

**Volume 29 No. 3.**

**June 2011**



*Inside this issue:*

*The Meter Stamps of Chess Magazine*

*Israeli Revenues Part 5*

*Machin Post and Go Varieties*

*Postcards - Two Calls for Help*

*and more.*

**1<sup>st</sup> Class**

**Up to 100g**



041005 1-00063-01

**1<sup>st</sup> Large**

**Up to 100g**



041005 1-00063-02

**Europe**

**Up to 20g**



041005 1-00063-03



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Telephone: (02) 6241 1963

Enquiries regarding subscription rates for *Capital Philately*, advertising rates, purchase of back issues etc. should be addressed to Darryl Fuller. He can be contacted by telephone on 0417 672 543 or by e-mail addressed to

[darryl.fuller@dbcde.gov.au](mailto:darryl.fuller@dbcde.gov.au) or [darryl.fuller@home.netspeed.com.au](mailto:darryl.fuller@home.netspeed.com.au)

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June 2011 – VOL. 29, NO. 3

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## June 2011 - Editorial

As I write this editorial I am also preparing to travel to Columbus Ohio for the American Philatelic Society’s Stampshow. This is a national show that has their Champion of Champion’s Class where the winners of about 30 shows across the USA vie to be the overall champion. I am lucky and I have been asked to be a judge, as part of Australia’s exchange of judges. In case you are not aware, Australia has accords with New Zealand, USA, Canada, South Africa, UK and most recently Sweden. What happens is that an Australian judge travels to the country to judge at a national show and the following year a judge from that country comes out to an Australian exhibition. The exception is New Zealand where we swap judges both ways every year. The advantage of these accords is that you get experience judging in sometimes very different situations. There is also a good exchange of ideas and usually exhibits are taken as well. The other thing I am looking forward to is seeing something of middle America. It is hard to get much more middle America than Ohio and I know it is going to be different from other trips I have had to the USA.

Hopefully by the time you receive this issue I will have caught up a bit with issues as the last one was very late in going out but I managed to get this one together in a quite short time. I would especially like to thank the authors of the articles as they all came to the fore when asked. They are a diverse group of articles. Miles Patterson’s article on meters is probably the first one we have had on meters in Capital Philately. They are an interesting area that tend to be most important to thematicists, although I do know of a four frame exhibit of the meters of Aden. Daniel Tangri’s article on the Post and Go Machins show the breadth of material that Machins cover. The other important aspect of this article is that the information is current and will be important in the future. Often too little current information is recorded and can be hard to find in later years. A good example is my search for airmail rates in the Caribbean in the period 1929-1950. This is a very difficult task and I wish someone had recorded them at the time. Finally, my thanks to Bruce Parker for his book reviews - I like book reviews so please don’t hesitate to send them in.

Darryl Fuller

## THE METER STAMPS OF 'CHESS' MAGAZINE

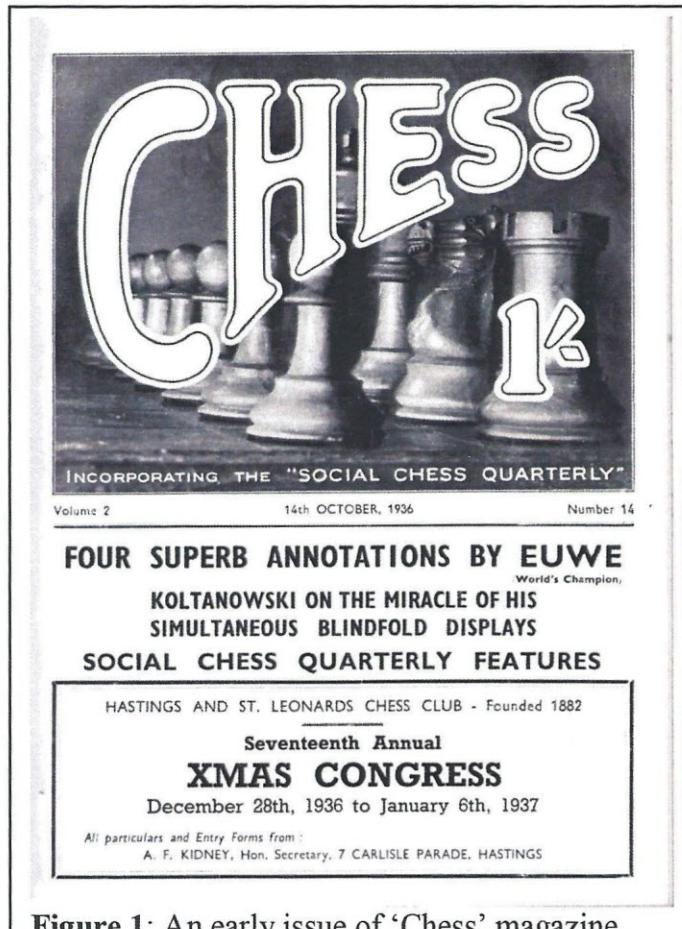
Miles Patterson

The idea of postage printed by machine, rather than using stamps, was put forward in Germany around 1895. A machine was patented in the USA in 1899. The first limited trials were in Norway in 1900 to 1905, although they weren't very successful. The first successful and sustained use was in New Zealand, starting in 1904. Postage meters were first licensed in UK in 1922 and Australian meter stamps date from 1927.

In thematic collecting, postage meter stamps offer another means of illustrating the theme. A study of meter stamps can be quite as interesting and challenging as one of stamps or postmarks. Having collected several meter stamps used by a UK chess magazine, I found that a little research shows how the various meter stamps and slogans used over the years can be woven into the story of the magazine itself, particularly in more recent years, when its ownership changed hands a couple of times.

'Chess', a monthly periodical (Figure 1), was founded in 1935 by Baruch H Wood, a strong English chess player, as a less formal alternative to the long running 'British Chess Magazine' (founded in 1881). Wood's approach was more 'chatty' than in traditional chess magazines, with photographs and cartoons. The business was based in Sutton Coldfield, near Birmingham, the major city in central England.

The onset of the Second World War made things very difficult for the new business, including affecting the availability of paper for printing. In fact, when war broke out, Wood was stranded with the English team in Buenos Aires at the Chess Olympiad; keeping the magazine going fell to his wife. When he managed to get back to England, Wood had a full time war job (he had an MSc in chemistry and did research on food flavourings to improve the quality of rations) as well as running the magazine. In



**Figure 1:** An early issue of 'Chess' magazine.

spite of the difficulties, the magazine and its associated chess book and equipment business was successful, due mainly to the prodigious amount of time and effort put in by Wood himself.

The magazine soon started using Neopost postage meters (Figure 2), with the simple slogan 'Chess, Sutton Coldfield, England'. The July 1937 issue of the magazine was the last to give the address for all communications as 'Masonic Buildings, Sutton Coldfield, Warwickshire, England'. Subsequent issues give simply 'Chess, Sutton Coldfield, England' (note the meter slogan uses this form), which Wood always maintained in his magazine,



**Figure 2:** Neopost LV machine GviR.

was ‘sufficient address’ (presumably all Post Office staff in England knew where Sutton Coldfield was – and all Post Office staff in Sutton Coldfield knew where the ‘Chess’ business was).



Figure 3: Neopost LV machine EiiR.

Early meter machines were ‘Fixed Value’ (FV), which had single piece dies for the value/country block, so a different value required replacement of the whole die with another, while retaining the town/date and slogan dies. Meters like those in Figure 2 were ‘Limited Value’ (LV) machines, which were introduced by Neopost from about 1930. Instead of the whole value/country die being replaced, a limited number of value segments could be inserted into an aperture in a blank country die, by means of a dial or lever. Some of the LV machine meter stamps show the breaks in the lower frame either side of the value, characteristic of an LV machine (in an FV meter, the frame lines would be continuous) although on some LV machines there are no breaks.

The numbering of early Neopost meters was started from 1, independently in each town. In effect this was a user’s licence number, as additional or subsequent machines used the same number. Thus ‘Chess’ was the second Neopost meter licence holder (N2) in Sutton Coldfield. This numbering system started around 1926 and the magazine started in 1935, so ‘Chess’ may have been using meters from the start, or at least before or during the war, although the 1946 example is the earliest I have seen. (Or perhaps Neopost meter sales in Sutton Coldfield were particularly slow.)

‘Chess’ continued using the N2 Neopost meters up to at least November 1961, now of course with the EiiR cipher (Figure 3) rather than GviR. It would

be interesting to find out when the switch from GviR to EiiR was implemented. The King died on 6 February 1952 and Queen Elizabeth’s coronation was 2 June 1953. The official first day for use of

the EiiR cipher was 1 May 1953, although some may have been dated 24 April. A ‘Chess’ meter stamp dated 13 June 1953 still shows, not surprisingly, GviR (Figure 4).

