



Capital Philately



Journal of the Philatelic Society of Canberra



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(founded 1932)

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Capital Philately is published quarterly and is supplied free to members of the Society. Other subscriptions are welcome - \$15 per year, post free within Australia. Back numbers are available at \$12 per volume (four issues); individual numbers at \$4 each.

Articles, letters to the editor and other contributions should be sent to the editor. For subscriptions, the purchase of back numbers and advertising, apply to the business manager.

Capital Philately gratefully acknowledges the financial support of the Australian Philatelic Federation and the ACT Philatelic Council.

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ISSN 0729-8765

CAPITAL PHILATELY

FEBRUARY 1992 - VOL. 10 NO 2

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EDITORIAL

This issue of *Capital Philately* will appear immediately prior to the Seventh National Philatelic Convention. This is to be held in the Canberra GPO, March 14-16 1992. The Council of the Society welcomes visitors, local and interstate, to the show and is pleased to provide this opportunity to promote the hobby of philately. To this end, the Society is offering a free introductory membership, until October, to any interested collector, young or old. We hope that those interested in the hobby, especially in Canberra and the local region, will accept this offer. They are welcome to come to Society display nights, exchange evenings, to use the library and to receive *Capital Philately*.

On January 2 the standard internal postal rate for letters was increased to 45 cents. This was accompanied by the issue of a very wide range of new stamp issues and associated philatelic items, these included three new stamp booklets. The cost of the single mint stamps, official first day covers, presentation packs, pre-stamped envelopes, aerograms and maxim cards was well in excess of \$50. For Australia Day there were four additional stamps and a miniature sheet.

Many commentators in the philatelic scene have remarked on the increased cost of collecting the full range of Australia Post philatelic products. As additional items are added to the range, eg pre-stamp envelopes, booklets, maxim cards etc, it is inevitable that the price associated with a change in the postal rate will increase significantly. For those who also collect various forms of positional blocks (ie to demonstrate sheet layout) the financial outlay becomes very substantial.

It is clear that the number of collectors who purchase all items has declined in recent years. This is reflected in the relative decline, in relation to the number and costs of the additional items, of the amount of philatelic sales. It is also very apparent from

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discussions with fellow collectors. Those who purchase mint and FDC's of all new items has declined year by year. Is the policy of Australia Post killing the goose that lays the golden eggs?

Alternatively, the increase in the range of products can be viewed as mirroring a world-wide trend followed by all stamp issuing agencies. In comparative listings of numbers of stamps and total value issued each year Australia Post is usually nearer the bottom than the top. I suspect that the majority of collectors now limit their Australian new issue purchases to a self-imposed and limited range of the products on offer. This might be mint and used commemoratives, FDC's or booklets. I also have no doubt that the forbidding range of new issues on January 2 1992 will cause a further group of collectors to join this trend. The coincidence of an issue early in the year, following the normal Christmas spending spree, will mean that more than the usual number of collectors will take this opportunity to trim their Australian collections. I am about to join that group myself, are you another?

Dingle Smith

WANTED - YOUR REMINISCENCES

The Society celebrates its sixtieth birthday on November 9th of this year. A special, extended issue of *Capital Philately* will be available on that day. This will contain articles concerned with differing facets of our history. However, members are invited to contribute additional items. Ideally these would be about 200 words or so in length but longer or shorter contributions would also be welcome. These could take a variety of forms. Examples are 'my first meeting', 'how I came to join the Society', 'favourite displays', 'a council meeting I would like to forget', etc. Any photographs, prints or negatives, associated with Society activities would be invaluable. These could include former or present members or photos of convention special events.

The editor or any member of the Editorial Committee (see the inside of the front cover for names) would be pleased to advise or to receive contributions.

Do it now, do not forget!

PHILANIPPON

PhilaNippon 91 was a world stamp exhibition held at Harumi International Trade Fair Center in Tokyo, November 16-24 1991. There were three entries from Canberra-based Society members. They achieved the following awards:

E.C.Druce *NSW Postal History to 1870*. Gold with Special Prize.
'Stamptom' *Australian Airmails 1914-36*. Large Vermeil.
'Stamptom' *Papuan and New Guinea Airmails*. Vermeil.

This combination of awards is the best ever achieved by members of the Society at international level. Congratulations to the exhibitors on these outstanding results.

LIKE STAMPS?

WHY NOT JOIN A STAMP CLUB?

