



Newcastle Philatelic Society Newsletter

VIEWS FROM NOBBYS

Newcastle Philatelic Society, P.O. Box 34, JESMOND NSW 2299

Website : www.philas.org.au/newcastle

AUGUST, 2010 : Newsletter No. 154 : EDITOR: Ron Davis

WHAT'S ON IN YOUR SOCIETY

THE NEWCASTLE PHILATELIC SOCIETY MEETS 7.30pm SECOND THURSDAY of EACH MONTH
MAYFIELD EX-SERVICES CLUB, 2nd FLOOR MEETING ROOM, HANBURY STREET, MAYFIELD
VISITORS ALWAYS WELCOME

DATES	DETAILS
Thurs 12 August 2010	ANNUAL COMPETITION , (Experienced, Intermediate and Beginners' Sections) A.G.M. and Presentations of Awards Night
Wed 18 August 2010	Newcastle Daytime Meeting : 10.00 am, 48 Mackie Avenue New Lambton East Display by Diana Bridgman - "CZECHOSLOVAKIA"
Sun 15 August 2010	WALLSEND STAMP FAIR , Junior Stamp Activities Meeting, at 11 am
Thurs 9 September 2010	Display by Arthur Gray from Sydney - "AUSTRALIA QEII PRE DECIMAL"
Wed 15 September 2010	Newcastle Daytime Meeting : 10.00 am, 48 Mackie Avenue New Lambton East, Display by Greg Laidler - "SOLDIER MAIL OF WORLD WAR I"
Sun 19 September 2010	WALLSEND STAMP FAIR , Junior Stamp Activities Meeting, at 11 am
Thurs 23 September 2010	STAMPAUCTION NIGHT (details, phone Don Catterall 02 4943 5639)
Thurs 14 October 2010	Display by John Pugsley - "ASPECTS OF THE BOER WAR, 1899-1902"
Sun 17 October 2010	WALLSEND STAMP FAIR , Junior Stamp Activities Meeting, at 11 am
Wed 20 October 2010	Newcastle Daytime Meeting : 10.00 am, 48 Mackie Avenue New Lambton East, Display by Howard Fisher, Toronto - "POLAND"
Thurs 11 November 2010	Display by Howard Bridgman - "EARLY USA, FROM SCOTT No. 1 - 1847 TO 1930"
Sun 21 November 2010	WALLSEND STAMP FAIR , Junior Stamp Activities Meeting, at 11 am
Wed 17 November 2010	Newcastle Daytime Meeting : 10.00 am, 48 Mackie Avenue New Lambton East, Display by Paul Thomas, Sydney - "POT POURRI, including Red Cross"
Thurs 9 December 2010	Display by Greg Laidler - "SARAJEVO TO VERSAILLES"
Mon 13 December 2010	Visit MAITLAND PHILATELIC SOCIETY (phone John Moore 4956 8931)
Sun 19 December 2010	WALLSEND STAMP FAIR , Junior Stamp Activities Meeting, at 11 am
DECEMBER 2010	NO Newcastle Daytime Meeting

- THE PIECE FROM YOUR PRESIDENT -

Amongst all other inventions the humble postage stamp has stood the test of time. The penny black was the brain-child of its inventor, Rowland Hill in 1840. It was issued imperforate with a watermark and it still has this shape and size that can be seen all around the world to this day.

The postage stamp always has a message. The shape and size may vary, the theme can be ancient or modern, it can bear a Queen's head or almost anything that the designer may present to the public, but its job is always exactly the same.

Every year I try to obtain all the stamps from Australia in a calendar year plus any miniature sheets for the same period. As the album pages are printed always more than six months later, one never fully knows whether or not one has the entire collection.

Last year (2009) I missed out on the stargazing issue - perhaps I was stargazing at the time!!! It's so easy to be distracted and miss out on what is important in your life.

The message of the postage stamp is obvious. Be it peel or stick, the postage stamp sticks to its task until it gets there. For us, the distractions are many, and there are many dangerous distractions.

So then, there is a message for us all, do all the good you can, in any way that you can. Persevere, stick to it until you get there.



