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Sower Centenary Issue



Roty's original Sower sketch, 1886
© Musée Oscar Roty, Jargeau

**Volume 53 ● Number 1
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THE FRANCE & COLONIES PHILATELIC SOCIETY OF GREAT BRITAIN

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

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

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* * *

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The Journal of the France & Colonies Philatelic Society

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SOCIETY NOTES

New Members

The Society is pleased to welcome the following:

1212 P Taylor (Nottingham), 1213 C Smith (Oxon).

* * *

Member Deceased

We are sorry to hear of the death of the following member, and offer our sincere condolences to his family:

349 J E Giblin.

* * *

Exhibition Success

We are delighted to be able to announce that at the National Stamp Exhibition last November, Chester 2002, the 4 issues of the **F&CPS Journal** for the year 2001 were awarded a Vermeil Medal and also won the trophy for the best entry in the periodicals section of the Literature Competition. Congratulations to all those who helped to achieve this distinction.

* * *

Society Insurance

Packet Secretary John West reports: The Society's insurers insist upon members obtaining a 'Certificate of Posting' whenever they forward a packet of stamps to another member via the postal service. The requirement was introduced simply because the insurers had taken the view that, if you sent material by recorded delivery, you were drawing attention to it and thus increasing the likelihood of it being stolen – one can only presume that this referred to dishonest postal staff taking it during transit.

The insurers apparently took the view that items going through the normal mail were less likely to be stolen! This may be considered somewhat farcical when they realise the stupidity of certain postmen - who leave these packets on the doorstep, and other ridiculous places, open to both the elements and the attention of the less savoury passers-by. Nevertheless their argument is that, provided evidence is available to show that it was posted, they will honour any claims for a loss.

There have, recently, been a number of subtle changes in the form that these 'Certificates of Posting' now take and members have enquired as to whether they are still complying with the rules by utilising these new forms. The insurers have confirmed that members will not be compromising the system if they utilise the particular form in use by their post office. Scotland, for example, incorporates a joint receipt for goods purchased with their own form of words to acknowledge posting. Several post offices are using 'Parcel Force' generated receipts. In summary, provided members abide by the insurers' principle of obtaining a receipt and not registering or recording the packet, it will be acceptable.

* * *

ABPS Congress

Congress in 2003 will be held at the Swallow Hotel, Gateshead on the occasion of the centenary of the North of England Philatelic Association (NEPA), 4 to 6 July.

One of the speakers will be our member **Stephen Holder**: "Philately 1903 to 2003".

* * *

Displays by Members

On 14 September 2002 **Bob Deakin** displayed "Morocco up to Independence in 1956" to the National Philatelic Society.

On 23 October 2002 **Ashley Lawrence** displayed "The Franco-Prussian War" to Salisbury P S, and on 20 February 2003 "100 Years of *la Semeuse*" to the Royal Philatelic Society, London.

On 13 November 2002 **Alan Wood** displayed "Classic France" to Salisbury P S, and on 8 February 2003 "The French at War" to the Forces Postal History Society.

* * *

New Book

Our member **Ian McQueen** has announced that he has finished his new book *Airmail Directional Handstamps*, and this is now printed and available in two parts. Volume One is a catalogue on a country-by-country basis, with the handstamps illustrated, and noted as far as possible with their places of origin, dates of use and colours of strikes. Then, with Volume Two, comes an alphabetical section by place names (of destination, transit or origin) and shorter sections covering such aspects as markings of individual airlines, transoceanic directions, air cancel styles, registration types and aircraft illustrations. Quite deliberately, first flight cachets and other souvenir handstamps have been omitted, so as to concentrate upon the ordinary markings for commercial airmail.

In total, the whole book runs to about 370 pages, A4 size, and contains more than 2,600 different illustrations, many of which have been repeated for another section to which they relate. Notes have been included within the individual sections where it was felt these might be helpful. The handstamps themselves have been given catalogue numbers, which may be useful for reference when describing or writing up specific items.

Those already familiar with Ian's '*Jusqu'à*' *Airmail Markings* books may be interested in this new study, which extends the *Jusqu'à* story as well. It is available from the author at 55 Albany, Bournemouth BH1 3EJ, for £35 in the UK, 60€ in Europe (preferably cash, or cheques drawn on a French bank), or US\$60 (preferably cash) – all prices including surface postage.

* * *

Continued on page 32

La Semeuse – The Early Years

Ashley Lawrence

La Semeuse, the Sower, first appeared on French stamps on 2 April 1903. As the centenary approaches, this article describes her early years. Note that Figure 1 is to be found on the front cover of this Journal.



Figure 2 - Roty's Medallion for the Ministry of Agriculture, 1895 (*reduced in size*)
© Musée Oscar Roty, Jargeau

The Original Design

In fact, the first rough pencil sketch of the Sower was made in 1886 (Figure 1, on front cover). In 1895, the design was used on a large bronze medallion, 265mm in diameter (Figure 2), intended as an award for agricultural achievement. In the event, as we shall see, the medallion was withdrawn from competition.

Instead, the Sower design was selected to appear on the new silver coins of France: the 50 centimes piece which was issued in 1897, the One franc and Two franc coins which followed in 1898 (Figure 3), and later values up to Five francs.

The Designer

La Semeuse was designed by Louis-Oscar Roty (Figure 4). Born in Paris on 11 June 1846, Roty studied art under the sculptor Augustin Dumont and the engraver Hubert Ponscarme. It was on account of the latter that Roty, with typical generosity, withdrew from competition the medallion which he had sculpted for the Ministry of Agriculture. Ponscarme had a large family to support, and Roty did not wish to compete against his former master and deprive him of the commission.

Roty played a major role in the renaissance of medallic art in the late 19th century. He exhibited at the Salon from



Figure 3 -
2F coin of 1897-98, as shown
in the central design of a postcard
© Musée de la Monnaie de Paris



Figure 4 -
Louis-Oscar Roty, Designer (1846-1911)
© Musée de la Poste, Paris



Figure 5 -
Charlotte Ragot, Model
© Musée de la Poste, Paris



Figure 6 -
Louis-Eugène Mouchon,
Engraver (1843-1914)

1873, and won the much-coveted *Grand Prix de Rome* in 1875, enabling him to further his studies in Italy. In 1885 Roty was awarded the *Légion d'Honneur*. In 1888 he became the youngest member of the *Académie des Beaux-Arts de l'Institut Français*, and in 1897 its president. He won the *Grand Prix* in 1889 and again in 1890 at the *Exposition Universelle*, and was made a Commander of the Legion of Honour. Roty died in Paris on 23 March 1911. Many of his designs and examples of his work are preserved at the *Musée Oscar Roty* in Jargeau (Loiret).

Roty's career as a sculptor of medals and bas-reliefs culminated in the selection of *La Semeuse* as the motif for the new coins in 1897. All three denominations were minted

regularly in great abundance until 1920, when the silver coinage was replaced by cupro-nickel alloy. So popular was the design that the Sower was chosen to reappear on the New Franc coins which were issued in 1960.

The Model

There are various legends concerning the identity of the model who posed for the Sower. The Roty Foundation collection in Jargeau contains a photograph of a young Italian girl, Rosalinda Pesch, aged 16 in 1886, who may have inspired Roty's original sketch. However, it now seems certain that Charlotte Ragot (Figure 5), aged 30 in 1897, was Roty's model for the medallion and coin versions of

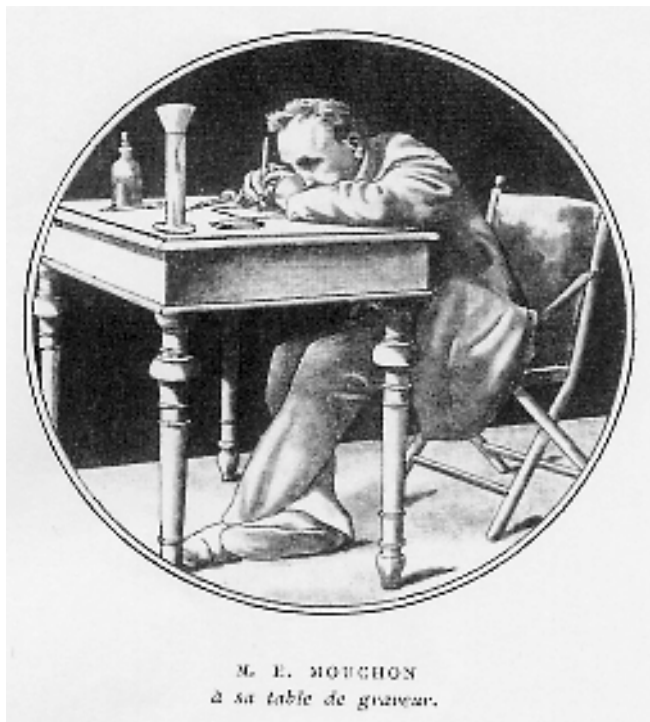
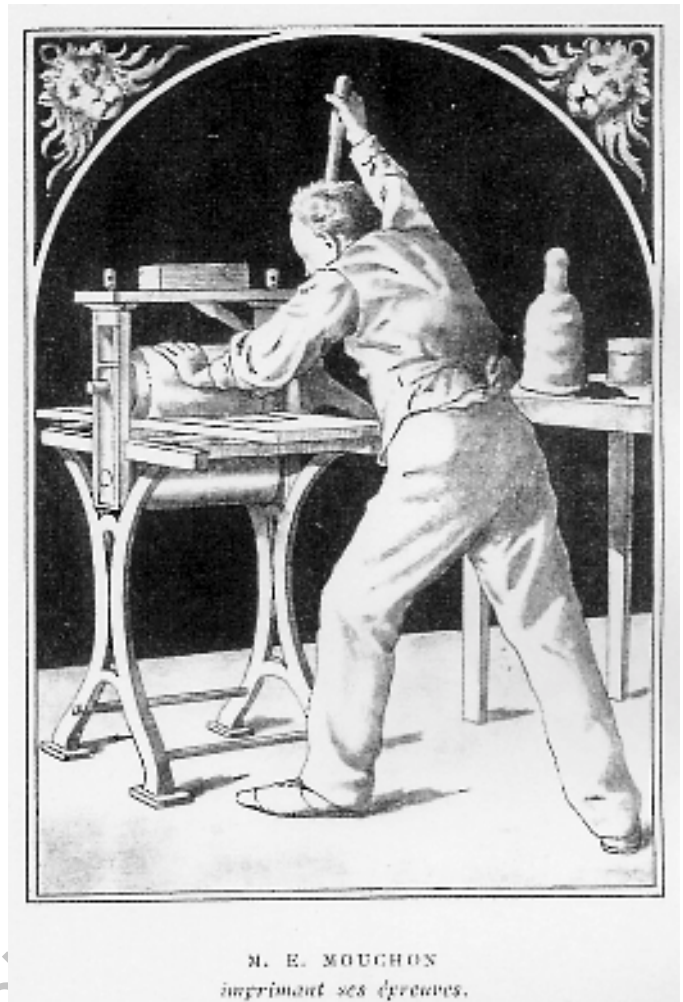


Figure 7 -
Mouchon engraving (above)
and printing proofs (right)



the Sower. A well-respected artists' model in Paris, she often worked with Roty and posed for his classical designs.

The Engraver

Roty's fame as the designer of *La Semeuse* was matched by that of his great friend Louis-Eugène Mouchon (Figures 6 and 7), the engraver who made the dies for the printing of the Sower stamps.

Mouchon was born in Paris in 1843, and died there in 1914. He first worked in his artisan father's workshop, where he learned copperplate engraving. Self-taught, studious, a tireless worker, his growing reputation led to his appointment as the official engraver for the postal administration in 1876. The French stamps which Mouchon engraved are well-known: the allegorical group representing Peace & Commerce ("*Type Sage*") of 1876-1900; the two series of "The Rights of Man", which Mouchon also designed, issued in 1900 and 1902; and of course *La Semeuse*.

Mouchon also engraved stamps for the French Colonies, including the first issues from Tunisia, and the stamps depicting Albert I of Monaco. He acquired an international reputation, receiving commissions from Belgium, Holland, Luxembourg, Portugal, Russia, Rumania, Serbia, Greece, Ethiopia, Guatemala and Argentina. He also engraved French banknotes and postal orders. His versatility embraced other art-forms: he excelled in wood-carving, he engraved medallions, painted, worked in enamel and ceramics, and wrote poetry.

In 1895, Mouchon received the red ribbon of the Legion of Honour, and in 1900 the Salon presented him with the Medal of Honour in recognition of his work. An excessively modest man, Mouchon was not well known to the public at large, but his talents were appreciated by his professional colleagues and fellow artists. He and Roty regarded each other with great affection and respect.

The Choice of a New Design in 1902

As mentioned, Mouchon had designed and engraved the series of stamps known as "The Rights of Man" (Yvert 112-118) which had appeared in 1900. However, the seated figure of a woman holding a scroll was not pleasing, and despite Mouchon's re-drawing of the vignette in 1902 (Yvert 124-128) it was decided to replace the design.

A Deputy from the Jura, Georges Trouillot (Figure 8), Minister of Commerce and Industry in the government of Émile Combes, urged the new Under-Secretary of State (later Minister) for Posts and Telegraphs M. Alexandre Bérard (Figure 9) to adopt a figure more in favour with the public as the symbol of the Third Republic. Encouraged by Trouillot, who was a friend and admirer of Roty, the Minister chose the design of the Republic sowing ideas, which had adorned the silver coins since 1897. The Decree of Adoption of the Sower design for use on stamps was made on 16 October 1902, and the press applauded the Minister's choice.

Roty's Sower, engraved by Mouchon, would be used for the five middle values: the 10c, 15c, 20c, 25c and 30c



Figure 8 -
Georges Trouillot (1851-1916),
Minister of Commerce

stamps. Denominations below 10c would continue to be served by *Type Blanc*, and *Type Merson* would be used for the higher values above 30c.

There was a political motive behind Trouillot's choice of *La Semeuse*. She was intended to represent the Republic on the march, at the rise of a new dawn. Wearing the Phrygian cap of liberty, lightly draped in classical garb, she symbolised rural France, sowing ideas and delivering a message of peace. The Sower turned her back on her warlike rival *Germania*, symbol of Imperial Germany, who was clad in iron and carried a sword.

Preparations for the New Issue

Roty made a plaster-cast of the Sower (Figure 10) which served as the model for Mouchon's engraving. Mouchon engraved the *poinçon* or die in bronze, without the value (Figure 11). It depicts *La Semeuse* against a lined background, with the sun rising above the horizon behind her. Mouchon made full use of his artistry as a copperplate engraver, and chose not to employ the plain background normally identified with typography. He delivered the die to the director of the *Atelier*, the government printing works in Boulevard Brune, where copies of the dies, the *clichés*, were reproduced in copper to make up the galvanos

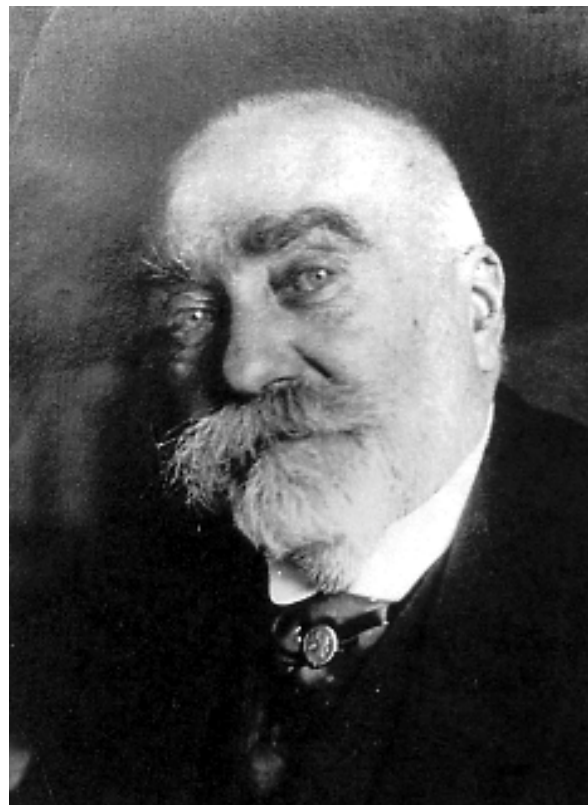


Figure 9 -
Alexandre Bérard,
Under-Secretary of State for Posts & Telegraphs
© Musée de la Poste, Paris

or printing plates. At this time all stamps were printed on flat plate presses: printing on the faster rotary presses was introduced towards the end of 1922.

The correspondence which passed between Mouchon, the director of the *Atelier* and the Minister between November 1902 and February 1903 reveals that there were technical difficulties with the engraving. The original die (which postal historians now call the *poinçon archaïque*), though providing magnificent proofs of the Sower, was engraved too finely to be reproduced satisfactorily, and to his considerable annoyance Mouchon had to re-engrave the die (now called the *poinçon primitif*) for the five values of stamps, to enable the printing plates to be manufactured. Mouchon's fee for this work, agreed with the Minister, was 4,000 francs (now equivalent to £8,000).

Colour trials were produced for the Minister's approval. The final selection of colours for the five new stamps (with their values omitted) is shown in Figure 12. The Slate-Green (*vert-bronze*) was chosen for the 15c stamp as it reminded M. Trouillot of the colour of the mountain pines in his Jura constituency. According to the postal historian and stamp dealer Arthur Maury, Roty would have preferred *jaune-indien*, but was told that this colour, one of the most expensive, would have added an extra 145,000 francs to the annual printing bill: Roty withdrew his request.

Urgent instructions were given to the director of the *Atelier* to hasten the production of the new stamps. Maury reports that the sheets were printed in the morning, gummed in the afternoon, and perforated the next day; these three operations would normally have taken a fortnight! By the end of March the printers were delivering 1,000 sheets of 300 stamps each day.

