

The Journal of the France & Colonies Philatelic Society



Rural Origin letter to Constantinople
franked with six Sage 5c Type IIA stamps
postmarked Culoz (Ain) 6 Oct 77
(See the article on Sage 5c Types IIA and IIB
by Derek Richardson and Godfrey Bowden on pages 129-130)

Volume 60 ● Number 4
December 2010
Whole Number 258

**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.

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* * *

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The Journal of the France & Colonies Philatelic Society

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SOCIETY NOTES

New Members

The Society is pleased to welcome the following:

1377 Tony Hargreave-Graham (Wiltshire), 1378 F M Turner (Essex).

* * *

Members Deceased

We are extremely saddened to hear of the death of the following two members who will both be sorely missed.

1187 Mrs Yvonne Larg, 730 Skanda Vaitilingam.

* * *

Future Events

The **London Group** will meet at the Calthorpe Arms, Grays Inn Road, London WC1 at 6.30pm on Wednesday 19 January 2011 when Stuart Henderson will display French Cinderellas, and at 6.30pm on Wednesday 16 March 2011 when John Hammonds will display Aspects of French Aviation; and at 3.00pm on Saturday 26 February 2011 at the Royal Horticultural Halls, Greycoat Street, Westminster, London SW1 when George Barker will display French Classics 1870-1876.

The **Southern Group** will meet at 2.00pm on Saturday 9 April 2011 at the East Worthing Community Centre, Pages Lane, East Worthing when Philip Mackey will display the Louis Napoleon issues.

The **Northern Group** will meet at 1.00pm in the Board Room, Leeds General Infirmary, Great George Street, Leeds LS1 3EX on Saturday 12 February 2011 when Tony Shepherd will display French Guyana, and on Saturday 9 April 2011 for Members' Choice.

The **Wessex Group** will meet at 10.00am on Saturday 29 January 2011 at the Scout Hall, Lower Street, Harnham, Salisbury, when Chris Hitchen will display Paris 1863-76 and Jeremy Martin will display Togo.

The **Scottish Group** will meet in Room 1, Cross House, Linlithgow at 1.00pm on Saturday 26 March 2011, when Russell Walker will display French Aviation.

* * *

Exhibition Successes

In August 2010 at Stampshow 2010 at Richmond, Virginia (USA) **Ed Grabowski** received a Gold medal in the open competition for his "Group Type in the French Pacific".

At Autumn Stampex 2010, held at the Business Design Centre in Islington, London, on 15 to 18 September 2010, the **Journal of the France & Colonies P S** of Great Britain (the 2009 volume of 4 issues) won a Large Vermeil award in the Literature Class. We gained 81 points and the judges' comment was "An attractive and well-planned journal."

* * *

Displays by Members

On 22 September 2010 **Ed Grabowski** displayed "The Postal History of the French Colonial Allegorical Group Type: Use in Madagascar & Dependencies" to the Collectors Club in New York. He was also leader of a Workshop on Collecting Colonies at the (US) FCPS Exhibition at Chicagopex on 19 November 2010.

In October 2010 **Steve Ellis** displayed "The French Red Cross" to the Macclesfield & Prestbury P S.

On 9 November 2010 **Mick Bister** showed "France 1929-1979" to the Huntingdonshire P S, a display composed of extracts from various collections including *inter alia* 50c *Jeanne d'Arc*, 1931 Colonial Exhibition, 1F50 Pétain, *Marianne de Muller* and Postal Mechanisation.

On 19 November 2010 **Marty Bratzel** displayed "Deconstructing the Catalogue: The Wartime Revenue Stamps of Cameroun" and **Robert Abensur** displayed "Taxed Letters from UGP Countries to France" at Chicagopex.

* * *

Offer of French Definitive Issues

Our member Peter Whiting reports that he is offering members the following definitive issues by weight, on paper and mainly letter rate, either separately or in any combination, on repayment of postage plus a small donation to charity:

<i>Cheffer, Béquet</i> , etc	40g
<i>Sabine de Gandon</i> , 1978	20g
<i>Liberté de Gandon</i> , 1982.....	35g
<i>Marianne de Briat</i> , 1980.....	60g
<i>Marianne de Luquet (RF)</i> , 1997	60g
<i>Marianne de Luquet (La Poste)</i>	15g
<i>Marianne de Lamouche (ITVF)</i> , 2005	100g
<i>Marianne de Lamouche (Phil@poste)</i> , 2008 ...	100g
<i>Marianne de Beaujard</i> , 2008	150g

He can be contacted on 01962 862051.

* * *

Wessex Group Programme 2011

- 29 January 2011 - Chris Hitchen: Paris 1863-76,
of stars and other things;
Jeremy Martin: Togo
- 2 July 2011 - Peter Kelly: The Paris Universal
Exhibition of 1900
- 1 October 2011 - John Hammonds: Aspects of French
Aviation

* * *

Vacancy: New Auction Secretary Wanted



With effect from May 2012, I will be stepping down from my position as Auction Secretary. By then I will have held the post for fifteen years and I believe it is therefore time for someone else to take over.

It is a highly rewarding and satisfying position to hold and I have thoroughly enjoyed every aspect of it. Not only does it provide the opportunity to handle quantities of fascinating material which can only broaden one's philatelic knowledge but it also offers an invaluable service to the members who buy and sell; furthermore it helps to finance the operation of the Society.

I attempted to resign a few years ago but as nobody came

forward to replace me I carried on with the valuable assistance of John Hammonds. On this occasion, though, my decision is irrevocable. My intended resignation will be formally offered at next year's AGM but I hope that by giving advance notice it will provide adequate time for someone to volunteer during the eighteen months between now and May 2012.

No previous experience is necessary – all you need is a love of stamps and a methodical mind. If you are interested in taking over please give me a ring on 01767-631404 or contact me at mbister@theslade.fsnet.co.uk. I shall be only too pleased to give more details on what the post entails.

Thank you.

Mick Bister

OBITUARY



Yvonne Lilian Ivy Larg 1930-2010

Yvonne passed away peacefully at St Barnabas Hospice Worthing, on 30 September, after a long and stressful illness.

She was Secretary of Bromley & Beckenham Philatelic Society for 11 years 1985-96, as well as being President in 1988-89; she was also Secretary of Goring on Sea PS for three years after moving to Worthing in 2001. She was President of the Kent Federation of Philatelic Societies 1994-5, and an Accredited Judge up to County level; she received an Award of Merit for services to Philately in 2000, and was Secretary of Lloyds TSB Philatelic Society for 23 years from 1987 to the date of her death.

With her husband Bob, under their banner "The Largs at Large", Yvonne gave approximately 250 displays in venues from Largs (Scotland) to Guernsey, from Barnstable to Norwich, in most of the Kent & Sussex Clubs and one in Canada; and she was made Honorary Life Member of the Bromley & Beckenham PS and of the Guernsey PS. Losing her main sight in 2009 due to macular degeneration was "the final blow" with all her other problems.

RDL

OBITUARY



Alec Swain, 1933-2010

In Woking, Surrey, on 12 February 2010 the funeral took place of Alec Swain, a former Secretary of this Society. He was a bachelor with no living relatives, and news of his sad demise reached us only recently.

Of Alec Swain's early life we know very little, save the fact that he had a schoolboy passion for railway trains. For most boys this is a passing phase, but in Alec's case it was the start of an outstanding career in the rail industry. He progressed from trainee mechanic to a seat on the board, acquiring as he did so a knowledge of railway engine design and operation that might be described as encyclopaedic. Not surprisingly, he took up model railway building as a pastime at which he could use his knowledge to good effect, and he rose to be Chairman of the Model Railway Club, a post he occupied with distinction from 1987 to 1991.

Alec Swain joined our Society at the beginning of 1971. From then on he was regularly present at the Society's monthly meetings which at that time were held at the Shaftesbury Hotel, Monmouth Street, London WC2. He became a member of the Committee in 1977 and was elected Secretary a year later. With his railway knowledge, Alec Swain was understandably drawn to the study of the carriage of mail by the French railways, and he is recorded as giving a full evening display to the Society in 1978 on the subject of *Bureaux Ambulants* postmarks. Paris Pneumatic Post was another of his collecting areas and he also built up fine collections of postal history from World Wars I and II. Alec had no interest in exhibiting competitively, but he was always happy to show parts of his collections to fellow members and to local philatelic societies. His displays were always well received, not only for their content but also for his most agreeable style of presentation.

Increased room hire charges at the Shaftesbury Hotel forced the Committee to look for somewhere cheaper to hold meetings, and in 1981 Alec was responsible for arranging the hire of a room at the YWCA Central Club Hotel, 16/22 Great Russell Street, London WC1. The CCH was to serve as the Society's meeting place for the next eighteen years, and for most of that time, Alec Swain held the post of Secretary or Membership Secretary – and sometimes both. He took his duties seriously. He told me later that while he was Secretary he always brought to meetings a display of his own "to fill the void" in the event of an invited speaker being delayed or failing to turn up. Happily, that never happened, but Alec was someone who left nothing to chance.

Alec Swain retired from British Rail in 1988. At his flat in Wembley he kept house and looked after his mother, who was poorly, but when she died in 1994 he sold the Wembley flat and bought a ground floor flat in the small town of Flitwick, in Bedfordshire. Ground floor was essential, since he was suffering from arthritis in one knee which seriously affected his mobility. (Regrettably, he stubbornly refused to agree to surgery.) However, he acquired an electric buggy to use when going shopping or eating out and, using his free rail travel privilege, continued to attend London meetings at the Central Club Hotel. In the summer of 1999 the CCH closed for refurbishment and a new meeting place was found at Marymount College, 22a Brownlow Mews (off Grays Inn Road), London WC1. Unfortunately, Alec could not manage the steep stairs up to the first-floor meeting room at Marymount College and decided to resign as Secretary, but continued as Membership Secretary – a job he could do from home – until the Spring of 2002.

For some years Alec Swain's name had been on the waiting list for a place at a home for retired railwaymen in Woking, and he moved there from Flitwick in August 2003, taking his electric buggy with him. It was not long before he became a member of the Woking PS whose meetings he attended until his health deteriorated. Throughout the time Alec Swain was at Flitwick it was my pleasure to entertain him four times a year as we shared the task of getting the F&CPS journals ready for dispatch. On arrival, he always produced a nice bottle of red wine, which ensured that our lunch breaks were convivial affairs. Any day spent in Alec's company was a day well spent and it's sad to realise that he's not around any more. He was a real gentleman and I feel privileged to have known him.

DJR

Five centimes Sage stamps of Types IIA and IIB

Derek Richardson and Godfrey Bowden

Foreword

In the preface to his two-part study¹ of the *Type Sage* stamps, Dr R Joany pointed out that, at the time the stamps were in use, practically nothing was being written about them, save for a recognition of the existence of two Types characterised by the position of the letter N of INV (after the SAGE signature) in relation to the letters U and B of REPUBLIQUE. This was because philatelic research at that time was directed almost entirely towards the classic issues of 1849 to 1875; while stamps currently in use were regarded as the “poor relations”. Dr Joany’s own research drew upon material seen in private collections, in the stocks of some specialist dealers, and above all in the resources of the Paris Postal Museum. He modestly pointed out, however, that in the end we were still left with “numerous knowledge gaps and imperfections” as well as “a few question marks”.

The present writers, working independently and at different times in the past, had both encountered some difficulty in the identification of the sub-types of the Type II five centimes green stamp. We therefore decided to revisit the subject, to re-examine our holdings, to seek some common agreement and, for the record, to write this note.

Background

Most of the French postage stamps issued from 1870 to 1875 (those of 10 centimes and above) were printed using the Cérés printing plates of 1849. These had figures of value that were so small – just over a millimetre in height – that mistakes were often made because post office employees found them hard to read. An announcement of a competition for a new design of postage stamp appeared in the *Journal Officiel* of 9 August 1875. The broad design aim was the personification of France, and one of the specifications was that the figures of value were to be between 6 and 7mm high. By the time the competition closed, fifteen days later, 440 entries had been received. The first prize of fifteen hundred francs went to Monsieur J A Sage² for his drawing depicting “Peace and Commerce uniting and ruling the World”.

Monsieur L E Mouchon³ was employed to engrave an original die, in steel, based on Monsieur Sage’s artwork. Unfortunately, the engraved die fractured during the tempering process and Mouchon had to repair it, which involved re-engraving the south-west corner of the design. Late in 1875, Monsieur Mouchon submitted design proofs of his repaired die. Following approval, he made thirteen copies of it – one for each of the intended stamp face values – and engraved the required figures of value.

