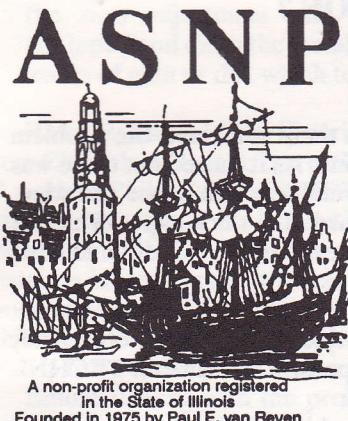


# NETHERLANDS PHILATELY



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## From the Editor

You all know that I apologized for the late appearance of the June journal, but at the time I was typing my "message" I didn't know how late that journal would be. It seems the printer and the USPS made some problems for us.

Then there was no September journal until our vice-president and the editor of the Newsletter stepped in and put together a journal issue from material that was already available. Personal problems prevented me from doing my "job."

And now here is the December journal, somewhat later than we had hoped, but with the September issue barely in your hands, I hope, you won't mind too much.

First we have what I consider to be a very interesting and important article by our Governor, Dr. Fred L. Reed, about "thick" and "thin" paper, geared to the paper of the first issue of the Netherlands. I have to confess that I have been guilty too of measuring the thickness of paper "by the seat of my pants." No more, though.

Our second main article is concerned with a very vexing question: Do we really want to collect the Netherlands Antilles with their gutter pairs, souvenir sheets, totally unnecessary issues (for the four queens the Netherlands issued only one stamp, but the Antilles went them four + better, four separate stamps + a souvenir sheet). Their unnecessary high values (the U.S.A. which is slightly more important a country has a \$5 highest value, except for the \$9.75 Express mail stamp, but the Antilles are now up to a NAfl 25.00 one), and the rest of the bad news? Dr. Frans Rummens spells out the pros and cons of the question. If you have any comments, let's have them, please.

We hope the book review and fillers will also provide you with stuff to think about. It will have to do until you get the March journal which will be dedicated entirely to a "forgotten" country: the Netherlands Indies, from the beginning to the end.

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## THICK PAPER - THIN PAPER: FACTS or FICTION ?

by Dr. Fred L. Reed

This study is applicable to the entire gamut of philately though it was conceived while focusing on my specialty: The First Issue of the Netherlands (1852).

When I started this innocent-looking project over two years ago, little did I know that I would be confronted with unforeseen problems evading solutions.

Most of us engaged in philately have encountered the problem to decide between paper varieties. In this study I confine the discussion to grades of thickness of paper only. Absolute thickness can be measured: A hair is so thin, a rope is that thick. Relative thickness has to be related to a fixed measure of the measured medium. What is thick for a thread will be thin for a string, and what is thick for a string will be thin for a rope. On the surface the distinction between thin and thick paper does not appear to be problematic and is usually decided by using our sense of touch. However, a classification made that way is entirely subjective and depends on the perception of the testing person.

Last April at the meeting of the Netherlands Philatelic Circle in England I approached separately four eminent experts in Netherlands philately and submitted to them five prepared sets of "twins" for their opinion as to thin or thick paper with the result that they all determined the same stamp of each twin as on thin paper and the other copy on thick paper using expressions as 'definitely' and 'no doubt.' Their judgments were identical on the 10 stamps though none of the philatelists knew about the votes of the others. The same test with nonphilatelists produced identical results.

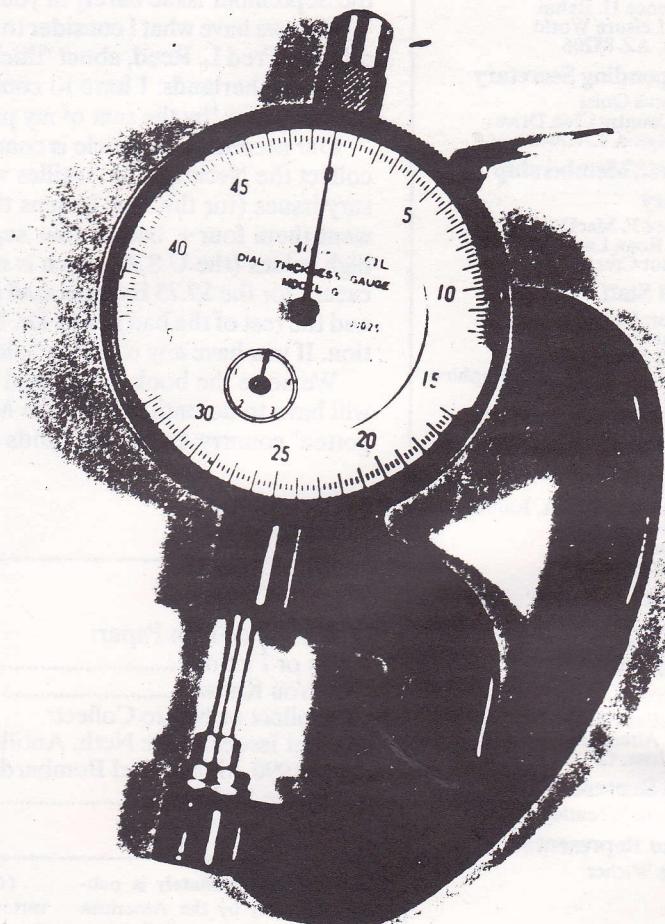
What does that prove? - Please stay tuned!

The five pairs of twins were chosen from the 1852 issue of the Netherlands, the 5 Cent plate VI and 10 Cent plate X, which are listed in the NVPH Speciale Catalogus separately on thick paper and on thin porous paper. All four experts agreed on the same copy of one twin to be on thin paper and the other on thick paper. Now, here is the catch: Both copies in each pair of twins were of exactly identical thickness established beforehand by accurate objective measurements! This should alert us to the fact that our tactile perception is totally unreliable when called upon to judge relative thickness of paper. It appears to be confused by sensation of softness or hardness and pliability or stiffness. By grading my stamps using my tactile perception only: I fell into that very trap and am now confronted with the task to rearrange my collection as to thin or thick paper by using objective measuring methods. Many stamps which I had graded thin measured thick and vice versa, and even

after using objective gauges there remained the problem where to draw the dividing line. As it turned out there was no abrupt division between relatively thin paper and what, in comparison, could be regarded as thick paper. The vast majority of the stamps registered in the middle numbers; but that will be discussed later.

To measure the absolute thickness of paper objectively and accurately I use an inexpensive instrument: TECHNI-TOOL model G (see photo):

A circular dial is divided into 10 numbered divisions which are each subdivided into 5 grades which again are divided into 4 units, each unit representing 1/200th of the dial. Two precision metal tables are activated by a lever which separates them. The paper to be measured is inserted between the tables which are closed by a spring when the lever is released. A hand indicates the amount of thickness on the dial. The tables open to 1/2 inch which requires 10 full rotations of the hand; 1/200th of one rotation — the smallest unit on the dial — represents .00025" (1/4000th of an inch) which equals .00635 mm (approximately 6 1/3 microns). Care has to be taken to watch



the zero adjustment with which the instrument is equipped and clean the metal tables from impurities like traces of gum or dirt which tend to interfere.

Bruce Rutherford, our librarian at the New York Collectors Club, alerted me to two articles by Ira G. Wilson in the American Philatelist, April 1983 and May 1984, who used a similar instrument dealing with a collateral subject. He pointedly criticizes the sloppiness and inadequacy of catalogs in treating the problem of paper thickness and advocates the need for objective methods to measure the thickness of stamps and interpret it in perspective to the stamp issue under investigation.

Before dealing with the problems of handmade paper which is believed to be solely used for the 1852 issue of the Netherlands during its entire 12-year-long reign, here are some measurements for machinemade paper: (1 unit = .00635 mm)

Kleenex unfolded (2-ply)	22 = .1397 mm (less than 2 times 1-ply) <sup>1)</sup>
Kleenex 1-ply	12 = .0762 mm (more than 1/2 of 2-ply) <sup>1)</sup>
stamp hinge	7 = .0445 mm
stamp hinge with gum removed	5.5 = .0349 mm (gum accounts for 21% of thickness)
airmail typing paper	5 = .0317 mm (thinner than Kleenex)
US commemora- tive stamps used	14-20 = .0889 - .1333 mm
Dutch com- memorative stamps	14-20 = .0889 - .1333 mm

In 1840, when the 'Penny Black' made its appearance as the first adhesive postage stamp, machinemade paper had been in use for some time. Much cheaper than handmade paper it can be assumed that it was widely used in the production of postage stamps, though the standard catalogs shed little or no light on this question. Dr. Theimer reports stamps of the 1850 issue of Austria as thin as .05 mm and as thick as .15 mm which latter he classifies as cardboard. Both, handmade and machinemade paper, were used for this issue. Wilson found Afghanistan Nos. 180 and F9 (Scott) measuring .048 mm and the thinnest of all, No. F1 on pelure paper, at .039 mm. Thin stamps I have measured are (Nos. by Scott):

Spain No. 6	measuring 8 units = .0508 mm
Spain No. 19	measuring 9 units = .05715 mm
Canada No. 1	measuring 12 units = .0762 mm
Canada No. 4	measuring 14 units = .0889 mm
North German Federa- tion Nos. 25 - 26	measuring 14 units = .0889 mm

My thinnest stamp of the Netherlands:

No. 31 (NVPH No. 27) measuring 10 units = .0635 mm  
I am sure that stamps on yet thinner paper exist, possib-

ly Japan's first two issues, Prussia Nos. 21 and 22, and others.

The Dutch NVPH 'Speciale Catalogus' brings in its general philatelic explanation a short note for paper varieties:

1)"Special paper varieties may be recognized by the entries marked with the addition of an x to the main numbers."

Then, for the 1852 issue, after the price quotations in a paragraph for paper and watermark this statement:

2)"Printed on handmade white paper. The first deliveries of the 5, 10, and 15 Cent are printed on hard thin paper (+/- 0.11 mm). After that always on thick paper (+/- 0.15 mm). The last deliveries of the 5 cent plate VI and the 10 Cent plate X are printed on very thin porous paper (0.1 mm) with the watermark often shining through and the stamp, especially in the watermark, appears thin."

Ad1): Paging through the NVPH catalog I find the first such notation for 3 values of the 1876 numeral issue, numbers 30FIIx, 31Fx and 33Fx for strong horizontally striped paper. Though for the 1852 issue paper varieties are listed for ribbed paper — 1g and 2f (several more plates are known) — and differentiation is made for thin paper — 1a, 2a, 3a — and the catalog distinguishes between thin paper and thin porous paper — 1r and 2q — no x is added to the main number.

Paper, by its nature and composition, is porous and it is irrelevant to use this characteristic as a distinguishing feature. I prefer to differentiate between soft and hard paper. Both are porous but in different degrees. There are countless combinations of ingredients and chemicals and many different methods used in the preparation of the pulp and the manufacture of paper which determine its consistency. Soft paper is pliable and offers little resistance to bending, hard paper is stiff and springy. There are so many variations to those properties that I consider it impractical, if not impossible, to measure them objectively.

Paper thickness, however, can be measured objectively and accurately as mentioned earlier. It is important to be aware that handmade paper differs from machinemade paper in that it is in most cases unevenly thick. I have found considerable differences in the same stamp. In the watermark area the readings are frequently lower; in contrast readings can be substantially distorted by increases through inclusions, dimples, wrinkles, ripples, gum residues, hinge marks, printing ink, and postmark impressions which often raise the paper in the back of the stamp.

I have measured over 2000 used copies of the Netherlands First Issue. In cases where I got several readings I had to throw them out if I could not adjust them to an average. I separated the readings for different plates and established

1) This apparent paradox can be explained through the fact that 2 layers together provide cushioning and compressibility through the inherent softness and resilience of the tissue.

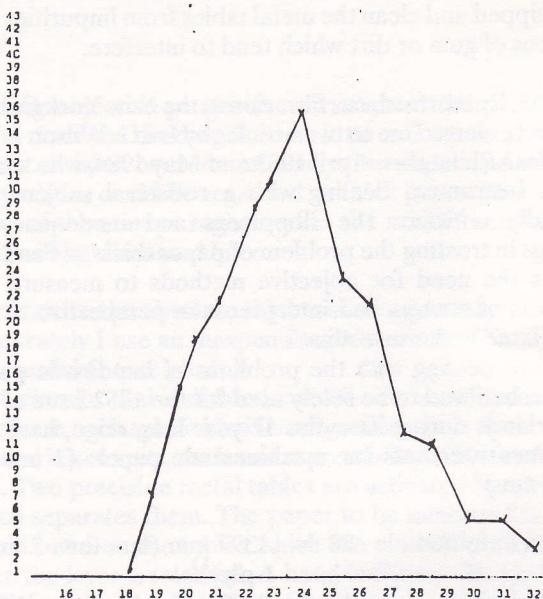
averages for those plates by adding up the individual readings and dividing the sum by the number of stamps measured. I am using the numbers representing the amount of the smallest divisions on the dial of the Techni-Tool, each equivalent to .0025" = .00635 mm. The following conversion table translates those numbers into fractional millimeters by multiplying them by .00635

1 = .00635	11 = .06985	21 = .13335	31 = .19685
2 = .01270	12 = .07620	22 = .13970	32 = .20320
3 = .01905	13 = .08258	23 = .14605	33 = .20955
4 = .02540	14 = .08890	24 = .15240	34 = .21590
5 = .03175	15 = .09525	25 = .15875	35 = .22225
6 = .03810	16 = .10160	26 = .16510	36 = .22860
7 = .04445	17 = .10795	27 = .17145	37 = .23495
8 = .05080	18 = .11430	28 = .17780	38 = .24130
9 = .05715	19 = .12065	29 = .18415	39 = .24765
10 = .06350	20 = .12700	30 = .19050	40 = .25400

Here now are the figures for eight plates, 1741 accurately compiled quotations with a minimum of 196 for a single plate, representing, according to Wilson, a random homogeneous sample. In abbreviated symbols, used from here on, the eight plates are: 5c:I, 5c:IV, 5c:VI, 10c:I, 10c:III, 10c:VI, 10c:X, and 15c. Of linear graphs made from the table for the eight plates five are pictured here to illustrate the table.

Analysis of the table shows a range of 16 to 32 or roughly .1 to .2 mm. The ratio of 1:2 indicates that the thickest paper is twice the thickness of the thinnest paper. Only 10c:X embraces that range in its entirety. The overall

### 5 Cent plate I

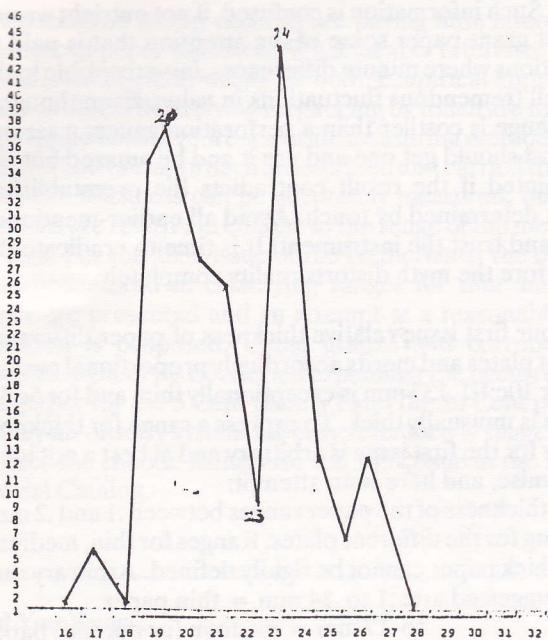


average thickness is .15455 mm, shifted slightly from the middle to the thick side of the spectrum. Averages for the individual plates check in between .139 mm for 5c:VI and .1603 mm for 10c:III. Only one copy of 5c:VI measures .1778 mm and none thicker than that. Only 3 of my stamps register at 16 and 8 copies at 17, and they all are from 5c:VI and 10c:X.

TABLE OF PAPER THICKNESS FOR 8 PLATES OF THE 1852 ISSUE OF THE NETHERLANDS

mm	#	5 Cent			10 Cent			15 Cent	
		I	IV	VI	I	III	VI	X	Total
.1016	16			1				2	3
.10795	17			5				3	8
.1143	18	1		1	1			10	13
.12065	19	7	3	34	1		1	23	71
.127	20	15	3	37	8		2	20	89
.13335	21	19	9	27	13	2	10	19	107
.1397	22	22	11	25	20	8	20	16	136
.14605	23	29	36	9	15	15	27	18	176
.1524	24	30	41	43	36	38	30	18	272
.15875	25	36	49	12	32	56	38	19	289
.1651	26	23	28	6	27	39	20	19	202
.17145	27	21	17	12	23	20	21	14	149
.1778	28	12	28	1	22	12	12	8	126
.18415	29	11	5		8	3	11	4	48
.1905	30	5	3		5	3	3	6	30
.19685	31	5			3	1			10
.2032	32		3	2		3	1	2	12
Total		239	235	213	217	197	196	200	1741
Range		18-32	19-32	16-28	18-32	21-31	19-32	16-32	19-32
Average No.		24.4435	24.957	21.89	25.0184	25.2436	24.812	22.99	25.1967
Average in mm		.155	.1585	.139	.15887	.1603	.1575	.146	.15999

### 5 Cent plate VI

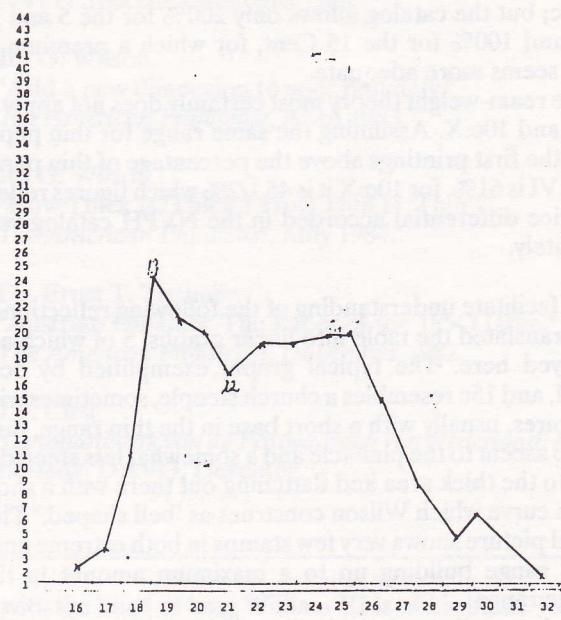


Of the 5 and 10 Cent plate I, only one stamp each but none of the 15 Cent measures 18 (.114 mm). Even at 19 only 14 stamps check in, excluding of course 5c:VI and 10c:X; but they include 3 stamps of 5c:IV and one of 10c:VI. Of all other plates not listed in this table I found copies as thin as 19 (5c:II) and 20 (all other plates except 10c:III for which 21 was the thinnest).

Noteworthy is that the overall average is .15455 mm which is thicker than the thickest stamp of the Austrian 1850 issue found by Dr. Theimer and labeled by him as cardboard. In contrast the thickness of the black proof of the 1852 issue of the Netherlands on cardboard is .267 mm.

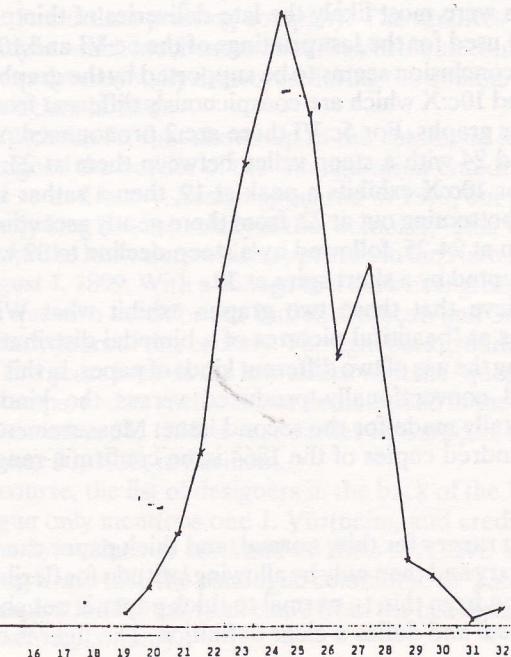
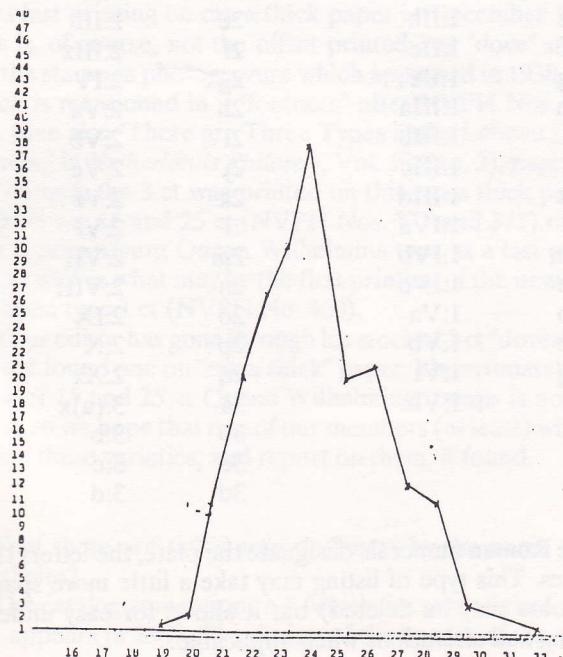
### 10 Cent plate VI

### 10 Cent plate X



An explanation for the existence of unusually thin or thick stamps is given by Wilson who quotes Williams' Fundamentals of Philately: "Paper is sold by the ream, but also by its weight per ream, since weight indicates the density. To satisfy the ream-weight requirement the manufacturer substituted a few thinner or thicker sheets to adjust the weight. I adopt and subscribe to this theory as applying to most plates of the First Issue of the Netherlands. It may not apply to the first printings of 5c:I, 10c:I, and 15c where a hard thin paper was used, but not so thin as the NVPH catalog makes us believe. It is reasonable to assume that this paper measured between 18 and 22 (.1143-.14 mm) and the

### 15 Cent



percentages are 27% for 5c:I, 20% for 10c:I, and 11% for 15c. According to these percentages the price for thin paper should be a multiple of 3 for the 5c:I, of 4 for 10c:I and of 9 for 15c; but the catalog allows only 200% for the 5 and 10 Cent and 100% for the 15 Cent, for which a premium of 500% seems more adequate.

The ream-weight theory most certainly does not apply to 5c:VI and 10c:X. Assuming the same range for thin paper as for the first printings above the percentage of thin paper for 5c:VI is 61%, for 10c:X it is 46 1/2% which figures reflect the price differential accorded in the NVPH catalog very accurately.

To facilitate understanding of the following reflections I have translated the table into linear graphs, 5 of which are displayed here. The typical graph, exemplified by 5c:I, 10c:VI, and 15c resembles a church steeple, sometimes with side spires, usually with a short base in the thin range, then a steep ascent to the pinnacle and a somewhat less steep descent to the thick area and flattening out there with a short base, a curve which Wilson construes as "bell shaped." This normal picture shows very few stamps in both extreme ends of the range building up to a maximum amount in the average range.

A relevant digression is indicated here: In the absence of information for the second issue (1864) in the NVPH catalog I have consulted the standard work on the 1864 issue of the Netherlands by J. F. Cleij. As I make out with my rather limited understanding of the Dutch language, there seems to have been an ongoing dispute since December 1860 concerning the use of larger sheets of thinner watermarked paper to accommodate 200 stamps. The manufacturer of the paper for the first issue, Erven Dirk Blaauw in Wormerveer, was asked to produce such paper and he made all kinds of attempts to comply with the request. However, it was finally decided to use machinemade paper without watermark at a considerably cheaper price (which was an important consideration) and Blaauw did not get the contract. But while the negotiations went on Blaauw was busy with the production of thinner paper and one result of his attempts were most likely the late deliveries of thin paper (16 - 20) used for the last printings of the 5c:VI and 10c:X.

This conclusion seems to be supported by the graphs for 5c:VI and 10c:X which are conspicuously different from all the other graphs. For 5c:VI there are 2 pronounced peaks at 20 and 24 with a steep valley between them at 23. The graph for 10c:X exhibits a peak at 19, then a rather steep decline bottoming out at 22, from there gently ascending to a plateau at 24-25, followed by a steep decline to 32 which is interrupted by a short spire at 30.

