

## **Introducing the Australian Philatelic Federation**

### **By Ian McMahon, Philatelic Development Officer, APF**

This month I include the first part of an outline of the role of an Australian Commissioner to an international exhibition and information about how to seek help to solve a difficult philatelic research problem.

#### **Being a Commissioner to an International Exhibition: Part 1 Before the Exhibition**

For each international exhibition in which Australia participates, the Australian Philatelic Federation (APF) appoints a commissioner to represent Australian exhibitors and the APF. Many exhibitors have wondered just what is the role of commissioners to international exhibitions. This article attempts to answer some of those questions, although it is a general article and not intended as a set of guidelines for commissioners or exhibitors. In addition, every exhibition is different with different requirements highlighting the need for commissioners to be patient and flexible.

The Australian Commissioner to an international exhibition acts as the coordinator of Australian exhibits to the Exhibition and the point of contact between the exhibitors and the Exhibition and between the APF and the Exhibition. An analogy might be with the team manager of a sporting team heading to an international competition.

One of the first tasks of a commissioner is collecting and submitting entries. Once the organising committee of an international exhibition has been established and the exhibition has obtained the approval of Fédération Internationale de Philatélie (FIP) for world exhibitions or the Federation of Inter-Asian Philately (FIAP) for Asian exhibitions, the exhibition will write to the APF seeking the nomination of an Australian Commissioner. Once that person has been nominated, they then become responsible for promoting the exhibition to potential Australian exhibitors and seeking entries. They may do this by emailing potential exhibitors such as those who have received a vermeil or higher for their exhibit at an Australian national exhibition and advertising the exhibition through the APF website, APF News and by other means. They may also contact individual exhibitors personally to encourage them to exhibit. They will also encourage people who have written or edited books, catalogues or journals to enter their publications in the literature class. They will circulate the exhibition prospectus and application form to exhibitors who have expressed interest in entering.

The Exhibition will have set a closing date for entries. The Commissioner will set an earlier date for entries to reach them and will receive entries and chase up those who have expressed an interest in exhibiting at the Exhibition. On receiving the entry forms they will be checked to ensure that all details are provided and correct and in particular that the exhibit is entered in the correct class and is eligible to be entered in the Exhibition. The Commissioner will then certify this to the Exhibition. A fair proportion of entry forms received by a Commissioner will be incomplete or incorrect and every now and then an exhibitor will submit an entry form for an unqualified exhibit. Hopefully this will be noticed by the Commissioner but can lead to disqualification if such an exhibit is entered in the exhibition. (At a FIP exhibition I have had the job of checking the eligibility of all exhibits and examining entry forms which were very incomplete and discussing the eligibility of the entries with the responsible commissioners).

Once the entry forms have been received the Commissioner will forward them to the Commissioner-General of the Exhibition. The Exhibition will then make a decision about which entries to accept. Once the Exhibition has advised the Commissioner as to which exhibits have been accepted, the Commissioner advises the exhibitors who have submitted entry forms of the outcome. Unsuccessful exhibitors can be naturally disappointed at not being accepted but FIP exhibitions have been oversubscribed for many years, and in some cases such as London 2010 very oversubscribed, so acceptance of exhibits is not automatic and exhibitions must choose which exhibits to accept. The Commissioner should not be blamed for entries which are not accepted by a particular exhibition and the exhibitor should not get disillusioned and simply enter the next available exhibition.

For the successful exhibits, the Commissioner will advise the exhibitor and ask for additional information about the exhibit, request payment for the Exhibition fees and the APF levy and arrange details of the delivery of the exhibit to the Commissioner.

The additional information includes the value of the exhibit (for customs purposes), the weight of the exhibit, completion of an inventory form, details of any special requirements such as oversize pages, details of any items needing cultural heritage approval and agreement to indemnify the APF and the Commissioner for the transport of the exhibit.

Exhibition fees need to be collected by the Commissioner from the exhibitors with the Commissioner then paying them to the Exhibition usually by a bank transfer or draft. The APF charges a levy for exhibits to partially cover some of the costs to the APF associated with transporting the exhibit to the exhibition. Much time can be sent by Commissioners in chasing up these payments to meet the Exhibition deadline for payment.

