Capital Philately
incorporating 'Pastcards'
and 'Machinations'

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EDITORIAL

Yet again this editorial commences with sadness as another of our long-time members passes-on. A tribute to Doug Ross’s philatelic endeavours appears elsewhere in this issue, but I would like to say how much I miss his pithy comments both on aspects of Philately and on Society activities and the wonderful quizzes he prepared. Doug’s last article appears in this issue – a review of Richard Gurevitch’s new book on the Queen Victoria issues of Hong Kong.

In his editorial for the last issue, Robert Gregson warned of “horse designing committees” producing camels. I hope that our continued efforts with guest editors can continue to produce good philatelic writing (and reading)! I think the journal flows better with the three parts running consecutively rather than as inserts and may thus be less “camel like”! I agree with Robert’s comments about frugal philately and hope that we can all take up the challenge and produce interesting collections and displays without the loss of “arms and legs”. Can I suggest a Society award for the best 5 sheet display at Members’ night next January on a topic the owner has not previously shown or exhibited; judging not to be based on exhibition rules – more on this in the next Capital Philately.

The challenge is to produce collections and displays which not only interest ourselves (as adults) but can also interest and stimulate young collectors. Cost is a continuing problem and with less and less mail using “conventional” stamps, sources for collectors, young and old, are drying up. When did you last receive a letter with a “lick & stick” stamp rather than a self-adhesive or a parcel with stamps not a (still collectable) adhesive cash register type docket or a “PAID” handstamp? As a small example, I recently received about 60 letters/large letters with entry forms for a pony show – three came in EXPRESS envelopes and the remainder were equally divided between PreStamped Envelopes and self-adhesive stamps apart from one (obviously another collector) with a Sydney Olympic Equestrian Winners stamp!

How can we get the young interested in collecting – Australia Post sends thousands of junior collector magazines to the ACT yet we have trouble getting half-a-dozen to the Junior Stamp Club! One feature article writer in a recent issue of Stamp News reminded us of the “Ampol” and “Eta Peanut Butter” campaigns of long ago and wondered whether the kids should be getting philatelic items every time they went to “Maccas” or The Colonel. This is probably a great idea, but I’m not sure how we work it with these multi-national giants. The petrol station and supermarket are visited by most families, frequently with young in-tow; perhaps these should be the focal points? So much for getting them interested and provided with philatelic items, the second problem remains – getting the young organised. I am frequently reminded that, in Indonesia, stamp collecting is part of the primary school curriculum – we all know what a wonderful medium stamp collecting is for teaching history and
geo reportedly me the topics which can be covered by thematics. Can we persuade the education authorities to include references to stamp collecting in their teacher training courses or can we persuade the Australian Philatelic Federation to run in-service training courses for primary school teachers, perhaps with a trial here in Canberra? The by-product here might also be more adult collectors!

To come back to my first point about interesting collections and displays – I would like to see more displays at meetings like the recent ones on Azerbaijan and European Charity stamps. These widely differing displays both provided a number of interesting elements being unusual, having interesting historical backgrounds which were well researched and presented, included recent issues and did not concentrate on “spots, scratches and shades”; although I must confess to much of this type of collecting with my traditional collection of Bermuda. Perhaps this is why I stated collecting Indonesia and presenting it as a Social Philately topic.

This issue continues Robert Ellinger’s Balloon Montés story, has more on Machins (and I note in recent issues of the British Journal “Stamp Collecting” there have been a series of articles on Machins including possible replacements planned some years ago), while the Picture Postcard section takes us on more journeys, this time to The Tower of London and the Murray River while Dingle Smith gives us a review of the recent successful Stamp Show.

Canberra Stampshow 2002 at the Hellenic Club in Woden.
Section 1: The Story (continued)

The "Bretagne", the "Galileé, the "Daguerre", the "Niepce", the "Montgolfier", as well as the only unnamed manned balloon, fell into German hands whilst the "Ville de Paris" and the "Général Chaney" actually landed in Germany. But the others, 56 of them or 80% of all starters, made it. They landed in either unoccupied France or neutral Europe or escaped the German army. The mail delivered by them was sent to the addressees in France or elsewhere in the world including such far away places as China and the Cape of Good Hope. A tremendous achievement!

Whilst the first balloon to take off was the "Neptune", the last to leave was the "General Cambronne", launched on the 27 January, the day of the capitulation.

Fifty-four of the 64 balloons that actually left Paris carried mail and most also carried pigeons and passengers. The most famous of these passengers was Leon Gambetta, one of the leaders of the III Republic which had been established after the collapse of the Empire following the battle of Sedan. He left in the "Armand Barbes" on the 6th October 1870 and, after a very rough take off, landed safely behind the Prussian lines. His aim to mobilize an army and relieve Paris, however, came to naught.

Altogether, the balloons carried 164 passengers, nearly 11 tons of mail, a considerable number of carrier pigeons and some miscellaneous cargo. The balloons also carried official dispatches and even military plans. Thus the "Ville d'Orleans", which came down in Norway, carried plans for a major sortie by the garrison of Paris! What a boost for German intelligence had she come down in the German lines! But also of interest to the Germans were the private letters carried by balloons that were actually captured. From these the mood in Paris and the impact of the siege could be quite accurately gauged.

The balloons were operated partially by the "Compagnie des Aerostiers", partially by the Postal Administration, and partially by private interests. The first named had permission from the Ministry of Posts to carry mail, the privately operated balloons had no such permit but some carried mail nevertheless. The early balloons were piloted by experienced balloonists such as Jules Darouf in the "Neptune" and E. Gadard who piloted the "Etats Unis". However, their number was very limited and thus Gadard, before leaving Paris, established a pilot school in one of the railway stations. The training was very basic indeed consisting as it did of the students standing in a mock gondola, crying "cast off" and manipulating imaginary valves. Most of the pilots trained, and about half of those rose to the piloting of a balloon, were sailors from the naval detachment which had been sent to Paris before the beginning of the siege to man the forts. The equipment provided on board the balloons was very simple: A thermometer, a compass and an altimeter plus a simple seat for pilot and passengers.

The weight limit for letters was set at 4 grams. Thus most of the letters were in the form of single sheets or "entires". A small industry printing "Ballon Monté" letter paper sprang up. All letters were supposed to carry on the front the inscription "par ballon monté" a rule that was not strictly enforced.
The postal rate for letters was 20 Centimes, the then prevailing French postal rate for domestic mail. However, underfranking and overfranking occurred frequently. Postage stamps used were initially those then available in Paris, that is mostly those of the Emperor Napoleon III with laurel wreath series. An infrequent situation under which a successor Government condones the use of stamps depicting the deposed head of state! No wonder that the Government in Paris soon unearthed the old printing plates of the first stamps of France pre-dating the Second Empire. These “Ceres” type stamps came into use in November 1870. However Napoleon III stamps remained valid right to the end of the siege. The Government in Tours followed the Parisian example and started printing Ceres type stamps from new plates. The two series differ marginally in design.

In addition to mail and Government dispatches it was decided that each balloon would carry some newspapers particularly copies of L’Officiel, the government journal. All papers reported on the situation in Paris and it was thought important that the outside world should be aware of the goings on in the capital. The pilots were requested to drop some of these papers out whilst flying over unoccupied France but always take some copies to their landing grounds for forwarding to the Government in Tours. There was no shortage of newspapers in Paris, a total of 24 appeared. Alas, some such as “Le Gauloise” and “Le Siecle” managed only one issue. The best-known paper was the “Gazette des Absents” with 40 issues during and immediately after the siege. Initially the Gazette appeared every Wednesday and Saturday but increased its appearance to three issues per week between the 3rd and 28th of January. The Gazette brought articles on the military situation, news from the provinces, the laws and orders issued during the siege and a journal of the siege. Attached to the paper was a blank sheet for personal messages.