THE SECRETARY'S SNIPPETS, AUGUST 2010

Your Society's 2010-11 PROGRAMME is ready for distribution, which you may receive with this Newsletter. It is packed full of interesting displays and activities at both our day-time and night-time meetings. You will notice that the night-time programme has two activities that you may wish to start thinking about now. Firstly the January 2011 members' activity is a display of up to 6 pages/items of local philatelic interest, and the other in June 2011 is a Scavenger Hunt - and you will get advance notice of items you should be looking for. This will also be up to 6 pages.

Finally, the dispersal of material formerly held by our LIBRARY has been completed. Over the past few years, items in our library were first offered to the NSW Philas Library and then to the other State Philatelic Council libraries. Items not required by the above were then offered to our Society members and stamp clubs in the Hunter region, with the remaining material donated to the University of Newcastle for one of their future book sales.

John Moore, Secretary

NEWCASTLE PHILATELIC SOCIETY AUCTION REPORT MAY 2010

Once again another successful night with lots of interesting material up for auction and eager bidders waiting to go after it. Even though several regular vendors were away, there were still 333 lots for sale and of these 164 were sold. That is almost exactly 50% and an excellent turnover for the 18 vendors.

We had 32 buyers and most got what they wanted except where quite a number of items which saw multiple bidders. Top price of the night was paid for a folder of diverse items that was chased up to \$70. It contained too many goodies to mention but possibly best were the NZ Auckland Exhibition stamps.

Next came a mint set of the Tasmanian pictorials which went for \$55, then a lot containing multiple pages of pre-decimal issues fetched \$36, whilst a FU 5/- Perf. OS Kangaroo brought \$25 and a FU One Pound Robes \$20. A batch of Australia Post Year books all sold at around half face, sadly bound for postage use. British Commonwealth was again popular, whilst some German Occupation lots created serious interest.

Australian decimal FDC unusually resulted in several sales but this was mainly due to the very low reserves. The strength of the auction was in its diversity of material. Our thanks go to the vendors, buyers and willing workers. Next Auction is in September. Hope to see you there!

Don Catterall, Auction Convenor.

FREE ADVERTISEMENTS !!

August, 2010

For our members : Phone RON DAVIS on 4951 7878 if you have something you want to buy, or swap, or sell.

WANTED:

SANDRA BAKER - phone 4956 4515, issues showing "Pre-history" - early man, fossils, cave paintings, etc.

There are several from China and from the Middle East that I need - Jordan, Israel, Lebanon, Iran, Iraq and Afghanistan

KEVIN SIMKUS - ph. 4951 1597: Wanted - MORE members to put their names down on the CIRCUIT LISTS to BUY stamps! Just take out the stamps you want from the circuit book, pass it on to the next person, & send the money to me.

JOHN BASSFORD - phone 4952 5716: Anything from "unusual countries" and "dead countries".

DAVID PICKERING, phone 4953 2735 - Locomotives on stamps & Post Cards, and ALL Australian 'Specimens' Overprints.

REX HILL, phone 4957 0176 - pre printed pages for albums, Great Britain from 1840, British Commonwealth, Channel Islands, Isle of Man, early Norfolk Island, early Cocos Island.

DON CATTERALL - phone 4943 5639: old postcards, and AUSTRALIAN Revenue and Railway Parcel stamps.

CHRIS ASHHURST-SMITH - phone 4957 0622: N.S.W. POSTMARKS, with Circular Date Stamps; and George V or VI Australian.

HOWARD BRIDGMAN - phone 49502 325 : Early U.S.A. covers wanted, pre-1930.

FOR SALE:

KEVIN SIMKUS - phone 4951 1597: Stamp hinges \$5 a large packet (1000). Hard to get anywhere else!! Ideal for mounting stamps for sale on circuit book pages. Proceeds to Philatelic Society funds.

CANADA



155 Polar Bear

90° Nord



1.000 Greater Arctic Bear



“ POLES APART ”

- a joint display by DON RUTHERFORD and TONY WALKER, 13th MAY 2010

Unusual – a display by TWO Polar enthusiasts, but displaying opposite ends of the world, Don with Antarctica, and Tony with the Russian Arctic.