On 1 January 1876 the postal administration awarded the Banque de France the contract for the production by typography of the new stamp issue, so ending the monopoly of

stamp production that the Paris Mint had enjoyed since 1849. However, the Mint was ordered to continue printing Cérés-type stamps of certain values until June 1876 to give time for printing plates to be manufactured and stocks to be printed at the French Bank’s large premises at 36 rue d’Hauteville, Paris 10.

Production

Taking account of the domestic and foreign postal rates that came into force on 1 January 1876, thirteen stamp values were needed, and the colours chosen for them were announced on 9 March 1876. Printing of the 40c and 5F values was deferred, but production of the remaining eleven values (1c, 2c, 4c, 5c, 10c, 15c, 20c, 25c, 30, 75c and 1F) began straight away under the direction of the French Bank’s *chef de fabrication*, Monsieur Ermel.⁴ The issue of the most heavily used values started in July 1876 and by November 1876 stocks of all eleven stamps were held at post offices throughout the country.

After printing began, it soon became apparent that a serious problem existed. The stamps themselves met the specifications, but the printing plates being used were found to be unsatisfactory. These were mosaic plates which comprised 150 *clichés* arranged in six groups of 25 (5 x 5) held within a metal framework. This framework was made of a soft metal alloy that wore out so quickly in use that frequent (and costly) replacements were needed. Monsieur Ermel made urgent enquiries and learnt that the printing plates used at the Imprimerie Nationale to print *timbres-taxe* were made by a different process altogether, involving electro-deposition (French *galvanoplastie*), and he ordered the adoption of this process at the Banque de France.⁵

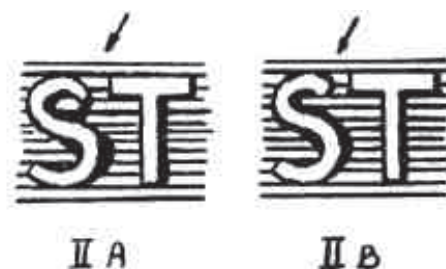
Monsieur Mouchon straight away began work on the task. Importantly from a philatelic point of view, he took as his model his original die, which he considered to be far better than the repaired die. The die itself no longer existed in its original form, of course, but fortunately, prior to the fracture, Mouchon had made copies in guttapercha – one for each face value then foreseen – and it was from these that he was able to create a new set of printing plates, replacing, in turn, the ones being used by the production team. Replacement of the 2c, 5c, 10c, 15c, 20c and 25c stamp printing plates occurred before the end of 1876, and the others followed later.

As far as the postal authorities were concerned, this change from one kind of printing plate to another was an internal matter and not one of public record. It was not until stamp collectors noticed that a small change in the J.A.SAGE INV lettering had occurred that the notion of Type I and Type II stamps came into being. Since then, collectors have identified seven more small differences between stamps of Type I and Type II.⁷

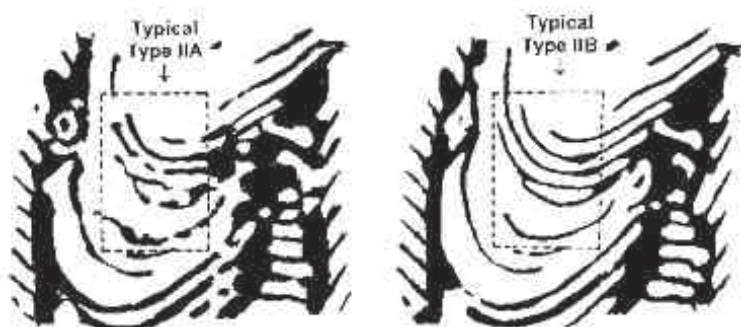


The 5 centimes Types IIA and IIB

The 5 centimes Type II Sage stamp, first seen cancelled on 29 November 1876⁶, had an obvious imperfection. In the word POSTE, the upper loop of the letter S is closed, not open. This closure sometimes consists of a connecting line but most usually it appears as a heavy mark, described by Dr Joany as a shadow. Towards the end of 1877 Monsieur Mouchon used a modified 5 centimes die which did not exhibit the “shadow” on the S of POSTE. Five centimes stamps with and without the “shadow” then became known as Types IIA and IIB respectively. The earliest known date of use of a 5 centimes Type IIB is 29 December 1877. It remained in print for twenty years, then was replaced by the 5 centimes yellow-green stamps of 1898 Types IIB and IA (or III).



Knee detail in “Peace” figure’s robe



The removal of the “shadow” was not the only change that Monsieur Mouchon effected. He also re-engraved the lines that define the knee bulge of the robe of the Peace figure. In Type IIA these lines are broken and ill-defined but in Type IIB they are unbroken and well spaced. We have not seen this identifying feature reported elsewhere. It is not easy to see with the naked eye.

A second Type IIA feature recorded by Dr Joany is the presence of a small outer indentation (French *petite encoche externe*) in the right-hand frame line. He illustrated this on page 51 of his *Le Monde Etude* N° 54 (1963). The present writers have examined dozens of examples of the 5 centime Type IIA stamps but none of them was found to exhibit the indentation described by Dr Joany. We think this feature can be disregarded.



In conclusion

Because the Type IIA print run was very short compared with that of the Type IIB, examples are naturally harder to find, and this is reflected in the catalogue prices. For example, those quoted in the 2009 edition of the Maury catalogue are:

	Mint, no hinge	Mint with light hinge mark	Mint, no gum	Used	On cover
Type IIA	165€	100€	35€	19€	40€
Type IIB	45€	22€	9€	1€	2€

We suggest the following ways of identifying Type II 5c Sage stamps:

- (i) Stamps with a “shadow” in the S of POSTE are of Type IIA and those without that “shadow” are of Type IIB. When the S of POSTE is obliterated by the postmark, see (ii) or (iii) below.
- (ii) Stamps cancelled between 29 NOV 76 and 28 DEC 77 are of Type IIA. (However, due to late use, some Type IIA stamps can be found with 1878 postmarks.)
- (iii) Stamps with broken lines in the Peace figure’s knee bulge are Type IIA.

References

- ¹ Dr R Joany, “Les timbres-poste au type Sage,” *Le Monde des Philatélistes* Etudes 47 (1962) & 54 (1963) (both reprinted in 1981)
- ² Jules-Auguste Sage (1840-1910)
- ³ Louis-Eugène Mouchon (1843-1914)
- ⁴ Frédéric Ermel (1834-1923)
- ⁵ Dr R Joany, Dr J Storch, J-F Brun, R Françon, *Histoire des timbres-poste au type Sage 1875-1976*, Yvert et Tellier Editeurs, 1980, page 33
- ⁶ Michel Melot & Jean-François Brun, “Le 5c vert au type Sage,” *Timbroscopie* N° 115, July 1994
- ⁷ Dr R Joany, Dr J Storch, J-F Brun, R Françon, *idem*, page 27

A World War I Card from a Thai Pilot in France

John Garner



Address side of card

At first glance this postcard is of little or no apparent interest, and yet it is the star of my collection. If you saw it on a dealer's stand you would probably reject it as being not just incomprehensible but dull, and yet, apart from its historical interest, it is distinctly scarce; I know of fewer than six of these cards still surviving from ninety years ago.

To go right back to the beginning, in 1914 when World War I began Thailand remained strictly neutral. The war was far away between people the Thais had no reason to like, let alone fight for. It was the French and British between them who had stolen something like a third of Thailand's territory (parts of Cambodia and northern Malaya), all in the name of Imperialism. If anything, Thai sympathies must have been with the Germans, who had never done anything to harm them.

This state of neutrality ended in 1917 when America joined in the War on the side of the Allies, and Thailand followed suit shortly afterwards, on 22 July 1917, when all Germans in Thailand were interned and their property confiscated. It is little known even amongst experts on World War I that after Thailand had joined the Allies she had every intention of sending an expeditionary force to France to help in the fighting. It took longer than expected to gather and train the little force, but finally on 19 June 1918 the expeditionary force set sail for France. The volunteers included ambulance, motor and aviation corps, totalling around 370 pilots and mechanics and 1200 infantry. I find it difficult to believe that anyone in the higher military command in France really wanted this little contingent with no experience of modern warfare, but there were distinct political benefits for the Thais being on the winning side.

The infantry were equipped with French style uniforms and helmets, but the pilots were much more of a problem

since they had no experience of modern fighter aircraft or of the appallingly dangerous German aces. Accordingly, the aviation contingent arrived at the *École d'Aviation* at Istres on 6 August 1918. 94 of the pilots completed training and received their licences as military aviators and 28 of the most skilful went on to the pursuit school at Pau in the very south of France close to the Pyrenees and finally went to gunnery school.

By this time the War had ended so no Thai pilots reached the front, but some joined the *Aviation Militaire* Air Divisions accompanying the French Army in the occupation of Germany and spent several months on flying duties: for the rest, training continued at various airfields round France.

Now for my card — translated by Alan Cameron:

"Sgt Dechakhup
Pilote Siamois
Ecole d'aviation militaire
Pau

"Avord

"Phydd,

"Since you arrived you have gone silent and have not sent any news at all. Tell us what is happening over there. Here I have long finished. At this time I just eat and sleep and do not know what else to do.

"I miss you,
(signature illegible)"

The date is illegible, but the card was probably sent in very late 1918 or early 1919, to a fellow more advanced pilot at the pursuit school at Pau. The card has a light '*Le Vaguemestre*' handstamp — he was an NCO carrying out postal and telegraph operations; in fact a postal orderly — and a manuscript *FM* for *Franchise Militaire*, ie Postage



ALLIES: OFFICERS OF THE SIAMESE AVIATION CORPS IN FRANCE.

The pilots – taken from the *Illustrated London News*



View side of card

Free. The card was sent from a pilot at Avord, where some light training should have been taking place. The picture on the reverse of the card is very ordinary in my eyes, but perhaps little else was available.

These cards from pilots are very unusual and I know of none at all surviving from the infantry. As far as I can tell the card was not censored and it seems clear from the message that the pilots were waiting impatiently to go back home, which most of them did at the end of March 1919, arriving in Bangkok on 1 May 1919 to the applause of the entire nation.

A small group of pilots remained in France to continue training at the seaplane school at St Raphael and some of the Thai expeditionary force died in France, though none as far as I know in combat.

Bibliography

"The Airmails of Siam" by Nils Ramm-Ericson, published in 2003.

[See also illustration of Thai infantry on page 160.]

LIST OF RECENTLY PUBLISHED ARTICLES

Compiled by Colin Spong and Maurice Tyler

Bulletin de la COL.FRA

N° 133 3^e Trim 2010: L'usage d'un Timbre-poste ayant déjà servi à l'Affranchissement d'une lettre (Coré & Hurpet); Les Nouvelles séries définitives de Timbres-poste et de Timbres-Taxe d'Usage courant d'après-guerre [1947-1948] dans les Départements et Territoires d'Outre-Mer (cont) (Drye); Les Débuts difficiles de la Carte Postale dans le Régime Franco-Colonial (Hurpet); Les timbres de la Série pour les Œuvres Sociales de la France d'Outremer (Venot).

Cameo

Vol 11 N° 6 (Whole N° 81): Togo - Undercover Mail from World War I (Mayne); Damaged by Sea Water - December 1942 [West Africa & AEF] (Priddy); 'Contentieux Postal Yaoundé / RUC' - An uncommon Cameroun Postal Service Date Stamp' (Maddocks).

L'Écho de la Timbrologie

N° 1843 Sept 2010: Roland Irolla, Dis, l'artiste, dessine-moi le timbre de tes rêves (-); Le Quartier latin de l'Afrique (Mangin); Les traversées aériennes transocéaniques de 1930 (Albaret); L'alphabet des Imprimeurs [5] (Marion - SOCOCODAMI); L'histoire épique des feuilles issues de la TD215 (Martineau - Cercle des Amis de Marianne); Les LISA II et le nouveau tarif de mars 2009 (Héron et Gengembre); Vous avez dit «Épreuves»? (Hennekinne); Les ancêtres des cartes en France [1800-1890] 2 (Storch); Aqueducs et ponts-aqueducs [1/2] (Krempfer).

N° 1844 Oct 2010: Serge Bloch, Dis, l'artiste, dessine-moi le timbre de tes rêves (-); Sept destins de haut vol [Pioneers of aviation] (-); Affirmation de soi et...francophilie [Du Dahomey et Bénin] (Mangin); Boîtes et coffrets de messagers au Moyen Âge ((Albaret); L'alphabet...des Imprimeurs [6] (Marion - SOCOCODAMI); Les ancêtres des cartes en France [1800-1890] 3 (Storch); Inscriptions de service des TD6 en marge gauche (Martineau - Cercle des Amis de Marianne); Les LISA II et le nouveau tarif de mars 2009 (Héron et Gengembre); Aqueducs et ponts-aqueducs [2/2] (Krempfer).

