



Capital Philately



Journal of the Philatelic Society of Canberra



The Philatelic Society of Canberra Incorporated
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Capital Philately

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EDITORIAL

Editors don't just fade away - they just keep writing. Ed Druce, who has relinquished his position as Editor because of a posting to Toronto, Canada, continues to contribute to this journal. In this issue, his article is more in the form of an editorial, but as you will read in his article, he has another 60 articles on postal history he is planning to submit for publication in future issues.

Ed has been a driving force in philately in Canberra and in

Australia for a long time. He was one of the founders of **Capital Philately** and was its second editor. Through his writing and editorship, **Capital Philately** has continued to be a respected philatelic journal, winning awards at national and international exhibitions.

We wish Ed well in Toronto and look forward to his visit back to Canberra to attend AUSTAMP 90 and his return at the end of his posting.

Comments by Former Editor

Ed Druce

By the time you read this I will be firmly ensconced in Canada, having endured a Canadian winter. While the challenge of representing Australia in Canada is welcome and the philatelic life in Toronto is tremendous, my move was tinged with regret at having to give up the editorship of this journal. The next number will be the first of volume 8 and it is said that once you are into volume 10 then there is no stopping. Alan Salisbury managed the first five volumes and it would have been my pleasure to take *Capital Philately* past its tenth birthday.

However, that was not to be and I have handed over to 'Dingle' Smith who will be an admirable successor and will bring to the job an extensive knowledge of traditional philately, postal history, postal stationery and cinderellas. Please excuse me if I reminisce a little in that I am the last of the originals. Indeed Alan Salisbury and I first looked at the question of a journal in the early 1970's, but it was the jubilee of the Society that triggered the decision to go ahead. Since then the journal has gone from strength to strength with increasingly higher awards at exhibitions and an extra-ordinarily wide range of articles mirroring the catholic philatelic tastes of Society members. The path has not been smooth, sometimes the amount of material available has meant that a number of the Editorial Committee has had to dash off that extra article, but I am pleased to say that the corner has been turned and the supply is now ahead of demand.

Advertising revenue has fallen away, although the local dealers, and Stanley Gibbons, have been sterling in their support. It is a pity that there is not more support

from the trade for such journals but I do understand that advertising is there not to subsidise the production of a journal but to promote business for the advertiser. The trade is therefore guided by their judgement on how many people read philatelic literature. Sadly the answer is very few. One of the reasons for adding more illustrations is that often people get switched on by pictures rather than words. (Memo to future editor - could you do the editorial in pictures?).

This lack of a desire to gain philatelic knowledge is one reason why we have not attracted a large number of additional subscribers although we did have about thirty extra from around the world. I'm sure this will grow as we become better known and then the rush will be on to get the back numbers. Even if you don't read your journal, don't throw it away. It will be worth a lot more than your accumulated subscriptions.

Capital Philately is taken to where it is somewhat by its editor but more importantly by its authors. In this respect the journal has begun to gain strength as a journal of record for postal history, fiscal stamps, literature, and postal stationery as well as in the philatelic history of the Australian States. The journal, however, does suffer from a lack of articles on Australian Commonwealth and on thematic philately.

All that remains is for me to wish Dingle Smith a very happy tenure as Editor and, provided he will publish it, to keep the Postal History Column. Now that I have written about thirty of them I'll let you into a little secret. There are about ninety planned and together they will form a compendium of postal history subjects and practices. The book has never been written but you as a subscriber to *Capital Philately* are the lucky owner. New members order your back numbers now!

Queensland National Parks and Wildlife Camping Coupons

Ian McMahon

On 1 November 1988 the Queensland National Parks and Wildlife Service (QNPWS) introduced a new system for the payment of national park camping fees. The system allows for the payment of fees by 'coupons' which are to be attached to the camping permit.

The 'coupons' were issued in the denominations of 50c, \$2, \$5 and \$7. The camping fees varied depending on the campground. Each campground has been classified into one of three categories: A, B, or C. Fees (for up to six people) for category A campgrounds are \$7 per site, category B \$5 per site and category C \$2 per person (up to a maximum of \$5 per site for six people). Seven days camping is

provided for the cost of six days. The 'coupons' are 46mm x 26mm in size and are roulette 9. The designs feature rainforest animals from North Queensland with the Cassowary featured on the 50c coupon, the Herbert River Ringtail on the \$2, the Torresian Pigeon on the \$5 and the Amethystine Python on the \$7.

Despite being described as coupons, they are stamp-like and fall clearly into the realm of the cinderella collector. The QNPWS brochures state that the coupons are not valid for postal purposes or for any other purpose than the payment of camping fees. They are available for purchase at selected QNPWS outlets (including the head office at PO Box 155, North Quay, Qld 4002) and are sold at a ten per cent discount to encourage their use. QNPWS will refund unused coupons less a \$5 handling fee.



