

MAURITIUS PHILATELIC SOCIETY

QUARTERLY UPDATES

No. 4 – 2016

OCTOBER - DECEMBER

OCTOBER:

The October meeting was held on Saturday 1st October at 14:00 at College du St Esprit, Sir Virgil Naz Avenue, Quatre Bornes.

Blocks of four of Mauritius Part II and gutter pairs, Aspects of Mauritius – The Dodo and philatelic accessories were the subjects of the meeting.

Mico Antoine showed a range of recent blocks of four, panes, gutter pairs and gutter strips as a follow up to the September subject. The technical aspects of collecting these were explained as well as the use of correct philatelic terms and descriptions for traffic lights, printers imprints, sheet number placements and other related selvedge imprints.

Aspects of Mauritius was an introduction to the main November topic, the Dodo. The sale in the UK of an “almost complete” skeleton of the Dodo caused a stir in Mauritius. The hysteria, half truths, outright lies and absolute rubbish published in the local press on the ravings of the curator of a private art gallery, was unbelievable. The exposure given to the self proclaimed defender of Mauritius *patrimoine* in the local media about “raining” Dodo bones, “theft” of national treasures and other sensational drivel viz his astronomical valuation of the long dead bird’s bones spoke volumes of the naivety of the local media.

A.N. Maderbokus gave a short talk on the need for members to use appropriate philatelic equipment, accessories and material to protect their collections. He brought along mounts, album leaves, a perforation gauge, a position finder, a magnifier, an electronic watermark detector, a philatelic guillotine and a dual purpose sweat box. He gave a demonstration on how to use good quality philatelic products.



(The quality and clarity of the postmarks are above average and are as is)



The October convocation dated 21st September 2016 was posted from Surinam on 22nd September.

NOVEMBER:

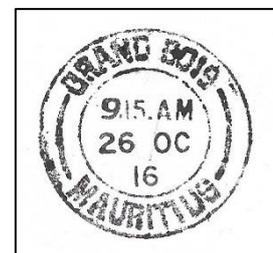
The November meeting was held on the 5th day of the month at 14:00 at the usual venue.

The agenda listed two items namely: All about the Dodo on stamps, postcards, paintings and recent issues of Mauritius.

A.N.Maderbokus display was spread over boards 3 to 6. Recent press coverage of the Dodo were appended to the notice board included a full page essay on “raining Dodo bones” nonsense and “grinding teeth” frustration caused by the Summers Place Auction in the UK of the “almost complete” skeleton of the bird that could not fly. The old bones sold for Rs 15M to Rs 19M depending on which paper one read. This is less than 10% of the Rs 200M dodo bones valuation by a local self-proclaimed expert.

The display included coins, banknotes, matchboxes, paintings, postcards, stamps, covers, books with a dispassionate delivery in the creole dialect about the true story of the Dodo. Diane Sher Mohamedkhan brought along two children’s books on the Dodo, one in french and one in english. Albert Koenig showed his old book on the bird. The english and french versions of Alan Grihaut’s book were passed around; no nonsense or *palabres* – only known and proven facts.

A.N. Maderbokus who happens to be a member of both the Orchid Society of Mauritius and the Horticultural Society of Mauritius reviewed the Freshwater Flora stamps. He gave an interesting account on the three species of flowers portrayed.



The convocation dated 26th of October 2016 was posted from Grand Bois on the same date.

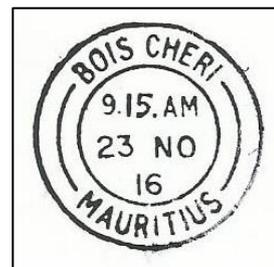
DECEMBER:

The last meeting of 2016 was held on Saturday 3rd December at 14:00 hours at College du Saint Esprit in Quatre Bornes.

The agenda listed a couple of items together with the Society's Xmas greetings and the final notice for the payment of 2017 subscriptions. Members were informed that there would be no meeting in January 2017, the first meeting was fixed for 4th February 2017.

The Society's guest speaker Dharmendra Mukool, Senior Archives Officer of the National Archives, addressed the meeting for a little over an hour as from 14:15. The soft spoken official delivered a particularly interesting talk on the history of archiving in Mauritius from the first time official records were first kept up to today. The lecture and the question and answer exchange was of a high standard. Those members who stayed away missed a very good occasion to learn what keeping records and research was all about. D.Mukool was impressed by the knowledge and maturity of those in attendance. The Society was extremely grateful for his presence at the last meeting of 2016 as the arrangements took a while to work out.

To support D.Mukool's lecture the display board carried archival material of the 1850s on correspondence and plan drawings for the renovation and alteration of the post office at Comedy Street in Port Louis, an article on restoration work at the National Archives from Le Défi Quotidien of 9th November 2016 and recent photographs of the Central Post Office in Port Louis as well as Joseph Osmond Barnard's grave at Western Cemetery.



The convocations dated 25th November 2016 were posted from Bois Cheri post office on 23rd November.

The call for members to show their interest in hobbies other than philately got a response from the following:

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|------------------------|--|
| Diane Sher Mohamedkhan | – old cameras and photographs |
| Randhir Mungra | – a fine “His Master’s Voice” gramophone and 78 rpm vinyls |
| Alain Louis | – a particularly interesting slabbed British “Red Penny” stamp |
| Indradev Curpen | – USA coins used in Mauritius |

STAMPS OF MAURITIUS COMMEMORATIVE STAMPS

FRESHWATER FLORA

A set of four stamps were released on 18th October 2016 featuring three species of flora as follows

Rs 11 *Bacopa monnieri* (Water Hyssop)

Rs 13 *Ludwigia octovalvis* (Mexican primrose-willow)

Rs 16 *Nelumbo nucifera* Gaertn (Sacred lotus or Indian lotus)

Rs 31 *Nelumbo nucifera* Gaertn (Sacred lotus or Indian lotus)

The common name of the three species (in brackets) are not imprinted on the stamps. That information is given in the data card. None of the species face any major threat. It is not surprising that Mauritius Post could only find three species of common flora to illustrate four stamps as well as the OFDC.



