



INTERNET PHILATELIC DEALERS ASSOCIATION

Established 23rd February 2002

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April 2016
Volume 14 Issue 4

NEWSLETTER APRIL 2016

EDITORS COLUMN

Welcome to the April 2016 Newsletter.

The past month was an interesting month on the philatelic scene. Some IPDA news to start with.

The IPDA AGM was held and the turnout through Proxies was very good. Well done everyone for participating. All administrative matters were dealt with swiftly, including the Annual Report from the Chairman, the Treasurer and the Audit. Re-elections for Director positions took place. Ken Sanford was re-elected and Bill Lehr was not re-elected. Thanks were recorded for Bill's work over the past years. In addition we are very pleased to welcome USA member Tony Tripi who was elected to the position of Membership Secretary. Since Bill still has the role of General Secretary and Treasurer he will continue for the time being to carry out these roles in an "ex officio" capacity in keeping with the IPDA Constitution.

Minutes have not yet been published and in my role as Acting Chairman on the day of the AGM I have followed up with the Chairman for these and the next Directors meeting. Sadly Allan has had some family health issues that have taken up his time.

Another well recorded topic on the Philatelic scene has been about Stanley Gibbons financial well being. I have a small piece on this on the back page. Although I was in the UK for the past 2 weeks I missed the chance to find out more. I have read some pretty hard hitting statements, including that "their catalogues prices are always way above market levels (50% higher generally)" and "that they have a faulty business model". Hard to know how these sorts of statements are quantitatively justified but obvious that they do have a significant impact on the share price.

I did manage to get a copy of the SG Stamp Monthly while in the UK and certainly enjoyed reading it. I also picked up some new catalogues I ordered online. Lovely quality, so well produced. But in the end we either think negative and see a downhill spiral or think positive and perhaps don't provide fuel to the self fulfilling prophesy of doom.

On a less somber note here are three nice takeaways from the SG April issue

- 1) excellent to see the success member Andrew Gavin is having with UPA - Universal Philatelic Auctions - and some very nicely presented advertising in the issue.
- 2) Brilliant 6 page piece by Adrian Keppel (part 2 of his latest writings) on the Swiss engraver Karl Bickel
- 3) Some very useful information about the latest measures employed by Royal Mail on self adhesive Machins and a review of various Post and Go issues.

On a different topic:

The latest email scam I have heard of from one of our members involves Royal Mail (UK), customs and a package you need to retrieve. The official looking emails claim that a package has been seized by HMRC upon arrival into the UK and that you need to declare it genuine so that it can be returned to you. All you need to do is click a link in the document. As you might have guessed this link will install malicious software on your computer designed to steal personal details like account names, email addresses and passwords. Always be aware of unsolicited emails that ask you to download attachments or pass on personal details — these are sure signs of a scam.

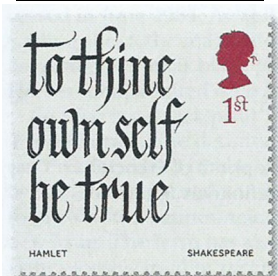
And on the subject of security perhaps this will be of interest to you. The British Government has created a free online course to encourage cyber security. You can find details [here](#). This is a free e-learning course aimed at staff in small to medium sized enterprises. It helps business owners and employees to understand information security and associated risks, provides examples of good practices, and gives an introduction to protection against fraud and cyber crime

Enjoy your stamps and I hope something in the rest of this Newsletter

Michael

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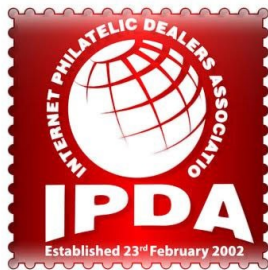
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Two Stamps of the Month

The Royal Mail 400th anniversary issue for the death of Shakespeare. Oh dear, I am sure he would not have liked them. All 10 of them!

And the new Machin definitive — Gooseberry Green — it really is an awful colour. And to scan the colour is impossible



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DR WOO AND HIS EXPENSIVE BIRDS

Editors Note: Some of you may know of, or have read, Jack Shamash. He is a top journalist who writes for The Times, The Guardian, The Independent as well as various stamp magazines. He is a member of the Royal Philatelic Society London and the author of the book George V's Obsession - A King and His Stamps. If you have not read his blog I highly recommend it. You can find him [here](#). He has very kindly given me permission to reproduce the following which I hope you enjoy reading as much as I did.

The stamp blog

TheStampblog.com 

Home

Build a great
collection cheaply!

Famous stamps

The Royal Philatelic
Collection

The latest blog

At last year's sale of the Vestey Collection of stamps, there was one item that attracted international interest among the major philatelists. The Western Australian fourpence inverted swan is often seen as one of the great classic stamps. On the day, it was knocked down for £122,000 including commission.

The buyer was initially kept secret, but the truth soon leaked out. The stamp had been bought by Dr Arthur KM Woo, who already owned four other copies of this elusive treasure. Incidentally, the underbidder on this occasion was the insurance billionaire Joseph Hackmey. Dr Woo obviously has deep pockets and a taste for very expensive stamps

A recently published book, written by Dr Woo and Brian Moorhouse, gives details of some of his stamps. He has at least 40 different collections of stamps, for which he has won at least 200 awards. His particular interest is in stamps which feature birds. He is particularly fond of stamps from Western Australia, which features swans. Also of stamps from Guatemala which have the famous quetzl bird and those from Bolivia which feature the condor. However many of his collections, such as his collection of Buenos Aires have no connection with birds whatsoever. One of his most expensive acquisitions was the Ice House Cover - an 1890 USA cover which has the only existing red and black Abraham Lincoln stamp on cover. He paid \$431,000 including commission



a 4-pence blue stamp issued in 1855, one of the world's first inverted errors although technically, it is the frame that is inverted, not the image of the swan, but it has become commonly known as the Inverted Swan. Source: Google Library image

Dr Woo, who is 82, has homes in Britain and Hong Kong. Despite the fact that he is one of the world's leading philatelists, he almost never attends philatelic exhibitions – even the ones which feature his own stamps.

Dr Arthur KM Woo belongs to a prominent Hong Kong family. His father was the late Dr Arthur Wai Tak Woo a renowned obstetrician and gynaecologist, who was a fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons. His mother was Mrs. Dorothy May Choy who was born in Sydney, Australia from a rich Chinese family. She was an accomplished pianist and talented writer.

They had 6 children, 5 girls and one boy, Dr Arthur KM Woo who was their youngest child. The Woo's lived in Hong Kong in a colonial style mansion, with tennis court and lots of land covered with azalea flowers. Friends recall that every year at the blooming of the azaleas they gave a party, known as the 'azalea party', which was attended by the cream of Hong Kong society



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DR WOO AND HIS EXPENSIVE BIRDS CONT'D

After his mother's Death in 1972 he had to return to HK for the inheritance. As the only male, under Chinese law he inherited the mansion , lots of shares and bonds, stamps, antiques. Friends recall that the house was full of Ching, Ming porcelain and furniture. Nowadays the house has been replaced by a high rise exclusive residential condominium. He also has a reputation as successful investor.

In keeping with the family tradition (his father and grandfather were medical doctors) Arthur KM Woo embarked on a course of medical studies. At the age of 16 he went to the University of Hong Kong and then moved to the University of Southern California where he graduated (cum laude) in microbiology. He then finished his post graduate studies at McGill university in Montreal, where in 1961 he received the degrees of master of surgery and Doctor of Medicine. He started practising in Hong Kong in 1962 and in 1967 moved to Maryland and then to California, where he practised medicine for 20 years.

One friend of his told me: 'Everything he did in his life he wanted to be the best. He is a very good golf player , a member of the HK golf club and he plays also the piano. He speaks good French , English and Chinese. He is very Westernised and charming.'

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Dr. Arthur KM Woo started to collect stamps just after World War II. His first stamps were from Hong Kong and later he started collecting stamps from the USA.

Throughout his life he has been a keen ornithologist. Unsurprisingly, he favours stamps with classic bird motifs. In a rare interview Dr Woo said: 'It's simply the beauty of the Western Australia Swan, the Guatemala Quetzel, the Colombia Andean Condor, the USA 1869 Eagle and Shield etc. These wonderful designs, coupled with patience and determination, enabled me to form the collections I have now'.

His favourite stamp is the Western Australia Swan, printed by Perkins Bacon (the firm that printed the original Penny Black). He explained: 'It is recess-printed and the design of the swan is truly beautiful, as are most of the other early Perkins Bacon engraved stamps'.

Among the items in his collection are an Antarctic Expedition with Penguin labels; Falkland 1933 Centenary 5/- Penguin with a unique imprint block of four in the scarce yellow-orange shade; and a China 1897-1900 Wild Goose issue.

The famous Quetzel, originally the coat-of-arms issue, was beautifully adopted as the main bird design for Guatemala. In his collection Dr. Woo possesses all the proofs, essays, sheets, rare cover combinations, plus the famous inverted centre of the 5 centavos on cover.

Collecting these kinds of stamps means big money but Dr. Woo is also humble. He is very retiring and rarely makes personal appearances at events where his stamps are shown. When asked about what individual exhibition honour gave him the most pleasure he recalled: 'I do remember that although I showed only a few selected pages of my Bird Collection in Claridges 1999, the positive comments I received from several world-famous philatelic personages in respect of my collection was something I will probably never forget'.

STAMP ENGRAVERS

In the March issue I reproduced a piece from Adrian Keppel and forgot to include the link to [his blog](#). You really will enjoy his writings I believe. A recent piece about the designer and engraver Max Svabinsky and Jindra Schmidt from Czechoslovakia, is well worth a read.



THE NEW BACK PAGE

Editors Note: I had the chance to chat to member Philippe Poppe from Cebu in the Philippines this month. Such an interesting guy. He told me about his Philippine stamps and this interesting "fake", which he kind shared with me for me to share with you. Thanks Philippe. Looking forward to getting back to Cebu later this year.

The stamp is the Year of the Rooster, 1992. A fake which has been used in the postal system. A scanner and colour laser printer have been used to create the fake stamp. The face value of 6p has been changed to 4p and the year 1992 has been changed to 1997. The white border with perforation was added to improve the stamp.

Fake



Original



STANLEY GIBBONS FUNDRAISING

There has been some news recently in the financial press about Stanley Gibbons because of their profit warning announcement which said they expected to post an adjusted pretax loss of GBP1.0 million to GBP2.0 million for the financial year to the end of March 2016. This the latest I have, courtesy of the London Alliance News.

"Stanley Gibbons Group PLC said it has seen an "encouraging" level of interest from existing shareholders in its ongoing equity fundraising. Stanley Gibbons said it was in the process of raising around GBP10.0 million to back a restructuring of its business to cut costs. The company expects to be in a position to make a further announcement on this fundraising in the near future"

Your editor cannot take a position because I do not know enough to comment but I did read this interesting view: "A grossly mismanaged company. There are no philatelists on the board. Only bankers and who trusts them these days? Vastly overpaid for the acquisitions, sitting on a stock overhang listed at Â£50 million but outside of the investment bubble might be worth Â£10 million"

The big question is how they value their stock. Sellers and buyers seems of the view their catalogue prices as, lets just say, a tad inflated. If their valuation is based on their own catalogue prices then QED they have a problem in the current market. Interesting times ahead!

THE LAST WORD

Something for our Canadian readers. I hope you will enjoy reading this. If you can get a copy of the SG Monthly Magazine for April there is a very interesting piece about the "Canadian Fancy Cancells" by John Hillson. These were cancells used after the Confederation of the Dominions to try to effectively cancel stamps, to avoid re-use of the stamps.

As for me, I will continue to write the Newsletter. As some of you know, I had my "hissy fit" - got to make a point sometimes and speak up, but I withdrew my resignation. I really do want to see this Association grow and achieve greater recognition. I will be giving more time to the IPDA (when not travelling - I have a few more trips planned over the coming months) and I hope to see some of you contribute along with me. Have a great month in April.

Best wishes, and thanks Michael
email me at michaelatipda@gmail.com if you have anything to chat about or ideas / materials for articles.