**QUEENSLAND POSTAGE RATES TO
OVERSEAS COUNTRIES 1863**

Ian McMahon

In an earlier article on Queensland postage rates and regulations (*Capital Philately*, November 1988), I mentioned that the Queensland post office published an extensive table of rates for mail to other British colonies and foreign countries. Due to space limitations full details were not provided. In this article I wish to provide a summary of these rates which were published in the *Queensland Government Gazette* in a notice dated 10 June 1863. The rates were for mail to overseas countries conveyed via the United Kingdom and prepaid to destination (unless otherwise stated). They revised the New South Wales rates in force at the time of the separation of Queensland from New South Wales and which presumably continued in force after separation. The prepayment of letters via the United Kingdom to foreign countries and to other British colonies commenced in New South Wales on 1 January 1855. For a discussion of the route and the rates as they affected New South Wales please refer to *Postal History of New South Wales* (Ed. J.S. White).

Letter rates

The charges given below prepaid conveyance of letters through the United Kingdom to their destination via Southampton. Letters sent via Marseilles were charged French postage of 3d per quarter ounce in addition to these charges (letters could also be sent as private ship letters at 6d per half ounce).

Holland:

6d up to 1/2oz, 1/- up to 1oz, 1/- per additional ounce (or part thereof). (This rate only prepaid transmission to the United Kingdom - charges for transmission from the UK to Holland were collected on delivery.)

Belgium:

9d up to 1/2oz, 1/6 up to 1oz, 1/6 per additional ounce (or part thereof).

Cape Verde Is:

9d up to 1/4oz, 1/1 for 1/4oz to 1/2oz, 1/10 for 1/2oz to 3/4oz, 2/2 for 3/4oz to 1oz; 1/2 additional 1/4oz, 1/6 additional 1/2oz, 1/10 additional 3/4oz, 2/2 additional 1oz.

France:

10d up to 1/4oz, 1/2 for 1/4oz to 1/2oz, 2/- for 1/2oz to 3/4oz, 2/4 for 3/4oz to 1oz; 1/4 additional 1/4oz, 1/8 additional 1/2oz, 2/- additional 3/4oz and 2/4 additional 1oz.

Africa (West Coast), Austria, Canada (including New Brunswick, Newfoundland, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island), Curacao, Falkland Islands, Gambia, German States (excluding Baden, Bavaria and Wurtemberg), Gibraltar, Gold Coast, Greytown (Nicaragua), Haiti, Lagos, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Venezuela:

11d for letters up to 1/2oz, 1/10 up to 1oz and 1/10 additional 1oz (or part thereof).

Canary Is:

11d up to 1/4oz, 1/5 for 1/4oz to 1/2oz, 2/4 for 1/2oz to 3/4oz, 2/10 for 3/4oz to 1oz; 1/4 additional 1/4oz, 1/10 additional 1/2oz, 2/4 additional 3/4oz, 2/10 additional 1oz.

Accra:

1/- up to 1/2oz, 2/- up to 1oz and 2/- per additional ounce.

Baden, Bavaria, Switzerland, Tunis and Wurtemberg:

1/- up to 1/4oz, 1/6 for 1/4oz to 1/2oz, 2/6 for 1/2oz to 3/4oz, 3/- for 3/4oz to 1oz; 1/6 additional 1/4oz, 2/- additional 1/2oz, 2/6 additional 3/4oz and 3/- for additional ounce.

Heligoland:

1/1 up to 1/2oz, 2/2 up to 1oz, 2/2 per additional ounce.

Denmark and USA:

1/2 up to 1/2oz, 2/4 up to 1oz, 2/4 per additional ounce.

Ionian Is., Poland and Russia:

1/3 up to 1/2oz, 2/6 up to 1oz, 2/6 per additional ounce.

Venetian Lombardy:

1/3 up to 1/4oz, 2/- for 1/4oz to 1/2oz, 3/3 for 1/2oz to 3/4oz, 4/- for 3/4oz to 1oz; 1/9 additional 1/4oz, 2/6 additional 1/2oz, 3/3 additional 3/4oz, 4/- per additional ounce.

Scutari, Tenedos:

1/4 up to 1/2oz, 2/8 up to 1oz, 2/8 per additional ounce.

Buenos Aires, Costa Rica, Guadeloupe, Guatemala and Sweden:
1/5 up to 1/2oz, 2/10 up to 1oz, 2/10 per additional ounce.

Greece, Papal States:

1/5 up to 1/4oz, 2/4 for 1/4oz to 1/2oz, 3/9 for 1/2oz to 3/4oz, 4/8 for 3/4oz to 1oz; 1/11 additional 1/4oz, 2/10 additional 1/2oz, 3/9 additional 3/4oz, 4/8 each additional ounce.

Ascension, Bermuda, Cape of Good Hope, British West Indies, Cuba, Honduras, Martinique, Mexico, Natal, New Granada, Puerto Rico, Surinam, St Croix, St Eustatius, St Helena, St Martins and St Thomas:

1/5 up to 1/2oz, 2/10 up to 1oz; 1/11 additional 1/2oz, 2/10 additional ounce.

Badagri, Bonny, Fernando Po, Goree, Old Calabar, Wydah:

1/6 up to 1/2oz, 2/10 up to 1oz; 1/11 additional 1/2oz, 2/10 additional ounce.

Oregan, Sandwich Is, California and Norway:

1/7 up to 12oz, 3/2 up to 10z; and 3/2 per additional ounce.

