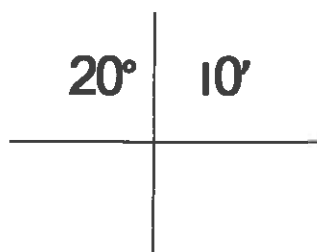


20° 10'

Issue No. 8 – AUGUST 2012



THE JOURNAL OF THE MAURITIUS PHILATELIC SOCIETY

| | |
|--|----|
| Monthly Society Meetings..... | 1 |
| Management Committee Meetings | 4 |
| The June Outing | 5 |
| P.O. Box 1000 Mauritius | 7 |
| Commemorative Stamps | 9 |
| Special Commemorative Covers..... | 10 |
| Stamp Programme 2012 | 12 |
| New Triolet Post Office | 12 |
| Stanley Gibbons Commonwealth Stamp Catalogue Indian Ocean 2 nd Edition..... | 13 |
| The Press..... | 14 |



2002 Chinese cover commemorating the 30th Anniversary of the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations between China and Mauritius

MAURITIUS POSTAL HISTORY = MAURITIUS PHILATELIC SOCIETY

20°10' is a publication of the Mauritius Philatelic Society

Written and Edited by Mico W Antoine

P.O. Box 89, Quatre Bornes, Mauritius

Layout/Formatting by Patrick Kwan Cheung – Gold Coast, Australia

©Mauritius Philatelic Society 2012

MONTHLY SOCIETY MEETINGS

MAY – The members meeting of May 2012 was held on the first Saturday, the 5th of the month at 14.00 hrs at College du St Esprit, Sir Virgil Naz Avenue, Quatre Bornes.

The agenda listed only two items; a postal history display by Dr A.N. Maderbokus and David Tarry's Mauritius collection.

The notice board was full of interesting material such as:

- The B.I.O.T M.V. Nordvaer stamp issued in December 1969, a T.P.O cover of 1st March 1972, a photograph of the vessel at Mahé, Seychelles and a black and white USA postcard of the ship.
- A 1999 photograph of the concrete name place post of the Mauritius Government Railway halt at the Floreal platform which has since disappeared and an enlarged reproduction of a 1927 photograph of No.62, the Beyer Peacock Garratt at Beau Bassin station. Today this recently renovated post office has had its exterior restored to its original state after being brainlessly vandalised with the corporate colours of Mauritius Post.
- Several inland commercial covers of 2012 some with the 'Law Day' first day of issue postmarks and a cover from Pailles as well as several loose stamps struck in violet.

Dr A. N. Maderbokus' display titled "The Queens and Kings of Mauritius" was of the highest quality and spread over four display units. The 1850 to 1978 range of items included covers, stamps, postcards, aerogrammes, censored mail, WW II material and other aspects of the 125 year plus period. These were chronologically arranged and the presentation was well documented and carefully delivered. Doc indicated that he will return with a much bigger display on other aspects of Mauritius at the end of the year.

Copies of the pages of David Tarry collection on P.O. Box 1000 Mauritius that was loaned to the Government of Mauritius via the Mauritius Philatelic Society in 1995 and displayed for six months after the opening of the first Mauritius Postal Museum was shown and explained. The 20 leaves displayed contained covers with familiar internees names and prisoner numbers, internment camp cachets, censor labels and marks, airgraphs and other related items. A copy of Geneviève Pitot's "The Mauritian Shekel"

was passed around. A couple of typically Mauritian hearsays from two members with regard to the author's surname and the French version of the book were brushed aside.

The Spot Auction offered 20 lots and the Purchase List was made up of some 40 items. The range has improved with successive meetings and turnover has increased steadily since the re-introduction of the Spot Auction in February 2012.

17 members attended the meeting.

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

Three topics were dealt with: Postmarks of Mauritius Part I, More on David Tarry's P.O. Box 1000 Mauritius – WW II Civil Censorship and Contemporary Mauritius Commercial Covers. The first and third items were meant to be a joint presentation by Dr A. N. Maderbokus and Mico Antoine. An eleventh hour emergency prevented Doc from attending the meeting. He however dropped his material at the president's place and the material was affixed onto the display units. The latest on Mauritian philately such as the new post office at Triolet, the badly disjointed Chinese-Mauritian joint commemorative covers, a new SCC (Special Commemorative Cover) all conveniently occurring in Mauritius Post's 240th Anniversary of Post Office in Mauritius year were on show. The third item was not discussed in the absence of Doc.

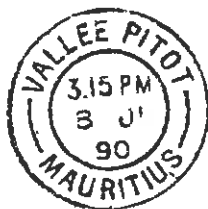
The notice board was well endowed with several items including a pane of 10 stamps from France with the portrait of Albert Koenig, all legal and valid for postage. The "Le Timbre-Poste Personnalisé" self-adhesives were printed by the La Poste own printing works of Perigueux. The *Mon Timbre à moi* stamps are rated for *Lettre Prioritaire 20g*. A very contagious stamp as others now also want their faces on their own stamps.

More serious material included:

- Current commercial covers from two sources which included metermarks on three different types of envelopes with the business logo from a Phoenix beverages company dated April and May 2012.
- Registered and A.R. (*avis de reception*) Rs 35 rated inland commercial covers affixed with medium and high value commemorative multiples.
- Official mail and PL (Postal License) covers and

- An interesting commercial cover from Rodrigues with multiple postmarks in Rodrigues (2) and Mauritius (3).

Mico Antoine presented his Postmarks Part I material trimmed down to post offices and postmarks that no longer exist and a wide range of 1960s Elizabeth II 1953 definitives on piece plus a collection of socked-on-the-nose Elizabethan 10 cents black and red-brown SG 307 from the "150th Anniversary of British Post Office in Mauritius" set of 1961 and several Elizabethan covers with Pitney Bowes propaganda machine cancellations. [Edward Proud's "The Postal History of Mauritius" was on hand for reference]



*Postmarks from closed post offices
and postal agencies*

More on David Tarry's P.O. Box 1000 Mauritius with additional WWII censorship material were shown with data from the draft of Patrick Kwan's monograph. These two aspects of Mauritian philatelic history were explained fully with material displayed providing absolute evidence of the linkage of the two.

