

The Journal of the France & Colonies Philatelic Society



Postcard with an artistic view of Charlecote Park,
the National Trust property situated very near the Charlecote Pheasant Hotel
where our Annual Philatelic Weekend will again be held 13-15 March 2015

Volume 64 ● Number 4
December 2014
Whole Number 274

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

Society Website: 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 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).

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.
Bank transfers to HSBC account name France & Colonies Philatelic Society sort code 40 07 31 account n° 71019325.

The Journal

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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)
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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:
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* * *

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

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

The Journal of the France & Colonies Philatelic Society

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SOCIETY NOTES

Editorial

Please read the Appeal opposite. You will see that there is now some hope that some form of Journal will continue to be printed next year, but only if we find enough volunteers willing to act as sub-editors for one or more articles or sections of the Journal. Please offer your help as soon as possible if you think you may be able to assist with one small task in the way described. Ask if you need more details of what is involved.

The Editor has in his stockpile enough articles for one more edition, but new articles are now urgently needed for any future productions after March 2015. Please submit them as usual, preferably with the text as Word files and any illustrations as jpg images.

Once again the Editor would like to express his gratitude to members who have collaborated in producing this edition, in particular Mick Bister, Chris Hitchen, Colin and Pat Spang; and Bill Mitchell.

Please note that in this Journal all covers and cards are illustrated at 80% of their true size.

* * *

Future Events

The **London Group** will meet at the Calthorpe Arms, Grays Inn Road, London WC1 at 6.30pm on Wednesday 18 February 2015 when Maurice Alder will display "60 Years of Collecting."

The **Northern Group** will meet at 2.00pm on Saturday 7 March 2015 at Heaton Royds, Bradford, courtesy of Stephen & Judith Holder, when Chris Hitchen will display "Aspects of Paris."

The **Wessex Group** will meet at the Scout Hall, Lower Street, Harnham, Salisbury, at 10.30am on Saturday 21 February 2015 when Mike Berry will show *Ballons Montés* and the Île de Ré and Peter Todd will show French Classics.

* * *

RPSL Displays

Three of our members will be displaying at the Royal Philatelic Society London in the current programme:

15 January 2015 **Peter Kelly**: L'émission au type Sage (see announcement in the September 2014 issue of the Journal);

26 February 2015 **Steve Walske**: The Blockade of America during the Revolutionary, 1812 and Civil Wars;

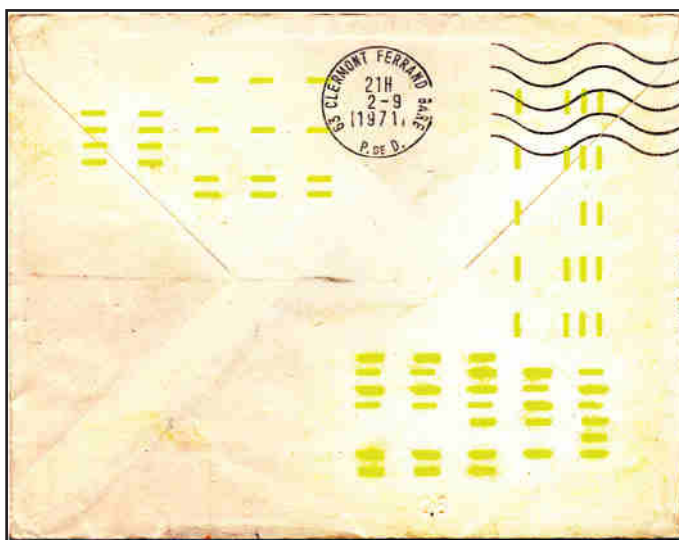
26 March 2015 **Mick Bister**: The Postcode Programmes of France - the experimental years 1958-1978 (see announcement below).

* * *

Displays by Members

Mick Bister will be giving a 12 frame display followed by a PowerPoint presentation on 'The Postcode Programmes of France - the experimental years 1958-1978' to the Royal Philatelic Society, 41 Devonshire Place, London, W1G 6JY

on Thursday 26 March 2014. The display is from 1.00pm and the presentation will start at 5.00pm.



The display traces from 1958 to 1978 the development of mechanised letter sorting in France. It focuses on the evolution of the coding desk languages employed during the experimental period, the interpretation of the barcodes which featured on treated mail and the accompanying postcode publicity campaigns launched by *La Poste*. A considerable amount of rarely seen material will be on display. Visitors will receive a handbook containing a brief history of the postcode programmes, a guide to the frames and a useful reference section to the various languages.

F&CPS members who are not members of the RSPL are warmly invited to attend as guests of the speaker. If you intend to come along, please let Mick Bister know in advance by contacting him at m.bister@btinternet.com or on 01767 631404.

The President of the RSPL invited Mick to give the display after having seen part of his collection exhibited nationally in 2011. He expressed the desire to see 'something different' being offered to the members of the Royal. If you come along, you will probably agree.

* * *

The following displays were given by our members at the 4th Cercle International de Rencontres Philatéliques, on 20 September at Salon-de-Provence:

Chris Hitchen: Les levées exceptionnelles de Paris 1863-1936

Peter Kelly: Type Sage, courrier recommandé et chargé

Guy Dutau: Les étiquettes de fermeture - Un phénomène transitoire de l'époque victorienne mais pas seulement...

Jean-François Gibot: Les timbres de 1950. 1000F, «stylisé de Paris»

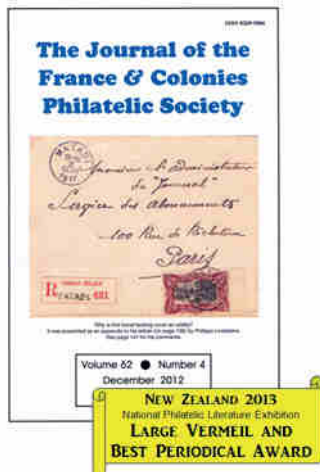
And at Marcophile XXXVIII, on 25-26 October 2014 at Uzès:

Peter Kelly: Développement des communications postales entre la Réunion et la France (1740-1852)

Chris Hitchen: Paris et La Poste ferroviaire

* * *

AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



Just twelve months ago the Society was in a buoyant and celebratory mood after its phenomenal success as key exhibitor at Autumn Stampex 2013. In the December edition of the Journal our president lauded the *'heroic efforts'*, the *'Trojan work'* and a level of enthusiasm which would prove to be the *'bedrock of the venture'*.

However, since then, the Society has suffered several setbacks which you will be fully aware of. By far the most pressing challenge has been to find a replacement for Maurice who has undertaken the Herculean tasks of both editor of our prize-winning Journal and administrator of the website. Our first appeal for help though was met with total and incomprehensible silence.

However, at the last hour we have been thrown a lifeline by an Australian member, Peter Allan, who has volunteered his services as technical editor of the Journal; in other words, he would be responsible for the lay-out and formatting of the pages on which articles appear. His task would be to receive text-files, previously edited by a team of sub-editors, together with any accompanying images and turn them into InDesign pages. These would subsequently be forwarded to Maurice as acting Editor-in-Chief for assembling into a Journal template and for onward transmission to the printers.

We are immensely indebted to Peter for his offer as it means that there is now a much brighter light at the end of the tunnel but we still have some way to go before emerging from it.

We **URGENTLY** need:

- a sub-editing team consisting of members who are willing to collate material from various sources (Society Notes and Reports of Meetings) or proof-read and edit articles. Volunteers would need to be familiar with nothing more than Word text and jpeg images.
- an editor-in-chief to replace Maurice - preferably someone who has experience in desk-top publication with Adobe InDesign although Maurice is happy to train the volunteer.
- a webmaster for the Society's website. Again, Maurice's failing eyesight makes his role no longer tenable. ideally we need someone with experience of administrating a website but again Maurice is willing to provide guidance.

Without your help the Society will never regain the prestigious status we held only twelve months ago nor will you continue enjoying the wide range of services we offer. We need your support and help NOW. Do not let your Society down.

Contact one of us at:

Steve Ellis: president@fcps.org.uk

Peter Kelly: secretary@fcps.org.uk

Chris Hitchen: treasurer@fcps.org.uk

Mick Bister: m.bister@btinternet.com

LIST OF RECENTLY PUBLISHED ARTICLES

Compiled by Colin Spong and Maurice Tyler

Bulletin de la COL.FRA

N° 149 3^{ème} Trim 2014: Les Épreuves de Guyane (Puech); Les Marques Postales du Tchad (Venot); Le Haut-Sénégal et Moyen-Niger (Golfier); Un Bureau au Soleil, Djamaa, Algérie (Flotte).

Cameo.

Vol. 15 N° 3 2014 (Whole N° 93): Cameroun: Policing the Plebiscite (May); Togo: 1920 1/- value on Emerald-green with Olive back (Martin); Gold Coast type Cancels of Togo: Postmarks of Tséwié (Ensor & Mayne); Togoland and Cameroons: Remembrances of WWI (Maddocks); Cameroun *Aérogrammes* – The “Apsley” Air Letter (Maddocks); ‘Expeditionary Force, Duala’ A very rare postmark from the Cameroons Campaign of WWI (Maddocks); Mail Day in the West African Bush (Maddocks); Cameroun Free French Air Mail Stamps, Printed by Harrisons, London 1942 (Maddocks).

L'Écho de la Timbrologie

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

N° 1886 Jul-Aug 2014: Les «Forçats de la Route» et la belle histoire de Forêt (Grosse); Une année à Dumont d'Urville, en Terre-Adélie [3] (Venturini); L'aéropostale du bout du monde vers Tromelin (Albaret); Timbres faussement signés (Garde); A l'occasion des Jeux olympiques de 1924 (Albaret).

N° 1887 Sept 2014: Les timbres-souvenirs historiques (Crosse); Une année à Dumont d'Urville, en Terre-Adélie [4] (Venturini); Les jeunes années de L'Écho de la Timbrologie (Bastide-Bernardin); Les timbres de papiers publics (Danan); Des facteurs et du courrier sur le Tour de France (Hella).

N° 1888 Oct 2014: Une année à Dumont d'Urville, en Terre-Adélie [5] (Venturini); Visite du Musée des postes et de la Communication (Bastide-Bernardin); Les timbres-amendes (Danan); La Postale de nuit (Albaret).

N° 1889 Nov 2014: Après l'armistice de la Grande Guerre (Grosse); Les cachets de cire Durant la Grande Guerre (-); Une année à Dumont d'Urville, en Terre Adélie [6] (Venturini); «Marianne 1944-2014» (Sinai); «Palais du Luxembourg» par Albert Decaris (Sollin).

Gibbons Stamp Monthly

Vol 45 N° 5 October 2014: Francophone West Africa: The Conseil de l'Entente (Pertwee).

Timbres Magazine

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

N° 159 Sept 2014: Le TVP se développe sur

enveloppes [3rd part] (Rucklin); Le timbre comme matériau d'explication de l'Histoire (Buffier); Pourquoi certains millésimes du 1c et du 2c au type Blanc de la Métropole sont-ils rares? (Rabillé); Le difficile rétablissement des liaisons maritimes d'Alger à Libération [2nd part] (Chauvin); Quelques marques connues mais d'origines inconnues (de La Mettrie); La Nouvelle-Calédonie, du soleil toute l'année dans les albums! (de Pellinec); Une collection «au poil» Zeyons; Une carte interzone de Djibouti (Chauvin); Lettres ornées, précaisées, Numa Grar et ses sultans (Baudot); Tarif special et tarif général (Prugnon).

N° 160 Oct 2014: Abel Mignon [1861-1936], graveur méconnu (Nowacka); Le mémorial postal du Gaullisme (Coutant); Les variétés de la 1^{re} colonne du panneau G1 du 25c Cérés dentelé au type I (Marion); Sous forme de lettre ou alors sous bande (de La Mettrie); Il y a 120 ans éclatait l'affaire Dreyfus (Zeyons); Débuter une nouvelle collection? (Gibot); Travelling Post Office & Railway Post Office (Chauvin); la carte postale devient une lettre (Prugnon).

N° 161 Nov 2014: Quand les carnets faisaient de la pub pour les autos (PJM); Le difficile rétablissement des liaisons maritimes [3rd part]: Madagascar et le Pacifique (Chauvin); Les raretés méconnues de l'émission provisoire de Lille [1871] (Morelle); Mark Taraskoff raconte..Georges Perec (MB); Pierrette Lambert s'expose à la Banque de France (Nowacka); Les cursives peuvent être simples ou doubles (de La Mettrie); Les carnets s'ouvrent à la transition [Marianne de Briat et Bicentenaire] (Rucklin); Les timbres publicitaires des laboratoires Veyron-Froment (Sinai); Les femmes de 1914-1918 (Zeyons); Brigitte Foncel: Une passion et du plaisir (Andrew); Septembre 1940: la reprise des vols en Afrique occidentale française (Chauvin); L.J.Moutafoff? (Baudot); Un fleuron de la philatélie (Prugnon).

Les Feuilles Marcophiles

N° 358 (Sep 2014): Identification et localisation d'un APO (Reynaud); Un décime rural bien précurseur? (Chouteau); Un pigeon voyageur, premier acteur de la poste aérienne (1^{ère} partie) (Cury); Un curieux imprimé insuffisamment affranchi adressé sous bande système Menard (Blanc); Les timbres d'arrivée de Bastia (Lauprêtre); Timbres «TROUVÉ À LA BOÎTE» (Guillard & Abensur).

Documents Philatéliques

N° 221 3^e trim 2014: Les voies postales par Santander et Canfranc après l'interruption de l'ambulant du nord durant la guerre civile espagnole de 1872 (Estel); Mission diplomatique en Chine 1844-1845 (Abensur); Le tarif de voie de mer de la convention postale du 1^{er} avril 1849 entre la France et l'Espagne (Langlais); «Lettres-Postes-Enveloppes» de J-A Pichot (de La Mettrie); La «Correspondance Privée» de Lille en novembre 1914 (Van Dooren).

Continued on page 142

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

Bill Mitchell



Figure 1
Le Havre (Spécial)
19 February 1915,
on reverse Paris R.P.
Etranger 20 February,
Madrid 24 February;
Belgian international tariff,
40 centimes for 20-40 grams

PART 1 – The Carton de Wiarts

Despite the lapse of the best part of seventy years I still have a vivid recollection of a newspaper photograph of one of our war-time Generals. (In those days, most papers were broadsheets – four pages for one penny unless one aspired to the heights of the *Daily Telegraph* or the *Times* which boasted six pages and cost three ha'pence). Their reports were no doubt heavily censored. This particular photograph was memorable for two reasons. The General sported a black eye-patch and a formidable moustache; I'm not sure

whether I took this in at the time or whether I discovered it later, but he also lacked, probably, his left hand. The other remarkable fact about him was his name – Adrian Carton de Wiart. So when I came across these envelopes from the Belgian Minister of Justice in exile in France during the First World War I had to buy them (Figs 1 and 2). That the addressee was related to the General was obvious, but how were they related, who exactly was Monsignor M E Carton de Wiart and what was his connection with Dollis



Figure 2
Ste Adresse 29 August 1915,
no marks on reverse;
Waterlow issue,
Belgian international tariff
20 centimes for first 20g



Figure 3
St. Andrew's Hospital, Dollis Hill,
photographed during the First World War

Hill, a suburb of north-west London, of all places? Thanks to Colin Spong and the Internet I now have the answer, which I hope readers will find interesting.

Maurice E Carton de Wiart (1872-1935) was born into a distinguished Belgian family, being a younger brother of Count Henri Carton de Wiart, who was the Belgian Minister of Justice from 1911 to 1918 and so the writer of the letters which were once enclosed in my two envelopes. Although Maurice was educated in Belgium, at Jesuit colleges in Brussels and Antwerp, he spent most of his working life in England, where he died. He was even ordained here, at Northampton in 1895, and in the following year he was appointed Secretary to the Bishop (of Northampton). From 1899 to 1908 he was Rector of a Mission he had founded at Olney, not so far away. A long association with Westminster Cathedral began in 1908 when he was appointed assistant diocesan treasurer, taking over as treasurer in the following year.

