

# Capital Philately



Journal of the Philatelic Society of Canberra



**The Philatelic Society of Canberra Incorporated**  
(Founded 1932)

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## EDITORIAL

This edition of Capital Philately will be the hands of members and subscribers immediately prior to the opening of AUSTAMP 90. It will therefore, also provide the opportunity for interstate and overseas visitors to see the Society's journal and we would be delighted if they take out a subscription. Capital Philately is entered in the literature section and we look forward anxiously to the judge's verdict.

Capital Philately commenced as a quarterly journal in November 1982, the fiftieth anniversary of the Philatelic Society of Canberra. The initial editorial was written by the President, Elspeth Bodley. She stressed the need for active

support by the Society for the venture if it was to succeed and described the pitfalls that could occur.

'History tells of innumerable publications like this, often with far greater resources behind them, which have expired because the promises of support which preceded the confident inauguration failed to materialise. An enthusiastically begun series of articles faded out because the organizer was too busy, or realised he did not have the ability to proceed; a key writer moved to another place; the list of contributing writers gradually diminished, until eventually the Editor himself was in the position of having to compose the whole magazine himself, and soon realised the futility of it all'.

From 1982 until late 1989 Capital Philately had only two editors, Alan Salisbury and Ed Druce, and the problems quoted above were avoided. The current editor took over at the end of 1989. It is a matter of profound regret to the Editorial Committee that, for the first time, the publication dates of the journal fell behind schedule. This was not due to lack of material and the appearance of this AUSTAMP edition gets us back (almost) to the quarterly dates.

This AUSTAMP edition of Capital Philately contains a major article that compares the Australian exhibiting scene to that in north America and the United Kingdom. There is also an account of the foundation of the Society and the meetings for the inaugural year. The agenda and problems have changed little over the last 60 years!

It is not the policy of Capital Philately to review new Australian stamp issues which are excellently described elsewhere. However, the

extension of the services, and philatelic material, from Australia Post has prompted the committee to provide an occasional column describing such material. This commences with the background to 'Giftpaks'. To maintain our coverage of traditional philatelic material, articles are included on King George V 'proofs' and on Torres Strait mails. It is not the editor's intention to regularly review the articles in Capital Philately in every editorial. This has been done on this occasion to describe the editorial committee's overall policy, on which comments are always welcome.

Finally Capital Philately adds its welcome to the visitors to AUSTAMP 90. These include those who have paid to come through the door, the exhibitors, the interstate judges, the dealers and Australia Post. The Society has done its best to provide a philatelic feast for all tastes and all ages. Thank you for sharing it with us.

## **NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR PHILATELIC EXHIBITORS**

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This new Australian-wide organisation was formed to meet the demand for an information network relevant to displaying philatelic material at any level — Club, State, National and International.

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**SPECIALIST PHILATELIC SOCIETIES  
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR  
PHILATELIC EXHIBITORS**

Paul Barsdell

It was thought appropriate that the specialist society to be described in the AUSTAMP 90 edition of Capital Philately should be the National Association for Philatelic Exhibitors, or NAPE as it is commonly known.

Even experienced exhibitors would not claim to know everything about exhibiting. Philately is a dynamic hobby and so is philatelic exhibiting. For example, the popular thematics class has undergone radical changes in recent times. New classes are emerging and receiving recognition, even at international exhibitions. An experimental fiscal class was introduced at Delhi in 1989 and is included in NZ 90 at Auckland, in August of this year. A new class, social philately, will make its debut at AUSTAMP 90.

How can collectors keep up with the new trends in competitive philately? How can they improve their exhibits?

With the advent of annual national exhibitions and encouragement being given to the holding of state exhibitions, it was felt that it was time to set up an organization to assist exhibitors and to act as a forum for their views.

In 1987, Gary Watson convened NAPE to cater for the interests of exhibitors. It was modelled on the successful American Association of Philatelic Exhibitors.

The aims and objectives of NAPE include the publication and dissemination of information about exhibiting and other organized aspects of philately, the encouragement of new exhibitors, and the promotion and development of the interests of exhibitors.

NAPE publishes a journal, The Australian Exhibitor, three times a year. It contains a variety of informative, stimulating and provocative articles on exhibiting and exhibitions. These range from the discussion of the importance of judging criteria, such as 'importance', to the illustration of mounting techniques. It also provides a most useful calendar of forthcoming exhibitions at all levels, from local, state and national shows in Australia to internationals overseas. The exhibition information also includes dates for the submission of entries, who are the relevant commissioners and a precis of awards at shows that have passed.

Since the inaugural meeting of NAPE, at the Fifth National Philatelic Convention in Canberra in March 1988, meetings have been held at all other major exhibitions. They have been well attended and have given members the opportunity to express views on a range of issues related to exhibiting.

If you are an exhibitor, or aspire to be one, can you afford not to join NAPE? Why not come along to the NAPE meeting at AUSTAMP 90, hear what it is all about and meet other members? Dingle Smith is the local NAPE representative and would be pleased to provide further information.

The annual subscription is \$20 (\$12 under 25) or \$30 (overseas) payable to the Treasurer:

NAPE,  
PO Box 6246,  
St Kilda Road Central,  
VIC 3004.



