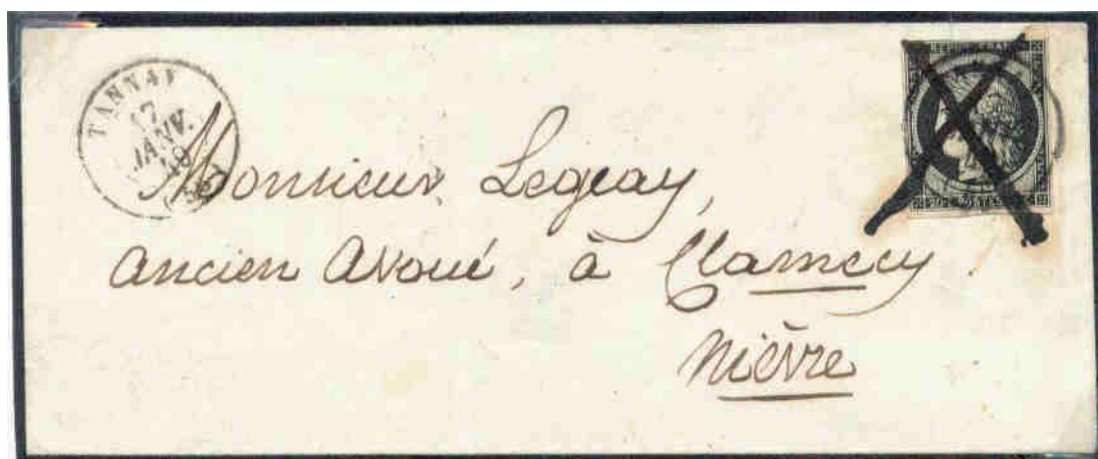


# The Journal of the France & Colonies Philatelic Society



Second Republic 20c Cérès on cover 17 January 1849 Tannay to Clamecy (both in Nièvre)  
with late usage of pen X cds, the *grille* not being generally available until after about 12 January



Second Republic (1849-52) 20c Cérès: block of 12  
with frames largely intact but printing flaw around first 'C' of 8th stamp

(Items from the late George Barker's collection shown in the John Whiteside Memorial Lecture -  
see report on back cover of this Journal, pages iii and iv)

Volume 64 ● Number 3  
September 2014  
Whole Number 273

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

**Society Website: [www.fcps.org.uk](http://www.fcps.org.uk)**

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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.

**2014 Annual Subscription Rates**

United Kingdom: £18.00, Europe: £26.00, Elsewhere: £30.00.

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

Sterling, Euro and US dollar bills are accepted but overseas cheques must be drawn in Sterling. The Society has a PayPal account for the use of overseas members, but please add 4% for bank charges, and email to [treasurer@fcps.org.uk](mailto:treasurer@fcps.org.uk).

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**Auction and Exchange Packet Sales**

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

S R Ellis, 22 Burton Crescent, Sneyd Green, Stoke-on-Trent ST1 6BT (email: [auction@fcps.org.uk](mailto:auction@fcps.org.uk))

according to instructions

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

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

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

**The Library**

The Society's substantial library, as detailed in the Library List (2004) originally distributed to all Members but now available in PDF format on the Society website, is soon to be disposed of, though members will have the first opportunity of acquiring certain items.

**The Magazine Circuit**

The Society subscribes to two French philatelic magazines, and has circuits organised for those who wish to read them.

For further details contact the circuit organiser:

R N Broadhurst, PO Box 448, Teddington TW11 1AZ (email: [stock@fcps.org.uk](mailto:stock@fcps.org.uk)); tel. 020 8977 9665.

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\* \* \*

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

# The Journal of the France & Colonies Philatelic Society

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September 2014 ● Whole No 273

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## SOCIETY NOTES

### Editorial

The Editor would like to point out that nobody has yet come forward to take on the task and that the December issue of the Journal is likely to be the last, certainly in its present form. At the same time he would like to express his sincere gratitude to the following members who have given much appreciated help in producing this edition: Peter Allan, Mick Bister, Chris Hitchen, Colin and Pat Spong; and the Editor's wife Annette.

Please note that in this Journal all covers and cards are illustrated at 70% of their true size.

\* \* \*

### New Members

The Society is pleased to welcome the following:

1433 Don Edwards (Norfolk).

\* \* \*

### Members Deceased

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

471 David Worrollo.

\* \* \*

### Future Events

Apologies are due from the Treasurer for the badly produced Programme Card sent out with the June Journal. Our new printer omitted to check it properly before printing and failed to notice the missing dates for some meetings. A replacement is being sent with this Journal and hopefully it will be an improvement. Notices of meetings are also available in the Journal and on the website.

The **London Group** will meet at the Calthorpe Arms, Grays Inn Road, London WC1 at 6.30pm on Wednesday 17 September 2014 for members' new projects and acquisitions; on Wednesday 15 October 2014 when Godfrey Bowden will display "Algeria"; and on Wednesday 19 November 2014 when Bob Larg will display "Further exploits".

The **Northern Group** will meet at 2.00pm on Saturday 22 November 2014 at Heaton Royds, Bradford, courtesy of Stephen & Judith Holder, when Steve Ellis will give a display on Maritime Mail.

The **Wessex Group** will meet at the Scout Hall, Lower Street, Harnham, Salisbury, at 10.30am on Saturday 11 October 2014 when the main displays will be given by Chris Hitchen on Lozenges and Railways and by Tony Howgrave-Graham on French Classics.

A **Midland Meeting** has been organised by Steve Ellis at the Bridge Centre, Birches Head Road, Stoke-on-Trent ST2 8DD for Wednesday 1 October 2014 from 10.30am to 4.30pm. Peter Kelly will display Réunion from the early days to 1900, and members' displays are invited for the afternoon. Full details were given in a flier included in the last Journal.

\* \* \*

### Displays by Members

**Peter Kelly** will be giving a 52 frame standing display of the "Postal History of the *Type Sage* issue of France" to the Royal Philatelic Society, 41 Devonshire Place, London W1G 6JY on Thursday 15 January 2015 from 1.00pm onwards.

Any of our members who are not RPSL members are very welcome to attend and, if they wish to do so, must give their names to Peter (contact details on the inside front cover of this Journal) well in advance of the day so that he can register them with the RPSL staff so that they can be officially guest badged on arrival.

The display is broken down into segments covering the various categories of mail, the postage rates and the cancellations and a selection of interesting destinations and is supported by a specially prepared book on the subject, a copy of which will be given to each visitor. A good deal of the material on display has never been shown in this country. With some 600 pages on show the display covers the interesting period from shortly after France became part of the UPU in 1876 until replacement in 1900. It also tracks the development of postal services and new products in line with the increasing requirements of the business community and the general public.

\* \* \*

### French Magazine Circuits

I have taken over the running of the magazine circuits from David Pashby who has recently retired to New Zealand.

David is one of the unsung heroes of the society, who for an amazing 38 years has organised the circuits benefiting all those who subscribe. We owe him an enormous debt of gratitude for all his efforts over such a long period of time.

When I took over, I found it surprising how few members actually take the magazines as they represent extremely good value. There are two titles: "*Timbres Magazine*" and "*L'Écho de la Timbrologie*". Both are written in French of course, but even with little command of the language, I find it really quite easy to understand the gist of the articles. They are most interesting and cover the whole range of French philately from the classics to the very latest issues. The subscription covers eleven copies per year, July/August being a joint copy.

As a special incentive to encourage more subscribers we are offering annual subscriptions to each magazine at only £8.00 each or £16.00 the pair. The only extra cost is the postage of each issue to the next member on the list.

We will be starting the new subscriptions with the January 2015 issues and any member interested in participating should contact me by 31 October at the latest to be sure of a place on the circuits.

Please reply to me by email: [stock@fcps.org.uk](mailto:stock@fcps.org.uk) by post: 47 Bolton Gardens, Teddington, TW11 9AX or phone: 020 8943 1421.

**Richard Broadhurst**

\* \* \*



## Exhibition Successes

We congratulate the following member on his award:

At Chicagopex (Chicago, 22-24 November 2013) **Ed Grabowski** was awarded Vermeil for "The Era of the French Colonial Group Type: Obock". At Sandical (San Diego, California, 24-26 January 2014) he was awarded Gold for "The Era of the French Colonial Allegorical Group Type Part IV: Senegal & Dependencies". At Philadelphia National Stamp Exhibition (Philadelphia, 4-6 June 2014) he was awarded Gold for "The Era of the French Colonial Group Type: New Caledonia & Dependencies and French Oceania".

At Spring Stampex (London, 19-22 February 2014) **John Mayne** was awarded Gold for "Togo, the First 30 Years (1884-1914)".

At Rocky Mountain Stamp Show (Denver, Colorado, 16-18 May 2014) **Stan Luft** was awarded Single Frame Gold for "France: The 15 Centimes Sage Goes to Sea".

At the Championnat de France de Philatélie 2014 (Paris, 14-21 June) **Robert Abensur** was awarded Gold for "*À voile ou à vapeur entre la France et l'étranger (1828-1849)*"; **Guy Dutau** was awarded Gold for "*Les premières émissions d'Haïti 1881-1887*"; and **Jean-François Gibot** was awarded Gold for "*Guyane Française fourmilier, orpailleurs et place des palmiers*" and for "*Utilisations postales du 2 centimes Empire Lauré*". All 3 members were awarded a *prix spécial* and the latter took the show title of *Champion de France*. In Planète Timbres 2014 our colleague **Brigitte Abensur** was awarded Gold for "*Utilisation des timbres au type siège*".

\* \* \*

## Philatelic Honours

The ABPS invited **Robert Johnson** to sign the Roll of Distinguished Philatelists at the Philatelic Congress of Great Britain, held in Ypres, Belgium, 11-14 July 2014.

\* \* \*

# BOOKSHELF

## Books Noted

*Catalogue des Collectors 2013*, pub. SO.CO.TA (Société des Collectionneurs de Timbres Autocollants); 252pp A5; colour illustrations; price 23€ + p&p; available from Alain Cordina, 22 avenue Jean Nicoli, 20250 Corte. [Collector is not the same as the English word but refers to the collections of stamps issued since 2008 in the form of booklets, mini-sheets or strips of 4 to accompany a particular event; this catalogue lists the "official" issues from 2008 to 2013 with values for individual mint stamps, booklets and mini-sheets, cancelled individually and on cover.]

*Affranchissements insuffisants et taxes complémentaires dans les échanges de lettres ordinaires entre la France et les pays étrangers (1849-1875)* by Guy Prugnon; 60pp A5; price 15€ inc p&p in France; available from Timbropresse, 6 rue du Sentier, 75080 Paris cedex 02. [Covers 1849-1856 conventions with Spain, Belgium, Switzerland, Sweden, Norway and 1857-1875 conventions with Grand Duchy of Baden, USA, Austria, Bavaria, Prussia, Spain, Sardinian States, Russia.]

*MonTimbreenLigne – MaLettreenLigne* by Jean-Paul Rortait; 54pp A4; colour illustrations; price 15€ + p&p; details from J-P Rortait, 8 rue du Four, BP 50008, 85101 Les Sables d'Olonne Cedex. [Research study explaining how this new (since 2008) franking system works and how to form a collection.]

*Cours des carnets et des publicitimbres 2014* by the Association des Collectionneurs de Carnets et de Publicitimbres; 100pp A4 bound colour photocopies; price 30€ [for non-members] + p&p; available from ACCP, 21 rue du Héron cendré, 95290 L'Isle-Adam; website [www.accp-asso.com](http://www.accp-asso.com) [Revised price listings up to October 2013, including varieties and fully illustrated.]

**An introduction to French postal history in Tripoli (1852-1914): in the age of steamships, French influence in the Levant and the decline of the Ottoman Empire** by Semaan Bassil; pub. by Archaeology in the Lebanon (Nos 38-39);

180pp 245 x 305mm; richly illustrated in colour; price 56€; available from Share-it – Digital River GmbH, c/o Digital River Ireland Ltd, Unit 153 Shannon Free Zone, West Shannon, Co. Clare, Ireland, or The Lebanese British Friends of the National Museum, 11 Canning Place, London W8 5AD; website [www.ahlebanon.com](http://www.ahlebanon.com) [Historical context and postal history with rich bibliography and documents from Ottoman government and French diplomatic archives, covering links between French postal service, Messageries Françaises and French vice-consulate in Tripoli.]

*Les Surcharges de Saint-Pierre-et-Miquelon* by Jean-Jacques Tillard; 148pp; price 88€; available from the author, 57 rue de Paris, BP 4433, 97500 St Pierre et Miquelon. [Based on 2013 Large Gold exhibit.]

*La Censure militaire belge 1914-1918* by Jacques Hemelaers et al; 270pp A4, 200+ illustrations in colour; price 30€ + p&p; available from André Van Dooren ([andre.van.dooren@orange.fr](mailto:andre.van.dooren@orange.fr)). [How Belgian censorship functioned in WWI.]

*Les cachets allemands des hôpitaux militaires et formations sanitaires Alsace-Lorraine (1914-1918)* pub. SPAL; 258pp A4, 800+ cachets with many illustrations of use; price 35€ + p&p; available from André Lader, 52 rue de Monsviller, 97700 Saverne. [Listing with dates of use.]

*Une mémoire philatélique des camps* by Michel Claverie; price 29€; available from bookshops or Editions du Signe. [Full study of concentration camp philately.]

*La cote des Coins datés des timbres de France en Euros* and *La Sabine de Gandon* pub. SO.CO.CO.DA.MI; price 25€ each; available from Jean-Claude Gagné, 18 rue Danielle Casanova, 77330 Ozor-la-Ferrière. [Dated corner blocks of French stamps in euros; and printing details of one stamp issue.]

Maurice Tyler

# LIST OF RECENTLY PUBLISHED ARTICLES

Compiled by Colin Spong and Maurice Tyler

## *Bulletin de la COL.FRA*

N° 148 2<sup>ème</sup> Trim 2014: Une défaite annoncée: Diên-Biên-Phù (Liévin) ; Haute-Volta : un entier postal du Début de l'Exploration (Kelly); Les Epreuves de Guyane (Puech); La poste ferroviaire de Tunisie pendant le Protectorat Français (Mercier).

## **Cameo**

Vol 15 N° 2 2014 (Whole N° 92): A Postcard from the early Exploration of the Upper Volta Region of French West Africa in 1886 (Kelly); Pre-WWII US Air Mail to West Africa (Wingent); French Postal Activity in Spanish Equatorial Africa 1887-1906 (Mitchell); Gold Coast and Togo conundrum, 1911 (Mayne); The Gold Coast type Cancels of Togo (Mayne).

## *L'Écho de la Timbrologie*

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

N° 1884 May 2014: Le 1<sup>er</sup> Mai: des fleurs et des travailleurs (Grosse); Une année à Dumont d'Urville, en Terre-Adékiue [2] (Albaret); Le dilemme d'Air France en 1934 (Albaret); L'émission provisoire d'Alep [1920-1921] (Rosenberg); Falsification de surcharges (Brun); Le 1,30F Sabine de Gandon (Rabineau).

N° 1885 June 2014: Vive le Chemin de fer! (Grosse); Une broderie qui fait dans le dentelé (Hella); Postiers et télégraphistes en Résistance 1940-1944 (Albaret).

## **France & Colonies Philatelist**

Whole N° 316 (Vol 70 N° 2) Apr 2014: World War II Censorship within the Congo Region (Morvay); Hellbourg to .. (Kelly).

Whole N° 317 (Vol 70 N° 3) Jul 2014: Foreign Censorship on World War II French Equatorial Africa Mail (Morvay); Postal Censorship and Intrigue at St Pierre et Miquelon 1939-1945 (Taylor); St Pierre & Miquelon Memories (Correl); A Different View on Exhibiting (Grabowski).

## **Gibbons Stamp Monthly.**

Vol 45 N° 3 August 2014: Monkey Business in Benin [The Zin Kaka set of 2003] (Pertwee).

## *Timbres Magazine*

Permanent features: Actualités, courrier des lecteurs, Club des clubs, Manifestations, Marcophilie, Les nouveautés de France, Actus Andorre, Monaco et les TOM, Pâp, Expertise, Les variétés, Le Journal des nouveautés, Bibliothèque, Mon marché du mois.

N° 156 May 2014: La variété POSTES 20 centimes EMPIRE non dentelé au type 1 (Marion); Cilicie: Des variétés à l'appel! [part 2] (Rucklin); Sarah Bougault ou la nouvelle génération de graveurs de timbres (Nowacka); Timbres jumeaux et monozygotes (de La Mettrie); Saint-

Pierre-et-Miquelon: Les oblitérations des bureaux annexes sur les premiers timbres surchargés en 1885 et 1888 à SPM (Tillard); Henri Boutet: des sujets de charme (Zeyons); ... par exprès (Prugnon); Mise en train... [imprimé d'ambulant de Méditerranée] (Chauvin).

N° 157 Jun 2014: Le TVP fait sa révolution [Marianne du Bicentenaire] (Rucklin); Louis Boursier entre gravure héraldique et philatélie (Nowacka); Panorama philatélique de Première Guerre mondiale (Singeot); Le contrôle postal français durant la Première Guerre mondiale (Bourguignat); A l'époque du masque de fer (de La Mettrie); Madagascar souvenirs de la Grande Ile (Zeyons); Une lettre de La Commune (Baudot); 1945: Diégo Suarez-Naval (Chauvin).

