

Vol.1 No.3 May 1983



# Capital Philately



Journal of the Philatelic Society of Canberra

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The Philatelic Society of Canberra  
(Founded 1932)

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This journal is published quarterly, and is supplied free to members of the Society. Other subscriptions are welcome - \$10 per year, post free within Australia.

Articles and contributions should be sent to the Editor. For subscriptions and advertising, apply to the Society  
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I.S.S.N. 0729-8765

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# Capital Philately

Vol.1, No.3.

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## Editorial

An amateur society, and this includes a philatelic society, is primarily a body of individuals who join together voluntarily to pursue a common aim or interest. In order that there shall be no doubt as to what is the general idea, the society usually has an agreed set of rules to govern its conduct and operations, and to set up an administrative body to carry on the day-to-day activities. One basic feature of any society is the provision of facilities for regular meetings where members may associate in pursuing their interests.

The Philatelic Society of Canberra has a high standing in the philatelic world. Such a standing demands constant effort to maintain it, and can be quickly damaged or lost.

The activities of the Society, whilst primarily the concern of its own members, do nevertheless have a considerable penetration outside their ranks, and outside Canberra, because of the impressions formed by visiting philatelists, some of whom are of high repute, and who are happy to accept invitations to attend. The standard of the Society is reflected in the philatelic scene by the participation of its members in organisations and exhibitions throughout Australia. The Society's venture into the publication of its own journal will show still further what part its members can take in the wider field. The material in exchange books is often seen by a circle wider than the Society's members, and the presentation and type of material in them is a clear indication of the level of collecting which exists here. The conduct of the Society's meetings, including the welcoming of visitors, can leave a lasting impression on those who experience them for the first time.

## CUCKOOS IN THE NEST

A.D. Ross

The more I see of topical and thematic collections which contain high quality material, the surer I am that "thematicists" are cuckoos in the philatelic nest. I use the phrase in a strict biological way and not for literary effect. Thematicists absorb material (stamps, covers etc.) and time, space and energy (in literature, at exhibitions and so on) that could be far more profitably applied to philately. Other aspects of thematicism, noted below, are also detrimental to philately.

Thematicists show their devotion to the cause by the talent, energy, time and money going with their collections. Put to philatelic use, these resources could produce a whole new crop of learned studies and well-won medals. As it is, if thematicism

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Editorial, continued

Published reports of activities and meetings show to a wide audience of readers what the Society is about.

The three members of the Society with the longest continuous membership have produced a document, in association with the Editor, setting out for consideration by members some ideas as to what our Society might be doing. These people, among them, have held every office in the Society, and so have knowledge and experience over a long period. Their paper, published elsewhere in this issue of "Capital Philately", points out that any society needs a long-term plan or goal towards which members may work. But even where a plan is adopted, it still needs to be implemented, and for any society there arises a two-fold danger. First, there may be no new talent offering for service, so that the existing officers continue year after year. They may (and often will) do a good job, but there is also the risk of uninformed comment about the old guard hanging on to office, leaving no opportunity for others to break into their ranks. (The fact that the grumblers seldom are willing to make any contribution themselves is conveniently overlooked!)

The second danger to a society is where there is continuous change in the office-bearers. Often people take on an office without a great deal of appreciation of what is involved or expected of them, and sometimes with no serious intention of giving the duties the priority they require. Such people have given little or no thought to ongoing society policies or administrative problems. This results in a lack of continuity, and often things are done, or money is spent, without much consideration of how they will fit into any set programme or budget. Such actions can easily turn out to be inimical to the best interests of the society in the long term.

The best solution would be a mixture of the experienced and new talents, and the need for this is one of the matters which the three members are attempting to bring to the notice of the Society.

We would all do well to give a great deal of thought to the general objectives set out in the paper, and to consider how the current activities of the Philatelic Society of Canberra might be developed even further in this direction.

flourishes, philately suffers. Unfortunately, while the cuckoos go on absorbing, philatelists generally seem unaware of what is happening to their hobby.

As I understand it, a "thematic" collection seeks, through philatelic material, to display, illustrate or expound some theme or topic: an aspect of nature or human activity, or a concept or story (abstract or concrete). So we have collections of dogs, ships, flowers - or of revolution, religion, mutual aid and *die ewige weiblich*, clothed or unclothed.

What is noteworthy about efforts to assemble such collections is that they cannot succeed, and for at least four reasons.

First, not every relevant aspect of the selected subject will, so far, have appeared on philatelic material (philatelists should be grateful)<sup>(1)</sup>. Take trains. Any serious study of them must cover, in detail, things like compound cylinders, the Walschaerts valve gear and the development of articulated locomotives. Any study that did not would be rightly criticised. Yet, as far as I know, a thematic "study" of trains just is incapable of detailed treatment of such matters. *Mutatis mutandis* comparable deficiencies must occur in virtually any thematic or topical collection. Nonetheless, collections purporting to illustrate or expound such subjects are solemnly presented even though, given the totality of their subject, there must be significant gaps in its philatelic coverage - as with calls, in collections of birds or whales or bats.

Again, because of their basic function, most stamps are small. (Anything above 3cm by 5cm turns into a jam label). This, and printing techniques, mean that stamps cannot represent fine detail. Nor can they convey the inner spirit of what they (very crudely) portray. As a result, thematicists are condemned from the start to a *grosso modo* and surface manner of presentation. Technical niceties (where the interest really lies) of compound cylinders, Van Gogh's brush work or English and Flemish bonds, are beyond the thematicist's capacity for display. As for the fire and passion of a religious founder, a reformer or a revolutionary, if Bernini, David and Goya cannot quite hit the mark, still less can miniaturised versions of their works. Not nature nor history nor the mind of man can be brought out in shrunken 3cm by 5cm formats.

Thirdly, the illustrations, such as they are, of philatelic material are static, and thematicists are hard put to show process or development, whether in time or space or both. A predatory bird, for example, has several wing configurations: searching flight, say, or hover, stoop, plunge, strike, recovery. Thematicists can show such a sequence, if at all, only by cobbling together disparate stamps from different places, in different formats. If the strike configuration, say, does not appear on the stamp, too bad.

No doubt, some day, postal administrations will accommodate such problems, putting out se-tenant strips of the four phases of the Otto Cycle, or, worse, "flickable" booklets showing the leg movements of a galloping horse: postal administrations are capable of almost anything. In the meantime, the thematicist must cobble on, to produce results that lack the expositional clarity of a

slow-motion film, a well-done book or even simple diagrams.

