

# The Journal of the France & Colonies Philatelic Society



1935 Madagascar cover with 5c booklet pane  
(Lot in February 2005 Society Auction)

Volume 54 ● Number 4  
December 2004  
Whole Number 234

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

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President, 2004-2005: M S Tyler, 56 Mortons Fork, Blue Bridge, Milton Keynes MK13 0LA.

Vice-President, 2004-2005: A D Barrett.

Programme Secretary, 2004-2005: A Lawrence.

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## **The Society**

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

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

## **2004 Subscription Rates**

United Kingdom: £10.00, Europe: £12.00, Elsewhere: £15.00.

Treasurer: C J Hitchen, 36 Everton Road, Croydon CR0 6LA.

The Society's Girobank account number is 39 784 9001.

## **The Journal**

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## **Auction and Exchange Packet Sales**

Lots for sale through the Society auctions, held 3 or 4 times a year, should be sent to the Acting Auction Secretary,  
M L Bister, 7 The Slade, Wrestlingworth, Sandy, Beds. SG19 2ES.

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

France: Mrs M Pavey, 15 St Ronan's Terrace, Innerleithen, Peeblesshire EH44 6RB;

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

## **The Library**

Members are invited to avail themselves of the services of the Society's substantial library, on terms set out in the Library  
List distributed to all Members.

Librarian: G E Barker, 520 Halifax Road, Bradford BD6 2LP.

## **The Magazine Circuit**

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

D A Pashby, 148 Glengall Road, Woodford Green, Essex IG8 0DS.

## **Journal Correspondents**

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\* \* \*

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

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# The Journal of the France & Colonies Philatelic Society

Editor: M S Tyler, 56 Mortons Fork, Blue Bridge, Milton Keynes MK13 0LA  
E-mail: editor@fcps.org.uk

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## SOCIETY NOTES

### New Members

The Society is pleased to welcome the following:

1239 Jeremy Martin (Wiltshire), 1240 Trevor Buckell (Wiltshire), 1241 Mrs Yvonne Wheatley (Leeds), 1242 Richard Wheatley (Leeds), 1243 A Métayer (France).

\* \* \*

### Date of AGM

Members should note that the date of the AGM and Auction has been changed to Saturday 14 May 2005 (one week later than advertised on the Programme Card and in an earlier Journal). All other details remain the same.

\* \* \*

### Northern Group Programme

The meeting scheduled for 12 March 2005 has been re-arranged for Saturday 19 March 2005, and will be a Members' Choice event (18/24 sheets). There is the possibility that this will be an all-day meeting 10.00 - 16.30 with a break for a pub lunch.

Meetings are normally held in the Leeds General Infirmary, Great George Street, LS1 3EX at 1.30pm in the Committee Room.

\* \* \*

### Exhibition Successes

The following members are to be congratulated on obtaining awards:

At the Autumn Stampex (London, September 2004):

**Peter Baker:** Large Silver for "Censor Marks, Cachets and Postal Markings of the Free French 1940-1945"

**David Stirrups:** Vermeil for "To Portugal from UK - Rates on Mail by British Packets 1810-1859"

At the Postage Stamp Mega Event (New York, March 2004):

**Ed Grabowski:** Gold for "French Colonial Allegorical Group Type - Use, Misuse and Non-use in Madagascar & Dependencies"

At the Garfield-Perry March Party 2004 (Cleveland, Ohio, March 2004):

**Steve Walske:** Platinum for single-frame exhibit of 1869-1871 US mail to France

At the Philatelic Show 2004 (Boxborough, Mass., April-May 2004):

**Steve Walske:** Grand Award and Gold for "Transatlantic Packet Mail between the USA and France 1840-1875"

\* \* \*

### Displays by Members

**John Yeomans** displayed "French India" at the country meeting of the Royal Philatelic Society, London at Crowborough on 7 August 2004.

**John Mayne** displayed "French Colonies" to Chester P S on 30 September 2004.

**Marcophile XXVIII** (Thionville, Moselle, October 2004) featured displays by the following members:

**Robert Abensur:** "Alsace-Lorraine 1918-1920"

**Peter Maybury:** "La Poste pendant l'Ancien Régime 1627-1703"

**Chris Hitchen:** "Levées exceptionnelles de Paris 1863-1936"

**Peter Kelly:** "Type Sage - Courrier recommandé et chargé" The Royal Philatelic Society, London shows for the current season include the following by our members:

**Barrie Jay:** "Continental Connections 1423-1815" on 2 December 2004

**Iain Stevenson:** "Telegraph Stamps and Stationery of the World" on 14 April 2005

**Francis Kiddle:** "Queensland - Stamps, Revenues, Railways" on 19 May 2005

\* \* \*

### Philatelic Honours

**John Hammonds** is to be congratulated on being awarded the Congress Medal for 2004 by the Association of British Philatelic Societies.

\* \* \*

### Wessex Group Programme

5 February 2005

2 July 2005

8 October 2005

Meetings are held on Saturdays at the Scout Hall, Lower Street, Harnham, Salisbury, starting at 10.00 for 10.30, with a break for lunch at the Mill Inn, and finishing no later than 17.00. There will be an invited display in the morning, and all members are asked to bring if possible a display of up to 24 sheets for the afternoon. Guests are very welcome. For further information on the programme or directions to the venue, please contact one of the convenors: Alan Wood, 22 Potters Way, Milford, Salisbury SP1 1PY (tel. 01722 328474) and Peter Kelly, Malmsy House, Church Road, Leigh Woods, Bristol BS8 3PG (tel. 0117 973 6296; e-mail pra.kelly@malmsy.freemove.co.uk).

\* \* \*

### News of Members

Peter Kelly reports that he attended **Yvonne Newbury's** 90th birthday party in Bath on 30 October. He says that Yvonne was in the best of spirits, surrounded by family and friends, many of whom reflected the various collecting habits she has enjoyed for so long, both on her own and with her late husband Roy. Although Yvonne disposed of her wonderful collection of the Franco-German War some years ago, she still retains an interest in postal history and asked after many of her philatelic friends.

\* \* \*

## France - The Red Cross: Part 2

John West

At the outbreak of war in 1914 it was accepted that, post-wise, rules were made to be broken and, with the armed forces encamped, or on the move, in areas of conflict, there was little time for thoughts about the correct postal rates for letters to loved ones. Realistically, there was even less opportunity to walk down to the shops and buy postage stamps! Some letters were accepted just bearing a unit handstamp, many bore no markings at all and the odd few were stamped with either the charity labels or genuine postage stamps.

The French Army postal system was not at all efficient at this time and the mail was subject to interminable delays between the front and home. It was several months before the whole subject was re-appraised and thoroughly overhauled. A complete re-organisation of the postal service enabled each unit to be allocated a "Postal Sector" with its own number, and letters had all to be addressed to that number. Thus was introduced the "*Trésor et Postes*", which is now more commonly identified by the initials "*T & P*". In simple terms, this can be translated as "Treasury and Post Office", for the offices took on the role of mail delivery whilst at the same time taking responsibility for the banking of the entire unit.

On 13 August 1914 the first British troops landed in France. Two days later the first British Army Post Office was established at Boulogne. This was followed closely by a second, based at Le Havre, which was set up two days after that. The British Army authorities had learned their lessons in operating a postal service under wartime conditions during the South African war of 1899-1902, and they were, accordingly, well prepared and organised.

A Forces privilege rate of postage had been introduced in 1795 because the cost of posting a letter in those days was so prohibitive, especially to low wage earners like conscripts in the Army and Navy. To enable them to keep in touch with their families, a one penny rate had been introduced and this rate was still in force when hostilities commenced in 1914.

Due to the difficulties, referred to earlier, of complying with even that requirement, the British postal authorities decreed that mail posted by British Forces abroad without sufficient postage stamps, or unstamped, would be delivered to the addressee and, as a privilege, no additional charge, or tax, would be levied to the penny rate – which the recipient of the mail would still be expected to pay.

Following a speech made to the House on 31 August 1914 by the then Postmaster General, Mr. Hobhouse, the government of the day approved an edict on 1 September 1914 which allowed troops serving in France a free postal facility. This was not so much a concession to the armed forces as recognition that it was totally uneconomic to try and collect the postage due when so much mail was being despatched from France without the postage being paid.

It seems unbelievable that this free postage facility was not granted to sailors until June 1918 – although an exception

to this had been made if they were serving aboard a hospital ship. Thus it was that, in this climate, all manner of strange cachets, handstamps and labels appeared on mail from the troops in France.

Initially, nobody could imagine that the conflict might last for longer than a few weeks, or months. This manifests itself in the proliferation of postcards of that time which referred to the European war of 1914-15. Many of these cards were printed by the Red Cross societies, both singly and in books which were perforated to enable the sender to detach one card at a time from them.

The grim reality of the extent to which the war had escalated was reflected in the ever increasing number of field post offices and hospitals that were being established. The same postal privileges were extended to soldiers who were in hospital as to those on active service. Almost every hospital had its own handstamp and many of these are, therefore, to be found on the mail originating from their inmates. The handstamp served, of course, to persuade the postal authorities that the author of the missive had a legitimate claim to the free postal privilege, authenticating, as it did, its place of origin.

No-one could make any secret of the fact that the French health authorities were totally unprepared for a war situation, insofar as their medical facilities were concerned. Prior to the outbreak of hostilities all nursing had been undertaken by nuns but, following the separation of the State and the Church, the nuns had all returned to the Church – leaving an enormous void in the French hospital services.

The military health service had drafted plans following the outbreak of war in the Balkans but the plans had all, in turn, been abandoned due, mainly, to the rapid improvements being made, even then, in medical science. The profession of nursing, against which a prejudice still lingered in France, had only just begun to be taken up seriously when war broke out. The three French 'aid' societies had, however, long been prepared for the eventuality of war and, with so many small '*comités*' and local branches, they were able – almost overnight – to place thousands of beds at the disposal of the "*Service de Santé*".

In England, though, the exploits of Florence Nightingale had made the nursing profession an honourable one and, although it required arduous training, her efforts had resulted in an upsurge of recruitment. It is hardly surprising, therefore, to discover that large numbers of English nurses were crossing the English Channel to undertake the massive task of manning the hospitals, ambulances and field stations, set up to tend to the wounded.

Miss Grace Ellison, the President of the National Council of Trained Nurses of Great Britain and Ireland, founded the French Flag Nursing Corps, which provided nurses to be put at the disposal of the French authorities. She approached the head of the French Army Medical Corps

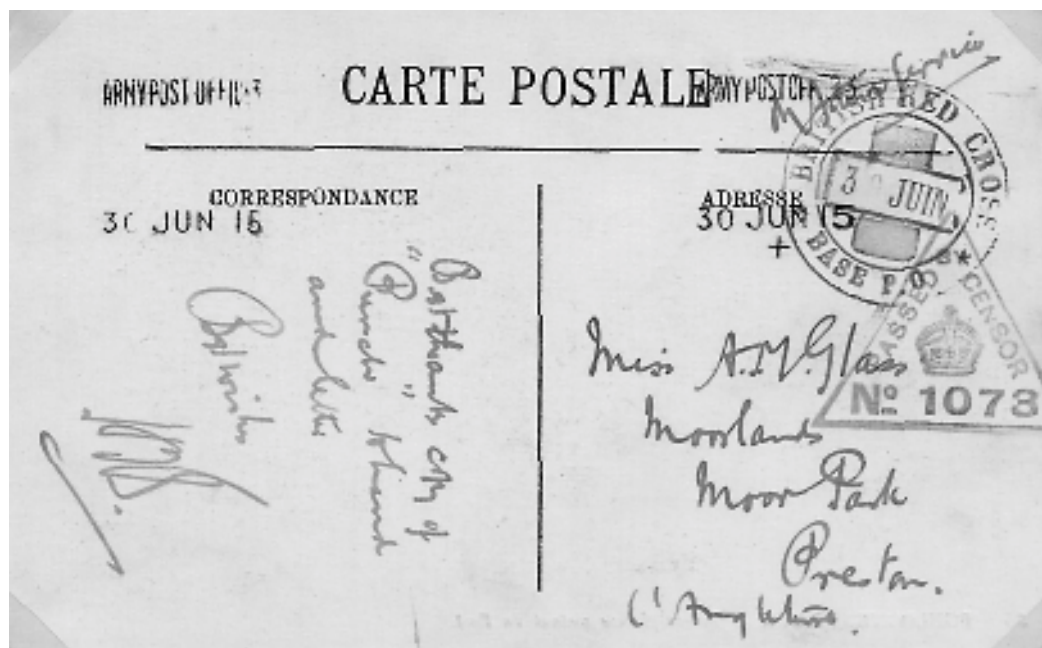


Figure 13 -  
A postal regulating depot was established at Boulogne in 1914. It became "Base Army Post Office 3" in January 1915 and - 6 months later - "Army Post Office 3". This card has a Krag machine cancellation used only between June and August 1915. The British Red Cross Base PO cachet features a cross with a removable centre, thus allowing for insertion of the date.

with her proposal and offered to supply fully trained nurses to staff the military hospitals. The first seven nurses supplied under this scheme went to Rouen and worked under the supervision of a sister. The trickle turned to a steady stream and soon large numbers of English nursing staff were manning these hospitals.

With the increase in volume of nursing staff in France, the British Red Cross Society utilised part of the Army Post Office at Boulogne as its headquarters and used various cachets incorporating Post Office markings on official and personal mail posted from there (Fig 13).

#### The 'Comité de Londres'

Of the three French Red Cross societies, only the UFF had a committee in London. This had been established several years before the outbreak of war. The French ambassador, M. Paul Cambon, who was besieged with offers of financial and other help, was quick to appreciate that the efforts necessary to co-ordinate all these offers and thus ensure that the French people received the maximum benefit therefrom necessitated the formation of a specialist group of people who were able to achieve that objective.

As a consequence, the 'Comité de Londres' (Fig 14) came into being. Offices were found at 25 Knightsbridge, London SW1 which - after a short space of time - were transferred along the road to N° 9. The essential function of the London committee was to utilise the gift or service offered so as best to satisfy each need that arose.

The *Comité de Londres* was assisted by the Anglo-French Committee of the British Red Cross Society and Order of St. John of Jerusalem. The Anglo-French committee had as its priority the scrutiny of credentials and issue of work certificates to Britons wishing to assist in the French war zones. It required strict, and careful, examination of applicants' claims to ensure that undesirable and/or untrustworthy personnel did not have the opportunity of obtaining positions in which they could jeopardise the lives of others. This particular task was delegated to a special sub-committee known as the "Anglo-French Hospitals

Committee" and the first certificates were granted in 1915. In total, they issued 7,309 certificates to British personnel going to France.

The staff of these committees agreed that a uniform was necessary and they approved a khaki colour with blue collars and cuffs. Holders of the Anglo-French certificates (as they were called) were also allowed to wear it. Just one example of the work of the Anglo-French Committee was the setting up of the Michelham Hospital at the Astoria Hotel in Paris. It was financed completely by Lord Michelham and provided 183 beds. This was followed by the inauguration of a convalescent home at Menton, also provided by the same benefactor.

In March 1917 the French Flag Nursing Corps integrated into the *Comité de Londres*, who also took over the payment of all salaries from the French government. On 1 January 1918 the *Comité de Londres* and the Anglo-French Committee amalgamated to become the "*Comité Britannique*" (Fig 15).

The *Comité de Londres* had also had an office at 34 Wilton Place, London SW1, where there was a department which was devoted to the organisation of "France's Day" (Fig 16). There was general public approval for the concept of a special day for fund-raising to benefit the Red Cross in France and there was no dispute over the selection of 14 July (Bastille Day) for that purpose.

It may seem odd that a permanent staff should be engaged all year round to organise an event which took place on just one day of the year. In reality, although London did adhere to the date set for arranging collections and other fund-raising ventures, the provincial towns paid scant respect to this arrangement and chose a date which suited themselves. Instances are recorded of France's Day being celebrated as late as 15 December.

Naturally, preparation for this annual event was time consuming with, quite literally, millions of trays and souvenirs to be manufactured, packaged and transported to the local collecting agencies. These agencies could not just be created out of thin air and the whole infrastructure



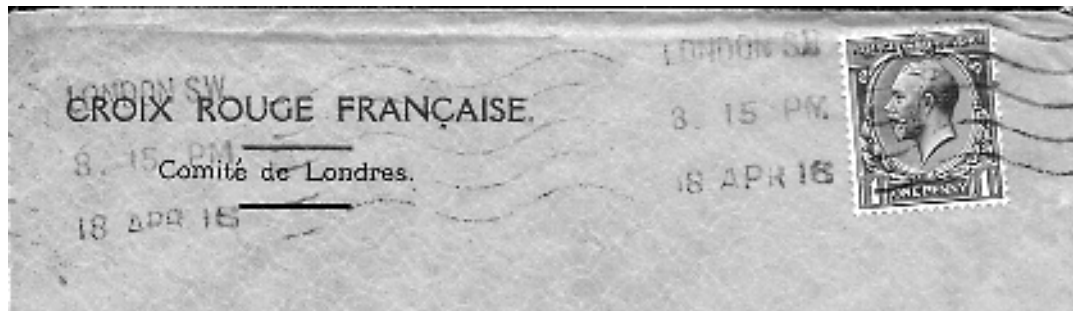


Figure 14 -  
Two items from the  
Comité de Londres

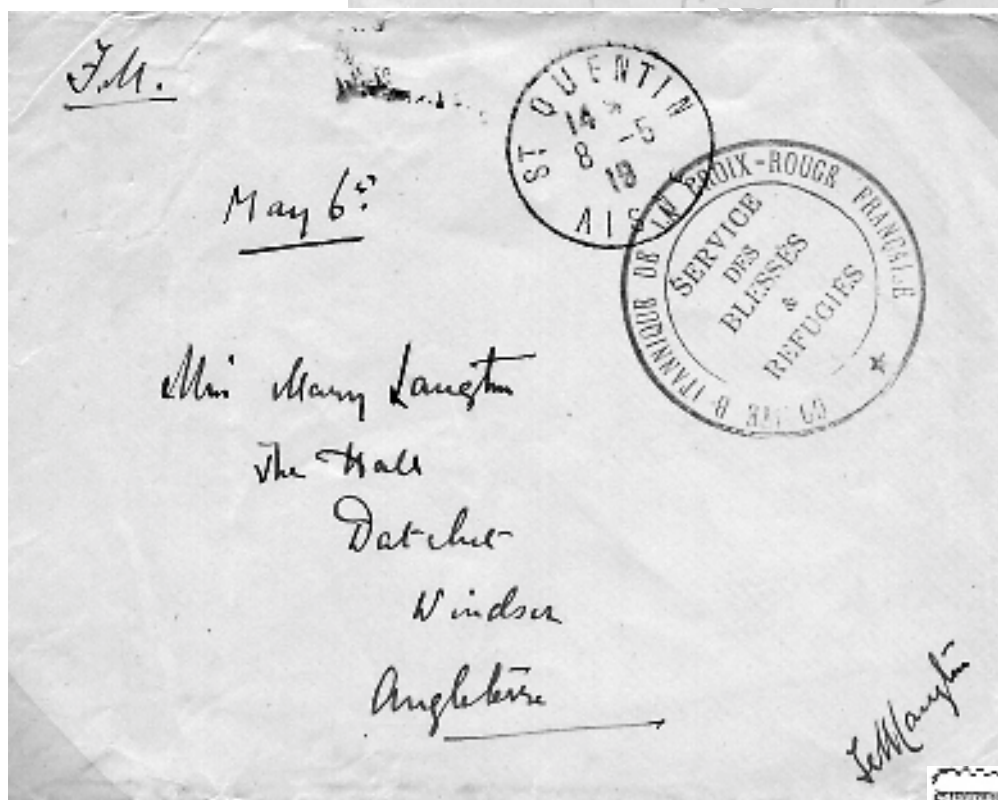
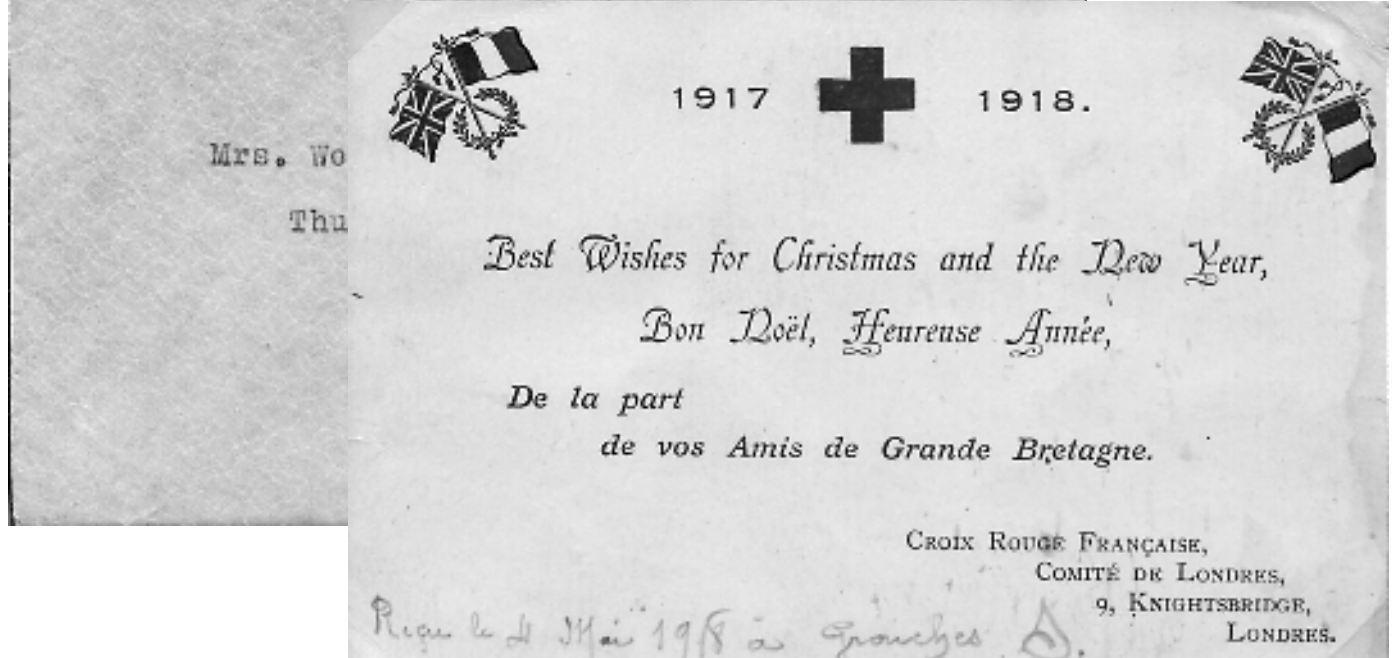


