



MAURITIUS PHILATELIC SOCIETY

News Items

2003.4

Founder Members : Yvan Martial - Mico Antoine.
Address: P O Box 89 Quatre Bornes Mauritius

DECEMBER 2003

MONTHLY SOCIETY MEETINGS

OCTOBER - The October meeting was held at Collège du St Esprit, Sir Virgil Naz Avenue, Quatre Bornes at 2.00 p.m. on Saturday 4 October.

The main topic was **J.I.O.I Covers**. The 6th Indian Ocean Island Games held in Mauritius from 29 August to 7 September 2003 provided an occasion for members to make their own commemorative covers. P Kwan who has been working in Rodrigues for several months prepared some covers in Port Mathurin to commemorate the games in Rodrigues. Judex Adrien, a keen cover-maker and signature-collector had his covers signed by government ministers, sports organisers and athletes. Derek Payen made some covers. The keenest and most successful cover-maker was Jean Auguste who marked all the Mauritius meets with covers cancelled at the nearest venue post office and at the Village Post Office on the days the events began and closed. Covers illustrated with logos, mascots and other appropriate images won him the prize outright – no one else came close enough.

Dr A. N. Maderbokus gave a talk on **The History of the 'Post Office' Stamps** accompanied by items from his own collection. Unlike the "Trochetia" of July he was better prepared this time.

[However we continue to compound past erroneous stories about the "Post Office" stamps. In Mauritius we mix legends with facts, myths with half-truths and we are stuck with the Blue Penny misnomer, like in the 'Blue Penny Museum' which is in fact the 'Mauritius Commercial Bank Art Gallery' with philately tucked in one corner.]

Sales were good. Attendance was average.

NOVEMBER – The November meeting was held on Saturday 8 November at Collège du St Esprit, Quatre Bornes.

These items were on the agenda:

150th Anniversary of Chambre d'Agriculture. Most of the Society's business and presentations are done in English. For a change Yvan Martial presented his subject in French. He had published a half page feature in *l'express* titled "Un siècle et demi de service pour la Chambre d'Agriculture" on 25 August 2003. Mico Antoine used this article plus stamps, covers and maxicards from his own collection as a backdrop. Briefly, on 16 November 1853 the Chambre was founded and 150 years later sugar cane remains the only tangible commercial cash crop of Mauritius.

World Post Day UPU Cachets by Mico Antoine was a complete collection of covers cacheted at all the 15 Post Offices where the UPU World Post Day rubber stamps were in use in 2003. All the covers were postmarked on UPU Day 9 October 2003. Other covers from previous years accompanied this display, thus members were able to examine and compare the 15 different cachets.

Postal Rates Increases. Tables of the new rates which came into effect on 1 November 2003 were scrutinized and commented upon. Tables from the last increase on 1 June 1998 were shown alongside the new rates. In the main, substantial rises to finance 'corporisation' waste, fat cat salaries and perks. Now wait for the next round of increases to finance "the Postal Tower, Post Shops, PAPs and ATMs".

2003

A nice meeting, good ambiance, good attendance, good sales and a couple of members were stunned by a very nice visitor.

DECEMBER – The last Society meeting of 2003 was held at Collège du St Esprit at 2 p.m. on Saturday 6 December.

Mico Antoine put up a general display of items such as postal rate change, last-day and first-day local and overseas covers, the Mauritius **Constellations** stamps of 2002 and the Namibian 1996 **Stars in the Namibian Sky** stamps (which happen to be the same constellations); the liberties taken with some aspects of the Baudin/Flinders “Encounter” events being staged by and in Mauritius; the fallacious Celicourt Antelme “up to midnight plea” of July 1847 and its “post-midnight fracas”.

Regarding the **Members’ Display** where members were invited to show off their 2003 acquisitions, no one did. A sign of the times, everyone broke so no one bought anything, too reticent to show one’s material or too lazy to prepare a maximum of 6 pages. Will try again next year.

Several special privately made commemorative covers were on offer – all were snapped up.

Auction Catalogues, Stamp Pamphlets, Bulletins and Brochures donated by members or surplus to Society needs were distributed free. Some philatelic journals, stamp magazines and book were also on sale.

