THE ACCEPTANCE OF SPECIAL STAMPS WITHIN THE UPU UP TO 1920

Limited validity of "Special" stamps between the UPU Congresses of 1897 and 1920

The sender thought that this letter from Switzerland to the UK was correctly franked at 25c with a definitive 10c stamp plus 5c and 10c stamps of the 1916 Pro Juventute issue (within their period of validity). However, this Pro Juventute issue was not accepted in prepayment of mail to the UK as it had only a limited validity period. The Swiss post office marked the offending stamps as invalid and indicated an amount of 30 gold centimes postage due – twice the value of the Pro Juventute franking. On delivery in London, 3d (the equivalent of 30 gold centimes) was charged as postage due.

The proliferation of special issues in the mid-1890's lead to objections from, in particular, the Society for the Suppression of Speculative Stamps ("SSSS"), formed in London on 6 May 1895. These objections were sympathetically received by Heinrich von Stephan, the German Post Minister. The **5th UPU Congress in Washington** in May/June 1897 resolved that local **special and commemorative issues** and **issues with a limited period of validity** were not to be permitted in prepayment of international mail. This restriction was rescinded at the **7th UPU Congress in Madrid** in October/November 1920.

This exhibit illustrates the use of special and commemorative issues of stamps and postal stationery to 1920, **in principle, on international mail** (but exceptionally on internal mail). Its structure is as follows:

The special issues up to the 5th UPU Congress in May 1897

Commemorative stamps and envelopes to 1891 (A)

Official commemorative postal cards (B), Charity issues (C), "Columbus" issues for the 400th Anniversary of the Discovery of America (D), The SSSS and the commemorative issues (E)

The 5th UPU Congress in Washington in May/June 1897 (F)

The special issues after the 5th UPU Congress and up to the 7th UPU Congress in 1920

Special issues made in the 11/2 years between the 5th UPU Congress and the end of 1898, before the resolutions of the Congress came into force (G)

Special issues made after the resolutions came into force on 1 January 1899:

Issues of the countries which had openly supported the restrictions Germany, Switzerland, France, Italy, and the Netherlands (H)

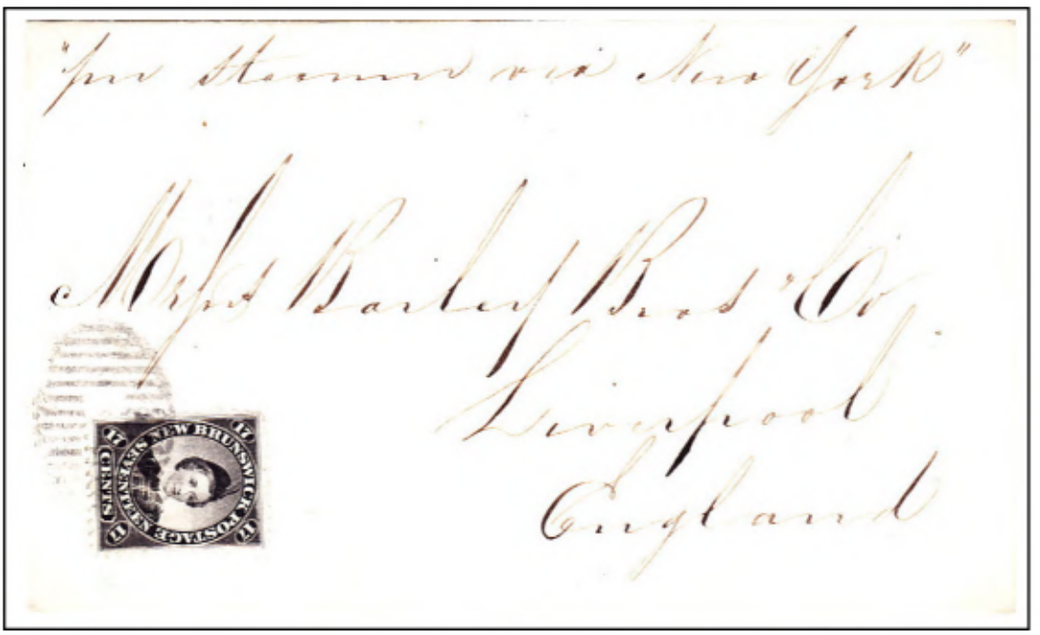
Issues of the countries which had openly opposed the restrictions: Great Britain and Portugal (J)

Issues of all other countries (K)

The 7th UPU Congress in Madrid in October/November 1920 (L)

The literature used is extensive: it includes standard and specialized catalogues, and the Kohl Handbook.

New Brunswick 17 cent Prince of Wales stamp of 15 May 1860 - the world's first commemorative stamp?



Expertise

This outer part of an entire addressed to Liverpool, England, with a routing "per Steamer via New York", is correctly franked with the 17 cent stamp for carriage to Liverpool by the faster route via New York. It bears Saint John and St. Stephen despatch and transit back-stamps of 10 and 11 May 1867, plus a Liverpool arrival back-stamp of 27 May 1867.

Only a few covers with this 17c stamp have survived (estimate ca. 5), probably because letters to England were usually sent by the slower but less expensive route from Saint John via Halifax for only 121/2c.

The issues comprising this section are grouped as follows:

a. Stamps which are considered by some to be the world's first commemorative stamps:

1. The first candidate is the above 17 cent stamp of the 1860 issue of New Brunswick, a British Colony which became part of the Dominion of Canada on 1 July 1867. This stamp, showing Edward, then Prince of Wales, was first ordered in March 1860, soon after the announcement of the Prince of Wales' intention to visit St. John, New Brunswick, in August 1860, but long after the other values of the set. It is therefore claimed to be a commemorative stamp.

2. The second candidate is the 15 cent Lincoln stamp issued by the USA in 1866. As this was the first stamp issued after Lincoln's death, and was printed in black, some people consider it to be a mourning stamp.

3. The third candidate is the 1871 "Trenecito" stamp of Peru, which was long catalogued as commemorating the railway and being the world's first commemorative stamp.

b. The earliest issue with a clearly commemorative inscription is the 1876 Centenary postal stationery envelope of the USA.

c. Great Britain's 1887 stamp issue is generally known as the "Jubilee" issue, but is clearly a definitive issue.

d. Similarly, the 1888 "Centenary" issue of New South Wales is by its nature a definitive issue although each stamp is inscribed "One Hundred Years".

e. The Jubilee issue of 22 January 1891 for the 50th Anniversary of the British Colony of Hong Kong was first true commemorative stamp issue.

f. Rumania's issue of 10 May 1891 for the 25th Anniversary of the Accession of King Carol was the second issue.

A. Possible commemorative issues to 1891 **a.2. United States Lincoln "mourning" stamp 1866**

United States 15 cent black Abraham Lincoln stamp of 17 June 1866 – a commemorative stamp?

The first stamp issued by the United States after the assassination of Abraham Lincoln on 14 April 1865 was a 15c stamp portraying him, which was issued in black on 17 June 1866. Some people regard this as a mourning stamp.

This entire to Austria dated 3 August 1866 is correctly franked with a pair of the above stamps; obliterated at New York and with a red New York "N(ew).YORK AM(erican). P(ac)K(e)T 7(cents) PAID" despatch date-stamp of 4 August; by closed mail to Aachen, receiving a boxed blue transit marking "AACHEN 3 FRANCO" there and a back-stamp of 18 August on arrival at Vienna.

This envelope to Zanzibar is correctly franked with three of the above stamps (5c US inland plus 40c British postage); cancelled at Salem, Mass. and with a despatch date-stamp of 9 April (1867); red transit date-stamps " BOSTON BR(itish). PKT." "PAID" & "40" (= 40 c. onward carriage paid) of 10 April and "LONDON PAID" of 22 April plus "4d1/2" (= rate for1/4 oz. via Marseilles); by closed bag to Mauritius (transit b/s 1 June) then back to Mahé; there, Dr. Brooks (Seychelles Chief Medical Officer 1858-97) handed it to the Sultan's sloop for carriage to Zanzibar.

Listed by standard catalogues as the world's first commemorative stamp

Expertise

Expertise

According to the Scott and Gibbons catalogues, this 5 centavo stamp with text "Chorrillos – Lima – Callao" (referring to the railway route), showing the engine and tender, was issued in April 1871 to commemorate the 20th anniversary of this railway line.

Specialists now dispute this, advising that usages of this stamp are recorded already from June 1870 and explaining that it was issued to pay a new reduced postage rate. On 15 September 1869, a reduction of the normal postage of 10 centavos to 5 centavos was reintroduced for mail transported only on this rail route (this rate having been previously been in effect from 29 December 1865 to 7 January 1868). As from 27 January 1873, this rate was extended to all mail carried by rail in Peru.