Figure 15 -  
In 1917 the Comité de Londres  
united with the  
Anglo-French Committee  
of the British Red Cross and  
Order of St John of Jerusalem  
to become the  
Comité Britannique

Figure 16 -  
"France's Day" vignettes -  
see Journal 193 pages 132-134  
for further details





Figure 17 -  
In 1915 a well equipped British convoy arrived at Bruyères, sent out by the British Ambulance Committee. It disembarked at Le Havre and was sent to the southern end of the Vosges. This convoy was to be known as *Section Sanitaire Anglaise* N° 1.

Figure 18 -  
The red cachet of *Section Sanitaire Anglaise* N° 16 du Colonel Barry. The 25c foreign postage rate is applied for a letter addressed abroad to a civilian, and the Sower stamp cancelled by the *Trésor et Postes* 145 handstamp.



had to be established in the first instance. Even then, work had still to be done, providing facilities and supplies for them as well as organising the local labour that was available. Packing alone took up four months of each year, and bills and posters had to be prepared, printed and published. Each year also saw the issue of a special vignette.

In 1915, when the organisation was still somewhat primitive, France's Day raised £24,115. The following year, when the *Comité de Londres* had taken it over, the project brought in £140,114, and in 1917 the organisers achieved the quite staggering figure of £190,349 – a figure made the more astonishing when one considers that almost all of it came from the sale of penny and twopenny souvenirs.

#### *Sections Sanitaires Anglaises*

With the agreement of the British Red Cross, the “British Ambulance Committee” was set up under the Presidency of the Duke of Portland. This committee financed the creation and provision of vehicles to form “ambulances” which were then despatched to augment the woefully inadequate amount of mobile medical facilities in the French battle areas. The first two convoys of these vehicles

were sent in January 1915, arriving at Le Havre. The first was promptly directed to the Vosges and the second to Commercy. These were known as “*Sections Sanitaires Anglaises*” and were numbered, not surprisingly, 1 and 2 (Fig 17).

The French clamoured for more and, after the King had inspected them at Buckingham Palace, a third convoy left England to travel to the Vosges on 6 February 1915 (S.S.A. N° 3). A fourth convoy arrived in France in June 1915 (S.S.A. N° 4) and, at about this time, the existing convoys were streamlined and reduced in size to 20 vehicles each. This created a surplus of vehicles which, when put together in October 1915, facilitated the formation of S.S.A. N° 5. Other convoys were to follow and were numbered consecutively (Fig 18).

A more comprehensive and detailed account of the movements and work of the *Sections Sanitaires Anglaises* can be found in the book “For Dauntless France” written by Laurence Binyon\*.

\* Originally published in 1918, by Messrs Hodder & Stoughton, it is now out of print.





Figure 19 -  
The double ringed  
cachet in red of the  
*Infirmier de Gare*  
*Montchanain*  
(Saône-et-Loire)  
is accompanied by  
the TPO strike of  
*Le Creusot à Chagny*.

### Hospital Ships

A Peace Convention held at The Hague on 17 October 1907 updated that part of the Geneva Convention 1864 which dealt with maritime warfare. It specified the conditions under which hospital ships were entitled to immunity from attack and it was decreed that they should be respected in time of war.

Five military hospital ships were commissioned by the British Admiralty in the first month of war, including three cross channel steamers – the *St. Andrew*, the *St. David* and the *St. Patrick*. They all went to Le Havre on 24 August 1914, together with the much larger hospital ship *Asturias* – which was originally a Royal Mail Steam Packet Company vessel of 12,000 tons.

The *Asturias* was mobilised as a naval hospital ship on 1 August 1914 and joined the Grand Fleet at Scapa Flow, but she was soon handed over to the army. On 1 February 1915, while *en route* to Le Havre, she was attacked in broad daylight by a German submarine. The master of the *Asturias* was able to alter course and thus dramatically avoided being hit by a torpedo which had been fired at her – despite the fact that she was clearly marked with the required Red Cross insignia.

She was utilised on a regular cross channel service throughout the war and, following one particularly bloody battle, actually carried a total of 2,400 patients on one occasion. This total exceeded her authorised limit by three times the legal number!

In March 1917 the *Asturias* was again attacked by the Germans, and this time was hit by a torpedo. The ship was extensively damaged to such an extent, indeed, that she was written off as a total loss at the time. She was subsequently rebuilt and was to see further service as the cruise liner *Arcadian*. The first hospital ship to actually be

sunk was the *Le Portugal* – which met that dreadful fate on 30 March 1916.

In peace time hospital ships were originally used as base hospitals, which remained with the fleet for as long as possible. The large number of casualties which resulted from wartime conflict altered the role of these ships to that of casualty clearing stations. As a result, hospital ships were forced to discontinue their practice of accompanying the fleet on patrol or into battle areas and, instead, they remained nearby or in deep water ports.

### Péniches Sanitaires

In August 1914 a committee founded by Professor Audoin of Poitiers University proposed that barges might be fitted out as hospitals in order to supplement all the other forms of transport being mobilised to evacuate seriously injured troops from the battle front. In addition, the committee provided the money to implement the project and, by October, the first “*péniche sanitaire*” (or ‘medical barge’) was launched.

The UFF provided sufficient personnel to start to make up a convoy and, with the addition of a further three barges, the first “*Péniche Ambulance*” was created on 26 November 1914. It was put at the disposal of the Third Army and left Paris on 5 December 1914, arriving at Bar-le-Duc on 14 December.

A total of 125 beds were installed and it was, initially, used as a fixed hospital – immediately being filled with casualties. Later in the war, it was to become mobile and was actively involved in the evacuation of badly injured troops from the stricken town of Dijon.



### Infirmières de Gare

A ministerial decree of 31 October 1911 enabled the SSBM to organise the establishment of hospital facilities at many of the main line railway stations. Their primary role was to ensure that nourishment was provided for all the casualties arriving in the "trains sanitaires", even supplying hot meals when they were given sufficient advance warning of an arrival.

The hospital trains generally travelled at speeds averaging between 30 and 50 kilometres per hour. Accordingly, the stations, where medical facilities were made available, were usually situated about 5 hours' travel (at those speeds) apart. The "infirmières de gare" (Fig 19) also provided a full supporting role with regard to the treatment, comfort and nursing of the injured – specialising in the treatment of those whose condition deteriorated and who became more seriously ill *en route*, necessitating their removal from the train.

### Cantines de Gare

The "cantine de gare" (Fig 20) was a kind of buffet, or restaurant, which was maintained by the Red Cross societies at their own expense. Its primary function was to supply food and drink to the soldiers who were continually circulating on the rail networks. In total the SSBM created 45 of these small canteens.

### Train Sanitaires

The hospital trains (Fig 21) were introduced early in 1915, when a degree of stability at the front, combined with the slowness of military operations, permitted their preparation in advance for evacuation purposes. Every carriage in the



Figure 20 -  
Straight line cachet in red  
of Cantine de la Gare, Niort

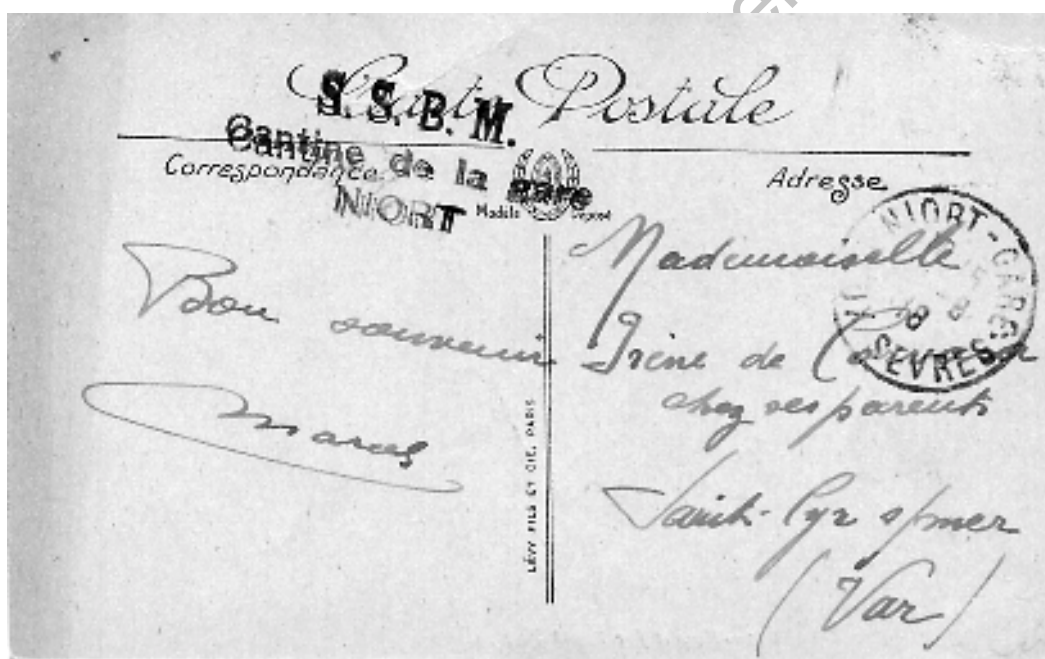


Figure 21 -  
Violet cachet of  
Train Sanitaire Semi-  
Permanent N° 5<sup>bis</sup> (Midi)  
accompanied by  
TPO strike of  
Châtelguyon à Riom



train had to have a red cross painted on the sides. Provision was made for two obligatory stops, one at a station where personal papers were all checked and put in order, and a second stop where the passengers were all subjected to a form of assessment regarding the nature of their injuries. There, a representative of the Health Services was responsible for the allocation of hospital beds and for maintenance of records concerning the soldiers' injuries or sickness. At the conclusion of each trip the trains had to be thoroughly disinfected under the supervision of a representative of the medical services.

These hospitals (Fig 22) comprised an operating theatre, isolation rooms and wards. They were, where possible, situated in protected positions, sheltered from gunfire. Usually, they were sited between 15 and 20 kilometres behind the front line, but emphasis was placed on their accessibility to main line railway stations and arterial roads, which were used for transporting the wounded.

- 1) Evacuation of the wounded and movement of the less seriously injured, as far as possible.
- 2) To prevent further movement of the badly injured, or those whose condition had deteriorated too much whilst being moved.
- 3) To avoid evacuation of those who were only slightly injured and who were likely to recover quickly. This enabled those men to be speedily returned to the battlefields.
- 4) To care for the seriously injured whose condition would be aggravated if any attempt were made to move them.

As their name implies, the “*hôpital temporaire*” was a hospital which was only in use for a short period of time. The duration of its existence would be dictated by the proximity and course of the fighting or, alternatively, by the other uses for which the building might be required. Depending upon the type of building that had been commandeered, it was often possible to re-open it, or open another part of the building once the part in use was closed down.

The temporary hospitals were all under the control of the military authorities and many were set up specifically for one particular army corps. No significance can be attached to the numbering system – indeed many of these hospitals are recorded as having no number at all. Others changed their numbers as they changed locations, whilst some kept the same number. A rare few even used A and B numbers.

The '*hôpital bénévole*' (Fig 23) was usually founded, organised, staffed and maintained by the benevolence of a private individual or group of individuals who were not affiliated to the Red Cross. In deference to their founders, most of these hospitals were run autonomously.

Figuratively speaking, these facilities occupied the bottom rung of the ladder in the organisation of the French Health Services and, it appears, they were only originally intended for use by soldiers of the Auxiliary Service. In point of fact

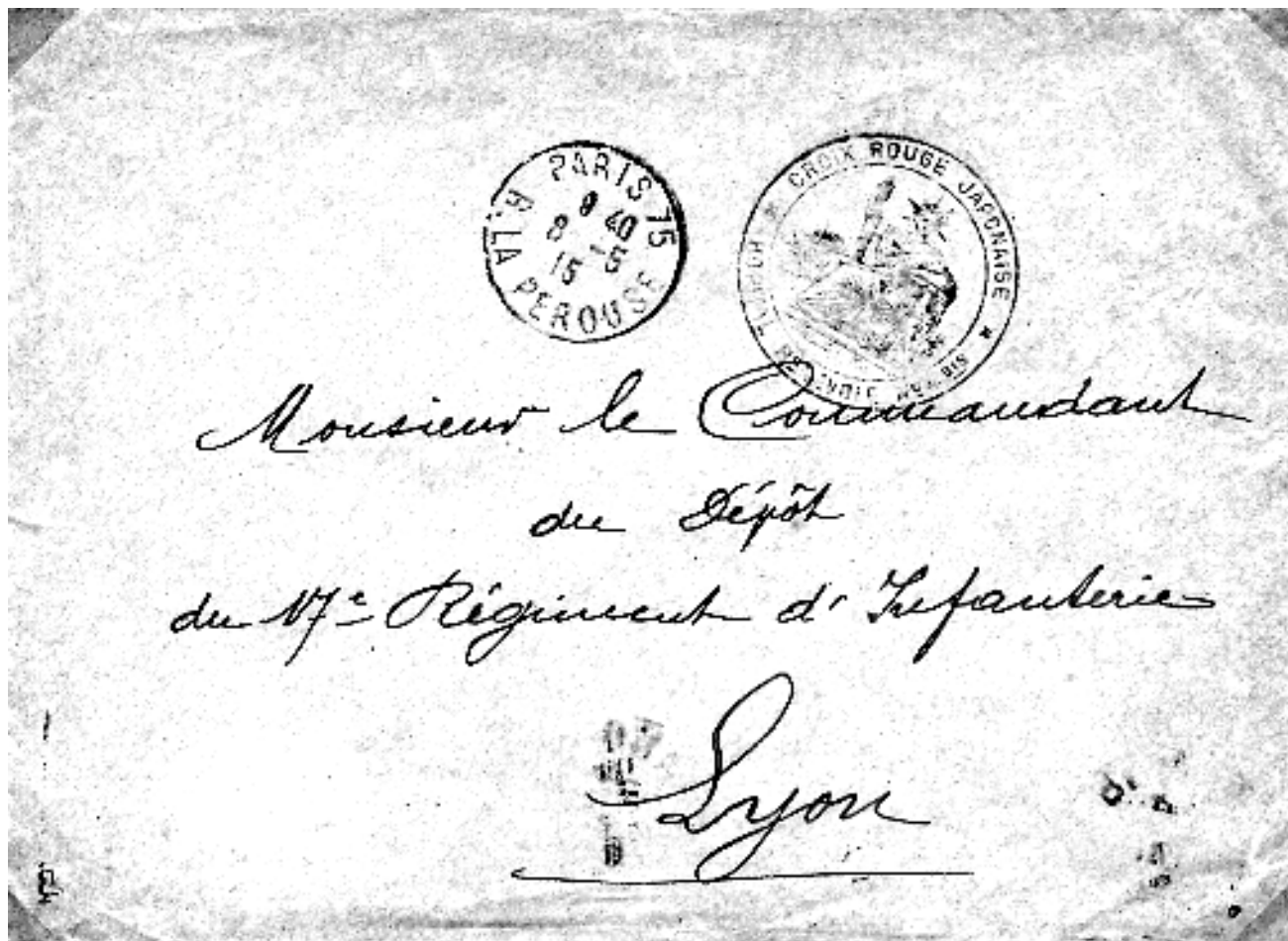


Figure 23 -

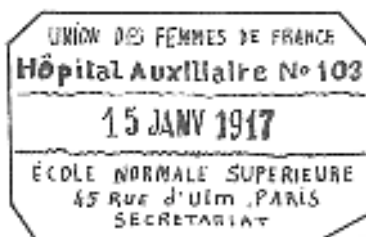
In 1915 the Japanese Red Cross sent a contingent of medical staff to set up at the Hôtel Astoria in Paris an establishment that became the *Hôpital Bénévole No 4<sup>bis</sup>*

the need was such that they rendered complete and excellent services to all injured soldiers, irrespective of their origins.

Cachets of these hospitals are scarce, due in part to the small number of beds at their disposal and, in part, to the fact that most had closed in 1916. One or two of these hospitals, which were only in use for a very brief period, were known as an "*hôpital temporaire bénévole*".

#### *Hôpitaux Auxiliaires*

The auxiliary hospitals (Figs 24 and 25) were totally dependent upon the *Croix-Rouge Française* and were established in wartime. They surfaced all over the country and were managed by local *comités*, who placed their staff entirely at the disposal of the military authorities. In excess of 1,500 such hospitals were in operation during the war. Some were only in use on certain days, others which were opened in schools, colleges and similar places of learning, were only to remain open until 1916, when the government ordered that these buildings



should be vacated to enable them to fulfil their proper function.

Certain hospitals appear to have had identical numbers but, in fact, as soon as one closed, the number was re-allocated to another as soon as it opened. They were sited in any premises which could be found, ranging from a tennis club (N° 98) at Boulevard Exelmans, to a private block of flats (N° 69) at Rue Lauriston (premises which provided facilities for 92 injured soldiers), both in Paris.

#### *Hospices (or Hôpitaux) Mixtes*

These were the hospitals intended for use by the general public in the larger towns, but in which one or more rooms were set aside for the exclusive use of wounded military personnel.

