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The Journal of the France & Colonies Philatelic Society



A fantasy item in the collection of Geoff Gethin
(see page 42)

Volume 58 ● Number 2
June 2008
Whole Number 248

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.

2008 Annual Subscription Rates

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

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

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

The Journal

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Auction and Exchange Packet Sales

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

M L Bister, 7 The Slade, Wrestlingworth, Sandy, Beds. SG19 2ES (email: auction1@fcps.org.uk).

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

France: R G E Wood, 51 Longstomps Avenue, Chelmsford, Essex CM2 9BY (Telephone 01245 267949).

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. For further details contact the circuit organiser:

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

Journal Correspondents

Paris: J M Simmons

London Group: L H Barnes

Southern Group: C W Spong

Northern Group: J P Maybury

Wessex Group: P R A Kelly / A J Wood

Scottish Group: Mrs M Pavey

Publications Stockist

J P Maybury, 18 Courtneys, Wheldrake, York YO19 6BR (email: publications@fcps.org.uk).

* * *

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

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

The Journal of the France & Colonies Philatelic Society

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SOCIETY NOTES

New Members

The Society is pleased to welcome the following:

1318 Joel Montague (USA), 1319 John Wilson (Devon), 1321 Dr Arindam Mukherjee (USA), 1322 Dr D Bakker (Lancaster), 1323 Stephen Williams (London), 1324 Dr Colin L Graham (Birmingham).

* * *

Members Deceased

We are saddened to hear of the death of the following members, and offer our sincere condolences to their families. See pages 63-64 for three obituaries.

7 J H Levett, 29 Mrs Y Z Newbury, 274 Gp Capt D A J Starkey, 846 Philip de Paris, 1013 R K Whitelock, 1224 T Davis..

* * *

Resignations

754 Dr C Board, 1291 D Scott.

* * *

Exhibition Successes

The following members are to be congratulated on gaining awards at the ABPS National Philatelic Exhibition at Harrogate (May 2008):

Mick Bister: Large Vermeil (Traditional Class) for "France: The 50c Jeanne d'Arc Issue of 1929"

Steve Ellis: Large Silver (Postal History Class) for "French Transatlantic Mail (1783-1875)"

Claire Scott: Large Silver (Social Philately Class) for "The Wounded Soldier"

John Scott: Silver (Social Philately Class) for "Why Write?"

At the Rocky Mountain Stamp Show in Denver, Colorado (May 2008), the following award was made:

Stan Luft: Gold for "France: Military Campaigns 1823-1897"

* * *

Future Events

The London Group will next meet at the Calthorpe Arms, Grays Inn Road at 6.30pm on Wednesday 24 September 2008 when members are asked to bring up to 12 sheets to display.

The Northern Group will meet at Heaton Royds, Bradford on Saturday 12 July 2008 for "Bastille Day".

The Southern Group will meet at the East Worthing Community Centre on Saturday 16 August 2008 from 10.30am to 4.30pm (with a break for lunch at the Half Brick, Brighton Road) when John Parmenter and Colin Spong will display Airmails and WWII.

The Wessex Group will meet at Harnham, Salisbury on Saturday 5 July 2008 at 10.30am when Alan Wood will show the stamps and postal history of Morocco.

The Scottish Group will meet at the new venue of St Michael's Parish Church, Cross House, The Cross, Linlithgow on Saturday 27 September 2008 at 1.00pm for a joint meeting with the Germany & Colonies PS, on the topic of Alsace, with Archie Hunter displaying WWI and Mavis Pavey the *Route du Vin*.

* * *

Bequest

A few years ago our Leeds member **Ray Whitelock** informed us that he had bequeathed his collection of France & Colonies to the Society "*in return for all the pleasure received over the years*". Ray died earlier this year and his collection has now been released for the Society to dispose of. Mick Bister reports that he hopes to include some of the material in the November auction.

* * *

Displays by Members

John Hammonds displayed Airmails of France to the Bromley and Beckenham PS on 9 April 2008.

At the end of June 2007 the following members displayed in Poitiers at a joint meeting of the Académies de Philatélie of France and Belgium:

Robert Abensur: Lettres insuffisamment affranchies de l'étranger pour la France

Guy Dutau: Relations postales franco-chiliennes par la voie de Magellan, des origines à 1883

Chris Hitchen: Les étoiles de Paris

Peter Kelly: Le type Sage 1876-1900, lettres recommandées et chargées

Michel Letaillieur: 30c Semeuse camée et poste pneumatique

Jean-Pierre Magne: Les conséquences de la loi du 20 mai 1854 sur le courrier territorial non affranchi

* * *

Register of Members' Interests

Bruno Mattei has changed his email address to: mattei.bruno@gmail.com

John Hammonds has changed his email address to: john@wheatsheaf31.plus.com

* * *

Annual Weekend 2009

The Annual Philatelic Weekend next year will take place at the usual venue of the Charlecote Pheasant Hotel, near Stratford-upon-Avon, from 13 to 15 March 2009.

* * *

Society Literature Prize

The competition for 2007 was judged as follows:

1. **Ashley Lawrence:** "Boules de Moulins"
2. **Derek Richardson:** "French Internment Camps, Chapter 17 - Camp de Choisel, Châteaubriant"
3. **Bill Mitchell & Laurence Lambert:** "The Post Offices of French West Africa, Part 4 - French Guinea"

The judging panel was convened by Steve Ellis.

* * *

Blériot Channel Crossing

The Kent Federation will be celebrating the centenary of Blériot's Channel crossing with a seminar on Saturday 18 July 2009 at the Salem Church Hall, 27-32 Maison Dieu Road, Dover, Kent CT16 1RF. Members of the British Airmail Society will be displaying their material.

For further information contact Len Barnes (contact details in the Register of Members' Interests).

* * *

ABPS EXECUTIVE BULLETIN NUMBER 9

April 2008

CONGRESS 2008

This is being held at Stratford on Avon from 24 to 27 July at the Holiday Inn. Further information can be found overleaf and a booking form is available from: Ian Crane, 15 Springbank, Everley Park Road, LONDON N21 1JH.

NATIONAL COMPETITIONS 2009

These will be back at Autumn Stampex in 2009.

FESTIVAL OF STAMPS 2010

BPMA are the driving force behind many planned events over several months in 2010.

STORAGE SPACE REQUIRED

The existing facilities for storage of containers may soon be lost. ABPS would like to hear from anyone with space to store up to four containers in their car park or elsewhere. Offers or suggestions please to Mike Brindle.

AGM

This will be held on Saturday 12 July 2008 at The Royal Philatelic Society London at 2pm.

ABPS NEWS

Please remember to send in your reports to our Editor, Hugh Feldman, prior to the copy deadlines. The next deadline is 15 July. Send by e-mail to hugh@feldman.f9.co.uk, or typed in a clear format and sent to him by post at Juniper House, Ashdon, SAFFRON WALDEN, CB10 2HB.

INTERNATIONAL EVENTS

Entries are now invited for Bulgaria 2009 (27 to 31 May). The UK Commissioner is Alan Griffiths, e-mail alanjgriffiths@btinternet.com. Great Britain is now ranked number 3 in the world for international exhibiting!

THE ABPS UK COLLECTORS CLUB

Exhibitors are being invited to register for participation in FIP/FEPA events. For more information, contact Brian Sole, e-mail brian.sole@btinternet.com or write to him at 3, Stockfield Close, Claygate, ESHER, KT10 0QG.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, OR TO GIVE YOUR COMMENTS on any of the above, please contact the ABPS General Secretary, Mike Brindle, on 01842 648727, at mikebrindle@talktalk.net, or write to him at 6 Nunnery Drive, THETFORD, IP24 3EN.

The Association of British Philatelic Societies Limited. Company Number 3326534.

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Philatelic Congress of Great Britain

CONGRESS 2008

Thursday-Sunday 24-27 July 2008

This is being held at the Holiday Inn, Stratford-upon-Avon. The hotel lies in a superb setting alongside the River Avon, and in close proximity to the town centre.

Congress will be held between Thursday 24th July and Sunday 27th July. There will be a full programme of events. 2008 is the Centenary of the London 1908 Olympics and there will be two displays associated with the Olympic theme. John Crowther will display 'The Olympics 1896-1932' and Tony Bosworth will present the second display entitled 'The 1936 Berlin Olympics'. The principal Congress lecture will be a presentation on Social Philately by Brian Sole. This will be followed by a presentation by one of the new signators of the Roll of Distinguished Philatelists.

The Ceremony of the signing of the Roll and presentation of the Congress Medal is scheduled to take place in Stratford Town Hall on the Saturday afternoon followed by a reception in the Hotel and the traditional Congress Banquet.

One of the local Philatelic Societies (Solihull) will be represented by Bryan Jones who will give a display on the early Postal History of Stratford-upon-Avon. The Chairman of Congress, Gerald Marriner, will give a short display on the Occupation of The Channel Island 1940-45. The Sunday morning will see further presentations by members of the Solihull and Stratford-upon-Avon Philatelic Societies together with a wide selection of standing displays by members of the local Philatelic Societies.

There is still time to book for this event and all collectors, friends and spouses will be welcome

For Hotel and Congress booking forms and any further information, please contact

Ian D Crane 020 8886 6776 iand.crane@virgin.net

or Colin Searle 07879 665 658 searlec@gmail.com

Gerald Marriner, Chairman, GB Philatelic Congress 2008

In addition, on Sunday morning 27 July at 09.30, our member Philip Mackey will be giving a 96 sheet display of Classic France for 45 minutes, covering:

1849 Ceres : stamps & PH incl Maritime

The 1853-68 Issues : Essays Proofs & Trials

The Franco Prussian War 1870-71 with Balloon Post kiloware; Boules; Siege & Bordeaux Issues etc to 1886.

Scottish Group Programme

Sat 27 Sept 2008	Archie Hunter: German Occup-
Joint meeting with	ation of Elsass Lothringen &
Germany &	Luxemburg
Colonies PS	Mavis Pavey: Route du Vin, Alsace
Sat 22 Nov 2008	Jim Moffat: French Antilles
Sat 7 Mar 2009	Peter Brand: Accountancy and
	Entry Marks
	David Hogarth: French
	Internment Camps WWII

(Further details from Mavis Pavey, tel. 01896 830120)

For new venue, see Future Events, page 38.

* * *

London Group Programme

Full details were given in the last Journal, page 2; but contact Len Barnes for further details, tel. 020 8303 5326)

* * *

Wessex Group Programme

Sat 5 July 2008	Alan Wood: Stamps & PH of Morocco
Sat 18 Oct 2008	Chris Hitchen: Paris and WWII

(Further details from Peter Kelly, tel. 0117 973 6296)

* * *

Northern Group Programme

Sat 20 Sept 2008	Members' Choice
Sat 11 Oct 2008	North-west All Day Meeting
Sat 29 Nov 2008	Members' Choice
Sat 14 Feb 2009	Stephen Holder: 3 Centuries of
	Alsace-Lorraine
Sat 4 Apr 2009	Members' Choice
Sat 11 July 2009	Bastille Day at Heaton Royds

(Further details from Peter Maybury, tel. 01904 449815)

* * *

Southern Group Programme

Sat 16 Aug 2008	John Parmenter & Colin Spong:
	Airmails and WWII
Sat 4 Oct 2008	Lesley Marley: Sabine and
	Liberty Issues
Sat 10 Jan 2009	Members' Displays

(Further details from Colin Spong, tel. 01903 709404)

* * *

For the next meetings of all these groups, see the Future Events section of Society Notes on page 38

SHORTER ITEMS - INCLUDING QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

German *Taxe* Marks on Togo and Cameroon Mail

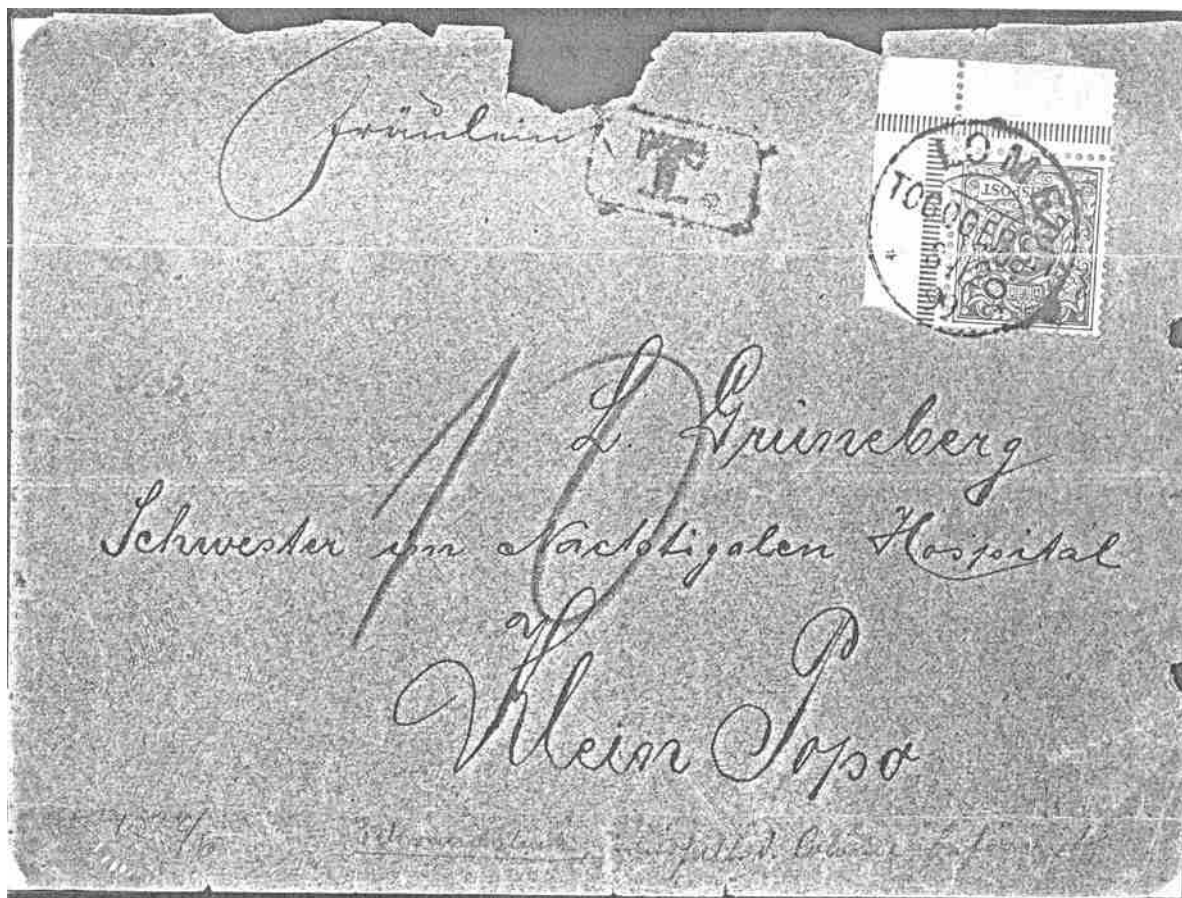


Figure 1

I have had further correspondence with Marty Bratzel on the topic of German or French *taxe* marks used in these colonies (see Journal 243 of March 2007, page 13, and Journal 246 of December 2007, page 124).

My main interest is Togo 1884 to 1922, and my German Togo collection is, I am advised by others, the only one of significance in the UK, having taken over 30 years to assemble. Knowing there will be few if any interested in the German period, my articles tend to ignore that era or any connection with it. I should perhaps have written more on the subject of *taxe* marks to justify my claims.

Many years ago I acquired a cover (Fig 1) that is an internal item from Lomé to a nursing sister at Klein-Popo hospital, posted 3.12.1899. The early internal rates for Togo are as follows, mail rates having changed on 1 May 1899:-

1. Letters carried by the mail carrier Vietot & Co to their own office passed free of postage (only one item recorded, purchased on eBay in Germany by my friend).
2. Letters within the same postal area, ie to and from the same city, attracted 5Pfg (the postage paid on this cover).
3. Letters within the country attracted 10Pfg.

The item required 10Pfg postage, hence the addition of the *taxe* mark, which could ONLY have been added in Togo. Incidentally, this cover has the only known example of the German *taxe* mark on internal mail pre-August 1914.

I still hold to the view that the strike I have found on covers post-1914 was German. Togo and Kamerun share much in common, and the German colonial postal system was fairly standard throughout their modest empire.

They say lightning never strikes twice in the same place, yet I have more recently bought on eBay a picture postcard to Togo from Germany which was redirected to Dahomey, when additional postage became payable (Fig 2). In 1905 the German mark and French franc were not quite on a par, and I suspect the manuscript 6¼ is the additional amount payable in French francs.

I cannot think the postage due *taxe* mark would have been added other than in Togo. It is, however, only the second example I have seen of the mark in the German period. I have it used in the occupation at both Lomé and Anécho, ie in British and French sectors.

It could be argued that with this second item passing from Togo to Dahomey the *taxe* mark was added by the French at Grand-Popo, but surely it would have been added at the point of departure, with the tax charged in manuscript being the amount required by the recipient country?

John Mayne



Figure 2

John's photocopies of covers with the "boxed T" postage due marking demonstrate, in my view, that the "boxed T" device was indeed used in Togo during the period of German administration. I have no evidence one way or the other regarding whether these devices were introduced into Kamerun / Cameroun by the Germans or the French, just observations on my part of use during the period of French administration and the lack of any covers from the period of German administration. That does not mean that such covers do not exist – I just have not seen any. In fact, I have seen very few postage due covers from Kamerun prior to or during World War I.

I do not collect other French colonies. To shed some light on the question of postage due handstamps, I have asked Bob Picirilli, coordinator for the Study Group for Air Mail Rates in French Colonies to 1945, to look through his file of several thousand photocopies of French colonial air mail covers, as well as his Ivory Coast collection, to see if the "boxed T" device was used in French colonial territories that were never under German administration. This will not, of course, answer the question of who introduced the device into Cameroun, but it will provide information as to whether (or not) the device was introduced elsewhere by the French.

I no longer receive any German auction catalogues, so I am not able to check illustrations for use of a "boxed T" device in any German colony or, for that matter, in Germany proper prior to World War I. I will nonetheless take advantage of any opportunity that comes along to look.

To repeat, your two most interesting Togo covers with the "boxed T" handstamp mark demonstrate conclusively that such a device was indeed used by the Germans in Togo prior to World War I. They provide weight to the contention that these devices were subsequently used by French postal authorities in Togo during and after the war.

However, we have no information one way or the other as to whether the French introduced additional generic "boxed T" devices in Togo at a later date. And, we have no conclusive evidence about whether the Germans or the French – or both – introduced them into Kamerun / Cameroun.

To conclude, I will certainly keep my eyes open for covers and markings of interest, and will provide you with copies of any that cross my path. Perhaps through collaboration, we can reach some definitive conclusions. That is one of the joys of postal history – tracking down elusive information. I look forward to further sharing of information between us.

Marty Bratzel

An Unknown Overprint on the 2F Merson?

This 2F Merson minisheet with the Munich 1979 overprint (illustrated on the front cover) is very well produced, with the stamp showing the same milky shade as the original. Apart from the location and date, the overprint is very convincing. I know nothing about it, however, and cannot

remember where I acquired it. I originally thought I might use it as an illustration in my book, but it is a neat fantasy rather than a forgery. Can any member provide any information about it, apart from what is contained in the printed text?

Geoff Gethin

Mauritania Postage Dues of 1906



John Mayne's short note (Journal 247 of March 2008, page 21) on the provisional due stamps created in the village of Sélilaby in 1906 prompts me to illustrate a cover showing apparent proper use of one of these stamps from this village. The item was posted from the small village of Bakel, Senegal, on 28 September 1906 to an addressee in Sélilaby. It was sent unpaid at what would have been the 5c printed matter rate had it been prepaid. The envelope was struck with a standard T in triangle in Bakel to denote postage due. On arrival in Sélilaby on 4 October the envelope was restruck with the T of Sélilaby (identical to those shown in the Mayne article) and a 10c Faïdherbe issue overprinted with the same T indicating 10c postage

due was attached. This is double the deficiency in accord with regulations.

This is one of the few examples of the provisional postage dues of Mauritania from this period that appears to be a genuine usage, or as close to a genuine usage as these items come. The example of the 5F value shown on cover on p 457 of the Dallay Africa catalogue is purely philatelic and illustrative of what one typically sees. I previously explored this issue in more detail in the US article: "Mauritania – The Provisional Postage Due Issues of 1906", *France and Colonies Philatelist* N° 268, pp 41-44, 2002.

Ed Grabowski

[See also the article by Stephen Holder on page 49.]

An Odd Meter Franking – a possible explanation

While looking through some recent back numbers of the Journal I came across Richard Wheatley's "An Odd Meter Franking" on pages 141 and 143 of Journal 242 (December 2006).