The outing was confirmed for mid-June and 2010 No. 5 – August 2011 was distributed two months later than scheduled.

22 members attended the meeting.

[K. B. Fitton's "Seychelles No. 7 Civil Censorship Markings 1939 – 1945" published in September 1990 and the chapter from Darrell Bates' "A Gust of Plumes" on Chief Censor Peter Twining's stay in Mauritius between 1939 and 1944 were referred to and quoted from.]

JULY – The monthly meeting was held on Saturday 7th July at 14.00 hrs at College du St Esprit in Quatre Bornes.

The notice board was overwhelmed with press cuttings on the widely covered Bicentenary of the Mauritius Turf Club commemorative stamps. Most of the articles were typically lengthy repetitive rhetoric with only one honest bare-knuckled historically correct feature devoid of any condescending niceties. This particular report included a rather unfavourable portrayal of the founder of the turf club, Colonel Edward Draper, whose portrait is on SG 852 of 1991.

The Colonel is revered by his 'grateful compatriots' from the Mauritius Turf Club or so they claim on the plaque on his tomb at Black River cemetery. In the capital his bust is at the club and in June 2012 a nearby road was renamed in his memory.

A good array of recently acquired kiloware material which included neatly trimmed postmarks and stamps on piece of the last decade of the last millennium were on show alongside examples from the first decade of the new millennium. Also from the same source several very poor Nigerian forgeries used on scam letters and some truly ugly Madagascar adhesives printed in the former USSR.

One display unit was full of photographs of the June outing taken by Monique Fok Shan and Albert Koenig.

Postmarks of Mauritius Part II was an arrangement of the regular standard Type D double circle circular datestamps impressions of Mauritius excluding slugs and special usage or services strikes for the period 1980 to 2010. Regular Type D cds examples in use in 1989 on covers from all the post offices in Mauritius and Rodrigues were shown. A collection of neatly trimmed postmarks from manila envelopes utilised by various users of official frankings, clear strikes from in-house postal services used covers and other good collectable backstamps recovered from commercial covers were also included in this display.

The January-June 2012 review was carried forward to August.

David Tarry's "The Sterling Period 1811-1877" title page details on the 11 frame exhibit beginning with "The Period after Occupation 1811-1822" and ending with "Some Aspects of Local and Rural Post 1840-1874" was explained.

A rather low turnout of 16 members was recorded.

AUGUST – The society meeting was held at 14.00 hrs on Saturday 4th August at College du St Esprit, Sir Virgil Naz in Quatre Bornes.

On the notice board was appended additional material and press cuttings on the Mauritius Turf Club as well as philatelic news snippets and an interview of the author of *“La vallée des hippopotames”*. The 2011 and 2012 British Indian Ocean Territory (B.I.O.T) royals and military stamps were shown and their relative face value, concept and design were compared with Mauritian stamps of the same period. Additional data on the 2012 Chinese/Mauritian SCCs together with a 2002 Chinese only cover and other sundry philatelic matter were also on display.

The main topic of the afternoon was the BSAC (British South African Company), Southern Rhodesia, Rhodesia and Nyasaland, Rhodesia and Zimbabwe philatelic name change of this central African country. The presentation, made at the request of the members at the July meeting, was influenced by the then yet to be published Mauritian *“Hippo Valley”* book. Mico Antoine who spent a total of 33 years in the three states of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland comprised of Southern Rhodesia, Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland put up a display which included the complete UDI (Unilateral Declaration of Independence) period from 11 November 1966 to 18 April 1980. The talk on the topic was both philatelic and historical devoid of any partisan, emotional or hysterical bias in other words facts and not fantasies.

Dr A. N. Maderbokus finally caught up with events by presenting his unfinished business on the Mauritius Turf Club, the Chinese-Mauritian commemoratives and the review and update of the first half of 2012 as per the afternoon’s agenda.

Displayed on one board was part of David Tarry’s Mauritius collection shown at Amphilex 2002. The title page on *“Some aspects of Local and Rural Post 1840-1874”* featuring P.O. changes on local and incoming mail, Early Town/Village framed ds’s and E.R.D. (Souillac), Instructional markings, Twin ring circles 6 and 10 and rare 1874 1d stamped Port Louis Town delivery, etc... Photocopies of David Tarry’s material have been shown at every society meeting since February 2012 in an effort to incite members to collect and write up Mauritius postal history to internationally accepted standards.

The auction for a change offered some excellent material which included several David Feldman auction catalogues, not often seen Mauritian year books from 1992 to 1995 and some very difficult to find special occasion philatelic gifts distributed to visiting delegations. The usual stamps, covers and other lots were also on offer as were several purchase lists. Sales were very good amounting to almost 20% of the annual budget. With three more meetings before the end of 2012, the budgeted annual total sales will be achieved.

There were 18 members at the meeting and 2010 No. 6 – December 2011 was distributed. All three newsletters of 2011 have now been distributed.

Hippo Valley

‘La vallée des hippopotames’ by Jean Pierre Lenoir published in August 2012 is a 393 page book on the exploits of some 35 odd Franco-Mauritian sugar cane growers, farmers and other sugar industry professionals, all friends of the author.

The narrative focuses on their arrival before the UDI period when the Hippo Valley Sugar Estates was set up the south east of Southern Rhodesia.

The pre-UDI recruitment and land offers made to white only Mauritian gets no mention. This non negligible influx of white settlers from Mauritius doing a reverse “chicken run” to bolster up a rebellion is deliberately overlooked. The plights and ordeals of the Mauritian farmers and cane growers of the Mugabe land grab years are described with passion. The non-white Mauritian creole artisans are just a detail and the indigenous black liberation fighters are all terrorists.