Figure 10 -
Plaster cast made by Roty
© Musée de la Poste, Paris



Figure 11 -
Die engraved in bronze by Mouchon, 1903
© Musée de la Poste, Paris
[Illustrated in *Timbres magazine*, March 2002]

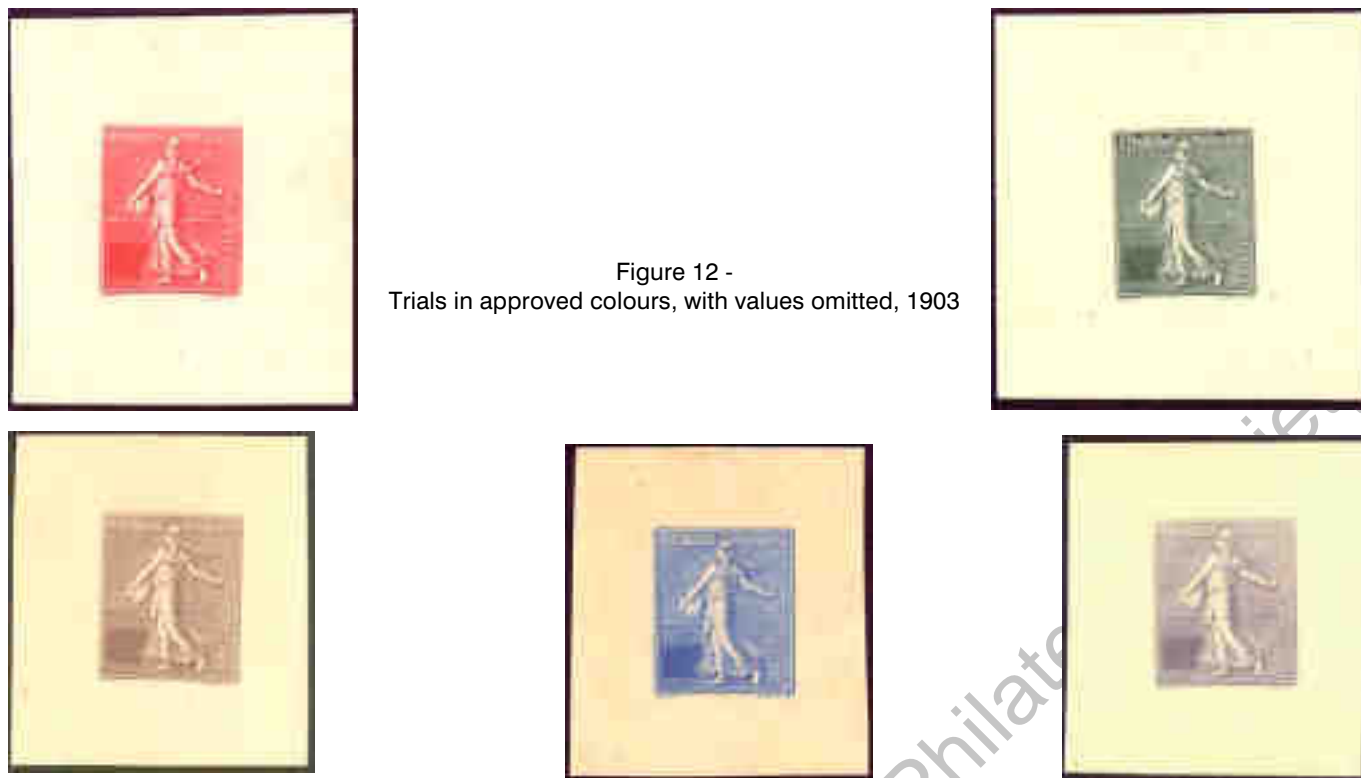


Figure 12 -
Trials in approved colours, with values omitted, 1903

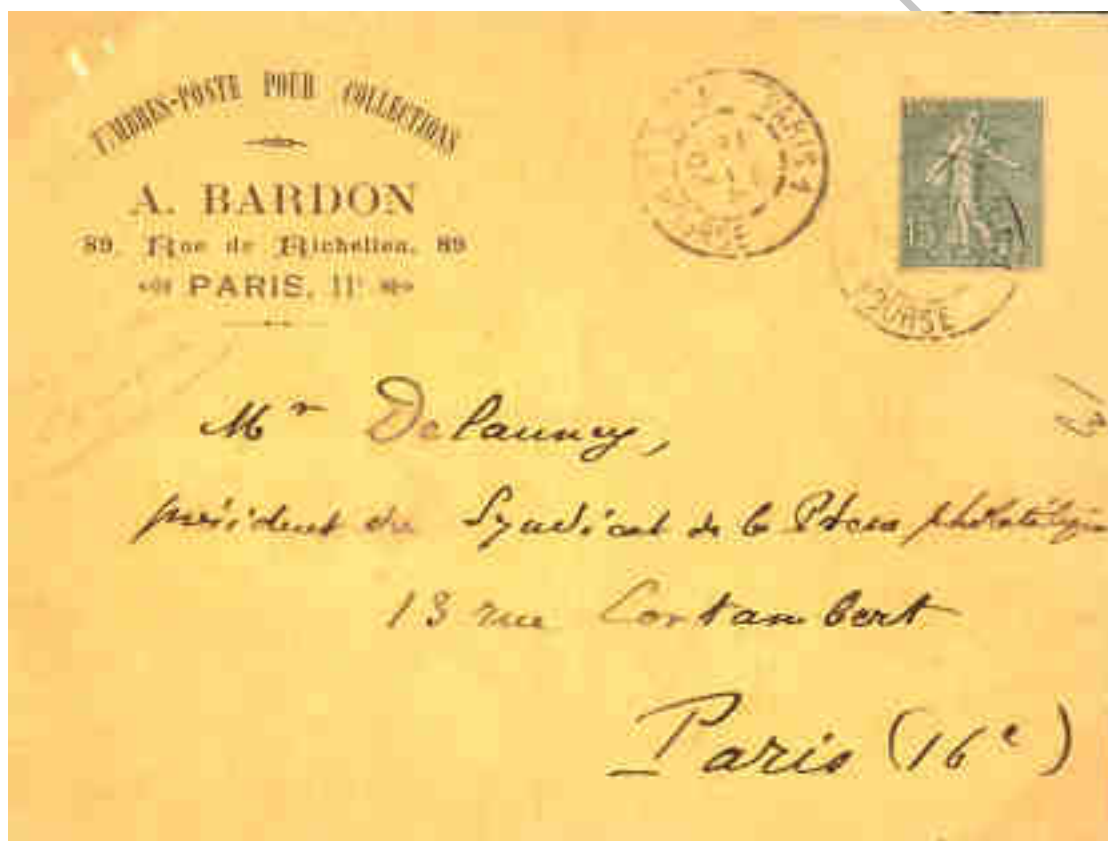


Figure 13 -
15c first day cover,
postmarked
2 April 1903

The Sower Issues of 1903

The first of the new lined Sowers, the 15c Slate-Green (Yvert 130) was issued on 2 April 1903. This was the internal postal rate for ordinary letters. Keen to impress his fellow politicians, Trouillot issued instructions that the stamps were to be put on sale first at the post offices of the Senate and Chamber of Deputies, and at selected post offices in Paris, before being allowed to go on general

release. On the first day of issue, more than 20,000 of the new 15c stamps were sold at the *guichets* of the Senate and Chamber of Deputies alone. According to Maury, demand was so great that the clerks at the post office counters had to ration the sale of the new stamps to five per customer. A first day cover, postmarked Paris 1, Place de la Bourse, 2-4-03 is shown at Figure 13.



Figure 14 - Essais de fond, 1906

Figure 15 -
"Le Matin" postcard
campaigning for
reduced postal rates,
1906

LA TAXE POSTALE EN EUROPE

ALLEMAGNE	AUTRICHE	HONGRIE	BELOQUE	ANGLETERRE
10 cent. 1/2 — 30 gr.	10 cent. 1/2 — 30 gr.	10 cent. 1/2 — 30 gr.	10 cent. — 15 gr.	10 cent. — 25 gr.

FRANCE

15 Centimes

10 Grammes

MANIFESTATION

Mettez les lettres du **MATIN**, partant de l'abonnement de la taxe postale de 0 fr. 15 à 0 fr. 10, sont invitées à jeter à la poste avec l'affranchir cette carte postale.

DÉVELOPPEMENT PROPORTIONNEL DES SERVICES POSTAUX

	Nombre de bureaux	Distances courtes	Distances longues	Population
Il existe en France	1	1	1	3.725 habitants
en Allemagne	1	1	1	1.425 —
en Angleterre	1	1	1	1.425 —

Imp. Walther et Bache — Paris.



Figure 16 -
Unissued design for 10c Sower with sun in front, 1906
(enlarged)



Figure 17 -
10c Sower on ground, 1906 (enlarged)



Figure 18 -
10c Sower with thin figures, 1906 (*enlarged*)



Figure 19 -
10c Sower with thick figures (*enlarged*)



Figure 20 -
Surcharged Red Cross issue with millésime (*enlarged*)



Figure 21 -
Surcharged Red Cross issue (*enlarged*)



Figure 22 -
Crédit Lyonnais *jeton-monnaie*
advertising 6% National Savings



Figure 23 -
Timbre-jeton
advertising Cognac Meukow



Figure 24 -
La Semeuse de Piel, 1960 (*enlarged*)

The other values were issued during the weeks that followed :-

- the 10c Rose-Carmine (Yvert 129) used for postcards, on 6 May;
- the 20c Purple-Brown (Yvert 131) used for commercial samples, on 29 June;
- the 25c Blue (Yvert 132) used for letters sent abroad, on 28 April;
- the 30c Pale Lilac (Yvert 133) for double rate postage, on 29 June.

These too, were first issued at selected offices in Paris, and only later elsewhere, as stocks of the earlier *Type Mouchon* were used up.

Between 1904 and 1906 the Sower appeared on postcards, letter cards and other forms of postal stationery, as well as on bank mandates. Some 15c Sower stamps were overprinted F.M. (standing for *Franchise Militaire*) from July 1904, for use by members of the armed forces on active service, as were 10c stamps from July 1906.

Public Reaction

The new design was generally acclaimed as a great success. Press and public alike were pleased to see the familiar figure of *La Semeuse*, the elegant embodiment of rural France, appearing on stamps as well as on coins.

Nevertheless, there were complaints, on political, artistic and practical grounds.

Some nationalists would have preferred to see a more militant figure, a patriot such as *Jeanne d'Arc*, who would symbolise France's determination to recover the lost provinces of Alsace and Lorraine, occupied by Germany since the defeat of 1871.

Purists complained that the lighting of the design was irrational. If the sun, rising behind the Sower, was the source of light, then it should have illuminated her back, rather than leaving it in shadow. (In fact there was a simple explanation for this: Mouchon's engraving was made from Roty's plaster-cast which, being in relief, had caused the shadows).

Worse: it was obvious from her wind-swept hair and from the gusting folds of her dress that the Sower was sowing into the wind. The seed corn would be blown back into her face. No *paysanne* with a *soupçon* of common-sense would be so foolish!

And was that the top of the seed-bag poking out from beneath her arm, or a rather provocative boob.....?

Postal officials complained that the figures and lettering were difficult to read against the lined background.

Minister Bérard, himself something of a perfectionist, was aware of such criticisms, and asked Mouchon to make changes. The task of reworking the background for the Sower was to prove a frustrating and ultimately humiliating exercise for Mouchon during the years 1903-1907. The *Musée de la Poste* in Paris holds a series of engraved dies and proofs which show Mouchon's efforts to correct the design faults during this period. Mouchon attempted to retain the lined background. The red *Essais de Fond* of 1906, illustrated at Figure 14, show the variations in the background design which he proposed for the 10c lined Sower, as well as the solid background proposed for the 25c cameo Sower. Mouchon prepared similar artist's trials in green and in blue.

In time, dies become worn, and need to be reworked or replaced. This can result in different "types" of a stamp, each having its own distinguishing features. Thus the specialised catalogues identify three types of the 10c. lined Sower, and six types of the 15c. lined Sower. We cannot always be certain which dies were modified or replaced by Mouchon himself, and which by the engravers of the *Atelier*.

The Sower on Ground, 1906

1906 provided a suitable opportunity for the introduction of a new Sower. The government had been put under considerable pressure to reduce the ordinary internal letter rate from 15c to 10c. The journal "*Le Matin*" led the campaign for this reduction by distributing more than 100,000 picture postcards, addressed to the President of the Chamber of Deputies, which contrasted the high French postal charges with the lower rates charged elsewhere in Europe. Such a postcard is shown in Figure 15. The Minister decided that a new 10c. Sower stamp would be issued to coincide with the reduction in the letter rate, which was to take place on 16 April 1906.

Mouchon engraved a fine new die whose design, *La Semeuse avec Soleil Devant*, showed the sun rising in front of the Sower (Figure 16). This was intended to counter any further criticism of the aberrant light source. The artist's proofs without value show three different patterns for the rays of the sun. Short dotted lines of sunlight were selected for the 10c die. To provide an alternative choice for the Minister, Mouchon also modified an earlier die, and depicted *La Semeuse avec Sol*, the Sower in cameo, against a plain background, standing on the ground (Figure 17). Trial sheets, containing 50 stamps of each of these designs, were printed, but the results were unsatisfactory. With the new placement of the sun in front of the Sower, the design appeared flat and lacking in distinction; it was promptly rejected. With time running out, the Minister reluctantly chose the alternative.

La Semeuse avec Sol (Yvert 134) was duly issued and sold, first at the post offices of the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies on 13 April, and more generally on 16 April 1906. Plate 1 was used to print some 2 million stamps in sheets of 50 by flat press between 10 and 25 April: no *millésime* appears on these sheets.

Mouchon made retouches to the die for Plate 2, lightening the shading on the Sower's right shoulder and on the ground. Plate 2 was used to produce some 28 million stamps, in sheets of 150 which included the *millésime* 6. These went on sale on 17 May. Despite the changes, the Sower on Ground did not satisfy the Minister, or gain popularity with the press or public. The critics carped at the new Sower "perched on a pedestal" ("*juchée sur un socle*"). The stamps were withdrawn from sale in July 1906, after only three months.

The Sower with Thin Figures, without Ground, 1906

Mouchon was again asked to revise the design, and he produced a new die in record time. When Minister Bérard saw the first proofs, he commented that the top of the Sower's seedbag looked like a boob ("*un téton*"), and demanded its removal. He was informed by the technical director of the printing works, M. Thévenin, that it would be impossible to scratch out the offending lines ("*gratter le téton*") without making a new galvano: this would require more work from Mouchon, and lead to further delay.

Bérard relented, and instead authorised Mouchon to engrave the dies for a new series of definitive stamps, 10c,

15c, 20c, 25c, and 35c, in which the Sower would appear in simple cameo against a solid background, without any ground. Mouchon duly engraved the dies in copper: they are preserved at the *Musée de la Poste*.

The new 10c Red Sower for the ordinary letter rate (Yvert 135) was issued on 28 July, followed by the 35c Violet Sower for registered letters (Yvert 136) on 8 November 1906. Both stamps were printed in sheets of 300, and are described as “*Chiffres Maigres*” as the figures of value and the lettering of the word *Postes* are thinly drawn.

Type I of the 10c Red Sower (Figure 18) went on sale at midday at the post office in Rue de Grenelles: within two hours it was withdrawn! Mouchon had engraved the die under the supervision of the Minister for Fine Arts, M. Dujardin-Beaumetz. When samples of the stamps were shown to Minister Bérard, he was so annoyed at the heavy print and lack of definition of the design that he ordered the immediate withdrawal of the stamps from sale, the destruction of Plate 1, and the burning of all unsold sheets. Notwithstanding the Minister’s order, officials gradually allowed further quantities of the Type I sheets to be distributed and sold in post offices, in order to prevent stamp dealers from speculating in the original issue, and making a killing.

Mouchon made retouches to his engraving, by inserting fine white lines of light which improved the delineation of the Sower’s robe and seedbag. The 10c and 35c values of the revised stamps (known as Type IIA) were issued respectively on 20 October and 8 November 1906, and continued to be sold until 2 February 1907.

However, despite all of Mouchon’s efforts, the Minister was still not satisfied with the new design. In the circumstances, no stamps were issued from the retouched dies of the other three values.

The Sower with Thick Figures, without Ground, 1907

On 24 October, just four days after the re-issue of the 10c stamp, Bérard ordered that the Sower with thin figures be replaced. To Mouchon’s mortification, the Minister also insisted that a new engraver be appointed. Jean-Baptiste Lhomme, a *graveur retoucheur* from the *Atelier*, engraved a new die, which reinforced the figures of value and made the lettering of the word *Postes* appear in a bolder type. The stamps which were produced from the new die are described as “*Chiffres Gras*” (Figure 19). Lhomme did not receive an engraver’s credit for his work: the names O. Roty and E. Mouchon continued to appear below the frame-line on Sower stamps.

Printing of the definitive series of cameo Sowers with thick figures commenced in January 1907. The first to be issued was the 5c Green Sower (Yvert 137), in the form of booklets of 40 stamps on 6 March, and in sheets of 150 stamps on 19 March 1907. The 10c Red Sower (Yvert 138) was issued in September 1907, the distinctive Scarlet shade (Yvert 138c)

appearing in November of that year. The higher values in the series, the 20c Brown, 25c Blue, 30c Orange and 35c Violet, were issued in different shades and at different times between 1907 and 1913.

The Sowers after 1913

As this article concerns The Early Years, I will be brief and selective. The 10c Sower was surcharged, then redesigned, for the benefit of the Red Cross in September 1914 (Yvert 146-7, Figures 20 and 21; see also John West’s article on page 33). Some Sower stamps (among others) were printed on greyish-granite GC (for *Grande Consommation*) paper as a wartime economy measure during 1916-19.

When the war ended, some metals needed for the minting of coins were in short supply, and Sower stamps served as small change. Department stores issued this *monnaie de nécessité* by placing stamps in protective sachets or cardboard covers, and banks and private companies issued stamps encased in aluminium and cellophane (*timbres-jetons*), which carried advertisements for their products and services (Figures 22 and 23).

Cameo Sowers and lined Sowers were issued in profusion during the inter-war years, at various times, and in different formats as sheets, booklets and coils, and postal stationery. They appeared in an astonishing variety of colours, types and values, and were often overprinted, until the Vichy government ordered their replacement in 1941.

In 1960, in recognition of her popular appeal, the Sower graced the first coins and stamps to be denominated in New Francs. The dies for the new 0.20 and 0.30 stamps (Yvert 1233, 1234A) were engraved by Jules Piel (Figure 24).

Sower stamps and booklets were issued for the 1996 *Journée du Timbre*.

In 2002, France said farewell to the Franc, but not to the Sower. She reappeared on the 10c, 20c and 50c Euro coins.

La Semeuse has been a treasure to France, to philatelists and numismatists for more than a century. Long may she continue to delight us. Here’s to the next 100 years!

Sources

1. Pierre de Lizeray: “*Les Poinçons “Semeuses” du Musée Postal*”
2. Jean Storch & Robert Françon: “*Monographie des Timbres de France de 1903 et 1906 au Type Semeuse*”
3. Jean Storch & Robert Françon: “*Les Timbres-Poste au Type Semeuse Camée de 1907*”
4. Arthur Maury: “*Histoire des Timbres-Poste Français*”
5. Illustrations from *Musée de la Poste, Paris*
6. Illustrations from “*Timbres magazine*”
7. M. Rida Roty

All items are from Ashley Lawrence’s collection unless otherwise noted.

PAGES FROM MY COLLECTION

(18) The Suspension of Mail Services in Time of War and Revolution

Robert Johnson

These pages, showing selected items franked with the Sower, give a flavour of the way in which civilian communications from country to country were affected by hostilities between them, or between them and others, or between others. Others in this context means countries other than France and her Colonies. Examples have been taken from the Balkan Wars in 1912-1913 up to the 1920s.



Figure 1 - Second Balkan War, March 1913

This letter was posted in France and returned by Turkey from Constantinople because of events between the First and Second Balkan Wars.

Adrianople (now Edirne) was a Turkish garrison city near the border with Bulgaria.

Adrianople was besieged from January to March 1913 by Bulgarian (and assisted later by Serbian) forces.

The city was surrendered by the Turks on 26 March 1913. This letter was posted on 14 March 1913.



Figure 2 - First Balkan War, October 1912

This item was affected by events of the First Balkan War.

Serbia, Bulgaria, Montenegro and Greece declared war on Turkey in October 1912, resulting in three large military defeats for Turkey, before the Peace of London, May 1913. CAUSE DE GUERRE and two other marks in Arabic script have been put on in Constantinople.

