

CAMPBELLTOWN PHILATELIC NEWS

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www.philas.org.au/campbelltown

Next meeting 12th March

Royal Flying Doctor Service display by Ed Wolf

A bit about Luxembourg

Their first stamps were produced in 1852. They were two imperf stamps, 10 centimes black portraying Grand Duke William 111, and a 1 silver groschen issue produced with seven shades of red. These stamps were replaced with a coat of arms design in 1859.

During World War I, Luxembourg's leader was a woman, Grand Duchess Marie Adelaide. She first appeared on a Luxembourg stamp in 1914. She reigned from 1912 to 1919.

But the Grand Duchess was unpopular and perceived as pro-German, so she took the advice of Luxembourg's parliament and abdicated after the war. She moved to Italy, became a nun, and then died in Germany in 1924 at the age of 29.

Even though Luxembourg is a small country, wedged between France, Belgium, and Germany, it has always been regarded as a great place to visit.

Starting in 1920, and continuing through 1944, a special series of postmarks was used to promote tourism in the Grand Duchy.

Twenty different postmarks were used. Twelve of them appeared before the Germans occupied Luxembourg during World War II.

Unfortunately the "once-a-year" issues of earlier years have now become an almost "once-a-month" event.



SEVEN MEN TO CHANGE A LIGHTBULB

A 1905 US Auction.



Ding-dong! Ding-dong! Vendue! Vendue! Ringing a bell and shouting "vendue" the town crier used formerly to call the public to attend upon sales by public bidding. By this method all sales by order of courts or other public officials were required to be made. It was also a convenient method of disposing of miscellaneous property expeditiously.

In later years we find the auction-room a popular method of dispersing many kinds of merchandise. The entire product of a large cotton or woollen mill may thus be distributed among the wholesale or jobbing houses of the country.

In no line of business has the auction mart become more popular than the stamp trade. The sales of stamps at auction in New York have reached nearly \$100,000 in a single season.

Still it is a matter of surprise how few collectors avail themselves of the advantages of buying at auction. And there are not a few who, not understanding the method, have tried unsuccessfully to buy at auction.

The purpose of this paper, then, is to assist those who are, or would be, buyers, by outlining the course of an auction sale and advising them of their rights and obligations.

First, it must be understood that those who conduct sales rarely offer their own goods. Cataloguers of reputation have sufficient consignments to tax their facilities to the utmost.

The first work of the cataloguer is to separate a collection into lots best suited to the convenience of

the probable buyer, be he collector or dealer. From a careful collation of these lots results a catalogue which will enable the would-be purchaser to form a pretty accurate idea, with the aid of a standard catalogue, of what stamps constitute each lot.

The condition of these stamps can only be generally described, as there is no fixed standard. Many collectors expect a standard of quality so very extreme that they can only determine by examination personally, or by a special agent, if the stamps offered will suit them.

The average collector, however, may accept the description in the catalogue to mean "marketable," unless otherwise described.

Probably not ten percent of the best collections of the world are in the condition required by the ultra-extremist. It is, then, hardly reasonable to expect perfection where there is only a possibility of 1 in 10 of its existence.

Having placed a catalogue before the buying public, many bids may be expected by mail. And it is at this point many bidders fail to understand the character of the sale. If a lot of stamps which a bidder wants is catalogued at \$10 and he would be quite willing to buy from a dealer at \$6, why should he not bid \$6 for it and perhaps get it for less if others did not bid on it?

If one makes liberal bids, it does not follow that he will have to pay the limit. It is customary to execute the highest bid at a fair advance over the next higher, at which bid it would be "knocked down" if there is no competitive bidding from the floor. The room bidders must always be reckoned with.

The bidder should always remember that there are perhaps twenty others bidding on the same stamp, some of whom are willing to pay as much as himself. His bid is, therefore, executed at the limit, the first bid received at this figure taking the prize, if the room bidders permit. Those in the room are always at an advantage in the bidding and usually secure the snaps.

The sale having been completed, in compliance with the law, which in this city is very strict, is absolute, and every bidder may be compelled to complete his part of the contract by paying for and taking away his purchases. No man, under the law, may refuse to accept and pay for his purchase, which has been on public view, even if not in accordance with the catalogue.

