

ITCS News

JANUARY 1993

ISSUE No 8

Newsletter of the International Telephone Card Society

ITCS, Telecom Australia Payphone Services, PO Box 3964, Parramatta, NSW 2124

Editorial

Welcome to the January 1993 issue of ITCS News. I hope you have recovered from the Christmas festivities and I would like to take this opportunity of wishing you a happy and successful 1993 on behalf of everyone in the Collectors Group at Telecom Australia.

Telephone Card collecting continues to grow in popularity around the world with new members being added to the ITCS mailing list every day. Telecom Australia is now acknowledged amongst the world leaders in the Collectors market. The international status with which Telecom and ITCS News are held is reflected in a recent article published in *La Cote en poche*, a French journal

devoted exclusively to Phonecard Collecting.

1993 promises to be an exciting year with regards to releases of Australian Collectors Editions and for the first time Phonecards are being produced in Australia. For more information, see the Australian news in this issue.

In this issue we preview the Australian releases scheduled for 1993 and as usual, bring you news from Singapore, Malaysia and New Zealand. We will also bring you a report from the Auckland National Phonecard Fair and Exhibition which took place in October 1992. Australia is experiencing a growth in Phonecard activity and there are now many Clubs operating throughout

Australia. This issue we have a contribution from the North of the Yarra Phonecard Collectors Club, which looks at different ways of collecting by serial numbers as collecting becomes more specialised. We welcome contributions from collectors throughout Australia and around the world and thank all those who contributed articles for this issue.

The Editor

January 1993

All opinions expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of the editor. Where possible, articles contributed by members are verified, however Telecom Australia accepts no responsibility for the accuracy of information printed in ITCS News.

News from Singapore

Submitted by Edward Tan

Since Singapore Telecom was privatised on 1 April 1992, a new logo has been incorporated onto all the new phone cards.

The first official card (\$5 ISSPA), called "SKYPAGER" was released on 1 October 1992 with the new logo on the front and the back of the card. On the back of the card there are five lines of instructions with a 'B' imprinted on the top right hand corner. The new logo is on the left while the amount is on the right, which is the reverse of the old card. Corporate cards do not show either the old or new logo on the front of the card.

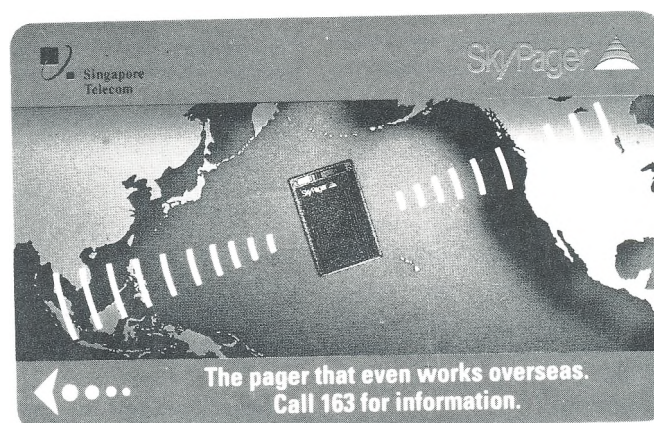
Skypager is an international paging service using pagers that not only work in Singapore, but throughout the world.

The first Government Phonecard to be introduced is the Household Expenditure Survey which is being conducted by the Statistics Department. For the entire month of October in 1992 over 8,000 households were surveyed. Each was given a \$2 Phonecard as a souvenir upon completion of the one week survey. The \$2 SHEA Phonecard is an attractive card in yellow with multi-colour shades spreading towards extreme top left and bottom right.

Two NEC Phonecards were released to the public in September 1992 at the Comcentre. The \$2 (2SNEA) and \$5 (2SNEB) cards are printed in multi-colours and depict NEC Printers. An additional square box can be found on the top left and right for 2SNEA and 2SNEB respectively, and both cards have a 'B' imprinted on the top right hand corner.

Two cards were released to commemorate the opening of the PSA Brani Terminal by the Prime Minister of

Singapore on 22 October 1992. The cards (\$2 ISBTA and \$2 ISBTB) were printed in multi-colours and sold at the Comcentre, Orchard Road, which drew huge crowds for two consecutive days. The \$2 card (ISBTA) shows an island surrounded by giant cranes ready to transport containers from ships onto prime movers to be transported away, while the \$2 card (ISBTB) depicts prime movers entering the checkpoint at PSA Gate 4 Brani terminal. Both cards have a 'B' imprinted on the top right hand corner.



Telecom Australia

Australian News

The big news in Australia for 1993 is that for the first time Telecom Phonecards are being produced in Australia. Previously all Australian Phonecards were manufactured in Japan by a company called Toppan. In early December 1992 a contract was signed with Leigh-Mardon Pty Ltd, an Australian company specialising in the production of plastic cards, embossing and encoding. While the majority of cards will now be produced in Australia, links will be maintained with Japan.

