

Errors of the Australian Colonies/States and the History of Their Discovery

Background

Historically, from 1850 to 1912, the Australia Colonies either sourced the printing designs and plates from the major London stamp printing firms or produced them locally. Both in London and domestically during this sixty two year period, many different printing techniques were used to produce postage stamps across all the colonies, including lithography, recess printing, and typography. During the course of this printing, errors in stamp production appeared, with many of these errors now prized by collectors keen to enhance their collections. The most common errors encountered in stamp production of the Australian Colonies include:

◇ Imperforate between pair	◇ Imperforate between stamp and margin
◇ Double print	◇ Double impression
◇ Printed on both sides	◇ Double overprint
◇ Inverted overprint	◇ Double perforation
◇ Errors of watermark	◇ Offsets on reverse

Historical philatelic references

From 1880 to around 1950, there were a large number of philatelic journals in Australia and the United Kingdom keen to publish new developments and varieties in philately. Many of the articles in Australia were almost direct copies of their counterparts in the home country, and vice versa. England was well served by the "London Philatelist", "The Philatelic Record" and "The Stanley Gibbons Monthly Journal." In Australia, the leading philatelic publications were "Vindin's Philatelic Monthly", the "Australian Philatelist" and the "Australian Stamp Journal". Each of these publications (and a number of others) were integral in providing philatelists with information of the discovery of new errors culminating with their listing in to the Stanley Gibbons British Empire catalogue the following year. The publication of the Brusden White catalogue in 2004 provided a major boost to the collector awareness of errors in the 1901-1912 Federal Period.

Treatment and relative rarity of the material

This exhibit displays many of the major errors from the Australian Colonies/States. Many of the errors are quite rare, and record confirming the number of recorded examples is provided for many of the items displayed, together with the history of their discovery from the various philatelic publications of the day. Stamps contained within a bold black box signify examples of significant rarity, generally with ten or less examples recorded.

Stamps that have an (E) in the description have been certified as genuine by a recognised authority. Finally, most errors have been given a date when they were listed in the Stanley Gibbons British Empire or Brusden White catalogues, the most popular references for this subject.

Exhibitor research

The exhibitor has conducted extensive research into the history of the discovery of each of the errors. The major philatelic publications researched include all the major philatelic journals and auction houses from the 1880's to the present predominantly from the United Kingdom and Australia. This research provided evidence of the discovery of each error and their rarity and availability to collectors. In addition, public collections in both countries have been visited to record examples displayed in these institutions.

Principle References:

"Commonwealth & British Empire Stamps 1840-1970" published by Stanley Gibbons
Philatelic Journals: *"Australian Philatelist"*; *"Australian Stamp Journal"*; *"London Philatelist"*; *"The Philatelic Record"*; *"Philately from Australia"*; *"The Stanley Gibbons Monthly Journal"*; *"Vindin's Philatelic Monthly"*.
Principle Stamp Auction House Catalogues: *"David Feldman"*; *"Christies Robson Lowe"*; *"H.R. Harmer"*; *"Millennium Philatelic Auctions"*; *"Moss Green"*; *"Prestige Philately"*; *"Robson Lowe"*; *"Rod Perry Auction Galleries"*; *"Spink"*; *"Stanley Gibbons Australia"*; *"Gary Watson"*

South Australia
November 1856
Watermark Large Star
Imperforate

2d Blood Red

Error – Printed on Both Sides

The second printing inverted

Double Impression (E)



Although the Printed on Both Sides error was recorded by Napier and Smith in 1894, the distinction between the Red and Blood Red shades was not made until publication by the "Australian Stamp Journal" in July 1921. It was listed in the Stanley Gibbons catalogue in 1917. It is a very rare stamp with three examples recorded, one being in the Royal collection. A scanned image of the front of the stamp is illustrated at the left.

2d Blood Red

Error – Printed Double (E)



This error is a new discovery and is the only imperforate Printed Double error recorded from South Australia. A scanned image of the upper portion of the stamp is illustrated at the right to show the extreme nature of the Double Print. It is the only recorded example.



