

ISSN 0269-5006

The Journal of the France & Colonies Philatelic Society



"Postal Delivery by Ski in the Alps" - an engraving by Pierre Gandon
from Mick Bister's collection of French Post Office engravings
(reduced in size)

Volume 57 ● Number 4
December 2007
Whole Number 246

THE FRANCE & COLONIES PHILATELIC SOCIETY OF GREAT BRITAIN

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The Society

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

All inquiries about and applications for membership should be addressed to the Membership Secretary, all other correspondence to the General Secretary.

2007 and 2008 Annual Subscription Rates

United Kingdom: £13.00, Europe: £17.00, Elsewhere: £20.00.

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The Journal

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

It is printed by Direct Offset, 27c High Street, Glastonbury, Somerset BA6 9DD from the Editor's camera ready copy.

Distribution: D J Richardson and M S Tyler.

The price is included in members' subscriptions.

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Colonies: J C 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.

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* * *

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The Journal of the France & Colonies Philatelic Society

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SOCIETY NOTES

New Members

The Society is pleased to welcome the following:

1305 J Ratcliffe (Warwickshire), 1306 Jean-Pierre Magne (France), 1307 M A Kemp (Suffolk), 1308 P R Maycox (Cambridge), 1309 M A Porter (Kent).

* * *

Member Deceased

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

945 John Knight.

* * *

Resignations

862 Prof J B Caird, 1102 John Walton.

* * *

Future Events

The London Group will be meeting at the Calthorpe Arms, Grays Inn Road at 6.30pm on Wednesday 23 January 2008 (when Mick Bister will display the 1929 50c Jeanne d'Arc issue), and on Wednesday 19 March 2008 (when John Shaw will display Fakes, Forgeries and Unissued Stamps); and at the Royal Horticultural Halls, Westminster on Saturday 23 February 2008 at 3.00pm (when Steve Ellis will display the French Red Cross).

The Northern Group will meet at Heaton Royds, Bradford on Saturday 29 March 2008 at 2.00pm (when George Barker will display Gaboon).

The Southern Group will meet at the East Worthing Community Centre on Saturday 12 January 2008 at 2.00pm (for members' displays).

The Wessex Group will meet at Harnham, Salisbury on Saturday 2 February 2008 at 10.30am (when Peter Kelly will show how postcards developed 1876-1900).

The Scottish Group will meet at the Burgh Hall, Linlithgow on Saturday 23 March 2008 at 2.00pm (when Bill Robertson will display Free French Censorship in Syria and Lebanon).

* * *

Philatelic Honours

Our member **John Scott** has become Librarian of the Postal History Society, succeeding another of our members, **Prue Henderson**, who has retired from the post. The library is newly installed at Winterborne Stickland in Dorset.

* * *

Competition Successes

In the ABPS Journal of the Year Competition 2007 the *F&CPS Journal* was awarded third place (out of 10 entries) in the Specialist Societies Class.

* * *

Wessex Group Programme

2 Feb 2008 **Peter Kelly**: How postcards developed 1876-1900
5 July 2008 **Alan Wood**: Stamps and postal history of Morocco
18 Oct 2008 **Chris Hitchen**: Paris and World War II

* * *

London Group Society Dinner

Len Barnes would like all members to know that it is intended in future to have an evening meal at a local restaurant immediately after our Saturday meetings at the Royal Horticultural Halls. The first such dinner will be held at Il Posto Ristorante in Vauxhall Bridge Road, Victoria, at 5.30pm for 6.00pm.

Those members hoping to attend the meal on 23 February should send Len a cheque for £10 in favour of the France & Colonies P S by the end of January 2008 (his address is in the Register of Members' Interests - and in the last Journal, page 79). This deposit will be returned to members at the restaurant, and meals will then be ordered individually.

* * *

Displays by Members

Steven Walske displayed "*Boules de Moulins* Mail to Paris during the 1870-71 Franco-Prussian War" at the Collectors Club, New York, on 20 June 2007.

The following members displayed at Marcophilex XXXI in Dunkirk on 6-7 October 2007 (see report on page 155):

Robert Abensur: *Relations maritimes entre la France et l'étranger 1838-1848*

Brian Brookes: *La poste à l'intérieur de la Martinique et les marques manuscrites de 1762 à 1890*

Guy Dutau: *Cartes-adresses; and Curiosités*

Steve Ellis: *Courrier transatlantique français*

Chris Hitchen: *La Petite Poste de Paris 1760-1795*

Peter Kelly: *Aspects de l'histoire maritime, période du type Sage (1876-1900)*

Michel Letailleur: *30c Semeuse Camée et poste pneumatique*

Jeremy Martin: *Togo français 1914-1922*

Peter Maybury: *Bateaux à vapeur*

Claire Scott: *Le soldat blessé*

John Scott: *Papeterie décorative européenne 1800-1900*

Alan Wood: *Le Maroc*

John Yeomans: *Indes françaises, l'entrée dans l'UPU et la période suivante*

During the year **John West** displayed "France - the Red Cross" to Pinner Philatelic Society.

In September 2007 Professor **David Stirrups** spoke on "GB Used in Gibraltar" to the Gibraltar Study Circle.

On 29 April 2007 **Ashley Lawrence** spoke on "The Siege of Paris 1870-1871" to the Postal History Society."

On 3 March 2007 **Jeremy Martin** showed "Stamps of the Gold Coast 1875-1957" to the West Africa Study Circle at the Royal Philatelic Society, London.

* * *

Continued on page 150

A Message from the President

It is a privilege to be your new President. My predecessor Peter Kelly has done a superb job these past two years, and will be a hard act to follow, but it is reassuring to know that I can turn to Peter, to Chris Hitchen and others, and benefit from their good judgment and experience.

Ours is a great Society. The France & Colonies Philatelic Society was established in 1949, the centenary of the first French postage stamp. With nearly 400 members in this country and overseas, having a diversity of collecting interests, but each having a special interest in the stamps and postal history of France and its Colonies, we have a range of talents and expertise second to none.

Several of our members also have close links with the Royal Philatelic Society London and with specialist societies in this country, in France and in the USA, and I intend to encourage such links and strengthen our international representation.

Thanks to our Editor Maurice Tyler, and the many contributors, we have a world class, prize-winning Journal published four times each year. The Society has also published authoritative books, Derek Richardson's on Postal Rates, and Geoff Gethin's on Forgeries & Fakes, which have been widely acclaimed. Members benefit from our extensive Library, from our successful system of Exchange Packets and the circulation of specialist French magazines, and from regular Auctions.

We provide an extensive programme of Meetings, with speakers and displays, in different locations throughout England and Scotland. The Annual Philatelic Weekend is a highlight in the Society's programme of events. It has been held in Charlecote, near Stratford upon Avon, in recent years, and as its many regular attenders can confirm, this is an occasion not to be missed!

Regular meetings of the Northern Group in Leeds, the Southern Group in East Worthing, the Wessex Group in Salisbury, and the Scottish Group in Linlithgow are advertised on the Programme Card and in the Journal. They provide the opportunity for members to display their "goodies" and the latest acquisitions from their collections, to listen and learn, and to enjoy our shared interest in philately in excellent company. Guests are always welcome at these meetings, and hopefully they will become new members of our Society.

I would like to add a special thank you to Len Barnes for his work as the convenor of meetings for our members in London and the Home Counties. There has been a decline in the attendance at meetings in Central London in recent years, for a variety of reasons, and the halting of this decline presents a real challenge for the Society. It is very difficult to persuade outside speakers to give displays to a mere handful of members. It has been suggested that meetings should be held at a more convenient venue, or series of venues in and around London – perhaps by arrangement with local philatelic societies – rather than at the present location. Consideration might also be given to the holding of meetings during the morning or afternoon, or at weekends, rather than on Wednesday evenings as hitherto. But these are decisions that must be taken, and arrangements made, by those members who are the most directly affected – those who live in London and the Home Counties.

For my part, I welcome suggestions, and will do everything possible to assist Len and his colleagues to bring about the revitalisation of the London meetings and to make them a success.

In order for the Society to remain vibrant, we need to attract new members, and especially younger members! We should take every opportunity to publicise the activities of the Society, and to show how the collecting of stamps, and the writing up of the collection, is not only fun but has an enormous educational value in terms of geography, history, the sciences and arts and so much more.

And here is NOT the way to do it. For his 13th birthday, I gave my grandson a rather nice *Ballon Monté*, hoping this might stimulate his interest in postal history. At the celebration party, the young man ended his speech with these words :

"And special thanks to my Grandpa Ashley for a most unusual birthday present – a 100 year old French letter."

Shock horror, followed by shrieks of laughter. I hope this hasn't put him off stamp collecting for good!

Good luck with all your philatelic endeavours. *Joyeux Noël*, and my very best wishes to my fellow Officers and Committee, and to all our members for a Happy, Healthy and Peaceful New Year. I look forward to greeting you at Charlecote next March.

Ashley Lawrence

ashleylawrence@btinternet.com

October 2007

Cameroun *Taxe* Marks

Marty Bratzel



Figure 1

On page 13 of Journal 243 of March 2007 John Mayne reported a rectangular boxed *taxe* mark on a cover postmarked Ayos Cameroun 28 Mar 56. John indicated that the handstamp was of German origin.

The article prompted me to conduct a trawl of my covers from French and independent Cameroun to determine where else this type of mark was used, to ascertain what other postage due markings were utilized, and to establish

the dates of use. Postage due markings of the British Camerouns are excluded from present consideration, having already been addressed by Bob Maddocks and myself.

The results were interesting. In addition to the expected diversity of manuscript "T" notations, only three generic types of postage due handstamps were found: the boxed "T" reported by John, a sans serif block "T", and a "T" in a triangle. Also, two holdover postage due handstamps from



Figure 2

Table 1 - Postage Due Markings used in French and Independent Cameroun

Boxed "T"	Block "T"	Triangle "T"	Manuscript	Other
Abong-M'Bang Akonolinga Ayos Batouri Kobdombo Kribi M'Balmayo Messamena Ndikinimeki Obala Yaounde	Akonolinga Atok Ayos Bafia Batouri Buea Douala Douala Bassa Ebolowa Edea Fort-Foureau Garoua Kaele Lolodorf M'Balmayo Mbandjock Minta Ngomedzap Nguelemendouka Waza Yagoua Yaounde Messa	Ambam Douala Douala New Bell Doume Ebolowa Edea Kribi Makak M'Balmayo M'Banga Mouanko Sangmelima Zoatele Bonaberi-Nkongsamba	Ayos Bali Bamendjou Bertoua Douala Kumba Lolodorf M'Balmayo Mbanga Minta Nanga Eboko Ndian Yaounde Yokadouma	Serif T – Kumba Serif T in Circle – Mankon Bamenda

the period of British administration saw use in independent Cameroun. It is presumed in the discussion below that the postage due notations were applied at the town of departure and not during transit.

Regarding the boxed "T" mark (Fig 1), I respectfully disagree that these originated during the period of German administration. Like John, I have never seen use in Kamerun. Rather, the handstamp is probably of French origin. The boxed "T" handstamp was used at at least 11 different post offices and agencies in French and

independent Cameroun (Table 1). The earliest example to hand dates from 1921 and the latest from 1990 both, interestingly, at Kribi.

A block "T" (Fig 2) was employed at 22 different towns (Table 1). The observed period of usage extends from 1925 (Akonolinga) to 1979 (Nguelemendouka). At Akonolinga in the mid-1920s, because of a shortage of postage due stamps, the block "T" was also applied to postage stamps to indicate that the stamps had been affixed to pay postage due (Fig 3).



Figure 3



Figure 4



Figure 5

A triangle "T" (Fig 4) was used at 13 different towns (Table 1) between 1921 (Douala) and 1975 (Mouanko). This handstamp was also on a cover with a Bonaberi-Nkongsamba railroad postmark but it may have been applied at Douala.

The two holdovers (not illustrated here) from the period of British administration were a serified "T" at Kumba (1966) and a serified "T" in a circle at Mankon Bamenda (1963).