**THE DESIGN AND PRODUCTION OF THE FIRST COMMONWEALTH
EMBOSSSED KING GEORGE V STAMPED ENVELOPES**

Ian McMahon

The first Commonwealth stamped envelopes were issued in 1913 and were impressed with the 1d red Kangaroo and Map stamps. These were followed in 1914 by envelopes impressed with the King George V sideface stamp. Unlike the postal stationery stamps of most other countries at that time, these stamps were not embossed.

On 10 December 1913, the Commonwealth Stamp Printer, J. B. Cooke wrote to the Secretary of the Treasury requesting that he ask the Postmaster-General to approve the preparation of dies for embossed stamps to be used in the production of stamped envelopes, see Figure 1. At that time the Commonwealth Stamp Printing Branch issued over 60,000 stamped envelopes each week. He requested approval for the cutting of three dies, one each for the 1/2d, 1d and 2d stamps. He included with his letter a sample of an envelope featuring the head of King Edward VII and suggested that the die feature a design similar to the sample but with the portrait of King George V. He proposed an oval frame for the 1/2d value, a round frame for the 1d and a flat oval frame for the 2d and the inclusion of the inscription 'Australia Postage'. He also suggested that the stamps be printed in the same colour as the adhesive stamps of the corresponding denominations. In his letter Cooke suggested that the engraving of the dies could be done by Mr Samuel Reading of Lonsdale Street, Melbourne at a cost of about £60. Samuel Reading had been previously employed in recutting the dies of the embossed stamps of Victoria and in producing the die for the Kangaroo and Map stamps.

The Postmaster General's Department decided not to agree to the production of these dies and advised the Treasury of its decision in a letter signed by the Department's Secretary (Mr J. Oxenham), dated 7 September 1914.

Cooke responded to this decision in a letter to the Secretary of the Treasury dated 16 September 1914. In this he outlined his case for the used of embossed stamps. Cooke felt that the use of embossed stamps on envelopes, which were made of unwatermarked paper, was essential to protect against forgery. Not only was the paper for the Post Office issued envelopes unwatermarked but the envelope stamps were also printed directly on private envelopes. He pointed out that no other country was taking as substantial a risk with the possibility of forgery and consequent loss of revenue as Australia was risking by not using embossed envelope stamps.

His arguments were presumably persuasive as the Postmaster-General's Department reversed its previous decision and advised, in a letter of 29 December 1914 to the Treasury, approval for the purchase of three dies. The Department did however, suggest that the dies might be cut in the Note Printing Branch of Treasury. The Commonwealth Note Printer, T. S. Harrison, was asked for his opinion on whether the work could be done there and he responded in a letter of 23 January 1915 (see Figure 2) that it was not possible to engrave cameo relief dies in the Note Printing Branch in their entirety because '...this class of seal if properly executed requires the skill of very high class operators'. He claimed that an engraver was needed to 'sink' the die, a

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(C O P Y)

POSTMASTER GENERAL
 COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA
 10/12/13

1708630
 TREASURY

COMMONWEALTH TREASURY
 13 28419

STAMP PRINTING BRANCH,
 (DEPARTMENT OF TREASURY),
 FLINDERS-STREET EXTENSION,

Copy

Melbourne, 13th May 10th Dec 1913
10/12/13

Sir,

I beg to report that we issue about 60,000 envelopes a week to private firms, and with the view of enabling us to emboss the same, I beg to suggest that the Postmaster-General be asked to approve that dies be prepared on somewhat similar lines to the sample submitted herewith. It is proposed to cut the stamp with the head of King George instead of that of the late King as on the sample submitted herewith. I also propose that the ½d shall be oval, 1d round and 2d a flat oval. The wording to be "Australia Postage" and the denominations ½d, 1d and 2d to be embossed in the same colors as the ½d, 1d and 2d stamps.

Herewith I beg to submit a price from Mr. Samuel Reading, of this City, for cutting the dies, and beg to recommend that the same be accepted.

I have the honor to be,

Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

Commonwealth Stamp Printer.

The Secretary,

Commonwealth Treasury.

1913 Dec 10

Figure 1 Letter from J.B.Cooke, December 10 1913

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puncher to execute the lettering and a geometric lathe operator to put the engine turning background to the lettering. Furthermore, Harrison felt that the die could not be engraved in Australia to the required level of workmanship and suggested that the work be done in London and that even there it would be difficult to find persons capable of doing the engraving to the appropriate standard.

