

France & Colonies Philatelist



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Secretary: Charles Bretagne, P.O.Box 30, Poughkeepsie, N.Y.
Editor: Stephen G. Rich, P.O.Box B, Verona, New Jersey



Actual Air Mail in 1793, by Balloon.
Pioneered by the French Armies.

By Edmond Queyroy

Air Mail-- carriage of letters by air -- is older than we think, and has been found to be a French invention.

Documents discovered in 1955 at Graz, in Austria, prove that this mode of communication-- today so widespread-- was first used, by French soldiers, on July 14, 1793.

The documents in question are 18 letters, that were found in the archives of the former War Ministry, accompanied by a report on them, Field Marshal de Coburg being the writer thereof. In this report, Marshal de Coburg explains that the missives had been placed in a "Mongolfière" or balloon, which French troops stationed in Valenciennes launched on July 14, 1793. When the Montgolfière was blown over the Austrian lines, it was shot down and the mail seized.

The use of the Montgolfière, the balloon of paper and linen, raised by heated air, which the brothers E. and J. Montgolfier had invented, was so extraordinary a means of mail transport that the episode was the subject of a special report from the Commanding Marshal of these Austrian troops, to the Emperor at Vienna.

This report has definitely shown us that air mail is a French invention 162 years old.

We show a Montgolfière and also the stamp of 1936 picturing J-F. P. de Rozier, first flier to be killed in a crash. His Montgolfière fell near Boulogne, in attempting to cross the English Channel. The stamp shows this balloon.

France Used in the Overseas Departments

Continuing the reports of these, which have appeared in Nso. 73, 74, 76 and 78 of 1954, and in No. 81 last year, we add a few new items, thanks to courtesy of Messrs. H.D. Mitchell (Editor of the Costa Rica Philatelist) and R.G. Stone. As almost all the current French stamps now seem to get to the overseas Departments-- French Guiana, Guadeloupe, Martinique, St. Pierre-Miquelon, etc., it is our intention to discontinue these lists as no longer useful, unless the members should yell, enough of them, for continuance.

Lt. Mitchell reported a goodly number of the items already listed, in addition to all those from Martinique here reported. His listing is based on 1952-55 covers from Guadeloupe and on 1953-54 ones from Martinique.

Guadeloupe use: (by Stone except as noted)

- 1f Bourdonnais arms
- 2f Angoumois arms
- 3f Annis arms
- 5f Saintonge arms (Mitchell also)
- 6f Lourdes
- 10f Royan (Mitchell also)
- 15f new type Ceres (Mitchell also)
- 18f Marianne de Gandon carmine (Mitchell)
- 20f Ajaccio
- 30f Bookbinding (Mitchell also)
- 40f Porcelain & Crystal
- 50f Jewelry
- 100f Mystere IV Jet Plane Airmail (Mitchell)

Martinique use: (all by Mitchell)

- 20f Chambord
- 20f Swimming
- 30f Haut Couture
- 30f Fencing
- 40f Pice du Midi de Bigorre
- 40f Canoeing
- 50f Rowing
- 110f Mystere IV Jet Plane Airmail.

If any duplications of previous listings, these are intentional, to mark prevalence of use.

Color Sequence of the 40c Peace, 1933

By Dr. Douglas H. Wells

Of the Peace series of stamps, designed by Laurens, engraved by Pelzers, the 40c was used for the single domestic letter rate when it was current. It appeared in 1933. The catalogs use various names for its colors. For this article, I will follow Wanos & de Belleville in calling them pale lilac, bright lilac, and violet shaded lilac, without questioning whether other names might fit better.

In the lot of two thousand which I have for study, all used copies, the pale lilac is the scarce variety, quite definitely. Violet shaded lilac is the "major" or regular color.

The pale lilac and the bright lilac had more use in 1937 than in all the other years combined. The violet tinted lilac was used in about the same proportion of all copies, each year, except that in 1939 there were relatively few of them. My copies used in that year are all dated Jan. or Feb. by the postmarks.

(This is the first section of a long article on this stamp, going into numerous varieties, which Dr. Wells put into your editor's hands in 1953. Problems of illustrating it have been the cause of delay. We hope today that it may be possible to solve the illustration difficulty.

--- Editor, F. & C. P.)

