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The Philatelic Society of Canberra
(founded 1932)
GPO Box 1840
Canberra 2601

President Richard Gurevitch
Secretary Judy Kennett

Capital Philately

Publications Committee Dingle Smith (Editor)
Ian McMahon
Graeme Broxam

Home phone numbers for the Editor and Secretary are:
Dingle Smith (06) 2543294 Judy Kennett (06) 2516997

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CAPITAL PHILATELY

AUGUST 1996 - VOL. 14, NO. 4

Editorial and awards	49
The chess motif for the 1990 Australian Hospice Movement pre-stamped envelope	51
K. Peter Breitkopf	
Hong Kong - the high denomination stamps of the Queen Victoria period and fiscal stamps used for postage: Part 1	53
Richard Gurevitch	
Member profile - Richard Gurevitch	59
Dingle Smith	
St Pierre et Miquelon - Canadian paquebot cancels and 1926 postage paid franks	61
Ian McMahon	
Pak-hoi to Beirut in 1910	63
Robert A. M. Gregson	

EDITORIAL

The popular image of philately and philatelists is one of sobriety and conservatism. Such qualities are not to be despised, indeed the opposites would not be welcome to the majority of members. However, one definition of 'conservatism' is opposition to innovation and that is not a quality that we would wish to foster. In an attempt to move with the times the editor has just enjoyed his first philatelic surf on the net.

For those who are completely opaque to such contemporary use of the language, this means linking into a worldwide network of information. To open this Pandora's box it is necessary to have access to a reasonably computer with the necessary links to the web, a reasonably acceptable term for an electronic network. It is neither my aim nor am I competent to describe the technical aspects of this most enjoyable first trip along the super-highway. I am happy however, on the basis of an hour or so of experience to comment on its potential for our hobby. To gain access to the philatelic content of the net it is necessary to tap into one of the systems that hold the information. The system that I used is known as Netscape and the sorting package (search engines) was Altavista.

My tutor was a non-philatelic colleague with three children below the age of eleven. They are keen junior collectors and took on the challenge of trying to obtain a stamp from every contemporary stamp issuing nation. The majority of their collection has been obtained by using their father's computer, they have corresponded electronically (conveniently Netscape allows easier access to e-mail) with collectors throughout the world and exchanged easily obtained Australian material for stamps from far away countries - their first venture was with Iceland. They have received some delightful and encouraging letters from collectors who could not resist the message on the net that starts '...I am a collector aged ten'. I would hesitate to extrapolate from this example to say that this is the way to recruit members to our own junior clubs but it is necessary for us to keep abreast of the technology and the interests of the young.

Incidentally, the remaining gaps in the collection of our young cyberspace collectors is for examples of the stamps from the former USSR republics in central Asia. Presumably the availability of personal

computers is less common there! If anybody has any such stamps I would be delighted to pass them on.

One aspect then, of the internet is ready access to a bulletin board of want and sale items lists from hundreds of collectors worldwide. In addition, there are dealers lists and already auction houses have begun to list their lots in this way. This means that internet users are spared the cost and inconvenience of buying catalogues and paying for, what internet users refer to as, snail mail. Another facet is the use of 'home pages', this allows collectors to describe their interests complete with full colour illustrations of stamps, covers and postmarks. Due to the computing skills and enthusiasm of Hans Karman, the Society has an excellent entry which describes our activities, including those of *Capital Philately*. The next step is for us to list the index of each issue so that others can obtain that fascinating article on Leeward Island postal stationery or Hong Kong fiscals. Hans Karman's personal home page is of first class quality and would undoubtedly be in the running for the award of excellence if (when?) philately moves to such an innovation. In my first surf I could not obtain a copy of Hans page(s) on my screen, for the technically minded it needs a split frame which involves the use of Netscape 2! Fortunately my computer was quickly equipped with this latest update.

I apologise to computer buffs for the lack of technical content and expression in this account and to those to who are not, for the inclusion of computer terminology. I made a very sincere attempt to leave out the jargon words but it is quite impossible to do so. However, despite these apologies the net has captured an avid new user. If you can get access to the net, try asking the nearest twelve-year old, have a go yourself. It can bring to your home a wealth of information and knowledge. When we will see the first international competitive stamp display on internet?

CHINA 96 AND CAPEX 96 -AWARDS TO MEMBERS

It is a great pleasure to report that Ed Druce was awarded the Grand Prix d'Honneur for his exhibit, *The Postal History of New South Wales* at CHINA 96. This international level competition was held in Beijing in May and not only does this award represent the highest ever obtained by a Society member but it is thought to be the first award at this level to any Australian exhibitor. Readers will remember that the exhibit was also judged as the Champion of Champions at CANBERRA STAMPSHOW 96 in March of this year. The Society is therefore, honoured by this achievement and all members join in congratulating Ed.

CAPEX 96, a full international competition, was held in Toronto, June 8-16. Five Canberra members entered and obtained the following awards:

Tom Frommer: *Australia's contribution to the development of world air mails 1914-34*. Gold.

Hans Karman: *Frank and Free*. Gold.

Darryl Fuller: *Leeward Islands postal stationery: Q.Victoria to K.George VI*. Large Vermeil.

Paul Barsdell: *Sarawak to 1923*. Large Silver.

Ian McMahon: *Postal stationery of Canada*. Silver-bronze.

The continued success of members with such a diverse range of exhibits is a measure of the breadth and depth of the Society's philatelic prowess. In each case the initial competitive debuts of the displays, often undertaken with some trepidation, were at Canberra conventions.