West Indies (foreign other than those specified above):

1/9 up to 1/2oz, 3/6 up to 1oz; 3/6 per additional ounce.

Ecuador, Chile and Bolivia:

2/5 up to 1/2oz, 4/10 up to 10z; 2/5 additional 1/2oz, 4/10 per additional ounce.

Newspaper rates

Charges given represent the charge per newspaper prepaid to destination through the UK via the route given.

Holland:

1d via Southampton, 3d via Marseilles (these rates only prepaid transmission to the United Kingdom - charges for transmission from the UK to Holland were collected on delivery).

Accra, Africa (West Coast), Ascension, Badagri, Bermuda, Bonny, Brazil, Buenos Aires, Canada, Cape of God Hope, Cape Verde Is, Costa Rica, Cuba, Curacao, Falkland Is, Fernando Po, Gambia, Gibraltar, Gold Coast, Goree, Guatemala, Guadeloupe, Greytown (Nicaragua), Haiti, Montevideo, New Granada, Old Calabar, Puerto Rico, Mexico, Martinique, Madeira, Luxembourg, Liberia, Lagos, Ionian Is, Natal, Honduras, USA, Sierra Leone, Surinam, St Croix, St Eustatius, St Helena, St Martins and St Thomas, Venezuela, West Indies (British and foreign) and Wydah:

2d via Southampton, 4d via Marseilles.

California, Oregon:

3d via Southampton, 5d via Marseilles.

Sandwich Is:

3d via Southampton, 4d via Marseilles.

Bolivia, Ecuador, Chile, Peru:

4d via Southampton, 6d via Marseilles.

Austria, German States (except
Wurtemberg, Baden and Bavaria),
Canary Is, Denmark, Norway,
Heliogoland, Poland, Russia,
Scutari, Tenedos, Sweden:
via Southampton: 1d per newspaper
plus 3d up to 2oz, 6d for 2oz to
4oz, 1/- for 4oz to 8oz, 2/- for
8oz to 1lb, 3/- for 1lb to 1.5lb,
4/- for 1.5lb to 2lb.

France, Greece, Belgium, Venetian
Lombardy, Wurtemberg, Tunis,
Switzerland, Papal States, Baden
and Bavaria:
Via Southampton: 1d per newspaper
plus 2d up to 2oz, 4d for 2oz to
4oz, 8d for 4oz to 8oz, 1/4 for 8oz
to 1lb, 2/- for 1lb to 1.5lb, 2/8
for 1.5lb to 2lb.

Book packet rates

The rates below prepaid the
delivery of book packets to
destination via Southampton.

Accra, Africa (West Coast),
Badagri, Bonny, Brazil, Buenos
Aires, California, Chile, Costa
Rica, Cuba, Curacao, Ecuador,
Fernando Po, Greece, Guatemala,
Guadeloupe, Nicaragua, Haiti,
Honduras, Ionian Is., Luxembourg,
Liberia, Lagos Mexico, Martinique,
Madeira, Montevideo, New Granada,
Old Calabar, Oregon, Puerto Rico,
Peru, Sierra Leone, Surinam, St
Croix, St Eustatius, St Martins, St
Thomas, Sandwich Is., U.S.A.,
Venezuela, West Indies (foreign)
and Wydah:
charged as letters.

Holland:
4d up to 4oz, 8d for 4oz to 1lb,
1/4 for 1lb to 1.5lb, 2/- for 1.5lb
to 2lb. (These rates only prepaid
transmission to the United Kingdom
- charges for transmission from the
UK to Holland were collected on
delivery.)

Ascension, Bermuda, Canada, Cape of
Good Hope, Falkland Is, Gambia,
Gibraltar,, Gold Coast, Honduras,

Ionian Is, Lagos, Liberia, Natal,
St Helena, Sierra Leone, British
West Indies:

6d up to 4oz, 1/- for 4oz to 8oz,
2/- for 8oz to 1lb, 3/- for 1lb to
1.5lb, 4/- for 1.5lb to 2lb.

Baden, Bavaria, Belgium, Cape Verde
Is, France, Madeira, Papal States,
Switzerland, Tunis, Venetian
Lombardy, Wurtemberg:
6d up to 2oz, 8d for 2oz to 4oz,
1/- for 4oz to 8oz, 2/8 for 8oz to
1lb, 4/- for 1lb to 1.5lb, 5/4 for
1.5lb to 2lb.

Austria, other German States,
Canary Is, Greece, Heligoland:
7d up to 2oz, 10d for 2oz to 4oz,
1/8 for 4oz to 8oz, 3/4 for 8oz to
1lb, 5/- for 1lb to 1.5lb, 6/8 for
1.5lb to 2lb.

Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Scutari,
Tenedos, Russia, Poland:
7d up to 2oz, 10d for 2oz to 4oz,
1/8 for 4oz to 8oz, 3/4 for 8oz to
1lb, 5/- for 1lb to 1.5lb, 6/8 for
1.5lb to 2lb. (These rates prepaid
delivery only as far as the extreme
frontier of Germany.)

