Académie Charles Cros (equivalent of the US Recording Academy) is named for him.

GEORGES BERNANOS 1888-1948

One of six 1F + 20c values in the 1978 Celebrities series featured Louis Emile Clément Georges Bernanos, an author whose works were adapted for the screen including a short – *Dialogue d'Ombres* (*Dialogue of Shadows*) and four feature films. The most notable *Sous le Soleil de Satan* (*Under the Sun of Satan*) starred Gérard Depardieu and won the Palme d'Or at the 1987 Cannes Film Festival; others were *Le Dialogue des Carmélites* (starred Jeanne Moreau), *Journal d'un Curé Campagne* (*Diary of a Country Priest*) which was considered Claude Laydu's finest performance and won the Grand Prize at the Venice Film International Festival, and *Mouchette*, directed by Robert Bresson and a prizewinner at the 1967 Cannes Film Festival.



YT 1987 / SG 2252

LEO TOLSTOY 1828-1910

YT 1989 / SG 2254

Another in this series showed Léon Tolstoy (adopting the Frenchified version of his name) but his inclusion is unclear as these are referenced as French celebrities and it is difficult to discern a French connection with this giant of Russian literature whose works have been adapted for over 60 films including no less than 19 versions of *Anna Karenina* and 14 of *Resurrection*. Surprisingly, perhaps, there are only six of *War and Peace*.

As may be expected many of these films were shorts, silent or foreign (principally Russian) and several designated lost (notably a 1927 United Artists' sound version of *Resurrection* starring Dolores del Rio). However *Anna Karenina* provides a rich vein of English-language productions – 1935 MGM starring Greta Garbo, 1948 Alexander Korda starring Vivien Leigh and Ralph Richardson, 1961 British television starring Claire Bloom and Sean Connery, 1985 US television starring Jacqueline Bisset and Christopher Reeve, 1997 US (filmed entirely in Russia for the only time) and starring Sophie Marceau and Sean Bean and most recently a 2012 joint US/British, and much award-nominated, effort starring Keira Knightley and Jude Law which cost US\$40m and grossed US\$69m.

The most acclaimed version of *War and Peace* is probably a 1956 Italian-produced, English-language epic directed by King Vidor and starring Audrey Hepburn and Henry Fonda (casting a fifty-year-old as a twenty-year-old raised a few eyebrows) with a strong supporting cast including Mel Ferrer, Oscar Homolka, Herbert Lom, John Mills, Jeremy Brett and Anita Ekberg in a breakthrough role. Highly rated in some 'Best Movie' lists it was widely nominated and won Best Foreign Film at the Golden Globes it sold 17.7 million tickets in Italy and earned over US\$6m in North American rentals.

A 1972 BBC adaptation starred Anthony Hopkins and Morag Hood and ran to twenty episodes with a total screen time of fifteen hours.

VOLTAIRE 1694-1778

Another of this 1978 series showed Voltaire (and Rousseau). We have met Voltaire earlier and Rousseau has no show-business connection.

**JEAN de La FONTAINE 1621-95**

The Red Cross charity set of 1978 depicted scenes from two fables – *The Hare and the Tortoise* and *The Town and the Country Mouse*; de La Fontaine collected fables from all over the world, many based on those of Aesop, and adapted them into free

YT 1990 / SG 2255



YT 2024 / SG 2286



YT 2025 / SG 2287

French verse publishing twelve books between 1668-94 containing 243 fables. Many have been adapted for film or television.

PIERRE ABELARD 1079-1142

Depicted on a 1F20 + 30c value in the 1979 Celebrities series Abélard was a medieval philosopher whose love affair



YT 2031 / SG 2295



YT 2032 / SG 2296

with his student Héloïse (shown in a vignette on the stamp) ends in tragedy. Adapted for film in a 1988 British production *Stealing Heaven* and filmed in Yugoslavia it received some favourable critical comment but was not a success.

GEORGES COURTELINE 1858-1929

Born Georges Victor Marcel Moinaux, and included in the above series, he first served in the military and civil service before writing poetry reviews for a newspaper and became a novelist; by 1890 he was writing plays for theatres in nearby Montmartre. His works were in a satirical style effectively implemented with his sharp wit and cynicism.

Les Gaiâtiés de l'Escadron (*Fun in the Barracks*) was a novel, adapted for the stage and filmed in 1932 (a re-make of a 1913 short) starring Raimu (who we met earlier), Jean Gabin and Fernandel and which was further re-made in Italy in 1952 as *The Cheerful Squadron* starring Vittorio De Sica. Another comedy *Messieurs les ronds-de-cuir* (*The Bureaucrats*) was filmed in 1936 and re-made in 1959. "les ronds-de-cuir" referring to special leather supports for the backsides of those who spent endless hours sitting at their desks. Like Shakespeare, Courteline died on his birthday which was June 25th.



YT 2032B / SG 2298

GEORGES ANDRÉ MALRAUX 1901-76

A slightly higher value of 1F30 + 30c depicted Malraux, a French politician and novelist whose early career was in archaeology. He was active in the Spanish Civil War and fought with the French resistance during the second world war being awarded the Croix de Guerre and the DSO by Great Britain.

His works were essentially philosophical or autobiographical in nature and he was frequently nominated for the Nobel Prize in Literature. *Espoir Sierra de Teruel* (*Days of Hope*), a war drama set in the Spanish Civil War, was filmed in 1940.

EUROVISION

A single 1F80 value issued in 1980 to mark the 25th anniversary of the European Broadcasting Union showing a satellite orbiting a stylised globe. The most notable manifestation of the



YT 2073 / SG 2337

organisation is the annual song contest which first aired in 1956 when it was won by Switzerland. That other winning songs should be *La, La, La, Boom Bang-a-Bang, Ding-a-Dong, A-Ba-Ni-Bi*, and *Diggi- Loo, Diggi-Ley* just about sums up the general level of mediocrity presented and we shall say no more about it other than the exception which proves the rule when the 1974 renewal launched the Swedish group Abba into super stardom after they won singing *Waterloo*.

COMÉDIE-FRANCAISE

The tercentenary of the founding, by a decree of Louis XIV, of the oldest active theatre in the World was marked by a 2F value of 1980. Situated at the corner of Rue de Richelieu and Avenue de l'Opéra it became a state-controlled entity in 1995 and is the only such theatre with a permanent company of actors. Popularly known as the House of Molière, as is the troupe which performed repertory pieces which were available online when the theatre was closed to the public during the Covid pandemic.



YT 2106 / SG 2378

LOUIS JOUVET 1887-1951

A French actor, theatre and film director featured on a 1F20 + 30c value of the 1981 Celebrities series. His most successful theatre production was *Dr Knock* in which he played the eponymous lead and, based on his early career as a pharmacist, delivered a convincing characterization of the crank doctor and this play became his theatrical standby. Forming his own company, Le Cartel de Quatre, he collaborated with Jean Giraudoux (see earlier) including the debut production of *The Madwoman of Chailiot* in 1945.



YT 2149 / SG 2393

Starring in 34 films (of which two were versions of *Dr Knock* in 1933 and 1951), the most notable being *La Fin du Jour* (*The End of the Day*), a 1939 release, directed by Duvivier (one of the most respected French directors) about retired actors living in a care home; *Les Bas-Fonds* (*The Lower Depths*) for director Jean Renoir (see later) in 1936 and also starring Jean Gabin (see later) about a bankrupt baron who shares digs with a charismatic thief; *Volpone* – a 1941 comedy extravaganza about a wealthy but miserly Venetian merchant based on a novel by Jules Romains; and *La Marseillaise*, another Renoir piece which presents a laid-back look at the French Revolution interspersing historical events with fictional scenes.

JACQUES OFFENBACH 1819-80

The German-born French composer is shown on a 1F40 + 30c value of the same series. Outside the spheres of classical music and operetta (of which he wrote nearly 100) he is probably best known for *Galop infernal* from the last act of *Orphée aux Enfers* (*Orpheus in the Underworld*) which is the most popular music for the can-can, originally a dance for



YT 2151 / SG 2395

couples but more commonly an energetic high kicking line dance for a chorus. Cancan in 19th century French slang meant “scandal” and became associated with the traditional last dance of an evening – a quadrille for couples - which often became a raucous affair. The can-can has become a staple of the cabaret repertoire at the Moulin Rouge.

Can-Can is a Cole Porter musical first performed in 1953 (and for which Gwen Verdon won a Tony award). It was subsequently filmed in 1960 starring Frank Sinatra, Shirley MacLaine, Maurice Chevalier, Louis Jourdan and Juliet Prowse. The score is some way short of Porter’s best work and subsequent revivals and a reworked film have done little to improve the show’s reputation. However no Porter show can be all bad and the score included the marvellous *It’s All Right With Me* which, although frequently performed by female singers, was actually written for a man to sing, as in the show and is so obvious from the words, and lament his lost love.

LOUIS PERGAUD 1882-1915



YT 2227 / SG 2516

Shown on a 1F60 + 40c value of the 1982 Celebrities series, Pergaud was a teacher who wrote books of poetry and in 1912 published *La Guerre des Boutons* (*War of the Buttons*) a novel which has run to 30 editions and concerns war play between children. Whilst starting humorously events become more sinister, rather like *Lord of the Flies*, as the lines between play and violence become blurred. The work is included in the French high school curriculum for literature and has been adapted for film on five occasions.

Other collections of short stories, generally referred to as “animal stories”, took animals of the Franche-Comté as the protagonists. *Tales of the Untamed. Dramas of the Animal World* won him the prestigious Prix Goncourt.

Although he sought to be a pacifist he was conscripted into the French Army during the Great War and in 1915, whilst a patient in a German POW hospital, he was killed by so-called “friendly fire”. A silly expression that; meaning to be shot on by one’s own side.

MARIONETTES

For no explained reason a single 1F80 value was issued in 1982 illustrating marionettes (stringed puppets) which were often used in children’s productions.

JULES VERNE 1828-1905

The Red Cross charity set of 1982 was in recognition of Jules Verne who was covered earlier. A 1F60 + 30c value shows a scene from *Five Weeks in a Balloon* and the other 1F80 + 40c value a scene from *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea*.



YT 2235 / SG 2543



YT 2247 / SG 2249



YT 2248 / SG 2250

STENDHAL 1783-1842

The 1983 Celebrities series included a 2F + 60c value featuring Stendhal who has been covered in an earlier piece.

JEAN EFFEL 1908-82

Effel, real name François Lejeune – the initials FL phonetically providing his pseudonym, was a painter, illustrator, cartoonist and journalist depicted on a single 4F value of 1983 (shortly after his death). His cartoon cycle *La Création du Monde* (*The Creation of the World*) was filmed as an animated comedy in 1958 and he was the graphic artist for a 1936 Jean Renoir film *La vie est à nous* (*Life is Ours*), a propaganda vehicle for the French Communist party. He was the poster designer for *The Seven Deadly Sins* (referred to earlier under d’Aurevilly).

YT 2284 / SG 2561



YT 2291 / SG 2579

ROMAIN ROLLAND 1866-1944

A 1F70 + 40c value of a series of six writers (also issued separately in booklet format) featured Romain Rolland, essentially a highbrow writer who won the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1915 and enjoyed close relationships with Sigmund Freud and Joseph Stalin. He did, however, have a strong belief in the democratisation of the theatre and its availability to all and to that end contributed two melodramatic plays based on French Revolutionary themes – *Danton* in 1900 and *The Fourteenth of July* in 1902.

JULES ROMAINS 1885-1972

Another 1F70 + 40c value featured Jules Romain a poet and writer whose play *Knock* was ably presented by Louis Jouvet (see earlier) as was *Volpone* for which he wrote the screenplay.

JEAN-PAUL SARTRE 1905-80

The third 1F70 + 40c shows Jean-Paul Sartre, an intellectual writer, political activist and a leading figure in 20th century French philosophy (a key figure in existentialism) and



YT 2355 / SG 2664



YT 2356 / SG 2665



YT 2357 / SG 2663



YT 2358 / SG 2667



YT 2359 / SG 2668



YT 2360 / SG 2666

Marxism. He declined the 1946 Nobel Prize in Literature for fear it would limit the scope of his writing. In 1948 the Roman Catholic church placed the Sartre oeuvre on its *Index Librorum Prohibitorum*.

Films based on his work include *No Exit (Huis-clos)*, 1962; *La Putain respectueuse (The Respectful Prostitute)*, 1952; *The Condemned of Altona (Les séquestrés d'Altona)*, 1962 – starring Sophia Loren – and *Les jeux sont faits (The Chips are Down)*, 1947.

I suppose it was inevitable that such a character would attract the attention of the *Monty Python* team and so it was. Following discussion of everyday issues of holidays, the difficulty of burying a cat which will not keep still and putting down a budgie Mrs Premise and Mrs Conclusion were engaged in an argument in the laundrette as to the true meaning of Sartre's *Roads to Freedom*. To resolve the issue they telephone Mrs Sartre (who Mrs Premise had met whilst on holiday in Ibiza). She advises that Jean-Paul is out distributing pamphlets but expects to return around six. An appointment is made and the pair go off to Paris where they arrive at an apartment block and go through the list of occupants (which includes the Duke and Duchess of Windsor, Yves Montand, Jacques Cousteau, etc) with Jean-Paul and Betty-Muriel Sartre residing at Flat 8. Ringing the bell, they are greeted by Betty-Muriel, a ratbag with a fag in her mouth and a duster over her head. The flat is a mess with papers everywhere which are only kept in some sort of order

by a goat eating leaflets. "If it wasn't for the goat you would never get in," observes Mrs Sartre. They ask to see Jean-Paul and are warned that he is in one of his moods and has already had a few glasses of *vin ordinaire*. Mrs Premise poses the question – "Your famous trilogy – *Rues à Liberté* – is it an allegory of man's search for commitment?" Jean-Paul answers "Oui", Mrs Conclusion swears, and off they go.

VICTOR HUGO 1802-85

Depicted on a 2F10 + 50c value, he was the first of our subjects, having appeared four times between 1933-8.

ROLLAND DORGELES 1885-1973

A novelist (born Rolland Lecavelé), shown on a 2F10 + 50c value, whose most memorable work was *Les Croix de Bois (Wooden Crosses)*, a moving study of the Great War published in 1919 with an English translation in 1920. This was adapted for film in 1932 and is cited as the best French film ever made about any war.

FRANÇOIS CHARLES MAURIAC 1885-1970

The sixth stamp in the series, a FFR2.10 + 60c value, showed François Mauriac, a writer and journalist whose *Thérèse Desqueyroux* was filmed twice - in 1962 and again in 2012 starring Audrey Tatou. He was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1952.

So that's another part of our journey completed and we've included muppets, marionettes, movies, music and *Monty Python* so here's to the next time as it's time to say goodnight.

Something for a vacant page in your album perhaps, from Niger

Collectors and philatelic agencies alike – though for different reasons (one to find something unhackneyed, the other to make yet more money) – must often search for a theme not already worked to death by stamp-issuing countries.

Here's something fresh, if that's the word, from Niger. In this instance, and uniquely perhaps, the Editor and I would probably be quite happy *not* to know of other issues exploring this theme!



