



PHILATELI-GRAPHICS

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New South Wales Charity Stamps of 1897

Malcolm Givens

These two often neglected stamps (Fig.1) achieve being a world's first for two reasons. They are the first "charity stamps" ever issued and, to the best of my knowledge, the first multicolor chromolithograph-printed stamps. They are superb examples of Victorian gothic revival illustration and design.



Fig.1. New South Wales Charity Stamps, 1897. The first charity stamps ever issued were surcharged and both marked the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria and raised money for a new home for tuberculosis sufferers.

The British colony of New South Wales issued these "charity" surcharged stamps to mark the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria and to raise money for the new home for tuberculosis sufferers being organized by Lady Hamden, the wife of the Colony's governor.

A competition for the design was advertised in the newspapers. The winner was to receive £10-10-0d (10 pounds, 10 shillings, no pence) and the runner up £3-3-0d. Mr. Charles Turner of Sydney won the prize. The design had to feature a reference to the Queen, the Consumptives Home, and the Diamond Jubilee together with the value for postage purposes as well as the surcharge for charity. The stamp at left in Fig.1 was worth one penny for postage and sold for one shilling, as indicated in the lower corners. A shilling equaled 12 pence. The right stamp has a similar ratio.

The government accepted the proposed designs on 25 May 1897. Because of the complexity of the design and the colors that were involved, the New South Wales

Government Printing Office, under George Sands, decided to use his newly acquired lithographic equipment for the production. That equipment had been bought for map printing but at the time hardly tested by him. The result vindicates his decision.

The idea of the surcharge for the charity was controversial. The public were expected to pay 1100% above their franking value. Purchases by stamp collectors were undoubtedly part of the thinking. Advice would have been available on that subject from Sir Daniel Cooper. He was a former New South Wales politician and a noted philatelist at the time.

Stamps were put on sale in June 1897 *cont. on pg 27*

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I am pleased to announce that Joe Sullivan has agreed to fill our empty director's position. Besides two stints as editor for a total of 16 years, Joe has been our most successful recruiter, a fund-raiser, a link to the APS, and a valuable contributor in many areas. The GPA will benefit greatly by his continued participation.

The First-Ever GPA Giveaway

I have seven of the computer-vended labels shown in my article below (only the label, not the maximum card). I will give them away to GPA members at no cost. If you would like one, please send me a request by email or postal mail no later than August 15. If I receive more than seven requests, I will choose the recipients at random.

Computer Labels for Your Collection

Larry Rosenblum

Not long ago I came across a printing-related maximum card with a computer-vended postage label instead of a postage stamp (Fig.1).



Fig.1. France has been issuing pictorial labels for over 20 years.

or PayPal. The web site is <https://www.galeriaatm.com/en>.



Fig.2. Engraving of hand press by Pierre Gandon.

Please see the "President's Message" for an opportunity to get one of these labels.

cont. from pg 25

but with an unusual restriction. They were only to be available for postal use for two months.

That was an unheard of decision at that time, anywhere in Great Britain, or its colonies. Possibly the decision was another "world first."

The quantities produced were small. The one penny was limited to 40,000 and only 10,000 of the two-pence halfpenny. Despite selling at twelve times their postal value they were quickly sold out. Australian stamp collectors were soon paying double the issued price for the stamps.

Abroad there was little interest. The British journal *Stanley Gibbons Monthly Journal* of October 1897 was scathing in comparing them to the British non-postal "labels" produced to support the Prince of Wales' Hospital Fund. The editor said:

"... The honest example of the Prince of Wales' Hospital Fund Stamps was not good enough for their Australian imitators, who wanted something that would appeal more directly to the cupidity of the philatelic speculator. Hence the queer labels, with a Penny Postal and Shilling Speculative value, in designs resembling those employed for advertising exhibitions on the Continent, which we hope and believe will not find a place in the leading Catalogues and Albums."

Stanley Gibbons did not list the stamps in their catalogues until 1926, and even then did not illustrate them. They are today catalogued by both *Gibbons* (SG280, 281) and *Scott* (Semi-postal B1,2). Interestingly, *Scott* still says that the stamps were Typo (letterpress) printed. Until about 1974 *Gibbons* made the same mistake. The two catalogues also show different perforation gauges.

The stamps (size 50mm x 42mm) were printed 30 per sheet. The paper used was watermarked with a crown over the letters NSW. That paper that had not been in use since 1885, suggesting that it was an oddment of stock, given the small quantity printed. As a result the watermark falls irregularly on the stamps. Fuller details of the government correspondence listing and quoting the surviving documents etc., can be found in *The Australian Philatelist*, Sep/Oct 1987 (R. Peck); the *New South Wales Philatelist*, October 1979 (N.J.Sheppard); and *The London Philatelist*, 1897.