N° 158 Jul-Aug 2014: Le portrait selon Archille Ouvré, Graveur, Illustrateur (Nowacka); La variété grande tache triangulaire du 1c Empire dentelé (Marion); TVP: les carnets se diversifient [2nd part] (Rucklin); Nationale 7, la route des vacances (Andrea); Visite dans les tranchées belges de l'Yser (Singeot); Timbres des colonies utilisés en métropole et vice-versa (de La Mettrie); Le difficile rétablissement des liaisons maritimes d'Alger à Libération (Chauvin); Jean Jaurès assassiné (Zeyons); A la recherche des lettres perdues ou à trouver (Baudot); Via di Mare (Prugnon); France Libre: le Fonds Spitfire (Chauvin).

## *Le Collectionneur Philatélique et Marcophile*

N° 169 (Jul 14): Une pièce philatélique pas courante (Lagarde); Les dix-huit communes vosgiennes annexées en 1870 (Lasserre); La défense des légations pendant la guerre des Boxers (Arata); Un vichyste interné par les gaullistes au Cameroun en 1942 (Berthier); La poste civile dans les territoires de Givet et de Maubeuge (II) (Ludwig & Van Dooren); La rafle des enfants juifs d'Izieu (Neimark); Petit paquet de la Feldpost pour un chauffeur de luxe (Flotte); Note sur l'annulation du bureau central de Marseille - Les Gros chiffres 2240 (Martino-Gauchy); Objet à taxer, à diriger en cabine (Chapuis).

## *Les Feuilles Marcophiles*

N° 357 (Jun 14): Dix ans de vicissitudes postales à Morsbronn (1923-1933) (Bonnefoy); Lettres recommandées envoyées en simple taxe: l'exemple des opérations immobilières. (1940-1945) (Langlois); Le quartier-maître fusilier Léon GAUTIER et la lettre qui débarqua le 6 juin 1944 (Albaret); La prise de Cherbourg (22-26 juin 1944) et «la guerre de papier»: l'utilisation de la propagande aérienne par les Alliés dans la bataille du Cotentin (Albaret); Le très intéressant parcours postal d'une lettre de la Mayenne au tarif de proximité du 1<sup>er</sup> janvier 1863 (AAP & Bovagnet); Les Camps «Cigarette» (Dantant); Les services postaux bas-normands lors du Débarquement (Lecouturier); Quand la petite histoire rejoint la grande Histoire! (Pleinfossé).

# The History of the Red Cross Stamp Issue in the Former French Colonies and French Post Offices Abroad during the First World War

André Métayer

Translated by Mick Bister

## Introduction

The people of France as well as in her Colonies were soon moved by the misfortunes and traumas suffered by the soldiers on the front. There was an immense feeling of solidarity.

It was within this context that France proposed, on 18 August 1914, the creation of the first charity stamp by the application of a 5 centimes surcharge on the already existing 10c *Semeuse camée chiffres gras*.

The January 1916 edition of the magazine *'Le Collectionneur de Timbres-Poste'* reprinted the text of an article previously published in *'Les Annales'* which recalled the reaction of a wounded soldier to the issue of these stamps in aid of the Red Cross.

*'A foot soldier had recently had a leg amputated. The pain had left him weak and helpless. I was there at his bedside. As he gazed around the ward a nurse passed*

*by. The wounded man beckoned to her to come over.*

*'Are you feeling ill?' she asked.*

*'No,' he replied, 'I would like you to bring me a Red Cross stamp.'*

*The nurse, amazed by this request but not wishing to upset the patient, brought him the stamp.*

*The poor soldier then lovingly kissed the stamp and said to me in a weak voice.*

*'If I am saved, it will be thanks to the centimes paid by all those who are purchasing these'*

*The narrator and witness to this scene added: 'I was so touched that I began to weep'.*

*All you philatelists who read these words, please continue buying the Red Cross stamps. In so doing you are supporting a good cause. The gratitude of those who are suffering is assured. Is that not the greatest of rewards?'*



Figure 1  
Morocco: First Rabat  
inverted Red Cross overprint  
© Yvert & Tellier



Figure 2  
Morocco: Oujda Overprint



Figure 3  
Morocco: Second Rabat  
Overprint

## Printings

In September 1914 Morocco was the first country to issue such a Red Cross stamp which was put on sale in Tangiers. Furthermore, it is the rarest of the collection since only 25 copies were printed and each with the surcharge upside down. The stamp is the *Type Mouchon* and the overprint was applied by the printers of the *'L'Echo du Maroc'* newspaper in Rabat (Fig 1).

With the first issue being unsuitable, two more appeared during September 1914.

At Oujda a plate was manufactured on site at the printing works of the *'Tablettes Marocaines d'Oujda'*. 1,500 stamps were overprinted and the plate was duly destroyed in the presence of Monsieur Vannier, the High Commissioner for Morocco (Fig 2). There do not appear to have been any clandestine printings. Another issue of 125,000 copies was produced from four printings with an overprint made by the printers of *'L'Echo du Maroc'* at Rabat (Figs 3 and 4).



Figure 4  
Morocco: Postcard dated 31 October 1914  
from Marrakech to Chartres





Figure 5  
Tahiti: 1893 15c  
Navigation and Commerce



Figure 7  
Alexandria: 10c Mouchon  
with millésime 4



Figure 8  
Port-Saïd: 10c Mouchon  
with millésime 6



Figure 6  
Morocco: 5c Type Blanc  
with 5c Red Cross surcharge  
and Protectorat Français overprint

After enquiries from several Colonies, the issues really took off in February 1915. Dated 5 February 1915, Circular N° 68 E.P. announced the conditions concerning the issue and use of the Red Cross stamps:

*As a result of requests received from different Colonies, notably Indo-China, Madagascar and New Caledonia, the Colonial Office has just authorised the issuing of a 10c stamp overprinted with a 5 centimes surcharge which will be contributed to Red Cross funds.*

*You are requested to inform those in your employment that these new stamps are valid for franking all items of correspondence from the Colonies to France or Algeria.*

*Similarly, the Red Cross issues of France are valid for franking correspondence to the French Colonies. However, mail for overseas destinations must only be franked with ordinary stamps.*

*On behalf of the Minister*

*E Mazoyer*

*Director of Postal Development*

The ruling regarding the banning of Red Cross stamps on international mail was also applicable in France and Algeria.

The issue of Red Cross stamps with 10c and 15c values was spread out between 1914 and 1919 and all of them were demonetised with effect from 1 April 1921. Only the small format printings in sheets of 150 displayed millésimes; the large format stamps did not.

For the various issues, stocks of earlier stamps were used sometimes even those from the 1890s such as the Tahiti issue (Fig 5). Morocco was the only country to issue a Type Blanc stamp with the surcharge (Fig 6). Among the French Post Offices Abroad, only Alexandria and Port-Saïd issued stamps with the surcharge (Figs 7 & 8).

As for the Colonies themselves, the stamps employed were from earlier issues (Fig 9). The topics are very varied which adds to their charm.

Most of the surcharges are printed on the 10c values with only a few on the 15c. A few colonies issued both values as in the case of Mauritania, Saint-Pierre et Miquelon and Sénégal (Figs 10-12).



Figure 9  
Middle Congo: 5c surcharge in black on the 1907 Panther issue





Figure 10

Mauritania: 10c and 15c Merchants crossing the desert



Figure 11

Saint-Pierre et Miquelon: 10c and 15c Fisherman



Figure 12

Sénégal: 10c and 15c Market Scen

In the case of the French Somali Coast, the overprinted 10c + 5c Somali Girl was issued in May 1915 ahead of the unoverprinted issues which were not put on sale until July (Fig 13).

Curiously, several colonies issued the 10c stamps after 1916

when the basic letter rate had already been increased from 10 to 15 centimes (Fig 14).

There were even stamps issued in Tunisia that were sold without any postal validity at all (Figs 15 and 16) and with the surcharge represented just by the Red Cross overprint.



Figure 13

10c French Somali Coast



Figure 14

Gabon: surcharged 10c Warrior issued in March 1917 after the rate increase



Figure 15

Tunisia: 5c Kairouan Mosque with *millésime* 5 and cancelled value and hence no longer postally valid



Figure 16

Tunisia: Registered letter from Tunis to Marseille dated 7 June 1918. Only the four stamps overprinted + 10c have any postal value and alone make up the 40c rate.



Figure 17  
Tunisia: 15c Ploughmen with *millésime* 3



Figure 19  
French Oceanic Settlements:  
10c Navigation and Commerce  
with *millésime* 8 and provisional overprint



Figure 18  
Tunisia: Letter from Tunis to Paris dated 14 October 1915  
with 15c Ploughmen paying the 10c basic letter rate

The 15c Ploughmen was overprinted with just a cross and sold at 15c but with a face value of only 10c (Figs 17 and 18).

The demand for these stamps was so great that it was often a case of first come first served or limiting the quantity that could be purchased at any one time.

While awaiting the printing of surcharged Red Cross stamps in the French Oceanic Settlements, the 10c Navigation and Commerce, first issued in December 1900, was overprinted EFO (*Établissements Français Océanie*) 1915 and sold at 10c with the extra 5c being raised from the local budget (Fig 19). The overprint was applied at Papeete in groups of 50.

In the French Indian Settlements there were several issues with, in each case, a different overprint. The 10c Brahma\* value, first issued in June 1914, was overprinted in carmine and issued in June 1915 (Fig 20), November 1915 (Fig 21) and June 1916 (Figs 22-23). In each case the surcharge is in a different position.

In the 31 August 1916 edition of *'L'Écho de la Timbrologie'* (page 698) a reader recalls the speculation prompted by the second and third printings:

*Allow me to say something about the Red Cross issues in the French Indian Settlements. A kind correspondent whom I had asked to obtain for me some of the 2nd and 3rd issue Red Cross stamps replied saying that it was impossible to meet my request as the stamps had been sold out on the day of issue. He added: "Some collectors had been lying in wait and had snapped up the whole lot with the result that the postmistress was suspended from her job. This punishment though did not spare the stamps from speculation."*

The surcharge was applied in Pondicherry in sheets of 75. The printings for the first three issues were 40,000, 45,000 and 12,000 respectively.

A further printing was issued on 20 April 1916 of which 50,000 were printed. Another printing of 60,000 appeared on 20 July 1916 but this time the surcharge was applied in Paris (Figs 24-25).

All this feverish activity, linked in part to speculation, enraged *'L'Écho de la Timbrologie'* which published a series of articles entitled *'Le Scandale des Colonies'* in July, August and September 1916.



Figure 20



Figure 21



Figure 22



Figure 23



Figure 24  
Pondicherry surcharge



Figure 25  
Paris surcharge

French Indian Settlements: the first four surcharges

\* Vishnu according to the 1936 Yvert & Tellier catalogue



In the French Oceanic Settlements, the following directive was issued:

*In order to be able to maintain a sufficiency of stamps for the 10c rate and to prevent the heavy buying of the provisional surcharged issues sold at 15c, the sale of the latter at the post office counters in Papeete will be limited to 1000 a day with a maximum of 25 per person. This limit can be reduced even further if there is still evidence of large purchases.*

*However, the limit will be suspended in the case of customers who bring mail to the counter for franking at 10c and who then immediately put in in the post.*

*Postal clerks outside Papeete will not be allowed to sell more than five stamps per person per day except when*

*it is for mail requiring franking and which is posted immediately.*

*Papeete, 5 August 1916*

*G Julien*

In Tahiti, the first issue was put on sale with restrictions. The stamps were sold at a rate of eight per person over a period of eight days to those who had registered beforehand. Even if the stamps had been used to frank mail, many of them did not reach their destination having been removed from the envelope during transit.

The sale of the second issue had similar restrictions. The stamps were sold to the public over a period of ten days from 24 April to 3 May 1915 between 7.30am and 7.45am [sic].

## Postal Usage

It is astonishing how few letters can be found today franked with such stamps bearing in mind the huge demand for

them at the time (Figs 26-31). Collectors must have been preferring to collect them mint.



Figure 26

French Guyana: Registered letter dated 21 December 1916 from Cayenne to Paris with block of four 10c + 5c Red Cross issue



Figure 27

Upper Sennegal and Niger: Letter dated 9 December 1916 from Timbuktu to Bordeaux with single 10c + 5c issue





Figure 28  
Indo-China: Registered Letter Third Step (50-75g)  
dated 21 July 1917 from Saigon to Bombay  
franked with three different Red Cross values  
contributing to the 80c rate



Figure 29  
Indo-China: Registered Letter dated 10 November 1917  
from Haiphong to Thonon  
franked solely with Red Cross issues



Figure 30  
Morocco: 10c + 5c Sower  
on postcard from Tangiers

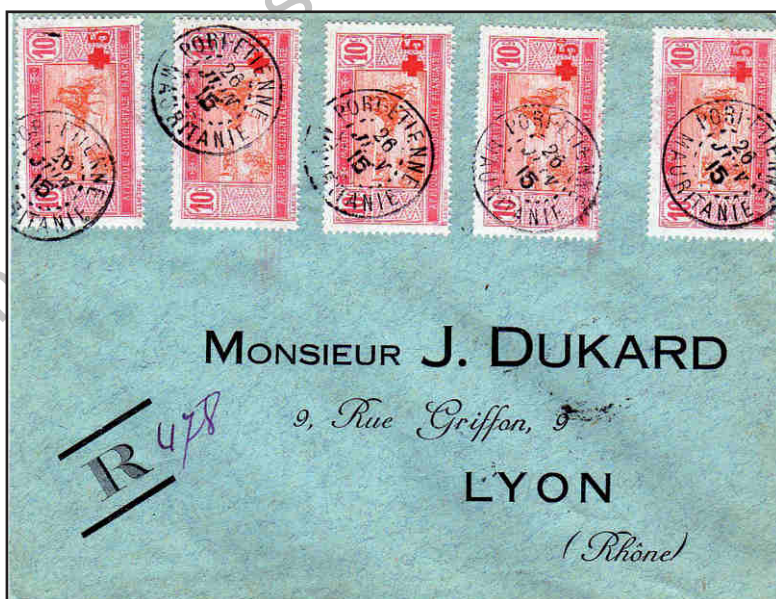


Figure 31  
Mauritania: Registered Letter Second Step (20-50g)  
dated 26 June 1915 from Port-Étienne to Lyon  
with 5 x 10c + 5c Red Cross issue paying the 50c rate

## Varieties

I choose not to comment on the varieties found amongst the surcharges due to the numerous forgeries and incidences of overprinting by favour. Indeed, in various colonies, the surcharges were applied on site without supervision. The local authorities took the decision to limit such risks, notably in the French Oceanic Settlements, with a directive dated 5 August 1916 relating to the issue of new stamps.

*Article 4 - In order to maintain total consistency and continuity in all printings, surcharges with the slightest variation such as broken characters, inverted overprints or wide spacing will not be tolerated. If any sheets are*

*found to vary, arrangements must be made to incinerate them immediately in the presence of all the members of the commission and to submit a report in writing.*

There was a similar case in the French Indian Settlements when a directive dated 20 July 1916 was issued relating to a new set of Red Cross stamps.

*Article 3 - The surcharge will be applied in Pondicherry in the presence of the Paymaster and a commission composed of the Head of the Revenue Office and the Head of the Treasury Bureau.*



## Millésimes

*Millésime* pairs of the small formats are rare, if not very rare (Figs 32-37). Because of the way that some sheets were overprinted, ie in separated panes, *millésimes* may be found with just a single stamp attached. In the case of the overprint applied at Oujda, a *millésime* is virtually impossible to find.

As has been said earlier, certain *millésimes* are extremely rare; such is the case with the stamps of Tahiti. The issue

was limited to 1,750 stamps. As there was only one *millésime* to each pane of fifty stamps there were only thirty-five *millésimes* printed. The *millésime* pair shown below (in Fig 38) is a great rarity.

9,700 copies of the second Tahiti issue were printed thereby in theory producing 194 *millésimes*. The stamp can be encountered with the *millésime* 0 for 1900 and without a *millésime* (Fig 39). This too is a great rarity.



Figure 32  
French Guyana: *millésime* 3 for 1913



Figure 33  
Indo-China: *millésime* 6 for 1916



Figure 34  
Indo-China: *millésime* 7 for 1917



Figure 35  
Indo-China: *millésime* 8 for 1918



Figure 36  
Morocco: *millésime* 5 for 1915



Figure 38  
Tahiti: *millésime* 3 for 1893



Figure 37  
Indo-China: *millésime* omitted  
from second row



Figure 39  
Tahiti: *millésime* omitted  
from second row

## Conclusion

This study shows that the 'little stamps' are exciting to collect and that they present a story worth reading about. You will have noticed that there are many unexpected rarities.

## Bibliography

- 'L'Écho de la Timbrologie' various articles published between 1914 and 1919 notably 'Le Scandale des Colonies' in Nos 340, 341 and 545
- 'Yvert & Tellier Catalogue Tome II, Timbres des Colonies Françaises', 1936, and 'Des Bureaux Français à l'Étranger', 1940.
- 'Maroc - Postes Françaises' by Exelemans and Pomyers, 1948
- 'Le Collectionneur de Timbres-Poste' various articles notably from Nos 407-409, 414, 416, 418, 421-423, 431-433 and 435

## Acknowledgements

My thanks and gratitude to M. Jean-Claude Baehr and M. Jean-René Hamelot who kindly read through the text and offered me advice.