Attendance and sales were good. The average attendance for the fourth quarter of 2003 was 20.

OVERSEAS MEMBERS VISITING MAURITIUS

Dr Patrick STEUER from Paris was the only overseas member to visit us at the end of the year 2003. None of our other regulars turned up this year. Another sign of the times? Too many hotels burnt down?

ANNUAL LUNCH – MENU

Eleven members got together for the 2003 lunch. The menu – *Roast Chicken, Crispy Squid, Mushroom & Corn Fritters, Sweet and Sour Fish Fillets, Prawns in Oyster Sauce, Sautéed Diced Veg with Cashew Nuts, Lemon Chicken, Stirfried Mixed Vegetables, Cantonese Fried Rice, Ice Cream/Grass Jelly, Chinese Tea.*

J Adrien took all the more than half full bottles of wine home for his Xmas meal.

MONTHLY COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The monthly Management Committee meetings were held at 1 p.m. on Saturday 11 October and 15 November at the residence of the President at 88 Club Road, Vacoas. The December committee meeting was held on Saturday 13 December during the annual year-end lunch at First Restaurant, Corderie/Royal St, Port Louis.

EXCHANGES

Curt N FERNUA
PO Box 237
D-78340
GAIENHOFEN
GERMANY

Is looking for serious collectors to exchange or purchase:

- (i) used stamps (ii) postmarks (iii) kiloware

Members are advised to establish their personal exchange mode – the Society will not get involved.

2003

NEW MEMBERS

The following have joined the Society during the period October – December :

Jean-René DELATTE – Belgium
Claude SCHOUFLIKIR – France

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WORLD POST DAY

To mark World Post Day 2003 rubber stamps were used on correspondence passing through several post offices in Mauritius from Saturday 5 October to Tuesday 9 October 2003. These rubber stamps were supplied to:

Quatre Bornes
Beau Bassin
Mahebourg
Port Louis (Sorting)
Riviere du Rempart

Curepipe
Phoenix
Central Flacq
Rose Belle
Triolet

Goodlands
Rose Hill
Vacoas
Reduit
Eau Coulée

* * * * *

STAMPS

FORTIFICATIONS

A set of four special stamps featuring Fortifications was released on Wednesday 10 December 2003. The stamps show:

- Rs 2 Batterie de la Pointe du Diable
- Rs 5 Donjon St Louis
- Rs 6 Martello Tower
- Rs 12 Fort Adelaide

The stamps were designed by Tony Theobald and printed by BDT International Security Printing Ltd, Ireland. The Official First Day Cover was priced at Rs 35.00.

N.B. The year imprint 2003 is back in the bottom stamp margin. They therefore forgot the year imprint on the Trochetia and Anniversaries and Events stamps because they simply didn't remember!

NEXT STAMP ISSUE

A single Rs 10 stamp is to be issued in February 2004 to commemorate the 20th Anniversary of the Indian Ocean Commission. The stamp will bear the blue logo of the commission and the flags of the five member countries on a white background.

Note that on 13 August 1992 Mauritius issued a Rs 3 stamp (SG 874) to commemorate the 10th Anniversary of the Indian Ocean Commission ... formed in 1982. According to a French website the Commission was formed in January 1984. Madagascar issued its 2004 stamp on 4 December 2003. Pick your year.

In March 2004 a set of stamps will feature four Mauritian mountains namely :

Corps de Garde
Le Pouce

Le Chat et la Souris
Piton du Milieu.

The year of the Mountain was ... in 2002.

2003

A further four sets of stamps are programmed for 2004. These are:

June – Petit Métiers
August – SADC

October – Rodrigues
December – Anthuriums

Further details will be made available in future issues of the News Items.

NEW CIRCULAR DATESTAMPS

More new double circle circular datestamps manufactured locally by MetalCast Ltd have been introduced in Mauritius. These devices have turned out to be unpopular with the postal officers using them as they are really “screwed-up”. The head has to be screwed on and off several times a day and a retaining side screw has also got to be manipulated to keep the head in position.

