

# Tasmanian Embossed Stationery - 1883 to 1912



½d embossed to order cut-out



½d embossed to order cut-out



1d embossed to order cut-out



1d embossed to order cut-out



2d Post Office issue cut-out



2d embossed to order cut-out

## Objective

The exhibit is a detailed study of the three De La Rue produced embossing dies, the Post Office issued envelopes and stamped to order stationery in all their forms. Emphasis is placed on stamped envelopes, postal cards, lettersheets and newspaper wrappers, which were prepared for use by business and private users. The exhibit covers the entire period that this stationery was in use.

## Treatment

The focus is on official issues, the use of the stamped to order service by Tasmanian businesses and individuals, with comprehensive coverage of the wide variety of types and usage of stationery. Postal rates and social history of the Colony form an integral part of the story of these issues in the life of the Tasmanian community, hence the coverage given to that aspect.

The stamped to private order service provided fertile ground for collectors to prepare envelopes in all manner of combinations of frankings; a practise that was roundly condemned at the time in contemporary philatelic circles. Nevertheless, they were legitimate postal stationery issues and are treated as such through a focus on usage.

The Convention has been used of naming multiple embossings from left to right. The terminology embossed to order and stamped to order are interchangeable, but the term printed to private order is not appropriate.

Frame	Contents
1	<b>POST OFFICE ISSUES - 1883-1900 2d De La Rue envelope - design, production and usages &amp; status of 1899-1912 ½d and 1d envelopes</b>
2,3,4	<b>STAMPED TO ORDER - ½d, 1d &amp; 2d dies employed for the stamped to order service for commerce and public incl. Brownells, Bank of VDL, AG Webster &amp; Roberts with thirty two distinct users</b>
5,6	<b>PRIVATELY STAMPED TO ORDER - Post Office issued stationery privately embossed and stationery bearing single to quintuple embossings of all values and combinations with focus on usage</b>
7,8	<b>NEWSPAPER WRAPPERS - Produced for J Walch &amp; Sons, The Mercury Newspaper and Tasmanian Mail &amp; for the general public</b>

## Background

New South Wales produced the first postal stationery in 1838 employing an embossing die on letter sheets and wrappers. In 1869 Victoria became the first Australian colony to produce postal stationery impressed with a coloured embossing die and in 1883 Tasmania became the only other Australian colony to issue coloured embossed stationery, announced by Public Notice in *The Hobart Town Gazette* of 21 March 1883. The delivery of the 1d and ½d embossing dies in 1892, (and a second 2d die), enabled the embossed to order service, as permitted under the *Postal Regulations* of January 1891, to be made available to commerce and individuals. The Commonwealth Post Office adopted this method of coloured embossing of stationery in 1914 using the profile of KGV, and later KGV1, until QE II envelopes ended in 1978.

## Research

The exhibit contains much new information beyond the published literature and catalogues including the production method of the De La Rue envelope, unrecorded users of the stamped to order service, and the first recorded example of the ½d value for the 1911 printed matter rate. The exhibit is based on the 2021 published *Tasmanian Postal Stationery* by Groom and Shatten.

## Rarity

Official Post Office archival records from 1914 note that AG Webster, Roberts & Co. and J Walch & Sons were the principal customers in Tasmania for stamped to order stationery. No other records have been located giving a listing of users. Given the scarcity of examples of the three major users, it is not surprising that fewer than five examples are known of most of the other users, and some are, in fact, the only recorded examples. The exhibit shows all but two of the known users.

References : Groom M & Shatten A, *Tasmanian Postal Stationery*, Tasmanian Philatelic Society, 2021; Tinsley, W.E., *Tasmania Stamps & Postal History*, Chapter XV (O.G.Ingles) & Chapter XVI (A.R. Butler); RPSL 1986. *Tasmanian Post Office Guides* Nos. 1 to 37 and Editions 1 to 5.  
<http://trove.nla.gov.au/> - Online Tasmanian newspapers 1820 to 1919; *The Courier*, Journal of the Tasmanian Philatelic Society

## POST OFFICE ISSUES

### 1883 DE LA RUE TWO PENNY ENVELOPES DESIGN & PRODUCTION OF THE DIE

In April 1882 an order was placed by the Tasmanian Post Office with De La Rue for two embossing dies. They were contracted to produce the Registration envelopes with an embossed die value of 4d and a 2d die for the production of an embossed envelope. De La Rue were also requested to produce the Two Pence envelopes.



Artists essay prepared by De La Rue dated June 15th 1882 for the Two Penny die. Endorsed 'Approved 19/6/82' 2d Sideface affixed to indicate the colour for printing. ex De La Rue Archives



Proof strike of the 2d die  
ex De La Rue Archives

#### Background to the Introduction of the 2d embossed envelope

In 1841 Great Britain issued an embossed envelope to replace the unpopular Mulready envelopes and letter sheets introduced in 1840 along with the Penny Black postage stamp. This concept was emulated in the Australian Colonies some years later with Victoria in 1869 and New South Wales in 1870 both issuing stamped envelopes.

In Tasmania the Minister of Lands and Works Charles Meredith in May 1872 suggested to the Postmaster-General F.M. Innes that the Tasmanian Post Office follow the lead of those mainland Colonies and issue stamped envelopes for postal purposes. The idea was received favourably and it was pointed out that there would be some delay in implementation as the necessary dies would have to be procured from London. The Secretaries of the General Post Offices in Melbourne and Sydney were asked for samples. They were supplied but the Ministry went out of office in August 1873 and the idea lapsed.

