



Internet Philatelic Dealers Association, Inc.

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EDITORIAL WELCOME

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Hello again everyone. Did anyone see January? I missed it. Where did the time go? And we have another 6 page issue. That is three months running. Unless I get lots of material from you I do expect to get back to 4 pages in the March issue.

Lots of reading this issue. I do hope you can find the time as I think there is some interesting and useful material here. Thanks to contributors as always.

Highlight of my philatelic month was getting covers carried on the first two A380 flights to the Antarctica. Maybe you have read about these flights. Very popular with those who want to see the place and of course aviation people.

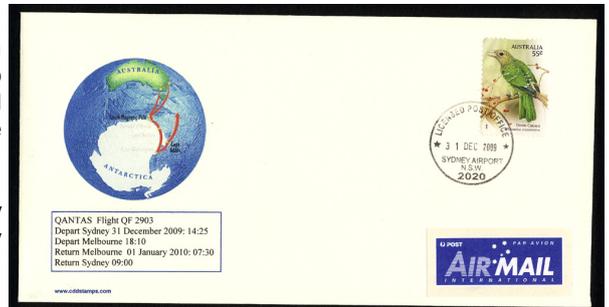
The first flight left Sydney for Melbourne and then on to Antarctica on December 31st and returned to Melbourne and then Sydney on January 1st. I had covers on that flight, and they were signed by the Flight Deck Crew. see images—>

On 24th January there was a direct Sydney Antarctica flight. Covers also on that and signed by the Captain and a few Cabin Crew.

To make a treble this year (recent past years there has only been one 747 flight to Antarctica on New Years eve) there will be a Valentines Day flight. On a 747. Sadly I cannot treat my wife to the 12 plus hours on a plane ;-) but I will have covers being carried. These flights are, as you guessed, sightseeing flights and while using Qantas aircraft they are organized by a travel company here in Sydney / Melbourne and really independent of Qantas themselves. Except that they provided aircraft and crew!

If you are interested in first flight covers please enjoy the pictures on my web site. And if you have customers who are interested I would be extremely grateful if you passed on my web site details; this is the link to my [A380 Cover Catalogue](#) or just www.cddstamps.com

Best wishes and I hope you enjoy this issue*Michael*



MEMBERS CORNER

Stamp of the month

First a big welcome to Kevin Drake. Kevin has been a stamp dealer for a long time selling mostly through mail bid auctions, at fairs and mailing lists. He is a long time member of the NZSDAA, New Zealand's stamp dealers society. Last year he established a web site as a start towards becoming an internet based dealer. Kevin is currently selling on eBay, TradeMe and BidX (the last two are NZ sites) and Xtion in Australia. His web site is www.stampsandcoins.co.nz

The following may not be 100% complete but there are members who run auctions and it might be generous if we promoted these to our customers if the material is something we don't have for sale. Let's help each other when and where we can. If there are others of you I have missed please do not hesitate to correct me and send me details so I can share with everyone.

- David Wood** M'ship # 106 --Premier Postal Auctions -- web site: www.premierpostal.com David's site maybe the largest auction operated by one of our members – well worth visiting. David is also part owner of another new large auction site called PHOENIX Auctions: web site : www.PhoenixAuctions.com.au
- Bruce McLean** M'ship # 116--Stamps for Collectors – web site - www.bmclean.com.uk
- Ian Boulton** M'ship #167 – Ace Stamp Auctions -- Web site: www.acestampauctions.com
- Steve Fletcher** M'ship #158 -- Da Hub Gone Postal auction -- web site: www.dahubb.com.au

EBAY NEWS

Picking up the eBay theme from last months articles I share this with you. Reprinted with the kind permission of Mark Rosenberg, President bidStart / StampWants .

Ebay is up to their old tricks again with their latest announcement made earlier today. With the headline “Our lowest insertion fees ever coming this spring: free auction-style listings; fixed price as low as 3c with full search exposure” you would expect that selling on ebay is going to be less expensive. At the very least you would think that auction-style listings will soon be free to list. However, nothing could be further from the truth. The headline itself is so misleading it should be considered an outright lie!

In many cases, sellers will soon be paying 50%-200% more in fees to ebay. Even if you have read ebay's entire announcement you may have very well overlooked this because almost all of the fee increases were hidden on a separate 'details' page. However, once all the details are taken into account, it's easy to see past ebay's deceit. For example, the headline mentions “Free auction-style listings.” However, this only applies to auction-style listings 99 cents and under (with further restrictions as well). As for the fixed price listings (which are replacing store listings) at 3c per item per month? That rate only applies if you subscribe to a \$299.95 per month Anchor store subscription.