Literature exhibits are usually sent to the exhibition well beforehand and the Commissioner will advise exhibitors with literature exhibits when their exhibits should be sent.

The Commissioner will seek advice from exhibitors as to how they will deliver the exhibit to them. Often exhibits will be delivered in person or by making use of an APF member attending an APF meeting. Otherwise a secure form of delivery will be required.

Once the Commissioner receives the exhibit they need to check the exhibit and ensure that it matches the indemnity form, a form listing the number of stamps, covers and other items on each page of the exhibit. It is not unknown for pages to be missing from an exhibit, for there to be materials (especially in an Open Class exhibit) which are prohibited by customs or for there to be pages which will require special handling. There will often be indemnity forms which do not match the entries.

The Commissioner will ensure that the requirements of both Australian customs and the customs in the country where the exhibition is being held are met. At times this can mean that additional requirements need to be met sometimes at late notice, for example, exhibitions advising a short time before the exhibition that their customs have asked for a CD containing scans of all the exhibits. When this happens exhibitors should not blame the Commissioner but seek to assist in any way then can in the time frame required.

Depending on the exhibition Australia may have 30-70 kg of exhibits to be transported to the exhibition. The Commissioner will do their best to ensure that excess baggage costs are kept

to a minimum perhaps by seeking the assistance of Australian exhibitors attending the exhibition while in some cases the APF may appoint an assistant commissioner.

The APF provides a prize for each international exhibition to which Australia appoints a commissioner. The Commissioner is responsible for arranging the prize and transporting it to the exhibition. They will usually provide a photo of the prize for inclusion in the exhibition catalogue. The Commissioner also handles any special requests from the Exhibition as well as any inquiries from exhibitors remembering that communications can often be complicated by language issues and delays in receiving responses.

The time finally arrives. The Commissioner has hopefully received all of the exhibits, checked the inventory forms, received the frame fees and ensured that all of the necessary information has been passed to customs. The exhibits are packed in special cases that the APF has made to transport exhibits, the special prize is packed and the Commissioner heads to the airport. If all goes to plan checking in should be easy as arrangements have been made for excess baggage.

In the next segment of this article I will look at the Commissioner's role at the Exhibition.



London 2010 World Stamp Exhibition

**AUSTRALIA 2013 FIP WORLD STAMP EXHIBITION  
EXHIBIT INVENTORY LIST**

Exhibitor: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Country of Exhibit: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Country: \_\_\_\_\_

No. of Frames		No. of Sheets	
1	2	3	4
1	1	1	1
2	2	2	2
3	3	3	3
4	4	4	4
5	5	5	5
6	6	6	6
7	7	7	7
8	8	8	8
9	9	9	9
10	10	10	10
11	11	11	11
12	12	12	12
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89	89	89	89
90	90	90	90
91	91	91	91
92	92	92	92
93	93	93	93
94	94	94	94
95	95	95	95
96	96	96	96
97	97	97	97
98	98	98	98
99	99	99	99
100	100	100	100

Total net weight: \_\_\_\_\_ kg

Value of the exhibit (in US\$)  
 (The value should include freight and insurance): \_\_\_\_\_

Exhibitor's signature: \_\_\_\_\_ date: \_\_\_\_\_

Commissioner's signature: \_\_\_\_\_ date: \_\_\_\_\_

For official use only

Organizer's signature for receipt: \_\_\_\_\_ date: \_\_\_\_\_

Commissioner's signature for receipt: \_\_\_\_\_ date: \_\_\_\_\_

\* This form may also be needed for Customs clearance  
 \* Exhibitor to provide TWO copies of this form to National Commissioner

