

HELVETIA PHILATELIC SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Founded in 1946 by Edward H Spiro

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No. 1 January 2009

RETURN TO SENDER

FRED HOADLEY



Whilst looking for items to show at Salisbury next month (Cancellations and Handstamps of a Non-Circular Type) I came across the interesting 5c Tell Boy wrapper illustrated above which was posted in 1908 to the Senior Doctor of the Wilhelmshaven City Hospital, and up-rated to 15c (5c per 50g foreign rate) with a 10c Helvetia stamp. The handstamp message reads 'Nicht nachsenden. Unter Angabe des Wohnortes zurück.' A rectangular boxed handstamp 'M. Schaerer A.G./BERN' on the reverse of the wrapper (illustrated below) indicates the name of the sender.

Maurice Schaerer opened a factory in Bern in 1892 for the manufacture of medical equipment. The company rapidly gained international renown for the production of sterilisation equipment, surgical devices and operating tables (The contents of the wrapper may well have been a trade catalogue of some sorts). The company is still located in Bern but now manufactures breakfast appliances (e.g. coffee machines for hospital use, etc.)

The German (not Swiss) handstamp was applied by the delivery office in Wilhelmshaven and translates 'To be returned to sender, with the home address of the addressee'. This would have been an instruction to the hospital to add the doctor's new address and return the item to the local delivery office for sending back to Switzerland. (Continued on Page 5)



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FROM MARIE LANZ VIA JOSHUA JUAN TO LOUIS MONNIN

EVERT POEL

A PROPOSALT SCHWEIZ – ABOUT SWISS POSTMASTERS WHO, MORE THAN 150 YEARS AGO, CANCELLED LETTERS IN A PECULIAR WAY.

(This article originally appeared in 'Jungfraupost', the journal of our sister society Studiegroep Zwitserland, and has been reproduced with the kind permission of the author and the Studiegroep. Translated from the Dutch by our member Bob Johnson – Editor)

This is a continuation of the small series of articles about the people behind the post office counter (see Jungfraupost 106 on the story of the youth named Heinrich and Jungfraupost 109 about the patriot of Seeberg), I now put before you three special post office officials from the middle of the 19th Century.

We have the people behind the post office counter to thank for the way Alt Schweiz philately is so richly checkered in cancelling. The postal officials made the various PP -, place name - and 15 dot lozenge (diamond-shaped, only in black) – cancels into a wholly separate ornament on the covers.

All colours of the rainbow were used and often also divergent diamond -, ring -, line - and dot - ('puntstempel') cancels. There was an obvious need for a separate postal identity, both in the little offices and the district offices of the cantons. The cancels could almost always be clearly attributed to a defined place or canton. The central post office in Bern always covered up this practice. This article describes the practices of three postmasters of that time who are known by both their christian name and family name and their scarce cancels.

Marie Lanz – In 1851 Marie manned the post office at Wangen a/Aare (near Solothurn). She was a special woman in the way she printed, both literally and figuratively, special cancels on the letters she had to invalidate. She used her signet ring with the initials M. L. to cancel the covers. This scarce type of cancel is now known as 'signet ring' or 'petschaft' - see Andres & Emmenegger's handbook of cancels in Group 10.

Thus such a petschaft cancel does not show the initials in ink but the background is printed in ink to show the initials in the white space revealed. The initials become visible by not printing on them.

Her cancels are not always very distinct and her initials are always hard to recognise (Fig. 1 is an example of a Marie Lanz cover but her cancel does not show up well on the stamp). Her M. L. cancels have only been found for dates in 1851. The last known was dated the 1st August 1851, it being superseded, in the middle of August, by the Federal lozenge - type cancel. Only then did she have a good substitute for her signet ring cancel. Marie continued to run the post office until 1855.