Finally, postal administrations, wanting a product that sells, shun the unpleasant, ugly and politically dubious, and concentrate on the pleasing, colourful and safe. The result is a strong unavoidable bias in thematics. Dog collections are long on St. Bernards, short on mongrels. "Slavery" is full of Wilberforce and broken chains but not of the horrors of the Middle Passage. And because history is written by the victors, "Revolution" has to skip Kerensky and the Empire Loyalists but gets a surfeit of Lenins and Washingtons. Meaty topics like "Famine", "The Black Death" and "Torture through the Ages" are almost beyond contemplation.

All this forces a reductionist approach on thematicism, and if it were the case that thematicism started, or had its main base, in the home of reductionism, North America, two influences would have gone to the cuckoo's making.

The most unfortunate aspect of all this is that thematicists have to pad out their collections to give bulk, some sense of continuity and the appearance of comprehensiveness. Words are often an important means of padding (if they are not the very glue or ligatures of a collection), page drawings often serve, but the most insidious form is the use of philatelic material.

Take deer collectors. Most, not content with a single copy of the stamp that best portrays a species, must have a copy of every stamp issued that portrays it, even to the point of having each one of a long series of stamps all with the same design. If the series is re-issued in different colours or with new values, or with minor, thematically irrelevant, design changes, if the stamps are overprinted or surcharged, the thematicist must have them too, though none adds any significant new detail. So one finds page after page of, say, the same kudu or Pere David deer, followed by <sup>(2)</sup> further pages of other kudu or Pere David stamps. "Boring, boring"<sup>(2)</sup>. The determined deer thematicist also calls in postal stationery, trials, proofs, specimens, <sup>(3)</sup> trade samples, covers, fancy cancellations<sup>(3)</sup>, even booklet covers<sup>(4)</sup>, which rarely add significantly to the "picture" conveyed by a single copy of the stamp best illustrative of the subject. The real interest and value of such material lie in the philatelic area, and away from there the material is grossly abused.

It is fair to ask what purpose a thematic collection serves when it is put together; what sort of kick a balletomane gets from a ballet collection, an ornithologist from a bird collection? Obviously, not the same as they get from their primary interests. In their cases, it may be a perverse form of striving for the impossible. But with the person who collects deer, when he might just as well have collected frogs or aeroplanes, does thematicism engender an abiding interest in the collected topic for its own sake<sup>(5)</sup> or just the need to acquire sufficient knowledge to prevent errors in writing up?

Collectors of paintings, birds and royalty stamps may be totally ignorant of such things as, respectively, the Golden Mean, pair bonding and the sacred king, without danger to their thematic standing. They draw on the world's store of knowledge simply to

further a vain and trivial pursuit.

The point is that, if a subject is worth studying, it should be studied for itself and at first hand. Similarly, if someone has anything significant, interesting, useful or amusing to say on a subject, his time and energy would be better applied to writing or speaking about it than to attempting to "show" it through miniaturised, purely visual material designed and produced for an altogether different purpose.

Thematicists might reply that such matters concern them alone, that their problems are theirs alone, that their self-inflicted sufferings affect no one else. If that were so, philatelists would not complain, but it is not - and so we return to the cuckoos.

First, padding removes from circulation much material whose interest and value is essentially philatelic. For all the philatelic good such material does in thematicists' hands, it might as well be under a coat of varnish along with the Penny Blacks with which an English novelist is said to have decorated a lampshade.

Secondly, there is the taking up by thematicism of time, space and effort in the literature and at exhibitions

Again, the market does not distinguish between the philatelic and thematic dollar; the presence of the thematicist simply serves to drive the market prices up.

Lastly, the panting of thematicists eager to fill gaps is music to the ears of postal administrations, already too prone to make new issues to satisfy those who collect new issues just because they are new. Here too, thematicism can create unnecessary calls on the philatelist's pocket<sup>(6)</sup>.

None of this can make philatelists feel well disposed towards thematicism. Indeed, philatelists, when they consider the question seriously, must feel that, like Imperious Caesar, dead and turned to clay, their hobby is being used to stuff holes to keep the wind away.

It is not as though thematicists are particularly happy in and among themselves. The suspicion that they are neither fish, flesh, fowl nor good red herring comes through strongly in their agonising about standards, for example.

Philately has no such problems. The nature of its material automatically generates standards having an internal consistency. Philatelically superb material, shown as such, remains superb, however rough or scrappy its writing-up. Take away the writing-up from a thematic collection, however, or let it be poorly written up, and the collection falls apart. The words are the glue or ligatures.

Again, a philatelic collection does not stand condemned for having gaps. If there is only one copy of a stamp, obviously only one collection can contain it, but other collections are not, therefore, dismissed as wanting. They are judged on the merits of the material they do contain. A thematic collection, by contrast, starts off on the footing that there have to be gaps in it. It can be complete only in a tautological sense, not in the sense that it covers its theme fully.

No wonder thematicists agonise over standards. Where everything else is arbitrary, standards too must be arbitrary. And attempts to throw a cloak of respectability over thematic collections by presenting material under philatelic headings simply serves to expose the confusion and illegitimacy of the whole pursuit.

The lesson for philatelists in this is that they should do all they can to suppress thematicism or, at least, divorce it from philately. Otherwise, more good material will go out of circulation, exhibition organisers will have extra burdens, prices will go on rising and "Oh how pretty"-ism will induce further unnecessary new issues.

Most species of birds appear incapable of recognising that they are fostering a parasite. Philatelists have a more discriminating intelligence, otherwise they would not be philatelists. They should exercise that intelligence.

#### NOTES.

- (1) Thematic collecting is founded on a tautology which is never brought into the open. Thematicists cannot show, say, whales as such, but only whales on stamps etc., to the extent that stamps etc. show whales.
- (2) And, if the nilghai, say, has appeared on only one stamp, 147 different Pere David deer stamps will be succeeded by the solitary nilghai.
- (3) Our deer collector will proudly include a cover with the ship's cachet of H.M.S. (or is it H.M.A.S.) Antelope.
- (4) Interestingly, even keen thematicists tend to steer clear away from perforation and watermark varieties which philatelists regard of major importance, but which have no presentational value for thematic purposes. Equally, thematicists tend to shy away from flaws and errors (other than of description) though the day may come when an Indian 1854 four-annas inverted head shows up in "Royalty", or an 1854 Western Australian inverted frame is included in "Birds".
- (5) Thematicism may do this but, if it does, I have still to meet a thematic collector who has been so "converted".
- (6) The market reaction of postal administrations can have very odd results. Take the issue by Muslim countries of stamps depicting Christian iconography and festivals. The Koran honours Christ (Nabi Isa) as the most important prophet before Mohammed but it is a far cry from that to issuing stamps depicting the events of Holy Week. One fears that the issue of such stamps is motivated by something other than ecumenism.

