

\$9,000 Rarity for \$600

There is a very true axiom "there is a bargain at every stamp show".

Regular columnist Michael Eastick is the living proof of this! Michael had attended the big "Stampex 99" show in London late September on his "way home" from stamp shows in the USA. All this and two young twins ... and I thought I had stamina!

Anyway, whilst visiting "Stampex" Michael purchased the 1913 First Watermark 10/- Kangaroo you see on the front cover of this magazine. A lovely MLH copy, of terrific centering for this hard stamp. Every major dealer in Australia can sell you that stamp for around \$800. And that is about the retail price as was marked at in London.

A dealer had it on display as: "SG #14, attractive mint with margin £300". The Stanley Gibbons catalogue value is £600, so "Half Cat" is the usual retail in the UK for such items. This is where knowledge is power, and where timing is EVERYTHING. Another English dealer spotted the stamp, and knew more than dealer #1 but not nearly as much as dealer Eastick!

That dealer #2 recognised that the "margin" was not JUST plain white selvage, but was in fact a printer's monogram. He did NOT know just exactly how much more that made it worth, but he sure as heck knew it was worth more than 300 quid! So, dealer #2 negotiates with dealer #1, and with a bit of trade discount, and VAT adjustment, it changed hands for well under £300 - lets say around \$A600 was involved.

Dealer #2 THINKS he is now well informed and well armed. He has his shiny thick Brusden White ACSC, that prices monograms. (Gibbons does not.) That catalogue says a normal mint 10/-

Roo is \$850 but with Monogram is worth TWICE as much - i.e the full catalogue was \$1,750. He assails Michael with this dramatic information, and Michael bows to his superior knowledge and buys the stamp, pointing out whilst wheedling (I hope!) the monogram was NOT full and complete. (None are!)

Never Forget Rule #1

Remember, rule #1 - knowledge is power. Rule #2 is "old catalogues are USELESS". Michael is savvy, he knows that old initial edition of Brusden White's ACSC, revolutionary as it was then, is totally redundant now. The current (2nd Edition) ACSC "Kangaroo" cat. has this stamp at \$4,000. (The basic mint stamp has "leapt" from \$850 to \$900!) Even \$4,000 is far too low. Rodney A Perry is about to publish a THIRD edition of the "Kangaroo" volume, and I understand the catalogue of a monogram piece will go to at least \$7,500.

That, and the other ACSC volumes are edited by our Associate Editor, Dr. Geoffrey

The \$600 to \$9,000 Roo!

Kellow. Superb works, all of them, that have revolutionised catalogues in Australia. These books are FAR better, and far, far, more detailed than ANYTHING produced on GB or USA stamps. True. If you are using the old 1988 loose leaf ACSC ... toss it in the bin, or donate it to a Model T Ford museum. Then go out and buy the Kellow ACSC. The new "Kangaroo" volume (3rd Edition) is out very soon Michael Eastick tells me and he is taking advance orders for that AND the debut ACSC "Postage Due" edition. He usually has a page or so of excellent catalogue and reference works, so go have a peekaboo in his central 16 pages insert this month. In stamp collecting, knowledge IS power.

Even a \$7,500 pricing is simplistic to some extent. For decades the ACSC has rated both the "CA" and the "JBC" monograms as being the same value. This is silly, and is not consistent with numbers existing. The "CA" Monogram is clearly scarcer than the "JBC" version. The

Michael Eastick (left) and Ernest Weiner, MD of Victoria Stamp Traders, cooking up a massive ASM reader giveaway!



only other "CA" known to exist surfaced also in the UK at a Cavendish auction in February 1998, and was purchased by a leading Sydney collector. That makes TWO copies known to exist, including the example on our front cover. Rod Perry told me today he was even contemplating listing the "CA" monogram at \$10,000 due to the scarcity of it.

Queen Does Not Have One!

Of the "JBC" at least 4 singles are known, and one of these is in the Australia Post Chapman collection. A few perf OS or "Specimen" copies also exist of these 10/- monograms. The Royal Collection contains NO 10/- 1913 monograms of either type, which is remarkable as King George V was extremely keen on the stamps of the era during whilst he ruled. Ordinarily such items were routinely forwarded to him as a courtesy by all British Commonwealth post offices.

Anyway, all of this aside, Michael Eastick has the 10/- stamp in his hot little hands and it will be on the front cover of his 16 page insert in this magazine he tells me. I'd rather have the "CA" monogram than the JBC if price was the same, clearly. It looks like a figure of \$9,000 plus will be needed to secure it, but these are the true Blue Chip items from our country. It is worth noting that at \$9,000 it is about TEN times the price of a "normal" stamp. As pointed out above, in 1988 this ratio was only DOUBLE. "Monograms are HOT". Nuf sed.

Win a Trip To London 2000!

Michael Eastick as noted above has just returned from a visit to "Stampex" in London. Whilst there he finalised further his planned expedition to the biggest show to be held in the 21st Century ... "London 2000", in May. As readers of his column will know Michael recently floated the idea of gathering a common interest group of a few dozen stamp collectors, dealers, and interested partners to all travel together to visit "London 2000".

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Mr Weiner has decided his company would offer a trip to London with hotel accommodation to the lucky winner of their promotion, and says there will be "many \$1,000s of other valuable prizes to be won as well".

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I spoke to Michael today who said: "ASM response so far has been amazing. So far we have a travelling party of about 40 people, and may even decide to split this into two groups, to suit the slightly different dates many people wish to travel on. We are confident that we will be able to negotiate terrific Australasia-UK-Australasia airfares, hopefully on Qantas for all participants, and this will apply to New Zealand readers too. Readers are really looking forward to sharing the long flights and hotel stays in London with a group of Aussie collectors and dealers".

He continued: "I personally inspected a suitable hotel last week in London. It is beautifully sited, right on the River Thames, opposite the Houses Of Parliament, and on the Earl's Court underground line. All your readers have no doubt heard horror stories about London hotel prices. I have used our large group numbers to negotiate a quite amazing deal of only £59 per room night, with up to 3 persons permitted per room" he continued.

Michael also tells me he is well advanced into finalising some "extra" activities for the participants on this "Australasian STAMPS" reader's tour group. "I have been able to ensure we can have a private visit to some of the superb stamp collections housed in the British Library. I am also hopeful we can arrange a special viewing of stamps from the Royal Collection, belonging to Queen Elizabeth II" he said. There will of

This unassuming looking cover sold for \$11,750.



Commercial Used Covers The "Next Big Thing"?

Rodney Perry (the new APTA President .. congratulations Rod!) has been saying for years: "Do NOT overlook apparently ordinary stamps on properly used commercial covers". Rod's excellent ACSC publications have now placed a "commercial used" cat. value alongside otherwise common looking stamps, that might surprise you.

Even the "Decimals" Volume #1 ACSC (1966-75) has some BIG surprises. A 1966 75c Navigator is rated \$1 used but \$40 on cover. The \$4 King is valued at \$80 on cover. Even the lowly 3c QEII coil is valued at 25¢ used, but \$15 on correct use cover. Later issues like the 1974 \$2 Painting, a terribly common stamp off cover, is cat \$15 on cover. (Free plug time - I have 100's of Reg'd covers in my ad this month, lot #99 with \$2 and \$4 franking etc!)

I spoke to Rod Perry today and he said: "This covers area will be a future outperformer in the market. To give you a few examples, no collector or dealer I have spoken to has EVER sighted the 1952 4½d red KGVII used singly for the purpose it was actually introduced for, i.e. of prepaying the postcard rate to foreign destinations. I suspect they largely went to Italy or Greece where much of our postwar migration emanated. If I were to auction one today a nice 3 figure sum would not surprise me at all. Likewise, I have never seen or heard of a contemporary on cover use of the 1964 7/6d Cook or £2 King" Rod concluded.

I understand our Associate Editor, Richard Breckon has also been a keen searcher for 10 years or so for the 4½d red KGVII used on a postcard overseas, so if any readers have a spare copy, please contact either Richard or Rod... these are the sort of things typically sitting in a dealer's cover box for 20¢, unloved and unrecognised. Not for long!

Modern Cover Sells For \$11,750

We are of course mere beginners in recognising the value of definitive stamps properly used on cover. The Germans and in particular the Italians collect these items with a passion. Illustrated nearby is the very common \$5 USA Alexander Hamilton denomination on a cover posted in 1966. It paid the correct \$5 rate for postage, insurance and Registration and was sent within Boston to a Bank. This cover was auctioned in Cleveland Ohio late August.

I asked Rodney Perry, Michael Eastick, Gary Watson, Martyn Greive, Simon Dunkerley and 4 other large dealers what they felt such an otherwise unspectacular looking cover might bring in a USA auction. All these dealers guessed at figures like: "several \$100

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would not surprise me". One dealer said: "I bet you'll tell me it went for something crazy like \$US500".

It opened at \$US1,250 and finally sold after a raft of bids for a now record \$US7,762.50 (or about \$A11,750) to a Colorado collector. The underbidder was a NY Auction agent. Bear in mind the high price was due to the fact that oddly only a few COMMERCIAL uses of this stamp on cover are recorded. (One 1947 huge commercial cover exists with 57 copies of the \$5 Coolidge stamps upon it = \$US 285 plus some lower values, so \$5 usage must have been pretty frequent.) There were 34,272 Hamilton FDC's serviced, but full Scott retail for a FDC is only \$65.

So do not simply soak off proper commercial usages of definitive stamps to get "FU stamps", as we have so often

done in the past! I wonder how many covers exist bearing say the 1948 £2 Arms?? The current KGVI ACSC values it at \$200 on cover. One sold last month for not much more than that at a large Auction, and it additionally was a "crash" cover. I'll pay TWICE that folks for ANY use on a clean commercial cover, so this sector of the market clearly has a LONG way to go in price ... all upwards methinks! Write that down.

Booklet Bytes

A few Booklet notes this month. First up, the new \$7.20 Lord Howe Courier Post Marine Life booklet has the BEST looking colour cover I've seen on any booklet for years. Stunning. Most large dealers have stocks. (The 1st booklet from last year is priced at 290 Dm = \$A225 in the list I refer to next!) The well known Netherlands based "Booklets International" have just sent me their 1999/2000 pricelist. One item in there I

noticed was a 1919 Malaya Federated States booklet, SG #SB4. Price is 12,500 Dm or about \$10,000. They have a regular ad elsewhere if you want one of the great British Asia rarities. I asked owner Walter de Rooy for a photo to use here, and he politely pointed out both outer covers are totally blank white card!

Finally, I saw a Fiji 5/9d KGVI booklet recently which had a black on GREEN cover. Gibbons say this booklet, #SB4 should have a black on Rose cover. Perhaps they are mixing it up with #SB4a? Anyway, if anyone has even seen or owns a Fiji KGVI 5/9d booklet please advise me ASAP what colour yours is ... no-one seems to have seen one for sale in years! **ASM**

Bar codes to speed mail and job cuts

BY JULIA BAIRD

Bar codes for every postal address in the nation – more than nine million of them – will appear on envelopes from next week as Australia Post launches a \$500 million upgrade of mail-sorting technology, despite threats of industrial action over thousands of job losses.

The most significant postal innovation since postcodes 30 years ago will make possible the sorting of 36,000 letters an hour.

The special software will use interpretation algorithms to change "rd" to "road" as well as special local knowledge to recognise "Barkley Street, Collingwood" when there is only a "Barkley Road" in Collingwood, Vic. It is the most comprehensive address reference database ever seen in Australia.

Australia Post says cost savings will allow the continuation of an eight-year price freeze on stamps at 45c.

It also predicts 2,000 jobs will be lost over two years as a result, in a special deal negotiated with the Communications Electrical and plumbing Union. But the NSW secretary of the CEPU, Mr Jim Metcher, said: "It was supposed to be 2,000, but there will be 2,000 in NSW alone."

If the dispute was not resolved by the Industrial Relations Commission next Tuesday, postal workers may strike, he said.



stanley gibbons ad