



Newcastle Philatelic Society Newsletter VIEWS FROM NOBBYS

Newcastle Philatelic Society, P.O. Box 34, JESMOND NSW 2299
Website : www.philas.org.au/newcastle

FEBRUARY, 2013 : Newsletter No. 164 : **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, AND EACH THIRD WEDNESDAY AT 10.00 a.m. AT STUDIO 48, 48 MACKIE AVENUE, NEW LAMBTON EAST.

VISITORS ALWAYS WELCOME

DATES	DETAILS
Thurs 14 February 2013	"NEW SOUTH WALES" - Display by Warren Oliver
Sun. 17 February. 2013	Junior Stamp Activities Meeting, at WALLSEND STAMP FAIR , 11 a.m.
Wed. 20 February 2013	Newcastle Daytime Meeting : 10.00 a.m., 48 Mackie Avenue, New Lambton East, Display by Russell Goddard - "POSTAGE PAID & PRE-STAMPED ENVELOPES"
<i>Thurs 21 February '13</i>	STAMP AUCTION NIGHT (details, phone Don Catterall 02 - 4943 5639)
Sat 2 March 2013	SWAP & SALE at Studio 48, 48 Mackie Avenue, New Lambton East, from at 10.00 am to 4 pm
Thurs 14 March 2013	"MORE HARDLY-EVER-HEARD-OF COUNTRIES" - Display by Ron Davis
Sun. 17 March 2013	Junior Stamp Activities Meeting, at WALLSEND STAMP FAIR , 11 a.m.
Wed. 20 March 2013	Newcastle Daytime Meeting : 10.00 a.m., 48 Mackie Avenue, New Lambton East, Display by Howard Fisher - "THE SCRAMBLE FOR AFRICA PART 2".
Thurs. 11 APRIL 2013	POPULAR CHOICE COMPETITION – 6 pages on Something Philatelic Starting with the Letter 'V'
Wed 17 April 2013	Newcastle Daytime Meeting : 10 am, 48 Mackie Avenue, New Lambton East, Display by John Hill– "CHRISTMAS ISLAND".
Sun 21 April 2013	Junior Stamp Activities Meeting, at WALLSEND STAMP FAIR , 11 a.m
Thurs 9 May 2013	Display by Paul Storm (Sydney)"ALICE THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS"
Wed 15 May 2013	Newcastle Daytime Meeting : 10 am, 48 Mackie Avenue, New Lambton East, Display by Roger Eggleton– "MORE HIGHLIGHTS OF PARCEL POST".
Sun 19 May 2013	Junior Stamp Activities Meeting, at WALLSEND STAMP FAIR , 11 a.m.
<i>Thursday 23 May 2013</i>	STAMP AUCTION NIGHT (details, phone Don Catterall 02 - 4943 5639)
Thurs 13 June 2013	Display by Greg Neumann "GERMAN FELDPPOST"

THE PRESIDENTS PIECE – FEBRUARY 2013

A perennial problem facing all collectors is where to source the items you wish to include in your collection.

In times past, your choices were limited to the local stamp dealer or by mail order through dealers and auction houses in other Australian centres, and you relied on their descriptions as very few items were photographed. If you had access to foreign currency transfers, you might be able to afford to make some purchases from British dealers (the bank costs alone were enormous) and it could take months to complete the transaction.

To day we are spoilt for choice. The evolution of computers and electronic media means we have instant communication with dealers and auction houses all over the world, and coloured photographs are the norm. Credit cards enable instant, safe & relatively cheap settlement.

Ebay and PayPal enable us to buy & sell directly to collectors all over the world with relative safety and bypass the dealers entirely, with the result that today there are few traditional dealers left.

We live in a changing world.