I believe that these two graphs exhibit what Wilson describes as "beautiful pictures of a bimodal distribution," indicating the use of two different kinds of paper, in this case the kind conventionally produced versus the kind experimentally made for the second issue. Measurements of some hundred copies of the 1864 issue confirm a range of 15 to 20.

Fixing ranges for thin, normal, and thick paper can only be arbitrary and then only by allowing latitude for flexibility. Transition from thin to normal to thick paper is not abrupt but gradual and defies a clear definition. The figures com-

puted from my measurements cast serious doubt on the information on paper thickness supplied by the NVPH catalog. Such information is confused, if not outright wrong. Why not grant paper some of the attention that is paid to perforations where minute differences, imperceptible to the eye, spell tremendous fluctuations in value. Even though a paper gauge is costlier than a perforation gauge; a serious philatelist should get one and use it and be amazed but not disappointed if the result contradicts the preestablished concept determined by touch. Avoid all earlier-mentioned pitfalls and trust the instrument! It is time to eradicate the myth before the myth distorts reality completely.

For our first issue relative thickness of paper differs for different plates and merits accordingly proportional evaluation. For 10c:III .133 mm is exceptionally thin, and for 5c:VI .178 mm is unusually thick. To express a range for thickness of paper for the first issue is arbitrary and at best a not ideal compromise, and here is an attempt:

The thickness of the paper ranges between .1 and .2 mm, varying for the different plates. Ranges for thin, medium, and thick paper cannot be rigidly defined. Arbitrary ranges suggested are: .1 to .14 mm = thin paper

to .17 mm = medium (or normal) paper  
to .2 + mm = thick paper

For a specific plate connoisseurs' premiums apply to the extremes of that plate's range.

Finally here is a suggestion to bring order into the confusing chaos of the NVPH listing of the first issue and organize it into a logical coordinated system that presents a clear systematic reference worthy of a Special Catalog that will also allow for future corrections, additions, and deletions as new information becomes available.

old listing	my suggestion	old listing	my suggestion
1a	1:I(a)x	2a	2:I(a)x
1b	1:Ib	2b	2:Ib
1c	1:Ic	2c	2:IA
1d	1:IIa	2d	2:II
1e	1:IIb	2e	2:III
1f	1:IIc	2f	2:IIIx
1g	1:IIx	2g	2:IV
1h	1:IIIa	2h	2:Va
1i	1:IIIb	2i	2:Vb
1j	1:IIIc	2j	2:Vc
1k	1:IIId	2k	2:Vf
1l	1:IVa	2l	2:VI
1m	1:IVb	2m	2:VII
1n	1:IVc	2n	2:VIII
1o	1:Va	2o	2:IX
1p	1:Vb	2p	2:X
1q	1:VI	2q	2:Xx
1r	1:VIIx	3a	3:(a)x
		3b	3:b
		3c	3:c
		3d	3:d

The Roman numerals designate the plate, the letters the varieties. This type of listing may take a little more space (the colon may be deleted) but it allows for easy understanding and alterations when applicable.

## SUMMARY:

Specialized stamp catalogs are paying little attention to the topic of paper thickness. What meager reference can be found is insufficient, wrong, or both. Empirical approaches to the problem like relying on gauging by touch are misleading. Application of more scientific measuring methods is advocated and one approach is described and carried through. Absolute thickness can be accurately measured; but comparisons are relative in context to the range of the measured objects. For the 1852 issue of the Netherlands the difficulties encountered in classifying ranges for thin and thick paper are presented and an attempt at a reasonable classification is proposed. Using graphs and corroborating evidence a theory is developed explaining the occurrence of thin paper for the 5 Cent plate VI and the 10 Cent plate X. Finally an orderly system for easy reference is suggested to replace the chaotic listings for the 1852 issue in the NVPH Special Catalog.

## References:

NVPH Speciale Catalogus 1988.

Ira G. Wilson.

"Add a new dimension to your philately,"  
*The American Philatelist*, April 1983.

Ira G. Wilson,

"How Thick Is 'Thick'? How Thin Is 'Thin'?"  
*The American Philatelist*, May 1984.

Dr. Ernst T. Theimer,

"Austrian Philately: The Paper of the 1850 Issue,"  
*The American Philatelist*, December 1982.

J.F. Cleij,

*Standaardwerk van de Postwaarden van Nederland: Emisie 1864*, DAVO, Deventer.

## Did You Know ...

That sometimes specialized information is hidden in articles in exhibition catalogues?

A prime example is found in the Amphilex 77 catalogue, the article by Jan Dekker, "Queen Wilhelmina sixty year on stamps 1891-1951." This is the article with the three-color table on the various printings and paper of the Queen with long hair set of the Netherlands, which now forms part of the NVPH *Speciale Catalogus*.

The specialized information is found on page 61 of the catalogue; it is really "buried" in some rate information and the announcement of some new issues and the disappearance of the 17 1/2 ct with the rate increases of November 1, 1946.

It appears that the 3 ct "dove" (NVPH No. 175B) had an extra last printing on extra thick paper in December 1946. This is, of course, not the offset printed 3 ct "dove" stamp but the stamp in photogravure which appeared in 1938, and which is mentioned in a "footnote" after NVPH Nos. 379-391. (See also "There are Three Types in the Lebeau Dove Stamps," in *Netherlands Philately*, Vol. 10 (No. 2), page 33.)

Not only the 3 ct was printed on this extra thick paper, but also the 15 and 25 ct (NVPH Nos. 337 and 341) of the Van Konijnenburg Queen Wilhelmina type as a last printing, as well as what may be the first printing of the new Van Krimpen type 1 ct (NVPH No. 460).

Your editor has gone through his stock of 3 ct "doves" but has not found one on "extra thick" paper. Unfortunately his stock of 15 and 25 ct Queen Wilhelmina stamps is nonexistent, so we hope that one of our members (at least) will try to find these varieties, and report on them, if found.

That there are two stamp designers by the name of J. Vürtheim?

The catalogue mentions a J. Vürtheim several times. He first appears in 1867. The design of the border of the third

set with the head of king William III is of his hand. He was then totally responsible for the design of the low values of 1869-1871, the coat of arms of the Netherlands, partially surrounded by a wreath of oak leaves. Although the NVPH Special Catalogue doesn't mention it, the next set of low values, those of 1876, were also based on a design by J. Vürtheim. Again he had a coat of arms in the center which was replaced by a large numeral. Of course, the "copper engraving," as mentioned in the NVPH catalogue was not a copper engraving, but a wood engraving. (See also the Van Dieten Proof Catalogue.)

This was the last design by J. Vürtheim Sr. Years ago I did some research on J. Vürtheim and found that he was born in Westphalia in the early years of last century. In the 1830's he came to the Netherlands and settled in Rotterdam where he started a lithographic printshop. The reason why the research had to stop was that his plant was merged with a large Rotterdam printing company. The archives of this company in which much more about J. Vürtheim could have been found were totally destroyed during the bombardment of Rotterdam in 1940.

J. Vürtheim Jr. first shows up in the catalogue in 1898. He designed the border of the "Inauguration Guilder." His second — and last — design appeared in 1899, but had an extremely long life, especially in the "colonies." This was the design for the low values which appeared in the Netherlands on August 1, 1899. With a change to a dark background this design was also used for the Indies, Curaçao and Surinam in the early years of this century. The light background came back a few years later as the low values with the "queen with ship" stamps, and as such was not demonetized in the Indies until December 31, 1938, a year earlier in Curaçao, and on November 30, 1938, in Surinam.

Of course, the list of designers in the back of the NVPH catalogue only mentions one J. Vürtheim, and credits him with the low values of 1899 and of 1869-1871. We wonder how long it will take the catalogue committee to "catch on." (The inspiration for this item came from the last installment of *Filatelie Informatief*.)

# To Collect or Not to Collect; Recent Issues of the Netherlands Antilles

By Frans H.A. Rummens

## Introduction

Not all people who collect the Netherlands are also collecting the Old Colonies or Overseas Areas, as they nowadays are called. Perhaps only one out of three does. Even those who do may limit their collection to pre-independence (Suriname and Indonesia) or may go only till a certain date. For Curaçao a logical cut-off point would be 1948, when the name changed to Netherlands Antilles. Some of those who went on have given up since, usually at some arbitrary date, in the late seventies or early eighties. When asked about this, these persons then point to the rising costs, particularly caused by what they term "spurious issues." We will investigate and discuss these concerns, using as examples in particular the new issues of late 1989 till the present (November 1990). To provide the background, though, we will also go back as far as the mid-seventies. The discussion will be structured into the following paragraphs:

- The gutter-pair syndrome
- The PHIL-EX bandwagon
- Souvenir sheetlets
- The Ravelo definitives
- Booklets
- Postal stationery
- Other recent stamp issues
- The marketing strategies
- Concluding remarks

All stamps were printed in offset by Enschedé and Sons, Haarlem (booklets in photogravure). Except where noted, the G-format was used for the stamps, with perforation 14:12 3/4 (horizontal stamps) or 12 3/4:14 (vertical).

## The Gutter-Pair Syndrome

Starting in 1977 several issues came out with a sheet lay-

out that provided white bridges between two half sheets. These issues are shown in figure 1. All these stamps were printed in sheets of 50, with a bridge of one stamp-width separating the



Figure 2 *Tête-Bêche* gutter pairs of the 1984-88 period. Top left: Eleanor Roosevelt (NVPH 791-3). Bottom left: Papiamentu (815-6). At right: Famous Persons (899-902).

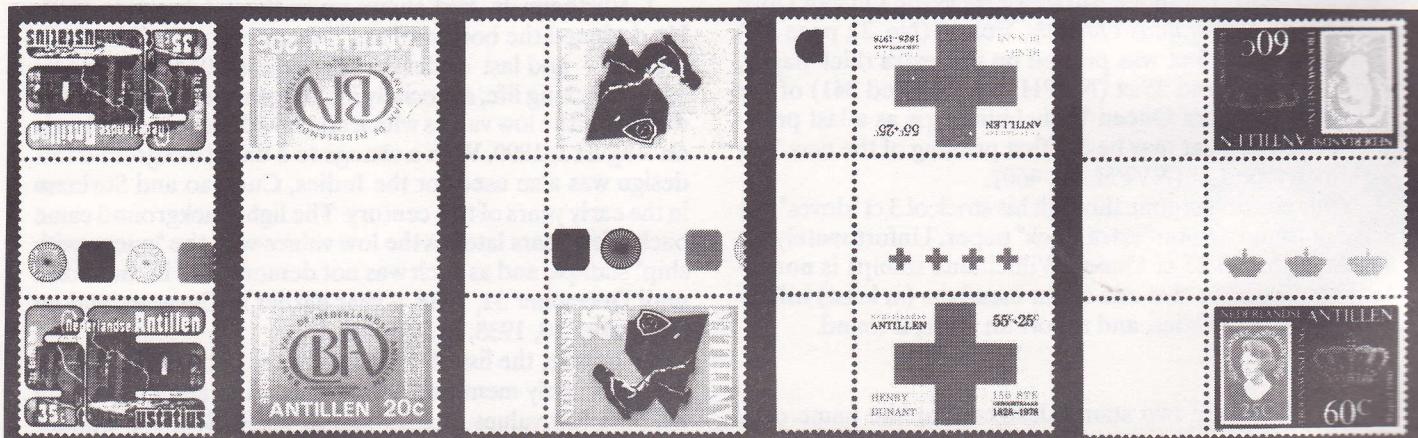


Figure 1 *Tête-Bêche* gutter pairs from the 1977-1980 period. From left to right: Tourism (NVPH 556-58), Bank N.A. (573-5), Sport (576-9), Red Cross (591) and Inauguration (654-5).

