

MAURITIUS PHILATELIC SOCIETY

QUARTERLY UPDATES

No. 4 – 2018

OCTOBER - DECEMBER

OCTOBER 2018:

There was no members meeting held in October 2018. This follows the decision taken at the end of 2017 to reduce the number of monthly members meetings from 11 to 7 a year.

NOVEMBER 2018:

The November members meeting was held on Saturday 3rd November at College du St Esprit, Sir Virgil Naz Avenue, Quatre Bornes at 14:00 hours.

The convocation dated 22nd October 2018 was posted from Nouvelle France on 24th October.

The agenda listed four items:

- New Stamp Issues
- World Post Day
- Commercial mail/Postmarks
- 3rd Quarterly Update

The convocation invited members who wished to participate in the afternoon programme to prepare their material and bring them along.

The 9th October two Rescue and Life Saving stamps design where no rescue or life saving representation were incorporated in the poorly conceived and totally unimaginative portrayals without any ambulance nor fire engine were discussed.

The OFDC illustration of a SAMU* ambulance, a Chetak helicopter training exercise and a securely docked Coast Guard vessel have no linkage with the St John emblem and fire fighting stamp themes. The criticism of both the Stamp Advisory Committee and Mauritius Post were fairly severe.

Mico Antoine showed a range of World Post Day cacheted covers collected between 1989 to date together with other WPD commemorative postal items of Mauritius handstamped with past exhibition markings.

The 2018 Mauritius Post World Post Day official programme dated 5th October, a press report and photographs of the 9th October Port Louis walk about were also shown as was the usual UPU annual message. David Onsiang brought along his private covers.

Commercial covers and postmarks was an array of current inland commercial covers made up of PostGlobal and Neopost metered covers, prepaid and “postage due” government

* SAMU – Service d’aide médicale urgente

covers and general commercial covers affixed with a range of postage stamps. Very few collectables, many non-collectables with either poor illegible postmarks or killer cancels. Mauritius Post inability or unwillingness to put a stop to its postmark problems were once again exposed and decried. The very slow response to the society's "Postmark Project" was raised. The project will continue to be monitored and reviewed in mid-2019.

A draft of the pre-publication 3rd Quarterly Update of October 2018 was reviewed mainly for the benefit of those who do not own or have access to computers nor visit the society website as the Updates are not published in the traditional hard copy format.

The notice board carried news report on Trinidad's threat to dislodge Mauritius from its joint 5th country and 1st colony positions in the world to issue postage stamps. Extracts of Donald Trump's decision to withdraw from the Universal Postal Union and the urgent UPU efforts to deal with the adverse consequences of the decision were appended to the notice board and explained. Local press reports on several articles and essays on the role of and Mauritius contribution to the World War I or *Grande Guerre* of 1914-1918 were also affixed to the notice board.

14 members attended the November meeting.



**NOUVELLE
FRANCE POST
OFFICE**

Opened : 01.08.1951
Current Location :
Main Road
Postcode : 51309



The convocations dated 22nd October 2018 were posted from Nouvelle France on 24th October.

DECEMBER 2018:

The December 2018 members meeting was held on Saturday 1st December at the usual venue and at the usual time. The convocation dated 22nd November 2018 were posted from Floreal on 23rd November.

Only one item was on the afternoon programme namely a special presentation of the 100th Anniversary of the end of World War I. Members were informed that A N Maderbokus would provide snacks for the afternoon's activities. Members were reminded to renew their membership for 2019.

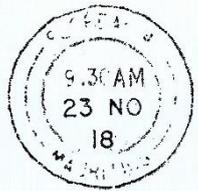
Four members had accepted the society's invitation to display material on and to talk about the *Grande Guerre*/World War I and World War II as when the matter was raised in November most members indicated that they had very little World War I philatelic and postal history material.

A N Maderbokus showed two World War I "censored" postcards of Royal College and gave a brief history of the college with photographs and literature on the college. He also reviewed the two Week-End articles of 4th and 11th November on recently published books on Mauritius and World War I and he referred to other press coverage commemorating the armistice and the end of the Great War. He also included some WWII censored covers of Mauritius in his display.

Diane Sher Mohamedkhan showed her mementos of family from both World War I and World War II which included citations, a ration book, poppy decorations, a book on acknowledgement of the donation of family history to the War Memorial Museum. Several photographs of her grandparents and parents including some who never came back and a family owned boat used in the evacuation of Dunkirk were also shown.