**EXHIBITING - A WORLD WIDE PERSPECTIVE**

E.C.Druce

In the late 1930's Australia had a philatelic exhibition every year. They were held in not only the state capitals, including Brisbane, Melbourne and Sydney, but also in the large provincial towns such as Geelong and Albury. World War II saw an end to these annual events and philatelic exhibiting did not really recover, as a regular event, in Australia until the 1980's.

In the USA there are thirty-five national exhibitions every year! The American Philatelic Society, which is the co-ordinator and patron of such shows, reports on an ever increasing demand from exhibitors. This demand is mirrored in Australia where national stamp shows are 'sold out' in terms of frame space. Only a decade ago show organizers were scrambling to fill the frames and we had the never to be forgotten sight of endless frames of a single set of stamps entered as a series of different exhibits. My, how things have changed, and arguably only for the better!

This surge of collector interest is manifestly world-wide. While Australia sensibly only has one national a year, the USA is steadily increasing its number, Canada has three and the United Kingdom two a year. Switzerland still gets by with only one every four years but it is an enormous show and, of course, Swiss collectors have a variety of European shows in which they can enter.

More and more people are enjoying the exhilaration of exhibiting. The challenge to assemble material and tell a philatelic story is irresistible. The knockers call it 'pot hunting' but then where would we be without the knockers and the ignorant. If 'pot hunting' was the real objective, would collectors

pay the entry fees, engage in many days of intense labour and subject themselves to judgement and critical appraisal. I think not.

The cry goes out occasionally - there are too many exhibitions - some addicts might argue that there are too few. Many collectors are stimulated by competition and are immediately looking for the next opportunity to improve. The real answer must be 'let the market decide'. The market is a complex mix of people wanting to exhibit, dealers wanting selling opportunities and volunteers wanting to give freely an inordinate amount of their time. Of critical importance is the support of Australia Post. The Australian Philatelic Federation (APF) is to be congratulated on allowing free market principles to operate and encouraging both state and national exhibitions to satisfy the emerging demand. If you want a good laugh, dig out some old Australian philatelic magazines of the last five years and read all the nonsense written by those who would be lonely arbiters of what Australian stamp collectors want.

Over the past five years I have had the opportunity to attend national exhibitions in three continents and being invited to judge in two different countries, where I have the honour to be on the national judges roster. All told, I have been to over a dozen national exhibitions recently and I thought it might be interesting to compare and contrast what I have seen. While comparisons are sometimes odious, an appraisal should help to put Australian national exhibitions in perspective.

**Duration and venue**

In Australia the period that an exhibition has been open has decreased from ten to four or five days. Originally, it was argued, dealers needed two weekends in order to recover their expenses and make a modest profit. The counter argument is that good advertising

should achieve the same number of visitors over a much shorter period - three day holiday weekends should be ideal. Generally other countries have followed the same logic, the exception was the recently held World Stamp Expo in Washington D.C. To be fair this was not a national exhibition but a dealers bourse and invited international exhibition held in conjunction with a UPU meeting. The show ran over three weekends with a dismal result for the dealers with only the last weekend producing the crowds. In both the USA and Canada national shows are commonly of three days duration - Friday to Sunday. Clearly business, including dealer sales, is concentrated. Perhaps the only downside to the timing is that there is not enough time for philatelic meetings (another emerging trend of the 80's) and, given the scale of Australian competitive entries, judging.

Venues in Australia are a continual problem; I nearly said nightmare. To obtain a venue of the correct size, close to efficient transport and at a reasonable cost is difficult. Perth in 1987 and Sydney in 1988 suffered from this problem, whereas Melbourne in 1989 showed the advantage of a well situated location. In the USA the venue is commonly the ballroom of a large hotel, often situated on the outskirts of a major metropolitan area. For Americans, who revere the automobile, this poses no problems. In public transport conscious Canada venues are normally downtown convention centres, costly but central. In the United Kingdom the two national exhibitions are generally held in the Horticultural Hall in Westminster. This is an adequate venue but almost impossible to find unless one can operate a map and a compass!

A feature common to all overseas venues is their small size. While competitive entries are usually less than a hundred in number, there is still a shortage of room and dealers are crammed together

and aisles between frames almost non-existent. The other noticeable contrast to Australia is the intensity of the light. We are fortunate in having much more intense light and in most venues the combination of natural and artificial light mean that exhibits can be seen. Indeed, the problem in Australia is often to keep direct sunlight away from the philatelic material. By contrast, lighting in most American venues is often poor. How the judges can see the material beats me, even if the narrow aisles means their noses are about 10 cm from it. In Canada and the UK much more attention is paid to exhibits and the lighting is better.

#### Exhibition lay-out

The lay-out of an exhibition - the relationship of exhibit to dealer space and the placement of aisles and special areas, such as courts of honour, post offices etc - is an important part of planning. After Sydplex 80, which attracted large crowds but few viewers of exhibits, organizing committees had a much better feel for visitor flow. Subsequently, in Australia, the design of exhibitions promotes access to the exhibits. Now it is customary to see crowds, not only at the dealer stands but also around the frames. Aeropex 88, where it was necessary to queue to see many of the frames, was probably the best example. Two lay-outs seem popular in North America, the half and half solution and the perimeter solution. The former has dealers in one half and exhibits in the other. This is occasionally taken to the extreme of dealers in one room and exhibits in another. In shows with this design the number of people looking at the philatelic material on display is minimal.

