

# PHILATELIC BULLETIN



Sarasota Philatelic Club

2024

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## Stamp Quiz



**Unfortunately, no one cor-**

**rectly answered last month's Stamp Quiz question. It was the 50 centavos Equestrian Seal of King Diniz definitive of Portugal from the issue of 1953-56 (Scott 775). Stay tuned for next month's Stamp Quiz.**



## FCPS Annual Weekend Meeting

By Vincent Centonze

Recently, I had the opportunity to attend the France & Colonies Philatelic Society's (FCPS) Annual Philatelic Weekend held in Charlecotte, a small village next to Stratford-on-Avon, England. The annual event is held each year in March. Over the past few years, schedule conflicts always prevented me from attending; however, I finally managed to make it across the pond. The event was certainly worth the wait.

Although there are two France & Colonies Philatelic Societies, one based in the UK and the other in the US, this meeting is conducted by the UK based organization. The annual weekend meeting is one of its premier events. Over 20 members attended this year's event, which ran from the evening of Thursday, March 7<sup>th</sup>, through mid-day Saturday, March 9<sup>th</sup>. The attendees included collectors from the UK, France, Belgium and the US. Most of the attendees brought displays. Members presented exhibits ranging in size from one to six frames of material and then discussed them for up to 15 minutes. After each group of three or four displays were discussed, attendees had the opportunity to walk around and view them for about 30 minutes before the frames were removed and the next group was set up. In addition to the live exhibits, there was also one splendid PowerPoint session covering Napoleonic Mail.

The outstanding group of presentations and material covered the gamut of topics from French Postal Stationery, Zeppelins, Corsican postal history, and Pneumatic mail to the French West African Air Service, Saint Pierre et Miquelon, French Navy mails, and much more. On Thursday and Friday evenings, there was also an "Anything Goes" segment, where individuals who hadn't signed up for a formal presentation could show and discuss up to two frames of their material. I never absorbed so much new information in such a short period of time. A few dealer members also set up tables for a mini bourse and there was a lot of material I just couldn't pass up. Needless to say, I came out of the meeting a few pounds (Sterling) lighter!

The location was idyllic as well and provided an opportunity for my wife and I to arrive early to visit all the Shakespeare sights nearby in his hometown of Stratford-on-Avon. For me, the weekend was truly a crash course in all aspects of the philately

of France and its colonies and I look forward to attending again next year. If anyone is interested in French philately, you should consider joining the FCPS. Benefits include auctions and *The Journal of the France & Colonies Philatelic Society* which is published three times per year, in April, August, and

December. You can contact the FCPS at [www.fcps.org.uk](http://www.fcps.org.uk). As I mentioned earlier, note that there is also a US based organization called the France & Colonies Philatelic Society. If you're a true philatelic Francophile, you might consider joining both organizations. Happy collecting!



**The FCPS annual weekend meeting boasted a wide range of France-related topics.**

*Continued on next page*



## The Prez Sez ...

Welcome to Summer!

At least we got enough rain to break the back of the drought. I sincerely trust that you were not affected by the street flooding in various Sarasota locations.

Our group had a congenial but very noisy meeting at Gecko's in June - half the table could not hear the other half. We will try Bob Evans (see separate email) for July and then decide what to do for August.



Liz Hisey and I went to NAPEX outside of Washington DC where we had the pleasure of seeing Mark Isaacs and Judy Rubin who also attended.

I am super pleased to report that my exhibit "Baltimore Postal History: From Colonial Times until June 30, 1851" won the Grand Award! This was something of a surprise to me as it's only 5 frames! I was already planning to go to GASS in Hartford because I am judging Literature - now I have another reason! *Pat*

## Last Blue Pillar Box Standing?

By Vincent Centonze

If you ever find yourself in Windsor, England, be sure to check out what may be Britain's only remaining blue postbox, also known as a "pillar box." Blue pillar boxes were used during the 1930s to post airmail. They were separate from the typical red pillar boxes which were used to post surface mail. The box is located on the corner of Hight Street and St. Alban's Street a few blocks from Windsor Castle and is no longer in use. A badly stained and weather-beaten placard on the pillar box bears the following information:

*"On 9<sup>th</sup> September 1911, Gustav Hamel took off from Hendon Aerodrome in his frail Ble-riot monoplane to inaugurate the first United Kingdom aerial post and landed in Shaw Farm meadow, Long Walk, Windsor. The flight was organized to carry special mail celebrating the coronation of King George V.*

*Within a few years, Air Mail services became well established and between 1930 and 1938, special blue pillar boxes like this commemorative one were used for posting Air Letters. This box is adjacent to the site of the Windsor Post Office (1887 – 1966) where Air Mail was received from the United Kingdom aerial post."*



After 1938, the blue pillar boxes were painted red, and airmail was posted in the same boxes as surface mail. Is this truly Britain's only remaining blue pillar box standing in its original location? There's also a blue pillar box in Manchester, England, which is in use as a regular postbox. However, it was apparently erected in 1983 and painted blue to commemorate the airmail postboxes, so it is not original. Blue mailboxes dedicated to the collection of airmail were used in other countries as well. In the July 2023 edition of the *Philatelic Bulletin*, I showed a picture of one on display in the Budapest Postal Museum.



**Britain's Blue Pillarbox for Airmail Collection.**

**(Left) Postcard carried on the first official UK airmail flight.**

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