

MARCH 2004

MONTHLY SOCIETY MEETINGS

JANUARY – The January meeting was held on Saturday 10th at Collège du St Esprit, Sir Virgil Naz Avenue, Quatre Bornes.

The **Stamps of Mauritius** for the year 2003 were reviewed and those of 2004 previewed. The consensus was that the topics shown on the stamps as well as the final products were of poorer than average quality.

Comments from overseas members and correspondents affixed to the Notice Board seemed to confirm this view:

.... "the stamps, must say the graphics are underwhelming" R.M. – USA

"The Fortifications set looks well standards will drop as we celebrate inconsequential events" N.C. – UK

"Ces dernières années c'était une tradition stable Est-ce que le service postal change ses principes" V.C. – Russia

... " recent Mauritius stamp topics are a bit obscure. Is the stamps subject selection still a political process? R.M. – USA

Political process! How does one explain the tampering with the 2004 programme. **C.O.I.** in, **Stone Buildings** out, **SADC** in and we are only at March. Have you looked at your stamps of 2003/4? What do you think?

B.I.O.T. 2001-2003 was a display by Mico Antoine showing the stamps for the period which were mainly sheetlets of the Royals.

Lists of the History Definitives (SG 529/48) varieties, new printings, margin imprints, overprints and other details of this series (as the study develops on an internet site) were discussed.

The Purchase List and Bid Board carried some very nice items and sales were good.

FEBRUARY – The February meeting was held on Saturday 7th at the usual venue and at the usual time.

The main topics were: **Chinese New Year** stamps of the USA, the complete 12 years cycle starting with the Rooster of 1992 to the Monkey of 2004 in whole panes, and other Chinese New Year stamps from Canada, Christmas Island and Jersey.

100 Years of Powered Flight featured the B.I.O.T. and Singapore issues as well as many Mauritian flown covers.

Ah Lan Lam Yan Foon gave a humorous explanation of the origin of the 12 years cycle and he disclosed guarded secrets about an angled 90° compatibility chart.

One member showed off his cover signed by none other than Nelson Mandela during the latter's private holiday on the island. Should be worth something someday.

Interesting aspects of Madagascar brought back by Jaswant Jhurry were exposed particularly with regard to that country's stamps (*dentelé et non-dentelé*) and their high priced First Day Cover issuing policy.

The Certificate of Posting "FEE" Rs 6 postal charge and the International Rs 25 Registration charge were explained.

This was the last meeting for Teo Keng Lee, CEO of South East Asian Bank, who was returning to Malaysia after a three-year stint in Mauritius. He offered a philatelic gift to all those in attendance.

The meeting was topped off with a bite of Willem Herbst's birthday cake.

MARCH – The Annual General Meeting was held on Saturday 20th at 2 pm at Collège du St Esprit, Sir Virgil Naz Avenue, Quatre Bornes.

The Agenda was:

- a. Approval of Minutes of Meeting of 2003 AGM
- b. Report of the President for the Year 2003
- c. Approval of Accounts ending 31st December 2003
- d. Approval of Budget for the Year 2004
- e. Election of Committee Members and Office Bearers for the year 2004
- f. Appointment of Auditor for the Year 2004
- g. Any Other Business

The Minutes and the Budget were approved. The President's Report was adopted. The Auditor was appointed and Committee Members were elected. All business was carried out except that the Accounts were conditionally approved, subject to them being rectified due to a technical error; the Accounts had been erroneously signed by the outgoing Auditor instead of being signed by the Auditor appointed at the AGM of 2003. The Registrar of Associations was to be informed of this slip up.

The new Committee for Year 2004 is composed of:

- Yvan Martial – President
- Mico Antoine – Vice President
- Judex Adrien – Treasurer
- Pravin Bhowanydeen – Assistant Treasurer
- Patrick Kwan Cheung – Secretary
- Gaëtan Bouchet – Assistant Secretary
- Sanjit Teelock – Member
- Jean Auguste – Member
- Ah Lan Lam Yan Foon – Member

A small display of current stamps (worldwide) was put up. The C.O.I. stamps of Mauritius and Seychelles were discussed. The special First Day Cover handstamp strike and examples of its application on unofficial C.O.I. covers as well as previous usage of the handstamp on past Official First Day Covers were shown.

