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NSW POSTAL STATIONERY - SPECIMEN OVERPRINTS

D I Smith & E C Druce

The specimen overprints of the stamps and postal stationery of the Australian States are, in general, poorly described. There are several reasons for this. Earlier philatelic writers were generally not particularly interested in this philatelic byway and the bewildering variety of types and styles makes the task more difficult than for most other British colonies. Further, many of the Australian States produced specimen overprints for purposes other than for distribution to the UPU. These were initially provided in response to collecting interest, then produced for sale and in some cases for distribution for presentation purposes. The standard work on specimen stamps of the Crown Colonies, by Samuel (1976), basically describes specimen overprints for stamps printed in the United Kingdom and distributed by the Crown Agents. Since very few Australian states fall in this category this invaluable source is of little value. Strangely specimen overprints on postal stationery have never received the close attention given to the adhesives intended for postal purposes.

An exception is for the specimen postage stamps of New South Wales which were thoroughly described by Butler (1967) in a series of four articles in the *London Philatelist*. It would appear that this detailed and thorough study is little known in Australia. In addition to distinguishing some 19 differing types of specimen overprint Butler places them into a well-researched chronology and discusses the likely numbers produced and the varying usages, i.e. he describes the requirements for the distribution to the UPU as well as the stamps produced for sale and presentation. Many of these would be more appropriately overprinted as 'reprints' and Butler also deals with this aspect. The treatment of the NSW specimen overprints on stamps is particularly thorough and the authors have only found the most minor additions and modifications to the original listing. However, as a conclusion to his study on the postage stamps Butler provided a listing for specimen NSW postal stationery. He suggests that:

'... there are a few instances where specimens would be expected to exist but have not yet been seen or described'. He further notes that '... with one exception ... all the overprints [of postal stationery] so far seen have direct counterparts on the adhesive stamps and the type faces closely follow the date pattern established by the adhesives'. (Butler, p.117, 1967).

It is clear that the Butler listing of specimen overprints for NSW postal stationery is incomplete and that a number of completely different forms of specimen overprint exist which are only seen on postal stationery.

Check of Specimen Postal Stationery

The major aim of the present study is to provide a check-list for the postal stationery specimen overprints of NSW. Except where specifically noted, all the items have been seen by the authors. In describing the form of overprint the notation initially used by Butler has been retained. Thus, where the stationery and adhesive styles are the same the reference is to the 'types' described and illustrated by Butler, this follows the earlier notation of Hutson (1960). Where new types are described these continue the numbering system of the postal adhesives which total nineteen, although a small number of sub-types are recognised.

In addition to the listing by Butler (1967), indications of the existence of overprints, but no detailed description of type, are given in Robson Lowe (1962) and by Higgins and Gage (see especially the issue for Ausipex 1984). The dates of issue and the reference number for each postal stationery item given in Table 1 also follow Higgins and Gage. In some cases there is a difficulty in separating small variations between types of overprint that are similar in size and printing styles. The last items of NSW postal stationery that are known overprinted 'specimen' are the illustrated cards issued in 1898.

A limited number of items are known with two types of overprint; this is frequently found for the postal adhesives. To date the known examples are wrapper E4 (types 4 and 21), registered envelope C1 (types 3a and 16), and official postcard D3 (types 4 and 16).

