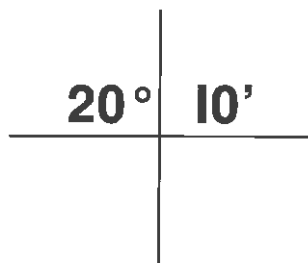


2010

Issue No 2 - AUGUST 2010



THE JOURNAL OF THE MAURITIUS PHILATELIC SOCIETY

CONTENTS

Monthly Society Meetings.....	1-2
Management Committee Meetings.....	3
Visitors to Mauritius.....	3
Stamps - New Printings, <i>al Idrissi</i> , Shanghai, ... Grand Port ...	3-5
G.P.O. Counter, Port Mathurin Post Office.....	5
Special Covers.....	6-7
Perforation Variety.....	6-7
The Red Penny and the Blue Pence.....	8
Connor v. Brownrigg.....	8
Annual Outing.....	9
Parcel Post, The Press.....	10



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INDIAN OCEAN

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MONTHLY SOCIETY MEETINGS

MAY - The May meeting was held at College du St Esprit, Sir Virgil Naz Avenue, Quatre Bornes at 14.00 hrs on Saturday 8th May 2010

Saturday 1st May, May Day or Labour Day, is a public holiday in Mauritius. Political parties use the occasion to hold huge rallies whereas the trade unions hold small meetings or marches. The Society meeting was therefore postponed to the second Saturday of the month as the policy is to avoid holding monthly meetings on public holidays.

Many topics were on the May agenda:

- The FIFA World Cup stamps of Mauritius also known as the "3rd joint SAPOA Issue" went on sale on 9th April. The single stamp, the gold foil sheetlet and the whole pane of 50, the three Official FDCs and every aspect of this issue, including some very privileged information, were presented jointly by Dr. A.N. Maderbokus and Mico Antoine.

A critical analysis of the issue, the launching, and the politics of Mauritian philately was made. The overwhelmingly consensus by those present was that this single Mauritian stamp and the nine other gold foil stamps of the sheetlet were badly conceived and executed.

- The Mauritius Post sponsored Birth Centenary of Renganaden Seeneevassen 2010 Special Commemorative Cover of 11th April was shown with no comment.

- The first of the three part story of James Stuart Brownrigg's tenure of office in Mauritius as Postmaster general was presented by Mico Antoine. The Colonial PMG of Mauritius from 1st July 1843 to 28th June 1853 was removed from office because of several irregularities in the department of the Post Office. The dispute between the Chief Clerk, Cornelius Connor and the PMG, the challenge to a duel, the ensuing disclosures and the official enquiry led to the demise of Brownrigg.

- The pre-publication seven page article titled *Stamped with passion on La Philatélie à l'île Maurice* in the latest Beachcomber Hotel magazine was brought to the attention of members. The promise was made that when the 26th edition of *EVASION* goes on sale several copies would be distributed to those attending the May meeting as well as other regular members on the attendance register. The Notice Board carried several press cuttings from Mauritius and from abroad. 17 members attended the May meeting.

JUNE - The June meeting was held at 14.00 hrs on Saturday 5th June 2010 at College du St Esprit, Sir Virgil Naz Avenue, Quatre Bornes.

- Part II of the Brownrigg story was the main item on the afternoon's agenda, followed by "From Stamp Booklets to Booklets on Stamps" by Mico Antoine and Dr. A.N. Maderbokus respectively.

- The case for the removal of the Postmaster general of Mauritius from office was strengthened by the enquiry into the serious irregularities uncovered in the day to day administration of the department. Connor's denunciations and the evidence obtained from witnesses working at the Port Louis post office were so serious that Governor Higginson who initially defended Brownrigg had no option but to comply with the orders of the Duke of Newcastle from 10 Downing Street, London, to remove James Stuart Brownrigg from office.

The lasting legacy of Brownrigg's tenure as PMG of Mauritius are firstly the undeniable advances in the department, secondly the issue of the "Post Office" stamps of 1847 and "Post Paid" stamps from 1848 to 1853 and the absence of conclusive or detailed documentary evidence on the stamps issued during his tenure at the post office, thirdly the decision to brand government furniture in Mauritius.

