

The one penny green letterpress stamps of South Australia

From 1856 the South Australian Post Office had recess-printed its stamps from Perkins Bacon plates, but owing to production costs a decision was made in the late 1860's to introduce cheaper letterpress printing. After the two pence value in 1868, the newly designed one penny value became in 1875 the second to be converted to letterpress.

The English firm of Thomas De La Rue prepared the die, and two plates which were sent to Adelaide where the stamps were printed by 'the Printer of Stamps', a Post Office employee. The green colour of the Colony's first penny stamps was retained, with some shade variations, until 1899. Over that time the main postal usages were to pay the printed matter rate and as a make-up value. Its fiscal use, although widespread, is not included here.

The exhibit is arranged by issue date, and includes the stamps overprinted "O.S." for Official use, and the 1881 "HALF-PENNY" surcharge. In the following table *italics* indicate significant items:

De La Rue proofs , pp 2, 3	<i>Die proofs, plate proofs, p. 2; colour trials, p 3</i>
The issued stamps , pp. 4-16 Perf 10 (line); also perf 11½-12½ and compounds; 1875-90: pp. 4 - 10	First watermark, 1875: <i>scarce perf varieties; mint block of six; officials, p. 4</i> Second watermark, 1876-1899: <i>large mint multiples, p. 5</i> <i>covers to Italy (postage due) and South Africa, p. 6</i> <i>mint blocks of Officials, and use on cover, p. 7</i> <i>"HALF-PENNY" surcharge 1881, pp. 8,9</i> <i>large block; and use on cover. p. 8</i> <i>strip cancelled on first day of issue, p. 9</i> <i>unlisted Official variety, p. 9</i> <i>record used Official multiples, p. 9</i> <i>scarce perf varieties, p. 10</i>
Perf 10 (comb), 1890-93: pp. 11, 12	Mint multiples; and <i>on covers, p. 11</i> <i>Officials, including varieties, p. 12</i>
Perf 15 (comb), 1893-95: pp. 12, 13, 14	Mint block, p. 12; on covers, p. 13; Officials, p. 14
Perf 13 (comb), 1895-99: pp. 14, 15, 16	Mint multiple, p. 14 <i>'value page number', p. 15; perf errors, p. 15; on cover, p. 15</i> <i>Officials, including varieties, p. 16; on cover to Mauritius, p. 16</i>

Within the exhibit items considered the most important have been given a **blue** background.

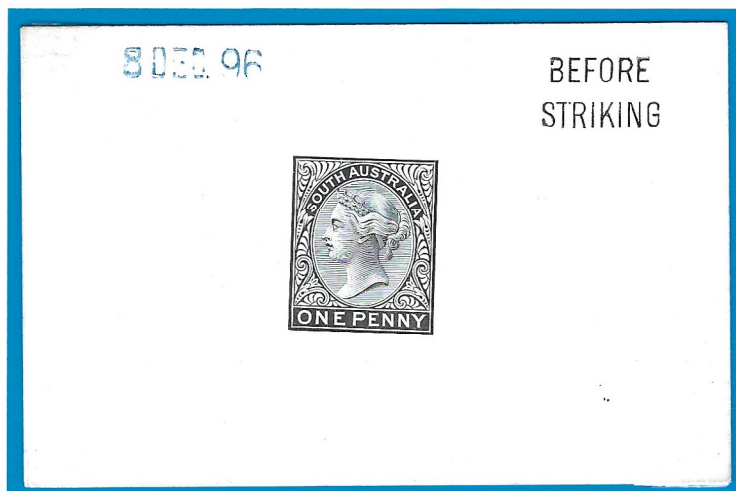
Personal research has included distinguishing between perf 10 line and comb, not differentiated in catalogues. The perf 10 gauge was used from 1875 to early 1893, with the comb perforator used only for about the last two years. Recognising the comb perforation is important in explaining its later conversions to perf 15 and 13 gauges.