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Capital Philately

August 1989

Governor-General Frank Stamp Used in Rural Victoria

Hans Karman

The Governor-General's frank stamp has been recorded used in Sydney and Melbourne only (Philately from Australia - March 1982). It was a Commonwealth marking for use on the Governor-General's official mail and is described in several articles other than the above, lately in the Bulletin of the Australian Commonwealth Collectors' Club (April 1986), the Chapman Report (Stamp News, February 1986) and Stamp News (July 1986).

Illustrated (fig. 1) is a mourning cover with the Governor-General's frank stamp, clearly cancelled at Skipton on 16 January 1902. It is addressed to the Mutual Stores, Flinders Street, Melbourne. This is the same address used on the earliest known Governor-General's frank stamp cover (fig. 2). In addition, the words "Chemist department" give a hint at the possible reason for the cover: both Lord Hopetoun and the Countess Hoprtoun suffered ill health. There is a faint Ballarat transit cds, and an arrival cds on the reverse of Melbourne, dated 17 January 1902.

How did this cover come to be sent from Skipton?

The Argus of 16 January 1902 reported that the Governor-General sailed from Perth on R.M.S. China on 15 January. He had been on a visit to the Western Australian goldfields.

The Sydney Morning Herald of 20 January 1902 reported:

"The Governor-General reached Adelaide from Western Australia by the mail steamer China to-day. The trip was trying for Lord Hopetoun, who suffered severely from seasickness. His Excellency landed

at 1.15 p.m., and travelled to the city in the vice regal carriage. He remained at the Adelaide Club until his departure by the special mail train at 5 p.m. for Melbourne. Sir John Forrest, who accompanied Lord Hopetoun, also returned to Melbourne by the special train."

The cover could therefore clearly not have been sent by him.

The Argus on 20 January 1902 further added that:

"Her Excellency the Countess of Hopetoun, who had been spending some weeks on Carramballac Station, lent to her by Mrs. Robert Chirnside, returned to Melbourne on Saturday evening, the special car being attached to the Ballarat train for the purpose."

Carramballac Station is located 20km west of Skipton. There is thus every reason to deduce that the cover originated from Lady Hopetoun's entourage. This is on the face of it not only the first recorded use of the Governor-General's frank stamp outside the two capitals, but also the first recorded instance of the use of the frank stamp by someone other than the Governor-General.

It would be interesting to speculate on the legitimacy of the use of the Governor-General's frank stamp in this case. Since no references to this frank stamp in legislation or regulations have been found, it is not known if any special conditions applied to its use. It may have been used under a liberal interpretation of "official use". The cover certainly does not comply with the rule applicable to the use of Victorian frank stamps, i.e. that the envelope should be marked "On Her Majesty's Service"; but I do not know of any Governor-General's frank stamps with such an indication.

I have in my collection a picture

postcard to England (fig. 3) which tends to confirm that the frank stamp was used on mail which cannot be classed as official. It has a message on the front: "D:Sis,

arrived safe hope you & yours are well. love. Edwin". I have not managed to identify either the addressee, Mrs J. Cook, or "Edwin".