Dates of Issue and Type

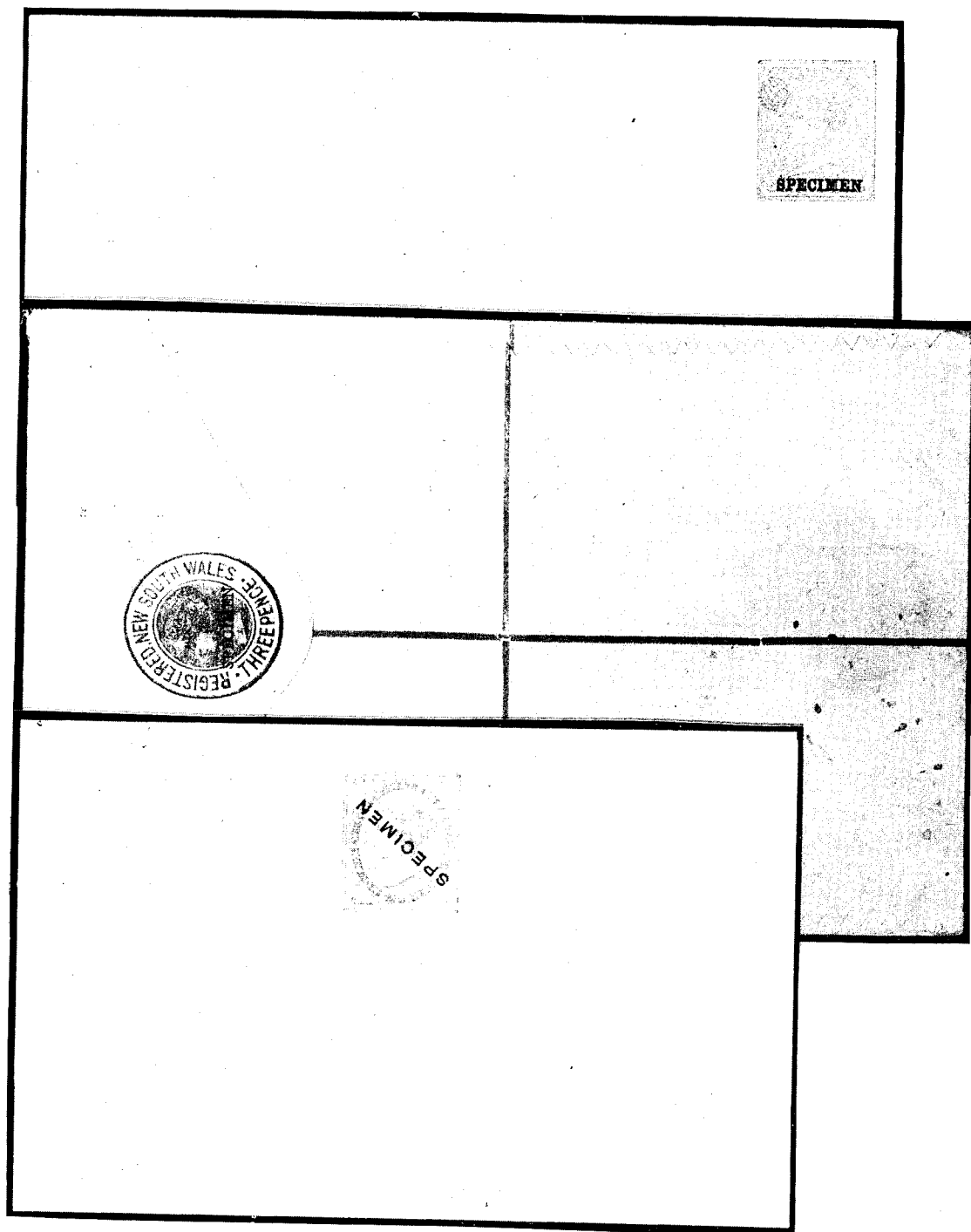
Table 2 lists the ten types of specimen overprint found on the postage stamps that are also known on postal stationery. It also records the four new types of overprint that are restricted to postal stationery. The dates of use on postal adhesives are taken from Butler and are compared to the postal issue date for overprints on postal stationery. There is a general accord between the dates except for type 3a. This is due to the use of type 3a on the first set of envelopes issued in 1870. This anomaly may be due to type 3a being overprinted on these envelopes long after their initial issue, perhaps as a latter form of 'reprint' for delayed distribution to the UPU.