Above: An entire letter written at Callao on 8 February 1871 and addressed to a firm in Lima; correctly franked with the above stamp (vermillion shade); cancelled with the Callao date-stamp and with a Lima arrival back-stamp of the same day.

Below: This wrapper bears the recipient's manuscript indication as having been despatched on 25 May 1873 and received on 27 May 1873. It was sent from Arica (now in Chile, but in Peru up to 1880) to Valparaiso in the south of Chile and was franked only with this 5 centavo "Trenecito" stamp (pale red shade), here cancelled with the double-framed "ARICA" marking.

World's first commemorative envelope: for the Philadelphia World Fair and the Centenary of the USA

This 3 cent envelope was issued in green and red in 1876 to commemorate the 100th Anniversary of the United States in conjunction with the World's Fair at Philadelphia. It bears the dates "1776" and "1876" and is thus the first issue of stamps or postal stationery actually bearing a commemorative text.

This example in green used to Germany is undated but is correctly supplemented with a 2 cent vermilion stamp of the 1879 issue, thus indicating usage between 1879 and 1883; it is cancelled with an obliterator and bears the despatch date-stamp Walton 22 July, a manuscript mention "Via England's closet mail" (= by British closed mail!), a "British Transit" date-stamp of New York dated 25 July and a delivery back-stamp of 9 August.

This example in red used to Switzerland is correctly supplemented with two 1 cent stamps of the 1873 issue; it is cancelled with an obliterator and bears a despatch date-stamp of Green Bay Wis. of 7 January, plus Langenthal transit and Melchnau arrival back-stamps of 23 January 1877.

Known as the "Jubilee" issue as it appeared on the 50th Anniversary of Queen Victoria's Accession

Although known as the "Jubilee" issue, this series of stamps issued on 1 January 1887 was clearly of the nature of a definitive issue and remained in use, with subsequent printings, until replaced by a rather similar series of Edward VII on 1 January 1902.

Above: An envelope bearing on the reverse the coat of arms of the Prince of Wales ("Ich Dien") sent to the Commander of the Nepalese Army in Kathmandu franked at 6d with a pair of 2%d stamps of the "Jubilee" issue plus a 1d stamp (1881 issue); cancelled "CHARING CROSS RD. E.C." on 3 June 1892; transit back-stamps of the Sea Post Office at Aden of 14 June and of Segowlie in India of 22 June; arrival back-stamp "NEPAL" of the British Residency post office in Kathmandu of 24 June 1892.

Below: A 2d registered envelope used from London to Austria and supplemented with 2%d + 5d (Die II) + 10d stamps of the" Jubilee" issue (UPU postage rate for 3% - 4oz); cancelled "UPPER THAMES ST. E.C." on 2 July 1895.

The first stamp issue with a clearly commemorative inscription: “One Hundred Years”

The stamps of this issue bear the inscription “ONE HUNDRED YEARS” (of the Colony of New South Wales) and are regarded by some as the world’s first official commemorative issue. The fact that new printings continued to be made until 1906 indicates that this issue was by nature a definitive issue.

Covers sent to Germany before the entry of New South Wales into the UPU in October 1891:

Above: From August 1901, franked at 6d with 2d + 4d “Centenary” stamps cancelled with the Sydney duplex marking on 10 August 1891; Bavarian Railway transit and Munich arrival back-stamps of 13 September 1891.

Below: From March 1890, franked at 10d with five x 2d “Centenary” stamps (1888 printing); cancelled with the “Ray” type obliterator with the number “46”; with Gundagai despatch and Nuremberg II arrival back-stamps of 5 March and 12 April 1890.

Commemorative issue for the 50th Anniversary of the establishment of the Colony

The World's first stamp of a clearly commemorative nature and with a respective inscription

With "B62" obliterator
Short "U" in "JUBILEE"

Expertise

With "B62" obliterator
Broken "1" in "1891"

C-t-o on 22 January 1891
The first day of issue

Expertise

C-t-o on 24 January 1891
"HO NG" instead of "HONG"

C-t-o on 26 January 1891
Short "J" in "JUBILEE"

50,000 copies of the 2 cent stamp of the 1883 issue of Hong Kong were overprinted locally "1841 / Hong Kong / JUBILEE / 1891" and issued on 22 January 1891. There was heavy speculation, with fights and people being killed attempting to buy this stamp on the first day. Used examples are often cancelled-to-order with the Hong Kong date-stamp between 22 and 26 January 1891.

The 2 cent stamp was the lowest value and franked either inland mail or international printed matter to 50g. Only about 20 covers with the Jubilee stamp are known (90% philatelic local covers), with no examples of international printed matter. Genuine used examples of the Jubilee stamp which bear the "B62" obliterator as used on international mail from Hong Kong are unusual.

Expertise

Ex Colonel F. W. Webb and Christopher D'Almada

A philatelic cover to the British P.O. in Canton, China, over-franked with a block of four of this commemorative stamp (a single would have sufficed), which includes the scarce overprint variety with a tall narrow "K" in "Kong"; the stamps are cancelled with the Hong Kong date-stamp of 24 January 1891; the cover was back-stamped on arrival at Canton on 2? January 1891.

Commemorative issue for the 25th Anniversary of the Accession of King Carol I of Rumania

Above: The 5 bani inland commemorative post-card used to France over-franked with the whole series commemorating King Carol I's Silver Jubilee which had been issued on 10 May 1891; cancelled at Bucharest on 22 May 1891.
Below: A registered cover to Germany minimally over-franked by 1 bani with the full series of stamps (plus additional copies of the 1 1/2 and 15 bani values); cancelled at Bucharest on 24 May 1891 and back-stamped on arrival at Cöthen on 26 May 1891.

B. Commemorative postal cards up to 1897 **a. Bavaria Exhibition postal cards 1882 & 1896**

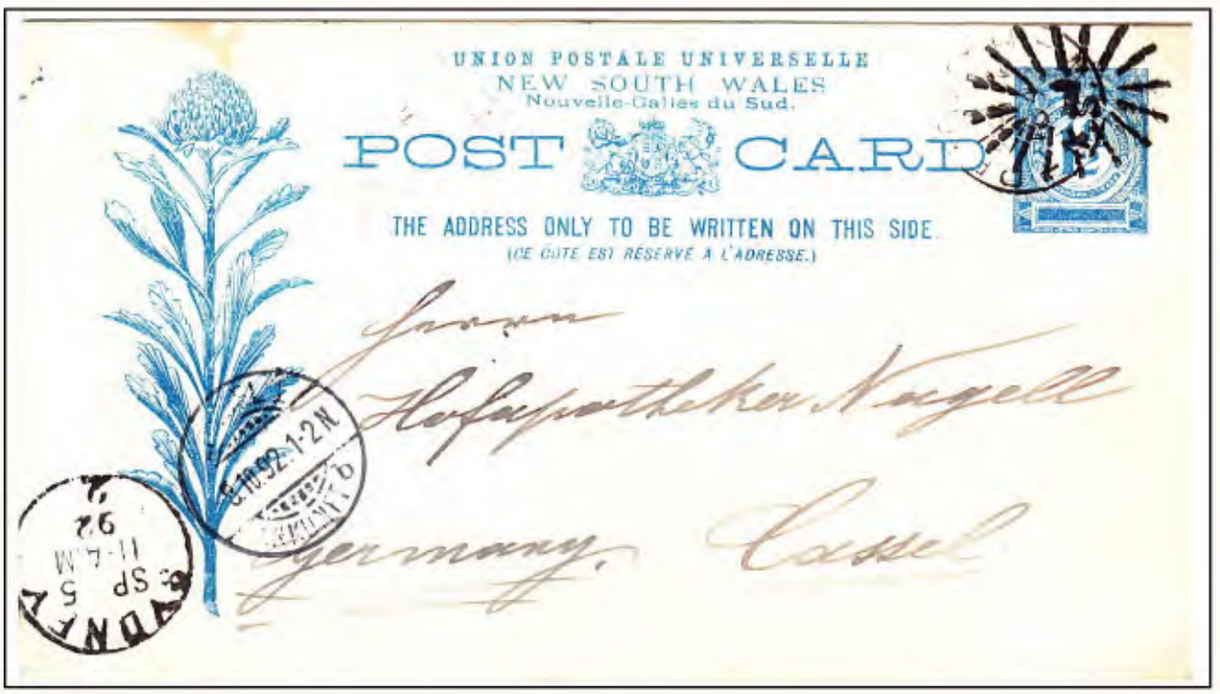
This section covers official post office commemorative postal cards up to 1897 (international use wherever possible). Special postal cards, which were printed to private order, and those which are definitive postal cards with additional commemorative text or illustrations added subsequently, are excluded from this exhibit.

