

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

Background

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

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

Historical philatelic references

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

Treatment and relative rarity of the material

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

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

Exhibitor research

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

Principle References:

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

Western Australia

1st August 1854

Watermark Swan

Imperforate

4d Pale Blue

*Error – Watermark Sideways
Facing Left and Reversed*



1/- Pale Brown

*Error – Watermark Sideways
Facing Left and Reversed*



1/- Pale Brown

*Error – Watermark Sideways
Facing Right and Reversed*

This watermark error is not recorded by the Western Australia Study Group.

7th August 1857

Watermark Swan

Imperforate

2d Brown Black/Red

*Error – Watermark Sideways
Facing Right and Reversed*



2d Brown Black/Red

*Error – Printed on Both Sides
The Second Printing on Reverse Upright (E)*

Although this error is quite common in used condition, it is a rarity unused. The stamp on the left is the only recorded unused example of this error. A scanned image of the front of each stamp is illustrated at the left.

Western Australia

7th August 1857

Watermark Swan

Imperforate



2d Brown Black/Indian Red
Error – Printed on Both Sides
The Second Printing on Reverse Upright



2d Brown Black/Indian Red
Error – Printed on Both Sides
The Second Printing on Reverse Inverted

Early colonial collectors were aware of this error and it was first recorded in the “Philatelic Record” in March 1881 and listed by Stanley Gibbons in 1891. It occurs in two formats. The majority of examples have the second impression printed normally, although it is also known printed inverted. Stamps printed on Indian Red paper are much scarcer. A scanned image of the front of each stamp is illustrated at the left.



6d Grey-black
Error – Watermark Sideways
Facing Left and Reversed



6d Grey-black
Error – Watermark Sideways
Facing Right and Reversed

11th August 1860

Watermark Swan

Imperforate



2d Orange Vermillion
Error – Watermark Upright (E)



2d Orange Vermillion
Error – Watermark Upright and Inverted

There are no contemporary records regarding the discovery of this error and it was listed by Stanley Gibbons in 1992. It is very rare with this being the only recorded unused example.

There are no contemporary records regarding the discovery of this error although it is listed by the Western Australian Study group. It is not catalogued by Stanley Gibbons and is very scarce..

Western Australia

11th August 1860

Watermark Swan

Imperforate



4d Blue

Error – Watermark Sideways

There are no contemporary records regarding the discovery of this error and it was listed by Stanley Gibbons in 1995.



4d Blue

Error – Offset on Reverse (E)

This error was first recorded in the "London Philatelist" in April 1909. This is a scarce error with horizontal pairs being the largest known multiple. Three are recorded.

1861

Watermark Swan Sideways

Intermediate Perforation 14-16



1d Rose



2d Blue



4d Vermillion



6d Purple Brown

Error – Watermark Sideways Facing Right and Reversed

The 4d value is not recorded with this watermark error by the Western Australia Study Group.



6d Purple Brown

*Error – Watermark Sideways
Facing Left and Reversed*



1/- Yellow green

Error – Watermark Upright

Although recorded by the Western Australia Study Group, this error is not listed in the Stanley Gibbons catalogue.