Although the meter mark was definitely odd, the franking at 1F25 was not necessarily so. In fact the chances are that it was correct.

As Richard points out, in the date the year of posting is incomplete. Not only is it incomplete, but it is also misleading because the "3", which allows two "solutions" (1923 and 1933), is certainly wrong:-

1. Item franked and posted on 27 March 1923.

This is impossible because meter marking was only introduced in 1924. Furthermore, "L.E.L.F." was printed on the back of envelopes in 1925.

2. Item franked and posted on 27 March 1933.

This is possible, but most unlikely. The UPU rate of 1F50 had been effective since 1 August 1926, over six years earlier. It is difficult to believe that the L.E.L.F. employee responsible for dispatching mail would have been unaware that the rate had changed.

Given the somewhat unorthodox if inventive use of the machine, the missive could hardly have escaped the sorter's notice and he would have inevitably checked the franking. Since it is even more difficult to believe that a PTT employee would have been unaware of the current UPU rate, the letter would surely have been taxed.

Whence the conclusion must be that the date, at least the year of posting, was wrong, but the franking at 1F25 was correct because the letter had been posted some time between 1 February and 31 July 1926, most probably on 27 March 1926.

John Simmons

Military Franchise Letter from Far East to Occupied Germany



I have a query about a cover I bought a few weeks ago to join my World War II album. It appears to have been sent from Indo-China to somewhere in Germany I can't quite decipher. On the reverse there are a number of cryptic initials which presumably identify the sender, though they are mystifying to me. The postmark on the front reads "Poste aux Armées 19-10-46 T.O.E.". There is an F.M. manuscript mark and yet the cover has a French stamp, presumably applied as a postage due, with a "Poste aux Armées" handstamp of 4-11-46 and the number 222. My queries are:

1. Can anyone make head or tail of the various initials supposedly identifying the sender on the reverse?
2. If the sender is indeed German, what on earth was he doing in Indo-China in 1946? What might have been his unit or particular branch of the army?
3. What do the initials "T.O.E." in the postmark signify?
4. Do the numbers 222 in the French postmark have any significance?
5. If the cover was indeed sent by a soldier as one would imagine, why was a postage due stamp applied in France before the letter was sent on to Germany?

John Garner

I can offer a few remarks which I hope will be helpful.

On the reverse, the first abbreviation is Abs. for *Absender*. In front of the stroke on that first line is a number (soldier's number?) which I think reads 25313. The second line reads S.P.71134, giving the *Secteur Postal* number (though I am not absolutely sure about the 4th digit). T.O.E. stands for *Théâtres d'Opérations Extérieures*, used for troops serving in foreign countries.

The name René sounds French rather than German, and he is perhaps writing from the Far East to a girl in the "Britische Zone" of Germany whom he met while serving there earlier? The cover is addressed to Emsdetten in Westf. [Westfalen], Sandüfergasse 6 [= 6 Sandbanks Lane].

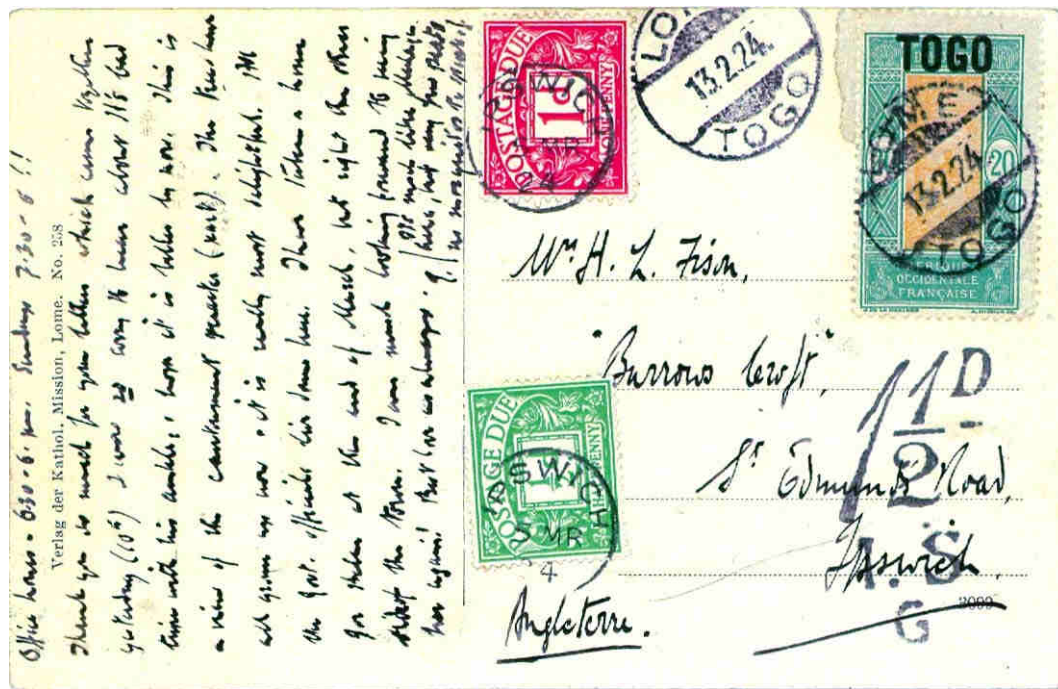
Emsdetten in Westphalia is west of Osnabrück and north of Münster. The 21a in a circle is, I believe, an early kind of postal code used in occupied Germany at that time.

A stamp has been affixed because it is addressed abroad (and not to France), when the military franchise does not apply (or, more strictly, is not recognised). In order to avoid postage due in Germany the stamp will have been affixed in France by the military *Secteur Postal* 222 and cancelled before being sent on to Germany. Postage for a letter sent abroad, however, did not reach 18F before 1 May 1948, and the stamp was issued in late 1947, so the rather unclear postmarks must read 1948 rather than 1946.

Can our readers offer any more detail?

Maurice Tyler

Togo – the 1921 Issue



The 1921 issue remains elusive on cover before 20 July 1922, with some values as single used stamps still unrecorded before this date. The issue was short lived, and whilst more readily found after 1922 is still difficult to find even then.

The above item was a delight to acquire, as it brings together German, British and French connections. The German cancel of Lomé was used on 13 February 1924 on the French 20c value 1921 issue used alone, with ½d

and 1d British postage dues affixed at Ipswich on 5 March. Lomé was in the British sector until 1 October 1920. The rate for a card with a message of over five words was 30c. In 1915 1d equated to 10c approximately, and it would seem that 2d postage due should have been raised?

This is only the third example of mail between 1914 and 1924 to England which I have recorded where underpaid postage has been levied.

John Mayne

Censor Marks from WWI

These items are no doubt known by collectors of Tunisia, but as far as I know some have never been recorded.



A double ring red mark having the seated Republic in the centre has been recorded by Jean Morat. It has the words MINISTERE DE LA GUERRE on top and CONTROLE POSTAL TUNIS at the bottom. On the reverse of covers with this mark, there usually is another: a square in the same ink with the words OUVERT PAR L'AUTORITE MILITAIRE. These two marks each come in two versions:

Type 1 Seated Republic

- The top and bottom texts are separated by a star
- The words MINISTERE... have serifs

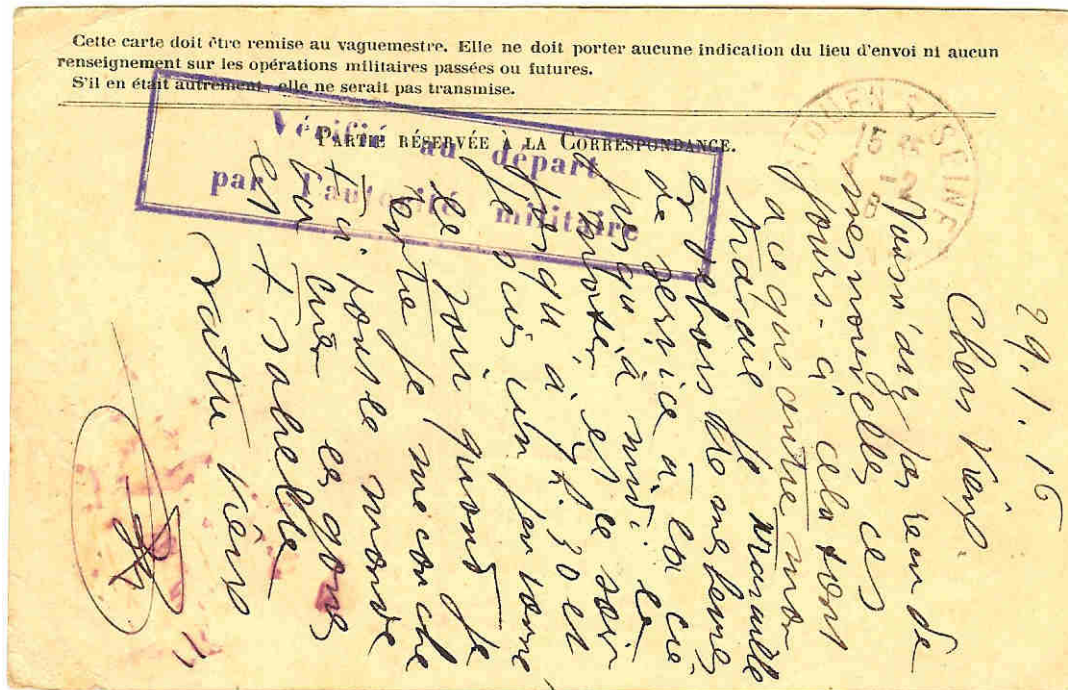


Type 2 Seated Republic

- The top and bottom texts are separated by four points arranged in a square
- The words MINISTERE... have no serifs

The mark OUVERT PAR comes in size 36x36mm and 30x30mm. Apparently the smaller mark goes together with type 2 Seated Republic and vice versa.

In each of these illustrations, the two marks were scanned side by side.



Another censor mark not in the Morat book is this boxed two line mark in violet. It measures 71 x 18mm, and has the text *Vérifié au départ par l'autorité militaire*. It is illustrated here on a January 1916 card from Sfax (30/1/16) to Saint-Ouen, France (4/2/16).



Also not recorded is a mark similar to the circular ones described above, but larger. It measures 42mm in diameter, and has *fleurons* to separate the top and bottom line.

Johan Delbeke

[These marks are illustrated and described on Johann's website www.alneum-resources.com (look for Resources - Articles).]

The Postage Stamps of the French National Liberation Committee, Algiers, in WWII

I was greatly interested in Bob Maddocks' study of the above issue that was published in Journal 244 of June 2007 (pp 45-47), together with Bill Mitchell's paper published in the *France & Colonies Philatelist* N° 286 of October 2006 (pp 80-84) and N° 290 of October 2007 (p 91) under the title "World War II – The Colonies 'General Issues' Charity Stamps".

Although at present my copies of the *Journal Officiel du Madagascar* are on loan to a colleague, so that I cannot check the reference quoted, it would appear from the paper quoted above that these stamps did appear in other colonies. I show below (Figs 1 and 2) a cover in my collection, albeit philatelic!



Figure 1 - Front of cover
19.12.1943.

Registered airmail with the six CFLN stamps
sent by the first air service to Réunion with slogan handstamp.

The sender was one of the censor officers from Mauritius employed at Tananarive
during the period November 1942 until June 1944
when the Service des Contrôles Techniques took over with one British liaison officer.

In Journal 240 for June 2006 there is a cover on page 59 from French India sent in by James Moffat, which is franked by a single value 9F + 41F from Pondicherry to a local address. In the Stanley Gibbons Catalogue for France [Part 6] it is stated that these stamps were issued by the

CFLN (*Comité Français de la Libération Nationale*) and put on sale first after the landing in Corsica, later in liberated areas in the south of France and from November 1944 throughout France and in many of the French colonies. Is there any mention of this in the *Journaux Officiels*?

Colin Spong

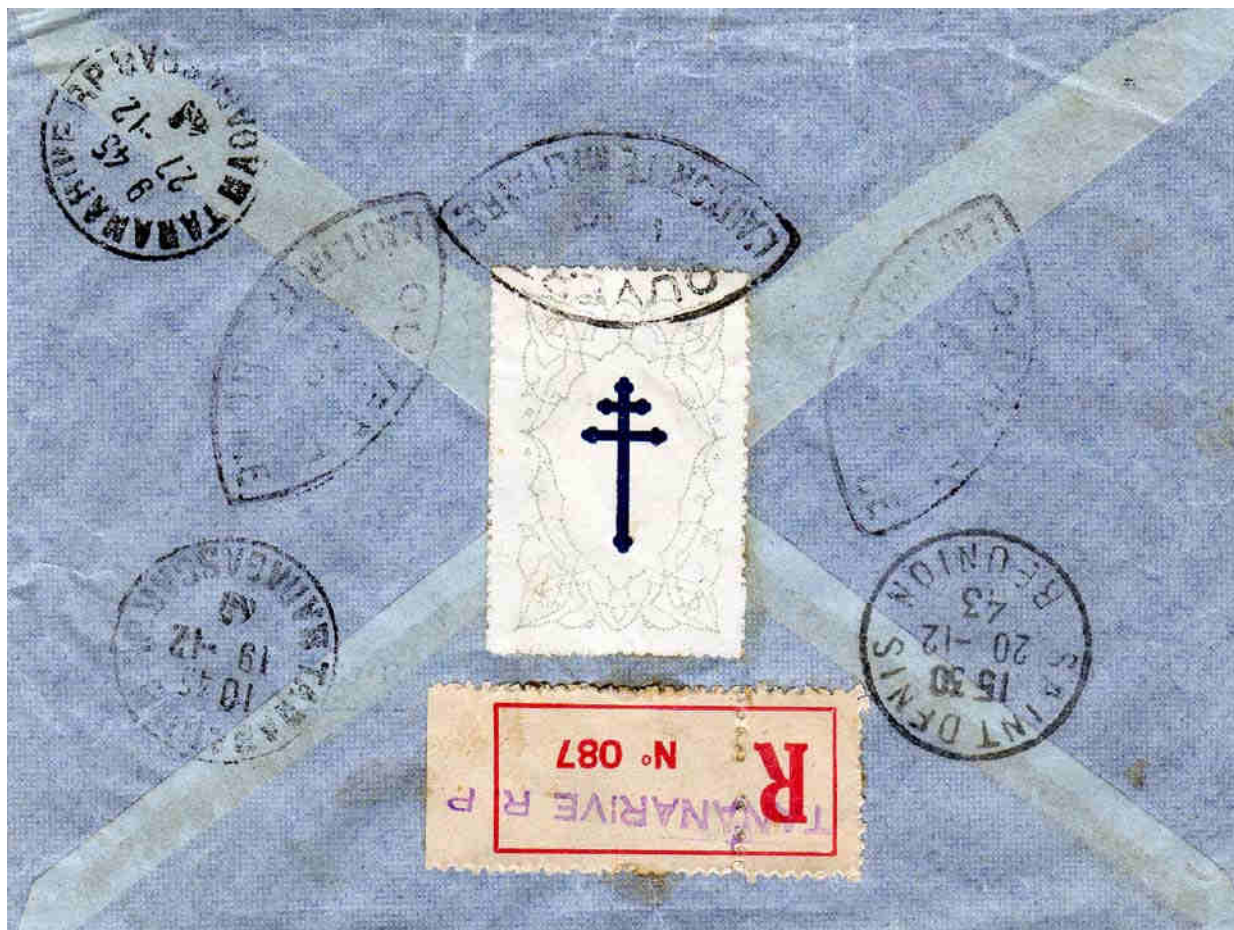


Figure 2 - Reverse of cover
Registration etiquette Type RB18A (not recorded for this period)
and French military censor Type FHIV.
Arrival cds at St.Denis and at Tananarive.
Postage 1F50, Registration 3F [Tariff of 05.01.42]
and air supplement 1F per 10g [Tariff of 15.02.42].

Marianne de Gandon 'à la bretelle' Variety

Efforts were made last year (see Journal 244 of June 2007, page 61, and Journal 245 of September 2007, page 86) to cast light on the puzzle of Marianne's bra strap. I persevered with Jean-François Brun and have at last had a response, as per the contribution below. This doesn't provide a definitive answer, but there may well

be a clue in the information that each revolution of the printing cylinder produces three sheets, each with different possibilities of misprints. Thus, in theory, two sheets out of three will not show the variety. The point about the variety being created by a tiny piece of metal is also useful.

Michael Meadowcroft

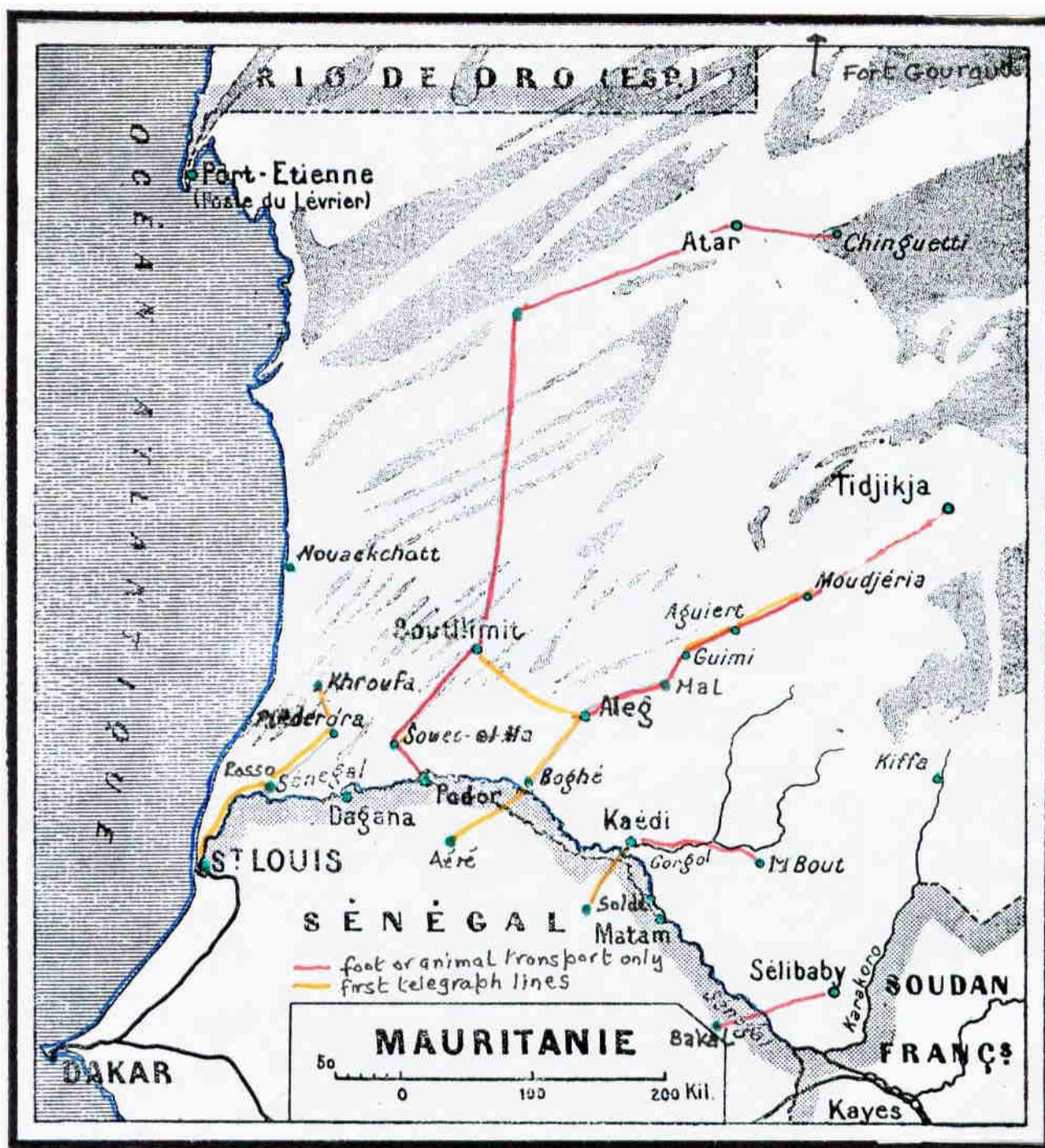
I have not made a special study of the Marianne de Gandon. On the TD3 (*taille douce trois couleurs*, or three colour line-engraving) presses used at the time, each turn of the cylinder prints 3 sheets, each produced by a different printing plate. It is possible that this variety is to be found in several places, in

fact, as it is no doubt a deterioration in the superficial coating of chromium (the chromium plating being intended to harden the surface of the plate). A small piece of metal detaches itself, thus creating a slight groove... which is shown as a line of ink on the stamp. Sorry I can't be more precise.

