

NEWSLETTER DECEMBER 2007

EDITORIAL WELCOME



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Hello everyone. Merry Christmas to you and your families, friends and customers. Welcome to the last Newsletter for 2007.

Hardly seems possible that the year has gone by so quickly and I have now managed my 8th issue of this Newsletter. I have certainly enjoyed writing the material and I guess from the comments or absence of them that you have not been displeased with it :-). Thanks to those of you who have contributed ideas and articles, in particular Alan, Larry and Chris in more recent issues.

I've chatted about some topics that interest me and which I think are very relevant to us as IPDA members. My opinion is only one and I'm sure there are more experienced views among you so please don't be shy next year – write to me and let's get more of our combined experience and knowledge shared among the membership,

After my recent travels from Singapore to Sydney on the inaugural A380 flights I have become more aware of some of the material and presentation of the material for auction on eBay. I guess we know it exists but turn a blind eye because it is not in our face. Well it got to be in my face because I started watching what was happening and to be honest I got quite a shock. You may be thinking I am naive. Perhaps there is an element of truth in that as well. But I didn't think I would see the extent of the deliberate misrepresentation of material that I have seen. Such is life!!!!

I read Glen Stephens writings on a regular basis and he frequently points out the fake and wrongly described material and the eBay sellers trying to pass these off. And often the buyers that pay for such material. One of my views is that we owe it to the hobby, to philately, to help educate collectors and to establish a reputation as a seller that if we are an IPDA member the buyer can have complete confidence in whatever they are buying. Just imagine if 10% of internet stamp sellers proudly promoted the IPDA logo with their sales; it would not be long before 20% did so, and the buyers from internet auction sites would be wanting to buy from those sellers. I know it is a dream, but that is what we should be thinking of making happen.

OK, on a not so serious matter. Christmas. Well that is serious for many of course, but Christmas presents in particular. What do stamp collectors give stamp collectors for Christmas?

First correct answer will win a..... what..... I don't yet know. I will have to think about it. What would you like as a Christmas present? :-)

I have made my own Christmas cards over the past few years and am thinking of doing so again this year. Very philatelic of course. All entries to the competition I just mentioned above will get one of my Christmas cards, so please send your mailing address when you send the answer to the question. Email me at michaelatipda@gmail.com

Finally, I changed the format in the November issue – because of time. I am keeping it for this issue because it is easier for me to be honest. Feedback on it? Don't be shy and don't think you will offend me. I won't be offended with any comments..

Best wishes, Merry Christmas and I hope to hear lots from you in a successful 2008 *Michael*

A380 ON ANYTHING...

Last month I wrote about the first flight covers I produced for the A380 inaugural commercial flights.

Of course I can understand people wanting to collect covers but some of the other A380 memorabilia, and I suppose you call them souvenirs, that sell on eBay, are quite surprising me.

Perhaps not so much the items themselves but the description given to them and then the prices that are paid. One really did surprise me. It was described as some of the first class give away bags and sold for £77 (GB) I am torn between feeling sorry for the buyer because he or she was really ripped off in my view but hey that is their problem, or feeling angry that the world has these people that will exploit situations, including, in my view, by knowingly misrepresenting what is for auction and have no remorse in doing so. The later, is life and has been so for centuries, so I guess there is no point thinking any more about that.

So what is left. Whether it be stamp collecting or any other product or item, we just have to hope that the buyers will have enough intelligence, common sense and hopefully product knowledge to make an informed bid.

Maybe people are intimidated by the extravagance of the sellers claims, and cannot bring themselves to ask a question for fear of being seen to challenge the seller. Back to stamps. I often get emails asking for explanations of some aspect of philately. Often I use the questions as the prompt for an article on my blog or a posting to a news board. How can you help? Well I think talk to your customers and make sure they understand as much as possible about collecting, about buying, about the risks inherent from buying from some eBay seller with 20 positive feedbacks or even 20,000. Both can be parasites exploiting the free market as they are perfectly entitled to do :-). Being an IPDA member means adding value to your customer. This is one way you can do it. Have your customer want to ask your advice. They will tell their friends about you and your business will grow I suspect.or at least you will feel good about yourself :-). Which reminds me..... I have a few A380 First Flight covers left, mostly signed by crew and captains.....eBay here I come :-)

ANTARCTIC FLIGHT COVERS

I am producing two covers for this flight. One will use the Antarctic Territories Penguin stamp issue. The other will feature a selection of famous Australians who have a connection in some or other with Antarctica, be it explorers or scientists for example.

I had planned to have the design finished to show you, but work and other matters have caused me to miss that idea. I'll show in the January issue, with postal cancellations and crew signatures. Might be more interesting to see. There is some history to these flights to the Antarctic and, as is often the case, the history is known and remembered because of an accident. In the case of these flights to the Antarctic the accident was an Air New Zealand flight on 28 November 1979 that flew into Mount Erebus. See: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Air_New_Zealand_Flight_901



Of philatelic interest, there were some souvenir covers being carried by passengers on that flight, and a few of them have sold for lots of money (in the thousands of dollars). Of course it goes without saying I don't ever want anything to go wrong on flights I am on, or my covers are on.

WRECK & CRASH MAIL SOCIETY

This logically follows from the previous piece because it is the website of the Wreck & Crash Mail Society, -

Have a look at: <http://wreckandcrash.org>. Quite amazing situations that have occurred over the years. The webmaster for the site — and an expert himself on the subject matter is Ken Sanford, one of the Directors of the IPDA. Have a look or just be aware; if you have a customer who is interested in such material you'll have the right place to direct them to.