- Dr. A.N. Maderbokus gave an interesting talk on Mauritian stamp booklets. The stamp booklets of Mauritius are relatively few in number and are classed in four categories, namely (1) the 1953, 1954 and 1955 booklets listed in Gibbons as SB1, SB2, SB3 respectively. These were issued during the colonial period and were composed of stamps and air mail labels stapled between two covers (2) the 1979 stitched Tenth Anniversary of Moon Landing booklet with the set of stamps and multiples of the two lower values in a multicoloured cover with relevant information on the event (3) the four 1977 150th anniversary of "POST OFFICE" stamps with each booklet containing panes of ten stamps of the four values (60c, Rs4, Rs5 and Rs10) attached to their respective illustrated folded cover by selvedge and (4) the various Mauritius Post stamp booklets which they decided to call Stamp Pack issued from 2005 to date of different folded illustrated covers with different denominations of various stamps constructed from normal stamp sheets of 50 attached by selvedge. The first three booklet types are catalogued whereas the last type is not listed.

Booklets on stamps shown were the History Definitives booklet of 1978, several stamp packs, special presentation packs, official gift packs, annual stamp packs (1994 and 2002) and annual stamp books (1992 to 1995). Whilst several of these items are rather rare and some very desirable to own they are relatively difficult to acquire as most were produced in limited numbers.

- Details of the three new printings of the Flowers definitive issued on 1st June 2010 were given

- Other items discussed and shown were - some data and copies of photographs of Keith Adams, Mauritius Government Railways engineer, received from Stephen Spark of London; more on the FIFA World Cup stamp; articles on Mauritian philately from France and the USA as well as local press cuttings on

postal related reports. 18 members attended the June meeting.

JULY - The July Meeting was held at Collège du St Esprit, sir Virgil Naz Avenue, Quatre Bornes on Saturday 3rd July at the usual time in Quatre Bornes. Three items were on the agenda, namely, the James Stuart Brownrigg case Part III, the May Outing and the Society's new 2010 Bulletin. Changes however were made due to time constraints and the need to deal with more current and pertinent matters.

The Notice Board carried several press cuttings on the Battle of Grand Port commemorations and celebrations viz., the horse drawn cart's tour of the island and details of the events such as exhibitions, battle enactments, seminars, and highly mediated for and against arguments in the build up to the actual battle of August 1810 ... in 2010.

The World Blood Donor Day commemorative cover of 14th June 2010 was presented and Dr. A.N. Maderbokus showed some of his recent acquisitions.

- A series of photographs of the Outing of May were displayed and Hans Bigler talked on the many pleasant surprises experienced by the participants on a day he described as one of the most beautiful days of the year; perfect weather, cloudless blue sky, the greenery of the landscape and the benefits of learning about things unknown.

- The Outing display was an opportunity to look at the thematic WOOD put up by Mico Antoine from his collection of sub-Saharan countries such as the two Rhodesias and Nyasaland (pre and post-independence), the whole of Southern Africa - Botswana, Namibia and the former Bantustans included as well as East Africa, K.U.T., and the post colonial period. All the stamps were wood related from trees, to furniture, to wooden sleepers, wooden coaches, wood burning locomotives, saw mills etc.

The stamps of Mauritius with any wood, wooden or wooded themes were included. There are surprisingly many Mauritian stamps issued on this thematic such as palm trees, the baobab tree and other trees, horse and oxen drawn carriages, colonial building and many more. The wood display was inspired by the Wood Museum at Varangue-sur-Morne.

- Details of the James Stuart Brownrigg Part III case was spread out over two display units but as other more current items were dealt with this item was carried forward to August

- A limited number of EVASION No.26 of April 2010, made available to the Society by Beachcomber Group was distributed to those present at the meeting. A draft of the first edition of 2010, the new Society bulletin scheduled for distribution in August was shown.

- Finally preliminary details of the new procedures regarding the resumption of Society sales were disclosed and the formalities for participation were explained fully.

AUGUST - The August meeting of the Society was held at the usual venue in Quatre Bornes and at the usual time on Saturday 7th August 2010.

The final part of the James Stuart Brownrigg case and the prologue to the Bicentenary of the Battle of Grand Port were the two main topics of discussion.

- The Notice Board carried a series of some twelve inland registered covers with the FIFA World Cup round stamps used in multiples of three to make up the inland registered rate of Rs21 (3xRs7) where several of the stamps remained uncanceled thus recoverable and reusable for inland postage. These were shown alongside another nine uncanceled stamps which had been soaked, recovered, ready for reuse or regumming! These were from one member who had obtained them from a single source. Other members reported having come across similar cases between the period April to July 2010.

- The sneaky issue of the *al Idrissi* stamp issued two days earlier on 5th August would have gone unannounced and unrepresented were it not for the diligence and efficiency of Dr. A.N. Maderbokus who took the trouble to obtain information on the personality depicted on the stamp. Nobody at the meeting had heard of *al Idrissi* before the meeting. Every body knew who he was after Doc's excellent presentation. However every body at the meeting were still at a loss as to what *al Idrissi* was doing on a Mauritian stamp and as to why Mauritius issued such a stamp. One member suggested that the stamp could be a major error as the country of issue ... Mauritius inscribed on the stamp was ... Morocco!!

