



Philately *from* Australia

Journal of the ROYAL PHILATELIC SOCIETY of VICTORIA Inc



*Murray River Steam
Navigation Co Stamps
& Letter Carrier
Datestamps of Melbourne*



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Commencing at 9:30am

in our Auction Rooms, Level 2, 170 Queen Street Melbourne.



1/6d Hermes
Proof



£5 Bululo Recessed Die Proof



Rhodesia Double Head
SPECIMEN Set



£2 'Sperati' Forgery



Western Australia
2d Mauve
Error of Colour



10/- Cobalt
SPECIMEN



1915 Censored Missionary Letter from
Finschhafen, cancelled with Defaced Seal



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Philately *from* Australia

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Contents

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Editorial

Welcome to the first edition of our journal for 2014 which marks the beginning of our 65th year of continuous publication. This issue highlights the wide range of interests embraced by members, from errors, varieties and plating to datestamps, postal stationery and locals.

In this edition, our President, John Boykett, gives us an insight into the tough, and sometimes tragic, (cattle) station life in the Northern Territory in the early 1900s via an early Victoria River cover. Bill Lloyd-Smith reports some important corrections to his article on De La Rue plate numbers on Tasmanian stamps which was published in the last issue. Gary Diffen continues his insightful series on Australian colonial stamp printing errors, this time looking at South Australian officials errors. This is now the eight article since his first in March 2012. Ted Gallagher has contributed a second sequel to his original June 2012 article on varieties of the 1937 1d Queen Elizabeth Die 1.

In a very special postal history article, Gary Watson gives us a detailed account and catalogue of the Letter Carrier datestamps of Melbourne from the mid-1850s until 1907. This article is the result of many years of dedicated research and collection. Most of these datestamps are extremely scarce and this contribution can be considered the definitive word on this topic.

In a follow-up to Gary Watson's article in the March-May 2013 issue on the "Brussels Find", Richard Breckon summarises and analyses much of the available information on the, at times controversial, Murray River Steam Navigation Company stamps and the only reported cover. It is a complex story, featuring some famous philatelic names, published in full in this issue to preserve the continuity of the discussion.

Readers will also find the second in our current series of "write-ups" of displays given to the Society. Jim Shaw gives us an entertaining introduction to New Zealand Newspaper Stamps 1873-1905, plus images of a number of rare and unusual items. This article follows Gary Diffen's account of US alcohol advertising envelopes which appeared in the last issue. I am sure that we all look forward to accounts of future Society displays and I extend an invitation to all future presenters to share their treasures via our journal.

Finally, you are reminded of the Society's Annual Open Day and Bourse which will be held at Purves House on Saturday 12 April 2014 from 10am to 3pm (see announcement this issue).

Royal Philatelic Society of Victoria Inc.

Purves House
303 High Street
ASHBURTON VIC 3147

General correspondence:

Royal Philatelic Society of Victoria Inc.
PO Box 490
ASHBURTON VIC 3147, Australia
TEL: (03) 9885 1483 (answering service)

Business Manager (sale of publications):

Peter LEITCH
C/o Royal Philatelic Society of Victoria Inc.
PO Box 490
ASHBURTON VIC 3147, Australia
Email: pleitch@iinet.com.au
TEL: (03) 9571 3686

Philately from Australia Committee:

Eric Frazer (Editor),
Richard Breckon (Assistant Editor),
Bill Lloyd-Smith (Assistant Editor),
Gary Diffen (Advertising Manager)
and John Rennie.

Editorial contributions:

Articles on any subjects of philatelic interest are welcome from contributors, whether or not they are RPSV members. Articles should be submitted as plain text in the body of an email or as an attachment in Word or Rich Text format. Please include a list of references or bibliography, as appropriate. Images should be supplied at 300 DPI or higher; quote source/permission for non-author images.

All contributions will be reviewed by the editorial team. Articles exceeding 3,000 words may have to be divided into instalments appearing in various editions of the journal.

Editorial submissions to: Eric Frazer
Email: eric.frazer@internode.on.net
Tel: (03) 9531 8923

Advertising submissions to: Gary Diffen
Email: garydiffen@gmail.com
Tel: (03) 9510 3291

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Journal of the
**ROYAL PHILATELIC
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A Note from Your President

Firstly, may 2014 bring to each of you much pleasure from your hobby, in whatever way you follow it. Secondly, congratulations to Eric Frazer and his team on having the December issue of *Philately from Australia* printed by 16 December, and to John Shawley and his team having it posted on 17 December. A wonderful end to the year! The Christmas Social went well, despite the hot evening. My brother David – in two Olympic crews – spoke most interestingly on his very full life. Thank you to Dianne Shaw and other wives who did such a good job with the food, and for Dianne's ever popular fruit punch! If you missed it, mark 18 December on your calendar for the next one. It is not too early for Melbourne members to plan for the Society's Bourse on 12 April – it is always a good day.

Bill Lloyd-Smith FRPSV

De La Rue Plate Numbers on the Tasmanian Stamps: Some corrections

This note records some corrections to my article entitled “De La Rue Plate Numbers on the Tasmanian Stamps”, which appeared in the December 2013 issue of *Philately from Australia* (p. 90-92).

In the second column of page 91, I stated that Plate 4 of the 1d Sideface was 240-on. Geoff Kellow has kindly pointed out to me that this is incorrect. Indeed, Easton's *De La Rue History* shows that the Agent-General for Tasmania ordered 10,000 sheets (1,200,000 stamps) from the new plate (Plate 4). So the new plate must be 120-on after all, not 240-on.

In the same message, Geoff noted that the Tablet series was also printed from plates that were 120-on. He quotes the *RBA Register NP-IS-2* of all printing instruments, begun some unknown date in 1906, as showing that the Tablet keyplate (used for all denominations except 2½d) was 120-on. Further, a careful reading of the Appendix to Basset Hull's book (published in the *London Philatelist* for 1901) shows that the 2½d plate (not a keyplate) was 120-on, as the invoice states. Further, the 5d plate must be 120-on since Basset Hull quoted the figures of 10,300 sheets and 1,236,000 stamps, which are only consistent with 120-on. The assertion that the plates were “120 set” (equivalent to 120-on in modern terminology) was made for the next five denominations (½d, 6d, 1s, 2s6d and 10s). The later part of Basset Hull's Appendix explicitly assumed that the plates for other denominations in the Tablet series were 240-on. For instance, he said that a new supply of ½d was ordered on 30 May 1896 to the extent of 10,285 sheets, which would correspond to 1,246,200 stamps, not 2,492,400 stamps as stated. The same error persists throughout the remainder of Basset Hull's article.

A new dandyroll was ordered for the Tablet series, as Lars Peter Svendsen has recently pointed out on the Bulletin Board of the *Tasmanian Philatelic Society* (topic heading:

“Tablet issues of 1892-1899 and new TAS watermark”); this posting shows official correspondence and the essays for the suggested dandyroll. This explains why the watermark on the Tablet series differs slightly from that used for the Sideface series. It is now clear that the 1d Plate 4 must be on the normal TAS paper first introduced in 1878.

In the penultimate paragraph on page 92, I stated that the 2d Joubert of 1870 for Victoria apparently had no plate numbers. Geoff referred to a cover in the archives which had been sealed on the back with selvage from this stamp which included part of the current number. More details about that item would be welcome.

Geoff's message also referred to articles by S. Graham Hoey in the *London Philatelist* for March 1995 and November 1996 on the De La Rue current numbers. The current numbers for the Sideface issues of 1870 and 1871 are correctly given in the first article, along with the 3d De La Rue Swan type (current number 52) and various plates for other Colonies, as far as I am aware. In the latter article, the description looks confusing as the later tables (numbered 3, 4 and 5) do not clearly distinguish between plate numbers and current numbers. Thus, for Tasmania, we have the numbers 1 to 7 for Sideface stamps in the first column of Table 3, which have to be plate numbers; these are paired with current numbers 41 to 44, 47, 48 and 50, in that order. The denominations are, in order, 1d, 2d, 4d, 10d, 3d, 5s and 9d. However, the numbers 8 to 11 in the first column are current numbers, not plate numbers. The current numbers 8 and 11 are well known to collectors of Tasmania, being for the Platypus keyplate and the 8d plate of 1878, respectively, but the numbers 9 and 10 seem to be conjectures. No evidence is presented to show that the 1878 plates of 1d and 2d ever bore those current numbers, although the claim is possibly credible.

South Australian Officials Errors

An area which has been given little philatelic press over the years is the South Australian officials. This is fertile ground for the astute collector given the range of issues, the number of errors listed in the Stanley Gibbons catalogue, and their rarity on cover. My focus is on the errors with many of these having only a modest pricing guide which does not belie their rarity. Many of these errors are quite scarce, especially in mint condition where I have struggled to find any up to the 1891 issues and would question if many of these even existed.

The first major error listed in the Stanley Gibbons catalogue is the 1874 1d Overprinted "O.S." in Type 1 and printed on both sides, SG O6a (Figure 1). This error was first reported in the *Philatelic Record* in



Fig.01

October 1884 and listed by Stanley Gibbons in 1903. To date, thirteen examples have been recorded with a further three in institution collections. Many of these have graced the collections of Napier, Mursell, Frenkle and Collins. It is quite a scarce error, with the second impression on the reverse very clear, as opposed to its non-overprinted "O.S." counterpart which has a faint second impression. This is the only example of a Printed Both Sides error in the South Australian "O.S." overprints.

A new listing in the Stanley Gibbons catalogue this year (SG 17e) is the 1876 4d Deep Mauve in a (remove) imperforate vertically between pair (Figure 2). This error has long been known to collectors since this pair appeared in the Ferrari sale in 1923, as well



Fig.02

as featuring in the collections of Crocker, Napier and Pearce. It is a rare error, with one other pair recorded which additionally shows the variety, "No Stop After S" on the second unit. There is only one other imperforate between error recorded in these issues, making these pairs one of the highly prized pieces from this issue.

The 1876 6d overprinted "O.S." featured in Figure 3 is a new error not commonly known to collectors and not listed in the Stanley Gibbons catalogue. The stamp is perforated double at the left. However, what is interesting about this error is that the vertical perforations measure two different gauges, perf. 11.5 on the outside and 10 on the inside, creating a mixed perforation error. It is not surprising that this error exists given that



Fig.03

this listing is for a compound perforation, however, it is surprising that this error has not been recorded until now in the philatelic literature. I know of two other examples. What this demonstrates is that there are still errors out there waiting to be discovered, with the possibility of this variety being found in other values from this series.



Fig.04

As can be seen in the Stanley Gibbons listing of the South Australian officials, there is an abundance of inverted "O.S." overprints. I have decided to feature one of the scarcer issues, the 1876 2/- Carmine, SG O21a (Figure 4). The first record I can find of this error is the example listed in the Tapling collection with the *Stanley Gibbons Monthly Journal* reporting its existence in March 1897. It was catalogued by that firm in 1903. I have recorded four examples of this stamp, but these records must be tempered since early auction catalogues did not highlight these stamps as single items, most of these errors being included in collection lots. Nevertheless, it is difficult to find, as are many inverted "O.S." overprints from South Australia, which makes this collecting field highly challenging.

The final stamp is an example of the double overprints found in the South Australian officials.



Fig.05

Again, there are a number of these listed in the Stanley Gibbons catalogue with many of them being quite scarce, including the stamp in Figure 5. The second type of "O.S." overprint with thinner letters in a closer setting was overprinted in 1891 on the 1/- Sepia value, with the "O.S." double listed as SG O33a. I can find no records of this stamp in contemporary philatelic literature although it was listed by Stanley Gibbons in 1903. It comes in two variants and I have recorded four singles with another two in a vertical strip of three. Again, I believe there will be other

examples out there given that the ability to record these "O.S." varieties is difficult based on old auction catalogues. However, it is still quite scarce and sought after.