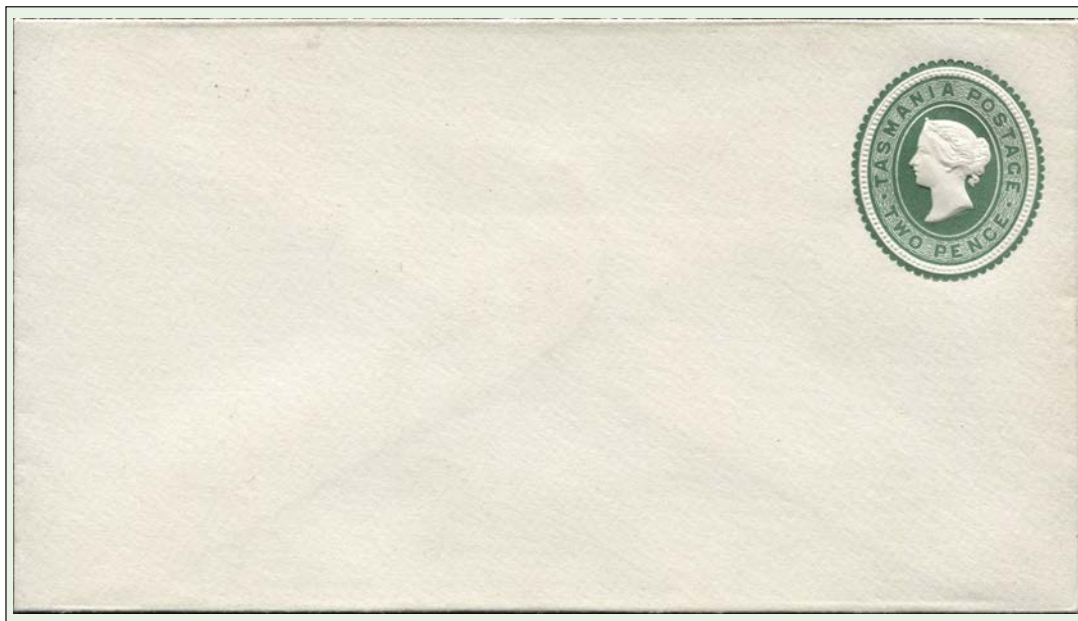
In 1882, following a successful political struggle to introduce postal cards into the Colony, the subject of stamped envelopes was again raised and the Postmaster General John Stokell Dodds sent a requisition to the Colonial Storekeeper on 23 March 1882. The Requisition stated in part that ".....The stamp (green) on envelope, instead of being oblong form to be of a somewhat oval shape or the corners slightly taken off, just to differ from the ordinary Two Penny postage stamp."

De La Rue & Co. through the Crown Agents were contracted to produce postage stamps for Tasmania and so they received the order for 100,000 stamped envelopes 'size as per pattern' on 17 April 1882. It is believed the sample sent of the desired pattern was the New South Wales design although the eventual Tasmanian design resembled that issued by Victoria.

## POST OFFICE ISSUES

### 1883 DE LA RUE TWO PENNY ENVELOPE SPECIFICATIONS & PRODUCTION

De La Rue produced the initial order of 100,000 envelopes. Whilst it had been thought that an additional 100,000 envelopes had been produced De La Rue archival records show that this was not the case based on a hand written summary of all stationery produced for the Tasmanian Post Office between 1883 and 1886.



The issued envelopes measured 5½ by 3 inches (140mm by 79mm) & were made of white laid paper showing a diagonal watermark spaced 25mm apart. The flap is pointed and it bears no envelope makers name.

Error of Manufacture - Envelope folded incorrectly and embossed once on inside and twice on the other side



Embossed impression  
on inside of envelope.



This example showing a complete 2d embossing impression on the inside of the envelope and two impressions on the outside on the envelope (one un-inked & the other in pale green) prove that the sheets were embossed prior to the folding and gumming of the envelopes.