Contemporary Meter Stamp Bulletins, issued by the Meter Stamp Study Group in the UK, provide some interesting information on the EiiR changeover. In Scotland, some GviR meters continued for quite a while, with new GviR dies being issued on request. The reason apparently was that Scottish Nationalists objected to the designation of the Queen as Elizabeth the *Second*, because the 16<sup>th</sup> century Elizabeth never ruled over Scotland and thus the new Queen was Elizabeth the *First* of the United Kingdom. However, the Post Office turned down any requests for a plain ‘ER’ cipher. (In some cases in England, it was perhaps just laziness, rather than



Figure 4: Neopost LV machine GviR, used in reign of QE2.

political beliefs; instances of GvR – George the Fifth – ciphers were still being recorded in 1959 and EviiiR – Edward the Eighth – in 1962!)

By November 1963, ‘Chess’ was using a new meter, NH838 (Figure 5). The new numbering system identified not the user, but the individual machine. These machines were the first Neopost ‘Multi-value’ (MV) machines, where each digit of the value required is set by dials (eg 0-9, ½, -). This machine and numbering system had been introduced by Neopost in 1955, although other manufacturers had already introduced them, so ‘Chess’ had probably not had a new meter for at least that long. The ‘Chess’ slogan has been updated a little but the message is the same. The

value die of these meters no longer has the EiiR cipher, but a completely new and quite decorative design, known as the 'Emblems' (or 'Floral Emblems') design.

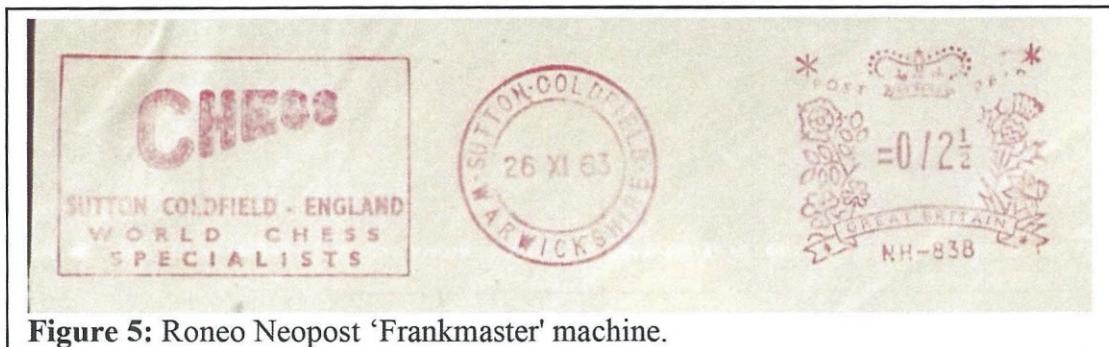


Figure 5: Roneo Neopost 'Frankmaster' machine.

By 1971, another new meter, RN438, and there was a change of design for the value die to a more modern utilitarian design. The non-postal value of this example (Figure 6) may indicate it was a test. Alternatively, it could just have been produced as a favour. Currency decimalisation in UK was implemented on 15<sup>th</sup> February 1971 and this seems to be the most likely reason for acquiring this new machine.

RN438 was used until at least September 1974. That year, however, the counties in

England were reorganised and Warwickshire became 'West Midlands'. The next meter, RM1600, was in use by 1976 and featured a change to the postmark element to show the new West Midlands name (Figure 7). A similar meter, RR53114, was then used from at least May 1982 to at least March 1985.



Figure 6: Neopost 405/505 machine.

Next there was a change from Neopost to a Hasler machine, HF15558, (Figure 8) in use by January 1986. The Hasler HF (plus five digits) series of machines had the year of manufacture (this does

not necessarily mean the year of issue) encoded into the second of the five digits. The first '5' in the meter number corresponds to 1985.

Then, in 1988, after over 50 years running the magazine, Wood sold the business, probably due to age and ill health, to Robert Maxwell's publishing company, Pergamon. The HF15558 meter was retained but with a new slogan (Figure 9). Amid controversy over his business dealings, Maxwell died in mysterious circumstances in



Figure 7: Neopost 405/505 machine.

1991. This triggered a collapse of Maxwell's business empire. In the turmoil, 'Pergamon Chess' became 'Maxwell MacMillan Chess' and was moved from Sutton Coldfield to Maxwell's business operations in Oxford.

In 1992, 'Chess' was sold to a private consortium and moved to Euston Road, London NW1 (August 1992 was the first issue under new management). Again the HF15558 meter was retained but the slogan changed to that of the new company - 'Chess & Bridge' (Figure 10). Curiously, the

meters, however; there are several gaps to be filled, in terms of earliest and latest use of the various meters. Indeed, there may be additional meters used that are not recorded here. Anyone who can help with

further information is kindly asked to contact me at: mp19370@gmail.com. I would be happy to

Figure 8: Hasler 'Mailmaster' machine.

town/date die contains the location 'W1' not 'NW1' as in the address. The two postal districts NW1 and W1 are adjacent and Euston Road is close to the border, but the error (if it is an error), is difficult to explain. The slogan also reflects the growing use of the internet, by providing an email address, and crams in a large amount of information, with full address, telephone, fax and email, as well as symbols representing the two main areas of the business.



Figure 9: Hasler 'Mailmaster' machine. Change of ownership to 'Pergamon'.

hear from fellow chess stamp collectors about the wider theme as well.

**Acknowledgements:** Information kindly provided by Alastair Nixon, editor of UK Meter News and the UK Meter Franking site. Information and scans (Figs 2-5) kindly provided by Jon Edwards of the Chess on Stamps Study Unit. Information kindly provided by Rob Bijpost of the Chess on Stamps Study Unit.

#### References:

International Postage Meter Stamp Catalogue, UK Meter Stamp Study Group (1950-84) Bulletins, 'Meter Stamps of Great Britain 1972' by John C Mann.



Figure 10: Hasler 'Mailmaster' machine. Change of ownership to 'Chess & Bridge'. (with 'W1' postal district error?)

The last meter used by the magazine shows a change back to Neopost machines, with N1300916. The slogan has gone to the opposite extreme, simplifying it to all you need to know in this Internet age – the web address (Figure 11). The town/date die now shows the correct postal district, NW1.

That is the end of the story chronologically, because the company informed me that they no longer use postage meters. It is not the end of the story of the 'Chess'



Figure 11: Neopost 'IJ25' digital inkjet machine (with correct postal district – NW1).

**Table 1:** Summary of ‘Chess’ Magazine Meter Stamps

| Meter  | Slogan   | Confirmed Dates of Use       |
|--|--|------------------------------|
| N2 GviR<br>Neopost LV                        | Chess Sutton Coldfield<br>England<br>World Chess Specialists | 12 Feb 46 to 13 Jun 53       |
| N2 EiiR<br>Neopost LV                        | Chess Sutton Coldfield<br>England<br>World Chess Specialists | 20 Nov 59 to 28 Nov 61       |
| NH 838<br>Roneo Neopost<br>'Frankmaster' 305 | Chess Sutton Coldfield<br>England<br>World Chess Specialists | 26 Nov 63 to 28 Oct 64       |
| RN 438<br>Neopost 405/505                    | Chess Sutton Coldfield<br>England<br>World Chess Specialists | 21 Oct 71 to 24 September 74 |
| RM1600<br>Neopost 405/505                    | Chess Sutton Coldfield<br>England<br>World Chess Specialists | 17 Jun 76 to 10 Mar 80       |
| RR 53114<br>Neopost 405/505                  | Chess Sutton Coldfield<br>England<br>World Chess Specialists | 12 May 82 to 28 Mar 85       |
| HF15558<br>Hasler 'Mailmaster'<br>F204/F1204 | Chess Sutton Coldfield<br>England<br>World Chess Specialists | 17 Jan 86 to 3 Mar 88        |
| HF15558<br>Hasler 'Mailmaster'<br>F204/F1204 | Pergamon Chess   | 13 Apr 88 to 8 Jan 91        |
| HF15558<br>Hasler 'Mailmaster'<br>F204/F1204 | Chess & Bridge (with address etc)                            | 13 May 96 to 13 Sep 97       |
| N1300916<br>Neopost 'IJ25'                   | WWW.CHESS.CO.UK  | 31 Jul 07                    |

## ISRAEL REVENUE STAMPS

### PART 5

Darryl Fuller

(continued from Capital Philately June 2010)

#### License Stamps

The Wallerstein listing of what he calls Auto Vehicle Registration stamps covers stamps that were used for a variety of licenses, and not just driver's licenses or automobile registration. The listing is confusing because it has values against stamps that have no value on them – the value was written on the stamp when placed on the license. Only two stamps a 5I.L. and a 10I.L. value have printed values.