Although I have only touched on a couple of examples of the South Australian officials errors, I cannot stress how scarce many of these overprint errors are. Aside from one collection in its home state, there are not many collectors of these, unlike their predecessors, the Departmentals. Maybe that will change in the future, but they certainly provide a challenge for current collectors chasing these issues.

What's New in Errors of the Australian Colonies

Most collectors of the Tasmanian Pictorial series will be familiar with the 1905 1d Mount Wellington Crown/A watermark imperforate between stamp and margin errors, SG 250. Although these errors are generally available in the market place, some of them are quite scarce. The distinguishing characteristic of the stamp shown in Figure 6 is that it is watermark V/Crown (inverted) from the 1902 printings, SG 240. This error exists in used condition for both perf. 12.5 (one example) and perf. 11 (three examples), however, this is the first mint example I have seen and it surely begs the question that there must be others out there.



Fig.06

The Letter Carrier Datestamps of Melbourne

The purpose of this article is to publish the author's original research into the allocation and use of datestamps associated with the operations of Melbourne's Letter Carriers, functionaries more commonly known as mailmen or postmen. The period being examined is from the mid-1850s until 1907. Note that none of the Letter Carrier (LC) markings include the town designator 'MELBOURNE' or even 'GPO'. Indeed, out of context, such as on single stamps, most collectors would have no idea as to what 'L.C.' signified, where the datestamps were used, and for what purpose.

That most of these datestamps are extremely scarce became obvious when research for this article commenced. About twenty serious collectors of Victorian postmarks or postal history were contacted and asked for any information they could supply on the subject. Several of them expressed no knowledge of letter carrier datestamps. Even those who were aware of LC datestamps generally knew nothing more than that they were used to cancel Postage Due stamps. Only six collectors were able to contribute scans of relevant covers in their collections, and none of these gentlemen had more than a handful of examples.

Very little has previously been written about these interesting markings [1, 2]. Some of what has been written is speculative or simply wrong. Although no official records on the subject have been located, the empirical evidence suggests that these datestamps were assigned to each letter carrier or "walk", as the letter carriers' rounds were known. The datestamps, however, would never have left the GPO.

The earliest recorded LC datestamp is of NO10/1854. Prior to the introduction of this implement, it is be-

lieved that Butterfly Numeral '14' was used at the GPO on undelivered letters to indicate that delivery had been attempted. The latest recorded usage is on 31 August 1854. Both markings are almost invariably found in the company of 'ADVERTISED' or 'ADVERTISED/ AND/UNCLAIMED', and/or Dead Letter Office markings.

As a class, covers bearing LC markings from the period 1854-1887 are scarce. In almost every instance, the specific datestamps are of extreme rarity. Of three markings, only one strike has been recorded. Examples of at least two numbered datestamps have not been recorded at all. For the years 1888 to 1890, no LC datestamps have been recorded. It is clear that they were withdrawn from service in or about 1887. Certainly, by 1891, they had been replaced by datestamps inscribed 'LIST ROOM'.

The best-known use of the LC datestamps is as cancellers on Postage Dues. However, it must be stressed that in this context, they had nothing to do with the mailmen's function. Adhesive Postage Due stamps were issued in October 1890. It has been generally accepted that each letter carrier was assigned a numbered datestamp to take on his rounds. In respect of unpaid or underpaid mail, an appropriate value of postage due stamps was affixed and cancelled by the postman when the addressee paid the fine to him. As will be demonstrated, this scenario is a fantasy.

It is almost certain that these markings were held at the GPO only and were used there exclusively. JRW Purves [3] suggested that they may have been allocated to CBD post offices other than the GPO, but this is considered unlikely. What is clear is that they were **not** used as letter carrier markings in this later period.

A. The unnumbered oval types



The first pattern was a small oval measuring 24x17 mm. A code letter was usually, but not always, inserted between the month and day slugs, or after the day slug, indicating that the slugs were interchangeable. The code letter is thought by some to represent a particular letter carrier or walk. However, it is far more credible that, as was the case with the contemporary general purpose Melbourne datestamps, this was a time code, signifying a particular period of the day.



A very curious sub-type has been recorded, with a "floating" numeral '1' located 3 mm to the right of the oval. Although this is quite clearly a number '1' with upper and lower serifs, when first noted it was considered to be an aberration and not actually part of the datestamp. However, a second example has now been sighted. At this time, there is insufficient evidence to even speculate as to the significance or purpose of the '1'.



A similar, but appreciably smaller, oval device measuring 22x17 mm was introduced by early 1858. Codes 'a', 'c' and 'd' have been recorded, in every case positioned between the month and day slugs. The earliest and latest recorded dates are AP13/1858 and OC11/1865, respectively.



The interesting thing about the date range is that it overlaps with usage of three similar oval datestamps measuring 24x17 mm or 24x18 mm that were introduced (progressively?) from late-1858. The last of these bears a striking similarity to the initial LC implement and could easily be mistaken for it, but it is recorded in 1865 and 1866 only. The companion types incorporate distinctive large dots after 'LC' or both before and after 'LC'. Again, a letter code was placed between the month and day slugs.

B. The numbered boxed types

By the mid-1860s, the oval datestamps were superseded by almost square devices, each of which incorporated a permanent numeral after 'L.C.'. Numbers 1 to 6 have been recorded, and it is almost certain that no higher numbers will be discovered. The latest recorded date for an unnumbered oval LC datestamp is MA17/1866. (Note that 'MA' signifies March, not May.) The earliest recorded date for any of the boxed types is DC17/1866, for 'L.C.2'. From this point on, no code letters were used in LC datestamps.



For the period until the 1880s, examples of all of these boxed datestamps are very scarce. Of 'L.C.4', only one strike has been recorded.

C. The numbered oval types



By 1878, the numbered sequence was extended with the introduction of a new series of oval types numbered '7' to '13'. No higher numbers have been recorded, but such could have been allocated. To this time, no exam-

ples of 'L.C.8' and 'L.C.12' have been recorded.

Although examples of the numbered boxed types are very scarce after 1875, use of 'L.C.1', at least, overlapped with the numbered oval types, with usage recorded as late as 1885 (see below). It seems likely that as many of the other boxed types as had not been lost or damaged would have continued in service during the currency of the numbered ovals. Because numbers '2', '3' and '6' were later reintroduced, it is expected that examples of each could be found used in the period up until at least early 1885.



Note that there is some variance in the dimensions and lettering of the numbered oval markings, strongly suggesting that they were not all introduced at the same time.

All of the numbered datestamps - both the boxed and oval types - were apparently withdrawn by mid-1887. Excepting usage on Postage Dues (discussed below), the latest recorded date for any of these implements is in March 1887.

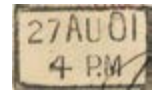
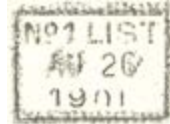
D. Later letter carrier-related datestamps



Two large oval datestamps inscribed 'LIST ROOM' - and again with no post office name - were in use by late-1889. It is clear from the cover evidence that they **replaced** the numbered Letter Carrier datestamps. It is suggested that the change was made to better reflect the administrative process within the GPO. From the earliest days of the Post Office, unclaimed letters had

been "listed" and advertised publicly. But, these were the first dated instructional markings to reflect that practice.

As previously, the List Room markings are also found in conjunction with Unclaimed handstamps. Relevant covers also characteristically bear strikes from an undated oval 'NOT KNOWN BY/ LETTER CARRIERS/ MELBOURNE' metal handstamp. (A single example of a similar rubber version is recorded for 27 November 1889.) The oval List Room datestamps remained in service for about ten years, the latest recorded usage being of the No 2 device on NO10/1899.



These were, in their turn, replaced by small boxed datestamps inscribed 'No 1 LIST' and 'No 2 LIST'. Usage of No 1 is recorded between mid-1901 and late 1907. Of the No 2 datestamp, only two examples - both cancelling single Postage Due stamps - have been recorded; usage on cover is not known.

Coincident with the introduction of the boxed List markings, a quite minimalist datestamp was introduced. This unprepossessing little implement is remarkable for being the only Melbourne datestamp comprised entirely of interchangeable slugs, i.e., there is no inscription whatsoever, simply date and time slugs! There are two variants: with the day appearing first or with the month first. Similarly with the boxed No 1 List datestamp, usage is recorded between mid-1901 and mid-1907. However, it is expected that later usage, even as late as 1910, may be encountered.



The three small boxed datestamps are the last to be considered in this study. By March 1908, datestamps incorporating revolving date wheels instead of interchangeable slugs had been introduced. These later types better reflected the processing of undelivered letters. As can be seen from the cover shown above, the name of the addressee was literally "called" - as had always been the case - in the hope that one of the postmen knew that person's whereabouts. The 'CALLED/L.C.R.' (= Letter Carriers Room) datestamp was applied at 11

am. No useful information was forthcoming, so the letter was listed, the 'L.C. LIST' datestamp being added at 4.15 pm on the same day.

Remarkably, this time-consuming calling and listing system continued into the 1990s. (The later Letter Carrier markings are outside the scope of this study.)

E. Reintroduction of the numbered boxed datestamps

This, however, is not quite the end of the story. As noted previously, the numbered boxed 'L.C.' datestamps were withdrawn sometime between March 1887 and early 1889 and replaced with the oval 'LIST ROOM' datestamps.

Victoria's first Postage Due stamps were issued on 12 October 1890. It is clear that the boxed 'L.C.2' and 'L.C.3' datestamps were reintroduced specifically to cancel Postage Dues affixed at the GPO. By late 1900, the 'L.C.6' datestamp was also returned to service for the same purpose. There is no evidence that the similar boxed 'L.C.1', '4' or '5' datestamps were ever used after their initial withdrawal, and it is presumed that they had been damaged or lost.



The first uniform series of Postage Due stamps for the Commonwealth of Australia was released on 1 July 1902. That seems to coincide with the second and final withdrawing of the boxed LC datestamps at the Melbourne GPO, the latest recorded usage for any of them being JE23/02.

It is a marvellous philatelic irony that most collectors who are aware of Melbourne's LC markings know them only as cancellations on Postage Due stamps, in which context they had nothing whatsoever to do with the letter carrier function.

A catalogue of the LC markings follows.

Readers are invited to contribute to this study by submitting scans of relevant material in their possession to the author by email: gary@prestigephilately.com. There is particular interest in recording use of any of the LC markings on cover, with a view to publishing a census of covers as a follow-up to this article. To highlight how elusive this material is, to date a pictorial record of fewer than 50 covers has been assembled.

While most of the material will have originated within Victoria, examples are known on incoming mail from the other Australian Colonies, and from overseas. The common factor is that every cover recorded is either addressed to, or re-addressed to Melbourne. It is possible that examples of these elusive markings could be found in any collection of 19th century postal history - from any country in the world - that includes mail to Victoria.

Catalogue of the Letter Carrier Datestamps of Melbourne 1854-1907

This listing adopts the methodology used in *The Post Offices and Hand-Held Datestamps of Victoria* by Watson, Webster & Wood (1989 & 1992).

The first column is the catalogue number, advancing by tens to allow insertion of new discoveries without compromising the original numbering. For those datestamps that were withdrawn and later reintroduced, suffixes 'A' and 'B' are used. Entries are arranged chronologically, except for the numbered series, which are arranged numerically.

The second column is the inscription on the datestamp. The third column is the external dimensions in millimeters, to the nearest half-millimeter. The fourth column is the shape of the device (left blank for circular datestamps, of which there are none in this study). Then come the earliest and latest dates recorded by the researcher.

Any relevant notes follow each entry (in a smaller font). Note that all examples seen to 1857 are struck in red. Thereafter, all strikes are in black ink, unless noted otherwise.

[Because this listing is considered to be provisional, no rarity ratings have been assigned to the respective markings. It is intended that this element will be introduced when the census of LC covers is compiled.]



