

MARCH 2003

MONTHLY SOCIETY MEETINGS

JANUARY - The first meeting of the new year was held on Saturday 11th at Collège du St Esprit, Sir Virgil Naz Avenue. Quatre Bornes at 2.00 p.m.

Mico Antoine reviewed the 2002 postage stamps of Mauritius. He produced evidence from the "Maps of Mauritius" brochure (distributed at the Mauritius Institute exhibition) proving beyond doubt that on the Alberto Cantino map of 1502 Madagascar is shown but **not** named unlike the "error of design" of the stamp which occurred because the reference material obtained by the President of the Stamp Advisory Committee and subsequently submitted to the stamp designer was the wrong material. A true reproduction of the Cantino map, the focal point in the exhibition, does not have Madagascar written across the island.

The "black" Constellation stamps poster was displayed and details of the AGOA stamps were provided. Contradictory information in Mauritius Commercial Bank Art Gallery brochures about the "Post Office" stamps was brought to the attention of members.

Patrick Kwan put up a small display on **Chinese Horoscope** and being a man of few words said almost nothing about the pretended art of foretelling the future.

Mauritius Government Railway "Steam Coaches", Port Louis "Tramways" and other railway information received from Stephen Spark of London were explained.

Attendance was good as were sales.

FEBRUARY - The February meeting was held on 8th February at the usual venue and at the usual time. Saturday 1st was a public holiday – the Abolition of Slavery Day. The **AGOA Forum**, the stamps, the Official First Day Cover, privately produced covers and the special presentation pack were the first item on the Agenda.

Yvan Martial gave a talk on the few stamps issued by Mauritius on American related topics, focusing his delivery on the 1994 Brown Sequard stamp (SG 899).

Pravin Bhowanydeen, the custodian of the Indian Collection, showed the latest batch of Indian First Day Covers received from the Indian High Commission in Mauritius.

News Items 2002.4 of December was distributed. Auction catalogues and other philatelic publications, surplus to the Society's needs, were distributed to members.

A limited number of the 1992 "**Groupement des Artistes Rodriguais**" special covers prepared by Paul Draper and obtained by Sanjit Teelock were offered at cost.

The Purchase List and Bid Board offered very good items with a special offer on several aspects of FRANCE – stamps, covers, booklets.

Attendance was very good and sales excellent.

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MARCH – The **Annual General Meeting** was held on Saturday 15th March 2003 at 2.00 p.m. at Collège du St Esprit, Sir Virgil Naz Avenue, Quatre Bornes.

The agenda was:

- a. Approval of Minutes of 2002 AGM.
- b. Report of the President for the year 2002.
- c. Approval of Accounts ending 31st December 2002.
- d. Approval of Budget for the year 2003.
- e. Election of Committee Members and Office Bearers for the year 2003.
- f. Appointment of Auditors for the year 2003.
- g. Any other business.

The minutes, accounts and budget were approved, the President's report was adopted, the Auditors were appointed and Committee Members were elected; all business were carried out.

The new Committee for year 2003 is as follows :

Yvan Martial – President
Mico Antoine – Vice President
Judex Adrien – Treasurer
Pravin Bhowanydeen – Vice Treasurer
Patrick Kwan – Secretary
Gaetan Bouchet – Vice Secretary
Sanjit Teelock – Member
Dr Nasser Maderbokus – Member
Ah Lan Lam Yan Foon – Member

As a backdrop to the AGM a comprehensive display on **Ornithology** was put up by Mico Antoine. This subject will be the main item for the April meeting.

[Complete details of the Echo Parakeet issue of the 19th March will be provided, such as reference material, photographs, maxicards, printing details (including the reprinting of the Rs 15 stamp because of a value symbol error), the WWF logo and WWF order.]

Sanjit Teelock organised a postal **Stamp Ballot** for (a) Favourite Stamp (b) Favourite First Day Cover and (c) Favourite Set of Stamps for year 2002. The results were announced at the AGM. Local members had voted as follows:

- Favourite Stamp – Rs 9 Crux of the Constellations
- Favourite First Day Cover – Maps of the South West Indian Ocean
- Favourite Set – Cicadas

Attendance at the March meeting was the highest recorded during the last 15 months.