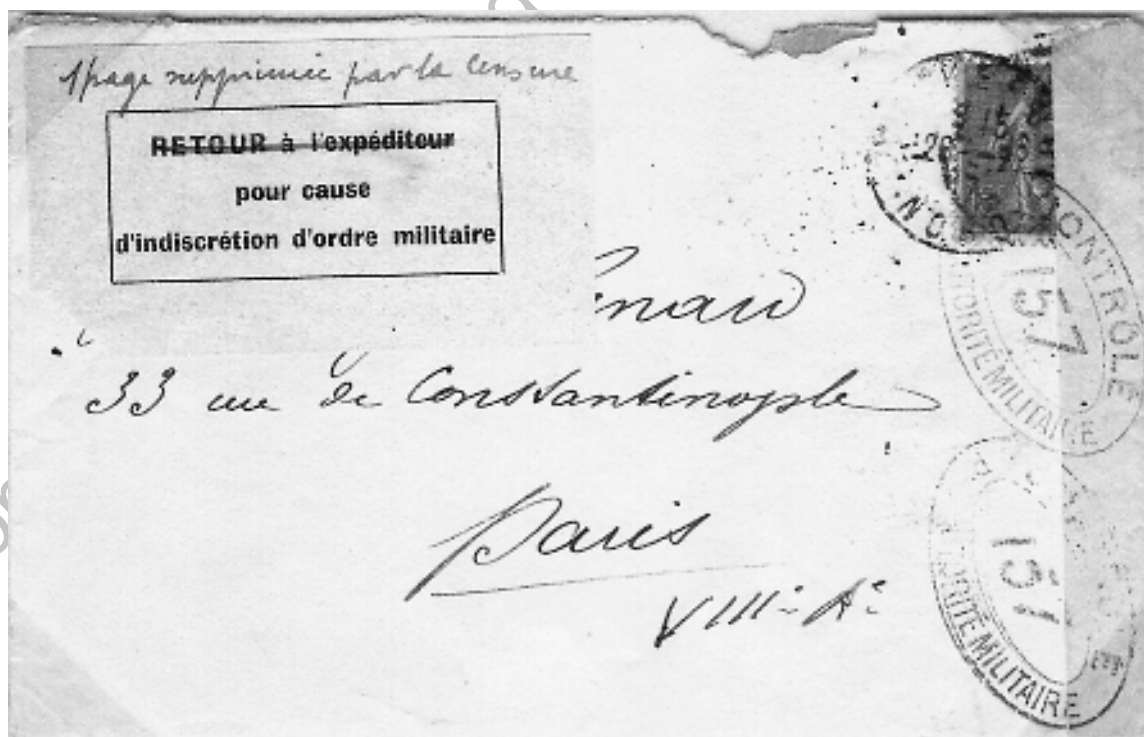


Figure 3 - First World War, July 1917

One page has been suppressed by the censor because of a breach of military regulations. The numbers in a double oval 151 to 200 were allocated to the military control at Pontarlier for use in connection with correspondence of prisoners of war.

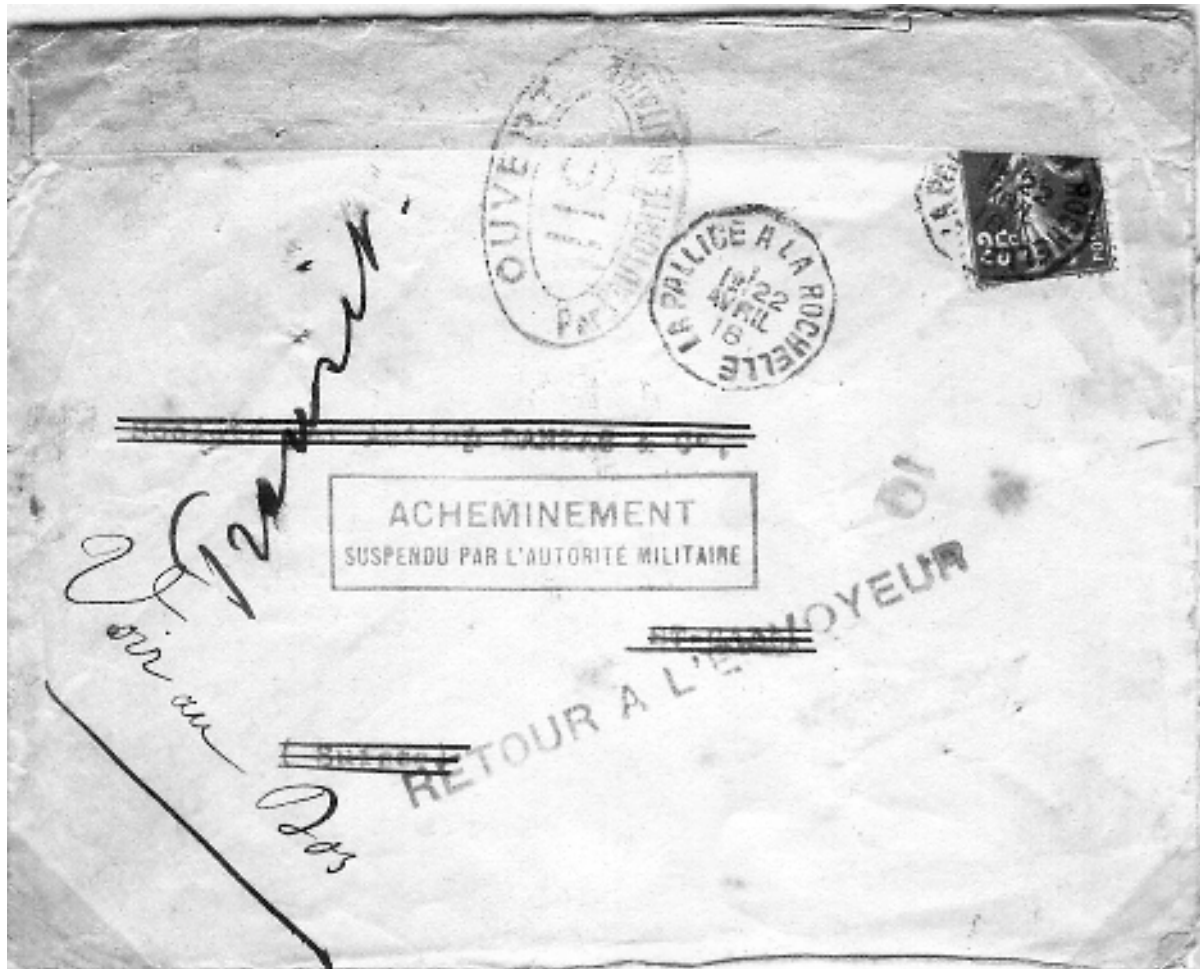


Figure 4 - First World War, April 1918

This item was censored at Pontarlier (119) near the Swiss border. The reason for the return of the letter from La Rochelle to Switzerland is obscure, but it is probably connected with restrictions on communications following the Ludendorff offensive on the Western Front which started in April 1918. Secrecy was being maintained about the arrival and disposition of American troops. Mail to Sweden (another neutral country) is also known to have been affected.

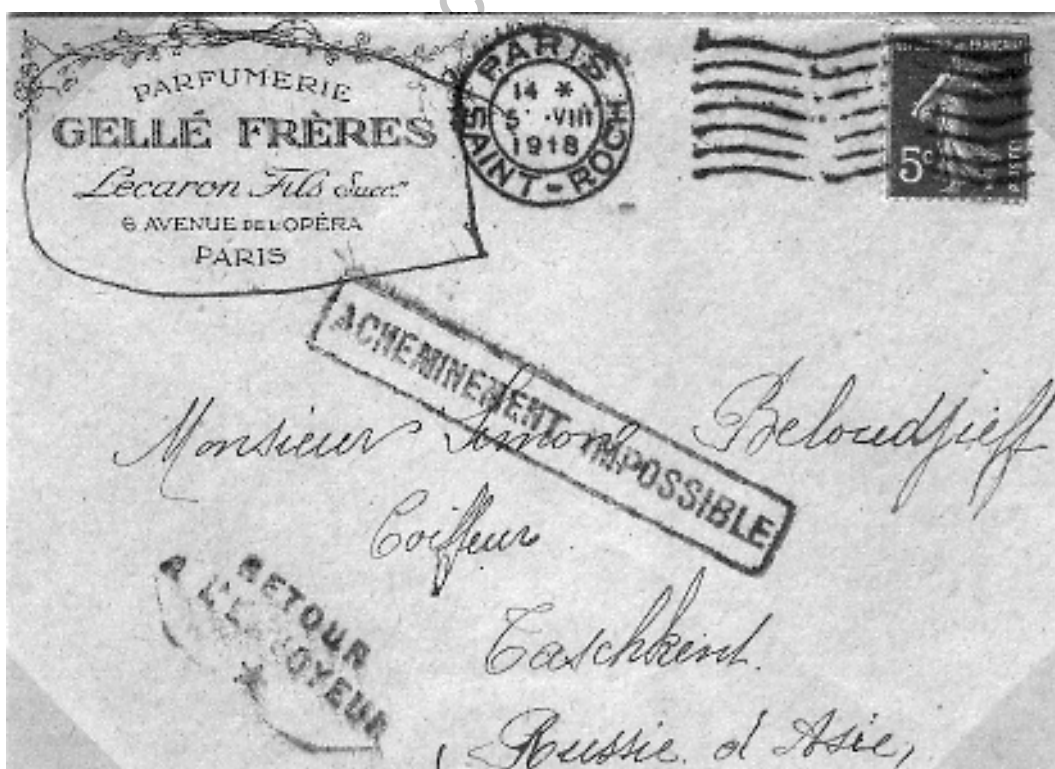


Figure 5 - Russian Revolution Period, August 1918
Communications between Allied countries in the West and Russia were affected by the Treaty of Brest Litovsk in March 1918, which involved the surrender of a large tract of land from the Black Sea to the Baltic by Russia to the Central Powers. This was an effective barrier, and letters had to pass via Siberia or Persia into those parts of Russia whose communications were not being disrupted by the activities of the Bolsheviks.



The Arabic on this letter from France to Northern Turkey reads "Refused by the Nationalist Authorities".

Figure 6 - Turkish War of Independence, December 1920

This cover is one of three acquisitions dating from the time of Atatürk in the early 1920s. Addressed to a nut merchant in Northern Turkey near the south shores of the Black Sea, it was kept in France as there were no means of getting it from Constantinople to its destination because of Atatürk's military operations. These military operations and their extent need to be researched.

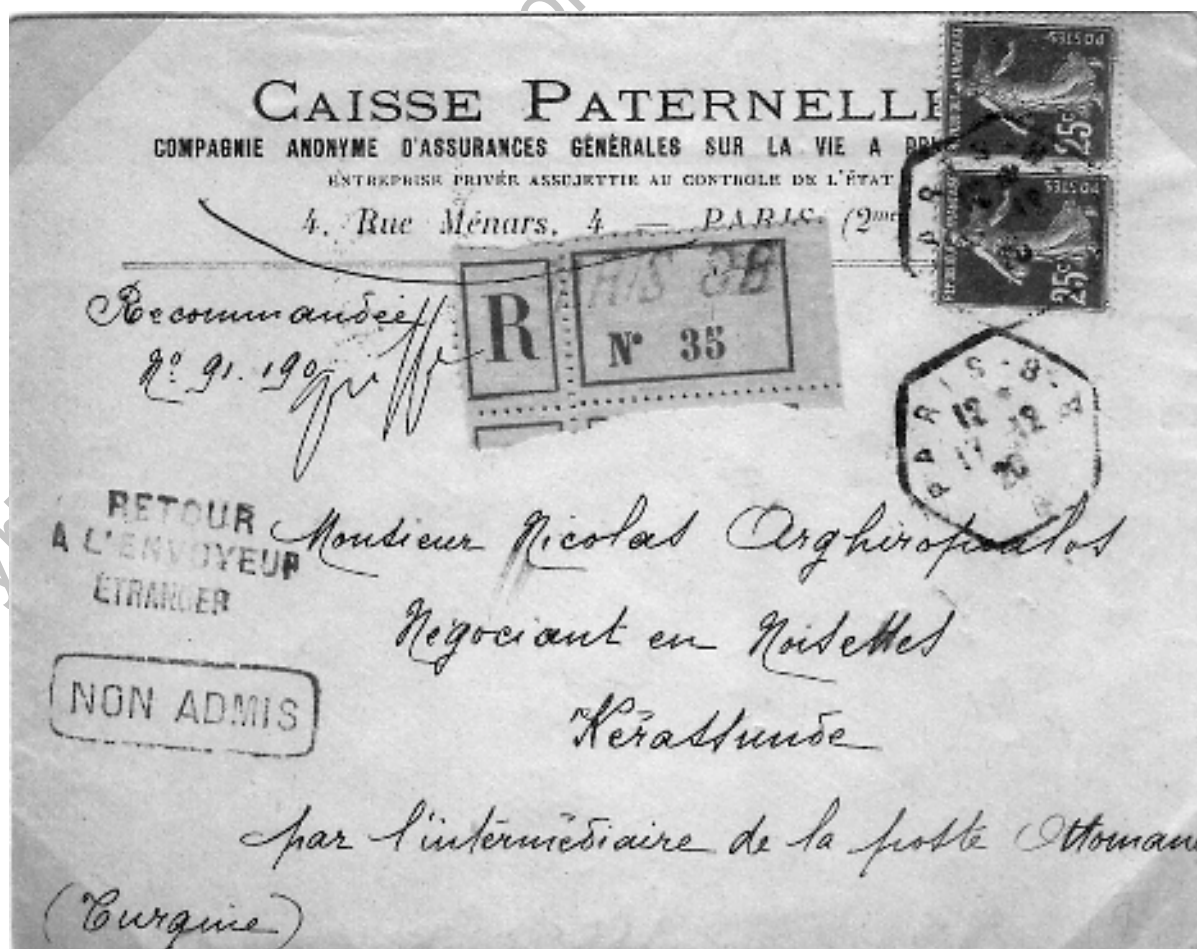


Figure 7 - Turkish War of Independence, December 1920

Some Early Machine Cancellations - 1

Bill Mitchell

Please don't expect too much erudition from what follows, which is way outside my speciality (French sub-Saharan Africa, as if you didn't know). Maurice has asked for contributions to a Sower centenary issue of the Journal and I can, as it happens, oblige with something. I've never been able to resist an interesting postmark and over the years I've built up a — distinctly haphazard — collection of French postal markings, so here are a few, mainly with a Sower connection.

Apart from an article by the late John Hayhurst dating back 20 years, very little has been published in the Journal on the subject of machine cancellations. The following notes have been taken from his article ("The Machine Marks of France" in Journal 149 for January 1983), *Le Guide de l'oblitération mécanique* by Yvon Nouazé (Étude n° 7 of Éditions GIP, Paris 1990) and the *Catalogue des oblitérations mécaniques de France* by Gérard Dreyfuss (Editions Yvert & Tellier, Amiens, 1st ed. 1994).

All the cancels in this selection come from machines known in France (usually erroneously, Hayhurst says) as "Flier". Dreyfuss does not comment on this, but Nouazé provides enlightenment. He says (page 38) that these machines were manufactured and sold, initially under the trade name "Hey-Dolphin", by the International Postal Supply Company of New York; in France a patent was obtained on 18 September 1900. The machine was continually being improved and several models existed, including two known to the PTT as "Flier" and "Superflier" — the name seems to have stuck.

The first machine was brought into use at the Paris R.P. office in January 1904, not long after the first appearance of the Sowers; they replaced American Bickerdike machines supplied by the Canadian Postal Supply Company. The characteristics of the cancel are: date stamp diameter 24mm (outer ring); the time indicated either by a figure or "N" ("nuit"); the date in three lines; the month in Arabic figures; the last two digits only of the year; seven wavy lines broken by the letters "R.F." and "D". The significance of "R.F." is obvious but the meaning of "D" is uncertain: it could be "Déposé" (*déposé au guichet*) or "Drop" (*drop indiquant un service rapide*) (Nouazé, page 42). The letters "R" and "C" are also known; additionally Dreyfuss records a "T". A fine example of this cancel is shown as Figure 1; Dreyfuss numbers it A 00008 and cites a period of use from 1904 to 1905.



Figure 1



Figure 2

This marks the beginning of a "période d'essais" lasting until July 1910; unfortunately I have to jump here to the period of general use which Nouazé dates from May 1913. The six examples illustrated have two things in common — the month is now in Roman figures and the year is shown in full. Figure 2 is Dreyfuss A 00119N ("nuit"), period of use 1913-14 (it was followed by an "H" with the time indicated by figures in 1915-17). The "R.F." and "D" have disappeared and are replaced by continuous wavy lines. In Figure 3 (Dreyfuss A 00116N, 1913-15) letters (or, rather, letters and a number) in the canceller (the date stamp is invariably to the left) have reappeared; "R.F." has been replaced by "1" ("one") which it is believed indicates the number of the machine at the particular office. No other number seems to have been recorded from France, but a "4" from the United States is illustrated by Nouazé (page 42).

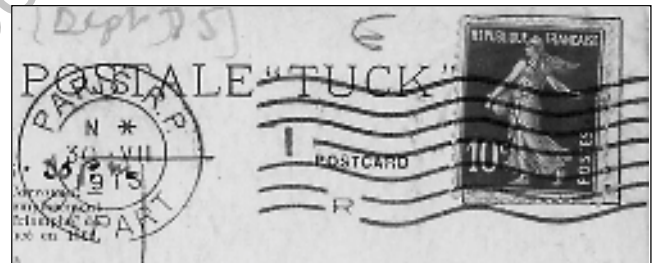


Figure 3



Figure 4

Figure 4 is basically identical to Figure 3 except that the "R" is replaced by a "D". It is important because according to Dreyfuss, and unlike Figure 3, it is not recorded with *levée* number instead of "N" to indicate the time of handling⁽¹⁾. This example, of 9 December 1913, has a *levée* number 21; an earlier example, of 21 May 1913, also with *levée* number 21, was illustrated on page 92 of *Timbroscopie* n° 138 (September 1996), so it may figure as A 00118H in the second edition of Dreyfuss, published in 1998.



Figure 5

A prominent feature of machine cancellations, of course, has always been the use of slogans (“*flammes*”) in place of the wavy line cancellers. The earliest examples are the well-known Bickerdike “flag” cancels of around the period of the 1900 Paris Exhibition (1898-1903); after this there was quite a long period when the wavy lines reigned supreme. Slogans reappeared shortly before World War I. The first one was used at the 1914 Lyon Exposition (Figure 5; Dreyfuss LYO 361). The machine was used after the exhibition closed, and examples dated after 1 November 1914 command a considerable premium.

to economise is to serve” (well, there was a war on) (Figure 7; Dreyfuss A 00125, 1918-19).

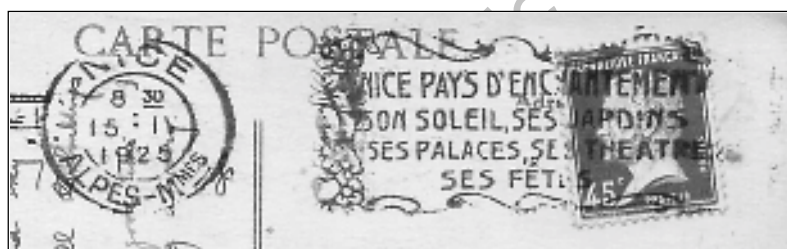


Figure 8



Figure 6

Three slogans for more general use were brought into service in some Paris offices in 1916. They were designed to encourage the public to help speed up the mail; one was exhorted to put the stamp in the top right corner of the envelope, to post as soon as possible and (Figure 6) to include the number of the *arrondissement* when writing to Paris. This is Dreyfuss B 008105 — he gives the period of use as 1917-20; mine is dated 10 October 1916.

The first “*flamme illustrée*” appeared at Nice in 1924 (Figure 8; Dreyfuss NIC 106). It was in use for a considerable time, until 1931, so it isn’t particularly scarce.

I apologise for any inaccuracies in these notes. I’m not an expert and my French isn’t what it should be! If anyone can correct any mistakes, please do so. Better still, can anyone produce a definitive article on these cancels? John Hayhurst suggested several lines for research, but nothing seems to have been done about them, in English at any rate.

Lastly, I must acknowledge my debt to Alec Swain. Most of my postcards with early machine cancels were purchased from him. He has spent many — I’m sure, happy — hours searching dealers’ stocks for interesting cancels. Some of the fruits of his labours are illustrated here.

Note

(¹) In this context I think that “*levée*” must mean the actual time, not the number, of the collection. Mick Bister has drawn my attention to a note on page 199 of Volume 2 of the 1982 Yvert Specialised. The decision to replace the number of a collection by its actual time dates from 1898. Initially hours went from 1 to 12 followed by “M” (“*matin*”) for mornings or “S” (“*soir*”) for afternoons and evenings, but as from 1 October 1901 this was changed to 1 to 24. So in this case “21 * ” apparently means “21.00” hours. But it’s strange that “N” for “*nuit*”, also followed by a star, was still in use. Can anyone elucidate?