The perimeter solution is dealers around the outside and the displays in the centre. This should produce more traffic down the display aisles and this is the case where the aisles are sufficiently wide. This is often not the case in US

national exhibitions. Overall the Australian approach, with a conscious attempt to promote traffic flow through the exhibits, leads to a much greater interest by collectors in the displays and the breadth of philatelic endeavour. In contrast at a recent UK national there were only two people looking at the exhibits - myself and, by coincidence, a well known collector-dealer from Brisbane.

One of the virtually unrecorded benefits of Ausipex 84 was the provision, largely from Australia Post but also from the APF, of high class modern exhibition frames. Australians take the availability of these frames for granted. If they visited exhibitions in North America they would not. Frames tend to be wooden, heavy and often legless. Such frames perched on tables do not aid the viewing of exhibits. In contrast, the frames used at the World Stamp Expo in the USA were modern, suspended from above, and while vertical were conducive to viewing the material. The older frames in use tend to be 12 sheet (3 by 4) whereas the more modern ones are 16 sheet (4 by 4). The 16 sheet frame appears to be the coming standard around the world.

In Australia we are excellently served by the two national stamp magazines in promoting forthcoming exhibitions. Such promotion is necessary to guarantee attendance. If you don't know its on, you won't go! Similar advertising takes place in the UK magazines for their shows. In North America the advertising is different; the American Philatelist and Canadian Philatelic Journal carry listings of future events, but they are just that - listings. One of the major advertising techniques is the preparation of postcards with the details of the shows which are available at dealer's shops and other philatelically related shows. I find these very useful and easily obtained. Australian organizing committees could usefully consider

their production and, given our excellent relationship with Australia Post, they could probably be made available at selected post offices.

Stamp dealers are a critical element in the running of exhibitions. They are the crowd pullers and the better the dealer representation, generally the better the attendance. Shows in Europe and North America are no exception. British national exhibitions are a collector's dream, with the majority of British dealers present. This is an extremely cost effective method for collectors to examine the British philatelic stocks. Why more do not take advantage of it I do not know. Equally, in the USA and Canada many shows attract a continent-wide bevy of dealers. The material comes to your door instead of the prospect of a 15,000 km round trip to Calgary, Baltimore, New York and Boston to find that elusive item. Canadian collectors warm to this opportunity whereas collectors in the USA seem to be more parochial or perhaps it is a regional phenomenon. The American Philatelic Society moves its two annual meetings (which also constitute national exhibitions) around the country. These are major events with a wide representation of dealers and good crowds, often from far afield.

The material on offer differs little from that in Australia - covers are just as popular but the prices often makes one wince. Paradoxically the chances of finding a bargain also seem greater. A greater supply and range of material in North America and Europe is probably the reason. Otherwise I can find little difference although dealers concentrating on 'sand-dune' emissions and other worthless gimmicks are more numerous as are dealers specialising in 'pins', enamel replicas of stamps or philatelic logos. I sense that this

latter interest will spread to Australia.

#### Philatelic content and judging

Enough of logistics and lay-out; what about the philatelic content? Overall the standards are broadly comparable. Exhibitions in Australia tend to vary in the standard of entries depending on whether they have attracted a flush of new entrants or whether they appeal only to established exhibitors. In the UK I have found the general standard to be high and broadly comparable to Australia. The USA is to me an enigma. The standard is either excellent or awful and there does not seem to be much in the middle ground, which is the strength of Australian exhibiting. Why this should be I do not know. Perhaps one answer is that Australia has state level shows where collectors can practice and learn. By the time they enter national exhibitions they are already skilled exhibitors. Another difference in North America is a tendency to load an exhibit with non-philatelic items. Advertising envelopes are pretty but they have nothing to do with stamps or postal history. The Americans seem to be taking an inordinate amount of time to learn this simple lesson.

All in all, if Australia has an advantage here, it is because the APF has pursued a policy of excellence; of transparency in judging and on-the-spot assistance. Interestingly this policy has come under attack from a few small minds whose philosophy is more obviously attuned to the Kremlin than Australia or perhaps I misunderstand them and they just object to excellence.

Now for judging, that much abused occupation that is central to the pastime of philatelic exhibiting. My overall impression is one of amazement that the standards are so similar. In the UK, where I unofficially judged, and in Canada, where I am on the panel, my judgement trained and honed in

Australia was almost identical to those of my colleagues. Occasionally we differed by half a medal (which is normal within teams) but rarely by a medal or more. I find this comparison tremendously encouraging. However, one of the major differences is that Canada and the USA do not embrace the points system in their judging methods, preferring the previous overall assessment method. I have been to two seminars in Canada where the two systems have been compared using real exhibits; generally the points system gives results about half a medal lower. This seems consistent with results at the international level since the change to the points system was made a couple of years ago.

I have participated in judges critiques in both Canada and Australia. Overall, I think that I enjoyed the Canadian critiques more in that they tend to get down to specifics of individual collections. Perhaps the much smaller number of exhibitors helps to encourage this approach but equally the ability of Canadian collectors to listen and accept constructive criticism plays an important role. Work in front of the frames with the individual exhibitor is probably not as intense as in Australia, so perhaps it is here where the Australian exhibitor catches up.