Maurice's association with Dollis Hill was close and long-lasting. In 1913 the diocese opened a hospital, St Andrew's, there and he was appointed its Administrator, apparently concurrently with his post at Westminster. The hospital was funded by an anonymous French benefactress, named after her death in 1917 as Marguerite Amicie Lebaudy. It had barely opened its doors when the First World War broke out and it became a military hospital. As Administrator, Maurice organised and led one of the first nursing parties to go to a theatre of war, and this presumably continued for the duration as his services were duly recognised by the British (OBE), French and Belgian governments. This first party, to the Belgian village of Hastière, turned out to be far from uneventful as the village was captured by the Germans on 23 August, but since Maurice managed to get back to England in October the party seems to have avoided the indignity of capture. A domestic prelacy, an honour within

the Monsignori ranks of the Roman Catholic Church, came in 1916. This is the year of the letter addressed to him at Dollis Hill, and the detailed superscription suggests that the promotion may have been very recent at 29 August; the handwriting on the envelope may be that of brother Henri (both, of course, may have been written by a secretary). Further recognition came to Maurice after the War (honorary appointments at Westminster, Namur and Lourdes), and in 1937 the hospital opened a children's ward in his memory.

Sadly, the hospital (Fig 3) no longer exists. Some facts and figures may be of interest. The initial cost in 1912 was £50,000 and at first there were 63 beds; at its maximum in 1963 these had more than doubled, to 141. Initially, private patients paid seven guineas (£7.35) and the less affluent two and a half guineas (£2.63) a week; in 1929 private rooms cost eight guineas (£8.40) weekly while beds in general wards cost anything from half that to nothing according to means. Although it operated under the auspices of the Roman Catholic Church with an emphasis on French-speaking patients, including many Belgian soldiers during the First World War, it was non-sectarian in character – indeed, towards the end of its existence it was very popular with the local Jewish community. During the 1930s it was a leader in the development of plastic surgery techniques, the senior surgeon being Sir Archibald Macindoe, later famous for his work with disfigured airmen in the Second World War. After the war the hospital did not participate in the NHS, and by 1959 it was having difficulty recruiting nursing staff from Roman Catholic sisterhoods. It was also facing financial problems even though a final extension was added in 1963, and in 1972 it was sold to the London Borough of Brent which closed it a year later. The buildings were demolished and re-developed (only the gateposts now survive) and the grounds are now a reservoir and public open space.



Figure 4
Count Henri Carton de Wiart
(photographer unknown).

Despite many enquiries it has not been possible to trace a photograph of his brother, Monseigneur Maurice.

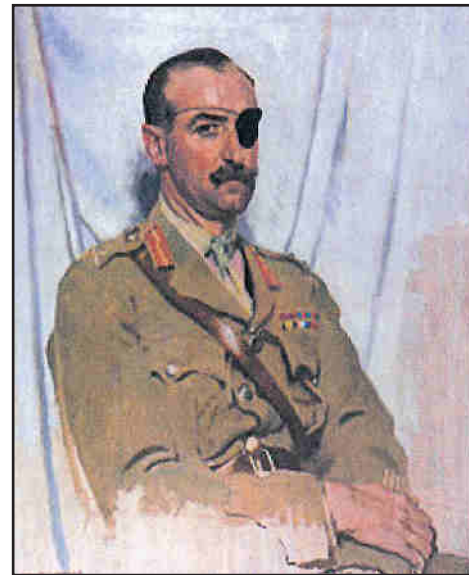


Figure 5
Sir Adrian Carton de Wiart –
the portrait by Sir William Orpen
in the National Portrait Gallery
(about 1919).

To return to the Carton de Wiarts, as perhaps befits a lawyer, Count Henrl (1869-1951) (Fig 4) led a somewhat sedentary life. He was a member of the Belgian parliament from 1896 until his death; in addition to serving as Minister of Justice from 1911 to 1918 (as already noted) and again, briefly, in 1950, he was Prime Minister of a Government of National Union (1920-21), delegate to the League of Nations (1928-35) and Minister of Social Welfare (1932-34). He spent the First World War years in France, as already noted, and World War II in London. This relatively unruffled existence seems only to have been seriously disturbed once, in 1915, when he was in France. His wife, who had apparently remained in Belgium, was sentenced to three months imprisonment in Berlin for allegedly endangering the security of German troops by corresponding with her husband. She was released following intervention by the Pope.

By contrast, the General's career was nothing if not colourful, as is hinted at by his full title on retirement – Lieut-General Sir Adrian Carton de Wiart, VC, KBE, CB, CMG, DSO (Fig 5). Born in Brussels in 1880, he was a first cousin of Count Henri and Maurice. He was educated in England and joined the Army in 1899, seeing active service in the Boer War, when he received the first of many wounds. Undeterred, after recovering he returned to South Africa. In the First World War he participated in most of the major battles on the Western Front, but before going to France in 1915 he took part in a “low-level” war in Somaliland during which he lost his left eye. He was to be wounded seven more times during the War, sustaining the injury to his left hand in 1915. The accounts of the damage differ,

from the loss of his fingers to an empty sleeve suggesting a much more serious injury (it has to be said, though, that the portrait by Sir William Orpen in the National Portrait Gallery does not suggest a missing arm – perhaps he lost the whole hand). Undeterred, he was present at the Battles of the Somme (1916, when he won his VC), Passchendaele (1917), Cambrai (1917) and Arras (1918). He was injured in all of them. In his memoirs he says that “Frankly, I had enjoyed the War”! As if all that was not enough, during the troubled early years of newly-independent Poland he headed the British Military Mission there, and he spent most of the inter-War years in that country, living the life of a country gentleman.

As War loomed again, in 1939 he headed another, inevitably brief, British Military Mission to Poland. When Poland fell, he returned to the UK with some difficulty to begin another life crowded with incident, serving in the ill-fated Norwegian campaign of 1940 and in Northern Ireland. Appointed to head a British Military Mission to Yugoslavia in 1941, the aircraft in which he was travelling was forced by engine failure to crash-land in the Mediterranean. After spending two years as a POW (when he was not trying to escape) he was released to assist the Italians in their surrender negotiations with the Allies and allowed to return to the UK after arriving at Lisbon. (The photograph that I still recall was probably printed at about this time.) There was yet more work for him as Churchill's personal representative in China. Kept on by Attlee, he was present at the Japanese surrender at Singapore (1945).

His final years were spent in retirement in County Cork where he died in 1963.

PART 2 The Belgian Civil Post



Figure 6

Unoccupied Belgium.

Bi-lingual cancel of Veurne/Furnes,

27 January 1917.

Not surprisingly, the stamp has been cut from a mourning envelope.



Figure 7

Souvenir postcard of the first Belgian post office in Ste Adresse, 1914-15, kindly supplied by Jim Moffat.



Figure 8

The French le Havre Seine Inf^{re} datestamp supplied to the Belgian authorities on 18 October 1914, showing the break above the "E" of "LE".

This and all other canceller illustrations except Figs 13 & 14 are taken from the book by Jean Bast noted in the Appendix.



Figure 9

The domestic Le Havre canceller supplied in December 1914, apparently for commemorative purposes.

So much for the biographies; what of the postmarks? They can only be fully understood by reference to what was actually happening on the ground; the outline that follows is taken from the book by Jean de Bast listed in the Appendix, occasionally supplemented by reference to other publications.

On 2 August 1914 Germany demanded of Belgium, whose neutrality had been guaranteed by the Great Powers in 1839 and again in 1871, the right of its army to enter Belgian territory as part of its plan to invade France. This demand was rejected on the following day so at 5 in the morning of the 4th German troops entered Belgium. Less than three months later almost the whole of the country was occupied, leaving only a small area in the south-west around Furnes (alternative name Veurne) (Fig 6) in Allied (Belgian and British) hands. Furnes was at first the headquarters of the Belgian army; early in 1915 this was moved to the relative safety of Houtem, where it was to remain until October 1918. The steady German advance led the Belgian Government to move from Brussels to Antwerp on 17 August, from Antwerp to Ostend on 3 October and from Ostend to le Havre (more precisely, the commune of Sainte Adresse, which had suitable office and residential accommodation) on 13 October. Count Henri Carton de Wiart was among

the Ministers evacuated at that time. Three days before the evacuation, on 10 October, the Belgian Government had sought French hospitality for itself and its army, the administration to be located in "*une ville disposant d'un port, le Havre par exemple.*" The French Government willingly agreed, but le Havre was not the first location to be considered; Abbeville, which has no access to the sea, and even Jersey, which is not in France, were considered before le Havre/Ste Adresse was finally decided upon. In addition to granting sovereign rights to the Belgians, the French granted the same rights to the Belgian army as were enjoyed by the French army.

So the Belgian administration duly settled down in Ste Adresse. It lost no time in arranging postal matters. A suitable building was found adjacent to the existing French post office (Fig 7); a stock of stamps had no doubt been brought from Ostend but no cancelling device was available. For a few days, from its opening on 18 October to the 22nd a French single-ring datestamp of le Havre was used to cancel its mail (Fig 8). Covers bearing this cancel are keenly sought after. Towards the end of the year the return of this datestamp was requested, apparently to commemorate the opening of this Belgian post office. The canceller supplied differed from the original; in the original there is a break



Figure 10

The three sub-types of Le Havre (Spécial) canceller supplied for use by the Belgian postal service, first noted on 23 October 1914.

in the circle above the “E” of “LE” and the *levée* (dater) includes the hour followed by a star; in the replacement there is no break in the outer circle and no *levée* number, just a star (Fig 9). De Bast does not note a last day of use of this cancel but he does illustrate without comment six Belgian stamps, some on piece, bearing the replacement cancel with date 18 October 1914 (the opening date of the office, so presumably back-dated by favour) (page 49). The LE HAVRE (SPECIAL) datestamp (Fig 1) soon appeared, the earliest recorded date being 23 October, the day after the withdrawal of the French domestic canceller. There are three sub-types, most easily recognised by the position or absence of a star in the dater (Fig 10). Several minor variations are noted, as are forgeries (pages 54, 55).

These arrangements were notified by the UPU to member states, rather belatedly, on 6 February 1915. Its circular quoted advice received from the French administration (my rather free translation) –

“I have the honour to inform you that following the transfer of the Belgian Government to Le Havre a Belgian post office has been opened in this town. Consequently the said office is empowered to issue Belgian postage stamps which are cancelled by a datestamp reading ‘LE HAVRE (SPECIAL)’; Will you please advise member administrations exceptionally to consider as prepaid, ordinary letters from Le Havre bearing stamps issued by the Belgian postal administration.” (page 31)

As an interesting aside, M. de Bast notes that changes in international tariffs had to be approved by the UPU, which had decided at the outset of hostilities that all proposals for change should be put on hold for the duration; it seems clear from the context that this did not apply to administrative changes. (So far as Ste Adresse is concerned, both civil and military facilities amounted to a Belgian enclave in France.) (Page 30).

To return from this digression, the LE HAVRE (SPECIAL) datestamp was replaced as from 15 October 1915 by the bilingual STE ADRESSE/POSTE BELGE/BELGISCHE

POST canceller (Fig 2). Several minor varieties exist (page 59). 15 October was also the date on which an entirely new issue of Belgian stamps, printed in London by Waterlow and Sons, was placed on sale. No doubt stocks of the previous issue were dwindling, many must have been left behind in occupied territory and probably looted. These previous issues were invalidated and the Ste Adresse office was forbidden to cancel them as from the same date (15 October); the French post offices were requested to hand over to the Belgians any item franked with them passing through their hands. Finally on 15 October, the Ste Adresse post office was moved to new accommodation in *l’hôtel Dufayel ou Palais des Ministères Belges* (page 57).

The Ste Adresse datestamps were to remain in use until 22 November 1918; after which date the post office was closed for private business although it continued to deal with official mail. In these last few days the bilingual datestamp was replaced by a roller applying a fancy design to the stamps together with a new circular datestamp reading, for example, 24 BELGIQUE 24/BELGIE and dated 29 November 1918. This was also used as receiver on incoming mail – an example with code 23 and dated 30 November on a postcard from the Belgian Congo is also illustrated. Code 22 is also known (pages 60-61) (Fig 11). These codes are not explained.

Finally, for those who are specially interested in French registration practice, I should mention that throughout its existence the Belgian post office at Ste Adresse used French registration labels. If I have understood M. de Bast’s brief note (page 62) correctly, from October to December 1914 two *cachets de service* were struck over the label, a French LE HÂVRE (note the accent) and a Belgian LE HAVRE (SPECIAL) without accent (page 62). So I presume that the latter appeared on its own from the beginning of 1915 until the office closed – one such cover, dated 16 April 1915, is illustrated on page 121. I should add, though, that I’ve also noted (page 67) another, dated 12 November 1914, so it must be assumed that it was not the invariable practice to apply both cachets in this early period. The accent was probably an error.



Figure 11

The bi-lingual Belgique/Belgie datestamp used in the last few days of the Belgian post office.



Figure 12
The first Belgian
Postes Militaires datestamp
(1883-1913),
from the article
by Roger Callens
noted in the Appendix
(apparently enlarged).



Figure 13
Bilingual Belgian military posts datestamp of 1914 with code numbers,
on envelope sent post-free to an Allied address, 21 July 1915 (? See text).

PART 3 The Belgian Military Post

The Belgian military also maintained a postal service (most of what follows comes from the article by Roger Callens noted in the Appendix). While other ranks were mainly Dutch-speaking, most of the officers spoke French. It's not surprising, therefore, that the first military post datestamps were inscribed in French only (Fig 12). There was no year-slug, but the period of use was 1883 to 1913; the code ("3" in this case) was sometimes omitted. I've no note of what other numbers, if any, were used, nor do I have an explanation of their significance. Callens, who notes that many questions about these datestamps remain unanswered, also does not explain the meaning of the other code, "12-13", also featured on this datestamp and the other similar types which followed it.

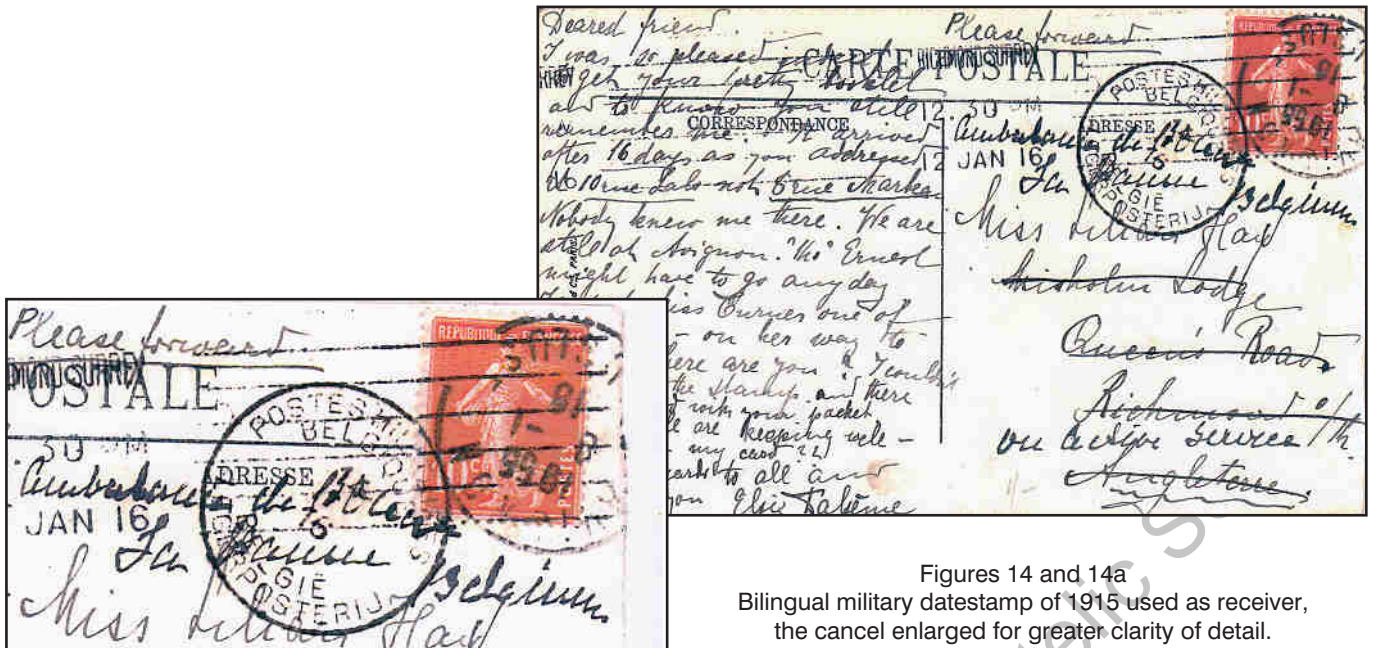
Bilingual datestamps inscribed POSTES MILITAIRES BELGIQUE/BELGË LEGERPOSTERIJ appeared in the summer of 1913; they were in use for a year or so and were identical in appearance to Fig 13, an example of the 1914 type from my own collection. The significance of the code numbers apparently differed. For the 1913 type only "2-3" and "8" are noted; the latter may indicate handling at the Central (Base) Post Office (see immediately below). The 1914 type was brought into use on 1 August; the code numbers now indicated either one of the army's six Infantry Divisions, the one Cavalry Division ("7") or the Central (Base) Post Office ("8") which was located in the Gare du Nord in Brussels but quickly moved to Antwerp (8 August) and Calais (end of October). The sender of this letter was serving in the third platoon (*peloton*) of the third company, 4th Infantry Division located at Honfleur in the French *département* of Calvados, but since there are no other postal markings it would require a detailed knowledge of Belgian troop movements in World War I to determine the actual year, the year slug having been replaced by a rectangular plug. It may, however, have been 1915 (see below).