Steering Wheel Design - The first license stamps were in fact based on a steering wheel design and were used 1953-55 I believe. They are quite rare stamps with Wallerstein listing one stamp but not illustrating it. Figure 60 illustrates the green version of this stamp which I believe may have only been in use one year, but possibly two. Although unrecorded by

Wallerstein the stamp was also issued in brown (Figure 61) and this is a very rare stamp, as I have only seen



Figure 60 Steering Wheel Design License Stamp



**Figure 61.** Steering Wheel design in brown

2 or 3 copies. It is unknown whether these stamps had tabs attached but they are perforated 14 at top and bottom, imperforate

at left and roulette at right. This suggests they may have had a tab or may exist in left and right versions from small sheets of 10 or twenty.

#### Treasury Seal Design – in about 1955 a new

design of license stamp was prepared which was smaller and had an attached tab. There are six different types of this stamp



**Figure 62.** Headed Transport Ministry

used for a number of purposes. The first of these is a stamp with a heading Transport Ministry and was used for automobile registration or drivers' licenses and is illustrated in Figure 62. All the copies of this stamp I have seen are watermarked Israel, perforated 14x14 and use the prefix *No*. This stamp also exists with green

writing instead of black but this appears to be a fairly rare stamp (an example is shown in Figure 63).



**Figure 63.** Transport Ministry with green font (125%)

The next stamp issued was more generic and the top line has ".....Tax



**Figure 64.** Generic Tax License

License" in Hebrew and is shown in Figure 64. This stamp was mainly used on automobile registration but also on other licenses, such as

fishing licences (Figure 64a) and unusually a license to produce electricity (Figure 64b). Most copies I have are on document but one copy off

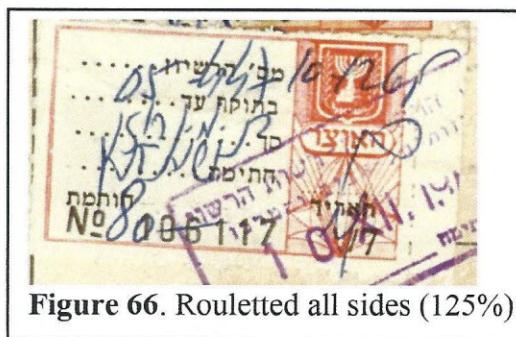


**Figure 64a.** Fishing license with generic license stamp

document has the Stag watermark. It exists perforated 14x14 and 14x11½ and uses the prefixes *No* and No. There appears to be a later variation of this stamp (shown in Figure 65) which comes in two watermarks (stag and no watermark) and three different perforations. It exists with Stag watermark and perforated 13x14, no watermark and perforated 14x14 and all of these with an asterisk as a prefix. I have



**Figure 65.** Second type of the generic license stamp



**Figure 66.** Rouleotted all sides (125%)



**Figure 64b.** License to generate electricity with two different license stamps

one stamp on piece that is rouleotted on all sides and has the prefix No. (Figure 66).

Around 1957 Israel issued a stamp in this designed designated Security Stamp that was used to indicate that a security tax, to help pay for the Sinai Campaign, had been paid. It is not a common stamp and may have only been used for a year. I think that a rubber stamp with a tank in the design may have also been used to indicate the payment of this tax. The stamp has the Israel watermark and is perforated 14x14 (Figure 67).



**Figure 67.** Security Tax stamp

Two other stamps were produced in this design that were used on tobacco sellers' licenses. They are the same stamp but are in green or

yellow and are headed Department of Customs and Excise. They are illustrated on an actual licence in Figure 68 (next page). The green stamp only appears to exist perforated 14x14 and with the *No* prefix. The yellow stamp exists perforated both 14x14 and 14x11 $\frac{1}{4}$  with the *No* and *Nr* prefixes respectively.

There is one final license stamp which has not previously been recorded and is illustrated in Figure 69, a complete fishing licence. The stamp is different from the earlier TAX LICENCE stamps in that it has an extra line of text and a green font. These five examples are the only copies I have seen.



**Figure 69.** An unrecorded license stamp variation

to be discussed in a later article, but fit with the motoring theme of this article. Wallerstein notes that these stamps were issued to driving schools to collect a tax from people receiving driving lessons. They were in use from 1958 to 1975 and have relatively high face values from 15I.L. to 100I.L. (Figure 71) and there is also an exempt value. Sample copies were also produced with the serial number 000001 and crossed by a pen stroke (Figure 72). These are rare. I think the actual tax rate must have quite high.

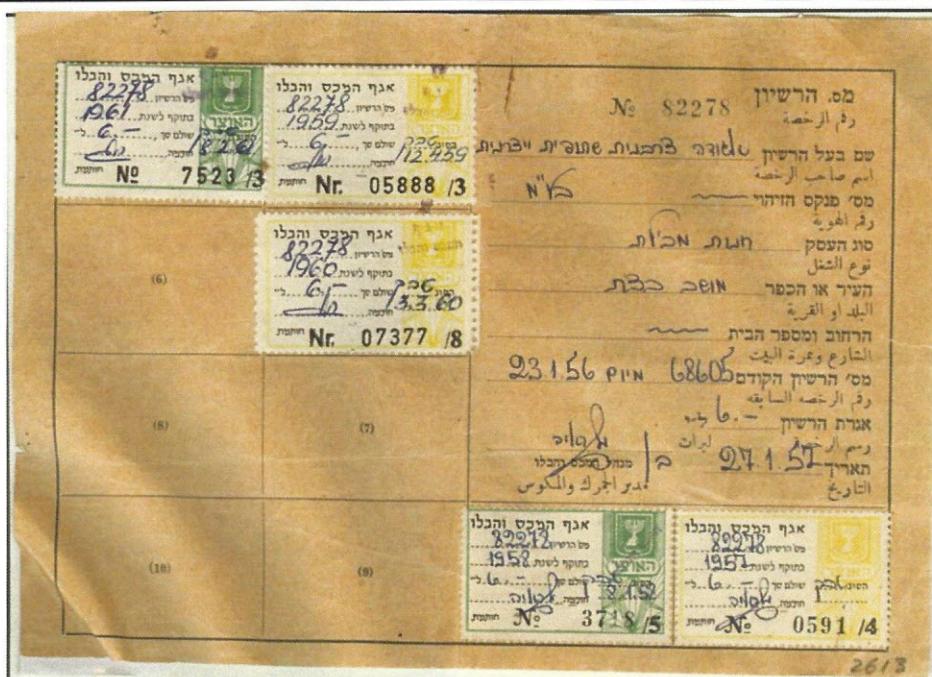


Figure 68. Tobacco Seller's License with both colour of license stamps (70%)

#### 5I.L. and 10 I.L. Treasury Design



Figure 70. Complete Driver's License with both the 5I.L. and 10I.L. license stamps and a 250pr traffic tax stamp (62%)

Two stamps were issued for use on drivers' licences. They appear to have replaced the steering wheel design and started about 1957. The 5I.L. value comes perforated 14x14 and rouletted whilst the 10I.L. value only appears to be rouletted. Both values are shown on a complete licence covering the years 1957-1961 in Figure 70, together with a traffic tax stamp.

#### Sales Tax for Driving Lessons

These sales tax (or Mas Kniyah) stamps probably belong with the other sales tax stamps

They are not common, mint or used but do turn up occasionally used, mainly the 100I.L. value.

Some of the values were overprinted to increase their face value prior to a new value being printed. These three values also exist as specimens and have no control numbers (Figure 73). There is also one major error on the 100I.L. value that has a reversed design as shown in Figure 74. You will note that it is the background that is reversed and has the circular design at upper left rather than lower right.

Despite Wallerstein noting that these stamps are worth about

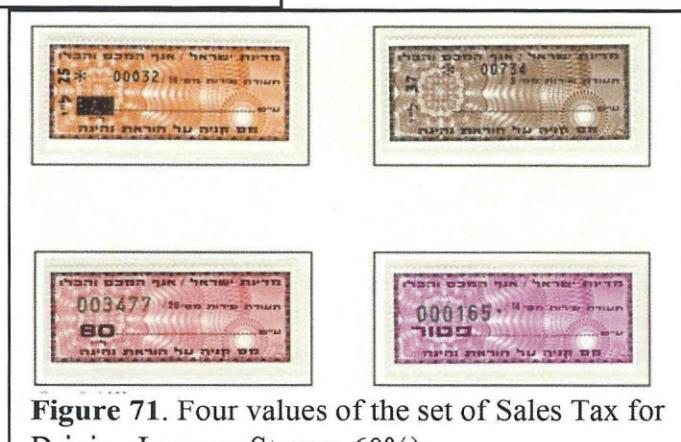


Figure 71. Four values of the set of Sales Tax for Driving Lessons Stamps 60%)

RRRR and I have never seen a copy mint or used. One final warning, re-gumming is rife with these stamps as the pen markings are cleaned off used copies.