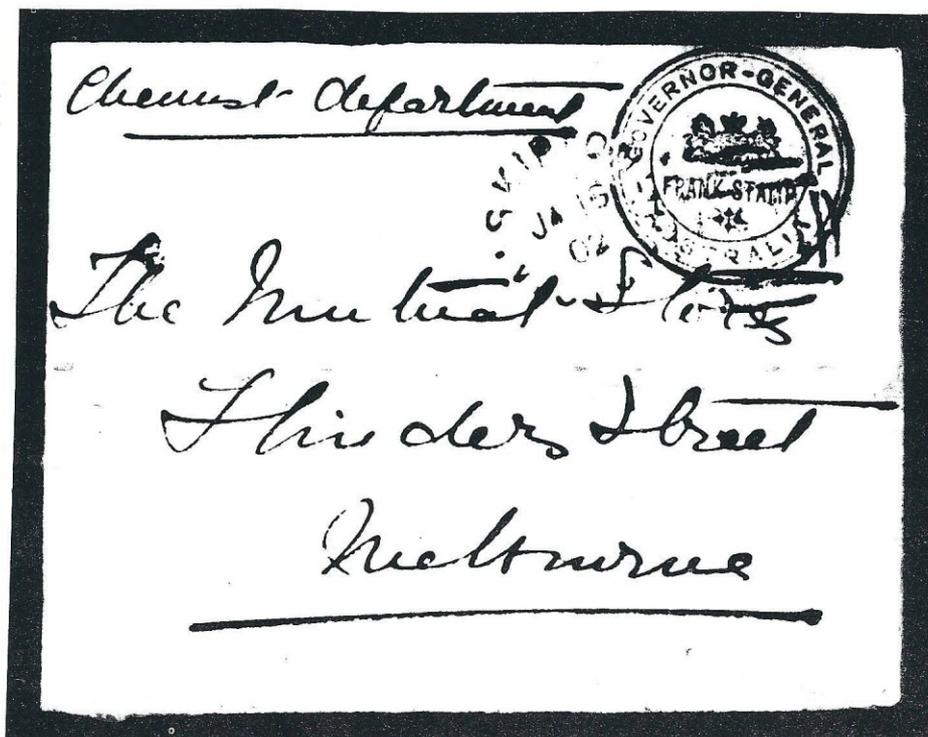


Figure 1

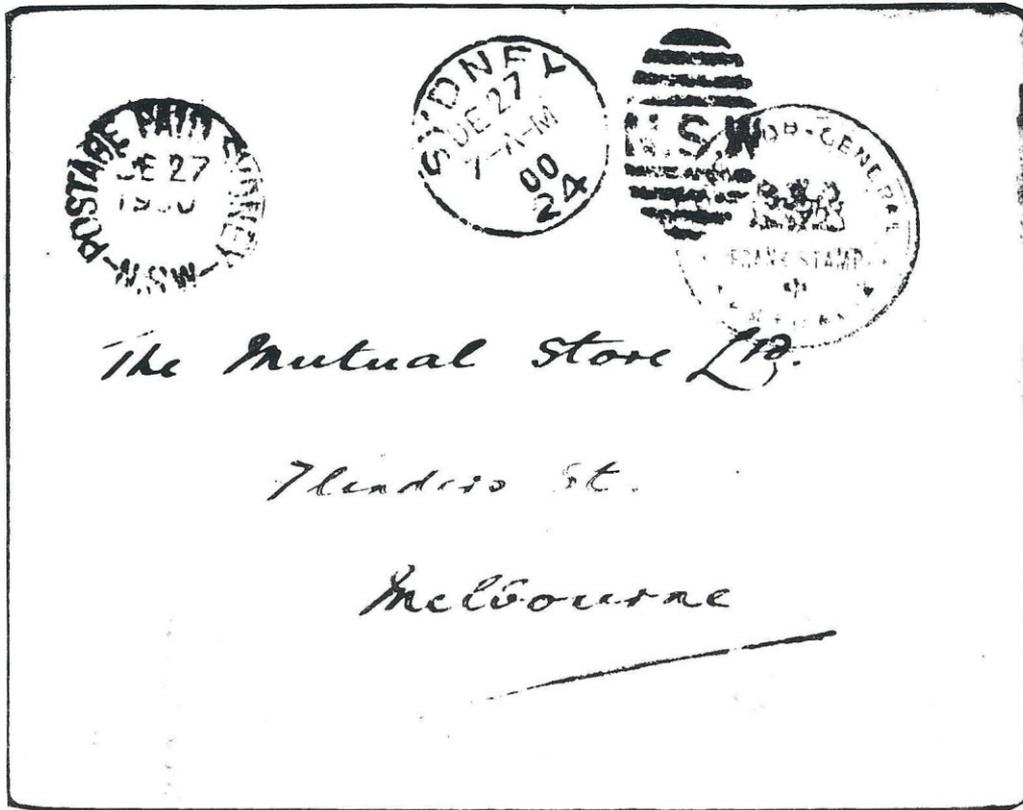


Figure 2

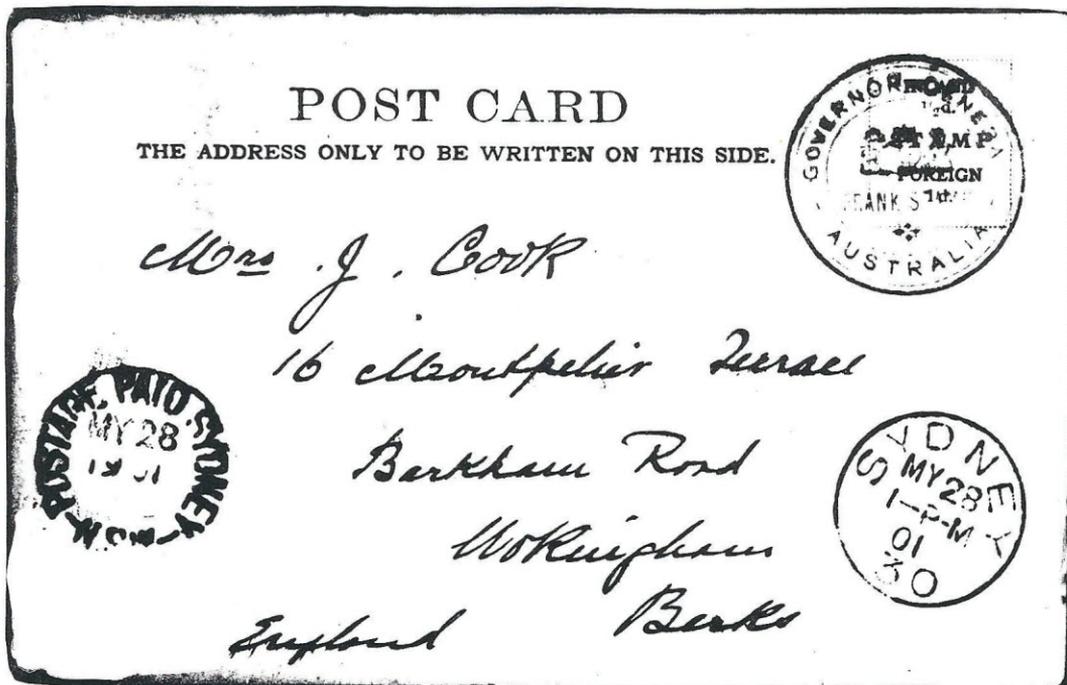


Figure 3

Bass Strait Islands

Allan Tippet

Just exactly 50 years ago, in the year I was located on King Island in Bass Strait, I found myself on the most southerly point climbing down over the rocks to photograph the seals from as close range as I could manage, and finished getting thoroughly drenched, and being lucky I wasn't swimming with them. Fifty years is an appropriate period for me to go back and contemplate seals and King Island, because we are turning back in our history at this time and recording things we should have written up long ago.

