

NEWSLETTER OF THE ORANGE COIN & STAMP CLUB FOR 25th FEBRUARY 2025

#268

2025 is our 60th Year



Rob. Willis with customers at our 2023 Coin & Stamp Expo

OUR 2-DAY COIN & STAMP EXPO is on Saturday 15th & Sunday 16th MARCH 2025 at the Orange High School Hall. We need you to come and participate

Our new web-site is <https://orangecoinsandtamps.org/>

THIS NEXT ORANGE COIN & STAMP MONTHLY MEETING IS ON THIS TUESDAY 25th February 2025 at 7.30.

Our current monthly meeting is at the Orange Cultural Centre at 7.30 on this **Tuesday 25th February 2025.**

Tony Read should announce details of the Club T-shirts and the proposed “Christmas in February” get-together” outing.

The next night meeting after that is on Tuesday night, 7.30pm 25th March 2025.

Our next monthly coin & stamp mini-fair is in the Orange Cultural Centre is on **Saturday 1st March 2025** from 9 to ‘middayish’.

Our meetings and the monthly fair are held in the Orange Cultural Centre building Sale St, Orange. It’s the building that used to be a school. It’s on the right hand side as you enter the Woolworths Car Park. The building is sort of opposite Harris Farm Market, but entrance is from the mini-park on the Sale St frontage.



ORANGE COIN & STAMP EXPO IS ON 16th & 17th MARCH 2025

Howard Lyons announced the dates for our Club’s 2025 Orange Coin & Stamp Expo. It’s on the weekend of Saturday & Sunday, **16th & 17th March 2024.**

It’s the week before the big stamp show at Wentworth Park in Sydney. Easter this year is from 18th to 21st April.

Members need to start preparing their competitive displays for:-

- The *Andy Auld Perpetual Shield* for the “most popular display”,
- The *MR Roberts Perpetual Shield* for the best numismatic display, and the new,
- The *Col & Eileen Davidson Shield* for best philatelic display.

There are plenty of numismatic dealers coming, but not Wynyard Coins. It’s getting hard to find non-Club stamp dealers. So many have recently retired. Thankfully Phil. and Win. Morehouse are coming, though.

Volunteers will be needed for the front desk & for setting up tables on the Friday night

HAVE YOU PAID YOUR 2024-25 CLUB MEMBERSHIP YET?

At the Club’s September meeting the membership fees for 2024-25 was set at \$15.00 if you paid after 1st December.

There are still some members, mainly those who live out-of-town, who haven’t paid.

You can pay at the Saturday morning mini-fairs (1st Saturday of the month 9-12) or to Howard Lyons at Expo. .

Members who become un-financial may soon find their newsletter discontinued

OUR ORANGE 2024 SPRING FAIR DEALERS - PLEASE KEEP SUPPORTING THEM AT OUR 2024

- **Wynyard Coin Centre (M.R. Roberts)**, 3 Barrack St, Sydney, 2000
Ph (02) 9299 2047. Fax (02)9290 3710
www.wynyardcoins.com.au
- **Orange Stamps & Coins** (Howard Lyons), PO Box 9288, Orange, 2800;
Mobile 0427 107 554 Phone/fax (02) 6362 2368, E-mail:
howard.lyons@bigpond.com Buying and Selling – Stamps, Coins, Banknotes, Accessories, etc.
- **Phil & Win Morehouse**, Bankstown. NSW 2200 Ph: (02)9707 4087, Email – wmorehouse@netspace.net.au. World-wide stamps bought and sold

OUR CHRISTMAS IN FEBRUARY 2025 NIGHT OUT

Club members had a good night out on Monday 3rd February 2025 at the *Friar Tuck Bistro* at Orange's Robin Hood Hotel for our annual "Christmas in February"

We hold it in February because we are all too busy in the lead-up to Christmas. Other groups have a goat Christmas in July, but Orange is just too cold for going out at night in mid-Winter.

RAY NORMAN: A CLUB FOUNDATION MEMBER, 1940-2025

Ray Norman passed away on 20th January 2025. He was born on 5th December 1940 and lived his early life in Auburn in western Sydney. Ray was a foundation member of the Club in 1966. He was our stamp auctioneer at Club meetings.

At his funeral at Holy Trinity his son, Philip related he had "been a traveller to everywhere and a collector of everything.... It was easier to list the countries that he had not been to."



Ray Norman

His collecting interest started with stamps and matchbox labels. He progressed to coins and fine bone china. His stamp collection included covers and stamps from everywhere that he visited, especially Thailand. He did more travelling once he retired as payroll manager at Orange Health Services. He was then often nicknamed "Pay Ray". He was

highly regarded by staff and management for this role.

Ray was an early member of Orange U3A (later their treasurer and auditor), a member of the Orange Historical Society and the treasurer for Holy Trinity Anglican Church. He also held the position of Rector's Warden and was on the Bishop's Council. He was treasurer of the Orange Family History Group.

Ray will be missed.

DATES FOR 2025

Orange Coin & Stamp Club 25th February 2025 night meeting, 7.30pm at the Orange Cultural Centre.

Orange Coin & Stamp Club mini-fair, Saturday morning 1st March 2025, 9-12, at the Orange Cultural Centre.

Campbelltown District Philatelic Society meeting, 12th March 2025, 7pm. Sir Thomas More Church Hall, 43 Acacia Avenue, Ruse 2569. Jim Feltham: *Norfolk Island*

ORANGE COIN & STAMP EXPO 15th & 16th March 2025 at the Orange High School Hall (see page 5)

Gladstone & District Philatelic Society's Stamp Fair, 29th & 30th March 2025 at Yaralla Sports Club, Wood & Bell Streets, Gladstone Qld 4680.

Sydney Stamp & Coin Expo, 20th-23rd March 2025 at the Wentworth Park Sporting Complex (see page 7)

Orange Coin & Stamp Club 25th March 2025 night meeting, 7.30pm at the Orange Cultural Centre.

Petersham Stamp, Coin & Banknote Fair, Sunday 30th March 2025, Petersham Town Hall, 107 Crystal Street, Petersham,

Orange Coin & Stamp Club mini-fair, Saturday morning 5th April 2025, 9-12, at the Orange Cultural Centre.