Table 1

Listing of NSW Postal Stationery Type of Specimen Overprint

H&G Description	Specimen Is it in H&G	Specimen & type, Butler	Specimen Type & Comment
<u>Post Cards</u>			
1d	1877 HG3	No	Type 14
1d	1877 HG3a	Yes	Yes, type 14
1d + 1d	1883 HG4	Yes	No
			New type, no.20
1d	1887 HG5	Yes	No
1d	1888 HG6a	Yes	Yes, type 12a
2d	1889 HG7	Yes	No
			No, except has full stop
3d	1889 HG8	Yes	No
			No, except has full stop
1d	1890/92 HG9	No	Yes, type 4
2d	1890/92 HG10	Yes	No
			Not seen
			New type, no.20.
			Specimen diagonally across corner
3d	1890/92 HG11	Yes	No
			New type, no.22.
			Specimen diagonally across corner
1d + 1d	1891 HG12	Yes	Yes, type 4
1.5d	1891/92 HG13	No	No
1.5d	1891/92 HG13a	Yes	Yes, type 4
1.5d +			Type 4
1.5d	1892 HG14	Yes	Yes, type 4
1.5d	1895 HG16	Yes	Yes, type 15
1d	1896 HG17	Yes	Yes, type 19
1.5d	1896 HG187	Yes	Yes, type 15
1d	1896 HG19	Yes	No
1d + 1d	1897 HG20	Yes	Yes, type 19
			Type 19

Note: Types 19b, c & 23a, b listed separately in Table 2



From top to bottom Types 3a, 4 and 7

Official Post Cards

1d	1888	HGD4	No	No	Type 4
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Note : Official Post Cards with specimen and oval NSW or GPO in Table 4.

Letter Cards

1.5d	1895	HG A1	Yes	Yes, type 17	Type 17, with stop
1.5d	1894	HG A2	No	No	Type 17
1.5d	1895	HG A3	No	Yes, type 16	Type 17
1.5d	1896	HG A4	Yes	No	Type 17
1.5d	1897	HG A5	Yes	Yes, type 15	Type 15
1.5d	1897	HG A6	Yes	Yes, type 19	Type 19

