

JUNE 2005

MONTHLY SOCIETY MEETINGS

APRIL – The April meeting was held at Collège du St Esprit, Sir Virgil Naz Avenue, Quatre Bornes at 2 p.m. on Saturday 2nd April.

The agenda for the afternoon was:

- **The Round Island** commemorative stamps issued on 18th March were examined. Earlier stamps such as the Round Island scene from the Protection of the Environment set (SG 810A of 1991 and 801cB of 1996 and 1997), the Round Island Bottle Palm (SG 689) from the Palm Trees set of 1984 and the Round Island Gecko (SG974) of 1998 were also shown. Photographs, postcards and special greeting cards of Round Island were on display as were some very attractive private covers of the Round Island set of stamps.
- **Sainte Croix Post Office** featured several covers struck with the temporary datestamp in use at Ste Croix Post Office. Mico Antoine explained the circumstances surrounding the “thefts” at the post office and the introduction of the locally manufactured rubber cancelling device on 8th November 2004.
- **OUTER ISLANDS OF THE INDIAN OCEAN** – History and Postal History of Rodrigues, Agalega, St Brandon, ZES and Iles Eparses, the title of the forthcoming book by Steve Pendleton was previewed. A final draft of the book was shown. Publication is scheduled for the second half of 2005.

As expected attendance was low since the April meeting was held only two weeks after the AGM of 19th March.

MAY – The May meeting was held on Saturday 7th of the month at the usual time and at the usual venue.

The programme was composed of:

- **Walking around Mauritius Part VI** was a presentation by Gaëtan Bouchet and Mico Antoine about the last three stages of the twelve walks that began in Souillac in May 2004. The stages from Bel Air to Old Grand Port to Trois Boutiques to Souillac were presented with some fifty photographs and covers made at post offices along the route as well as postage stamps depicting topics and scenes from the three stages.
- **A Mauritian Philatelic Tribute to Pope John Paul II**, a display of stamps, covers, postcards, maxicards and documents put up by Mico Antoine. The display was in the main items from the visit of the Pope to Mauritius and Rodrigues in October 1989. Several members made covers postmarked at Sainte Croix and Saint Pierre on 2nd April and 8th April 2005 the dates of his death and his burial respectively.

Contemporary Mauritian Commercial Covers, the main subject for the June meeting was explained. Examples of items that were deemed acceptable were shown. Final arrangements for the assault of *Le Pouce* were discussed and the ascent was confirmed for 14th May with a 9 a.m. rendezvous at Moka Police Station.

The Purchase List and Bid Board offered a wide range of Mauritian items and sales were very good.

JUNE – The June meeting took place at 2 p.m. at the usual venue in Quatre Bornes on Saturday 5th.

Amongst the material on display were:

- **Coastal Post Offices** was a display of covers made at post offices sited in coastal localities from Baie du Cap in the south, the west coast, the north coast, the east coast, the southeast and the south coast to Souillac. Illustrated covers, photographs of the post offices, historical data such as year of inauguration, types of datestamps and postal markings, period maps and tables of postal rates were shown.
- **The Contemporary Mauritian Commercial Cover** display attracted only five participants who showed from two to twenty items. Alain Louis showed some twenty Mauritius Commercial Bank and Mauritius Telecom metermarked window envelopes, Patrick Kwan some fifteen registered covers on which the designated rubber stamp registration handstamp produced defective office names, e.g. the broken p of Sebastopol. Nasser Maderbokus showed two items, a double rated local undelivered cover and a taxed (postage due) cover from abroad, Mustapha Khan showed two items both with the misspelt VACCAS (for Vacoas) registration label and Mico Antoine showed a dozen covers handstamped with Explanatory Markings and five “Missent” items.

Dr Nasser Maderbokus’s local undelivered double rated multiple cacheted cover was voted the most unusual item.

Photographs of the *Le Pouce* climb and a short exposé about the ascent by eleven members of the Society, including two overseas visitors, completed the afternoon’s activities.

Kris Gunnoo, the officer-in-charge of the Philatelic Bureau of Mauritius Postal Services was our special guest. He addressed the meeting and assured our members that his services are at their disposal and that he would make every effort to satisfy their needs.

News Items 2005.1 was distributed. Sales from the Bid Board and Purchase List, supervised by Ah Lan Lam Yan Foon, were very good.

MONTHLY COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The Monthly Management Committee meetings were held on Saturday 2nd April, Saturday 7th May and Saturday 4th June at 1 p.m. at Collège du St Esprit, Sir Virgil Naz avenue, Quatre Bornes.

POSTAL STATIONERY

Further to the comment by Mico Antoine in News Items 2005.1 of March 2005 more recent details of the new type of postal stationery introduced by the Mauritius Postal Services have come to light.

