

NEW SOUTH WALES POSTAL STATIONERY - AN INTRODUCTION

Dingle Smith

For many years, the first Thursday meeting of every month in the Society's program has been devoted to a display. These are marked by a wide range of subject matter and frequently contain items that are worthy of recording so that other collectors can benefit and perhaps, add comments from their own material. In other cases, the background to the topic is of interest to fellow philatelists. It is unusual however, for accounts of the displays to appear in published form - *Capital Philately* is the obvious outlet.

This account is based on a display of 'N.S.W. Postal Stationery' presented at a Society display evening on February 6 1992. It seems appropriate for the editor to produce such an article in order to encourage others who display to contribute in a similar way.

The Background

Until the last twenty years or so, postal stationery was a relatively neglected field of philately. This has the advantage that the costs of obtaining material, in relation to scarcity, are much less than for traditional philately or for postal history. For many collectors, including the author, the earlier lack of interest means that postal stationery is generally poorly described in the literature. Thus, there is the challenge of 'finding something new'. These generalities are certainly true for colonial Australian postal stationery and apply to N.S.W. It is difficult to analyse why a collector elects to collect material from a specific country. My own preference for N.S.W. is, in part, because the state pioneered the use of most forms of postal stationery in Australia.

The easiest way to begin a collection of postal stationery is to purchase a bulk collection and then see what you have got! It is likely that there will be a dominance of mint items, this is because most catalogues in the last century listed postal stationery and such material was popular with collectors. Once catalogues dropped such listings, collector interest rapidly fell away. An interesting challenge is to collect used postal stationery illustrate the rates to differing postal destinations. Early postal stationery collectors were overwhelmingly interested in mint material.

The problem is to find descriptions of the items you have obtained. The basic starting point is the Higgins and Gage (usually abbreviated to 'H & G') *World Postal Stationery Catalog*. This is a multi-volume reference work which can be consulted in the Society's library. The listing and short descriptions have not been updated to include the most recent issues but H & G is still the best available listing for Australian states. A special issue of H & G limited to listings of Australasia, was published at AUSIPEX in 1984 and forms a convenient publication for Australian collectors to purchase.

As collecting interest develops there is a need for more detailed background material. For N.S.W. the classic study, *The Postage Stamps Envelopes, Wrappers, Post Cards and Telegraph Stamps*, by A.E.Bassett Hull and others is the major reference. This was published in 1911 and original copies are now priced at several hundred dollars. However, it is available in reprinted, photocopy form. Bassett Hull formed the major source of information for the February display, unfortunately it is thin on details after about 1896. Other references tend to be devoted to specific areas of postal stationery and are more difficult to locate as they are published in a very wide range of philatelic journals. For example, *Capital Philately*, has produced the only consolidated list of specimen postal stationery, see Smith and Druce vol 6, no 2 and vol 6, no 3.

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Before outlining the various types of postal stationery, mention must be made of the embossed letter sheets issued with prepaid postage for use within Sydney town. These were introduced in November 1938 and were not finally abolished until May 1852 when it became mandatory to use adhesive stamps to pay postage. This letter sheet gives N.S.W. a special place in the development of world postal stationery. An account is given in *The Postal History of N.S.W. 1788-1901*, dated 1988 and edited by J.S.White.

N.S.W. Postal Stationery

The account below is limited to selected items in each category of postal stationery that were displayed in February.

The major categories of N.S.W. postal stationery, and their date of introduction, are:

Postcards (inc. reply cards)	1875
Lettercards	1895
Envelopes	1895
Registered envelopes	1880
Wrappers	1864
Telegraph forms	1894

All of these, with the exception of telegraph forms, have separate categories devoted to 'official' use, usually distinguished by the use of 'OS' as an overprint or in the stamp design. All the categories, except for letter cards, were first introduced into the Australian colonies by N.S.W.

Post Cards

These were first used in Austria in 1869. The introduction of N.S.W. post cards, that incorporated a stamp in the design, in 1875 was therefore, very early. Figure 1 shows an example of the first post card (H & G 1) with the 'To' in script. Bassett Hull however, leaves little doubt that the script version was a near final proof and not the first issued card. Has anyone seen the H & G 1 used?



