

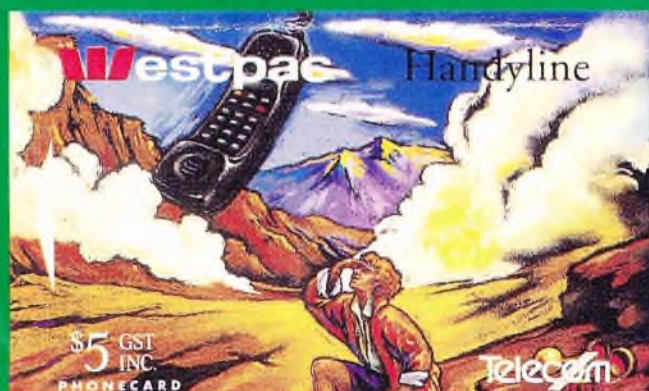
The Phonecard Collector

November 1993

Published monthly with The Stamp Collector



Australian Christmas issue



New cards from NZ

Classic Chinese stamps on phonecards series

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Telecom to limit quantities

UNTIL now, most of Telecom Australia's Collector Edition folders have been produced in a quantity of 10,000.

In most cases, the Collector Edition folders have had a fixed "Withdrawal From Sale" date at least 12 months after the issue date.

Telecom has made the folders available through its direct mail service for as long as possible, so that the large numbers of new collectors taking up the hobby would have the best opportunity to obtain the Collector Editions at Telecom's issue price.

However, this has resulted in the Phonecard Collector Service incurring quite significant costs for the long term high security storage and insurance of Collector Editions.

In order to reduce these costs, and to allow for the better management of its direct mail order fulfilment service, Telecom may vary quantities of future Collector Edition folders.

Telecom has also announced that it will shorten the sale period for the Collector Editions. As more phonecards carrying private advertising become available, there will be a greater need for efficient management of Telecom's security storage facilities.

Only 5000 Micro editions

For the reasons already stated, the Microscopic World Collector Edition will be issued in a quantity of only 5000 folders. The withdrawal from sale date for this Edition will be 12 months from the date of issue, however, Telecom expects that the Microscopic World Collector Edition will sell out well before the withdrawal date.

The Microscopic World phonecards and Collector Edition folder are bright and attractive and feedback from collectors indicates that this issue has been one of the best received, both by collectors in Australia and overseas.

The popularity of the designs, combined with the reduced quantity of folders, will ensure strong demand for this issue.

Environment issue

Another new Telecom Phonecard Collector Edition will be available for the Environmental Series cards. These cards are based on the winning entries in the bi-annual Telecom Phonecard Design Award competition.

This Collector Edition also, will be produced in a quantity of only 5000 folders. The surrealist nature of the designs featured in this issue come at a time of great interest in surrealism as an art form, especially among younger people, and this will further enhance demand for the new Collector Edition (see outside back cover of this edition of **The Phonecard Collector**.)

Feedback

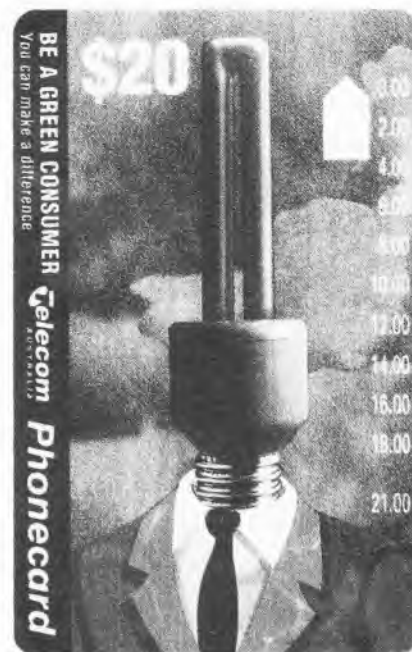
Telecom Phonecard Collector Services is in constant touch with collectors about the format of its products, and where possible, endeavours to act on the feedback received.

This feedback indicates that the vast majority of collectors want Collector Edition folders to be truly special. Variation in quantities issued of Collector Editions will help to maintain and even enhance the desirability of these issues in the future.

SA collector edition variety

According to a Telecom spokesperson, a small proportion (less than 10%) of the South Australia Collector Edition packs was packed with at least some matching serial numbers.