Jean-François Brun
(trans MST)

Mauritania & those *Taxe* marks

Stephen Holder



Introduction

A few short notes on page 21 of Journal 247 (of March 2008) on the T marks of Mauritania, indicating postage due 'used' in Sélibaby, caused me to sigh gently, and has roused me to write a few lines which might be of interest to collectors other than myself, being one of the few people who collect Mauritania seriously. In fact I do not know any other collector in this country who does have a detailed interest in the postal history of this desert territory, save for those people who interest themselves in airmails, where Mauritania has a position of some importance in French Colonial philately.

There are a few things to remember about Mauritania in the colonial period which affect the postal history. Firstly, the French instigated some modest military probes into the interior in the late 1880s and 1890s (despite the fact that a recent article in the travel section of the *Daily Telegraph* stated that the French had been rulers there since 1814 - possibly a typing error for 1904) and these were consolidated into a military territory which they called Mauritania (after the original Roman province name for the whole area including Morocco, which was then one of the great grain producing areas for the Roman Empire),



Figure 1

The earliest cover known to me from Sélibaby.

10c Faidherbe cancelled with a double ring cds *in red* Sélibaby 11 August 1906, with large red handstamp *Mauritanie*, and also cancelled Bakel Sénégal in transit 18 August 1906.

The envelope is inscribed *Cercle de Guidimaka* (the military administrative district) & has the *contresigning* of the district office. Addressed to General Pénaud, it has been re-addressed from Bayonne to St Jean de Luz.

One of the rarest covers of Mauritania.

by a decree dated 12 May 1903. Very few documents of a postal history nature exist from this period.

The Civil Territory of **Mauritanie** was created by a decree dated 18 October 1904. In practice this at first included only the lower or southern part of the country, north of the Senegal River and south of a rough line Nouackchott-Tidjikja, plus an area in the north around Poste du Lévrier which was renamed Port Étienne from mid-1907. The territory was extended northwards by Colonel Gourand in 1909.

There was only a very modest postal structure in the early years, connecting the outposts between themselves and back to Saint-Louis in Senegal, from whence the whole territory of Mauritanie was administered. The first efforts were concentrated on building the telegraph lines to form military communications, and the opening of post offices and postal services, most of them fairly elementary, followed the extension of the military telegraph lines, which the French considered the important part of the infrastructure to develop.

The civil postal service was not inaugurated until a decree dated 3 July 1906, and it remained under the general authority of the Director of Posts at St Louis, Senegal, from 1908 to 1960.

The level of postal traffic in all areas of Mauritania was always very small compared with most other countries. Even as late as 1950 there were only a handful of Europeans in most towns, and until after World War Two the number of literate people in each area was minute, often as low as ten or twenty individuals. In the early days only a few French military personnel and a handful of merchants or officials could read or write. Most mail was from these parties back home, largely to France, plus a certain quantity of mail to the official Berber or Moor interpreters for the French, who liaised with the local nomadic populations on behalf of the French rulers. There is thus very little mail indeed from most post offices, and some small settlements are largely if not wholly represented by 'philatelic' mail or by postcard exchange club members.

The railways did not come to Mauritania until the 1960s, but air transport developed quite quickly from the mid 1920s because of the great distances between some of the outlying settlements. Much of the mail was carried on foot or by pack animals until very recent times. Mail for the exterior was almost always routed via Saint Louis and Dakar in Senegal to connect with the more developed world. In modern times the country has developed very rapidly but the population is still very small (about two million?) in an area nearly the size of Western Europe.



Figure 2

A selection of loose stamps cancelled with the T in triangle:
 of these the 5c & 10c look very suspect and are probably forged handstamps.
 The 5c has a heavy CTO cancellation but the date stamps on the other stamps look to be properly used:
 two values are without date stamp and are thus probably cancelled with the T by favour.
 One has to accept that most of these stamps thus handstamped have been so done by favour.

The first stamps & the *Taxe* handstamps

Stamps with values from 1c to 5F in the designs of the well known *Faidherbe*, *Balay* & *Palms* series of the African colonies were issued in 1906 and a 45c value was added in 1907. The dates of issue are not known for each office, and the fact that stamps were produced does not mean that there were any available at or used in the various post offices for the first year or so. Only a few offices had any significant traffic (and that very small indeed by most countries' standards), and the little postal agencies attached to modest military posts, such as Sélibaby, the 'town' in question on the stamps shown in the last Journal, had virtually none, save the odd military cover or philatelic envelope prepared for stamp dealers or collectors, cancelled to order and often backdated. Most of the stamps of this first issue with clear date stamps of the towns open in 1906-7 are cancelled to order or by favour cancels.

It follows that the use of postage due on covers for the early years was almost non-existent, and it is difficult to entertain the idea of such items from Sélibaby, where the expression 'three men and a dog' to describe its size is probably appropriate, as it only had 4 Europeans in 1950! As an indication of the level of postal business here are some figures extracted from official archives.

Year	No. of inhabitants	No. of Europeans
1906	223,000	???
1911	250,000	144
1915		164
1921	261,746	214
1926	289,184	279
1931	323,498	321
1936	380,227	296
1953	560,359	695

It can be seen from this that the potential for letters passing through the post was very low indeed, as the Europeans and a handful of interpreters were the only literate people in the Territory.

Most of the mail was from four offices, Atar (an important military base), Port Étienne (the main military centre) and to a lesser extent Kaédi & Boghé. The other fourteen offices (which included Sélibaby) open in the early period were all *agences postales*, with very little postal traffic of any kind other than philatelic covers and some official mail. Loose stamps can be found with circular date stamp cancellations of most of the offices on the first issues of Mauritania, but few of those are other than cancelled by favour or back-dated items. A few covers do exist from 1906-8, but in some forty years of collecting I have not seen a great many. One or two are illustrated here. (See note later concerning Kaédi under the list of post offices).

The arrangement to use a **T** to indicate *taxe* due from underpayment of postage was as follows. Although *Timbres-Taxe* stamps were issued in 1906-7 only the 20c was issued in 1906. When postage due was necessary the official instruction was for the ordinary stamps to be used, handstamped by the postal officer with a **T** in a triangle (about 15 x 12mm). Only this cachet was authorised. Larger triangles with a **T** and any form of **T** without a triangle are fabrications, forgeries, fantasies, whatever you may wish to call them, and they are often struck on top of already used stamps, rather than the other way round which is how they should appear on the very rare occasions that they were used correctly. They were only authorised for use from 5 September to 6 December 1906.

Only ten values of the set are found with the **T** in triangle handstamp; the 4c, 35c, 45c, 75c, 2F & 5F values were not used thus.



Figure 3

1c *Faidherbe* cancelled Kaédi 9 October 1906 for local delivery with a 20c *Palms* cancelled Kaédi the same day & with the T in triangle cachet on stamp and cover. Philatelically contrived but a 'genuine' cover in the correct period.



Figure 4

An attractive cover, with philatelic franking of the *Faidherbe*, *Balay* & *Palms* issue, 10 May 1909 from Kaédi, registered, to the well known philatelist F Doé at Epernay, France. The letter is from the officer in charge of the post noting 'sorry for the delay, awaiting the 2 francs value'.



Figure 5

A striking picture postcard of two young ladies of Dakar, with 10c *Faïdherbe* cancelled Boghé to Dieppe; 10 July 1908, with a large official cachet *Mauritanie - Mal / Djemja des Ouidad Nogmach* one of the rare marks of any kind seen from Mal. The writer was Lieutenant Duboc who other cards show was the military commander of the *Cercle d'Aleg*.



Figure 6

An envelope from Port Étienne to Bordeaux, 6 October 1907, franked with a 10c *Faïdherbe* + a bisected 20c *Palms*. Whilst there was no notice authorising the use of bisects, this has passed through the post and arrived 18 October 1907.



Figure 7

A picture postcard of Cintra, Portugal, franked with a 5c *Faidherbe* cancelled Tidjikdja 23 July 1907. The card had been used before, addressed to Rueil in 1905(?).



Figure 8

A picture postcard of Moorish Camel riders in Cayor, Sénégal, franked with a 5c *Faidherbe* cancelled Aleg 19 June 1908, cancelled in transit Dakar Sénégal, from Lieutenant Duboc, commandant of the *Cercle d'Aleg*.

Postal tariffs at the time, which of course governed the likely use of the postage due stamps, were as follows, and basically mirrored the current inland rates in France.

letter rate within the territory and to France	10c per 15 grams
postcard rate as above	5c
printed matter or journals	5c per 50 grams
supplement for registration	25c

The settlement of Sélibaby was near the lower curve of the Senegal River, fairly close to the border with French Soudan and it was always a modest military outpost. The earliest cover of which I am aware is shown in figure 1 dated 11 August 1906. I have seen very few other covers from the place until the 1920s. What records there are available show that there could only have been a handful of literate people there at any time until perhaps the 1960s.

The three stamps shown in the Journal article which started this short discourse, clearly show faked T handstamps on Mauritania first issue stamps already cancelled with by favour date stamps of a slightly suspicious format. The 5F value was not authorised for use with a *taxe* handstamp, and the date slugs are upside down in relation to the legends of the date stamp. I do not know of a cover from this outpost dated during the authorised period of use of the T in triangle handstamps, and the likelihood of a postage due cover existing from there is virtually nil.

For comparison and interest I have illustrated a few contemporary covers, and would remind the reader that there are very few completely genuine and non-philatelic *postage due* items existing, and few ordinary commercial ones of this early period. These should indicate the kinds of mail which can be found for this period, but in over forty years of collecting I have only seen a relatively small number of covers used from 1906 to 1910, and not many more until the Desert Riders pictorial issues appeared in 1913-14.

The Early Post Offices of Mauritania

Many of these postmarks are extremely rare *in genuine use* on the stamps of the first issue but can be found cancelled to order/by favour and/or with backdated cancellations. The commoner cancelled to order offices are marked *

<i>Post Office Name</i>	<i>Details & Dates of Opening</i>
Aguiert	Occupied by the French 17 Feb 1905; postal agency 1 July 1906-1909; postmarks rarely found.
Akjoujt	As Akjoucht was a military post in 1908; re-opened as a post office as Akjoujt 2 Feb 1931.
Aleg	A French military post in 1904, a postal agency 1906, a full post office 25 July 1907; postmarks rare on first issues.
Atar	Occupied by the French 9 Jan 1909; post office opened 11 Oct 1913.
Boghé *	Occupied by the French Dec 1903, post office opened 1906.
Boutilimit *	Occupied by the French Aug 1904; postal agency opened 1906; 'by favour' cancels known on first issues.
Chinguetti	Occupied by the French 23 April 1909; postal agency 11 Oct 1913, full post office from c1933-4, when the first automobile reached it!
Guimi *	Occupied by the French 15 Feb 1905; a postal agency opened 1906 & closed Dec 1911; the military post was abandoned 10 Feb 1912.
Kaédi *	On N bank of the Sénégal river, a French settlement since 19 July 1864; a Sénégal post office c1890-91; part of Senegambia & Niger 15 Nov 1902 to 18 Oct 1904 when it returned to Sénégal; transferred to Mauritania 1 July 1906; many CTO marks on first issues.
Khroufa *	Occupied by the French early 1903; postal agency 1906, closed 2 Nov 1907; cancelled to order stamps are found; the date stamp Mauritanie / Kronfra 2 Oct 1906 is a fake.
Kiffa	A French military post established 11 Dec 1906, and a post office of Upper Sénégal & Niger opened 1 Jan 1910, closing in late 1910; it reopened 1911 and on 13 April 1913 came under the administration of Mauritania but only became a postal agency of Mauritania 11 Oct 1913.
Mal	Occupied by the French 1904; a postal agency opened 1 July 1906 and closed 19 Oct 1907; probably the rarest postmark of Mauritania.
M'Bout	Occupied 9 May 1904; a postal agency opened 1906; postmarks rare.
Méderdra	Occupied early 1907; a postal agency 1909; few postmarks known.
Moudjéria *	A postal agency from 1906; always a minor office but by favour postmarks known; a fake postmark known on second issue stamps.
Nouakchott	Occupied Dec 1903 & a military post established; a postal agency July 1906; the post and the agency were closed 8 June 1912; early postmarks are spelt Nouackchott; it re-opened 25 Sep 1929 and since Nov 1958 it has been the capital of the country.
Port-Étienne *	The main port of Mauritania, a post office since 1907 (formerly Poste du Lévrier); CTO cancels are found on the first issues.
Poste du Lévrier	Was occupied by the French around 1906 and its name Cansado was changed to Poste du Lévrier; the post office opened 1 July 1906 but was changed to Port Étienne 15 August 1907; postmarks are scarce.
Regba	Occupied by the French with a military post 1904; a postal agency opened 1906 & closed 2 Nov 1907, the military post having closed 18 May 1907: as far as I am aware <i>no postmark has been seen</i> .
Saint-Louis	Although the administrative centre of Mauritania the post office was in Sénégal, but Mauritania stamps were authorised for use there.
Sélibaby *	A military post may have been established in 1894; a postal agency opened 1906; a small office but CTO postmarks are known from here.
Souet-el-Ma	A military post was established 1902-3; a postal agency opened July 1906 & closed 2 Nov 1907; postmarks are rare.
Tidjikdja *	Occupied 2 April 1905 and the post was besieged several times; a postal agency office opened 1 July 1906, closed in 1909 & reopened in 1910; CTO postmarks are found.

LIST OF RECENTLY PUBLISHED ARTICLES

Compiled by Colin Spong

Bulletin de la COL.FRA

N° 123 1^{er} Trim 2008: Le Fonctionnement du service des postes et télégraphes au Laos (Hurpet); Martinique marcophile moderne (Levanas); Kratt Cambodge sur timbre du Siam (Engles); Comores: une variété. Volcanique (Flotte); Le bureau de poste de Mata-Utu (Séréni).

France & Colonies Philatelist

Whole N° 292 (Vol 64, N° 2) Apr 2008: New Postal Datestamps on Cameroun Postage Stamps and Mail (Bratzel); The French Influence on the First Postal System of Ethiopia (Morvay); Performing Philatelic Research (Bratzel); Naufrage de *La Russie* (Delpy); Guadeloupe Revisited (Grabowski).

L'Écho de la Timbrologie

Permanent features: Actualités, Prêt-à-poster Florilège de PÂP, Variétés, Anomalies, Cartes postales, Comment ça marche?, Flammes, Livres, Maximophilie, Thématique.

N° 1816 Mar 2008: Sylvia Cornet, Dis, l'artiste, dessine-moi le timbre de tes rêves (-); Les timbres de grève des CCI [IV & End] (Franceschi); La naissance d'une nouvelle Poste aux armées (Hella); Duxin, le magicien: 800 pièces inconnues [9] (Storch); Le sel de la philatélie [1] (Marion); Les étiquettes postales pour la douane (Emmenegger).

N° 1817 Apr 2008: Alain Giampaoli, Dis, l'artiste, dessine-moi le timbre de tes rêves (-); Propagande aérienne et guerre psychologique (Albaret); Les découpages en taille-douce [I] (Marion); Les timbres sectionnés de taxation postale et fiscale (Danan); Toute la lumière sur les «phares cachés» (Barratin); Le phare des îles Sanguinaires (Barratin); Le sel de la philatélie [end] (Marion); Le contrôle des changes (Emmenegger).

N° 1818 May 2008: Gérard Haton-Gauthier, Dis, l'artiste, dessine-moi le timbre de tes rêves (-); Propagande aérienne et guerre psychologique [end] (Albaret); Duxin, le magicien: 800 pièces inconnues [10] (Storch); Les timbres sectionnés de taxation postale et fiscale (Danan); Les découpages en taille-douce [II] (Marion); Les ponts du diable (Krempner); Le courrier censuré (Emmenegger);

Timbres Magazine

Permanent features: Actualités, courrier des lecteurs, Club des clubs, Manifestations, marcophilie, Les nouveautés de France, actus Andorre, Monaco et les TOM, Pap, Expertise, Les variétés, Le Journal des nouveautés, bibliothèque, Mon marché du mois.

N° 88 Mar 2008: La «Marianne de Beaujard» (Decaux); Samy Ghorbal, journaliste et philatéliste (Amiel); Passionnez-vous pour les oblitérations de nos classiques (Pellinec); Les timbres d'usage courant révélateurs privilégiés de l'identité nationale (Coste); Des timbres peu

fréquentables (de la Mettrie); Le timbre Liberté lettre «A» et la taxe en Israël (Livnat); Normandie: quand un paquebot devient «vedette» (Michaud); Les services de messagerie (Baudot); Transmettre ou ne pas transmettre...? (Prugnon); Un ambulant au pays du Matin calme (Chauvin).

N° 89 Apr 2008: Conversation avec Jacky Larrivière, artiste et graveur (Decaux); Penser aux chers absents [usage bureaux temporaires] (Chauvin); Les autres façons de collectionner sur le thème «Europa» (PJM); La série Poste Aérienne de 1949-1950 mystère polémique (Michaud); Les gros chiffres, prenez le temps de les analyser (de Pellinec); Badinguet s'impose à la une (de la Mettrie); Le bureau J de Paris au mois de janvier 1849 (Baudot); A propos du SIÈGE DE BELFORT et du BALLON DE BELFORT (Rouchy et Baudot); Une réexpédition taxée (Prugnon); Courrier interzone officiel (Chauvin).

N° 90 May 2008: Les Etats Généraux de la Philatélie (-); 1954: L'année où les préoblitérés prennent vraiment leur autonomie (Michaud); Paul Léautaud, le petit ami des animaux (PJ); Des flammes sur le cinéma dans le monde (PJM) A malin ...malin et demi! [a little history of ancient letters] (de la Mettrie); Sous les pavés les Cartes Postales (Zeyons); Le convoyeur du Chemin-de-fer Congo Océan (Chauvin).

Documents Philatéliques

N° 196 2^{ème} trim 2008: Le provisoire des Abiras [Congo Français] (Jacquot); Les rebuts militaires durant la Seconde Guerre mondiale, Premières recherches sur l'organisation des services (1939-1946) (Albaret).

Les Feuilles Marcophiles

N° 331 4^{ème} trim 2007: Les débuts du timbre oblitérant petits chiffres (Andrison); Service supplémentaire des bureaux principaux de Paris (1851-1856) (Platzer); Les empreintes de rouleau manuel en Moselle allemande (1940-1944) (Bastian & Demeraux); Compléments d'informations relatifs aux machines à oblitérer NEOPOST IJO 85 (Guillard); Les relais-poste (Cabayé).

N° 332 1^{er} trim 2008: Panorama de la poste ferroviaire dans les ex-territoires, ex-colonies françaises et départements français (Mercier); Les formations sanitaires de l'Aude pendant la guerre 1914/1918 (Gallicet); Compléments d'informations relatifs aux machines à oblitérer TOSHIBA TSC 1000 (Guillard).

The Indo-China Philatelist

Vol 38 N° 2 (Whole N° 182) Mar 2008: Indochinese Culture High Values used on First Flight Cover (Bentley); Vietnam 1955 - Military Postal History in a Year of Transition (Crenshaw); Cover Bears Witness to Japanese Takeover of Indochina (Bentley); Previously Unreported Revenue Items (Dykhouse); Small Lot of Silent Witnesses - J Desrousseaux (Düring)

Supplement (March 2008): The Legal and Administrative Basis for the Postal System in French Indochina (Galembert 1924, ed. Montague).

Vol 38 N° 3 (Whole N° 183) May 2008: Hungarian Cinderellas Carry Grasset Replica (Wiar); Airmail Routes and Rates from French Indochina to France, 1940-41

(Picirilli); "Yen The" and "Phuc Yen" Combat Columns of 1909 (Gelhaar).

Stamp Lover

Vol 100 N° 2 Apr 2008: Saint-Exupéry - Aviator, Air Mail Pioneer & Author (Bartlett).

BOOKSHELF

Books Noted

Les Colonies Françaises - Tarifs et service postal 1848-1878 - Les Colonies d'Amérique by Michèle Chauvet; 440 pp, 160 tables, 260 illustrations in colour, 70 documents reproduced; price 100€ + p&p; available from Brun & Fils, 85 galerie Beaujolais, Palais Royal, 75001 Paris. [Analysis of official texts and postage rates in Guadeloupe, Martinique, French Guiana, St Pierre & Miquelon; all rates from France to colonies, from colonies to France, other colonies, foreign countries; various routes available; mail between colonies.]

Poste Maritime Française - Consulat de France Panama 1848-1881; Deuxième service postal du Pacifique Sud 1872-1874 by Louis-Eugène Langlais; pub. Académie de Philatélie; 211 A4 pp; over 100 illustrations in colour; price 45€ + p&p; available from Brigitte Abensur, 8 rue des Fossés, 54700 Pont-à-Mousson. [New information on postal history and role of French consulate at Panama; one chapter is devoted to the maritime line connecting Valparaiso with Panama between March 1872 and March 1874; deals with mail between France or other European countries and the USA passing by Panama, including the use of British maritime mail services for French correspondence, and the establishment in 1865 of a French maritime service to Colon, enabling a continuation of the journey in the South Pacific, which had to compete with Britain and the North German Confederation.]