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- Gordon Gibbons, President -

** Nowadays, someone goes into politics with a wonderful future, and comes out with a terrible past.

THE SECRETARY'S SNIPPETS, February 2013

It seems like it was only 'yesterday' that the Society's current syllabus was being put together. It's now time to think about what you, the members, would like to have in the 2013-2014 programme. Yes, I know it is some months away before the next AGM, but it does take time to put together a display programme that is convenient for the displayers, particularly those that live outside the local area. Please contact me, preferably by email (moore.john@optusnet.com.au) with your suggestions - and hopefully what you may wish to display yourself.

At our April meeting, the activity is our annual Popular Choice Competition, where we have been working through the letters of the alphabet, this year being the letter 'V'. Whilst the letter 'V' may not be easy as some of the other letters, I am sure with some imagination, a look in the index of countries that have issued stamps, or a dictionary, will be sufficient inspiration to display 6 pages (including a title page) of philatelic material that is really 'left field'. Venezuela and Victoria and Vatican are obvious, vicuñas and vultures less so, Vichy issues and vegetables and vermin are, perhaps, 'left field'?

Whilst I have mentioned it before, this is a timely reminder of Australia 2013 World Stamp Exhibition to be held in Melbourne from May 10-15. There will be approximately 3800 frames of material on display including 'Court of Honour' material from the Royal Collection. There is provision for over 100 dealer and postal administration stands, many of who will be from overseas. For the latest information on this exhibition, visit www.australia2013.com.

- John Moore, Secretary -

To all Members :

As at the 1st July 2013, I will be retiring from the position of Exchange Branch Convenor.

Unless a Member or Members inform the President that they are prepared to accept the position on or before the 1st February 2013, I will, with the Committee's approval, commence winding the Branch down. As from that date I will NOT ACCEPT any further material.

Kevin Simkus, Exchange Branch Convenor

*** The world's largest population of CAMELS is not found in Arabia, but in Australia ! The Australian desert is home to more than 200,000 camels, which were first introduced to the country way back in the 1840s.

OTHER TIMES

Newcastle Philatelic Society subscribes to quite a few philatelic publications. NPS Secretary John Moore circulates them among the members. John will add your name to the regular recipient list of any publication you would like to read.

The Royal Philatelic Society of Victoria (that's RPSV, not RSVP) has been marking its 120th anniversary — congratulations to all its current members, and especially to its longest serving member, Ray Chapman, who celebrated his 90th birthday in October. Thanks to the NPS circulation system, I have just finished reading the Sep. 2012 issue of the journal of RPSV, Philately from Australia. One of its most enjoyable "reads" was an article (pp. 84-85) from the Argus newspaper of 26 Sep. 1908, about handling the mail at the Melbourne GPO. A few excerpts:

The letter which has been posted only two or three minutes before may ... be deposited in the bag, sealed up, and on its way to the railway station before the stamp has had time to become accustomed to sticking to the envelope.

The officers [of the postal service have no] machinery for searching the pockets of absentminded husbands. A letter should have a fair start.

Thackery said ... that it was a delightful time in a man's life when he could hear the postman's knock with no misgivings. Certainly the decisive "rap-a-tap" has caused men to blanch with fear at least as often as it has caused a woman to flush with pleasure. As politicians say of this "great country", every unopened letter has "potentialities".

- Roger Eggleton [22 Jan. 2013]

Music for Surgery : Can music help patients during surgery? The results of research conducted at the Jefferson General Hospital in Port Townsend, Washington, suggest it can. The effects of music in the operating room on 25 different patients were studied by music therapist Helen Lindquist Bonny and nurse anesthetist Noreen McCarron. Music instead of sedation was used to quash the sounds within the operating room that often create anxiety before an operation. Melodious music reduced blood pressure and heart rates, notes American Health, and also cut by half the sedatives needed to calm patients. A comparable study in the Federal Republic of Germany showed a similar reduction. Classical music, as well as popular music from the '40's and '50's, with even tempos and rhythms was used. Wild, raucous sounds were shunned. McCarron claims that the soothing effect of music is equivalent to 2.5 mg of Valium. Patients listening to it generally felt better after their operation and could go home sooner.