More on Demonetized Stamps of France

The article on this subject in No. 84 brought in further information from two members:

Dr. Chase informs us that in the note at the end, the price for the 5f rose was 4f 50c, not 4f 40c. Reference to original manuscript shows that it was 4f.40 therein. Your editor has been cautious, because of some embarrassing former-time experiences, to not "correct" statements of fact in copy, even if it seems logical. Hence this was let stand.

Writes Mr. Paul Baudry:

"The stamps listed by you, having lost all postal value, are not supposed to be cancelled by the Post Office, and the correspondence on which they are found has to be considered as bearing no stamps or insufficient stamps and be handled accordingly; with one exception, however:

"That any correspondence bearing the 'Petain' stamps or the 'Legion Tricolore', the 'Villes Bombardées' or the 'Famille du Prisonnier,' all issued by the Vichy authorities, has to be returned to the sender or sent to the Dead Letter Office as being unacceptable by the Post Office."

Mr. Baudry says "to the Dead Letter Office," as he uses it here, is the most accurate way to translate "versée au rebut".



Preliminary Report on the 5f Empire.

Thanks largely to advertising in the Members' Appeals column in this publication, your editor has been able to assemble 60 copies of the 1869 5 francs Empire. The mere fact that almost all have tears, thin spots, etc. does not make them less useful for study. All are used copies.

The material in hand indicates definitely by measurements of the 5 and F in each case, that the alleged two types listed by Scott are only the extremes of a continuous range of variation. The sizes distribute themselves according to a "normal curve of variability", with most of them clustering midway between Scott's two sizes. On the alleged two or three types of the catalogs and handbooks published in France, equally full intergrading was found.

Detailed, illustrated publication must await reaching 100 copies minimum, and will probably be in the Collectors Club Philatelist. This is in line with the Group's policy, since we meet as a "Study Group" at that Club, of helping to improve that publication by our contributions.

Articles Coming in the Near Future.

Weekly Philatelic Gossip will have, probably early in April, an article "'Types' in French Stamps" discussing the fact that on so many of the stamps the "types" intergrade.

The Essay-Proof Journal will have, in its April 1956 number, an article on "Clichés versus Plates," in which production methods of French stamps figure prominently.

The Collectors Club Philatelist of March is to include an article on the 1876 Rough Printing Type Sages, explaining their origin and basing this on neglected statements by Mr. E. Mouchon.

PHILOPODE BOOKLETS OF FRANCE

This article about the rare "Philopode" booklets was originally published in the "Philatelic Magazine" of Great Britain and later in "The Booklet," organ of the Booklet Pane Society of the U.S. It is reprinted here by the special permission of Mr. Jervis and with the kind cooperation of Mr. Harry Moskovitz, editor of "The Booklet." The story of the Philopodes is the result of a long research by Mr. Jervis. It may not be reprinted without his permission.
--- Editor, F. & C. Phil.

By
Henry Jervis
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Fig. 1.—The Philopode inscription.

Philatelic include a strip dated 22/8/28. A strip of four of the 50c. value, without its cover, in my small *Philopode* collection, bears the same date.

Monsieur Freyrier was known both in France and beyond the French borders as a man of the highest integrity. For over 20 years he occupied the chair of the Montpellier Philatelic Society. As delegate-general for the South of France to the Federation of French Philatelic Societies, the most important philatelic organisation in the country, he rose to be vice-president of the Federation.

Business Stopped

Since the policy of the war-time occupiers of France included the centralisation in Germany of all the (To top of next column)

European chemical industries, Monsieur Freyrier found his business first impeded and eventually stopped by "shortages" of raw materials. With characteristic resourcefulness he founded the well-known journal, the *Bulletin Philatelic du Midi*, which has been under the control of Madame Freyrier since the lamented death of her husband in November, 1953.

It is believed that the originator of the *Philopode* carnets himself designed the *fantassin*, or French infantryman, who figures on the *Philopode* device and on the firm's stationery. The *chick* from which the stamp margins were printed disappeared some time after the Governmental prohibition of its further use for that purpose.

