

The Journal of the France & Colonies Philatelic Society



A poignant item from Jeremy Martin's display at Charlecote of World War II material
(See report on page 67)

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

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The Society

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

All inquiries about and applications for membership should be addressed to the General Secretary.

2017-18 Annual Subscription Rates

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

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The Journal

The Society's Journal has traditionally been published in March, June, September and December, but this year there will be no September issue and next year will appear 3 times a year, in April, August and December.

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The price is included in members' subscriptions.

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Auction and Exchange Packet Sales

Lots for sale through the Society auctions, held 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)

according to instructions.

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

France: R N Broadhurst, 47 Bolton Gardens, Teddington TW11 9AX (Telephone 020 8977 9665)

Colonies: D J Chalcraft, 2 Woodfield Road, London, W5 1SJ (Telephone 020 8997 0622)

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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* * *

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The Journal of the France & Colonies Philatelic Society

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SOCIETY NOTES

Editorial

The AGM has just been held and I am delighted to report that the new Society Rules have been adopted. Thank you to those who submitted comments on the draft version circulated in March; each comment was raised by the President and discussed by the members present. I can report too that **David Chalcraft** is now officially our Colonies Packet Secretary (see contact details below) and we are pleased to welcome back Peter Kelly to the committee after his brief sabbatical. A full report of the AGM will appear in the next Journal which will be published in December.

The Society will not, I'm afraid, be publishing a Journal in September. Despite the repeated appeals, no-one has volunteered to take over the role of Journal Manager. I have therefore agreed to remain in the post but with a reduced workload of three editions a year hence the next edition in December will be the final edition for 2017. In 2018 the Journal will be published at regular four-monthly intervals – in April, August and December. At the end of 2018 we will assess the situation again. This is not a decision that has been taken lightly. The committee and officers are dedicated to maintaining the high standards of the Society and of its Journal and you can rest assured that although there will be a reduction in quantity there will not be a reduction in quality. In the meantime we remain optimistic that someone can be found to take on the job so that we can return to a quarterly publication as soon as possible.

The decision to publish a triannual Journal has caused certain repercussions. Firstly, timings of the auctions in 2018 will have to change as will the date and location of the AGM. You will find more detailed information in **Steve Ellis's** announcement below.

We have some excellent articles in this month's Journal and several more are in the pipeline for December and April. However, it is the same few contributors that I rely on so I invite those of you who have an interesting item in their collection to share it with us. Please send your contribution to me in Word format with illustrations as jpeg attachments at 300 dpi to m.bister@btinternet.com. Thank you.

Mick Bister

* * *

New Members

The Society is pleased to welcome members 1459 David J Morris and 1460 Miss Helen Thompson

* * *

Resignations

The following members have advised us that, sadly, they will not be renewing their membership this year: 1288 Mme M Chauvet, 1311 Pascal Liévin and 1416 P J Rowbotham.

* * *

Members Deceased

It is with great sadness that we have to report the death of four of our members: 907 E Menne Larsen, 1436 Brian Owen, 667 W I Stevenson and 755 J R Worker.

We offer our condolences to their respective families.

* * *

Members' Displays

David Hogarth achieved a Silver award at the 88th Scottish Congress held at Perth in April with a display "France - from the Third to the Fourth Republic". We offer him our congratulations.

* * *

Future Events

The **Wessex Group** will be holding its next meeting on 1 July at the Scout Hall, Lower Street, Harnham starting at 10.30am when **Alan Wood** will show 'Before, during and after the Siege of Paris'. After lunch, the afternoon will be devoted to members' displays.

The next meeting of the **Northern Group** is to be held once again at Rotherham (Broom Church Hall) on 15 July. Light refreshments will be served from 10.00am with the meeting starting at 10.30. Lunch will be taken at a local pub. The whole day will be devoted to members' displays although everyone is welcome even if they bring only a couple of sheets or indeed none!

The **London Group** will be meeting on 5 August from 11.00am to 4.00pm at the Calthorpe Arms, 252 Grays Inn Road, London WC1X 8JR. The morning will start with **Len Barnes** showing 'Anti-tuberculosis labels' followed by **Mick Bister** with his display on 'Cartes de visite'. Lunch will be taken at the Calthorpe Arms and the afternoon will be devoted to members' displays

* * *

Colonies Exchange Packet

Please note the contact details for our new Colonies Packet Secretary: **David Chalcraft**, 2 Woodfield Road, London, W5 1SJ, email: djchalcraft@hotmail.com, telephone: 0208 9997 0622

* * *

New Auction Arrangements

During 2018 there will be three auctions at regular four monthly intervals, linked with the revised distribution of Journals. They will take place at the beginning of February, June and October. The final auction of 2017 will take place in late October. As the AGM will be moving to the Charlecote weekend from next year there will no longer be a room auction; instead all three auctions will be carried out via post or email bids. (In practice very few members take advantage of the live bidding facility.) A list of unsold lots should appear on the website a week after each auction closes. Items for sale in the auction are welcomed: please see the instructions outlined in each auction catalogue. If you are unsure please email or ring me.

Please support the auctions by adding to your collections. Much hard work goes into running them and the reserves are lower than dealer prices! The Society also benefits from the 10% commission charged to vendors. **SRE**

* * *

France Exchange Packet

It's good to report that the France Exchange Packet is very busy at present. Subscribers generally see one packet per month comprised of up to twelve books of stamps and covers.

There is a vast range of interesting stamps from 1849 to the present day. In addition there is a good selection of *carnets* and miniature sheets, back of the book material, service stamps, *taxe*, *préoblitérés*, covers etc. The standard is generally very good and much material is very reasonably priced. The packets are an excellent source for those wishing to complete general collections of France or to

take advantage of rarely seen and unusual material.

Currently we are able to accommodate new members and would be delighted to add you to the circuits. There is no obligation to buy and you may retire from the circuits at any point. If you would like to join please get in touch with Richard Broadhurst, your France Packet Secretary, whose details are inside the front cover of this Journal.

In addition we are always looking for new material and would be pleased to hear from any vendors who can supply us with books of stamps or covers for sale.

RNB

* * *

OBITUARY

Iain Stevenson



Professor Iain Stevenson was a longstanding and larger than life member of the Society and served as its Vice-President from 1996 to 1998 and as its President from 1998 to 2000. His main philatelic interests were in telegrams and telegraph stamps on which he gave the Sir Daniel Cooper lecture to the Royal Philatelic Society in 2015. Other interests included postal stationery, Belgian *départements conquis*, World War II and postal history of Montpellier and the Hérault. He showed a selection of the latter at the Royal as part of the display given in November of last year by the *Académie de Philatélie* of which he had been a *membre associé* since 1999. He also collected aspects of Scottish postal history (he was a founder member of Lanarkshire PS) and before his untimely death he was due to give the Tom Rielly Display at this year's Scottish Congress. Iain was also a credited FIP judge in the postal stationery class.

Iain had retired in September 2015 as Professor of Publishing at University College London (UCL) thereafter holding an Emeritus position. Previously he had enjoyed a long and distinguished career in publishing and had worked for Longman, Macmillan, Wiley and the Stationery Office. He was an author of books on publishing and was a consultant to the British Library and active on the governing and advisory board of the Publishers' Association. Not only was Iain a Fellow of the Royal Philatelic Society but also a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society and wrote and published much on the history of cartography in Scotland.

Iain and I shared a great affection for France and in particular for the beautiful city of Nice. I shall be forever grateful to him for pointing me in the direction of the *Sunday bourse aux timbres* in the rue Pastorelli. He likewise appreciated my recommendation to visit the *Saturday marché aux livres* in the Place du Palais de Justice. I shall miss comparing our philatelic and literary purchases made under the Riviera sun.

Mick Bister

LIST OF RECENTLY PUBLISHED ARTICLES

Compiled by Colin Spong and Maurice Tyler

Bulletin de la COL.FRA/

N° 159. 1^{er} Trim 2017: 1889, Une Année Charnière pour la Marcophilie de Mayotte (Bergossi); Les Bordereaux de Commande des Timbres au Type Aigle (Millet); L'aviateur Jim Mollison au Sénégal (Hurpet); Cartes Interzones de Saint-Pierre et Miquelon (Mercier); La Censure Militaire de Courrier Civil à Madagascar en 1942 (Groenewald).

The Collectors Club Philatelist

Vol 96 N° 2 March-April 2017: A 10 Pfennig and 2 cents Special - Togo (Brody); Picture Postcards of the Battle of Waterloo (Wishart).

Vol 96 N° 3 May-June 2017: The Ink Staining of Stamp Paper (Granzow).

Documents Philatéliques

N° 231 1^{er} Trim Jan 2017: Les Formules Monégasques de Mandats-Poste (Maier); La Suppression puis le Rétablissement du Tarif réduit pour le Luxembourg 1942-1945 (Bonneyoy); Les Cartes Télégramme «du Choléra» [1884] (Barbelin); Les Timbres de la «Grosse tête d'Hermès» et du «Cérès» de France avec l'Inscription de l'Imprimeur Ernest Meyer (Fanchini).

N° 232 2^e Trim Apr 2017: Transitions en Cochinchine 1946-1949 (Goanvic); Les Alaouites (Parenti); Les Envois Groupés avec une Facture dans le Régime intérieur 1917-1957 (Bonneyoy & Lavigne); Le Courrier Espagnol pour les îles Philippines: la voie de Marseille [1860-1898] (Herráiz).

L'Écho de la Timbrologie

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

N° 1915 Mar 2017: L'art de fabriquer des timbres gravés à Phil@poste-Boulazac (Bastide-Bernardin); Les papiers d'affaires (Lavigne); Philandorre a quarante ans (-).

N° 1916 Apr 2017: Le Choletais a toujours su tisser sa toile (Cholet); Seuls avec les Manchots empereurs [Terre Adélie] (Venturini); Fête du Timbre 2017 (-); Le tarif des papiers d'affaires [cont](Lavigne); René Fonck, l'as des déçus (Albaret).

N° 1917 May 2017: L'Atlantique Nord en mai 1927: échec français contre succès américain (Albaret); Technique de production et historique des Carnets pour distributeur SAGEM.(Rabineau); Les débuts de la recommandation en France (Lavigne); De la Midwinter au retour du bateau (Venturini).

France & Colonies Philatelist

Whole N° 328 (Vol 73 N° 2) Apr 2017: A Tale of Two Cards (Broadhead); Philatelic or Not? How does a Collector tell for sure? And then what to do? (Grabowski); French Participation in Quelling the Boxer Rebellion and its aftermath (Luft); The 1805 Blockade Runner (Kelly).

Gibbons Stamp Monthly

Vol 47 N° 9 Feb 2017: Benin's Modern Commemorative Rarities: Part 1 (Pertwee)

Vol 47 N° 10 Mar 2017: Benin's Modern Commemorative Rarities : Part 2 (Pertwee).

The Indo-China Philatelist

Vol XLVII, N° 2 (Whole N° 227) Mar 2017: Early Quin-Hon Military Postmarks (Bentley); Lao Scouts (Moallem); Update on Kampot Province Revenue Stamps (Dykhouse); The Postage Due Stamps of South Vietnam (Glebbhardt); Estimating an Early date of a Vietnam Cover (Düring); Bank for Everyone (Bentley).

Vol XLVII N° 3 (Whole N° 228) May 2017: More on the Postage Due Stamps of South Vietnam (Gebhardt); Dangerous Counterfeits of Fifth Anniversary of Guerilla Fighter Mac Thi Bu'o'i (Gebhardt); Postal Envelope for Unrecovered Payments (Pezer); Democratic Republic of Vietnam & Currency (Daniel III); First Revenue Stamps of North Vietnam (Dykhouse); French Indochinese Plate error found on Overprinted North Vietnam Issue (Düring); Unusual Label offered on e-Bay Auction (Bentley); Meeting in Nha Trang (Beardsley).

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° 187 Mar 2017: L'Indochine, perle de l'Extrême-Orient (de Pellinec); Quelques oblitérations (de La Mettrie); La République de Jules-Clément Chaplain (Nowacka); Les postiers à l'école du tri (Gomez); Les timbres «Recouvrements»: quand la philatélie sert la fiscalité (Singeot); Philandorre fête son 40^e anniversaire (Coutant); Une collection exceptionnelle Félix Potin (Zeyons); Petites enquêtes marcophiles (Baudot); Tunis par Bône (Prugnon).

N° 188 Apr 2017: L'Occupation italienne de Menton (Singeot); Pierre Gandon et Jacques Cartier; rétablir la vérité (Gomez); Quand des plis maritimes illustrent la Conquête de l'Ouest [Épisode 9: la desserte de la Californie] (Veglio); La collection départementale: un vrai régal (Delon); La Grande Peste de Marseille, 1720-1722 [1723] (Dutau); La lutte de Jacob contre l'ange ou le muse postal d'Eugène Delacroix (Aupiais); Poissons d'avril au Vatican (de La Mettrie); Le Carnaval de Cholet (Zeyons); Exprès et taxes complémentaires (Prugnon).

N° 189 May 2017: L'art et le timbre: les expositions philatéliques (Nowacka); Les dentelures méconnues des émissions locales indochinoises (Melot); Derniers épisodes de l'histoire de la Sarre (Singeot); De passage à l'Elysée (Aramis); La publicité et les timbres (Gomez); Quand la Poste officie sur le rail (Singeot); Jean-Jacques Mahuteau, la passion des mers du Sud (-); Envois postaux qui changent de sexe (de La Mettrie); Les Présidents de la

République (Zeyons); Les frégates de Tonkin (-); Lettre anonyme de septembre 1870 (Baudot); Quel échelon de poids (Prugnon).

Les Feuilles Marcophiles

N° 368 (1^{er} Trim 2017, Mar 2017): Timbres à date français avec mentions «Aérien-Aérodrome-Aérogare-Aéroport-Aéropostale-Aviation-Avion» (1^{ère} partie) (Lavenas); Le bureau municipal des Postes de Cogolin (Trinquier); Vous avez dit «service rural»? (Pinhas & Reynaud); L'apport de l'histoire postale à celle des Alsaciens-Lorrains de 1871 à 1918 (Schaff); 1801 Le retour de l'Armée d'Égypte: lettre d'un militaire et évocation d'un grand médecin des armées, René Nicolas Desgenettes

(Dutau); Histoire de la double relation postale du Principat d'ANDORRA, Chap I (5^{ème} partie - fin) Les débuts du Télégraphe et son apport au fonctionnement du service du courrier (Dupré); Timbres «ORDONNANCE DU 17 NOVEMBRE 1844 (Art 30 et 31)» (seconde partie) (Guillard & Abensur).

Le Collectionneur Philatéliste et Marcophile

N° 177 (Apr 2017): Nansen, un passeport pour les apatrides (Van Dooren); Philippeville, VÉDETTE RÉPUBLICAINE (Lagarde); La Bataille des Frontières, au mois d'août 1914 (IV) (Geubel & Van Dooren); Introduction à la Marcophilie et l'Histoire Postale (IV): L'histoire postale durant les débuts de la période classique (Morat).