As from 4 August 1914, the date of the German invasion, free franking was unofficially available to postal and military personnel; formal authority followed three days later. This did not apply to registered letters or mail addressed to foreign countries (Allied countries excepted). The

sender was required to endorse the upper right corner of his envelope with either SM, MD or FM (*Service Militaire, Militaire Dienst, Franchise Militaire*) (Fig 13).

Re-organisation of the Field Post Service in 1915 (possibly in September) meant that the datestamps were no longer related to the Divisions and were now used with and without code numbers. These were systematically removed or replaced by datestamps without code (Fig 14). The travels of this civilian picture postcard of La Place de l'Horloge at Avignon are interesting. Posted at Avignon on 8 January 1916, it reached Richmond in Surrey in time to be re-directed, on the 12th, to the Ambulance de Belgique, La Panne, Belgium; it was received at the local military post office only two days later when the datestamp without code was applied. (I've included an enlarged illustration (Fig 14a) because the two cancellations have been struck over the forwarding instructions, making reading difficult). La Panne lies on the Belgian coast very near the French frontier. It was in the small part of south-west Belgium around Veurne (Fig 3) which was never occupied by the Germans.

Another interesting example of this code-free datestamp, dated 1 May 1916, is illustrated by Roger Callens. It is on a printed *Service Militaire* postcard addressed *Au Comité/Aide aux Soldats Belges/Poste Restante/BAARLE-DUC/BELGIQUE*. There is no indication of the place of origin either on the card or in the text, but the card was censored by a Belgian military censor stationed at Folkestone so it was very likely somewhere in the UK (originally at Veurne from November 1914, the censor office was quickly divided into two sections in January 1915, one being at Folkestone and the other at Calais). Baarle-Duc was, and still is, a Belgian enclave in the Netherlands, just across the border to the north-east of Antwerp. The Belgian receiver of 9 May is inscribed BAARLE-HERTOG/BAARLE-DUC. Antoine Magonette (see the Appendix) has more of interest to say on this. The enclave, some 2km north of the border, has an area of 30 hectares and at the time had a population of some 1500. Baarle-Duc and Baarle-Hertog are said to be two separate villages (if this is so, they must



Figures 14 and 14a
Bilingual military datestamp of 1915 used as receiver,
the cancel enlarged for greater clarity of detail.

have shared postal services). It has to be said, though, that Magonette prints a sketch-map which marks only Baarle-Hertog together with a Dutch village, Baarle-Nassau, just outside the enclave.* The enclave was not occupied by the Germans, who kept the international border heavily guarded. Nevertheless it was extensively used for underground communication between Belgium and France. Three frequently used addresses were *Le Mot du Soldat*, *l'Union Belge de Maasticht* and *La Poste des Alliés*. The card illustrated by Roger Callens suggests that the enclave was also used more openly. It must surely have been sent by a fund-raising charity in the UK to an associate in the enclave. I suspect, though this is guess-work on my part, that the military datestamp was applied by the Belgian censor at Folkestone. The gap of eight days between the two cachets suggests this, at any rate. I would like to know more about this card!

Acknowledgements

Maurice Tyler has read this article in draft and has kindly suggested several improvements. Pat Spong has kindly typed my long-hand draft.

APPENDIX

A Note on sources

The following authorities have been consulted.

For the biographical details –

Westminster Cathedral Archives and

The Catholic Herald, 29 June 1935 and 18 June 1937. (Maurice)

The New York Times, 8 July 1915 (Henri)

Wikipedia, for details about Count Henri and Sir Adrian, and a note on the Monsignori.

English Heritage and London Borough of Brent websites (St Andrew's Hospital)

For the Belgian civil posts –

de Bast, Jean – *Le Gouvernement et l'armée Belges au Havre pendant la Guerre 1914-1918* (La Société Philatélique Belge, 1984) - *Introduction* and *Chapitres I* (*Le Gouvernement Belge en Exil*), *II* (*La poste Belge au Havre*) and *XII* (*Départ du Gouvernement Belge*),

Magonette, Antoine - *Le Bureau de Correspondance Belge de Sainte-Adresse - La Correspondance Clandestine Belge 1914-1918* (published by the author, Honfleur, 1998) - *Introduction* and *Première Partie, Le Bureau de correspondance Belge de Sainte-Adresse*.

Van San, Piet (editor) - *La correspondance des Belges pendant la première guerre mondiale* (Belgian Archives générales, 1999, to complement an exhibition of the same name - Paper I, *La guerre de mouvement août-octobre 1914*; Paper 5, *Le gouvernement belge au Havre*, both by Van San).

For the military posts –

Callens, Roger - *Belgian Military Postal Service in WWI* (The Military Postal History Society, USA, Fall Bulletin 2008), reprinted in *Forces Postal History Society Journal*, Vol XXVIII, November 2009.

Magonette, Antoine (see above) - *Deuxième Partie, la poste clandestine privée*.

de Bast, Jean (see above) - *Chapitre VI - Les services de l'armée belge établis au Havre*.

Van San, Piet (see above) - Paper 2, *Les postes militaires au cours de la première guerre mondiale* (Arlie Tassin and Leon Plovie); Paper 3, *La censure militaire belge* (Van San), Paper 8, *La poste clandestine* (Jacques Hemelaers).

I am grateful to Maurice Tyler for the loan of these publications.

* I'm sceptical about this suggestion that there are two villages in the enclave. Baarle-Duc and Baarle-Hertog are surely alternative names for the same place, as with Veurne/Furnes. The German for "Duke" (French "Duc") is Herzog, which is not very different from the Dutch "Hertog." The best map I've been able to find, Michelin's 1cm/2km Belgium North and Central, marks only Baarle-Hertog in the enclave. M. Magonette, who is apparently French, not Belgian, seems to have misconstrued the village's bilingual postmark. As regards places also noted above, Michelin does note the alternative Veurne/Furnes ("Furnes" in brackets); La Panne becomes "De Panne." Sad to say one feature of this part of the map is the large number of cemeteries that are noted.

A Review of the State of the N° 3154 Cancellation as Used in Ecuador

Stan Luft

The French postal killer, showing large numerals (*gros chiffres*) 3154 in a lozenge of dots, was assigned in 1863 to the little Alsatian town of Rixheim in the Haut-Rhin *département*. In November of 1870 that killer was forever lost by Rixheim when it was occupied by German troops during the Franco-German War of 1870-71. This fact is reasonably well known to French (and German) postal historians. After the war duplicate killers from now lost Alsace and Lorraine towns were reassigned to newly opened post offices in small towns elsewhere in France; the 3154 killer only went in 1874 or 1875 to Beuzeval in the Calvados *département* for just a short period, inasmuch as all French *gros chiffres* were themselves abandoned the last day of March 1876 (give or take a day) and replaced as killers by a second strike of the town cachet. Beuzeval 3154 killers are far scarcer than even Rixheim ones, and this use is also far less well known.

Possibly even far less known, and still known only to a very few specialists, is that another duplicate 3154 killer was used in Ecuador, first in Guayaquil (very rare) and then in Quito (rare). How this came to pass has been debated for decades. Here we do our part by bringing this fascinating story through its history of philatelic supposition to what we hope will be its irrefutable conclusion. Also we publish here a far larger census of 3154s on mail from Ecuador than hitherto known (Luft, 1984; D'Elia, 1999)

To date, the last known letter bearing a French 3154 killer was dated 20 November 1870, that is just prior to the occupation of Rixheim (Maier, 1985; Trassaert, 1997; Kunemann, 2003). For a long time, a favored, quite romantic explanation was that the French postmaster or postal employee departed with his 3154 killer rather than to have it fall into German hands, and eventually exiled himself to Ecuador where experienced postal people were much in demand. This would sound quite reasonable were Ecuadorian usage dated only from 1871 or so. But why far-away Ecuador when all he needed to do was to cross westward or southwestward into an unannexed *département* of France?

It is most regrettable, nay unfortunate, that far too many philatelic writers fail to take note of the work of other students of their chosen subject. In part this could be due to ignorance of other journals or newsletters, many of them little known, in other languages, or simply ephemeral. But nowadays there is little excuse for such ignorance.

My earliest bibliographic reference is that of W B Haworth (1925), who apparently discovered the presence of the 3154 marking, calling it postmark "e," but illustrating it with a forged cancel! In his article he notes a cover dated 17 July 1872. So far so good in equating that cover with our former Rixheim postal person.

But the very next entry, that of J F McGee (1954) mentions in passing that the 3154 cancellation was present in Ecuador as early as 1865 but gives no further details. He does list another early cancellation, dated 1868 (see my census).

In spite of those findings, McGee was generally ignored by most authors, sorry to state myself included.

With now several known Ecuadorian covers predating the latest known Rixheim 3154 cover, how did such a device reach Ecuador? Answers do vary in details (Ayora, 1982; Roth, 1987); but generally speaking, it appears that the French government, eager to follow the British example in reorganizing postal systems in less developed countries, chose Ecuador. The 1860s French ambassador, M. H Fabre, ably did his part, and soon saw to it that a French postal team set up shop in Quito. A sample of a current French killer for letters was provided from the stocks in Paris, and by chance it just happened to be a duplicate of little used 3154 of Rixheim. More recently the late Jean-Luc Trassaert (1997) provided the *coup de grâce*: the French Rixheim's postmaster in 1870 was a woman (Léonie Fux [viz Kunmann, 2003]) and she never resided elsewhere but in her native Alsace!

Now it's time to examine my census. Obviously there must be more such covers lurking out there; no census can ever be considered quite complete! Those lacking town cachets and listed at the end, appear to be mainly from the latter years of genuine 3154 use, for reasons as yet unknown to me. The same applies to the hiatus in covers that should date between 1874 and 1877. Hopefully we shall eventually and fully know why.

The most commonly used stamp, the lowly blue ½ Real, was used on local letters and wrappers, and also to convey the mail to embarkation from Guayaquil, where once aboard a packet it was to be considered as unpaid.

Forgeries and reprints of both the first two issues of Ecuador and of the 3154 killers have been covered in varying degrees of detail by Salinas de Lozada (1944), Haché *et al* (1953-54), Levi-Castillo (1961), Funkhouser (1963), Maier (1985), Tyler (1993), Harris (personal communications), among others. Alex Rendon (1983 personal communication) advised me that "all 3154s on Ecuador are bogus," but we need not have to accept that!

We should now be able to agree that the following conclusions have been firmly established for the subject matter:

- (1) A 3154 killer was in use in Ecuador from at least 1865, and therefore we must banish forever that poignant tale of a Rixheim postal employee taking his cancelling device with him to 1870 Ecuadorian exile ahead of the invading Germans; and
- 2) That no less than three 3154 killers were in use during much of the 1870-1876 time period: in Rixheim until November 1870, in Beuzeval (Calvados) from 1874 to the end of March 1876, and during all that time but only occasionally, in Ecuador; and
- (3) Falsifications will continue to outnumber genuine stamps and covers.

CENSUS OF ECUADORIAN 3154 COVERS (10/2013)

Date Stamp	From / To	Franking	3154 color	Source
I Feb 1865	Guayaquil / Quito	1R yellow(?)	?	D'Elia coll.
I Feb 1865	Guayaquil / Quito	½R blue	?	Soler & Llach sale
8 Nov 1868	Guayaquil / Lima	1R yellow (x2)	?	McGee (1954)
Late 1870 to 1872	?	?	?	Ayora (1982)
2 July 1870	Quito / Paris via Panama	½R + 12 <i>décimes</i> tax	?	Maier (1985)
13? March —	Quito / Latacunga	½R	red	P Dreyfus coll.
1870±	Quito	½R + 1R yellow + 4R red	black, red	Haché <i>et al</i> (1953-54)
7 June? 1871	Quito / Guaranda	1R (x2) + 4R (x2)	red + black	P Dreyfus coll.
1 July 1871	Quito / Lima	1R yellow (x2)	?	Smithsonian coll.
8 Nov 1871	Quito / Guano	½R + 1R	red	Ivy & Mader 6/97 sale
27 Nov 1871	Quito / Guaranda	4R (x3) + 1R (x2) + ½R	?	D'Elia coll.
3 Jan 1872	Quito / Guaranda	4R (x2)	?	Ex-Bustamente.
12 Jan? 1872	Quito	?	?	Haché <i>et al</i> (1953-54)
20 Jan 1872	Quito / Rome	½R	?	Smithsonian coll.
I Feb 1872	Quito	?	?	Haché <i>et al</i> (1953-54)
3 Feb? 1872	Quito / Guaranda	4R (x2) red of 1865	?	Peter Holcombe cert.
3 March 1872	Quito	½R	red	Zurich Lowe 1991 sale
17 July 1872	Quito	1R yellow (x2)	black	Haworth (1925)
23 July 1872	Quito / La Esperanza	½R	black	Luft coll. (ex-Harris)
29 — 1872	Quito / Guaranda?	1R orange + ½R of 1872	red	P Dreyfus coll.
31 — 1872	Quito / Guaranda	½R	red	P Dreyfus coll.
1872	Quito local	½R of 1866 + 1R (x2)	?	Ex-Bustamente
18 Dec 1872	Quito / Guaranda	½R + 4R	black	P Dreyfus coll.
22 Oct 1873	Quito / Latacunga	½R + 1R (x16) of 1872	?	Ex-Bustamente
8 Apr 1874	Quito —> ?	1R (x7) of 1872	?	?
12 Apr 1874	Quito	½R of 1872	?	L J Harris coll.
22 Apr 1874	Quito / Riobamba	½R of 1872	?	L J Harris coll.
17 Jan 1878	Guayaquil / Paris via Panama & London	½R of 1872 + 23 <i>décimes</i> tax	black	J Kaufmann coll. (Docs. Phil. 1991)
22 Feb 1879	Quito / Paris via Panama & London	½R of 1872 + 16 <i>décimes</i> tax	blue	Mainsheet (1985) (signed Jamet)
25 Mar 1878	? —> Paris via Panama & London	½R of 1872 + 15 <i>décimes</i> tax	?	M Kunemann coll. (signed Calves)
No Dater (docketed 26 Aug 1871)	? —> Cincinnati	1R pair of 1865	?	F Longhi coll. (signed Brun)
No Dater	—> Riobamba	½R of 1872	black	P Dreyfus coll.
No Dater	—> Riobamba	½R of 1872	black	Zurich Lowe 1991 sale
No Dater	Quito / Latacunga (5 June 1878 internal)	½R of 1872	?	1985 SOLLUPHIL or Feldman sale
No Dater	—> Otavalo	½R of 1872	?	F Longhi coll. (signed Brun)

Acknowledgements

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France and Colonies Philatelist

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Cameroun Telegraph and Radio (Bratzel); My Favorite Cover [Algerian 1868 with 2 scarce town cancels] (Morvay); Tunisian Parcel Post (Rasmussen).