The mystery deepened with the unconvincing official, political, cultural, historical and navigational linkage of *al Idrissi* to the Bicentenary of Grand Port celebrations-cum-commemorations. At the end of the presentation Doc got a big hand.

- Doc also gave a well prepared prologue to the Bicentenary of the Battle of Grand Port commemorative stamps scheduled for release on 28th August. In six stages he expounded on the period 1715 to 1810 - the French colonial period. This was pure unadulterated historical facts without the distortions and bias so prevalent in articles, interviews, programmes and other bicentenary related hoohahs.

- The final part of the Brownrigg story related to the period 19th February 1853 to January 1855. On 21 March 1853 in a despatch from the Duke of Newcastle to Governor Higginson the removal of James Stuart Brownrigg as Postmaster general of Mauritius was made with the remark "that Mr. Brownrigg should not continue to hold an office under this department" followed by a correspondence on 28th March from Colonel Maberly that Lord Canning had ordered Mr. Brownrigg "to close his accounts as the agent of this department."

At the end of a longer than usual meeting attended by 17 members the new 2010 Society bulletin was distributed.

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The Management Committee meetings of the Society for the period of May to August 2010 were held as follows: Saturday 8th May, Saturday 5th June, Saturday 3rd July and Saturday 7th August at Collège du St Esprit, Sir Virgil Naz Avenue, Quatre Bornes.

All the meetings started at 13.00 hrs. The quorum was assured with 9, 7, 5 and 6 members in attendance for the respective meetings. Judex Adrien was not in Mauritius for the July and August meetings. The quorum is 5.

DELIBERATIONS / DECISIONS

MAY

- Details of the May Outing of Saturday 15th were finalized: rendezvous point, route, sites to visit and the timetable were confirmed.
- The average attendance at the monthly meeting was examined and it was decided to maintain the 2010 calendar as established in December 2009.
- The question of inviting guest speakers was raised.
- The approach from a member for assistance in staging his exhibition was mooted.
- Judex Adrien informed the Committee that he would be absent from Mauritius from July to November 2010.
- On the matter of a website for the Society it was explained that the financial cost was not the problem as a sponsor could be found. The problem, for which there was no solution up to now, was the maintenance and management of the site. Past experiences with two former Committee Members and one former overseas member were recalled.

JUNE

- Hans Bigler reported on the May Outing. Those who did not participate missed something worthwhile, those who signed up and who did not turn up were expletives deleted.
- Three names were presented as possible future guest speakers for the period September 2010 to February 2011.
- VINOD RAMNIAL, a businessman of Port Louis, aged 56 was admitted as a member of the Society.
- Ismael Kara reported to the Committee on the invitation by the Mauritius Tourism Promotion

Authority (MTPA) to a meeting with other stakeholders on the MTPA's "Culture and Heritage" project.

- Proposals for the resumption of sales at Society meetings were under study.
- As from 2010 the Society's journal will bear the title - "2010".

JULY

- Following a meeting with Dr Amina Gurib-Fakim Dr. Maderbokus informed the Committee that subject to confirmation she had accepted the invitation to be the Society's guest speaker in October.
- The new layout of the Society's journal was approved.
- Judex Adrien's letter of 10th June 2010 was filed and his early return to Mauritius in September noted.
- Society sales discussions had been finalized and sales would resume at the September meeting.
- The main topic of the August and September Society meeting agendas were fixed.
- A decision was taken with regard to a banking intrusiveness.

AUGUST

- The items on the July Society meeting agenda were discussed, viz., photographs of the Outing, the "Wood" stamps display and the rescheduling of the third part of the Brownrigg story.
- Plans for the period October to December were outlined.
- The remainder of the 2010 stamp programme from August to December were examined, viz., denominations, subjects, units, sets and single issues, political launchings, FDCs.
- The sales procedures were explained fully: details of procedure, participation, payments and other matters were scrutinized and authorized for distribution.

VISITORS TO MAURITIUS

STEPHEN ANDRÉ from BIEL/BIENNE, Switzerland visited Mauritius from 17th July to 7th August. He met with the President on three occasions but was unable to attend the Society meeting of August as he left Mauritius on the evening of Saturday 7th.

STAMPS

NEW PRINTINGS

Three new printings of the 9th April 2009 Flowers definitive stamps were put on sale locally on 1st June 2010. The denominations are Rs8, Rs10 and Rs25.

