

SERENDIPITY

How it works



Bavaria 1910 private order postal card Munich Exhibition

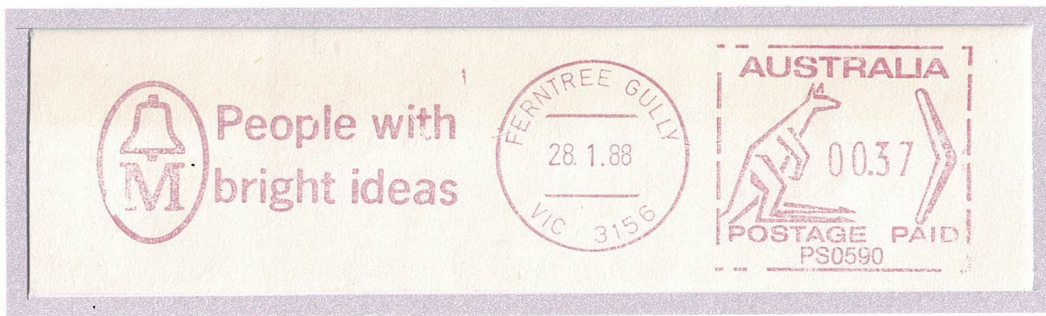
From early roots in an old Persian fairy tale, serendipity has assisted the human mind to make unexpected connections, leading to great innovations for the benefit of mankind.

Understanding how serendipity works may allow us to channel this phenomenon for even greater benefits as well as inspiring a positive outlook for the future.

1. Fortuitous Discovery
2. Not Just a Happy Accident
3. The Prepared Mind
4. Right Time Right Place
5. Learning from Mistakes
6. Recognising Potential
7. Inspiring the Future

1. FORTUITOUS DISCOVERY

Serendipity is a happy but unexpected discovery when looking for something entirely different, often leading to a good idea or solution.



Postalia PS4 wide design multivalued for Klockner Moeller

History abounds with examples of important findings thought to be serendipitous in nature:

Archimedes' Principle from a "Eureka" moment in the bath,



Austria 1980 Black print

the recovery of the Rosetta Stone,



Specimen

Isaac Newton's discovery of gravity after an apple fell to the ground while he rested under a tree,



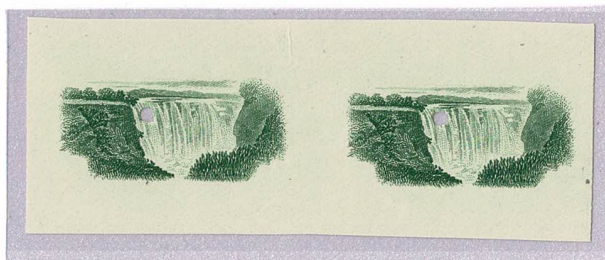
David Livingstone's sighting and naming of Victoria Falls when looking for a trade route across the African continent,



Waterlow & Sons Ltd, London Frame Proof



1932 Issued stamp



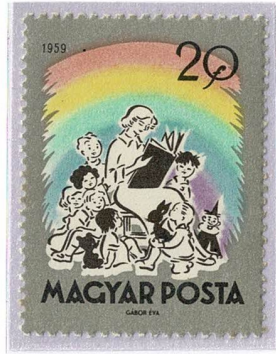
Vignette Proof

and the Big Bang theory of Creation.



1 Fortuitous Discovery

The word "Serendipity" was coined by Horace Walpole, an English historian in 1754 to describe a type of discovery he had read about in an old Persian fairy tale called *The Three Princes of Serendip*.



Serendip was an Arabic name for the exotic island kingdom that later became Ceylon, and is now known as Sri Lanka.