Western Australia

1861

Watermark Swan Sideways

Perforation 14



1d Rose



2d Blue



4d Vermillion

Error – Watermark Sideways Facing Left and Reversed



1d Rose



2d Blue



4d Vermillion

Error – Watermark Sideways Facing Right and Reversed

1861

Watermark Swan Sideways

Clean Cut Perforation 14-16



2d Blue



6d Purple Brown



6d Purple Brown

Error – Watermark Sideways Facing Left and Reversed



2d Blue



6d Purple Brown



1/- Yellow Green

Error – Watermark Sideways Facing Right and Reversed

Western Australia
 27th December 1864
 Watermark Crown/CC
 Perforation 12½



1d Bistre



1d Yellow Ochre



1d Bistre

*Error – Watermark Sideways
 Facing Right*

*Error – Watermark Sideways
 Facing Left and Reversed*



1d Bistre



1d Yellow Ochre

Error – Watermark Sideways Facing Right and Reversed



2d Yellow



4d Carmine



6d Violet



1/- Bright Green

Error – Watermark Reversed



2d Yellow



6d Violet



6d Lilac



1/- Sage Green

Error – Watermark Reversed

Western Australia
 27th December 1864
 Watermark Crown/CC
 Perforation 12½



2d Yellow



4d Carmine



6d Violet

Error – Watermark Inverted



4d Carmine



6d Violet



1/- Bright Green

Error – Watermark Inverted



2d Yellow



4d Carmine



6d Lilac

Error – Watermark Inverted and Reversed



4d Carmine



1/- Bright Green

Error – Watermark Inverted and Reversed

Western Australia
27th December 1864
Watermark Crown/CC
Perforation 12½



2d Yellow
Error – Watermark
Sideways Facing Left



2d Yellow
Error – Watermark
Sideways Facing Right
and Reversed



2d Yellow
Error – Watermark
Sideways Facing Right

This error was first reported in the "Philatelic Record" in June 1896 although it did not identify the direction of the watermark. It was listed in the Stanley Gibbons catalogue in 1984. The error showing the watermark "Sideways Facing Right and Reversed" has not been recorded by the Western Australia Study Group and it is not listed in the Stanley Gibbons catalogue.

2d Yellow
Error of Colour Printed in Mauve



In early 1879, the Postmaster at Albany considered it necessary to apologise to Stanley Gibbons for having to charge 6d a stamp for a block of 60 of the 2d value printed in mauve. Instead of being printed in yellow, the colour of the 2d stamp, this block was printed in mauve, the colour of the 6d stamp.

Thus, one of the most significant errors of the Australian Colonies came on to the market where it was first reported in the "Philatelic Record" in March 1879. A number of other unused examples have been found outside the original find by Stanley Gibbons and at least 40 used examples of the error have been recorded.



6d Violet
Error – Watermark Sideways Facing Left



6d Violet
Error – Watermark Sideways Facing Right (E)



This error was first reported in the "Philatelic Record" in June 1896 although it did not identify the direction of the watermark. It was listed in the Stanley Gibbons catalogue in 1984. Mint examples are rare with only five examples recorded and a pair.

Western Australia

18th January 1865

Watermark Crown/CC

Perforation 12½



4d Carmine

Error - Printed Double

Given its status as one of the great errors of Western Australia, it is surprising how little has been written on the 4d Double Print. There was no announcement of its discovery, although the H.L. White collection has an example which was bequeathed to the NSW State Library in 1922, and catalogued by Stanley Gibbons in 1929. Nine mint examples have been recorded in private hands.

Ex Hall, Gartner, Austin, Vestey



1d on 2d Yellow

Error – Watermark Reversed

This watermark error has not been recorded by the Western Australia Study Group.



1d on 2d Yellow

Error – Surcharge Triple (E)

Although listed by Stanley Gibbons in 1903, this error did not appear in any contemporary philatelic publications until an article by the "London Philatelist" in March 1908. Twelve examples are recorded including one in the Royal Collection and two with official puncture.

Ex Walkley

1877

Watermark Crown/CC

Perforation 14



4d Carmine



1d Yellow Ochre



2d Chrome Yellow



4d Carmine

Error – Watermark Sideways Facing Left and Reversed



1d Yellow Ochre



2d Chrome Yellow



6d Lilac

Error – Watermark Sideways Facing Right

Western Australia

1877

Watermark Crown/CC

Perforation 14



1d Yellow Ochre



6d Lilac



6d Reddish Lilac

Error – Watermark Sideways Facing Right



1d Yellow Ochre



2d Chrome Yellow



6d Reddish Lilac

Error – Watermark Sideways Facing Right and Reversed

This watermark error on the 6d value has not been recorded by the Western Australia Study Group and it is not listed in the Stanley Gibbons catalogue.



2d Chrome Yellow

Error – Watermark Upright

This error was first recorded in the "Australasian Stamp Monthly" in December 1941 and listed by Stanley Gibbons in 1984.



2d Chrome Yellow

Error – Watermark Upright and Inverted

This error is not recorded by the Western Australia Study Group and is not listed in the Stanley Gibbons catalogue.



4d Carmine (E)

Error – Watermark Upright

Discovered in 2016, this watermark upright error is the only example recorded and is expected to be listed by Stanley Gibbons in 2018.