THE CHESS MOTIF FOR THE 1990 AUSTRALIAN HOSPICE MOVEMENT PRE-STAMPED ENVELOPE

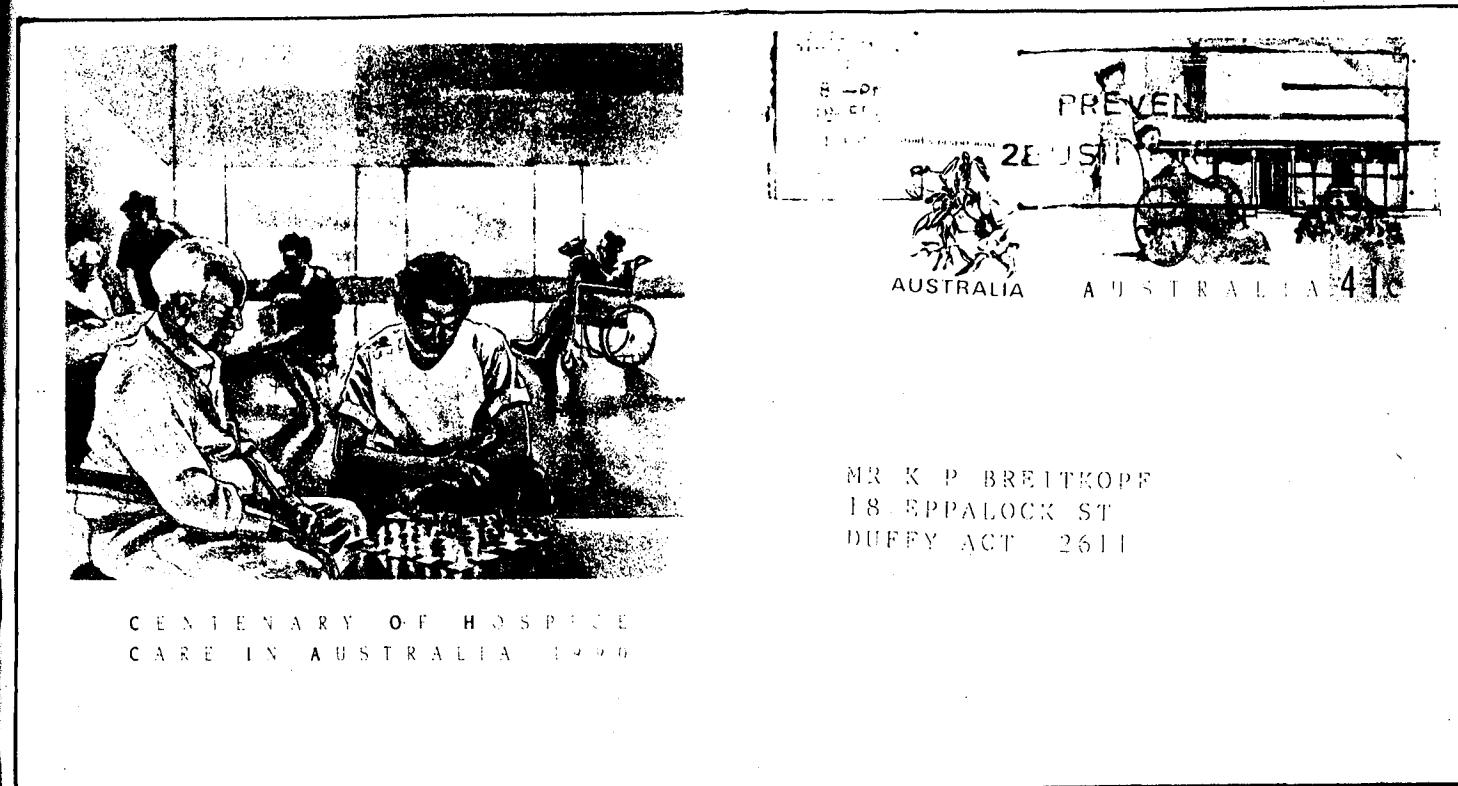
K. Peter Breitkopf

Australia Post issued a pre-stamped envelope on 15 August 1990 to commemorate the Centenary of the Hospice Care in Australia. The envelope, illustrated below, shows two people playing chess. It was a source of fascination and intriguing interest to me as a collector of chess thematic philately to determine what prompted the designer to choose such an illustration for this theme. Finally, after five years this continuing and niggling interest became so strong that I decided I must do something positive to track down more information.

The first attempt was a letter to Australia Post. Their response indicated that:

Unfortunately we haven't kept much of this type of material so I can't really help you. I believe, however, the design was adapted from material supplied by the Hospice Movement, so you may be able to get more information through them.

The problem with this suggestion was that there is no listing in the telephone directories for 'Hospice Movement'. The nearest entry was the listing of contact numbers for individual hospices, or palliative care centres. Later research indicated that the Hospice Movement has an office in Perth. The trail seemed to have come to a dead end.



The next step was a long shot combined with some amateur sleuthing. This involved using the available clues, eg. the technical details in the *Philatelic Bulletin* identified the designer's name and city of residence. This long shot involved selecting the name from the telephone directories and sending a letter to whom I hoped was the right individual, explaining the situation and seeking assistance.

Bingo! With this first attempt the actual designer of the envelope, Priscilla Cutter, proved to be the right contact. She then graciously responded to the request for further information about her concept for the design of the PSE. It is best to quote directly from her letter:

Yes, the two individuals in the foreground are involved in a game of chess! Generally the hospice movement is involved in palliative care, usually for the elderly and those who are terminally ill. Due to the sombre nature of the subject matter I decided to evoke a more positive and bright outlook. This lead to the depiction of individuals interacting in more passive and mentally stimulating activities, in a bright happy environment. I chose chess as the main focus to further enhance the concept of mental stimulation, and positive interaction with fellow hospice patients. Most public have the perception of the terminally ill being bedridden or alone. I wanted to dispel this perception - and in doing so my submission was well received by both Australia Post and the various hospice centres.

So there it is - another intriguing mystery solved. What a wonderful and encouraging explanation of how the chess theme was perceived as eminently suitable for a postal cover commemorating hospices. I think it demonstrates an imaginative and original approach to a complex subject. At the same time, it also once again shows the universality of chess, as not just a game but a broader and stimulating activity that can be enjoyed by a whole variety of individuals and cross section of the community. It goes to show that to produce a chess related postal article the subject matter can be far more imaginative than depicting chess tournaments, chess pieces or chess personalities.

Congratulations to Priscilla Cutter for designing a very 'catchy' and attractive postal item related to chess, which has made a well appreciated contribution to philately and its related thematic interest.

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PART 1: HONG KONG THE HIGH DENOMINATION STAMPS OF THE QUEEN VICTORIA PERIOD AND FISCAL STAMPS USED FOR POSTAGE.

Richard Gurevitch

INTRODUCTION.