France & Colonies Philatelist

Whole N° 301 (Vol 66 N° 3): The French Intervention in Chad (Luft); Recruits, Enthusiasts and Specialists (Meadowcroft); A Postal History Mystery - Solved [Paris-San Paulo letter] (Broadhead); Amazing Originations and Destinations - From French Guiana to French India (Ward); Amazing Originations and Destinations - From Réunion to Tahiti (Herendeen); William H Gross France & Colonies Sold (-); Covers from Nowhere to Nowhere - A Gold Miner sends his earnings home? [Inini Territory to St Lucia] (Edinger); Douala, Cameroun - Non-Maritime use of the *Paquebot* Handstamp (Bratzel); Too Good to be True [a Group Type Oceania & a Tahiti provisional] (DeBoard).

Whole N° 302 (Vol 66, N° 4): Postal Issues of the 1925 Paris Decorative Arts Exposition - Part V "Le Flambeau" (Broadhead); The 1924 Olympic Issue of Lebanon (Bazzi); Postal History can really be history! (Nilsestuen); Too Good to be True - Redux [Tahiti] (Gaetjens).

Gibbons Stamp Monthly

Vol 41 N° 5 Oct 2010: The Glorious Islands (Pendleton).

Timbres Magazine

N° 115 Sep 2010: La Ligne, une fabuleuse aventure (de Pellinec); La Côte française des Somalis: petite colonie, grande histoire (Singeot); Au répertoire des variétés: les incidents de tirage [2] (Rucklin); Répertoire du 1F Vermillon de 1849 (Prugnon); Le point sur les carnets «Marara» [Polynésie française] (Beslu); Survol des oiseaux du Vietnam (Aramis); Les Zeppelins et la France (PJM); L'expédition polaire de l'ingénieur André Le Drame (Zeyons); Devoirs de rentrée (Baudot); Le service des boîtes mobiles (Prugnon); Contrôle postal en Côte française des Somalis (Chauvin); Jacky Cappe, L'art et la guerre (Amiel).

N° 116 Oct 2010: «Avec cette lettre, c'est dix minutes de la vie du Général de Gaulle que je détiens» (Benaï); Ceux de la Commune internés à Rochefort (Loëdec); Variations sur des boîtes mobiles (de la Mettrie); Les carnets en pochettes surprises [3] (Rucklin); Voyage dans les îles anglo-normandes (Singeot); Une lettre de Paris pour Trieste insuffisamment affranchie (Prugnon); Les Amitiés Africaines (Chauvin); Les fictifs de la Poste (Dousselin); Pouvez-vous me dire? [faux de Londres] (Camelin).

N° 117 Nov 2010: Les timbres du Royaume de l'Est (Melot); Variétés ou variants? [4] (Rucklin); 1860: la difficile naissance de l'émission (Danan); Les timbres perforés: petits trous de mémoire (Singeot); Sujets français sur timbres russes (Aramis); Autour d'un dîner prié (de la Mettrie); Pour un toit avec toi [cartes de Georges Cochon] (Zeyons); L'avis de réception (Prugnon); Les bandes phosphore de la Marianne de Beaujard (Martineau); 1940: La poste navale dans l'empire colonial (Chauvin).

The Indo-China Philatelist

Vol 40 N° 4 (Whole N° 194) Sep 2010: Dual First Flight Cover (Bentley); Postal Meters of French Indochina (Bentley & Dykhous); More on Bank Censor Exemption (Dykhous).

The Collectors Club Philatelist

Vol 89 N° 5 Sep-Oct 2010: Odessa to Marseille, August 1870 (Wishart).

Vol 89 N° 6 Nov-Dec 2010: The French Royal Packet Service between France and the United States, 1783-1793 (Walske).

Documents Philatéliques

N° 206 4^e trim 2010: 1853 - Caïffa, le Mentor et la taxe à cinq décimes (Livnat); Les pays d'outre-mer par la voie d'Angleterre - Le cas particulier du Portugal (Bourgouin); Les débuts de la répression de l'emploi de timbres-poste ayant déjà servi (Lavigne); L'étoile tronquée: une oblitération et un cachet à date jumelés - Avec une loupe et un double décimètre... (Brun); La difficile organisation de la poste civile italienne dans les zones annexées en 1940 (Gérard).

French Postal Rates of 1 July 2010

PRIORITY LETTERS AND ECOPLI FROM FRANCE TO FRANCE AND OVERSEAS ZONES

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

Zone 2: New Caledonia, French Polynesia, Wallis and Fortuna, Terres australes et antarctiques françaises, Clipperton

Weight up to	Priority letters to			ECOPLI (250g maximum) to		
	France	Zone 1	Zone 2	France	Zone 1	Zone 2
20g	0,58€	0,58€	0,58€	0,53€	0,53€	0,53€
50g	0,95€	Priority letter rate to France plus an air supplement of 0,05€ per 10g	Priority letter rate to France plus an air supplement of 0,11€ per 10g	0,75€	ECOPLI rate to France plus an air supplement of 0,02€ per 10g	ECOPLI rate to France plus an air supplement of 0,05€ per 10g
100g	1,40€			0,95€		
250g	2,30€			1,75€		
500g	3,15€			-		
1kg	4,05€			-		
2kg	5,35€			-		
3kg	6,25€			-		

Example: Rate for a 35g Priority letter from France to a Zone 2 destination = 0,95€ + 4 x 0,11€ = 1,39€.

Registration of a priority letter plus other options

Options	R1	R2	R3	AR	Contre-Remboursement
Indemnity in case of loss or damage	16€	153€	458€	-	-
France	2,80€	3,40€	4,30€	1,00€	7,00€
Zone 1	10,05€	12,20€	15,43€	1,20€	8,37€
Zone 2	13,40€	16,27€	20,57€	1,20€	8,37€

Valeur Déclarée. The cost of insuring for loss of or damage to a registered item with a value of up to 600€.

Items weighing up to	250g	500g	1kg	2kg	3kg	5kg
France, Andorra, Monaco	13,00€	14,00€	15,10€	16,20€	17,30€	18,40€
Zone 1	19,60€	19,60€	24,00€	29,30€	34,60€	45,40€
Zone 2	21,10€	21,10€	27,30€	42,20€	56,70€	85,60€

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

Poste Restante. Correspondence 0,58€, Newspapers and Periodicals 0,29€.

FROM FRANCE TO FOREIGN COUNTRIES

Any item not marked *MARCHANDISE* is treated as a document.

Zone structure: Zone 1 = European Union countries + Switzerland, Zone 2 = Rest of World.

Weight Up to	Documents				Weight Up to	Marchandise (Petit Paquet)			
	Priority		Economy			Priority		Economy	
	Zone 1	Zone 2	Zone 1	Zone 2		Zone 1	Zone 2	Zone 1	Zone 2
20g	0,75€	0,87€	-	-		-	-	-	-
50g	1,35€	1,75€	-	-		-	-	-	-
100g	1,80€	2,35€	1,60€	1,75€	100g	2,00€	2,70€	1,80€	2,00€
250g	4,10€	5,60€	2,85€	3,05€	250g	4,30€	5,90€	3,00€	3,20€
500g	6,10€	7,35€	4,00€	4,40€	500g	6,50€	7,70€	4,40€	5,00€
1000g	8,75€	10,80€	5,65€	7,00€	1000g	10,00€	11,50€	6,50€	9,00€
2000g	12,60€	16,95€	8,75€	12,90€	2000g	12,85€	17,25€	8,90€	13,10€
3000g	-	27,75€	-	21,60€	3000g	-	28,25€	-	22,00€

The 3000g weight step applies only to 18 former French colonies in Africa.

Registration⁽¹⁾: 4,30€ for indemnity of 45€ (R1) or 5,30€ for indemnity of 150€ (R2).

Advice of delivery of a registered item: 1,30€ (no change).

Contre-Remboursement^(1,2): a fixed fee of 8,00€ (no change).

Valeur Déclarée up to	500€	1000€	2500€	5000€
Tariff^(1,2)	7,80€	10,80€	19,00€	29,00€

⁽¹⁾ Additional to the Priority Document or Merchandise rate.

⁽²⁾ Service not available to certain destinations.

Additional rates such as the fees for holding and forwarding mail and 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 given above.

Rates that commenced 1 October 2006, 1 March 2008 and 2 March 2009 were recorded in Journals N^{os} 242, 248 and 252.

Derek Richardson

La Poste Navale -

Some Notes on French Naval Posts in the Two World Wars

Bill Mitchell



Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3
(Bureau N° 31 was at Fort-de-France in Martinique)



Figure 4
(11 MARS 40 was the date of the *Instruction* relating to the *Poste Navale*, noted in the text)

These illustrations are taken from Bertrand Sinais' catalogue.

In the Questions and Answers pages of the Journal for December 2009 (Whole N° 254, at page 152) Stewart Duncan illustrated a 1943 registered cover bearing a cachet reading *COURRIER OFFICIEL*, posted at the *Bureau Naval 53* on 19 November and addressed to the Commander Naval Officer in Charge at Bathurst in the British colony of Gambia. The postage paid was 8 francs, which was supplemented by a further 6 francs cancelled on 6 December; the letter reached Bathurst on the 10th. All the stamps used were current issues of Algeria, and it was understandably assumed that the *Bureau Naval* was located somewhere in that country. Stewart's questions were – what was the *Bureau Naval 53*, where was it located in Algeria, why would an official dispatch require postage or be held up due to underfranking and what was the current breakdown between postage and registration fee. The franking is discussed in notes by Barbara Priddy on page 153 of Journal 254 and by me on page 45 of Journal 256 (June 2010).

The first question can best be answered by a quotation from a Note by Bob Stone⁽¹⁾, although there will be more on this later on. Stone was writing about military mail, but what he said must surely have applied equally to correspondence from naval units – “The military services had their own post-offices or post agents at some places and times. These used a variety of special postmarks and cachets..... Military POs generally used French stamps and French postal procedures.”

As to the location of the *Bureau Naval 53*, Maurice Tyler noted that he had ascertained from the Web that it was situated in Dakar, Senegal, and not in Algeria; it was open from 14 April 1943 to 15 March 1946. These details were also reported by Colin Spong, quoting an article by Dr Jacques Mériaux in *L'Écho de la Timbrologie* for January 1973, on page 8 of the Journal for March 2010 (N° 255). They also appear in Bertrand Sinais' *Catalogue des Oblitérations Navales Françaises 1771-1986*, published in 1987; the details are exactly the same – “*POSTE NAVALE BUREAU N° 53, DAKAR, 14 avril 1943 au 15 mars 1946*”. The *Bureau Naval* at Algiers was N° 74, opened a day later than the one at Dakar, on 15 April 1943, and closed on 31 October 1950; it was open again from 23 June 1952 to 12 June 1964 (page 22).

This was a new series of numbers introduced under Free French auspices, the earliest (N° 69) being opened on 1 April 1943 at Nemours, Algeria. The origin of these World War II naval post offices can be traced back to an *Instruction* of 4 April 1939 on the handling of the posts in wartime, which was replaced by another *Instruction*, of 11 March 1940, relating specifically to the *poste navale*. At first, individual ports were identified in the date stamps, eg *ALGER-NAVAL* (Fig 1), but shortly after the outbreak of the War these were replaced for security reasons in accordance with *Instructions* of 9 and 17 October 1939, by a series of numbers, Algiers being N° 22. Dakar, an *agence postale navale*, was initially N° 32, but this was quickly changed to N° 33; it was issued with “dotted” hexagons inscribed *POSTE NAVALE* (no number, Fig 2) and *AGENCE NAVALE* N° 33 (as in Fig 3) and also (curiously, in view of the security considerations already mentioned) a circular date stamp reading *DAKAR-NAVAL* (Fig 4), all in 1940. These details come from Sinais, pages 12 to 16; there will be more on this later, too.

So there can be no doubt that Stewart's letter was posted at Dakar and not at Algiers. But why was it franked with Algerian stamps – indeed, why was it stamped at all? Logically, this second question should be answered first, but I'm afraid I can only answer it by inference. In the Note already mentioned, Bob Stone records that in wartime military personnel were entitled to free postage, but this was limited to first-step letters and postcards addressed to any part of the French Empire if transmitted by and in the French posts – overweight letters, registration, foreign destinations, airmail surcharges etc had to be paid for. He adds that “Official military correspondence between or from military units had the same general franchise as other government agencies in peace and wartime.” Unfortunately, I have been unable to trace a definitive note of the free franchise available to government agencies and the military administration during World War II (can any of our French members help?), but from the evidence of this cover, which seems to be franked for airmail, it's reasonable to infer that it did not extend to registration, foreign destinations or airmail surcharges.

