



Philatelic Review Bulletin

Penrith & District Philatelic Society

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Produced in Australia by

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Dear members and collectors,

The contents of this bulletin aims at informing members of pending auctions, stamps issues and other calendar items relevant to our hobby.

As things go, there will be room for errors but I hope I can keep those to a minimum.

The editor

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Meetings

Start: 8:00 pm; first Thursday in the month (except January)

CWA Rooms, Baby Health Centre, Tindale Street, Penrith

Date	Activity
3 April 2008	Exhibition; Trading
1 May 2008	Exhibition; Trading
5 June 2008	Election
3 July 2008	Exhibition; Trading Club Pack Auction
7 August 2008	Exhibition; Trading
4 September 2008	Exhibition; Trading PHILAS Display
2 October 2008	Exhibition, Trading
6 November 2008	Exhibition; Trading Club Pack Auction
4 December 2008	Exhibition; Trading
5 February 2009	Exhibition; Trading

References

- Australia Post
- The Australasian Stamp Catalogue
- The Australian Commonwealth Specialists' Catalogue 44th edition
- Comprehensive Colour Catalogue of Australian Stamps

Events

Where	When	Contact
Katoomba: Katoomba Masonic Centre Civic Centre, Station Street	1 st Saturday 10:00am – 4:00pm	Tel: (02) 9418 9044
Brookvale: Manly-Warringah Leagues Club Unlicensed Premises (first floor Carpark Building), corner Federal Parade / Pittwater Road	1 st Saturday (except January) 10:00am – 4:00pm	Tel: (02) 9977 4076
Orange: Quinn's Arcade, Summer Street	1 st Saturday (except January) 9:00am – 4:00pm	Orange Coin & Stamp Club, P.O Box 324, Orange, 2800 Tel: Norm Binns (02) 6362 3754
Tuncurry: Tuncurry-Forster TAFE College, Taree Street	1 st Saturday (February to November) 9:00am – 12:00noon	Great Lakes Stamp Club, P.O Box 717, Forster, 2428
Caringbah: Stamp and Coin Collectors Fair, East Coast City Church, 375 Kingsway (Entrance fee: Gold Coin - all funds donated to the church)	1 st Saturday	Convener – Dave Ellis Tel: (02) 9528 9011
West Tamworth: St Paul's Hall, corner Church & Bridge Streets	1 st Saturday 9:00am – 4:00pm	Tamworth Philatelic Society, P.O Box 678, Tamworth, 2340 Tel: (02) 6765 6914
Bankstown: Masonic Hall, corner of Restwell Street and Greenfields Street	1 st Sunday 9:00am – 3:00pm	Grahame Fudge: Tel: (02) 4455 4011
Corrimal: Masonic Hall, 69 Railway Street	1 st Sunday 10:00am – 4:00pm	
Penrith: CWA Hall, corner Castlereagh & Tindale Streets	2 nd Saturday (3 rd in August) 10:00am – 4:00pm	Tel: (02) 9623 6009 Your call could not be connected
Brookvale: Federal Parade Hall	3 rd Saturday (March, June, August & November only) 10:00am - 4:00pm	Manly-Warringah Leagues Club Stamp Club, 563 Pittwater Rd, Brookvale, 2100
Lithgow: Masonic Hall, Mort Street	3 rd Sunday 10:00am – 4:00pm	Tel: (02) 9623 6009
Wallsend: Pioneer's Hall, Cowper Street	3 rd Sunday 10:00am – 4:00pm	Tel: (02) 4946 9121
Epping: Epping School of Dance Hall, 9 Oxford Street	4 th Sunday 10:00am – 4:00pm	
Croydon: Imar Community Hall, 2A Fitzroy Street	Last Sunday February, May, August & November only; 9:30am – 3:00pm	NSW Postcard Collectors Society, P.O Box 426, Newport, 2106

