



Brighton Philatelic Society
Education Meeting Presentation
11 April 2017



Collecting Decimal Australian Stamps

by
David Mallen

David was invited to be the guest speaker at the Society's Education Meeting to launch of the new Decimal Australia Study Group. About 30 members attended and were 'blown away' by David's expert presentation and his knowledge of what Australia Post has been issuing since 14 February 1966.

David opened the talk with a quote from the UPU's Philatelic Code of Ethics. It states that member countries (Australia is a member) *shall issue stamps to meet market demands, shall not saturate the market and drive philatelists away from the market, and, not intentionally exploit their customers.* By the end of the presentation, members were convinced Australia Post is doing just the opposite.

The first graph David showed indicated that since 2000 there have been on average 23 stamp issued per year (= about one per fortnight), 97 different stamp designs per year and the number of stamp variations began increasing in 2002 reaching a peak of over 700 variations in 2013.

The talk focussed on 6 main options for collecting decimal Australian stamps:

1. Mint sheet stamps
2. Postally used stamps
3. Specific variations
4. Collectable stamps
5. Impressions products
6. Other stuff

Mint sheet stamps are a basic option – either gummed and/or self-adhesive. Postally used stamps are getting scarcer. (One member of the audience suggested 'postally used International Post stamps on envelopes'. This option would certainly be a challenge as all of these go overseas.)

David's area of expertise is Stamp Variations. The main variations are:

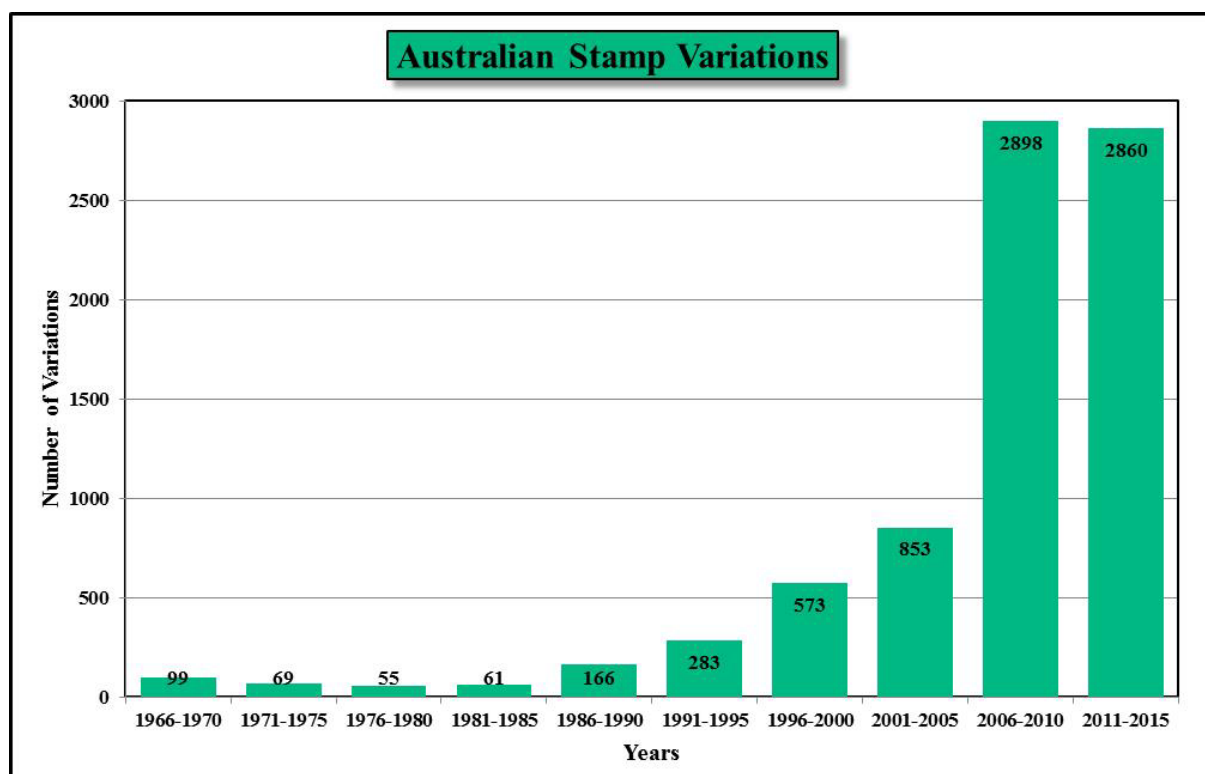
1. Blocks, Strips & Pairs
2. Decorative Gutters
3. Image
4. Imperforate
5. Minisheets
6. Overprints
7. Perforation
8. Prestige Booklet Pages
9. Printed Perforations
10. Self-adhesive
11. Sheetlets
12. Size
13. Tabs

David lists all these in his two Australian Stamp Variations catalogues.