With his letter, Harrison provided copies of an embossed envelope which he claimed had been produced from a die made in Australia (a colonial issue featuring Queen Victoria, presumably a Victorian envelope) and another envelope from a die cut in London (a Costa Rican envelope featuring the head of Columbus). In his letter he points to the poor work of the Australian envelope compared to that from Costa Rica, with its '...exquisite modelling of the face of Columbus', as evidence that the cutting of the dies could not be done in Australia. Although Harrison's samples have not been retained with his letter, Figure 3 illustrates a Costa Rican stamped envelope similar to the one to which he refers. It was produced by Waterlow Brothers and Layton, London.

In addition, Harrison did not like the designs suggested by Cooke, commenting that the round die was 'ugly'. He suggested that an oval design similar to the Costa Rican stamps be used and that only a single design was needed for the three values.

Cooke responded in a letter, dated 7 April 1915, to the Secretary of the Treasury that the Victorian envelope which Harrison claimed had been printed using a die engraved in Australia had in fact been printed from a die engraved by De La Rue of London. Harrison's use of this envelope to suggest that the work could not be undertaken in Australia was therefore, not appropriate. Presumably this confusion arose because, although the die had been originally produced in London, it had been later recut in Australia. As Cooke mentions in a later letter, this die had been obtained in 1869 and had been in continual use until 30 December 1912. G. Kellow, in his book *The Stamps of Victoria*, mentions that the first embossed Victoria stamped envelope was issued in 1869 and was printed from a die produced by De La Rue. However, in 1881, a new die was cut by Arthur Williams. Samuel Reading modified the die in 1886 by adding the words 'Stamp Duty' and again in 1901 when he removed that inscription. Cooke commented that there were advantages in having different designs for each denomination as it helped postmasters in country post offices, where the light at night was from a hurricane lamp, to distinguish different denominations and pointed out that different dies were used for United Kingdom stamped envelopes. He also submitted examples of Papuan stamps produced from a die engraved by Reading and a 3d registered envelope with a stamp engraved by Messrs Bridgland and King (also of Melbourne) which he claimed were equal to the work of De La Rue. He forwarded three designs, one each in the denominations 1/2d, 1d and 2d, for consideration by the Postmaster-General's Department. The 1/2d design would be engraved by Mr. Reading, the 1d by Messrs Bridgland and King and the 2d by Mr Purvis of Little Bourke Street, Melbourne.

To finally resolve the issue, the Postmaster-General decided to meet with Cooke. Following this meeting the Postmaster-General's Department agreed to approve the adoption of the design Cooke had submitted for the 1/2d die for all three values

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COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA.

DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY.



AUSTRALIAN NOTE ENGRAVING AND PRINTING BRANCH,

FLINDERS-STREET EXTENSION 811

Melbourne, 23rd. January, 1915.

S i r,

1. With reference to the attached papers (14/25921) relative to the proposed purchase of three steel dies for embossing envelopes, I have the honor to state it is not possible to engrave the Cameo Relief dies in this office in their entirety. This class of seal if properly executed requires the skill of very high class operators - the engraver who "sinks" the portrait, the die puncher who executes the lettering, and the Geometric lathe operator who puts the "engine turned" background to the lettering &c.

2. In my opinion these dies cannot be sufficiently well made in Australia, and I submit copies of the work done in the Commonwealth and the London production. Attention is invited to the exquisite modelling of the face of Columbus as compared with the "flat" and very poor work on the face of Victoria. In fact there is no attempt at modelling on the latter production and this kind of work could be readily imitated.

3. No advantage exists in having three different pattern dies. A round Cameo relief for a portrait is generally considered very ugly, therefore I beg to suggest that the design be oval, similar to the proof from the Costa Rica die (enclosed), and that the dies vary in denomination only, being printed in different colors for the several values in the same way as obtains in the letterpress issue.

4. This should reduce cost and give a far better result, as more time and labor can be expended on the original head, and the duplication of this master die is a matter of hours only.

5. I have the honor to state that even in London great difficulty is experienced in procuring men capable of doing this fine work of relief dies, and should it be decided that the embossing of envelopes will be undertaken to any extent I most certainly am of opinion that the die should be of the most exquisite workmanship. If one design for the dies is required the cost should not reach £60, even with the very best work thereon, and I think the price for the articles made in the Commonwealth too high. As I have indicated the cost would not exceed this amount if made in London by the highest class of workmen.

I have the honor to be,

S i r,

your obedient servant,

Australian Note Printer.

The Secretary,
Commonwealth Treasury,
Melbourne.

