

5/1999

Display of the France and Colonies Philatelic Society



to the Royal Philatelic
Society London to mark
its 50th anniversary

—

11th March 1999

France & Colonies P S Display

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Introduction

In 1949, on the occasion of the hundredth anniversary of the first French postage stamp, a group of British philatelists set up a pioneering specialist philatelic society devoted to the study of the stamps of France and the then French Empire. From small beginnings, the France and Colonies Philatelic Society, which I have the privilege to lead during its fiftieth anniversary, now unites over four hundred collectors in Britain and overseas in the many and varied delights of the stamps and postal history of *la francophonie*.

The Society provides an extensive programme of meetings in three locations, holds an annual philatelic weekend, publishes a well-regarded and authoritative Journal and series of monographs, and operates two thriving exchange packets and an Auction. It is a friendly and informal group where new members are always made most welcome.

As the French postage stamp celebrates its sesquicentenary, we are delighted to share some of our treasures with the Fellows and Members of the Royal Philatelic Society in the hope that we can illustrate just how fascinating and full of interest the stamps and postal history of our nearest continental neighbour can be. Most of the exhibitors showing today are present and will be delighted to discuss their material with you. We hope you enjoy our *regard sur la philatélie française!*

Dr Iain Stevenson,

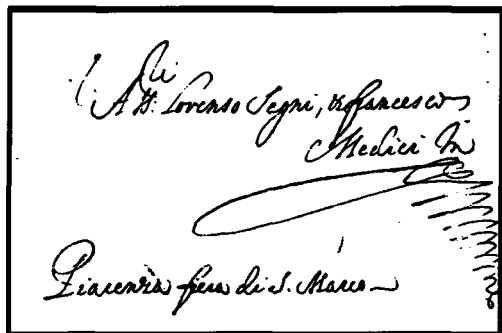
President, France and Colonies Philatelic Society, 1998-2000.

Frames 1 - 2

Pre-revolutionary postal history

A J Wood

The development of the postal system reflects an improvement in methods of transportation, the growth of commerce and increase in literacy which contributed to progressive increases in the volume of mail. King Louis XI created the first Royal Posts in 1464. In 1576, a letter tax was



introduced for mail that was not solely for court purposes. Twenty-seven years later Fouquet de la Varane the Contrôleur Général des Postes de France was responsible for the Act making the Posts publicly available. Mail was carried by messengers between the major towns and cities. The routes developed greater traffic as the roads themselves were improved. By 1789 a complete network of postal services covered the whole country.

Examples are shown of letters from the Corsini correspondence dating from the reigns of Henri III and Henri IV, letters to the Piacenza Fair during the reign of Louis XIII and a selection of covers from the reigns of Louis XIV, XV, and XVI.

Frames 3 - 4

Classical France

J Levett RDP

This phase in French philately embraces the years 1849 to 1876. It spans the period when the Barres, father and son, were the stamp engravers, with Hulot at the Mint responsible for the stamp production. In April 1876 the whole pattern of design and plate structure was changed. The display represents some of the designs and constant printing varieties, with a few depicting rates covering this period.

Frames 5 - 6

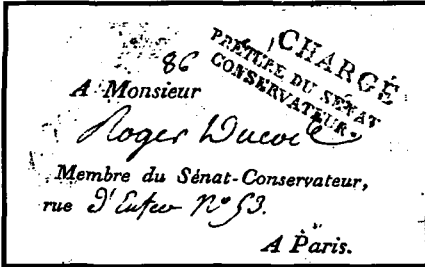
Monsieur le Maire

George Henderson

This display shows a small selection of official letters posted in the early years of the eighteenth century, either written by or to mayors of various *communes* in France. Though less spectacular than the correspondence from the ministries in Paris, many of these letters from small towns demonstrate lively concern for individual human affairs; they show the scrupulous attention to detail required of mayors, and their gracious courtesy when writing to their *confrères*; also apparent are their humble attempts to conform with contemporary fashions in official presentation and the occasional naive disregard for the rules of the post office - e.g. concealment of coins under seals. Unlike letters posted from government departments, which were exempt from postage, letters at *commune* level were subject to payment.