So that the audience could get a 'feel' for stamp variations, David used the recent Rare Beauties set issued on 30 March as an example. The sheet stamps were two \$1 and two \$2 stamps. The audience was amazed at the quantity and cost of this set.

'Rare Beauties' Variations			
Variation	Quantity	Source	Cost
Blocks Strips Pairs	13	Prestige booklets, Minisheet, Sheet	\$92.95
Image	6	Day 1 - Day 4 minisheets, Booklet	\$22.00
Imperforate	4	Prestige booklet	\$50.00
Minisheets *cancelled	9	Minisheet, Day 1 - Day 4 minisheets, Medallion covers*	\$198.00
Perforation	2	Day 2 & Day 3 minisheets	\$6.00
Prestige Booklet Pages	10	Prestige booklets	\$80.95
Self-adhesive	3	Booklet, Day 1 minisheet	\$13.00
Size	9	Day 1, Day 2 & Day 3 minisheets, Booklet, Imperforate prestige booklet	\$69.00
Total	56	Total	\$531.90

He displayed graphs of each main variation that showed how many had been issued from 1966 to 2015. Most of the graphs peaked in the decade since 2005. The total number of the 13 main variations released since 1966 was over 7500, with about 2900 in both 2006-2010 and 2011-2015.



An interesting discussion revolved around Gutters. David explained the difference between 'genuine' gutters, gutters produced for Gutter Packs and 'pseudo' gutters. He showed an example of a 'pseudo' gutter from the Streeton & Nolan set issued on 30 March. These stamps were issued in a sheet of 25 that had 6 columns. Columns 1, 2, 4, 5 & 6 had stamps and column 3 had the 'pseudo' gutter. He pointed out that the stamps produced for Gutter Packs may have an Image, Size or Perforation variation compared with the original sheet stamps.

One member of the audience told her story about the Top Dogs gutter issued in 2013. The order of the stamps had been changed from the original published design. The dogs on the tenent strip of 5 stamps that was issued no longer matched their names in the gutter strip!

David went on to explain about Collectable Stamps. They are stamps released by Australia Post that are not valid for postage. They are an expensive item to collect and many are imperforate or made of gold foil. Many are also limited editions from the *Impressions* range of products released every November. There were 747 Collectable stamps released between 1970 and 2016, including 61 pre-decimal and 11 Colonies stamps. (David has published a book called 'Collectable Stamps of Australia' and he donated a copy to the Society's library.)

Option 5 on David's discussion list was the *Impressions* products. They began in 2005 and have been released in November ever since. They are mostly very expensive limited edition products. Whilst writing for *Stamp News* between 2006 and 2011, David spent about \$4000 for the 718 *Impressions* stamp variations with a face value of \$720. This was in addition to buying all the variations from all the other regular issues throughout the year. This was the main reason he stopped collecting at the end of 2010.

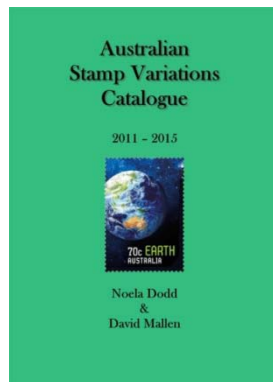
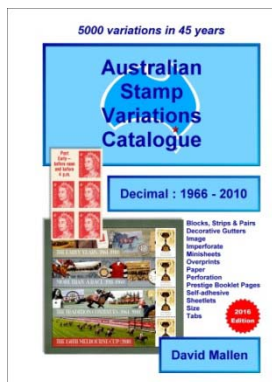
David finished his discussion by mentioning some of the "Other Stuff" one may wish to collect. He mentioned a few of the popular options such as: Booklets, First Day Covers, Framas, Postmarks, Pre-stamped Envelopes, Prestige Booklets, Reprints and Sheetlets.

David recommended not to collect every decimal product or variation and he re-emphasised one must specialise. "Choose an area of interest and look for that. One could also limit the collection to a specific theme, such as 'racehorses on stamps' or a specific period, say, pre-2005."

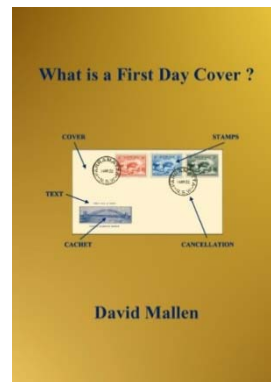
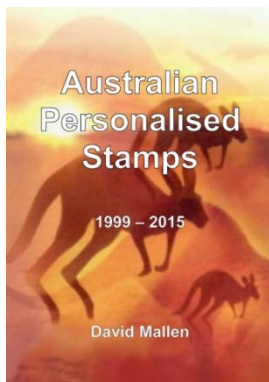
About 10 BPS members formed the Decimal Australia Study Group and plan to meet on a monthly basis.



David's two Australian Stamp Variations Catalogues are available on-line from au.blurb.com/user/asvcat.



He also has a range of free publications that may be downloaded from issuu.com/asvcat.



(Scan the codes to go to the webpages)

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