



I. B. MATHEWS *et al.* *Transvaal philately*. Reijger Publishers: Cape Town, 1986. 291pp. Illus. R150,00 (exclusive). ISBN 0 620 09752 3. (Luxury edition: R225,00 (exclusive), ISBN 0 620 09753 1).

The subtitle of this large and handsome volume is "the stamps, forgeries, postal history and miscellanea of the Transvaal territories from inception to Union". For the foreseeable future it will undoubtedly be regarded as the definitive work on the subject and it has already won for its author an international gold medal. Major Ian Mathews is a retired British

Army officer who was honorary editor of the South African Stamp Study Circle newsletter. He is currently president of that body, as well as being the Southern African representative of the Transvaal Study Circle. He is also the author of a number of articles on philately, while his co-authors (K.A. Baker, B.J. Bowden, D. Crocker, G.H. Jonkers, J. Kaupe, D. van Zeyl and M. Wigmore) are all experts in their particular fields.

Part 2 of the publication provides a fascinating overview of the development of postal services. A chapter on postal markings is followed by one listing Transvaal post offices with the dates of their establishment, where this could be determined, and the type of canceller used, where known. Also included is information on postal rates and a listing of internal mails

which includes a reproduction of a map issued by the postal authorities in 1899 of the Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek (ZAR). Interestingly enough the name "Johannesburg" does not appear on this map, although Krugersdorp, Benoni and Springs are marked.

A particularly interesting chapter by K.A. Baker deals with external mails. These include, in addition to the Transvaal, Colesberg and the Orange River Sovereignty (later the Orange Free State), the Transvaal-Natal route and the Transvaal-Cape route. The author describes how mail was carried (in wagons and stage-coaches) and the Cape-Transvaal schedule giving times of dispatch and arrival of mail from Cape Town during the period 1870-1899, when the service was suspended due to the outbreak of the Anglo-Boer War. Following this is a description of the routes to the north, the Pietersburg route and Transvaal mail routes to foreign countries, including Australia and New Zealand, Portugal, India, China and the Far East. Another section deals with the conveyance of mail during the Anglo-Boer War and its aftermath.

In Part 3 (Miscellany) there is an account of the Nieuwe Republiek which came into being in August 1884 and was incorporated into the ZAR as the Vryheid district four years later. The area's postage stamps are described in detail, including the forgeries. There is a chapter which describes the railways of the Transvaal and the various stamps used by the railway authorities. A section of this chapter deals with travelling post offices.

This publication will prove to be of as much interest and value to the historian as to the philatelist.

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