The UPU Congress of 1878 resolved that the heading "Union Postale Universelle", and the name of the issuing country, should appear on the address-side of a post-card and that the card should not exceed 14 x 6 cm. The 1885 Congress further resolved that the address-side should bear the text "Coté réservé à l'adresse" and no illustrations.

Above: This special 5pf card issued for the Bavarian Industry Trade and Art Exhibition in Nuremberg in 1882 is the **world's first commemorative postal card**; it bears a respective text plus an illustration. This example was used commercially within Germany; it was cancelled at the Exhibition in Nuremberg on 4 August (1882) and bears a Leipzig delivery mark of 5 August. This card does not comply with the UPU requirements and was intended solely for inland use (international use not yet seen).

Below: This special 5 pf inland card for the Bavarian National Exhibition in Nuremberg in 1896 bears only a minimal text and has a yellow-brown background print showing the exhibition hall. In spite of the missing name of the issuing country and the prohibited illustration on the address side, this example was sent registered to the USA without objection. It is supplemented with a 25 pf stamp to give a 30 pf franking (10 pf postage + 20 pf registration); cancelled with the special Exhibition date-stamp on 29 July 1896; with London Registry transit mark dated 30 July and Philadelphia arrival back-stamp of 8 August 1896.

Postal cards with commemorative text: “One Hundred Years” in value imprint

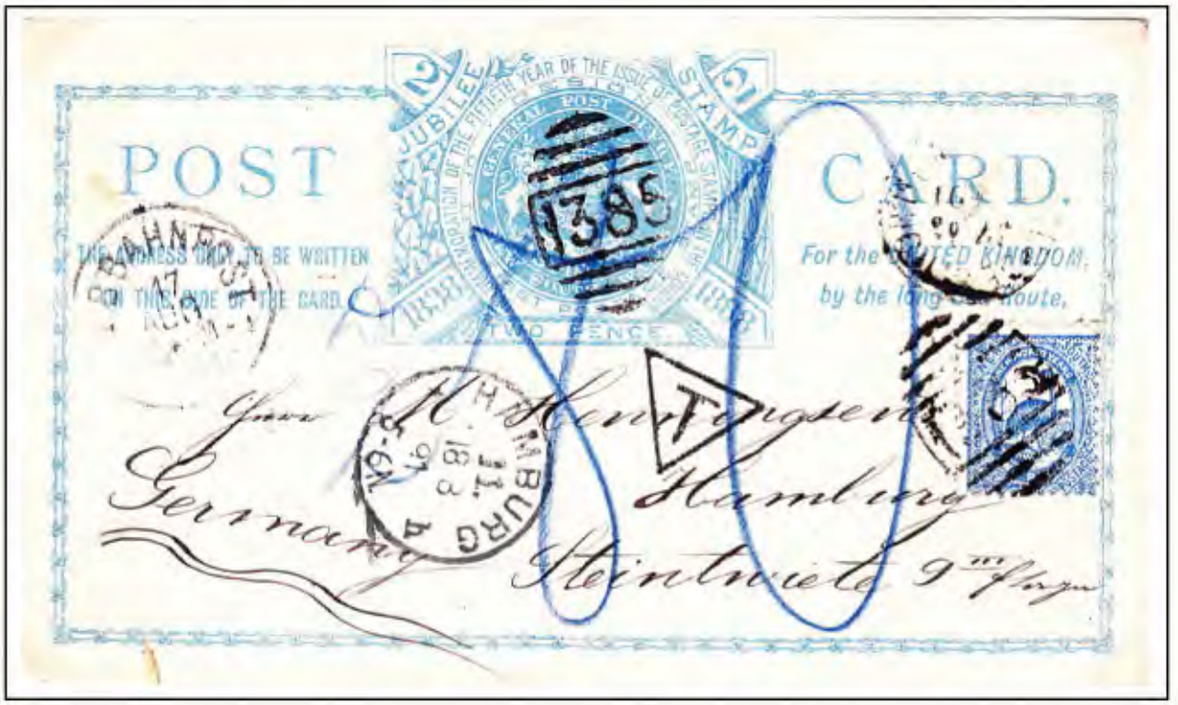


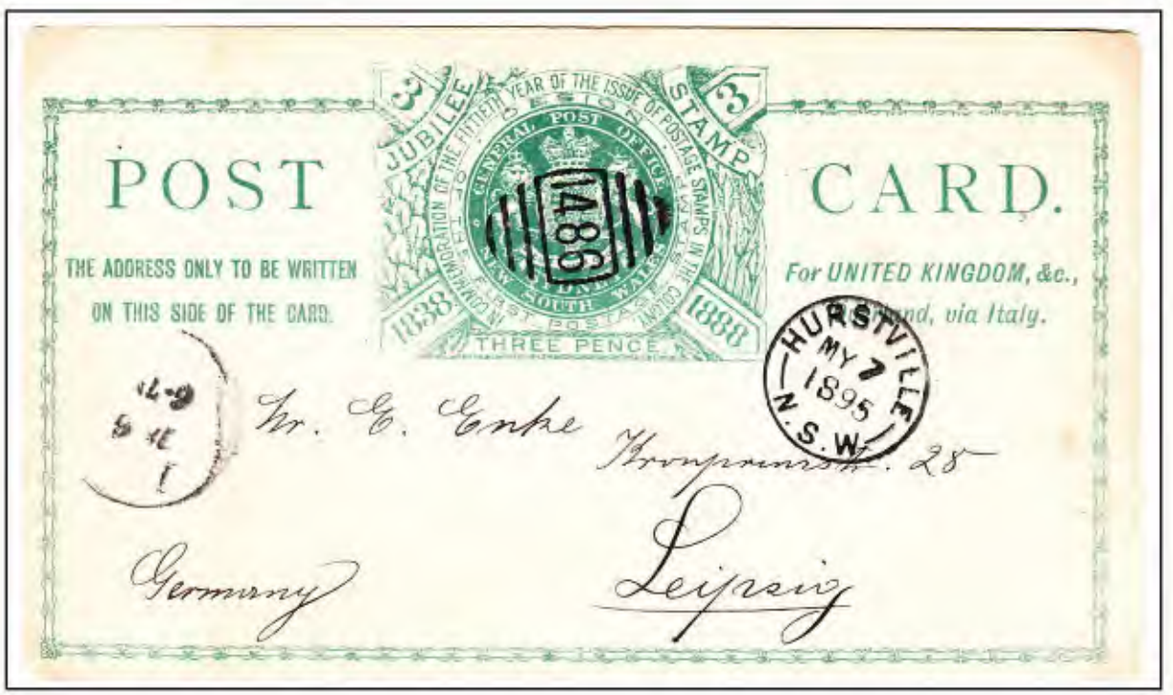
The existing 1d inland postal stationery card was re-issued in 1888 with a value imprint bearing the commemorative inscription “ ONE HUNDRED YEARS”. The fact that various further issues with small design changes were made between 1888 and 1892, and that various versions of a 1½d post-card (the new UPU rate), still with the commemorative inscription, but now with a text conforming to the UPU rules, were issued from 1891 to 1895, indicates that these postal cards were by nature definitive issues.

Above: A 1d inland postal card of the 1888 issue (before the entry of NSW into the UPU in October 1891) supplemented with a 1d stamp of the “ONE HUNDRED YEARS” issue to give the agreed 2d post-card rate to the United Kingdom via the long sea route (with the sender’s manuscript note to this effect); cancelled with the Sydney duplex mark on 3 July 1890.

Below: A 1 ½d postal card of the 1891 issue (at the new rate after the entry of NSW into the UPU, complying with the UPU’s text requirements, but not the maximum permitted size) used to Germany; cancelled with the “Ray” type obliterator with the number “7”; Penrith and Sydney date-stamps of 4 and 5 September 1892; Cassel arrival date-stamp of 8 October 1892. This postal card was accepted as a post-card although it was 2cm wider than the UPU’s maximum (NSW later corrected this oversight in size).

2d + 3d postal cards commemorating the 50th Anniv. of the "first postage stamp" issued by NSW in 1838





In 1838, New South Wales issued letter-sheets embossed with the seal of the GPO to indicate prepayment of 2d local postage in Sydney - this was two years before Britain's "Penny Black" and "Mulready" envelope! Members of the public could also submit their own letter-sheets for embossing. The issue of these "stamps" was commemorated in 1889 with 2d and 3d postal cards.
Above: 2d post-card "For the UK by the long Sea-Route" sent to Germany on 11 July 1891 (before NSW's entry into the UPU) and correctly supplemented with a 2d "Centenary" stamp to give the 4d letter-rate (it did not qualify as a post card) to Germany "by the long sea route". Apparently sent, however, "overland via Italy", for which the letter-rate was 6d, and therefore marked "T" and "2d". With transit mark of Bavarian Railway Post dated 17 August 1891 and Hamburg arrival date-stamp of 18 August 1891. As it was not fully prepaid, this card was charged 80 pf. postage due on delivery (the German rate for a non-UPU letter).
Below: 3d post-card "For the UK, & c., Overland, via Italy." issued for the faster transit to the UK via Brindisi at the special 3d rate agreed with Britain. Here sent to Germany in 1895 (after NSW's entry into the UPU on 1 October 1891), this card exceeded the maximum UPU post-card size but its 3d covered the UPU letter-rate of 21/2d. Cancelled with the "486" obliterator of Hurstville, the card bears Hurstville despatch and Sydney transit date-stamps of 7 May 1895 and a Leipzig mark of ?? June.

Switzerland's first commemorative issue was a 5c inland postal card for the 50th Anniversary of the Zurich Cantonal stamps (the first stamps on the Continent). The card was sold together with the 50c entrance ticket to a stamp exhibition in Zurich from 25 June to 2 July 1893. This card caused such speculation that it was being sold on the street for up to 30 francs and the police had to be called in to restore order. It made Swiss Post Office very aware of the potential speculation in stamp issues.

Three registered cards to Germany with confused rates due to the prohibited illustration/missing inscription on the address-side:

Above: Accepted as a post-card - the 5c value imprint + 30c stamp pay the rate of 10c postage + 25c registration

Centre: Franked as a letter - the 5c value imprint + 45c in stamps pay the rate of 25c postage + 25c registration

Below: Franked as a letter - the 5c value imprint was not accepted; the 50c stamp pays the 25c postage + 25c registration.

B. Commemorative postal cards up to 1897 e. Italy 25th Anniversary of the Liberation of Rome 1895

This Italian 10c inland card of 1895 commemorating the 25th Anniversary of the Liberation of Rome is very unusual in that its 10c value imprint is on the message-side and not on the address-side. This fact; and the prohibited illustration on the address-side, led to classification as a letter and to confused rates when these cards were sent to foreign countries:

Above: The Italian post office raised no objection but the German T.P.O. affixed a label saying that the illustration on the address-side was not allowed and marked 25 pf = 30c = 2 x 15c (25c letter rate less 10c franking) as postage due.

Centre: The Italian post office accepted the 10c value imprint on the reverse and marked the 15c under-payment with a "T". On arrival at Berne, the Swiss post office treated this post-card as unpaid and charged 2 times the 25c letter rate as postage due.

Below: The Italian post office cancelled both the 10c value imprint on the reverse and the 10c stamp and did not indicate any under-payment. The card was date-stamped on arrival at Ravensburg, without the German post office noting any underpayment.

Postal cards commemorating the conversion of Prince Boris to the Orthodox Church

The special stamp issue commemorating the conversion of Prince Boris to the Greek Orthodox Church was supplemented with inland and international postal cards with a picture of the Prince on the address-side – which meant that the cards conflicted with the rules of the UPU. However, no objections were raised to the following cards used internationally.

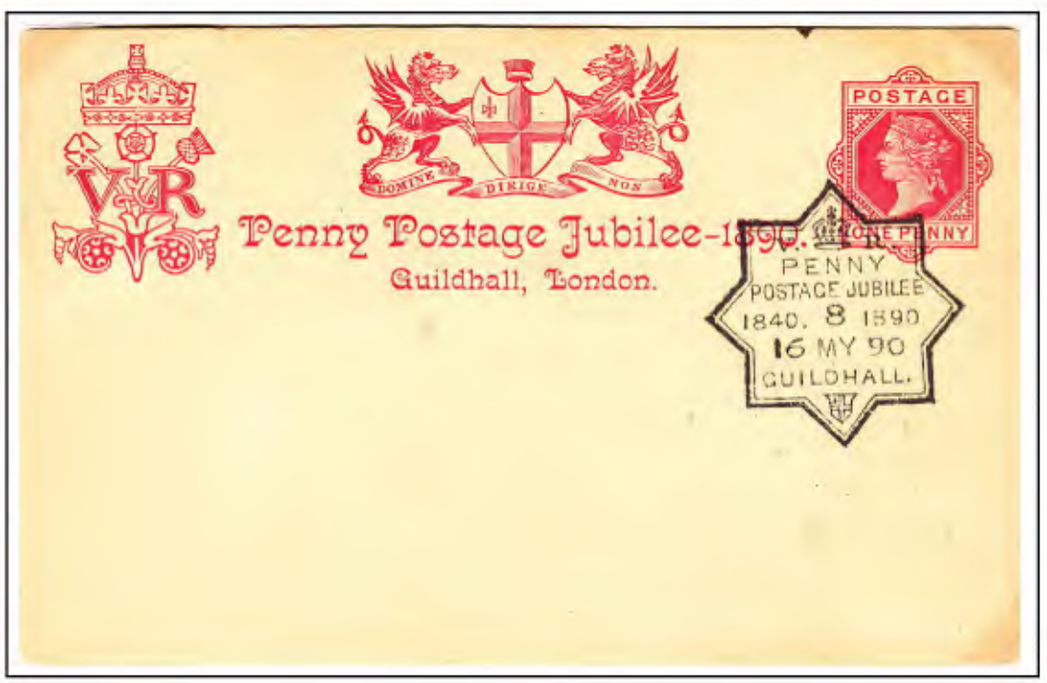
Left: A 10st international postal card with lilac picture (Type B – point of right sleeve 1 mm from cheek) sent registered to Turkey correctly supplemented with commemorative stamps to 25st; cancelled at Varna on 17 March 1896 (29 March by the Gregorian calendar); transit and arrival back-stamps of the German and Turkish post-offices in Constantinople dated 30 March 1896.

Right: A 10st international postal card with brown picture (Type A – point of right sleeve 2 mm from cheek) sent registered with return receipt to Japan correctly supplemented with stamps of this issue to the value of 50st; cancelled at Tutrakan on 12 April 1896 (24 August by the Gregorian calendar); transit and arrival date-stamps of London, Hong Kong and Nagasaki dated 28 April, 30 May and 9 June; kept for 4 months before return; despatch and transit date-stamps of Nagasaki and Yokohama of 18 October, then transit date-stamps of San Francisco (8 November), New York (13 November) and Rustchuk 13 November (=25 November) 1896. This card thus travelled round the world – the long text does not conclusively confirm that it was non-philatelic.

Sweden's first commemorative issue was a 56 inland postal card for the 25th Anniversary of the Accession of King Oscar II. These three cards sent abroad show confused rates due to the prohibited illustration/missing inscription on the address-side:
Above: to London as a post-card - 56 value imprint + 56 stamp = postcard rate of 106; returned franked at 21/2d as a letter.
Centre: to Germany as a post-card - the 56 value imprint was not accepted; the 106 in stamps pays the postcard rate of 106.
Below: to Germany as a letter - the 56 value imprint was not accepted; the 206 stamp pays the UPU letter rate of 206.

C. Charity issues up to 1897 **a. Great Britain stationery for 50th Anniv. of Penny Postage 1890**

The world's first stamp or stationery issue with a charity supplement



Above: This 1 d inland envelope was sold at 1 s, the additional 11 d being for the Rowland Hill Benevolent Fund to aid the widows and orphans of postal employees. This one was sent registered to The Netherlands, additionally franked with 1 %d + 2d stamps (1887 issue) to give the 2%d foreign letter-rate plus 2d registration fee. Cancelled with the Gracechurch St. (London) registration date-stamp of 26 November 1890, it has an oval "R" registration marking and an illegible Amsterdam arrival back-stamp.

Below: This 1 d postal card was sold at 6d, the additional 5d being destined for the above Benevolent Fund. Its value of 1 d represents the foreign post card rate, but this card does not comply with the UPU text requirements. These cards were very quickly sold out and, like this example, a great number were cancelled-to-order at the exhibition (here with the special metal date-stamp)

Non-postal commemorative Hospital Fund labels used on envelopes sent abroad

The British Post Office did not make an issue for Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee in 1897; but charity labels with the inscription " 1837 The Queen's Commemoration 1897", which had printed values of 1/- and 2/6, but no franking value, were placed on sale at newsagents and stationers by the Prince of Wales Jubilee Appeal Fund to collect money to build a hospital in London. These charity labels did not sell well, but they may have inspired the New South Wales tuberculosis fund stamp issue.