The whole of the book, a par product of the author, is a biased almost bigoted yarn of a not very successful Mauritian sugar venture in a remote corner of Zimbabwe – heady stuff.

Several publications were on hand and were quoted from. These included - Neocolonialism in Africa; Small Wars, Small Mercies; Crisis in Africa; A Rebel Tycoon as well as the purely philatelic 1980 Rhodesia Stamp Catalogue.

by W M Antoine

ATTEND THE MONTHLY SOCIETY MEETING AND ... LEARN THE FACTS

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The monthly management committee meetings of the society for the period May to August 2012 were held on the first Saturday of the months under review at College du St Esprit, Sir Virgil Naz Avenue, Quatre Bornes. These meetings started at 13.00 hrs and ended by the latest before 14.00 hrs so that the society meetings could begin on time.

The quorums were assured with the attendance of 8, 8, 8, and 7 members for the months of May, June, July and August respectively. The Management Committee is made up of 9 members and the presence of a minimum of 5 is mandatory for the holding of a committee meeting.

AGENDA / DELIBERATIONS / DISCUSSIONS

MAY

- The minutes of the meeting of April was approved on a proposition of Mico Antoine seconded by Albert Koenig.
- The April meeting of members was reviewed and the proceeding recorded.
- A progress report on the Municipality of Port Louis Philatelic Club was made.
- The June outing was fixed for 16th June. Three options were retained for a final decision to be taken on 2nd June.
- The society's activities for the period January-April 2012 were reviewed.
- The society's website project was declared dead. Both C. Cushmaje and A. Seesaha's absences from and their avoidance of all society related activities were noted.
- Gerard Noyau (ex-member) of Norfolk, England was re-admitted as a member of the society upon presentation of a new application for membership.

JUNE

- The minutes of meeting of May were approved on a proposition of Hans Bigler seconded by Judex Adrien.
- The report on the May meeting of members was examined and the range of material displayed was noted.
- The itinerary of the June outing was confirmed.
- The latest position on the three news bulletins of 2011 was given.
- Details of the first contact between *Association Philatélique de l'Océan Indien* (A.P.O.I) and the Mauritius Philatelic Society (MPS) were disclosed. Albert Koenig was designated as the contact

person for the society and that he and Mico Antoine were assigned to advance all the points raised at the introductory meeting.

- Dr Nicolas Leoville of Reunion Island was admitted as a member of the society.

JULY

- The minutes of meeting of June were approved on a proposition of Ismael Kara seconded by Judex Adrien
- The June monthly members meeting was discussed and the proceedings were minuted.
- It was decided to invite (more) members at the July members meeting to show their material at the August meeting. The agenda for the August meeting therefore was left open.
- A.P.O.I/MPS. The draft proposals for future collaboration between the two societies were approved
- The satisfactory progress of the re-introduced Spot Auction was noted even if the low numbers of members offering material for sale was evident.
- Ally Mohammad Hossanee of Phoenix, Mauritius was admitted as a member of the society

AUGUST

- The minutes of meeting of July was approved on a proposition of Albert Koenig seconded by Hans Bigler.
- The July monthly members meeting proceedings were minuted.
- It was decided to re-invite (more) members to participate in the September members meeting after the poor response to the call made at the July meeting.
- A second outing was proposed for 20th October – by invitation only.
- The monthly members meeting programme was fixed: October – Elizabethan Mauritius and if possible a guest speaker; November – members display or alternatively empty display units; December – Mauritius by Dr A. N. Maderbokus.
- The January to March 2013 programme was fixed as follows : January – annual break; February – a review of Mauritius 2012; March – AGM.
- A report on the June outing was filed.
- Details of further developments between A.P.O.I and MPS were reported.

20°10'

3 x A YEAR

APRIL – AUGUST - DECEMBER

THE JUNE OUTING

The planning for this outing began as early as March. It took some time to arrive at a decision as several proposals were put forward. A choice had to be made between hiking in the region of Rochester Falls, a *randonnée* at Bassin Blanc, a visit to Bois Chéri and a walk from La Louise to St Martin. In May it was decided the best option for strong philatelic reasons was the 'La Louise to Saint Martin' proposition.

One participant claimed he knew the circuit well having walked the walk several times. More importantly the philatelic link with P.O. Box 1000 Mauritius and David Tarry's collection which had been the subject of several society meetings during the year made the visit to the Jewish section of St Martin cemetery most appropriate.

At 9 a.m. on Saturday 2nd June, Mico Antoine, Albert Koenig, Judex Adrien, Monique Fok Shan, Hans Bigler and Ismael Kara rendezvoused outside Guy Rozemont Stadium, La Louise. Four others who had signed up – Ah Lan Lam Yan Foon, Saoud Mauthoor, Thonyno Dieudonné and Premduth Hurloll did not turn up. Hans Bigler who was not too well had agreed to follow the group's progress by car and meet them at two designated points and if needed provide a ride to anyone who got too tired.

The group of five found their way out of La Louise from the back of the stadium by following secondary roads in a generally north direction towards Corps de Garde mountain, the Tamil temple at the base of the mountain being the focal point. From that point the going was due west towards "La fenêtre", the gap between Corps de Garde and Mont Saint Pierre. Following some narrow unpaved roads and hugging the west of Corps de Garde the group ended up behind unfamiliar swampy terrain and water cress basins. After asking for directions from some garden vegetable planters and taking a second wrong turn, the group ended up in some very tall grass with very little chance of moving forward. Backtracking to safer grounds and once again asking for directions from workers in what appeared to be a scrap yard (also breaking up things

other than scrap) the group finally found themselves on the correct route to "La fenêtre" as the track was now bordered by the very familiar pepper shrubs. These pepper plants were introduced in Mauritius long ago by Pierre Poivre, we were told, and some clusters of red peppers could still be reached in the upper branches after the annual April/May harvest by the general public.