The besieging German armies had little means of stemming the flight of these balloons. Rifle fire proved rather ineffective and the first anti-aircraft gun, or better “anti-balloon” gun, produced by Krupp especially to cope with the balloon situation in Paris, also proved ineffective. However, the German command, soon mobilized cavalry detachments to follow balloons on their flight and capture them upon landing. Whilst this countermeasure was less than fully successful, it did force the French into launching their balloons in the dark, normally around 3 a.m. Not a pleasant time in European mid winter considering that pilot and passengers had to stand in open wicker baskets slung under the balloon! And the wicker basket was only about 1.25 m deep!

Table 3 gives a breakdown of the distances travelled by the 68 balloons that actually took off. Twenty-six percent came down after flights of 101 to 200 km; eight, or around 12% flew less than 50 km but the same number flew more than 500 km, quite obviously a very wide spread in performance. The record flight distance was achieved by the “Ville d’ Orleans” which after some 1,200 km found itself over Norway where the pilot and passenger jumped out into the snow, the balloon with mail and carrier pigeons drifted into the sea, but both balloon and mail were later rescued! The shortest flight of only 5 km was that of an unnamed private balloon which landed in Prussian siege lines.

As the speed of balloon travel was entirely dependent upon the wind, the duration of a flight did not necessarily indicate the distance travelled. Of 65 balloons for which relative information exists, 13 or about 20 percent were in the air for 6 to 7 hours (Table 4), another 12 or about 19% were in the air for 7 to 8 hours and eight flew longer than 8 hours. On the other hand, the aforementioned unmanned balloon came down in Prussian lines after less than one hour in the air. When relating distance flown to time spent in the air there was the “General Uhrich” which spent 8h 45 minutes in the air to cover a mere 36 km; equivalent to an airspeed of slightly more than one km/hour. On the other hand the “Steenackers” travelled 433 km in only 3 hours, an average speed of 144 km/hour!
Section 2: The Letters

Letter dated October 14, 1870.

This letter was flown out by the balloon “Jean Bart II” which left Paris on the 16th of October, that is 30 days after the beginning of the siege. The balloon landed in Dinant, Belgium after travelling nearly 300 km in 5 hours. Upon landing the balloon was cut free from the gondola and disappeared.

The letter is addressed to a Mr Dorling in Fleet Street London, in other words to a newspaperman. The letter is written in English and is an interesting document.

The letter is franked with a 30 Centimes stamp of the Napoleon III with laurel wreath series. It carries on the front a Paris dispatch cancellation, “Paris R Bonaparte 2eme 15 Oct 70”. Also on the front a small framed ‘PD” cachet and one full and one half London arrival cachet “London 18 Oct 70 A Paid”.

The letter commences with “I send you by balloon post a par (sic) which will be no doubt of interest to many of your readers. The English correspondent at the Prussian headquarters and ......Paris no doubt keep the English public as well acquainted with what is going on here as ourselves. We have plenty to eat and drink so far and probably should have for the two months so if the Prussians intend to take us by famine their patience will be tried a little longer. We have everything we require except dairy produce of which none is to be had at any price. A little bit of salt butter might be found with difficulties... at six to ten Francs a pound. But cheese is nearly as great a luxury or it is as great a luxury as strawberries at Christmas. Horsesflesh has become quite a common article of food and being cheap, the poor classes eat nothing else. It is also to be found on the table of the better classes as we are but on rations for butcher meat –3 ounces a day for each adult. Forage is very dear and as we have scarce any, as for horses they may be had for almost nothing, that is from half a crown upward if someone would buy one good enough to run in a gig. It will be four days (this should surely be four weeks) tomorrow since we have received any papers, English or others. This lack of news is perhaps our greatest irritation. We are still left to wonder what (sic) has won the Czarowitch and Middle Park Plate. If you continue to post my papers I shall no doubt receive them some day in a lump, if not, I hope you will keep copies for to read when communications are again open. Paris is fearfully dull. One half the shops are closed altogether and the others, excepting the cafes, are shut up at dark. Our stock of coal is small and only one third of the street lamps are lighted. Excepting on the Boulevards, scarcely a soul is to be seen in the streets after nine. Theatres and all pleasure amusements were closed by order a month ago, social events have been depressed in the streets and the cafes are closed at half past ten. Half an hour later Paris is like the city of the dead. The only distraction we have left is to listen to the cannons of the forts, fired from time to time to prevent the enemy erecting batteries anywhere within range of our guns. The Parisians are very confident of keeping out the Prussians - I am satisfied that they will never enter by assault as the place has been made quite impregnable. What the result of a bombardment would be, if the enemy could get within range, is another question.
Letter dated 17th November 1870, that is sixty days after the beginning of the siege

The letter is addressed to Arachon near Bordeaux in France. It was flown by the “Général Uhrich” which left Paris on the 18th of November and landed north of Paris in Lazarches. General Uhrich was the defender of Strasbourg, which had capitulated on September 27th.

On the front the letter bears the departure stamp “PARIS PL DE LA MADELEINE 6e 17 NOV 70” with a 20 centimes Ceres stamp cancelled with a star cancellation. On the back an arrival stamp “BORDEAUX A TRUN 26 NOV 70” and a delivery cachet “ARACHON 3e 26. NOV. 70 (32)”.

The text of the letter is:

My dear Gustave,

Since we have decided that our letters reach you, I have decided to write to you again hoping that the balloon which will carry these lines will encounter favourable winds. Actually I have but little news to tell you because as we are virtual prisoners we know almost nothing. I dine almost every day with your father who is very well and happy. We eat heartily and when you see us again you will be shocked by our greediness. We can get to eat all except veal. If Jeanne were here she would be really deprived. It’s lucky you were not in Arishan because I believe that your mother and Henriette, who I trust has fully recovered, are in Paris! You would no doubt have accompanied them. If you want to be really kind, send me a few lines by a pigeon or other. This type of telegraphic system appears to be well established. I now belong to a so called “war party” and so will at last see a Prussian, because I must tell you that until now I have never seen one.

We meet nearly every day at your place. Those who come regularly include M. Tournit, Christian and Philippe, they often dine with us.
The Collis family, M. Sarabin etc etc