Frames 7 - 8 The Special Offices in Paris, 1790-1850 C J Hitchen

The greatly increased amount of government activity during the early days of the Revolution and the vast influx of people into the capital led to the creation of post offices attached to various governing bodies to serve their postal needs. As the constitution and regimes changed so did these offices. Though not generally open to the public they handled all classes of business - letters under franchise, paid and unpaid mail. The first was that for the newly formed National Assembly followed by those created under the Convention, the Directory and the Consulate.



Under Napoleon matters became rather more stable. The legislative body was divided between an upper house, the Senate, which sat at the Luxembourg Palace, and the lower house, the *Corps Législatif*, which sat at the Palais Bourbon where both remain today. After the restoration of the monarchy in 1815 this structure was retained, although the Senate was then named the House of Peers and the lower house became the Chamber

of Deputies. The advent of the Second Republic in 1848 saw the creation of the last of these offices, for the National Assembly once again, and the Presidency.

**Frame 9 Paris Star cancellations Clifford Harman
and postmarks 1852-76**

In July 1863 a change was made to the cancellation used in Paris. A Star had been used by the Central Bureau since January 1852, but now a large-sized numeral was introduced into the six-pointed star. Thirty-nine of these numbers were assigned. Stars can be found altered or with a blank centre. This cancellation remained in service until April 1876 when the system was re-organised and it occurred to the Postal Administration that the separate killer cancel was not necessary. Thereafter, the date stamp cancelled the stamp.

**Frames 10 - 11 Type Sage: a miscellany of Peter R A Kelly
stamps and postal history**

The Type Sage issue was introduced progressively in the second half of 1876 and lasted up to and beyond 1900. As an issue it was very much a child of the General Postal Union which became, shortly after, the Universal Postal Union, and early tariffs reflected the period of transition and the early stages of change in domestic and overseas rates. May 1878 saw important changes in the structure of the domestic rates and a move towards the unification of overseas rates which was not fully achieved among member countries until 1881. After that a further series of changes took place which generally were a response to an increasing volume of mail as well as a need to modify and adapt post office services to increasingly sophisticated user requirements.

The issue of stamps itself provides a comprehensive range of values in two basic types, caused by a break in the frame and its subsequent repair shortly after its introduction. Matters were further complicated by the lower values of the first series all being coloured green which, because of complaints, had to be changed within the first year. Further colour changes occurred to a number of values over the long life of the issue.

In 1900 the *Sage* was replaced by the *Types Blanc*, *Mouchon* and *Merson*.

This short display aims to show as great a variety of stamps and postal applications as possible, thereby illustrating the enormous scope for the study of this issue.

Frame 12

Type “*Jeanne d’Arc*”

M L Bister

The issue of the 50c *Jeanne d’Arc* in 1929 was the culmination of a long struggle between the civic authorities in Orléans and the postal authorities in Paris to agree on the representation of the Maid of Orléans on the country’s stamps. The 500th anniversary of her birth in 1912 and her canonisation in 1920 had been overlooked by the PTT, but thanks to the tenacity of the Mayor of Orléans the PTT was eventually persuaded to invite designs to commemorate the 500th anniversary of the Relief of Orléans. Hastily conceived, neither the choice of stamp design nor the quality of printing did justice to the occasion and the stamp attracted criticism from many quarters. The display presents some of the precursors, proofs and printings of this maligned issue.

Frames 13 - 14

The Sower - *Type Semeuse*

Ashley Lawrence

The Sower, a girl personifying rural France, scattering seed corn from the bag at her waist, was designed by Louis-Oscar Roty, and first appeared on French silver coins minted in 1897. The design was chosen for the new series of postage stamps, engraved by Louis-Eugène Mouchon, which was issued in 1903. The Sower continued to grace the stamps of France, against different backgrounds, in various colours and denominations, for much of the 20th century.



The first frame shows the 15c Green Sower *lignée*, the first value to be issued, and the different types, papers and formats used for printings between 1903 and 1923. The display includes the 15c stamp used on a cover posted on 2nd April 1903, the first day of issue; a booklet of stamps printed on the wartime “GC” paper; and examples of type VI, described as “the rarest French definitive.”

