

# **MAURITIUS PHILATELIC SOCIETY**

## **QUARTERLY UPDATES**

**No. 1 – 2018**

**JANUARY - MARCH**

### **JANUARY:**

The society does not hold the usual monthly members meeting in January anymore. The first month of the year, particularly the first half, is holiday time in Mauritius. In the past attendance was so low that about ten years ago the decision was taken to drop the month of January from the society's meeting calendar altogether.

The management committee however met at the residence of the president at 3A, La Louise Avenue, Quatre Bornes at 13:00 hours to approve the minutes of meeting of 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2017, to establish the monthly meeting calendar for 2018 and to review the society's performance during the past year. The February 2018 agenda was also confirmed and the date of the Annual General Meeting was fixed for 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2018.

### **FEBRUARY:**

The first monthly members meeting of 2018 was held on Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> February at College St Esprit, Sir Virgil Naz Avenue, Quatre Bornes. The agenda posted from Bois Cheri on 24 January was of three topics namely Stamps and Postal History 2017, Commercial covers 2018 and provisionally the review of newsletter 20<sup>o</sup>10' No. 19. The stamps of the whole of 2017 were reviewed particularly the Republic of Mauritius islands of Mauritius set of three stamps. There was a lengthy explanation on the constraints in exploiting the marine resources of the Maritime Economic Zone followed by some untold aspects of the history of Diego Garcia as well as the joint management solution of the Tromelin sovereignty problem. Solid stuff, no bluff nor bull from three members.

A comprehensive arrangement of commercial covers of Mauritius only exposed and confirmed the insoluble postmark problems at Mauritius Post.

Press cuttings on Mauritius Post, Maubank and Metro Express, which the society in its own way is monitoring with an open mind, were posted on the notice board.

Richard Wilson, who was unable to attend several meetings during the second half of 2017 made amends with a small Mauritius certification and censorship display.

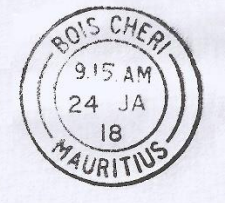
The 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2018 30% postal rates hike was analysed and Mauritius Post's financial woes were disclosed. Mauritius Post's October 2017 1<sup>st</sup> in Africa and 33<sup>rd</sup> in the world UPU "Integrated Index Post Development" certificate award was critically appraised.

The stamps of B.I.O.T. issued during 2017 were also presented. All things considered a good attendance, some good material in the purchase lists without any spot auction or bid board lots and very heavy rainfall all afternoon.



**BOIS CHERI  
POST OFFICE**

Opened 01.07.1981  
Current Location :  
Main Road  
Postcode : 60203



The convocations dated 12<sup>th</sup> January 2018 were posted from Bois Cheri on 24<sup>th</sup> January.

**MARCH:**

The Annual General Meeting was held on 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2018 at College du St Esprit at 14:00.

The press notice for the AGM was published in “L’express” on 12<sup>th</sup> February and the AGM convocations dated 20<sup>th</sup> February were posted to members from La Flora on 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2018.

The AGM agenda was as follows:

1. Approval of the minutes of the 2017 AGM.
2. Report of the president for the year 2017.
3. Approval of the accounts ending 31 December 2017.
4. Approval of the budget for the year 2018.
5. Election of committee members and office bearers for the year 2018.
6. Appointment of the auditor for the year 2018.
7. Any other business.

The nine candidates for posts on the management committee met at 13:00 to ensure that all issues concerning the AGM were in order. AGM documents, ballot papers, letters of

candidature, audited accounts, the budget, related listings and relevant information were appended to the notice board.

The AGM began on schedule and all business were carried out in conformity with the rules and regulations of the society.

The elected committee members then met and constituted the management committee as follows:

Mico W Antoine	President
Ahmad N Maderbokus	Vice President
Alain Louis	Treasurer
Ally M Hossanee	Assistant Treasurer
Arnaud Guibert	Secretary
Sachitanand Mungra	Assistant Secretary
Jean J Auguste	Member
Thonyo Dieudonne	Member
Diane Sher Mohamedkhan	Member

A N Maderbokus had set up a two unit display of Rodrigues material as an introduction of a more important presentation on Rodrigues at the May 2018 meeting. He urged members to join him by bringing along their philatelic material at the May society meeting for a postal and political history of Rodrigues interchange. The purchase list was of 40 items and the bid board offered 15 lots. Newsletter 20°10' No.19 (December 2016) was distributed. 15 members attended the AGM.



**LA FLORA POST OFFICE**  
Opened 11.06.2011  
Current Location :  
Main Road  
Postcode : 61704

A circular postmark from La Flora, Mauritius. The text inside the circle reads "LA FLORA" at the top, "9.15AM" in the center, "22 FE" below that, and "18" at the bottom, with "MAURITIUS" written around the bottom edge of the circle.