Figure 40  
Advertisement promoting Red Cross

# Detoured Alsace-Lorraine Mail – 1870 and Beyond

Stan Luft

*This article was originally dedicated to the memory of Ruth and Gardner Brown, whose pioneering postal history exhibit of detoured mail of the Siege of Paris was cruelly criticized by an ill-prepared jury in 1980. As a result, the exhibit was never again shown in competition, to postal history's great loss.*

*It was first published in "The London Philatelist" Whole Number 1291 of December 2001, and then, with only minor differences in wording, republished in the "France & Colonies Philatelist" Whole Number 272 of April 2003. It is reprinted here in full colour by permission of the author, and with further minor modifications.*

*The author adds that since its first publication M. Raymond Pittier had kindly shown him some other, very fine examples of the genre from the Croix-Rouge "Bourbaki" Collection, lots 1275-1286, offered by Corinphila Auctions, 22 October 2000. These covers, however attractive in their origins and destinations, did not show us any significant, additional methods of detouring the Alsace-Lorraine mails.*



Figure 1



Figure 2

## Introduction

Mail communications, in and out of, and normally through Alsace-Lorraine, were badly disrupted during 1870-1871 by the German invasion and occupation of north-eastern and northern France, and by the eventual German annexation of much of Alsace-Lorraine.

For this presentation, I make use of the following time frames to separate, like Gaul of Olde, the three parts of the story: (1) wartime (1870-January 1871); (2) the postwar occupation (February-March 1871); and (3) the post-occupation period (March 1871-on). Covers from my collection are shown, to illustrate a number of ways in which mail was detoured to its eventual destination. The subject, surprisingly because of its obvious interest to postal historians, apparently has received scant attention. Other than possible side references in other articles, the only one I know of is R de Fontaines's brief presentation in *Documents Philatéliques*, N° 84, 1980, regarding mail detoured via Switzerland.

## 1. Wartime Detoured Mail (August 1870-January 1871)

Mail was detoured to avoid the conflict and the ruptured rail lines, and to stay ahead of the invading forces.

**Figure 1** shows a cover from Riquewihir (Haut-Rhin, Alsace) of 5 September 1870, when that small, charming town was still in French hands.

It is addressed to Baden, then an enemy entity! The normal route to Baden would have been via Strasbourg, besieged since 23 August. It therefore was detoured via Mulhouse (6 September) and Basel (7 September), and reached its destination on the 8th. A most rapid international mailing! Sent unpaid, it was taxed 12 Kreutzer at Offenburg, Baden.

The **Figure 2** cover is from Huningue (Haut-Rhin), 15 October 1870 and still in French hands in spite of a brief 7 October Prussian incursion, to besieged Paris. With Paris cut off, the letter was carried outside the posts to Basel, where it received the proper 30 centimes Swiss franking



to France, and returned on 16 October to France, via Besançon, crossing the border on the 17th. It was then held somewhere in unoccupied France until after the war. The Paris receiving backstamp is, unfortunately, incomplete as to date.

**Figure 3** is a 5 November cover from now occupied Strassburg (note the Occupation stamps, German date stamp, and German town spelling) to Rouen in northern France. At this time, northern France was completely cut off from Alsace-Lorraine (and the rest of France) by a German sweep to the English Channel. The letter accordingly was routed via Belgium. It is overpaid by 5 centimes to Belgium or by 10c to France. It entered the northern France

enclave from Belgium, at Lille, on 7 November and arrived at Rouen on the 8th. Again, another example of rapid and unimpeded transit.

The **Figure 4** cover is from St. Petersburg, Russia, to Montpellier in southernmost France, docketed "via Suisse" though the normal prewar routing would have been via Alsace-Lorraine. It departed on 18 November 1870 (Julian calendar, = 30 November, Gregorian calendar), and reached France, but only after transiting neutral Austria and Italy, on 6 December according to the poorly discernible Savoy entry marking. The backstamps are Wien (3 December), Lyon-Avignon night train (7th) and Montpellier arrival (7th).



Figure 3



Figure 4

.....

## 2. Postwar Occupation Detoured Mail (February-March 1871)

This brief period embraces the beginnings of the *double affranchissement* or "double franking," whereby mail between Occupied and Unoccupied France required the postage of both régimes, or else it was to be taxed in transit or upon arrival.

In order to avoid this extra charge, or possible German censorship of the mail, or for simple distaste of German institutions, some Alsace mail was hand-carried outside the posts to nearby Switzerland, later even to unoccupied France, to be posted from there. It should be noted that, until 15 February 1871, there was no sanctioned mail exchange between the to-be-annexed parts of Alsace-Lorraine and the Unoccupied Zone.

**Figure 5** is a letter from Strasbourg to Lyon, bearing 24 February 1871 Lausanne and Berne postmarks on a 30c Swiss stamp, the correct single letter rate to France. It entered France as direct closed mail to Lyon on the 25th and was received there on the 26th.

The **Figure 6** cover originated with Lantz Frères of Mulhouse at some indistinct February 1871 date, and was eventually brought to nearby Basel. There, a 30c Swiss stamp was affixed and cancelled on 21 March. The letter entered France on the 22nd and went on by train to Toulouse (23 March) and thence to the Rodez destination (23rd) in southern France. The message states that any reply should be sent via Nicholas Legrand of Basel. I still lack a cover from France to Alsace-Lorraine for this period.



Figure 5



Figure 6

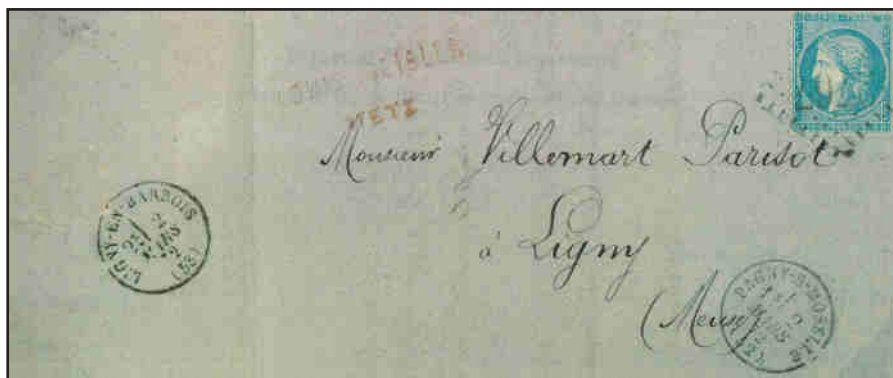


Figure 7



Figure 8

### 3. Post-Occupation Detoured Mail (March 1871-on)

For the same reasons as given in the previous, Occupation Period section, a small fraction of the mail to and from slated-for-annexation Alsace-Lorraine continued to be detoured.

On 1 January 1872, almost all of Alsace and much of Lorraine were formally incorporated into the new German Empire. Earlier, however, the mail facilities and administrations of the rest of the Occupied Zone were returned, from late March 1871 onward, to French control. Eventually, this restitution applied also to the remainder [the unannexed parts] of Alsace and Lorraine. My two covers from this period are, unfortunately, only from annexed Metz, in Lorraine.

The **Figure 7** cover was written in annexed Metz on 1 March 1872. However, it traveled outside the mails to restituted Pagny-sur-Moselle, barely 30 kilometres to the south-east,

and mailed from there on 2 March, staying entirely within the French postal system and bearing a French 25c Cérès stamp, to its destination (also on the 2nd) at Ligny, in unannexed Lorraine.

The **Figure 8** cover of 9 October 1872, also from Metz, was similarly sent to Charleville via Pagny-sur-Moselle on the 10th [note the absence of a year slug], arriving on the 11th. Transit via Pagny, just inside the restituted part of Lorraine, apparently was a favored means of bypassing the German posts.

Other ways and means of detouring mail from, to, or through Alsace-Lorraine exist, and some should prove extremely unusual. I would be pleased to be shown and to be able to publish other examples sent in by our readers.

# United States Mail to France in World War II

## Part II

Lawrence Sherman

*This article, by a member of the American Philatelic Society, was first published in the American Philatelist of January and February 2013 and we gratefully acknowledge their permission to reprint.*

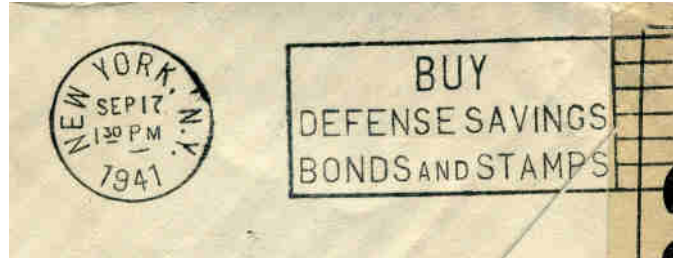


Figure 13

September 1941 backstamp on 19 Dec 1940 surface cover to Rolampont, Haute-Marne

In September 1941 mail to Occupied France was officially suspended. The news first appeared in *The Postal Bulletin*, a publication of the United States Post Office. The announcement carefully noted that the action was “by order of the occupation authorities,” meaning the German army. Since postal relations with occupied France were now suspended, “postmasters will decline to accept for mailing, effective immediately and until further notice, mail articles addressed for delivery in the occupied zone of France, except when addressed to civilian internees.”<sup>16</sup>

Postal patrons in the US were shocked by the news. In October it was a page one story in at least one philatelic newspaper, *Western Stamp Collector*, which headlined the story, “Mail to Occupied France Returned to U.S. Senders.” The story read:

Letters mailed to persons in the occupied zone of France as long ago as last November, some by air mail at a cost of 30 cents, have been received back by the senders the last few days stamped “Retour à l’Envoyeur, Relations Postales Interrompues,” and, in English, “Return to Sender, Postal Service Suspended.”

According to New York postal officials, 100,000 letters had been returned a few days ago by the postal authorities of France. They apparently had been held there in the hope there would be lifting of the German restrictions.

Some of the letters sent by clipper had been opened by the French censor and resealed with the notation “Contrôle.”<sup>17</sup>

The formal suspension caused the New York, NY, Post Office to be flooded with mail that had been addressed to the occupied zone, processed in Marseille, then held by Vichy postal authorities. Many of the approximately 100,000 [or 180,000] letters returned to sender, both surface and air-mail, were backstamped with machine-cancelled receiving

postmarks dated between 17 September and 2 October. An example is shown above (Fig 13).

Before September, postal relations between the US and occupied France were simply impossible to implement; now they were formally suspended. Why? What had tried German patience sufficiently to cause the German army to take this official step?

Perhaps issuance of the Atlantic Charter on 12 August was the precipitant. This joint declaration of President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill promulgated at sea (Placentia Bay, Newfoundland), spoke of the “common principles” of the two countries, and offered hope for a peaceful world after “the final destruction of the Nazi tyranny.”

A possible immediate precipitant was “the Greer incident.” On 4 September the destroyer *USS Greer*, steaming independently toward Iceland, was involved in an unfriendly encounter with German submarine *U-652*. A British plane alerted the destroyer to the presence of the U-boat some miles ahead, then dropped its depth charges at random when it needed to return to its base. *U-652* thought *Greer* had attacked. It fired a torpedo at the destroyer. There ensued an exchange of depth charges and torpedoes, all missing their targets, until the ships broke off the encounter. The incident enabled President Roosevelt to order US warships to “shoot on sight” in waters “the protection of which is necessary for American defense.”

Two pages of the 9 September 1941 issue of *The Postal Bulletin* are devoted to a list of 44 *départements* of France that were completely occupied and — thanks to the meandering demarcation line that split *départements* into some partially and others wholly occupied — to a far longer list of over 1,000 individual post offices in unoccupied regions of otherwise occupied *départements*.



## Unoccupied France (Vichy)

The Franco-German armistice, signed in late June 1940, came into full force about a month later. The government under Marshall Henri Philippe Pétain, with Pierre Laval serving as Deputy Prime Minister, moved from Bordeaux to Clermont-Ferrand and finally to Vichy on 1 July. Why Vichy?

The place had neither historical resonance nor geographical convenience. It was, and is, an insignificant little spa town in the Auvergne.... Its population of 25,000 was swollen each summer by the visitors who came to take the waters and gamble in the casinos. Yet it was acceptable because it lay far from any of France's borders and outside the sphere of influence exercised by any leading politician.... But above all, Vichy fitted the bill because it could offer enough hotel beds to accommodate a government.<sup>18</sup>

Postal, telegraph, and telephone services within the *zone non-occupée* "were unrestricted, but international traffic was allowed only with countries which were not at war with Germany, and German monitoring services kept a close check on radio-telegraph emissions."<sup>19</sup> The Vichy regime, publicly neutral (but by secret terms of its armistice committed to supporting "within the limits of its ability, the measures which the Axis powers may take" to defeat Great Britain), enjoyed diplomatic relations with the United States. It enjoyed postal relations as well. The United States Official Postal Guide in July 1941 indicated that regular mails continued to be routed from New York "via Portugal or Spain, once a week;" airmail service flew the trans-Atlantic route three times weekly (though "time of onward transit from Lisbon [was] uncertain"); and, despite suspension of parcel post service, special delivery service was still provided.<sup>20</sup>

Concerning the Lisbon-Marseille link during the period of American neutrality, Pan Am's FAM 18 service had long since terminated in Lisbon. How was the mail then transported to Marseille? In the absence of postmarks or postal handling notes in specific mail situations, we are most often left to conjecture. There are air, rail and ship possibilities.

**Air** — Deutsche Lufthansa had flown routes between Stuttgart and Lisbon via Lyon, Marseille, Barcelona and Madrid, but the outbreak of war temporarily ended this route involving French cities. However, after September 1941, "some incoming trans-Atlantic air mail addressed to France and Monaco was received by Deutsche Lufthansa at Lisbon and flown to Marseilles for delivery in the unoccupied zone and Monaco. Some of this mail was dropped off in Spain for censorship by German authorities (usually in Madrid) before delivery to Marseilles."<sup>21</sup>

Beginning December 1939 and until the May 1940 *blitzkrieg*, Air France provided service from Lisbon to Marseille via Tangier (Morocco) and Oran (Algeria). With France defeated and divided, Air France and a small domestic carrier, Air Bleu, disappeared. From their ashes appeared a new airline, *Réseau Aérienne Française* (R.Ae.F.), "under the control of the Vichy government and with the permission of the Germans."<sup>22</sup> R.Ae.F. flew a circular air route in the *zone non-occupée* connecting Vichy, Lyon, Marseille and Toulouse. In September 1940 another circular route was added between Toulouse and Marseille. This route

passed through Perpignan, a small city in the foothills of the Pyrenees near the Mediterranean coast. It is the chief city of France's most southerly *département*, Pyrénées-Orientales, in the region of Languedoc-Roussillon. Once a jewel in the Crown of Aragon before the union of Castile and Aragon in 1479, Perpignan is currently known for its commerce in wine, olives, and cork.<sup>23</sup> Some overseas mail likely traveled by rail from Lisbon to Perpignan and then was placed aboard R.Ae.F. aircraft and flown to Marseille. There was still another — and likely pivotal — role played by Perpignan in carrying trans-Atlantic mail from Lisbon to Unoccupied France: rail transport.

**Rail** — Starting July-August 1940 "the Post Office of the 'free zone' organized the passage of foreign mail by the few border towns of the zone. Three towns became 'centralizing centers' for foreign mail."<sup>24</sup> These "centralizing" cities — Lyon, Marseille and Perpignan — became Vichy's portals for international surface and airmail. It is believed that most mail (including airmail) from the United States, after arrival in Lisbon, traveled via rail through Spain, then to Perpignan and Marseille. Directly on the Spanish-French border, along the railway line between Barcelona and Perpignan, lay the coastal villages of Portbou (in Catalonia), and Cerbère (in south-eastern France), border towns even today best known for their railway stations. At these stations US mail was transferred onto trains chuffing from the coast to Perpignan and beyond. Transfer at the Portbou/Cerbère node was not easy: the broad-gauge rails (1668mm) of Spain were incompatible with the standard gauge (1435mm) of France. This necessitated a complex system of sidings in Portbou so that trains could change wheelbases. (As late as 2007 it was noted: "Nowhere else in France is there a pair of stations with such exiguous sites and where so many difficulties occur in operation than these twins, situated on either side of the border."<sup>25</sup>)

The Portbou-Cerbère-Perpignan rail route may have been the major one for mail transport from Lisbon to Vichy France, but at least one other portal existed. Some airmail carried to Lisbon reportedly was carried by surface transportation to Hendaye, an important railway junction in the south-west corner of France on the border with Spain. There it was censored by German authorities before traveling on to the *zone non-occupée*.<sup>26</sup>

**Ship** — Perhaps fanciful, but still possible was off-loading at Lisbon of mail bags to steamships of the American Export Line (AEL), which offered regularly scheduled passenger and cargo (including mail) service between New York and Lisbon and Mediterranean sites including Gibraltar, Marseille and Genoa. There were problems, though. "Prior to the entry of the United States into the war," wrote NYC Postmaster Goldman, "we had some difficulty in connection with ships available to carry mail to continental Europe usually via the port of Lisbon, as these steamship companies refused to handle the mail because... the ships would have to be sent to a British control port, usually Bermuda, for censorship. For that reason there was a considerable accumulation of mail for continental Europe, generally Spain, Portugal, France, etc., on hand."<sup>27</sup> The attack on Pearl Harbor ended American steamship travel. On 10 December 1941 AEL canceled the voyage for one of its ships scheduled to leave New York for Lisbon and announced there would be no future sailings. The



Figure 14  
22 Jan 1941 letter from NYC To Trévoux,  
forwarded to Lyon

company ordered its Lisbon staff “to return home by any means possible.”<sup>28</sup>

Whatever the method of shipment after arrival in Lisbon, mail to Vichy France usually came through, sometimes traveling from one place to another within Vichy’s borders. An airmail letter to Trévoux, in the Ain département (Fig 14), exemplifies the uninterrupted mail service from the United States. Postmarked in New York City on 22 January 1941, the letter was forwarded within the unoccupied zone. It was initially received in Marseille. There the censor’s “Contrôle” resealing tape was applied and the almond-shaped handstamp struck over the tape. “WK2” printed in the center of the handstamp was the letter number code for the Marseille international mail censor office.