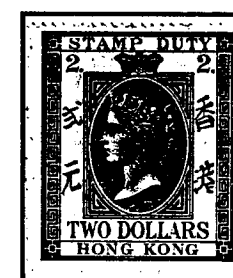
During the Queen Victoria period of stamp issues of Hong Kong, some high denomination adhesives originally designated for fiscal use were authorised for postal use and incorporated into the range of postal stamps sold by the Post Office. Later, stamps of the same design, albeit that they were annotated 'Stamp Duty', were specifically issued as postage stamps. Other fiscal adhesives were used in an unauthorised manner for postal purposes. All these issues are treated in a category separate to postage stamp issues in some stamp catalogues (eg Stanley Gibbons, and Yang), although others (eg Scott) incorporate them into the total range of postage stamp issues. There also appears to be some confusion in stamp catalogues as to which of the adhesives were authorised for use as postage stamps and their date of issue. There are few writings on these stamps. The most authoritative are by Bishop and Sayers in 1933¹, and Munk in 1935². However, both continue to place the adhesives authorised for postal use in a separate category.

I have long advocated that the values authorised postal use or specifically issued as postage stamps for be treated in the same manner as other postage stamps of the period³. Indeed, I consider that a 'traditional' collector of Hong Kong stamps should include them if his collection purports to show all issued stamps.

This article provides a brief overview of those stamp issues.

AUTHORISED ISSUES

1874 'High Denomination' Issue.



Two Dollars Green



Three Dollars Mauve



Ten Dollars Carmine

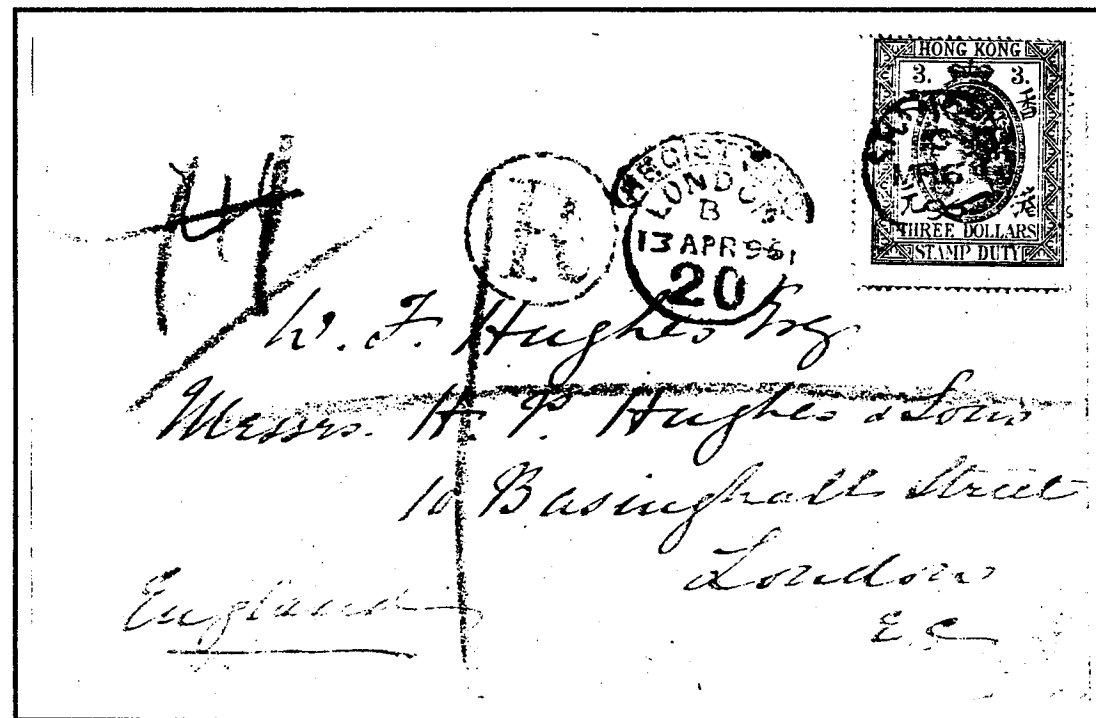
¹ Bishop, Capt G.T. and Sayers, Mr W.; 'Hong Kong. A Short Study of the Postal Fiscals.', The Stamp Lover December 1933.

² Munk, Dr H., Kohl-Briefmarken Handbuch, Lieferung 35, 1934.

³ Gurevitch, Air Cdre R.N., Hong Kong Stamps of the Queen Victoria Period 'A Collector's Notebook', 1993.

The need for a high value stamp to supplement the range of stamps on issue was seen as far back as 1865 when the Hong Kong Postmaster, Mr. Mitchell, wrote in his Annual Report that he saw a need for a 480 cents stamp (amongst two other additional lesser values)⁴.

In 1867 the first series of seven fiscal adhesives ranging from 3 cents to 10 dollars were produced for Hong Kong by De La Rue. The values consisted of 3, 25, and 50 cents, and 1, 2, 3, and 10 dollars. They were printed on watermark Crown over C.C. paper and perforated gauge 15½ by 15. In late 1874 the use of the three highest values (\$2, \$3, and \$10) was changed from fiscal to postal purposes. The only authoritative reference I have been able to find to the change of use is contained in the Hong Kong General Post Office pamphlet of 1 October, 1880 listing the stamps issued by the Post Office and which states after the three 'dollar' values "These were disused revenue stamps, utilized for postal purposes". The pamphlet also annotated that the 10 dollar value was no longer available at that time. The information clearly shows that the \$2, \$3 and \$10 values had become postage stamps. Morton, who examined copies of the Post Office Annual Reports and records much pertinent information from those Reports to 1882, shows no sales of the \$10 value after 1880 and with total sales of less than one thousand stamps over the seven years it was on issue⁵. The \$2 and \$3 values continued to be used until well into the Queen Victoria issue period, even though new \$2 and \$3 values were ordered in 1890. The \$2 was used until about September 1897 and the \$3 until early 1902.



Three Dollars mauve perforated 'gauge 15½ by 15' used on a 8 March 1896 registered, and probably insured, cover from Shanghai to London. Postage was probably made up by 20 cents double postal rate, 10 cent registration fee, and \$2.70 insurance. (This is recorded as the only surviving complete cover bearing any of the three high value stamps of the 1874 issue although several of the \$2 and \$3 values are recorded on large fragments and on a 'front'). *Ex-Franklin D. Roosevelt.*

⁴ Morton, Rev C.S., The First postage Stamps of Hong Kong, Gibbons' Stamp Monthly, January 1928.