Randhir Mungra displayed 15 WWI censored covers addressed to French authorities and the French Red Cross from desperate German nationals seeking information on missing husbands, sons and relatives. Several of the letters bore multiple postal markings, redirection instructions, censor handstamps and military inscriptions.



<p>FLOREAL POST OFFICE Opened 02.02.1934 Current Location : Floreal Road Postcode : 74112</p>


The convocations dated 22nd November 2018 were posted from Floreal on 23rd November.

Alain Louis showed several enlarged photocopies of World War I scenes and sites from the Meuse region of France under German occupation and he gave a brief talk on trench warfare during the *Grande Guerre* of 1914-1918 which resulted in one of the biggest casualties of any war.

Mico Antoine showed a range of military stamps of B.I.O.T. which included several WWI and poppy commemorative stamps as well as other military themed stamps of Diego Garcia. Since Mauritius has hardly ever issued military or war stamps the only Mauritian item shown was the 1995 50th Anniversary of WWII 3 stamps set (SG 920/22) with its WWI *monument aux morts* FDC illustration.

The book “Les Mauriciens dans la Grande Guerre (1914-18)” by Christine Renard and Christine Chompton-Ahnee brought along by Arnaud Guibert was passed around. Jacques Dumora’s book “Memoire Mauricienne – La Grande Guerre” was mentioned but not shown.

The last bid board of the year offered material that included several Mauritius philatelic gift items such as a 1997 “Post Office” van, a rarity in gold “Blue Mauritius” german item, “Post Office” postcards and the W.W.F. “Echo Parakeet” set of four FDCs and four maxicards. The 36 items purchase list did not sell too well.

14 members attended the December 2018 meeting.

COMMEMORATIVE STAMPS

RESCUE AND LIFE SAVING

On 9th October 2018, to mark the occasion of World Post Day, Mauritius Post issued two distinctly different postage stamps on two different rescue and life saving themes. Both stamps are titled “Rescue and Life Saving”.

The Rs 3.00 denomination features only the black and white badge of “St John”. The eight pointed Amalfi star symbol of the association which dominates the stamp against an empty washed lemon yellow background without any ambulance or first aid image. The stamp is however subtitled St John Ambulance in small print which shows nothing rescued nor saved.



The Rs 13.00 stamp features the black silhouette of a group of six fire fighters in the foreground with a blazing fiery red and yellow inferno on the rest of the stamp. What appears to be a couple of jets of red water, not black nor white, is aimed from a safe distance to the yellow centre of the conflagration. The stamp is subtitled “Mauritius Fire and Rescue Service” without any life saving or rescue of human or animal depiction. In so far as the building or whatever structures in the background are concerned two jets of water will not save or dampen anything.

The Official First Day Cover is illustrated with three “Rescue and Life Saving” photographs composed of a SAMU ambulance and not a St John ambulance, a National Coast Guard ship safely docked at Port Louis Harbour and a Police Helicopter Squadron Chetak. The two stamps are affixed to the right of the OFDC and are cancelled with a single strike of the First Day of Issue/Mauritius Type D double circle circular datestamp at 8:15 AM/9 OC/18 in three lines.

The insert provides some details on the history of the origins of the Order of St John from 603 AD to date and on the NGO’s operations in Mauritius. A much longer write up on the Mauritius Fire and Rescue Service is about its history, its service vision and mission, gender equality, tools, equipment and a replica of its logo. The logo of Mauritius Post is imprinted on the gumless backflap of the FDC.

The OFDC was offered for sale at Rs 95.00 per unit at the usual Mauritius Post outlets throughout Mauritius and Rodrigues.

100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE END OF WORLD WAR I

A special commemorative stamp was released on 12th November 2018 to mark the armistice that ended World War I – the Great War. The armistice was signed at the 11th hour, on the 11th day of the 11th month in 1918. The stamp titled Anniversaries & Events / 100th Anniversary of the End of World War I was issued on Monday 12th November 2018, the day after and not the day before the event. In Mauritius Post’s logic Sunday 11th November was not a working day in Mauritius hence the stamp was released without any ceremony nor circus.



The stamp is a photograph reproduction of the World War I “*monument aux morts*” (monument to the dead) that was erected in front of the gate of Royal College in Curepipe in 1922. The insert provides brief notes on the anniversary, the role of Mauritius and Bernard Partridge statue.