APTA

2008

Mar 30	SCDAA Stamp & Coin Fair, Petersham Town Hall
Jun 29	SCDAA Stamp & Coin Fair, Petersham Town Hall
Aug 8 - 10	ANDA Sydney show
Aug 31	SCDAA Stamp & Coin Fair, Petersham Town Hall
Sep 13 - 14	Northern Beaches Expo, Federal Parade Hall, Brookvale NSW.
Nov 30	SCDAA Stamp & Coin Fair, Petersham Town Hall

2009

Mar 29	SCDAA Stamp & Coin Fair, Petersham Town Hall
May 31	SCDAA Stamp & Coin Fair, Petersham Town Hall
Aug 30	SCDAA Stamp & Coin Fair, Petersham Town Hall
Nov 29	SCDAA Stamp & Coin Fair, Petersham Town Hall

Auctions

ALLIANCE AUCTIONS (UK)

office@allianceauctions.com

Tel +44 1279 758854 Fax + 44 1279 758859

CAVENDISH AUCTIONS (UK)

stamps@cavendishphilauc.demon.co.uk

CHARLES LESKI AUCTIONS

www.leski.com.au

CRAIG CHAPPELL

craigchappell@bigpond.com.au

EDLINS of CANBERRA

www.edlins.com.au

MILLENNIUM PHILATELIC AUCTIONS

www.millenniumauctions.com

MOWBRAYS AUSTRALIA

Melbourne

sgamelb@ozemail.com.au

1st & 2nd February 2008 (over 2 days)

19th April

12th July
18th October

Sydney

sgasydney@bigpond.com

19th March

18th June

3rd September

3rd December

J.R. MOWBRAY PHILATELIST (NZ)
JOHN MOWBRAY INTERNATIONAL
www.mowbrays.co.nz

PREMIER POSTAL AUCTIONS

www.premierpostal.com

david@premierpostal.com

PRESTIGE PHILATELY

www.prestigephilately.com

19th January 2008 1pm #133

STANLEY GIBBONS MELBOURNE

sgamelb@ozemail.com.au

STANLEY GIBBONS SYDNEY

sgasydney@bigpond.com

STATUS INTERNATIONAL

auction@statusint.com

21st CENTURY AUCTIONS

www.21stcenturyauctions.com.au

info@21centuryauctions.com.au

Useful Links

Name	WEBSITE
A-One Stamps	www.aonestamps.com
APRL	www.stamps.org
APS	www.west.net
Australian Philatelic Federation	www.apf.org.au
Bilby Stamps & Covers	www.bilbystamps.com.au
British Library Philatelic	www.portico.bi.uk Collection
Burpengary Stamps	www.burstamp.com
CDDSTAMPS	www.cdddstamps.vom
Collections Plus	www.centurynova.com.au
County Philatelic	www.stampauctions.co.uk
FIP	www.f-i-p.ch
French postal history	www.esil.univnirs.fr/Eleves/P98/incio/index.html
Ideal Solutions	www.philately.com
James Bendon	www.jamesbendon.com
Kennedy Stamps P/L	www.kennedystamps.com.au
Kevin Morgan	www.kevinmorgan.com.au

Name	WEBSITE
Stamps and Coins	
Leonard Hartman USA	www.pbbooks.com/index.html
Malta Philatelic Society	http://www.maltaphilately.org/
Michael Eastick & Associates PTY LTD	www.michaelestick.com
NRG Philatelics	www.nrgphilatelics.com
Pacific Stamps	www.pacificstamps.com.au
Phil Bansner	www.philbansner.com
Phillips	www.phillips-auctions.com
Provincial Philatelics	www.proyphil.demon.co.uk
Renniks Publications	www.renniks.com
Royal Mail	www.royalmail.co.uk
Sotheby	www.sothebys.com
Stamp Shows	www.stampshows.com/#international
Stamp World	www.stampworld.com/index.html
STAMPS4COLLECTORS	www.stamps4collectors.net
Stanley Gibbons	www.stangib.com
Stanley Gibbons Australia	www.stanleygibbons.com
Status International	www.statusint.com
Sydney Stamp Centre (WCS)	www.sydneystampcentre.com.au
Webzine, NetStamp	www.netstamps.com
Yvert & Tellier	www.yvert-et-tellier.fr/