The stamps were lithographed by BDT International Ltd of Ireland; the sheet format is of 50 vertical stamps (size 27.94x44.45mm) divided in two panes of 25 separated by a central gutter strip with the three middle gutters imprinted with the logo of Mauritius Post; the two stamps at either ends of the gutter

strip do not bear the logo imprint. The stamps are printed on the all over embossed spiral large crown CASCO watermark paper.

All the characteristics are the same as the other previous printings of this series. The only visible distinguishing feature of this new printing of 1st June 2010 is the position of the sheet number which is found on the selvage of the third stamp of the right pane or the eighth stamp to the right of the sheet. Other changes such as distinct shades, if they exist, are not evident.

The release of these new stamps was not announced nor were any Official First Day Covers issued by Mauritius Post Ltd.

AL-IDRISSI

Mauritius Post Ltd released a single stamp that was not on the official programme on Thursday 5th August 2010 to pay tribute to al Idrissi - geographer and cartographer without any prior notice.

This stamp with a face value of Rs27 features a speculative portrait of the bearded and turbaned subject whose full name is Abu Abd Abdullah Muhammad ibn Muhammad ibn Ash Sharif al Idrissi or Edrisi or Idrissi (circa) 1100-1165. The title of the stamp and the Official First Day Cover script is in imitation Arabic calligraphy. The secrecy surrounding the stamp became evident on the day of issue when a cultural and a Bicentenary of Grand Port linkage was made at the unveiling of a copy of the Mauritian version of al Idrissi's planisphere in a Port Louis garden.

The Official First Day Cover is illustrated with a reproduction of al Idrissi's planisphere, which was a large global map made of precious metal, mostly silver that did not survive the twelfth century. The double circle cancelling cachet (as illustrated) is of the same design. The denomination Rs27 is not a specific listed postal rate.

The logo of Mauritius Post is imprinted on all the five gutters of the sheet. The standard BDT colour dabs or traffic lights and cylinder numbers are printed on the selvages of the four corner blocks as well as on the gutters. The printer's imprint is found only on the middle stamp of each of the two panes at the bottom selvedge. The sheet number is imprinted on the side selvedge of the first stamp to the right of the sheet - position 1/10.

Other technical details from Mauritius Post are: Designer Mauritius Post Ltd; Printers BDT International Security Printers Ltd; Stamp size 44.45x27.94mm (*sic*); perf 14; Gum PVA; Watermark Casco; Sheet Format 50 stamps set in two panes of 25 with gutter.

The covers were on sale at Rs65 per unit at the usual outlets throughout Mauritius on the day of issue and thereafter at the Philatelic Bureau, Port Louis, as well as at several designated post offices until stocks are exhausted.

SHANGHAI EXPO 2010

World Expo 2010 in Shanghai China with some 200 participating countries and international organizations which is expected to be visited by 70 million visitors during the 184 days over which it is held from May 31st to October 31st was commemorated by a single stamp-on-stamp reproduction of the Two Pence deep-blue "Post Office" of 1847. It was released on 20th August 2010 in Port Louis.

The Official First Day Cover is illustrated with the official emblem of the exhibition inspired by the shape of the Chinese character "shi" and the title of the stamp SHANGHAI EXPO 2010 is in what is supposed to be calligraphic Chinese. The stamp is cancelled with a special circular cachet, measuring 24mm in diameter, incorporating the emblem of the exhibition. A second clear strike of the same canceller is applied to the left of the stamp.

Technical details are exactly as those of the al Idrissi stamp apart from the face value of Rs30.

The cover was on sale at Rs70 per unit at post offices throughout Mauritius and Rodrigues on Friday 20th August and thereafter at the Philatelic Bureau, Port Louis, as well as at several designated post offices.

China did not release any "joint issue" with Mauritius, thus Mauritius Post's announcement of "a Joint Stamp issue with China Post" is inexact.

BI-CENTENARY OF THE BATTLE OF GRAND PORT 1810-2010

A set of two stamps was released on Saturday 28th August 2010 to commemorate the only naval victory of the French over the British during the Napoleonic Wars. The battle which took place at Grand Port is chiseled on the *l'Arc de Triomphe d'Etoile* in France and in Mauritius at Pointe des Régates where a monument shaped like the Tour Eiffel hallows this hollow victory.

The stamps are landscape in format and printed horizontally in sheets of 50 divided into two panes of 25 with a central gutter strip of five which are all imprinted with the logo of Mauritius Post.

The stamps are denominated Rs14, overseas minimum (standard size) postcard rate and Rs21 the standard minimum inland registered rate. The stamps are titled **Bicentenary of the Battle of Grand Port 1810-2010** and depict respectively a "Battle scene" and "Ile de la Passe".