ANTARCTICA is the fifth largest continent in the world, covering 14.2 million square kilometres – not quite TWICE the area of Australia ! Nine nations have made claims to parts of Antarctica – the U.S.A., Russia, Norway, France, New Zealand, Chile, Great Britain, Argentina, and Australia. Other countries have sent expeditions there. More than 95% is ice-covered, and it contains about 90% of the world’s fresh water. The 2/- stamp below was the first inscribed “Australian Antarctic Territory” – was carried on the *MV Thala Dan*, cancelled on the day (FDI) it arrived in MAWSON 18 February 1958, and departed 2 March 1958. The Australian Antarctic Division mounted several field research expeditions during the 1985-86 summer season, one of which was to HEARD ISLAND – Australia’s remotest territory! Temporary post office facilities and official post office cancellations were made available for these expeditions.



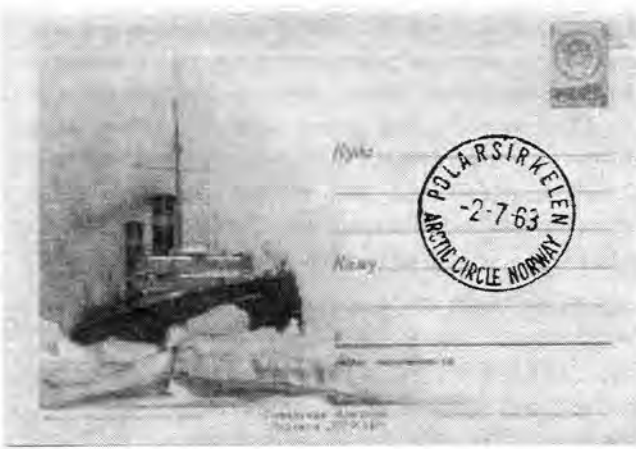
2/- Australian Antarctic Territory, 1958



35c Australian Antarctic Territory, 1958



D. RUTHERFORD
13 ASHFORD AVE
MEREWETHER
NSW 2221



On the other hand, there is NO land at the North Pole in the ARCTIC, which is not a clearly defined area. It includes the Arctic Ocean, many islands, and parts of the mainlands of North America, Asia and Europe. There are NO penguins in the Arctic Region, just as there are NO



polar bears in Antarctica. The total surface area of the Arctic Ocean, including the North Polar Sea, the North Sea, the Norwegian Sea and the Barents Sea, is about 14 million square kilometres – strangely enough, about the size of Antarctica! Tony’s display was mostly about the Russian influence in the area – research expeditions, its drift stations, the weather stations, the ice breakers, cargo ships, a rescue expedition when drift station staff were stranded when the large ice-floe that they had been on broke up when it reached warmer waters Unfortunately, many of the cachets and cancels were in the Russian language (fair enough, I suppose!).



Stamp issuing countries in the Arctic include Canada, the United States (Alaska), Greenland, Norway, Finland, Sweden, Russia (the USSR), Iceland, and smaller countries like the Faroe Islands. In the Arctic areas of Alaska, Canada and Greenland, there are no towns much larger than 10,000 population, but in Scandinavia and Russia, there are larger cities such as Murmansk and Norilsk, Tromsø in Norway and Reykjavik in Iceland.

The specialist Polar Collectors Society has a few members of OUR Society as members, including Tony.



“POT POURRI” – display by PAUL THOMAS, Sydney, 10th JUNE 2010



While Paul said that his display was going to concentrate on “Nobel Prize Winners and various aspects of medicine”, in fact his brush covered a much wider range – seven different (but in part inter-related) topics.

It was interesting that so many countries’ stamps dealt with AIDS and Infectious Diseases and Safe Sex. Two items which were particularly noted were the an airmail envelope cancelled at a city situated in the south of France – CONDOM, and a stamp from Lesotho in Africa, with the caption : “on duty, off duty, protect your partner, your nation and yourself – use a condom”. Cinderellas stamps collectors were surprised

to find that there is a “Hutt-River-Province”-type Gay and Lesbian Kingdom situated east of Australia’s Great Barrier Reef, proclaimed in 2004 – the Gay Kingdom of the Coral Sea. Its capital is called Heaven, postcode 0000, and the denomination of its stamps is in Euros !