Stamp Issues

Australia Post

www.auspost.com.au/philatelic/stamps/intro.asp

15.1.2008	Red Rose 50c Sheet of 10 perforated stamps Special occasion booklet Sheet of 10 Peel and stick
23.1.2008	Australian Legends 4 x 50c perforated 4 x 50 c peel & stick
5.2.2008	Organs & Tissue Donation 50c Sheet of 10 Peel & stick
19.2.2008	Centenary of Scouting in Australia 50c Scouting in Australia \$1.30 Scouting today \$1.95 Scouts on stamps NOTE: Sheetlet pack - stamps plus tab!
3.3.2008	Gorgeous Australia

4.3.2008	World Youth Day
11.3.2008	AFL Souvenir Packs
24.3.2008	Centenary of Rugby League
1.4.2008	Heavy Haulers
16.4.2008	ANZAC Day - Lest We Forget
18.4.2008	Queen's Birthday

Please also note: For the first time Australia Post now attaches a 'Seal of Authenticity' on postal and numismatic covers 'to ensure the collector knows they are buying an official Australia Post PNC'¹.

Great Britain

<http://www.royalmail.com/portal/rm>

2008 STAMP PROGRAMME

This year is already looking good for stamps and collecting. From SOS and the RAF to Insects and the Olympics, here are the inspiring issues we've got lined up for 2008.

February - Working Dogs
February - The Houses of Lancaster and York
March - Celebrating Northern Ireland
March - Mayday - Rescue at Sea
April - Insects
May - Cathedrals
June - Classic Carry On and Hammer Films
July - Airshows
August - Olympics
September - RAF Uniforms
September - Country Definitives: 1958 – 2008
October - Women of Distinction
November - Christmas 2008
November - Lest We Forget

Invitation

Dear guests and readers of this bulletin,

You are invited to join our club as stamp collecting has provided many of us with deep insights into past and present cultures of countries we may never visit. As a guest you may find the behaviour of existing members a bit overwhelming. Do not be afraid to ask questions. If you do, please do not be overwhelmed with the answer as you usually get more than you asked for. Some of us have been

¹ Stamp Bulletin No 290

collecting stamps for such a long time that we have forgotten what it feels like to be a beginner.

Join in and enjoy a pastime that need not be expensive. If you have inherited a stamp collection we will provide you with information (free of charge) about the value of that collection. Again, we may make comments you may not like (there is rust in the collection; not worth much but interesting enough to expand; etc). We are human and we have our little errors. However, if you do not like the information received, by all means, get a second opinion.

Looking back and ahead

We had only a small group attending our first meeting of the year. I, again auctioned some stamps for the benefit of the club. Financially we are in the black and that is a good sign for a club of our size.

This month I researched a topic sometimes ignored by collectors and those are the pre-cancelled stamps we often find in USA collections. As you can see below, they are not the only Postal Authority subscribing to the issue of precancelled stamps. I hope you enjoy this brief excursion.

Uwe Krüger
President

The ABCs of Precancel Collecting²

WHAT ARE PRECANCELS?

Precancelled postage stamps, or precancell's, may be defined broadly as stamps that have been cancelled before being affixed to mail matter. Several narrower definitions have been proposed, but none has universal acceptance. However, most collectors and nearly all catalogues require that the stamps be precancelled with a device made specifically for that purpose.

As you would expect, most such devices precancel several stamps at once, as they are intended to be applied while the stamps are still in sheets or panes. Thus, each stamp in the sheet would show the same legend; generally the name of the town and state between parallel lines. In other words, the legend usually "fits" the stamp.

Saving time is most often given as the reason for precancelling stamps. Long ago, someone recognized that cancelling 100 stamps in a sheet would take less time than precancelling individual stamps on 100 pieces of mail. Thus was born the idea of making stamps already cancelled available to mailers of large amounts of printed matter, usually advertising. To encourage such mailers to use these precancelled stamps, the Post Office Department offered them a slightly lower postage rate if they would also sort their mail for handling by the post office. Over the years, thousands of mailers have used precancelled stamps on such third-class mail, and many precancell's of higher denominations have been used on fourth-class mail.