Les cahiers pour l'histoire de La Poste: Les PTT à Marseille - Aux origines d'un réseau de communications 1852-1914 by Mathieu Roux; 179 pp in colour; price 6€; available from Comité pour l'histoire de La Poste, 44 boulevard de Vaugirard, 75757 Paris cedex 15. [Construction and development of PTT network in this city, covering social, economic and cultural themes; including telegraph, mail and telephone.]

Poste rurale Basses-Alpes - Arrondissement de Forcalquier by R. Gregnac-Daudemard; 60 b/w detachable sheets; price 8,50€; available from author, "Colline", boulevard des Arbousiers, 83120 Sainte-Maxime. [Revised edition of 1977 work, giving information on rural post of this district, including census of 1830 and 1911, distribution system to scattered villages, and handstamp letters known.]

Catalogue des Entiers Postaux - Prêt-à-Poster émis en France depuis 1994 by Philippe Pignon & Jean-Pierre Somoneau; pub. ACEP (Association des Collectionneurs d'Entiers

Postaux); 480 pp; price 69€ + p&p; available from Jacques Hontebeyrie, 125 boulevard Saint-Denis, 92400 Courbevoie. [Over 3000 P-à-P listed and valued; gives details of each issue, with description of illustrations, format, etc.]

Les Marianne de Briat - Les Tirages en feuilles - Les Tirages pour carnets, pub. Sococodami; 110 pp, b/w; price 15€ inc p&p; details from Jean-Claude Gagné, 18 rue Danielle-Casanova, 77330 Ozoir-la-Ferrière. [Details of sheet and booklet printing of the *Marianne du bicentenaire*, 2nd edition with added illustrations, corrections and new dates.]

Neuer Ganzsachen-Katalog - Afrika 2007; 656 pp b/w; in German; price 50€ inc p&p; available from the *Écho de la Timbrologie* bookshop. [Postal stationery of Africa, including Algeria and former French colonies of Morocco and Tunisia.]

Le Catalogue Spécialisé des Surcharges E.A. utilisées en Algérie sur timbres de France 1962/1963, pub. Phil.EA France Algérie; revised and updated 2008 edition of 1989 work by Claude Bosc; 170 pp, 30 in colour; price 50€ inc p&p; details from J-P Lamarre, 29 rue Jacques-Louis-Bernier, 92700 Colombes. [Includes discoveries made since 1989, an up-to-date price index, and 66 reproductions of documents, 60 in colour.]

Histoire de la communication - La Poste et la Philatélie à Thiers et dans sa région by Marcel Fillère; 108 pp in colour & b/w; price not indicated; details from author, Chemin des Tuilières, Athéna-Villa No 4, 26110 Nyon. [History of the postage stamp in the evolution of methods of communication, focussing on creation of first French stamp and the different allegorical figures of the French Republic, and the local history of the post and stamps in the region of Thiers.]

Les Paquets Familiaux en provenance des colonies françaises (1940-1950) by Laurent Bonnefoy; *Bulletin Col.Fra hors-série n° 24-3*; 75 A4 pp, illustrations in colour; price 40€ inc p&p; details from Alain Hurpet, BP 5, 10230 Mailly-le-Camp (email colfra-publications@orange.fr). [Details stamps, labels, cards, receipts and manuscript indications used for family food parcels sent from the colonies in this period, with historical and economical context in France, North Africa and AOF, including study of regulations, list of labels specific to AOF and Togo, censorship and taxation as well as postage rates.]

Maurice Tyler

Postal Rate changes of 1st March 2008

Derek Richardson

Letters to Metropolitan France

Weights up to	20 g	50 g	100 g	250 g	500 g	1 kg	2 kg	3 kg
Priority	0,55 €	0,88 €	1,33 €	2,18 €	2,97 €	3,85 €	5,07 €	5,93 €
ECOPLI (Non-priority)	0,50 €	0,72 €	0,87 €	1,64 €				

Letters to Overseas Departments and Territories

Zone 1 : Guadeloupe, Guyane, Martinique, Reunion, Mayotte, Saint Pierre et Miquelon, Saint Martin, Saint Barthélemy

Zone 2 : New Caledonia, French Polynesia, Wallis and Fortuna, TAAF, Clipperton

Service	Priority		ECOPLI *	
	Zone 1	Zone 2	Zone 1	Zone 2
Letter up to 20 g : Metropolitan France rates apply viz.	0,55 €	0,55 €	0,50 €	0,50 €
Letter over 20 g : Metropolitan France rates apply (see table above) PLUS the following air supplement	+0,05 € per +10 g	+0,11 € per +10 g	+0,02 € per +10 g	+0,05 € per +10 g

Example: Rate for a priority letter weighing 35 grams to Zone 2 = 0,88 € + 4 × 0,11 € = 1,32 €

* ECOPLI items have reduced air priority

Registration

Regime (at sender's choice)	R1	R2	R3
Indemnity in case of loss or damage	16 €	153 €	458 €
Fee (in addition to the priority letter rate)	2,80 €	3,40 €	4,30 €

Advice of delivery of a registered item : 1,00 €:

Contre-Remboursement. La Poste collects from the addressee (the purchaser) on delivery the price of an item (maximum value 800 €) that has been sent by registered post. La Poste repays the sender (the vendor) the amount collected. Fee: 7,00 €.

Valeur Déclarée. This service applies to Metropolitan France, Andorra and Monaco. The net price of insuring for loss of or damage to an item up to a value of 600 € is

Items weighing up to	250 g	500 g	1 kg	2 kg	3 kg	5 kg
Net price	11 €	12 €	13 €	14 €	15 €	16 €

Plus a supplement of 0,50 € for each 100 € by which the declared value exceeds 600 €. Maximum 5000 €.

Poste Restante : Correspondence, 0,55 €; Newspapers and periodicals, 0,28 €.

FOREIGN COUNTRIES

Letter rates

Zone structure: Z1 = EU + Switzerland, Z2 = Rest of World, (P) = Priority, (E) = Economy

Up to	20 g	50 g	100 g	250 g	500 g	1 kg	1,5 kg	2 kg	3 kg*
Z1 (P)	0,65 €	1,25 €	1,50 €	4,00 €	6,00 €	8,50 €	11,00 €	12,30 €	-----
Z2 (P)	0,85 €	1,70 €	2,30 €	5,50 €	7,20 €	10,50 €	14,00 €	16,50 €	27,00 €
Z1 (E)	-----	-----	1,35 €	2,80 €	3,90 €	5,50 €	7,00 €	8,50 €	-----
Z2 (E)	-----	-----	1,70 €	3,00 €	4,30 €	6,80 €	10,40 €	12,50 €	21,00 €

* only to 18 former French colonies in Africa

Registration⁽¹⁾ : 4,00 € for indemnity of 45,73 €.

Advice of delivery of a registered item : 1,30 €.

Contre-Remboursement⁽¹⁾⁽²⁾ : a fixed fee of 8,00 €.

Valeur Déclarée⁽¹⁾⁽²⁾ : a fixed fee of 4,00 € plus a value supplement (2,29 € minimum) of 0,38 € per 76,22 € of VD.

⁽¹⁾ Additional to the Priority letter rate.

⁽²⁾ Service not available to certain destinations.

Additional rates such as the fees for holding and forwarding mail, the prices of postal stationery and Prêt-à-Poster material can be found on the site www.laposte.fr, which is the source of the principal rates quoted above. This is the second lot of changes to the rates as published in *Tables of French Postal Rates 1849 to 2005*. The first, those effective from 1st October 2006, was recorded in Journal 242.

REPORTS OF MEETINGS

LONDON GROUP MEETING OF 23 FEBRUARY 2008

Steve Ellis: French Red Cross

Members present: Len Barnes, Mick Bister, Mike Brindle, M A Fairhead, John Hammonds, Chris Hitchen, Claire Scott, Colin Spong, Maurice Tyler, John West, David Worrollo, Michael Wright, John Yeomans. Guest: Ron Bentley.

Apologies: Bill Mitchell, John Scott, John Thorpe.

Steve began his display by telling us he was interested in telling the story of the French Red Cross by means of philatelic material, but also illustrating it with postcards, books, medals, and even an armband.

His story began in June 1859 when the Austrians were fighting the French and Sardinians in the Battle of Solferino. Henri Dunant from Switzerland found many wounded on the battlefield with no facilities for tending them, and this led two years later to a proposal to set up voluntary societies to deal with this problem. In 1864 the first Geneva Convention established an international Red Cross organisation, which in France took the form of a private society, the Société de Secours aux Blessés Militaires (SSBM). In 1879 and 1881 breakaway movements produced the Association des Dames Françaises (ADF) and the Union des Femmes de France (UFF), and these three organisations were only amalgamated in 1940.

Each society produced its own stationery and cachets, and we saw examples of these, together with postcards and cachets of stretcher bearers, trained dogs, infirmaries along the route, refreshment posts, *foyers*, and canteens (45 established in railway stations). Different categories of hospitals were numbered according to the organisation they belonged to, and we were shown cachets and cards from auxiliary hospitals, military hospitals, evacuation hospitals, 'complementary hospitals', 'benevolent' hospitals, convalescent hospitals, and even hospital ships and barges, and foreign hospitals in France.

The second part of the display dealt with the postal implications from 1870 to World War II. There were cachets

to publicise the activities of the Red Cross and to justify free postage. Some of the earlier ones included the 1870 Comité de Strasbourg, an agency set up in Basle, covers from Lyon including one from an ambulance unit, and from Morocco 1907-8 where the Red Crescent was utilised because of the religious objection to the reminder of the Crusades.

Further items that caught the eye involved exhibitions by the Russian Red Cross and by the ADF, training schools for nurses, and the agency at Geneva handling enquiries about missing civilians as well as military personnel (with labels identifying the section for the queries, which numbered 3000 a day in 1914). We also saw the involvement of other countries, cachets from the World War II tracing service, Red Cross message sheets with pre-printed text, French books with instructions, and a book produced in Great Britain beautifully illustrated to raise funds for the French Red Cross.

The third and final section of the display moved on to show examples of the French Red Cross providing assistance for those affected by floods or displaced people (eg with the distribution of clothing), publicity used on blotters or on cards, and fund-raising by means of bonds or lotteries or overprinted stamps.

Rather than sheets of stamps, Steve had brought individual vignettes, with a series produced by each organisation and applied to mail by purchasers who wished to support the good cause. The situation was clouded by Delandre who aimed large numbers of his productions purely at collectors (and was eventually prosecuted for fraud). We saw examples of booklets and post-war labels, and the afternoon ended with personal reflections on Dunant and his vision.

The vote of thanks for a wide-ranging selection of interesting material was given by Maurice Tyler.

Many of those present at the meeting then retired to a local restaurant for a convivial meal together.

MST

LONDON GROUP MEETING OF 19 MARCH 2008

Squadron Leader John Shaw: Fakes, Forgeries and Unissued Stamps

Members present: Maurice Alder, Len Barnes, Michael Ensor, M Fairhead, Chris Hitchen, Peter Lawrence, Martin Tingle, Colin Wenborn. Apologies: Mick Bister, Maurice Tyler.

John began with an explanation of his role as part of the expert committee of the Royal Philatelic Society. He outlined its structure and how it operated. Although a relatively small committee it was able to draw on the expertise of over fifty outside consultants with a wealth of philatelic and general knowledge to assist in its work. A large library and reference collection has been built up

over many years, and with access to other major collections such as those held by the British Library these all help to underpin the work done. John went into considerable detail about the process of expertising. Microscopes, different lights such as strobe, side light and ultra violet and an instrument referred to as a spectral comparator were all explained with examples of fakes and forgeries that he had worked on and what the investigations had shown up. It was possible to determine whether a postmark was on top of or underneath a surcharge and to detect cleaning and removal of marks to improve an item.

In the second round John showed copies and originals of some of the French and French colonial items that the committee had examined over the years. Amongst these were copies of letters from the first fortnight of January 1849 including many of the rare provisional cancellations used before the grills were available. Fortunately for the happy owners most of these had proved genuine. Spiro and Fournier forgeries followed and some of the classic 20th century fakes such as the 5F + 1F Orphans cunningly altered to the 5F + 5F and the 85c green Air changed to a rather more expensive 50F. French colonial and Haiti material concluded the round. In response to a question from Martin, John clearly explained the difference between fakes and forgeries.

The final round showed some classic Paraguay which have been very extensively forged. Most could be detected by counting the number of pearls round the central vignette.

In summing up the speaker paid tribute to John Levett, who had died at the weekend, and with whom he had worked on the committee. John had enormous knowledge of French philately as well as many other subjects. He had always been willing to share this and had provided great assistance to the expert committee over the years. He had given many memorable displays to this and other societies and played a major role in the development of the France & Colonies P S.

The vote of thanks for a most enjoyable and educational evening was given by Chris Hitchen

CJH

SCOTTISH GROUP MEETING OF 23 MARCH 2008

Bill Robertson: Free French Censorship in Syria and Lebanon 1941-1945

This proved a very good meeting, with 6 members attending. Bill's display gave insight into a subject that most of those present knew little about.

Firstly he gave a short background talk as to how the censorship offices came into being. He then, with the aid of a chart, showed the three basic types of censorship cachets used in the offices at Aleppo, Beirut and Damascus. These consisted of the Cross of Lorraine and the initials CP (Contrôle Postale); the positioning of the letters CP indicating the office used. Throughout the display Bill showed how these marks were amended

as deemed necessary and why numbers were added to them.

Bill then showed mail from each office, indicating when changes to the CP marks came into use; the different marks used for commercial and private mail; the treatment given to registered and military mail. He demonstrated how the numeric coding system on the censor cachets had been broken down, but told us that there was still one system to be cracked.

Bill is producing a book on this subject which he hopes will be available at the end of the year.

MP

NORTHERN GROUP MEETING OF 29 MARCH 2008

George Barker: Gaboon 1862 to Independence in 1959

After a few precursor items (pre-1886), George displayed the first stamp issues, comprising general colonies issues with **GAB** handstamp, and a similar series with just numeral surcharges. The third of these provisional issues involved the surcharging of three general colonies' postage dues with new face values of 15c or 25c; finally, as supplies of regular issues had still not been received from Paris, a local issue was prepared at Libreville with a crude type-set design, 15c and 25c.

Thereafter, Gaboon was merged into French Congo and a range of the Congo provisional issues was shown. Finally, the 'Group' or 'Tablet' design was introduced, and a measure of stability followed. In 1904, Gaboon regained its postal independence and the 'Group' stamps appeared inscribed '**GABON**'. Subsequent pictorial designs followed,

and Gaboon's independence as a stamp-issuing territory continued up to 1936, when issues for the combined territory of French Equatorial Africa became general. Here, George was able to show the variations in production of the 1937 pictorials, which were still evident, even with the use of the '**LIBRE**' and other Free French overprints.

Members Present: George Barker, Steve Ellis, Stephen Holder, Peter Maybury, Rod Mintoft, John Smith. Guest: K Miller.

Apologies: R J Barnes, J W Cowell, A Goude, R L High, B Lucas, D Mabbs, M Meadowcroft, A Shepherd.

Rod Mintoft, and John Smith were welcomed to their first Northern Group meeting, as was Keith Miller, as a guest of Rod Mintoft.

JPM/GEB

SOUTHERN GROUP MEETING OF 12 APRIL 2008

John West: French Red Cross

John West showed a fine and most interesting display of French Red Cross, and opened his presentation by describing the origins of the reply service operated in the two World Wars by the Red Cross in Geneva to meet the need to reply to enquiries relating to POWs and other internees. A wide range of uncommon mail was shown with response identified by the application of a reply label in colour, and questions were raised by John about the origin of the inscriptions on rare examples. The display continued with examples of WWI mail from hospital trains with cachets representing the various foreign nursing services operating in France at that time, including those of England, Belgium, USA and the Netherlands

The French Colonies were represented by a number of examples of stamps and covers illustrating the application of the 5c surcharge applied in red in Paris and locally in

black, and which was used to finance the charity. John described the many forgeries of the Paris overprint in inverted, sideways and displaced form.

In France in 1959 the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Red Cross by Jean Henri Dunant was marked by the issue of stamps, and examples were shown of proofs, colour trials, booklets and panes, together with Cinderella material and charity stamps.

Colin Spong gave a vote of thanks to John, which was warmly endorsed by the members present.

Members present: Michael Annells, Betty Blincow, Ian Burgess, Colin Clarkson, Roy Ferguson, Bill Mitchell, Bob Small, Colin Spong, John Thorpe; and guests: Frank Blincow, Pat Spong. Apologies from Michael Berry, John Hammonds and Yvonne Larg.

JY

LONDON GROUP MEETING OF 16 APRIL 2008

Colin Spong: Aspects of Madagascar

Barbara Priddy: West African Airmails 1923-1942

Colin opened his display by considering the different reasons why we collect. In his case, the gift of an album from his grandmother and swapping shrapnel at school for French Sowers led, on his return to the hobby in the mid-1960s, to an interest in the French sphere of the Indian Ocean. At first collecting the Comoro Islands, he eventually purchased a collection of Madagascar in 1970. After the French society COL.FRA began in 1984 with the study of 19th century issues, he decided to concentrate on the 20th century. His main areas of interest now include airmails, railways and the Second World War.

He informed us that Madagascar is the fourth largest island in the world, situated off the east coast of Africa, and now has a stable government, with good relations with the UK. His display illustrated the many different aspects of mail available, including airmails (picture postcards of pioneer airmen and planes from France, with commercial flights established from 1935, and even a crash cover from the Congo). Commercial routes and rates were illustrated with etiquettes and timetables, followed by a section on two of the railways with covers, postcards and photos of stations. Finally came British/French civilian censored mail (types of labels and handstamps).

Barbara then took over, describing how the world's first regular long-distance airmail service developed in stages from the 1919 Latécoère service Toulouse-Casablanca, via Aéropostale Paris-Dakar, to Air France which eventually extended the route to Santiago. Carrying mail by air at that time was far more than just transporting goods, it was a mystical experience, and pilots had to face the dangers of forced landings (over 200 aircraft crashed between 1923

and 1939), being captured by tribes for ransom, and not being granted permission for overnight stays in some places because of political tensions.

Barbara's display showed some of the early aircraft on postcards, and illustrated many aspects of this developing service. These included the first non-stop crossing of the South Atlantic with a payload of mail by Mermoz in 1930 (troubled by problems with the baggage), the introduction of all-air services in 1935, and the beginning of a twice-weekly service in 1938. Connections to Dakar by road, rail and sea were also illustrated, and a small collection of vignettes produced by charities and stamps commemorating planes and pilots was shown.

The outbreak of World War II brought the suspension of civil flights for a time, and the use of censorship cachets. This disruption in normal services led to new routes being explored and to various trial flights. The story was told of a cover posted in Accra in the Gold Coast in June 1940 that flew via Dakar to Paris, but on its way to London the plane was mistakenly shot down by the French coastal defences, and then was detained in Paris when the Germans occupied France and was finally delivered in June 1945 with an explanatory cachet. Barbara concluded her display with a few puzzles to be solved, and covers on the last plane from Algiers to Marseille in November 1942 when Air France was grounded as Algiers was invaded by the Allies.

A vote of thanks for both displays was given by Mick Bister.

Members present: Len Barnes, Mick Bister, Godfrey Bowden, Michael Ensor, M Fairhead, Chris Hitchen, Hugh Loudon, Maurice Tyler.

MST

SOCIETY'S 32nd ANNUAL PHILATELIC WEEKEND 7-9 MARCH 2008

39 members together with their guests attended the Society's Annual Weekend at the Charlecote Pheasant Hotel near Stratford-upon-Avon.

Friday

Apart from an afternoon Committee Meeting, the weekend opened officially after dinner on the first evening, when Joint Organisers **Peter Kelly** and **Chris Hitchen** welcomed all those attending. Certificates awarded at last year's New Zealand National Philatelic Literature Exhibition were presented to **Derek Richardson** (Silver Gold for "Tables of French Postal Rates 1849-2005" and Silver for "Subject Index to Four French Philatelic Magazines 1946-2000"), **Geoff Gethin** (in his absence accepted on his behalf by Maurice Tyler) (Large Silver Gold for "Fakes & Forgeries of 20th Century French Postage Stamps"), and **Maurice Tyler** as editor (Silver Gold for "The Journal of the France & Colonies Philatelic Society 2005-2006").

