



Capital Philately



Journal of the Philatelic Society of Canberra



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CAPITAL PHILATELY

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EDITORIAL

This issue of Capital Philately is about four weeks later than I had hoped, but like all volunteer positions, occasionally personal matters must take preference. I have now managed to all but put these matters behind me so that in future Capital philately will be back on track. Assuming I receive adequate material to publish. Indeed, I hope to have the August issue ready my mid-September which will be the final issue of volume 18. The Editorial Committee has been discussing some exciting changes for volume 19 which I will discuss further in the August issue. However, please keep the material coming in and please provide feedback on the articles you liked and any you would like to see. As editor I have no hesitation in soliciting specific articles if the interest is there.

This issue has an overview of the very successful Canberra Stampshow 2000, which once again, apart from the weather, set a benchmark in exhibitions I believe. However, as the chairman of the Organising Committee and a judge, I would like to take this opportunity to editorialize on why the Society should continue to hold exhibitions. A number of members of the Society and even some of the committee members believe that we spend too much time in organising exhibitions. As someone who has been intimately involved with a number of exhibitions I can assure you that the people involved don't do it for the fun.

Canberra has held biennial exhibitions every year since 1980 and three of these have been National exhibitions. Most have been State level exhibitions and all but two of the nationals made good profits. These profits have underpinned the Philatelic Society of Canberra and without these funds the subs would be even higher than they are now. Certainly Canberra Stampshow 2000 made an excellent surplus which I believe should be spent on the current members, since our reserves are quite adequate at present. This matter is currently being discussed by the Society's Council.

However, even more importantly than money, the exhibitions provide a focus for philately and collectors in the region. Based on Australia Post's Stamp Bulletin mailing list there are over 6,000 stamp collectors in the Canberra region. The Society has just under 200 members of which a moderate percentage are interstate. This means that we have managed to attract less than three percent of the possible members to the Society. Doesn't sound very good but it is probably typical of the ratio Australia wide. So the question raised is how do we attract new members, and to me the simple answer is – provide a focal point to attract them. Hence the need to hold regular exhibitions. Certainly we were very successful at Stampshow 2000 with 22 new members being signed up at the exhibition. This follows on from about 10 members we managed to attract from the 1998 exhibition where we followed up after the exhibition. It should also be noted that a number of the current members of the Committee and the Society were attracted by the 1994 and 1996 exhibitions. Little

did Danny Howard know that in 1998, when he won the door prize at Natstamp 98, that he would end up Treasurer a year later! We still have a dynamic society and are continuing to attract new members. We also have a database of nearly 500 people who are interested enough in stamps to come to an exhibition and we will continue to target these people as potential new members. None of this would have happened without these regular exhibitions.

The other question raised recently was, whether we need to hold exhibitions of the size that we do? In the past we held small State level shows in the basement of the GPO. The venue was free and we used to get a grant from the government, the end result of which were significant surpluses. Then we lost our free venue so we moved to Dickson College which has the room and is affordable although not cheap. This has worked well and is now well enough known that I would loathed to move it to another venue. We have also held two full national exhibitions at larger venues, the first of which lost a lot of money and the second in 1998 made a small profit. I was involved in both which, philatelically were very successful, but very hard work for all involved with little direct return to the Society. I do not believe that there is a lot of interest in the Society in holding another full national exhibition, even though we do it well. What has evolved is a hybrid of State classes with some National classes. This originally started because Australia was not holding regular national exhibitions. However, the big plus of this for Canberra is that this type of exhibition takes little more effort to organise, can use Dickson College well, is more attractive to national and international dealers, as well as sponsors, and as we proved this year is also more profitable.

Overall I hope that members of the Society will continue to support the biennial exhibitions in order to underpin the Society's finances, attract new members, provide a focal point for all stamp collectors and to continue to trial new innovations in philately. There will be more on this last point in the next issue. So please think about the above when you are next asked to help out with an exhibition – they benefit us all not just the exhibitors.

This issue of Capital Philately has its usual mixed bag of articles. One area in which I would like more material is articles on Australia. This issue contains one on Australia's UN Forces in East Timor which I hope is of interest. Whilst Capital Philately has a policy of publishing material that has not previously been published, the editor does occasionally break this rule. In the last issue it was the article on the Danish GEBYR stamps which was originally published in Dutch and was translated by Hans Karman. In this issue the author of the UN article kindly gave permission to republish it because it was likely to be of significant interest to Australian collectors.

MEMBERS' EXHIBITION RESULTS

CANBERRA STAMPSHOW 2000 – 18-20 MARCH 2000

National Classes

Edric Druce	Northumberland Postal History 1600-1840	Large Vermeil (81)
Edric Druce	The Evolution of Aircraft (Maximaphily)	Large Silver (72)
John Vasallo	Australian Decimal First day Covers	Silver (67)
Edric Druce	Picture of Earth (Maximaphily)	Silver Bronze (62)
Hubert Goron	New Caledonia	Silver-Bronze (61)
Ian McMahan	St Pierre et Miquelon	Silver-Bronze (60)
Edric Druce	French Equatorial Africa	Bronze (59)

State Classes

Sheryll Oswald	New Hebrides/Nouvelle Hebrides 1888-1949	Large Silver (65)
Hans Dahl	The Friendly Games	Silver (63)

Post Cards

Hans Karman	Windmills	Gold (85) (SP)
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round 2. This is deduced from the postmark that has TUR 2 in it. At that time there were up to six postal rounds per day in Stockholm from the main office. Obviously Riddargatan (which means 'street of the knights') was served by the sub-post office in Linnegatan. As Herr Schoug had moved to Ruslagsgatan which is nearer to Odengatan, the final and apparently successful attempt to deliver his postcard was made on the same day on delivery round 3. These two Stockholm postmarks are actually examples of what are called Brevbärarexpeditionsstämplar (letter carrier delivery cancellations), and in the case of Linnegatan only two rounds (turer) per day were made, whereas for Odengatan there were eventually three per day. The SFF handbook of 1952 then suggested that the cancellation Linnegatan Tur 2 came into use only in 1910, but this example predates it. The postmarks in question were introduced at these offices around 1907.

Having got the good engineer's mail to him, let us see why he was the recipient of such a card. The oilfields on the Apsheron peninsula near Baku were developed by the Nobel brothers (of which Alfred, who founded the famous prizes after making explosives, was only one) though oil was being collected by crude methods, from surface pools, as early as the 8th century, and was burnt for religious reasons by fire worshippers, in the Temple of the Eternal Fires. This building is depicted, rather roughly, on two issue of stamps for Azerbaijan, SG9 and SG10 (Figure 2, enlarged in size) which appeared about 1919 and SG147 (wrongly described in the catalogue as 'flaring naphtha') in 1994. As the Nobel brothers' company was Swedish some mail between Baku and Sweden is still to be found very occasionally in Stockholm stamp auctions, which is where this example came from. Surviving

mail in the opposite direction from Sweden to Baku is much rarer. The three Nobel brothers and their partner are featured on SG 150 and SGMS151, the modern Azeri issue of June 1994, on the 115th anniversary of their commercial venture.