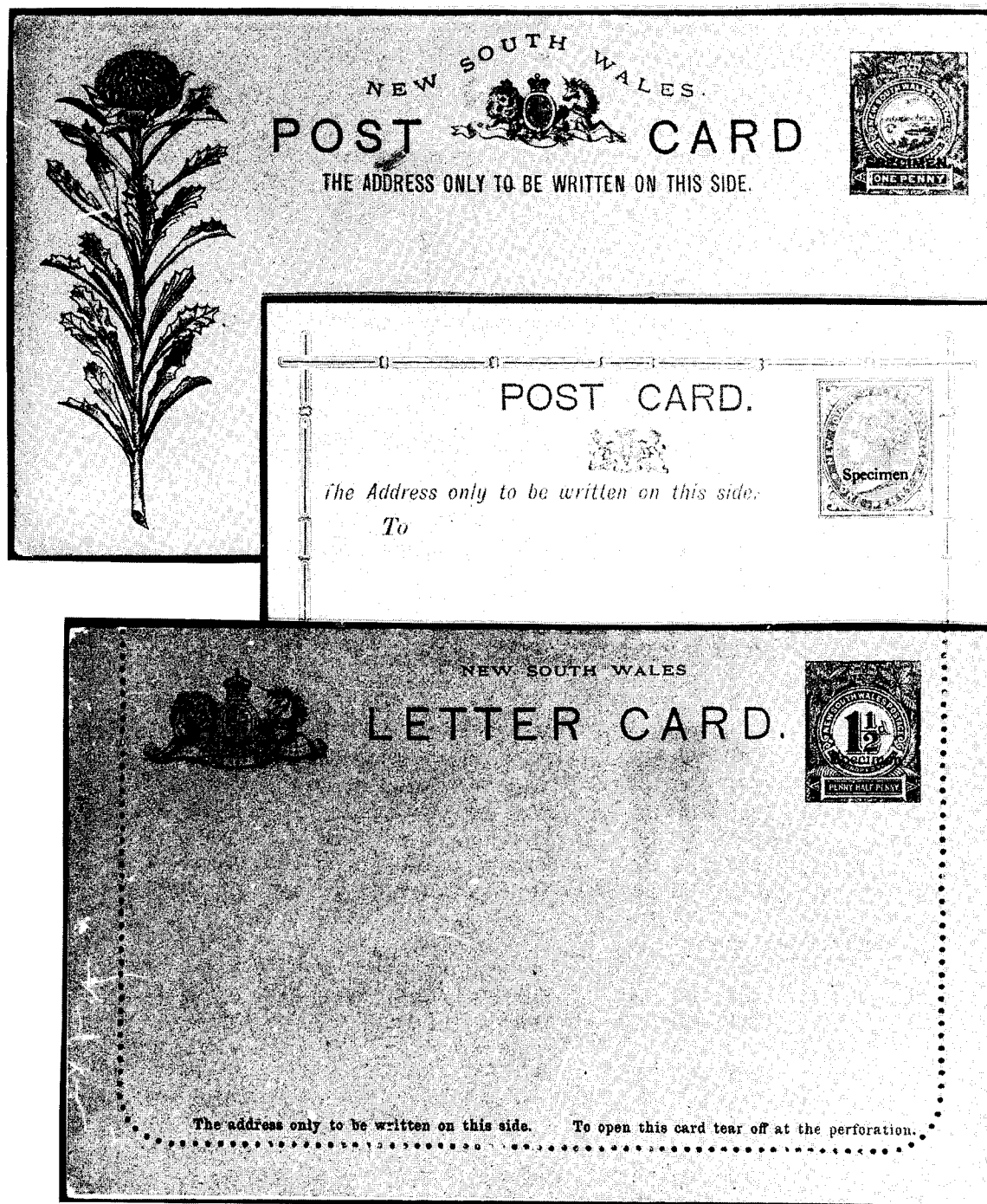
Envelopes

1d	1870	HG B1	No	Yes, type 7	Type 7, diagonal, on differing seals
1d	1870	HG B1b	No	No	Type 3a
1d	1870	HG B2a	No	No	Type 3a, size b
1d	1870	HG B2a	No	No	Type , size a
1d	1888	HG B3	No	Yes, type 16	Type 16
1d	1888	HG B4	Yes	Yes, type 4	
1d	1888	HG B4	No	No	Type 21
2d	1888	HG B5	Yes	Yes, type 4	Type 4
1d	1897	HG B7	Yes	Yes, type 19	Type 19
2d	1897	HG B8	Yes	Yes, type 19	Type 19

Official Envelopes

1d	1888	HG DB4	Yes	Yes, type 4	Type 4
1d	1888	HG DB4a	Yes	No	Type 4, with malformed 's'
2d	1888	HG DB5a	No	No	Type 4, on curved flap. HG only gives pointed
4d	1891	HG DB13	Yes	Yes, type 16	Type 16, with stop

Note : Official Envelopes with specimen and oval NSW or GPO in Table 3.



From top to bottom Types 12a, 14, 15

Registered Envelopes

4d	1880	HG C1	No	No	Type 3a
4d	1880	HG C1	No	No	Type 16
4d	1880	HG C1a	No	No	Type 3a
4d	1885	HG C2	No	No	Not seen, auction description
3d	1892	HG C7	No	No	Type 16
3d	1894	HG C8	Yes	No	Type 4
3d	1893	HG C8a	No	No	Type 4
3d	1894	HG 10	No	No	Type 4

Official Registered

5d	1888/91	HG DC1a	Yes	No	Type 4, small 's'
6d	1888/91	HG DC3	Yes	No	
6d	1888/91	HG DC3a	No	No	Type 4

Note : Official Registered with specimens and oval NSW or GPO in Table 3

Wrappers

1d	1864	HG E1	No	No	Not seen auction description
1d	1865	HG E2	Yes	Yes, type 4	Type 7, always diagonal and inverted
1d	1870		No	No	Wmk 'Kangaroo & Emu, AP Co' See Robson Lowe (1962, p.78 only known as 'specimen')
1d	1889	HG E4	No	No	Type 21
1.5d	1892	HG E6	Yes	Yes, type 4	Type 4
1d	1897	HG E9	Yes	Yes, type 19	Type 19

Telegram Forms

6d	1894	HG H1	Yes	Yes, type 16a	Type 17, with stop
1d	1894	HG H2	Yes	Yes, type 16a	Type 17, with stop, in red.