#### *Hôpitaux Complémentaires*

The '*Hôpital Complémentaire*' was yet another type of hospital in use during World War I. They were run under the auspices of the "*Service de Santé*" – the French Health Service – and, as one would expect from their title, they were used purely to com-

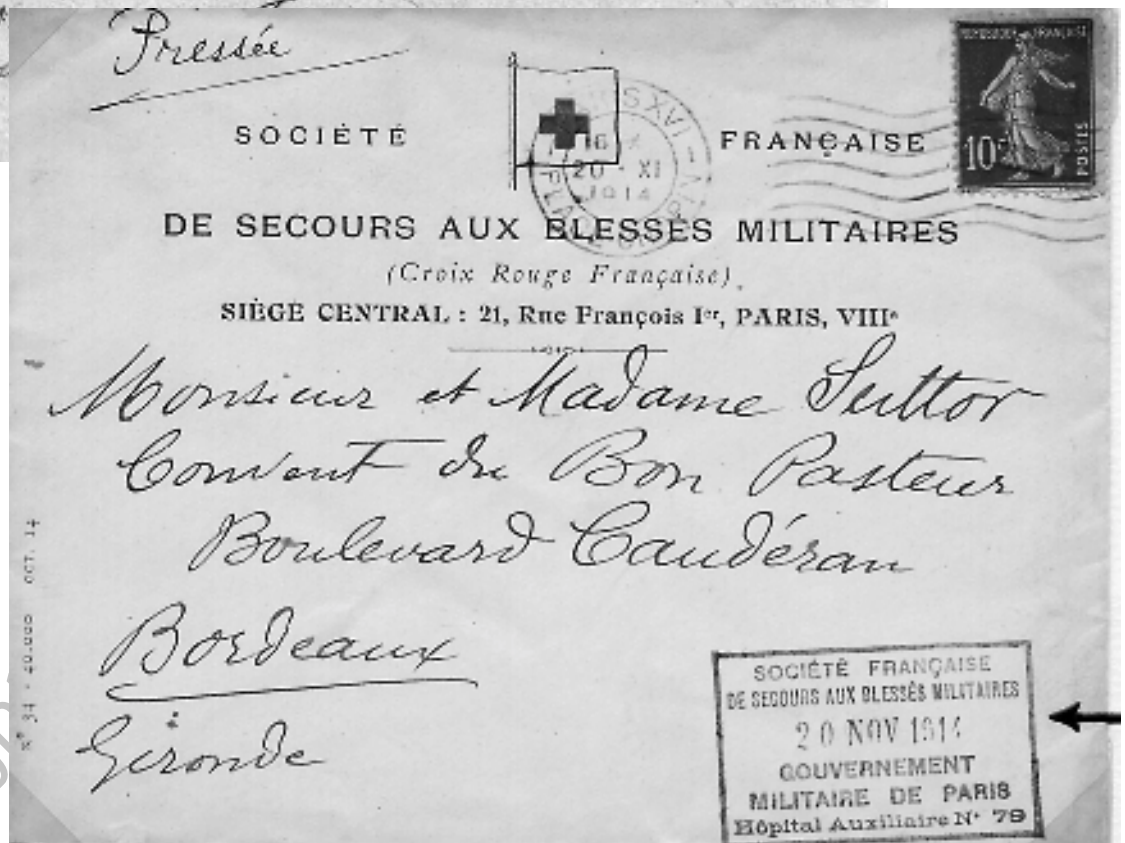






Figure 24 -  
Hôpital Auxiliaire N° 2  
of the  
Comité de Lyon

Figure 25 -  
Boxed straight line  
cachet in violet of the  
Hôpital Auxiliaire N° 79  
in Paris



plement the existing services and facilities already available at established hospitals.

These hospitals were generally set up in local schools and colleges and were, naturally, restricted by the limitations placed upon them in trying to utilise such premises – sometimes being forced to close when the new school term started.

#### *Dépôts d'Écloupés et de Convalescents*

These were a form of early convalescent home (Fig 26). As a general rule they were to be found within an army barracks

and housed men who were fit enough to be sent back into battle at a moment's notice, should the need arise. These premises usually catered for those who needed 2 or 3 weeks' rest as the result of battle fatigue or minor injury. They were maintained by the military authorities, who selected personnel with medical qualifications to ensure good discipline was combined with proper medical attention.





Figure 26 -  
Cachet in green of a  
Dépôt d'Éclapés  
et de Convalescents



Figure 27 -  
Cachet in red of the  
Cercles Cantines

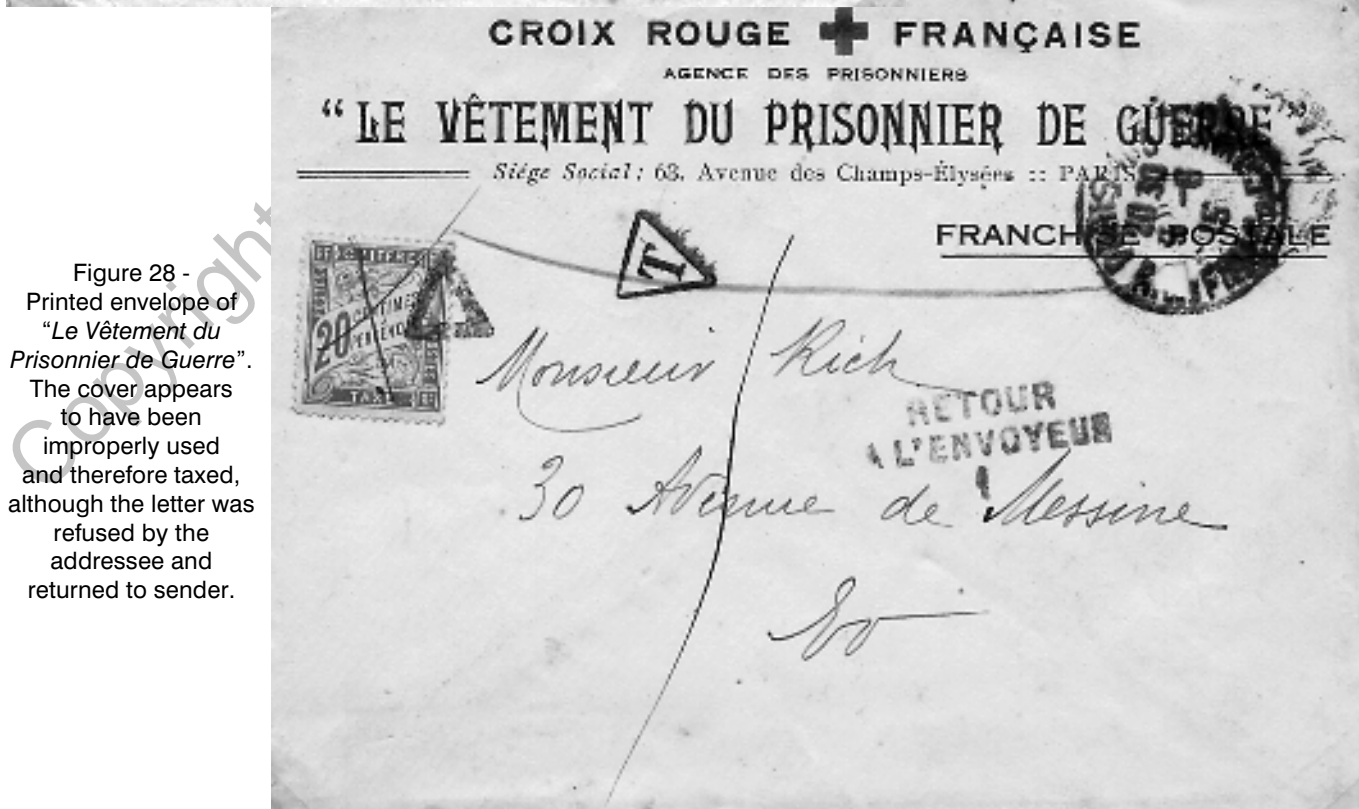


Figure 28 -  
Printed envelope of  
"Le Vêtement du  
Prisonnier de Guerre".  
The cover appears  
to have been  
improperly used  
and therefore taxed,  
although the letter was  
refused by the  
addressee and  
returned to sender.



### ***Cercles du Soldat***

These were established by the SSBM and set up mainly in Paris, but instances are recorded of them also being set up in one or two other major cities. They were, effectively, just meeting places for the wounded soldiers to gather and entertain themselves, playing cards and other similar games. It is known that 12 such 'circles' (or clubs) were in operation in Paris. The '*Cercles du Soldat*' (Fig 27) even produced their own printed stationery – a practice which was possible because, of course, these clubs were not only static but guaranteed longevity due to the type of service they provided.

### ***Œuvre des Permissionnaires***

This was an institution designed for the use of soldiers who were on leave, particularly those who had come from an area that was occupied and thus they found themselves deprived of shelter, food and other comforts. Nourishment and lodgings were provided for the men who found themselves in this plight.

The idea of forming this organisation had been germinated in the "*Cantine*" at the Gare du Nord, where the numbers of homeless troops who gathered there to try and find somewhere to go, prompted the helpers to do something to try and help them. It was sustained solely by virtue of the benevolence of its founders.

### ***La Chemise du Soldat***

The honour of founding this organisation fell to the *Comité de Commercy*. In the huts set up by them provision was made for showers, disinfection and drying equipment. Soldiers were able to have a proper wash and clean up before being supplied with clean clothing whilst their own, often verminous, clothing was disinfected and washed (See also No 9 in the list of groups on this page).

### ***Chiens Sanitaires***

The "*Société Nationale du Chien Sanitaire et du Chien de Guerre*" had for several years before the outbreak of war concentrated its efforts on the training of dogs to find missing or hidden casualties. As soon as war broke out, the society placed a large number of trained dogs at the disposal of the military health authorities. After some early setbacks, they were gradually able to detect bodies hidden under snow and quickly adapted to the expectation that they would return to their handlers and then be able to accompany the handler back to the site they had discovered, where a body might be lying.

At first they were trained to recognise and recover the hat, or the handkerchief, of the fallen *poilu* but it quickly became

evident that the soldiers would often lose their headgear during the fighting. Just as commonplace was the problem that arose for the dogs when the troops were wearing metal helmets with a chin strap. These completely disorientated the dogs and prevented them from carrying out their assignment.

A further complication arose as the result of difficulties experienced by the dogs in distinguishing between a handkerchief and a medical dressing. Understandably, handlers were reluctant to risk releasing their dogs to search for casualties if the dog was going to tear off an injured soldier's dressing by mistake. In an endeavour to counter that problem, they began re-training the dogs to identify, and recover, small objects such as a cartridge, a pipe, or even a cigarette lighter, but they were never to prove particularly successful.

A ministerial decision, announced on 15 September 1915, abolished the use of the *chiens sanitaires* by the army.

One sees that the majority of the charitable work was connected, either directly or indirectly, with the French Red Cross, or controlled by the military authorities. Many of the organisations were patronised by important personages from both the civilian and military populace. All these charitable institutions possessed their own handstamps, and many letters originating from them were sent *en franchise*.

Here is a list of the better known groups:-

1. Le Foyer du Blessé
2. Assistance aux Convalescents Militaires
3. Société d'Assistance Morale aux Blessés Militaires Musulmans
4. Le Paquetage du Convalescent
5. Le Tricot du XV<sup>ème</sup> Arrondissement
6. Les Nouvelles du Soldat
7. Union Militaire des Blessés Alliés
8. Le Vêtement du Blessé
9. Le Vêtement du Prisonnier de Guerre (Fig 28)
10. Œuvre du Soldat Blessé ou Malade
11. Œuvre des Reformés de la Guerre
12. Œuvre de l'Aide et de la Visite aux Blessés
13. L'Œuvre du Soldat sans Famille
14. Fédération Nationale d'Assistance aux Mutilés des Armées de Terre et de Mer
15. Œuvre Fraternelle des Mutilés Militaires
16. Œuvre des Prisonniers de Guerre de l'Arrondissement de St. Quentin

## Amazing 1870-71 Wonder Stories - 88

Ernst Cohn

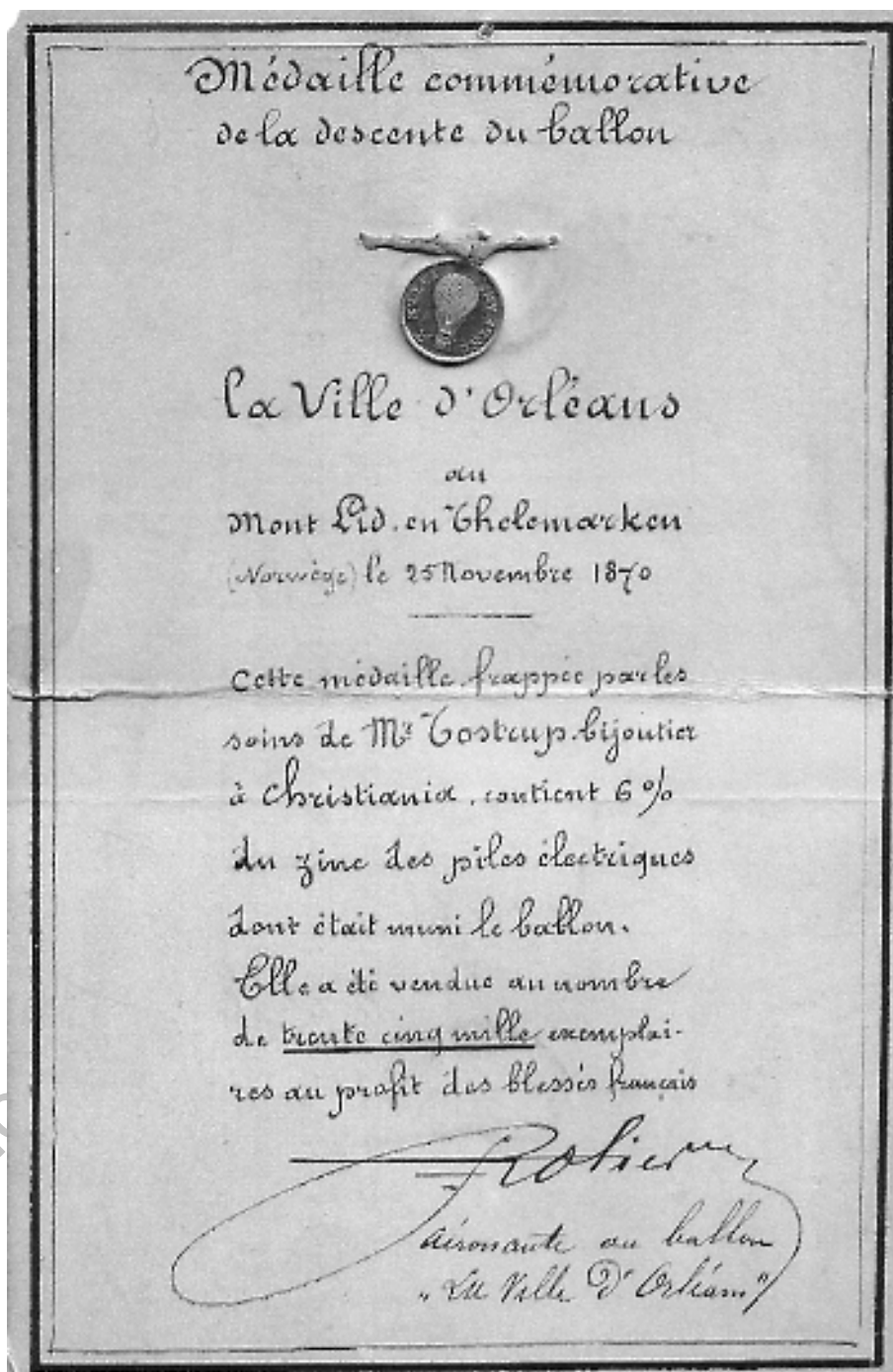
In 1978 The Collectors Club of Chicago published my book *The Flight of the "Ville d'Orléans"*, containing most of the important facts about this extraordinary mail balloon that flew from Paris to Southern Norway during the Franco-German War of 1870-71. Pages 100-103 are devoted to the little medals, made from parts of Rolier's lamp (presumably from its wires and battery electrodes). Less reliable Norwegian publications state the medals come from a battery to be used in telegraphing after landing (?). Medals were sold plain, silvered, or gilt at various Norwegian festivities by Goldsmith Tostrup of Christiania (today's Oslo).

The firm still existed when I was in Oslo in 1980. In fact, I bought my second wife's engagement ring there at that time.

In 2004 a document was sold in France over the Internet for 506 Euros. Thanks to the kindness of Mr. Patrice Billon, I got an excellent copy of the little sheet that is shown herewith. It is not clear to me whether the medal near the top is the actual medal or a picture of one, though the way it seems to hang there, slightly crooked, makes me think it is the former. Except for the bottom three lines that are hand-written, the sheet is presumably printed.

The text mentions that the medal, struck by Jeweler Tostrup, contains 6% of the zinc from the electric batteries with which the balloon was equipped. [How would anyone have known that 6% of that zinc was used, that 6% of the zinc in each medal was from the balloon, or whatever else the 6% has reference to?] Rolier claims also that 30,000 such medals were sold for the benefit of wounded Frenchmen, without telling us anything about his source of that information. Though I have cited claims, made in the Norwegian press, about moneys collected at various celebrations and how some of the funds were used, neither the total number of medals nor the total funds thus realized and transmitted for French wounded is mentioned in any of the sources I saw at Oslo University Library (and some of those statements in the contemporary press appear to be fantastic enough already).

This newly discovered Rolier document is undated, its purpose unknown. Had Rolier come into possession of a batch of these medals and was he selling them? Was it something created in connection with the unveiling of the



Bartholdi balloon monument on 28 January 1906? But according to an interview he gave at that time to a Bordeaux paper, he still didn't know exactly what happened to him and his balloon in 1870. Of course, the text of this newly found little sheet does not look very trustworthy, yet authentic "Rolier" – confused and disorganized as concerns the happenings in Norway. It is all very mysterious, and if any reader can answer one or more of the questions this document raises, I should be delighted to know about it.

None of my French friends has ever mentioned the existence of this sheet. Why should it be essentially unknown until now? In any case, I can find no reason to doubt its authenticity, even if the 'facts' cited in it appear to be questionable.



# An Introduction to French Machine Cancellations

Iain Stevenson

## (A) "Daguin" type jumelé

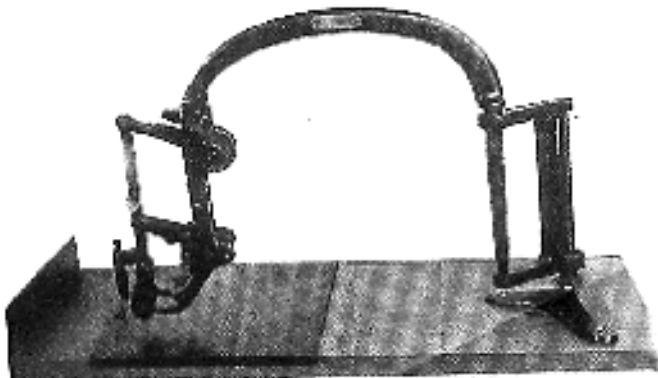


Figure 1 -  
Illustration of Daguin cancelling machine



Figure 2 -  
Example of cancellation

**Date of use:** 1884-1920 (with some late survivals and reintroduction up to 1946)

**Manufacturer:** brevetée Eugène Daguin

**Number of machines in use:** unknown, probably over 1250

**Mechanism:** hand-operated

**Impression:** single strike of twin date stamps

## (B) "Daguin" publicitaire

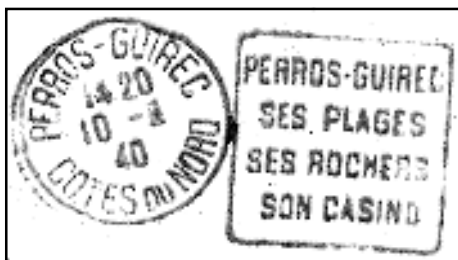
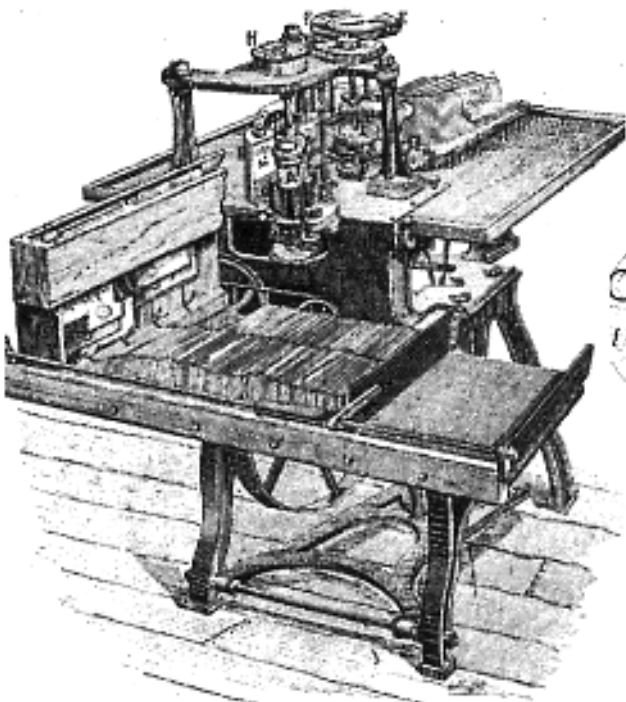


Figure 3 -  
Example of Daguin publicitaire

As the Standard Daguins fell out of use after 1920, a PTT circular of 17 August 1923 authorised the replacement of the second die in Daguins by a propaganda slogan "in favour of tourism". The PTT charged a fee of 250 Francs to make and install the die, to be paid for by local *Syndicats d'Initiative*. At first the slogan was placed to the left of the date stamp, but later was occasionally to the right. The first office to use a *Daguin publicitaire* was Luchon, which actually anticipated the official notice, bringing it into use during July 1923. Eventually almost 1000 permanent slogans and a few temporary ones were used throughout France and her colonies. The machines were officially retired in 1967 but L'Épine in Marne was still using its machine as late as 1970.