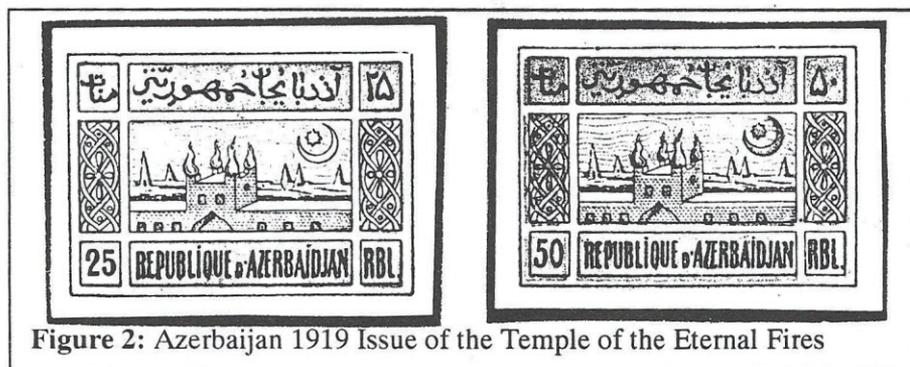


Figure 2: Azerbaijan 1919 Issue of the Temple of the Eternal Fires

The skilled engineers in the oilfields were not all Russian - Swedish and German expatriates worked there and sent home mail to their families. Other mail of the period, and the profusion of surviving picture postcards, often printed in Germany, of scenes in Baku, indicate that this was an area of exotic oriental interest, with a local colony of Western Europeans who had their own schools and institutions. Modern Baku is again beginning to resemble that period, as the new and comprehensive Internet pages at www.bakupages.com (in English or Russian) with listings of hotels, real estate, rates of exchange, business connections, and the weather forecast for the next four days, show. Modern mail of the international oil companies often goes by courier services, so that postal history material of the present day seems scarcer than that of the Tsarist Empire.

The message on the card is in Swedish and is dated Baku 13=26/11 1907; using both the old and new calendars. It says:

"Thank you for your letter of the 12th with which this evening I find myself worried, in finding out that you had moved on the 1st October. So I don't know where to find you, or where to write to you. Here therefore are only a few lines, which I hope reach you and that you will send me first thing your address. Otherwise how are you in the autumn weather? I am still alive as you see! Greetings from your good friend G.W.D."

I think the surname is Dallergren, (obviously Swedish) though we only have it in full in Cyrillic. The fact that he says he has lost Herr Schoug's address matches the meanderings of the postcard within Stockholm's local post system. What is interesting is that the reply card portion has the address already written in, by the sender, in Russian, ready for return posting, but was obviously never sent (Figure 3).

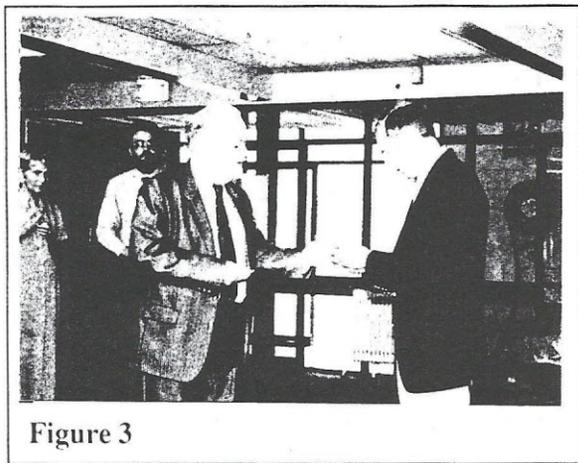


Figure 3

The awards night on the Sunday was a slightly more formal affair than the “faux palmares” but was still very enjoyable. Although it did lead to a rather infamous bet between Lindsay Probin from the Norfolk Island Post Office and Mark Juresich. The end result of which meant I didn't get home until 4am the next morning. However, on a more important note there were two special presentations made at the awards dinner. The first was to Judy Kennett for services to the Philatelic Society of Canberra and as shown in figure 5,



Figure 5

for her services over the years on many exhibition committees. Judy is due to leave Canberra in the near future and will be sorely missed. Judy's experience and contacts will be hard to replace. There was another award to be presented to Ian Faber for services to the Philatelic Society but unfortunately he could not be present at the dinner.

Wearing one of my many hats, in this case as President of the ACT Philatelic Council, I also had the pleasure in presenting the Shakespeare Award to Elspeth Bodley. This is shown in figure 6. There will be a full write-up on the Shakespeare award in the August issue but I must say that it was a pleasure to award this to Elspeth. She fully deserved the award and is now in the distinguished company of Alan Salisbury and Ed Druce.

Overall the exhibition was great fun and more importantly, as I stated in my editorial, it has attracted a number of new members to the Society. The next exhibition is just starting to be planned and I hope that you will all assist the Society when asked because we have the longest running series of exhibitions in Australia and I would like to keep up the tradition. Besides we them to attract new members and to promote philately around the region.

exhibition. All I can say is that if you ever have the opportunity to attend one these “challenge” dinners then do so.

The exhibition itself was well attended although I must admit to being disappointed with the number of children who came along. Whilst the weather had an impact upon attendance, I heard on the grapevine that a lot of business was done by the dealers who attended. Figure 4 shows Andrew Kimonides, one of our regulars at exhibitions in Canberra.

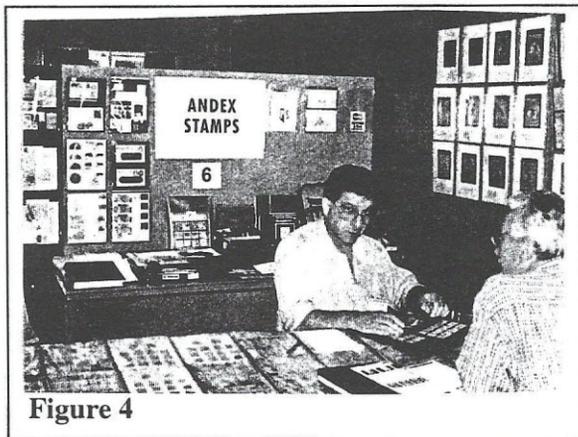


Figure 4

and as shown in figure 5, a special award by the organising committee for her services over the years on many exhibition committees. Judy is due to leave Canberra in the near future and will be sorely missed. Judy's experience and contacts will be hard to replace. There was another award to be presented to Ian Faber for services to the Philatelic Society but unfortunately he could not be present at the dinner.



Figure 6

AUSTRALIAN REVENUES – THE CATALOGUES.

Dingle Smith

John Barefoot has recently published the latest edition of his catalogue, namely *British Commonwealth Revenues*. This is the sixth edition of this work and it provides an invaluable listing of what for so long had been a neglected field of philately. The first of the Barefoot catalogues appeared some twenty years ago and progressively new revenue items have been added. For example, the fifth edition published in 1996 comprised 220 pages, in the latest edition that has increased to 272 pages and at the same price. The 'new' items are not necessarily new issues but represent the addition of revenue stamps, many of which first appeared decades ago. For many revenue collectors this is one of the delights of this growing field of philately. Just imagine being able to find a whole new series of postage stamps that had escaped everybody else's attention!

For collectors of Australian State revenues, the newest Barefoot edition is of particular interest. This is because the section for the Australian States has been subject to extensive revision - this applies both to content and price. It is of interest therefore, to consider why this is the case. The short answer is that John Barefoot has been able to add material from a series of listings and catalogues produced by Australian authors. It is a praiseworthy feature of the British Commonwealth Revenue catalogue, that it contains references to these more detailed sources.

For those new to the field, the Australian States (and to a lesser degree the Commonwealth) provide a very rich field for revenue collectors. Each State (as well as the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory) has issued revenues stamps and the variety of taxation purposes, for which the stamps provided receipts for payment, are especially extensive. These go well beyond the usual category of 'stamp duty' to include stamps for a wide range of agricultural, cattle and swine duties with such intriguing issues as buffalo fly tax stamps and charges on avocados and vegetables. The latter exotic examples are unique issues stemming from Queensland. All of the States (and the Commonwealth) also issued large and often exquisitely printed Victorian beer duty stamps. With the possible exception of Great Britain, that issued un gummed forerunners of revenue stamps in the eighteenth century, the Australian States have variety and interest unmatched elsewhere in the British Empire. It is not by accident that 30 pages of the latest Barefoot catalogue are devoted to Australia!

