



NEWSLETTER FEBRUARY 2012

EDITORIAL WELCOME

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Happy New Year to everyone. Kung hei fat choy as they say here in Hong Kong, because it is now 2012 in the Chinese new year.

The Year of the Dragon, as we all know from the many stamp issuing authorities around the world that have issued stamps to commemorate the event. We have just celebrated the New Year as I write, and what a great place to be at such a time.



Hong Kong Miniature Sheet \$10 Year of the Dragon Commemorative

Will the new year for the IPDA be prosperous and will our members have the success I wish you all? I hope so. We are often asked what value do members get from belonging to the IPDA. That is a hard question to answer in some ways. I look at other organizations and wonder the same thing. I won't mention names but it does occur to me that the value I get from those organizations is equal to or greater than the contribution I make. And to be honest I make little contribution. Spare time is not something I have a lot of, and what spare time I do have I use for my stamps, my writings and the IPDA

To help get value from the IPDA I believe we must make a contribution. Whether it be through helping us promote the IPDA through our personal and business dealings or just advertising the IPDA logo on our websites and sales listings. The more the buying public see value from buying from an IPDA member the more the word will spread and the more value I think we can expect to get from being a member. It really is up to us in many ways, don't you think?

As I have mentioned before, to celebrate our 10th Anniversary we will be holding a marathon chat. Some members have expressed, WHY? What is the point. Well it is one way to get more people aware of the IPDA. Past chats have had quite good turnouts. Yes, it is a networking opportunity. And yes it can be fun and light hearted at the same time. In this global world we have Twitter and Facebook and Linked-in and many other social media forums. A chat room is just one more. I do hope you can visit the room. Join in and promote your web site or auction sales perhaps? The options are up to your imagination and chat skills maybe :-). In fact we are looking for members to host an hour and be the moderator. If you want to volunteer just write to Bob Bechtel at Robert@packetplus.com. He will be most pleased to hear from you. If you want to look at the times please have a look at <http://www.packetsplus.com/IPDAChattimes.html>

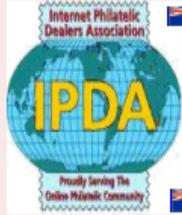
I mentioned in the January issue we would be issuing a Commemorative cover. I have completed the production and packing of these now. They will be sent to arrive soon after 23rd February. If you do not receive one please write to me at michaelatipda@gmail.com. This is a limited edition. I do hope you like it and perhaps you can find a way to use it to show off the IPDA.

Stamp of the Month

I have a bit of a blue theme in this issue, just happened that way, it was not deliberate. I think this is stunning so thought you might to see it - issued by Hong Kong Post - one of the Year of the Dragon issue.



Best Wishes**Michael** michaelatipda@gmail.com



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Volume 10 Issue 2

STAMP MARKET TRENDS PART 1 CHINA

In the last issue there was a small piece about stamps trends. Difficult to know where to research this type of trend commentary and much of what is published always has the blah blah blah copyright tag. Never enough time to write and ask permission to use but hey since we are a not for profit organisation perhaps some leniency if we clearly state the source and acknowledge copyright and promote them at the same time. All this as a precursor to a piece I read recently from Stanley Gibbons on the Chinese market. Perhaps an investment portfolio not in our league but all the same perhaps an indication of the trend that continues to see the Chinese stamp market a hot investment. I seems to have been that way for many years. And, Published with the kind permission of Keith Heddle from Stanley Gibbons.

“In the Year of the Dragon, take advantage of the Chinese stamp market. As the Year of the Dragon begins, the Chinese market is still flying - with potentially great rewards for the smart investor; just don't get burnt.

The Chinese have been quick to recognise an opportunity and in rare stamps, they appreciate the portability, the tangibility and the potential for wealth retention and growth - further fuelled by recently found freedoms post the Cultural Revolution (where stamp collecting was banned as bourgeois).

That, the energy and the sheer numbers involved are powering the market - so it makes sense to take advantage now. In short:

Demand is outstripping supply

The potential returns for expertly-selected, rare stamps are high

The rarest examples have a value cultural icons, increasing their investment value

The wave of Chinese money that entered into the markets for fine wine, art and antiques is quietly but steadily flowing into the world of stamp collecting - and the returns are starting to follow the patterns of these other investment markets.

However, I must sound a note of caution. In the relative rush to acquire rare stamps and other prestige collectibles, quality and authenticity are often being overlooked by many merchants and auction houses. The prices for certain stamps are coursing away, powered by speculators, by cultural factors and a lot of it driven by an eagerness to get a slice of the action.