The Indo-China Philatelist

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Vol 44 N° 3 (Whole N° 213) May 2014: Vichy Local Issues, Pt 2 - 1942 Issues (Dykhouse & Bentley).

Vol 44 N° 4 (Whole N° 214) Sep 2014: Indo-Chinese Postal History of WWI (Aspnes); Vichy Local Issues, Pt 3 - 1943 Issues (Dykhouse & Bentley).

Vol 44 N° 5 (Whole N° 215) Nov 2014: Vichy Local Issues, Pt 4 - 1944 Issues (Dykhouse & Bentley).

Gabon: The Development of the Postal Services 1862-1889

John Yeomans



Map of Gabon

Historic Background

In 1482 Gabon was identified by Portuguese explorers on a voyage to the Congo; Dutch traders arrived in 1593, and the French in 1630 but the hostile climate of high temperatures and humidity and the dense jungle spreading to the shore line of the seven hundred miles of the Atlantic coast were major obstacles to expansion.

In 1839 Commandant Bouet Willaumez of the French Naval Base in Senegal was delegated to negotiate with local chiefs and he succeeded in acquiring a tract of land on the left bank of the Gaboon estuary. In 1840 Jesuit Missionaries from Guinea and in 1842 Presbyterian Missionaries from the USA arrived, and in 1846 a French Navy frigate *Penelope* captured a slave ship the brig *Eliza* off the

coast and released forty-nine slaves on the Island of Gorée. In 1849 they were moved to Gabon to a location near the Missions, a settlement that was to become Libreville.

In the period 1875 to 1885 the exploration of the interior was led by Pierre Savorgnan de Brazza and he, in the second of three expeditions to the head waters of the River Ogoewe, succeeded in finding a route to the River Congo. Brazza negotiated a treaty with a local chief Makoka for land at the village of Mbe, and on the right bank of the Congo at Stanley Pool. On September 10 1880 he raised the Tricolour and established the settlement later to be named Brazzaville. Brazza met Stanley at his camp near Matadi on the lower river and returned in triumph to Paris



1880 American Mission on the Ogoewe near Lambaréné

'Local bye - law relating to the establishment of the post offices of Gabon and Assinie.

'First Article. Two post offices will be established one in Gabon and the other in Assinie. The one in Assinie will stay in contact with the metropolitan offices of Le Havre and Calais via the British Post Office in Cape Coast, the one in Gabon establishes its connections through the British Post Office in Fernando Po.

This decree follows a ministerial communication from Paris dated 6 August 1862 and which was published in the *Bulletin Officiel du Gabon Congo*:

'Commander, following the communication dated 21 June, I have the honour to inform you that I will despatch to Bordeaux to board on the Monredon destined for Gabon, two cases marked GAB No 806 and 864 and containing gummed paper to serve as envelopes

Communications

1869: A French company Messageries Maritimes introduced a contract mail service *Ligne J* between Bordeaux and Buenos Aires via Dakar, Pernambuco and Bahia with a connecting service from Dakar to the French West African ports and Libreville.

1871: The Portuguese introduced a shipping service and, in 1881, a contract service for mail between Lisbon, Madeira, Cape Verde Islands, St Thome and Banana with a feeder service operating between St Thome and Libreville.

In the aftermath of the 1870 Franco-Prussian War and the near abandonment of the Gabon colony the administration and postal services were suspended and Libreville was reduced to the status of a coaling station. Very few examples of mail from the Colony are recorded in the period October 1870 to June 1877.

The cover dated 10 June 1863 shown in [Figure 1](#) is an early example of mail from France addressed to a member of the crew of the French Navy aviso *Etoile* in the harbour of Port

The obliterator consisting of a 8 x 8 lozange with the insert GAB and the circular canceller ETABLISSEMENTS DU GABON GABON were supplied together with a quantity of the 10c, 20c, 40c and 80c adhesives of the General Colonies Eagle issue.

The canceller is uncommon used on mail and is recorded in two periods 1863-1865 and 1883-1886 and the obliterator GAB from 1863-1867.

In 1865 at Libreville a second circular canceller was issued COTE-D'OR ET GABON GABON, remaining in use until 1886, this being the period during which the French Gold Coast was administered by the Governor of Gabon.

The third circular canceller LIBREVILLE GABON was introduced in 1886 and used by three other offices in the period to 1889.



Figure 1

Gabon. It is franked 1F for the second step weight <15g from the Tariff of 1861.

It was carried by rail to Paris with backstamp *Pyrénées à Paris* 20 June and returned to Calais 20 June and to Liverpool. On 24 June 1863 the Laird ship *Macgregor Laird* departed Liverpool on the West African contract service to Fernando Po with an onward connection to Gabon.

Figure 2 shows a cover from Libreville dated 5 July 1863 and struck with a very early example of the uncommon cds Stone Type 1. It was carried as closed mail by the African Steamship Company steamer *Ethiope* to Fernando Po 28 June and Liverpool 13 August with entry to Calais 14 August. It was then carried to Paris and Brest to arrive 17 August 1863.



Figure 2



Figure 3

The cover in Figure 3 includes the text of a letter dated 1 November 1863 (error 1864) from a member of the crew of the *Etoile* a coastal patrol vessel moored in the estuary of the river Gabon. Unpaid and carried to Lagos 10 November to enter the postal system as closed mail and a connection with the steamer *Macgregor Laird* to arrive in Liverpool 10 December. It went to London 11 December, with Calais and Nègrepelisse arrival 12 December 1863.

From Article 42 of the Tariff of January 1858 it is struck with GB / 2F representing a payment to Britain for the carriage of bulk mail of 30g. Manuscript 10 from Tariff of 1861 represents a charge to the recipient of 10 décimes for a weight of 7½ g and 1 in blue crayon, being the credit of 1d to the Lagos post office

Figure 4 illustrates an interesting example of unpaid mail from Libreville dated 24 December 1863. Carried as closed mail on a feeder service to Fernando Po and then by the steamer *Athenian* to Liverpool to arrive 10 February. The cover entered France at Calais 12 February 1864 and was returned from Paris 12 February to Liverpool to connect with the Cunard steamer *Asia* operating the packet service to New York.

On arrival it was struck with 'NY Br Pkt 30 or US Notes 46 / 28 February' representing a charge of 30 cents coins for the second step weight of <1½oz and payment of US inland 6 cents, British sea and transit 16 cents, France 8 cents.



Figure 4

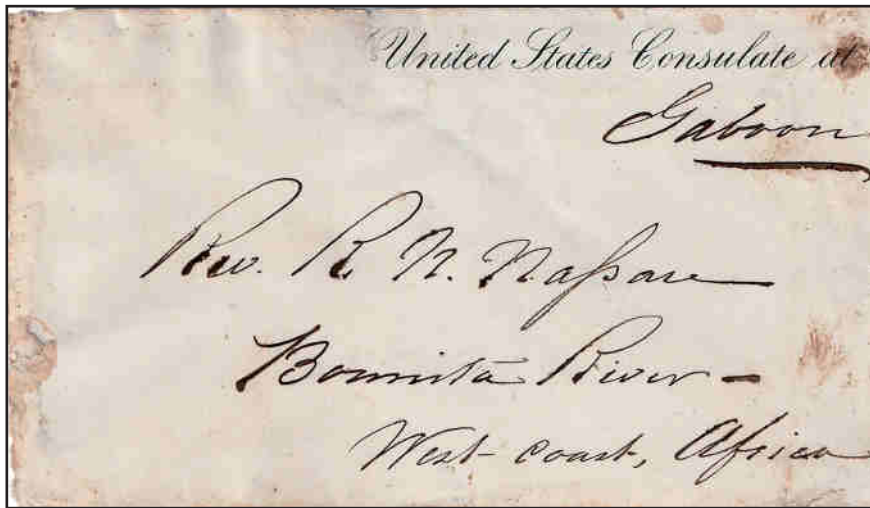


Figure 5

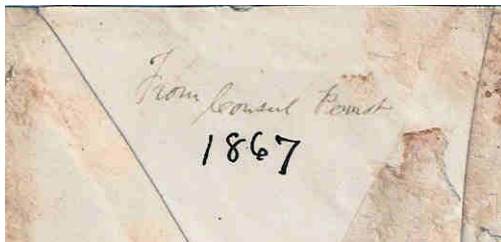


Figure 6

In 1859 Presbyterian Missionaries moved into Northern Gabon, to the Island of Corisco in the Gulf of Guinea, and later in 1865 to the settlement at the mouth of the River Bonita. Figure 5 shows the front and Figure 6 the back of an early example of an official envelope dated 1867 from Perot the American Consul at Gaboon addressed to the Reverend R H Nassau at Bonita who spent 40 years of his life in West Africa, much of the time in Gabon

Figure 7 illustrates an example of incoming Presbyterian missionary mail dated 29 June 1877 from Trenton New Jersey. It was franked 15c for a weight of $< \frac{1}{2}$ oz and carried by closed mail on a British packet from New York to Liverpool, and by the steamer *Sénégal* operating the *Ligne J* service from Bordeaux 20 July to Lisbon and Dakar connecting to Libreville 17 August 1877.



Figure 7



Figure 8

The cover from Libreville shown in Figure 8 was dated 21 January 1870 and franked 70c for the first step weight of < 10 g for mail carried by a British packet, and cancelled by the uncommon lozenge GAB. It was carried by closed mail from Libreville 21 January to Fernando Po and then to Liverpool. There was a rail connection to the port of entry Calais, followed by Paris to Clermont with backstamp *Paris à Clermont* 24 February 1870.



Figure 9

Figure 9 illustrates a cover from Libreville dated 10 May 1884 addressed to Rufisque Senegal with an example of the first canceller used in the second period of use but with the year slug error '1864'. It was correctly franked 25c for the first step weight of <15g.

It was carried on an interesting routing from Libreville 10 May 'via Liverpool & Bordeaux par SS Angola' and from Liverpool to Calais and a connecting rail service to Bordeaux on 6 June. The steamer *Orenoque* operating the Messageries Maritimes *Ligne J* service to Buenos Aires carried the mail via Lisbon and Dakar with a strike of the Lisbon transit cds *Ligne J Paq Fr No 3* on 9 June and Rufisque arrival 14 June 1884.

Figure 10 illustrates mail and Figure 11 a photograph of the *USS Lancaster*, a screw sloop of war.

The *Lancaster* had sailed down the West Coast of Africa to arrive in the mouth of the River Congo on 28 April and to the harbour of the River Gaboon on 11 May en route to Brazil and Rio de Janeiro, arriving 1 July on assignment as flagship of the South America Squadron.

The cover is franked 25c for the weight of <15g and bears a strike of the first canceller during the second period of use. Mail carried from Libreville 11 May to Fernando Po to connect with the steamer *Volta* operating a contract service to Liverpool with Liverpool arrival 8 June. It took the packet service to New York with backstamp arrival 20 June 1885.



Figure 10

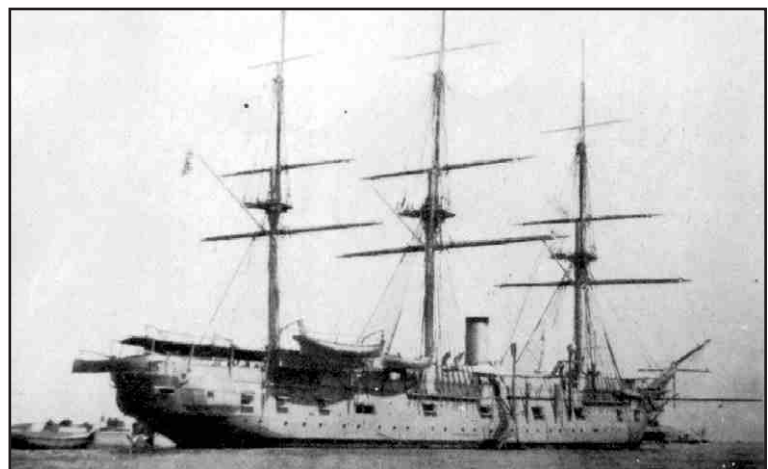


Figure 11



Figure 12

The West African Mission was a civil operation led by Brazza comprising a team numbering more than 200 including 48 Europeans, Senagalese marines, naturalists, and a geographer to continue the survey and topography work started in the earlier expeditions on the Ogowe river system, together with 350 tons of provisions and supplies to support the basic infrastructure of the new French Congo colony. He set out in March 1883 from Bordeaux on the steamer *La Précurseur* to Libreville and then by river steamers on the River Ogowe to N'Djole and later to Franceville and Brazzaville

Figure 12 illustrates a Mission cover dated 18 October 1885 from Libreville franked 25c and carried to Dakar to connect on 31 October with the *Orenoque* operating the Messageries Maritimes *Ligne J* service from Buenos Aires to Dakar, Lisbon and Bordeaux 14 November, with Paris arrival 15 November 1885.

Figure 13 illustrates a cover from Libreville 12 April 1889 registered and addressed to France

It is franked with 2 x 25c on 20c *timbre-tax*, a local overprint issued to meet demand in the short period 27 March to 18 May 1889 following a shortage of the General Colonies issue. The franking of 50c comprises 25c for the first step weight of <15g plus 25c registration fee from the tariff of July 1878.

It was carried by a steamer service from Libreville on 12 April to San Thome to connect with the Portuguese steamer *Portugal* operating a contract service, to arrive Lisbon 19 May and then tool a connection to Bordeaux on 21 May and arrived in Cauderon 22 May 1889.



Figure 13



Figure 14

On 11 December 1888 Gabon and French Congo were combined as a single administrative entity and named Gabon Congo.

Figure 14 is a cover dated 9 November 1889 from Libreville to Beauvais France.

It is franked with a 25c on 20c 'timbre-tax' (Yvert no. 13) and bears a strike of the unrecorded cachet 'Gabon-Congo N'Djole.'

Per the Tariff of 1889 it is franked 25c for the first step weight of <15g.

It is likely to have been carried by river steamer from N'Djole, a settlement on the River Ogowe, to arrive at Libreville on 9 November.

There was a connecting service by French steamer to Dakar and Bordeaux, and it had a December 1889 arrival backstamp.

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Newspaper Wrappers of France: Supply and Demand

John Courtis

Dr John K Courtis FRPSL is a distinguished Australian philatelist, who is not a member of our Society. He has researched newspaper wrappers of the world, as he explains in his article, and he offers us his conclusions as far as France is concerned.

Morya is the oldest mission station in Basutoland, founded in 1833. The *Kansas City Star* newspaper, Missouri, USA was first published in 1888 and is the recipient of eight Pulitzer Prizes. *Compagnie FAQ in Yabassi*, Western Cameroon; *La Metropole* Antwerp, Belgium; *Grand Hôtel du Parc*, Cannes; *Consulate de Bolivia*, New York City, USA; M Stelling, *Droguiste Herboriste*, Copenhagen, Denmark; *Enoch Pratt* free library, Baltimore are but a few of the intriguing addressee details that have appeared on the postal stationery post office newspaper wrappers of France. Of course France was a Colonial power and the reach of its newspapers to colonies and elsewhere would have served the needs of the expatriate community and commercial interests. The purpose of this paper is to review the supply of and demand for these wrappers as evidenced by their listing and sale on the Internet site eBay over the past decade.

The auction site eBay is not the only outlet for the sale of the wrappers of France. Because eBay is essentially an English-based forum it may well be that other sites are better suited to the sale of the postal stationery of France. Other collectors with information about the sale of wrappers of France from other Internet sites as well as the more traditional philatelic auction houses are invited to supplement the findings of this eBay-based study.

Post Office Issues

The first wrappers of France were issued on 1 October 1882. This comprised two Peace and Commerce or Sage type wrappers in two denominations: 1c black (Higgins & Gage E1) and 2c red-brown (E2). Approximately six months later on 19 March 1883 a 3c red (E3) was issued. Nine years later in 1892 these three denominations were issued without border lines (E1a-E3a). In 1898 date codes appeared on wrappers. Although usually not detectable from eBay images because of the manner in which the wrapper is folded, these date codes were printed to the right of and facing the indicium. The first digit of the date code is the last digit of the year of printing and the next two digits indicate the week number in the year of printing.