Will you kindly cause care to be taken of the enclosed Costa Rica Envelope, and return same to me as it is the only copy I possess.

Figure 2 Letter from T.W.Harrison, January 23 1915

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The Department also agreed to have the dies cut by Samuel Reading. Cooke then finalised the arrangements for the cutting of the dies and forwarded to the Postmaster-General's Department a copy of an undertaking signed by Reading to produce the three dies to the satisfaction of the Stamp Printing Branch for £60. The specification for the work was:

'Required for the purpose of embossing envelopes three steel dies to be cut according to design to be supplied.

The workmanship throughout to be of the highest order possible, and to be subject to the entire approval of the Commonwealth Stamp Printer.

The dies to be cut in steel after cutting to be hardened.

Time allowed for cutting the three dies referred to, four months from the date of the issuing of the official order.'

In a letter dated 11 April 1916, Cooke reported that Reading has satisfactorily completed the dies and enclosed proofs for the Postmaster-General's approval. He commented that:

'It will be remembered that there was a difference of opinion as to whether we should send to London to have the dies engraved or entrust the work to a local engraver...I am of the opinion that the engraver has been fortunate in his effort to turn out a first class die, the engraving of the head being equal to anything we could have obtained in London, and we have given the Australian an opportunity of showing his skill'.

Richard Peck, in an article in the *Bulletin of the Commonwealth Collectors Club of New South Wales* (October 1984, p.140), records that the dies were entered in the Stamp Printing Branch's register on 2 May 1916. In addition six 1d electros for embossing were entered in the register on 24 May 1916.

The Postmaster-General's Department notified acceptance of the dies in a letter to the Treasury on 3 May 1916 and requested further proofs for distribution to the Deputy Postmasters-General, located in each state. The dies were then used to produce envelopes impressed with the 1/2d green, 1d carmine and 2d violet stamps featuring King George V in an octagonal frame, see Figure 3. The final design was not inscribed 'Postage' but that was added to the design in 1920. The octagonal design was replaced by a new design depicting a portrait of George V in an oval frame in 1928.

Source: Treasury File A571 1916/11118, Australian Archives.



Figure 3 The Costa Rican example (left) and the issued Commonwealth stamp

NEW SOUTH WALES POSTAL STATIONERY - AN INTRODUCTION

Dingle Smith

For many years, the first Thursday meeting of every month in the Society's program has been devoted to a display. These are marked by a wide range of subject matter and frequently contain items that are worthy of recording so that other collectors can benefit and perhaps, add comments from their own material. In other cases, the background to the topic is of interest to fellow philatelists. It is unusual however, for accounts of the displays to appear in published form - *Capital Philately* is the obvious outlet.

This account is based on a display of 'N.S.W. Postal Stationery' presented at a Society display evening on February 6 1992. It seems appropriate for the editor to produce such an article in order to encourage others who display to contribute in a similar way.

The Background

Until the last twenty years or so, postal stationery was a relatively neglected field of philately. This has the advantage that the costs of obtaining material, in relation to scarcity, are much less than for traditional philately or for postal history. For many collectors, including the author, the earlier lack of interest means that postal stationery is generally poorly described in the literature. Thus, there is the challenge of 'finding something new'. These generalities are certainly true for colonial Australian postal stationery and apply to N.S.W. It is difficult to analyse why a collector elects to collect material from a specific country. My own preference for N.S.W. is, in part, because the state pioneered the use of most forms of postal stationery in Australia.

The easiest way to begin a collection of postal stationery is to purchase a bulk collection and then see what you have got! It is likely that there will be a dominance of mint items, this is because most catalogues in the last century listed postal stationery and such material was popular with collectors. Once catalogues dropped such listings, collector interest rapidly fell away. An interesting challenge is to collect used postal stationery illustrate the rates to differing postal destinations. Early postal stationery collectors were overwhelmingly interested in mint material.

The problem is to find descriptions of the items you have obtained. The basic starting point is the Higgins and Gage (usually abbreviated to 'H & G') *World Postal Stationery Catalog*. This is a multi-volume reference work which can be consulted in the Society's library. The listing and short descriptions have not been updated to include the most recent issues but H & G is still the best available listing for Australian states. A special issue of H & G limited to listings of Australasia, was published at AUSIPEX in 1984 and forms a convenient publication for Australian collectors to purchase.