Finally, let me touch on the use of FIP standards. The APF has insisted that the basic FIP standards apply to Australian nationals. Why train your philatelists to compete with one set of rules, only to have all the rules change once they go international? It is simply a case of making sure that postal stationery in Australia means the same as postal stationery at the world level. This policy has produced results, with Australians continually maintaining a standard in international competition. In the UK and Canada the same general approach is followed but in the USA exhibitors march to a differing

tune. The end result is quite obvious; the USA collections being marked down severely for including inappropriate material. It seems to me a pity that USA collectors and exhibitors are not made more aware of the standards that apply when they go elsewhere. The major problem seems to be in the inclusion of fiscal stamps and illustrated envelopes. Australian has taken a lead role in helping to address this apparent gap between exhibition classes and collector interests. At the FIP Congress in Stockholm, Australia successfully moved for an experimental class for fiscal stamps. This was introduced at the World Exhibition at New Delhi in 1989; Australia has consistently included a cinderella section in all national exhibitions.

More recently the APF has proposed an experimental class, 'social philately', which covers the more ephemeral items such as illustrated

envelopes. Canberra 1990 is the first time this class has been included in a national exhibition. It is this willingness to experiment which endears me to the Australian system. The ostrich-like approach of the USA collectors is somewhat sad.

Overall, I must say that Australian national exhibitions are excellent. Well organized, well attended, well laid out and with high philatelic merit. The results of this effort and appeal to excellence will have a long term positive effect on Australia Post, on dealers, on societies and on the circulation figures of stamp magazines, even those who sound like a cross between a squeaky wheel and a broken record. With a bit of luck, the philatelic flow-through will enable the squeak to be greased and perhaps the broken record repaired or replaced.

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THE FIRST YEAR OF THE PHILATELIC SOCIETY OF CANBERRA

Ian McMahon



On the evening of the ninth of November 1932, eleven men and women met at the Hotel Canberra in response to an advertisement in the Canberra Times. The meeting appointed Mr Shakespeare as chairman and, following a motion from Dr C. Finlay calling for the formation of a philatelic society, the Philatelic Society of Canberra came into being. Those present were: Dr C. Finlay, Rev H.W. Woodhouse, Professor J.F. Haydon (Professor Modern Languages, Canberra University College), E.H. Harvie, H. Chapman, H.C. Deane, J.F. Hopkinson, W.C. Weale, J.W. Shakespeare, Mrs F. Finlay and Miss E. Rowe. In addition seven people sent apologies: Hon A.E. Green (MHR for Kalgoorlie, Postmaster-General 1931), Hon J.A. Perkins (MHR for Eden-Monaro), L.H. Kendall, C. Brinkman, Dr J.A. James, H.B. Dickson and Rev Dr J. Walker. These eighteen people were therefore, the foundation members of the Philatelic Society of Canberra.

The meeting went on to elect a patron (Hon Archdale Parkhill, the Postmaster-General) and the first committee: Mr Woodhouse as President, Professor Haydon and Mr Finlay as Vice-Presidents, Mr Shakespeare as Secretary, Treasurer and Exchange Superintendent, Messrs Kendall and Weale as auditors and Messrs Deane, Hopkinson and Harvie as committee members.

The subscriptions for the Society were set as 5/- for ordinary members, 3/6 for associate members and 1/- for junior members with a 2/6 application fee.

The stated aims of the new Society were:

- . the cultivation, study and advancement of philately in all its branches,
- . to hold meetings for exchanging information, reading papers, delivering lectures on philately and for discussion thereon,
- . to provide a medium for the exchange and/or sale of stamps,
- . to transact other business as may promote or facilitate the study of philately.

Members at the first meeting were asked to indicate their collecting interests - seven gave their area of collecting as 'general' (although Mr. Weale collected 'general and Balkan states') while the remainder collected British Empire (Professor Haydon also collected post-war Europe). The meeting decided to establish an exchange circuit and requested the exchange superintendent to prepare the first exchange book.

The second meeting of the Society was held at the Hotel Canberra on 20 December 1932 with nine members present. Three new members were accepted (Messrs Kendall, Rosenbloom and Oxbarrow). The Society noted the reply of the Hon A. Parkhill accepting the position of patron and enclosing a donation of one guinea. At this meeting the Secretary was requested to write a letter to Mr Parkhill asking that Philatelic Bureaux be set up in each capital city.

At the Society's third meeting (which was held at the residence of Mr E. Harvie in Kingston on 21 January 1933), members present were treated to a display by Messrs Shakespeare and Weale and were also informed of an invitation from the Yass Stamp Club for Canberra members to attend one of their meetings. No meeting was held in February 1933 due to the lack of a quorum, although a number of Canberra members did visit the Yass Stamp Club in that month.

The next meeting was held in March at the Central Methodist Church Hall at Forest. Mr Walker displayed his collection of West Indies and the Pacific. In correspondence, a letter had been received from the Postmaster General's Department reporting that the Department would not consider opening philatelic bureaux in the capital cities as this would be in direct competition with stamp dealers. Six visitors from the Yass Stamp Club were present including the President, Mrs Holliday. Mr. Shearsby from Yass showed one of the designs he had submitted to the PMG Department for the 1927 Canberra issue and a design he had prepared for the new pictorial series. Mr Woodhouse suggested that one of Mr Shearsby's designs be sent to the Society's patron with the request that it be considered for inclusion in the new pictorial issue.