The Barefoot catalogues therefore, provide a simplified and well-illustrated guide to Australian State revenues for the beginner. It has to be remembered that the production of such catalogues provides challenges that differ from their postage stamps equivalents. Not least of these is the problem of defining a 'revenue stamp'. Barefoot's British Commonwealth catalogue is limited to adhesive stamps and does not include those impressed or printed onto various documents such as cheques or betting slips - both of which have been subject to tax for many years. The catalogue prices are for used copies, there are no separate listing for mint (and certainly not for mint unhinged) examples. Until recently it was widely accepted that used revenues stamps were often 'poorly' used in comparison with postmarked postage stamps (also a receipt for payment!). As the collection and exhibiting of revenues stamps grows, more attention is now focussed on condition and the inclusion of mint examples.

The reason why modern revenue catalogues are of such interest, is that nobody systematically listed this material after the World War I. Initially, catalogues such as Gibbons listed adhesive revenue stamps (and postal stationery) but as the numbers of stamps grew revenues were dropped from the listings and collecting interest rapidly waned. The period from about 1910 until the latest issues represents the Dark Age period for revenue collectors and this was a worldwide phenomenon.

Australian Revenue Catalogues.

British Commonwealth collectors owe a massive debt to John Barefoot for resurrecting this neglected field. In Australia the praise for re-kindling interest must go to Bill Craig. His single-minded dedication to the topic resulted in the publication of a series of listings and handbooks on each of the

type of sheetlets but they are now available through mail order. This will help their popularity as a collecting field but I would suggest that if you are interested you try to get the early sheets sooner rather than later. Regrettably the philatelic Society of Canberra has no stock of the Canberra sheetlet.

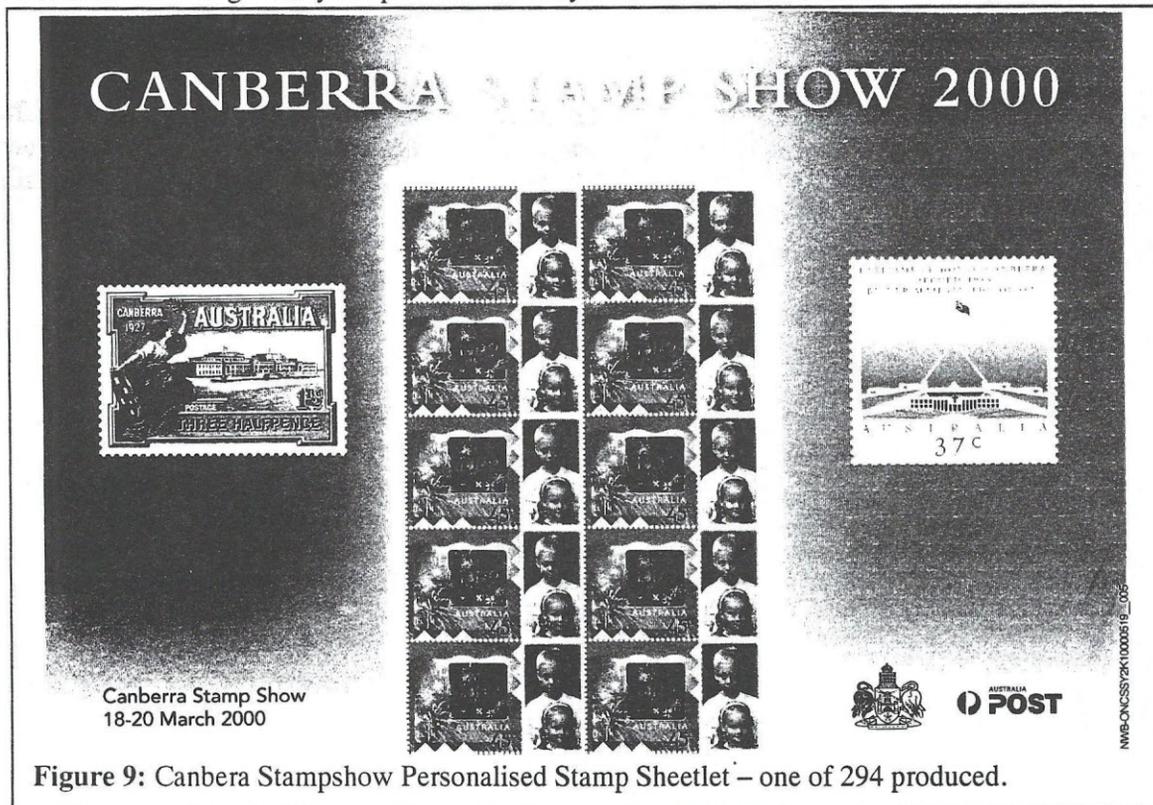


Figure 9: Canberra Stampshow Personalised Stamp Sheetlet – one of 294 produced.

AUSTRALIAN PHILATELIC FEDERATION

PRODUCT		(Weight)	PRICE	QTY	VALUE
BINDER AND SLIP CASE ONLY	Each	550gms	\$14.50		
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PAGES 283mm x 250mm, Unpunched	Per 50	650gms	\$37.00		
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Side Opening 290mm x 220mm	Per 10	190gms	\$16.00		
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	Add'l Kilos		\$3.00		
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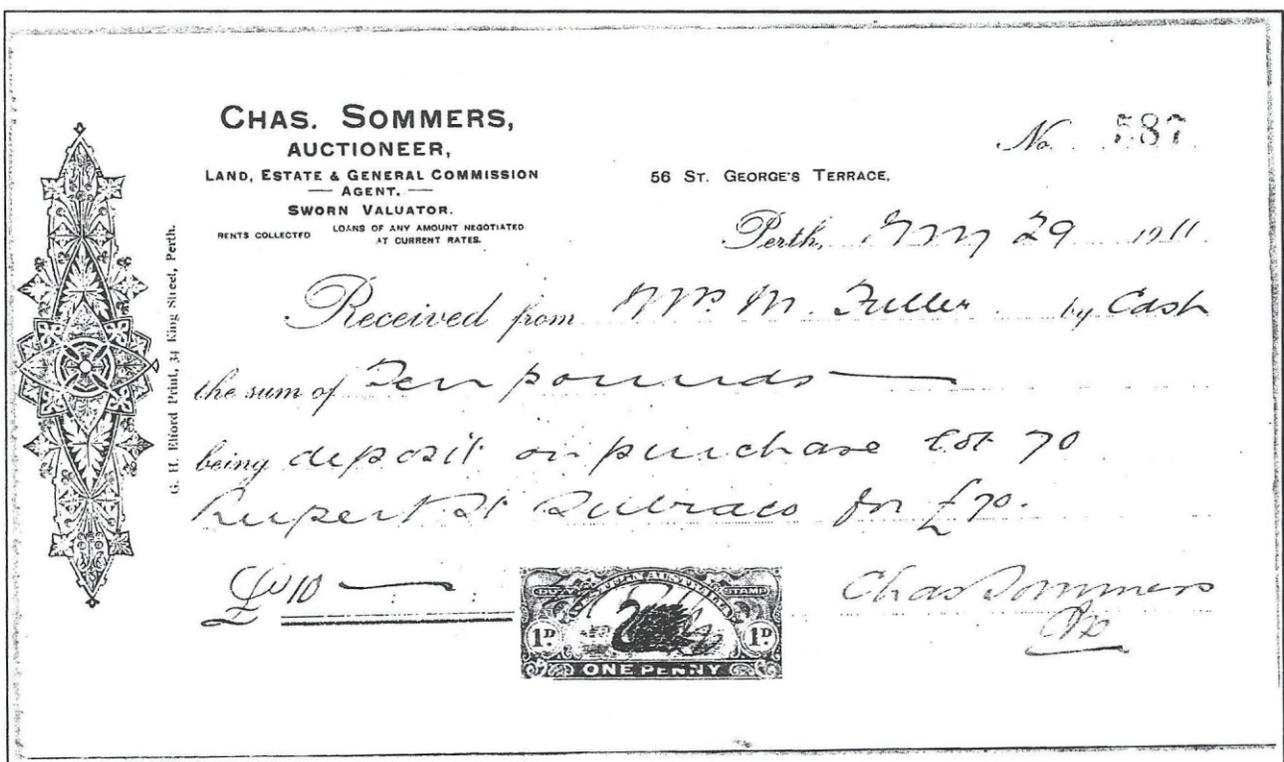
A Listing of The Revenue Catalogues for Australian and Australia States