Figure 1 Proof of the first post card of 1875

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The cards of 1889, that commemorate the 1838 letter sheet, provide an illustration of the frequent changes in rate to destinations outside the state. Incidentally, these are among the first commemorative post cards anywhere and the design was 'borrowed' from a Mexican revenue stamp! The 1889 cards were re-issued in 1890/91 and show changes in the charge for different routes, see Figure 2.



Figure 2 Changes in destination for 2d and 3d cards of 1889-91

The illustrated post cards, which commenced in 1897, are too complex to describe here. They are a real challenge with at least twenty different views, some six colours, differing forms of greetings message etc.

Envelopes

In 1855 serious discussion took place as to whether N.S.W. should issue embossed envelopes. They did not materialise but specimen envelopes were produced, two of these are described in *Capital Philately* (vol 7, no 1). Figure 3 shows examples, from printer's waste?, of the dies produced for the 1d and 2d envelopes, they are known in a variety of colours.



Figure 3 Proof for unissued 2d envelope (left) proof of 3d registration value.

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Official envelopes provide a fruitful field for further study. Those marked 'OS' were withdrawn on Dec 31 1894. However, some of the old stock was used up by government departments with the stamp obliterated by six bars. Two styles are illustrated in Figure 4, one has the addition of 'On Her Majesty's Service' the other does not. The former has the stamp obliterated in black the latter in red.

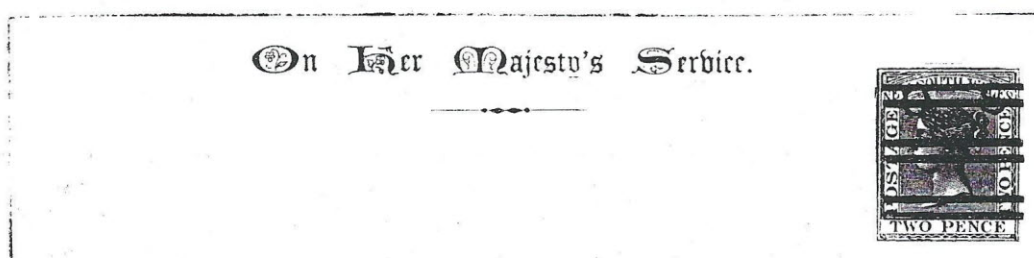


Figure 4 Official envelopes with the stamp obliterated.

Registered envelopes

These were first released on 6 March 1880. The gazette entry stresses that '...the impressed stamp represents the registration fee only (4d.), and the postage must be prepaid by affixing the necessary stamps'. In 1891 the registration fee was reduced to 3d. A proof of the 3d registration stamp, which is on red on yellow paper, is illustrated in Figure 3.

Wrappers

Wrappers were introduced solely for the postage of newspapers. In Great Britain, *The Times* used a coloured impression embossed on the actual newspaper. The first N.S.W. wrapper was issued on April 1 1864, the 1d stamp used the die shown in Figure 3. There was only one official wrapper, issued in August 1891. When it was withdrawn on December 1894 only some 8,000 had been printed. An unrecorded example with the 'OS' inverted is illustrated in Figure 5.



Figure 5 Inverted 'OS' on 1d wrapper of 1891

Comment on any of these items would be welcomed together with offers for written accounts for *Capital Philately* of Society displays.

EARLY ESSAYS FOR NSW POSTAL STATIONERY ENVELOPES

D.I.Smith

The letter sheets issued in New South Wales in 1838 have a sound claim as the world's first item of postal stationery. A series of unissued envelopes with embossed stamps came close to being the next item of Australian colonial postal stationery. An example of these envelopes is illustrated in Figure 1. They measure 133 by 75mm and have rounded, ungummed flaps. They are made from white laid paper with a watermark of lines which forms a rhomboidal pattern. The six penny value has the letters Joyn..., thought to be a part of the paper marker's name. The two covers have the same 'Specimen' overprint in serif script, 24mm in length (dot included) with the capital letter 3mm in height. This style represents a new type of NSW postal stationery specimen, additional to those described by Smith & Druce (1988).