The second frame shows the 10c Red Sower *camée*, introduced in 1907 and used until 1922. The display includes the attractive scarlet shade; the 10c stamp on cover flown on the first scheduled airmail flight; and the so-called “Turin” forgery on the visiting card of the arresting officer!

Frames 15 - 16

The Pasteur Issues

G E Barker

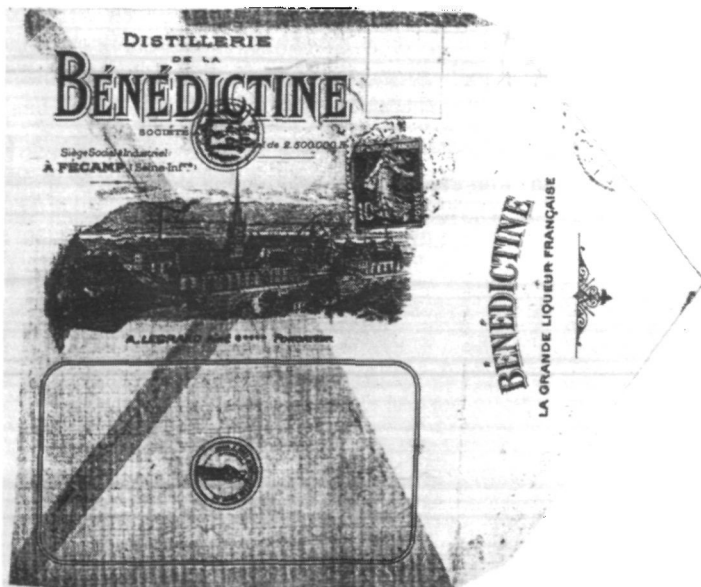
On 23 May 1923, France issued three stamps to celebrate the centenary of the birth of Louis Pasteur. They were in the International colours of green (foreign printed matter), red (foreign postcards) and blue (foreign letters) for ready recognition in international mails. The values 10, 30, 50 centimes were respectively in the ratios 1:3:5. Over the next three years the issue continued as definitives, though inflation caused rates to rise in four stages to 30c, 90c, and 1Fr50c but the ratio 1:3:5 remained. No 25c value appeared and the 60c and 75c red values only appeared as postal stationery. The design remained in use alongside the 90c stamp commemorating Berthelot until the early 1930s.

Frames 17 - 18

Le menu français

Iain Stevenson

French Food and Wine is justly famous throughout the world. This two-frame thematic display is a slightly tongue-in-cheek exploration of *la cuisine et les vins*, using stamps, booklets, postal stationery, cinderella material, postal history and postcards to guide the viewer through a typical menu of famous regional specialities, (in frame 17) from *hors d'oeuvres* to *café et petits fours*, accompanied (in frame 18) by a comprehensive wine list featuring Burgundy, Claret, Alsace, while not forgetting liqueurs and table water. I hope that some of the jokes buried in the captions afford you amusement and remind you that philately can be a valuable adjunct to France's arguably greatest contribution to human enjoyment. *Bon Appétit!*



Frames 19 - 20 *Anti-tuberculosis stamps, 1925-1939* Derek Richardson

Soon after the end of the first world war, treatment of tuberculosis sufferers and research into the causes of the disease were undertaken by the *Comité National de Défense Contre la Tuberculose*. The grant the Committee received from the government was far short of what was needed, so the sale of charity stamps was adopted as the means of raising the money required to support the



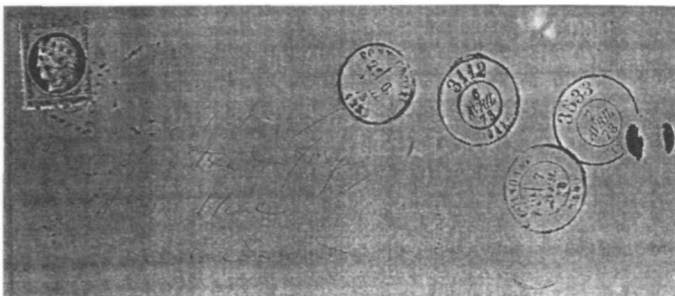
Committee's work. It was decided to run a "campaign" annually in November-December time, when it was hoped to find members of the public in a generous frame of mind. Each campaign would feature a different stamp design and a different slogan.