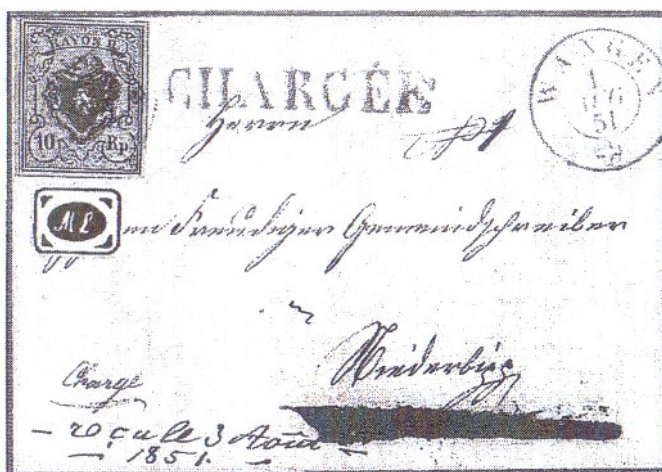


Fig. 1



Fig. 2

From the beginning of her term of office she used green ink for all the cancels – the signet ring -, the lozenge -, place name - and 'Chargee' cancels of 1853. (Fig. 2 shows a cover of 1853 – after 1851 Marie Lanz was happy with the diamond cancel. You will have to imagine the green colour in this black and white edition of HPS.) The use of the colour green was unique to Wangen. Other green cancels are known, but they are probably due to colour changes. Those from Marie Lanz are all genuine.

Other 'petschaft' cancels are catalogued in Group 10 but only with unknown or illegible initials. The letter from Trachselwald is an example of illegible initials (Fig. 3).

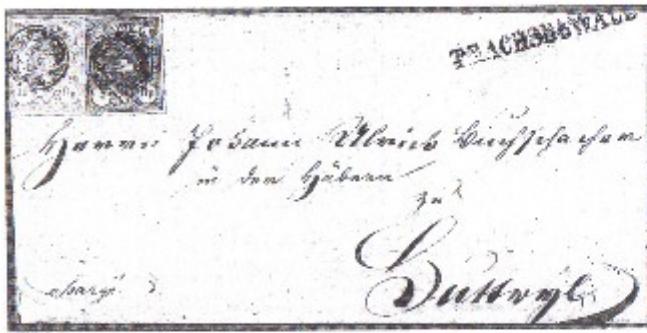


Fig. 3

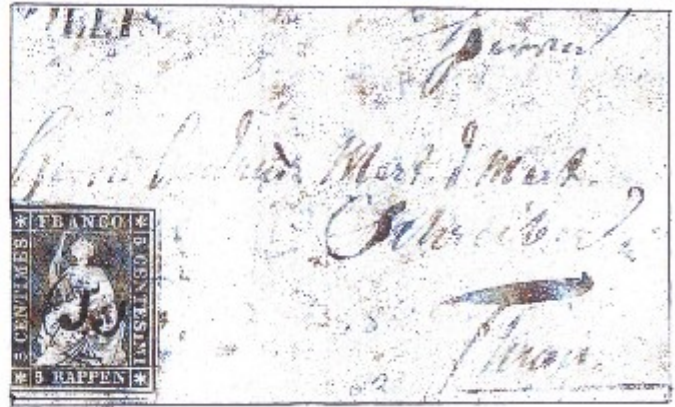


Fig. 4

Joshua Juan – In 1852 Juan was a farmer, the wrestling champion of Graubünden and a master of Schwingen, a sport which can best be compared to the modern discipline of hammer throwing. But, at least as important, he was also the postmaster of the small settlement of Zillis which you reach when you travel from Chur over the San Bernardino Pass to Italy. Juan lived in the nearby village of Reischen and walked to and from his work every day. Like Marie Lenz, he used his initials J. J. to cancel stamps. His cancel is included in the cancel handbook in Group 8 of the cipher cancel category as No. 19. The only difference from Marie's cancels is that the dark and light areas are turned around. All petschaft cancels are cipher cancels, but not all cipher cancels are petschaft cancels.

Joshua Juan used his initials J. J. (in a circle) for five years, from 1852 to 1857 (Fig. 4 shows a 22A type used in 1854).

In 1871 a post office was opened in Reischen and J. J. became its postmaster. After his death in 1873 his wife and afterwards his children took over the task. The family Juan was appointed to this post office until its closure in 1972.

Louis Monnin - Louis was a wine merchant in Bellelay and, until his death in 1855, held the position of postmaster as a 'sideline'. Bellelay was a very small settlement, situated on the French border to the north east of Biel. Apart from its great abbey, Bellelay is only known philatelically for its splendidly cancelled letters; and it is these that Louis Monnin was responsible for. He created his own dot – cancels which he cancelled only in his favourite colour, blue.

In 1852 and 1853 he cancelled the stamps with a rectangular dot – cancel that he made himself (see Fig. 5). This cover also has the fine despatch cancel of his wine business : A&L Monnin à Bellelay. He was one of the biggest customers of this post office ! (Continued on Page 8).

