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RPSV

# Philately from Australia

Journal of the ROYAL PHILATELIC SOCIETY of VICTORIA Inc

Vol. LXXVI No. 2, June 2024



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Powelltown  
Forests



Nauru  
during  
WWII



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Mombotombo



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## EDITORIAL

Welcome to the second edition of the journal for 2024 where, sadly, we must report the passing of our long-term member Adrian Michell (see p. 37). Given successes at national and international exhibitions in 2023, no doubt members will now be looking forward to the full national exhibition in Canberra in September this year (see announcement p. 38).

As promised, Kevin Burt has returned to the Warburton-Powelltown forests area with a follow-up to his December 2023 article. This time, he completes the intricate story of the timber industry which had Yarra Junction as its focal point. Of course, the article is illustrated with some rare covers (and recent photos); postal historians are encouraged to look for evidence of long-forgotten post offices in the area.

In his "Favourite Things" No 19, Gary Watson tells the story of Nauru, sometimes in our news for the wrong reasons. We are exposed to the mining activities of the British Phosphate Commission, the deadly work of German "raiders" during WWII, and the fate of some of the ship mail involved. The connection with one of the most important figures of Australian Philately, Ken Baker, is surprising.

For those yearning for a taste of Central America, Glen Stafford treats us to the airmail stamps of Nicaragua featuring the Momotombo volcano. Pan American Airways instigated the first airmail service in 1929 and stamps were produced by the American Bank Note Company of New York. Glen shows some wonderful blocks, specimens, essays and proofs.

Back home, Ted Gallagher details the design and production of the 1963 Blue Mountains issue. Many will remember the feat of the explorers Blaxland, Wentworth and Lawson first crossing these mountains from their school history lessons. The stamp design process ran smoothly following the selection of Tom Alban's entry from the nine short-listed in an Australia-wide competition.

Bill Clark presents the fourth part of his series on the One Penny Constant Flaws of the Emblems of Victoria. This time, he carefully describes and illustrates Flaws 18-27 with the usual enlarged images. Fortunately, Bill is showing no signs of fatigue.

After a long absence, Don Pearce returns to our pages with another fascinating offering from South Australia. The article is based on the famous Robert Blake Yardley stamp collection which was auctioned by Harmer's in London in 1944-1945. Finally, Ian Greig discusses the missing 'imprimatur' sheets of the £1 and £2 Edward VII stamps of Victoria.

After almost eleven years, this is my last edition as your Editor. Best wishes for the future to readers, authors, reviewers, advertisers and, especially, the editorial and production teams.

*Eric Frazer*

### Royal Philatelic Society of Victoria Inc.

Purves House  
303 High Street, ASHBURTON VIC 3147

#### General correspondence:

Royal Philatelic Society of Victoria Inc.  
PO Box 490, ASHBURTON VIC 3147, Australia  
TEL: (03) 9885 1483 (answering service)

#### Business Manager (sale of publications):

Peter Leitch  
C/o Royal Philatelic Society of Victoria Inc.  
PO Box 490, ASHBURTON VIC 3147, Australia  
Email: pleitch@inet.net.au  
TEL: (03) 9571 3686

#### Philately from Australia Committee:

Editor: To be advised  
Richard Breckon (Assistant Editor)  
Bill Lloyd-Smith (Assistant Editor)  
Gary Diffen (Advertising Manager)

#### Editorial contributions:

Articles on any subjects of philatelic interest are welcome from contributors, whether or not they are RPSV members. Articles should be submitted as plain text in the body of an email or as an attachment in Word or Rich Text format. Please include a list of references or bibliography, as appropriate. Images should be supplied separately at 300 DPI or higher; quote source/permission for non-author images.

All contributions will be reviewed by the editorial team. Articles exceeding 3,000 words may have to be divided into instalments appearing in various editions of the journal.

Note that *Philately from Australia* does not normally reprint articles that have been published elsewhere.

Editorial submissions to: Richard Breckon  
Email: richard.breckon@auspost.com.au

Advertising submissions to: Gary Diffen

Email: garydiffen@gmail.com

Tel: (03) 9510 3291

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RPSV

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# The President's Review

## What does the future look like for philately and the RPSV?

I think I would get asked this question about stamp collecting at least once a week. Most people predict a gloomy future. However, there are emerging signs that this is not the case. A number of major auction sales in the world are producing world-record prices, so someone is buying out there. More importantly, there are tens of thousands of young collectors using social media as their information and entry point into the hobby. Organisations such as ours do not see these people because we apparently have no relevance for them.

None of the older generation seem to have a magic answer about how to attract younger collectors, but the youth of today have different ideas. The 20-40 year olds are active on Instagram, but I would bet that less than ten of our members use this social media platform. The older generation, the over 40s, are more used to Facebook. Again, I do not think that many members are active on this platform either.

From a financial perspective, the future of the Royal is very secure, unlike many other philatelic societies. We currently own our premises at 303 High Street, Ashburton and have cash on term deposit for future operations. However, we cannot rest on our laurels. We must admit that we now live in very different times.

Looking in the rear vision mirror, the business landscape is littered with companies that failed to evolve with the times. These organisations include the likes of Kodak (they rejected the digital camera because it would impact their photo processing revenue), Nokia mobile phones and Blockbuster Video. At different points in time, these businesses were at the top of their game and the leaders of their industries. Either they no longer exist or they are shells of their former selves.

The RPSV and philately are facing similar crossroads. We either evolve, or keep doing the same old things expecting the results to change.

## What are some of the new initiatives for the RPSV?

Your Council has been active defining some of the fundamentals of the society that need improvement. For us to attract younger members, we need to reach out to them in different ways. The Royal Historical Society of Victoria was at a similar crossroad six years ago. They changed their branding, updated their website and engaged with social media. With an identical age demographic to the RPSV, they have increased their membership by 150%.

Our first priority was to update the branding of the RPSV. We have engaged an external company, who has worked closely with the Historical Society, to develop a branding image to replace the 1837 Queen Victoria profile that has served us well for 80 years or so. Council has recently made the final decision

regarding colours and now presents the new brand image for the RPSV in this edition.

Our second mission is to assess the Website and determine ways it can be upgraded at minimal cost. Our thoughts are that the front page needs a complete makeover. Fortunately, due to extensive work over the past 2-3 years, the back-end structure of the current website is sound. This assessment will be completed over the next couple of months, and a program of work mapped out to make our offerings more attractive to the younger generation of collectors.

Finally, later in the year, with these two projects done, we will be embarking on a social media program. Given that your Council has no particular skills in this area, we will again be looking for external help. It was the use of Facebook, Instagram and other social media platforms that drove the membership increase of the Royal Historical Society of Victoria. This initiative will not reap rewards overnight; however, if we play the long game, results will happen. The Historical Society now has its younger members running their social media platforms. This would be a result for the RPSV to look forward to.

There are exciting times ahead for 2024!

## Farewell to Eric Frazer, Editor of *Philately from Australia*

All the wardens of the RPSV are volunteers and freely give their time to the operations of our Society. Custodians like Eric Frazer are the lifeblood of the Royal. After almost eleven years as editor of *Philately from Australia*, Eric has decided it is time for someone else to assume the role. This edition will be his final farewell.

Every society needs an Eric Frazer. Contributors like Eric are like gold; they are so hard to find. His contribution to the journal cannot be overstated. Before Eric assumed the role of Editor, maintaining the quarterly production schedule was a struggle and some distribution deadlines were not met. However, Eric's project management skills put things back on track and allowed *Philately from Australia* to maintain its standing on the international stage. Compared to other society magazines, *Philately from Australia*, in my opinion, is head and shoulders above the rest.

On behalf of all members, I would like to thank Eric for his marvellous contribution. I hope he enjoys his retirement and further overseas travel. It leaves a gaping hole in the RPSV management. If you know of anyone who has the skill set to be Editor of *Philately from Australia*, please get in touch.

Have fun in philately.

**Gary Diffen**  
*FRPSV, FRPSL*



Image courtesy Jon Fladeby

# VALE: Adrian Michell (1936-2024)

Our member of nearly 20 years, Adrian Michell, died on 10 February in Melbourne at the age of 87. He joined the Royal at Pacific Explorer FIAP Exhibition held in Sydney in 2005.

Adrian was born in Constance, Romania, in 1936 and emigrated to Australia with his family in 1950. After attending RMIT (Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology), Adrian began working as a radio technician. He later established a successful television repairs business in Melbourne.

The acquisition of a cousin's stamp collection encouraged Adrian to embrace philately. The focus of his philatelic interests was Romania, Serbia, Croatia, various early Balkan countries and polar regions.

As Adrian liked to explain, he was fascinated by how "chaos" was reflected in philately and the Balkan Peninsula provided plenty of philatelic chaos to explore. Adrian was a friendly man who was always willing to chat with other members at daytime and evening meetings. He was a regular user of the Library's resources.

Adrian is survived by his two children and grandchildren.

*Information supplied by  
Jon Fladeby & Paul Michell*

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# Canberra Stamp Show 2024

Richard Breckon APR, FRPSV

Canberra Stamp Show will be held from Thursday, 12 September to Sunday, 15 September at Thoroughbred Park, 1 Randwick Road, Lyneham, ACT. The four-day exhibition, organized by the Philatelic Society of Canberra, will be the only National-level exhibition held in Australia during 2024. Since 1980, the Philatelic Society of Canberra has held a biennial National Philatelic Convention and Canberra Stamp Show 2024 is the 23rd exhibition in the sequence.