The standard BDT traffic lights and cylinder numbers are printed on the selvages of the four corner blocks as well as on the gutter strip. The printer's imprint is found on both panes, top on the middle selvedge (position 1/3) and bottom on the middle selvedge (position 10/3). The sheet number is found on the top selvedge of the fifth stamp to the right of the sheet (position 1/5).

Technical details are: Designer: Mauritius Post Ltd, Printer: BDT International Security Printing Ltd (Ireland), Process: Lithography, Stamp Size: 44.45x27.94mm, Perforations: 14, Gum: PVA, Paper: CASCO large crown all over watermark.

The Official First Day Cover is illustrated with the monument at "Pointe des Régates", and portraits of the victor Guy-Victor Duperré and the vanquished Nesbit Willoughby who are identified simply as DUPERRE and WILLOUGHBY; the monument is not named.

The two stamps are cancelled with one strike of a special double circle circular cachet measuring 28mm in diameter with the title of the stamps within the outer circles and the dates 1810/2010 in the upper half of the inner circle with Mauritius / 28 AUG 2010 in the lower half. A second clear strike of the canceller is placed on the cover between the illustration and the stamps.

The FDCs were on sale at Rs75 at the usual outlets throughout Mauritius and Rodrigues on the day of

issue and thereafter at the Philatelic Bureau, Port Louis, as well as at a few designated post offices.

The "launching" of the Official First Day Cover on 28th August signified the closure of the various commemorations and at times controversial celebrations of the 1810 skirmish between 8 ships which led directly to the successful British invasion of *Ile de France*, the defeat of the French in December 1810 and the renaming of the island as Mauritius its original name.

G.P.O. COUNTER

A brand new die with a brand new slogan has been installed in the OMRON table top automatic canceller that was moved from the Central Mail Office (GPO SORTING) "sometime in September 2009" to the GPO COUNTER Post Office (Dumas Street Post Office) where the canceller continued to be used with the GPO SORTING die. The name place now designates the office of origin on mail posted at Dumas Street Post Office correctly.

The new die reads G.P.O. COUNTER (top) with MAURITIUS (bottom) and it incorporates the very first Mauritius Post rectangular slogan which bears the Mauritius Post logo and the following CWA, CEB, TELEPHONE / BILLS MOTOR VEHICLE LICENCES / ARE AVAILABLE / AT POST OFFICES in four lines.



Payment for these services can be made at some post offices in Mauritius but definitely not at all post offices so the slogan message is inexact.

The new postmark with the new slogan has been seen on mail dated 29th July 2010. Any reports of earlier sightings will be acknowledged.

Ed. Note. See the report on Page 6 News Items 2009.4 of December 2009.

POST MATHURIN POST OFFICE

(bis repetita)

The new post office of Port Mathurin, Rodrigues, located at Solidarity Street, opposite Rodrigues College, Junior Department which opened for business on Monday 22nd February 2010, was officially opened on Wednesday 14th July 2010 by the Minister of Information and Communication Technology and the Minister of Fisheries and Rodrigues and the Chief Commissioner of Rodrigues Regional Assembly in the presence of other eminent personalities as well as the Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Mauritius Post Ltd.



Photographed by Stephen André, August 2010

SPECIAL COVERS

World Blood Donor Day

A special commemorative cover was put on sale on 14th June 2010. Inscribed with - World Blood Donor Day / New Blood for the World / My Blood, Your Life / and illustrated with a caricature of one drop of dark red blood. The cover is franked with the Rs8 denomination of the "Anthurium Species" stamp (SG 1121) of 2004. The stamp is cancelled with a special double circle cachet measuring 25mm in diameter with two drops of black blood, the date 14 June 2010 and the letters MOH & QL within the inner circle. Blood Donors Association (Mauritius) (top) and National Blood Transfusion Service (bottom) are inscribed within the two circles. A clear strike of the cancelling cachet is placed to the left of the stamp.

The logo of Mauritius Post is imprinted on the back flap to denote proprietorship and since MOH & QL translates into Ministry of Health and Quality of Life, every outfit involved gets bloody exposure. A headless insert with some superficial data gives a "BIG THANK YOU TO ALL OUR UNSUNG HEROES" in

capital letters at the bottom of the data card. Some of the 1,000 covers produced were on sale at the Philatelic Bureau, Port Louis, at Rs25 per unit, and others were distributed by those involved to those promoting the merits of donating blood.

In future blood will be collected at post offices on the first Wednesdays of the month. A MoU (Memorandum of Understanding) between the Blood Donors Association and Mauritius Post Ltd now puts post office premises at the disposal of the association for the collection of blood.