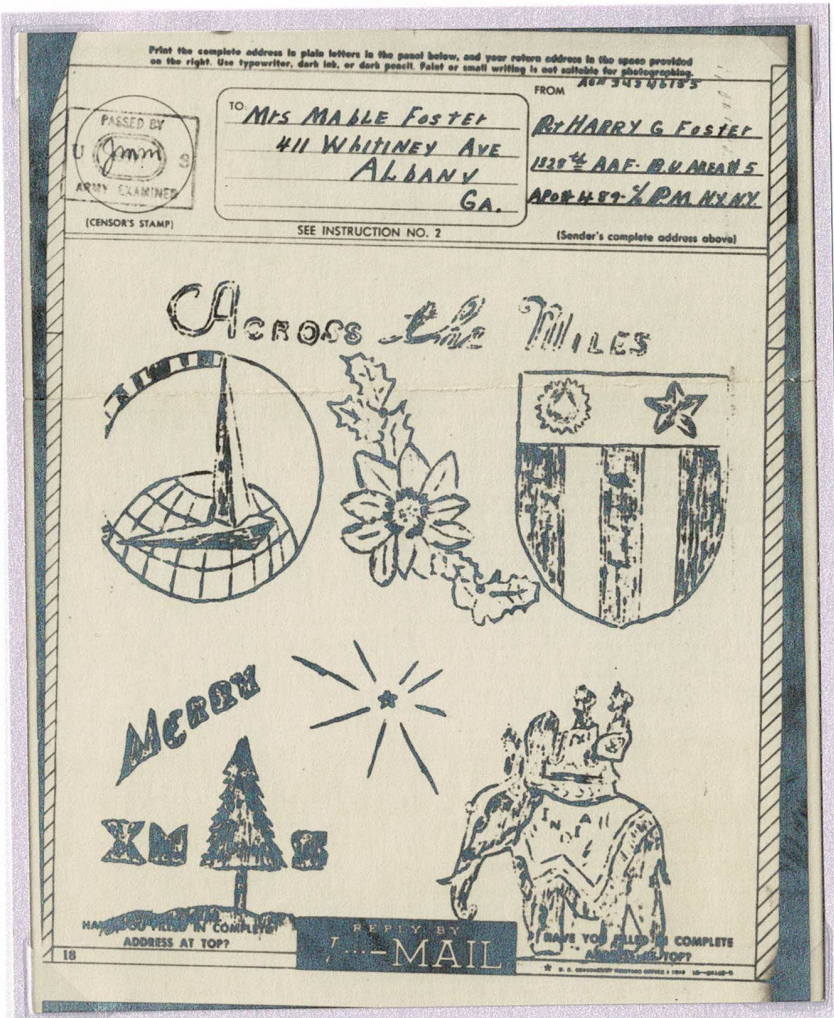


As the three princes traveled around the country,



Plate Proof in issued colours

they were always discovering things by accident and astuteness that were not related to their quest.



USA 1944 V-Mail from India-China division of Air Transport Command flying "The Hump" from Misamari to resupply the war effort in China.



Surcharge

2. Not Just a HAPPY ACCIDENT

While a serendipitous event always results in a happy outcome,



2 Not just a HAPPY ACCIDENT

it does not occur simply through accidental coincidences or random processes producing the occasional beneficial result.



Permit Mail



Specimen



France 1942 booklet 20 stamps 1.50Fr Petain

Luck, chance or fate definitely plays a part in the initial “happy accident” but the ability to recognize and capitalise are critical components.



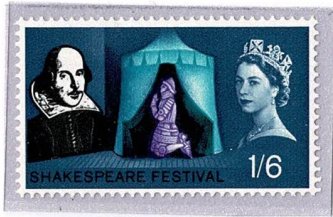
Prague to Capajuvovo October 5th, 1973 Printed matter rate 40h (<50g) underpaid by 20h and taxed an extra 20h

3. The PREPARED MIND

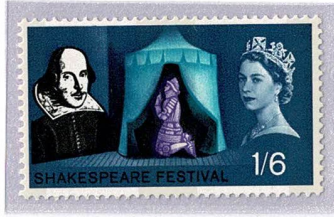
Fundamental to serendipity is the ability of knowledgeable minds to benefit from chance occurrences.

Louis Pasteur, one of the founders of the science of microbiology, conveyed this by famously declaring that in the field of observation:

"Chance favours only the prepared mind".



