

Handbook Postcards 03 – International Cards

The First Issues

In late 1888 arrangements were completed for the exchange of post cards between New South Wales and Great Britain; the rates being Two Pence for the long sea route, or Three Pence for the quicker overland route to Great Britain via Italy (from Brindisi or Naples). Special cards were prepared for this purpose. The suggestion was adopted that the post cards should celebrate the Jubilee (50 year anniversary) of the issue of the first NSW postal stationery on 1 November 1838: ie. the albino embossing of letter sheets with a circular replica of the Seal of the Colony .

The special treaty of 1887 between UPU member Italy and the non-UPU Australian colonies was also an encouragement to establishment of the service, Gough (2019, p.663). The treaty had the effect of encouraging the use of the Italian ports of Brindisi or Naples as access points to Europe and much reducing the uncertainty for other European destinations of whether or not additional postage was due.

On 24 November 1888 Dr Andrew Houison (1890) and others submitted a design to the Post Office for the proposed cards. It contained an outline drawing of the embossed design used on the NSW pre-paid letter sheets of 1838. The remainder was a tracing from the "Contribucion Federal" fiscal stamp of Mexico of 1882 (see original stamp below at Figure 1), with the necessary alterations in the inscriptions (also see actual card medallion image below at Figure 2). The design was approved by the Postmaster-General on the 27 November 1888. Proofs submitted by the Government Printer were approved on 19 December 1888 and instructions issued for a supply to be available for use on 1 January 1889.



**Figure 1: 1882 "Contribucion Federal"
Fiscal Stamp of Mexico**



**Figure 2: Actual design of the first issue
2d Central Medallion**

The notification of the proposed issue, which appeared in the NSW Government Gazette of 29 December 1888, included the following statements:

"It is hereby notified that from the 1st proximo a Post Card of the value of Two-pence will be issued, which may be forwarded from New South Wales to the United Kingdom by the contract packets of the Peninsular and Oriental and the Orient Steam Navigation Companies only by what is termed the 'long sea route', ie. conveyed all the way from Australia, by sea, to England.

A Post Card, of the value of Three-pence, will also be issued on the 1st proximo for use between this Colony and the United Kingdom, overland via Italy, which may be forwarded only by the abovementioned packets.

It happens that the year 1888 is the fiftieth since the introduction of postage stamps in the Colony of New South Wales, and the necessity that has arisen for the issue of special Post Cards has therefore been availed of to commemorate this jubilee event by including in the design of these cards a reference to the occasion."

The cards were printed in December 1888, with 30,240 of each of the Two Pence PC7 (see Figures 3 and 5) and Three Pence PC8 (see Figures 4, 6 and 7) cards held in the NSW Government Printing Office stock and 6,000 of each issued to the Post Office on 29 December 1888. This suggests the possibility of sales and use before 1 January 1889.

Presumably the postal authorities held reasonable expectations of sales noting that the cards were respectively the first NSW blue and green postal cards issued featuring a comparatively bold and attractive design. Nevertheless, low sales eventuated. This sales outcome is reflected in the scarcity of these cards for collectors today, particularly used examples of the last two issues.

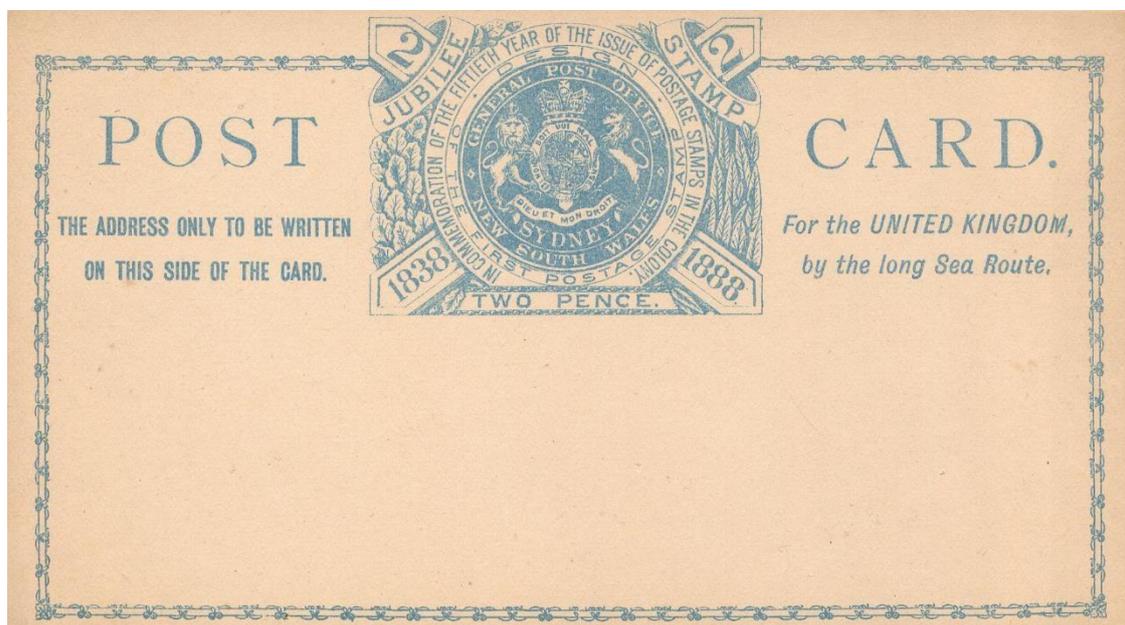


Figure 3: First Two Pence Jubilee Card (PC7)