WHAT DO PRECANCELS LOOK LIKE?

The Post Office Department authorized the precancelling of stamps in 1887. Nevertheless, a few cases of "unofficial" precancelling occurred earlier. They usually consisted of lines drawn across the stamps with a pen or brush. Obviously, they can only be distinguished from ordinary used stamps when they are on original cover. Moreover, the return address of the mailer gives the only clue to the post office of origin. Such covers are scarce and need only concern the specialist.

Some post offices turned to the printing press to replace pen strokes and the like. What was printed on the stamps was still largely narrow or wide lines or slugs not easily identified as to post office. In a few cases, distinguishing characters were used. Glastonbury, Conn., printed a large "G" on the 1c denomination of the 1869, 1879, and 1882 issues. Glen Allen, Va., used a five-pointed star distinguishable from other star cancellations by a heavy border surrounding a centre of fine parallel lines. All these early attempts at precancelling that do not show the post office name are classed as "Lines and Bars"; although a fruitful field for research by the expert, they are not plentiful and are not listed in most precancel catalogues.

The wide divergence in practice at this time probably led to the Post Office Department advice of May 23, 1903. It specified that the name of the city and state should appear in two lines, with a plain line above and below. This pattern has been pretty much the rule ever since, largely because the Post Office Department has supplied most precancelling devices since 1913.

DISTINGUISHING PRECANCELS FROM POST-CANCELS

Because many post-cancelled stamps also show the city and state between parallel lines, they may be confused with precancell's. However, all ordinary cancellations are applied by hand, whereas precancell's are made by about every conceivable duplicating device. Thus, the possibility of confusion is really limited to hand stamps.

² <http://www.precanceledstamps.com/abcs.html>

In other words, all overprints showing the name of the city and state PRINTED in deep black printers' ink are precancell's. Hand-applied overprints, whether cancellations or precancellations, usually show greyish ink, and further clues must be used to determine which is the case.

Because precancelling devices usually put the name of the city and state on each of several stamps at once, they generally read straight across the stamp, either horizontally or vertically. Furthermore, the legend is complete on each stamp. If the stamp is still on paper, the precancellation does not run off onto the paper. If a stamp meets all three of these conditions, it is a precancel with few exceptions.

With single stamps off paper, one can not apply these three rules rigorously. Post-cancellations occasionally run straight across the stamp. Well centred cancellations from towns with short names sometimes seem to fit single stamps:

Note that the post-cancellation below is a common type which shows vertical lines that place the inscription in a box. Such cancellations are therefore often designated as "box-killers." Only a few precancelling devices have such vertical lines, and they have them spaced the width of ordinary-sized stamps.



Another type of post-cancel which looks similar to precancell's is the "box-roller". These again can be distinguished by the vertical lines between town and state, as well as the size usually runs off the paper. This is not a precancel:



Even the rule that the cancellation not run off onto the paper is not foolproof. In emergencies, postal employees will occasionally "precancel" stamps with hand stamps made for post-cancelling or other purposes. Because stamps so over printed can not be distinguished as precancell's once they are removed from the original paper, they are not recognized as precancell's. They are usually called "provisional's"; often they consist of just the name of the city and state in one line.

For distinguishing hand stamped precancell's from post-cancels, there is really no substitute for experience. Until you have gained experience, save any stamp that you think might be a precancel. Meanwhile, study your stamps and whatever precancel literature you may have acquired. Before long, you will be able to decide in 99% of the cases whether or not a given stamp is indeed a valid precancel.

DESCRIBING PRECANCEL IMPRINTS

A few terms are useful in describing precancel imprints in words. They have to do with position, continuity from stamp to stamp, and styles of letters.

Although most precancellations run straight across the stamp, they are not always right-side-up, or "normal," on the stamp. Terms used to describe the position of the imprint are "normal", "inverted", "up", "down" and "diagonal".

