

# **MAURITIUS PHILATELIC SOCIETY**

## **QUARTERLY UPDATES**

**No. 3 – 2017**

**JULY - SEPTEMBER**

### **JULY:**

The July members meeting was held on the 1<sup>st</sup> of the month at St Esprit College, Quatre Bornes at 14:00 hours. The convocations were posted from Rose Belle on 21<sup>st</sup> June 2017.

The management committee met at the same venue between 13:00 and 14:00 hours to discuss the affairs of the society.

The members meeting agenda listed two items: the Kwan Tee Pagoda commemorative and an aspect of Mauritius.

A N Maderbokus gave much more details about the 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary stamp on the Les Salines Tai Biou Pagoda than the scant narrative in the insert of the Official First Day Cover.

In the context of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the national airline, Air Mauritius, a comprehensive arrangement of stamps, covers, postcards, photographs and other philatelic items were spread over three display units. First Flight Covers, new aircraft delivery covers, Air Mauritius air fleet postcards, photographs of the airport as well as philatelic material of airlines flying to and from Mauritius during the last 50 years were shown.

A brief historical resume is that Air Mauritius was incorporated on 14<sup>th</sup> June 1967, first flight in 1972 with a hired aircraft, operated used aircrafts from 1972 to 1988 and finally new aircrafts from 1988 to today. Note was taken that in 2017, for the Golden Jubilee, no commemorative stamp or stamps were issued and that a limited number of a “Special Commemorative Cover” that will be seen by a very select few franked with one inappropriate Rs 50.00 Indigenous Flower definitive stamp was the best that the national airline and Mauritius Post could come up with. Since the society does not show or promote private SCCs anymore we will not show the SCC and the event which will soon be forgotten anyway unlike the 1977 and 1993 sets of stamps on Air Mauritius. The Government of Mauritius, Air Mauritius and Mauritius Post are collectively responsible for the 2017 golden philatelic non event. They can play catch up in 2018.

The notice board carried press cuttings on the national airline from *L'express* and *Week-End* (nostalgic reminiscence of the past) not very accurate nor too honest either. “Metro Express” or the light railway system articles with lots of half truths, constantly changing assessments and other drivel from all kinds of railway experts were also appended to the notice board.



### ROSE BELLE POST OFFICE

Opened 26.08.1868  
Current Location :  
Royal Road  
Postcode : 51829



The convocations dated 21<sup>st</sup> June 2017 were posted from Rose Belle on the same date.

## AUGUST:

The single convocation for the months of August and September dated 24<sup>th</sup> July 2017 was posted from Verdun on the 26<sup>th</sup> of July.

The August agenda was listed as follows: a very special presentation on varieties of Mauritius, philatelic hyper-inflation, a preview of newsletter No. 18 and an update on Mauritian philately.