The late evening then gave the opportunity for some short displays, starting with **Iain Stevenson** who showed two books of model letters in French (including advice to a wife writing to the mistress of her husband) and a beautifully decorated Algerian journal; **Godfrey Bowden** had brought some Algerian illustrated cards, *La Belle France* labels, and an essay for Algerian stamps; **Paul Watkins** showed some 1910 postcards for the *Fête de Jeanne d'Arc*, a Marcel shampoo advert, an ink drawing on card, and a 1920 anti-strike card; **Mavis Pavey** displayed entry marks among her latest acquisitions, a postage due query, and *poste navale* cancellations; and **Maurice Porter** had a query about charges on 19th century POW mail. **John Scott** then showed an unusual use of the French language with the day of the week printed in French even on some foreign postal stationery, and some decorative notelets including a 19th century engraving of Charlecote Hall; **Claire Scott** illustrated "death by post" with death certificates, assassinations, an ornate *In Memoriam* card, correspondence from an ambassador's wife in Constantinople, and some mourning stationery; **Skanda Vaitilingam** displayed Fezzan and Ghadames stamps from WWI onwards, a booklet by an American, and some French slogan cancels; and finally **Peter Maybury** had brought some new acquisitions from the *Ancien Régime*, illustrating 18th century rates, the *Paris Petite Poste*, and some Algerian mail.

Saturday

The following morning it was announced that next year's Weekend would take place at the same venue from 13 to 15 March 2009, and the cost would be £67 per person per night (for bed, breakfast and dinner). **Ashley Lawrence** then gave his President's Display on The Siege of Paris 1870-1871. He showed a variety of letters and cards flown aboard the 67 manned balloons that left Paris, including *plis confiés*, letters entrusted to the pilot or passenger. One letter travelled aboard *L'Armand Barbès*, the balloon by which Leon Gambetta escaped from Paris to reorganise French resistance in the provinces. The astonishing flight of *La Ville d'Orléans* was represented by two letters: one retrieved by fishermen from the mailbag that was jettisoned

in the North Sea, the other recovered from the balloon when it eventually landed at the Tunet Farm in the mountains of Norway, after a record-breaking flight of nearly 1,000 miles.

Pigeons supplied by the Society *Espérance* were taken aboard most of the balloons, and used to bring messages back to the capital. The microphotographer M. Dagron was flown out of Paris, with his assistants and equipment, aboard *Niepe* and *Daguerre*, to apply their expertise to the Pigeon Post service. The latter balloon had the dubious distinction of being brought down by Krupps' *Gum Ballon*, the world's first anti-aircraft gun! M. Dagron later wrote about his adventures, and Ashley showed copies of his booklet, published in French and in English. The Pigeon Post service, first used for sending government dispatches on microfilm, was so successful that by mid-November 1870 it was opened to the general public. Ashley showed how a 20-word message was sent by Mrs Brown from London to be microfilmed in Tours, then carried by pigeon from Bordeaux, and eventually delivered by telegram to her husband William Brown in Paris. Ashley has written a book about his research into the William Brown Siege correspondence, and hopes to have this published in the near future.

Ashley showed examples of the Cérès stamps that were issued during the Siege, to replace the stamps depicting the disgraced Emperor Napoleon III. In Paris stamps were produced from the original plates of 1849. New plates were made in Bordeaux for the printing of stamps by lithography. He also displayed a letter recovered from a *Boule de Moulins* that had been carried in a metal sphere submerged beneath the River Seine: for a full account of this remarkable invention, see his article published in the December 2007 issue of the Journal. There was a selection of humorous cartoons by Draner and Cham; medals, and souvenirs of the Siege, including the "Mrs Simpson" facsimile of a *Ballon Monté* printed by Letts. The display ended with illustrations of the monument, designed by Bartholdi and financed by public subscription, that was erected in 1906 to commemorate the aeronauts and pigeons of the Siege of Paris. Sadly, this splendid monument was demolished by the Germans during their occupation of Paris in 1944.

Alan Wood showed postal history items from 1789 to 1818, commencing with the establishment of the National Assembly and the creation of the 83 *départements* of France. The introduction of the Republican calendar and the establishment of many postal franchises resulted in a variety of postal markings. Much military mail arose from the invasion by French troops of Belgium, Holland, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, Switzerland, the Illyrian Provinces and Spain. Campaigns into Egypt and a march upon Moscow eventually led to Napoleon's defeat at Waterloo and his exile to St Helena. An army of occupation composed of Russian, Austrian, Prussian and British troops controlled the country from 1815 to 1818.

Continued on page 77

OBITUARIES

John Henry Levett, RDP, FRPSL



8 August 1927 - 14 March 2008

The death of John Levett means for our Society the loss of one of our most experienced philatelists, who was active at every level in the hobby, from local club activities to international competitions. He was a lively and enthusiastic collector, and at all times encouraged all those around him in the Society. More than just this, he came upon the scene in the life of F&CPS at a moment when the young and potentially active society was faltering in its development. Because of deaths and other reasons, the Society had lost many of its Officers, and John, assuming the presidency from 1965 to 1971, almost single-handedly revitalised the Society. He instituted a new quarterly publication, found a new London headquarters, encouraged a rebirth of membership and raised the Society to an international level of activity from which it has never looked back. Perhaps the high spot of those early years was to get the Society to act as host to the Philatelic Congress of Great Britain at Enghien-les-Bains, near Paris, in 1974. He donated the first of the Society awards, the Levett trophy, which was intended specifically to encourage members to participate in competitive philately.

He had left school at the age of 16, entering the family firm of stockbrokers, Victor Levett & Co, thus beginning his long apprenticeship in the City of London, where he showed considerable business acumen, and which served him well both in the world of finance and that of stamp collecting (philately was to come much later!). After service in the RAF, he resumed his financial career, and joined Southend PS. Subsequently, he showed again his devotion to his local society, joining Woking PS, where he became President in due course, and remained a life-long member.

He worked tirelessly for organised philately, judging exhibitions, and chairing BPE in 1975. He gave displays throughout the UK, and also in the USA and South Africa. He was a member of the PCGB Congress Executive for many years. He joined the Royal Philatelic Society London in 1963, and was a Council member from 1969, becoming vice-President in 1983 and President in 1986. He was honoured with election to the Roll of Distinguished Philatelists in 1979 and subsequently served for many years on the Board of Election.

His philatelic interests were wide, with great collections of Great Britain (in particular, connections with France), Sudan and the Niger Coast, but his main interest always lay in the stamps and postal history of France. He displayed France to the RPSL in 1969. His specialised collections of France achieved notable results worldwide, with gold medals at ARPHILA 75 and CAPEX 78. His research was particularly successful in the Bordeaux issues (with which he won the Stampex Silver Mail Coach award in 1966), the General Issues for the French Colonies (Grand Prix Melbourne 1985), the 25c Ceres issues of 1850/1871-76 (where he continued the work of the late Pierre Germain) and, perhaps most importantly, the postal history of the Franco-Prussian war of 1870/71, where, among other medals, he achieved gold at CAPEX 87 and a large gold and special prize at both PhilexFrance 89 and PhilexFrance 99, being runner-up for the Grand Prix in both instances. The research work in this area led to an intensive study of the Paris Commune of 1871, which won gold at BELGICA 2006 and featured in the display he gave to RPSL in 2004 (together with his son, Dr Ian Levett). As a result of his French interests he became an overseas member with France's Académie de Philatélie, and a *Membre d'Honneur* of the Académie Européenne de Philatélie. He was also a member of the Collectors Club of New York, where he displayed, and the Society of Postal Historians.

One last tribute to his philatelic expertise must be mentioned. He joined the Expert Committee of the Royal in 1982, and was still active at the time of his death. He showed great wisdom in these tasks, and was much appreciated for his knowledge of classic GB and French philately.

Throughout his long philatelic career, he was supported firmly by his wife, Sally, to whom, and to his sons and daughters, and many grandchildren, we send our sincere condolences. The writers of these few words were privileged to call him a great philatelic friend, helper and adviser. Philately, and the F&CPS in particular, will be the poorer for his passing.

George Barker/Stephen Holder

Yvonne Z Newbury, FRPSL



30 October 1914 - 7 January 2008

With the deaths of Yvonne Newbury and John Levett, most of the members of a remarkable group, all members of F&CPS-GB, of collectors/devotees of the Franco-Prussian War of 1870/71 have now left us: together, they must have had a combined knowledge of the subject unequalled in the anglophone world.

Yvonne (née Huth) was a great niece of the Huth banking family, famous for its massive correspondence legacy. She began collecting stamps as a child, encouraged by her father who collected France (imperfectorate issues only!), and was offered correspondence from the Siege of Paris of 1870/71 when quite young. She graduated in Geography, with Economics, from Bedford College in 1936. Though she collected France generally until the early 1960s, the Siege developed into her sole passion, after having seen a display of *Ballons montés* by the British Air Mail Society to the Civil Service PS in 1962. She joined F&CPS in the early 1960s. She began exhibiting Siege of Paris internationally in 1970, and her collection achieved six 'golds' by mid-1986. She was proudest, it was reported in December 1986, of the one gained in Paris at PhilexFrance 82, but this may have changed with another gold at PhilexFrance 89!

She became vice-President of our Society in 1971-72, and President 1972-73, but after moving at about that time to Somerset was subsequently rarely seen at London meetings. She came, however, frequently to the annual Society philatelic weekends, and showed her collection of stamp boxes at the one in April 1992. Much of her professional life was spent at the Ministry of Defence, where she met Roy Newbury, whom she later married. He was a devoted bibliophile, and she and Roy had impressive other collections, especially of natural history books and glass. She made many contributions to the Society Journal, between 1969 and 1998, and continued almost to the end in giving great support to the Society. Her 90th birthday party on 30 October 2004 was a great occasion, with Yvonne still interested in postal history, despite having disposed of her Siege material some years before then. Her outgoing, friendly personality, and her vast store of knowledge of the Siege, will be greatly missed.

George Barker/Stephen Holder

Ray Whitelock

It was as a politician that I primarily knew Ray Whitelock, who has died at the age of 86. He was one of those rare individuals who was a Liberal by personality and instinct. However difficult the issue, and however ravenous the opposition, Ray never flinched, and his disarming and engaging personality often won over his opponents.

After the war Ray settled in business in Wilmslow. There he joined the Liberal party and became a Councillor in 1964. In 1967 he moved to Leeds to become the Secretary of the Dyers and Finishers Association - an employers' organisation within the wool textile industry. Ray arrived at my Leeds Liberal office before, it seemed, the removal van was fully unpacked at his new home! He contested numerous elections and ran the local party association with skill and tact. He was also the Treasurer of his local community association for many years.

I always reckon that political Liberals have to have at least two other interests from the shortlist of railways, Gilbert and Sullivan, philately and classic jazz. With Ray it was the last two and over the years we met up at many venues connected with them. Ray's wife Jeannine died in 1999 and thereafter some of the incentive to go to jazz venues diminished and he concentrated more on his stamp collection.

Ray's main interest was in France, hence his membership of F&CPS. He was not a rich man and therefore he mainly bought larger medium-level auction lots which gave him the opportunity to enjoy sorting, classifying and mounting many items in his collection. It is rather out of fashion these days but Ray referred to himself as a stamp collector rather than as a philatelist. He had no remaining family and it was typical of his thoughtfulness that he left his collection to the Society in his will.

Michael Meadowcroft

French Transatlantic Mail 1800-1857

Steve Ellis



Figure 1

Entire letter from Dunkirk, 1801, carried privately to London and there prepaid 1/10d for packet rate to New York. Carried on the *Manchester* packet from Falmouth to New York.

Although a considerable amount of mail was carried between France and the United States of America during the first half of the nineteenth century, no postal convention between the two countries existed until April 1857 when the United States-French Postal Convention came into being. Until that time the carriage of mail was generally undertaken privately or in accordance with various Anglo-French and Anglo-American postal conventions.

Prior to the 1857 convention, since it was not possible to send mail fully prepaid to its destination, any rate change in France, the USA or even Britain affected charges for mail sent between France and the USA, and such changes occurred quite often. Different rates sometimes prevailed depending upon the nationality of the ship, the method of its propulsion (sail or steam) and whether the mail was carried on a private basis or under contract to the government.

Mail at the beginning of the nineteenth century, although occasionally carried by warship, was generally by a private commercial ship (with departure details being announced at the port). Mail carried into France would be subject to a charge of one décime over and above the inland postage rate (determined by distance and weight), being the "*voie de mer*" which was received by ship's captain for each item of mail handed in at the port.

Such letters received an "entry mark" when put into the internal postal system. These include the relatively common straight line cachets "COLONIES PAR", "PAYS D'OUTREMER", "PAYS D'OUTREMER / PAR" and the "OUTRE-MER", "COLONIES FRA" circular cancellations, with the gaps being filled by the name of the port of entry.

Occasionally the letter would be carried out of the mails to England and from there by the transatlantic packet services,

initially from Falmouth (Fig 1) but subsequently from Bristol, Southampton and Liverpool. At the beginning of the century this would have been necessary by virtue of the cessation of cross-Channel mail services due to the war with Britain.

Often the mail would be sent to the port by a forwarding agent whose task it was to select the vessel which would arrive at the destination in the least time. The forwarding agent is indicated either by the use of a cachet or being written in manuscript on the letter. One can find on French transatlantic mail double forwarding agents' cachets – for example, on mail from France at Le Havre and London (Fig 2), and on mail to France at New York and Liverpool.

As the volume of transatlantic mail increased, regular packet services operated by fast sailing ships came into operation: examples of such American services were the Old Line, Havre-Whitlock Line and Havre-Second Line (all of which eventually merged into the Union Line) between New York and Le Havre. It is common to find the name of the ship written on the letter. These services came to carry the bulk of the mail direct between the USA and France until the 1840s and, occasionally, even later.

The introduction of steamships after 1838 revolutionised the carriage of transatlantic mails, being much quicker than the sailing ships, and hence more mail between France and the USA was routed via England for sending on these services. The major British company was Cunard, but one of the first operators was the Great Western Steam Ship Company. Unlike Cunard they were not awarded a government contract for the carriage of mails: thus mail carried on their ships was treated as private ship letters and will often carry a transit marking such as "BRISTOL / SHIP LETTER".



Figure 2

Entire letter from Le Havre, 1843,
sent via forwarding agent "Turlin du Kiosque"
through its offices in both Le Havre and London.
Late use of Boston curved "SHIP" marking.



Figure 3

Entire letter from Philadelphia to St Étienne, 1845,
with accountancy mark "COLONIES / &c ART.12"
indicating carriage via Britain to France.
Postage due – 20 décimes (10 to Britain, 10 to France).

Figure 4

Cover from Paris, 1854,
prepaid 80 centimes
(8 décimes) for carriage
by American ship.
New York cancellation in
black indicating 21 cents
due and carriage by
Am(erican) Packet.



Contract steamer mail, though, was charged 12 décimes for the transatlantic packet element (equivalent to 1/-), plus the inland postage based on distance (though note that the 1836 Anglo-French postal convention introduced a special rate from Paris to Britain of 10 décimes for the inland postage element). Additionally a charge in America was added – 6 cents if to/from the port or 2 cents plus inland postage elsewhere. Sending a fast transatlantic letter was not a cheap business!

All transatlantic mail to France travelling via Britain was treated as unpaid under the terms of the Anglo-French convention of June 1843 (and its subsequent modifications) and a share of the amount collected by France had to be credited to Britain. The Convention's Article 12 relates to mail "from other colonies and countries beyond the sea" which was forwarded to France at the 3/4d per ounce bulk rate – in effect 10 décimes to Britain for letters up to 7½ grams, for sea and transit charges, to which was added the rate for internal French postage from the port to the destination. This explains the boxed marking "COLONIES &c / ART.12" (Fig 3) which was replaced by the more common "COLONIES &c / ART.13" marking from December 1845.

With the implementation of the uniform inland rate within France from August 1849, a 15 décime rate became established for transatlantic letters sent by British open mails and carried by British steamer, which included the British transit/sea charge equivalent to 10 décimes. This covered carriage to/from the American port, plus there was a 5 cents charge in the USA.

A second transatlantic rate, though less common, was 21 cents by British open mails when carried by an American packet. The French charge remained at 15 décimes, whether carried by British or American ship; arguably the sea postage is paid twice with this rate, both by the sender and the recipient. This charge was reduced to 8 décimes (comprising 3 décimes to Britain for transit and 5 to France for inland) by French Decree of September 1851 (Fig 4), though a cover in my collection for July 1851 indicates that this rate must have been introduced earlier than September.

A third rate was established by French Decree in December 1851, namely 13 décimes for open mail sent via Britain,

comprising 5 décimes for the British packet, 3 for British transit and 5 French internal. There was a corresponding 5 cents US charge, paid on delivery or when posted.

A fourth rate existed: from July 1851 the US packet rate was reduced to 20 cents, including US internal postage, when carried by the direct American steamer service to France. When the mail was posted at or delivered to the port the French charge was reduced to 30 centimes (3 décimes). The Havre Line, set up by the owners of the successful Union Line sailing packets, operated the direct service between New York and Le Havre, generally once per month in this period.

France lagged behind Britain and the USA in the operation of transatlantic steamers, but the Compagnie Générale des Paquebots Transatlantiques, known as the Hérout & de Handel Line after its founders, ran a scheduled mail service between Le Havre / Cherbourg and New York. Only nine journeys operated between June 1847 and February 1848, when the company ceased due to the unreliability of its vessels and the size of the financial losses incurred. Mail leaving France on this service had no special French or American postal markings but incoming mail generally has a distinct boxed or circular entry mark containing the words "PAQ. REG." (*paquebot régulier* or regular steamship) (Fig 5). These are desirable covers!

An interesting episode has come to be known as the "Retaliatory Period" between July 1848 and January 1849 when as a consequence of Britain's attempt to charge the full packet rate on transatlantic mail carried to Britain on American steamers, the American postal authority retaliated by charging similarly on mail carried to or from the USA by British steamers. This results in the markings of "29" or "34" as charges in cents applied to mail during this period (24 cents retaliatory packet fee plus 5 or 10 cents US inland postage), in addition to the French postal charge (10 décimes to Britain for the packet fee plus inland postage). The dispute was resolved in January 1849 and prior rates resumed, but examples of the retaliatory charge marks are to be found on French mail.

A second retaliatory period, less well known, applied in respect of mail to/from France through Britain from 26 January to 10 February 1853. Incorrect charging by the

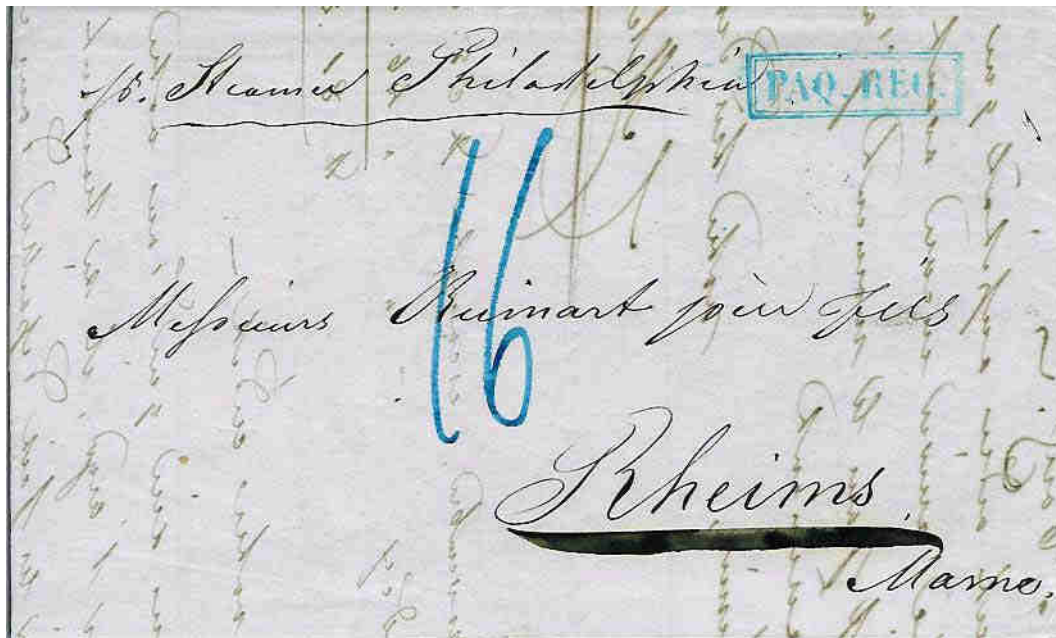


Figure 5
Entire letter
from New York to Rheims,
August 1847,
carried by
Hérout & de Handel
service.
“PAQ.REG.” cachet and
16 décimes charge
(10 steamship
and 6 internal).