More than one of the 11 Post Offices that have been supplied with them up to the end of October 2003 are simply not using them – Solferino for example. More detailed information will be published in due course.

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POST OFFICES

ON THE MOVE

A Press Notice dated 4 November 2003 from The Mauritius Post Ltd called on interested parties to submit offers for the rental of office space in concrete buildings in the following localities to accommodate Post Offices.

Locality	Space required	Locality	Space required
(i) Central Flacq	200 m2	(vi) Mare d’Albert	100 m2
(ii) Belle Rose	100 m2	(vii) Plaine de Papayes	100 m2
(iii) Belle Vue Maurel	100 m2	(viii) Pointe aux Sables	100 m2
(iv) Bois Chéri	100 m2	(ix) Riviere du Poste	100 m2
(v) Baie du Tombeau	100 m2		

MONTAGNE LONGUE POST OFFICE

A Postal Services Division notice dated 10 November 2003 informed the public that on Monday 17 November 2003, the Montagne Longue Post Office will be transferred to new accommodation located at Royal Road, near the Government Primary School, some 500 metres from the actual Post Office and that the full range of postal services normally available at any standard post office will continue to be provided.

FOREST SIDE POST OFFICE

A Press Notice from Headquarters dated 19 December 2003 informed the public of a fire in the Sorting Unit of Forest Side Post Office in the early hours of Monday 15 December 2003 during which a number of ordinary correspondence addressed mainly to areas situated between Cité Atlee and Cité La Brasserie posted between 11,12 and 13 December 2003 had been destroyed.

A LONG WEEKEND

A special Post Office notice from Headquarters dated 23 December 2003 informed the public that all Post Offices “will be closed as from noon on 31 December 2003 and will resume services on 5 January 2004”.

Now you know why your mail got stuck in the post.

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

Edited by Mico W Antoine.

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SPECIAL COMMEMORATIVE COVERS

Three of the four "Anniversaries and Events" stamps were used on special covers made by the following :

J.I.O.I.- 2000 covers were made by COJI the games organisers to mark the opening of the games. The Rs 2 stamp cancelled with the large Port Louis Philatelic Service 1 obliterator dated 29 AU 03 on specially made *Enveloppe Premier Jour*. Many members were able to obtain these covers.

The Mauritius Sugar Industry Research Bureau marked their Golden Jubilee with a special cover franked with the Rs 10 MSIRI stamp cancelled with the Reduit (slug) double circle circular datestamp dated 2 October 2003. 385 covers were made and the society obtained a small quantity which were all sold at the December meeting.

The Mauritius Chamber of Agriculture prepared a special cover to commemorate its 150 years. The cover bears the Rs 6 Anniversaries and Events 2003 stamp cancelled with the large Port Louis Philatelic Bureau 1 obliterator dated 15 November 2003. The date of the actual anniversary being the 16 November, a Sunday in 2003, the covers were datestamped on Saturday 15 November. 300 covers were made and the Society was able to obtain a few covers.

POSTAL RATES

The Postal Services Division of The Mauritius Post Ltd introduced new postal charges effective as from 1 November 2003. The last day of the old rates was Friday 31 October 2003, however the first day of the actual general usage of the new rates was Monday 3 November as Saturday 1 November was a public holiday and 2 November was a Sunday. Several members are known to have made their own private last day-first day covers.

Several of the increases were substantial:

The inland rate ordinary letter (First 50 gms) from Re 1 to Rs 2, a 100% increase

The overseas registration rate from Rs 6 to Rs 25 a four fold increase - a direct consequence of the barcode (registration) label.

The list of increases (affixed to Post Office notice boards) is reproduced with this News Items for our members - courtesy of the Postmaster General

Le bulletin d'Information de La Mauritius Post Ltd

The No. 2 December 2003 bulletin is a definite improvement on the No.1. There is a message from the new CEO Giandev MOTEEA, an interview with the non-executive Chairman Kishore PERTAB and an article by the Postmaster General Hafiz AMIR. A good balance of English and French, more sober features unlike the exaggerations of No. 1 plus a piece on the Mauritius Postal Museum without any mistakes or deformed facts.