The next section will focus on the traffic tax stamps and start on the many sales and luxury tax stamps.



**Figure 72.** Sample values with the 000001 serial number (60%)

50% more when on documents, I have only ever seen one document with one of these stamps on it (shown in part in Figure 75). In addition, despite having room for six digits in the control number I have never seen a number much higher than in the 9,000s and I think this may explain why values are so scarce and a mint set is very hard to put together.

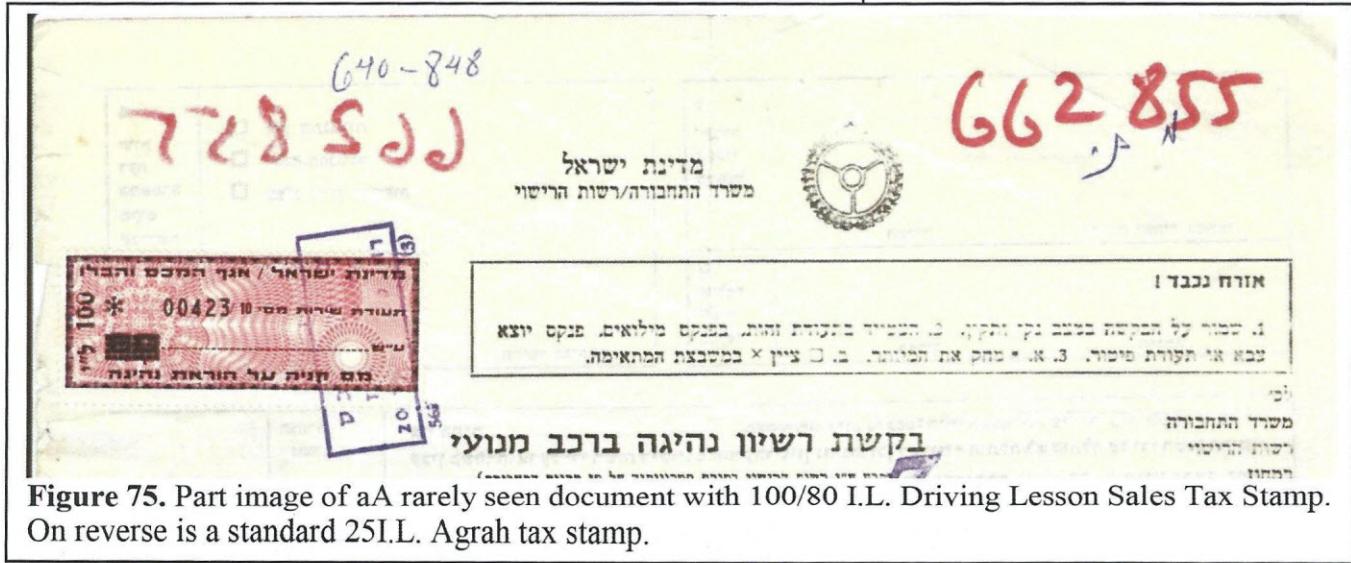
Most of the mint copies known have sequential control numbers which suggest someone arranged for perhaps 5-10 sets to be purchased and kept rather than unused examples turning up because they were not needed. Indeed Wallerstein rates the lowest value 15IL. as



**Figure 73.** Specimen copies of the overprints with no serial numbers.



**Figure 74.** Inverted background



**Figure 75.** Part image of a rarely seen document with 100/80 I.L. Driving Lesson Sales Tax Stamp. On reverse is a standard 25I.L. Agrah tax stamp.

## STRAYING FROM THE THEME

Miles Patterson

Many years ago I acquired a First Day Cover for my thematic interest – chess – put it away in my collection and thought little more of it, although I did notice there were an unusual number of markings on it. Only more recently did I try to unravel the meaning of these markings and discovered there was more to this otherwise ordinary FDC, although I found myself straying far from my original theme of chess.

The interest to the chess collector is of course the stamp, and its associated FDC envelope, issued on 7 October 1978 by Argentina for the 23rd Chess Olympiad in Buenos Aires. The Chess Olympiads are World Team Chess Championships, held every two years for national men's and women's teams to compete for gold, silver and bronze team and individual medals. The 1978 event was particularly notable, because it was not won by the all-powerful USSR team, which had previously won every Chess Olympiad it had played in; Hungary caused the upset, with the USSR only coming second. The USSR women, however, maintained their 100% record by winning their section.

The cover itself is obviously a philatelic concoction, as most FDCs are, of course, with nothing remarkable about the stamp, First Day of Issue postmark and the FDC envelope with its cachets and individual number (336 out of how many?). The interesting part starts when we see it was addressed to someone in 'Islas Malvinas'. The Malvinas is the name used by Argentina for the Falkland Islands and Port Stanley is the largest settlement and capital. There is not much detail in the address, but Port Stanley is not that large and if Algerio Nonis lived there, it is conceivable the mail would find him, without further information.

The Falkland Islands group is in the South Atlantic about 480 km off the coast of Southern Argentina. The French settled one of the two main islands in 1764 and the British the other a year later. The Spanish purchased the French settlement in 1770 and expelled the British, but only for a year. The British then neglected their interest and Argentina proclaimed sovereignty in 1820, but the British took them back in 1833. Argentina continues its claim on 'The Malvinas' to this day and invaded the islands in 1982, resulting in the Falklands War, with Britain taking them back again.

Because of the long running dispute, direct communication, including mail, between the Falklands and Argentina up to the 1970s was clearly problematic. However, encouraged by the United Nations, negotiations between Argentina and the UK led to an agreement in 1971 – the Joint Declaration (*Declaracion Conjunta*) of 1 July 1971, enacted on 20 March 1972 – on the opening of travel and communications between the Falkland Islands and the Argentine mainland. Clause 8 of the Declaration read: "*The Argentine Government should take the necessary measures to arrange for a regular service of weekly frequency by air for passengers, cargo and mail between the Argentine mainland and the Falkland Islands.*" Clause 15 stated: "*Postage stamps on mail travelling between the Argentine mainland and the Falkland Islands in either direction should be cancelled with a mark referring to this joint statement.*"

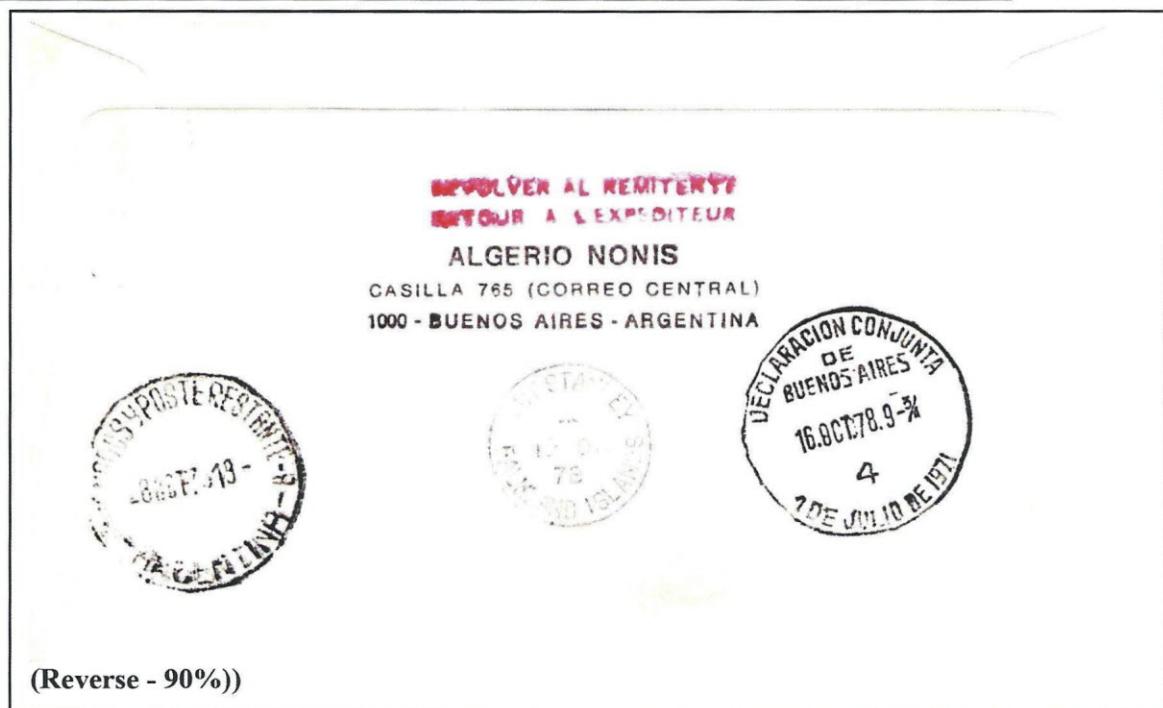
So now we have an explanation for the '*Declaracion Conjunta*' handstamp. The FDC was sent from Buenos Aires, Argentina to the Falklands on 7 October 1978 and received a '*Declaracion Conjunta*' handstamp of that date. But what happened next?