The quill, used for writing for centuries, is a flight feather from a large bird such as a goose or swan. They were sharpened with tiny folding knives called “pen-knives”. And there are left-handed quills for left-handed people, and right-handed quills for right handed people !



Paul’s display also included sections on Alcohol, Illicit Drugs, Ophthalmology and Nobel Prize Winners. Alfred Nobel (1883-1896), of course, was the man who invented dynamite and detonators, but also ballistite, blasting gelatine, synthetic rubber, synthetic leather and artificial silk, and was involved in pioneering the extraction of petroleum in Russia. When he died, most of his estate went to establish a fund for the Nobel Prizes. Amongst the numerous winners of these prizes in the fields of Physics, Chemistry, Physiology and Medicine, Literature, and Peace were Marie Curie in 1911 (a double prize winner with her husband), for the discovery of radium and polonium and the isolation of radium, and in 1935, also in Chemistry, Frederic Joliot-Curie and his wife Irene, for the synthesis of new radio-active elements. Included in Paul’s display was the Indian philanthropist, Mother Theresa, a winner of the Peace prize.

Perhaps the greatest discussion was about the Red Cross Organisation, its inception by Henri Dunant following the Battle of Solferino in Italy in June 1859, and the various symbols used by these humane organizations. In honour of Dunant’s Swiss nationality, a red cross on a white background (the Swiss flag with colours reversed) was adopted as the symbol at the Geneva Convention in 1864. During the Russo-Turkish War from 1876-1878, the Ottoman Empire used a Red Crescent instead of the Red Cross because they believed that the cross would alienate its Muslim soldiers. The Red Crescent was formally recognised in 1929, and is now used by 33 countries with majority Muslim populations, out of the 186 recognised societies worldwide. The third protocol emblem, the Red Crystal, was adopted in June 2006 because of controversy with Israel and a number of other disputes. Israel had adopted the Red ‘Star of David’ for indicative use within Israel in 1931, and recently obtained official recognition of this symbol placed within the Red Crystal for indicative use when operating abroad. A sixth symbol – the Red Lion with Sun – had been used in Iran from 1924 to 1980, and is still recognised despite Iran’s shift to the Red Crescent in 1980.



There have been a number of other symbols suggested by various countries over the past years, but they have all been unrecognised. Afghanistan submitted an archway design in 1935, the Congo wanted a Red Lamb, and India wanted a Red Wheel (but it was abandoned in favour of the Red Cross), Lebanon a Red Cedar, Sudan a Red Rhinoceros, Syria a Red Palm, and Zimbabwe a Red Star. Interesting !

- RD -

***** FOR THOSE COLLECTORS OF COMPUTERS ON STAMPS !!**

Did you know that the composition of your computer is made up of approx. 25 kg of plastic, metals, glass and silicon. Its heart is just a hundredth of a kilo (10 grams) of silicon and metal formed into integrated circuits known as 'chips'. Though weighing next to nothing, making chips generates the most waste - the 400-step process involves silica, carbon, hydrochloric acid, hydrogen, ultra-violet rays, phosphorus, boron, gold, silver and precision machinery. Circuit boards are made from copper, fibreglass, epoxy resin, more chemicals, heavy metals, energy, water and tin solder. Therefore the making of the 25kg computer generated 63 kg of waste and used 27,700 litres of water and 2300 to 4000 kilowatt hours of energy.

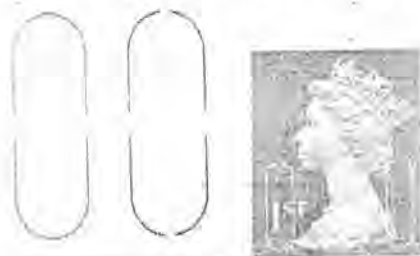
Who said Machins were "boring"? - George Szekely and Ed Burnard

Following the introduction of the 'penny black' 170 years ago, the British Post Office and other postal authorities became paranoid about the potential loss of revenue arising from the removal of cancellation marks from stamps and their subsequent re-use. Much effort was put into the development of fugitive inks, grilles and other security devices.