Orange Coin & Stamp Club 29th April 2025 night meeting, 7.30pm at the Orange Cultural Centre.

Orange Coin & Stamp Club mini-fair, Saturday morning 3rd May 2025, 9-12, at the Orange Cultural Centre.

Wagga Club's 2-day Stamp & Coin Fair, 17th & 18th May 2025, from 9am, at Sturt Public School, White Avenue, Koorinal, 2650

Rockhampton Stamp Fair, 1-4, Saturday 21st June 2025 at Fred Fox Hall, Gladstone Road, Rockhampton Qld

TURN YOUR STAMPS INTO CASH! GET SOME PAGES READY FOR THE CLUB'S EXCHANGE BOOK

Colin needs coin and stamp pages for the next stamp circuit book and the next coin/note circuit books

Colin can be contacted direct at Email: ptilinopus1@bigpond.com Ph: 63690634

ITEMS FOR THIS NEWSLETTER AND CORRESPONDENCE TO THE CLUB

Items for this newsletter are always required. You do not have to be a member of the Orange Club. They need to be posted to the Editor, Derek Dolstra, who is also the secretary at the Club's postal address: -PO Box 9113, ORANGE 2800 or better still e-mailed in Word format (pictures as jpg files) to: - ddolstra@bigpond.net.au or **Phone 02 63 614 872**

Orange Coin & Stamp Club Inc's

2025 – Coin & Stamp Expo

Saturday 15th March, 2025

9am to 3pm

& Sunday 16th March, 2025

9am to 2pm

at the

Orange High School Hall,

Cnr Summer and Woodward Streets, Orange

(off-street parking available, turn left opposite

United Petrol Station in Woodward St, just prior to the traffic lights.)

**NSW dealers offering a range of Australian & World stamps,
coins & accessories.**

Stamp, banknote & coin competitive displays

Admission \$2-00 , accompanied children free.

The following dealers will be in attendance at this event...

Phil and Win Morehouse: Bankstown, SW 2200. Ph (02) 9707

4087 Email :wmorehouse@netspace.com.au Worldwide stamps bought and sold.

Orange Stamps & Coins: Howard Lyons, PO Box 9288, Orange.2800; Ph/Fax (02)63622368 Email:
howard.lyons@bigpond.com.au

... Buying/Selling ...Ebay link <http://stores.ebay.com.au/orangestampsandcoins>

Pacific Rim Coins: Chris Buesnell, Suite 300/79-83 Longueville Rd, Lane Cove
2066 Phone: (02) 9418 6593

Top End Coins: Les Robinson, P.O.Box 381, Nelson Bay. 2315 Phone: 0455 660
email: topendcoins@gmail.com

PLUS Various members of the Orange Coin and Stamp Club

**For all enquiries ring Howard on 0427 107 554 (leave name and
number + short message)**

Hope to see you there

NZ POST: *ANIMALS IN SERVICE* STAMP ISSUE FOR 5TH MARCH 2025



Here's the latest stamp issue from NZ Post where a local letter costs \$2.30. The issue is about the contribution that animals have made to the armed forces of New Zealand.

In war and in peace, animals and soldiers have worked alongside each other. As beasts of burden, messengers, protectors, mascots and companions these war animals have demonstrated true valour and enduring partnerships with New Zealand soldiers.

The commemorative stamp issue for 5th March 2025, includes four stamps, featuring monochrome images (easier to print?) of various service animals and the purple poppy, a symbol of remembrance. The four stamps cost NZ\$13.57





SYDNEY STAMP & COIN EXPO 2025
175th anniversary of the Sydney Views Stamps

FULL AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL PHILATELIC EXHIBITION

Free Entry 20 to 23 March
Explore, Collect & Connect

Limited Edition PNCs & Mini Sheets

Australia Post Philatelic Bureau will be in attendance

STAMPS
British Commonwealth & World, Australia Post Limited Editions, FDC's, Cinderellas, Postal History, Postcards, Thematics & Ephemera

COINS
British Commonwealth & World, RAM & Perth Mint - Gold & Silver Coins, Ancient Coins, Tokens, PNCs, Banknotes, Medals & Medallions

LOCAL, INTERSTATE AND OVERSEAS DEALERS
buying, selling & valuations

ORGANISED BY
APTA
PHILAS Est. 1971

OPENING HOURS
Thursday: 10am to 6pm Saturday: 10am to 5pm
Friday: 10am to 6pm Sunday: 10am to 3pm

Wentworth Park Sporting Complex
5 Wentworth Park Road,
Glebe NSW 2037.

www.sydney2025.com.au



Thanks to Community Radio 2MCE Bathurst 92.3 and Orange 94.7 for mentioning our last Spring Fair.

ZIMBABWE'S NEW CURRENCY, THE Zig

Zimbabwe has a new currency, the Zimbabwe gold, at least since April 2024. This currency, unlike the last one, is backed by actual assets. The previous Zimbabwean dollar currencies weren't. The Zig is backed by a US\$575 million mix of foreign currency, gold and other metals.

The smallest coin is a 1 Zig:-



There are 10Zig and 20Zig banknotes that are frequently used. There are also 50Zig and 100Zig banknotes that are infrequently used: -



The last of several Zimbabwean dollar issues, like their forebears, also suffered from huge depreciation. The market rate of the last dollar issue had reached 40,000 to the United States dollar.

In the early 2000's a catastrophic agricultural reform program and an expensive war in Congo left Zimbabwe flat broke. To pay everyone it simply printed more money, and then more again. By mid-2008 the inflation rate hit 231,000,000%. The price tag for a loaf of bread was \$100 billion Zimbabwean dollars (about A\$7).

There were 4 official Zimbabwean dollar currencies between 1980 and 2009. Each time Zimbabwean's scepticism has tanked their value.

In 2009 the government stopped printing Zimbabwean dollars and officially allowed the use of U.S. dollars, the Botswana pula, Indian rupee, the euro, the Australian dollar and the South African rand. By then most multinational companies fled *en masse*. People still farmed and mined and traded, but they kept earnings out of the government's reach. Tax payments effectively ceased as the economy devolved into a system of barter and exchange. Two-thirds of gross domestic production was "off the books". If you had to use money, it was mostly in a combination of whatever US dollars and South African rands that happened to be on hand.