Correspondence and lists received from overseas philatelists seeking Mauritian exchange partners were affixed to the Notice Board. News Items No 4 of December 2003 was distributed.

The attendance at the AGM was higher than that of the January and February meetings.

MONTHLY COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The Monthly Management Committee meetings were held on Saturday 24th January, Saturday 14th February and Saturday 27th March at the residence of the President at 88 Club Road, Vacoas.

NEW MEMBERS

The following joined the Society during the first quarter of 2004.

Marek Pawel SZREJNA, Sainte Croix, Mauritius
Vicky CUSHMAJEE, Quatre Bornes, Mauritius

EXCHANGES

Marek SZREJNA is a young Polish catholic priest who wishes to get in touch with collectors interested in Aerophilately/Aircraft with a view to exchanging stamps etc.
His address: Cure de Sainte Croix, Sainte Croix, Mauritius.

Svien Erik ANDERSON, P.O. Box 13, No. 3138 Skallestad, NORWAY wishes to obtain mint material of Mauritius from the Elizabethan period.

Yves HAREL, 28 rue Lalo, 75116 Paris, FRANCE wishes to obtain stamps of Mauritius as per his wantlist.

Patrick MARTEL, 43 rue Victor Hugo, 59960 Neuville-en-Ferrain, FRANCE wishes to exchange used stamps of France for other stamps world-wide. He will reply to all letters.

Sandor WEISS, Keleti Karocy u-15A, Budapest 4 – 1024, HUNGARY wishes to obtain stamps of Mauritius and other countries in complete sets, mint condition only.

Interested members may contact the above directly and set up their own mode of exchange. The Society will not get involved in any arbitration. Names and details are published on request.

THE BEST OF 2003

The result of the annual poll conducted by Sanjit Teelock is:

- Favourite Stamp – Rs 15 Echo Parakeet-Male
- Favourite F.D.C – Anniversaries and Events
- Favourite Set – Trochetia

NEW POST OFFICE

The Postal Services Division of the Mauritius Posts Ltd plans to open a new post office in the **Castel** or **Upper Mesnil** region. A Tender Notice dated 25th March 2004 giving details of the type of premises and amenities required was published in the press.

POSTAL TOWER?

No ground has yet been broken in Ebène at the site where the “foundation stone” plaque was unveiled by Hon. Paul Raymond Bérenger, GCSK on 10th October 2002. Note that the other Postal Tower of 1974 depicted on SG-474 was never ever built in Port Louis.

LA POSTE CENTRALE

The Port Louis Central Post Office is still housed in the building it has continuously occupied since 1870 even if the air-conditioning is broken down for ages now and even if the ceiling on the varandah is completely rotten and is disintegrating at March 2004. But time is running out.

The Port Louis Central Post Office will now not be relocated to the ex-BNPI building across the road which it acquired and paid for, despite the announcement to that effect by (the same) Hon. Paul Raymond Bérenger, GCSK, because The Mauritius Post and Cooperative Bank is squatting in this building since it shifted from its former premises.