Inverted imprints, or "inverts," most often occur when a hand stamp is unknowingly picked up wrong-way-to by a postal clerk, or when a printer sets up his press to centre the imprint on sheets of stamps with selvage on one side and finds some sheets with it on the other. As you would expect, inverts are usually less plentiful than normal's. Most imprints reading up or down do so because the device was made to fit the vertical heights, rather than the width, of the stamps. Diagonal imprints other than provisional's, arise either through carelessness or because a sheet of stamps curled or slipped in a printing press.

Stamps showing two impressions in any position are called "doubles"; three impressions, "triples"; and so on. They usually occur because the first impression missed some of the stamps in the sheet. Inasmuch as hand stamps can easily be applied in any position, most catalogues only list different positions of imprints when they are mechanically applied.

Continuity between stamps is determined by the lines above and below the name of the city and state. On most precancelling devices, these lines run continuously across the width of the plate. Thus, a single stamp will usually show the lines seeming to run off at both sides. Some precancel devices, however, have a break in the lines between adjoining horizontal subjects; the resulting short lines are called "bars." An example is:



On precancelling devices that have lines, the lines necessarily end at the extreme left and right sides of the plate; thus, stamps from the edge rows usually show lines running off on one side and the end of a "bar" on the other.

Descriptions of the style of lettering on precancelling devices always specify two things. The first is whether the city and state are shown entirely in capital letters ("caps"), or whether only the first letter of each word is capitalized ("caps and lower case"). The other has to do with the shape of the letters: if the ends of the strokes seem to spread, the letters are said to have "serifs" or be "serified"; if not, they are called "san-serif," "block," or "Gothic" letters.

These letters **have** Serifs:



These letters **do not have** Serifs:



CLASSIFYING PRECANCELS

Precancell's may be conveniently considered as falling into two main classes. Those imprinted by mechanical means, and those imprinted by hand. The first group comprises precancell's made by feeding the stamps through a printing press, a mimeograph, or some other semi-automatic machine. The second group includes precancell's made by stamping, rocking, or rolling a simple inked device upon the stamps by hand. A third category encompasses precancell's made by any of these methods but also showing the mailer's initials and date of use.

PRINTED PRECANCELS

Because of the deep black ink and sharpness of the impressions, printed precancell's are the easiest to recognize. In the early days, most of them were printed from type set up by the local printer who was given the job of making precancell's for the post office. Since 1913, most have been printed from 100-subject electroplates furnished by the Post Office Department to the local postmasters. In addition, since 1923, post offices needing large quantities have been supplied with precancell's made in the Bureau of Engraving and Printing in Washington.

Typesets



Precancell's printed from set type or linotype slugs are known as "Typesets." They differ widely in appearance and often reflect the individuality of the printer, as witness the early fancy designs. Each printer used type faces he happened to have in his shop. In some cases, he didn't have enough type of one style and used two or more in setting 100 individual subjects.

In most cases, typeset precancell's are neat and attractive; perhaps because of the printer's pride in craftsmanship as well as the distinctiveness of design. Nevertheless, because each subject is set up individually, all sorts of variations between subjects can occur. Interest in typeset precancell's is heightened by the hunt for misspellings, inverted words or letters, wrong type fonts, and other minor differences.

Electros

Precancell's printed from electroplates, usually of 100 subjects, are called "Electros." Although a few precancelling electroplates have been made locally, the majority have been supplied from Washington. These plates have been made for the Post Office Department under contract since 1913. As the contractors changed, so also did the style and appearance of the precancelling imprint on the plates. Also, changes in government specifications at various times have altered the appearance of electro imprints.



With the locally made electroplates, there are about as many different styles as there are plates, much as with typesets. But then, such plates are made by setting up one or more subjects in type and duplicating it. Hence, locally made electros can not always be distinguished from typesets. Some of these plates consist of only 50 subjects: when they are used, half a sheet of stamps is precancelled; the sheet is turned end-for-end, and the other half is printed; inverted unless the plate is also turned. In a few cases, curved plates have been made for use on a Multigraph machine; if the machine is operated with a ribbon rather than printer's ink, the impressions show lines of fabric as though printed through a typewriter ribbon.

Usual practice has been to use larger letters on plates for towns with shorter names; condensed letters for towns with long names. In some cases, towns with two-word names have been shown in two lines. All told, about 88 different styles of electroplates have been issued from Washington.

