

'Push On' - magazine of the Bicycle Institute of New South Wales
Australia.



Graham Wade is a BINSW member, PUSH ON cartoonist and president of the International Bicycle Stamp Club.

by Graham Wade BSC President.

Law breaking comes pretty easily to most of us. They tell us it's in our blood. The famous Coolgardie Cycle Express printed the first Australian bicycle stamps and they broke the law. The first cyclist we find on an official Australian Post Office stamp is riding illegally, too!

Coolgardie Locals

Over the years, governments have claimed that they have exclusive rights to deliver mail but, in 1892, the mail just wasn't being delivered to the new West Australian goldfields. Those were the days when many more Australians were entrepreneurs and it was urgent for the developing mines and the prospectors to get fast and reliable information. So, a local businessman, James Healy, set up his Cycle Express Company, right opposite the sleepy Coolgardie post office.

First the cyclists brought mail quickly from the rail head at Southern Cross but the postal authorities awarded a contract to a coach line for this run. Healy next took the opportunity for his crack cyclists to get the mail to the outlying goldfields. They say a considerable amount of gold was carried by Healy's team. The business went very well and, in 1894, he decided to issue stamps for the service rather than simply rubber stamp the envelopes "PAID". Here they are: the 1/- and 2/6 blues.



The services were, by the standards of the day, quite expensive and the riders were highly respected for their achievements in express delivery. Fortunes were at stake with letters, claims, assays, samples and share certificates being carried.

The service expanded to the point that, in 1895, Healy included a string of camels



on the operations to carry the ever-increasing loads of mail and took the opportunity to issue three attractive two-colour stamps - 6d, 2/- and 5/-. "Coolgardie Cycle Express Company" surrounds the camel and rider.

These stamps had been on sale for two days when the Western Australian Government declared them illegal and stepped in to stop their sale. The Government then moved to generally restrict Healy's operations. It all became too much and quite unprofitable for the Coolgardie Cycle Express Company which soon closed down.

By then, however, Healy and his bike riders had done a great deal for the development and establishment of the great W.A. goldfields. The stamps remain as small reminders of those rip-roaring and romantic early days. They have also cast a long shadow for, in 1964, at the Rockdale stamp show, the blue 1/- and 2/6 bike stamps were reprinted and overprinted with the date "1964". Mail was carried from the Show at the Palais Grande to the post office by penny farthing cycle. While this was great fun, it was, of course, quite anachronistic as the success of the Coolgardie services was dependent on the latest safety design cycles, much as we ride today and as depicted on the stamps. In the build up to "Wapex", the West Australian Philatelic Exhibition of 1984, three facsimile sheets were

produced of the stamps and taken along for re-enactments of the services.

Lake Lefroy

There was to be one other short-lived cycle mail with its own stamp issue. Two cyclists, H. Lacy-Hillier and F.E. Maskell, formed a partnership to get the mail into Coolgardie from Lake Lefroy. The service lasted from February to June in 1897. Their 6d stamp, which was a copy of a Western Australian Swan issue, was added to envelopes as an extra stamp along with the normal post office stamps. Again, when the postmaster in Perth heard of the service and of the stamp they had printed, he wrote and warned Hillier and Maskell to desist or "a penalty would be enforced for the offence". The "H" and "M" in indelible pencil across many of the stamps stand for Hillier and Maskell, owner-riders of the Lefroy service.



South Australian Centenary

Things went pretty quiet on the stamp front for many years until, in 1936, the Australian Post Office released three commemorative stamps with a tiny bike depicted on them.

The 2d, 3d and 1/- stamps showed the same design with the settlers proclamation tree central, a bushland scene to the left and modern Adelaide to the right. A close look (and I mean *close!*) at the city street will reveal a cyclist riding on the wrong side of the street. So there it is, illegal riding preserved and commemorated by the Commonwealth!



There was a stamp replica card of these designs printed from the original dies and released in different colours for the South Australian sesqui-centenary in 1986.

