

## LOOKING INTO THE PAST

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[Editor's Note: As I have been recently reviewing past issues of the journal while preparing an updated Index for Volumes 1 through 60, I encountered many articles in issues from 30 years ago and more that still hold interest today. I intend to republish some of them in upcoming editions with updated images. Here Don Wright starts this program off with some reminiscing about stamp issuing policies over the years.]

As we discussed, here is a bit of Looking Back 50 Years. We complain about too many new issues nowadays, but with only 13 new stamps a year in 1959, the problem was just the reverse. I started collecting insects on stamps because with a new house and new baby, I just could not afford to continue my British Commonwealth and US collections. I sold them as part of the down payment on the house and figured collecting insect stamps would be inexpensive. I almost gave up even that when the following year they declared 1962 to be International Malaria Year. The flood of mosquito stamps was almost more than I could handle, except I got a big raise in salary that year.

In the course of looking up other information, I ran across an old note in *Bio-Philately*, Volume 12, Number 6, June-July 1963, page 209, "A Checklist of Insects on Stamps," by this author.

**TUMBLE BUG or DUNG BEETLE**, *Copris* sp.

SPAIN. 1935. Sc#552, A116, 15c myrtle green. This has been identified as a COCKROACH in most lists, and I must admit it looks like one. However, Jack C. von Bloeker wrote me years ago the following: "The subject of the stamp was copied from an old woodcut in the 1st edition of Lope de Vega's "La Dorotea." The original woodcut is inscribed in Latin: "Odore enecat suo. Audax dum vegae irrumpit Scarabaeus in hortis, fragrantis perlit victis odore Rosea." (It brings death by its own odor. As soon as the daring Scarab Beetle (or Dung Beetle) rushes into the gardens of Vega, it is perished, overcome by the fragrance of the Rose's odor.)

The belief originated from the ancient idea that evil-smelling, dung-inhabiting scarabs were repelled by fragrant odors. De Vega employed the theme of a scarab expiring on a bed of roses as a means of expressing contempt for his contemporary literary critics.

Interestingly, This checklist by country and by taxonomy took 22 typed pages to cover all insect stamps issued up to 1963, and did not list any stamps showing the Monarch Butterfly. Compare that with Handbook 150 that contains 457 pages, in a smaller font, to cover the years 1992–2002 and lists 97 entries for the Monarch. Note also that there were six issues per year.

Looking back even further, I found in *Biology Tidbits*, as it was then known, Volume 9, Number 4, February-March 1960, pages 179–80, "Insects on Stamps of 1959," by Jack von Bloeker. Here he lists only four sets with of a total of 13 stamps for all of 1959. How times have changed!




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## NEW MEMBERS

The Biology Unit welcomes the following new members:

1833	Cochrane, William; Castlemaine, NSW AUSTRALIA	(2, 5)
1834	Andrews, Sarah; Germantown, PA	(5)
1835	Clark, Michael; Pound Ridge, NY	medical, pharma