At the same time, certain buyers and sellers, in their desire to capitalise on the market, have not been mindful of the key factors that make stamps truly valuable - principally rarity and condition, but also does a long term market even exist for the stamp or stamps?

More than any other merchant of prestige collectibles in the world, Stanley Gibbons understand these factors; our 156 year history of expert dealing is testament to that. That is why we have been buying carefully and (we trust) wisely, focusing consistently on quality and rarity. As the Chinese market matures and potentially slows its pace, it is these expertly-selected items in premium condition that will continue to hold their value and appreciate.”



One of the famous 'red revenues'

This mint example from 1897 ('small figures' 2c on 3c deep red, error such inverted, fresh large part o.g.), is very rare and one of the finest unused examples of this stamp Picture from Stanley Gibbons

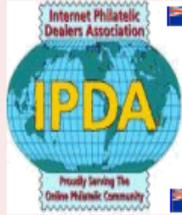
For more information readers can contact Keith at investment@stanleygibbons.com

STAMP MARKET TRENDS PART II GENERAL

Another stamps trend piece that I came across recently was here

<http://stampselector.blogspot.com/2012/01/general-commentary-has-bull-in-china.html> I do think you will enjoy reading this site. The blog not only talks about China but there are many pieces on other areas. The by-line to the blog is

“STAMPSELECTOR IS AN ONLINE PHILATELIC INVESTMENT AND STAMP MARKET RESOURCE, PROVIDING PRACTICAL INFORMATION FOR STAMP COLLECTORS, STAMP DEALERS, AND INVESTORS. THIS INCLUDES STAMP INVESTMENT TIPS, GENERAL COMMENTARY ON THE STAMP MARKET, AND PRACTICAL ADVICE REGARDING BUILDING A STAMP COLLECTION AND PROFITING FROM PHILATELY”



SCARE STAMPS

Another interesting blog <http://stampquantities.blogspot.com/> This listing is a perpetual work in progress - an incomplete listing of stamps with printings of 100,000 or fewer. It currently contains over 9,700 entries, and will be updated periodically. Quantities Issued information is vital to those interested in investing in stamps.

Editor Footnote: Have a favourite stamp? or should I say a favourite you would like to own?.

This is mine. 1935 2 1/2p Prussian Blue Color Error, Scott No: 229a,, SG 456a – Quantity issued 360 (as per “stampquantities”)

There is some debate on this number. I have read that 480 were issued and that Stanley Gibbons believes there are around 200 in existence today.

This stamp is considered one of the great philatelic errors of the 20th century. If you want to read more about this stamp I recommend <http://www.philatel2.com/jubilee/id278.htm>

The Prussian Blue was a colour trial, along with the ultramarine colour.

King George V chose the ultramarine but the printers, Harrisons and Sons, inadvertently printed and perforated some sheets in Prussian blue.

All except 6 sheets were destroyed and it has been reported that 3 of these were issued to the Edmonton Post Office where they were bought, some being used on letters to friends of the buyer.



The 'Prussian Blue' shade is much darker than normal



The Normal 1935 Silver Jubilee Stamp

SCARE STAMPS - MAURITIUS 2D BLUE

Keeping on the theme of rare and blue stamps I thought you might enjoy reading this. This concerns Mr James Bonar who, back in 1903, was coming to the end of his career as a senior civil servant in London and was clearing out his house in Hampstead. He came across a sixpenny pocket-book which he had briefly used as a stamp album when he had been momentarily infected by the stamp-collecting bug forty years earlier. He laid the booklet aside, meaning to give it to his grandson (the late J.J. Bonar of Edinburgh, one of Scotland's leading philatelists of the 20th century). Unluckily for him, however, his grandfather casually mentioned his schoolboy album to a Miss Thomas, a family friend, and as she had some knowledge of philately she agreed to cast her eye over it.

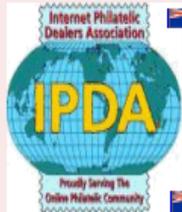
It was the typical haphazard accumulation of a schoolboy and contained little of interest, until Miss Thomas turned to the page headed 'Mauritius'. There, to her astonishment, she found an unused specimen of the 2d blue with generous margins on all four sides. James Bonar was at a loss to explain how he had acquired this stamp. Even by 1864, when he stuck it in his album, it was a well-known rarity. It is possible that he was given it by the Postmaster of Mauritius back in 1847 when the stamp was issued.