Clearly, Algerio Nonis was not known in Port Stanley. If we check the back of the cover, it is pretty obvious why. Mr Nonis was the sender of the cover and has kindly placed his Buenos Aires address on the back so it can be returned to him. So the postal staff in Port Stanley added the '*Addressee Unknown Return to Sender*' handstamp to the front, lightly struck through the address with a pen (the only handwritten marks on the entire cover, front or back) and stamped the back with a Port Stanley postmark dated 12 October 1978. It is worth noting that they did this all carefully – look at the neat positioning of the '*Addressee Unknown*' handstamp. I doubt that Port Stanley was one of the busiest post offices in the world and clearly the staff had the time and inclination to treat this collectible item with some respect (I won't comment on the way postal staff treat potential philatelic items these days!).

And so the FDC was sent back to Buenos Aires. There is another '*Return to sender*' handstamp (in Spanish and French) on the back, above the return address. It is rather crude and smudged, and its positioning implies it was put there by the sender, who also used a handstamp for the address on the front. This suggests that Mr Nonis sent a batch of these covers and in fact I have seen others for sale. A quick search on the Internet indicates Mr Nonis was (and perhaps may still be) a collector/exhibitor in Argentina, if not a dealer.



(Front - 90%)



(Reverse - 90%)

The back of the FDC has another 'Declaracion Conjunta' handstamp, this time dated 16 October 1978. The date, and the fact it is only in Spanish, seems to suggest it was applied when the cover had returned to Argentina, which raises a couple of questions. Did the postal authorities in the Falkland Islands not apply the stamp required by the agreement, or did they just see no need in this case, since they were returning a cover with the cancel already on it? If the second cancel was applied on its return by the Argentine Post Office, why bother – the cover wasn't going back to the Falklands?

A final question is raised by the last marking on the back of the cover – a 'Poste Restante' handstamp

dated 28 October 1978. Mr Nonis had given his return address – a PO Box in Buenos Aires, so the cover should not have found its way to Poste Restante, or was this marking applied to mail to be left in PO Boxes?

So Mr Nonis decided to spice up his FDCs by sending them to a fictitious addressee (himself) in the Falklands, probably knowing they would pick up the 'Declaracion Conjunta' handstamp (did he expect to get two?) and possibly some other markings before finding their way back to him. The result is a nice change from the usual rather mundane FDCs, and an interesting addition to my collection.

# MACHINATIONS

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## Machin Post and Go varieties

Daniel Tangri

Those of you who remember Australia Post's use of counter-printed stamps during the 1990s will remember that there were a lot of varieties. Different machines used different fonts, and odd values and errors could be thrown up by the computer-based technology. It will therefore be no surprise to hear that the recent introduction, in the United Kingdom, of similar technology to print 'faststamps' or 'post and go' stamps has also been characterised by similar outcomes. The technology used in the UK is more mature, and the machines more reliable; but there are no fewer than four types of stamps, and several varieties produced by software glitches. This article will provide a brief overview of what is rapidly becoming a fascinating area of Machin collecting.

Post and Go machines have been at some post offices in the UK since 2004. They are large red machines, rather like an ATM, and similarly networked so that they can process credit cards and have new tariffs downloaded to them remotely. They are only present in a fairly limited number of post offices in the UK (about 146 at present), although some post offices have several machines. The machines are self-service machines, and were introduced to reduce queue times and congestion in post offices – customers who only want a stamp or two could use the machine, leaving counter staff to deal with more complex transactions.

Initially, the machines vended a white label with the service printed in black – 2<sup>nd</sup> or 1<sup>st</sup> class

postage, for example. On 8 October 2008 the Galleries post office in Bristol offered the first of a new type of label (Figure 1), printed by Walsall in rolls. Walsall printed a long rectangular white self-

adhesive stamp, on yellow backing paper, with a Machin head at the right. Two phosphor bands are placed on either side of the portrait. A fairly large blank space remains at the left. The whole label is covered by a security overprint with the words 'Royal Mail' repeated in a semi-circular pattern.

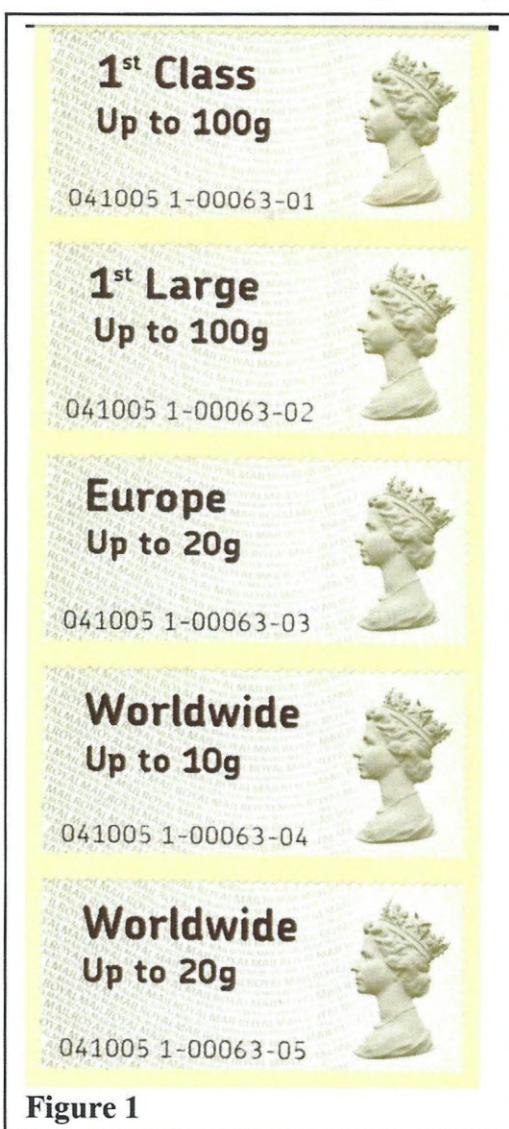


Figure 1

This overprint is quite dark to the left of the portrait, but becomes very faint near the head and under the phosphor bands. Incidentally,

similar security overprints occur on the current gold Machin Horizon labels and self-adhesive Machin security definitives, but those stamps also have the overprint over the portrait.

No value or service description is printed on the label. The Post and Go machine thermographically prints the value and service description on the left of the label, along with a line of mysterious-looking numbers at the bottom left. Since 2008, stamps for five different common letter rates could be printed at the machine (a sixth value is about to be added). Rates are all 1<sup>st</sup> class or airmail – for example, ‘Worldwide up to 20g’ or ‘1<sup>st</sup> Class up to 100g’. The machine will only print up to five stamps per transaction, so it has become common for people to collect strips of five showing the five different values. These Machin Post and Go stamps are listed by Gibbons (SGFS1-FS5).

The line of mysterious-looking numbers at the bottom left of each stamp is actually composed of four different codes. The first six numerals are an office identifier (indicating which post office vended the stamp). There is then a space, followed by a single number that is the machine number (indicating which machine at the office vended the stamp). This is followed by a hyphen and then by five further numerals. These comprise the session number. A further hyphen is then followed by two further numerals – the transaction number. The transaction numbers are consecutive, and from Figure 1 you can see that a strip of five will have numbers from 01 to 05.

The beauty of these codes is that one can easily work out which post office vended any Post and Go stamp. This helps to identify the source of varieties. Lists of office identifiers can be found online, for example at [postagelabelsuk.com](http://postagelabelsuk.com) or [stampmagazine.co.uk](http://stampmagazine.co.uk). It should be noted that some changes have been made to these codes in more recent times; these will be dealt with below.

The first Post and Go Machins can easily be identified by the large, bold black font used for the service description, and the somewhat spidery-looking numerals for the codes (which look rather like numerals printed on old thermal typewriters).

As is the case with most Machin stamps, there are a number of phosphor band varieties. Examples are known with short bands at the top and at the

bottom, and also with the right band inset. There is one quite spectacular variety (Figure 2) which occurred late in 2010. The words ‘Up to 10g’ are missing from one of the Worldwide stamps. Some of the codes at the bottom have also run over each other. The example in Figure 2 was vended from the Brazenose St post office in Manchester; the error is also known from the City of London branch in Eastcheap.

