



# Capital Philately



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Journal of the Philatelic Society of Canberra



**The Philatelic Society of Canberra Incorporated**  
(Founded 1932)

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## Capital Philately

Vol. 6, No 4

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### Editorial

The bane of an Editors life is twofold; getting enough material of the right class and fighting the costs of production so that the journal can survive. **Capital Philately** is no different to any other journal. We have survived through the last six years the first disease, and indeed have conquered it only to be hit between the eyes by the second.

At a time when the Editors plate is full of manuscripts from all over Australia the rising costs of printing and distributing **Capital Philately** put in serious doubt the continuity of the journal, at least in its present form. The journal does receive support from elsewhere, the layout and preparation is done for close to nothing by a team of two and the journal receives grants of \$500 per year from the Australian Philatelic Federation and \$200 per year from the ACT Philatelic Council. Both these bodies deserve our thanks for the support which enables **Capital Philately** to continue.

Indeed the Australian Philatelic Federation is a considerable supporter of Literature with a Journal Support Program and Grants and Interest Free loans for the publication of books. This is as it should be because knowledge which can be preserved for future generations is of the utmost importance whereas knowledge that goes to the grave with the possessor must be the ultimate in human futility. Have you got some knowledge of your philatelic subject? If so, how about letting the editor know. It doesn't matter if you believe that you cannot write because all help will be given so that your knowledge can be published for posterity.

Another important aspect of philatelic literature is knowing where to find the article on the subject of which you are interested. The first step is to consult various indices, especially of journals. In this respect the Society has just produced an **Index to Capital Philately** for the first five volumes and this is now available from the Business Manager at \$5 (\$6 post paid in Australia). Your run of **Capital Philately** is not complete without it. For members who have joined recently and want to complete their run then the Business Manager has copies of back numbers available; some are in exceedingly short supply. The other requirement is that you can locate the articles once you find out about them. As a member of the Philatelic Society of Canberra you are in an unenviable position with one of the best philatelic libraries available to you and if you live in Canberra, access to the National Library. In addition if members are also members of Royal Philatelic Society of Victoria or a member society of the Philatelic Association of New South Wales then they have access to the best three philatelic libraries in Australia.

This editorial seems to have drifted more and more into philatelic literature but I beg no one's leave for that. The enjoyment of learning more about one's subject and also being able to dip and delve into the far flung reaches of the world's largest and most successful hobby is being realised by more and more collectors. If you haven't already started, why not sit in the Society library for an hour or two and just dip into a few of the many books on countless subjects that are held there for your use.

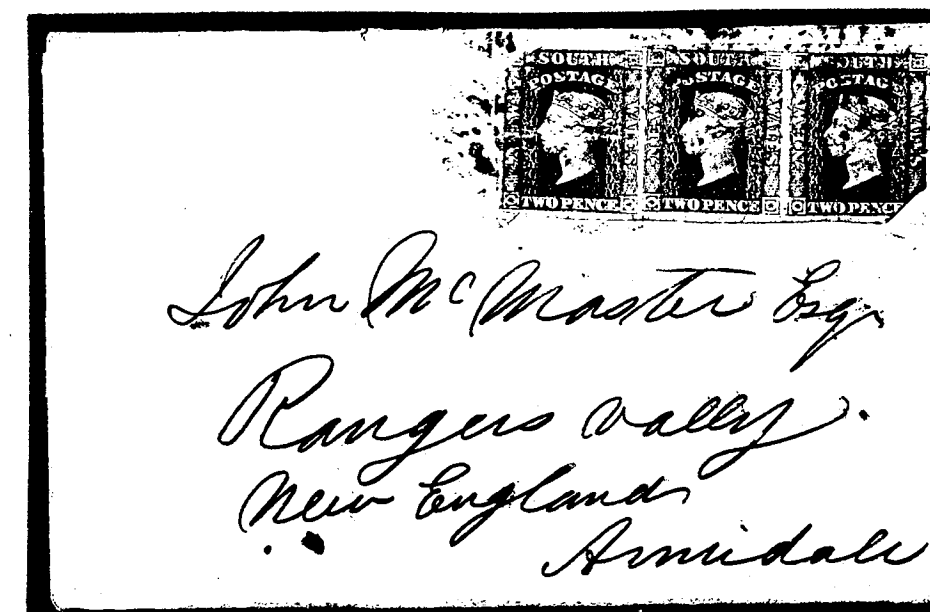
# QUEENSLAND POSTAGE RATES AND REGULATIONS 1860 TO 1911

Ian McMahon

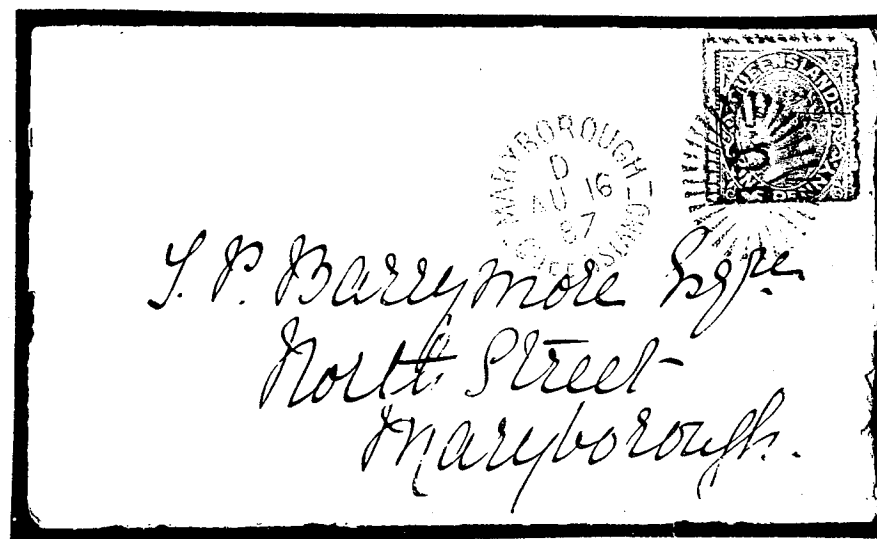
In this article I wish to discuss the rates and regulations of the Queensland Post Office over the period 1860 to 1911 - ie. from the time of separation from New South Wales (10 December 1859) until the introduction of uniform postage rates throughout the Commonwealth of Australia on 1 May 1911. Prior to separation, the postage rates of Queensland were those of New South Wales and these rates remained in force after separation. The information for this article has been largely taken from Queensland Government Gazettes and Legislative Assembly Papers.