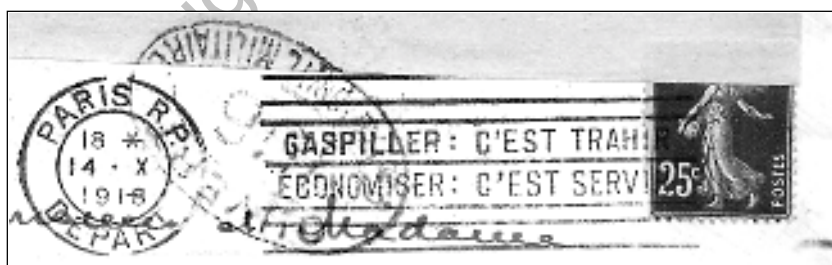


Figure 7

1918 saw the first of a long series of slogans advocating, as Gordon Brown would say, prudence. “To waste is to betray,

A Red 10c Sower Rarity

David Jennings-Bramly FRPSL



Figure 1 - The block of 6 type II Sowers (enlarged)

Lurking amongst the red 10c Sowers is a little known and extremely rare block of six. In 1911 the PTT started experiments with the intention of producing booklets costing 3, 5 and 6 francs, the booklets to be all of one value - e.g. 60 x 5c, 30 x 10c, 12 x 25c, or containing 5c and 10c panes to 5F face value, with the 6F booklet to contain all three values. Those wishing to learn more about them are referred to the masterwork by Messrs Storch and Françon, "Les Timbres-Poste au type Semeuse camée de 1907, tome I" (see n° 328 in the F&CPS 3rd Library List).

Owing to the interruption of the Great War 1914-1918, only one of the proposed booklets reached the post offices for sale. The booklet contained 30 x 10c Sowers of a new type - type II, Yvert 138f, and there were 5 panes of 6, with interleaving.

During May 1984 I found a ppc with Yvert 138f posted on 9 February 1919 in Paris, to Manchester (Figures 2 and 3) - this date being some 4 weeks earlier for its use than previously recorded: it has been suggested that the booklets

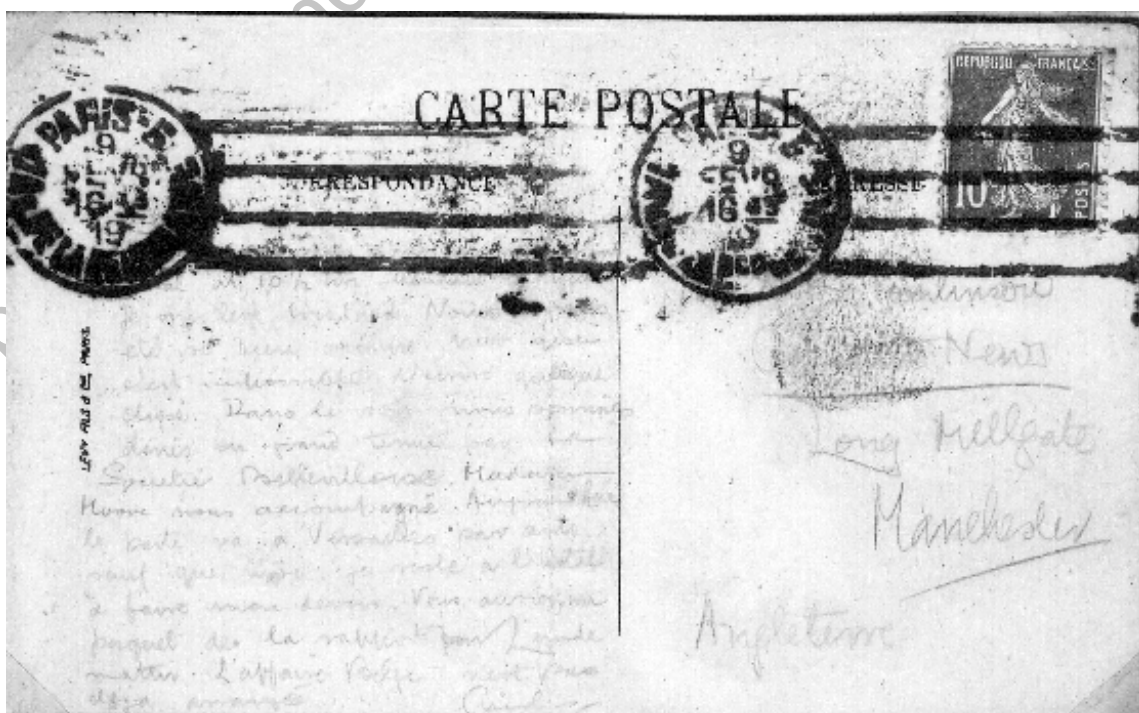


Figure 2 - Postcard with early date for type II Sower (see enlargement overleaf)

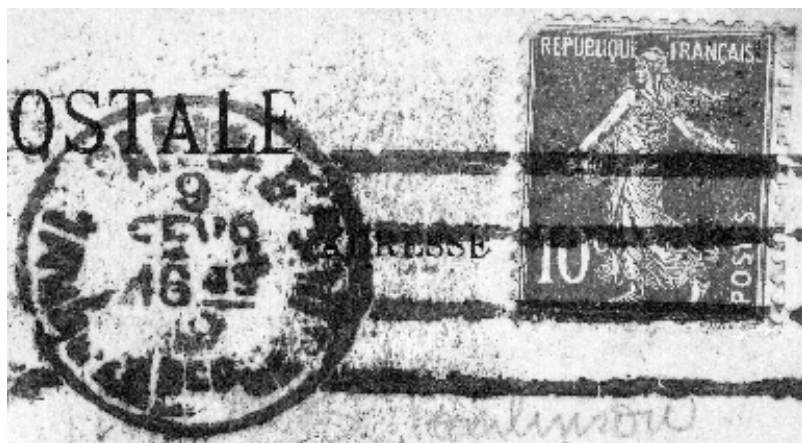


Figure 3 -
Enlargement of the postmark on the postcard in Figure 2,
showing the date of 9.2.19

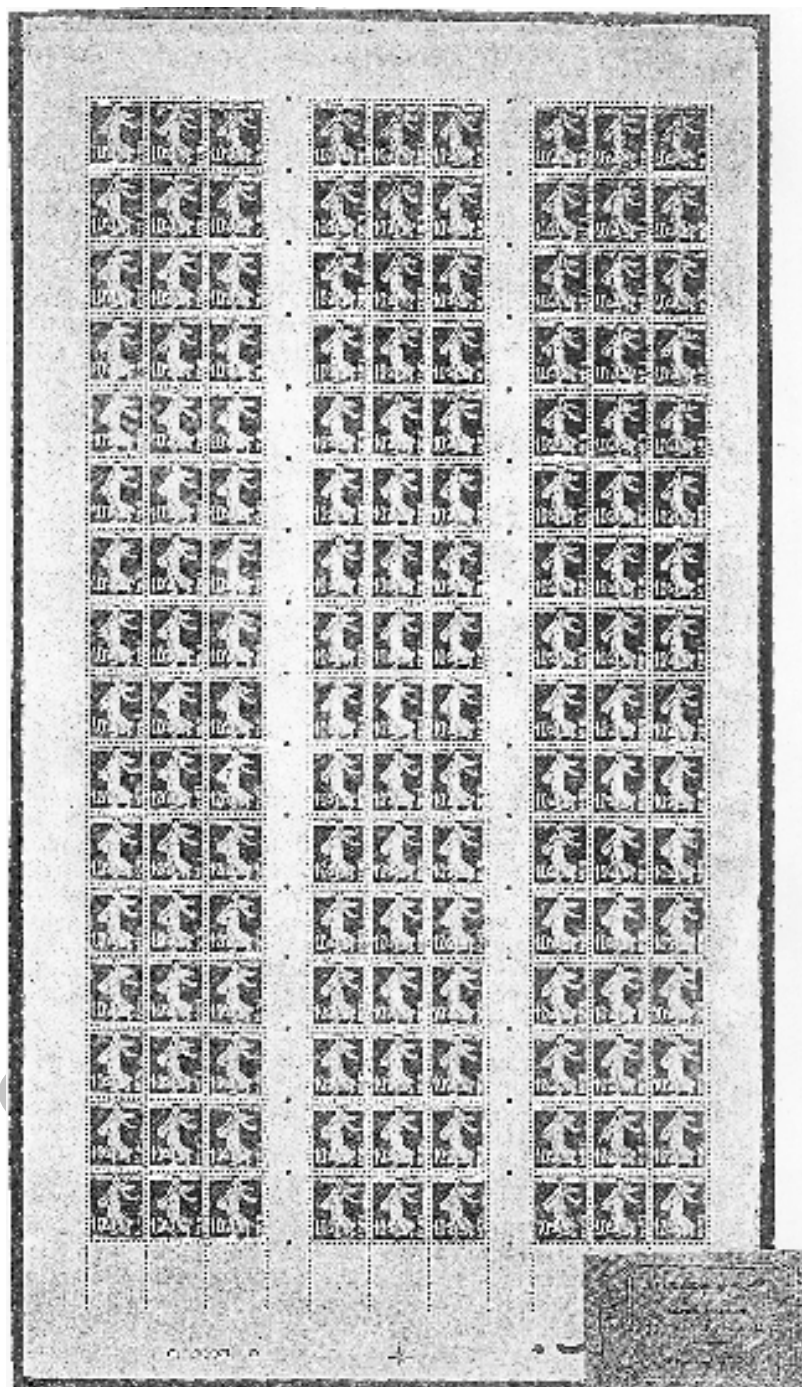


Figure 4 -
A photocopy of the sheet, considerably reduced in size

were first on sale in 1918. I would like to hear of any earlier date than mine.

After the Great War the PTT decided to standardise on single value stamp booklets in the format of the Blanc 5c booklet of 1906. On 1 April 1921 the overseas postcard rate rose to 30c, removing any further need for red 10c Sowers; the principal use for them had disappeared on 1 January 1917 when internal postcards and letters went up from 10c to 15c.

The PTT then issued all stocks of red 10c Sowers, which were disposed of to post offices by October 1921, and it was during that month that some curious non-standard sheets of red 10c Sowers were being used up in a Paris post office.

The sheets contained 144 stamps and had stuck to each of them a block of 6, torn from one of the sheets: the "make-numbers" were affixed for ease of accounting, 150 being the norm. The Postal Museum sheet illustrated (Figures 4 and 5) does not have the block of 6, but a booklet where the block could have been affixed.

These remainder sheets were left over after the confection of the booklets of 30 type II red 10c Sowers. Some sheets were broken up and used before dealers managed to buy any that were left. I think the remainder sheets must have been very few in number, because virtually all the mint copies I have seen are taken from booklets - easily recognised by virtue of the cut perforations.

There is no record that I am aware of giving the totals of booklets confected and sold, or of remainder sheets sold. These booklet stamps are to be found used from all over France, though they are few and far between compared to type Ic booklet stamps, Yvert 138d, first issued in 1910 and in a rare booklet in 1916 with the stamps on GC paper. Examples of Yvert 138f used from the remainder sheets are scarce, and far scarcer still on items of mail.

The cover illustrated (Figures 6 and 7) was the only one in a bundle of identical envelopes from the same sender to the same address, posted at the same office, with dates either side of this one, which has a remainder block of 4 x Yvert 138f on it; all the others had the 1F Merson and a block of 4 x Yvert 138.

Towards the end of 1976 I found the block of 6 illustrated at the head of this article (Figure 1) and I photographed it, and in the spring of 1977 I sent an enlargement of the block to the late M. Pierre de Lizeray, asking if he felt the block could be what I thought it might be. I did not attempt to influence his thinking in any way.



Figure 5 (above) -
The attached booklet
in the bottom right hand corner of the sheet opposite



Figure 6 (right) -
Enlargement of the block of 4 Sowers
on the cover below

Figure 7 (below) -
Block of 4 type II Sowers on cover



I did envisage a scenario such as follows, explaining my reasons for believing that the block had been on registered mail addressed to Britain. A man walks into the rue Gluck post office in Paris on 8 November 1921 and hands over a letter addressed to England saying he wants it to be registered. The clerk takes it, weighs it and, finding the letter to be under 20g, says "one franc, monsieur" (50c postage, 50c registration). Having received the franc, he opens his counter book and takes out the block of 6 and 40c more (probably in single 10c stamps). It is likely that he had, or had had, a 144 stamp sheet, and even if he did have it, what he did was easier than trying to tear out a block of 9 (+1) or 10. Yes, I know, he might have used a 1F Merson, but were the orders to use up the 10c stamps when possible?

So, he sticks on the stamps, and cancels them, writes out the receipt, and says "Next!" as he hands it over.

The letter arrives at Mount Pleasant, and the British clerk in the registered section slashes on a blue cross, as was then customary, front and back, with his blue crayon, and records the letter and sends it on for eventual delivery: the block now has part of a blue cross running down the left side (as it has). The French Post Office did not, does not, use the blue cross on registered or express mail.

Some time later someone unwittingly, perhaps a collector of blocks, destroyed what must have been a very rare piece of postal history. One thing is certain and that is that no block collector would destroy a "perfect block" of nine stamps and reduce it to six.

As for me, I believe I have the "make-number" block of six off a sheet of 144 Yvert 138f - *et avec foi tout est possible!*

M. Pierre de Lizeray wrote to me on 23 March 1977, and here below (Figure 8) is the relevant part of his letter:-

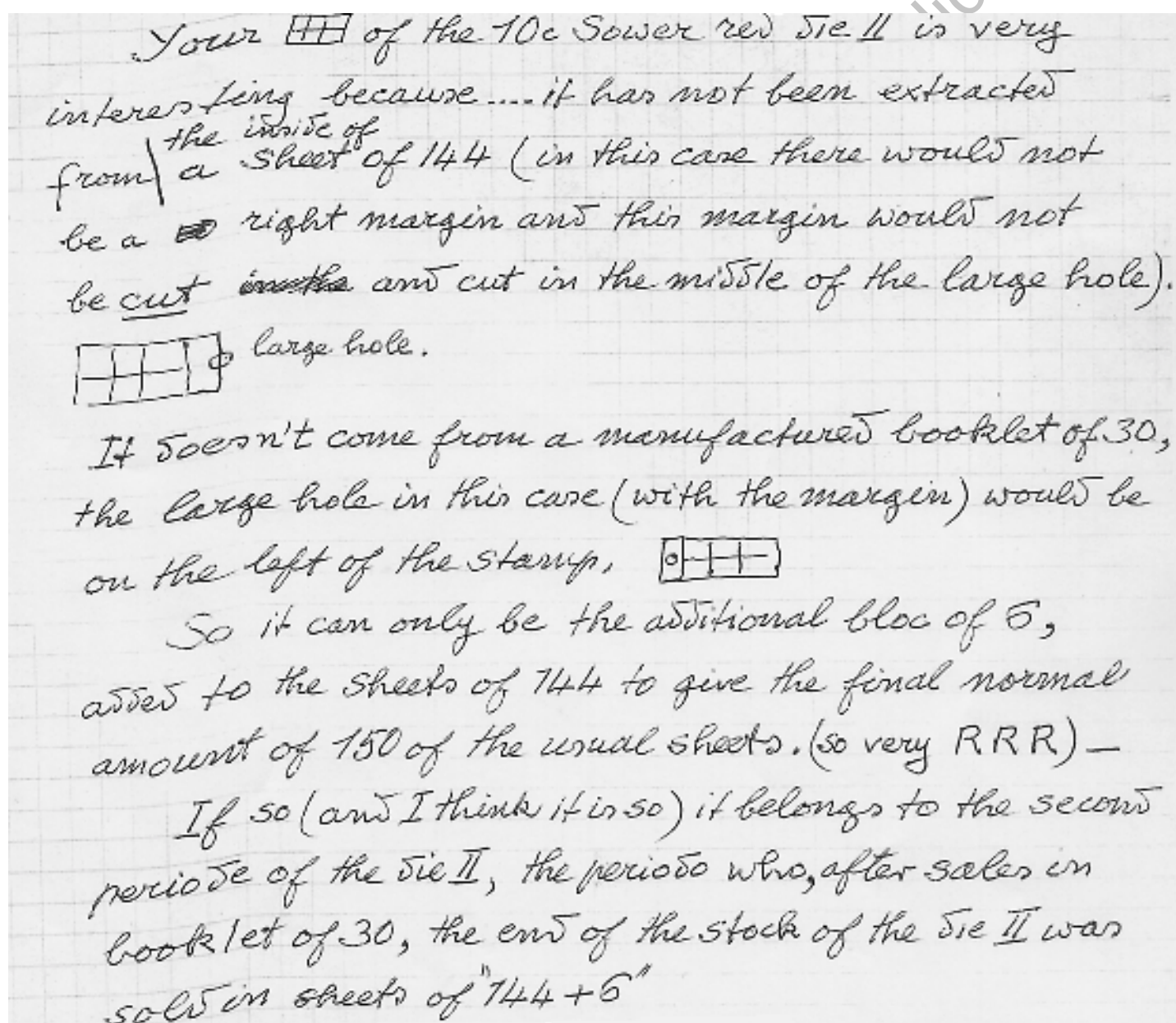
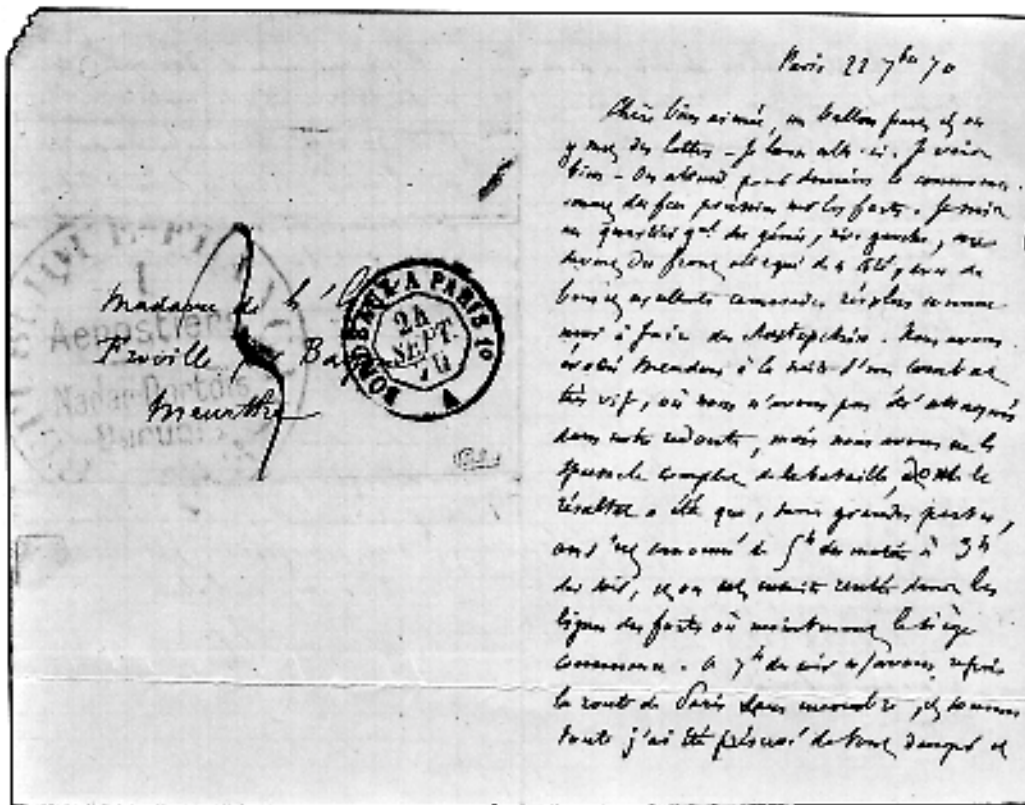


Figure 8 - Part of the letter from Pierre de Lizeray

which reinforces my belief.

