

JUNE 2003

## MONTHLY SOCIETY MEETINGS

APRIL - The April meeting was held at Collège du St Esprit, Sir Virgil Naz Avenue, Quatre Bornes at 2.00 p.m. on Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> April 2003.

The main subject on the agenda was **Birds Part II** by Mico Antoine and the dominating bird was the Echo Parakeet of Mauritius of 19<sup>th</sup> March 2003. Four World Wildlife Fund special First Day Covers and four special Maxicards obtained from an overseas dealer were displayed and orders were taken from those wishing to purchase these items. The World Wildlife Fund had purchased a considerable number of sets of the Echo Parakeet stamps from the Postal Administration to produce these magnificent covers and maxis. Many other details about the stamps were provided and photographs used for designing the stamps were shown.

Pravin Bhowanydeen showed the latest batch of Indian Official First Day Covers received from the High Commission Office in Port Louis.

The Purchase List and Bid Board offered very good items and sales were good as was the attendance. News Items 2003.1 of March was distributed.

MAY - The May meeting was held at the usual venue and at the usual time on Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> May.

Patrick Kwan put up some **World War II Censorship** material from Mauritius. He showed many covers with censor labels and handstamp markings used during that period.

Ah Lan Lam Yan Foon presented a thematic display on **Horses**.

Stephen Spark from London gave a talk on his continuous research of the Mauritius Government Railways. He was in Mauritius for two weeks. During his visit he, Patrick Kwan and Mico Antoine visited some light railway sites in the south of the island at Savannah, Bel Air and Rivière des Anguilles to look at water tanks, railway bridges (at Savannah and Rivière des Anguilles), surviving railway tracks, diesel and steam locomotives and a passenger carriage

The News Board contained material on latest philatelic news worldwide. The Purchase List and Bid Board offered high quality material and sales were good.

JUNE – The June meeting was held on Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> June 2003 at 2.00 p.m. at Collège du St Esprit, Sir Virgil Naz Avenue, Quatre Bornes.

The main topic of this meeting was a **Collector's Workshop** on Terminology, Classification, Essays, Proofs, Specimen, Gum, Numbers – Current, Control, Rotation, Plate and Cylinder. The workshop was organised to familiarise members with the many facets of philately.

The Trochetia stamps and stamp cards were previewed. Recent stamps of France and other recent stamps issued by several postal administrations were displayed. New Mauritius Telecom Smart Cards were shown.

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Press reports on the Post Office Savings Bank merger were also discussed. Several aspects of the Post Office Savings Bank from official publications such as the Annual Report of 1999-2000, School Savings Scheme cards of the 1970s' and posters and other material were shown.

The Purchase List and Bid Board sales were exceptional with many stamps and covers on offer. After a very long break, a Spot Auction was held and several lots were knocked down.

Auction catalogues, philatelic magazines and other publications surplus to Society requirements were distributed free of charge to members.

During the second quarter attendance has been very good; the June attendance was the second highest of the year after that of the AGM of March 2003.

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### THE MAY OUTING

The Annual Outing took place on Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> May. Those who signed up met outside the Mauritius Sugar Terminal Corporation offices at Kwan Tee Street, Caudan at 9.00 a.m. for a 9.15 departure.

Gaetan Bouchet organised this outing and members visited the ex-Tuna Fishing Cannery plant built around a former railway goods shed. The structures added to the goods shed are to be pulled down; the shed is to be rehabilitated and restored to its original state before conversion into an aquarium and shopping mall.

The visit also included other sites in the Caudan and Port Louis Waterfront complex as well as a boat ride in the harbour.

Yvan Martial will do an article on the outing in the 2004 News Bulletin.

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### MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Monthly Management Committee meetings were held at 1.00 p.m. on Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> April and Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> June at the residence of the President at 88 Club Road, Vacoas. The May meeting was held during the outing in Port Louis on 17<sup>th</sup> May 2003.

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### MEMBERSHIP

#### Resignations/Non Renewals

The following are no longer members of the Society:  
Alain HURON – MAURITIUS  
Joseph WONG KENG YUEN – MAURITIUS  
Yvon CUPIDON – SEYCHELLES  
Ingemar GOLLUNBERG – GREECE

#### New Members

The following have joined the Society:  
Helen MORGAN - AUSTRALIA  
Jean Yves FARAUD – FRANCE  
Olivier LALOUETTE – MAURITIUS

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### SORTING AND DELIVER OFFICES OF PORT LOUIS

A press notice dated 15<sup>th</sup> April 2003 informed the public that The Mauritius Post Ltd would transfer the Sorting and Delivery section housed at the ground floor of the Post Office headquarters to a new location at Albion Docks, Trou Fanfaron on 21<sup>st</sup> April 2003.

The new Sorting and Delivery Offices were inaugurated at 4.30 p.m. on Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2003.

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**LA POSTE CENTRALE**

A Tender Notice dated 9<sup>th</sup> April 2003 was published in the press inviting bids for "Architectural Consultancy Services for the Proposed Renovation of the General Post Office Building and its Conversion into the Nelson Mandela Centre for African Culture."