(to be continued)

This is clearly one of the brightest ideas in a long time and we have to thank Gary Watson, with his collector's hat firmly on, for putting in the time and effort to get the association up and running. If you are a judge, an aspiring judge, an exhibitor, or a potential exhibitor then you should not hesitate to join (see the Journal Review on p.79).

The exhibits section of the Convention was once again very strong with many first time exhibitors trying their luck and doing very well. The Postal Stationery Class not only attracted a healthy number of entries but also some very classy material. Cinderellas disappointed in only having two entries but the material and presentation was excellent. With the introduction of Fiscals and Revenues as an experimental Class at World level we can expect this area of collecting to take off and those collectors who got in early amongst the scarce but unwanted material will never have the smiles erased from their faces!

By the time this is published the first Australian National Philatelic exhibition confined to one class, **Aeropex 88** will be all over. The amazing thing about **Aeropex** is that it attracted over 80 entries. A large number are collectors new to aerophilately and Canberra has several entries. Aerophilately will be all the better for **Aeropex**, new collectors, new ideas and new themes. If you don't have an interest in aerophilately then I suggest you think again.

While some are switched on by collecting items carried on pioneer flights (often carried to defray the cost of the experiment), others are not, feeling that they are manufactured items. To this latter group may I suggest that the introduction of the aeroplane in the last sixty years to provide scheduled mail services is an area of collecting that has hardly been touched. There is an awful lot of philately out there after the first flight covers have been forgotten. And it's inexpensive although the research is hard. How about at least ten aerophilately exhibits from the ACT at the national exhibition **Austamp 90** at Canberra. Give it a go!

Finally, to revert to the Convention; to have the exhibition dismantled and a sorting office resurrected in its place in 90 minutes must set some or record. The thanks are due to the many members of the Society, new and old, who approach the job so professionally. And there is no substitute for practice - a biennial Convention with an associated exhibition has really put us on the philatelic map. To all concerned, well done.

NSW POSTAL STATIONERY - SPECIMEN OVERPRINTS

D.I. Smith & E.C. Druce

(continued from vol.6, no.2)

In general, the use of capital letter or lower case overprints corresponds to the broad pattern given by Butler. These are:

1870-86 Capitals 1892-94 Capitals

1886-92 Lower Case 1894-1903 Lower Case

It should be noted that several of the new types are large in size and would not be suitable for use on postage stamps.

Pictorial Cards

During 1897 and 1898 a series of delightfully illustrated pictorial cards were issued. These were in three differing styles printed on the blank side of the one penny post cards designated by Higgins and Gage as post card 19. These are further classified as types 19a, 19b and 19c. These have headings on the reverse, respectively, 'Greetings from ...', 'With Christmas Greetings' and 'New Year Greetings'. Higgins and Gage list, for each style of greeting, eighteen differing views; the latter are numbered from 1 to 18. Many combinations of these 1897 pictorial postcards are known overprinted 'specimen' on the address side although no examples have been reported for 19a. All of the HG type 19b and c specimen cards have the same form of overprint and all are in a blue-grey shade. The cards so known are given in Table 3, the description of the view shown follows the notation in Higgins and Gage.

The 1898 pictorial penny halfpenny cards (HG 23) have similar views and format to HG 19 but only 'With Christmas Greetings' and 'With New Year Greetings' are known. These are Higgins and Gage 23a and 23b respectively. Table 3 lists all of these that are known with specimen overprints. The form of the overprint is identical to that used for HG types 19a, b and c, except that, in all cases, the overprint is red.

A further complication is that the various views are known in variety of colours; no attempt has been made to sub-divide these in Table 3. Much of this information was made available by Gary Watson. Material from the first Australia Post archival sale is illustrated in the 'Gary Watson' auction catalogue for 14 September 1987.