All National classes are under the auspices of the Australian Philatelic Federation; State-level classes are under the auspices of the ACT Philatelic Council; Banknotes are under the auspices of the Philatelic Society of Canberra. Entries to Canberra Stamp Show closed on 31 May. However, entries received up until 10 June are likely to be accepted. The on-line entry form can be found at <https://canberrastamps.org/cs-2024-entry-form/>

Various Challenges are involved:- Fifth Biennial Picture Postcard Challenge, Universal Postal Union 150th Anniversary Challenge (exhibits highlighting the UPU), 50 Years-On Challenge (exhibits relating to the 1970s) and Stamp Club Challenge (three National-level exhibits entered by participating clubs).

Around 30 dealers are expected to participate. A special feature will be the enlarged sizes of dealers' stands to allow better displays of merchandise and more effective operating.

A Supporters' Club has been established and a range of unique products is available comprising numbered and gold overprints on two minisheets, a postcard and Postal Numismatic Cover.

Canberra Stamp Show's opening hours are:- Thursday 12th: 12noon to 5pm, Friday 13th and Saturday 14th: 10am to 5pm and Sunday 15th: 10am to 3pm. The Awards Dinner will be held on the Saturday evening.

## Quongup: Where is it?

Kevin J Burt FRPSV



Sketch Map of Warburton Forests (adapted from Whistles Through the Tall Timber by Nick Anchen, Sierra Publishing, 2023). This map can also be read in combination with the Starvation Creek article (PFA Dec 2023, pp. 108-110).

In a previous article (PFA Dec 2023), I presented a short history of Richards' Tramway near Warburton. In this article, I tell the tale of one other main tramway of the Warburton-Powelltown forests, that of the Yarra Junction to Powelltown (and beyond) tramway.

I first encountered that name, **Quongup**, while exploring the exhibits at the Upper Yarra Museum at Yarra Junction, which in fact is situated in the old railway station building. Worth a visit if you are up in that direction. What a strange name for a Victorian post office!

Without repeating myself too much, the timber industry in these forests followed the great Victorian gold rush of the second half

of the nineteenth century. Many prospectors flooded the Upper Yarra district, right through to Matlock, Wood's Point and Walhalla. After the initial rush, the easy alluvial gold was found, but petered out. Meantime, the expansion of Melbourne as prospectors returned and the successful mines in the Ballarat and Bendigo districts increased the demand for timber dramatically.

So, exploitation of the forests here began. Yarra Junction was the focal point of the timber industry, more cut timber being loaded through the railway yard than anywhere in the world in some years during the early quarter of the twentieth century. Part of the loading came from the Warburton-Yarra Valley forests, the other from the Little Yarra and Latrobe Valleys and Powelltown.

An initial attempt at a tramway started from Blake's Mill in 1901, which was situated a little east of the present township of Powelltown - then not in existence. In 1906, a company was formed, the Gilderoy Tramway Company (GTC), and it proposed to build the tramway with steel rails. However, this was found to be too expensive and the proposal lapsed. A new proposal by the GTC to build the line from the end of Blake's tramway to Yarra Junction using wooden rails was later accepted. The line was finished in July 1907 and well used as the road was only a rough track through the bush<sup>3</sup>. Its existence encouraged the formation of new mills to exploit the forests of the Little Yarra Valley. The tramway was 17 km from Yarra Junction to Powelltown.

A note for the technically minded: The wheels of vehicles using a wooden railed tramway had a much wider tread and deeper flanges than those for steel rails.



30 January 1937: Label type C4a on cover from Yarra Junction to Melbourne. The post office opened with the arrival of the railway on 20 November 1901. It still operates.

In 1911, a company was formed to use a new timber preservation process invented in England by a Mr Powell and was apparently successfully used in Western Australia. It was called the Victorian Powell Wood Process Company (VPWPC)<sup>3</sup> and it applied for 4,000 acres of forest to supply the timber. The then Forest Department allotted the company 1,000 acres in the upper Latrobe Valley, plus another 2,000 acres in reserve. To be successful, the company would require a rail or tramway connection to Yarra Junction.

As the Victorian Railways declined to build a 5'3" line up the Little Yarra valley, building one to Noojee instead, the VPWPC proposed to rebuild the wooden tramway with steel rails at 3' gauge. The tramway proposal was accepted provided the company permitted passengers and freight other than timber to use the line. Passenger carriages, rather primitive by today's standards, were built by the company and a tender to carry mail was accepted. Once the line was completed, the company opened their mill at the present site of Powelltown.

Table with columns: No. of tenders, Description, Section, Freight, and Date. It lists tenders for the Yarra Junction and Powelltown line.

Extract from the Commonwealth Government Gazette, 12 September 1914. New post offices were opened along the line at Gladysdale, Black Sands, Gilderoy and, later, Three Bridges.



4 May 1936: Registration label C6a on cover from Three Bridges. The office opened as a Receiving Office 17 July 1914, became a Post Office 1 July 1927 and closed 28 December 1956. The name, not surprisingly, derived from the three tramway bridges nearby.



The two Registration labels above are V6a types, issued from 1918 to 1928, therefore used at the peak of the timber industry; although off cover, they are very historic and rare.

A problem arose when the Powell process was a failure. VPWPC had contracted to supply 100,000 sleepers for the Trans-Australian railway to Perth. When the first 6,000 were delivered, only 500 were usable and only 9 of these were up to specification. There was a Royal Commission into the debacle and the process was never used again. The company was sold to a new company, the Victorian Hardwood and Seasoning Company (VHSC) at a loss. The "Seasoning" part of the title was later omitted (VHC).

As fortune would have it, the demand for timber for a growing Melbourne was increasing and the new company set about developing a traditional timber supply. The successful tramway to Yarra Junction was extended eastwards into the forests of the Latrobe River headwaters to harvest its allocation there. Many other mills set up in the district using the tramway to transport their cut timber. One of these was that of Billy Knott (see later) an experienced sawyer, and another by the Forests Commission, the first State sawmill at Nayook West, where a small town grew up.



The cover is dated 19 November 1935 from the postmark on the reverse; label type C2 Blue.

As a postal historian, I have no hesitation of including this poor bedraggled cover because of its rarity. The Nayook West Post office was opened as a Receiving Office on 1 February 1926, a Post Office on 1 July 1927, closing 1 October 1947<sup>7</sup>. This last date is in doubt as the mill and town were destroyed on Black Friday 1939 and not rebuilt. The opening of the post office occurred after completion of the Bump tunnel (see later). A Mr. J. Salvado was the postmaster (Healesville and Yarra Glen Guardian, 16 Jan.1926).

Table with columns: No. of tenders, Description, Section, Freight, and Date. It lists tenders for the Yarra Junction and Powelltown line.

Extract from the Commonwealth Government Gazette, 19 November 1926, Acceptance of Tenders

By 1924, the VHC tramway was extended into the headwaters of the Latrobe River, and even further into the Big Creek valley. This was the area known as Powelltown Bush. Here, a remarkable connection was made northwards into the Ada

River valley by means of an arrangement known as the High Lead, transferring logs by means of cables suspended from selected treetops. The area is still accessible as a walking track and rises 400 metres, a slope of 1 in 4, obviously not suitable for normal means of transport. This enabled logs to be extracted from the Ada valley for the Powelltown mill.



Above left: recent photo of the remains of the Powelltown Bush line. Right: looking into the site of Knott's Mill a few hundred metres away and now inaccessible.

Steam locomotives used the line to Powelltown Bush; any supplies and passengers and workmen had to use the train as there was no road. There was no provision for passengers east of Powelltown; men rode somewhere on the consist and ladies in the locomotive cab. Mail came to the workmen here in charge of the driver:

*Seven or eight timber-fellers materialize from the trees. Axes are dropped as the engine-driver cheerfully flourishes a packet of letters and bundle of newspapers.*<sup>3</sup>

Some years before Chris Ingram was reviving the output of the renewed VHC Powelltown mill, another unrelated miller had moved into the area, the Goodwood Timber and Tramway Company (GTTC). Previously operating in South Gippsland, it had a mill and tramway for many years in the Port Albert district – from 1910 until early 1920 when the available timber was cut out<sup>1</sup>. Although intending to operate in the same area as the VHC, it came from the east instead of the west.

Billy Knott, an experienced sawyer, had established a mill near the confluence of the Latrobe River and Big Creek in 1922 and had a past acquaintance with the GTTC directors. They decided to build mills in the upper Latrobe valley and included Knott's mill in their operations. So, all their equipment was transferred from Port Albert, and a 3'6" gauge tramway was built from the newly opened (1919) Victorian Railways line to Noojee up the valley to Knott's mill. The gauge differed from the usual local tramway gauge of 3'0". A telephone line was also installed.

127. Noojee and Loch Valley, twice weekly.  
128. Noojee and Millsbyn, via Platman's, Latrobe Timber Co., and Knotts, six times weekly.  
129. Neerim South and Rosworth, via Neerim East, three times weekly.

Extract from the Commonwealth Gazette, 9 November 1925, inviting tenders for mail delivery. Goodwood tendered and their tender was accepted.

It was here that a post office (?) was opened and called **Quongup**. GTTC was originally a Western Australian timber company, hence the connection. In the south west of Western Australia, there is a waterfall of that name between Balingup and Nannup, and also a rural property of 1,500 acres nearby.

The Forests Commission had an agreement with GTTC to ship their timber via Noojee, and was pressuring other mills in the district to do the same; this was undoubtedly political pressure from Victorian Railways. There was much resistance to this pressure as residents of Nayook West would have to travel to Melbourne via Noojee, which was a far longer journey than the Yarra Junction route, and storekeepers from there to Yarra Junction would lose much custom. So in 1924, the Forests Commission relented and GTTC and the Victorian Railways

Noojee line lost a great deal of timber traffic.