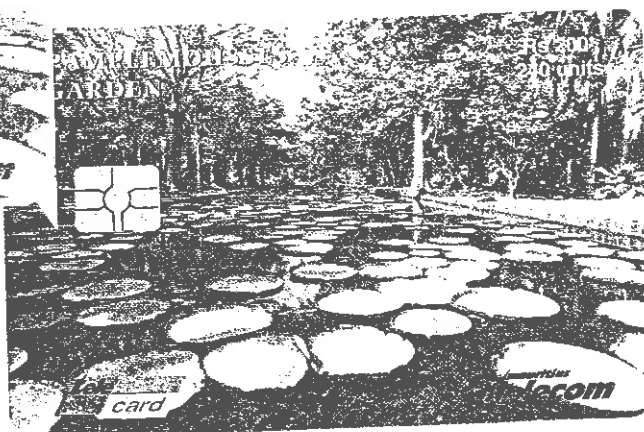
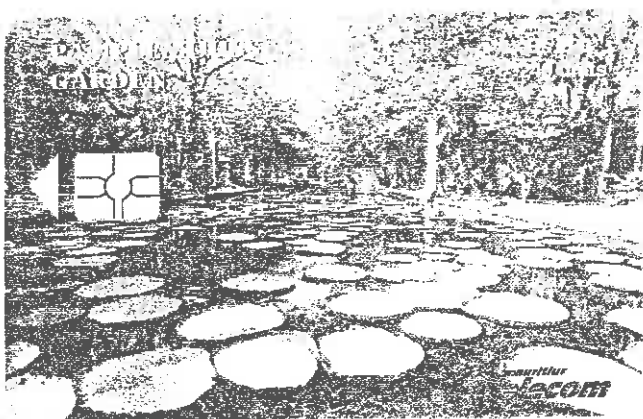
The Port Louis Central Post Office will move into the building vacated by The Mauritius Post and Cooperative Bank, recently created with the reserves and depositors/customers of the Post Office and Post Office Savings Bank respectively. The building on Dumat Street was previously occupied by the now defunct and bankrupted M C C B and its successor the loss making New Cooperative Bank. The losses of the New Cooperative Bank have been absorbed by The Mauritius Post and Cooperative Bank in a win-win merger – Paul Bérenger dixit. He also predicts a bright future for the new M P C B claiming that it will become a leading Mauritian financial institution. Watch this space!

MAURITIUS TELECOM SMART CARDS

A new 240 units Smart Card featuring **Pamplemousses Gardens** bearing the manufacture date of October 2003 has been in use since March 2004. The new card carries the same scene as that of the original Smart Card of April 2003 but it is darker in colour and an additional logo has been added on front. On back the shaded area is of a darker olive than that of the original.

30,000 cards were produced and the price is Rs 200 plus VAT.

NB. As from 2004 we will list Mauritius Telecom Smart Cards ONLY. Other Mauritius Telecom cards and private operators cards will not be listed as there has been a proliferation of these cards. There are just too many cards and listing all of them is beyond our scope.



The Mauritius Philatelic Society, PO Box 89, Quatre Bornes, MAURITIUS
 Edited by **Mico W Antoine**
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STAMPS

Commémoration du 20ème anniversaire de la COI

A single stamp with a face value of Rs 10 was released on Wednesday 27th February to mark the occasion of the 20th Anniversary of the Indian Ocean Commission. The stamp shows the blue logo of the organisation and the flags of the five member countries on a white background.

The stamp was designed by Derek Miller and printed by BDT International Security Printing Ltd.

The Postal Services issued this Press Notice dated 23rd February 2004:

“No Official First Day Cover will be issued. Arrangements have been made to cancel personal covers of philatelists on the date of issue only at the Philatelic Bureau, General Post Office, Port Louis, with a special cachet.

Collectors are invited to call at the above Bureau where their covers will be serviced on 27th February 2004”

Note: The actual date and year of the “birth” of the Commission is as unclear as the various issue dates of the 20th anniversary five nation joint issue. The Seychelles issued its COI stamp on 16th February 2004. The Comoros and France (Reunion Island and Mayotte being members) are yet to issue their stamps. Madagascar issued its stamp on 4th December 2003.