**Only recorded example**

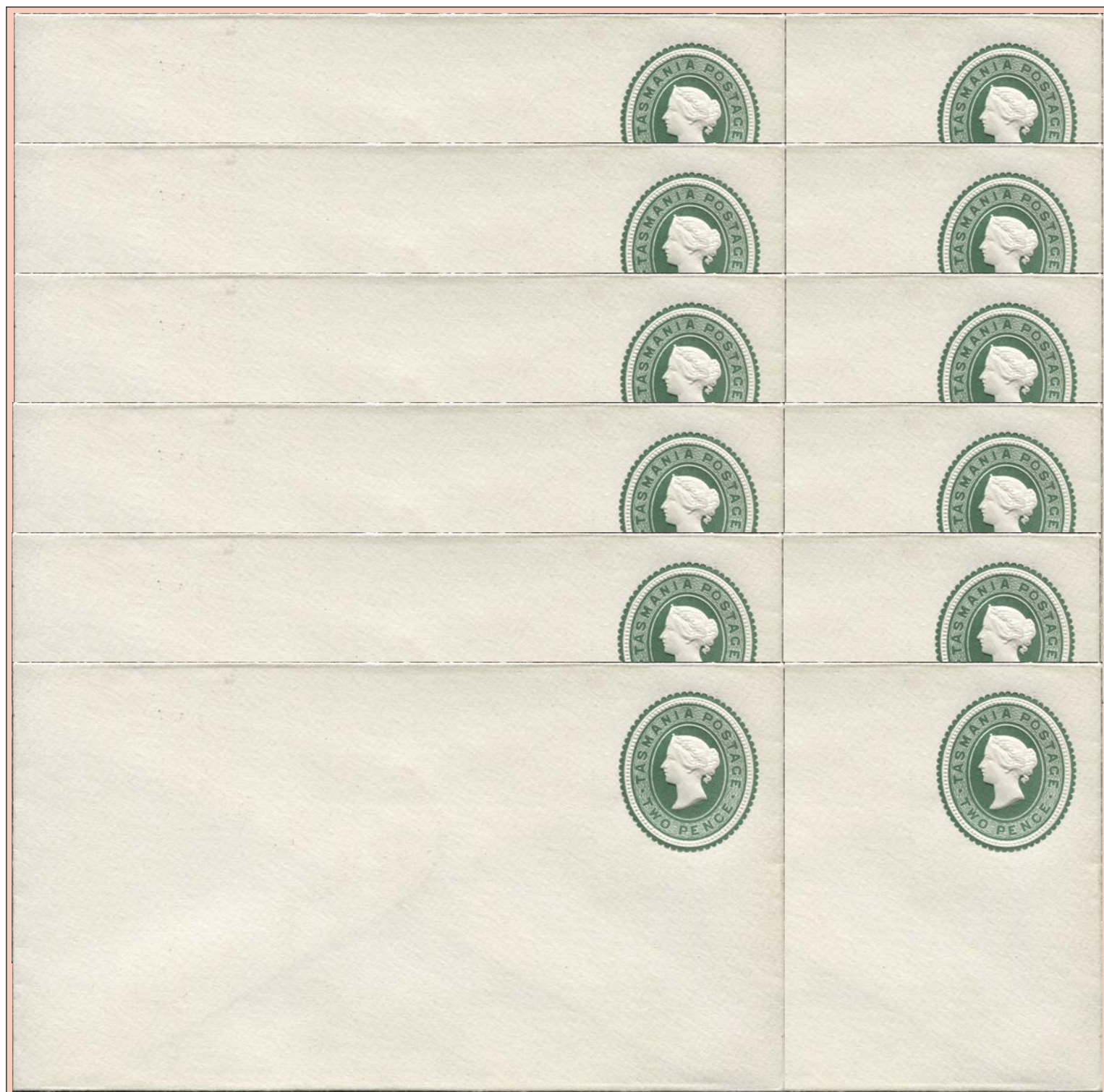


## POST OFFICE ISSUES

### 1883 DE LA RUE TWO PENNY ENVELOPES SALE TO THE PUBLIC

A Notice published in The Hobart Town Gazette on 21 March 1883 advised that the 2d envelopes would be sold to the public in packets of one dozen for 2s 3d or if required four envelopes for 9d.

*Only recorded example  
of a full set with Band*



## POST OFFICE ISSUES

### DE LA RUE TWO PENNY ENVELOPES SPECIMEN OVERPRINTS

In December 1889 the UPU distributed to its members the current postal issues of Tasmania together with those of the other Australian Colonies. This was in keeping with the ongoing discussions occurring about the entry of the Australasian Colonies into the UPU. This finally took place on 1 October 1891. Included in the current stamp issues sent out in 1889 by the UPU was the 2d stamped envelope.



*Sans serif with fancy C. Butler type D*



*Serifed letters with comma. Unrecorded by Butler*

**SPECIMEN.**

*Butler Type B*

**SPECIMEN**

*Serifed type unrecorded by Butler*

**SPECIMEN.**

*Butler Type A*

*Only two of the seven recorded types are shown for the purposes of saving space*

The style of *SPECIMEN* overprint used on the 2d envelope for the 1889 UPU distribution is not known. Butler in his chapter on Specimens in the 1986 Tinsley book *Tasmania : Stamps and Postal History* recorded five different fonts. Two unrecorded types are shown here. Butler believed that they were prepared by the printers or Post Office as samples, publicity or for presentation to dignitaries.

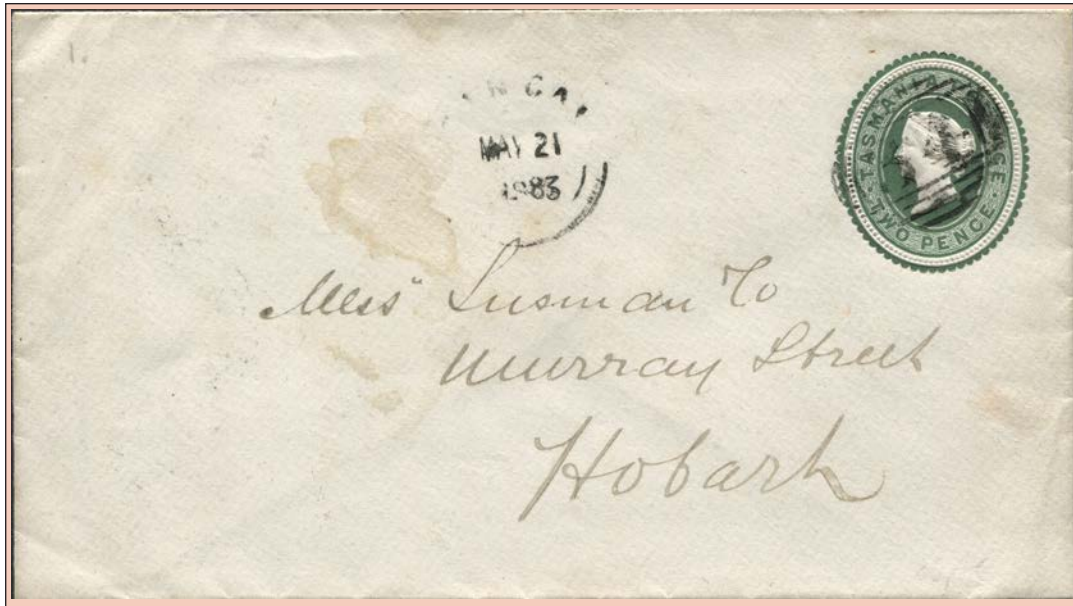


## POST OFFICE ISSUES

### DE LA RUE TWO PENNY ENVELOPES EARLY USE

A newspaper report in The Mercury of 29 March 1883 stated:

*"STAMPED ENVELOPES.- Specimens of the stamped envelopes to be issued to the public on the 2nd prox. have been forwarded to us by the Secretary of the Post Office..... The intercolonial stamped envelope, with its pretty 2d. stamp at the right-hand top corner, is extremely neat in appearance, and is almost tempting enough of itself to make one write to friends in the other colonies."*



1883 (May 21) 2d inland rate Fingal to Hobart. **Earliest recorded use.**



1884 (Feb 13) 2d inland rate Southport to Hobart. Joseph Graves Southport Saw Mills rubber handstamp on reverse.

De La Rue produced 100,000 stamped envelopes. This supply lasted until 1899 giving an average annual usage of some 5,900 envelopes throughout the seventeen years they were available. The Postmaster General Bolton Stafford Bird advised Parliament in July 1889 that there was 'little or no demand' for the 2d envelope.

## POST OFFICE ISSUES

### DE LA RUE TWO PENNY ENVELOPES LATER USE

The pack of twelve envelopes attracted a premium of 3d for the 12 envelopes or a 1d premium for four envelopes.



1890 (April 18) 2d inland rate  
Cambridge to Bream Creek.



1899 (Feb 17) 2d inland rate  
Deloraine to Launceston.



1900 (March 9) 2d inland rate  
Hobart to Zeehan.

Envelopes used after 1899 are scarce



## POST OFFICE ISSUES

### DE LA RUE TWO PENNY ENVELOPES - UPRATED FOR DOUBLE WEIGHT LETTERS AND REGISTRATION FEES

The envelopes met the 2d per ½ oz. inland and intercolonial rate and required additional postage for heavier letters or for registration and late fees.



1899 (June 7) double weight letter Hobart to Launceston.



1895 (June 7) New Town to Melbourne uprated to meet the registration fee of 3d.  
**Only example of Dark shade of embossing recorded.**



## POST OFFICE ISSUES

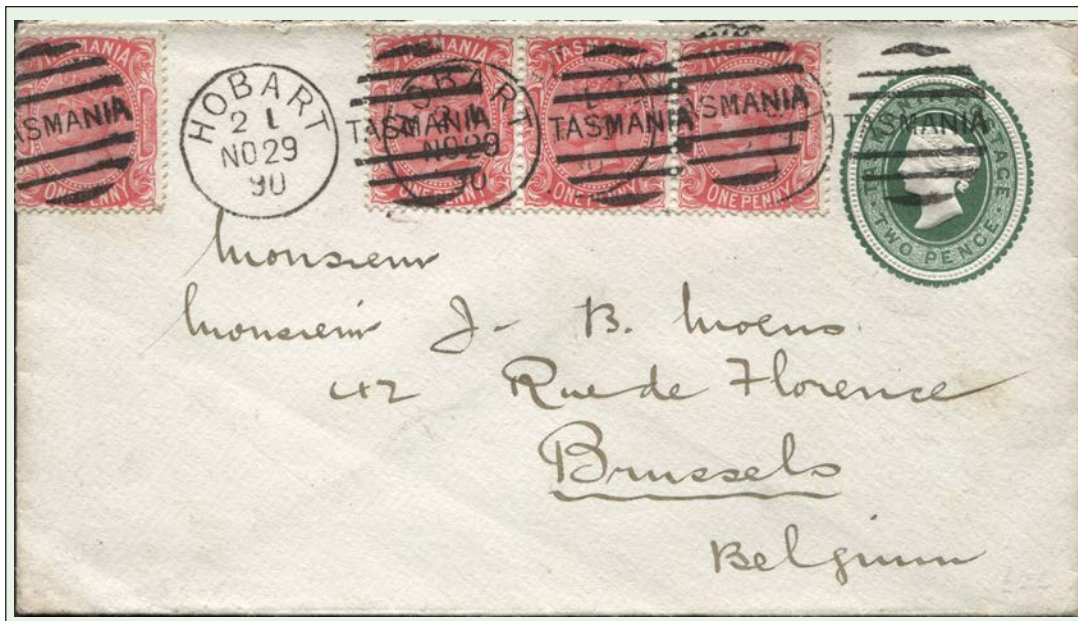
### DE LA RUE TWO PENNY ENVELOPES - UPRATED USE TO UNITED KINGDOM & EUROPE BEFORE UPU MEMBERSHIP

At the time of the introduction of the 2d envelope in 1883 the rate to the United Kingdom was 6d by the long sea route. On the admission of Australasia to membership of the UPU on 1 October 1891 the rate to European countries was reduced from 9d to 6d per half ounce



1884 (November 28) Hobart to London uprated 6d to meet the rate by the 'long sea route'. Backstamped London 6 January 1885.

Sender is A.F. Basset Hull, author of the definitive book on the Stamps of Tasmania.