But if posted at Dakar and requiring franking, why were Algerian stamps used? At this stage of the War both



Figure 5a

Algeria and Senegal were aligned with de Gaulle's Free French movement and fresh supplies of stamps could not be obtained from France. Furthermore, in June 1943 de Gaulle had removed his headquarters from London to Algiers⁽²⁾, which consequently acquired Paris's responsibilities for postal matters in the liberated parts of the French Empire. So on both counts Algerian stamps replaced those of France in military and naval post offices in North and West Africa. But I was puzzled by this cover in my collection (Fig 5a) with the *DAKAR-NAVAL* cancel and a very grubby 2 francs Senegal stamp paying the airmail surcharge to France on 14 February 1940. Bearing in mind Bob Stone's comments already mentioned, there seemed to be no obvious reason for this as at that date one would have expected a French stamp, so I consulted Peter Kelly, who referred me to a doctoral thesis of Jacques Mériaux published by Sinais in 1998 under the title "*Histoire de la poste navale*". Unfortunately, there are differences between Sinais' own account and Mériaux (as summarised by Peter). For a broad outline such as this I'm reasonably confident that what follows is correct, but I must stress that it may not be wholly accurate.

It will be helpful, I think, to begin with World War I, when a *Bureau Central pour la Poste Navale* was attached to the *Bureau Central Militaire* at Marseille from 20 March 1916, but otherwise there were no naval post offices as such in the major Mediterranean ports boasting a French post office. Instead, a member of staff at these civilian post offices (they were at Toulon, Ajaccio, Port-Saïd, Alexandria, Bizerta, Philippeville, Algiers and Oran) was appointed specifically to deal with naval mail (Sinais, page 8). It seems to follow that when stamps were required they will have been

those of France, the French post offices in Port-Saïd and Alexandria or Tunisia as appropriate (Algeria, of course, used French stamps until 1924). Sinais does not say when this arrangement came to an end, but it would appear that between the Wars naval post continued to be handled by civil post offices using the stamps, when required, appropriate to their location. (The offices in Port-Saïd and Alexandria were closed on 31 March 1931.) *Bureaux navals secondaires* were opened at other Mediterranean ports lacking a French post office; they all seem to have been closed by the middle of 1920 – Sinais, pages 8-9).

So far as World War II is concerned, the arrangements were much more elaborate. The naval post was re-established in anticipation of the outbreak of war by the *Instruction* of 4 April 1939 and began its work on the general mobilisation of the following 2 September. Once again there was a *Bureau Central de la Poste Navale*, which was responsible for the sorting and distribution of letters addressed to the naval post offices, handling undeliverable mail and liaison with central military post offices (Sinais, page 11). It also provided *matériel*, which presumably included stamps (Mériaux). Sinais records (page 11) that it was originally located at the Paris 123 post office in the rue d'Anjou, close to the Navy Ministry; on 11 June 1940, shortly before the German occupation of Paris, it was moved to Tours and a few days later to Bordeaux. In these early days the naval post offices were located in the principal ports of France and North Africa, which for these purposes included Senegal. The ports outside France were Algiers, Bizerta, Casablanca, Dakar and Oran. Elsewhere in Africa there were also offices at Diégo-Suarez and Djibouti (Sinais, pages 12-16). If on land they were attached to civilian post offices



Figure 5b

in that town for accountancy purposes and initially they may, if outside France, have held stocks of local stamps. At any rate, when numbered date stamps were allocated to them in October 1939, as already noted, detailed instructions about censorship were introduced to prevent site identification, for example by the use of picture postcards. For the same reason the use of Algerian stamps was no longer tolerated (Mériaux). So Senegal stamps should not have been used at Dakar in February 1940, but Mérlaux wrote of covers in his collection irregularly franked with Senegal stamps – like mine, which does not seem to be philatelically contrived. So it is possible that, notwithstanding the official ban on the use of local stamps, a blind eye was sometimes turned to the practice. Mériaux adds that the *Agence Postale Navale* N° 33 was open from May 1940 and is believed to have been closed on 30 June in the same year; my cover shows that its cancel was in use some two to three months earlier – I assume, from the *Bureau* N° 32 period. The reverse of the cover (Fig 5b) doesn't help; it shows only the sender's name, his Service number 10329 and his location (Dakar) (if what I assume to be his Service number is actually AO329, this conveys nothing to me.)

Some pages further on in his account (37-38) Sinais mentions that for very short periods between May 1939 and April 1943 there were also land-based naval postal agencies at three places in France, and he records a requirement that these bases must have a complement of a minimum of 1,000 men. No doubt this also applied to the agency at Dakar.

Mériaux (see the note by Colin Spong already mentioned)

records that a Free French *Bureau Central Naval* was transferred from Casablanca to Algiers after the Liberation (of North Africa). Sinais (page 18) goes a little further than this and dates the opening of this central office as "spring 1943" and the transfer to Algiers on 15 September of that year; after the Liberation of Paris it was relocated there in November 1944. Shortly afterwards it was replaced by (or renamed as?) the Paris Naval Office (N° 81) – which he says on page 22 was open from 20 October 1944!

As already noted, the naval post offices at Algiers and Dakar were closed on 12 June 1964 and 15 March 1946 respectively. The last survivor was Oran (N° 22); it was (re-) opened as late as 11 June 1956 and closed on 30 January 1968. But naval post offices and agencies, both ashore and on board ship, continued to exist for many years after the war; Sinais lists and illustrates a large number of their postmarks, many of them incorporating the name of the vessel. They make a compact and relatively inexpensive subject for anyone looking for an interesting new sideline collection.

I am most grateful to Peter Kelly for his summary of relevant parts of Mériaux's book, which has added to the interest of the story as told in Bertrand Sinais' catalogue.

References

- (1) Stone, R G – "Military-Related Mail from the French Colonies", *France & Colonies Philatelist* (USA), July 1981 (Vol 37 N° 3, Whole N° 185), page 117.
- (2) Giangreco, D M – "Roosevelt, de Gaulle and the Posts", Joseph V Bush Inc, Bonita, California, 1987, page 34.

More Gremlin Activity in Cameroon Philately: Cameroon Airlines *et al*

Bob Maddocks



Figure 1
Airmail cover from Yaoundé to France November 1971

On 21 March 1971 the Federal Republic of Cameroon, which had previously relied on Air Afrique (an airline serving a consortium of francophone African states) for its international air communications, created its own airline, Cameroon Airlines. The inaugural flight to Europe was apparently scheduled for 1 November 1971, some six months later. For the philatelic record, no commemorative postage stamps were issued to mark either occasion. However, as evidenced by a couple of contemporary airmail covers in my collection, a special publicity handstamp was produced to celebrate this aforementioned inaugural flight. It was applied to commercial mailings posted on around that date to Europe. So far, it has been noted by me on covers posted at Yaoundé and Tiko only and in two slightly different formats.

The first handstamp (Fig 1) was made up with three straight lines reading "CAMEROON AIRLINES / PREMIER VOL / PREMIER NOVEMBRE 1971". Its overall size was 44mm x 12mm and it was struck in green ink on a cover to France. The adhesive postage stamps on this same cover were not cancelled; in fact there is no originating postal date stamp. As the sender gave his address as Yaoundé, it is assumed that the cover was mailed at that point.

The second handstamp (Fig 2) is slightly larger in size at 46mm x 14mm. It has the same composition except that "AIRLINES" has curiously been misspelt as "AIR-LAINES". It was struck in black on a cover mailed to England from Tiko, the principal airport in the anglophone state of West Cameroon. The Tiko postmark of November 1971 is not fully legible as to the day.

It has not been established whether such publicity cachets were introduced by the postal authorities or by the airline and where else they may have been utilised.

Moving on three months: the first philatelic reference to the inaugural flight of Cameroon Airlines to Paris and London is to be found in stamp catalogues under the date of February 1972. On the 2nd of that month a 50F commemorative "Premier Vol" stamp (Fig 3) was issued, as was a respective First Day Cover (Fig 4). The gremlins are not known to have produced any appropriate handstamp as well!

Now take a second look at the above mentioned Tiko cover (Fig 2). Thereon, for very good measure, is seen a second and quite different commemorative handstamp – this time marking, in French, the 25th anniversary of UNICEF! Such was the gremlin activity in November 1971.



Figure 2
Airmail cover from Tiko to England, November 1971



Figure 3
Cameroon Airlines Inaugural Flight 50F commemorative stamp, February 1972 (enlarged to 125%)

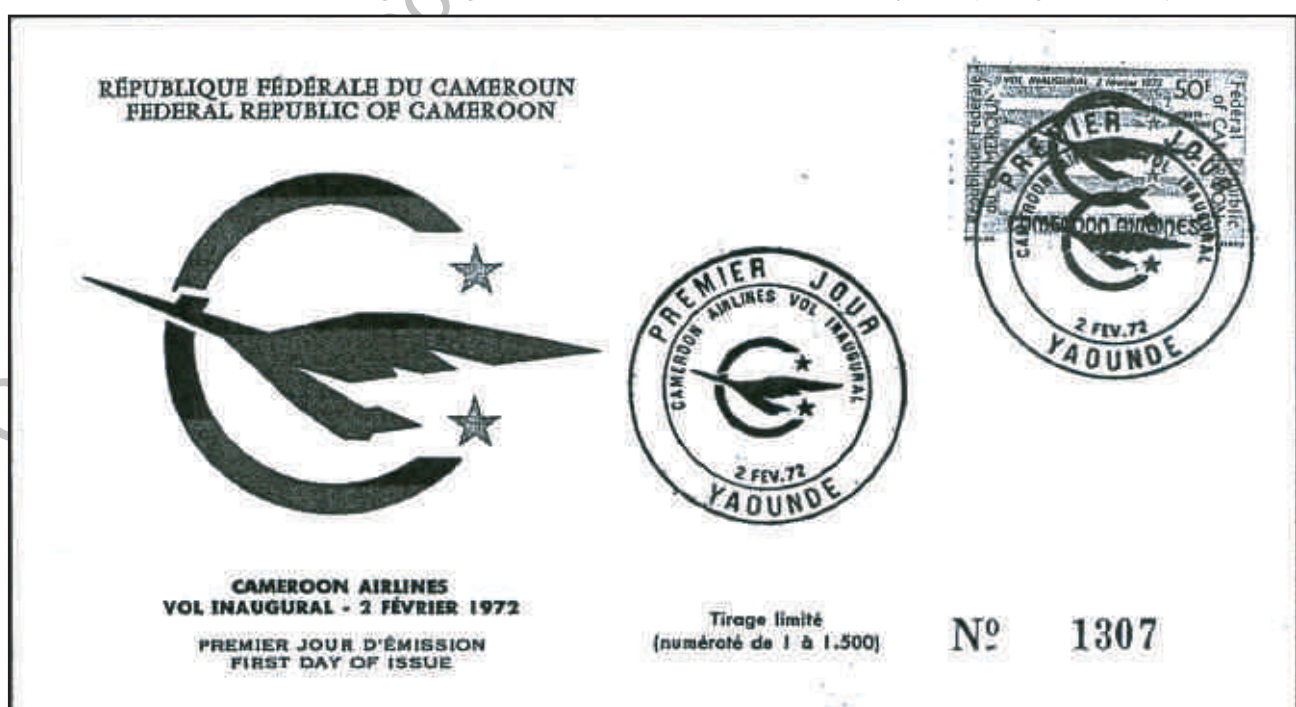


Figure 4
Cameroon Airlines Inaugural Flight 50F commemorative stamp on First Day Cover (courtesy Marty Bratzel)



Figure 5
Cameroon 25th Anniversary of UNICEF 40F commemorative stamp, November 1971



Figure 6
Cameroon Airlines 10th Anniversary 300F commemorative stamp, March 1981



Figure 7
Cameroon Airlines passenger ticket (*reduced size*)

To conclude the perplexities highlighted in this short *tour d'horizon* a return is made to Cameroon Airlines, more particularly to the philatelic celebration of the 10th anniversary of its existence. On 21 March 1981 a set of three commemorative postage stamps (100F, 200F and 300F values) was issued. Attention is drawn specifically to the artwork of the 300F stamp (Fig 6) – a scary juxtaposition of landing and landed aircraft on the same runway! The designer obviously needed a personal crash course on aeronautical composition: *zut alors*, even our mysterious gremlins must have wept!