## Supply of Queensland Stamps

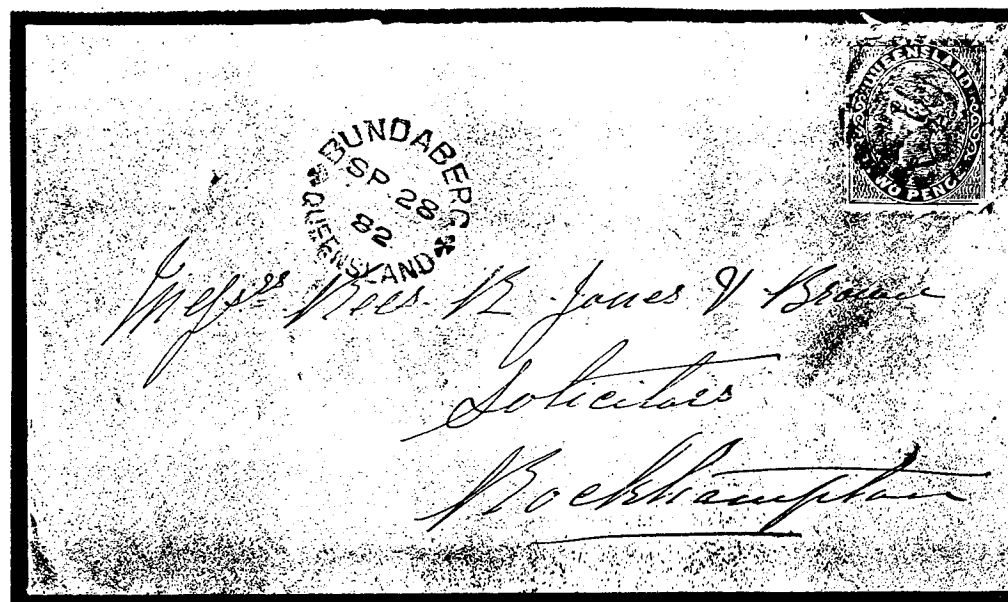
On 6 January 1860 the Postmaster-General announced that until a supply of stamps had been received, postage had to be paid in cash at the time of posting and that insufficiently paid letters addressed to places outside Queensland would be returned to sender. On 26 January 1860 he advised that a supply of New South Wales stamps had been received and would be distributed to post offices, while on 21 September 1860 he advised that a



Cover from Dulacca, QLD bearing stamps of the special printing



Town letter rate



Country letter rate

supply of Queensland stamps had now been received from England and that they would be issued on 1 November 1860. After that date only Queensland stamps would be accepted in payment of postage.

#### Town letters

From 1860 until 1871 the rates for town letters were 1d for half an ounce, 2d for one ounce, 4d for two ounces and 2d for each additional ounce. In 1871 the charges were simplified to 1d for the first half ounce and 1d for each additional half ounce. The town rate applied to letters intended for delivery in the same town in which they were posted. From 19 June 1888 the area covered by the Brisbane town rate was extended to include Eagle Junction, Toombul, Racecourse, Fairfield, South Coast Junction, Yeronga, Stanley Bridge, Taringa, Sherwood, Stafford, Mt. Cootha and Hemmant. This was extended to a radius of 11 miles from the GPO on 5 September 1900. On 4 November 1891 the town rate at Ipswich was extended to a four mile radius around Ipswich including Booval and Bundamba. A similar extension of the town rates at Toowoomba and Townsville occurred on 24 October and 19 September 1900 respectively.

#### Country letters

From 1860 to 1871 the rate for country letters (ie. letters to addresses within Queensland) was 2d for half an ounce, 4d for one ounce, 8d for two ounces and 4d for each additional ounce. In 1871 this was simplified to 2d per half ounce. Letters containing gold were charged double rates until 1902.

#### Packets posted to places within Queensland

From 1860 printed reports were charged 1d for four ounces and 1d for each additional two ounces. Packets containing savings bank passbooks were charged 2d for four ounces and 1d for each additional two ounces. Book Packets were charged 2d for four ounces and 1d for each additional four ounces.

From 1 August 1871 town and country packets were charged 1d per each two ounces. Packets containing gold were charged double the letter rate. From 1888 books were

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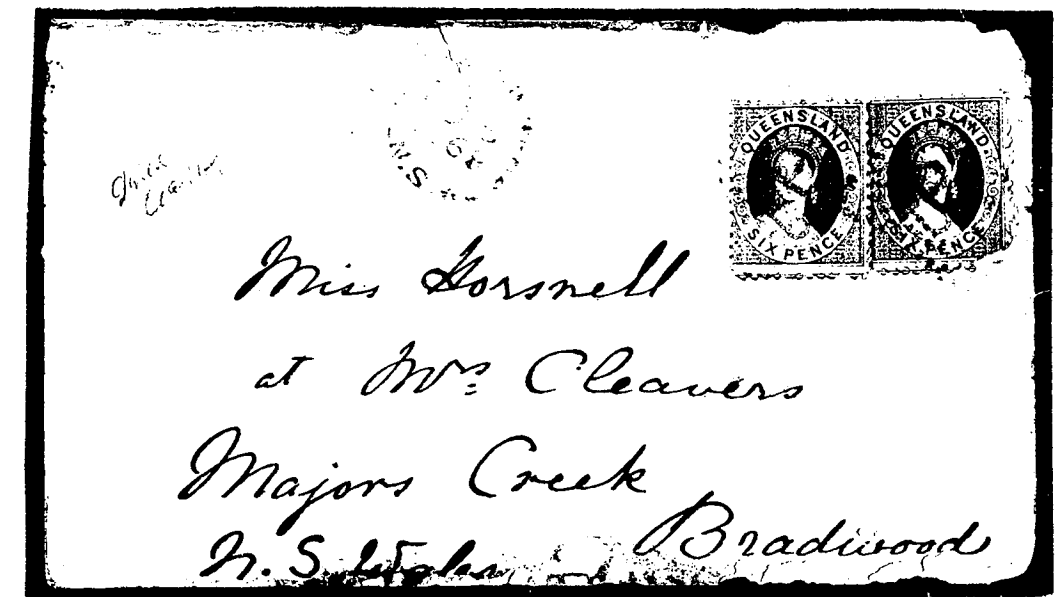
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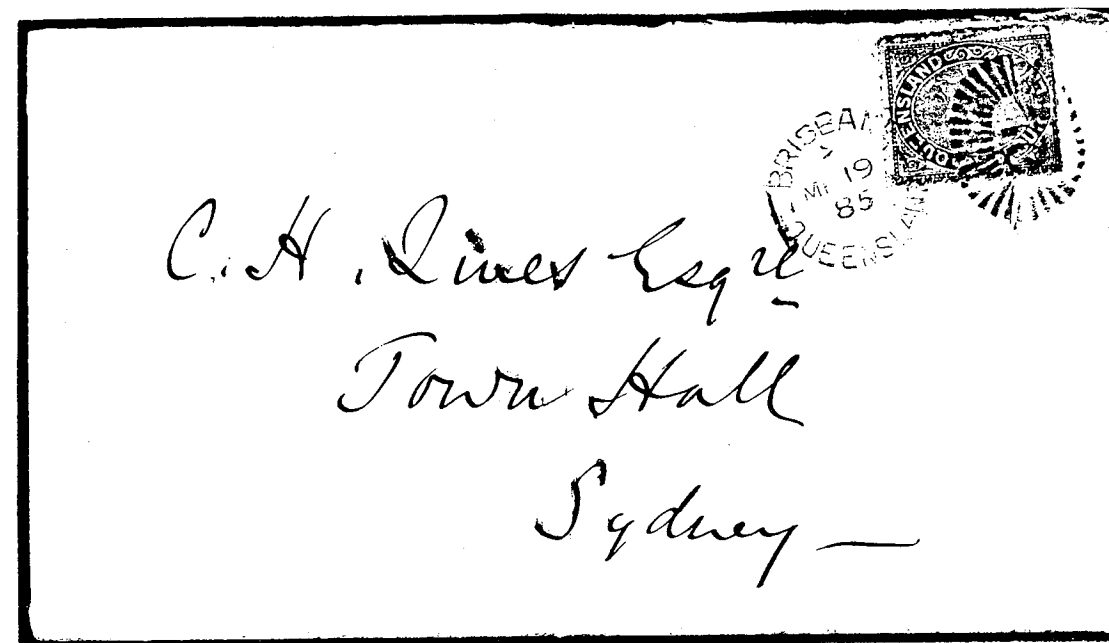
1859 Intercolonial Rate - one ounce

charged 1d per four ounces. From 1902 packets were divided into printed papers and samples, and commercial papers. All were still charged at the rate of 1d per two ounces but the maximum weight was 5lbs for printed papers and commercial papers and 1lb for samples.

