



MAURITIUS PHILATELIC SOCIETY

News Items 2005.1

P.O. Box 89 Quatre Bornes Mauritius

MARCH 2005

MONTHLY SOCIETY MEETINGS

JANUARY – The first Society get together of the new year took place at 2 p.m. on Saturday 15th January at Collège du St Esprit, Sir Virgil Naz Avenue, Quatre Bornes.

The January agenda was made up of three topics: the **Review of Mauritius 2004 – Stamps and Covers**, the **Postal History of Mauritius 2004** and **Errors and Varieties**. Mico Antoine dealt with the issues of 2004 and shared privileged information with those present about the COI, SADC and Rodrigues Regional Assembly sets. All the major events affecting the Postal Services during the year were reviewed. This included all the known cachets used during the year, the introduction of computer “labels”, transfers of post offices, senior appointments and retirements in the Postal Services and other milestones. Errors and Varieties examined mainly major unlisted errors, freaks, oddities, dry prints and inverted watermarks.

The first meeting was well attended with twenty members in the room. The Purchase List, Bid Board and Spot Auction were not on offer. The renewal of the Management Committee and the necessity to replace some departures as well as the need for new blood was brought up early in the hope that members would come forward.

FEBRUARY – The February meeting was held on Saturday 6th of the month at the usual venue and at the usual time.

The agenda was made up of **SIDS**, a display of **UNICEF** covers of countries that had participated in the “United Nations International Meeting to Review the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Development States” held in Mauritius from 10th to 14th January at the brand new Swami Vivekananda International Conference Centre in Pailles (phew!). Covers of participating island nations, a list of SIDS countries and data downloaded from a UN website were presented by Patrick Kwan.

Walking around Mauritius Part III was a display of photographs from the 7th, 8th and 9th stages of the walk around the island undertaken by Gaëtan Bouchet and Mico Antoine. These walks, from Cap Malheureux to Poudre d’Or, Poudre d’Or to Poste de Flacq and Poste de Flacq to Bel Air also featured illustrated covers made at post offices along the route.

Sainte Croix Post Office was postponed to April.

Latest philatelic news from around the world was discussed. The new *Lamouche Marianne* definitive stamps of France, the new BIOT Birds definitive stamps and stamp postcards were on display.

The Purchase List offered a range of covers and mint stamps. Attendance was good with 16 members on a very wet humid afternoon – real bad weather.

MARCH – The **Annual General Meeting** was held on Saturday 19th at 2 p.m. at Collège du St Esprit, Sir Virgil Naz Avenue, Quatre Bornes.

For the 16th consecutive year the quorum was assured with many members present.

The Agenda was made up of:

- (a) Approval of Minutes of 2004 AGM
- (b) Report of the President for the Year 2004
- (c) Approval of Accounts ending 31st December 2004
- (d) Approval of Budget for 2005
- (e) Election of Committee Members and Office Bearers for the year 2005
- (f) Appointment of Auditor for the Year 2005
- (g) Any Other Business

All the items on the agenda were presented and approved in conformity with the Rules and Regulations of the Society. The dedication of the five committee members who ensured a quorum at every meeting of the Management Committee between November 2004 and March 2005 was commended, the absence and actions of those who stayed away during this period were noted and the Society's gratitude to the auditor recorded.

The new Committee for Year 2005 is composed of:

- Patrick Kwan Cheung – President
- Jean Auguste – Vice President
- Judex Adrien – Treasurer
- Vicky Cushmajee – Vice Treasurer
- Mico Antoine – Secretary
- Gaëtan Bouchet – Assistant Secretary
- Ah Lan Lam Yan Foon – Member
- A Nasser Maderbokus – Member
- Indradev Curpen – Member

The former President, the former Vice Treasurer and one ordinary member of the committee did not stand for re-election.

Mico Antoine put up a comprehensive display of stamps featuring Birds. News Items 2004.4 of December 2004 was distributed.

MONTHLY COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The Monthly Management Committee meetings were held on Saturday 15th January, Saturday 5th February and Saturday 19th March at 1 p.m. at Collège du St Esprit, Sir Virgil Naz Avenue, Quatre Bornes.

NEW MEMBERS

The following joined the Society during the first quarter of 2005.