Currently Royal Mail admits to an appreciable loss of revenue from the reverse situation - the re-use of uncanceled stamps. Their solution this time is to prevent the removal of stamps, generally by soaking, rather than to ensure that all mail is cancelled. It's rather akin to treating a headache instead of removing the cause.

Their most recent measure was the introduction in February 2009 of a security measure comprising two die-cut ovals in the lower portion of the stamp. These U-shaped impressions in a soaked stamp render the paper weak and flaccid, and thus prone to tearing when removal is attempted. Stamps targeted with this feature are the four NVI's (No Value Indicated) for letter and large letter use, and the higher value Machin definitives of 50p, £1, £1.50, £2, £3 and £5.

These stamps are currently printed by De La Rue and Walsall Security Printers, who also apply the die-cut ovals. De La Rue ovals are in two sections, shown left, whilst the Walsall impression has 4 sections, shown on the right. With Walsall, there are also two varieties - wide and narrow gaps respectively at the apex of the oval.



These ovals seem to be a permanent security feature of the higher value Machins after an embarrassing teething problem was corrected. On the De La Rue issues, one and sometimes both of the ovals were left behind when removing the self-adhesive stamp from its backing. Micro-adjustment of the depth of the cut resolved the problem. In addition to the introduction of die-cut ovals, a new laminate is being used which Royal Mail claims does not allow stamps to be soaked from the substrate. This new feature is targeted on 50p to £5 values. I can see that it will be used on all GB stamps in due course.

A further interesting feature - the '1st' booklet issued on 10th March has round perf tips, but the one issued on 31st March has flat perf tips!

Also what might be of interest is the hidden security coding used by Royal Mail on the non-denominated security Machins that identifies the format in which the stamp was issued (business sheets, booklets, coils, etc.).

For instance, the De La Rue (business sheet) stamp has "MBIL" instead of "MAIL", while the Walsall has "MTIL". The code is a change of one letter in the curvy ROYAL MAIL background pattern, located at the top right, above the diadem. You have to use reflected light to see it.

The codes are as follows:

- B replacing A in Royal - **ROYBL** MAIL - in business sheets (Large '1st' and '2nd' Machins)
- B replacing A in Mail - **ROYAL MBIL** - in business sheets (standard '1st' and '2nd' Machins)
- C replaing A in Mail - **ROYAL MCIL** - in mixed booklets with four '1st' Machins and two commemoratives ("C" is for custom)
- F replacing R in Royal - **FOYAL** MAIL - in booklets of four stamps (large '1st' and '2nd' Machins)
- S replacing A in Mail - **ROYAL MSIL** - in booklets of six (standard '1st' Machins)
- T replacing A in Mail - **ROYAL MTIL** - in booklets of twelve (standard '1st' and '2nd' Machins)

There are no hidden codes in counter sheets, which means that no Machin with a denomination has a code.

Royal Mail says that these codes let them know the source of a stamp when a problem is discovered, for example, a sub-standard application of the phosphor bands.

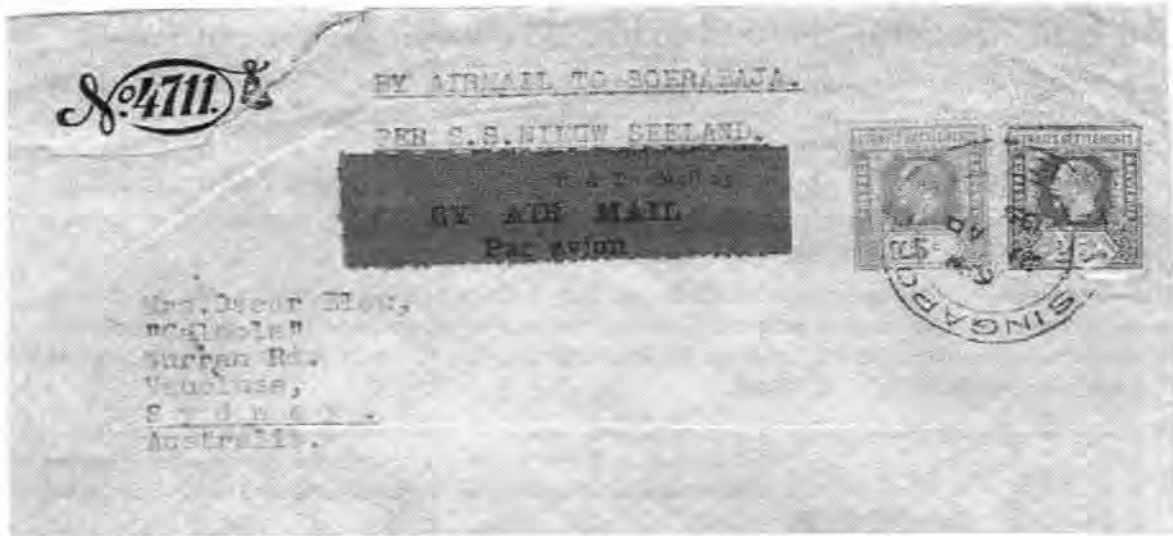
So now we have different slits, different perforations, and ID letters. Who said Machins were boring?