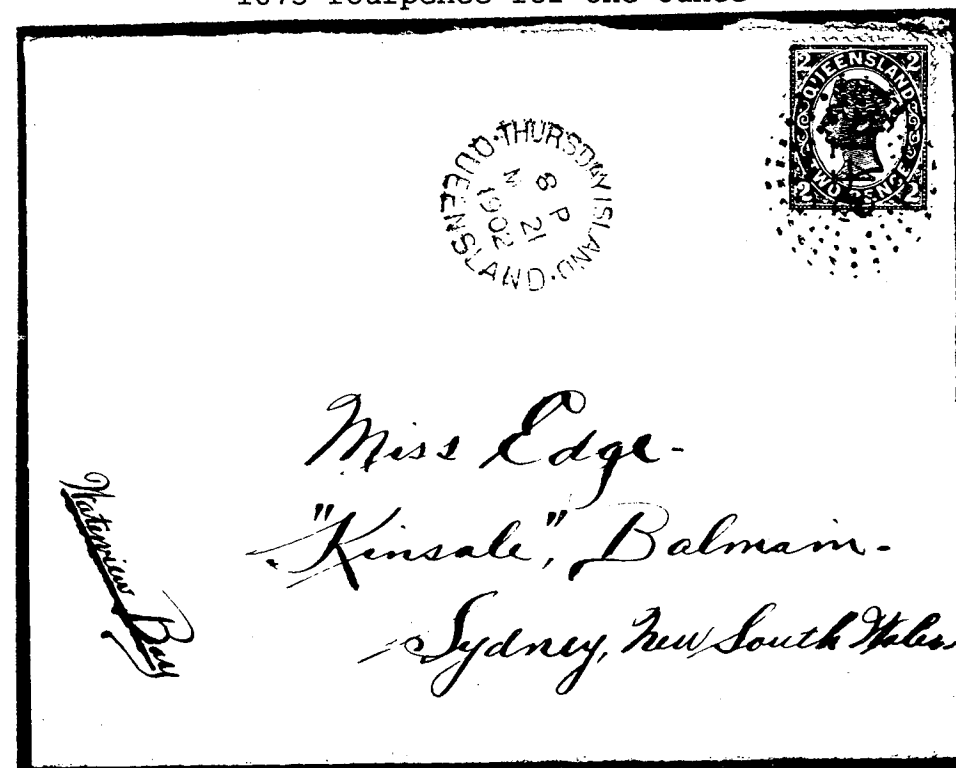
From 1892 parcels were charged 6d for the first pound and 3d for each additional pound. In 1901 the parcel rates for interstate parcels were 6d for 1lb, 9 for 2 lbs, 1/0 for 3lbs, 1/3 for 4lbs and 3d per additional pound up to 11 pounds.

#### Letters to other Australian Colonies and New Zealand

From 16 December 1859 the intercolonial rate was set at 6d for half an ounce, 1/- for one ounce and 6d per additional ounce. In 1871 letters carried by sea to the Australian Colonies (except Victoria) and New Zealand were charged 3d per half ounce. Overland letters to South Australia were charged 4d per half ounce to be paid half in Queensland stamps and half in New South Wales stamps while overland letters to New South Wales were charged 2d per half ounce. In 1873 the rate for



1873 fourpence for one ounce



1901 Commonwealth rate post federation

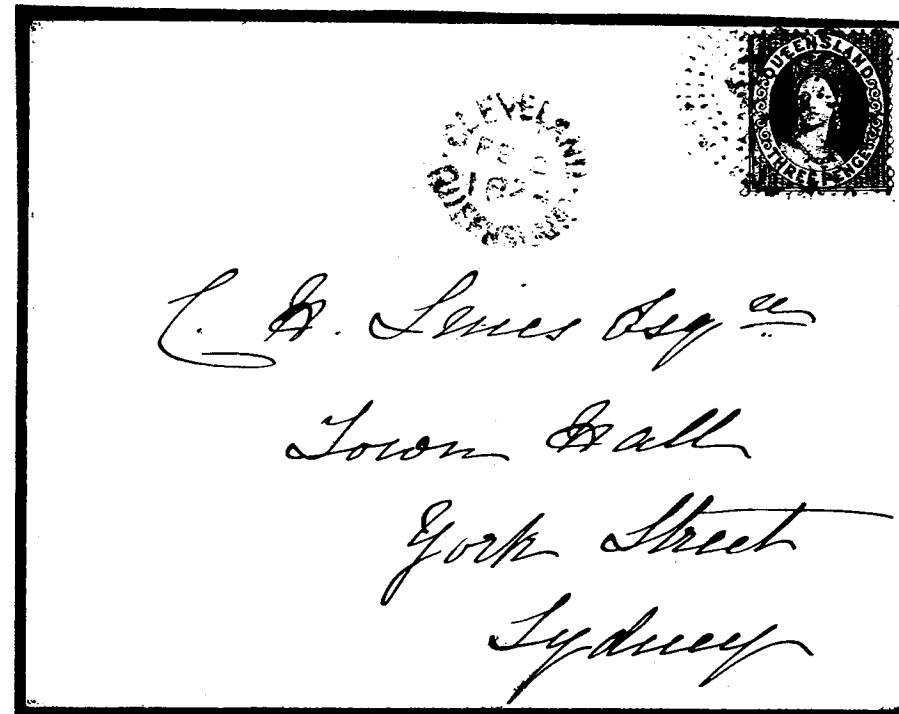
letters carried by sea to all the Australian Colonies and New Zealand was dropped to 2d per half ounce. For letters carried "overland" to New South Wales and South Australia the rates were unchanged. The overland rate to Victoria was 4d per half ounce which had to be prepaid with 2d in Queensland stamps and 2d in New South Wales stamps. The overland rate to South Australia was reduced to 2d in 1881 while that to Victoria was reduced to 2d in 1882. However, until 1883 "loose letters" were charged at the higher rate, to be paid for in Queensland and New South Wales stamps. The rate of 2d per half ounce remained in force until 1911.