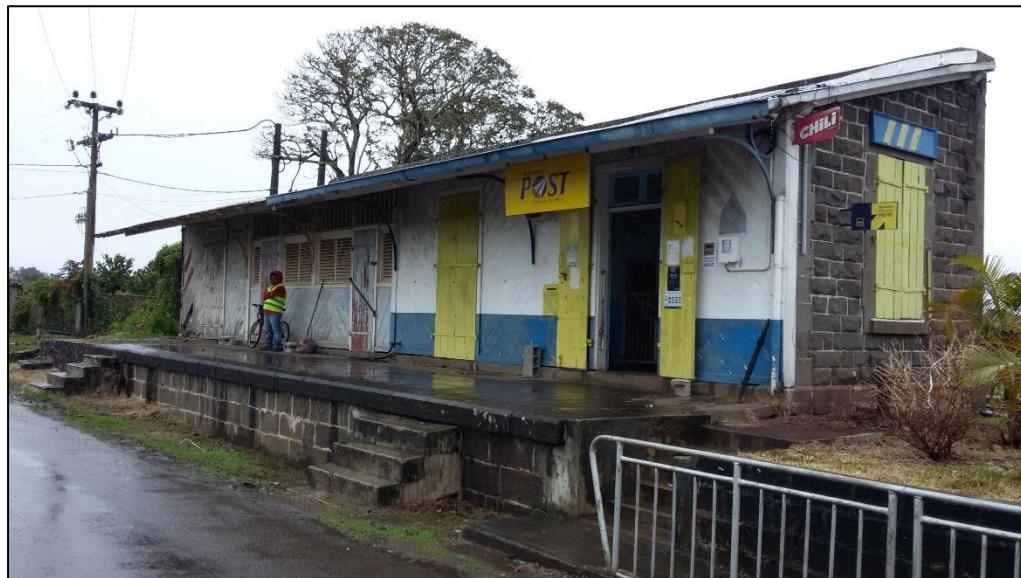
A N Maderbokus prepared a range of Elizabethan errors and varieties mainly from the Birds and Marine Life definitive such as the better known and listed missing colours, sawn branches, claws, eyes and beaks shifts, double fins, double prints and dry prints. It was however the many unlisted doctor blade flaws, printers waste, big blobs and other varieties that should have never left the security printer's premises and get into the hands of dealers that were of more interest. Doc showed over 50 separate items some on cover, on piece or on loose stamps. One story goes around that a Mauritian employed as a factory floor sweeper by a security printer was involved; where ever there is a Mauritian there is a good story.

If Doc's show was special then Richard Wilson's was very special. It was from another era and another world that is very rarely seen in Mauritius or anywhere else for that matter. It was a dozen German hyper-inflation covers from February 1922 to November 1923. All the covers were in exceptionally good condition, clean clearly struck datestamps and handstamps. All full of stamps covering almost the whole of the envelope and in some cases the back as well. Most of the stamps were overprinted with new values as well as manuscript instructions. He gave an interesting talk on the postal rates and the financial turmoil of that period in Germany. Richard is in the offshore global business so he knows quite a bit about inflation.

The No. 18 newsletter would have been distributed at the August meeting were it not for an equipment problem at a stationery shop. A draft copy of the newsletter was passed around with a promise that the newsletter will be distributed at the September meeting.

The mid-year update of stamps, postal history and of the society's work were made. The main issue was the press coverage of the drugs and Mauritius Post connection with the worsening problem and other negative reports regarding the services of Mauritius Post. Supporting data of the update topics were appended to the notice board.

[If anyone has modern hyper inflation covers of or from Zimbabwe, Richard will be glad to hear from you.]



**VERDUN  
POST OFFICE**

Opened 15.11.1880  
Current Location :  
Royal Road  
Postcode : 81802



The convocations dated 24<sup>th</sup> July 2017 were posted from Verdun on 26<sup>th</sup> July.

**SEPTEMBER:**

The September members meeting convocation mailed from Verdun on 26<sup>th</sup> July together with the August notice of meeting mentioned the possible presence of three overseas members. Provisions were therefore made with standby topics if needed.

Jean Claude Montocchio from Paris did visit Mauritius, he met with the president on three occasions and he was at the September meeting. He brought along a recent acquisition of a postal stationery postcard postmarked Grand Sable on 11 January 1927 addressed to Pasteur Colthurst at Rue Salisbury, Rose Hill. The rarity of the Grand Sable postmark on cover, on piece or even on individual stamps is known. Only one Type C single circle circular datestamp is recorded from this post office between 1926 and 1928. Two members in the room provided valuable data on the address and the name of the sender of the card which Jean Claude was able to confirm before he returned to Paris.

During Jean Claude's presentation an unrelated matter relating to the prevailing handstamping of mail problem was proposed by Derek Taylor. The president intervened to cut short any futile out of place debate as the society's and Jean Claude's stand and efforts were known to everyone in the room.