BOOKSHELF

Compiled by Michael Round

Catalogue de cotation des timbres de Saint-Pierre et Miquelon – Les classiques 1885-1900. Jean-Jacques Tillard.

A5 format, 128 colour pages, spiral-bound. Price 32€ including postage within France, from Jean-Jacques Tillard, 57 rue de Paris - BF 4433, 97500 Saint-Pierre et Miquelon. Email: texspm@cheznoo.net

Most general catalogues cover early Saint-Pierre et Miquelon in a page or so. These issues deserve more, as this publication – not so much a catalogue, more a handbook – amply proves. A whole page is devoted to each individual stamp, illustrated in full colour and with pricings generously supplemented by information previously known only to specialists and experts. This is a vital tool for anyone spending serious money on the area. Text in French only.

Spink/Maury, Catalogue de Timbres de France, 120th edition 2017

Hardback, 215 x 155mm; 1,105pp with colour illustrations throughout. Price £22.50; ISBN: 978-1-907427-75-6

I reviewed the 2016 edition of this catalogue here in September 2016. Any member who never got round to buying it at the time now has a chance to acquire this latest update. A brief reminder: it includes enough detail for several lifetimes, namely stamps on cover, *tête-bêche* issues, blocks, reprints, military mail, specimens, telegraphs, officials, parcel post, booklets, essays, proofs, airmails, precancels, postage dues, imperforates, balloon mail, occupation issues, telephone stamps, siege mail and war stamps! My recommendation remains unchanged.

The Free French in London 1940 – 1945. Peter A Baker.

A4 softback, 64 pages, copiously illustrated in colour. Published by the Stuart Rossiter Trust. Price £9.50 plus p&p. Email john.w.jackson@care4free.net Orders: www.rossitertrust.com

This review of the postal history of the Free French and other associated London-based organisations covers those World War II censor marks, cachets, resealing tapes (or labels) and postmarks that relate to the Free French Army, Navy, Air Force, and the Courier Service, Liberation

and National Committees, and undercover addresses. I recommend it to members interested in WWII, censorship, British or French Postal History, with the proviso that the French and English texts contain a few spelling and other errors. The illustrations are superb, however, and the amount of information prodigious.

La désinfection du courrier en France et dans les pays occupés. Guy Dutau.

A4 format, 700 pages. Price 85€ plus postage (France, 16.90€; Europe 21.20€; elsewhere 53€). Available from Guy Dutau, 9 rue Maurice Alet, 31400 Toulouse, France. Email: guy.dutau@wanadoo.fr

The containment of infectious diseases required a whole raft of rules and regulations, from which mail was not exempt. Many of us will know of disinfection slits to be found in affected entires, to allow smoke or other purifying agents access to their contents. This luxurious new publication, with over 500 illustrations, tells the history of such diseases and the measures taken to combat them; the information in it is bound to include material new to even the most knowledgeable of us. An absorbing read – in French only.

Storia della Navigazione a Vapore e dei Servizi Postali sul Mediterraneo, Volume III (1840-1850). Alessandro Arseni.

A4 format, 256 pages. Price 60€ plus postage. Published by The Postal Gazette. Further details from info@thepostalgazette.com

Of tangential but definite interest to Francophile postal historians, this sumptuous volume completes a trilogy devoted to the pre-adhesive period. Routes covered embrace Sardinia, France, Algeria and Spain, plus those English packet-boats that plied the coast of Italy – not forgetting an experimental service based in Trieste. The demise of packet-boats *Polluce* and *Mongibello* will fascinate historians among us; the statistically minded will welcome the inclusion of over 23,000 dates, 400 notes, 26 quoted laws or decrees, and the reproduction of more than 100 actual letters. Text in Italian, much of it guessable to members fluent in French.

The 25c Visiting Card Rate from 1 April 1920 to 15 July 1925

Mick Bister

Effective date	Number of manuscript words added		
	None	1 to 5	Over 5
01.01.1917	.05/50 g	.10	.15
14.07.1922	.05/50 g	.15 ?	.15 ?
25.03.1924	.05/50 g	.15	.25
16.07.1925	.10/50 g	.15	.30

Figure 1

Extract from 'Tables of French Postal Rates 1849 to 2011' page 32, Visiting Cards

The above Visiting Card rates have been extracted from the F&CPS Brochure N° 7 '*Tables of French Postal Rates 1849 to 2011*' (4th Edition) compiled by Derek Richardson and published in 1992.

This *tour de force* is a mine of information meticulously tabulated by the author using the data published a decade earlier in '*Les Tarifs Postaux Français 1627-1969*' by Alexandre, Barbey, Brun, Desarnaud and Joany¹. This erudite group of French authors had collated the information by studying the contents of the '*Bulletins des Postes, des Télégraphes et des Téléphones*' which had been issued regularly by the PTT to its postmasters announcing, *inter alia*, rates and regulations relating to the handling of mail. However, I have not been convinced that the authors of '*Les Tarifs Postaux Français 1627-1969*' uncovered or interpreted accurately all the information they found in the *Bulletins*² hence the question marks against certain rates quoted by Derek Richardson in **Figure 1** and indicated in blue.

My suspicions were aroused a few years ago after I had written an article entitled 'Visiting Cards - a brief history of rates, regulations and postal stationery' which was published in the Journal in 2004³. Since then I have been

attempting to collect an example of every visiting card rate. I have sought, for each change of tariff, an example of a '*mignonnette*' (visiting card envelope) complete with its contents correctly franked for each of the three categories: a) a card with no added text, b) a card with one to five words of added text and c) a card with over 5 words of added text.

All my successful purchases reflected and confirmed the rates published in both the above mentioned reference books with the exception of one period - that of 14 July 1922 to 24 March 1924. I have never seen from this period examples of either of the 15c rates indicated in blue in the above table. However, during and even prior to this period I had frequent sightings of visiting cards franked at 25c. What explanation could there be for such a contradiction?

My initial reasoning was that these items were quite simply overfranked. Senders would have a stock of 25c stamps readily available at home for sending letters at the contemporary 25c rate and preferred to use them instead of going to the post office just to purchase the occasional 15c value for a visiting card.

I was alerted though to the real answer when I came across the two taxed items offered on Delcampe and which I subsequently purchased.

The first envelope (**Figure 2**) bears a 15c Lined Sower cancelled on 28 August 1920. The card inside was checked and found to contain more than the five words of text permitted at this rate and was therefore taxed at 20c using

1 Hereafter referred to as Alexandre, Brun *et al*

2 Alexandre, Brun *et al* do admit in the preface of their book that 'despite systematic and scrupulous researchmisprints and errors are always possible'

3 FC&PS 'Journal' Numbers 232 and 233, June and September 2004.



Figure 2

Taxed visiting card, Auxerre to Saint-Brieuc, 28 August 1920

the double deficiency taxation of the period ($25c - 15c = 10c \times 2 = 20c$). This confirms therefore the existence of a 25c rate.

The second item (Figure 3) bears a 5c Cameo Sower cancelled 8 October 1921. It was intercepted and likewise found to have more than five words of added text and was taxed accordingly ($25c - 5c = 20c \times 2 = 40c$). In addition, a 1 franc penalty⁴ was applied as the underfranking was deemed to have been intentional.

So there was indeed a 25c rate for visiting cards and it even existed before the period beginning 14 July 1922 and very likely from the previous rate changes on 1 April 1920 which do not feature in Derek Richardson's tables at all. I therefore turned to the section on the 1 April 1920 rates in *Les Tarifs Postaux Français 1627-1969* by Alexandre, Brun *et al* but there was no reference here either to anything relating to visiting cards (Figure 4). This omission had therefore led future readers and researchers to conclude that there had been no change in 1920 and that the visiting cards rates of 1 January 1917 continued to be in force.

inadvertently passed over.

STEP 1

a) **BULLETIN 1920 N° 5 (March)** quoting rates in effect from 1 April 1920.

On page 181 (Appendix 1) the principal rates are announced including Printed Matter at 5c and basic Letter at 25c; there is no reference whatsoever to Visiting Card rates. It would appear that Alexandre, Brun *et al* had decided not to look beyond this page of the *Bulletin* in the belief that there were no further changes mentioned.

However, if we turn to page 207 of the same *Bulletin* (Appendix 2) we see that the new rates are presented this time in tabulated form and more significantly there is, in small print, a footnote alongside the 'Imprimés' entry reading "To be accepted as printed matter (5c), visiting cards must not display any manuscript text other than name, title and address of the sender". Hence the 5c is confirmed as the basic visiting card rate (Figure 5) but what about the rates for sending cards with 1-5 words and over 5 words?



Figure 3
40c tax and 1 franc penalty applied to visiting card, Beaune, 8 October 1921

Clearly, as I now possessed evidence of the existence of a 25c rate, Alexandre, Brun *et al* must have missed something in the sources they researched and so I embarked on an on-line⁵ investigation into what had been overlooked. I consulted the same volumes of the *Bulletins Mensuels des PTT* as the above authors and I uncovered, step by step, *Bulletin* by *Bulletin*, the information which they had

b) **BULLETIN 1920 N° 12 (July)**

On page 469 (Appendix 3) clarification is given about the 1-5 word rate.

"The 10c rate previously applicable to visiting cards (1 January 1917 to 31 March 1920) bearing a written text of up to 5 words is withdrawn. Such cards will be liable to the letter rate (25c) when they have a written annotation." (Figure 6)

So we now know that there was a 5c rate for no added words and a 25c for the 1-5 word rate.

But what about visiting cards with over 5 words? We need to look at a further instruction.

4 The 1 franc penalty was imposed from 1 April 1920 to 1 January 1927 on visiting cards that were deliberately flouting the number of words regulations.

5 Website <http://gallica.bnf.fr/> is a source of much French archival material, not only of philatelic interest, which is available subscription free to researchers.

D. 10 DÉCEMBRE 1919

Les premières liaisons postales aériennes expérimentales furent réalisées sans affranchissements particuliers, mais dès que les lignes devinrent un tant soit peu régulières des surtaxes furent instituées en fonction du poids et de la distance à parcourir.

SURTAXES AÉRIENNES

	Jusqu'à 20 g	De 20 à 100 g	Plus de 100 g jusqu'à 200 g
Jusqu'à 500 Km. . . . .	.75	1.50	2.25
Plus de 500 Km jusqu'à 800 Km	1.	2.	3.
Plus de 800 Km	1.25	2.50	3.75

23 FÉVRIER 1920 (D. 22-02-1920)

COLIS POSTAUX

	3 Kg	5 Kg	10 Kg
Acheminement	1.30	1.80	2.95
Factage-Express . . . . .	.60		

	500 F	1000 F
Remboursement.	1.30	1.90
Valeur déclarée (par 500 F) . . . . .		.15

1^{er} AVRIL 1920 (L. 29.03.1920)

LETTRES ET PAQUETS CLOS

Jusqu'à 20 g. . . . .	.25
Au-dessus de 20 g, jusqu'à 50 g . . . . .	.40
Au-dessus de 50 g, jusqu'à 100 g . . . . .	.50
Au-dessus de 100 g, par 100 g en plus . . . . .	.15

PAPIERS D'AFFAIRES Taxe des lettres

CARTES POSTALES

Ordinaires ou illustrées . . . . .	.20
Avec réponse payée. . . . .	.40
Illustrées, moins de 5 mots. . . . .	.15 (*)

(*) Une CIRCULAIRE du 28 juillet 1920 autorise :

- A titre transitoire - jusqu'au 31 déc. 1920 l'emploi de C.P. illustrées dans le cas où la mention CARTE POSTALE sera biffée, remplacée ou non par le titre IMPRIMÉ au TARIF DE 5 c.

Ces cartes ne contiendront que la signature et adresse de l'expéditeur et l'adresse du destinataire.

- Une circulaire du 27 nov. 1920 reporte cette possibilité jusqu'au 30 juin 1921.
- Une nouvelle prorogation est accordée par la circulaire n° 1729 E.P. du 21 juin 1921.

IMPRIMÉS NON PÉRIODIQUES

En nombre	
Jusqu'à 20 g. . . . .	.03
Ordinaires	
Jusqu'à 50 g. . . . .	.05
Au-dessus de 50 g, jusqu'à 100 g . . . . .	.15
Au-dessus de 100 g, par 100 g en plus	+.15

CARTES ET CIRCULAIRES ÉLECTORALES BULLETINS DE VOTE

Jusqu'à 25 g. . . . .	.01
Par 25 g en plus . . . . .	.01

CÉCOGRAMMES

Sous bande ou sous enveloppe ouverte	
Jusqu'à 20 g. . . . .	.02
De 20 g à 100 g . . . . .	.03
De 100 g à 500 g . . . . .	.05
Par 500 g en plus . . . . .	.05

Poids maximum des imprimés non périodiques toutes catégories : 3 Kg.

TARIFS SPÉCIAUX

Avertissements, avis de percepteurs et de receveurs spéciaux des communes ainsi que les établissements de bienfaisance

- envoyés aux contribuables, sous bande

Avertissements et avis de percepteurs relatifs à l'impôt sur le revenu

jusqu'à 5 g	jusqu'à 10 g
.01	
	.01

JOURNAUX ET ÉCRITS PÉRIODIQUES

	Poids de l'exemplaire			
	- 50 g		par 25 g en plus	
	R.G.	R.L.	R.G.	R.L.
Envois routés . . . . .	.01	½ c.	.01	½ c.
Envois non routés. . . . .	.02	.01	.01	½ c.

R.G. : rayon général - R.L. : rayon limitrophe.

ÉCHANTILLONS (jusqu'à 500 g)

Jusqu'à 100 g . . . . .	.20
Par 100 g en plus	+.15

RECOMMANDATION

Lettres, paquets clos, cartes postales . . . . .	.35
O.P.R. . . . .	.25

VALEURS DÉCLARÉES

a) TAXE du tarif des lettres ordinaires	
b) DROIT FIXE de recommandation . . . . .	.50
c) ASSURANCE : jusqu'à 1000 F . . . . .	.20
par 1000 F en plus	+.10

Figure 4

Les Tarifs Postaux Français 1627-1969' by Alexandre, Barbey, Brun, Desarnaud and Joany, Pages 100 and 101, omitting any reference to Visiting Card rates in the 1 April 1920 tariffs



Figure 5

5c printed matter rate applied to visiting card with no added words
Flers-de-l'Orne local, 14 March 1922

c) **BULLETIN 1920 N° 20 (November)**

On page 867 (Appendix 4) further clarification is provided.

"Visiting cards comprising any number of written words other than those listed above (for the 5c Visiting Card rate) must be franked at the Letter rate." (Figure 7)

To mitigate any further confusion the following order was issued to postmasters:

"These instructions concerning Visiting Cards must be brought to the attention of the public by affixing a notice in a prominent position near the letter box."

So, to summarise, for the period from 1 April 1920 to 13 July 1922 there were only two visiting card rates. There was the 5c rate (assimilated into Printed Matter) for cards with no written words other than sender's signature name, title etc and there was the 25c rate (assimilated into Letters) for cards with any number of added written words. There was no specific 1-5 word rate.