At the same time, there was a further development of the VHC tramway between Powelltown and Powelltown Bush. The top of the ridge between the Little Yarra and Latrobe Rivers was quite steep and winches had to be used to pull trains over the top. It was decided to build a tunnel in view of the amount of traffic using the line. This was completed early in 1926, and used some rails from the Melbourne cable trams with the flangeways on the outside.

In fact, as well as allowing quicker access to Powelltown for trains, the tunnel sheltered 200 people from a bad bushfire in the same year. Also in consequence, the GTTC and its tramway deteriorated both financially and physically and never recovered. However, Billy Knott continued to mill timber at Quongup and connected the mill to the VHC 3' Powelltown Bush tramway. Knott died in 1928 and the mill was sold to Hermon and Vaness; they continued to operate until everything was destroyed in the 1939 Black Friday fires.

It is likely that mail for remote employees of VHC came "up the line" from Powelltown with the driver in charge, and mail for Quongup came from Noojee in a similar manner but in the opposite direction.

As a summary of the remote bush post offices of the Warburton/Powelltown forests, including Richards' Mill in the previous article in *PfA* (December 2023), below are the Post Office Guide 1930 entries of two.

QUIRINDI .. N	(AH)	
Quongup T .. V	KTC	Noojee M
QUORN .. S	Not L	
Quorrobolong T .. N	ABDC	9-1. 2-6: S. 9-2.

Riana South T .. Y	ABVZNO ..	S. 9-1. Riana M.
Richards' Mill .. V	AVN	(L) Warburton M
Rich Meadows T .. W	KTC	Big Pat's Creek T, 13
		9-11. 2.30-4.30;

**Abbreviations:**

- K – Telephone and Telegraph business only transacted.
- T – Trunk line office.
- C – Telegrams must be called for.
- A – Non-official post office.
- V – Cash on delivery office.
- N – Postal note office.

Was Quongup ever a proper post office? On information encountered so far, it was not. Why it had two periods of operation separated by 2½ years is not known (see table following).



Cover from Powelltown with label type C6c, dated 27 June 1946, two years after the tramway closed, as road conditions had much improved. The post office opened as Blake's Receiving Office in 1904, name changed to Powelltown 15 July 1912, full post office 10 August 1913 and currently operates.

A postscript for this article: Is it not always the way that important information turns up immediately after publication? There was another bush post office which should be added to

the list – Starvation Creek, which was situated at the Federal Mill in upper Starvation Creek. I was aware of its possible existence, but evidence was only anecdotal. It gets a more definite mention in a new book<sup>4</sup>, in my hands a week before finalising this article – a bit of luck – and has a Post Office Guide entry with a similar status to Richards' Mill. Its operating period was very short. Maybe the post office at Richards, relatively close, was considered adequate enough. They both opened in the same month.

Stapylon RT .. Q	KTC	(r) Yatala M
Starvation Creek	AVN	Warburton M,
		Big Pat's Creek T, 13
Station Peak T .. W	KTC	9-12. 1-6: S.

**Summary of the forest post offices of the Warburton/Powelltown district**

OFFICE	OPEN	CLOSED
Nayook West	Receiving office: 1/2/1926. Post Office: 1/7/1927.	1/10/1947 - unlikely date, most probably 13/2/1939.
Quongup	1. 28/7/1925. 2. 15/1/1934.	1. 10/8/1931. 2. 30/6/1937.
Richards Mill	1/1/1929.	9/9/1937.
Starvation Creek	15/1/1929.	22/12/1930.

Physical postal evidence of Quongup and Starvation Creek, such as postmarks and/or registration labels, is yet to be found.

**References:**

1. "Goodwood, A History of the Goodwood Timber and Tramway Company, Port Albert, Victoria" (1984), *Light Railways*, Vol. XXXI, No.124, April.
2. Phoenix Auctions Melbourne, Post Office Reference List, www.phoenixauctions.com
3. Stamford, F.E., Stuckey, E.G., and Maynard, G.L., (1984), *Powelltown*, Melbourne: Light Railway Research Society of Australia.
4. Anchen, N., (2023), *Whistles Through the Tall Timber*, Melbourne: Sierra Publishing.

# 'A Few of My Favourite Things', Number Nineteen: A South Seas Disaster

Gary Watson FRPSV, FRPSL, ACCCF, FBSAP

Nauru is a remote and diminutive speck of only 21 square kilometres perched right on the equator in the middle of nowhere [1]. Its claim to fame was the presence of prodigious quantities of bird droppings, or guano. Over time, the guano solidified into phosphate rock, from which fertilizer could be made. If not for the avian dung, Nauru is unlikely to have a more distinguished history than any number of non-phosphate-endowed outcrops in the vastness of the Pacific Ocean.

The first European occupation was by Germany which, in 1888, annexed Nauru to their colony of the Marshall Islands [2]. Phosphate was not on their radar but expansion of their overseas empire certainly was. The magically transformed bird poop deposits were discovered in 1900. They were found to cover more than 80% of Nauru's landmass. Six years later, the German authorities granted a mining concession to the Pacific Phosphate Company [3].

When World War I erupted in August 1914. Britain was allied with Japan, whose navy made a beeline for Germany's Pacific territories, occupying the Caroline, Mariana and Marshall Islands – with one exception. Despite being stationed almost 1700km WSW of Nauru, an Australian force from occupied German New Guinea got to Nauru first, where they claimed the island for Great Britain. Nauru was so far removed from the other Marshall Islands that Japan was apparently unfussed about the situation, and probably already at the practical limits of its ability to occupy additional territory [4].

Immediately after the war ended on 11 November 1918, the victorious allies set to divvying-up Germany's territories. The Aussies stayed on Nauru and, in 1923, were granted a League of Nations mandate over the island. Nauru effectively became

an external territory of Australia in 1947, then blundered towards independence in 1968, becoming the world's smallest independent nation.

The British Phosphate Commission (BPC) was created in 1919 by the Mother Country, New Zealand and Australia to exploit Nauru. Almost beyond belief is the fact that the new company paid more than £3,500,000 for the assets of the Pacific Phosphate Company! Not beyond belief is that the traditional owners of the land were paid a handsome royalty of ½d per ton [5].



View of the devastated Nauruan landscape caused by phosphate mining. Image courtesy of Philip Malsale, Climatologist, SPREP

The serious pillaging of Nauru began in earnest in 1921. Mining rock phosphate is an interesting activity. In short, the fossilised bird excrement is extracted from crevices in the coral that forms the host-island's foundations. What remains is an utterly useless and entirely uninhabitable landscape, such as might have been created in the frenetic mind of Arthur C Clarke or Isaac Asimov.



Enlargement of 10/- stamp



The SS Triona

The raiders' operations around Nauru were the most successful of the war. The Germans departed with 675 prisoners, allocated between *Orion* (265), *Komata* (153) and *Kulmerland* (257, including 52 women and six children). Steaming north, they made a brief stop at the almost unpronounceable Ailinglaplap [9] in the Marshalls. All three ships then headed for the remote New Guinean island of Emirau in the Bismarck Archipelago, arriving on 21 December.

A total of 514 of the 675 captives were disembarked at Emirau. 171 of them were islanders or of Chinese descent. The Germans left food for the 500+ people abandoned on Emirau. White planters on the island assisted them and got a message to Kavieng, 138km to the south-east. On 29 December, the castaways were all taken aboard the British passenger ship *Nellore*, and landed at Townsville on New Year's Day 1941.

However, the captain of *Orion* refused to release the European officers and crew in his charge, to prevent them from joining the Allied war effort. All of them, including 15 from *Triaster*, 11 from *Triadic* and 10 from *Triona*, ended up in Germany, where they remained as POWs for the duration of the war.

There are several readily available accounts of these events. What the standard historical texts do not mention is that some mail from the destroyed ships survived. One or more mailbags (I expect only one) from *Triona* had been transferred with the crew and passengers in mid-ocean. *Triona* was then despatched by a German torpedo. When *Orion* disgorged its human cargo at Emirau, the mailbag went with them.



The modest little cover shown here was posted at Melbourne in late-November 1940: the day is unclear. It is addressed to "Ocean Island/Central Pacific", east of Nauru, to which *Triona* was scheduled to head next. The addressee, John M Ross, was probably either an employee of the BPC, or the postmaster at Ocean Island. His name appears on many covers from the 1930s, and he was the closest thing the Gilbert & Ellice Islands had to a stamp dealer. The present item appears to be entirely non-philatelic, likely from a family member sending Christmas greetings.

The recovered mailbag would have been sent by rail from Townsville to Sydney, where the endorsement "Raider mail" was applied in red-pencil to explain the delay in delivering the cover. There is a Sydney backstamp of 23JA41. The cover was then re-sent to Ocean Island, where it received a partial arrival datestamp of 11MAR41, also on the reverse. John Ross was probably quite bemused. Because of wartime security measures, news of the Germans' successes at Nauru would have been kept under wraps, and arrival of the mail, three and a half months after the original despatch, may have been the first the islanders knew of the troubles.

The overall soiling and apparent water-stain at the base might be seen as detractors. However, they are an integral part of the story, providing physical evidence of the difficult circumstances that befell *Triona's* mail. At some point, the mailbag suffered at least partial immersion. This could have happened when *Triona* was attacked; during transfer to *Orion*; while unloading at Emirau; or during the eight days the former passengers were stranded on that island. It is improbable that it occurred after *Nellore* arrived at Emirau.