Western Australia

1877

Watermark Crown/CC

Perforation 14



6d Lilac

Error – Watermark Upright

This error was first recorded in the "Australian Philatelic Record" in June 1930 and listed by Stanley Gibbons in 1984.



6d Lilac

Error – Watermark Upright and Inverted

This error is not recorded by the Western Australia Study Group and is not listed in the Stanley Gibbons catalogue. Less than ten examples are recorded in unused condition, however, the records do not indicate the position the upright watermark.



1882

Watermark Crown/CA Sideways

Perforation 14



1d Yellow Ochre



2d Chrome Yellow



4d Carmine

Error – Watermark Sideways Facing Left and Reversed



4d Carmine

Error – Watermark Upright and Reversed



4d Carmine

Error – Double Perforation

Western Australia

1882

Watermark Crown/CA Sideways

Perforation 14



1d Yellow Ochre



2d Chrome Yellow



6d Lilac

Error – Watermark Sideways Facing Right and Reversed

1882

Watermark Crown/CA Sideways

Perforation 12



1d Yellow Ochre



2d Chrome Yellow



4d Carmine



6d Lilac

Error – Watermark Sideways Facing Left and Reversed

This error in the 1d value is not recorded by the Western Australia Study Group and none of them are listed in the Stanley Gibbons catalogue.

1885

Watermark Crown/CA Sideways

Perforation 14



1/2d Green



1d Carmine



2d Grey



2 1/2d Deep Blue



6d Bright Violet

Error – Watermark Sideways Facing Left

These inverted watermark errors were first reported by Mogens Juhl in "The Commonwealth Period Stamps of Western Australia" in 1981 and listed by Stanley Gibbons in 2009. The three higher values are quite scarce.

Western Australia

February 1893

Watermark Crown/CC (Sideways)

Perforation 14

ONE PENNY on 3d Cinnamon

Error – Surcharge Double

There are no contemporary reports on the discovery of this error until an article in Philately from Australia in March 1949, although it was catalogued by Stanley Gibbons in 1917. It is very rare, with this copy being the only recorded example. It is interesting to note that there is green overprint ink smeared all over the reverse of the stamp.

Ex Brachi, Vestey



ONE PENNY on 3d Cinnamon

Error – Surcharge Omitted

This error was first recorded in the “Australian Philatelist” in June 1913 and is not listed in the Stanley Gibbons catalogue. Two examples are recorded of this error in mint condition, whilst the Royal collection has a pair used on piece.

Ex Walkley



21st November 1895

Watermark Crown/CC Sideways

Perforation 14

Half-Penny on 3d Cinnamon

Error – Surcharge Double (E)

This error was first recorded in the “London Philatelist” in February 1896 and listed by Stanley Gibbons in 1919. Although a pane of 60 was discovered, most examples still exist in large blocks.



Western Australia
December 1898
Watermark W Crown A
Perforation 14



1d Carmine



2d Yellow



6d Bright Violet

Error – Watermark Inverted

These inverted watermark errors were first recorded in the “The Stamps of Western Australia” by Juhl in 1981 and listed in the Stanley Gibbons catalogue in 2006. The 1d value is the rarest stamp in the series with inverted watermark and this is the only used multiple recorded.



1/- Olive Green

October 1902
Watermark V/Crown
Perforation 12½



1d Carmine rose

Error – Watermark Upright

This error was noted in the Stanley Gibbons catalogue in 1911 and listed in 1984.



1d Carmine Rose

Error – Double Perforation

This error is not recorded in the Brusden White catalogue of 2004.

1d Carmine Rose

Error – Mixed Perforation 11 and 12.2

This pair is perforated 12½ on all four sides with additional vertical perforations gauging 11 between, thereby creating the mixed perforation error. This error was first recorded in the Brusden White catalogue in 2004 with the listing of the Bromfield example in the Western Australia Museum in Perth. This pair is the only recorded example in private hands.



Ex Hiscock

Western Australia
October 1902
Watermark V/Crown
Perforation 12½



2d Yellow
Error – Watermark Upright

This error was noted in the Stanley Gibbons catalogue in 1911 and listed in 1984.



2d Yellow
Error – Watermark Upright and Inverted

This error is not listed in the Brusden White catalogue.