On a different note, but still about overseas mail - in Australia it is hard to purchase high value stamps at the post office. Licensed Post Offices generally don't order many stamps except for 55c (now 60c) up to \$2.45 because they pay for the stamps the following month, where as they prefer to use labels because they don't pay until they sell them, and without any cash investment. Try and find a Post Office that has \$20 painting in stock. It is so hard to send even a small package overseas - for example up to 250g airmail to Europe is \$11 but if you ask for stamps - being International stamps - not only do they have a small amount but only a limited number of values, and often no or very little to make up the \$11. What I mean is, say 5 x \$2.10 = \$10.50, but to make the rest of \$11 being only 50c, there is no 50c International, so they start mixing values some \$2.10 and \$2.65 etc, but one often has to pay little bit extra to be able to make up the postage. I send packets regularly and this is always the case. I don't know what would happen if someone want to post a 5kg or 10kg parcel with stamps !!

- George Szekely/Ed Burnard -

*** Noted on this week's desk diary (22.7.2010) - PERHAPS AN ADMONITION TO PRIME MINISTER JULIA GILLARD REGARDING THE POSTPONEMENT FOR THREE YEARS OF ACTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE AND THE CARBON TAX : Nothing will ever be attempted if all possible objections must first be overcome. - Dr. Samuel Johnson -

*** I think we consider too much the luck of the early bird and not enough the bad luck of the early worm. - Franklin D. Roosevelt -



“FAMILY HISTORY AND LETTERS”
 - a display by **PAUL STORM, Sydney,**
 on **Thursday 8th JULY 2010**

It was an unusual display, which was split into two parts – with a lot of talking about each part, and accompanied by two thick inlaid ceramic floor tiles - one of which was spare stock from the Houses of Parliament in London (!) - and lots of old letters and postcards.

Paul started off by showing a fairly-ordinary-looking “entire” with a cancelled GB Penny-black on it, which he had discovered in a dealer’s box. It was addressed to “Mr. Herbert Minton, Stoke on Trent” (the famous Minton of Minton’s China). The writer of the letter was Augustus Welby Pugin, a quite famous church architect who had designed a Gothic-revival church in Birmingham (England) and was asking Minton to expedite the production of their order for Minton’s special “encaustic tiles” for the church floor prior to Holy Cross Week, 19th September, 1840. Copies of this original historic letter have circulated widely on various publications. Pugin designed a few churches in Tasmania, five of which have survived in their original Gothic condition.



The second part of Paul’s talk was about a small collection of items found in a messy tea-chest which came out of a building site. They related to the BLAU family – a family of Hungarians who had connections in Vienna and migrated to Australia in 1908. Oscar and Julius Blau formed a company which sold “4711” eau-de-cologne toilet-water in all countries “east of Cairo”, and particularly had lots of dealings in the Netherlands Indies. They were interned as “aliens” during World War I, at Holsworthy in NSW. German aliens were locked up wherever they were – South America, Ceylon, South Africa – and Rottneest Island, and St. Johns

Island in Singapore, and were later transferred from these last two to Holsworthy, together with Germans, Austrians, Hungarians, Croats, Czechs, Bulgars, Turks – and Australians. They included the remaining crew from the German battleship “Emden” which ran onto the shoals at North Cocos Island after its battle with the “Sydney”. Julius Blau died in 1938, but Paul’s display included Xmas postcards from Robert Blau, Oscar’s brother.