Ed. Note. For the ICAC annual anti-corruption campaign every December some 20 plus offices of Mauritius Post propagate the ICAC message in ... "red ink only". For this once only philatelic blood collection campaign the cover is cancelled with... black ink. On the cover the drop of blood is dark red, the Anthurium stamp is bright red; the black blood of the cachet is for contract!!

World Blood Donor Day
New blood for the world



**MY BLOOD,
YOUR LIFE**



Special Commemorative Cover

(Reduced)

PERFORATION VARIETY

Perforation varieties caused by machine malfunction are not listed nor are other spectacular perforation freaks. One such variety has been found recently on an envelope, months after the item was mailed, by a member of the Society. It is the Rs7 *Acanthurus leucosteron* stamp of the Fish definitive series issued on 9th October 2000, SG1038.

Only one of this *piquage à cheval* variety on cover is known to date. No other covers or stamps have been reported or seen despite further searches by the owner of the cover as well as other members of the Society.

This item was postmarked at Saint Pierre post office presumably at some time in 2009 from a college in Helvetia, Saint Pierre, to a Quatre Bornes address. The handstamp on the back of the envelope is the only evidence of the source as the contents have been mislaid.

It is assumed that several sheets of this standard inland rate Rs7 Fish denomination were purchased over the counter at Saint Pierre post office in the normal course of business. Saint Pierre post office is the nearest office to the college at Helvetia. The stamps were then used in the normal course of business by the school. (cont.page 7)

SPECIAL COVERS

Death Centenary of Florence Nightingale (1910-2010)

The Mauritius Nursing Association (MNA) produced a **Special Commemorative Cover** to mark the Death Centenary of Florence Nightingale (1910-2010). Released on Friday 13th August 2010 the cover is illustrated with a photograph of the Civil Hospital in Port Louis and a portrait of Florence Nightingale. Franked with a single (2010 new printing) standard inland postage stamp of Rs7 from the Indigenous flowers of Mauritius definitive series the cover is cancelled with the standard double circle circular datestamp (cds) from the Philatelic Bureau with Port Louis at top and Mauritius at base.

In addition to the postmark a special circular cachet measuring 25mm in diameter is applied to the left of the stamp. This cachet reads Nursing Association Mauritius (top) 13 August 2010 (bottom) with a simulation of the lady with the lamp and a patient within the inner circle. The insert provides essential relevant data on the Mauritius Nursing Association, the "Civil Hospital", and a brief biography of Florence Nightingale. 700 covers were produced and a limited amount was available at the Philatelic Bureau at Rs40 per unit. The logo of Mauritius Post is not printed on the cover back flap of the cover.



(Reduced)

PERFORATION VARIETY (continued)

How many sheets of this variety were sold? How many of these stamps were actually used on mail? Were any mint stamps saved? How many more covers are out there? The Society would like to hear from you as other examples must surely exist

The postmark is almost illegible, feebly struck with an under-inked and unclean datestamp. The postmark does however tie the stamp to the cover. On the white envelope the only decipherable details are MAU of Mauritius, a partial S of Saint Pierre, a very short hyphen and the numeral 0 for the year (09). Nothing else is visible on the envelope or on the stamp itself. The stamp can in fact be recovered and be reused or regummed! There are absolutely no traces of the postmark on the dark blue stamp.

The short hyphen, the partial S, the 0 and the handstamp of the college on the back of the cover provides the proof that the item was posted at Saint Pierre as the postmark has all the characteristics of the screwed up locally manufactured Metal Cast Ltd Type D datestamp introduced in Mauritius in 2003 and 2004. Saint Pierre was one of the few post

offices supplied with these double circle circular datestamps and current proving covers confirm that this datestamp is still in use today.



A clearer and more complete well struck postmark, should other covers turn up, will confirm the deduction that the cover was mailed from Saint Pierre post office.

The Rs7 Fish *piquage à cheval* variety is the only other variety known to the Society since the inverted watermark varieties of the R1 and Rs9 Constellations (SG1083 and 1086) stamps of 2002.

THE RED PENNY AND THE BLUE PENCE

During April, May and June 2010 Mauritius featured in several prestigious philatelic as well as non-philatelic publications.

▪ (U.S.A) Max Colchester writing in the *Wall Street Journal* of 21st April 2010 on the state of the hobby refers to the Orange-Red ONE PENNY as - "One of the most valuable stamps in the World is an orange, 1847 one penny stamp from the island of Mauritius. It is known in philatelic circles as the Mona Lisa of stamps...."

▪ (FRANCE) In the May 2010 *Timbres* magazine Sabastian Marrot in a four page article *Un festival en souvenir du roi - philatelite*, on the LONDON 2010 STAMPEX held from 8th to 15th May, refers to King George V's acquisition of the Deep Blue TWO PENCE stamp as - "d'un Post Office bleu de Maurice...."