The second set of wrappers of France depicted the winged goddess representing *Liberté*, the balance *Egalité* and the kissing cherubs *Fraternité* (Liberty, Equality, Fraternity). These are referred to as the Liberty design or the Blanc design after the name of the designer Joseph Blanc. Two denominations were issued in 1901: 1c grey (also dark grey) (E4) and 2c violet brown (E5). Quite some years later, in 1917, a 3c vermillion was issued (E6). Another seven years on a 5c green Liberty was issued (E8).



Figure 1: Indicia Appearing on Wrappers of France

The first wrapper of the third and final set was issued in 1921, being the 5c orange Sower design (E7). Why it was necessary to reissue the Liberty design in 1925 in the same 5c denomination in a different colour was likely due to an UPU requirement. In 1926 a 15c violet brown Sower design was issued (E9). In 1929 a 2c cinnamon Liberty was reissued without date codes but this issue was not accorded a separate “E” catalogue number. In 1932 two more denominations of the Sower design were issued: 1c olive brown (E10) and 2c green olive (E11), both with date codes. Seven years later the final three denominations of the Sower design were issued: 10c ultramarine (E12), 20c deep lilac (E13) and 30c red (E14). These later issues are very elusive in used condition. The several indicia are summarized and shown in Figure 1.

Supply Listed on eBay

The author has hand-collected images of used post office postal stationery wrappers worldwide from eBay on a daily basis since September 2003, i.e. a little over a decade. The database contains 32,000 images, of which 473 are those of France, representing approximately 1.4% of the total. In that sense the post office wrappers of France are uncommon.

Each of these 473 wrappers was analyzed on a number of attributes: addressee destination, uprating, auxiliary markings such as postage due and merchant marks, and bearing private overprinting. The results of the basic demographics per issue (based on H&G “E” numbers) are summarized in Table 1.

H&G #	Brief Identifier	Number listed	Up-rated	Domestic Destination	Non-domestic
1	1882, 1c black Peace & Commerce; thin border	32	5	22	10
1a	1892, 1c black Peace & Commerce; without border	92	17	65	27
2	1882, 2c red-brown Peace & Commerce; thin border	25	10	13	12
2a	1892, 2c red-brown Peace & Commerce; without border	62	19	38	24
3	1883, 3c red Peace & Commerce; thin border	40	23	17	23
3a	1892, 3c red Peace & Commerce; without border	25	11	14	11
4	1901, 1c grey Liberty, Equality, Fraternity	54	21	31	23
5	1901, 2c grey Liberty, Equality, Fraternity	98	48	46	52
6	1917, 3c vermilion Liberty, Equality, Fraternity	8	6	3	5
7	1921, 5c orange Sower	7	5	2	5
8	1924, 5c green Liberty, Equality, Fraternity	4	4	1	3
9	1926, 15c violet brown Sower	8	1	6	2
10	1932, 1c brown Sower	4	1	2	2
11	1932, 2c green olive Sower	7	2	5	2
12	1939, 10c ultramarine Sower	7	2	5	2
13	1939, 20c deep lilac Sower	0			
14	1939, 30c red Sower	0			
	Totals	473	175	270	203

Table 1: Frequency of Appearance on eBay of PO Wrappers of France

The first observation is that 57% of these extant wrappers were addressed to locations within France, while 43% were addressed to locations outside France. A more detailed study of the 203 non-France destinations revealed a remarkable 28 countries: Germany (70), Belgium (22), Switzerland and Egypt (13 each), Austria (12), USA (10), Great Britain (8), Brazil, Italy and South Africa (6 each), Holland and Sweden (4 each), Spain, Norway and Argentina (3 each), Canada, Portugal, Greece, Cameroon, Hungary and Algeria (2 each), and Andorra, South Africa, Denmark, Morocco, Serbia, Dutch East Indies, Yugoslavia and Luxembourg (1 each). Collecting all 28 country destinations would be quite a challenge. What is somewhat surprising is that few wrappers to French colonies appear to have survived.

The extant quantities of each issue appearing in the database are skewed towards the Peace and Commerce issues,

representing 58% of the total. The Liberty issues represent 35% while, in stark contrast, the Sower issues represent only 7%. There are no extant examples in the database of the 1939 20c and 30c issues. However, copies of these two wrappers have been noted for sale on the Delcampe Internet site which makes it important to remember this is an eBay study which may not be the preeminent site for the wrappers of France. Issues from 1917 onwards comprise slightly less than 1% of the total.

Collectors of post office postal stationery are normally on the lookout for auxiliary markings, high or unusual upratings, examples bearing private printing and illustrations, postage due, consular and censor markings, and so forth. There were 17 cases of wrappers bearing private overprints and those that could be read from Internet images are shown in Figure 2. As an aside, Jan Kosniowski's forthcoming catalogue of worldwide post office wrappers illustrates

13 different types of private overprints. The existence of these other privately overprinted wrappers is mentioned because wrappers such as these often appear for sale in the catalogues of the traditional philatelic auction houses.

Merchant marks are undocumented but represent a category of wrappers that might appeal to some collectors. Not all merchant marks are readable because the handstamp has not been applied clearly; moreover, some marks appear on the reverse of the wrapper and thereby do not show up in eBay images. Marks that were readable are: *Tivoli Tours*, *F. Cabanis* (vertical within ornate scroll), *L. Ganet*, *McCharles*, *Olivier LE BRAS*, *Desmedt*, *Coopération Pharmaceutique Française* and *Journaux Municipaux*.

Other markings include *Retour* (8 examples), *Inconnu* (2 examples), one consular marking, and postage due "T" markings and/or postage due adhesives (5 examples). Also noted were a few examples of named ships on wrappers and *Via* manuscript directional instructions. There were 175 uprated wrappers which is approximately 37%. This seems to be a high incidence of uprating and probably signals the use of wrappers with enclosures requiring different weight scales. The postal historian would have scope within this area of postal stationery for interesting research into rates and routes.

Some of the more notable private overprints are shown in Figure 2. Most are self-evident but two require special

mention. Example 4 shows a $\frac{1}{2}$ centime *en plus* handstamp. This is the only example of this handstamp in the database and was sold for the highest recorded price as discussed below. Kosniowski explains this marking in his catalogue:

"From 6 April 1878 new rates of postage were introduced for posting of newspapers which required the use of an additional $\frac{1}{2}$ centime on some items depending on the weight. (The postage increased by a $\frac{1}{2}$ centime for each 25 gr or part above the basic weight). There were no $\frac{1}{2}$ centime stamps which could be used. Payment was collected at the time of posting in cash. In August 1884 new regulations (Article No 244 de l'Instruction Générale) were introduced which required that the words ' $\frac{1}{2}$ centime en plus,' when applicable, be added to a packet by writing or by stamping. Many of the larger post offices were issued with a handstamp ' $\frac{1}{2}$ centime en plus' enclosed in a circle. The handstamp was applied after an item had been handed in for posting and paid for."

The other notable example is number 5 which was recently listed (December 2013) being a souvenir wrapper celebrating the visit of the Emperor of Russia. Clarity is poor, but there are three photographs of the Emperor and his wife to the left of the indicium. It is important to note that this was an official wrapper unlike the Huot private souvenir issues bordered in black which are not official postal stationery wrappers, although they frequently appear on eBay and are touted dishonestly as official wrappers (*caveat emptor!*) (Courtis 2010).*



Figure 2: Examples of Stamped-to-Order Wrappers Listed on eBay

* M. Philippe Pignon, President of the French *Association des Collectionneurs d'Entiers Postaux* (ACEP) made the following comment: "These souvenir wrappers are not postal stationery, these are wrappers with vignettes of fancy accomplished for the visit of the Tsar of Russia Nicolas II in France. These wrappers were printed by the firm of L. HUOT, Paris. There were many different types. Motifs are often identical or very closely resemble those printed on postcards and envelopes" (see Courtis 2010).

Demand on eBay

Since March 2006, the author has hand-collected daily sales data of used wrappers that have occurred on eBay. At the end of 2013 there have been 11,354 sales recorded in the database of which 151 refer to the post office wrappers of France. These sales are summarized in Table 2 per "E" type from lowest to highest realized price. The number of bidders per transaction is shown in parentheses. Number of bidders is not the same as number of bids, which is usually higher. An awareness of the number of bidders is helpful in determining the strength of the collector market. A rule of thumb is that on average a score of 2.5 bidders per type of wrapper issue is the "norm"; number of bidders above 2.5 indicates a stronger collector interest and a score below 2.5 indicates a weaker collector interest.

The profile of all bidders shows that there were three transactions each with seven bidders, another two transactions with six bidders, 11 transactions with five bidders, 16 transactions with four bidders, 18 transactions with three bidders, 40 transactions with two bidders and 66 sole bidder

transactions. The overall weighted average number of bidders calculated from the last column of Table 2 is 2.09. Only seven wrapper types scored 2.5 and above implying that 59% of the wrapper types of France do not have a strong bidder following on eBay.

There are two realized prices especially worthy of note. The \$52.34 was reached with seven active bidders for the souvenir E1 wrapper commemorating the visit by the Emperor of Russia and his wife. The highest realized price of \$156.30 was for the sole example of the handstamp *1/2 centime en plus*. Although no attempt was made to track individual items and their realized prices, the author's annotated notes indicate that the \$59 for E4 was for what appears to be a handstamped *Journaux Municipaux* and address. Examination of the original might reveal it to be privately overprinted. Other higher prices were usually paid for large value uprates, clear postmarks and postage due markings. Taken overall, the realized prices are quite modest. Only six of the 156 recorded sales were for more than \$20.

H&G	Sales Details (Ranked Low to High in USD) & Number of Bidders per Sale (Specimen Sales show suffix Sp)	# of Sales	Mean Sale Price	Mean # of Bidders
1	1.78 (3); 2.27 (3); 2.45 (2); 2.78 (1); 2.84 (3); 5.00 (1); 8.05 (2); 8.30 (1); 10.62 (5); 11.50 (3); 52.34 (7)	11	9.84	2.81
1a	0.95 (1); 0.99 (1); 0.99 (1); 0.99 (1); 0.99 (1); 0.99 (1); 1.00 (1); 1.04 (2); 1.22 (2); 1.27 (3); 1.61 (2); 1.80 (3); 2.24 (3); 3.00 (1); 3.24 (4); 3.25 (4); 3.27 (4); 4.00 (5); 4.00 (5); 4.00 (2); 5.50 (2); 5.50 (4); 9.30 (2); 10.50 (4); 11.00 (3); 12.00 (1); 20.50 (4); 21.50 (3)	28	4.88	2.50
2	0.99 (1); 0.99 (1); 4.00 (5); 4.02 (4); 5.19 (2); 5.50 (2); 5.51 (7); 8.00 (1); 26.00 (1)	9	6.68	2.66
2a	0.99 (1); 0.99 (1); 0.99 (1); 1.25 (2); 1.26 (4); 2.25 (2); 2.80 (2); 3.60 (3); 4.70 (1); 5.50 (2); 6.39 (4); 12.50 (1); 15.50 (4); 156.50 (3)	14	15.37	2.21
3	1.54 (2); 1.99 (3); 3.00 (1); 3.00 (1); 3.25 (1); 6.00 (1); 8.13 (2); 8.30 (1); 8.49 (5); 8.50 (5); 9.99 (1); 13.19 (5); 15.16 (5)	13	6.96	2.53
3a	1.99 (1); 2.24 (4); 3.25 (7); 3.67 (2); 4.00 (5); 5.60 (3); 6.01 (4); 9.99 (1)	8	4.59	3.37
4	0.99 (1); 0.99 (1); 0.99 (1); 0.99 (1); 0.99 (1); 1.45 (2); 1.58 (2); 1.99 (1); 1.99 (1); 1.99 (1); 1.99 (2); 2.55 (2); 3.00 (1); 3.25 (2); 3.99 (1); 5.00 (1); 6.50 (3); 7.50 (1); 7.68 (1); 7.75 (6); 7.99 (1); 8.50 (3); 13.86 (6); 59.00 (2)	24	6.35	1.83
4Sp	12.35 (2); 16.00 (2); 16.67 (1)	3	15.00	1.67
5	0.99 (1); 0.99 (1); 0.99 (1); 1.25 (2); 1.25 (2); 1.36 (2); 1.60 (1); 2.02 (2); 2.24 (3); 2.25 (2); 2.60 (1); 2.85 (2); 3.25 (4); 4.29 (2); 5.50 (2); 5.50 (5); 6.00 (1); 7.68 (1); 9.00 (1); 11.50 (2); 12.25 (1); 17.16 (5)	22	4.66	1.90
5Sp	12.35 (2); 16.67 (1)	2	14.51	1.50
6	1.04 (2); 5.12 (2); 6.00 (1); 9.59 (3)	4	5.43	2.00
7	0.99 (1); 3.00 (1); 6.50 (4); 7.00 (1); 9.19 (4); 9.99 (1)	6	6.11	2.00
8	5.72 (4); 6.00 (1)	2	5.86	2.50
8Sp	12.35 (2); 16.67 (1)	2	14.51	1.50
9	0.99 (1); 10.90 (2)	2	5.95	1.50
10	No sales recorded	0		
11	6.00 (4); 9.99 (1)	2	7.99	2.50
12	0.99 (1); 6.00 (1); 6.00 (1); 6.00 (1)	4	4.75	1.00
13	No sales recorded	0		
14	No sales recorded	0		
Total		156		2.09

Table 2: eBay Sales of Wrappers of France: March 2006 – December 2013

Conclusion

Bearing in mind that eBay is only one part of the philatelic market (albeit a growing one) and that this is an eBay-based study, the extant post office postal stationery wrappers of France comprise 1.4% of the database of 32,000 wrapper images hand-collected daily since September 2003.

With the exception of issues up to 1901, used wrappers of France are uncommon, certainly elusive, and in a few cases scarce. Of the eight issues between WWI and WWII only 37 extant copies have been listed representing .08% of the wrappers of France. In the broader context this is a survival ratio of only 1:860 of the worldwide database.

An analysis of destinations indicated 43% of these extant wrappers were to locations outside France and that 28 countries were represented. This breadth of destination in postal entities is a reflection of France's colonial power

status. At least two of the locations could be seen to be exotic, namely, Western Cameroon and Basutoland.

More than one-third of wrappers were uprated; this proportion is also higher than for other country-specific studies. The postal historian would be pleased to see wrappers with postage due markings and/or adhesives as well as auxiliary markings such as *Retour* and *Inconnu*, merchant marks, *via* directional routings and named ships.

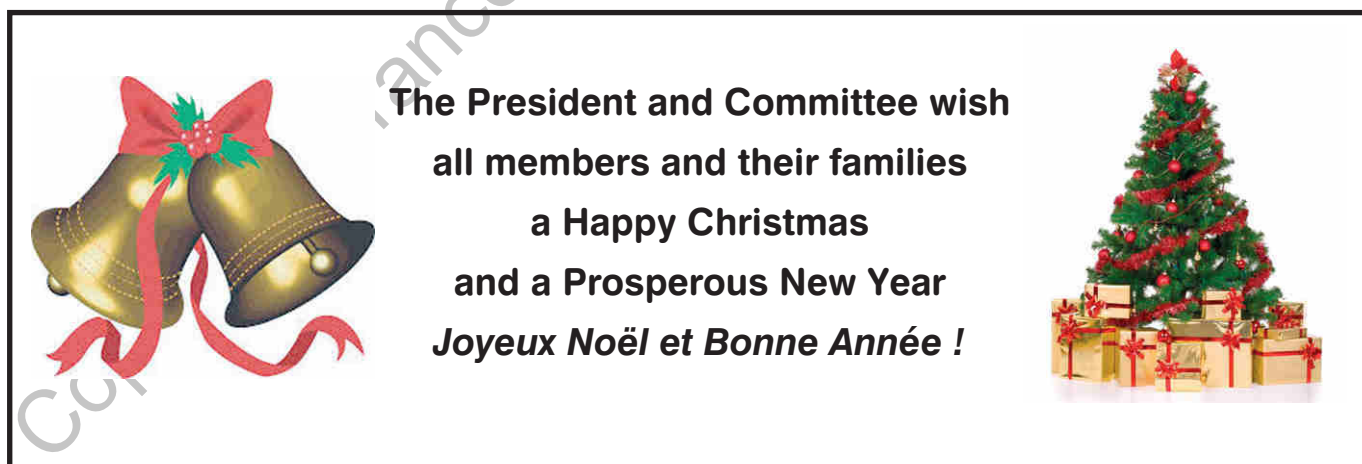
There were 156 sales including specimen wrappers with 99.96% selling for less than \$20. Bidder interest was modest with an overall weighted average number of bidders of 2.09, less than the 2.5 rule-of-thumb norm. About 40% of wrapper types showed bidder interest of 2.50 and above. Of the 156 sales only three are remarkable: the handstamp *1/2 centime en plus*, the souvenir of the emperor of Russia's visit and the handstamped (?) *Journaux Municipaux*.