Normal



3 Phosphor bands

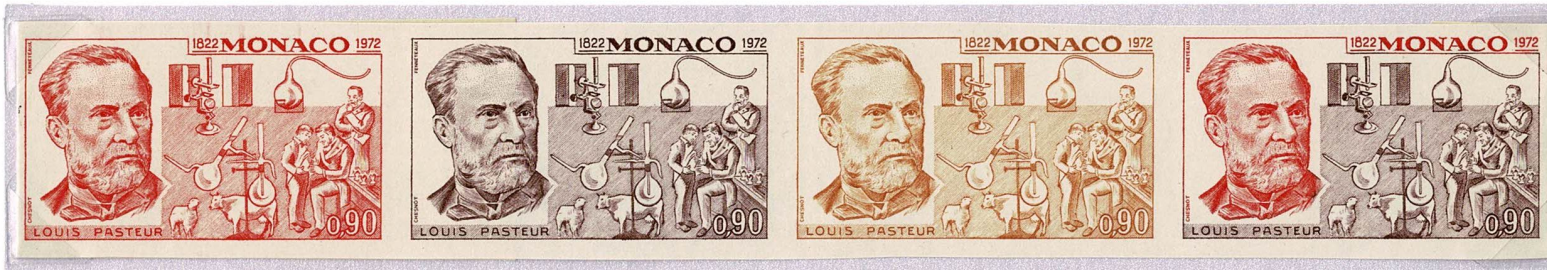


Millesime

This echoed a very similar idea expressed in the play "Henry V" written 250 years before by Shakespeare:

"All things are ready if our minds be so".

Pasteur's own research led to many breakthroughs on the causes and preventions of diseases.



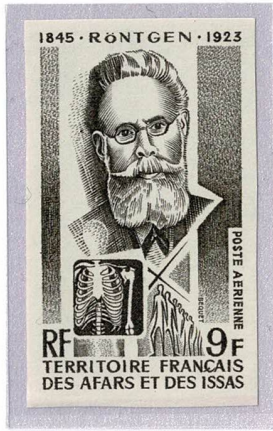
Monaco 1972 Trial colour proof strip



France 1938 Paris-Geneva First airmail flight without surcharge

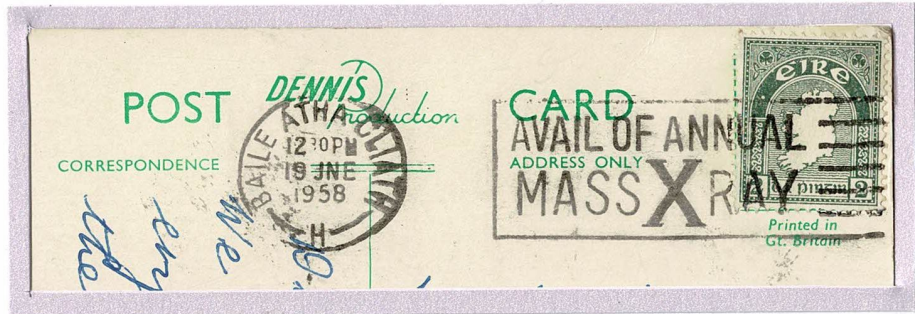
3 The Prepared Mind

An underlying thirst for knowledge stimulates the curiosity of the well-prepared mind.



1973 Trial colour proof

Physicist Wilhelm Rontgen typified this when he questioned unexpected behaviour while studying cathode rays, leading to his discovery of X-rays, now a standard medical tool.



Another factor that allows serendipity to work is the ability to keep an open mind, accepting the wonders of life while questioning the causes.



NSW 1896 1 1/2d postal card Sydney to Stourport England

Like other creative areas, the disconnect enforced by physical activity after intense concentration can act as a stimulus for problem-solving and new ideas.