Manuscript "T" postage due markings (see, for example,

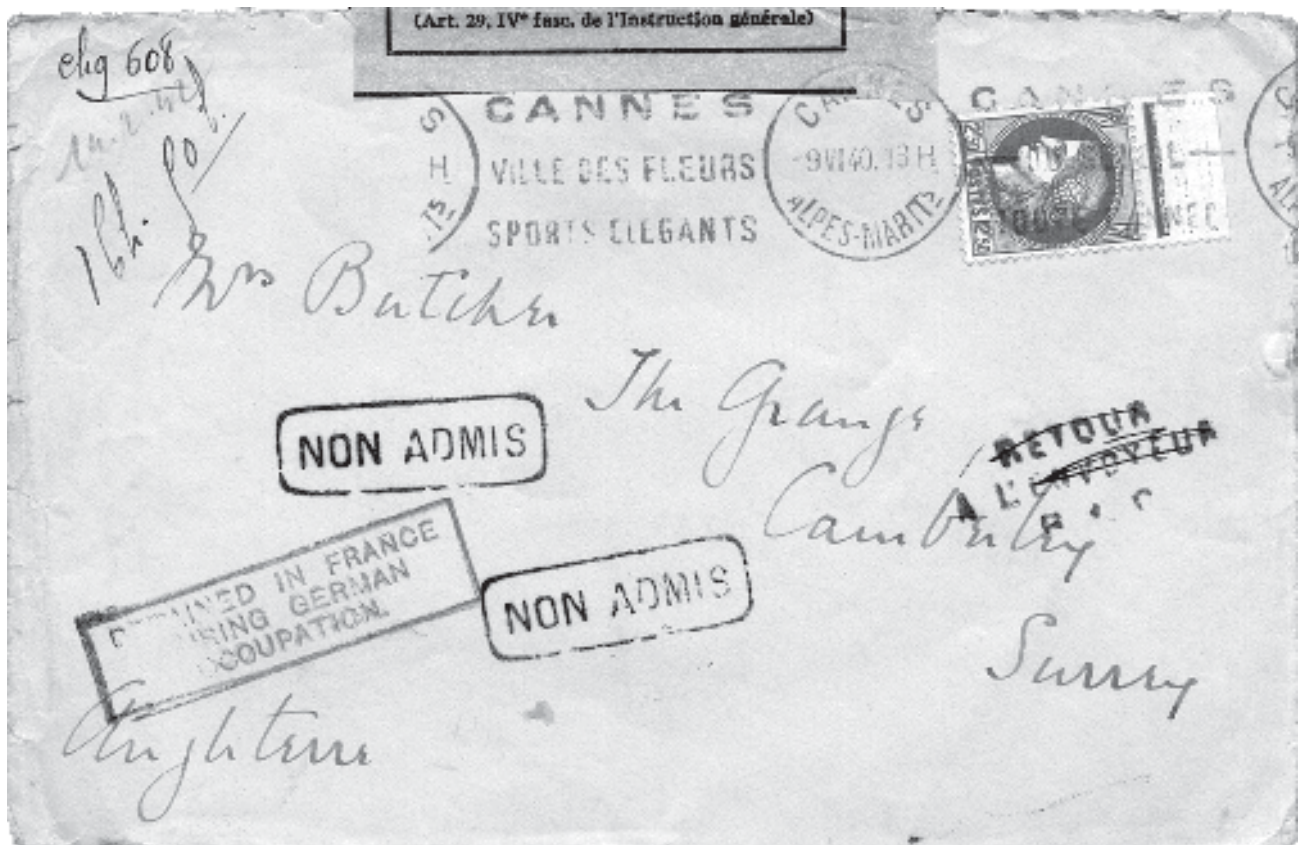
Fig 5) were added to covers from 14 towns (Table 1) from the late 1940s (Lolodorf) through 1999 (Bamendjou).

This tabulation of handstamp and manuscript markings and observed dates represents only what is in my collection. More towns and a broader range of dates are to be expected. If another member wishes to investigate Cameroun postage due markings in detail, I would be pleased to contribute.

Thanks to John for prompting this preliminary investigation.

'Detained in France during German Occupation' – an Update

Roy Reader



Cover 1

After the Germans occupied Paris in June 1940 the French postal workers hid from them a large number of bags of mail travelling through the capital on their way to or from the United Kingdom. These they released to London in March to May 1945, well after the Germans had been removed from most of France. In London the mail destined for addresses in the United Kingdom was stamped with a special handstamp inscribed 'DETAINED IN FRANCE DURING GERMAN OCCUPATION'. A detailed account of what happened appeared in an article I wrote for Journal 175 and in addenda that appeared in Journals 178 and 179. This present article is to make two amendments to the information given as well as to present four interesting covers that have come to light since my original article in 1990.

Amendment 1 (see Journal 175, page 34)

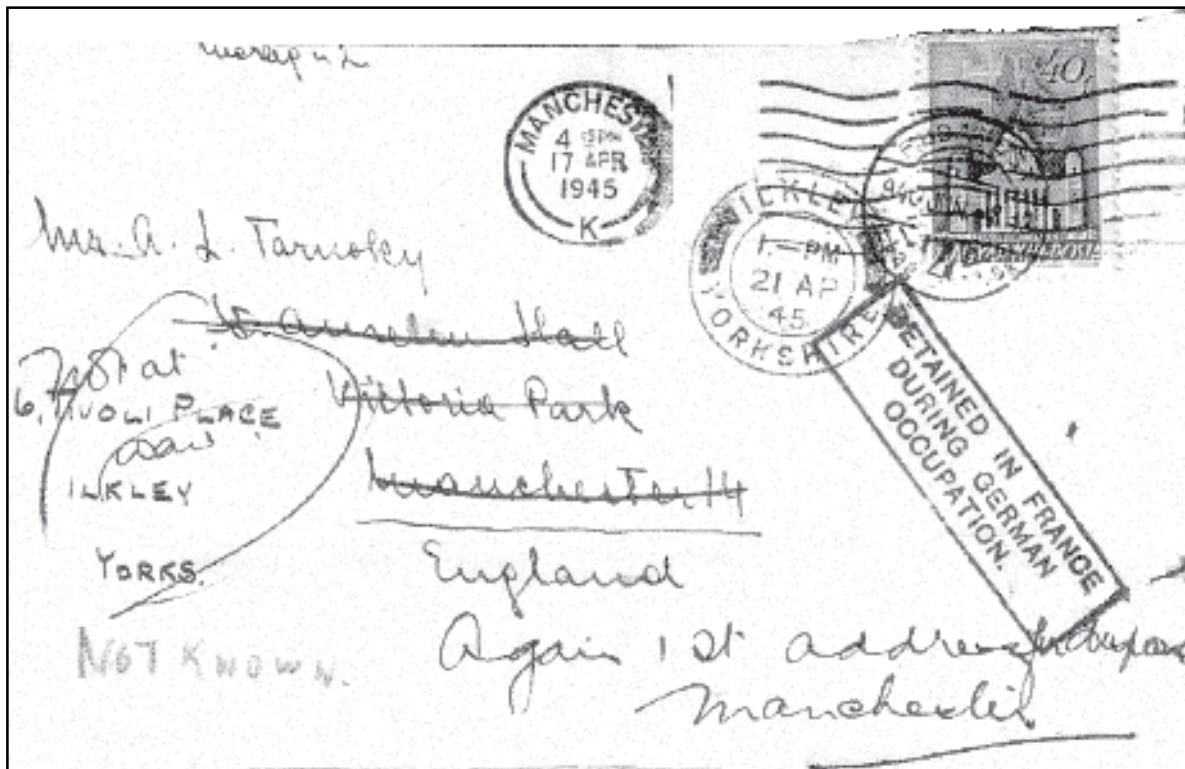
At the time of writing in 1990 it was thought that forgeries of the 'Detained in France' handstamp existed thanks to the efforts of a forger who had been operating in Nottingham in 1982, but it transpires that the handstamp was most probably not among those selected by the forger for his activities. It was not mentioned in a report on the forger's trial and James Grimwood-Taylor, who attended the case as an expert witness, has stated he is sure that it was not among the handstamps proved to have been forged. All this does not, of course, preclude the possibility that some other person may at some time have made a forgery of the handstamp, but no such forgery has yet been identified.

Amendment 2 (see Journal 178, page 221)

It seems that there may have been only three and not four handstamps. A post-war document in the Royal Mail Archive states that the handstamps had been distributed with one going to the British Library and a set to the Royal Philatelic Society. Unfortunately it did not say how many the set was made up of, so that it could be any number over one. When I wrote my article in 1990, I contacted various organisations to ask how many, if any, they had in their possession. The British Library said they had one, the Postal Museum two and the Royal Philatelic Society one, having had two but having handed one back to the Postal Museum. That made a clear total of four. However, a recent enquiry of these three organisations gave the following result: British Library one, Postal Museum two and the Royal Philatelic Society nil, having now also handed their second one back to the Postal Museum. When in 1990 the Postal Museum told me they had two handstamps in their possession, they must have forgotten that one of them was out on loan to the Royal Philatelic Society, so that this handstamp finished up being counted twice.

Cover 1

This cover addressed to Camberley in Surrey was cancelled at Cannes on 9 June 1940 and despite the turmoil of the Battle of France seems to have reached Paris before the Germans got there five days later. Their arrival meant that the cover could not be forwarded to England. It was therefore marked 'RETOUR A L'ENVOYEUR' (Return to



Cover 2

(reproduced by courtesy of Martin Evans and the Civil Censorship Study Group)

Sender), but this could not be accomplished before the Germans banned all postal communications between the northern and southern zones of France on 1 August. The *'RETOUR A L'ENVOYEUR'* was therefore crossed out and the cover marked *'NON ADMIS'* (Inadmissible). Postal workers then opened it with a view to destroying it if it contained nothing of value, but in it they found a cheque. They marked the top left corner of the cover *'1 Ch. pol.'* (that is *'1 Chèque postal'*, this being a cheque drawn on the French Post Office Bank). They then resealed the cover with a standard Post Office sealing label before adding it to the other letters being hidden away from the Germans. All this is, of course, unless they hid it away first and then checked it for its contents later, perhaps on 14 February 1942, the date pencilled over the *'1 Ch. pol.'* endorsement. The further endorsement reading *'Chq 608'* may well have been added on arrival in London, which must have been between 30 March and 2 May 1945. There is no indication as to when the cover was finally delivered to the addressee. Examples of the covers opened by the postal workers in this way are none too easy to find nowadays. One belonging to the Kenneth Sargeant collection was illustrated in Journal 179.

Cover 2

This cover addressed to Manchester was cancelled at Budapest on 8 June 1940, detained in France during the German occupation, released to London in March-April 1945, stamped with the special handstamp and then delivered to its Manchester address, from which it was redirected to Ilkley on 17 April and back to Manchester on 21 April. At first this looks all very normal, but in reality it should not have been delivered to the Manchester address when it was, for instructions had been issued that detained mail received from Paris should not be forwarded to the addressee if it was to or from a country with which the

United Kingdom no longer had a postal service. Any such mail was to be detained pending instructions. In April 1945 there was no postal service with Hungary, nor would there be one until 2 October in the case of some business correspondence and until 28 November in the case of other types of mail as well. Thus it was that the cover from Hungary that I illustrated on page 29 of Journal 175 was not received by its addressee in London until 10 October. The cover to Manchester should not have been released until then either. As it was, it took only a little over 4 years 10 months to reach the addressee instead of a little over 5 years 4 months.

Cover 3

This (see pp 130-1) is one of the letters released to London from Paris in 1945 with the United States the final destination. The British did not stamp these letters with the *'Detained in France'* handstamp, which was reserved for mail destined for United Kingdom addressees only. Instead they forwarded the letters just as they were to the United States, enclosing with them a verbal note explaining the delay. The letters — or some of them at least — arrived at New York on 17 May. The New York Postmaster decided to have 5,000 labels printed with the message *'This article was held in France during the German occupation and has now been released by the French authorities'*. These labels were printed on 21 May, as shown by the print details given at the bottom of the labels themselves. They were then stuck onto the mail ready for its final despatch some ten days after its arriving in New York. Although 5,000 labels were printed (the minimum economic quantity according to Peter Hartland-Swann), it is highly unlikely that all were used, although a fair number must have been needed, for otherwise the postmaster would not have felt it worthwhile having them printed in the first place. However, very few examples of mail bearing these labels seem to exist today.

One example, a cover sent to New York from New Caledonia on 17 May 1940, is illustrated in Peter Hartland-Swann's article in Journal 178. Another, this one sent to New York from Le Puy-en-Vélay in France on 10 July 1940, appears in Robert Johnson's *Interruption of the Mails in Time of War and Civil Commotion* and also in his article in Bulletin N° 149 of the Civil Censorship Study Group. In the latter Robert Johnson also mentions a further cover that he once saw sent to New York from France, this one also cancelled on 10 July 1940.

The cover that concerns us here was sent not from France to the United States, but from the United States to France. It was sent registered. It was stamped at Long Island on 10 June 1940 and then at New York on 10 and 11 June. It was addressed to the Fédération des Sociétés Juives in the Avenue de la République in Paris. It reached Paris but not the Federation, for the premises were closed. The postman wrote on the back '*Absent Maison Fermée*' (Away House Shut Up) and then (with missing accents added) '*à représenter délai expiré*' (to be presented again at end of retention period). After a second attempt to deliver the letter, the postman added on the back (again with a missing accent added) '*absent Dernier [...] Présentation*' (away Last Call to present it).^{*} The Jewish owners or tenants were staying away from their office, perhaps having wisely joined the mass exodus to the south of France during the German advance on Paris. On 6 July, at some point before, during or after the attempts to deliver the letter, the cover was backstamped at Post Office 11 in the Rue Mercœur, near the Avenue de la République. The cover was eventually marked '*RETOUR A L'ENVOYEUR*'. In the absence of postal relations between the northern zone of France and the United States, the postal workers decided the letter should join the others they had hidden away from the Germans in the Main Post Office in Paris. In 1945 the letter was released to London with the others and then returned to New York, which it reached on 17 May. There it had a label stuck on it. However, this label differed from those on the other three covers already mentioned in that it had 'RETURNED TO SENDER' printed above the main text. The Postmaster had evidently thought it helpful to indicate returned mail in this way. The print details at

the bottom of this label are the same as those on the other labels, but it is not known if the labels with 'RETURNED TO SENDER' on were included in the 5,000 without this inscription or were in addition to them. The cover was eventually delivered back to its sender on 29 May 1945, that is, 4 years 11 months 19 days after it had first been sent.