You can review most of the fee increases on ebay's announcement 'details' page directly [on ebay here](#). Keep in mind you'll still need to scroll down the page past even more spin to get to the actual details. To help get past the trickery, we'll give you an overview as well. First, let's take a look at the new insertion and final value fees for auction-style listings (some categories may have different fees):

Old		New	
Starting Price	Insertion Fees	Starting Price	Insertion Fees
\$0.01–\$0.99	\$0.15	\$0.01–\$0.99	FREE!* / \$0.10
\$1.00–\$9.99	\$0.35	\$1.00–\$9.99	\$0.25
\$10.00–\$24.99	\$0.55	\$10.00–\$24.99	\$0.50
\$25.00–\$49.99	\$1.00	\$25.00–\$49.99	\$0.75
\$50.00–\$199.99	\$2.00	\$50.00–\$199.99	\$1.00
\$200.00-\$499.99	\$3.00	\$200 & up	\$2.00
\$500.00	\$4.00	Selling Price	Final Value Fee
Selling Price	Final Value Fee	Item Not Sold	No Fee
Item Not Sold	No Fee	\$0.01-\$24.99	8.75%
\$0.01-\$24.99	8.75%	\$25.00-\$1,000.00	3.50%
\$25.00-\$1,000.00	3.50%	\$1,000.01 & up	1.50%
\$1,000.01 & up	1.50%	\$0.01 & up	9.00% (\$50 cap)

* All Final Value Fees are inclusive. Example, for an item \$25.01-\$1000 you would pay 8.75% of the initial \$25.00 (\$2.19), plus 3.50% of the remaining closing value balance

* Up to 100 items per month, without a store subscription

As you can see, there are no longer tiers for final value fees of auction-style listings. According to ebay they decided to help sellers by making the final value fee a simple flat rate of 9% (with a \$50 cap). There reasoning behind this is that sellers not only won't mind higher fees if they are easier to calculate, but sellers should prefer them!

Now for a look at some examples. What fees are you currently paying, and will you soon be paying when you list an item at auction for \$40, and it sells for \$65? Currently on ebay this would cost you \$4.59 in total fees. By March, when ebay's new fees take effect you'll be paying \$6.60 in total fees, an increase of 44%. List and sell an auction at \$150? That would cost \$8.57 currently, and will soon cost a total of \$14.50 in fees, an increase of 69%! For comparison, on bidStart that same item would cost \$5.62 in total fees, almost a third the cost (and even less currently for non-stamp items).

In ebay's defense, you can save on final value fees for auctions by subscribing to a store subscription. However, you'll need to pay a monthly store subscription fee, and while the final value fees for auction-style listings are tiered with a store subscription, they're still higher than they are now.

Store subscriptions themselves are drastically changing as well. To start, store subscriptions will no longer allow sellers to list store items. Store items will be replaced by fixed price 30 day listings. Depending on the level of store subscription you have, you'll pay different listing fees for fixed price 30 day listings (which your store listings will be automatically converted to in March).

Old

Store Item Price	\$1.00-\$24.99	\$25.00-\$199.99	\$200.00+
Insertion Fee	\$0.03	\$0.05	\$0.10

New (Per 30 Days)

Fixed Price Insertion Fees				
eBay Stores Level	Anchor (\$299.95/month)	Premium (\$49.95/month)	Basic (\$15.95/month)	Standard Fees (non-subscriber)
Insertion Fee	\$0.03	\$0.05	\$0.20	\$0.50

EBAY NEWS .. CONT'D

While each seller will need to figure out what their own costs will be, in most cases the cost to maintain a store will be skyrocketing. For example currently a store owner with a basic store subscription who has 1,000 items between \$1.00 and \$24.99 pays \$30.00 in insertion fees, plus a \$15.95 store subscription. In March the insertion fees alone with a basic store subscription will be \$200.00! A store owner could upgrade to a premium store subscription, to save some money. However, this would result in \$50.00 for insertion fees, plus a \$49.95 store subscription. So total monthly store listing/subscription fees would increase from \$45.95 a month to \$99.95 a month - over a 100% increase! Final Value fees in most categories for items under \$25 remain the same at 12%, and are slightly less than they are now for items over \$25. So overall, if you own a store on ebay expect to be paying significantly more than ever before. Or, you could switch to bidStart!