2d Red

Error – Printed on Both Sides

The second printing upright



2d Red

Error – Printed on Both Sides

The second printing inverted (E)

The first report of this error was in the "Philatelic Record" in December 1891 and it was listed by Stanley Gibbons in 1903. Although no catalogue distinction has been made, it appears that the second printing in the upright position is rarer than the inverted. Fourteen examples have been recorded in private hands. A scanned image of the front of each stamp is illustrated at the left.

Ex Hall (the right hand stamp)

South Australia
November 1856
Watermark Large Star
Imperforate



2d Pale Red
Error – Offset on Reverse

There are no contemporary reports regarding this error until the auction of the Michael Blake collection in 2014. A scanned reproduction of the front of the stamp is illustrated at the left. This is the only recorded example.

Ex Blake



2d Pale Red
Error – Printed Both Sides (E)

This error was first recorded in the “Stanley Gibbons Monthly Journal” in February 1897 and listed in the Stanley Gibbons catalogue in 1917. It is very rare, and often confused with the Second Roulette issue. Three used examples and a strip of three are recorded in private hands. A scanned image of the front of the stamp is illustrated at the left.



1/- Orange
Error – Printed Both Sides

This error was first reported in the “London Philatelist” in April 1904, although collectors must have been well aware of its existence since it was listed by Stanley Gibbons in 1903. Just over 20 used examples are recorded, with a scanned image of the front of the stamp illustrated at the left.

Ex Pearce

December 1860
Watermark Large Star
Rouletted



1d Deep Yellow Green
Error – Double Rouletted

Although the occasional used single in this series has been seen with double rouletting, this is the only mint multiple recorded from South Australia.

South Australia
 December 1860
 Watermark Large Star
 Rouletted



1d Pale Sage Green
Error – Gummed on Both Sides (E)

This error was first recorded with the auction of this mint block of 8 in the Mursell collection in 1964. It is the only recorded example.

Ex Mursell, Napier, Harrison, Lower



1d Sage Green
Error – Imperforate Pair (E)

This error first came to the attention of collectors when this pair was auctioned in the Harry Lower sale in 2007. It led to the listing of this error in the Stanley Gibbons catalogue in 2010 and is the only recorded example.

Ex Lower

South Australia
December 1860
Watermark Large Star
Rouletted



2d Pale Vermillion
Error – Printed Both Sides
The second printing upright



2d Pale Vermillion
Error – Printed Both Sides
The second printing inverted

This error was first reported in the “Philatelic Record” in August 1891 and listed by Stanley Gibbons in 1937. At the left is a scanned image of the front of each stamp.

No distinction has been documented regarding the upright or inverted printings on the reverse of this error. However, from copies examined, the upright printing on the reverse is the much rarer variety, with only a couple of examples recorded.



2d Pale Vermillion
Error – Printed Both Sides
The second printing inverted

The largest multiple known of this error is this used block of six. The strip of three in the Fryar collection (the only other multiple recorded) is also cancelled on the 23rd of February 1861 and these two pieces are almost certainly part of the same sheet, however, their characteristics do not match to complete a block of nine. A scanned image of the front of the block is illustrated at the left.

Ex Mursell, Napier

South Australia
December 1860
Watermark Large Star
Rouletted



2d Pale Vermillion
*Error – Imperforate Vertically
Between Pair*



2d Bright Vermillion
*Error – Imperforate Vertically
Between Pair*

This error was first recorded in the “London Philatelist” in April 1904 and listed in the Stanley Gibbons catalogue in 1917. It comes in two distinct shades which has not been recognised by catalogue editors. The Bright Vermillion shade appears to be the much scarcer variety.

Ex Fryar, Jaffe



2d Pale Vermillion
Error – Double Impression

There are no contemporary reports of this error, although collectors were aware of its existence for many years. Compared to the 6d and 1/- Brown values from the Perkins Bacon plates, this error is relatively scarce on the 2d value.