Above: A letter to Belgium bearing only the private 1s Diamond Jubilee label, which is cancelled with the Carnforth duplex mark dated 19 July 1897; although unfranked, the envelope bears no postage due markings; Liege arrival back-stamp of 20 July 1897.

Below: A late usage of the 1890 1d commemorative envelope to Switzerland, with the private 2s6d Diamond Jubilee label added. Bearing 2d + 2½d stamps (1887 issue) to give the 2½d foreign letter-rate plus 2d registration fee (the 1d franking value of the envelope was ignored); cancelled with the Birmingham registration date-stamp on 22 July 1897; the label is tied with the oval "R" registration marking; London registry transit date-stamp of 22 July; Lausanne arrival back-stamp of 24 July 1897.

The world's first stamp issue with a charity supplement – Diamond Jubilee commemorative issue

Possibly inspired by the labels issued by in Britain, New South Wales honoured the 1897 Diamond Jubilee with the world's first stamps bearing a charity supplement. Stamps of 1d (inland rate) and 2½d (UPU rate) were sold at 12 times their franking value, i.e. 1/- and 2/6, the supplement being destined for a Consumptives Home (Tuberculosis Sanatorium). The SSSS placed thesestamps on its black list.

Above: A registered cover to England bearing the above 1/- stamp plus a pair of the 2/6 stamps, giving a franking value of 6d. As the correct was 2½d postage plus 3d registration, the cover is over-franked by ½d (which is minimal compared to the charity supplement paid of 5s 6d!). The stamps are cancelled with the Sydney registration date-stamp on 5 July 1897; with cover has a red London transit mark of 8 August 1897 and delivery back-stamp of 9 August 1897.

D. "Columbus" issues for the 4th Centenary of the Discovery of America **8 countries 1892-93**

The stamp issue made by the U.S.A. was widely acclaimed because of its fine engraving; but it also attracted heavy criticism as the U.S. Post Office was seen to be profiting from the growing hobby of philately by issuing the world's first long and expensive series of commemorative stamps (which were replaced by a new definitive series in 1894).
This 2c envelope was sent registered to Switzerland with a philatelic supplementary franking comprising the first 9 values of the "Columbus" issue from 1c to 50c, which gave a total franking of $1.28 as against the necessary postage of 5c plus registration fee of 8c. It was cancelled with the date-stamp of Quincy, Adam County, Illinois on 6 January 1894 and bears a New York registration label plus back-stamp of 9 January 1894.

The first event which gave rise to stamp and postal stationery issues by a range of countries - and to an issue which marked the beginning of the exploitation of stamp collectors with high value issues of stamps - was the 4th Centenary of the Discovery of America i.e. Christopher Columbus's landfall in the Bahamas on 12 October 1492.

These issues fall into three categories:

a. The Seebeck issues of stamps and postal stationery for El Salvador and Nicaragua, which were made on 1 January 1892, plus that for Honduras made on 1 July 1892, each of which feature Christopher Columbus.

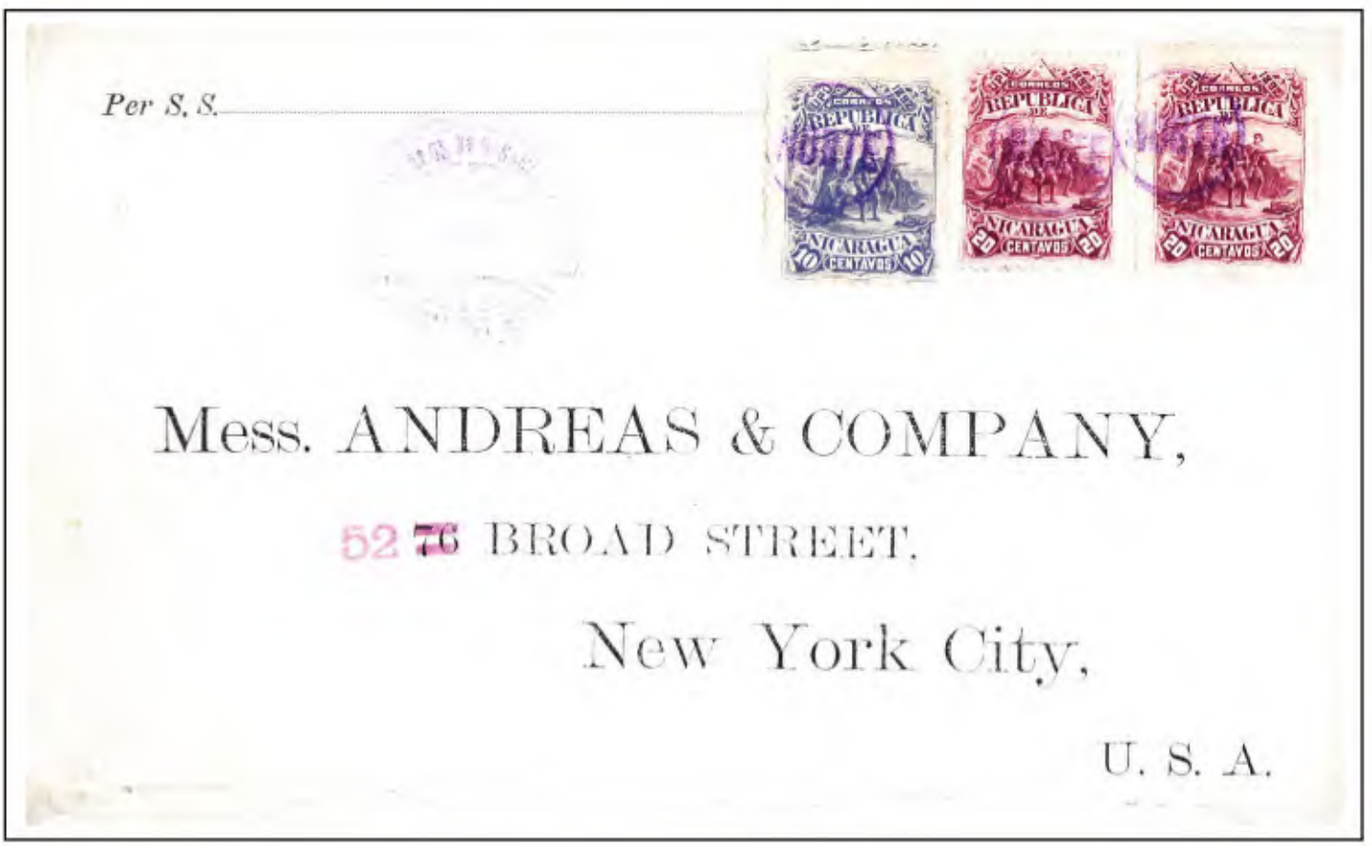
b. Modest issues by Argentina and Paraguay made on 12 October 1892, the day of the 4th Centenary, and by the Spanish Colony of Puerto Rico on 19 November 1893, the 400th Anniversary of Columbus's landing there.

c. The monumental issue of 16 stamps with a face value of $16.34 made by the U.S.A. on 2 January 1893 (8c value on 2 March) for the World Columbian Exposition in Chicago from 1 May to 30 October 1893.

d. A single stamp in a similar format to the stamps of the U.S.A. issued in July 1893 by Venezuela as a participant in the World Columbian Exposition in Chicago.

The postal stationery envelope issued by Paraguay and the four envelopes of different values issued by the U.S.A. do not appear to have given rise to specific criticism.