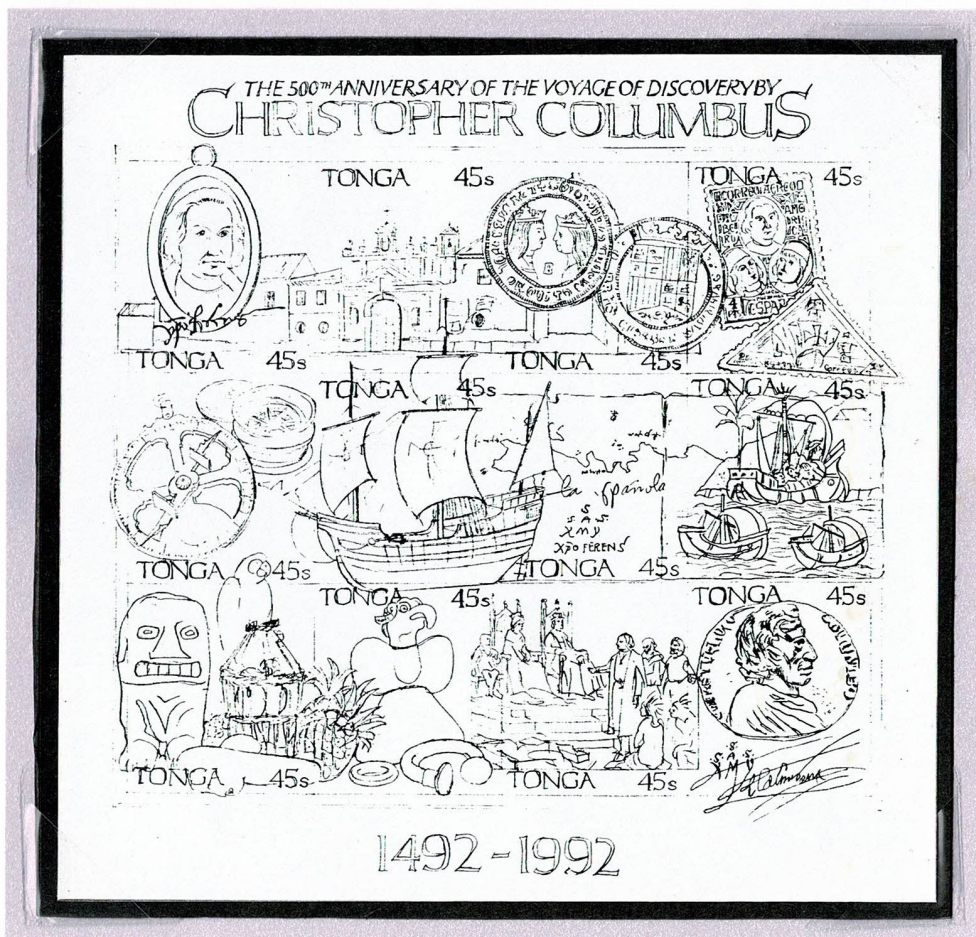
Germany 2001 Francotyp-Postalia : "EFS3000/NEF300" multivalve

4. RIGHT TIME, RIGHT PLACE

Serendipity can be triggered by being in the right place at the right time. Christopher Columbus made multiple voyages across the Atlantic in search of a faster route to Asia for the spice trade.



USA 1894 Cladewater Texas to Atlanta Georgia 2c envelope (1st class rate for domestic mail) + uprated 2c for additional 1oz plus 4 x 2c block on reverse to pay the registration fee of 8c = 12c



Tonga 1992 - Preliminary artwork for Columbus souvenir sheet reduced to final size for presentation to officials for approval – ONLY ONE IN EXISTENCE

Instead, he landed on and explored parts of the American continent



Colour Trial in Lake

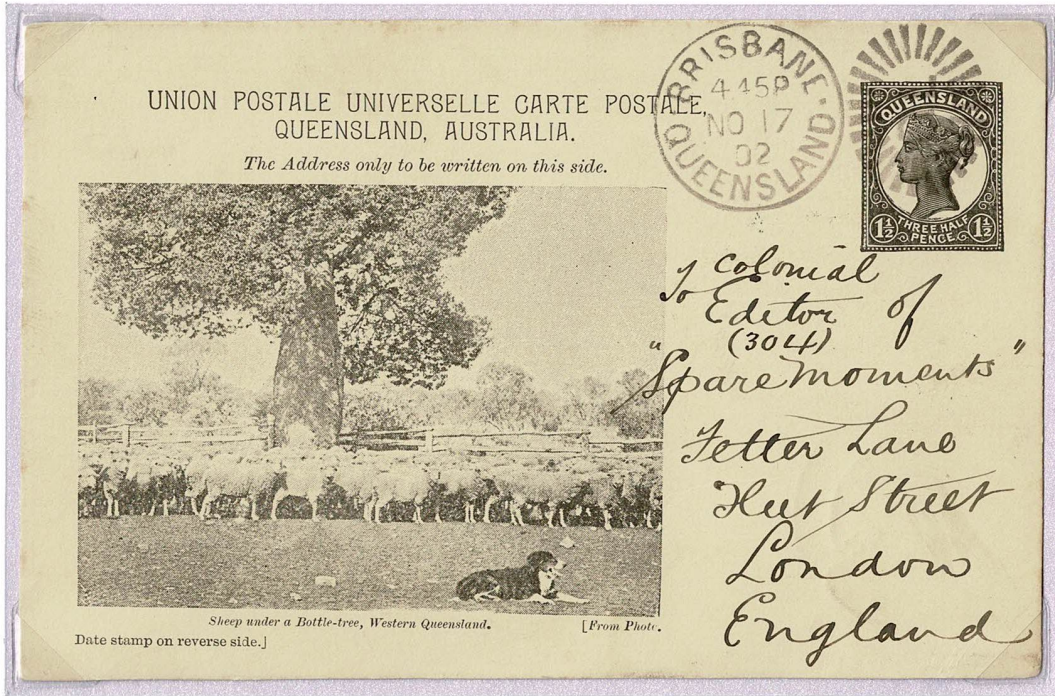
and among non-native peoples, is considered the true discoverer of America.