Unfortunately, Telecom staff who organised this packaging have since moved on, and more information about this interesting packaging variety has been hard to find.



One of three striking designs which won the 1993 bi-annual Telecom Phonecard Design award for graphic design student, Simone Tetof

The limited information available suggests that it was decided to try to match serial numbers as a bonus to collectors of the Collector Edition.

This exercise apparently proved to be much more difficult than envisaged, and it was decided to discontinue it. However, at the time the process was ceased, Telecom believes that approximately 1000 of the 11,000 South Australia Collector Edition folders were produced with at least some serial numbers that had been manually matched.

Christmas

To celebrate Christmas 1993, Telecom Australia commissioned Sydney artist, Vincent de Gouw to produce the stunning, original Australian scenes that appear on this year's Christmas phonecards reproduced on the front cover of **The Phonecard Collector**.

The \$5 and \$10 cards carry outback and city scenes unique to Australia, featuring the Southern Cross shining in the sky. Quantities have yet to be confirmed. There will not be a special collectors Xmas card produced this year. □

1994 International Phonecard Expo PNG WWF issue for Christchurch, NZ

THE annual International Phonecard Expo will be held in Christchurch, New Zealand, over ANZAC weekend, Sunday and Monday, April 24-25 1994.

The 1993 Expo attracted 3000 visitors over two days and organisers believe the 1994 event will be even more strongly supported.

As in previous years, the Expo is being run under the auspices of the Linstudy Phone Card Society, Inc. The Expo will be open from 10am to 4pm on both days.

The venue is again the Chandelier Room, Chung Wah Restaurant, 63 Worcester Boulevard.

It is right in the heart of the city, only two blocks from Cathedral Square and one block in the other direction from the popular Christchurch Arts Centre.

The building has a large, open car park alongside it with free parking

during weekends and public holidays.

There will be approximately 20 dealer stands and Telecom New Zealand is expected to participate with a display and sales stand as well as a sopecial Adcard for the Expo.

A phonecard auction is also planned to take place during the International Phonecard Expo.

The Phonecard Collector INFORMATION LINE

International Phonecard Expo,
C/- Shades Stamp Shop, 54 Shades
Arcade, Cashel Street, Christchurch,
New Zealand. ☎ +64 2 366 6390;
Fax +64 3 377 2377.

News Wanted • News Wanted

The editor of **The Phonecard Collector** seeks news of events and new phonecard issues from around the world for these pages.

All contributions will be acknowledged, and payment will be made for regular or longer submissions, especially of technical articles and information unpublished elsewhere. New issue correspondents are sought in all countries and regions.

DURING January 1994, Papua New Guinea's Post and Telecom departments will release a joint issue of stamps and telephone cards, depicting the Huon Gulf (Tree) Kangaroo and the Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF) logo.

Four stamps will be released by PNG Post on January 19 and will be followed by a set of four PNG Telecom phonecards, reproducing the stamp designs.

Denominations of the phonecards will be K2, K5, K10 and K20. To the best of our knowledge, this is the first joint Post/Telecom (stamp/phonecard) issue in phonecard history.

The issue will happen in time for the HONG KONG '94 stamp exhibition. WWF stamp issues have a huge following in Hong Kong and elsewhere in Asia and there is sure to be a similarly strong following of WWF phonecards, with an issue last year by NZ Telecom, and one in preparation by Telecom Australia. □

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Adcards increasing in frequency: latest issues for Westpac, Southern Pacific Hotel Corporation

AMONG the illustrations on this month's cover of **The Phonecard Collector** is the \$5 Westpac Handy-line Adcard issued during September. The phonecard illustration is from the "Westpac Delivers" campaign and depicts a woman vulcanologist on White Island. A cell phone is symbolically delivered by the Westpac Rescue Helicopter demonstrating the convenience of telephone banking.

The card was issued in a run of 13,500 with 1500 put aside for collector sales and 2000 for single card sales.

During October, a set of 10 \$5 Adcards was released for Southern Pacific Hotel Corporation, showing various SPHC properties around New Zealand. A total of 75,000 cards were produced, of which 1500 sets were put aside for collector sales.

The Southern Pacific Hotel Corporation is the largest hotel operator in New Zealand. Properties depicted on the cards include those under the Parkroyal, Travelodge, THC and Centra banners.