But why “Cameroon Airlines”? Although the Federal Republic of Cameroon is officially bilingual, the Adminis-

tration in Yaoundé were, and still are, predominantly francophone, with the English language very much the lesser medium of communication. Indeed, it did not even always appear together with French on the postage stamps. Surprisingly the new airline’s name was registered in English only. As such “Cameroon Airlines” appeared alone without any French equivalent on passenger tickets etc (Fig 7) and also on both sides of the fuselage of the company’s Boeing 747 aircraft, which was named as well in English, “Mount Cameroon”.

Could it be that the gremlins were of the anglophone persuasion? Whatever, they still leave unexplained the plurality of “Airlines”!

SHORTER ITEMS - INCLUDING QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Charlecote Park



We thought members contemplating the Society's Philatelic Weekend, to be held from 18 to 20 March 2011 at the Charlecote Pheasant Hotel, might be interested to see this postcard illustrating Charlecote House.

[This is in fact the National Trust property now known as Charlecote Park, a Tudor building remodelled in Victorian times, situated with its parkland almost opposite the hotel and often visited during the weekend by guests.]

Judith & Stephen Holder

Editor]

Poste Militaire N° 560

With reference to the query by John Mayne about *Poste Militaire N° 560* (on page 89 of Journal N° 257), I attach an answer from a friend who is not a member of the Society:

"I have two covers bearing Algerian stamps cancelled *POSTE MILITAIRE N° 560* in April and July 1944. The first cover has an identical *MISSION SCIENTIFIQUE FRANÇAIS* cachet as depicted on page 89 of the Journal, and the other has a boxed cachet *INAUGURATION DU FORT COLONNA D'ORNANO / MOURZOUK FEZZAN / 23 JUILLET 1944*. The sender has marked them *Sebha Fezzan*.

"After the French invasion of 1943 former Italian Libyan stamps were overprinted *FEZZAN Occupation Française* and surcharged in French currency. These are some of the rarest stamps of Libya.

"France produced new definitives for Fezzan in 1946, but in the meantime Algerian stamps were used, as on my two covers of 1944.

"It would seem that the most likely location of military PO 560 was SEBHA."

David Taylor Smith

Landing Site of a *Ballon Monté*



I understand that my *Ballon Monté* cover was flown from Paris, Gare d'Orléans, in *Le Parmentier* and landed at Gourgançon (Marne) at 9.00am on Sunday 18 December 1870. Earlier this year I visited this village and reunited the cover with its landing ground after 140 years.

I also visited Rheims Cathedral in the hope of seeing *L'Ange au Sourire* (Yvert 256) on the left hand side of the northern portal, but unfortunately it was temporarily covered by scaffolding. Another year perhaps!

Peter Whiting

The 1F50 Pétain + 50 S N Overprint - *Addendum*



No sooner has my article been published (in Journals 255-257) when further evidence comes along.

In the Cérès October Auction, another version of the SN overprint made an appearance. I suppose we have to call it Type 5. The overprint is quite different to the other four

that I described insomuch that the SN is at the top and the +50 is at the bottom. It comprises a black surcharge (Ink N° 605) on a carmine red stamp (Ink N° 444).

The item was offered with a starting price of 250 euros but has not been sold.

Mick Bister

Hong Kong / Saigon Postmark on 25c Cérès

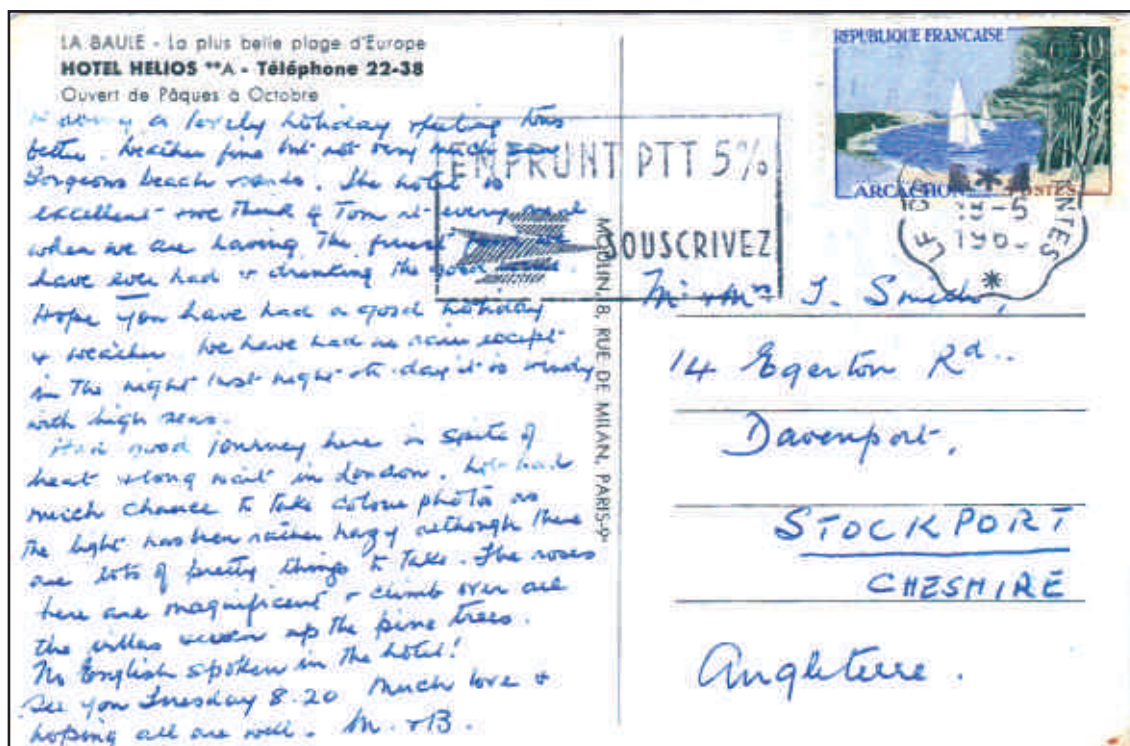


This is an enlarged photocopy of a stamp passed to me by a friend in Holland asking if I can give him any information regarding the postmark – which I can't! I've asked three members of our own Society who I thought may be able to help and a friend with an international reputation in Hong Kong circles but all without success. There is no mention of it in Webb's "Hong Kong" and my own references to Indo-China are very limited.

I should be grateful then if any members of the Society or other readers of the Journal could throw any light on its use. I assume it's a maritime strike of some sort but then, such assumptions are dangerous.

Mike Roberts

Train-borne Machine Cancellor



Illustrated above is a card postmarked by a machine apparently carried on a train travelling between Le Croisic and Nantes in the 1960s (the last digit of the year is unclear). I have not been able to find a mention of such a mark in Yvert, the articles of Gérard Artaud, the listings of TPO marks by Pothion or in Nouazé on mechanical cancellation. Godfrey Bowden reckons the machine responsible was a SECAP on account of the relative positions of the date stamp and the *flamme*. It would have been hand-operated and small enough for use in the postal compartment

of a *courrier convoyeur*. He has a hand-applied date stamp of the 1950s identical to that portion of this mark but for the reverse journey Nantes au Croisic.

We have here something sufficiently uncommon to make me, and perhaps some other readers, want to know more about the distribution of this type of mark and why the short journey from Le Croisic qualified for one. Is a clue to be found in the PTT advertisement in the *flamme*, since we read that the choice of such designs was normally a matter for the user?

Michael Ensor

Posted Early for Christmas – or a Premature Item for Noël

Thanks no doubt to Father Christmas the envelope illustrated on the next page, containing a Christmas card sent in December 2009, was franked with the following stamps, the face values of which amounted to 0.70€, the 20g Zone 1 (EU and Switzerland) “PRIORITAIRE” letter rate:-

- 1 x 0.56€ self-adhesive commemorative serving the 20g domestic “PRIORITAIRE” letter rate. Printed in *héliogravure* it was one of the Lisbon mini-sheet stamps, issued as part of the “Capitales Européennes” series (09/11/2009).
- 1 x 0.10€ grey self-adhesive *Marianne de Beaujard*, Yvert 210.
- 4 x 0.01€ yellow self-adhesive *Marianne de Beaujard* Yvert 208.

NB – The 2010 edition of Messrs Yvert and Tellier’s Catalogue had been enhanced by a new chapter: “Autoadhésifs”. A significant number of stamp designs between 1990 and 2010 were produced in two versions – gummed and self-adhesive – and consequently have two references as is the case with the *Marianne de Beaujard* for example.

The stamps were cancelled by five acceptable strikes of one of the new(ish), anonymous circular date stamps: ROC Code 41974A (cf Maurice Tyler’s “New Cancellations by La Poste”, Journal 255, March 2010).

It is rather surprising that the now almost inevitable “La Poste” logo should have been replaced by the out of date hour slug, but not quite so surprising as the change in the year. Maybe Father Christmas again or a sleepy PO sorter?

John Simmons



Varieties of Senegal 1915-18 Red Cross Issues

In Journal 257, on page 93, John Mayne reports the first Red Cross overprint variety for the colonies for this period that he has seen.

I can offer illustrations of three further examples of varieties of these overprints used on cover, all posted in Bignona in 1919.

Bruno Mattei



Double surcharge



Double surcharge, one inverted



Double surcharge, one inverted

New Cancellations by *La Poste*



The above scan of part of an envelope recently received may be of interest to readers. As you will see there are two distinct types of cancel, (a) Neopost and (b) Toshiba, both

applied on the same date at the same office. The envelope was posted in 57100 Volkrange. I have shown it to John Simmons and he has not seen any other example.

Peter Maybury

Books Recommended by Members

Members may be interested to hear about the following publication issued by The Yugoslavia Study Group:

“Indeficienter - The Story of Fiume to 1918”, by Tonnes Ore; Monograph Number 8, June 2010; 109pp, A4, soft-back. Available from the Treasurer, Michael Chant, 8 Ullswater Road, London, SW13 9PJ. Price £15, post paid.

“French Establishments in India” by Ron Wood, 2006/7, privately printed in an edition of five, two volumes bound as one, a total of 456pp, is available for consultation in the library of the Royal Philatelic Society London. The two volumes cover the periods 1691 to 1923 and 1923 to 1954, and are extensively illustrated in colour.

Cheques payable to ‘Yugoslavia Study Group’.

Of potential interest to members of the F&CPS is Chapter 3 - The Illyrian Provinces 1809-1813, comprising 9 pages and including copies of original documents (decrees, postal rates), maps and entires. A list of the postmarks used is in the appendix.

Bernard Sharp

The book deals with a variety of items, from a cover sent from Pondichéry during the Dutch occupation in 1693 to doctors’ advertising cards, and includes both postmarks and postal rates. It has been highly recommended to anybody with an interest in French colonial postal history by our member John Parmenter in his review for the *London Philatelist*.

Colin Spong

French Registration and Insurance

We are sure that many of our readers enjoyed Alan Wood's article in Journal 257 (pages 97-111) and, in particular, the splendid illustrations of his fine covers.

It is impossible, in a single article, to enter into specific detail with regard to the rates and operations of this service, and what follows is an attempt on our part to sum-

marize the rates that were in force during this period and bring a little additional clarity to certain points.

For those who wish to expand their knowledge of this fascinating subject we have added details of a number of works and specific articles that have appeared in our Journal to the useful bibliography at the end of Alan's article.

Date	Action	Payment	Registration fee	Observations	Tariff.
1/3/ 1829	Creation of 'la lettre recommandée'	Unpaid only (<i>port dû</i>)	None	Only for letters to Paris	Normal tariff / distance & weight
1/9/1844		Paid or unpaid as sender wished	None	Extended to all offices	Normal tariff / distance & weight
1/1/1849		Prepayment only	<i>Double port</i>		Double rate
		Paid or unpaid as sender wished	+25c		
1/7/1854	Abolition of 'recommandé'				
2/1873	Re-establishment of this class	Prepayment only	Letters + 50c		
2/1873			Postcards, <i>imprimés</i> & 'autres objets' (AO) +25c		
16/1/1879	No reduced rate	Prepayment only	25c		
1/4/1898	Reintroduction of reduced category	Prepayment only	Reduced price objects including postcards (OPR) +10c		
1/4/1898	Letter rate unchanged	Prepayment only	+25c		

Registration labels

See Journal 200 (June 1996) "Early use of Registration labels 1900-1909" by Peter Kelly.

The point should be made that with effect from 17 October 1909 registration labels were used for all classes of mail and no longer solely for reduced price mail including postcards, mail sent *sous franchise* and mail which the post office required to be registered.

This latter category of mail, effectively compulsory registration, is a specialised operation but not applied regularly to all registered mail. Readers requiring further information can refer to the article by Peter Kelly (with contributions from Peter Maybury and Chris Hitchen) entitled "Chargement d'Office – some notes on the origins and use of this instructional mark from the 18C to 1918" which was published in our American sister society's journal, *The France & Colonies Philatelist* Whole Number 285, June 2006.