Figure 6
25c letter rate applied to visiting card with 1-5 added words
La Brède local, 3 June 1920



Figure 7
25c letter rate applied to visiting card with over 5 words
Ségrie-Fontaine to Flers, 13 March 1922

STEP 2

But what were the rates for the next period from 14 July 1922 to 24 March 1924?

d) BULLETIN 1922 N° 15 (July)

On page 333 (Appendix 5) we learn that after more than two years' absence the 1-5 word rate has been reinstated.

".....a tariff of 15c for visiting cards under wrapper or in an unsealed envelope bearing a handwritten text of between 1 and 5 words of any sort."

Page 341 (Appendix 6) reiterates the terms enabling the visiting card to be accepted at the 5c printed matter rate.

(Figures 8 and 9)

"It should be noted that visiting cards, printed or handwritten, which are to be admitted as printed matter, may contain the following: name, first name, profession, address etc"

However, there is no reference to the over 5 words rate but philatelic evidence indicates that it continued, unchanged, at the 25c letter rate (Figure 10). The three rates are now 5c for no words (other than those permitted above), 15c for 1-5 words and 25c for over 5 words.

Finally, what were the rates for the next period from 25 March 1924 to 15 July 1925?

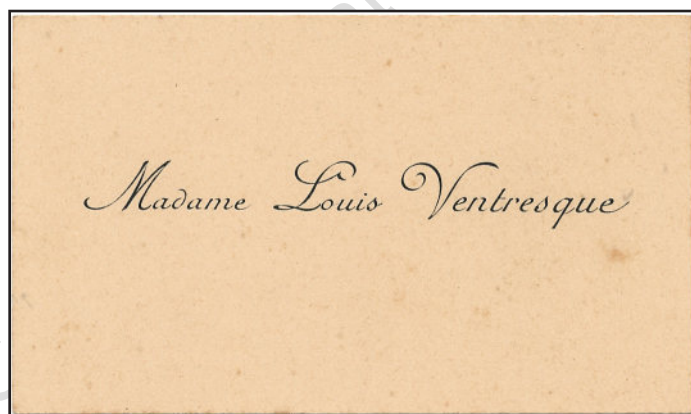


Figure 8
5c printed matter rate applied to visiting card with no added words
Paris to Alger, 6 December 1923

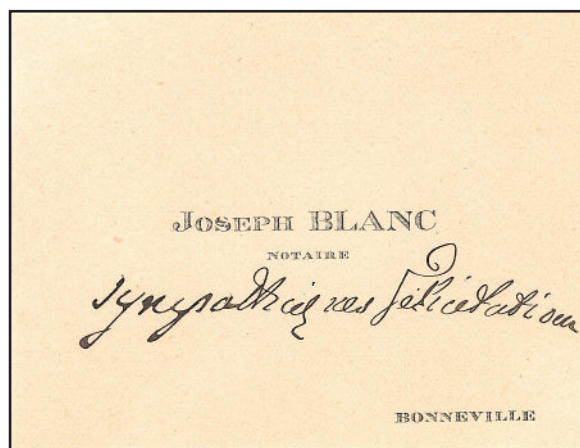


Figure 9
15c rate applied to visiting card with 1 - 5 words
Bonneville to Flumet, 2 January 1923



Figure 10
25c letter rate applied to visiting card
with over 5 words
written in Ajaccio, posted Marseille to
Toulon, 3 January 1923

STEP 3

e) **BULLETIN 1924 N° 12 (April)** On page 427 (**Appendix 7**) we read an announcement which is totally unambiguous. It confirms that all three visiting card rates of the previous period will continue to be applicable (**Figures 11, 12 and 13**).

“Visiting cards bearing the following handwritten or printed information: surname, title or profession, sender’s address, consultation and meeting times: 5 centimes

Visiting cards bearing handwritten or printed information other than the above up to 5 words: 15 centimes and over 5

words: 25 centimes”

On page 432 (**Appendix 8**) revisions regarding the nature of added text were announced.

“The 5 centimes rate is applicable to visiting cards bearing the following handwritten or printed information: surname, first names, title or profession, times of availability and leave, Any text, whether printed or manuscript, added to a visiting card will attract the rate of 15c for 1-5 words and the letter rate for over 5 words. This means that visiting cards containing printed greetings, condolences, congratulations, thanks etc can no longer be accepted at the 5c rate.”

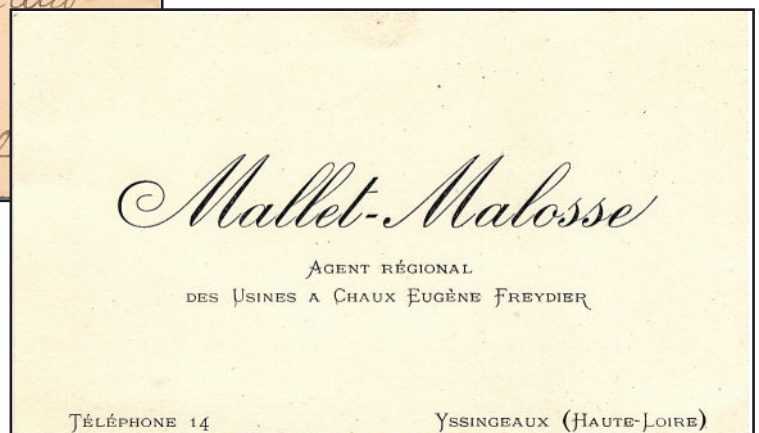


Figure 11
5c rate applied to visiting card with no added words
Yssingeaux to Tence, 2 January 1925



Figure 12
15c rate applied to visiting card with 1 - 5 words (written on reverse)
Draguignan to Ginasservis, 15 April 1925



Figure 13
25c rate applied to visiting card with over 5 words
Paris to Melun, 5 November 1924

CONCLUSION

Having confirmed the existence of the 25c rate **Figure 1** now needs to be updated to include the data shown in blue in **Figure 14** as follows:

- Insertion of new row for tariff of 1 April 1920

- Change of the 'over 5 words rate' in 14 July 1922 tariff from 15c to 25c

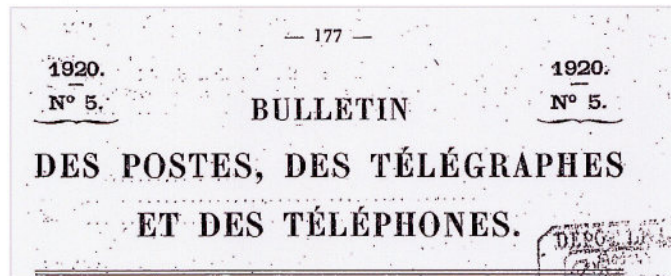
Finally, I wish to record my thanks and gratitude to Derek Richardson for his reading of my draft and for graciously acknowledging the need for the revision.

01.01.1917	.05/50 g	.10	.15
01.04.1920	.05/50 g	.25	.25
14.07.1922	.05/50 g	.15	.25
25.03.1924	.05/50 g	.15	.25
16.07.1925	.10/50 g	.15	.30

Figure 14
Revised data

APPENDICES

BULLETIN DES PTT
N° 5
MARCH 1920



(Appendix 1) Page 181

V. — Imprimés.

a) Imprimés non périodiques :

1° Imprimés présentés à l'affranchissement en numéraire, déposés en nombre au moins égal à 1,000, triés et enliassés par départements et par bureaux de distribution, jusqu'au poids de 20 grammes, 3 centimes;

2° Imprimés autres que ceux visés à l'alinéa 1°, jusqu'à 50 grammes, 5 centimes;

De 50 à 100 grammes, 15 centimes;

Au-dessus de 100 grammes, 15 centimes par 100 grammes ou fraction de 100 grammes;

I. — Lettres et paquets clos.

Jusqu'à 20 grammes, 25 centimes;

De 20 à 50 grammes, 40 centimes;

De 50 à 100 grammes, 50 centimes.

Au-dessus de 100 grammes, 15 centimes par 100 grammes ou fraction de 100 grammes.

Poids maximum, 1,500 grammes.

(Appendix 2) Page 207

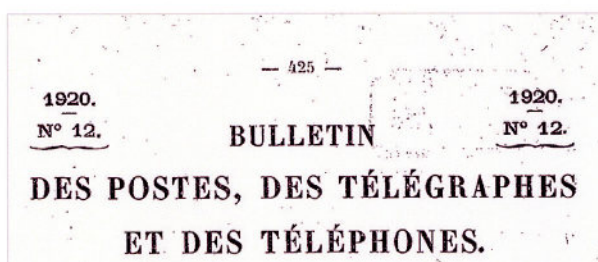
2° Imprimés autres que ceux visés au premier alinéa.	Jusqu'à 50 grammes.....	0 05	
	de 50 à 100 grammes.....	0 15	
	Au-dessus de 100 grammes.	0 15	Idem.....
	par 100 grammes ou fraction de 100 grammes excédant.....		
3° Cartes électorales imprimées, bulletins de vote imprimés ou manuscrits et circulaires électorales imprimées....	c fr. 01 par 25 grammes ou de 25 grammes excédant		
	Jusqu'à 20 grammes.....		

Pour être admises au tarif des imprimés, les cartes de visite ne doivent comporter aucune mention manuscrite autre que le nom, la qualité et l'adresse de l'expéditeur.

Pour être admises au tarif des imprimés, les cartes de visite ne doivent comporter aucune mention manuscrite autre que le nom, la qualité et l'adresse de l'expéditeur.

— 207

BULLETIN DES PTT
N° 12
JULY 1920



(Appendix 3) Page 469

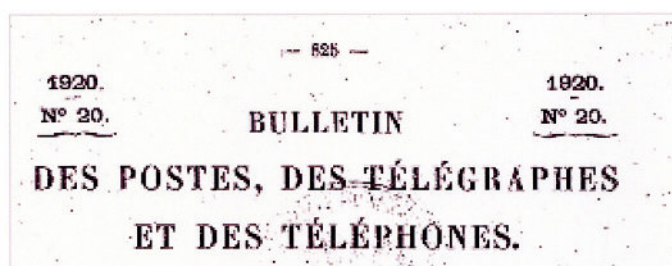
Imprimés non périodiques.

1° D'une manière générale, tous les envois qui étaient précédemment admis au tarif des imprimés non périodiques avant la promulgation de la loi du 29 mars 1920 continuent à bénéficier de ce tarif; le seul changement réside dans la modification des taux d'affranchissement. Ces taux sont ceux indiqués à l'article 1^{er}, § V, de la loi du 29 mars 1920.

Seuls les avis concernant le service des colis postaux sont maintenant passibles du tarif des lettres.

Tous les tarifs spéciaux dont bénéficiaient précédemment certaines catégories d'imprimés disparaissent, à l'exception de ceux expressément visés par l'article 3 de la loi. Le tarif de 0 fr. 10 précédemment applicable aux cartes de visite portant une inscription manuscrite limitée à cinq mots est également supprimé. (Ces cartes sont passibles du tarif des lettres, dès lors qu'elles comportent une annotation manuscrite.)

BULLETIN DES PTT
N° 20
NOVEMBER 1920



(Appendix 4) Page 867

4° La taxe de 0 fr. 15 prévue pour les cartes postales illustrées portant au plus cinq mots de correspondance n'est pas applicable aux cartes de visite. Celles-ci sont admises au tarif des imprimés, soit 0 fr. 05 jusqu'à 50 grammes, si elles portent les seules indications imprimées ou manuscrites ci-après :

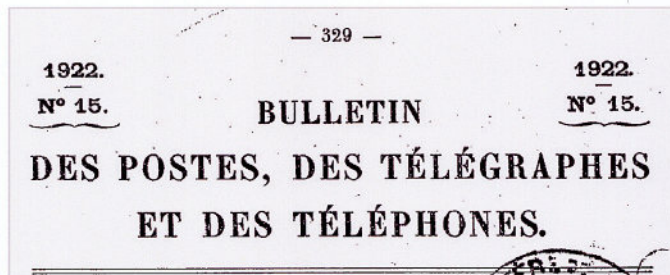
Nom, prénoms, qualité, profession et adresse de l'expéditeur;
Jours et heures de consommation ou de réception;
En congé, en disponibilité, retraité ou en retraite.

Les cartes de visite comportant un nombre quelconque de mots manuscrits autres que les indications visées ci-dessus doivent être affranchies au tarif des lettres.

Les prescriptions ci-dessus, concernant les cartes de visite, devront être rappelées au public par un avis affiché d'une manière très apparente à proximité des boîtes aux lettres.

NOTA. — A cette occasion, il est rappelé que les cartes de visite contenant des vœux, souhaits, félicitations, avis de faire-part, remerciements ou autres formules analogues imprimés, autographiés, lithographiés, etc., ont droit au bénéfice du tarif réduit quel que soit le nombre de mots employés.

BULLETIN DES PTT
N° 15
JULY 1922



(Appendix 5) Page 333

ARRÊTÉ du 30 juin 1922 concernant les modifications apportées aux tarifs et à la réglementation des factures et relevés, des certificats de vie et quittances pour l'exécution de la loi sur les retraites ouvrières et paysannes, des cartes illustrées et des cartes de visite.

c) Un tarif de 0 fr. 15 pour les cartes de visite sous bande ou sous enveloppe ouverte comportant une inscription manuscrite de un à cinq mots quelconques ;

(Appendix 6) Page 341

IV. — CARTES DE VISITE.

Les cartes de visite expédiées sous bande mobile ou sous enveloppe ouverte et portant une mention manuscrite de un à cinq mots quelconques sont admises au tarif de 0 fr. 15.

Lorsque l'envoi comporte plusieurs cartes de visite placées sous une même bande ou enveloppe, les cinq mots autorisés peuvent être répartis sur les cartes constituant l'envoi.

Il est rappelé que les cartes de visite, imprimées ou manuscrites, qui sont admises au tarif des imprimés, peuvent contenir les indications ci-après :

Noms, prénoms, qualité, profession et adresse de l'expéditeur.

Jours et heures de consultation ou de réception.

En congé, en disponibilité, retraité ou en retraite.

Les cartes de visite contenant des vœux, souhaits, compliments de condoléances, félicitations, remerciements, ou autres formules de politesse imprimés, lithographiés ou reproduits par un moyen mécanique quelconque, ont droit au bénéfice du tarif des imprimés, quel que soit le nombre de mots employés pour exprimer les indications en question.

Comme tous les objets admis à circuler à prix réduit, les cartes de visite peuvent, en outre, porter extérieurement ou intérieurement l'indication imprimée ou manuscrite des nom, qualité, profession et adresse du destinataire, ainsi que la date d'envoi et la signature de l'expéditeur.

BULLETIN DES PTT
N° 12
APRIL 1924



(Appendix 7) Page 427

3° Cartes de visite contenant les indications manuscrites ou imprimées ci-après :

Nom, prénoms, qualité ou profession et adresse de l'expéditeur, jours et heures de consultation ou de réception : 5 centimes.