The address of the intended recipients had changed. It was now Hôtel l’Angleterre, Lyon. The letter was duly forwarded there. The reverse of the envelope reveals, among other markings, two lightly struck receiving marks. The first is a postmark of Trévoux, Ain, of uncertain date. The second is a machine-printed receiving mark with slogan cancel from Lyon, Rhône, dated 18 November 1941. The censor markings and city postmarks indicate successful forwarding within the *zone non-occupée* of mail from the United States.

Philatelic library shelves groan beneath the weight of books and monographs detailing airmail and airline histories, operations and statistics. Certainly, the advent of trans-Atlantic airmail, “which was about contemporaneous with the beginning of the war, signaled a major change in the transportation of mail between Europe and the Americas.” Despite the greater expense of airmail, “the considerably reduced delivery time made them attractive.... Thus sea mail began a decline in volume that continued throughout the war.”<sup>29</sup> Yet during the war international mail to and from the United States was sometimes necessarily carried by steamship. Only occasionally do we get a glimpse of the ocean portion of such mail’s journey. Two surface letters mailed in 1941 provide a look.

For his five cents the writer of the letter to Marseille postmarked 24 November in Hanover, Pennsylvania (Fig 15), indicated clearly how he wanted the missive to travel: “Via American Export Line SS [Steamship].” Indeed, after censorship in Bermuda, it likely traveled exactly as wished — on one of the four combination passenger-cargo ships of American Export Line, the largest US-flag shipping company operating cargo services between the United States east coast and Mediterranean ports between 1919 and 1977.



Figure 15  
Front of 24 Nov 1941 letter  
from Hanover, PA,  
to Marseille  
showing handwritten  
“Via American Export Line SS.”



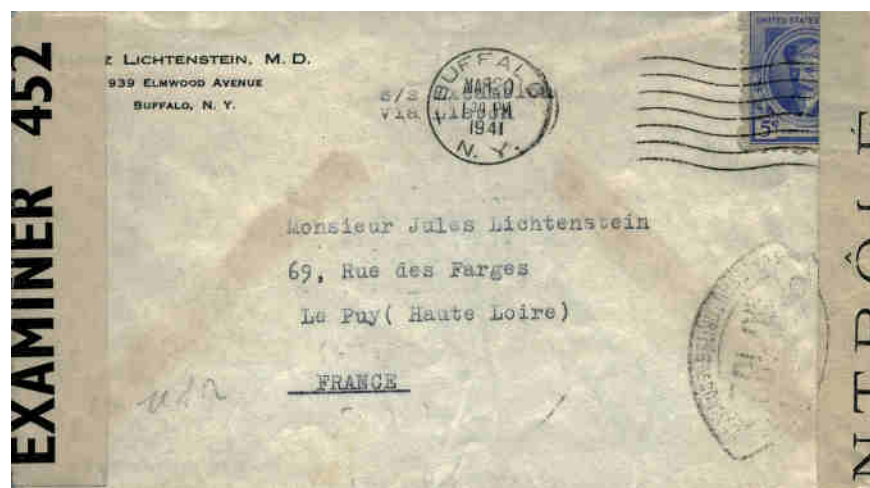


Figure 16  
Front of 20 Mar 1941 surface letter  
to Le Puy,  
with close-up of  
s/s Excambion / via Lisbon

The second surface letter, postmarked 20 March (Fig 16), was sent from Buffalo, New York to Le Puy, in the Haute Loire *département* in Unoccupied France. Partly hidden beneath the postmark on the front are the typed words, “s/s Excambion / via Lisbon.”

Steamship *Excambion* was one of the four ships of AEL. (In an ecstasy of alliteration, the others were named *Excalibur*, *Exeter*, and *Exochorda*.) Built for the line in 1931, *Excambion* displaced 9,360 tons and was 450 feet long. In its many round trips between Lisbon and New York in 1940-1941, the liner “was instrumental in the success of the war-time Emergency Rescue Committee, transporting thousands of Nazi refugees in Europe to freedom in the United States.”<sup>30</sup> (Two passengers it carried from Marseille in 1940 were painter Salvador Dalí and his wife Gala as they fled France ahead of the German army.) When AEL ended its sailings after Pearl Harbor, *Excambion* made the last voyage from Lisbon of an American ship.

On the front of the envelope are resealing censor tapes indicating incoming examination in Bermuda (P.C. 90 “Opened by / Examiner 452”) and by the Vichy French (“Contrôle”). The lightly struck “MC 182” in the center of the handstamp tying the French tape was a Le Puy censor letter code.<sup>31</sup> After arrival at the port of Marseille, this letter traveled by rail or was trucked inland to the Languedoc region and Le Puy, censored there, and delivered.

In re-organizing its Postal, Telegraph, and Telephone (PTT) services, the Vichy government took two crucial steps in ordering relations between the Secretary-General of the PTT and the occupation authorities (the German army). First: “Although the seat of the French government was in Vichy, the secretariat-general of the PTT was re-established in Paris in July 1940, and took over the building of the former ministry of the PTT.” Second: “Two high officials of the PTT were attached to the DSA [Direction of Armistice Services, the centralized control organ established by Vichy for all armistice questions].... These two lived in Paris at the secretariat-general of the PTT and maintained a liaison between this secretariat and both the DSA and the local occupation authorities.”<sup>32</sup>

There were consequences flowing from the close association of Vichy PTT services with these “local occupation authorities.” A letter sent to the Unoccupied Zone soon

after the partition of France serves as an example.

On 5 August 1940 a Dr Neumann in New York City sent an airmail letter to Dr Armand Mayer, at the Hôtel du Teich in Ax-les-Thermes (Ariège) in Unoccupied France (Fig 17). The spa town lies in the foothills of the Pyrenees, near the border with Andorra and Spain. On the front there are three strikes of a handstamp, “Retour / à l’Envoyeur / 266.” The back reveals a receiving handstamp of Ax-les-Thermes dated 16 Nov 1940. Also present are an *Oberkommando der Wehrmacht* (OKW) resealing tape with three short dashes below the eagle & swastika, and an OKW handstamp tying the resealing tape. There is in addition a double-ring receiving mark reading “2<sup>e</sup> Secion” dated 7 Dez 40. Though the town at the top of this handstamp is blurred and unreadable, the “dez” (*dezembro*) abbreviation and spelling of “Secion” mark this as a Portuguese handstamp, applied when the cover was being returned.

Most important are the words in French written near the top of the envelope flap reading: “Departed without leaving an address. The Mailman.” The mailman’s initials follow his statement. The letter received special handling: there is no sign of Vichy censorship, only German. Such were the fruits of establishing the secretariat-general of the PTT in Paris, allowing oversight of the Vichy mail system by the occupation authorities. It seems that Dr Mayer was a “person of special interest,” a Jewish engineer/scientist from Paris who was one of the lucky ones who made it across the border from the spa town to Spain and beyond. On the run, he left no forwarding address at the Hôtel du Teich.

From the Internet we learn that Dr Armand Mayer (1894-1986) graduated from *l’Ecole Polytechnique* in 1913 and *l’Ecole des Mines de Paris* in 1921 (after WWI service). A specialist in soil and rock mechanics, he became Engineer of Mines in Paris. Having created the first French laboratory of soil mechanics in 1934, he went on to study techniques for rapid construction of airfields. In 1942 he was in North Africa, overseeing French participation in building and repairing airfields for the Allied forces. He was responsible for assisting in rehabilitation and construction of dozens of airfields in Corsica, Italy and then France itself as Allied armies advanced into western Europe. He was awarded the Legion of Merit for his wartime work.<sup>33</sup>





Figure 17  
5 Aug 1940 airmail to Dr Armand Mayer,  
front & back

This returned airmail letter evinces the events involved in Dr Mayer's escape across the border in late 1940 and his appearance in French North Africa in time to help the Anglo-American armies that stormed ashore in November

1942. How he made his escape we don't know — did he obtain an exit visa from France and a transit visa through Spain, and how did he get to North Africa? — but he made it.

• • • • •  
“As Time Goes By”: December 1941 - November 1942

Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini were eager to join Japan in its conflict with the United States. Four days after the attack on Pearl Harbor they did just that, declaring war on 11 December. With mail suspension plans already in place, the USPOD did not have to wait two days to respond, as they did in suspending mail to Japan. “On the very date of our declaration of war on Germany and Italy,” wrote the Postmaster General in his post-war report, “all mail

service whatsoever was discontinued to those nations and places under their control, which included all of continental Europe except Gibraltar, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, Russia, and **unoccupied France**.”<sup>34</sup> [Emphasis added.]

This was the third nail in the coffin of deceased US-Occupied France postal relations, the first two being the nearly impenetrable *zone o / zone nono* international mail barrier established in August 1940 and the German occupying authorities' suspension of mail delivery in September 1941. Now the already suspended mail service to occupied France was “discontinued” because that unhappy land was an enemy-occupied country. Labels attached by US censors to the back of returned-to-sender mail posted after 11 December 1941 made that clear (Fig 18). In 1940 the French authorities had said your mail *may not* cross the border into Occupied France; in September 1941 Germany had said, your mail *will not* cross the border; in December 1941 the US government said your mail *must not* cross that border into enemy-occupied territory.

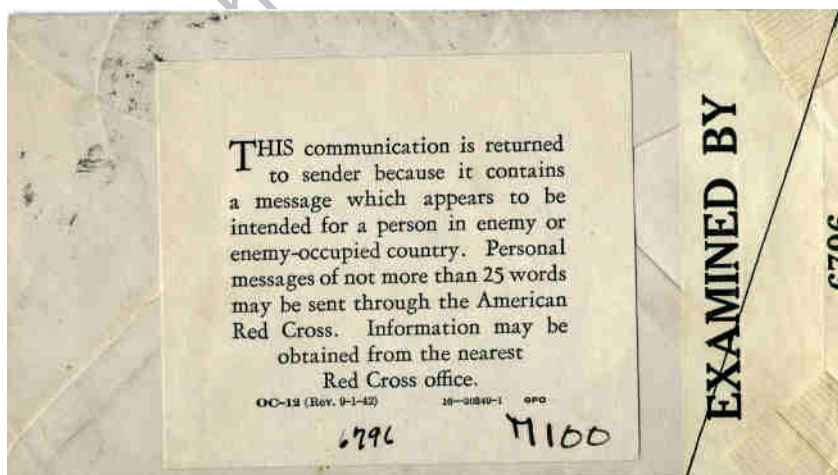


Figure 18  
Back of envelope label: Enemy-occupied Country



Figure 19  
22 April 1942 cover to Osséja,  
front & back

With the abrupt end of US neutrality, all German-occupied lands became enemy-occupied lands and mail to them was discontinued. Unoccupied (Vichy) France, ostensibly neutral in accord with its public armistice terms, continued to have postal relations with the United States.

Two letters illustrate this continuity. The first (Fig 19) paid the 45¢ fee for registered airmail to Europe. Carefully placed registry markings on the back show that the letter was mailed from Poughkeepsie, New York on 22 April 1942 and received by the foreign section of the New York City post office the next day. It was later examined by British censors in Bermuda, then delivered to Osséja, a town in the Pyrénées-Orientales *département* near the Spanish border. There was no sign of French censorship and no arrival postmark.

The second airmail letter, sent from New York City on 3 August (Fig 20), was addressed to Marseille. It arrived there after censorship in Bermuda, but could not be delivered. The reason was stamped on the back: “*Parti sans /*

*laisser d’adresse*” [Gone away without leaving an address]. So “*Retour à l’Envoyeur*” was stamped on the front of the envelope in Marseille and when the letter returned to New York a handstamped pointing hand with “Returned to / Sender” joined it. No suspension of service — only a “Written in German” letter, a sender and receiver with likely Jewish names, and a mysterious departure.

On 8 November 1942 American and British troops landed on the Atlantic (Morocco) and Mediterranean (Algeria) coasts of French North-west Africa. This was Operation “Torch,” a massive undertaking that involved huge convoys from Great Britain and from the United States. The Allied invasion of North Africa now placed the Axis powers on the defensive in the Mediterranean. The German army raced to occupy the *zone non-occupée*. The Vichy regime was shocked, really shocked by this violation of the June 1940 armistice. On 11 November the military occupation was complete.



Figure 20  
3 Aug 1942 cover to Marseille,  
front & back



*Au Revoir, la Poste à Marseille: November 1942 - June 1944*

Figure 21  
Wrapper to Marseille,  
imprinted Sept 1942,  
returned

For US international postal purposes, all of France was now enemy-occupied. Illustrating this, in chronological order of their mailing are a printed matter wrapper and two airmail letters to Vichy France, one originating in San Francisco, the other in New York City. All three were returned to sender.

The wrapper (Fig 21), addressed to Marseille, was posted in New York City in September, two months before the Allied landings in North Africa. It paid the 1½¢/2 oz international printed matter rate. The wrapper likely was censored and placed in one sack of printed matter among many others awaiting trans-Atlantic surface shipment to Unoccupied France. Too late. Service was suspended.

Posted on 8 October, a month before the Allied landings in North Africa, the letter from San Francisco (Fig 22), marked “Transatlantic,” was addressed to Clermont-Ferrand, the prefecture of the Puy-de-Dôme *département*. Censorship held up the mail long enough for it to

be caught in mailstream turbulence induced by the Allied landings and German occupation of the *zone non-occupée*. Uncensored in the United States, it arrived in Bermuda, was censored there, and returned to sender. The details of the unanticipated three month round trip are seen on the envelope. On the front, inked initials “I.C.” on P.C. 90 “Opened by Examiner 3706” re-sealing tape, and the “Service Suspended / Return to Sender” marking, indicate the mail was examined by the Imperial Censorship Detachment in Bermuda and returned to the US. On the back, the New York, NY, receiving date stamp of 12 January 1943 provides the return date. The Morgan Annex, noted between the canceling bars, was the site at the New York, N.Y. Post Office where, according to the city’s postmaster, “all mail articles, including registered, originating at, or, destined for Axis countries or countries dominated by the Axis were receiving censorship treatment, under supervision of military personnel [before being returned to sender].”<sup>35</sup>



Figure 22  
8 Oct 1942 airmail letter to Clermont-Ferrand,  
“I.C.”,  
returned



Figure 23  
Airmail cover from NYC w/censor tape,  
postmarked 9 Nov 1942

The airmail letter from New York City addressed to Nice (Fig 23) never left the west side of Manhattan. Mailed from West 77th Street and postmarked 9 November 1942, one day after the Anglo-American invasion of North Africa, it was returned four days later by a censor stationed at Morgan Annex on West 33rd Street. Significant details on the

cover include the “Returned / to Sender / by Censor” label on its front; the intended address under the brown tape (revealed by back-lighting as Hotel Windsor, Nice, Alpes Maritimes, France); and, on the back, a Morgan Annex receiving mark dated 13 November 1942. All told, a “trans-Atlantic” midtown Manhattan study in the censor’s art.

.....

#### Liberation: June 1944 - May 1945



Figure 24  
13 Sept 1944 letter to Paris

Three tempestuous years after the United States entered the war, and three months after D-Day, limited mail service from the United States was resumed to liberated areas of France. As Allied armies fought their way eastward following the landings in Normandy on 6 June 1944, and the liberation of Paris on 25 August, mail service to France was gradually resumed only as regions became secure and postal infrastructure was re-introduced. Acceptance of “non-illustrated postcards” to Normandy’s Manche *département* on September 4 marked the start of the service. Cards were to be sent by surface mail. The messages were to be written in English or French, confined to “personal or family matters,” and addressed to civilians only. The Post

Office Department emphasized that the service was limited “to ordinary post cards exclusively.”<sup>36</sup>

Alas, misunderstandings promptly led to “Returned to Sender / Service Suspended” cachets sprouting on cards and letters addressed to France. On 13 September, just days after restricted service to the Normandy area was begun, a mailer in New York City exhibited a double misunderstanding. She addressed a letter, not a postal card, to Paris (Fig 24), which did not yet have a functioning mail link to the United States. The letter traveled as far as the Morgan Annex, from which it was returned on 26 September.





Figure 25  
25 Sept 1944 postal card from NYC to Bréhéville

Geography — ignorance of it — defeated some mailers' attempts. On 25 September a woman named Gabrielle in New York City properly sent a postal card (Fig 25), in French, dealing with personal or family matters: "Dear cousins, my dear Léon," the translation reads, "I am taking advantage of the authorization to write to France by means of a postal card; therefore excuse me for my brevity in writing to you in order to get news about your little family and your wife and pretty daughters...." But the card was addressed to the village of Bréhéville in the Meuse *département*, the Lorraine region of north-east France, whose liberation would only come months later after bitter fighting. The card was promptly returned to sender.

Success came at last for a persistent mailer named Gladys who lived in New York City. She wrote a postal card to her

friend Alga who lived in Le Bouscat, a town near Bordeaux in the Gironde *département*. Effective from 10 October, a limited mail service was extended to many *départements* in continental France; five days later the Gironde *département* was included in a further extension of restricted mail service.<sup>37</sup>

On her postal card postmarked 9 November (Fig 26) Gladys explained to her friend: "I have written you a letter, but it was returned. They will only accept postal cards, so can only tell you that we are all well, and hope that you are, too." This card was itself returned from the post office — the international postcard rate was three cents, not one cent. Undaunted, Gladys paid the postage due. Her card received an NYC civil censorship handstamp and sailed off to Le Bouscat, where, on date uncertain, it was received by Alga.