These items marked with an asterisk (*) are published by W (Bill) D. Craig and most are still in print at very reasonable prices - most well below \$20.00. Details of availability and prices can be obtained from: Revenue & Railstamp Publications, GPO Box 1265, Hobart, Tas. 7001.

The new *British Commonwealth Revenue* catalogue (the 6th edition, dated 2000) can be purchased from J.Barefoot Ltd, PO Box 8, York, YO24 4AR, UK. The price is £20.00 plus £4.00 air post and packing.

- *Craig, WD & Ingles OG. 1978 *The revenue and railway stamps of Tasmania*. Note: the prices and some additional information on revenue stamps are given in Craig (1997)
- *Osborn, D. & Craig, WD. 1983. *The revenue stamps of New South Wales*.
- *Craig, WD. 1986. *The revenue stamps of the Commonwealth of Australia and its Territories*.
- Dzelme, VEJ. 1987. *The fiscal stamps of Western Australia*. Published by Dzelme.
- *Craig, WD., Presgrave, AD & Walker, MJ. 1993. *The revenue stamps of South Australia*.
- *Craig, WD. 1997. *Handbook of Tasmanian revenue stamps*.
- *Craig, WD. 1999. *Handbook of Victorian revenue stamps*.
- *Peck RC. & Smith, DI. *Priced catalogue of New South Wales revenue and railway stamps*. Cinderella Stamp Club of Australasia, available from PO Box 889, Chatswood, NSW 2057. Price \$32.00 plus postage. Note: this gives additional information and revised prices to Craig & Osborn (1983).

All of these catalogues give guidance to more specialised articles published in a variety of philatelic books and journals.



Editor: Coincidental to receiving Dingles article on revenues, my mother sent me the receipt shown above (80% of actual size). It is a nice example of the type of revenue that turns up on a day to day basis and of which the catalogue listings are most useful. Needless to say the property in Rupert Street Subiaco, which was purchased by my great grandfather in 1911, is no longer in the family. Mores the pity since it is now a highly valuable property in a sought after suburb.

INTERFET, being a military force, had its own postal facilities organised by national contingents:

- The Australian contingent: AFPO 5 was based in Dili. The members of this contingent have free mail privilege when writing home.
- The French contingent: BPM 705 (Bureau Postal Militaire) is based in Darwin, Australia.

We have no information on mail sent from the other INTERFET contingents.

As for the UNTAET-mission, mail is sent from Darwin bearing Australian stamps. This is probably done because of the destruction of the civilian post offices in East Timor during the post-election period. It remains to be seen if UNTAET will have its own (overprinted?) stamps as the UN did during its UNTEA-mission in West New Guinea in 1962-63.

The cover in Figure 1 was sent by a member of the Australian Police Detachment of the UN Monitoring Group in East Timor in July 1999.

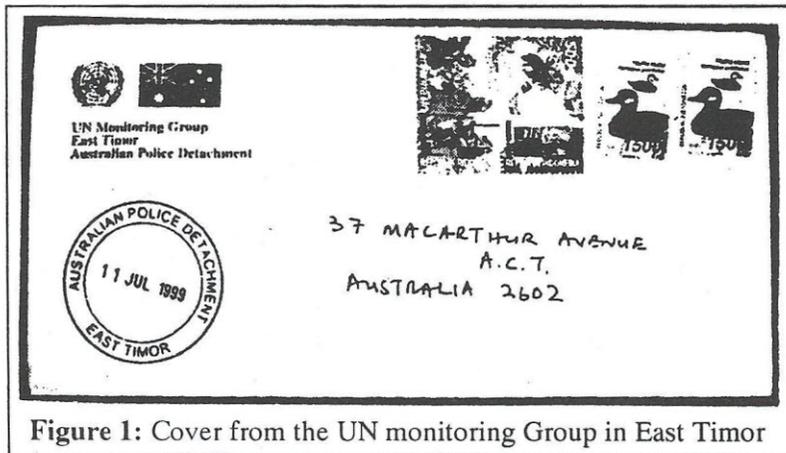


Figure 1: Cover from the UN monitoring Group in East Timor

Figure 2 shows a registered letter sent to Mr Ian Martin, the Chief of UNAMET in Dili, from Switzerland on August 8, 1999. It was returned by the Indonesian Post Office due to the unrest in East Timor.

Figure 3 displays the letterhead of Major-General P.J. Cosgrove, Commander of INTERFET. Its logo shows a dove carrying an olive branch superimposed over East Timor.

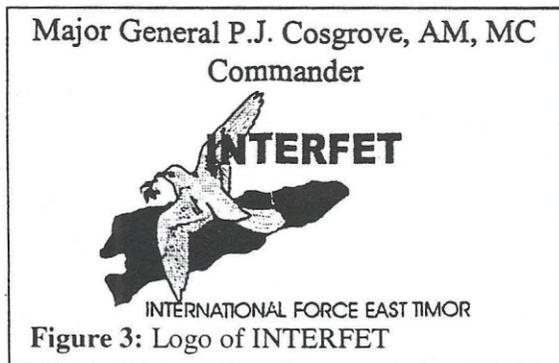


Figure 3: Logo of INTERFET

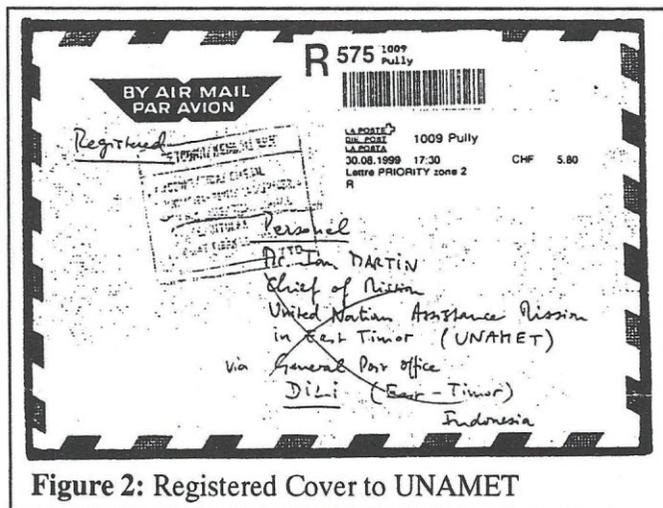


Figure 2: Registered Cover to UNAMET

The Australian contingent AFPO 5 uses three postmarks consisting of an oval with numerals 1 and 2 inside as well as one without a numeral. It also uses an undated rectangular insignia indicating that postage has been paid by the AFPO 5. These appear in figure 4.