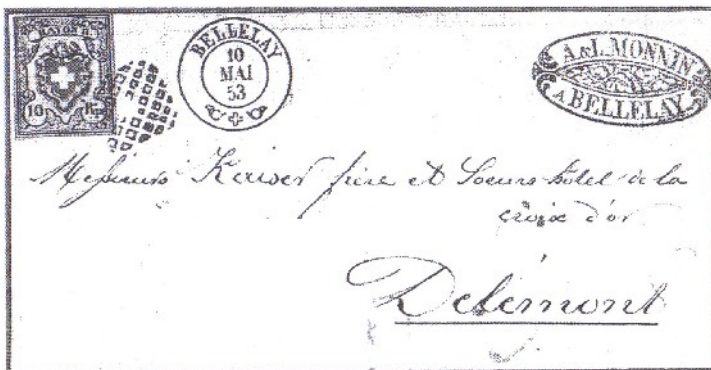


Fig. 5

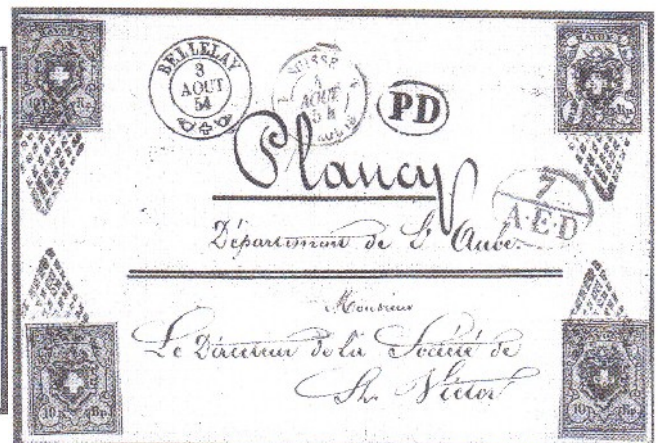


Fig. 6

HELVETIA PHILATELIC SOCIETY NEWS**THE SOCIETY'S ANNUAL NATIONAL MEETING 2009**

Full details of this important event taking place on the weekend of the 28th and 29th March in Chester are set out in the separate information sheet and booking form enclosed with this newsletter..

NEXT MEETINGS OF THE HPS REGIONAL GROUPS

All members can be assured of a warm welcome at these very sociable and informative events :

London Group

Wednesday 11th March 2009 – 'Military Issues' – commencing at 6.30 p.m. in Room B328, Third Floor, Macmillan House, Paddington Station, London W2 1FT (the room will be open from 6.00.p.m. Meetings usually end at around 8.30. p.m.).

Northern Group

Saturday 3rd January 2009 – Chairman's Display by Norton Wragg – commencing at 2.00 p.m. in the Leeds Institute for the Blind and Deaf, Centenary House, North Street, Leeds. (Enquiries to David Hope on 0161 303 0091).

Southern (Wessex) Group

Saturday 21st February 2009 – 'Non-Circular Handstamps and Cancellations' – All Members (main speakers – Bob Medland and Fred Hoadley) commencing at 10.30.a.m. and closing at approximately 4.00.p.m. at the Clovelly Hotel, Mill Road, Salisbury. (Enquiries to Fred Hoadley 01403 711987).

SPREADING THE WORD

In response to my request, Frank Parsons and Derek Dawson have told me that they are active on the display circuit, spreading the message of the fascination of collecting Swiss material. Derek has given us a flavour of his presentation. He writes: 'On 17th November 2008 Ruth and I had the pleasure of visiting the Cinque Ports Philatelic Society at Folkestone. In 2006 we had shown them our Hotel Post and Soldier Stamps. This time it was a 'Medley' of our Swiss Collection. We started with the Basle Dove and Neuchâtel envelopes, followed by our Neuchâtel forgeries with a Zumstein bill showing a check on ten stamps, eight of which were 'forgeries'. From there we showed our Rayons and Strubels, a selection of Airmails and Bundesfeier Cards, finishing with a few interesting odd sheets including a block of the 'Alinghi' Americas Cup winner, the 'Pingu' parcel stamps with and without string and 'Our Millennium' issues all postmarked on the day at Klosters station.