The gap between the mountains was reached well behind schedule. Hans was waiting at the grotto located at the base of Mont St Pierre. After a short rest during which lots of "badamier" kernels were collected and many photographs taken the five hikers began the descent to La Ferme reservoir whilst Hans drove off to Bambous.

The view from the east end of Mont Saint Pierre is truly spectacular. In front and far below of the hikers La Ferme reservoir the village of Bambous and the cane fields of Medine. Closer to the left the bare basaltic north face of Mont Saint Pierre and to the right the treed southern side of Corps de Garde. The group headed west slowly down the steep drop to safer level grounds below along the big water pipe feeding La Ferme reservoir.



The hikers on the downhill trek towards La Ferme reservoir

The vegetation to the right was fairly thick and there was very little water cascading down the gorge between the two mountains – which meant no *voile* or bride's veil. There is much to see on the south banks of the reservoir on the way to Bambous village. The landscape is of dry savannah type grasslands with sparse thorny bushes and some eucalyptus trees. The group came across a herd of fairly healthy cattle, a

couple of pigs, illegal fishing by expatriate Chinese construction workers and a local fisherman with a small outboard craft, drums, lots of empty plastic containers of a bleaching agent. There was a lot to photograph and to talk about. One hiker had already taken over one hundred shots. The southside rear end of the village is a terrible eyesore; a shanty town of metal shacks, some with satellite dishes. Many squatters from Rodrigues are found in this region of *La Ferme* in Mauritius.

At the end of the village, an asphalt road running parallel to the eastern boundary of Bambous leads directly to the fairly long reservoir embankment. The chiseled stone wall of the dam in the middle of the embankment is impressive. A commemorative plaque gives the date of the inauguration of the sluice gate as 15th March 1915. Hans was waiting on the dam wall. The walk from "*La fenêtre*" to the wall took over one and a half hours.

After a short lunch break under the dam wall and a detour to the Catholic church cemetery where Albert was glad to find the Koenig family burial lot still in good condition after an initial scary search. With time running out, everyone piled into Hans's car for the 10 minute drive to St Martin.

St Martin cemetery is the principal burial ground of Beau Bassin. It is located along the Rose Hill link road off the Bambous-Petite Rivière trunk road. The Jewish section is separate from the rest of the main cemetery. The register of St Martin cemetery lists 126 detainees who were buried between 1941 and 1945; one burial was not registered. Thus there were in fact 127 burials during that period. However a count showed that there are in fact 128 graves in the section as Isia Birger, a non-detainee, is also buried in the Jewish section. Arlene Koenig came to meet the hikers at St Martin and Tarkesswar Greedharrye came early and left early having got his timing and bearings wrong.

There are several plaques affixed to the wall and grating at the entrance to the cemetery paying

tribute to those who have contributed land, time, funds or helped in any tangible way. Jacques Desmarais, the Birger family, Aaron Zwergbaum, Medine Sugar Estates, the African Jewish Congress, the South African Jewish Community are some of the persons or organizations thus honoured. The current administrating of the section (from a legal view point) is entrusted to the South African Jewish Board of Deputies and the African Jewish Congress.

The striking feature of the Jewish cemetery is the order and the obvious good maintenance of the section. Carved into the WW II era upright basalt headstone of each tomb is the name, origin and birth/death dates of the defunct. A more recent smaller black plaque, sometimes with amended names, has also been affixed to every grave. There are several misspellings of first names or surnames on some of the original tombstones.

Hans Bigler, who speaks German, gave an interesting talk on the origin of those buried and he provided much relevant information. Mico Antoine who had brought along his copy of "*The Mauritian Shekel*" helped out. The 259 page book by Geneviève Pitot is the only authoritative work on "*The Story of the Jewish Detainees in Mauritius 1940-1945*" (sic).

It was well past 15.00 hrs when the small group broke up after a very instructive, good humoured and successful outing. The next outing will be by invitation only.



Inside the Jewish section of St Martin cemetery with the hikers among the well maintained tombs

P.O. Box 1000 Mauritius

The overwhelming majority of Mauritians do not know the historical facts about the 1580 Jewish prisoners interned at Beau Bassin prison between 1940 and 1945. The prisoners were illegal immigrants fleeing persecution from the Nazis during World War II and were mainly from Austria, Czechoslovakia and Poland with lesser numbers from at least seven other countries. The prisoners included women and children who were prevented from landing in Palestine and they were the only group ever deported to Mauritius. They arrived in Port Louis aboard two Dutch ships on 26th December 1940.

If most Mauritians, including Mauritian historians who give the episode a pass over, are conveniently unaware of this period of Mauritian colonial history, that is not the case with Mauritian philatelists particularly collectors of Mauritian postal history. No postage stamps have ever been issued by either the colonial or post-independent governments on this event nor has any special philatelic commemorative item ever been issued in Mauritius – none have been reported anyway.



Airgraph sent to detainee 1185 Gustav Bauer with triangular handstamp B4- reduced 70%.

An article by Peter Ibbotson published in "Stamp Collecting" on 9th November 1972 titled "P.O. Box 1000 Mauritius" gives a brief story of the Jewish

prisoners of Mauritius. More importantly the philatelic history of the dispatch of letters, telegrams, airgraphs and parcels and the receiving of mail addressed to the detainees of Beau Bassin internment camp is described. P.O. Box 1000 Mauritius was the official designated address of the detention centre. Mail was also received and dispatched via the International Committee of the Red Cross.

The World War II years inevitably led to censorship of mail and detainees' mail was subjected to the regulation promulgated in 1939. Almost all P.O. Box 1000 Mauritius letters bear censorship cachets and labels.

One of the best collections of detainees' mail and World War II censorship of Mauritius ever assembled is that of David Tarry from Shropshire, UK. He served in the Royal Air Force and he knows Mauritius having been based on the island for some time. He owns one of the most comprehensive collections of the main aspects of the postal history of the colonial period of Mauritius.