Amazing 1870-71 Wonder Stories - 74

Ernst Cohn



This letter is described in the second paragraph below.

Let us consider some bits of text found in letters entrusted to balloonists, or at least sent by balloon in the Paris siege, as they pertain to the airlift and the siege generally. To start with, what better than a letter to a friend at Lyon, given to pilot Duruof personally by its writer, Nadar, who helped launch the first manned mail balloon of the siege. The message is written on printed stationery of the *République Française, Défense Nationale, 18^e Arrondissement*. *Observations Aérostiques sous la direction des Citoyens NADAR-DARTOIS-DURUOF* (French Republic, National Defense, 18th District. Balloon Observations under the direction of Citizens N-D-D). From the text: “By my first mail balloon, my dear Méra, I send you our good greetings ...” There follow all sorts of expressions of heroic and victorious feelings that we need not go into. This was lot 164 in some unspecified French fixed-price sale, offered at 3,500 francs, hence presumably around \$700 at that time. The correspondent who sent me this photocopy, which is not illustrated, wrote on it, in German: “I came too late for this ‘Neptune’.” Spectacular though this one is, others are also known by Nadar, written that same night and given to Duruof, who was far-sighted enough to have sold his old balloon to the French government before he left town. The ‘Neptune’ had become totally useless after landing that day.

Here (illustrated above) is the start of another ‘Neptune’: “Paris 22 7bre 70. Dearly beloved, a balloon is leaving and

one puts letters on it — I launch this one.” It is unfranked, marked ‘3’ [décimes] due, bears the red *Aéroliers* stamp and a daytime train mark Bordeaux à Paris 1°/A/24 Sept. 70. This was lot 30287 [mistakenly marked 30290] in the Feldman auction of May 1982. The expertizer’s signature, not very legible, looks like that of my long deceased friend Paul Maincent. On the color photo, at least, the red stamp looks to be very lightly struck or else bleached.

The late Gardner and Ruth Brown — he was an enthusiastic 1870 collector, she helped with translations and mounting material for exhibits — sent me a rather thin photocopy of a personally entrusted letter, dated at Paris 27 September 1870. It may have a faint oval postmark on the face, but the only one I can make out is a cds from Manchester, 4 OC 70, 2. Thus, it might have left on the ‘États-Unis’ or more likely on the ‘Céleste’. Being unfranked, it is marked ‘6’ [pence] due. The address is “Madame Philippi, chez Mr. Ph. Goldschmidt, Manchester.” There is no written indication of Great Britain, but it found its way there anyhow:

“Dear Children. We write to you daily by one means or another, in the hope that one of our notes might reach you; the present one leaves by a balloon tomorrow morning. The aeronaut is a friend of the Hayem family ... A million kisses from your father Antoine May.

Dear Children. We continue to be well and I have hope that you have received news from us by balloon ... Be as calm as we are, your mother Rosalie May. And your brother ... May God protect France! Henri. Address answer c/o postmaster, Tours. for Madame Hayem, 4b rue des petites Ecuries, Paris."

The last line indicates that the open folded letter was taken to Mrs Hayem for transmittal to the balloonist. My notes say that Mrs Philippi was a born May, but I do not remember where that information came from.

This letter is of interest for a totally different reason as well: A certain Charles W May flew out of Paris on the 'Georges Sand'. He was an arms dealer who is sometimes confused with Antoine May, a painter, who (with his family) wrote the above. The New York 'Evening Post' for 1 November 1870, p. 2 col. 3, mentions: "A letter from Mr. May, the American artist, to a friend in this city, dated Paris, Sept. 19, 1870, ..." That was evidently from Antoine and is the only other letter from this May known to me.

Several attempts were made to send balloons into Paris, all predictably futile. However, people were happy to try anything in desperation. Thus, whether or not the letters flew, they are all bona fide messages and thus eminently collectible from a postal history point of view. Here is text from a letter, not entrusted to a specific aeronaut but sent from Belgium to Tours. It is addressed to Paris and endorsed "By mounted or free balloon" but bears no indication whether it ever got there at any time, by any means. Actually, since balloons had to be 'free' to move in order to be sent somewhere, what the writer meant was "by manned or unmanned balloon", which should have been "*Par ballon monté ou perdu*", since the French appropriately consider unmanned free balloons to be lost balloons.

Sent from Gavère in East Flanders, this 42nd letter (of the war) by the writer is dated Friday 21 October 1870:

"My beloved little Mother, I have received the letter you confided to Mr de Kératry who happily has given me good news from you all. The day before I received that of the 11th in which you told me of your disappointment at the fact that the 'Figaro' had just returned your letter and money. I am distraught thinking that you were so worried about me and so unhappy not to have news from us, because I shall try everything in my power to let you have a word at least — judge if I have been fortunate with this new attempt due to the kindness of Mr de Kératry — may it succeed! How happy I shall be on the day when I shall know that you are reassured on my account. I have immediately done what you told me and have written to him as I tell you every day and repeat — I have been in perfect health at Gavère for almost four weeks."

Émile de Kératry left Paris on the morning of 14 October aboard the 'Godefroy Cavaignac' and landed not far from

Bar-le-Duc that afternoon. The area being occupied, the balloon had been pursued unsuccessfully by a patrol of German lancers. Kératry slightly hurt his leg and head by the sudden drop, as he telegraphed to the Tours government on the 15th at 11.14am from Chaumont. His wife had applied through the French foreign ministry for a German permit to join her husband. Bismarck wrote to US Ambassador E B Washburne on the 25th from Versailles:

"Sir, I have the honor of receiving your letter dated yesterday concerning Mme Kératry, and I am sorry to say that it would be hopeless to employ myself on her behalf with the military authorities for obtaining an exception to the principle they have adopted not to allow any person of French nationality to leave the invested city. — I remain ..."

In any case the letter for Gavère was presumably mailed on the 15th at the earliest and reached its destination with some delay because of war conditions.

The reference to the 'Figaro' concerns the first openly advertised Paris mail smuggling scheme, suppressed because of the jealousy of another newspaper. The scheme was then pursued by an architect, Itasse, whose man returned without success, however.

It is sometimes quite difficult to read 1870 mail, even when it is written in beautiful script, e.g. because some people used extremely thin paper and wrote text first one way and then 90° across it; it makes little difference whether that is on the same or opposite sides of such a sheet. But if someone can take the time and decipher the text, at least portions are often quite relevant to postal history and make the events come to life.

I close with a particularly poignant example, a brief note sent on thin, blue paper to a lady at Yvetot (Lower Seine département), bearing the blue *AERONAUTES* cachet on the back with a matching blue *15 DECE 1870* and no postal marking front or back:

"Thursday, 15 December 1870

My dear Adèle, I have no hope that this letter will reach you. I want nevertheless to write to you to (show I) remember your birthday, as I have also written to Mama for hers. Have you gotten the letter I wrote to you 6 [or 16?] days ago? ... Three weeks ago I received your telegram. Nothing thereafter ..."

Those of you who know the tell-tale signs — blue *AERONAUTES* and *15 DECE 1870* in matching color — are aware that that letter was taken by the 'Ville de Paris' that landed in Rhenish Prussia, so that all mail was captured. A Düsseldorf paper actually mentions these markings on some mail from this balloon, though its name was not known then. That description was repeated by a Luxembourg newspaper without revealing its source. In any case, the brother's pessimism was justified, though he could hardly have foreseen the fate of that balloon when he wrote to his sister.

SHORTER ITEMS - INCLUDING QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Algeria – the 1943 “E.F.M.” Telegram Stamps



Since my article on the *Bâtiment de Ligne “Richelieu”* stamps and cancels (see Journal 226, page 167) was completed, two references to the 30F/1F75 Algeria telegraph stamp which I discussed very briefly have appeared in the *France & Colonies Philatelist*, the magazine of our sister society in the United States. As they include an explanation of this neglected issue they are summarised here.

There are in fact two of these E.F.M. overprint/surcharges, converting Algerian 5c and 1F75 postage stamps into 30F telegraph stamps. Both are listed by Yvert and Cérès, but not by Gibbons. The following explanation appears in an article by Stanley J Luft (the editor of the *Philatelist*) entitled “American Expeditionary Force Messages, World War II” in the issue for July 2001 (Vol 57 N° 3, Whole N° 265). US military personnel could send surface mail free and, as indicated in my “*Richelieu*” article, paid only 6 cents for air mail to the United States, but telegrams were expensive – they were, of course, normally charged at so much per word. So to make this service more attractive telegrams containing numerically coded messages (eg “I am well”) were devised, for which a flat-rate 30F was charged. As is explained in my previous article, 3F was the

equivalent of 6 US cents, so effectively these telegrams cost GIs 60 cents each. They were called “Expeditionary Force Messages” and were first used in liberated Algeria in the Spring of 1943, hence the use of Algerian stamps for surcharging.

Collectors of French stamps will be interested to know that Stan goes on to say that after D-Day the charge for the E.F.M. service was reduced to 25F, and the 25F Chenonceaux stamp (Yv 611) was specifically issued for E.F.M. use, as were early printings of the large-format 25F Marianne de Gandon (Yv 731). Both can be found with normal French cancels, of course, but do not despise examples cancelled by US-type mute ovals or bars. They do not look very attractive, but they are scarce – the Marianne stamp especially so.

In a supplementary note in the January 2002 number of the *Philatelist* (Vol 58 N° 1, Whole N° 267) Lewis E Bussey illustrates one of the E.F.M. covers in the Behr sale mentioned in my previous article, and another bearing a block of 4 of the same stamp affixed to a 6 cents US airmail postal stationery envelope sent by an American Army doctor (?) at US APO 252, presumably at Algiers, to a relative at the University of Colorado. Unfortunately neither he nor Stan Luft comments on whether telegram stamps could legitimately be used for postage, as to which I remain very doubtful, but at least the second cover illustrated by Lewis Bussey was sent by an American serviceman, which gives it a certain verisimilitude.

Bill Mitchell

Togo: the 1921 “Mandate” Issue – Again!

I published an up-dated list of earliest recorded dates of use of this issue (stamps of Dahomey printed in distinctive colours and overprinted *TOGO*) on page 115 of Journal 225. Many of the new dates came as the result of a request for help from the members of COL.FRA, and the latest issue (N° 101, 3^{ème} trimestre 2002) of the COL.FRA *Bulletin* contains an interesting supplementary response from Constant Bouérat, a former senior official of the PTT in the Ivory Coast, who has written extensively about the postal history of the former colonies which formed French West Africa.

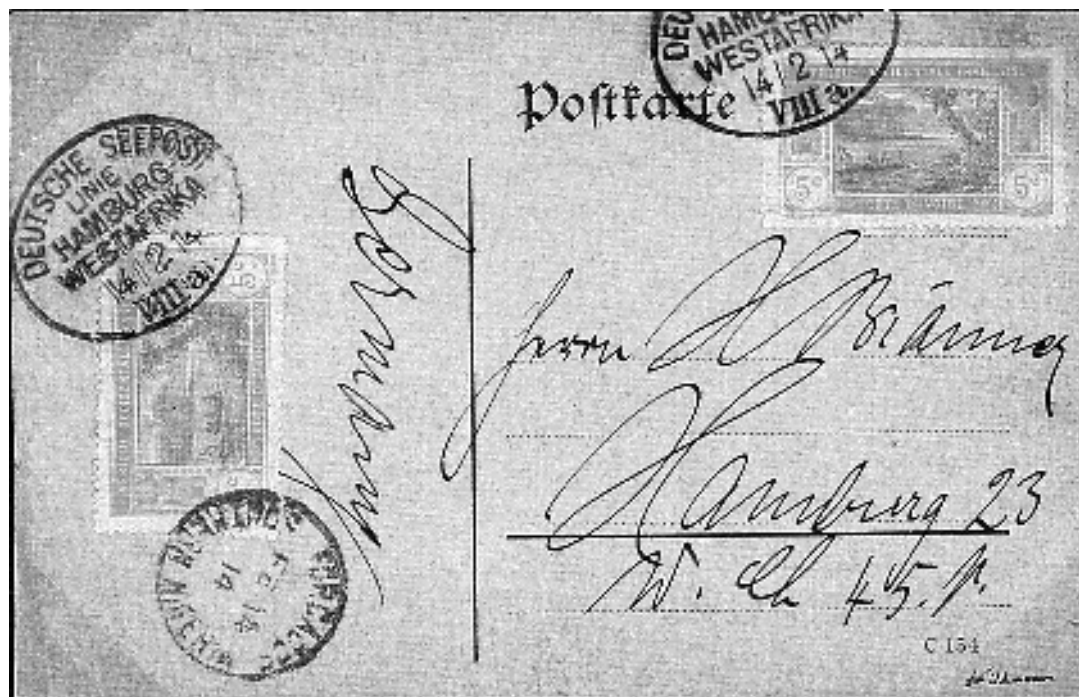
As a result, I can say that Michael Ensor is right — once printed, the stamps were stored at Lomé and not, as I had assumed, at Paris for despatch to Togo as required by dwindling stocks of the previous “Occupation” issue. In fact, they reached Lomé nearly six months before the attributed date of issue (15 July 1921, according to Stanley Gibbons). As early as 3 February the local administration

appointed two commissions, one to receive the first consignment of the new stamps from Paris and the other to “*vérifier les surcharges*”, which I take to mean check for errors.

A glance at the earliest dates of use now recorded will show that only four of the 25 stamps attributed to 15 July 1921 have been seen used in that year, so the “Mandate” issue was on sale concurrently with the previous issue (stamps of Dahomey overprinted *TOGO/Occupation/Franco-Anglaise*), and indeed with unoverprinted stamps of Dahomey, until 28 December 1923 when remaining stocks of both the latter were incinerated. A year later, on 26 December 1924, the first stocks of a definitive issue for Togo (Yv 124-143, *taxe* 9-19) were despatched from the Atelier du Timbre in Paris, and on 30 October 1925 the remaining stocks of the “Mandate” issue were in their turn destroyed. Stamps held by members of the public, of course, remained valid for postage — I have two examples used as late as 1938.

Bill Mitchell

The Woermann Line



Ships of the Woermann
Line called at all
major ports on the
West African coast,
including Assinie
and Grand Bassam
in the French colony
of the Ivory Coast.
This card is an unusual
mixture of German
stationery and cancels
with French colonial
issues tied by
a British cancel
on the same date
as the ship is listed
in British West African
waters by Czimmek.

This is a photocopy of an unusual item acquired fairly recently from an auction in Germany.

You will see that it is a German postcard, with a message on the reverse side, bearing a pair of Ivory Coast 5c values to meet the correct rate from there to Hamburg, the home port of the Woermann Line whose *Ovalstempel* "VIIIa." has tied both issues to the card on 14.02.1914, the message having been written the previous day. One issue is also tied by the Forcados (where the message was written), Southern

Nigeria single ring cancel on the day the item was handed in to the ship. There is no suggestion of it being philatelic, and it appears genuine in every respect, although it has no arrival cancel: but having said that, this is not unusual for mail from Woermann ships which was dropped at Hamburg and addressed to that city.

This is an unusual West African item with German, British and French connections, that I have not brought to the attention of any other society.

John Mayne

Département Conquis 131



One of my areas of postal history is the twin city of York, that is Münster in Westphalia. One of my covers is illustrated here, and my write-up at present includes the following information; but I would appreciate any comments or further details from members.

As the Armies of Napoleon marched forward, the districts conquered were given a *département* number. After the occupation of Westphalia 1810-1813, Münster, Lippe was given the *département* number 131.

This cover is from an officer of the 9th Infantry Regiment writing home to his mother and father in Forges-les-Eaux, Département de la Seine Inférieure, on 3 February 1812. It is sent from Altenberg, 15km north-west of Münster on the road to Steinfurt (in Département 131, Münster, Lippe). The

three line *département* postmark was received from Paris for Münster, chief town of Westphalia (Lippe).

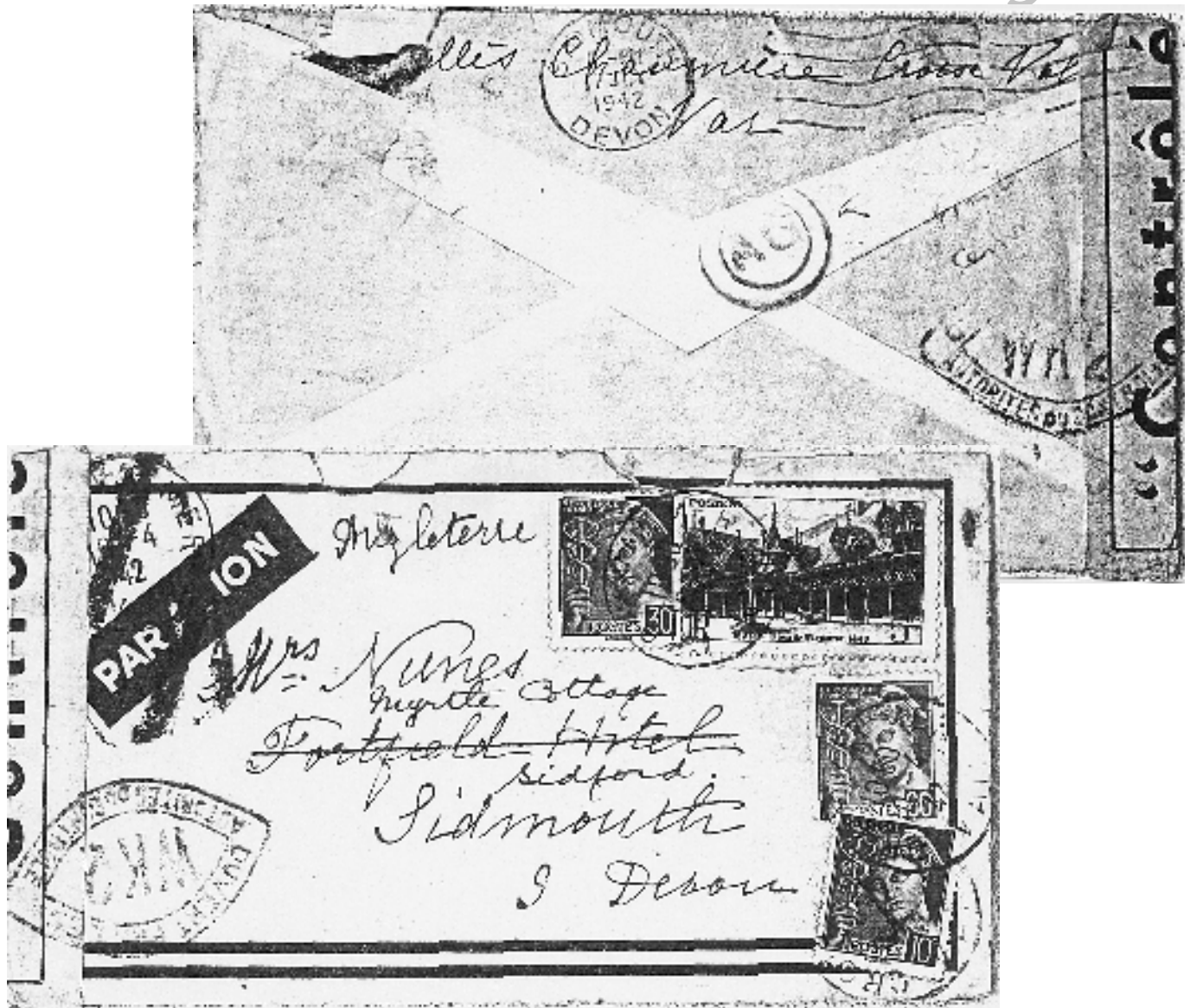
The manuscript mark indicates 2 décimes to be paid on delivery of this letter. Would there have been a special rate for soldiers' letters? Incidentally, I also have the other 3-line handstamp for this locality - P131P / MÜNSTER / LIPPE for post paid mail.