Cover 4

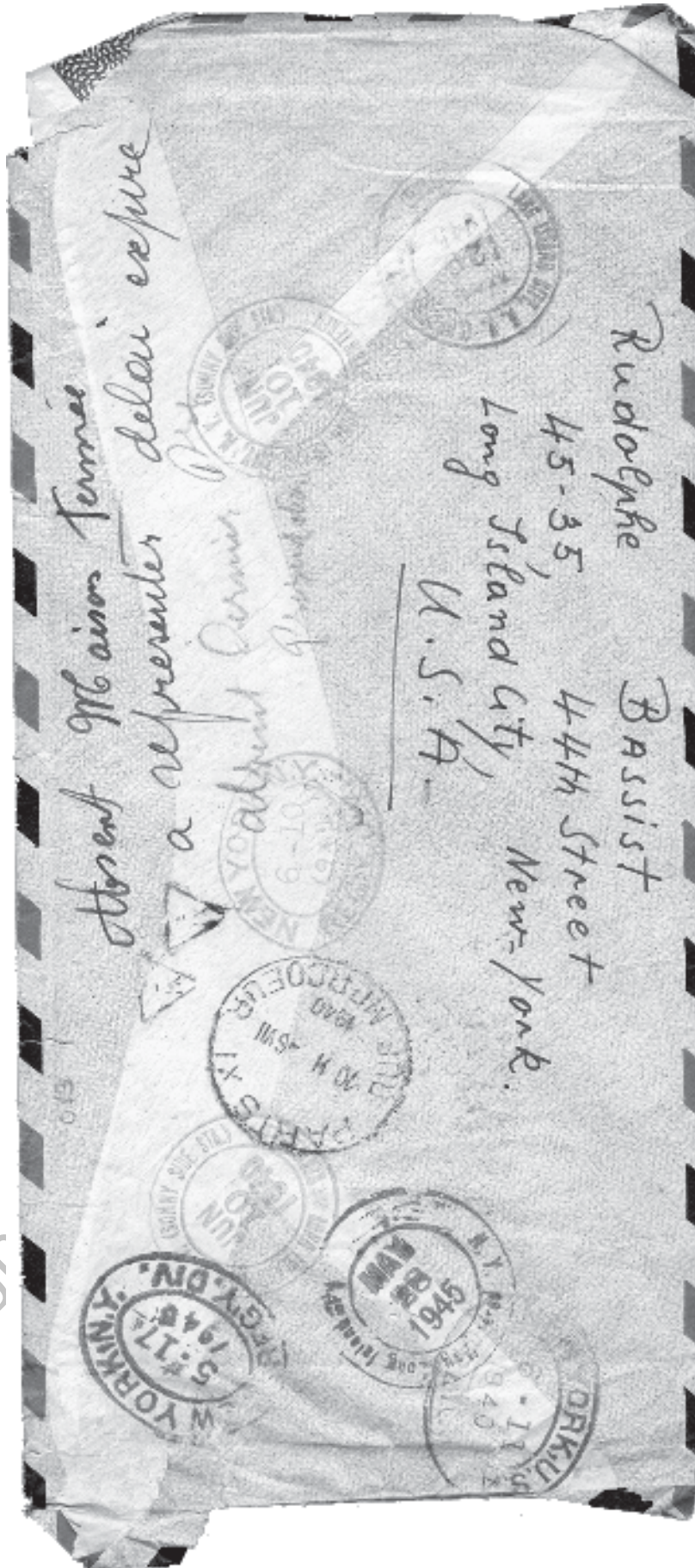
This cover (see p 132) does not fit into the scheme of things as laid down in an explanatory letter sent from the Main Post Office in Paris to London in 1945, since it could not have been caught in Paris when the German troops arrived there in June 1940 but must have somehow arrived there later during the occupation itself. A small number of such covers can be found. They *may* have been among those covers that came to London in March-April 1945 in five bags outside those originally recorded. One such cover was illustrated in my article in Journal 175. Cancelled in Portugal on as late as 6 September 1940, it was destined for Guernsey but finished up with the letters being hidden away in the Main Post Office in Paris. I explained how this probably came about. I recently found in a 1992 issue of the *Îles Normandes* an illustration of another very similar cover also addressed to Guernsey and cancelled in Portugal, this time probably on 3 September 1940.

In the case of our cover illustrated here the country of origin was not Portugal but China and it was destined not for Guernsey but for the United Kingdom. The cover was sent from Shanghai on 4 July 1940, twelve days after the signing of the Franco-German Armistice entrenching the Germans in the northern zone of France. It was addressed to London but for some reason was sent to France. Once in France it finished up in Paris. We are left wondering, however, not only why it was sent to France but also how it got there. By the Siberia route? No! For it bears none of the German censor marks that such mail received on its journey. Was it sent on one of the few ships listed by Raymond Salles as having arrived at Marseille from the Far East between June and November 1941? It is possible, but the question then arises as to why the French Post Office did not then put the letter in with all the other mail that was being regularly sent to London via Lisbon. (The Vichy Government let postal relations continue between the southern zone it controlled and the United Kingdom. Not until the German occupation of the southern zone in November 1942 were postal relations with the United Kingdom finally broken off.) If the letter arrived at Marseille, it must have been held in the southern zone until it could be sent to Paris some time after the Germans lifted the ban on letters between the two zones on 1 March 1943. In Paris it would then have been put with the mail hidden away in June 1940. Another question now presents itself, however: Why was the letter sent to Paris from the southern zone at all? After all, the French postal workers at places in the south of France had hidden away a number of letters destined for the United Kingdom when the Germans occupied the southern zone in 1942 and these they simply released into the normal postal service (with no special handstamp explaining the delay) some time after postal relations with the United Kingdom resumed after the liberation.

* The note is problematic. The first line reads in full '*absent Dernier P*[+ two or three unclear letters]'. The second line reads '*Présentation*'. The word after '*Dernier*' should be masculine, perhaps the word '*Passage*' (= Call) abbreviated to '*Pse*', although such an abbreviation does not seem too likely. The cover was shown to the counter staff at a French post office to see if they could identify the mystery word, but opinions varied and no consensus was reached. As the unclear letters after the 'P' look very much like the 're' of the word '*Présentation*' on the second line, it could be that the postman began to write '*Présentation*' on the first line, found there was inadequate room to finish it comfortably and so abandoned it to write the word underneath instead. This leaves the problem, however, that the adjective '*Dernier*' should then be in the feminine! Had the postman perhaps started out with the idea of writing '*Passage*' and then changed it to '*Présentation*' without changing the adjective to agree with it? Or did the postman just make a careless slip in his haste to write the note and get on with his round? Or was he just none too good at spelling? Or is there some other altogether different explanation?



Cover 3 (front)



Cover 3 (back)



Cover 4

All these questions might lead us to suspect that this is not a genuine cover — or, to be more precise, that it is a genuine cover that travelled normally from Shanghai to London but that has had a faked handstamp and phoney endorsement added to it by someone up to no good. However, Nicholas Mays, the Deputy Archivist at Times International, has confirmed that the initials S.H.C. at the end of the endorsement stating the letter was received at *The Times* on 10 October 1945 were those of Stanley Harold Cohen, who was working in the newspaper's Pensions Department at the time. Moreover, Nicholas Mays confirmed that the address is in the handwriting of David Stewart Fraser, who was *The Times* correspondent in China from 1912 to 1939. There can therefore be no doubt that this cover is genuine. Perhaps one of our members can explain first why this cover might have been sent to France and not to the United Kingdom and then how it might have got to France with the result it finished up in the northern zone with the mail hidden away in Paris until 1945.

The cover arrived in London from Paris by 2 May at the latest, this being the day on which the last consignment was received, but it was not delivered immediately to the addressee, as postal relations between the United Kingdom and China had not yet been resumed and, as stated earlier, the ruling was that none of the released letters should be forwarded to their addressees if they came from countries with which the United Kingdom had not yet resumed postal relations. As it turned out, the resumption of postal

relations with China would not be announced until 24 October. Mr Cohen received his long-delayed letter two weeks before this announcement. It had taken 5 years 3 months 6 days to reach him.

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Boules de Moulins

Ashley Lawrence

Introduction

During the Franco-German War of 1870-71 the Germans besieged Paris. For more than 100 days, between 19 September 1870 and 28 January 1871, the Germans made every effort to render the French capital incommunicado. For their part, Parisians devised ingenious methods for communicating with the outside world. Messages were sent out of Paris aboard manned balloons (most of which carried baskets of homing pigeons as well as mailbags). The pigeons brought back messages from the provinces and abroad, and the pigeon post became particularly effective once M. Dagron showed how official and private dispatches could be carried on microfilm. However, there was a limited supply of trained pigeons, and the extreme winter conditions made their flight to Paris irregular and uncertain.

Other means of improving communications were tried. Five dogs were flown out of Paris aboard the balloon *Le Général Faidherbe*. Their trainer, M. Hurel, claimed they could act as couriers, and bring coded messages back to Paris, hidden in specially designed collars. The dogs were duly equipped, and released near Orleans: they were never seen again. A cable that had been laid secretly along the bed of the Seine was discovered and cut by the Germans. There were ingenious and well-meaning, but impractical, proposals for an aerial telegraph wire to Paris, supported by balloons flying miles apart, and for primitive versions of submarines and dirigible airships. "*Le Général Chanzy*" carried the prototype of a special divers' suit; unfortunately it landed in Bavaria. Some of the suggestions were worthy of Jules Verne; others might have greeted Gulliver on his travels in Laputa.

The best of these imaginative schemes was the so-called "*Boule de Moulins*", invented by Pierre-Charles Delort, a former mayor of Lyon, and promoted by Delort in association with an engineer Louis Emile Robert and a publicist J. Isca Vonoven, which was intended to carry mail into Paris along the bottom of the River Seine. This was a more sophisticated version of a method used for the smuggling of contraband at the Belgian frontier. As a postal service, it was ultimately a failure, but the scheme was so extraordinary that it deserves its place in the postal history of the Siege of Paris.

Boule de Moulins

The *Boule* was a hollow zinc sphere, measuring 13cm in diameter and 20cm in height, about the size of a man's head. It was designed to contain 500 - 800 letters, was rustproof, and could be made watertight by welding on the cover once the letters had been inserted. Sealed compartments of air at each end enabled the *Boule* to retain buoyancy, and not sink into the mud at the bottom of the Seine. The outside of the *Boule* was shaped with twelve vanes: these would act rather like a paddle wheel, and enable the container to roll along the river bed, and be pushed downstream by the force of the current into Paris. During its journey, the *Boule* would be concealed from the enemy, and would not interfere with any river traffic. Once

in Paris, it would be caught in nets stretched across the bottom of the Seine.

At the beginning of October 1870, Robert, a former president of the Chamber of Commerce at Algiers, approached General Trochu, the Governor of Paris, whom he had known in Algeria, and showed him the device. Trochu sent an officer, the Comte de Béarn, with Robert to meet the Director General of Posts in Paris, Dr Germain Rampont-Lechin.

In the meantime, the *Boule's* inventor Delort applied to patent the device, describing it as a "*Sphère sous Marine*". The application was made on 21 November 1870, and the patent was issued on 28 January 1871, the day the armistice was signed.

Following initial tests on the Bièvre, a small tributary of the Seine, official trials were carried out on 1 and 2 December, attended by Rampont and officers from his staff. Divers placed a net, 280 metres wide and one metre high, across the bottom of the Seine at Port à l'Anglais, near Vitry. The trials were successful, and on 6 December a contract was drawn up between the promoters and M. Rampont, and approved by the Ministry of Finance, for the postal use of "the agent", the name given to the device to preserve secrecy.

Vonoven remained in Paris to order reserve nets and to complete their installation at Port à l'Anglais, in readiness for the capture of the *Boules*. If the scheme succeeded, huge quantities of mail could be brought into Paris beneath the surface of the Seine, in defiance of the German stranglehold on the capital.

On 7 December Delort and Robert left Paris aboard "*Le Denis Papin*" with prototypes of "the agent", to persuade the postal authorities in Tours to approve their project. The balloon was piloted by a sailor, Daumalin, and carried one other passenger, a National Guard messenger Pierre de Montgaillard, 55 kilos of mail and a basket of three pigeons. It departed from the Gare d'Orléans at 1.00am, and having travelled 120 miles, landed safely near La Ferté-Bernard in the Sarthe at 7.00am. Delort and Robert reached Tours without difficulty. There, they found the Delegation about to retreat to Bordeaux, the Army of the Loire having been defeated and Orleans having been recaptured by the Germans the previous day.

Apparently, Delort and Robert were welcomed at first by M. Steenackers, the Director General of Telegraphs and Posts. He even suggested that the new system might be used to send off the backlog of letters awaiting despatch to Paris. They had further discussions with M. Feillet, Steenackers' immediate deputy and, before leaving for Clermont-Ferrand, where the *Boules* were to be manufactured, Robert passed a communiqué to the provincial press, announcing the inauguration of the service. Letters were to be sent to him, *Poste Restante*, Clermont-Ferrand, under cover of a franked envelope and enclosing a postal order for 1F20.

Delort and Robert reached Clermont-Ferrand on 13 December, and prepared to set up their service. On 16 December they were staggered to learn of an order by Steenackers forbidding them to proceed, and instructing them to return to sender any mail received. Their scheme interfered with the post office's monopoly, and if they did not obey, the Public Prosecutor was to intervene. They returned to Bordeaux, where Steenackers informed them that he did not recognise the contract made in Paris, and that the Delegation was in sole charge of these affairs. This was characteristic of Steenackers, and arose from his animosity toward M. Rampont, whom he regarded as a rival: three weeks earlier, Steenackers had rejected the contract made by M. Rampont with M. Dagron. Steenackers insisted on renegotiating the contract with Delort and Robert. He reduced the price of the service, and thus the share of the revenue that the promoters would derive from the scheme.

The Service

The new agreement was signed, and a Decree was issued on 23 December approving the scheme. The new postal service was announced in the *Moniteur Universel* on 26 / 27 December, and posters were issued giving details to the public. The service commenced on 4 January 1871. Letters were not to exceed 4 grams in weight, and the address had to contain the words "*Paris, par Moulins (Allier)*", thus giving the service its name. Postage for letters from France and Algeria was one franc, of which 80 centimes would be paid to the promoters, 40 centimes on initial receipt of the letter, and the balance on delivery in Paris. The Postal Authority would retain the remaining 20 centimes as its normal postal charge, and gave no guarantee that letters would be delivered. Any combination of French stamps totalling one franc was acceptable, the most common being 80c + 20c, or 5 x 20c.