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Acknowledgement

Sincere thanks are offered to Allan Gory for his reading and commenting on an earlier draft.



French Forces and the air mails of Tunisia, 1919-1956

David Trapnell



Figure 1a

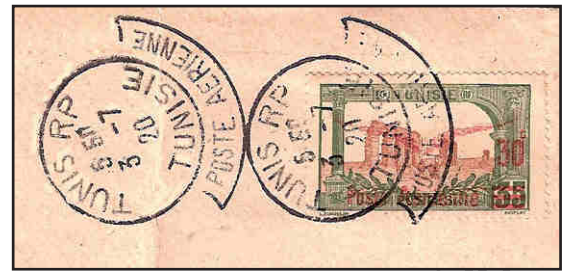


Figure 1b

Figure 1a shows a cover addressed to the Head of the Squadron at the local administrative office at Ben Gardane, one short flight away. The POSTE AERIENNE datestamp is from ZARZIS, dated 21.6.1919.

Figure 1b shows a similar datestamp of TUNIS RP (Head Office), 3.7.1920.

Although this handstamp is described in the French literature I have not found it recorded in English.

Both covers bear a Tunisian 35c adhesive overprinted in red POSTE AERIENNE 30c.

Much has been written about the postal history of air mail services. However those of Tunisia seem to have had less attention. Dates and rates are the most common topic¹ and rightly so because such information is the key to understanding air mails. However, I have been unable to find anything describing military use of civil air mails from, and to, Tunisia or the role of the armed forces in management of its airports. This paper aims to give an overview of air mails from the first experimental flights of 1919 to their cessation with the German and Italian invasion of Tunisia and its capture from Vichy France on and after 9 November 1942 and on to the Declaration of Independence on 20 March 1956. The retention by the French of Bizerte and its associated naval, military and air bases until 1963 and the dramatic end has been the subject of a separate paper².

An experimental inland air mail service

Within a few months of the end of the First World War enterprising pilots and others in the southern part of “habitable” Tunisia (the northern half) in 1919 began an experimental inland air mail service. For this they created readily recognized handstamps, incorporating POSTE AERIENNE in an arc below the circular datestamp, to cancel the adhesives on its flown mail (Fig 1). Because this was struck twice on each of the six covers (or reproductions of them) that I have seen, it seems likely that the organisers of the service were conscious of the potential significance of their new cancellation. None of these was dated earlier than June 1919. Perhaps the earlier flights did not use datestamps.

Because the experimental service started at what had been military airfields during the war and so soon after it, it seems likely that some past or present military personnel were involved in its instigation. The experts on African air lines, Gérard Collot and Alain Cornu³ specifically confirmed this supposition. They reported that “military aviation created an aerial postal service between Gabès and the towns of South Tunisia. The flight path was from Gabès to Île de Djerba, thence to Zarsis and Ben Gardane. The first trials began in March 1919 and continued until 24 April. The aerial postal service was opened to the public on 26 April, one flight there and back each week. [...] The service officially ended on 31 January 1920 but one can find examples up to July 1920. Without doubt these were isolated flights.” Jean Morat⁴ reported that the first experimental flight was on 20 April 1919 and that there were eleven more after that, up to 1 February 1920.

As Figure 1 shows, the specially-created datestamp was certainly in use from June 1919 to July 1920. More research is needed to find who initiated, funded and organised this inland experimental service and why it ceased activity in 1920. Presumably the service was not financially viable.

Military management of El Aouina airport, Tunis

During the First World War, from July 1916 onwards, surviving postal history evidence suggests that Military Aviation was based at Tunis and Gabès⁵, the latter because it was a sea port nearer the action in the southern (desert)

¹ For example Robert E Picrilli (2011): *Postal and Airmail Rates in France & Colonies*, F&CPS (Tunisia pp 208-217)

² David Trapnell (2014): “The forgotten war - the 3-day battle of Bizerte, 1961”, *Postal History* N° 349 (March 2014) pp 19-26

³ (1999): *Lignes Africaines - Histoire aérophilatélique, Tome 1 – Les défricheurs: 1911-1931* [Editions Bertrand Sinais, Paris], pp24-27

⁴ Jean Morat (2000): *L'histoire postale et l'émission de timbres durant la régence, Tunisie, 1888-1956* (Private publication)

⁵ David Trapnell (2013): *The Postal History of French Forces in Tunisia 1900-1920 & the South Tunisian Campaign 1915-1917*, a 40-page A4 monograph in full colour published by the France & Colonies Philatelic Society (GB),

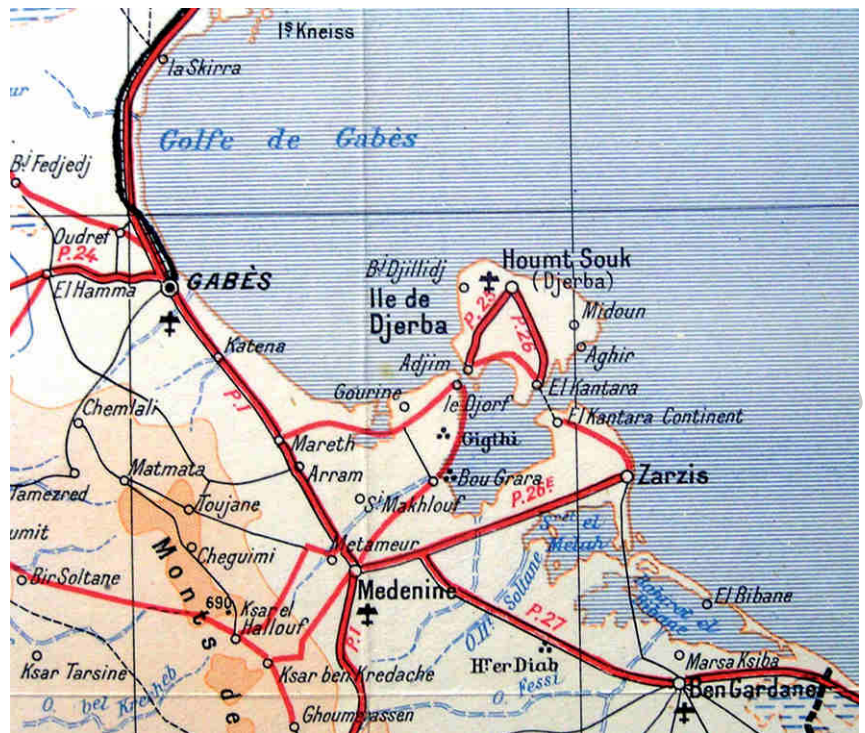


Figure 2

The flight route is said to have started at Gabès, thence to Djerba, to Zarsis, to Bengardane (each 60-70km "hops") and then 180km north to Sfax and 230km more to Tunis.

part of Tunisia. There is no evidence that mail was carried by air in the Tunisian part of the First World War. However, after the war and the experimental air mail period El Aouina airport (about 10km north-east of Tunis) on the road to Carthage and La Goulette became (and remains) the most important airport in the country. Initially all airports were military.

After the French had made Tunisia a Protectorate in 1881,

they maintained a strong military presence, officially called the Army of Occupation (see note 5). Before World War II military aviation in North Africa, including Tunisia, was controlled by *Groupes d'Aviation d'Afrique*. Group 4 was based at El Aouina (Fig 3).

Figures 2 – 8 show that, with an exception in 1942-1943, throughout the period from 1920 until Independence in 1956, the French called El Aouina BASE AERIENNE,



Figure 3

Envelope headed 4° GROUPE D'AVIATION D'AFRIQUE.

In the same dull blue ink (& therefore from the same inkpad) is a double-ring handstamp with the same words around SERVICES des EFFECTIFS (Effective force section).

This is struck over a linear purple handstamp reading EL AOUINA le (manuscript 5.5.25) / LE CHEF ... VOUILLON-ROSSNER / Commandant le 4° GROUPE D'AVIATION D'AFRIQUE and a signature.

The externally hexagonal datestamp is a typical, but unusual, Tunisian type, EL AOUINA / 5.5.1925 / TUNISIE.

with *Liberté* usually seated in the centre of its official authorizing handstamp (but not its locally-made, unofficial ones – see Fig 4). Its postal services were controlled by *Le Vaguemestre* – the military postmaster. I have found no evidence to show whether he handled only mail from military personnel or all going through the airport.

French control stopped after the German/Italian invasion on and after 9 November 1942 until their total surrender to the Allies in May 1943. How and when French influence was reasserted after May 1943 is by no means clear at present, there being an almost total absence of information on this in the literature to which I have gained access. I have so far failed to find any postal history material for this

period.

Figure 9 shows an Italian cover from Tunis sent by air mail to Marsala, Italy, only four days before the German and Italian invasion of Tunisia on 9 November 1942, thus showing that flights were still taking mail close to the time of the invasion. I can find no record of how much warning of this was had by the inhabitants of Tunis and Bizerte (where the other bridgehead was established, 70km to the north). Presumably, if the airport was open for air mails to Italy it was also for mails to France. Figure 7 shows that last French military air mail cover (11 October 1942) that I have seen before Tunis was occupied by the Axis powers a month later. Other later covers may exist.



Figure 4

50mm diameter BASE AERIENNE / Le Vaguemestre (probably locally made) authorizing handstamp with EL AOUIA / TUNISIE (27mm) datestamp, 27.9.1939.

Le Vaguemestre was the military postmaster.

Manuscript "F.M." (Franchise Militaire = free military post), top right.



Figure 5a

Another card endorsed FM top right, bearing the same EL AOUIA date-stamp, of 27.10.1939 and an official triple-ring authorizing handstamp reading BASE AERIENNE / Le Vaguemestre, with *Liberté* in the centre.



Figure 5b

43mm diameter

After the total surrender of the German and Italian forces on 12 May 1943⁶, Tunisia was occupied by the Allies. British military post offices operated there until May 1945⁷.

As recently as 2013 France had been said to have a modestly-sized military base immediately beside the international airport at Tunis⁸. However, the same source and Google maps now show the area as a helicopter airport.

Sidi-Ahmed airport, Bizerte

Bizerte and its naval base and arsenal at Ferryville and nearby Sidi Abdallah, 70km north of Tunis, had their own adjacent airports at Karouba and Sidi-Ahmed, primarily for naval use⁹, c.8km south-west of Bizerte and north of Ferryville. Figure 10 shows a cover addressed from France in 1933 to a sergeant pilot of 4th Air Squadron of Africa, based at Sidi Ahmed. This is consistent with the primary

purpose of this airfield then being military.

As late as December 1955, only three months before Tunisian independence (it had been deliberately gradually applied from 1952, while France still retained defence and foreign policy), Sidi Ahmed airport still had a military postmaster (Fig 11). Even after independence, Bizerte and its naval and military bases remained under French military control until October 1963 (see note 2). Now, more than 55 years after independence, Sidi Ahmed airport is still listed as “military”¹⁰.

The French Air Base N° 156 at Bizerte, Sidi-Ahmed (now “Roland Garros”) and the *Base de l’Aéronautique Navale* (BAN) at nearby Karouba both used the runways of Sidi Ahmed airfield. Thus the history of these two Bases is closely linked, both by this and their shared history as French Strategic Bases, including in later years as an “atomic base”¹¹.



Figure 6

Cover bearing a pale red BASE AERIENNE / Le Vaguemestre (official) authorizing handstamp with *Liberté* in the centre, FM top right, and the 27mm EL AOUINA / TUNISIE circular datestamp of 22.8.1941.

El Aouina was the airport for Tunis, about 10km north-east.

The 1F air mail fee was paid because the *Franchise Militaire* (FM) covered only the basic surface mail.

The cover was addressed by one of the staff at El Aouina airport to the Sergeant book-keeper at the Salon-de-Provence military base.

⁶ David Trapnell (2013): “The postal history of defeat - Italy in North Africa 1940-1943,” *Postal History* N° 346, pp.52-59

⁷ Robert W Gould & Edward B Proud (1982): *History of British Army Postal Service, Vol III, 1927-1961* [Proud Bailey & Co, London]

⁸ *Wikimapia* (2013): Aerial photo/map of *Base militaire d’El Aouina* (Tunis) [This is no longer shown]

⁹ *Guide Bleu – Algérie Tunisie 1950* [Hachette, Paris]

¹⁰ *Wikipedia* (2013): List of Tunisian airports

¹¹ *Paris Match* N° 642, 29 July 1961



Figure 7
Cover with the EL AOQUINA datestamp of 11 October 1942 with another feeble strike of the same official BASE AERIE NNE / Le Vaguemestre authorizing handstamp, together with manuscript "FM" & 1.5F air mail fee paid. The sender endorsed the cover PAR AVION (no label) and "service radio, groupement mixte N° 8, Base Aérienne de Tunis, El Aouina (Tunisie)."



Figure 8
Air mail cover with two strikes of the TUNIS EL AOQUINA / AEROGARE datestamp of 21.9.1948. This datestamp was in use in 1946¹², replacing an earlier variety with AEROPORT in use in 1942. The military postmaster's red oval authorizing handstamp reads BASE AERIE NNE / TUNIS EL AOQUINA / Le Vaguemestre.



Figure 9
Cover to Marsala, Italy, dated 5.11.1942, only 4 days before the invasion by German and Italian forces started on 9 November at Tunis and Bizerte. Because the cancellation is that of Tunis head office, it is reasonable to infer that the letter was flown from El Aouina airport. No postage stamp, "PM" (posta militare) or Taxe stamp. The sender gave no information about himself.

¹² Jean Morat – see note 4 (page 28)

Sidi Ahmed naval airport, Bizerte



Figure 10

Cover addressed December 1933 from France to a sergeant pilot of the 4th Air Squadron of Africa, fighter group (groupe de chasse), at Sidi Ahmed airport, Bizerte. This shows that Sidi Ahmed was an active military air station at that time.

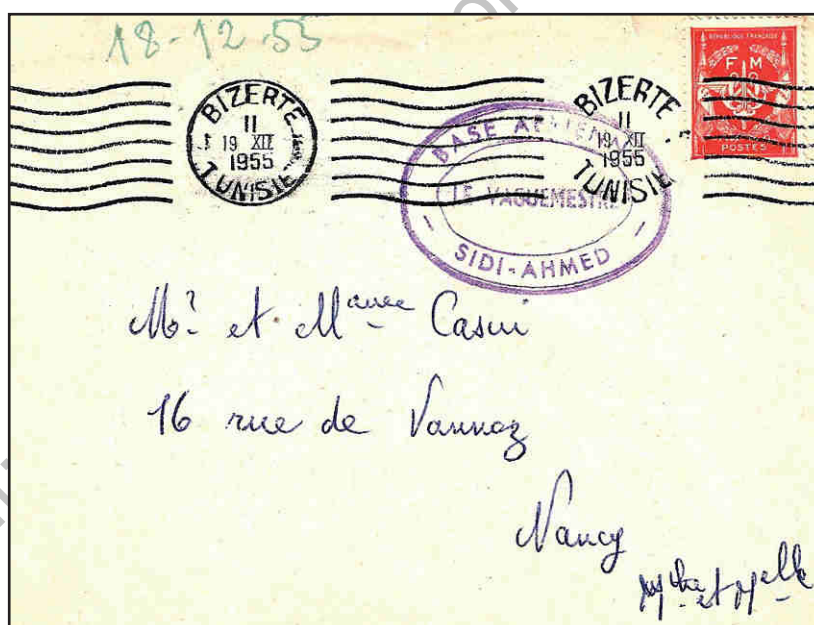


Figure 11

Cover with the machine cancellation of Bizerte dated 19.12.1955, bearing the double-oval handstamp of the military postmaster, BASE AERIENE / SIDI AHMED / LE VAGUEMESTRE. This was less than three months before Tunisia gained "independence" on 20 March 1956. Even so, the naval bases and airfields at Karouba, Ferryville and Sidi Ahmed were retained by France until 1963 (see note 2). The sender gave no information about himself on the cover. The (FM12) adhesive used here has FM for *Franchise Militaire*. These were used by entitled personnel but, in Tunisia, infrequently (for reasons unknown).