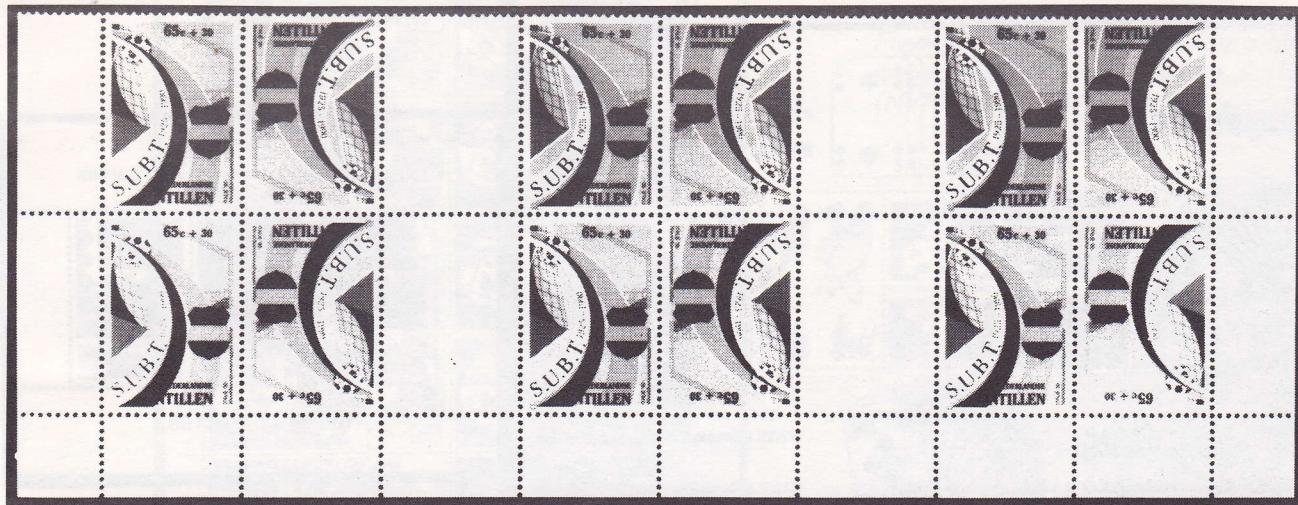


Figure 3 Soccer/Anti-Drug set of 1990 with double Tête-Bêche gutters.

two blocks of 25. There is and was no need for the gutters; the sheet of 50 is small enough and we should not confuse the situation with the double printing sheets of 2x50 or 2x100 that are used extensively by Enschedé, for reasons of economy.

For several years following, there were no gutter pairs, but then, between 1984 and 1988, another three such issues came out. They are shown in figure 2. One of these, the 'famous persons' set of 1988 is shown as a complete gutter, with top and bottom selvedge. Apart from the counting numbers, this gutter is blank, without the 'traffic lights' (really colored printer's test marks), that are visible with most of the previously issued gutters. While we were already preparing this article, we were apprised of a new wrinkle in

the gutter game. On June 13, 1990, a set of two semipostals was issued. The 65 + 30 ct stamp commemorates the Punda soccer club "S.U.B.T." (Sport Unie Brion Trappers). The 115 + 65 ct stamp has an anti-drug theme. As figure 3 shows, this time there are two gutters! The entire sheet is only  $6 \times 5 = 30$  stamps, but this is enough to provide now two kinds of se-tenant tête-bêche pairs; with or without gutter. With all the earlier gutter issues, only the gutter pairs are tête-bêche.

Yet another variant is formed by issues with a so-called 'information tab.' The anti-cancer set of November 7, 1989, was the first of this kind, but it was quickly (December 1) followed by the first "December" discount stamps. When we first received these stamps, we had only single stamps, with tabs at the right. However, that told us very little about the sheet lay-out. Did perhaps the stamps and the tabs form a checkerboard pattern? Were there tête-bêche situations? To answer these questions, we ordered corner blocks of four (see figure 4). It turned out that the lay-out is very simple. No tête-bêche, no checker board. The only stamps that are a bit special, are the ones in the first column; these are the only stamps without a tab to the left. The anti-cancer set has denominations of 30, 60 and 80 ct, without surcharges(!) and the December stamps have 30 and 100 ct values. The text on the anti-cancer tabs is practically all in Papiamentu, the December tabs say "Merry Christmas and Happy New Year" in four languages, but you need at least 5x magnification to be able to read these good wishes. Note also that the two sets have differences in perforation. The anti-cancer stamps have the regular 12 3/4:14 perforation (16x25 teeth) in standard G-format, without selvedge perforation at right. The December stamps are 13 1/4:14 (16x24 teeth), but in a slightly smaller and totally new format of 24x35 mm. The tabs are 13 mm wide, with 8 teeth and there is no selvedge perforation at the bottom.

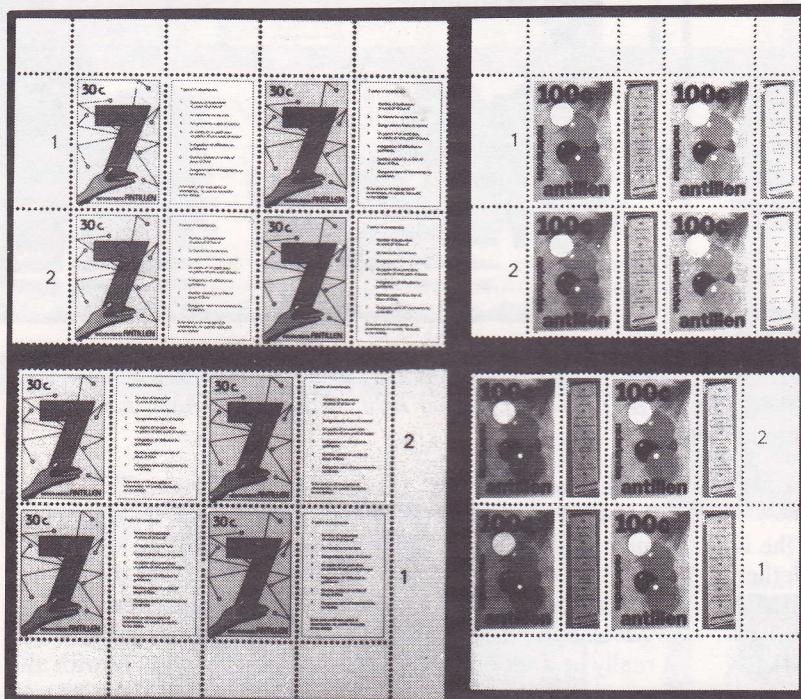
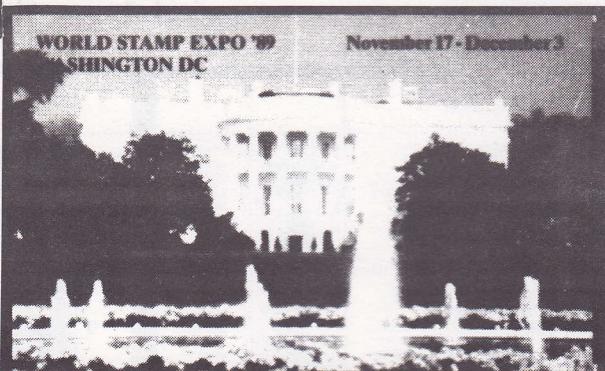
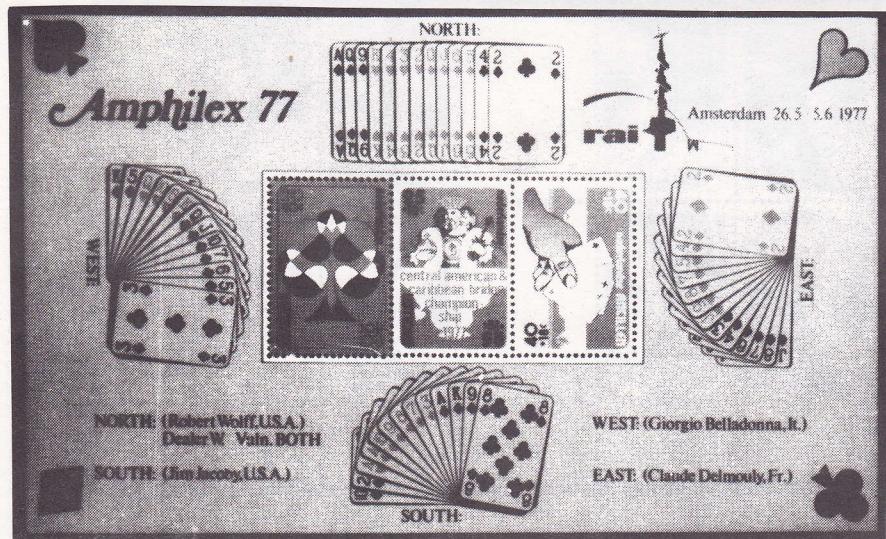


Figure 4 Stamps with 'informational tabs.' At left: anti-cancer issue of 7-XI-1989 (NVPH 933-4). At right: 'discount' issue of 1-XII-1989 (933-4).



*Figure 5 Philatelic Exhibitions. Top left: AMPHILEX'77 (NVPH 541-4). Center left: LONDON'80 (656-62). Bottom left: PHILEXFRANCE'82 (719-22). Top right: BRASILIANA'83 (743-746). Center right: WORLD STAMP EXPO (829-32), with at the bottom right the cover of the latter sheetlet.*

### The PHIL-EX bandwagon

Philatelic events are always welcome reasons for the issuing of special stamps. All countries do this, the Netherlands not excepted. Think only of the recent AMPHILEX (1977), FILOCENTO (1984) and FILACEPT (1988) exhibitions. The Netherlands Antilles had their AMPHILEX issue too (NVPH 541-44), which one still can appreciate as a sisterly show of support. See figure 5. But was it so necessary to Commemorate LONDON 1980 (NVPH 656-62)? One has really difficulties understanding this, just as why the

Antilles would have reasons to celebrate PHILEXFRANCE'82. What then about BRASILIANA'83? Of course, one has to be neighborly, too. But WORLD STAMP EXPO 1989 (NVPH 929-32)? Never mind that there was a concurrent UPU Congress, this was an American affair. What also counts is exactly of what these issues consist. Must it really be a set of three plus a souvenir sheetlet, as with all five events just mentioned? The World Stamp Expo'89 we discussed before (ASNP Newsletter, Vol 14, #3, April 1990); three high value stamps, plus a sheetlet with the same three high price stamps, plus an extra \$1.50 if one wanted

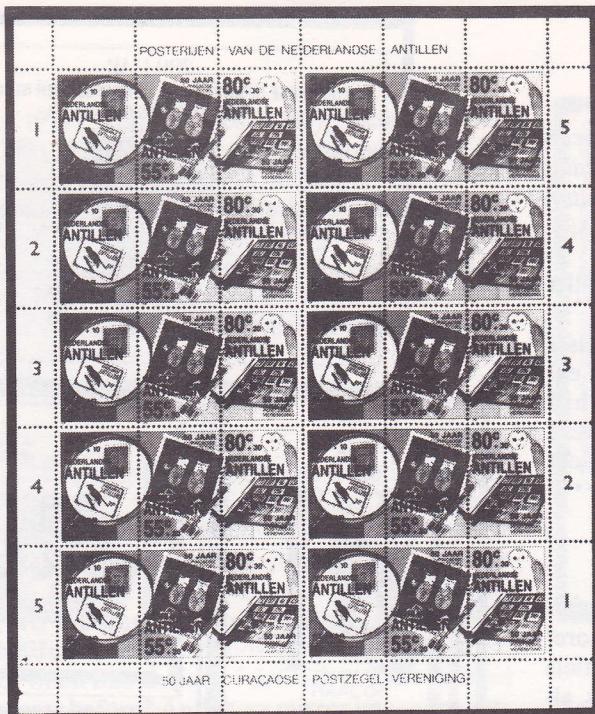
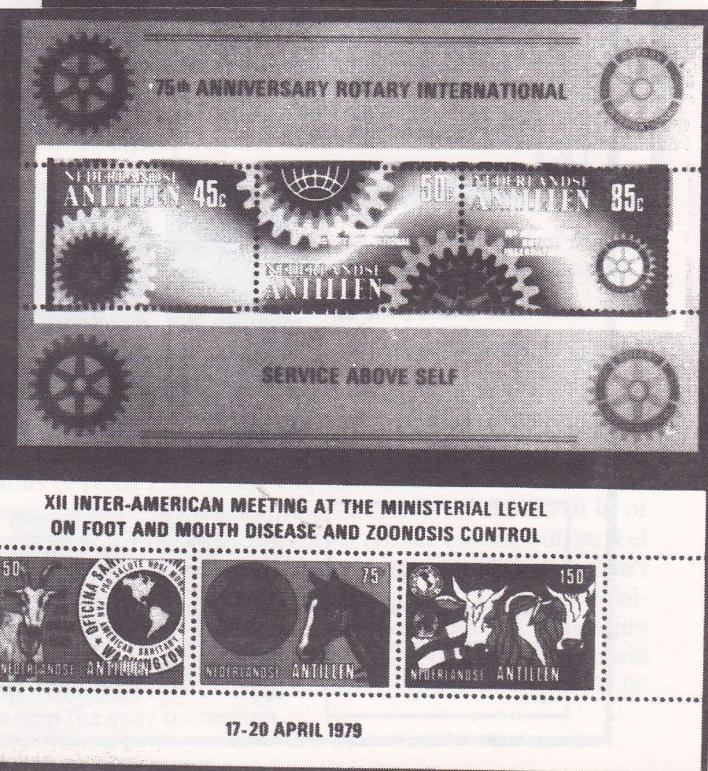


Figure 6 Special sheetlet for the golden jubilee of the Curaçao Stamp Society (NVPH 910-2).