Delort had intended to operate the service from Clermont-Ferrand. Instead, Steenackers designated Moulins in the *département* of Allier, some 185 miles south of Paris. In response to the public announcements, mail began to arrive by rail from the provinces and abroad, and was processed at the post office in Moulins, where the postmaster M. Bertrand arranged for the letters to be stuffed into the *Boules*. Delort saw to the welding of the covers on the *Boules*, and to their despatch to Nevers or to Cosne (Nièvre). From there, disguised as a peasant, Robert took the *Boules* (often hidden under a covering of hay) by cart or by boat or on foot, to be lowered into the Seine at various points up-river from Paris. The first four *Boules* were immersed at Bray-sur-Seine, some 12 miles from Paris on 4 January 1871. Later *Boules* were put into the river at Thomery near Fontainebleau, and from the bridge at Samois. After each "drop", Robert returned to Cosne, where the *Boules* were stored.

The risks were considerable. The Germans were constantly on the lookout for clandestine couriers, and Chancellor Bismarck had warned that anyone caught crossing the siege lines without permission would face the death penalty. According to the letter that Robert later sent to General Trochu, 55 *Boules* were launched between 4 and 31 January 1871.

The promoters felt bitterly towards M. Steenackers, blaming him for having repudiated their original contract, and for causing delays in the setting up of the service. They were still seeking settlement of their claims in 1873.

After the Siege

The scheme was a failure insofar as no *Boules* arrived in Paris before the city surrendered on 28 January 1871. The *Boules* could not cope with the river's meanderings and cross currents, and many foundered or became stuck in the muddy banks of the Seine. The winter of 1870-71 was one of the coldest on record; by mid-January, as the Seine froze, ice-flows were a further hazard, tearing or carrying away the nets. Several days before the capitulation, Delort had been ordered to stop the despatch of more letters, as no word had been received from Vonoven in Paris of the successful arrival of any *Boules*. The service was officially suspended on 31 January, and mail remaining at Moulins and at Cosne was sent on several weeks later.

On 6 February the Controller of the Lyon-Paris *ambulant* reported the presence of some 14,600 letters in Moulins. These, the so-called *Sac de Riz* letters, he made into 15 parcels, and hid the packages in sacks of rice to be transported (with German consent) into the starving capital. The letters were successfully smuggled into Paris inside the sacks, and distributed. For the most part they are postmarked with dates of despatch later than 15 January, and bear Paris distribution marks of 12 or 13 February 1871.

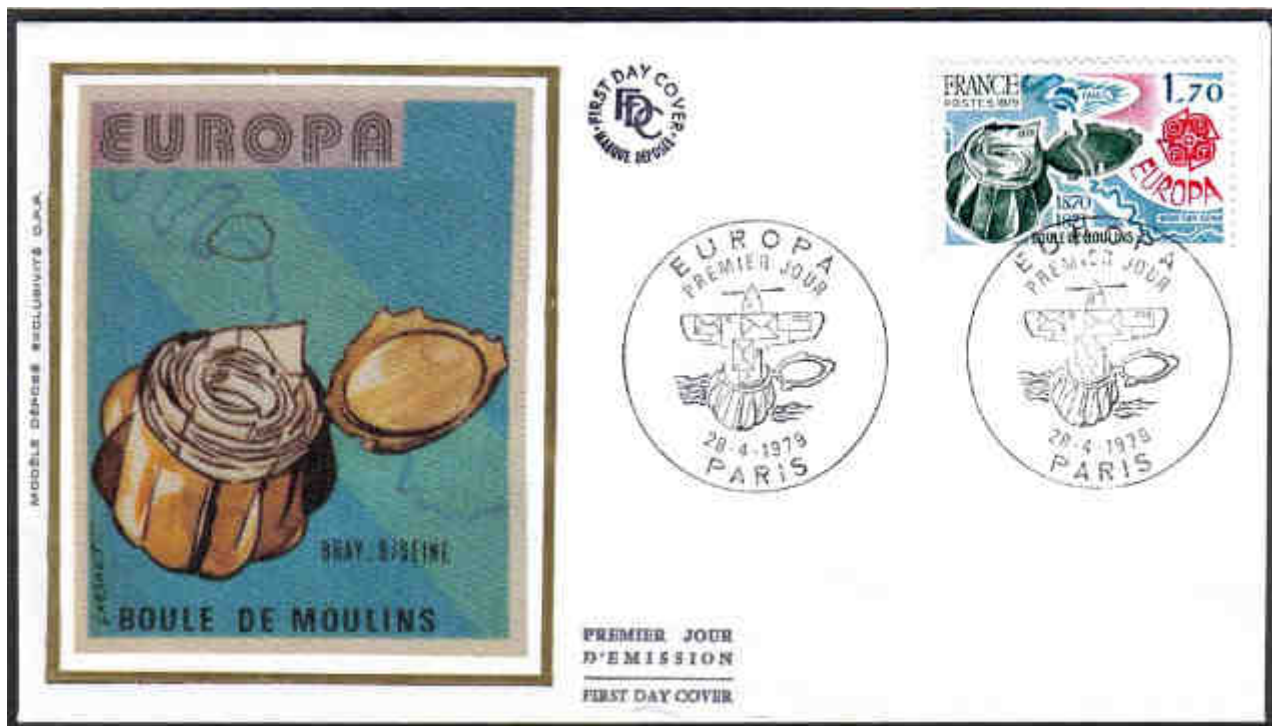
On his return to Cosne, the same Controller reported finding *Boules* ready for despatch. The contents were reclaimed by the Departmental Authorities, and were sent to Paris after the Germans permitted the free entry of mail. For the most part these letters are postmarked with despatch dates between 10 and 15 January, and carry Paris distribution cachets of 17 to 22 February.

The letters from the backlog at Moulins and Cosne show no traces of damp, and the adhesive stamps to the value of one franc are usually intact.

The letters that were carried by *Boules*, written on thin paper to meet the weight limit, suffered to varying degrees from their immersion. Those found between 1910 and 1954 were not passed on to the postal authorities, and many found their way into the stamp trade.

The first *Boule*, containing 450 letters, was retrieved from the Seine near Les Andelys on 6 March 1871. Another was fished out of the river at Quillebeuf (Eure) on 26 March, and its contents were delivered to Paris during the period of the Commune. Others were found at Ponthierry (1871), Corbeil (1872), Le Havre (1872), Mantes (1873) and Choisy-le-Roi (1882). The Paris floods of 1910 uncovered a *Boule* by the Quai d'Auteuil. Since then, more have been retrieved at Montereau (in 1920 and again in 1956) and during repairs to the bridge at Fer de Melun (1942). Children playing in reeds found one at Bazoches-lès-Bray in 1951, and another was found there in 1954.

The discovery of a *Boule* during dredging operations at St Wandrille near Rouen in August 1968 resulted in lengthy



court proceedings over the ownership of the *Boule* and its contents, some 540 letters. There were several interested parties, and the court had to decide between their competing claims: M. Le Grevellec who had discovered the *Boule*; the authorities at Rouen where the find took place; the PTT, the French postal authority; the granddaughter of M. Delort who had inherited the rights to the registered patent in her grandfather's invention; representatives of those by whom the letters were written, and to whom the letters were addressed. Only the wards in *Jarndyce v Jarndyce* were missing! The legal arguments and appeals lasted until 1976, when the *Cour de Cassation* upheld the decision of the Court of Appeal that the *Boule* belonged to the postal administration, and that the letters belonged to the heirs of those who wrote them or to whom they were addressed. The PTT was ordered to conserve

the letters for 30 years, during which the heirs were entitled to establish their claim, so that the letters might finally be delivered.

The most recent find was in 1982, at Vatteville-la-Rue. Altogether, some 35 *Boules* have been recovered to date. It is estimated that some 35,000 to 40,000 letters were received in Moulins for despatch by *Boules*, of which about half were actually put into the Seine.

A Europa stamp (seen on the First Day Cover above) was issued in 1979 (Yvert n° 2047) that illustrated a *Boule de Moulins*, the background showing the flow of the Seine between Bray-sur-Seine and Paris. The postcard from the Musée de la Poste (also seen above) shows the *Boule* that was recovered from the Seine, and is now displayed in the postal museum in Paris.

There are still *Boules* waiting to be discovered. One day, perhaps soon, a *Boule* will be found that contains letters

addressed to me. My Bank Manager will be so pleased! Dream on, Ashley



Boule Cover

This cover is addressed to Madame Sénéchal, Rue de Passy 59, Paris. It is endorsed "*Paris par Moulins*" but the name of the *département*, Allier, is omitted, which is unusual.

The cover was sent by rail to Moulins. It is postmarked *Gare de Caen, 3^e / 2 Janv. 71*, and on the reverse *Cherbourg à Paris, 2 Janv. 71*.

The cover appears to have been franked 1F60, rather than the required 1F, as it bears the impression of two of the Bordeaux 80 centimes Rose stamps (Yv 49). However, there is space beneath the upper stamp for the missing 20c

Blue stamp (Yv 44), and as the letters were crammed tightly into the *Boule*, the lower impression may be offset from another letter.

The letter was conveyed by *Boule*, but failed to arrive in Paris. The stamps soaked off while the *Boule* was immersed, but the envelope has absorbed the die, and clearly shows the Rose colour and the design of the Cérès Head of the Bordeaux stamps.

This cover probably came from the *Boule* that was retrieved from the River Seine during the floods of 1910.

Charles Blomefield

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Printed Envelopes with Directional Markings from Saigon

Ian McQueen

In Journal 243 of March 2007 (pages 14-15) I published copies of some printed envelopes from Saigon which were marked for sending to Marseille or Calcutta. Imagine my surprise when, soon after sending these items to the Editor (back in December 2006), I went to a local stamp fair and found three similar, but nevertheless very different, "Calcutta" types in a box which the only dealer there with any stock of postal history items handed to me to examine.

The only difference with these new ones is that they were all sent registered, which suggests to me that they may have enclosed money being sent home to Indian families by Indian men who were working in Indo-China. All are a bit tatty, but that is not very surprising in the circumstances, and in all they comprise quite a range of dates, 1933-39, whereas those previously published were from 1951-54. So how many more printing types may still turn up? It amazes me that there are so many printings.





Here are some more Indo-China covers printed with directional markings. Having now obtained quite a few of them it occurs to me that there may well be more different types still to be noted.

These three belong to the 1932-34 period, and their obvious difference is the colour of the printings, notably the greenish-yellow border frame and the dark blue of the "Par Avion" and the route direction. All are for *VIA AIR-ORIENT*, *INDOCHINE-FRANCE* and *PAR BAGDAD-*

MARSEILLE (this latter portion of the inscription set either from top to bottom or from bottom to top) and one example has its yellow printing virtually a pale orange colour. One of these did not start at Saigon, but was posted at *DALAT / ANNAN* and passed through Saigon the next day.

These three definitely come from separate and distinctive printings, which suggests that there may well be others which I have not seen. So it would be nice to hear of any more which members can report.





Much later this year I came across two more exhibits to join the others. The complete cover of 1934 with the **SAIGON-MARSEILLE** at the top left corner is an item I have had for years, but completely forgotten because I had it not with any others, but in an album of Indo-China rates and air fees. The illustration of the bottom of an envelope with the **PAR AVION DE SAIGON À**, to which the sender

has added 'Marseille' in manuscript, was sent to me many years ago by a Hong Kong specialist. When I rediscovered it I tried to get a complete copy, but unfortunately without success – though I did make a note at the time that it was used in 1932. Hopefully some member who has an example will contribute a complete copy. The saga of these printed envelopes continues!



PAR AVION DE SAIGON À *Marseille*

SHORTER ITEMS - INCLUDING QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Demonetised Madagascar Red Cross Stamp



I have recently consulted with several members of the Society in an attempt to solve the mystery of this cover dated 7 May 1926. I first sought to find a work of reference that would assist me to identify the date(s) of demonetisation of the Red Cross surcharged stamps of World War I — and I was particularly keen to see if the Madagascar 10c + 5c had been demonetised by 1926. Maurice Tyler was able to confirm what I already knew, that the French Red Cross 10c + 5c of 1914 (both printed and surcharged issues) was demonetised on 1 April 1921, but he had no information about the colonial issues, although they were likely to have been dealt with similarly at the same time or shortly afterwards.

Colin Spong was also unable to fathom the cover, although he adjudged that the total franking is only 17c at the most, and that the rate should have been 1F25 as at 1 February 1926. There is absolutely no evidence of any other stamps having been removed; there are no tax marks, and the only other mark (on the reverse) is an arrival mark added at Silverton, Oregon, in June 1926. It must have travelled to Oregon by surface mail.

It was Michael Round who finally came up with the definitive answer about demonetisation. According to the 1936 Yvert Specialised (apparently the last specialised volume for the Colonies) each colony's Red Cross surcharged issue was demonetised on the same date as the French stamps, 1 April 1921. Astonishingly, this now renders the total valid postage on that letter as being 7c out of the 1F25 required.

I believe that this cover instances one of the latest uses I've seen of the 1914-18 Red Cross issues postally cancelled. It just leaves our readers to offer a (sensible) solution as to how on earth it would have passed through so many hands without attracting some form of tax mark for the outstanding 1F18.

Incidentally, Colin Spong tells me that the Minister for the Colonies in Paris authorised the overprinting of unwanted values (where large stocks were held) which resulted in the 30c cinnamon being devalued to 5c.

Any help from members in solving this mystery will be very welcome!

John West

French Guinea Post Offices

There are several reasons for writing articles for specialist philatelic magazines such as the Journal. One is to assist future researchers by recording new discoveries or by bringing together in one place information already published, but in a variety of different sources. Probably of more interest to the general reader is the sharing of an enthusiasm for something off the beaten track in a way which (hopefully) the reader will also find interesting. A third reason is the hope that inaccuracies, misun-

derstandings or poorly expressed thoughts will be corrected or illuminated by a second opinion.

This last has been done — and we welcome it — by Peter Kelly in his comments (Journal 245, page 88) on our article on the Post Offices of French Guinea*. It will be recalled that he discussed the *bureaux gare*, an obscure postal facility which has not to our knowledge been the subject of an

*Journals 243, March 2007, pages 5-9, and 244, June 2007, pages 49-54.

authoritative study, and the not much better documented *boîte mobile* service in the colonies#.

