

Revenue Review

SA Rail Proofs

Figure 1 shows a pair of black proofs taken from a complete sheet. The pair both show considerable damage. These proofs appear to have been pulled late in the print run and possibly are the very last pull of the sheets prior to the destruction of the litho stones. They came to light recently by a collector in South Australia other sheets show GR in the corners.

Fascinating to see one complete sheet of ½d value [24, 2 panes of 12 4x3] which has a horizontal gutter [fig 2] top half, with the original VR in the corners, and in the lower pane showing the hand altered GR. My guess is that when the ½d GR was issued the need for this value was not that great [proven by just a few surviving copies] with the printer masking off the top half of the stone to print dinky sheets of just 12. Excellent find for plating the hand altered GR issue. Figure 2 shows the vertical pair slightly out of alignment, which is also demonstrated in the 1885 VR proof sheet known in private hands.

What Wikipedia Says About Telegraph Stamps

“The majority of telegrams were paid for using normal postage stamps. These can often be identified by their distinctive telegraphic cancels. Some countries issued specific telegraph stamps. Private companies also issued stamps in countries where the telegraph network was in private hands. Great Britain is a typical example of the development of telegraph stamps, with private companies such as The Electric Telegraph Company, incorporated in 1846, issuing stamps before nationalisation in 1870. Post Office Telegraph stamps were issued in 1876 but were withdrawn in 1881 after which ordinary postage stamps were used.

The Royal Philatelic Collection of Queen Elizabeth II has many telegraph stamps as George V was an enthusiastic collector. It includes examples of British and Commonwealth stamps as well as private companies such as Bonelli's Electric Telegram Company, the Electric Telegraph Company and the British and Irish



Fig. 1



Fig. 2

Dave Elsmore

Magnetic Telegraph Company.

Telegraph stamps are not listed in general stamp catalogues, although they are collected by specialists. They are regarded by philatelists as a form of 'back of the book' or 'cinderella stamps'. Occasionally postage stamps ran out and telegraph stamps were used for letter postage as an emergency measure, for example in Spain in 1879, and these are accepted by philatelists as collectable postage stamps.

One sideline to the story of telegraph stamps is the *Stock Exchange Forgery of 1872* which was discovered in 1898 by Charles Nissen when examining used stamps from telegraph forms. The stamps were found to be forged due to the absence of a watermark and because they had impossible corner lettering. It is believed that a clerk in the Stock Exchange Post Office, London had been using forged one shilling green stamps on the forms instead of genuine stamps and keeping the fees. The culprit was never identified, but examples of the forgery are now sold for many times the price of the genuine stamps."

Believe it or not some stationery collectors appear

to think telegrams [and Postal notes – but that's another story] belong in a stationery collection. They are clearly a revenue where money was collected to pay a fee for a service with a telegram traveling inside an envelope, they clearly have nothing to do with stationery. FIP appear to have 'dumped' telegraph stamps into the Stationery class prior to the Revenue exhibition class being formed. Time they were put into their correct class! Figure 4 shows a very nice 8/- New South Wales Electric Telegraph issue of 1872. Used copies of this issue are particularly rare with figure 4 being the only 8/- I have recorded used. Most of the New South Wales telegraph revenues that have survived from this series are specimen overprints that were placed in presentation packs for collectors. Revenue collectors are happy for the stationery boys to have Telegram envelopes placed in stationery.

Queensland Cancellation Intrigue

In the last Prestige stamp auction figures 4 and 5 [courtesy of their web site] were sold for \$5,750.00 plus buyers. Lot 448 in sale 156 [fig 4] had new certificates



Fig. 3



Fig. 4

Revenue Review

from AIEP member Chris Ceremuga stating the strips are genuine. Figure 5 accompanied the other two strips in figure 4 but had no certificate. I have been told the strips in figure 4 also have bad certificates from the Royal Philatelic Society of London Expert Committee. I had several rounds of emails and a phone call to Gary Watson of Prestige Philately prior to the sale trying to put my point across that the cancel on them [QL] as far as I am aware did not exist but a Q.L exists [see 5/- fiscal post al in figure 6 courtesy of eBay], the only QL without stop appears in the duplex cancels. I tried to explain at best that I believed they could have half a duplex cancel on them but either way my opinion is that they are incorrect. These high value revenues, as far as I know were never sold at any Queensland Post Offices, only the Queensland Treasury.

Gary Watson stated "Our vendor paid a lot of money for them and has submitted them in good faith" further from Gary "We have a bid for the strips, from

a collector who knows his oats & is satisfied that the cancels are genuine. I shared your comments and he noted them but is satisfied to back his judgment." I continued to put my case having collected Queensland for some 40 years both straight stamps and revenue issues including the postmarks of Queensland.

In my opinion, The Royal Philatelic Society of London Certificates should stand and always be attached to these strips. I have since been told by Gary Watson "We have sold the lot but on extension so we can have them exhaustively reviewed. Might get back to you about them. Would appreciate you mentioning in your article that we took note of your opinion and sold them subject to obtaining another expert opinion of genuineness."

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Fig. 5



Fig. 6