

NEWS ITEMS 2007.3

The Journal of the Mauritius Philatelic Society

P.O. Box 89 - Quatre Bornes - Mauritius - Indian Ocean

SEPTEMBER 2007

MONTHLY SOCIETY MEETINGS

JULY – The July meeting was held at Collège du St Esprit, Sir Virgil Naz Avenue, Quatre Bornes at 2 p.m. on Saturday 7th July 2007.

Three items were on the agenda: • The Dodo stamps of June 2007 and the Dodo on stamps of Mauritius since 1950; • Aspects of Mauritius Postal History – OFFICIAL PAID; • The latest on Mauritius and the World – including a Grain of Sand stamp.

The four black-bordered Dodo stamps and the unprogrammed souvenir sheet issued on 25th June as well as the presentation pack were discussed after an introduction by A.N. Maderbokus. The display was enhanced with postcards and maxi-cards on the famous extinct bird. Some exaggerations and inaccurate pieces from the local rags and the “Artistic impressions of the Dodo” data sheet of the Official FDC were dissected.

Patrick Kwan showed several covers franked with the “OFFICIAL PAID” circular double circle datestamp addressed to UK destinations from Vacoas, Rduit and Port Louis – all the covers were from official OHMS sources or the (Anglican) Bishop of Mauritius.

Tromlin, the Grain of Sand, occupied by France and claimed by both Madagascar and Mauritius, caused some hysteria amongst the political class and wild claims by local “historians” and excited local scribes because of the TAAF Iles Eparses stamps issued by the French postal services. Diane Venturi, a member from Reunion was at the meeting and she provided details on the local release of the souvenir sheet on Iles Eparses in Reunion.

During the English language presentation on the de jure and de facto situation prevailing on Tromlin supported by documentation Mico Antoine granted permission to an upset news-person to express his disapproval and to air his patriotic off-the-cuff adulterated opinion in the French language.

28 local members attended the July meeting and sales of the new Mauritius monograph, philatelic magazines and the usual range of stamps and covers were very good.

AUGUST – The August meeting was held at the usual venue and at the usual time on Saturday 4th August.

The monograph, **MAURITIUS ~ A Brief Introduction To The Mauritius Government Railways, Barred Oval Numeral Cancellers and Double Circle Circular Datestamps of Mauritius**” by Mico Antoine and Patrick Kwan Cheung was the main subject for the afternoon. The maps, photographs and illustrations, listings, the actual stamps cancelled with BONCs, B53 covers, circular datestamps strikes (specimen, on piece or on covers) and other items reproduced in the monograph were on display. The authors reviewed every page of the monograph. The Calebasses and Poste de Flacq oversight on plate (iii) “Post Offices of Mauritius – April 2007” was amended; the first was removed and the second reduced to Flacq only.

▪ A couple of speculative articles in non-philatelic publications on the "Post Office" stamps of 1847 and the primitives of 1849 to 1859 written by a couple of self-serving ignoramuses were examined. These articles were published in three tourism and travel magazines, in a philatelic journal and in a hardcover book. Some sampling; "fourth country in the world together with the United States, to issue stamps in 1874..."; "it was too late to replace the plates. This was possible only on the second issue" and in a French translation of one article we have Mauritius ... "*quatrième pays au monde à émettre des timbres en 1947*". The glossy magazines, distributed free on the national airline, entertained the ignorant visitor with absolute nonsense. The locals on the island were also entertained to real trash in the 2007 "MT Yellow Page" Mauritius Telecom Telephone Directory on pages 6 and 7, in French and English, on the "Postal History" of Mauritius from a Blue Penny Museum source carrying the art gallery's logo to boot too.

▪ Philatelic News Worldwide on the Notice Board showed good colour photocopies of all the covers, cachets and datestamps of the TAAF Iles Eparses issue on Tromlin, Europa Glorieuse, Bassas da India and Juan de Nova.

[TAAF is the acronym for Terres Australes et Antarctique Française and FSAT for French Southern and Antarctic Territories].

22 members attended the August meeting and sales of BONCs cancelled stamps and other items on offer were very good.

SEPTEMBER – The September meeting was held at Collège du Saint Esprit at 2 p.m. on Saturday 1st September 2007.

The September agenda had three items namely: ▪ 100 years of Scouting; ▪ Quatre Bornes Post Office; ▪ Postmarks and BONCs on covers and cards.