Michael Round

YT 754 / SG 1137 / Sc 780 (enlarged)

The adoption of stamp vending machines in France

Jean-Luc Raffel

Part 1: Machines and Technology

As the years go by and the copy and pasting from one source to another other has brought about errors and/or inaccuracies, I would like to challenge certain writings. So a little historical review is in order in which I will rely mainly on contemporary texts and illustrations that I have been able to collect, here and there. The website *gallica.bnf.fr* has made my task much easier¹ but I will admit that it's not over. More than a hundred years later there is still work to be done and every time I want to move on to another period, I still discover new things about our first vending machines and coils. After exclusive use in the Paris post offices, we find evidence of them in Algeria, then after the Great War they also arrive in the *Grand Est*². And recently a reading, or rather an overview, of a thesis in Dutch³ (Google translation is not at its best) necessitates a trip to Brussels to the state archives in Belgium⁴ with perhaps new revelations for the first automatic machines installed in France.

It was after three unsuccessful attempts, abandoned at the end of 1903⁶, of the JANISCH, KITAPGI and AUBIN & GROSSET machines (the latter very similar to the 'DICKIE' system), that, on 13 March 1908, a new type of vending machine was demonstrated and trialled at the *Hôtel des Postes* in the Rue du Louvre, Paris. The machine arrived with great fanfare and made a few lines in the Parisian and provincial dailies.

You will all recognise this new vending machine in the picture (Figure 1). It is an ABEL which arrived in France after its unsuccessful five-month trial in London from February 1907 to July

1907. It was manufactured by the Deutsche Abel-Postwertzeichen-Automaten-Gesellschaft (or DAPAG), also known for its POKO franking machines which were renamed, in France in the 1920s, to COMPTOPOST. The ABEL machine was specifically designed to sell 10c postage stamps.



Figure 1
The 'ABEL' 10c stamp vending machine

The earliest press articles that I have read, but are without photos, are from 14 March, 1908, and from the daily newspapers 'Comœdia', 'La Presse' and 'Le Journal'.

We would have to wait until the end of May 1908, to see the arrival of other ABEL vending machines designed to sell the 10c letter card and the 5c postage stamp. 'Le Petit Journal', published on the 16 May 1908, reported the arrival at the *Hôtel du Poste* of the new equipment and recorded the enthusiasm of the crowds who came to watch the machines in action (Figure 2). 'La Liberté', on 7 June, similarly commented on their arrival and on the ease of operation (Figure 3).

On 1 June 1910 a contract was signed between the 'French Society of Automatic Distributors ABEL' and the Postal Administration.

As we can see from the above extract from the *Journal officiel de la République française*, (Figure 4) the parties in the contract agreed that on "1 June 1917, it would be renewable by tacit agreement every seven years". But the manufacturers of the ABEL machine were not the only company to benefit from such an agreement. Mrs. Georgine KERMODE (née FAWNS) and Miss Katrine Ellen FAWNS (I correct the spelling error in the *Journal Officiel*) who were agents for the DICKIE distributors in Europe had the identical tacit agreement. There being no advertising in the press at the time it is therefore now impossible to give a date of arrival in France from Britain of the first KERMODE & FAWNS machines.

¹ Gallica is a digital library at the Bibliothèque nationale de France and its associates (<https://gallica.bnf.fr/>).

² The region that was under the rule of the German Empire from 1871 to 1918

³ 'De introductie van automatische verdeelmachines voor treinticketten en postzegels in het begin van de 20ste eeuw' (The introduction of automatic dispensers for train tickets and stamps in the early 20th century) by A Margot

⁴ Archives de la Guerre. Séquestres - SOBELHO, société anonyme belgo-hollandaise de distributeurs automatiques (<https://arch.arch.be>)

⁵ 'Le Radical' 27 December 1903 page 1 - 'Les Réformes Postales'

⁶ Regarded as the first stamp vending machine invented by Robert Dickie in Wellington, New Zealand

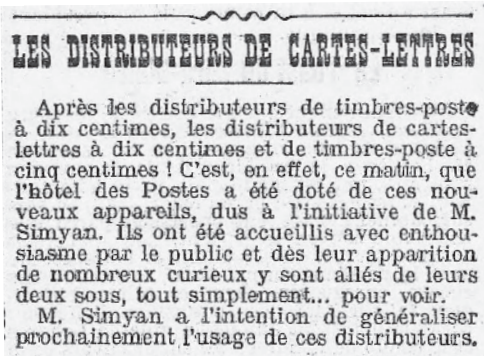


Figure 2
Extract from 'Le Petit Journal'

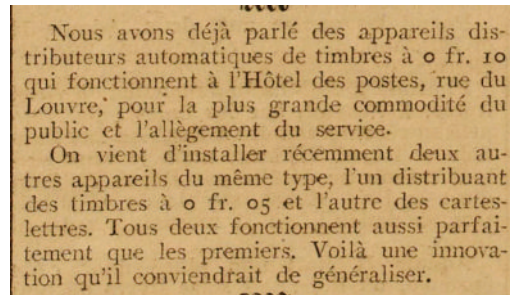


Figure 3
Extract from 'La Liberté'

M ^{rs} Kermodé et miss Fawres, 21, rue Godot-de-Mauroi à Paris.	Exploitation de distributeurs automatiques de timbres-poste.	1 ^{er} juin 1917, renouvelable par tacite reconduction par périodes de sept années.	Six mois avant l'expiration de chaque période septennale.
Société française de distributeurs automatiques Abel, 54, rue Taitbout, Paris.	Exploitation de distributeurs automatiques de timbres-poste.	1 ^{er} juin 1917 renouvelable par tacite reconduction par périodes de sept années.	Idem.

Figure 4
Extract from the 'Journal officiel de la République française', page 968, 30 January 1913

The April 1914 edition of 'Impressions', a review published by the Senate (Figures 5 and 6), provides us with some statistics such as the number of Parisian offices with vending machines (100) and the quantity of stamps sold per month/per machine (2,000). It also mentions the refusal of the manufacturers to install machines in the provinces because of the lack of publicity and insufficient guarantee of their usage. But new difficulties arose in the application of this agreement. The PTT was contracted to supply the stamps for the vending machines but it could only do so if the coils were entirely compatible with the machine's mechanisms. It would therefore be necessary for the vending machine's agent to make available a model to the PTT so that the printers of the coils could adapt accordingly to the measurements. However, the agents refused.



Figure 5
'Impressions', April 1914

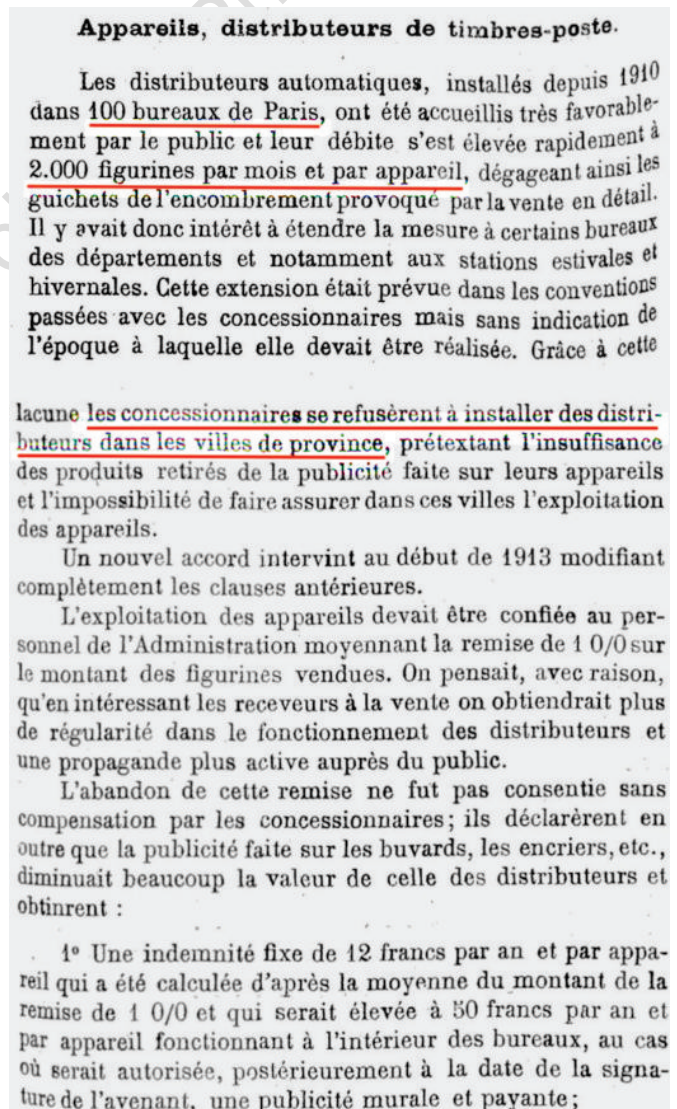


Figure 6
(part a) Extract from 'Impressions' with relevant text underlined in red by the author

2° Le remboursement de la taxe de 10 francs par appareil à percevoir au profit du Trésor par application de la loi de finances du 8 avril 1910.

Par contre, en cas d'accumulation dans les distributeurs de jetons ou de pièces de monnaie n'ayant pas cours, les concessionnaires sont tenus de rembourser le montant de la perte, déduction faite de la remise de 1 0/0 sur le produit de la vente.

Dans un délai de deux ans un certain nombre de bureaux de province et notamment les stations balnéaires devront

Mais de nouvelles difficultés se sont élevées pour l'application de cette convention. L'Administration est tenue d'alimenter les appareils mais elle ne peut le faire que si les roulettes de timbres-poste s'adaptent exactement aux organes du distributeur.

Il est donc indispensable que le concessionnaire mette à sa disposition un type de ces organes afin que la confection des roulettes soit réglée suivant les dimensions du type. Or le concessionnaire s'est refusé à cette communication et prétend imposer l'achat de machine à fabriquer les hobines.

Cette thèse nous paraît insoutenable. L'Administration doit d'abord exiger qu'on lui fournisse le moyen de remplir les charges de son contrat. Elle examinera ensuite si elle a intérêt à acquérir la machine qu'on lui propose.

Figure 6

(part b) Extract from 'Impressions' with relevant text underlined in red by the author

A later agreement in 1913 had overcome these issues but there were further difficulties as it was the responsibility of the *service comptable* for making the spools. We must not forget that it was the *atelier* that was responsible for (only) printing the stamps but that the *service comptable* was responsible for the manufacture of the spools, the assembly of the coils and the quality control.

It was on 29 April, 1914 that the front page of the daily 'Le Radical' informed us of the arrival of a brand-new type of machine being tested in the waiting room at Saint-Lazare station.

It had taken nearly five years for this machine, patented in Canada and registered on 21 August 1909, to be trialled in France.

There is also a Swiss patent application (N°49816 of June 24, 1909) but the Cockerel is not present. The design with a cockerel is taken from a patent N°122391D of 7 December 1909.

(Figure 7)

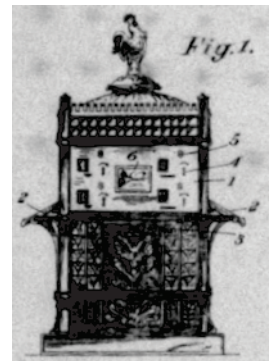


Figure 7
The automatic post office as it appears in a 1909 patent
© Espacenet

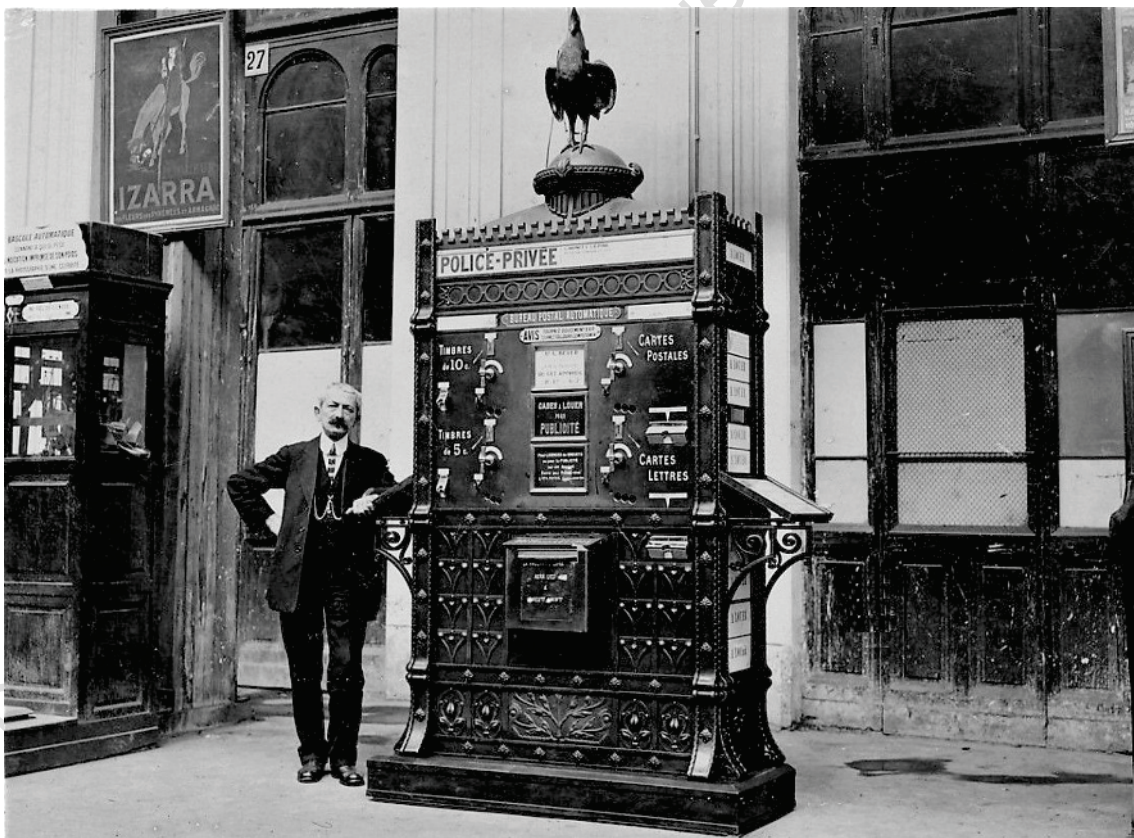


Figure 8

'Système de distributeur automatique avec publicité combinée'
or combined automatic post office and advertising kiosk

This Swiss machine, patented by Mr Arthur MEYER and Mr Charles JUNOD, was a veritable 'automatic post office' combining dispensers of 5c and 10c postage stamps and of postcards and letter cards, together with a mailbox, writing

desks and advertising facilities. Monsieur Meyer was reported present at the inauguration of the machine and it might be he in the photograph (Figure 8). But the installation was to have a short lifespan there.



Figure 9

Extract from the 'Excelsior' of 12 December 1914

The Great War sounded the death-knell for the German ABEL machines, firstly, due to the sequestration of German assets and therefore those of the ABEL company (Figure 9) and, secondly, as a result of the decommissioning of their vending machines in Paris.

The 'Intransigent' reported how the PTT initially blocked the slots on the vending machines and attached a notice saying 'Closed for repairs' but, later, on 2 September 1915, fifty-one such machines were auctioned at the Hôtel Drouot in Paris (Figure 10).