Bureau Prints

Bureau Prints are precancell's that are printed at the Bureau of Engraving and Printing in Washington. They came about

when the Post Office Department felt that large quantities of precancell's could be prepared cheaper than by hiring local printers to make them from government-issues electroplates. In a real sense, they are varieties of U.S. postage stamps made for restricted use.

Although a few experimental precancell's for three cities had been made at the Bureau in 1916, the practice did not become general until 1923. At that time, the manufacture of regular-issue postage stamps of denominations from 1c to 10c was switched to high-speed rotary presses. It then became a simple matter to incorporate rotary precancelling plates in the presses and have the finished stamps come out precancelled. The number of post offices using Bureau Prints has grown steadily; nearly 9,500 different Bureau Print precancell's have been issued in denominations from 1/2c to \$1.00.

Five simple rules will help you to distinguish Bureau Prints (other than the Experimental's) from other printed precancell's:

1. They occur only on rotary-press stamps (except for the 8c of 1954).
2. They occur only on the regular issues of 1923 (Perf. 10), 1927-31 (Perf. 11x10 1/2), 1932 (3c Stuart), 1938 (Presidential), 1940 (Defense), 1954 (Liberty), on subsequent general (not commemorative) issues, and on corresponding coil stamps of all these issues. (Nearly all printed precancell's on coil stamps are Bureau Prints.)
3. They always show single lines above and below the city and state; never bars or double lines.
4. They are always in the normal position, except on stamps that are wider than they are tall; on these stamps, the precancellation usually reads down.
5. They show [these styles](#).

Electroplate Errors

Both local and Bureau Print precancell's made from electroplates occasionally show errors. The frequency of such errors in a sheet of 100 stamps depends on how the plate was made. If it were cast from 100 subjects of set type, a given error would occur only once per 100 stamps. If 50 subjects were set up and duplicated to make plates to print 100 stamps; as is the case with Bureau Prints, a single error would occur twice on the sheet. If a row of ten subjects were set up and duplicated ten times to make the plate, any error would occur ten times on the sheet. The most common type of error is the omission of a period after an abbreviation.

MIMEOGRAPHED PRECANCELS



Mimeographed precancell's are usually identified easily by the typewriter lettering. Moreover, they often show other characters found on a typewriter keyboard [#, 'T', (,), -/] in place of the usual lines or bars. As each subject is typed separately, errors and variations are common. Any attempt to imitate

mimeographed precancell's by direct typing on a stamp can be readily detected; the mimeographed impression does not indent the paper.

MACHINE-PRECELELED COIL STAMPS

One further type of mechanical device has been used extensively for precancelling. It was devised specifically for precancelling coil stamps in rolls, rather than stamps in sheets. Obviously, no flat printing plate could conveniently be used to precancel stamps in strips of 500 or 1,000*. The invention of automatic stamp-affixing machines created a big demand among large mailers for precancelled coil stamps. About 1920, the first machines to precancel rolls of coil stamps were supplied to a few post offices.

In these machines, the stamps were unrolled from one spool, passed beneath an inked roller that did the precancelling, and rewound on another spool. In keeping with the designated form of precancellation, the first machines printed the name of the city and state between bars:

*Privately perforated coil stamps of 1902-22 do exist precancelled with flat electroplates. In these cases, imperforate sheets of stamps were first precancelled and then made into coils by cutting and splicing.

However, sometimes the stamps and the precancelling roller didn't travel at the same speed, and each stamp did not carry the entire precancellation. To overcome this problem, the customary inscription was changed to a vertical arrangement whereby the city and state usually appear twice on each stamp:



HANDSTAMPED PRECANCELS

In cases where precancell's are needed, but not in large enough quantities to justify having them printed, they are made by hand by post office employees. Devices used to make such precancell's have been supplied by the Post Office Department since 1913, but some hand stamps have also been obtained locally from other sources.