With the recent launch of our new collectible categories, very low selling fees and unrivaled customer service, there's never been a better time to switch to bidStart. Especially with the recent antics of ebay! We also offer an easy ebay sync process, which lets you copy all of your current ebay store and fixed price listings to bidStart. In as little as 2 minutes you can set up a store on bidStart, and schedule all of your ebay listing to be imported, whether you have 1,000 or 50,000 listings.

Our sync process not only imports your listings, but can keep your listings on bidStart automatically synced with your ebay listings. We can automatically add any new listings to bidStart which you add on ebay, and end any listings on bidStart which you end or sell on ebay. So why not import your listings today, experience the benefits and low cost of bidStart over the next few months, and then once your ebay fees skyrocket you can make the switch over exclusively to bidStart! If you don't personally list items on ebay yourself, be sure to tell everyone you know. As always, we'd love to hear from you, and will promptly respond to your email. Just reply to this message, or use the 'Contact Us' form on our website if you have any questions, or would like any additional information.

Mark Rosenberg, President, bidStart / StampWants

BOOKS — STANLEY GIBBONS

Collect British Stamps 2010 Edition - A new issue of Collect British Stamps has been issued - so I recently read. I have not seen a copy but I read it is in a larger format and has been completely redesigned. There is an extensively revised introductory section which includes a Commemorative Design Index, with a survey of useful equipment (what does that mean?), and information on storing stamps safely. This sounds like it will be useful I would think, but until I see it I can comment no further. Anyone seen a copy? And would like to comment?

The catalogue also contains articles on Machins, and the London 2010 Festival of Stamps. Stamps are catalogued up to the Christmas issue 2009. The catalogue is a simplified listing of stamps from the 1840 Penny Black up to the 2009 Christmas stamps. The listings includes all stamps with different watermark or perforation, visible plate numbers on the Victorian issues, graphite lined and phosphor issues, including in the numbers of phosphor bands. The catalogue includes first day covers for definitives from 1936, regionals and all special issues, presentation packs, post office yearbooks, war occupation stamps of Guernsey and Jersey, Guernsey, Jersey and Isle of Man stamps issued before postal independence, postage due and official stamps, Post Office picture cards (PHQ), commemorative gutter pairs and traffic light gutter pairs. Price £12.95

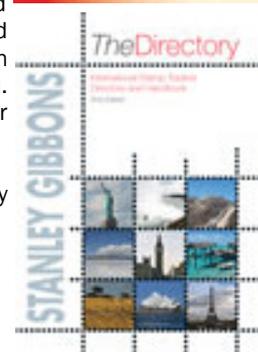
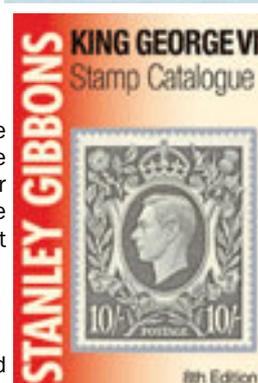
KING GEORGE VI STAMP CATALOGUE 8TH EDITION

Published December 2009. This new edition of the King George VI stamp catalogue will be invaluable to the collector of this extraordinarily popular area of collecting. It is now up-to-date and in line with the Commonwealth & Empire Stamps 2010 and contains definitive information about the stamps of this popular reign. Completely redesigned into the new Stanley Gibbons format with increased page size and attractive design, transforming the ease of use and accessibility of the information. Includes stamps issued both Great Britain and Commonwealth countries during the reign of King George VI. Price £34.95

THE DEALER DIRECTORY 1ST EDITION

Published December 2009. According to SG this is the most authoritative international directory and handbook for philately. SG say it is essential reading for all those interested and involved in philately, and that this handbook provides a wealth of up-to-date information on contacts in the area, helping collectors find the right dealers to assist in enhancing their collections. As well as contact details, many listings contain details of dealer specialities and indices to help you find exactly the right dealer in the right location for you. Dealers and Auction Houses are listed, many with their phone and email contact details. Societies list their area of interest as well as current contact information. Organised by geographical region.