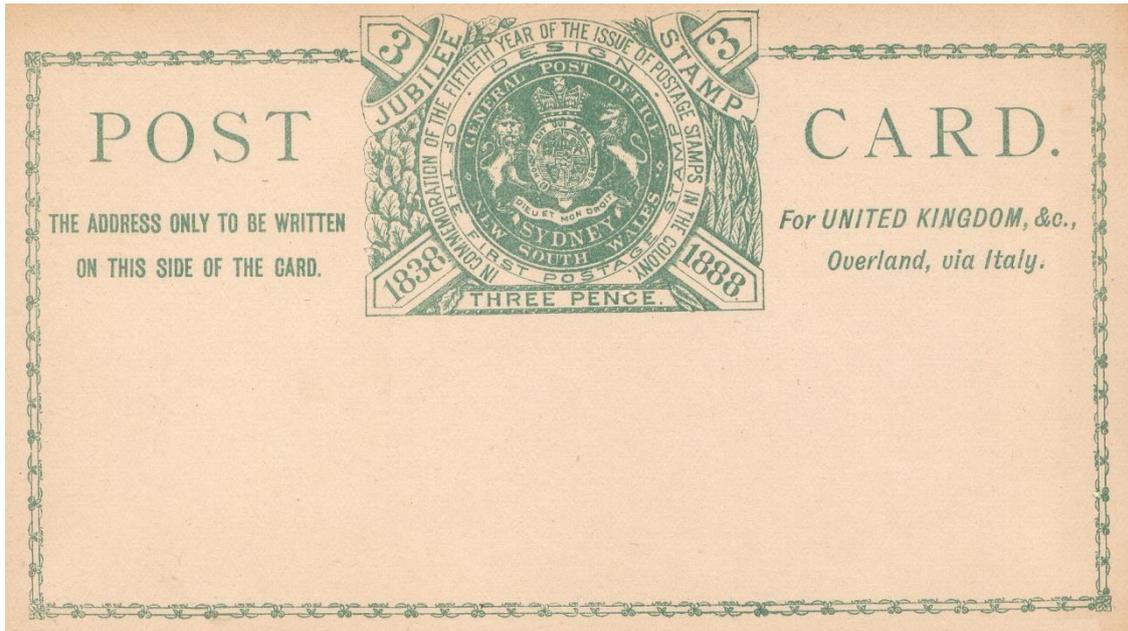


Figure 4: First Three Pence Jubilee Card (PC8)

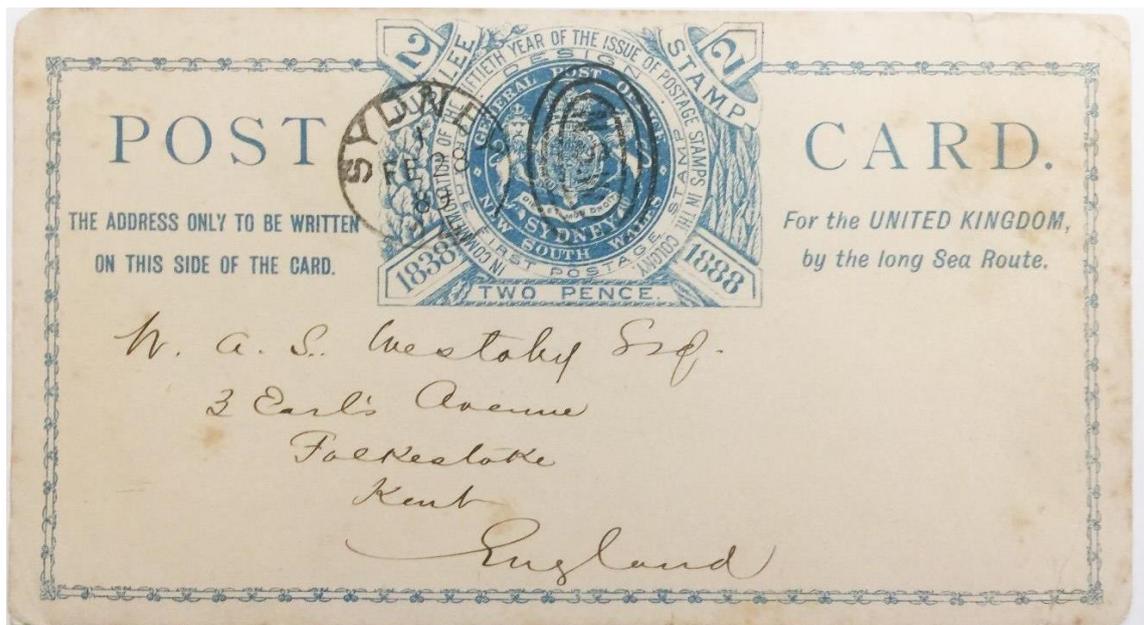


Figure 5: Sydney to Kent, England sent 28 February 1889 by Dr Andrew Houison (PC7), As mentioned previously, Dr Houison was a key figure in the creation of the design for the Jubilee cards. Dr Houison's message on this card to Mr Westaby is also of interest as he writes "Your twopenny card dated Jan 3rd reached me Feb 18th, thus giving 45 days for longsea route." However, as Dr Houison is writing to an English correspondent this is a UK to NSW voyage.

