

IBNS Bank Note of the Year 2007

Presentation of the award at the Banque de France, Paris

by David August

On 15 October, 2007, following negotiations between the International Bank Note Society and the *Banque de France*, three members of the IBNS visited the bank in Paris and presented awards to the people responsible for the society's Bank Note of the Year. Representing the IBNS at the ceremony were Michel Prieur, Claude Fayette (both life members from France), and David August (Belgian chapter secretary). They were received at the entrance of the Banque de France by Michaël Roussel, international sales manager, and after passing through security checks, were guided upstairs to the boardroom decorated with 17th century Brussel's tapestries, where the ceremony was to take place. Here they were introduced to the general manager of the printing division of the Banque de France, Michel Perdrix, and two other members of his management team, Erick Lacourrege, director, and Emmanuel Devaux, marketing manager.

The IBNS members were then presented by the general manager to the governor of the *Banque Centrale des Comores*

history, the culture and the traditions of their countries. Thus a country can become known worldwide through its banknotes. This attitude can be complemented by those same central banks opening up their archives, not just to collectors and professionals, but in particular to the worldwide public through expositions in museums and especially through sites on the Internet. Otherwise how will our historians and universities be able to pass on to future generations that very important part of everyday life, the banknote?

The second speech on behalf of the IBNS was given by David August, commencing with a brief background of the worldwide society, its chapters and its 2,000 members; then explaining how the IBNS Bank Note of the Year Award is selected through its membership and the reasons why, in particular, the Comoros 1,000-franc banknote issued in 2006 had been voted the winner for 2007 by the IBNS judges. (see *IBNS Journal* 46.1 p15)

David August, on behalf of the IBNS, then presented Bank

Note of the Year certificates, signed by IBNS President Marcus Turner, and medallions to the governor of the Banque Centrale des Comores, the general manager of the Banque de France printing division, and the note's designer, artist Roger Pfund.

After various photographs of the ceremony had been taken, all present proceeded to the board's dining room for a congratulatory glass of



Messieurs Michaël ROUSSEL, Emmanuel DEVAUX, Madame Yvette PFUND, Messieurs Mohamed IDARROUSSE, Michel PERDRIX, Ahamadi ABDOULBASTOI, Roger PFUND, David AUGUST, Claude FAYETTE, Michel PRIEUR, Eric LACOURREGE.

(BCC), Ahamadi Abdoulbastoi, accompanied by the councillor from the embassy of the Comoros in Paris, Mohamed Idarrouse. The IBNS representatives were then introduced to Roger Pfund, the Swiss designer of the award-winning Comoros 1,000-franc note, and his wife, Yvette.

Seated around the boardroom, the general manager explained why the IBNS had been invited to hold this ceremony at the Banque de France. He then surprised the visitors by presenting framed specimens of the award-winning banknote to the governor of the BCC, to David August on behalf of the IBNS, and to Roger Pfund.

Re-installed at the board table, the first speech on behalf of the IBNS was given by Michel Prieur, based on the theme that central banks should consider their banknotes not just as methods to make payments, but also as presentations of the beauty, the

champagne and an excellent lunch in the best traditions of French cuisine, which was thoroughly enjoyed by everyone. The walls of this room are covered by wood panelling dating from the 18th century, illustrating the different hunting methods of that time—one of the most beautiful rooms imaginable.

After lunch the visitors were conducted by the general manager and his staff through various corridors into the Galerie Dorée, a 40-metre long, extraordinary art gallery in Regency style, dating from the 15th century, which existed when the original building was purchased in 1713 by the Comte de Toulouse, a son of Louis XIV. The Banque de France purchased this *Hôtel de Toulouse* in 1808. After viewing this room the party was conducted to the exit where the IBNS representatives said farewell and walked into everyday life astounded by a wonderful occasion that will never be forgotten.