Each card provides information on the hotels depicted and details of where hotels in that category are located.

The phonecards are retailed by the individual hotels for hotel guests to purchase and are to be used by the Southern Pacific group as promotional material and gratuities for regular clients.

The Phonecard Collector INFORMATION LINE

Telecom PhoneCard Collector Service, P.O. Box 3838, Auckland, New Zealand.

T'com NZ at Philatelia mit T'Card in Cologne

THE other New Zealand phonecard depicted on this month's cover shows two Elephant Seals and is an Adcard issued on behalf of Telecom New Zealand's PhoneCard Collector Service.

The \$5 AdCard was issued to commemorate Telecom NZ's participation as an exhibitor at the Philatelia mit T'Card and International European Phonecard Fair in Cologne, Germany, from October 22 to 24.

Of the total quantity issued (15,000), 10,000 were offered for sale at the fair and 1500 put aside for collector sales from Telecom NZ's Collector Service in Auckland.

See next month's issue of **The Phonecard Collector** for a report on Philatelia mit T'Card. ☐



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Christmas 1993 Australia



To celebrate Christmas 1993, Telecom Australia has commissioned Sydney artist Vincent de Gouw to produce the stunning, uniquely Australian scenes that appear on this year's Christmas Phonecards.

Send your order to: Phonocard Collector Services
Telecom Australia Payphone Services PO Box 3964, Parramatta NSW 2124 Australia
or Fax to: Australia: 02 891 6678 / Other countries: + 61 2 891 6678

Individual Card Designs (Not available in a Special Editions folder)

Description	Number required	Price in \$ Aust	Cost
Australian Outback Christmas		\$5.00	\$ <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>
Australian City Christmas		\$10.00	\$ <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>
For each 20 individual card designs ordered, or part thereof, add \$2.50 for postage and handling. For example 1-20 cards \$2.50, 21-40 cards \$5.00.			\$ <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>
TOTAL ORDER: (including postage and handling) =			\$ <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>

Please allow 4 - 6 weeks for delivery.

I wish to pay by: Tick appropriate box ☒ *** Do not send cash** 1) ☐ International Bank Draft in \$Aust.

2) ☐ Cheque (orders posted in Australia only) made out to "Telecom Australia Payphone Services"

3) ☐ BANKCARD ☐ MASTERCARD ☐ VISA ☐ AMEX ☐ DINERS CLUB ☐ JCB

CARD NUMBER EXPIRY DATE:

CARD HOLDERS SIGNATURE _____ DATE:

Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms/Dr

ADDRESS

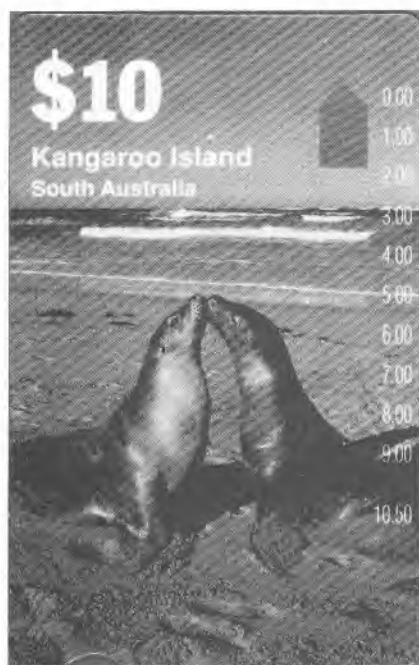
CUSTOMER ID No. (if known)

POST CODE COUNTRY (overseas only)

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NEWS

ralian \$10 Kangaroo Island phonecard in colour, with the reverse in black and white. A quantity of 3000 cards has been produced.

Card numbering is in red, and a unique feature chosen by the club is the actual fair date printed in a manner similar to phonecard ID coding (ie. A2711-93).

A quantity of cards will be retained by the club, which will offer current and new members a card matching their membership number. Cards are offered to members at \$2 each.

A limited quantity will also be allocated to phonecard clubs around Australia at \$2 each. Other collectors can order through the club at \$3 per card.

Now with the release of three club cards — for Melbourne, Queensland and now, South Australia, these issues are sure to generate a whole new area of Cinderella card collecting.