At 30<sup>th</sup> June 2003, the Central Post Office is still housed in the premises it has occupied continuously since 1870.

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**S.A.R.S.**

A Post Office Notice dated 9<sup>th</sup> April 2003 informed The Mauritius Post Ltd's valued customers that due to the suspension of flights to Hong Kong, Malaysia and Singapore as a result of the outbreak of the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) mails would not be conveyed to the following countries.

Bangladesh	Korea	Philippines
China (People's Republic)	Macau	Singapore
Hong Kong	Malaysia	Sri Lanka
Indonesia	Maldives	Taiwan
Japan	New Zealand	Thailand

The Post Office were making alternative arrangements for conveyance of mails to some of these destinations and the public would be informed of further developments

Mails accepted at the counter or from posting boxes were forwarded to the SSR Airport Office of Exchange where they were retained until the situation returned to normal.

[By 16<sup>th</sup> May 2003, mails for more than half the listed destinations were being accepted. (As per Circular Instruction No. 13/2003). No special markings or manuscripted annotations on mails to any of the listed destinations have turned up yet and no special rubber stamp was made or used in Mauritius.]

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**BARCODE LABELS ON FOREIGN REGISTERED ITEMS**

On 10<sup>th</sup> June 2003 barcode labels were introduced for use on outgoing foreign (Air and Surface) registered items. This measure is for the improvement of the quality of service of foreign mail and for the effective use of electronic track and trace systems.

The self-adhesive barcode label consists of three parts;

Part A – to be peeled off and affixed to the registered item

Part B – to be affixed to the new original certificate of posting (PS 2 revised) intended for the customer.

Part C – to be detached and affixed on the duplicate PS2 in the registration book.

The use of registered barcode labels does not apply to bulk posting. Existing procedures where bulk posters use designated numbers and hold rubber stamps and other devices will continue pending the introduction of appropriate arrangements.

Barcode labels are not used on registered items posted in Agalega or Rodrigues for Mauritius and vice --versa.

Barcode labels are not used on registered items posted in Mauritius to destinations within Mauritius.

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## STAMPS

### TROCHETIA

A set of four special stamps featuring *Trochetia* flowers was released on Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> June 2003.

The stamps show:

- Re 1 *Trochetia boutoniana*
- Rs 4 *Trochetia uniflora*
- Rs 7 *Trochetia triflora*
- Rs 9 *Trochetia parviflora*

The stamps were designed by Rosie Sanders and printed by Joh Enschedé, Holland.

The Official First Day Cover is illustrated with *Trochetia blackburniana* (*Boucle d'oreille*). The face value of the set is Rs 21 and the Official FDC was priced at Rs 35.

The *Trochetias* are endemic flowers and the *Trochetia boutoniana* became the national flower as from 1992.

Four special stamp cards were also released on 18<sup>th</sup> June 2003. The cards show the stamps without the value and with an adjustment to the size of the country's name. Whereas the stamps were on sale at all post offices in Mauritius and Rodrigues the stamp cards were on sale only at nine outlets: GPO Counter, Postal Museum, Philatelic Bureau, Grand Bay, Mahebourg, Tamarin, Trou d'Eau Douce, Grand Gaube and Poste de Flacq. The stamp cards were sold in prepacked sets of four at Rs 40 the set. 2000 sets (8000 cards) were produced.

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### NEXT STAMP ISSUE

A set of four special stamps is scheduled to be issued in August and not in September as officially announced in the programme. The date of issue will on 20<sup>th</sup> August before the official opening of the Indian Ocean Islands Games scheduled for 29<sup>th</sup> August 2003. The stamps will feature :

- Indian Ocean Games
- Chamber of Agriculture (150 years)
- Visit of Abbé de la Caille (250 years)
- Mauritius Sugar Institute (50 years)

The announced Centenary of the First Powered Flight (miniature sheet) has been dropped. The *Chambre d'Agriculture* and the Mauritius Sugar Institute (MSIRI) stamps were designed locally.

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### VACOAS POST OFFICE

A press notice from The Mauritius Post Ltd dated 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2003 informed the public that Vacoas Post Office will be transferred to new accommodation, located in Jhugroo Bros. Building, St Paul Street, nearly opposite the Municipal Council of Vacoas – Phoenix, Vacoas.

Only counter services, namely postal transactions, Savings Bank, collection of water bills and waste water bills, etc will be available in the new accommodation.

Mail and delivery services will continue to be provided in the building occupied by the Postal Services Division in the yard of the Municipality complex as in the past.



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## News ItemS 2004.2

### A SPECIAL PRIVATE COVER

A special cover was put on sale on 9<sup>th</sup> June after several had been distributed as gifts to selected foreign and local personalities on 7<sup>th</sup> June. The cover commemorates the Transit of Venus, in front of the Sun, which occurred on 8<sup>th</sup> June. This rare phenomenon was visible to 75% of the inhabitants of Planet Earth, however Mauritius and Rodrigues (according to some) were the two spots on Planet Earth where the visibility was clearly or simply the best.