Business and door-to-door sales were done by a network of volunteers. Pilot campaigns took place in 1925 and 1926 and national campaigns started in 1927. The stamps were privately printed in sheets of 100 and booklets of 20. Large format "window sticker" stamps were added in 1928.

Frames 21 - 22 *Bureaux de passe* J L Whiteside

BUREAUX DE PASSE: These were 23 offices operating between 1864 and 1882, almost certainly at night, whose main function was to receive mail from one direction and to redirect it in another. The date stamps, normally found on the reverse, are of two eccentric circles with the office shown, not as its name, but as its number in the lozenge obliterator allocation. Many of the offices used more than one type and some 50 different marks can be identified.

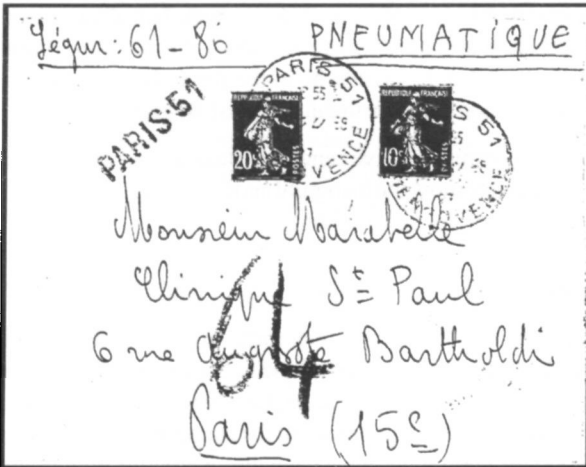
The 18 sheets exhibited illustrate "doubles" - items that have passed through two of these offices. The writing-up emphasises the importance of considering the sequence of application of all the postal markings on these covers. The last four sheets are perhaps more unusual "doubles," passing through the same bureau twice.



Frames 23 - 24

Pneumatic Post of Paris and Marseille B Lucas

This was a system whereby items of mail were placed in containers and sent by compressed air through pneumatic tubes between the telegraph/post offices of the cities. Included in the display are uncommon items such as a postcard sent only fifteen days after the system opened to the public



pointing out the advantages over a telegram; an item posted in the moveable box of a tramcar; the advice of receipt of a *pneu* to a hotel guest; returned unknown; postage due; *poste restante*; cachets for envelopes exceeding the permitted sizes; registered items; two items sent at the special rate of the telephone fee when the telephone exchanges were out of action due to flooding; and an official notice giving a flood warning. The system in Marseille is represented by unused and used examples of pneumatic stationery.

Frames 25 - 26 Monaco: *origine locale* and packages Jerold K Massler

PART ONE. At the turn of the century, employees of the expanding tourism industry in Monaco began taking up residence just over the border in French territory where the real estate prices were more favourable and work was but a short downhill walk. Monte Carlo Supérieur, as it was called, did not have a postal service. In 1902 the French postal authorities asked the Monegasque *Poste* to provide a service to its citizens residing just over the border. All correspondence was properly franked with French adhesives and received an OL strike signifying *ORIGINE LOCALE* and was processed by the main post office in Monte Carlo. Shown are two rare mixed frankings plus the only known *PRINCIPAUTÉ* strike in private hands.

PART TWO. All postal systems processed packages which usually are important to show the high values properly used. Seven different methods of payment are shown for packages which are military free franking, revenue stamped paper, *colis postaux* paid by sender and paid by recipient, home delivery service, private package insurance, postage stamps, and consular fee stamps (required for the repatriation of human remains - an urn).



Frame 27 **Paris Postal Museum cancellations** **Mavis Pavey**

The first postal museum in Paris, opened in 1945, was situated in Rue St Romain. In 1973 it moved to Boulevard de Vaugirard, here having more space for display rooms and library etc.

Periodically major exhibitions are held in the Galerie du Messager, covering the many aspects of philately. Each exhibition has a commemorative cancellation. The museum has always used commemorative date stamps. The first of these was for the inaugural week 4-9 June 1946. Some cancellations can be regarded as 'permanent' in that they could be in use for a number of years, and others as 'temporary,' designed for and lasting only for the duration of an exhibition.