Cat. No.	Inscription	Dimensions	Shape	Earliest date	Latest date
LC1010	LC	24x17	Oval	NO10/1854	JL8/1857

Code letters 'a' (between month & day) and 'd' (after date). 1857 examples have no code letter.

LC1020	LC	24x17	Oval	AP14/1856	OC5/1856
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This has a "floating" '1' with serifs, 3 mm to the right of the oval. Code letter 'a' (Oct). April example has no code letter.

LC1030	LC	22x17	Oval	JU8/1857	OC11/1865
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Code letters 'a', 'c', 'd'.



LC1040	LC	24x18	Oval	DC31/1858	JA14/1863
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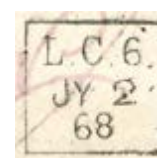
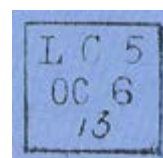
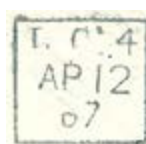
There are very large dots before and after 'LC'. Code letters 'c' (1858) and 'd' (1863).

LC1050	LC	24x17	Oval	NO7/1860	
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There is a very large dot after 'LC'. Code letter 'a'.

LC1060	LC	24x18	Oval	AP20/1865	MA17/1866
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Code letters 'c' (1865) and 'd' (1866). 'MA' = March.



LC1070	L.C.1	18x17½	Rect	AU29/73	DE11/85
LC1080A	L.C.2.	18½x18	Rect	DC17/66 JL1/91	LC1080B AP20/02

Reintroduced to cancel Postage Due stamps. Some strikes have no day & month slugs.

LC1090A	L.C.3.	18x17	Rect	JA11/67	JA20/74
LC1090B				JY15/91	JE23/02

Reintroduced to cancel Postage Due stamps. Some strikes have no day & month slugs.

LC1100	L.C.4	17½x16½	Rect	AP12/67	
LC1110	L.C.5	17½x17	Rect	OC6/73	MR17/81
LC1120A	L.C.6.	17½x17	Rect	JY2/68	OC20/69
LC1120B				JA5/01	JE23/02

Reintroduced to cancel Postage Due stamps. Some strikes have no date slugs. Some 1901 strikes have an inverted year slug reading '10'.

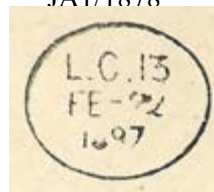


LC1130 L.C.7 24x20 Oval MR6/1882 MY27/1885

LC1140 L.C.8

Unrecorded, but presumed to have been introduced.

LC1150 L.C.9 24x20 Oval JA1/1878 FE22/1887



LC1160 L.C.10 24X20 Oval NO /1879 MY25/1885

LC1170 L.C.11. 24½x20½ Oval FE2/1882 JA27/1885

LC1180 L.C.12

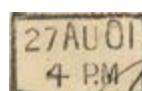
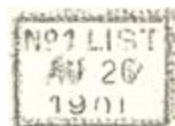
Unrecorded, but presumed to have been introduced.

LC1190 L.C.13 24x20½ Oval FE24/1887 MR4/1887



LC1200 LIST ROOM/No 1 30x24 Oval NO27/1889 AU17/1899

LC1210 LIST ROOM/No 2 30x22½ Oval AP16/1892 NO10/1899



LC1220 No 1 LIST 20x14 Rect AU26/1901 DE23/1909

LC1230 No 2 LIST 20x14 Rect /19-- JE20/19—

Only two strikes recorded, both on loose stamps. One has no year slug; the other has only the century slug '19'.

LC1240 (No inscription) 17x10½ Rect 7JE01 20NO11

Some examples have the month slug first, eg, AP1607.

Acknowledgments:

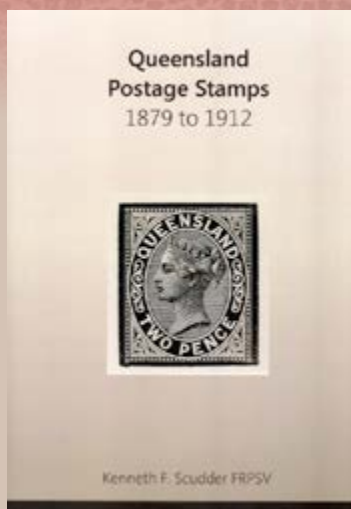
The following collectors are warmly acknowledged for variously providing information, scans of material in their collections, and general encouragement: John Barwis (USA); Ken Barelli (Melbourne); Larry Birke (USA); Don Davies (UK); Dale Forster (USA); Hugh Freeman (Sydney); Brian Fuller (Melbourne); Alan Grey (Melbourne); Bill Jenkins (Melbourne); Dr Geoff Kellow RDP (Sydney); Don Richardson (New Zealand); Helen & Max Watson (Melbourne); John Waugh (Melbourne); and David Wood (Melbourne).

References:

- [1] Purves, JRW, *Victoria: The Postage Dues, background and foreground*, Melbourne: Hawthorn Press, 1962.
- [2] Watson, G, It Wouldn't Happen Today: Delivering an 1872 letter in Melbourne, *Philately from Australia*, Vol LXII, No 1, March 2010, p. 27.
- [3] Purves, Victoria: The Postage Dues, p. 63.

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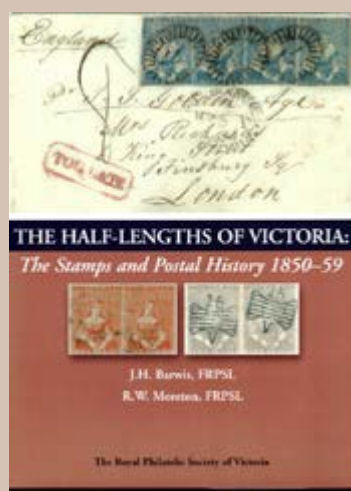


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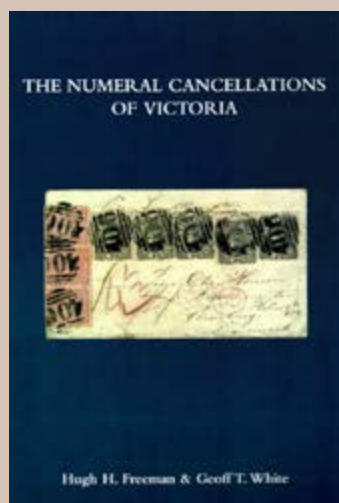


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An Early Victoria River (NT) Cover

The Kimberley district of North West Australia was settled by Nat Buchanan and others, who overlanded cattle from the Goulburn district of NSW around 1883. Stores for the Kimberley cattle stations were shipped in to the Victoria River Depot, which was at the head of navigation for vessels carrying stores. The first post office – non official – opened in 1902, as Victoria River. The name was changed due to the post office being moved, to Timber Creek in early 1935. The nearest post office in 1902 was Wyndham, some 350 km away.

The first datestamp for Victoria River was a squared circle type, known 1902 to 1913, and rated by Williams¹ 4R. Williams' earliest date for the second datestamp is 28 July 1928, and rated 3R. This cover, cancelled 3

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Western Australia 1924 Perth Wellington St PPC



Australia 1930 Customs Duty multiple (20)



Australia 1923 KGV 1½ d red OS in die envelope



Australia 1945 private wrapper "Over 6 ozs" taxed



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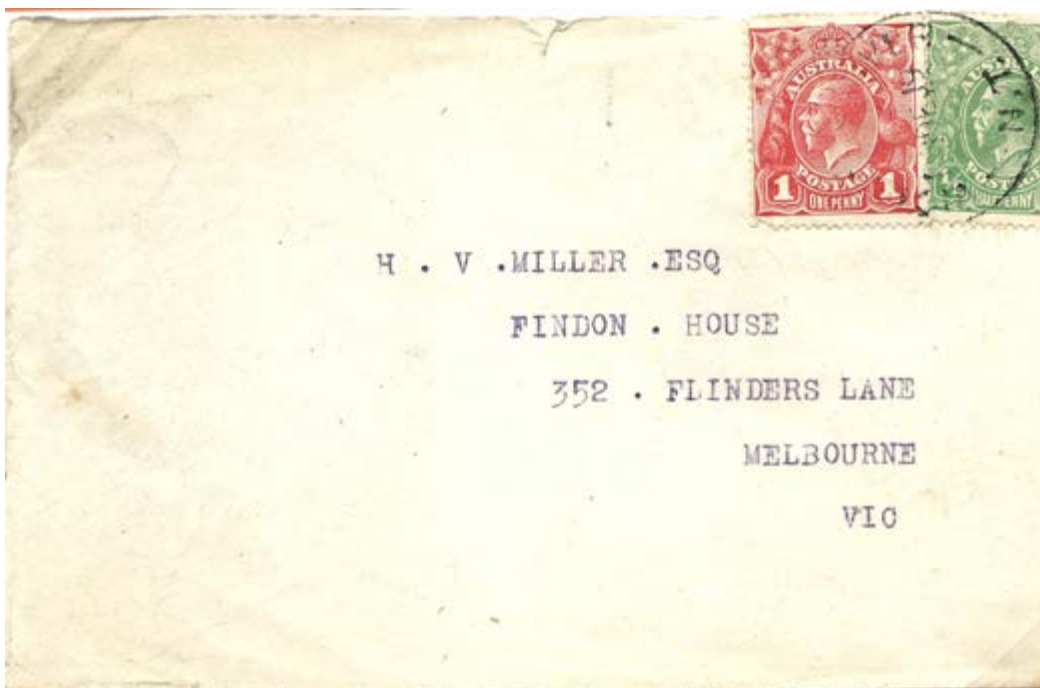


Figure 1: The cover cancelled 3 Dec 1919 at Victoria River

Dec 19, is nine years earlier than that recorded by Williams (Figure 1).

The cover has no backstamps, but would have been carried on the S.S. Bambra, the Western Australian Government mail steamer, on its six weekly service between Fremantle and Darwin, and then by rail to Melbourne. The S.S. Bambra operated this service from 1914 to WWII.

The enclosed letter is a report from D. J. Byers², the manager of Bradshaw's Run, Victoria River (Figure 2). It gives a graphic and rather laconic account of the difficulties with which the early settlers had to deal.

Notes:

¹ E.A.Williams, *The Postal History of the Northern Territory, 1824-1988*. Melbourne: Royal Philatelic Society of Victoria, 1992.

² Mr Byers was tragically lost in the bush while returning to his station from Darwin in late July 1921. His body was never found. (Byers, L. W., Death of Mr Byers, *Townsville Daily Bulletin (QLD)*, Sat. 4 Feb. 1922, p 2.

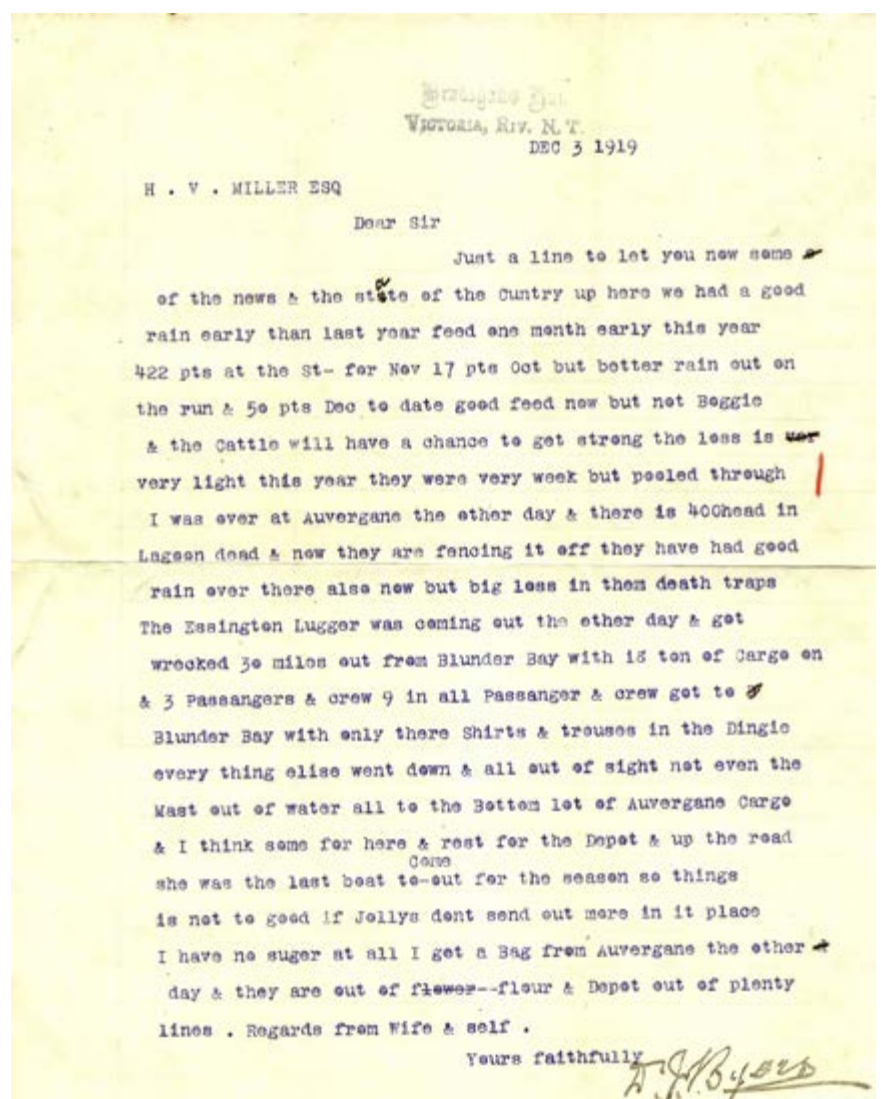


Figure 2: The enclosed letter from D. J Byers to H. V. Miller



Varieties of the 1937 1d Queen Elizabeth Die 1: A Second Sequel

I refer to my article in the June 2012 edition of *Philately from Australia* and a Sequel in the December 2012 issue.

In the Sequel, I was able to provide an image of the *retouch around "USTRA"*, which is listed but not illustrated as 181i in the *Australian Commonwealth Specialists' Catalogue (ACSC)*, and positioned as R7/1 (see Figure 1). I have recently found a used copy of a stamp showing a pronounced

weak entry around "USTRA" (see Figure 2), which would suggest that it is the reason for the retouch. A positional piece is required to confirm this.

Also in the Sequel, I noted a coloured flaw between rows 3 and 4 (see Figure 3), but was unable to identify its location in the rows or if it was a constant flaw. Recently, I purchased a sheet from a Melbourne dealer showing the flaw in the first column of the right pane of an upper sheet, giving the location as between R3/1 and R4/1. The same sheet had the flaws at L1/8 and L2/8, as illustrated in the Sequel.

The ACSC lists and illustrates a weak entry under and to the right of "AGE" at R3/7 on an upper sheet of plate 2 (see Figure 4). A similar weak entry is also evident on stamp L6/7. It comes from a sheet with a 23 mm wide gutter, confirming that it is from either plate 4 or 7.



Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3



Figure 4

Reference:

The Australian Commonwealth Specialists' Catalogue: King George VI, 2006, edited by Geoffrey Kellow

Murray River Steam Navigation Company stamps: a local post mystery



Image courtesy: Prestige Philately

First recorded over 140 years ago, the stamps of the Murray River Steam Navigation Company (MRSNCo) have long fascinated collectors. In this article I have traced the research conducted over the years by leading philatelists who have endeavoured to throw light on this obscure subject. Note that I have used “Murray River Steam Navigation Company” – notwithstanding the fact the stamps are inscribed “MURRAY S.N.Co.” – as MRSNCo is the name appearing in company records.

For many years, very little information existed and some leading collectors of local stamps considered the MRSNCo stamps to be of dubious status. However, a significant amount of research has been carried out during the past 70 years, which has shed some light on the MRSNCo and the production of the stamps. Also, there is some confirmation the stamps did serve a postal function, as attested by a unique cover of 1869 featuring a MRSNCo stamp used in conjunction with a Victorian postage stamp.

Last year, the existence of previously unknown multiples of MRSNCo stamps was revealed. The circumstances behind this astonishing discovery are described in “The ‘Brussels Find’: the Final Word is never written” by Gary Watson FRPSV in *Philately from Australia* (March–May 2013, pages 16–19).

It was the pioneer Brussels stamp dealer, Jean-Baptiste Moëns, who first reported the existence of the MRSNCo stamps in his journal, *Le Timbre-Poste*, (October 1872, page 75). Under the new issue heading of “New South Wales”, Moëns wrote: “Someone has sent us four more stamps of doubtful appearance . . . The impression is on white paper; perforation 14, ½ penny black; 1 penny red; 2 penny blue; 3 penny green.”

The news was reported in the *Philatelic Journal* (November 1872, page 185), by the editor and English stamp dealer, Edward Loines Pemberton. Under the heading “Bogus Novelties”, Pemberton wrote:

“NEW SOUTH WALES. – *Local*. – Four stamps are in the market, of which we have every reason to suspect the authenticity. They are all of one design, oblong, inscribed VICTORIA, N.S. WALES, MURRAY S.N.CO. The centre contains a vessel, which is surrounded by certain tropical plants and

trees. There is no mention of postage, and therefore we doubt that they can be anything more than parcel labels at the best, and it is to be distinctly understood that we do not even admit that much about them. They are coarsely printed on white, heavily gummed, perf. circ. 14.

½ penny black.

1 penny red.

2 penny blue.

3 penny green.”

The news was published in other journals, including French stamp dealer (who was subsequently philatelic secretary to Philipp von Ferrary), Pierre Mahé, in the *Gazette des Timbres* (January 1873, page 90), which also featured an illustration of the 3d MRSNCo stamp. The editor of the *Philatelist* (December 1872, page 169), Dr Charles William Viner, noted the MRSNCo stamps and added a softening comment: “The Brussels magazine notes four stamps in the same type without guaranteeing their authenticity . . . They are possibly employed by a private company, trading from Victoria to New South Wales, in the same way as the Danubian Steam, and Levant Co.’s stamps serve.”

Fred J. Melville wrote a series of articles, “Stamps of the Steamship Companies: a Rough List”, in the *Stamp Lover*, which he

had edited since its inception in 1908. Melville commented on the MRSNCo stamps in the *Stamp Lover* (April 1914, page 225): “These are probably quite bogus, but we have failed to trace any record of their existence in the philatelic press, and shall be obliged for information from Australian and other collectors.” Melville listed only the ½d, 1d and 3d values. As he had never seen the 2d stamp, it was omitted.

In 1923, Melville wrote *Phantom Philately: a Descriptive List of Stamps that are not what they seem* (reprinted by George van den Berg, 1950). Melville described the MRSNCo stamps in these terms: “These are rarely met with, and appear to be hoary old impostors of the early stamp-collecting days. . . Of these I have only come across the ½d., 1d. and 3d., but the contemporary chronicles give: ½d. black, 1d. red, 2d. blue and 3d. green.”

This appears to have been all that was published on the subject prior to World War II. It did not provide much revealing information, but things would soon change. In England, Erik F. Hurt was keen to know more about the MRSNCo, while in the course of acquiring information for a catalogue of local posts stamps. Hurt was a dealer in private posts and he had compiled a 26-volume reference collection – said to be the largest of its kind in existence. During 1942–45, Erik Hurt, in conjunction with brothers Leon Norman & Maurice Williams, published five instalments of the *Priced Catalogue of Local Postage Stamps*.

In the *Australian Stamp Monthly* (October 1 & November 1 1941, pages 327–29 & 365–67), Hurt wrote an article titled “Murray Steam Navigation Company: An Appeal to Australian Philatelists”. He began by referring to the early published references, and noting he had informed Melville that he (Hurt) had acquired a 2d MRSNCo stamp, which caused Melville to be “most excited”. Hurt wrote that Melville’s decision to include the MRSNCo stamps in *Phantom Philately* did not imply they were bogus, since the catalogue included stamps that were obviously genuine issues of local carriers. Melville, who died in 1940, was described by Hurt as someone “who was very careful to turn up his references, but was not always so careful to check up on facts for himself . . .”

Hurt had come to the conclusion the MRSNCo stamps were lithographed, and he had also observed that the four values are not alike. The upper corners of the ½d, 2d and 3d feature tiny figures of value, but in the 1d design the upper corners are filled in by a small star, similar to the star in the lower corners of the other values. Also, the individual stars are different in each of the four values. The lettering in the top and side margins is different on each value, meaning that a different die was used for each value. Hurt went on to say in his *ASM* article:

“What I think possibly happened was that a die was made for the central vignette, and from this a transfer for all values on four stones. Then secondary dies were made for the frames – all four sides and transfers from these added to the stones mentioned. It seems a very round-about and unnecessarily laborious proceeding, but there is evidence, if one will examine the stamps, that it is so, by the various positions of the ill-fitting centres in the frames. Alternately new frames were drawn. But I do not think this occurred in the 1d., partly because of the differences in the corners and partly because the frame fits the

vignette as though it was an integral part of the same design, and partly for the following reason:–

There has lately come into my hands an **engraved** proof of the 1d. Murray S.N.Co., printed in green on a large piece of card. This is a very finely done piece of work, which, while it naturally shows none of the worn appearance in the way of broken lines, seen in the litho. impressions, is identical with the 1d. red in every respect but one. . . The one small difference between the die proof and the stamp in red from the litho. print is that the words ONE PENNY [are] on a ground covered with rather widely spaced vertical shading. But on the 1d. copy in red, not only could these lines have been easily removed on the die before transfer was made, but there are actually minute signs of this process having taken place as is evidenced by minute fragments of the lines still adhering to the label frame under the vignette. Moreover, the words ONE PENNY are identical under the strongest glass with those on the proof.”

Hurt believed the MRSNCo stamp image was genuine. It seemed unlikely that such care in production – as evidenced by the 1d die proof – would be spent on a bogus stamp. Furthermore, their continued rarity does not indicate a bogus origin, but Hurt arrived at another conclusion. He thought the 1d stamp *only* was genuine, and the other values were “bogus imitations” prepared by someone who had access to the printing stone:

“I am not suggesting that these stamps were ever used. They may only have been a proposed issue which, due to the failure of the company, came to naught, but they would be none the less philatelically interesting for that. There are other unissued stamps that have been accepted and are valued highly by philatelists. One thing I do suggest in view of what I have shown in connection with the proof. That is, that the original value was to be 1d. and that only the 1d. is genuine, while the other three values are bogus imitations by someone who wished to gild the lily by completing the set and who possibly got hold of the original stone and was able to make use of the vignette portion by adding the labels. In fact, it almost looks to me as if the labels of the ½d., 2d. and 3d. were drawn on the stone separately, one after another, by hand, after those of the 1d. had been damaged or removed. Surely this is the only possible reason for not only the crudity of the inscriptions on these three values only, but their complete dissimilarity one from another. Even the dotted background on the side labels of these values differs from that of the 1d. What other explanation is there for the necessity of drawing in all four labels of each stamp when to make use of the 1d. design for the other values it would normally have been only necessary to change the lower “value” label, especially if one had the original die? The evidence is strongly in favour of the “bogus” merchant having only the old stone and not the die. . . . In conclusion, I not only suggest that my last supposition is correct, but that the Murray River Co. actually got the 1d. value ready for issue, but due to some unforeseen cause, or due to failure of the company, the stamps were not put into use. Someone found the stone and printed off from it, later adding also the other values to provide a set which might attract collectors.”