Alan was quite right to include a bibliography covering this wide ranging subject and we would recommend the addition of the following key works:-

Dictionnaire Philatélique & Postal, published by the Académie de Philatélie and Académie européenne de philatélie, 1999

Alexandre, J-P: *Dictionnaire historique des timbres et griffes «standard» de l'Administration Française des Postes 1792-1914*, Brun & Fils, Paris 1996

Alexandre, J-P, Barbey, C, Brun, J-F, Desarnaud, G: *Les tarifs postaux français 1627-1969*, Editions loisir & culture, Le Havre 1982

Chauvet, Mme M: *Introduction à l'histoire postale – Des Origines à 1849, Vols I & II*, Brun & fils, Paris 2000; and *Introduction à l'histoire postale de 1848 à 1878*, Brun & fils, Paris 2007

Dumont, J & Sauvanet, A: *Essai de nomenclature des étiquettes des services postaux et télégraphiques de France 1868-1987, Vols I & II*, Union Marcophile 1984 & 1987

The majority of these books are held in the Society's library and no serious study of French postal history can be made without frequent reference to them.

Peter Kelly & Chris Hitchen

The New Hebrides Booklet



Figure 1



Figure 2

In Stanley Gibbons Stamp Catalogue Part 6, France, 7th edition 2010, the French Colonies are included. For the listings of issues for the New Hebrides Condominium, for which stamps were inscribed in French and English, a single stamp booklet, N° FSB1, is recorded as being issued in 1980. The contents are described as being a pane of four of each of four values with a total face value of 200F.

The front and back covers of a booklet illustrated in Figs

1 and 2 respectively contain 2 vertical pairs of each of four values of the 1977-78 Maps of the Islands issue. Inside, the covers give the internal mail postal rate as 10F for the first 20g and the airmail rate as being in 10g steps with the rates to different countries to be confirmed by the Post Office. Additionally, postcards by air to Australia, New Zealand and New Caledonia are charged 15F, 20F to North or South America and to Europe or Africa 30F. All the information is printed in both French and English.

Alan Wood

REPORTS OF MEETINGS

SOUTHERN GROUP MEETING OF 8 AUGUST 2010

Alan Carter: French Postal Markings / Members' Choice

The Organiser welcomed Members to the all-day August Meeting. After coffee the following members gave displays:

Michael Annels: French Airmails

George Nash: French Internment Camps

Colin Spong: Dulac issue of Madagascar

Members departed for lunch at the Alexandra, Lyndhurst Road and recommenced at 2.30pm when the the Southern Group were entertained by **Alan Carter** who showed items from his collection of French postmarks.

He started with the early straight line and cursive marks, diverting into an explanation of the French Revolutionary Calendar and how the names of places with any royalist connections were changed to a name more suited to the Republican cause. Many examples of mail from overseas countries with accountancy marks were shown.

On the advent of stamps in 1849 a different type of postmark was introduced. Initially these were of a *Grille* type followed by a Lozenge with *Petits* or *Gros Chiffres*, identifying towns with a number which was later replaced by a cir-

cular date stamp type of postmark that included the town name. The Lautier classification of postmarks introduced in 1884 was discussed with examples of the system on display (Google: Guy Maggay for more information on different types of postmark). Railway, Maritime and postmarks for special occasions eg *Jour de l'An*, *Autobus*, *Journal* etc were shown.

This was a thoroughly entertaining afternoon with a show of material that in most cases is not difficult to obtain but put together it makes an unusual and rarely seen display. The vote of thanks was given by Colin Spong, who was sure that those present had enjoyed this unusual display explained with great panache by Alan.

Members present: Michael Annells, Graham Booth, John Hammonds, Bob Larg, George Nash, Colin Spong, Alf Taylor and John Yeomans. Guests: Kath Nash, and refreshments were looked after by Christine Annells, Jean Hammonds and Pat Spong]. Apologies received from Michael Berry, Colin Clarkson, Roy Ferguson and Yvonne Larg,

JNH

LONDON GROUP MEETING OF 15 SEPTEMBER 2010

Members' Displays: 12 Sheets

Members Present: Len Barnes, Mick Bister, Michael Ensor, Bill Mitchell, Barbara Priddy, Derek Richardson, John Thorpe.

Apologies: Godfrey Bowden, Chris Hitchen, Tony Merson, Michael Round, Maurice Tyler.

Derek Richardson explained how he had built up his collection of the *Type Paix* issue which culminated in the writing and publication of his book in 1982. He had later sold the proofs, dated corner blocks and postal stationery, retaining just the covers for an ongoing study of postal rates. Highlights of his display included scarce usage of the 75c value representing the concessionary postcard rate to Luxembourg, the frontier rate to Switzerland and the *Mandat* fee. An unusual cover bore the 75c and a 1F fiscal paying the foreign letter rate, a combination which appeared to have been tolerated.

Len Barnes displayed a small part of his huge accumulation of early 20th century postcards, both black and white and in colour, which he was in the process of classifying. Topics included military headgear, anti-German propaganda, fashion and whimsical tableaux to be exchanged between lovers. Len accompanied his display with anecdotes inspired by the contents of some of the cards.

Barbara Priddy followed with a display beginning with a cover flown on the Latécoère 521 in 1935 from Dakar to the French West Indies to celebrate the tercentenary of the

transfer of Guadeloupe and Martinique from the French Antilles Company to the French Crown. Similar items were shown including an example of the return flight and an accident cover with a fine *AVION ACCIDENTÉ* cachet. A recent visit to the Foynes Flying Boat Museum in Ireland had enabled Barbara to see at close quarters a replica of a Yankee Clipper synonymous with the early transatlantic mail flights.

Michael Ensor closed the first half with a display of *ambulant*, *convoyeur-ligne* and *convoyeur-station* marks between 1856 and the 1960s. Much discussion focused on one item, a postcard posted in the 1960s unfortunately with an illegible date but with a cancellation which mystified everybody present. The date stamp was a *convoyeur-ligne* with its distinct wavy circumference used on the *Le Croisic à Nantes* line but it was part of an *EMPRUNT PTT 5% SOUSCRIVEZ flamme* identifying the strike as being applied by a machine rather than a handstamp. Can anyone shed further light on this machine *convoyeur* cancellation?

The second half was opened by **Bill Mitchell** who displayed some fine material from military campaigns in Dahomey, Senegal and French Sudan between 1875 and 1903. Some of the covers bore adhesives representing the military concessionary rate including a fine 1875 item with a 25c Cérés transported on the *Niger* from Dakar to Bordeaux. Others were sent under *franchise militaire*, one of which was from the *Corps d'Occupation du Dahomey* bearing the cachet of the *Dahomey et Dépendances / Direction du Chemin de Fer*.

Mick Bister closed the evening with a miscellany of items including a query about the use of the 1F75 Royal Visit issue on a 1938 cover to the USA cancelled upon arrival in Washington with a 'MAILED IN COUNTRY INDICATED BY POSTAGE' cachet. Thanks to Barbara and Michael the cover was identified as personal correspondence that had travelled in the Diplomatic Bag. Other items

included the limited *Marianne de Cheffer* printing issued only at the *Salon Planète Timbres* in Paris this year and which has received much derision from the philatelic press and collectors alike. This was followed by a display of *vignettes* promoting the use of the post code during the 1960s and '70s and, to close, a selection of tempting lots from the forthcoming auction of the Geoff Gethin collection.

MLB

SCOTTISH GROUP MEETING OF 18 SEPTEMBER 2010

Joint Meeting with Germany & Colonies P S

15 members attended this joint meeting of the Scottish Group with the Scottish Group of Germany & Cols P S.

Alan Wishart began the displays for the French Group by showing 2 frames of mail from Russia to France from 1789. These illustrated the various transit and entry marks in use over the period covered. He had red and black '*Aus Russland*' examples. As the mail had travelled to France via Prussia, the entries to France showed *Prusse Givet*, *Prusse Valenciennes* and *Prusse Lille* as the points of entry.

Alan then showed mostly postal stationery material concerned with the state visits to France by 2 Tsars, the first being Alexander III: there were the 1893 cover to commemorate the Russian Mediterranean Fleet's visit to Toulon, lettercards and newspaper wrappers and a mourning envelope for Alexander III. Quite a lot of the cards showed portraits of French presidents and these could be available in up to 5 colours. Nicholas and Alexandra also visited and Alan showed items from the 1896 visit.

Alan then moved to mail from WWI with French/Russian connections including an Easter greeting card to English Allies after the Congress of Vienna. This section ended with invoices in Russian and French for provisions etc provided by local mayors.

Alan concluded his display with 3 frames of postcards of Rouen. These showed a variety of views and aspects of the town, some showing slight variations in the angles at which the photos had been taken.

Archie Hunter then put up his display of German stamp booklets and panes. He covered the period 1920-1981. Beginning with the *Germania* issue he illustrated how booklet sheets were made up. He followed the *Germania* booklets with those of the Ebert, Hindenberg and Arms issues, then the airmail (stone eagle) type. He finished with a very colourful display of DDR sheets, showing composite sheets including those of the Circus, postmen and two Meissen pottery issues.

MP

NORTHERN GROUP MEETING OF 25 SEPTEMBER 2010

North-West Area Meeting - John West: French Red Cross / Members' Choice

Present: Steve Ellis, Alan Goude, Colin Graham, Roger High, Brian Lythgoe, Peter Maybury, Jim Mercer, Mike Rego, Peter Rooke, Tony Shepherd, Peter Stockton, John West.

Guests: David Anderson, Janet Stockton, Chris West.

A bright but slightly chilly morning welcomed us for the fourth time to the village hall in Adlington, Cheshire, where our hosts Peter and Janet Stockton, assisted by Chris West, plied us with coffee, tea and biscuits prior to the commencement of the business of the day.

Society vice-president **John West** was introduced to the gathering together with his opening main display of Red Cross stamps and covers. The first part was devoted to the evolution of the system of the Tracing Labels, with WWI examples relating to Germany, Belgium, France, South Poland and an unknown type with O.O. designation. Brian Lythgoe suggested it possibly was an abbreviation for Ob Ost = Eastern Front. Further usage for Treasury, Committee and Civilian Affairs plus pre-printed envelopes were followed by a section on WWII and the issued stamps.

The second part of the display consisted of the colonial overprinted stamps, both Paris and local productions. John explained the rules re purchase of these stamps and showed inter-island mail, forgeries, varieties, diplomatic bag mail, and Red Crescent issues, ending with CFA overprints with proofs, stamps and covers.

Following viewing and discussion **Peter Rooke** produced a display of the Piedmont *Département Conquis* from the 1798 republic through the establishment of the *Département* in 1801 to the fall of Napoleon. Letters, maps, conscription posters and military accounts were featured.

Alan Goude then displayed Dahomey-Benin with stamps, postal stationery and covers from the 1880s to build a picture of the development of the postal service featuring the use of bisects during stamp shortages.

Following an excellent three course lunch (with wine and coffee) **Tony Shepherd** managed to keep us all awake with French Guyana, covering the maritime line C from Cayenne to Martinique, including a letter registered on board ship. Airmails followed with a TAG letter to South America

and then examples of postmarks from the interior, finishing with military mail.

Jim Mercer was next with a modern family correspondence from Tunisia to Southern France, which was complemented by a plethora of anecdotes concerning his collecting interests.

Steve Ellis followed with a display of two shipping lines with French connections: (1) the Fabre Line 1881 to 1940s with letters, postcards depicting vessels, tracing the expansion from carrying Italian emigrants to the USA through to WWI and conversion to hospital ships in 1940; (2) the Orient Line - following the development of voyages from Liverpool to France and on to Australia.

Mike Rego presented his newly formed collection of Paris Star cancellations, which had been assembled in only a couple of months or so. This was an amazing feat by any standard as it included destination mail and studies of rates and routes. An exceptional item was a quadruple rate letter to Peru franked with a strip of six 80 centimes Napoleons for the via Panama tariff of 1 August 1865.

Our host **Peter Stockton** provided the penultimate display featuring military mail, airmail letters, propaganda leaflets

dropped from aircraft and post-insurrection use of the FM stamps of and relating to the Madagascar revolt 1947-1948, all accompanied by an erudite explanation of the cause and effects of the uprising.

Peter Maybury then showed an expanded version of his France-Italy by non-postal steamship display. Items of note included franked mail cancelled on arrival. Of particular interest was an 1868 letter carried by a Claude Clerc & Co vessel from Marseille to Naples and cancelled *AFFRANCHIE* on board (to prevent re-use of the stamp) and then officially cancelled on arrival in Naples.