At the June meeting of the Society the Exchange Superintendent complained that members had not been circulating the exchange book in accordance with the rules and he advised that a second exchange book was in preparation. At the July meeting, held at the Methodist Hall in Reid, Mr Woodhouse spoke on 'The History of Stamp Collecting'. This talk was written up by the Canberra Times, a copy of the article is included with this account.

At the October meeting the Exchange Superintendent reported that he had broken up the first exchange book. The total value was £8.9.5, sales were £4.8.7 (almost 50%!) and there was a net profit to the Society of 8s 8d. He also reported that the second book was in circulation. Dr Walker displayed his collection of New Zealand and Samoa.

The first Annual General Meeting of the Society was held on 8 November 1933. The annual report shows a surplus for the year of £1.7.7 and that the Society's membership was twenty-five. The report also suggested that attempts be made to

encourage juniors to join. Members were also requested to adhere to the two-day rule in passing on the exchange books. The report noted that there had been no meetings of the committee during the year but it was hoped that they would start shortly. The meeting elected Professor Haydon as the new President, and Rev Woodhouse and Rev Walker as Vice-Presidents with Messrs Finlay, Deane and Harvie as committee members. Mr Shakespeare remained as the Secretary, Treasurer and Exchange Superintendent.

CANBERRA TIMES 20.7.53.

## PHILATELY

## Story of a Hobby

Rev. H. W. Woodhouse's  
Address

An address on the History of Stamp Collecting was delivered by the President (Rev. H. W. Woodhouse) at the monthly meeting of the Philatelic Society of Canberra last night.

The Rev. Woodhouse traced the early attempts made by private concerns to deliver letters for fees, which finally led to the introduction of the postage stamp system as used at present, by Great Britain in 1840. The system spread rapidly. Britain was followed by Mauritius, the early stamps of which country are great varieties among collectors to-day; then European countries and British Colonies, until to-day every country of the globe had some postage stamp service.

Romances of famous collections were also touched upon and the story was told of the famous Magenta, the cent stamp of British New Guinea, which was originally sold by a school-boy for 6/- and finally auctioned for over £7000.

Mr. Woodhouse said that many stamps of the rarer class were beyond the reach of the small collector's purse, but that did not deter countless thousands from following the most fascinating hobby of all time.

## VIA TORRES STRAIT

Ian McMahon

The 'Postal History of New South Wales' describes in some detail the ocean mail routes used by New South Wales. When referring to the Torres Strait mail route the book comments that after 1880 the route was of little consequence to the carriage of NSW mail. While this was undoubtedly true for NSW, the route via Torres Strait was of prime importance to Queensland during the 1880's.

The establishment of a mail service between England and Queensland via Torres Strait was first suggested in Governor Bowen's despatches to the British Government in 1860 and again in 1862. In September 1864 the Queensland Government again approached the British Government with a request for the establishment of a fortnightly mail service between England and Australia via Singapore and Torres Strait. The request observed that '...the said route could be relied on with confidence whenever the route [via Cape Leuwin, in southwestern Western Australia] was interrupted by tempest in the Indian Ocean or by political storms in Melbourne or Adelaide'. The reply from London was that the Treasury did not feel justified in providing subsidies for the establishment of such a route. The Queensland Government then suggested that the French and Dutch Governments might be interested in co-operating with such a service as it could carry mails bound for the Dutch East Indies and for New Caledonia. However, when approached by the British Government the French refused to co-operate. The 1864 report of the Postmaster-General noted however, that '...I have no doubt that ultimately there will be communication between the Australian Colonies on the East Coast and the Mother Country via Torres Strait'.

In 1866 the Queensland Government contracted the steamers 'Souchays' and 'Hero' to conduct a twelve month experimental mail service between Brisbane and Batavia via Torres Strait. Although the experimental voyages were successful, the Queensland Government concluded that the expense needed to maintain the service was too great for a colony with a population as small as that of Queensland.

Finally, in 1873 a four-weekly mail service began between Singapore and Brisbane operated by the Eastern and Australian Mail Steamship Co. and calling at Gladstone, Bowen, Cardwell, Somerset (now Thursday Island), Sourabaya and Batavia. The first voyage was undertaken by the 'Sunfoo' and left Singapore on 18 November 1873, arriving in Brisbane on 12 December. Latter the ports of Townsville and Keppel Bay (near Rockhampton) were added to the itinerary. The route quickly became the major route for the despatch of mail from Queensland to England and other overseas destinations. Thus in 1875, a total of 114,382 letters were despatched via Torres Strait compared with 9,852 carried by P and O's service via Melbourne and 8,696 via Sydney and San Francisco. The contract with Eastern and Australian was terminated on 31 October 1880 as the company refused to make Brisbane the terminus of the mail route.