The Phonecard Collector INFORMATION LINE

Club Secretary, APCC Inc, 64 Concord Drive, Reynella, SA 5161, Australia.

Rosebud fair

THE Rosebud & District Phonecard Collectors' Club will hold a Phonecard Fair on Saturday, January 8 1994, at the Rosebud Swimming Pool, Foreshore, Point Nepean Road, Rosebud, Victoria (opposite the end of Boneo Road).

There will be dealer booths and the fair will be open from 10am to 4pm. (Melway reference 170 A.1.)

The Phonecard Collector INFORMATION LINE

Rosebud & District Phonecard Collectors Club, Inc, PO Box 211, Rosebud, Vic 3939, Australia.

Adelaide fair

IN conjunction with their first Phonecard Fair, to be held in Adelaide on November 27, The Australian Phonecard Collectors Club, Inc, will release a limited edition club card. The card is illustrated above, and the design is based on the South Aust-

News Wanted • News Wanted

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The Phonecard Collector is published monthly as a supplement in The Stamp Collector.

Phonecard collectors (and dealers) who subscribe to **The Stamp Collector** to receive their copy of **The Phonecard Collector** each month will receive a **valuable FREE BONUS**.

- Subscribe for three years and we will give you a 20-word Classified ad in **The Phonecard Collector** each month for 12 months! (A \$120 value!)
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Malaysia	MYR\$74.95	MYR\$123.95	MYR\$156.95
Other ASEAN Countries	Sing\$44.95	Sing\$74.95	Sing\$94.95
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Collectible Kadfon cards of Malaysia

STAMPS, postcards and coins have always been popular amongst collectors in Malaysia, and were joined in 1990 by telephone cards.

Locally-issued phonecards have a growing following in Malaysia and there have been recent moves to set up a phonecard club in the country.

Malaysian phonecards are much sought after by overseas collectors because of their designs with a uniquely Malaysian flavour.

Phonecards are quite new in Malaysia and are produced in relatively small quantities, so that they are of increasing interest to collectors.

Serious collectors tend to concentrate on unused cards or mint cards, which are perceived to have better potential for an increase in value.

The less expensive alternative is to collect used cards which can be easily obtained from non-collectors for free or for a small token.

Many collectors look out for rare cards and limited editions are highly sought-after. Other attractions include the attractiveness of the design, both on the front and the reverse side.

Serial numbers, too, are sought-after by some enthusiasts. A set of phonecards with matching serial number can fetch twice or even more than a similar set with different serial numbers.

Cards in low denominations are generally more popular in Malaysia.

Telekom Malaysia's RM3 cards depicting Malay Martial Arts and the Clock Tower are very popular amongst collectors because of their attractive designs and low denomination.

Another Telekom Malaysia phonecard sought after not only for its beautiful design, but also because due to its limited edition is the RM10 phonecard depicting a 'cute' girl with the caption, "Bring A Little Cheer To Someone Dear". This edition comes

in two versions — in English and in Bahasa Malaysia, the national language. Each version was printed in a relatively small edition of only 5000 pieces.

Rarer still, are Telekom Malaysia's complimentary phonecards which were printed in very small numbers. They were given out as gifts to commemorate the introduction of KAD-FON by the Syarikat Telekom Malaysia Berhad (STM) in May 1990. These complimentary cards came in denominations of RM3 (Clock Tower) — 1500; RM5 (Fishing Village) — 500; and RM10 (Mosque) — 500; all with the word 'COMPLIMENTARY' printed at the bottom on the front side.

Amongst the lucky recipients of this commemorative issue were some 200 Malaysian Airlines passengers who flew in to Pulau Langkawi on May 17 1990, the day the KADFON was officially launched on the island by YB Datuk Paduka Daim Zainuddin, who was then the Malaysian Finance Minister.

A couple of months after the launch, the company adopted a new corporate logo and later changed its name to Telekom Malaysia Berhad. With the change, subsequent issues carried the new logo.

The old STM logo became a rare feature on Telekom Malaysia phonecards and these issues are highly sought-after.

Telekom Malaysia's first phonecards comprised the RM20 Stadhuys Building and the RM50 Tabung Haji.

