

L1: ½ d Notes from VOL 2

Postage Stamps of New Zealand

Designed by Mr. J. Fitzgerald, of Christchurch, this value depicted the pied fantail with clematis in the background.

The original plate laid down for this value contained 480 impressions in two groups of 240 (10 rows of 24). The two groups were distinguished by the plate markings 1A and 1B. The sheets were divided before issue and the plate markings appeared under the second stamp in the bottom row.

Messrs. De La Rue & Co. used two types of printing machines for the production of the Pictorials. The larger machine would hold two plates, each containing 480 impressions. The plates were put in the machine side by side and were used where a comparatively large printing was necessary. This machine was so designed that it could print two values at the one time.

The second machine was smaller and was employed in cases where large quantities were not required and where one plate was sufficient.

Supplies of the 1/2d printed from the plate with markings 1A and 1B and with multiple watermark, were placed on sale on March 20, 1936.

In all sheets with the marking 1A a flaw occurred on R8/1, and consisted of a large spot of colour in the centre of the clematis blossom, above the back of the bird.



To speed up the production of this value another plate of 480 impressions was laid down in 1936. This plate was unnumbered but the sheets from the two panels - panels of the plate could be distinguished by the existence of recurring flaws.

In sheets from one panel of this plate a dot appeared to the left of figure 1 on R3/8, and there was a short dash of colour near the top of the oblique stroke of the N of NEW on R5/15. In R2/21 of sheets from the other half of the plate

a diagonal coloured line cut through the frame under the second A of ZEALAND and proceeded upwards through the right-hand side of this letter and into the left-hand side of the N. In R6/9, there was a coloured dot just above and nearly touching the top of the figure 2. Two short dashes of colour appeared to the left and near the middle of the fraction bar in R8/3.

Printings from the original plate and from the unnumbered plate were issued in July, 1936, with the watermark inverted. During the print-



ings from the original plate three flaws developed on the panel with marking 1A and were found in the last printings, together with the constant flaw on

R8/1. In R1/1 a large diagonal dash of colour appeared near the top of the fourth and fifth feathers in the tail, and the solid colour between the leaves just above the bird's head extended downwards on to the head. In R10/4, a spot of colour showed near the middle of the first stroke of the W of NEW. A fault developed in the plate on R8/3, and resulted in a prominent dash of colour joining the horizontal stroke of the 2 to the bottom of the fraction bar.

A flaw also developed in row 9, No. 7, in one panel of the unnumbered plate. Because of damage to, or wearing of the plate, at this spot the shading almost disappeared from the back and neck of the fantail, and the left claw became a white blob. In row 4, No. 8, of the last printings from the same panel of this plate a coloured flaw caused the E of REVENUE to appear like an F.

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Postage Stamps of New Zealand Continue

A major variety was to be found in R5/17 from the same panel of the unnumbered plate. Dashes of colour appeared in the value the fraction bar and over the figure 2. Under magnification it will be found that these coloured marks represent the remains of two impressions of the figure 1 of the value. The only feasible explanation that can be suggested to explain this variety is that in some way the figure 1 which would project on the transfer roller, was inadvertently placed in contact with the surface of the plate before it was placed in the correct position and that there was sufficient pressure to transfer the impression in the soft steel.

A third plate was made in 1937. The panels were numbered 1A and 1B respectively but the figure and letters were considerably larger than those in the original plate. