

Introducing Frama Stamps.

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Frama stamps are relative newcomers to the philatelic scene, having been born in Switzerland as long ago as 1976! Since then Frama machines, and of course their stamps, have spread rapidly across the world so that New Zealand is caught up in the modern phenomenon Frama fever!

I intend to look briefly at the New Zealand and South Pacific Frama scene, how to collect Framas and glance at some of the Frama literature currently (as of May 1987) available.

THE NEW ZEALAND FRAMA SCENE.

New Zealand became the third Commonwealth country to install Frama machines, after Australia and Great Britain. The design of the first New Zealand Frama issue was based upon the existing Pitney Bowes franking machine design (fig 1). The first New Zealand Frama machine was installed in Auckland from 3 September to 16 October 1984, and was able to produce Frama stamps of any denomination from 1c to \$99.99 (fig 2).



Fig. 1



Fig. 2



Fig. 3

The second New Zealand Frama design (fig 3) appeared on 12 February 1986 when 24 machines were installed throughout New Zealand. More machines have since been installed - currently there are almost 100 in operation.

The New Zealand Post Office became New Zealand Post on 1 April 1987. Two stamps were issued to mark this event, and one can see that the logo on the second Frama issue is now obsolete.

There have been new frama designs recently including a commemorative design for WORLD STAMP EXHIBITION NEW ZEALAND 1990.



Third issue

THE AUSTRALIAN FRAMA SCENE.

Australia became the second Southern Hemisphere nation to install Frama machines—Brazil being the first! The first Australian Frama stamps were then the most colourful Frama stamps ever issued (fig 4). Barred edge frama stamps were issued on 22 February 1984 in the 7 state capital cities. The postcode of the location was printed at the time of issue; thus a Hobart Frama can be distinguished from a Perth Frama by their respective post-codes of 7000 and 6000.

In Darwin on 29 July 1985 a machine with the 5790 postcode was installed. This is the only other Australian Frama machine to print a postcode.

Many other machines were installed in 1985/86 throughout Australia— all without any postcode. There are 9 different basic Australian Framas!

The second Australian Frama design — kangaroos — was issued on 22 October 1985, and the third design — platypuses — was issued on 25 August 1986. (figs 5 & 6).



Fig. 4

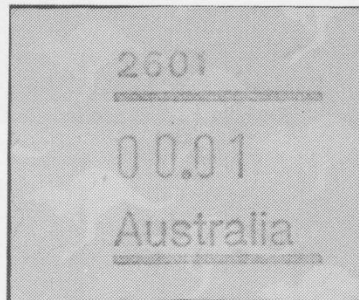


Fig. 5



Fig. 6



Fig. 7

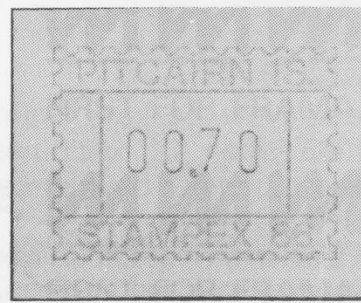


Fig. 8

A fourth design appeared on 30 January 1987, when the America's Cup series of final races commenced. This was issued at "Cup-pex '87" in Perth and comprised a green overprint (the exhibition logo) on the platypus design. Only postcodeless "Cup-pex '87" Framas exist (fig 7); thus there are 28 basic Australian Frama stamps at present to collect.

Mention must be made of "Stampex '86" in Adelaide, where Pitcairn Island's frama was issued on the Pitcairn Island Post office stand (fig 8).

HOW TO COLLECT FRAMA STAMPS.

The above sections dealt with only New Zealand, Australia and Pitcairn Island Framas, yet other countries have issued Frama stamps and the following collection suggestions are applicable to all Frama countries.

Most Frama countries have "button set" machines i.e. 3 basic postage rate Frama stamps are issued by pushing one of the three choice buttons. The 1984 Auckland machine, and the Australian postcode Frama machines are of the "button set" variety. The more recent New Zealand and Australian machines are more advanced. A "coin set" is thus suitable for the keypad machines in New Zealand, and would comprise 1c, 2c, 5c, 10c, 20c and 50c values.



A button set from New Zealand in 1984 comprised 24c, 30c and 35c.

A button set from Australia in 1984 comprised 30c, 40c and 85c, in 1985 comprised 33c, 45c and 90c, in 1986 comprised 36c, 50c and \$1.

There is also the basic set (of 28) Australian Framas mentioned earlier!

First day covers and maximum cards can also be included in your collection, as can examples of commercially used covers (fig 9). These may be difficult to find but they do make interesting additions to any collection.

Also look out for examples of different postage rates on cover. For example with the current New Zealand Frama design: 25c was the postage rate for standard letters from 12 February 1986 until 30 April 1986; 30c from 1 May 1986 until 1 February 1987; 40c from 2 February until 31 March 1987, and from 2 April 1987; whilst for April fool's day 1987 — to mark the inauguration of New Zealand Post — there was a special 1c postage rate! Other covers bearing the appropriate postage rate Frama stamp (airmail, registered or insured) should also be sought.

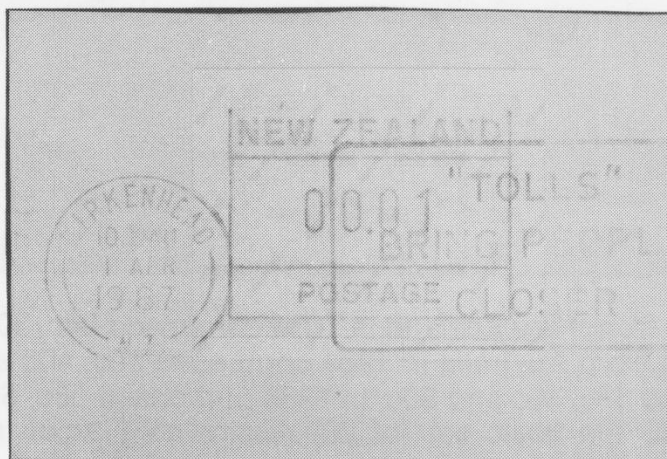
Varieties can be collected and both minor (e.g. missing frames lines, broken digits etc.,) and major (e.g. misguillotined, paper joins etc.,) varieties exist.

LITERATURE.

For such a recent phenomenon, it is surprising that any literature on Frama stamps exists. What does exist is excellent value for money and covers the Frama field in much more depth than this article.

Information about New Zealand and Australian Frama stamps may be found in: "Australian Stamp Monthly" & "Stamp News" — both Australian stamp magazines; "Captain Coqk" — newsletter of the Christchurch (N.Z.) Philatelic Society (Inc.); "Frama Australiasia" — an excellent reference book by Ken Sparks; "ATM*FORUM" — a German magazine; and yes! there is a German Frama catalogue (by Wolfgang Maassen), both the latter items cover the whole world of Frama.

For further help/information — I may be contacted at: Stirling & Co. Ltd., P.O. Box 949, Christchurch.



1c Frama used on 1st Day of N.Z. Post Ltd.