6d Dull Ultramarine
*Error – Imperforate Vertically
Between Pair*

This error was first recorded in the “Australian Stamp Journal” in August 1929 and listed in the Stanley Gibbons catalogue in 1950. This is the only example in private hands.

Ex Redman, Beresford, Burrus

South Australia
December 1860
Watermark Large Star
Rouletted



10d on 9d Yellow

Error – Surcharge Inverted at Top (E)

This famous error was first recorded in the Stamp Collectors Monthly in April 1870 and listed by Stanley Gibbons in 1903. Twenty three examples are recorded including a pair and two in the Royal collection. One stamp is known used on cover.

Ex Frazer (first stamp)

Ex Frenckle (second stamp)



10d on 9d Yellow

Error – Surcharge Misplaced

1/- Yellow

*Error – Imperforate Horizontally
(Vertical Pair) (E)*

First reported in the "Australian Stamp Journal" in November 1913, it was listed in the Stanley Gibbons catalogue in 1950. This is the only recorded example.

*Ex Collins, Mackenzie, Mursell, Napier, Frenckle,
Blake*



South Australia
December 1860
Watermark Large Star
Rouletted



1/- Dark Grey Brown
Error – Double Impression (E)



1/- Chestnut
Error – Double Impression (E)

May 1867
Watermark Large Star
Perforation 11½ - 12½
x Roulette



6d Bright Pale Blue
Error – Rouletted
Vertically Five Times



10d on 9d Yellow
Error – Printed Both Sides

This error was first reported in the "London Philatelist" in September 1892 and listed in the Stanley Gibbons catalogue in 1903. Almost 30 used examples have been recorded. A scanned image of the front of the stamp is illustrated at the left.

Ex Fryar, Jaffe

February 1868
Watermark Large Star
Perforation 11½ - 12½



1d Dark Green
Error – Printed on Both Sides (E)

Although this error was listed by Stanley Gibbons in 1903, the first report in contemporary literature was in the "London Philatelist" in February 1915. This error is more frequently found overprinted "OS", yet this is still the only recorded example after one hundred years. A scanned image of the front of the stamp is illustrated at the left.

Ex Mursell, Napier, Jaffe

South Australia
February 1868
Watermark Large Star
Perforation 11½ - 12½



1d Deep Yellow Green
Error – Imperforate Vertically Between Pair (E)

This error first came to the notice of collectors with the sale by auction of the Napier collection in 1976 and it was listed in the Stanley Gibbons catalogue in 1995. This is the only recorded example of this error.

Ex Napier, Frenckle



3d on 4d Sky Blue
*Error – “P” of
Surcharge Omitted*



3d on 4d Deep Ultramarine
*Error – Double
Print (E)*



3d on 4d Deep Ultramarine
*Error – “PENC” of
Surcharge Omitted*

Double Prints on this value are quite rare and only a handful of examples are known.

Ex Jaffe



3d on 4d Deep Ultramarine
Error – Surcharge Omitted (E)

This is one of the most famous errors of the Australian Colonies and was first reported in the “Philatelic Record” in October 1879 and listed by Stanley Gibbons in 1892. Of the ten used examples recorded, four reside in institution collections.

Ex Mursell, Napier, Midas

South Australia

February 1868

Watermark Large Star

Perforation $11\frac{1}{2}$ - $12\frac{1}{2}$



4d Dull Purple
Error – Double Perforation



6d Bright Pale Blue
Error – Double Perforation



6d Indigo
Error – Double Impression



6d Prussian Blue
Error – Imperforate Between Stamp and Margin at Left

A cover from Adelaide dated the 21st of May 1874 and addressed to England with two 6d Prussian Blue stamps, the left hand unit showing the error "imperforate between stamp and margin at left". Errors on cover are quite rare.



9d Red Purple
Error – Double Impression (E)



9d Red Purple
Error – Double Perforation



10d on 9d Yellow
Error – Double Perforation



1/- Red Brown
Error – Double Impression

South Australia
February 1868
Watermark Large Star
Perforation 11½ - 12½

9d Bright Mauve
Error – Printed Both Sides

This error was first reported in the “Philatelic Record” in September 1891 and listed by Stanley Gibbons in 1903. A scanned image of the front of the stamp is illustrated at the left.