CHRISTMAS ISSUES

Every collection, every bag of kiloware, every swap, they always seem to contain many Christmas stamps. Not surprising I guess when a majority of people suddenly start sending Christmas cards and parcel presents to friends around the world at this time of year.

But do we really want all these used Christmas stamps. Obviously not or they would not keep appearing in swap packets and in bulk auction lots. One - what I can only think of as an amateur selling stamps to make a few bucks — auction site seller is selling stock cards of GB Commemoratives. Apart from the fact the post cancellations are heavy and there are obviously damaged stamps on the page, even though most of the stamps overlap and you actually cannot see the condition of all the stamps, apart from that — which is bad enough I hear you say, some 40% of these stamps are GB Christmas issues. Some deal eh!!!! Sadly the lots — yes many are placed from time to time — they sell Oh and the seller is not an IPDA member..... that was my little joke.

Anyway, I believe some people collect Christmas stamps as a Thematic topic. Good news there is only one issue a year. Bad news..... from nearly every country in the world. For the record I think some Christmas issues are quiet appealing. Ok I am going soft in my old age. Here are a few I have seen that may or may not revive some memories of youth and innocence.



EBAY FEEDBACK

Well have I found a topic here to get the most conservative of collectors in a commotion. I have said this before but I'll say it again, I must have a very limited experience of eBay and the buyers / sellers community. I don't get wound up by the feedback mechanism but I have read cases where I can see why people would get emotional about the topic, especially if they are getting some undeserved negatives.

I read about who should post feedback first, and arguments about positioning and the upper hand for providing feedback. Do you know something. I think if people have these views they should get out of doing business this way . They are obviously not mature enough to work in a market place where reputation and trust matter. Go back to selling on a cart in the street, where people can see your wares, feel and touch and haggle over the price. I always post when I receive what I bought. Sometimes people post feedback to me when I pay, sometimes when I have posted. I don't mind to be honest. I always post when someone has paid me. After all, in my view, that is the transaction, but if someone wants to feel they have the control that is their issue not mine.

And something else. When I started my eBay selling , and buying for that matter, I made it clear who I was. I did not masquerade behind some meaningless combination of letters and numbers. Why do people do that? why do they do it with message board names? What are they trying to hide!!!! With the passage of time many have of course established their reputation with high volume sales and exceptional feedback so I guess it doesn't matter. But any new buyer will still wonder who they are dealing with. Oh well, such is life. Lets really enjoy eBay and other auction sites, and what they have to offer, even the free entertainment some listings provide!!!!



KILOWARE

I wrote on this topic last month and asked if anyone knew a good source of GB Commemorative kiloware. I said I'd share the information with you.

One of our members, Roger West from AvionStamps in the UK has GB kiloware sorted by definitives, commemoratives, regionals and others. His material spans the last 15 years he tells me although mostly from 5 to 15 years ago.

This kiloware was collected from Guide Dogs for The Blind. Some of you may know this organization. They raise money to buy and train guide dogs. Stamp collecting was a popular way to raise some cash I recall from my time in the UK. Anyway, I cannot tell you how brilliant the kiloware is because Roger is mailing it to my UK address — and I'll have to wait until my trip over there to study it. But I think it will be just fine.

And if anyone else knows of GB Commemorative kiloware sources please let me know, particularly from 2005 onwards.

BOOK REVIEW

Current and Out Of Print Reference Books — History of Canadian R.P.O.s 1853 - 1967, A by L.F. Gillam F.C.P.S.

This is a nice book giving a lot of detail to the R.P.O.s (Railway Post Offices) of Canada.

The book was published in 1967 by the author and was limited to only 500 copies. It is a hardbound book and has plenty of illustrations throughout. Many show the cancellations and types plus examples on cover.

The book consists of 170 pages plus about another dozen pages with maps of the different runs.

The format is simple to follow. Each railway company is listed at the top of each section and followed with a list of all known railway cancellations known at the time of publishing.

While there are other newer books out on the same topic, I would still recommend buying this book if you have the chance simply because there is a lot of information in this book that cannot be found in other publications.

The book by itself is a collectors item for a couple of reasons:

1 - It is long out of print and, 2 - there were only 500 copies printed.

For any philatelist interested in railway cancellations of Canada, this book is a must. However, be prepared to pay anywhere from \$35.00 to \$50.00 depending upon the source.

POSITION VACANT

IPDA Treasurer Wanted : I advertised this last month, but still no applications. At the Board Meeting this past week, the Board have agreed to double the salary. See November issue for details.

Applicants can apply to the Chairman, Dave Ramsay. (He is a pushover at interviews) email chairman@ipdaonline.org

READERS EMAILS

Hello, SURPRISE !!! None this past month either. :-) but I have written a few pieces to the blog. And it is good to see we are getting some visitors. And from around the world. I assume members but without lots of study on my part I cannot easily tell and I have no inclination to find out. Whoever reads it I just hope they enjoy it.

Got an opinion, got something you want to promote, got something you want to get some advise on. Drop me an email and I'll make an article for the blog or this Newsletter. Next one will be issued to welcome in the New Year

Oh yes, You remember my online poll on the blog <http://ipdanews.blogspot.com> at last count I had one response. Better than none eh!!!!!!!!!!!!!! Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to everyone. Michael