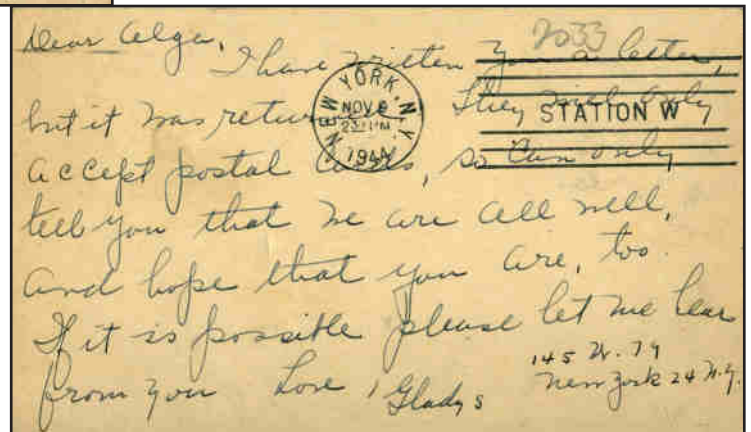


Figure 26  
9 Nov 1944 postcard to Le Bouscat,  
front & back



Figure 27  
Special delivery letter to Paris, 1 Dec 1944, in *Prexie Era*, Winter 2009

As war conditions allowed, the Post Office Department permitted mailing of “weight restricted surface letters, and eventually special services such as registered mail, airmail, and special delivery. Full restoration of mail service did not take place to the whole of France, however, until August 1945, a full three months after Germany capitulated.”<sup>38</sup> The special delivery letter to Paris postmarked 1 December 1944 (Fig 27) was sent on the very date that special delivery and registry services to liberated areas of continental France were resumed.<sup>39</sup> The 25¢ franking included the 5¢ international surface rate plus 20¢ paid for “special delivery service at the usual international rates applicable thereto,” in Post Office officialese.

Why did the mailer not use airmail to speed his special delivery trans-Atlantic letter? He had no choice. The French PTT Service had been severely affected by the war. By the end of the war, 25 percent of post offices, 50 percent of mail wagons, and 75 percent of Paris’s post vans had been lost, destroyed, or stolen. Old German warplanes were used to start up airmail services again.<sup>40</sup> Airmail service to France (and other countries of western Europe) was not resumed until 21 June 1945, more than a month after VE Day.<sup>41</sup>

With restoration of postal services, the French postal administration revealed in 1945 that for five years — since the fateful days of June 1940 — it kept in its possession some mail originating in the United States and sent in transit via France. Illustrating this is an airmail registered letter addressed to Rohatyn, Poland (Fig 28). The New York City postmaster’s “Returned to Sender” label indicated that “this article was held in France during the German occupation and has now been released by the French authorities.” The back of the envelope reveals registry acceptance at Inman Square, Massachusetts, on 30 August 1939. The next day — one day before German forces invaded Poland — the letter passed through the New York Post Office foreign section on its way to Poland via France. A postmark recorded its presence in Paris on 8 August 1940. There,

in recently occupied France, its transit to occupied Poland ended. The letter remained sequestered in Paris until it returned via New York City to Cambridge, Massachusetts on 29 May 1945. As the postmaster explained: “The French service withheld from dispatch the articles which contained valuable enclosures in order to prevent their falling into the hands of the German authorities, and arranged to have them kept throughout the occupation of Northern France. These articles were returned to the United States for eventual return to the senders.”<sup>42</sup>

The war had accelerated the worldwide construction of airfields and the development of long-distance land-based planes. Remember Dr Armand Mayer, who in 1940 departed the Hôtel du Teich in Ax-les-Thermes near the Spanish border “without leaving an address”? At war’s end he was living in Paris, helping restore France’s dams, roads, railways and airfields. Airfields like these were in nearly universal service. The airplanes that flew from them became emblematic of the postwar era, supplanting the Clipper flying boats. Restoration of trans-Atlantic postal services proceeded apace with the rapid development of ocean-spanning commercial planes like the land-based four-engine Lockheed Constellation and Douglas DC-4. For people in the United States who had waited so long to communicate with friends and relatives in France, this finally meant safe, uninterrupted travel and regular delivery for their mail.

As for Rick and Ilsa, though they could not share the plane ride from Casablanca to Lisbon in December 1941, together they would always have Paris.

#### Acknowledgments

My thanks go to Susan Tiefenbrun for translation, Louis Fiset for information about and permission to use his 1940 postal card and 1945 special delivery letter to Paris, and Dieter Leder, Barbara Priddy, Bob Wilcsek, and John Wilson for fruitful email discussions about airmail and many other aspects of wartime US mail to France.





Figure 28  
Letter to Rohatyn, Poland,  
held in France for 5 years,  
front & back

## End Notes

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22. Boyle, p. 420.
23. The extraordinary story of Perpignan and historic Rousillon (the region which today borders the Spanish districts of Lleida and Girona and the Principality of Andorra) is admirably told by Norman Davies. *Vanished Kingdoms: The Rise and Fall of States and Nations*. NY, NY: Viking, 2012. See Chapter 4, "Aragon: A Mediterranean Empire (1137-1714)," pp.151-227.
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# Everywhere but Greece: The Travels of two WWII Cameroun Airmails to Greece, Returned Due to the Suspension of Services

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Figure 1

The two covers presented here came to my attention because of their connection to Greece in the months leading to the German occupation in WWII and the ensuing severing of communications between Greece and the outside world. I understand though that their story may also be of interest to collectors of African airmails of this period, especially in terms of postal rates and routes. As I am no expert in the intricacies of African airmail, I owe thanks to Bill Mitchell for offering all the information on the postal rates, and Barbara Priddy for clarifying the routes. Of course, any inaccuracies are entirely my own.

The first cover (Fig 1) illustrates perfectly the complexities of the transmission of mail, especially airmail, during the Second World War. Mailed from Douala, in Cameroun, on 12 September 1940, the cover was addressed to Mytilene, the capital of the island of Lesbos in Greece (most likely to a family member, as the recipient's name, Argyriadou, could be the female equivalent of Argyros, the sender's name). The sender was a Greek who had some form of business in Douala, as we can see from the specially printed envelope.

The sender applied to the cover stamps worth 9 francs and 75 centimes and handed it over to the Douala post office. The chapter on Cameroun in Picirilli's book (p 46) notes that the *Journal Officiel du Cameroun* did not publish air-mail surtaxes to non-French community destinations. In this case it seems that the Douala post office staff probably relied on the most recent scale of changes available to them, which would have been those in force immediately before the fall of France in June 1940. These were (as found in Picirilli's book):

- Foreign surface rate of 2 francs 50 for the first 20g (tariff of 1 February 1940; Table 4.2, p 42) plus
- Air surtax Cameroun to France of 3 francs per 5g (tariff of 10 October 1938; Table 4.4, p 43) plus
- Onward airmail transmission between France and European destinations of 1 franc 25 (tariff of 29 November 1939; Table 2.9, p 12)

This letter (its contents are since lost) must have weighed between 5 and 10g, and the sender was therefore charged  $2F50 + 6F$  (double the airmail rate Cameroun-France of 3F per 5g) +  $1F25 = 9F75$ .

The cover was handed over unsealed for verification of its contents, a procedure used for all commercial and business paper mail in Cameroun (Bratzel, 88). This was clearly an envelope meant for business purposes. The contents were passed by censor in Douala, who applied the two circular handstamps **CONTROLE POSTAL \* Commission A / TERRITOIRE DU CAMEROUN**.

So far, one might think, so good. Unfortunately, a bit of fate, the circumstances of war and a bit of bad luck conspired to render this Greek's letter undeliverable. And, at the time, there was no real reason for it to be undeliverable. In September 1940 Greece was neutral and the Italian invasion of Greek soil was over a month and a half away (28/10/1940); though this invasion did not stop mail in or out of Greece. The German invasion, which did sever communications between Greece and the outside world, was not to start until 6 April 1941; seven months away! Actually getting out of Cameroun was the first of the many problems facing this cover. In late August 1940, Cameroun





Figure 2

– having previously sided with Vichy France following the fall of France – had gone over to the Free French and de Gaulle. Consequently, the French Aéromaritime, whose route Niamey-Pointe Noire served the coast of French Equatorial Africa, terminated at Cotonou and no airmail service was available out of Douala until 16 October 1940 (Proud, 828).

So, at this point in the cover's adventures, the Douala Post Office may not have known exactly what to do with it. Logically, it should have been loaded onto a local steamer to Lagos. From there, the cover had two options: either to Cairo via BOAC's Takoradi-Cairo Landplane route or to South Africa and, from there, to Cairo on BOAC's Durban-Cairo leg of the Horseshoe route. Instead (by human error perhaps?) it was put on a northbound ship all the way to the UK; the absence of a Lagos censorship mark indicative of it avoiding Nigeria altogether. In Britain it met with the censor again, who opened and re-sealed it with the OPENED BY EXAMINER 4237 tape. Its long journey then continued via steamer all the way to South Africa and onwards from Durban to Cairo via BOAC's Horseshoe route.

How long did the journey to Egypt take? Well, the Egyptians seem to have stopped forwarding mail to Greece – after June 1940 only possible by steamer across the Mediterranean – by mid-April 1941, soon after the Germans invaded Greece. I assume therefore that this cover did not reach Cairo before March-April 1941 at the earliest; nearly seven months after posting... By the time it was passed by Egyptian censor – opened and re-sealed with OPENED BY CENSOR / EGYPTIAN CENSORSHIP tape – the German invasion was under way. The Cairo PO marked the cover with Return to Sender and returned it the way it had come, down to South Africa but this time via surface mail. In South Africa it received the bilingual (English/

Afrikaans) handstamp MAIL SERVICE SUSPENDED / POSDIENS GES[TAAK] and Cape Town Returned Letter Office cds (7/10/1941). Once again, the time it took to return from Egypt to Cape Town is considerable, perhaps best explained by assuming that there was no hurry to return undeliverable mail to its sender, along a route already heavily congested.

From Cape Town, this weary cover was sorted into a mail bag back to the UK, though there may have been better options for a swifter return to sender, such as a steamer to Nigeria or a route via the Belgian Congo. In any case, the cover found itself back in the hands of a British censor, who opened it for a second time and resealed it with the OPENED BY EXAMINER 444 tape. The need for yet a second examination by a British censor may seem excessive but the explanation for this may lie in the fact that this appeared to be commercial mail (even though it was actually family correspondence). It was also diverted mail. According to British Censorship procedures, diverted trade mail was to be 100% examined (Morenweiser, 22).

Having been through four pairs of censors' hands, breached thrice and circumnavigated the African continent twice, this cover will have eventually found its way back to Douala from Britain. It is a pity that there is no return marking to give us an indication as to when.

The second cover presented here (Fig 2) was mailed on 25 March 1941, from M'Balmayo in Cameroun, this time to Athens. The sender was, again, a Greek. Using the information on the postal rates above, we can break down the postage of 6 francs and 75 centimes as follows: 2F50 (foreign surface rate) + 3F (the airmail rate Cameroun-France per 5g) + 1F25 (France to European destination by air) = 6F75. This time the cover does have its contents and I can confirm it does weigh less than 5g!

From M'Balmayo the letter travelled 286 kilometres by rail to Douala on the M'Balmayo-Otélé branch line (37 kilometres) and then on the Otélé-Douala line (249 kilometres. Bratzel, pp 71, 137-8). In Douala it was censored and the circular handstamps **CONTROLE POSTAL \* Commission A / TERRITOIRE DU CAMEROUN** were applied.

The sender had specified that he wanted his letter conveyed to Cairo along the Lagos-Khartoum-Egypte route, as per his typed instruction on the envelope. In March 1941 there were two routes that suited the sender's wishes. One was Sabena's Takoradi to Cairo route via Lagos, the Belgian Congo and Khartoum; the other was BOAC's Trans-Africa Landplane route departing from Takoradi to Cairo, also via Lagos and Khartoum. In the absence of a Lagos censor (and since all mail out of Cameroun and French Equatorial Africa which passed through Lagos was censored there) it looks like the route flown by Sabena is the likeliest. Starting at Takoradi, Sabena's route flew to Lagos, Douala, Liberge and Stanleyville. At Stanleyville the mail changed planes and flew to Juba, Khartoum and terminated at Cairo. There was a Sabena flight out of Douala on 26 March, but it is unlikely this cover would have made it on to that flight. The next flight out of Douala was on 2 April, allowing plenty of time for the train journey and the censor's work. Assuming it caught the 2 April flight out of Douala, the cover arrived at Stanleyville on the 3rd, stopped overnight, changed plane and departed the following day arriving at Cairo on 5 April (Proud, p 918). In Cairo the envelope was opened and its contents were passed by censor, who used the typical OPENED BY CENSOR / EGYPTIAN CENSORSHIP tape to re-seal it and applied the square Postal Censor and boxed B885 (on reverse) handstamps. A Cairo machine date stamp reveals that this cover had been processed by the Cairo PO and censored by 14 April. From there, it should have travelled

by rail to Alexandria to make the crossing to Greece by steamer. Contemporary postal history shows that after arrival in Cairo, mail to Greece usually took another 2½ - 3 weeks to reach the Greek capital. The nine-day processing of this particular cover in Cairo (arrival and censorship) is not out of the ordinary.

It seems though that the Egyptians had little faith that the mail would reach Athens before the Germans did – their invasion had begun on 6 April; by mid-April the Greek defences were collapsing, Thessalonica had been taken (9/4) and the German forces were penetrating deep into Central Greece. The Cairo PO employee applied the Return to Sender handstamp and the cover made its way back to Douala at an unknown date.

One final note that may be of interest is the sender's remark that the post is a much cheaper alternative to a telegram. As he writes, "they charge 1,000 francs for a telegram Douala - London and London - Athens."

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## SHORTER ITEMS - INCLUDING QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

### West African Airmail to Marseille Transiting at Niamey

Sens Madagascar-Congo-France-Belgique			SERVICE SABENA DATES DE DEPART D'ELISABETHVILLE :	
JOURS	RÉGIE MALGACHE		AVRIL	4 18
JEUDI	TANANARIVE MOZAMBIQUE		MAI	2 16 30
VENDREDI	MOZAMBIQUE BROKEN - HILL ELISABETHVILLE		JUIN	13 27
SAMEDI	SABENA	AIR AFRIQUE	JUILLET	11 25
	ELISABETHVILLE N'GULE (facultatif) BOKINA KAMINA LUPUTA (facultatif) LULUABOURG LUEBO PORT - FRANCOU	ELISABETHVILLE - KAMINA LULUABOURG PORT FRANCOU BANNINGVILLE	AOUT	8 22
DIMANCHE	PORT - FRANCOU BANNINGVILLE LEOPOLDVILLE COQUILHATVILLE	BANNINGVILLE BRAZZAVILLE COQUILHATVILLE	SEPTEMBRE	5 19
LUNDI	COQUILHATVILLE BANGUI FORT - ARCHAMBAULT FORT - LAMY	COQUILHATVILLE BANGUI FORT - ARCHAMBAULT FORT - LAMY	SERVICE AIR AFRIQUE DATES DE DEPART D'ELISABETHVILLE :	
MARDI	FORT - LAMY ZINDER NIAMEY GAO	FORT - LAMY ZINDER NIAMEY GAO	AVRIL	11 25
MERCREDI	GAO REGGAN	GAO AOULEF EL - GOLEA	MAI	9 23
JEUDI	REGGAN COLOMB - BECHAR ORAN	EL - GOLEA ALGER	JUIN	6 20
VENDREDI	ORAN MARSEILLE PARIS BRUXELLES	BRUXELLES - ALGER, consulter horaires AIR FRANCE	JUILLET	4 18
† Correspondance STANLEYVILLE - COQUILHATVILLE.			AOUT	1 15 29
DIMANCHE	SABENA		SEPTEMBRE	12 26
	STANLEYVILLE BASOKO BUNBA LISALA BASANKUSU COQUILHATVILLE			

Figure 1

With reference to Marty Bratzel's Cameroun cover in the June issue of the Journal (Whole N° 272, pages 70-71), I am unable to help with the rates or the anomalous 1947 handstamp, but there is a very interesting story attached to the transit time.

Figure 1 shows the timetable for April-October 1936, an extract from the Sabena *Horaires et tarifs du 20 avril au 30 octobre 1936*, kindly copied to me many years ago by Norman Clowes. The weekly plane, alternately Sabena and Régie Air Afrique, left Elisabethville on Saturday, transited Niamey, where it off-loaded mail for Cotonou and picked up mail from Cotonou, on Tuesday, and arrived at Marseille on Friday (the RAA mail was transferred at Algiers to an Air France flying-boat).

Aéromaritime maintained a weekly shuttle between Cotonou and Niamey to connect with the trans-Saharan services. The flight took less than half a day. In theory, then, a letter which was at Cotonou on or before a Monday should have caught the plane that transited Niamey on Tuesday and arrived at Marseille Friday. In practice, the flight could

be even faster. Figure 2 shows the front and back of a cover posted in Porto Novo Saturday 22 August 1936, back-stamped in transit at Cotonou Sunday 23 August and at Marseille Gare Avion Thursday 27 August, and on arrival in Paris Friday 28 August. (Somewhere along the way it has acquired a 'Visitez l'Afrique Noire' cachet: I have not seen this on another Dahomey cover and any comments would be welcome.)

This cover was carried on the Sabena flight which departed Elisabethville Saturday 22 August and transited Niamey 25 August, and Marty's cover should have been carried on the next Sabena flight, which was scheduled to depart Elisabethville 5 September, transit Niamey 8 September, and arrive at Marseille 10 or 11 September.

Was the delay due to an error in handling this particular cover at Cotonou or even Niamey? Figure 3 shows a cover posted at Cotonou 7 September 1936, which should also have been carried on this Sabena flight, but also with a transit mark of Paris of 18 September. Two covers is more than a coincidence, so the cause of the delay lay elsewhere.