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MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Monthly Management Committee meetings were held at 1.00 p.m. on the following Saturdays - 18th January, 15th February and 22nd March at the residence of the President at 88 Club Road, Vacoas

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VISITORS TO MAURITIUS

LOUIS LAURENTY from Belgium was in Mauritius during February and March. He attended the two meetings held during his stay.

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EXCHANGE

SHAWN DAVIES, 9 Culdaff Road, Portstewart, Co. Derry BT55 7DP, Northern Ireland wishes to obtain Mauritius stamps mint and used. He offers mint and used of Eire and Great Britain in exchange as per Want Lists. He also offers stamps of France, Germany, Austria, Australia and Canada in fine used condition.

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THE 2002 NEWS BULLETIN

Due to some avoidable as well as some unavoidable circumstances the 2002 News Bulletin has been delayed well beyond its scheduled date of publication. Whilst the 2002 News Bulletin has been completed and ready for printing since the beginning of January 2003, the Management Committee at its meeting of 22nd March took the decision to publish the 2002 and the 2003 News Bulletins as one joint publication. This is the most logical and practical solution. The two-year issue will be of a minimum of 80 pages as the 2002 News Bulletin alone is 48 pages. Publication is scheduled for June/July 2003.

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LA POSTE CENTRALE

At the end of March 2003 the Central Post Office is still housed in the premises it has occupied continuously since 1870. The Society wrote officially to the Government about the matter on 12th February 2003 and received an unsatisfactory short reply from the office of the Vice-Prime Minister, Paul Raymond Bérenger G.C.S.K. on 24th February. The Society is pursuing the matter further. On 25th March 2003 parliamentary questions were posed by the opposition about *La Poste Centrale*. Further details will be published in the next News Items and News Bulletin.

CAMP DE MASQUE POST OFFICE TRANSFER

The Camp de Masque Post Office was transferred to new accommodation situated on the ground floor of the Medine Camp de Masque Co-operative Credit Society near the Government Primary School on 13th January 2003.

GRAND BAY POST OFFICE - ADDITIONAL NEW ACCOMODATION

Some services of the Grand Bay Post Office were transferred to new accommodation situated in the Richmond Hill Complex, a few metres from the Super U hypermarket. Only Counter Services ranging from postal transactions such as stamps sales, payment of telephone accounts, registration acceptance and philatelic sales as well as Savings Bank transactions are available at the new site. Mail and Delivery services will continue to be provided at the premises situated on the coastal road (Royal Road).

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STAMPS

AGOA – 2nd US-SSA TRADE AND ECONOMIC COOPERATIVE FORUM

A set of two special stamps showing the official logo of the Forum was put on sale on Wednesday 15th January 2003.

The stamps feature:

- Re 1 Logo (blue and yellow border)
- Rs 25 Logo (red and green border)

2003

The stamps were designed by CABS (Crown Agents Stamp Bureau) and printed by the House of Questa.

The Official First Day Cover is embossed with the Coat of Arms of Mauritius in natural colours with gold lettering.

The Official First Day Cover formed part of the official gift pack to delegates at the Forum. 1000 special stamp packs were produced specially for this occasion; the MPS provided assistance with regard to text and design.

Ed. Note: The second United States – Sub Saharan African Trade and Economic Cooperation Forum was held at Réduit from 13th to 17th January 2003. When President George W Bush finally decided not to attend in person all heads of state or heads of government of 35 of the 36 eligible countries stayed away. The only head of state or head of government present was from the 36th country – Mauritius.

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ECHO PARAKEET

A set of four special stamps featuring the **Echo Parakeet** was released on Wednesday 19th March 2003.

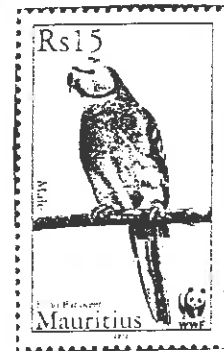
The stamps show:

- Re 1 Chick
- Rs 2 Fledgling
- Rs 5 Female
- Rs 15 Male

The stamps were designed by Andrew Robinson and printed by BDT International Security Printing Ltd of Ireland. The Official First Day Cover bears an attractive illustration of the head of the male "*Psittacula ecques*".

