



NEWSLETTER SEPTEMBER 2011

EDITORIAL WELCOME

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Welcome to another Newsletter. Hope this finds everyone well and business as good as you would wish.

How was the past month for your sales? Do you have any insights to pass on to fellow dealers? I have been rather out of it this past month because of my work and travels, yes, yet again. However, I did manage to place a few bids on GB Commemorative kiloware. As many of you know I am always on the look out for good material, both for my own collection and to use to sell on. The reason I am telling you this is because I wanted to talk about the parcels I received and the stamps on them. And, the reason for this is to pass on some observations which I hope you will read and be thinking, of course I do not do that.

Do what? You are asking. Well remember I am in Hong Kong and the lots I bought were mailed from the UK. Three lots actually. Now you would think I could get a useful sample of modern GB Commemoratives wouldn't you or even some high value Machins. Especially as the sellers advertised they would use modern GB commemoratives on the parcels. Not so. One parcel which had some 20 stamps on it - everything from 1979 material to 2005 — had 70% of the stamps stuck on with glue. Why? because the seller had used previously used stamps that had not been franked in the mail. Many were glue to the stamp while even more were glue to the original paper the stamp had originally been on — yes a stamp that has non soluble gum, as in Security Machin definitives. Very closely cropped before being reused. Hahahahhah Nice of the seller to get "free postage" for himself while I gladly paid him for the postage hoping to get some new stamps for my GB Commemorative collection. Win win for him, lose lose for me.

Another seller went one better. They tried to use some high value Machins and a few new stamps but after sticking the stamps to the parcel they then put sellotape around the parcel and yes, you guessed it, over some of the stamps, especially the high value £5 Machin. Lovely mess that made of what would have been a nice stamp. As for some of the other stamps on the parcel they were stuck on the very edges of the parcel, which, in transit, got, as one might expect, quite bumped around. And since the box was of rather soft cardboard the stamps of course got nicely creased and torn. So out of some £25 worth of stamps I estimate I got some 2 to 5 £ face value of useful stamps.

Stamp of the Month



Used or damaged?
SG 156 Plate 1.
What is your view.
Would you be selling
this as 'used' ?

The third parcel was the best piece in my view. Some 600gs of GB Commemoratives and mixed as described I bought this lot to see how good or bad a lot could be from someone who proclaimed quite openly they were not a stamp dealer but were just doing the 'sell some stamps they had acquired' gig. Stamps actually not bad I must admit. Nothing too exciting from a cursory look so far. But the packing was lovely. Not! A soft post office bag with stamps stuck on and yes of course creased to ruin. Not one stamp was salvageable. Sad but true.

And, not one of the sellers was an IPDA member, although one was a dealer, or so he proclaimed, and they never will be IPDA members in my view. I will admit I got some useful stamps from so called 'Charity collections' from people who are not dealers but who are just trying to make a buck. And I guess they are doing it quite successfully, and dare I say it, taking away business from you and other dealers.

The good news. I was in Australia for a week a few weeks back and I looked at the web site of Steve Fletcher, <http://www.stampmall.com.au/> as I often do since he often has some good stock. I ordered two small GB Commemorative lots from him and asked could he, if at all possible, mail then in time for me to receive before I flew back to Hong Kong. I received them three days later, registered mail, nicely packaged, with clean and reusable stamps. Oh by the way, Steve is an IPDA member and it showed. Well done and thanks Steve. Nice quality stamps as well.

Have a great September, Best wishes **Michael** michaelatipda@gmail.com



FLYING THE FLAG FOR ILLEGALS BY ROGER B WEST [AVION THEMATICS](#)

When the USSR broke up a number of new issues appeared bearing the names of the new republics, names such as Altai, Buriatia, Chuvashia, Dagestan, Kalmikia, Mordovia, Sakhalin Isle, Tatarstan, Udmurtia among many others. It didn't take long for the press to condemn them and being 'unofficial' they were given the name 'illegals'. They must have proved financially rewarding for the producers as before too long, some third world territories also started appearing on the market – stamps bearing such names of Benin, Burundi, Chad, Congo, Djibouti, Malawi, Rwanda, Somalia, St Thomas etc, and these too bore the title 'illegals'.

At one time it may have looked as if traditional philately would self destruct and the philatelic press were not slow in slanging these new issues, even suggesting they were robbing the countries concerned of revenue. I'm sure the authorities knew where these issues were coming from but must have been powerless to stop them. There followed considerable discussion at UPU level to identify these 'illegals' and future authorised issues were inscribed with a number.

Now, twenty years later the situation has settled down somewhat. Illegals are still being produced, albeit in more modest numbers probably governed by the knowledge of just how many the market can stand. The knockers have also quietened down a bit and attempts to list all doubtful issues seem to have proved fruitless.

But are these illegal issues really such a bad thing?

I am a thematic dealer and cater for the collector who collects by subject rather than by country. In my very early days, I was made aware of a butterfly collector who paid good money for a self-adhesive item simply because it had a butterfly logo on the backing paper. It didn't take too long for me to realise that other thematic collectors would be looking for similar non-stamp images and to this end, I started dealing in matchbox labels, telephone cards, postcards and of course, illegals. To supplement this, apart from traditional stamps, my stock also includes other items that over the years have received their fair share of knockers – I'm referring here to GB Locals, forgeries, Gulf States and Cinderellas.



Fig.1 How it all started, a typical overprint on a block of 4 obsolete Russian definitive



Fig.2 A typical 'illegal' – an attractive design well printed with good perforations

A big plus for most of the above is that they are relatively cheap and they enable one to put together a fairly comprehensive and diverse thematic collection at a reasonable cost. I believe that most collectors are aware that these dubious issues should never be used in a competition entry but in this respect, we're only talking about a tiny percentage of the collecting fraternity. The remainder are obviously quite happy to collect such items.

Another very strong point in their favour is that the illegals are very well produced and as far as designs, printing quality and perforations are concerned, they're as good as many and better than most.

I'm reminded here of an incident that happened one day while I was doing a stamp fair. A young lad was being a bit bothersome while his father was buying some stamps from me. To keep the lad quiet, I showed him a stockbook of aviation made up almost entirely of illegals. Not only did it keep the lad quiet but he was so taken by them that his father bought him a few. That lad is now a stamp collector thanks entirely to illegals, and if he screws them up by putting them in his pockets or takes them to school to swap for a Dinky toy or whatever, it really doesn't matter, we all started in a similar way and we all learnt from so doing. Cont'd

FLYING THE FLAG FOR ILLEGALS BY ROGER B WEST [AVION THEMATICS](#)

If we look back into the past history of postage stamps, we find that 120 years ago, there were people nagging about the USA Columbian Exposition issue. At a time when 1c and 2c stamps had postal validity, this issue contained values up to \$1, \$2, \$3, \$4 and \$5 all of which were unnecessary. The total face value of the set amounted to \$16.34 – today's equivalent value is \$980, but today, such items regularly appear in major auction catalogues.

But if we need something to complain about, there are plenty of other things in the philatelic world to get your claws into. I'm frequently reminded of the thousands of people who pay good money to the Post Office for first day covers only to find that 20 or 30 or 40 years later when they come to sell them, they're virtually worthless.

Or maybe you could take the GB Machin series. Arnold Machin's design first appeared in 1967 yet we still see it in use today 45 years later; what's more, Stanley Gibbons identify 435 types in their specialised listing.

Or what about the huge quantity of new issues being thrown out by many Postal authorities, most are produced purely for the collector often only available from the Bureaux and all too often printed in so many formats, well beyond the normal postal requirements.

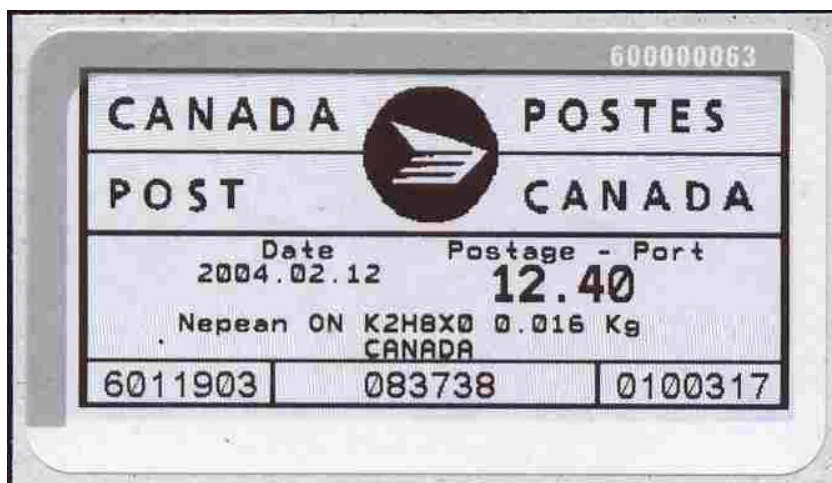


Fig.3 Is this where philately will end up?

While on the subject of requirements, does Tristan da Cunha really have a need for postage stamps? In 1952 when they received their first issue, the number of islanders who had contact with the outside world you could probably count on the fingers of one hand. A similar situation arises with Pitcairn Island but here you could divide the population (just 50) into the number of stamps issued (over 800) and come up with 16 stamps per head of population!

Maybe a more appropriate nag would be towards the postal authorities who are doing away with stamps altogether in favour of self-adhesive labels. This is probably the direction philately is going and in this regard we really do need to be flying the flag for illegals – at least they're stamps!

Roger B West is a well known philatelist and an acknowledged expert in the stamps of St Helena. In 1994 he edited the handbook 'Madame Joseph Forged Postmarks' which has been widely acclaimed as one of the most important philatelic reference works. Roger has a number of displays which prove popular when shown to Societies all over the United Kingdom namely St Helena Forgeries, Tete-Beche, Dominica, Specimen Stamps and his highly acclaimed 'An Evening Wasted'. [Avion Thematics](#) are members of The American Philatelic Society, The American Topical Association, the West Africa Study Circle and British West Indies Study Circle. They are active members at local philatelic societies and sponsors of the 'Phoenix Trophy Competition'. Roger is an IPDA member who regularly contributes to this Newsletter.