It appears to be the result of a software glitch, although one wonders if collectors worked out how to produce it by fiddling with the machine settings!

**Figure 2 Missing ‘Up to 10g’**

(Figure 3). These show the original label, with Machin head and security overprint, but no service description and code, but the words “Winco Nixdorf sample” and a value in Euro printed across the label and a circular printed stamp containing the word ‘Paderborn’ and some numbers. Examples are also known of a much larger label (Figure 3a)



**Figure 3. Sample Label**

without the Machin head but with similar printed text. The wording is easily explained; the Post and Go machines are made by Wincor Nixdorf, which is based in Paderborn in Germany. These labels are produced by the Post and Go machine each time a new roll is put in – they are essentially test labels. They are usually collected by the clerk in charge of the machine and left in the waste bin, though some have been found on the floor of the post office.

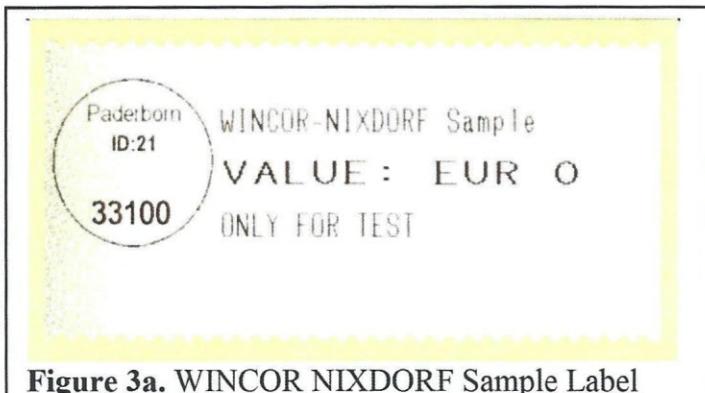


Figure 3a. WINCOR NIXDORF Sample Label

After being introduced at the Galleries post office in Bristol on 8 October 2008, the first Machin Post and Go labels were then made available at another 20 post offices over the next few weeks. All were in England except a single office in Belfast in Northern Ireland. During 2009 a further 86 post offices were provided with Post and Go machines supplying the labels, and this time post offices in Scotland (Aberdeen, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Inverness, Paisley and Perth) and Wales (Cardiff) were added. During 2010 a further 40 post offices were added to this list, including more offices in Scotland and Wales.

### Second Post and Go Machines

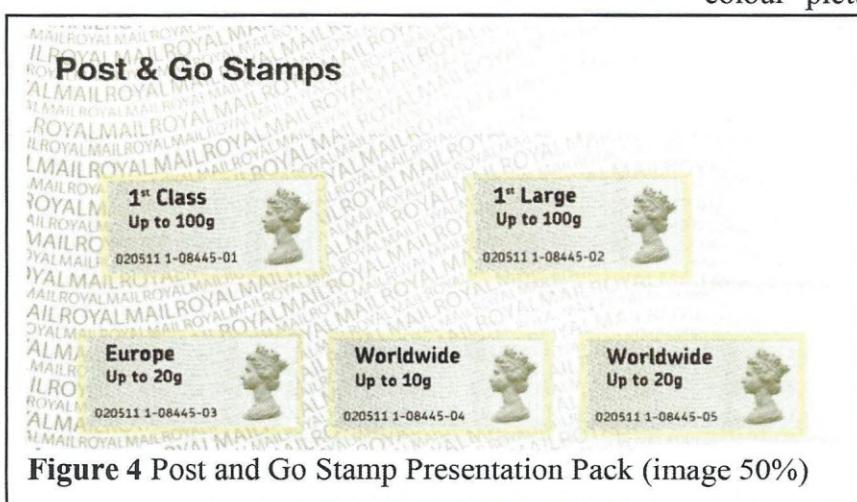


Figure 4 Post and Go Stamp Presentation Pack (image 50%)

On 31 March 2009 the Royal Mail produced a presentation pack containing the five Machin Post and Go stamps (Figure 4). These stamps were specially printed in gravure by Walsall, and can be distinguished from the first Post and Go labels by the thicker and darker font used for the codes at the base. Furthermore, all of the presentation pack stamps were printed with the office identifier '020511' for the Galleries branch, Bristol.

The rear of the presentation pack contained a brief description of the stamps, and a picture which was intended to illustrate the four codes at the bottom left of a stamp – but the picture gets the transaction number and the session number the wrong way round!

These gravure stamps also occur with short phosphor bands. In fact, short bands appear to be so common on this issue that normal bands may well be the rarer variety.

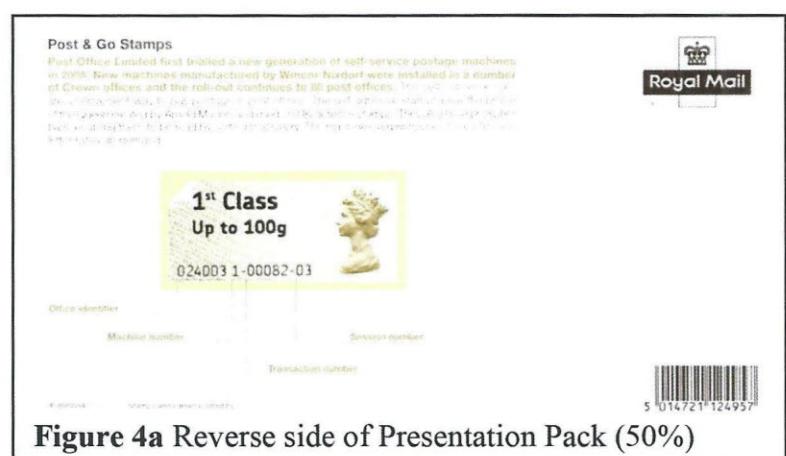


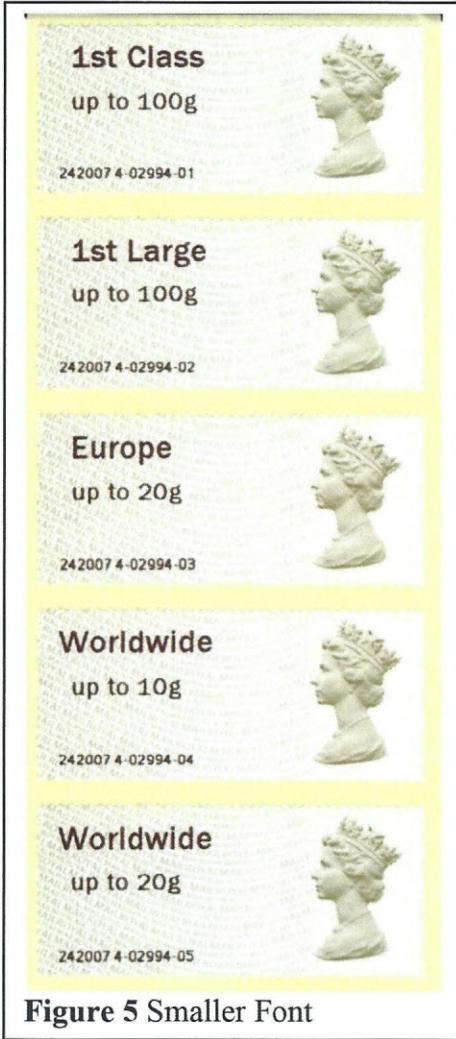
Figure 4a Reverse side of Presentation Pack (50%)

### Third Post and Go Machines

From 17 September 2010, 30 post offices began offering new Post and Go stamps with lovely colour pictures of British birds instead of the Machin portrait. The intention was that the offices would sell these stamps until supplies ran out, and would then switch back to the Machin Post and Go stamps. Post offices which did not have the birds stamps continued to sell the Machin stamps.