Seebeck issues for 1892 which depict Columbus's Discovery of America



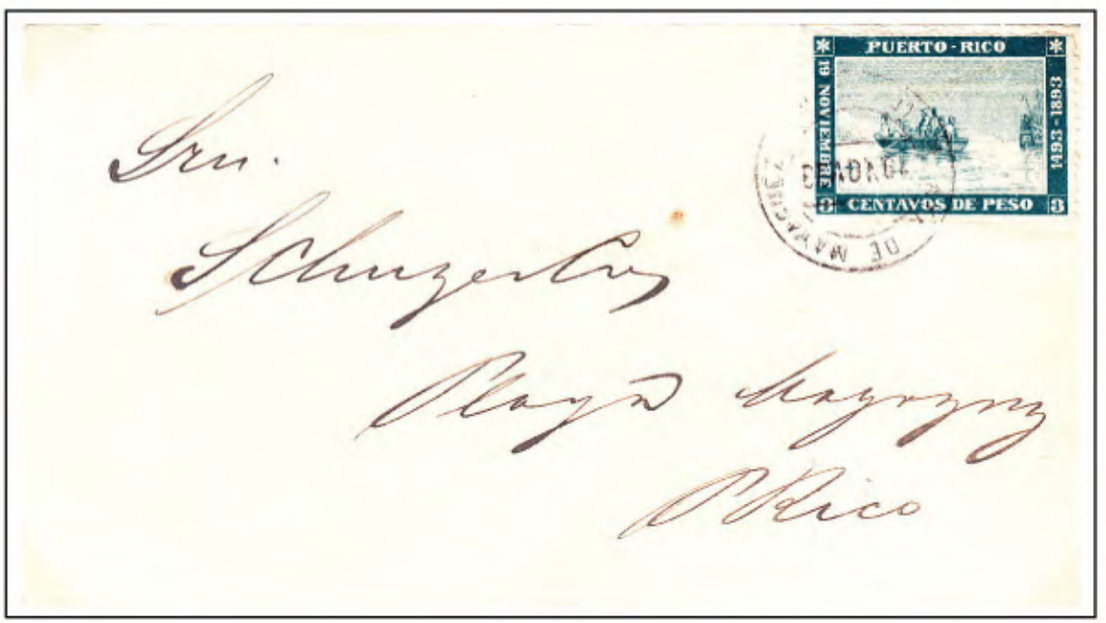
N. F. Seebeck, a director of the Hamilton Bank Note Co., New York, contracted to supply Ecuador, El Salvador, Honduras and Nicaragua with new series of stamps and postal stationery each year free of charge (the longest period was 1890-99 for Nicaragua). On 1 January (in some cases 31 July), the previous year's issues became invalid and were returned to Seebeck, who could market these, and also reprints from the original plates. The issues of El Salvador, Honduras and Nicaragua for 1892 depicted Columbus's landing, but were by their nature primarily definitive rather than commemorative issues.

Above: The 25c "Seebeck" stamp of the 1892 issue of Honduras used to frank an AR letter to Argentina (postage 10c, reg. 10c, receipt 5c); cancelled at Tegucigalpa on 17 January 1893; Panama transit b/s 28 January; Buenos Aires arrival b/s of 18 March.

Below: A commercial letter of 15-75g to the USA; correctly franked with one 10c and two 20c "Seebeck" stamps of the 1892 issue cancelled "NORTE" at San Juan del Norte on 24 July 1892; New York "PAID ALL" arrival back-stamp of 8 August 1892.

D. Issues for the 4th Centenary of the Discovery of America b. Argentina and Puerto Rico 1892/3

Modest issues for the 400th Anniversary of Columbus's Discovery of America



In 1892 and 1893, Argentina, Paraguay, Puerto Rico and Venezuela made modest issues (1 or 2 low-value stamps) to commemorate the 400th Anniversary of the Discovery of America by Columbus.

Above: The 5c and 8c stamps issued by Argentina on 12 October 1892 supplemented by a 1 c stamp and used locally in Buenos Aires on the first day of issue (the envelope is over-franked).

Below: The single 3 centavo stamp issued by the Spanish Colony of Puerto Rico showing Columbus's landing on the island on 19 November 1493. Here used locally on 19 November 1893, the day of issue and the only day on which it was valid for postage.

D. Issues for the 4th Cent. of the Discovery of America c. U.S.A. Columbian Exposition issue 1893

Above: A registered cover to Leipzig, Germany with a philatelic franking comprising the 8c + 30c + 50c values of the "Columbus" issue of the U.S.A. instead of just the 13c required. Cancelled at Philadelphia with an undated oval obliterator, but with a Philadelphia registration mark of 24 May 1894 on the reverse; registered at New York on 25 May 1894; arrival back-stamp illegible.
Below: This large folded cover sent registered to Germany was franked with 3 x 30c + $1 values of the "Columbus" issue to pay the postage (representing a weight of 38 x 1/2 oz at 5c) plus the 8c value for the registration fee. These were cancelled at New York with the oval registry obliterator; registration mark of 19 October 1893 plus Dresden arrival back-stamp of 28 October 1893. This $1 "Columbus" stamp was the first stamp over 90c issued by the U.S.A. and, together with the $2, $3, $4 and $5 values, is only very seldom found on examples of commercial mail (this example with a straight edge is from the top of the sheet).

D. Issues for the 4th Centenary of the Discovery of America **d. Venezuela 1893**

A finely engraved pictorial stamp for the Columbian Exposition in Chicago similar to those of the U.S.A.

Above: A registered cover with advice of receipt sent to Hamburg franked with 3 copies of the 25 centimo "Columbus" stamp issued in July 1893 covering postage 25c + registration 50c (advice of receipt fee on accompanying form?); cancelled at Caracas on ? October 1893; ms. routing "via New York"; Hamburg arrival back-stamp of 31 October 1893.

Below: A letter to Switzerland with one copy cancelled at Caracas and marked by the French Messageries Maritimes Line D vessel "Ville de Marseilles" on 27 June 1895; arrival at Bordeaux on 16 July; back-stamped on arrival at Zürich on 18 July 1895.

Concern as to unnecessary stamp issues led to the formation of the Society for the Suppression of Speculative Stamps ("SSSS") in London on 6 May 1895. General criticism was made concerning the number of stamps issued for the French Colonies (see below), the Seebeck issues (see Section D) and the Portuguese Colonies.

Between June 1895 and November 1897 the SSSS declared about 15 specific commemorative issues from 1895 (issues before 1895 were not specifically addressed) to 1897 (issued or planned) to be speculative or unnecessary. The Society's activities declined after restrictions had been resolved at the 5th UPU Congress in May/June 1897.

This section covers the commemorative issues from 1893 up to the end of 1897, which are basically presented chronologically (the charity issues have been covered in Section C and the "Columbus" issues in Section D):

(i) Issues prior to the formation of the SSSS in May 1895:
- 1893 (a) Montenegro Printing Anniversary
- 1894 (b) Japan Silver Wedding, (c) Belgium Antwerp Exhibition, (d) Portugal and Azores Prince Henry,(e) San Marino Government Palace

(ii) Issues after the formation of the SSSS – whose comments or black-listing are mentioned in the description:
- 1895 (f) Portugal and Territories St. Anthony, (g) Transvaal Penny Postage
- 1896 (h) Bulgaria Prince Boris, (j) Japan War with China, (k) Greece First Olympic Games, (l) Montenegro Royal Jubilee, (m) Johore Coronation & Labuan Jubilee, (n) Belgium Brussels Exhibition
- 1897 (o) Guatemala Exhibition, (p) Canada Jubilee, (q) Newfoundland Anniversary, (r) Leeward Is. Jubilee, (s) Barbados Jubilee
- 1895 -97 (t) Six issues by Ecuador, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela

A report of the French Undersecretary of State for the Colonies, M. Etienne, dated 15 February 1890, recommends that, in planning stamp issues for the various colonies, one should consider from the outset the higher income from the sales of **different** Colonial issues to **collectors** "the number of which is increasing from day to day".

This philatelic registered cover sent from Mayotte to France in 1913 (over-franked at 1 Fr.) bears stamps of the separate issues for all the four Comoro Islands (Anjouan, Grande Comore, Mayotte and Moheli) plus a stamp of Madagascar, all of which were valid at Mayotte. Is this evidence of a French policy to make multiple issues?

A modest commemorative issue which the SSSS considered “quite unnecessary”

A 1d stamp was issued by the Zuid Afrika Republic (Transvaal) on 6 September 1895 to commemorate the introduction of Penny Postage in Transvaal. The S.S.S.S. considered this issue to be unnecessary and placed it on its black-list. One wonders whether this action of the London S.S.S.S. was influenced by the very strained political relationship between Great Britain and the Z.A.R.

Above: A cover to Germany correctly franked at the UPU rate of 2½d with a pair of the Penny Postage commemorative stamps plus a ½d definitive stamp. Sent from Johannesburg on 3 May 1897; arrival back-stamp of Lichtenfels dated 24 May 1897.

Below: A 1d postal card (1894 issue) used to Germany supplemented with a Penny Postage commemorative stamp. Written at Johannesburg on 11 October 1896; arrival date-stamp of Barmen dated 2 November 1896.

A local commemorative issue black-listed by the SSSS

This special issue of 4 stamps, dated 2 February 1896 by the Julian calendar, was made on 14 February, the day of the baptism of Crown-Prince Boris, to commemorate his conversion to the Greek Orthodox Church. Although this event was of considerable significance for Bulgaria, the stamp issue was considered unnecessary and black-listed by the SSSS.

