

JUNE 2006

## MONTHLY SOCIETY MEETINGS

APRIL – The April monthly meeting was held at Collège du St Esprit, Sir Virgil Naz Avenue, Quatre Bornes at 2 p.m. on Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> April.

The agenda dealt with three subjects, namely the **Bicentenary of Mahebourg 1806-2006** stamps, Official First Day Cover, souvenir sheet, and postcards; **Scripophily** was about perfins and fiscals on Bills and Notes, Bank Drafts, Insurance receipts and a Registrar General receipt and the third item was the **Bishops of Mauritius (Anglicans)** and the **Bishops of Port Louis (Catholics)**.

An overall and critical review of the Bicentenary issue viz. the subjects depicted; – the far too frequent appearance of Labourdonnais on Mauritian stamps (1997, 1999 and 2006 during the last decade), the price and the quality of the glossy cover with its ungummed flap, the structure and contents of the accompanying data sheet and other negatives of this commemorative.

Scripophily, presented by Mico Antoine, featured multiple perfined keyplates and perfined pictorials on bills and other bank documents from existing and former banking institutions such as MCB/M and M.B.I/L<sup>T.D</sup> as well as receipts from BB&Co, MFI/C<sup>OL</sup><sup>D</sup> and the unlisted RG (Registrar General).

The Bishops was a fairly detailed joint presentation by Judex Adrien (an Anglican) and Mico Antoine (a Catholic) of the holders of the office and a range of cacheted free frankings as well as paid postage on commercial covers. The inclusion of this subject on the agenda was triggered by the recent acquisition of a 1926 franked OHMS cover initialled +JL (James Leen, Bishop of Port Louis) with an early Phoenix Delivery Mark and the enquiry from a UK member about a cover addressed to (Archdeacon) Edward C. Dawson.

25 members attended the meeting in the *Salle de Cathéchèse* right next door to Monsignor John Baptist Murphy's tomb.

MAY – The May meeting was held on Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> May at 2 p.m. at the usual venue in Quatre Bornes.

The main topic was the PowerPoint projection of a brand new DVD titled “**Museology in Mauritius**” prepared specially for the meeting which was presented by the Society's guest speaker, S Abdoolrahman, Acting Director-General of the Mauritius Museum Council. This was a presentation of the highest quality that covered all aspects of the management and workings of public museums in Mauritius. Amongst the contents of the DVD were the location of all the public museums and their collections. At the end of the hour long presentation, the Ag. Director invited questions from the members.

In the future the DVD will become the main medium by which the MMC will promote its objectives.

Indradev Curpen gave a talk on the **Prof. Basdeo Bissoondoyal** stamp issued on 15<sup>th</sup> April. He insisted upon the true recording of Mauritian history citing many examples of falsehoods. His delivery was accompanied by documentary evidence from books and press cuttings. It was also observed that the single stamp issue on one personality was a waste as there was a strong case to commemorate at least three other political figures during 2006 namely Gaëtan Duval (10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his death), Abdool Razack Mohamed (centenary of his birth), Guy Rozemont (50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his death).

Mico Antoine put up a display on **Railways Worldwide** in support of the Mauritius Museum Council's project for the Mauritius Government Railway Museum at Mapou.

23 members plus three guests from the MMC and the Rector of the College, Jacques Malié esq., attended the meeting. At the end of the session the MMC distributed their 2002-2003 annual report, in which the Society's "Stamp Exhibition 2002" features, to everyone present. Every one was also presented with the special Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund guided walks postcard obtained by the Society.

You miss much when you don't attend your meetings!

JUNE – The June Meeting was held at the usual venue and at the scheduled time on Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> June.

The agenda mentioned a very special display on **B.I.O.T.** and a display of photographs on the **Grande Rivière Sud Est "Outing"** in addition to the **Bring and Buy – Jumble Sale**, which because the December 2005 experience was such a success, a repeat could only be a hit!

The GRSE photographs were shown and a short review of the visit to the village and Ile-aux-Cerfs was made. The B.I.O.T. display was withdrawn and replaced by the examination of a couple of Mauritian lots on offer in a Geneva auction scheduled for 9<sup>th</sup> June.

Firstly, a Rodrigues cover addressed to Hon. H. Adam, the same H. Adam (then junior) of the now unsellable third Lady Gomm Ball cover – the one "posted" on 27<sup>th</sup> September 1847 instead of 21<sup>st</sup> September 1847 with scratches over the still visible Adam name. This Rodrigues cover was described as the "Unique use of B65 cancelled on cover" on an OHMS envelope (shown) with a back strike of "Rodrigues /A/JY.20.92 with Mauritius arrival alongside" (not shown).

