

Cinderella Corner

Welcome readers to the May edition of *Cinderella Corner* for 2021. This article explores four different, and uncommon, Sydney Harbour Bridge commemorative cinderellas. It then considers an early 20th century chemist label. Finally, some discussion on a well-known Australia WWII-era Red Cross cinderella is explored. As usual, any feedback and further information about the items illustrated in this article is greatly appreciated.

Sydney Harbour Bridge: 85th Anniversary

Since its opening 85 years ago in 1932, the iconic Sydney Harbour Bridge has provided many philatelic and wider ephemera enthusiasts with a wealth of collecting, albeit occasionally expensive, opportunities. From the famed green 5/- postage stamp to illustrated telegrams and souvenir postcards issued on the day of its inaugural ceremony, the bridge has certainly been (and continues to be) a source of much historical and contemporary fascination and importance.

In the world of cinderellas, perhaps the most elusive of the labels issued in the early period of the Sydney Harbour Bridge's construction are the four foil ones most likely all produced in 1932. These items are rather scarce and are often found affixed to the front of various covers (some with box SYDNEY HARBOUR BRIDGE postmarks). As illustrated



Figures 1 & 2

collectively in Figures 1, they were issued in four distinct colour schemes: gold, black and gold, dark blue and gold, and green and gold, respectively. They are wafer thin and delicate, and, given their foil consistency, are often found in different stages of *poor health*. With an elongated octagon shape measuring 55mm in length and 28mm in height, they each present the text 1923 – 1932 SYDNEY HARBOUR BRIDGE. A small plane also features above the centre part of the completed bridge. The 1923 signifies when the construction stage of the bridge

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Figures 3 & 4

commenced, officially documented 97 years ago, on 28 July 1923; the 1932 represents the year it was officially opened, nearly 9 years later, on 19 March 1932.

These four foil cinderella labels are, perhaps, the earliest of those few different ones issued to commemorate the construction and/or opening of the Sydney Harbour Bridge. They certainly predate by a few years the famed Western and Southern Provincial Airlines LTD (WASP) labels issued in minishets, which were offered free of charge and found affixed on envelopes carried on flights by the company

(1935 onwards). However, unlike the WASP labels, which are documented in Frommer's *Australian Air Mail Labels and Vignettes* and mentioned in Bill Hornadge's *Cinderella Stamps of Australasia: An Illustrated and Priced Catalogue of Locals, Phantoms, Labels, Unauthorised Issues and Related Items of Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific Islands*, these labels do not bear a mention in either catalogue nor, it appears, any others. The release schedule for these elusive labels is therefore somewhat of a mystery. One theory has emerged that they were released on different days, yet this seems unlikely. At least two of the different labels have featured on covers postmarked the same date. Figure 2 illustrates the dark blue and gold one, postmarked 14 March 1932, and the gold label, affixed to the cover illustrated in Figure 3, also bears the same postmarked date. Of the latter, another similar cover signed by Kingsford Smith amongst others was also post-

marked 14 March 1932.

Given that these dates predate the official opening of the bridge by one week, it is likely that their production and release was to prepare (and promote) forthcoming celebrations associated with the opening of the Sydney Harbour Bridge and to recognise the nearly decade long construction of it. I have yet to cite examples of the other two labels (black and gold; green and gold) with a postmarked date of 14 March (earliest and most commonly cited) to 19 March

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(opening of the bridge), yet the green and gold label has appeared on a cover dated 21 March and, as evident in Figure 4, the black and gold one has been used on a cover dating 1941, along with a Lady Gowrie Red Cross cinderella! This final example is thankfully tied, towards the top, which suggests that the owner either kept the label for nearly a decade after its release and then applied it decoratively to the cover, or that the black and gold cinderella was issued some time after the other three.

The Sydney Harbour Bridge has provided some significant pre-decimal and decimal avenues for cinderella collectors. I welcome some further insight into these foil-issued labels and when and how they were released.

Francis Longmore Chemist Label

The 'guarantee stamp' illustrated in Figure 5 is a wonderfully rare item and one of only a handful of pre-WWI Australian chemist advert labels, from the turn of the 20th Century, that have been discovered. Across the label bears the handwritten initials 'JBR' and the year '1902'. Both are likely the maker's marks and the label itself would have been affixed to a product sold by the chemist.

This small orange and cream label measures 20mm x 27mm, is perforated 10 on all four sides, and bears the following text: *FRANCIS LONGMORE – CHEMIST & c – MELBOURNE. – GUARANTEE STAMP*. The owner of store, Francis Longmore, was a chemist operating at 185 – 187 Bourke



Figure 5

Street, Melbourne. He was a New South Wales native who settled in Melbourne in the late 1800s. The image, while difficult to accurately define, pres-



Figure 6



Figure 7

ents a bearded man with a digging tool slung over his shoulder: he stands in a wide-open field with an enormous rising (or setting) sun.

'Support... The Lady Gowrie Red Cross Appeal For £250,000' – Unlisted Discoveries

More than a century after its formation in Australia, the Red Cross continues to remind us of the generosity and unwavering compassion of many ordinary Australians who, since 1914, helped positively shape the lives of many vulnerable individuals.

One of the more popular collecting topics for the budding cinderella enthusiast is the Australian Red Cross labels and envelope cutouts, many which are documented in a section of Mosbaugh's original 1984 catalogue. This document, while brief across its 3 pages, offers black and white images and brief descriptions for over 120 different Australian labels. The most common of these is undoubtedly the 1941 issued 'Nurse and Red Cross on Map', a blue, white and red rectangular item that regularly graces internet searches. Aside from this, another cinderella that ever so often enters the philatelic market is the smaller 'Support... The Lady Gowrie Red Cross Appeal for £250,000' one. This label, coloured red, white and black, illustrates a prominent red cross next to a nurse crouching in the corner. Lady Gowrie, whose title appears on this and a few other Red Cross labels, was Zara Eileen Hore-Ruthven (20 January 1879 – 19 July 1965), Countess of Gowrie. She was president of the South Australian branch of the Australian Red Cross Society and also worked

closely with the Victorian League.

In Mosbaugh's catalogue, the label is listed as number 9, with the dimensions 25 ½mm x 29mm, and the stamp rouletted 7. No further information is provided regarding the sheet size or the organisation of these labels. A scarce complete booklet pane of the label is illustrated in Figure 6 (as pictured). This 2 by 5 pane is rouletted 7 and presents a variety in the third label of the second row: a clear white dot and an additional sequence of four white dots.

Another pane from a complete booklet containing 100 of these labels (across 10 sheets) adorned within a rather unattractive plain front and rear cover of light brown colour, is illustrated in Figure 7. Interestingly, these labels were perforated 14½ (unlisted in Mosbaugh) and the same variety of extra white dots, again on the third label of the second row, was identified on every pane. These sheets appear to have been perforated in groups of five, with the first five panes, and then the second five panes, aligning perfectly, but not as a complete booklet. The perforated variety of this label is much scarcer than the rouletted one.

Complete booklets of any World War II-era (or earlier) Australian cinderellas (where they existed) are extremely rare as hardly any survived these eras. These discoveries of the 'Support... The Lady Gowrie Red Cross Appeal for £250,000' informs that even in the more assumedly common cinderellas, a wealth of undiscovered and unlisted information can exist.