Figure 7 Other Souvenir Sheetlets. Counter clock-wise, from the top left: Child Welfare 1977 (NVPH 555), Red Cross 1978 (#592), Bonaire Sail 1979 (#629), P.A.H.O. 1979 (#624), Rotary Clubs 1980 (#651), and World Communications 1983 (#741).



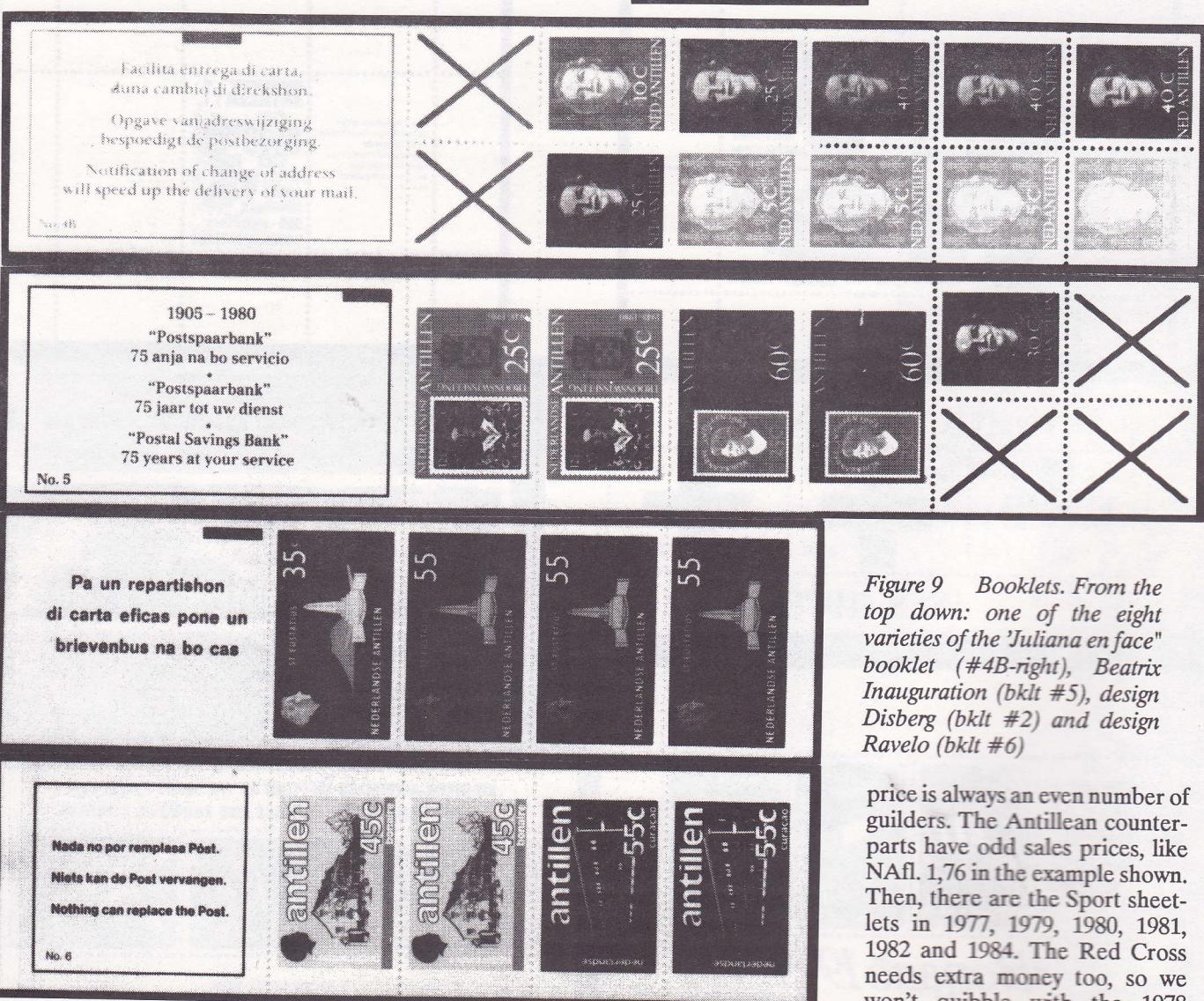
*Figure 8 Some more successful sheetlets. Top: 200 years relations USA-Netherlands (NPH 715), Golden Wedding Anniversary Juliana-Bernhard (#860) and Century Women of Orange (1990).*

that sheetlet in a pretty cover (see again figure 5); it is all a bit much.

The golden jubilee of the Curaçao Stamp Society was a subject of considerable local pride, so that had to be expressed in philatelic language. That Stamp Club issue had another special character, though; the three stamps were only issued se-tenant, requiring us to purchase a whole sheet to find out and show you the lay-out (figure 6).

### Souvenir Sheetlets

In the above paragraph, we have already met with a fair number of souvenir sheetlets. But there are many more! There are, to begin with, the annual Child Welfare sheetlets (figure 7). Admittedly, the Dutch have similar sheetlets, although these had a very rational origin. These are designed to be sold by school children and for that reason their sales



*Figure 9 Booklets. From the top down: one of the eight varieties of the 'Juliana en face' booklet (#4B-right), Beatrix Inauguration (bklt #5), design Disberg (bklt #2) and design Ravelo (bklt #6)*

price is always an even number of guilders. The Antillean counterparts have odd sales prices, like NAfl. 1,76 in the example shown. Then, there are the Sport sheetlets in 1977, 1979, 1980, 1981, 1982 and 1984. The Red Cross needs extra money too, so we won't quibble with the 1978 sheetlet. But why sheetlets like

the P.A.H.O. (1979), Rotary Clubs (1980), Social and Cultural Care (1981, 1982) and Communications(1983)? By way of exception, we like the sheetlet of 1982, commemorating 200 years of relations USA-Netherlands (see figure 8). The two 'Orange' sheetlets of 1987 and 1990 are not bad either, but one must ask the question again: why sheet stamps plus sheetlet? In the latter case there is actually a set of four stamps to celebrate the "100 years of women rulers" (see figure 8).

### Booklets

In 1977, two "Disberg design" booklets were issued. See figure 9. These were of the vending machine type. Great! Except that the Netherlands Antilles did not have a single such vending machine at that time. So, they are sold over the counter, but so are the annual "Zomer" booklets in the Netherlands. To the purist, though, neither should exist. Then came the 'Juliana en face' booklets. But why these "en face" booklets, when that design of definitives was replaced more than 20 years before? And those mirror image lay-outs are perfectly superfluous as are the different colors of St. Andrew's crosses. On the other hand, it is true that there are collectors who go absolutely wild about such booklets and who will buy them by the dozen, so that they can tear out every conceivable combination. Then, in 1980, there was the commemorative booklet at the occasion of the Throne Abdication/Inauguration. Superfluous, because there were still no vending machines and furthermore there were already the sheet stamps (figure 1). In 1985, one more booklet came out, with two Oscar Ravelo design definitives. Around this time the first booklet vending machines were installed in the main post office in Willemstad. This main office, incidentally, is now on the Punda side of Willemstad, therefore way out from the center of town. All these booklet stamps have one, two or three straight edges, so they are separate collectable items. Also the printing technique, color, denomination and format are different from those of the sheet stamps. The most modest booklet is the latest one, based on the Ravelo design (figure 9), so we are hoping for the best for the new booklet that has been announced for 1991. It was already announced that this booklet will have a theme of 'wishes.' This appears to be an emulation of the US booklets of a similar kind.

### The Oscar Ravelo definitives

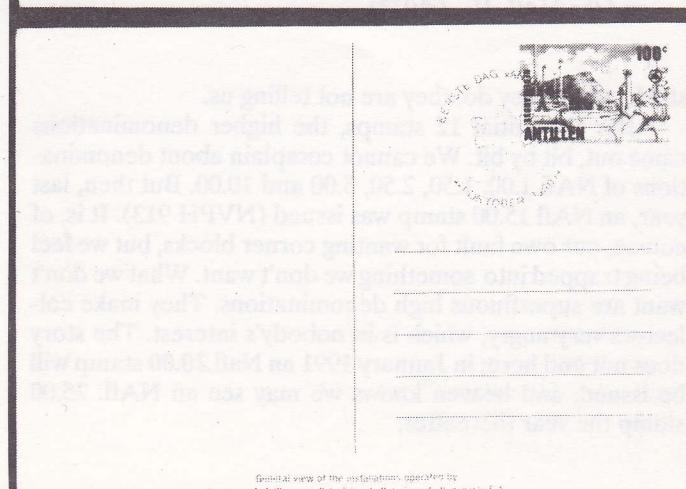
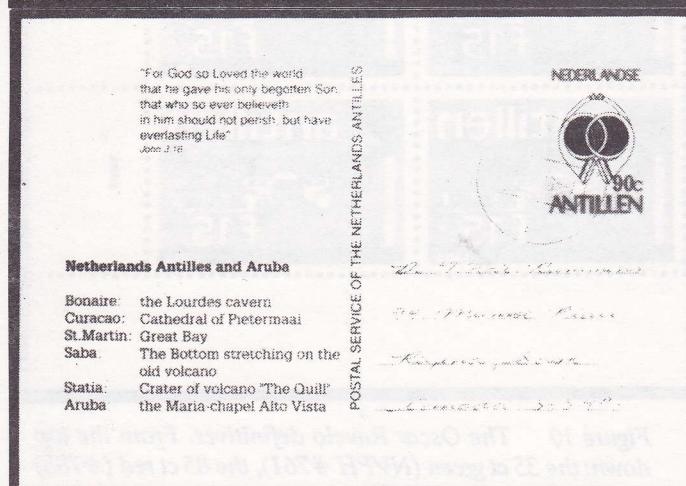
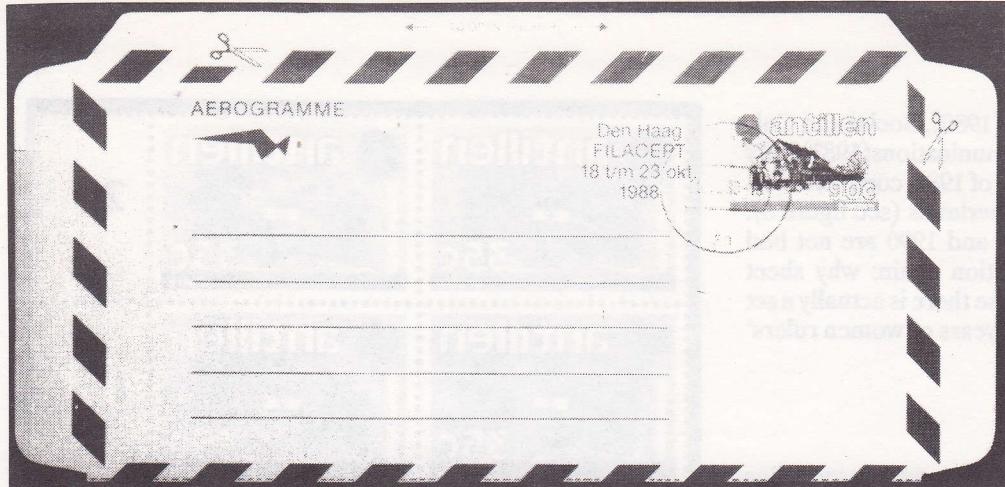
The definitives of the Disberg design (NVPH 275-290 and 460-468) reigned for 25 years, and it was not until 1983 that new designs, by Oscar Ravelo, were introduced. See figure 10. The first ones came out in batches of six, with each of the islands represented by its government building. But when in 1986 Aruba obtained "Status Aparte," something curious happened. The two denominations of 35 and 85 ct were suddenly withdrawn without notice. These were the two, of course, that showed the Aruba Government building. In the Netherlands, the NVPH reacted by hiking up the catalogue price of these two stamps (Nos 761 and 785). We had been collecting this issue in corner blocks, but we missed out on the block of the 85 ct stamp; we can only show the single stamp. Ever since, we have been trying to buy that missing block, but to no avail; no dealer seems to have any



Figure 10 The Oscar Ravelo definitives. From the top down: the 35 ct green (NVPH #761), the 85 ct red (#785) and the NAfl. 15.- (#913).

stock, and if they do, they are not telling us.