As collecting interest develops there is a need for more detailed background material. For N.S.W. the classic study, *The Postage Stamps Envelopes, Wrappers, Post Cards and Telegraph Stamps*, by A.E. Bassett Hull and others is the major reference. This was published in 1911 and original copies are now priced at several hundred dollars. However, it is available in reprinted, photocopy form. Bassett Hull formed the major source of information for the February display, unfortunately it is thin on details after about 1896. Other references tend to be devoted to specific areas of postal stationery and are more difficult to locate as they are published in a very wide range of philatelic journals. For example, *Capital Philately*, has produced the only consolidated list of specimen postal stationery, see Smith and Druce vol 6, no 2 and vol 6, no 3.

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Before outlining the various types of postal stationery, mention must be made of the embossed letter sheets issued with prepaid postage for use within Sydney town. These were introduced in November 1838 and were not finally abolished until May 1852 when it became mandatory to use adhesive stamps to pay postage. This letter sheet gives N.S.W. a special place in the development of world postal stationery. An account is given in *The Postal History of N.S.W. 1788-1901*, dated 1988 and edited by J.S.White.

N.S.W. Postal Stationery

The account below is limited to selected items in each category of postal stationery that were displayed in February.

The major categories of N.S.W. postal stationery, and their date of introduction, are:

| | |
|--|------|
| Postcards (inc. reply cards) | 1875 |
| Lettercards | 1895 |
| Envelopes | 1895 |
| Registered envelopes | 1880 |
| Wrappers | 1864 |
| Telegraph forms | 1894 |

All of these, with the exception of telegraph forms, have separate categories devoted to 'official' use, usually distinguished by the use of 'OS' as an overprint or in the stamp design. All the categories, except for letter cards, were first introduced into the Australian colonies by N.S.W.

Post Cards

These were first used in Austria in 1869. The introduction of N.S.W. post cards, that incorporated a stamp in the design, in 1875 was therefore, very early. Figure 1 shows an example of the first post card (H & G 1) with the 'To' in script. Bassett Hull however, leaves little doubt that the script version was a near final proof and not the first issued card. Has anyone seen the H & G 1 used?



Figure 1 Proof of the first post card of 1875

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The cards of 1889, that commemorate the 1838 letter sheet, provide an illustration of the frequent changes in rate to destinations outside the state. Incidentally, these are among the first commemorative post cards anywhere and the design was 'borrowed' from a Mexican revenue stamp! The 1889 cards were re-issued in 1890/91 and show changes in the charge for different routes, see Figure 2.



Figure 2 Changes in destination for 2d and 3d cards of 1889-91

The illustrated post cards, which commenced in 1897, are too complex to describe here. They are a real challenge with at least twenty different views, some six colours, differing forms of greetings message etc.

Envelopes

In 1855 serious discussion took place as to whether N.S.W. should issue embossed envelopes. They did not materialise but specimen envelopes were produced, two of these are described in *Capital Philately* (vol 7, no 1). Figure 3 shows examples, from printer's waste?, of the dies produced for the 1d and 2d envelopes, they are known in a variety of colours.



Figure 3 Proof for unissued 2d envelope (left) proof of 3d registration value.

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Official envelopes provide a fruitful field for further study. Those marked 'OS' were withdrawn on Dec 31 1894. However, some of the old stock was used up by government departments with the stamp obliterated by six bars. Two styles are illustrated in Figure 4, one has the addition of 'On Her Majesty's Service' the other does not. The former has the stamp obliterated in black the latter in red.

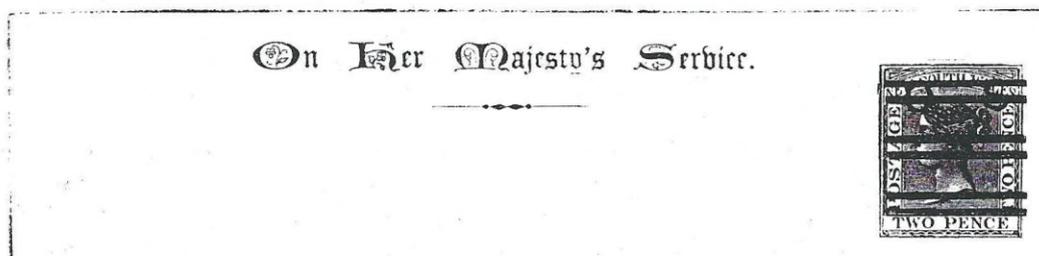


Figure 4 Official envelopes with the stamp obliterated.