Production of the Endangered Species issue started shortly after contracts were signed. The issue is the first to be produced in Australia, however the first Australian produced Phonecard to be encoded and released for sale in the Australian marketplace is likely to be the new \$20 generic card — the barrier reef design. This is due to stock control and market demand.

Collectors will notice from the new generic series that Phonecards will now carry bar codes on the reverse side of the card. Two bar codes appear, the largest is the standard EAN bar code used for price swiping in supermarkets etc. and will assist resellers with stock control. The smaller of the two bar codes is for internal stock control within Telecom. The serial number will continue to appear in readable form for the convenience and interest of collectors.

Australian production will mean reduced lead time and increased flexibility, and eventually a greater frequency of designs. The cards will be produced on identical material to those manufactured in Japan, using an offset printing method. The smaller bar code and serial number are ink jet printed onto the card, which is approximately ten times faster than the hot stamped numbering system used in Japan.

Leigh-Mardon is one of only two security printers in Australia, with Phonecard printing capabilities in the order of one million cards a month which can be expanded relatively easily as demand increases. Leigh-Mardon were chosen by Telecom due to their dedication to high quality, security and customer satisfaction.

Australian Phonecard releases for 1993

Australia Day 1993

The 1993 Australia Day Phonecard celebrates Australia Day on January 26.

Showing the smiling faces of three children, the design reflects the national pride Australians feel as they join together to celebrate in a brilliant and colourful Australian summer.

Australia Day marks the occasion when

Captain Phillip and the First Fleet sailed into Port Jackson and established the settlement which is now Sydney.

The \$5 card, designed by Sydney artist Graham Austin, will be released in a special edition collectors pack and will also be available for sale unpackaged.

Print run 450,000

Serial number range 24150000-24599999



Endangered Species Series

Australia has seen more of its mammal species become extinct in the last 200 years than any other continent in the world. Add to this the birds, reptiles, fish, amphibians, insects and plants and we have a picture of a nation faced with the potential loss of thousands of unique species. The Endangered Species series highlights this problem by featuring three of Australia's threatened animals. The set includes a \$5 Hairy-nosed Wombat, a \$5 Bridled Naitail Wallaby and a \$10 Numbat. The cards will be available in a special collectors edition or unpackaged. Due for release in February.



New Generic Series

The new generic series will be available from March 1993 (the \$20 card will be released in February). There are four Phonecards in the set which will replace the previous generic series bearing the Phonecard logo. The series feature well-known Australian scenes and animals and are designed to appeal to the growing Australian tourist market: a \$5 Sydney Opera House and Harbour Bridge, a \$10 kangaroo with Uluru in the background, a \$20 Great Barrier Reef and a \$50 koala. Designed by Sydney artist Alvaro Zarelli, the cards will not be available as a packaged collectors set. Due for release in March.

Year of Indigenous People

A special series of three Phonecards has

been commissioned by Telecom Australia to commemorate 1993 — The UN Year of Indigenous Peoples. The three cards — a \$5, \$10 and \$20 card — will be designed by an Australian Aboriginal artist. Due for release at the end of April.

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Planned releases for the rest of 1993 are a landscape series, a sporting series and the second Phonecard Design Award. This national competition is run by Telecom Australia in conjunction with the Australian Graphic Design Association and is open to final-year, full-time tertiary graphic design students. Due for release in November.

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Now available is *Collect Australian Phonecards*, the 1993 Australian Phonecard Catalogue produced by Graham Bird and Ken Sparks. This is an updated version of the original Australian Phonecard Catalogue, and includes articles, price listings, printing, number and design information as well as full colour illustrations. The catalogue is available from dealers, newsagents, booksellers or through Lighthouse Philatelics, PO Box 487 Forestville, NSW 2087. The recommended retail price is \$8.95.

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From 27 February 1993 the \$2 Telecom Phonecard will no longer be available. The \$2 Phonecard was offered to give Australians the opportunity to try the Phonecard system for the first time. Research now shows that 97% of Australians are aware of Telecom Phonecards and that sales of the \$2 card have dropped by more than half.

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The first major Australian Phonecard fair will be held in Sydney on Sunday 14 March 1993 and is expected to attract dealers from Australia, New Zealand and overseas. The Australian International Phonecard Fair, one of three major hobby fairs in Sydney during March, will be held in the Holiday Inn Menzies.