After the initial 12 stamps, the higher denominations came out, bit by bit. We cannot complain about denominations of NAfl 1.00, 1.50, 2.50, 5.00 and 10.00. But then, last year, an NAfl 15.00 stamp was issued (NVPH 913). It is, of course, our own fault for wanting corner blocks, but we feel being trapped into something we don't want. What we don't want are superfluous high denominations. They make collectors very angry, which is in nobody's interest. The story does not end here; in January 1991 an NAfl.20.00 stamp will be issued, and heaven knows we may see an NAfl. 25.00 stamp the year thereafter.



**Figure 11** Postal stationery. From the top down: the FILACEPT aerogramme of 1988, the 'Sand Dollar' post card of 1990, Papal Visit (1990) and ISLA post card, also of 1990.

### Postal Stationery

Curaçao/Netherlands Antilles have always been sparing in their issuing of postal stationery. There were five different Disberg Aerogrammes and four postal cards. This is eminently reasonable in view of the rate changes during those 25 years. In the Ravelo design, an 80 ct (1987) and a 90 ct (1988) aerogramme were issued. The latter one later obtained a special imprint in blue, announcing FILACEPT. See figure 11. Again this falls into the category of unneeded, therefore unwanted issues. In July 1991, a new aerogramme will be issued, but we have no further details.

On February 9, 1990, a curious postal card was issued. See again figure 11. The card is actually a piece of advertising for the newly opened "Sand Dollar" condominiums on Bonaire. The curious part is, that the imprinted stamp is on the picture side! The imprinted image was borrowed from NVPH 739, from the tourist set of 1983, except that the denomination was raised from 45 to 70 ct. Note also the special First Day cancel. On May 13, 1990, a 90 ct postal card came out, at the occasion of the Papal Visit. It is really a picture post card, with a gaudy picture at that. The stamp imprint is a reprint of NVPH 474, except for the denomination. Shown is simply the emblem of the Netherlands Antilles Postal system. On October 1, 1990, the third postal card of the year was issued. The picture side shows a panoramic view of the "Refineria ISLA (curaçao) S.A.", which celebrated some jubilee, probably 75 years of oil refining on Curaçao. This is, of course, the old Shell refinery, which was, not long ago, sold to Venezuelan interests. The imprinted stamp design is new, but the same as that of the sheet stamps, although the 1965 stamps (NVPH 355-57) could have stood model. To the credit of the postal system, it must be said, that these three post cards were widely available on the islands, which is something that cannot always be said about the booklets and aerogrammes.

In our opinion, three special post cards in one year is altogether too much, though.

### Other recent stamp issues

The Netherlands Antilles have long issued (at irregular intervals), Flora and/or Fauna sets. In 1985, for example, there were both a Fauna and Flora set, in 1986 there was neither, and in 1987, 1988 and 1989 there was a set of either Flora or Fauna. This trend seems now to continue, as in January 1990 a six-stamp Flora set was issued (see figure 12). Flora and Fauna stamps have always been issued without surcharge.

*Figure 12 Other 1990 Stamp Issues. From the top down and from left to right: Flora (NVPH 935-40), Social and Cultural Welfare (#941-3), Dominican Sisters (#944-46), Famous Persons, ISLA, Orange Women, Child Welfare.*



'Culture' stamps, with a surcharge for various social and cultural purposes have also been a long tradition, going back at least to 1962, but as an annual tradition it dates from 1967. They are perhaps comparable to the Dutch "zomer" stamps, which have indeed the same purpose. In a few of the past years, it would appear that there was no 'Culture' set, but in these years there always was another semipostal set with a cultural theme. For example, 1981 had a set for the aid to handicapped children and 1989 had the semipostal set of the golden jubilee of the Curaçao Stamp Club. The 1990 set issued on March 7, 1990, has only three stamps in it, with two of these having a Scout/Guide theme. The third one focuses attention on "Totolika," a support group for the family and friends of persons with a mental handicap.

On May 7, 1990, another three-stamp set was issued, commemorating '100 years Dominican Sisters on St Maarten.' The denominations are 10, 55 and 60 ct. The strange one here is the 10 ct. Even if there is a use for such a stamp as a make-up value, it is quite unusual to degrade a commemorative stamp to such usage. Incidentally, the lowest denomination in the Ravelo definitives is 20 ct, but a five

cent stamp from the 'Island' set of 1972 is still widely available as 'make up' value.

On August 8, 1990, a set of four stamps was issued, featuring four well-known personalities from the Islands. The 40 ct portrays Carlos Alberto Nicolaas-Perez. This was the man who created the "Sociedad Bolivariana de Bonaire" (see also NVPH 871-874). He died just last year. The 60 ct has the portrait of Evert S. J. Kruythof, teacher, administrator, writer and ecologist, who lived on Saba, Statia and Curaçao. From him is the handbook *The Netherlands Windward Islands*, published in 1938. John de Pool is the subject of the 80 ct stamp. Writer, sculptor and painter, he is best remembered for his Curaçao Memoirs, which were originally published in Spanish, in 1935. The 150 ct stamp is devoted to Joseph Sickman Corsen; composer, musician, but especially poet. Many of his poems were originally in Spanish, but he later translated them into Papiamentu.

On September 5 a set of four stamps and a souvenir sheetlet was issued on the occasion of '100 years Women of Orange.' The four stamps of the set are dedicated one each to Emma, Wilhelmina, Juliana and Beatrix, while on the sheetlet one finds them all four together. The sheetlet has an NAfl 2,50 face value and the other four have each a 100 ct denomination. Of course, this unique jubilee had to be commemorated, but again we feel that either the set or the sheetlet is superfluous.

On October 31 the annual Child Welfare set was issued. No fewer than six semipostal stamps this time, quite contrary to the earlier announcement of three. Even the denominations are different. There is a 30 + 5 ct, 55 + 10 ct, 65 + 15 ct, 100 + 20 ct, 115 + 25 ct and a 155 + 35 ct stamp. Very modest surcharges therefore, and as a surprise: no sheetlet, thereby abandoning a tradition of thirteen years. In figure 12 we show only five of the six stamps of this set; the 100 + 20 ct never made it to Regina, Sask.



Figure 13 One of the two 1990 Child Welfare FDCs.

### Marketing Strategies

The Netherlands Antilles have struggled for decades to optimize their philatelic sales. They have had a Philatelic Department continuously ever since 1958. At the same time, philatelic sales were also conducted from The Hague, by the Dutch "Filatelistische Dienst." That meant that the stamps were available at the Dutch philatelic wickets. These were few in number and they were open for philatelic sales only one or two hours per week. From 1963 till 1977, though, the Antillean stamps were made available by the Dutch to mail subscribers, seemingly competing but actually complementing the mail service from Willemstad. Brochures were sent to anyone requesting them. In January 1977 the Dutch PTT withdrew completely from all sales of Antillean stamps. The Antilles had tried their own hand, but apparently the results were not satisfactory. At least, that is when, in the mid-seventies, a "Doctorandus" van Reyen (no kin of our editor, but a Dutchman, then living on the Canary Islands), landed an exclusive contract with the Postal Authorities in Willemstad, to organize not only the sales, but also to take control of the kind of stamps and other philatelic collectibles to be printed. Promptly, the gutters, sheetlets and other opportunistic issues started. Many of these products were not even for sale in the Antilles. (That situation has changed though; if you now want gutter pairs, you simply have to indicate this in writing and such pairs will be included in your subscription). "World Wide Philatelic Agency Inc." was the name of the company, set up by Van Reyen. Clearly, things had gotten out of hand, out of Willemstad's control that is. Somewhere in the early eighties a new contract was negotiated. The Antilles would again have a philatelic service of their own, and they appeared to have gotten some control over the kind of issues and their printings. For about five years, there were no gutter pairs, no deliberate varieties and only a few extra sheetlets. For reasons we do not understand, drs van Reyen got bolder again, starting in 1984 with the Eleanor Roosevelt gutter pairs (figure 2). Fact is that the Philatelic Department in Willemstad was struggling; they published their own brochures for each issue, but it took a lot of trying before these settled down to the very nice write-ups we now receive. They still cannot supply photos of the new stamps to philatelic writers. Their response (to

letters, orders and enquiries) was slow and has been improving only very recently. Early in 1990 they announced a reorganization. From then on, as a rule, new issues would only be supplied on a semi-annual basis. We believe this to be a wise move. Fortunately (for your Newsletter editor), the door was left open for receiving brochures and stamps as each issue appeared. The only condition was that one had to agree to buy an FDC along with a mint set. We signalled our agreement with this condition, but asked that our FDCs be properly addressed and moved through the mail. To our delight, that is exactly what they did for us. In figure 13 we show one of the two FDCs that were necessary for the long Child Welfare

set. It is only thanks to this cover that we can show you the missing 100+20 ct stamp. Each FDC was separately registered (and reregistered at the Canadian border, hence the large "R"). At the same time computers were introduced to speed up the turn-around time. According to the most recent indications, the entire revamping has been quite successful.

### Concluding Remarks

In this article we have been rather critical of the Postal Authorities in the Netherlands Antilles. We have pointed to the many unnecessary issues whose main purpose it appears to be to get more money out of the pockets of collectors. This is a dangerous game, that can easily backfire. There are many other (island) countries, that are far worse offenders. Several actions have been undertaken against these practices. The American Philatelic Society, for example, blackballs certain countries. They will not publish any news about such blackballed countries, and the monthly repeated blackball serves as a continuing warning to all collectors. The Scott Publishing Company, which annually prepares a world catalogue, refuses to list certain countries, or just lists the new issues "for the record" without any pictures or details. The Netherlands Antilles so far have escaped either fate. However, there is more coming. At the recent UPU Congress in Washington, D.C., last year, the delegates adopted a 'Code of Ethics' for stamp-issuing Postal Administrations. This came about after representations from the president of the FIP (Federation Internationale de Philatelie), from IFSDA (International Federation of Stamp Dealers Associations) and from ASCAT (Association of Catalogue Publishers). All these big guns are quite determined now to use their clout and it is interesting to see that the UPU has agreed to lead this fight. The Netherlands Antilles better beware.

Let us once more say that the Netherlands Antilles are by no means among the worst offenders. There are in fact many good things that can be mentioned about their stamps. Technically speaking the stamps are always of high quality, no doubt thanks to the continuing policy of retaining Enschede & Sons as the printers. Design-wise the stamps are O.K. as well. Not as avant garde as many of the Dutch

stamps, but many a collector will be grateful for that. On the other hand, the Antillean stamps are not as gaudy as those of many Island States. Barring a few exceptions (such as, for example, the 1980 Rowland Hill set and sheetlet), the Antillean stamp designs are tasteful. This compliment is the more relevant in that the designers are almost always local artists. The Netherlands Antilles are fascinating islands and through these stamps of Flora, Fauna, Personalities, Child Welfare, Culture and Commemoratives, we learn a lot about them. The brochures of the Philatelic Department in Willemstad are well printed, with an abundance of background information (the brochures are somewhat lacking in technical details; the perforation given is usually wrong and

there are never details about the pane lay-out). The Willemstad reorganization seems to have cleared up a log jam and so the future could be quite bright. The remaining black clouds are those darn deliberate varieties and other unnecessary issues.

#### Acknowledgments

We thank mr. R.B. Eleonora (Philatelic Department, Postal Services, Willemstad) and mr. J.H. Ackerman, Amsterdam, for their help with the recent issues. Larry Rehm did a major job on all the figures.