Military air mails from other Tunisian places



Figure 12a

Figure 12b
43mm diameter

A Franchise Militaire letter card, endorsed PAR AVION, bearing the two-part cancellation of GAFSA, dated 6.12.1938, and the official authorizing handstamp (see Fig.12b) of the military postmaster in charge of the military Postal Section, to France.

An extra 1.50F (2x 75c) air mail fee was paid.

The sender noted on the front that he was a member of the Military Aviation Fuel Company, Secteur Postale 553, Gafsa (where there was an airfield).



Figure 13

Air mail stationery, endorsed FM France, top right, posted without payment of air mail fee, so presumably sent by standard (free) surface mail.

The datestamp is a scarce but typically Tunisian type, dated 3.11.1939, from Camp Servière, Ferryville, a desert camp built in the late 19th Century, south of Bizerte¹³, for the French Army of Occupation.

¹³ David Trapnell (2013) – see note 5

Military air mails from and to Ferryville and its adjacent Sidi Abdallah naval base, 1941, 1942



Figure 14
Air mail cover bearing the FERRYVILLE datestamp of 8.10.1941,
together with a 2-line address handstamp,
DIRECTION DU PORT / DE SIDI ABDALLAH
with a double-ring authorizing handstamp
MARINE FRANÇAISE / SERVICE DE LA MER
and, top right, FM.
1F air mail fee paid.



Figure 15
Cover with the FERRYVILLE datestamp of 14.1.1942
and a larger French navy authorizing handstamp,
MARINE FRANÇAISE / SERVICE DE LA MER.
PAR AVION & air mail fee 2x 50c paid.



Figure 16
Cover from France to Sidi Abdallah,
bearing two 90c adhesives overprinted "50" in red (Ceres 482)
of Vichy France paying the air mail fee,
"F.M." top right
and the standard naval authorizing handstamp
MARINE FRANÇAISE / SERVICE DE LA MER.
Date not clear - 1941 or later.

Throughout this study I have assumed that the military postmaster at an airport did not put his handstamp on all mail going through it but only through his office, and then only on mail needing authorization of the use of military free post. I have also assumed that such military senders were based at the airport because other military units would have their own authorizing handstamp. In Tunisia, even each *Photo Optique* crew (a few men only) had its own authorizing handstamp.

Conclusions

The following deductions may be made on the basis of the postal history evidence –

- 1 French soldiers and sailors entitled to free postage (*franchise militaire*) had to pay any extra air mail fee. It was often used.
- 2 From the first experimental inland air mail service of 1919, started by military men, until Independence on 20 March 1956, airfields had military postmasters to handle mail from military personnel.
- 3 El Aouina airport, Tunis, was the main airport for air mails. The airport was active until a few days before the German Italian invasion on & after 9 November 1942. I have failed to find when it was restored to French control. Throughout this time the airport had a military postmaster (and therefore a military unit requiring his presence) until shortly before Independence in 1956.

There was still a French military compound beside El Aouina until recently.

- 4 Sidi Ahmed airport, Bizerte, was a naval air base. It continued to have a military postmaster up to and after Independence.

A Fighter Group was based there in 1933.

The airfield also served nearby Sidi Abdallah, Ferryville and Camp Servièr across Bizerte Bay. Until 1963, even after "independence", the French continued to retain their naval and military installations around Bizerte.

- 6 Gafsa had an airport with military personnel and a military postmaster at least until World War II.
- 7 Military or naval air bases, such as Sidi Ahmed, were wholly under French military management until they finally withdrew from Tunisia in 1963.

There is insufficient evidence here to indicate whether civil airports (such as El Aouina, Tunis), which had military postmasters, were controlled by military personnel or whether (as seems more likely) there was a military unit based at a civil airport. Either conclusion is consistent with the postal history here reported.

In the official French archives are records relating to many of these issues.¹⁴

¹⁴ *Inventaire de la série GR R Cabinet du ministre et organismes rattachés Secrétariat général pour l'administration et organismes rattachés 1934-1999*. See GR1 R 268, 269, 270.

BOOKSHELF

NEW BOOKS

Besieged in Paris: An Englishman's Account of the Franco-German War, 1870–71
by Ashley Lawrence FRPSL; published by the Stuart Rossiter Trust; price £25 + p&p; available from John Jackson, 17 Cambridge Avenue, Melton Mowbray LE13 0AA; payment details from john.w.jackson@care4free.net

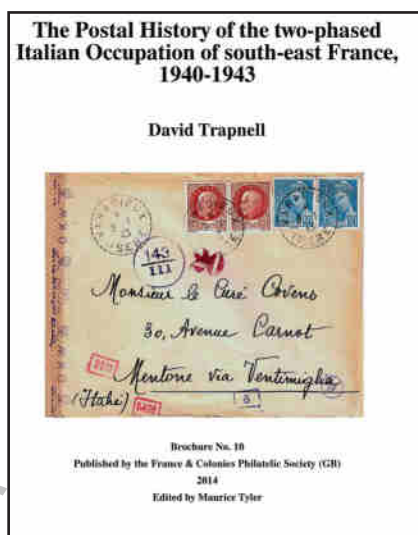


Ashley Lawrence has researched a remarkable series of letters from an astute observer of the siege of Paris, the climax of the Franco-German War. In spite of the siege, during the five month period from September 1870 to January 1871, William Brown succeeded in corresponding with his wife in England and she managed to communicate with him, using whatever postal and clandestine means were available. The characters, events and aspects of life in Paris during those terrible months are described in great detail.

Softback, 290pp, A4. Copiously illustrated with colour and b&w illustrations. There is also an index and bibliography.

ISBN 978-1-908710-00-0

The postal History of the two-phased Italian Occupation of south-east France, 1940-1943
by David Trapnell; published by the France & Colonies Philatelic Society (GB); price £10 + p&p; available from Richard Broadhurst, PO Box 448, Teddington TW11 1AZ; contact email stock@fcps.org.uk or telephone 020 8943 1421.



This subject has been virtually ignored by writers in English, even though it has been described in French and Italian. This study, apparently the first of its kind, was based upon censored mail rather than the more common sources of postal research. It confirms the presence of Italian Forces in tiny pockets of France and the existence of the Italian-led Armistice Commission from June 1940 until the end of 1942. As the Germans invaded "free" France in November 1942, the Italians occupied much of France south and east of the Rhône until their surrender in September 1943. This study shows that they did not occupy all the areas commonly described and uncovers important disagreements between authors and between the English and French versions of Wikipedia! A study of censorship proves that some parts occupied by the Italians, were under the effective domination of the Germans. There is a new map of the area occupied by the Italians as proved by censored mail.

Review

Yvert & Tellier *Timbres de France Tome 1* 2015 (Price 21€90)

There are a surprising number of changes to the latest 2015 Yvert France part 1 catalogue, no doubt as a result of competition from the increasingly popular Arthur Maury catalogue. The Yvert catalogue will always be the bible for collectors as it has the standard numbering system but it had become very predictable with little new detail added each year.

The new edition has a count of 1112 pages, 110 more than the previous year. The use of white paper after years of using grey is a most welcome and striking change. Catalogue numbers are now shown next to the date at the top of every page, making life a lot easier when you are searching for a particular stamp.

The really big change is that the catalogue is now arranged into two main sections: Classic period (1849-1900) and Modern period (1900 to date). The Classic period listing includes not only all the postage stamps but all the categories normally found at the back of the book i.e. *taxe*, *préoblitérés*, telephone, Colonies etc. I'm not sure that this is an entirely useful asset as you now have to leaf back and forward when looking through lists of classic and modern issues.

All the stamps up to Sage are listed in a completely new format with just two or three stamps per page with less detail than previously. Unfortunately the prices on the left hand page have been printed so close to the centre that when the book is laid flat they are impossible to see! Something you would have thought should have been spotted before printing.

The other big change is the addition of two brand new categories to the "back of the book" section. These comprise 1) PTT charity stamps and 2) Experimental vignettes, and for me are a very welcome addition. They are now given full catalogue status with corresponding Yvert numbers and prices. Probably the best known of these are the numerous Palissy labels used in the testing of new printing presses. If you have any of these and are not sure quite what they are, it is well worth checking them out as some of the prices quoted are quite astonishing!

In terms of pricing, unsurprisingly there are many substantial rises in the classic imperforate stamps in mint condition. One odd change is the reduction by 200€ of the 5F violet grey Napoleon Y33 used, almost impossible to find in good condition. Many of the early booklets benefit

from good price rises reflecting the scarcity of these items, notably the *Sourire de Reims* Y256 which shows a very healthy price increase of 350€ taking it to 1350€. Amongst the early booklets with publicity labels both the Phéna & Minéraline types are up by 100€ and 125€ respectively, although prices for the individual stamps with "*pubs*" Y188 remain unchanged.

The first two *Blocs* Y1 Paris and Y2 Strasbourg philatelic exhibitions are each given a boost of 250€ in unmounted mint state.

A glance through the modern issues reveals very few price increases except for some modest rises in a few of the recent definitive roulette stamps. The notorious *Bloc Souvenir* Y1 *Rouge Gorge* which has been the subject of much speculation has been downgraded 25€ to 100€.

For some extraordinary reason the early issues of Reunion have been given a place in the Part 1 catalogue, I presume, only because they comprise the stamps of France overprinted "CFA". A much better category to add would have been *Publicitétimbres* (booklet stamps with *pubs*) which made a fleeting appearance in 2006 and for some odd reason, considering their popularity, have never appeared since!

There are still some anomalies with the catalogue that could have been cleared up. The first concerns the self adhesive stamps from 1990 to 2008 where over twenty pages are devoted to listing the stamps twice in different parts of the catalogue with different numbers! The other oddity is the way in which *Blocs* are listed from 2009 onwards. Up to this time they were to be found under their own separate heading. Now, in what appears to be a completely random manner, some are illustrated in the main catalogue, others in the *Blocs* section whilst some are not shown at all, most confusing!

Finally, it is still a disappointment that so many used stamps are awarded such low prices by Yvert. Every collector of modern commemoratives knows how difficult it is to source these in fine used condition, much more so than their mint counterparts. For example, many used stamps from the ever increasing deluge of miniature sheets are quoted at less than half the price of the mint stamp. This makes absolutely no sense as the only way to obtain these is to buy them at full price and get them cancelled yourself as it is unlikely that any will ever see genuine postal use!

Richard Broadhurst

Books Noted

Apologies for having duplicated the details of several books in Journals 272 and 273. Or did anybody notice?!

Timbres au type Sage – Les oblitérations Jour de l'An (1876-1900) by Pascal Mrozinski; pub. Les guides du collectionneur - Conservatoire du Sage; 60pp A5; price 12€50 + p&p; details from author, 189 avenue de la Libération, 63000 Clermont-Ferrand; website <http://conservatoire-du-sage.org> [Undated New Year's Day postmarks during the Sage period, with different types including linear cachets, lozenges (GC and PC), Paris stars and district and office marks; 634 listed with illustrations, descriptions and indication of rarity.]

4 siècles d'Histoire de La Poste à Aix-en-Provence by Guy Marchot, Gérard Fiandino & Christian Duverne; pub. Association philatélique du Pays d'Aix; 400pp; price 20€ + p&p; available from APPA, BP 266, 13608 Aix-en-Provence Cedex 1; website appa.aix.free.fr [1200 documents, illustrations, engravings, tables and postmarks in b/w; postal history of region since 1605.]

Le 25 centimes Type Sage by Michel Hervé; 32pp in colour; price 15€; available from author, 29 rue des Ferrières Sud, 27110 Quittebeuf. [Different versions and types are

photographed and explained, with enlargements of details and comparisons of shades.]

La Grande Guerre à Reims vue par la Philatélie by A Jacquart & F Bouloux; pub. Club Philatélique Rémois; 82pp A4 in colour; price 15€ + p&p; available from Club Philatélique Rémois, MVA 214/03, 122bis rue du Barbatre, 51100 Reims or Drouot Philatélie, 8 rue Drouot, 75009 Paris. [Full postal history of the town during First World War, with postcards, stamps, manual and machine cancels, cachets of Red Cross and of military units, Trésor et Postes cachets, patriotic vignettes, etc; printed version of exhibition held in Reims in September 2014.]

Répertoire des oblitérations des bases aériennes 1955-2012 by the Association nationale des Officiers de Réserve de l'Armée de l'Air; A4; price 20€ + p&p; available from Capitaine Alain Devornique, Président du secteur 640, ANORAA secteur 640 AIN RHONE LOIRE, Cercle de garnison, Quartier général Frère, 22 avenue Leclerc, 69363 Lyon Cedex 07. [List of all types of cancellations of air force bases since opening of their first postal agencies.]

Maurice Tyler

SOCIETY NOTES

Continued froms page 130

Register of Members' Interests

Due to reports of a reduction in use of the Register of Members' Interests and as a result of the problems currently being experienced by the Committee in finding voluntary manpower, it is with regret that publication of the Register has been suspended.

* * *

London Group Meetings

After much discussion the London Group has decided

that after the current programme of Wednesday meetings ending in April 2015 future meetings will all be held on Saturdays. 3 all-day meetings per year (+ AGM) will be held at the usual venue, where lunch will be available.

* * *

Resignations

The following member has recently resigned:

1099 Peter Denning.

* * *

SHORTER ITEMS - INCLUDING QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Philatecam 1971 in Cameroun



Figure 1



Figure 2

The Cameroon Philatelic Exhibition – Philatecam 1971 – was held from 30 September to 10 October 1971 at both Yaoundé and Douala. The exhibition celebrated the tenth anniversary of the reunification of the former Southern Cameroons with the Republic of Cameroon and achievements “since our National Unity.”

To publicize and commemorate the event, the post office released a set of five stamps on 1 August and, on 1 October, a gold, silk-screened, embossed 250 franc stamp depicting the nation’s flag, President Ahidjo, and the Reunification Highway and the Mungo River bridge. The date of issue of the latter is confirmed by the attractive first day cover

pictured in Figure 1. The Scott catalogue also reports the date of issue as 1 October. However, the *premier jour* postmark on the first day cover pictured in Figure 2, prepared by the same cachet maker and bearing a higher sequence number, has a date of 4 October! What gives?

I speculate that the postal authorities had quite a number of covers to process and not all could be postmarked on the day of issue. Perhaps a conscientious postal employee adjusted the date in the handstamp to reflect the actual day that he applied the cancel. Do postmarks dated 2 and 3 October also exist? Further speculation is welcome.

Marty Bratzel

Lack of RF Overprint on Dated Corner Block

In the June 2014 Journal Anthony Greaves asked why his *coin daté* block of 50c turquoise *Postes Françaises* Mercury dated 8.1.45 did not bear the “RF” overprint, and some answers were given in the September issue of the Journal on page 115.

I would merely like to add that according to J-C Gagne, who is secretary of the SO.CO.CO.DA.MI, the last printing of the 50c turquoise Mercury stamp, cylinder O+S, took place between 20 December 1944 and 9 January 1945. This printing was not surcharged.

John Simmons

Shorter Items continued on page 170

REPORTS OF MEETINGS

LONDON GROUP MEETING OF 17 SEPTEMBER 2014

New projects and acquisitions

Len Barnes began with a display of the TB labels used in France since the 1920s to provide funds for charity work to combat tuberculosis. He was looking for new ways to present the material and a certain amount of discussion took place on this subject.

Everyone had brought something to show and this was followed with –

Godfrey Bowden: The first postage dues of Tunisia were made with a large perforation T on current postage stamps. It has long been known that these were done locally as and when needed. He described his efforts to identify the post office responsible for each different perforation and the progress he had so far made.