▪ (FRANCE) In June 2010 *Timbres* magazine in a layout spread across eight pages on the exhibition held at Musée de la Poste in Paris from 2nd to 12th June 2010 on *Afrique et océan Indien* features a section on Mauritius sub-titled "*Ile Maurice: sans le bal de Lady Gomm*". The two "Post Office" stamps of Mauritius are described as *1d orange-rouge...* and *L'un sera rouge-orange, l'autre bleu foncé... avec les mots "Post Office"*.

About the only place left on Earth where some institutions, such as the Mauritius Commercial Bank

with its art gallery and Mauritius Post with its postal museum amongst a few others, continue to get it wrong is Mauritius where the "Post Office" stamps originated. There is simply no such thing as a BLUE PENNY. It is not easy though to get through to those and some of their converts, whom Mark Twain in *Following the Equator* writes off as the many who believe *Paul and Virginie* "to be part of the Bible". The inbred penchant for myths and legends coupled with the childishly silly elitist aversion of the truth, the selective appropriation of certain historical periods, the memory lapses occasioned by the denial of recorded facts and plain stupidity are the reasons for the perpetuation of the BLUE PENNY misnomer in Mauritius.

Some enlightened and open minded institutions do not however succumb to this local distortion of facts. For example:-

▪ (MAURITIUS) In the April 2010 edition of *EVASION* - No. 26, the Beachcomber Hotels magazine, in an article on *La Philatélie à L'île Maurice* titled *Stamped with passion* spread over pages 37 to 45 the two "Post Office" of Mauritius stamps are correctly identified in the text and the colour reproduction of the two stamps are true.... no BLUE PENNY nonsense from them nor from the Mauritius Philatelic Society.

CONNOR vs. BROWNRIGG

On 22nd May 1852, the Governor James Macaulay Higginson was made aware of the contents of the letter dated 20th May 1852 from Cornelius Connor, Chief Clerk of the Post Office to the Colonial Postmaster-general of Mauritius James Stuart Brownrigg. The Governor immediately directed that Mr. Connor be dismissed for misconduct; the challenge to a duel being "more an ebullition of temper than an unpardonable offence" consequently should a suitable vacancy occur in another department Mr. Connor would be the first to fill such a vacancy.

Connor subsequently apologized to Brownrigg for his challenge to shoot it out and was ready "to crave your pardon even upon my knees for the gross insult I offered you in an evil and misguided hour..." Brownrigg refused to accept the apology.

In the month of June 1852 the Auditor-general informed the Governor of the "existence of several irregularities in the department of the Post Office".

The five offences with which Brownrigg was eventually charged were:

1. With regard 1st, to the peon, Pierre Louis, alias Louis, alias Jaggoo.... Jaggoo was Brownrigg's personal private servant and coachman. Brownrigg put him on the payroll of the Post Office and drew his salary from April 1845 to mid-1852.

2. When the Post Office was moved from the Place d'Armes to Government Street Brownrigg took away a handsome armoire, and substituted an inferior one belonging to himself for it.

3. In 1849 Brownrigg sold to the Post Office an armoire belonging to himself, and had the bill made out in a clerk's name.

4. In March 1852, Brownrigg received 4 *l. (livres)* from Captain Bowers and had not brought this amount to account.

5. The last charge was that Brownrigg had retained the pay of a convict courier, named Kishna, during eight months, and had only paid him when the inquiry was instituted.

On 28 June 1853 a dispatch from Governor Higginson to the Duke of Newcastle confirmed "the appointment of Mr. Brownrigg as Colonial Postmaster-general has been revoked..."

... as a result of the Brownrigg enquiry the Duke of Newcastle in a dispatch from Downing Street, London dated 16th March 1853 enforced the suggestion from Mauritius "for the branding of public furniture for the purpose of identifying it as public property"

Ed note. Connor was right - no doctor was needed, there was no duel but both the Postmaster general and the Chief Clerk lost their jobs.

ANNUAL OUTING



Under the Banyan Tree at Rivière Noire - Photo Mico Antoine, May 2010

On May 15th 9 members out of the 13 who had signed up for the trip to the south west of the island met well after the scheduled time as usual, at the rendezvous point, Guy Rozemont Stadium, La Louise. In three cars the group headed for Riviere Noire, Varangue-sur-Morne, Black River Gorges Viewpoint, Grand Bassin, Mare-aux-Vacoas and finally back to the starting point.