Hurt referred to an old-time, London stamp dealer, Victor F. James, who had once written about MRSNCo stamps in his



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newsletter. The item was identified by L.N. Williams (1984) as appearing in *V.F. James' Philatelic Notes and Offers*, No. 414, July 9 1938. James said that he met someone who had been employed by the "Murrey River Company" [sic], and who still held one of the company's share certificates. The claim persuaded Hurt to believe the shipping company had actually existed, but he wanted to know more – when the company started; where and how it operated; and when it ended – and hence his "appeal to Australian philatelists." Hurt did not have to wait long for a reply.

In the *Australian Stamp Monthly* (December 1 1941, pages 399–405), Jack Cato presented his arguments in favour of the stamps in an article, "The Private Post of the Murray Steam Navigation Company: An Open Letter to Mr. E.F. Hurt, of Harpenden, England." Jack Cato was president of the (Royal) Philatelic Society of Victoria in the mid-1930s and a leading specialist in Australian Commonwealth stamps. Also, Cato was a prominent photographer in Melbourne and someone who moved comfortably in society circles. He believed the MRSNCo was connected to a Scottish immigrant, William McCulloch, who came to dominate Victoria's transport industry. McCulloch first began operating paddle steamers on the Murray River in about 1860 and as Cato described McCulloch:

"He leads us a merry dance in cross-checking the records to trace his companies, which had different titles to cover their trade in various districts along the vast extent of the rivers. He had "The Murray River Shipping Co.", "The Murray Steam Navigation Co.", "The Murrumbidgee Steam Navigation Co." and "The Murray and Murrumbidgee S.N. Co." He registered his ships in the Australian and New Zealand Shipping Gazette and in Lloyds Register as "Murray Shipping Co." His city offices appear in the Melbourne Directories for the 70's as "The Murray, Darling and Murrumbidgee River Steamers, William McCulloch & Co."

In some years this company is listed in the Directory above the name of "John Orr, agent." In the Melbourne Directory for 1870, page 739, we find – "Upper Murray Steam Navigation Co. John Orr, Agent, 18 Queen Street." Same agent and same address as Wm. McCulloch & Co. The prefix "Upper" pointed the direction to Melbourne Consignees. But on the river, and in all its activities there it is called "Murray Steam Navigation Co." The first official record I can find is in the "Riverina Herald" [*the correct title is "Riverine Herald"*], published in Echuca, Saturday, January 26, 1867 – an advertisement headed "Murray Steam Navigation Co.", offering the "S.S. Moira" for sale. . . . This company is in the Directories for only six years, from 1867 to 1873, and then it disappears. It traded in the upper reaches of the Murray River. It is important to note this."

Cato quoted A.S. Kenyon, president of the (Royal) Historical Society of Victoria, who had spent much of his younger life on the Murray River: "All the boats of the Murray conducted Private Posts, receiving and delivering letters for a fee." According to Cato, Kenyon was the greatest authority of the day on early Victorian history.

Cato referred to the late Frank Neal of Sydney, who had owned "the only full set of MRSNCo stamps in Australia". Subsequently, these stamps were acquired by W.R. Waddington, also

of Sydney. Waddington had loaned his stamps to Cato, together with Neal's research notes. On one occasion (the year is not known), Neal had enquired about the stamps in a letter to C.J. Phillips, who was a former employee of the MRSNCo. Phillips had replied to Neal saying:

"Yours of the 9th May to hand regarding Murray River Locals. Mr Melville is quite wrong. Forty years ago in Australia I wrote some articles upon same, headed C. & P. travels through wilds of Australia. The Shipping Co. used to trade right up Murray River, and many times I have personally delivered letters and even small parcels with these stamps or labels on . . . I was also a shareholder in the Company, and may be able to find an old balance sheet, which gave particulars of these stamps, etc., etc."

Cato stated he took the stamps to "the oldest printing firms in Melbourne", and found men who had been in trade long enough to have printed banknotes for private banks: "All agreed that the stamps were identical with work done by H.P. Niven & Co., of Ballarat at that time, but this old firm is long closed down." Francis Niven established F.W. Niven & Co. in Ballarat in the mid-1850s, where he operated lithographic presses and employed 70 hands at the firm's peak. (Is Cato referring to a later name adopted by the firm?)

Cato concluded his article with a strongly-worded plea for recognition of the MRSNCo stamps, saying he had never found anyone in Australia who doubted the local post. Leading philatelists who had discussed the subject with Cato included J.R.W. (Bill) Purves, Alec Rosenblum, A.F. Basset Hull, William Ackland and Stan Orlo-Smith, none of whom had suggested the MRSNCo stamps were bogus. Writing to Cato, Basset Hull drew a link between the MRSNCo and McCulloch & Co. Parcel Express, both firms being under the same management, and both having produced local carrier stamps. In 1879, when he was living in Hobart, Hull had been sent several McCulloch & Co. 6d Parcel Express stamps by his brother, who was then working at a bank in Melbourne.

In the *London Philatelist* (October 1947, pages 188–90), H.R. (Bob) Holmes RDP contributed a few significant observations in an article, "The Stamps of the Murray Steam Navigation Company: An Unrecorded Error". Holmes was then editor of the *London Philatelist*. His article discussed two versions of the ½d MRSNCo stamp, the existence of which was apparently unknown to the earlier writers:

". . . A discovery, which I recently made, however, shows that an error occurred on the stone of the ½d value, but whether it affected every unit on the stone and was subsequently corrected or whether only one unit showed the error is at present only a matter for surmise. The discovery relates to specimens of the lowest denomination with the value reading "HALF PENCE" instead of the correct "HALF PENNY". I have had a set of these stamps in my collection for many years, and it was while going over some duplicates that I came on two specimens with the curious "HALF PENCE" inscription."

Holmes advanced a theory to explain the two versions of the ½d stamp. He believed the stone had been originally laid down featuring stamps reading "HALF PENCE". Then at some point after printing had commenced, the "error" was noticed and it

was decided to change the inscription to read "HALF PENNY". To achieve this, the "CE" of "PENCE" was cleaned off the stone, and new letters "NY" were drawn in their place. Holmes illustrated enlarged images of the HALF PENCE and HALF PENNY stamps. It is noticeable the letters "HALF PEN..." are identical on both stamps. However, the "NY" on the HALF PENNY stamp is thicker than the other letters, suggesting they were redrawn. It can be assumed that "Half Pence" might have been regarded as an error of grammar, since "pence" is the plural form and "penny" is the singular. For the same reason, it is right to say "half cent", but not "half cents".

A revised version of Hurt & Williams Local Posts catalogue was published as the *Handbook of the Private Local Posts* in Billig's Specialised Catalogues, Volume 6 (1950), in which the "HALF PENCE" variety was added to the listing. The MRSN-Co stamps gained further catalogue recognition with the publication of *The Encyclopedia of British Empire Postage Stamps, Volume IV, the Empire in Australasia* by Robson Lowe (1962) with the five variations of stamps being listed by a "V" in the price column. ("V" indicated "valuable" for a stamp worth from £5.5s. to £20.)

Up to this stage, no one had provided evidence the MRSNCo stamps ever served their presumed function – the prepayment of fees for a local post. In October 1963, at the "fifth Thursday" meeting of the Royal Philatelic Society of Victoria, F.E. (Fred) Wood displayed his MIPEx '63 exhibit, including MRSNCo and other Australian local stamps. The highlight of the display, according to a report in *Philately from Australia* (December 1963, page 108), was "the unique Murray River local on cover". Wood said this had been "unearthed in the United States." It is interesting to note that Fred Wood was acting editor of the *Australian Stamp Monthly* during World War II, when the editor, Phil Collas, was away on RAAF service. Wood was the editor in late 1941, when Hurt and Cato published their research in *ASM*.

The 1869 MRSNCo cover was the subject of a non-attributed article in the *Australian Stamp Monthly* (April 6 1964, page 219), "Rare Local Stamp Found Used on Cover". The MRSN-Co cover even enjoyed the privilege of being featured on the front cover of the *ASM*, normally reserved for a topical new stamp issue. The article described the newly-discovered cover featuring a Victorian 2d Laureate stamp used in conjunction with a 3d MRSNCo stamp:

"The cover is dark blue in colour, of a kind popular at that time, and is franked with a 2d grey Victorian stamp in use in the 1860s. It is addressed to Geo. Langford Esquire, J.P., R.M., Echuca. Beneath the R.M. and Echuca is an indecipherable squiggle, probably the name of Langford's property. In the upper left corner is written "Per P.S. Kelpie" and also at the left at lower down is the Murray Steam Navigation Co.'s green 3d stamp. This is pen-cancelled with the initials "J.K.M." and the date 10.2.69. The (2d grey) stamp is obliterated with a barred numeral cancellation with the number "40", which was allocated to Echuca. The cover is also backstamped with a circular datestamp "Echuca/FE 10/69/, VICTORIA".

The *ASM* article noted there was nothing to say where the cover had originated from, but it offered a guess it was probably a station along the Murray River, in the direction of Swan Hill (i.e. to the west of Echuca), because "the paddle steamer 'Kelpie' is known to have plied mainly on that part of the river." Regarding the "JKM" initials the article commented:

"The initials with which the local stamp is cancelled – 'J.K.M.' – are those probably of J.K. Mayne, at that time manager of the Echuca branch of Wm. McCulloch & Co. and its several subsidiaries, of which the Murray Steam Navigation Co. was one. A few years later Mr Mayne left McCulloch's and, with another of the firm's employees, founded the well-known business of Mayne, Nickless & Co. En-

quiries in the Echuca district have so far failed to produce any information about the addressee, George Langford, J.P., or his descendants, if any."

Actually, George Langford's identity can be easily established today. The internet search facility, Trove Online Newspapers, reveals many news items in Echuca's *Riverine Herald* referring to Langford's involvement in court cases. On 9 January 1869, the *Riverine Herald* under "The New Arrangements for

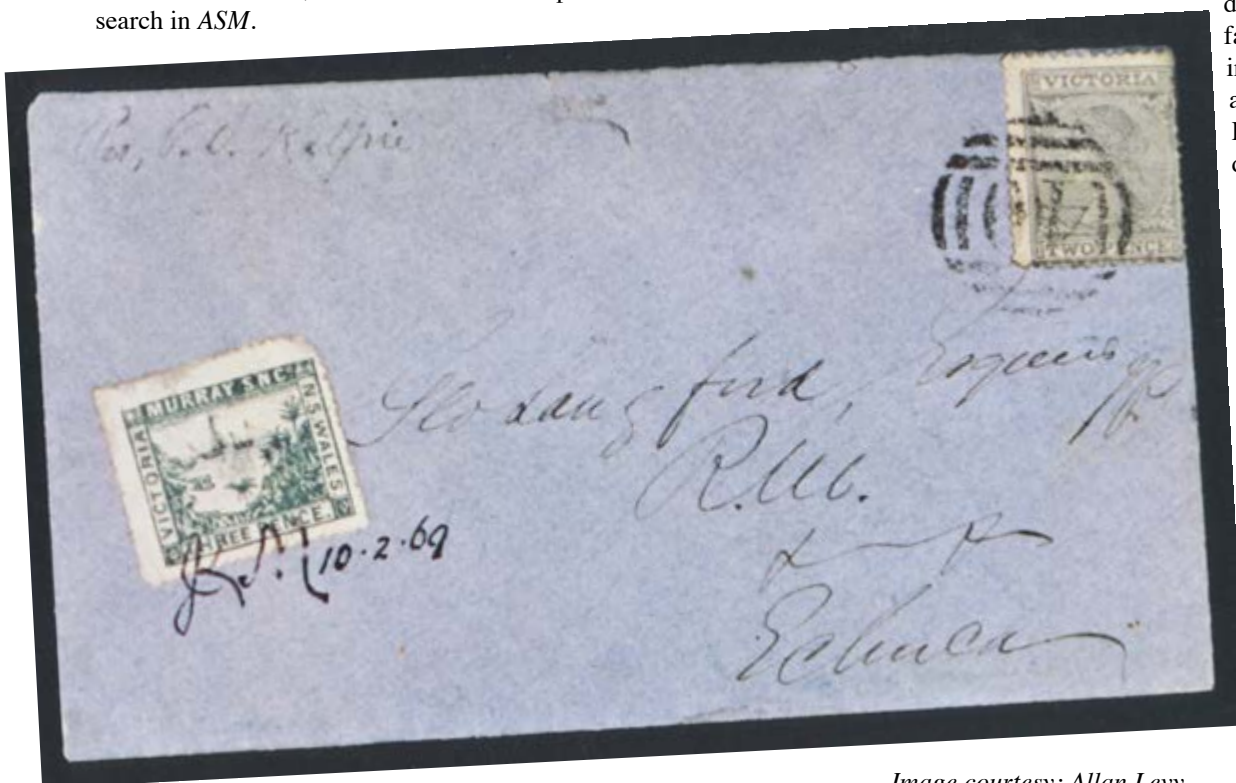


Image courtesy: Allan Levy



Judges and Magistrates” George Langford Esquire is identified as the Police Magistrate; this being a month before the MRSNCo letter was sent. Langford served in the role until early 1878. Incidentally, the apparent initials “R M” in the address might be actually “P M”, if a downward stroke of the pen was made to link “P” to “M”.