I was advised by email from SG that I have a listing in this, with my private address!!!. They never asked my permission. Anyone know anything about this Directory? Price £9.95



DISTANCE SELLING REGULATIONS – UK

Alan Devine, our Membership Secretary is a member of the ADPS in the UK. He receives their monthly Bulletin. Alan writes to tell us that in this month's Bulletin there is interesting information that he had not seen before. Apparently in 2000 the UK the government established a set of regulations called the Distance Selling Regulations. These apply to the stamp industry as well as all other industries who sell on the internet, TV, phone or fax.

Alan thought this article might be of interest to and useful for our members. The article follows below and is reprinted with permission from Malcolm Tudor who made the original report and from the ADPS Secretary to use the article. The article describes special rights which buyers enjoy in the UK. No wonder eBay could not introduce the new rules which they tried to introduce here. Also, Alan notes that the regulations are not in conflict with the way we like to manage our own sales or our code of ethics or the rules belonging to the Confidential List.

Many thanks Alan.

Distance selling Regulations—by Malcom Tudor

Online and mail order shoppers have special rights under UK Distance Selling regulations beyond those enjoyed by customers on the high street.

Among other things, the rules require full contact details be provided by the vendor to ensure direct and effective communication.

If you sell goods or services to customers by:

- The internet
- Digital Television,
- mail order, including catalogue shopping,
- Phone, or
- Fax

Then you need to know about the Consumer protection (Distance Selling) regulations 2000.

The key features of the regulations are:

- You must give consumers clear information including details of the goods or services offered, delivery arrangements and payment, the suppliers details and the consumer's right to cancellation right before they buy (known as prior information)
- You must also provide this information in writing
- The consumer has a cooling-off period of seven working days.

Full details are available from the Office of Fair Trading at www.oft.gov.uk

APS NEWS - SHOW LISTINGS

In this month's newsletter from the APS is a section about Chapters and Affiliates. As we are a Chapter of the APS this month's news is of interest to us. For our members who do not get their own APS Newsletter; "CHAPTER/AFFILIATE SERVICES - Chapters play an important role in promoting stamp collecting locally, while Affiliates help bring together collectors who share similar interests. Both Chapters and Affiliates are encouraged to take advantage of APS assistance, including Free Show Listings, mailing lists, and e-blasts".

For example: "FREE SHOW LISTINGS:

This column is updated/published monthly in The American Philatelist. To better serve APS members, The American Philatelist publishes upcoming stamp shows with contact information for readers looking for directions to those events. While every effort is made to ensure accuracy, you should check with the specific show contact to verify information. To obtain a listing in this section, submit a "Show Time" form, available online or by mail from APS headquarters. Information must be received 60 days before desired publication time. Listings are free to shows with competitive exhibits sponsored by APS chapters and affiliates. Shows that do not include exhibits are identified with *B* Grand award winners from *WSP* shows are eligible for the annual APS World Series of Philately Champion of Champions competition. All information is subject to change without notice. While every effort is made to ensure accuracy, you should check with the specific show to verify information. The APS website listing includes shows much further in advance than we have space to include here. (Listings are as of January 4, 2010.) (Editors Note: A few are listed below for your information:

Florida: February 5-7: Sarasota National Stamp Exhibition, Sarasota Philatelic Club, Sarasota Municipal Auditorium, (US 41) 801 N. Tamiami Trail, Sarasota. Contact Sy Bricker, mto.stamps@gte.net; www.sarasotastampclub.com; 941-933-0919. *WSP*

Ohio: February 5-7: COLOPEX, Columbus Philatelic Club, Franklin County Veterans Memorial Hall, 300 W. Broad Street, Columbus. Contact Chuck Wooster, cwooster@aol.com; <http://www.colopex.com>; 614-560-3689. *WSP*

New York: February 12-14 MetroExpo NY, Metropolitan Expositions LLC, Midtown Holiday Inn, 440 W. 57th Street, New York. Contact Elaine Dunn, shows@stampnewsnow.com; www.metroexpos.com; 603-424-7556. *B*

California: February 19-21 APS AmeriStamp Expo, American Philatelic Society, Riverside Convention Center, Riverside. Contact Dana Guyer, stampshow@stamps.org; www.stamps.org; 814-933-3803 ext 217; Fax 814-933-6128.

Florida: February 27-28 Baypex 2010, Florida Stamp Dealers Association & Clearwater Stamp Club, Honeywell Minnreg Building, 6340 126th Avenue, N., Largo. Contact Sheldon Rogg, h.rogg@verizon.net; www.floridastampshows.com; 727-364-6897.