⁵ Ibid.

1890 Emergency Issue.



2 Cents Lilac

Towards the end of 1890 a shortage of 2 cents stamps developed, supposedly because of a delay in the delivery of stamp supplies from London. The small format 2 cent 'Stamp Duty' label was authorised for postal use. The Hong Kong General Post Office pamphlet of 1 March, 1892 states "The stamp was temporarily utilised, during the last week in December only in place of the 2 cents postal stamp which was exhausted".

The stamp is found postally used at other times but such use was not officially authorised.

The 'Unified Series' Issue.

From March 1887 considerable correspondence ensued between the Hong Kong Post Master General, the Crown Agents and De La Rue on the production of a unified issue of stamps⁶. De La Rue wanted to produce a complete new issue of stamps, but the PMG, ever conscious of the cost involved with such an endeavour, devised a solution whereby most current stamps, albeit printed in new double fugitive ink colours for security reasons, could form the new stamp issue. Only two double fugitive ink colours were available, namely, purple and green, and to increase the range of colours to make up the new stamps for the issue, red tinted paper was incorporated for some values. The series consisted of ten values, namely, 2, 5, 10, 20, 30, & 50 Cents, and 1, 2, 3, & 5 Dollars, the 2 and 5 Cents values coming from the earlier 1882 issue.

The new Two and Three Dollar stamps were printed from existing plates and basically of the old colours for those values and on Crown over C.C. watermark paper, but they were perforated 'Gauge 14'.

⁶ Easton, Mr. J., De La Rue History of British and Foreign Postage Stamps, 1855 - 1901, Faber & Faber, 1959.



5 Dollars on Ten Dollars purple on red paper

The Five Dollars stamp for the issue was produced by printing the Ten Dollars fiscal stamp in purple on red tinted paper and overprinting the stamp with its new value. The red tinted paper used for the printing of the stamp is watermarked Crown over CA and the spacing of the overprint matches the spacing of regular small sized stamps produced by De La Rue, ie, about 23 mm by 20 mm; however, because of the larger size of the stamp, ie, about 30 mm by 25 mm, the watermark appears in a linear multiple form over the stamps and in some cases is found with only the border watermark.

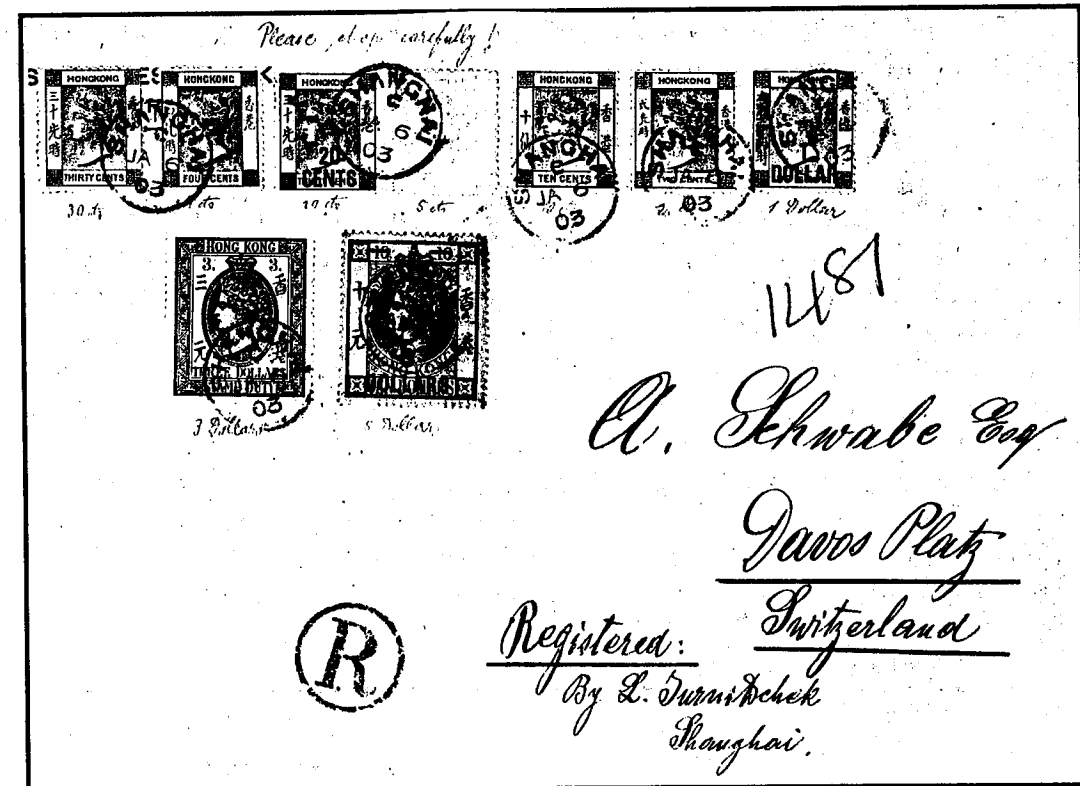
All three high dollar value stamps were produced as postage stamps and form a part of the 'Unified Series'. Together with the lower values of the set, they were supplied to Hong Kong at the end of 1890. Whereas the Five Dollars stamp was placed on issue on 1 January, 1891, the Two Dollars and Three Dollars values were not issued until much later as supplies of the earlier stamps of those two values were still available.

The Two Dollars stamp perforated 'Gauge 15½ by 15' did not run out until about September 1897 when all remaining stocks of the were overprinted One Dollar. Some of the then unissued new Two Dollars stamp were also overprinted at the time. Thus the issue date of the Two Dollars stamp perforated 'Gauge 14' can be taken as about October 1897⁷. The earliest date of usage I have recorded for the stamp is 19 November, 1897 from Shanghai which meant that it would have been issued earlier at Hong Kong.

The Three Dollars stamp perforated 'Gauge 15½ by 15' did not run out until early 1902, when the new stamp of that denomination was brought into use. Because of its short period of use, this stamp is quite a rare stamp, especially in used condition.

