

Dr. Arthur K.M. Woo's Buenos Aires exhibit wins the top prize at the 2009 UK National Stamp Exhibition held in London

A first time entry of a five frame exhibit of Buenos Aires shown by Dr. Arthur K.M. Woo scooped a Large Gold medal and the Grand Prix top prize at the recent UK National Stamp Exhibition held in London from 16th to 19th September 2009 despite some very strong competition from excellent collections of Cape of Good Hope triangulars, Classic Swiss Cantonals and USA 1847-1857. The latter collection, a first time exhibit from Mr. Joseph Hackmey of London, was awarded the Reserve Grand prize.

Dr. Woo is a Fellow of the Royal Philatelic Society in London and a member of the American Philatelic Society.



Buenos Aires issued its first stamps in April 1858, Two different series of stamps were issued. The first are known as the “Barquitos” and all feature the famous ‘steamship’ vignette. There were three separate issues of “Barquitos” stamps in the 1858-59 period. The second series are known as the “Cabecitas” and feature a ‘Liberty Head’ vignette. There are two easily distinguishable issues of these second series stamps made in 1859 and 1862 respectively. Buenos Aires joined the Republic of Argentina in 1862 and thereafter ceased to issue its own stamps however, they did remain valid for postage through to the early 1864 period.

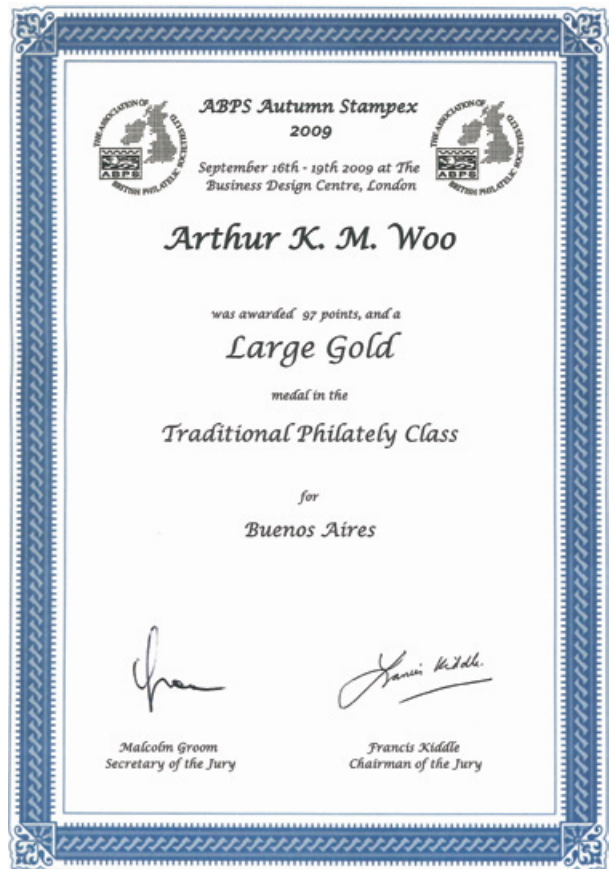
The winning collection commenced with a set of the unadopted 1857 “Gauchitos” essays in blocks of four followed by the 1858-59 “Barquitos” stamps which were very well represented with mint and used

examples of all values including complete platings of the 2p, 4r, 1p brown and 1p blue values. There were many pairs and strips throughout, several of which are the largest recorded multiples. It is worth mentioning that there are no recorded blocks of any of the “Barquitos” stamps. The largest recorded multiple of a “Barquitos” stamp is a strip of four and the two recorded strips of four were both shown in this exhibit. Usages on cover included the finest of the two recorded 2p bisect covers, overseas usages to Europe, usages to Uruguay, Paraguay and Chile, two single 3p value covers, one of two recorded single 4p covers and the finest of the three recorded 5p covers. Rare multiple frankings with pairs, strips of three and strips of four were also shown on cover as well as three of the four recorded two-value combination covers including the famous 3p + 4p franking pictured in the Kneitschel catalogue.



The crown jewel of Buenos Aires philately is the unique vertical tete-beche pair of the 1858 1p blue and this was also shown along with the unique example of the same value with the “printed on both sides” variety. The tete-beche variety is actually listed on the first page of William’s Encyclopaedia Book of Rare and Famous Stamps and has not been seen at a major show since it was last exhibited over 10 years ago in the Court of Honour at Anphilex in New York in 1996.

The 1859-62 “Cabecitas” issues were represented with die proofs plus the unique plate proof block



of the 1p value as well as a very fine group of both mint and used multiples including most of the largest recorded pieces. Covers were also well represented with two examples of the rare single 4r green franking as well as a rare strip of three 4r on cover. The 1p blue included two of the rare ‘BUENOS AIRES’ omitted varieties and some lovely examples of the double prints while usages on cover included two single frankings to France, pairs and a strip of three as well as a spectacular usage on a ‘Mensajeiras’ (stagecoach) service. The 2p carmine included single usages, a pair on cover, combination frankings with the 1p blue and two of the four known bisect usages. The later colour changes included a cover to Rosario with four examples of the 1p rose, while 2p blue usages included a combination usage with the 1p rose, a strip of four on cover and a small but remarkable section of combination usages with Republican issues which finished with the only recorded usage with a 10c “Escudito” value.