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E.C.Druce

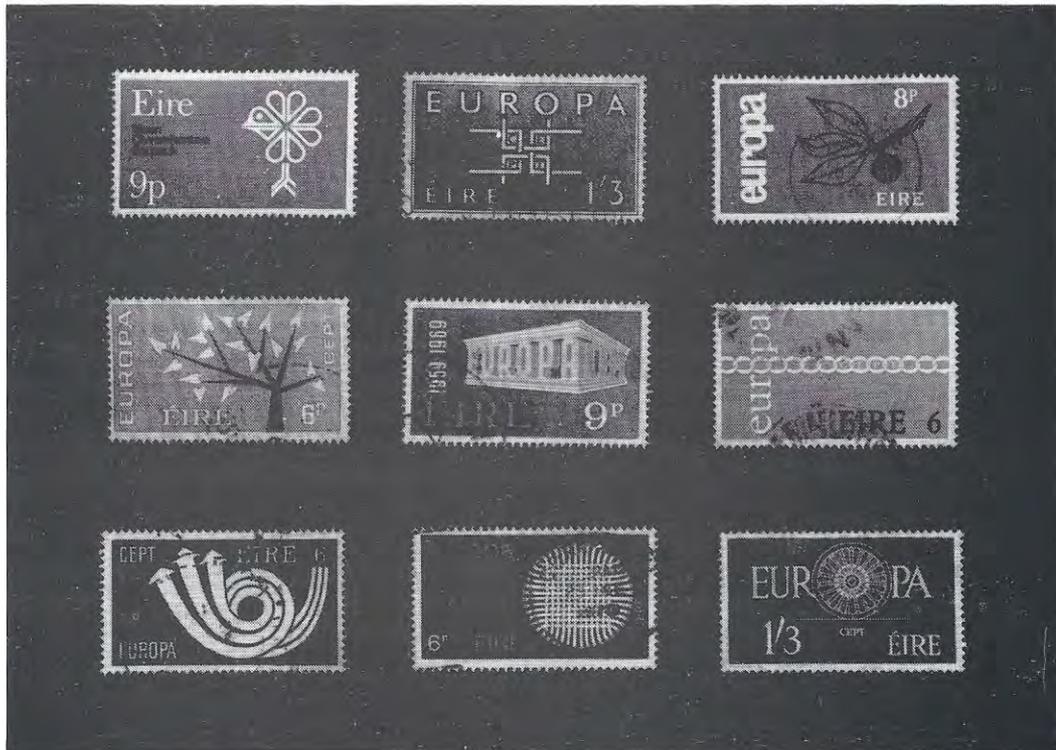
(Concluded from February 1983)

## National Development

Over the first fifty years stamps with this theme have been few and far between, but the completion of the Shannon Barrage (S.G. 92), the bi-centenary of the Guinness Brewery (S.G. 178, 179) and the 25th Anniversary of Aer Lingus (S.G. 184, 185) should be noted. For "aircraft on stamps" enthusiasts the latter two stamps show a Boeing 720 and a De Havilland Dragon.

## Sport

Sport is also poorly represented in Ireland's first half century. Stamps which fall in this category are the single issue showing a "hurler", to commemorate the Golden Jubilee of the Gaelic Athletic Association (S.G. 98) and the stamp for the 250th Anniversary of the Royal Cork Yacht Club (S.G. 279). The latter stamp shows a painting of club boats by Peter Monamy and should also be included in "Irish art".



### International Organisations

The Irish Post Office has consistently recognised the work of the United Nations and its market agencies. It issued sets for World Refugee Year (1960, S.G. 180, 181), Freedom from Hunger (1963, S.G. 193, 194), International Red Cross (1963, S.G. 197, 198), International Telecommunications (1965, S.G. 205, 206), International Co-operation Year (1965, S.G. 209, 210), Human Rights Year (1968, S.G. 263, 264), and the International Labour Organisation (1969, S.G. 269, 270).

### Europe

The 1955 Messina Conference suggested that member countries of the Council of Europe issue stamps in common design. The first issue appeared in 1956. In 1959, 18 members of the O.E.E.C. and Finland set up the European Postal and Telecommunications Conference (CEPT) and in 1960 those nations, including Ireland, (S.G. 182, 183) issued stamps in common design. There was then a gap until 1963 when Ireland again issued a Europa set (S.G. 195, 196) and ever since a pair has been issued annually. The set for the European Conservation Year (S.G. 274, 275) also falls within this theme. It should be noted that the "Rising Sun" motif for the omnibus 1970 Europa stamps was designed by the Irish artist Le Brocquy.

### Famous Irishmen

Many famous Irishmen have appeared on Ireland's stamps; most of them have been dealt with previously, but two made their names, not in the cause of Ireland, but for other countries. They are Barry and Brown, both naval men. Barry was the "Father of the U.S. Navy" and was honoured by the unveiling of a statue and the issue of two stamps in 1956 (S.G. 162, 163). Brown founded the Argentine Navy, and his death centenary brought two stamps in 1957 (S.G. 168, 169).

### Foreign Anniversaries

The close ties felt between the U.S.A. and Ireland due to the large number of Irish migrants in the New World were manifest during the Fenian Rising. The ties were further amplified by Ireland honouring the 150th Anniversary of the U.S. Constitution (S.G. 109, 110) and the New York World Fair (S.G. 201, 202). Surprisingly, Ireland has not yet issued a Kennedy stamp. However she has recognised the 100th Anniversary of the Canadian Confederation (S.G. 231, 232) and the birth centenary of Mahatma Gandhi (S.G. 272, 273).

This concludes a survey of Irish commemoratives. However, a new theme was added in 1971, when for the first time a Christmas stamp was issued.

Airmails

A series of airmail stamps was issued between 1948 and 1965 with values ranging from 1d to 1/5d (S.G. 140-143b) showing the Angel Victor, Messenger of St. Patrick, carrying the Voice of Ireland over the world. Airmail flight covers to look out for include 1924 (2nd May - 2nd June) Belfast-Liverpool, first official airmail between Ireland and England, and 1932 (18th August) Dublin-New York, some of the mail being stamped with an unofficial overprint on the 1s reading "Atlantic Air Mail August 1932".