## (C) Bickerdike



Machine américaine à oblitérer

Figure 4 -  
Illustration of Bickerdike machine.



Figure 5 -  
Example of Bickerdike cancellation at the Paris Exposition 1900

**Dates of use:** December 1898 - February 1899 (trial); June - November 1900 (Paris Exposition); May 1900 - August 1903 (Paris Départ)

**Manufacturer:** The Canadian Postal Supply Company, Montreal (Bickerdike patent)

**Number of machines in use:** four

**Mechanism:** treadle

**Impression:** single strike with "flag" block at right cancelling stamps

The Bickerdike machines were not considered satisfactory and were not used to cancel stamps after 1903, although they were used to backstamp letters as receipt marks (without flags) until 1906.

## (D) International

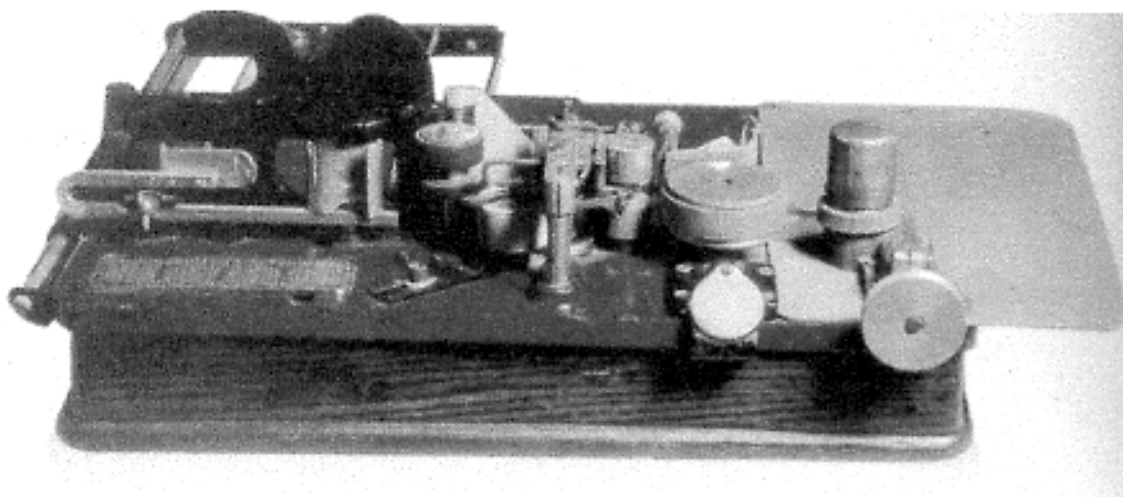
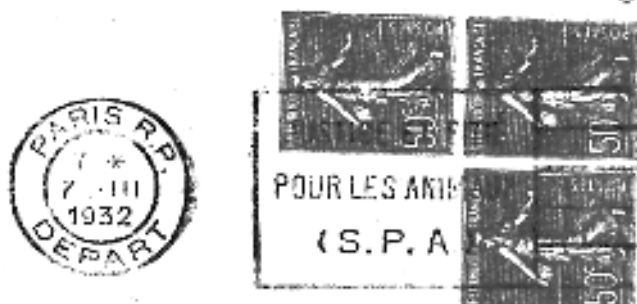


Figure 6 -  
An illustration of the original "Hey-Dolphin" prototype trialled in Paris in 1904



(left) Figure 7 -  
Impression of trial International machine  
used at Paris, 81 rue des Capucines, in 1906  
with "R.F." in the cancellation barrel.  
"D" = "déposé" indicating the use of this machine  
on late collected mail.

(right) Figure 8 -  
Impression of general issue International machine at Nice  
with standard cancelling barrel comprising seven wavy lines



(left) Figure 9 -  
Advertising slogans were introduced in 1916  
Later types had a number of hyphens at the right of the barrel  
to cancel the stamps

**Dates of use:** trial period: January 1904 - July 1910

general use: May 1913 - August 1960 (Toulon Naval had a machine in operation as late as 1972)

**Manufacturer:** The International Postal Supply Company of New York (Hey-Dolphin patent)

**Number of machines in use:** 228 (October 1933); the last purchase of one was made by the PTT in March 1932

**Mechanism:** manual or electric

**Impression:** single strike, double-ring date stamp, barrel with wavy lines or slogan between lines or boxed with cancelling "tires" at right (number varies between four and ten)

## (E) Krag

**Dates of use:** trial period: 1906-1908

first generation: 1908-1948

second generation: 1921-c.1960

"third generation": 1926-1930

**Manufacturer:** Krag Maskin Fabrik A/S, Oslo, Norway (Krag patent)

**Number of machines in use:** circa 450 (only nine for the so-called "third generation")

**Mechanism:** manual or electric

**Impression:** continuous (single strike for "third generation"), period of 78 mm;  
for first generation the date is in four lines with the *levée* on the third line;  
for second generation the date is in one line across the centre of the datestamp



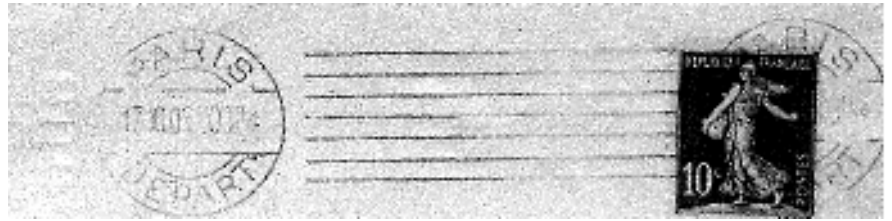
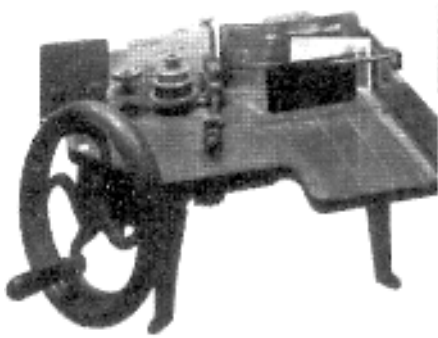
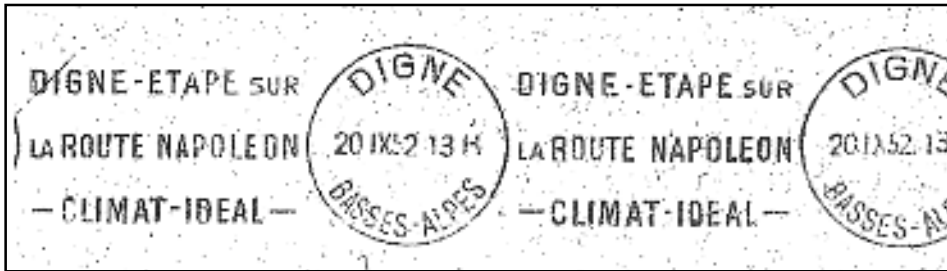


Figure 10 -

The hand-operated trial Krag machine installed at Paris, rue du Louvre in 1906 and the impression it made.  
Note that the "bridge" date stamp it used was a modified Swedish die and no other type resembling it was ever used in France again.



(left) Figure 11 -  
Impression of Krag  
second generation cancel  
from Digne with slogan

(right) Figure 12 -

The so-called single strike "third generation" Krag used experimentally in Paris between 1926 and 1930 and at a few provincial offices (Boulogne, Strasbourg, Fougères) is now thought not to be a Krag but the modified hand-operated machine, the "Savava", which obtained a French patent in 1926 and was manufactured by Établissements Delachanal, who went bankrupt in 1931 and made no further machines.

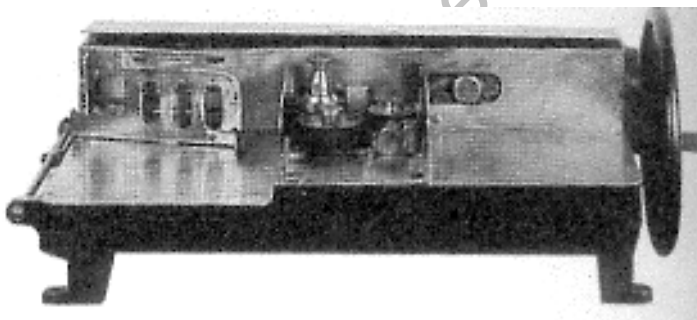


Figure 13 -  
A Savava machine.

(F) Garcia

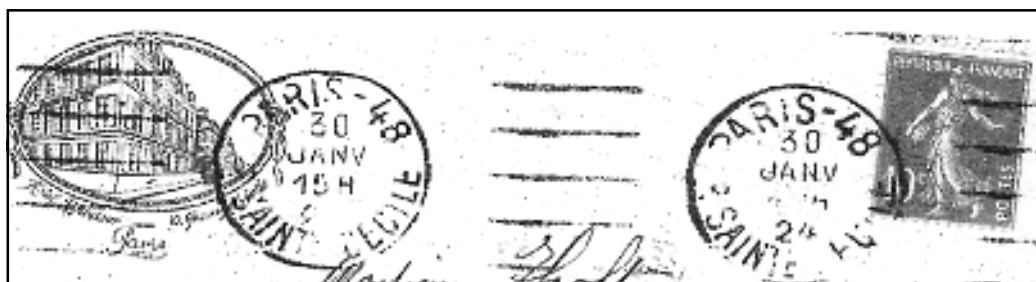
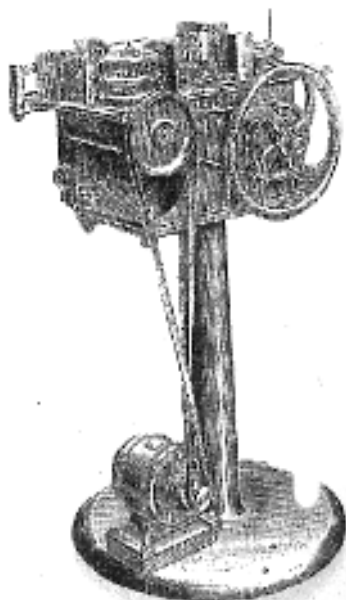


Figure 14 -

Impression of the Garcia machine used at Paris 48 in 1924. It was distinctive from its very short period of only 60 mm. Garcia machines were mainly used as backstamp receipt cancellations as they gave only a rather poor impression.



(left) Figure 15 -  
An engraving of a Garcia cancelling machine from an early catalogue.  
Note the electric motor mounted on its base.

The Garcia system was manufactured in France by M. Klein under licence, but only eight machines were made and because of the poor impression and the unwieldiness of the machine, they were abandoned, although it is believed that two machines were sent to Tananarive in Madagascar in 1926.

### (G). Universal

(right) Figure 16 -  
Impression of the British made "Universal" Type G  
cancelling machine installed in Paris and Lille



**Dates of use:** Type G (Paris VIII only): March 1931 - c.1943

SECAP licenced models: 1935-45 (3 machines)

**Manufacturer:** Original type G: Universal Postal Franking Company Ltd, London, then under licence in France by SECAP (*Société d'Études et de Construction des Appareils de Précision*).

**Number of machines:** four

**Impression:** single-lined small date stamp; "British" look; wavy line cancellation in the barrel

**Mechanism:** electric; high capacity (30,000 letters per hour)

### (H). R.B.V.

**Dates of use:** 1932-1959

**Manufacturer:** L'Outillage RBV SA

**Number of machines:** 340

**Impression:** continuous; distinguishable from Krag in that *levée* in the date is always on the second line; after 1949, the date was redesigned so that it appears in three lines with the year in full.

**Mechanism:** electric or manual

The RBV was the first French designed and manufactured cancellation machine since the Daguin.



Figure 18 -  
Impression from RBV machine

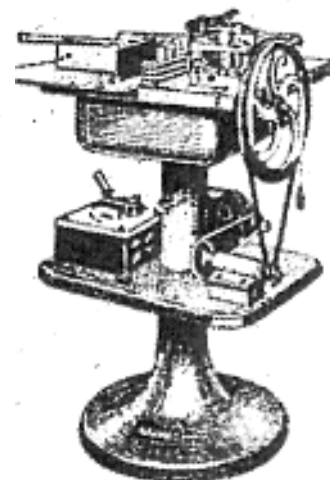


Figure 17 -  
Illustration from 1932  
of RBV machine,  
driven by an electric motor



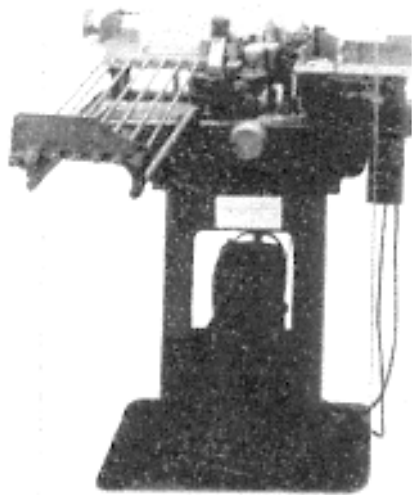
**(I) SECAP****Dates of use:** 1951 - present day**Manufacturer:** Société d'Études et de Construction des Appareils de Précision, Paris**Number of machines:** over 500, with over 350 still in operation**Impression:** single strike, clear, crisp; after 1978, the name of the office and the date were repeated under the "flamme", which was always to the left.**Mechanism:** electric (later cancelling dies plastic) or hand-operated

Figure 19 -  
An early SECAP machine which was capable of cancelling 25,000 letters per hour.

A larger capacity machine with semi-automatic letter-facing was introduced in 1955 with a throughput of 60,000 letters per hour. Many SECAP machines are still in daily operation even though they are almost fifty years old.

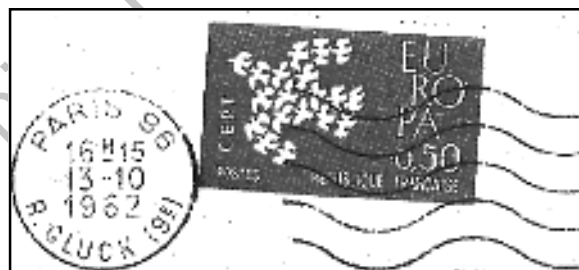


Figure 20 -  
A typical SECAP impression

**(J) Toshiba**

Introduced in 1976, the electronic machines manufactured by the Japanese company Toshiba are used in regional sorting centres (*Centres de Tri Concentrés* = CTC) and are incorporated into electronic sorting machines which both sort and cancel mail.

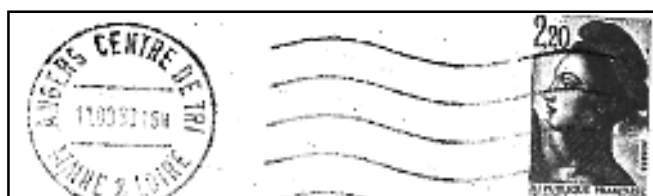


Figure 21 -  
A Toshiba impression,  
distinguished by the "bridge" around the date

**(K) Klussendorf**

Manufactured by Klussendorf GmbH of Germany, these high capacity automatic sorting and cancelling machines are now replacing Toshiba's in larger CTCs.

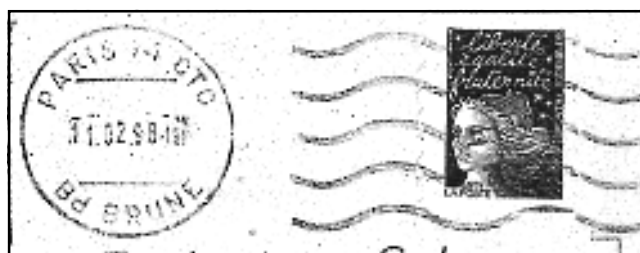


Figure 22 -  
The Klussendorf impression has a distinctive large diameter date stamp and thick lettering

[This article was based on a display given to the Society during the Annual Weekend at Leamington Spa in April 2000.  
All illustrations of cancellations are shown actual size.]

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N° 109 3<sup>ème</sup> Trim 2004: Etudes: Cartes familiales interzones des Établissements français de l'Océanie (Beslu); Colonies générales 1859-1892: classement rationnel (Drye); 1881, la première surcharge locale sur timbre-poste dans nos colonies (Drye); Mayotte: Émission provisoire de novembre 2003 (Mérot); Timbres-taxe de Zanzibar: des nouveautés (Herendeen); Le saviez-vous?: Aux collectionneurs de DOM-TOM (Drye); Polynésie française (Drye); Émissions 2003 dans la France d'outre-mer (Beslue et Mérot); Textes officiels: Guyane: dépêche ministérielle 354 du 4 août 1891, arrêté 228 TR du 25 mars 1947 (Antolin); Compléments aux articles parus: Au Tonkin, des slogans politiques peu connus (Goanvic); Territoire de Memel (Pineau); Guinée française: les timbres à date mutilés (Hurpet); Surcharge de 1895 à Majunga (Buchheit); Compléments aux hors-série et ouvrages: Postes et courriers français en Extrême Orient (Goanvic).

## Collectors Club Philatelist

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## L'Écho de la Timbrologie

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

N° 1777 Sep 2004: Prêt-à-poster Florilège de PÂP (-); Décodage: De France pour la Suisse (Prugnon); Éclairage: Quand La Poste fait école (Hella); Timbres «sans valeur» mais pas sans intérêt (Gomez); Marianne et les symboles de la République (Jamet); Les guerres

d'Indochine à travers les timbres fiscaux (Danan et Barbaro); Les 55 ans du Conseil de l'Europe (Emmenegger); Les très chers orphelins [1<sup>re</sup> partie] (Storch).

N° 1778 Oct 2004: Prêt-à-poster Florilège de PÂP (-); L'Histoire au bout de la plume [Musée des Lettres et Manuscrits] (-); Les cartes «changement d'adresse» (Hella); Décodage: Une lettre retardée (Prugnon); Réunion des variétés (Guilbaud); Les traités de paix de l'après-Versailles (Emmenegger); Les très chers orphelins [2<sup>e</sup> partie] (Storch).

N° 1779 Nov 2004: Prêt-à-poster Florilège de PÂP (-); La lithographie (-); Marianne française, née à Alger (Jamet); Saint-Exupéry, le Prince de l'aéropostale (Hella); Florilège d'entiers postaux (Storch).

## The Indo-China Philatelist

Vol 34 N° 3, May 2004: Cross-Border Postal Service (Bentley); Cambodia's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Independence (Shaw); Lao Royal Ballet Printer's Waste or Proof? (Thompson); Vietnam Veterans Memorial Precancels (Cartafalsa).

Vol 34 N° 4, September 2004: Double Double Impression (Bentley); First North Vietnam Stamp - Maybe (Dykhouse); Effect of Khmer Rouge Isolation on Mail from France (Wiert); Norodom Sihanouk on the Stamps of Cambodia (Shaw); Indochinese Flags on Stamps (Aspnes); Dien Bien Phu Commemorative (Drillien).