The Zimbabwean dollar was officially demonetised in 2015. Soon after that these huge "number" banknotes were purchased as a curiosity. Financial advisers liked to show them to clients a lesson in investing in solid assets, not cash. They were also purchased by banknote collectors. They actually got a better rate of return on this investment, over other sorts of investment. Some denominations sold on eBay for over A\$200.



However the 2024 Zimbabwe Gold (Zig) currency issue has "sort of worked". However, it too has consistently lost value since its introduction. Realistically its value has become pegged to the black market exchange rate, which is about twice the official exchange rate.

Huge economic issues remain unsolved as grain imports continue and the government continues to overspend. In November 2024 Zimbabwe had an A\$32 billion external debt.

BLAST FROM THE PAST NO 32 WITH “Simpy”

The following items have been sourced from various Australian Post Office Stamp Bulletins.

March 1980: A set of seven new pre-stamped envelopes depicting Australian animals was issued on 11 September 1979.

June 1980: A pre-stamped envelope issued on released 25 June 1980 commemorated the Centenary of the Siege at Glenrowan rather than bushranger Ned Kelly and the Kelly Gang.

August 1980: Four 22 cent Community Welfare stamps released on 11 August 1980 depicted the St Vincent de Paul Society, Salvation Army, Life Be in it and Meals on Wheels.

September 1980: A set of five x 22 cent stamps in se-tenant format and a mini sheet (three stamps) were issued on 29 September 1980 for National Stamp Week and show different aspects of early Australian Postal History.

A two-page article provided results for two surveys conducted in December 1979. The surveys comprised both members of the public (2,338) and stamp collectors on the Australian Stamp Bulletin mailing list (approximately 5,000 responded).

From the latter group 64% were male and 36% female, 31% aged 30 to 49, 22% aged 50 to 69, 15% were aged under 15 and only 3% were aged over 70. Pre-stamped envelopes were collected by 18% and 18% had a thematic collection with birds the most popular theme.

Australia was collected by 94% of respondents followed by AAT 52%, PNG 34%, NZ 29%, Cocos 28%, Christmas Island and Norfolk Island both 27%, UK 26%, Fiji 17%, USA 16% and Nauru 15%.

I think the results would be very different if a similar survey was conducted today.

The bulletin also contained a listing of Souvenir Stamp Packs issued by Australia Post up to 30 June 1980 including quantity issued. The lowest number was 70,225 for the 1974 Paintings and the highest 728,900 for the 1980 Folklore (Waltzing Matilda).

November-December 1980: Stamp quantities delivered by the printers to Australia Post for the year ended 30 June 1980 varied from a low of 200,000 x 7 cent Desert Pea coil stamp to a high of 215,054,000 for the 22 cent White Tailed Kingfisher.

January – February 1981: A set of four stamps was released on 18 February 1981 depicting caricatures of Sporting Personalities jockey Darby Munro, cricketer Victor Trumper, tennis player Sir Norman Brookes and billiards legend Walter Lindrum

May – June 1981: Page 6 announced the introduction of an annual Souvenir Album containing the postage stamps issued during that year.

July – August 1981: The major event this year was the Marriage of HRH Charles Prince of Wales & The Lady Diana Spencer. Australia issued two stamps on 29 July 1981 to commemorate the event.

New postage rates were introduced on 14 July 1981 with the basic rate increasing from 22 cents to 24 cents.

A pictorial postmark was used from 22-24 September 1981 for the Henty Field Days.

August – September 1982: A pictorial postmark was used from 1-7 September 1982 for the Girl Guides Muster at Dubbo.

November – December 1982: Details were provided on how to obtain a Christmas card from Santa Claus courtesy of the Australian Stamp Promotion Council.

150 YEARS SINCE THE TRAGEDY OF THE SINKING OF THE MAILBOAT SS *GOTHENBURG*

What is now the Northern Territory was originally part of South Australia. In 1863 an Order in Council in England had transferred the Northern Territory to South Australia.

George Goyder, who was South Australia's Surveyor General established the first settlement at Port Darwin in February 1869. He called the surveyed town Palmerston, a name that lingered on officially for the next 70 years. Port Darwin was just the port.

Various state governments had promoted an overland telegraph line from Port Darwin to Port Augusta, or even to a line to Burketown and on to Brisbane in Queensland, Brisbane, all to connect with the telegraph line from London to Singapore and the Dutch East Indies. Victoria proposed a line from The Gulf to Melbourne.

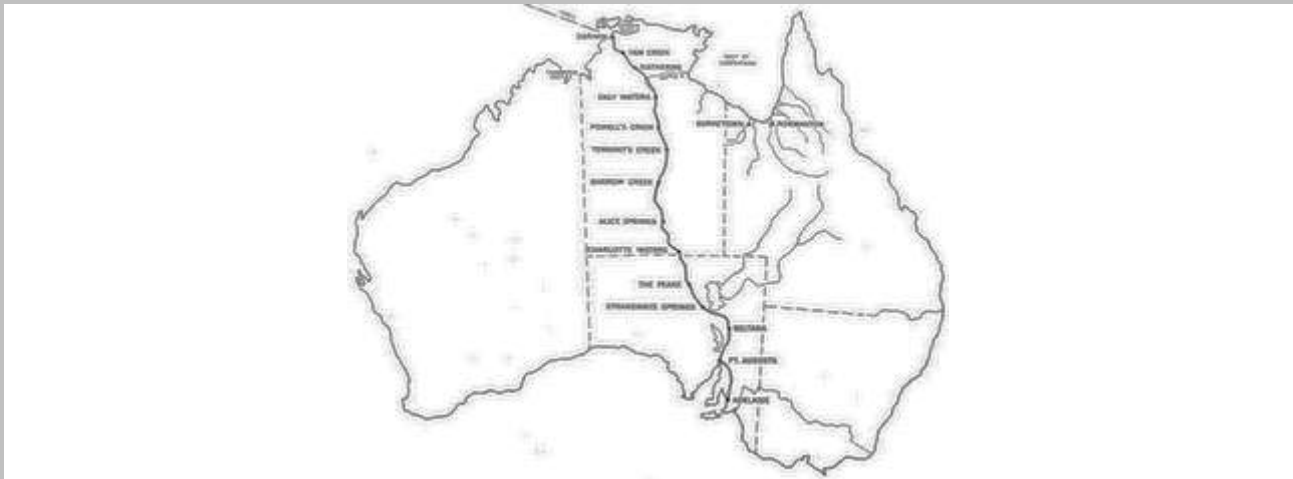
The South Australian government recognised the economic benefits that would result from becoming the centre of the telegraph network. It offered a reward of £2000 to encourage an expedition to find a route between South Australia and the north coast.