Working over the sources I have accumulated over that 50 years, it occurs to me that no-one has really looked at the postal history of the whole of Bass Strait. One finds many isolated reference to vessels carrying mails, and people writing or receiving letters, and official Colonial despatches; not to overlook the many things implied about mails in snippets of history. Clearly one cannot go to the encyclopaedia and look up 'Mails in Bass Strait'. Moreover, have you noticed how most of our beautifully illustrated new kind of literature on the history of our shipping, railways, towns, trade routes, etc., have virtually nothing on the mail systems which emerged beside them, so that one looks in vain in the index for this kind of information. Can you imagine my latest acquisition on Australian railways, a chronological treatment of all our railway lines, one by one, with three or four hundred illustrations, and not a reference to a Travelling Post Office, or a picture of a train at full speed catching up a mail bag in its cage. Likewise, we have books galore on our coastal shipping and shipwrecks, but not very much in them on the mails and mail contracts which often kept them going and coming. What we do have

is mostly in Government Memoranda, that have to be searched out in the Archives, or Postal Guides (which are often discarded like telephone books).

In my King Island days I used to walk down the track heading south from Currie along the top of the sand dunes to British Admiral Bay, so called after a famous wreck there. A whole series of mixed history and legend has grown up about the King Island wrecks. In this case the tradition has it that the vessel had a cargo of whisky. Somehow, no-one knows how, a hundred or so cases just completely evaporated overnight after they had been stacked up on the beach for salvage. The treasure is supposed to be still buried there in the sand dunes somewhere (some spirit that!). Certainly, although 89 (I think from memory) perished, others did survive. Tradition does not record whether the mail was salvaged or not, or whether or not a 'wreck cover' could ever turn up at auction.

Quite near this location, just before my time, the burrowing of the mutton birds loosened the sandbine and the wind blew out a long gully, exposing thousands of animal bones including the sub-recent species of emu and kangaroo. Here I found some flaked quartz, and there was no quartz anywhere in the area. It was an old skinning location that was exposed.

Away back years before my time a well-known Straitsman, David Howie, had established two Tasmanian women there to hunt for him and skin kangaroos. Elsewhere in the same island he did a little sealing, but the bottom had dropped out of sealing by his time in mid-century, and he turns to kangaroo.

The heyday of sealing went back another fifty years before that. That is the point where I entered the story, but now I go back to the

beginning in the hope that I can reconstruct a picture from the scores of fragments of information that have come with half a century of reading and research, finding what our philatelic auctioneer call 'pickings'.

'Sealing' has more often than not been tacked on to 'whaling' by historians as if it were just a kind of afterthought. Rather it is a subject for study in its own right and has only a number of similarities with whaling. I do not intend entering the issue of whether or not the hunting of seals was ever legitimate, but to study the subject of the history of Bass Strait one has to differentiate between sealing as a 'controlled pursuit' and the wholesale slaughter of the creatures which ultimately led to their virtual elimination. One has to distinguish between the Straitsmen, who tried to settle the islands and make a livelihood from sealing, and the lawless desperadoes; fugitives from justice who would exterminate people just as quickly as animals if it suited their purposes, who turned to bushranging on land and piracy at sea. Although I hold no brief for either type, if anything worth-while might have come out of the early settlement of Bass Strait, it must have come from those small companies of Straitsmen; for here was a new world struggling to be born in a realm of convict-based 'survival-at-any-price' existence, before any substantial migration of freemen.

We are in Bass Strait while it was still under the Governor of New South Wales, before Van Diemen's Land became a separate entity in itself in 1828, by which time the islands had been almost stripped of seals and the Straitsmen had to find other activities.

It was a period of officially-sponsored exploration, and its charting was only accomplished piece by piece. The

records of Furneaux, Bass Flinders, Baudin and Sokes later, are all in the Archives now; but even before their arrival and the discovery of Bass Strait as a passage was between Van Diemen's Land and the mainland, both hunters and legitimate sealers on the one hand, and the marauding escaped convicts on the other, had located many of the innumerable hideouts offered among the islands of Bass Strait, small harbours suitable only for little craft, which were mostly either built in the Colony, captured or stolen.