Cartes de visite portant toutes indications imprimées ou manuscrites autres que celles indiquées ci-dessus :

Jusqu'à 5 mots : 15 centimes ;

Au-dessus de 5 mots : 25 centimes.

(Appendix 8) Page 432

c. Cartes de visite.

Les nouvelles dispositions adoptées par le Parlement ont pour objet de supprimer la distinction qui existait entre les mentions manuscrites et les mentions imprimées autorisées sur les cartes de visite.

Le tarif de 5 centimes est applicable aux cartes de visite contenant les indications manuscrites ou imprimées ci-après :

1° Nom, prénoms, qualité, profession et adresse de l'expéditeur ;

2° En congé, en disponibilité, retraité ou en retraite, qui se rapportent à la situation de l'expéditeur ;

3° Jours et heures de consultation ou de réception.

Toutes autres mentions, quelles qu'elles soient, imprimées ou manuscrites, portées sur les cartes de visite, rendent l'envoi passible du tarif de 15 centimes jusqu'à 5 mots, ou du tarif des lettres, pour les inscriptions de plus de 5 mots.

En conséquence, ne bénéficieront plus du tarif de 5 centimes les cartes de visite contenant des vœux, souhaits, compliments de condoléances, félicitations, remerciements ou autres formules de politesse imprimés.

Avis de Réception 1876-1914

Peter Kelly

This article sets out to summarise how the Post Office dealt with the *avis de réception*¹ (Advice of Receipt forms) and the means of payment for the service during the period of the *Type Sage* issue 1876-1900 and the practice after that date that remained the same until 1914 and the influence, both internally and externally, of the UPU Congresses of Vienna in 1891 and Washington in 1897.

The '*Dictionnaire Philatélique et Postal*'² describes the advices as being postal stationery first introduced in 1859 allowing the sender of registered or insured mail to be advised by post or telegraph of the date of delivery of the item (with the written proof of the destination office) to the addressee or his authorised representative. Depending on the period and subject to certain conditions the request could be made at the time of posting or at a later date.

The Postal Congress at Vienna in 1891 brought about, at least on an international level, a change in the way in which advices of receipt of registered and insured objects were handled. This had almost immediate repercussions, as far as France was concerned, and changed the manner in which requests for this information had been formulated in the past. These changes were outlined in *Bulletin Mensuel*

N° 5 supplement of May 1892 (para 14, page 225 *et seq*)³ and took effect from 1 July of that year.

Until that date, where a sender required confirmation that his letter had been safely delivered, he would request this at the office of posting (*office d'origine*) which would fill in the small single sheet form, folded to make four pages, (form reference N° 103 that later became form 514 in January 1884). At that time they collected the AR fee for this service of 20c (from 1 September 1871 until 1 May 1878) and 10c thereafter. This was paid in postage stamps that were affixed to the form. This form was sent with the letter or object in question to the office selected to deliver it (the delivery office). After delivery this office would complete the form and return it to the office of origin who would, in turn, return it to the sender.

It is unusual to find complete copies of these forms because the instructions on them stated that the half of the sheet representing pages 3 and 4 be retained by the office of destination. This section contained the details of the office to which the request was sent and their confirmation that delivery had taken place.

Illustrations of examples from 1876 to 1 July 1892 are given in **Figures 1 to 6**.

1 Hereafter referred to as AR

2 Published jointly by the *Académie de Philatélie* and the *Académie Européenne d'Études Philatéliques et Postales*, Annonay 1999.

3 The *Bulletin Mensuel* contained updates and changes to rates, regulations etc and was issued by the PTT to postmasters at monthly intervals.



Figure 1

An example of Form N° 103 dated 18 October 1877 and franked 20c for the AR fee, a rate that lasted until 1 May 1878.

N° 103.
Mai 1882.
Eca rose 112.

OBJETS CHARGÉS OU RECOMMANDÉS
DONT LES EXPÉDITEURS DEMANDENT À CONNAÎTRE LE SORT.

MINISTÈRE
DES POSTES
ET DES TÉLÉGRAPHES.

(Exécution des articles 296 à 300 de l'instruction générale.)

à remplir par le préposé du bureau d'origine (*)

AVIS DE L'EXPÉDITION D'UN OBJET CHARGÉ. RECOMMANDÉ.

BUREAU de *Blarrie*, DÉP^t de *B. L. L. L.*
Le Receveur soussigné expédie aujourd'hui, sous le n° *471* l'objet
ci-dessus indiqué à l'adresse de M. *E. Carquies*
à *Montpellier* rue *(*) Carquies n° 1*
L'expéditeur demande si cet objet a été reçu par le destinataire.

Le *22* *juin* 1882.

(*) Ou poste restante, s'il y a lieu.

TABLEAU N° 2, à remplir par le préposé du bureau de destination.

RENSEIGNEMENTS FOURNIS SUR LE SORT DE L'OBJET
DESCRIT AU TABLEAU N° 1 (1).

BUREAU d' *Blarrie* DÉP^t d' *B. L. L. L.*

Le Receveur soussigné *certifie* que cet objet (a) *a été réexpédié*
à l'adresse par Carquies (Gard) conformément
à la demande du destinataire *25 octobre 1882.*

(1) La présente formule doit être renvoyée au bureau d'origine le jour même où l'objet aura dû être mis en distribution, soit qu'il ait été livré à l'ayant droit, soit que la remise n'ait pu en être faite pour une cause quelconque.

(a) Porter ici, suivant le cas, les mentions suivantes :

(a) A été délivré le _____ au destinataire, qui en a donné reçu.

(b) A été réexpédié le _____ conformément à la demande du destinataire.

(c) A été refusé le _____ par le destinataire.

(d) N'a pu être délivré { inconnu. parti sans laisser d'adresse. au destinataire, décédé, et les héritiers ou ayants droit n'en ayant pas réclamé la remise.

(e) N'a pas été réclamé au guichet de la poste restante, où il est adressé.

(f) N'a pu être présenté au destinataire, momentanément absent.

A la suite des mentions figurant ci-dessus, sous les lettres c à f, ajouter l'une des indications suivantes :
Cet objet est renvoyé aujourd'hui à l'expéditeur, ou cet objet sera renvoyé à l'expéditeur le _____ après l'expiration des délais de garde réglementaires à mon bureau.

RENSEIGNEMENTS FOURNIS A L'EXPÉDITEUR SUR LE SORT D'UN OBJET CHARGÉ OU RECOMMANDÉ.

M^(*) de *Gardes*
rue *St Rte*
Gardes n°
à
département de la *H. Garonne*

(*) L'expéditeur de l'objet est invité à s'adresser au Directeur des Postes et Télégraphes de son département pour les réclamations ou les demandes de renseignements supplémentaires qu'il pourrait avoir à former après la réception du présent avis.

Figure 2

This form is of special interest because it is a request for an advice of receipt made four days after the original deposit of the letter of 18 October 1882.

RENSEIGNEMENTS FOURNIS À L'EXPÉDITEUR SUR LE SORT D'UN OBJET
CHARGÉ OU RECOMMANDÉ

M. *Genner*
rue *ROCHE-S-VE* n° *17*
à *ROCHE-S-VE*
département d *VENDEE*

(*) L'expéditeur de l'objet est invité à s'adresser au Directeur des Postes et des Télégraphes de son département pour les réclamations ou les demandes supplémentaires qu'il pourrait avoir à former après la réception de l'avis.

N° 514
[Ancien 103].
(Sept. 1884).
Écu rose 112.

OBJETS CHARGÉS OU RECOMMANDÉS
DONT LES EXPÉDITEURS DEMANDENT À CO

(Exécution des articles 296 à 300 de l'Instruction générale.)

MINISTÈRE
DES POSTES
ET DES TÉLÉGRAPHES.

TABLEAU N° 1, à remplir par le préposé du bureau d'origine (*).

AVIS DE L'EXPÉDITION D'UN OBJET { CHARGÉ.
RECOMMANDÉ.

BUREAU d *ROCHE-S-VE*

Le Receveur soussigné expédie aujourd'hui, sous le n° *100*, l'objet ci-dessus indiqué à l'adresse de M. *Morin*,
à *Paris*, rue *(**rue de la Temples) 24*

L'expéditeur désigné à la page 2 de la présente formule demande si cet objet a été reçu par le destinataire.

Le *15 mai* 188

(**) Ou poste restante, s'il y a lieu.

TABLEAU N° 2, à remplir par le préposé du bureau d'origine.

RENSEIGNEMENTS FOURNIS SUR LE SORT DE L'OBJET
DÉCRIT AU TABLEAU N° 1.

BUREAU d

Le Receveur soussigné déclare que cet objet (1) a été livré
au destinataire

Le 188

(1) Porter ici, dans le cas de distribution, la mention suivante :
(a) A été délivré le au destinataire, qui en a donné reçu
(b) A été refusé le par le destinataire.
(c) N'a pu être délivré inconnu, parti sans laisser d'adresse.

Figure 3

As in Figure 2 this is an example of the replacement Form N° 514 (Écu rose) dated 15 May 1885.

This is franked at 10c, the rate in force from 1 May 1878 until the end of this study period in 1914.

All of these advices were returned to the sender by registered mail, free of further payment, as the 10c represented the charge for the service. They are generally marked 'chargé' and can create confusion given that the word 'chargé' is normally used in conjunction with insured mail

and being an old term whose meaning denotes the care and responsibility of the Post Office for mails handled by them.

In this particular case the handstamp 'Chargé d'office' refers to the decision of the Post office, where they consider they have a particular responsibility to register an item of mail without reference to or additional payment by the sender.



Figure 4

An example of an advice dated 7 April 1878 on Form N° 103 with an irregular but spectacular franking of 15c as opposed to the regular rate of 20c. This is effectively the local postage rate for mail sent within the circumscription of the same office and that is the case here. The combination of 3 x 4c chestnut and a 3c bistre is exceptional. The possibility of a 5c stamp having become detached is discounted as measurements taken show that there is insufficient space within the postmarks to achieve this.

N° 287. A BIS.

MINISTÈRE DES POSTES ET DES TÉLÉGRAPHES DE FRANCE.

DEMANDE D'AVIS DE RÉCEPTION

d'une lettre de valeurs déclarée ou d'un objet à destination des Colonies et de l'Étranger

ADMINISTRATION des Postes et des Télégraphes

AVIS DE RÉCEPTION

d'une lettre assurée (valeur déclarée) { enregistrée sous le n° 269, et adressée à M. Jules Bourdon, à Bruxelles (Poste Rte) le 9 septembre 1887.

Le soussigné déclare { que la lettre assurée (valeur déclarée) { à l'adresse susmentionnée et provenant de Niort a été dûment livrée le 12-9 1887.

Signature: [Signature]

Timbre du bureau d'origine: [Stamp]

Timbre du bureau distributeur: [Stamp]

du destinataire: [Signature]

du Chef du bureau distributeur: [Signature]

* Cet avis doit être signé par le destinataire ou, si les règlements du pays de destination le permettent, par le chef du bureau distributeur, puis être mis sous enveloppe et renvoyé, sous recommandation, par le premier courrier.

A. Maussion, Brucellae, notaire Niort

Figure 5

This is an example of Form N° 287 that was used where an advice of receipt was required for a registered or insured letter sent abroad or to the French Colonies. In this case on 9 September 1887 an insured letter was sent from Niort to Brussels who delivered it on 12 September and returned the form on the same day to Niort. The same charge, 10c, was used on both inland and foreign mail



Figure 6.

An example of a Form N° 514 completed by the small *facteur boitier* sub-office of Neuve Grandchamp (Saône-et-Loire) on 13 May 1891 with a fine type 25 datestamp.

New instructions, to take effect from the 1 July 1892, followed the UPU Vienna 1891 Congress which gave the following guidelines in Article III of the *Règlement de détails et d'ordre* Section IX.

When the sender requires an advice of receipt the object must be marked very clearly *Avis de Réception* or by the imprint of a handstamp marked AR.

The advice of receipt must be created by the delivery (destination) office on the prescribed form and sent to the office of origin which shall forward it to the sender.⁴

Bulletin Mensuel N° 5 stressed the point that the form had to be completed by the delivery office, thus confirming this to be the case for both inland and foreign mails. The Instruction stated that when a sender required an advice of receipt he would make this request at the time of posting and would pay the fee required by means of postage stamps but this time affixed to the object in question. The letter had to be stamped with the newly created AR rectangular boxed mark with chamfered corners. The official ink colour was black but red is occasionally seen. In view of the fact that no advice form would accompany

the object to the delivery office the Instructions stressed the need for the office cancellation of the franking, on and alongside the postage stamps, to be clearly identifiable; the AR stamp also needed to be prominent. Where boxes and samples were concerned it was recommended that the office of origin actually wrote the name of their office on the object to ensure this clarity. Thus it is that the AR stamp constitutes the request for an advice of receipt and, at the same time, confirms receipt of the fee for this service.

The franking of the objet should therefore comprise: the postage, the registration fee, the AR fee and the cost of insurance where appropriate, all applied by means of postage stamps. On receipt of the object at the destination office and after delivery to the addressee the revised Form N° 514 would be completed and be returned to the office of origin who would forward it in a special envelope (Form N° 818 and later 819) under postal franchise.

Figures 7 to 9 illustrate the period from 1 July 1892 to 1 January 1899.

4 Author's précis and translation



Figure 7

The new system required the letter to be marked AR and the service fee to be added to the postal franking. However, the AR handstamps were not available at the time the new regulations came into force and the origin offices had to write clearly on the front of the cover '*Avis de réception*' as demonstrated across two of the stamps in this example dated 29 July 1892.



Figure 8.

An exceptional example of franking dated 12 November 1892 with a single 75c violet/orange Sage paying postage of 30c (2nd weight step, tariff of 1 May 1878) + Registration Fee 25c (Tariff of 16 January 1879) + Insurance Fee 10c (300 francs insured value, tariff 1 July 1892 at 10c per 500 francs) and AR fee of 10c. (Tariff of 1 May 1878).



Figure 9.

Registered letter with AR dated 1 October 1894 from Lourdes to Lourdes. Basic postage rate of 15c (Tariff of 1 May 1878) + Registration 25c (Tariff of 16 January 1879) + 10c AR fee (Tariff of 1 May 1878) = 50c. The cancellation is 'ART D'ARG / LOURDES'. These 'Articles d'Argent' date stamps were only used by a relatively small number of offices and their purpose was intended for use on financial products (i.e payment orders etc) but are sometimes seen used on ordinary and registered/insured mail.

This system did not prove to be perfect and a substantial number of complaints arose from senders who failed to receive the advice of delivery. The main reason for this was the poor quality of the postal cancellations, blotched, faint or smeared that made the details of the origin office illegible. This was particularly so as far as international mail was concerned and led to the matter being reviewed at the Postal Congress at Washington in 1897.