Registered envelopes

These were first released on 6 March 1880. The gazette entry stresses that '...the impressed stamp represents the registration fee only (4d.), and the postage must be prepaid by affixing the necessary stamps'. In 1891 the registration fee was reduced to 3d. A proof of the 3d registration stamp, which is on red on yellow paper, is illustrated in Figure 3.

Wrappers

Wrappers were introduced solely for the postage of newspapers. In Great Britain, *The Times* used a coloured impression embossed on the actual newspaper. The first N.S.W. wrapper was issued on April 1 1864, the 1d stamp used the die shown in Figure 3. There was only one official wrapper, issued in August 1891. When it was withdrawn on December 1894 only some 8,000 had been printed. An unrecorded example with the 'OS' inverted is illustrated in Figure 5.



Figure 5 Inverted 'OS' on 1d wrapper of 1891

Comment on any of these items would be welcomed together with offers for written accounts for *Capital Philately* of Society displays.

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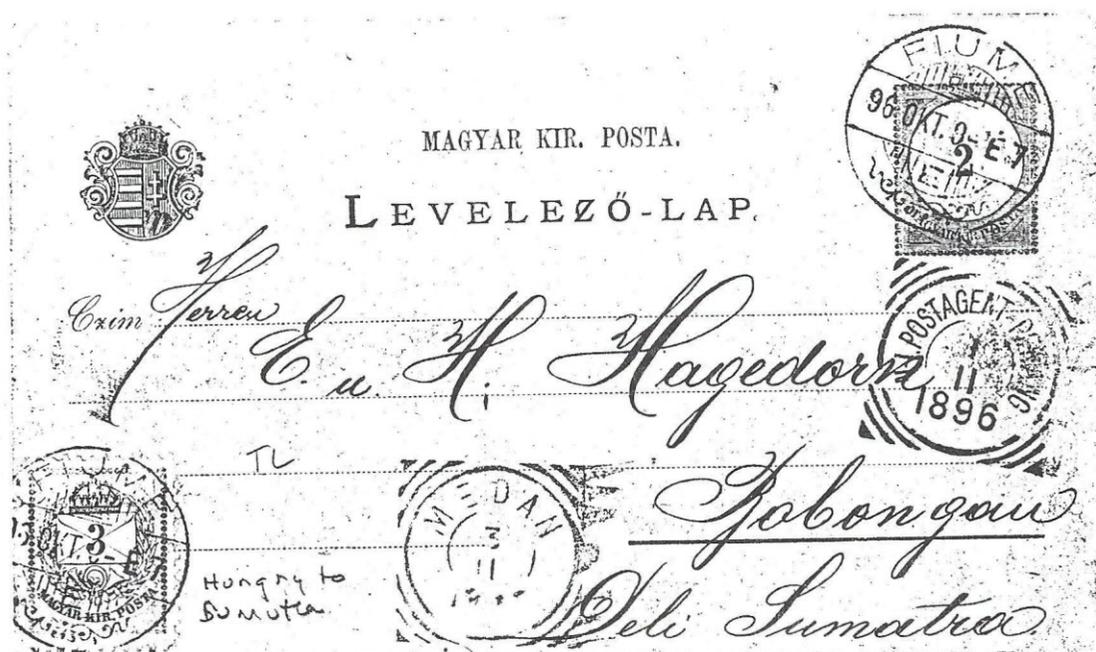
A FAVOURITE POSTAL CARD

Judy Kennett

I found this Hungarian postal card in the stock of an American dealer at AUSTAMP 90. My eye was taken by the unusual destination of Sumatra in the former Dutch East Indies (now Indonesia). It was posted in Fiume - now Rijeka, a city in Croatia.

The 2-Krajczar Hungarian postal card of the 1896 issue was intended for use in Hungary and in areas controlled by the Hungarian Postal Administration which included Croatia. The sender added a 3-Krajczar blue-green stamp of the 'envelope' issue of 1881 in-order to make up the international rate of 5-Krajczar for postal cards.

Both the adhesive stamp and the imprinted stamp on the card were cancelled 96 OKT 9 (the Hungarian style for 9 October 1896), although the sender's message is dated 10/10/96. On 1 November 1896 the card was cancelled 'POSTAGENT PENANG'. Later, on 3 November 1896, the circular date stamp was applied at Medan in Sumatra.