Most collectors of Mauritius postal history have at least one example of a Jewish detainee cover in their collection and they know this period of the history of Mauritius. Overseas members of the Mauritius Philatelic Society who come to the island have all visited the Jewish section of St Martin cemetery and all our local members are aware of this historical site.

There is another duly registered association that has kept alive the memory of the Jewish link with Mauritius. The *Amicale Maurice Israël* "Shalom Club". The "Shalom" magazine of 2007 published on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of independence of Israël has a brief article on and photographs of a visit to the cemetery of St Martin.

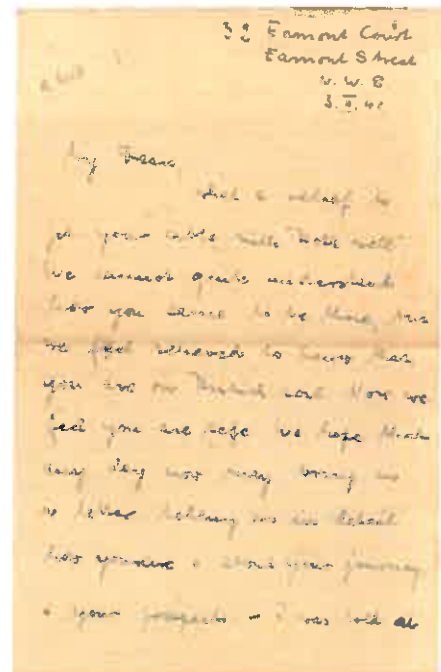
Two names that consistently come up when the period is discussed today are Geneviève Pitot, the author of "The Mauritian Shekel" published in 1998 and Owen Griffiths, an office bearer of *Amicale Maurice Israël*. Geneviève Pitot was born in Mauritius but lives in Germany and in the preface to the book she explains her reasons for writing a nearly forgotten story remembered only by very few Mauritians. Owen Griffiths lives in Mauritius and he is credited with providing support in producing the book with an exclusive acknowledgement. Some typically Mauritian misconceptions about the author and the book raised after the June outing were cleared with Owen regarding Geneviève's surname



and the French version of the book. There is no printed French version of the book. It is only the manuscript that is in French and even if Geneviève does not cross the two ts of her family name, the name is Pitot not Pilot.

There are several members of the Mauritius Philatelic Society who have a copy of "The Mauritian Shekel" on their bookshelf. There may well not be many Mauritians who know about the Jewish link with Mauritius however there are quite a few who do.

← Reverse of a Red Cross message form (reduced 50%) with triangular handstamp B2. The reply to the message sent by detainee no. 1129 Hans Radnitz on 02.01.42 was received on 24.03.42 via the Red Cross.



Incoming cover (reduced 75%) to detainee Siegfried Klatzko with resealing label and triangular handstamp B2. The single line DET. CP. P.O. BOX 1000 was possibly applied as the wording Postbox 1000 on the second line was not clear. The letter which was sent from UK on 3 February 1941, some six weeks after the arrival of the detainees in Mauritius would be among the first received by the detainee. Extract from letter (reduced 50%) – ‘What a relief to get your cable with “both well”. We cannot quite understand how you came to be there but we feel relieved to know that you are on British soil’. It is known that Siegfried Klatzko at one time was in charge of incoming/outgoing mail for the detainees. Twice weekly, letters (maximum of 2 pages written on one side) were handed in open for examination and details entered in a book at Beau Bassin before being despatched to the GPO Head Office in Port Louis.

The illustrations in this article are from the collection of Patrick Kwan.

COMMEMORATIVE STAMPS

Bicentenary of Mauritius Turf Club (1812-2012)

On 25th June 2012 Mauritius Post released a set of four stamps to mark the 200 years of Mauritius Turf Club. In addition to the stamps a special miniature sheet and the usual official First Day Cover were also issued.

The four stamps and their face value are:

Rs 7 – Horse Racing

Rs 10 – View of Race Track Champ de Mars

Rs 14 – Grandstands – 1917

Rs 21 – Mauritius Turf Club Insignia

All reference material, photos, illustrations and text were provided by Mauritius Turf Club from which the graphic artist of Mauritius Post 'designed' the stamps.

The miniature sheet which has a face value of Rs 50 featuring "The Paddock" is produced from a very poor photograph which is darkened with shades, shadows, grey asphalt paths and greenery. The faces of the trainers, owners and jockeys in the foreground have been digitally masked rendering them faceless and unrecognizable. The whole of the commemorative souvenir is blurry – rubbed by amateurism. The size of the small sheet, black borders included, is 117mm x 74mm. See page 14.

The FDC is illustrated with a view of today's grandstand as seen from "La Plaine". A special

cancellation cachet dated 25 June 2012 size 34 mm high x 30 mm wide obliterates the four stamps with one strike and the cachet cancelling nothing is also applied between the stamps and the FDC illustration. A folded data card (insert) contains an interesting history of the Mauritius Turf Club... according to the Mauritius Turf Club.

The official launching ceremony took place at the Postal Museum, Port Louis Waterfront on Monday 25th June 2012 at 13.30 hrs. The Minister responsible for Mauritius Post graced the function in the presence of the Chairman and Chief Executive Officer as well as other eminent personalities.

The technical details are:

Stamp format – Rs 7, Rs 10, Rs 14 - horizontal,
Rs 21 - vertical

Stamp size – Rs 7, Rs 10, Rs 14 - 44.45 x 29.94 mm
Rs 21 - 29.94 x 44.45 mm

Printer – BDT International Security Printers of Ireland

Sheet format – Two panes of 25 stamps separated by a central gutter strip.