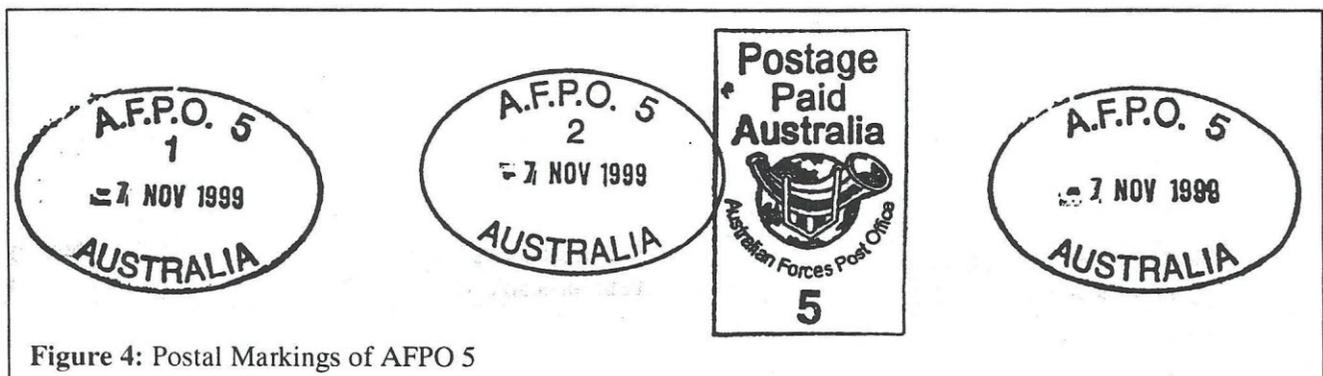


Figure 4: Postal Markings of AFPO 5

eBay Is Here to Stay

There is no doubt that eBay is here to stay and has had a significant impact on the way goods are sold, especially collectibles. There are a number of sites attempting to compete with eBay and whilst they may be successful in part, most can't compete. eBay has the volume and although US-centric has a dedicated usage worldwide, particularly for stamps. I read recently that eBay, unlike many internet companies, actually turns a profit. In the last year I believe that something like \$3 billion worth of goods were sold and that they list hundreds of millions of items over a year. At this stage it is hard to imagine another company making a serious dent in their business.

Designed for Stamps

When you think about it eBay is the ideal mechanism for selling stamps and covers by individuals and dealers. It allows you to list a lot of relatively low value items and reach a worldwide audience at a quite low cost. Traditional auctioneers cannot compete at this end of the market. In addition, the system works a fair deal on trust and that is one thing that the worldwide philatelic community has developed over the years. Certainly more so than many other similar areas.

Bidding

I tend to use a number of techniques for bidding. It can be time consuming and nerve racking to follow the bidding. If the item is of interest but not essential I tend to put a bid in and leave it to luck. However, you should note that if you are outbid the system does inform you and you can put in another bid. The other two common methods for bidding are to put in a high bid early and to follow the bids during the last few minutes. This can quite tense. The other is to leave your bids to the last minute or two in the hope that other potential bidders are not on the line. The trick to remember is that if you get into a bidding duel set yourself a limit and stick to it. Otherwise you may regret your heat of the moment bid. You may think that it is only one more bid but you don't know that the other bidder/s are thinking the same. I once bid a cover to \$US100 with only a minute to go with the other bidder putting in a \$150 bid to secure the lot. I only knew this because another bidder came in with about 15 seconds to go and bid over the top to get the lot for \$151. This can be most annoying but I would not have paid this for the lot.

Search Techniques

One area that takes some skill is refining search techniques because there too many lots to search them all. For example I use LEEWARD* (where the * stands for any letter or symbol) to search for Leeward Islands. This will pick up both Leeward and Leewards whereas just using Leeward misses the Leewards lots. I also search both the heading and the description in this case. For airmail covers I search using both AIR MAIL and AIRMAIL, as both are used. However, don't search for airmail in the body of the text because it will pick up just about all lots where the method of posting the lot to you uses the word. Another frustrating item is STATIONERY where it pays to search for STATIONARY also. In time you learn the ways you need to search and occasionally it pays to look through all the lots in a section to see how people are describing their lots.

Caveat Emptor

As most people will be aware this means "let the buyer beware". There will always be crooks and over the years I have dealt with one or two dealers who were less than honest. However, one thing the philatelic community has is trust. In general dealers and collectors trust each other and it is this trust that lets so much trade go on worldwide. Apart from the one instance where a small sum of cash went missing in Canada, I have had no problems to date with any of my philatelic transactions on eBay. However, you do need to take some care when trading and often you get to know the people you are trading with, particularly if you buying specialised material.



Figure1

PHILATELIC DETECTION AND THE READING OF MARKS

Robert A. M. Gregson

The postcard depicted here (Figure 1) was sent from Baku in Azerbaijan to Stockholm in Sweden in 1907. There are a number of details which are worth identifying, and they illustrate the information that a patient collector can obtain with access to relevant background sources and literature.

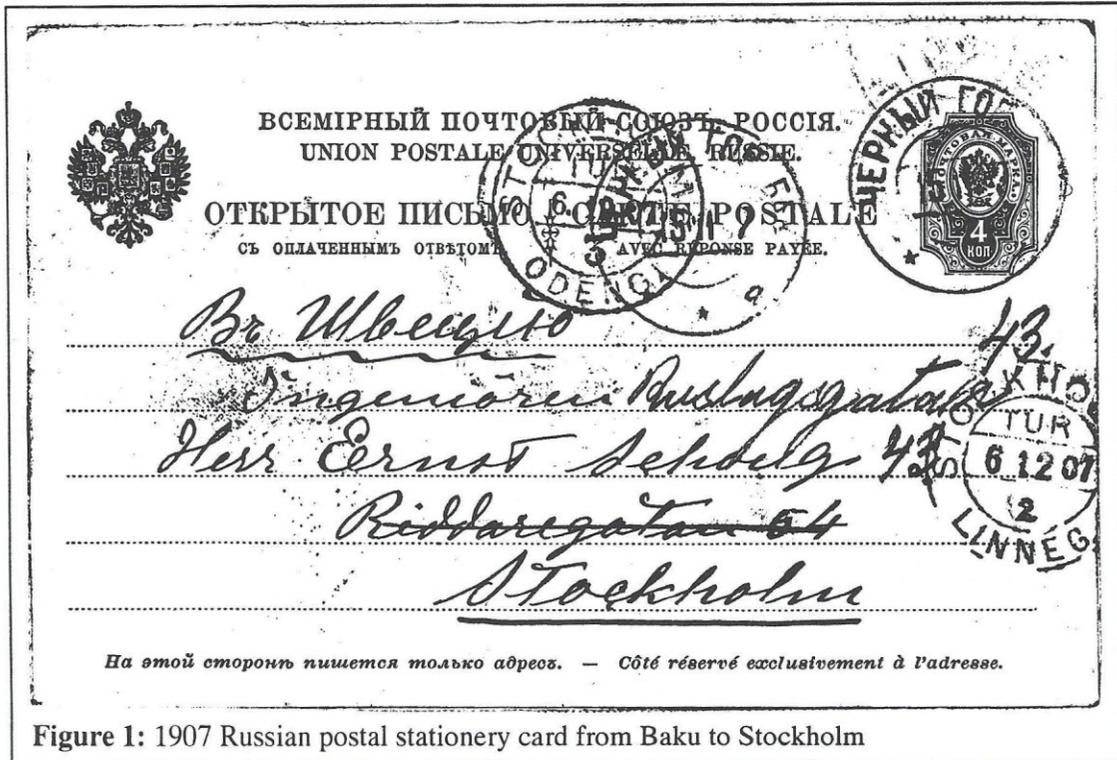


Figure 1: 1907 Russian postal stationery card from Baku to Stockholm

The card is a double 4 kopeck issue of the Tsarist Empire, which prepaid international mail. It is the issue current in the first decade of the 20th century, and is inscribed in Russian and French. The texts on the front card, in the two languages, say exactly the same thing; 'International Postal Union, Russia', 'Postcard with prepaid response' and 'Side reserved exclusively for the address'. The second part of the card says that it is for the reply, with similar bilingual text. As is commonly the case, surviving double cards which have had the first side used and not separated from the second reply half have little or no writing on this second part. In short, they were not used by the recipient to make a reply, or the two parts would have been torn apart and only the first part then surviving in the files of the recipient.