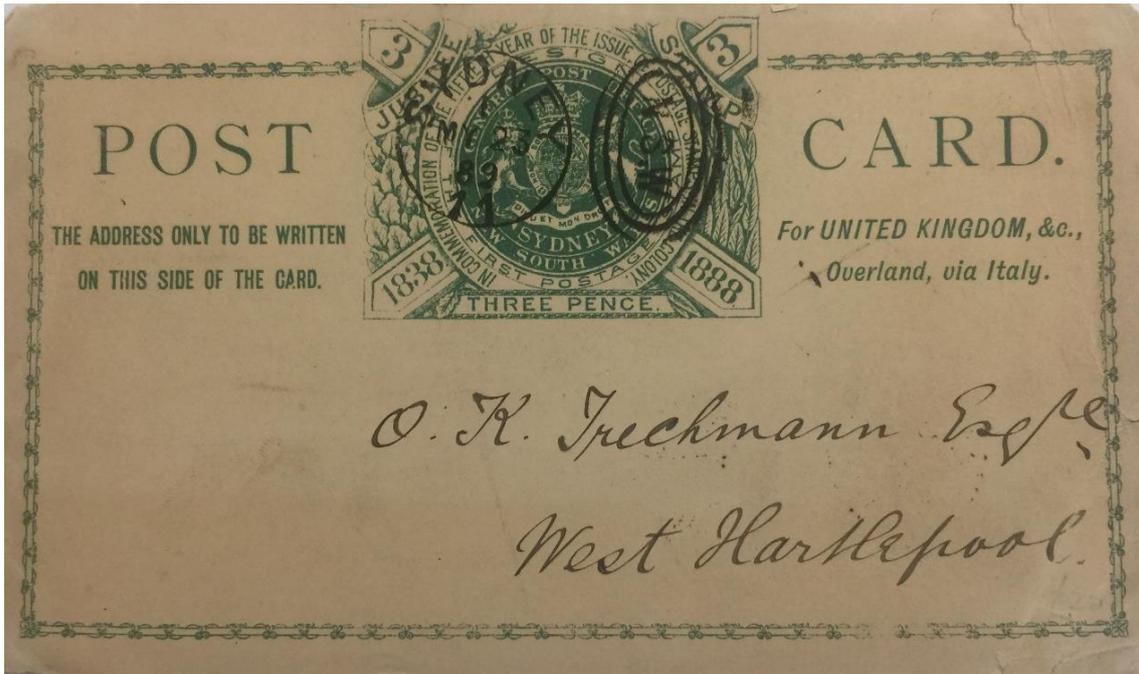


Figure 6: Sydney to West Hartlepool, England sent 23 May 1889 (PC8)
 The Orient Line's Lusitania left Sydney on 23 May 1889 and reached the UK on 29 June 1889, a duration of 37 days.