The second issue came in September 1992, with the introduction of optical system cardphones. The issue comprised RM3 (Malaysian Fruits), RM5 (Bougainvillea), RM10 (Perhentian Island), RM20 (Kuala Lumpur Railway Station) and the RM50 (Songket). All these cards carry the new company logo.

To date, Telekom Malaysia has issued only one advertising phonecard

— the RM3 card for International Stamp & Coins. Only 3000 cards of this type were issued.

Telekom Malaysia selects telephone card designs to specifically promote Malaysian culture, scenery, artifacts, fauna and flora.

The company's third issue will depict scenery of the Malaysian countryside, in line with Telekom Malaysia's commitment towards preserving the natural environment.

The Phonecard Collector INFORMATION LINE

Manager, Payphone Division, Telekom Malaysia Headquarters, 16th Floor, Wisma Telekom, Jalan Pantai Bahru, 59200 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

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KF20

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KF13

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PHONECARD ORDER FORM

DESCRIPTION	PRICE IN MALAYSIAN RINGGIT	NUMBER OF ORDERS	COST
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KF1. (THE 1ST COLLECTOR'S SERIES)	RM 43.00/set	1	43
MALAYSIAN DELIGHTS SERIES			
KF2. RM50.00 - GOLDEN THREAD MATERIAL	RM50.00		
ECONOMY SERIES			
KF3. RM3.00 - RUBBER PLANTATION	RM 3.00		
KF4. RM5.00 - PADI FIELD	RM 5.00		
KF5. RM10.00 - TIN MINING	RM 10.00		
KF6. RM20.00 - OIL REFINERY	RM 20.00		
TRADITIONAL BUILDING SERIES			
KF7. RM3.00 - NATIONAL MUSEUM	RM 3.00		
KF8. RM5.00 - RONG SRI HALL	RM 5.00		
KF9. RM10.00 - TRADITIONAL MALAY HOUSE	RM 10.00		
KF10. RM20.00 - SULTAN IBRAHIM BUILDING	RM 20.00		
KF11. RM50.00 - OLD SRI MENANTI PALACE	RM 50.00		
GREEN CAMPAIGN SERIES			
KF12. RM3.00 - A SCENARIO OF MALAYSIAN NATURE	RM 3.00		
KF13. RM5.00 - GREENS WITHIN THE CITY	RM 5.00		
KF14. RM10.00 - ROLLING HILLS OF GREEN BLANKETS	RM 10.00		
GPT CARDS			
TOURIST ATTRACTIONS SERIES			
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KF18. RM20.00 - STADTHUYS BUILDING	RM 20.00		
KF19. RM50.00 - MUSLIM PILGRIM BUILDING	RM 50.00		
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KF20. RM3.00 - MALAY MARTIAL ART	RM 3.00		
KF21. RM10.00 - LITTLE GIRL	RM 10.00		
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Comment

The phonecard scene in Great Britain by Eric Elias.

CERTAIN paragraphs of my article published in **The Phonecard Collector** (September 1993) about telephone card collecting in Great Britain have caused great offence among fellow collectors and dealers in Britain.

They were not accurate. Any comments regarding 'yob elements' and 'theft' were garnered almost entirely from personal experiences and were in no way reflective of the conduct of the hobby in the UK in general.

I am given to understand that these irregularities appertain to isolated venues and individuals not representative of the hobby as a whole. Nor by implication did I wish to suggest that

those within the hobby were less than genteel. I did not wish to bring the image of the British into international disrepute.

I wholeheartedly retract any implied statement that fellow collectors and dealers, for whom I have great respect, are dishonest, disreputable, homeless or alcoholic. The hobby here is moving forward with an increasing amount of activity in *all* fields, especially British cards.

My reference to 'drunks', 'jobs' and 'homeless' was based on isolated incidents and has no bearing on the mainstream body of collectors who come from a huge variety of professions and walks of life.

I wholeheartedly apologise for any offence caused. I hope, however, that some good will come from all the discussion caused by my words and subsequent retraction. It would appear that there are similar, isolated incidents in other countries which have been brought to my attention during the recent debate.

As a footnote, the original article was prepared in April 1993. The June 1993 show referred-to was cancelled at short notice. It is expected to take place in 1994.