When the rarity of the booklets became apparent after the second (To third column, below cut)

IN 1928, when Monsieur Freyrier, a manufacturing chemist of Montpellier, approached the French Government's *concessionnaire* for facilities for advertising in the current stamp booklets his well-known *Philopode* compound, an antiseptic ointment for the feet, he received an exorbitant and entirely unacceptable quotation for the service desired. Being a man of initiative and resource, Monsieur Freyrier then bought in quantity entire sheets of the current Sower values, namely the 15c. purple-brown, the 25c. yellow-brown and the 50c. vermilion.

He next had his *Philopode* device (Fig. 1) printed on the margins, and issued each value in the form of a vertical mint strip of four stamps, enclosed in a protective cover of special design, using the remaining stamps for the ordinary postal purposes of his firm.

The reaction of the postal authorities and the *concessionnaire* to this bold and unexpected breach of a highly lucrative monopoly was swift and vigorous. But Monsieur Freyrier had taken competent legal advice, and though the full story of his resistance to various forms of persuasion, including threats of prosecution, would make interesting reading, the philatelic nature of this short article requires its omission.

Briefly it may be said that when the strength of Monsieur Freyrier's position became aware to the government, a Decree was issued, with force of law, by which an end was put to the printing of the *Philopode* booklets. Nevertheless by this time they had been produced to the following numbers:—

15c. ...	109 booklets
25c. ...	662 booklets
50c. ...	2,073 booklets

From the documentary point of view it is to be noted that these numbers were first published in 1932, in the first of the eight volumes of the *Mémorial Philatelic*, the life-work of Monsieur Gustave Bertrand of Nîmes. In this great work an account of the *Philopode* booklets is accompanied by admirable photographs of a set of the eight varieties of the 25c. booklet. A somewhat fuller account of the *Philopodes* is to be found in the excellent monograph of the Sowers, by the late Monsieur Barrier, published in 1952 under the title *Les Semeuses*.

Part of the successful resistance put up by Monsieur Freyrier to a powerful Government Department lay in the

absence of any direct profit-making motive on his part, for the *Philopode* carnets were never placed on sale, whether to dealers or to the general public.

On the contrary, they were distributed gratuitously to the medical practitioners, pharmacists and others who formed Monsieur Freyrier's regular *clientèle*, and this free distribution was accompanied by a request that the stamps given away in the booklets should be used for franking further orders through the post.

Apart from the extreme rarity of these carnets, some of their philatelic interest lies in the existence of eight varieties of each value. Without entering into tedious explanations, it may be said quite briefly that the left-hand margin of each sheet of Sowers, with its adherent stamps, provided material for two different strips of four, namely, one each from top and bottom. On these strips the publicity inscription ran upwards, while on the corresponding marginal strips from the right-hand side of the sheet the inscription ran downwards. Thus four varieties of each value were produced.

In addition, the blank strip which ran down the middle of each sheet was utilised by cutting it in half from top to bottom, each half retaining its adherent stamps.

Because the perforations ran across this blank space, the four strips which were thus formed, after the printing of the inscription, produced another set of four strips, indistinguishable from the first except for the perforations. A "perforated" strip of four is shown, in its cover, in Fig. 2.

Since every sheet of the current issues of France bore the date of printing at the extreme right-hand bottom corner, and a serial number at the opposite corner, it follows that each set of eight varieties of each of the three values must show one strip of four dated and one numbered.

The eight strips illustrated on page 185 of volume I of the *Mémorial*

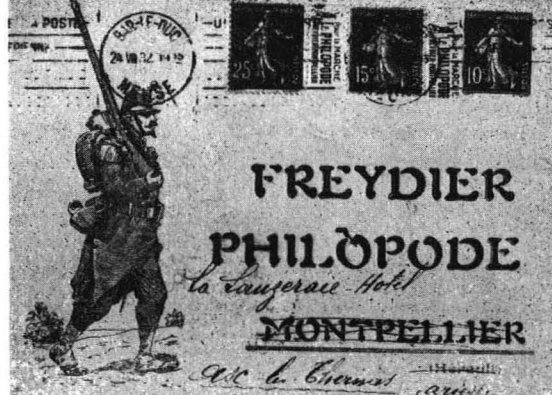


Fig. 3.—One of the rare examples of Philopode stamps on cover.

World War, Monsieur Freyrier exhausted all possible means of tracing the existence of unused copies. He advertised for them and circularised his former clients, but to no avail.