Vol 34 N° 5, November 2004: Private FM Overprints (Bentley); Incoming Letter from Mexico [to Vietnam] Rewards Research (Cartafalsa); "La Francophonie" (Millington); Nice Cover - But a Fake (Schwartz); Lao Post Offices (Evans, Commins & Gibson); Cambodian Postal Rates in 2004 (Shaw); Lao First Flight Cover in 1954 (Aspnes).

## Timbres Magazine

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

N° 49 Sep 2004: Les Blasons: les talentueux remplaçants du Maréchal (Melot); Voyage, tourisme et vacances [Carnets] (PJM); Découverte d'un nouveau modèle de carnet DAB! (Kéledjian); Les marques linéaires d'entrée en France (Baudot); L'histoire chaotique des semi-modernes de Guadeloupe (Pellinec); Le retour de la France en Indochine (Chauvin); Les joies de vivre de Jean Effel [Postcards] (Zeyons); Le courrier des internés en AEF (Chauvin).

N° 50 Oct 2004: Grace de Monaco reine à l'écran, princesse dans la vie (Michaud); Le musée de La Poste: visite au cœur de notre patrimoine philatélique (Rabier); L'après-Versailles: Memel, Teschen et Danzig (Sanders); Les entiers postaux de stalags et oflags [1941-1944] (Sinais); La France d'outre-mer dans la guerre et 1944-2004: hommages philatéliques à Félix Eboué (Chauvin).

# Senegal – The 1915 Red Cross Stamp, Commercially Used!

Bill Mitchell



Figure 1 -  
Front of cover

This issue of the Journal coincides, give or take a few months, with the 90th anniversary of the outbreak of World War I, and this seems an appropriate time to write up this cover, which has been in my collection for many years. It is not, I have to admit, particularly attractive to the eye – three stamps, one of which is almost covered by a British censor's sealing tape, are disfigured by ugly black sealing wax, the others are not in a particularly good condition and it is generally scruffy. Consequently the cover languished unloved in my pending tray for a long time until I started taking an interest in postage rates, when I found that it was a good deal more interesting than appeared at first sight.

The cover tells us that it was sent registered from Podor, on the Senegal/Mauritania border, to a Mr J A Smithson at Didsbury, near Manchester. It was posted on 2 August 1917 and arrived at its destination on the 23rd of that month. On the reasonable assumption that the stamp covered by the sealing strip is another 10c + 5c Red Cross, the total franking was 95c. Of this, 25c was the foreign registration fee (and had been since 16 January 1879); the remaining 70c was the cost of a foreign letter weighing between 61 and 80 grams (25c for the first 20 grams, then 15c for each additional 20 grams) under the tariff of 1 May 1910 (Derek Richardson's *Tables of French Postal Rates*, F&CPS Brochure N° 7, second edition 1996, pages 42 and 49).

There cannot have been all that much quite heavy commercial correspondence to the UK from this small town in Senegal (Podor's population in 1937, according to the 1943-44 Admiralty Handbook on French West Africa, was only 3,168), so further study of the cover seemed to be justified. The only apparent details of the sender are the initials "A O" (not, I think, meaning "*Afrique Occidentale*") impressed on the red wax sealing the flap, so the envelope gives no clue as to the nature of its contents. Another splodge of black wax on the reverse is impressed with a rectangular box inscribed "WAR OFFICE POSTAL CENSOR". This merited further enquiry, and – not for the first time – Charles Entwistle, the specialist dealer in wartime postal history, came to my aid. He wrote –

"...censorship came under the control of the War Office and wax was used to seal some registered mail (most frequently found on Post Office supplied registered envelopes and philatelic mail). Unfortunately, I am unable to ascertain the shape of the imprint [from my photocopy] but if it is oval it was applied in London (G Mark recording 18 examples) and if rectangular Liverpool (of which he records 2 examples)."

So the letter was carried by a British ship docking at Liverpool (Liverpool *paquebot* cancels are not uncommon on stamps of the French West Africa colonies over the first





Figure 2 -  
Back of cover



Figure 3 -  
Enlargement of red and black seal on above cover

30 or so years of the 20th Century), and it seems quite possible that the contents were a supply of stamps.

Was Mr Smithson a stamp dealer? Enquiry of the archives held by the Manchester City Council has shown that both the 1917 Directory and the 1918 Electoral Register record that the householder at 81 Atwood Road (Smithson's address as shown on the envelope) was a Martha Mawson, suggesting that Smithson was a lodger and entitled to vote elsewhere, or perhaps was using an accommodation address. That, I'm afraid, is as far as I've been able to go because the Manchester Library and Information Service is only able to make one search in response to a written enquiry (they stretched a point and made two for me).

If the envelope did indeed contain stamps the point of origin, Podor, is curious since a professional dealer would

surely have obtained his supplies from Paris, or possibly Dakar or Saint Louis. This suggests that Smithson may have been a part-timer in contact with an individual (A O?) in some other connection. According to the Admiralty Handbook (Vol II page 429), Podor was a centre of the gum arabic trade; this fact doesn't suggest an alternative to stamps as the nature of the enclosure. But although it was a small town 178 miles upstream and 135 miles by road from Saint Louis it had a long history. A note on the map published by International Travel Maps of Vancouver shows that it is believed to have been inhabited since the 3rd Century AD; a British-built fort of the mid-18th Century was destroyed by local people but subsequently rebuilt by the French. And – a final exotic touch – the island (it is apparently built on an island in the Senegal River) is believed to have been once inhabited by elephants!



## Postal Sector 390

### Roy Reader

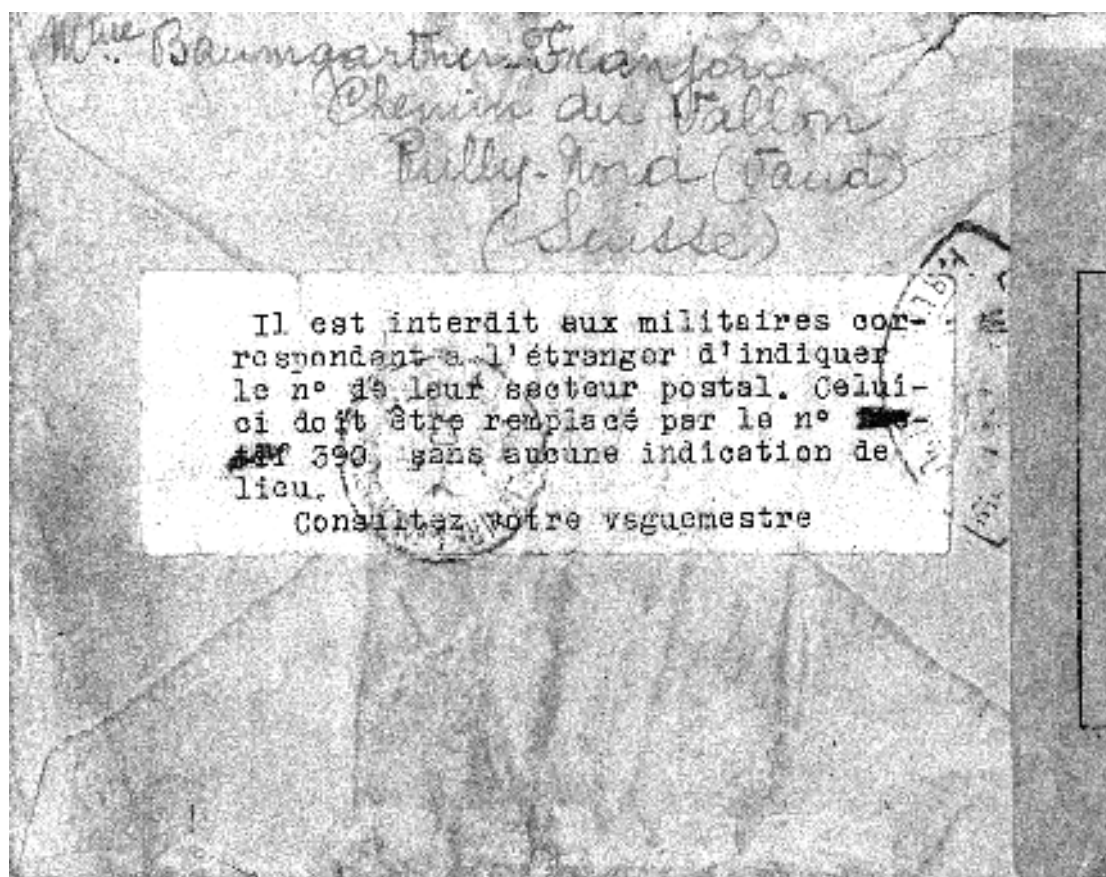


Figure 1 -  
Back of cover with warning notice

Journal 231 of March 2004 (page 15) illustrated two 1940 covers showing variations of the warning notice affixed to mail being sent to a French soldier from abroad when his real postal sector number was given as his address instead of simply Postal Sector 390. Monsieur Roger Ollivier has now kindly sent me a copy of a recently acquired cover showing another variation of the warning notice. It is illustrated in Figure 1.

The cover was sent from Lausanne to a soldier at Postal Sector 308 on 23 March 1940. On entering France, it was examined at Lyon Censor Office WF, the only frontier office known to have used transparent sealing strip such as appears on this cover. It is clear that the label was stuck on the cover by the censor office as it is tied to the envelope by the censor mark. The label appears to have been run off on a duplicator. It is worded differently from the other labels so far noted. It reads *'Il est interdit aux militaires correspondant à l'étranger d'indiquer le n° de leur secteur postal. Celui-ci doit être remplacé par le n° fictif 390, sans aucune indication de lieu. Consultez votre vague-mestre.'* (Servicemen writing to abroad are forbidden to give their postal sector number. The latter must be replaced by the **fictitious** number 390 without any indication as to place. Consult your Post NCO.) The crossed-out word *'fictif'* (fictitious) was regularly used in relation to Postal Sector 390 when one wanted to indicate it did not refer to the office of any specific army or air force formation but

simply to a category of mail. Its inclusion on the label of our cover was not really necessary, though it is not clear why someone (at the Central Army Office?) would have wanted to give himself the bother of crossing it out. Was it perhaps thought that it might just confuse the soldier whose letter it was? Or was it feared that the soldier might take things too literally and in his future correspondence give his address as *'Secteur Postal Fictif 390'* instead of simply *'Secteur Postal 390'*?

Tracing what happened to this letter is not without interest. We need to start with the address put on the envelope by the sender: *'Raymond Franjou, 8<sup>ème</sup> Génie, 14<sup>ème</sup> Groupe Télégraphistes Auxiliaires, Section 83, Secteur Postal 308'*. The mention of Postal Sector 308 shows the soldier was in the Engineer reserves, 308, another 'fictitious' number, being used for all mail destined for all soldiers in the Engineer reserves once posted out to operational formations, wherever they were located. The introductory *'8<sup>ème</sup> Génie'* (8<sup>th</sup> Engineers) indicates that he was from the 8<sup>th</sup> Engineers Regiment, which was based at Versailles, with a detachment at Mont-Valérien. The 8<sup>th</sup> Engineers Regiment was, in fact, a Signals Regiment, signals not having been detached from the engineers as had happened in the British Army. The address also tells us that the soldier was in the 14<sup>th</sup> Auxiliary Telegraph Group and in Section or Platoon 83. But where precisely were these?



Figure 2 -  
Front of cover

As already observed, the cover was cancelled at Lausanne on 23 March 1940 and then brought into France at Lyon, where the warning notice and censor marks were applied. The cover was then sent on to Central Army Office N° 1 at Melun, where it was backstamped on 10 April. There the offending '308' was crossed out in blue crayon and replaced with '9', the postal sector number of the 14<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division. The '9' was, however, then crossed out in its turn and a handstamp applied with an indication that the cover was to be forwarded to Postal Sector 6588. These four-figure numbers had been introduced as far back as November 1939 to replace the numbers in the 301-313 range originally used for mail destined for reserve units. The fact that each unit within each arm of the reserve received its own four-figure number considerably speeded up the time taken to deliver mail to that unit. Thus Postal Sector 6588 would have been used for just Raymond Franjou's 14<sup>th</sup> Auxiliary Telegraph Group or even perhaps his Section/Platoon 83. The cover was then sent on its way and, travelling via Frontier Office K at Troyes, it arrived at the 14<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division. This Division used in fact Postal Sector 9, the number put on the cover at the Central Army Office and then crossed out again! The number 9 had, however, been strictly speaking incorrect, as Raymond Franjou's unit was a reserve unit attached to the Division and not an organic part of the Division.

At the time the cover got to its destination the 14<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division was stationed on the Lorraine Front, guarding the frontier from Spicheren to Grosbliederstroff, just south of Saarbrücken in Germany. Its composition included two signals companies: 14/81 *Compagnie Télégraphique* (Lines

Company) and, dependent on it, 14/82 *Compagnie Radiotélégraphique* (Wireless Company). We can therefore see how Raymond Franjou's 14/83 Auxiliary Section or Platoon neatly fitted into the scheme of things. Unfortunately, however, no-one in the Division seemed to know of any Raymond Franjou and perhaps even of 'Section 83' either, and reference to both was crossed out. At 14/81 Lines Company the Post NCO marked the cover '*Inconnu à la Cie Télé 14 S. Post. 9*' (Unknown at Lines Company 14 Postal Sector 9), and a similar note was written on it by 14/82 Wireless Company: '*Inconnu à la Cie Radio 14 S.P. 9*'. The cover finished up in the Divisional Post Office. There a handstamp was applied reading '*PAS POUR LE SECTEUR POSTAL - 9*' (Not for Postal Sector - 9). Presumably Raymond Franjou never got his letter – and there are no signs of it ever having been returned to sender. Did it simply finish up in a philatelist's album, eventually to find its way recently into Monsieur Ollivier's?

#### Sources and References:

- 'Les Commissions de Censure au cours des Hostilités 1939/1940', in *Bulletin N° 24* (February 1992) of the Club Marcophile de la Seconde Guerre Mondiale
- Deloste, C, *Histoire Postale et Militaire de la Deuxième Guerre Mondiale 1939-1945* (Échangiste Universel, Bischwiller, 1969)
- L'Huillier, A, 'La Poste Militaire aux Armées - 1939-40', in *Les Feuilles Marcophiles*, N° 177, 3rd Quarter 1969 (Union Marcophile)
- Manuel du Gradé du Génie* (Charles-Lavauzelle, Paris, 1940)
- Ministère des Armées, État-Major de l'Armée de Terre, Service Historique: *Guerre 1939-1945: Les Grandes Unités Françaises: Historiques Succincts*, vol 2 (Paris, 1967)





## SHORTER ITEMS - INCLUDING QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

### *B. de V.*

In Journal 232 of June 2004 (page 67) Dennis Collins asked for further information about the cachet "Received Damaged / B. de V. sent" on a *Bulletin d'Expédition* to Tientsin. I can offer an extract from the UPU Convention at Paris of 5 July 1947 which explains "*B. de V.*" A *Bulletin de Vérification* was sent by one country to another to report on the state of mails that had arrived in the receiving

country. The item illustrated relates to the letter post; the parcel bulletin would have been more detailed. I cannot supply the 1947 parcel bulletin, although I could from the 1960 UPU Tokyo Convention – however, the item here gives the answer sought. I have examples used in practice about 1880 on mails received at St Helena post office, but I do not think that any have a French connection.

Robert Johnson

202	CONVENTION—FORMULES	
		<b>C 14</b> (Règl., art. 150, § 1)
ADMINISTRATION DES POSTES	CORRESPONDANCE AVEC L'ADMINISTRATION	
d.....	d.....	
BUREAU d.....		
<b>BULLETIN DE VÉRIFICATION</b>		
Timbre du bureau expéditeur du bulletin  	pour la constatation et la rectification des erreurs et irrégularités de toute nature reconnues dans la dépêche N°. .... du bureau d'échange d..... pour le bureau d'échange d.....	Timbre du bureau destinataire du bulletin  
.....° expédition du ..... 19....., à..... h.....		
<div style="border: 2px solid black; padding: 10px; margin: 10px auto; width: 80%;"> <b>ERREURS OU IRRÉGULARITÉS DIVERSES</b>          (Manque de la dépêche, manque d'envois recommandés ou de la feuille d'avis, dépêche spoliée, sac déchiré ou en mauvais état, etc.)       </div>		
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="width: 45%;">         ..... le..... 19.....          Les agents du bureau d'échange destinataire de la dépêche :       </div> <div style="width: 45%;">         ..... le..... 19.....          Vu et accepté :          Le Chef du bureau d'échange expéditeur de la dépêche :       </div> </div>		
..... (Dimensions : 148 x 210 mm.)		



## ARTICLE 150.

**Check of Mails.**

1. When an intermediate office is obliged to repack a mail, it verifies the contents, if it presumes that they are not intact. It prepares a verification note identical with Form C 14 annexed, in conformity with the provisions of §§ 4 to 6 below. This note is sent to the office of exchange whence the mail has been received ; a copy is forwarded to the office of origin and another is inserted in the repacked mail.

2. The office of destination ascertains whether the mail is complete and whether the entries on the letter bill and on the special lists of registered articles, if any, are in order. In case of loss of a mail, or of one or more bags, of registered articles, of a letter bill, of a special list of registered articles, or in case of any other irregularity, the fact is verified immediately by two officers. These officers make the necessary corrections on the bills or lists, taking care to cross out the incorrect entries in such a way as to leave the original entries legible. Except in the case of an obvious error, the corrections are accepted in preference to the original statement.

3. When an office receives letter bills or special lists which are not intended for it, it sends these documents to the office of destination, or, if its internal regulations so require, a certified true copy of them.

(H. O. 7203)W

12

## CONVENTION—DETAILED REGULATIONS

133

4. The facts verified are notified by verification note to the office of origin of the mail, and, in case of actual loss, to the last intermediate office, by the first available post after the complete check of the mail. This verification note must specify as exactly as possible which bag, packet or article is in question.

5. A duplicate of the verification note is sent, in the same conditions as the original, to the Administration to which the office of origin of the mail is subordinate, when that Administration so requires. In case of important irregularities giving reason for presuming loss or tampering, the envelope or bag, as well as the string and the wax or lead seal, of the packet or bag of registered articles, is attached to the verification note for the office of origin ; where this is not possible, the reason for their non-attachment must be explained. The same applies to the outer envelope or bag, with its string, label and seals. In relations with Administrations which require the sending of a duplicate, the exhibits mentioned above are sent attached to the duplicate.

6. In the cases referred to in §§ 1 to 3, the office of origin and, if necessary, the last intermediate office of exchange may, in addition, be advised by telegram at the expense of the Administration which sends the telegram. An advice must be sent by telegram whenever the mail shows evident traces of having been tampered with, in order that the office of despatch or intermediate office may make enquiry in the matter without delay and, if necessary, advise the preceding Administration by telegram for the continuation of the enquiry.

7. When the absence of a mail is the result of a failure of connection or when it is duly explained on the way-bill, the preparation of a verification note is necessary only if the mail does not reach the office of destination by the next opportunity.

8. The sending of the duplicate prescribed by § 5 may be deferred if it may be presumed that the absence of the mail arises from delay or wrong circulation.

9. As soon as a mail which had been reported as missing to the office of origin, and, if occasion arises, to the last intermediate office, comes to hand, a second verification note must be addressed to these offices announcing the receipt of this mail.

10. The offices to which the verification notes are addressed return them as promptly as possible, after having examined them and made thereon any observations to which they may give rise. If these notes are not sent back to the Administration of origin within two months counting from the date of despatch, they are considered, in the absence of proof to the contrary, as duly accepted by the offices to which they have been addressed. This period is extended to four months in relations with distant countries.

11. When a receiving office by which a mail should be checked has not sent to the office of origin, and to the last intermediate office of exchange, if any, by the first available post after the checking of the mail, a verification note reporting irregularities of any kind, it is considered, until proof to the contrary, as having received the mail and its contents. The same assumption is made in respect of irregularities to which no reference has been made or which have been incompletely reported in the verification note ; it is the same when the provisions of the present Article regarding the formalities to be fulfilled have not been observed.