In the first decade of the century the sealing trade was stimulated by the emerging merchant community of Port Jackson, who offered a job opportunity for such men as had completed their term of servitude and were seeking a livelihood. Many did respond to these offers for crews in small trading craft that headed for Bass Strait. The names of those of them who responded are recorded for posterity and many of them became historic personalities among the Straitsmen and elsewhere. 'Straitsmen' by the way, was their own self-designation, which rather indicates that their self-perception was legitimate: they saw themselves as permanent residents rather than exploiters and opportunist adventurers. The moment we meet that notion of selfhood, we must expect to find some kind of structured system of trade, supply, communication and mails.

Sure enough, although this is difficult to reconstruct with that wholeness that is required of good history, the records of the Administration, the merchant Archives, the early colonial newspapers and the first law court reports, both by specific reference and by implication show up a rudimentary system of inter-communications at work. Although there was little, if any, regularity in the schedule (except the seasonal one), there was

nevertheless a pattern, which dovetailed into the maritime trading pattern and mails procedure at the time.

There were a number of small settlements, some of which have been described by visiting seamen, ship captains and Administrative officials and one or two Christian humanitarians who made observations and wrote letters. These locations reached from the Furneaux Group in the east, and the Kent Group, King Island and beyond to the west as far as Kangaroo Island. Let me cite a couple of cases.

John Boulton, a free migrant to Hobart Town, sought to educate himself in colonial ways by taking a voyage by employment on a 39-ton schooner, 'Sally', and left a record of his rambling. He depicts the life of the communities on Cape Barren Island, Clarke Island, the Kent Group and on King's Island, where he found Elephant Bay to be the haunt of sealers. He stayed with James Monroe known as 'the King of the Eastern Straitsmen' on Preservation Island, getting a good picture of life there over eight weeks, having signed off there, to await a connection with Port Dalrymple, which was more or less easy of access. At Port Dalrymple he came to the military post at George Town, where he had to establish his identity before moving on inland up river to Launceston.

The settlement on Gun Carriage Island at one stage comprised a dozen or so cottages, neat and orderly, and led by one, Thomas Tucker, supposed by some to have been a most desperate character, but by others the opposite. He was a gentleman by birth, an ex-commissioned officer of the Royal Navy, who taught his children to read and write. One could cite other examples, but the point is made.

Many ships on the high seas passed

through Bass Strait bound for Sydney, and later Melbourne. Most of them carried mails of some kind and employed the British system and observing its regulations. However, in view of the fact that they passed through one of the major sealing areas of the South, their captains were not averse to doing a little sealing on the side. For example, the Governor had to send a vessel of his own to look for the 'Honduras', known to be carrying official despatches, but having become involved in a profitable sealing sideline. Sealing grounds, like whaling grounds were well-known meeting places for sealers and whalers. That meant locations for the exchange of newspapers, and mails, especially mails from the home port to ship captains fishing, or trading far from home. There was a loose fraternity among them.

Quite apart from this where ships took oil and seal skins prepared in a settlement and kept awaiting the arrival of a vessel, there would be consignment mails accompanying the cargo; or in the other direction consignment mails for stores and supplies sent to the island settlement. Thus was a mail link maintained with Sydney or Hobart Town, and shortly afterwards with Launceston. Some Straitsmen served as island 'factories' for the colonial merchant. In other cases shipping agents represented the Straitsman.

Personal links with the overseas world were very few. The settlers had left society, taken Tasmanian or Maori women and were raising their own mixed-blood population. Any home ties they had there. Yet inter-colonial mails did go to and fro. One finds references to a letter having been sent by, or received through the 'Active', 'The Brothers', 'John Palmer', 'Little Mary', 'Governor Sorell', 'Glory', 'Speedwell', 'Eliza', or 'Endeavour', all of which worked Bass Strait in the period of New

South Wales control.

Moreover, they often had special locations for leaving and picking up any mail. One of the most innovative 'mail boxes' was at Sea Elephant on the east side of King Island, where a temporary shack had been erected and a large bottle was suspended from a rafter. It stood out as a landmark on a lonely piece of straight beach - an excellent place for the receipt and delivery of mail. Campbell and Co., the merchants in Sydney used this, even communicating with the Governor through this mechanism when they were negotiating a consignment of cattle for shipment to Van Diemen's Land in 1804. The matter is referred to in a letter between them.

A still stranger transaction is in the records, of the carriage of despatches to King Island, where the French were busy making observations. The vessel having to go out of her way, the captain preferred, instead of the captain's normal gratuity, payment in the form of '30 empty salt-meat casks'. An interesting currency calculation!

Governor King had rather encouraged the sealing trade in Bass Strait. He had given the local merchants indirect support in their struggle with the East India Company, which took exception to their shipping of trepang to China and seal skins and oil into Britain, and were greatly hindered and suffered losses through this monopoly. That is a big subject and a good deal of correspondence changed hands - administrative, commercial and legal; but that was between Britain and the Colony, not the Straits communities, the fruit of which continually mounted up in the Sydney warehouses.

Messrs Kable & Underwood, would-be colonial merchants in Sydney working in partnership, had four schooners and a sloop working the

trade, and there were as many again of other owners in full-time sealing when King handed over to Bligh in 1806. True, the Colonial Administrators kept a tight rein on local boat building because of the facilities it offered convicts for escaping, and this also slowed down merchant development. Even so, when Bligh took over he found four vessels under construction, three of them over 100 tons each. He immediately legislated to bring this activity under tighter control.