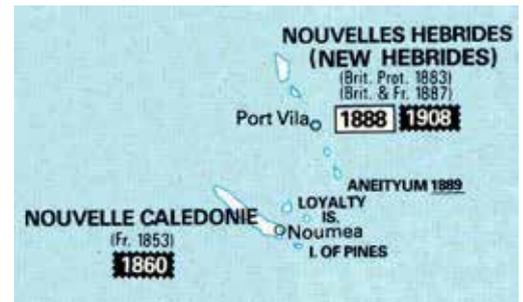
NEW HEBRIDES CONDOMINIUM FROM 1892 TO 1938

- a display by JOHN GIBSON (Gosford), 8th November 2012

There have been only TWO Condominiums in the world – Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, and the Anglo-French New Hebrides. The New Hebrides were discovered by the Portuguese explorer Quiros in 1606, who believed it to be part of Australia and named it Espiritu Santo. The French discovered they were, in fact, islands in 1768, and these were named by Captain Cook in 1774. On appeal to the British government, they became a protectorate in 1883. In November 1887, an Anglo-French Convention was signed which placed the islands under a joint commission of French and English naval officers. A further agreement in 1904 provided for jurisdiction over the islands and set up a commission to settle disputes between the English and French colonists, and in 1906 a special convention bestowed equal rights on British and French citizens.

The islands had no regular contact with Australia or other Pacific colonies before 1888. A New South Wales Postal Agency was opened on the southern island of ANEITYUM in 1889 but this was short-lived. The mail was re-routed via Port Vila and a canceller was introduced in 1892. Stamps of New South Wales and, occasionally, France were used to prepay mail and these were postmarked either Sydney or Noumea (New Caledonia).

In 1892, the contract for the carriage of mail to Australia lapsed and the Australian New Hebrides Company (and its French counterpart) took over responsibility for the postal service. However, the companies, which in 1897 had issued their own stamps, soon went into liquidation. Postal Agencies of New Caledonia were opened in 1903 and 1905 at the New Hebrides towns of Port Sandwich and Port Vila, the mail being directed through Noumea. Stamps of both New South Wales and New Caledonia continued to be used until the New Hebrides Condominium Post Office was established in October 1908. The former Postal Agencies were closed soon afterwards.



Their earliest stamps were those of New Caledonia (who had had postage stamps since 1860), overprinted "New Hebrides Condominium" in English and French. This overprinting, and later surcharges in 1920, 1921 and 1924, were done in nearby Suva (Fiji) by the Government Printer.

France and Britain each kept their own currencies, and this had problems. There had to be stamps in the English language AND in the French language. Then the French objected strongly to their version being printed on British Colonial watermarked paper, so De La Rue was instructed to prepare a suitably watermarked paper for the next printing. Then, where both the French RF and the English GR insignias and coats of arms were shown on the one stamp, the French objected to being on the left-hand side and insisted on being on the right (more prestigious!). On the British stamps, the positions were reversed.

But this rivalry didn't restrict itself to postage stamps - although the British and French embassy buildings are at different heights, both insisted that their flags be flown at the same height – "so that the Union Jack was not overlooked".



On 25th July 1911, a set of stamps designed by a J. Giraud in 1909 was issued. They showed an idol in the centre, talking drums at the sides and weapons of warfare, with palms on either side. There were 9 stamps in the British set, and 11 in the French. The values printed on the stamps showed the currency and the amount for which the stamps were to be sold. The stamps could be purchased at the French post office (cheaper) and used to pay postage

at the (higher) English rates !

It is interesting that in 1912, the '2' in the datestamp was inverted for the whole of 1912 !

In 1938, a new set of definitive stamps was issued showing a beach scene, and this is where John ended his display.