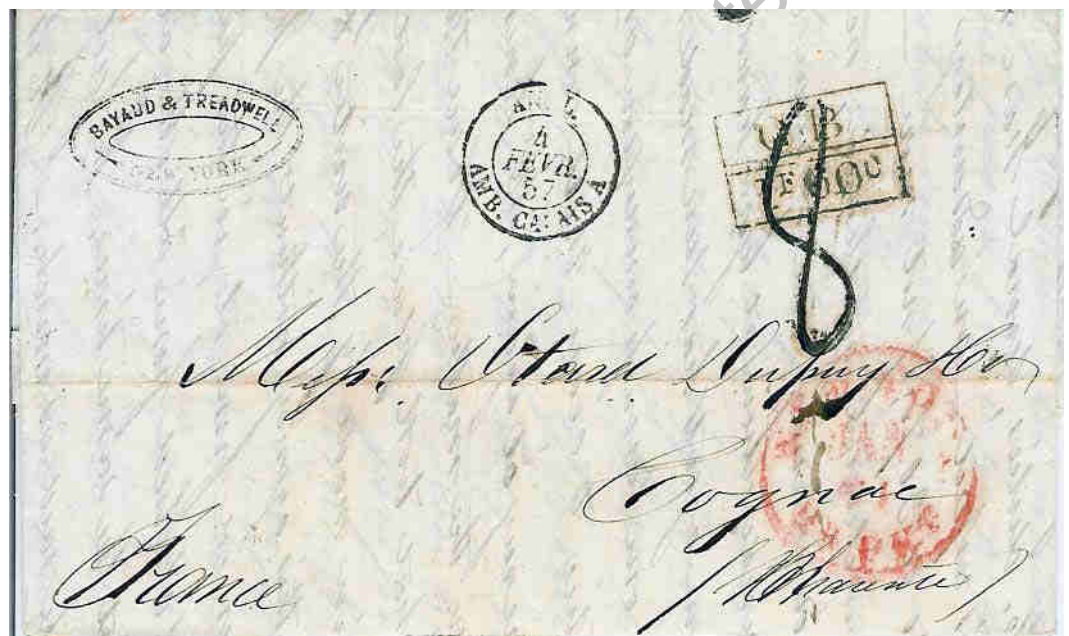


Figure 6
Entire letter
from New York to Cognac,
January 1857,
prepaid 5 cents cash
for British open mail rate.
Cachet
“NEW YORK / BR.PKT.”.
GB accountancy mark.
Postage due 8 décimes.

Americans of 21 cents for the British open mail rate arose out of a misunderstanding by the US Postmaster General who felt, wrongly, that the American packet mail was being discriminated against. Mail carried on Cunard crossings during this period was affected and shows the 21 cent charge, despite being carried by British packet.

Due to the frequency of service most mail was carried by the regular transatlantic contract packet steamers from Britain – Cunard (British), Ocean Line and Collins Line (American); less mail was carried on the direct service (though this changed after 1857 with the increase in departures from French ports). However, mail was still carried by private ship or non-contract steamers (for example, Vanderbilt European Line during 1855). When not posted from the port, the French rate for such mail was 60 centimes (6 décimes). The US rate had dropped from 7 cents (2c ship plus 5c internal) to 5 cents in April 1855.

Finally, just prior to the introduction of the 1857 United States-French Postal Convention there is what is known as

the “Interim Period” from January to March 1857. The Anglo-French Postal Convention introduced in January reduced the bulk rate for the exchange of letters between the two countries in open mail when carried by British steamers (or non-contract vessels). For the three month period until the US-French convention was introduced on 1 April, new rectangular accountancy marks were applied (Fig 6) to signify the credit to Britain of 1 franc 60 centimes per 30 grams (equating to 40 centimes per single-rate letter).

This latter convention brought to a close this complex period of different rates, introduced a simplified rate structure which permitted the payment of through mail between France and the USA for the first time (regardless of whether the mail was transported direct or via Britain), and introduced a methodical system of apportionment of revenues between the countries’ postal administrations, indicated by cachets struck at the exchange offices. But that, as they say, is another story!

Dahomey Internal Communications at the Turn of the 19th and 20th Centuries

Bill Mitchell



Figure 1a

Since my article “Benin – Postal Use of Military Telegraph Date Stamps” (Journal 242, December 2006) and the short notes by John Mayne and myself (Journal 241, September 2006) were written, John has sent me scans of three more of these date stamps taken from the catalogue of the Lugdunum Philatélie auction of 2 October 2006. Further reading has revealed a fourth and has enabled me to add to the article “Benin – the Early Years” by Laurence Lambert and myself (Journal 230, December 2003). It should be noted that the name of the colony was changed from Benin to Dahomey et Dépendances as from 1 January 1894, but date stamps inscribed TELEGRAPHIE MILITAIRE / BENIN were used as postal cancellations for another ten years or more.

The new examples of this postal use of Military Telegraph date stamps are summarised as follows; the first comes from the article “Le Haut-Dahomey (1898-1907)” by Henri Tristant⁽¹⁾ and the remainder from the Lugdunum Philatélie sale.

1. 7 December 1898. Poste N° 2, situated at an unidentified point in Haut-Dahomey. The destination was apparently Porto-Novo. Although it is not immediately apparent, this is the letter on which Tristant based his conclusion that Poste N° 2 was probably located at Konkobiri at this time (see my 2006 article).
2. 16 September 1899. Poste N° 5 on an *en franchise* envelope addressed to Porto-Novo and endorsed “*Troupes occupant le Haut Dahomey*” (there is another endorsement which looks like “*Très rare*”, no doubt added subsequently by a dealer or collector, but no indication of the place of origin). This is illustrated (Figs 1a and 1b).
3. 26 June 1902. Poste N° 6 on a franked letter to Paris. I only have a copy of the front; yet again there is nothing to indicate where it was posted. Since this was only one month after John’s envelope containing a carte de visite which can be shown to have been posted at Allada (see my 2006 article), this also probably originated there.
4. 26 April(?) 1905. Poste N° 1 (indistinct; it could possibly be N° 4) on the picture side – which is all that I have – of a postcard franked with a 5c *Type Groupe* of the Ivory Coast (Yv 4), so the card was probably posted by a traveller at a coastal town on the telegraph line from Cotonou to the Dahomey/Togo border. It could have been Cotonou, so if it was indeed Poste N° 1 the card could add a little support to John’s suggestion, in his Journal 241 note, that this number may possibly have been allocated to Cotonou.

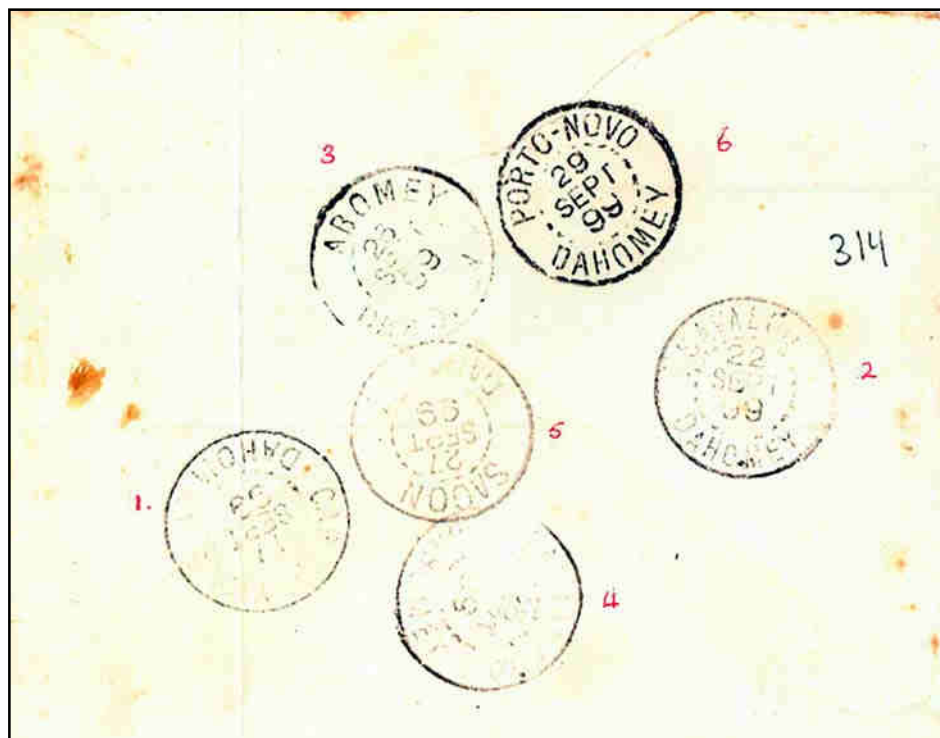


Figure 1b

Some of the strikes are very poor, but with the aid of a magnifying glass and the 1900 schedule of stops it has been possible to decipher them all, thus:-

- | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. CARNOTVILLE 17 SEPT 99 | 4. ZAGNANADO 26 SEPT 99 |
| 2. SAVALOU 22 SEPT 99 | 5. SAGON 27 SEPT 99 |
| 3. ABOMEY 26 SEPT 99 | 6. PORTO-NOVO 29 SEPT 99 |

Details of the routes taken by letters 1 and 2, and of two contemporaneous letters without Military Telegraph date stamps, are set out later in this article. They enable some interesting comparisons to be made, but first some notes on the telegraph and postal services in Dahomey at this time as recorded in my sources – Tristant, an important article by Constant Bouérat⁽²⁾ and a report which must have been compiled by early 1900 at the latest⁽³⁾.

There were two trunk telegraph lines to the interior, the *Lignes du Nord-Ouest* and *du Nord-Est*; with a minor exception we are only concerned with the former. Initially it was constructed by the army from about 1892; subsequently a civil line was developed between 1896 and 1899. Bouérat gives the following details –

Porto-Novo - Dogba (72 kms, 1896) - Sagon (63 kms, 1897) - Zagnanado (13.5 kms, 1897) - Savalou (100.5 kms, 1897) - Carnotville (123 kms, 1897) - Djougou (143 kms, 1898) - Kouandé (90 kms, 1898) - Konkobiri (112 kms, 1898) - Diapaga (127 kms, 1898) - Fada N'Gourma (229 kms, 1899).

The total distance was 1,073 kms; stations beyond Konkobiri were in a part of Haut-Dahomey which was hived off to Upper Senegal and Niger in 1907 and is now in Burkina Faso.

Tristant notes that as the lines reached each point permanent telegraph stations (*bureaux télégraphiques sédentaires*) were established and were quickly converted into post offices. This is confirmed by Bouérat, who gives the following dates of opening for these post offices –

Porto-Novo 1 July 1894; Dogba 1894; Sagon and Zagnanado 20 January 1897; Savalou 24 April 1897; Carnotville 16 August 1897; Djougou 12 February 1898; Kouandé 12 August 1898; Konkobiri 6 September 1898; Diapaga 4 August 1898; Fada N'Gourma 24 January 1899. (Tristant adds two other offices beyond Carnotville – Ouangara, briefly open in 1898 until the office at Djougou was opened, when it was transferred, and Matiacouali, open from 1898 to 1901 and again for a few months in 1902-1903.)

As noted in my 2006 article, Bouérat also records that in Dahomey post offices often preceded telegraph lines, but apparently this did not happen in this particular case – they seem (roughly) to correspond.

In 1903 the Savalou - Carnotville - Djougou section was altered to Savalou - Cabolé - Djougou to provide a link with the German colony of Togo at Cabolé, whose post office was opened on 16 November 1903. On 27 February 1913 Cabolé was ceded to Germany and its post office was

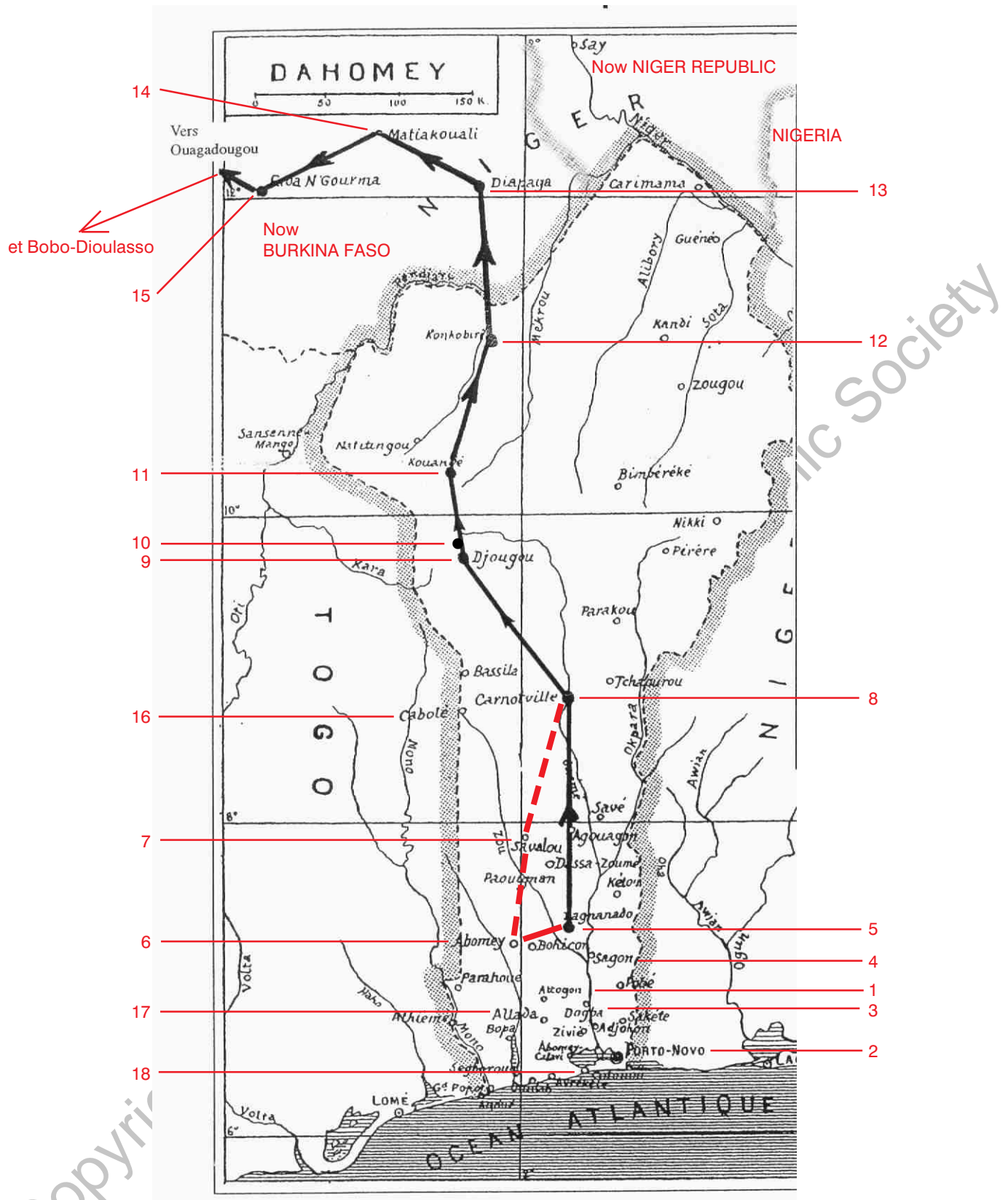


Figure 2

Poste piéton au Dahomey

The map, taken from the account of the 1900 letter from Lille (ref 5), comes from Langlois & Bourselet's catalogue of French West Africa postmarks (Editions du Graouli, Paris, 1937).

In marking the route of the *Poste Piéton*, which began at Zagnanado, M. Millet was apparently unaware that it reached Carnotville by way of Abomey and Savalou (the official 1900 account was not reprinted by COL.FRA – ref 3 – until some 5 years later).

The broken red lines show the route as recorded in 1900.

- | | | | |
|---------------|----------------|------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. RIVER OUMÉ | 6. ABOMEY | 10. OUANGARA | 14. MATIACOUALI |
| 2. PORTO-NOVO | 7. SAVALOU | (approximate position) | 15. FADA N'GOURMA |
| 3. DOGBA | 8. CARNOTVILLE | | 16. CABOLÉ |
| 4. SAGON | 9. DJOUGOU | | 17. ALLADA |
| 5. ZAGNANADO | | | 18. COTONOU |



Figure 3
Mail carriers arriving in Kayes

closed; so far as I'm aware it has never been reopened. Carnotville was not on the *Ligne du Nord-Est*, so it declined in importance after 1903. Apparently named after Sadi Carnot, the French President who had been assassinated in 1894, it does not appear in the Times Atlas of 1896, the year before – as noted above – its telegraph and post offices were opened, so in all probability it grew up around them both. The post office was closed around 1914 (see the article on the post offices of Benin / Dahomey in the Journal for March 2000); Carnotville appears on a plate from the Times Atlas of, I believe, 1921, but I have found no reference to its subsequent history.

The routes taken by the carriers of these four letters (two with and two without Military Telegraph date stamps) followed the telegraph *Ligne du Nord-Ouest* pretty closely, although the two diverged at one point. The location of these offices is shown on the map (Fig 2).

How were the mails carried? Tristant writes that mail from Haut-Dahomey, "as in all African countries", was carried on foot by *courriers-piétons*. Letters were enclosed in sacks, maximum weight 25 kilos, which were carried on the head, and the daily stages varied between 40 and 60 kilometres. On its way to the coast the mail entered Bas-Dahomey at Carnotville, from where it continued either on foot by *porteur-piéton* or by canoe (*pirogue*) down the River Ouémé (teams of porters and pirogues are illustrated in Figs 3 and 4). Later, as from late 1902⁽⁴⁾, the opening of the first section of the *Chemin de fer du Niger* to Abomey-Bohicon enabled the final stage of the journey to be completed more quickly.

It will be noted that Tristant uses different terms, *courrier-piéton* and *porteur-piéton*. It is not clear whether there is any significance in this. He certainly says that it was the former who carried the heavy loads on their heads, and

this is corroborated by what is probably his source, the 1900 account of the postal services in Dahomey, But was the mail from these remote military telegraph outposts always sufficient to require the services of a *porteur*? It seems likely that very often all that was necessary was a messenger (*courrier*) carrying his charge in a cleft stick, like the one shown on the 200 francs airmail stamp issued by Togo in 1947 (Fig 5). The details published by Tristant as noted in my 2006 article certainly suggest that the two letters he describes were carried separately by two individuals.* Perhaps either method was used according to the volume of mail to be carried at a given time and the two terms were interchangeable.

Bouérat records that the first section of the mail route to the interior, a *pirogue* service between points on the River Ouémé, began in accordance with a *décision* of 8 February 1893. I find that his account of subsequent developments is not easily reconciled with Tristant's version. He notes an *arrêté* of 28 February 1899 in connection with the extension from Carnotville to Haut-Dahomey but, as I noted in my previous article, Tristant has recorded that postal and telegraph services began at Fada N'Gourma in accordance with an *arrêté* signed there on 21 November 1898. Bouérat does not reprint the text of the 1899 *arrêté* – was he recording the Governor's formal approval of arrangements that had already been put in place by local administrators?

The account of 1900 says that the mails left Porto-Novo for Dogba and Zagnanado every Monday, Wednesday and Friday, this last being extended to Fada N'Gourma – the

* Michael Ensor and David Jennings-Bramly tell me that letters were still being carried in this way in remote parts of both West and East Africa in the 1950s, by which time they may have had the services of a bicycle!