While I was in Queensland in October 1991 I visited Cliff de Goede, a long time member of the Society. The conversation came around to mails that linked the Dutch East Indies and Europe. I mentioned this card with the POSTAGENT cancel and asked if Cliff could assist with additional information. Cliff was able to supply some information about the Dutch postal agencies in Malaya. I quote at length from his reply.

'About your card from Hungary to the Dutch East Indies with the squared 'POSTAGENT PENANG' cancellation, somewhere I have the complete history of this postal agency but I have not yet been able to put my hand on it. When I find it I will send you all the details.

However, during the period in question, ie mid to late 1880s, the Dutch East Indies Post Office maintained two official postal agencies in Malaya, one in

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Penang and one in Singapore. Their main function was to collect mail from China and other east Asian areas which came to these two ports in a variety of ways and often was difficult to handle or delayed when relying on local services. These were then forwarded to Batavia* by the regular Dutch mail steamers or the KPM (Dutch East Indies Packet) which regularly called at these two ports. They also handled the transfer of mail from foreign shipping lines going to the Far East, such as Messageries Maritimes or the British Orient Line.

In the case of your card, originating in Fiume, I suspect it was carried by rail to Genoa or some other Italian port and then by non-Netherlands vessel to Penang, where it was handed to the NEI postal agency and forwarded to MEDAN, the main postal distribution centre on Sumatra. Mr. Hagedorn was obviously a stamp dealer as the card is a request for a stamps price list!

This is the information I discovered when I investigated a strange 'POSTAGENT' cancel. It is part of international postal history - a Hungarian postal card and stamp, sent from a city in Croatia, a part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire at that time, to the far-away East Indies, which was then a colony of the Netherlands. How many changes in administrations have taken place since then!

And, one might wonder, how does the transit time of 26 days compare with the sea-mail service of today?

* Batavia (now Jakarta)

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the complete coverage "down under"

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**SPECIALIST PHILATELIC SOCIETIES
THE AMERICAN TOPICAL ASSOCIATION**

Peter Kunz

Enthusiastic thematic collectors can certainly benefit richly from joining the American Topical Association.

The American Topical Association (the ATA) was founded by Jerry Husak in 1949 working from the bedroom of his home. Husak wanted to form a club which would be of assistance to all thematic collectors. The ATA currently has over 7,500 members worldwide.

Members can avail themselves of thematic checklists on a myriad of subjects which are compiled each year by thematic collectors and specialists as well as obtaining address lists of other members together with their collecting interests.

As examples of the scope of the hundreds of topical checklists and interests, recently updated lists includes such thematic subjects as automobiles, balloons, blood donations, dolphins, fire fighting and scuba diving.

Membership also entitles the collector to receive the journal of the ATA, this is entitled *Topical Time* which is air mailed to Australia six times per year.

Topical Time includes articles on the thematic exhibition scene worldwide and new issues. There are also articles on themes of interest to members as well as accounts of the activities of study groups which have specialised information on topics ranging from Americana, butterflies and moths, masks, railroads, space to gay and lesbian history!

Topical Time is usually about 90 pages long and is printed on quality glossy paper. Its production is a tribute to the dynamic nature of thematic collecting and the ability of Americans to treat this aspect of philately in detail with enthusiasm and energy.

Membership of the ATA, for eighteen months, can be obtained for US\$ 27. The contact address is:

American Topical Association
PO Box 630
Johnstown PA, USA.

HORSES
On Stamps

SPACE
STAMPS



PHILATELIC
NUDES

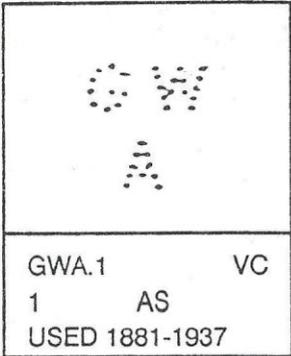
COMMERCIAL PERFINS OF AUSTRALIA

JOHN GRANT AND JOHN MATHEWS

The 'official' perfins used by Australian state and federal governments have been a recognised field of philately for many years. General and specialised catalogue listings are available. However, many collectors also file away commercial perfins but systematic collecting has been hampered by the lack of any comprehensive listing. The publication of the study by John Grant and John Mathews heralds a new era for Australian perfin collectors.

The authors illustrate and describe some 1500 different commercial perfins. Details are given of the period of use: the name, address and type of business and an indication of rarity. There is therefore, an illustration, at actual size, for all known perfins.