Michael Round: The Central African Republic is one of the most deprived states in Africa. Michael explained its successive designations and regimes, first as Oubangi Chari, then part of French Equatorial Africa and finally as an independent state with a cannibal Bokassa as its first Emperor. Covers and stamps from all periods were shown including many quite modern ones which in fact are quite hard to find on commercial mail.

Barbara Priddy: Keeping to the title ‘new’ Barbara brought a cover purchased that very afternoon at Stampex. Her astute eye had picked out a cover from the Gold Coast to France at the very outbreak of World War II. French air services from French West Africa stopped for the first 2 weeks and then resumed as things settled down. This had indeed been held up as proved by the dates of despatch and arrival.

Chris Hitchen: Chris concluded an informative evening with railways. He began with the station offices in Paris and then briefly explained the *Convoyeurs Stations* marks usually found on mail posted at smaller stations on secondary lines in the provinces. Since letters posted at the stations in Paris went through the station office there was little need for these but all Paris stations had them although they are rarely seen and very hard to come by. He finished with 2 covers and a photograph of the rail disaster at Melun on 4 November 1911 when the Marseille express to Paris struck a mail train from Paris which had missed red signals.

Members present: Len Barnes, Godfrey Bowden, Chris Hitchen, Barbara Priddy, Michael Round.

Apologies for absence: Mick Bister, Maurice Tyler.

CJH

WESSEX GROUP MEETING OF 11 OCTOBER 2014

Tony Howgrave-Graham: French Colonies Classics and Chris Hitchen: Lozenges and Railways

Our first invited display of the morning was given by Tony Howgrave-Graham who gave us a wide ranging display of classics from the French colonies. This comprised a carefully chosen selection of items of particular interest and of fine quality. It included ‘*tête-bêche*’ and ‘*couché*’ stamps among the Cérés and Eagle used on letters and many scarce frankings and categories of mail. A particular item that caught the eye of one of the convenors was a rare Réunion journal sent at the inland rate of 2c and franked with a pair of 1c Eagles.

This was followed up by **Chris Hitchen**’s display in two parts of Paris district offices lozenges (1857-1863) and railways in and out of Paris from the 1850s. The display of lozenges highlighted the many combinations and font shapes that can be seen and the period itself was of particular interest because of the many changes taking place in the geography of Paris due to the massive rebuilding programme of M. Haussmann. We also were shown letters paid in cash remembering that no low value stamps were introduced until 1860.

In the second part of his display Chris explained the background of the supplementary offices linked to the main railway stations that were not open to the public and the development of the *convoyeur* service on the smaller lines where examples of mail marked by them is extremely scarce

given the presence of the supplementary offices.

After our usual lunch at the Old Mill the following members gave displays. **Alan Wood** started with the period following the Siege of Paris. He showed that after the Armistice mail had to be sent out via Versailles, prepaid and unsealed. It was then censored and we saw mail sent to a variety of destinations and a variety of censor marks. **Ingrid Swinburn** showed old postcards of Dinan with modern day photographs taken from the same angle and it was interesting to see how much of the old town was unchanged. **Peter Lawrence** had a selection of stamps and postage dues together with stamps for Alsace / Lorraine for use in German territories. **Trevor Buckell** showed a selection of incoming mail from various places over a wide period from Franco-British Convention mail to airmails and a presentation album to mark the tercentury of France in the West Indies. **Peter Kelly** displayed *type Sage*. A small selection of letters including insufficiently paid letters that were explained, mixed franking on Monegasque postal stationery, and an unusual registered sample from a *facteur boîtier*. **Ashley Lawrence** brought a fine display of mail from the Siege of Paris centred on the Browne family archives sent by a variety of means with particular emphasis on the pigeon mail and the techniques of micro-photography. **Jeremy Martin** showed World War I material from France including silks, postal stationery prisoner of war and greetings mail.

PRAK /AJW

LONDON GROUP MEETING OF 15 OCTOBER 2014

Godfrey Bowden: Algeria

Godfrey informed us that his display would concentrate on the stamps of Algeria rather than the country's postal history. As a result, instead of focusing on rates and routes he would be talking predominantly about the country's issues in relationship to its historical background and the changing status of the region.

After a brief account of the pre-philatelic history of Algeria Godfrey informed us that the French opened their first office in 1830 and used the stamps of France from 1849 to 1888. A wide range of examples was shown with PC cancels starting with 37 and GC cancels starting with 50 or 51 including strikes on a couple of scarce Bordeaux printings. Examples of circular date stamps were shown on later issues including a *Bateau à Vapeur* cds on an 1872 cover to Dublin and a pane of twenty-five copies of the 1c Sage cancelled Oran.

Proposals were made for the provision of stamps specifically for Algeria with designs appropriate to the country. Godfrey showed undated essays produced by the *Délégations Financières Algériennes*, a pseudo-parliamentary structure created in 1898. The 'stamps' created a considerable amount of interest as nobody present had any previous knowledge of them. The proposals were rejected by the Paris authorities and French stamps continued to be used; however, from 1924 all new issues were overprinted ALGÉRIE. A comprehensive display was given of the Blanc, Sower, Merson and Pasteur issues with examples of flat plate and rotary overprints, errors and varieties.

In 1926 the first Algerian pictorials were issued displaying street scenes and views. We saw the '*arbre coupé*' and '*cinquième arbre*' varieties on the Mustapha design and perforation varieties of the 1930 Algeria Centennial Philatelic Exhibition issue. The 1938 inverted overprint and the *recto-verso* offset on the 30c Admiralty issue were likewise admired.

With the outbreak of World War II designs changed again and we saw how they reflected the changing status and allegiance of the territory. We saw the pro-Vichy issues, the new Coat of Arms series and the pro-de Gaulle *Marianne d'Algérie* and *Coq d'Algérie* issues in blocks of four. Interesting post-war charity issues included the omnibus *France Combattant* set and the less frequently seen 1F50 Alger and the 2F Oran with the LIBRE overprint and surcharged 18F50 and 8F respectively. We were also treated to examples of the 1944 use of Algerian stamps in Corsica after the liberation of the island including a superb example of the 50c Marianne and the 1F Alger on a September 1944 cover from Calacuccia to the Central

Mediterranean Forces and a pair of the 1F50 Arms on a January 1944 cover from Vezzani to Algeria. Both Corsican offices were located in very small mountain communities.

The post-war period saw the return of overprinted French stamps but by 1950 the pictorials had been re-introduced. These included in particular the exquisite 1950 *Productions algériennes* series and other stamps created by the great designers and engravers of the time.

Godfrey began the second part of his display with a selection of the 1946 airmails. He underlined the importance of being able to distinguish the two types of the 20F value and explained how the -10% overprint on the 5F value was in response to a sudden reduction in tariffs in January 1947. This was followed by a comprehensive three frame display of *Colis Postaux* issues which spanned half a century from 1899 to 1949. Specifically issued for Algeria, they can be regarded as the first true Algerian stamps. The usage of each service was explained - *Apport à la gare*, *Livraison par exprès*, *Colis encombrant* etc.

The late 1950s saw the movement towards Algerian independence. To show solidarity with the French who preferred the *status quo*, the Algerian stamps were replaced once again from 1958 to 1962 with French issues including, in 1959, the 25c *Marianne de Muller* and, in 1960, the 25c *Marianne de Decaris*. With independence granted, the above stamps and any others inscribed *République Française* were overprinted EA for *État Algérien*. Godfrey remarked that the collecting of such overprints was a minefield as every office had its own design and subtle differences between the overprints were such that identifying the office was problematic. However, he produced a wide range of examples both on and off cover including varieties, mixed fonts and errors.

On a lighter side, Godfrey closed his display with a selection of Héliog-Vaugirard '*Belle France*' vignettes, the production of which was prolific in the 1920s and 1930s, depicting Algerian scenes together with vignettes printed by the lesser known Héliog-Goutagny & Allex of Lyon. These were accompanied by humorous New Year's greeting cards depicting stereotyped Algerians which, despite not being politically correct, put a smile on members' faces.

It was a most informative and entertaining evening and on behalf of the members present Len Barnes gave the vote of thanks and commended Godfrey on his all embracing account of the philatelic history of Algeria.

Members present: Maurice Alder, Len Barnes, Mick Bister, Godfrey Bowden, Rodney Dean, Michael Fairhead, Chris Hitchen, Bob Larg, Hugh Loudon, Barbara Priddy.

MLB

MIDLAND FULL-DAY MEETING OF 1 OCTOBER 2014

Peter Kelly: Réunion Maritime Postal History

9 Short Displays

A new venture for the Society was the organisation of a mid-week day meeting held during the autumn. The venue was a well lit room at a conference centre in Stoke-on-Trent and the date was 1 October.

The morning comprised a display of the highest quality from **Peter Kelly** on the maritime postal history of Réunion which was followed by an excellent buffet lunch. The afternoon saw a very good variety of members' displays as follows:

Chris Hitchen – Paris railways;

Brian Lythgoe – Monaco;

John Mayne – WWI Togo occupation;

Peter Stockton – Madagascar Uprising 1947;

Godfrey Bowden – Algeria *Colis Postaux*;

Paul Watkins – France / GB postal stationery;

Brian Brookes – British occupation of Martinique;

Maurice Tyler - WWI official Flag cards/propaganda cards;

Steve Ellis – the French Ambulance.

We were joined by two guests from Crewe Philatelic Society, but sadly not by Mick & Marian Bister due to sickness. Annette Tyler and Jean Bowden enjoyed visits to the Emma Bridgewater and the Middleport Pottery factories, complete with guided tours.

Members' thoughts would be welcomed as to whether this event should be repeated in the autumn of 2015 (the other end of the year from the Charlecote weekend conference). Please write, ring or email Steve Ellis who organised this event.

SRE

SHORTER ITEMS - INCLUDING QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Continued from page 167

Identification and catalogue references sought for Comoro Islands stamps

I welcome assistance from members in identifying some recent purchases please. The circumstances are:

A recent auction purchase included a selection of *Archipel des Comores* issues to 5 July 1975 subsequently overprinted *Etat Comorien*.

The 1997 Yvert and Tellier catalogue for those African colonies which attained independence gives a total value for 25 ordinary issues of Ff 325, say £30/35, and a total value for 26 air issues of Ff 650, say £65/70. These values are for mint issues, with used issues quoted respectively at Ff 200 and Ff 500.

Stanley Gibbons Stamps of the World 2015 edition adds as an appendix that these stamps have either been issued in excess of postal needs or have not been available to the public in reasonable quantities at face value. Such stamps

may later be given full postal listing if there is evidence of regular postal use.

These latter comments also apply to various issues of 1976 and later years.

From eBay it would appear those stamps which are not listed by Stanley Gibbons have a catalogue number – I suspect Scott numbers are used. The auction site suggests catalogue values have risen since 1997. Perhaps they are listed by Michel?

If a member can direct me to a catalogue to obtain a reference number and current price, I shall be grateful. It is my intention to offer duplicate items via the colonial exchange packet before offering them elsewhere. A copy of the catalogue information and note of date of publication would be of considerable assistance and benefit.

John Mayne

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ABPS Exhibitions News

The exhibition “**Mail in times of trouble: World War I**” was held at the “Vleeshuis” in Ypres (Belgium) on 12-13 July 2014 and as part of the RDP Ceremony Weekend. The material shown can be seen at <http://www.rdpypres.com/en>

Set out below are the philatelic exhibiting events known to us for 2015.

Wernamo 2015: 13-15 March 2015 Swedish National Exhibition at Värnamo. The Swedish National exhibition has invited collectors from the United Kingdom to participate under the ongoing bilateral arrangements. Frank Walton is the British Commissioner and he would be delighted to forward Bulletin No. 1 to anyone who is interested in participating. All normal FIP classes are represented. Please email frank@frankwalton.com for further information.

London 2015 Exhibition Seminars: 13-16 May 2015 Business Design Centre, 52 Upper Street, London N1 0QH. Advance notice that there will be seminars on Postal History, Thematic Philately, Traditional Philately and Open Philately on 13 and 14 May. These are open to all on a first come, first served basis.

York Fair 2015: 16-18 July 2015 York Race course A pilot exhibition with only 100 faces, confined to postal history. If this is successful it will become an annual, non-London exhibition thanks to support from Chris Rainey. The application pack will be on the ABPS website in due course. Closing date is likely to be 15 June 2015.

Singapore 2015 World Stamp Exhibition: 14-19 August 2015 Sands Expo® & Convention Center. See <http://www.singapore2015.com> Details available from the British Commissioner: Peter Cockburn: High Garth, Stockcroft Road, Balcombe RH17 6LG. Phone 01444811004; mobile 07771563552 Email pcockburn@aol.com

Bilateral Exhibition “Germany-Great Britain” 3-6 September 2015 Winter Palace - library/orangery in Gotha, Thuringia, Germany. Closing Date 31 January 2015. This is a Rank1 German National Exhibition. All competitive classes are available (except Open and Modern). 12 page frames. See http://www.bsv-gotha.de/2015Bilaterale/bedingungen_en.pdf Details available from the British Commissioner: Graham Winters, 110 Oakenshaw Lane, Walton, Wakefield, West Yorkshire WF2 6NL Tel: 01924 259713; Mob: 07581792340; email j.g.winters@hotmail.co.uk

Autumn Stampex 16-19 September 2015. Details on the ABPS Website from March 2015: Business Design Centre, 52 Upper Street, London N1 0QH; <http://www.abps.org.uk/Exhibiting/Exhibitions/index.xalter> Key Participant: Great Britain Overprints Society.

The Capital Stamp Show 2015 celebrating 150 years of Government in Wellington 23-25 October 2015, TSB Bank Arena, Wellington PO Box 2146, Wellington 6140, New Zealand: See <http://www.nzpf.org.nz/exhibitions/capital-stamp-show-2015>

Nordia 2015 30 October - 1 November 2015: Täby Park Konferens & Hotell, Täby, near Stockholm. A number of places are likely to be available to British exhibitors. To participate, you must be qualified for the International Exhibition. See http://nordia2015.se/pdf_nordia/bulletin_1_en.pdf Contact Chris King chris.king@postalhistory.net

NOTOS 2015 12-15 November 2015: Peristeri Exhibition Centre, Dodekanisou 106, 12135 Peristeri: With FEPA Patronage. Multinational, 21 countries. For further information please see <http://hps.gr/notos2015> This is a new style, no frills exhibition. Participation is open to collectors who are: (a) Members of philatelic societies affiliated to the FEPA Member Federations of Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Egypt, France, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Israel, Italy, Monaco, Montenegro, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia, Spain, Turkey and Greece; (b) Residents of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Malta and Moldova, which along with the countries in (a) complement the European South; (c) Members of philatelic societies affiliated to other FEPA or FIP Member Federations, preferably with exhibits related to the European South. Philatelic Literature is open to exhibitors worldwide without any restriction on the subject. Contact NOTOS 2015 by e-mail: notos2015@hps.gr

Events now closed to applications

7-9 May 2015 **ECTP 2015** The European Championship for Thematic Philately in conjunction with the International Stamp Fair in the Exhibition Hall of the Messe Essen.

13-16 May 2015 **London 2015 Exhibition** Business Design Centre, 52 Upper Street, London N1 0QH.

13-22 March 2015: **EXFILNA 2015:** Aviles: National Spain + Italy. Spain

18-25 March 2015: **ÇANAKKALE 2015:** Çanakkale: Turkey + 8 countries FEPA Recognition

10-12 April 2015: **LAPOEX 2015:** Lahti: National Finland. Finland

17-19 April 2015: **Rhein-Ruhr-Posta 2015:** Löhne: Youth. Germany

18-25 April 2015: **JUVENIA 2015:** Ourense: Youth. Spain

7-10 May 2015: **North Bohemia Stamp Exhibition:** Chomutov: National Czech. Czech Republic

22-25 May 2015: **PHILA-FRANCE 2015:** Mâcon: National France. France

5-7 June 2015: **TRONDHEIM 2015:** Lerkendal: National Norway. Norway

3-4 September 2015: **German Youth Exhibition:** Mainz: National youth. Germany

29-31 October 2015: **International Fair and Seminars:** Singelfingen: International Fair and Conferences. Germany