The bird pictures were wider than the Machin portrait. This meant that the service description and codes would have been printed partly over the bird pictures. Consequently, new

software had to be installed at the 30 post offices so that a smaller font would be used. This required an engineer to work on each machine. To install the software the night before the birds stamps were to be released would have been a large undertaking requiring many staff, so the new software was installed at post offices over several days from 8 September 2010. Once the software was installed, the machines vended Machin labels, but with the new smaller font (Figure 5). The

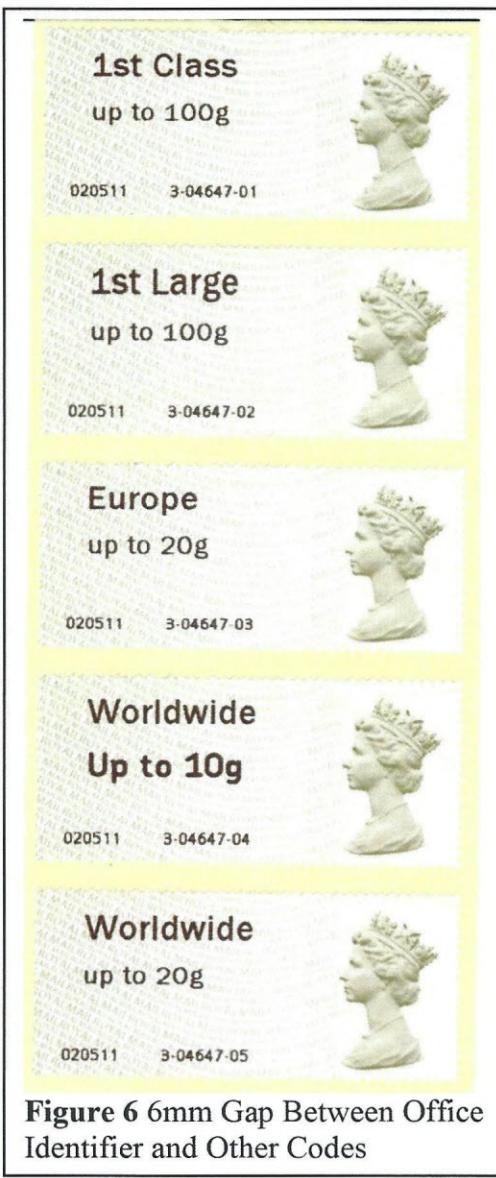


**Figure 5** Smaller Font

Although they were only available for about a week, the smaller font varieties were soon noticed and copies made available on eBay. As a result, they are not especially rare, although they do appear to be less common on eBay these days.

As an aside, some post offices were supplied with Post and Go machines, for the first time, after 17 September 2010. It is worthwhile collecting a strip from such a post office, as it clearly shows that the first Machin Post and Go stamps (with the larger font) continued to be sold at some post offices at the same time as the birds stamps.

service description is now placed further to the left, leaving quite a large white space between the head and the text. The line of code at the base of the stamp is much smaller and darker. Other noticeable differences from the first Post and Go Machins are that the small font stamps have a different font for 'g', and use a lower-case 'u' for 'up'.



**Figure 6** 6mm Gap Between Office Identifier and Other Codes

The smaller font stamps are also known with short phosphor bands. There is also another spectacular variety (figure 6) showing a 6mm gap between the office identifier and the remaining codes. At the same time, the words 'Up to 10g' on the Worldwide stamp have been printed in

the old, large font. The Deegam Report No. 90 reported that this variety was known from a Liverpool post office, but my example is from the Galleries Branch at Bristol, indicating that this particular software glitch occurred in at least two places.

#### ***Fourth Post and Go Machins***

The birds Post and Go stamps are now being supplied at all post offices with the machines, so the Machin labels are obsolete. However, a further version of the Machin label was produced at Spring Stampex 2011. Apparently the Royal Mail wished to trial a new machine in an environment where it would be subject to heavy usage. The new machine was a 'Postal Vision' machine manufactured by Hytech of the Netherlands. This is a much smaller machine than the Wincor Nixdorf machine, but it is not currently built to

take payments – as a result, it needs to be operated by postal staff. It is possible that similar machines may be used in the future for exhibitions or at the Philatelic Bureau at Tallents House.

The Hytech machine printed the Machin labels with small font, but there are a number of differences from the 2010 small font stamps (Figure 7). The differences are best observed in

the shape of the zeroes in the printing, for example in ‘100g’, and also in the fact that the second line of the service description starting with ‘up to’ is always inset on the Hytech examples. Furthermore, the machine number in the code was doubled (it appears as ‘22’) and the session number also contains six numerals instead of



Figure 7 Hytech Machine

five. Another quite significant change was that the Hytech machine could vend strips of six stamps, as opposed to Wincor Nixdorf's five stamps.

A major variety was discovered after Stampex had ended. The security overprint is partly missing at

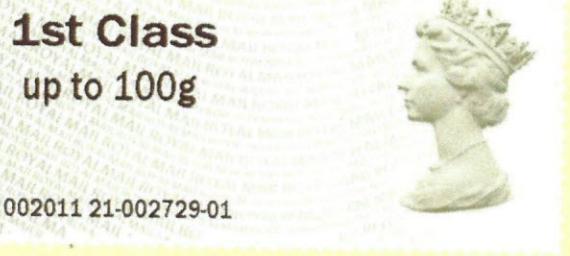


Figure 8 Security Print Partly Missing (140%)

the base of some stamps (Figure 8), and shows up as a little strip of white at the bottom of the stamp. As this variety was not noticed while the stamps were still on sale, it has turned out to be quite rare. Potential buyers should beware though; some unscrupulous sellers on eBay have taken advantage of the fact that the security overprint is normally very faint around the Machin portrait, and have offered normal Hytech stamps as the error. A true error will have a white strip all along the bottom of the stamp.

In recent weeks, blank Machin labels, without any machine printing, have begun to appear in some

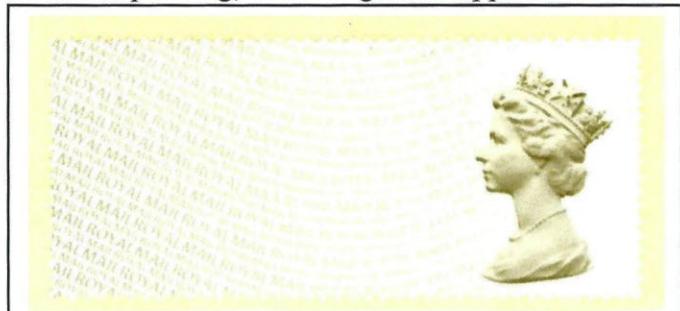


Figure 9 Blank Label

quantity (Figure 9). A similar blank label was illustrated by John Deering in the January 2011 ‘Machin Watch’ in *Gibbons Stamp Monthly*, and it was suggested then that the label was vended from a machine which failed to print in error. Given that there has been a ready supply of blank gold Horizon labels, I rather wonder if some post office staff are not selling off left-over blank labels. In any event, the blank labels are worth having to illustrate how the labels look before the Post and Go machine overprints them.

**Acknowledgements.** I should like to thank Brian Morris for information on the Wincor Nixdorf samples, and Frank Goldberg for his comments on an earlier draft.

# PASTCARDS

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## TWO CALLS FOR HELP!

Bronte Watts

I would be pleased if members and readers could please help me!

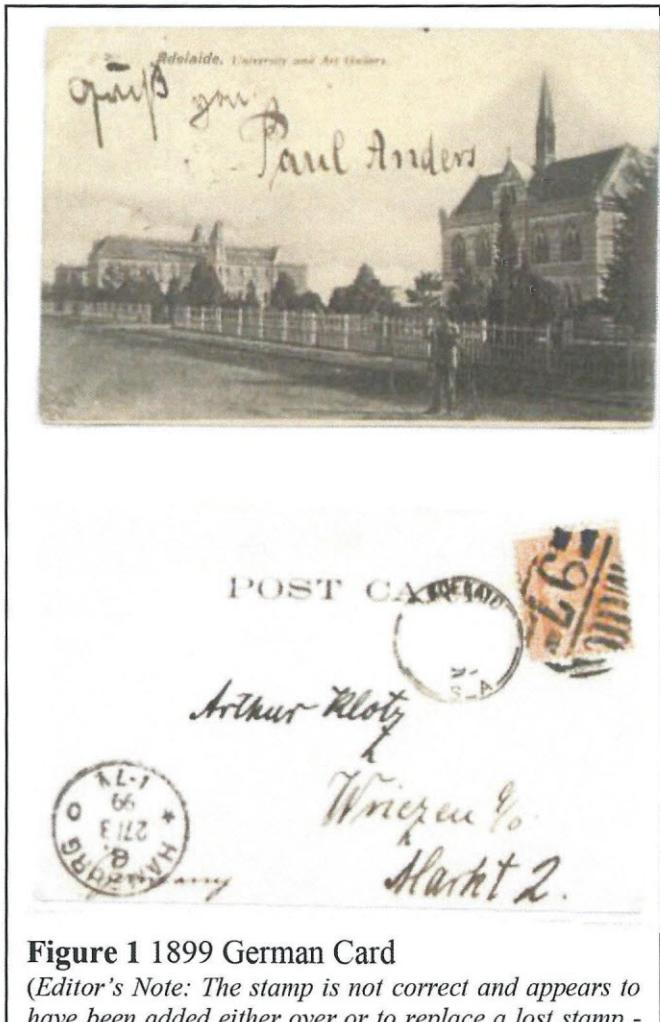
Firstly, as well as my research into postcards published by Pitt (Capital Philately Vol.28 Nos. 1&2 and with more to come!), I am researching the 1898-1905 period in South Australian postcards. I am looking for the following:

Black & white and coloured "Grus Aus" cards printed in Germany generally pre 1900;  
Robert Jolley postcards 1898-1902;  
L. von Koennertz 1899 postcards;  
Sands & McDougal Ltd postcards 1898-99;  
Wannenmacher postcards 1898-99; and  
Stengel & Co cards of Sydney & Brisbane as well as Adelaide.