So there my dear Gustave, is how we are getting along.
# CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF BALLOONS AS THEY LEFT PARIS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Ownership</th>
<th>Date of departure</th>
<th>Place of landing</th>
<th>Km flown</th>
<th>Time flown</th>
<th>Mail carried</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Le National</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>20.09.70</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>Flight cancelled due to poor state of balloon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L’Union</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>21.09.70</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>Flight cancelled, balloon blew up whilst being inflated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Le Neptune</td>
<td>Administration des Postes (AdP), operated by Compagnie des Aerostiers (CdA)</td>
<td>23.09.70</td>
<td>Evereux, WNW of Paris</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>3h 15</td>
<td>125</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La Citta di Firenze</td>
<td>Ministère de Travaux Publique</td>
<td>25.09.70</td>
<td>Near Triel sur Seine, NW of Paris</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>3h 12</td>
<td>150</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Les Etats-Unies</td>
<td>AdP</td>
<td>30.09.70</td>
<td>Near Mantes la Jolie NW of Paris</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>3h</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>Actually two small old balloons lashed together with a very small balloon in between</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Le Céleste</td>
<td>AdP</td>
<td>30.09.70</td>
<td>Near Dreux, WSW of Paris</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>2h 30</td>
<td>80</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Name</td>
<td>AdP</td>
<td>30.09.70</td>
<td>In enemy lines</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1h</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>No mail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Le National</td>
<td>AdP</td>
<td>04. 10.70</td>
<td>Did not take off due to poor state of repair</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L’Armand Barbès</td>
<td>Administration des Telegraphes operated CdA</td>
<td>07.10.70</td>
<td>Epinay sur Seine, N of Paris</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>4h 20</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>Had Gambetta on board.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Le George Sand</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>07.10.70</td>
<td>Montdidier, N of Paris</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>4h 50</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>The balloon carried 2 Americans: May and Reynolds who were to negotiate the purchase of arms with the US Government, it carried no mail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Name</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>12.10.70</td>
<td>St. Denis, Northern Paris suburb</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0h 20</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>Landed inside perimeter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Le Washington</td>
<td>AdP</td>
<td>12.10.70</td>
<td>Carnieres, NE of Paris</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>3h</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>Very poor ascent, pilot injured. Carried 28 homing pigeons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Le Louis Blanc</td>
<td>Administration des Telegraphes operated CdA</td>
<td>12.10.70</td>
<td>Beclers, Belgium</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>3h 30</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>Very rapid and heavy landing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Le Godefroy Cavaignac</td>
<td>AdP</td>
<td>14.10.70</td>
<td>Bar le Duc, E of Paris</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>4h 30</td>
<td>400</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Le Jean Bart I</td>
<td>AdP</td>
<td>14.10.70</td>
<td>Montpothier, ESE of Paris</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>3h 45</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>Attempts to fly her back into Paris failed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Le Jules Favre I</td>
<td>AdP</td>
<td>16.10.70</td>
<td>Chimay, Belgium</td>
<td>198</td>
<td>5h</td>
<td>195</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Le Jean Bart II or Le Lafayette</td>
<td>AdP</td>
<td>16.10.70</td>
<td>Dinant, Belgium</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>4h 55</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>Balloon cut free upon landing and disappeared</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Type</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Duration</td>
<td>Distance</td>
<td>Notes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La Liberté</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>17.10.70</td>
<td>Le Bourget, Northern suburb of Paris</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td>Very old balloon left over from World Exhibition days. Balloon blew off before launching without basket and pilot</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Le Victor Hugo</td>
<td>AdP, operated CdA</td>
<td>18.10.70</td>
<td>Coeuvres (Aisnes), ENE of Paris</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>5h 45</td>
<td>440</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La Republique Universelle or Le Lafayette</td>
<td>AdP</td>
<td>19.10.70</td>
<td>Mezieres (Ardennes), E of Paris</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>2h 10</td>
<td>350 Balloon landed on trees in forest</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Le Garibaldi</td>
<td>AdP operated CdA</td>
<td>22.10.70</td>
<td>Meuny (Seine et Marne), SE of Paris</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>2h</td>
<td>450</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Le Montgolfier</td>
<td>AdP</td>
<td>25.10.70</td>
<td>Mutzig (Alsace), E of Paris</td>
<td>365</td>
<td>3h 45</td>
<td>390 Balloon captured by Germans</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Le Vauban</td>
<td>AdP</td>
<td>27.10.70</td>
<td>Commency (Meuse), E of Paris</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>4h</td>
<td>270 Balloon fell into the hands of Germans together with 30 homing pigeons which were used by the Germans for misinformation Passenger and pilot escaped</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Le Normandie or La Bretagne</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>27.10.70</td>
<td>Verdun, E of Paris</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>3h 05</td>
<td>---- Caught by Prussian patrol carried no mail</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Le Colonel Charras</td>
<td>AdP operated CdA</td>
<td>29.10.70</td>
<td>Langre (Haute Marne), SE of Paris</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>5h</td>
<td>460 Very rough landing, pilot died at Tours 10 days afterwards</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Le Fulton</td>
<td>Administration des Telegraphes</td>
<td>02.11.70</td>
<td>Cholet (Maine et Loire), SW of Paris</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>5h 45</td>
<td>250</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Le Ferdinand Flocon</td>
<td>AdP operated CdA</td>
<td>04.11.70</td>
<td>Chateaubriand (atlantique), SW of Paris</td>
<td>326</td>
<td>6h 45</td>
<td>130</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Le Galilée</td>
<td>AdP</td>
<td>04.11.70</td>
<td>Chartres, SW of Paris</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>3h 45</td>
<td>420 Pilot and 420 kg of mail captured, passengers escaped</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La Ville de Châteaudun</td>
<td>AdP operated CdA</td>
<td>06.11.70</td>
<td>Chartres, SW of Paris</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>7h 45</td>
<td>455</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unnamed Unmanned</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>07.11.70</td>
<td>Brie Compte Robert (Marne)</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>4h</td>
<td>---- Carried no mail or dispatches but fell into the hands of the Germans</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La Gironde</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>08.11.70</td>
<td>Evreux, WNW of Paris</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>7h 15</td>
<td>60</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La Daguere</td>
<td>AdP</td>
<td>12.11.70</td>
<td>Jossigny (Seine et Marne), SE of Paris</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>1h 15</td>
<td>260 Shot down by Germans, pilot and passengers taken prisoners</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Le Niepce</td>
<td>AdP</td>
<td>12.11.70</td>
<td>Vitry-le-Francoise (Seine), E of Paris</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>6h10</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>Carried no mail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Le Général Uhrich</td>
<td>AdP operated CdA</td>
<td>18.11.70</td>
<td>Lazarches (Val d'Oise), N of Paris</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>8h45</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>First night flight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L' Archimède</td>
<td>AdP</td>
<td>21.11.70</td>
<td>Limbourg, (Netherlands)</td>
<td>335</td>
<td>5h45</td>
<td>220</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L' Egalité Committee</td>
<td>GENERALE de Transport Aérienne</td>
<td>24.11.70</td>
<td>Louvain, Belgium</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>2h45</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>The largest balloon of the lot, carried no mail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La Ville d'Orléans</td>
<td>AdP operated CdA</td>
<td>24.11.70</td>
<td>Telemarken, (Norway)</td>
<td>1,246</td>
<td>14h45</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>Drifted into the sea but pilot, passenger and mail rescued</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Le Jacquard</td>
<td>AdP</td>
<td>28.11.70</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>740</td>
<td>5h45</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>Lost in the Irish Sea some of the mail rescued. Pilot drowned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Le Jules Favre II</td>
<td>AdP operated CdA</td>
<td>30.11.70</td>
<td>Belle Isle island off the coast of Brittany SW of Paris</td>
<td>440</td>
<td>7h45</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>Crash-landed on Belle Isle off the Brittany coast, pilot injured. Carried news of the planned sortie of the Paris garrison</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La Bataille de Paris Administration des Telegrafs</td>
<td></td>
<td>01.12.70</td>
<td>Vannes (Morbihan), SW of Paris</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>5h45</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>Carried no mail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La Volta Ministère des Institutions Publique</td>
<td></td>
<td>02.12.70</td>
<td>St. Nazaire (Loire Atlantique), SW of Paris</td>
<td>366</td>
<td>5h30</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>The balloon carried a scientist and instruments to observe a solar eclipse. Carried no mail.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Le Franklin</td>
<td>AdP</td>
<td>05.12.70</td>
<td>Saint Aignan SW of Paris</td>
<td>363</td>
<td>7h</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Le Denis-Papin</td>
<td>AdP</td>
<td>07.12.70</td>
<td>La Ferté Bernard (Sarthe) SW of Paris</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>6h</td>
<td>55</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L’Armée de Bretagne Administration des Telegrafs</td>
<td>Operated CdA</td>
<td>07.12.70</td>
<td>Bouillé Loretz (Deux Sèvres) SE of Paris</td>
<td>285</td>
<td>5h</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>Very bad landing, pilot injured</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Le Général Renault</td>
<td>AdP operated CdA</td>
<td>11.12.70</td>
<td>Baillollet (Seine et Marne) SE of Paris</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>3h15</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>Bad landing near Prussian patrol</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La Ville de Paris</td>
<td>AdP operated CdA</td>
<td>15.12.70</td>
<td>Wetzlar, Germany</td>
<td>480</td>
<td>6h15</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>Balloon, pilot and passengers captured</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Le Parmentier</td>
<td>AdP</td>
<td>17.12.70</td>
<td>Gourgoncourt (Marne), E of Paris</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>8h45</td>
<td>150</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Le Gutenberg</td>
<td>AdP</td>
<td>17.12.70</td>
<td>Fère Champenoise (Marne), E of Paris</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>7h40</td>
<td>----</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Le Davy</td>
<td>AdP</td>
<td>18.12.70</td>
<td>Beaune (Côte d'Or), SE of Paris</td>
<td>265</td>
<td>6h</td>
<td>25</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Le Général Chanzy</td>
<td>AdP operated CdA</td>
<td>20.12.70</td>
<td>Rothenburg, Germany</td>
<td>560</td>
<td>7h30</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Balloon, pilot, passengers and mail captured</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La Lavoisier</td>
<td>AdP</td>
<td>22.12.70</td>
<td>Angres (Maine et Loire), SW of Paris</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>6h30</td>
<td>175</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Volume 20 Number 3
| Event Name            | AdP Type and Details | Date     | Destination Details                                | Time  | Mail Carried?
|---------------------|---------------------|----------|-----------------------------------------------|-------|-------------------
| La Délivrance       | AdP operated CdA    | 23.12.70 | La Roche sur Yon (Vandee), SW of Paris         | 375   | 7h 15            |
| Le Rouget de l'Isle | Private             | 24.12.70 | La Ferré Macée (Orne), W of Paris              | 200   | 6h 225           |
| Le Tourville        | AdP                 | 27.12.70 | Eymouliers (Haute Vienne), SSW of Paris        | 350   | 9h 160           |
| Le Merlin de Douai  | Private             | 27.12.70 | Vierzon (Cher), S of Paris                    | 191   | 6h 55            |
| Le Bavard           | AdP                 | 29.12.70 | S. Julien de Landes (Vendee), SW of Paris     | 377   | 6h 110           |
| L'Armée de la Loire | AdP                 | 31.12.70 | Montbizourt (Sarthe), SW of Paris             | 181   | 8h 232           |
| Le Newton           | AdP                 | 04.01.71 | Dreux (Eure et Loire), W of Paris              | 96    | 6h 30 310        |
| Le Duquesne         | AdP                 | 09.01.71 | Reims (Marne), ENE of Paris                   | 127   | 7h 45 150        |
| Le Gambetta         | AdP operated CdA    | 10.01.71 | Avallon (Yonne), ESE of Paris                 | 175   | 11h 240          |
| Le Kepler           | AdP                 | 11.01.71 | Laval (Mayenne), WSW of Paris                 | 245   | 6h 30 160        |
| Le Monge            | Private             | 13.01.71 | St Avil de Soudge (Indre), SWS of Paris       | 213   | 7h 30            |
| Le Général Faidherbe| AdP operated CdA    | 13.01.71 | St Auit de Soulege (Gironde), SWS of Paris    | 487   | 10h 30 60        |
| Le Vaucanson        | AdP                 | 15.01.71 | Armentiers (Artois), N of Paris               | 210   | 7h 15 75         |
| Le Steenackers      | Administration des Telegraphes | 16.01.71 | Hardenwijk, (Holland)                        | 433   | 3h 11            |
| La Poste de Paris   | AdP operated CdA    | 18.01.71 | Veuray, N of Venlo (Holland)                  | 400   | 6h 30 70         |
| Le Général Bourbaki | AdP operated CdA    | 20.01.71 | Reims (Marne), ENE of Paris                   | 136   | 9h 125           |
| Le Général Deaumesnil| AdP                 | 22.01.71 | Charleroi, (Belgium)                          | 227   | 4h 45 280        |
| Le Torricelli       | AdP                 | 24.01.71 | Saint Juste en Chaussée (Oise), N of Paris    | 76    | 8h 230           |
| Le Richard Wallace  | AdP operated CdA    | 27.01.71 | ------------------------------| 550   | 220              |
| Le Général Cambronne| AdP                 | 28.01.71 | Villaines la Juhel (Mayenne), W of Paris      | 210   | 7h 15 20         |
Doug Ross, a Life Member and leading luminary of the Philatelic Society of Canberra, passed away in Canberra Hospital on 15 March 2002. Born and raised in the ancient English county of Staffordshire, Doug continued his education through a Classics scholarship at Pembroke College at Oxford University, where, after an interruption while serving in the Indian Army in World War II, he took his degree in Politics, Philosophy and Economics. His life-long interest in "men and things" commenced as a young boy train-spotting in Staffordshire and Worcestershire and continued through his life-long love of India, ornithology, languages and of course, philately. He met his wife Barbara in the early fifties through a mutual interest in ancient Greek theatre and the archaeology of Roman Britain and they were married in 1955 and came to Australia in 1957. They have lived in Canberra since then, sharing a love for the Australian bush and wild life with their only child Clare. Doug had a distinguished public service career in the Treasury which was recognised by a medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) for public service in 1985. It is a measure of the modesty of this man that I only found this out when I was writing this obituary, also that he possessed a PPE from Oxford, a degree which many of the British Commonwealth's leaders read for in the days, now long gone, when politicians aspired to scholarship and intellectual integrity.