Sometime in June 2005 posters were placed on Notice Boards in some post offices promoting postal stationery. The posters read:

Nouveau, maintenant en vente. Enveloppes "prêt-à-poster" valable uniquement pour les envois locaux.

Five types of envelopes were offered.

Dimensions :

1 – 114x162 avec fenêtre

2 – 114x162 opaque

3 – 110x230 avec fenêtre

4 – 110x230 opaque

5 – 110x230 autocollant

(Translated that means two window types, one self-sealing and two opaque envelopes whatever opaque may mean. A new feature of the Mauritius Postal Services is the increased utilisation of the French Language.)

The envelopes are available at 26 post offices:

Batiment E. Anquetil, Beau Bassin, Bel Air, Bell Village, Centre de Flacq, Chemin Grenier, Curepipe, Flic en Flac, Floréal, General Post Office, Goodlands, Grand Bay, Mahebourg, Mesnil, Plaine Verte, Phoenix, Quartier Militaire, Quatre Bornes, Réduit, Rivière des Anguilles, Rose Belle, Rose Hill, St Pierre, Solferino, Souillac, Vacoas.

Three post offices have got lost in translation. Bell Village, Batiment E. Anquetil and Plaine Verte are officially designated as Port Louis Western Suburb, Port Louis Centre and Port Louis Eastern Suburb.

One fundamental oversight - prices are not indicated on the posters.

N.B. The question remains – Is this the way the Mauritius Postal Services is going to get rid of 30,000,000 Re1 Fishes stamps? One thing is certain, they are going to recover many soiled and mishandled envelopes in the future – when they terminate their hopeless scheme.

NEXT STAMP ISSUES

POSTAL SERVICES

The **Postal Services** set of stamps has been rescheduled for release on 14th July 2005, a month later than the programmed date.

OLD STONE BUILDINGS

The set of four stamps featuring the Carnegie Library and the District Court in Curepipe, the Post Office Headquarters in Port Louis and the Vagrant Depot outside Port Louis at Grand River North West on the coastal road (Royal Road) to Pointe-aux-Sables are scheduled for release in September.

SALE OF POSTCARDS AT POST OFFICE COUNTERS

A wide range of commercial postcards supplied by a private entrepreneur were put on sale at four outlets "on a pilot basis" as from 27th June 2005. The outlets are the Postal Museum, the General Post Office (Dumas Street), Flic en Flac and Grand Bay.

The three types of cards designated TYPE A B and C are priced at Rs 8.00, Rs 12.00 and Rs 12.00 per unit. These products sell in open commerce at around Rs 6.00, Rs 8.00 and Rs 8.00 at stalls and tourist shops sited in close proximity to the four outlets. Some outlets offer them for as low as Rs 4 Rs 5 and Rs 6 respectively, e.g. a stationery shop in Quatre Bornes.

The “privatised” Postal Services has introduced another new product in its one-stop-shop new business development project.

CORRIGENDUM

ROUND ISLAND

The value of the **Mazambron** stamp which appeared as Rs 10 instead as Rs 25 in the March 2005 **News Items** is hereby corrected.

EXCHANGES

GLEN HUNTER, 22 Madeleine Avenue, Northmead NSW 2152, AUSTRALIA; Fax No. 612 96887556; e-mail: - glenhunter@optusnet.com.au wishes to get in contact with collectors of Mauritius.

He wishes to obtain

- A number of singles from the period between 1870's and 1920's
- Modern definitive issues (only) particularly various dated printings such as the 1989 “Protection of the Environment” and the 1978 series.

RHONDA RICHARDSON of P.O. Box 445, Plantersville MS 38862, UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, needs help to complete her **postally used** collection of Mauritian stamps from 1937 to present.

Members may get in touch with Glen and Rhonda under the Society's usual reserve.

THE PRESS

Le Défi-Plus	09.4.2005	Factures d'électricité à la poste
L'express	04.5.2005	La poste offre l'internet gratuit
Le Défi-Plus	07.5.2005	Paiement des déclarations à la poste
L'express	08.5.2005	Le rendezvous de l'Afrique postale
Le Matinal	10.5.2005	Les administrations postales appelées à devenir des “infocom entreprises”
Le Matinal	21.5.2005	L'ancien bâtiment de la Poste centrale tombe en décrépitude
Le Matinal	30.6.2005	Free Internet access from today

MAURITIUS PHILATELIC SOCIETY = POSTAL HISTORY OF MAURITIUS

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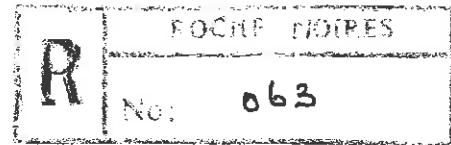
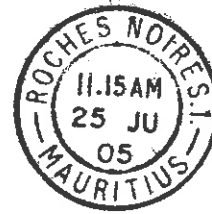


POST OFFICES
ROCHES NOIRES

A new post office became operational on Thursday 16th June 2005 at Roches Noires. It is situated at the corner of Royal Road and New Road 100 metres from the Mauritius Telecom Building.