Arthur Dent

[*Editor's Note:* According to the rates book, the only special rate for soldiers' mail in 1812 would be 25c for letters sent TO (and not from) soldiers, and then only if this amount was

prepaid. Otherwise the normal rates applied. 2 décimes was the rate for a distance up to 50km only. The distance between Münster and Forges-les-Eaux (north-east of Rouen) seems from the map to be at least 530km as the crow flies, but distances were measured via the shortest route by road, so this could well have been over 600km. The charge for a letter over this distance was 9 décimes. Could the figure on the cover be a 9 rather than 2? There is very little difference between the manuscript versions of these figures, and the 2 usually has a curl at the base which does not seem to be present on the copy you have sent me, although it is difficult to distinguish between the letters of the address and the tax figure.]

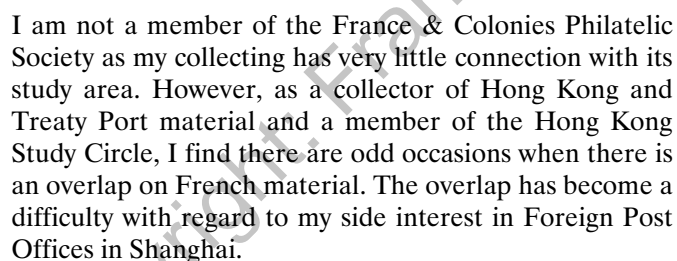
WWII Censorship and Cancelled Airmail Marks



I must confess France is not my primary area of collection, but this cover fitted into my group of Cancelled Airmails. It is franked at 6F, cancelled Croix-Valmer (Var) 10 AP 42, and addressed to Sidmouth where it arrived 17 JULY 43. On the reverse appears a double ring cachet enclosing the letters "AC" which I believe to be a Vichy censor mark. Perhaps the "AC" stands for *Autorités du Contrôle*.

My reason for purchasing it some years ago was the cancelled airmail marking of Marseille. Obviously this item could not have travelled by air, but I wonder which route it would have taken. Was the franking correct? The Censor's sealing tape is torn to fit the envelope: was there any text following the word "Contrôle"? And finally, was there much private mail between France and the UK at this time?

John Sears



article *The French Concession in Shanghai and its Postal Cancellations* (Postal History Society Bulletin N° 150).

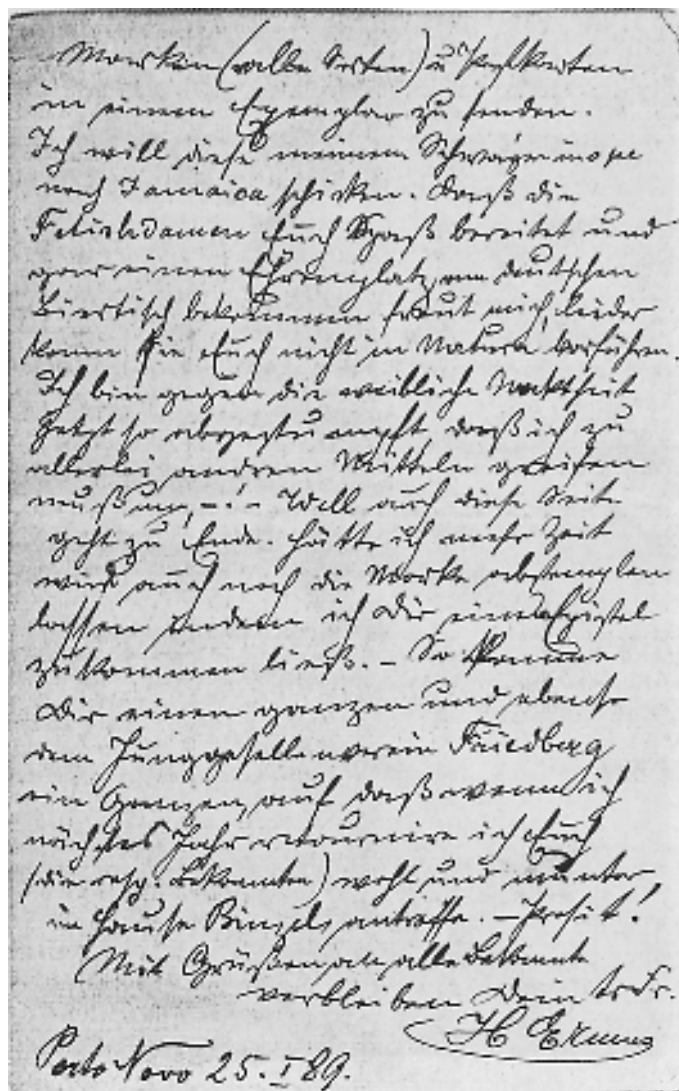
I therefore wonder if members are aware of any subsequent or additional published information concerning the 16 cds and the two types of '5104' he discusses as used in Shanghai?

I am quite happy for this photocopy to be reproduced in the Journal, as it may be of interest to your members, given the adhesives used, the origin, and the declaration form. I shall be including the item in the expansion of my "Foreign Post Offices in Shanghai" which recently achieved a National Level Gold as a 'One Frame' entry in Perth WA without it!

Any information members can supply will be appreciated

Malcolm Givans
(Queensland, Australia)

Benin and Mail from Togo



Front and back of the postal stationery card

John Sacher's article on Togo mail (Journal 226, page 144) was most helpful and interesting. By coincidence the same week I received this Journal a purchase arrived from a German auction (see illustrations).

The schedule of Benin/Dahomey Post Offices in Journal 215 gives three dates for Porto-Novo, from three separate sources, the earliest 1 July 1894.

When I saw this item in the catalogue 'I jumped the gun', my first thought being that, with it routed from Benin to Germany via Liverpool, it had passed through Togo for collection via British ship in the Gold Coast. An enlarged photocopy identified the strike beneath the Friedberg arrival cancel as W. Africa. After reference to *The Postal History of Gold Coast* by Edward B Proud it was apparent the cancels for that country did not embody 'W. AFRICA', whilst those of Lagos did.

The French Colonies 10c single postal stationery card with the message written at Porto-Novo 25 January 1889 was cancelled there on 1 February, probably the day the mail left by hand for Lagos, in accord with John Sacher's statement 'Earlier mail from Benin was sent out via Lagos' – both examples mentioned by John being some years ahead of this one.

The service to West Africa operated by Chargeurs Réunis and Fraissinet et C° (according to Salles III) commenced with the departure of *Ville Maranhao* from Bordeaux on 10 July 1889, which probably called at Cotonou on 2 August, six months after this card was posted.

With the enlarged photocopy ahead of the auction there was time to reduce my bid based on the premise there was a Togo connection, and I am pleased to acquire French Colonial postal stationery used before the first Benin issues were released in 1892 and at Porto-Novo some five years earlier than the post office there is listed as open. I accept there is no guarantee the card itself was bought in Benin.

John Mayne

LIST OF RECENTLY PUBLISHED ARTICLES

Compiled by Colin Spong

Bulletin de la COL.FRA

N° 102 4^{ème} Trim 2002: Colonies Générales: Le classement rationnel des émissions générales de timbres-poste et entiers pour les colonies françaises [1859-1892] (Drye); Réflexions, modifications et compléments sur les articles précédemment parus: A bâtons rompus les surcharges locales! (Brun); Tout des Colonies: La fabrication des timbres-poste au type «Groupe» (Bucheit); Publication des Arrêtés: Le service des Postes et Télégraphes aux Colonies en 1900: Guadeloupe.

France & Colonies Philatelist

Whole N° 271 (Vol. 59 N° 1) Jan 2003: French Marcophily - Mail by Rail [conclusion] (Kinsley); Postal Censorship in St Pierre & Miquelon 1939-1945 (Allen); Gabon - A design source for the 1910 issue (Mitchell); Amazing 1870-1871 Wonder Stories - 73 (Cohn); More on the MIRECOURT Marking (-).

L'Écho de la Timbrologie

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

N° 1757 Nov 2002: Jean-François Logette, Grand postier et grand collectionneur (Jamet); Edmond Dulac, artiste méconnu [3^e partie et fin] (Trassaert); Le contenu des enveloppes (Maraval); Décodage: Un bel échantillon (Prugnon); Marcophilie: Le porte-avions Charles de Gaulle (Gohier); Les Gaulois sont dans la plaine (Trassaert).

N° 1758 Dec 2002: Léproserie d'Orofara [Polynésie Française]: Le traitement du courrier (Dutau); Poste et philatélie en France (-); Edmond Dulac, artiste méconnu [4^e partie] (Trassaert); Décodage: Errare humanum est! (Prugnon); La 1^{ère} empreinte rouge du Père Noël (Danan).

N° 1759 Jan 2003: Tout sur la Foire de Paris (Trassaert); Décodage: Lettre ou Écopli? (Prugnon); Convoqué à la Gestapo (Jamet); Avec un AR s'il vous plaît! (Emmenegger).

Les Feuilles Marcophiles

N° 311 4^{ème} Trim 2002: DEP.LIMIT., R.FRONT, R.F.B., REG.FR., PROV.LIM. (Alexandre); Les Compagnies de Travailleurs Espagnols en France métropolitaine [1939-40] (Perruchon); Les formations sanitaires du Tarn et Garonne pendant la guerre de 1914/1918 [compléments] (Fontagne); Les nouveautés en matière de guichets-annexes (Delvaux); Groupe d'étude de la poste en milieu rural (-); Du bon emploi de la critique en histoire postale (Danan).

Supplément au N° 311: La Légion d'Honneur: Deuxième centenaire de l'Ordre, Histoire postale, lettres, documents. (Sénéchal).

Philatélie

N° 9 Oct-Nov 2002: Poste aux Armées: L'occupation de Rome (Foster); Timbres-Taxe: Les chiffres-taxe carrés et la Poste aux Armées (Blanc); Monaco: 1960 Deux timbres non émis (Giraud); La Lettre du Mois: Le forçement de recette (-); Ile Maurice: L'organisation postale durant l'administration française (-); Mauritius: L'émission des «Post Office (-); Vente aux enchères du 30 Novembre 2002: Résultats de ventes (-); Poste Aérienne: Roland Garros (Yves).

Timbres magazine

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

A gremlin crept into the numbering of the October issue - it should have read N° 28

More recent issues have been extremely late in arriving, and details of their articles will have to be delayed until this problem has been resolved.

POSTAL HISTORY SALES

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

All lots are well described, with a free photocopy service on request.

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The Sower – Miscellaneous Items

Robert Johnson

CHEQUES POSTAUX
Compte N° 712

Timbre à date
Aufpoststempel

88 fr. 00 c.

Montant du remboursement
sur Nachzahlungkarte

Objet adressé à M. *Witz*
an *Witz*
à *Witz*
Date : *3 Juin*
csm

Signés de raison *2641*
Entenzeichen

Ré d'enregistrement :
Bachings Nr.

RÉPUBLIQUE FRANÇAISE
MANDAT-CARTE
à inscrire à un compte de chèques postaux.
Zahlkarte auf ein Postcheckkonto

Origine :
Aufpoststempel

da rem-
boursement
der
Nachzahlung

MANDAT de la somme
(Montant de la somme, francs et centimes en lettres)
(Betrag in Buchstaben (Franken und Centimes))
de *huit francs cinquante*

à inscrire au compte courant désigné ci-après :
sur *Gutschrift auf das Konto*

STRASBOURG C/o 712
Mr. ARNOULD Adrien
52 En Fournirue
M E T Z Moselle

A DIRIGER SUR
le bureau de chèques de **STRASBOURG**

Cadre réservé
aux rectifications.
(Art. 73, § 1, G.
VII^e fasc.)

Timbre
à
9 fr. 25

À REMPLIR
par le bureau d'émission
Von der Emission an-
poststempel auszufüllen

N° DE TIRE

COUPON :
fr. 00 c.

Cadre réservé au contrôle.

Nom et adresse
de l'expéditeur :
Name, Wohnort und Wohnung
des Absenders

ADR. ARNOULD
52, En Fournirue 52
METZ

Mod. 206.
Nov. 1924.

REN
N° 80
Remboursement
de 88 fr. 00 c.

Somme en toutes lettres — Za wörtlichen (als Franken in Buchstaben)
huit francs cinquante

M. *Witz*
Witz

Indemnités de service :
Postwurmk

Absent
Nicht angekommen
Délai demandé
Frist verlangt
Impayé
Nicht eingelöst
Refusé
Bersagert

Adresse
Wohnung Straße n. Hausnummer

206
METZ

A French cash on delivery card for an insurance premium demand of June 1925,
payment of which was refused.

The standard charge to the sender in these circumstances was 30c.

There is a Metz Port cds on the *recouvrement* due.

Both French and German languages were used on the card.



This parcel post card of April 1927 was sent internally from Metz to Nancy.
The routing mark is "à domicile."
The railway cds on the back is of Pagny-sur-Moselle, of the Chemins de Fer de l'Est.
Postage amounts to 4F70 and there is a fiscal stamp of 50c.

The Sower in Literature

A young Englishman's letters from abroad giving his very personal and somewhat peculiar view of Paris in the year 1900 have been fastened together with pink ribbon. The collection includes copies of the writer's art work and illustrates postal items. Included is a coloured reproduction of a 1900 postcard from Bordeaux to Paris franked with a

10F red Sower! A cover of the same year from Paris to an address in Dorset bears two 10F pink Sowers. The compilation, entitled *The French Letters* by D Rushton, and published by Rushton, Rushton and Rushton, has the reference numbers ISBN 0 948082 00 3.

Alan Wood

Continued from page 2

Society Library

Our Librarian **George Barker** wishes to apologise for the slight delay in putting his new premises in order to receive the Society's books and magazines, ready to deal with members' requests.

He now hopes to be in a position to manage the stock efficiently from about the end of March, after the Leamington Weekend.

As a matter of priority he is also preparing a new Library List to be distributed to all members.

Members may like to know that a few new periodicals from other philatelic societies are now being regularly deposited in the Library for consultation or loan, and Colin Spong

has kindly agreed to add the titles of articles in some of these to his regular listings. These include the *COL.FRA Bulletin* (titles of whose articles he has incorporated from a personal copy for some time), *Le Cagou* (New Caledonia), *Cameo* (West Africa) and *Documents Philatéliques* (Académie de Philatélie).

* * *

Local Radio

On 5 February 2003 our member **Stephen Holder** was interviewed for about 30 minutes on the subject of Stamp Collecting by the independent station Bradford Community Broadcasting, which transmits locally on 76.9 FM.

* * *

1914 - the 10c Red Sower and the Red Cross

John West

The 10c red Sower was first issued on 28 July 1906, and it continued to be printed until 1921, going through numerous shade changes brought about because of repeated re-printings. Following upon the German declaration of war, on 3 August 1914, M. Roty's famous female became destined to take on another role, this time as a Red Cross worker!

The French government lost no time in recognising the possibilities of surcharging a stamp as a means of raising funds urgently for the Red Cross societies. On 11 August 1914 a ministerial decree authorised the production of the first ever stamp to be surcharged for the benefit of the Red Cross and valid for postal use by the general public. In view of the urgency of the situation that first issue was of a provisional nature.

This issue was ready for sale, astonishingly, within 7 days – and first appeared on 18 August 1914 (see Figure 1). The purchase, and use, of these special stamps was quite optional, but the spontaneous solicitude of the French nation resulted in substantial sales. In fact, during the first month that these stamps were on sale the Red Cross received 3,000 francs per day from the surcharge. This amount was sufficient to enable them to tend to, and nurse, 750 wounded soldiers on a daily basis.

A total of 600,000 copies of the then current 10c Sower stamp were overprinted, on the lower half, with a small cross and the figures '+5c' in red. This overprinting took place at the Government Printing Works, at Boulevard Brune, in Paris. They were issued for sale throughout France and in Algeria where, at that time, stamps of the motherland were valid for postage.

The overprint was applied in sheets of 150 (Control 4), by means of electrotypes, and did not show up well on the vermilion background. Examples have been seen where the surcharge is almost exactly the same colour as the stamp itself. Research suggests that this was due to a mixing of the pigments, intended for the printing of fresh stamps, with that being used for the overprint.

Imperforate colour trials exist with the surcharge on the '5c' black and the '5c' green, in this same vermilion colour. Instances are also recorded¹ of a colour trial where the overprint is in green on the '5c' orange. There is one, genuine, variety listed – but this has nothing to do with the overprinting. When the original stamps were printed, a regular flaw occurred in the 106th stamp of the sheet. This left the letter "P" of "REPUBLIQUE" broken and giving the appearance of the letter "F". It exists in only a few sheets of the stamps that were overprinted.

Giving consideration to the haste with which the overprinting was ordered and executed, it would have been expected that this issue would yield numerous varieties. Save to say that although the overprint did vary slightly on occasions as to its relative position on the stamp, it is

remarkable that not one accredited genuine variety exists². It will come as no surprise to learn that determined efforts were made to fill this void. With the existence of vast numbers of the '10c' stamp in circulation prior to and after the overprinting, the skilful forger had only to cut a handstamp with a cross and the figures '5c', and it was merely a matter of days before a proliferation of "inverted surcharges", "double surcharges" and even "inverted double surcharges" began to flood the market (see Figures 2-4).

Responsibility for the bulk of these forged issues is laid at the door of M. Jules Hermann, a resident of Chaville. He is alleged to have created the "varieties" described, not only on the French definitive issue, but on many of the colonial issues too. A number of letters exist, addressed by M. Hermann to himself, to which he has affixed these items.

How then should one distinguish the genuine from the false? All of the stamps were perf. 14 x 13.5 and none were watermarked, but as the forgers used genuine postage stamps anyway, the question can only be answered by detailed examination of the overprint itself. On the bogus issues the overprint is a much darker shade of red than the original. It is also sharp in outline and quite distinct compared with the genuine article, which seems almost amateurish to the naked eye. On the genuine postage stamp the figure '5' and the letter 'c', as well as the cross, all appear to be old, worn and indistinct by contrast. Whilst there are similarities in the make up of the '5', the shape differs. On the genuine the vertical stem running down the flag of the figure '5' is cut off at a 15 degree angle downwards, before curving - which curve ends in a sharp 10 degree cut. Between the base of the stem and the end of the curve there is a 0.75mm space.

On the counterfeit version the vertical stem, running down from the flag of the '5', ends in a sharp point - from which point it starts to curve. This curve finishes in a rounded end. Between the base of the stem and the end of the curve there is only a 0.5mm space. Additionally, the letter "c" on the genuine copy is much thinner than the forged version. The "double overprints" are not uniform in appearance and copies exist where the crosses overlap and where they are 1mm apart. This might be explained as being the work of two different forgers, but the author is sceptical of that theory, choosing to subscribe to the more likely scenario that the same handstamp was carelessly applied twice, thereby forming the "double surcharge", rather than the unlikely possibility that someone actually created a "double surcharge" handstamp.

The spate of forged varieties of the genuine Red Cross surcharged stamps interfered with the pristine acceptability of Red Cross issues in general – and France in particular. In a number of colonies the local authorities had not

¹ Yvert et Tellier.

² Stanley Gibbons list an inverted surcharge, but base this on a block of 4 supposedly found in America. The authenticity of this claim has still to be verified.

waited for the efficiently overprinted stamps from Paris to arrive, but had gone ahead and overprinted small numbers locally. These were printed on small presses, with an inadequate stock of type and poor workmanship. As a result of appearing in such limited numbers, as well as the visual difference between them and the Paris overprintings, they proved to be the subject of considerable 'speculation' on the part of local post office officials and the local inhabitants.