The withdrawal of the German ABEL stamp vending machines made way for the installation of fifty to one hundred KERMODE to be distributed in the Paris post offices. A market study Paper N°131/2 confirms the existence of the one hundred KERMODE & FAWNS machines in Paris in 1917 when the company was called upon to update the mechanism to deliver 15c stamps instead of 10c (Figure 11). Initially it was envisaged that the machines be returned to England for

the modifications but the risk of transport by sea was too great. Instead, the necessary mechanisms were sent to France accompanied by an engineer and two technicians. In the same market survey Mr PETIT, member of the Marketing Committee, proposed that the decommissioned German ABEL machines should likewise be upgraded (Figure 12). But what *did* happen to them?

One had to wait until 23 November, 1915 before the 'bobines' officially became known as 'roulettes' although the term 'roulette' appears as early as June 1911 in the annals of the PTT. In the early days the machines' agents only received half sheets of 150 postage stamps and it was their responsibility to make up the small 'bobines' themselves but nothing prohibited them from reallocating them, which the ABEL company must certainly have done for use in its POKO franking machines. Later agents and post offices could order ready-made coils of 600 and 1,200 (Figure 13).

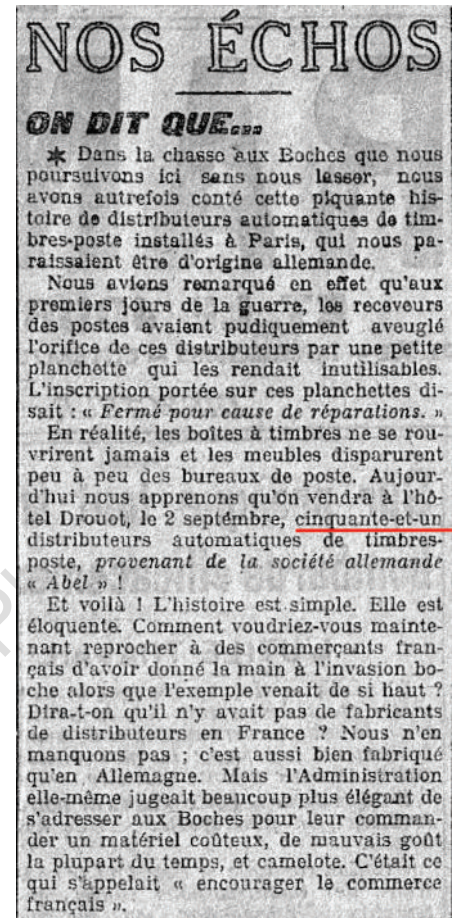


Figure 10

Extract from the 'Intransigent' of 31 August 1915

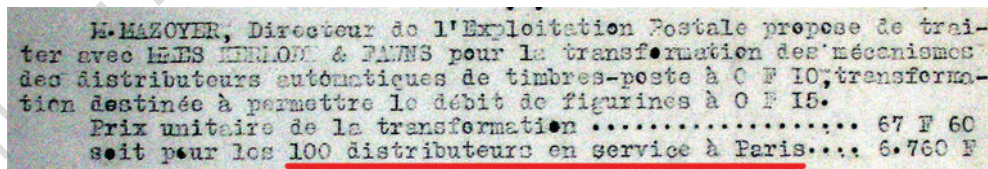


Figure 11

Extract from the market study dealing with the transformation of the KERMODE & FAWNS stamp vending machines

© Les Archives Nationales (Le CARAN),
Ref : F/90/21774 Meeting of 27 March 1917, Market 131/2

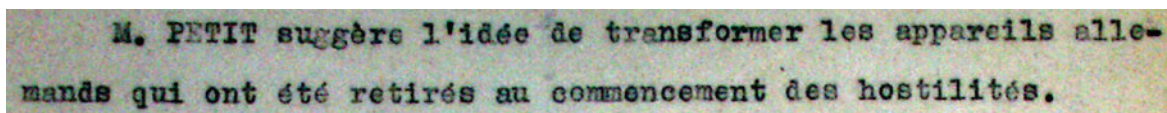


Figure 12

© Les Archives Nationales (Le CARAN),
Ref : F/90/21774 Meeting of 27 March 1917, Market 131/2

Figure 13

Extract from Page 50 of the *Bulletin Mensuel des Postes et des Télégraphes* of January 1916 announcing availability of coils

CIRCULAIRE N° 446 C. du 23 novembre 1915 relative à la création de roulettes de timbres-poste.

Il vient d'être créé des roulettes de timbres-poste destinées à être utilisées soit pour les distributeurs automatiques, soit pour les machines à affranchir. Le nombre de figurines dont se composent ces roulettes ainsi que le prix de vente de ces dernières sont indiqués ci-après :

Roulettes de 600 figurines à 0 fr. 05.....	30 francs.
Roulettes de 1,200 figurines à 0 fr. 05.....	60 —
Roulettes de 600 figurines à 0 fr. 10.....	60 —
Roulettes de 1,200 figurines à 0 fr. 10.....	120 —

La remise de 1 p. % sur la vente des timbres-poste est également allouée sur la vente desdites roulettes.

Il n'est pas fixé de minimum quant au nombre de roulettes que peut commander chaque bureau, mais les commandes collectives n° 615 bis doivent être faites par dix roulettes au minimum et multiples de dix.

Dans la comptabilité, il y aura lieu de traiter les roulettes comme les carnets de timbres-poste, c'est-à-dire que l'unité sera la roulette avec attribution d'une valeur brute correspondant au nombre de figurines y comprises.

Afin d'éviter toute confusion avec des roulettes d'un type spécial et provisoire réservé à des distributeurs fonctionnant déjà dans certains bureaux, les commandes n° 611, les relevés n° 615 et les états collectifs n° 615 bis indiqueront distinctement s'il s'agit de roulettes pour distributeurs automatiques ou de roulettes pour machines à affranchir (Ex. : *Distrib. — Mach. à aff.*).

Before we study the philatelic side of the KERMODE & FAWNS and ABEL stamp vending machines, we need to examine the internal technology regarding how the coils were a) delivered (top) and b) separated (bottom) as shown in the diagram below (Figure 14).

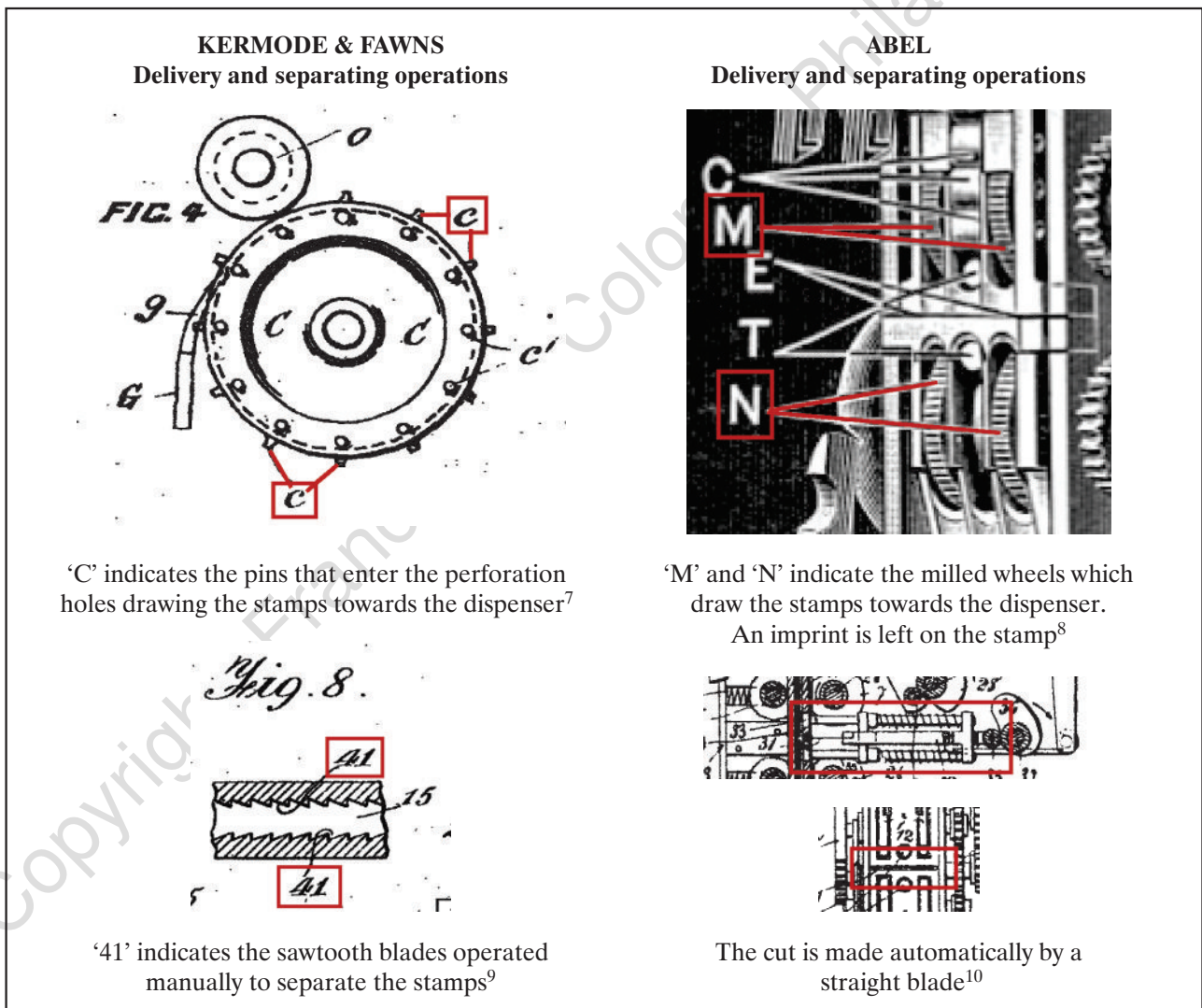


Figure 14

Comparison of the delivery and separating operations in the KERMODE & FAWNS and ABEL machines

⁷ Extract from Patent GB190425875 of 28 November 1904, Robert James Dickie and John Henry Brown

⁸ Extract from page 115 of 'La Nature' N°1913. 22 January 1910

⁹ Extract from Supplement GB190719500 to Patent GB190425875 of 30 August 1907, Katrine Ellen Fawns and Georgine Kermode

¹⁰ Extract from Patent AT37034 of 21 January 1907, Heinrich Wollheim

Precursors of the French postal card

Frans Jorissen

Part 1

This year, it is exactly 150 years ago that the first official French postal card was introduced, on 15 January 1873. The idea of the postal card was launched in 1865 by Heinrich von Stephan, at the 5th Conference of the German Postal Association in Karlsruhe (Figure 1). In January 1869, Emmanuel Herrmann published an article in the Viennese

magazine *‘Die Neue Freie Presse’*, in which he explained the economic advantages of such a product. The Austrian Post Office was convinced and, on 1 October 1869, the first official postal cards were issued simultaneously in Austria and Hungary (Figure 2).

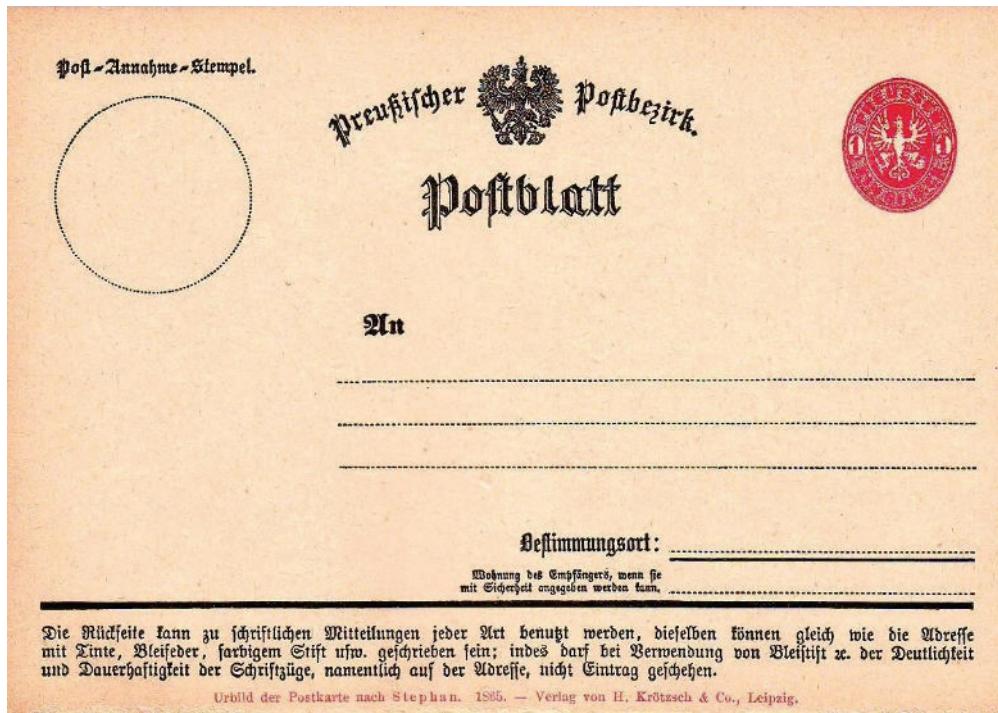


Figure 1

Reconstruction of the *‘Postblatt’* proposed by Von Stephan in 1865.

This reconstruction was produced by Kalckhoff in 1911, based on the detailed original description. It is clear that Von Stephan envisaged a postal stationery card (with imprinted indicium), with the reverse being reserved for correspondence. This *‘Postblatt’* is very similar to the postal cards issued in 1870 by the North German Postal Association, except that those were formular cards, which had to be franked with one or more stamps.

Figure 2
The first postal card of Austria, sent on 2 October 1869, from Weitentrebetsch (now Široké Třebčice in the Czech Republic) to Prague. The Austrian Post Office had opted for a greatly reduced postcard rate of 2 kreuzer, compared to the long-distance letter rate of 5 kreuzer



In France, the first official postal card was not introduced until 15 January 1873. This made France one of the last Western European countries to do so, two to three years later than Austria/Hungary (1 October 1869), several German states (August-September 1870), Luxemburg, Great Britain, Switzerland (all in late 1870), the Netherlands, Belgium, Denmark and Finland (all in 1871).

This does not mean that the postal card was completely unknown in France before 1873. In fact, before the first official postal card was issued by the Post Office, a wide variety of postal cards had already been circulating on the French territory, many of them being related to the Franco-Prussian war of 1870-1871. These precursors are the subject of a short series of articles of which this is the first one.

Printed cards without a wrapper

Already in June 1859 (earlier than in all other countries), printed advertising cards were allowed to be sent without a wrapper, according to the generally applicable printed matter rate (1 centime for printed matter up to 5 grams). These printed advertising cards are referred to as ‘*Carte-adresse*’ in the French regulations. Sending printed cards without a wrapper, which was initially introduced as a trial, remained allowed at least until August 1871, when this possibility was no longer mentioned in the regulations. Of course, there is always doubt whether something not mentioned is forbidden, or whether everything not forbidden is allowed. In the period concerned, and contrary

to today, people mostly adhered to the first concept. To put an end to all doubt, sending printed cards without a wrapper (or crossband) was permanently banned in October 1873.