Regards, A Devine Membership Secretary Internet Philatelic Dealers Association Inc.

A STAMP SALES WEBSITE FROM A DEALERS VIEW PART II

I wrote last month that in the February issue Steve would discuss some decisions you face; notably shipping costs, store layout and design, speed of the site, choosing your site host, customer ease of use, cost efficiency and marketing. I hope you find the second part of his material interesting.



Steve Fletcher Trading as "Da Hub Gone Postal"

Some decisions you face are:

Shipping Costs, choosing a method that suits your Business. I chose a Flat rate cost. This works fine except for International heavy items, where I have to set up extra Payment Items to collect payment.

Store layout and Design, this involves setting up the Product categories, choosing the colour, look and feel of your shop and changing all the little bits & pieces of text that come as standard with your shop setup, but which do not exactly meet YOUR needs.

One very important choice to make is the **quality of images** to use. Use a High quality image and the site takes a long time to load, choose a low grade image and you do get quicker loading, but at the cost of being able to see what you are looking at. My choice was to go with the High Quality images, because you as a customer have the right to see what you are about to buy. Also if you list as many items as I do, it is virtually impossible to point out any thing except major faults, eg pulled perfs etc. I try to avoid listing any items that are sub standard. I work on the principle that it is better not to have the problem in the first place, rather than to have to fix it afterwards. However listing over 10000 lots does get errors, mixed up lots. Mostly I have about 5 returns a year, almost always because I have missed a Hinge or some gum disturbance and call the item MUH. This I settle by a no argument returns policy. Send it back, money back or replacement and I reimburse postage as well. Mistakes happen I would love it if they didn't but Fixing it Instantly is the only way to handle this.

Speed of the site is very important. The more you put on the page the slower it loads, but the easier it is to use. You have to make a trade off with this. Nowadays Broadband is becoming more & more the norm. My call on this is to go for the larger images and bigger pages.

A particular example is in the menus. Do you use a text menu system, or a Button Image menu. The text system loads quickly, but looks ordinary, the button system loads slower but looks better, Currently I am running with the Buttons, but shortly will install an add on Module to the Software that uses a Drop down Menu System. Faster & better looking, I am still working on it, but early January should see that installed.

Choosing your Site Host also plays a big part. Do not cut corners with your choice of Web Host, it will be money well spent to go with a Dedicated Hosting Company. Firstly you will get Speed and Reliability, secondly you will get Backup & Service.

I use a company in Europe called SiteGround, which is a dedicated Hosting Company, I am not sure but I believe it is the Worlds largest. I chose them because of their Speed, reliability and the Quality of their Backend Administration Panel. They have push button Script installs, ftp access, and super fast Service Help. Plus they do special installs & upgrades at \$50 a job. Not the cheapest, but RELIABLE, which goes a long way for me.

The other alternative is to go with one of the dozen or so Dedicated Zen cart Hosting Services, a Google search & an hour or so will find them. They offer superb Zen cart (or other Software) specific hosting & service, with product specific expertise. Good for the business that would like to pay to the work to be done. My choice was based on needing more than just a Shopping Cart, I host Pictures, a full Website, Several other php scripts and need more than a one software specialist.

Here is the one that will cause most pain. **Customer Ease of Use**. It is just a fact that all software has a learning Curve, quite steep at times. From the Stamp point of view, by far the majority of Collectors are in the Older Age Bracket. Technology & Web Site navigation may not be intuitive for them. The choice you have here is giving too much Information & help, versus giving too little.

Ideally a customer should **know** that to place an order they need to register, (you would never think of trying to buy something on eBay if you were not logged in & Registered, but there is an expectation that it will work "magically" on a Private website) then place an order. However as every piece of Software that Sells something does it in a different way, there is really NO SET STANDARD. Sometimes you can go to a shop , add things to your Cart & checkout, sometimes you have to Register and login before you do this. The System I use does both, You can place an order, by adding items to your cart, then proceeding to the Checkout, and at this stage you will be given the opportunity to Register. Preferably you will Register First, then Login and Start Shopping. The advantage of this is that you can go away & come back a day later and the items you placed in your cart will still be there.

The problem that you face as a Web site Designer is WHERE to put all of this Information needed to work a Shopping cart. Putting it on the Front Page is an idea, but then you end up with an awful lot of text on your Front Page. The other alternative is to put it in Separate pages in the Menu, generally this is the better option. The less cluttered you can make the front page the better, both for speed & appearance. However this is another of the many Trade Offs you have to consider, because my experience has been that very few people wish to click a menu item page to find out exactly what they need to do to best use a Site. The urge is to just click away and expect it to meet your expectations. Of course everybody has different expectations and experience. Meeting these can be a Challenge !!