The *Règlement de détail et de l'ordre, para XIII* confirmed the decision taken that the UPU would return to the pre-1892 procedure whereby the office of origin would complete the AR form and the fee be attached to that. The details of this may be found in *Bulletin Mensuel* N° 13 of November 1898 pages 276-7 and these were followed up in *Bulletin Mensuel* N° 14 also of November 1898 (page 299 *et seq*) by *Instruction N° 499 'Avis de réception des objets chargés et recommandés (Service intérieur et international)'*. These instructions applied to both the inland and foreign ARs and confirmed that the system would revert to the system in place prior to 1 July 1892. This took effect from 1 January 1899 (Law of 8 April 1898). It required a revised AR Form N° 514 (Union B) and the AR fee, payable in stamps, had to be affixed to it. The object continued to be handstamped AR. The form was tied with string to the object and sent to the destination office. After delivery and completion of the form by the destination office it was mailed to the sender without registration in special envelope N° 819, (thus missing out the office of origin).

As mentioned above, a new AR Form N° 514 was introduced referred to as Union Form B. It was coloured rose, marked *raisin rose*, and on the front there was space for both the date stamp and the name of the office in a straight line

handstamp, the name and address of the sender and, for international mail, the signature of the recipient in countries that followed this practice. On the back would be the address and *département* of the office of destination and the AR fee represented by postage stamps.

There was some opposition to this because the sender received a confirmation from the office of destination to the effect that the letter had been delivered without any signed confirmation from the addressee that this was so. To add further to the complexity of all this, it was also possible for a sender to request an advice of receipt after the letter had been posted.

The procedure was the same with the despatch of Form N° 514 but the letter would not of course have been marked AR and the recipient would be unaware of that. The request for this service could be made either at the office of origin or a different office. Effectively the recipient was not involved and the sender had to rely on the good faith and efficiency of the distributing office. It is certainly an area where possible abuse could occur.

Finally, it was also possible to obtain an advice of receipt telegraphically in cases where both the origin and destination offices were on the telegraph network or within the limits of free distribution of the service. Form N° 514 was used with the word '*télégraphe*' expressed in red ink after the AR stamp. The cost of this service was 50c, payable in postage stamps affixed to the AR form.

The final illustrations (Figures 10-12) cover the period after 1 January 1899 when the postage stamps constituting the AR fee were attached to the advice form.



Figure 10
(See next page for more images)

N° 514.
(Raisin rose 165.)

RÉPUBLIQUE FRANÇAISE.

(Mod. B de l'Union.)

SOUS-SECRÉTARIAT D'ÉTAT
DES POSTES
ET DES TÉLÉGRAPHES.

AVIS DE RÉCEPTION

d'un *Lettre* { valeur déclarée } enregistré au bureau
recommandé k.

de *Niort* le *5 Mars 1901*, sous le n° *117*
et adressé à (inscription complète) *M. Granis, notaire*

à *Figeac (Lot)*
(rue et n° s'il y a lieu)

Timbre du bureau d'origine: *NIORT 15 MARS 01*

Nom et adresse de l'expéditeur (A). *M. Labrousse-Bordenave*
à *Niort - Rue du Quatre Septembre*
(rue et n° s'il y a lieu.)

Le soussigné déclare que l' *LR* { valeur déclarée } à l'adresse
susmentionnée a été dûment livré le du destinataire: *Niort*

Signé: *Granis*

(1) Nature de l'objet (lettre, boîte, échantillon, etc.). — (2) G et n° d'inscription au registre de dépôt. — (3) Dans les offices du chef du bureau distributeur est remplacée par celle du premier courrier:
Dans le régime intérieur: Sous enveloppe n° 819 comme correspondance ordinaire.
Dans le régime international: Sous enveloppe n° 289 recommandée d'office.
(4) Dans le régime international le nom et l'adresse d'entrée de la formule n° 514 au bureau d'origine.

Figure 10

An example of the complete documentation of a letter sent registered from Niort to Figeac dated 5 March 1901. The advice Form N° 514 (*raisin rose*) is completed at Niort and the sender retains the receipt. Niort sends it to Figeac, franking it at 10c. Once the letter has been delivered by Figeac the Form N° 514 is returned to the sender in the special envelope (N° 819) without it being registered. The AR cachet has been applied to the front of the envelope in error and deleted.

N° 819. POSTES ET TÉLÉGRAPHES. 130-145 A-1000

ENVOI D'UN AVIS DE RÉCEPTION N° 514.

Monsieur Labrousse-Bordenave
Rue du Quatre Septembre
Niort

Granis

Stamp: *FIGEAC 15 MARS 01*



Figure 11

In this example an administration error has been made. A registered letter with AR dated 20 June 1899 has been sent from Mouilleron-en-Pareds (Vendée). This small, class 3, office was obviously not aware of the change in procedure and continued to place the stamps for the AR fee on the letter instead of on the form.



Figure 12

It was also possible to get an advice of receipt of a letter sent '*sous franchise*' or post free. In this example dated 25 June 1900, the franchise is that of the President of the *Cour des Comptes* authenticated by the '3 PARIS 3 / CONTRE-SEINGS' date stamp and their pink registration label.

These labels were introduced on 16 February 1900 for use on *Objets à prix réduits* (OPR) – reduced price objects such as printed matter, journals etc, on mail sent under franchise and on mail that the Post Office deemed to require registration, without charge to the sender (*chargement d'office*).

Summary of AR Forms⁵

- Form 103 (1A)** 1859-1883.
1 page folded into 4. Natural / straw colour. For '*chargements*' only.
- Form 103 (1B)** 1873 -1893
1 page folded into 4. Colour pale rose. '*Recommandé*' and '*Chargement*'
- Form 514 (Ancien 103)** Different styles (minor differences in wording and presentation)
2A, 2B and 2C. 1884-1898 (Date of issue 1885?)
1 page folded into 4. Marked '*Ecu Rose*'. Half retained by destination office.
2D, large format. Single page. No fold.
- Form 514.** Union A April 1892 -1920.
Marked "*Ecu + référence N°*". Single page. Colour natural / straw and later rose.
Sent in special envelopes 818 and later 819.
- Form 514** Union B 1899-1920
Marked '*Raisin rose*' 1 page, rose coloured. Address of destination office on back.
Fee on back.

This article is designed as an introduction to the way in which this service worked and those requiring further detailed information with regard to the wide variety of official stationery involved should consult the two articles written jointly by Messrs Sambourg and Mathieu in '*Feuilles Marcophiles*' (Journal of the *Union Marcophile*) N° 226 3rd quarter 1981 page 15 *et seq* and N° 229 2nd quarter 1982 page 28 *et seq* and, more recently, '*Timbres – Avis de Réception*' by Messrs Guillard and Abensur, '*Feuilles Marcophiles*' N° 354 (3rd quarter 2013) page 32 *et seq* and N° 355 (4th quarter 2013) page 33 *et seq*.

The 30 centimes orange Cameo Sower —a not inconsequential stamp

Stan Luft

The 30 centimes orange was never meant to have a major role or use which is why it was printed in orange, a rather casual stamp colour for the time.

It was printed by the currently used flat-plate method, cut into post-office counter sheets of 150 stamps and issued on 25 May 1907, replacing the far more attractive 30 centimes violet Lined Sower of 1903. All the orange stamps were printed from the same die type, called Type 1. A rather pleasant deep orange shade appeared in the summer of 1907, only to return to the more familiar lighter shades of orange, presumably in order to save printing ink.

But the Great War came in 1914 and, by 1916, the 'normal' paper was replaced by poor quality grayish to yellowish paper known as *Papier de Grande Consommation*, better

known as GC paper from the initials printed on the sheet margins. Use of normal paper resumed in post-war 1920 and continued until the stamp was, in turn, replaced by the 30 centimes red Cameo Sower (in UPU red) in January 1922. A limited quantity were printed on high quality white paper, originally destined for use in the printing of some booklet stamps. This experimental pregummed 'X' paper proved to be too expensive when purchased for printing booklets in 1912 and leftover stocks were used in 1916 for the 30 centimes orange and presumably other values. Mint copies can be recognised by their white paper colour and striated gum. You might be lucky to find one. Imperforates exist, on normal and on 'X' paper.

Stamps are printed to serve a purpose. Here are the principal usages of the 30c Sower orange.

Domestic Tariff of 1 April 1898	International Tariff of 1 October 1907
Registered Business Papers with annotations	Frontier letter rate* to Belgium and Switzerland, 30 to 45 grams
Domestic Tariff of 16 April 1906	Frontier letter rate* to Spain, 15 to 30 grams
Letter rate, 30 to 45 grams	International Tariff of 10 May 1910
Paris Pneumatic letter rate, up to 7 grams, and letter-card rate	Letter rate to Luxembourg, 40 to 60 grams
Domestic Tariff of 1 May 1910	Frontier letter rate* to Belgium and Switzerland, 40 to 60 grams
Letter rate, 150 to 200 grams	Frontier letter rate to Spain, 20 to 40 grams
Registered Merchant's Samples rate, 150-200 grams	International Tariff of 8 February 1917
Domestic Tariff of 1 January 1917	Frontier letter rate* to Belgium and Switzerland, 20 to 40 grams
Letter rate, 50 to 100 grams	International Tariff of 1 April 1921
Debt Collection (<i>Valeurs à recouvrer</i>)	Printed matter rate, 100-150 grams
Domestic Tariff of 1 April 1920	Postcard rate (maximum 5 words of text)
Printed matter rate, 100 to 200 grams	
Domestic Tariff of 1 October 1921	Special Alsace-Lorraine Rate 15 December 1918
Registered Printed Matter (inc. <i>Retraités</i>)	Registered Local Letter rate
*Distance measured between offices less than 30 km apart in a straight line,	

Readers might think by now that the 30 centimes orange is a dull subject, unworthy of specialisation, or even of collecting. So I shall now bring forth extracts from my specialised Gold Medal award exhibit of the 30 centimes

Cameo Sowers. They will show paper, gum and printing varieties, perforation errors and unusual covers to show how much variety one can find and exhibit (Figures 1-22).



Figure 1
Imperforate sheet-margin copy;
also known to exist on 'papier X'.



Figure 2
Upper-left corner imperforate block of 4



Figure 3
Recto-verso printing



Figure 4
Lower left block reprint on bristol card stock with
simulated perforations (enlarged detail right) from a
single block of 25 printed in 1907.



Figure 6
Gutter block on experimental 'X' paper
with diagonally striated gum (enlarged detail right);
cross in bottom selva is for positioning perforating machine.



Figure 5 (below)

Lower-left sheet marginal block of 10 on GC paper:

P 2602 12 code records press operator **P**, printing date of **26 February** and Press N° **12**.



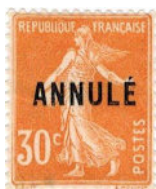


Figure 7
1911 ANNULÉ overprint for
use in training schools for
postal employees¹



Figure 8
Double horizontal
perforations



Figure 9
Major vertical
perforation shift



Figure 10
Pre-perforation paper fold

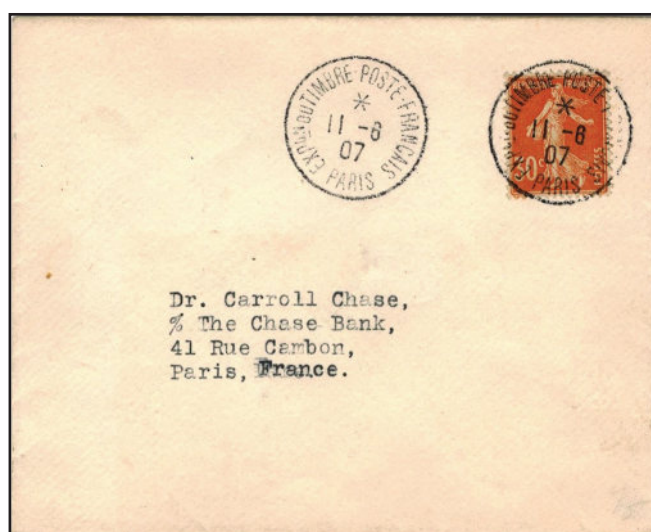


Figure 11
Very early use (11 June 1907) on a letter cancelled at the Paris Exhibition of French Postage Stamps,
to the future eminent philatelist, possibly mailed to himself.



Figure 12
Pneumatic letter cancelled 1 December 1911
from Paris 37 at 19^h45 reaching Paris 8 at 20^h15 (cnds on reverse)
ie. 30 minutes transmission time.

¹ Unlike the POSTES PARIS 1921 and the POSTES FRANCE 1921 overprints (see Figures 23 and 24) the ANNULÉ is not expensive enough to attract counterfeits



Figure 13

Letter of 22 November 1912 with experimental Chambon 'continuous' machine cancel: rare on what was then a high value.



Figure 14

Label attached to registered merchant's samples without declared value, cancelled Saumur 23 July 1913.
20c postage (150-200 grams) + 10c reduced registration fee = 30c.

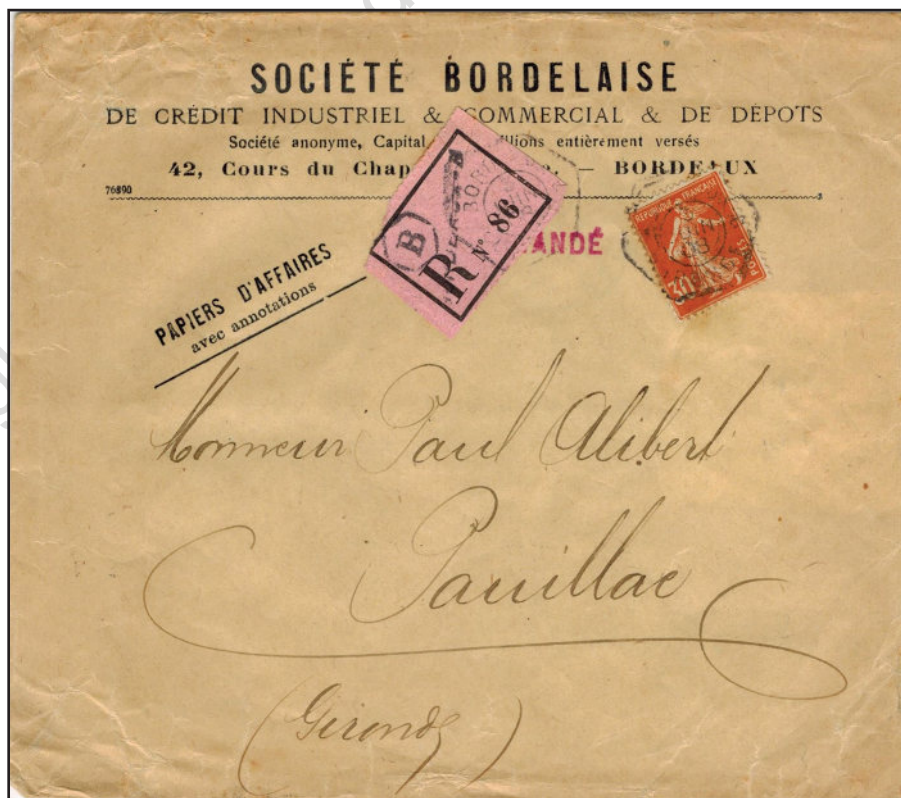


Figure 15.