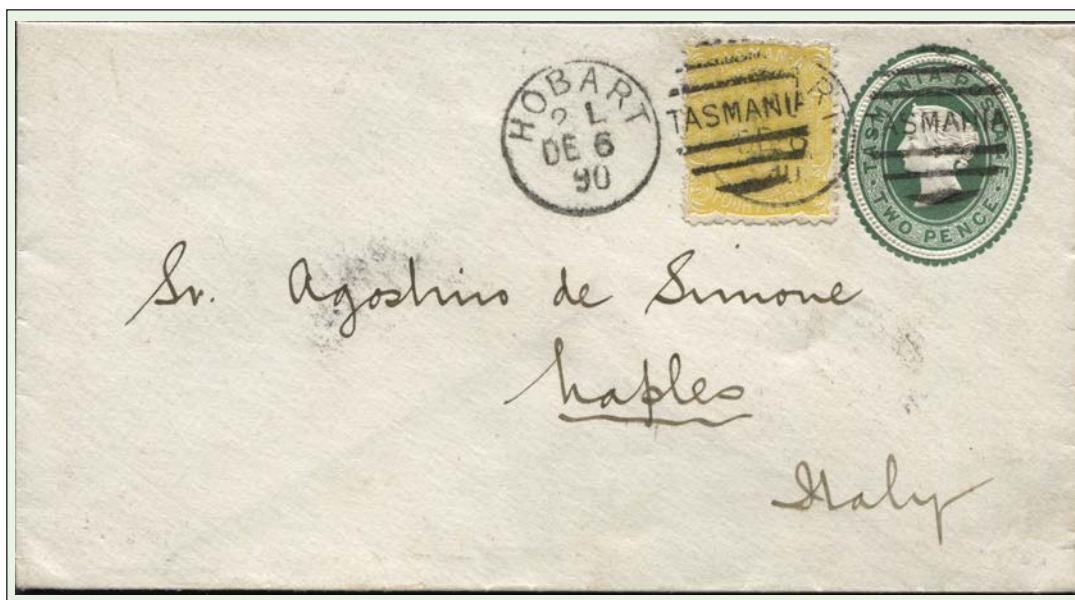


1890 (November 29) uprated to 6d for the 'Long Sea route' Hobart to Belgium via United Kingdom before the Colony joined the UPU. Accepted at the reduced rate without penalty possibly in anticipation of the new rate published in the Postal guide of 1 January 1891. Backstamped Bruxelles 12 February 1891.

## POST OFFICE ISSUES

### DE LA RUE TWO PENNY ENVELOPES - UPATED USE TO EUROPE BEFORE UPU MEMBERSHIP

The rate for single weight letters to most European destinations before Tasmania joined the UPU was 9d via Brindisi. The Postal Guide (No.1) of January 1891 records the reduced rate of 6d per half ounce.



1890 (December 6) uprated to 6d for the 'Long Sea route' Hobart to Naples. Accepted at the reduced rate without penalty possibly in anticipation of the new rate published in the Postal guide of 1 January 1891. Backstamped Napoli 11 February 1891.



1888 (March 7) registered and paid 1/1 Hobart to Leipzig before Tasmania joined the UPU. Uprated to meet the 9d per half ounce rate to Germany and 4d registration. Backstamped Brindisi 9 April 1889.

Treated as fully unpaid mail and so taxed double deficiency. Mss. '57' in black represents 57 silbergroschen due on arrival equivalent to 68½d.

A possible explanation is that the 68½d is made up of 2x10½d postage from Tasmania, 2x10½d fine, Tasmanian registration 6d, 2x2½d UPU postage to Italy, 2x2½d fine, 3d registration at Italy, 2x2½d UPU rate for Germany and 2½d fine.



## POST OFFICE ISSUES

### DE LA RUE TWO PENNY ENVELOPES - UPRATED USE TO UNITED KINGDOM AFTER TASMANIA JOINS UPU

When Tasmania joined the UPU as part of Australasia on 1 October 1891 the single letter rate to the United Kingdom became 2½d



1897 (November 1) Spreyton to London at single UPU British Empire rate of 2½d. Backstamped Dover Station Office 5 December 1897.