The Russian postmark is interesting and scarce; a little history helps to explain why. It reads Chernyi Gor(od) Bak(in) which translates as Blacktown in the Baku urban district. This was a sub-post office in the city on the edge of an oilfield. The canceller is the 'a' variant which lasted until about 1915. The date, 15 11 07, is in the old-style calendar still used by the Orthodox Church today, and which was 13 days behind the Western calendar in the 20th Century. The card got to Stockholm on 6th December 1907, and from other postmarks on mail of that period we can assume reasonably that it would have gone by rail via Kiev and then either to Berlin, and then North via the ferry at Sassnitz-Trelleborg to Sweden, or less likely to St Petersburg and across the Baltic to Stockholm, which would be slower. The transit time is thus eight days, which is good and better (about half) than one might expect today.

The addressee is Engineer Herr Ernst Schoug, who was at Riddargatan 54 but had moved to Ruslagsgatan 43. The postal service in Stockholm in those days was efficient and persistent. These addresses are in the centre of the city; the card is first cancelled at Stockholm Linnegatan on delivery

FOUND IN THE TRASH

Darryl Fuller

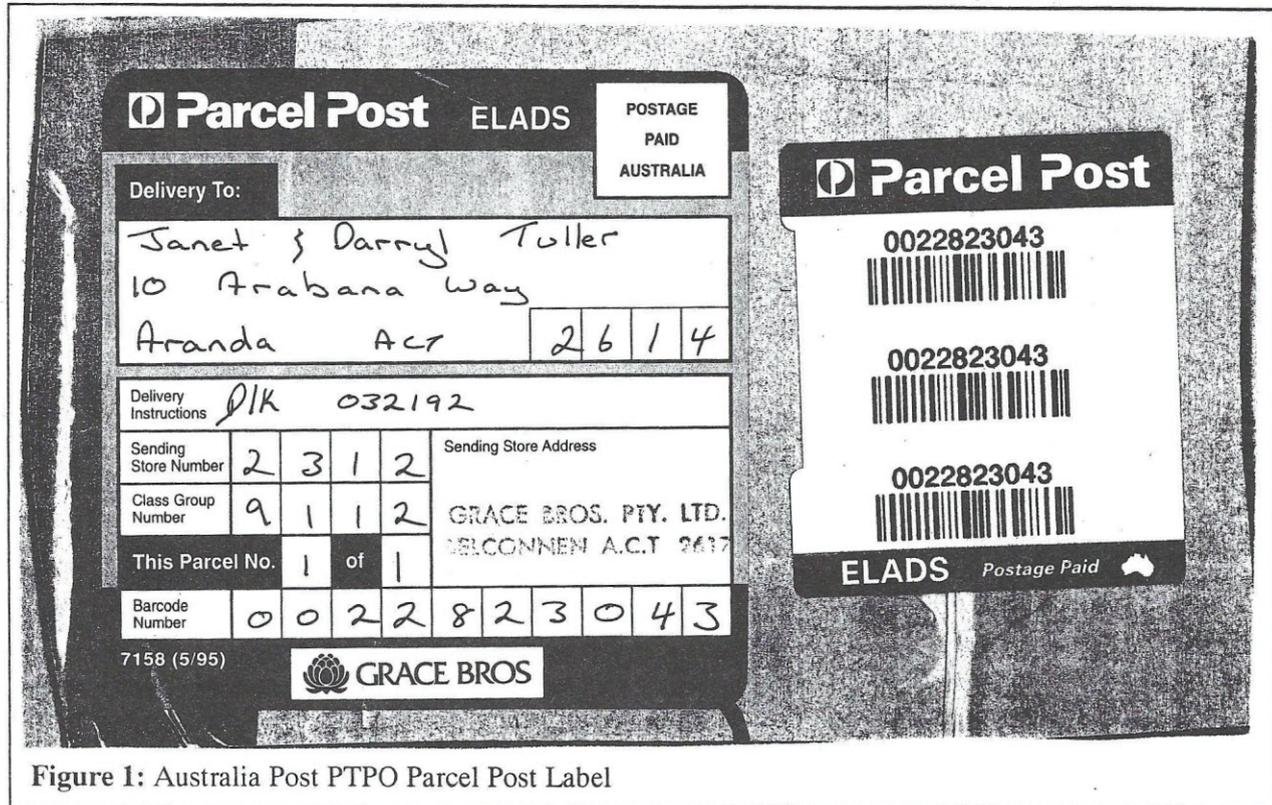


Figure 1: Australia Post PTPO Parcel Post Label

The parcel post label shown in Figure 1 was on a parcel sent to my wife and I last Christmas. My Sister-in-law ordered a hamper through Myer/Grace Bros and it was delivered by Australia Post from the nearest appropriate store. In this case a distance of only 4 kilometres. Again this is one of those items of postal history that are usually thrown out in the trash. I have a few other of these ELADS labels but this is the first Printed to Private Order (PTPO) one I have seen. It reminds me of the Myer 3/7d and 5/10d food labels that are now so rare. However, I doubt that these will ever reach that status, but who knows. If anyone has seen similar items I am sure that Ian McMahon would be interested in seeing them or getting a photocopy.

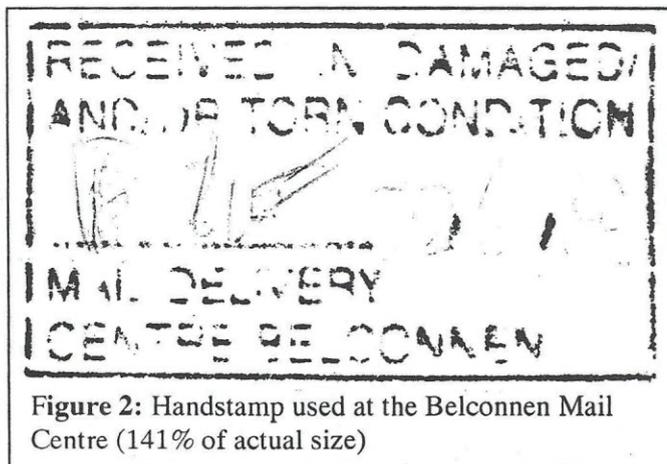


Figure 2: Handstamp used at the Belconnen Mail Centre (141% of actual size)

The handstamp shown in Figure 2 was applied at the Belconnen Mail Centre on 22 June 2000. The handstamp is in black and has been signed and dated in blue ink. It was applied to the Australia Post "ambulance" envelope shown in Figure 3. This is the first of this type of handstamp I have seen and once again I was lucky enough to salvage it from the trash.

The term "ambulance" envelope is used to describe an envelope used to enclose a damaged letter. They are often official envelopes, as is this one, and often have other important markings on them, such as this handstamp. Their best known use is often with crash mail where the letters have been damaged by fire or water and are put into an ambulance envelope by the postal authorities. Once again I feel lucky to have salvaged this one as a complete envelope in good condition.