The second half was from our Pro Juventute collection, additional Soldier Stamps collected and then a couple of frames with the beginnings of Ruth's heimat collection which is mainly in the Prättigau valley which is from Landquart up to Davos. This starts with an envelope cancelled in BÜHLER (Ruth's maiden name) and showing a stamp with our own picture organised by our friend Silvia (see illustration). Sadly Bühler is now closed.'

Our Honorary Secretary, Peter Vonwiller, holds a list of our members who are prepared to give displays to other societies. If you would like your name added please contact Peter at the address on Page 1. (Editor)

REPORT ON THE LONDON GROUP'S MEETING: 'POSTAL HISTORY' - 12th NOVEMBER 2008

Claude Mistely writes : As he was unable to show sufficient older material, Claude Mistely displayed mainly modern items to set the scene in providing an overview of the history of the internal carriage of Swiss surface post by foot, mule and horse-drawn and motor vehicles. He started with the PTT cards of the early cantonal messengers, then mentioning the Thurn and Taxis and Fischer posts. He then showed some contemporary cards of the different types of the 19th Century horse-drawn carriages and went on to the early cantonal posts and the formation of the Federal Post in 1849, followed by cards showing the Simplon and Gotthard posts, post boxes and postmen's uniforms. He concluded with illustrations and stamps showing motor postal coaches between 1906 and 1980 and an ATM stamp machine.

Fred Pickard produced a most attractive selection of eighteenth and nineteenth century Swiss mail from 1741, going through the Napoleonic period, the cantonal posts and the early Federal Post. This included the material with route marks of the horse-drawn postal coaches. He then outlined postal history highlights, showing the first postal stationary from Geneva of 1846, the first post card issued by Switzerland just a year after the very first one by Austria., the 1900 UPU cards (the first commemoratives) and the 1912 and 1913 Pro Juventute issues (the first charity stamps). He then dealt with Swiss Military train mail, showing a 1919 cover from Yugoslavia, the Industrielle Kriegswirtschaft issues, miniature sheets, the introduction of rotary printing on the 1936 definitives, further developments by the PTT Printing Works until its regrettable closure in 2002, and the development of rotogravure printing by Courvoisier which, following its first use on Swiss stamps in the 1930s, was used on stamps of many other postal authorities all over the world. Finally, he gave an account of automatic letter sorting and the use of ATM stamps.

Neville Nelder, a very welcome visitor, gave a very interesting display on the postal history of Moutier in the Jura. He showed an entire, posted in 1819 sent to Lausanne, with the frank Münster, the original name for Moutier and arrange of the town cancellations between 1869 and 2004. An unusual and scarce item was a Zeppelin card flown from Vaduz in Liechtenstein to Lausanne on the special 19th June 1931 flight, addressed to Moutier, which had the appropriate transit and arrival cancels.

Derrick Slate had a good selection of other postal history aspects: First World War Internment Camps; German Censor Marks with envelopes from Switzerland to Great Britain, India and the USA; examples of the Red Cross tracing service; postage due errors and invalidations plus a range of travelling post office railway markings.

Vice-Chairman, Eric Lienhard, displayed the evolution and use of razor blade postmarks. The pre-cursors were new types of circular postmarks with the date and time of use in boxes, which were originally developed by Güller and had a limited use. Eric showed examples from Sainte Croix (uniquely inscribed Ste Croix Suisse) and from exhibitions at Vevey and Basel in 1901, the latter two with the appropriate exhibition labels. To this he added a wide range of entires with the majority of the different razor blade postmarks from all the participating towns: Aarau, Basel, Bern, Bellinzona, Chur, Geneva, Lausanne, Luzern, Neuchâtel, St Gallen and Zürich. The examples shown covered both despatch and arrival marks and there were a few with razor blade marks for despatch and arrival on the same envelopes. Such entires are very scarce.

Claude Mistely, as London Chairman, applauded the excellent variety and range of the postal history items that had been shown and proposed a vote of thanks to all participants, which was endorsed with acclamation.

RETURN TO SENDER
(Continued from Page 1)

FRED HOADLEY

Perhaps they had been inundated with letters, journals, etc. to be redirected ? It is assumed that the doctor had left that particular hospital, so by returning this item to the manufacturer their address list could be updated. However, as there are no other markings on the wrapper, how was the information conveyed back. Written on the contents, perhaps ?

Once again I am indebted to Michael Rutherford, for translating the message and interpreting its meaning. The disappointing part for me is that the handstamp turned out to be German, not Swiss, and therefore doesn't really meet the requirements for the February meeting. Oh well, never mind, it's a nice item to add to my collection.