In addition to the annotated listing, there are some seventy pages of text. These present background to the use of the perfins, accounts of the relevant federal and state legislation and information on the supply of perforating machines. A particularly interesting chapter, Victorian service punctures, describes the punctured 'to private order' perfins produced by various firms in Melbourne during the period 1890 to the 1930s.

| | | | |
|--|-----------------------------|---|----------------------------------|
| * Illustration of Perfin Pattern | * Identification of user |  | Geo. Wills & Co Ltd |
| *Reference No | * Address of user | | Grenfell St Adelaide SA |
| *Types | * Occupation of user | GWA.1 | VC |
| *Period of Use | * Notes | 1 | AS |
| | | USED 1881-1937 | |
| | | | Merchants & forwarding agents |

The key to the format used in the catalogue is shown below together with an example for GWA (Geo. Wills & Co Ltd). This has the distinction of being the earliest known Australian perfin. The letters 'AS' in the illustration indicate that it was used on both Commonwealth and South Australian stamps.

A chapter is also devoted to the manufacturers of perforating machines. The first perfins were produced in the United Kingdom in the late 1860s and the first manufacturer of perforating machines was Joseph Sloper (J. Sloper & Co Ltd of London). The authors present evidence that some of the Australian perforators were also produced by Sloper. In addition, there are reproductions of early advertisements extolling the virtues of Australian made perforators.

Commercial perfins of Australia is a splendid example of high quality philatelic research, excellently presented and designed to meet the needs of the collector. The authors' acknowledge the help of the Perfin Club of New Zealand and Australia (for details see *Capital Philately*, v.8, n.3) and the contributions of other perfin collectors. The book is

Capital Philately

dedicated to the late Joe Purcell of Kingston, Ontario who put together the first unpublished listing of Australian commercial perfins.

The publication runs to some 300 pages, is of A4 size, stitched and bound and incorporates a number of photographs and illustrates a number of proofing covers. The study is available from J. Grant and J. Mathews, PO Box 3111, Weston Creek, ACT 2611, to whom cheques should be made payable. The retail price is \$28.50 which includes postage within Australia; certified mail and overseas postage is extra. The monograph will be officially launched, on Saturday March 14 1992 at the Canberra GPO, at the Seventh National Philatelic Convention.

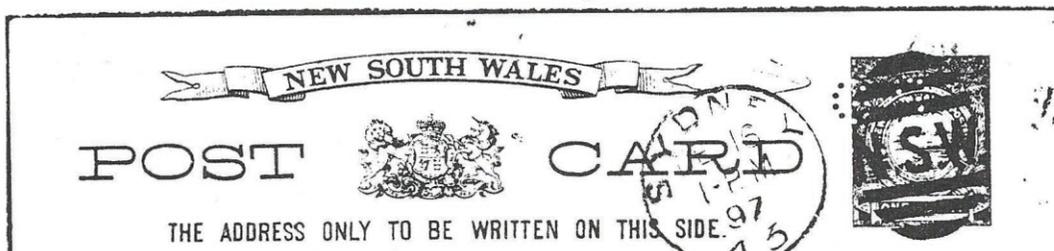
The study is a credit to the authors and it is especially pleasing that both have been active members of the Society for many years.

Dingle Smith

GR PERFIN ON POSTAL STATIONERY

DINGLE SMITH

One of the advantages of reviewing forthcoming publications, that include check lists, is the opportunity to search one's own collection for undescribed items. I was pleased to find that my collection contained such an item. This is illustrated below; it is a GR perfin on a 1d NSW post card issued in 1896 (Higgins & Gage 17). This perfin for 'Government Railways' is described as GR.1, by Grant and Mathews.



The interest of this card is that it is the first reported use of a perfin on an official item of postal stationery. The three examples listed by Grant and Mathews were all punctured onto printed-to-order envelopes. Two other examples of GR perfins on NSW post cards are described in the Gary Watson auction catalogue for 5 March 1990. There were as '...1905 usage of 1d HG 19 perf GR' and '1907 usage of 1d HG 30 with GR perfin'. Careful readers of the published text will however, find that these examples of use on postal stationery are now incorporated. This is a splendid example of the flexibility offered by having manuscripts stored on a word processor.

I also have a NSW post card (HG D3a), postmarked 14 June 1890, sent by the NSW Government Railways. This acknowledges receipt of a letter, the subject of which was 'fowls from Mudgee'. The interest is that this is an official post card with 'O S' overprinted on the stamp impression. Perhaps the use of the GR perfin commenced after 'OS' overprinted postal stationery was withdrawn on Dec 31 1894?

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