Postage Dues

The first G.B. postage dues were issued in 1914 and were used in Ireland. After the overprints appeared in 1922 it was not deemed necessary to overprint the postage dues. The first Irish postage dues appeared in 1925 on "SE" watermarked paper and consisted of 1/2d, 1d, 2d and 6d values. The watermark was changed to "E" in 1940 and between then and 1969 the following values were issued: 1 1/2d, 3d, 5d, 8d, 10d, and 1s.

A decimal set was issued on 15th February 1971.



## Booklets and Postal Stationery

Booklets were first issued in 1931. From then until 1947 they had a face value of 2s. Slogan labels appeared on some panes. From 1948 to 1953 the face value was 2/6d; from 1954 to 1961, 4s booklets were issued, reverting to 3s from 1962 to 1964, and 2/6d and 5s in 1966. Before decimalisation (1970) 6s booklets appeared and then in 1971 decimal booklets with a face value of 30p were issued.

Some of these booklets are extremely rare, and are much sought after by collectors.

Postal stationery is usually ignored by most stamp collectors. However, some Irish postal stationery is hard to find and is well worth looking for. When the overprints were issued in 1922, postal stationery remained on sale unoverprinted. The only concession was that the current G.B. 5d registered envelope was issued in green (normally red).

The following G.B. issues were on sale: 2d sealed envelope, 1d unsealed envelope, 1d and 1½d letter cards, ½d and 1d wrappers, 3d, 3½d, and 4d registered envelopes. Several provisional issues of registered envelopes were made by embossing additional stamps. These are rare.

Distinctive Irish postal stationery was first issued in 1924 and consisted of stamped envelopes, registered envelopes, postcards, letter cards, and newspaper wrappers. These were all post office issues, but Stamped to Order facilities were available. This enabled individuals or firms to obtain their own stationery with stamps imprinted by the P.O. A small charge for handling was made. Thus a wide variety of stamped postal stationery can exist, due to different rates and combinations of values. They can be found embossed or typographed. The Irish P.O. has used values between ½d and 5d for the Stamped to Order service.

Air Letter forms are issued by the Irish P.O. but require stamps to be affixed to them.

In conclusion, collecting Ireland is a challenge; collecting interest was dampened by the unattractiveness of the overprints and the first definitives which were on issue for 45 years, but the recent attractive definitives and simple, well-designed commemoratives illustrating Ireland's turbulent history, have increased the collector demand, and many Irish stamps are now hard to find. The collector should always keep his eyes open for the Thom high-value four-line overprints and the 2d map coil imperforate. Finally check your local dealer's box of junk and keep your eyes open for G.B. postage dues and postal stationery used in Ireland between 1922-25. They will be gems to add to any collection as will any Irish booklets or postal stationery.



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## TOWARDS 2032

As the Philatelic Society of Canberra enters its second half-century, we wish to put forward before fellow-members some thoughts on what the Society might seek to do in that period. We have an acquaintance of some years with both the Society and philately, and hope that our views will set members thinking.

The obvious starting place is the object of the Society, defined in the Constitution as promotion of the "study and enjoyment of every aspect of philately". This is a very broad statement, which needs to be actualised in more specific terms. For those who like such things, we have spelt out in the Annexure some concrete objectives which should be relevant to most philatelic societies, and which, we suggest, are worth adopting as an amplification of what is set out in our own constitution.

The next obvious point is that a philatelic society is an amateur, non-profit body. Its affairs need to be conducted in a business-like way, and members should apply "professional" standards in their collecting, but the "amateur" aspect should no more be lost sight of than the objective of "enjoyment". While there is no place in a society for those who seek financial reward from their membership, we see nothing anomalous in an amateur body encouraging professional standards in its members: ways of doing this are also set out in the Annexure.

And indeed, our Society has been applying these principles and working towards these objectives in recent times with some success. Our concern is not so much with what has been done so far, but rather with what is to be done in the future. This applies particularly as regards the philosophy and purpose which should underlie the Society's future activities.

As a basis for these activities, our Society has a large and growing membership, which includes collectors who are both skilled and enthusiastic, and ranges from international exhibitors to beginners. It is the sole philatelic society in the Australian Capital Territory; it enjoys a high standing among Australian philatelists generally, and for that reason can attract high quality displays from outside its own ranks. On the material side, the Society is well placed financially. It has a steady and substantial source of income through the Exchange Branch, and has shown that it can also raise large amounts ad hoc through special cover sales, etc. The Society is reasonably housed, although in rented premises; it has a good and growing library and it is putting together an impressive array of philatelic aids; a Society journal has now made an appearance. The question is how best to apply all these resources, personal and material, actual and potential. For any society, the question is how to ensure that it goes forward with the maximum of efficiency, to the greatest advantage of its members and philately in general. What we ask now is how we can ensure that the Society does go forward with this level of efficiency.

In such a situation, the temptation (and certainly the easiest course), could be to go on operating year by year, taking things as they come, with no larger or longer view. That would involve the danger of resources being not so much wasted or frittered away, as not applied in the most cost-effective manner.

So what should the Society seek to do? There are three basic courses for any philatelic society:-

- (a) it could opt to remain no more than a friendly and convenient vehicle for local philatelists. In the case of our own Society, and given the likely flow of funds from all sources, subscriptions could remain at the present level. Adequate provision could still be made for library growth and the acquisition of any further philatelic aids for which a reasonable amount of member use might be expected;
- (b) at the other extreme, it could aim at becoming a power in the philatelic land. Having regard to the resources available to the Philatelic Society of Canberra, this would be flying high, and would impose intolerable strains on the Society's management capabilities;
- (c) a middle course, which seems appropriate to the Canberra Society, would be to aim at consolidation, growth and development, within bounds which would not impose undue burdens on office-bearers. To ensure that such a course was held to, there would need to be some form of intermediate target. One possibility would be for the Society to acquire its own premises. There are, of course, others. If it were decided to opt for a building, a fairly early decision would be needed, as suitable sites, reasonably central, and with access to parking facilities, are becoming scarce. Any such target would call for fairly strict financial controls and budgeting, both short and medium term. Indeed, even now, the Society's current flow of funds is such as to call for careful preparation of annual budgets.