It provides a limited range of normal counter services but not the payment of pensions and water bills. Delivery services including telegrams are provided by Rivière du Rempart Post Office.

The post office name in the double circle circular datestamp is correctly spelt Roches Noires. The cds has Roches Noires and the numeral 1 at top and Mauritius at base. The registration rubber handstamp is misspelt Roche Noires and the straight line rubber stamp (for official use) is also misspelt Roche Noires.



ROCHE NOIRES

SAINTE CROIX

The temporary rubber datestamp used at Sainte Croix Post Office since 8th November 2004 was withdrawn on 3rd June 2005 at 1 p.m. On the same day a standard new Type D double circle circular datestamp was introduced at 1.15 p.m.

- N.B. ● It has taken the "privatized" Mauritius Post Ltd over six months to replace a datestamp.
- The Mesnil Post Office is the only post office in Mauritius using new single circle datestamps since it opened on 14th March 2005. All other post offices in Mauritius and Rodrigues use double circle circular datestamps.

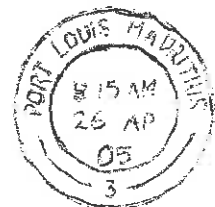


GENERAL POST OFFICE COUNTER

The main post office in Port Louis sited on Dumas Street began to use a new double circle circular datestamp as from 26th April 2005. Port Louis Mauritius is at the top of the cds with the numeral 3 at the base and short lines at the sides.

Another old double circular datestamp also with numeral 3 has been in use for decades at the old main post office in Port Louis (at least since the early 1960s) as well as at the Dumas Street site since the transfer of May 2004. This old cds is almost identical to the new cds except that the characters and numerals are thicker and there is a dot between Port Louis and Mauritius at the top. The two datestamps are used on different counters.

N.B. As was the case with the two Vacoas 6 cds when the second Vacoas 6 cds manufactured locally by Metal Cast Ltd was introduced in 2003 someone in the Mauritius Postal Services has not learnt to count yet (see News Items 2003.3 September 2003).



TEMPORARY CLOSURES

La Louise Postal Agency was closed for business from 7th May to 8th June. The agent, R. Boodhun in whose store the "La Louise Post Office" (that is what is painted on the building) is located closed his shop and went on holiday to Britain. He reopened his shop at the La Louise crossroads on 9th June.

Cluny Postal Agency was closed for business from 18th May to 17th June. The agent CKC Jean Chung Chung Wai closed his shop situated at Royal Road and went on leave.

No press notices were published for either closures and no information to the public regarding alternative arrangements were announced.

THE MAY OUTING
(see April Convocation)

On Saturday 14th May eleven members of the Society, including two overseas visitors, led by Indradev Curpen and Vijay Ramharai met at the Moka Police Station at 9 a.m. Everybody including the President was on time and that is something very recent.

The group then caught a Sebastopol bound bus for the quick ride to Petit Verger. The bus stopped directly opposite an unpaved road which led directly to the foot of *Le Pouce*. The short walk, through the cane fields on Mon Desert Alma Sugar Estate, during which a briefing was held was leisurely and unhurried.

On a sunny, cloudless, windy day with gusts of 35 to 45 m.p.h. blowing from the south south east the ascent began with Vijay leading and Indradev bringing up the rear. Galloping ahead of Vijay was Judex Adrien followed by, in some disorder, T Greedharrye, Patrick Kwan, Soorooj Ramdewor, Jean Auguste, Mico Antoine, Keng Lee Teo, Stephen Spark and at the rear assisting Gaetan Bouchet, Indradev.

The assault of *Le Pouce*, along a narrow, slippery path, was slow and some one and a half hour later the group reached the plateau. From there on the climb up the gentle slope to the shoulder was easy. On a ledge over 2000 feet up the view was exceptional. At this point the thumb was only at arm's length behind the shoulder.

After a short rest one climber suddenly decided to go to the summit, something not envisaged. Five others followed but three of them desisted within a few yards from the crest, the obvious risks were not worth the relative glory. At around noon *Le Pouce* had been conquered by a trio of climbers.

The descent took one hour. The tired climbers then walked back to the main road and caught the same bus, christened *Ville de Paris*, to Moka. Nobody offered to walk back to Moka Police Station, no one wanted to visit Chateau Val Ory and a couple of gardens along the way.

One detail, the first to reach the top of *Le Pouce* was the oldest member of the pack; the two youngest were nowhere near the thumb.

There is something about mountain climbing, the lift upon reaching the summit is quickly dampened by the down of the impending drudge of returning to base.