Come along readers and judge for yourself how the Great Britain telephone card scene really does make out. **EE**

The Phonecard Collector Display Advertising Rates

	Size (width × depth)	To be typeset	Camera-ready/Repeat
Full (1/1) page	177 × 270mm	A\$475	A\$415
Half (1/2) page	86 × 270mm or 177 × 133mm	\$280	\$230
One-third (1/3) page	55 × 270mm or 177 × 91mm	\$200	\$160
One-quarter (1/4) page . .	86 × 133mm or 177 × 64mm	\$160	\$125
"Mini-Display" ad	41 × 41mm	\$30	-

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CREDIT CARDS: All major credit cards are accepted for prepayment of advertisements.

DISCOUNTS: Advertisers who prepay by cheque or money order are entitled to a discount of 10% off the above rates (except for "Mini-Display" ads which are priced nett).

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Sydney View

with Opera House

THE past month has seen many price movements, especially for foreign cards. There has been a string of fairs in Sydney, Brisbane and Melbourne and for many a stamp dealer, sales of phonecards have proven to be the 'icing on the cake'.

There has been demand for a wide variety of cards at these shows, however the recent New Zealand Jurassic Park telephone cards seem to have been the most popular choice.

Mint prefix numbers continue to sell and demand is firm for Telecom Australia's collector's editions.

Collector's editions are edging up in price, especially the South Australia edition. I am surprised this one has taken so long to increase in price as it is quite difficult to buy wholesale. A fair retail price for this pack would be around \$120.

Likewise, the Geelong edition seems to have broken the \$100 barrier.

US cards

I have long been a supporter of United States cards, especially the New York issues. I recommended the Democrat Convention card at around \$27 as advertised in *The Stamp Collector* last year. Collectors are now paying over \$600 for this card!

The other obvious example is the first New York Skyline card which was selling for around \$13 at the same time. Look to pay around \$150 for this now.

New Aussie cards

The new Australian cards are certainly attracting the interest of younger collectors. Most readers will have learned by now that the days of finding *stacks* of cards in phonebooths are long gone!

Even for the most diligent card-seekers, the new \$20 cards are prov-

ing quite elusive. Whether with one-hole or multi-holes, the \$20 Landscape, \$20 Micro and \$20 Indigenous People are all hard to find.

Because of this, these cards are attracting a relatively high percentage of mint price at the fairs.

With Christmas almost upon us, we can celebrate the first anniversary of the \$1.50 Christmas card.

This card was the subject of some controversy, but has moved upwards in price again. For most of the year, the price stalled at around \$35 but you could expect to pay around \$50 for a mint example now.

Foreign cards

One of the attractions of foreign cards is the enormous range of styles to collect. General collectors seem to fall into one of several categories. One is the collector who collects one card from every country that issues cards and is not too fussy about *which* card. The second category is the thematic or topical collector who might be seeking trains, cats, ships, 'planes, famous people, Australia-related or other subjects on phonecards, from whatever country. Third is the collector who wants to get the *first* cards of each country. Fourth is the collector who seriously collects another country's cards in addition to those of his or her own home.

This last category of collecting could be a goldmine for the collector. If you concentrate on another country, you will inevitably end up knowing more than your dealer! In such cases you should be able to pick up the old bargain.

For example, European generic cards can be picked up from dealers for 50c to \$1 or so.

A check of any of the catalogues available will reveal that with many of these cards, there are many prints and types, as with Australian cards. Most are common, but some are quite scarce and expensive.



An in-depth study of this area could bring rich rewards.

Whilst on the subject of catalogues, I understand a new catalogue by S Hiscocks is in the pipeline. The recent volume covered phonecards of Great Britain and Ireland, whereas the next volume will concentrate on the cards of America, North and South and the islands of the Atlantic and the Caribbean.

Cook Islands

The Cook Islands are a tropical paradise and some recent phonecards represent the islands' picturesque features very well.

The first Cook Islands cards are NZ\$10 and \$20 denominations.

A new set of three cards from New Caledonia will also be popular set, despite a very high face value of around \$150. Don't expect to pay much less than \$200 for it. Phonecards are very popular in France and New Caledonia is a French Colony. Many of the cards will be used up by French expatriots calling home.

Prefix hunt

Some predicted the demise of the collection of prefixes. I can confirm that prefix hunting is still around and going strong.

Prices for the more elusive cards are remaining high. I believe that any of the cheaper cards from the Olympic series, particularly the \$10 and \$20 cards, may be a good buy.