#### Intercolonial packets

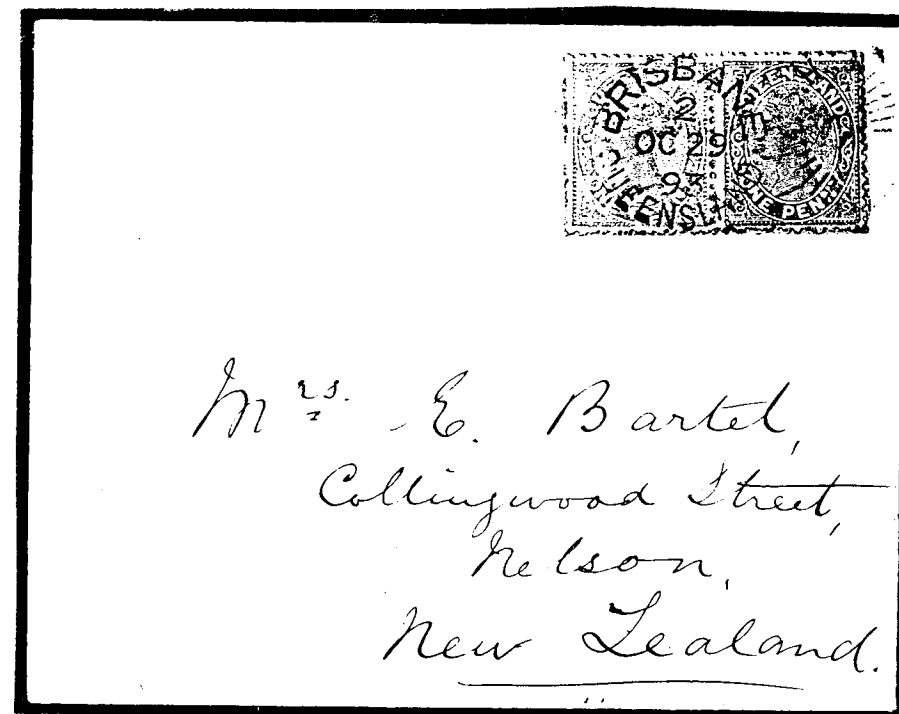
In 1860 book packets to other Australian colonies were charged 6d for eight ounces, 1/- for 1lb and 6d for each additional eight ounces. In 1871 the rates for intercolonial packets were changed to 1d for one ounce, 2d for two ounces and 2d per each additional two ounces. In 1873 the rates for packets to the Australian Colonies and New Zealand were changed to 1d for one ounce, 2d for two ounces and 4d for each additional four ounces. From 1888 the rate was reduced to 1d per two ounces for packets and 1d for four ounces for books.

As a result of the Australasian Postal Convention the rates of postage on intercolonial packets were changed on 22 December to 1d per four ounces up to 5lbs for books, half-penny per two ounces up to 5lbs for magazines, 1d for two ounces up to 4lbs for printed papers and 1d per two ounces up to 1lb for packets. From 1902 packets were divided into printed papers and samples, and commercial papers. All were still charged at the rate of 1d per two ounces but the maximum weight was 5lbs for printed papers and commercial papers and 1lb for samples.

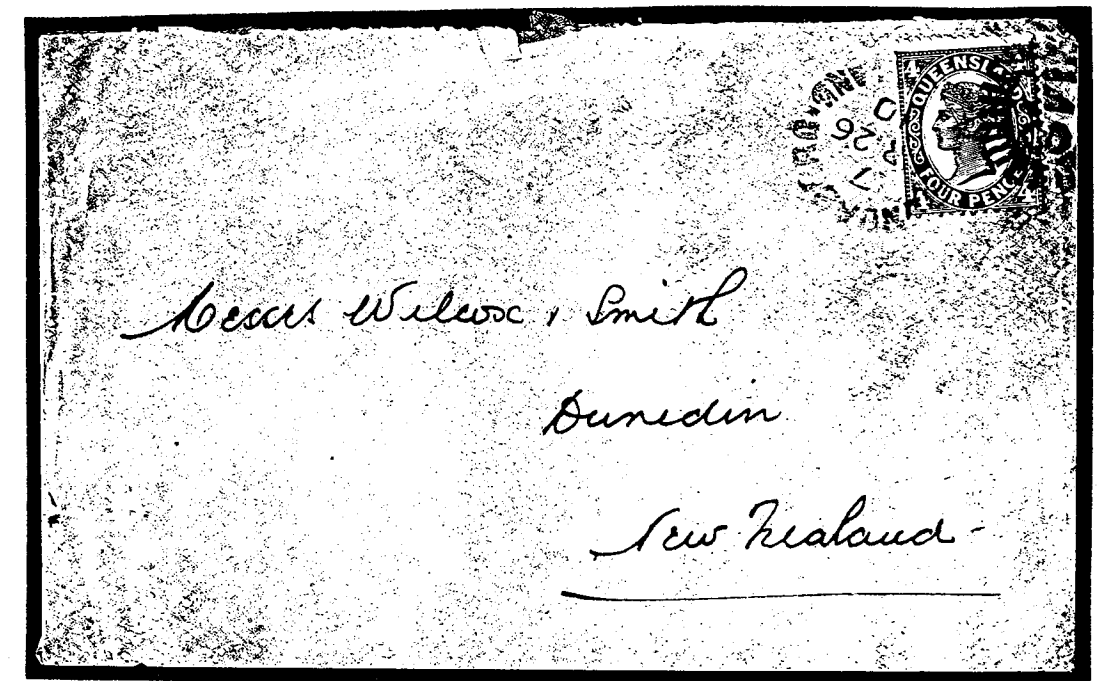
From 14 January 1892 the rates for parcels to the Australian Colonies and New Zealand were 8d for the first pound and 6d for each additional pound. In 1901 the rates for interstate parcels were 8d for 1lb, 1/2 for 2lbs, 1/8 for 3lbs, 2/2 for 4lbs and 6d for each additional pound.



1871 Intercolonial Shipletter rate



1873 Reduced rate, 2d per half ounce



Double rate letter to New Zealand

**Colonial and intercolonial newspapers**

Until 1892 Queensland newspapers could be posted free to places within Queensland and to neighbouring colonies provided they were posted within seven days after publication were charged 1d. In 1892 a charge of half-penny per newspaper was introduced. On 22 December 1896 this was changed to half-penny for newspapers under 10 ounces within Queensland and half-penny per 2 ounces for newspapers to the Australian Colonies, New Zealand, Fiji, British New Guinea and the New Hebrides. In 1901 newspapers cost half-penny per 10 ounces to post to places in Queensland, half-penny per 8 ounces within Australia. In 1902 the rate within Australia became

half-penny per ten ounces while in 1904 this rate was also applied to newspapers to New Zealand. From 1906 bulk newspapers within Australia were charged 1d for twenty ounces and to New Zealand 1d for sixteen ounces.

**Note:** the illustrations are from material loaned by B.P. Beston and E.C. Druce. The author gratefully acknowledges their assistance.

(to be continued)

## BOOK REVIEW

**The Production of ONE PENNY POST CARDS for Western Australia by Brian Pope & Phil Thomas.**

64 pages in soft cover. Issued 1988 as Monograph No. 4 by W.A.S.G., PO Box 423, Claremont WA 6010 at \$6 p.p.

The purpose of the book is made crystal clear on the very first page. It is all about which unbordered penny post card was issued for handpainting and the confident authors finish me off in the final Section 13: The Debate, where they have the audacity to state that there is no basis for further discussion. The rest of the book is just repetitious framework. If they had only paused to consider my latest contributions in **Sydney Views** they just might have hesitated and buyers would have saved their supporting donation.