Stephan ANDRE of Biel Switzerland
Gerhard SCHUCKER of Biel/Bienne Switzerland
Diane VENTURI of Les Aviron Reunion Island
Paul van BODEGRAVEN of Amsterdam Holland
Saoud MAUTHOOR of Quartier Militaire Mauritius

RESIGNATIONS (R) TERMINATIONS (T) AND STRIKE OFFS (S/O)

The following are no longer members of the Society:

Peter IBBOTSON	Dorset England (R)
Louis LAURENTY	Oreux Belgium (S/O)
Guy HOUBRIX	Jemeppe-sur-Meuse Belgium (S/O)
Bernard BERTHE	Basecles Belgium (S/O)
Said KURMAULLY	Mid Glamorgan Wales (S/O)
Bertrand LAGESSE	Floreal Mauritius (R)
Jeewan BHUGOBAUN	Curepipe Mauritius (R)
Derek PAYEN	Rose Hill Mauritius (T)
Pravin BHOWANYDEEN	Quatre Bornes Mauritius (T)
Soleiman HÖSSEN	Les Guibies Mauritius (S/O)

Resignations refer to those who wrote in, Terminations to those who have been advised they are no longer members of the Society and Strike Offs to those removed from the membership list due to non-payment of dues.

EXCHANGES

The following wish to exchange stamps, covers and other philatelic items with members of the Society.

Imrich VARGA 95177 LADICE 262 SLOVENSKO (SLOVAKIA)	He seeks a "stamp collector partner" in Mauritius.
Bert OOSTHUIZEN 723 Zimba Street GARSFONTEIN X10 0081 PRETORIA SOUTH AFRICA e-mail: bert.oosthuizen@buhlergroup.com	He wishes to collect all Indian Ocean Islands stamps plus worldwide Aviation. Space, Ships, Milling of grain/wheat.

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

STAMPS

ROUND ISLAND

A set of four special stamps was released on 18th March 2005 in "the Nature series depicting endemic fauna and flora of Round Island." The stamps feature:

- Rs 2 Juvenile Keel Scale Boa – *Casarea dussumieri*
- Rs 8 Hurricane Palm – *Dictyosperma album var conjugotum*
- Rs 9 Round Island Petrel – *Pterodroma arminjoniana*
- Rs 10 Mazambon – *Lomatophyllum tormentorii*

The stamps were designed by Andrew Robinson and printed by BDT International Security Printing Ltd of Ireland. The Official First Day Cover priced at Rs 85.00 is illustrated with an aerial view of the island.

NEXT STAMP ISSUE POSTAL SERVICES

A set of four stamps on the Postal Services is scheduled for release in June. The stamps will feature Mail Sorting, Mail Transfer, Mail Distribution and Counter Service.

Stop Press. This set may not be issued on schedule. All the four artworks have been amended at least once and the Counter Service stamp has been redrawn more than once.

SIDS MAURITIUS 2005 – SPECIAL COVER

To commemorate the holding of the SIDS meeting in Mauritius in January, the Mauritius Postal Services hastily prepared 7000 special covers franked with three stamps (Re1, Rs4, Rs5) from the Fishes of Mauritius definitive set. The cover is illustrated with the SIDS Mauritius 2005 logo and the stamps are cancelled with a SIDS Mauritius cachet dated 10th January 2005.

3000 covers were made available to the Government of Mauritius and 4000 were put on sale to the public at Rs40 per unit at all post offices in Mauritius. The net profit from the sale of this commemorative cover, we were informed by a poster and a press notice, was to be donated to the Mauritius Post Tsunami Fund.