700 covers are franked with three values of the **Constellations** set of 2002, namely the Rs 7, Rs 8 and Rs 9 values, an incomplete set as the R1 value had been exhausted and only 700 part sets (of three values) were available. Hence, logically, only 700 covers could be made. The covers are illustrated with an Earth/Celestial scene, the same scene as that of the cover of a Mauritian book.

The three stamps are cancelled with one strike of the Port Mathurin 3 Rodrigues double circle cds dated 8 JU 04. A small cachet in blue shows the Earth, Venus and the Sun and in two lines - Pointe Venus Rodrigues / 8 June 2004, applied between the stamps on the right and the title of the cover on the left - "Transit de Venus / 8 Juin 2004 / Ile Maurice et Rodrigues." The back flap carries a logo of The Mauritius Post Ltd.

An insert gives scant information in English only. The covers were priced at Rs 35 each.

#### *Comment by Mico Antoine*

700 covers were produced by the *Comité Organisateur* set up by the Government of the Republic of Mauritius to oversee this "astronomique" event. Of these 300 were retained by the *Comité Organisateur* and 400 were put on sale. The sale was supervised by a member of the staff of The Mauritius Post Ltd on the premises of the Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority in the Air Mauritius Paille-en-Queue Building on John Kennedy Street, Port Louis. The sale opened at 10 a.m. and closed at 11 a.m. on the orders of the Postmaster General, not as a result of a crush (which never happened) but because the same buyers, some fifteen, were queuing up over and over again to purchase one cover per customer (down from two when the vendor realised he was selling to the same clients). A Government minister had previously announced on the 7<sup>th</sup> June that members of the public would be able to purchase two of the precious covers each so that as many people as possible would be able to own a souvenir of the "Transit of Venus".... from a total of only 400 covers.

The concept, production, servicing, disposal and whatever else about this cover was a comedy of errors from beginning to end, a complete shambles. The exercise was an example of how a special commemorative cover should not be made, handled, serviced or disposed of.

Despite the printing of the logo of The Mauritius Post Ltd on the flap of this cover, this cover was NOT a Postal Services product. The Postal Services and the Society were on the same orbit regarding this cover. But there are some who don't listen to good advice, who think they can do whatever they want irrespective of the outcome.

The Society was not involved in any manner in the "Transit of Venus" cover mess. The Society did not mandate anybody to be its representative or spokesperson on the *Comité*

MAURITIUS TELECOM PHONECARDS

A 500 units Smart Card featuring “*Cueilleuses de thé*” in the Série “*Petits métiers*” bears the manufacture date of September 2002. First seen in the second quarter of 2003 the card shows two tea-pickers at work. The information printed on the back of the card tells us that tea was introduced in Mauritius in 1765. The price of the card is Rs 400 plus VAT. 30,000 cards were produced.

Three Smart Cards were put on sale during the second quarter of 2003. Chamarel Waterfalls has not been shown on a postage stamp; however waterfalls have been depicted on SG 279, 297, 427 and SG 988-991. Chamarel Coloured Earths is depicted on SG 713 and Pamplemousses Garden on SG 586-90 and MS 591. The Giant Water Lilies are shown on (the Rs 2 stamp) SG 588.

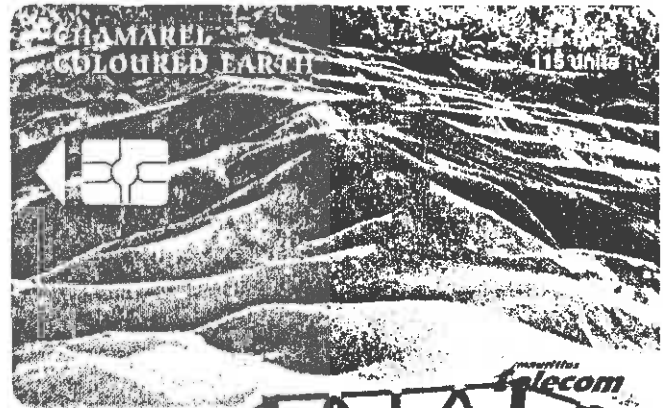
The 55 units Smart Card features **Chamarel Waterfalls**. The card bears the manufacture date of April 2003. 40,000 cards were produced. The price of the card is Rs 50 plus VAT.

The 115 units Smart Card features **Chamarel Coloured Earth**. The card bears the manufacture date of April 2003. 30,000 cards were produced. The price is Rs 100 plus VAT.


The 240 units Smart Card features Giant Water Lilies at **Pamplemousses Garden**. 30,000 cards were produced and they bear the manufacture date of April 2003. The price of the card is Rs 200 plus VAT.



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Certificate of Posting of a Foreign Registered Postal Packet (See also Overleaf)

Registration barcode No :  RR 001580010 MU

The undermentioned postal packet upon which a Fee of Rs...6..... has been paid in addition to the postage of Rs...21..... has been registered and posted here this day.

Full name and address of addressee : *Steve Pendleton*  
*3006 Gary Avenue W.*  
*Visalia CA 93277*  
*California USA*

Accepting Officer's Initials 

Date Stamp: PORT LOUIS MAURITIUS 9 15 AM 10 JU 03 5

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