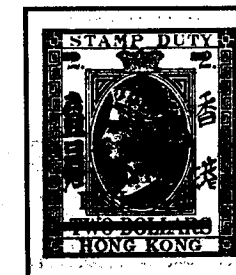
⁷ Munk, Dr H., Kohl-Briefmarken Handbuch, Lieferung 35, 1934.

⁸ Gurevitch, Air Cdre R.N., Unpublished research papers.



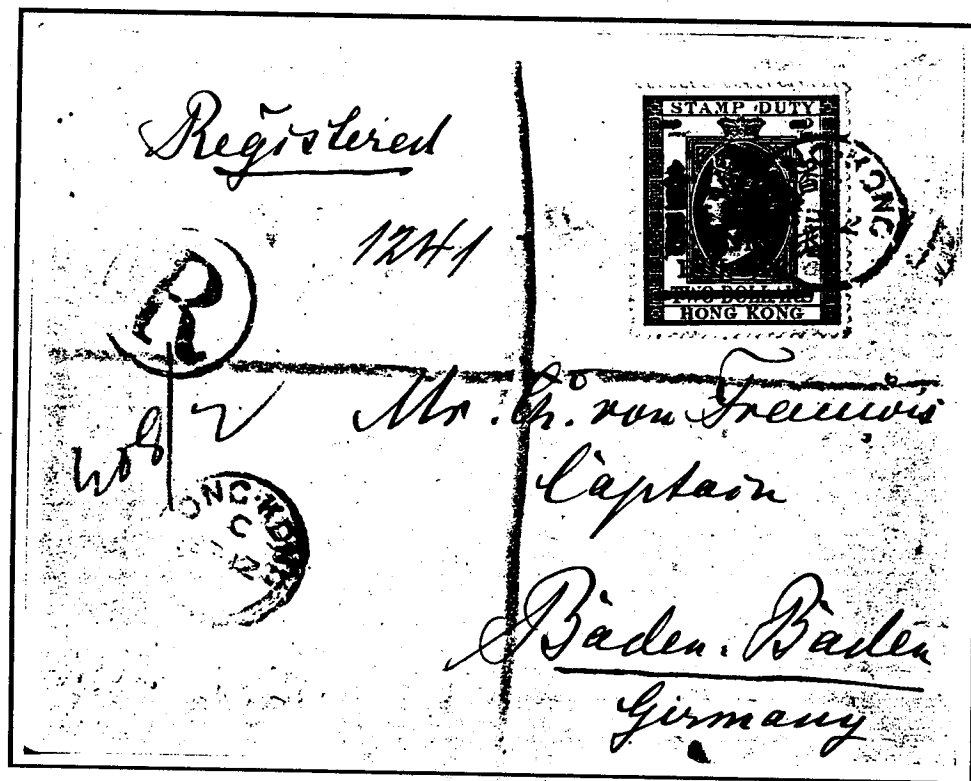
Three Dollars mauve perforated 'Gauge 14' and 5 Dollars on Ten Dollars purple on red paper, together with other lesser denomination stamps used on registered (and probably insured) cover postmarked 6 January, 1903 from Shanghai to Dvovs Platz, Switzerland. The cover probably has affixed all the denominations of Hong Kong stamps available at the British Post Office in Shanghai at that time. Although it appears to be philatelic in nature, it has the seal of, and was sent from, the Russian-Chinese Bank in Shanghai which could mean that it was used in a genuine manner as well. (This is one of two recorded covers, both philatelic, with the perforation 14 Three Dollars mauve stamp).

The 1897 One Dollar Provisional Issue.



One Dollar on Two Dollars Green (both printings)

The regular One Dollar overprinted stamp of 1891 was withdrawn from issue in the middle of 1897 following the detection of postal forgeries of the stamp. The Government Printer, Noronha & Sons, was instructed to overprint remaining stocks of the perforated 'Gauge 15½ by 15' Two Dollars stamps with a new value of One Dollar in English and the value in Chinese was applied with a hand chop at the Post Office as had been done with the earlier One Dollar stamp. The stamps were placed on issue pending reprinting by De La Rue of the earlier One Dollar postage stamp in a new colour. It is believed that after all remaining stocks of that Two Dollars stamp had been overprinted, the Post Office felt it required stamps of that duty. As a result, a second local overprinting was undertaken on the then unissued perforated 'Gauge 14' Two Dollars stamps using the same overprinting forme as had been used with the first overprinting. It is reported that the first overprinting consisted of 39 sheets, and the second of 15 sheets. However, the relative availability of these stamps today would indicate to me that perhaps rather more stamps were overprinted than the number reported, and moreover, stamps of the first overprinting appear to be scarcer than those of the second. The overprint in English was applied in a forme of 12 down the sheet and each of the positions can be identified⁹. Stamps of both printing exist with the Chinese overprint omitted, as well as some of the second printing with one of the two Chinese chops missing or one inverted¹⁰.



One Dollar on Two Dollars green perforated 'Gauge 14' used on a 12 September 1898 registered cover from Hong Kong to Baden-Baden, Germany.

To be continued.

⁹ Gurevitch, Air Cdre R.N., Hong Kong Stamps of the Queen Victoria Period 'A Collector's Notebook', 1993.

¹⁰ Ibid.

MEMBER PROFILE - RICHARD GUREVITCH

Dingle Smith

Richard first joined the Society in 1965 when meetings were held in the bank building in Hobart Place and the library was housed in a locked cupboard. Like so many members he first collected, the world and everything, as a twelve-year old in Hong Kong. However, the schoolboy hobby lapsed and that first world album is long since lost. Stamp collecting was in abeyance until 1964 when Richard was stationed in Canberra. Richard ascribes his motivation to collect and to join the Philatelic Society of Canberra as the need for an interest to counter the long cold winter Canberra nights resident in the single officers' quarters at Fairbairn.

His first serious philatelic venture was to purchase, for thirty pounds, a collection of Australian Commonwealth material from the long established, but now unfortunately defunct, Downey Auctions in Melbourne. This lot would now seem to have been an excellent investment as it contained sundry high value 'roos and a 5/- Harbour Bridge. Long lonely nights were now enlivened by the study K. George varieties. At that time the focus of the Society, led by such stalwarts as Ron Hyronimus and Alan Salisbury, was firmly on Australian Commonwealth stamps, the much broader collecting base of present members reflects that of Australia as a whole. In the later 1960s he obtained a small collection of Hong Kong with the intention of breaking it up for sale on the circuit sheets but decided to retain the material and built up a country collection, albeit at that time a minor interest.

