



Glen Stephens'

Market Matters:

Use NICE stamps please!

Readers of my columns for the last 20-25 years will recognise that this is one of my pet 'hobby horses'.

Nothing bugs me more than receiving a parcel that cost \$15 or \$20 to mail from a dealer or collector, and seeing two near worthless \$10 definitives on there as franking.

Or far worse still, a white 'Supermarket' type white gummed frank label - value zero.

This makes my blood boil. How on earth are future generations going to source FU copies of short issue stamps unless we all try and use them postally??

Not only is this poor manners to another member of the stamp fraternity - it is often costing you money, as most times I do add something for the nice frankings when folks are sending me material to purchase.

Sending parcels long distance has got horrifically expensive in recent times. The last round of price hikes in September means a heavy surface parcel from Sydney to Perth is often well over \$50, and over \$60 to Darwin. Even Hobart is over \$40.

Express Post costs are now insane - to Perth is \$192.50 and Darwin \$223.50 for the same heavy parcel.

These high costs mean we must ALL try and 'game' the system - quite legally - by using franking that has some substantial value in the hands of the recipient when neatly cancelled.

To give you an example, I have been mailing cartons of stockbooks all over the place in recent months. Shameless plug - I am running an internet only special at \$240 a carton of 10 of a new Deluxe 'Lighthouse' black

Massive new \$5 stamp.

page book, and have sold 100s this month alone.

But they are HEAVY, and clearly cost a bomb to mail outside NSW. I have discovered the PERFECT stamp to use for this dispatch.

\$5 'Kangaroo' Stamp

In September 2004 Australia Post issued the first stamp in its new \$5 series 'Treasures from the Archives', which highlights items from the National Philatelic Collection.

As I often say: the 'First' of anything that will become a long series, is often the one to buy up.

With this issue, Australia Post has created its first ever Jumbo Stamp™, the size of a miniature sheet. It features the £2 Kangaroo and Map stamp, the highest value stamp in the first Australian Commonwealth series.

As Editor Kevin Morgan pointed out a few months back, trademarking a commonly used term like 'Jumbo Stamp' when it is in daily use in the USA to refer to quality stamps is quite a mystery.

The 1932 printing of this £2 Kangaroo stamp is shown on the stamps in a multi-

ple format to represent the (supposedly) unique full sheet of 120 that is held in the National Philatelic Collection. It is on permanent exhibition in the Post Master Gallery in Melbourne.

Why I say 'supposedly' is that it is my belief another complete sheet of £2 Roos exists in the hands of a non-collecting family connected with the bookmaking business. It was purchased with 'spare' cash in the Great Depression. Coff.

I have known of this sheet since 'Australia 1999', and many scoffed at my report. There are some very interesting stories about its movements since. I imagine it would sell for about \$A500,000 today.

This new stamp is MASSIVE - 105 x70 mm. Literally the size of many modern Mini sheets. You can see from the size of the postmark on the copy illustrated nearby how large it is.

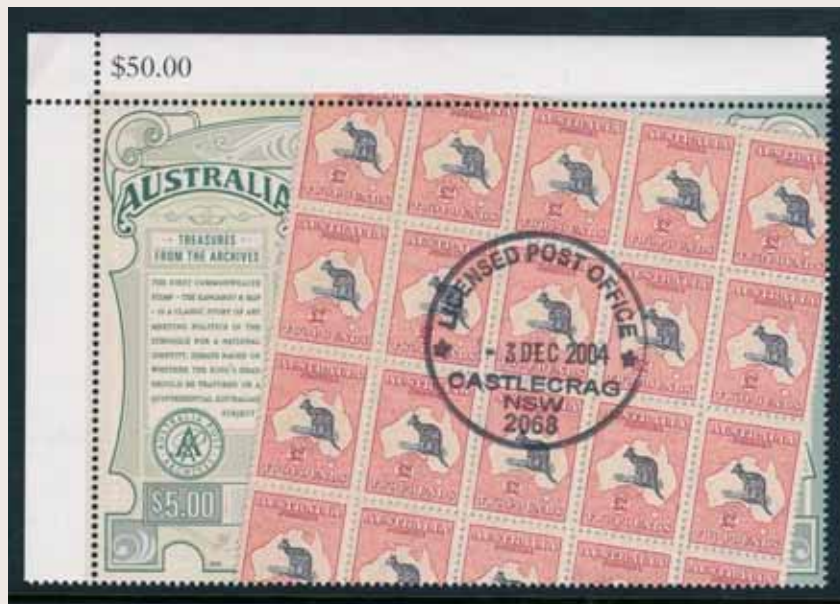
The sheet of 10 is about the same size as a regular sheet of 100, so they are clearly about 10 times the exterior size of a normal commemorative.

These stamps are PERFECT for us all to use on philatelic mail. I had dinner with dealer Simon Dunkerley recently, who like me probably pays scant attention to the AP new issues.

I took a sheet of 10 to show him and he said he was planning to buy some for use on his client mail - especially to Kangaroo collectors.

I purchased dozens and dozens of sheets, and dozens of 'cheque books' of the 'peel and stick' versions. Clients just love getting these on mail. Must be 20 years since I bought so many stamps for postage from Australia Post

One buyer of a stockbook carton of 10 lived in Perth. These



Glen Stephens - Market Matters

cost \$40 to ship Registered Post to him. So this week I used 8 of these big stamps - 4 on each side of the carton, and I bet he is a lot more delighted to get that - than 4 x \$10 Defins.

A UK client needed a parcel of Pacific albums sent by air and the cost was \$150. I neatly cancelled 3 sheets of 10, put them in a plastic cover, and he got them all superb CTO full gum. Effective post cost to the UK on his carton - NIL.

Nicely cancelled, these stamps of course will have a retail value of MORE than \$5 each. As I often illustrate, postage of a heavy carton across this country can effectively be 'FREE' if we use some common sense, and a little bit of thought and planning.

My guess is 50% of the world's used copies of this stamp down through the ages will bear postmarks of 'Castlecrag NSW 2068'!

One packet I mailed today took \$10 franking so I affixed a \$5 gummed and a \$5 'peel and stick' alongside each other. May well be the only cover existing with that combo. And it is contemporaneous use - i.e. mailed while stamps are still on national sale.

I am lucky to be able to apply the cancels myself when the postal staff are not busy, and even after a few 100 strikes still get a kick out of placing the postmark right in the centre of the stamp as I did of this one today, illustrated nearby.

Corner cancels on this stamp just look 'wrong' in my view. Anyway, Philatelic Sales Section only keeps special issues on sale for 6 months from issue date now, and that means this one will vanish early March - if stocks still remain.

Please - we ALL need to do out little bit to generate nice used stamps for the albums of the next generations. Dealers - buy some of these and use them on your mail to clients.

Cairns Stamp Club

I first saw a \$5 'Roo' on a beautiful Registered cover I received one day from Alan Sparks, Hon. Secretary of the Cairns Stamp Club. I gave the cover to a client in Gosford who loves such exotic frankings.

This was the letter inside:

"Dear Mr Stephens

Please find enclosed some on-paper stamps with North Queensland postmarks. You mentioned in your recent article in *Stamp News* that a lady from Cairns had sent you some material for your valuation opinion but had failed to include return postage.

It is a shame she didn't contact our club first. We are not experts, but we may have been able to offer her some advice.



You also mentioned that you had a personal interest in postmarks and since we have several kilograms of on-paper, and no requests for them, we thought that giving some to somebody like you who appreciates them would be a good thing to do. Please - we do not need them returned.

No special effort to sort cancels or whatever was made in selecting those enclosed. Some of the cancels from the far north of Cape York, especially those from Aboriginal communities are very scarce indeed. The PO's are usually part of the canteen and mail is usually sent to Cairns MC un-postmarked where a Cairns MC or slogan pmk is applied.

It gives me great heart to know that there are collectors out there who appreciate this area of philately and your comments are most welcome.

I sometimes do the markets here, and always take a large box of stamps with me to give to children. Parents will often leave the kids whilst they go and check the other stalls.

To see the look of awe and wonder on these children's faces as they sort through the stamps never fails to bring tears to the eyes of this grown man. To me, this is what philately is all about.

The club regularly gives stamps to those requesting them. They are donated by businesses and people from around Cairns. It is our way of promoting stamp collecting. Initially it was intended that they were to be given to children and many hundreds of packets of off paper stamps were delivered to junior schools.

However, to our dismay we discovered that in most cases teachers didn't bother offering them to students because they felt there was a lack of interest among chil-

A joy to behold!

dren. Sadly it is now my experience that I have to agree with them.

Nearly all interest now comes from older people and in the past month we have sent stamp packs locally, interstate and one each to Canada and Germany - all to older retired people.

Most members of the club are *Stamp News* readers and always appreciate your articles which are usually interesting and informative and must take up a lot of your time. How you manage to run a business as well is beyond me, but please keep up the good work.

Should you know anyone (especially children) who are interested in receiving any stamps (free) would you please ask them to contact us. No personal information is kept and there is absolutely no obligation

We hope you enjoy the postmarks.

Best regards, Alan Sparks.

Cairns Stamp Club Inc,
www.cairnsstampclub.asn.au
PO Box 5089, Cairns 4870. "

I have a great fondness for clear sharp well struck cancels of any era, from any country. As you can see from the nearby photo, letter rate stamps with neat cancels on piece make a wonderful showpiece. The few dozen similar stamps kindly mailed to me by Alan really brightened my day.

A shame space does not allow them ALL to be illustrated! It was a very pretty assembly.

I sell masses of Australian 'commemoratives only' kiloware, and I know many folks say they buy it just for this purpose - to select clear strikes on stamps, whilst

Glen Stephens - Market Matters

still on paper. I know that only a small percentage of stamps receive circular cancels these days - nearly all are machine slogan franked - sadly.

'Thank You' to the Cairns Stamp Club for their kind gesture, and far more importantly for offering to share free stamps for those readers that request them.

I am sure if other collectors have such similar material surplus, and want to send it where it will get a good home and be sent free to young collectors etc, that you'd be welcome to mail it c/- Alan's attention.

They have a wonderfully professional and informative website, and with a live-wire like Alan Sparks connected to the Club, I feel sure they will remain a leading Society for quite some time to come.

Reagan Stamp

The United States Post Office will issue a 37¢ commemorative stamp February 9, 2005 to honour Ronald Reagan. That day would have been his 94th birthday.

The design is illustrated here as it is one of the most warm and appealing looking USA stamps I have seen for some time, and I am sure will be enormously popular worldwide.

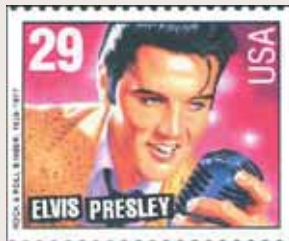
I have no hard statistics on it, but my guess is Reagan was the most popular President for decades with people OUTSIDE the USA. I guess when you are competing against the likes of Richard Nixon and both George Bush's it is not very difficult.

I bet the Reagan stamps outsells the 1995 32¢ Nixon issue - five to one. That stamp issue was incredibly un-popular with the public and even rated a story at the time in 'USA Today'.

All over the USA, postal clerks reported that people were asking for any stamp other than Nixon. The 'USA Today' article quoted a Post Office sales manager in Houston saying 9 out of 10 customers turned down the stamp when it was offered.

Only 80 million Nixon were printed, and I bet most were destroyed later. Numbers 'sold' have never been released.

517 million sold



Quite a contrast to the 1993 29¢ Elvis Presley issue. USPS claims it is their largest selling commemorative stamp in history. Over 517 million stamps were sold. They reportedly made a phenomenal profit on that one stamp.

I was driving around the USA 'Deep South' a couple of weeks ago and there is a large plaque inside Gracelands from USPS commemorating this former achievement.

Oddly, both times I have been in Gracelands in recent years no 29c Elvis stamps are on sale anywhere to tourists, despite a USPS office being on site, offering nice 'Gracelands' cancels. Tourists and fans would pay \$2 each for these - no quibble.

Priscilla Presley fought for royalties for use of the image and lost her case - seldom does the Presley Estate lose in copyright and licensing matters.

The Reagan stamp design was unveiled recently at the Ronald W. Reagan Presidential Library and Museum, in Simi Valley California.

A massive image of the stamp is illustrated nearby - photo courtesy *Linn's Stamp News*.

Nancy Reagan is in centre of the three standing dignitaries.

On her left is US Postmaster General John Potter, and on the right is Frederick Ryan Jr, Reagan's Chief Of Staff 1989-95.

Mrs Reagan said at the stamp unveiling: 'The stamp really captures Ronnie's humour and optimism, and I hope the American people



4 metre high stamp

will like it as much as I do.'

Ronald Reagan died June 6 of pneumonia, following a decade long struggle with Alzheimer's disease.

Season's Greetings!

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all readers of this column - and their families and their loved ones.

Stamp-wise this has been a very exciting and interesting year. Thanks to all readers for the many phone calls and emails with comments for AND against what has been written here!

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