The first card shown here (Figure 1 - both sides) is titled "Adelaide, University and Art Gallery" – the card is believed to have been printed in 1899 from an 1869 photograph!

The second card (Figure 2) is a coloured German "Grus Aus" from Australie of the "Town-house or hall, Sidney"

Secondly, I have some cards, such as that shown below (Figure 3), which I believe were published by Robert Jolley of Melbourne, showing pictures of the Inauguration of the Commonwealth of Australia in Sydney. It is believed that there are twelve in the series; I know of eight:



**Figure 1** 1899 German Card

(Editor's Note: The stamp is not correct and appears to have been added either over or to replace a lost stamp - stamps of Victoria were not valid in SA at that time.)

1. Hon CC Kingston Minister of Trade & Customs/German Arch – College St and the "Royal Anchor"
2. Visiting Indian Infantryman/Melbourne Arch – Park & George Sts

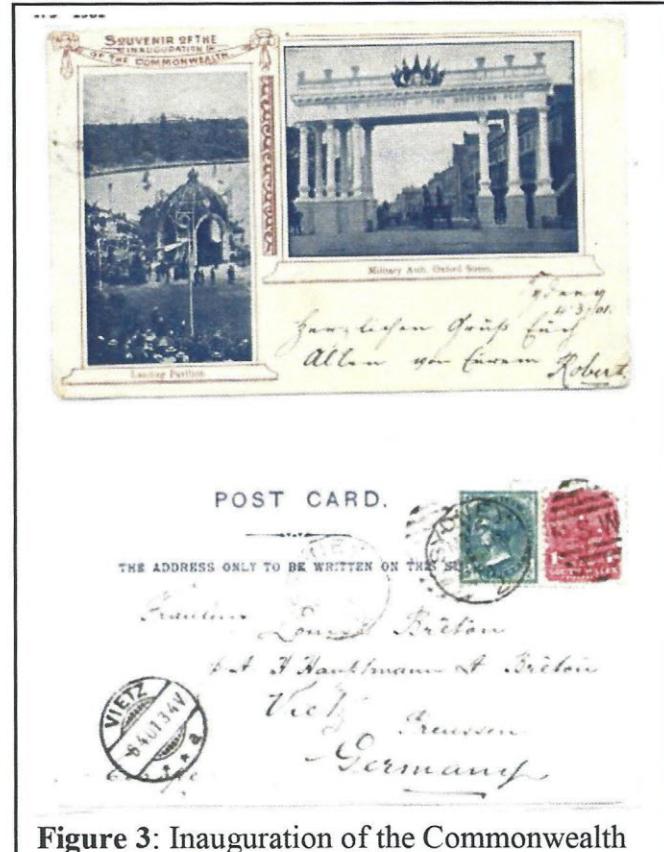


**Figure 2:** "Grus Aus" from Australie of the "Town-house or hall, Sidney (sic)"

3. Swearing-in Pavilion, Centennial Park/Wool Arch, Bridge St/ Sir James Dickson, Minister of Defence
4. Sir Wm Lyne Minister for Home Affairs/Agricultural Arch, Bridge St/ Saluting the "Royal Anchor" Reception Marquee
5. Hon N.F. Lewis Minister without position/Governor General landing at Farm Cove
6. Hon. Alfred Deakin Attorney-General and Minister for Justice/Government House/French Arch – Pitt & Bourke St.
7. Sir George Turner, Treasurer/America Arch – Pitt & Hunter Streets/The 93 steps leading from the pavilion to the heights above
8. The Landing Pavilion/Military Arch, Oxford Street. (used: dated 4-3-01)

Does anyone have or know of the missing ones?  
Are there more than four?

I would appreciate any comments or information to: Bronte Watts, Unit 3, 3 Cosgrove St., MAGILL, South Australia, 5072; phone: 08 8431 0549 or email: [wttbsrnt@yahoo.com.au](mailto:wttbsrnt@yahoo.com.au)



**Figure 3:** Inauguration of the Commonwealth of Australia in Sydney.

## BOOK REVIEW

### George Rose: Australia's Master Stereographer

While the collecting of Stereoscopic Views is not quite collecting Postcards, this book is of great relevance to Australian postcard collectors because George Rose (1861-1940) and "The Rose Stereograph Company went on to be one of Australia's leading postcard publishers. Indeed, many of his stereoscopic views were also published as postcards – as the stereoscope went out of fashion, replaced by movies (particularly newsreels of current events) postcards increased in popularity. That is not to say that postcards pushed-out the stereoscope – postcard popularity increased because of an increasing literacy in the population and the spreading of cheap postage – within most countries, postcards could be mailed for about one half-penny (about one third of one cent)!

For those who do not know, a stereograph is a pair of photographs, taken with a special twin (horizontal) lens camera, the lens separation being about the distance apart of the human eyes. Prints from the two negatives are carefully aligned and

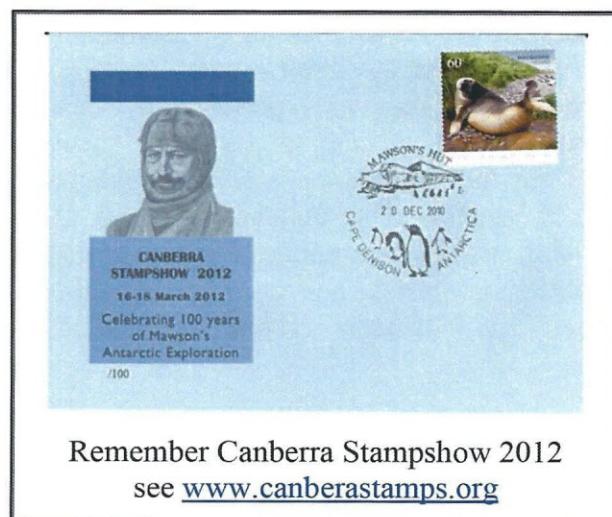
mounted for viewing through a twin lens device – The Stereograph – one eye seeing each image giving a three dimensional picture to the brain.

George Rose travelled not only around Australia, but around the world taking stereoscopic pictures, indeed, as this wonderful book tells, his early photographs of Korea, taken in 1904, are almost the only pictorial images of that country from that period. So important are these cards that they formed the centrepiece of a Rose exhibition held in Seoul in 2002.

It is believed that Rose produced over 10,000 stereographs, most of which are listed in this monumental work by Adelaide author Ron Blum. Images range from Victoria in the later part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century including training and departure of Boer War troops, The Federation celebrations in Sydney and the Coronation of King Edward VII in London (and images while travelling!) to South Pacific Islands, Korea (as mentioned) to the Great War, European Countries, North Africa and the Middle East.

This book is far more than a list of Rose's stereographs as it includes much historical and geographic data about the regions and events photographed and includes some of the quite long descriptions printed on the rear of Rose's stereographs.

While all of us who collect postcards eagerly await Ron Blum's second volume: "*George Rose: The Postcard Era*", no serious Australian collector should be without this volume.



Remember Canberra Stampshow 2012  
see [www.canberastamps.org](http://www.canberastamps.org)

Available from:

Ron Blum, 2 Hussey Avenue, Oaklands Park, South Australia, 5046 for \$75.00 Australian postage paid.

Bruce Parker

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## BOOK REVIEW

### THE POSTCARD CENTURY – 2000 Cards and their messages

By Tom Phillips

While published some time ago (2000), this large (not for reading in bed) book has recently appeared on the "remainder" market, my copy coming from Clouston & Hall in the Canberra suburb of Fyshwick for \$25.00 – two thousand cards for \$25 is 80 cards per dollar! The book is aimed to cover a century from 1900 to 1999 at 20 cards per year! Although an Australian collector may be disappointed in the very skimpy coverage we get, think of it this way: you get to see a lot of Europe and North America over a one hundred year period.

While you can't put them in your collection, the "wow" value is tremendous for the illustrations alone and you get all or most of the messages and originating and destination towns or suburbs as well! For the pure philatelist, there are few images of the "backs" (the postal side), and that is unfortunate, but the book would need to be another thirty millimetres thick to do that! While I have had my copy for some time, I have still only got through to 1911, although I have skimmed and "flipped" around as well and have not been disappointed with any page I have opened.

Card illustrations are mostly reduced in size, but the colour in the reproductions of the coloured cards appears to me to be quite true.

I would expect the copies are still available, but it may be as well to phone your friendly "remainder" book dealer to enquire.

Bruce Parker



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