The Official First Day Cover illustration is the silhouette of three soldiers armed with modern era combat gear walking away from an orange yellow glow of what appears to be a huge fireball – a distinctly non World War I background scenery lifted from a source known only to Mauritius Post’s imaginative graphic works department. The Rs 25.00 stamp affixed to the right top corner of the OFDC is cancelled with a single strike of the Type D double circle

First Day of Issue/Mauritius philatelic cds at 8:15 AM/12 NO/18. No additional cachets or medallion additions mars the OFDC. The logo of Mauritius Post is however imprinted on the gumless backflap.

The OFDC was offered at Rs 105.00 per unit at Mauritius Post's usual outlets as from 12th November 2018.

**ATTEND YOUR SOCIETY MEETINGS
ATTENDANCE FIGURES 2018**

**JAN - MARCH 2018 - JANUARY N/A, FEBRUARY 16, MARCH 15
APRIL - JUNE 2018 - APRIL N/A, MAY 15, JUNE N/A
JULY – SEPT 2018 – JULY 15, AUGUST N/A, SEPTEMBER 10
OCT – DEC 2018 – OCTOBER N/A, NOVEMBER 14, DECEMBER 14**

WORLD POST DAY

I

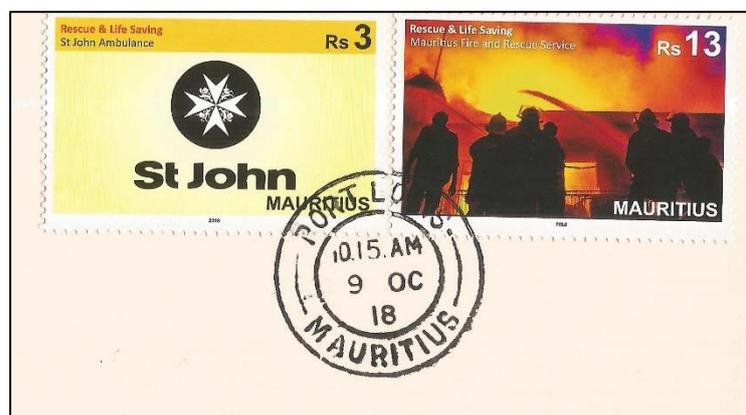
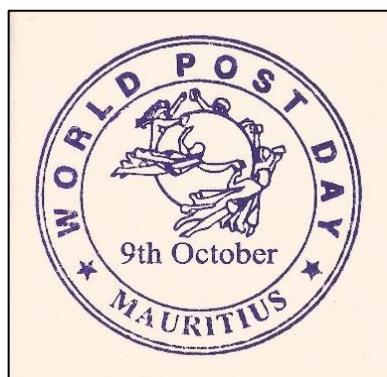
The 2018 Universal Postal Union theme, “The Post. Delivering good to the world”, was commemorated with celebrations in Mauritius, one of the 192 member countries of the UPU with its 600,000 global postal outlets. The 2018 UPU message from the Director General rightly paid tribute to the “gallant postmen and postwomen” of the Mauritius Postal Services rather than to its corporate management whose track record since incorporation is not that great ... on the contrary.

The annual event was marked by a series of activities which began on 5th October with philanthropic visits and donations through to 1st December closing with a team building and staff gathering effort. The annual staff lunch was held at Domaine des Aubineaux, a highly touristic site at Forest Side described as “an oasis of greenery, peace and tranquility” where consumption of alcohol and smoking is forbidden. The high point of the 9th World Post Day 2018 celebrations was a showy and colourful walkabout in the streets of the heart of central Port Louis during lunch hour with participants togged in uniform or full battle dress from several departments of the police force, the health and fire department and some civil organisations in the context of the “Fire Rescue and Life Saving” postage stamps issue on 9th October. A banner held in front of the CEO who led the marchers read “Mauritius Post: à vos côtés pour la vie” and not “The Post. Delivering good to the world” the UPU/WPD 2018 tribute to its galant postmen and postwomen.

Other attractions or activities in the eight point programme of WPD 2018 were blood donations in three towns, games, sports, a “futsal” tournament, open days and a cultural programme.

II

A World Post Day rubber stamp was used at the philatelic bureau on 9th October 2018 for application to souvenir covers including the OFDC of the Recue and Life Saving issue upon request as well as on other philatelic mail serviced at the bureau. The year excised devices had been used in the past to mark WPD. No new dated WPD handstamp was produced specifically for 9th October 2018.