12. Verification notes and their duplicates are forwarded under registered cover.

The text of Regulation 150 which governs the actual *Bulletin de Vérification*



## A 10c Blanc Mystery



Figure 1

Some years ago I received from a dealer 5 packets of off-paper French *préos* from which to pick what I wanted at 6d each: there were 5c and 10c Blanc, green 10c, ultramarine 10c and brown 15c Sowers.

The 5c Blanc packet was disappointing; the 10c Blanc packet contained 528 copies, of which 40 copies had apparently machine cut perforations (Fig 1), the sides in all instances being parallel and of the width of coil stamps. A further 4 copies had the right side cut and the left side torn (Fig 2), and 9 copies had the right side torn and the left side cut (Fig 3), as shown in these enlargements.

The final stamp to be illustrated is one of the 9 (Fig 4) and is from a coil, Yv coil n° 46: this is proven by the dot between AFF and R of AFFRANCH<sup>ts</sup>. The dot is a constant flaw occurring once only on the cylinder made specially for



Figure 2

overprinting the *préo* onto coils: the cylinder prints 20 x 10 *préos* wide at each full rotation and the variety is in row 7, so one example exists in every 200 stamps.

Assuming that all 53 copies with a cut side or sides are from coils, why should 13 copies have 1 side cut and 1 side torn? I have never seen a coil strip of 11 or single copies of coil stamps identifiable by the die particular to a coil exhibiting such a peculiarity. Possibly the perforations left or right appearing to be torn are the results of 2 of the 11 cutters blunting, but I would still expect blunt cutters to give even lines, with the ends of teeth being in part "hairy". None of my copies shows such regularity.

Will a specialist in the Blanc issue elucidate, please – and at the same time demonstrate a certain way by which one can differentiate between these 10c Blanc stamps from coils and sheets?

David Jennings-Bramly



Figure 3



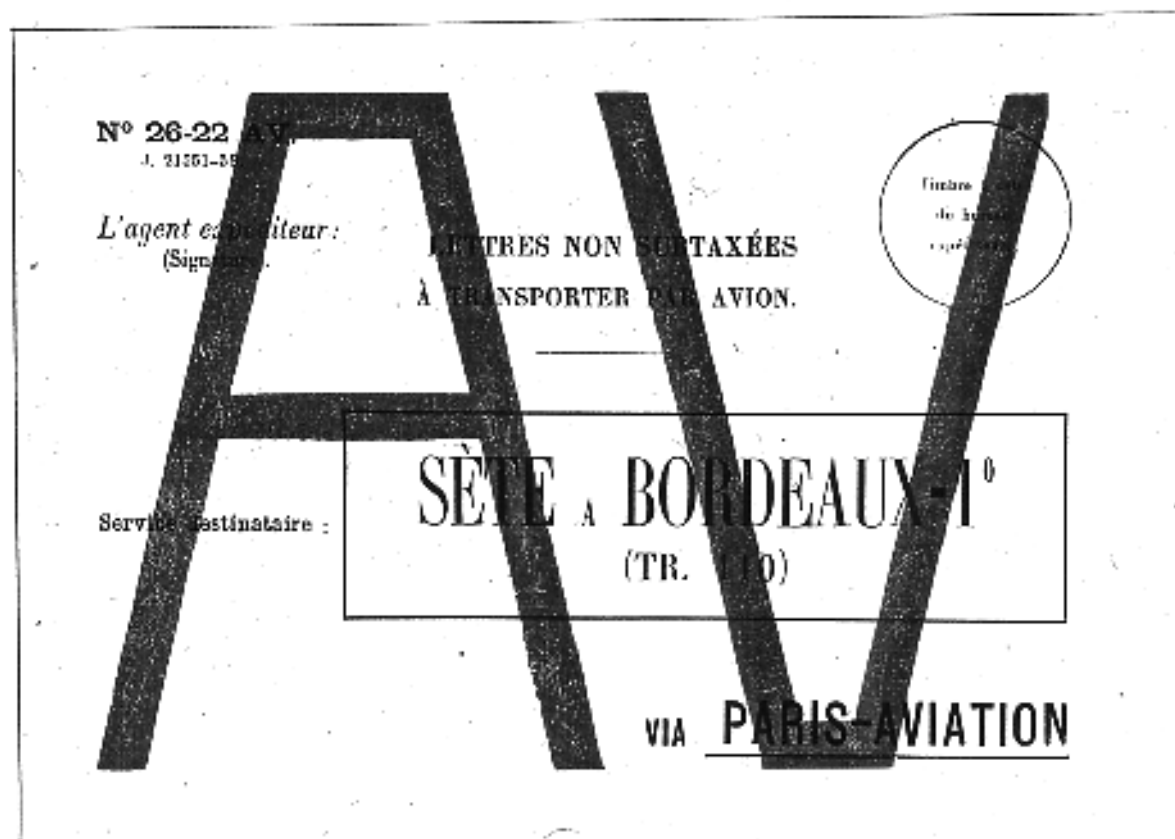
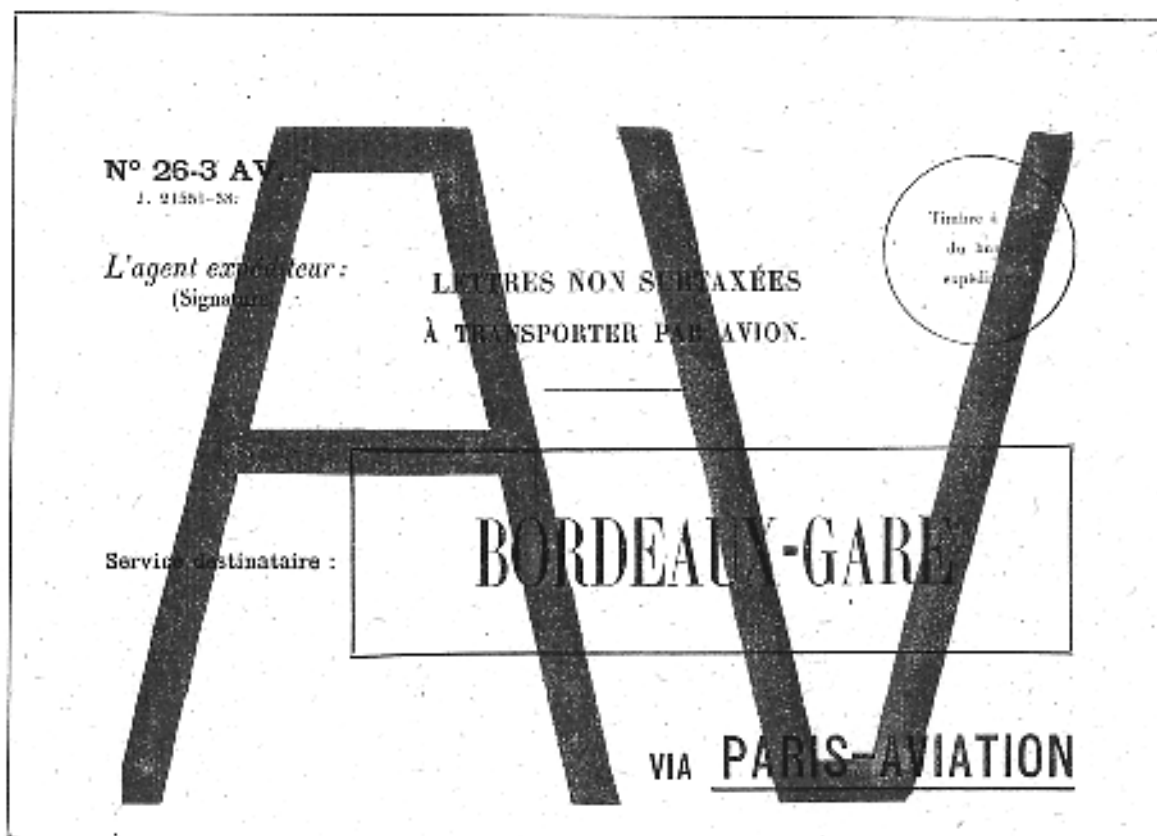
Figure 4

## AV Labels

I recently acquired these items in an auction when nobody else bid on them, but I know nothing about them and would be interested in any information that members could provide. They are obviously unused labels, presumably made for marking bundles of letters to be flown even

without an air fee having been paid. The reference at top left with "38" at the end suggests they may have been used in 1938. They are printed in black, on white paper, and the AV overprint is in red.

Ian McQueen





## 1908 Paris Markings

This postcard was sent on the opening day of the Franco-British Exhibition. The message and address are written in violet pencil. The address is without *arrondissement*, simply "87, Faubourg St Antoine, Paris". Sideways over the address is something in black ink that is not easy to read but appears to start "From..." I would speculate that this was written after delivery, but it is just possible that it is relevant to the markings at bottom right.

Here we have, sideways on in red ink manuscript, and above one another, "7 9 12 XII". Then, ranged along the bottom, we have five small handstamps. Two are circular, "XII over 3" and "6? over 5" and three are oval. One of the latter appears to be "0/9" [but is probably a distorted "6/9" - Ed.], next to it is "6?/2", and at the far left "6/?". I should be grateful for any explanation of these markings.

Ruth Wilcock



[Editor's Note - The manuscript writing at right angles to the address starts with the phrase "*Inconnu (= unknown) 87 fg S Antoine*"; the second line is possibly "*d° (= ditto) Inconnu N° 3*"; and the other 3 lines appear to be "*Inconnu*" repeated in different handwriting. The circular and oval handstamps are those of individual postmen, who have

tried to identify the addressee but failed, and have indicated that it is not someone on their round. Chris Hitchen has confirmed that the top figure in the handstamp is that of the *rayon* (Arabic numeral) or the *arrondissement* (Roman numeral). He says that *arrondissement XII* and *rayon 6* are contiguous areas.]

## French Internet Site

Quite by chance, I stumbled upon a website <http://mapage.noos.fr/philflash> which is the home of "*le premier journal philatélique sur Internet*". Some members probably know about it but it is completely new to me. Issue n° 001 appeared on 10/04/2000 and issue n° 061 appeared on 30/09/2004. It is published irregularly but appears about twice a month.

You can click on any issue number and read its contents. It is edited by Jean-François Brun and it contains contributed articles, news items, forthcoming events (useful for the programme secretary!), book reviews, titles of all the articles in all the French philatelic magazines and much else, BUT NO ADVERTISEMENTS. Interested members might like to dip in and sample its contents.

Derek Richardson

## Paris Parcel Post

A concessionary service operated by Henri Gonon and Co. from the Central Bureau at 23 Rue du Louvre (facing the Head PO) had 400 postal agencies in the “*bureaux de tabac*”. The parcel postal service within Paris operated under the auspices of the Postal Administration from 1 September 1890.

The tariff for simple parcels up to 5Kg was 25 centimes. Insured parcels were charged 60 centimes, subject to a maximum redemption of 500 francs.

Under a decree of 1 September 1892 delivery of the parcels was guaranteed up to 25 francs. Three collections were

made daily from each of the *bureaux* with three daily deliveries to all districts within Paris (only one collection and two deliveries on Sundays and public holidays).

Senders were required to write their name and address on the outside of the parcel preceded by “Sent from...” Delivery was against a signature of receipt. The times of collection and delivery were displayed on notices at the *bureaux*.

From the Central Bureau parcels received before 12.45pm were delivered from 1.00 to 4.30pm; those before 1.30pm were delivered from 4.30 to 8.00pm and those before 9.00pm delivered the next day from 8.00am until noon.

Alan Wood



Figure 1 -  
Copy of a parcel post stamp of 1890



Figure 2 -  
Counterfoil, receipt and stamp of 1892



Figure 3 -  
Counterfoil, receipt and stamp of 1894, by which time the Paris Parcel Postal service was firmly established  
The French specialist catalogues publish details of the above and subsequent issues.



# COLIS POSTAUX DE PARIS

SÉRVICE CONCESSIONNAIRE  
DE L'ADMINISTRATION DES POSTES

Société concessionnaire : Henri Gönou et C<sup>ie</sup>

**BUREAU CENTRAL : 23, RUE DU LOUVRE**  
(EN FACE DE L'HÔTEL DES POSTES)

TÉLÉPHONE

TÉLÉPHONE

**400 AGENCES D'EXPÉDITION DANS LES BUREAUX DE TABAC**

Le service des **Colis postaux de Paris pour Paris** fonctionne, sous le contrôle de l'Administration des postes, depuis le 1<sup>er</sup> septembre 1890.

TARIF	{	COLIS SIMPLES,.....	0 fr. 25	Jusqu'à cinq kilogrammes.
		COLIS EXPÉDIÉS CONTRE REMBOURSEMENT....	0 fr. 60	
			(Maximum : 500 francs.)	

En outre du BUREAU CENTRAL, 23, RUE DU LOUVRE, **400 agences d'expédition**, établies dans les bureaux de tabac, sont autorisées à recevoir les colis et à en donner reçu sous la responsabilité de l'Administration : le récépissé délivré à l'expéditeur garantit l'envoi jusqu'à concurrence de **25 francs**. (Décret du 1<sup>er</sup> septembre 1892.)

Il est fait, chaque jour, **trois levées** dans tous les bureaux et **trois distributions** dans tous les quartiers de Paris. (Une seule levée et deux distributions, les dimanches et jours fériés.)

L'expédition ne demande aucune formalité : en outre de l'adresse du destinataire, l'expéditeur doit indiquer sur le colis sa propre adresse, précédée des mots : « Envoi de... »

La livraison s'opère contre signature du destinataire ou de son représentant. Une affiche apposée dans chacun des bureaux fait connaître les heures des levées et les heures des distributions correspondantes.

Au BUREAU CENTRAL, 23, RUE DU LOUVRE, les colis déposés avant midi 45, sont livrés de 4 heures à 4 h. 30; les colis déposés avant 4 h. 30, sont livrés de 4 h. 30 à 8 heures du soir; les colis déposés avant 9 heures du soir, sont livrés le lendemain matin de 8 heures à midi.

**Nota.** — L'Administration ne répond pas des bouteilles ou flacons qui ne seraient pas emballés dans des boîtes en bois résistant.

*Voir au verso la Nomenclature des Bureaux.*

Figure 4 -  
Notice setting out details of the service



## Society

Paris. — Imprimerie de la Cour d'appel, L. MARETHEUX, directeur, 1, rue Cassette. — 2193

Figure 5 -

## REPORTS OF MEETINGS

### DISPLAY AT THE ROYAL PHILATELIC SOCIETY, LONDON, ON 22 MAY 2004

John H Levett RDP, FRPSL and his son Dr Ian J S Levett FRPSL:

The Franco-German War 1870-71, and its aftermath

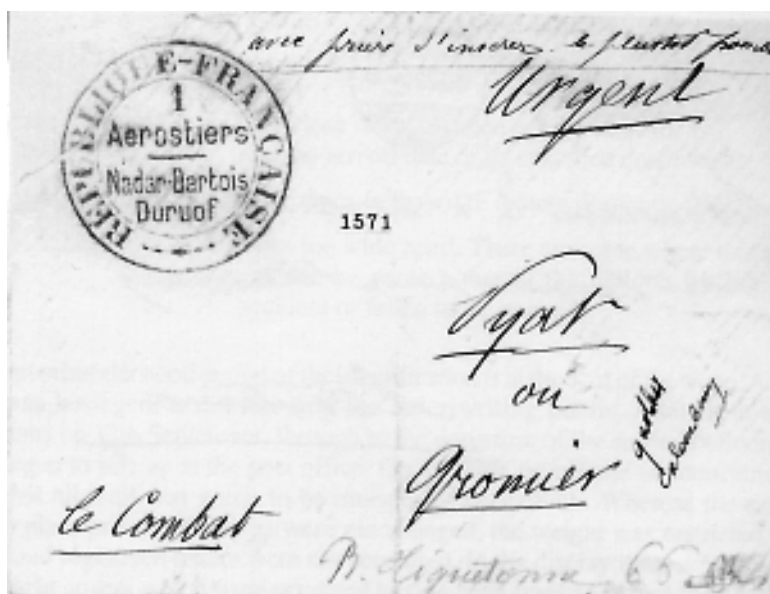


Figure 1 -

A rare *Aérostiers* cachet in red applied to some balloon letters

#### Introduction

From a postal history perspective, this was a display *par excellence*. John and Ian Levett wanted to show how the war of 1870-71 and its aftermath affected Paris and the French postal system. To that end they filled 52 frames with selected items, and such was the scope and quality of the material displayed that they succeeded in their aim in glorious manner. For specialist and amateur postal historians alike, this was a *tour de force*, and a splendid presentation of a complex and fascinating subject.

For most English people, mention of the Franco-German War evokes the siege of Paris, cats and rats on menus, Gambetta's daring escape from Paris by balloon, and not much else. This is not surprising. Britain remained neutral during the war of 1870-71, so it receives little coverage in our history books, and we only remember the more lurid aspects. The dispute between France and Prussia over competing claims to the vacant throne of Spain did not threaten Britain's mastery of the seas, so Victorian statesmen could disregard the silly posturing of the French Emperor Napoleon III, and were not alarmed by the imperial ambitions of the Prussian Chancellor Bismarck.

However, it is a pity that we underrate this war of 1870-71, for it shaped the terrible events of the 20th century. It was the first "modern" war in the sense that the whole civilian population, not just the regular troops, were involved in the struggle. It saw the effectiveness of the *mitrailleuse* or machine-gun, and the heavy artillery made by Herr Krupp of Essen. France suffered humiliating defeats and the loss of Alsace and Lorraine. French demands for revenge led directly to the Great War of 1914-18. The declaration of the Paris Commune foreshadowed and inspired the Russian revolution of 1917.

#### Balloons

To the postal historian, the manned balloons which carried mail out of Paris during the siege have a special significance: this was the world's first regular airmail service. The presenters chose not to display their balloon letters, *ballons montés*, in the usual chronological sequence. Instead, they devoted four frames to flights of particular interest, and used other letters most effectively to illustrate related topics. In all, 49 of the 56 official mail-carrying balloons were represented in the display.

Among the treasures were a *pli confié* entrusted to Duruof, the pilot of the first balloon, *Le Neptune*, which left Paris on 23 September 1870, and a letter carried aboard the ill-fated *Le Jacquard* bearing the scarce Falmouth postmark; the latter balloon came to grief off the Cornish coast, and Prince, the pilot, drowned. Also shown was a letter-journal recovered from the penultimate balloon *Le Richard Wallace* which left Paris on 27 January 1871; its pilot Lacaze was the second balloonist to perish in the Atlantic, off the coast of La Rochelle.

Mail carried aboard *La Ville d'Orléans* was displayed: one of its mailbags was jettisoned in the North Sea off Mandal, and the remainder were recovered from the Tunet farm in the mountains of Norway. Ernst Cohn has written an excellent account of the adventures of the aeronauts of this balloon, Rolier and Bézier, whose terrifying flight of 1,250 kms set a long-distance record. The display also included mail from *La Ville de Paris*, which was captured by the enemy when it landed in Germany, and letters bearing the scarce red cachet of Nadar's *Compagnie des Aérostiers* (Fig 1), or the blue cachet which was later used by Messrs. Dartois and Yon.