4 Right Time, Right Place

The Australian town of Come-by-Chance, named after the opportune purchase of a local sheep station, was immortalized in a ballad by the poet Banjo Paterson:

*"Quite by chance I came across it
Come-by-Chance was what I read"*



In Canada, the accidental discovery of a desirable natural harbour in the 1700s led to its naming as Come-by-Chance, now one of the country's busiest oil ports.

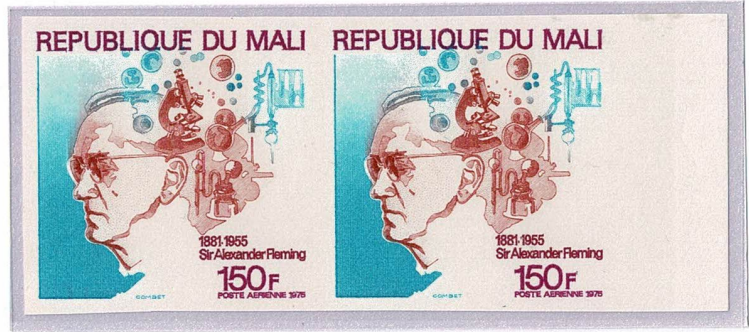


Come-by-Chance Newfoundland to USA 27th Sep 1927 4c letter rate (2oz) + registration fee 10c and "U.S. Customs Passed Free" handstamp

5. LEARNING from MISTAKES

The unexpected event that is central to serendipity often stems from accidents or mistakes.

The invention of penicillin by Alexander Fleming arose from a mould that had accidentally contaminated an experimental culture.



It is thought that cheese was first discovered by accident, from the storage and transport of milk in leak-proof bags made from the stomachs of ruminant animals such as sheep and camels



Specimen

which made the milk curdle and form a soft cheese.



Sudan 1948 Fifth Permanent Issue: "Nun" flaw bottom right (2/3)

Native tribes are believed to have accidentally discovered the use of quinine to treat malarial fever.