All the four stamps identify the species as Echo Parakeet and the stamps carry the logo of WWF; the official cancellation cachet incorporates a profile of the head of the adult male.

Ed. Note: This issue was printed in relatively low numbers. The species is not identified by its scientific name on the four stamps and the illustration of the Official First Day Cover identifies the bird as *Psittacula ecques*. Scientific papers name the bird as *Psittacula ecques echo*, as does the 1997 Jersey (SG 826) stamp and the three different Mauritius Endangered Species aerogrammes of 1995-1997



NEXT STAMP ISSUE

A set of four stamps scheduled to be issued in June will show a floral theme – the Trochetia :

- Trochetia uniflora
- Trochetia boutoniana
- Trochetia parviflora
- Trochetia triflora



LAST DAY –FIRST DAY

The last day of business of **Mauritius Postal Services** as a department fully under the control of the Government of Mauritius was Friday 28th February 2003.

The first day of business of the **Postal Services of The Mauritius Post Limited** as a 100% government owned ‘private company’ was Monday 3rd March 2003 as Saturday 1st March was a public holiday in Mauritius.

Several attractive last day of business covers are known to have been made.

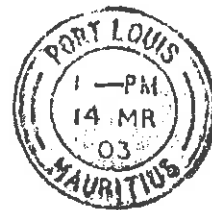


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The new organisation **The Mauritius Post Limited** is known as the Company. The post of Postmaster General is re-styled General Manager – **Postal Services**. (From the Tripartite Agreement signed on 27th January 2003)

New rubber handstamps have been introduced. One postal mark from headquarters of the Postal Services on a free-franked cover of 14 March 2003 is shown here.

THE MAURITIUS POST LTD.



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The locally printed Echo Parakeet special stamp issue poster dated 6 March 2003 is headed **The Mauritius Post Ltd**. The AGOA and other recent locally printed stamp issue posters were headed **Postal Services**.

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AEROPHILATELY

On Thursday 20th March 2003, a brand new 120 seater (108 Economy and 12 Business Class) Airbus Industry A319 "Air Mauritius" aircraft touched down at Plaisance Airport. Handed over at Hamburg (Germany), the delivery flight was routed via Malta and Nairobi (Kenya) before arriving in Mauritius. The middle distance plane is to be used on the airline's regional routes – Reunion, Seychelles, Madagascar and Southern Africa. Christened Blue Bay the twin-engine airliner bears the registration 3B-NBG.

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THE PRESS

- L'express* – 20.01.2003 – L'erreur fatale.*
Le Défi Plus – 01.02.2003 – Les syndicats et le gouvernement signent un accord sur le transfert des employés.
L'express – 07.02.2003 – Le bureau de poste livré le mois prochain (Flic-en-Flac)
L'express – 11.02.2003 – La poste centrale chez l'ex-BNPI.*
Le Défi Plus – 08.03.2003 – La 'séniorité' fait grincer les impatients.
L'express – 17.03.2003 – 'Histoire de Maurice', une série qui s'apprécie.¹
L'express – 20.03.2003 – La poste entame son grand lifting.²
L'express – 26.03.2003 – La Mauritius Post et la New Cooperative Bank s'unissent.
Le Mauricien – 27.03.2003 – Services postaux et bancaires.
L'express – 29.03.2003 – Post & Cooperative Bank : de grandes ambitions.
Le Défi Plus – 29.03.2003 – Fusion Banque Coopérative/Mauritius Post Ltd.

* These two items mention the Central Post Office relocation.

¹ A long rambling account on the 1978 definitives SG 529A/548B.

² A report on the inauguration of the new Grand Bay Post Office.

FOOTNOTE

An overseas member's observation: "I find it hard to understand how Mauritius could issue a black set. Obviously nobody in the postal authority has studied postal history or they would know why the famous Penny Blacks were withdrawn during the 1840's, because postal cancellations did not show up on such a background"

Ed. Note. Our local members selected a black stamp, the Rs 9 Crux as their favourite stamp of 2002. Maybe one reason is because the stamp can be used over and over and over!

Someone on the Stamp Advisory Committee had an explanation for the black stamp – Stars come out at night when it is dark!

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The Mauritius Philatelic Society, PO Box 89, Quatre Bornes, MAURITIUS

Edited by Mico W Antoine.

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