In the 1970s Richard decided to broaden his horizons with the purchase of a collection of Czechoslovakia. He has constantly added covers and stamps to this initial purchase to the extent that the material is now housed in a trunk! The decision to collect Czechoslovakia led to the accumulation of other 'C' countries. It would be interesting to know if this alphabetical bias, due to auction houses describing lots by the first letter of the countries concerned, is common with other collectors. I have always avoided countries in the lower half of the alphabet to shorten the time spent sitting in auctions waiting for lots to be knocked down. Thus Cuba and Costa Rica were added to Richard's collecting interests and this led to neighbouring countries in Central America and the Caribbean, for instance Haiti and Guatemala. It is unclear how Richard also came to collect Montenegro.

Richard Society' membership lapsed for a period the 1971-77 when he continued his work on the design and construction of airfields with the Commonwealth Department of Works. On his return to the RAAF he was again based in Canberra, by this time his Australian collection had been sold and Richard's real interest in Hong Kong was about to begin. It will be a surprise to many to learn that this interest only seriously commenced in the early 1980s. By this stage Richard was an avid devotee to research and he quickly built up a reference library for Hong Kong, that spurred Richard to further research the early material of Hong Kong and to the publication, in 1993, of *Hong Kong postage stamps of the Queen Victoria period: a collector's notebook*, for details see *Capital Philately*, v.12, n.2. The book has received laudatory reviews, a literature award at an international exhibition and the Webb Cup from the Hong Kong Study Circle based in the UK. Richard is now engaged on a longer and more detailed account of early Hong Kong. There is relatively little archival material and his search to establish dates of issue and usage has resulted in the recording of some 2,700 covers with much of the information obtained from auction catalogues. An unusual problem is that postmark dates (except for those in the Treaty Ports) are not given until the early 1890s. Richard has

not been a prolific exhibitor at exhibitions but had shown material at various Canberra Conventions. Many members however, will be aware of the breadth and depth of his Hong Kong and Central American collections from displays that he has given to the Society.

In 1994 Richard was elected as President of the Society. The Society tradition of limiting presidential terms to two years (and not re-cycling them!) means that there is a continuing stream of new ideas. Richard is particularly pleased with the success, during his presidency, of the 'focus' meetings. These have been well-attended and have brought together established philatelists and newcomers in order to enhance the enjoyment and skills for all. Another success story has been the provision of coffee at the conclusion of Thursday display evenings. In itself a small step but important to improve social interaction between members and guests. Richard looks forward to completing his monograph for Hong Kong and to the continued growth and increase in philatelic fellowship among members. He would dearly love the Society to own its own premises and ideal shared by many other members but, being realistic, he doubts whether it could ever be achieved.

This profile raises the question: is the Society's success as one of the most active philatelic groups in Australia due to the influence of climatic on what to do on cold winter nights in the national capital? Undoubtedly, Richard and the Society have gained immeasurably from his early decision, suggested by a fellow officer, of the need to counter Canberra's winter by devotion to philately.



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ST PIERRE ET MIQUELON CANADIAN PAQUEBOT CANCELS AND 1926 POSTAGE PAID FRANKS

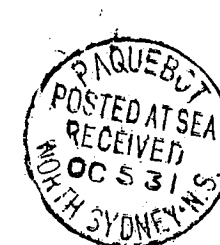
Ian McMahon

Many will be aware of the two collecting 'challenges' currently taking place in Australian philatelic circles: the Great Australian Postal Stationery Challenge and the French Colonial Challenge. My task in the latter challenge is to attempt to assemble a collection of St Pierre and Miquelon, France's last remaining territory in North America.

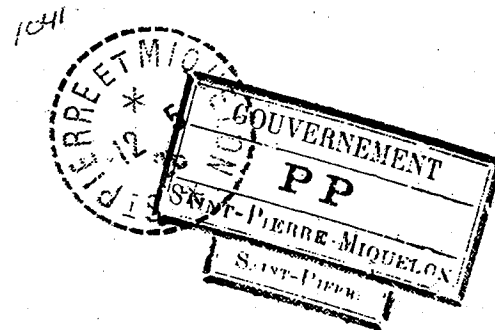
There is much of interest in collecting St Pierre et Miquelon but two aspects that have recently come to my attention are the disproportionate number of St Pierre et Miquelon stamps with Canadian ship mail cancels and the Islands' response to a shortage of adhesive stamps in 1926.

St Pierre et Miquelon mail with Canadian cancels

The location of St Pierre and Miquelon, and the lack of direct mail services to France, has meant that most mail from the Islands travels via Canada or the USA. Because of the ship traffic between the islands and the Canadian east coast a fairly large proportion of the Islands' mail has travelled as ship letters, carried on vessels travelling between the two countries. Such mail was either posted on board the ship in transit between the two countries or while the vessel was in port at St Pierre. The most common Canadian ports of entry for St Pierre ship mail are North Sydney and Halifax, Nova Scotia.



Such covers with St Pierre and Miquelon stamps usually received Canadian paquebot markings such as the two examples illustrated above. These are 'Paquebot Posted at Sea Received [date] North Sydney N S' circular datestamp and a machine cancel 'PAQUEBOT POSTED AT SEA' cancel, likely to be from either Halifax or North Sydney on stamps of the 1909-28 definitive issue.