In the absence of an authoritative study we were necessarily speculative about the *bureaux gare*, and we have little doubt that Peter's view is correct — the function of the station staff was confined to seeing that incoming mail was handed over to the addressee or his representative.

Similarly, with outgoing mail we think that railway

#The article "The 'Boîte Mobile' in the Colonies" by Bob Stone mentioned in Peter's footnote was reprinted in Journal 137/138 (issued June 1978) but, as he says, it makes no reference to French Guinea.

personnel's responsibilities were limited to accepting correspondence and seeing that it was put on the next available train either by handing it to the *convoyeur* or (in his absence) placing it in a *boîte mobile*, as Peter suggests may have been done in Madagascar. This is still speculative, but it does have the merit of making sense.

We are sorry if we gave the impression (Journal 243, page 6) that we were implying that there was an interchangeability between the *bureaux gare* and *boîte mobile* services. This was not our intention; Peter has in fact correctly set out the position that we intended to convey but did not put very well. So thank you, Peter, for your helpful comments and for your kind appreciation of our efforts.

Bill Mitchell and Laurence Lambert

French Congo Pigeon Post



I have a 1907 French Congo 'Pigeon Post' cover originating in Brazzaville, addressed to France and dated 16 September 1907, and of which to date the background history has not been clear.

A recent chat with John Hammonds at the Royal prompted me to check a report in *Gibbons Stamp Weekly* of 16 November 1907 – with an interesting result:

Pigeon Post

It is announced that the pigeon post installed at Brazzaville, the French station on the Congo River, near Stanley Pool, is now working for a distance of 190 miles around that town and in every direction, as the pigeons have been trained most carefully. It is now a question of establishing other pigeon posts at distances of 125 miles from Brazzaville to Lake Chad.

Now the 'direct line' distance from Brazzaville to Loango is 177 miles and within the 190 miles' range if carried by a

pigeon (Loango à Bordeaux *paquebot* probably struck on the steamer at Libreville - the day is not clear in the date block). The franking of 35c is made up of 10c for 15g letter rate to France and 25c registration.

Looking at Salles, I find that the Chargeurs Réunis steamer *Europe* left Libreville on 24 September on the monthly service to Bordeaux, having made local connections from Loango (c 2 days) and ports to Loando to meet that departure; and the Bordeaux arrival fits with the arrival backstamp cds 13 October.

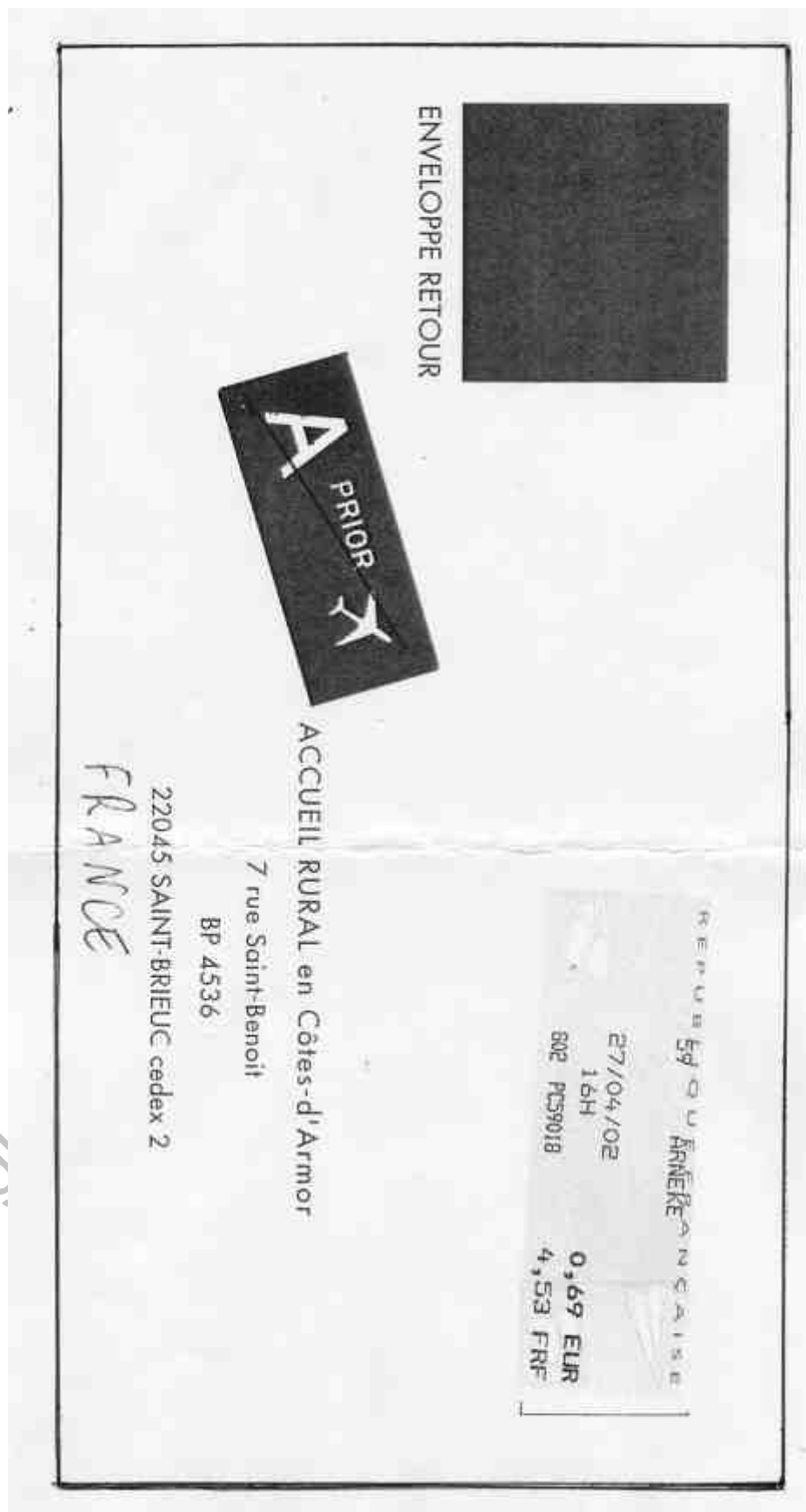
Contributions from members adding to the story of the development of this and the then prospective service to Lake Chad would be welcome

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Salles, *La Poste Maritime Française*, Vol 3
Gibbons Stamp Weekly, Vol 6 N° 20 dated 16 November 1907

John Yeomans

A Likely Story! - of a PRIORity Cover



The cover illustrated was given to me by the late André Le Guillou¹ for my collection of Priority marks and labels.

It is a curious item in that, although franked (0,69€ for the 2nd weight step, *LETTRE* tariff of 01.01.02) and posted in France (Arnèke - 59 Nord), it also has *FRANCE* added to the printed address in manuscript in blue ink and a Belgian “*PRIOR*” label annulled by a diagonal line in black ink.

As far as I was concerned it seemed to be simply a question of the sender changing his mind, but the cover was accompanied by a more detailed if more imaginative explanation (here translated from André’s original French):

Little Belgian story...

A Flemish couple wanted to send a letter to a tourist organisation in France.

To make sure it got there more quickly they even used a “*PRIOR*” label.

But, it was expensive, *une fois*.²

They therefore put a line through the onerous option and ended up in the *ECONOMIC* section – the 0-100g weight step – for a letter which weighed less than 50g.

Still too expensive, *une fois*²...

They then drove (or thumbed a lift) to a small village in France where they posted the letter after discussing the price at the counter.

Thus they benefited from the French domestic rate, no doubt cheaper by a few euro centimes than the Belgian export tariff, even *ECONOMIC*.

Clear profit all along the line.

And since the “*PRIOR*” label was *mal (barrée)*³, no, not *mal barrée*⁴ but *mal rayée*⁵, the letter must have travelled quickly from the French border (the right side) to St Brieuc for a reasonable price!

No saving is too small!

Notes

1. André Le Guillou (1928-2006) is probably more well known to those philatelists who are essentially interested in stamps and their fabrication, He was a member of the SO.CO.CO.DA.MI for 36 years, of which 22 of them were spent as President, General Secretary and Editor of most of the Society’s publications, including the News-sheet and Supplements.
2. *une fois* - - transposition from Dutch - reinforces an assertion, an order or a question.
3. (mal) barrer = to cross out (badly).
4. “mal barrer” = to get off to a bad start.
5. (mal) rayer = to cross out (badly).

NB The More Likely Story

The letter was sent to a tourist organisation in St Brieuc by a Belgian couple from Brussels.

They must, initially, have intended to post their missive in Belgium — whence the handwritten *FRANCE* and the “*PRIOR*” label.

For some reason, unknown of course, they changed their minds and their letter was posted in Arnèke in France.

Since “*LISA*” labels are applied only by post office staff, the letter must have been posted “over” the counter. The same clerk, in all probability, put the line through the “*PRIOR*” label.

John Simmons

French West Africa – the 1940 Airmail Stamps

As Richard Wheatley rightly points out in the final remarks in his short article “French Sudan 1940 Airmail Stamps” on pages 60-61 of Journal 244 (June 2007), the face values of the five stamps in this set do not in general correspond with the then current airmail postage rates. Identical stamps (apart from the colony name) were issued for the other colonies within the Federation of French West Africa – Senegal, French Guinea, Ivory Coast, Dahomey, Niger and Mauritania – as well as the Mandated Territory of Togo, and according to the Dallay catalogue all 8 sets were issued on 8 February 1940.

Richard has overlooked two points – it took some time to design, engrave and print stamps and get them into post offices in the colonies, and airmail supplements varied according to the distance to be covered. If these two factors are taken into account, all the face values can in fact be accounted for.

I will take first the four with the odd 90 centimes. This was the basic French Group surface letter rate, applying (in French West Africa) from 1 January to 30 November 1939 after which, as Richard says, it was increased to 1 franc.

This was a little over two months before the stamps were issued, and it is reasonable to infer that by then the stamps were at an advanced stage of preparation and it was not practicable to re-engrave the value tablets on the dies. Deducting the 90 centimes leaves 1, 2, 4 and 6 francs for airmail supplements, and a browse through the Newsletters produced by Bob Picirilli for the French Colonies Airmail Rates Study Group shows the services for which the stamps were intended at the time of their inception.

(1) 1 franc was the supplement for letters weighing less than 5 gms sent by air within the Federation; it applied from 3 June 1935 to 31 May 1941.

(2) 2 francs obviously applied to internal letters weighing between 5 and 10 gms (all rates were “per 5 gms”). It was also the supplement for under 5 gms letters to several destinations – French Equatorial Africa and French Cameroon flown by the Aéromaritime coastal service (2 June 1939 to 9 July 1943), to French North Africa via Air Afrique (1 November 1938 to 31 May 1941) and – for Senegal and Mauritania only – to France (1 November 1938 to 31 May 1941).

(3) 4 francs, then, was the supplement for internal letters weighing between 15 and 20 gms and for the other destinations listed at (2) above, between 5 and 10 gms.

(4) 6 francs was the supplement for internal letters weighing between 25 and 30 gms, but the 6F90 stamp was inadequate because the basic for this weight was 1F20. It was, however, correct for the 10 to 15 gms weight step for the remaining services at (2) and also, at the time the issue was planned, for second step (5 to 10 gms) letters to Madagascar and Reunion where the rate was 3 francs per 5 gms. In this case, however, the rate was obsolete by the time the stamp was issued, because the supplement, which dated from 1 November 1938, was increased to 8 francs on 7 November 1939.

The odd man out, the 4F50 value, is interesting because it shows how much difference a few weeks can make in stamp production. Unlike the other values it does fit the new rates – for foreign mail. Here, the basic surface rate rose from 2F25 to 2F50 on 1 January 1940 – only one month after the domestic rate increase – yet the die must surely have been amended to fit the new rates, giving a supplement of 2 francs. For all the colonies this was the addition (2 x 1 franc) for letters weighing between 5 and 10 gms flown on the Aëromaritime route to foreign colonies between Dakar and Cotonou – Portuguese Guinea, Sierra

Leone, Gold Coast and British Togo (although Liberia was an independent country, this rate presumably applied for there as well). This rate had been in force since 20 November 1935 (as a generous supply of first flight covers shows, in the event this service did not begin until 1 March 1937).

As from 2 June 1939, 2 francs was also the supplement for letters weighing up to 5 gms sent to foreign colonies between Cotonou and Brazzaville in Middle Congo – Nigeria, British Cameroon and Spanish Guinea. These supplements apparently remained unchanged until after 1945, the cut-off point for the Study Group's enquiries.

And, for Senegal and Mauritania only, there was the 2 francs rate for first step letters to foreign destinations directed to be flown only as far as France. (At the time the issue was being planned there was no additional supplement for onward transmission by air from France to many European countries, but this was an early casualty of World War II – supplements were restored on 29 November 1939.)

I have found that, apart from philatelic mail, these stamps are elusive on cover. *Seul sur lettre*, the “90 centimes” values should not exist; the 4F50 probably ranges from scarce to very rare, depending on places of origin and destination.

Bill Mitchell

Forged 1925 International Philatelic Exhibition Sheetlet

In Journal 245 of September 2007 (page 85) Bob Paterson queried the forged sheetlet he had acquired, with imperforate blue stamps.