3 June 1908 registered business papers with annotations, 50-100 grams, from Paris urban auxiliary bureau.
10c Business papers postage + 10c printed matter registration fee + 10c annotations fee = 30c.

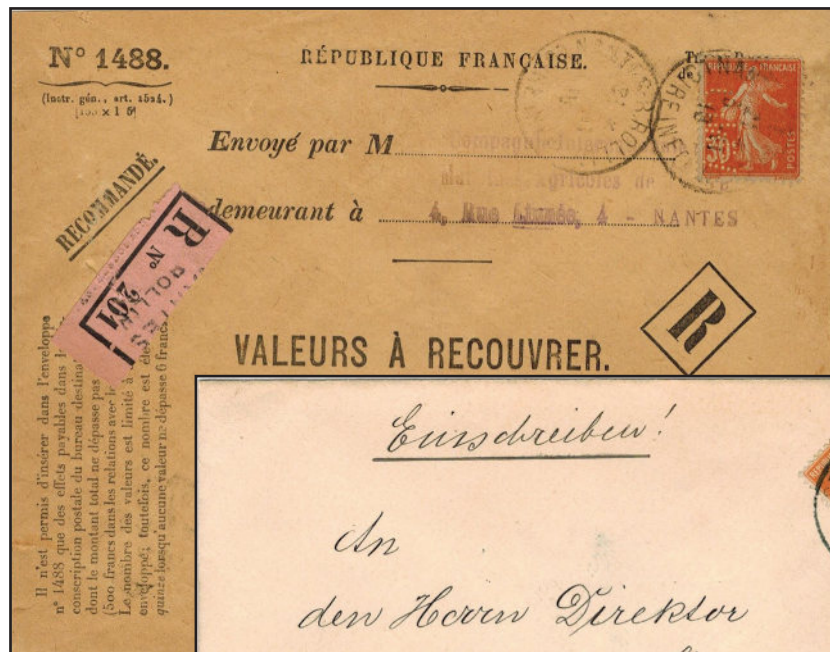


Figure 16
30c with CIMA perfin.
cancelled Nantes 3 November 1918
on registered Debt Collection envelope.
15c postage + 15c reduced Valeurs à
recouvrer registration fee = 30c.



Figure 17
Strasbourg 1
provisional date stamp
(dumb at bottom)
dated 10 March 1919.
A seldom seen
30c registered local letter
at the special reduced tariff
for recuperated
Alsace-Lorraine in effect
from December 1918
to July 1919.

MINISTÈRE DU TRAVAIL. RETRAITES OUVRIÈRES ET PAYSANNES.

INDICATION EN CAS de non distribution

Timbre à date au départ.

30c

RECEVU EN BRESSE N° 416

CARTE ANNUELLE D'ASSURÉ OBLIGATOIRE

de M. *Gurand Louis Anthelme*
(Nom et prénoms de l'assuré)

Adresse : *Cerdon*

DATE DE LA DÉLIVRANCE DE LA CARTE : 1^{er} 1923

Signature du Maire,

DATE DE L'ÉCHANGE DE LA CARTE : 1^{er} 1924

Signature du Maire ou timbre à date de la poste.

01-02-23 31.01.24

Carte valable du 1^{er} *Février 1923* à la fin du mois de *Janvier 1924*
à échanger dans la première quinzaine du mois suivant.

NUMÉRO D'ORDRE de l'assuré : *16* SÉRIE. *829918* NUMÉRO.

Date de naissance : *18 Janvier 1901*

Lieu de naissance : *Cerdon*

Nationalité : *FR.*

Caisse d'assurance : *C.N.R.V.*

Mention éventuelle de réserve du capital

Les timbres-retraite doivent être collés à l'intérieur dans les emplacements réservés.

AVIS IMPORTANT.

Tout assuré qui n'échange pas sa carte à la date indiquée ci-dessus risque :

1^{er} De subir une diminution sensible de la rente provenant de ses versements et de ceux de son patron ;

2^o De perdre tout ou partie de l'allocation que l'État ajoute à sa pension ;

3^o De faire perdre à sa femme et à ses enfants l'allocation au décès (150' à 300').

Figure 18.
Worker's pension card
for recording annual pension payments
dated 2 February 1923
sent at registered printed matter rate.
15c postage + 15c reduced registration fee = 30c.

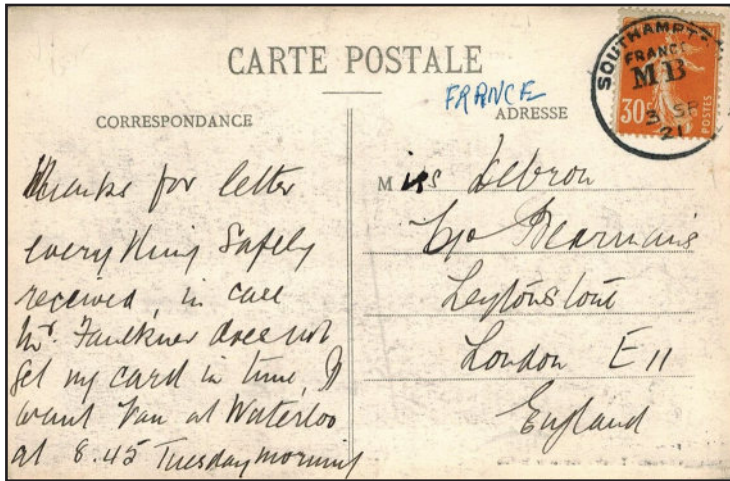


Figure 19.
Postcard stamped SOUTHAMPTON MB,
posted at sea
3 September 1921.



Figure 20
19 April 1922 registered special-delivery
(EXPRESS) letter:
50c letter rate + 35c registration fee
+ 1F exprès fee = correct 1F85 postage.



Figure 21.
30c Pneumatic Post envelope cancelled 14 March 1911,
Paris 120 to Paris 02, with 30c adhesive
to pay the return receipt (accuser réception) fee.



Figure 22
Correctly franked 2F15 registered letter
with strip of five 30c plus a pair,
all with horizontal and vertical perforation shift and
four Return to Sender markings.
The cover is dated 24 June 1938
and is a late usage contrived cover
but still an exhibition showpiece,
as long as one indicates its relevance.

We may return now to lowly printed matter and to the falsification of the 30c Sower.

Some remainder sheets on GC and normal papers were precancelled POSTES PARIS 1921 and POSTES FRANCE 1921 on flat-bed presses in 1920 for posting bulk printed matter from Paris and the provinces, and were issued 1 January 1921 for use only that year. POSTES PARIS precancels are scarce, and rather

rare on cover (Figure 23). POSTES FRANCE 1921 precancels (Figure 24) are rarer still. Counterfeits are rampant and outnumber the genuine article, ranging from easily spotted to very dangerous. Expertisations are recommended and Geoff Gethin's book² is a very valuable guide through this jungle.

² *Fakes and Forgeries of 20th Century French Postage Stamps*, R G Gethin, F&CPS (GB), 2006

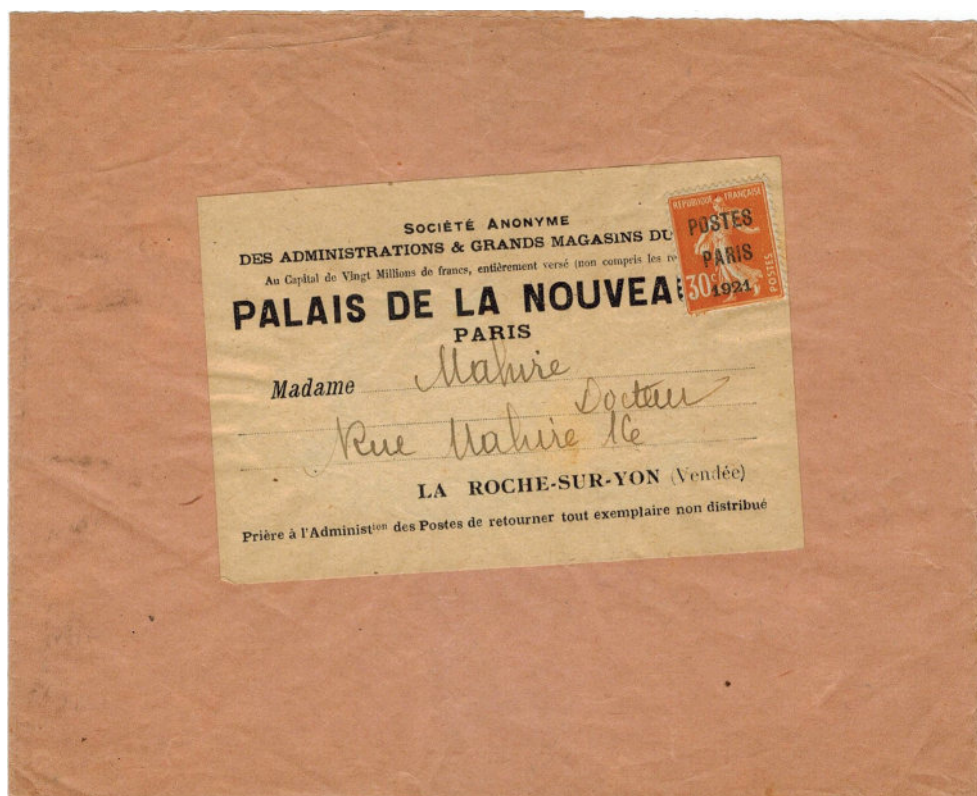


Figure 23
1921 wrapper from Paris to La Roche-sur-Yon with 30c Sower precancelled POSTES PARIS 1921 paying 100-200 grams pre-sorted bulk mailing printed matter rate.



Figure 24
30c Sower precancelled POSTES FRANCE 1921
Issued 1 October 1921

Now, isn't that 30 centimes orange Cameo Sower whetting your appetite and worth a try at collecting other than the single (used) stamp in the old album you may still have?

Selected Bibliography

Fakes and Forgeries of 20th Century French Postage Stamps, R G Gethin, F&CPS (GB), 2006

The Sower, A Common Little French Stamp, Ashley Lawrence, F&CPS (GB), 2012.

Regular Issues of France 1876-1945 According to their Normal Postal Usage, S J Luft, FCPS (USA), 1974

Tables of French Postal Rates 1849 to 2011, Derek Richardson, F&CPS (GB), 2011(Footnotes)

Urgent Payments

(*Virements accélérés or chèques postaux accélérés*)

Edwin Voerman

The work domain of the post office has always been much broader than just organising and performing the postal services.

In the field of activity of the French postal organisation the finance aspect has played a big part since 1759 with the introduction of the *chargé* service (insured mail) and, from 1817, the issue of *mandats* (postal money orders). Over the course of the 19th century collecting financial claims, the *Service des recouvrements* (Debt Collection) in 1879, also gained prominence. In 1881, the first postal savings bank was founded and shortly after the First World War, on 7 January 1918, the *Compte Courant Postal* (Post Office Current Account) also started to provide banking services with the development of the chequing and the deposit payments system.

The Post Office bank

As of 1971, the CCP expanded its services to increase the

speed of executing payment orders. In banking terms, these urgent payments even received their own vocabulary reference; in Dutch they became known as *spoedjes* and in English *giros*. With these transfers, the payment was debited and credited on the same day provided both debtor and creditor used the same processing centre. The client would receive proof of payment from the order service with which he could prove to his creditor that the payment had been completed.

There have always been a multitude of reasons to urgently process substantial payments. When the interest rates were still favourable to clients, it was preferable to retain money in the bank as long as possible to generate interest, while conceding additional processing costs for an urgent payment as a consequence. There were substantial fees involved in direct payments as businesses and individuals could process large transactions.

Fees

Date	Fee per 10.000F or part of this amount in francs	Maximum amount to be charged in francs
4 January 1971	4	16
15 May 1978	5	20
1 August 1980	5,50	22
17 January 1983	6	24
2 July 1984	6,30	25,20
1 August 1985	6,60	26,40
1 August 1987	7,60	30,40
16 August 1988	7,80	31,20
1 February 1990	8	32
19 August 1991	9,20	36,80

Figure 1

Naturally, the CCP charged a fee for this kind of special service. This was a so-called '*ad valorem*' tariff, which increased according to the amount of the transaction. Such a tariff could be expressed as a percentage, but it could also apply to a fixed amount per monetary unit. Provision

was maximised to prevent unreasonably large fees for substantial transactions. As there was no additional effort involved to process a transfer of a hundred thousand or a million francs, a maximum fee capped the tariffs although it was subject to change from time to time (Figure 1).

Date of <i>BO</i> issue	Same centre fee in francs	Different centres fee in francs
10 August 1992	50	100
1 August 1993	50	100
1 August 1998	50	100

Figure 2
Extracts from the *Bulletin Officiel des PTT*¹

Until 1992 the tariff tables were divided in steps limited by a maximum but as from 1992 the tariff steps were abandoned and there was only a fixed amount for these kind of payments - a 50 francs fee for payments to and from accounts held in the same financial centre and a 100 francs fee for payments to and from accounts held in different financial centres (Figure 2). On 1 August 1993 the name of the service changed from '*Virements Accélérés*' to '*Virements Urgents*'.

You can still easily find the '*Virements Accélérés*' forms with stamps fixed on them as a proof of payment dated before 1981. After 1981 I have not seen any yet. This can mean two things: either 1) they were still being used, but have not appeared on the philatelic market or 2) the system of fixing stamps on the form was replaced by some kind of payment in cash to simplify the operation².

Airmail stamps

For us philatelists it is a welcome circumstance that the urgent transfer fee was due in stamps; at the same time we acknowledge the fact that it was not the intention of the PTT for these items to reach the collectors' market. Fortunately

for philatelists, such items have become available; the non-postal usage of stamps is always intriguing. As there was insufficient room for the stamps on the front of the transfer demand, they always had to be affixed to the reverse (Figures 3 to 6). Airmail stamps are invariably found and sometimes complemented with smaller values. Airmail stamps had nothing to do with the urgent payments service but their usage resulted from a decision taken in 1945 to issue all high denominations as airmail stamps. This seems to be an understandable decision. Being calculated on the weight and distance to the final destination the scale of airmail tariffs can increase quite rapidly thereby demanding high denominations. Various causes can be identified to explain the poor availability of airmail letters bearing the highest of values. In contrast, we find these types of airmail stamps on non-airmail items such as order forms for holding and forwarding mail, new issue subscription cards (up to 1956), *poste restante* permits, heavy parcel labels and, of course, on *chèques postaux accélérés*.

The system of urgent payments has eventually been superseded in modern times by the introduction of internet banking. The last known tariffs date from 1998.



Figure 3

The reverse of an urgent transfer demand for 780,000 francs on 22 February 1977.

The fee amounted to 4 francs for every 10,000 with a maximum of 16 francs.

A 15 francs airmail stamp (see Figure 6) was not issued until 1973 so the amount due could not be paid with fewer than three stamps.