Poison's Price : Many poisons are worth far more than either gems or gold, says the Soviet magazine Sputnik. "For example, an ounce of the poison of the cobra costs 9,000 dollars [U.S.]; that of Bungarus caeruleus 14,000 dollars, one of the sea snake 43,000 dollars, the North-American coral cylinder-snake 56,000 dollars, the African boom slang snake 283,000 dollars, that of the bumblebee (*Bombus muscorum*) 1,134,000 dollars, and that of the female American black widow spider 2,360,000 dollars." Why so high priced? Because of difficulty in obtaining them, as some species are very rare. Besides, insects yield only milligrams of poison, and snakes about ten droplets, and a month may be needed to develop another dose. Despite the cost, such poisons are in demand for use in serums to save those bitten, and as disease cures.

A SMORGASBORD OF ONE-FRAMERS

- a display by **BERNARD DOHERTY**, Thursday 13th December 2012

Bernie displayed FOUR one-frame (15 pages) exhibits, assembled over the past few years.

1. PARCEL POSTS – PARCELS FROM, TO, AND WITHIN AUSTRALIA

This segment included Australia Post advertising matter, letters, labels and paperwork from King George VI to the present, surface and air mail parcel and small packet tags, official mail labels, a counter printed receipt, Food For Britain (Myer Emporium gift parcels), an Air Parcel reply-paid service, and details of metric post, “cubic weight” applied to parcels, and distance charges and charging zones.

2. AUSTRALIA POST MONEY TRANSFER SERVICES

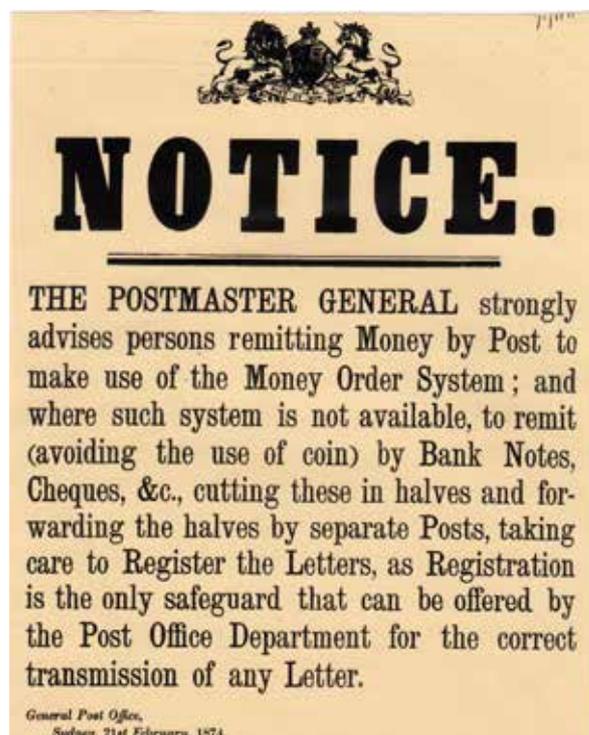
This included an interesting 1874 notice advising that banknotes and cheques should be cut in half and mailed separately (bushrangers were prevalent), postal notes, money orders, an overseas money order application, money order inter-office operations, an enquiry about non-payment of a money order, advice of payment of a money order, overseas arrangements for money orders, postage reply specimens and Staff Training specimens, such as this 50-euro travellers cheque.

3. A POSTAL HISTORY OF POSTCARDS

“The evolution of postcards and the relevant postal regulations”. 1896 to 1909 saw the most prolific use of postcards, although NSW Official penny post cards existed in 1875. From 1905, correspondence was permitted on the address side of postcards. There were examples of incorrect and unacceptable prepayment of postcards, and in May 1906, an admonition : “Cards ornamented with tinsel, mica, powdered glass, or similar substances are prohibited transmission through the post unless enclosed in covers”.

4. SOUTH AFRICAN POSTAL CARDS.

As well as various postal cards, Bernie showed some standard postage stamp booklets. Most impressive were two cards issued 16th August 1998, showing migratory species of birds (one of which is shown here), and an airmail postal card set of 20th October 1998, with impressed stamps of a Buffalo, a Rhinoceros, and a Lion.