The difficulties of fighting the East India Company, and control of local boat building led several would-be developers to go further afield. Some turned to America. Others became involved in the Fiji sandalwood trade with terrible consequences. Two vessels were wrecked there and several individuals lost their lives by getting involved in native wars. But the Bass Strait settlements continued, either supplying for the merchants or operating in their own autonomy. One Straitsman sailed his craft to Western Port on the mainland, established himself with a beach pitsaw, severed his vessel in two, cut longer timber from the bush and 'spliced' a new centre into his boat, transforming it into a small schooner, which traded for many years in the Straits and was even entrusted with important mails.

Occasionally, a war prize was brought in, and in spite of the way they complicated the legal aspects of the shipping, they were sent home to Britain with cargoes under special terms and round-about measures. Campbell & Co. shipped 400 tons of skins and oil on the Calcutta-built 'Lady Barlow' and brought back the 'Sydney' from Calcutta, unloaded 600 head of cattle at Port Dalrymple, and proceeded with another cargo of skins and oil; but nothing ever ran smoothly which threatened to compete with the East India

Company. It was always possible they would need to unload the skins and oil and take timber, or bring back a cargo of rice to get round the letter of the law.

However, this was not the reason for the slowing down of sealing in Bass Strait. It was rather because

the seals were being exterminated. With the development of Launceston some of the Straitsmen moved to the mainland.

(The final installment of this article will be published in the next issue.)

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**SPECIALIST SOCIETIES
THAILAND PHILATELIC SOCIETY**

Paul Barsdell

Although Australia is geographically close to Asia, few Australian collectors collect countries or areas within this large continent. Australians predominantly collect within the framework of their cultural heritage - Australasia, Great Britain, Europe and North America. The fascination of Asian philately has not been lost, however, on overseas collectors and material from most areas of Asia has become rapidly scarcer and more expensive in recent years.

Asia is still a fertile ground for new discoveries and research. There is also the scope to build up worthwhile collections at a reasonable cost. It does take more effort because few Australian dealers have extensive stocks of Asian material. But that's part of

the fun of collecting.

Thailand is one country which provides challenges for the specialist but is also, with few exceptions, relatively cheap to collect on a simplified basis. The country was originally known as Siam but its name was changed to Thailand in June 1939. In September 1945 the name reverted to Siam but was changed back to Thailand on 10 May 1949. Thailand has also the distinction of being one of few Asian countries not to have been colonised by a European power. Its postal operations were, however, often supervised by Europeans recruited from postal administrations in Europe, particularly Germany.

The Thailand Philatelic Society is the main international society specialising in Thai philately. It had its inaugural meeting 31 years ago on 25 January 1958. Although its base is in England, its 127

members are spread world-wide, including several in Australia.

The journal of the Society, The Thai Times, is the main organ of communication among members to keep them abreast of new discoveries, research findings and new issues. It is published three times a year in April, August and December.

Whereas the early issues of journals of many specialist societies are out of print and are very difficult to obtain, the out of print issues of The Thai Times have been reprinted and are available from the Be-Line Company in the USA and from Vera Trinder in England. As there is no comprehensive handbook for Thai philately, the availability of the full set of The Thai Times is invaluable as a source of information.

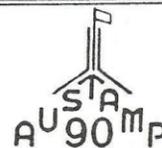
Apart from the journal, the Society publishes an occasional newsletter to keep members informed of Society activities and services.

The Society has also published two monographs, Revenue Stamps of Thailand - A Provisional Listing and Thailand - Mail to and from Prisoners of War and Civil Internees 1942-45, both edited by Peter Collins.

The Society maintains a library from which members may borrow materials for the cost of postage. A library list lists all material held and identifies its form (book, journal article, etc) and weight for calculation of postage.

The Society holds an occasional auction for which a catalogue is distributed to members to allow postal bidding. Much good material is included in the auctions.

Further information about the Society may be obtained from the Hon. Secretary, Brian Land, The Manse, 53 Wattsham Road, Bildeston, Ipswich, Suffolk, IP7 7EG, UK.



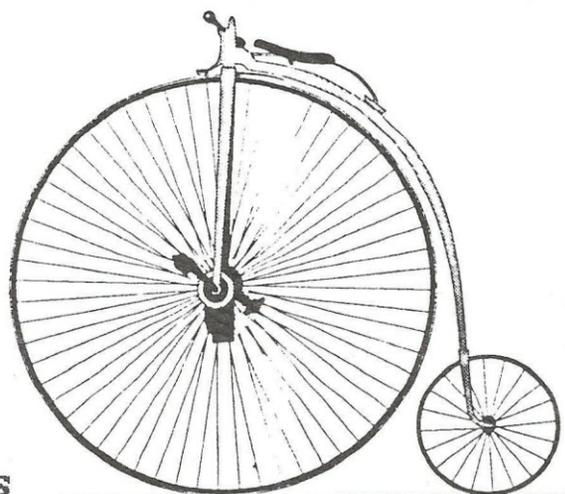
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