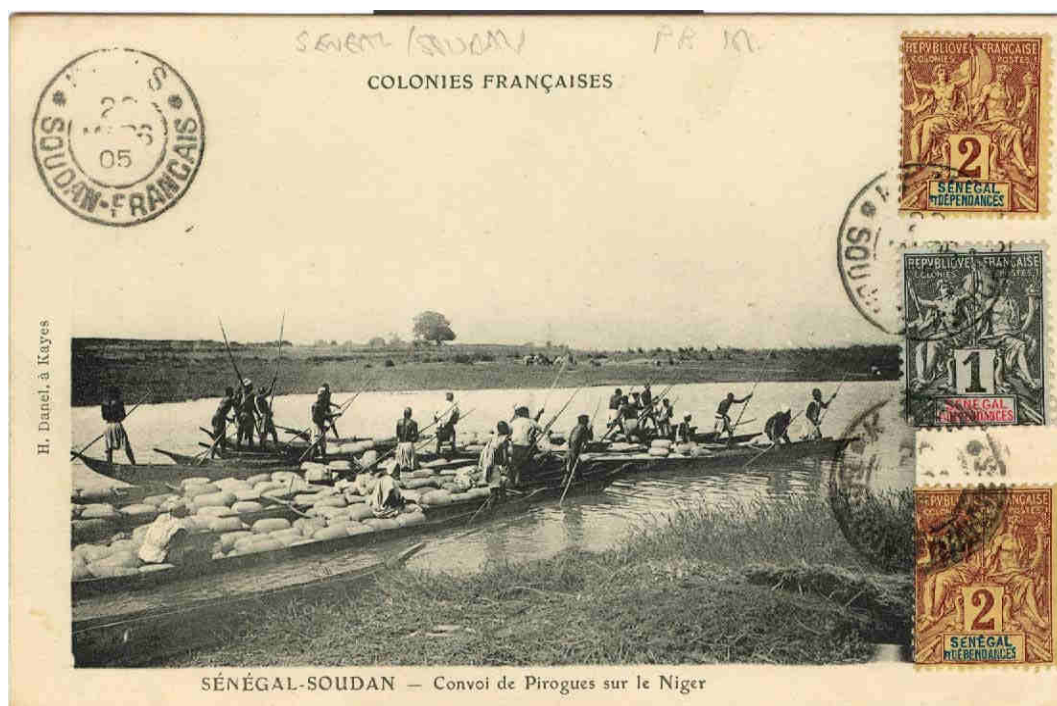


Figure 4
Convoy of *pirogues* on the River Niger



Figure 5
1947 Togo airmail stamp

ALLER				RETOUR			
BUREAUX	Arrivée	Départ	Durée du Trajet	BUREAUX	Arrivée	Départ	Obser.
Porto-Novo.....	»	vend. s.	30 ^h	Fada N'Gourma	»	lundi s.	La voie fluviale est employée entre Porto-Novo et Zagnanado (Sagou). Les porteurs sont utilisés pour l'autre partie du trajet.
Zagnanado.....	dim. m.	lundi m.	36	Matiacouali....	mer. s.	jeudi m.	
Abomey.....	lundi s.	mar. m.	12	Diapaga.....	sam. s.	dim. m.	
Savalou.....	jeudi m.	jeu. m.	48	Konkobi.....	mardi s.	mer. m.	
Carnotville.....	dim. s.	lundi m.	78	Kouandé.....	sam. s.	dim. m.	
Djougou.....	jeudi s.	ven. m.	84	Djougou.....	lundi s.	mar. m.	
Kouandé.....	sam. s.	dim. m.	26	Carnotville.....	ven. s.	sam. m.	
Konkobi.....	mer. s.	jeudi m.	84	Savalou.....	lundi s.	mar. m.	
Diapaga.....	sam. s.	dim. m.	40	Abomey.....	mer. s.	jeudi m.	
Matiacouali....	mar. s.	mer. m.	16	Zagnanado.....	jeudi s.	ven. m.	
Fada N'Gourma	vendr.	»	54	Porto-Novo.....	dim. m.	»	

Figure 6
Timetable for Porto-Novo to Fada N'Gourma and return

full journey took 28 days in all. The boatmen and runners responsible for mail in “the Colony” – presumably Bas-Dahomey is meant – were recruited locally and received a monthly wage “*variable suivant les points*”, which I take to mean according to the nature of the terrain to be covered.

The account ends with a not undeserved little pat on the back – this very simple method of recruitment ensures a regular, efficient service (“*Ce mode de recrutement très simple assure un fonctionnement très régulier du service*”). Interestingly, it also records that correspondence between Parakou, on the *Ligne du Nord-Est*, and the River Niger

was carried by horsemen selected from troops stationed locally (“*se fait l'aide de cavaliers choisis parmi les troupes stationnées dans le Haut-Pays*”). There was an extension of the *Ligne du Nord-Ouest* beyond Fada N'Gourma, but the account does not say whether this arrangement applied there as well.

The 1900 itinerary is reprinted here (Fig 6). Table 1 will, I hope, clarify it a little; I have treated “*m(atin)*” and “*s(oir)*” as “AM” and “PM” respectively. With overnight stops the outward journey took exactly four weeks, Friday PM to “Friday”; the return slightly less, Monday PM to Sunday

AM. Abomey, at the end of the second stage from Porto-Novo, lay to the south-west of Zagnanado. For some reason which is not immediately apparent this section of the postal route diverged from the *Ligne du Nord-Ouest* (this is the minor exception already mentioned). Surprisingly, Abomey was on the *Ligne du Nord-Est*; the two lines probably crossed somewhere to the south of Carnotville.

Table 2 compares the scheduled times for the various stages of the outwards journey (they are not given for the return) with the distances as recorded by Bouérat. The average distance covered per day does not differ greatly from the 40 to 60 kilometres claimed by Tristant; the calculations do not pretend to be scientific and the scheduled times apparently include overnight stops, so the time actually on the road was probably somewhat less than stated which would obviously increase the averages.

Table 3 charts the progress of a 1900 letter from France to Fada N’Gourma and beyond as recorded by the postmarks applied in transit⁽⁵⁾ and compares the average distance travelled in a day with the averages for the scheduled times as shown in Table 2 using the same rough and ready basis of calculation. For two reasons the two do not correspond particularly well – the postmarks did not record the precise time of handling and we have no means of knowing the actual conditions in Haut-Dahomey at the time and how they might have affected the scheduled times. The apparently poor time achieved on the Carnotville - Djougou stage (28.60 instead of 40.85 kilometres a day) may have been due to the redirection of the letter from its original destination (Say, the final point in Haut Dahomey on the *Ligne du Nord-Est*) to Bobo-Dioulasso, some 600 kilometres to the south-west of Fada N’Gourma in what was then French Sudan.

Table 4 similarly records the details of the three letters in the reverse direction already mentioned, the earliest from the Military Telegraph Post N° 2, believed to have been located at Konkobiri, on 7 December 1898 (this is the Military Telegraph letter N° 1 listed above). The second was dispatched from the Military Telegraph Post N° 5 on 16 September 1899, one day north of Carnotville (letter N° 2 above). I have been unable to identify any settlement which might have been the place of origin, and it seems highly likely that many of these letters were written in the field and immediately handed to a messenger, and so cannot be assigned to anywhere in particular. This is probably what Robert Crombez meant when he wrote that these cachets can never be attributed to a specific location⁽⁶⁾, but as I showed in my 2006 article this can sometimes be done. The third letter, from Diapaga on 26 November 1899, shows a considerable improvement in the service in Haut-Dahomey over a period of a year or so (Konkobiri to Carnotville, from 20 to 9 days). In Bas-Dahomey the three letters show a remarkable consistency (Carnotville to Porto-Novo, 10, 12 and 9 days). It would, however, be unwise to read too much into all this on the evidence of only three letters.

This, I think, is all that can be done with this data, which draws attention to some points which cannot easily be explained. How, for example, did the letter in Table 3 apparently get from Kouandé to Konkobiri in three days, 4 to 7 July, while the scheduled time was 84 hours, which gives an impossible average of 28 hours’ travel in a day? 84 hours, of course, is actually three and a half days, and even this gives an average of exactly 24 hours in a day. A lot still remains to be discovered about the posts in these remote areas a century ago. One thing is certain, though – the fact that the mails got through at all reflects great credit on everyone concerned.

To conclude, here is a consolidated list of the TELEGRAPHIE MILITAIRE / BENIN cachets known to me –

N° 1 – 2 October 1904 (Cotonou?); 26 April 1905 (Cotonou?)*

N° 2 – 7 December 1898 (Konkobiri?); 12 February 1899 (Konkobiri?); 18 March 1899 (Konkobiri)#

N° 4 – 13 February 1893 (no indication of origin); 9 February 1899 (Diapaga?)

N° 5 – 30 October 1892; 16 September 1899; 8 October 1900(?) (no indication of origin in each case)

N° 6 – 8(?) May 1899 (no indication of origin); 26 May 1902 (Allada); 26 June 1902 (Allada?)

* This could possibly be Poste N° 4.

This date was reported by Peter Kelly (Journal 244, June 2007, pages 64-65) after this article was completed. It is now virtually certain that this post was also situated at Konkobiri on the two earlier dates.

References

- ⁽¹⁾ *Feuilles Marcophiles N° 145*, 28 February 1962, pages 19-33 at pages 23-27, 29 and 30. This article has been reprinted by COL.FRA in its *Bulletin Hors-série N° 14* (2004), a study of the stamps and postal history of Dahomey edited by Robert Crombez (pages 39-48 at pages 39-44, 45 and 46.)
- ⁽²⁾ “*Les origines des Postes et Télégraphes au DAHOMEY (1890-1908)*”, *Bulletin 16/17* of the Société Internationale d’Histoire Postale, Grenoble, 1970, pages 28-67 at pages 35-37 and 41.
- ⁽³⁾ An extract from “*Les colonies françaises. Organisation administrative, judiciaire, financière*” published in connection with the Paris Universal Exhibition, provided by J-J Sereni and reprinted in *COL.FRA Bulletin 104*, 2^{ème} trimestre 2003, pages 1-3.
- ⁽⁴⁾ Waugh, William M – “Railway Mail in the French African and Indian Ocean Colonies” (F&CPS Inc, Vaurie Memorial Fund Publication N° 7, New York 1987, page 15.
- ⁽⁵⁾ “*Poste piéton au Dahomey*”, an account by Alain Millet published in *COL.FRA Bulletin 83*, 3^{ème} trimestre 1998, pages 10-11.
- ⁽⁶⁾ *COL.FRA Bulletin 70* (2^{ème} trimestre 1994), page 6.

TABLE 1
ITINERARY OF THE POSTAL SERVICE FROM
PORTO-NOVO TO FADA N'GOURMA AND RETURN, 1900

OUTWARDS	DEPART	ARRIVE	SCHEDULED TIME (HOURS)
Porto-Novo to Zagnanado	Friday PM	Sunday AM	36
Zagnanado to Abomey	Monday AM	Monday PM	12
Abomey to Savalou	Tuesday AM	Thursday AM	48
Savalou to Carnotville	Thursday noon	Sunday PM	78
Carnotville to Djougou	Monday AM	Thursday PM	84
Djougou to Kouandé	Friday AM	Saturday PM	36
Kouandé to Konkobiri	Sunday AM	Wednesday PM	84
Konkobiri to Diapaga	Thursday AM	Saturday PM	60
Diapaga to Matiacouali	Sunday AM	Tuesday PM	60
Matiacouali to Fada N'Gourma	Wednesday AM	Friday	54
RETURN			
Fada N'Gourma to Matiacouali	Monday PM	Wednesday PM	
Matiacouali to Diapaga	Thursday AM	Saturday PM	
Diapaga to Konkobiri	Sunday AM	Tuesday PM	
Konkobiri to Kouandé	Wednesday AM	Saturday PM	
Kouandé to Djougou	Sunday AM	Monday AM	
Djougou to Carnotville	Tuesday AM	Friday PM	
Carnotville to Savalou	Saturday AM	Monday PM	
Savalou to Abomey	Tuesday AM	Wednesday PM	
Abomey to Zagnanado	Thursday AM	Thursday PM	
Zagnanado to Porto-Novo	Friday AM	Sunday AM	

OBSERVATIONS The river (*la voie fluviale*) is used between Porto-Novo and Zagnanado (Sagon); porters are used for the remainder of the route.

TABLE 2
PORTO-NOVO TO FADA N'GOURMA, TIMES AND DISTANCES, 1900

	SCHEDULED TIME (HOURS)	APPROX TIME (DAYS)	DISTANCE (KMS) ⁽¹⁾	AVERAGE KMS/DAY
Porto-Novo to Zagnanado (<i>pirogue</i>)	36	1.5	148.5 ⁽²⁾	99.00
Zagnanado to Abomey	12	0.5	100.5 ^(3,4)	40.20
Abomey to Savalou	48	2.0		
Savalou to Carnotville	78	3.5	123 ⁽⁴⁾	35.14
Carnotville to Djougou	84	3.5	143	40.85
Djougou to Kouandé	36	1.5	90	60.00
Kouandé to Konkobiri	84	3.5	112	32.00
Konkobiri to Diapaga	60	2.5	127	50.80
Diapaga to Matiacouali	60	2.5	229	45.80
Matiacouali to Fada N'Gourma	54	2.5		

⁽¹⁾ These are telegraph line distances.

⁽²⁾ Porto-Novo to Dogba, 72 kms; Dogba to Sagon, 63 kms; Sagon to Zagnanado, 13.5 kms (total, 148.5 kms)

⁽³⁾ Zagnanado to Savalou – this is the distance on the direct telegraph line so both the distance travelled by the mails and the average covered each day will have been greater.

⁽⁴⁾ Zagnanado to Carnotville – scheduled 138 hours; time 6 days; distance 223.5 kms; average per day 37.25

TABLE 3

A LETTER FROM FRANCE TO THE INTERIOR, 1900

		DAYS	DISTANCES (KMS)	AVERAGE/ DAY (KMS)	AVERAGE AS SCHEDULED (KMS)
Lille	21 May				
Marseille	23 May				
Cotonou	(?)14 June ⁽¹⁾				
Zagnanado	20 June	(?)6	(?)183.5	(?)30.55	—
Carnotville	27 June	7	223.5 ⁽²⁾	31.92	37.25 ⁽³⁾
Djougou	2 July ⁽⁴⁾	5	143	28.60	40.85
Kouandé	4 July	2	90	45.00	60.00
Konkobi	7 July	3	112	37.33	32.00
Diapaga	11 July	4	127	31.75	50.80
Matiacouali	14 July ⁽⁵⁾	3			
Fada N'Gourma	16 July	2 }	229	45.80	45.80

⁽¹⁾ There is no arrival date stamp – this is the date on which it is believed that the letter arrived from France. If it is correct, for some reason the letter took a long time to reach Zagnanado, because Cotonou and Porto-Novo are only some 35km apart.

⁽²⁾ Zagnanado to Savalou 100.5 kms (but see Table 2, Note 3); Savalou to Carnotville 123 kms (total, 223.5 kms).

⁽³⁾ Zagnanado to Carnotville – see Table 2, Note 4.

⁽⁴⁾ Djougou – the date stamp is incorrectly dated 2 JUIN.

⁽⁵⁾ Matiacouali – Tristant, writing in 1962, had doubts about a post office here because, although its existence was recorded in the *Journal Officiel du Dahomey*, its cancel had never been seen. The strike is poor, but this letter was the first recorded confirmation of its existence.

TABLE 4

THREE LETTERS FROM THE INTERIOR TO THE COAST
FIGURES IN BRACKETS ARE THE APPROXIMATE
DAYS TAKEN AND AS SCHEDULED IN 1900

Origin -	7 DECEMBER 1898 <i>Télégraphie Militaire</i> <i>Poste N° 2</i>	16 SEPTEMBER 1899 <i>Télégraphie Militaire</i> <i>Poste N° 5</i>	26 NOVEMBER 1899 Diapaga
Diapaga	—	—	26 November
Konkobi	(?)7 December	—	29 November (3) (3)
Kouandé	10 December (3) (4)	—	—
Djougou	17 December* (7) (1.5)	—	4 December (5) (5.5)
Carnotville	27 December (10) (4)	17 September (1) (—)	8 December (4) (4)
Savalou	30 December (3) (3)	22 September (5) (3)	11 December (3) (3)
Abomey	3 January (4) (2)	26 September (4) (2)	14 December (3) (2)
Zagnanado	4 January (1) (0.5)	26 September (—) (0.5)	15 December (1) (0.5)
Sagon	4 January (—)	27 September (1)	15 December (—)
Dogba	5 January (1) }	— }	16 December (1) }
Porto-Novo	6 January (1) }	29 September (2) }	17 December (1) }

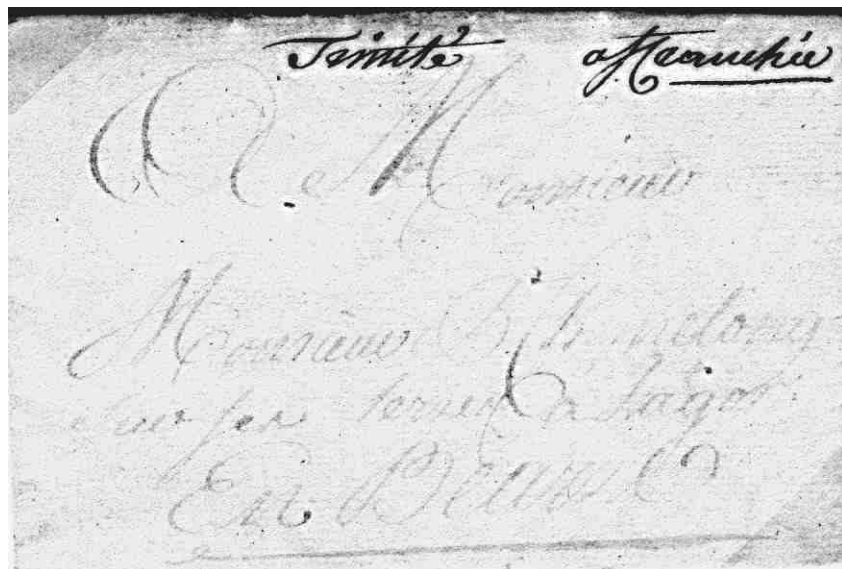
* The cancel reads OUANGARA. Tristant records that the Ouangara date stamp was used at Djougou for some time after its post office was opened on 12 February 1898 until a suitably inscribed date stamp became available. Ouangara was known from 25 August 1898 to 20 February 1899; Djougou from 25 May 1899.

Haut-Dahomey Konkobi to Carnotville: 20, —, 9 days

Bas-Dahomey Carnotville to Porto-Novo: 10, 12, 9 days

REPORTS OF MEETINGS

Continued from page 62



Brian Brookes displayed Martinique sub-offices and manuscript marks from 1688 until 1890 (see illustration above). The earliest manuscript 'Martinique' was on a letter dtd 1724, and we also saw a 'Trinité' from 1769. Twenty-five postal agents were appointed in 1766, though all mail was forwarded unmarked to St Pierre. In 1831 it was confirmed that there were four principal offices and that sub-offices could endorse the name of the office of origin on the front in manuscript. This continued until they were issued with their own handstamps in 1879 when Martinique joined the UPU.

After the coffee break **Iain Stevenson** showed the neglected field of pre-obliterations (*préos*). Iain noted that philatelists value 'commercial' mail but often neglect this most commercial mail, 'junk mail'. Pre-obliterations find their origins in the newspaper stamps of the 1860s, that are really revenues but allowing free postage of papers, applied to blank sheets of newsprint and cancelled by the printing. The idea that stamps applied to printed matter should be cancelled in advance of mailing was revived in the 1920s after a brief experiment in the 1890s. Iain showed examples on entires, including the printings specially made for the big Parisian stores to mail their catalogues. The rest of the display was in date and rate order, but included *préos* used illegally to overseas, multiples, those applied by automatic dispenser from coils, and examples of some of the 'junk' contents 'that are now fascinating period pieces, as are the designs on the envelopes including a 'Sower' not even Ashley had ever seen! The display concluded with examples of *préos* 'cancelled' by return to sender cachets and other instructional marks.

The first "Marianne" to appear as a French definitive stamp was that designed by Edmund Dulac, and Dulac's Marianne was the subject of **Derek Richardson's** display. This "emergency" issue was prepared in London for use in France after the Liberation in 1944. Derek's collection contained examples of single and mixed values on cover.

Bob Paterson gave his first display to the Society, showing stamps and covers relating to commemorative and charity

issues of the 1930s. He pointed out that finding examples postally used on cover can be difficult, as some values are extremely elusive.

Alan Baum pointed out that he had got rid of his France collection in order to start a new one, and had decided to try and obtain the first issues of every country. For his display this weekend he had brought the French Colonies set, with the stamps sorted geographically, incorporating maps to show where the colonies were situated.

After a longer break for lunch, **John Yeomans** displayed French Equatorial Africa, a very large territory extending from 5 degrees south of the Equator to 20 degrees north, from equatorial rain forests to the Saharan desert - one of the largest in area of the French Empire. The establishment of trading posts along the coast of Gaboon and in 1875 the exploration of the River Ogowe and the opening of the way to the River Congo by

Pierre de Brazza led to the economic and administrative development of the territory and significant expansion after 1890. This expansion spread from the coast inland with the pacification of the interior of Gaboon and most of the Lower Congo by 1895, and then of the Middle Congo and the Lower Ubangi by 1903. Later moves included the Upper Ubangi and Shari basin by 1910 and finally Chad in the north by 1920. The display showed examples to illustrate the development of the postal charges and routes for mail within the territories, the wider French Community and to foreign countries. These included Gaboon First Régime 1862-1888 (1863 France to ship *Étoile* in the harbour at Port Gabon, missionary mail of 1867 to Bonito and 1870 to France with GAB lozenge cancellation); Gaboon Congo Régime 1889-1891 (1891 Libreville to Montevideo); Congo Français First Régime 1891-1904, which included the territories of Gaboon, Middle Congo, Ubangi-Shari and Chad as one Administration (uncommon mail from the 1898 Mission Saharienne in Chad and examples of 1st, 2nd and 3rd step weights together with printed paper 5c unsealed letter rates, together with a very uncommon example of a handwritten AR Form of 1897).

Barbara Priddy showed French West Africa airmails from September 1939 to June 1940, covering first flights, censorship, rates and routes. One item of particular interest was a cover that, after being carried on a plane brought down by anti-aircraft fire, was detained in France during the German occupation.