With regard to the PS *Kelpie*, this vessel is recorded in *Ships of the Inland Rivers: An Outline history of all known paddle ships, barges and other vessels trading on the Murray–Darling system* by Ronald Parsons (1987). According to Parsons, the *Kelpie* was built in 1864 by James Symington at Kelpie Farm, Moama, NSW. Originally built as a sternwheeler, the *Kelpie* was converted to as a sidewheeler in 1875 at Echuca. The owners of the *Kelpie* were listed by Parsons as the Murray River Steam Navigation Co. (“according to Press”); first registered in 1867 to Linton & McCulloch, Moulamein, NSW; and subsequently registered to various owners from 1873 to 1895, when it was “broken up”, although other sources say 1901. Parsons says of the *Kelpie*: “Her first unregistered owners issued stamps to prepay freight on small packets and letters accepted for delivery along the rivers. One cancelled by the KELPIE still survives.”

In 1976, ownership of the MRSNCo cover changed hands. The cover was offered as Lot 318 in P.J. Downie Stamp Auction of 27 July 1976, estimated at \$400, but sold for \$900. The new owner of the cover was Allan A. Levy of Melbourne, a stamp trader operating in the United States and Australia. Having acquired the cover, Levy set out to find out as much as he could about the MRSNCo.

Levy spent a lot of time researching newspapers and other sources in the State Library of Victoria, as well as company records in government archives, and local records in Echuca. He found confirmation of the company’s existence. A Memorandum of Association dated 23 January 1864 described the objects of the Murray River Steam Navigation Company as being “The conveyance of passengers and goods in ships or boats . . . and the doing of all such things which are incidental to the above object.” Levy found three balance sheets of the company, dated 8 February 1865, 19 August 1865 and 23 January 1866. The company’s head office was located in Lydiard Street, Ballarat, which was also the address of F.W. Niven & Co., the assumed printer of the stamps. Levy could not find reference to the MRSNCo in any Victorian directory. An internet search has confirmed the address. The “Murray River Steam Navigation Company (Limited)” published an announcement in Ballarat’s *The Star* newspaper (Friday, 26 August 1864, page 3) stating the company’s offices were situated in Lydiard Street, Ballarat.

Searching (hard copies) of the *Riverine Herald*, Levy located various advertisements for the company, the earliest appearing on 4 January 1865. This announced “The Murray River Steam Navigation Co’s new steamer KELPIE . . . for freight apply to Reynolds and English, Echuca and Melbourne.” Another *Herald* advertisement of 21 June 1865 stated: “The Murray River Steam Navigation Co (Limited). The steamer VICTORIA will leave Echuca for Lower Murray . . . for freight . . . apply to Messrs McCulloch and Co, Echuca or John Cockburn, supercargo.” The *Herald*’s shipping column had numerous references to the arrival and departure of the *Kelpie* at Echuca from

1864 to 1870 and beyond. An internet search has located an earlier MRSNCo advertisement in the Melbourne *Argus* newspaper (Friday, 5 August 1864, page 1), which announced the “new steamer” *Kelpie* would depart Echuca on 15 August “for Moulamein, Edward River, landing goods at Swan Hill, and intermediate places.”

Levy’s research was written up by the late Bill Hornadge in *Stamp News* (February 1981, pages 144–45), “The Murray River Locals”. A leading researcher himself of Australian locals, Hornadge compiled and published *Cinderella Stamps of Australasia* in 1974. This illustrated and priced catalogue lists the MRSNCo issue, pricing the mint stamps at \$100 each and the cover at \$500. In his *Stamp News* article, Hornadge quoted from correspondence received from Levy, which included an interesting observation about the cancelling of the MRSNCo stamp on the 1869 cover: “The adhesive is tied to the cover by the initials **JKM** which stand for J.K. Mayne who at the time was a manager at the Echuca branch of McCulloch and Co. In the Latrobe Library [*part of the State Library of Victoria*] there is a letter book recording hundreds of letters written by J.K. Mayne and others on behalf of McCulloch & Co for 1869. All the letters written by Mr Mayne sighted has Mr Mayne’s signature as J.K. Mayne with the ‘J’ and ‘K’ joined in a similar manner to the ‘JKM’ tying the adhesive to the cover.”

Following this publicity, there was a further development. In his column “Cinderella Corner” in *Stamp News* (May 1981, page 140), Hornadge reported that Sydney stamp dealer, Glen Stephens, had acquired used examples of 1d and 3d MRSNCo stamps. The form of cancellation on both stamps is a rough, diamond-shaped pattern of pen dots. The stamps were examined by Allan Levy, who thought them to be genuine used examples, which had been previously unrecorded. Along with a third stamp – an unused 3d MRSNCo – the two used examples had been acquired by Stephens in an American auction. They were part of a deceased estate’s collection of local stamps with a navigation theme.

By the time Hornadge published a successor to his Cinderellas catalogue – *Local Stamps of Australia: With a listing of Commemorative Postal Vignettes* in 1982 – he had a good deal of additional information to include. In fact *Local Stamps of Australia* features six, A5 size pages devoted to the MRSNCo.

It is interesting to note Hornadge’s recollection in *Stamp News* of MRSNCo stamps being sold in Australia for a few shillings before World War II. A set of four stamps with original gum appears in Prestige Philately’s General Public Auction 187, 7 February 2014, Lot 490. Described as “almost certainly the finest set in existence”, they sold for \$1,500 plus buyer’s commission and GST.

In *Stamp News* (June 1986, pages 26–34) there is a long article by L.N. Williams. A “Philatelic History of the Murray Steam Navigation Locals” is a summary of previous writing on the subject. The article was originally prepared by Williams in October 1984, shortly after AUSIPEX ’84 was held in Melbourne. In March that year, Robson Lowe offered “The Postal History of Victoria” for private treaty sale at £40,000 plus VAT at 15% for a UK buyer. Included in the collection was the MRSNCo cover, which was valued at £10,000 plus VAT. The cover was available for sale separately. Apparently, Williams’

history of the MRSNCo stamps was prepared in association with the marketing of the MRSNCo cover. Williams said in the article he had been informed the cover was acquired by a “world-famous Italian collector.”

Last year, there was the *Brussels Find*. Belgian stamp dealer, Rodolphe de Maleingreau, sent to Gary Watson of Prestige Philately a total of 84 previously unknown MRSNCo stamps, most of which comprised multiple items. Until the existence of the stamps was announced, no one appeared to have ever recorded a multiple of any MRSNCo stamp. Included in the find are two full sheets of 10 (two x five) 1d stamps, surrounded by selvedge. A block of six of the 2d and various pairs of the ½d suggest the 10-on sheet format was used for all the stamps. It is an amazing find.

The *Brussels Find* involves an intriguing connection to the original discovery in 1872 of the MRSNCo stamps in Brussels by Jean-Baptiste Moëns. As explained by Gary Watson in his *PfA* article, the original owner of the *Brussels Find* was (the late) Charles Mackintosh, an extensive collector of worldwide locals. Mackintosh was a Scottish banker living in Brussels and he reportedly had connections with the wool trade between Belgium and Australia. There is no record of how he came to acquire the multiples of the MRSNCo (and the Victoria Echuca Railway) stamps.

We have so far focused on the research of others about the MRSNCo, but the writer would like to contribute a few observations about the 1869 cover – the only evidence to suggest the MRSNCo actually operated a local post. The question may be asked:– Did the MRSNCo operate a *legal* postal service, which did not breach the Post Office’s monopoly on letters?

The Post Office’s monopoly applied to letters of less than 16 ounces (one pound = 0.45 kilograms), but there were exceptions. The Victorian Post Office Act 1866, Section (62) states: “No letter shall be carried for hire or reward otherwise than by post. . . But nothing herein contained shall extend to any letter exceeding sixteen ounces in weight nor to any letter concerning goods sent and to be delivered therewith, or containing process of or proceedings or pleadings in any court of justice briefs cases and instructions for counsel and their opinions thereon respectively, deed affidavit or letter of attorney; nor to any letter sent by any person concerning his private affairs by any special messenger; nor to any letter *bonâ fide* sent or carried to or from the nearest post office.” Conceivably, the 1869 letter addressed to Echuca’s Police Magistrate could have involved the despatch of goods, transmission of legal papers, or carriage to the nearest post office, this being Echuca.

In his regular column “Cinderella Corner” in *Stamp News* (February 2009, pages 44–45), Tony Presgrave expressed concerns about the MRSNCo cover. Emphasising he did not have doubts about the stamps themselves, Presgrave said the manuscript cancellation on the cover was “difficult to explain”. According to a history of the Mayne Nickless company, *Hurry Back* by Brian Carroll, J.K. Mayne was manager of McCulloch’s office in Deniliquin, New South Wales, up to 1876. That year Mayne was appointed manager of the Echuca office. The date of Mayne’s signature on the cover is 10 February 1869, the same day the Echuca Post Office applied its date-stamp. Presgrave comments “So how did an employee of McCulloch come to use the (3d) stamp or at least cancel the stamp in 1869

on the same day the letter was backstamped in Echuca when the employee was based in Deniliquin? (Deniliquin is 145 kilometres from Echuca, via the Edwards and Murray Rivers.) Presgrave also states a comparison of J.K. Mayne’s initials on the stamp and his handwriting in documents reproduced in the Mayne Nickless book shows “noticeable differences.”

Certainly, J.K. Mayne was not the manager of McCulloch’s Echuca office in 1869, as earlier writers have stated. Allan Murray in a local history of Echuca, *Rich River* (1953), reproduced several items of correspondence from McCulloch’s Echuca office, which are signed by Harry Clifton as manager. Only the Echuca office correspondence from 1876 reproduced in the book is signed by J.K. Mayne as manager. However, did Mayne work in a subordinate role at Echuca in 1869? This question might be answered by a study of the McCulloch archives in the State Library of Victoria, but the answer must await a future article. (When Allan Morris wrote his book, the McCulloch archives were held in Echuca.)

Notwithstanding these doubts, a singular feature of the cover is suggestive of it being carried over a distance to the Echuca Post Office for onward postal transmission. The Echuca date-stamp was placed on the *reverse* of the envelope. If the article had been posted for delivery in Echuca in the normal manner, the date-stamp would most likely have been applied to the front, alongside the barred numeral obliterator. A date-stamp applied to the reverse suggests its use as a transit or arrival postmark. This seems a logical step for a letter taken by a local carrier to the nearest post office for on forwarding.