Figure 2



Figure 3

I checked Gérard Collot's *Lignes Africaines* for 1936 and Nierinck's *Recovered Mail*. The outward-bound Sabena flight which left Brussels 29 August and should have arrived at Elisabethville 4 September was delayed by bad weather after inaugurating the stop at Libenge. Then, after leaving Coquilhatville 4 September, the plane suffered an engine failure and made an emergency landing in a field near Lac Tumba, which damaged it beyond repair. I have not found

it stated anywhere, so am unable to say for certain, but this may well have led to the cancellation of the homeward-bound flight of 5 September. Marty's cover, together with mine, was therefore carried on the RAA flight which departed Elisabethville 12 September, transited Niamey 15 September, and arrived at Marseille 17 or 18 September. Not crash covers, but what you might call 'consequential delay' covers.

Barbara Priddy



## Lack of RF Overprint on Dated Corner Block

In the June 2014 Journal (page 78), Anthony Greaves asks why his *coin daté* block of 50c turquoise *Postes Françaises* Mercury dated 8.1.45 has no “RF” overprint.

The answer is quite simple, the block illustrated is Yvert

549, first issued in 1942, the unoverprinted version which was overprinted “RF” and issued in 1944 (Yvert 660).

*Coins datés* exist for Yvert 549 for the years 42-45, the block in question, 45, is catalogued at 5 euros.

Richard Broadhurst

Following the Liberation of France on 25 August 1944 and the proclamation of the Fourth Republic, the French postal administration made two gestures of patriotism. Firstly, all stamps bearing the portrait of Pétain were demonetised with effect from 1 November 1944. Secondly, remainder sheets of the four Mercury issues of 1942 inscribed POSTES FRANÇAISES were overprinted R.F.

However when the time came for new printings of the

Mercury issue (end of 1944 and early 1945) the initial rapture of the Liberation had receded and the stamps were issued without the overprint.

Dr Joany comments in his book *Nomenclature des Timbres-Poste de France*, Vol VI, Page 37, that ‘the RF overprint was applied to these stamps more to satisfy the emotions of the day than through any necessity. It made available to everyone an affordable souvenir of the restoration of the Republic’.

Mick Bister

## Cameroun Postmark Identification – Help Please

The postmark on the 40-centimes Cameroun postage stamp depicted here is dated \* / 8 - 4 / 27. Single-circle cancels, ~26½mm in diameter, were not otherwise introduced into Cameroun until some 25 years later, in the mid-1950s. The wording at the top reads ... OUNDE CAMEROUN followed by an asterisk. This format, with the country name immediately following the town name, which we can reasonably conclude is Yaoundé, has only been recorded on two 30mm diameter cancellers, introduced in the late 1940s, that read *Douala Cameroun / Chargements* or *Douala Cameroun / Télégraphe*. On those cancellers, the date is a single line, set with wheels, not with slugs as for the illustrated postmark.

The word at the bottom of the postmark is an abbreviation. Only the portion immediately preceding the asterisk is visible – ... PR. I presume that there is an asterisk preceding YAOUNDE, which would leave space for a five or six (plus or minus) lettered word at the bottom.

I have no reason to think that the cancel is not genuine. I have seen stranger for Cameroun.

Your help, please to determine that wording. Has any reader encountered a similarly worded / abbreviated cancel for another colony or overseas territory during the 1920s? I considered an abbreviation for *Chargements* or *Télégraphie*, but the usual abbreviations for those words do not compute with what we can read. I also considered the service cancels used in Cameroun during the 1920s – devices with a dashed inner circle that read *Postes et Télégraphes du Cameroun* with a single asterisk – but, again, nothing connects. Could the handstamp have been for internal PTT use, or could it have been non-postal, intended for use by another branch of the government?

The stamp was offered on eBay in a lot of 129 mint and used French Cameroun postage stamps accompanied by 7 German Kamerun stamps. Other than the stamp and



postmark depicted here, all appeared “routine” to me, but the lot attracted 13 bids from 8 different bidders and sold for \$40.00 USD. Knowing that I could not bid that much for just one interesting stamp, I contacted the vendor, Dan Cohen, aka dan-the-stamp-man, prior to the close of the auction. Dan kindly and promptly sent me a 1200 dpi scan of the stamp, thereby allowing all of us to share in this discovery. Again, your assistance would be appreciated to resolve the mystery about the wording on the cancel.

My sincere thanks to Dan for providing the scan and helping make philately even more fun.

Marty Bratzel

## Cameroun Mail

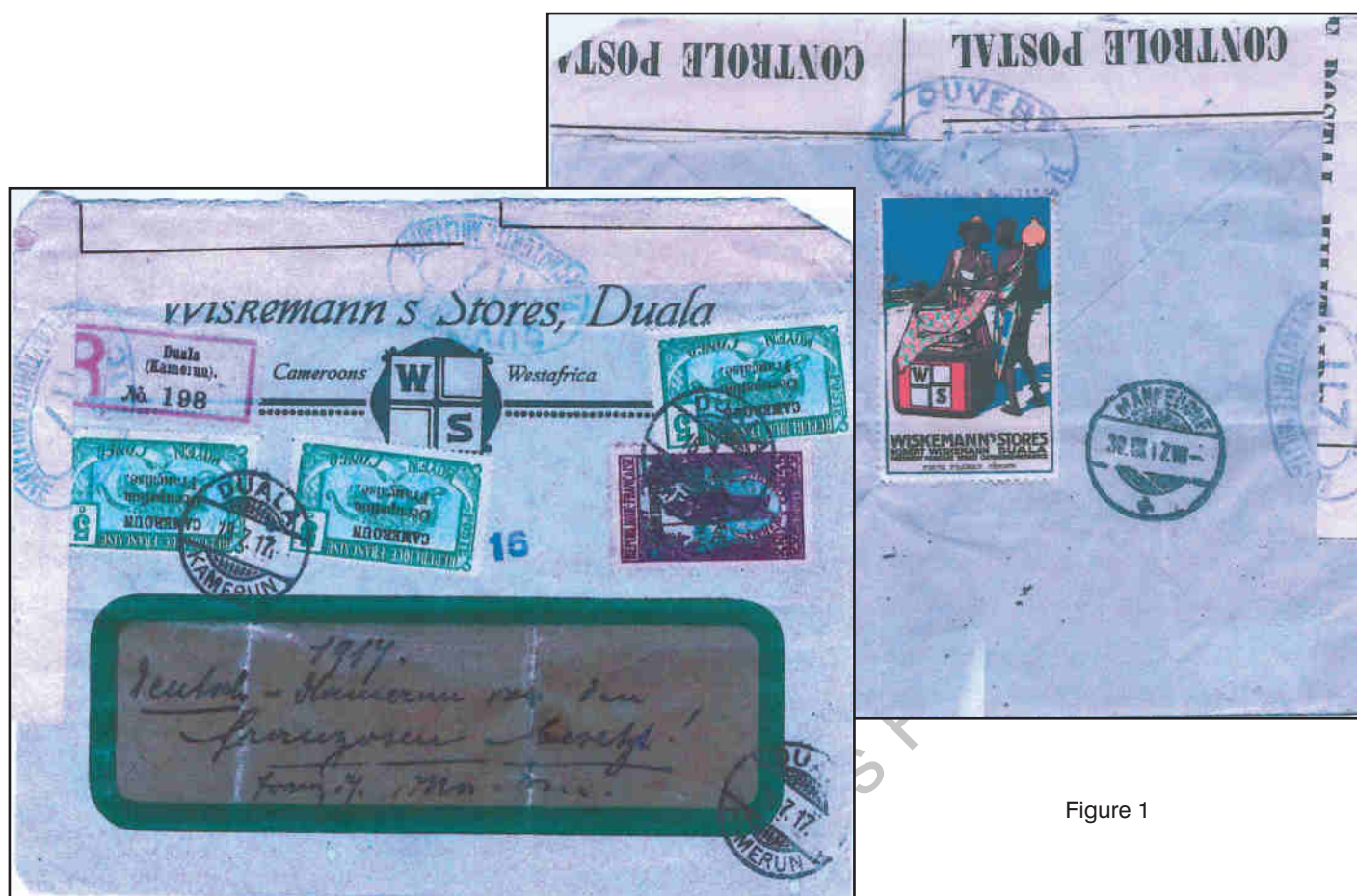


Figure 1



Figure 2

Two recent finds with the same dealer found at Swinplex may interest collectors of Cameroun.

The earlier item (Fig 1) is a commercial window envelope printed for Wiskemann's Stores of Duala in the German period to – I believe – Mannedorf, Czechoslovakia. From Duala 18.07.1917 it is censored by French military censor and has French censor tapes; sent registered post, it shows the use of a German registration label, and is backstamped 30.8.1917. Interestingly the reverse flap was originally sealed by a *vignette* issued by the store in question, not previously seen by me, this being tied to the cover by censor strike. Postage of 50c has been met by Middle Congo issues overprinted. The rate for such correspondence from

the French sector of Togo, also under joint administration at this time, was 25c registration fee and 25c postage for an item to a foreign destination. The window box for the address to be shown unfortunately carries a dealer's note, which slightly detracts from the cover.

The second purchase (Fig 2) is also the first example of its kind seen by me. This is a newspaper wrapper for *Le Cameroun libre*: the paper was not included but the stamp affixed has been carefully removed from the printed matter. Posted from Yaoundé 14.11.1941 I think the incomplete red 'mark' top right is a censor strike and not an arrival cancel. It was sent to Nyasaland, an unusual destination I suspect for wartime Cameroun mail.

John Mayne



## Togo —the 1921 issues, perhaps the last word!



Figure 1



Figure 2

Our editor has shown considerable patience – thank you Maurice – re this issue where Stanley Gibbons quote in France and Colonies Catalogue 2010 the earliest known date individual stamps forming this issue were first used. It is accepted they were introduced gradually as earlier issues were exhausted, probably limited in the early days to Lomé and Anécho post offices.

Many years ago I acquired the cover in Figure 1, I appreciated it was philatelic but was 'hooked' for several reasons:

1. It was endorsed by a philatelic dealer from Belgium.
2. I had seen no other Togo mail from the occupation period with a Belgian connection.
3. It had an early French registration label, 24, for Anécho.

4. Inside the cover was an advert for a Belgian stamp auction.
5. The letter arrived after the auction!
6. I was puzzled by the number 4510, perhaps a USA registration number for tracing purposes.

Sometimes it is all too easy to disregard philatelic covers, such as this, but it paid dividends perhaps to acquire it. For several years a friend has accompanied me to over 50 displays across the UK, Aberystwyth to Nottingham, Renfrew to Redruth, he knows my Togo collection as well as I do, and invariably draws my attention to any item he sees that may be of interest. He telephoned regarding two covers on eBay (Figs 2 and 3), adding he doubted if they would be of interest as they were philatelic but he thought I had a similar one. The two were offered as one lot. The salient features were:



Figure 3

1. Both were to the same address as the cover owned.
2. Both passed down the same route.
3. Both were posted the same day 13.02.1922 as the one owned.
4. The American(?) registration numbers were consecutive.
5. The French registration labels were not consecutive.
6. The 'new' covers also had advertising literature, each of a different nature.
7. They too were philatelic but the three combined illustrated all seventeen values of the set.

I have advised Stanley Gibbons of this find as eleven of the seventeen values illustrated have an earlier date than the one in the catalogue, the values are 1c, 2c, 4c, 15c, 20c, 35c, 40c, 50c, 75c, 2F and 5F. Whilst of no great value nevertheless an interesting find, especially when one considers the three covers are reconciled in the fourth country with which they have connections. The two latter covers were acquired from the United States, the first in England, over 91 years after being posted, an amazing coincidence.

John Mayne

## Importance of Surnames

Do you know the surnames of your near relatives? I am referring not only to your living relatives, but also to those as far back as 6 May 1840 (the date of the first postage stamp in the world – the “Penny Black” of GB). The oldest date patently depends on the earliest date of your collection.

My concern with genealogy goes back to 1952; when I returned from the war in Korea and had three months leave. My father had died recently, my mother's morale was consequently low and to raise it I got her going on Genealogy – a subject in which I still keep an interest.

Now to the main part of these anecdotes! In 1985 I was exchanging GB Queen Victoria “Penny Reds” etc. After a mutually successful two hours my friend said “I will now show you my best envelope”. I was interested despite NEVER being a collector of envelopes! He then produced a typical Victorian folded envelope with a “One Penny Black” stamp on it and postmarked “9 May 1840”. One of the very EARLIEST letters to be sent by the new “postage” system!!

I saw that the letter was addressed to “Mrs Henry Pomeroy, Trinity Square, Dublin”! I said “I think she is one of my forebears but I am not certain; who wrote the letter?” My friend

said that he had never read it and thus we opened it and – wonder of wonders – found that it was signed “Your affectionate brother William Truell”. He was my great-grandfather writing to his married sister!!!

My friend gave me a photocopy of the whole letter which I found to be remarkably interesting as it was about how William had recently become the Vicar of Stoke-sub-Hamden (a village near Yeovil in Somerset), how he had bought four acres of ground from the Duchy of Cornwall and how he was going to build a Rectory there – also how the Archbishop of Canterbury had kindly agreed to send him fifteen pounds towards his expenses!

I made copies of the letter, and gave copies to several interested persons in Stoke-sub-Hamden. Sadly the “new” Rectory had been in private hands for many years!

When I asked my friend how he had acquired the envelope he told me that it had been in a “lot” of thirty, one of which was signed by the famous author Robert Louis Stevenson!

What are the odds of the above happening?!!! How many readers of this article have missed seeing a similar letter concerning themselves?? Good hunting!!!

George Truell



## World War II Map of Occupied France



Lest any reader might draw the wrong inference from the map shown on page 57 of the June 2014 issue of the Journal (included in the article by Lawrence Sherman on the United States mail to France in World War II) and reproduced above, I feel I should point out that it contains two errors.

The deep green parts of France adjacent to its Italian border are described as “Italian acquisitions 1940-1944”. This must be wrong because Italy surrendered on 8 September 1943! The territory shown was “acquired” by Italy in the brief period between attacking France on 21 June

1940 and the Armistice that was signed on 24 June and became effective on 25 June 1940. The shaded area shown as “under Italian occupation after November 11 1942” is also inaccurate.

This map closely resembles similar maps in Wikipedia. The English version is different from the French one! A monograph [entitled *The postal history of the two-phased Italian occupation of south-east France, 1940-1943*] soon to be published by F&CPS will show that both of these are also misleading (in other respects).

David Trapnell

### FRANCE 1920 TO DATE

THE BASIC STAMPS OF FRANCE MINT & FINE USED  
BLOCS CARNETS SERVICE PRÉOBLITÉRÉS TAXE  
ANTI TB BACK OF THE BOOK KILOWARE

PLEASE SEND FOR LATEST LISTS

ALL ITEMS SENT ON APPROVAL DISCOUNTS FOR F&CPS MEMBERS

### FRANCE STAMPS

PO BOX 448 TEDDINGTON TW11 1AZ  
EMAIL: [francestamps@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:francestamps@tiscali.co.uk)  
TEL: 020 8943 1421

## Society Regional Programmes

### London Group Programme 2014-2015

Hon. Convenor: Len Barnes

Wed 17 Sept 2014 - New Projects and Acquisitions

Wed 15 Oct 2014 - Godfrey Bowden: Algeria

Wed 19 Nov 2014 - Bob Larg: Further Exploits

Wed 18 Feb 2015 - Maurice Alder: 60 Years of Collecting

Wed 15 April 2015 - Mick Bister: Marianne de Muller & Marianne de Cheffer

Sat 9 May 2015 - AGM (11.30) & Auction (2.00)

Wed 15 July 2015 - This meeting has unfortunately had to be cancelled.

\* \* \*

### Northern Group Programme 2014-2015

Hon. Convenor: Stephen Holder

Sat 22 Nov 2014 - Steve Ellis: Maritime Mail

Sat 7 March 2015 - Chris Hitchen: Aspects of Paris

Sat 11 July 2015 - Members' Displays

\* \* \*

### Wessex Group Programme 2014-2015

Hon. Convenors: Peter Kelly & Alan Wood

Sat 11 Oct 2014 - Tony Howgrave-Graham: French Classics  
Chris Hitchen: Lozenges & Railways

Further meetings in January, July & October 2015 will be announced later.

\* \* \*

### Midland Meeting 2014

Hon. Convenor: Steve Ellis

Wed 1 Oct 2014 - Peter Kelly: Réunion from the early days to 1900  
Members' Displays

See the flier enclosed with the last Journal for full details.

\* \* \*

### Annual Philatelic Weekend 2015

This will be held at Charlecote, near Stratford-upon-Avon, from Friday 13 to Sunday 15 March 2015. Further details will be published in due course.

\* \* \*

*Venues and full contact details are given on page 86 of this Journal and on the enclosed Programme Card.*

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## Articles for the Journal

Members who have submitted articles for the Journal but are still awaiting their publication should not despair.

The Editor intends to publish as many as possible in the December issue of the Journal, and intends to make sure that the remainder appear in one form or another during the course of next year.

He holds the following in his stockpile at present:

Bill Mitchell: The Carton de Wiarts and Belgian Postal Services in France in the First World War

Stan Luft: A Review of the State of the N° 3154 Cancellation as used in Ecuador

David Trapnell: "Les travailleurs" who helped win World War I

David Trapnell: French Forces and the airmails of Tunisia 1919-1956

John Yeomans: Gabon – the Development of the Postal Services 1862-1889

John Yeomans: Tchad – Postal Services in the Period of Military Pacification 1900-1920

John West: The French Connection

John Courtis [non-member]: Newspaper Wrappers of France – Supply and Demand

One or two other articles have been promised but not yet delivered, and it is unlikely that these will now be published in printed format.