** Definition of an ASTRONAUT :
Whirled traveller.

When Ron Davis worked in the Commonwealth Bank in the mid-1950s, the regulation was that the Bank would pay half the face value of a banknote for half of a torn or cut note presented at the counter, but you had to have three-quarters of the note to get full payment - including two signatures and one number, or two numbers and one signature.. This may still be the case, but doesn't apply to cheques. Nothing for anything less than a half. It was surprising how many squashed dejected-looking banknotes which had been through a washing machine were presented at the counter !

AUSTRALIAN AIRMAIL RATES 1921 – 1966

- display by JOHN MOORE, Thursday 10th January 2013

John's display included some extra-large airmail covers, which he mounted on A3 sized sheets - i.e. double the size of the normal A4 sheets, which he used for the rest of his display. He ranged from the early days of aviation to the change to decimal currency in 1966.

During 1921 the domestic air mail fee was set at 5d per ½oz. During 1923 this was changed to 3d per ½oz plus normal surface rates. This fee remained at 3d per ½oz for letters and postcards until abolition 36 years later in 1959. This created an anomaly where at 4d it was cheaper to send a post card air mail to New Zealand than within Australia which was 5d. Adding to this anomaly the previously issued definitive stamp was withdrawn during 1960.

Postcards were normally cost half the regular full letter rate, so a postcard could be sent to England for 9d., where a letter would cost 1/6d. This half-rate was upped to the next penny if the full rate was an odd figure – 15 pence (1/3d.) should be 7½d. but would be charged at 8d.

Air mail rates had settled down before World War 2, but they became complex between 1939-1946 depending upon whether mail was sent by air to Athens or Italy and by surface means (train) from there to, say, Germany, or whether it was carried by air all the way.



A particularly interesting item was a small registered and censored package sent from Melbourne to Northern Nigeria in Jan. 1945, on which the postage was 16/6d., plus 3d airmail, made up with 3 x 5/- stamps. The customs declaration stated that the package contained "spectacles", and there was some discussion on what must have happened to need glasses posted half-way around the world.

Another interesting registered and censored cover was sent in 1950 from Sydney City to Czechoslovakia, the 5/- postage consisting of 4/6d. for 1 to 1½ ounces plus 6d. registration fee, made up of several adhesive stamps but including the 8½d. impressed stamp.

Interesting !

- R.D.-



*** The only time on record that snow has fallen in the Sahara Desert was on 18th February 1979. The storm lasted half an hour and the snow soon melted.



OUR CHRISTMAS PARTY, NOVEMBER 2012

The Society's 2012 CHRISTMAS GET-TOGETHER and barbeque was again held at Margaret and Don Catterall's place in Charlestown. As on previous occasions, we were asked to bring along "something about which you could tell a story" – and we "did ourselves proud".