We would be interested in members' reactions to these thoughts, and their ideas as to how our Society might advance.

C. de Goede  
R.P. Hyeronimus  
A.D. Ross

#### ANNEXURE.

##### A. Suggested Overall Objectives for the Society.

While at all times preserving its amateur status, a philatelic society should seek to -

- (1) function as a learned society devoted to the science and practice of philately;
- (2) develop and improve the public image of the hobby as a serious study pastime;
- (3) encourage the formation of serious collections, studies, etc., relative to all aspects of the hobby;
- (4) encourage original research into stamps, postal history, stamp printing and production;
- (5) encourage the preparation of papers, articles and books, and their presentation and publication;

- (6) assist and encourage members to increase their personal knowledge of all aspects of the hobby.

B. Suggested Ways of Implementing the Overall Objectives.

Against the background of an efficient and economical handling of a society's business and financial affairs, there should be -

- (1) presentation of public exhibitions and displays of the highest standard;
- (2) provision of a specialist library and philatelic equipment, and encouragement of members to make full use of them;
- (3) running of schools and other teaching schemes, such as workshop sessions;
- (4) provision of a forum for the showing of collections, reading of papers, discussion and questions;
- (5) organisation of inter-society visits and interchange of ideas;
- (6) sponsorship of the publication of books, papers, etc., of appropriate standards;
- (7) provision of advice and assistance in the disposal of deceased members' collections;
- (8) provision of facilities through which members may dispose of good material surplus to their collections;
- (9) collaboration with other kindred bodies in the provision of facilities, staging of national and international exhibitions, etc.

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# OVERSEAS NOTES

## POSTAL SERVICES IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

P.A. Wood

As with many other countries, the postal system in the U.S.A. pre-dates by many years the issue and use of adhesive postage stamps. The first postal system in America was legalised by the General Court of Massachusetts in 1639. This system directed that all mail from overseas was to be left at the home of Richard Fairbanks of Boston. Fairbanks received a penny for each letter and arranged for its onward transmission to its final destination.

In 1664 the city of New Amsterdam was taken into English hands. In 1672 the name was changed to New York, and in the same year Governor Francis Lovelace established a monthly post between that city and Boston. This later became the Boston Post Road - U.S. Highway No. 1. In 1683 Governor William Penn of Pennsylvania established a post office in Philadelphia where Henry Waldy, the first postmaster, sent a weekly mail by horse and rider between Philadelphia and Newcastle, Delaware. Later that year a post route was established from Maine to Georgia. These old post routes became the trunk highways serving the eastern seaboard of the U.S.

In 1691 Andrew Hamilton of Edinburgh was appointed by the British Crown as Postmaster-General of the American colonies, and in 1692 Thomas Neale was granted a patent to establish post offices in America. However, he was unable to run at a profit, and in 1707 the Government purchased the rights. In 1753 Benjamin Franklin became the first Postmaster-General for the North British Colonies in America and served in this position until 1774, when he was dismissed because of his sympathies with the cause of the American colonists. Many improvements were made during Franklin's administration and the system became an efficient and reliable means of communication.

Benjamin Franklin was appointed Postmaster-General of the American postal system on 26th July 1775 at a meeting of the Continental Congress. It was decided he should hold office in Philadelphia, and appoint a line of posts from Portland (then Falmouth) in New England to Savannah in Georgia and with as many cross-posts as he should think fit, to establish a weekly post to South Carolina. Franklin was directed to arrange a system whereby post riders were placed at intervals of 25-30 miles over the whole stretch from Portland to Georgia, and the mails were to be carried from post to post day and night three times a week.

The Parliamentary Post which had been established on 17th February 1692 was regulated by the General Post Office, London, which appointed the chief officers (Postmaster-General and his Deputies). These latter, in their turn, appointed their own postmasters and arranged the posts. There were difficulties in that some of the Governors of the colonies were against giving any of their postal revenue to Britain, and would not permit the Royal Post to cross their borders. Up until 1753, no funds from the post office in America had been paid to Britain. Britain had controlled the post in the other British North American Colonies with the

exception of British Columbia and Vancouver Island, and continued to do so until 1851.

The Congress Post or Constitutional Post came into being in March 1774 when the colonists began a movement to establish a postal system which would be independent of the regular Post Office. William Goddard was sent by the Committee of Correspondence to Salem with the proposal that a Post Office be established in America. Goddard had been a printer and publisher in Maryland and was the son of a former Postmaster of New London. He himself had been postmaster of Providence for two years. Goddard seems to have been successful in Salem, as a few days later the Committee of Salem sent a letter to Boston stating their opposition to the Parliamentary Post, and demanding the setting up of a Colonial Post.

Goddard drew up plans for an independent American Post Office and inserted his plan in a Boston newspaper on 2nd May 1774. The first Congress met on 5th September 1774. It appears that postal matters were not discussed at this first session, but the matter was submitted to Congress in May 1775, and on 26th July 1775 Congress resolved to appoint a Postmaster-General for the United Colonies.

The Confederation Post came into being on 9th July 1778, and an ordinance was passed (with some later amendments) which formed the basic law of the Confederation and the United States Post Office, and was in use until 1792. The Articles of Confederation created a perpetual union of the thirteen States, which was ratified in 1781. It gave to Congress the sole rights and power to establish and regulate post offices from one State to another, and to exact such postage on papers passing through them as might be necessary to pay the expenses of the office. This system was independent of any postal system existing in any individual State. It was a Post Office for the United States.

Following ratification of the Constitution, George Washington appointed Samuel Osgood to serve as Postmaster-General on 26th September 1789. At this time the postal service was part of the Treasury Department and this continued until 1829, when the Postmaster-General became a member of the President's Cabinet.

In 1789 there were 45 post offices; by the mid-1950s there were over 40,000. In 1790 there were 1875 miles of post routes, but by the 1950s this had increased to over 2.1 million miles.

In colonial times the policy was to make a profit from the postal services, but after the Post Office was made a separate Department of Government this policy was changed, as it was felt that there was a duty on the Government to render a good service and that this should not necessarily be self-sustaining. This resulted in huge Government deficits rising to \$727m in 1952. As in Britain, the introduction of adhesive stamps proved a great advance in the postal service, and legislation was passed on 3rd March 1847 authorising the Postmaster-General to issue postage stamps, which were first placed on sale in New York on 1st July 1847.