Main references:

- (1) *Commonwealth & British Empire Stamps 1840-1970*, Stanley Gibbons Stamp Catalogue
- (2) *The Postage Stamps of South Australia*, Philatelic Society of South Australia, 1948; edited by N R James
- (3) *The Stamps of South Australia*, chapter 5: draft prepared by the South Australian Study Group

De La Rue proofs

die proofs:

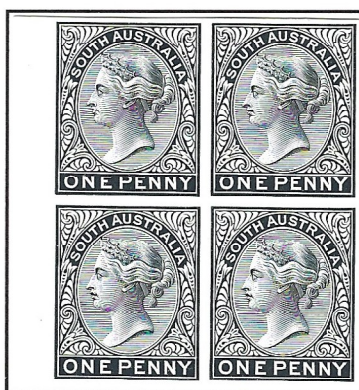


printed on thin card
(struck on the occasion of an inspection by the Agent-General)



reduced to stamp size, from the De La Rue striking book

plate proofs:

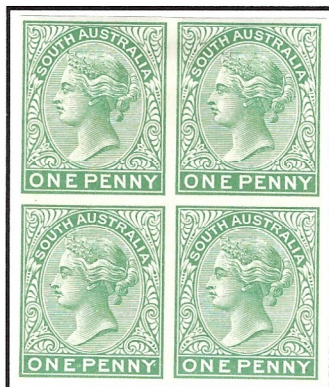


printed on thin card

colour trials

printed on gummed unwatermarked paper

imperforate:



yellow-green



blue-green

perf 14:



yellow-green



blue-green

The issued stamps

the first watermark, 1875 - crown over 'SA' (wide)

perf 11½, 12½

10 Jan. 1875
(blue-green)



De La Rue paper

Official, 13 Aug. 1875



perf 10 (line)

Apr. 1875
(blue-green)



Official, 30 Sep. 1875



compound, perf 10 and 11½, 12½

27 Aug. 1875
(blue-green)



Change of watermark, 1876 - crown over 'SA' (close)

Note: this De La Rue paper was used for all subsequent printings of the one penny green stamps

perf 10 (line)

9 Feb. 1876 (*blue-green*)



Nov. 1878 (*yellowish green*)



perf 10 (line) covers:



with additional six pence making up the 7 pence rate to Italy, 1887

However, as the letter was posted at Williamstown, **Victoria**, the South Australian postage was not accepted in Italy, so postage due of 100 centesimi, equivalent to one shilling and twopence (7d deficient postage + 7d fine) was collected from the recipient.



with additional ten pence paying 11d postage from Whyte-Yarcowie to Cape Town via London, 1883

Officials, Perf 10 (line)

block-type 'O.S.'