The fee is made up of the 5 francs *Daurat et Vanier* (Y&T PA 46), the 10 francs *Boucher et Hilsz* (Y&T PA 47) and the 1 franc *Marianne de Bequet* (Y&T 189).

1 I thank Monsieur Pierre-Hemri Cotte from France for his additional information concerning the period 1988-1998.

2 Both suggestions still have to be examined. Maybe one of our readers of this article can contribute to the last chapter in the life of the '*Virements Urgents*' service.

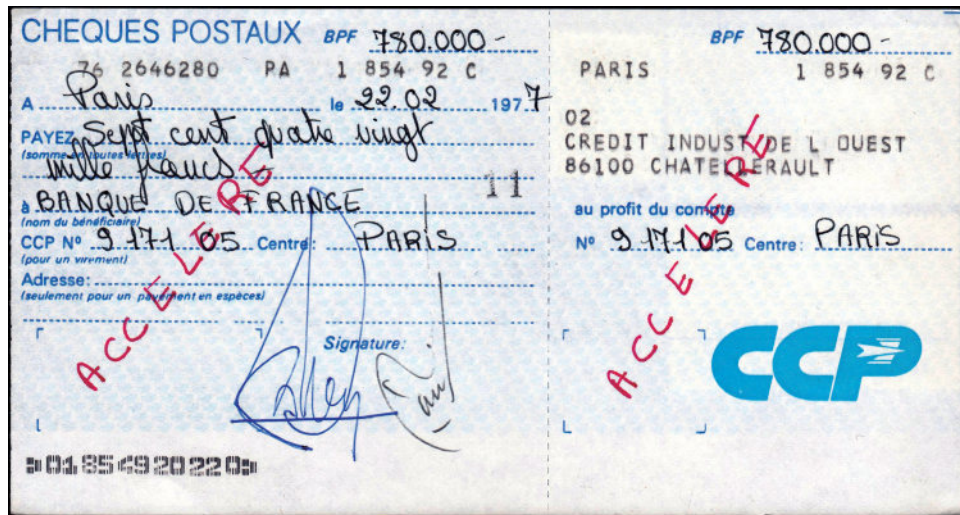


Figure 4

The front of the same urgent payment demand of 22 February 1977.
One can see that the word 'Accélééré' has been written in red ink



Figure 5

The reverse of an urgent payment demand for an amount of 400,000 francs on 13 July 1978.
The fee amounted to 5 francs for every 10,000 francs, with a maximum of 20 francs.
The maximum amount was paid by means of the 20 francs *J. Mermoz et A. de Saint-Exupéry* (Y&T PA 44).
At that time, this was the only way to settle the payment with a single stamp.

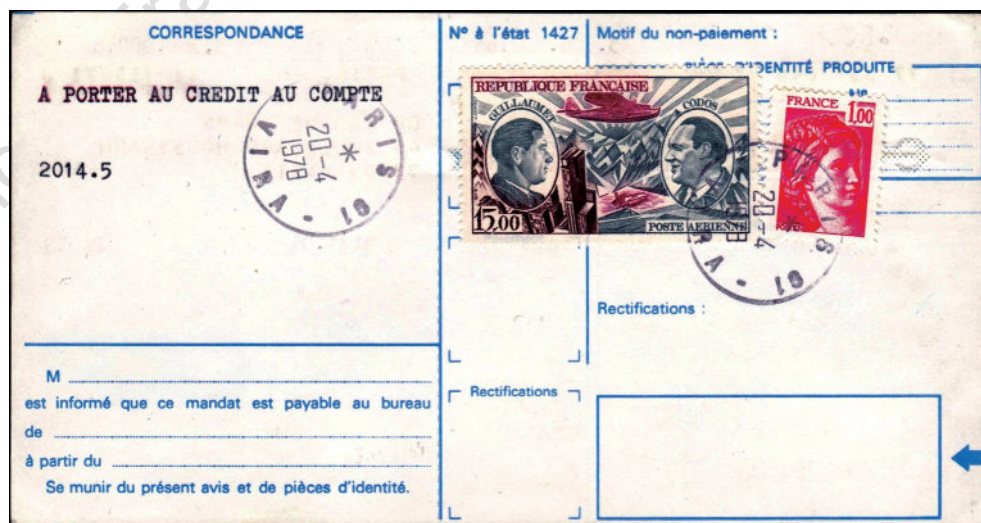


Figure 6

The reverse of an urgent payment demand for 3,500,000 francs on 20 April 1978.
The fee amounted to 4 francs for every 10,000 francs with a maximum of 16 francs.
The fee was paid with a 15 francs *Guillaumet et Codos* (Y&T PA 48) and a 1 franc *Sabine* (Y&T1972).

REPORTS OF MEETINGS

WESSEX GROUP MEETING OF 11 FEBRUARY 2017

Steve Ellis: Marseille Maritime Mail

The spring meeting of the Wessex Group took place at Harnham, Salisbury on 11 February and was attended by twelve members and two guests.

Our invited display was given by **Steve Ellis** who showed Mediterranean mail out of Marseille. Starting with an outline of the history and the development of shipping from France's major port we were shown early contract mail and commercial non-contract mail, particularly from Italian shipping companies. The contract mails were shown in a series of logical sections with examples of the origin and destination marks and '*ligne de*' and '*bateaux à vapeur*' cancellations. Importance was given to the foreign services such as P & O, Spanish companies and the Admiralty packets that used the port. The display ended with a selection of material post-1900 dealing with communications with North Africa.

After our usual lunch at the Old Mill the following members gave displays as follows:

Ingrid Swinburn - examples of Revolutionary mail.

John Scott - fine engraved commercial stationery illustrating

products, medals and petitions.

Claire Scott - a selection of advice of death stationery and eulogies with reference to the size of black borders.

Chris Hitchen - French exhibitions in Paris 1852-1900.

Jeremy Martin - World War I miscellany.

Tony Howgrave-Graham - a fine selection of different issues of classics from the colonies with interesting rates, routes and destinations.

Peter Lawrence - interesting queries about *bureaux auxiliaires* and a Sower variety.

Len Yandell - material relating to Mont St Michel.

Alan Wood - interesting material post-Siege of Paris in 1871, censorship of mail leaving Paris at Versailles and distinguishing marks applied to the backs of letters.

Also present were **Peter Kelly** and **John Foscett** with non-members **Tony Swinburn** and **Joyce Foscett** making a total of 14.

PRAK/AJW

NORTHERN GROUP MEETING OF 25 MARCH 2017 AT ROTHERHAM

The Northern Group day meeting was held in Rotherham on 25 March and was attended by nine members and four guests. An excellent occasion was enhanced with some fine displays from the following:

John Morton - Pre-1806 mail showing early markings, routings and rates

Peter Maybury - Tunisia pre-1900

Paul Watkins - Anglo-French mail, both early cross-

Channel and 1920/30s airmail

Alan Goude - New Hebrides, 1905-53

Stephen Holder - Foreign post offices of Syria, including Turkish, Austrian and British, plus maritime mail and French stamps used in Syria

Trevor Smith - Exhibition mail

Steve Ellis - *Affranchissement Insuffisant*: underpaid mail from 1849

SRE

41st ANNUAL PHILATELIC WEEKEND 10-12 MARCH 2017

32 members and 15 guests attended the Society's Annual Weekend at the Charlecote Pheasant Hotel near Stratford-upon-Avon.

Friday

A Committee Meeting was held in the afternoon, and after dinner (which was accompanied by wine generously donated by **Ashley Lawrence**) the proceedings were opened by **Peter Kelly**. Before the evening's displays the attendance stood for a minute's silence in memory of member **Iain Stevenson** who had died earlier in the month.

Claire Scott began with a fascinating display of stationery relating to death. Items included funeral directors' invoices, yellow fever and mourning stationery, death certificates, mourning wafers and black wax seals.

David Hogarth gave a short display on the pre-World War I links between France and Russia with covers and cards commemorating the State and naval visits between the countries in the 1890s.

Mick Bister gave a display of the 25c Visiting Card rate of 1920-25 which had been overlooked by authors of books on rates. Mick showed extracts from the *Bulletins des PTT* of the period to prove the rate's existence. (See article 'The 25c Visiting Card Rate from 1 April 1920 to 15 July 1925' on Pp 34-44)

Peter Maybury followed with a display of *paquebot* mail and other correspondence related to the Canal du Midi. One fascinating item was a 1783 letter from a postmaster to the canal director expressing concerns about children seen swimming in the canal.

Finally, **Steve Ellis** closed the evening with a colourful display of cards, vignettes, stamps and *blocs* related to philatelic exhibitions between 1924 and 1943.

Saturday

Saturday morning began with the traditional President's Display given by **Steve Ellis** and this year's was entitled 'Insufficiently paid, cross-border and Marseille maritime mail'.

The display was presented in three parts, two of which, he explained, were new areas of study for him. The French postal authorities often had to deal with mail insufficiently paid by the sender (often marked '*Affranchissement insuffisant*') and the display examined the reasons for the underpayment, the charges levied, the cachets initially applied (or not) and the use of '*chiffre-taxe*' postage due stamps, after 1849, with the introduction of French adhesives. Included were examples of both domestic and foreign mail, examples of fraudulent use, plus several examples of cachets applied which had not been previously recorded. His second display covered the different types of cachets of payment markings applied to cross-border mail, indicating whether letters had been pre-paid to the

destination or only as far as the border or frontier. The third examined in detail the carriage of mail between Marseille and the Italian coastal ports upon non-contract, regular commercial services operated by both French and Italian shipping companies with examples of various cachets and entry marks applied to such mail by both the postal authorities and the companies or their agents.

After a period of viewing, **Mick Bister** took over with his display of the '1F75 State Visit issue of 1938'. The study was in two parts beginning with the printing of the stamp itself. Proofs at various stages were shown followed by examples of both printings and the means of identifying them. Mick then explained how, as a result of a postponement of the state visit, documents and souvenirs had to be amended with the new dates although the stamps and postal stationery were left unchanged in order not to spoil the designs.

Jérôme Castenet then followed with a study of the 'Franking and taxation of postcards in international mail'. Jérôme defined the postcard as a reduced tariff item which carries a message but is not enclosed in an envelope. This definition has changed with the times. In France, the history of the postcard starts with the 1870 war. Made of cardboard measuring 11 x 7cm and weighing a maximum of 3 grams it is rarely encountered. It did not benefit from a reduced tariff when sent overseas; it was therefore categorised as a letter. The so-called formula postcard was issued on 15 January 1873. France did not sign any bilateral postal agreement with regards to a reduced tariff until the application of the Treaty of the *Union Générale des Postes* on 1 January 1876. In many respects it was a precursory treaty and particularly so because it did not stipulate the precise conditions by which the postcard could benefit from the '*carte-correspondance*' tariff, the official term of the UGP treaty. The treaty of the Universal Postal Union of 1 April 1879 rectified this omission but the definition of a postcard did not fully evolve until 1907 after the arrival of the illustrated postcards at the end of the nineteenth century. Monetary instability after the First World War and the arrival of airmail necessitated the modification and completion of the UPU regulations from April 1921.

Paul Watkins concluded the first half of the morning session with his presentation of 'GB Late Mail to France'. The display illustrated the handling of 'late' letters from the UK to France between 1840 and 1914, showing how London businesses adopted the payment of additional 'late' fees on their correspondence to the Continent as it suited their business practices of working late office hours. Items shown included mail with the scarce 6d fee, a variety of handstamps including the rare boxed 'L4' and a group of covers posted at London railway stations for the Continental Night Mail. Whereas UK businesses adopted the 'Late' system as routine practice, the French equivalent of the *levée exceptionnelle* was not used in the same way and examples of its use are far less often found.



Paul Watkins enthralled members
with his display of GB late mail to France

After a break for viewing and coffee, **Chris Hitchen** gave a display on the 'Postal services in Paris 1900 to 1914' during which a lot of changes took place. Postal rates were revised in 1906 and 1907 to give France probably its lowest postal rates. Of note were wrappers on printed matter sent by publishers at the last minute with stamps affixed but cancelled by themselves. 1911 saw the beginning of specific reduced rates for mail for the blind and advice of pensions contributions. Pneumatic mail posted to the provinces with extra postage, cash on delivery items, labels that had been attached to sample packets and insured and express items both inland and abroad were all included. 1909 suffered from serious postal strikes and a letter sent by the Chambers of Commerce to maintain commercial services was shown. Postcards of the 1910 floods, post offices of the time, postcards organised by *Le Matin* newspaper on 19 June 1909 for a Children's event and the apparatus to automatically register letters finished the display.

Robert Abensur followed with his display on 'The postal convention of 1817 between the kingdoms of France and Sardinia in force between 1 January 1818 and 31 December 1838'. The Kingdom of Sardinia (Savoy, Piedmont and the island of Sardinia) was restored in 1814 and enlarged in 1815 by the addition of the former Republic of Genoa. During this period unpaid letters are exchanged through the 'rayons' or zones system according to its geographical origin. French territory is divided into five 'rayons' (handstamped from CF1R to CF5R in accordance with the distance from the border) and the Sardinian territory in three (handstamped from CS1R to CS3R). The charge to be paid by the addressee is the sum of a foreign fee according to the 'rayon' and an internal rate according to the internal tariffs. Prepaid letters are charged the sum of the internal rates of each country. Mail passing through the two countries was also studied with usage of the TF ('*Transit Français*') and TS ('*Transit Sarde*') handstamps. The majority of mail between the southern Italian States (Tuscany, the Vatican States, the two Sicilies) to or from France and the Iberian peninsula (Spain, Portugal, Gibraltar) was exchanged through the 1817 Convention. However, only a proportion of letters from Southern

Austria, the duchies of Parma and Modena and the Ionian islands was exchanged through the Franco-Sardinian route with France, United Kingdom, the Netherlands and Belgium. The Convention also had provisions for letters from or to overseas territories via France (such as American and Mediterranean countries).

Peter Maybury then stepped forward to give his display of 'Corsica Maritime Mail 1836-1914'. Peter explained that the study of these services would fall into four distinct parts. The first period was from 1836 to July 1850 when the lines from Toulon to Bastia and Ajaccio were operated by *Gérard et Cie* with the vessels '*le Var*', '*le Liamone*' and '*le Golo*' maintaining a twice weekly service alternating between the two Corsican ports. Then August 1843 saw the services taken over by the Marseille based, state owned, *Paquebots de l'Administration des Postes* which augmented its four vessels with three *avisos* seconded from the French Navy. However in 1850, much to the disgust of the good folk of Corsica and Toulon the concession was not renewed. For the period 1 July 1850 to circa 1879/1880 the postal service was awarded to the *Compagnie Valéry Frères* of Bastia with authorisation to install movable boxes onboard their vessels, thus heralding the introduction of the *Bateau à Vapeur* circular date stamp. January 1880 saw the introduction of the *Ligne de....* date stamps and in 1912 an octagonal date stamp for the Bastia-Marseille service, with the *Cie. Fraissinet* operating the services out of Marseille. The final section looked at the lines to or from North Africa, Livorno, and from 1 August 1853, Porto-Torres on the island of Sardinia, plus the use of a BM mark on mail carried by the Fraissinet service from the island to Nice.

