

# The Golden City Philatelist

BENDIGO PHILATELIC SOCIETY INC. A0016241J

P.O. BOX 962 BENDIGO, VIC. 3552

Now in our 88<sup>th</sup> year

July 2018



## Diary of Future Events

July	Tuesday	3rd	Moon Stamps Lunar Eclipse.
July	Wednesday	4th	Daytime Meeting.
August	Tuesday	7th	Year of a Clean & Healthy Planet.
August	Wednesday	8th	Daytime Meeting.

Please Note: The daytime meeting is on the Wednesday after the main meeting. This is not always the first Wednesday of the month

**August Saturday 11th Bendigo Philatelic Society Annual Stamp Fair**

Please Note: Contrary to previous reports, there will be an auction at the July meeting.

## President's Report for July 2018

Presidents Report for July 2018

The year is flying by and it only seems yesterday I wrote to you with our June report !!

We are now over half way through our year and only one month to our Annual Stamp Fair.

All organizing is in the hands of our Vice President Bill Trew who can be contacted at [marj.trew@bigpond.com.au](mailto:marj.trew@bigpond.com.au)

We look forward to renewing friendships with dealers and collectors from far and wide.

Jim Garden our Library Manager is moving abode and Ian Kimpton has been appointed to manage our Library. Thank you Jim for all your work and welcome Ian. It is volunteers such as these that keep our club strong.

We are so pleased to know that Myrtle Darby has returned home after her visit with the Medical Profession in Melbourne. We look forward to your return to the BPS in the meantime keep well.

On Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> July a group of our members are travelling to Melbourne by train to attend the Brighton Philatelic Society Auction. This is a great Philatelic and Social Day and if you would like to join us we would love to have your presence.

Brighton run an excellent Auction and that treasure you are looking for may just be there.

If I have whetted your interest please give me a telephone call.

My telephone number is 0448 120 066

Happy Stamping...Libby.



The general monthly meetings of the BPS are held on the first Tuesday of every month at 7.30pm at **Old Long Gully School (now CVGT)**

**Cnr Stanfield and Jackson Streets, Long Gully**  
Extra Daytime Meeting at Golden Square on the Wednesday after the main Tuesday meeting .

**Auctions** will be held at all Tuesday meetings

**EXCEPT NOVEMBER**

**5 items per member** are allowed for auctions **except in December** when **10 items per member** are allowed for the Christmas bonanza auction.

Exchange sheets will be circulated at all meetings.

## CLUB CONTACTS:

**President: Libby Luke**

**Secretary: Joy Watters**

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**Treasurer: Margaret Brown**

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## Editorial: When is the best time to let go?

There are many reasons why people collect things but often they fall into one of two groups, those who collect with investment in mind and those who collect purely for pleasure. Of course, the first group collects for pleasure as well but when they purchase, they tend to be more focused on rarity and condition. The other group, which includes myself, often tend to be less choosy, for instance, not being as worried by hinge remains or maybe putting together a thematic collection of stamps simply because the subject appeals to us.

One facet of managing each type of collection is when to let go. If you want your stamps to be an investment, you have to be watching the market and if you wish your children to benefit from the investment, you either have to make sure they are aware of the value or liquidate it yourself before you die. There have been many instances of families who let the trustees sell off Grandpa's collection for a few hundred dollars without knowing it was worth more than the house. Most younger people these days have no idea how valuable a collection can be. That goes two ways. There are some who believe that the old exercise book found in Grandpa's shed with his childhood collection in it, must be worth a fortune and are very disappointed when they are informed differently.

As I said, I collect purely for pleasure, which is not to say that I haven't spent a lot of money over the last sixty years on what is now a quite large collection but I recently had cause to think about this topic and thought I'd share my thoughts.

All hobbies cost money. A friend of mine has quite a good wine cellar and he derives a lot of pleasure out of selecting just the right bottle for an occasion. Once it has been opened and drunk, though, it is gone forever whereas my stamps give me pleasure again and again, every time I open an album. Another friend is a golfer. He recently didn't let his partner know just how much he paid for a new putter but I could have bought a lot of stamps for the price. At least his hobby allows him to maintain his health. Some of my friends are smokers and that costs them far more than my hobby costs me in more ways than one.

My collection owes me nothing. What I've spent has repaid me many times over in the pleasure and relaxation it has provided and if my descendants get anything from it when I'm gone, well that's a bonus but there is one facet of all this that has got me thinking lately. Where is the line between being a collector and simply being a hoarder? A collector works with his stamps constantly trying to improve it whereas a hoarder simply accumulates.

For many years, I collected Italian WW2 postal history and last year, I exhibited at Stampex. I noticed a week or two back that I still hadn't unpacked it since it was returned last November. Over the years, the stories behind all those envelopes had engrossed me as I did the research and frequently saddened me as I found the final chapter for the letter writer was a grave, far from home. I thought about what would be required to improve the collection and I realized I didn't expect to be going any further with it so why was I hanging on to it? It would not take much to move it up to gold medal standard but I realised that my interests had gone in a different direction over the last year or two.

After a week of thinking this over, I packed the whole collection off to Abacus to be auctioned in August. What it brings is far less important to me than hoping that someone will come to it with fresh ideas and get the pleasure from it that I have. I'm now looking at the other collections I have with the same view. Some of them will stay with me forever, or for my part of forever, but the ones that have begun to simply take up space will be moved on allowing room and energy for the parts of my collection that need my attention.

Once the decision is made, the manner of disposal must then be decided. If you have a dealer you have known and trusted for years, offering the lot to him may be the easiest option. The advantage is a fast payment. The disadvantage is that he has to make a profit and you may not be happy with the price offered. Auctions may offer a higher return but you have to wait for the money. The recent failure of a couple of auction houses has made some people wary of this method but the industry seems to be working to improve controls. Finally, you can always sell your collection yourself, using one of the many on-line sites. This would probably give the best return but the amount of work involved can be staggering and many of us are too old to want to start another full-time career which is what it can become. As Hamlet would have said if he had been a philatelist, "To sell, or not to sell? That is the question".



*When the time comes to let go, sending your collection to auction can be an option*

## The Power of a Stamp

When your editor was a boy of ten or eleven and living in England, he began ordering stamp approvals that were advertised in his favourite comic. Each month, a small book of stamps would come, he would buy a few and post the rest back paying with unused postage stamps. There was always a bonus stamp for those who bought the whole book and one month, it was the 1869 Nicaragua stamp (SG 12) shown at right. The stamp company claimed that it was valued at ten shillings and he decided that he just had to have it.



He had a Saturday morning job and between that and his pocket money he bought the book after four weeks of saving. As can be seen from the grubby appearance, he had not yet learned to use tweezers and probably not even to wash his hands between playing in the garden and handling his stamps. He still loves it though and sixty years later, it is one of the few stamps from his original collection that he still has. It also started a love affair with the early Nicaraguan stamps. In 1901, Nicaragua released another similar stamp featuring a dockside scene dominated by Mt. Momotombo. This stamp was to have enormous political consequences for Nicaragua and indeed, for the whole world.

In 1881, a French consortium led by Ferdinand de Lesseps who had earlier succeeded in building the Suez Canal, began construction of a canal through the Panama isthmus which would join the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans and cut off the dangerous route around Cape Horn. This was a far more hazardous venture than Suez, due to the terrain and climate but by far the biggest obstacles were Yellow Fever and Malaria. The role of mosquitos was unknown in those days and soon the project was recording 200 worker deaths a months from disease. Within a few years, the consortium was bankrupt having lost US\$287,000,000 and with the loss of 22,000 lives.

A new French group took over, managed by engineer Philippe Bunau-Virilla, whose major contribution was to convince the company that a system of locks would be needed instead of the original plan to stay at sea level. Despite his competence, by 1891, the project had stalled. In the meantime, the United States were planning their own canal through Nicaragua. Bunau-Virilla was sent to Washington to try to convince the Americans to buy the French project, instead of starting their own. A price of one hundred million dollars was asked but canny US congressmen used the Nicaragua option to beat the price down to forty million. Even at that price, many in Congress preferred Nicaragua and it looked as though they had the numbers to push this through.

In 1902, Mt. Momotombo had erupted but the Nicaraguan government had hushed up the news as they thought it could affect the American decision. Bunau-Virilla remembered seeing a stamp with the mountain smoking and he visited the stamp dealers of Washington, buying 90 of their copies which he then attached to letters to all forty-five congressmen, one on the envelope and one on the letter itself, pointing out the dangers of building a canal through a volcanically active area. The letters did the trick and Congress voted to purchase the French project which they eventually finished in 1914.



Politics added another dimension to the problems. The area was part of Columbia and after a deal on purchase of the land was arranged, the Columbian parliament refused to ratify it. Rebels in the area saw their opportunity and rose against the Columbian government and the Americans used their gunboats to support the rebels by blockading the sea lanes to prevent Columbia sending troops to the area. The Panama area declared its independence and thus the new country of Panama was born.

The whole affair caused bitter divisions in the US congress but eventually things settled. The US paid Columbia thirty million dollars as compensation provided they recognized Panama's independence.

A hundred years later, by 2014, around 850,000 ships had gone through the canal, all paying for the privilege, and Nicaragua must surely be regretting the damage done by a simple stamp.



## The Stamp That Saved Lives

Almost immediately after France was invaded by Germany in World War Two, a resistance movement, known as the Maquis, sprang up. Communication between members was difficult and often relied on the post. Unfortunately for the Maquis members, the Germans had a very efficient network of spies and collaborators working to seek out members of the Maquis. They also censored messages, looking for hidden meaning in seemingly innocuous wording.

If suspicion fell on someone, the Germans had a novel way to confirm the guilt or innocence of the person. They would send a message by post to the person, telling them to be at a particular place at a particular time to be part of a plan for action. If the person ignored the letter or took it to the authorities, they surmised that the suspicion was unfounded but if they turned up for the appointment they were immediately arrested and executed. Many lost their lives before the Maquis realized what was happening. Obviously, a solution was needed if the post was to be a reliable way of communicating.



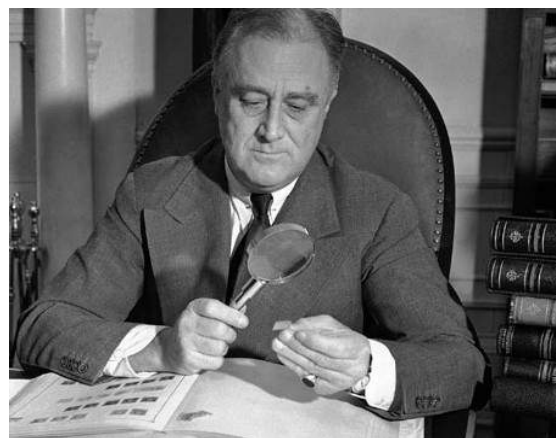
The solution came from England. The 1939 French stamp depicting Mercury, messenger to the gods (and also the minor god of deceit and trickery) was the normal stamp for posting a letter. The English reproduced the stamp but added some tiny changes around the nose, neck and eyes. Only those who knew where to look would ever notice. These stamps were then dropped by parachute on supply flights to the resistance.

From then on, when a letter was received, if it bore one of those stamps, it was assumed to be genuine but if it had a normal French stamp on the envelope, those receiving it knew it had come from the Germans and was a trap. Unfortunately for philatelists, leftover mint copies of these stamps are very rare and as messages were usually destroyed after reading, examples on cover are even more so.

### A Philatelist's Psalm

Stamp collecting is my hobby, I shall not be bored.  
It maketh me to do research on far places.  
It causeth me to correspond with odd people.  
It keepeth me alert.  
It leadeth me into areas of understanding for curiosity's sake.  
Yea, though I live through a Winter of inclement weather,  
I will fear no boredom, for my stamps are with me.  
They provideth me a means of escaping from the tensions of my responsibilities.  
They filleth my house with books.  
My cash runneth lower.  
Surely interest and knowledge shall follow me all the days of my life.  
And I will be listed in the ranks of the Philatelists forever.

*Sent by Ed in Canada who found it on the internet*



### Extra Daytime Meeting of the Bendigo Philatelic Society.

If you are unable to get to our regular evening meeting, or want more time to pursue your collecting interests, we now have a daytime meeting on the morning after our main meeting.

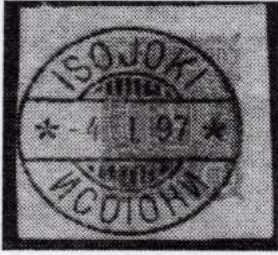
Members are welcome to attend both meetings. Daytime meetings will not be formal meetings.

Venue: Golden Square Hall, 9 Old High St.  
(Bendigo Field Naturalists Club rooms)  
(Behind the Golden Square Fire Station)

Date and time: Wednesday July 4th. at 10.00am  
(Then every Wednesday following the Tuesday meeting)

Coffee, Tea, biscuits etc, available throughout the meeting.

The venue has lots of free parking, has ground floor and ramp access and is close to a bus stop in High street. Further details if required can be obtained from the club secretary.



**BLACKBURN MISSIONARY**

**STAMP CLUB Inc.**

**"A Club with a Mission"**

**P.O. Box 51, Forest Hill, Vic 3131**



# **STAMP SALE**

**COINS and POSTCARDS**

**30th June, 2018**

**9 am to 2:30 pm**

**BURWOOD HEIGHTS UNITING CHURCH**

**Cnr. Burwood Highway and Blackburn Road**

**Burwood East**

**(opposite K Mart) (Melway Map 61 – K6)**

**Next two Saturday Sales**

**(27<sup>th</sup> October 2018 and 24<sup>th</sup> February 2019)**

**Extensive range of stamps at Bargain Prices**

**Light Refreshments Available**

**Free Parking**

**Free Admission**





# BENDIGO Stamp Fair

Saturday

11th August 2018

9.30am - 3.30pm

Local & Melbourne  
Stamp and Coin Dealers

St Andrews

Uniting Church Hall  
24 Myers Street Bendigo

## Free Entry

Food and Drinks Available

Bendigo Philatelic Society Inc

P.O. Box 962 Bendigo Central, Vic. 3552

[www.bendigophilatelicsociety.org](http://www.bendigophilatelicsociety.org)

Enquiries to Fair Coordinator: Bill Trew

Email: [marj.trew@bigpond.com.au](mailto:marj.trew@bigpond.com.au)