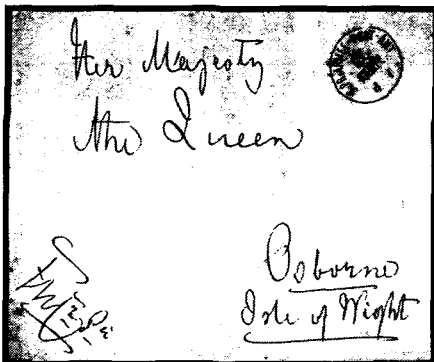
The format of the cancels is the same as for all commemorative cancellers: text around the outside, illustration and date in the centre. These nine sheets show the inaugural and first seven 'permanent' cancellations together with that for the opening of the new building.

Frame 28 **Perfins and security devices** **Peter Stockton**

As in Great Britain, the precursor to the perfin was the security underprint in the late 1850s. The company *Claude Lafontaine, H Prevost Martimet & Cie* employed such a device from 1872. The official use of perfins was authorised by the Minister of Finance on 15th November 1876. The perfin design or mark had to be smaller than one third of the surface of the stamp and should never alter or obscure the face value. Some 3000 different types have been discovered for France and her colonies, not all of which are presently identified. Of particular interest is the receipted invoice of *Vilmorin, Andrieux & Cie*, Seed Merchants of Paris, bearing a 25c perfinned sower stamp for postage, with inside a 10 centimes *quittances* revenue stamp bearing the same perfin. By a law dated 6th December 1954, all perfins on postage stamps were prohibited from 21st January 1955.

Frames 29 - 30 **The Franco-Prussian War** **C S Holder**

A summary of the different types of mail and the many & varied ways in which it was carried, by land, by water & in the air during the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-71 and its immediate aftermath.



The display shows examples of the German *Feldpost* and the French *poste militaire*, mail from besieged cities, especially that flown by balloon out of the Siege of Paris and inwards mail by water and by pigeon; Red Cross, prisoner of war & internees' mail and the occupation of northern France by the German forces during and after the war.

Most aspects of postal history are found in this interesting period, some of them - in particular the Siege of Paris airmail - for the first time.

Frames 31 - 32 Postal Relations between France and R Reader
the UK in World War II / The 1F50 Pétain Stamp

Part 1. This display shows how far the war affected postal relations between France and the United Kingdom. It will be seen that initially everything continued normally. When, however, France fell to Germany in June 1940, she was divided into a German-occupied northern zone and a French-controlled southern zone. Postal relations between the UK and the southern zone continued, though via neutral Portugal. On the other hand, the Germans banned all postal relations between the UK and the northern zone. Mail in transit was returned to sender or even detained in Paris until the end of the war. Some individuals smuggled mail for the UK into the southern zone for posting from there. An end to all postal relations between the UK and France came in 1942 when the Germans occupied the southern zone too. Some individuals then used intermediaries in neutral countries as forwarding agents. Use of Thomas Cook's PO Box 506 in Lisbon was, however, most unwise as the Germans surely knew its role as a forwarding agency. Postal relations between the two countries finally resumed after the Liberation, in mid-September 1944, though initially for postcards only.

Part 2. Presented here is a brief survey of the career of the 1F50 Pétain stamp serving the basic letter rate of 1F50 introduced on 5 January 1942. The stamp started out in rose, but then became brown and even, on one occasion, blue in support of charity. It eventually found itself forged by the Resistance, and even transmogrified into a De Gaulle stamp. With the Liberation, its subject matter brought it disgrace and it suffered numerous overprintings with the letters R.F. (for République Française), crosses of Lorraine and various slogans, until eventually it was demonetised on 1 November 1944 - although, even then, it clung on to existence until the very end of the war in the Saint-Nazaire pocket held by the Germans until final surrender in May 1945.

Frames 33 - 34 100 years of Aviation in France J N Hammonds

This display celebrates 100 years of aviation in France beginning with Clément Ader's flight of 1890 and ending with *Concorde*. Cards and ephemera illustrate "those magnificent men in their flying machines" before the first world war. During this period it was these aviators' task to get governments and people interested in flying. This was done by the holding of meetings and air races. Examples of covers flown by the pioneer airlines which became *Air France* in 1930 are shown together with those flown by *Air France* providing a vital link with the French Empire. After the second world war developments continued, culminating in the opening of the *Concorde* service between Paris and Rio de Janeiro.