Our second cover, from a Sydney CBD post office, also bears witness to the same situation. It is more extensively soiled and more obviously affected by immersion in water. Although the 2d stamp for the Empire letter-rate postage remains affixed, the 3d stamp for the registration fee has been lost. Also missing is the Queen Victoria Buildings (QVB) registration label. Interestingly, the registration number of the article, "No 3565", is written where the label had been affixed. This information may have been recovered from Post Office records in Sydney. More likely is that the label was hanging by the proverbial thread and was discarded after the number was written on the envelope.

On this cover, the disruption endorsement reads "Sunk by raider/& recovered". Also in red pencil, it is however in a very different hand. This is attributable to the cover being processed through the Registration Section at the Sydney GPO, as proven by the datestamps inscribed 'RS' on the reverse.



The second GPO cds, of 23JA41, the same as on the ordinary cover, is problematic. It was probably applied when the mail from Townsville was received. However, it may indicate the date (possibly the same day?) that the covers were processed for re-sending to the Gilberts. Again, there is an Ocean Island arrival backstamp, of 12MAR41, or one day later than the unregistered cover. They were almost certainly in the same mail, the discrepancy again being due to the fact that the registered cover received special attention, its arrival needing to be officially recorded.

The two featured items are a complementary pair. Each confirms the travails of the other. The registered cover also provides almost conclusive evidence that it was re-forwarded in another article, in the nature of a Postmaster-General's Department "ambulance envelope". This would account for the lack of an endorsement regarding the missing stamp and the apparent short-payment.

We have no direct evidence as to who sent either cover. As noted above, the normal cover probably contained a Christmas epistle from a family member. As for the registered envelope, the 'QUEEN VICTORIA BUILDINGS' cds, and it being addressed "Postmaster", certainly suggest that one of Sydney's then numerous stamp dealers was the originator.



Serendipitously, this cover contains an enclosure, not the anticipated dealer's order for stamps, but a roneo'd receipt for a money order in the sum of £4 and advice that the requested stamps were accompanied by the receipt. It is almost certain that the ex-*Triona* cover was returned at the same time.

Not surprisingly, the philatelic trader is identified as "K Baker Esq/12 Royal Arcade/Sydney", which was located just across George Street from the QVB. The late Ken Baker was, for decades, the doyen of the Sydney stamp trade. In 1940, he was a relatively callow 28 years of age. He would go on to forge successful partnerships with Bernie Moloney, Leo Rose, and Kevin Duffy AO.

Famously, Ken also acted as agent for renowned collector, John Augustus Charles ('Jack') Kilfoyle, a wealthy pastoralist with major property interests in Western Australia [10]. Perhaps Ken's most audacious transaction occurred in 1948, when he acquired Thomas Field's wonderful collection of Australian essays, proofs and issued stamps intact. The collection had been consigned to Harmers of London. As soon as the Field catalogue arrived, Ken showed it to Jack Kilfoyle, who expressed the desire to buy the whole auction. Ken promptly despatched a telegram with an offer of £7,500 [11] which Cyril Harmer found irresistible [12].

Having myself been in the trade since 1979, I knew Ken Baker quite well and always enjoyed my interactions with him. I often engaged him as my agent for Sydney auctions. One day, Ken phoned to say, ruefully, that he had made a mistake with one of my bids and felt he could no longer provide good service. He was in his 90s. Ken continued trading until shortly before his death in 2016, at the age of 104.



Reproduced by permission from 'Australasian Wreck Mail' by Brian Peace (2nd Edition, 2013), p. 302

Remarkably, in an interview for the online forum Stampboards [13], Ken Baker specifically mentioned “his” *Triona* cover, saying: “Rod Perry recently showed me an envelope with my handwriting I posted to the post office in the Gilbert & Ellice Islands ordering £4 of current stamps...”! [14]

This connection between the subject of this column and one of the most important figures in Australian philately is, for me, a thick layer of icing on an already compelling cake. It only adds to why these two distressed items of “disaster mail” are among My Favourite Things.

**References & notes**

- [1] Technically, Nauru is 40km south of the equator. An online article offers this hyperbole: “Nauru is as far from any place on earth”. See thereader.mitpress.mit.edu/dark-history-nauru. Google places Nauru as 13,887km (8,629 miles) from London. By contrast, Pitcairn Island is almost 500 miles more distant, coming in at 14,707km (9,139 miles) from London. You would not want to row to either place.
- [2] Wikipedia says Nauru was annexed to German New Guinea. This is clearly wrong. The only stamps used on the island were inscribed ‘MARSHALL INSELN’ and the German-pattern datestamp was inscribed ‘NAURU/(MARSHALL-/INSELN)’.
- [3] The Pacific Phosphate Company was formed in 1902 by a merger of South Pacific Co Ltd and the German entity Jaluit-Gesellschaft (= Jaluit Company).
- [4] Nauru is 780km SSW of Jaluit, the principal atoll in the Marshalls Group. By contrast, it is “only” 305km west of Ocean Island (now known as Banaba), part of Kiribati (pronounced “kir-in-bahss”), formerly the Gilbert Islands.
- [5] To understand the significance of this number, see my previous article in *Philately from Australia* of March 2024. To be fair, the royalty payment was soon tripled to 1½d per ton, but only after strong protestations from the island’s twelve chiefs. In 1927, it soared to 7½d per ton, still a pathetic pittance.
- [6] The stamp illustration in Stanley Gibbons’ catalogue is titled “*Century (freighter)*”. This is highly improbable. *SS Century* was a collier, owned by Howard Smith Ltd. The ship on the stamp has the unusual and distinctive bow of the BPC vessels. The influential ‘The Ships List’ website lists two Howard Smith ships named *Century*, neither of which can have been the subject for the stamp. The first was built in 1906 and sold in 1926 to Greek interests. The second was built only in 1956.
- [7] *Triaster*, *Triadic* and *Triona* were all operated by the BPC. *Vinni* was a Norwegian ship. *Komata* was Scottish-built but operated by Japan’s Miyachi Kisen KK.
- [8] In 1726, Davy Jones first appeared in English literature in *The Four Years Voyages of Captain George Roberts* by Daniel Defoe. Davy Jones was the nemesis of seafarers. His “locker” was a metaphor for the abyss, to which drowned sailors and wrecked ships were consigned.
- [9] My best effort at a phonetic rendering is “Ai-loonn-lap-lap”.
- [10] Kilfoyle is one of very few philatelists to have an entry in the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, which reveals he was once convicted of theft of cattle and sentenced to two years in jail. On another occasion, he was sued for the quaint offence of “breach of promise”; he settled for £850.
- [11] According to the Reserve Bank’s online calculator, £7,500 (\$15,000) would have been worth some \$519,000 in 2022 dollars (the latest data available online). Great good fortune for Kilfoyle; at best, a mediocre result for the family of Thomas Field.
- [12] It may surprise you, dear reader, to know that such questionable behaviour on the part of the auction house was not a one-off occurrence. In Australia, the culturally important sporting collections of Olympian Shirley Strickland and Australian Football Hall of Fame Legend, Ron Barassi, were sold intact, even though the auction catalogues had been printed and distributed. I have no problem with people making opportunistic offers but I have a professional disdain for those who accept them.
- [13] See stampboards.com/viewtopic.php?t=34641
- [14] Ken went on to say “...a few pieces of sodden mail were recovered...” In *Australasian Wreck Mail* (2013) by our esteemed member Brian Peace, it is stated at page 303: “At least ten items have been recorded...three...are from the USA”. Five of them are then listed individually. Number 1 – which is illustrated – is the Ken Baker cover, and the only registered item recorded. Number 2 is the John Ross cover (which is illustrated in *Maritime Disaster Mail* (2003) by Norman Hoggarth & Robin Gwynn. Two other covers from Australia and one from London are listed. Incorporating Brian’s reference to three unlisted items from America – one of which was an overtly philatelic cover in Tony Eastgate’s collection – the census stands at only eight items: four from Australia; one from England; and three from the United States. Examples are therefore as scarce as the more highly-rated Matunga covers from World War I.

# Nicaragua: Momotombo Airmail Stamp Production

Glen Stafford

This story begins with Pan American Airways (P.A.A.) instigating the first airmail service to and from Nicaragua. On 15 May 1929 P.A.A. included Managua, capital city of Nicaragua, into their newly formed Foreign Air Mail route five (FAM 5). The airmail fee for this service was 25 centavos per 14 grams (½ oz.) to be paid to P.A.A. Additional surface rates and taxes were also to be applied.



25,000 overprints in sheets of 10 x 10 on the 1928 National Palace issue. Bottom right hand corner shows tall '1' in 1929 error.

## Presidential decree of 7 May 1929 ordered the first airmail stamps of Nicaragua

Pan American Airways instigated the first Nicaraguan airmail service. Prepared airmail stamps being unavailable, obsolete 25 centavos definitive stamps were overprinted “Correo Aereo/1929/P.A.A.” in three lines. These airmail stamps were produced locally by provisional overprints in red. These stamps were first used on 15 May 1929 for mail carried by P.A.A. from Managua to New York via Miami, Florida.

## New Momotombo Airmail Stamps: 15 December 1929

The American Bank Note Company of New York (ABNCo.) was given the contract to produce the first Definitive Airmail issue of Nicaragua. The design has two US Marine Corps planes, flying to the right, over the smoking volcano Momotombo. Purchase Order number (PO No.) F8979.



This photo was to be the basis of the new airmail stamp. Originally taken to be the QSL card for the Marines. PO No. F8979 on top with the words ‘Sky, Land & Lake’ on RHS. ‘In engraving note these marginal marks’, & ‘3 Prints’ on bottom.