2d Yellow
Error – Mixed Perforation 12.2 and 11 (E)

This stamp is perforated 12½ on all four sides with an additional horizontal perforations at the base gauging 11, thereby creating the mixed perforation error. This error was first recorded in the Brusden White catalogue in 2004 with the listing of the Bromfield example in the Western Australia Museum in Perth. This stamp is the only recorded example in private hands.

4d Chestnut
 Perforation 12½
Error – Watermark Upright (E)

This error was known to collectors in the early 1920's and was noted in the Stanley Gibbons catalogue in 1928 before being listed in 1984. This is a very rare error with both these errors being the only recorded examples in private hands. There is a mint copy in the Royal Collection.

Ex Hiscock (mint stamp)



October 1902
Watermark V/Crown
Perforation 12½



2/- Brownish Red/Yellow
 Perforation Single Line 12.4
Error – Watermark Sideways

There are no contemporary reports regarding this error until it's listing in the Brusden White catalogue in 2004. There are two perforation variations of this error. The first issue perforation single line 12.4 is very scarce with only a handful of sideways watermark examples known. All recorded examples are used and dated between August 1905 to February 1906.



2/- Brown/Yellow
Perforation Comb 12.2 x 12.4
Error – Watermark Sideways

There are no contemporary reports regarding this error until it's listing in the Stabley Gibbons catalogue in 1984. The most common variant of the watermark sideways error is in the Brownish Red shade. This example in Brown/Yellow is only the second mint example recorded.

October 1902
Watermark V/Crown
Perforation 11



2d Yellow
Error – Watermark Upright and Inverted

There are no early reports of this error although it was first noted in the Stanley Gibbons catalogue in 1930 and listed in 1984. No distinction between watermark upright and inverted is made in the Brusden White catalogue in 2004. Eight used examples are recorded.

October 1905
Watermark Crown/A
Perforation 12½



½d Green
Error – Imperforate Between Stamp and Margin at Base

Although there are no contemporary reports on the discovery of this error, early collectors were aware of its existence with three used examples in the Bromfield collection which was bequeathed in 1963. The stamp in unused condition is very rare with only three examples recorded.

Western Australia
October 1905
Watermark Crown/A
Perforation 12½



½d Green

Error – Double Perforation

This error was listed in the Brusden White catalogue in 2004.



1d Carmine rose

Error – Watermark Reversed

This error is not recorded in the Brusden White catalogue of 2004.



1d Carmine rose

Error – Offset on Reverse



2d Yellow

Error – Watermark Upright

This error was noted in the Stanley Gibbons catalogue in 1930 before being listed in 1984. Less than ten examples have been recorded.



8d Apple Green

Error – Watermark Upright (E)

The Western Australia Study Group reported this error in 2010, with this used example was discovered in 2015. It is very rare and will be listed by Stanley Gibbons in 2017.



9d Red Orange

Error – Double Perforation

This double perforation error is not recorded in the Brusden White catalogue of 2004.

Western Australia
October 1905
Watermark Crown/A
Perforation 12½



9d Orange Yellow
Error – Watermark Reversed

This watermark error was from the first printing in 1906. Only a handful of CTO examples are known, with one copy recorded commercially used.



1d Rose Pink
Error – Mixed perforation 12½ and 11 (E)

This stamp is perforated 12½ on all four sides with additional vertical perforations at the left gauging 11 between, thereby creating the mixed perforation error. This error is not recorded in the Brusden White catalogue of 2004. Two examples are recorded, the other Perforated OS.

October 1905
Watermark Crown/A
Perforation 11



This error was noted in the Stanley Gibbons catalogue in 1936 and not listed until 1978. The above block of eight is one of the largest multiples recorded.



9d Yellow Orange
Error – Watermark Upright (E)



9d Yellow Orange
Error – Watermark Upright and Inverted

This error was known to collectors in the mid 1910's where examples were acquired by H.L. White and Bromfield. It was listed by Stanley Gibbons in 1990. The distinction between the Watermark Upright and the Watermark Upright and Inverted has only recently been noted, and more research needs to be undertaken to confirm the relative rarity of each error. Only two mint examples are known from a pair discovered and divided in 2009. Approximately twenty used examples are known including a pair.