Environment Dangers

The 1975 issue of environmental dangers showed bush fires, pollution and road safety. The sad, grey 10 cent road safety design shows a crushed bicycle wheel just beyond a "Stop" sign. Talk about illegality! The facts of the case are somewhat uncertain but some "person or persons unknown" - car driver, bike rider, or enraged pedestrian - must have broken some law. But the advice that the stamp gives - "STOP Australia" - maybe goes a bit too far.



We are fortunate that this and the next bike stamp were executed by two of Australia's best designers. This one by Gordon Andrews and the next by Des O'Brien. (The records say others were involved but I'm dubious.)

Olympics, 1976

Four stamps came out at the time of the Montreal Olympics. A cyclist featured on the 40 cent denomination. The designs attempt to catch the feeling of sports action.



Significantly, it was this stamp that closed the trap on me and made me collect cycle stamps. I had received a letter from a missionary friend in Thailand with a bike stamp affixed and, while I had a few bike stamps by that time, it was this 40c Australian that convinced me that there must be more to be found. I decided to pursue the theme. There are many hundreds on the world scale. Postmen and children, Olympic and World Champions, circus cyclists and more, all riding their bikes over the stamps of most of the world. From 1975, Australia's stamp cyclists became a law-abiding lot, with salutary subjects like:

Community Welfare

There were four of these, at 22c each. One of them which encourages the "Life. Be In It" campaign, shows joggers, a tandem bicycle and a miniature "Norm" on his bike.



Centenary of District Nursing

Wendy Tamlyn's charming design for the centenary of the Australian District Nursing Service appeared in 1985. A Melbourne minister had called a meeting 100 years earlier to begin the movement that was eventually to provide nursing care in people's homes all over Australia. The job was done first by bicycle and the design shows an elegant and demure young nurse outside the first Melbourne headquarters with her American built Columbia lady's bike.



Living Together

The Living Together series is the definitive set of Australian stamps for the Bicentenary. Cartoonists from all over the country provide fun images of Australians. The 40c stamp depicts recreation.

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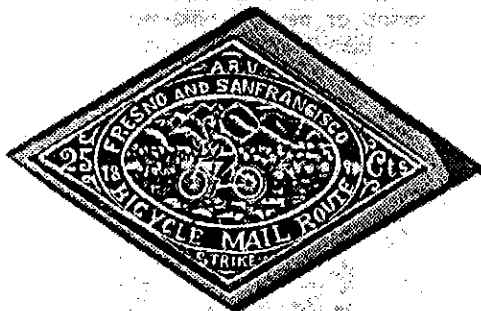


ting Australia Post to issue them. He is organising various cycle associations across the country to request AP to act. If you feel you want to encourage cycling through this avenue, can I suggest you write to your local member of federal parliament and/or to Australia Post Headquarters, Melbourne, expressing your support for the idea.

Victorian, R. Har (Roland Harvey) drew a family involved in what is, from our point of view, the perfect recreation - cycling.

A New Issue?

Peter Innocent, the well-known bicycle writer and activist from Victoria has encouraged me to submit designs for a new set of cycle stamps in the hope of get-



Worldwide

On the world scene, these German local city service stamps were the first to appear in 1886.



There was a railway strike-breaking stamp in California in 1894.

Colonel Baden-Powell blue printed this cycle stamp to be used inside his besieged command of Mafeking town during the Boer War. Warner Goodyear, riding the bike, was B.P.'s "boy scout" leader.



Cuba issued the first cycle express stamps in 1899 and Bulgaria the first race subject in 1931.



The war generated Swiss soldier stamps and a Northern Italian courier service called "Corailit".