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1992 Christmas Phonecards

\$1.50 card: print run 10,000

Serial number range 2185000-2185999

\$5 card: print run 500,000

Serial number range 21900000-21999999

22720000-23019999

23020000-23020000

\$10 card: print run 300,000

Serial number range 22000000-22099999

23120000-23319999



Telecom Australia

News from New Zealand

Submitted by **Alan Kilpatrick**, PO Box 589, Dunedin, New Zealand

The Phonecard scene has been very active in New Zealand in recent weeks with a new issue, the appearance of the first four advertising cards and a major variety — all creating a great amount of interest and excitement amongst New Zealand collectors.

1992 Maori Legend Series

The final issue of standard issue cards for 1992, The Maori Legends set of four, was released on 16 November. The issue appears to be a cross between a special and definitive issue, with numbers produced for each card being significantly higher than for a normal special issue. Two thousand collectors packs were also produced and these were released a few weeks later. The designs, control numbers and production figures are as follows:

\$5	Maui Slows Down the Sun	132B	263,000
\$5	Maui Fishes Up the North Island	131B	263,000
\$10	Rona is Abducted by the Moon	131C	239,000
\$20	Tane Separates the Sky from the Earth	131D	106,000

These very attractive and colourful cards are the work of Auckland designer Manu Smith.

Advertising Cards

New Zealand is now entering the era of widespread availability of a large range of advertising cards. Most issues will consist of at least 10,000 cards. These

advertising cards are a new service being promoted by Telecom New Zealand. The cards are printed in New Zealand on blanks supplied by GPT of England. The control number of the blanks used to date is 'CCIB' and is the same for all the cards outlined below.

The first of these was produced for the inaugural Auckland Phonecard Expo. (See below for a full report.) The Air Expo 92 was promoted on another \$5 card. There were 20,000 cards produced which were released mainly through retail outlets in and around the airport area of Auckland.

The 13th New Zealand Scout Jamboree, held at Upper Hutt in early January 1993 was illustrated on another private issue \$5 card. The print run was 15,000 with cards being sold by the Scout Association.

The last in the series was the card advertising DB Bitter Beer. Dominion Breweries commissioned 10,000 \$5 cards which were available for purchase from DB Associated outlets.

Major New Error

Mentioned in the last issue of ITCs News was the Winter Sports Series \$10 Hockey card, bearing the inscription intended for the back of the Rugby card. The latest discovery is the \$5 Netball card from the same issue, with the reverse inscription reading 'Hockey in New Zealand'. A reasonable number of mint cards were discovered at their 'source' which have already found homes with eager collectors.

Auckland Phonecards Society Expo

The Auckland Phonecard Society inaugural Phonecard Expo was held at Avondale Racecourse on the 25 and 26 October 1992. This was the first large phonecard display and sale to be held in Auckland and was a major highlight on the collectors calendar. The Expo attracted about 1500 people who came to buy, sell, trade, view the displays and purchase the special commemorative card produced by the Auckland (NZ) Phonecard Society with the support of Telecom.

The commemorative card which featured a colour picture of the Avondale spider, proved very popular with visitors. These were available for sale at the Expo in a small folder for \$6 each, with a limit of two per person. There were 5000 Spider Cards commissioned by the Auckland Phonecard Society and produced by Telecom, with 750 retained for Collector Services.



Collecting by Serial Numbers

Submitted by **Marg Hutton**

North of the Yarra Phonecard Collectors Club, P.O. Box 197, Heidelberg West, VIC 3081

Collecting Australian Phonecards by serial numbers adds another dimension to the hobby. There are two basic approaches: firstly, collecting one example of every Phonecard from each batch run printed or collecting one Phonecard of every type from every 100,000 printed.

These two approaches can be best explained by looking at actual examples. Consider the \$10 cartoon, ID code A920103-3. The serial number range for this card is

00000199970000-0000020159999,

with every number in the range being printed. Batch run collectors would only have one card of this type in their collections whilst those who collect one card from every hundred thousand printed would have three-serial number prefixes 199, 200 and 201.

If batch run collectors have only one example of the first print \$10 cartoon in their collections, how does batch run collecting differ from print-run collecting where one card of every different ID code type is collected? This can be answered by looking at another example — the \$2 echidna card, ID code T5C1. This card was printed in 1991 in eight separate batch runs. (A batch being defined as a continuous run of serial numbers without a gap.) The serial number prefixes of these batches are 49,50,57,58,59,80,81 and 82. The significant point about the echidna card is that the ID code did not change from batch to batch. Therefore, collectors assembling a collection of Australian phonecards by ID code would have only one example of the echidna in their collections whilst serial number collectors would have eight.

There can be no doubt that considering

serial numbers enhances the enjoyment gained from collecting. But which approach is preferable? Whilst this is really a matter of taste, one thing is certain — many collectors who attempt to build their collections by accumulating one example from every 100,000 printed are destined never to complete their collections. There are several hundred cards where only 600 of a particular hundred thousand serial number range exist. For example, consider the \$50 generic. It was printed in March 1992 with a serial range of 0000012999400-0000013099999.