However, the Committee are now investigating other options.

Please let the Editor know if during the changeover of responsibilities any others have been inadvertently overlooked.



# REPORTS OF MEETINGS

## MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF 10 MAY 2014

Our president John West opened the meeting at the Calthorpe Arms public house, 252 Gray's Inn Road, London WC1 at 11.30am in the presence of 20 members

**(1) Members Present:** Maurice Alder, Len Barnes, Mick Bister, Godfrey Bowden, Steve Ellis, Michael Fairhead, Roy Ferguson, John Hammonds, Chris Hitchen, Peter Lawrence, Philip Mackey, Barbara Priddy, Michael Round, Robert Small, Colin Spong, Maurice Tyler, John West, Alan Wood, Bob Wood, David Worrollo.

**Guests:** Marian Bister, Chris West

**Apologies:** Richard Broadhurst, Peter Kelly, Ashley Lawrence, Hugh Loudon, Bill Mitchell, John Parmenter, John Thorpe, Paul Watkins

**(2) Minutes of the previous AGM** of 11 May 2013, published in Journal 269 were accepted unanimously as a true record of that meeting. This was proposed by Alan Wood and seconded by John Hammonds

### **(3) President's Report - John West**

"I consider myself extremely fortunate to have been elected to preside over the F&CPS for the past three years. This has been a period when the Society has appeared to blossom and been particularly successful, no more so than to have organised, arranged and provided the keynote display at the 2013 Stampex. The display attracted many plaudits, even more viewers and, most importantly for us, generated a great deal of interest in the Society. My thanks go, once again, to Mick Bister and his enthusiastic band of helpers who were able to maintain a presence throughout the entire exhibition, flying the flag, selling our products and answering the myriad number of questions from visitors to our stall.

"I take a great deal of pride for being at the helm throughout a time when we have continued to publish an award winning Journal and, in addition, have supported – and continue to support – individual members to realise their dreams of having their own material published. Indeed, the stunning tome by Ashley Lawrence on the subject of "The Sower" issue itself proved to be an award winning publication.

"Our philatelic weekend, presently at Charlecote, goes from strength to strength and, although this year's attendance was down slightly from previous years, there was no diminution in the quality of the material on display. Thanks, as ever, go to Peter Kelly and Chris Hitchen who, under the euphemism of "convenors" arrange and organise this philatelic feast for Francophiles. It would also be remiss of me not to mention the work of Annette Tyler, Jean Hammonds and Marian Bister who have raised a substantial sum of money over the years overseeing the sale of books and material.

"The seat of the auction organiser, vacated by Mick Bister, has been filled effortlessly by Steve Ellis who, if he doesn't have a big enough work load, is now attempting to organise a 'Special' all day meeting at Stoke-on-Trent in October,

for anyone who would like to attend. I am content to step down from this exalted position, safe in the knowledge that the baton is to be passed to another safe pair of hands, an enthusiastic philatelist and a man with the Society's interests at his heart and I trust that every member will give him the same degree of commitment and support as they have all given to me.

"Sadly, a Society such as ours is always going to be damaged by the passing of some of its luminaries and none more so than the departure of George Barker in the past few weeks. Although it was evident that our library had become somewhat of a white elephant in recent years, the demise of George has accelerated the necessity for the dissolution of our acclaimed library. This has been brought about by the increasing use of the Internet for research purposes, the heightened cost of postage and the lack of storage facilities. Members will be given an opportunity to purchase many of these books and my thanks go to Stephen Holder for agreeing to list and price this material. Full details will be appearing on our website shortly.

"In conclusion may I take this opportunity to thank every member for their support and help in ensuring that my tenure was both successful and pleasurable."

### **(4) General Secretary's Report - Peter Kelly**

"2013 has been a very successful year for your Society and it can be seen from the reports given at the meeting that all sections have performed well, membership numbers remained stable, and finances are sound.

"The highlight of the year was undoubtedly the Society's presence at Stampex 2013 where members were invited to put up a 100 frame display, for which a detailed report appeared in Journal 269. Organising the displays required a lot of work ably led by our leader, Mick Bister and a small band of volunteers. A small stand was manned throughout the show, an excellent lunch was organised by Ashley Lawrence and a meeting was held, open to the public. All of this proved of interest to those visiting Stampex but the recruitment of new members was disappointing.

"Generally, attendance at meetings has fallen off and this is of concern to the committee. Of particular regret was the decision to close the southern group after all of the years of effort put into it by Colin Spong. Meetings are a core element of the Society's activities and a valuable way in which to increase our knowledge of French philately and also the occasion to meet up with some nice folk too. Our annual Charlecote meeting was very successful and we all enjoyed some excellent displays in comfortable surroundings and good company. If you have not attended one of these it is really well worth giving it a try.

"This report is designed to cover the activities of the Society to 31 December 2013 but circumstances have arisen that I feel need to be brought to the attention of the general membership and this relates specifically to the Journal and the Library.

"The situation regarding the Journal is critical. As you will all be aware, Maurice Tyler stood down at the end of the year as our editor after many years of splendid service, producing a top quality magazine that has won awards and plaudits internationally. Maurice had told us of the problems he had with his eyesight and we had the time and opportunity to appoint a new editor, Howard Fisher, who produced his first journal, N° 271 in March which was beautifully produced. Unfortunately he felt it necessary to give us notice of his intention to resign both editorship and membership with immediate effect because of an acute personal situation. This has left us in a very difficult position with no replacement in sight and little time available to resolve the problem. Maurice, typically, has stepped in and volunteered to edit and produce the June journal which, unless a volunteer appears, may well be the last one you will receive. Obviously the committee will work on a "plan B" in the event of no-one coming forward and the solution could be through the development and expansion of our website.

"The second problem that has arisen concerns the future disposal of the library, magazine and catalogue collection that now have to be moved following the sad loss of George Barker, who died in March. We all owe an immense debt of gratitude to George for all that he has done for the Society over the years in so many ways and particularly in storing and maintaining the library for us. Stephen Holder is now working on the valuation of the library and members will have the opportunity of bidding for the books which will have a reasonably low start price. For those interested the last book list was produced and distributed in 2004 and is also available on the Society website.

"A separate announcement will go out in respect of the magazines for whom a home is sought. These are to be

offered, free of charge but subject to collection, and will cover the entire stock with no cherry picking.

"Over the past few years, members have been told that there may be problems ahead with an ageing committee who cannot take on more and deserve to take on less, and, again, I remind all of you that without committed volunteers the future of your society looks less rosy with each passing year. Action is needed now!"

#### (5) Treasurer's Report - Chris Hitchen

"We made a small surplus of £xxx in 2013. On the income side the Packets did slightly better and the Auction again dipped slightly. Subscriptions increased with the new rates set some 2 years ago to £xxx.

"Meeting costs were a little less due to reduced activity, whilst Journals costs again increased. A new tender for printing the Journal has been received and it was reluctantly decided that we had no choice but to switch as the new terms were better than our old printers could match and included reduced distribution costs. For four Journals over a year the saving should be in the order of between £xxx and £xxx.

"Income from publications will now dry up but the saving on printing should allow us to hold subscriptions at the current level for at least one more year.

"It is no longer possible to be sure of the services that the Society can provide in the future. That means that no meaningful forecast of future income or expenditure can be made. At the moment the position is sound and I will continue to monitor events closely."

The treasurer proposed that the subscription next year should remain unchanged; the proposal was seconded by Mick Bister and Steve Ellis and passed unanimously.

#### FRANCE & COLONIES PHILATELIC SOCIETY BALANCE SHEET AT 31 DECEMBER 2013

<u>CURRENT ASSETS</u>		<u>2013</u>	<u>2012</u>
Cash at bank			
Sundry debtors		_____	_____
<u>DEDUCT CURRENT LIABILITIES</u>			
Sundry creditors			
Subscriptions in advance		_____	_____
		_____	<u>18030.95</u>
<u>TOTAL ASSETS</u> represented by			
<u>MEMBERS FUNDS</u>			
Uncommitted funds at 1.1.2013			
Year surplus (2012 loss)		_____	_____
<b>INCOME &amp; EXPENDITURE 2013</b>			
<u>Expenditure</u>	<u>2013</u>	<u>2012</u>	<u>Income</u>
Meetings			
Journal 4 issues			Auction
Postage and expenses			Exchange packet
Stampex 2013			Interest
Insurance			Donations
Year surplus (2012 loss)	_____	_____	Sale of publications
			Subscriptions
	_____	_____	_____

The accounts were accepted unanimously after a proposal by John Hammonds seconded by Colin Spong



**(6) Auction Secretary's Report - Steve Ellis**

"The first auction in February 2013 was smaller than normal, but larger auctions containing 500 and 544 lots followed in May and October as a consequence of an increased number of vendors offering material. "The average number of bidders remained about the same as in 2012, but the percentage of lots sold rose from 41% to 45%. Despite this there was a fall in the total value of sales with more cheaper lots being offered in the auctions in 2013. As a consequence the surplus to the Society fell

from £xxx in 2012 to £xxx in 2013, but nevertheless this was still a healthy result and well supported by members. it is interesting to note that over the course of the five auctions that I have run, 120 of our members have bid in at least one of these auctions.

"Finally, I can report that sales for the February 2014 auction were the highest for a postal auction for several years. Thank you to the vendors for providing the material and to the bidders for using the Society auction to boost their collections."

FRANCE & COLONIES PHILATELIC SOCIETY					
AUCTION ACCOUNT for the year ending 31 DECEMBER 2013					
INCOME			EXPENDITURE		
2012		2013	2012		2013
SALE OF LOTS			PAYMENTS TO VENDORS		
(including reimbursed Postage & Packing)					
	Feb/Jan			Feb/Jan	
	May			May	
_____	November	_____	_____	November	_____
_____		_____			
BOOKSTALL & BOURSE			BOOKSTALL & BOURSE		
			PRINTING		
			Feb/Jan		
			May		
			_____	November	_____
			POSTAGE		
			Feb/Jan		
			May		
			_____	November	_____
OTHER REVENUE			OTHER OUTGOINGS		
			Banking cost		
			Administration		
			<b>Surplus to Society</b>		
_____	Float b/f from previous yr	_____	_____	Float c/f to next year	_____
_____		_____	_____		-
_____		_____	_____		_____
RECONCILIATION OF CASH POSITION AS OF 31 DECEMBER 2013					
Balance in HSBC Current Account					
Unpresented cheque by vendor					
Surplus to Society					
Float carried forward to 2014 (bank float)					

been extended by the inclusion of several books of vignettes (poster stamps) which some members welcomed as a way of expanding their thematic interests, and there have also been more books of relatively highly-priced items.

“Unfortunately at the beginning of 2014 two packets were lost in transit, and another was damaged as a result of insecure packaging. While the owners of lost or damaged material have been fully compensated, the result is the prospect of higher insurance fees during the coming year. As always, it is essential for every member receiving the packet to be conscious of responsibility for its safe keeping and prompt transmission.”

FRANCE AND COLONIES PHILATELIC SOCIETY				
ACCOUNT FOR 'FRANCE' PACKET 1 JANUARY - 31 DECEMBER 2013				
RECEIPTS		PAYMENTS		
2012	2013	2013	2012	
In hand 1 January: cash at bank		2012 surplus paid to Treasurer		
Deposit a/c		Payment to vendors		
Current a/c		less unrepresented cheque		
		Expenses		
-		Stationery & printing		
		Postage		
Receipts from members				
Cheques pd to bank		In hand 31 December		
Stamps and cash		Deposit a/c		
		Current a/c		
Bank interest				
<u>Books completed during 2013</u>		<u>Cash at bank comprises</u>		
commission on sales		receipts for books still circulating		
insurance refunded		2011 surplus due to Treasurer		
return postage refunded		unrepresented cheque		
balance paid to vendors				

**(8) Report of Packet Secretary (Colonies) - John West**

‘I didn’t realise that includes you!’ I am always reluctant to impose the ultimate sanction upon offenders but people must realise that they are privileged to handle valuable material and they must deal with it as they would wish that others would if it belonged to them. Additionally, for some unknown reason, some members have stopped including a certificate of posting with their remittance slip. I would urge all members to ensure that they obtain this certificate (to provide proof of posting in the event of loss) and to forward it to me with their paperwork in future.

“For the year ending 31 December 2013 I was able to make a payment of £xx to the Society. This total includes commission and insurance received, after postage, stationery and other sundries had been paid for. Finally, may I pay a small tribute to the vast majority of members who are scrupulous with all their dealings with the packet and whose regular compliments and kind comments provide the motivation to encourage me to continue to fulfil this role for a bit longer yet!”



### France and Colonies Colonial Packet accounts 1 January to 31 December 2013

#### Income

Balance b/f from 31 Dec 2012

Receipts from members

2013

Commission on sales

Insurance recovered

Postages recovered

Balance due to vendors \_\_\_\_\_

Total receipts 2013

Bank interest

#### Expenditure

Payments to vendors

Expenses

Surplus 2012 paid to Treasurer

Creditors:

Money received for  
booklets not brought

to account

Retained interest

Surplus 2013 due to Treasurer \_\_\_\_\_

### (9) Editor's Report - Maurice Tyler

"As always, our members have continued producing interesting articles in sufficient number and of good quality, enabling me to fill the Journal quite easily throughout the year. Occasionally articles have also been acquired from authors outside the Society for reprinting in the Journal if they deal with relevant themes that might otherwise be missed by our members.

"Thus, during 2013 the Journal appeared four times as usual and amounted to a total of 176 pages (plus the 16 cover pages) (156 the previous year) of which 164 inside pages were in full colour (136 the previous year). [In effect, all pages will now be available for colour illustrations.]

"These extra pages appeared as a result of giving over the September edition very largely to illustrated summaries of our Society displays at Autumn Stampex 2013. This meant not only that this edition, intended to serve as a catalogue for the exhibition, was an extra large one, but also that the December edition increased in size as well to accommodate major articles that had had to be omitted from the September one. The total cost of producing last year's volume of 4 issues, including expenses, but not those of distribution (i.e. postage and packing), was approximately £xxxx (or £xxx more than the previous year).

"At the end of December I handed over total responsibility for the Journal into the very capable hands of our new Editor, Howard Fisher, who has already shown his skill in producing the March edition of the Journal. Unfortunately, since that issue appeared Howard has reported that for compelling personal reasons he is unable to continue in that post and is having to give up all his philatelic activities.

"I had hoped to have more time to devote to our website, which I had hoped to keep up to date and develop for the greater benefit of members. These plans are now in some disarray as I have offered to resume the editorship on a temporary basis until a solution to this problem can be found. One disappointment, as I reported a year ago, is that very few have found it worthwhile registering for the on-line Forum, that was devised as a vehicle for members to

engage with each other in discussion, raising and answering queries and offering personal opinions within a very short period of time, rather than having to wait for a meeting or for the Journal to arrive on their doorstep. Once again, I would appeal to members to contact me for a username and password to be provided so that they can participate fully in this facility.

"In the meantime, with the help of other members of the committee who have offered to help with such tasks as composing reports (for example, of the Charlecote weekend and of the London meetings) and proof-reading, I will attempt to keep the Journal going, possibly in a reduced format or on a less frequent basis, until the end of this year. I am very willing to give full training during this period to any member with basic skills in editing and publishing, with my earnest wish to hand over the job to a volunteer as soon as possible."

### (10) Librarian's Report

There was no Librarian's report, the current situation of the Library having been fully covered in the General Secretary's report.

### (11) Magazine Circuit Organiser's Report - Chris Hitchen

Chris Hitchen reported that David Pashby would shortly be returning to his native New Zealand and would be retiring from his post as Magazine Circuit Organiser. A vote of thanks was given for the sterling work undertaken by David over a long period of time. Richard Broadhurst has volunteered to take over the role.

### (12) Publications Stockist - Richard Broadhurst

"2013 was another highly successful year for the sale of our publications with nearly £xxxx surplus going to the Society's funds adding to the previous year's total of £xxxx. During the year both the Picarilli Rates book and Ashley Lawrence's Sower book completely sold out leaving us with only Derek Richardson's Rates book as our major source of income. There is a steady trickle of sales of older books and back Journals but the income in future years, unless we publish a new book, will inevitably be significantly down on what it has been recently."

### (13) Election of Officers and Committee (2014-2015)

The office of President was handed over by John West to his successor Steve Ellis who thanked John for his three years stoical service to the Society. The list of those willing to serve as officers and committee members had been published in the Agenda and their election *en bloc* was proposed by David Worrollo, seconded by John Hammonds and passed unanimously.

President:	Mr S R Ellis
General Secretary:	Mr P R A Kelly
Membership Secretary:	Mr P S Watkins
Treasurer:	Mr C J Hitchen
Editor:	Mr M S Tyler
Auction Secretary:	Mr S R Ellis
Packet Secretary (France):	Mr R G E Wood

Packet Secretary (Colonies):	Mr J C West
Committee members:	Mr M L Bister
	Mr R N Broadhurst
	Mr A J Lawrence
	Mr J Parmenter
	Mr C W Spong

For information: Group Convenors are:

Mr L H Barnes (London )
Mr C S Holder (Northern)
Mr P R A Kelly & Mr A J Wood (Wessex).

### (14) Any Other Business

There being no other business the meeting closed and members adjourned for lunch.

MLB

## WESSEX GROUP MEETING OF 28 JUNE 2014

**Ingrid Swinburn: World War II Mail in France**  
**Ashley Lawrence: French Post Offices in the Ottoman Empire**

The principal displays were given by Ingrid Swinburn and Ashley Lawrence, as the second advertised speaker, Peter Todd, was unable to attend and will give his display at a later date.