Frames 35 - 36 French mail Bernard Berkinshaw-Smith
from the Far East

A display of postal history showing mail carried by French mailboats from the Far East.

Frames 37 - 38

The Red Cross in the French Colonies

J West

One of the most successful ways of raising funds for the Red Cross during the First World War was to surcharge postage stamps - a practice adopted by a number of the allied countries. The excess amounts were contributed to the Red Cross fund.

Being printed in limited numbers, the way was open to speculation on the part of both local postal officials and the public. This exhibit explores the issues of the French Colonies - some of which may have been launched with a speculative intent, but all of which had postal validity and most of which resulted in a benevolent donation.

In a number of French colonies the local postal authorities did not wait for the efficiently over-printed stamps from Paris but surcharged issues locally. These special printings utilised small presses, with an inadequate stock of type and were notable for their poor workmanship. This resulted in the variety of different surcharges to those produced at the government printing works in Paris.

Frames 39 - 40

Madagascar: *le Type Filanzana*

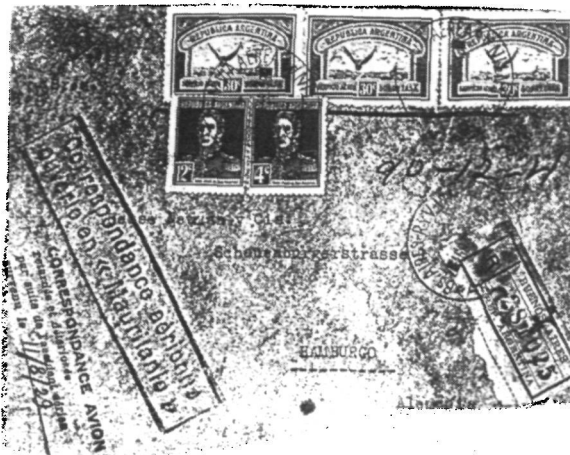
Colin W Spong

The design issued in 1908 depicts a *Filanzane* or in Malagasy *Filanzana*, a sort of Sedan chair carried by four men. In the background is seen a tram emerging from a tunnel. This definitive issue lasted until 1932 and even re-appeared in 1942 overprinted *France Libre*. This display shows the 1908 printing and its usages.

Frames 41 - 42

**French West Africa:
the Dakar-Toulouse Route**

Barbara Priddy



This display shows the development and use of the airmail route between Senegal and France from the trial flight of 1923 to its suspension following the allied landings in 1942.

The route eventually formed part of the *Ligne Mermoz* between France and Chile, and covers indicating this are shown.

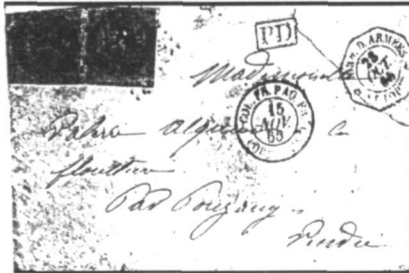
The dangers of the route are highlighted by covers rescued from various crashes.

Frame 43

**French West Africa:
Campaign and other Military Mail**

W G Mitchell

Serious French colonisation in West Africa required a constant military presence. It began in 1817 in Senegal, where pacification was largely completed by the turn of the 20th century. At this time major campaigns were in progress in the interior (northern Dahomey and Sudan). French armed forces remained throughout the colonial period.



Until January 1899 mail between France and its colonies was charged as for a foreign destination; military personnel were, however, entitled to send basic weight letters at metropolitan rates, which became the norm in 1899. From December 1900 basic weight letters were free but other services such as registration and carriage by air had to be paid for. Similar rules applied to official mail

Frames 44 - 45

Guadeloupe and Martinique

Skanda Vaitilingam

These two islands in the West Indies were first colonised by the French in 1635, the tercentenary of the settlements being celebrated by special sets of stamps in 1935.