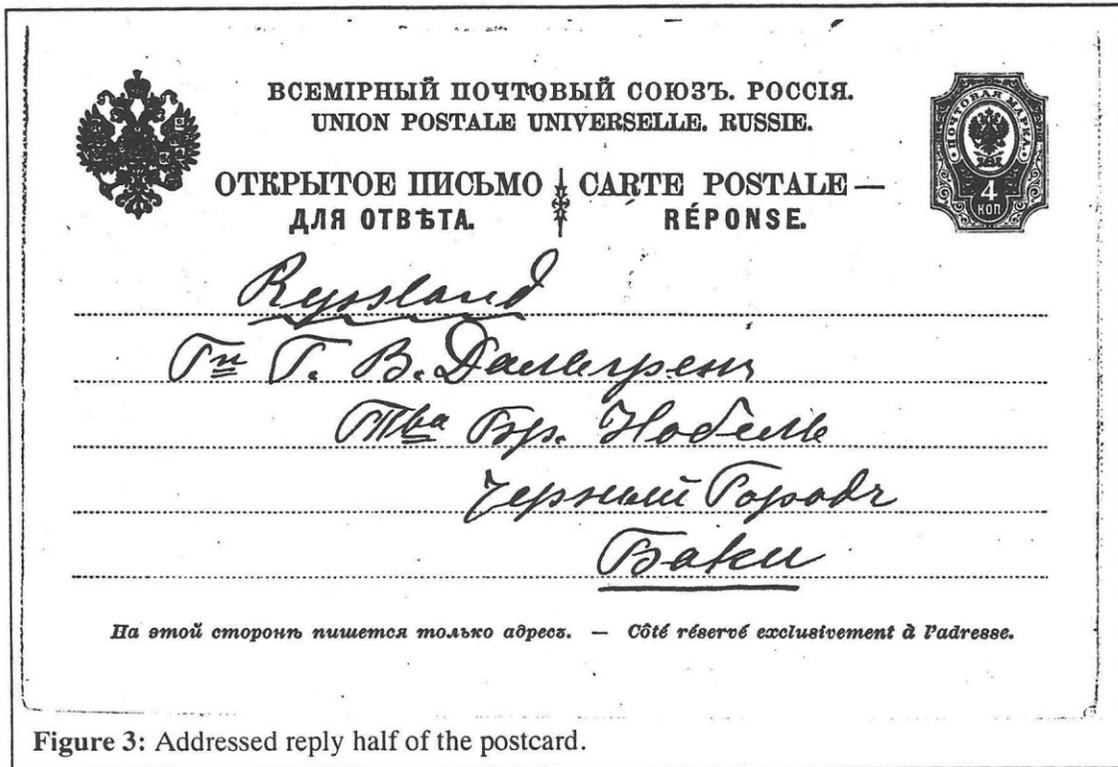


Figure 3: Addressed reply half of the postcard.

Baku today is a city with a population of over one million, and an underground railway system with 19 stations. However, apparently not one of these stations is called Chernyi Gorod. Many places and streets were renamed in the transition from the Tsarist to the Soviet era, and the map of Baku still shows some street names with Soviet associations.

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Sveriges Filatelist-Förening Riksorganisation (1952) *Handbok över Svenska Post- och Makuleringsstämplar 1685-1951*

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Capital Philately

States and for the Commonwealth. In most cases Bill enlisted the aid of the then, very limited band of revenue collectors as joint authors. A list of these publications is given at the end of this review. They began in 1978 with *The revenue and railway stamps of Tasmania*, a joint venture with Owen Ingles, and were completed in 1999 with the publication of *Handbook to the revenues stamps of Victoria*.

All of these publications can be regarded as a 'first cut' at producing comprehensive listings. None are complete but all have sparked a re-awakening of collector interest in this previously forgotten field. An exception to the Bill Craig stable of listings is *The fiscal stamps of Western Australia*. This is authored and published, in a most handsome format, by John Dzelme. We are now entering the second phase of Australian State revenue catalogues. These can be regarded as updates of the original listings but with added material and with the addition of in-depth studies that include details on printing, the availability of proofs, specimens and the like. *Revenue and railway stamps of New South Wales* (1999) represents the first of these updates. A feature of the Craig publications is that they have always attempted to include information on impressed duty items. These are genuine revenue items but even among revenue collectors they have been ignored for far too long. A first attempt at listing British Commonwealth impressed duty stamps is available in *The impressed duty stamps of the British Colonial Empire*, written and published in 1998 by Barber in the USA. The next generation of revenue studies will move to providing more information on duty rates. Already exhibiting places an emphasis upon the use of stamps on the appropriate documents - the equivalent of 'postal history' items in displays of more traditional philately. The tables of duty rates then become the equivalent of postage rates.

Catalogue Prices

Prices for mint and used as given in the standard postage stamp catalogues are generally more than the usual trading price. However, there is an established international market for such items, often aided by detailed archival information on the numbers printed. This is rarely the case for revenues. Certainly in Australia details of the numbers printed are either unavailable or have yet to be dug out of the government archives. The market is growing but is still small. The setting of prices in response to the balance of supply and demand that is so well seen in postage stamps is more complex for revenues. The avid collector finds an item that has not yet been listed but has no clear idea as to how common the item is. There is also the problem that if a hoard of used avocado stamps turns up in a isolated barn in rural Queensland that it could be sufficient to flood the whole market. At present I would guess that used examples of avocado stamps are extremely rare. Indeed they might not even exist at all in used condition!

Another example are the early Victorian beer duty labels, designed to be torn in half or defaced to denote use and stuck onto barrels and casks, procedures that do not lead to preservation. The prices continue to rise but the real question for many States is whether used examples exist at all! The South Australian catalogue uses an interesting method of dealing with this problem, it lists the known stamps (from archival sources) and distinguishes those that have not yet been seen the authors - all of whom are doyens of South Australian collecting.

To some collectors the prices are of little interest but for most of us they provide valuable information. It can be argued that without the listing of prices, that the market in revenue stamps would be very much poorer. For both collector and dealers, there is a fascination in listing as 'not yet previously described' and then trying to find a price. My excuse for buying revenue material is that the price can only go up although I rarely sell items! It is certainly the case that the supply of better quality revenue material of the Australian States is rapidly disappearing from dealer's stock books.

The *Handbook of the revenues stamps of Victoria* completes the catalogues for the individual Australian States and, together with the new Barefoot catalogue, these provide a base for new collectors to more easily enter this byway of our hobby. Revenue collecting is fun, how about starting a collection? There is ample scope for even beginners to add new items to the existing catalogues.

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THE LATEST WAY TO SHOP – EBAY

Sheryll Oswald

There is a hushed silence. Your heart is pounding fit to burst. Your hands are sweaty as you stare transfixed at the screen. Another click on the mouse, the page in front of you refreshes, and you start counting down aloud.....

... 15, 14, 13, 12, 11, 10, 9, 8

You click to the other page (one which you prepared earlier) and press the “Send” button. There is an agonising delay while the screen locks up. Your heart beats even faster, but there is nothing you can do now but wait. Finally, the page changes and, yes! You’ve done it! It says, “Congratulations... You are the current high bidder!”

But wait! That’s still not enough. Have you won the lot? You click to the first page and hit the refresh button for the news. Will it be good or bad? The page shows that the auction has ended, and you have the high bid! You whoop with delight. You jump up and down in your seat, exhilarated!

But there’s more! How close to the deadline were you? You click on the bid history and find... One second to spare! Now that’s cutting it fine. Maybe you should have changed to the bid page at 9 seconds. But who cares now. You won the lot, and that aol guy in the US is sitting in his seat dazed, wondering how he missed out.