The convocations dated 20<sup>th</sup> February 2018 were posted from La Flora on 22<sup>nd</sup> February.

## 2018 MEMBERS MEETING CALENDAR

3<sup>rd</sup> February, 3<sup>rd</sup> March, 5<sup>th</sup> May, 7<sup>th</sup> July, 1<sup>st</sup> September, 3<sup>rd</sup> November, 1<sup>st</sup> December.

[After the formation of the society in 1989 and up to 2007 the society held twelve members monthly meetings every year. Subsequently January was dropped from the calendar and up to the end of 2017 11 members meetings were held every year. The management committee has been monitoring the members monthly meeting calendar for the last four years. At the August 2017 management committee meeting it was decided that as from 2018 only 7 monthly members meetings would be held. The situation will be reviewed in December 2018]

### 50<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE INDEPENDENCE OF MAURITIUS

A set of three stamps was issued on 12<sup>th</sup> March 2018, a public holiday on the occasion of “The Golden Jubilee Celebration of Independence”, one year to the day after the “25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Republic of Mauritius” stamp of 12<sup>th</sup> March 2017 also another public holiday and another of those not so “Exceptional Sale” practices.



The stamps depict:

Re 1.00 Port Louis Harbour Past Present (photographs)

Rs 6.00 National Anthem lyrics on a scroll

Rs 13.00 Lame dan lame official logo of 50 years of Independence

The Rs 13.00 stamp “Lame dan lame” does not bear any small print inscription.

The Official First Day Cover is illustrated with 15 past patriotic, political and national themed stamps arranged to form the figure 50 within the “presidential” gold laurel. The much used gold laurel is now overused. The stamps are affixed in disorder, two vertical and one horizontal (Rs 6.00, Rs 13.00, Re 1.00), to the right of the cover and are cancelled with the standard First Day of Issue/Mauritius 27mm double circle cds on 12 MR 18. A cachet 25mm in diameter with the events full title within the two outer circles and the years 1968-2018 within the inner circle is applied, cancelling nothing, between the stamps and the cover illustration. The logo of Mauritius Post is printed on the gumless back flap of the cover. The OFDC was offered at Rs 90.00 each.

A miniature sheet 133mm x 100mm with the three stamps arranged in another disorderly placement (Rs 6.00, Re 1.00, Rs 13.00) with the facade of the National Assembly building in Port Louis was also issued. The MS was priced at Rs 20.00 each.

Stamps, OFDCs and MS were available at 9 outlets on 12<sup>th</sup> March 2018 and were on general sale as from the 13<sup>th</sup>. Notes on technical details will be published in our June 2018 newsletter together with other information.

N.B. The society has always criticized Mauritius Post for its new stamp issue announcements. We now quote as proof item 7 from Circular Instruction No. 13/2018 dated 6/3/2018:

**7 Poster.** A poster is being sent to Post Offices. It should be conspicuously displayed outside office (as far as possible) for a 24 hour information to the public and for marketing purposes (sic).

In whatever language one wants to interpret item 7. 24 hrs notice is the norm for ADVANCE notice of new issues. I know of cases when posters were sent to post offices on the very day of new issues. According to reports from members of the society and the public there was some deception at Vacoas and Curepipe post offices because of Mauritius Post's ineptness. (WMA)

**ATTEND YOUR SOCIETY MEETINGS  
ATTENDANCE FIGURES 2018**

**JAN - MARCH 2018 - JANUARY N/A, FEBRUARY 16, MARCH 15**

**POSTAL RATES**

Postal tariffs and charges were raised with effect from Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2018.

Tariffs and charges were increased by an average of 30%. The main changes were:

- 1) The second step of Re 1.00 on inland letters applicable from 10 grammes instead of 20 grammes and on each additional 10 grammes instead of each 20 grammes. That is a 100% increase.
- 2) The basic inland letter rate was raised from Rs 10.00 to Rs 13.00 and the registered fee for inland letters from Rs 17.00 to Rs 20.00. These two rates are the main revenue source for Mauritius Post.
- 3) A fee of Rs 25.00 for every small packet and EMS mail retained for postal examination on which **no** custom duty has been levied.
- 4) An additional payment of Rs 100.00 by corporate companies for post office box rental for mail addressed to every sister company in addition to the normal box rental.
- 5) Upward revision for inland parcels and dispatch fee for parcels to and from Rodrigues.



For other postal rates see annexed postal rates schedule dated 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2018.