During the afternoon session **Dr Colin Graham** made a short presentation on the Institute for Analytical Philately – “Solving Philately’s Puzzles through Science” – a recently formed organisation based in the USA. Further details are available on the website:

www.analyticalphilately.com.

The meeting closed at 4.30pm, with afternoon tea to sustain the prospective travellers. A vote of thanks and appreciation to Janet, Peter and Chris for their splendid efforts was unanimously approved.

JPM

WESSEX GROUP MEETING OF 16 OCTOBER 2010

Alan Wood: French Postal History / Members Choice

Our principal morning display was given by co-convenor **Alan Wood** and entitled ‘A varied selection of French postal history’. This comprised 12 frames, each concentrating on a different topic and period, covering Paris *Petite Poste*, 9 offices from 1758, pneumatic mail of Paris, a selection of advertising cards illustrated by French and foreign stamps, newspaper stamps (1868-1882), waybill markings (1843-1856), Paris parcel post (1890-1929), postage due (1859-1940), *bureaux ambulants* (1847-1854), USA to France (1849-1876), Belgium to France (1823-1856) and registration, Paris (1889-1899). The display contained a number of scarce and interesting pieces and there was certainly something for everyone.

Peter Kelly finished off the morning display with two frames showing the relationship between the postal and telegraph services during the period 1876-1900. This included a scarce registered telegram from Paris to Mauritius.

After lunch at the Old Mill members put up the following displays:

Ashley Lawrence: Siege of Paris from the Brown archive, a letter taken out of Paris by an American and the reply to

it sent by pigeon post – considered to be the only known example of an outward letter from Paris with the relevant reply;

Edwin Rideout: Early French airmails and the first issue of stamps specifically for airmail;

Jeremy Martin: Correspondence between France and French post offices in Turkey plus a variety of airmails and other items;

Ingrid Swinburn: A selection of instructional markings;

Bob Paterson: 1936 airmails, stamps and covers;

Graham Lenton: Charity stamps designed to raise money for tuberculosis – to begin with the campaigns were regional but became national by the late 1920s;

Trevor Buckell: 1939, stamps and covers of the year;

Chris Hitchen: A series of stamps with views of the Rueil region prepared for Marcophilex 2010.

The following members also attended; Peter Lawrence, Brian Weeks, Bryan Wood, and Dr Hargrave-Graham (a new member). Tony Swinburn attended as a guest.

PRAK / AJW

SOUTHERN GROUP MEETING OF 16 OCTOBER 2010

Andrew Watton: Corsica

Colin opened the meeting welcoming our member Andrew Watton to Worthing and then asked everyone to stand in remembrance of Yvonne Larg who died on 30 September after a long illness and Alec Swain, a former General Secretary whose death had just been reported to have occurred sometime earlier this year.

Andrew Watton had brought his fine display of Corsica philately and ephemera to the meeting and gave us a background to the history of the island. Andrew explained the difficulty of collecting examples of mail of the island in general and in particular from its 1000 villages. However, in the first of three parts he showed a range of early French pre-stamp entires from 1702 and from the British occupation period 1794-1796 and a selection of covers with village postmarks together with a postcard image.

In the second part more village postmarks and images from 1860 were shown and difficult to find examples of covers and cards postally used in the 1960s and later. Napoleon's birthplace was recognised by a series of postcards with cachets

The third part expanded into examples of mail of the railways with postcard images, airmail and military covers, and the presentation closed with examples of adhesive stamps and destination mail including St Thomas, Cuba and Puerto Rico. To complement the display Andrew showed ephemera including examples of salt from the mines, herbs gathered from the countryside and a range of publications and maps

Roy Ferguson proposed a well deserved vote of thanks to the acclaim of the members

Members present: Michael Annells, Michael Berry, Graham Booth, Colin Clarkson, Roy Ferguson, John Hammonds, Bob Larg, Colin Spong, Alf Taylor, John Yeomans. Guests: Christine Annells and Pat Spong [who both looked after the refreshments]. Apologies received from George & Kath Nash.

The next meeting will be on Saturday 9 April 2011 when member Philip Mackey will be coming to display his Louis Napoleon issue. Some of us gather for lunch beforehand at the Alexandra, Lyndhurst Road.

JY

LONDON GROUP MEETING OF 20 OCTOBER 2010

Alan Wishart: Clamjamphrie

Members present: Len Barnes, Godfrey Bowden, Michael Fairhead, Chris Hitchen, Hugh Loudon, Barbara Priddy, Derek Richardson, Ian Stephenson, Alan Wishart, David Worrollo.

Apologies: Alan Barrett, Mick Bister, Maurice Tyler.

Alan Wishart began by explaining that clamjamphrie is a Scottish word implying trumpery or rubbish of little value. However the material that followed was very far from that and provided a most entertaining evening.

The first round covered mail from Russia to France from the end of the eighteenth century up to the First World War. A wealth of entry and transit marks was shown and Alan pointed out that most of this had to come through Prussia, entering France at the various border points, principally Givet, Valenciennes, Erquelines and Lille. A delightful item to begin with was a letter of 1789 from St Petersburg to St Quentin rated at 58 sols. Much of the correspondence that has survived was to champagne, spirit and wine producers and merchants. A letter of August 1870 from Odessa to Marseille had gone via Austria and Genoa to avoid the Prussian invasion of France. Postal

stationery in the Sage period around the visits to France of the Russian royal family and mourning covers after Alexander was assassinated continued the Russian theme. The round concluded with patriotic cards from the First World War, one with the Imperial arms blacked out. Some Russian troops were actually based in France during the conflict.

More Russian related material began the second round. There were some fascinating documents in French and Russian regarding the billeting of Russian troops near Boulogne in 1817. Then followed some frames displaying Prisoner of War cards and parcel cards from German and French prisoners in the First World War including some from camps in Algeria and Morocco.

For a final round Alan concentrated on Northern France and spoke of some of the connections with Scotland. Postal history from the towns of St Quentin, Laon and Guise in Picardy appeared and a collection of postcards of Rouen in the early twentieth century.

Chris Hitchen thanked Alan for showing us such varied and interesting material

CJH

NORTHERN GROUP MEETING OF 6 NOVEMBER 2010

Members' Choice

Members present: Steve Ellis, Alan Goude, Peter Maybury, John Morton, Mike Rego, Tony Shepherd, Peter Stockton.

Apologies: Messrs Barker, Cowell, Graham, High, Holder, Meadowcroft, Rooke.

Displays were given by the following members:

John Morton: The Sower issue of 1907 - an outline history of the necessity to issue a new series of stamps was followed with examples of the 3 dies used to produce stamps, booklets and postal stationery. Forgeries, overprints, *portetimbres* and a study of the die flaws completed a display that had achieved a gold medal at the North-West Federation convention in October.

Tony Shepherd: A light hearted display of French Guyana postcards with trade cards, picture cards including some scarcer items of the smaller towns and villages and a small section of Dreyfus cards printed in Holland but banned from appearing in France. This was followed by military mail from Guadeloupe including a very rare example of the 1835 military concession rate of 6 décimes.

Alan Goude: Colony to Colony mail - with examples to and from some 30 colonies and protectorates, via surface mail,

air, railway and road. Of particular note were a fine letter from the Comoros Islands to St Pierre et Miquelon and a newspaper wrapper from Madagascar to Algeria.

Mike Rego: Paris postmarks 1874-1939 - a splendid variety of material relating to the background of the naming of various offices, including contemporary postcards, trade cards and photographs together with street plans and notices.

Steve Ellis: A triple offering of (1) the C^{ie} Rostand - formed in 1845 with 3 vessels serving the Marseille-Constantinople route until 1851 when it was incorporated into the Messageries Impériales enterprise; (2) Algeria-Marseille-Toulon - how mail has been transported between Marseille and Toulon by road, rail, air and telegraph; (3) Batum-France - mail via the French, Russian and Turkish POs in Constantinople by sea and rail, with examples of the Messageries Maritimes *paquebot* and PLM services.

Peter Stockton: Hérault - a display of postal history with straight line markings, the various types of cds letters to Richard Cobden (the apostle of free trade), a fascinating letter of 1885 re performing rights, prices current, postage due marks and finishing with POW mail from both World Wars.

JPM

LONDON GROUP MEETING OF 6 NOVEMBER 2010

Alan Wood: Classic France

Members present: Len Barnes, Godfrey Bowden, John Corderoy, John Hammonds, Chris Hitchen, Hugh Loudon, Philip Mackey, John Parmenter, David Pashby, Barbara Priddy, J B Rawlings, Hans Smith, Maurice Tyler, Alan Wood, Michael Wright.

Guest: K Gawn.

Apologies: Alan Barrett, Mick Bister, John Cowell, A Mereson, Paul Miller, R Stupples, Alan Wishart.

Alan Wood explained that his main collection was of classic issues of France up to 1900, although he had various other side collections. His display of 120 sheets would however be limited to the 1849 Cérès and 1853 Napoleon (perforated and imperforate) issues, but nothing from 1870 onwards. This was nevertheless very wide-ranging and included not only the stamps themselves but also covers illustrating postal rates, Jean de Sperati and other forgeries, underpaid mail, reproductions, proofs and cachets such as circular date stamps of different types, grill and roller grill cancellations, the Paris star and provisional lozenges.

A variety of further postal markings followed in the second round, with the marks including local letters, *bureaux de passe*, TPOs, maritime mail, roller cancellations, railway stations, printed matter and local origin handstamps. One item of particular interest was the 15c green stamp used within Paris.

Alan introduced his third and final round by pointing out that this was a working collection and that some of the pages were therefore rather unbalanced. He then expanded the range of items on show with such topics as *bureau de distribution* marks, postage dues, remainders, used abroad, French postmarks on Hong Kong mail, the papal grill, Messageries Impériales, lettered postmarks, the American Legation of 1869, newspaper cancellations, missent letters, *poste restante* and a registered telegram envelope of 1864.

In his vote of thanks Chris Hitchen expressed the appreciation of those members present for the opportunity to see such a comprehensive and interesting collection.

MST

[See also photograph on page iv (back cover).]

SCOTTISH GROUP MEETING OF 13 NOVEMBER 2010

David Hogarth: World War II Miscellany / Peter Brand: Naval Mail

With 2 apologies, a small group was present for the meeting on 13 November, in Linlithgow.

We had 2 displays, of which the first from **David Hogarth** covered mainly WWII internment camp mail. David showed covers and postcards from a variety of camps including those of Argelès, Le Barcarès, St Cyprien, Argelès-sur-Mer, Récébédou, Le Vernet d'Ariège, Noé, Rivesaltes, Nexon, Chambaran, St Sulpice-la-Pointe, Tarn and Laghouat in Algeria (for British servicemen). Postcards showed camp activities and guards, and the letters included mail from the Belgian and German Red Cross, an unrecorded cachet and cachets on Spanish mail.

David went on to show British Intelligence forgeries, Liberation overprints, French Resistance forgeries, airmail overprints and French naval airmails. These were followed by items from the St Nazaire Chamber of Commerce,

National Liberation covers, Free French forces in Lorient, suspended mail, Vichy cachets and tokens, anti-Bolshevik and postwar issues including destroyed towns.

Peter Brand took the second round, showing mail from French capital ships – those large enough to have on board postal facilities, although these facilities were also available to any other smaller ships within the vicinity. The ships included Saigon submarines of 1907 through to ships eventually scuttled at Toulon during WWII, the *Paris* used to house Poles at Devonport and many others. Examples of cancellations included both open and closed corner hexagons followed by the more modern circular date stamps. Some ships' cachets were shown as was a *Poste Navale* land base of Brest.

It was agreed that a pleasant afternoon had been enjoyed by all those present..

MP

BOOKSHELF

Books Noted

Madagascar – Philatélie malgache, tome II: Les oblitérations by Jacques Desnos; pub. Col.Fra (*Hors-série* N° 5-8B); 125pp; price 26€; available from M. Alain Hurpet, BP 5, 10230 Mailly-le-Camp. [Follow-up to 2009 study by same author; well illustrated list of different cancellations used in the island from 1882 to independence, including railway, maritime and military cachets as well as official texts.]

Tarifs Fiscaux Français, pub. Cercle d'Étude de la Philatélie Fiscale; price 12€; available from I Daniel, 66 boulevard Garibaldi, 75015 Paris. [Catalogue of French fiscal rates.]

L'Oblitération mécanique en France, tome II by Yvon Nouazé; pub. Fédération française des Associations philatéliques; 288pp, 195 x 255mm; price 26€ (55€ for both volumes) + p&p; available from FFAP, 47 rue de Maubeuge, 75009 Paris. [Complement to first volume, covers details of new machines Neopost IJO 85 and Toshiba TSC 1000.]

