



MARITZBURG PHILATELIC SOCIETY

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Affiliated to the Philatelic Federation of South Africa

NEWSLETTER

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Editor: Aubrey Bowles

SPRING IS HERE

Springtime is garden time so get your spades and forks and come outdoors; Spring is here!
Springtime is planting time so get your seeds and plants and start growing!
Springtime is also "cherry blossom time" when the flowers start blooming and the bees arrive!
Wear something bright to celebrate Spring on the first of September and share the joy of Spring!



Cherry blossom on a Japanese stamp

MARITZBURG JUNIOR STAMP CLUB

In October 1985 the following article by Eric Holmberg was published in the S A Philatelist "Sleepy Hollow" held their annual club competition on 06 August at the Psychology Block of the University of Natal.

Pupils from 5 schools participated including Athlone; Cordwalles; Greytown; Hilton and Kearsney

There were 26 entries excluding those entered in the National. There were 46 pupils and 16 adults in attendance

Some of the winners and the awards were:

Mark Henderson (President's Rose Bowl)

Jonathan Stephenson (Hathorn Cup)

Andrew Barnes (Aurex Cup)

Carol Hathorn (Levengood Cup)

We wonder what has happened to these once enthusiastic and competitive stamp collectors? Do the trophies still exist or have they been lost in the "midst of time"?

We will always remember Anne Southwood and her passion for getting children involved in stamp collecting.

What a pity that schools are no longer interested in promoting the hobby which has always proved to be extremely educational beneficial in so many ways.

DIARY NOTES

02 to 06 September: National Stamp Show – Paarl 2025. Two of our members are competing and we wish them much success

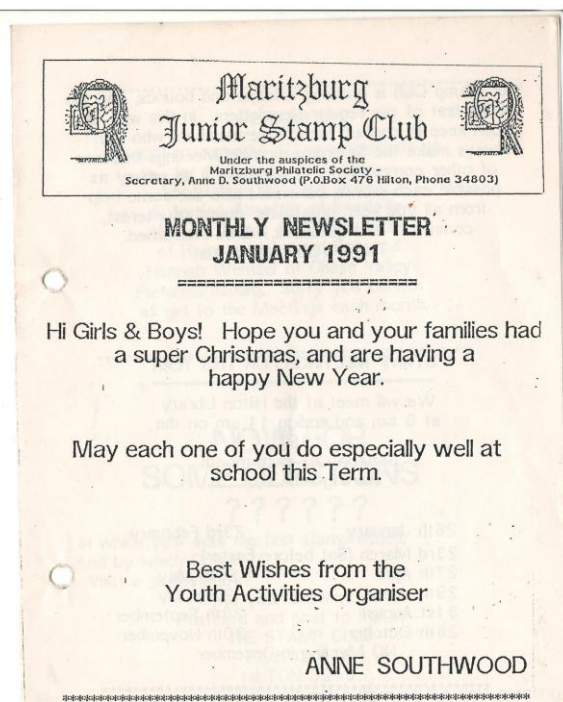
08 September 09h00: The Ambers Stamp Club meet in the Amber Valley Community Centre. Visitors are welcome. The theme of the meeting will be "Show & Tell" with the Alphabet Show covering the letters K; L & M

20 September 09h00: MPS regular meeting at the Hilton Scout & Community Hall, 1 Magnolia Lane, Hilton (just behind Checkers)

"Show & Tell" and the Alphabet Show covering the letters Y & Z

There will also be feedback about the National Stamp Show

Please make a positive effort to attend this exciting meeting and do participate in our "in-house" competition. The "mug of the month" will be awarded to the winner as judged by the members present.