During many years' search for these rarities I first acquired a single *Philopode* stamp, the 50c. figured above. After a long interval there came to hand a copy of the 50c. booklet, whose rarity may fairly be estimated by comparison with the 50 franc green Air Mail stamp of 1936, of which 118,000 copies were made available for postal use, and is now listed by Scott (1955 edition) at 35 dollars mint, say £12.

The *Mémorial* booklet, containing ten Sowers of the green 10 centime value (thin letters) sells readily, in finest condition, for the equivalent of £10, both in Paris and the U.S.A. Of this carnet 20,000 copies were issued. The number of collectors who possess one of the original 2,073 copies of the 50c. *Philopode* must indeed be small.

Of the 25c. booklet there can be very few copies left of the original 662, while the 15c. booklet must be still rarer, due account always being taken of the probable numbers destroyed at issue at the request of Monsieur Freyrier. Hence there can be no abundance of complete sets of the three values!

In the U.S.A., where the Booklet Pane Society is as much interested in complete booklets as in their panes, a set of three *Philopodes*, 15c., 25c. and 50c., recently changed hands for 100 dollars, say £36. This must indeed be considered a moderate price in view of all the facts.

As is to be expected, covers bearing the *Philopode* stamps are next to non-existent, for their future rarity could hardly have been

anticipated at the time of issue.

Fig. 3 shows one of the surviving examples. Among its several back-stamps there is the official stamp of the "Capitaine chargé du Matériel" (Quartermaster) "du 94e Rég. d'Infanterie à Bar-le-Duc, Meuse." The 10c. Sower is printed on the cover. The 15c. and the 25c. *Philopode* stamps adhere to their margins. The *Philopode* envelope is also known impressed with the red 50c. *Paix* stamp (Scott 267; Gibbons 508).

The philatelic status of the *Philopode* carnets has been extensively discussed in the French press. Perhaps the last word on the subject may have been penned by that distinguished philatelist Monsieur Gaston Tournier, when he wrote, as quoted in *Les Semeuses*:—

What philatelic value may be attached to the publicity booklets? As the question now stands, it seems difficult to give an answer. On the one hand there are the booklets in which the advertisements were officially printed. These were sometimes issued in small editions, with the whole issue covered by the advertiser and sold exclusively by him to stamp dealers at excessive prices. On the other hand, there are booklets of the *Philopode* kind, originating from a private source, but issued purely for advertising purposes, and distributed free of charge. Between these two kinds of booklet the collector will ask himself "Which are really the fancy goods?" and he will surprise many people by assessing each kind at its proper valuation.

The *Philopode* strips (without covers) are listed in the *Whole World Catalogue* of Scott under his numbers 165B, 169B and 146B, needless to say unpriced.



Fig. 2.—A perforated strip in its cover.

The LESGOR CONTEST

Fifth annual holding of the Lesgor Contest, on Feb. 7, 1956, at the Group's meeting that date, was marked by a significant change in the entry of material. As contrasted to the four previous Lesgor Contests, the quality and caliber of the exhibits was much better. Likewise, the part taken by non-resident members was much larger.

Though the total number of contesting exhibits was small, nobody was dismayed. So good was the material shown, that its lessened amount was hardly noticed.

The judges, Messrs. Queyroy, Kremer and our Secretary Bretagne, made the awards thus:

Original Research section:

Best in Show: Adrien Boutrelle: Study of France No. 307, Daudet's Wind-Mill.

Open Class:

First Award: John B. Morton, Buffalo, N.Y. for Cancellations of the Railway Post Offices and other Ambulants.

Second Award: Meritt F. Handy, Malden, Mass. for Paris Star Cancellations on covers, complete.

Other showings were:

Everel Keys, Harvey, Ill: Free French Cover Rarities.

William Martin: France, the regular issues, in his own type of new writing-up.

A pleasant feature of the Lesgor Contest was the return to activity of Mr. Brainerd Kremer, who had been ill all fall. Less overweight, he was quite his old cheerful extrovert self.

The Parent Chapter of F. & C. Group meets each first Tuesday of the month, save in summer, at Collectors Club, 22 East 35 St., New York. All members, whether resident or not, are entitled to attend meetings.

MEMBERS' APPEALS

Want and exchange notices only; members only; on or two insertions only; no charge. Those who reply will please offer only what is asked.