100 years of Scouting in Mauritius was presented by Judex Adrien together with guest speaker, Cyril Rose, Deputy Chief Scout of Mauritius. Judex showed covers he had prepared from 15th January through to 6th August 2007 to mark the centenary. The activities being: ▪ 15th January - Ticket for Life and 100 Trees Challenges, ▪ 24th February - 150th Anniversary of the Birth of Lord Baden Powell, ▪ 5th May - Rally of the Centenary, ▪ 28th July–1st August - the Centenary Flame, ▪ 1st August - Operation Sunrise at Belle Mare, ▪ 31st July–6th August - Jamboree of the Centenary at Belle Mare.

Mauritius did not issue stamps for the centenary of the scout movement during 2007. Judex had been quietly buying up the 1982 "75th Anniversary of Boy Scout Movement" stamps SG 635/8 for his 2007 commemorative covers all of which were appropriately illustrated, cacheted or signed.

Mico Antoine presented the history of Quatre Bornes post office from 1869 to 2007 viz. the three different premises occupied since 1869, BONC 24 on cover and stamps, all the known circular datestamps on stamps piece or cover, the square delivery mark, the various registration labels and the alphabet and numeral rubber handstamped registration mark and the current positions of the counter SU (Service Unit) *WebRiposte* computer labels on covers. This was a fairly comprehensive display and included photographs and postcards as well as press notices and other literature and data.

Patrick Kwan showed a range of BONCs on postcards, postal stationery and covers; the range included a couple of difficult to obtain B32 on postcards and the numeral 3 (Calebasses) on stamp.

Sales were very good and 24 members were at the meeting.

MONTHLY COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The Management Committee met at Collège du St Esprit to discuss Society matters on Saturday 7th July, 4th August, and 1st September at 13.00hrs, one hour before the monthly Society meeting. The Committee is made up of nine members and the quorum is five. The quorum in the third quarter was 8, 8 and 8 for the three meetings.

STAMP BOOKLETS

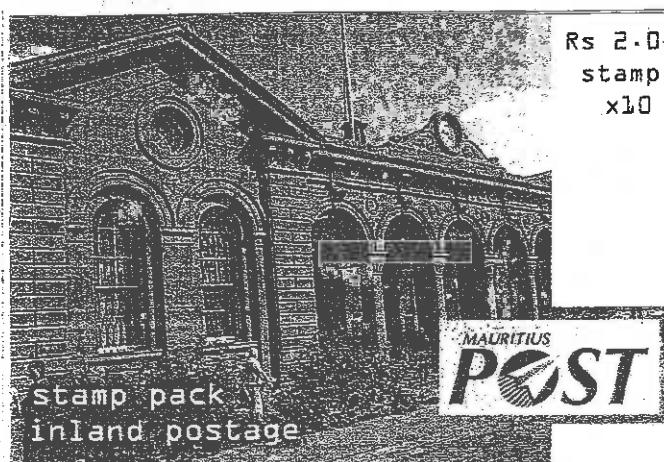
UPDATE

In News Items 2006.1 of March 2006 the Society reported on the introduction of a new postal product by Mauritius Post Ltd at two postal outlets as well as in several supermarkets as from 25th October 2005; the new product being **Stamp Booklets** described and marketed as **Stamp Packs**. A full description of two types of booklets which contained 10 stamps of two denominations of the **Fishes** definitives was given in March 2006.

On Monday 4th June 2007 three other new Rs2 inland postage booklets were on sale at Souillac post office. These Rs2 booklets are illustrated with the following: Yellow Post Office Van, ex-GPO Building in Port Louis, Counter Service at Dumas Street in Port Louis and the older Computer Keyboard booklet as well as the only Rs7 overseas postcard booklet illustrated with the Black River Post Office. The booklets contained 10 stamps each from the Bicentenary of Mahebourg (SG 1140 and 1141) set and were offered at Rs20 and Rs70 for inland postage and overseas postcard postage respectively notwithstanding that the rates at June 2007 are Rs5 and Rs10 for the two services; furthermore the instructions are out of date and the denominations inappropriate as they are for the former postal rates. Two walls and the counter of Souillac post office were decorated with many empty booklet covers as the unsellable booklets had simply been broken up and the stamps used by the counter clerks during the normal course of business.

The reason for the sale of these booklets at Souillac and at another rural post office was to quietly dispose of the surplus booklet covers produced for the pilot project. The project was discontinued simply because it went nowhere in spite of the once only sale of the booklets to supermarkets at 30% discounts on the face value of the stamps. Mauritius Post Ltd in effect sold postage stamps in Mauritius at under face value – an innovative marketing strategy of some magnitude!

These stamp booklets were advertised in "Blue Penny News" the annual of Mauritius Post Ltd in December 2005 under the rubric, *Développements à la poste – Lancement des stamp packs*. The booklets were supposedly available in certain post offices and at several sales points such as "London" and "Spar" supermarkets.