## Australia 2013 Inventory Form

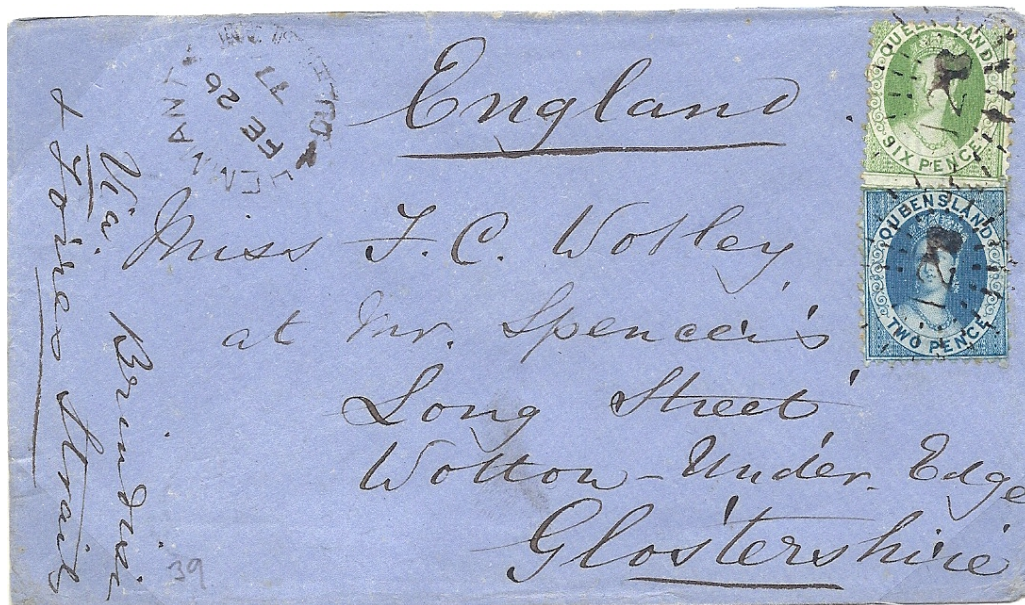
## APF Research Assistance Service

Everyone who enjoys studying their stamps and covers will at some point come up against a difficult philatelic problem and not be able to find the information they need. If you need help solving such a problem, the APF research assistance service may be able to assist you. The APF Research Assistance service is designed to assist collectors in learning about their fields of interest and helping find solutions to difficult philatelic problems and by seeking to provide information not readily available to a collector.

The APF has appointed a state research officer for each state. Details can be found at <http://www.apf.org.au/research.htm>. A request for research assistance should be sent to your State Research Officer, preferably in the form of a written request or email, supported by photocopies or scans of relevant material. Where necessary the State Research Officer may refer it to the National Coordinator for further advice. Please note this service is not for the expertisation of stamps or for valuation purposes.

Examples of requests could be anything from information on air mail rates and routes (which were particularly complex in the 1930s, 40s and 50s), on the -10% overprint issues of Belgium to information about the forgeries of the Australian states issues. The service is particularly aimed at helping with information searches where you have already tried the more available sources of information.





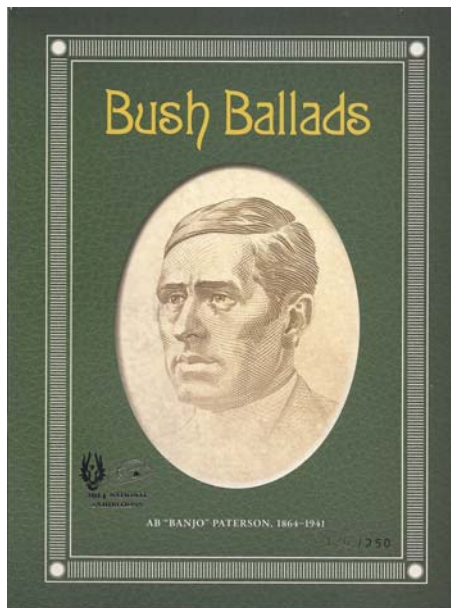
From Queensland to England in 1877: do you know the ship it was carried on?



Can you identify this Queensland registered envelope?

### Bush Ballad Imperforate Booklet

Each year Australia Post makes available an imperforate booklet for sale by National Philatelic Exhibitions. This year's imperforate booklet is the Bush Ballads Booklet is now available. The booklet contains imperforate panes of each of the four stamps, a pane of a block of four of the stamps imperforate and an imperforate miniature sheet. Orders sent to the Canberra Stampshow 2014 are now being filled while future orders should be sent to Adelaide Stampex 2014, GPO Box 9800, Adelaide, SA, 5001.



Bush Ballard imperforate booklet



Imperforate block of four from the Bush Ballard booklet