The raging battle aims at solving whether the cards for handpainting were printed on the normal N-card remaining from the printing of PC 15 and cut in the c.125x95mm format (the authors' claim) or whether they were the surfaced S-cards in the UPU 140x90mm format (my claim).

They are certainly mistaken, but it may console them that I have been chasing the wrong surfaced card.

Following the decision to issue post cards suited for handpainting, i.e. white cards with a rough or matte surface, 5,100 cards were printed and recorded on 27 MY 09. They fit exactly with the fact - adeptly sidetracked by the authors - that three electros were taken from the strongroom 22 MY 09. They were forwarded to Perth in June and the cards of the exactly same quality were also forwarded to the other States. A year later, when little demand was reported, the PMG on 1 AP 11 notified DyPMGs that no further cards could be expected. On 20 NO 13 they were told to dispose of the cards. If these cards were not something very special and probably bundled in a special way, these steps would have been superfluous.

Of the colourful American Fleet cards 9,249 had been sold less than a year before. Only limited numbers have survived and it may safely be presumed that cards for handpainting printed in half that number have a far lower survival rate.

When I wrote **Postal Stationery from Western Australia** in 1984 I was fully aware that N-cards were more often seen than S-cards. This and the fact that they were special convinced me that S-cards were meant for handpainting.

However, after I had published my platings of N-cards and S-cards in **Philately from Australia** 1/87, it occurred to me that both kinds had turned out to be much more common than the American Fleet card and also the Melbourne Zinco card, and that they were not far from being as common as PC 10 and PC 15. With a printing of only 5,100 neither can be the card for handpainting. I was faced with having to find a third kind, which I call the H-card. But how to catch this rare bird?

In **Sydney Views** 15/87, the authors showed an S-card with scratches on the swan stating that it was proof that these cards were printed after N-cards. They also mentioned cards found on thicker printing stock. I was not convinced, but suggested in the next number that they investigate whether that meant the existence of a third kind of card, the characteristics of which had yet to be established. I virtually let my secret bird out of the cage, but to their peril they ignored the suggestion and kept their blinkers firmly on.

Instead, and breaking away from his partner, Pope in **Sydney Views** 17/87, defended his position by publishing certain 1909 documents proving conclusively that N-cards were printed before S-cards. However, that cannot turn the rather common N-card into the rare H-card.

The documents show, in my opinion, the considerably more important points, that white card means surfaced card and that stock rather similar to that used for S-cards was available for the May 1909 printing of cards for handpainting. Similar stock had been used for the American Fleet card and here it appeared that white stock should in future 'in place of the "buff" sealed pattern at present' be with 'one side rough or "matte" in the size fitting 32 times on the sheets in UPU format'. 130 reams were ordered and delivered with 68 reams on 24 JY 09 and 62 on 23 DE 09. Obviously, these sheets were not available in May, but at that time white (surfaced) cards had been printed on sheets presumably

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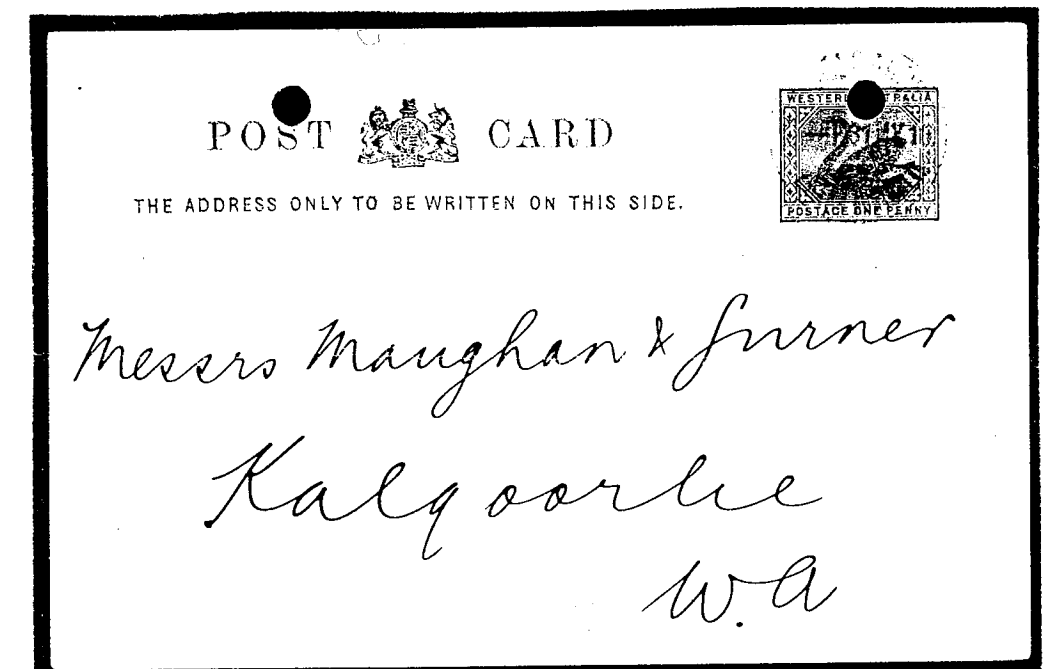
obtained from a commercial source. This is the H-card for handpainting as issued to all Australian States in very small quantities (less than two reams were needed).

Investigating dates of use I found that 1909 dates were absent in my material, though dates at least from July/August were to be expected.

On 6 OC 09 Cooke mentioned printing 32-on and Reserve Bank of Australia (RBA), on 20 NO 09, recorded 9,599 half sheets = 307,184 cards printed. That fits both with the numbers in which N-cards have survived to this day and with the earliest date of use 13 FE 10.

The small printing of 4,896 cards recorded on 30 JY 10 is an unsolved problem, but may be trials for printing on new stock recorded on 5 AU 10 with 5,530 sheets = 176,960 cards. Here too both quantity and date of issue, shortly before 17 DE 10, fit S-cards.

The numbers printed of these two cards compare well with the frequency with which N-cards and S-cards are met.



PC 17 One Penny blue suitable for handpainting

However, among my photostat material & classified as an S-card is a card I read as having been mailed on 1 MY10. Thanks to the owner, Bernard Caillard, I have inspected the original. It revealed postmarks reading Coolgardie 31 MY 10 andz Kalgoorlie 1 JU 10, dates proving that it cannot be an S-card from the 5 AU 10 entry in RBA.

This remarkable card is Unit S7 in my present plating showing the NY-flaw in the TEXT component. Additionally, the original revealed the flaw 'Dot east of the Crown's band in the ARMS component', a flaw sometimes visible since PC 10A. (Probably identical with the authors' 18:12).

Caillard and I agree that this card shows a better quality surfaced front and a lighter greyish or matte white back than on the S-cards used from later in the year. The card is rather thick and stiff. Under the UV-lamp the back is light buff. The blue of the stamp is also different being a shade between the two known in S-cards and slightly blotted.

We believe that this is the H-card, tentatively pending a final judgement when further copies have been located and inspected. As three electros were taken from the strongroom, there is also a plating problem to solve. None from my plating fits, but the authors, who claim to know additional units, even more than fit the plate for S-cards, may be able to identify the two missing units.

