

The Royal Philatelic Society London

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PRESS RELEASE

Discovering the Spanish Antilles

Teasing his audience when introducing his presentation to The Royal Philatelic Society London on 12 November, Yamil Kouri asked 'where are the Spanish Antilles?' He quickly stopped any guessing by explaining that they essentially comprised Cuba, Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic and the Philippine Islands, strategically situated for trading purposes. Yamil went on to show and describe their first postal issues from 1855 to 1865.

The initial issues shared the same design as the first stamps of Spain (issued in 1850), featuring the portrait of Queen Isabel II. The presentation looked at the production of the stamps, the proofs featuring different papers and colours, the basic stamps, usage including first day covers, and forgeries. It was the latter that led to a new design being introduced in 1865 and thereafter changed annually.

On 19 November 1855 a local service was established in Havana for which the rate was $\frac{1}{4}$ real. To meet the need, stocks of the 2 real stamp were surcharged ' $\frac{1}{4}$ '. The initial surcharge came in two types: on display was one of two known pairs showing both types of surcharge.

Giving the vote of thanks Richard Berry commented that all had been 'wonderfully educated, fascinated and entertained' by the presentation.

Those wishing to visit The Royal Philatelic Society London at 41 Devonshire Place, London W1G 6JY, or be a guest at one of its meetings, are asked to contact in advance the Administrative Office on 020 7486 1044.



Yamil Kouri (left) receives a plaquette from Frank Walton, President of The Royal Philatelic Society London.

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