Only on his 6th attempt in 1862 did John McDouall Stuart end up crossing the Continent from south to north. Stuart had suggested that telegraph line was a possibility as he travelled across the country. He noted the best places for river crossings, sources of timber for telegraph poles, and water supplies. The South Australian government were at that time very keen for a trans-continental to connect with their line from Port Augusta to Adelaide. They gave strong support to McDouall Stuart's proposal.

The final contract was secured in 1870 when the South Australian government agreed to construct 3200 km of line to Darwin, while the British-Australian Telegraph Company promised to lay the undersea cable from Banyuwangi in Java to Darwin. The latter was to be finished on 31 December 1871.

Darwent & Dalwood, who won the contract for the northern section of 970 km, arrived in Port Darwin aboard SS *Omeo* in September 1870 with 80 men, 80 draught horses, bullocks, equipment and stores. Stephen King Jr. was their surveyor and explorer. The northern line was progressing well until the onset of the wet season in November 1870. Heavy rain of up to 250 mm a day waterlogged the ground and made it impossible for work to progress. With conditions worsening, the men went on strike on 7 March 1871, rancid food and disease-spreading mosquitoes amongst their complaints. On 3 May 1871, Overseer of Works William McMinn cancelled Darwent & Dalwood's contract and sent all the workers back to Adelaide, on the basis of insufficient progress (they had erected poles to a distance of 362 km and strung wire for 208 km to that date) and the insurrection of the men. The South Australian Government was now forced to construct an extra 700 km of line, and threw every available resource into its completion, down to purchasing horses and hiring men from New South Wales. They completed the Central section too of 1,000km.

Running more than seven months behind schedule, the two lines, one from Darwin, running south, and one from Port Augusta, running north, were finally joined at Frew's Ponds on Thursday, 22 August 1872.



The Overland Telegraph Line from Port Darwin south changed the way Australia related to the world and the country's extreme isolation was broken.



The cable from Java comes ashore on 19th November 1871

The telegraph line also opened up the centre of the continent. Within a year of its construction, the gold discovered during construction of the Telegraph Line at Pine Creek, was being mined. Within 10 years the cattle industry had been established in the Northern Territory. Prospectors and graziers used the lines repeater stations as centres from which to explore and stake claims on the land. In the 1870s, Chinese began to settle, at least temporarily in the Northern Territory, many of whom worked the goldfields and on the Palmerston to Pine Creek railway.

The first Palmerston Post Office opened in 1864. This early settlement was abandoned in December 1866. It used a postmarker inscribed "P.O. NORTHERN TERRITORY".

The 2nd Palmerston Post Office opened in 1869. Its first postmark was inscribed "NORTHERN TERY". The Post Office was re-located to a part of the Port Darwin Cable Station in March 1873. They co-existed for many years. The Postal Guides referred to it as "Palmerston (Port Darwin)". The "NORTHERN TERY" postmark was replaced with the move with a "PALMERSTON" one. This postmarker lasted until 1876 when it was replaced with a "PORT DARWIN" one.

This new population in the yet-to-be Northern Territory needed a regular outlet for its mail & gold. Telegrams were hugely expensive. The journey overland to Adelaide would have taken at least 30 days, and be subject to attack by Aboriginal populations, lack of water, a road, and fodder for horses.



Port Darwin, 1878 from the 'Australian Sketcher'

Merchant shipping visited Port Darwin irregularly, mostly *en route* from China and Singapore to Sydney or Melbourne to Singapore and China with cargoes of tea. There was little incentive for them to call at Port Darwin on the way north. There was, however, a small but growing trade with the Netherlands East Indies.

In November 1874 the South Australian Parliament voted funds to lease a suitable ships to operate ten round trips a year to Port Darwin for a mail service, carry passengers and cargo between Port Adelaide and Port Darwin. It would travel via Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane, Somerset on Cape York and Darwin. A number of shipowners were contacted. On successful completion of each voyage, the South Australian government would pay the owners £1,000 sterling.

Port Darwin was having to cope with the gold rush to Pine Creek. All the Palmerston banks sent their money and gold to their head offices in Adelaide as registered mail in a strong box. Government paperwork had to go to Adelaide, as well as the mails.

J McMeokan & Blackwood Company, who owned the SS *Gothenburg* were one of the successful tenderers to run a mail ship between South Australia's Northern Territory and Port Adelaide. . The SS *Gothenburg* was an iron-hulled combination sail and steamship. It had 3 masts like a barquentine, and a 2-cylinder 120 horsepower steam engine. She carried 4 lifeboats – 2 on each side. The *Gothenburg* had been built in England in 1854. Its first owners were the North of Europe Steam Navigation Company, who sailed it between England and Sweden until 1862.

In 1862 John H Blackwood bought the SS *Gothenburg* and she sailed to Australia. At that time it was one of the most modern ships in Australia. It was also considered a reliable vessel. For the first few years she operated on the Trans-Tasman shipping route between Australia and New Zealand. After that she was transferred to the Australian coastal runs.



The SS Gothenburg at Port Adelaide during her lengthening in 1873

The SS *Gothenburg* was re-built at Port Adelaide in 1873 to increase her passenger accommodation, cargo capacity and range. Her registered length was increased to 60m from 57m. The depth was increased from 3.9m to 6.2m.

The *Gothenburg*'s first return trip to Darwin in December 1873 went according to plan.



Captain R.G.A. Pearce

When the SS *Gothenburg* left Port Darwin on Tuesday 16 February 1875, on his second trip, Captain Robert George Augustus Pearce was under orders to make best possible speed. Pearce had been her captain on the Adelaide – Darwin run for some time and had built up a solid reputation. He was a man of the sea, a man of sobriety and kindness, and was well respected by his fellow sea captain.