ROGER EGGLETON had some Zimbabwe inflation banknotes ranging from \$500 million to \$100 trillion(!) and a USA 25-cent fractional banknote of the 1860-70's (coins were melted down). GORDON GIBBONS showed two postcards from Chile – a picture of Oficina, a nitrate mining town around a pit in the middle of a desert, and some peasant ladies at work, wearing interesting fashions. MARGARET CATTERALL told the story of her grandfather, Lawrence Meldrum, who lived in Wickham, and who was involved for over 33 years in Elocution contests. In addition to being a musician, he was a monumental mason, and Margaret showed us his 1887 Indenture as an apprentice, paid 5/- a week in his first year, and 25/- a week in his 5th year. HAROLD FRANKS was a Post Office telegraphist, and then ran the 1964 Federal elections as a Divisional Returning Officer. In those days, there were 76 Senators for the whole of the Commonwealth – there are 150 for the Commonwealth now. He told us stories about Fred Daley, and about Sir Roden Cutler. DON CATTERALL was very proud of a Royal Canadian Mounted Police souvenir and a photo of a "Mountie" which he had obtained when they were staying at a hotel in Banff. JOHN MOORE also told us of his travels – a big trip around Australia – and showed us some (very) red sand and red rocks he had picked up in the Pilbara region of Western Australia. BERNARD DOHERTY displayed a wax seal used for sealing mailbags at Adamstown Post Office in the late 1800s, before lead seals (and tin seals) were introduced. RAY LITTLE handed around a sheet of 100 used 6-baht 1988 stamps from Thailand showing King Rhama, but with a clear 27 Nov 1938 cancel! JIM MACDOUGALL showed us a photo of the large "Deportation Cross" in Nova Scotia, commemorating the expulsion by Britain from Nova Scotia of over 5000 French Acadian settlers in 1755, who were shipped down to the New England region of USA. Ships sank, thousands died, but some made it back to France. CAROL DAVIS showed some old photos of her climbing Yalludunida Peak and Mount Waa in the Nandewar ranges near Narrabri in the late 1960s-early 1970s. MARGARET MACDOUGALL grew up in Satur, a suburb of Scone, had memorabilia of her Uncle George, who enlisted in WW1 in February 1916 aged 17½, and died on the Somme later that year aged 18. In one of his letters, he assured his family that "none of the Satur boys were involved" in the famous riots in Sydney by soldiers and enlisted men from Casula camp. JEAN EGGLETON has been doing tapestry for a few years, and described her "creative needlepoint" needlework project with the Hunter Valley Tapestry Group. It took her 5 years 4 months to complete her first item – which was too big to bring in to show us. And RON DAVIS brought along two huge shells which he had obtained direct from a mollusc fisherman when he was in Fiji in 1969 – a Conch shell and a Portuguese Helmet shell. Also at this get-together were Diane Franks, Janet Doherty, Dawn Little, Warren and Louise Oliver, Don Rutherford and Kevin Simkus – and quite possibly someone else whom I've forgotten!

- Ron Davis -

** The deener, quid, zack and trey ...

A PENNY for your thoughts! It was only a lowly coin, in fact, the second lowest coin in value in the days when Australian currency was fixed to the British coinage system. Can you remember that far back? Remember when a deena was a shilling, a quid was a pound, zack was sixpence, and a trey was threepence? Well, let me refresh the memory. On February 14, 1966, we saw the end of the penny and said hello to a two cent coin. We had thrown out pounds, shillings and pence and settled for decimal currency and the decimal scale system. AND, eventually, they did the same thing in Britain!

Some say they liked the old system. Be that as it may, decimal currency is 47 years old this month and going strong. Based on the mathematics of ten, decimal currency hasn't proved a lasting problem for the little Aussie battler.

We don't often hear stories of miscalculation due to dollars instead of pounds (£'s), but we do hear of exasperation by an older generation trying to fathom the conversion of inches and feet to millimetres and centimetres. If kilometres don't add up to miles without a struggle, tonnes weigh like tons on the intelligence of most. And grammes and ounces and pounds (lbs.) and kilograms still confuse some.

Decimal coinage began in February 1966 with one, two and five cent coins replacing a half penny, penny, three pence and sixpence coins. The former shilling - worth 12 pence - became a 10 cent coin. Confusing wasn't it! A two shillings piece - sometimes called a florin - advanced to a 20 cent coin. In the paper money, a ten shilling note was replaced by a one dollar note and the pound became a two dollar note. Five, 10, 50 and 100 pound notes - we just substituted the word 'dollar' for 'pound'.

All this because it's easier to multiply, add, subtract and divide by ten. If everyone was expected to eventually gain by using the decimal system, the instant winners were the coin collectors – the numismatists - who at a stroke of the Governor General's pen had a ready collector's bonanza in the change of coinage.

47 years has changed plenty in our world, but nothing has changed the basic interest of people in money!

** Standing nearly 20 kilometres (12 miles) high, the Verona Rupes cliff on MIRANDA - a moon of Uranus - is more than ten times higher than the walls of the Grand Canyon, making it the highest cliff in our solar system!

