



# Philatelic Society of Australia

## Commemorative Meetings 2011



### Wednesday 15 June - Meeting Report

#### **FIRST ISSUE OF THE GERMAN REICH 1872-1874 by Heinz Weingarten**

The sixth meeting of the Society's centenary year took place at Philas House on 15 June with 17 members & 4 visitors in attendance. The guest presenter was Heinz Weingarten who in 2010 had won a gold medal at the FIP General World Exhibition held in London. For our Society, he showed his London prize-winning display.

The 8-frame display presented by Heinz featured covers from the period 1872-1875 with postage stamps carrying pre-unification currencies of both Northern Germany (Thaler/Groschen) and the southern states (Gulden/Kreuzer). These two currencies co-existed until December 1874 when a single new currency (Mark/Pfennig) was introduced in January 1875. The four years chosen (1872-75) corresponded to the first years of Germany's 2<sup>nd</sup> Reich. The 25 German-speaking states were unified in 1871 by the Prussian chancellor, Otto von Bismarck.

The majority of postage stamps shown on the covers were the 1872 & 1874 issues featuring an embossed eagle with a shield on its chest. Covers on display showed the great variation in postage rates within Germany during these years. Represented were rates for postage of items with different weights, those with special rates or registration, local letters, bulk postage and express post. Also shown were rates for prepaid postcards. Examples of mixed franking were shown where the 1872-74 issues were combined with pre-unification German State stamps and even those with stamps of foreign countries. Covers from 1875 showed mixed franking where 1872-74 stamps were combined with the new Mark/Pfennig issues. Postal rates to many foreign destinations were also featured. Added to the variety of postage stamps in use, covers also showed a wide range of cancellations as pre-unification hand stamps continued to be used until worn out and only then were they replaced by the new German Reich hand stamps.

Frank Whitfield in his vote of thanks commented on the excellent condition of the 100-year plus covers, the rarity of many items, and the meticulous and precise annotation of each sheet in the display. It is certainly worthy of a gold medal in any philatelic exhibition.



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## RATES AND ROUTES AT THE TIME OF THE GERMAN REICH EMBOSSED SHIELD ISSUE, 1872 - 1875

### Introduction

The Deutsches Reich was the unification of the 25 German states by Otto von Bismarck on January 18, 1871. The constitution of the new empire entitled Baden, Bavaria and Württemberg, who had their own postal administrations, to continue to conduct their own postal service, but only Bavaria and Württemberg made use of this privilege. On 1 January 1872 the postal service in Alsace-Lorraine (conquered from the French) was absorbed by the Reichs Post.

Two different currencies co-existed until 31 December 1874: Thaler/Groschen for the northern part and Gulden/Kreuzer for the smaller southern part (see map), with exchange rate of 1 Groschen = 3½ Kreuzer. On January 1 1875, the Mark (= 100 Pfennig) became the uniform currency and new stamps were issued. However, all through that year (1875) the existing Groschen stamps on the market (except for the ¼ and ½ Groschen stamps) could still be used all over Germany, even in the southern, previously Kreuzer areas, at the rate of 1 Gr = 10 Pf.

### This Exhibit

This exhibit shows the first stamp issue of the German Reich while it was in use in 1872-1875. The stamps have an embossed eagle with a shield on its chest.

Examples are shown of rates for a variety of postal items, of different weights, in both Kreuzer and Groschen areas, within Germany and from Germany to 50 other countries.

### The exhibit is divided into three parts:

- Postal rates within Germany, in both Groschen and Kreuzer shield stamps:**
  - Different postal items of different weights sent within Germany.
  - Special rates: Registration, local letters, bulk postage, express post etc.
  - Usage of prepaid postcards
- Mixed Franking of German shield stamps with old German stamps and foreign stamps.**
- Postal rates to 50 countries around the globe:** Australia, America, Africa, Europe and its far-east colonies, Asia and the disputed area of Alsace-Lorraine.



### Bibliography

- Arbeitsgemeinschaft Brustschilder Publications
- Kohl Briefmarken Handbuch 1926
- Ganzsachen Katalog des Berliner Ganzsachen Sammler Vereins 1957
- Zusammenstellung der Portosätze by Werner Steven 1985
- Die ersten Einschreibezettel der Welt by Albert Fuchs
- Grobe Altdeutschland Spezial Katalog 1975
- Hanspeter Frech Postkarten Handbuch 1991
- Michel Deutschland-Spezial Katalog 2003
- Feuser, Nachverwendete Altdeutschland-Stempel
- Van der Linden, Catalogue des Marqueses de Passage

Note: where stated 'only \_\_\_ pieces known / exist', the statement refers to the authenticator report, to the shield study group publications or to the study of the shield stamp market for the last thirty six years.

A 'mile' refers to a traditional North German mile (meile), which was 24,000 German feet, or approx 7.5 Km long.

### Abbreviations used:

Gr – Groschen                      s/s – small shield  
Kr – Kreuzer                        l/s – large shield

Meetings are held on the third Wednesday of each month (except December)  
10.30am at Philas House 17 Brisbane Street, Darlinghurst.

[www.philas.org.au/psa](http://www.philas.org.au/psa)