THE MYSTERY OF THE MISSING URN

The Maritzburg Philatelic Society has always been the proud owner of several cups awarded to members who have won club competitions or who have provided exemplary service to the Society. One such cup is the "MAIRIC URN" donated to the MPS by Eric and Maisie Holmberg to be awarded for Postal History. Years later the scope of the competition was broadened to include Postal Stationery; Modern Postal Material and Permit Mail the Holmbergs were ardent philatelists and Eric Holmberg served the MPS faithfully for many years as President whilst his wife, Maisie, served as Secretary. One of the most outstanding exhibitions ever held, to celebrate the city of Pietermaritzburg turning 150 and the club 50 years, the PIETERMARITZBURG 150 National Stamp Exhibition was organised by Eric Holmberg and held at the Royal Agricultural Showgrounds from 22-26 November 1988 with hundreds of visitors attending the event. Sponsorship was very good with a jury of nineteen judges! There were 11 Groups and Tony Evans, one of our "retired" members exhibited his Gold Medal Rhino collection in the Thematic & Topical Class. Special P.M.G. approved mail was flown into the show by glider from Greytown! The Post Office were most generous in their support of the 1988 event including the issue of many stamps; miniature sheets and envelopes printed for the occasion. The Mairic Urn is a bronze claret jug mounted on a wooden base with a surrounding band showing the various winners over the years including Roger Porter RDPSA, who won it more than twice; Ruth Sykes; Pat Izaaks and Aubrey Bowles amongst others. Unfortunately, the urn (cup) was overlooked when we moved to our new premises in Hilton and we lost track of its whereabouts. Recently, one of our stalwart members, Pat Izaaks, who sadly lost his wife and brother in quick succession, took a load of old metal objects and scrap to a local scrap-metal dealer in Pietermaritzburg for disposal. After being weighed, he was directed to a section of the yard where he was to offload his consignment. Imagine his surprise when looking around the area, he noticed the Mairic Urn nestling amongst a pile of old metal which had obviously been dumped there by another seller, waiting to be melted down! Pat was quick to negotiate the re-acquisition of our prized trophy and eventually managed to persuade the scrap-dealer to exchange the cup for Pat's scrap! What a marvellous effort made by Pat to ensure the return of the urn to its rightful owners and we are very proud and pleased to have Pat as one of our loyal and stalwart members and our gratitude has no bounds!

On behalf of the Club President, Committee & Members, we offer our sincere condolences to Pat Izaaks who has sadly lost both his dear wife and brother in quick succession. We are thinking of you Oom Pat, sterkte!

THE MPS CUPS



Left: The Mairic Urn donated by Eric & Maisie Holmberg
The "urn" is actually a claret jug and will soon be restored to its original glory by Fred de Jager who very kindly engraves all of our trophies, by hand!
Fred & Val de Jager also undertake the catering at our meetings for which we are most grateful.

The MPS is the proud owner of six cups which are awarded as follows;

1.BURNCREE CUP

Donated by Jill Bowles for any winning Thematic Exhibit

2.CESA CUP Donated in memory of C E S Arbuckle for Country Exhibits (Traditional Philately)

3.CHAIRMAN'S CUP

Donated by Jack Duminy and awarded by the Club President to the most consistent or improved exhibitor at Club Level

4.MAIRC URN

Donated by Eric & Maisie Holmberg for Postal History; Postal Stationery; Modern Postal Material or Permit Mail exhibit

5.MICHAEL DYER CUP

Created in memory of Michael Dyer who served the club loyally for many years

Awarded to any member who has provided *service excellence* to the Club

6.SYKES CUP

Donated by the Sykes Family in memory of Brian Sykes who was an ardent stamp collector.

Floating trophy for inter-club competitions

Club competitions are to be held at least once per year for cups 1; 2 & 4

The Chairman's Cup is awarded annually solely at the discretion of the Club President

The Michael Dyer Cup is also awarded annually by the Club President guided by the majority of the Committee

The Sykes Cup is a floating trophy that is awarded annually to the winner of any inter-club competition in which the MPS is also involved.