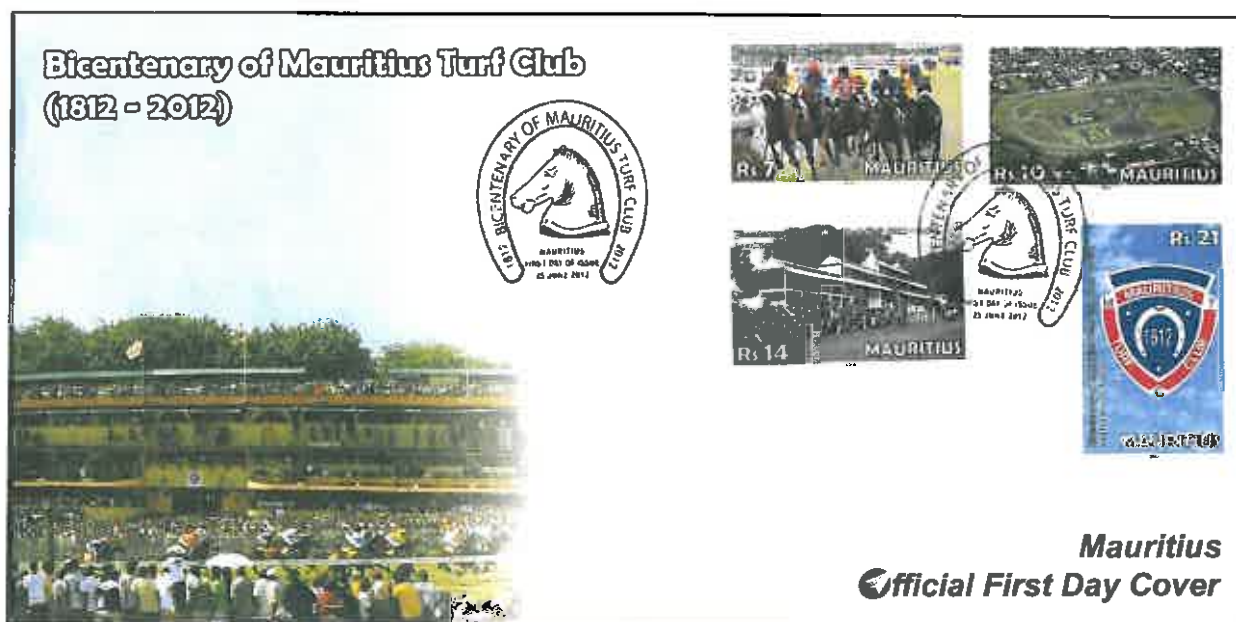
Perforation – 14

Gum – PVA

Watermark – CASCO large crown –w18

Process – Lithography

The sheet imprints such as gutter imprint placements, sheet number positions, printers imprint, traffic lights, cylinder numbers are as per standard BDT sheets.



SPECIAL COMMEMORATIVE COVERS

The 40th Anniversary of the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations between the People's Republic of China and the Republic of Mauritius

China. A single (one) commemorative cover was issued by the National Philatelic Corporation of China on 15th April 2012 to mark the 40th year of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Mauritius on 15th April 1972. The cover designed by Ma Xiaoling is illustrated with the coat of arms of the two countries and is franked with the Chinese 'Roses' stamp of 1.20 yuan together with its se-tenant pictorial butterfly label and the Indigenous Flowers of Mauritius Rs 5 stamp from the 2009 definitive set.

A single strike of a special cancellation cachet featuring a Mauritian land tortoise (the tortoise signifies the gifted pair of the species offered to China by Mauritius) is applied to the Mauritian stamp. Another special cachet incorporating a pair of courting cranes (China never gave Mauritius any cranes) cancels the Chinese stamp and label. The first cachet reads, in English, 40th Anniversary (top) Mauritius – China (bottom) with the date 15 APR 2012. The second cachet is inscribed in Mandarin with the date 2012-4-15 in Arabic numerals. Both strikes are sharp and are struck clearly – no smudging or over inking. The back of the cover carries details of the commemoration in Mandarin and English. 80,000 units are produced. The Chinese cover was 'released' by Mauritius Post in Mauritius on 17th May 2012.

Mauritius. Ten (10) separate commemorative covers were released by Mauritius Post to mark the 40th year

of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Mauritius and China on 17th May 2012, one month and two days later than the actual date of the event – 15th April 2012.

The design of the cover is almost similar to the Chinese cover. However there are significant changes. There is a different placement of the coat of arms as the positions have been switched. The event is described in English in four lines at the top of the cover whereas the Chinese cover is in Mandarin and English. The 10 Mauritian covers are franked with 10 different 1.20 yuan Chinese Flowers stamps together with their se-tenant Butterfly labels. There is also a change in the position and placement of both the Chinese and Mauritian stamps as well as the cancellation cachets. The date of the Mauritian cachet reads 17 May 2012 whereas the Chinese cachet reads 2012.5.17.

The back of the cover is blank without any inscriptions but the logo of Mauritius Post is imprinted on the back flap. A thick folded data card (insert) provides much bump about the event. However the date remains 15th April 1972 throughout the text. There is no mention of 17th May 1972 or 17th May 2012 anywhere.

The quality of the Chinese made cover is starkly different from the Mauritian made covers – the text, the coat of arms illustration and the Chinese print are all neat and precise. The Mauritian text is poorly printed propaganda. The two Chinese applied cachets are sharp and clearly struck; the two Mauritian applied cachets are over inked and poorly struck on all the ten covers.



Both the Chinese 15 APRIL 2012 cover and the Mauritian 17 MAY 2012 covers commemorating a common event that took place on the same day on 15th April 1972 were released in Mauritius on 17th May 2012.

Priced at Rs 25 each, the eleven (11) covers were put on sale in sets of one dozen (12) composed of two (2) identical Chinese covers and ten (10) different Mauritian covers for the "round" sum of Rs 300 for an even dozen.*

Needless to say the number of sets of Mauritian covers made was not disclosed unlike the Chinese ones individually numbered 1 to 80000.

Editor's Note: If the write up is not too clear and may even appear to be a bit senseless it may well be because the antics of this commemoration does not make any sense.