Text on the back of the mounted photo is as follows: ‘Received Engraving Department 16 July 1929’ Manuscript ‘PEM (3)’ plus two green ‘3’ in a green circle.



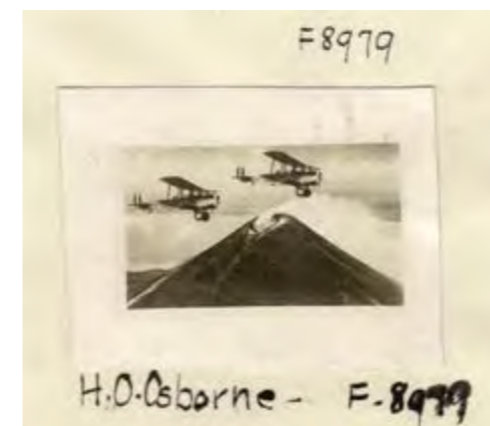
Marine Observation Squadron One QSL Card with call sign ‘NN INIC’. This is the only known stamp design to feature a US Marine Corps aircraft.

The design for the new airmail stamp was taken from the QSL (Query Station Location) communication card used by Marine Observation Squadron Four. The photographer officer of Marine Observation Squadron Four, then First Lieutenant Hayne Davis Boyden, designed the Marine QSL card. He added a photo of a Marine Biplane (a De Havilland DH-4) twice to a separate image of a volcanic mountain attributed as Momotombo.

Hayne Davis Boyden (11 January 1897 – 23 August 23 1978) was a highly-decorated naval aviator and aviation pioneer in the United States Marine Corps who retired at the rank of Brigadier General. A veteran of several campaigns of the Banana Wars, Boyden became known in the Marine Corps as a pioneer in aerial photography. He photographed thousands of square miles of Cuba, Haiti, Nicaragua, Panama and the Olympic forestry region of the Pacific Northwest. This aerial photography became the basis for mosaic maps of these areas.



The ABNCo. first produced bromide copies to be used as the vignette to create the first lot of hand-drawn frames and values for essays to be approved by the Nicaraguan government. The size of the bromide vignette was to be the same size as the engraved stamps.



Bromide identifying the PO ‘F 8979’ and engraver’s name ‘H.O. Osborne’



Three essays with the original bromide photos and hand painted (drawn) with various colours and values. PO F8979 manuscript on top and ‘Appd by minister of Finance letter July 15/29. Initials ‘SHL 8/6/29’ [6 August 1929]. On reverse of essays was the manuscript ‘Received 6 August’ with a green ‘9’, ‘10’ & ‘11’ in green circle stamp.

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Provenance:  
Collection James B. Williamson (1981)  
Collection Lord Vestey (2014)

Provenance:  
Alfred H. Caspary (1958)  
Lars Amundsen (1967)

Provenance:  
Charles Lathrop Pack (1944)  
Collection Louise Boyd Dale &  
Alfred F. Lichtenstein (1990)  
Collection Sir Miles Rivett-  
Carnac (2004)

Provenance: Collection Julius Beresford, Collection J.R.W. Purves (1981),  
Collection Ludwig Baetgen (1989)

Provenance: The estate of John Ash

## THE HUNTINGFIELD BLOCK



2d. scarlet on C of A watermarked paper, a lower right corner block of four (2 x 2) with margin initialed and dated 29/9/36 by the Governor of Victoria, Lord Huntingfield. Mounted on its original sheet deriving from Lord Vestey's collection. Originally a block of six (6) as the only existing stamps of this issue. In 2015 reduced to this block of four (4) and two singles by the owner.

Provenance:  
John Ash (1936)  
5th Baron Huntingfield, Governor of Victoria (1936)  
Samuel 2nd Baron Vestey (1936-1954)  
Samuel George Armstrong 3rd Baron Vestey (1954-2014)  
A Private Connoisseur Collector in Australia (2014-)

Provenance: Rod Perry, Melbourne (1975)  
Stanley Gibbons Australia, Sydney (2001)



Provenance:  
Collection C.J.L. Snowden (1944)  
Collection Dr. Mario Tomasini (1973)  
Collection John R. Boker (1981)  
Collection „Manwood“ (1995)  
Collection „Carrington“ (2012)



Provenance:  
Harmers Australia, Sydney (1977)  
Rod Perry, Melbourne (1983)

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Die proof of the 25 centavos in adopted colour sepia was printed on a sunken card. Die number '65819'. Following are Die proofs of the 50 centavos in unadopted colours with Die number '65918', also on sunken cards.



Steel engraved master Dies were manufactured from these approved essays.

Steel-engraved plate proofs of 100 (10 x 10) stamps were manufactured for each of the three values.



Plate proof on thick card in adopted colour for the 25 centavos. On back is Approved by Engraving Dept. Supt's (Superintendent) Office 5 September 1929

Specimen overprints were also produced by ABNCo. for the UPU nations and archives. They were overprinted with the word 'SPECIMEN' in red, which ran along the left side of Mt Momotombo. A hole was drilled on the right side below the value tablet.



Specimen set with security punched holes



300,000 25c printed



100,000 50c printed



100,000 1C printed

Printed by American Banknote Company, line engraved and recess printed in sheet 10 x 10, perf 12

### Additional New Values Momotombo Airmail Stamp Issued (8 July 1931)

On 15 May 1930, the airmail rate for adjacent republics was dropped by P.A.A. from 25c to 15c & 20c. Foreign airmail rates also dropped 15c, with 20c to Canada. With these new rates, additional values were required. The surcharge "Vale C\$0.15 & C\$0.20" was overprinted locally in two lines on the Momotombo olive black 25c airmail stamp.

The Nicaraguan government ordered new values to be printed on the Momotombo airmail stamps. On 8 July 1931, 15 centavos in violet (200,000) and 20 centavos in green (150,000) were printed and issued. An additional 150,000 of the 15 centavos were printed in late 1933.



Plate proofs on thick card issued in the correctly issued colours. Showing the top left-hand corner of a sheet of 100. Each showing a manuscript 'F9401', which reflects the PO No. from Nicaragua.

The Momotombo airmail stamp was issued and re-issued in various colours and overprinted in different values as the FAM 5 route developed and additional values were required for various new destinations.

The Momotombo airmail stamp issue remained the main printed issue stamp until the new issue of 30 July 1937. These were the Ryan Brougham Airplane over Presidential Palace stamps engraved in recess by the ABNCo. in sheets of 100 (10 x 10), perforated gauge 12, inscribed "INTERIOR" and intended for domestic mail. Map of Nicaragua stamps were also engraved in recess by the ABNCo. in sheets of 100 (10 x 10), perforated gauge 12, inscribed "INTERNACIONAL" and intended for foreign mail.





# A Study of the 1963 Sesquicentenary of the First Crossing of the Blue Mountains Issue

Ted Gallagher FRPSV

## BACKGROUND

The European settlement at Sydney Cove, established in 1788 after the arrival of the First Fleet, grew rapidly. By the early 19th century, the Blue Mountains had become a barrier to the expansion of the Colony which required more farmland to meet its needs, particularly after the droughts of 1812 and 1813. Until then, the settlers remained unaware of how to cross the mountains despite several attempts, including two by Gregory Blaxland. In 1813, with permission from Governor Macquarie, Blaxland put together an expedition with a plan to find a passage to the western plains by following a line of ridges that ran westward between river valleys. He invited William Lawson and William Charles Wentworth to join him.

Blaxland was born on 17 June 1778 in Kent, England. He sailed for New South Wales on 1 September 1805 with his wife, three children, two servants, an overseer, a few sheep, seed, tools, groceries, and clothing. When he reached Sydney, he sold many of these items and made a profit, which enabled him to buy eighty head of cattle so that he could breed them and sell the meat. He located 1,600 acres of land that the Government had promised to new settlers, as well as forty convict servants, and established his farm. He was also one of the first people to plant grapes in the Colony and make wine, for which he was awarded a gold medal by the Royal Society of Arts, London.

William Lawson was born in Middlesex, England in 1774. After training as a surveyor, he bought a commission in the New South Wales Corps for £300. He migrated to Sydney, arriving in late 1800 aboard the *Royal Admiral*. Initially, he was posted to Norfolk Island. On his return to Sydney, he was promoted to commandant of Newcastle. Subsequently, he bought a small property at Concord, where he held horses and cattle.

William Charles Wentworth was born on the *Surprise* on 13 August 1790, when it was standing off Norfolk Island in a violent storm. His Irish father, D'Arcy Wentworth, the first paying passenger to arrive in the Colony, had entered into a relationship with a convict girl, Catherine Crowley, on the convict ship *Neptune* which was part of the second fleet. In 1802, William was sent to school in England, returning in 1810, at which time he was granted 1,750 acres of grazing land on the Nepean River.

The party, which also included four servants, four packhorses and five dogs, left Blaxland's farm, near the modern suburb of St Marys in Sydney's west on 11 May 1813. They methodically explored the ridges until they found a route. After getting their first glimpses of the western plains from what was to be called Mount York, they reached Mount Blaxland, as it became known, on 31 May. From this vantage point, they could clearly see the forest and grassland to the west, which Blaxland declared would "support the stock of the Colony for thirty years". Today's Great Western Road largely follows the route they pioneered.

Subsequently, the three trailblazers became prominent citizens of the Colony. In recognition of the importance of their accomplishment, the Blue Mountains' towns of Blaxland, Wentworth Falls and Lawson were named after them.

In its 1880 Christmas supplement, the *Sydney Mail* published a lithograph by M. Emile Ulm entitled: The Blue Mountain Pioneers. This is thought to be the first depiction of the crossing. See Figure 1.