The sending of printed cards without a wrapper had thus been possible for at least 12 years. The cards can be simple advertising cards (Figure 3) but in many cases they announce an upcoming visit by a sales representative (Figure 4); in Germany such cards are called ‘*Vertreter-Karten*’. In some rare cases, the cards may be more or less lavishly illustrated (Figure 5). Such illustrated cards can also be considered as precursors of the much later illustrated postcards.



Figure 3

Printed card sent from Paris to Evreux around 1865. The postage (1 centime) was paid in advance, as indicated by the Paris ‘*Imprimé Paris - P.P.*’ cancel.

This is a card from the firm N. Antoine and Sons, advertising their Japanese ink

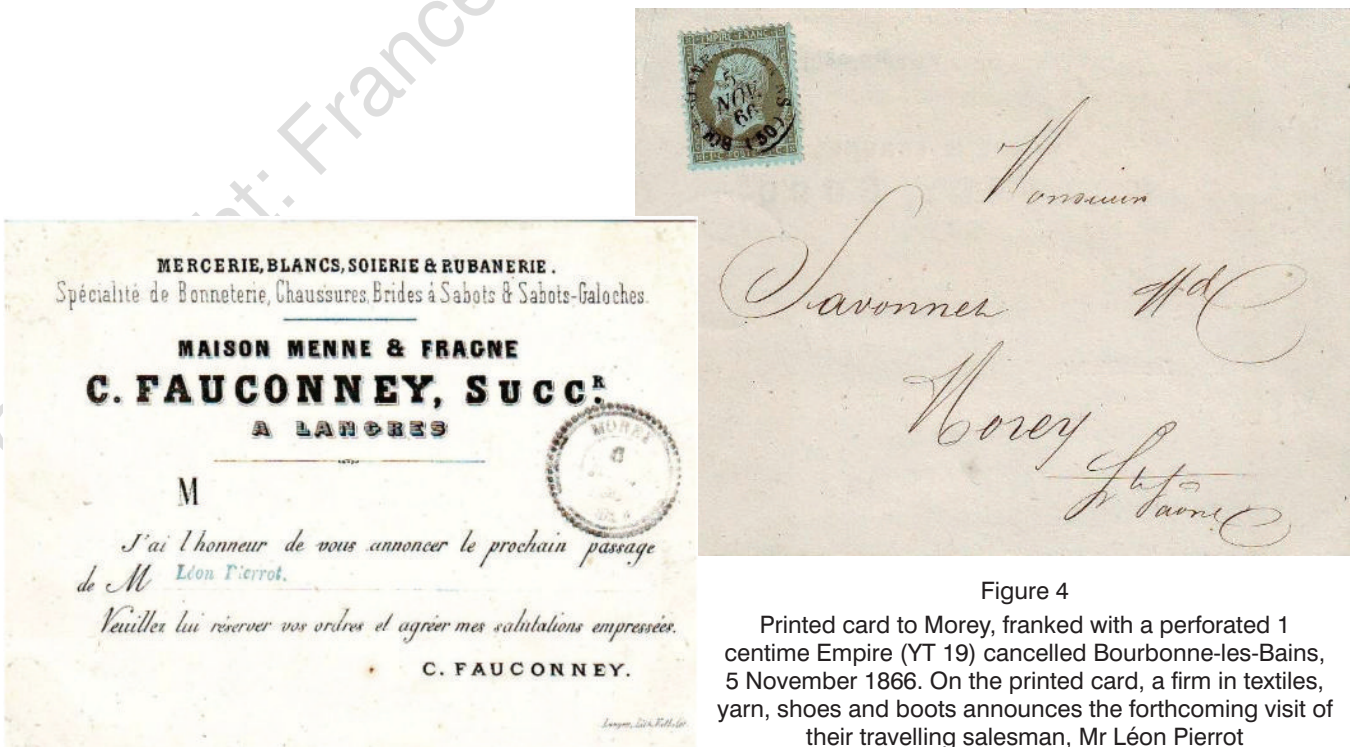


Figure 4

Printed card to Morey, franked with a perforated 1 centime Empire (YT 19) cancelled Bourbonne-les-Bains, 5 November 1866. On the printed card, a firm in textiles, yarn, shoes and boots announces the forthcoming visit of their travelling salesman, Mr Léon Pierrot

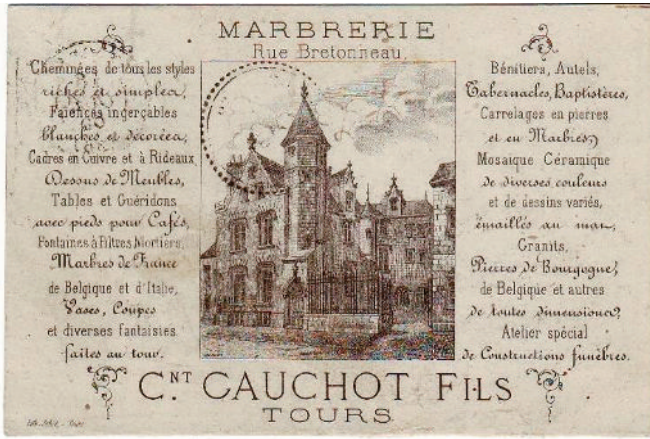


Figure 5

Printed card sent on 16 October 1865 from Tours to Lérémeré, franked with a perforated 1 centime Empire (YT 19)

The beautifully illustrated card, printed on both sides, was sent by the stonemasonry firm C. Constant and Sons. Today, the illustrated 'hôtel', built in the 15th century, can still be admired at number 22 in the Rue Bretonneau in Tours (Figure 6)

The vast majority of these cards were sent within France; printed cards sent abroad are extremely rare (Figure 7). Such cards had to be franked according to the printed matter rate for this country which, in the period before the UPU, had mostly been fixed in bilateral agreements.

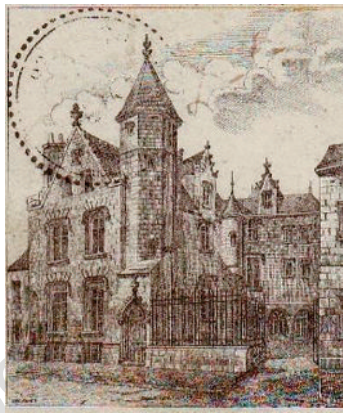


Figure 6

The premises of Cauchot Fils as illustrated on their card and the building as it appears today

BOBICHON PERE & FILS
Rue Brossard, 9, à Saint-Étienne (Loire)
CHARBONS & COKES EN PREMIER CHOIX
Pour tous les genres de Consommations.
Il est perçu 0,20 c. de Commission par tonne de 1,000 kil.
BASSIN HOUILLER DE LA LOIRE
PRIX COURANTS DES CHARBONS
Saint-Étienne, le 186

DÉSIGNATION DES DIVERSES QUALITÉS.	PRIX des charbons sur place les 100 k.
Forat 1 ^{er} choix.....	2 30
Id. bonne qualité.....	2 20
Id. qualité ordinaire.....	2 10
Grès bonne qualité.....	1 90
Id. qualité ordinaire.....	1 80
Grèlasons 1 ^{er} choix.....	1 75
Grèlasons bonne qualité.....	1 60
Débris choisis.....	1 40
Débris de gros creux bonne qualité.....	1 30
Débris de crible bonne qualité.....	1 30
Chatilles lavées première qualité.....	1 30
Petites Chatilles très-bon choix.....	1 25
Malbrook 1 ^{er} choix.....	1 40
Id. bonne qualité.....	1 30
Menu de forge 1 ^{er} choix.....	1 70
Id. id. bonne qualité.....	1 60
Id. id. qualité ordinaire.....	1 50
Menu raffort 1 ^{er} choix.....	1 40
Id. id. qualité supérieure pour tous les genres de chauffages.....	1 30
Menu Malbrook sortant.....	1 30
Id. sortant bonne qualité.....	1 15
Menu sortant grès.....	1 15
Menu fin lavé qualité supérieure.....	1 15
Petit Coke choisi bonne qualité pour chauffage domestique.....	1 80
Id. bonne qualité pour fours à chaux.....	1 10
Id. ou escarbilles id. id.....	1 00
Schiste bonne qualité id. id.....	0 75
Id. qualité ordinaire id. id.....	0 60
Coke lavé 1 ^{er} choix.....	2 80
Id. lavé bonne qualité.....	2 75
Id. lavé qualité ordinaire.....	2 30
Coke 1 ^{er} choix pour chauffage domestique.....	1 80
Agglomérés lavés 1 ^{er} choix.....	2 40
Id. qualité ordinaire.....	2 30
Transport approximatif. Charbons.....	
Cokes.....	

Les Charbons sont vendus chargés dans les wagons à la mine.
Le prix de transport est donné comme renseignement et sans garantie.



Figure 7

Printed card sent on 11 May 1867 from St Etienne to Vevey in Switzerland, franked with a perforated 5 centimes Empire (YT 20). The card, sent by the firm Bobichon Father & Sons, lists the prices of various grades of coal. The bilaterally fixed printed matter rate of 1 October 1865 is 5 centimes per 40 grams

The French example of sending printed cards without a wrapper was followed by many European countries, notably the German states (Baden, Bavaria, Prussia, North German

Postal Federation, Württemberg, etc.), Austria, Hungary, Finland and even Russia (Figure 8).

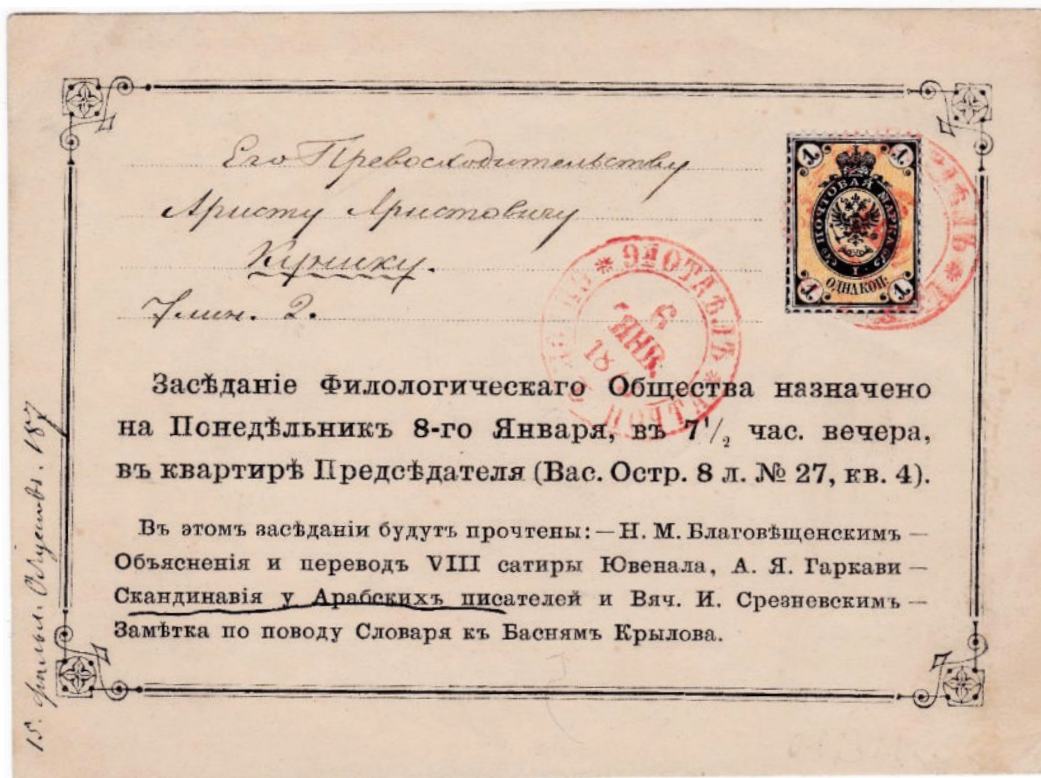


Figure 8

Printed card, sent locally in St Petersburg (Russia) on 6 January 1873, stamped with a 1 kopeck seal.

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Tables of French Postal Rates 1849 to 2011 by Derek J Richardson, 4th edition, published 2011 - PDF only	£10.00
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Censorship of Civilian Mail in Madagascar during World War Two Handstamps and Labels, by John Parmenter with Alain Hurpet et.al. Email: peterkelly35@btinternet.com	£10.00
The Sower – a Common Little French Stamp, by Ashley Lawrence FRPSL. Reprint available from the author. Email: ashleylawrence1000@gmail.com or 01202 766877	£25.00
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French Transsaharan Mails and History, Post Offices and Communications in Niger by Peter Kelly FRPSL, FSPH. The third book in the French West African and Saharan series available from the author: peterkelly35@btinternet.com	£20.00

SHORTER ITEMS - INCLUDING QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

‘*Avis de réception après le dépôt*’ Advice of receipt after time of posting

Edwin Voerman

Anyone who puts a letter in the French mail and wants to know afterwards whether it actually reaches its destination will send it by registered post and ask for an ‘advice of receipt’ (*Avis de Réception* or simply ‘AR’). Such a receipt may also be requested for payments. This chargeable service was created by the French Postal Service as early as 1859 and payment is shown by the affixing of stamps.

The Background

There had been periods when the stamps were affixed either to the advice of receipt or to the letter. Nowadays it is on the letter again. In the vast majority of cases, an advice of receipt is requested directly at the time of posting. In France, this is called *lors du dépôt*. From 1881, it was also possible to ask after posting whether the sent document had finally arrived. We call this *après le dépôt*.

Until 1926, it did not matter with regards to the tariff whether you asked for an acknowledgement of receipt during or after mailing, but this changed in 1926. Quite understandably so, because asking afterwards involves a time-consuming administrative process, especially if it concerns a foreign destination. The service known as *Réclamation* by which one could make a claim for non-delivery had always been available but, from 1976 onwards, a request for an advice of receipt after the time of posting was attributed the same name. Advices of receipt requested afterwards are greatly outnumbered by requests made during the postal delivery of a registered document. Indeed, retrospective requests are quite rare. Even modern retrospective information requests are still being offered at auctions at a price that makes many a classic item look insignificant.

I will describe one such retrospective request for confirmation of the arrival of a registered letter sent from France to Italy in 1966.

The Enquiry

Payment for making an enquiry was made by affixing stamps to the C4 RÉCLAMATION form. In this case it was a 1F fee (rate from 19 May 1964 to 12 January 1969), paid using a stamp from the 1965 *Série touristique d’usage courant* depicting *Les Alignements de Carnac* (YT 1440). The stamp, affixed to the front of the form (Figure 1), is cancelled 20 December 1966, the date on which the Loivre

office in the Marne received the request. In Section 1, in the upper part of the form, the margin reads *À remplir dans le service d’origine*. This is stating that the form should be completed at the office at Loivre where the dispatch in question originated from. This part of the form also describes the item that the request for clarification is about. We read here that it concerns a letter registered under number 0146, sent by Mr Daniel Delière four months earlier on 19 August 1966 at 6.15pm. The addressee has the same family name and is described as *Melle* (short for *Mademoiselle*) Nadine Delière, presumably the sender’s daughter, residing in the Italian holiday village of San Pietro-in-Palazzi in the town of Cecina. This is on the Mediterranean coast just below Livorno in the province of the same name. One suspects that Dad probably wanted to know if his francs had eventually arrived because the content of the letter is cryptically described as containing only *missive et papiers*: ‘letter and papers’. “Should I have disclosed exactly what I was sending?”, Daniel Delière must have thought.