Peter Kelly's display was entitled "A Journey down the River Niger". His introduction outlined the physical and human geographical features that had made France's colonial expansion into what became French Sudan and Niger so difficult. The river itself was impassable to shallow draught vessels under steam in two places, and navigation generally depended on the water levels which varied according to the volume of rainfall in the Guinea Highlands. The period covered was from around 1900 until 1935 when the habits of communications changed with the introduction of airmail directly from the colonies to France and also

within the colonies themselves. Letters were chosen from all the offices on the river from Bamako in French Sudan to Gaya in Niger, and these were accompanied by explanations of the two routes used to the coast via Senegal or Dahomey. A selection of illustrated postcards showed the vessels used and life along the river.

After a short tea break and time for viewing, **Peter Maybury**'s contribution consisted of 19th century French internal and foreign mail carried by French, Italian, British or Spanish steamships serving Le Havre, Boulogne, Calais, Saint-Nazaire, Marseille, Toulon, Cette and Corsica. *Bateaux à Vapeur* services were operated by smaller shipping companies and provided an indispensable service carrying mail over a period of many years. Of particular interest are the lines using rivers and canals. According to M. Salles, licences were granted by the Postal Authorities in 1840 for movable boxes to be placed on board vessels, for receipt of "last minute mail" of the Le Havre/Caen line (founded in 1837) and the Le Havre/Morlaix line (founded in 1839). These stipulated that the boxes had to be sited on board a steamship and within sight of the captain at all times. The existence of boxes on vessels of the Paimboeuf/Nantes line is recorded as from 1837, but interestingly one item in the display would appear to push back the official existence of these boxes by some 11 years. On arrival at a vessel's destination, which may not necessarily be that of the letter, its box would be taken to the local post office, emptied, the letters taxed or the stamps cancelled, and a dedicated *Bateau à Vapeur* handstamp showing the point of origin of the box applied. Letters would then continue to their destinations.

Steve Ellis took a look at transatlantic mail from a different standpoint, namely by showing examples of the various shipping companies, both French and foreign, which operated scheduled services from French ports. Commencing with the *Paquebots-Poste Royaux* in the late eighteenth century, the display went through to the heyday of the 1920s, and included examples of companies operating both regular packet ships and non-contract vessels.

Chris Hitchen had chosen mail from France to the United States 1830 to 1878 as his topic. France was late to develop intercontinental steamship services, and before the inauguration of the French Line H in 1864 such mail was dependent on foreign shipping lines or commercial vessels prepared to carry mail as ship letters. The display began with letters sent via Le Havre, paid at inland rates plus 1 décime *voie de mer*. The advent of steam speeded transit times considerably: Great Western and Cunard were the first with such services and France had access to these under the terms of the 1836 and 1843 postal conventions between the two countries. France and the United States set up rival services but only the American ones were successful. The rates varied according to the carrier and route and examples of these were shown including some from the retaliatory periods. Not until April 1857 was a postal convention agreed between the United States and France which for the first time allowed mail to be paid all the way to destination. The credits and debits due to each administration were fully explained with a variety of letters sent on the various lines then operating. Negotiations to

renew the treaty in 1869 failed and matters reverted to the position before the 1857 treaty. Some mail went direct from France prepaid with American postage to pay on delivery as well, and some used the British route to be paid to destination. 1874 saw a new Franco-American agreement concluded and in January 1876 both countries aligned their rates with those agreed by the General Postal Union.

After a very enjoyable dinner, members proceeded to the second traditional evening meeting of impromptu displays. **Chris Hitchen** started with *Jour de l'An* cancels and a query about a 1942 cover from Paris to Hungary via Germany that was returned via Switzerland and refused in occupied Lyon; **John Hammonds** showed various routes of wartime airmail; **George Barker** had brought modern express covers and postage dues, with mention of the Prugnon booklet; **Bob Paterson** showed 1936 airmail stamps on cover, a camp cover and "Peter Kelly Art of an Era" cards; **Mick Bister** illustrated the Coats of Arms issue with a few items of special interest including proofs; **John Parmenter** produced tables of reduced frontier rates to contiguous countries; **Maurice Tyler** displayed a series of POW banknotes used in French camps; **Prue Henderson** had brought some picture postcards "for enjoyment"; **Alan Wishart** showed the Russian commemoration on French cards; **Paul Watkins** had some queries on rates involving a redirected registered letter from Lille to the UK and a variety of items including secret messages under stamps in the Siege of Paris, censorship of foreign mail at Versailles in the Siege, and WWII servicemen's mail in occupied France; and **Skanda Vaitilingam** displayed three large postcards with wide views of Paris. In a final session, **Lesley Marley** showed details of different printing processes in the "Chambon News"; **Robert Johnson** gave full details of his new subject of British Post Offices in French Morocco; **Godfrey Bowden** showed *timbres fictifs* from various regional centres from 1935 to the 1990s; **Alan Baum** displayed a collection of early material based on the *Journée du Timbre*; and **John Yeomans** showed a recent acquisition from the AEF consisting of a ps card out and return from Augsburg to Majumba, French Congo, 1891.

Sunday

Full displays restarted on Sunday morning with Mick Bister displaying the Coats of Arms issues 1943-1966. He began by giving details of the precursors which were two sets of stamps issued in 1941 and 1942 featuring the coat of arms of major French towns. They were line engraved and issued to raise funds for the Secours National and although they were applauded for their artistic merit the marketing of them as indivisible sets at 60 francs a time was unpopular. In 1943, due to a shortage of paper, the PTT decided to replace four of its current large format high values with smaller stamps. The latest four-cylinder presses were employed thus permitting the first rotary typo printings in three colours. Four different designers were commissioned to design the four values but it was the celebrated heraldist, Robert Louis, designer of the 20F *Île de France* issue who was to impress the PTT the most and who was commissioned to design the rest of the series in their entirety from 1944 until his death in 1965. Mick proceeded to show dated corner blocks and postal usage of the subsequent

issues. The 1944 set replaced the 1943 issue with the same high values but in 1946 the issues took on a completely different usage; henceforth, the stamps would serve low value rates such as those applied to newspapers and printed matter. The 1946 set also had a secondary commemorative purpose as the stamps represented the four provinces that had been liberated from their annexation by Germany and Italy. It was not only the provinces and their coats of arms that changed with each series, so did the reference to the issuing country. The first series bore the inscription POSTES FRANCAISES, the second series FRANCE, the third series POSTES RF and the fourth series, in 1949, REPUBLIQUE FRANCAISE which was retained thereafter. In 1954, modifications were made to the presses allowing the fourth cylinder to contribute a fourth colour to the design. The 1955 set included the coat of arms of the thirty-ninth and final province. The series of coats of arms had been much appreciated by philatelists and public alike. *Le Monde* however was concerned that many distinct regions had been omitted.

Three years later, a new coat of arms series was initiated but with all the provinces having been exhausted, the arms were now those of major French towns. In 1958 Algeria ceased to issue its own stamps and those of metropolitan France were put on sale in the Algerian offices. As a reminder to the Algerians that Algeria was part of France the Byzantine coat of arms of Alger was put on the 1959 15F value. In the following year, after the introduction of the New Franc, the Alger design was reissued in centimes together with a 5c Oran. The designs did not however last for long as after Algeria won its independence in 1962 the two values had to be replaced. The 10c Troyes, issued in 1963, was the first of the coat of arms issues to receive phosphor bands in 1970 and was also the first to be printed at both the Paris and the Périgueux printing works. Arguably the most contentious issue was the 30c Paris of 1965 which was issued in both sheet and booklet form. Robert Louis had insisted that the rules of heraldry be respected but due to the technical problems encountered in the printing of the booklets, one colour, yellow, had to be omitted. Following Robert Louis' death, his daughter Mireille designed the next three issues. The St Lô design was the only arms stamp to be printed using metallic gold and silver inks and hence was perhaps, of all the sixty-one coat of arms issues, the one which reflected most accurately the rules of heraldry. It is sad that Robert Louis was not able to witness this achievement himself.

André Métayer was at the last minute prevented by personal circumstances from attending the weekend, and his display on "Incidents with French Mail since 1900" was presented by Ashley Lawrence. In his commentary, translated by Ashley, André pointed out that the normal progress of our correspondence can be beset by numerous risks and difficulties. Thus Australia and New Zealand protested when France decided to test nuclear weapons in the Pacific, and refused to deliver mail coming from France, though the postage on the letters that were returned to France was reimbursed to the sender! The French postal administration, anxious about its position, is always horrified at delay, and by action taken to prevent the fulfilment of its mission. On each such occasion, the Administration ordered

its employees to affix a suitable postmark to the mail, to explain the reasons for the difficulties that had been encountered. There are many difficulties which can make the delivery of mail impossible, such as war; inability to cross lines of demarcation; mistakes in identifying the recipient or the destination of a letter - "Not known", "Not living at that address" etc. In other cases, the postal service or its employees may be at fault: "Regret the delay due to the postman's mistake or negligence"; or by such incidents as "The attack on a mail van in Toulon in May 1988". The delivery of mail may be prevented or delayed by train crashes or derailment; by air accident; by shipwreck. But when the postal service has made a mistake, it does not hide the fact, and will send the letter on its way 20 years later, setting out in the postmarks not only the first date of posting but also the date of ultimate delivery that shows its negligence. In other circumstances, the postman will leave a letter in a box which has been closed down, and this may be delivered a year later with a letter of apology. Some letters will carry postmarks giving terrible news, such as "The addressee could not be reached in time" or even "Killed by the Enemy". Other letters will have experienced exceptional events, such as the letter that was sent on D-Day, 6th June 1944, from Nantes to Cherbourg, and was damaged and partly burnt during the course of that historic day - it bore the postmark "Postal relations suspended". Wishing to complete the delivery of this letter, all the postmen assembled to see if between them they could identify the addressee. They did not succeed, and the letter carries the further cachet from Postmaster Frimourez : "Not known at a meeting of the postmen" - a system that is still in use. This display could only give an insight into the wide range of such postmarks, each of which is capable of forming a collection on its own.

After the break for viewing, **John West** displayed the Red Cross tracing service in World War I, with emphasis on its reply labels. He began by outlining the background that led to the establishment of an ICRC agency in Geneva that would not only act as a receiving bureau for information about prisoners, but would also organise the distribution of gifts intended for them. This responsibility would also involve recording and classifying all requests to trace missing soldiers and for sending copies to the national societies of the countries enmeshed in the war, in order to try and determine where missing personnel were incarcerated. In addition a special section was created at the agency to deal with non-combatants who were missing - those civilians who had fled the fighting, or been deported or interned. The basic filing system that was introduced proved effective, and was soon receiving over 5000 daily appeals for help. A simple system of reply labels was formulated to be affixed to correspondence engendered, and these were colour coded and contained a manuscript or occasionally typescript reference number designed to identify the relevant section or clerk dealing with that enquiry. Se-tenant labels in six different colours and two sizes were identified, part of which had to be separated and attached to the reply envelope. Various abbreviations and words were used on the labels, the most prominent being ESFF (*Enquête Spéciale Fichier Français* or Special Enquiry French File), ESFA (*Enquête Spéciale Fichier Allemand* or Special

Enquiry German File), and CIVILS (Civilians); much less frequently appeared TRESORERIE (financial matters) or COMITE (committee affairs). John speculated on a number of unknown mysterious factors, such as the use of the different sizes, the composition of the reference numbers, the number of labels printed, the method of printing, the paucity of material available from the last two years of the war, the use of an unusually large address label, and other anomalies. John has produced a fully illustrated article for the Journal (to be published later in the year) on this agency, which closed its doors at the end of 1919.

Claire Scott then presented her display on the wounded soldier. She pointed out that during the course of the First World War from 1914 to 1918 a staggering total of 65 million people were mobilised of whom over 8 million were killed and over 21 million were wounded. If those taken prisoner or reported missing are included, more than half of those who went to war did not escape unscathed. Many of the casualties originated in the killing fields of Northern France where a virtual stalemate of artillery bombardments and trench warfare achieved very little but changed the social fabric of Europe. Evacuating the wounded was a logistical achievement in itself and the display traced the story of the wounded soldier from the battlefield to hospital. The French system of free mail for virtually every layer of military command evidenced by cachets for each unit meant that the process of evacuation could be illustrated through postal history. Beginning with the stretcher bearers and continuing through ambulances, field hospitals, hospital trains until their arrival at a hospital, the progress of the wounded soldier can be traced rather as a spring turns into a stream and then a river. Only the Red Cross dogs, who were often the first to reach the wounded, were not allocated their own cachet for free postage. The sheer number of wounded in France alone far exceeded the capacity of the traditional hospitals and literally thousands of buildings were commandeered for medical use, many in schools, barracks and other institutions. Apart from the three competing Red Cross societies in France, each of whom organised hospitals in most of the country's military regions, others were arranged by private individuals or committees in smaller buildings, sometimes private houses, with only a handful of beds that functioned only during the heat of the conflict. Such was the patriotism generated by the war, particularly during its early stages, that volunteers from the participating nations also provided ambulances and hospitals. Eventually after treatment and, hopefully, recovery, the wounded soldier either returned to the field of battle or, in the case of foreign nationals, was evacuated to his home country, in many cases on a hospital ship. Most of the correspondence from the soldiers themselves was written on picture postcards, usually in pencil, and both the views of war scenes and hospitals as well as the poignant notes written by the wounded add a valuable dimension to the human story of life on the Front.

Alan Wishart showed POW mail in World War I, consisting of a selection of postal stationery and picture postcards sent from Frenchmen held in German camps and Germans

held in French camps, finishing with some postcards of the camp in Langensalza. These camps could be purpose built or just a section of a military establishment or a corner of a hospital; frequency of post in such places varied widely. The display included such items as receipts for parcels, postal stationery or postcards used by specific camps, censorship, and Pontarlier used as a collection point.

After the coffee break **John Scott** displayed French decorative stationery, especially when provided with watermarks, such as one with Napoleon. Typical decorations included flowers, foliage and geographical locations; and the items included decorative wallets, military stationery, commercial stationery (the one example shown was that of a butcher), and there was even a watercolour cutout from 1920.

The display of cross-Channel mail to or from Kent by **Maurice Porter** featured the Boulogne-Folkestone route with covers posted in the *Boîte Mobile*, with the boxed M.B. mark and the later 'tombstone' cancel to unusual destinations including the USA and Jamaica. Packet rates, the attempted evasion of sea postage, and Consignees' Mail carried by the South-Eastern and Continental Steam Packet Company were also shown.

Paul Watkins displayed French post offices abroad, illustrating French expansion abroad in the mid-19th century with the aim of matching the French Empire under the first Napoleon - mainly at the expense of the weakening Ottoman Empire. Covers were shown from the 1830s Algerian Expedition with Toulon disinfection, the Crimean War including an 1853 letter with Cérès 1F pair franking to the Ottoman War Ministry, mail from POs at Constantinople, Dardanelles, Varna, Ibraïla, Trébizonde, Mersina, Beirut, Smyrna and the scarce Aleppo postal agency, the 1860 Syrian Expedition, Egypt including a pair of 40c Bordeaux used in Alexandria, and a few items from further afield including *Type Sage* stationery used in Zanzibar and a 1901 Boxer Rebellion card sent by a British officer through the Chinese office at Peking which forwarded it through the French office at Shanghai.

The final display was by **Godfrey Bowden** on Algeria 1924-1958. He began with the historical background to the stamps issued, pointing out that early in the given period there was a tendency to remind Algeria of the French victories in the country, such as the 1937 Centenary of the capture of Constantine and the 1938 Centenary of the acquisition of Philippeville. During the Vichy period France still supplied its stamps, eg stamps showing Pétain, but in 1943 the CFLN (*Comité Français de Libération Nationale*), formed after the Allies routed the German forces that had invaded the year before in contravention to its being a 'free zone', produced their own stamp needs as well as producing stamps (Marianne de Fernez and Coq) for the foreseen liberation of France. Algeria having had a taste of independence, the years 1945-1958 saw increasing unrest until the fall of the 4th Republic and the return to power of de Gaulle who facilitated the independence of the Algerian State. Godfrey's display therefore began with the first issues of flat and rotary overprints on various French printing types, and highlighted a number of interesting stamps. For

example, we saw the evolution of the two types of the 90c Arc de Triomphe, the reference to the Republic of France (RF) being removed from certain stamps during the Vichy period probably due to pressure from Germany, the 1943 high value 'Summer Palace' series being very useful for franking the many heavy parcels sent home by the Allied forces under the OAT scheme, the 1946 20F Air with the sought after variety of the non serif F (presumably an error in using an adaption of one of the other values' printing plate which all show non seriffed Fs), the tariff change on 1 January 1947 affecting Algeria as well as France (the swingeing increase from 3F to 5F for the internal letter rate lasting only 3 days when it was reduced by 10% to 4F50, bringing with it a problem of stamp supply, and consequently the issue of the 5F Air stamp being overprinted -10%), and in 1958 the final 'Arms' stamp (the 6F with the addition of 'République Française' forming the final philatelic protest against independence) – a stamp difficult to come by.

The weekend came to an end with presentations for the winners of various competitions, voted for by members: **Bob Paterson** for the best display by a debutant (someone who has not won a competition prize in the past), **Mick Bister** for the best display on stamps, **Brian Brookes** for the best display on postal history, and **Ashley Lawrence** for the best article submitted to the Journal in 2007. Further details of the displays are given above and of the Literature Competition on page 39 of this Journal. A short review of the weekend revealed that, apart from a minor problem of staffing in the bar on the first night, members were very happy with the venue, and it was agreed that we should seek to return to Charlecote next year. On behalf of the two Joint Organisers, Peter Kelly thanked members for

their co-operation and in particular guests **Marian Bister**, **Jean Hammonds** and **Annette Tyler** for running the bookstall which had raised a considerable sum of money for the Society. A vote of thanks was then given by Mick Bister to those Organisers, **Peter Kelly** and **Chris Hitchen** for all their hard work in running the weekend so successfully.

The following members were present for part or all of the weekend:

Maurice Alder	Peter Maybury
Michael Annells	John Mayne
George Barker	John Parmenter
Len Barnes	Bob Paterson
Alan Baum	Mavis Pavey
Mick Bister	Maurice Porter
Godfrey Bowden	Barbara Priddy
Brian Brookes	Derek Richardson
Steve Ellis	Claire Scott
John Hammonds	John Scott
Prue Henderson	Gerald Small
Roger High	Willy Stephens
Chris Hitchen	Iain Stephenson
Robert Johnson	Maurice Tyler
Peter Kelly	Skanda Vaitilingam
Ashley Lawrence	Paul Watkins
Hugh Loudon	John West
Philip Mackey	Alan Wishart
Lesley Marley	Alan Wood
	John Yeomans

MST

See photos of this event on the back cover of this Journal.

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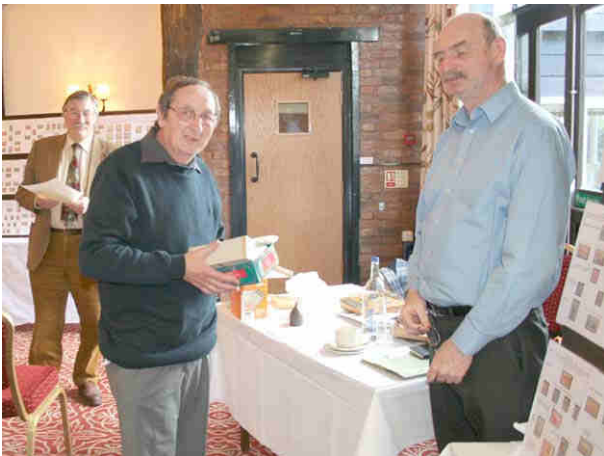
Charlecote Prize Winners



Brian Brookes (with Chris Hitchen)



Mick Bister (with Peter Kelly)



Bob Paterson (with Chris Hitchen)



Ashley Lawrence (with Steve Ellis)

Other Members Attending the Charlecote Weekend



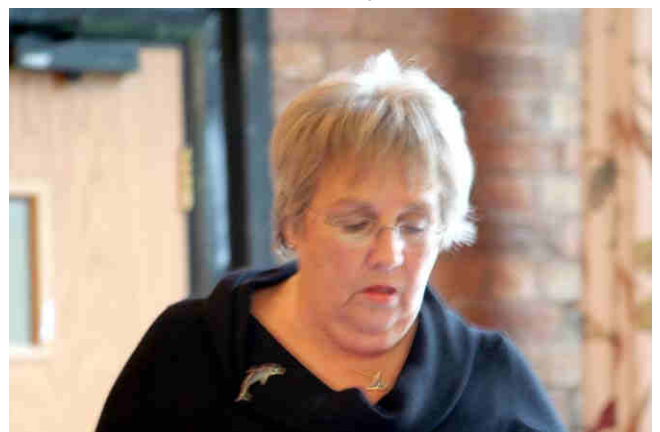
John Mayne



Peter Kelly



Derek Richardson



Lesley Marley