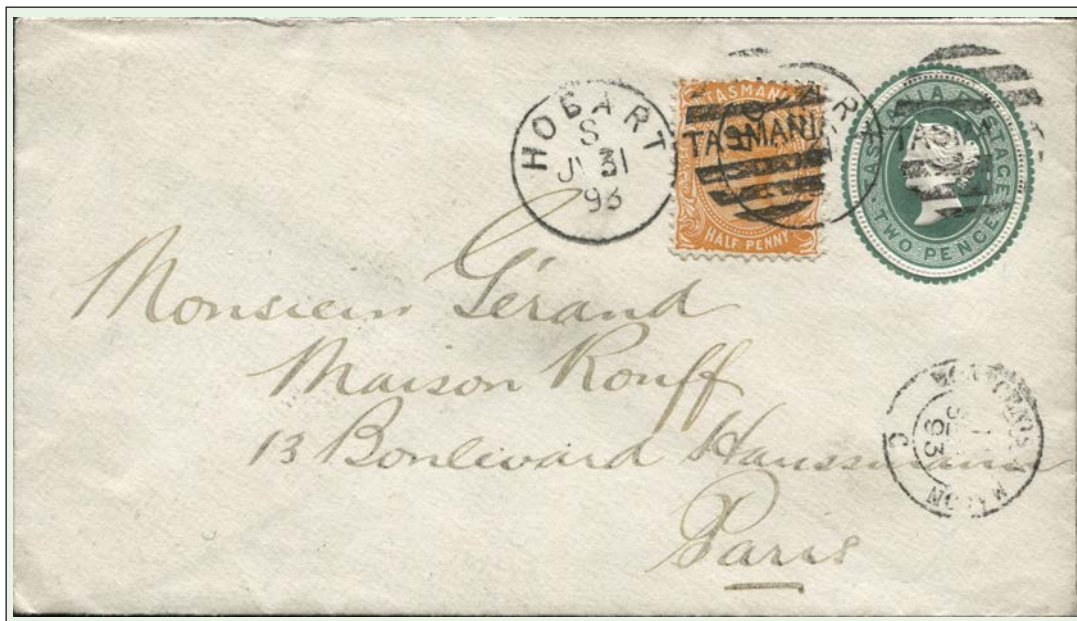


1893 (November 6) Deloraine to London uprated to 5d to meet the double weight UPU British Empire rate of 2½d. per ½ ounce. Backstamped Notting Hill 11 December 1893.

## POST OFFICE ISSUES

### DE LA RUE TWO PENNY ENVELOPES - UPRATED USE TO EUROPE AFTER TASMANIA JOINS UPU

Following Tasmanian membership of the UPU as part of Australasia on 1 October 1891 the single letter rate to the United Kingdom became 2½d. In 1892 the single letter rate to foreign countries was reduced from 6d. to 2½d., as for the United Kingdom



1893 (July 31) uprated for UPU foreign letter rate Hobart to Paris. Backstamped Paris 15 September 1893.



1892 (October 1) Hobart to Berlin at double UPU Foreign letter rate of 2½d. Backstamped Berlin on 7 November 1892.



## POST OFFICE ISSUES

### DE LA RUE TWO PENNY ENVELOPES - UPRATED USE TO USA AFTER TASMANIA JOINS UPU

The rate of 2½d. per ½ oz. applied to mail for the United States from 1892.



1895 (September 24) New Town to New York uprated to meet the UPU Foreign Letter rate. Backstamped New York 30 October 1895.

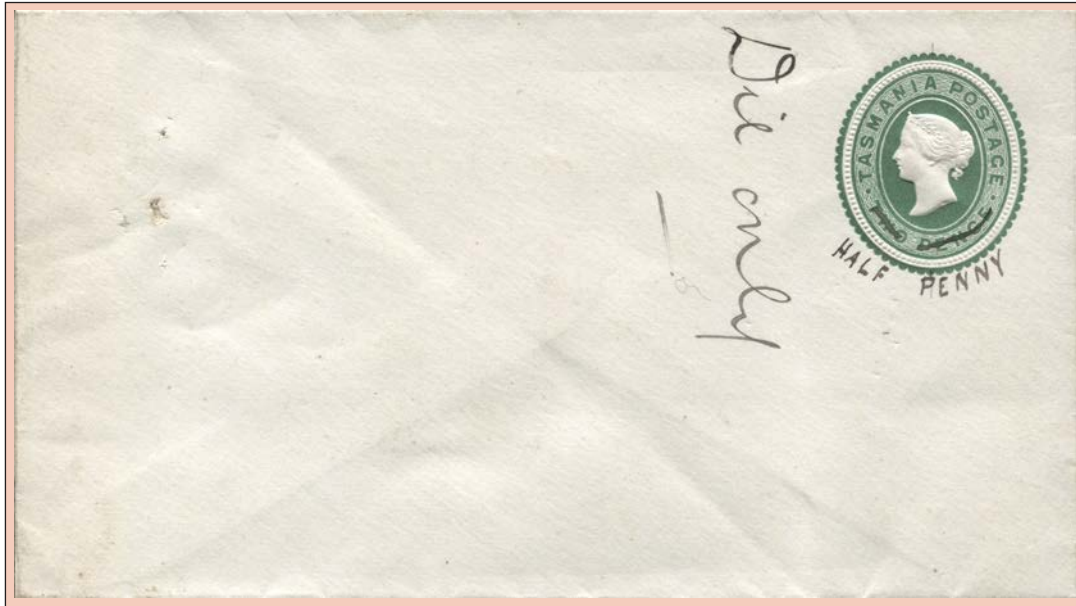


1896 (March 9) posted on Tasmanian Main Line Railway (No.3) to New York uprated for the UPU Foreign Letter rate. Backstamped New York 4 June 1896.