No normal commercial mail have been reported by any member of the Mauritius Philatelic Society from any post office of Mauritius cacheted with any WPD impressions during the whole of the 2018 WPD commemoration and celebration period.

FIRST QUARTER MEETINGS 2019

JANUARY: BREAK – NO MEETING

FEBRUARY: SATURDAY 9TH – 1ST 2019 MEETING

MARCH: SATURDAY 9TH – ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

CLOSURE OF POST OFFICES

Circular Instruction No 64/2018 dated 19th December 2018 advised the staff of all post offices providing counter services that operations would cease at noon on Monday 24th and Monday 31st December 2018 the eve of Christmas and New Year public holidays.

MAIN CURRENCY EXCHANGE RATES

The average exchange rate for December 2018 was:

Rs 44.097 for GBP £1 / Rs 39.626 for EUR €1 / Rs 34.861 for USD \$1

(Source: Bank of Mauritius)

THE DISPATCH

No annual newsletter of Mauritius Post has been seen at 31st December 2018. The aptly renamed former 2016 newsletter from Mauritius “Post Office” News to “The Dispatch” in 2017 is in line with the non distribution of the 2018 edition; no doubt dispatched due to dire financial conditions.

Despite the absence of “The Dispatch” two in house end of the year messages were distributed to the staff of Mauritius Post in December 2018.

The one page “end of year message” from the chairperson dated 28th December 2018 is not worthy of comment apart from the “achievements” – despite the difficult economic context.

The “End of year message” also dated 28th December 2018 from the CEO of the corporation who always has a lot to say even when it is sometimes much wiser to say nothing is a mainly hollow two page, eight point listing of numerous empty non achievements and poor investments in various fields during the last 15 years of operations as a corporatised body (2003-2018).

Under point 1 Philately – the CEO mentions only the poorly designed political event of 12th March 2018 “narrating the past, present and future of the country” set of 3 stamps to the exclusion of the other 11 stamps commemorating 6 separate events that “embellished” Mauritius philatelic activities during 2018. Not one word on the deep red bottom line.

Under point 3. Strategic Alliance – RIA Instant Money Transfer Service. The ridiculous pre launch setbacks in Port Louis, the post launch bad press, the non extension of the service to other main town post offices and another seven other gets no mention. Not one word on the financial segment, the money changer scheme.

Under point 4. This five “segment” point is about amongst other issues post office buildings of which a significant number have been renovated and relocated “but only one “Nouvelle France PO” is mentioned and this is very significant because it is significantly the only one. No mention of the promised closure of “loss making” post offices and for the record the only post office closed was the profitable Waterfront post office in Port Louis.

The rest of the message is all bluff and bluster. The CEO’s messages of recent years, after his last “farewell message” of December 2016 have been more like epitaphs of an organization that was once very profitable as a government owned, controlled and managed department. Today Mauritius Post is an unrecognizable corporate government funded loser totally dependent on government grants for survival despite regular whopping postage rate increases.

FOOTNOTE: Mauritius Post lost one of its “segments” during the last quarter of 2018. The government’s decision to get rid of the “billet vert” lottery deprived Mauritius Post of one of its segments to the relief of counter staff belittled by of one the silliest gimmicks of the corporate office’s business diversification schemes.

DON’T FORGET TO RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP FOR 2019 BEFORE 31ST DECEMBER 2018.

OVERSEAS MEMBERS MAY PAY BY PAYPAL VIA : daguibert2@gmail.com

THE PRESS AND THE POST

02.10.2018	L'express	Les employés de la poste déplorent l'augmentation de 1.73%.
04.10.2018	Le Défi Quotidien	La Mauritius Post Ltd fidèle au ... poste.
09.10.2018	Le Défi « Zen »	La Mauritius Post Ltd affiche ses services.
10.10.2018	Le Défi Quotidien	Un Central Mail Office pour la poste bientôt.
17.10.2018	Le Défi Quotidien	Mauritius Post offre les services de RIA.
04.11.2018	Week-end	Les étapes d'une redécouverte du Colonel Nicolas Pike.
23.11.2018	L'express	La MCB et autres achètent le 3.11.1993, ...
24.11.2018	L'express	Les invitations au bal de Lady Gomm ...
04.12.2018	Le Défi Quotidien	Soupçons de détournements de fonds à la Mauritius Post.
25.12.2018	L'express	Mauritius Post offre les services de RIA

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.