Hopefully this information will help to illustrate the purpose and importance of our cups for future awards

VAALKRANTZ

by Roger Porter RDPSA

The Battle of Spionkop (23-24 January 1900) was a humiliating defeat for the British. A soldier wrote *"The bullets came like hail, and hundreds of men were killed or wounded"* Private Turner wrote *"They mowed us down like rabbits"*

Vaalkrantz is a mountain that lies north of the Tugela River, upstream of Colenso. The historic battle of Vaalkrantz was fought there between the British Army and the Boer Republican Forces of the ZAR from 05 to 07 February 1900

1650 Burghers held Vaalkrantz under the command of Commandant General Piet Joubert

The massive British Army was under the command of General Redvers Buller VC who had advanced across the Tugela River in an attempt to relieve the besieged town of Ladysmith

On 05 February, a pontoon of bridges was built allowing the soldiers to cross the river. In the Battle of Vaalkrantz, Buller had 72 guns and delivered 9 599 shells but the Boer guns prevailed, having a longer range. From a balloon launched on 06 February, Buller learnt of the *"almost impregnable position further on"*

Private John Ebur wrote *"I write to tell you the horror of that fearful Battle which lasted three days and two nights, only to find that after losing so many lives, Buller gave up the position which we had so gallantly earned and once more we re-crossed the Tugela and retired back to Chevely"*

A few days after this Battle, General Buller said in a speech to his army that he had *"found the key to the road to Ladysmith"* Sarcastically, infantry soldiers would ask the men of the artillery *"I say, have you found that key yet"* the reply was *"Yes, but it don't fit the lock"*



French Postcard depicting Buller's retreat from the Battle of Vaalkrantz

The postcard depicts:

- Buller on a donkey with cap reading **Dum-dum** leading the British Army with bayonets fixed backed across the Tugela with some soldiers drowning and artillery shells landing
- Commander General Piet Joubert standing on the north bank holding a large key looking at the retreating British. Just behind Joubert is the French General de Villebois-Marvil holding the Transvaal Vierkleur inscribed *Transvaal Independence* and General Louis Botha looking on from the advantage of the Vaalkrantz mountain
- Top left are the foreign soldiers that were supporting the Boers namely Russian; German; Dutch and American

PHOTO GALLERY

All photographs by courtesy of Russell Bowton
(You could also feature here if you participate in the Alphabet Show or Show & Tell – come on, give it a go! You might even win the Mug of the Month)

The Alphabet Show for August covered the letters V; W and X



Aubrey Bowles and his Vatican exhibit which was actually a story that unfolded from information on the back of a postcard. This exhibit was adjudged to be the best on show



Gordon Groves gave a very interesting talk about the failed "Operation Sealion" invasion and the Battle of Britain which preceded the planned attack on Gt Britain by Germany during World War 2



Pieter Swanepoel showed the X-Factor being a connection which he discovered between the South African artists Van Wouw; Oerder and Pierneef who all collaborated to form a local art movement.



Tony Koch showed a variety of stamps that he had bought on auction which included a collection of Nyasaland stamps. Tony is looking for a 3d Natal Stamp that will become his pride & joy!



Roger Porter RDPSA gave an extremely interesting talk about the Battle of Vaalkrantz which is shown on Page 3
 Roger always finds something out of the ordinary to entertain his audience and we always look forward to his presentations.

SHOW & TELL

We appeal to all members to participate in this section of our monthly meeting because there is always something of interest for everybody and much to be learnt from our exciting hobby
 Pieter Swanepoel showed a label from a Red Cross Parcel pictured below. The number 6 on the label refers to a British Military Label for the 6th Division, which was involved in the capture of Tobruk by the Allies in January 1941



The Siege of Tobruk in 1942 saw the surrender of the 2nd South African Division to the Axis Forces resulting in over 10 000 South African soldiers becoming prisoners of war. This event made a significant blow to South Africa.

Red Cross food parcels were crucial for prisoners of war (POWs), especially for those from Tobruk. These parcels, often sent by the Red Cross and other organisations, provided essential sustenance and boosted morale during imprisonment. The parcels contained a variety of food items such as biscuits, tinned meat, sugar and tea as well as cigarettes and other comforts.



Pieter Swanepoel talking about his "Show & Tell" item described above. Pieter consistently makes an effort to bring an item of interest to the meetings.

MUG OF THE MONTH

The "Mug of the Month" was won by Aubrey Bowles for his exhibit on the Vatican. Aubrey also celebrated a significant birthday this month!
 Aubrey would like to challenge more members to exhibit during September. The letters are:



Y & Z

Left: Club Pres. John Handman congratulating the winner of the Mug of the Month.