## INTRODUCTION OF THE STAMPED TO ORDER SERVICE

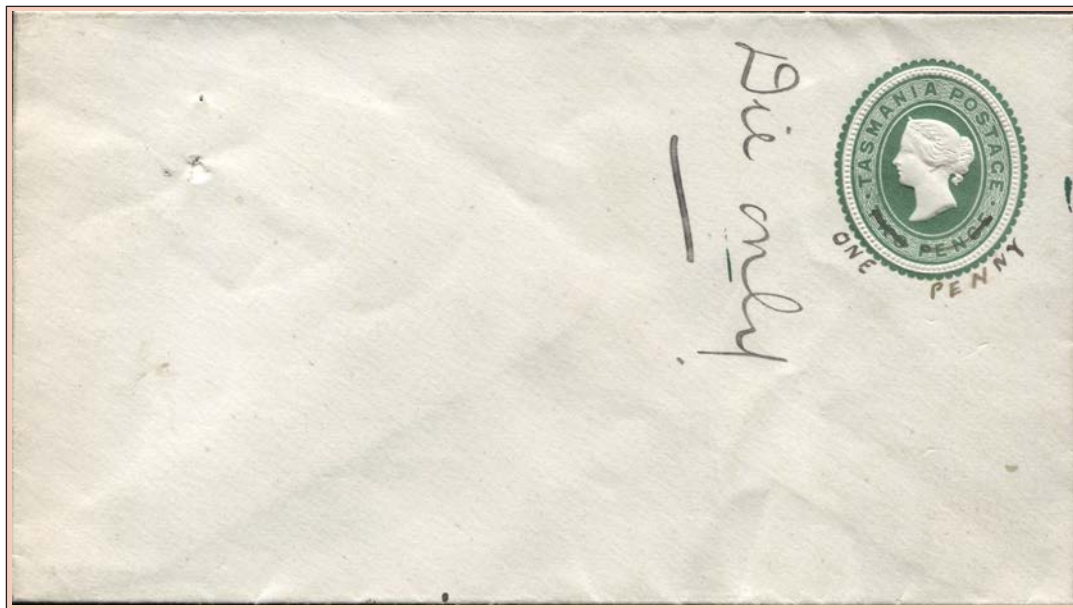
### HALF PENNY & ONE PENNY ENVELOPES - ESSAYS BASED ON TWO PENNY ENVELOPE

On 31 August 1889 the Agent General for Tasmania instructed De La Rue to prepare embossed dies for ½d and 1d values to be sent to the Colony to meet the need for such values for newspaper wrappers and envelopes as required by the Act allowing embossed to private order stationery. De La Rue prepared essays based on the 2d envelope and the proposed designs were accepted by the Agent General on 3 September 1889



1883 2d envelope used as essay for Half Penny design

ex De La Rue Archives



1883 2d envelope used as essay for One Penny design

ex De La Rue Archives



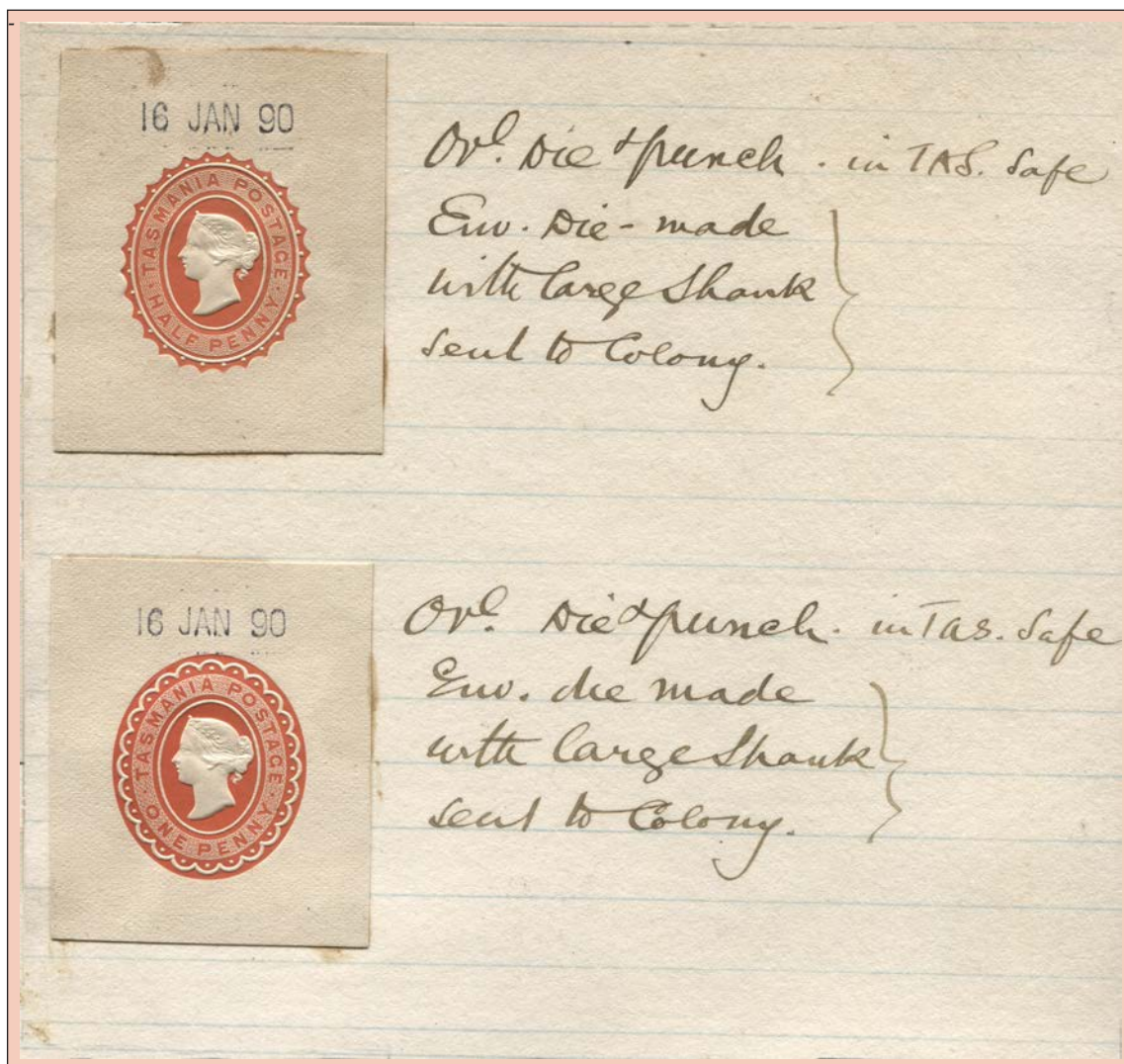
## INTRODUCTION OF THE STAMPED TO ORDER SERVICE

### HALF PENNY & ONE PENNY ENVELOPES - DIE PROOFS

In January 1890 De La Rue prepared dies for Half Penny and One Penny values. The dies were held in the De La Rue safe and envelope dies and punch were sent to the Colony for the embossing of printed to private order stationery. It is apparent that a second Two Penny die was also prepared as embossed to private order envelopes and wrappers began to appear in the Colony from January 1891 for all values. The original 2d die remained in London until 1898.