I reflect that while I got to know Doug, as most of us did, through his philatelic interests, his forays in life ranged far and wide and perhaps this is what provided a mutual attraction between us. In other things, we were as different as could be; apart from the fact that dear Doug was of my father's age when he died, a somewhat battered and ageing leftie and a rather charmingly old fashioned Tory had to agree to differ on some issues. He deplored my collection of Marxist texts, possibly because, unlike me, he had the intellectual capacity to have read and understood them, while I forgave his monarchism, tampered, as it was for all of us Machin collectors, by a devout wish that the Queen would depart this mortal coil and allow us to round off our collections.

His collections, like his other interests, were wide-ranging and embedded in an appreciation of the factors and events which led to the material's inception. He assembled collections of Great Britain – Doug's first Penny Black was, he once told me, acquired in the 1930's and he never looked back – Danzig, several aspects of India and thematic collections of birds, badgers and others. However, he drew his boundaries around his philatelic interests very liberally, and it never ceased to amaze me how his knowledge in the areas which formed my own specialisation exceeded mine. But his generosity and modesty in this, as in all matters, knew no bounds, and he was always available for having his brains tapped in any matter which needed his knowledge.

His love and commitment to this Society knew no bounds, and we have seen it in recent years in his forays in this journal (see his review of Richard Gurevitch's destined-to-be-classic work in this issue), in his active participation in our monthly meetings – even in our first meeting since his passing, when the President called for "Items of Interest" it seemed as if we were waiting for Doug's usual and never disappointing contribution – and by his never-ending urging on us all to aspire to better and higher things. He was also kind and considerate to older and infirm members of the society which he visited regularly. He was ever courteous but never backward in his comments when he felt that the standards which we, in this long standing and distinguished Society, should aspire to were not being reached. And yet Doug never subscribed to anything like an elitist view in his philatelic pursuits, and was remarkably reticent in exhibiting and the conventions of organised philately. Rather, he delighted in talking about his material off the cuff, while showing large numbers of sheets annotated with his own writing in pencil; Doug retained a suspicion of computers to the end, and was, in his usual endearing fashion, something of a Luddite.

As the years went by he developed a reluctance to drive at night and I used to give him a lift to and from our first Thursday monthly meetings. It was our regular opportunity to interact and exchange views about life, the universe and everything. His intellectual calibre was great and it is hard to reflect...
that it is no longer part of our lives. There was a time, during the course of the illness which claimed him, when we felt some hope that he would pull through. But we knew that, irrespective of anything, the way things were meant that we could never hope to have him back as we all knew and loved him, sparkling with wit, eager to impart and receive. And so I'd like to think of our Doug as I last saw him, the day before his operation, when, in the company of his daughter Clare, we ranged over a whole raft of issues from the Tampa crisis, the Bradshaw railway guide from the last century, the evolution of Hindi as seen on governmental correspondence and the historiographical interpretations of Field Marshal Douglas Haig. Cheerful and sanguine to the last, he went with courage to the appointment from which there was no return. And I feel that the description of another, sometimes also irascible, independent minded Catholic intellectual, could very well serve as the best epitaph of our dear friend and comrade, Douglas Ross:

“........a man of an angel’s wit and singular learning; I know not his fellow. For where is the man of that gentleness, lowliness and affability? And as time requireth a man of marvellous mirth and pastimes; and sometimes of as sad gravity: a man for all seasons.”