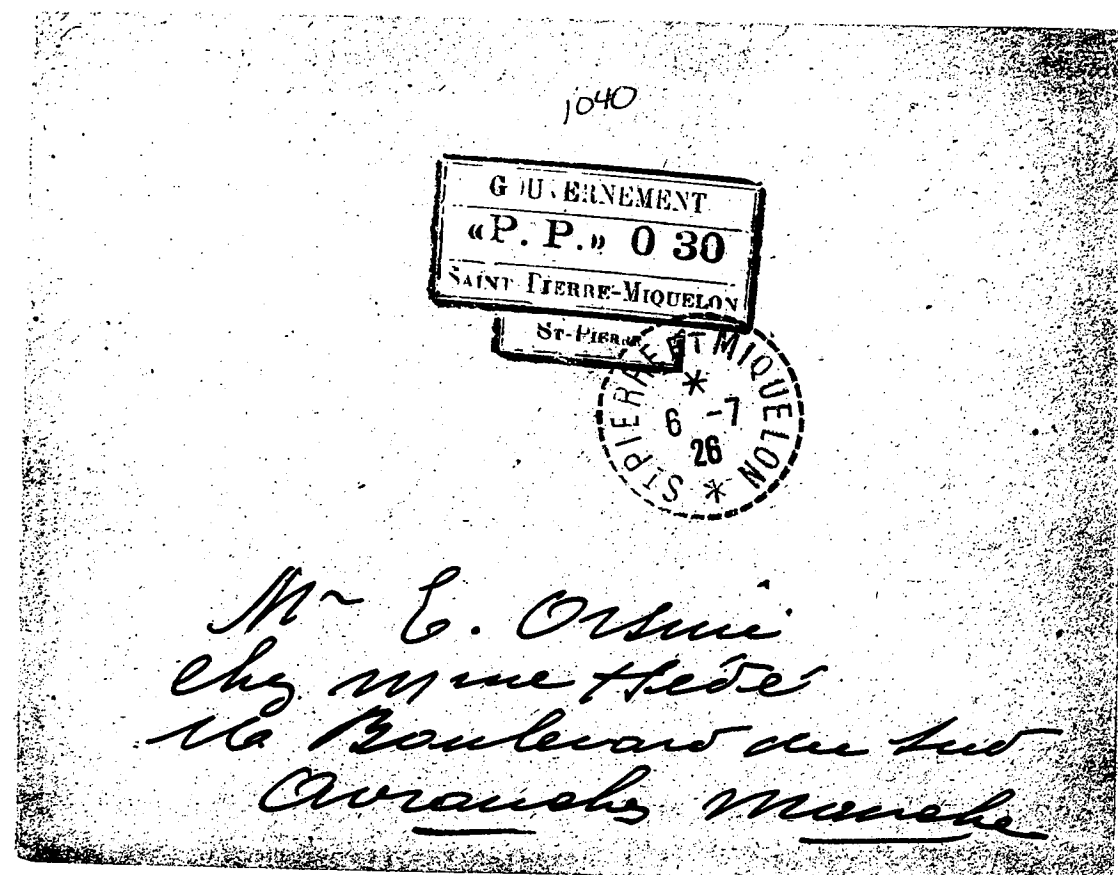


Madame
R. Lemire, signeur

An article by Robert Stone in the *Collectors Club Philatelist* (May 1975, vol. 54, pages 143-185) gives a good description of these ship letters and the postmarks used. He quotes the postmaster at North Sydney, Nova Scotia as saying that 'nearly every boat coming in from St Pierre brings some loose letters to be marked with the 'posted at Sea' cancel' and notes that the cancel was applied also applied to loose letters brought over on the irregular plane flights from St Pierre.

The shortage of adhesive stamps in 1926

Owing to a shortage of adhesive stamps, in particular the 0.30 fr denomination, between April and July 1926, letters addressed to France had the postage pre-paid in cash and were then handstamped with 0.5 fr, 0.30 fr or non-denominated cachets indicating that postage had been paid. These cachets were inscribed *Gouvernement /PP value/Saint-Pierre-Miquelon/St Pierre*. A local cover used on 12 May 1926 with a non-denominated handstamp is illustrated on the preceding page and a 0.30 fr handstamp on a cover from St Pierre to France, dated 6 July 1926, below.