The authors state, p.7, that 'Study of shades has not produced any meaningful conclusions'. Such, and many more, statements they certainly make at their peril. A certain coloursense is useful, but in the past they failed with regard to half-penny post cards, 2d letter cards and 2d envelopes.

N-cards are known in (a)pale blue & (b)ultramarine. The latter is rare but does belong as it fits the plating.

With regard to S-cards the authors correctly mention thicker cards, but they overlook that the thickness follow the two colour-groups: (a)blue is on the thicker, rather stiff card, while the quite different (b)deep blue cards are thinner and pliable. Also the UV-lamp shows considerable differences as the back of (a)blue is dark lilac-brown, while (b)deep blue remains buff in shades. Two different kinds is not surprising as the sheets for S-cards came in two instalments.

In future, cataloguing will be

PC 17 = H-card

5,100 cards issued c. July 1909  
blue on surfaced, rather thick, stiff card  
with light greyish back  
(tentative description)

PC 18 = N-card

307,184 cards issued c. February 1910  
(a) pale blue  
(b) ultramarine  
on unsurfaced card as PC 15, c.125x95mm

PC 19 = S-card

176,960 cards issued c. November 1910  
(a) blue on surfaced, rather thick, stiff  
card with buff back  
(b) deep blue on surfaced, thin and pliable  
card with buff back

At present the UV-lamp is the best lead to identification: PC 17 light buff & PC 19 (a)dark lilac-brown.

There is much to discuss with regard to the platings, both camps have doubtful points, but now these are merely of academic interest only to those directly involved. I admire the wealth of illustrations in the book, but regret several important omissions and also the linguistic adroitness with which they circumvent the important question whether or not Cooke produced electros. Certainly, they are not able to present evidence in favour for inspection. Nor will they be able to do that with regard to the three cases they mention of repaired units.

Normally, the authors are meticulous with references. How come that in this case at least 6 entries have been left out, including articles by Bernard Caillard in **Sydney Views** 16/87, and Carl Steig in **Australia Colonials** Sept. 1984 and repeated in **Sydney Views** 17/87?

If only Cooke had kept the borders the authors might not have fallen overboard.

**Mogens Juhl**

with many thanks to Bernard Caillard.

**NEW SPECIMEN TYPE C OVERPRINTS DISCOVERED ON 3rd  
WATERMARK 10/-, 1 POUND AND 2 POUND  
KANGAROO AND MAP ISSUES 1927-28**

**Ray Chapman, MBE, RDP**

In 1928 the 3rd wmk 10/- Bi-colour type C specimen overprint replaced the 10/- type B grey and deep pink aniline in the sets of 42 current and obsolete postage stamps sold by the Australian Post Office for one pound from October 1927. Demand for these sets had been averaging about 50 a year throughout Australia. Type C on the 10/-, 1 pound grey and 2 pound purple black and rose were gradually introduced into the sets as stocks of earlier stamps became exhausted.

The exceptionally scarce 10/- 3rd wmk grey and pale pink or grey and pale pink aniline shades were overprinted with two types of specimen overprints which we will call C1 and C2. These types also exist on the 1 pound grey 3rd wmk and 2 pound purple black and rose. Any collector of Commonwealth specimens knows how difficult it is to find even one copy of a type C overprint on the 3rd wmk 10/-.

The type B overprint on the 1 pound grey has always been acknowledged as our rarest specimen overprint on the Kangaroo Map series. Only 6 have been recorded. My research over many years has shown the 10/- 3rd wmk C to be almost as scarce with two possible variations - only three of C1, five of C2. There must be more but where are they?

The C1 overprints on the 10/-, 1 pound and 2 pound are easily distinguished by a narrow S giving a clipped appearance and a different C with a thick up-stroke finish similar to a G.

The 10/- 3rd wmk was replaced in February 1929 by the small-multiple wmk paper with the C overprint. The 1 pound grey 3rd wmk type D was replaced with the overprint on the C of A wmk paper in 1935. The 2 pound purple black and rose type C was replaced in 1930-31 by the 2 pound small multiple wmk type D which in turn was replaced by the C of A issue of 1934.



The illustrations showing the two different type C overprints on the 10/-, 1 pound and 2 pound issues. C1 is the new discovery obviously replaced because of the faulty S.

These new varieties are being displayed at SYDPEX 88 for the first time.

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For the beginner, our monthly "Beginners Start Here" column is essential reading and our long-running "Cinderella Corner" with Bill Hornadge has broken new ground in Cinderella collecting.

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### SPECIALIST PHILATELIC SOCIETIES - INDIA STUDY CIRCLE FOR PHILATELY

**Paul Barsdell**

In 1949, Mr N.J. Mills, a stamp dealer of Eastbourne in Britain, formed the India Study Circle. He organised exchange packets and a newsletter, 'Notes and News'. After five issues of the newsletter, Mr Mills disappeared! The Study Circle was reformed by Mr R.A. Killick and in December 1951, 'News Sheet' No. 1 was issued. From this point, membership of the Study Circle grew rapidly. When Mr Killick resigned as the 'general factotum' in December 1954, 20 editions of the 'News Sheet' had been issued and membership had grown to 100. The study Circle's first formal meeting was held in February 1955 and its first President elected. The 'News Sheet' was renamed the 'News Bulletin'.

In January 1976, the 'News Bulletin' was remodelled to become 'India Post', a quarterly journal which is now in its 22nd volume. In December the same year, the Society changed its name to 'India Study Circle for Philately' because of some confusion in India as to the aims and interests of the Circle. The Study Circle now has more than 500 members world-wide.

The Circle's aim is to promote study and research into the philatelic and postal history of India. This is intended to cover Convention and Feudatory States of India and areas overseas which have been administered by the Indian Posts and Telegraphs Department'.

Within the Study Circle, 'India' is defined as the area covering the old Empire of India, which includes the modern Republics of Pakistan, Bangladesh and Burma. However, the scope of the Circle has been extended to cover Bhutan, Nepal and Sikkim and the former Danish, French and Portuguese possessions in India. The Circle's 'Members' Guide' goes on to say that externally, 'areas such as East Africa, Aden, Persian Gulf, Singapore etc. only fall within this scope whilst such areas were administered for postal purposes by the Indian Posts and Telegraphs Department, or subsequently supplied with overprint Indian stamps. In addition, the Circle covers Indian forces serving at home and abroad.

One should not forget the place of India in the development of sea and air postal links with the Far

East, Australia and the Pacific. All in all, the scope of the Circle is wide enough to attract members not just from among collectors of India and States, but from the many other diverse areas covered by its charter.

The quarterly journal **India Post** is the main means of communicating discoveries and the results of research to other collectors. It also acts as a medium for seeking help with those knotty problems that confront all of us. A quarterly newsletter, which is bound into the journal, keeps members informed of the Circle's activities and other items of news. Since 1970, the Circle has been publishing, on a piece-meal basis, the **Handbook of Indian Philately**. This is available only to members of the Circle. The Circle has also published the four volumes of **A Guide to the Postal Stationery of India** by Derek Lang. The first two volumes are now out of print. The Circle's publication **Convention States Postal Stationery** is also available.

The circle has an extensive library which all members has access. A catalogue of the collection is contained in the 'Members' Guide'. Although the exchange circuit is restricted to the United Kingdom, several auctions are held annually for which postal bids may be made from members overseas. Applications for membership should be made to Mr D. J Dawes, 166 Wivenhoe Road, Alresford, Colchester, Essex, CO7 8AQ, United Kingdom.