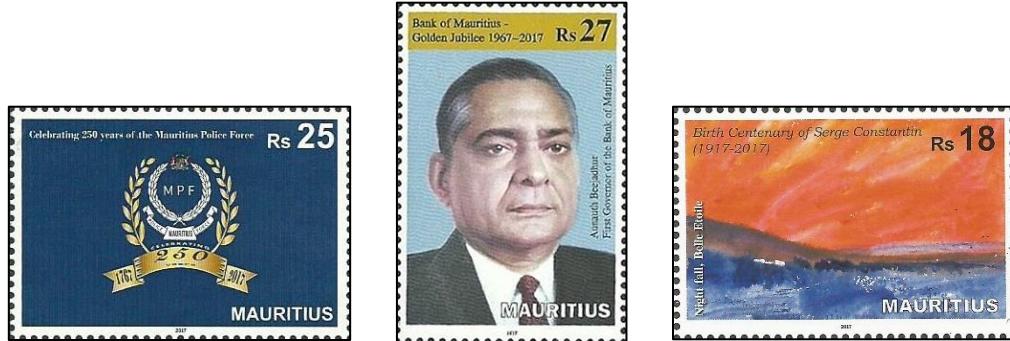
Two display units were covered with a selection of Mauritius thematics prepared for the society's promotional "Mauritius through its stamps" exposition scheduled for three days from 27<sup>th</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup> October at Bagatelle Mall. Some of the selected themes were – classics, colonials, aerophilately, Paul and Virginie, tourism, heritage, sites and monuments, sugar, marine life, bird life, fauna, flora, Port Louis, ships, UN and Mauritius at work.

A collection of covers postmarked in 1989 and 1990 at post office that have since been closed up to the end of 2016 were affixed to one display unit. M Antoine used these covers to introduce the "2018 Postmark Project" that the society will embark on next year. The object is to narrow the gap if not close it altogether for the missing years between the Edward Proud listings ending 1968 and the society's updating beginning 1989 – a gap of some 20 years. Further details will be examined at the society November meeting.

The notice board contained several press cuttings on the post and drugs connection, a couple of maps on the "Metro Express" light railway system, an economist's report and forecast of the profitability of the railways project and the 1796 "first independence" of Mauritius story.

The (postponed) distribution of No. 18 newsletter promise was kept.

## STAMPS OF MAURITIUS COMMEMORATIVE STAMPS



### CELEBRATING 250 YEARS OF THE MAURITIUS POLICE FORCE

A rather long title for this Mauritius Police Force commemorative, listed in the 2017 Stamp Programme as 250 years of Mauritius Police Force released on 1<sup>st</sup> August 2017 in Mauritius and Rodrigues.

The silver Mauritius Police Force badge, with a gold ribbon at base, laurels at sides and the years 1767 – 2017 placed in the centre of the stamp, occupies about 1/3 of the surface against a navy blue background. The full title is in small print at the top of the stamp. Lots of

wasted navy blue to hide poor quality postmarks and perhaps allow for the possible re-use of soaked off stamps.

The Official First Day Cover is illustrated with a photograph of the “Police Headquarters” building in Port Louis with the slogan “*Salus Populi Suprema Lex Esto*”. The (identical) laurelled 250<sup>th</sup> design is replicated in the top centre of the cover. The Rs 25.00 stamp affixed to the top right of the cover is cancelled with the Type D First Day of Issue/ Mauritius 27mm double circle circular datestamp at 8:15 AM/ 1 AU /17. The logo of Mauritius Post is printed on the gumless back flap of the OFDC. No additional cachet defaces the cover.

The insert is over illustrated with 9 branches of the Mauritius Police Force and 16 types of police uniforms from 1767 to 2017. The data is sparse and does very little justice to the history of the police force in four paragraphs titled “A tribute to our past on road to a safer future” (sic) on 1/8 of the total surface of the insert – perhaps the less said the better.

The Rs 25.00 stamp will hardly be seen on inland mail. It will however be used mainly as a fiscal charge for copies of birth certificates; maybe an appropriate way to celebrate. Mauritius Post certainly has a problem with denomination assignments.

The OFDC was priced at Rs 95.00 per unit.