French adhesives were used from 1851, French Colonies general issues from 1859, followed by a variety of surcharges of these stamps with the colony's name or initials (GPE or MQE) and values. In 1892 Peace & Commerce definitives inscribed with the colony's name were issued, followed by colour and value changes and surcharges.

The first pictorial definitives appeared in 1905 (Guadeloupe) and 1908 (Martinique). To meet changes in postal rates and stamp shortages there were many surcharges, new values and colours produced in the 1920s. New pictorial sets were issued in 1928 (Guadeloupe) and 1933 (Martinique), again followed by surcharges, value and colour changes to 1940.

Both colonies participated in the various colonial omnibus issues. During World War II they supported the Free French cause, and in 1945 each issued a special definitive set. Officially granted French *Département* status in 1946, each island produced a final set of pictorial stamps in June 1947.



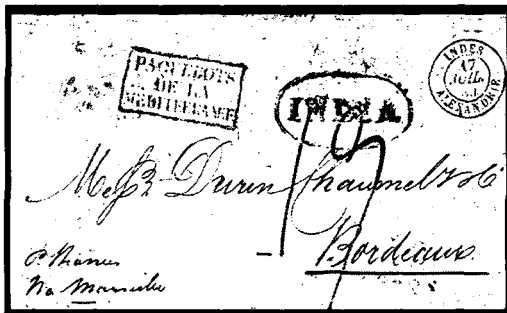
Frames 46 - 47

Établissements Français dans l'Inde

R Wood

This exhibit shows a miscellany of French Indian postal history in conjunction with eventual stamp issues covering the period 1824 to 1939, including routes where known and rates.

Early mail to France went via the Cape of Good Hope by sail and was put ashore at the first port of call in France. In the 1830s British steamers via the Red Sea or Gulf quickened the transit of mail. Later the opening of the Suez Canal and the rail link to Brindisi further shortened transit times.



Items include: 1850s French Indian *BUREAU* cancels prepaying to destination; the first adhesive stamps (1859), the general colonies, pre-paying postage; the colonies' own key plate stamps, issued 1892; 1903/4 emergency surcharging of fiscal stamps for postal use; the colonies' own stamp designs (1914); 1916 Red Cross surcharged 5c for charity; a change of currency in 1923; first flight Paris/Pondicherry (1930); commemorative stamps produced for the Paris Exhibitions of 1931 and 1937; the second charity stamp of 1938, and in 1939 two stamps commemorating the New York World Fair; official mail entitlement to free post; and an odd item from 1939 - a Japanese stamp used in error.

Frames 48 - 49

French Post Offices in Egypt

Pierre-Louis Grech

There were 4 French Post Offices in Egypt: Alexandrie (1837-1931), Suez (1862-1888), Le Caire (1866-1875) and Port-Saïd (1867-1931). They used stamps of France from 1857 until 1899, when special issues were supplied to the two remaining POs: Alexandrie and Port-Saïd. Postmarks were similar in design to those used in France.

The story of these offices is illustrated here by a selection of covers bearing various cancellations, date stamps, auxiliary markings and postal rates, concentrating on the 19th Century.

From 1843 mail inside Egypt was carried by the privately owned *Posta Europea*. This was acquired by the Khedive Ismail in 1865 and became the Egyptian Post. It issued its first stamps in 1866. Mixed frankings of the Alexandrie French PO with *Posta Europea* and Egyptian Post are shown.

Frame 50 T-perf postage dues of Tunisia, 1888-1901 Godfrey Bowden

Postage due stamps of Tunisia of 1888-1901 created by perforating ordinary stamps with a large "T" have been studied, noting various types from different machines. Genuine covers are scarce so it is difficult to allocate types to particular offices. Dimensions vary widely and by careful measurement it is hoped that a pattern will emerge that will allow types to be allocated. On 11th May 1899 post offices were instructed to cancel T perforated stamps with a large ink cross at least 2 mm in width, but not all complied; some genuine stamps are found uncanceled, with small crosses, or cancelled by datestamps. The picture is further confused by examples produced to order by the French stamp dealer Maury.

Frames 51 - 52 *Une bonne bouche* all exhibitors

In the final two frames exhibitors have brought along a single sheet showing a favourite item from their collections unconnected with their main display, to provide a final flourish. We invite you to guess which belongs to whom!