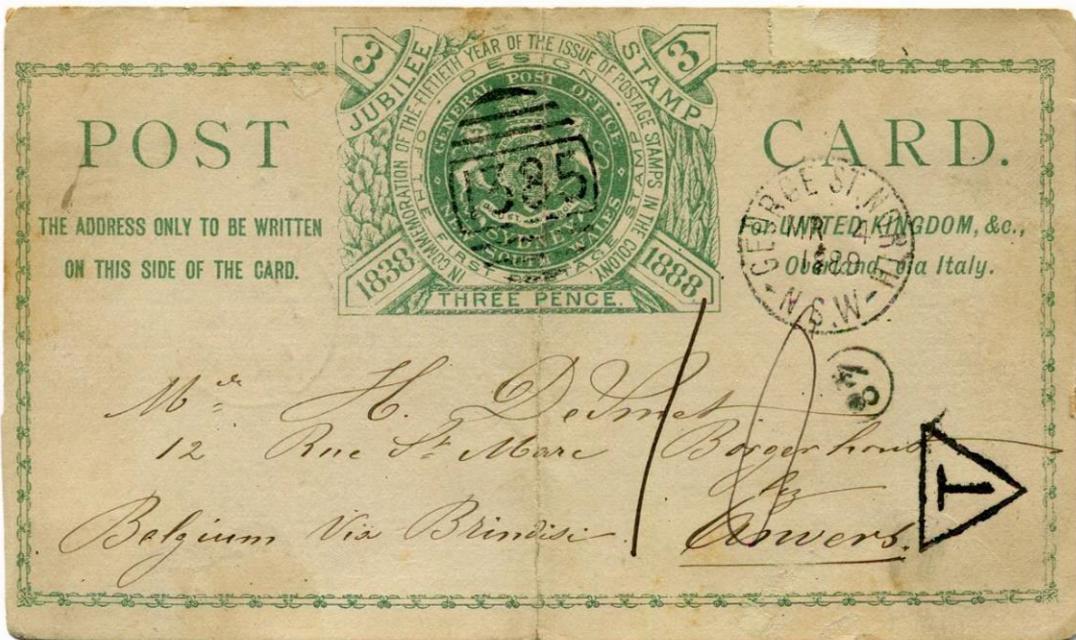


Figure 7: George St Nth to Belgium on 4 March 1889 taxed for insufficient postage. (PC8)
 NSW postage of 3d was only valid to the UK and the Belgian Post Office chose to tax the card an additional amount of 10 centimes for the Belgian destination.

Amendment to the Three Pence Card (PC10)

In June 1890 an arrangement was made for the exchange of post cards with France at the rate then existing for the United Kingdom by the overland route, ie. Three Pence. Consequently, the words "and for France" were added to the inscription to the right of the design on the then current Three

Pence card (see Figures 8 and 9). The additional words were in a type similar to those existing, but were printed in a somewhat lighter shade of green, sometimes at a slight angle to the existing lettering. The overprint was placed on all Three Pence cards in stock on 7 August 1890. These numbered 18,495. Examination of the Printing Office ledgers indicates that only 1,500 of these overprinted Three Pence cards were issued to the Post Office from 19 August 1890 of which 300 were overprinted Specimen, leaving just 1,200 for postal use.

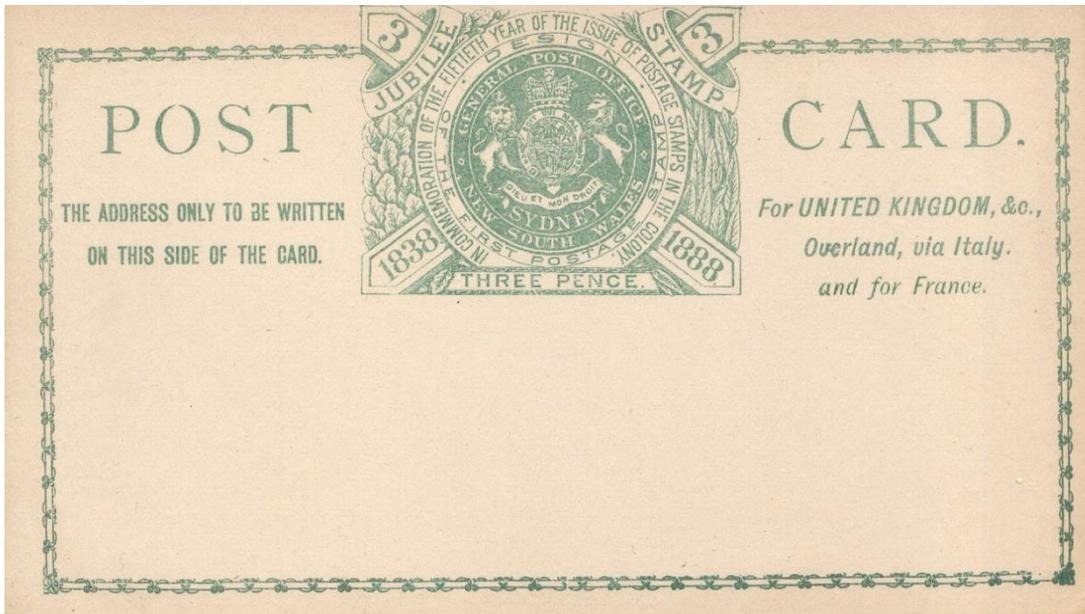


Figure 8: The “and for France” Three Pence Jubilee Card (PC10)