A scanned colour reproduction of the catalogue page was examined and the following observed: the partial set-off of a circular "MAURITIUS" handstamp, the manuscript alteration of the "*reçu*" date (25/26) which is suspiciously similar to the addressee's script, the almost perfect B65 barred numeral "socked-on-the-nose / bull's-eye" strike on the stamp that does not appear to tie the Eight Cents Queen's Head to the cover. Rare item... "predating the next recorded cover from Rodrigues by nine years"... Indeed!

Also shown was a scanned colour reproduction of the 1847 H. Adam Jr cover (which has a clear postmark of 27/Sept/1847 struck on back with the Aikin datestamp) now catalogued for sale by "Special offer to tender".

Lastly the listed types of bluish paper used in printing the Post Paid are now called into question by two Post Paid with margins from Davies and Rudge respectively offered in the Geneva auction. Reproductions of these were shown, the bottom edge of one and the side edge of the other are white at the extremities, **not** blue.

The Jumble Sale was not a success; three vendors did not price their lots, the members designated to man the table did not do as asked of them because someone else took control of the table. In short the success of December 2005 was turned into a failure in June 2006.

22 members attended the meeting.

N.B. Lot 60047, Mauritius Rodrigues Island, the unique "B65" cancel on cover 1892, estimated at SFr 15,000-20,000 **did not sell** – "Lot closed".

### MONTHLY COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The monthly Management Committee meetings were held on Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> April, Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> May and Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> June at 1 p.m. at Collège du St Esprit, Sir Virgil Naz Avenue, Quatre Bornes.

### MEMBERSHIP

#### NEW MEMBERS

The following joined the Society between January and June 2006.

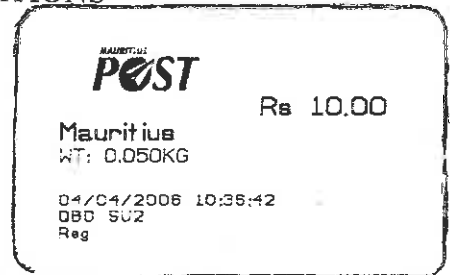
Lucie Cheryl CLEMENT	of	Beau Bassin, Mauritius
Pierre FLUSIN	of	Beau Bassin, Mauritius
Glen Evan HUNTER	of	Baulkham Hills, Australia
Habibullah Tursun KAMAL	of	Quatre Bornes, Mauritius
Assenjeé Ismaël KARA	of	Rose Hill, Mauritius
Vikash RUPEAR	of	La Flora, Mauritius

During the same period the Management Committee turned down a new application from a former overseas member of Mauritian origin residing in the UK.

### DEPARTURES AND RESIGNATIONS

The following are no longer members of the Society.

Markku HARKONEN of Norway – resignation  
 Willem HERBST (non renewal) – returned to South Africa  
 Denis MOOTHOSAMY of Mauritius – resignation  
 Marek SZREJNA (non renewal) – returned to Poland



### COMPUTER GENERATED LABELS

There are several components to the *WebRiposte* counter computer generated self adhesive label or 'computer stamp'. The main features are the Mauritius Post emblem or corporate logo, the value, the island's name, the four digit weight in kilograms, the eight digit date, the six digit time (hours, minutes, seconds), the abbreviated post office identification (QBO for Quatre Bornes) and the counter number, e.g. CC2. Reg is for Registered and in some cases Reg is repeated more than once with a (+) plus mark added.

When the computerization "Blue Penny Project" was introduced at Curepipe in November 2004 the Postal Services covered itself with ridicule by identifying the counter with the counter clerk's name, e.g. SBHUGOO, this was soon amended to initials only (SB) and then amended again to CC2 for counter clerk (CC) position (2) to identify the counter. These features became almost standard for other post offices as the computerization project was extended.... until recently.

On the Quatre Bornes label the CC2 has been replaced by SU2 to indicate the counter position SU being Stock Unit and at the (Port Louis) Waterfront post office the counter position is maintained and STK has been added for Stock hence the ID reads WFT CC1STK.

When Forest Side came online during 2006 the ID read FEF which is the logical abbreviation for Flic en Flac. The confirmation that FEF is in use at Forest Side comes from the postmark struck with a double circle datestamp reading Forest Side on the back of a registered item. FLO, logically is the ID of Floréal but not in Mauritius. FLO is the abbreviation of Flic en Flac as evidenced by the ID on the computer generated label. The ID of Floréal will be revealed in the next "News Items."