A STAMP SALES WEBSITE FROM A DEALERS VIEW PART II cont'd.

The solution, I believe is to go the way of the Minimalist Front Page and put as much Information in the menu Pages as you can. Naturally this makes for a lot of reading, and I constantly get Questions, which have already been given answers, on some other page, But, not the page that the person was expecting to find them in.

I think human nature is to be impatient, as a Web Designer you need to respond to all comments, and implement them as quickly as you can. Also make a VERY CLEAR Customer Contact Button, so that comments can be made easily. A Website is always an Active Changing thing, to stop changing makes it Static and it soon gets Boring. I do updates on a nearly daily basis, however doing them Weekly should be a Minimum.

You can see that there are a lot of options available , however most require that you lose some feature to gain another. Without doubt the hardest part of all is making your Store CONSUMER FRIENDLY. This takes a lot of testing & listening.

Lastly, because this is written for IPDA members, it is a given that **Cost efficiency and Marketing** be considered. Doing it yourself versus Employing somebody.

If you are able to do it yourself, you will be significantly in front financially, however you may have less functionality, or lesser appearance according to your skill level. I have spent MANY HUNDREDS of hours building my Site. I could only do it if the majority of work was done by myself.

Take the task of **Listing items**. Stamp Describing & Listing is a slow business, on a Good day I can get 100 items done from scratch, Described, priced, scanned & uploaded. If I was to pay somebody, you can budget at least \$2 a listing in costs, before Cost of Goods. Therefore listing small items is unlikely to be cost effective. As a Self lister, I can get away by using an average and ignore the cost of listing, I put it down to part of a Hobby, something that cannot happen for a Mainline Dealer. Also the cost of Software Development is about \$50 per Hour or job if you use external labour. I do 90% myself & contract out the bits I find too hard. I always get New Modules Professionally Installed, messing up the Core Code is not fun !

Marketing, needs to be considered. With eBay, Oztion, StampWants, Delcampe etc, they all come with built in Customers, what you have to do is attract their attention from a List of many Sellers. With your own Store & Domain you are ENTIRELY responsible for generating your store traffic. I use an email Mailing List, built up over the last 5 Years, and sent out something every 2 weeks on average, this costs about \$20 per Month for my List, and uses a Professional List Management Company. An absolute requirement to comply with Anti-Spam laws, it gives the recipient access to delete themselves from the list, change email & update details themselves. I also Take a Monthly ¼ Page Advert in Stamp News, plus making sure that my Main Page has all the required Meta data & descriptions to attract the Web Search Engines. I do not expect to make a Success of this in under a year. This is the Third time I have built my Online Stamp Business from Scratch. Making the Decision to Take My destiny into my own hands, is something I feel very happy I have taken the step to do.

I am fortunate that being a Pensioner, I do not have the cash flow requirements of a Bricks & Mortar dealer, but I do this 24/7 so my Commitment to my Stamp Business and Hobby is 100%.

Hope you enjoy your foray into Online Stamp sales, it has its own sets of Challenges & rewards.Steve Fletcher

WANTED: GB Kiloware – GB commemoratives 2005 through 2010 on paper preferred. Will pay top price for top quality with no, or very few, Christmas issues and no, or very few, Machins.

Can anyone help? Write to me at michaelatipda@gmail.com

Want to ask another member a question or search for stamps etc – email me at michaelatipda@gmail.com and I'll place your request here

CLOSING REMARKS

Well there is a lot of text in this issue but I hope you enjoyed the articles. My thanks to Steve Fletcher for his piece. Very informative and complete. I look forward to receiving your letters over the coming month and any ideas for articles, or articles themselves.

As I said in January, please don't forget, one of our objectives this year is to grow our membership; not for purely financial reasons although that is always useful, but for the reason we want to promote to collectors and buyers the value to them from buying from dealers and sellers who are members of a recognised Association like the IPDA. The more we see some of the less than desirable activities on eBay and other auction sites the more this may start to change buyer habits; that is to want to buy from recognised and accredited dealers and sellers, especially IPDA Members.

Enjoy your stamps and stamp colleagues..... Best wishes, *Michael*