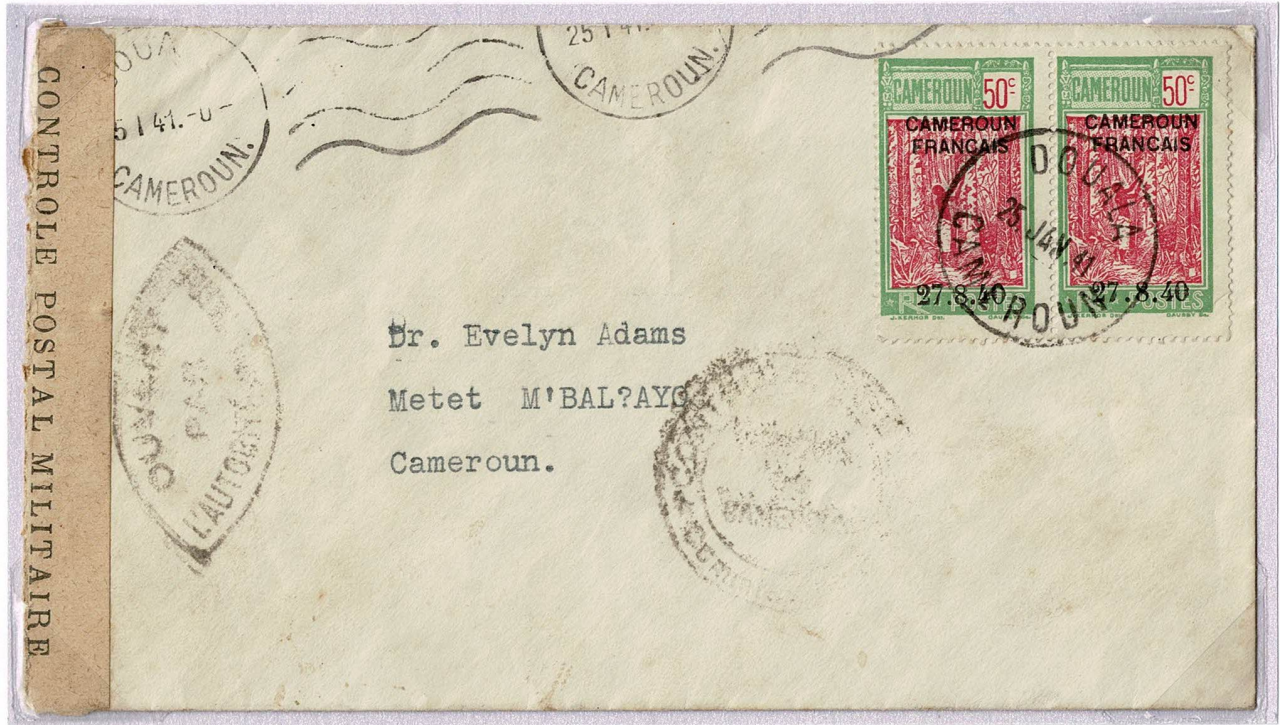


The active therapeutic ingredient was eventually isolated by Pelletier and Caventou.



5 Learning from Mistakes

Natural rubber had limited use until Charles Goodyear developed the process of vulcanization through inadvertently leaving rubber and sulphur on a hot plate.



Cameroun 1941 internal censored cover Douala to Mbalmayo with double-ring military cachet and "Controle Postal Militaire" label

The durable non-sticky result revolutionized the use of rubber for motor vehicle tyres



and its elasticity led to extensive use for suspension and damping in rail transport and industry.



Proof



SPECIMEN Proof



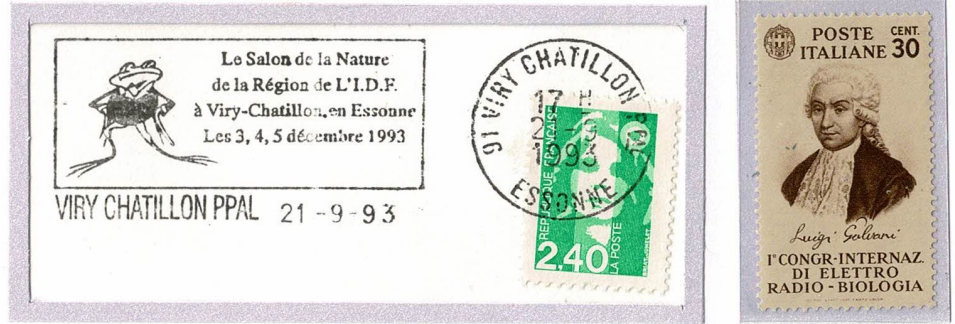
Imprint block



6. RECOGNISING POTENTIAL

The ability to recognise the potential of an observation or discovery to achieve important leaps in understanding, is the final piece of the serendipity puzzle.

The observations of an "animal electricity" in frog's legs by Galvani set the basis for modern neurophysiology.