*Proof strike of One Penny die.*  
ex De La Rue Archives RPSL Cert.58308

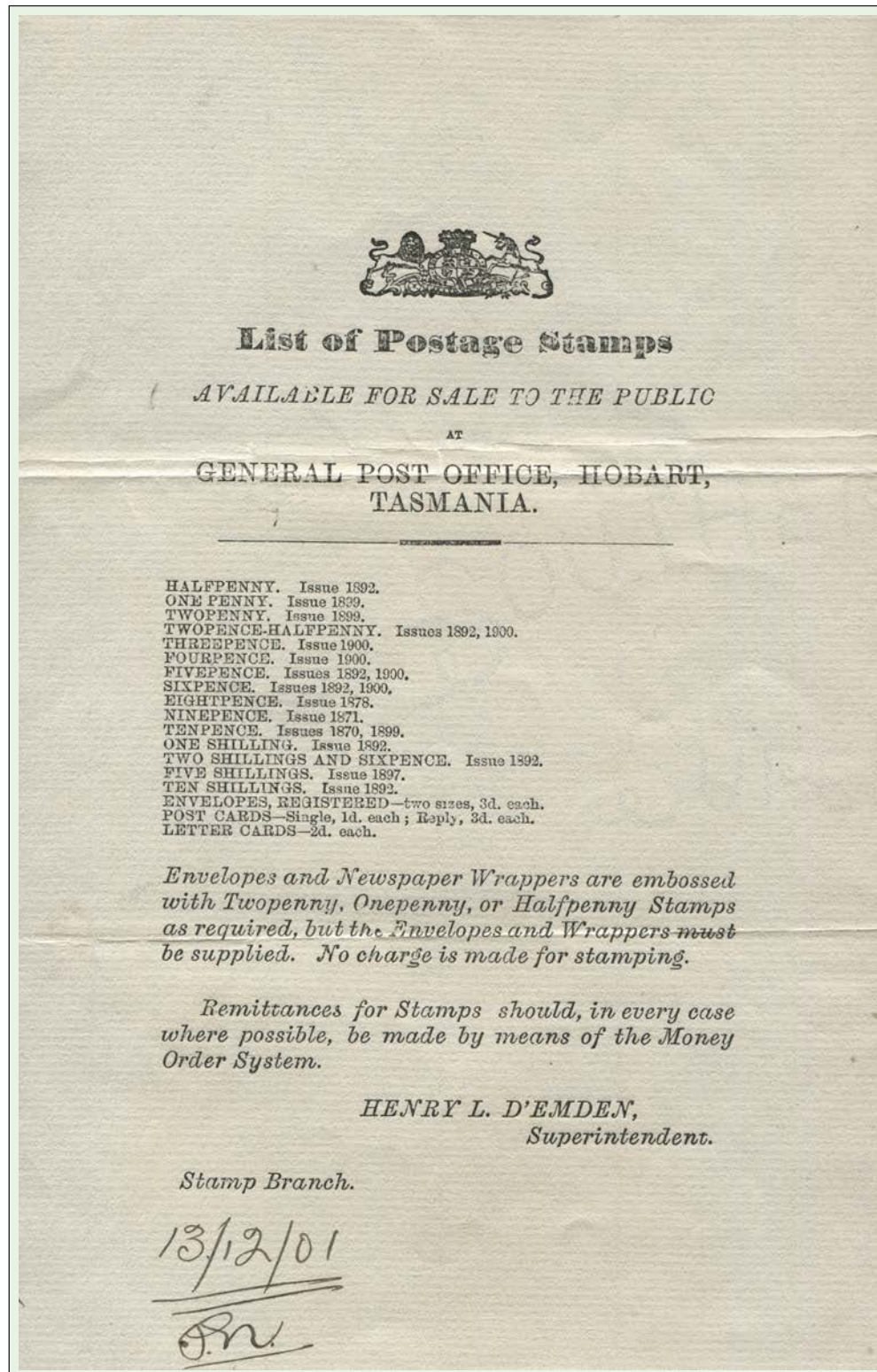


*Die proofs of both values dated January 16th 1890 indicating disposition and delivery to the Colony.*  
ex De La Rue Archives

## 1891-1912 STAMPED TO ORDER SERVICE PROVIDED BY THE POST OFFICE

### POST OFFICE NOTICE

The Tasmanian Post Office introduced the embossed to order service in 1891 and it continued until 1912. In response to enquiries from the public about the availability of stamps the Post Office mailed a 'List of Postage Stamps' which included postal stationery on issue at the time.



1901 Notice which includes the advice that...."Envelopes and Newspaper wrappers are embossed with Twopenny, Onepenny and Halfpenny Stamps as required, but the Envelopes and Wrappers must be supplied. No charge is made for stamping. ".