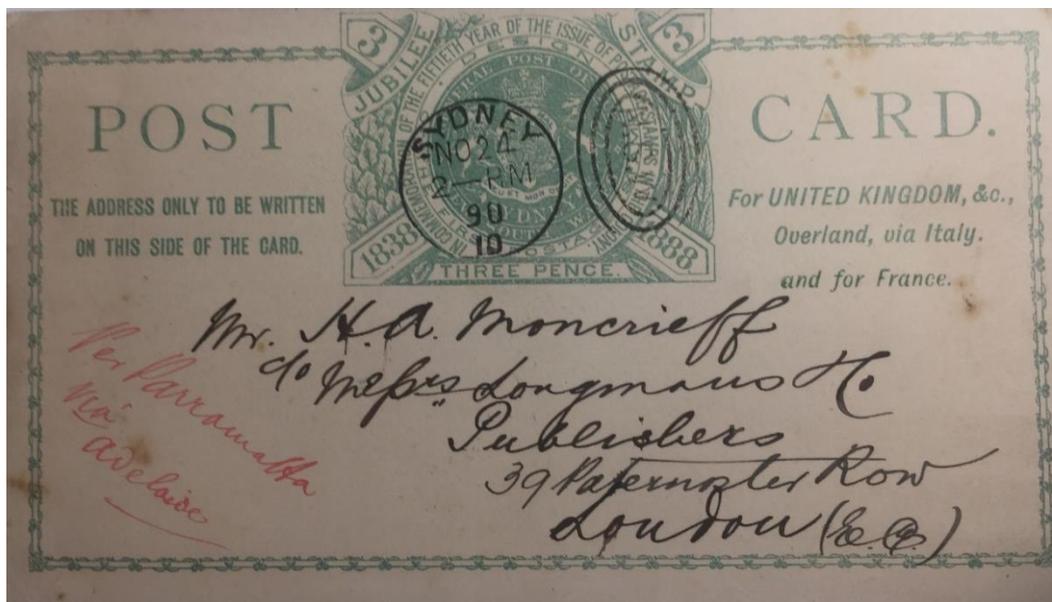


Figure 9: Sydney to London sent 24 November 1890 (PC10) on the P & O vessel ‘Parramatta’ reaching Brindisi, Italy on 26 Dec 1890 (White (1988) p293). Receiving mark for London of 29 Dec 1890 on reverse.

Revision of the Two Pence Card (PC11)

In November 1890 the maximum charge for post cards to the United Kingdom, France, and some other countries was reduced to Two Pence. This necessitated an alteration to the inscription on the

Two Pence Card, with after the words "For the UNITED KINGDOM" substitution of "by the long sea route" with "and other Countries to which Post Cards may be sent." Other changes to the design included lowering of the central medallion and slightly increasing the size of the border (see Figures 10 and 11). A proof was submitted and approved on 24 November 1890. Twelve thousand cards in the amended design were printed in November 1890. They were first issued on 30 December 1890. Subsequently, only 3,045 were issued to the Post Office of which 645 were used as Specimens, leaving only 2,400 for normal postal use.

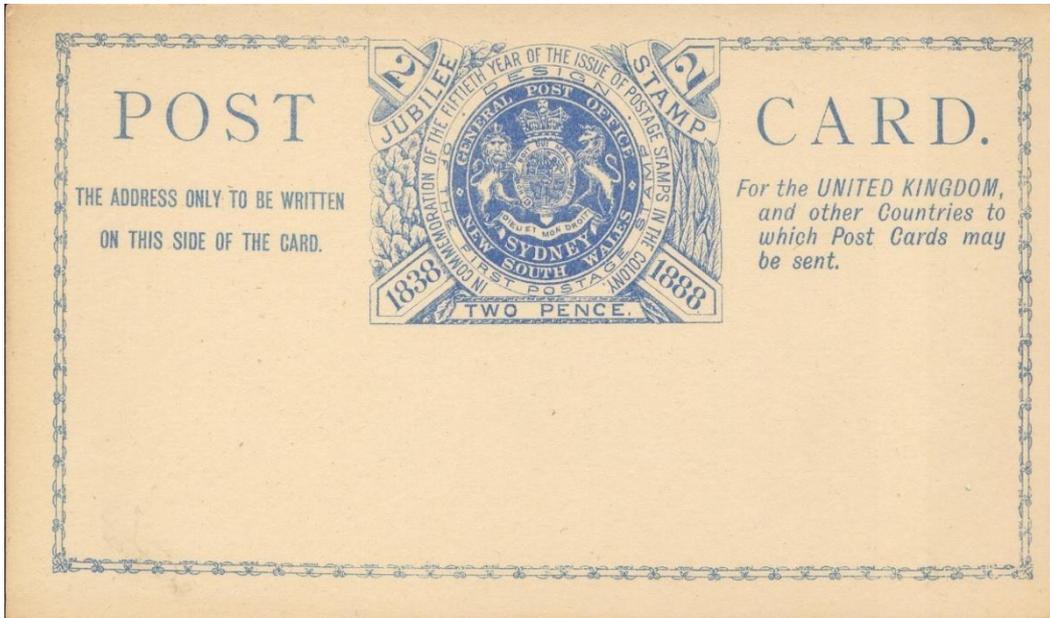


Figure 10: The Revised (Lowering of Central Medallion etc) Two Pence Jubilee Card (PC11)



Figure 11: Sydney to Liverpool, UK sent 16 February 1891 (PC11)

Card Size

The four cards commonly occur in the size range 152-163 mm: 80-90 mm. An example of one larger dimension card has been seen.

Production, Plate Flaws and Card Colour

The cards were printed from lithographic plates. There is considerable variation in the shades from all three printings. The structure of the Jubilee cards seemed to differ to other NSW postcards as they consist of two thin papers sandwiching a thicker card in the middle. This seemed to make the cards more prone to damage, particularly the corners. There are also some differences in card thickness.

A number of constant plate flaws, varying in prominence, were distinguished by Bell (2004) who also reported his assessment that the plates were likely to have contained 12 subjects. Reasons for this conclusion were;

- a. On the basis of minor flaws, there seems to be 12 different sub-types of the first Two Pence Card,
- b. The numbers printed were in multiples of 12 (ie. 30,240; 30,240; 12,000).