There were about 98 passengers and 37 crew (surviving records vary). They included government officials, circuit court judges, and Darwin residents taking their first annual leave, as well as returning miners. Aboard was the French Vice-Consul. Edouard Durand and James Millner, the medical officer in George W. Goyder's 1869 expedition to re-found Port Darwin. There were also several prisoners aboard, bound for the Adelaide jail. Locked in the Captain's cabin was about 93 kilograms (3,000 oz) of gold valued then at £40,000. This was consigned to the ES&A Bank in Adelaide (worth about \$1,250,000 today). Durand reportedly also carried a tin box with him containing gold sovereigns and coins worth in excess of £3,000. As well there were at least 4 bags of general mail.

In three days of fine weather, the SS *Gothenburg* travelled 1,500 kilometres from Palmerston (Port Darwin) to the tiny settlement of Somerset on the tip of Cape York.

The weather began to worsen so the ship stopped to take on rock ballast at Somerset. While she was anchored, conditions deteriorated to a point where both anchor chains parted. After the loss of the anchors, the *Gothenburg* was forced to prematurely steam out 13 kilometres because of strong currents.

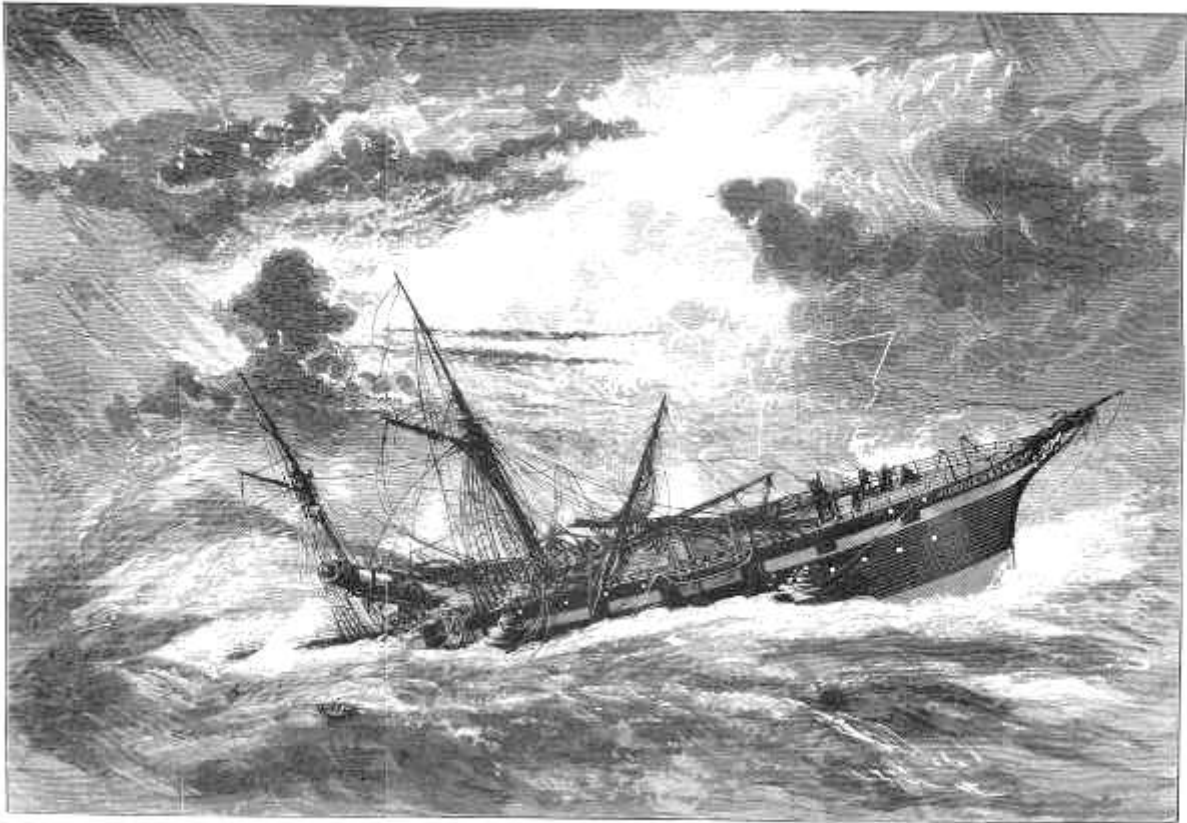
Two days later, Tuesday 23 February, *Gothenburg* passed Cooktown at about 2:00 pm. The wind and rain severely increased and cloud cover became so thick it blocked out the sun. Despite this, she continued the journey south into worsening weather, in a deep water passage between the North Queensland coastline and the Great Barrier Reef, known as the inner route. Although taking this route provided some protection from the open sea, captains had to navigate and thread their way through a number of then-uncharted reefs. All passengers and crew expected to be in Newcastle on Sunday evening for a scheduled stopover.

On 23rd of February the *Gothenburg* was moving down the Queensland coast inside the Barrier Reef, under sail and steam, in squally conditions with poor visibility. Unknown to the captain and crew, floodwaters from the Burdekin and Wickham rivers, resulting from a tropical cyclone moving across northern Queensland were steadily pushing the *Gothenburg* to the east off her normal course.



At 6pm next day, just north of Townsville, she slid gently on to a coral reef and resisted all attempts to free her. While on the reef the wind increased in the night to a strong gale. The passengers were all asked to go aft, and the engines were kept going astern all night. One man was left on the wheel and the mate ordered everybody to turn in. About 3am the ship started to roll and the mate called all hands on deck and ordered the topsail to be set. About 4am the ship bumped so heavily that the crew were thrown off their feet.

The four life-boats were insufficient to carry all of those on board. One boat broke free in a heavy squall with four aboard. It was noticed that it held two mail bags with a Darwin seal were in it. This life-boat was later found smashed on rocks on Holbourne Island. Another boat broke free with and men in it.



THE WRECK OF THE STEAMER GOTHENBURG.

The women passengers were frightened and some got in the boat still attached to the davits. It was lowered but the sea capsized the boat and they were washed off. It capsized completely when male passengers attempted to leap aboard. The same heavy sea took all those on the ship's side. The sea then washed completely over the *Gothenburg* as it slid off the reef. The captain and chief officer on the bridge were washed away. As the steamer commenced to break up in the stormy seas dozens of passengers and crew fought desperately for their lives, and by morning, only her battered masts protruded a few metres above the water.



