

# Cinderella Corner

## Novelty Printing And Fameface (Part One)

Welcome to the October issue of Cinderella Corner. One of the defining hallmarks of 'modern' Australian cinderellas are the searches collectors engage in for quality and interest. The task can demand some time, especially in a national and increasingly global philatelic market saturated by poor copies, fakes, and crudely produced stickers and labels with Australian motifs. If you are interested in broadening your collections beyond the pre-decimal era, I suggest you invest some time and energy into searching for items from the short-lived Novelty Printing's FAMEFACE cinderellas. This article explores these colourful, often humorous and always high quality labels that first met the Australian market more than 23 years ago. This piece is the first of two articles devoted to exploring these labels; the second will appear in December's issue, a fitting end to the 2017 year. Both aim to build upon a few previous Cinderella Corner issues that have explored FAMEFACE cinderellas. These mainly featured in 1997 and 1998, including a small piece by Bill Hornadge in July 1997 that discussed and welcomed a pair of different Newcastle Centenary labels produced by FAMEFACE.

## History Of Novelty Printing And Fameface

I first contacted Mr. Dieter Blasche, one of the founders of Novelty Printing, earlier this year. Following a few bouts of conversation via phone and



Figure 1

email, Dieter kindly sent me a wealth of information about his former company and its philatelic enterprising. This has been condensed and is now offered as a snapshot of the company from its origins in 1993 until its close in 2000.

In 1993, Dieter Blasche, his wife Anna, and close friends and former business partners Kym and Sue Briggs (all from South Australia), were made aware of *Letterface*, a Sweden-based product that produced and printed personalised labels and stickers. They became interested in their services and, after contacting the company, followed by some consideration, decided to begin their own printing of such labels, as *Letterface* insisted on printing abroad and were decidedly costly. Equipped with a collective expertise in the field of IT and an energy and interest in philately, Dieter, Anna, Kym and Sue received a small business grant from the Australian government and registered the familiar *Novelty Printing* on 18 January, 1994. A few months later, Dieter and his partners lodged trademark for the word FAMEFACE and the famed bowtie image that features on each printed sheet. Figure 1 illustrates this image, affixed as a label sent to customers who purchased their products. Thanks to Mr. Noel Almeida for carefully removing this label from a correspondence package he kept from Novelty Printing for close to 20 years. The slogan following the word FAMEFACE, as presented on their brochures, was: *Not only for Famous people.*

The initial equipment and technology costs reached near \$150,000, with Kym and Dieter responsible for the processes of printing a sheet of labels, from a scanned photo, with a total time of under 5 minutes. Their respective wives, Sue Briggs and Annegret Blasche, fronted the business. When required, Dieter was also responsible for producing much of the artwork.

Novelty Printing, along with their trademark FAMEFACE logo, was advertised, initially, at Philatelic Exhibitions and craft fairs. Anna then increased exposure of the business through some television appearances. Then, in October 1994, a business consultant for the company brought them together with Australia Post. A joint business venture was drafted and Novelty Stamps brochures were distributed across Australia Post branches and Offices. At one point, a few years

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Figure 2

later towards 1997, Australia Post visited the business in South Australia to inspect the printing process. Then, the following year in January 1998, with no official deal having been signed between Australia Post and Novelty Printing, a call was received from Australia Post informing Novelty Printing that they were no longer interested in pursuing the business venture, citing that the offered product did not fit with their core product.

Several months later, in March 1999, Australia Post released their own personalised product; the P-

stamp. Novelty stamps sought legal advice and were informed that an unaffordable sum close to \$150,000 would be needed to address the matter in court. After a few publicised appearances on the matter, including Novelty Printing's story appearing on Today Tonight with Frank Pangallo in Adelaide, and a Talk Back Radio segment with Darren Hinch and David Maiden, the company was forced to close in 2000, ending a 6-year stint in the modern Australian cinderella market.

## Early Sample Sheets

Figure 2 is a scarce item in the Novelty Printing range. It is an imperforate sheet of labels from 1994 that measures 210mm by 296mm and bears the header: *Samples only – THESE ARE NOT POSTAGE STAMPS – Novelty Printing.*

Like all sheets that were subsequently produced, the top far right corner of the sheet bears the FAMEFACE logo along with the company's then postal address and telephone number:

*PO Box 467 Williamstown  
SA 5351 Phone / Fax: 085 –  
246859.*

The sheet features the typical 6 x 6 arrangement, with

each top left hand corner of labels identified with 'FameFace' text.

A second Sample Sheet, also issued in 1994, presents an example of a complete sheet of the 'Cheeky Babe!' label from the Sample Sheet illustrated in Figure 1 (Row 3, Column 1). Each label measures 28mm by 42mm and is perforated 13 ½ by 12 ½. This sheet, illustrated in Figure 3, is also a rare survivor of the early printing processes of Novelty Stamps.

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## Bill Hornadge And Fameface

Over the years in business, Novelty Printing received a lot of orders from collectors, dealers and other members of public. One more famed individual in philatelic circles who ordered many different labels and sheets was Cinderella Corner creator (and Stamp News Australasia founder) Mr. Bill Hornadge of Dubbo, NSW. For the general public, sheets were usually created from a photo, with a caption as per customer's request. Orders from Bill, however, most of the time required some artwork as per his specifications. These often resulted in colourful and humorous labels that were both a testament to Bill's character and his affiliation and commitment with cinderellas and philately, as well as his unwavering association with his hometown of Dubbo.

Figure 4 and 5 highlight two of these Hornadge requested labels (both illustrated as strips of three), both with the same image but different colour schemes. They were produced to advertise Bill's cinderella catalogues and sales and bear the text: *Cinderella Stamps – REVIEW PUBLICATIONS PTY. LTD.* Review Publications was Bill's



Figure 3

own company where he produced several texts on philately, including a few catalogues dealing with local post stamps of Australia.

Figure 6 heralds some of the cartoon artwork that adorned many of 'Bill Hornadge's labels.' Here, there

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are 12 different images from the sheet, under the heading **Dubbo Cartoons** (all the different FAMEFACE sheets that were produced presented such headings to identify what the labels represented). Each label offers a different Dubbo vignette with a unique capture, such as the colloquially written:

*Tourists in Dubbo? Yairs, well I guess it 'ud be orright, but you wooden want one to marry your sister, woodya?*

And another with the delightful:

*I keep having this terrible dream that Dubbo may not be the exact centre of the Universe.*

The December Cinderella Corner issue will continue the narrative on Novelty Printing and FAMEFACE, firstly by furthering the scope of Bill Hornadge labels. I welcome readers to offer any further information (and, of course, scans) about the many labels that they produced.



Top: Figure 4. Above: Figure 5.

Below: Figure 6

## Dubbo Cartoons

## Novelty Printing