The use of the printing plate that produced his blue Paris sheet to make a more convincing forgery can be seen on pages 33 and 34 of my book [*Fakes and Forgeries of 20th Century French Postage Stamps*], where forgers have been

I have a copy of the 1925 Exposition reproduction. It was given out by someone standing on the street outside the July 1989 Paris Expo. I too did a double take when I saw the beautiful reproduction. Mine is n° 6915, but with circular courtesy cancel

PARIS / EXPOSITION PHILATELIQUE FRANCE - PARIS. 17.7.1989

I should like to contribute a comment on Mr Paterson's item (Journal 245, page 85):

This was a sheet produced for publicity purposes by “House of Stamps” (Geneva) and was offered free (at the gates of the Exhibition) at the 1982 Paris International Philatelic Exhibition. It was very well produced, and I believe (but am not sure) that this was part of the production of facsimiles carried out by the company (or an associate company) that was subsequently prosecuted by the British Library because said company had copied rarities from the BL Philatelic Collections, and reproduced them for sale.

more ambitious by adding the “smile and dimples” perforation and unsuccessfully trying to imitate a harrow perforation with a tine perforator.

George Barker bought a blue sheet during its brief period of sale outside a Paris stamp exhibition, and Alan Wood knows all about the “House of Stamps” that produced it. Somewhere I have a short article on the blue sheet.

Geoff Gethin

with 2 figures in the centre holding a tablet, not unlike the Sage tablet.

I stopped to ask the man what he was selling since there was no advertising material given with the sheets, each in its cellophane protector. He shook his head and handed the next number to another *passant*. This is one of those oddities not easily explained.

Ralph Barracano

I'm not sure if forgery is the right description as it is not in the colour of the original, and doesn't attempt to be a forgery of the original – perhaps facsimile/imitation is a better term. Mr Paterson mentions a “little rubber stamp” which said “Reproduction”: it's not a rubber stamp but, with the address of the company and the price (45FF) of its catalogue, was printed on the (gummed) reverse of the sheet.

It is a most interesting/amusing adjunct to one's collection, and depending on the number printed (10,000?) is possibly much scarcer than the original 1925 sheet, for which the printing was 50,000 copies, all sold during the exhibition!

George Barker

More on the Dallay Europe/Asia Catalogue and the Perf 11 Pictorials

I am indebted to three F&CPS colleagues, directly or indirectly, for information further to my review of the Dallay Europe/Asia catalogue (in Journal 245 of September 2007, pages 106-108). Keith Collard kindly informs me that Dallay's **numbering** of stamps is indeed a copyright-avoidance issue, a subject aired in the French press a few years ago and which culminated in Dallay's placing advertisements promising not to infringe Yvert's copyright on numbering.

David Jennings-Bramly has, equally kindly, directed me to a detailed article of his on the mysterious **perf 11 French Colonial pictorials** (in Journal 211 of March 1999, pages 51-57), a highly readable article to which I happily direct other members for full information. David concludes that they are all bogus – one clue being their printing in litho rather than typo (which, to my shame, I had not spotted). A random assortment of values from at least 17 colonial

stamp issues was known at the time of writing: they did not include every one of my Canton selection, however, so there may well be more waiting to be reported. They may have been manufactured around 1970, though the perpetrator has not been positively identified, nor his/her reason for choosing the particular stamps (some scarce, but many common) to be imitated.

Finally, a request from Mick Bister has prompted me to inspect the Germany/French-zone listings more carefully. Here I find that Dallay's **minimum price** is indeed 0.10€ (for certain mounted mint values from 1945-7), and not 0.30€, as I'd thought. This piece of information may only be of direct use to those members wanting to extend their collections cheaply – but it has also warned me (as a reviewer) of the dangers of confining my attention too closely to areas I know more about, before plunging into print.

Michael Round

“T.O.M.O.” on 1921 Morocco Cover



This airmail cover from Rabat to France bears 3 x 25c stamps (SG 47), with the standard French Post Office Rabat cancellation dated 29.11.1921. It would have been transported by Lignes Latécoère on the daily flight which plied between Casablanca and Toulouse, travelling from Toulouse to Le Vésinet (Paris) by train via the Gare d'Austerlitz. To be noted is the enormous increase in airmail traffic with Morocco: in the last months of 1919 some 9,000 letters were carried; in 1920 this rose to 182,000; and in 1921 over 327,000 would be carried.

I sent a photocopy of the cover to George Barker, asking what the initials T.O.M.O. stood for. He was unable to help, but suggested inserting this query in the Journal to see whether other members could suggest the answer. He points out that the cover is probably an official one — the cachet struck is in green (and is of interest in itself) and reads “Résidence Générale de ... au Maroc” — and therefore was probably sent in franchise, and that the 75c in stamps covered the airmail fee. Any comments from members would be welcome.

John Smith

Hexagonal Censorship Mark in French Occupied Zone of Germany



I recently managed to buy this cover, which was rather tatty but had a censorship marking that made me look twice as I had not seen one like it previously. The cachet is hexagonal, and contains the words "*Saisi par les autorités de contrôle*". I looked in the Riemers catalogue, but it is not mentioned there at all, and I wondered if any members of the France & Colonies P S had seen one or could give me some information on it.

My French is non-existent, but someone did tell me "*saisi*" meant confiscated. [The phrase in the hexagon literally means "seized by the monitoring authorities" – so therefore "confiscated" as you suggest — Ed.] My questions therefore are: Did the cover pass through censorship, and if so, where and at what time was this mark in use? There are no other markings and no sealing tape. The date stamp is 16.1.46. I shall be very grateful for any help that can be offered.

Charles Karsten

Comoro Islands Display

In Journal 245 of September 2007 (page 90) Michael Round gave details of his Comoro Island display that is still in progress, and mentioned that he was unable to show any 1975 Mayotte quadrisects, brought about by a shortage of stamps following the island's political separation from the rest of the group.

I wrote an article in the *US France & Colonies Philatelist* 275 of January 2004 (pages 3-9) on the quadrisected and bisected Mayottes. Included are the 2 *arrêtés* of 17

December 1975 and 16 January 1976 authorizing the actions.

The man in charge at Mayotte, *le représentant de l'état* at the time, M. Veyrent, is still living across the street from me. I made a slide show of his treasures (he has the original *arrêtés*) on which he gave a commentary on several occasions, and I still have scans of his material if Mr Round is interested. I don't know if M. Veyrent is interested in selling, but I could ask if anyone is interested.

Ralph Barracano

LIST OF RECENTLY PUBLISHED ARTICLES

Compiled by Colin Spong

Cameo: Journal of the West Africa Study Circle

Vol 10 N° 3 (Whole N° 72) Oct 2007: Another Cameroons Campaign Letter of 1915 (Warrell); Togo: August 1914 (Martin); The Independence of the CEF Post Office Duala in WWI (Maddocks); *Cécogrammes* in Cameroun (Parren); Cameroun - Postage Due Stamps 1916-1923 (May); Cameroun Overprints of the 1990s (Lazar); 1915 CEF Sterling Overprinted Kamerun Postal Stationery (Maddocks).

Bulletin de la COL.FRA

N° 121 3^{ème} Trim 2007: La Réunion: Deux surcharges un timbre (Delpy); Indochine: Service accéléré et voie auto (Venot); Une Semeuse fiscale pour colis postaux à Rouïna [Algérie] (Flotte); Le Service postal à Madagascar en 1913 (Devarennas); La croisière jaune (Hurpet); Les timbres à date de Libreville (Pennacchotti); La construction du chemin de fer et l'histoire postale ferroviaire du Congo (Mercier); Wallis et Futuna: timbres à date année 2000 (Zammith); Sénégal: affiche de bureaux de poste (Venot).

France & Colonies Philatelist

Whole N° 290 (Vol 63 N° 4) Oct 2007: French Colonial Postal Rates 1878-1945 (Picirilli); Genuine and Forged Postmarks of Junde Cameroun (Bratzel); FAM 19 - The New Caledonia Connection (Tucker); World War II - The Colonies "General Issues" Charity Stamps: A Correction and an Addendum (Mitchell); Wither Goest Research? (Herendeen).

L'Écho de la Timbrologie

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

N° 1810 Sep 2007: Marc Roulin, Dis, l'artiste, dessine-moi le timbre de tes rêves (-); La Marianne d'Ève Luquet [2] dernières valeurs en francs (Hella); Premiers envois de l'Aigle (Millet); Duxin, le magicien: 800 pièces inconnues [5] (Storch); Impression ... des timbres ... personnalisés [1] (Marion); La France et le monde à l'heure du rugby (Hella).

N° 1811 Oct 2007: Sylvie Martignat, Dis, l'artiste, dessine-moi le timbre de tes rêves (-); La Marianne d'Ève Luquet [3] Son effigie se décline de toutes les couleurs après le passage à l'euro en janvier 2002 [end] (Hella); Duxin, le magicien 800 pièces inconnues [6] (Storch); Impression ... des timbres ... personnalisés [2] (Marion); Dole, début de l'épopée napoléonienne (-).

N° 1812 Nov 2007: Fabrice Monaci, Dis, l'artiste, dessine-moi le timbre de tes rêves (-); Collectionner les

coins datés (SO.CO.CO.DA.MI); Jean Yvert, A Dieu Pajean (Cosserat); Duxin, le magicien: 800 pièces inconnues [7] (Storch); Un formulaire centenaire encore utilisé en France [coupons-réponse] (Hella); A vendre: vrais faux timbres [Jean Sperati] (Marion); Impression [III] des timbres personnalisés (Marion); Têtes à claques et autres chapeaux (Marion).

Timbres Magazine

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

N° 83 Oct 2007: Le Tchad, une colonie à collectionner (de Pellinec); Les lettres d'ans tant! (de la Mettrie); Carte Postales: Maisons d'écrivains, Lieux de mémoire (Zeyons); Les Guerres du XVIII^e siècle et leurs marques postales [7] (Baudot); Une pénalité non recouvrée (Prugnon); Les Anglais à Diégo-Suarez (Chauvin).

N° 84 Nov 2007: La Guinée: Une collection à explorer (Melot); 1967: la *Marianne de Cheffer...* une consécration posthume (Decaux); Armée du Rhin (de la Mettrie); Pour vos placements, pensez à la Caisse d'épargne... de 1935 [Benjamin Delessert] (Lemasson); La courte et riche histoire des carnets de Polynésie française (Beslu); Premier jour et première date (de la Mettrie); Le timbre «A» - Une lettre sur-affranchie taxée à l'arrivée en Israël (Livenat); Les camps militaires des XVII^e et XVIII^e siècles (Baudot); Des vols «aussi étonnants que scabreux» [Syrie et Liban LAM aviation] (Chauvin).

The Collectors Club Philatelist

Vol 86 N° 5 Sep-Oct 2007: Indochina Military Mail: 1893-1905 (Grabowski).

Documents Philatéliques

N° 194 4^{ème} trim 2007: Le blocus de la Grèce par la France (décembre 1916 - juin 1917) (Bourguignat); Le courrier des militaires japonais en Indochine de 1940 à 1945 (Gibot); Conférence à l'Académie de Philatélie: Services postaux sous le contrôle du Viêt-Minh (1945-1955).

The Indo-China Philatelist

Vol 37 N° 4 (Whole N° 179) Sep 2007: 7-cent Indochinese Culture Envelope (Bentley); New Values for New Rates in 1939 (Bentley); Native Women Officials Corner Date Impressions (Bentley).

Vol 37 N° 5 (Whole N° 180) Nov 2007: Postwar Censorship of Soldier Mail (Bentley); Indochina's Airmail Labels (Bentley).

BOOKSHELF

The Postal Tariffs of Cameroun under French Administration 1916-1959 by M P Bratzel Jnr, vi + 215 pp, 8½ x 11 inch, spiral bound hard copy plus searchable DVD appendix, pub 2007 by MPB Canada, obtainable from the author at 1233 Virginia Avenue, Windsor, Ontario N8S 2Z1, Canada, price £40 plus £5 global priority airmail, payable in UK bank notes or the equivalent in US dollars, cheque drawn on a US bank.

This is not just a collection of Tables (if it was, it would be a valuable reference work if not exactly a good read); it is in fact a concise postal history of Cameroun during the 43 years of French administration in so far as it was relevant to the postal tariffs actually imposed.

After 11 pages of Introductory notes (Cameroun's history; postal services and tariffs; currency; the search for, presentation and organisation of information; the nature of France and the French Community; acknowledgments etc) and a list of acronyms used in the book, there follows a very useful four pages of Combination Tables for Quick Reference which set out the essential basics: first step (to 20 gms) letters plus registration plus air mail surtaxes (to 5 or 10 gms as appropriate) for both domestic – ie French Community – and foreign mail, the air mail surtaxes being specifically the rates for France and the United States respectively.

The bulk of the book is divided into four sections — Domestic Tariffs within Cameroun, to France and within the French Community; International Tariffs; Air Mail; and Other Services. Each section is sub-divided into accounts of the relevant services — as an example, here are the details of the shortest section, which deals with Air Mail:

Air Line Services

Air Services Prior to May 1937

Air Services to/from Douala from 1937

Air Mail Charges

Published Studies

Air Mail from Cameroun prior to and during World War II

Air Mail from Cameroun to the United States during World War II

Air Mail within and from Cameroun after World War II

Additional Air Mail Considerations

Air Parcel Post

Insufficiently Franked Air Mail

Telegram Air Letter

Special Holiday Greeting Rates

Military Mail

Remuneration for Air Transport

The account of the Air Parcel Post refers the reader to the thirteen page account of the Parcel Post in the Other Services section of the book. This is a subject which is not often included in the literature on postage rates, partly because of its complexity and partly because so little material survives to find its way into collections.

The relatively short period covered by the study and the generous page size have enabled Dr Bratzel to add interest

to his Tables by expanding many of his explanatory notes into a true narrative: as already noted, a concise postal history.