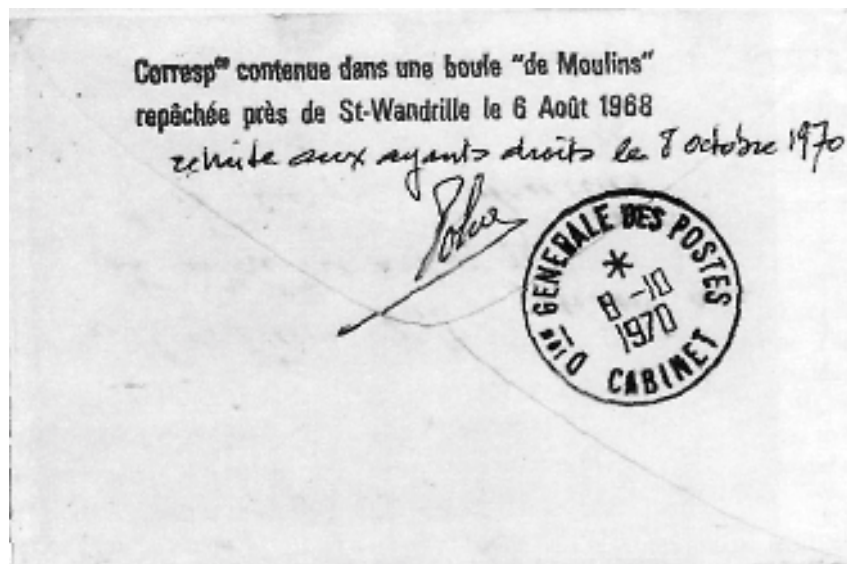


Figure 2 -  
A boule de Moulins delivered almost 100 years late -  
with a straight line cachet in red

### Military correspondence

We saw correspondence from the siege of Metz: letters released by balloon by the pharmacist Dr. Papillon and by the military engineers, and a letter written on balloon fabric by the correspondent of "The Guardian", George Robinson. There were examples of letters sent by soldiers and naval officers, and by French POWs, whose mail was accorded free postage during the early weeks of the war. The soldiers in General Bourbaki's ill-fated army who were interned in Switzerland were given a similar privilege, as was the Red Cross: the latter's cachets were shown in a variety of colours and shapes.

As the siege of Paris dragged on, *Les Gazettes des Absents* and other newspapers were produced in airmail format by the enterprising M. Jouast and other publishers, and by news agencies such as Havas whose press reports were published in two editions, one in French and the other in German. Postal stationery was produced, marked *Par Ballon Monté*, some bearing flags and patriotic slogans: the latter are rare when postally used during the siege, but there are numerous unused examples which were produced by Maury as souvenirs after the war.

### Boules de Moulins

Various attempts were made to bring mail into Paris during the siege. Among the more imaginative were the zinc spheres with fins, the *Boules de Moulins*, which were invented by Messrs. Delors, Robert and Vonoven. Each *boule* was stuffed with 200 to 300 letters (on which additional postage had been paid, to compensate the inventors), sealed, and placed in the River Seine at Moulins, Allier. It was intended that they would be carried upstream into Paris, where they would be caught by nets placed across the river. Sadly, the scheme was thwarted by ice and mud; none of these *boules* reached Paris during the siege,

but several have been found since. The display included a letter from a *boule* which was dredged up near St Wandrille in 1968, having been immersed for almost a century (Fig 2).

Letters were smuggled into Paris across enemy lines by *passeurs*, who were well paid for their service, as they faced the death penalty if caught. Some letters were concealed in sacks of rice and brought into Paris during the armistice period. Inward letters such as these are hard to identify in the absence of postal markings or evidence from their text, and forgeries of such letters are known.

### Pigeon post

The most successful means of communication with Paris was the pigeon post. Most of the balloons which left Paris, commencing with *La Ville de Florence*, carried baskets of homing pigeons; the pigeons were used to bring messages back to Paris. In November 1870, M. Dagron, an expert in microphotography, departed from Paris by balloon and served the government delegation in Tours and later in Bordeaux. With Dagron's assistance, many thousands of dispatches, both official and private, were reduced onto microfilm which was put into capsules, and flown into Paris attached to the pigeons' tail feathers. The microfilm *pellicules* were then magnified and projected onto screens, so that clerks could transcribe and distribute the messages. The efficacy of the pigeon post, allied to microphotography, was noted and adopted by military observers in many other countries after the war.

German occupation of much of eastern France, and the closure of the Paris railways during the siege, caused mail to be diverted from Calais, Marseille, Bordeaux and other traditional routes. The display included letters intended for, or from France, which were routed through Belgium, Switzerland, and Britain.



## Postage stamps

Seven frames contained exhibits of the postage stamps which were issued during the war. After Napoleon's capitulation at Sedan and the establishment of the Third Republic early in September 1870, the removal of the Emperor's effigy from stamps became a priority. Within Paris, M. Hulot resurrected the plates of the *Cérès* head from which the first issues of 1849-50 had been printed, and these plates were used to produce the 10c, 20c and 40c Siege issues.

As the siege prevented the Paris Mint from serving the provinces, the government delegation in Tours arranged for a series of stamps to be produced in Bordeaux: for many philatelists, these are the most interesting of all the classic issues of France. There were eight values, produced by lithograph process on stone. The first plate, the crude 20c Type 1, was designed by M. Dambourgez; Types 2 & 3 of the 20c, and the plates for the other values were designed by Léopold Yon. The display included reconstructions of the plates, and superb examples of the varieties of shades, of cancellations and usage of the Bordeaux stamps on cover.

## Post-war

Faced with imminent starvation, the government in Paris agreed to an armistice on 28 January 1871. The Germans took control of mail leaving or entering the city, and imposed a censorship at Versailles. The display covered the period of the armistice, during which peace terms were negotiated and normal postal services were resumed, and included examples of the scarce blue-boxed censorship cachet used in Versailles between 10 and 16 February 1871.

Further frames showed material relating to the rest of France following German occupation. Of particular interest were Alsace and Lorraine, which were overrun by the Germans at the start of the war, and much of whose territory was ceded to Germany under the terms of the peace treaty. The Germans speedily issued a set of stamps, from 1c to 25c in value, to cover their occupation of Alsace and Lorraine. From the end of 1870 until 1872 a tax was imposed on mail which passed between France and Germany.

## The Paris Commune

Sixteen frames were devoted to the Paris Commune and related subjects. The Commune was declared on 18 March 1871, by socialists of the extreme left who repudiated the elected government of M. Thiers (which removed to

Versailles) and rejected the armistice terms. It ended on 28 May, after ten weeks of civil war, the massive destruction of property, atrocities committed by both sides, and the slaughter or banishment of many thousands of insurgents. The display included letters passed in and out of Paris by Lorin and other agencies, mail smuggled into and out of Paris, the use of *poste restante* addresses, and letters written by convicts from the prison ships, and to and from prisoners held on the penal colony of New Caledonia.

Other items on display included scarce registered letters which were returned to sender with a label explaining that the registration service had been cancelled; a *pli confié* written in code, addressed to the British Ambassador in Tours; and an example of the Mrs Simpson facsimile, printed by Messrs. Letts as a post-war souvenir, which was postally used in India! This last item had once belonged to me, and I was delighted to see it again in this august setting.

## Conclusion

John and Ian Levett are to be congratulated on their magnificent display. It has been a privilege to see such a wide range of material relating to so many aspects of the war of 1870-71, and including items of great rarity. The quality of the exhibits was enhanced by the excellent writing-up of the individual sheets, and by the illustrated booklet which accompanied the display and gave an overview of the subject. The information was presented clearly and in detail, and showed admirable research and scholarship.\*

Ashley Lawrence

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\* There are a few minor inaccuracies in the section on the Pigeon Mail in the booklet which ought to be corrected. Homing pigeons were carried on nearly all balloons leaving Paris, commencing with *La Ville de Florence* on 25 September, and not as stated on balloons leaving towards the end of November 1870. The pigeons were not transferred to Clermont-Ferrand as stated (although this destination had been intended by the Director of Posts M. Rampont at the time he agreed terms with M. Dagron). By order of the Director of Telegraphs and Posts M. Steenackers, pigeons were taken to the government delegation in Tours, and were later taken to Bordeaux after the delegation moved there on 10 December 1870.

*[The following members of the France & Colonies Philatelic Society, some of whom had come specially from as far away as Yorkshire, Somerset and even France, attended the show at the Royal: G E Barker, B Berkinshaw-Smith, J N Hammonds, C J Hitchen, C S Holder, Prof. B S Jay, D Jennings-Bramly, P R A Kelly, A Lawrence, M Letailleur, Dr T M C Lindsay, P G Mackey, J P Maybury, Ms B M K Priddy, C W Spong, Dr W I Stevenson, M J F Tingle, S S Vaitilingam, J L Whiteside and R G E Wood. Apologies were received from M H Alder, M L Bister, G H Fryer, R Hill, F Kiddle, and M S Tyler.]*

*John has indicated that he has spare copies of the booklet that accompanied his unrepeatable display (24 A5 pages plus cover; 20 illustrations in colour) which he would be prepared to sell to members of this Society at the bargain price of £2.50 including postage and packing. Please contact the Editor for further details if interested.]*

## WESSEX GROUP MEETING OF 27 AUGUST 2004

**Peter Kelly: Mails from Reunion to France 1864-1900**

**Alan Wood: The Franco-German War and the Commune**

### Members' Short Displays

At the inaugural meeting of the Wessex Group, which took place at the Scout Hall, Lower Street, Harnham, Salisbury, Joint Conveners Alan Wood and Peter Kelly welcomed 15 members and guests and outlined the format that the meetings are to take. An invited display is to be given in the morning and, following lunch, there will be members' displays in the afternoon.

The invited displays on this occasion were given by **Peter Kelly**, who showed mails from Reunion to France, the postal history of *Messageries Maritimes Lignes T, U and Y* (1864-1900), followed by **Alan Wood**, who showed part of his fascinating collection of the Franco-German War and the period of the Commune.

After lunch the following members gave displays:- **Ingrid Swinburn** - "French censored mail WWII"; **Edwin Rideout** - "Postage stamps of Tunisia"; **Peter Todd** - "*Bureaux de*

*passe* and studies of postmarks on detached stamps 1849-1876"; **Bob Paterson** - "A *Marianne de Gandon* variety"; **Ashley Lawrence** - "Stamps used as money after WWI and *Porte-timbres*"; **Trevor Buckell** - "Fiscals used in commerce"; **Peter Kelly** - "Postage due on unpaid and partially paid mail (1876-1882)"; **Chris Hitchen** - "Paris post offices 1849-1876"; **Alan Ketchell** - "A thematic display of the river Loire from the source to the sea".

Other members present: Lesley Marley, George Nash, Brian Weeks, and Peter Brookman. Our guest was Tony Swinburn.

The meeting was declared to be a success and the decision was taken to have more meetings towards the end of this year and next year. It has consequently not proved possible to book the Scout Hall towards the end of this year, but further details and programme dates for 2005 will be found in Society Notes on page 130 of this Journal.

PRAK

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## NORTHERN GROUP MEETING OF 18 SEPTEMBER 2004

### Members' Choice: 12-24 sheets

Present: Robert Barnes, Steve Ellis, Alan Goude, Bernard Lucas, Peter Maybury, Tony Shepherd, John Whiteside, plus guests Yvonne and Richard Wheatley.

Apologies: George Barker, Judith and Stephen Holder, Michael Meadowcroft.

Following some odds and ends of housekeeping, including comments on the newly acquired frames (83.333% positive) Bernard Lucas produced a "novelty" item – an envelope he had received that morning, bearing a privately produced copy of the first Persian (Iranian) postage stamp, from the US and which had passed through both postal systems without comment.

**Alan Goude** was first off with registered or, as he explained during a description of the different types of the service, more correctly *Recommandé* mail from French Colonies. Examples of the varied styles of labels from smaller offices in Martinique to the specially produced types of New Caledonia were displayed and discussed. **Tony Shepherd** followed with WWII censorship from French Guiana. An overview of the political situation between de Gaulle and the USA, together with a description of the penal colony where there were some 25,000 prisoners held between 1939 and 1945, preceded a fascinating display of the airmail routes and rates employed to many destinations. **Richard Wheatley** then brought some notable points from the current Cavendish auction catalogue to our attention and, much to the delight of you know who, **Yvonne Wheatley**

produced some of her fledgling collection of French railway marks. **Robert Barnes** informed us he was in search of help with a small collection of pre-stamp covers (1753-1838) he had recently purchased. These were then displayed and, lo, help and information were forthcoming. Continuing along the line we came to *Bureau de Passe 312 RENNES* via the expertise of **John Whiteside**. Explaining that there were 3 handstamps and how to identify them, John proceeded to exhibit a range of strikes as used along the Paris - Brest line, including an extremely rare double usage found only on misdirected letters.

Still faithful to his professional career **Bernard Lucas** showed us some unusual French Revenue stamps used on documents: *Radiodiffusion* (radio licences) in the 3 different colours issued for 3 separate years, tobacco, municipal tax with a variety of usage and finally 5 types used for different types of fishing licence. Still loosely on the theme of water **Steve Ellis** surfaced with a short display of transatlantic mail during the period 1870-1874 when there was no operative convention between France and the USA, explaining that there was much confusion as the rates were determined by the carrier and route and this resulted in many overpaid letters. The second part of his offering was a selection of new acquisitions, again mainly on a maritime theme. The final display of the afternoon was by **Peter Maybury** who brought us back to dry land with a selection of locally manufactured 2 decime handstamp marks covering the period 1801 to 1848.

JPM

## LONDON MEETING OF 29 SEPTEMBER 2004

### Members' Short Displays

The first meeting of the new season was attended by 15 members, and was introduced by the President Maurice Tyler who called for the usual impromptu 12 sheets.

The first session was opened by **Alan Barrett** with parcel post stamps, and he was followed by **David Worrollo** showing Tunisia from 1926 to the 1940s, **Mick Bister** with the 1F75 Royal Visit, **Godfrey Bowden** with a further miscellany from Tunisia, and **Barbara Priddy** who covered French West Africa airmail rates 1925-1929.

The second session began with **Bill Mitchell** and early Senegal, **Michael Ensor** who homed in on Lomé, **Alan**

**Baum** with a selection of Paris stars on stamps, **Michael Wright** who had brought some sheets of colonial postage dues 1944-1945, and **Mick Bister** who returned to the fray with his collection of visiting cards.

In his vote of thanks Maurice commented that although most of those who displayed had been slightly indisciplined about the number of sheets on show (the frames usually having to accommodate between 13 and 20 sheets), we had seen a fascinating variety from both France and the colonies of stamps, cinderellas, covers and printing details that had made the evening a most enjoyable one.

MST

## MARCOPHILEX XXVIII ON 2-3 OCTOBER 2004



The 2004 gathering of the members of *l'Union Marcophile* was held in the Municipal Casino in Thionville (Moselle) on 2 and 3 October. Organised by *l'Amicale Philatélique Thionvilloise* and very well supported by the local authority, the local traders association, *La Poste* and the Moselle regional authority, the event coincided with a weekend of Napoleonic celebrations all orchestrated with typical French verve.

Our journey began at Waterloo for the Eurostar to Brussels, where we spent the night. The next morning's proposed tour of the city was abandoned for a couple of hours when we stumbled across the philatelic emporium of a well known dealer. This pleasant deviation was followed by lunch in the *Grande Place* prior to boarding a train for Luxembourg, where we changed to a local commuter "rattler" for the final leg of our outward journey.

Thionville is a fairly large town that was for a period of years a prosperous centre for the iron and steel industry. Heavily bombed during WWII it has been sympathetically restored, with several pretty parks by the old fortifications and walks along the banks of the Moselle. Needless to say there are several excellent restaurants in the town centre, and that moment of glory we all crave arrived when *les Anglais* were asked by one of the more eminent members of the UM to recommend a good eating place.

Sited in the upper hall were forty-one non-competitive displays, of which *Les Anglais*, aka Hitchin, Kelly and Maybury, provided three, entitled: *Levées exceptionnelles de Paris (1863-1936)*; *Type Sage - courrier recommandé et chargé* and *La Poste pendant l'Ancien Régime (1627-1703)*. This

year it was difficult to choose a favourite, as the quality and the variety were excellent, so, even though many hours were spent in appreciating the subjects, there was still plenty of time to spend with old and new found friends, not to mention the 14 dealers who were ensconced on the ground floor.

The *Auberge du Crève-Cœur* was the venue of the society's gala dinner on the Saturday evening. This well appointed restaurant is situated on a hill top some eight kilometres out of the town and provided a delightful meal experience on a *Lorrain* theme, i.e. plenty of *mirabelle* (a rather potent local liqueur distilled from plums or perhaps damsons – when asked no one really knew, or seemed to care).

For those who stayed on for the Monday coach tour of the area, the guided visit to a restored section of the Maginot Line at Hackenberg was something very special. Over 10 km of tunnels stretching under 160 hectares of woods and forest, which in their time were home to 1,000 soldiers and 43 officers. Lunch at a local *auberge* followed and then it was on to Manderen for a guided tour of the reconstructed 15C *Château de Malbrouck*. A detour from the scheduled return route took us into Germany and then back to Thionville via a stop at a local distillery to sample even more of the regional delights. Dinner at Knutange, a small town 11 km SW of Thionville rounded off a quite memorable day.

The return journey next day took us directly to Brussels for the Eurostar to Waterloo, where we arrived many euros lighter and a few pounds heavier.

JPM



## SOUTHERN GROUP MEETING OF 16 OCTOBER 2004

### Chris Hitchen: Paris Mail as seen through Postal Rates

The Organiser welcomed Chris on a return visit to the Southern Group with his postal history of mail to and from Paris. On this occasion Chris gave a display linked to postage rates and their reasons from the French Post Office. A great variety of covers was seen in three sessions and Chris answered a number of questions from the members present. Colin expressed on behalf of those present a sincere vote of thanks for a most interesting and rewarding afternoon.

Members present: Michael Annells, Betty Blincow, Michael Berry, Roy Ferguson, Geoff Gethin, Bob & Yvonne Larg, Bill Mitchell, Bob Small, Colin Spong, John Thorpe, Michael Wilson, Robin Wilson, John Yeomans; and guests Frank Blincow and Pat Spong (who looked after the refreshments). Apologies from Colin Clarkson, John Hammonds, Lesley Marley, George Nash, and Barbara Priddy. The next meeting was arranged for Saturday 8 January 2005: Members' Displays / New Acquisitions.

CWS

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## LONDON MEETING OF 30 OCTOBER 2004

### President's Display: World War I

Our President and Journal Editor, **Maurice Tyler**, introduced his display by explaining that it would be an extension to his previous President's display on World War I and that it would be presented in three parts. This time he would be concentrating on the postal services, predominantly military, that operated during the war and would be displaying the plethora of marks encountered in a sequence that would hopefully make sense of them all.

Maurice started therefore with an example of an *Ordre d'appel sous les drapeaux* or call-up card followed by cards from the *Bureaux de recrutement* which gave the recruit details of enrolment. Trains that were used for transporting troops sometimes had a TPO attached and were provided with a distinct canceller in which the normal TPO brigade number was either omitted or replaced by a digit denoting the section of the line on which the train operated, as exemplified by a 1914 cover with **MARSEILLE A NICE 2°**. Maurice spoke of *cachets de manœuvres* which were used originally before the war, some of which were later recalled during the war but only in cases of emergency. An example was shown of the *cachet de manœuvres* of the *Infanterie 29<sup>e</sup> Division* used upon their return to barracks in Toulon as the postal wagon with all its other cachets had been lost during action in Lorraine.

Maurice then progressed to a magnificent display of *Gare de rassemblement* marks applied to mail in transit between the army *dépôt* and the troops in the field. These bore not only the circular date stamp but the classical *chapeau* mark with the number of the army corps it served. Examples were seen struck in red, black, blue and purple and one with the *chapeau* strike in black but the date stamp struck in purple. Of particular interest was the cachet originally intended for a colonial corps, which eventually had the word *colonial* removed before being allocated to the *21<sup>e</sup> Corps*.

Maurice closed the first part with examples of mail bearing the date stamp of the *Bureau Central Militaire* in Paris which in the early part of the war handled mail for personnel not attached to a particular corps. An item of mail was seen from the *B C M Annexe* at the Conservatoire which dealt with packets and registered mail, and one from Marseille where the *BCM* handled mail to and from the *Armée d'Orient*, and moved for a time to Lyon.

The second part of the display began with Maurice explaining the rôle of the *Bureaux Frontière* which were established not on international frontiers but on lines separating civilian zones from zones administered by the military. They were normally located at or near a *gare régulatrice* which organised the dispatching of mail and equipment on a daily supply train into the battle zone and a 1915 postcard was shown with a fine **3<sup>e</sup> ARMÉE GARE RÉGULATRICE** cachet. The *Bureaux Frontière* were designated A to N (but no J) plus W. (The letter W, being of non-French origin, was initially allocated to the *Bureau Frontière* handling mail for British troops). Cachet L, allocated to the corps at Gap who were awaiting a possible Italian insurgence was never used in this capacity but re-allocated for use in Marseille. A splendid example of an urgent '*pli rouge*' cover addressed to the *Ecole des Mines* in Paris was shown bearing a **BUREAU FRONTIÈRE G** strike in black and a **POSTE AUX ARMÉES** date stamp in purple. Further examples of *Poste aux Armées* strikes were shown including a 1919 postcard to Jersey with a 10c Sower cancelled **POSTES AUX ARMÉES** (ie with *POSTES* in the plural).