EBAY SELLING EXPERIENCE BY GEORGE FROM [STAMPSANDPHONECARDS.COM/](#)

A buyer lives in USA and uses a USA address but wanted the item sent to Kuwait in his name. I did and then he put a non received dispute and Ebay refunded the buyer from Paypal without asking what happened. I then contacted Ebay and they said they could not reverse. Therefore I have totally done \$36.50 Australian The buyer got it for free.

Another buyer thought that from Australia it is 6 days to some country region in Russia. It take 3-4 weeks to Moscow, as no direct airlinck. Paypal refunded the buyer and I was left without the cash.

Ebay just needs an alternative to shake them up. Because Ebay and Paypal use Swiss invoicing they are exempt from GST in Australia. Therefore, as traders we can not even put Ebay and Paypal as our GST tax input.

Editors Note: Thanks George for your experiences. What have other members to share so we can all benefit.?

REGISTERED MAIL ENTERING THE USA

Thanks to Bill Lehr for this News Update:

We take the opportunity of advising members that the concerns we expressed on page 9 in our February IFSDA magazine regarding the risks to Registered Mail entering the USA appear to have been warranted... Swiss member Gottfried Honegger informs the IFSDA offices that following the loss of a particularly rare classic Swiss stamp in registered mail inbound to the USA he managed to - with assistance from philatelic contacts at high level - have an investigation into this situation. The investigation has initially implicated a single postal worker at the International Mail Centre at JFK airport. Apparently he was intercepted leaving the premises with approximately 100 registered letters on his person; a further 300 letters were found in his vehicle. First indications are that he removed whole bags of registered letters to sort through for letters containing cash. These were kept, those without cash being discarded.

The misappropriated cash was used to upgrade his lifestyle. The suspect specifically appears to have utilized his knowledge of the weakness in the system whereby incoming foreign registered letters are accorded no special secure handling until they reach the local post office and sent out for delivery. Between the JFK mail centre and the local post office of delivery the foreign registered letters simply travel in the regular domestic first-class mail. Incoming registered mail acceptances from Switzerland, the United Kingdom and Germany appear specifically to have been at risk through this mail centre. IFSDA President Ingo Walter raised this issue of registered mail being handled in an insecure manner when he attended meetings with the UPU on 3rd May at which stage only a suspicion of a problem existed. The UPU indicate the domestic handling procedures are under the control of its member countries, in this case the US Postal Service. Any IFSDA members with recent losses of registered mail into the United States are invited to submit details of place and date of posting, destination city and the material contained in the missing letter. Information will be consolidated and missing material listed as stolen on the IFSDA website. In the meantime IFSDA members are encouraged to use Express Mail or Courier sendings into the USA.

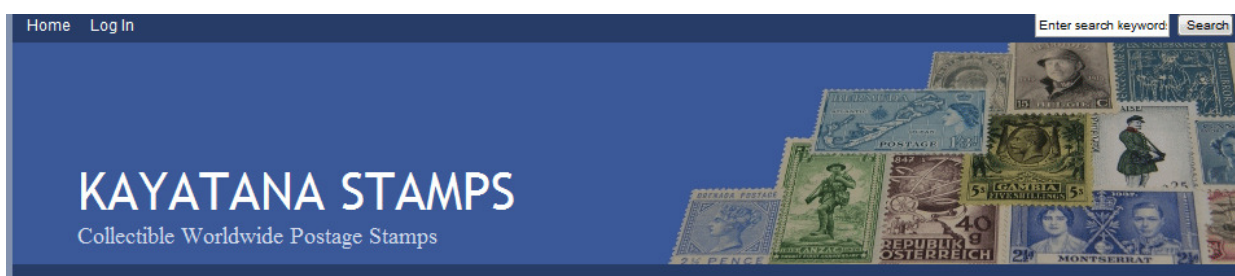
AUSTRALIAN TAX DEPT. REQUIRING EBAY TO REPORT

The Australian Taxation Office (ATO) and Centrelink have each advised eBay that they will be issuing formal requests for information relating to sales by Australian eBay members, who sold over \$20,000 worth of goods on eBay.com.au during the tax year ending June 2011. The ATO and Centrelink have indicated that they will request the following information in relation to affected sellers: Contact name, Address, Telephone number, Email and IP address, User ID, Date of birth, Date of registration on eBay, Monthly and annual sales volumes and value, Power Seller status, eBay store status. eBay are legally required to comply with these requests for information. In addition, such disclosure is also permitted pursuant to eBay Privacy Policy. eBay confirm that disclosure will be made to the ATO by August 1, 2011, and in accordance with Centrelink's required timeframes. eBay may also be required to provide available bank account

NEW IPDA CHATROOM

The old one closed down through no fault of the IPDA - come join us in the new room
the URL for the new chat room. <http://www.chatzy.com/74062515118>

NEW MEMBER – WELCOME KAYATANA STAMPS



CLOSING REMARKS

Four pages again. Many thanks for all your contributions. I look forward to more during the coming month.
mail me at michaelatipda@gmail.com Best Wishes**Michael**