Figure 1

Figure 2 shows two of four stamps issued in 2012 depicting Inland Explorers. The left hand stamp is obviously based on the Ulm lithograph.



Figure 2

## ORIGINS OF THE STAMP ISSUE

By mid-1961, the City of Blue Mountains had plans underway to mark the 150th anniversary of the crossing. As part of these plans, a proposal for a commemorative stamp issue was sent to the Federal Member of Parliament for Macquarie, Mr A.S. Luchetti, who brought it to the attention of the Postmaster-General, the Honourable C.W. Davidson.

The Stamp Advisory Committee (the Committee), recognising the importance and historical significance of the crossing to the development of the infant colony of New South Wales, recommended that the proposal be adopted. The Postmaster-General agreed in principle in February 1962.

## SELECTION OF THE SUBJECT

When proposing the stamp issue, the Council of the City of the Blue Mountains indicated a desire to conduct an Australia-wide competition for a suitable design. In March 1962, after consultation with the Postmaster-General's Department (the Department) about the design specification, the competition was announced in the press. Eighty entries were received by the April closing date and nine were short listed and forwarded to the Department in late April. See Figure 3.



Figure 3

At its May meeting, the Committee chose Tom Alban's entry, showing the explorers looking westward from Mount York, for development and subsequent adoption. See item I of Figure 3. Ulm's lithograph may have been the inspiration for Alban's proposal.

The following month, the Postmaster-General concurred with the Committee's choice. The Committee then decided that the following changes were needed:

- alter typography by removing the inscription,
- amend caption to 'BLUE MOUNTAINS CROSSING 1813',

- use a different style for the denomination,
- within the illustration, continue the trees to the top of the design,
- increase the tone around the feet of the explorers and the rocks to the right, and
- lessen the background tone.

The topographic alterations were carried out by Department artists and then Tom Alban effected the changes to the illustration. See Figures 4 and 5.

Following receipt of these revisions, the Committee requested further changes, namely:

- move the horse on the left inwards to lessen the design space in that area,
- insert a white blaze down the horse's nose to clarify the animal a little,
- lighten the tone on the upper side of the horse's head,
- prepare a mask that modified the line of the landscape on the right,
- use a different typographic style for the '5d' and include a white line around it, and
- reduce 'AUSTRALIA' in height by a fifth.

These changes were made by Department artists. See Figure 6. A further request to return the denomination to Times Roman font and other subtle changes resulted in Figure 7.

The revised artwork was deemed satisfactory by the Committee and was forwarded to the Note Printing Branch (NPB) in early December where Peter Morriss engraved the die. A die proof was available towards the end of January 1963 (Figure 8). However, the Committee required several subtle changes. After a further three die proofs were provided, the Department gave its approval of the die (Figure 9) for plate production.

Die proofs had been requested in blue and green. The Committee recommended the adoption of option 6 of the proofs shown at Figure 10.



Figure 4



Figure 5



Figure 6



Figure 7



Figure 8



Figure 9



Figure 10

## PRODUCTION

The steel master plate was of 320 impressions comprising four groups of 80 (Sheets A, B over C, D), each 10 rows of 8. From a single alto plate, four nickel electrotype plates were manufactured, three of which were used for printing. Sheets of 80 were issued to post offices for sale from 28 May 1963.

## VARIETIES

The 2024 edition of *The Australian Commonwealth Specialists' Catalogue*, lists and illustrates all the significant varieties of this issue.

### Acknowledgements:

The author wishes to thank Richard Breckon APR, FRPSV for providing access to and scans from the Australia Post Archives and for his advice.

The collections of the State Library of New South Wales for the lithograph *The Blue Mountain Pioneers*.

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*The Australian Commonwealth Specialists' Catalogue: Queen Elizabeth II, 2024* edited by Geoffrey Kellow, p8/180

# Emblems of Victoria: One Penny Constant Flaws, Part 4

Bill Clark FRPSV



Figure 1: Flaw 18

This is the fourth article in this series which intends to illustrate all the known One Penny Emblems constant flaws. Purves identified 32 flaws. I have been able to identify an additional 22 flaws, which I have numbered following Purves' numbering, with the addition of a "(c)" suffix. My criteria for recognising a new constant flaw is that I must have at least three matching examples.

**Flaw 18:** A white flaw made up of a group of dots starting just above the eyebrow, extending up to the lower part of the diadem.

In Setting 1, my research shows it has a stamp to its left, is below Flaw 17 First State and is in the bottom row of a group of 30. In Setting 2, I have found it has a stamp to its right and is in the bottom row of the sheet. In Setting 3, Purves gives the position as B21, to the left of Flaw 6.



Figure 2: Flaw 19

**Flaw 19:** An almost vertical white flaw near the edge of the oval, starting level with just below the nose running down to level with the lower lip. There is also a mottled appearance to the solid colour to the left of the profile, from the top of the diadem down to level with the eye.

In Setting 1, Purves gives the position as A1. In Setting 2, my research shows this flaw is in column 4 or 5 and cannot be in the top or bottom rows of a group of 30. It has Flaw 13 two places to its left and Flaw 28 to its right. In Setting 3, my research shows this flaw cannot be in the top or bottom rows or the left column of a group of 30; also, it has Flaw 40(c) above it.



Figure 3: Flaw 20

**Flaw 20** shows a white dot near the edge of the oval, level with the mouth.

In Setting 1, my research proves there is another stamp on all four sides. In Setting 2, my research proves it is in the top row of a group of 30, with a stamp to its left and two stamps to its right. In Setting 3, my research proves it is in the right column of a group of 30, with a stamp above and below.



Figure 4: Flaw 21

**Flaw 21** has a white area below the neck and above the E of Penny. Also, there are two vague areas of extra colour either side of the upper sails on the ship; the size of these extra colour areas varies from printing to printing.

In Setting 1, there is nothing to indicate its position. In Setting 2, my research shows it has another stamp to its right and a stamp below it. In Setting 3, my research proves the position is A16, with Flaw 14 then Flaw 52(c) to its right and Flaw 3 then Flaw 37(c) to its left.



Figure 5: Flaw 22

**Flaw 22:** There is a break above the N of One in the top of the two lines between the text and oval. I have not yet found this flaw in Setting 1 but I have found it in Setting 2; Purves only found this flaw in Setting 3.

In Setting 2, there is nothing to indicate its position. In Setting 3, I have found an example with a part of the marginal inscription, which proves the position as C30.



Figure 6: Flaw 23

**Flaw 23:** There is a small white dot near the edge of the oval, just below the level of the chin. Also, there is a break in the left frame, a little below the rose. This flaw has not yet been found in Setting 1.

In Setting 2, the only indication I have to the position is that it is not in the top row of a group of 30. In Setting 3, this flaw is in the top row of group C or D, with a stamp either side.



Figure 7: Flaw 24

**Flaw 24:** A small white dot in the white area between the oval and the line around the oval, level with the bottom of the leaves in the left floral emblem. This dot is partly encroaching on the oval and slightly deflects the line around the oval.

In Setting 1, it is to the left of Flaw 9 First State; it is in the third or fourth column of a group of 30. In Setting 2, the only indication of position is that it has a stamp to its left. In Setting 3, my only indication is that it has a stamp below it; Purves states that it is three in from the right of the sheet.



Figure 8: Flaw 25

**Flaw 25** show areas of extra colour between the sails of the ship, the largest of which is between upper sails.

In Setting 1, my research using marginal watermark shows that it is in the fourth stamp in from the right edge of the sheet. In Setting 2, my only indication of position is that it has stamps both sides and above it. In Setting 3, Purves gives its position as A5. However, I have it as the lower-left stamp in a block of four, which proves this is not correct. My research proves the position is A8 with Flaw 27 to its left, Flaw 13 to its right and Flaw 11 above it.



Figure 9: Flaw 26

**Flaw 26:** There is a white spot under the IA of Victoria.

In Setting 1, it is in the fourth, fifth or sixth column of a group of 30. In Setting 2, it is in the right column and has a stamp below it in the group of 30. In Setting 3, Purves states it is in the bottom row of the sheet. My research shows it has two stamps to its left and one to its right.



Figure 10: Flaw 27

**Flaw 27** shows two almost vertical scratches running down through the top frame. The first is above the left edge of the C and the second is above the space between TO of Victoria. This flaw has not been found in Setting 1.

In Setting 2, my only indication of position is that it has a stamp to its left. In Setting 3, Purves gives its position as A4. However, I have it in a pair with Flaw 25 to its right, proving the position to be A7.

**References:**

J.R.W. Purves, *The "Emblems" of Victoria 1857-63*, Melbourne: The Royal Philatelic Society of Victoria, 1957.

Pages from Bill Purves Collection.

# The Robert Blake Yardley Collection of Postage Stamps (with Special Focus on South Australia)

Dr Donald Pearce MBBS



Robert Blake Yardley was an English lawyer who joined the Royal Philatelic Society in 1901, and was its president from 1931 to 1934. He was a member of the Expert Committee of the Society from 1904 for many years.

He was born in 1858 and died in 1943. He collected the stamps of the whole world, and more than 200 stamp issuing countries from Afghanistan to

Wurttemberg were included in seven sales of his collection by H.R. Harmer's auctions which were held in London between September 1944 and January 1945. The total number of lots sold was 3,690.

I possess an original copy of the catalogue, and of the prices realised [1]. (The catalogue also contains "An Appreciation"

of Yardley written by Mr Frank Godden.) I thought it might be worthwhile to compare the results with what you might reasonably expect to occur if the same items were to be offered in the stamp market today.