** Effect of Loud Music

While parents have often worried about their children listening to loud music, young people are now hearing warnings from another source - the musicians themselves. The reason? "More and more performers are discovering that their hearing is permanently damaged," reports *Time* magazine. The problem begins when the sound-carrying hairs located in the inner ear are regularly exposed to noise above 100 decibels - rock concerts often are about 120. Thus, "repeated assaults by high-decibel rock," explains *Time*, cause these hairs to flatten and "lose their resilience permanently." One audiologist said that hours of music blasting through stereo earphones was as if "the nozzle of a fire hose had been stuck down the ear canal."

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).



“CANADA AND ITS PROVINCES” -

- the display by JIM MACDOUGALL, Wednesday 21st NOVEMBER 2012

Like most of us, Jim started collecting stamps “as a kid”, Canadian King George VI, “Admirals”, and other packet stamps. But it was the Queen Victoria 1837-1897 Jubilee stamps that kept him interested over the years – 20 in the set + high values. He liked that stamp design because of its classical beauty – “it was nicer than the new flashy ones”. Then university. Years passed, and in 1997, he studied with Roger Eggleton in Illinois, USA., so after 10-15 years, his interest re-commenced, being interested mostly in the pictures on the stamps, plus a bit of information about them. Formerly a British Colony, Canada issued its first stamps in 1851, in small numbers. These included the “Beaver” stamp – the first ‘animal’ stamp in the world. There were then about 600 post offices to sell them. The Dominion of Canada was founded in 1867, and generated 27 years of Queen Victoria stamps. 145 years later, it now includes 10 provinces and two territories, the most recent being NUNAVUT in 1999, being the eastern part of the North West Territories.

Meanwhile, Nova Scotia (now one of the provinces) first issued postage stamps in 1851; New Brunswick also in 1851; Newfoundland in 1857; Prince Edward Island in 1861; and British Columbia and Vancouver Island in 1860, later separating in 1865. All these had been crown colonies or self-governing colonies.

Quebec (pronounced *kaybek* in French) had been settled by the French since 1608. Many of the early settlers died of scurvy in the long winters, not knowing that Cartier had learned a cure from the Indians in 1535.

Another first - in 1935, the world’s first micro-date was included above a maple leaf on a Canadian KGV issue. Their stamps now show many different features, one of which was Confederation Bridge – at 16km long, the longest bridge in the world spanning ice-covered water (where formerly ice-breaking ferries were used) !



“BIRDS – A PHILATELIC COMPILATION OF ORNITHOLOGY” -

the display by KEITH LAVERICK, Wednesday 16th JANUARY 2013



Keith approached his BIRDS ON STAMPS collection in a very scientific way. “The Class is AVES”, he said. “It used to comprise 27 Orders, 155 Families, 2003 Genera, and 8650 Species. The experts have now changed all that – 25 Orders, 234 families, and have recognised 10,500 different species!” “It gets a bit complicated – the Family *Passerines* contains 1500 birds! But I’ve restricted my collection to only ONE stamp for each bird”. The 10,500 birds are all shown in the 15 volumes of the “Handbook of the Birds of the World” (a bit hard to carry with you on a bird-watching expedition), but the “Atlas of Australian Birdlife” is on the internet. Many interesting facts were learned from Keith’s display – the Spider Eater has a nectar-eating bill, and Emus+Ostriches+Rheas+Kiwis have no breastbone or sternum, and would be unable to fly even if their wings were bigger. *Diclofenac* has led to serious poisoning and decline of vultures in India and Pakistan, and the Koel is the most obvious (loudest?) of the Cuckoo family in Australia.



THE LOGISTICS OF WAR

The French President is sitting in his office when his telephone rings.

"Hallo, Mr. Hollande," a heavily accented voice said. "This is Paddy down at the Harp Pub in County Clare, Ireland. I am ringing to inform you that we are officially declaring war on you. We voted to reject the Lisbon treaty."