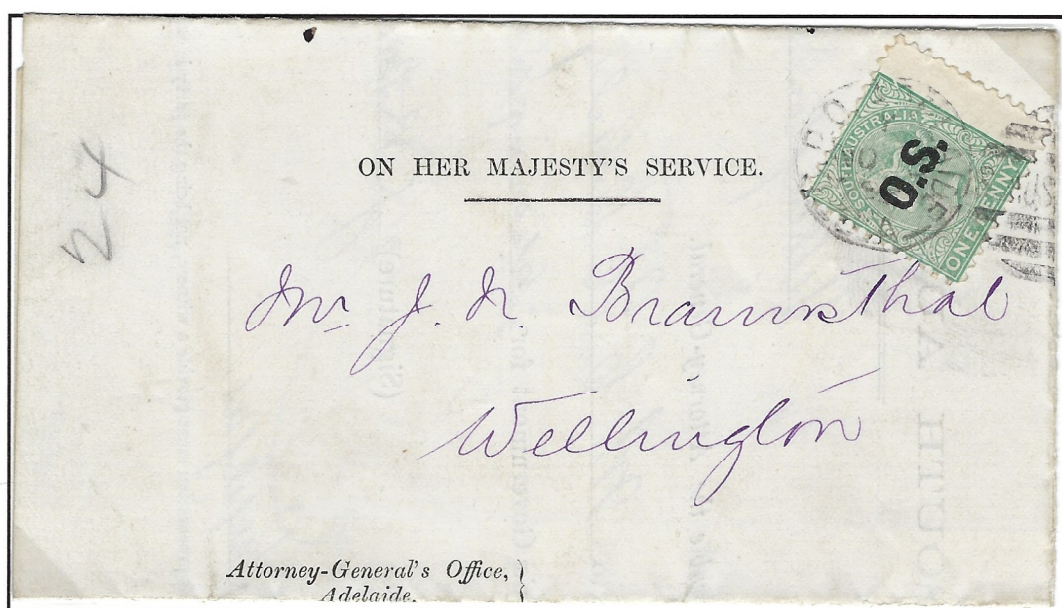
blue-green, 2 Oct. 1876



yellowish-green, 3 Jul. 1880



deep green, 1880



blue-green printing paying printed matter rate to Wellington, S.A.

‘HALF-PENNY’ surcharge, 1881

The Post Office Amendment Act of 1881 imposed postage of one halfpenny on newspapers posted in the colony as of 1 January 1882. Provisional stamps were prepared in Adelaide by surcharging stocks of one penny stamps from the 1880 deep green printing. 960 000 stamps, including officials, were prepared.

Perf 10 (line)

31 Dec.1881
(deep green)



*The overprint plate comprised 240 electros made up from 20 masters of 12 (6 x 2).



uprating halfpenny newspaper wrapper to England; only three ½d surcharge covers are recorded (ref. 3)

halfpenny surcharge - *continued*

***transient variety:**



***short line through 'ONE PENNY' and damaged first 'N' in the overprint.** It appeared *only once* on the overprint plate and early in the printing, after which the damaged cliché was replaced.



strip of four on piece, cancelled DE 31/81, **the first day of issue** (catalogues show 1 Jan. 1882)

Officials, 20 Feb. 1882

(48000 issued)



dropped 'P', small font **unlisted variety:**
first N', in 'PENNY' line normally through
'ONE PENNY' at the top

the largest and equal second largest used multiples recorded
(ref. (3), p.82:



other one penny perforation varieties

compound perf 10 (line) and $11\frac{1}{2}$, $12\frac{1}{2}$

11 Feb. 1880 (*deep green*)



2 Mar. 1880 (*blue-green*)



perf $11\frac{1}{2}$, $12\frac{1}{2}$

Feb. 1884 (*blue-green*)