What are we talking about here? Auctions, yes, but not the sort you bid on as early as possible, pop the piece of paper in the post and wait for a reply in x weeks. No, this is Ebay, a totally different sort of auction. Not for the faint-hearted, I assure you, though not all auctions need be like the one above. Just ask the person next to you at the stamp meeting where he or she bought that nice cover doing the rounds at the meeting. Or if anyone has picked up a bargain lately. Chances are, someone will tell you, “Oh that! I picked that up at Ebay.”

What is Ebay? Actually, it’s www.ebay.com and there is even an Australian equivalent – www.ebay.com.au. But I use the Los Angeles site, as everything I want to bid on is there.

There is also the opposite side of the coin. I vividly remember the night I stayed up for a 3am auction, became complacent when it seemed my opposition on the other side of the globe had gone out to dinner, and so I lowered my planned high bid. My confidence and experience weren’t what they are now, and I put my bid in a minute before the deadline. At 25 seconds to go, I was still the high bidder. But after the next refresh click it was 7 seconds to go, and a dratted freeserve guy in the UK had outbid me! I sat dazed in my chair, my fingers turned to butter, and I wasn’t able to rebid in time. What a night that was. Staying up till the witching hour, just to not get a lot on Ebay!

Trade on!

FURTHER COMMENTS ON EBAY

Darryl Fuller

When Sheryll mentioned that she was writing an article about eBay, I said good, because I had been meaning to write one for some time. I suggested a joint article but having read Sheryll’s description of bidding, I believe that she captured the feeling beautifully. It really does happen as she has described it. However, having used eBay for some time I thought that I would add a few comments of my own.

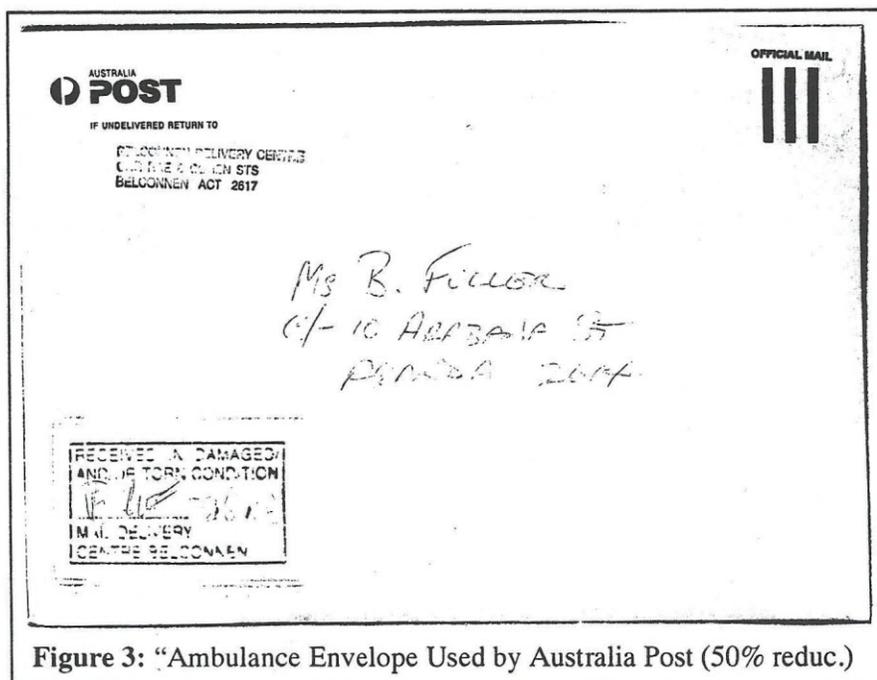


Figure 3: "Ambulance Envelope Used by Australia Post (50% reduc.)

FOUND IN THE ARCHIVES

Editor: In Found in the Archives in the last issue I stated that only two of the members in the photograph were still alive. I have been reliably informed by David Elsmore that Arthur Hart is alive and well and living in Brisbane. He is 86 years old and still collects stamps. My apologies to Arthur for this oversight.

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I must admit that a lot of the material I have purchased over the last year or two has been covers and I virtually never buy unless an item is illustrated. I would be wary, however, about purchasing specialised stamps and anything that requires a certificate. It is rare to purchase a lot sold "as is" that subsequently turns out to be the rarity it is supposed to be. Yes, like all auctions, you can pick up bargains such as the £10-20 postmark I picked up in a 50c lot (figure 1). However, the very nature of eBay lots, which are usually single items, and are viewed by many philatelists worldwide, tends to limit the opportunity to get real bargains. What tends to happen is that the sellers often get a better price or a more realistic price than they might have expected. A good example I read about recently was an Australian cover that had a block of six of the KGV 1d engraved stamps on it and was addressed to the USA. This stamp is not overly common on cover and its \$US10 estimate appeared a good starting point since 6 pence did not represent a known rate. However, it turned out that this was First Day Cover of the stamp, which are very rare, and the item realised over \$A1000. I am sure the vendor was surprised but I am also sure the buyer was reasonably happy also.

Final Advice

My best advice is to start slowly with eBay and get familiar with the way the auctions work. Set yourself limits and try not to get carried away. As with all auctions it is often better to follow a few lots in which you are interested but don't have a high priority to buy, to see how the system operates. Once you are comfortable then start off with a few bids and once you dealt with a few lots that you

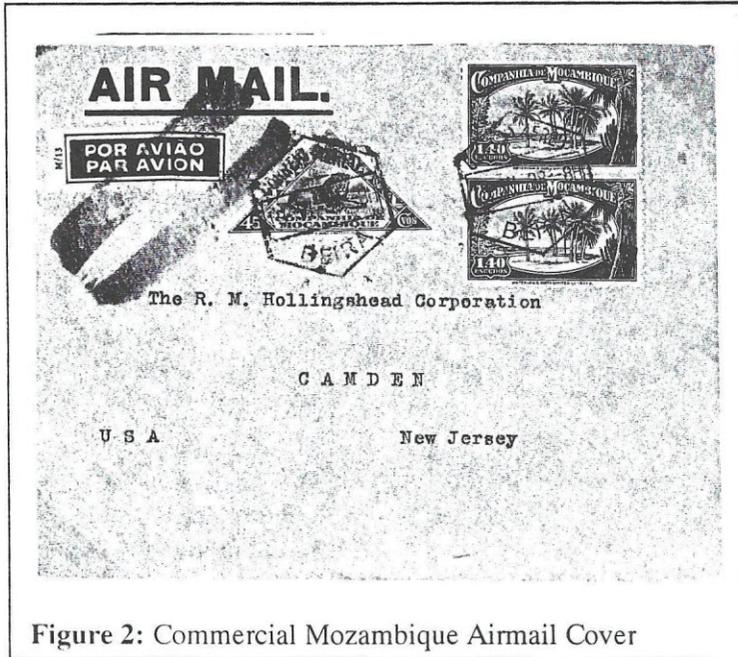


Figure 2: Commercial Mozambique Airmail Cover

have purchased you will see the benefits and the downfalls of bidding this way. But as I said above, eBay is here to stay and is gradually changing the way many people buy and sell philatelic material. Where else would you find items like the cover illustrated in figure 2. It is a commercial airmail cover from Mozambique in the 1930s complete with j'usqua markings. It cost about \$US30 but I am sure that I won't find another in a hurry. The fascinating (and time consuming) world of eBay awaits you, but remember *caveat emptor*.

(There is a lot to discuss about eBay but if readers are interested Sheryll and I can do a follow up article.)

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