Listing of Card Types

Following in Table 1 is a listing based on the published articles/monographs of Bell (2004), Bassett-Hull (1911), Higgins & Gage (H&G) (1983), Houison (1890) and particularly printing data from the NSW Government Printing Office (GPrO) ledgers which fortunately cover the entire period of supply and distribution of the Jubilee cards from 1888 to 1891.

Bassett-Hull (1911) is a key historical monograph for information about the origin and pre-1900 issues of NSW stamps and postal stationery. Higgins & Gage (1983) is the only catalogue listing in English. Houison (1890) is an early account of the development of the NSW Post Office. Bell conducted detailed research published in a series of papers in Sydney Views between 2004 and 2010 which represent a major advance in the study of NSW postal stationery. Most of the background history of the Jubilee Cards in this handbook is derived from Houison (1890), Bassett-Hull (1911) and Bell (2004).

For cross referencing the H&G numbers are also provided in the following table. However, the use of this listing and particularly the numbers PC 7-8, PC 10-11 are recommended as they align with the correct chronology of Jubilee card issue as provided by the GPrO ledgers.

TABLE 1 LISTING OF TYPES

No.	Issue Date	Denom	H&G No.	Colour	Other Features
PC7	29/12/1888	2d	7.	Blue	Central medallion extends 5mm above top border. Inscription states "For the UNITED KINGDOM, by the long sea route." (see Figure 3)
	MINT	\$50	USED	\$100	SPECIMEN (B15) \$100
PC8	29/12/1888	3d	8.	Green	Central medallion extends 5mm above top border. Inscription states "For UNITED KINGDOM, &c., Overland, via Italy." (see Figure 4)
	MINT	\$50	USED	\$100	SPECIMEN (B15) \$100
PC10	19/8/1890	3d	11.	Green	Central medallion extends 5mm above top border. Inscription states "For UNITED KINGDOM, &c., Overland, via Italy. And for France." Additional line "and for France" was an overprint added to the residual stock of PCJ2 and is in a lighter shade of green. (see Figure 8)
	MINT	\$100	USED	\$150	SPECIMEN (B17) \$100
PC11	30/12/1890	2d	10.	Blue	Central medallion does not extend above top border. Border 1mm x 3mm larger. Inscription states "For UNITED KINGDOM, and other Countries to which Post Cards may be sent. " (see Figure 10)
	MINT	\$50	USED	\$100	SPECIMEN (B17) \$100

Numbers of the General and Specimen Types Supplied and Distributed

The general issue: Supplied by the Government Printing Office (GPrO) from stock and distributed by the General Post Office (GPO). Specimen issues are not included in the numbers in this paragraph.

	1888	1889	1890	1891	1892	
2d. Supplied by GPrO	6,000	4,800	1,200	1,800	NIL	[Total 13,800]
Distributed by GPO*	480	9,480	1,320	2,520	NIL	[Total 13,800]
3d. Supplied by GPrO	6,000	3,600	2,800	NIL	NIL	[Total 12,400]
Distributed by GPO*	480	8,520	3,200	200	NIL	[Total 12,400]

The general issue numbers above may be subdivided as follows:

2d.	First Printing	11,400
	Revised Card	<u>2,400</u>
		13,800
3d.	First Printing	11,200
	After amendment	<u>1,200</u>
		12,400

*As there are no records to indicate otherwise, it is assumed that all cards distributed by the General Post Office were sold. If in fact there were unsold copies that were destroyed then the availability of the latter two cards is further diminished below the numbers indicated above.

The following **specimen issues** were also made:

	2d.		3d.	
August 1889	345		345	Un-overprinted examples of the initial issues (PC7 and PC8) sent to other postal administrations via the UPU
September 1889	200		200	First two issues (PC7 and PC8), overprinted Specimen [B 15*]
April 1891	345			Un-overprinted examples of the revised 2d card (PC11)
April 1891	300		300	The revised 2d card (PC11) and the amended 3d card (PC10) overprinted Specimen [B 17*]

*B15 is in Roman Capitals 17 1/2 x 2 1/4 mm long, with full stop, placed low over the central medallion - see Bell (2007).

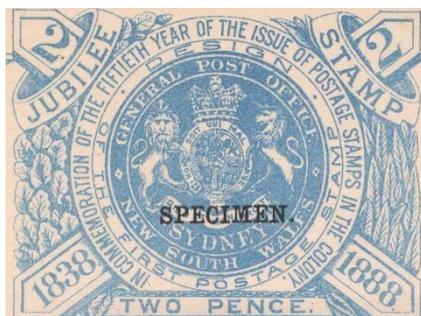


Figure 12: B15 on PC7s

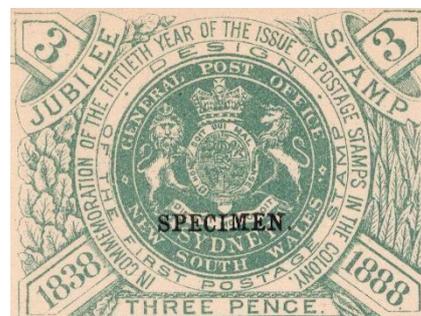


Figure 13: B15 on PC8s

*Bell 17 is in large lower case letters, 17 mm long, placed at upper left, diagonally over the 0 of POST – see Bell (2007). This is the only use of Bell 17 on any NSW postal stationery or postage stamp.