In its place the Queensland Government signed a contract with the British India Steam Navigation Co. to operate a four-weekly service between Brisbane and London via Keppel Bay, Bowen, Townsville, Cooktown, Thursday Island, Batavia, Colombo, Aden and Port Said. The conditions of the contract required that the ships terminate at Brisbane - the ships were not to go further south without the consent of the Queensland Postmaster-General (you can imagine the dire consequences if the ships ever went near Sydney!). The new service

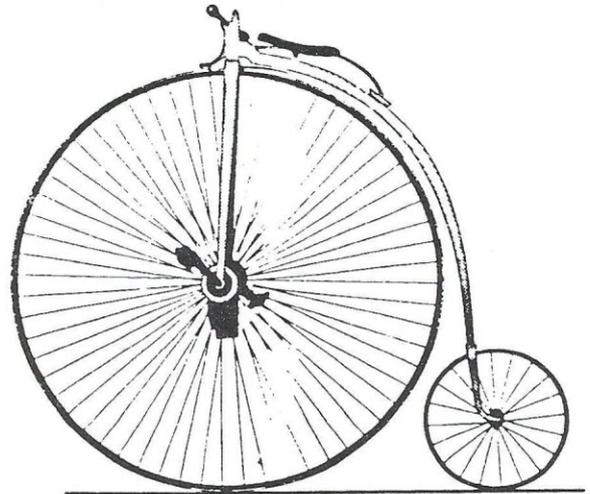
commenced on 11 February 1881 when the 'Merkara' left London, arriving in Brisbane on 26 April 1881. The Queensland Government provided the new service with a £55,000 a year mail subsidy. In addition the steamers, which came to be known as the Queensland Royal Mail Line, brought out thousands of immigrants to the colony (including my great-grand parents), most of whom were assisted in some way by the Queensland Government. In 1881 the numbers of letters, packets and newspapers carried on the new service were 89,114, 3,238 and 92,555 respectively; this compares to 30,362 letters on the other routes. Between 1882 and 1886 the service was upgraded to a fortnightly service but, in 1886, reverted to four-weekly. The contract provided for penalties for late arrival of the mail steamers. For example, in 1886 the company was fined £800 for the late arrival of five of its steamers - however in the same year it received £950 in premiums for the early arrival of other ships. In February 1888 a new contract was signed which provided for a £19,800 mail subsidy. However, the volume of mail carried via the Torres Strait route was now beginning to decline - only 21% of overseas letters being sent by this route in 1888. By 1895 this had dropped to just 12% and the mail contract was finally terminated in 1896. It is presumed that the route was unable to compete with the weekly mail service provided jointly by P & O and the Orient Line. After 1896 the route ceased to be of any major significance for the carriage of mails with only 5,524 letters carried in 1898.

The Torres Strait mail route was born of the resentment of Queensland being at the end of the shipping service from England- with all goods and passengers having to be trans-shipped from Sydney. This left Queensland business at the whim of Sydney merchants and exorbitant freight charges from the Sydney-based steamship company

which operated the Brisbane-Sydney leg. It also posed greater difficulties in attracting immigrants, who usually disembarked before reaching Queensland, and delays in the receipt of mail. The Torres Strait route provided a boon for the development of Queensland (especially the coastal ports) bringing thousands of immigrants to the colony and providing a direct route for trade, and for the mails, between Queensland ports and England.

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#### **AUSTAMP 90 FEATURES:**

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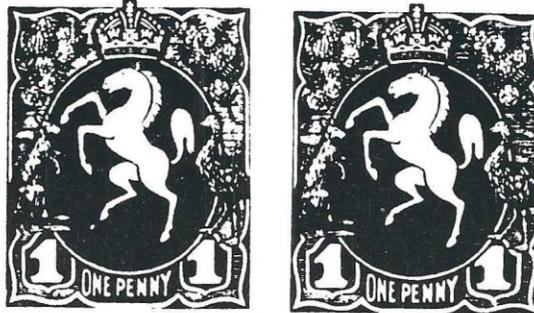
**KING GEORGE V PENNY DESIGN WITH PRANCING HORSE - SOME THOUGHTS**

J. Grant

This item first appeared on the Australian philatelic market in December 1988, when a block of six was advertised in Public Auction No. 82 of Charles Leski & Associates Pty Ltd. The block was described as:

these two blocks were cut and also a little story behind them.

The complete sheet was brought into the shop of a Home Counties dealer some two years ago by an elderly man and no information was obtained as to its origin. Examination of the sheet shows it to be in the usual sheet format of twelve rows of eighteen, making a total of 216 stamps.



(140% of actual size)

'ESSAY: c. 1920 Harrison Imperforate Essay in red on unwatermarked wove paper without gum; a lower marginal block (6) showing a white horse rampant in the frame of 1914 King George V 1d red issue. [not previously seen by us and stated to have come from the Estate of a former Harrison's director]'

The stamps themselves are on cream wove paper in a deep orange-vermilion shade and are larger than the issued stamps, being 28.5 by 23.0mm, and there are no marginal markings. The artwork is somewhat crude compared to that of the issued stamp. So far no positive evidence has appeared that these are by T.S.Harrison.'

In more recent times, an advertisement has appeared in the Australian philatelic press offering copies of this item. The advertisement, placed by J.M A.Gregson of the U.K., reads as follows:

From the above, there would seem to be a suggestion that the issue had somehow been connected with Harrison, although the references are not consistent; one being to T.S.Harrison, the Australian Note and Stamp Printer from 1918-26 and the other to Messrs Harrisons and Sons, the U.K. stamp production house.

'In a January 1988 Phillips auction, there appeared a block of six of an Australian Penny Red design with a prancing horse replacing the head of the King, listed as being by Harrison. This was duly sold for £310 plus premium and then in September a further similar block appeared, this one making £380 plus premium. Subsequently we have been fortunate to discover the sheet from which

Unless there is information which has not been made public, any inferred connection to (either) Harrison would seem to have little basis. Judging from the quality of the issue, there is little reason to suggest such a connection. It would seem that the issue was copied from the KGV One Penny design of the 1914 surface printed

issue. Certainly, there are more points of similarity with that issue than with the 1913 1d engraved design. The comparison is most obvious in the central value tablet which, like the 1914 issue, is solid rather than lined.