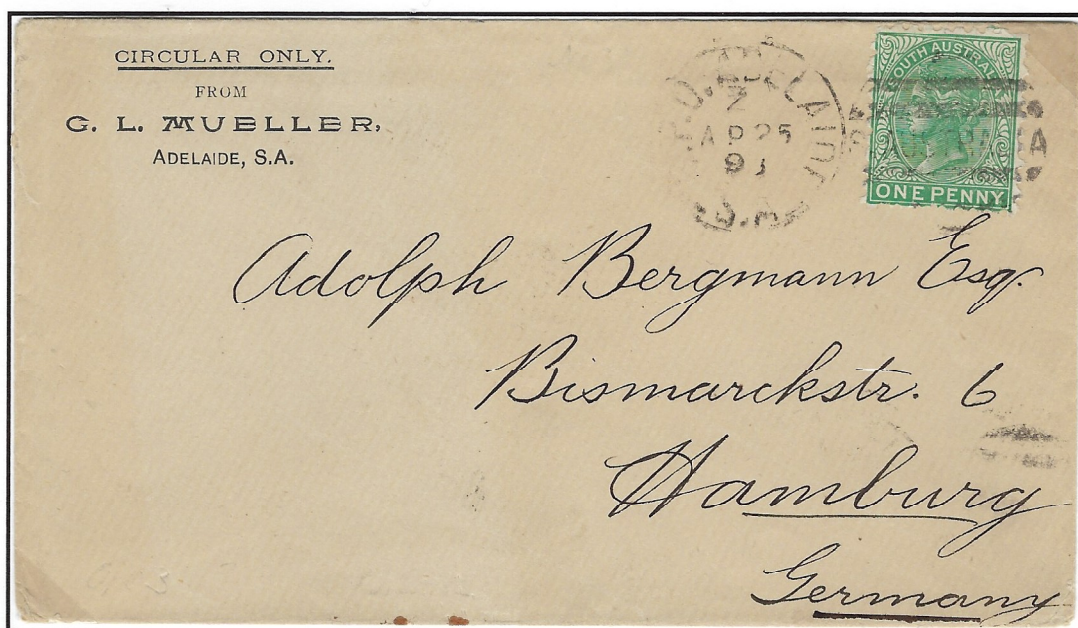
new perf 10 (comb) perforator, 1890

perf 10 (comb)

(deep blue-green)



paying one penny **late fee** on a post card to Victoria, 1892.



paying one penny printed matter rate to Germany, 1893.

Officials, perf 10 (comb)

(narrow 'O.S.' only)

22 Apr. 1891 (*green – shades*)



yellowish green



yellowish green



blue-green

variety: no stop after 'S':



yellowish green



blue-green

comb perforator altered to *gauge 15, 1893

Perf 15

8 May 1893 (*green*)



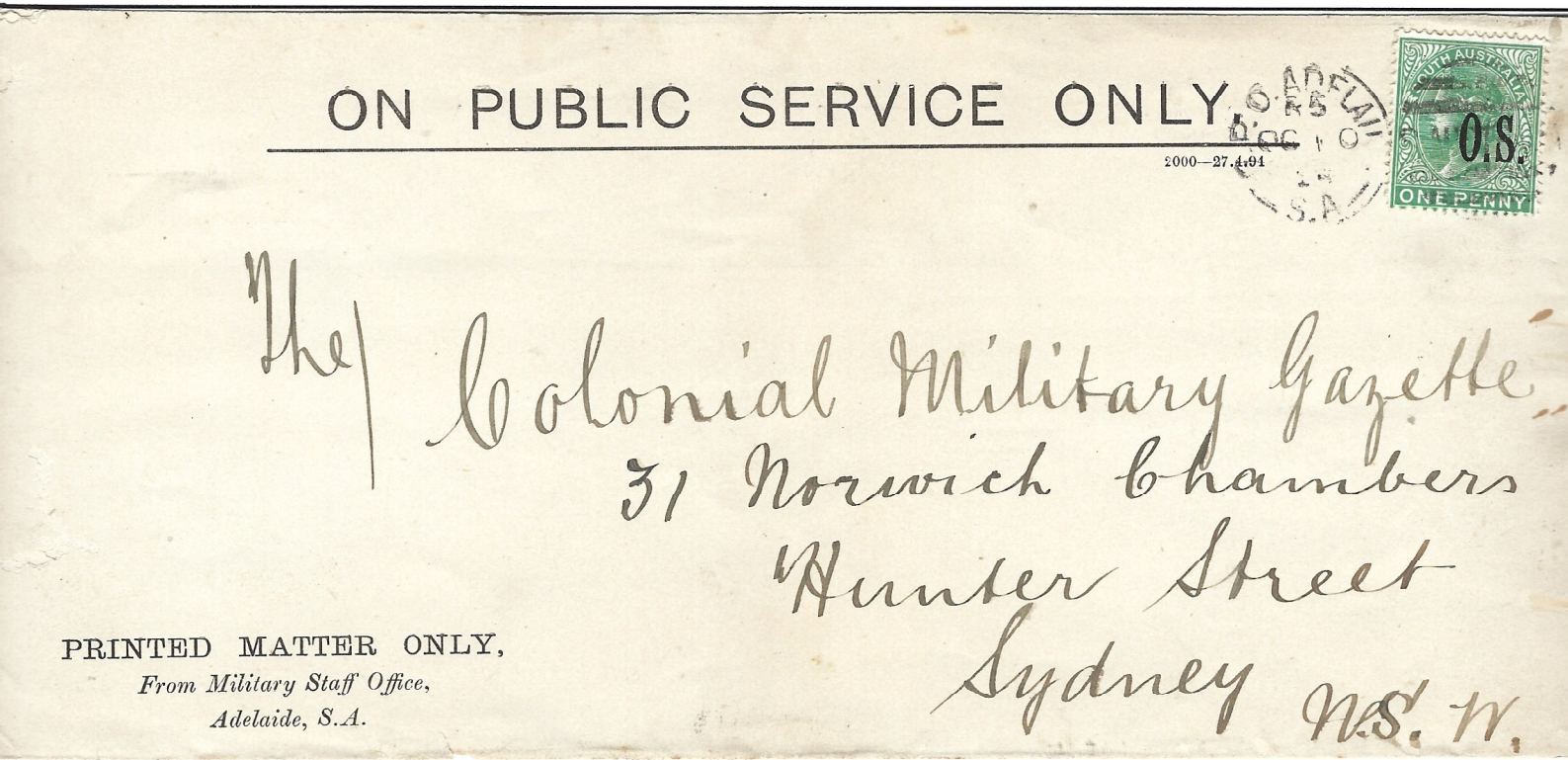
*to facilitate separation of
the stamps from the sheets