### **GOLDEN JUBILEE OF THE BANK OF MAURITIUS (1<sup>ST</sup> SEPTEMBER 1967 – 1<sup>ST</sup> SEPTEMBER 2017)**

Mauritius Post issued a single stamp on 6<sup>th</sup> September 2017 to commemorate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the central bank of post independent Mauritius described as “the coming to life of the Bank of Mauritius on 1<sup>st</sup> September 1967 in Port Louis”.

The stamp bears a colour portrait of the first governor of the bank Aunauth Beejadhur, the same head portrait showed in miniature on the 29<sup>th</sup> October 1992 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Bank of Mauritius 40c denomination of the four stamps set. Like the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary stamps issued after the actual anniversary date the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary stamp was given the same treatment.

This is the third time the Bank of Mauritius has featured on stamps of Mauritius. The first time was on 10<sup>th</sup> April 1973. By printing, in gold, “1<sup>st</sup> September 1967 – 1<sup>st</sup> September 2017” on the cover next to the date of actual issue 6<sup>th</sup> September 2017 the wrong date is more than evident.

The 2017 insert gives adequate, appropriate and useful data (courtesy of BOM) on the Bank of Mauritius.

The Rs 27.00 denomination paying the combined inland registration fee and postage (Rs 17.00 and Rs 10.00) is affixed to the right of the Official First Day Cover and is cancelled with the 27mm Type D double circle circular datestamp First Day of Issue/Mauritius at 8:15 AM/6 SE/17. The cover is illustrated with the first Bank of Mauritius headquarters building in the fore with BOM Tower in the rear. The logo of the bank is imprinted in the upper middle of

the OFDC above the two line title of the event. No redundant additional cachet mars the rather plain cover. The logo of Mauritius Post is printed on the gumless back flap.

The OFDC was on sale as from 6<sup>th</sup> September 2017 at Rs 110.00 each and were quickly sold out. They were simply not produced in sufficient numbers.

### **BIRTH CENTENARY SERGE CONSTANTIN (1917 – 2017)**

A single stamp featuring a painting of a Mauritian sunset scene “Night Fall, Belle Etoile” by Serge Constantin was released on 28<sup>th</sup> September 2017 to mark the birth centenary of the “artist, painter and stage designer”.

The data card provides scant details on the artist or his work. A photograph of the personality appears on the verso of the card together with technical details of the issue. “...a brief account on his biography” makes no mention that Serge Constantin was born in Port Louis on 18<sup>th</sup> May 1917 and died at Belle Etoile on 15<sup>th</sup> October 1998”.

The Official First Day Cover is illustrated with “another painting of the artist” and the artist in “medaillon” (sic) without identifying the painting which happens to be “Coromandel” painted in 1965.

The Rs 18.00 stamp representing the small postcard (max size 105mm x 148mm) overseas airmail rate is cancelled with one strike of the regular Type D First Day of Issue/Mauritius at 8:15 AM/28 SE/17. No additional cachet or logo appear on the cover. The logo of Mauritius Post is printed on the gumless back flap.

The stamp and OFDC went on sale at all post offices in Mauritius and Rodrigues on 28<sup>th</sup> September 2017 at Rs 90.00 each.

### **MAIN CURRENCY EXCHANGE RATES**

The average exchange rate for September 2017 was:

Rs 45.213 for GBP £1 / Rs 40.509 for EUR €1 / Rs 34.045 for USD \$1

(Source: Bank of Mauritius)

### **ATTEND YOUR SOCIETY MEETINGS ATTENDANCE FIGURES 2017**

**JAN - MARCH 2017 - JANUARY N/A, FEBRUARY 16, MARCH 17  
APR - JUNE 2017 – APRIL 15, MAY 12, JUNE 14  
JULY-SEPT 2017 – JULY 15, AUGUST 17, SEPTEMBER 13.**

## INTERNATIONAL REPLY COUPON – 2017-2021

A new Universal Postal Union (UPU) International Reply Coupon (IRC) went on sale in Mauritius on 21<sup>st</sup> September 2017. Claimed to have been supplied to all post offices in sufficient quantities (as per Circular Instruction No 38 2017 dated 19.9.2017) it is known that several post offices received only **one** example.