## BEER DUTY STAMPS - WHAT IS A BASTARD FIRKIN?

D.I. Smith

Beer duty stamps of the Australian States provide some spectacular examples of printing and design. As with many early Australian revenue stamps much research remains to be done. This account is one very small contribution to that end. Prior to federation, States were responsible for levying and collecting their own taxes, and it would appear that all States issued revenue labels to collect the duty on beer.

The first issue of beer revenue labels for South Australia appeared about 1890. There are three denominations, the bastard pin, the bastard firkin and the kilderkin. The bastard firkin label is illustrated. The value of duty at one shilling and sevenpence does not correspond to a simple division of the two shillings and ninepence charged for the 18 gallon kilderkin. 'Bastard firkin' does not appear in standard reference texts but assistance from the Australian Customs Service provided the following explanation.

The unit originated with the South Australian Brewery, or its forerunners, in Adelaide. Wooden kegs were made to hold a kilderkin and when these were damaged they were cut down and the wooden staves re-used to make smaller kegs. The vessels so made were however, a little larger than a true firkin (9 gallons) and were called 'bastard firkins'. The volume of these 'bastards' was close to 10 gallons. Hence the term 'bastard firkin' was adopted as an unusual volume for duty purposes. Interestingly, the Customs staff regard the bastard firkin as the forerunner of the modern 10 gallon keg. It is pleasant to think that the 10 gallon keg is not a mindless example of decimalization but an intriguing part of our national heritage.

However, this is not the end of the story. The smallest taxed unit for beer in South Australia was the 'bastard pin' at ninepence. A. Hamilton, in the Feb. 1913 edition of the **Bulletin of the Fiscal Philatelic Society** (p. 106), presumed that a 'bastard pin' is four gallons but appealed for more 'definite information'. This request appears to have gone unanswered for over seventy years. Any offers?

## POSTAL HISTORY COLUMN - FORGERIES AND FAKES

E.C. Druce

One of the worrying features of collecting classic stamps is the presence of forgeries. These 'album weeds' vary from masterpieces of the engravers' art to crude reproductions. The traditional philatelist needs to learn the techniques of detecting forgeries and thus have developed the philatelic skills of recognising printing methods, identifying watermarks, determining paper types and quantifying perforations. It is these techniques which separate the real from the phony. In recent times the traditional philatelist has a need to be able to detect regumming and to recognize colour changlings.

Postal History has not been bedevilled by forgeries and fakes to the extent of traditional philately. This perhaps is a function of both labour and the selling price. Until recently postal history items did not command the premium which applies to rare stamps and therefore the financial incentive was not there. Additionally the forger may have to forge not only the cover but also the postmarks and perhaps even the stamp. A lot of hard work with little information available to assist.

Before going on to describe some of the tools of a postal historians trade required to identify faked and forged covers, let me first draw your attention to the fact that sometimes covers are not forged or faked but merely misdescribed because of lack of information. More than a decade ago I was looking through a well-known dealers stock of pre-stamp covers of Great Britain. Suddenly I saw a very fine entire from a small town in my collecting area. It was described as having been sent in the early 1720's and would have pre-dated the previously earliest known marking by fifty years. It is at this moment that pulses begin to race and the warm feeling of euphoria rises. However there was some nagging doubt in my mind, while the entire contained a hard drawn plan of the town clearly dated in the 1720's, the town marking looked similar to one used in the 1780's and which was not the first to be used. A quick check of my own reference list of postmarks of that town (my own research) and a check of the postal rate showed conclusively that the entire was posted after 1784 and before 1790. The dealer listened, examined the cover,

agreed with me and altered the description. The moral of this story will, I assure you, become apparent later.

Now to turn to the detection of forged and faked covers. I use the term forgery to mean a cover which is totally fabricated whereas a fake is a cover which has been adulterated such that it purports to be something different even though the various elements may be genuine. A postal history item is composed, most often, of three elements; the cover (entire, post-card, wrapper), the stamp and the postal markings. Prior to the introduction of adhesive stamps the stamp on a cover was either handstruck or added in manuscript. In the detail that follows comments made in respect of the stamp and of the postal markings may apply to these stamps (or rate markings).

Given these three elements it is obvious that a fake maybe formed by any one element not being genuine - in some cases two out of the three may not be genuine. How then do we begin our task of determining genuineness. Perhaps the first step is 'Does it look right?' Tom Frommer showed me an aerophilatelic cover the other day which, if genuine, would be extremely rare. Everything about it appeared to be in order, the right sort of paper in the envelope, the right sort of address but what would have been the clincher, the backstamp was only partially there. The majority of it covered an area torn from the cover. Not conclusive but worrying. In this case it was a forgery. Like the excellent philatelist that he is Tom kept looking for a genuine cover, even though it was only rumoured to exist. Eventually he turned up one and the backstamp was genuine and totally different to the partial strike in the fake cover.

If the cover looks reasonable then begin a question and answer session. Is the stamp a forgery or not? If yes then the cover is probably a fake - double check that it is not a postal forgery. Take a look at Figure 1, a beautiful small cover with a delightful pair of penny Sydney Views. The cover is genuine, the postmarks on the reverse are genuine but two things are wrong. The numeral obliterator is the incorrect number for the post-town and, on closer examination, the stamps are forgeries. Note the star in the upper part of the circle and the fact that it is centred under the TA. The only key to

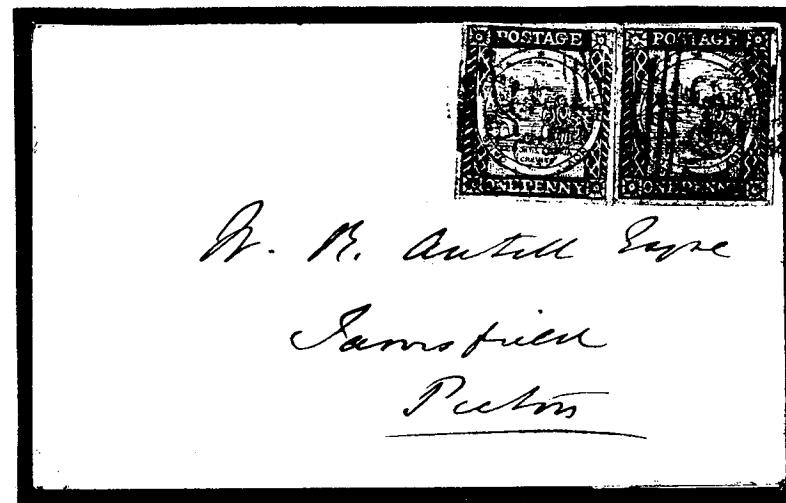


Figure 1

detecting the superbly engraved Jeffry's forgery. The genuine stamp has the star directly under the T.