THE PRESS

<i>Le Mauricien</i>	25.10.2003	Sentiment mitigé des syndicalistes de la poste
<i>Le Week-End</i>	26.10.2003	Première rencontre entre la nouvelle direction et le Front commun, mardi.
<i>L'express</i>	26.10.2003	Réponses en poste restantes
<i>L'express</i>	26.10.2003	Poste: échanges animés gouvernement- opposition
<i>L'express</i>	29.10.2003	Poste: rencontre direction-syndicat jugée 'positive'
<i>L'express</i>	01.11.2003	Enveloppes timbrées dans une poubelle
<i>Le Défi-Plus</i>	01.11.2003	'Les nouvelles technologies sont une menace directe pour les services postaux.'
<i>Le Défi-Plus</i>	07.11.2003	Que pensent les Mauriciens des nouveaux tarifs postaux?
<i>L'express</i>	08.11.2003	Monsieur Bérenger et son parcours culturel
<i>Le Défi-Plus</i>	08.11.2003	Services postaux: La situation s'aggrave.
<i>La Vie Catholique</i>	12.12.2003	Vacoassiens souvent privé de Poste pour cause de modernisation
<i>Week-End</i>	14.12.2003	Les employés de la poste inquiets.

THE MAURITIUS POST LTD.**POSTAL SERVICES DIVISION**

Postal Charges effective as from 1 November 2003

INLAND

	Rs cs
Letters:	
First 50 grammes	2.00
Each additional 25 grammes or fraction of 25 grammes	1.00
Postcards	1.00
Printed Papers:	
First 50 grammes or fraction of 50 grammes	2.00
Each additional 50 grammes or fraction of 50 grammes	1.00
Literature for the Blind	Free
Express Delivery Fee	12.00

OVERSEAS MAIL - SURFACE

	Rs cs
Letters:	
Not exceeding	
20 grammes	5.00
50 grammes	10.00
100 grammes	12.00
250 grammes	24.00
500 grammes	50.00
1000 grammes	90.00
2000 grammes	160.00
Postcards	4.00

	Rs cs
Printed Paper:	
Not exceeding	
20 grammes	3.00
50 grammes	4.00
100 grammes	6.00
250 grammes	12.00
500 grammes	20.00
1000 grammes	40.00
2000 grammes	60.00
For each additional 1000 grammes or fraction of 1000 grammes	30.00

	Rs cs
Newspapers and periodicals published in Mauritius	
Not exceeding	
100 grammes	3.00
250 grammes	6.00
500 grammes	10.00
1000 grammes	16.00
2000 grammes	25.00

Literature for the Blind

Free

Small Packets:

	Rs cs
Not exceeding	
100 grammes	8.00
250 grammes	12.00
500 grammes	20.00
1000 grammes	36.00
2000 grammes	50.00

AIRMAIL**For Foreign correspondence transmitted by air-**

Destination	Letters each 5 gms	Postcards	2nd class mail each 10 gms	Air letters (aerogrammes)
	Rs cs	Rs cs	Rs cs	Rs cs
ZONE 1				
Comores, Reunion, Madagascar and Seychelles	7.00	7.00	5.00	7.00
ZONE 2				
Africa, Bangladesh, Europe, Far East, India, Middle East, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and South East Asia	8.00	7.00	6.00	7.00
ZONE 3				
Australia, Canada, New Zealand, North, Central and South America and Pacific Islands	9.00	7.00	7.00	7.00
RODRIGUES: For correspondence transmitted by air	2.00	1.00	1.00	

Newspapers and periodicals published in Mauritius for countries of	ZONE 1	ZONE 2	ZONE 3
	Rs cs	Rs cs	Rs cs
Not exceeding 100 grammes or fraction of 100 grammes	8.00	9.00	10.00
Each additional 100 grammes or fraction of 100 grammes up to a maximum of 2000 grammes	7.00	8.00	9.00

Certificate of posting	6.00
Registration Fee (Inland)	8.00
Registration Fee (Foreign)	25.00
Advice of Delivery Fee (Inland and Foreign)	8.00
Reply Coupons	30.00