Mountains of Mauritius

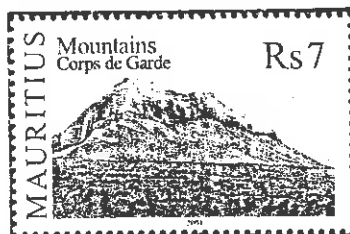
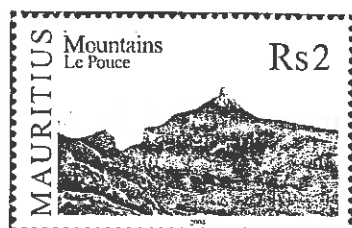
A set of four special stamps featuring **Mountains** were released on Wednesday 11th March as follows:

- Rs 2 Le Pouce
- Rs 7 Corps de Garde
- Rs 8 Le Chat et la Souris
- Rs 25 Piton du Milieu

The set was designed by Derek Miller and printed by De La Rue Security Print. The Official First Day Cover is illustrated with a map of Mauritius showing the location of the four mountains. The cover was priced at Rs 50 per unit.

NB. A small quantity of the stamps were rushed to Mauritius by special courier in order to meet the launch date of 11th March 2004, the eve of the anniversary of Independence Day, a public holiday in Mauritius. The remaining stamps were dispatched later. None of the sheets from the first consignment were numbered whereas all the sheets from the second consignment were numbered.

The sheet number is in the selvage above stamp R 1/5 in the top right hand corner of the sheet. Have you got that stamp or better still the block of four with cylinder numbers and traffic lights from both consignments – with and without sheet number? Nice variety huh!



FORTHCOMING STAMPS ISSUES – 2004

A set of four stamps will be issued in June featuring four “*Petits Métiers*” (Small Businesses) as follows:

- Rs 2 Ferblantier (Tinsmith)
- Rs 7 Cordonnier (Cobbler)
- Rs 9 Forgeron (Blacksmith)
- Rs 15 Vannier (Basketry)

See the four other *Petits Métiers* stamps SG 970/73 of 1997

- A single stamp is scheduled for release in August featuring the brand new Cyber Tower in Cyber City at Ebène on the occasion of a **SADC** (South African Development Community) conference in Cyber Island (also known as Mauritius). Maybe two stamps will be issued!!
- Note that the “History” topic set of stamps featuring **Stone Buildings** announced for September 2004 has been rescheduled for release in 2005.
- The **Rodrigues – Decentralised Administrative Process** set of four stamps scheduled for October 2004 and the **Anthuriums** four stamps set planned for December 2004 are maintained in the amended Official Stamp Programme released by The Mauritius Post Ltd – Postal Services Division.

THE PRESS

Week-End	11.1.2004	Mauritius Post Ltd: informatisation et diversification des services.
Week-End	11.1.2004	“ <i>Faire de la Poste</i> un Community Hub”.
L’express	12.1.2004	La Poste projette de vendre des bons de Trésor.
L’express	16.1.2004	Les postiers contestent la révision salariale.
Le Défi-Plus	17.1.2004	Les postiers brûlent le rapport de KPMG.
Week-End	18.1.2004	Les postiers menacent de retourner au sein du service civil.
L’express	20.1.2004	Les postiers toucheraient plus que l’instituteur.
L’express	21.1.2004	Le plafond s’écroule à la Poste Centrale.
L’express	22.1.2004	Après discussion entre les syndicats des postiers et MPL.
L’express	22.1.2004	Un accord entre la poste et le front syndical.
Le Défi-Plus	24.1.2004	Un accord signé entre les deux parties.
Le Mauricien	24.1.2004	Accord entre la direction et les syndicats de la poste.
Week-End	25.1.2004	Hausse salariale moyenne de 24% pour les postiers.
L’express	25.1.2004	Sérénité retrouvée à la Poste.
L’express	27.1.2004	Straight Answers.
L’express	05.2.2004	Partenaire stratégique pour MPL.
L’express	07.2.2004	Chapeau à la poste!
L’express	11.2.2004	Un postier réclame son scooter auprès d’IBL.
Le Défi-Plus	14.2.2004	Un climat d’insécurité règne à la MPL.
L’express	23.2.2004	Les employés de la poste se réunissent.
L’express	26.2.2004	Privatisation de la poste redéploiement pour certains.
Le Défi-Plus	20.3.2004	Un délai de 30 jours accordé aux indécis.

MAURITIUS PHILATELIC SOCIETY = POSTAL HISTORY OF MAURITIUS