Melville’s “hoary old impostors” seem to have come a long way in the last 70 years or so.

Thanks to Eric Frazer for researching online information about the MRSNCo.

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Jim Shaw

New Zealand Newspaper Stamps 1873-1905: Display to the Society 20 February 2014



Figure 1. 1873 Perf. 10: Very early postmark usage (Dunedin SE 19 73). The “first day” of issue was 1 Jan 1873.

The first printing of the New Zealand newspaper stamps was made in 1872, in readiness for issue in January 1873. At this time there was a shortage of the paper being used for the Fullfaces and, in any case, it was felt the “large star” paper would be unsuitable for surface printing. As a result, paper being used for duty stamps was employed. This was a wove paper made by De La Rue & Co., watermarked “NZ” (16 x 6 mm). *The Postage Stamps of New Zealand Volume 1* states that 77,600 stamps (2,990 sheets) were printed with the NZ watermark in 1872 so that they would be ready for issue in 1873. The duty stamps were twice the size of the newspaper stamps and, with 100 “NZ” impressions in 10 rows of 10, misalignment of the watermark on the smaller newspaper stamp was relatively common. This problem was largely overcome in 1875 with the move to a specially procured paper with a six point irregular “small star” which was arranged in 20 rows of 12 impressions. In 1892, the De La Rue paper with “NZ and Star” watermark was used and, as the paper was intended for larger stamps, resulted in poor watermark registration.

The Government Printer also struggled with the perforation of the newspaper stamps employing a rotary machine gauging 10 and a line machine gauging 12½, either alone or in combination. A head gauging nearly 12 (11¾) was also used as a temporary measure. Double perf. varieties are scarce but more numerous in the perf. 12½ era. Some partial imperforates exist from the “small star” printings.

The surface printing process and the large number of newspaper stamps produced inevitably gave rise to wear of the plates, and a second plate was introduced around 1888. The two plates can be distinguished by flaws that occur on the stamps, although replacement of individual electros (new electros were manufactured in 1894) can confuse the picture with flaws apparently vanishing and new varieties appearing. The term “electro” is a shortening of electrotypes which refers to a facsimile for use in printing of a block of type, an engraving, or the like. Usually they consist of a thin copper or nickel shell that is deposited by electrolytic action in a wax, lead or plastic mould of the original and backed with lead alloy.



Figure 2. Mail tag 1895: A very interesting usage of 2 x ½d stamps plus uprate of 2 x 2d to provide a rate of 5d for a 3–4 oz parcel, attached to a parcel tag addressed to “G Moore Esq, Eparaima, Masterton” and postmarked 10 JA 95.



Figure 3. Double perf. "NZ & Star" in mint block of 16: Perforated $12\frac{1}{2}$ vertically and horizontally and re-perforated $12\frac{1}{2}$ in 3 horizontal rows with a single comb and patched by printers to strengthen the stamps after having been "cut" vertically. This extraordinary example of the efforts taken by the printers not to waste any stamps printed and damaged is typical of the standards applied in that time period.



Figure 4. Bulls Eye plate marking: This sheet marking was first noticed on this issue in the 1st and 2nd plates for a very limited period. It disappeared, as it seems to have had no useful purpose. It was also used on a number of other first Sideface issues.

For the past ten years, I have been studying the plate flaws that occur on the halfpenny newspaper stamp. My starting point was the extensive research ascribed to the late Ken McNaught and, with the gradual acquisition of further material and scrutiny of dealers stock, I have uncovered many flaws for each plate. The chief difficulty has been the acquisition of clear dated copies. With usage of these stamps limited, in theory, to inland newspapers, suitable material from Plate 1 (1872-1888) is very scarce. The survival rate for use on newspapers has been extremely low and reflected in the prices sought for such items – often thousands of dollars. The replat diagrams of each plate ascribe major flaws that have been identified as occurring over some years and many printings of these stamps. For Plates 1 and 2, my studies have incorporated the varieties up to the Volume VI replat lists of *The Postage Stamps of New Zealand*.

The newspaper stamp went off sale in 1895 with the issue of the halfpenny Second Sideface stamp, although its use continued until around 1905. Postal usage was more extensive from 1891, when New Zealand joined the UPU, as there was a greater need for a halfpenny stamp (e.g., commercial papers). Used examples from Plate 2 (from 1888) are, therefore, more readily available.

Newspaper wrappers were issued on 1 April 1878 printed on white wove un-watermarked paper, with a gummed edge. An ornamental four-line inscription appeared at the top of the wrapper. A stamp of the $\frac{1}{2}$ d newspaper type was beneath the inscription, being printed in electrotypes blocks of 18 wrappers in dull rose. There were four separate printings to 1903 when it was replaced. It is known that they were sold in batches of 25, 100, 500 and 1000. These were



used extensively locally initially, and overseas when permitted later.

Also, other innovations occurred, e.g., the Austin Walsh cigarette card issues of 1892. Section 14 of the *Post Office Act 1881* allowed for the production and issue of private cards (stationery of commercial firms was stamped-to-order). At first, the Post & Telegraph Department arranged with the Government Printer to simultaneously print and stamp the stationery required by commercial firms or individuals but, later, the Government Printer only stamped the stationery provided. Additional printing or advertising was arranged elsewhere. Orders had a minimum of 1,000 items, with postage also being paid for in addition to printing and stationery.

The first occasion that the above section of the Act was used commercially was in March 1892 when Austin Walsh & Company of Auckland had 20,000 cards printed in connection with a publicity competition. The card was 2¾" wide and 1¾" deep, printed in one operation in dull rose. The stamp was a stereo of the ½d newspaper postage stamp, the rate being specially negotiated. The cards were used to return opinions or votes to the company, being the forerunner of the Business Reply postage scheme of the 1930s.

This display includes some innovative ideas that I aspire to perfect including: the use of diagrams to display the key plate flaws; a page with watermark plate designs in metal (a heavy one); large blocks and a sheet of the issued stamps (actually 90% of the sheet due to a perf. error); a large range of date usages to support the plate flaws studies; and a significant range of newspaper wrappers and usage. It has now achieved a Large Vermeil in the Bangkok World Stamp show. Some selected items are shown below.



Figure 5. Taxed newspaper wrapper: Overseas rate – underpaid mail – from Dunedin 29 JE 93 with ½d 1895 sideface issue. The Foreign Section marking "F.B." has been applied with a "2d" deficiency being charged for 1d underpaid. As a member of the U P U, underpaid mail from New Zealand was taxed double deficiency which was retained by the country of delivery – in this case the United Kingdom. Newspaper wrappers were taxed as postal stationery at the rate of 10 centimes (T 10) prior to 1920.



Figure 6. An extraordinary part-envelope and usage of the ½d newspaper stamp on official stationery, as a registration usage to London from Wellington (cancel 4 NO 92). There are 6 x ½d all overprinted O. P. S. O. in violet, watermark large star, prepaying the 3d registration with 2½d perf. 10 sideface stamp as the postage overseas rate to London. It is surprising that the ½d newspaper stamp should have ever been overprinted "OPSO", as it was never an official stamp for mailings, and for most letters would have only been a make-up rate. No surviving "OPSO" ½d newspaper stamps on newspapers have yet been recorded. The envelope transit time was 42 days, with an arrival date of 17 DE 92, in London.



Four prominent Melbourne philatelists are shown in this group pictured at the 4th Australasian Philatelic Congress held in Melbourne in October 1928 to coincide with the International Philatelic Exhibition staged in the Melbourne Town Hall. The four philatelists are top left: **A.A. (Alec) Rosenblum**; top right: **A.J. Derrick**; bottom left: **David Plummer**; and bottom right: **J.R.W. (Bill) Purves**. Rosenblum and Purves vied for the top award at the exhibition with both showing their Australian Commonwealth collections. In the event, it was Purves who got the nod. Two years earlier, Derrick had published a history of the (Royal) Philatelic Society of Victoria. Plummer was a young 18 year old publicity officer for the 1928 exhibition.

100 YEARS



50 YEARS AGO

The Australian Philatelist, 3 March 1914, featured a commentary on forming a specialised Australian Commonwealth collection, even though the “proper” stamps involved were little more than a year old. (The journal asserted that Commonwealth stamps began when state stamps were made interchangeable for postal use on 14 October 1910.):

“The Commonwealth stamps proper also afford scope for specialising. The “Half-penny” and “One Penny” are found with double perforation and many shades, also unperforated at either one of the sides; and the “One Penny” with the watermark sideways, and both values inverted. There are several shades found in the other values, 2d to 5/-; and possibly similar varieties of perforation and watermark as in the “Half-Penny” and “One Penny,” may be met with in these values also. As the “Kangaroo” will be replaced by a new issue, of which the “One Penny” has already appeared, and the opportunity for specialising in them is naturally, curtailed; but this should give collectors a greater zest in looking for varieties while the opportunity exists. The Postage Dues with all their varieties of perforation and shades of colour are full of interest and will fill several pages of the album. Already the new stamp – the “One Penny” King George – has provided some notable varieties in paper, gum, and shades of colour, as well as the four plate numbers. Although we are promised another million of them, they will not last long; and there is every probability that they will afterwards appear on watermarked paper, and printed from electros.”

Following MIPEx, *Philately from Australia*, March 1964, featured editor Horrie Chisholm’s editorial “The Problem of Understanding”, which discussed the challenges of explaining the significance of stamps on display. Incidentally, it would be most interesting to learn the identity of Melbourne’s “top philatelic bore”:

“A personal experience at MIPEx showed those who came were eager to be taught. They did not merely want to see stamps, nor even to see great rarities, but to learn the background to the stamps on display. Explaining the causes of the various issues of New Zealand Chalon Heads to a young collector, the editor found himself surrounded by an audience; and having repeated himself four times to new comers, only escaped by departing with those to whom he had been giving impromptu lectures. Well-briefed guides might be an asset in ideal circumstances, but there is a limit to the number of suitable personnel and most of them are far too busy otherwise during the exhibition. Guides can also be a problem. After more than 25 years, the writer still remembers an exhibition at which the city’s top philatelic bore constituted himself chief guide and greeter. Unfortunately, he was available for the whole period of the exhibition. Equally unfortunately, he was indefatigable.”



Don Napier

– Fifty Years in the Royal Philatelic Society of Victoria

[Ed: This was the keynote address delivered in Don Napier's honour at the Melbourne Savage Club on 19 July 2013. Readers are referred to a full report of the evening by Richard Breckon which was published in the June-September 2013 edition of *Philately from Australia* (p. 36).]

Some of you of the later vintage – there are a couple in the room – may remember that film: *If it's Tuesday, it must be Belgium*. Well tonight we have our own version: *If it's the Savage Club, it must be Don Napier!* So we gather here this evening in one of Don Napier's favourite places to mark and honour his contribution to another of his favourite places – the Royal Philatelic Society of Victoria. It is a great honour for us tonight to pay tribute to Don, and to celebrate his fifty years as a member of the Society, and, in this tribute, it is not only those here tonight who are involved, but many others who would have wished to be here, and also those former members of the Royal who have been gathered up.

So Don, you are amongst friends. And that is important. Philatelists can be a feisty and self-absorbed lot. Many are not blessed with doubt and, sadly, there are some who are challenged by lack of appropriate communication skills. And, I am not just talking about Exhibition Judges! Don is not of that kind. He delights in the company of others, is encouraging and supportive to those new to philately (I know that from personal experience), and is genuinely interested in the collecting habits of others, especially those lesser mortals who do not collect Rhodesia! So many folk new to the hobby can be put off in the early days of their collecting by the often pompous, sometimes pretentious, manner of the 'established' collector. Our Don is not of that ilk. And the fact that Don has brought these gifts to the Royal here in Victoria is a great blessing.