Ingrid gave us a display on World War II mail starting with the period of the phony war and covering mail sent within France and to foreign destinations. What we found to be particularly interesting was the background information that Ingrid was able to give us, the way in which businesses continued to operate and also the impact of refugees. Examples of censored mail were shown as well as the inability to deliver letters and the interzone cards, the effects of Vichy and the occupation of the whole country following the North African landings.

Moving on, we saw the impact of the Allied landings in France, the postal interruptions that ensued and finally the liberation. Internment camps were described and examples of undercover addresses were shown. Ingrid talked about the general problems of communication and the transport of goods, fuel and food shortages. Then, after the war, mail that had been hidden away resurfaced. This was a fine display, very well presented and we were all able to learn from it.

Ashley Lawrence kindly stood in for Peter Todd and gave us an interesting display of French post offices in the Ottoman Empire. Starting with covers of the French post offices abroad using PC and GC cancellations Ashley moved on covering the period to WWI and the cancellation types 18, 84 and 25 and the "Levant" and "Piastre" overprints.

Ashley described the situation in Syria and Lebanon after the Sykes Picot agreement and the setting up of the mandated territories, the different overprints for Grand Liban

and Syria, the Arabic overprints, the special overprints for Aleppo and Cilicia and the Alaouites.

**Peter Kelly** showed a selection of *Type Sage* letters and cards all relating to the 2nd Boer War including letters to those involved in the campaign, prisoners of war in Ceylon and Saint Helena and also publicity cards supporting the Boers in France and the visit of President Kruger there in 1900.

**Richard Stupples:** An extract from the *London Illustrated News* in 1848 with details of people going to the polls and the birth of the 2nd Republic.

**Trevor Buckell:** A query on a trial stamp, where it was decided that this was probably an adoption of the telegraph stamps.

**Chris Hitchen:** The Paris Commune. January 1871 After the Franco-Prussian War the lack of Government support led to the Paris uprising. The display dealt with how the post offices functioned and how incoming and outgoing mail was dealt with, the return to normal service and prison mail.

**George Nash:** Military mail in WWI. Individual regimental letters and illustrations of the time.

**John Hammonds:** Aviation meetings in Lyon, starting in 1894 showing postal stationery, vignettes and postcards of the time.

**Alan Wood:** *Assignats* – a selection to be sold as part of George Barker's estate. Mail from German States into France 114-1850s showing a wide range of entry marks.

**Jeremy Martin:** A visit by Jeremy to the European Parliament at Strasbourg and postal souvenirs.

PRAK/AJW



## NORTHERN GROUP MEETING OF 12 JULY 2014

### "Bastille Day" Meeting

Alan Goude: Colonial Delights

Alan commenced with a general survey of the stamps we know as the Colonies General Issues, from the first Eagles, through the Colonial printings of the Metropolitan stamps which were produced imperforate on slightly inferior paper, and on to the Dubois types and the postage dues. From this he led on to a display of St Pierre & Miquelon, not an easy Colony to pick for a display.

Following a description of the history, topography, climate and life of the islands he showed stamps from the beginnings of the postal service there, all the pictorial issues and the perhaps infamous *France Libre* issues, which followed a plebiscite where the inhabitants broke with Vichy to side with De Gaulle, the stamps being largely produced to raise funds for the cause. Forgeries of some of the rare items were also shown.

The third round was a miscellany of several topics, the transport of mail in French Equatorial Africa, by rivers, lakes, railways, airmail and portage; a selection of the issues for the French Post Offices in Egypt and Crete, and a brief section on the first French issues of Cameroun.

This was an excellent display and truly a 'Colonial Delight', much enjoyed by those able or discerning enough to attend the meeting.

Those present: Messrs Clapham, Ellis, Hitchen, Holder, Morton, Pease, Place, Stockton, Watkins.

Apologies had been received from Messrs Caswell, Graham, Howitt, Lythgoe, Maybury, Meadowcroft, Rooke, and Mrs Pavey.

CSH

## LONDON GROUP MEETING OF 16 JULY 2014

Steve Ellis: Maritime Mail

Steve opened the first half of his display explaining that he would be concentrating on Marseille and the Mediterranean shipping lines, firstly the contract services from Marseille to other Mediterranean ports, then the services going beyond Suez and finally a study of the commercial services operating along the Italian coast.

The earliest items seen were an entire to Genoa dated 1668 and another to Livorno 1689 showing departure marks from Marseille. There followed a letter to Malta dated 1765 and a rare example, one of only two known, of a letter carried by the naval vessel '*Rhameses*' which transported both passengers and mail on the '*Ligne du Levant*' line. Steve then moved on to explaining how the lines beyond Suez were allocated their letters and showed examples of mail carried on *Lignes N. O, T, U* and *Ven route* for Hongkong & China, India, Australia, Zanzibar and Réunion & Mauritius. An exceptional item was an 1899 postcard from German East Africa to Constantinople accepted on the *Ligne U*.

Then followed examples of mail carried by commercial companies with examples of cachets and timetables. Steve was particularly intrigued with the Albert Rostand service of which he showed examples of mail dated between 1846 and 1851. He explained how Rostand became a co-founder of *Messageries Nationales* (later *Messageries Impériales* and then *Messageries Maritimes*) into which he integrated his three vessels. Examples of mail transported by the new company were shown dated 1854 and 1855. The last frame was devoted to material displaying Italian cachets, including an intriguing 1873 manifesto for the vessel '*Président Troplong*' (later research revealed that the vessel had been built by Scott & Co, Greenock, in 1869, the year that Troplong, President of the Senate, had died), various cachets of

French and Italian forwarding agents and entry marks.

For the second half, Steve moved from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic and provided an eclectic display of sixty-seven different shipping lines which had operated a trans-Atlantic service involving a port of call in France. This included French, British, US, Belgian and Dutch lines and the material combined postal history with ephemera such as picture postcards of vessel and timetables. Steve added that it was the sort of display he would often give to local societies as there was something to interest everybody.

The earliest example was a very rare *Paquebots-Poste Royaux* item from 1793 with an *AMÉRIQUE SEPTENTRIONALE & LORIENT* cachet in red and a *P.F. de NEW YORK* strike in black. Then followed fascinating and engaging accounts of both well-known and lesser-known services which had operated between the 1830s and 1930s. A cachet which caught everyone's eye was that of the *Paquebot la Victoire* of the *Havre et Guadeloupe Co.* on an 1833 cover. A particularly rare item was an 1847 letter carried by the *Hérout & De Handel* Line which failed after only nine voyages due to the unreliability of its vessels.

Len Barnes thanked Steve for making the long journey to give his display and for bringing such a rich variety of material and demonstrating such a wealth of knowledge. Steve commented that the collection had been built up through diligent research and only modest expenditure but he was delighted that two of the items we had seen had since entered into 'the kids' inheritance' category.

Members Present: Maurice Alder, Len Barnes, Mick Bister, Richard Broadhurst, Steve Ellis, Chris Hitchen, Barbara Priddy, Roy Reader.

MLB

## LONDON GROUP FULL-DAY MEETING OF 16 AUGUST 2014

**John Hammonds: Aviation Mark IV**

**Mike Berry: Ballons Montés**

**Chris Hitchen: Paris Commune**

The Saturday full-day meeting began at 11.30 with Len Barnes introducing the speakers and summarising the programme for the day.

**John Hammonds** filled the morning slot with two contrasting displays of aerophilately under the title of 'Aviation Mark IV' in recognition of it being his fourth successive display on the topic to the London Group.

The first part of the display was devoted to the first hundred years of aviation in France beginning in 1793 with the hot air balloon of the Montgolfier brothers. We were shown postcards depicting events, the company's headed stationery and trade cards and items related to the first aeronaut, Pilâtre de Rozier. John moved on to hydrogen filled balloons and produced fascinating postcards depicting imaginative designs including a balloon with paddles to assist navigation as used by Blanchard and Jeffries to cross the Channel in 1785.

John moved on to the Siege of Paris and showed examples of mail flown on *ballons montés* including the *Armand-Barbès*, the *Vauban*, the *Denis-Papin* and others. Equally fascinating was the range of *lettres-journaux* published for dispatch by balloon - *La Gazette des Absents*, *La Dépêche-Ballon*, *Le Ballon Poste* and the very rare *La Chronique Illustrée* as well as examples of illustrated supplements. We also saw a wonderful display of pigeongrams and related material. A pair of 'Mrs Simpson' facsimile covers published by Letts Diaries were also shown as well as post-siege souvenirs and advertising material promoting tethered balloon flights at fairs and exhibitions.

John closed the first half with the story of the *Monument aux Aéronautes* erected in memory of both pilots and pigeons at Neuilly-sur-Seine in 1906. The project with its funding through public subscription was explained through postcards, stationery and donation receipts.

For the second half of his display John focused on the development of aeronautical communications between France and Indo-China. The story began with an attempted flight in 1919 to Australia which had to be aborted in Rangoon. Although mail was reportedly carried, none has been seen. John proceeded to display mail flown on eastward bound flights during the 1920s including items to Tehran, Beirut and an attempted flight to Saigon which again only reached Burma. The famous 1929 crash cover to Hanoi, from the flight that only reached as far as Bondy, was shown complete with *ANNULÉ* overprints on the stamps. Mail to and from Saigon between 1929 and 1933 was also shown.

A wide selection of mail from various legs in the Middle East was seen, originally military mail and then civil, with examples of the special stamps used. Covers included 1930 flights from Beirut to Constantine and from Beirut to Brazil. Some covers bore the cachet *LETTRE TRANSPORTEE EXCEPTIONNELLEMENT PAR AVION*. These were items of correspondence at surface rates but accepted for airmail to make up the permitted weight allowance. The

story continued with Maurice Noguès' attempt to overfly Turkey and the inauguration of the regular France-Indo-China service by Air Orient. Unusual items included a *Serv-ice Accélééré* cover for which an extra fee had been paid to transport the letter by road between the two unfinished legs of the railway track between Hanoi and Saigon and mail bearing control marks used between 1932 and 1934 in a different colour for each and which remained unexplained.

Finally we saw mail illustrating how the events of World War II disrupted the services to the Far East and how efforts were made to circumnavigate theatres of war to ensure continued communications.

After John's serving of delicious philatelic appetizers, members took a break for lunch which was served in the upper room thereby allowing the opportunity for continued viewing and discussion of his display.

Members reassembled for the first of the afternoon displays which was to be given by **Mike Berry** who had brought part of his collection of *Ballons Montés*. Mike began by relating the historical background to the Siege of Paris and giving an account of the efforts to maintain communications between Paris and beyond the Prussian lines. He explained that his display would be a chronological record of mail from over forty flights out of Paris starting with the Ville de Florence which flew out on 25 September 1870 to the final flight by the Général Cambronne on 28 January 1871. Mike informed us that he had translated the contents of the *ballons montés* to provide a deeper insight into the events of the time and the conditions endured by the besieged Parisians.

The extent of the display and the quality of the material were astounding. We saw a postcard flown on the unmanned fifth balloon on 30 September franked on the first day of the 10c rate closely followed by a cover from the *Céleste* from which leaflets were dropped over enemy lines. Then came the tiniest of letters cancelled by a PP cds and flown on the *Washington* or the *Louis Blanc* and a cover flown on the Garibaldi bearing the red cds of the Paris Central office. A cover flown on the *Gironde* displayed a superb munitions factory cachet in blue inscribed *POUDRES ET SALTPÊTRE* and we saw a cover from the first night-time flight undertaken by the *Général Ulrich*. Several covers were in the form of *lettres-journaux* including the *Dépêche-Ballon* and the *Gazette des Absents* together with a missive from the Havas News Agency. Mike's final cover from the *Général Cambronne* was part of only a 20kg payload and is a much sought after item.

Several covers gave an insight into other forms of postal communication. We learned that a passenger on the Fulton was planning to establish a communications system to Paris via Rouen. The *Armand Barbès* and the *Colonel Charras* carried sixteen and six homing pigeons respectively. The *Daguerre* carried an engineer and a chemist skilled in the production of *pellicules* required for the pigeon post and

two passengers on the *Denis-Papin* were carrying a prototype *Boule de Moulins*.

Perhaps though the most fascinating messages were those which gave accounts of food shortages in the capital. As early as October 1870 *filet* of horsemeat is being featured on a restaurant menu. Meat is becoming rationed and the price of vegetables in the markets is soaring. By December, mention is made of cat and dog meat being offered for sale and they are later joined by donkey meat and mice. By January 1871, elephant is being served in restaurants together with 'a strange sausage stew'. There is concern that there is only enough food for two weeks in the capital.

Before viewing handouts in the form of a written commentary had been given to members as a guide to the display and these were eagerly retained as a memento of an extraordinary display rich in both postal and social history.

The meeting closed with a display by **Chris Hitchen** whose material from the period of the Commune was a perfect conclusion to the preceding display.

Chris explained the origins of the Paris Commune which lasted from 18 March to 28 May 1871. Following the end of the Siege of Paris, the French Government moved its seat from Bordeaux to Versailles, and attempted to restore its control over the popular uprisings in Paris. Chris related the major events during the insurrection – the initial attempts by the army to disarm the revolutionary National Guard, the attack on Montmartre to remove the cannon, the desertion of the regular army to join the *communards*, the summary executions on both sides, the blockades and the destruction of the Hôtel de Ville and the Tuileries, the battle in the Père Lachaise cemetery and the defeat and deportation of the *communards*.

Chris went on to describe the extent of the disruption to the Paris postal service during the period of the Commune. Many post offices had been destroyed and the Director of Posts had fled with much of the material required to

operate the service. Covers were displayed bearing cancellations made by earlier decommissioned handstamps; we saw examples of circular date stamps from the 1850s with the collection time removed, the use of a 15c *double-trait* and even a recalled anchor mark. One of the many magnificent items was an official Commune communication sent under franchise with a *Recette Principale* strike in red.

Chris explained that there was still a Prussian presence outside Paris which restricted both citizens and mail from leaving the capital. We saw an example of a German *laissez-passer*, a price list from an agency for the forwarding of mail, a card from the Bruner agency announcing the arrival of a letter in Paris and a casualty report card. St Denis became a hub for mail in and out of Paris due to its important railway facilities but this did not necessarily mean that the most direct route would be taken by a letter. One letter for Lyon showed evidence of having gone via Antwerp. Some railway employees held a permanent *laissez-passer* enabling them to work on the TPOs serving the provinces. Examples of TPO mail were shown including an item to Nevers franked at 20c and cancelled with an AP lozenge for the Auxerre to Paris service.

Finally we were shown prisoner-of-war mail comprising a letter from a prisoner captured at the battle at Père Lachaise, a letter addressed to a prisoner on a hulk moored off Cherbourg and a censored cover to a *communard* imprisoned in a hulk moored at Belle-Ile. The unfortunate men were probably awaiting deportation to Nouvelle-Calédonie.

The general consensus was that the meeting had been very successful. We had been given displays by three members who had brought along exceptionally rare material and who had held our attention with informative and entertaining commentaries. Heartfelt thanks were expressed to each of the speakers and after a short discussion it was agreed that a full-day Saturday meeting should be organised more frequently.

MLB

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## THE FIRST JOHN WHITESIDE MEMORIAL LECTURE OF 17 JUNE 2014

**The imperforate issues of France 1849-1862,  
from the collections of the late George Ernest Barker RDP FRPSL  
presented posthumously by C S Holder FRPSL**

On 17 June 2014 a display was given in memory of John Whiteside FRPSL, the well known collector and postal historian, who died two years ago. He was a member of Bradford PS, Leeds PS, the RPSL, and for some time the F&CPS. He had very generously left a bequest to Bradford & Leeds PS, and Bradford had decided to recognise this with an annual display by an invited speaker. It was decided that the first one would also be held in memory of George Barker.

George had built up over his many years of collecting a formidable and valuable assembly of French stamps and it was decided for this occasion to show his early classics, which contained many items rarely seen outside the international exhibitions.

The first round consisted of a selection of the first 20c black

of 1849-50, with essays, proofs, and a remarkable show of mint items, including multiples and blocks and of course the *tête-bêche* varieties; this was followed by similar studies of the 1 franc including the carmine, carmine-brown and vermilion shades, the 40c, including the wide four varieties, 10c and 15c and 25c each with multiples, rare cancellations, spectacular covers, fine mint examples and the *tête-bêche* issues (where they exist).

A smaller selection followed of the two Republic issues of 1852-3, followed by a lovely display of the Napoleon imperf issues, which was preceded by a large study of the essays and colour trials, including a number of spectacular blocks. The Napoleon imperf were shown more by covers than mint multiples, but a fine display of all values was shown, again including the *tête-bêche* issues where known.



In each issue the official reprints of 1862 were also included, for those values where they exist. Probably the highlight of this remarkable show was the fact that it included ten

*tête-bêche* items, something seen very rarely nowadays. A leaflet with the principal facts was also given out during the display.

CSH



1F Cérès vermillion  
cancelled 'gros points'



1F Cérès  
orange-vermillion



1F Cérès dull vermillion  
cancelled with rosette  
of Paris Office J  
(available only about  
7-12 Jan 1849)



1F Cérès carmine  
*tête-bêche*



20c Cérès black (1.1.1849-23.6.1850): block of 15 from bottom right of pane



20c Cérès black: block of 4  
with quasi 'frame line' at right hand  
(as a result of production technique?)



20c Cérès black: *tête-bêche*



20c Cérès black: strip of 4, positions 137-140 in above block



20c 'Essai en brun': marginal block (positions 136-140 and 146-150)  
showing identical frame breaks to those seen in the above block of 15



20c Cérès re-impression 1862  
made at the instigation of Sir Rowland Hill