Maurice approached the end of his second session with material from the *Bureaux Centralisateurs* which handled mail from troops to civilians and from the *Bureaux ambulants d'armée* which were the TPOs linking the *gares régulatrices* along four sections of railway line near the front. However, the very last item which received particular acclaim was a 1915 card from L.H. of Paris who were publishers of picture postcards. The card was requesting permission from the *Police Judiciaire* to depict scenes of Soissons in ruins which needed vetting in case they might give information to the enemy (Fig 1).

Picture postcards were featured at the beginning of the third part and we were shown cards depicting a soldier writing a letter, a field sorting office and both horse-drawn and motorised transport of mail. Further miscellaneous items were displayed including *Trésor et Postes* mail to various destinations and express letters with devices to emphasise the element of urgency. One such cover which stimulated much discussion was a 1914 envelope from the *Trésorerie Générale de l'Aude* in Carcassonne to Paris, headed *Pli Urgent à Distribuer par Express* and which had

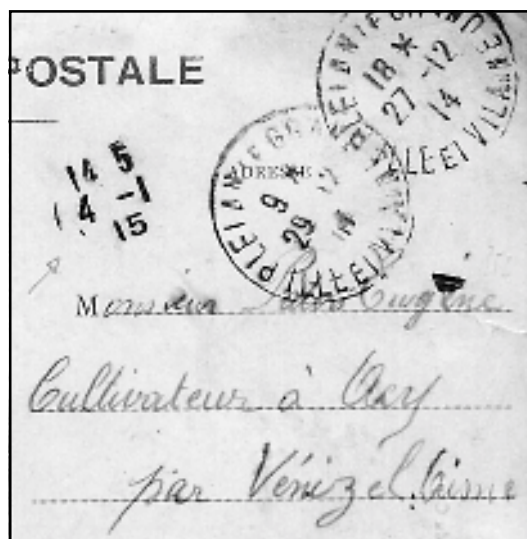
been almost completely coated in a layer of red ink. Other items of interest included a 1915 postcard to Switzerland with a tiny cachet inscribed 'La France lutte pour le droit', an *Hors Sac* envelope for collection at Limoges station and cancelled **TRESORET POSTES 79** and a temporary canceller fabricated by the postmaster at Vénizel by embedding the date slugs into the end of a cork (Fig 2).

Towards the end, Maurice showed a 1916 postcard sent by a convalescing sergeant to the hospital infirmary where he had been treated. To take advantage of the *franchise militaire*, the sergeant had had to show his ID at the local post office counter whereupon a *remis au guichet* strike had been applied to the card to endorse the FM status.

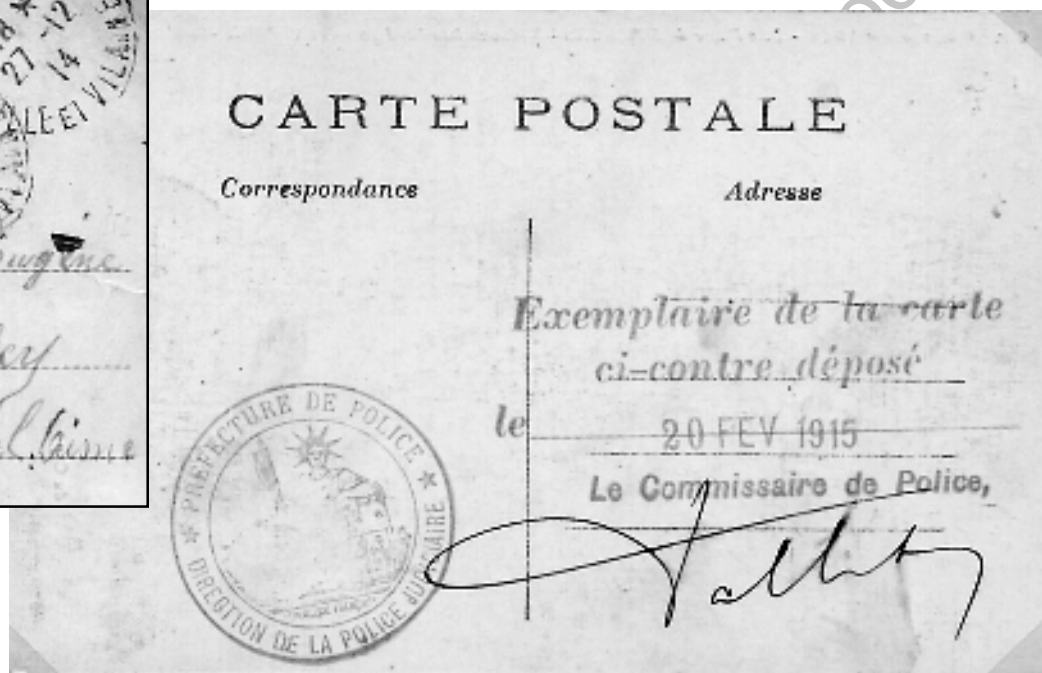
Finally we were shown a registered commercial cover with the commemorative date stamp of the *Congrès de la Paix* at St Germain en Laye where the peace treaty with Austria had been signed on 10 September 1919.

After the final viewing and much discussion of the items on display, Vice-President Alan Barrett gave the vote of thanks on behalf of the members present. He explained that despite having been a member of the Society for over forty years he was not familiar with Maurice's collecting interests and had been astounded by the depth, variety and appeal of the material which he had displayed and applauded Maurice on his enthusiastic delivery of such a complicated but fascinating subject.

MLB



(above) Figure 2 -  
Cachet de fortune of Vénizel



(right) Figure 1 -  
Specimen postcard submitted  
to Police Judiciaire for approval

## NORTHERN GROUP MEETING OF 6 NOVEMBER 2004

John Morton: (1) Rural Mail; (2) World War I

Present: George Barker, Steve Ellis, Alan Goude, Bernard Lucas, Peter Maybury, Tony Shepherd, Peter Stockton, Paul Watkins, Richard Wheatley.

Apologies: Robert Barnes, Judith and Stephen Holder, Michael Meadowcroft, Yvonne Wheatley, John Whiteside.

The organiser confirmed that the March 2005 meeting had been re-scheduled for 19 March and then introduced John Morton, an F&CPS member of many years' standing, who had "volunteered" the afternoon's entertainment.

Rural Mail was the theme for the first part of the display and John commenced with an overview of the system and its origins. Some 18<sup>th</sup> century letters opened the display, followed by an in-depth look at the reforms of 1829, circular date stamps, sub-office marks, franchises, inspectors' marks *et al.* The introduction of adhesives in 1849 was well covered with the various changes in tariffs, including a couple of very nice covers with the 10c stamp cancelled by the *facteur's* **OR** handstamp. The first part concluded with studies of the 10c rate and the working of the postal routes in and

around the Lot valley, where, purely by coincidence, John has a house.

John opened the second session with a brief history of the reasons for the conflict and described the display as charting the progress or otherwise of the Great War as seen from both sides. This consisted of 190+ sheets of letters, maps, picture postcards, silks, military cards, letter cards, and documents, to and from French, Belgian, British, Austrian, German, Italian, Serbian, Indian and colonial troops. Internment mail, censored mail, POW mail, captured mail all appeared together with hospital cachets and a set of superb cartoon cards of the "Montmartre Kid". The concluding section dealt with the Italian campaign of 1917, the entry of the USA, the French re-occupation of the Alsace and Lorraine territories and the occupation of Germany.

Tony Shepherd proposed a vote of thanks to John, and even he was almost lost for words after such a fascinating display, but needless to say he managed a few.

JPM

## Postal History Projects and Proposals

[This note is also being published in the *France & Colonies Philatelist* (US).]

### Modern Cameroun Postal History

Members of our respective societies may wish to participate in a collaborative project to compile postal history and postmark information for Cameroun since independence in 1960 and reunification in 1961. We are following a format similar to that used to present information about the territory under the earlier German, French, and British administrations.<sup>1-3</sup> Specifically, we will:

- List all post offices, their dates of opening and closure, and their classification, e.g. full service, agency.
- Illustrate all postmarks and their observed dates of use.
- Document forged, backdated, and CTO postmarks.
- Describe postal services.
- Compile and illustrate ancillary postal markings, e.g. registration and postage due.
- And more!

Our format is open ended, in order to accommodate information about new post offices and new postmarks. The present working draft includes more than 200 post offices and 500 different postmarks. We expect these numbers to approach 300 and 1500, respectively. Among the observations thus far:

- Postmarks with letters excised, e.g. Rep. Fed. Cameroun changed to Rep. Cameroun or just Cameroun, and R.U. Cameroun altered to R. Cameroun.
- Postmarks with interesting locations, e.g. Bamenda Up Station, C.R.C.P., Foumban Poste Auto Route, Mbalmayo C.I.G.R., Poste Auto Rurale CS.
- Postmarks indicating services or function, e.g. Arrivée, Départ, Chargements, Guichet, Ouverture and Transbordement.

We welcome collaboration. Our goal is to prepare a revised draft by the end of 2005. For the cost of photocopying and postage, we can provide a copy of our working draft, or members can submit photocopies of intriguing postmarks and covers. All contributions will be acknowledged.

### Cameroun Postal History during French Administration

As a companion to the book about Cameroun post offices and postmarks during French administration,<sup>2</sup> I am also preparing companion volumes about Cameroun postal tariffs, postal routes, and maritime connections for the period 1916-1960. Much of the information is drawn from official documents such as the *Journal officiel du Cameroun*. These activities are well in hand, and only moral support and encouragement are requested.

### Postal History for other French Colonies

The compilation of Cameroun postal history information is the product of almost 20 years' research (admittedly off and on, as time dictated) at the US Library of Congress, Washington, DC; the Centre des Archives d'Outre-Mer, Aix-en-Provence; the United Nations Library, New York; and a half dozen other libraries / archives on three continents. During this time, we have photocopied or microfilmed more than 3,000 pages related to French Cameroun alone.

Robert Picirilli is leading a complementary project through the Study Group for Airmail Rates in French Colonies to 1945, again trolling the *Journaux officiels*, postal publications, newspapers, and other documents for elusive information. Bob and his group clearly demonstrate the benefits of collaboration. They have met with considerable success, and the reports published to date are most useful, but there is still much to do.

These two projects have led to the observation that there are TONNES of postal history information for French colonies and overseas territories, just waiting to be tapped!

One cannot begin to appreciate the wealth of information available, e.g. definitive dates of post office opening / closure; postal tariffs (often different from French rates and with some rates unique for the colony); postal routes; postal organization, operations, and personnel; and so much more. Although authors of many fine publications over the years have drawn information from official documents, *these materials have never been systematically mined*. The challenge — or opportunity — that we lay out for the membership is to systematically and comprehensively review official documents and prepare definitive postal history accounts for French colonies and overseas territories (in addition to Cameroun and colonial tariffs), before the primary information sources are lost, as many are in abysmal condition.

For those interested in undertaking studies for a particular colony or territory, we would be most pleased to share information about available documents, their location, and techniques to make the research most enjoyable and rewarding. This offer also pertains to research into former colonies and territories, now independent. Some work is under way into independent Niger and other countries in equatorial and west Africa, and interested participants are welcome.

### Terminology

In the course of our research, we have encountered a number of terms and acronyms used in a postal context. In some cases, we can make an educated guess about the acronym and the services and functions implied by the term. But too often we are at sea.

Your Editor and I have consulted the following: *Glossary of English Equivalents of Terms Commonly Used in French Auctions, Catalogues and Stamp Trade* (France & Colonies Philatelic Society [US], reprinted 1994); *Lexique Philatélique / Dictionary of Philatelic Terms* (Roger Stroh, 1971); *The Philatelic Dictionary, English-French-German* (Eric Singer, 1946); *Timbrodico* (Timbropresse, 1990); and Patrick Lavenas' rendition of acronyms for modern French date stamps, published serially in the *F&CP*. However, we met with only limited success. Clearly, terminology used by modern postal services worldwide is changing rapidly.

This leads to the question — Is there any interest in preparing an updated glossary of postal acronyms and terminology used throughout the French community, and including an explanation of the services provided?



To share your views, or to express an interest in participating in any of these projects, please contact the Journal Editor.

## References

1. Albert Friedemann, *Die Postwertzeichen und Entwertungen der deutschen Postanstalten in den Schutzgebieten und im Ausland*, 3. Auflage, Dr Wittmann Verlag, Munich, 1967. [Kamerun in Volume 2]

2. M P Bratzel, Jr, H Kraja, and R J Maddocks, *Les oblitérations du Cameroun 1914-1960*, MPB Canada, 1990. [83 pp., ISBN 0-9694026-0-0]

3. R J Maddocks and M P Bratzel, Jr, *The Postmarks and Postal History of the Cameroons under British Administration 1916-1961*, MPB Canada, 1994. [136 pp., ISBN 0-9694026-1-9]

Marty Bratzel

## BOOKSHELF

### Books Noted

*Handbuch Katalog Saar 2004*, pub. Michel; 512 pp, 150 x 200mm; 530 illustrations in colour; 7500 valuations; price 64€ (+ p&p); available from Schwaneberger Verlag GmbH, Muthmannstrasse 4, 80939 Munich, Germany. [Specialised information on the philately of this frontier region, covering about 500 stamps and including the French occupation issues 1920-1935 and 1947-1959.]

*Les Entiers postaux de France et de Monaco, 7<sup>e</sup> édition 2005*, by Jean Srorch, Robert Françon & Bertrand Sinais; 400 pp, 150 x 235mm; values in euros; 700 illustrations in colour; price 68€ inc. p&p in France; available from Éditions Bertrand Sinais, 7 rue de Châteaudun, 75009 Paris; or from *L'Écho de la Timbrologie*, 37 rue des Jacobins, 80036

Amiens Cedex 1. [Completely revised edition after 6 years' gap; includes new chapter on WWI and WWII.]

*Les Guichets Annexes en France: Étude des timbres à date*, by Patrick Lavenas; 153 pp; special issue of *Les Feuilles Marcophiles*; price 22,50€ inc. p&p in France; available from Union Marcophile, 19 avenue du Châtelet, 77150 Lésigny. [Details of the cancellations of these branch offices that first appeared in the 1920s; with names and dates of use, and listing by *département*.]

*Les Vignettes de Monaco*, by Jerold M Massler; 161 pp, illustrated; pub. 2003 by L'Arc-en-Ciel; further information from author at 4881 Griffin Road, Apt. 106, Davie, FL 33314, USA.

Maurice Tyler

### Update

**AR – Avis de Réception:** This book was reviewed in Journal 232 of June 2004 (page 65), and members should note that the principal author, Professor Handelman, can now be

contacted by e-mail at rochelle@sympatico.ca or, if using snail-mail, at his private address, 287 Second Avenue, Ottawa ON, K1S 2H8, Canada.

Bill Mitchell

### Magazine Index

Readers are reminded that Derek Richardson's *Subject Index to Four French Philatelic Magazines 1946 to 2000* is available to F&CPS members at the special price of £5 plus postage until the end of the year – this period has now been extended to the end of January 2005. After that date the price will be £6 plus postage for all purchasers.

UK members should send to Mr L H Barnes, 34 High Beeches, Northcray, Sidcup, Kent DA14 5NB a cheque for £5.90 (£6.90 from February 2005) made out to the France & Colonies Philatelic Society.

Members in the Eurozone can either send 10€ in banknotes to Len Barnes before the end of January, or can order from John Simmons, App't 175, 10 square des Sablons, 78160 Marly-le-Roi, France, by sending him a cheque for 12€ made out to him personally. The European airmail sterling price (via L Barnes) (cheques drawn on UK banks) is £6.68/£7.68.

To members in North America the cost will be \$14 US until the end of January 2005 or 16\$ US in bills from February 2005 onwards (from Len Barnes). The world airmail sterling price (cheques drawn on UK banks only) is £7.60/£8.60. Non-sterling cheques sent to the UK need the equivalent of £7 added for bank charges



**The President and Committee  
wish all members and their families  
a Happy Christmas and a Prosperous New Year.  
Joyeux Noël et Bonne Année!**



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## February 2005 Auction - Selected Lots



(left)  
1915 Dépôt Spécial  
des Prisonniers de Guerre,  
Aurillac

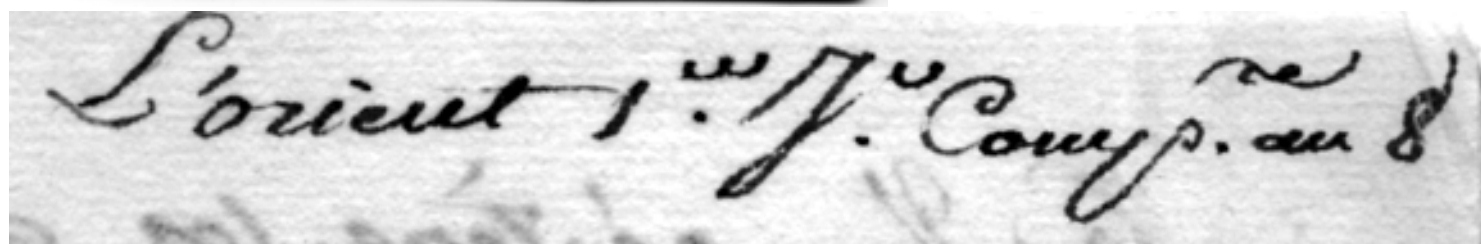


(right)  
25c/30c Sower  
in uncut booklet pane of 10

(below)  
Entire with message dated  
'1<sup>er</sup> jour complémentaire, an 8'  
as shown in extract at bottom

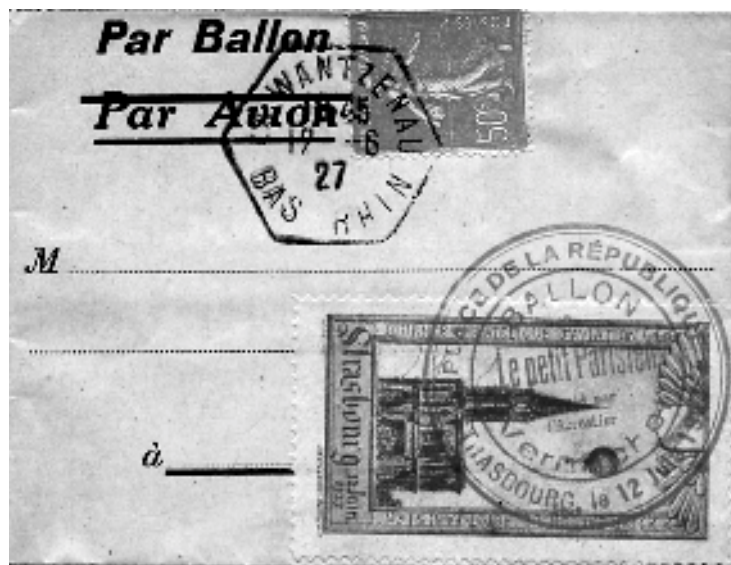


(above)  
ex selection of tax stamps  
on GC paper

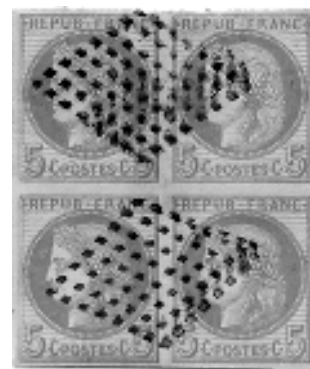




## February 2005 Auction - Selected Lots



(right)  
5c General Colonies  
issue  
in block of 4



(left)  
1927 50c Sower on  
Strasbourg balloon flight

(below)  
1957 Valeur Déclarée  
with 4 x 25F Émile Baudot



(above)  
50F Plane over Paris



(above)  
Testing Vignette  
by Pierre Gandon



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