### 1945 - 1990 Allied Food Bombardments on Holland

by John W. Van Rysdam

In April 1945 the Allies made their famous food dropings over a starving Holland.

Through an arrangement between the Red Cross and the German army certain dropping fields were assigned as free havens. The allied airplanes could parachute their food parcels without German anti-aircraft interference. The food

was then collected and distributed to a starving Dutch population through the Red Cross. People at that time were so hungry that some of the bread never made it home, but was consumed right at the distribution centers.

Picture post cards 1 and 2 show these food dropings around Rotterdam. Figure 3 shows a "Thank-You" post card



Figure 1



Figure 2

Figure 3



from a Dutch stamp club in Goes to the U.S.A., mailed in 1946.

Thirty-five years later, in 1980, the Dutch P.T.T. issued a special stamp to commemorate the food droppings (NVPH No. 1198). The FDC shows this stamp in the last figure.

And as one who was there and feasted on this food I also would like to say: Thank you Allies.

And what did the "Allies," that is, the pilots and crews of the planes that dropped the food think. Some comments appeared in the March 23, 1990, issue of the *Windmill*, the Dutch-Canadian newspaper. A veteran from Kansas wrote: "As the B-17's crossed the coast of the Netherlands, the 900-combat veterans were scared. Was it (the truce) a trick? Was this to be where the propaganda machines of Herr Goebels would bolster the

Third Reich? By the destruction of 100 bombers in one blow? ... On the roof of a ten story building stood people, waving with one hand and furled out among them and holding it in the other hand was 'the Stars and Stripes,' all unseen by the enemy in the streets ..."

Another from British Columbia gave his views: "I was a bomb aimer on a Lancaster and flew with an RAF squadron



Figure 4

in 1945. I was involved in three food drops, one on a race track near The Hague and two on Ypenburg Drome near The Hague. The drops took place on April 29, May 1 & May 7, 1945. I must say that I found these operations the most exciting and satisfying. It was quite a thrill to fly over a city square filled with hundreds of people at a very low altitude."

From Seattle, Wash., comes this message: "... we noticed a skiff carry a cow and two men rowing towards dry ground. We stayed a respectful distance from the craft for fear of causing the cow to panic and upset the craft ... The men waved as we flew by ... Observed one German shaking a fist at us when buzzing his position ... Urgent message from Dutch underground requesting further buzzing of cows be stopped ... At the Harmelen drop site, civilians turned their back to us and bent over. On their backs were white letters 'Thank You Boys'... we were somewhat choked.... We circled the drop site and threw out parachutes made of handkerchiefs weighted by candy bars and gum for the children.... Most of the crews, if not all, were volunteers."

And so it goes. Most of the comments included remarks like this one: "I found the few food drop missions in which I participated gave me great satisfaction ... far more than any of the previous bombing missions."

### Coil Corner

There has been a great deal of activity in coils recently, and a number of new varieties and sub-varieties have appeared. It seems like each issue of the Postumaat Bulletin carries new discoveries, obtained from widely scattered coil stamp vending machines as well as from the PTT Philatelic Service in Groningen.

The reason for the variation in size of control numbers on recent coils (see Coil Corner, Netherlands Philately Vol. 14 #3, p. 55) is now discovered to be the result of cleaning and adjusting operations of the ink jet printing mechanism. Consideration is being given to the most effective way of categorizing these varieties.

The new 1991 Rolzegel Speciale Katalogus (reviewed in Netherlands Philately Vol 15 #1, p. 16) has made a substantial effort to clarify the situation. But with new varieties appearing so frequently, it cannot be expected to be the last word.

The new catalogue now lists control number type faces as follows:

Types 1, 2, and 3. No change in these numerals, all applied by conventional printing

Type 4 Height from 2.6 to 3.1 mm<sup>1)</sup>

Type 5 Maximum height, 2.6 mm<sup>1)</sup>

Type 6 Height greater than 3.1 mm

Type 7 Height +/- 3 mm

<sup>1)</sup> Netherlands Philately Vol. 14 #1, p. 13

Types 4, 5 and 6 all slant forward to some degree, and usually consist of numbers of 5 digits. If there are more or less than 5 digits, the number of digits will be so indicated by the use of brackets.

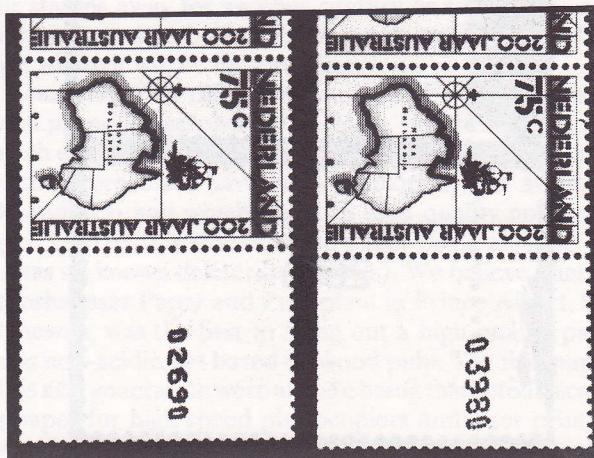
Appearing first in 1989, Type 7 is more upright and is produced by the new Arpeco ink jet machine. The number

of digits' in the control number varies so that brackets will always be used. Example: for the current 65 c Crouwel coil, the catalogue listing of 1116Re is 65N7(4)FW-D2, which means the value is 65 c, the top of the number is toward the top of the image (the normal position), the control number type is 7 and consists of 4 digits, the paper is white phosphor-coated, and the gum is D2 variety. Some illustrated examples follow:



Type 4

Type 7(5)



Type 5

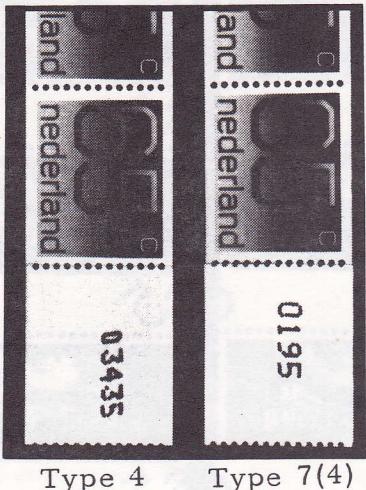
Type 6



Type 2

Type 4

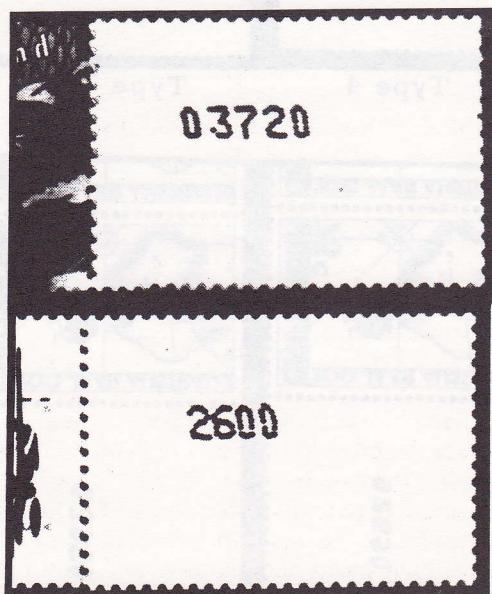
Type 5



Type 4

Type 7(4)

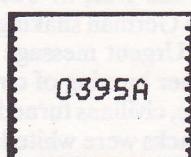
As mentioned earlier, new sub-varieties keep appearing which do not fall neatly into the above classification. One example is shown below:



Both Type 4 (enlarged)

In addition to the fact that these two Type 4 control numbers vary in the number of digits, they also do vary in the spacing between the digits. The five digit number is considered a normal Type 4, while the four digit is clearly a separate sub-variety. It has been suggested that this compressed-spacing variety be assigned classification Type 4a, but no official action has been taken to date.

Another sub-classification is shown below. The letter A is appended to the end of the set of digits, to avoid any pos-



sibility of confusion if the control number consists of just digits 0, 1, 6 or 9. This appears to be given the classification R7A, and was originally found on the 75 c. Beatrix.

Control numbers with only three digits are also now being seen, first noted on the f 7 Beatrix.

Growing attention is being given to the new vending machine postage labels by coil collectors. This is probably due to the fact that they are produced in roll form, and carry control numbers (Type 7, rather than Type 4 as indicated in the new catalogue). But they are dispensed singly, so strips cannot be collected. This is a facet of coil collecting which does not interest me, but I guess it's a case of everyone to his or her own preferences.

There is also a great deal of discussion about the ideal way to collect and display coil strips. While a few collectors still favor a strips of three, the major interest has been the strip of 5, with the control number on the bottom stamp (or at the right end, for horizontal coils), for some years.

Now there is increasing activity in collecting strips of 10, but how to best display them is unclear. One would like to show both control numbers, but what does one do with the unnumbered remainders at the end? Several systems have been proposed, but there is far from an agreement on the subject. A major concern about switching to strips of 10 is that it places all the strips of 5 in one's collection, into a sort of second-class status. I am personally sticking with the strips of 5 until the picture is much clearer.

Now, from the present to the dim past. Ir. R. J. Hammink, co-editor of the Rolzegel Katalogus, has written a most interesting article on the little-known Michelius "postzegelplakmachine", which is published in the October 1990 issue of Perfinpost, the bulletin of Perfin Club Nederland. This device resembles in several respects, and was competitive with, the POKO machine in their early years of trial usage in both Germany and the Netherlands.

One characteristic of its product is two small holes — almost pinholes — along the vertical center line of the perfinned coil. It had a capacity of 5 rolls, and could be operated either by hand or by an optional motor.

If there is interest in the full article, it would require translating. Any volunteers? I believe permission could be obtained from the author for reprinting in this Journal.

LHR

Acknowledgment to: Ir. R. J. Hammink and the Rolzegel Speciale Katalogus, H. J. T. Bos, Jan Enthoven

## ON STAMPS AND PAPER ACIDITY

by *Frans H.A. Rummens*

### Introduction: Paper technology

In the mid 19th century a major discovery was made; paper could hence be manufactured from wood pulp. Prior to this invention, paper could only be made from such fibers as cotton, flax or from such exotic material as papyrus, the plant that gave paper its generic name. The first wood pulp process that gained commercial usage is the so-called Kraft process. The alkaline pulping that was used led to a darkly colored mass, that was difficult to bleach entirely. To-day, the Kraft process is still in full use, but only for such applications as cardboard boxes, supermarket paper bags and the like. In the 1880s, however, acid pulping came into commercial usage. The main agent here is bisulphite, usually  $\text{Ca}(\text{HSO}_3)_2$ , with excess sulphurous acid  $\text{H}_2\text{SO}_3$ , or more simply  $\text{SO}_2$  (sulphurdioxide). The pH in this process is in the 3-4.5 region. The pulp from this sulphite is much less colored than in the Kraft process, opening the way to white paper. The bleaching is then performed by  $\text{ClO}_2$  chlorine dioxide, which is made in situ by Sodium Chlorate  $\text{NaClO}_3$  plus sulphuric acid  $\text{H}_2\text{SO}_4$ , again at pH 3.5-5. The point of telling all this Chemistry stuff, is to bring home the fact that most of the white paper you see is highly acidic. True, when the paper is pressed and dried, most of the acid goes into the watery effluent, but enough  $\text{SO}_2$  and  $\text{SO}_3$  sticks to the cellulose paper fibers, to constitute a permanent danger, including to itself. Such paper will in due time turn yellow, then brown and eventually it will crumble into dust. Look at any paperback, that is 20-30 years old and you will see the above described situation. Newspapers of the same age will actually look worse. The chemistry of this degeneration is not well understood;  $\text{SO}_2$  and  $\text{SO}_3$  in their function of acids may attack the C-O bonds, that hold the building blocks of the cellulose together.  $\text{SO}_3$  in addition is a strong oxidant and the destruction may well be caused by it alone. Whatever the mechanism, librarians all over the world are now engaged in a massive battle to prevent their newspapers, other periodicals, books and documents from self-destruction. Chemical treatments have been developed to neutralize these resident acids; the process is slow, labor intensive, requiring large installations, so that only the major libraries can afford such an effort. Smaller libraries and private citizens have little chance of getting into the act, as facilities are booked solid for years to come.