- R.D. -

SWAP AND SALE NIGHT 24th June 2010

We spent quite a busy and pleasant couple of hours with everyone socialising and chatting about our hobby. There were nine members who took tables and some were particularly successful in their disposal of unwanted stock, which of course resulted in some happy buyers.

There were just over 30 people in attendance, and this included a few non-members whom we were more than pleased to see come along. Hope to see you all again next year.

Don Catterall, Convenor.



“The handle on your recliner does not qualify as an exercise machine.”

*** A man who could leap like a flea would be able to jump 100 metres (330 feet) into the air.

THE NEWCASTLE DAYTIME MEETINGS,

at Studio 48, 48 Mackie Avenue, New Lambton East, at 10 a.m.
on the **THIRD** Wednesday of each month (except December).



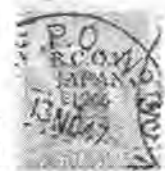
“WEATHER” - display by HOWARD BRIDGMAN, Wednesday 19th MAY 2010

“How can you show WIND on a stamp??” Some puzzled expressions on faces after atmospheric-scientist Howard introduced his favourite topic, “Weather”. It turned out that flags blowing strongly in the the wind and an anemometer on a stamp – looking VERY still – were two of the designs which represented “wind”. “You’d think they could *blur* it a bit, or something!” “Everyone TALKS about the weather, but no-one does anything about it.”

Howard revealed lots of interesting “stuff” about weather – the earliest measurement of rainfall occurred in Korea in 441 A.D.; no two snowflakes are alike, except when depicted on stamps as decoration; “fog” is when visibility is less than 1 kilometre, “mist” is when visibility exceeds 1 kilometre; a rainbow occurs when sunlight interacts with water and cloud droplets at an angle of 22.5 degrees; most weather occurs in the troposphere, the sub-layer closest to earth, about 10 to 12 kilometres deep; the launch of the Sputnik in 1958 changed weather forecasting forever....

We saw stamps and covers showing aspects of hurricanes and their effects, clouds (the USA issues of 2004), weather maps, fog, rainbows, lightning, weather satellites, pollution, auroras, rain, snow, and sea currents – the cold current flowing along the Peruvian coast is named after Baron Alexander von Humboldt, the famous geographer from Berlin University. “Log into the Weather Bureau on www.bom.gov.au on the internet,” Howard concluded – “there’s a lot of interesting “stuff” to be seen there”....

“THE ½d KANGAROO 1938-1966 – THE STAMPS AND USAGE” - display by DON RUTHERFORD, Wednesday 16th JUNE 2010



First issued on 3rd October 1938 as part of Australia’s Zoological series, the last printing of this stamp was in 1960. It was demonetized in February 1966 with the change to decimal currency. As the minimum postage rate for any mail was 1d., the ½d. stamp was ever only a make-up value. From 1923 to 1941, the postage rate for a postcard was 1d. and 1½d. for a letter. Then in 1941, War Tax of ½d. was introduced, additional to the postage rate, but after World War 2, the additional ½d. remained, and postage went up to 3d. for a postcard and 3½d for a letter, being increased to 4d. in 1956.

Don’s display contained all of the relevant imprint blocks – McCracken, “John Ash, Australian Note and Stamp Printer”, and “Printed by the Authority of the Government of the Commonwealth of Australia”. Then in 1954, because of accounting problems caused by the demand for corner blocks with imprints (hundreds of left-over part sheets had to be accounted for), the Stamps Advisory Council advised that imprint blocks be discontinued. “The growing demand from philatelists was creating a nuisance and disturbing normal work at Post Office counters”!

Noted in the display were coil stamps with coil perforations (Don mentioned the discovery of sheets of stamps with coil perforations – were they made in error or to dispose of surplus sheets?), a join in coil strips with normal perfs, 1½d, 2d, and 2½d postcards with ½d added, an “Unclaimed at Townsville” Dead Letter Office cancel of 1957, and an “M, Queensland” relief postmark – perhaps a cut-down “Emu” postmarker !