For some reason, possibly because of their high face value, they haven't escalated as high as some of the other prints.

OH

Classical Chinese stamps on phonecards

Jiangsi province displays stamps on its phonecards.

THE first four sets in a series of telephone cards depicting popular modern Chinese stamps was issued by Jiangsi province, China, during October.

Goldfish

The first set of phonecards — 12 10 yuan cards — reproduces China's goldfish stamps issued in 1960. The crucian carp is the remote ancestor of the goldfish. There are records of the breeding of a gold-coloured variety of this carp in Jiaxing, Zhejiang province, during the Song Dynasty (AD 960-1279). After some 900 years of home breeding and artificial selection, the crucian carp has evolved into the many varieties of the goldfish which exist today. There are many varieties of goldfish. In terms of colour, there are orange, black, brown and blue goldfish. The 12 kinds of goldfish depicted on this series are among the most beautiful varieties, selected and bred with meticulous care by expert Chinese fish-breeders. In the order of the stamps, they are: Flossy balls with turned over gills; Black back dragon eye; Water bubble eye; Red tiger head; Pearl fish; Blue dragon eye; Sky gazer; Red cap; Purple cap; Red head; Pied dragon eye; and Red dragon eye.

Beijing Opera Facial make-up

This, the second series, reproduces a set of eight stamps issued in 1980 on eight 10 yuan phonecards.

The facial make-up of the Beijing opera is a plastic art with unique characteristics. Its aim is to show up the nature and special traits of an opera character through appropriate

exaggeration and symbolism. Based on the colour of the background, such make-up is divided into three kinds: red faces, white faces and black faces. Based on their composition, they are divided into regular faces, three-tile faces, crossed faces, six-part faces, broken faces and the like.

As a result of centuries of continued development and creation, there are today over 300 different facial make-ups. The ones selected for this new series are of well-known characters who are representative of different kinds of roles in Beijing opera.

In the order of the stamps, they are: Meng Liang, Li K'uei, Huang Kai, Sun Wu Kung, Lien P'o, Chang Fei, Lu Chih Shen and Tou Erh-tun.

The Twelve Beauties

The Twelve Beauties of Jinling is excerpted from the novel, *A Dream of Red Mansions*. (The Twelve Beauties of Jinling from *A Dream of Red Mansions* stamps were issued in 1981.) The phonecard series comprises 13 10 yuan phonecards (12 stamps and one miniature sheet are depicted on the cards). *A Dream of Red Mansions*, by Cao Zueqin (?-1763), the great Chinese novelist of the 18th century, is a literary masterpiece that ranks highly in both ideological and artistic value. It is not only one of the finest novels produced in China, but a gem in the world of literature. Scholars and readers of many lands have praised it highly ever since the first Chinese edition appeared over 200 years ago. In the order of the stamps, the phonecards show: Baoyu and Daiyu reading; Daiyu burying flowers; Baochai chasing a butterfly; Yuanchun visits her parents; Yingchun reciting Bud-

dhist sutras; Tanchun helps form a poetry society; Xichun drawing a picture; Xiangyun picking up a necklace; Liwan lecturing to her son; Xifeng hatches a plot; Sister Qiao escapes; Keqing at leisure; and Miao yu serving tea.

Female roles in Beijing opera

The fourth set of phonecards shows the stamps depicting female roles in Beijing opera, issued in 1983. The issue comprises eight 10 yuan phonecards. Beijing Opera, with a history of some 200 years, is one of the most important forms of China's traditional theatrical performances and is popular throughout the country. It prides on a rich and colourful repertoire and many different schools and styles. There are four main types of roles: sheng (male roles), dan (female roles), jing (painted faces), and chou (comedians). Based on the sex, age, position and personality of the characters, each of these roles is further divided into types according to the singing and acting. The dan specials consist of eight pieces, of which four are of the quing yi type (the quiet and gentle), two of the hua dan (the vivacious or dissolute) and one each of the dao ma dan (sword and horse type, women skilled in fighting with weapons) and wu dan (women with martial skills).

Next series

The next four sets in the Classical Chinese stamps on phonecards series from Jiangsi province will depict: Pilgrimage to the West; Galloping Horses; Suzhou Garden-Liu Yuan; and The Court Ladies. □



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