"Well Paddy," Hollande replied. "How big is your army?"

"Right now," says Paddy, after a moment's calculation, "There is myself, me cousin Sean, me next door neighbour Seamus and the entire darts team from the pub. That makes 11."

Hollande paused. "I must tell you, Paddy, that I have 100,000 men in my army waiting to move on my command."

"Begorra!" says Paddy. "I'll have to ring you back."

Sure enough, the next day, Paddy calls again.

"Mr Hollande, the war is still on. We have managed to get us some infantry equipment."

"And what equipment would that be Paddy?" Hollande asks.

"Well, we have two combines, a bulldozer and Murphy's farm tractor."

Hollande sighs, amused. "I must tell you, Paddy, that I have 6000 tanks and 5000 armoured personnel carriers. Also, I have increased my army to 150,000 since we last spoke."

"Saints preserve us!" says Paddy. "I'll have to get back to you."

Sure enough, Paddy rings again the next day.

"Mr Hollande, the war is still on! We have managed to get ourselves airborne! We have modified Jackie McLaughlin's ultra-light with a couple of shotguns in the cockpit, and four boys from the Shamrock Bar have joined us as well."

Hollande was silent for a minute and then cleared his throat. "I must tell you, Paddy, that I have 100 bombers and 200 fighter planes. My military bases are surrounded by laser-guided, surface-to-air missile sites. And since we last spoke, I have increased my army to 200,000!"

"Jesus, Mary and Joseph!" says Paddy. "I will have to ring you back:"

Sure enough, Paddy calls again the next day.

"Top o' the mornin', Mr. Hollande. I am sorry to inform you that we have had to call off the war".

"Really? I am sorry to hear that," says Hollande. "Why the sudden change of heart?"

"Well," says Paddy, "We had a long chat over a few pints of Guinness and packets of crisps and we decided there is no way we can feed 200,000 prisoners!"

Rotary Club of Coffs Harbour, NSW ("Rotary Down Under").



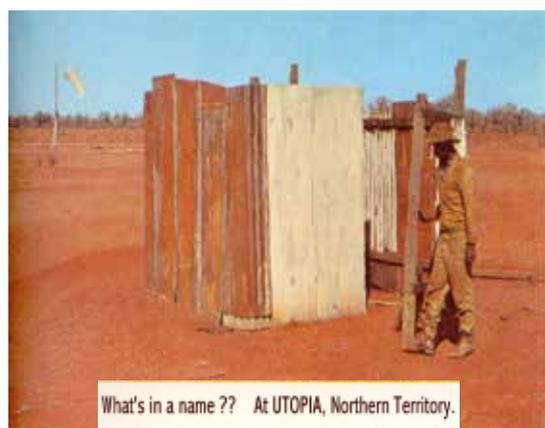
Some interesting and clever things have happened with AUSTRALIA POST's stamps last year. The [2012 London Olympics](#) issue shows a red London bus, and a close look at the route number on the front of the bus shows it as the year of the stamp issue a "microdate" with a difference!



With the [Road Trip Australia](#) issue of 18th September 2012, if you have a magnifying glass you will also notice that there are many amusing extra touches on these stamps. The number plates on the Great Barrier Reef stamp read 'HIPPIE', and 'OMG!!!' on the Alice Springs stamp; there's some squashed cane toads on the Great

Barrier Reef stamp; and a spider or scorpion on each vehicle, except for the Port Arthur stamp, which includes the extinct Thylacine (Tasmanian Tiger). This is only the second time 35 mm x 35 mm self-adhesive stamps have been issued, the first being the instant Royal Wedding stamp from 2011.

** Crocodiles swallow stones to reduce their buoyancy.



*** Hard hats used by the Department of Sustainability and Environment and Parks VICTORIA for fire fighting and field work can only be used for 3 years – they are being recycled into creating 'plastic' park benches. It takes 550 hard hats to make a bench. ABC

Insanity Streak