Obviously, there can only ever be 600 collectors at the most with a 129 \$50 generic in their collection. It would appear that collecting by batch runs is perhaps a more realistic alternative for Australian collectors who wish to build collections based on serial numbers.



Telecom Australia

News from Sweden

With thanks to Alan Parris

Linstudy — The NZ Phonecard People, PO Box 24-199, Christchurch, New Zealand

Sweden was first involved with Phonecards as early as 1981 when over 200,000 Landis and Gyr optical cards were produced and used on a limited basis over a two year period. In 1987 GPT equipment was used in a series of trials and two years later a further trial of Tamura magnetic cards was carried out. Finally in 1989 a totally different system based on Schlumberger chip cards was introduced. Collecting in Sweden seems to have been slow in developing so even the latest cards are not common. Most of the public issues appear to have been

released in reasonable quantities. However private issue advertising cards, which have been available since 1989, have print runs as low as 100 so are unlikely to feature in many collections.

Cards are issued in unit values of 10u, 25u, 50u, 100u and 150u. All the large issue public cards appear to come with a variety of chip types which can add considerable value to a collection. The reverse side of the Swedish cards appears to follow a fairly standard pattern, with each card carrying a brief description of the illustration and credits for the source

of the picture. The statistical information on the bottom line of the card is in the form:

LZYA 60102/016 1992 02 100.000

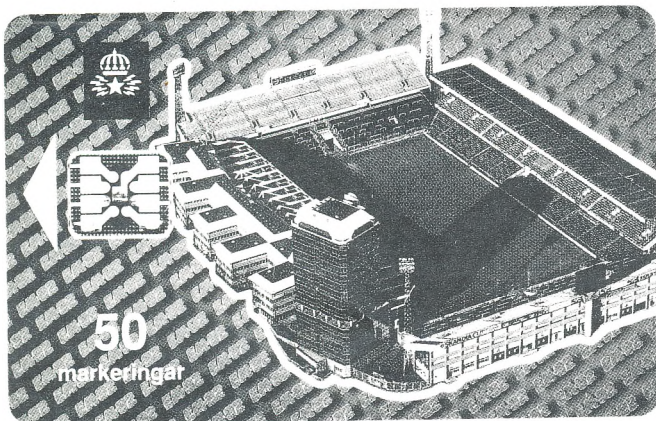
The first five digits give the unit value:

60105 = 25 units

60102 = 50 units

60103 = 100 units

The next three digit number gives the card number in the unit sequence. This is followed by the year and month of manufacture eg 1992 02 = February '92. The final five or six digits tell the quantity of cards printed.



News from Malaysia Submitted by Jimmy Chang

Deepavali — The Festival of Light

A Malaysian card celebrating Deepavali was issued in December 1992. The \$10 card commemorates Deepavali, the most important Hindu festival, also known as the Festival of Lights, which fell on 26 December. The festival is observed by the Indian community which make up about 10% of the Malaysian population.

Deepavali marks the victory of Sri Krishna, the reincarnation of Vishnu over the demon King Narakasura. It is a classic tale of the triumph of good over evil. This is symbolised by the lighting of oil

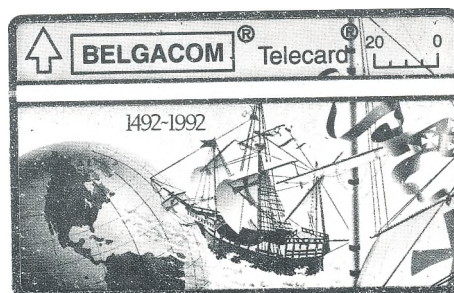
lamps to dispel the spiritual darkness, hence its name. Lights can be seen in all Hindu homes. While this is a Hindu festival, all Malaysians join in the celebrations as with major Malaysian celebrations — it is 'open house' and all guests are welcome.

The elegant card to mark the celebration is issued by Uniphone, one of the two Phonecard companies in Malaysia. A single peacock feather (the holy bird) over a purple background appears on the card. The control prefix on the reverse is 30 MSAA. This card can be included in a thematic collection of

Festival cards of Malaysia, which has so far included cards celebrating the Chinese New Year and Hari Raya Puasa. A card celebrating Christmas is also expected, but at the time of publication, details were not known. As Malaysia is a multi-racial, multi-religious country, all these occasions are public holidays.

Uniphone Telecommunications Berhad first started issuing cards to the Malaysian public in March 1990 and of the two phonecard companies in Malaysia, it is by far the more prolific. It caters for a higher volume market and has the monopoly in large towns and cities.

Some International Phonecards



Telecom Australia