The Fifth Sale comprising British Possessions in Australasia was held on 11 & 12 December 1944 and included 537 lots, of which Lots 250 to 325 inclusive were of South Australia. The Rev. James Mursell described Yardley's South Australia collection and his "historical" approach to collecting in *The Australian Stamp Journal* in December 1913 [2].

The top price obtained for a South Australian item was £30 for Lot 301, "10d. blue on 9d. yellow, the rare error on Crown and SA wmkd. paper, S.G. 78a, light dated cancellation and very fine (see photo-plate V) – Cat £55". Lot 302, described as "another very fine copy of this error with similar pmk.", sold for £27. Lot 276, "10d. in black on 9d. yellow, S.G. 37, unused, fine and very rare, unused (see photo-plate IV)", produced the third-highest price at £18.

Next in decreasing price order came two mint four penny stamps, the first a copy of the perf. 11½ x roulette Lot 285, and the V-Crown watermark part O G, both of which sold for £17/10. There is some doubt about the former stamp, in my opinion.

A pair of 1d deep yellow green imperforates offered as Lot 259

# The Missing 'Imprimatur' Sheets of the £1 and £2 King Edward VII Stamps of Victoria

Ian P Greig FRPSL, FRPSV, FBSAP

*This article first appeared in the September 2023 edition of The London Philatelist (pp. 389-390) and is reproduced here for the interest of RPSV members with the kind permission of the author.*

In the Australian Postal Archives, and quoted in the *Philatelic Bulletin* of February 1964, published by the Australian Post Office, is a reference to the King Edward VII £1 and £2 stamps of 1901-13:

*...it is of interest that the first two sheets printed of each value were reserved for the Royal Family, one pair of sheets being presented to King Edward VII and the second to the Duke of York.*

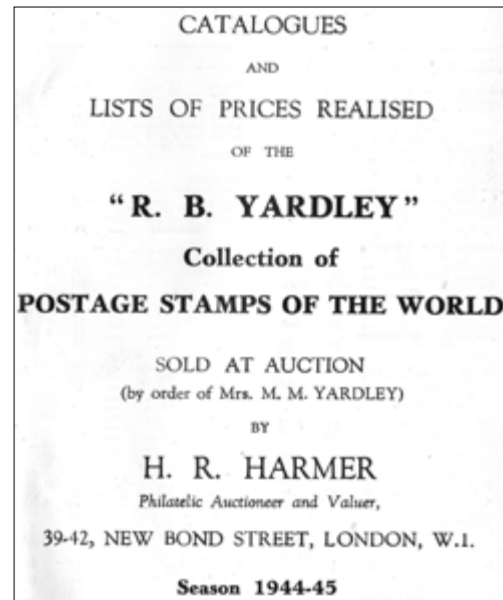
In May 1901, while on his round-the-world tour on the *Ophir* (Maxwell, 1902), the Duke of York (later King George V) was in Melbourne, where these stamps were printed. However, as the stamps were not issued until November 1901 and June 1902 respectively it is unlikely these were given to the Duke with the many other philatelic items with which he was presented during that trip.

Having had the honour of being Deputy Keeper of The Queen's (now The King's) Collection, I had been asked about these sheets several times. Recently I made enquires of The Royal Archives and received the following thorough response, which not only is relevant to these stamps but also to the wider issue of all stamps received during this period:

*I regret to say that I have not been able to find any information about Edward VII receiving stamps from the colony of Victoria, or indeed receiving any stamps in the period or subject areas I was investigating. Unfortunately, papers from this particular King's reign are relatively limited, as he left instructions that his letters should be destroyed after his death. The King's papers were entrusted to his Private Secretary, Lord Knollys; and in view of the difficulty of separating public and private material, both of which can appear in the same item of correspondence, it seems that his inclination, when in doubt, was to destroy. Consequently, it is often difficult to find information for that particular period and reign.*



*The two pages from The King's Philatelic Collection showing these particular stamps of the first issue on V Crown paper, single line perforation 12½. The £1 block of six and the £2 block of four are the largest recorded unused blocks, respectively. These images are reproduced by gracious permission of His Majesty The King to whom copyright belongs.*



sold for £52/10, and a lovely used copy of SG 1 sold for £42; a second copy [pen cancelled] was not sold.

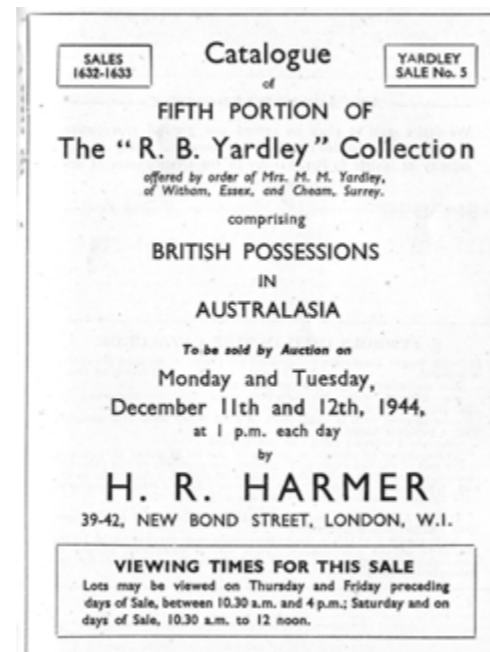
Queensland included "1860-61, the collection of die proofs in black on card or India-paper of the 1d, 2d, 3d, 6d [2], 1/- also Registered stamp – all fine and rare, a very good lot – Est £40", which sold for £45.

Among the Tasmanian items, a quality mint block of six of the 1854 Plate II four penny SG 7 sold for £61/10, and there were four other Tasmanian lots which surpassed the most expensive lot of South Australia in the sale.

Victoria included a couple of early two pennies SG 30 unused and SG 50 used which brought £40 and £42, respectively, and two collection lots at £38 and £55, the latter including more than 1,600 stamps.

Western Australia included a copy of the inverted frame four penny, cancelled 2 in circle with corners trimmed to shape, estimated at £250, which realised £200. A wonderful copy of the one shilling salmon [SG 8] in unused condition reached £42.

Only five of the 3,690 lots sold for more than £100, with the top price being £220 for Lot 195 in the Third Sale, a used copy of the four penny carmine error of colour Cape of Good Hope triangular stamp SG 16a.



The Reserve Bank of Australia's Pre-Decimal Inflation Calculator [3] indicates that a basket of goods valued at £1 in 1944 would cost \$72 today [2018], a multiplying factor of 36 keeping in mind that £1 became \$2 in 1966. This has been more than matched by increases in house prices, gold bullion and diamonds etc with factors of 50 to 100. The house my father bought for us in 1946 cost £4,000 and would sell today for approximately \$500,000, which is about 60 times as much.

### References:

- [1] Catalogues and Lists of Prices Realised of the "R. B. Yardley" Collection of Postage Stamps of the World, Sold at Auction (by order of Mrs. M. M. Yardley) by H. R. Hamer Philatelic Auctioneer and Valuer, 39-42 New Bond Street, London, W.1.
- [2] Mursell, Rev. J., "A Glimpse at Mr. R. B. Yardley's South Australians", *The Australian Stamp Journal*, Vol. IV No. 2, 10 December 1913, pp. 27-29.
- [3] Reserve Bank of Australia, Pre-Decimal Inflation Calculator, <https://www.rba.gov.au/calculator/annualPreDecimal.html>

is probably a pair of SG 1 actually, as the print quality looks like the work of Perkins, Bacon rather than that of the very inexperienced Printer of Stamps in Adelaide. This pair sold for £11/10.

The only other single item to sell for more than £10 was Lot 294, "the elusive 3d. in black on 4d. Prussian blue, S.G. 66, fine but centred to right and has minute thin spot – Est £5 " which sold for £10/10. I was offered an example to match that description precisely some time ago.

Only two lots contained stamps on covers, Lot 304, which sold for £15, and Lot 323 which sold for £10.

A fine copy of SG 112a, the threepence on Broad Star paper with three pence double [Lot 316] brought £5/10, and a copy of SG 59a the tenpence printed both sides Lot 290, with Royal Society certificate, failed to sell. Lot 258, a Cancelled copy of SG 3 [No 6 in the block], sold for £9/9.

In general, the collection was strong in mint/unused stamps, and, for example, contained a mint copy of SG 91, but no used examples. Indeed, used examples seemed to appear only when mint examples were not available.

Multiples are rarely seen in the collection, beyond the blocks of proofs, and a used strip of four of the first rouletted ten penny, later in the collection of the late Ronald Butler. A used strip of four of the sixpenny roulettes is the only other multiple, except for the used pair of SG 78, sold for £2/10. A copy of the very scarce [not to say rare] SG 165 2d De La Rue perf. 11½ x roulette, Lot 320, brought only £1/6.

If the same material were to be sold today, I doubt that the ten pennies on Crown and SA paper would sell for more than the price of the Cancelled sixpenny, or that the unused copy of SG 37 would feature as highly as it did in 1944.

The material of the other states and Fiji, New Zealand, Papua, Samoa and the British Solomon Islands, which made up the rest of the 2-day sale, included such items as a se-tenant vertical pair Fiji Times express [6d above; 1 shilling below], £23, plate proofs of NSW 5 shilling values in various colours in blocks [81 stamps] which sold for £47/10, and a Cancelled sixpenny of NSW [No 3 of the block of six] which sold for £11.