Ex Jaffe



10d on 9d Yellow
Error – Watermark Crown/SA (E)

This error was first reported in the “Philatelic Record” in December 1890 and listed by Stanley Gibbons in 1903. Over 40 examples are recorded, with a block of four in the Royal collection.

Ex Lye, Napier



2/- Carmine
Error – Printed Both Sides
The second printing inverted

This error was first reported in the “Stanley Gibbons Monthly Journal” in December 1897 and listed by Stanley Gibbons in 1903. Less than twenty examples are recorded. A scanned image of the front of the stamp is illustrated at the left.

Ex Frenckle, Jaffe

October 1870
Watermark Large Star
Perforation 10



6d Bright Blue
Error – Printed Double (E)

Although the left hand stamp has a 1955 BPA certificate, there is no record of it being recorded in the philatelic press or at auction until it was sold in 2014. These two stamps are the only recorded examples. An enlarged scan of the Queen's profile is illustrated in the centre showing the dramatic double print.

South Australia

October 1870

Watermark Large Star

Perforation 10 x 11½ - 12½



3d on 4d Pale Ultramarine
*Error – Imperforate
Between Stamp
and Margin at Left*



4d Slate Lilac
*Error – Imperforate
Between Stamp
and Margin at Left*



6d Prussian Blue
*Error – Double
Impression*



6d Prussian Blue
*Error – Imperforate
Between Stamp
and Margin at Left*



10d on 9d Yellow
*Error – Imperforate
Between Stamp
and Margin at Left*



10 on 9d Yellow
*Error – Double
Perforation*



10d on 9d Yellow
*Error – Imperforate
Between Stamp
and Margin at Right*

July 1871

Watermark V/Crown

Perforation 10



4d Dull Lilac
*Error – Imperforate
Between Stamp
And Margin at Left (E)*



4d Dull Lilac
*Error – Watermark
Reversed (E)*



4d Dull Lilac
Error – Printed Both Sides (E)



This error was first reported in the "Philatelic Journal" in June 1900 and listed in the Stanley Gibbons catalogue in 1903. Three examples are recorded, including one in the Royal collection. A scanned image of the front of the stamp is illustrated at the left.

Ex Frazer

South Australia
 July 1871
 Watermark Broad Star
 Perforation 11½ - 12½



3d on 4d Ultramarine
Error – Surcharge Double (E)

This error was first reported in the “London Philatelist” in February 1894 and listed by Stanley Gibbons in 1903. It occurs in two variations. The second, with the surcharges almost in top of each other, is much rarer, with only three examples known. Over 20 examples of this error have been recorded.

Ex Jaffe



6d Prussian Blue
Error – Imperforate Vertically

This error was first reported in the Stanley Gibbons Monthly Journal in December 1897 and listed in the catalogue in 1950 as the Indigo shade rather than Prussian Blue. It is the only example recorded in private hands, with another pair residing in the Royal collection.



6d Prussian Blue
Error – Double Impression

A cover from Adelaide dated the 27th of January 1877 and addressed to England with a 2d Orange and a 6d Prussian Blue showing the error “double impression”. Errors on cover are quite rare.

South Australia

July 1871

Watermark Broad Star

Perforation 11½ - 12½



6d Prussian Blue
Error – Double Impression



6d Prussian Blue
Error – Printed Double



The Printed Double error is completely different to the more common Double Impressions. It is clearly visible on the enlarged image of the Queen's profile at the right where the head has been doubly printed. This is a rare example of the Printed Double.



8d on 9d Burnt Umber
Error – Surcharge Double (E)



8d on 9d Grey Brown
Error – Surcharge Double (E)



This error is a recent discovery and was responsible for the catalogue listing in Stanley Gibbons in 2010. It is the only recorded example. An enlarged scan of the doubling of the surcharge is reproduced in the above image.