Government-Issued Hand stamps

Much as with electroplates, the Post Office Department has had precancelling hand stamps made for it under contract

since 1913. They also show changes in style and appearance as the contractors changed, and narrower spacing's between lines since 1938. Again, wider letters are used for towns with short names, etc. All told about 350 different styles of hand stamps have been issued from Washington.

The number of stamps precancelled at one time by these hand stamps has changed over the years. The earliest devices seem to have carried ten subjects, 5 horizontal by 2 vertical. Soon thereafter, the pattern became 25 subjects, 5 by 5.

Since 1936, all government-issued hand stamps have been of ten subjects, 2 horizontal by 5 vertical. From 1913 to 1932, the printing surface was flat and made of rubber; from 1932 to 1958, hand stamps were made of metal with slightly curved surfaces for rocking across an ink pad and across the stamps (These devices are sometimes called "hand electros."); since 1958, all hand stamps have been flat and made of a synthetic rubber called "vinyl," more resistant to wear and cleaning than the old rubber hand stamps.

Locally Made Hand stamps

Local hand stamps are of three kinds. A number, showing many different designs, were made before the Post Office Department began supplying such devices. Several have since been made to order for local postmasters who couldn't wait to get a device from Washington or who had trouble making satisfactory impressions with government-issued devices. Many have been made by mail-order houses to precancel stamps they received as remittances for merchandise ordered from them.

These devices differ widely and precancel from one to 25 stamps at one time. Although most of them have flat rubber printing surfaces, a number have been made in the form of a wheel, or roller. Such rollers will continue to repeat the precancellation when rolled across stamps so long as they carry enough ink to make an impression. They usually are distinctive in design and show two or more staggered legends:

If they did not have such novel arrangements of city and state names, they would be nearly impossible to distinguish from ordinary post-cancelling rollers.

Hand stamped Impressions

With all types of hand stamps, the sharpness and blackness of the impression varies with the kind and amount of ink of the pad, the smoothness and hardness of the surface beneath the stamps, and the skill of the individual doing the job. Moreover, impressions from rubber hand stamps vary somewhat in size with the pressure of application, and they sometimes show distortion due to warping of the rubber. As with electros, the frequency of errors depends on how the hand stamp was made.

DATED PRECANCELS

A Post Office Department ruling of July 1, 1938, specified that precancelled stamps above the 6c denomination should also carry the initials of the user and the month and year of

use. To make room for this further information on each stamp, many electroplates and all hand stamps issued since 1938 have had the narrower spacing between lines. All precancell's that carry this added legend are called "Dateds."

Addition of user's initials and date can be done either by hand or by printing in some manner. In most cases, little dating hand stamps have been made and "blobbed" onto the stamps. Because the possible variety of such dateds is infinite and because they are not especially attractive, they have aroused little interest among precancel collectors. On the other hand, because the variety of dates by press printing or mimeographing are more limited and the resulting precancell's are neat, they are avidly collected.

When the dating is done by the same device that does the precancelling, the precancell's are called "Integrals." Only a few dozen mailers use enough precancell's to justify the expense of having integral devices made. Integrals are usually hand stamps:

However, a few distinctive ones have been made from set type:

Because they include the precancellation, they are recognized as types of precancell's and are collected by those who do not collect precancell's with dates added separately.

FOREIGN PRECANCELS

The United States wasn't the only country to discover the benefits of precancell's in processing large amounts of mail. Several other countries also precancelled their stamps. Below are examples of each type to help the beginner spot them.

ALGIERS



BELGIUM





LUXEMBOURG (special thanks to Gary Little for the Pix)



CANADA



MONACO

NETERLANDS



TUNESIA



FRANCE

HUNGARY



METHODS OF COLLECTING PRECANCELS

The preceding survey of precancell's may well leave you with the impression that precancel collecting is a big field. And so it is; big enough to suit the fancy of about every kind of collector. Some folks like to collect in a boundless field; some like to keep their interests broad but limit their collections to samples of larger areas; some like to limit their attention to smaller fields where they can see a chance of completion. Precancel collections are of all types, and some shading in between. A few words about popular ways of collecting may help you decide how you would like to build your personal collection.