Table 2

Types of Specimen and dates of overprints
used on NSW posted stationery

Type		Dates- Stamps	Dates- Postal Stationery
3a	Caps, serif	13.5 x 1.75mm 1881	1870-80
4	Caps, serif	13.25 x 1.75mm 1892	1892
7	Caps, sans serif, diagonal	19.0 x 2mm 1865-70	1871
12a	Caps, sans serif	15.0 x 2.0mm 1890*	1888
14	Lower case, serif	10.5mm 1877	1876
15	Lower case, serif	11.5mm 1895-7	1884-88
16	Lower case, serif	13.0mm 1890-91	1880-88
16a	Lower case, serif	13.5mm 1890-91	1891
17	Lower case, serif	13.5mm 1887-96	1894
19	Lower case, serif	16.0mm 1897	1897- 1900's

* from Butler but only on postal stationery

New Types

20	Caps, serif (diagonal)	16.5 x 2.0mm	Not Known	1883
21	Caps, sans serif	12.5 x 1.75mm	Not Known	1888-89
22	Lower case, serif, (diagonal)	17.0mm	Not Known	1890-92
23	Caps, serif	64 x 4.5mm	Not Known	1897-98



From top to bottom Types 16, 17, 19

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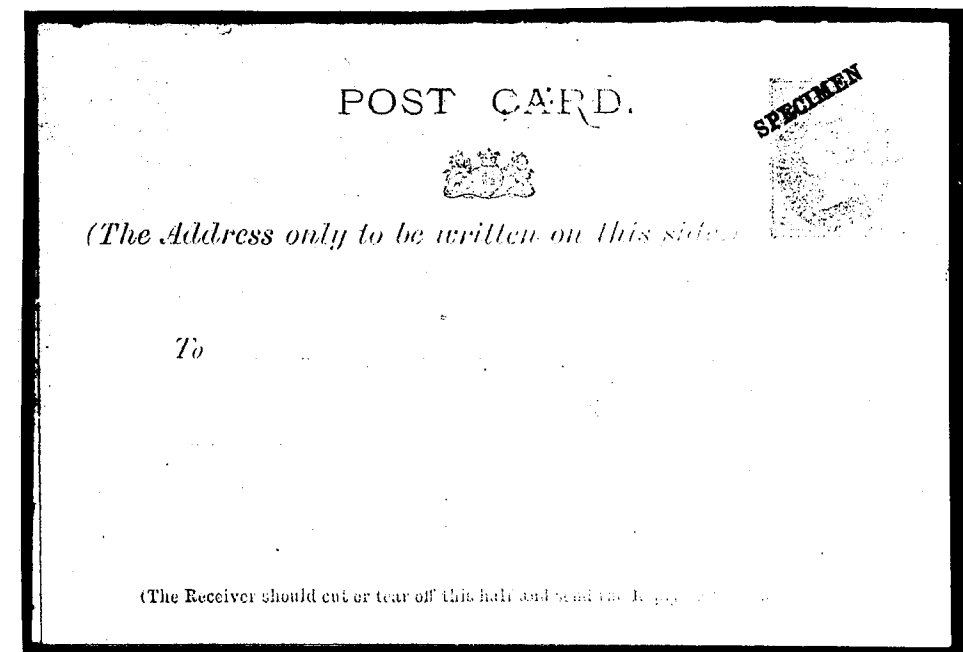
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Type 20

Table 3

Specimen Pictorial Post Cards 1897 & 1898

1d	1897	HG 19a 'Greetings from ...'	No specimens known+
1d	1897	HG 19b 'With Christmas Greetings' on views no's 4,5,7,9,10 & 13,	all blue-grey
1d	1897	HG 19c 'With New Year Greetings' on views no's 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,11,12,14 & 18,	all blue-grey
1.5d	1898	HG 23a 'With Christmas Greetings', on views no's 1,2,3,4,6,7,8,9 & 10,	all red
1.5d	1898	HG 23b 'With New Year Greetings' on views no's 1,2,3,4*,6,7*,8,9 & 10*,	all red

*Known cancelled with triple-oval NSW, without specimen;
+HG19a is known with triple-oval NSW on 1,3,4,5,6 & 11

O.S. Specimens

The use, in New South Wales, of stamps and postal stationery marked OS for official correspondence ceased in January, 1895. However, the **Government Gazette** of July 22, 1895 announced the sale to the public of surplus OS stamps together with 1d postcards. The next steps in this public sale of obsolete issues are described in Bassett Hull, 1911 (p.323).