The page size has also enabled Dr Bratzel to set out his data in such a way that it is easily readable; frequently a Table is spread over two pages. Dates of orders or decrees giving effect to rate changes are included, as well as the dates on which they came into force. For domestic rates, those applicable to internal mail, Cameroun-France mail and Cameroun-French Community mail are distinguished, although they are of course very often the same. For the researcher, a very important feature of the Tables is the number of the relevant *arrêté* or other legislation; where this is not given in his source (usually the *Journal Officiel du Cameroun*) the entry is given a code number so that it can be identified in the Appendix. This consists of a 16 page chronological listing (following an Explanatory Note) of “the substantiating documentation for the information presented in the text and the summary tables”. This list includes the Order, Decree or Law (or Code Number), its date, the effective date, the year and page number of the *Journal Officiel* (etc) and the title of the document. All the documents can be consulted by means of the accompanying CD. Dr Bratzel apologises for the poor quality of some of the reproduced pages; I've had photocopies of many of them for some years — the quality is certainly variable, but they can be read.

I should mention one other feature of this outstanding addition to the already considerable literature on Cameroun. Dr Bratzel has added to the interest of his Tables and narrative by a selection of illustrations, not just of covers and postcards but also of forms and other postal documents not so often seen — for example, Money Order cards and receipts, Advice of Receipt forms, International and Franco-colonial reply coupons and a registered address label for a packet of samples. Postal services are not neglected either, especially in the section devoted to air mail where notices of Air Line Schedules, General Information to the Public and Reduced Holiday Greeting Rates can be found. There are photographs, too — of post offices, ports, aircraft.

This superb work should be owned by every collector of Cameroun and will be of interest to collectors of other French colonies and indeed France itself. It is a labour of love, the result of 20 years' research, and will not be superseded for many years — if at all.

My only quibble — for a work of this importance and likely longevity, a more substantial cover would have been an advantage.

Bill Mitchell

Books Noted

La route du Yunnan et du Tonkin, by Jacques Gautherin; pub. La Philatélie Chinoise; 121 pp; price 50€ + p&p; details from Marcel Duhamel, 17 rue de l'Annonciation, 75016 Paris. [Fifth volume in the "*Chine et philatélie*" collection; covers postal and philatelic history of Haiphong-Yannanfu railway line whose construction began in 1900 and lasted 10 years; history of the line and its exploitation, together with opening of Indo-Chinese post offices in Yunnan; illustrated by cards and covers, sometimes very rare.]

Hommage à Henry Cheffer, pub. Aphilacart; 35 pp; price 12€; details from A Roncier-Lemee, 19 rue de Kergreach, 29780 Plouhinec; email alain.roncier@free.fr [Commemorating 50th anniversary of death of this famous stamp

engraver, focussing on his sketches and artwork on the theme of Brittany.]

Catalogue des oblitérations mécaniques des ex-Colonies françaises, protectorats et territoires sous tutelle, by Gérard Artaud; 70 A4 pp in 2 vols; price 15€ (North Africa) & 12€ (Black Africa, Asia & Europe) + p&p; available from author, 6 rue Armand-Millet, 92340 Bourg-la-Reine. [*Flammes*, *daguins* and other machine cancels used overseas, with valuations.]

The Postal Issues of Syria, Lebanon and the Alaouites 1919-1945, by Alexander Kaczmarczyk: Peter Brookman has informed us that this book, noted in Journal 245 (page 108) is now available at Vera Trinder, priced at £24.

Maurice Tyler

SOCIETY NOTES

Continued from page 122

Appeal for Journals

Peter Maybury reports that we are out of stock or very low on the following A4 issues of the Journal:

Whole Numbers 223, 228, 231.

Any members who have unwanted copies of these missing items and are willing to donate them to the Society are asked to contact him or the Editor with details.

* * *

Auction

Our Auction Secretary, Mick Bister, would like to remind all members that any items to be submitted for the next auction should be in his hands by the end of January 2007.

Descriptions of the items (see previous auction catalogues for guidelines) should be included, together with a suggested reserve price.

* * *

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



REPORTS OF MEETINGS

SCOTTISH GROUP MEETING OF 15 SEPTEMBER 2007

Joint Meeting with Germany & Colonies PS

4 F&CPS members and 7 G&CPS members attended the meeting at Linlithgow, with apologies received from 3 F&CPS members.

Peter Brand gave the first display: a variation on the France at War theme he showed in May. This time he concentrated on the France/Germany aspects. He started with the War of the League of Augsburg (1690-1697) which resulted in a diversion in the mails between France & Italy — the first sheet being an example of this. An example from the Seven Years War (1756-1763) followed.

Then came examples from the Napoleonic (or Revolutionary) Wars which lasted from 1792 to 1815; these showed the complexity of the postal system of the period, and they were slanted towards the German side of things. There was a reminder here that for the first time the common soldier got help with the cost of postage. There was an organised postal system for each army. With the German occupation of France came a letter from a von Ribbentrop written at Chartres. Examples followed of civilian mail from places like Hamburg when the city formed part of the Grand Duchy of Berg; from the French *départements* of 128 and others, including 130 with its entry/exit mark **France par Buckebourg** being highlighted.

Peter then led into the Franco-Prussian War with its postal consequences: free mail for prisoners of war (agreement signed August 1870); the role of the Red Cross; the Geneva Convention (signed 1864). The Red Cross opened for business on 23 July 1870 and its first recorded cachet was shown. Examples of Paris Balloon flights were shown as were examples from Alsace and Lorraine, the occupied territories. Finally, from this section, examples showing the development of German *Privat Posts* in French cities.

August 1914 brought a different kind of war, and here Peter showed military, aviation and naval mail from the European front, moving on to the Eastern front with a couple of sheets. Finally came examples of the French military presence in Europe following the 1918 armistice.

In the second round **Alan Wishart** showed Prisoner of War Mail 1914-18. Alan's first sheets showed material from the civilian internee camp of Ruhleben; including Christmas cards from the same person from 1914-1917: there were photo postcards of camp activities, camp cachets and censor marks. He told us that there were 450 camps in Germany. Most mail went through the normal postal systems, and incoming and outgoing British mail was processed through an office in the Strand.

Alan showed postcards showing camps, inmates and theatrical activities in camps in Germany; a series from Munster was numbered, Alan's highest card being 59. He also had cards showing the effects of tests for secret writing on a French officer's card from Stuttgart and one from Osnabruck. We then saw items from Italian, German and British POWs. There were 150 camps in England, some on the Isle of Man and also in Ireland.

Finally, Alan showed material from the Stobbs camp, near Hawick, the largest in Scotland. There were also camps on the Isle of Raasay where German prisoners of war helped to dig out iron ore. Badly wounded troops were interned in hospitals in Switzerland and these could be visited by their families. There were also British internees in Holland.

The verdict on this joint meeting was that it was certainly worthwhile, and might be a way of persuading more F&CPS members to attend.

MP

LONDON MEETING OF 26 SEPTEMBER 2007

Members: 12 Sheets

Members present: Len Barnes, Godfrey Bowden, Michael Ensor, Michael Fairhead, Chris Hitchen, Hugh Loudun, Bill Mitchell, David Pashby, Roy Reader, John Thorpe, Michael Wright. Apologies: Mick Bister, Maurice Tyler.

The meeting began at 6.35 after the treasurer gave the convenor a nudge. The following members gave displays:

Len Barnes produced a range of the anti-tuberculosis labels produced in France between the wars, including two on covers.

Godfrey Bowden showed Algeria from 1924 to 1949, including French stamps overprinted for use in Algeria and an explanation of the flat plate and rotary printing differences.

Chris Hitchen showed a small extract of his collection of the *Petite Poste de Paris* 1760-1795.

Bill Mitchell showed some of the Senegal markings used during a shortage of stamps in 1902 with an A in a

circle, which had formed the subject of a recent Journal article (Journal 242, page 125). He continued with advice of receipt forms and a cablegram from Senegal.

David Pashby brought some World War II material, which included *Franchise Militaire* in 1940, liberation overprints, the 'stamps' used by the French Legion, Free French stamps produced in Algeria, and *ravitaillement* labels.

Roy Reader showed items from the Polish army in France in 1940.

Michael Wright gave an interesting and unusual display of French and French Colonial *coupons-réponse*. Michael brought a copy of the newly published work on the subject by Hurtré, produced under the auspices of the Académie de Philatélie.

The meeting concluded with **Godfrey Bowden** showing some perfrins on cover including a precursor card with incised CA.

CJH

SCOTTISH GROUP MEETING OF 6 OCTOBER 2007

Stephen Holder: 2 French Colonies

6 members were in attendance to hear Stephen Holder talk about the colonies of Cameroon and Mauritania.

In the first round Stephen told of the early history of Cameroon, explaining how the Germans settled in 1868 and concluded treaties with the Duala kings on 14 July 1884, making it a German protectorate. WWI brought about British and French occupations in 1915. On 10 January 1920 Cameroon became a mandated territory under the League of Nations.

The display illustrated all these happenings with the various stamp issues, covers and postal stationery, then covering WWII with its censorship, etc. We also saw maritime mail, railway cancellations, and small town postmarks right up to the coming of the Federal Republic in 1963.

Round 2 covered the stamps, covers and postal history of Mauritania from 1904. Again Stephen gave a brief history of the territory, telling how the French developed telegraph lines to form military communications and a civilian postal service (3 July 1906).

The level of postal activity has always been small because of the low number of literate people in the towns and villages, but Stephen had plenty of items relevant to the changes being made.

Railways arrived in the 1960s but by then airmail services were well established and Stephen had many examples of internal and external airmails to show us. He explained and illustrated the 'used abroad' intercolonial stamp usage.

MP

LONDON MEETING OF 17 OCTOBER 2007

Len Barnes: Aspects of French Aviation

Godfrey Bowden: Aspects of the First 100 Years of French Philately

10 members were present at this first of the extra meetings organised by Len Barnes.

Len began by showing various aspects of French airmails, from the Balloon Post of 1870-71 to airmail letters of 1946. Following the inauguration of airships, we saw the way in which the French took advantage of the American invention of aeroplanes. Early aspects of aviation included many first flights, often sponsored by three millionaires in the champagne industry, with many of the special covers being retrieved only after the mail had been returned to sender.

A very wide variety of aviation related covers and cards were shown, including catapult mail, rocket post, quite a number of first night flights, flights to Australia, crash mail (including a plane that came down in the Atlantic), a locally printed item by Air France in Brazil, and the establishment of a long distance record. The display was brought to a close with details of air routes, publicity cards, and special souvenir covers and cards.

The second display was described by Godfrey as a "jumble of stuff", that started with an extract from his study of the basic letter rate 1849-1949, showing the change in rates over that period and the length of time certain types lasted. We then moved on to the development of formula cards – unused material, with some privately printed – that according to Godfrey represented only a minute fraction of what the Sinais catalogue claims is available.

Then came the plating of Sage stamps, illustrating different printings and revealing whether particular positions in the plate could be found according to the type of flaws. Other items of note included enlargements of the 25c Sage to show the various types, *la Coulissante* - an advert for a pair of braces, subtypes of pictorial stamps from the 1930s, and various small errors in stamps (especially under- and over-inking).

Maurice Tyler gave the vote of thanks to both those displaying for their interesting and colourful collections.

MST

WESSEX GROUP MEETING OF 20 OCTOBER 2007

Robert Johnson & John Yeomans: Welcome to Brazzaville Members' Displays

On a bright sunny autumn day 16 members and one guest gathered at the Scout Hall, Harnham, near Salisbury, to see the joint display of Robert Johnson and John Yeomans: "Welcome to Brazzaville".

It was in fact goodbye to Brazzaville for our member Robert who has passed on this collection to member John in the time between agreeing to display it and the meeting itself. Since acquiring it John has added to it and has considerable plans for its future expansion. Robert gave us

a fascinating talk on the background to the development of the Congo region and its place within the Federation of French Equatorial Africa, looking at the history, the physical challenges of exploration and colonisation and how the postal history fitted into it. The range and variety of pieces on display was of the greatest interest to all present.

After our usual lunch together at the Old Mill the afternoon session was devoted to members' displays with a wide variety of topics from:

Bob Paterson: "Dulac stamps and postal history"

Peter Lawrence: "Incoming transatlantic mail to Cognac 1829-1854"

Ingrid Swinburn: "The route of a letter from France to England"

Alan Ketchell: "The stamps of Memel"

Colin Spong: "Civilian censorship in Madagascar"

Skanda Vaitilingam: "The stamps of Algeria"

John Hammonds: "Airmail services in Africa and Madagascar"

Edwin Rideout: "The stamps of French post offices in the Turkish Empire"

Jeremy Martin: "WWI and WWII - Censored, detained and undeliverable mail"

Ashley Lawrence: "50c Sowers - different types, booklets etc"

Alan Wood: "Journal and parcel stamps, forgeries and other curiosities"

Peter Kelly: *Type Sage*, maritime mail

PRAK

NORTHERN GROUP MEETING OF 20 OCTOBER 2007

Members' Choice

Present: George Barker, Steve Ellis, Alan Goude, Brian Lythgoe, Jim Mercer, Peter Rooke, John Smith, Peter Stockton, Paul Watkins, John West; visitor – Mr. Anderson. Apologies: Robert Barnes, Roger High, Stephen and Judith Holder, Bernard Lucas, Peter Maybury, Tony Shepherd.

The Northern Group met for the second time at Adlington Village Hall, Cheshire, the previous meeting at the venue having taken place in 2005. The following displays were made:

Peter Stockton: A display of mainly military mail from the Madagascar Uprising of 1947, including leaflets printed in both French and Malagasy as dropped by aeroplanes; examples of military mail handled in the civilian post and vice versa; a short display of WWII material, concluding with a stamped "*Ravitaillement*" card used in connection with the issue of ration books.

John West: Red Cross stamps of the Colonies with special consideration of the effect of apparent demonetisation of the issues on 1 April 1921. One particular cover (see p 141) from Madagascar in 1926 appeared to have only 7c of valid franking against a required tariff of 1F25 taking into account the effect of the demonetised stamps affixed. An overfranked cover was shown with a manuscript "*Affranchi par expéditeur*" where the postal clerk's endorsement was intended to convey that the overpayment had been made by the sender and not at the behest of the postal authorities. The display continued with examples of frankings in the currency of the CFA franc (*franc de la Communauté Financière Africaine*) and a specialist section of Red Cross labels for tracing correspondence with Geneva and an archive specimen of a Red Cross overprint from Madagascar.