Some post office identifications are GPOC (Port Louis HQ Dumas Street) and GBAC (Grand Bay) the C in both cases stands for Counter as a means of differentiating the counter from other services. PLC (Port Louis Centre) PLW (Port Louis Western) STA (Stanley) BBA (Beau Bassin) GOO (Goodlands) RED (Reduit) and CUR (Curepipe).

P.S. The computer generated labels, the "stamp", the "registration slip" and other receipts, are printed on thermal paper. The details imprinted thereon generally disappear with time (in some cases rather too soon) and this raises the question of claims for non-delivery of registered items and the conservation of covers and postal history. Furthermore the conditions governing the "Registration of a Postal Packet" are not disclosed to the customer on the computer generated "Registration Certificate".

### THE PRESS

Le Mauricien	3.4.2006	"La poste opère dans des conditions difficiles"
Week-End Scope	5.4.2006	Une nouvelle ère (A l'heure de l'IT)
L'express	15.4.2006	Un timbre pour les cent ans de Basdeo Bissoondoyal
Le Défi-Plus	22.4.2006	Timbre-poste à l'effigie du Pr Bissoondoyal
Week-end	7.5.2006	Les kamikazes de 1858...
Le Mauricien	12.5.2006	Giandeo Bissessur nommé Head of Postal Operations
Le Défi-Plus	3.6.2006	Nouveaux timbres sur l'environnement
Le Matinal	8.6.2006	Ramcharitur : "Le GM doit laisser la poste travailler"
L'express	8.6.2006	Les syndicats de la poste expliquent les pertes
Le Mauricien	10.6.2006	POSTE Les syndicats contre les propos du P.M.
Week-end	11.6.2006	Mauritius Post émet quatre timbres autour de l'écologie
Le Mauricien	12.6.2006	The PM's press conference What they didn't ask him
L'express	12.6.2006	Mystery of missing mail from abroad
L'express	13.6.2006	MOKA. La poste dans un bâtiment historique
Le Matinal	29.6.2006	La poste se veut écologique

### MANAGEMENT CHANGES

**Nunkishor Fakun** appointed General Manager of Mauritius Postal Service on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2004 quietly left the Postal Services on 20<sup>th</sup> January 2006. This is the shortest tenure of office at the head of the Mauritian Postal Administration as GM, PMG or CPM since 1811. Other short tenures being those of **James Saunders** February 1811 – March 1813, **Charles Lennon** November 1888 – August 1890, **H. Babooram** January 1990 – April 1991 and **J. C. Doman** April 1991 – September 1992.

After Fakun's departure **Giandeo Bissessur** was appointed **Head of Postal Operations** as from 15<sup>th</sup> February 2006. The post of **General Manager** has been suspended.... for the moment.... and there are lots of Heads around now, six at the last count!

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

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2006

News ItemS 2006.2

A VERY SPECIAL COVER

The M.V. Mauritius Trochetia voyage No 353 of 30<sup>th</sup> March 2006 (a public holiday in Mauritius) was the first voyage of the vessel to the Chagos Archipelago. The vessel carried 100 native Ilois on a specially arranged visit to their "unforgotten Paradise" of Salomon, Peros Banhos and Diego Garcia. Some covers are known to have been carried on this voyage of which ten can be confirmed. Ten covers (5 each of two types) were carried by the vessel's Master and are postmarked Port Louis Mauritius and Diego Garcia Chagos as well as being cacheted, signed or initialled on recto or verso. The voyage is also logged by the Master on all ten covers and all the covers are franked with three values of the Birds definitives of B.I.O.T. but only five are franked with two additional Mauritian stamps. The markings on the covers are:

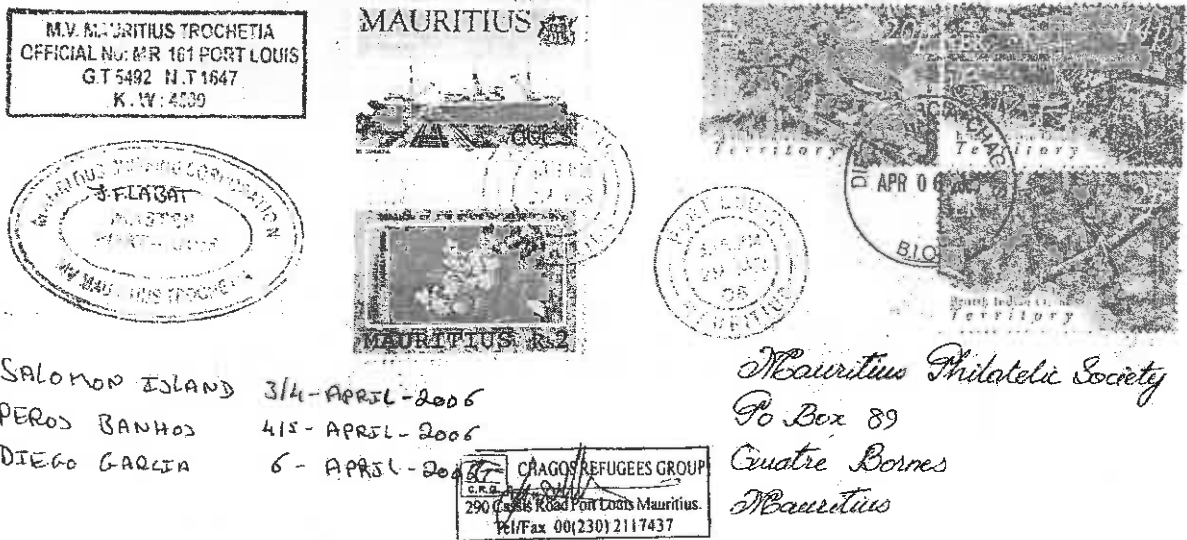
Front

- the Port Louis Mauritius postmark dated 29 March 2006
- the Diego Garcia Chagos postmark dated 6 April 2006
- the vessel's rectangular cachet
- the Mauritius Shipping Corporation Master's oval cachet with the Master's name **J.F. Labat** inscribed within the cachet by the Master
- the Chagos Refugees Group cachet and the signature of the group's leader, **Louis Olivier Bancoult**
- the manuscript logging of the voyage by the Master as follows:
  - o Salomon Island 3/4 - April - 2006
  - o Peros Banhos 4/5 - April - 2006
  - o Diego Garcia 6 - April - 2006

Back

- the British Indian Ocean Territory : Post Office : cachet
- the Port Louis, Mauritius postmark dated 10 April 2006.

The M.V. MAURITIUS TROCHETIA docked at Port Louis at 2 p.m. on 10 April 2006.



## VISIT TO GRANDE RIVIERE SUD EST

On May 20<sup>th</sup> 2006, at 9 a.m. sharp eight members of the Society left Manhattan Shopping Centre in Curepipe in two cars for Grande Rivière Sud Est via Quartier Militaire, Sebastopol, Montagne Longue and Bel Air. Another member, after having spent the morning extracting teeth at the Bel Air Dental Clinic joined the group at GRSE.

Of the original fourteen who had initially signed up, five went missing; two signings were conditional (subject to professional obligations); one was bed-ridden with *chikungunya* (the mosquito borne virus) and two others simply didn't turn up, one of the two has a reputation of being totally unreliable. Do you guys recognize yourselves?

At GRSE the group of nine visited the local post office situated in the multi-purpose village community centre where a couple of members made commemorative covers. This visit was followed by a guided tour of what remains of the former Mauritius Government Railway depot and installations which had been previously surveyed by a railway enthusiast. This took in the former post office in the station building and the platform (still intact), the sites of the goods and sugar sheds, the locomotive shed and the water tank (long demolished), and some existing former railways' staff accommodation. A stroll around the sea-front garden at Pointe de la Batterie and a look in at the "Passenger Shed" at the former ferry landing on the north bank of the river rounded up the walkabout in the village.

On the stroke of midday at Camp Pêcheurs Jetty the group embarked on the thirty-seater outboard "Sail Fish" skippered by Rajesh Junglee for a trip up-river to the Cascade and then back down river to the open sea for a one-hour ride to Ile-aux-Cerfs. Some deft manoeuvres were necessary to skim over and between rocks in shallow waters at the entrance to the Cascade and this included new seating arrangements and weight distribution. After lunch on Ile-aux-Cerfs where a couple of members turned down offers of free para-sailing lessons the group returned to GRSE. Nobody fell in the sea, nobody dipped their toes in water, nobody got wet.

The weather was superb, clear blue skies, warm sunshine, cool Indian Ocean breezes and a calm sea even if the boat got rocked a couple of times in the wakes of high-speed motor boats. At 2.30 the "Outing" ended and the participants found their way out of Grande Rivière Sud Est.



**G.R.S.E. POST OFFICE THEN – TODAY**

## STAMPS

**Birth Centenary of Prof. Basdeo Bissoondoyal**

A single stamp with the face value of Rs10 was released on Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> April 2006 to commemorate the centenary of the birth of Basdeo Bissoondoyal, born on that date at Tyack one hundred years ago. The stamp is illustrated with a portrait of the Pandit. The data card, inserted in the Official First Day Cover, pays a glowing tribute to the Professor, scholar, leader, writer and politician.