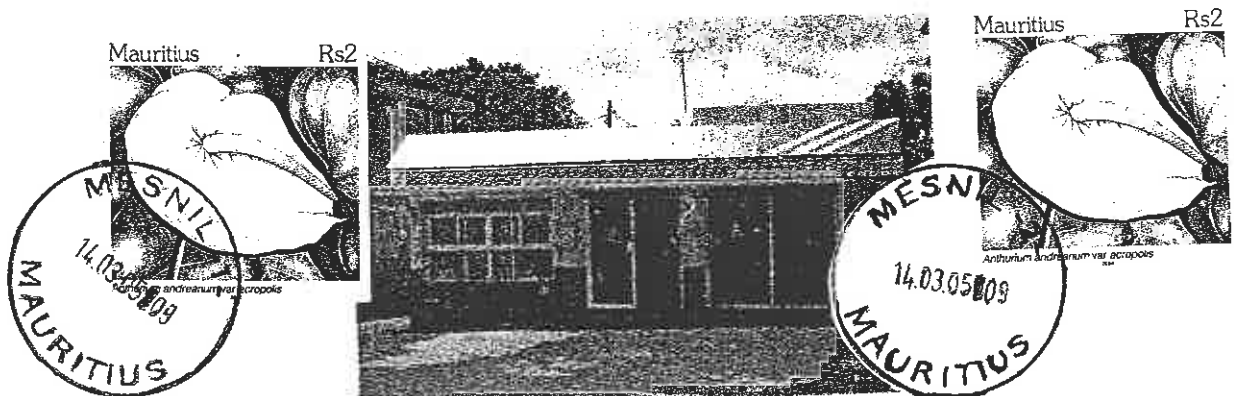
The cover does not carry the logo of the Mauritius Post Ltd. The insert in the cover does however bear the logo of the institution but makes no mention of the Tsunami Fund. The cover itself is of poor quality, a cheap product that looks cheap!

MESNIL POST OFFICE

A new Post Office was opened on Monday 14th March 2005 at Mesnil opposite the Mosque on Royal Road. It provides “the whole range of standard counter services with the exception of the National Pension and CWA bills that will be introduced later”.

NEW TYPE OF CDS - MESNIL

A new type of single circular date stamp has now been introduced into Mauritius. Supplied by Reiner of Germany the two “mail daters” in use at Mesnil are of 30mm head diameter with unengraved steel wheels 3mm in size. The two-digit date, month and year are separated from the two-digit hour by a slug, all being in the centre of the dater in one straight line. The two cds numbered 1 and 2 have the office name and numeral at the top with Mauritius at the base.



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

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POSTAL STATIONERY

Comment by Mico Antoine

The only type of postal stationery sold by the Postal Services during the last couple of years have been the imprinted Rs5 aerogramme, the re-rated Rs7 aerogramme with the additional two Re1 Fishes definitive stamps (available at all post offices) and the four Trochetia postcards which are on offer at a few selected outlets. Recently, since privatisation, some strange postal stationery have been introduced.

Currently on offer at several larger post offices are three types of white envelopes: two sizes of (business) window types and one normal type. All three are affixed with two Re1 Fishes definitive stamps, this in a futile effort to dispose of some 30,000,000 of Re1 Fishes value still in stock at mid 2004 from the initial order of 60,000,000 delivered as from October 2000. No one has been able to explain why 60,000,000 of this value was ordered and printed at one go.

The sure way to dispose of this huge stock is simply by issuing them to the 100 odd post offices particularly to the smaller post offices. This solution has not even been contemplated. Proof of this; during 2004 10,000,000 Rs2 denominations were produced that is the equivalent of 20,000,000 Re1 stamps. Some of these are to date still being issued to all the post offices in Mauritius and Rodrigues, and the Rs2 values of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly and Anthuriums stamps are still in stock. The Re1 Fishes is hardly seen on mail – the bulk is still in stock; some are however being used on aerogrammes and on some strange postal stationery.

The envelopes are on offer at Rs2.75 and Rs2.50. The public is not interested and no one is buying them, not at post office counters anyway. The Postal Services have since adopted a new strategy, these envelopes are now being offered to commercial firms, for example, a hotels group. In the meantime several values of the Fishes definitive are at critically low levels and the dilemma is (a) new printings (b) extension of the life of the Fishes definitive until the Re1 value is exhausted (c) burn the Fishes.

A series of postcards, very silly stuff, manufactured by Modus Vivendi Ltd, are on offer at some post offices, with the manufacturer's poster pinned to the post office notice board without the selling price indicated. The odd sized postcards and their stampless accompanying envelopes are offered at Rs18.00 per unit. No question of using two Re1 Fishes stamps on these envelopes because part of the illustration on the envelope will be covered; the "motto" beneath the illustration does have a warning "Beware of side effects". The public is not buying these silly postcards. When I asked for one at Quatre Bornes the Postal Officer at the counter left her post, went to her shelves in the main safe and returned with some 100 cards. She selected one for me – truly silly stuff.