By the morning of 25th February, only the masts were visibly protruding from the water, with 14 people clinging to the rigging, where they remained a hold for the next twenty-four hours in cyclonic weather.

Many passengers associated with the gold diggings were unwilling to let go of their gold and money belts, as it was probably their life savings; these individuals insisted on keeping them tied and once overboard reportedly drowned very quickly.

Six men in one of the boats landed on an island near the Whitsunday Passage and were picked up by the SS *Leichhardt*, which returned to the wreck and searched unsuccessfully for survivors, before steaming to Brisbane at full speed with news of the disaster.

Soon every available boat from Townsville and Bowen was out searching, but most returned empty handed. However, fourteen men who had clung to the rigging and were eventually able to bail out a water-filled lifeboat still fastened to the wreck set out for the mainland. They landed on Holbourne Island, where they found four others who had been in one of the first boats swept away. These were the only survivors. Of 126 persons on board, 102 lost their lives.



Gothenburg survivors



Tiny Holbourne Island is now a National Park

At Holbourne Island, 18 survivors were living off raw bird's eggs and rainwater that had pooled in the island rocks. Because rescue was uncertain, they engraved ship details and their names on the concave side of a large turtle shell, in the hope that it would be found in the future.



The Holbourne Island turtle shell



On Sunday, 28th February, 15 of them set off in the starboard lifeboat for an island about 30km away to the south, which appeared to be closer to the main shipping lane. A rescue ship sent looking for survivors, picked up the group and took them safely to Bowen. Another rescue ship, *Bunyip* from Townsville, subsequently returned to Holbourne Island and rescued the three remaining survivors.



From left: Robert Brazil, John Cleland and James Fitzgerald in 1875

There were three heroes identified that tragic night, all attested to by all the other survivors, for their attempts to save other passengers. In recognition of their bravery, on 26 July 1875, the Governor of South Australia, Sir Anthony Musgrave, presented passengers James Fitzgerald and John Cleland and crewman Robert Brazil with gold medals and a gold watch. The *Göthenburg* Relief Fund Committee also presented each of them with a gold chain.



The Humane Society Gold Medals (from the Illustrated Adelaide News 1 Sep 1875)

None of the mail bags from Darwin were ever recovered.

On 15th March 1875 a salvage party, led by diver J. Putwain recovered the gold from the captain's cabin and over the next few weeks searched the wreck for valuables. Putwain's claim to the gold was disputed, and after his legal expenses very little profit was left.



The stern of the Gothenburg

Today, only parts of the deteriorated iron hull and the coal-fired square boilers of the SS *Gothenburg* remain. The wreck lies in 9 to 16 metres of water on the western side of Old Reef, 130 kilometres southeast of Townsville. The *Gothenburg* shipwreck is registered on the Queensland National Estate (place ID #8923) as a Heritage site, and is protected under Section 7 of the (Commonwealth) *Historic Shipwrecks Act 1976*,

Compiled by the editor D.D., from Trove and other internet sources

FIRST AIR MAIL FROM BRISBANE TO TOWNSVILLE ON 15TH SEPTEMBER 1935

1935 was a busy year in Australia for new air-mail services. It was the year when New England Airways Ltd commenced their official Brisbane to Townsville air-mail with a flight on Sunday 15th September. Intermediate stops were made at Rockhampton and Mackay.



Mails off-loaded at Rockhampton were back-stamped "ROCKHAMPTON / 10.30 A.M. / 15 SE 35". Mails off-loaded at Mackay were back-stamped "MACKAY / 12.30 P.M. / 15 SE 35". Mail for Townsville was back-stamped "TOWNSVILLE / 3 P.M. 15 SE 35". The registered cover, shown below, just shows the "• REGISTERED • / 16.SEP.35 / TOWNSVILLE" date-stamp on the Monday.

Mails for this and subsequent twice-weekly Sunday and Thursday flights closed at the Brisbane G.P.O. at 1am on the Saturday and 4.15 a.m. on the Thursday. The plane was scheduled to fly from Brisbane's Archerfield Aerodrome at 4.30 a.m.

Previous flights from Brisbane to Townsville had commenced in June 1935, but these carried no air-mail, until the 15th September.

The plane continued north to Cairns. The *Townsville Daily Bulletin* of 16th September 1935, page 4, noted that "After the arrival of New England Airways *City of Grafton* on Sunday afternoon, Pilot McDonald left at 3 o'clock for Cairns. On this occasion no passengers travelled further north than Townsville, and Mr McDonald's dog company was a terrier dog travelling by air from Sydney to Cairns".

Nelson Eustis in the *Australian Air Mail Catalogue*, however, cites the pilot on the 1st Official air-mail flight was Keith Virtue who flew the *City of Grafton*, VH-UMH. It was as an Avro 618 Ten version of a Fokker F-VII. Eustis records that the return flight left Townsville on Tuesday 17th September 1935. Covers were cancelled at Townsville and back-stamped "MACKAY / 17 SE 35"; "ROCKHAMPTON / 10.15 AM / 17 SE 35", and "BRISBANE / 2.30 PM 17 SE 35".



City of Grafton VH-UMH carried the 1st air mail to Townsville

This aircraft subsequently crashed at Newcastle on 28th November 1935 not all that long after the Townsville flight. It had been originally purchased by Australian National Airways in 1930 as the *Southern Sky* before joining the New England Airways fleet.

The *Townsville Daily Bulletin* of 17th September 1935 reported that Mr W.A. Martin, Superintendent of Mail, Brisbane came on the New England Airways inaugural air-mail trip to Townsville. Discussing the air mail on the Sunday Evening, Mr Martin said: -

"Townsville would enjoy the privilege of air mail facilities twice a week with mail exchange between Brisbane, Rockhampton and Mackay. There was little doubt that the frequency of the service would be increased as the volume of traffic warranted such a course. Citizens need have no fear as to the punctuality of the service, for the New England Company had been running a daily service to and from Sydney and Brisbane for some years, with unfailing regularity. Every day the 'bus

conveying the mails and passengers from Archerfield Aerodrome may be seen discharging freight outside the Brisbane G.P.O. at about 1.30p.m. It may be said that the punctuality was as regular as that of the average train or steamer."