THE SWISS SOCIETY OF POSTMARK COLLECTORS (Schweizerischer Verein der Poststempelsammler (SVPS) or Association Suisse des Collectionneurs d'Empreintes Postales (ASCEP))



This society was founded in 1959. In the early years it was concerned solely with machine cancellations. Because some members also collected Special -, Automobile- and Publicity (K) - Cancels these areas were also included and in 1974 the name of the Society was changed.

At the Annual General Meeting in Spring 2008 over 60 members of the dissolved Coil Stamp Collector Society also joined and therefore we also include this aspect. We currently have 321 members of whom 21 are domiciled abroad. In addition to the usual tasks of the Society, we have two get-togethers each year to exchange information and hold an auction. We publish our bulletin 'Der Poststempelsammler' (The Postmark Collector) four times a year. Each edition has 64 pages of articles covering the full range of our members' collecting interests. The Society's most important task is the publication of specialist books and, in particular, catalogues. In 2007 it published the 4th edition of its 'K' Cancel Handbook of Switzerland and Liechtenstein – in two volumes, 300 pages. There are almost 2,600 cancels described and valued as well as much background information about these items. It is anticipated that the end of 2009 will see a new edition of the Machine Cancel Handbook of Switzerland, Liechtenstein and the UN Geneva Office. This will be an enormous work containing approximately 900 pages of information.

Further details on the Society and how to join are available on its website – www.svps-ascep.ch It also contains details of the publications it produces and how to obtain them. A series of long, copiously illustrated articles by Pierre Guinand in 'Der Poststempelsammler' in 2008 provided a very comprehensive analysis and description of the 66 known 'Cachets de Remplacement'.

AUCTION NEWS

Good news for those with treasured collections or hoping to attract fresh recruits to our hobby. The firm of Corinphila Auktionen AG recently published the list of prices realised in their major philatelic auction in October 2008 which included over 1,800 Swiss items. Commenting on the sale they wrote (in October '08) there was 'no sign of a world-wide economic crisis' quoting some 'outstanding results' for particular items. They intend to present for viewing all of the single lots from their forthcoming 157th auction (to be held in June 2009 in Zürich) during the International Exhibition IBRA to be held in Germany in May 2009. The 'List of Prices Realised' in October '08 is available from the HPS's Library.

THE SWISS RAILWAYS SOCIETY

BOB MEDLAND

Many HPS members are interested in railway-related philately. Only recently I was made aware of the existence of The Swiss Railways Society that was founded in 1980 and publishes an excellent little colour magazine, published quarterly. The magazine contains much of interest with articles about trains, stations, trams etc with many colour photographs as well as more general subjects. If anyone is interested in joining they should contact Martin Fisher, 28 Appletree Lane, Redditch, Worcs. B97 6SE or e-mail Membership@SwissRailSoc.org.uk There is also a website www.swissrailsoc.org.uk

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DID YOU KNOWMICHAEL RUTHERFOORD

THAT the Soderberg auction became a most peculiar event on 5th November 2008. It started late at 6 pm (as the last of five collections) and went on until 3 am the next morning!! I don't know how many Swiss collectors were present, but the 1353 lots did not apparently achieve the expected result for such a remarkable collection. Specialists will enjoy the catalogue of so much Swiss classic and other fields.

THAT another catalogue is remarkable too, that of Rapp for his auction of 24th – 26th November 2008 in Wil. It weighs 2.3 kg, beautifully bound and has just over 600 pages for nearly 1700 lots. Who can throw such a reference book away ?

THAT for many years I have been looking for an acceptable explanation of the 1910, and onwards, Bahnpost/Ambulant TPO cancellations with small letters 'a', 'b', 'c', 'd' or dash after the SBB train number. I have covers with all these letters, "d" being the rarest, while most collections have seen none. Now I have met an experienced philatelist, Karl Böniger, pensioned, who used to be a PO official in Swiss TPOs for decades. He confirmed the easiest explanation, namely that this was to identify multiple cancellers in the same coach for the busiest long distance trains. The applications are; "a" for the main desk handling "Registered" or other special mail items; "b" for usual letters and cards; "c" for items taken by the conductor at intermediate stations with "d" as a reserve. Until now it was thought that the role was to have only one canceller per TPO, and that the letters could indicate in which part of the route items were cancelled. See Figs. 1 – 4 taken from the Güller record books i. e. 90% full size.