The Reply

In Section 2, the margin reads *À remplir dans le service de destination*. Here we see the entries of the receiving office at San Pietro-in-Palazzi. The undersigned, the postmaster of the San Pietro-in-Palazzi office, confirms that the letter in question was handed over on 22 August 1966 to a Mr Renato Bresci who was in charge of collecting correspondence destined for the holiday village. The confirmation is written in red and accompanied by the San Pietro-in-Palazzi datestamp of 18 January 1967.

You might say that this would be the end of the story, but there was something else that preceded this simple confirmation that the letter had actually arrived and, to find that, we turn over to the back of the form (Figure 2). Only then does it become clear what a huge administrative task this kind of request engendered. In Section 3A (*Par le bureau d’origine et les bureaux de transit*) the initial outward route had to be logged by the staff at Loivre and in Section 3B (*Par le bureau d’échange*) and in Section 4 (*À remplir dans les services intermédiaires*) the onward itinerary was logged by their colleagues at the Gare PLM office as confirmed by the ‘Paris Gare P.L.M. Enquêtes’¹ datestamp of 7 January 1967.

¹ For postmark enthusiasts, such a modern datestamp inscribed ‘Enquêtes’ is not easy to find. P.L.M. stands for ‘Paris, Lyon, Méditerranée’.

The hassle

In Section 3A, we find that the registered letter in question was dispatched from the Loivre office to Châlons-Gare² sorting office at 6.30pm on 19 August 1966. On the next day,

20 August, it was forwarded to Paris by the Nancy-Paris³ train for onward transmission to the PLM *Etranger* office (Paris-Lyon-Méditerranée Foreign Branch).

ADMINISTRATION
DES POSTES DE FRANCE

BUREAU
de LOIVRE

RÉPUBLIQUE FRANÇAISE

00566
RÉCLAMATION

RECOMMANDÉE n° 0146

20-12 1966

C9 (Recto)
tarif. net. 155, \$ 1.)
du bureau d'origine

1 A remplir dans le service d'origine.

(1) d'un envoi recommandé... LETTRE (2) par avion remboursement (2)
ou d'une lettre avec valeur déclarée de (3) par avion remboursement (3)
boîte par voie de surface

contenant *missives et papier* (4)
déposé par *Monsieur Daniel DELIEGE* le *19 Aout 1966 à 18h15*
sous le N° *146* au bureau de *LOIVRE (Nancy)* à l'adresse suivante :
Melle Madame DELIEGE - Village Touristique Française -
San Pietro in Palazzi - Cumana - Prov. Livorno - ITALIA (5)
et faisant l'objet d'une demande d'avis de réception (1).

(1) Un fac-similé de l'enveloppe de la suscription de l'envoi n'est pas annexé.

2 A remplir dans le service de destination

A. — en cas de distribution (1)

Le soussigné déclare que l'envoi susmentionné a été dûment livré à l'avant droit le *22/8/1966*
Le montant du remboursement a été transmis à l'expéditeur de l'envoi par le mandat n°
le 19.....
Le montant du remboursement a été transmis au bureau de chèques postaux d
par mandat n° le 19.....
Le montant du remboursement a été mis en compte courant postal le 19.....
() livré à monsieur BRESCI RENATO chargé de retirer la correspondance du village*
Le Chef du bureau distributeur,

B. — en cas de non-distribution (1)

Le soussigné déclare que l'envoi susmentionné est encore en instance au bureau de
a été renvoyé au bureau d'origine le 19.....
a été réexpédié le 19....., à
n'est pas parvenu au bureau de destination.
La déclaration du destinataire est ci-jointe.
Le Chef du bureau distributeur,

Timbre du bureau distributeur

(1) Biffer les indications inutiles.
(2) Lettre, imprimé, échantillon, etc.
(3) Indiquer le montant.
(4) Description du contenu, autant que possible.
(5) Indiquer l'adresse exacte et complète.

N° 859. J. S. 421328. O.

Figure 1:
Front of Form C9 RÉCLAMATION (Actual size 21 x 27cm)

² If the word 'Gare' appears after the place name, it refers to a postal sorting office ('Centre de Tri') attached to a railway station with a letterbox function for citizens and businesses. At the 'gare', mail from the city and the wider area ('banlieue') is delivered by buses or postal vehicles. The mail is stamped at the 'gare' and then redistributed. Not to be confused with a railway station (Gare de followed by the name of a city).

³ The Nancy-Paris train would have arrived at the Gare de l'Est.

C 9 (Verso)

4.54
329

R-109-5363

3 A. Remplir dans le service d'origine et les bureaux par le bureau d'échange (1).

Compris dans la dépêche ^{avion}/_{surface} d' LOIVRE le 19 août à 18h30 (.....° envoi)
pour Châlons - gare

Compris dans la dépêche ^{avion}/_{surface} de Châlons - Marie gare (.....° envoi)
pour Nancy - Paris 2^e le 20 Août 1966

Compris dans la dépêche ^{avion}/_{surface} de Nancy Paris 2 C (.....° envoi)
pour Plq échanger du 20.8.66

B. Remplir dans le service d'échange (1).

Si parvenu et + 20 grammes
L'envoi désigné d'autre part a été expédié dans la dépêche ^{avion}/_{surface} du bureau d'échange de PLM Etranger (.....° envoi) du 20-8 1966
pour le bureau d'échange de TURIN - ROME 130. Il a été inscrit sous le n° du tableau V de la feuille d'avis ou de la liste spéciale n° de la feuille d'envoi n°
Train 609 - parmi 5 LR en 1 sac - feuillets

Si parvenu et - 20 grammes
L'envoi désigné d'autre part a été inséré dans la dépêche ^{avion}/_{surface} du bureau d'échange de PLM Etranger du 20-8 1966 (13° envoi) pour le bureau d'échange de TURIN - PISE 66 P.A.
Il a été souscrit sous le n° du tableau V de la feuille d'avis ou de la liste spéciale n° de la feuille d'envoi n°
parmi 37 LR en 1 sac - Signature : feuillets
AZ 325 Orly via Turin

4 A. Remplir dans les services intermédiaires (1).

L'envoi désigné d'autre part a été inséré dans la dépêche ^{avion}/_{surface} du bureau d'échange de du 19..... (.....° envoi) pour le bureau d'échange de
Il a été inscrit sous le n° du tableau V de la feuille d'avis ou de la liste spéciale n° de la feuille d'envoi n°
Signature :
Timbre du bureau

L'envoi désigné d'autre part a été inséré dans la dépêche ^{avion}/_{surface} du bureau d'échange de du 19..... (.....° envoi) pour le bureau d'échange de
Il a été inscrit sous le n° du tableau V de la feuille d'avis ou de la liste spéciale n° de la feuille d'envoi n°
Signature :
Timbre du bureau

5 RÉPONSE DÉFINITIVE

de l'Administration destinataire ou, le cas échéant, de l'Administration intermédiaire qui ne peut établir la transmission régulière de l'envoi réclamé à l'Administration suivante :

La présente demande doit être renvoyée à bureau de LOIVRE

(1) Biffer les indications inutiles.

Paris 7-1 1967
PARIS GARE P.L.M.
ENQUÊTES

Figure 2: Back of Form C9 RÉCLAMATION (Actual size 21 x 27cm)

In Sections 3B and 4B it is not easy to define at which point the mail was transferred from the French transport system to the Italian. It reads as though the letter was sorted to go on the Turin-Rome train N° 609 (this route still operates today from the Gare de Lyon) where it was one of 5 registered letters in one mailbag. But what happened next? In Section 4B, it is indicated that the item was forwarded to Pisa (which is just 50 km from San Pietro-in-Palazzi) as one item in a consignment of 37 registered letters (referred to on the form

as LR, 'lettres recommandées'). It was the 13th consignment of the day but did it go by train? There is no reference to a train number but instead, after the manuscript insertion 'Turin-Pisa', there are the letters PA (Par avion or Poste aérienne?) and below is the Alitalia flight reference 'AZ 325 Orly via Turin'. On the form though, 'avion' has been deleted in favour of 'surface'. Or is the flight number that of the plane returning the 'Réclamation' to Paris? Clarification from readers would be welcome.

The case was closed by the Italian authorities on 18 January 1967 and the completed form was placed in a return envelope and sent back to France (by airmail?) and forwarded to the post office in Loivre. The form could not be sent to the claimant, Daniel Delière, directly from Italy as he had not been required to write his address at the time of application. The bottom left of the form states that he was informed of the outcome of his claim on 20 January. And all that for just 1 franc! So the claimant did not receive the form himself. What is extraordinary is that it survived, together with the return

envelope, (Figure 3) as an example of postal administration that will have rarely been preserved in its entirety.

If we follow this whole (detailed) course of events, we must be impressed by the thoroughness with which the postal services worked at the time. I don't think it is still to that extent today considering the many incidents of lost registered mail from abroad which I regularly deal with myself. Complaining these days hardly ever yields anything concrete and certainly not this kind of detailed information.



Figure 3

Return envelope from the Italian Post Office

French Congo: The 5c and 15c “Valeur” Stamps

Surcharged at Brazzaville. Issued 9 July 1900, withdrawn 12 July 1900

There is a great deal of discussion surrounding the issue of these stamps. One acknowledged expert on the stamps of Congo Français and Gabon-Congo, Count Olivier de Pomyers, is particularly scathing about them in his 1946-48 revision of “*Les Timbres du Gabon et du Congo Français*”, but then so is he about many of the overprints of the time. There are reasons for agreeing with him that many of these overprints were produced to satisfy commercial demand from dealers in Paris and there is no doubt that various ranking colonial civil servants were not averse to lining their pockets by encouraging unnecessary overprint issues to delight the traders. But this happened throughout the 19th century colonies and there is no doubt that these stamps were issued by formal “*arrêté*”. A number were used for postage; and today's most respected dealers and catalogues are happy

to trade them and to quote prices for the few that still exist, but to be asking in excess of the “normal” average of 25-30% of the catalogue quotations for unclearly-dated or even obvious cancelled-to-order examples (as in Figure 2c) would appear to me to be unacceptable. However, as always, demand in the market will decide.

The story appears to be that, on the 8 July 1900, owing to the non-arrival of stamps ordered from Libreville, there was a serious shortage in Brazzaville of the most popular values, so a local printer was therefore ordered to overprint ‘5’ on a batch of 300 of the 20c brick-on-green stamps (for local correspondence) (Figure 1) and ‘15’ on 900 of the 30c brown (for letters to France and other colonies) (Figures 2). Monsieur Cor, the interim Lieutenant-Governor, was persuaded to sign and publish the formal “*arrêté*” authorising



Figure 1 (YT 25)* 11 July



Figure 2 (YT 26)* Left to right: a) 9 July, b) 12 July, c) 30 August

the sale of the stamps next day on the 9th, but with instruction to Post Office staff to affix and cancel them on items presented for posting at the counter. The Governor in Libreville was consulted *post facto* and was most put out by this. He sent an order, received sometime on 12 July, for the offending items to be burned immediately. No figure has ever emerged of the number of stamps paid for or destroyed. Only one each of the unused stamps has ever been offered on the market (some say three) which would perhaps point to the order having been obeyed. Furthermore, it would also be logical, given the restriction on sales, that only cancelled stamps can be found on the market today. As to surviving covers, like this one (Figure 3) there can only be a handful at the very most, hence the prices they command.

Those are the least disputed facts, but of course they do not guarantee the absolute honesty of the managers and staff at the Post Office who would know the possible value to dealers of such a small number of stamps apparently used properly or 'saved' from the flames. Stamps with dates between 9 and 12 July, as opposed to those with partial cancellations, are naturally the most prized. But what can one say about Figure 2c, (if the part cancellation mark is anything to go by) apparently dated 30 August and offered by a highly respected dealer in 2021? Or, indeed, say about my cover to Paris? It is sealed with no detectable letter inside and has no arrival markings. Did it travel? And if it didn't travel, how did it escape from the Post Office counter at Brazzaville once cancelled?



Figure 3
(YT 26) 15 on 30c.
Dated 12 July 1900
from Brazzaville to
Paris

* All (enlarged) stamps illustrated are from various stamp auction catalogues.

REPORTS OF MEETINGS

47th Annual Philatelic Weekend, 10 - 12 March 2023



Left to right: Peter Kelly, David Parmley, Chris Hitchen

The event took place at the usual venue of the Charlecote Pheasant Hotel, Stratford-upon-Avon where the 17 members attending enjoyed good food and company and the pleasure of nineteen principal displays as well as the Anything Goes sessions in the evenings.

Proceedings were co-convoked by Peter Kelly and David Parmley, Andrew Telfer Brunton took the photographs and Marian Bister kindly ran the bourse where plenty of material changed hands.

The principal displays, in order of running, were:

'French Morocco Airmails' – **David Parmley**

Following the AGM the business proper commenced with an extensive two-part display of over 160 examples of airmail items. Although the service commenced in 1919 the earliest item was from 1920 and more than half of the items were to places other than French territories. The second part was shown later in the day.

David explained the problems of complex rate structures and the difficulty in reading dates from rubber date stamps which deteriorated rapidly. He also explained the absence of documentation of weights or scope of the air supplement.

However the fascination lies in the use of six definitive series and two air series between 1917-45 together with ongoing use of the obsolete 1914 Protectorate overprinted series which provide endless scope for late usage, mixed and multicolour frankings and the apparent motto of the Moroccan postal service never to use one stamp if three will suffice.

'Illustrated Stationery' – **Andrew Telfer Brunton**

Illustrated postal stationery came into its own in the late 19th century and these attractive items were used to promote the business of the senders including manufacturers, retailers, hotels, winemakers, tradesmen and even manufacturers of corsets for girls as young as 4-5 years old! Examples from 1862 up to 1950 were shown as well as a couple of incoming items.

'Postmarks and Postal History of Senegal to 1945' – **Rodney Gent**

Superb examples of postmarks from 56 towns and villages and railway cancellations from main and branch lines.

Senegal currently has a population of over 17 million which has grown eight-fold since 1950, indicative of just how small the populations of the towns served by many of these post offices were in the 1930s. It also explains why some of the (little used) cancellers were in such good condition, those in the main towns varying considerably and often producing indistinct cancellations. Items included an early commercial cover from the notorious town of Gorée, once centre of the slave trade, a censored cover to New York that was caught up in the system for 4 months and examples of paquebot usage as well as usage in Freetown, Sierra Leone.

'France Transatlantic Mail' – **Steve Ellis**

This covered French Transatlantic mail between 1783, the date of the introduction of the *Paquebots Royaux* service operated between L'Orient and New York, and 1857, the date of the implementation of the first postal convention between France and the United



Steve Ellis

States of America. The use of occasional private ships, regular 'clipper' services and 'packet' services primarily from Liverpool for the carriage of mail were explained. The display also illustrated the many changes in rates which applied, including two 'retaliatory' periods, the use of forwarding agents, non-contract services, the ill-fated *Hérout et de Handel* service and special markings.