It is of interest to examine some of the published statistics concerning these local issues. They enable comparisons to be made between the sums paid for some of them and the actual amount by which the Red Cross benefited. In Tahiti, for example, two small, local editions were printed, each a distinct issue. The first consisted of 1,750 stamps, representing a contribution to the French Red Cross of 87 francs 50 centimes. These were acquired by local speculators and sold at 65 francs each. Out of these two local issues, comprising a total of 11,450 stamps, 572 francs went to the Red Cross and 232,967 francs went into the pockets of speculators and their agents!

M. Georges Brunel, a distinguished French philatelist of the day, published an article³ wherein he drew up figures as examples of the sums secured for charity by the sale of local issues of Red Cross stamps. He quoted three instances, namely:

1. **Morocco**, where four issues of stamps (255,500 in all) sold at the local offices at 15c each. Two-thirds of that amount went to the postal administration and the remainder to Red Cross funds.**12,775 Francs.**
2. **Reunion**, where three issues (of 71,200 stamps) divided in a similar manner yielded.....**3,560 Francs.**
3. **Tahiti**, two issues obtained for the Red Cross the princely sum of**577Fr 50c.**

These figures must not be taken as representing the total amount obtained for the Red Cross funds by the sale of the local issues of Morocco, Reunion and Tahiti. They are merely cited as examples of the proceeds, recorded as having been received, up to the time the article was compiled.

The Definitive Issue

The re-engraved, or definitive, version of the surcharged 10c Sower appeared on 10 September 1914, a month after the release of the provisional or temporary issue (see Figure 5). Six months later, on 13 February 1915, this issue provided another first – yielding, as it did, the first *carnet* of postage stamps, surcharged for the benefit of the Red Cross (see Figure 6).

The definitive stamp differed dramatically in appearance from the over-printed version by having a small, rectangular block (in white) on the bottom left hand side of the stamp, within which was printed the same lettering as had, hitherto, appeared on the overprint. Furthermore, the inscription “*Croix-Rouge Postes*” (reading upwards) had been added along the right hand frame, in white.

These stamps were printed, initially, in sheets of 150 – between 1914 and 1916 inclusive – and are to be found with the ‘*millésimes*’ of ‘4’, ‘5’ and ‘6’ (although the ‘6’ is particularly scarce). In 1915, they were also printed in sheets of 120 for the purpose of the booklet issue.

Invariably, the preparation of a specific stamp (*viz.*, sheets, coils, *carnets*) required a separate type of block of its own. In the case of each booklet that was produced (up to and including the 30c blue Sower) a new die was required.

It sometimes happened that, when one set about obtaining the die for the booklets by copying a die used for the sheets, the copy made was so good that no retouching of the die so produced was necessary and no differences between the engraving of the stamps produced from the different type blocks, created from the two dies, could be found. This was certainly not the case with the sheet and booklet stamps of the Red Cross definitive issue.

A study of the two types of stamps reveals a number of differences. Primarily, one finds that their dimensions distinguish the one from the other, namely:

Sheet stamps measure 18.7mm x 22.2mm
Booklet stamps measure 18.9mm x 22.4mm

A second, but slightly less obvious, difference can be detected in the colour shades - the booklet stamp being reddish orange, whilst those from the sheet are red.

A third difference which, moreover, is the most distinctive feature, concerns the re-cutting of the frame of the booklet stamps. In the sheet stamp engraving, the eastern border is formed by a heavy outer line and a faint inner line, between which there is a white line which is so faint that, in the printing, it is to some extent obliterated.

In the booklet stamp engraving, the eastern border of the frame is formed by a thin outer thread, which is no more than equal to the thickness of the inner thread, and between which there occurs a much broader white line (which has expanded at the expense of the outer line). This latter-mentioned difference between the two stamps remains absolutely constant throughout.

The die for the booklets was obtained by retouching a copy of the die for the sheets. As always occurs in similar cases, the die copied directly from another is slightly larger than the original. In this instance, the difference in dimensions manifests itself quite clearly when one examines the manner in which the perforations on the booklet stamps encroach upon, and partially obliterate, the names of the designer and engraver which, on the sheet stamps, can be seen clearly on the bottom of the stamp.

The die originating from a copy always gives a heavier engraving, initially, than that from the die from which it has been copied. It is this which makes it necessary for the copy to be retouched. As a general rule, this retouching does not take in the whole of the copy and the result is that the copy (or ‘daughter-die’) exhibits a dual divergence from the ‘parent-die’. Certain of its sections become finer than those of the ‘parent-die’ (and those of the original in the series), whilst other sections remain heavier.

Thus it is that the eastern border, and the whole of the effigy, have become finer. Indeed, they have become so

³ *Le Timbre-Poste*, July-August 1916.



Figure 1 -
On 3 August 1914 Germany declared war on France.
Eight days later the Sower became a Red Cross worker!
600,000 were issued, printed by typography in brick-red or red-orange and perforated 14 x 13½.

Of course, the haste with which the overprint was produced encouraged a number of forgeries, such as



Figure 2
the double surcharge



Figure 3
the inverted surcharge



Figure 4
and the inverted double surcharge.



Figure 5 -
Barely a month later,
on 10 September 1914,
the overprint was replaced
with a re-engraved version,
again in brick-red or red-orange.



Figure 6 - Booklets were printed from 1915 onwards.



Figure 7 -
A registered letter, posted on 30.12.15,
featuring the two 1914 Red Cross issues in blocks of four.



Figure 8 -
The overprinted stamp used by Bureau-Frontière M
and addressed to a post office in Paris.



Figure 9 -
A cover which bears both of the 1914 Sower issues,
together with the 5c green, apparently added as an afterthought!
It is backstamped with a Lausanne arrival mark.



Figure 10 -

A registered cover sent from Nantes on 11 January 1915,
with an arrival mark at Berne on the reverse dated 16 January.
The strip of four, plus one single, made up the 50c foreign registered letter rate,
i.e. 25c postage plus 25c registration.
Notice how faint the '5c' of the surcharge is on the left hand stamp.



Figure 11 - Two 10c surcharged stamps are used with a 5c green on a Montpellier Red Cross cover.



Figure 12 -

This cover was sent from Strasbourg and has a provisional cancellation on it – i.e. there is no *département* name at the bottom of the circle. Later this was changed and the cancellation read 'Strasbourg Bas-Rhin' – as before the war.



Figure 13 -

On piece perhaps the sender was still celebrating the end of the war!



Figure 14 -

The surcharged stamp used alone on cover for a civilian letter sent from and to Paris.

fine that the booklet stamps have only a faint border on the eastern edge and their finer engraved Sower is a little flat – with the engraving being less contrasted and not so well marked.

On the other hand, some non-retouched engraving shadows are heavier in the imprinting of the booklet stamps such as, for example, the eye of the letter “R” in “*ROUGE*” and the full stop following “5c”. All this enables one to say, with certainty, that the initial die is the one used for the sheets and that the copied die is the one used for producing the booklets. The dates of issue confirm this – although it is not always wise to put one’s trust in those alone.

The booklet itself measured 110mm x 60mm. It was buff coloured, with lettering in red and blue.

There was none of the advertising material, which was common to many of the booklets of that era, on either the cover or the selva. Otherwise the format of the layout was identical to the majority of the others which were printed at about the same time. The cover was purely functional and no effort was made to give it any form of aesthetic visual appeal in the hope of it tempting the ‘impulse purchaser’ who might be persuaded to buy some of the charity booklets simply because they were so much more attractive.

The stamps, contained within the booklets, were printed in half sheets of 120 and were then cut into six strips, each comprising two panes of ten (5 x 2). These strips were then affixed to the cover by stapling the centre of the gutter panel separating the two panes.

One or two varieties are recorded, notably the letter “S” of “*POSTES*” being broken. Some sheets were printed on a yellowy paper and instances are recorded of “*tête-bêche*” copies being in existence. The discovery of these copies proves that these stamps were printed by the so-called “Windmill Sails” method, where the sheet was presented four times to the press, turning through 90 degrees each time.

Specimens of this stamp have been noted in a pale vermilion colour but, generally speaking, there is a consistent absence of errors, or varieties, throughout the period that the stamp was being printed.

Neither the booklet nor the single stamp was quite as successful as had at first been hoped. Nevertheless, they were used quite freely – indicating the benevolent mood of the public, who were willing to pay 50% more than was necessary to post a letter. They are even to be found on covers with mixed franking – such as those sent with Belgian and French mail from Le Havre and St. Adresse, as well as on French and German mail in Alsace.

In searching for reasons for the demise of this stamp, one must take into account the fact that the Sower design had, by 1914, already been on sale in stamp form since 1903 and it has to be admitted that after a decade the public had become bored with the image. There can be little doubt that the competition provided by the charity vignettes (many of which were very attractively printed and featured subjects of interest to the general public as well) also played a part in reducing the amount of money spent on the genuine –

but dreadfully dull – postage stamps. The realisation that the early enthusiasm for the surcharged Sower had waned, and the appreciation of the reasons for this diminution of interest, proved to be a compelling reason for the postal authorities to commission more elaborately designed Red Cross stamps.

It was, doubtless, a combination of factors – including the furore over the speculation in the colonial issues – which prompted the postal administration to experiment with the issue of a series of stamps⁴, all surcharged to augment the Red Cross funds. The original decision, made in August 1916, evidently anticipated this issue being overprinted with the Geneva cross. Whether this hope was abandoned through ink shortages or printing difficulties may never be known, but a set of eight different values ranged from “2c” to “5F” was printed, with each one surcharged on an escalating scale commensurate with their face value.

Another, and unusual, variation was the issue of a set of stamps⁵ in Tunisia which were overprinted with a red cross. This series was surcharged with a rising increment for the Red Cross funds in proportion to the original value of the stamp, the actual amount by which the Post Office would benefit being fixed at 10c for each stamp in the series. As a start the 5c value was surcharged at “+10c” (thereby reversing the normal convention) and, subsequently, all the values of this series - from 15c to 5F - were surcharged in the same manner. The stamps were sold at their face value, although only the basic value contributed to the postage price. By this means a new channel for philatelic charity was opened, with the proceeds of this enterprise being used to sustain French prisoners in Germany.

If issues such as these were not responsible for killing off what dwindling enthusiasm may still have lingered for the Red Cross Sower stamps, the death knell was finally sounded on 1 January 1917, when the inland postal tariffs were raised by 5 centimes. Instances of genuine postal use of these stamps, after that date, are uncommon and they were finally demonetised on 1 April 1921.

In pursuance of the policy of producing charity stamps with more visual appeal, the postal authorities abandoned a project to surcharge the ordinary 15c Sower and approached M. Louis Dumoulin, a well known artist of the day, to submit sketches for a fresh design to appear on a Red Cross stamp. He set to work on a “*striking souvenir of the Huns’ war on all tenets of Christianity*” and eventually produced a design which, effectively, divided the stamp into two panels. One panel portrayed a sinking hospital ship whilst the other was intended to reflect the work of the mobile surgical units, featuring a nurse tending to an injured soldier at one of the field hospitals.

Sources

Postage Stamps of the Red Cross by Derek Ingram (1920)

Faux et Truqués by Jean-François Brun (1980)

Les Timbres-Poste au type Semeuse Camée de 1907, Tome 1 by Jean Storch & Robert Françon (1981)

Correspondence with Jean-François Brun

⁴ SG nos. 370-377 inc.

⁵ SG nos. 51-59

BOOKSHELF

Mail of the Czechoslovak Legions in France by Jaroslav J Vemer; 2002; 82 pp., 6¼ x 9", card cover, perfect bound; b/w and color illustrations; published under the auspices of the Society for Czechoslovak Philately; \$12.00 postpaid, from the author, at 8602 Ewing Drive, Bethesda, MD 20817, USA.

Jaroslav Vemer is a long-time collector and expert on Czech philately and the recipient of numerous high awards for his exhibits. Among his many interests are the history and markings of the Czech soldiers who fought for the Allied cause in the First World War, in hope of obtaining from the victors a free country after the war. Finding little useful, in-depth published material on the subject, Mr. Vemer decided to remedy this void by writing his own handbook, using basically his own covers.

The book is printed in parallel columns in English and in the Czech translation by Vladimír Ustohal. I'm amazed that the Czech text occupies no more space than does the English (being far more accustomed to the added verbiage of Romance languages).

The saga of Czech troops in France during that war is one of two very unequal parts. The first concerns the several hundred volunteers then living in France, who were formed by the French into two companies of C Battalion in the Foreign Legion's Moroccan Division (Trésor et Postes 109 divisional markings, from December 1914). This battalion was largely wiped out at the May 1915 Battle of Arras, and its French franchise mail is perforce very rare. The same holds true for the provisional, not-always-postal markings of Czech entities at Epinal, Soissons, Troyes, etc. Additionally, some other Czech volunteers served elsewhere in the Foreign Legion, and their mail can only be identified by the language used.

The second, larger, and somewhat better known part of the story comes after the formation, early in 1916 at Paris, of a Czech government-in-exile. Czech and Slovak soldiers, lately of the Austro-Hungarian armies, who had been taken prisoner on the Russian, Italian and Balkan fronts, were bit by bit, while undergoing many hardships, shipped to French POW camps. It was not until late 1917-early 1918 that they were permitted to enroll into newly-created Czechoslovak units under overall French command. The first contingent, the Czech Brigade, was created in November 1917 at Cognac from former POWs — eventually totaling over 2300 men. Most of the surviving volunteers of 1914-15 were, however, refused permission to transfer out of the Foreign Legion.

By May 1918, the 21st and then the 22nd Czech Infantry Regiments were constituted at Cognac as the Czech Infantry Brigade under French officers. The brigade saw combat from June 1918 on. A 23rd Regiment was activated in December; which consisted mainly of Slovak volunteers

from North America. Now with three regiments, the brigade was elevated to 5th Division status. After the Armistice, the division was repatriated to a now-free Czechoslovakia by way of Italian rail lines.

From the first, the Legions used the well-organized French military postal system and under the same conditions regarding the franchise, the Czech postal facility at Cognac serving as the main distribution point. Censorship was exercised by either or both the Czechs and the French. Various postal and administrative markings were used, mainly at Cognac, and the author shows examples of all known ones — 58 in all, in many categories.

As the brigade had been assigned to the French 53rd Infantry Division, that division's Trésor et Postes 217 date stamp was also used, as well as purely Czech variations on the "217". Censorship was generally exercised at the regimental level; several different markings are known. A rare Military Franchise black on bluish etiquette (written in French) was used in mid-1918; I suspect it was purely unofficial.

The Legion's cartographic section printed, during the latter half of 1918 and into 1919 a variety of franchise postal cards, forms, labels, etc. for the Legionnaires' use.

All 58 known markings — postal, administrative, censorship, civil governmental, etc. — are shown full size in the main body of the book. Colors used are usually mentioned but this tends to be buried in the text. The markings are shown again but reduced in size at the end (pp. 79-82) of the book, in tabular format, with value indices for use on cards, on letters, and on other postal paper. Being a very small fraction of the French army, mail of the Czech troops must be very difficult to find in any condition.

Mr. Verner is the first to admit that much more information on the markings (and undiscovered ones) and their timeframe remains to be discovered. We hope that a future revision will bring more such information to light. In the meantime, this fine study is definitely the single most complete and useful source of information on this subject.

Illustrations, whether period photographs and postcards, cuts of the markings, or of actual covers (the latter in color) are uniformly excellent. There's a good bibliography, mainly in English or Czech. The book is nicely printed on glossy paper in the Czech Republic. Some typos were noted, but they seldom detract. The book will not lie flat without cracking the spine, but the attractively low price makes this almost a trifling matter.

Stanley Luft

* * * * *

Books Noted

The Postal History of the Free Czechoslovak Forces in Great Britain 1940-1945 by Richard Beith; pub. Czechoslovak Philatelic Society of Great Britain (Monograph No 15); 90 pp., A4, card cover; price £14; available from the author at 14

Middlecroft, Guilden Sutton, Chester CH3 7HF. [Well illustrated in b/w but some colour; reports on escape from France to Britain of Czech compatriots; includes a section on the Return to France of 1944.]

AR - Avis de Réception by David Handelman with sections by Peter A S Smith and Henrik Mouritsen; pub. Postal History Society of Canada, 2002; 158 + vi pp., 6 x 9 in., spiral binding, soft cover; illustrations, bibliography, index; price C\$25.69 + p&p; available from the author at Mathematics Dept., University of Ottawa, Ottawa, ON Canada, K1N 6N5. [Organised in 14 chapters from early period (1879-1892) to "Weird AR"; worldwide in scope.]

50 Ans d'Histoire et de Collections, pub. UPT; 150 x 210 mm., 66 pp., b/w; price 10€ + p&p; available from Union des Philatélistes et des Télécartistes de la Poste et de France-Télécom, 78 rue Taitbout, 75009 Paris. [On the 50th anniversary of its creation the UPT traces its history from 1952 to 2002; illustrated by philatelic items.]

Les Flammes Postales de la Haute-Vienne, 1^{re} partie: Les Flammes à Caractère Local, by Jean-Louis Dutreix and Alain Debord; 52 pp., A4, b/w; price 10€; available from l'Association ACFOLIM, 4 allée de Louis-de-Funès, 87100 Limoges. [An introduction to *flammes* in general, with anecdotes on those of the *département* (errors, censorship, etc.) , and life size reproductions of local *flammes* from their origins to 2002 with dates of use and indications of value.]

Complément à Janvier 1849, Inventaire des lettres affranchies avec des timbres-poste en janvier 1849, pub. Association Marcophile du Val de Durance; price 2€; available from Jean Demenge, 2 Traverse de la Libération, 13650 Meyrargues. [Update of 8 sheets to this previously published work, covering 18 new offices and 124 new letters.]

Les Essais de Marquages des Encres Fluorescentes et Phosphorescentes, by Jean Renard; 45 pp. in colour, A4; binding either glued or with rings; price 15€ + p&p; available from the author at 26 allée des Roses, 37270 Montlouis-sur-Loire. [Details of different luminescent markings affecting stamps, paper, postal coding, etc. involving research and experiments since the 1950s]

Cérès - Catalogue Timbres-Poste, France 2003; 560 pp.; price 19€ + p&p from *Timbres magazine*, or available from Cérès Philatélie, 23 rue du Louvre, 75001 Paris. [Includes classical section with numerous descriptions and values for cancellations, a semi-modern section with values for stamps on cover; and a modern section that has recapitulative

images of the definitive series; also covers definitive varieties 1900-1959, airmail, precancels, *colis postaux*, booklets, exhibitions, military posts, *roulettes*, specimens, service stamps, tax stamps and telegraphs; and there is a new section on French *millésimes*.]

Cours des Carnets 2003, pub. Association des Collecteurs de Carnets et de Publicitimbres; 70 pp., A4, b/w; price 10€; available from ACCP, 13 rue Hardy, 78000 Versailles. [All the booklets of France & Colonies are listed and given an estimated value; available to non-members of the association.]

Introduction à l'Histoire Postale des Origines à 1849, 2^{me} édition 2002, Tomes I et II, by Michèle Chauvet; total 600 pp.; 210 x 297 mm.; b/w; price 100€; available (Visa payment possible) from Éditions Brun & Fils, 85 galerie de Beaujolais, 75001 Paris. [New edition, revised and augmented by about 50 pages, of this work in 2 volumes originally published in 2000.]

Marianne de Gandon, Tirages et Coins Datés, Volume 1: le 15F bleu, by Roger Vacheron; 140 pp. photocopied; available (price not indicated) from Sococodami, BP 4625, 22046 Saint-Brieuc Cedex. [Detailed information on printings and dated corners of this stamp issued in 1951.]

Les Cahiers Philatéliques de la Libération, Tome 10: Émissions de la Libération de Marseille, by Henri Brives; 94 pp., A4, b/w; details (price not communicated) from Denis Duet, 19 rue Marc-Chagall, 33880 Saint-Caprais. [Events in this city from 1942 to 1944 and how they affected philately, including the forged stamps with an effigy of General de Gaulle (1943) and the Pétain series overprinted with patriotic slogans (1944).]