'However, this supply did not contain sufficient varieties to meet the demands of collectors, who clamoured for the obsolete types, and especially with red overprints. With a desire to meet this demand, the Department determined to reprint such varieties as were not then in stock and furnish them to collectors. The face value of the complete set was nearly 6 pounds, and as this price would be beyond the reach of most collectors, and as the audit regulations forbade the sale of uncanceled stamps, at less than face value, it was decided to obliterate the dates with an undated cancelling mark, consisting of the letters NSW in three concentric ovals, and to sell the sets at 2 pounds each. One thousand sets were printed, and all were cancelled. Nine hundred sets bore the above-mentioned obliteration, and 100 were cancelled with GPO in three concentric circles for gratis distribution to other postal administrations'.

The availability of the 2 pound sets, with oval overprints, was announced in the **Gazette** of 15 August 1895. This form of cancellation caused a 'storm of indignation ... from the philatelic journals'. Only 158 of the 900 NSW overprints were sold and 50 of the official GPO sets distributed. The Gazette announced, on 18 March 1896, that the sale of these sets would be discontinued. The remaining NSW oval sets were destroyed and the GPO sets additionally cancelled 'specimen'. The list of OS NSW postal stationery that were included in these sets is given in Appendix S of Bassett-Hull. This information is incorporated in Table 4. Table 4 also gives the Higgins and Gage reference number and year of issue. The latter often differs from that given in Bassett-Hull, although it is almost certain the Bassett-Hull dates are correct.

Following the description in Bassett-Hull, there should be three different styles for these sets of OS postal stationery. They can be cancelled with a triple oval NSW, a triple oval GPO or an oval GPO with a specimen



From top to bottom Types 21, 22, 23

Table 4

OS Postal Stationery
For presentation and sale to collectors

H&G No	Date	Date of Issue	NSW (Bassett-Hull, Ovals 1911)	GPO Ovals	GPO Ovals & Specimen	NSW Oval & Specimen
<u>Post Cards</u>						
1d	1877	D1	1 Jan 1880			
1d	1887	D2	31 Mar 1887		Type 16	
1d	1888	D3/3a	31 Jan 1889		Type 16	Type 16
1d	1890	D4/4a	31 Jan 1890			Type 16*

*with NSW ovals and GPO ovals on reverse

Envelopes

1d	1883	DB1/1a	31 Aug 1880
2d	1883	DB2	7 May 1882
1d	1888	DB4/4a	30 Sept 1888
2d	1888	DB5	30 Sept 1888
1d	1883	DB6	7 May 1885
1d	1888	DB 8 or 8a, b,c,d	28 Sept 1888
2d	1888	DB9	31 May 1889
4d	1891	DB13	8 Aug 1892

Registered Envelopes

3d	1888/92	DC 1 or 1a, b,c	26 Sept 1892	Type 16 (on 1b)
6d	1888/92	DC 2 or 2a	24 Oct 1888	Yes
6d	1888/92	DC 3 or a,b	23 May 1889	

overprint. The latter two cases would be relatively uncommon with a maximum of only fifty of each. To complicate this picture, some of these postal stationery items are also known with a triple oval NSW and a specimen overprint. Butler (1967, p. 141) also comments on this situation. The authors have one example which combines a triple oval NSW and specimen and, on the reverse of the card, a triple oval GPO.

Table 4 shows the examples that should exist, those that have been seen are marked. To date, all these specially issued OS postal stationery specimen items are cancelled with type 16. The authors would particularly welcome information on OS postal stationery items that would enable the blanks in Table 2 to be completed. It should be noted however, that these items are also known with specimen overprints that correspond to their initial issue. The type of overprint is shown in Table 1.

Conclusion

The listing of specimen overprints for NSW postal stationery represents a considerable extension to that published by Butler (1967). It is hoped that similar check lists may be forthcoming for the stationery of other Australian States. The only State with readily available information is Western Australia (see the West Australian Study Group publication of 1982). While comparable information for Queensland, South Australia, Victoria and Tasmania would be of considerable interest the numbers of overprint posted stationery items is thought to be less than for New South Wales. The authors would be pleased to receive additional information of specimen postal stationery items care the editor of 'Capital Philately'.

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