Of course the Indian lotus is so sacred that it is shown not once but three times to the exclusion of many other species of flora of Mauritius. The edible virtues of the flower are that it can be eaten as stems, leaves, seeds and consumed raw, cooked, as flour – according to the data card. Hence justification for “three” portrayals, 2 stamps + 1 cover, for one flower.

All the denominations are fractional values. There is not a single stamp for the inland standard rate of Rs 10 or the local registered rate of Rs 27 - the most used postage rates - unless one uses two stamps for the inland registration rate. The senselessness of issuing series without denominations of common usage does nothing to promote Mauritian philately.

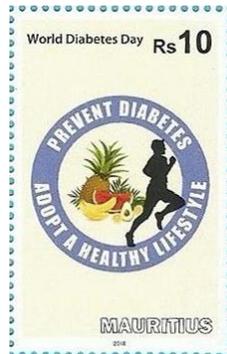
The Official First Day Cover was on sale at Rs 135 per cover.

WORLD DIABETES DAY

A single stamp was issued on the 14th November 2016 depicting the theme “Healthy living and diabetes”.

The face value of the stamp is Rs 10 and the design incorporates the silhouette of a runner and fresh fruit whereas the OFDC illustration is all about fruit and vegetable. The message for a healthy lifestyle, prevention and combat should be seen on inland letters.

The Official First Day Cover was on sale at Rs 60 each.



WORLD POST DAY

World Post Day in 2016 fell on Sunday 9th October so there was no need to close any post offices on that date. However the usual but toned down annual activities began with a Mega (what else) Blood Donation day on Sunday 9th October 2016 at Quatre Bornes and ended with a staff get together at a Balaclava hotel on 26th November 2016, a Saturday when all post offices in Mauritius were closed for business.

The Mauritius list of activities were of 10 functions and the Rodrigues annex was of a mere three.

No World Post Day cachet dated 9th October 2016 has been seen on any item of mail nor have any 9th October (only) year excised cachet for that matter. It is reliably learnt that no World Post Day handstamps were distributed to post offices in Mauritius or Rodrigues in 2016. No commercial or privately produced philatelic cachet covers have been reported to date – not even from the Mauritius Post sponsored Dodo philatelic outfit.

ATTEND YOUR SOCIETY MEETINGS ATTENDANCE FIGURES 2016

**JAN - MARCH 2016 - JANUARY N/A, FEBRUARY 16, MARCH 18.
APRIL - JUNE 2016 - APRIL 15, MAY 13, JUNE 14.
JULY – SEPTEMBER 2016 – JULY 17, AUGUST 14, SEPTEMBER 15
OCTOBER – DECEMBER 2016 – OCT 13, NOV 18, DEC 15**

AVERAGE FOR THE YEAR 15

CLOSURE OF POST OFFICES

I

A press notice from Mauritius Post dated 22.11.2016 in L'Express of 23.11.2016 informed the public that all post offices will be closed on Saturday 26th November 2016 in the context of World Post Day.

II

A press notice published in L'Express on 29th December 2016 kindly informed the public that all post offices will be closed on Saturday 31st December 2016 and that business transactions at post office counters on Friday 30th December 2016 will be accepted up to 16:00 hrs instead of the usual 15:15 hrs closure.

THE PRESS AND THE POST

- 07.10.2016 Le Défi Quotidien : Giandev Moteea quitte Mauritius Post.
- 08.10.2016 L'Express : La Poste organise une marche contre la drogue.
- 03.11.2016 Le Défi Quotidien : Dans des colis postaux.
- 07.11.2016 Le Défi Quotidien : Giandev Moteea invité à demeurer à la poste.
- 11.11.2016 L'Express : Nominations contestées.
- 15.11.2016 L'Express : Trésor mauricien volé estimé à Rs 400M en vente.
- 25.11.2016 Le Défi Quotidien : Aucune pénurie de cartes roses à la Mauritius Post.
- 30.11.2016 L'Express : Rs 18.8 M reçus par des détenus.
- 03.12.2016 Le Défi Quotidien : Bisbilles à la poste.
- 06.12.2016 Le Défi Quotidien : Les colis postaux passés à la loupe durant les fêtes.
- 14.12.2016 Le Défi Quotidien : Code Postal et LAVIMS
- 17.12.2016 Le Défi Quotidien : Le "Bombay Cover" vendu à Rs 80 millions
- 19.12.2016 Le Défi Quotidien : Mauvaise planification (Forest-Side).
- 20.12.2016 L'Express : La grève des postiers s'étend (GB)

MAURITIUS 'POST OFFICE' NEWS

A new look 18 page newsletter of The Mauritius Post Ltd covering the Events and Activities of the organisation dated December 2016 was published at the end of the year. It is worth what it's worth ... what is noteworthy is that despite the August 2015 postal tariffs revision and the capital injection by Government in June 2016 the company's financial situation "remains fragile"; the rest is as always old wind. Privatisation or rather corporatisation has simply not worked. In fact the postal services is both broke and broken.