In the meantime sets of four Trochetia postcards of June 2003 (a substantial stock) lie in the Postal Services main vault some two years after they were produced. Each card sells at Rs 10; a stamped normal white envelope (with two Re1 Fishes stamps) new type postal stationery another Rs2.50 that is a total of Rs12.50. The silly stuff cost Rs18 and a single Rs2 stamp must be added (remember 2 x Re1 will mar the illustrated cover) that is Rs 20.00.

The good quality Trochetia postcards are a Postal Services product; the poor quality postcards are a private entrepreneur's. Why is the Mauritius Post Ltd selling someone else's postcards instead of its own?

PUBLICITY HANDSTAMP

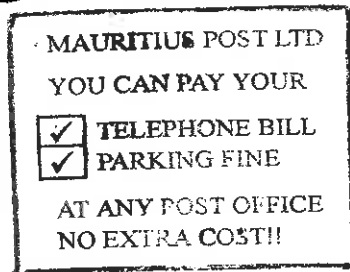
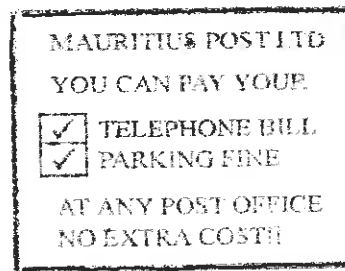
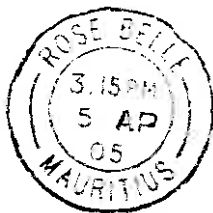
A special publicity handstamp was put in use as from 15th March 2005 at seven post offices namely Floreal, Forestside, Grand Bay, Mahebourg, New Grove, Rivière du Rempart and Rose Belle with instructions to “impress a maximum number of correspondence received for delivery” and on “ALL Mauritius Telecom items on the front cover”.

The rubber stamps were to be used until 15th April 2005 in order to publicize two new services offered by the Postal Services in its One Stop Shop business effort.

The boxed device measures 4½cm x 3½cm with the message in six lines with two boxed ticks reading – MAURITIUS POST LTD/YOU CAN PAY YOUR/TELEPHONE BILL/PARKING FINE/AT ANY POST OFFICE/NO EXTRA COST!! – ending with two exclamation marks.

An inking pad and a phial of red ink was supplied with the rubber stamp.

(Despite instructions to apply the rubber stamps with red ink, that is why a phial of red ink was supplied, I have got covers from Floreal and New Grove struck in blue).



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THE PRESS

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|---------------|-----------|---|
| Le Mauricien | 05.1.2005 | Le Postmaster Bahemia écroué comme le cerveau du hold-up. |
| Le Défi-Plus | 08.1.2005 | Partenariat FedEx/MPL |
| Le Défi-Plus | 08.1.2005 | Un Postmaster épinglé par la police. |
| L'express | 09.1.2005 | Le “Postmaster” dans le coup. |
| Le Matinal | 11.1.2005 | Postal Services do their bit for tsunami victims. |
| L'express | 13.1.2005 | La poste dynamise son service express. |
| Scope | 21.1.2005 | Symbolisme de la Poste Centrale. |
| L'express | 30.1.2005 | La Poste prend des couleurs africaines. |
| L'express | 31.1.2005 | Les bureaux de poste démocratisent l'internet. |
| Le Matinal | 31.1.2005 | Centre Culturel Mandela : les postiers font de la résistance. |
| Le Matinal | 01.2.2005 | Post Office staff against “erasing” of history. |
| Le Matinal | 05.2.2005 | The old order changes |
| L'express | 14.2.2005 | Le bâtiment idéal |
| La Voix Kreol | 18.2.2005 | Un article raciste d'Yvan Martial contre les créoles. |
| La Voix Kreol | 18.2.2005 | Le bâtiment idéal |
| L'express | 16.3.2005 | Des timbres pour valoriser l'île Ronde. |

MAURITIUS PHILATELIC SOCIETY = POSTAL HISTORY OF MAURITIUS