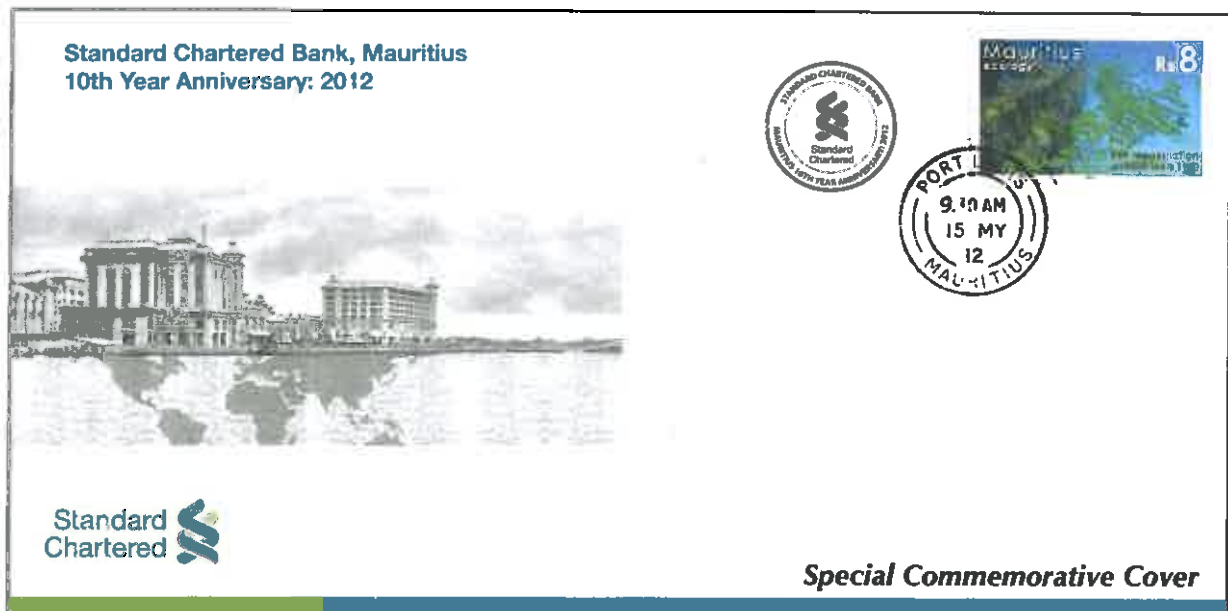
**This is the Mauritian version of the baker's dozen – add one to eleven to make twelve and... charge for it.*



Standard Chartered Bank, Mauritius

10th Year Anniversary: 2012

A special cover was produced to commemorate a decade of the presence of Standard Chartered Bank in Mauritius. The cover dated stamped at Port Louis on 15th May 2012 is shown below reduced to 75%. Price Rs 40.



STAMP PROGRAMME 2012

Further to the 2012 Stamp Programme published in 20°10' – No. 7 of April 2012, a new revised programme was available from the Philatelic Bureau in Port Louis as from July 2012. The new data is as follows:

| Theme | Proposed date | No. of stamps |
|---|---------------|---------------|
| 1. Law Day | April 4 2012 | 4 |
| 2. Bicentenary of the Mauritius Turf Club | June 2012 | 4 |
| 3. Customs Dept of the Mauritius Revenue Authority | August 2012 | 4 |
| 4. (i) 40 th Anniversary of the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations between Mauritius and China (ii) Centenary of Scouting in Mauritius (iii) International Year of Cooperatives | October 2012 | 1 1 1 |
| 5. Past Eminent Personalities (i) Mr Marcel Cabon, O.B.E (ii) Mr G.M.D. Atchia | December 2012 | 1 1 |
| 6. 240 th Anniversary of Postal Services in Mauritius | December 2012 | 4 |

The bottom of the page once again carries a warning that "the above programme and proposed dates may be subject to change" – the last three words underlined for emphasis. The revised programme is listed on official headed stationery impressed with the Philatelic Bureau handstamp and is undated.

Editor's note: A postal administration that cannot propose a final definitive 100% unchangeable stamp programme to the cabinet of the government of Mauritius at the beginning of any given year should simply stop issuing postage stamps. Mauritius Post have been making a complete hash of the stamps, philatelic and postal history aspects of Mauritius since corporatisation. Other 2012 debacles are the Mauritius Turf Club rubbish, the 240th year celebrations and the Sino-Mauritian commemoration.

NEW TRIOLET POST OFFICE

A press notice from Post Office Head Quarters (sic) Port Louis dated 23rd May 2012 and published in *le Mauricien* of the same date announced the inauguration of a new post office located next to the old post office of Triolet on Thursday 24th May 2012. The new post office became operational as from 25th May 2012.

To mark the event a Special Commemorative Cover (SCC) was issued and 'will be on sale at Rs 125 per unit'. However, from 24th May to 31st May 2012 this SCC 'will be sold exceptionally at a promotional price of Rs 100



per unit'. The advertisement conveys a 'two price' offer for the same item. The new modern, spacious post office "provides over 65 postal and non-postal services".

The SCC is illustrated with a reproduction of the new post office and bears the 240 years celebration motto. It is franked with the gold foil stamp issued in September 2010 on the occasion of the 110th anniversary of the birth of Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam. The stamp is cancelled at the left bottom corner with the standard Triolet Type D double circle circular datestamp reading 8.15 AM 24 MY 12. What appears to be an imprinted circular imitation of a handstamp announces at top right next to the stamp – New Triolet Post Office (top) Mauritius (bottom) with "Opening 24 May 2012" in two lines in the middle. The actual inauguration ceremony was performed by the Prime Minister Dr the Honourable Navinchandra Ramgoolam at 16.30 p.m.

Stanley Gibbons Commonwealth Stamp Catalogue Indian Ocean 2nd Edition

The smaller new 2012 reformatted 164 page catalogue is an improvement on the larger 2006 76 page 1st edition.