If he has been wronged, he may seek redress and will be surprised to find how sensitively the law responds. Appeal to the law is needless, however, as the manager of the sale will wish to avoid any unpleasant notoriety, and the auctioneer to protect his license and his bondsmen.

Some bidders, not satisfied with their purchases, seek an excuse by which to avoid their contract, and display

a petty meanness of which they are probably quite ignorant. How hard to see ourselves as others see us. They return lots because they are not satisfied and compel the manager to become the purchaser at the prices they have bid. The manager has no redress but to cut off the offender from his lists.

To make low bids is quite proper and hurts no one except the bidder. We have seen strings of 200 or 300 bids on a single sale where the bidder would get two or three lots no one else wanted. If gunning for bargains, reasonable bids on desirable stamps is often very successful. If the stamps are not the ones wanted or not in accordance with the instructions of the bidder, the bids are cancelled.

The small commission charged, **usually 5 percent**, is often saved many times to the bidder by thus employing an agent who has no direct interest in the sale.

To summarize: Study the catalogue, mark those lots you wish to buy, enter a fair price that you are willing to pay for each lot, estimate the amount you wish to expend, and send your bids for about double this amount to an agent with full instructions as to your wants in condition, quantity, etc.

Do not send trifling bids. Do not bid on something you do not want. And, if you make a mistake, do not try to hold someone else responsible.

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Australia Post eyes price rise

Chief executive Ahmed Fahour wants to put the price of a standard stamp up at the end of March, and is sugar-coating the proposal by committing to hold the new price for three years, pointing out that earnings pressure on small locally run postal agencies will ease.

The basic price of a stamp has only increased three times in the past 22 years, from 45¢ to 60¢. The last increase from 55¢ was not so long ago, in June 2010

Australia's basic postage rate is now the second-lowest in the OECD, which averages \$1 a letter, and even if it gets the 10¢ increase, Australia Post will continue to lose money on snail mail that must be delivered nationwide under its charter.

Mail volumes are 23 per cent below their peak here, but are down by 30 per cent in the US, even though the US Postal Service has a monopoly on mailbox access.

They are down by 40 per cent or more in countries including Britain, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Denmark, and Korea (the only OECD country that still charges less than Australia Post).

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Stamp printer on verge of bankruptcy

Printing company Joh Enschede is on the verge of bankruptcy and has asked staff to forgo holiday pay - the equivalent of an 8% pay cut.

.A spokesman for the FNV print union said the company had been hit hard by competition from abroad. Other European printers get government help and Joh Enschede does not, he told ANP. Joh Enschede has lost the contract to print Dutch passports but still produces cash, stamps and other official documents, ANP said.

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Frugal Canadian - (Ex-Scotsman)

Jack MacDonald, who died in September aged 98, has left \$US187.6 million (\$205 million) to a children's hospital, a university and the Salvos.

Jack went out of his way to look poor, partly because he didn't want to be badgered by people who wanted money. Never one to catch a cab when a bus was available. Even after he suffered a fall in July and acquired a head injury he told the neurosurgeon to use generic drugs and not "those expensive brand-name drugs."

MacDonald inherited some money from his parents after they died and was able to stockpile the large fortune through his frugal ways and by clever stock market picks.

He sent about \$150,000 - anonymously, at first - to the little village of Elora, Ontario, Canada, where his paternal grandfather lived after emigrating from Scotland.

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The house that stamps built

From the air it resembles a lotus, from the ground it looks like a spaceship and inside it pays homage to a postal stamp. Whatever the illusion, it carries an \$8 million price tag.

The Daintree Rainforest house called Alkira is the first new build that philatelist Rodney Perry has undertaken. Since the age of 14 Mr Perry has preferred to spend his time focusing on his career collecting, selling and studying stamps.

"Stamp collecting became a very big thing after the war," said Mr Perry.

"In the fifties they use to give packets of stamps out when you bought a gallon of petrol and that is how stamps became hugely popular with kids my age at the time."

Mr Perry started his own stamp auction centre in Melbourne and at one stage had 14 employees. He has since sold the business to a Sydney firm.