The earliest methods of transportation were by horseback rider, stagecoach, and by steamboat. Of course the opening of the railroads in 1834 meant a great leap forward in the transportation of mails, and with the discovery of gold in California in January

1848, mail was being carried regularly from the eastern seaboard to the western seaboard. The first overland mail arrived in Los Angeles in May 1848.

The Pony Express, a privately-run venture, commenced between St Joseph, Missouri and Sacramento, California on 3rd April 1860, to give faster mail transportation to and from the Pacific Coast. The first mail took 10½ days, and 75 ponies were used. The fastest time was 7 days 17 hours, to deliver to the west coast the inaugural address of President Abraham Lincoln in 1861.

During my research I was delighted to find that the Bishop Mark was in use in America between 1758 and 1800. The marks are, however, readily distinguishable from their British counterparts, as they had no dividing line between the day and the month. There were five sizes ranging from 14mm to 19mm, and they can be found in a number of colours including red, blue, and black.

The first hand-stamps used in the British colonial period were made in England and issued by the G.P.O. Each comprised two lines, and first appeared in 1756 for New York. A second single-line type appeared for Boston in 1769. This type had large letters, but there were several single-line types with smaller letters, which were probably made locally. One of these was produced for Salem in 1774.

Following the adoption of adhesive stamps for prepayment of postage, the registration system was introduced in 1855 to give greater security to valuables being despatched through the post.

In 1858 street letter-boxes were introduced so that people wishing to mail their letters did not have to call at a post office, and in 1863 the free delivery of mail was inaugurated in 49 cities.

Up until 1862, all mail carried in trains was processed in post offices, but in that year the postmaster of St Joseph, Missouri, in an attempt to avoid delays, tried out a method of sorting and distributing mail in a moving train between Hannibal and St Joseph. The experiment proved successful, and on 28th August 1864 the first officially-sponsored trial of the Railway Post Office was conducted between Chicago and Clinton. On 22nd December of that year, a deputy was appointed specifically in charge of railway post offices and railway mails.

Post-cards were first used in the United States in 1873 and the Special Delivery service was commenced in 1885. Parcel Post, however, was not inaugurated until 1913, but by 1956 the Postal Department was handling almost one billion parcels annually.

Air mail is, of course, widely used in the United States. This was established on 15th May 1918 in co-operation with the War Department, which supplied the planes and the pilots, the first airmail being flown between Washington, D.C. and New York City.

This is not intended to be an exhaustive history of the postal system in the U.S., but I hope that it may whet some appetites.

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COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA -1914 - 1d KING GEORGE V -  
DIE PROOFS, PULLS AND MASKS

R.P. Hyeronimus, F.R.P.S.,L.

The recent discovery and description of twelve De La Rue proofs of the 1914 1d King George V has caused me to look at all the references to these die proofs. As a result it seems that quite a lot of confusion has developed among various writers regarding the descriptive terms used. Clarification is needed.

First let us consider the words "proof" and "pull". Rosenblum (p. 552) uses both terms with reference to the same item. Dormer Legge mostly refers to proofs but suggests (p. 71) that a proof on thin wove unsurfaced paper is in the nature of a "pull". More recently, Sheppard (A.C.C. Club of N.S.W. Bulletin, Art. 1630) uses the term "pull" to mean either a progressive die proof, a proof on thin proof paper or an early or preliminary proof print. Scrivener (B.S.A.P. Bulletin October 1981 supplement) restricts himself to the term "proof".

The Esaa-y-Proof Society has defined a proof as "any impression from an officially approved design die, plate or stone, or a new plate made from the approved die in which the design is exactly like the stamp as officially sold to the public, regardless of the colour, kind of paper or material on which it is printed or any experimental treatment to which it is subjected and not used on stamps sold to the public".

A pull is a term used in lithographic printing. It is used generically to designate a print in transfer ink upon transfer paper irrespective of whether the print is made from a plate or stone.

The work of hand-cutting a die extends over several weeks or a month or more. It is natural that an engraver would need to look at the effect of his day-to-day work quite often. For this purpose prints are taken in the same way and on the same machine as any final proofs submitted to the authorising authority. Prints made from the die in an unfinished state are therefore "progress proofs" and sometimes referred to as working proofs or engravers proofs.

Although the word "pull" seems convenient to indicate a proof taken on proof paper as opposed to card, I consider that this term should not be used in Commonwealth philately. De La Rue prints from the die in its unfinished states should be referred to as progress die proofs or progress proofs, and all others as die proofs or proofs.

Masking procedure and the nature of a "mask" seem to be quite misunderstood.

Dormer Legge (p. 62) refers to "proofs in which the design appears masked by a solid blotch of colour which appears in varying intensity as if it were a photographic print from a film into which light had penetrated". Two such proofs are illustrated in his book. Sheppard refers to the white "mask". This appears to be completely opposed to Dormer Legge's idea of the term. Scrivener refers to a die proof as "unmasked" when the impression is surrounded by extraneous colour and "masked" or "masked to give a clear surround" in other cases.

To understand these die proofs it is necessary to think about the die itself. The engraving of the die was carried out in approximately the centre of a flat piece of steel 71mm x 79mm. The first step was to mark out a stamp-size rectangle 21mm x 25mm. Extraneous scratches arising from this work can be seen on several of the proofs. The next step was to cut a variable 1mm gutter around the entire rectangular area of the proposed engraving. As this gutter area was cut, probably by a machine router, from the surface of the steel plate, it would not produce any image. This gave rise to the clear white surround noted on certain die proofs.

When a proof was required, the die (steel plate containing the engraving) was inked and an impression taken by means of a special small press. Depending upon the amount of surplus ink wiped from the plate surface, an irregular impression of all or part of the metal surface was obtained. There would always be the 1mm white gutter surrounding the engraved area of the die because this area had been cut from the flat surface as already shown.

In many instances such a proof was adequate, but when a better example was desired, the surface of the steel outside the design area was covered or masked with some suitable material. This resulted in a clear die impression only. Examples can be seen where the printing pressure was such as to cause the area thickened by the mask to be indented into the surface of the soft proof paper.

In my opinion, Scrivener's terminology and understanding of masking is correct. I consider the term "unmasked" should be used to indicate any die proof showing extraneous colour surrounding the actual engraved area of the die. The word "masked" should be used to refer to any die proof showing a clear surround when referring to this particular type of die.

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#### POSTAL HISTORY COLUMN

This column has been held over to the next issue because of lack of space.