Le Contrôle Postal et Télégraphique Français pendant la Première Guerre Mondiale (1914-1921) by Jérôme Bourguignat; pub. l'Académie de Philatélie; 480pp (70 in colour), A4; over 400 illustrations; price 55€ + p&p; available from Brigitte Abensur, 8 rue des Fossés, 54700 Pont-à-Mousson. [Synthesis of different aspects of postal and telegraphic censorship, based on thorough research into military and postal sources, well illustrated with letters and documents.]

Catalogue des Timbres Personnalisés 2010, pub. SO.CO.TA (Société des Collectionneurs de Timbres Autocollants); 100pp; price 33€; available from M. Alain Cordina, résidence Jean Zay, Bâtiment A, 55 avenue du Général de Gaulle, 92160 Antony. [List illustrated in colour of “*Mon-timbramoi*”, “*IDtimbres*” and other personalised stamps of France, with values and other information.]

Maurice Tyler

[See also details of some new books recommended by members on page 147.]

LONDON GROUP MEETING OF 17 NOVEMBER 2010

Colin Spong & John Parmenter: Wartime Madagascar

Members present: Len Barnes, Mick Bister, Godfrey Bowden, Michael Ensor, Michael Fairhead, Chris Hitchen, Hugh Loudon, Bill Mitchell, John Parmenter, Derek Richardson, Barbara Priddy, Colin Spong, John Thorpe, Michael Wright.

Apologies: Alan Barrett, Maurice Tyler.

Colin Spong opened the procedures with a display of censored mail from 1942 to 1945. Accompanied by useful maps, he gave a brief history of the invasion of Madagascar by British and African troops describing Operation Ironclad in Diégo-Suarez in April 1942 and the progression of the occupation forces southwards to Tananarive after which the Vichy French administration switched allegiance to the Free French. After the initial fighting, resistance from the Vichy French had been low level and according to Colin the campaigns were drawn out by the French generals who wanted to extend their collection of campaign medals and thereby increase their pension.

An explanation of the censorship procedures followed. We were given details of the location of the FPOs and a description of the APO strikes that could be encountered from places such as Majunga, Antsirabe and Anikora. Mail was shown bearing a variety of APO date stamps including a provisional 'On Active Service' airletter of September 1942 to the UK franked with a 3d GVI cancelled FPO 349 and a cover with a selection of Kenya, Uganda and Tanganyika issues to Nairobi cancelled APO 85. Further covers illustrated censorship by the British Military Administration at Tananarive, Tamatave and Diégo-Suarez..

Administration was handed over to the Free French in June 1943 apart from Diégo-Suarez and Joint Liaison British/French Civil Censorship became operational. Examples of British censored mail were shown with the various oval and octagonal handstamps used by the authorities and depicting a wide range of rates and stamps including regular use of the *France Libre* overprints. Destinations included Mauritius, Capetown and Djibouti and one letter to the USA arrived with a green label attached reading 'The US censor is not responsible for the mutilation of the letter'.

Examples of the French Civil censorship followed with their familiar *Contrôle Postal* strikes and the mysterious boxed I, J, K, L, O and R strikes which are still not fully understood. Colin's display closed with examples of mail censored by the *Service des Contrôles Techniques* which operated from 1944 to 1945 including a fine example to Bombay which was censored again by the British upon arrival in India.

The second half of the evening was taken over by **John Parmenter** whose display featured wartime airmails in and out of the island.

The first part concentrated on connections between Madagascar and France and John explained the problems that beset mail attempting to make the journey. Direct flights were no longer possible and mail had to be carried by sea to Dakar in Vichy Senegal from where it could be flown to Marseille. However, the vessels transporting the mail were often intercepted by South African patrol boats causing the mail to be delayed by up to ten months, especially if it were registered mail, while it was being censored in Durban or Capetown. John showed three examples of mail cancelled 17 and 18 July 1942 that was amongst the last to leave the island before the fall of Tananarive to British troops. Once Madagascar had pledged its allegiance to the Free French, flights could be resumed and John showed an example of the short-lived 7F airmail fee which lasted only between 19 October and 10 November 1944.

The second part consisted of mail sent to foreign destinations showing the wide range of rates applicable at the time. Highlights included printed matter to the UK, covers with evidence of double and triple censoring and an item with a Foreign Service handstamp. Finally, John showed us mail from Madagascar to the French Colonies and Corsica, once again providing a rich display of frankings and rates. Some particularly choice items had received *Taxe Perçue* strikes filled in with the amount paid.

The meeting closed with Hugh Loudon giving a vote of thanks and congratulating Colin and John on their passion and knowledge of the subject.

MLB



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



Boyer Enlarged

David Jennings-Bramly



Figure 1

Since the article on Boyer covers carried by our Journal, N° 255 of March 2010, I have been favoured with a most detailed letter from a new member of our Society, Monsieur Jean-Luc Raffel, hailing from Bessancourt.

The eight Boyer covers illustrated in his letter to me start with a decorative one (Fig 1) handstamped "SS Homeric" sailing on 23.12.25; postmarked 17.12.25 at the then 20c rate and franked with a coil strip of 4 x 5c Blanc: this cover antedates my earliest by 3 months.

His second cover is ostensibly for the *SS Berengaria*, sailing 30.12.25; postmarked 24.12.25, again franked with a coil strip of 4 x 5c Blanc.

The third cover (Fig 2) adds to the list of coils used by Boyer: once again decorative, now for *SS Olympic* sailing 30.6.26; postmarked 23.6.26 and franked with a strip of 3 x 5c Blanc coil and a 10c green Sower coil stamp. But no! The 5c Blanc is not Yvert *roulette* 16. It is the *préoblitéré* Yvert 43, the *AFFRANCHIS POSTES* stamp!! This is the first and only Boyer cover recorded with a *préo* on it and then incorrectly franked, breaking PTT regulations by mixing ordinary and *préo* stamps. At that time, with the rate having risen by 5c, I am certain that most people would increase their four stamp strip by one, not reduce it by one

and then add a 10c stamp as happened. Curious!

The next cover of particular note owned by M. Raffel (Fig 3) is, at first glance, a twin of mine heading the March article: closer examination shows that the Sowers' head lies to the right and the stamps come from *roulette* N° 25. What a page the two would make! A curious feature of the covers I know or have record of with one exception have the coils lying with the head of the stamp to the right. The only exception is my cover illustrated in Journal 255 (page 20) as Figure 2, which has three to the right and one to the left.

The latest date I have is now extended by seven months. The declared ship is the *SS Paris* sailing 31.7.33 and postmarked 23.7.33; franked by a pair of *roulette* N° 20, the 15c brown Sower.

Thanks to a good friend buying a Boyer cover "on spec" with me in mind, I now have yet another cover postmarked after the declared ship has sailed. M. Raffel has two such covers amongst his eight listed to me and has consulted contemporary shipping lists to ascertain if either might have caught the named ship. Neither could have so done. M. Raffel is specialising in French coils to the nth degree; mention any aspect of them – he covers it. A true enthusiast.

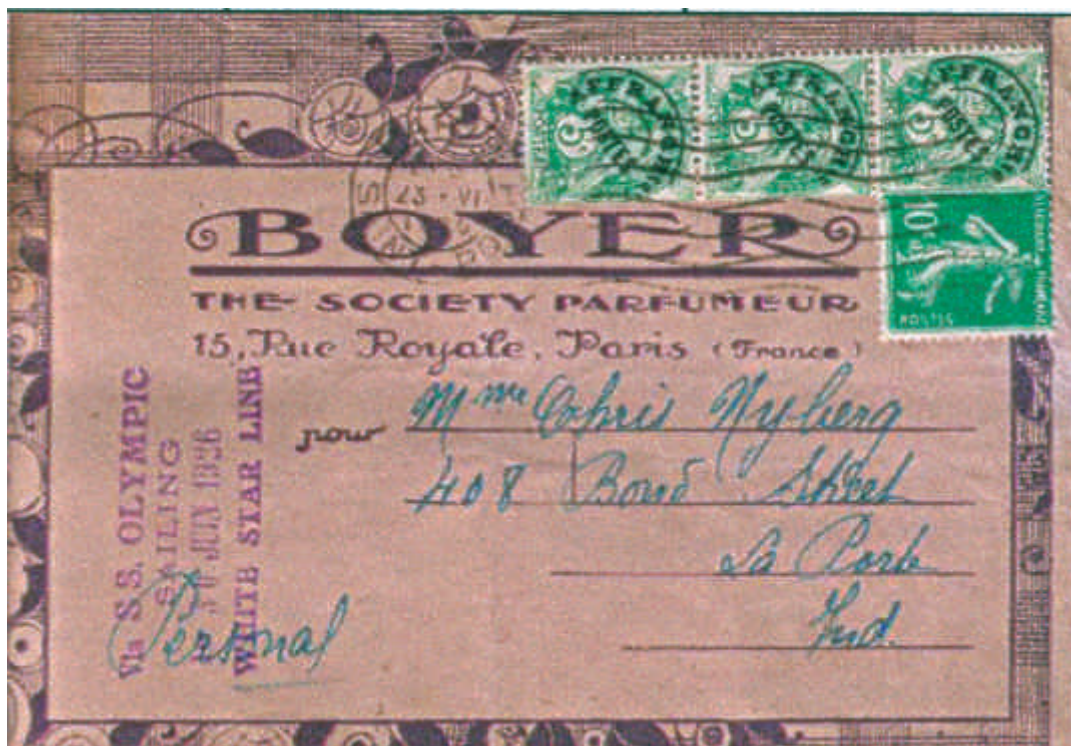


Figure 2

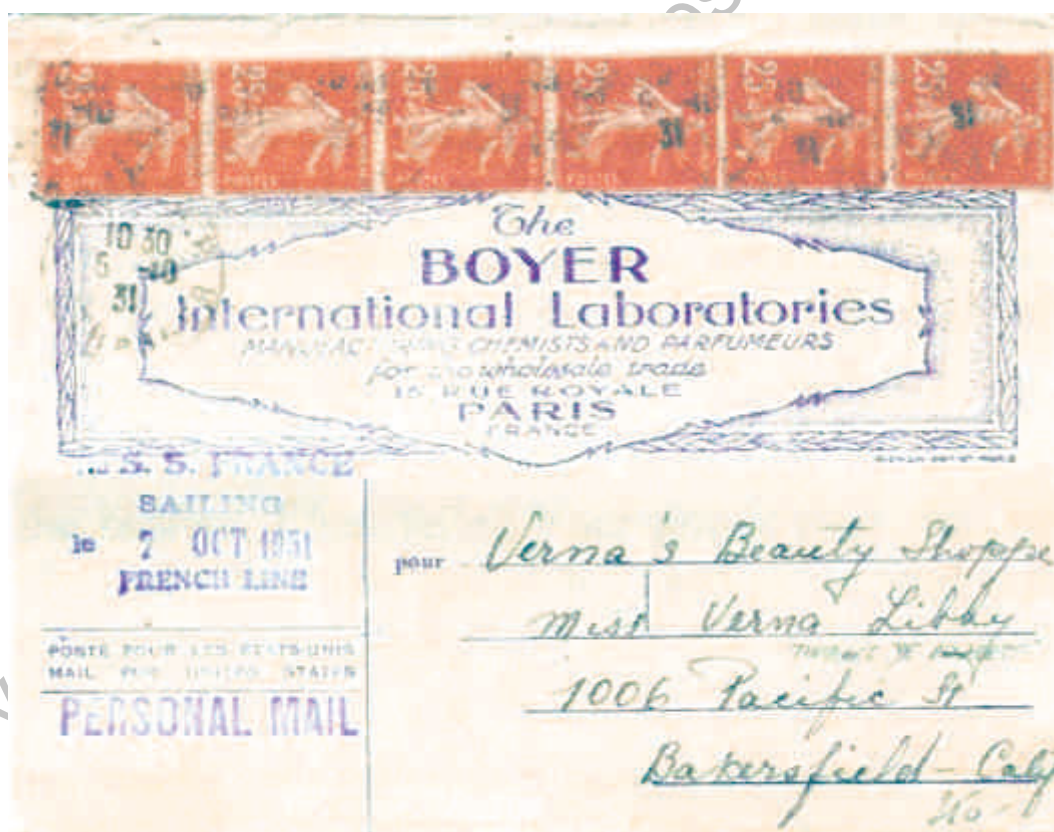


Figure 3

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Alan Wood
displaying his collection of
Classic France
at the London Group meeting
of 6 November 2010

(See report on page 154)

Photograph by Godfrey Bowden