'World War II' – **Paul Watkins**

A 3-frame display on the WWII *Service de Travail Obligatoire* (STO) system organised by the Vichy government at the behest of the German occupiers. It supplied a supplementary workforce for German industry and manufacturing where local numbers had been depleted by enrolment into the German forces. A variety of covers were shown to and from French *zivilarbeiter* assigned work in steel, munitions and transport industries as well as in smaller family concerns – including a Hamburg wine merchant and a luxury fountain pen workshop. Also shown

were work passes for French POW's working alongside their 'free' co-workers and a wages transfer receipt from the I.G. Farben works.

'Mail Communication Across the Sahara' – Peter Kelly

This extensive display covered the development of mail services in that part of the desert lying between Algeria and Tunisia to the North and French Soudan (now Mali) to the South. Postal items and illustrations were set out in four sections.

The first section covered the early Camel Post from the 1890s until the First World War, including the first formal Camel Service of 1908 between Gao and In-Salah.

The second section covered the introduction of motor vehicles from 1923 when Citroën led the way using the eastern Hoggar route. Shortly afterwards a Renault team crossed using the western route which proved superior, leading to the creation of the *Compagnie Générale Transsaharienne* in 1930 with the first contract in 1932. In the meantime, mail had been carried by a competitor in the Algiers to Gao Saharan motor rally in 1930. Another route was exploited by a newly formed company, *Société Algérienne des Transports Tropicaux*, in 1934 linking Algiers to Zinder via Tamanrasset and Agadès. There was a new emphasis on tourism as an additional revenue generator.

The third section dealt with air services. Although Latécoère had started regular flights in 1925 from Toulouse to Dakar following the coast, flight over the desert presented new problems that were not resolved until wireless telegraphy and visibly marked tracks became available. Flights by early pioneers and other exploratory and military flights led to the regular service provided by Air Afrique and Sabena in 1935 which linked Algeria with French and Belgian Equatorial Africa.

The final section showed that much of Niger is Saharan and mails were still carried by camel in parts up to World War II and that unrest in the desert was still prevalent at the time of WWI with the siege of Agadès.

'The Cedars of Lebanon & Free French Forces in the Levant' – Jeny Wolvers

Jeny showed the cedar tree's use as the country's emblem on postage stamps, and the brief use of overprinted and imprinted stamps in Syria and Lebanon during World War II for the Free French Forces. Her display concluded with *'Journée du Timbre'* 1945-1958, Algeria - the annual celebration of the French postal service, each year depicting someone important in its history, or postal uniforms and transport.

'La Petite Poste de Paris 1760-95' – Chris Hitchen

Letters from the early days in June 1760 were followed by items from most offices. Whilst *La Petite Poste* was always distinct from the General post its success saw it taken over by the King in July 1780 which led in 1788. This led to the creation of a counter in the head post office for local letters, and examples of these were included. Letters for the General Post could be collected by the local offices and transferred and a number of these were also shown. The

display continued with letters from the inner and outer suburbs and a range of covers from the suburban postmen once controlled by Office K. The little-known marks of Offices L and M concluded the display.

'Balloon Post Around The World' - Gwynne Harries

A light-hearted look at the use of balloons either from necessity or for philatelic purposes.



Gwynne Harries

'40c and 1F25 Chapelle de Ronchamp' – Mick Bister

The original chapels on the site were illustrated by postcards and the events which led to the engagement of Le Corbusier to design a new one were described. Jacques Combet was commissioned to design and engrave the stamps and illustrations of Combet's artwork and a range of colour trials and sheet printings for the first issue, the 1f25 in 1964, were shown together with examples of its limited usage.

Likewise, colour trials and sheet printings were shown of its successor, the 40c value, issued in 1965. Ostensibly issued for the foreign postcard rate, it also served as the letter rate for former North African colonies and former French Indo-China. Used in multiples and mixed frankings, it satisfied a wide range of other rates. A detailed study was shown of the experimental coil trials of 1968 which included examples of the testing labels and the various printings of the Ronchamp coil itself.

'European Capitals' – Andrew Telfer Brunton

Each year since 2002 *La Poste* have produced miniature sheets depicting European Capitals, beginning with Rome in 2002 and most recently, Ljubljana in 2022. Each sheet includes five stamps depicting local places of interest on background designs relevant to the cities concerned. Two monochrome gravures of the illustrations on the sheets for Rome & Luxembourg were included in the display.

'Type Sage Postage Due and Underpaid Letters' – Peter Kelly

Examples of postal items were presented to illustrate developments reflecting UPU regulations.

The period from 1.1.1876 to 1.5.1878. France became an active member of the General Postal Union from the first date but the regulations applied to international mail and she retained the old system of two separate rates until 1 May

1878. Mail was sent and delivered within Paris and throughout France and Algeria within the circumscription of the same office (the local rate 15c) and from office to office (the territorial rate 25c). There was a penalty for sending mail unpaid (the unpaid rate) of 25c for local and 40c per weight band for territorial.

The black imperforate “*timbre taxe*” was used to indicate the amount of taxation only on local mail. All territorial mail was marked either by the hollow “*timbre creux*” handstamps, numeral handstamps or manually. Paris also had office date stamps showing the amount of the taxation.

The period from 1.5.1878 to 30.9.1882. The classic period had ended with the greatest of changes in the postal system now beginning to reflect the approach of the U.P.U but still adhering to some of the old ways. There was now only one rate (15c) for mail sent within the country and Algeria.

The period from 1.10.1882 to 15.4.1892. Introduction of the Type Duval (*Banderolle*) postage dues (initially all values were black but were replaced progressively by colours). The regulations now specified that postage due stamps were to be used on all mail, local or otherwise, where taxation was required.

The period from 16.4.1892 to 13.4.1898. An important change in taxation as the old “unpaid letter rate” was withdrawn and replaced by the cheaper and simpler double deficiency calculation which applied both to unpaid and partly paid letters.

The period from 13.4.1898. Once again, a change in that the tax was to be applied exactly, thus a withdrawal of the previous rounding-up rule.

‘Insufficient payment after 1849’ – **Steve Ellis**

The third part of a series of displays which looked at the wide variety of markings employed to signify that a ‘*taxe*’ was necessary. Often written in manuscript, cachets were subsequently used – ‘*Affranchissement Insuffisant*’ and various derivations were shown, including some unrecorded locally fabricated cachets. Also shown were the large numeral ‘*double trait*’ markings and postage due adhesives.

Records, Rates and Rock’n’Roll – **Mick Bister**

A rather tongue-in-cheek confection permitting Mick to combine two of his interests, records of the 1950s and 60s and French philately.

The first part of the display was the history of the first 45 rpm records created by RCA Victor in 1949 and pressed in a variety of coloured vinyls to distinguish the different genres, progressing to examples of the generic black vinyl and then to the popularity of the flexidiscs of the 1960s.

The flexidisc was immensely popular in France especially as an advertising and promotion ploy; it was cheap to produce, light and unbreakable and perfect for sending through the post. Various companies enticed customers to collect vouchers and redeem them in exchange for the latest recordings.

‘Postmarks and Postal History of Côte d’Ivoire to 1945’ – **Rodney Gent**

More superb examples of postmarks from 41 different towns and villages as well as 5 different paquebots. Some of the villages in the 1930’s and earlier were very small and their cancellers in very good order, with examples of their usage difficult to find. The covers included examples of a further three different post offices as well as a variety of cancellations and postage dues including Moroccan and British. There were examples of censored mail and the use of Upper Volta stamps in a mixed franking.

Colonial *Recouvrements* and *Societe d’Horlogerie* – **David Parmley**

This was basically a work-in-progress display of thirty or so service envelopes, originating in various colonies, which had included returns of outcomes (and hopefully recoveries) of debt claims handled by the *Recouvrements* service of the French post office.

The *Société d’Horlogerie* was a clock and watch manufacturer which advertised in magazines and stamp booklets offering watches (later cameras and small electrical appliances) on instalment terms, a risky business supplying goods to Africa on credit.



David Parmley



Rodney Gent



Andrew Telfer Brunton

Lack of space during the session precluded the showing of numerous covers addressed to the *société* franked with colonial adhesives which had contained orders or instalments.

‘Balloon Mails of the Siege of Paris and Associated Communications and Ephemera’ – **Gwynne Harries**

During the Franco-Prussian war (Sept 1870 - Jan 1871) when the city of Paris was under siege telegraph lines had been cut, many couriers intercepted, and roads and railways blocked, rendering external communication impossible. The Minister of Posts, aware that a number of balloon aviators were marooned in the city, proposed “*ballon monté*” (manned balloon flight) and taking the service to the airways!

These balloons were mainly constructed in the unused Paris train stations of Gare du Nord and Gare d’Orléans whose dimensions allowed preparation for their one-way flight from the city. This display showed many examples of items dispatched this way and tried to identify the specific flight, which is not always possible as there were often flights whose dates overlap.

The display also showed examples of mail prepared after the Armistice and the difficulties of sending via Versailles, a ‘forged’ cover, incoming and outgoing mail, German Field Post mail, and examples of the newspapers printed and created to relate information about the horrors of the siege to the outside world.

‘*Facteurs boîtiers*’ – **Andrew Telfer Brunton**

The French post offices had different classifications depending upon the services each provided. The *Facteurs boîtiers* came into existence in 1850 and superseded the *Bureau de Distribution*. These offices had limited postal functions including collection and distribution of mail out of hours and postal clerk functions during working hours. Each office was attached to a Management Post Office or *Recette*. Examples of outgoing or incoming mail with Type 23, 24 or 84 postmarks, local mail with different *Facteur boîtier* dispatch and receipt postmarks were exhibited. These included underpaid covers and postcards, redirected mail, items sent on interesting railway routes with TPO postmarks and mail with additional collection or delivery marks.

‘Réunion Maritime Mail 1846-57 The Difficult Years’ – **Peter Kelly**

The display summarised some of the difficulties Réunion faced in external communication. Until 1848 the only means of communication was through merchant shipping and the occasional naval vessel, a problem shared with Mauritius (one day’s sailing). In 1848 Mauritius established the first colonial packet service to Galle Point, Ceylon (4000km) to link in with the Far East P & O service between Suez and



Peter Kelly

Aden. This worked well although, under sail, precise timing was difficult.

In 1852 the first direct service from the U.K. to Mauritius via the Cape was contracted to the General Screw Navigation Company (GSNC) but the steamships were underpowered and were unable to keep to timetable. In 1854 the contract was terminated, and the ships were requisitioned for service in the Crimean War so the islands used French and Mauritian schooners to Galle.

GSNC was replaced by the Lindsay Line operating from the U.K to Calcutta via the Cape, Mauritius and Galle Pt. These vessels were less reliable than the GSNC. Mail continued to go via the schooners, and the Lindsay contract was rescinded after a year. Examples of mail shown included mail from Mayotte (Comores) to France via Réunion and a letter carried by naval vessel to Mozambique.

In 1856 local interests formed the *Compagnie Française de la Mer des Indes* to provide a packet service between Mauritius and Aden connecting with the P&O inwards and outwards. It started promisingly but collapsed by the end of the year when P & O intervened and leased the *Azof* to Mauritius to maintain service. This worked so well that by March 1859 the P&O Suez to Australia service incorporated Mauritius with a feeder service between Réunion and Mauritius. So for the first time the islands benefitted from a reliable and cheaper service.

The display showed letters in both directions that were sent over this eleven-year period.

‘North Africa 20th-century Maritime Services’ – **Steve Ellis**

To round off proceedings Steve showed how an interesting display can be formed without large cost following a little research from books and the internet. The example he gave was the carriage of maritime mail in the twentieth century between France and North Africa, highlighting the operations of numerous shipping companies and the associated cancellations and cachets which were applied.

David Parnley

Do you have a display or an item of interest you would like share with others? If so contact Chris Hitchen (treasurer@fcps.org.uk) for Journal items, or Mick Bister (m.bister@btinternet.com) for Zoom items.

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF 11 MARCH 2023

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of 11 March 2023

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Society held at The Charlecote Pheasant Hotel, Charlecote, Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire, CV35 9EW in the presence of 15 members.

Members present: Maurice Alder, John Allison, Mick Bister, Ken Dyke, Steve Ellis, Rodney Gent, Gwynne Harries, Chris Hitchen, Peter Kelly, Alan King, Jeffery Moysey, David Parmley, Hendrick Slabbinck, Andrew Telfer Brunton and Paul Watkins.

Apologies for absence: Richard Broadhurst, Jan Gane and Peter Stockton.

The President introduced the meeting and welcomed those attending. The Minutes of the previous Annual General Meeting of 12 March 2022 had been published in Journal 299, August 2022 and were accepted as a true record of that meeting. There were no matters arising from the minutes not already on the agenda.

- 1 President's report
- 2 General Secretary's report
- 3 Treasurer's report and accounts
- 4 Auction Secretary's report
- 5 Packet Secretaries' reports:
 - 5.1 France
 - 5.2 Colonies
- 6 Journal Manager's report
- 7 Editor's report
- 8 Website Manager's report
- 10 Election of officers and committee members

President - Mr Chris Hitchen; **Vice President** – Mr Richard Broadhurst; **General Secretary** – Dr Andrew Telfer Brunton; **Treasurer** – Mr Chris Hitchen; **Auction Secretary** – Mr David Parmley; **Packet Secretary (France)** – Mr Richard Broadhurst; **Packet Secretary (Colonies)** – Mr Rodney Gent; **Journal Manager** – vacant; **Journal Editor** and **Website Manager** – Mrs Jan Gane; **Publications Officer** – Mr Richard Broadhurst; **Committee members** – Messrs Mick Bister, Peter Kelly, Steve Ellis, Maurice Tyler and Paul Watkins.

These were proposed by Alan King and seconded by Mick Bister and elected unanimously.

11 Any other business – nothing was brought up by those in attendance

The AGM concluded at 10:10 am and was followed with the announcement of the literature award winner.

Awards

The winner of the **Literature trophy** was announced by Steve Ellis and went to Simon Binsted for the most enjoyable article in the Journals of 2022.

F&CPS President's report 2022

I had hoped that with the impact of the pandemic waning the Society could resume functioning on a more normal basis.

As far as the services provided to members that has largely been the case.

However we have had serious problems with the packet services. Royal Mail reliability has plunged and we have had problems with serious delays in transmission and significant losses. Wardrop, our insurers refused to renew cover on the ground of excessive claims. The only other company in this specialised line of business Stamp Insurance Services has been approached but has refused to offer cover for books in transit.

A new policy has been negotiated with SIS to cover loss or theft of material from the premises of the packet secretaries and Auctions but does not insure the packets against loss in transit to and from members.

The Society will now have to bear the cost of any future losses sustained. It was agreed to monitor the situation carefully and to ask the packet secretaries to inform the Secretary should problems arise. If substantial losses were to occur then it may become necessary to review whether the society can afford to circulate packets but at present that option has not been considered necessary.

The Northern Group has resumed meetings, but lack of interest has meant that none have been held in London or by the Wessex Group. Some Zoom meetings have been run successfully but again the future will depend on offers of displays.