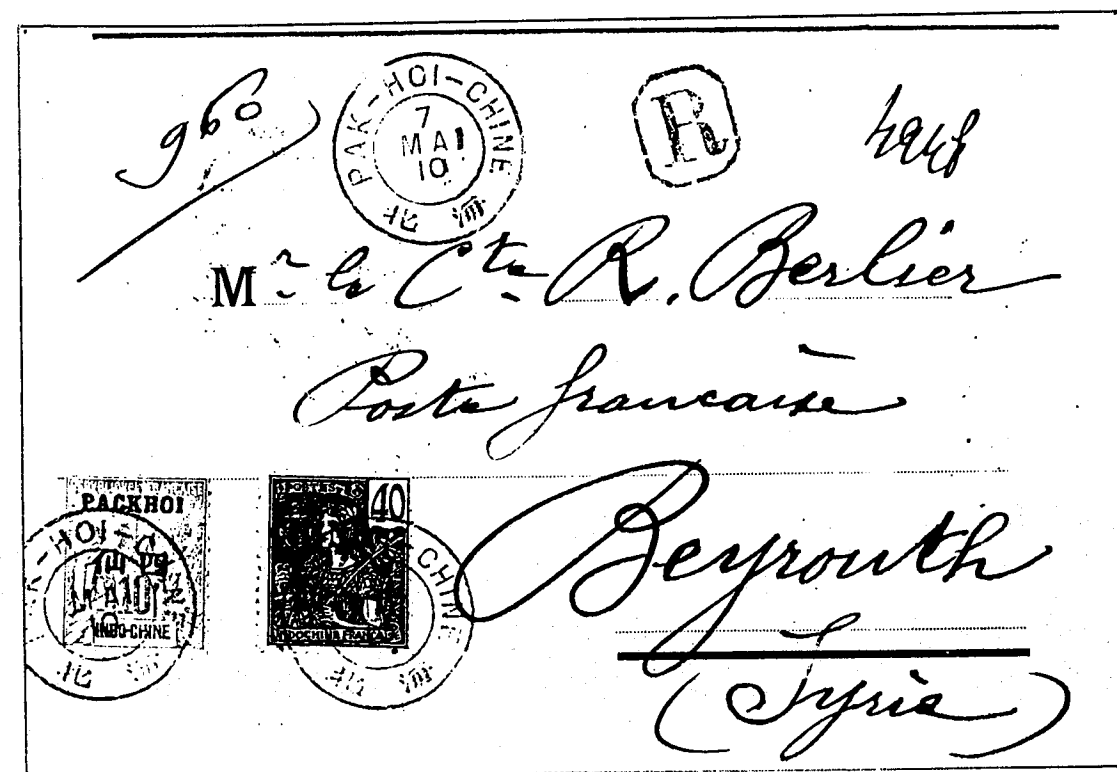


FROM PAK-HOI TO BEIRUT IN 1910

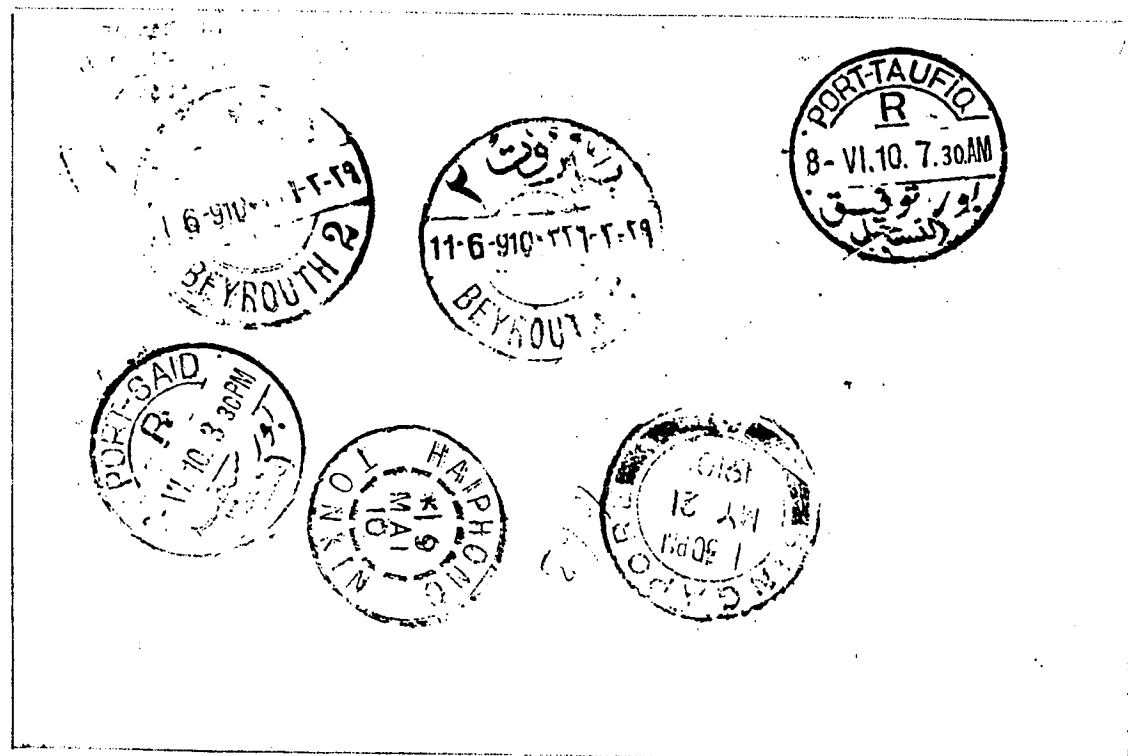
Robert A. M. Gregson

The French colonisation of what is today Vietnam was a slow and erratic process, with only partial cultural assimilation and continued sporadic warfare. When the French moved into Tonkin, the region around Hanoi, there was resentment from the Chinese Empire, whose political and commercial interests were being displaced. By the 1880s, when a skeletal network of administration and communications had been set up, initially by the military and by shipping companies such as the *Compagnie des Messageries maritimes*, open warfare broke out between China and France. Not surprisingly, the military hardware and organisation of the French were eventually victorious, and in a treaty of 9 June 1885 signed in the Chinese capital, China recognised French *de jure* sovereignty in Tonkin, and agreed to the establishment of French consulates in a number of towns in Yunnan, the southernmost province of China bordering Vietnam. Yunnan had been brutally ruled by the Chinese, the natives being ethnically and often in religion different from their northern neighbours, a situation which appeared to have helped to give the French a foothold.

The port of Pak-hoi, which is today called Bei-hei, lies on the coast about 100 kms north of the border with the then area of Tonkin. The French navy blockaded it in the war of 1884, and in the subsequent treaty settlement clause No.2 of the memorandum of 4 April 1885 specially agrees to the lifting of that blockade, in exchange for the Chinese concessions in Yunnan. Consulates were established in some cities in Yunnan, and in Canton, where the French were trading and bringing products down to the coast for export or into Tonkin by land. Pak-hoi was one of those consulates, and the French colonial stamps of Indo-China overprinted for China, in general, and for specific places in southern China, between about 1907 and 1922, are one of the surviving legacies of that period of colonial influence by France. The place names used at the time of these issues are in modern atlases either spelled differently, or in some cases completely changed.



The cover illustrated is commercial mail from Pak-hoi to Beirut in the Lebanon, both places of then French influence and with French post offices. The top edge of the envelope has been trimmed off; it would have had the printed name of a company trading in Pak-hoi in the style of that period which was common in European commercial stationery. Registered mail of the period before the First World War is always philatelically interesting and informative, the practice of backstamping the mail every time it changed hands between different postal administrations enables us to trace routes and journey times, mostly by ship and by rail. Leaving Pak-hoi by coastal steamer which went about twice a month, the letter went first to Haiphong, the port of Hanoi, and then to Singapore. Apparently it was then passed to British colonial administration and shipping, and travelled on the much used route to Suez. At the entrance to the Suez Canal it was accepted into Egyptian postal hands, was cancelled again at the north end of the canal, and finally took another ship to Beirut. The influence of the various colonial administrations on the style and wording of the postmarks at the time is easily traced.



The stamps used are the 10 centimes of the colonial key type for Indo-China overprinted Packhoi in French and Chinese, supplemented by the 40 centimes Grasset type overprinted for general use in Chinese offices; in total paying a registered rate.

The postmarks are Pak-hoi Chine 7 Mai (19)10, and on the back Haiphong Tonkin 19 Mai (19)10, both in the French style, then Singapore 1 30pm My 21 1910 in British colonial style, followed by Port Taufiq R 8 VI (19)10 7 30 am at the entrance to the Suez canal, Port Said 8 VI (19)10 3 30 pm at the Mediterranean end of the canal, and finally Beyrouth on 11 6 (1)910 in French and Arabic.

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