THAT another TPO question could also be cleared up, namely Werner Gattiker's registered cover shown on Page 65 of the September edition of the Newsletter. Such letters (posted into a stationary TPO) even if correctly franked could not be registered in the TPO as they never had the labels, neither the receipt forms. These letters were handed to the PO at the end of the trip and they were then handled in the normal way. If there was a sender's address the receipt was sent there free. It is hardly likely that the "label" shown was done in the TPO. Was 371 the correct number ?

THAT it should be noted that there were various "levels" of official mail, at different times, but usually an additional service, such as registration had to be paid for in ordinary stamps on the cover.

THAT a friend gave me a curious cover and as I look for foreign cancellations which have a Swiss connection, the official German Special large-size cds for 10. 10. 1969. is shown in Fig. 5 The question is what does "450 Years" mean ? What happened in 1632 to initiate a permanent association with the Swiss Confederation. It is well-known that the medieval town of Rottweil, south of Stuttgart, did have a loose alliance with the Old Swiss Confederation, which was nullified by Napoleon, together with a similar situation in Mulhouse, north of Basel. My three history books all give different periods for the admittedly loose ties with Rottweil. The addressee has no idea.

THAT the third and last very large REMA letter sorting installation has started full operation in Härkingen, near Solothurn. Full details of last day of the older generation and first day of the new is in preparation.



Figs.

1

2

3

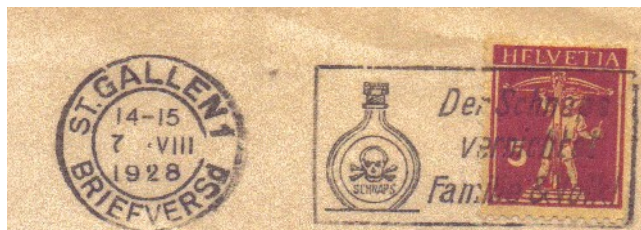
4

5

THAT I should have mentioned it before, but last October a very useful book (spirally bound, 67 A5 pages, in Italian, French and German) was published by the group who study the new business franking impressions, IFS etc. Titled "Repertorio Catalogo" it can be obtained for about 40 CHF. Further details may be obtained via the Editor.

MY FAVOURITE PUBLICITY CANCELSPETER VONWILLER

Peter has kindly responded to the call to share some of the most interesting or entertaining publicity cancellations in his collection with our members. Although they refer to a variety of topics, they all seem to have one thing in common – they were all posted in Peter's 'heimat' – St Gallen. Schnaps did not seem to be the 'flavour of the month' in 1928.

WHO ARE THESE GENTLEMEN ?BOB MEDLAND

A further response to Colin Griffith's photograph query (HPS Newsletter August 2008 Page 64). I can offer a partial answer. The gentleman in the middle of the photograph is undoubtedly Frank Monroe Hawks, a famous American aviator of the 1920/30s. Born in 1897, he was a Lt/Commander in the First World War and was subsequently a pioneering aviator for Texaco, advertising the company around the USA. He held numerous speed records and was the first pilot to complete in-flight re-fuelling. Undoubtedly he visited Europe but there is no mention of any particular flights. In relation to the cover dated 17. 5. 32, - at that time he would have been pre-occupied with recovering from facial injuries sustained in a crash that occurred when his aircraft failed to get airborne on 18th April of that year. He died in another crash in 1938.

FROM MARIE LANZ VIA JOSHUA JUAN TO LOUIS MONINEVERT POEL

(Continued from Page 6). In 1854 Louis Monnin went over to diamond-shaped, dot-cancels (Fig. 6). The letters are finer than before ! These letters with 'punktrauten', as the Swiss say, have become famous amongst philatelists all over the world. Louis Monnin was known not only for his own cancel designs but, above all, for the artistic and conscientious way he placed the cancels on the letters. There are no slovenly cancelled letters of Bellelay known (while Monnin was postmaster) ! They are all little jewels.

He continued to produce his artistic works at the post office until 1857. He was certainly a connoisseur.

<u>Sources</u>	Peter Meir	The 100 th edition of 'Philatelie'	2000
	Henri Grand	'Obliterations Suisses 1843 – 1854'	2004
	Walter Hammerli	'100 Jahre Schweiz. Philatelisten ver. Zürich'	1984
	Andres & Emmenegger	'Grosses Handbuch der Abstemplungen'	1969

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