If the stamp is genuine then is it the right rate? The wrong rate may not necessarily indicate a forgery but beware! Lets look at Figures 2 and 3. These will help us learn some of the techniques of the postal historian. Figure 2 illustrates a cover from Albury to the United Kingdom. The cover emanated from Albury alright, the postmarks are genuine and the numeral obliterator on the stamp, '50', is correct. The stamp itself is an eightpenny Laureate, a relatively rare stamp and even scarcer on cover. But what rate was this eightpenny stamp prepaying? The basic rate to the United Kingdom was twopence Inland rate and threepence Shipletter - a total of fivepence. If it had been a 'double' letter, over half an ounce, then the charge would have been tenpence, and there's no evidence of postage due. Could it have been a registered letter? There are no registered markings therefore it's unlikely and the franking is an additional fivepence anyway rather than sixpence. Perhaps a Late Fee was charged? But that was sixpence anyway. The only remaining possibility was that it was charged the quadruple inland rate and the shipletter charge was not prepaid. Since there are no due markings covering this possibility we have to dismiss it. The postage due in the United Kingdom was eightpence, the black eight, and this was standard charge for a letter prepaid in full in Australia.

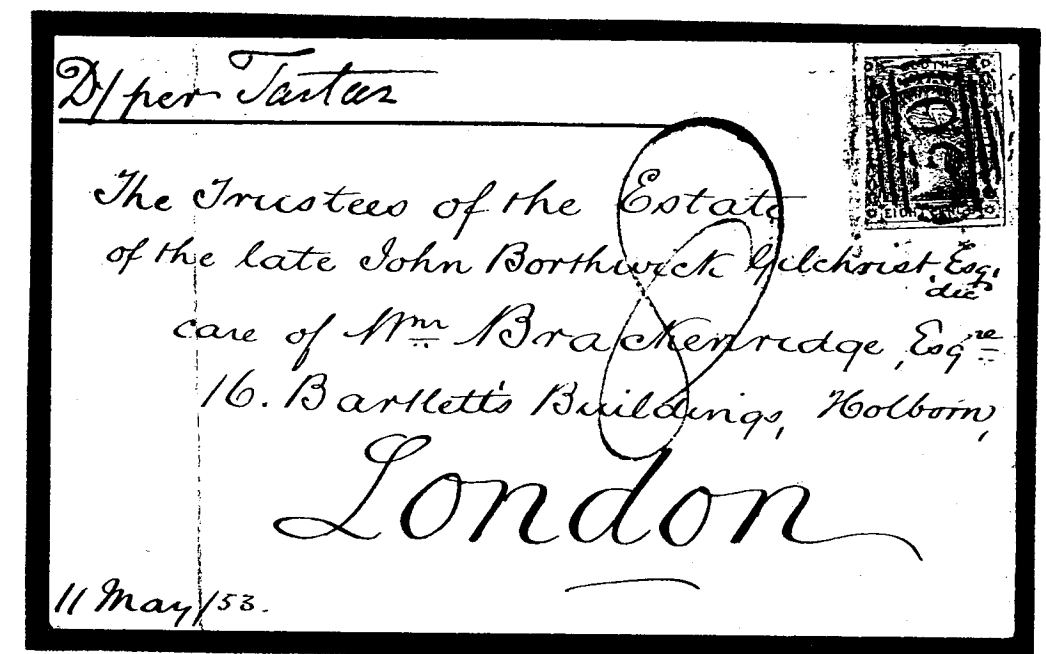


Figure 2

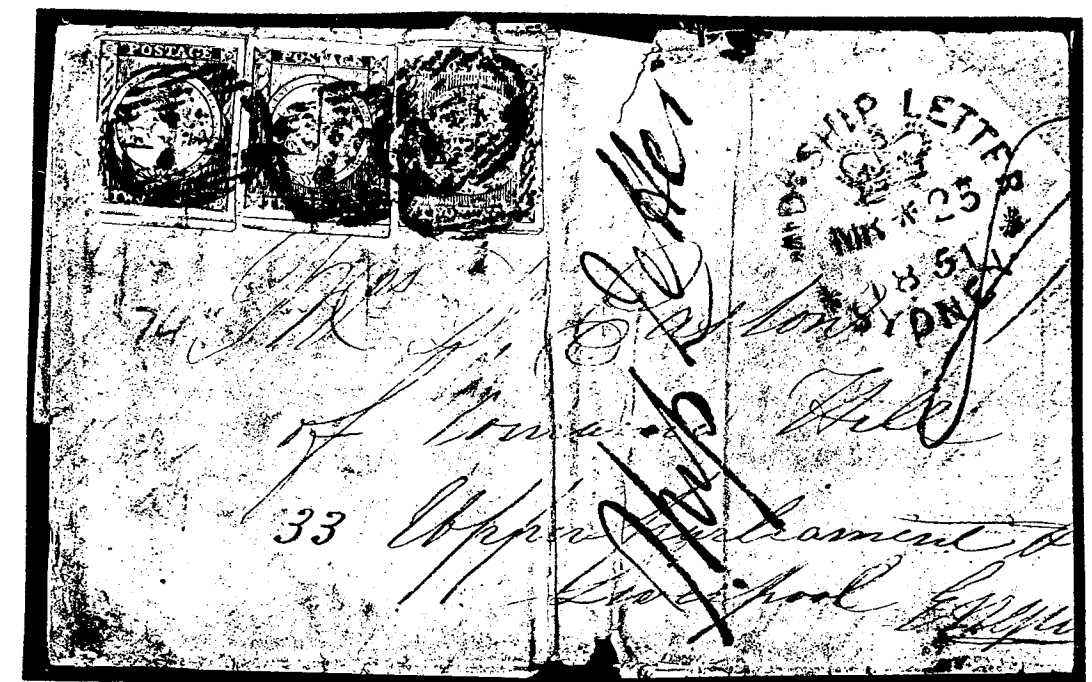


Figure 3

Thus we are left with the probability that although everything is genuine in itself the stamp and the cover don't belong; indeed they are not tied. Somebody has come across a cover and a separate stamp and married them at a later date. Caveat emptor.

However, an incorrect rate may not always indicate a fake. Take the cover in Figure 3, posted in Callandoon, now Goondiwindi, and bearing a strip of three twopenny Sydney Views. Cover genuine, stamps genuine, and postal markings genuine. In addition everything about it looks right, not least its tatty-ness! Overall one has to conclude that in this case the sender overpaid the letter by one penny probably using the only stamps available.

Alternatively there is always the haunting possibility that the rate was correct and that this is the only evidence of a charge for an unknown service! In postal history it's worth keeping an open mind.

The final series of questions you may need to ask include 'Are the markings genuine?' and 'Is the cover genuine?' To take the latter question first some rules of thumb are useful. Envelopes didn't come into common use until 1840 in Great Britain and 1850 in Australia, a consequence of uniform postage. Early paper is usually laid and commonly watermarked. Quill pens, thick down stroke, thin upstroke preceded fountain pens and biro's!

Finally markings. These are often forged but usually the forger fails to reproduce the marking accurately, uses the wrong ink and applies the marking out of chronological context; on a stamp not yet issued or long after usage of the genuine marking had ceased!

These then are some hints to help you sort the sheep from the goats. In the end it's how much you know, and the need to cross check various details. Those tricks of the trade described earlier which I used to avoid purchasing a misdescribed item are the same tricks of the trade which you need to employ. In the end it's knowledge of rates, of routes, of markings and of postal practice which you need to acquire. Usually I comment that these skills enable you to spot a bargain. This month the claim is that they will save you buying a pig in a poke.