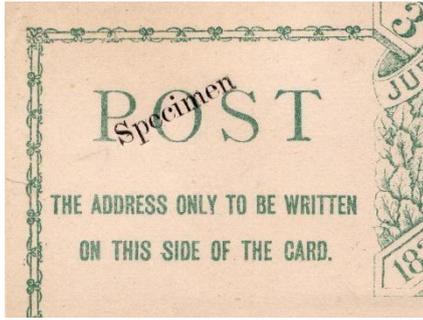


Figure 14: B 17 on PC10s

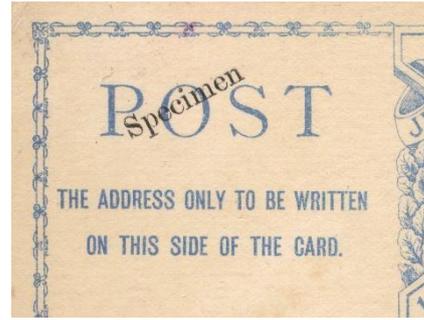


Figure 15: B 17 on PC11s

A note from Printing Office records of 19th June 1889 from the NSW Postmaster-General to the Under Secretary of Finance and Trade (oversighting the NSW Government Printing Office) confirms that the first "specimen" supply of August 1889 (345 + 345) was specifically requested "to be printed and supplied as early as possible, without, however, impressing the word "specimen" upon them ...". The note further confirms that this action was sought so that the NSW Post Office could favourably respond to a request from the London Post Office for New South Wales to also follow UPU member practice although NSW was not a UPU member. Presumably the further supply of 345 unoverprinted revised 2d cards (PC11) in April 1891 had the same rationale.

Basset Hull (1911) refers, on p 385, to "345 of each current denomination" being "sent to the Central Bureau of the Universal Postal Union, on the 29th August 1889, for distribution amongst other postal administrations". Bell (2009a) confirms that a further 345 of the revised 2nd Jubilee card (PC11) was sent to the UPU on 21 April 1891. Bendon (2015) confirms that between 3 February 1887 and 30 May 1892 the UPU required 345 items for distribution.

The overprinted specimen Jubilee cards were printed in numbers (200+200+300+300) that did not match the UPU requirement of 345 and were retained in NSW for archival, sale or presentation purposes. This resulted in the unusual outcome that the officially overprinted specimen Jubilee cards should not be present in any UPU member collection unless acquired by some other means outside the UPU distribution process.

Further Detail of Dates, Numbers Printed and Issued

The ledgers of the Government Printing Office from 1888 to 1894 are a valuable source of printing and issue data for these particular cards. The ledger data enabled the compilation of **APPENDIX A** which provides further key data for the collector.

An interesting byway arises from a handwritten note of 20 December 1888 on the Printing Office file of requisitions (Records Office Series 4450) from the Postmaster-General to the Inspector of Stamps requesting that all Printing Office supplies of these cards be in packets of 60 cards for the 2d and 40 cards for the 3d. The reason for the request is "so that they may be readily distinguishable from postcards at present in use". The note then has a signed handwritten notation "Packed as requested the 2d in blue and the 3d in green papers."

Examination of Appendix 1 will confirm that all Jubilee Card supplies to the Post Office, except for Specimens, are respectively divisible by 60 or 40, thus suggesting that all supplies were made in the blue or green papers. There appears to be no record of these coloured wrappers having survived.

Summary of Card Numbers

The following is a summary of numbers supplied by the Government Printing Office for each card type derived from comparing the card numbers supplied with the key dates in the narrative. All specimen issues are included:

PC7	Two Pence Blue First Printing 'long sea route' (11,400 + 545 specimens)	11,945
PC8	Three Pence Green First Printing 'Overland, via Italy' (11,200 + 545 specimens)	11,745
PC10	Three Pence Green Overprinted 'and for France' (1,200 + 300 specimens)	1,500
PC11	Two Pence Blue Second Printing 'and other countries' (2,400 + 645 specimens)	3,045
Total Supplied		28,325

The issues of the **overprinted** Specimens were:

PC7s	Two Pence Blue First Printing 'long sea route'	200
PC8s	Three Pence Green First Printing 'Overland, via Italy'	200
PC10s	Three Pence Green Overprinted 'and for France'	300
PC11s	Two Pence Blue Second Printing 'and other countries'	300
Total Supplied		1,000

Scarcity

The Jubilee post cards are generally scarcer than many of the other NSW cards because of their lower supply numbers. The two later issues (PC10 and PC11) are significantly scarcer than the first two (PC7 and PC8).

Non-philatelically used cards should command a premium, particularly for the later issues, as they were issued in very low numbers. Cards used before the UPU entry date of 30 September 1891 should command a premium over those used after that date: many of the post-September 1891 cards have a philatelic origin.

A used example of the 'and for France' card (PC10) actually sent to France prior to November 1890 would be particularly desirable noting the issue date of 19 August 1890 and the very low total issue number of 1,200.