The origins of these items of postal stationery pose problems. The most detailed descriptions are given by Houison (1890) and Basset Hull (1911) with briefer mentions in Hutson (1960) and Robson Lowe (1962). The salient features of these accounts are that J.C. Thornthwaite submitted an estimate, dated Feb. 16 1855, to R.P. Raymond, Inspector of Stamps, for two dies to emboss the Queen's head on envelopes. These were for one penny and twopenny values. A series of memoranda then ensued between Raymond, the Postmaster-General, the Colonial Secretary and the Governor-General. These are described in Houison (p 85-86). The outcome was a decision to produce envelopes with embossed stamps for the four values; one penny, two penny, six pen and one shilling. The envelopes were to be watermarked in the right hand upper corner in words with the value of the stamps. The Colonial Secretary informed Raymond on 25 July 1855 that a

requisition had been forwarded to England for machinery, dies and paper for the manufacture of the envelopes. Houison, in 1890, confirms that the dies '.... are now in the Government Printing Office and copies of the envelopes may be seen in the very best collections'. Basset Hull reported that the dies were destroyed in 1898. Why these envelopes were never issued remains a mystery, further obscured by Basset Hull's comments that '... I feel convinced that the dies were not obtained from England, as there is no mention of them whatsoever in Messrs. Perkins, Bacon and Co's papers ... I believe they were cut by Thornthwaite who... cut the dies for a number of Australian silver and copper tokens current from 1852 to 1868' (Basset Hull, p.334). This view is confirmed from the published Perkins Bacon Records (de Worms, 1953) in which there are several letters to and from NSW in 1855, but all concern postage stamps, and none relate to postal stationery.

The four denominations chosen for the envelopes were suitable for a range of postal uses. The one penny and twopenny values applied to town letter rates and the six-penny and one shilling to various inter-colonial and overseas charges. Further details are in White (1988).

The one penny and two penny values were of an original design, almost certainly by Thornthwaite. Examples are known embossed on piece with the one penny in rose and the two penny in black, brown, blue and violet. An example of a pair of the two penny values on piece is shown in Figure 2. The one penny value in black was used for the first NSW wrapper in 1864. A pair of the two penny values was also embossed onto the flap of an early version of the first registered envelope. Most writers regard these as essays. However, Houison, in commenting on the first registered envelopes, states that '... they were only in use for a very short time, and, when the permanent issue was ready, the

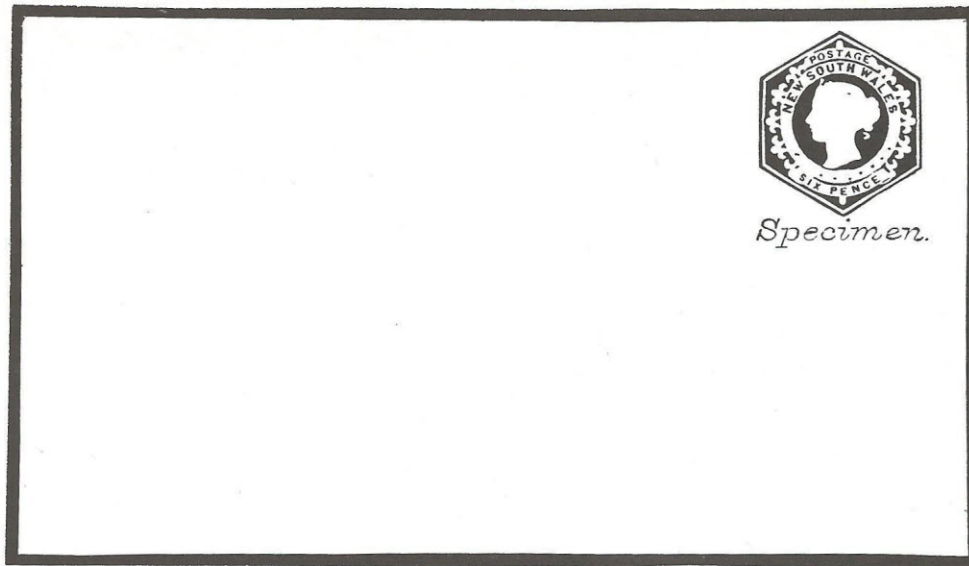


Figure 1

whole of the provisional copies were returned to the Government Printing Office and there destroyed'.

The six penny and one shilling values were based upon the diadem postage issues of February 1854. The original design was modified to produce hexagonal and octagonal forms (Figure 1). There are minor variations between the stamp design and their embossed equivalents which indicate a re-engraving process.