Acting on Miss Thomas's advice, James Bonar took the stamp to Neville Stocken of Puttick & Simpson. He pronounced the stamp genuine and said that it would make four figures at auction. Unfortunately Bonar had stuck the stamp into his album with gum which had discoloured the stamp. Stocken carefully cut the stamp from the page and boiled it to discharge the gum and remove the backing paper.

Although the stamp has no gum it is the finest specimen of the 2d and its appearance in the auction on 13 January 1904 created widespread interest. C.J. Phillips, acting on behalf of the Reichspost Museum in Berlin, took the bidding to £1,400, but M. Crawford made the winning bid of £1,450.

The following morning, Sir Arthur Bigge, private secretary to the Prince of Wales (later King George V) commented, 'I see some silly bugger has paid a fortune for a tuppenny stamp.' The prince said quietly, 'I was that silly bugger.' Today, the 2d Post Office Mauritius is one of the greatest gems in the Royal Collection at Buckingham Palace.





DEALERS CORNER

This piece is for you, all members. You write to me with ideas. Here are a few and with many thanks to member Vince Sgro (APS Life member) who recently wrote to me. Vince writes that he is looking start a website. He currently sells through eBay. What advice do we have for him. I recall we wrote a piece on this some years ago. Anyone remember this issue. Maybe I can search for it and send him that. I think we actually did a two part series but I forget the year, let alone the month.

Anyway, back to the theme, Are there items in your collecting or selling field(s) of interest that you see as being in demand, either because it is what your customers are asking for, or you see reflected in the prices that can be realised. Please share your experiences with us all. Experience we can all learn from perhaps.

Perhaps we can create a page on the IPDA web site or I can publish material here that will show material in demand, or even philatelic products. One thing I have found here in Hong Kong is that I can buy good quality magnifying glasses at a very cheap price, also tweezers, plastic covers, and stock albums for example. I have thought of exploring this myself but just not got around to it. If anyone is interested let me know and I'll pass some details to you if you do not already have a good contact(s) in China.

Would you be interested in writing a piece for this newsletter — such as a stamp market report—or perhaps you have read an interesting stamp market report and can send it to me for republication here. I'll get approvals as required. All you have to do is send me the details and contacts.

MAXICARDS

Is this a subject you have an interest in? Or maybe your customers do. I recently wrote to the President of the Maximum Card Study Unit (MACSU) to promote our 10th Anniversary to him, and hopefully his members. He sent me a copy of the recent issue of their *North American Maximaphily; Journal of the Maximum Card Study Unit*. Any one interested I will send on to you if you write to me at michaelatipda@gmail.com. They are MACSU Affiliate # 106 of the American Philatelic Society, and Chapter # 67 of the American First Day Society. A subject taken very seriously it would seem, judging by this piece. <http://indipex2011-mc.blogspot.com/>

CHINA'S 'ANGRY DRAGON' STAMP

And talking about taking things seriously. How about this stamps and the reaction to it's issue.

Issued in China to mark the Year of the Dragon it has sparked uproar among the public because the dragon is thought to look "too fierce". One Chinese writer is quoted as saying she was "scared to death" on seeing the image of the creature with its claws, scales and bared teeth.

China Post, which produced the stamp, insists it is a perfect combination of history and modernity. The stamp's designer says a tough image was needed for a powerful creature.

"Among everyday people, the dragon is thought to exorcise evil spirits, avert disasters and give blessings, so we need a tough image," Chen Shaohua is quoted by the China Daily as saying. The dragon has been a symbol of Chinese imperial power for centuries. But media figures and people posting on Chinese blog sites have said the image is inappropriate and too ferocious. The controversy has not stopped people from queuing for the stamp, with many post offices reporting that the stamp sold out on the first day.



CLOSING REMARKS

Ok, time to finish this issue. **Please do not forget the IPDA 10th Anniversary.** The chat on the 25th / 26th February, and the Anniversary cover I hope you all enjoy. And, is there someway you can help promote the IPDA. At the stamp shows you attend, in your shop, on your web site, on your auction listings, or through your participation in one way or another.

I can send you publicity material and an IPDA logo if you need it. Articles for future issues always make me happy and even subjects to write about. We have ideas for improving the value you get from the IPDA and your Board is trying to do just that. Have a great Year of the Dragon. email me at michaelatipda@gmail.com

I look forward to hearing from you :-) **Michael**