The condition of mint and used examples of cards is variable and fine examples are highly collectable noting that used cards viewed to date have at least minor blemishes due to staining, paper splits or corner fraying.

Used cards having a receiving post office cds are surprisingly scarce. Cards with a reference to the ship on which the card was sent allow further confirmation of the sailing taken from available maritime records - see Tabcart (2011) for detailed sailing departure and arrival dates.

The proofs are assumed to be either in archives or no longer exist. A cursory review of the literature did not indicate their disposition. The literature does not report the production of a proof of the overprinted 'and for France' Three Pence card (PC10).

The overprinted Specimen cards were only produced in low numbers but are occasionally seen in auctions.

If the un-overprinted cards sent to the UPU were distinguishable by some sort of consistent official marking then they would be a further category of Specimen types. It is possible that un-overprinted specimens distributed to UPU members could have had a recipient country specimen marking (eg. 'Ultramar') to indicate the specimen status. However, there have been no reports in the literature of the existence of any examples, so they remain an unresolved query.

Destruction of Reminders

The Two Pence and Three Pence post cards were withdrawn from use on 30 September 1891 less than three years after their first issue. The withdrawal was the day before NSW entered the UPU. A note to this effect, which reads "From 1 Oct. the issue of present 2d. & 3d. Post Cards [is] to be discontinued and 1½d, and 1½ d + 1½ Reply Cards substituted in lieu - see Treasury Auth. 91/D.2821" occurs in the Government Printer's 'Register of Postage Stamps and Postage- Due Stamps Printed and Issued to the Honorable, The Postmaster General during the month of September 1891'. [State Records Folio 1/19)

The cards held at the Government Printing Office (18,295 of the original 2d., 8,955 of the revised 2d. and 16,995 of the amended 3d.) remained in stock until at least late 1897. On the 28 September of that year the Government Printer wrote to the Acting Deputy Postmaster General requesting him to 'see your way clear to authorise destructionin the usual manner'. Such requests seem to have always been approved. Destruction of the remaining stocks was probably carried out in October 1897, but no formal record of confirmation was observed by Bell (2004).

APPENDIX A – NSW JUBILEE POSTCARDS PRINTED AND ISSUED 1888 – 1894

DATE	PRINTED 2d	PRINTED 3d	ISSUED 2d	ISSUED 3d	BALANCE 2d	BALANCE 3d	NOTES
DEC 1888	30,240	30,240					
29 DEC 1888			6,000	6,000			
31 DEC 1888					24,240	24,240	
1888 TOTAL			6,000	6,000			
24 JAN 1889			3,000				
26 APR 1889				800			
2 JUL 1889			600	400			
7 JUL 1889				800			
10 JUL 1889				800			
24 AUG 1889			345	345			Specimen Un-overprinted
3 SEP 1889			200	200			Specimen Overprinted
27 SEP 1889			1,200	800			
1889 TOTAL			5,345	4,145	18,895	20,095	Reconciles with ledger
TOTAL 1889 CARDS			4,800	3,600			
TOTAL 1889 SPECS			545	545			
RECONCILIATION			5,345	4,145			
31 JAN 1890				800			
6 MAY 1890			600	400			
3 JUL 1890				400			
7 AUG 1890						18,495	'and for France' overprinted on this balance of the 3d card
19 AUG 1890				400			
22 SEP 1890				800			
NOV 1890	12,000						Printing of revised 2d card
30 DEC 1890	.		600				First issue of revised 2d card
1890 TOTAL	12,000		1,200	2,800	29,695	17,295	Reconciles with ledger
TOTAL 1890 CARDS			1,200	2,800			
30 JAN 1891			600				Revised 2d card
16 APR 1891			600				Revised 2d card
21 APR 1891			345				Specimen Un-overprinted
21 APR 1891			300	300			Specimen Overprinted
19 JUN 1891	2d	3d	2d	3d	2d	3d	Revised 2d card
1891 TOTAL			2,445	300	27,250	16,995	Reconciles with ledger
TOTAL 1891 CARDS			1,800				
TOTAL 1891 SPECS			645	300			
RECONCILIATION			2,445	300			
1892					27,250	16,995	No issues. Reconciles with ledger.
1893					27,250	16,995	No issues. Reconciles with ledger.
1894					27,250	16,995	No issues. Reconciles with ledger.
1897					0	0	Destruction of stock requested Sept 1897. Bell assumed destruction actioned in the following month.

References

Basset Hull, A. F. (1911), The Postage Stamps, Envelopes, Wrappers, Post Cards and Telegraph Stamps of New South Wales, Stanley Gibbons for the Royal Philatelic Society, London, Postillion Publications Photocopied Reprint, p373-375, p436.

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Details of numbers printed and issued by the Government Printing Office (GPRO) were extracted from the Government Printer's Registers (now held by Archives NSW at Kingswood).

The numbers issued at the GPO, and the actual date the cards were first issued, came from the Annual Reports of the NSW Postmaster General.

File Series 4450, Requisitions for stamps, envelopes, etc. 1 Jan 1888 - 31 December 1896, NSW Government State Records Office.