The basic inland postal rate was raised from Rs 10.00 to Rs 13.00 and the inland registration fee from Rs 17.00 to Rs 20.00. Outgoing conventional overseas mail revenue is of no significant importance. Mauritians do not send much letters abroad any more. The once popular aerogrammes, once used even between Mauritius and Rodrigues, are no longer available at post offices nor used anymore. Last time aerogrammes were produced was in .... 2002. Printed paper, newspaper and periodicals are now online. In so far as Mauritius Post's award winning EMS courier service is concerned each of the leading big four independent courier operators bring in more revenue than total EMS earnings. Furthermore all courier services in Mauritius pay a licence fee to the Mauritius postal authorities in order to operate. Finally Mauritius Post has signed memorandums of understanding with Fedex and DHL to serve as their agent. It is letters, inland letters, that is Mauritius Post's milk cow.

## **CLOSURE AND TRANSFER OF POST OFFICES IN PORT LOUIS**

### **GENERAL POST OFFICE**

The new General Post Office (ex GPO Counter) services were transferred from the former Mauritius Cooperative Central Bank (MCCB) building at 3 Dumas Street Port Louis as from 13<sup>th</sup> March 2018 to 1 Sir William Newton Street Port Louis (ex Mauritius Post and Cooperative Bank (MPCB) and ex Maubank headquarters). Closure of Dumas Street (ex GPO Counter) was on 11<sup>th</sup> March 2018 as 12<sup>th</sup> March was a public holiday.



Dumas Street



Sir William Newton Street

### **WATERFRONT POST OFFICE**

The Waterfront Post Office located in the New Postal Museum (ex *La Poste Centrale*) on Quay Street Port Louis closed its doors as from Friday 16<sup>th</sup> March 2018. All customers including bulk mailers would from that date use the services provided at the newly opened General Post Office (ex GPO Counter) located on the opposite side of the motorway at 1 Sir William Newton Street, Port Louis. Closure of Waterfront post office was on 15<sup>th</sup> March 2018.



Waterfront



MPL HQ Port Louis

### **MAURITIUS POST LTD (MPL) HEADQUARTERS**

The headquarters of Mauritius Post Ltd formerly located at 3 Dumas Street Port Louis in the former MCCB building (together with the GPO Counter post office) was scheduled to complete its transfer to 1 Sir William Newton Street in the new General Post Office building at the end of March 2018.

### **DATE STAMPING**

Another date stamping of mail circular instruction was issued by the Operations Manager of Mauritius Post on 7<sup>th</sup> February 2018. Circular Instructions No.8/2018 is accompanied with a very old eight point extract of rule number **10 Date Stamps, seals, etc...** from the Departmental Rules of the General Post Office.

The society will report on whether or not the disastrous date stamping “hallmark” of Mauritius Post has shown any improvement in the June Update.

### **MAIN CURRENCY EXCHANGE RATES**

The average exchange rate for March 2018 was:

Rs 47.181 for GBP £1 / Rs 41.668 for EUR €1 / Rs 33.767 for USD \$1

(Source: Bank of Mauritius)

**2018 MEMBERSHIP FEES  
IT IS ONLY Rs 300.00  
HAVE YOU RENEWED YOUR MEMBERSHIP FOR 2018?  
IF NOT KINDLY DO SO NOW.  
OVERSEAS MEMBERS MAY PAY BY PAYPAL VIA :  
mtd@bow.intnet.mu**

## THE PRESS AND THE POST

- 17.01.2018 L'express : Mauritius Post s'associe à Maubank .... (a).
- 17.01.2018 L'express : Courier non remis – La facture va en prison (Argentina).
- 28.02.2018 Le Défi Quotidien : Une histoire en perpétuel mouvement.
- 13.03.2018 Le Défi Quotidien : Bonne Gouvernance : La Mauritius Post pointée du doigt.
- 21.03.2018 Le Défi Quotidien : Importation de drogue : La poste serre la vis.
- 24.03.2018 L'express : Emission de timbre-poste pour 2018.
- 29.03.2018 Le Défi Quotidien : The Government Audit Report (year 2017) Quand l'Etat investit Rs 11.2 Md pour rien (b)
- 30.03.2018 L'express : Avenir incertain pour la Maubank (c)
- 30.03.2018 L'express : Une ancienne employée coupable pour falsification.

(a) The opening press item of January is an interesting article where the CEO of Mauritius Post, Giandev Moteea, explains his partnership vision with Maubank, in the development of a new venture to commercialise financial products including acting as a “money changer”. The immediate vicinity of 1 Sir William Newton Street is teeming with licensed and unlicensed money changers who will eat Mauritius Post alive. Two other press items of March reveal that (b) Mauritius Post and Maubank are both at the top of the list of unpaid outstanding government borrowing/funding (5<sup>th</sup> and 1<sup>st</sup> respectively) of Mauritius’ most indebted public/private state corporations/companies out of the 29 named business units and (c) that Maubank has an uncertain future. Maybe some Mauritian rocket scientist can make some sense out of the three press reports. We, at Mauritius Philatelic Society, can't.

Written by Mico W. Antoine – Layout Arnaud D. Guibert

Note: The material contained in this update has been compiled and collated in good faith for general information and no liability can be accepted for errors and omissions.