Pages i to xxxii are about contents, general information and adverts. British Indian Ocean Territory, Madagascar (British Consular Mail), Mauritius, Seychelles including *Zil Elwanyen Sesel* and its two other inscriptions are all overwhelmed by the 82 pages of the fast sinking Maldivé Islands. This 50% filler should have been relegated to the back of the book as an appendix.

Catalogues are mainly about numbering, description and price. The Mauritius section lists stamps of Mauritius from 1847 to December 2011. In the main prices for post independence issues have hardly changed between 2006 and 2011 except for the early definitives up to 1975. The post 1978 definitives are flat. Commemoratives have fared no better. The underpriced 1981 SG 628/31 are still very low at 80p mint and £1.00 used and most of the commemorative stamps issued between 1968 and 2006 have stagnated at 2006 quotations. Very few reasonable upward price revisions have been made except for one notable exception; the already overpriced Pink Pigeon set (SG708/11) of 1985. This is now £32 mint and £20 used from the earlier £27 and £16 respectively. Not surprisingly more recent, 2007 to 2011, issues are priced higher than many earlier stamps. This is simply because the face value of these has been markedly increased. Denominations of Rs 11, Rs 17, Rs 22, Rs 27, Rs 30, Rs 50 and Rs 100 that are totally unrelated to listed postal rates have been issued in recent years.

Colonial Mauritius are strong, very strong with almost all prices raised by considerable margins. The two 'Post Office' stamps of 1847 are now out of reach of even the speculators and the very rich. SG1 (£450,000 in 2006) is now £1,100,000 and SG2 (£550,000 in 2006) £1,300,000. Both rose by over 100% in six years. The Mauritian consortium can always balance their books with these figures – they may have to yet!

Some of the 2012 'Post Paid' with 2006 prices for mint condition in brackets are SG3 £60,000 (£38,000), SG25 £6,000 (£3,250); Dardenne SG41 £13,000, (£7,000), the Arms of 1900 SG 138/55 £300 (£225), Edwards SG 181/95 £250 (£170), George VI pictorials SG 276/90 £70 (£50).

All the Express Delivery overprints of 1903-04 SG E1-E6 and the varieties have been increased considerably. With regard to booklets all the colonial era booklets have been revised upwards. The Moonlanding booklet is priced at 2006 level and the four already overpriced 1997 'Post Office' booklets are held at 2006 prices. The five Mauritius Post locally produced booklets wrongly described as 'stamp pack' and their derivatives have been correctly excluded from the catalogue.

In so far as the stamps of Mauritius used in Seychelles between 1861 and 1890 listed under Seychelles as Z1 to Z65 and ZR1 are concerned most prices have been revised upwards. The B64s have always done well.

If the colonials have done well, the earlier post independents not well at all, recent issues – mainly since corporatization of the Postal Services have further eroded the value of Mauritian stamps and not in pecuniary terms only.

Consider the following:

- The 2007 SG 1170 'Anniversaries and Events' Rs 5 value features the original wrong withdrawn Osman that was issued on 4th December. The right Osman stamp is listed as 1170a with the wrong issue date of 4.12.2007 and is unpriced. The correct issue date for the corrected Osman stamp is 27.12.2007. More importantly the (official) withdrawal date of the wrong Osman - 8th December 2007 is not mentioned. That alone makes the wrong Osman stamp the perfect candidate for the first Mauritian 'appendixed' stamp.
- The Indigenous Flowers of Mauritius definitives issued in 2009 (SG1180-91) omits five new

printings - 1184 Rs 7 of 2009 and 1184 Rs 7, 1185 Rs 8, 1188 Rs 15 and 1190 Rs 25 of 2010. Only the 12 original printings of 2009 are listed.

- The confused SAPOA members World Cup issue of 2010 shows Mauritius Rs 7 normal stamp in used condition with a clear postmark. This is the only stamp of Mauritius ever thus depicted – all other stamps are shown mint. The gold foil miniature sheet priced at £3.50, produced in

absurdly low quantities, is now very expensive wallpaper in Mauritius and on the internet. This disjointed joint eight out of fourteen nations issue has plunged Mauritius into the nadir of philatelic notoriety.

Stanley Gibbons, take note.

Review by MW Antoine

THE PRESS

| | | |
|-----------------|------------|---|
| The Independent | 18.05.2012 | MPL issues envelopes to mark 40 years of Sino-Mauritian relations |
| The Independent | 25.05.2012 | Triolet gets state of the art post office |
| The Independent | 25.05.2012 | PM highlights role of post office in modern society |
| The Independent | 07.06.2012 | MPL encourages recycling with used envelopes drop off points |
| The Independent | 14.06.2012 | Rs 300,000 stolen from post office |
| The Independent | 20.06.2012 | ... Bassin, Quatre Bornes does not meet MPL criteria |
| Express Weekly | 22.06.2012 | Two-penny Blue |
| Le Matinal | 26.06.2012 | Le bicentenaire du MTC en ,,, poste |
| The Independent | 27.06.2012 | Pillay appeals to showcase horseracing as sports |
| The Independent | 07.07.2012 | User-friendly postcode set up |
| Le Matinal | 10.07.2012 | Tentative de vol à la poste d'Eau Coulée |
| The Independent | 10.07.2012 | Police foils robbery at post office |
| The Independent | 13.07.2012 | MPL to organise beach clean-up |
| The Independent | 13.07.2012 | Blood donation to be encouraged in Rodrigues: MPL |
| The Independent | 17.07.2012 | MPL employees clean beach for a day |
| l'express | 17.07.2012 | La passion des timbres lui colle à la peau. |
| The Independent | 18.07.2012 | MPL inaugurates new gallery |
| l'express | 20.07.2012 | Le musée de la poste, totalement timbré |
| l'express | 22.07.2012 | La France à l'honneur à la Poste |
| Le Week End | 05.08.2012 | Le bureau de poste d'Ebène sur la sellette |
| The Independent | 23.08.2012 | Indian stamps exhibition at Postal Museum |



Souvenir sheet of the Bicenentenary of the Mauritius Turf Club