This error was first reported in the philatelic press by the "London Philatelist" in February 1923 after being listed by Stanley Gibbons in 1917. Four examples are recorded. An enlarged scan of the doubling of the surcharge is reproduced in the above image.

Ex Napier, Frenckle, Jaffe



8d on 9d Burnt Umber
Error – Surcharge Offset on Reverse

A scanned image of the front of the stamp is illustrated at the left.

South Australia

July 1871

Watermark Broad Star

Perforation 11½ - 12½



9d Rose Lilac

Error – Printed on Both Sides

The second printing inverted (E)

9d Rose Lilac

Error – Printed on Both Sides

The second printing sideways (E)

This error was first reported in the London Philatelist in July 1893, however, it is not listed in the Stanley Gibbons catalogue. The second impression on the reverse is much lighter than it's Large Star Watermark counterpart and this is the only recorded example. A scanned image of the front of the stamp is illustrated at the left.

This error was first reported in the Stanley Gibbons Monthly Journal in December 1897 and it is not listed in the Stanley Gibbons catalogue. Two used examples are recorded and there is a mint pair in the Royal collection. A scanned image of the front of the stamp is illustrated at the left.



9d Rose Lilac
(Small Holes)

*Error – Double
Impression*



9d Rose Lilac
(Small holes)

Error – Double Perforation



9d Rose Lilac
(Large Holes)

*Error – Double
Impression*

South Australia
 July 1871
 Watermark Broad Star
 Perforation 11½ - 12½



1/- Red Brown
Error – Imperforate Vertically

This error was first reported in the “Stanley Gibbons Monthly Journal” in October 1906 and listed by Stanley Gibbons in 1950. Seven used examples are recorded, including one in the Royal Collection.



1/- Red Brown



1/- Dull Brown

Error – Double Perforation



1/- Dull Brown

Error – Printed Double



The Printed Double error is completely different to the more common Double Impressions. It is clearly visible on the enlarged image of the Queen's profile at the right where the head has been doubly printed. This is a rare example of the Printed Double.



1/- Reddish Lake Brown
Error – Double Impression

This is the largest multiple known of the 1/- value with this error.



1/- Chocolate
Error – Double Perforation

South Australia

July 1871

Watermark Broad Star

Perforation 11½ - 12½



1/- Chocolate

Error – Imperforate Vertically and Imperforate Between Stamp and Margin at Right

This error was first recorded in the “Stanley Gibbons Monthly Journal” in December 1897 and listed by Stanley Gibbons in 1950. Strips of four illustrate the full extent of the error with the last four vertical columns of the left hand pane imperforate.



1/- Sepia

Error – Double Perforation



1/- Sepia

Error – Double Perforation

The double perforations at top have a small strip of paper behind them indicating a post office repair to error.

November 1879

Watermark Broad Star

Perforation 10



6d Prussian Blue

Error – Double Impression (E)



6d Bright Blue

Error – Double Impression (E)



6d Prussian Blue

Error – Double Perforation

Mint examples of the Double Impressions are very scarce.

South Australia

December 1877

Watermark Broad Star

Perforation 10 x $11\frac{1}{2}$ - $12\frac{1}{2}$



6d Prussian Blue
Error – Double Perforation

The vertical double perforations on this pair provide an interesting insight to the perforation machines of South Australia. The first vertical perforation measures $11\frac{1}{2}$, whilst the second perforation measures $12\frac{1}{2}$. An assumption could be made that this is a “mixed perforation”, however, the gauge of the machine measured between $11\frac{1}{2}$ to $12\frac{1}{2}$ through the perforation pins, making this pair an interesting double perforation.



6d Bright Blue
Error – Double Perforation



6d Bright Blue
Error – Double Impression



6d Bright Ultramarine
Error – Double Perforation



6d Bright Ultramarine
Error – Mixed Perforations 10 and $11\frac{1}{2}$

There is no reference to this error in contemporary philatelic literature until the auction of this block in the Griffiths collection in 1992. To date, three vertical pairs and two blocks of four have been recorded, all emanating from the same sheet.

Ex Griffiths