"Under the exiting arrangements, Mr Martin added, "mail posted in Brisbane on Saturdays did not reach Townsville until 6.45a.m. on Tuesdays. With the acceleration due to the air mail this correspondence would reach Townsville at 2 p.m. on Sundays, and be available for private box holders shortly after 2p.m. Similarly, posted in Brisbane on Wednesday and up to 4.45 a.m. on Thursday would be available to private box holders shortly after 2 p.m. on Thursday. Besides Townsville, all places on the Northern rail system would also benefit. That was because mails from Brisbane to these places which now close at 4.45pm on Wednesday may be extended until 4.45 a.m. on Thursdays and they would connect with earlier trains [6.30 a.m. next day for Cairns]."

[The first official air mail from Townsville to Cairns was not provided by New England Airways until 14th October 1935. It was carried on the Monospar '*Captain Flinders*' VH-UTM.]

"On the return air trip, mail would leave Townsville at 6.30 a.m. on Tuesdays and Fridays. Correspondence for Brisbane would reach there by 2.30 p.m., in time for the afternoon deliveries by postmen. It would be recognised that each way ample time was allowed for business people and residents to reply by return 'plane.'"

"The conveyance of mails between Brisbane and Townsville in less than 9 hours recalled past years. Prior to the extension of the Northern [North Coast] rail system, mails for all places north of Rockhampton were conveyed by steamer. The arrival of the old S.S *Bingera* at the Townsville Jetty in the early hours of Monday morning, laden with mails, was a familiar sight. These mails had left Brisbane at 8 a.m. on Friday and took 52 hours to reach Townsville. The opening up of the railway reduced the time to 36 hours, while the introduction of the just-inaugurated air mail service effected a reduction to less than nine hours."

Over the next few weeks the "*City of Grafton*" VH-UMH was replaced by a General Aircraft ST-12 Monospar aircraft, named "*Captain Philip*" VH-UTK. The "*City of Grafton*" returned to the company's Brisbane to Sydney service. VH-UTK "*Captain Philip*" was a plane that had been ordered by New England Airways and shipped to Australia in a crate. It arrived in March 1935 and was assembled by Keith Virtue.

VH-UTK also saw service on charter to Sir Donald McKay's, 1935 *McKay Aerial Reconnaissance Survey Expedition* exploring central Australia. Flown by expedition pilot Captain Frank Neale. It flew from Mascot to Alice Springs, and returned to Sydney late July 1935. It resumed flying the Brisbane-Townsville route until 1938, even though on 1st January 1936 New England Airways was re-named Airline of Australia Ltd.



VH-UTK in July 1935 with the inscription 'Mackay Aerial Reconnaissance Survey Expedition 1935'



VH-UTK repainted in the Airlines of Australia blue and red colour scheme, in Clermont, Queensland, 1938

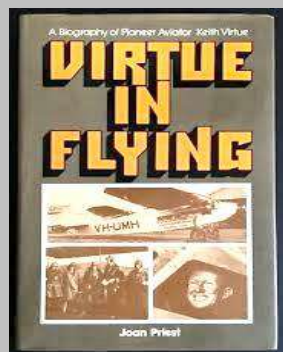
VH-UTK. Was destroyed by fire on 1st July 1938, on the ground at Mackay Qld while operating an Airlines of Australia service from Brisbane to Townsville. Captain C. F. Moore was starting the engines at Mackay when the port engine back-fired and set fabric alight, starting a fire which resulted in a fuel tank exploding. Captain Moore used the aircraft's fire extinguisher, but the aircraft was burnt out, only the starboard engine could be salvaged. There were no injuries.

The new company to replace New England Airways was floated on the stock exchange in late-1935. Named Airlines of Australia it was backed by the British Pacific Trust. Its main purpose was to extend the aerial services to Cairns and from Sydney to Melbourne, and beyond. However, Australian National Airways (ANA) obtained a controlling interest in April 1937. The two airlines maintained separate identities until 1942. Keith Virtue was flight superintendent.



Keith Virtue in later years with a DC-3. He was the first Australian pilot to accumulate 20,000 hours flying

Keith Allison Virtue MBE (23 June 1909 – 7 February 1980) was a pioneer Australian aviator. He has been described as one of the greatest of the Australians who devoted their life's work to the task of pioneering airlines in Australia. He died in 1980 playing golf.



He was only 19 when he and Keith Virtue his future father-in-law, G.A. Robinson, established New England Airways. Joan Priest's biography of Keith Virtue called "*Virtue in Flying*" makes the point that "New England Airways took over where Kingsford-Smith and Ulm left off. They renewed the Brisbane to Sydney air line in 1930 in the Depression and provided the only airline service of Australia's east coast".

New England Airways was incorporated in 1st January 1931. G.A. Robinson, who ran the successful Lismore bus-line, the New England Motor Company, was the managing director. Keith Virtue was also a director and the chief pilot.

New England Airways had initially commenced a regular air service between Lismore and Brisbane, as well as joy-flights and charter flights. Their service kept expanding and by 1935 had flown over a million miles and had carried 21,500 passengers safely on their Brisbane to Sydney services.

Keith Virtue subsequently became the Flying Superintendent for Airlines of Australia. He enlisted as a Flight Lieutenant in the R.A.A.F. on 11th September 1939 and was discharged in July 1947. He was involved in supplying ground troops in New Guinea and helped developed the practice of "biscuit bombing" supplies.

COUNTERSTAMPED COINS

Counterstamped coins are not common in modern circulation, but in previous eras, they were often used. Counterstamps or countermarks were a way to certify a coin had the proper precious metal content or value and was acceptable for legal tender. Alan McRae in his article in the August 2000 *Coin News* also made the point *"that whenever there was a need to alter a coin or provide emergency currency, counterstamping the coins already in circulation was often the quickest and cheapest solution"*.

MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS

This was very true of the silver coins issued during the reign of Mary Queen of Scots in Scotland. Mary lived from 8 December 1542 – 8 February 1587 and was queen of Scotland from 14 December 1542 until her forced abdication in 1567. Mary was six days old when her father James V of Scotland died and she inherited the throne.



Mary, who was educated in France, married the Dauphin of France, Francis in 1558. Francis prematurely died in 1560. In 1565 she married Lord Darnley.