In 2022 Jan Gane has once more provided us with three high-quality Journals for members to enjoy. Whilst Mick Bister has stepped down from the post of Journal Manager he has quietly continued to check and edit many of the articles offered and his continued assistance has proved invaluable. Michael Round diligently proof-reads everything in order to maintain the Journal's high standards.

Assistance by other members with the initial appraisal of new articles submitted would be appreciated. There is still a lack of sufficient articles and we continue to rely too heavily on those who do make regular contributions.

Sadly, John Parmenter our Publications Officer died in December. Richard Broadhurst stepped in to take over and now has all the Society's stock of publications. It was decided to do away with some of the older titles which have effectively ceased to sell. Peter Kelly has taken on the marketing of the Madagascar brochure which had never really been properly launched due to Covid.

All current Officers have agreed to continue and our services are totally reliant on their ability and willingness to carry on. Two of our long-standing committee members, John West and Ashley Lawrence, have decided that the time has come to retire. Their help and work over many years deserves our warmest thanks.

Chris Hitchen,
President F&CPS, 11 March 2023

General Secretary’s report

The Society has had a comparatively successful year. Since last April we have had 13 new members with a further application in the process.

At the end of 2022 the Society had 179 UK members, 56 overseas members and 16 members or organisations who receive complimentary copies of the journal.

Sadly, we have had a number of deaths of members and in particular that of John Parmenter who has done stalwart work for the society over many years in relation to publications. He will be greatly missed.

There has been a steady stream of queries and requests for advice as usual. I am grateful to members for assisting me in replying or directing those questions to appropriate authorities.

As a result of committee discussions on the issue of requests to assist with valuation or disposal of collections a short advisory document is being prepared for distribution to members.

As with other societies, we get a steady stream of junk emails which remain tiresome despite filtering and blocking of offenders. In addition, there are occasional approaches from companies offering services, none of which are relevant to our Society and are ignored.

The committee met on the 28th February and the state of the Society’s finances is on the agenda for the AGM.

Dr W A Telfer Brunton,
March 2023

Treasurer’s Report and Accounts 2022

As anticipated the cost of meetings dropped although still somewhat higher than pre-pandemic. Other costs have remained similar to previous years but increased inflation could well see changes in the future.

We have lost some 30 members in the past year and this will of course reduce our income from subscriptions. Inflation is still at a high level and other costs are likely to increase.

**FRANCE & COLONIES PHILATELIC SOCIETY
BALANCE SHEET AT 31 DECEMBER 2022**

Examined by Alan King, Chartered Accountant, Poole, Dorset 24 February 2023

As a matter of prudence I have always tried to keep our expenditure in line with our income. I feel therefore that it would be sensible to increase subscriptions in 2024 as follows £20 UK, £30 Europe and £35 overseas

Postage to Europe and Overseas is now very high. Members outside the UK can always take the Journal and other information in electronic format at the same subscription as UK members: £20.

Chris Hitchen
Treasurer, 11 March 2023

Auctioneer's report 2022

Lots offered averaged over an increased offering from an unchanged number of vendors.

Overall about 33 percent of lots were sold reflecting a slight reduction in the number of bidders and the previous year's opportunity to offer the fresh material from the George Nash collection. There has accordingly been a reduction in the value of lots sold and reductions in printing costs have been offset by the imposition of bank charges;

The increase in lots offered has led to an increase in printing costs but the opportunity to include illustrations, kindly proposed and facilitated by Jan Gane, has been of benefit and generated interest. It remains to thank all the vendors and bidders who have supported the auction during the year

David Parmley, January 2023

AUCTION ACCOUNT YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31 2022

	2022	2021
	£	£
SALE OF LOTS (including postage etc)		
Winter (51 bidders: 43 in 2021)		
Spring (41 bidders: 57 in 2021)		
Autumn (47 bidders: 51 in 2021)	_____	_____
	_____	_____
PAYMENTS TO VENDORS		
Winter (15 vendors: 14 in 2021)		
Spring (12 vendors: 15 in 2021)		
Autumn (10 vendors: 11 in 2021)	_____	_____
	_____	_____
EXPENSES		
	_____	_____
	_____	_____
NET SURPLUS TO SOCIETY	_____	_____

Packet Secretary's report (France) 2022

I am pleased to report that 2022 was another busy year for the packet

after expenses and the Society benefited from a commission payment

The total sales were down somewhat this year mainly due to the unfortunate loss of a number of long-standing participants due to age and illness-related issues. The other contributing factor was the very unreliable service from Royal Mail from September onwards. The numerous strikes led to packets taking twice as long to circulate as normal. It also resulted in the largest number of losses in the post for many years.

Nevertheless the packets were much enjoyed by members from all four corners of the UK. The packets contain a wide variety of material from classic issues, postal history, back-of-the-book and an increasingly popular modern selection of stamps, blocs and carnets. There really is something for everyone! It is a very useful way for members to obtain good competitively priced France material.

Currently we are able to accommodate new members who would like to receive the packets and we would also be delighted to receive more material to sell, especially anything unusual! For those who have not participated before it is an excellent and enjoyable way of both buying and selling stamps. Further details are available from the Secretary.

Richard Broadhurst 7th February 2023

Packet Secretary's report (Colonies) 2022

The bad news is that the number active on the packet has reduced from 34 to 29. The reduction included three who sadly passed during the year.

After a quiet year in 2021, 2022 introduced the need for the packet secretary to rediscover his nerves of steel. One packet disappeared in the summer never to return, and several others disappeared for varying lengths of time. The worst was three months. This unsatisfactory situation was exacerbated by the postal strikes late in the year. It is to be hoped that a noticeable improvement in the weeks after Christmas will be sustained. A number of overdue packets arrived, in one case, three in a day. They were handed to me by a smiling postman who I have previously made fully aware of my concerns. Richard and Chris's exhortations to circuit members to do all they can to outmanoeuvre the postal fates by keeping to the rules is enthusiastically endorsed by me, not least for the maintenance of my good mental health.

The availability of material to sustain the regular send-out to members has been on a knife-edge for most of the year.

This means the vendors who support the packet get their offerings to members very quickly. There has been a wide range of material offered and enthusiastically received as the results for the year show. So many thanks to them all for their support.

As ever, it has been a pleasure to be in contact with such an amiable bunch as make up the colonies circuits. They have

been tolerant of my mistakes which makes life roll along fairly sweetly. They have also supported the packet handsomely during the year for which I thank them.

Rodney Gent 11 January 2023

Report of the Magazine Organiser 2022

We subscribe to two French stamp magazines: *L'Écho de la Timbrologie* and *Timbres*. The magazines are distributed monthly and are much enjoyed by the recipients. We are able to accommodate any new members who may wish to join the circuits. Further details are available from the organiser.

Richard Broadhurst 7th February 2023

Journal Manager's report 2022

In the absence of any offers to take this on I have continued to assist our editor Jan Gane with the initial collection of material for the Journal and some proof reading. Mick Bister and Michael Round have done a great deal to help with the early preparation of articles to go in the Journal and their efforts should be recognised.

Chris Hitchen March 2023

Editor's Report 2022

Three 60-page Journals were produced in 2022 and we were very fortunate to have some delightful articles which were serialised – The *Marianne de Muller* series, *Réunion Maritime* and *There's no Business like Show Business*. These pages produced over a quarter of the year's content. We are extremely lucky to have prolific writers and researchers who can produce such interesting reading – and supply such wonderful illustrations. Approximately 20 full-length and over 25 short articles were produced, plus full detailed book reviews and Maurice Tyler's "Recently Published Articles".

Special thanks to Michael Round whose skill at proof-reading is exceptional and to David Hogarth who sadly had

to retire after Journal 299. The first stop with the gathering of articles is with Chris Hitchen and Mick Bister, so much work is completed by them before it gets to me – Thank you.

Sadly our cupboard is almost bare for August.

So, this Editor's plea is for more articles – short or long they will be welcomed.

Jan Gane March 2023.

Website Manager's Report 2022

I seem to have had a spectacularly busy year and am tardy in getting the Journal back issues along with the last two Zoom programs uploaded to the website – it is on my to-do list. The Website is updated regularly with necessary internal software upgrades and information from each current Journal and Auction (usually with a week of publication of the Journal) and of course any updates that come along.

The website needs some refreshing and I would like new images of physical meetings for the website.

The analytics – we've had just over 3,000 visitors this year, 37% from the USA, 13% from the UK, 14% from China and 3% Canada. The List of Journal Contents is the page most often visited followed by the Publication Page, Auctions, Benefits of Joining and Zoom meetings. I take most of this with a pinch of salt because I have no idea if they are real people looking at pages or bots.

The Forum had five new members this year. It still remains seriously under-used. We had one only enquiry and response on the Forum which garnered a very interesting article for the Journal.

Thank you to everyone, especially members of the Committee for their help throughout this last year - it is much appreciated.

Jan Gane March 2023

Chris Hitchen

Philatelic Weekend 2024 Advance Notice

There was some discussion at the AGM and the general feeling was that the society should consider a mid-week option which might facilitate travel arrangements and potentially reduce the cost.

After negotiation with the venue and taking into account their availability we were able to agree a compromise option which members may wish to mark in their diaries:

Thursday 7 March Dinner and evening session

Friday 8 March All day, dinner and evening

Saturday 9 March Morning

Accommodation Dinner, bed and breakfast at £119 single and £139 double.

Charlecote Pheasant Hotel 01789 335960 email: reservationsCP@charlecotepheasanthotel.co.uk

reference **GA000596-FCPS**

Full details will be provided in a flier to accompany the December edition of the Journal but in view of the considerably reduced rate offered and the hotel's preference for booking before 7 December 2023 members may wish to book earlier.

In view of the level of recent attendances we have only been able to reserve 15 rooms in the first instance so it would be helpful if those intending to attend would let me know as soon as possible either by telephone on 07464 926250 or email dparmley@jhgl.co.uk in case it is necessary to negotiate for additional numbers.

Look forward to seeing you all there.

David Parmley

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

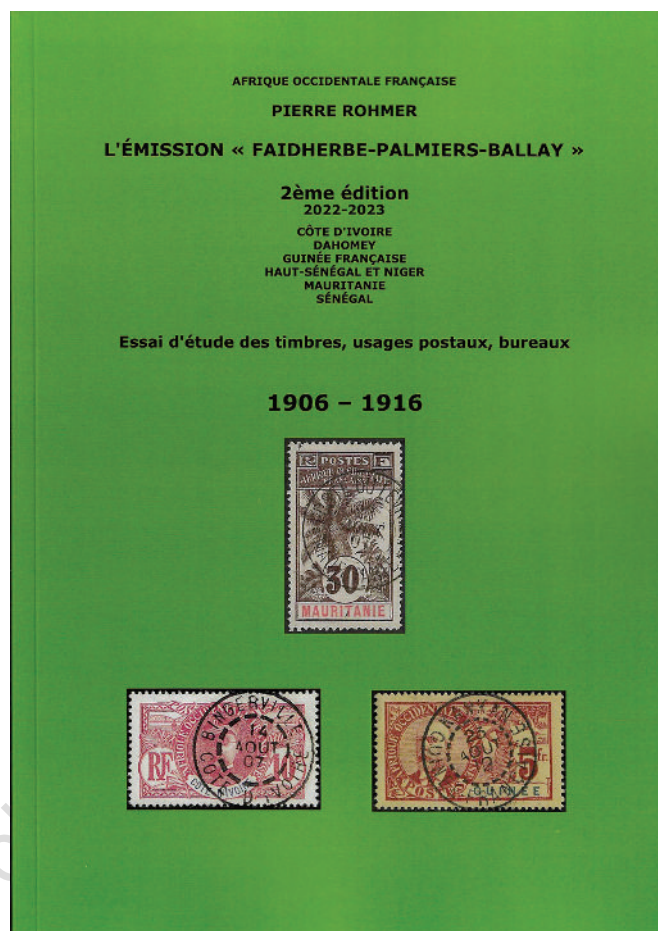
Reviewed by **Michael Round**

The French West African issues of 1906, nicknamed 'Palmiers' (palm-trees) after the middle values, are not the first-ever French Colonial pictorials: that honour is shared among French Congo (1900), French Somali Coast (1902), and Madagascar (1903). Neither are they the first Government-printed pictorials: those were for French Guinea and New Caledonia (both 1905). But they were the first Government-printed pictorials entirely composed of large-format stamps. Sometimes considered as an "omnibus" issue – that is, sharing the same design among several colonies – this issue, strictly speaking, is more of a "minibus". The only countries favoured with it were in West Africa, and comprised Dahomey, French Guinea, Ivory Coast, Mauritania, Senegal and that large territory then called Upper Senegal and Niger which subsequently split into Niger, French Sudan and Upper Volta.

The 'Palmiers' are certainly rated as French Colonial classics, and the better values among them can fetch high prices, but they are little written about. Pierre Rohmer hastened to make amends: his first edition passed me by, but I was delighted to learn of and acquire this 2nd edition.

His work is truly compendious. He begins with biographies of designer and engraver Puyplat, then of featured personalities Louis Faidherbe and Noël Ballay. He studies essays and other preliminary work, marginal markings, Specimen overprints, postage rates, imperfs - and varieties, possibly little-known to us, like misplaced or missing inscriptions (added country by country to the basic stamps, as in the 1892 'Tablet' issue), accents missing from the word 'Sénégal', some dubious items perf 11, and forgeries. These last are well covered, if in less detail than in Serrane's celebrated *Vade-Mecum* of 1929. Worried owners among us will learn that (i) only the 5F value seems to have been forged and (ii) they may be most easily detected by the horizontal lines of shading. In the genuine these touch the cheek (Ballay's right cheek, i.e. on the viewers' left) while in the forgeries they stop short, leaving an unshaded line down the side of the portrait. Of the other varieties, the missing accents are the most rewarding. Far less so is the Senegal 2c inscribed in blue rather than red. M Rohmer rates this as "unissued" and apparently it's not valuable, even on cover.

The remaining space – about 70% of the whole – shows a vast range of covers (not forgetting postal stationery) and used singles, their postmarks combining to form a veritable



gazetteer of towns. Picture postcards, mixed frankings and redirected covers add considerable visual appeal though such lavishness must surely have put the book's price up.

M Rohmer's work is to be loudly applauded, with – from me – just three caveats. *One*: page-numbers are all in the lower right corner, so left-hand page-numbers fall, inconveniently, near the binding edge. *Two*: the 'Palmiers' designs received mixed reviews at the time: these are touched on, but much more might be quoted, and entertainingly so, from contemporary stamp magazines. *Three*: many of us probably own distinct **shades**, particularly of the low values, but they remain unclassified and practically unmentioned. There's a good reason for this: frustratingly, the 'Palmiers' marginal sheet markings indicate the day and month of printing but not the year, a vital clue to deducing the sequence of shades. In their absence, a worldwide symposium of used copies with dated postmarks might reveal the story – in time, we hope, for the 3rd edition.

Collect France for more than ten minutes, and you'll discover enough fascinating byways to keep you busy for the next three lifetimes. World War Two alone pulsates with interest: just one area within it – Liberation stamps – has generated an entire society, precisely (if unconsciously) named the *Association des Collectionneurs des Timbres de la Libération et de la second guerre mondiale*. Its second Bulletin

of 2022 (numbered 215, no less) has articles on the liberations of Limousin, Corrèze and Haute-Vienne; further items cover La Creuse and Angres. Write to 9 square Pierre de Geyter, 95140 Garges les Gonesse for details.