Robert Whittinton on his friend Sir Thomas More

Albert Farrugia
April 2002

(Ed: The following book review is unfortunately the last of Doug’s Philatelic writings; readers are referred to articles under the pen-name “Litotes” in recent issues of Capital Philately.)
It may appear somewhat curmudgeonly to begin the review of a book with a reference to what seems to be a misprint – or is it meant as an outrageous pun? – in the first word of the text. Maybe, but the fact is the misprint – or pun – is so felicitious, given what the book seeks to do, so very much what Italians call ben trovato, that I have no qualms about the reference.

If the President of the Hong Kong Philatelic Society had headed his introduction Foreword, it would have been no more than conventional usage. But the headword is, in fact, Forward, and going forward in the study of the Colony’s Victorian stamps (for reasons of precision, the author calls them postal adhesives) is precisely what the book is all about.

The time span of Gurevitch’s book is 40 years and, given that only one stamp design appeared in the period and given, also, the conservative nature of the Colony’s postal authorities of the day, it might be thought that a book of over 500 pages in length was something of an overkill. On the other hand, during that relatively short period, unwatermarked paper was succeeded by Crown CC and Crown CA; shades abounded; numerous rate changes were made in response to UPU bureaucratic requirements, the postal authorities’ strivings for a rational rate structure, sea route changes and variations in postal freight contracts; temporary shortages of particular values brought on over 10 surcharges; the one commemorative issue of 1891 had a complex printing history; there are nice questions of definition as regards postal fiscals and mere revenues; there were forgeries and mystery stamps. And, much of the material is expensive, and the more expensive an item is, the more important it is, if only from a prudential viewpoint, to know about it all that can possibly be known.

(It is worth bearing in mind in this context the facts that Machins have now been running for rather less than 40 years and that the Second (1996) Edition of Degam which runs, by my estimate, to well over 700 pages, doesn’t purport to cover the whole Machin field – for example, no ‘flaws’ other than missing etc. phosphors and missing colours.)

By the time I had got to page A237 of Volume 2, it was clear that Gurevitch had not only advanced Hong Kong studies in many ways, some of them noted briefly below, he had also set out new or improved methodologies that could be applied in other philatelic fields – and shown budding philatelic authors how to go about the business of getting a major work published. In particular, mention has to be made of the book’s contributions to philatelic method; philatelic taxonomy; the role of quantification in philately; the creation of data banks; and the application of modern digital technology to the problems of plating and distinguishing between printings. Interspersed among all the technical material is much by way of history (of the stamps themselves and the study thereof), personal anecdote, villainy and eccentricity.

Gurevitch first published on the Colony’s Victorian stamps in 1993. That book was a slim volume of 135 pages, with A Collector’s Notebook as its secondary title. Its illustrations were black and white, it passed over such things as proofs and specimens and, as the author recognised, it left many doubts and difficulties unresolved. Purchasers of the present book may be assured that it is not a cobbled together revamp of the earlier volume. It is much larger, profusely illustrated, as often as not in fairly true colours, and comprehensive, no aspect of ‘Queen Victoria postal adhesives’ being omitted and valid grounds being given for any omission of what laymen would have regarded as ‘stamps’. The interval
between the two books was filled with further research via archives, auction catalogues, personal contacts, long forgotten or scarce publications and the aisles of international stamp shows, and with the adaptation of PC facilities to detailed philatelic study. Some new discoveries were fortunate in that they filled existing gaps or confirmed previously made surmises, but at the cost of having to redraft large sections of the emerging text.

The body of Volume 1 comprises a chronological listing of the definitive and provisional/special issues but this is preceded by two introductory sections.

Of these the first, which I think particularly valuable, is historical: the development over time of Hong Kong studies, from the early period – which might well be described as a Dark Age of ignorance and/or imprecision – through eras of clarification and definition to the present author. There are CVs of the main luminaries and, best of all, reproductions in toto or in extenso from the work of those who appeared in little known or scarce journals. Gurevitch recognises that he stands on other men’s shoulders (although he is prepared to criticise his predecessors where he thinks the facts warrant).

The reasons for there having been a Dark Age are numerous. For one thing, there was the complicated line of communication between the Post Master in Hong Kong and the printer in London: Post Master; Colonial Secretary; Crown Agents in London – who had minds of their own at times; De La Rue – then up the ladder again, with transit times between colonial dockside and London dockside of up to two months, and great ones in the wings, the Governor of the Colony and the Secretary of State for the Colonies, happy to have their share of the fun when the fancy took them. Then the Post Master at a critical period, 1875-1890, the legendary Mr Lister, regarded stamp collectors as so many barnacles on the bottom of an institution whose function was to run HM’s mails; nothing was to be done for collectors qua collectors. Records went up in smoke. Earlier philatelic writers misread or misinterpreted what data there were, but being pioneers in the field were given credence by their successors. Official records and Annual Reports were gappy – and 19th century printing techniques were such that an order for, say, 1000 sheets each of 240 labels could result in the arrival in the Colony of anything between 900 and 1100 sheets. It is no wonder that at times it proved difficult to establish how many stamps of a particular kind were received into store and, of those, how many were, variously, sold, surcharged to provide another denomination or destroyed. Even dates of issue were matters of doubt. One cannot but feel sympathy for the pioneers even when they didn’t get the story right or quite right. Gurevitch’s second helpful section – baldly titled Stamp Production – covers almost everything you wanted to know about producing surface-printed (typography) stamps, from design to plate making, proofs, perforations, surcharges and overprints, varieties, kiss prints, marginalia and the modus operandi of a Victorian printing house.

The first stamp design, in which the Colony’s Governor had a large hand, stood basically unchanged for a century: the Sovereign’s head, and Colony name and denomination, in English and Chinese, all within a frame. During the Victorian era, the head, based on Wyon, was the same for all values and issues. Frames, frame ornaments and Chinese characters varied from stamp to stamp, being engraved, but the Colony’s name and letters of value (in English) and the Arabic figures of value were punched in. Those familiar with the first GB engraved issues know how their corner check letters are frequently out of true: indeed, the angles of alignment of the letters have been turned into a plating device (cf. The Plating of the Penny 1840-1864). By contrast, the punching of the HK letters and figures shows excellent alignment. After discussing the matter with the author, I am inclined to think that the individual letter/number punches were formed up into consolidated slugs and that it was the slugs, that were punched in.

Gurevitch brings out several aspects of the trials of a 19th Century printer working for a distant governmental client. Did ‘Chinese whispers’ problems develop as messages were passed up and down the line, even if successive permutations of the message were in written form? What to do with a client who wanted stamps printed in double fugitive ink but in colours incapable of being produced as doubly fugitive? Was the printer’s patience tried by overly-zealous officers of the Inland Revenue
Department as they checked numbers of blank and printed sheets in and out of their 'bond' store? Was he prepared to fudge when it appeared that some stamps could have got through the safety fence in imperforated form?

The author discusses Specimen stamps at some length with numerous illustrations of the various SPECIMEN formats. There is a fine authentication of one manuscript Specimen: two HK stamps overwritten Specimen by the one hand are shown alongside a large block of a GB stamp also printed by DLR and overwritten by that same hand. Elsewhere, Gurevitch indicates, if only by implication, what a task it must have been to satisfy the UPU's ever growing demand for SPECIMEN overprints, and what anomalous and ambiguous positions could arise when the filling of an order for SPECIMENS required only part of a printed sheet.

