

Cinderella Corner

Welcome to the first Cinderella Corner issue for 2017. Towards the end of last year, cinderella items continued to fetch well-above *generous* estimate prices at philatelic auctions towards, indicative the this area of philately is alive and well. The number of collectors interested in cinderellas from Australia and around the world have also increased, raising the profile of the importance of such material. This year will surely see *new* welcomed discoveries un-

earthed regarding cinderella labels from around the world and remind readers of their numbers and the soaring varieties that exist amongst them.

In this issue, I revisit one earlier explored cinderella from the September 2016 Cinderella Corner following some welcomed feedback from Tony Presgrave. Other labels are also discussed in this edition, including some fairly recently acquired ones bearing the colourful title: *Van Demon's Land*.

Van Demon's Land

There are a number of elusive cinderella labels that herald from the Australian colonial-era. From the 1840s Hobart Wilkinson chemist label, revered as the earliest example of a non-postal Australian label, to the 1899-1900 Australian Imperial Contingent Boer War poster stamp, these items help build breadth to the types of labels, and their uses, that existed throughout some of Australia's early States. One such item with a fairly longstanding curiosity are the *Van Demon's Land* labels presented in this article. The location *Van Diemen's Land*, to which the cinderella's colourful name of *Van Demon's Land* is drawn, was changed to the Australian state of Tasmania in 1856. Its original title was coined by explorer Abel Tasman in honour of Dutch colonial governor Anthony van Diemen. The items (as a block of 6) illustrated in Figure 1 first appeared only a few years after this change of name, sometime between 1865 and 1867, as reported in a 1938 newspaper article from Hobart's *Voice*. They are, as such, around 150 years of age and one of the earliest of the Australian cinderellas. The written account notes that the image is of *satanic majesty* (as identifiable in Figure 1). It also notes two varieties of the label: black on bright red and black



Figure 1

Vito Milana



Figure 1

on yellow. The former colour scheme is colourfully (and appropriately) known as *Devil's Mourning*. The block in Figure 1 illustrates examples of the latter colour scheme, and appears to offer a complete sheet (2 by 3) with an overall measurement of 81mm x 132mm. Each individual imperforate label, when separated, measures approximately 38mm x 40mm and bears the following text: VAN DEMON'S LAND – 5 SOULS. The central image of a demon, with mouth agape, is further adorned with a skull and crossbones in the top right hand corner of each label.

An earlier article from the late 1866 French philatelic magazine *Le Timbres Post* suggests that the labels were created by a Frenchman or Belgium living in Australia. The piece further purports that the fictional currency of 5 souls aligned to 5 French halfpennies, lending further weight to the possibility of a French connection. It is not known, however, if the labels were sold or offered free of charge.

Another article, dated a year later in April 1867, mentions that the cinderellas were possibly affixed to unpopular Government bills and, as such, the use of these labels and the motivation for their pro-

duction was likely to be political. Such a satirical undercurrent at the time of geographical change in Australia was certainly charming!

Figure 2 offers one of the yellow and black labels affixed to the front of a Hobart addressed cover



Figure 3

Cinderella Corner



Figure 4

dating 29th December 1894. While the label is not tied, it does suggest that this important Colonial-era cinderella was used on a cover more than 30 years after it was first produced. It also highlights the size of the label, as it trumps the size of the one penny Tasmania stamp cancelled to its left.

A modern copy of the red and black label often surfaces, with one example illustrated in Figure 3. This label, with an uncertain date of release, is



Figure 5

much smaller than the original labels, measuring 22mm x 24mm. The features of the demon are also slightly different, including:

- The absence of extended fingernails on the demon's hand
- The absence of the demon's tongue as the mouth appears to be closed.

The copy is also notably glossier than the original cinderellas and is printed on slightly thicker pa-



Figure 6

Vito Milana



Figure 7

per. That aside, there is no indication on its reverse that it is a copy and it uncertain when these were printed.

The Van Demon's Land cinderellas offer a glimpse into the early world of Australian labels. They are humorous and rare and further information is needed on them, both the originals and reproductions, to help build greater breadth to their creation and purpose.

Seventh Australasian Philatelic Exhibition

In the September 2016 issue of Cinderella Corner, I illustrated an example of a cinderella celebrating the 1936 Seventh Australasian Philatelic Exhibition alongside a near identical label from New York. The former is rather common and can often be cited tied to South Australian covers. Both are re-illustrated here, respectively, as Figures 4 and 5. Since listed last year, Tony Presgrave has offered some welcomed additions to these labels and their co-alignment and association. He mentioned that the President of the Philatelic Society of South Australia, Mr. Reuben Sharples, visited the New York exhibition and from the information in the Society's minute book of the time, it indicated that he brought the New York label back to South Australia and reproduced it with slight alterations for the South Australia exhibition. Historical documents therefore confirm that the New York label was created first and the Australian counterpart then followed.

The Philatelic Society of South Australia was also the only society in the state at the time and its members were the main driving force behind the

exhibition.

Melbourne Toy Fair

The Melbourne Exhibition Buildings, completed in 1880, have hosted, and continue to host, countless events and fairs over a period spanning more than a century. For several decades, one event that has featured in various forms is the Toy Fair. In March of this year, it will be called the Toy Hobby and Licensing Fair and is a 'leap forward' in terms of technological advancements to what the fair offered in the 1950s and 1960s.

There are three known poster stamps that were produced to help promote the Toy Fair in the 1950s and 1960s. These were available more than a month before the opening of the event and were distributed to Victorian organisations that were associated with toy products so that they could be affixed to letters and other written correspondences as a means to help promote the Toy Fairs. For example, Figure 6 presents the 1959 Toy Fair label affixed to the top left corner of a Kid-dicraft cover postmarked 10th April 1959. Kiddi-craft, founded in 1932, pioneered the use of plastics in manufacturing toys. Similarly designed labels are illustrated for the years 1958 and 1960 with Figures 7 and 8, respectively. They each feature a golli-wog with arms outstretched as well as The Royal Exhibition Building. The dates of the fair are also printed at the base. Reports of the events from the 1950s suggest that the fairs were well attended by both children and adults. Given that the Toy Fair, or derivatives to the event's name, existed over many years, it is likely that other cinderella labels exist for



Figure 8