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## Book Review

POSTAGE STAMPS AND POSTAL HISTORY OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA, Volume II, by Mogens Juhl, F.R.P.S.,L. 88 Pages, 21.5 x 14.5 cm. Published by Svemo Trading Co. Pty. Ltd., 8A Clifton Street, East Balmain, NSW 2047. Price \$12.50 including postage.

Volume II of the series of publications planned by Mr. Mogens Juhl on the stamps and postal history of Western Australia is a worthy successor to the attractively presented Volume I. The current volume deals with the Melbourne printings of the Commonwealth period 1902-1912 in great detail, and brings to light many new facts and figures either not known previously or unrecorded in the better-known literature on Western Australia.

Mr. Juhl has given some excellent introductory remarks regarding the gradual transition from the Colonial to the Commonwealth postal systems, including comments on the sections in the Constitution and Acts affecting postal matters at the time. This is followed by a clear description of the production practices of the Victorian Government Printer, not only as far as Western Australian stamps are concerned, but also for other Australian States where this has a bearing on production aspects for Western Australian stamps.

Most of the introductory material was already well-known to serious collectors of Western Australia, although some worthwhile additions to general knowledge have been made. This applies particularly to the Government and Post Office records discovered by Brian Pope and the newly-found letter published in the "Black Swan" for September 1982. However, where Mr. Juhl has broken much new ground is in the section on perforations, especially on the perforation repairs. It clearly illustrates the rarity of some of the compound perms. and gives a good outline of the whereabouts of known copies or where they have been previously mentioned.

As in Volume I, Mr. Juhl has devoted a detailed chapter on the various official perforations and hand-stamped overprints of the Commonwealth period issues. In the actual description of the postage stamps, the various colour groups have been identified by printings, and wherever possible some indication has been given of numbers printed in each group and approximate use dates. Inevitably some of this material was already covered in the Perth Handbook, but much additional information provided by Mr. Juhl makes it essential for Western Australia collectors to study the books side-by-side to get the complete picture. This in no way detracts from the value of the comprehensive treatment given to these stamps by Mr. Juhl in his current volume.

Following the publication of Volume I, many collectors made comments or new material available to Mr. Juhl in respect of the De La Rue printings. All this has been covered in detail in a Supplement to Volume I, as the concluding part of Volume II. The obviously great interest created amongst collectors evident from this response must be heartening to students of Western Australia, and equally encouraging to collectors of other States where also much remains to be discovered and recorded. If for this reason

alone, Mr. Juhl should be commended for taking on this task and making the financial sacrifices to have the material published.

Volume II has covered virtually all aspects of the stamps of the Commonwealth period. If one could offer any criticism of the study, it would be the complete absence of notes on plate flaws and varieties, except where the author makes reference to the findings of Purves in the printings of the high value stamps. This was somewhat disappointing to this reviewer, and hopefully will be corrected in a future volume. All in all, the latest work is excellent value for all those interested in the stamps of Western Australia or as an adjunct to the study of other State stamps of the Commonwealth period.

C. de Goede

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## READING ABOUT STAMPS

Phil Litt

Dear Reader,

You may remember we had to break off our talk about specialisation in stamp collecting in the last issue, right at the point where my mate Al from America, (The Fiji specialist), was starting to spring some surprise on me. "Kid," he said, (darn it, he's always calling me 'kid', it's starting to get my goat), - "Kid, I'm gonna give you one helluva surprise." Gosh, maybe he's had enough. "Wh-what is it, A.R.?" "I'm gonna answer y'r question, " he says, "the one y' asked me about the books I use and why they help me." "Oo, ta!" says I. I hope, in retrospect, that Americans don't understand sarcasm, as I didn't mean to be rude. Al's a good scout, really.

"I'm assumin' yew ain't interested in the pre-adhesive period," he says. "No literature to recommend anyway. Pure research is y'r only hope there. Different, though, when yew come to the first stamps. They were printed by the Fiji Times, and in some ways were a bit like a local post. Then came the Thakombau issues. These early stamps are all rather well covered in literature. First of all," he says, "yew gotta get one basic book, still fairly easy to buy. That's J.G. RODGER & R.F. DUBERAL 'Fiji, the Stamps and Postal History, 1870-75.' (Melbourne, Hawthorn Press, 1970). It's based on a great deal of documentary sources an' is a helpful book."

"But if yew aim to get into plating," Al fixed me with a 'you couldn't possibly wish otherwise' look, "then yew cain't do without the book by J.R.W. PURVES 'The Postage Stamps of Fiji, 1878-1902' (Plymouth, The Mayflower Press, no date, reprinted from the London Philatelist'). If'n it ever turns up, yew'll hafta pay big for it, Phil; but this book of Purves' is a real must for the serious specialist in early Fiji."

"Lemme give ya a tip, Phil kid," says Al. "There's one li'l item not many folks know about that is a rather good addition to Purves. Long time back I was in Fiji fer mebbe nine, ten year, an' some of us got together in a small group, an' even produced a li'l paper, called 'Stamp Gossip'. Result was, two guys, J.B. TURNER & R.A. DERRICK wrote up some articles in 1947-52, an' these got put together under the title 'Notes on the Stamps of Fiji'. If'n I say it my-self, it was good stuff, an' really does supplement Purves' book."

"Howsomever," Al ontinued, "an' it grieves me to hafta tell yew, Phil, but I misdoubt me whether y'll ever manage to get the book as is the real classic for early Fiji. That's Charles J. PHILLIPS 'The Postage Stamps etc. of the Fiji Islands' (London, Stanley Gibbons, 1908). That's the book as has ten stoopendous plates loosely inserted. Lemme tell ya, Phil boy," (one of these days I'll show Al my birth certificate, I really will) "if yew see it listed at an auction, an' yew've got \$300 or so to spare, yew jes might be lucky - an' at that figure it'd be worth it. But failing y'r own copy of Phillips, somehow get hold of a copy of his plates,

'cos a copy of Purves' book plus a set of the Phillips plates, boy, that's a mighty good second best. I'll say it again, Phil - yew jus' gotta have a set of the Phillips plates, along with Purves o'course, if yew aim to be serious in plating studies of the early Fiji stamps. An' there's heaps to do; it's not all done by a long shot. See here, Purves on'y plated the 1d, correctly identifying the eighteen types there are to be found," - Al was in full cry, clearly in his home ground - "but he on'y succeeded in identifying four types of the 2d. If'n yew get those Phillips plates, Phil kid, an' read up everything, but everything as has already been done, - why now, you c'n jus' pick it up from right where Purves left off!"