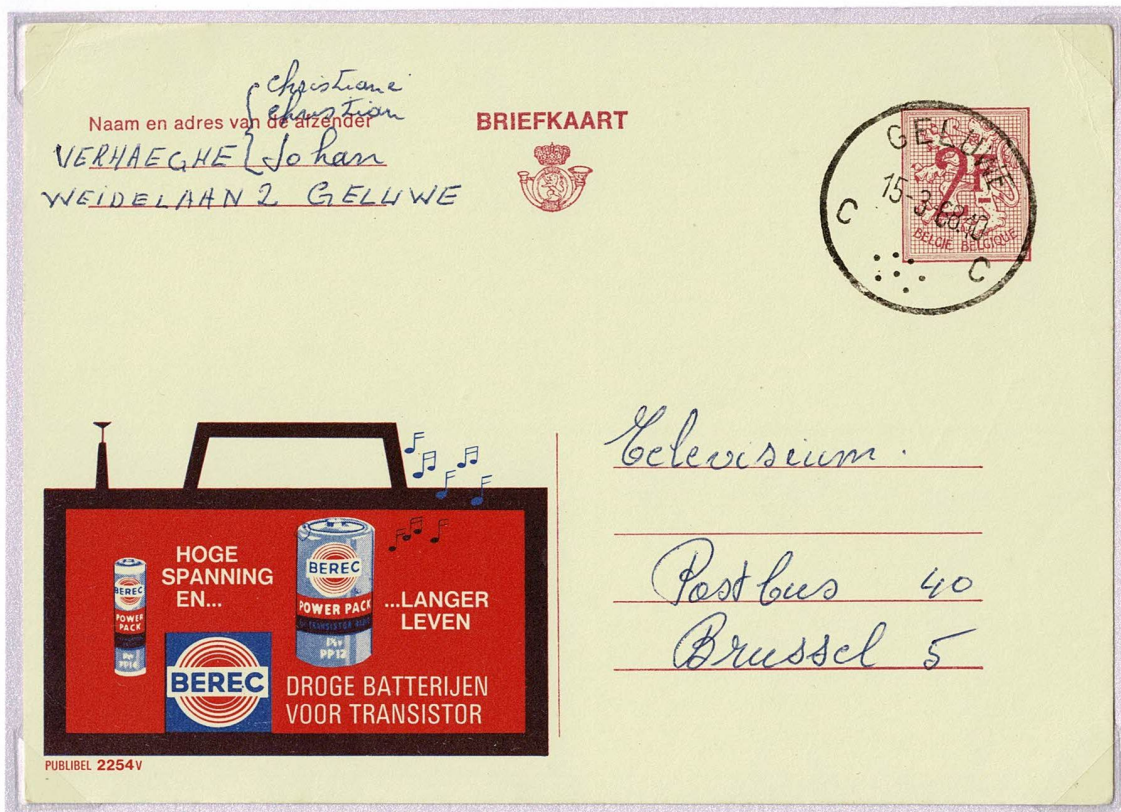


Building on this research, the first electric battery was designed by Alessandro Volta,



France 1961 Havas "M" multivalue

revolutionizing the storage and use of electricity initially in industry and later in personal mobility.



6 Recognising Potential

Insulin treatment for diabetes arose because Banting and MacLeod saw the potential of an earlier chance discovery linking the pancreas and blood-sugar levels.

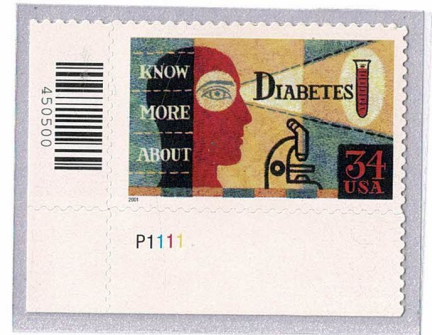


Plate number single

A Swiss engineer, George de Mestral, returned from a country walk with annoying burrs attached to his clothes.



AUSTRIA 1910 private order postal card,



1968 Sterling Currency



1971 Decimal Surcharge

From examining the little hooks and loops that caused this natural adhesion, he invented a new kind of fastener. Known as Velcro, it achieved wide acceptance after use by astronauts.



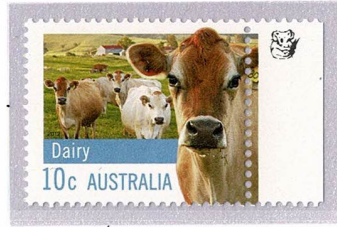
France 1966 SECAP small upright frank multivalue

6 Recognising Potential

Edward Jenner developed the smallpox vaccine after recalling a chance conversation with a dairymaid that led him to realise the possibility of using cowpox to inoculate against the infection.



2012



1st reprint 2012



2nd reprint 2014



3rd reprint 2015



4th reprint 2016



5th reprint 2018



Artist die proof signed by the engraver BEQUET

Observation and recognition of the significance of abnormal cell structures led to the development of the pap smear and other cancer detection tests.



Belgium 1993 Advertising Proof



Specimen



Issued stamp

7. INSPIRING the FUTURE

Ongoing research highlights that serendipity is a key factor in the discovery of new things, potentially channeling even greater benefits for mankind in the future.



Berlin 1971 Photo Essay



Specimen



Permit Mail for Queensland
Cancer Fund No. QAW3282

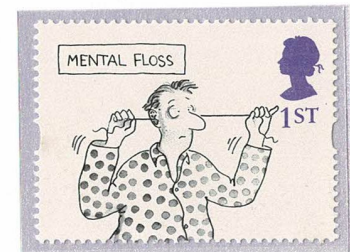
Through the combination of human abilities and chance, serendipity works by reconnecting mankind with the spiritual universe, re-defining the special concept of “gifts from the gods”