"I have also made some fortuitous investments over the years," he said. "I saved up and bought a house and then was able to buy other properties and some shares as well."

But six years ago when Mr Perry decided to channel his profits into a new build near Cairns he quickly learned that property development and stamp collecting are very different beasts.

"The brief we gave our architect was simple; we need some sort of water feature and just to generally surprise us," said Mr Perry.

The 40 hectare plot, which the couple bought for \$1.725 million in 2006, is located in the only place on the planet covered by two World Heritage listings – one for the Great Barrier Reef and one for the Wet Tropics heritage area.

Obtaining permits alone took a year with the design necessitating water to be pumped from a nearby creek to a man-made lake. But Mr Perry said it was worth it. The pool at the centre of the home is inspired by Mr Perry's favourite stamp, the 'One Pound Jimmy'.

Each of the property's six fingers has perforated port holes, which at different times of the day, allow in perforated light - a look reminiscent of the edges of a stamp.



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Introduction of silver stamps with diamonds featuring European Monarchs

Since April 30, 2013 Willem-Alexander is King of the Netherlands. To mark this event the Dutch Postal Authority (PostNL) together with the Royal Dutch Mint designed and produced a series of 10 legal tender

stamps representing the portrait of **King Willem-Alexander** depicted in the format of Minted Photo Image (MPI) and 3D relief, with a rose cut diamond attached, and 9 other ruling European Monarchs. All the stamps are made of pure silver with a small diamond added.



Mormon Stamp Hoax

One of the more colorful individuals who gravitated toward the "absurd new fad of collecting bits of colored paper, and even paying good money for them", was Samuel Allan Taylor (1838-1913). Taylor was one of the pioneers of stamp collecting in the U.S. and published the first North American stamp journal, "The Stamp Collector's Record." He was also a notorious producer of bogus stamps, known as 'the Master Grafter', and was the leader of the 'Boston Gang' of philatelic forgers.

He was at the height of his fraudulent career between 1863 and '79, and for one of his productions, a fictitious U.S. local, used his own portrait in the design. Many of Taylor's creations, he had a keen sense of humor, evident in many stamps he produced, and he was partly an artist and partly a cynical faker who thrived in his profession. Taylor once said that he was "a man of flexible conscience and speculative disposition." He contended that his output was for use as "space-fillers," the genuine stamps being too expensive for the average collector. He circulated his stamps widely and his patrons paid little for most of them, but he could work up a very deceptive job when in the mood.

Among Taylor's least convincing forgeries were imitations of two stamps of the Confederacy: one of the 1862 2c Blue, picturing a simian Jefferson Davis,

and another of the 1863 2c Brown Red, with a depressed looking Andrew Jackson. In 1863, an article appeared in "The Stamp Collector's Magazine" describing a stamp issued in 1852 by Mormon leader **Brigham Young** for prepaying postage to and from Salt Lake City and the rest of the Utah Territory. According to the article, "This and some other attempts at independent government on the part of Brigham Young and his followers caused the Washington authorities to dispatch a military force to the Great Salt Lake for the purpose of restoring order and allegiance. It met with but ill success, however."



The stamps were printed in several colors, and bear a crude, block-printed likeness of Joseph Smith, the creator of Mormonism. In 1864, postal authorities confiscated covers franked with these stamps bound for England. In December of that year, Taylor published an article in his journal admitting that they were "facsimiles" and included an illustration of his creations. When Brigham Young was interviewed about the matter, he responded that he "had never thought of issuing a postage stamp." One can only speculate as to the identity of the source of the 1863 article which attributed some legitimacy and historical significance to the stamps, as to who tried to create cancelled covers bearing them, and whether, after the government intervened, Taylor was motivated by fear of being thrown in prison to admit to creating the stamps as "facsimiles." In any case, this brazen attempt to rewrite history failed.

I've recently read that these fakes, which may be considered "Cinderellas", sell for around \$10.- to \$15.- each.

The stamps have potential dual market appeal to collectors of Cinderellas and Religion/Mormonism topicals, as fantasy stamps related to a religion of which there are over 15 million adherents worldwide. Assuming that no more than a few hundred of each remain, they could actually be good investments.