Above: A philatelic registered cover to Hungary correctly franked with stamps of this issue to the value of 50st; cancelled at Sofia on 19 March 1896 (31 March by the Gregorian calendar); with a Budapest arrival back-stamp of 2 April 1896.

Below: A wedding invitation card sent as printed matter to Germany correctly franked with the 5st stamp of this issue; cancelled at Pleven on 23 March 1896 (4 April by the Gregorian calendar).

A local commemorative issue which did not receive attention from the SSSS

This unusual commemorative issue shows on stamps of 2 and 5 sen Prince Arisugawa, who had distinguished himself as Head of the General Staff in the 1894/95 war against China, and, on further 2 and 5 sen values, Prince Kitashirakawa as Commander of the force sent to Formosa. Both died during the action. The stamps show neither their names nor the reason for the issue.

Above: A 2 sen envelope (1888 issue) used to Germany correctly supplemented with a 2 sen Prince Arisugawa stamp, a 5 sen Prince Kitashirakawa stamp and a 1 sen definitive stamp; boxed "PAQUEBOT" mark (5 years before the first recorded mark); Kobe date-stamp of 20 May 1897; transit and arrival back-stamps of Yokohama and Crefeld dated 21 May and 20 June 1897.
Below: A cover to Germany franked with 2 x 2 sen + 5 sen Prince Arisugawa stamps, plus a 1 sen definitive stamp, to give the 10 sen UPU rate; cancelled at Yokohama on 25 August 1897; Hamburg arrival back stamp dated 25 September 1897.

A commemorative issue which the SSSS already black-listed before it appeared

The Greek issue for the First Olympic Games, comprising 12 values from 1l to 10dr, gave rise to protests in advance as its purpose was announced as being to finance the Games. The Olympic Games Committee received a large loan from the Greek National Bank. In order that this could be repaid, the Greek Government made on 25 March 1896, the opening date of the Games, an issue of commemorative stamps on the basis that (a) 50% of the additional sale proceeds (= the excess over the normal sales as calculated on the basis of the 18 months to 30 June 1895) would be used for repaying the bank loan, and (b) during a period of six months, from 25 March 1896 (= 6 April by the Gregorian calendar) to 30 September (= 12 October), only the "Olympic" stamps, and not the existing definitive stamps, would be accepted for the franking of mail. This led to the SSSS black-listing the issue already in October 1895.

On 21 September 1896 the validity (but not the exclusive use) of the "Olympic" stamps was extended to 31 March 1897. A resolution of 14 March 1897 extended the validity to 30 June 1897 and one of 6 April 1897 extended it indefinitely or "until the issued stamps have been used up". These extensions of the period of validity of the " Olympic" stamps lead to the withdrawal of the SSSS's black-listing.

Based on the above history, items franked with "Olympic" stamps may be divided into three different periods:

1. 25 March (= 6 April) to 30 Sept. (= 12 Oct.) 1896: Sale and exclusive use of "Olympic" stamps
2. 1 Oct. (= 13 Oct.) 1896 to 31 March (= 12 April) 1897: Sale and non-exclusive use of "Olympic" stamps
3. From 1 April (= 13 April) 1897: Unlimited, non-exclusive use of "Olympic" stamps

Period 1: This cover was sent to the USA from Corfu on 18 April 1896 (i.e. 30 April by the Gregorian calendar, at which time the year figure in the Corfu date-stamp was blocked-out); this was 15 days after the closure of the Olympic Games. It is correctly franked with a 25 lepta "Olympic" stamp at the UPU postage rate of 25 gold centimes (= 25 lepta), which had presumably been paid in silver coins. The cover bears a New York transit back-stamp of 13 May and a Providence arrival b/s of 14 May 1896.

Post-card and registered mail franked with “Olympic” stamps cancelled by Athens date-stamps

Above: A 5l inland post-card used to Austria correctly supplemented with “Olympic” stamps to the value of 5 lepta. The stamps are cancelled with the Athens Section 1 date-stamp (which was used for ordinary mail and post-cards) on 2 September 1897 (= 14 September by the Gregorian calendar), when the period of validity of the “Olympic” stamps had been extended indefinitely; Trieste transit date-stamp dated 18 September 1897.

Below: A registered cover sent to Cyprus correctly franked with 25 + 60 lepta “Olympic” stamps during the initial period of validity (April-September 1896), apparently 2 x 15g (at 30 lepta) + regn. 25 lepta. Stamps cancelled with the Athens Section 3 (international regd. mail) date-stamp on 4 July 1896 (= 16 July by the Greg. cal.); arrival back-stamp of Larnaca dated 25 July 1896.

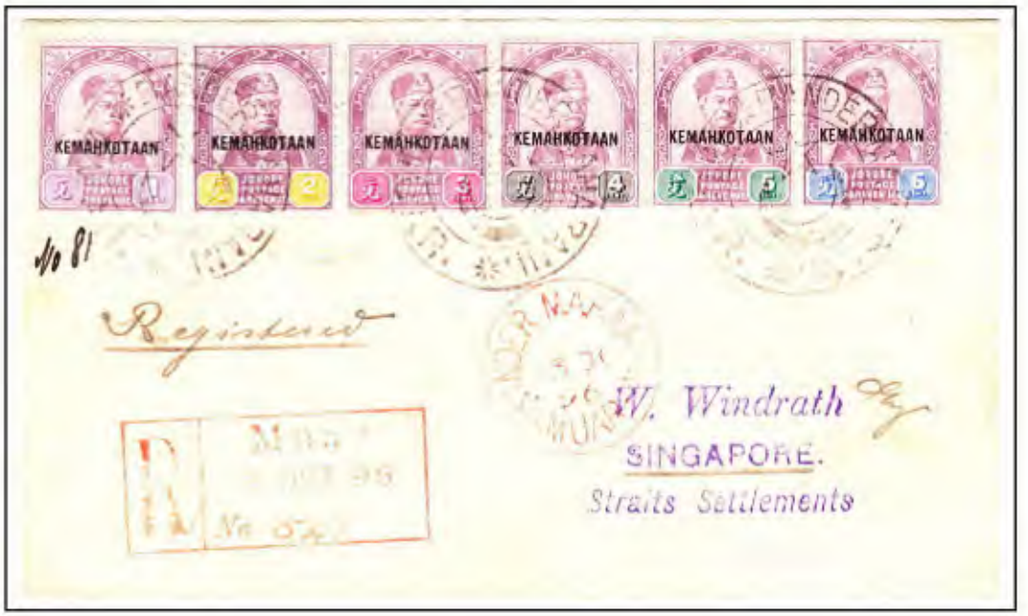
A local commemorative issue which did not receive attention from the SSSS

The Principality of Montenegro issued a long series of stamps, plus postal stationery, to commemorate the Bicentenary of the Dynasty of Petrovich Njegush. This issue apparently escaped the attention of the SSSS.

Above: A registered cover to Cattaro, Croatia, correctly franked with a 25 novcic stamp of the above commemorative issue (apparently 10 n postage + 15 n registration); cancelled with the Cettigné date-stamp on 9 February (1897); arrival back-stamp of Kotor (Cattaro), just over the border in Austrian Croatia, from the same day.

Below: A 2 novcic inland post-card of the above commemorative issue used to Germany (philatelic use) correctly supplemented with 1 n + 2 n stamps of this commemorative issue; cancelled with the Cettigné date-stamp (date illegible); Nymphenburg arrival date-stamp of 5 February 1897.

Johore Coronation and Labuan Jubilee overprint issues –not criticized, rather surprisingly, by the SSSS



Above: A philatelic registered cover to Singapore over-franked with 6 of the 7 stamps of Johore State, which were overprinted " KEMAHKOTAAN" in March 1896 to commemorate the Coronation of Sultan Ibrahim; cancelled at Bander Mararani, Muar; with date-stamp and dated registration marking of Muar of 13 October 1896 and Singapore arrival back-stamp of 14 October 1896.

Below: A philatelic registered cover to Germany over-franked with the full set of 6 stamps of Labuan Island, which were overprinted "1846 JUBILEE 1896" and issued on 24 September 1896 to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the Cession of Labuan to Great Britain; cancelled at Labuan on 11 April 1898; with Brindisi and Bologna transit back-stamps of 13 and 14 May 1898 and a Leipzig delivery back-stamp of 15 May.

Belgium's second local commemorative issue - not black-listed by the SSSS

Belgium's second commemorative issue was made as publicity for the 1897 Brussels Exhibition. The issue comprised three stamps: a 10c value issued in light brown on 15 October 1896, a 5c value issued on 15 November 1896 and a 10c value issued in purple-brown in January 1897; these were valid until 31 December 1897. A planned issue for an exhibition in Liège had been black-listed by the SSSS, but this Brussels issue did not draw formal comments.