Don still has his first stamp album. You should get him to show you it sometime. I suspect he began collecting over seventy years ago. George V was then on the throne and he was something of a philatelist himself. Sir Harold George Nicolson, English diplomat, author, diarist and politician, wrote rather unkindly of King George V that *for seventeen years (as Duke of York) he did nothing at all but kill animals and stick in stamps*. Philatelists, and others, including Don, look more kindly upon George V. Don's family comes out of Scotland, but he was raised in England. His stamp collecting career has been formed by his working career as a very successful Quantity Surveyor. A spell in Jamaica shaped future collecting

interests, as did a number of years in the then Northern Rhodesia. I cannot understand his fondness for early Jamaica postal history (there are no stamps involved) but have some empathy for this great love – Rhodesia – especially the Double Head issue which features that other kindred philatelist – George V.

So why did this man, with such specialist interests, take such interest in the RPSV? I suspect that it was about companionship, about common interests, and it was about life-long learning.

Philatelist Clubs and Societies exist and flourish because of the goodwill and contribution of volunteer members. A passing glance at the active numbers in any club or society will confirm that statement. Don has certainly brought much, and given much, to the Royal Philatelic Society of Victoria. Over the years he has filled the following positions:

- President
- Secretary
- Treasurer
- Secretary of the Expert Committee
- Trustee of the Building
- A member of the Publications Committee
- A member of the House Committee

And he was part of that small group who undertook, so successfully, the physical move of the Royal from Avoca Street to Ashburton.

That roll call gives one but a brief glimpse of the extraordinary contributions that Don has given to this Society. It does not, however, show all the countless and unheralded acts of kindness that have taken place over the decades.

So for all of this – the known and the unknown – the Society is in the great debt of this man.

And there is still life in the old dog! Don has been elected as President of Rhodesian Study Circle from 2014, and Don, I bring you greetings and congratulations this evening from Colin Hoffman, Chairman of the RSC, a member of the Council of the RPSL, and a member of the RPSV.

So there, here we are, gathered to celebrate the past fifty years, and to look forward to all the blessings that flow from this man. I invite of us here this evening, to rise, and to drink a toast in thanks to our Don – Don Napier.



Vale Maurice Williams

AM, FAP (Hon)
1929–2013

RPSV member Maurice John Williams died aged 84 in Sydney on 16 December 2013. He was a noted philatelist and a prominent identity in business circles. Maurice's passing came as a shock to friends who did not know of his illness.

In the June 1994 Queen's Birthday Honours List, Maurice was awarded Member of the Order of Australia (AM) "for service to business and industry." He served as chief executive of the Australian Gas Light Company (1977–90) and chairman of Australia Post (1990–97). He left school at 15 to work at AGL as an electrical apprentice. During a 46-year career at the company, he moved through the management ranks to become CEO.

Maurice's interest in stamps developed around 50 years ago, when his son gave up a stamp collection in favour of scouts. Impressed by their history and visual appeal, Maurice started collecting Australian Commonwealth stamps. Through the encouragement of Ray Chapman RDP, a close friend, Maurice formed several notable exhibits for Open Philately and One-Frame competition.

The first competitive exhibit was a philatelic history of the Sydney Harbour Bridge, a theme inspired by Maurice's residence in McMahon's Point, which is located directly opposite the bridge. At the Sydney National Philatelic Exhibition in 2007, Maurice achieved Large Gold for his Sydney Harbour Bridge exhibit. The collection was sold the following year by Prestige Philately, with every lot at an average of two-thirds above the estimate prices.

Maurice went on to form similar collections on Qantas airlines, New South Wales post office buildings and Australian stamp engraver, Frank Manley. His last displays were shown at AUSTRALIA 2013, these being "Royal Stamps of George VI" (5 frames, Vermeil), and Coat of Arms 1949–1964 (One-Frame, 87 points).

Maurice's seven-year term as the Chairman of the Australia Post Board led him to take a more focused interest in the hobby's development. He was instrumental in setting up the Post Master Gallery in Melbourne and he supported AUSTRALIA '99, Australia's second World

Philatelic Exhibition, serving as the Honorary President. Also, Maurice got involved in approving annual stamp issue programs for Australia and its territories.

In 2011, the Australian Philatelic Federation

appointed Maurice Williams an Honorary Fellow of Philately. He was only the third person to achieve this award, after David Maiden (2001) and Max Stern (2003). Maurice enjoyed good relationships with many collectors and traders. He was a friendly man who liked to talk about his latest acquisitions. He particularly sought out those who could help his collecting, encouraging them to share their knowledge and provide advice. Maurice enjoyed the process of learning and he was never reluctant to ask questions!

Maurice is survived by his wife Norma, two daughters, one son, nine grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren.

Richard Breckon ARP, FRPSV

A Personal tribute to Maurice Williams

I had a wonderful friendship with Maurice. My wife Pam and I always enjoyed the visits of Maurice and Norma to our home at Noosa Heads, Queensland. Regularly, every two weeks, Maurice and I spoke by phone to discuss possible acquisitions for his various collecting fields. He was clever at asking the "right" questions, so that he was always advancing his knowledge of the exhibits being put together. They were well-researched exhibits, and this was reflected in the awards he achieved.

I first met Maurice 30 years ago, at AUSIPEX '84. He was very interested in learning about Australian Commonwealth philately. An early focus was George V stamps, although he could never be entirely happy with such a well researched field. Instead, Maurice took up new icons like Sydney Harbour Bridge, Qantas, royal portraits, engraver Frank Manley, etc., which provided plenty of scope for his enquiring mind. In particular, Maurice's Sydney Harbour Bridge exhibit featured material that I think no one else could have managed to ferret out.

During my 85 years in stamps I have met many talented collectors, but Maurice's tenacity at searching for special items for his exhibits showed he was always on the ball. I think it is impressive these skills were held by a senior executive at Australia Post. I am especially proud Maurice wrote the preface to my book on the Chapman Collection, launched by him at AUSTRALIA '99, the world stamp expo he did much to instigate. Maurice Williams was a great mate.

Ray Chapman AM, MBE, RDP, FAP, LMRPSV



Maurice John Williams AM. Image courtesy of the APF

Royal News

Council members display

The varied collecting interests of Council members were showcased at the 30 January meeting, which involved six-sheet displays: **Peter Alexander** (North West Pacific Islands 25-on overprint panes of George V issues); **John Boykett** (Victorian Crown Law Office reply paid forms addressed to Justices of the Peace in northern Victoria and southern NSW); **Richard Breckon** (Unusual messages on early Victorian postcards and lettercards); **Marjorie Crawford** (Penguins on stamps of Antarctic stamp-issuing territories); **Gary Diffen** (WW I German Prisoner-of-War mail sent from Australian camps); **Peter Leitch** (Victoria 1879 10s. and £2 Stamp Duty issues from lithographic and electrotpe printings); **Frank Pauer** (A.J. Shearsby's silk screened & E.W.M. Ogden's hand-painted first day covers); **Ted Gallagher** (1964 50th anniversary re-enactment of first air mail flight by Maurice Guillaux); and **John Shawley** (Mauritius railway station post offices and travelling post offices).

New Fellow of RPSL

The Society extends its congratulations to **John Courtis FRPSL**, our Queensland member and a regular contributor to *PfA*, who was elected as a Fellow of the Royal Philatelic Society London on 28 November 2013.

New member

The Society has gained a new member: **Terry Smith** (VIC). His application for membership was accepted on 30 January 2014. We wish him a long and happy association with the Society.

Deceased member

The Society received the sad news of the passing in early December 2013 of **Arnold Trossman**, our member in Florida, United States. We extend our condolences to his family.

50-Year members

This year two members will attain 50-year memberships: **Max Watson LMRPSV, FRPSL** (VIC) and **Charles Lawlor** (VIC). Further details will be announced shortly about the celebrations to be arranged for the two members.

Annual Competition 2014

The Society's Annual Competition will be held on Thursday, 19 June. The competition rules permit entries that are high resolution scans of the exhibits to be submitted for judging. The scans must be in colour at 600 DPI (dots per inch) and be laminated. This is to encourage interstate and overseas members

to participate. Annual competition entries must be lodged with the Secretary by 29 May. For further details of the Annual Competition see the Society's website: www.rpsv.org.au/services/annual-competition

Basset Hull: The Stamps of Tasmania: Second Edition

An appeal for images for the above was published in the December 2013 edition of the journal. A number of images have already arrived and these are much appreciated. Images still required are summarised below. *Unused* examples are preferred and should be scanned at a minimum of 400 DPI. As before, please send contributions by email: bill.lloydsmith@gmail.com.

1. Postage stamps (including postal fiscals): The Couriers (1853); the 4d Chalons from Perkins Bacon printings; the Sidefaces of 1870 onwards (especially

4d blue unused); other Sideface issues (both colour groups of the 4d (yellow, bistre), the 5s and other values); later issues, especially the higher value bicoloured stamps, also St George & Dragon; the two essays (1886), namely 2s 6d & 10s.

2. Postal stationery: Unused postal stationery items including the Walch postal card and lettersheet; a good/fine used example of the PTPO wrapper used by Basset Hull for mailing the *Federal Philatelist*; the lettercard views from 1900 onwards. Images of the 1898 envelopes have already been submitted.

3. Impressed duty: Early examples (before 1880) as in the Craig and Ingles catalogue. The Platypus series of 1880 has been submitted and is being reviewed.

4. Other: A used 20s postal note; examples of specimen overprints (all major types including those used on postal stationery).

SOCIETY SYLLABUS

April 2014

1 (Tue) 1.00 p.m. Daytime Meeting,
World War I: Harold Sheath

9 (Wed) 7.45 p.m. Postal History Group

12 (Sat) 10.00 a.m. to 3.00 p.m.
Society Open Day and Bourse.

Members, guests and visitors welcome.

17 (Thu) **No meeting (Easter)**

20 (Thu) 8.00 p.m. **Australian Overseas
One Penny Rates: Gary Watson FRPSV**

26 (Sat) 2.00 p.m. Library Afternoon

May 2014

6 (Tue) 1.00 p.m. Daytime Meeting,
**Some Aspects of Australian Colonials: John
Boykett FRPSV**

14 (Wed) 7.45 p.m. Postal History Group

15 (Thu) 8.00 p.m. **Australia KGVI varieties:
Ted Gallagher**

29 (Thu) 8.00 p.m. **The Other Side of QEII –
Decimal Varieties: Arthur Gray FRPSV**

31 (Sat) 2.00 p.m. Library Afternoon

June 2014

3 (Tue) 1.00 p.m. Daytime Meeting,
Rotary: Graeme Allison

11 (Wed) 7.45 p.m. Postal History Group

19 (Thu) 8.00 p.m.
Society's Annual Competition

28 (Sat) 2.00 p.m. Library Afternoon

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The Royal Philatelic Society of Victoria Inc.
Purves House, 303 High Street,
Ashburton VIC 3147
PO Box 490, Ashburton VIC 3147, Australia
www.rpsv.org.au

The Royal Philatelic Society of Victoria is one of the premier philatelic Societies in Australia. It was founded in 1892 and in 1946 was granted the "Royal" prefix by King George VI. The Society has owned its own building for over 50 years and, in 2003, moved into Purves House in Ashburton, a suburb of Melbourne. The Library is now located in a highly accessible space and the meeting area can accommodate up to 100 people.

New members are always welcome and are offered the following services:

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EXPERT COMMITTEE: The Society's Expert Committee will provide members and others with Certificates of Opinion on Australasian and Pacific Island items.

PUBLICATIONS: Members receive the quarterly journal *Philately from Australia*. The Society has produced many keystone philatelic publications and actively seeks new research for publication.

An Application for Membership form may be downloaded at:
<http://www.rpsv.org.au/rpsv-docs/Application-for-Membership.pdf>

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