Andorra collectors are well served in the literature. Not to be overlooked is **Andorra-Cotlliure** (“Cotllioure” to non-Catalans among us), the magazine of the eponymous philatelic society. Issue No 47 (January 2023) ranges widely from upcoming new-issue details (coins as well as stamps) through retrospectives on Andorra’s floods and first stamp exhibition (coincidentally both of 1982), Spanish stamps on Andorran correspondence, scented cards, and – good luck

to us all on this – how to unstick self-adhesives. Email: pere.mateu@wanadoo.fr; postal address: Pere Mateu 5 carrer André Derain, 66190 Cotlliure.

Those of us wishing to observe a French view of British philately, or want to do their bit for *détente*, may find what they seek through the **Club Philatélique Franco-Britannique**: for details, contact Thierry Charenton, 26 rue de Coudert, 24190 St Vincent de Connezac. Email: tfcharen@wanadoo.fr The December 2022 issue (No 167) of the club magazine *Britannica* has items on the Franco-Prussian war of 1870, and views on current and recent GB definitives.

New-issue listings from Stanley Gibbons: April – July 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 should (but don’t always) identify the last issue of GSM containing that country’s previous update.

France collectors are in luck this time. The April and May supplements (see below) cover nearly eight A4 pages between them. Here are all the designers’ names, exact dates of issue, perf measurements and so on that you could desire, plus SG’s habitually painstaking descriptions of every design in those love-’em-or-hate-’em self-adhesive booklets.

APRIL 2023

France (“4/23”, a typo for 4/22). 2019 Le Carré d’Encre – 2020 William the Conqueror (SG MS6759/MS6958 plus booklets CSB205/7, 210/6)

- Council of Europe (1/14) 2020 Human Rights Building (C74/5)

MAY 2023

France (4/23, unarguably). 2018 Tableware booklet (SG 6343/54), re-listed to show illustration, plus 2020 Order of Liberation – 2021 Christmas Tree (SG 6959/7158, plus booklets CSB217/26)

JUNE 2023

St Pierre et Miquelon (8/22). 2015 Wash House – Frog (SG 1228/30), re-listed to show illustrations

Vietnam (11/21) 2019 USA-DPRK Summit (SG 3056)

Wallis & Futuna Islands (11/22). 2016 Butterflies – 2017 Christmas (SG MS1093/1112).

JULY 2023

Nothing here for F&CPS members.

Grateful thanks are due to SG catalogue editors Hugh Jefferies and Clare de la Feuillade for their kind permission to reproduce these details.

Michael Round

Society Zoom Programme

In the autumn, subject to sufficient offers we will run another Show and Tell meeting with the participation of anyone who cares to join. Here’s our idea for how it will work:

1. Scan a stamp, several stamps, cover or several covers or any other item philatelically related to France or its colonies. Save each item as a separate JPG file. (That is important. PDFs don’t work as well.)

2. Prepare a short description that will explain why you like the items you scanned – technical details, design quality, postal rates and routes, markings, social history of the writer or recipient, or anything else you would talk about if you were given five minutes to explain this to a group. Be sure it is obvious which part of your description applies to which JPG file.

3. Send that description as a Word document or just put it in an email along with the JPGs to Mick Bister at - m.bister@btinternet.com

Mick will then put together a PowerPoint presentation with everyone’s scans and at least a portion of your written description. When we hold the Zoom meeting, you will be able to speak to the group about your “stuff” when it appears in the PowerPoint show.

There will be no indication of ownership in the PowerPoint file, so don’t let that limit you when you make your selection. The more of us who participate, the better it will be, of course.

Please advise Mick as soon as practicable. Toward the end of August we will consider if there is sufficient material and consider a suitable date probably sometime in October.

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° 253 Mar 2023: Une découverte rare, exceptionnelle et même sensationnelle [20c noir, date du premier timbre de France] (Melot); Les inondations de 1937 et 1982 en Andorre (Louviau); La première poste aérienne semi-officielle en France: Nancy-Lunéville 1912 (Sinais); L'ACTPC de la belle époque aux années folles (4^{ème} partie) (Chauvin); Rendez-vous pacifiques franco-allemands entre deux guerres dans les Vosges (Zeyons).

N° 254 Apr 2023: Henri Péquet: La première poste aérienne du monde (1911) (Sinais); Paris, 1927: quand un orage suscite un tarif spécial (Barbelin); L'ACTPC de la belle époque aux années folles (5^{ème} partie) (Chauvin); Les timbres d'Algérie à surcharges manuscrites, sous la France combattante (Danan); Les Daguin en Afrique (Hervé); Les échangeurs de l'âge d'or (Zeyons).

N° 255 May 2023: Le rallye aérien de Monaco (1914) (Sinais); Entiers postaux et cinéma: les festivals de cinéma (PJM); L'ACTPC de la belle époque aux années folles (6^{ème} partie) (Chauvin); Le Traité de Lausanne était signé il y a 100 ans (Emmenegger); De La Rue et Chambon: une vieille histoire (Gomez); Dix lettres qui se ressemblent un peu [25c Cérés de 1871] (de La Mettrie).

N° 256 Jun 2023: Le courrier recommandé avec la carte AR (Emmenegger); 15 octobre 1913: Villacoublay-Pauillac 1^{ère} liaison aéropostale officielle (Sinais); Marcel Marceau – Le résistant devenu mime, ou l'inverse (Berrebi); Avis de recherche [bureaux équipés ou non de la machine Daguin] (Hervé); L'ACTPC de la belle époque aux années folles (7^{ème} partie) (Chauvin); Les cartes postales du casque à pointe (Zeyons).

L'Écho de la Timbrologie

N° 1981 Mar 2023: Télégrammes du XIX^e siècle [la poste d'Albi] (Bastide-Bernardin); Courrier ramené par le *Marion Dufresne* pendant l'OPA4-2021 (Venturini).

N° 1982 Apr 2023: Petites valeurs des timbres-taxe au type Duval (Hardy); OB Austral 2022 et première partie de l'OP 1-2022 du *Marion Dufresne* (Venturini).

N° 1983 May 2023: Décryptage d'un courrier ayant emprunté la voie maritime (Vanpeene/Bastide-Bernardin); Petites valeurs des timbres-taxe au type Duval (2/2) (Hardy); Graver en taille-douce ou comment joindre l'outil à la créa (Pays); l'OP 1-2022 du *Marion Dufresne* (2/2) (Venturini).

N° 1984 Jun 2023: Le Sénat conservateur... du temps où Napoléon était Consul (Sollin); Le 1c Sage noir sur azuré sur journaux annulés typographiquement en noir (Galagain); l'OP 2-2022 du *Marion Dufresne* (Venturini).

Bulletin COL.FRA

N° 183 1^{er} trim 2023: Théophile Piry (1851-1918), un

Français en Chine (Ferrien); Les entrepôts postaux de l'Armée d'Orient 1919-1920: La fin de la guerre des Balkans (Mercier); Les bureaux de poste du Nord-Cameroun (suite et fin) (Parren).

France & Colonies Philatelist

Vol 79 N° 2 (Whole N° 352) Apr 2023: Cameroun Vichy Stamps in Mauritania (Bratzel); The Mystery of the 1874 Eure Newspaper Bands Franked with French 1c Napoleon III Stamps, but Cancelled with the Colonies Pondichéry Inde CDS: Probably Fake Cancels (Marra); One Centime Postcard Rate (Rasmussen); Epic of Vimy: an exhibit revisited (Hedger); Aerophilately of the ill-fated Latécoère 631 Hydravion (Taylor); An Ordinary Cover with Extraordinary Significance (Rosenblum); When Philately Meets Genealogy Research and Military History... (Dufresne de Virel).

Documents Philatéliques

N° 256 (2^e trim 2023) Apr 2023: Avis de tribunal recommandé et taxe en 1876: un cas particulier de réexpédition (Castanet); Le report 1 du 4 centimes de l'émission de Bordeaux (Buffet); Rectificatif au tarif des imprimés électoraux en septembre 1937 (Bonnefoy); Le 15 centimes bleu type Sage et ses filigranes (Abbes); La machine à affranchir type SA (Hamelin); Des objets postaux au format bien peu normalisé...L'acheminement des cartes géographiques nécessaires aux campagnes napoléoniennes (Veglio); Une dépêche parisienne qui ne manque pas de parfum! (Sollin).

Les Feuilles Marcophiles

N° 392 (Mar 2023): Timbre à date du Paris insolite: Le bureau dit de l'École de Médecine (Lavenas); Une carte d'abonnement aux timbres-poste témoin de l'Histoire (Bonnefoy); Quand le personnel des Postes ne maîtrisait vraisemblablement pas la géographie du département des Pyrénées-Orientales (Fort); Quelques anomalies postales en Gironde (Rey); Une pièce d'anniversaire (Pleinfossé); Boîte aux lettres de tranchée (Albaret); Un postier très pointilleux (Trinquier); Historique du personnel de la Poste d'Alsace-Moselle à travers la carrière du facteur Hombourger Julien (Schaff); Abus de Franchise militaire durant la Première Guerre mondiale: la lettre taxée qui «cachait la forêt» (Pleinfossé).

Le Maghrebophila

N° 40 Dec 2022: Nomenclature des Timbres Fictifs du Maroc (Benziane); Algérie – Carnets – Algérie Indépendante (Roujon); 130^{ème} Anniversaire de la Poste Makhzen [Poste Maroc] (Lemrahi).

N° 41 Mar 2023: Le Petit Socco de Tanger : la Grande Histoire en Cartes Postales (Dessane); 130^{ème} Anniversaire de la création de la Poste Makhzen (Guyaux);

Correspondants Postaux de Saka, Ouauizarhte et Tarhjjit (Mercier & Sanchez).

N° 42 Jun 2023: Maroc - les oblitérations mécaniques OMEC sous Protectorat Français (1929-1956) 1^{ère} partie (Benziane); Voie transsibérienne: un courrier du Maroc accidenté (Benziane).

The Indo-China Philatelist

Vol LII N° 3 (Whole N° 253) May 2022: Unknown to the Postmen of Hanoi (Bentley); 15c Navigation & Commerce on Wrapper (Bentley & Dufresne de Virel).

Vol LII N° 4 (Whole N° 254) Jul 2022: Duty Plate Flaws of the 10c Native Woman (Halewood); Visiting Card Regulations (Bentley & Dufresne de Virel).

Vol LII N° 5 (Whole N° 255) Nov 2022: Indochina's "V" Markings on Postage Due Items (Bentley); Group Type Bisects from Indochina (Dufresne de Virel); URGENT letters from Indochina (Bentley).

Vol LIII N° 1 (Whole N° 256) Jan 2023: More on Duty Plate Flaws of the 10-centime Native Woman (Halewood); Canadian Peacekeeping Forces Postal System (Bentley); A 1929 Costes-Bellonte Hanoi to Paris Flight Cover (Miller); "Bad Day" in Saigon's Central Post Office (Düring); Mail

from Independent Laos (Bentley).

Vol LIII N° 2 (Whole N° 257) Mar 2023: MAGASIN HANOI Postmark (Bentley); Inverted 5c + 5c Native Woman Semi-Postal (Bentley; RPK Overprints on Cambodian Stamps (Wiar); Indochina Covers with LIG.S PAQ. FR No 1 Maritime Postmarks (Dufresne de Virel); Distribution of Sample Stamps (Bentley).

Forces Postal History Society Journal

Whole N° 335 Spring 2023: Siege of Stralsund – Napoleonic Wars – 1803-1815 (Cowlin).

Collectors Club Philatelist

Vol 101 N° 5 (Sep/Oct 2022): Review of "Lettres de la Grande Armée/Letters of the Grande Armée, History of the mail organization inside the greatest army of the XIX century" by Paolo Bianchi (Migliavacca).

Cameo

Vol 24 N° 1 (Whole N° 118) Jan 2023: Mail from neighbouring countries into Cameroun (Parren).

Vol 24 N° 2 (Whole N° 119) May 2023: Togo: the postal history of the Anglo-French Occupation 1914-1922 – Registration chapter updated (Martin).

Books Noted

Le Petit Yvert 2023 pub. Yvert et Tellier, 2 rue de l'Étoile, CS 79013, 80094 Amiens Cedex 3; 680pp 12.5 x 18.5cm; price 14.90€. [All French stamps since 1849 in pocket edition]

Timbres d'Afrique francophone Vol 1 2023 – de Afars et Issas à Haute-Volta; 836pp 21 x 27cm; price 54.90€. [Latest edition of Yvert et Tellier catalogue]

French Maritime Post: The Europe Company, Le Havre - St-Petersburg 1840-1852 by Robert Abensur; 44pp A4, bilingual French/English; price 18€ + 8€ p&p; pub. Académie de Philatélie; available from author, 8 rue des Fossés, 54700 Pont-à-Mousson. [History of this maritime company and its steamships]

Compagnies du Canal de Panama: Organisations postales 1881-1903 by the late Louis-Eugène Langlais; 150pp A4; price 20€ + 8€ p&p; pub. Académie de Philatélie; available from Robert Abensur at above address. [3rd book in series on postal organisations of (mainly French) Panama Canal companies 1843-1903]

The Struggle for Dominance on the Indian Subcontinent 1494-1819 by Éric Scherer; 300pp A4; bilingual French/English; pub. Monaco Musée des timbres et des monnaies 2022; price 80€. [Attempts at colonisation by various European powers including France]

The Armies from Buonaparte to Napoleon 1793-1815 by Maurice Boule; 870pp A4; bilingual French/English; pub.

Monaco Musée des timbres et des monnaies 2022; price 80€. [Military and postal history of the period]

Les Indésirables by Guy Marchot with Henri Neimark, Lionel Barriquand & Laurent Bonnefoy; Vol. 2 672pp A4; price 30€ + p&p; Vol. 3 108pp A4; price 15€ + p&p; available from Association Philatélique du Pays d'Aix, Résidence Val St Jean-D, 39 avenue Jules Ferry, 13100 Aix-en-Provence. [Vol. 1 of this account of French civilian internment camps in WWII was fully reviewed by David Hogarth in Journal 294 of December 2020 (pp 160-161); these 2 volumes extend the information]

Maroc: Les Établissements Postaux illustrés par la carte postale pendant le Protectorat Franco-Espagnol (2^{ème} édition 2017) by Khalid Benziane; 184pp; price 40€ inc. p&p; available from author at khalid.benziane@orange.fr [Illustrations and details of postal establishments in Morocco up to 1956]

FFAP Une belle centenaire 1922-2022 by Claude Désarménien, Martine Divey, Bernard Jimenez, Bernard Le Lann, Philippe Lesage, Alain Milone, Bertrand Sinais, Henri Taparel & Lucien Berthelot; 344pp 21.5 x 30cm; price 30€ + 12.50€ p&p; available from FFAP, 47 rue de Maubeuge, 75009 Paris or ffap.philatelie@gmail.com [History and details of Fédération Française des Associations]

Maurice Tyler