Histoire des Postes du Rhône: Lyon 1789-1939, by Yvette Mience; 450 pp., 160 x 240 mm.; illustrations of 50 old postcards and of several unpublished cachets; price 25€ + p&p; available (in April 2003) from Éditions Bellier, 41 cours Richard Vitton, 69003 Lyon, or BP 3038, 69394 Lyon Cedex 03. [Historical events during this period and the way they impinge on the postal services; includes the Poste Royale and the Petite Poste in 1789, the inauguration of the Hôtel des Postes in 1938, the growth of principal and secondary post offices in the city, and anecdotes concerning a number of different postal employees.]

Maurice Tyler

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TARIFFS: Internal Letter Rates, 1849-2002

Derek Richardson

The table below brings up to date the information given in Table A1 of F&CPS Brochure No.7. The recent introduction of a 350g weight step is said to be to do with the part-privatisation of the *service rapide*.

Phase 1 : 1849-1937.

This Section contains office-to-office rates. See Section A3 for local letters. The letter tariff of 1849 encompassed everything except printed matter and newspapers. Prior to 01.07.1854, unfranked letters were taxed at the letter rate. A full table of postage due on unfranked and underfranked letters is given in Section A15.

Up to (g)	7½	10	15	20	30	50	100	INCREMENTS	1000	1500	2000
01.01.1849	20	-	.40	-	-	-	1.	+1. per +100 g	10.	-	-
01.07.1850	25	-	.50	-	-	-	1.	+1. per +100 g	10.	-	-
01.07.1854	25	-	.40	-	-	-	.80	+.80 per +100 g	8.	-	-
01.01.1862	-	.20	-	.40	-	-	.80	+.80 per +100 g	8.	-	-
01.09.1871	-	.25	-	.40	-	.70	1.20	+.50 per +50 g	10.20	-	-
01.01.1876	-	-	.25	-	.50	.75	1.25	+.50 per +50 g	10.25	-	-
01.05.1878	-	-	.15	-	.30	-	-	+.15 per +15 g	-	-	-
16.04.1906	-	-	.10	-	.20	-	-	+.10 per +15 g	-	-	-
01.06.1910	-	-	-	.10	-	.15	.20	+.05 per +50 g	1.10	-	-
01.01.1917	-	-	-	.15	-	.25	.30	+.05 per +50 g	1.20	-	-
01.04.1920	-	-	-	.25	-	.40	.50	+.15 per +100 g	1.85	-	-
25.03.1924	-	-	-	.25	-	.45	.60	+.20 per +100 g	2.40	3.40	-
16.07.1925	-	-	-	.30	-	.50	.75	+.20 per +100 g	2.55	3.55	-
01.05.1926	-	-	-	.40	-	.65	.90	+.20 per +100 g	2.70	3.70	-
09.08.1926	-	-	-	.50	-	.75	1.	+.30 per +100 g	3.70	5.20	-
21.04.1930	-	-	-	.50	-	.75	1.	+.40 per +100 g	4.60	6.60	-
31.05.1933	-	-	-	.50	-	.75	1.	+.40 per +100 g	4.60	6.60	7.50

Phase 2 : 1937 to date. (See Section A2 for the non-urgent letter rates introduced on 13.01.1969)

Up to (g)	20	50	100	200	250	300	350	400	500	1000	1500	2000	2500	3000	4000	5000
12.07.1937	.65	.90	1.30	1.80	-	2.20	-	2.60	3.	4.75	6.50	8.	-	9.	-	-
17.11.1938	.90	1.20	1.60	2.20	-	2.70	-	3.20	3.70	5.	7.	8.80	10.50	11.50	-	-
01.12.1939	1.	1.30	1.80	2.40	-	3.	-	3.50	4.	5.50	7.50	9.50	11.	12.	-	-
05.01.1942	1.58	2.	3.	4.	-	5.	-	6.	7.	9.	11.	13.	15.	17.	-	-
01.03.1945	2.	3.	4.	-	-	7.	-	-	10.	14.	17.	20.	-	25.	-	-
01.01.1946	3.	4.	6.	-	-	10.	-	-	14.	20.	25.	30.	-	40.	-	-
01.01.1947	5.	7.	10.	-	-	15.	-	-	20.	30.	40.	50.	-	65.	-	-
02.01.1947	4.50	6.50	9.50	-	-	14.	-	-	19.	28.	38.	47.	-	60.	-	-
01.01.1947	4.50	6.	8.	-	-	12.	-	-	16.	25.	34.	40.	-	50.	-	-
08.07.1947	6.	9.	12.	-	-	20.	-	-	28.	40.	50.	60.	-	75.	-	-
21.09.1948	10.	15.	20.	-	-	30.	-	-	40.	60.	80.	100.	-	125.	-	-
06.01.1949	15.	20.	30.	-	-	45.	-	-	60.	90.	120.	150.	-	200.	-	-
08.12.1951	15.	25.	35.	-	-	50.	-	-	65.	90.	120.	150.	-	200.	-	-
01.07.1957	20.	35.	50.	70.	-	90.	-	-	120.	160.	200.	240.	-	-	-	-
06.01.1959	25.	45.	65.	85.	-	110.	-	-	150.	200.	250.	300.	-	-	-	-
01.01.1960 MF	25	.45	.65	.85	-	1.10	-	-	1.50	2.	2.50	3.	-	-	-	-
19.05.1964	25	.50	.90	1.50	-	-	-	-	2.	2.50	-	3.50	-	-	-	-
18.01.1965	30	-	.70	-	1.50	-	-	-	2.	2.50	-	3.50	-	-	-	-
13.01.1969	40	-	.80	-	2.	-	-	-	2.70	3.40	-	4.70	-	6.	-	-
04.01.1971	.50	.90	1.20	-	2.50	-	-	-	3.30	4.20	-	5.70	-	7.30	-	-
16.09.1974	.80	1.40	1.90	-	4.	-	-	-	5.	6.50	-	8.50	-	11.	13.50	16.
02.08.1976	1.	1.70	2.40	-	4.80	-	-	-	6.	8.	-	10.50	-	13.20	15.70	18.
15.05.1978	1.20	2.10	2.90	-	5.80	-	-	-	7.20	9.60	-	12.80	-	15.80	18.60	21.20
01.10.1979	1.30	2.10	2.90	-	5.90	-	-	-	7.20	9.60	-	12.80	-	15.80	18.60	21.20
15.10.1979	1.30	2.30	3.20	-	6.40	-	-	-	7.90	10.50	-	14.10	-	17.40	20.50	23.30
01.08.1980	1.40	2.50	3.50	-	7.20	-	-	-	9.	12.	-	16.10	-	19.80	23.40	26.80
01.09.1981	1.60	2.90	4.	-	8.50	-	-	-	10.60	14.20	-	19.	-	23.40	27.60	31.40
01.06.1982	1.80	3.30	4.50	-	9.60	-	-	-	12.	16.10	-	21.60	-	26.60	31.30	35.60
01.06.1983	2.	3.60	4.90	-	10.40	-	-	-	13.	17.40	-	23.30	-	28.70	33.80	38.40
02.07.1984	2.10	3.70	5.	-	10.70	-	-	-	13.40	17.90	-	24.	-	29.60	34.80	39.50
01.08.1985	2.20	3.90	5.	-	10.70	-	-	-	13.40	17.90	-	24.	-	29.60	34.80	39.50
01.08.1986	2.20	3.70	5.40	-	11.70	-	-	-	14.60	19.20	-	25.70	-	31.70	36.	41.
01.08.1987	2.20	3.70	5.60	-	12.30	-	-	-	15.30	20.	-	27.	-	33.	38.	43.
16.08.1988	2.20	3.70	5.60	-	12.30	-	-	-	15.30	20.	-	27.	-	33.	-	38
11.01.1990	c2.30	3.80	5.70	-	12.	-	-	-	15.	20.	-	27.	-	32.	-	38
19.08.1991	d2.50	4.	6.20	-	11.	-	-	-	15.	20.	-	27.	-	32.	-	-
10.08.1992	2.50	4.20	6.40	-	11.30	-	-	-	15.	20.	-	27.	-	32.	-	-
05.07.1993	p2.80	4.40	6.70	-	11.50	-	-	-	16.	21.	-	28.	-	33.	-	-
18.03.1996	p3.	4.50	6.70	-	11.50	-	-	-	16.	21.	-	28.	-	33.	-	-
02.06.2000	p3.	4.50	6.70	11.50	-	-	14.	-	16.	21.	-	28.	-	33.	-	-
01.01.2002 €	p0.48	0.69	1.02	1.75	-	-	2.13	-	2.44	3.20	-	4.27	-	5.03	-	-

Key:

- denotes a non-existent weight step

c, d : Red C and 0 undenominated stamps were issued for these 0-20 g rates on these dates, followed by the stamps with figures of value.

p signifies permanent validity stamps (TVPs) with no indication of value.

REPORTS OF MEETINGS

MAIN SOCIETY MEETING OF 27 NOVEMBER 2002

Barrie Jay: Cross-Channel Mail

Introduced by President Mick Bister, Barrie Jay explained that his display would cover 17th and 18th century mail between France and Great Britain, the first part up to the declaration of the Napoleonic Wars. He indicated that his sheets were fully written up but that he would point out some of the more interesting items.

Thus we started with some Corsini covers, sent by the Merchant Adventurers' and Merchant Strangers' post. These were followed by a few 1649 letters smuggled between France and Great Britain by the royalist Heath family, with 4d and 6d charges; and others from Livorno to London via Venice or Lyon, charged 9d or 1s. Handstamps indicating charges were almost never used from Great Britain until the 1790s, but mail was sent from Great Britain to France in the 1720s to maintain the supply of Cognac and Bordeaux.

Although campaign mail was not frequent at the time, we were shown two covers from the War of Austrian Succession, with letters after the campaigns of Dettingen and Fontenoy (1745). Several letters between the Channel Islands and France were seen, although there was no official post in the Channel Islands before 1843 and mail was carried privately. Examples were shown of mail from the 1770s war with America, in which France took its part and had an arrangement with the Turn and Taxis post; and from the Revolutionary Wars (from 1793), such as a letter from Marseille to London that was sent back to sender, and one from Calais to Dover probably sent by a neutral vessel.

The first part of the display, which had included uncommon charge marks and Bishop marks, illustrations and maps, considerable detail on rates in different currencies, eyewitness accounts of battles, intercepted mail and unknown routes, finished with such choice items as an Armée du Rhin cover to London that ended up in Switzerland, the 1799 expedition to the Low Countries to fight the French, and the Armée d'Angleterre (during the last invasion of Great Britain from 1795 onwards) in Wales, Newcastle and Southern Ireland.

After an interval for viewing, Barrie continued with the period covering the start of the Napoleonic Wars 1803-

1815, material from which, he claimed, was not difficult to find if one looked for it. So we were shown mail from civilian POWs sent from France to Great Britain, and mail sent in the opposite direction by arrangement with Turn and Taxis via Hamburg – such as a letter from Montpellier to London via Paris but forwarded via the Hamburg packet mail, and some from Britain to France that received the R4 or RN4 handstamp in Hamburg.

Various routes were tried at this time, and some letters went by private ship and received a ship letter mark. Napoleon, in fact, issued a decree banning mail between the two countries, and after 1806 the situation was much more difficult, so that ship mail or smuggling was attempted. Barrie remarked in passing that Mme Récamier seemed to travel freely between the courts of France and Britain; but then he pointed us in the direction of a registered letter from Chatham to Paris, a letter to the USA that received an examiner's mark in Boston (Mass.), and one from London to Bordeaux that was put into the latter town's Petite Poste.

We noted some fascinating letters, often carried privately and which used some strange ways to get to France during the 100 Days War. There was much POW mail that frequently passed through the Transport Office in London, some censor marks such as that of Porchester Castle, mail with a mixture of marks indicating that they were carried by cartel vessels (covered by a flag of truce), and also some *COLONIES PAR* and *GRANDE-BRETAGNE PAR* marks for the Channel Islands. We finally saw the SS in a circle cachet on a few letters from Switzerland to London via France (indicating the British Foreign Branch of the Post Office), and SS not in a circle from Paris to London (a mark that is not yet fully understood).

In giving the vote of thanks, Chris Hitchen commented on the exceptional quality of the material we had been shown, illustrating the difficulty of relations between France and Great Britain during this period, although the exchange of mail did take place. We had appreciated a lovely display with clear informative explanations.

MST

SOUTHERN GROUP MEETING OF 18 JANUARY 2003

Members' Short Displays

The Organiser opened the proceedings on a fine sunny afternoon [although this turned to heavy rain later in the evening!] welcoming members to the first meeting of the New Year. As on previous occasions the displays were to be given by those present and the following members entertained:

Michael Berry - *Ballon Monté*; **George Nash** - World War II POW covers; **Barbara Priddy** - Modern Senegal; **Michael Wilson** - Cross-border Mail; **John Hammonds** - 75th Anniversary of 1st Airmail [Montmartre] & Film Festival

Rally; **Roy Ferguson** - New Acquisitions; - **Bill Mitchell** - Early Senegal; **Yvonne Larg** - Monaco; **Michael Annells** - French Railway Mail; **Bob Larg** - Old Acquisitions; **Colin Spong** - Madagascar British Censorship.

Members present: Michael Annells, Michael Berry, Colin Clarkson, Roy Ferguson, John Hammonds, Bob & Yvonne Larg, Bill Mitchell, George Nash, Barbara Priddy, Colin Spong, and John Thorpe; and Pat Spong [Guest] who looked after the refreshments.

CWS

NORTHERN GROUP MEETING OF 25 JANUARY 2003

Stephen Holder: The Postal History of Tunisia to 1900

Present: Stephen Holder (Chairman), Bernard Lucas, John Whiteside, Steve Ellis, Alan Goud, Michael Meadowcroft, Robert Barnes, Peter Stockton, Peter Maybury.

Apologies were received from Judith Holder (left holding the fort at the Morley stamp fair), Arthur Dent and George Barker (in France).

Chairman Holder opened the meeting by welcoming everyone, and then explained the origins of the collection we were about to see. It was originally formed by himself, sold to Arthur Brown, who expanded it somewhat and, some years later repurchased from a certain London dealer.

Stephen then went on to outline the geography of Tunisia and its history up until 1900, explaining that there was very little written about the postal history of the country and not much more about the stamps! He should know.

The display commenced with letters written during the period of the Turkish Protectorate when Tunisia formed part of the infamous Barbary Coast, the earliest being from Tunis datelined '*à la rade de Tunis 19 mai 1736*'. This was followed by such choice items as: Tunis to Marseille 1786 via forwarding agent and the French PO in Genoa, single and double rate examples; Algiers to Tunis 1838 privately carried by ship's captain; several covers to Malta, Genoa (Italy) and also to France via Malta.

Of maritime interest we saw what is probably the earliest use of the Tunis-Bône handstamp 1848 – some twelve years earlier than recorded by Salles – and an 1855 usage of the Tunis Consular mark, not to mention an 1866 letter to Tunis from the French PO in Smyrne and an 1849 disinfected letter from Washington (USA) via France and Algeria. A great example of the Djidjelli **B.M.** was the icing on the cake.

In the classics period a pair of Bordeaux issue 20c cancelled GC 5107 in blue and an 1871 80c post-Franco-Prussian War rate, made up of an unusual combination of Cérès issues, three 25c and a 5c, were among the more outstanding items. Three 1872 covers from England via Naples franked at 6d, 7d (1d late fee?) and 1/- provoked much interest, and these were followed by a variety of rates, weight steps, registration etc., of the Sage period.

In 1880 there were only two French post offices in the country, Tunis and La Goulette, and examples of these marks were shown. We were then told the reasons for the French invasion of Tunisia in 1881 and the setting up of a Protectorate, with the Bey as titular head of state but all domestic and foreign affairs being controlled by the French administrators. As a result more offices were opened, usually situated in relation to the telegraph system, and examples from some of these new offices followed.

The final part of the display was devoted to the Italian Post Offices originally established by the kingdom of Sardinia. Examples from the Sardinian Post Office were followed by letters from the period of the founding of the kingdom of Italy in 1860, when Italian stamps were used which were initially cancelled by a date stamp, later by a 'killer' – n° 235 – and the various changes in canceller format. The use of Italian stamps overprinted 'ESTERO' (foreign) was well represented, as was the return to using Italian stamps prior to the closure of the office in 1901.

Peter Maybury expressed the members' appreciation of a splendid and informative display, and the meeting closed at approximately 4.00 pm when our leader rushed off to rescue Judith and the stock from darkest Morley. The next meeting is scheduled for 22 March when we will be entertained by our recent acquisition, George Barker.

JPM

MAIN SOCIETY MEETING OF 29 JANUARY 2003

Members' Short Displays

Unfortunately our intended speaker was not well enough to attend the meeting in London, and an appeal had gone out at very short notice to a number of stalwart members, inviting them to bring sufficient material to fill a frame or two. The response was so generous that it was possible to hold three sessions instead of the usual two.

The first session was taken up by **George Henderson**, who showed patriotic postcards in colour from the First World War, with posed photographs (some of children in uniform); **Prue Henderson**, who showed pre-1925 picture postcards illustrating places that were entry points into France from various countries; and **Michael Round**, showing genuine on-cover usage of post-colonial Niger and Ivory Coast postage dues and *poste restante* charges, as well as some returned mail sent between Zaïre and France or various ex-colonies that had been salvaged *en route* to a Congolese dustbin.

The second session began with **David Worrollo**, showing mail from the period 1853-1875 sent from France to various

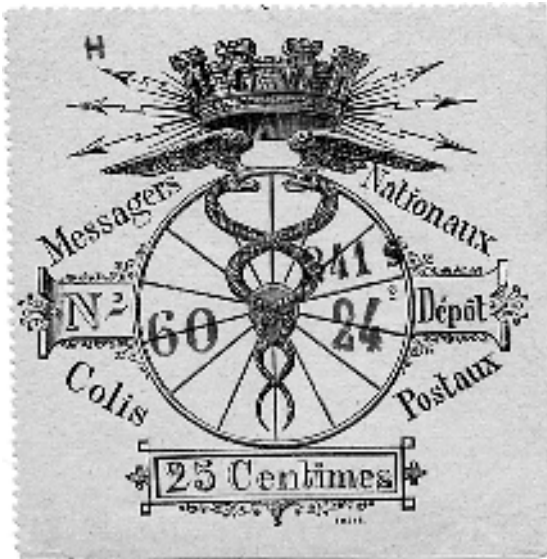
overseas destinations; followed by **Barbara Priddy**, with a comprehensive illustration of the trans-Saharan airmail route in the 1920s and 1930s; and **Geoff Gethin**, who had brought some draft pages from his work in progress on 20th century French forgeries, with 400% photocopies to expose the details of the original items.

The final session was filled by **Derek Richardson**, who had brought a full set of the anti-malaria cartoon cards in colour that were issued to military personnel in Salonika during the First World War; and **Maurice Tyler**, who displayed most of the official French banknotes issued by the government or military authorities from the Third Republic onwards.

Those who had brought material but found no time to show it included Mick Bister, Chris Hitchen and Bill Mitchell. Mick commented at the end that the strength of the Society had enabled us to see a remarkable variety of items that constituted a genuinely entertaining evening.

MST

May 2003 Auction Lots



25c Messagers Nationaux, Colis Postaux



1F50 Marseille EIPA30



10c Sower on Messageries Internationales porte-timbre



1816 Suisse par Beffort



1918 Lille Reconquis



25c Marianne de Decaris, carmine missing

May 2003 Auction Lots



60F Cameroun,
Visit of Giscard d'Estaing,
star in flag error



1929 Dragon d'Annam crash cover



1933 Morocco crash mail