Lunch having been taken on site, the afternoon saw seven further displays before afternoon tea was taken.

Brian Lythgoe: Cameroon showing varieties of WWI issues including missing values, and a selection of the Colonial Exhibition of 1931. Particular issues then highlighted were the storming of the Bastille anniversary and proofs of the 1947 definitive set.

George Barker: exhibited "Day of the Stamp" starting in Nice in 1938 with issues every year from 1941 onwards to 1955. A 1942 item was franked at a 10c rate for *Céogrammes* (Braille communications for the blind), with a 1947 postcard to Brighton showing a "Transorma" automatic sorting mark.

Paul Watkins: Anglo-French mail, starting with four items

sent between husband and wife over the period 1678 to 1681, the husband being a secret agent in France for Charles II at Rouen. A social reference comprised comment as to a ship's captain being paid for feeding a dog in transit. The display continued with letters sent via the diplomatic bag to and from Boulogne. More modern material saw airmail routings with 3 franc and 2/6d rate for airmail express and delivery by special messenger. An item posted in England at 11.15am was destined for same day delivery in Paris.

Steve Ellis: began his display with a section concerning the paddle steamer *La Marguerite* built in Glasgow in 1894. The ship was originally engaged in journeys including the transmission of mail from Tilbury to Boulogne and Calais. Special trains were laid on from Fenchurch Street, London, to connect with Tilbury. Owing to high coal consumption, the service ran at a loss and from 1903 to 1925 the ship was used between Liverpool and Llandudno/Anglesey. Various postcards and items of mail as carried by the ship told an interesting story. The display continued with French maritime mail between St Nazaire and Colon "*Ligne A*" from a service introduced in 1865 by way of re-organisation of the then existing arrangements.

Alan Goude: showed inter-colonial mail with particular emphasis on single stamp frankings to pay the correct rates. Examples were shown of mail between Ivory Coast, Dahomey, Senegal and Togo. The scarcity of inter-colonial mail was compared with that between metropolitan France and her colonies. The display concluded with the 1893 military stamps of New Caledonia, the need for which had come about by reason of abuse of the general military franchise system.

Peter Rooke: brought mail from the Napoleonic period – in particular the Peninsular War and mail from the Armée d'Angleterre. A section dealt with biographical details of Le Comte de la Vallette (1769-1830) who was Director of Posts 1804-1815. A further section included Imperial Decrees as sold at Post Offices, having been printed at the Imperial Press in Paris.

John Smith: concluded the afternoon displays with a selection of airmail covers from French Morocco, posing a number of questions as to varied cancellations/rates.

Members were thanked for the interesting displays as prepared for the day with a final vote of thanks to Janet Stockton for the comestibles!

PSS

SOUTHERN GROUP MEETING OF 27 OCTOBER 2007

Michael Berry: *Ballons Montés*
David Watson: French West Indies

Roy Downing was unfortunately indisposed and unable to display 'Marianne de Dulac' and so at short notice Michael Berry and David Watson accepted invitations to show 'Ballons Montés' and 'French West Indies' respectively

Michael by way of introduction explained the historical background leading up to the Franco-Prussian War and the Siege of Paris 18 September 1870 - 25 January 1871. He mentioned a particular interest in identifying the mail by balloon name with (wherever possible) receiving marks to identify the arrival. Examples of mail carried on the manned second balloon were shown, together with those of the later period to number forty-two, and including the fifth balloon – being the first to be released unmanned.

David explained that in a wide ranging display he would be showing material from the three French Territories in the Caribbean area – Guadeloupe, Martinique and French Guiana. Examples were shown of early 19th century entires from the British occupation period of Martinique and Guadeloupe, and it was noted that General Colonies stamps were not in use until the 1870s. French Guiana started to

use overprinted General Issues in 1887, and forgeries were shown together with a philatelic use of mail in the inland colony of Inini. Die proofs were shown of the later issues of Guadeloupe and Martinique stamps together with specimen overprints and postcards. Airmail routes to the French Caribbean were slow to develop, but after WWII Air France and PANAM established routes, and examples of carried mail were shown

A vote of thanks to Michael and David was given by Colin Spong to acclaim by those present.

The next meeting was arranged for 12 January with "Members' Displays".

Members present: Michael Annells, Michael Berry, Colin Clarkson, Roy Ferguson, John Hammonds, Colin Spong, John Yeomans.

Guests: Jean Hammonds and Pat Spong.

Apologies from Betty & Frank Blincow; Bob & Yvonne Larg, George Nash, Bill Mitchell, John Thorpe.

JY

LONDON MEETING OF 3 NOVEMBER 2007

Ashley Lawrence: *Ashley's Bits and Pieces*

Although our president Ashley Lawrence is synonymous with the Sower issue, this afternoon's display was intended to show us other aspects of his collecting interests and to give us an insight into his fascination with historical research, particularly with reference to the 1870-71 Siege of Paris.

Ashley began by outlining the development of the Paris Pigeon Post which eventually proved to be the most efficient means of getting mail back into the capital during the siege. To begin with, baskets of homing pigeons were carried out with the balloons so that they could fly back with a simple message, written on a piece of paper, announcing the place and time of the balloon's arrival. Ashley explained how the role of the pigeon was then extended to that of carrying, from Tours, despatches and later civilian messages reduced onto microfilm or *pellicules* placed inside a goose quill tube and attached to the bird. With the help of the pigeon fanciers' society *L'Espérance*, large numbers of pigeons were flown out to Tours, sometimes accompanied by the fanciers themselves. Brought down by enemy action, photography pioneer René Dagron survived his flight to Tours, as did most of the microphotography equipment which accompanied him. Once carried back to Paris by the pigeons the *pellicules* were then projected onto a screen and banks of copyists would transcribe the messages onto telegram forms for onward transmission within the capital.

A beautiful set of polychrome Liebig postcards illustrating the phases of the Pigeon Post was shown, as were contemporary engravings from the magazine *L'Illustration*, photographs of the principal protagonists

and, most intriguing of all, examples of actual *pellicules*. On view too was an example of one of the rare *Dépêche-Réponse* cards. These were sold at Paris offices and permitted the recipient to answer, by writing yes or no, four printed questions. The cards were carried by balloon out of Paris and, once delivered, the recipient would submit the answered section to his local post office for onward transmission to Tours.

To conclude the first half of the display, Ashley related the story of the Brown correspondence which illustrated how mail from England could be incorporated into the Paris Pigeon Post. Full details of the events can be found in Ashley's in-depth article 'A message brought to Paris by Pigeon Post in 1870-71' (Journal N° 224). Firstly we were shown the draft letter written by Mrs Brown to her husband in Paris and the receipt for her registered letter which she had handed in at Rathbone Place post office and which would have reached Tours via Calais and Amiens. We then saw the telegram and its envelope as delivered to Mr Brown in Paris. The only missing evidence from the story was the *pellicule* itself but Ashley demonstrated how, by diligent research at the Musée de la Poste in Paris, he had succeeded in locating the original *pellicule* from which the letter had been transcribed.

The second part of the display commenced with a short study of *Franchise Postale* markings of the 19th century. These were to be found on official correspondence which was carried post free but which beforehand had to be authenticated by a cachet or signature (*paraphe*). Items were displayed from the *Service de l'Empereur*, the *Maire*

de Quimper and the *Administrations des Forêts*. An 1892 item from the *Présidence de la République* to a certain gentleman by the name of Dreyfus aroused considerable interest until Ashley pointed out that this Dreyfus was a Léon and not an Alfred.

The final part of Ashley's bits and pieces exemplified our president's tenacity and devotion to historical research. Ashley had acquired an 1870 letter written by a young German officer, Karl Muller, who was billeted in the Château de Nainville near Paris during the Franco-Prussian War. The letter, however, was written on both sides of very thin paper, thus rendering it for the most part illegible; but Ashley resolutely made contact with the right people in the Metropolitan Police Force Forensic Department who were able to provide legible copies of both sides. It transpired that the letter was written to his cousin in Silesia and related the events of the time and gave a detailed description of the château including its impressive grand piano.

Further research in the archives at Potsdam revealed the letter writer's military history, and as for the château, Ashley discovered through correspondence with the Mayor of Nainville that, during the Franco-Prussian War, it was

owned by Baron Joseph-Mayer Cahen d'Anvers. The original letter together with picture postcards, research correspondence and contemporary photographs brought these revelations to life.

Today the château no longer belongs to the Cahen d'Anvers family and instead is owned by the *Ministère de l'Intérieur* and used for receiving foreign government officials. It is also the headquarters of the *Institut National d'Études de la Sécurité Civile* and it was the commandant of this establishment, a Colonel Feyzeau, who contacted Ashley with a plan for the most fitting conclusion to the story. In July 1999, Ashley was invited to dine at the château with the present Comtesse Joséphine Cahen d'Anvers which enabled him to not only show the Comtesse the letter written from her former family residence but also to take a photograph of the famous grand piano!

All 11 members present, together with Ashley's son, were struck by the volume of research that had been undertaken to develop just a few items of correspondence into an in-depth study of the social and political history of the period. Mick Bister thanked Ashley for giving such an erudite talk and for displaying such fascinating and historically valuable material.

MLB

MARCOPHILEX XXXI AT DUNKIRK 6-8 OCTOBER 2007

13 members of the Society produced (non-competitive) displays for the very successful Marcophilex exhibition at Dunkirk, and full details are given on page 122 of this Journal. In addition another 3 members attended as visitors: Michael Ensor, Prue Henderson and Maurice Tyler (accompanied by Annette).

There was thus a sizeable contribution from the Society of Postal Historians and the France & Colonies Philatelic Society who together were invited to fill 50 frames. The Convention was held at the spacious Kursaal on the seafront at Malo les Bains, a suburb of Dunkirk. This was an extremely well organised show with over 60 exhibitors, of which one third were ours, showing a wide range of material with, obviously, a preponderance of things French. There were also some 15 dealers.

The Friends of the Paris Postal Museum brought an additional display, as did the Town and Chamber of Commerce of Dunkirk, highlighting various issues during the dark days of the war. The programme included an open meeting of the Académie de Philatélie with a most interesting illustrated talk by the President, Robert Abensur, on the taxation of postcards.

On the Saturday night we all attended the gala dinner at the Kursaal and enjoyed an excellent meal. This was, to some extent, overshadowed by France's last gasp win over the All Blacks, the match being avidly followed by many who received messages on their mobile telephones..

Meanwhile, outside the Kursaal we enjoyed almost continuous sunshine over the weekend, which helped considerably with the digestion of all the good food we had

eaten and allowed us to enjoy a walk along the beach or promenade and to discover the town itself, where there was much of interest to see, particularly in the old port area.

Monday is the day usually given over to an outing in the surrounding countryside, and the residue of our members joined with those of the Union Marcophile on the coach. First stop was the enormous Arc International glass production site where we saw how the glasses, plates, vases and other objects were made. The visit into the foundry can only be likened to Dante's Inferno as we were subjected to very high noise levels, great heat, leaping flames and frenetic activity. Things became more leisurely over a splendid lunch in a little restaurant not far away.

Afterwards we visited the "Coupole" at St Omer which had been an important base for the manufacture of the V2 rockets in 1943. It is now the "Centre d'histoire de la mémoire du Nord". The harrowing pictures of the way in which civilian detainees were treated was very disturbing to most of us.

The final visit of the day was to a small family owned distillery producing geneva at Houille. It is one of the last small private gin distilleries producing this powerful spirit flavoured with juniper berries, and the actual still itself dated from 1812. After tasting the product (48 degrees) many dozed on the coach ride back to Dunkirk.

By and large I can confirm that the British Expeditionary Force acquitted itself well, enjoyed themselves, and the final evacuation took place in an orderly and reasonably disciplined fashion.

PRAK

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London Meetings

2 December 2006	8 short displays; Poster Stamps (F Kiddle)	36
24 February 2007	Quarantine and the Disinfection of Mail (D Vandervelde)	69
12 May 2007	Annual General Meeting	111
26 September	8 short displays	151
17 October 2007	French Aviation (L H Barnes); First 100 Years of French Philately (G H Bowden)	152
3 November 2007	Franco-Prussian War 'Bits and Pieces' (A J Lawrence)	154

Northern Group Meetings

13 January 2007	5 short displays	37
3 March 2007	The Amazing Travels of <i>Type Sage</i> (P R A Kelly); 8 short displays	69
14 July 2007	#Bastille Day — 17 short displays	119
20 October 2007	9 short displays	153

Scottish Group Meetings

24 March 2007	French Philatelic Exhibitions (Mrs M Pavey)	75
12 May 2007	France at War (P Brand)	119
15 September 2007	Joint Meeting with Germany & Cols P S (P Brand, A Wishart)	151
6 October 2007	Cameroon and Mauritania (C S Holder)	152

Southern Group Meetings

13 January 2007	Aspects of the Maritime Post of Reunion (P R A Kelly)	37
21 April 2007	Cinderellas (C Kiddle)	75
11 August 2007	France & French Definitive Issues (T Buckell); 4 short displays	120
27 October 2007	<i>Ballons Montés</i> (M J Berry); French West Indies (D Watson)	154

Wessex Group Meetings

3 February 2007	The Stamps of France 1871-1876 and 1920-1949 (T Buckell); 10 short displays	36
7 July 2007	The Life and Times of the 1F50 Pétain (M L Bister); 10 short displays	119
20 October 2007	Welcome to Brazzaville (R I Johnson & J Yeomans); 12 short displays	152

Joint Meetings

16-18 March 2007	#Society's 31st Annual Weekend	70
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