Wanted: Stamps in good condition of the 1853-60 Issue (imperfectorate Empire) with interesting cancellations. Also Occupation stamps 1870-71 (Alsace-Lorraine). Paul Baudry, 47 East 87 St., New York 28, N.Y. (Member 93)

Five Francs Empire stamps, no matter how bad the condition, wanted at appropriate prices, for study of varieties. Please price each copy by itself. I have 59; need 100. S.G. Rich, Verona, New Jersey (Member 2)

Exchange: Wanted, France and Colonies; I have 5000 duplicates plus better European. Jack Kerns, 1500 South Oxnard Blvd., Oxnard, Calif. (Member 439).

Want the following; will trade or buy. Give price when sending: on cover only. Cancellation items of Paris: letter M cancellation; B Hour of Distribution; H, L; Paris stars Nos. 2, 4, 5, 10, 11, 36 with both Boulevard stations on postmark. Merritt F. Handy, 44 Highland Ave., Malden 48, Mass. (Member 269)

One dollar offered for a copy of France No. 95 (40c Sage Type 2) with postmark showing date unmistakably earlier than 1880. Catalog price of this stamp used is 3 cents. S.G. Rich, Verona, New Jersey. (Member 2).

* SECRETARY'S REPORT *

December 1 to February 15 1956

NEW MEMBERS: Welcome.

- 621 Gaillaguet, Raymond L 187 Don Avenue,..... Rumford 16, R.I. (France 20th. Century.)
- 622 DeMers, Edward F. 7201 Watson Way, La Mesa California. (France and Colonies.).....
- 623 Wheeler, Elena L. Miss 8 Ridgeview Avenue, White Plains, New York. (France.).....
- 624 Moffat, Fraser M. Col. 1035 Park Avenue, New York 28, N.Y. (France-Monaco-Maroc.)

APPLICATION PENDING:

- 625 Holmdahl, John W. 2300 Dashwood, Oakland 5, California.....

CHANGE OF ADDRESS:

- 10 Wood, Robert L. Dr. to Box 14, Dogwood-... Drive, Danbury, Conn.....
- 17 Vaurie, A.J.C. to 231 East 76th. Street, New York 21, New York.....
- 192 Cunningham, Helen T. Miss to 1425 S. 13th. Avenue, Maywood, Illinois.....
- 405 Schellens, Richard N. to 115 Scenic Drive, Redwood City, California.....
- 439 Kerns, Jack T. to 1500 S. Oxnard Blvd. Oxnard, California.....
- 476 Walter, Mercer C. Brig. General to Ft. Lewis, Washington.....
- 589 Mulhenheim, F.E. to 14 West 82nd. Street, New York 24, New York.....
- 611 Clark, Robert J. to 4008 Martin Drive, San Mateo, California.....

Resignation Received:

- 36 Thomas, Bernard. Box 58, R.D. 1, Sperryville Virginia.....
- 127 Roberts, Daniel H. 24 Romaine Avenue, Jersey City 6, New Jersey.....
- 404 Schauer, W.E. 1839 N. 54th. Street, Milwaukee 8, Wisconsin.....
- 492 Leppman, Ulrich, 286 South Church Street, Moorestown, New Jersey.....
- 571 Cremona, Roger-Max 68 Avenue des Francais, Bayrouth (Liban).....

Respectfully Submitted
Charles Bretagne, Secretary

French Equatorial Africa

July 30 1955 list of Post Offices stated to be furnishing full service, and not branches.

By Edmond Queyroy.

- Gabon:.....Libreville, Bitem, Lambarene, Mouilla, Cyem, Port Gentil.
 - Middle Congo...; Brazzaville, Dolisie, Madingou, Pointe-Noire.
 - Oubangui-Chari.. Bangui, Bambari, Bangassou, Berberati, Bouar, Fort-Sibut.
 - Chad.....Fort-Lamy, Abecher, Ati, Fort-Archambault, Moundou.
- (Middle Congo is called Moyen Congo by the French authorities, and they spell Chad Tchad.)

Scott's catalog, after listing for some sixty six years French Colonies dues overprinted in red diagonally, MARTINIQUE, finally delisted them in 1955. These 1887 products were really no more than private fakes. Other cataloguers dropped them many years ago.