[Will these one-off, limitedly available, misdescribed dodgy philatelic products get listed?]

SOUTH AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY

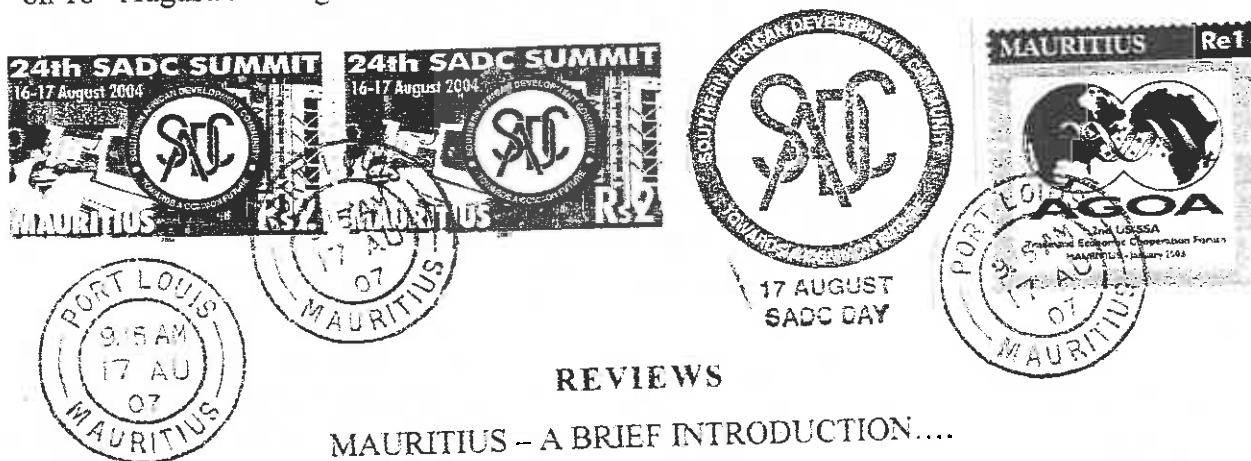
The circular SADC rubber stamp was used in Mauritius and in Rodrigues on the 16th and 17th August 2007 to commemorate the South African Development Community summit meeting held in Lusaka, Zambia.

25 rubber stamps in all were distributed to 20 post offices and to three other offices as follows:

Post offices: Beau Bassin, Bel Air, Central Flacq, Chemin Grenier, Curepipe, Eau Coulee, Floréal, Forest Side, Goodlands, Grand Bay, Mahebourg, Phoenix, Quatre Bornes, Rivière des Anguilles, Rivière du Rempart, Rose Belle, Rose Hill, Triolet, Vacoas and Port Mathurin.

Other offices: Office of Exchange (SSR Airport, Plaisance), GPO Delivery – General Post Office, Port Louis (2), CMO Sorting – Central Mail Office, Port Louis (2)

Instructions were issued to Regional Principal Postal Executives and to controlling officers on 6th August 2007 to apply the SADC cachet on the maximum pieces of correspondence on 16th and 17th August only and to return the rubber stamps to the Deputy Head of Postal Operations on 18th August. Proving covers have been confirmed by several members of the Society.



REVIEWS

MAURITIUS – A BRIEF INTRODUCTION....

A very fine accomplishment! I am very impressed by this production. Informative maps of the island, tying the postal development to the railway lines; pictures of various post offices; the listing of different cancellers, and accompanying illustrations; and much, much more. This will be seen as a real feast by all those who enjoy the different facets of Mauritius. **John Ng Wong Hing – Verdugo Vieja, California, USA.**

I received your comprehensive Mauritius monograph and enjoyed reading it. It obviously took a lot of research. I went to Scott Publishing on August 30 for my monthly visit with your monograph. Michael Baadke, editor, reviewed it briefly. He asked if he could keep the monograph, ultimately, placing it in the large Linn's/Scott library. **David Lodge, Contributing Editor, Scott Stamp Monthly – Ohio, USA.**

The monograph is a wonderful introduction to collecting Mauritian postmarks. I only wish something like it was available then when I started collecting way back in 1973 or even better when I was serving in Mauritius in 1954/56 I may have contracted the bug then. **David Tarry, Editor IO, Indian Ocean Study Circle – UK.**

MAURITIUS POSTAL HISTORY = MAURITIUS PHILATELIC SOCIETY

NEWS ITEMS is a publication of the Mauritius Philatelic Society

Edited by Mico W. Antoine

P.O. Box 89, Quatre Bornes, MAURITIUS

© Mauritius Philatelic Society 2007