The new Mauritius IRC will be sold simultaneously with the still available older Mauritius Doha IRC scheduled to be withdrawn on 31<sup>st</sup> December 2017. The price of the new Istanbul IRC is Rs 72.00 the same price as the older Doha IRC despite a postal rate increase in August 2015.

10 countries participated in the international design competition for the 2016 “Post and sustainable development” theme. The concept of Vietnamese graphic artist Nguyen Du was selected at the 7<sup>th</sup> October 2016 UPU congress held in Istanbul, Turkey – one year before the issue of the IRC in 2017.



(reduced)

**DON'T FORGET TO RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP FOR 2018  
BEFORE 31<sup>ST</sup> DECEMBER 2017.  
OVERSEAS MEMBERS MAY PAY BY PAYPAL VIA :**

mtd@bow.intnet.mu

## STAMP PROGRAMME 2017

A revised Stamp Programme was available from the Philatelic Bureau as from mid September. Some dates were added here and there, no date was given yet for the Fauna and Flora stamps scheduled for November, a miniature sheet was added (in manuscript) for the Sea Shells of the Republic of Mauritius series of 9<sup>th</sup> October and at 30<sup>th</sup> September no “Lions International ...” stamp was released in the (one issue only) September relisting.

This can only mean that at mid September Mauritius Post Ltd still did not know why it listed the Lions stamp in both the original and the revised 2017 stamp programme nor did it care much about its continued poor handling of its philatelic operations.

## **THE PRESS AND THE POST**

- 07.07.2017 L'express : Un Mauricien en possession d'un timbre datant de 1897.
- 08.07.2017 Le Défi Quotidien : Saisie de Rs 30 millions d'héroïne à la poste.
- 12.07.2017 Week-end : Mauritius Post lance bientôt un service de messagerie.
- 12.07.2017 Le Mauricien: Air Mauritius – Lancement d'une S.C.C.
- 17.07.2017 Le Mauricien : Un jeune prend livraison d'un colis de cannabis.
- 25.07.2017 Le Défi Quotidien : Une quarantaine de saisies dans les Parcel Post Offices.
- 06.08.2017 Week-end : Deux cadres de la Poste avec deux kilos d'héroïne.
- 08.08.2017 L'express: Nous redoublons de vigilance à tous les niveaux.
- 08.08.2017 Le Défi Quotidien : Saisie d'un colis d'héroïne.
- 10.08.2017 L'express : Connexions à établir entre postiers et policiers.
- 12.08.2017 L'express : Le parcours du colis de Rs 30 millions d'héroïne.
- 13.08.2017 Week-end : Le facteur indélicat.
- 18.08.2017 L'express : Drogue via la Poste.
- 19.08.2017 Le Mauricien : La Poste accède à une demande.
- 19.08.2017 Le Défi Plus : Frustration autour d'un exercice de promotion.
- 19.08.2017 Le Défi Plus : Une carte postale arrive 43 ans après son envoi (UK).
- 24.08.2017 Le Défi Media : Une somme de Rs 200,000 disparaît de la poste de Trianon.
- 02.09.2017 Le Mauricien : La Mauritius Post Ltd primée.
- 08.09.2017 L'express : Plaintes CSU dans les 95 bureaux de poste.
- 15.09.2017 Le Défi Quotidien : Un retraité fait les frais du retard de la poste.
- 30.09.2017 Le Mauricien : Un timbre ... de Serge Constantin.

## **SOCIETY MEETINGS 2017**

**Society members meeting for the fourth quarter of 2017 October to December will be held on the following dates:**

**7<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER**

**4<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER**

**2<sup>ND</sup> DECEMBER**

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Visit our website : [www.mauritiusphilatelicsociety.com](http://www.mauritiusphilatelicsociety.com)