With regard to the quality of the work, as noted in the advertisement by Gregson, the execution of the engraving is crude. The work lacks fineness and attention to detail. The engraving strokes seem to be deep and coarse, causing a loss of half-tones and absence of graduation in the shading, in the wattles, emu and kangaroo. The emu is more lifelike than in the 1913 engraved design and shows none of the 'dissolute' fowl appearance of the progressive die stages of the 1914 surface printed issue.

The Kangaroo is smaller and has a slightly different stance to the roos of the 1913 engraved or 1914 surface printed issues. The wattles, words and numerals of the value are poorly drawn and slightly uneven.

Presumably, given the overall unprofessional nature of the artwork, the engraving was the work of one person. This was also the case for the 1914 issue. This contrasts to most other stamps of the period where specialists in lettering, portraiture etc would all have contributed to the overall design.

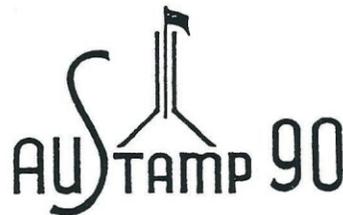
Regarding the quality of the printing, the issue has the characteristic blotchiness of printings from poorly prepared copper electros; white flaws of various sizes, partly missing or damages frames etc.

The item is curious in that it would seem to be the work of a non-professional, yet would also seem to have been produced using professional equipment. This is evidenced by the fineness of the lines of engraving and the manufacturer's access to equipment

to produce electros. I would suggest that the issue may be the work of an apprentice, possibly at De La Rue. It is feasible that an apprentice would have been permitted to follow the work of an expert (possibly F.W.Pearce) in preparing a die but, to avoid any close likeness to the official postal issue, would not have been allowed to complete the design with words 'AUSTRALIA' and 'POSTAGE'. The use of the prancing horse is puzzling. It seems to have no special significance and may simply be a subject which the engraver could produce well; it is probably the most expert part of the design. It is not difficult to imagine that a die having been finished, an apprentice would have been allowed to further test his skills by striking lead or wax cliches to produce a copper electroplate from which a very limited number of sheets were printed.

If my surmise is correct, the issue can have little philatelic importance. It is nevertheless, a further interesting aspect of the fascinating story of the KGV issues.

Any further thoughts?


 The logo features the word 'AU' in a stylized, bold font, followed by a graphic element consisting of a vertical line with a small flag-like shape at the top, and the word 'STAMP 90' in a similar bold font.

## AUSTRALIA POST 'GIFTPAK'

Ian McMahon

In November 1989 Australia Post issued a postpak box called a 'Giftpak', this is illustrated in Figure 1. The 'Giftpak' sells for \$7.50 and prepays the delivery of a parcel up to 5 kg to any destination in Australia by surface mail. The price of the box includes a card featuring a eucalypt flower, protective plastic wrapping and a small piece of tape. The box is printed with an overlay of 'Postpak' in white on a red background with black lettering and when folded ready for use is 32 cm x 23 cm x 10.5 cm in size. The box is not inscribed with a denomination but rather the 'stamp' area is merely inscribed 'POSTAGE PRE-PAID AUSTRALIA'. The reverse of the box includes space for a sender's address and a panel containing instructions on the use of the box. Among other things this states that there is a maximum weight of 5 kg, that the use of other services (eg registration etc) in conjunction with the box is permitted, that the box could be used once only, that the flat rate of postage was based on average costs and so could be at variance with postage charged for other services and that the box is a uniform rate container for the purposes of Clause 100 of the General Postal Services Terms and Conditions.

The 'Giftpak' was advertised in the press in early December 1989. The advertisement proclaimed, "...cross all the fiddly bits off your gift list", and continued, "...now when you send a gift, you won't have to fiddle around with wrapping paper, padding, string or tape. You don't even have to remember to buy a card. Giftpak, available from any post office, is a sturdy box that looks like it's gift wrapped and protects whatever you want to send."

The issue of the 'Giftpak' follows two years of experimentation by Australia Post with the issue of parcel labels immediately prior to Christmas in 1987 and 1988. For Christmas 1987, Australia Post trialled in Tasmania a pre-paid label. This label, sold with a postpak box, prepaid parcels up to 10 kg to destinations in New South Wales and Victoria. This was followed in Christmas 1988, by parcel labels known as 'Santapak' labels, see Figure 2. In the eastern states these were available in three types all prepaying parcels up to 10 kg - one for intrastate parcels and the other two prepaying parcels for delivery within New South Wales, Queensland, Victoria, Tasmania and South Australia (one for surface mail and one for air mail). The labels were supplied with a postpak box and were intended to provide discounted rates for Christmas parcels. They were advertised by a