The chronological list gives the setting for the appearance of each issue/value, describes major varieties, with blown up illustrations mostly in colour (check lists of plating diagnostics in the case of surcharges and the 1891 Jubilee overprints are given in volume 2), with at least one cover reproduced to show each stamp in action.

Within the list, Gurevitch devotes a large space to the so-called Perforation 12 two cents pink-rose (which is still listed in my somewhat dated Gibbons Part 1). At the end of Gurevitch's pages one can only shake one's head: a villain or villains somewhere, innocents abroad, vested interests, possible conflicts of interest – in all, a likely story. I admire the author's 'end of the chapter' reconstruction of what may have happened. The one virtuous character in the story seems to have been Surgeon-Captain Bishop who had a perforation 12 copy that was different in some ways from the other known perforation 12 copies and who was willing to have his specimen put to the test in the interests of truth and science. The stamp was boiled, its edges separated from its centre, and it stood revealed as a fake. One hopes that the bits were retrieved from the saucepan and reassembled by a micro-surgeon but with FALSE writ large across the back. Another good story is that of the $1 surcharge forgery which came to light in September 1897, a story particularly poignant to this reviewer who thought he had come across a copy in a job lot of HK. Unfortunately, the cancel on my copy is dated well after the withdrawal of the genuinely surcharged stamp and, as Gurevitch notes, once the authorities knew there was a forgery about, they would have kept the closest scrutiny on – and rejected – any stamp purporting to be One Dollar on a 10 Cents stamp. Mine is a false forgery and, like the Surgeon-Captain's boiled bits, of interest only as an instance of the traps dug for innocent stamp collectors.

At first view, volume 2 of the book seems lacking in the excitement of volume 1: no coloured illustrations for one thing. But the Appendices in volume 2 reproducing earlier writings on Hong Kong Victoria merit close study, and the two succeeding sections – all figures and tabulation – are full of meat.

To take the 110 pages of tabulation first. These list in chronological order, for the period Jan 1863 – 1907, all covers – some 3300 in all – bearing HK Queen Victoria postal adhesives (other than those with lower values towards the end of the period) known to the author, each cover being described in sufficient detail to distinguish it from the others. It is a massive compilation, valuable in two ways: it provides the market with a firm guide to comparative scarcities, and would-be purchasers with a protection against any sort of falsification or rigging of existing material.

The figure pages are equally important in their way. Values set by the market depend very much on the quantity of material available and that quantity depends in its turn on the degree to which the original supply of a stamp was 'squirrelled' in mint condition by institutions, hoarders, speculators and ordinary collectors, and the effects on the remaining supply of such things as the hazards of postal usage and retrieval, diversion to other uses (surcharging, conversion to revenue status), destruction in official hands as superfluous or demonetised etc.

Historical experience assists the market in making its assessment of the reach of such factors but for that assessment to be applied profitably, the size of the original stock must be known (or more or less
known). As noted above, the quantitative data for HK stamps in the first 40 years or so are patchy and inconsistent, come from different sources and are expressed in different ways: printer’s deliveries, values of sales, numbers of stamps sold. Gurevitch has plotted what known figures are available, reduced them as far as practicable to a common base, and applied trend and proportion techniques to arrive at interpolated values. His engineering background would have made him aware of the problems of derived figures and he has put his readers on their guard by giving such derived figures an order of accuracy. The orders range from exactitude to plus or minus 50%. In other words, further work needs to be done before it can be said that the HK situation is sewn up. And for that to happen, more serendipitous finds will have to be made.

There is one other, superficially more glamorous, feature of the book that impressed me: the application of computer technology to the study of the overprinted 1891 Jubilee issue. Gurevitch shows how it is possible to scan two stamps, blow up the image and superimpose a horizontal slice from one stamp on the corresponding (voided) area of the other. If the slice cuts across an overprint or surcharge, it can be seen whether the overprint/surcharge halves coincide. If they do, the presumption is that the two stamps occupy the same position in the overprinting forme; if they do not, two different positions (or two different formes) must be involved. Gurevitch devotes many pages to this operation: the large-scale coloured illustrations make possible confident judgements that would be difficult on the basis of mere comparison of any two stamps by eye or with the aid of dividers. In this way, Gurevitch has been able to establish a partial plating of the seventh Jubilee printing. A further computer technique is relevant to a different or ‘semi-official’ setting of the Jubilee issue. If what Euclid called perpendiculars are imposed on the stamps of the first seven printings, it can be seen how the vertical elements of the overprinting tend to lie in varying degrees off-centre to the perpendiculars: by contrast in the ‘semi-official’ setting, those elements fall spot on the perpendiculars; great care seems to have been taken with composing the forme for this setting, far more than would be required for, or appropriate to, a stamp intended for general issue. The ‘semi official’ setting seems to have been a special job, possibly a one-off job, authorised by whom on whose behalf is not known. The technique is one that would greatly help in sorting out, for example, the 1942 Landfall of Columbus issue of the Bahamas.

Much more could be said about the contents of Gurevitch’s book but its form also calls for comment. Printed in Canberra, it looks and feels good: the margins are ample, the typeface comfortable to the eye, and the book opens easily with no sign of the spine cracking. As noted above, the book is copiously illustrated and the colour fidelity is high enough not to mislead. As a product, the book says much for the skills of the local printing industry. (While local self-congratulations are in the air, it is equally important to put on record that this is another work of major philatelic scholarship to come from a Society member, the first having been, of course, Hieronymus’s book on Commonwealth Postage Dues.)

I understand that the text, illustrations included, was prepared on the author’s PC and passed, to the printer, in print-ready disc form. His only input at the pre-print stage was the provision of technical advice on layout details. Such a process may well speed up all the preparatory pre-print stages of a book and so help reduce its direct costs, the author’s time substituting for the compositor’s wages, but the man with the stick in a Gutenberg-style printery still has an important role, not least in bringing a fresh eye to the text. As I know to my own cost, long engagement with a text can bring about the falling away of one’s power to see the text as what it is: a series of distinct marks on the paper. At the nth reading, the text tends to turn into a series of words proper, concepts, even whole sentences or, worse, there emerge the sounds of those words, concepts, sentences. I suspect that this is what may have happened here with the result that misprints and linguistic lapses are a little more frequent than one would otherwise expect in so learned a work. There are small errors, none of which affects lines of argument or exposition: for example on p.47, as the illustrations there clearly show, the position of the plate number of the NE pane is above the fifth, not the fourth, stamp in the top row.
Capital Philately

These minor flaws can easily be picked up and corrected in a second edition. None of them detracts from the value of the work: they are no more than bush flies at a very good fête champêtre.

Collectors – at any level – of Hong Kong material will find that Gurevitch’s book adds to both their pleasure and expertise in the topic. Those who have never had a HK stamp in their album pages – thereby missing out on an absorbing topic – can read the book with as much pleasure and profit as HK buffs for what it teaches about the broader aspects of philately and the new research avenues it opens up.

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There are still some of these terrific envelopes available!
Why not buy one (or more) – they make a great gift and the funds raised go to support the Philatelic Society of Canberra.
THE AUSTRALASIAN CHALLENGE-RETROPSECT AND PROSPECT

Dingle Smith

The last number of *Capital Philately* described the rules for the inaugural Australasian Challenge. This was not only a new event at Canberra Stampshows but was the first occasion in Australasia that a competitive exhibition had offered the opportunity for a team event. Understandably the publicity for the Show trumpeted the virtues of such a competition. This account attempts to analyse its success and to outline the possibilities of the Challenge becoming a permanent feature on the Australasian philatelic calendar.