The unissued envelopes are known in several forms. These are first recorded in a footnote in Basset Hull (p. 354) and later in Robson Lowe (p. 76). One set comprises envelopes on white laid paper, with rounded ungummed flaps, for values of two pence blue, six pence purple and one shilling pale rose. These are known with and without specimen markings (Figure 1). The second consists of one penny orange-vermilion, two pence deep blue, six pence chocolate and one shilling rose. These are printed on thin white wove paper with pointed, ungummed flaps. Again they are known with and without specimen overprints. None of these accounts

give any descriptions of watermarks on the paper. A further footnote in Basset Hull describes a set of three envelope essays thought to date from 1865 or 1866. From the description it would appear that the embossed stamps are of different design to those described above.

References

- Basset Hull A.F** 1911, The Postage Stamps, Envelopes, Wrappers, Post Cards and Telegraph Stamps of New South Wales. London: Gibbons & RPS
- Houison A.** 1890, History of the Post Office together with an Historical Account of the Issue of Postage Stamps in New South Wales. Sydney: Government Printer
- Hutson G.J.** 1960, The Stamps of New South Wales London: RPS.
- Lowe, R.** 1962, The Encyclopedia of British Empire Postage The Empire in Australia. London: Robson Lowe Ltd.
- Smith, D.I. and Druce, E.C.** 1988, NSW Postal Stationery - Specimen Overprints. Capital Philately, v.6, 49-55 and 69-77.
- White, J.S (ed)** 1988, The Postal History of New South Wales 1788-1901 Sydney: Philas

Capital Philately

dedicated to the late Joe Purcell of Kingston, Ontario who put together the first unpublished listing of Australian commercial perfins.

The publication runs to some 300 pages, is of A4 size, stitched and bound and incorporates a number of photographs and illustrates a number of proofing covers. The study is available from J. Grant and J. Mathews, PO Box 3111, Weston Creek, ACT 2611, to whom cheques should be made payable. The retail price is \$28.50 which includes postage within Australia; certified mail and overseas postage is extra. The monograph will be officially launched, on Saturday March 14 1992 at the Canberra GPO, at the Seventh National Philatelic Convention.

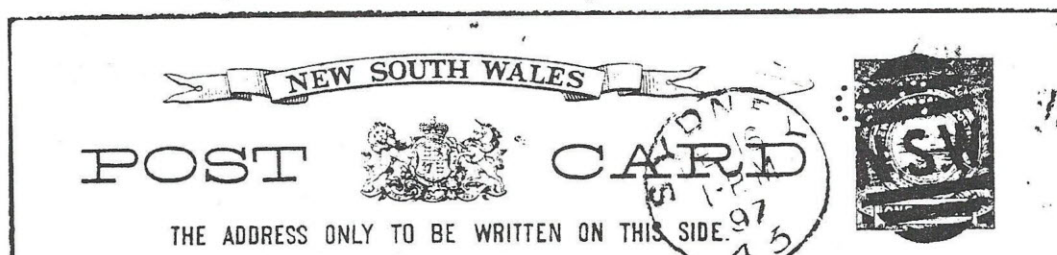
The study is a credit to the authors and it is especially pleasing that both have been active members of the Society for many years.

Dingle Smith

GR PERFIN ON POSTAL STATIONERY

DINGLE SMITH

One of the advantages of reviewing forthcoming publications, that include check lists, is the opportunity to search one's own collection for undescribed items. I was pleased to find that my collection contained such an item. This is illustrated below; it is a GR perfin on a 1d NSW post card issued in 1896 (Higgins & Gage 17). This perfin for 'Government Railways' is described as GR.1, by Grant and Mathews.



The interest of this card is that it is the first reported use of a perfin on an official item of postal stationery. The three examples listed by Grant and Mathews were all punctured onto printed-to-order envelopes. Two other examples of GR perfins on NSW post cards are described in the Gary Watson auction catalogue for 5 March 1990. There were as '...1905 usage of 1d HG 19 perf GR' and '1907 usage of 1d HG 30 with GR perfin'. Careful readers of the published text will however, find that these examples of use on postal stationery are now incorporated. This is a splendid example of the flexibility offered by having manuscripts stored on a word processor.

I also have a NSW post card (HG D3a), postmarked 14 June 1890, sent by the NSW Government Railways. This acknowledges receipt of a letter, the subject of which was 'fowls from Mudgee'. The interest is that this is an official post card with 'O S' overprinted on the stamp impression. Perhaps the use of the GR perfin commenced after 'OS' overprinted postal stationery was withdrawn on Dec 31 1894?