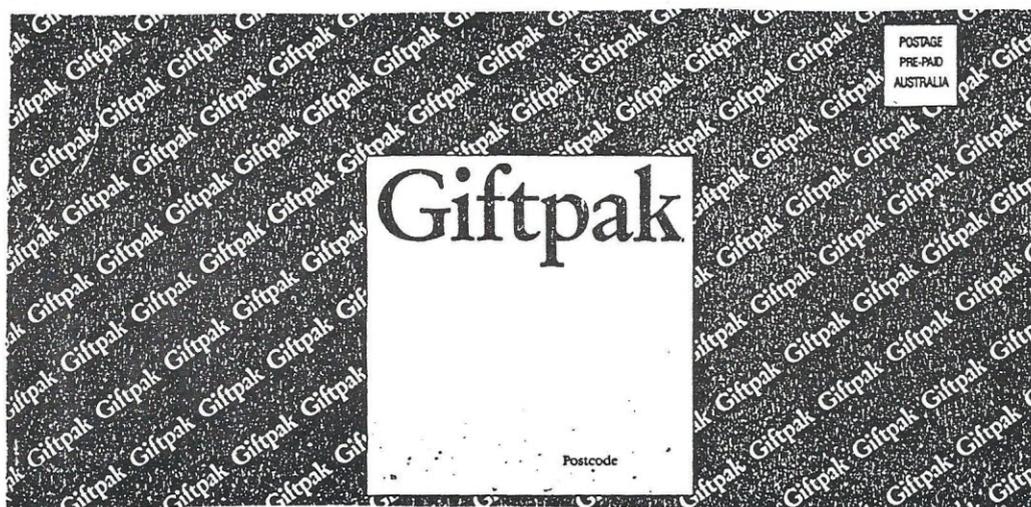


Figure 1 The Australian Post 1989 'Giftpak', not actual size

colour brochure which was distributed to many households and which encouraged customers, "... if you can't be there at Christmas send your love in a Santapak" and claimed that the 'Santapaks' were the economical way to send Christmas presents to your loved ones.

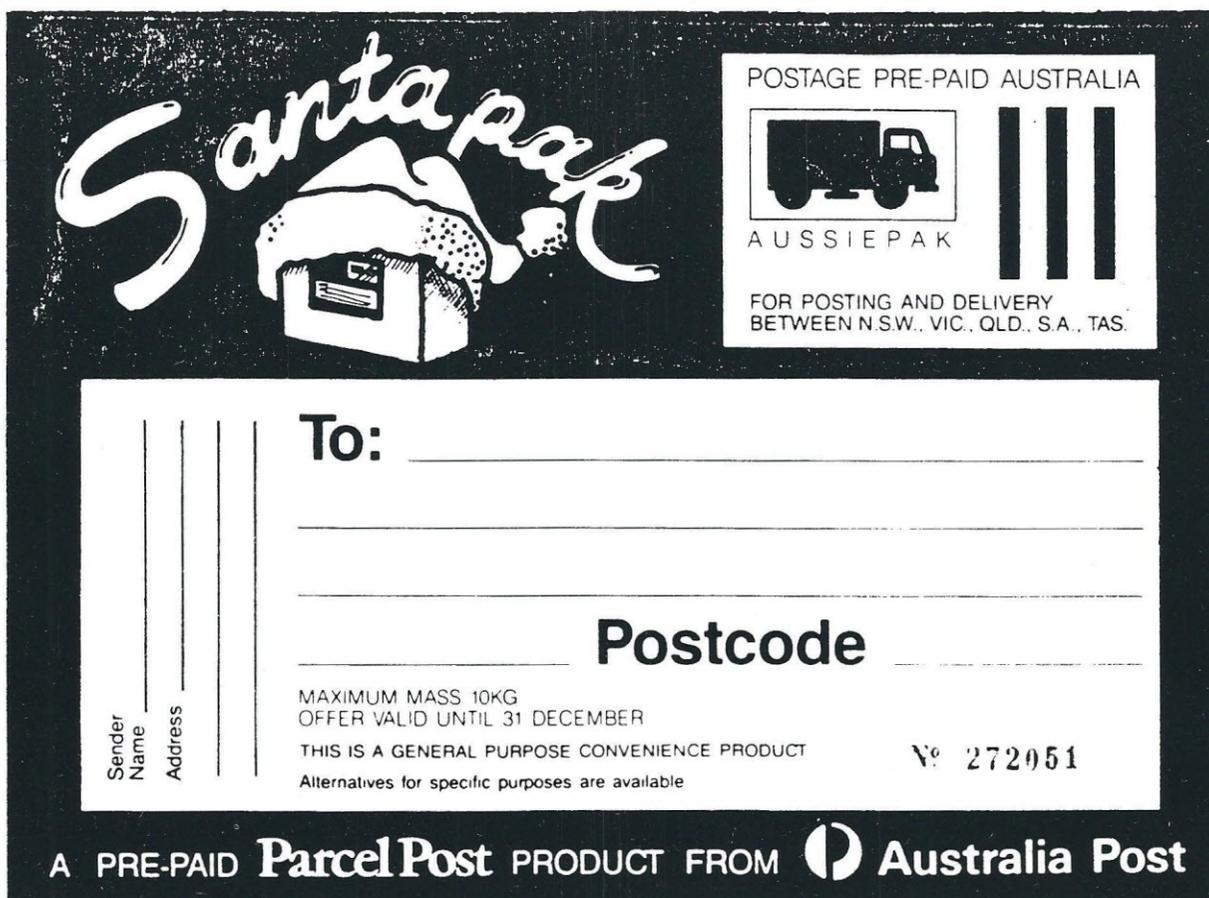


Figure 2 The Australia Post 'Santapak' label Christmas 1988, actual size.