The first Scottish silver ryal was issued by the Edinburgh Mint in 1566. It was given a value of 30 shillings. It featured the busts of Mary and Lord Darnley. Very few of these coins were minted: -



Darnley was assassinated in 1567. Later in 1567, Mary re-married Lord Bothwell. In 1568 after the Battle of Langside, Mary escaped to England. She was imprisoned on Fotheringham Castle by Queen Elizabeth I. After a number of plots in which Mary hoped to take over the English throne she was beheaded in 1587.

Silver ryal issues after 1568 do not show any portraits, but feature the Royal Shield with thistles on either side.

Her son, James IV of Scotland took over the Scottish throne on 24th July 1567 on his mother's abdication. He was 1 year old.



A Mary Queen of Scots, 0.916 silver ryal dated 1567 not counterstamped. Hammered at Edinburgh Mint. This design was first minted in 1566, during Mary's marriage to Henry, Lord Darnley. The reverse has a tortoise climbing a palm tree. The Latin inscription below translates as: 'Glory gives strength' while that around the edge translates as: 'Let God arise and let His enemies be scattered'(from Psalm 68). It was counterstamped with a thistle to the left of the palm tree in the Revaluation of 1578. The coins' value was thus raised from 30 shillings to 36 shillings and 9 pence



A Mary Queen of Scots & Lord Darnley 1566 counterstamped silver ryal with the James IV revaluation "thistle" countermark of 1578.

The silver that had been used on the Mary & Darnley ryal coins had rapidly increased in price. Their value was so high that many were melted down and sold off as bullion. James IV ordered in 1578 that Mary's silver coins, and some of his own, be recalled to the mint to be counterstamped. They used a thistle design. A number of different dies were used. The 30 shilling ryals were revalued at 36 shillings and ninepence. Other coins like the silver testoons

of Mary were similarly counterstamped and revalued from 5 shillings at 7 shillings and fourpence:-



GEORGE III of England

George III reigned from 1760 to 1820.

The oval counter-stamped coins were struck in response to the crisis of silver coinage at the end of the 18th Century; the supply of silver in commerce and for the Mint had dwindled due to the Wars in France after the Revolution in 1797, causing a shortage for the minting of coins. English tradesmen had earlier realised it was okay to use the larger Spanish 8 reales and other silver coins as an unofficial currency. After all they had a silver bullion value. A lot of these coins had come into the country through piracy and the Mint receiving Admiral Byng's seizure silver coinage from Spanish ships.

In 1797, the Bank of England stopped redeeming its paper notes for gold (because of "difficulties,") not excluding the coming war with Napoleon, which is another way of explaining that the nation went off the gold standard (albeit temporarily). The public was disquieted. To stem the alarm, the Bank decided to force into circulation a large supply of foreign milled crowns (mainly Spanish silver, from various mints and sources), and monetized them for British use.

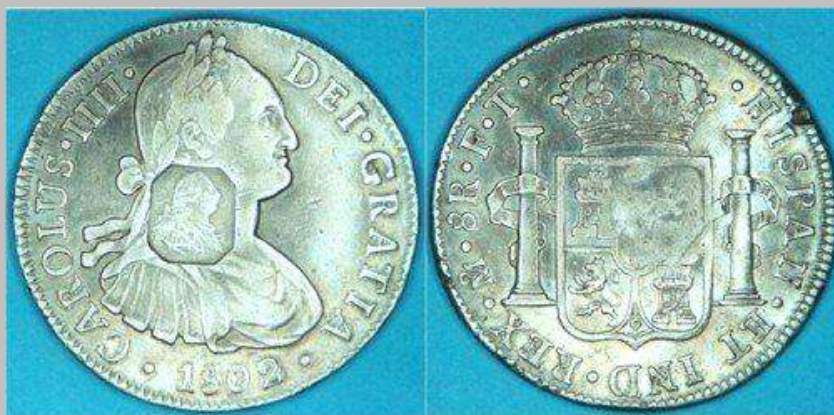


A George III 'emergency' Spanish 8 real silver dollar coin counterstamped with an oval counterstamp die. The Spanish coin is dated 1795 from the Seville Mint. The Bank of England released stocks of its Spanish and colonial dollars and halves, each with an oval counterstamp.

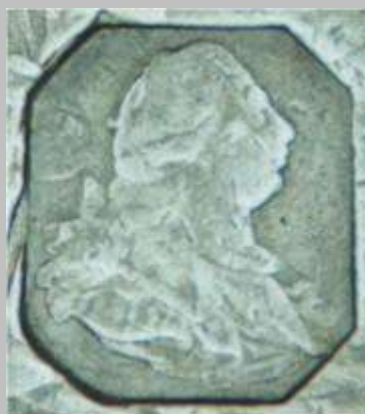
In 1797 The Treasury decided to "validate" silver Spanish Colonies 8 reales coins for local circulation as an "emergency" issue. An official Treasury value of **4 shillings and 9**

pence was attributed to the newly counterstamped Spanish dollar coins, but the Bank of England “upped” the value to 5 shillings.

The release of these coins failed to solve the problem of small change. Another problem was that these oval die pieces were easily counterfeited until the more complex octagonal mark was introduced from January to May 1804.



An octagonal counterstamp on an 1802 Mexican Mint 8 reales coin.



*Close-up of the octagonal counterstamp on the 1802 * reales coin.*

Counterfeiting became a common issue due to the simple nature of the counterstamp and ultimately the solution of completely covering Spanish Dollars with a new design was implemented late in 1804 with the assistance of Matthew Boulton who was responsible for removing any residual presence of the original Spanish designs.

Due to poor public sentiment these coins were often described as "*The head of a fool stamped on the neck of an ass*"

These 1804 octagonal counterstamps proved no more difficult to replicate by the reviled "counterfeiters" (as if the Bank of England were thoroughly honest) and were quickly copied by the "money bandits" outside the Bank. The entire project soon ended, however, as Napoleon forced the British to engage in battle after battle in his mad rush to conquer the world. The Bank of England then issued its own new coins and went back on the gold standard when it issued the famous Military Guineas in 1813, which were coined entirely to pay mercenary troops on the Continent, who refused silver.

Compiled from internet sources and Alan McRae's article in the August 2000 Coin News