“PRE-HISTORY ON STAMPS – SOUTH-EAST ASIA”

- display by SANDRA BAKER, Wednesday 21st JULY 2010



Sandra’s display started with sketches of ‘Nal’ style pottery from 3000 B.C., recovered from a hill village in South Baluchistan (Pakistan), and followed by artefacts from the Indus Valley Civilization (also Baluchistan) from 2600 to 2200 BC. And, displaying a sample of copper ore :“Ancient Egyptians used copper (2400 BC) for sterilizing wounds and drinking water, but as times passed (1500 BC), for headaches, burns and itches. Ancient Aztecs fought sore throats by gargling with copper mixtures.” Her display took us through early mining in Botswana, the first agricultural development of cotton in Pakistan’s Indus region (the civilization disintegrating in 1900 BC.), domestication of animals in India, and temples in Indonesia.



We saw early clay toys from Iran, beads and shards of pottery from India, pre-historic Ma-ch’ang pottery from the Kansu region of China, a Neolithic burial jar from Manunggul in the Philippines, ancient relics from Thailand, Sri Lanka, and pre-Christian Cyprus, and the Ankor Wat temple and Khmer temples in Cambodia. Cambodia’s temple-building King Jayavarman died in 1220 AD, and the civilization died with him – the last stone temple was built around 1290. An interesting tour through pre-history indeed !!

*** Experience is the name everyone gives to their mistakes.

FOSSICKING FOR STAMPS IN ROTHENBURG, GERMANY – Howard Bridgman

Diana and I recently returned from a trip to Europe, which included a river cruise between Budapest and Amsterdam. One of the most interesting places we visited was the town of Rothenburg, in Germany. Rothenburg is famous for its Christmas shops and museum. The Christmas displays are extensive (even overwhelming). But that is a different story....

The tour company (Tauck) arranged for guides to take us on small-group walking tours around the city. The cathedral was the largest building and on the main square. During the walk, I saw a little corner shop that advertised on its side window : covers, coins, and the German equivalent of a bunyip.. This turned out to be the only opportunity to buy stamps on the trip.

After the walking tour, Diana went to the Christmas shops and I went back to the shop. It was easy to find again because of its location relative to the cathedral. When I walked in, I saw that the shop was selling a whole mix of things, and was something between an antique and a trash-and-treasure shop.

The proprietor spoke good English. When I told him that I was looking for weather on stamps or on covers, he looked very dubious. He said that this shop was a side business for him, and that he had acquired a collection of covers and stamps from someone he knew. I suggested that I simply look through what he had, to see what I could find.

I spent a fun 45 minutes exploring his stock, which was scattered around the shop. As any thematic collector can testify, looking through unknown material in the hopes of finding a gem is just a much fun as creating the collection itself. I found a few items related to music for Diana, and then, at least for a weather-on- stamps collector, I “struck gold”.



He had a 1979 West German first-day cover buried in one of his boxes. It was an issue of three stamps commemorating German Nobel Prize winners in physics and chemistry. One of the 60 pfennig stamps (see photo) was dedicated to Albert Einstein. The excitement to me, as an atmospheric scientist, was that this stamp shows sunlight (electromagnetic) scattering by particles and droplets in the atmosphere. A rainbow, shown in the background, is created when water droplets scatter sunlight at an angle of 22.5 degrees, acting like a prism

I have never before seen a stamp showing light scattering by the atmosphere. Whoever created this stamp has shown great imagination and initiative. Finding this cover was one of the highlights of my trip - and it only cost 2 Euros.

- Howard Bridgman -

** A **heat gun** used to remove paint can reach temperatures of up to 500 degrees C. Which, no doubt, is why one company felt compelled to add this label to its box : “Do not use this tool as a hair dryer”.

JOHN AND ANNA HILL at the Royal Philatelic Society of London's President's Dinner to mark the opening of the LONDON 2010 Exhibition. As the photo shows, it was a splendid formal occasion, held in the eighteenth-century Drapers' Hall in London.



Signs of the Times

** DAYLIGHT SAVING is like cutting off one end of your blanket and sewing it on to the other end to make it longer.