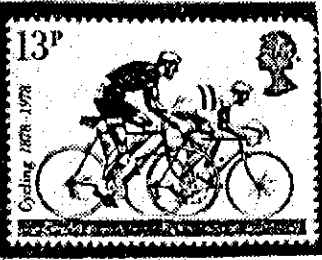
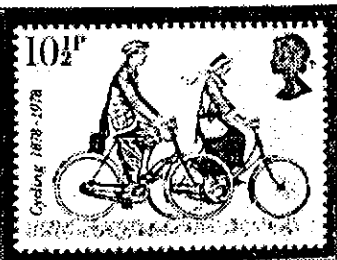
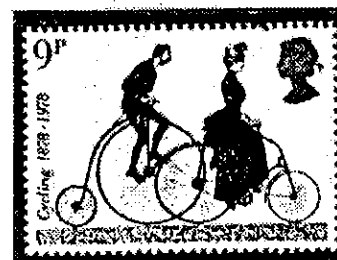
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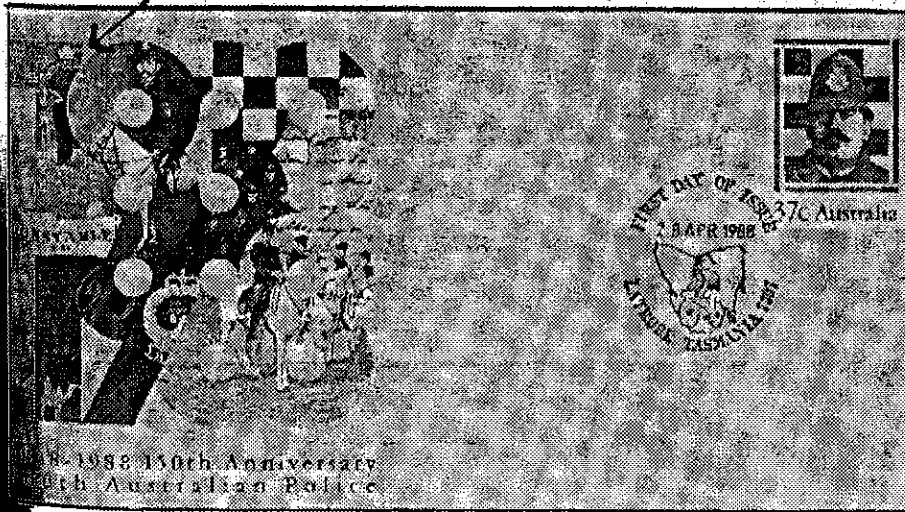
The Olympics, World Championships, Commonwealth Games, Tour de France, Peace Races and National Games have all generated bicycle stamps.

The history of the bike has been shown magnificently by Britain, Germany, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Mali, Togo and Mongolia.

My favourites are the postmen and their cycles, perhaps best illustrated by the pre-stamped envelope issued in 1984 by Australia Post to mark the 175th anniversary of postal services in Australia.

And, in keeping with the title of this article, one of the latest Australia Post pre-stamped envelopes commemorates the South Australian Police sesquicentenary. In the design, a cop stands beside his trusty grid: Goodie or baddie, who knows?

Two of Graham's designs for Papua New Guinea. A very close look reveals the bicycles!



July 1988

AUSTRALIAN BICYCLE BRIGADES

In the March 1989 issue of the British monthly magazine 'Stamp & Coin International Mart' an article by P. J. Browne was published. It was all about various publications dealing with Cinderella stamps. The author thanked Andrew Hall of Glass Slipper for providing the illustrations for the article. Between a mention of an American journal and 'Cinderellas Australasia', I spotted this illustration:

BRAGGS COURIER **Bicycle Brigade**
 A Unit of Mynors Nickless Limited
 Ph: 233 7255
 (envelopes, documents, small parcels up to 1kg) \$3-00 PRE PAID
City Express 2333789

I immediately wrote to all our Australian members and Graham Wade BSC replied:

"As far as I know only one company uses stickers - BRAGGS here in Sydney, New South Wales, and ALLIED (same company) in Melbourne, Victoria"

"I didn't think Club members would be interested as they are not stamps. They are units you buy (\$2.50) and hand over to the courier bike rider called 'Car 16' or 'Car 26' or whatever"

Extraordinary! Our President sees no similarity with the Parisian Parcel Post for Paris "locals" of 1890 (see pages 12 & 13 of the Fourth Issue of 'Bicycle Stamps')...

DM.