At this point, dear Reader, your Phil Litt was exercising considerable restraint. I mean, I wasn't setting up to be the new Purves of Philately. Ah well, you've got to make allowance for these specialists, and Al is a dear bloke. After all, I was only asking about books... I tried a different tack. "But what about postal history as a specialisation, A.R.?" Al obligingly came back to earth.

"Well now, Phil." He tore himself away from his favourite theme. "There's some real fascination for ya there. Lots o' research, kid," (grrr) "an' even some literature to recommend. I surely don't need to tell yew, Phil, that any stamp, regardless of condition, if it's clearly dated, is real good f'r postal history study. Then, if y've got the cash to pick up covers an' time to research 'em, well, they're real rewarding. Lemme suggest yew get a copy of H.M. CAMPBELL 'The Postal Cancellations of Fiji' (Melbourne, Hawthorn Press, 1957; reprints from 'Philately from Australia'). Then there's J. Whitsed DOVEY 'Ship Letters of the South Pacific', a real help for the Fiji postal history specialist. Campbell also wrote a five-page appendix to Dovey's book, that yew oughta look at, Phil, it's rather important. It was published in 'Philately from Australia'."

"There's journals, too. I always keeps me eye on 'em, 'cos they're always keen on printing bits o' postal history. Any time yew spot back numbers o' that English journal 'Stamp Lover', I suggest yew look through 'em; I've found they like to put in a lot on Colonies. Other journals, too, like the 'Philatelic Journal of Great Britain', 'American Philatelist', 'Island Life', an' y'r own Australian Stamp Monthly, they're all worth watching. An' here's another tip, Phil," he says. "If yew're keen on tracing shipping routes, or following mail movements by back-stamps, then a really good atlas or wall-chart is another part of y'r equipment."

"But, Phil," says Al, "I jus' gotta warn ya - them covers, some of 'em are a mite dear. While back, a torn Fiji Times stamp on cover went fer over \$7,000. Hoo, boy! An' happens I know it's one of three covers to the same person on the same route."

"Shippin' histories have often helped me, Phil," he says. "There's shipping guides, an' books like H. ROBINSON 'The Carriage of British Mails Overseas', where Fiji gets its due place. Another aid is the very good 'Cyclopaedia of Fiji' (Cyclopaedia of Fiji Company, 1907) which has given me loads o' good stuff. Then any general shipping books of the Pacific, like windjammer voyages,

whalers, trading trips an' the like, many's the time I've found one or the other of these will confirm or refute apparent mail movements. Like I said before, y've gotta read as wide as ya can."

"Say, Phil, I've bethought me of a couple good items I use," says he, "an' I'd be right glad to have anyone make use of 'em, - pervided o'course they use 'em in my house. One's a book of cuttings I keep on Fiji. I reckon I got some things there as ain't well known at all. I mind some articles by E.A. BARNETT I got in typescript, on Fiji postal errors, Fiji pirogue stamps, and the 1/- Queen Victoria stamp- an' others. The other thing, that's a card index o' cross references I'm always adding to from my reading. Sometimes a book may add on'y one item, but I puts it in, an' time an' time again I've found it a real handy tool."

"Just a few last ideas, Phil," says Al. "Mebbe yew think we've sucked this dry, but I c'd go on fer hours." (You may not believe this, dear Reader, but I was showing signs of cracking up!) "We ain't touched on postal stationery as a separate area. Or fiscals used postally. Or cinderellas. Or official mail. Or any modern specialisation, like mebbe Elizabethan. Or - say, d'ya know where we c'n get some coffee, an' I'll fill yew out on some of these? There's some real good stuff in..." With a regret that was almost real, I assured Al that there was positively no coffee available just now, and thanked him profusely for his help. At the same time, I made a mental note to look for a simpler theme for next time. I'd no idea things were going to get so complex. Ah well, that's specialisation!

I will have to leave it to you, dear Reader, to judge to what extent the above opus stems from the inspiring influence of Dr. A.R. Tippett, and to what extent it waffles from your own Phil Litt. One thing only, however, must remain in the dark, and that is the identity of my friend Al; like I said, he's shy.

Cheerio,

Phil Litt.

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### MEMBERS' WANTS

Each member of The Philatelic Society of Canberra is entitled to two free insertions under this heading each year. Such advertisements must not exceed 12 words, and their inclusion in any particular issue will depend on available space, at the discretion of the Editor.

Wanted - Australian Railway Parcel Stamps - E.C. Druce

Wanted - Foreign Post Offices in China and Korea - stamps, covers - A.G. Salisbury

"The largest publication in the world is the 1112 volume set of British Parliamentary Papers published by the Irish University Press in 1968-72" (p.96, Guinness Book of Records, 1983 edition).

Emperor Chien Lung (1710-1799) of the Ching Dynasty was an avaricious reader of books. He often thought that there were too many books within the Empire disseminating certain knowledge which his loyal subjects could do without and there were also too many books the contents of which were anti-establishment.

In the 37th year (1772) of his reign, he set up a state publishing house in Peking, charging it with the task of editing a series of selected works containing only the knowledge and literature which he thought the subjects of the Empire needed to know. Under the general editorship of three princes, Yong Rong, Yong Hsuan and Yong Hsing, and assisted by 362 scholars, the project was completed 18 years later (May 1790) just in time for the Emperor's 80th birthday.

The final product, entitled Selected Works, had 3,503 classifications of knowledge (philately not included). It comprised 79,330 volumes of text, 200 volumes of detailed indices and 20 volumes of abbreviated indices. Subsequently, 6,819 volumes of supplementary listing of unused references were also added to it.

Ever since Bee Hsing of the Sung Dynasty vastly improved (1041-1048) the then available printing technology (from the laborious, time-honoured fixed woodblock engraving to the movable, alloy plating), many large publishing events have taken place. The Selected Works, although not necessarily the largest, must be regarded as a monumental publishing event. Considering how condensed the Chinese written language is, the Selected Works probably exceeds the Guinness "world record" by 70 times.

P. Lee, stamp dealers based in Canberra, are also philatelic publishers. While they cannot match the resources of Emperor Chien Lung, they believe their humble publications such as stamp catalogues and philatelic handbooks do make a useful contribution to the world of philately. If you are thinking of publishing an original work of a philatelic nature and which could make a useful contribution to the advancement of philately, why not discuss with us the possibility of a joint venture.



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