New Zealand included "Die proofs, in black on card or India-paper of the first type 1d, 2d, 3d [2], and 6d, all fine", which

Nevertheless, I checked the Royal Archives' general index, which covers papers from the reigns of Queen Victoria, Edward VII and George V, under various hopefully relevant subjects – but regrettably in vain. Under the subject of 'stamps', there are no index cards between 1900 and 1910; and I found no mention of the stamps in index cards for Victoria, or in the cards covering 1901-1903 under Edward VII's name. There would not, therefore, appear to be any obvious reference to these stamps in catalogued papers.

We have some papers of Lord Knollys during his period as Private Secretary to the King; these are largely uncatalogued, though they have been roughly arranged in subject groups. I checked groups of papers relating to the Ophir tour (note 1), foreign affairs, the Colonies, and miscellaneous subjects over the period 1901-1903: but again found no mention of these stamps.

#### References:

Australian Post Office, *Philatelic Bulletin*, Vol. 11 No. 4, February 1964, p. 29.

Maxwell, Sir William, *With the "Ophir" round the Empire: an account of the tour of the Prince and Princess of Wales, 1901*, RCIN 1006090, 1902. See [www.rct.uk/collection/1006090/with-the-ophir-round-the-empire-an-account-of-the-tour-of-the-prince-and-princess](http://www.rct.uk/collection/1006090/with-the-ophir-round-the-empire-an-account-of-the-tour-of-the-prince-and-princess)

Stanley Gibbons Commonwealth Catalogue.

I am afraid, therefore, that it would not appear there is any information in the Royal Archives about these stamps from Victoria, and I am sorry that we have consequently been unable to clarify this matter for you.

What happened to these 'reserved' (presumably imprimatur) sheets of stamps, is unclear. However, if the two sheets destined for the Duke of York had been received by him, there is very little doubt that they would now be in The Red Albums of The King's Philatelic Collection.

#### Acknowledgment:

With thanks for the knowledge and help of the archivists of the Royal Archives for which due acknowledgment is given.

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**ROYAL PHILATELIC SOCIETY VICTORIA**

**The Royal Philatelic Society of Victoria Inc.**  
Purves House, 303 High Street,  
Ashburton VIC 3147  
PO Box 490, Ashburton VIC 3147, Australia  
[www.rpsv.org.au](http://www.rpsv.org.au)

*The Royal Philatelic Society of Victoria is one of the premier philatelic Societies in Australia. It was founded in 1892 and in 1946 was granted the "Royal" prefix by King George VI. The Society has owned its own building for over 50 years and, in 2003, moved into Purves House in Ashburton, a suburb of Melbourne. The Library is now located in a highly accessible space and the meeting area can accommodate up to 100 people.*

New members are always welcome and are offered the following services:

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**PUBLICATIONS:** Members receive the quarterly journal *Philately from Australia*. The Society has produced many keystone philatelic publications and actively seeks new research for publication.

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## Back Then: Correct Addressing Campaign, circa 1973



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AUSTRALIAN POST OFFICE

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For instance he can't always interpret vague addresses and he could easily be bluffed by an address that is completely wrong. Give him a chance and give your mail a chance. Address correctly and carefully.



AUSTRALIAN POST OFFICE

The 1973 edition of the *Sands & McDougall Directory of Victoria* incorporated a catchy page divider, illustrated front and reverse, with messages to reduce the level of mail posted with incorrect or absent addresses.

## 100 Years

The *Victorian Philatelic Record* of June 1924 reported on "a meeting with extremely important bearings on the future of philately in Victoria" which was held in Melbourne on 8 May 1924 between representatives of the four Victorian philatelic societies, at the invitation of the (Royal) Philatelic Society of Victoria "to discuss the advisability or otherwise of forming a Federal Council representative of all four philatelic societies." In the event, the council did not proceed because, reportedly, the Prahran Philatelic Society rejected the idea "in toto." Leading philatelist, Alec Rosenblum, originator of the scheme, outlined his ideas:

*These include, for example, the existence of a body capable of taking prompt action in the event of any urgent matters arising in the philatelic world; the organisation of propaganda work, the formulation of rules to check the growing evils of stamp changing, the importation of forgeries, etc., and the presence of a committee representing organized philately throughout Victoria and so capable of speaking with the solid voice of the whole local philatelic community in the event of Government or other action affecting or liable to affect our hobby. It was pointed out, moreover, that the proposed council could in no way interfere with the domestic arrangements of any of the societies participating, there being no obligation to accept any recommendation received from the council beyond the obvious necessity of putting the matter to a vote of members. In the event of such a recommendation not being agreed to, the council would have no power to ask, much less to force, acceptance.*

## 50 Years Ago

Under the heading "Lady President for R.P.S.V." *Philately from Australia*, September 1974, reported on the election of Myra Farley to President of the Royal Philatelic Society of Victoria at the Society's annual meeting on 18 July 1974:

*Miss Farley has been one of Victoria's outstanding philatelic personalities and has been an energetic and devoted member of the Society for more than twenty years. She was Secretary for six years, from 1956 to 1962, and this period saw much of the work associated with the acquisition of the Society's headquarters [6 Avoca Street, South Yarra]. Her interest in philately sprang from ANPEX 1950 in the Melbourne Town Hall, and throughout her membership she has been a driving force in connection with all the Society's social activities. She has been a member of Council since 1971 and was one of the foundation recipients of the J.R.W. Purves Medal. Miss Farley's collecting interests are United States and France and she has been President of the U.S.A. Specialists' Society. She is also a member of the Royal Philatelic Society, London, the Royal Sydney Philatelic Club and the American Philatelic Society, as well as the U.S.A. Specialists' Society and the Women's Philatelic Society, Melbourne. Miss Farley says her aim during her year of office will be to foster and develop the spirit of friendship which has been a feature of the Society.*

# Royal News

## New members

The Society has gained five new members: **Malcolm BROWN** (WA), **Malcolm PRICE** (England), **George WESTERN** (USA), **Gerard McCULLOCH** (Vic.) and **Jon TIERNAN** (NSW), whose applications have been accepted by Council. We wish them a long and happy association with the RPSV.

## 50-Year members

**E.W. (Edward) BRETNALL** marks 50 years of membership of the Society this year. A luncheon is planned to celebrate the occasion, which will be attended by Edward and Mrs Brentnall. **Hubert DU GUESCLIN**, our Perth member, also celebrates 50 years of membership this year but, unfortunately, Hubert will not be able to travel to Melbourne to attend the luncheon. The luncheon will be held

on Monday, 17 June. To book, please contact the Secretary, Bill Clark: [bill@cattani.com.au](mailto:bill@cattani.com.au)

## Nominations for Council

Nominations for office bearers and other members of Council for 2024-2025 must be in the hands of the Secretary no later than Thursday, 15 August. The Annual General Meeting will be held on Thursday, 19 September, commencing at 7.00 p.m.

## Special General Meeting

A Special General Meeting is planned to be held about one month prior to the Annual General Meeting on 19 September. The Special General Meeting will vote on proposals to modernize the Rules of the Society. A quorum is required and members are urged to attend this important meeting. The meeting will be held on Thursday, 15 August at 7.00 pm, one half hour ahead of the evening meeting.

## SOCIETY SYLLABUS

[www.rpsv.org.au](http://www.rpsv.org.au)

### July

- 2 (Tue) 1.00 pm Daytime Meeting, **Members' Six-Sheet Display**
- 10 (Wed) 7.30 pm Postal History Group
- 18 (Thu) 7.30 pm **Australian Commonwealth Missing Colours: Richard Guy OAM**
- 27 (Sat) 2.00 pm Library Afternoon

### August

- 6 (Tue) 1.00 pm Daytime Meeting, **Samuel Calvert Woodblocks: Kevin Keast**
- 14 (Wed) 7.30 pm Postal History Group
- 15 (Thur) 7.00 pm **Special General Meeting**

15 (Thu) 7.30 pm **Kenya King George VI: A specialised study of stamps, social and postal history: Ronnie Winchester**

29 (Thu) 8.00 pm **A Social Postal History of NSW: Stephen Browne (ZOOM)**

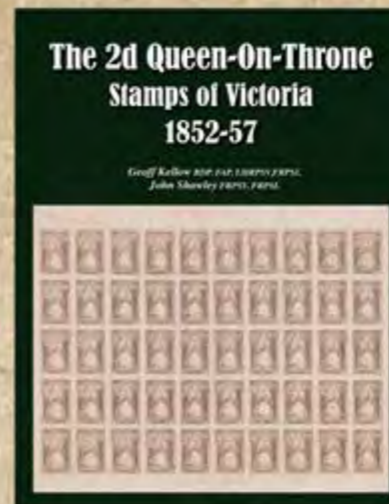
31 (Sat) 2.00 pm Library Afternoon

### September

- 3 (Tue) 1.00 pm Daytime Meeting, **"This & That": Helen Watson**
- 11 (Wed) 7.30 pm Postal History Group
- 19 (Thu) 7.00 pm **132nd Annual General Meeting; Retiring President's Display**
- 28 (Sat) 2.00 pm Library Afternoon

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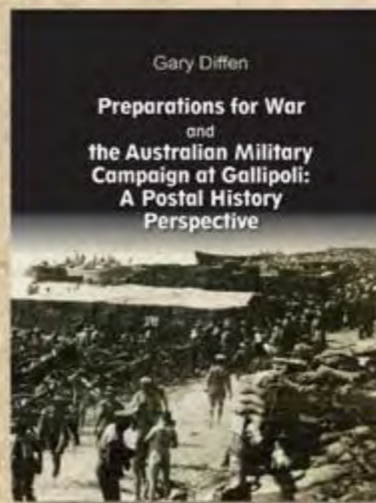
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