### Stamps and acid paper

What has all the above to do with stamps? Most of the (older) stamps were not printed on acid paper at all, so the  $\text{SO}_3$  scourge does not apply to them. Or does it? Unfortunately it does, because many stamp album pages are(were) made of acidic paper. There exist album pages that are made of acid free materials, meaning mostly that these were not manufactured from wood pulp. Lighthouse and Lindner are two of the companies that offer only acid-free materials to the stamp collectors; not only does their promotional literature say so, but our own tests have borne this out as well, without exception. Many other commercial album pages turn out to be made from acidic paper. On

pages a few years old, this is often directly visible by the yellowish color of such a page, when compared to a fresh sheet of paper. The edges and particularly the corners may have turned brown already. Presently there is an easier and better way to test paper for acidity, however. It is called the pH TESTING PEN, distributed by Light Impressions Corporation, 439 Monroe Ave, Rochester N.Y. 14607. The basic price is \$7.00, postage and handling may be extra. All one has to do, is to put a stroke of this felt tipped pen on the paper to be tested and watch the color develop. If it stays blue, you are safe. If the color turns yellow, the paper is one that is strongly acidic and should not be used for album pages. If the color changes to any intermediate green color, one has an indication, that whereas the paper in question may not be a wood pulp paper, it somehow got contaminated with acid. A nice example of this turned up, when we tested a Netherlands Scott #1 (it was a dog of a stamp!). This stamp was in use between 1852 and 1864. The back of this stamp turned green with our indicator pen. How is this possible, one may ask, in view of the fact, that such stamps were printed on the very best paper available, never mind that the wood pulp industry did not yet exist at that time? The answer is the confirmation of our worst fears. This stamp (and any other stamp, that has ever been mounted on acidic pages), had picked up the acid from the album page. Under firm contact,  $\text{SO}_2$  and  $\text{SO}_3$  can indeed migrate. All these processes are very slow; but then, old stamps have been sitting in albums for more than a century. There is no doubt in the author's mind, that given time, acidic album pages will destroy stamps, when these are directly mounted on these pages.

### People of the World, Remount.

The most direct solution to the acid problem is to remount your stamps on acid-free pages. In fact, Nature provides us with a bonus here. Suppose your stamps have become (slightly) acidic, from exposure to acidic products. Mounting them now directly on acid-free pages will induce the acid to migrate back into these pages. As always with diffusion, the driving force is formed by the acid concentration differential, which now is in the stamp's favor. Just put your stamps away for another century or so, and the acid will have migrated back into the much greater bulk of the page, where it will be far less dangerous.

Remounting on the above mentioned rather expensive album pages will resolve the problem, but there exists now a much cheaper alternative. In recent years new wood pulp bleaching processes have been developed, that avoid the  $\text{SO}_3$  and  $\text{SO}_2$  and which result in high quality non-acidic paper. (In fact this results in the paper being alkaline, but this has no known deleterious effects). We believe, that the Weyerhaeuser Paper and Pulp plant in Prince Albert, Saskatchewan, was the first to bring out a high quality paper that is non-acidic, yet based on wood pulp. The first papers of this new generation were and are being marketed as copying paper for high speed photocopiers and laser printers. The name of the product is HUSKY II Xerocopy. It is avail-

able in 8 1/2 x 11 inch format and can be ordered with 3 holes punched (product code 1177) The paper is somewhat thin (0.105 mm) and it has some shine through, but otherwise it has performed very satisfactorily as an album page material for a year and a half now with the author. It takes typing and photocopying extremely well and even hand lettering is sharp and crisp. There is better news yet. Weyerhaeuser has now brought out a line of offset papers, made with this new process. It is available in a range of poundages, finishes and sizes, but we think we can pinpoint two winners.

The first is called First Choice Husky Hy-Bulk. It is a 75 lb paper, with a thickness of 0.16 mm. It has virtually no shine through and has just the right degree of stiffness for an album or exhibit page. Writeability is very good, especially if one uses a typewriter, photocopier or printer. It is normally sold in 25x35 or 25x38 sizes, but your supplier should be able to custom cut it for you.

The other winner is the 70 lb Husky offset with vellum finish. The main advantage of this paper is that it gives crisper results if one does hand lettering with ink. It is almost as opaque as the Hy-Bulk, with a thickness of 0.135 mm, and it is directly available in 8 1/2 x 11 format, be it without 3-hole punch. Again, your friendly neighborhood supplier should be able to perform the punching for you.

On the North American market, Weyerhaeuser papers are exclusively distributed on by Barber-Ellis. In the mean time Weyerhaeuser has converted more paper mills to the alkaline process, and some other companies are starting to do likewise. For the high quality product, that collectors demand, the paper out of Prince Albert is likely to remain recommended for quite a while to come.

#### Of hinges and other mounts

Most of the hinges we tested reacted acidic in various degrees. So why risk it? The Lighthouse hinges are non

acidic and they have the additional advantage that they are truly peelable. What about mounts like Showguard, Scottmount, Lighthouse, Hawid and Schaufix? These are all made from pure polystyrene, without added chemical softeners; they are acid free and highly inert generally. Mounting your stamps with such mounts would offer considerable protection against acid. Personally, we would still prefer to have non-acidic pages underneath.

All the photo corners we tested were strongly acidic. Just don't ever use them. We also tested two brands of the so-called Jumbo corner mounts (one European, one American) and found them only very slightly acidic. The so-called VeHa corner mounts have no paper and these tested non-acidic.

For the collectors of "on piece" philatelic material, the news is generally gloomy. Almost all post cards and envelopes were and are made of acidic paper; the acid will inevitably attack the affixed stamps from behind. However, if this is of any solace, the cards and envelopes themselves will likely disintegrate well before the stamps do. The oldest postal stationery we tested was of 1876. It and all later postal stationery tested acidic. With old covers and crds, there is an additional hazard, in that the inks of old were rather acidic. We have seen 200 year old letters, where the hand written text had literally eaten its way through the paper, the latter itself being of excellent quality.

What is needed is the development of an inexpensive, safe, do-it-yourself chemical kit, that will allow collectors to do their own de-acidifying. Perhaps there is room here for a nice little cottage industry to grow, for those collectors who prefer somebody else to handle the chemicals.

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#### Fakes and Other Junk

by Paul E. van Reyen

Since I don't see so many fakes or forgeries lately (except those donated to the ASNP by a member in Canada), I have decided to go for the "Other Junk" in this story. Although the desire to write about these two stamps (see the figures) has been floating around for quite a while, an article about the triangular stamps of the Netherlands by R.C. Bakhuizen van den Brink in *Philatelie* of December 1989 provided the necessary impetus.

The two stamps in question are both airmail stamps for special flights, one, the 30 ct, issued in 1933 and the 12 1/2 ct in 1938, first used for the special flight to South Africa to commemorate Dingaansdag (Dingaan Day). If you look closely at the figures you will notice that both are canceled, but with minute "corner" cancellations, unreadable.

If we now turn to the NVPH catalog we find very little about the 30 ct stamp, except that it came out October 19, 1933, and was first only sold in anticipation of a special flight. From March 1937 the stamp was freely available at the post offices, but could only be used after an announcement by the PTT. Total number sold was 1,589,200. Before we turn

to the article by Mr. Bakhuizen van den Brink, let's see what the catalog has to say about the 12 1/2 ct stamp.

This stamp was available from November 22, 1938, again only to be used on special flight covers. It was NOT valid for ordinary postage! This issue carried issue number A. On May 10, 1940, the Germans invaded the Netherlands, and one would suppose that any special flights would be put on the back burner for the duration of the Occupation, and that at least the first special flight stamp of 30 ct would be taken out of circulation since a new one was now available. But what happened: In 1941 a new issue (B) appeared, also on paper with vertical watermark circles, but with a slightly different appearance. Finally, in 1944 (!) the stamp appeared on paper with a horizontal watermark circles. According to the NVPH catalog all the issues with the vertical watermark amounted to 943,450 copies, while the 1944 issue alone was 810,000 stamps. Both of these war issues have no price for used copies, while issue A is listed at 80 Dutch cents!

And now we turn to Mr. Bakhuizen van den Brink. First we read that the 30 ct was available between October 23 and 30, 1933, for the record flight of the *Postjager* which was planned for October 31, but which didn't leave until December 9, 1933. Thereafter the stamp was only sold for special flights, until December 16, 1936, when it appeared that the

stamp was available all the time at the philatelic windows in post offices.

And now let's quote the author: "During the Second World War the triangular 30 cent stamp was — just like the other airmail stamp, the 12 1/2 cent "Crow" — printed in large quantities which were subsequently sold on the black market ..."

Many of them must also have been "corner"-canceled either with a legitimate canceling device (nothing being impossible during the Occupation) or with a totally fake one.

Either way, these stamps should be removed from a collection, and preferably, destroyed.

For those of you who might have part sheets of the 30 ct stamp, the really bad stamps are from issue D, with a screen of 70 and dextrin gum (instead of gum Arabic).

Really sold 30 ct stamps are only 1,567,106, according to Mr. Bakhuizen van den Brink.

It seems likely that most of these "used" stamps have landed in the U.S. after the war, hence this "warning" seemed appropriate.

## BOOK REVIEW

**Speciale Catalogus 1991**, Published by the NVPH, 563pp, full color, ill., ASNP price \$12.00 postpaid.

The "speciale" is very special this time. It is in fact the 50st edition and as such it is a jubilee issue, well worth mentioning. There are two festive features. The first is a 15-page listing with prices of all the known small round ("kleinrond") cancels. The second is a 17-page listing of all the plate- and etching numbers ever used for Dutch stamps, for all printing techniques. Both these features are one-time-only, so you better hang on to this particular edition. Or buy one, even though perhaps in August you did not think you needed one.

There are several other features, that will presumably be permanent. There is the new price of Hfl.19,75, after almost a decade of a Hfl.15,- price. This was inevitable, in view of inflation; frankly, this new price is still a bargain, even if we have to pay \$12.00 to get one delivered into our mail box. New also is the listing of stamps with syncopated perforation, directly after the main numbers, in the main portion of the catalogue. This is only logical and it constitutes a change, that we welcome warmly. After all, when watermark varieties get their own main numbers and other perforation varieties (such as the change from a 12 1/2 comb to 13 1/2:12 3/4) get sub numbers, the syncopates fit in quite naturally. They are listed, though, with their old R-numbers; we hope, that in due time they will receive their proper sub numbers, such as 177C et cetera. The main body listing is for single stamps only. In the B.O.B. section they are listed again, this time complete with blocks and pairs.

Our member Hans Verschuur from Roosendaal supplied the Catalogue Committee with a pile of information on the printings of the Netherlands Indies stamps of the 1940-1950 period, including the Kolff printings for Surinam

and Curaçao. The Committee has chosen to adopt only a small portion of the submitted information, at least for now. All the gutter pairs are now mentioned in the text, and some erroneous 'numbers printed' were corrected. We hope only that in coming years more of this mother lode will be utilized.

Prices are up, scattered all through the catalogue. It is, however, possible to make a few generalized statements. Prices are up, particularly for classic stamps, particularly for unused quality, particularly MNH before 1940. The changes are not universal. Often only certain stamps within a set have increased, not necessarily the high values. The Overseas Areas participate abundantly in the price hikes, even for the Postage Due stamps, which for too long have been left alone. In general, the price increases are in the order of 3 to 10%, with some surprising exceptions. For example, the Neth. Indies # 144v and 228f (rare double overprints) went from Hfl.1250,- to 1750,- and Hfl.2000,- to 2500,- respectively. The upside-down overprint on the Neth. Indies air mail #17, when on cover, went up from Hfl.6500,- to 8250,-. Curaçao weighed in with a rise from Hfl. 1200,- to 1500,- for its 1914 booklet. We found even one 100% hike, this one for Suriname 69v, the 1/2 cent numeral of 1913 with imperf at left, from Hfl. 1000,- to 2000,-.

There are even some price decreases. We note some of the early NVPH FDC's, the #1 Internment stamp, some of the earlier vending machine booklets (all of the Netherlands), and the UNTEA overprints of Neth. New Guinea.

Many smaller changes were noted too. These are often of the nature of inaccuracies, that have been corrected. Apparently, the NVPH catalogue committee is listening and we encourage them to continue implementing yet more improvements.

F.R.