The design of the rules was a matter of considerable discussion and the Challenge formally made to the Philatelic Councils in Australia by the Philatelic Council of the ACT. All of these are affiliated to the Australian Philatelic Federation (APF) and that body approved the rules and judges for the Challenge. Initially the proposed team competition was entitled the Inter-State Challenge. It soon became apparent that the New Zealand philatelists were also keen to enter the competition. It was therefore, agreed that New Zealand would also compete, and enter two teams, one representing North Island and the other South Island. This was despite some hesitancy on the part of the organisers in expanding the original concept before it had been trialled. This expansion of the original concept led to a name change to the Australasian Challenge.

In outline each team was required to enter five adult exhibits and one youth entry. In addition one of the adult entries had to be from a ‘novice’, defined as somebody who had never before entered any exhibit (except a 1-framer) in a class judged at national level. Each of the five adult entries had to be from a different exhibiting class either recognised by the International body (FIP) or by the APF. Each exhibit was to be of five frames with the exceptions that the novice could enter 3-5 frames and the youth exhibit would confirm to the number of frames as recognised in national competitions. The number varies with the age of the competitor. All exhibits would be judged at national level. The team with the largest aggregate score for all the exhibits would be declared the inaugural winner of the Challenge.

The original plans for the jury for the Challenge were that all the judges would be appropriately qualified national ACT judges and that the ACT would not field a team in the competition. This was to overcome the perception of any bias that might have arisen if judges were selected from the competing teams. However, this was modified slightly during the run up to the competition. Ed Druce and Darryl Fuller had been members of the original jury but their absence required the appointment of at least two additional judges. Bernie Beston of Queensland and Michael Blake of South Australia, both very experienced judges were approved by the APF as replacements. Sue McIntosh of Canterbury, New Zealand was also added to the panel as she was attending the Show as the Official Commissioner appointed to transport two New Zealand exhibits to and from Canberra. These three non-ACT national judges provided additional expertise in classes of exhibiting in which the ACT judges were less skilled.

The rules regarding the classification and number of frames for each entry were purposely selected to provide a variety of exhibits and to test the overall philatelic prowess of the competing teams. A concern of the organisers was that the States with many established international collectors would perhaps swamp the entries of the States with smaller numbers of such tyros. The limitation to five frames would mean, in many cases, that the leading exhibitors would have to re-jig their exhibits from eight frames to five.

The Challenge was issued to State Philatelic Councils and they were required not only to accept the Challenge but also be responsible for the selection of the team and the despatch of the entry forms.
The winning team would receive a handsome marquetry plaque and, with agreement of the Druce family and the APF, this was named the Ed Druce Memorial Award. This was purchased jointly by Australia Post and the Philatelic Society of Canberra and is intended as a permanent memorial to the exceptional contributions of the late Ed Druce to philately in Australia.

The initial proposal and rules related to the Canberra event but some draft comments were made on the possible future of the event if it proved to be successful. These suggestions were that the Challenge be held every two years with a preference that it would be a component of a State or regional exhibition, ie it would not be attached to a National Exhibition. The composition of a team entry, number of frames and the classes represented, would be assessed after the inaugural Challenge. There was also the suggestion that team competitors in the initial Challenge would not be permitted to re-enter the same exhibit in any future Challenge.

Prospect

So much for the pre-Canberra Stampshow planning for the Challenge. How did it all work out and what are the recommendations for the future of the Challenge?

All the Australian States entered teams together with North and South island New Zealand. The only hiccup was that NSW failed to find a novice and therefore only entered 4 adult exhibits. In the opinion of the organisers it was better to enter a depleted team than to withdraw. Victoria made a conscious effort not to include their front line international exhibitors but to invite team members who were relatively new to top class competition.

All agreed that the inclusion of youth and novice entries was an excellent concept although many teams had to work hard to find these team members. The pleasing result is that there are now seven new national exhibitors, many of whom obtained high marks, plus several new youth exhibitors. All experienced exhibitors will agree that taking the plunge to prepare one's first national exhibit frequently leads to a desire to enter future shows.

There was also agreement that the maximum of five frames was a good decision as this required many experienced exhibitors who usually enter eight frames to modify their exhibit especially for the Challenge. In some cases this required considerable reorganisation of the exhibit and, in a few cases, the problem was overcome by omitting the last three frames. In some cases the latter approach resulted in a loss of marks as the exhibit suffered in its overall flow.

An earlier fear that the Challenge would be overwhelmed by entries that had obtained Gold and Large Gold awards at international show did not materialise. There were a number of such exhibits, always a delight to see, but the requirement that each team entered exhibits from different exhibiting classes added immensely to the overall appeal of the collective entries. It was good to see that many of the less popular classes and those that are only available in Australian and New Zealand shows were not only well represented but of a very high standard. There were for example, three revenue entries and even more surprising, three in the First Day Cover class. The latter, together with the two exhibits in the National First Day Cover Class, represented the best showing of this form of material ever seen at an Australian Show. Truly a coming of age of a relatively new class, with one exhibit obtaining a Gold award and another a Large Vermeil.

As Chair of the Jury for the Challenge, it is my pleasure to report that the judging of the Challenge was one of the most efficient and enjoyable with which I have been associated. The judging was undertaken by teams of jurors who focussed on specific classes. As a result of this approach the overall team winner was not readily apparent until very late in the judging process. Any earlier fears of judges trying to find a few extra marks in order to sway the overall team totals did not occur. The judging of the Challenge leads me, and others, to the opinion that there is no problem in involving judges resident in the State or island of the competing teams.
The presentation of the medals and Ed Druce Memorial Award was kept confidential until the Saturday night Awards Dinner and this did much to heighten the excitement of the announcement of the winning team. For the record the results with total aggregate points for each team were:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Team</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Western Australia</td>
<td>501</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Island New Zealand</td>
<td>467</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Island New Zealand</td>
<td>466</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Australia</td>
<td>463</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queensland</td>
<td>432</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria</td>
<td>427</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tasmania</td>
<td>417</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New South Wales</td>
<td>394</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

So the trophy, suitably engraved is now in Western Australia. It seems certain that the Challenge will indeed, become a biennial event. WA will need to bring the trophy back East for the next Challenge!

**Changes for the Future?**

The APF and NZ Philatelic Federation will formally make decisions regarding the future of the Challenge, likely after wide discussion among State Councils and exhibitors. Decisions that need to be made include:

- The composition of the entries;
- Whether entries in 2002 can be exhibited again in 2004;
- The venue.

There seems overall accord that the arrangements in 2002 regarding the number of frames per entry were ideal and, despite the difficulties that arose in finding the novice and youth team members, that novice and youth entries should be included. Some minor tidying up of the rules is required. For example, that literature entries are essentially unsuitable and that there should not be entries from any one team in the same class that are only distinguished by being ‘modern’ or ‘classical’.

The inclusion of entries from 2002 in the subsequent Challenges, tentatively recommended in the original rules, raises problems. For States such as Tasmania that have relatively few national exhibitors it would not be possible to find a whole team of new exhibitors. Alternatives to overcome this problem are for the better philatelically resourced States not to use earlier exhibits, although individuals could re-enter with a different exhibit, likely in a different class. Other options are that the winning team has to find all new entries or that exhibits that have obtained, say, a Large Vermeil or better at international exhibitions are not eligible for the Challenge.

There is much merit in the original suggestions that future Challenges, like that in Canberra, should not be held in conjunction with a full national exhibition. The reasons for this include difficulties that would arise with judging with both Challenge and National classes but perhaps more importantly, the boost that the Challenge gives to State or regional level shows. This approach may cause problems for a possible Challenge in New Zealand, as ‘the land of the long white cloud’ does not have an established pattern equivalent to Australian State exhibitions.

It was not the intention of the original Canberra-based proponents of the Challenge that it should always be hosted in the national capital. Of course, this does not preclude Canberra making a bid for the 2004 Challenge. What did become clear is that it would be acceptable for the host State (or Territory or Island!) to enter future Challenges but with the clear proviso that judges were drawn from all, or the majority, of the jurisdictions of the teams that entered the competition.

