



Philatelic Society of Australia

Commemorative Meetings 2011



Report - Display - 16th March Covers and postage stamps of Tonga from the 1820s to 1899 by David Benson



The third meeting of the Society's centenary year took place at Philas House on 16th March with 19 members & 2 visitors in attendance. The guest presenter was David Benson, winner of a large vermeil medal at the 2010 FIP General World Exhibition held in London.

The display presented by David featured covers and postage stamps, including multiples, of Tonga from 1820 to 1899. Highlights of the display were letters written by missionaries to their principals in London and Germany. These letters had traveled either by the Samoa-Australia (Sydney or Hobart) route, or Panama route to London, whilst those destined for Germany had traveled by way of the USA (San Francisco or New York) those traveling via San Francisco carried an additional 5c USA stamp. Other covers of great interest included an 1892 letter addressed to the then Prince of Wales (later George V) and a letter to New Zealand bearing unofficial bisects.

Among the postage stamps on display were those of Tonga's King George I & King George II together with die proofs of several issues. Other rare philatelic items included examples of a halfpenny overprint on a George I shilling issue, and a typewritten halfpenny overprint on a tuppence halfpenny George II issue. The display also contained many examples of extremely rare George I and George II multiples together with the largest known multiple of the 1892 royal wedding issue. Each page of the display was concisely annotated with the title page highlighting those items of greatest philatelic interest.

Cyril McColough in his vote of thanks praised the high standard of the display, and of David's written and oral presentations. The success of the display could be best judged by the many questions addressed to David both after the oral presentation and during the viewing of the seven frames of material.