perf 15 printed matter rate covers:



containing invoice only, Hindmarsh to Port Adelaide, 1894

Official use (also see next page):



on O.P.S.O. cover, Adelaide to Sydney, 1895

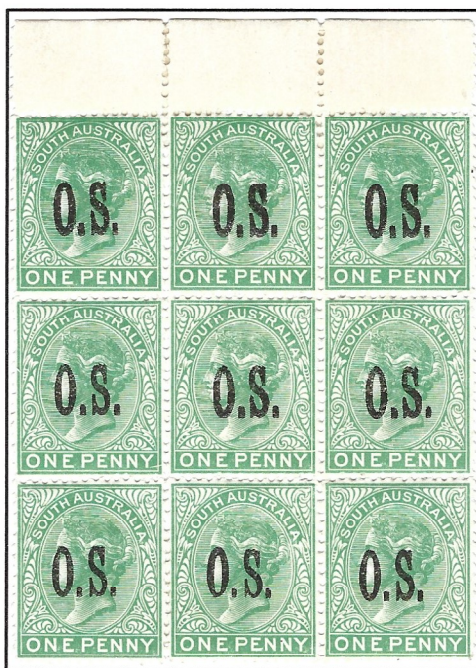
perf 15, continued



← white flaw on forehead

Officials, perf 15
(narrow O.S. only)

8 Sep. 1894 (*green*)



comb perforator altered to *gauge 13, 1895

*compromise gauge; sheets perf 15 were found to separate *too* readily

Perf 13, 11 Jan. 1895 (*green – shades*)



perf 13 - continued

plate 2 introduced in 1895



De Las Rue 'value page number' (ex Krichauff)

perforation errors:



perf 13 with private perfin for **D&J Fowler** on "CIRCULAR ONLY" cover, 1898, paying overseas bulk-mailing printed matter rate (see "**20 POSTED.**" cachet) to U.S.A.

Officials, perf 13

(narrow O.S. only)

20 May 1895



no stop after 'S' ↑



mis-placed 'O.S.'



no stop after 'S'



with additional ½d paying 2d letter rate postage to Mauritius on a halfpenny Official newspaper wrapper

In 1899 the colour of the one penny stamps was changed to **red** to meet U.P.U. specifications.