OFFICIAL LOCAL POST: Berlin 1889 2pf New Year card
Neue Berliner Omnibus und Packetfahrt Actiengesellschaft



and assisting us to make sense



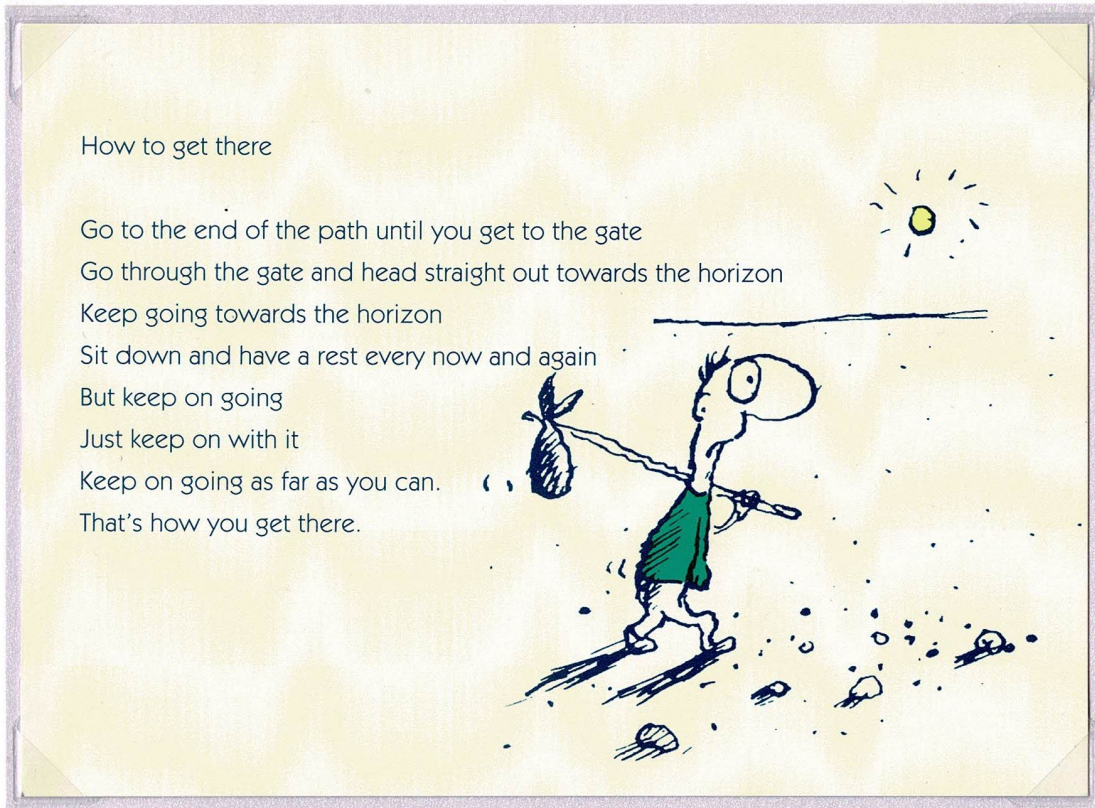
Booklet stamp

of our ever more complex world



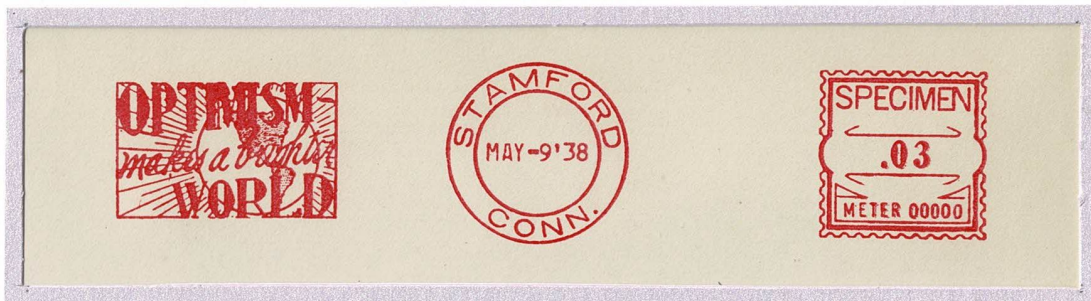
7 Inspiring the Future

And at the personal level, serendipity works by encouraging us on our journey through life,



Australia 1998 page from "The Teapot of Truth" prestige booklet

helping to maintain an optimistic outlook for a brighter future,



USA 1938 Pitney Bowes LV-10 SPECIMEN

knowing that out of the blue, the magic of serendipity could inspire us through finding joy in unexpected places.



Finland 1999 SPECIMEN booklet