Above: A 10c inland letter-card used to Germany correctly supplemented with the 1896 Brussels Exhibition 5c and 10c light brown stamps (tabs removed); cancelled at Maeseyck on 7 May 1897; Münster arrival back-stamp dated 8 May 1897.

Below: A commercial cover to Switzerland under-franked by 5c with a pair of 10c purple-brown Antwerp Exhibition stamps cancelled at Brussels on 10 March 1897; marked "T" and "0,15"; 10c postage due charged in Zürich on 12 March 1897.

Restricted sale and use of commemorative issues of Ecuador, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela

During the period January 1895 to May 1897, Ecuador, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela each made one commemorative issue, usually with a very short sale and validity period, which saw little use on international mail. Three were black-listed by the SSSS.

Above: An AR cover to Spain correctly franked with 5 and 20 centavo stamps of the 9 October 1896 issue of Ecuador, which commemorated successes of the Liberal Party; the stamps were cancelled at Guayaquil on 9 November 1896; the envelope has four Spanish transit back-stamps of 12 and 13 December 1896 plus a Barcelona arrival back-stamp of 14 December 1896.

Below: A cover to the USA correctly franked with a 25 centimo stamp of the 4 July 1896 issue of Venezuela, which commemorated the 80th Anniversary of the death of Francisco de Miranda (a promoter of independence from Spain); the stamp was cancelled at La Vela on 15 September 1896; the envelope has a “Paid All” back-stamp of New York dated 26 September 1896.

Comprehensive commemorative issue for the Central American Exhibition - no mention by the SSSS

Large printings of these commemoratives were issued on 1 January 1897 by Guatemala for the Central American Exhibition (the other participants were Costa Rica, Honduras, Nicaragua and Salvador) and the regular issues were taken off sale. The 14 stamps and postal stationery were initially valid until 30 June 1897 (later extended to 15 January 1898). In spite of the limited validity period, the SSSS did not black-list this issue, possibly because of its regional, rather than just local, significance.
Above: The 6 cvo. inland envelope used to the USA supplemented with four 1 cvo. stamps of the Exhibition issue; GPO despatch date-stamp of 23 October 1897 (during the extended validity period); New Orleans transit back-stamp dated 2 November.
Below: An AR letter to Switzerland correctly franked with a 25 cvo. stamp; cancelled at Coban on 21 January 1897 (during the original validity period); New Orleans and New York transit back-stamps dated 2 and 5 February; Wil arrival b/s of 16 February.

E. The commemorative issues up to May 1897 a. Montenegro Anniversary of Printing issue 1893

400th Anniversary of the introduction of printing into Montenegro – before the SSSS

Expertise

Above: A 3n postal card with the commemorative overprint sent to Germany correctly supplemented with a similarly overprinted 2n stamp (perf. 11 ½) to give the 5n postage rate; cancelled at Rijeka on 24 April 1894; Gera arrival mark of 2 May 1894.

Below: A 7n envelope sent registered to Austria correctly supplemented with a 7n stamp to pay the postage for 15-30g plus a 10n stamp for the registration fee; all with the commemorative overprint and the stamps perf. 11½; cancelled at Cettigne on 31 July 1893; Vienna arrival back-stamp dated 3 August 1893.

Japan's first commemorative issue – 2 and 5 Sen stamps for the Emperor's Silver Wedding

Above: This 2 sen inland envelope (1888 issue) is supplemented with the 2s + 5s Silver Wedding stamps, plus a 1 sen definitive stamp, to give the 10 sen rate to Switzerland; cancelled at Yokohama on 18 January 1896; Geneva arrival b/s dated 25 February

Below: This registered cover to Germany was sent from the Japanese post-office in Shanghai, China, correctly franked with the 2s Silver Wedding stamp plus 8 and 10 sen definitive stamps of the 1888 issue (UPU rate 10s + registration 10s); cancelled at Shanghai on 1 April 1896; Yokohama transit date-stamp of 6 April 1896; Mülheim arrival back-stamp of 9 May 1896.

Belgium's first local commemorative issue, which some considered unnecessary

Belgium's first commemorative issue was for the 1894 Antwerp World Exhibition. 5c, 10c and 25c stamps were issued on 20 February 1894 and were used as definitive stamps, but were only valid up until 31 December 1894. The issue was considered unnecessary but was not black-listed by the S.S.S.S.

Above: A cover to Germany franked for 15-30g with 5c plus 25c definitive stamps and two 10c Antwerp Exhibition stamps (all with the "no Sunday delivery" tabs removed); cancelled at Brussels on 8 July 1894; Berlin delivery back-stamp dated 9 July 1894. Below: A 10c inland envelope used to Switzerland supplemented with 5c + 10c Antwerp Exhibition stamps (all with the "no Sunday delivery" tabs present); cancelled at Antwerp on 9 September 1894; Winterthur arrival back-stamp dated 10 Sept. 1894.

Portugal's first commemorative issue – the first of several which lead to heavy protests

Portugal's first commemorative issue was for the 500th Birth Anniversary of Prince Henry the Navigator and comprised 13 stamps from 5r to 1000r, plus a 10r post-card, which were issued on 4 March 1894 (also with an overprint "Açores") and used as definitive stamps. The issue was considered unnecessary and drew heavy protests, but was not black-listed by the S.S.S.S.

Above: A cover to the USA correctly franked with a 50 reis Prince Henry stamp overprinted "Açores"; cancelled at Ponta Delgada on 7 March 1894; Lisbon and New York transit back-stamps of 16 and 29 March; New Bedford arrival back-stamp of 29 March.

Below: A registered cover to Hungary correctly franked with 25r and 75r Prince Henry stamps; cancelled at Lisbon on 10 March 1894; arrival back-stamp of Sopron (Odenberg) dated 14 March 1894.

San Marino's first commemorative issue – sold at over face value by the post office

The Government of San Marino issued a series of three stamps (25c, 50c and 1 lira), plus a 5 lira official envelope, on 30 September 1894 to commemorate the opening of the Government Palace and to finance its building. In order that the stamp trade should not make speculative profits, the San Marino Post Office itself sold the stamps and the envelope at a premium.

Above: The Government Palace 5 lira official envelope; the address-side, with the supplementary franking of stamps of the same series and the postal markings, is shown on the next sheet.

San Marino's first commemorative issue – sold at over face value by the post office

Above: A reduced photocopy (60%) of the 5 lira official Government Palace envelope on the preceding sheet; sent registered to London, supplemented by the 25c and 50c stamps of this issue, on 22 January 1895; arrival date-stamp of 29 January 1895. The standard literature suggests that, of the 2,000 copies of this envelope printed, less than 20 were properly used as here.

Below: A registered cover to Austria over-franked at 1 L75, instead of the necessary 50c, with the entire series of Government Palace stamps; cancelled on 5 October 1894 (5 days after issue); Mödling arrival back-stamp of 8 October 1894.

Portugal's second commemorative issue – the first issue to be formally black-listed by the SSSS

Portugal's second commemorative issue, made on 13 June 1895 for the 700th Anniversary of the Birth of St. Anthony, comprised 15 stamps from 21/2r to 1000r (which were also issued with an overprint "Açores"), plus a 10 r post-card.

Above: A registered cover to England correctly franked with St. Anthony stamps of Portugal to the value of 100r; cancelled at Lisbon on 17 June 1895; with a Manchester registry arrival back-stamp of 20 June 1895.

Below: An 85g registered cover to Germany correctly franked with 50r + 4 x 75r St. Anthony stamps overprinted "Açores"; cancelled at Angra on 17 June 1895; Lisbon and Cologne TPO transit and Friedenau arrival back-stamps of 22 and 25 June.

Portugal's second commemorative issue – the issue of overprint issues by colonies increased the protests

Portugal's second commemorative issue, for the 700th Birth Anniv. of St. Anthony, also appeared in the form of local overprints of the stamps on hand at the post-offices in Inhambane, Lourenço Marques and Mozambique.
Above: A cover (16-30g) from Lourenço Marques to India correctly franked with 2 x 50r stamps of the 1894 "Moçambique" series overprinted "L. Marques Centenario S. Antonio MDCCCXCV" issued on 1 July 1895; cancelled at Lourenço Marques on 23 June 1895; Aden "Sea Post Office" transit and Bombay arrival back-stamps of 22 and 28 July 1895.
Below: A philatelic registered cover to Lourenço Marques over-franked with the entire 1886 "Moçambique" series of stamps overprinted "1195 Centenario Antonino 1895" issued on 1 July 1895; cancelled at Mozambique on 31 August 1895.