Those who came for the trip were Mico Antoine, Judex Adrien, Monique Ah Shan, Hans Bigler, Thonyno DieuDonné, Jean Marc di Costanzo, Tarkesswar Nath Greedharrye, Khan Mustapha and Ismael Kara. The four no shows are nameless.

The first stop was at the recently opened and suddenly closed Mauritius Heritage Museum at Petite Riviere Noire. This undertaking was a bad idea in the wrong place; it did not work nor did it last. The magnificent banyan trees are still there, they have lasted, even if the museum is now shuttered. A couple of members then made an unscheduled stop for their commemorative covers at the Case Noyale post office, the roof of which was falling apart. We could not accept the invitation to visit the adjacent community health centre as we were already behind schedule.

The winding climb to Chamarel was pleasant and the next stop was *Varangue-sur-Morne* where one of the best kept private museums in Mauritius is located. The Wood Museum is crammed with almost everything that one can imagine that is made of wood or that has anything to do with wood. This hidden in the mountains treasure trove is well worth a visit. Everyone in the group was impressed. The

"Touché du Bois - Timber down the Ages" museum is an outstanding realization.

After visiting all the rooms in the Wood Museum and walking around the manicured yards the Outers had lunch in the car park before doubling back to the Baie du Cap - Grand Bassin fork in the road for a *randonnée* at the 3 kiosk Nature Walk (of some two kilometres) with spectacular views of Ile aux Benitiers and La Gaulette to the west. We even heard monkeys chattering in their fenced up breeding farm.

The next stop was the Black River Gorges Viewpoint where there were several foreign tourists as well as local visitors. Some of us tried the pricy two tier crushed sugar cane juice. One price for anyone that looked like or sounded like a tourist (some of us spoke English), another price for the locals who spoke creole. The vendor had good ears.

A short and quick diversion to Grand Bassin, the sacred lake and place of Hindu pilgrimage, where a couple of us saw the huge 108-foot tall Mangal Mahadeo (Lord Shiva) statue for the first time. Very impressive even if some disproportionate features of the idol were evident. Many photographs were taken as someone had a bright idea which did not really work out too well!

One more stop at the Mare-aux-Vacoas reservoir where someone suggested that there would be no shortage of water in the summer as he had never seen so much water in the reservoir at this time of the year.

The last stop was at the starting at around 4.30. Thus ended the 2010 Society Outing on a beautiful sun kissed Saturday of May.

PARCEL POST

An INLAND PARCEL POST (INTER ISLAND) form MPL/PSD 113 (not MPL PSO 113 as referred to) used on a parcel of personal effects from Terre Rouge, Rodrigues, to Brisée Verdrière, Mauritius dated 26 JA 10 (see 2010, No.1 of April 2010 - Monthly Society Meetings)

MPL/PSD 113

THE MAURITIUS POST LTD.
(INLAND)

PW 5

(1) Name and address of Sender
Terre Rouge Rodrigues

(2) Detailed description of Contents
Personal belongings

(3) Weight in Kg
9

(4) Name and full address of addressee
Brisée Verdrière

Date Stamp

are correct

Signature of Sender

Rs 10

Rs 25

Rs 50

Rs 50

Manuscript details: PW 5 over 4, Mailbag item reference 4th or 5th item in bag - 9, Weight 9 kilos - 135, postage 9 kilos x Rs15.

THE PRESS

Week-End	02.05.2010	Feuillet d'or à 9 timbres en vente
The Independent	07.06.2010	Mauritian stamp star in France
L'express	09.06.2010	[Don de sang] Collecte dans les bureaux de poste
The Independent	10.06.2010	BDA, MPL sign MoU
The Independent	14.06.2010	BDA organises blood donation programmes
Le Défi-Plus	03.07.2010	Facteur qui sonne
Le Défi-Plus	17.07.2010	Il ne reçoit pas ses lettres, il tabasse le facteur
Le Matinal	20.07.2010	Port-Mathurin : de la poste folklorique à une poste moderne
L'express	20.07.2010	D'une poste folklorique à une poste moderne
Week-End	01.08.2010	Une poste moderne à Port-Mathurin
The Independent	06.08.2010	MPL pays tribute to Al-Idrisi
The Independent	21.08.2010	MPL marks island's strides in tourism
The Independent	21.08.2010	MPL First Day Cover presented
L'express	27.08.2010	Hommage a Florence Nightingale
Le Défi-Plus	28.08.2010	Expo universelle et timbre-poste
Le Matinal	21.08.2010	Timbres à l'honneur à Shanghai
Le Matinal	21.08.2010	Itinéraire d'une carte postale : ...

MAURITIUS POSTAL HISTORY = MAURITIUS PHILATELIC SOCIETY