The writer is clearly biased but the Canberra Challenge was a great success. It provide an excellent display of varied material, introduced new exhibitors to competitive exhibiting but most importantly, the Challenge was marked by a feeling of friendly competition without rancour between the teams regardless of their success. It demonstrates that there is a place for team competition within philately. It was an event that would have certainly had the full approval of the late Ed Druce.
In times of hyperinflation the rate for sending even an ordinary letter can jump by as much as a factor of ten within a few weeks. The most readily accessible table of postal rates under such conditions is found for Germany in 1920-1923, listed for all types of mail and destinations by the Michel Deutschland-Spezial Katalog. But this sorry state of affairs can be matched for a number of countries, such as Hungary, China, or the Russian group. Slightly slower inflationary trends, with analogous philatelic consequences, can be found for other countries such as Brazil. When a currency collapses there may be a short period in which postage can be paid by a mixture of stamps denominated in the old collapsed currency and a new replacement currency. For example, in Germany in December 1923 briefly one could use stamps denominated in 1,000,000,000 old Marks to pay in 0.01 new Marks.

New currencies are often created just by shifting the decimal point to the left, an operation used by France and by the USSR, and sometimes called devaluation. But what happens if stamps are not invalidated when their face value becomes pathetically small and has failed to keep up with the new tariffs? There are then attempts to use them up, indeed the sender might have to use a profusion of stamps which were bought earlier in sheets, because no new high values have become available. The distribution of stamps to all post offices in a country in times of high inflation and rapidly changing rates may break down. In some post offices it has been not unusual for the clerks to run out of stamps completely, and thus resort to using a handstamp or a locally-produced label to indicate that postage has been paid. There were many examples of this from Germany in late 1923, which are catalogued. In this situation of shortages and uncertainties some philatelists have a cheerful opportunity to create covers plastered with stamps which are still valid but not really the most convenient denominations to employ.

Three examples are presented here, to offer the advice that one should always look at both sides of a cover. International mail is the most fruitful source of examples, because the rates outside a country have to be corrected for the weaker exchange rates of the sending country rather more fully than for purely internal mail. If a letter is sent registered or express, or both at once, then the surcharges can be considerable. One finds examples of letters with a whole sheet of stamps attached, folded and stuck by one edge to the envelope, which are not easy to illustrate.

The first example is from Germany to Sweden, sent from Seelze near Hannover on 25 8 1923 and backstamped Stockholm on 27 8 1923. This was commercial correspondence, between two companies that obviously had a sufficient volume mail to use printed stationary, but the sender was at a small place and had bought stamps for the office correspondence in whole sheets. This would be reasonable for local letters for a while, but as soon as they were faced with writing internationally the rates had soared. What would have been about 80 pfennigs in 1920 now cost 60,000 Marks. This was made up of 30 copies of the 2000 Mark stamp still available. An ordinary inland letter of the same weight for that company’s mail would have jumped from 400 Marks to 8000 Marks in the previous three weeks.
The next example is from Austria to England in October 1923. It is sent from Seefeld in Tirol, a small place perhaps suitable for the sender to have a skiing holiday, to a lady in London and was sent express. The red label Express is Austrian, and the purple cancellation EXPRESS FEE PAID was applied in London on receipt. It is a mark like a roller cancellation that was still in use in the 1930s. Unfortunately the usage then did not run to backstamps on arrival, so we cannot know the time for transit, but that would have been about two or three days. The one stamp on the front might have paid ordinary local postage, but whoever went to the post office was in for a shock as the back is plastered with 20 Kronen and 240 Kronen stamps, adding up to 5000 Kronen. In 1919 it would have been about 10 Kronen. If the letter was sent by an English friend then it would not have come as very expensive because the Pound sterling was then very strong relative to the Krone, and rising. But to an Austrian on a fixed income sending a letter express was a severe demand on resources, perhaps the letter was a desperate attempt to solicit a loan.
The last example is modern, from Belarus to Australia, and is rather philatelic. Belarus is nominally independent from Russia and has experienced more severe inflation since the collapse of the USSR, without the deflationary correction that Russia imposed on its own Rouble. The sender is secretary of the Belarus philatelic federation, and so has plenty of correspondence, both local and international. The letter is from Minsk on 30 10 2001 and registered. Australia Post did not choose to put more of its bar-coded labels on this one, but it took about 10 days to arrive in Canberra. The total postage paid is 5465 Roubles. Note in this case that the stamps have dates on issue on them, so though they are all still valid for postage we can trace the progress of inflation a bit. On the back is one block of 15 Rouble stamps dated 1992, in the usual small definitive format that has been typically Russian since the 1850s. On the front, the big block is of 100 Rouble stamps dated 1993. The 200 and 500 Rouble stamps are dated 2001. I doubt if the pretty 25 Rouble stamp with dolls dated 1993 was really necessary to pay more postage. This cover suggests slow creeping inflation, economically damaging but not the rapid onset presaging complete collapse as in the German case. It still was possible to use up a lot of ordinary definitives that are past their best use date.
The situations illustrated by these three covers are analogous but vary in degree of economic severity, one is commercial, one is personal and one is philatelic. They are unlikely to arise again in the future in Europe, and obviously have never been encountered in Australia. It might be wise to end with a warning, some forged postal history material related to hyperinflation exists, from various countries, and one should look for guarantee marks on covers whose provenance is doubtful.

Special Announcements

**New Stamp Shop!**

**TALLISKER STAMPS**

will commence full-time trading at
Shop 17, Bailey’s Arcade, Canberra City on
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*Congratulations to Garry and Heather Reynolds on their new venture!*

*Drop in to wish them well in July, or see them at the next Philatelic Society of Canberra Stamp Market, Second Sunday of the Month at the Griffin Centre, Civic.*

**Specialist Albums**

**G & R ALBUMS**

An exciting new series of Australian made Albums & Catalogues, which set new standards for you to enjoy.

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- King George V Heads – Vol 1 & 2
- Great Britain – Plate Nos 1853-1883
- Australian States – Specialist Album

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- Aust. States–Official Perfins–Specialists
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NOTICE OF INTEREST
Berne, Switzerland, 5 March 2002
International Bureau of the Universal Postal Union - Press Release

Support lining up for UPU's new stamp control system

More than 70 postal administrations have already joined the Universal Postal Union's new stamp control system that is aimed at combating unauthorised stamp issues. The initiative has also received support from major international philatelic bodies within the World Association for the Development of Philately (WADP), which operates under the auspices of the UPU. Known as the WADP Numbering System (WNS), it is aimed at strengthening the position of authenticated postage stamps while at the same time protecting the interests of stamp issuing countries, stamp collectors, philatelists and the stamp trade.

The new numbering system applies to all stamps issued by participating countries on or after 1 January 2002. All new stamps, stamp sets, souvenir sheets and sheetlets submitted to the UPU by these countries since the beginning of 2002, are allocated a unique number to facilitate the creation of a universal stamp inventory. The unique number includes the ISO Alpha 2-letter country code. The scanned stamps, together with a brief description and the WNS numbers, will be made available to all interested parties, including Posts, catalogue producers, the philatelic trade and philatelists.

The new system will further act as a central register of authentic issues against which stamp issues can be verified. It is, however, not intended to replace stamp-numbering systems of stamp catalogues, but rather to complement them by allowing easier recognition of the legitimate issues.

The UPU envisages that more postal administrations will join the numbering system as it develops in the months to come. Stamps without a WNS number could in future be banned from international exhibitions. The International Federation of Philately (FIP) is already considering such measures and other philatelic organizations are expected to follow.

Recent years have seen an increase in postage stamps produced without the knowledge or authorization of legitimate countries, or in the name of territories which do not qualify for the issuing of postage stamps, or which simply do not exist. The sale of unauthorized stamps not only defrauds collectors, but can lead to severe losses in revenue for postal administrations.

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