The Official First Day Cover priced at Rs25, illustrated with a pile of books, was launched at Rivière des Anguilles Post Office by the Minister responsible for the Postal Services on a Saturday morning. Once again a first day cover was put on sale on two different days, Saturday (15<sup>th</sup> April) and "exceptionally" on Monday (17<sup>th</sup> April) in this case.

The third (middle) gutter in the strip of five separating the two panes of the sheet is imprinted with the logo of Mauritius Post. The stamps were printed by Cartor of France on CA watermarked paper and the design is attributed to Mauritius Post Ltd.

**Ecology**

The **Ecology** set of four special stamps was released on Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> June, World Environment Day, and was **not** launched by the Minister responsible for the Mauritian Postal Services at Pamplemousses Post Office as envisaged! (He must be tired of officiating at awkward hours, on a Saturday or a Sunday for "exceptional" events)

The stamps feature:

- Rs2 - Biological control locust predation 1763
- Rs8 - Fish repopulation artificial reefs 1980
- Rs10 - Erosion control terraces in Rodrigues 1958
- Rs25 - First captive breeding of giant tortoises 1881

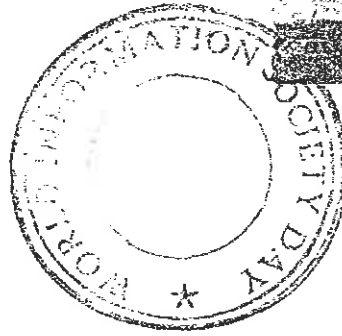
The Official First Day Cover is illustrated with an extract from the **Environment Protection Act – 2002**, on a parchment type scroll and "the envelope is made of recyclable paper" sic. The poorly written-up insert contains jumbled, dodgy data and outright mistakes.

The stamps were printed by BDT International Security Printers of Ireland on CA watermarked paper. The Mauritius Post logo is imprinted only on the middle gutter of the gutter strip separating the two panes of the sheet. The Official FDC is priced at Rs70 (the stamps have a face value of Rs45) and the design is attributed to Mauritius Post Ltd.

**WORLD INFORMATION SOCIETY DAY**

A special circular rubber stamp, 4.5cm in diameter, with the words **WORLD INFORMATION SOCIETY DAY** and a star at base within two outer circles and a single inner circle (as shown) was used on Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> May 2006 at five offices of the Postal Services.

The offices were G.P.O. Sorting and G.P.O. Delivery (both are housed in the same building on two separate levels at Albion Docks, Port Louis), Vacoas, Curepipe, Goodlands and Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam International Airport Office of Exchange (SSR O/E). The object was "to celebrate" and "to impress as many items of correspondence" handled with "the stamp on Wednesday 17.05.06 only."



On four covers seen, one from Goodlands and three from Port Louis, three are postmarked on 17.05.06 and one from Port Louis is postmarked 16.05.06.

### PERFINS

#### A NEW MAURITIAN PERFIN

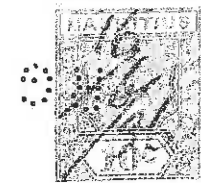
An unlisted perfin (perforated initials), namely **R G** for Registrar General, fiscally used on a receipt dated 16 June 1936 registering the sale of a motor vehicle, has come to light.

Details are as follows:

Perfin	No of holes	Height	User
<b>R G</b>	12/10	6 mm	Registrar General

#### Recto

A manuscript fiscal cancellation on the stamp (a single King George V keyplate) on "16/6/36" in black ink registers the date of sale of an "Austin" automobile for the sum of Rs850. R G is perfined upside down and the R is on the stamp but the G is outside the stamp.



Twenty fifth June  
 DC29 4893  
 Eighteen rupees & seventy cents  
 at 2% + 10%  
 Received  
 W. [Signature]

#### Verso

The sale was: **REGISTERED AT MAURITIUS ON THE / Twenty fifth DAY OF June / ONE THOUSAND NINE HUNDRED AND THIRTY six / REG: DC29 NO 4893 RECEIVED /** and in manuscript *Eighteen rupees & seventy cents at 2% + 10% surcharge* and the receipt is signed.

Ed. Note. The manuscript (*italics*) and signature are in black ink: the bold capitals is the four-line rubber stamp.

N.B. The claim that a new perfin has come to light is made with the reserve that this perfin was not listed before, certainly not in both Ibbotson books.