GENERAL COLLECTING

Collecting all varieties of precancell's, other than dateds, is known as "General Collecting." Although it is an extremely large field, many collectors seem to enjoy it because they can so easily add items to their collections. No single current catalogue lists all of the millions of stamps that have been precancelled. The last such catalogue was the Hoover Standard Catalogues last issued in 1940.

General collections may be mounted in many ways. A good way to start is to set aside a page for each state. Then, when you have acquired several varieties from one town, add a page for that town. Later on, you may find you have many varieties that show the same style or type of precancellation from the town; you can then put these items on a separate page. As you become familiar with precancel types, you may want to put your Bureau Prints on separate pages from the local city-types.

General collecting is highly recommended to the beginner as the best way to learn about and gain experience in precancell's. Even though one then narrows the interest in any way desired, the collector will have a sound background in the whole field.

BUREAU PRINTS

Of the narrower fields of precancel collecting, perhaps the most popular is Bureau Prints. It appeals especially to the individual who likes to collect in a well mapped area. Probably no other field of stamp collecting is so well documented; government records show what Bureau Prints have been made and how many copies of each. [Complete catalogues](#) are issued frequently, and specially printed albums are available. Minor variations, repaired plates, and the like also furnish ample challenge to the person who likes to study stamps under a magnifying glass.

PRECANCELS OF ONE STATE

A popular way of narrowing the field of general collecting is to collect the precancell's of one or more states that interest you. [Individual catalogues](#) are available for many states; in the absence of official records for local precancell's, they list all varieties that were known to the editor when they went to press. If you collect only a few states, you can trade other precancell's that come your way for new ones from your pet

states. You can thus build up a better showing faster than in general collecting.

TOWNS AND TYPES

Another way to narrow the precancel field is to collect just one precancel from each town that has issued them. A complete town collection would contain over 21,100 precancell's. For this kind of collection, no catalogues and little knowledge of precancell's are needed. Lists of precancelling towns have been published from time to time, but new towns are being added every month. Lest town collecting seem too simple, bear in mind that many towns are scarce and no collection contains them all.

In recent years, a popular narrowing of town collecting has been limiting one's collection to town's no longer in existence with the exact imprint in vogue formerly. Some of these towns represent post offices that have simply been discontinued; others represent a change in official spelling on from one word to two; all such towns are popularly known as "Ghost Towns." There are about 2,000 of them.

When town collecting slows down, many collectors expand their interests to types. In such a collection, they try to get one stamp imprinted with each precancelling device that has been used. Collecting types requires nearly as broad a knowledge of precancell's as general collecting. In a sense, it is general collecting in miniature. The PSS Town & Type Catalogue is the best source of information for the town & type collector.

OTHER SPECIALIZED FIELDS

A good many other ways of collecting part of the precancel field appeal to individuals with widely differing tastes. Some folks collect precancell's on only one issue of U.S. stamps: Washington Bicentennials, National Parks, Defense issue, Postage Dues, etc. Others collect all precancell's from towns with Indian names, religious names, boys' names, etc. Still others collect towns along a certain river, railroad, on transcontinental highway. Some collect precancel commemoratives on airmail stamps-although neither is supposed to be precancelled. Others collect all precancell's in a particular style of overprint; probably the most popular have been the Double-Line Electros (DLEs).

Probably no other field of stamp collecting offers as much opportunity for individuality in collecting as does precancell's

IN CLOSING

Whatever you decide to collect in the precancel field, you will come to derive much pleasure from the hobby. This statement is doubly true if you don't just accumulate precancell's but also study them. Few experiences are as rewarding as discovering something that no one else noticed before. Precancell's are about as fertile a field for such discovery as there is.

A word of warning: Don't spoil your fun by becoming a "condition crank." Of course, we all want stamps in fine condition, but many precancell's just don't exist that way. Your best bet is to collect whatever copies come along and replace them with better copies when and if you can. However, don't pay fancy prices for poor copies until you learn which are really scarce in any condition.

You will further increase your enjoyment of precancell's by personal contacts with other collectors. Such contacts are easy to make through membership in the Precancel Stamp Society and in active local groups.