Finally **Peter Kelly** closed the morning session with his display entitled 'The Precursor postcards of France 1873-1878'. The first two official postcards introduced in 1873 were designed separately to cover local and territorial use and had to be sold with postage stamps affixed. These were replaced in January 1876 by a single card designed to cover both categories of mail. These were replaced in June and August 1878 by larger cards with impressed *type Sage* 10c and 15c stamps, the latter for overseas use. Privately printed cards were permitted in October 1875 and these could be freely designed and coloured but the details on the front had to mirror those permitted by the *Administration*. The commercial advantages of all these cards was explained and how, over the years, the Post Office gradually bowed to commercial demands with the acceptance of labels and eventually advertising on the fronts. The display finished with examples of taxation of cards, irregularly franked, insufficiently paid or unpaid.

After lunch, **Stephen Holder** showed a selection of his postal history of Syria and opened the short talk with a comment that too much French material was shown at the F&CPS meetings and he was therefore going to break the mould by showing material from other countries! He showed six frames of chosen material from the foreign post offices in Syria starting with the Turkish Province (the earliest

cover shown being dated 1486 which he presumed was the oldest cover being shown that weekend). Then followed attractive ranges from the German, Austrian, British and Russian offices in the area, closing for good measure with a small group of covers from the French offices. On being challenged by there being no stamps, just covers, he produced selected pages of classic stamps of France used in the various offices of Syria and Lebanon.

Jeremy Martin followed Stephen with a display of aspects of World War II. Jeremy began with the phoney war which included a cover dated April 1940 from a soldier who had escaped from Poland and was undergoing training at the *Camp de Versailles* (see image on front cover). Upon arriving in England from the evacuation at Dunkirk, survivors were given post-free cards to send messages home advising their safe arrival. One intriguing card was from a French soldier who posted his card from Tonbridge to Boulogne-Billancourt. The remainder of the display covered the German Occupation and the D-Day landings.

David Parmley was next with a display entitled 'Tunisian Miscellany'. This material was acquired by accident as it comprised about half of a lot described as "French Morocco – 105 covers". However he thought the varied content made it of interest for display. The first item was an 1870 letter, written in Italian, to Marseille followed by a selection of postal stationery mint and used including an item from a Tunisian stamp dealer in Sfax and registered items. Plain and picture postcards including taxed items were shown including one which had seen more of France than Judith Chalmers directed variously to Nice, Lyon, Paris and Le Touquet. Censored items followed from the Great War and Second World War to romantic addresses – Craiova, Calcutta, Lausanne, Brussels and Hampstead!

Next came registered, *paquebot* and airmail items together with some post-independence material including taxed covers to the BBC. Finally we saw a lawyer's bill with a couple of fiscals – only 2800 Francs so a trivial matter – and two postal orders of which one was payable to Henri Schoeller, the local agent for *Les Piscines du Petit Bois*.

After tea and refreshments **Colin Spong** stepped forward to give two displays on Madagascar - one of his own material and a second on behalf of the South Africa collector and friend Joh Groenewald.

Colin's display was entitled 'Madagascar - the *France Libre* surcharges'. After the handing over to the Free French authorities and the arrival of General Le Gentilhomme as High Commissioner on 8 January 1943, to celebrate the occasion General Le Gentilhomme authorised by a Decree of 19 January 1943 that all stocks of stamps – postage, air and tax - in store or post offices must be surcharged FRANCE LIBRE. The result was that definitive stamps as far back as the 1922-39 and 1930-42 series as well as some commemorative issues were surcharged in three different types – single, two and three line. The display showed mint and used stamps, in singles, blocks and sheets with varieties, and some on cover. Colin confessed that this fascinating study of the period has also some

'shady' connections! In 1943 a plane on a flight to London allegedly landed in Algiers and was destroyed by fire with all its surcharged stamps. Later in 1944 (27 November) the Governor General Pierre de Sant-Mart's own plane with more of the surcharged stamps was on a flight to France when it crashed on Mt Zaghuan near Tunis, destroying everything. Madame de Sant-Mart, the Governor's wife was among the passengers killed. Whilst both stories have been quoted by various authors without any official references, to date Colin has been unable to find any substantiating records.

Joh Groenewald's display was entitled 'Madagascar - British and East African military post offices 1942-1945'. After the Allied invasion of Madagascar in May 1942 two British field postal offices were deployed at Diégo-Suarez with FPO numbers 226 and 596. An East African base post office EA APO 53 followed with a number of field postal offices which operated from the base in Diégo-Suarez. Mail was shown from all these offices and in various mutations, without stamps for soldiers on active duty and with East African, British and Madagascar stamps. Some postal items with 'earliest dates' were included. The use of the mysterious postmark FROM H M BASE at the naval base in Diégo-Suarez was shown.

Evening

Following dinner, the evening was open to members to continue giving short displays.

John Scott opened the evening with a display of World War I military correspondence cards. The first part recorded the increasing number of flags illustrating the cards as the number of Allies increased and the second part concentrated on patriotic cards illustrating heroes and heroines such as Joan of Arc.

John Hammonds followed with a display of the 50F 'Banknote' publicity label produced by Edouard Berck in which we saw a proof, a complete sheet and stationery.

John Parmenter showed French West Africa first flight covers of the 1920s including items from the Dakar to France test flight and from the first regular flight from Dakar to Casablanca.

Paul Watkins sought information about several items including an 1834 *déboursé* cover to a *poste restante* address, a miniature cover from a *poste enfantine* toy post office, an 1867 'easy opening' envelope with a perforated flap and a pair of 10c and 35c bromide 'essays' signed Becker.

Peter Stockton offered a selection of material related to the Dardanelles campaign of 1915-1916. We saw a *Corps Expéditionnaire d'Orient* cover, maps, postcards and military correspondence.

Godfrey Bowden closed the evening with a study of the T (*Taxe*) perfins of Tunisia explaining the methods of perforation, the variations to be found in the number, size and positioning of the holes and the usage of the issues. A wit in the audience asked Godfrey if he had bought his stamps (w)holesale!

Sunday

The morning began with a second display given by **Peter Kelly** entitled 'Réunion and the *Messageries Maritimes*, 1864-1900'. 1864 was a key year with the acceptance of a tender from *Messageries Impériales* to provide a monthly service to the two islands of Réunion and Mauritius. In 1857 provision was made for a second line for the *Messageries Impériales* to Rio but this did not happen as the colonial expansion in Indochina was a much more pressing need and was replaced by the Suez to Saigon line as a '*ligne principale*' with the provision for annexes off it to French India and the Dutch East Indies and Réunion. The annexe for Réunion was left in abeyance. In 1864 the Government authorised not an annexe but a principal line from Suez to the two islands with the first voyage taking place on 19 August 1864. This now gave Réunion three possible routes back to Europe and all of them reliable between 1864 and 1866, namely a) the *Messageries* service, b) the P & O which continued to serve Mauritius until July 1866 (Réunion could still use this service although the feeder contract was cancelled immediately. Mauritius could be accessed either by commercial shipping or by the outward *Messageries* service) and c) the Union line which, after long negotiations, extended its UK – Cape line to Mauritius at the end of 1864 intending to correspond with the P & O at Mauritius. 1864 was the start of a mythic period for postal historians with the Eagle issue, choice of routes, different rates for British and French mailboats. It was also a peak period for sugar cane production, increased trade, more ships calling at ports, and now transit mail from Madagascar and through India. From now on, registered, journals, printed matter, military correspondence became more commonplace and postal rates started falling. In 1869 the *Ligne de Suez à la Réunion et Maurice* was renamed Line T and it now became an annexe of Line N (*Ligne de l'Indochine*) corresponding at Aden. This remained in place until 1882. In 1870 with the opening of the Suez Canal, *Ligne N* now started at Marseille. In 1882, the 3rd route of Line T was introduced as a principal line – *Ligne d'Australie et Nouvelle Calédonie* – from Marseille to Suez, Aden, Mahé, Réunion, Mauritius and on to Australia. 1883 saw the First Madagascar campaign. Réunion had an import role for supplies and medical services and for providing convalescence facilities. In 1884 the volume of mail increased, a '*ligne coloniale*' operated between Madagascar and Réunion and mail showed shipping marks probably applied by police or customs at Tamatave. In August 1888 *Messageries Maritimes* decided that they would no longer call at Mauritius and Réunion but would sail directly to Australia from Mahé. This came as a shock to Réunion but a solution was proposed immediately with the creation of an annexe line (Line U) making a circular voyage between the two islands, Madagascar and Mahé, and corresponding with the outward and return journeys of Line T at Mahé. No postal agents were carried on Line U and mails continued to be marked by postal controllers on Line T. At the same time, a new principal line was created out of Marseille serving Réunion and Mauritius, Madagascar and the East Coast of Africa. This was the Line V and, as a principal line, they carried postal controllers. They called at Suez, Obock, Aden, Zanzibar, Mayotte, Diégo-Suarez,

Sainte Marie, Tamatave and occasionally Majunga. In 1896 the decision was taken to change the route of Line T to Australia by calling only at Aden and Colombo. Now that it no longer called at Mahé it was no longer concerned with Réunion mails. This meant that Line U was no longer an annexe and was converted into a principal line (Line U 2nd route). At first the situation was a little confused with Lines U and V becoming interconnected and sailing alternatively from Réunion and Mauritius via Madagascar and Zanzibar and then directly to Djibouti. 1897 saw the rationalisation of Lines U and V. Line U became the East Coast line sailing from Marseille and calling at Djibouti, Zanzibar and different ports in Madagascar. This was a very busy line following the activities of the 2nd Madagascar campaign. In 1896 there was no service to Mahé and this was corrected in 1897 with the 2nd route of Line V, out of Marseille and calling at Port Said, Djibouti, Aden, Mahé, Réunion and Mauritius. 1899 was an important date because all colonial mail could now be sent to France at the inland rate. This meant that a military concession rate in the colony was no longer required. In 1912 lines U and V were fused and were now called *Marseille à la Réunion* 1 and 2 with voyages every 14 days, the first out by Zanzibar and back via Mahé and the second out by Mahé and back by Zanzibar.

John Hammonds followed with a display on Indochina. The display was in four parts: Introduction, Maritime, Exhibitions and, of course, Airmail. The opening pages included postcards published by *Chocolaterie d'Aiguebelle* and Léon Noir showing maps of the constituent parts of Indochina and special postmarks for Anghor Wat. Next came covers with *Service accéléré* labels used between 1927 and 1936 when the railway from China to Phong Penh was being built. During this period, on payment of 5c extra, the covers went by bus between the railheads. The maritime section displayed covers using the *Ligne N* and later *Marseille à Yokahama* postmarks supported by postcards illustrating the ships used on the route. The section ended with examples of some special maritime postmarks. The third section included postcards of exhibitions, mainly in France, where Indochina was represented. The exposition at Hanoi was included with its special postmark. The final section showed airmails, including the use of KLM lines between 1929 and 1931 followed by covers to various destinations. Crash mail was represented including an accident at Allahabad where the aircraft collided with a vulture and a special envelope for the '*Émeraude*' which crashed in the French Alps killing the founder of the route Maurice Noguès.

After a period of viewing it was the turn of **Alan Wood** who showed us three frames entitled 'GB into France'.

The next display, by **David Hogarth**, explored the surcharged stamps issued by France from 1914 to 1940 as a means of raising funds for charity rather than for their postal use, particularly when in many cases the surcharges greatly exceeded the postal rate for which a stamp was issued and where the number of surcharged stamps in any year outnumbered the definitive issues and the non-surcharged stamps. The display was a "work in progress" as similar issues continued during the 1940s.

Chris Hitchen gave a second display, this time on 'The development of machine cancellations from 1898 to 1913'. Covers from Bickerdike and International machines with their characteristic flag cancels, the Norwegian Krag machines and the first efforts by French manufacturers with Chambon and Garcia machines were all shown as well as a mysterious 1909 one which remains unidentified.

Finally, **Bob Larg** gave a display of 'France 1876-1900' beginning with some 1876 Peace and Commerce stamps on postcards, letter-cards and newspaper wrappers. Three sets of Telegraph stamps were shown, as were Postage Dues, and some miscellaneous items franked with the Blanc and Mouchon issues of 1900. We saw a lovely Samples Envelope from Bon Marché followed by souvenir covers for the visit of the Emperor and Empress of Russia and Bob finished with a unique envelope covered by 25 copies of the 1 centime Peace and Commerce issue addressed "*A sa Majesté l'Impératrice Eugénie à son château, Farnborough, Angleterre*".

After viewing and delicious refreshments, members returned for the close of the meeting to hear **Steve Ellis** announce the results for the Society Literature Award. In a remarkably close contest, with only a single point separating the top three articles published in the Journals of 2016, the results were as follows.

1st 'Paris Instructional Marks from 1837 to 1950' by **Chris Hitchen**

2nd 'The Coat-of-Arms Issues of France 1943-66' by **Mick Bister**

3rd 'La Retirada – Spanish Refugees in France 1939-43' by **David Hogarth**

Chris Hitchen was awarded the trophy by the president

and Steve thanked the judges, Messrs. **Greenbaum, Jones, Prendy and Yandell**.

Further to the announcement at the 2016 AGM, **Mick Bister** was presented with the Geoff Gethin Award for Service to the Society.

The three ladies who volunteered to run the Bookstall throughout the weekend, **Marian Bister, Annette Tyler** and **Jean Hammonds**, were each thanked and presented with a plant by the President.

The convenors, **Peter Kelly** and **Chris Hitchen** were thanked for the time and effort in organising the event which once again had been very successful in every aspect.

The following members attended all or part of the weekend.

Robert Abensur
Maurice Alder
John Allison
John Barton
Mick Bister
Godfrey Bowden
Richard Broadhurst
Jérôme Castanet
Steve Ellis
John Hammonds
Chris Hitchen
David Hogarth
Stephen Holder
Dominic Joyeux
Peter Kelly
Bob Larg
Lesley Marley

Jeremy Martin
Peter Maybury
John Parmenter
David Parmley
Barbara Priddy
Michael Rego
Derek Richardson
Claire Scott
Henk Slabbinck
Gerald Small
Colin Spong
Peter Stockton
Alf Taylor
David Trapnell
Maurice Tyler
Paul Watkins
Alan Wood



Mick Bister
receives his Geoff Gethin Service Award from Steve Ellis



Chris Hitchen
receives the Literature Prize from Steve Ellis

Photos by Mick Bister (pages 66 and iv) and Maurice Tyler (page iii)



Derek Richardson

‘Concentration and Appreciation’
Photos by Mick Bister



Peter Kelly



Maurice Tyler



Henk Slabbinck and Jérôme Castenet



John Scott



Robert and Brigitte Abensur



Godfrey Bowden and Peter Stockton



Jeremy Martin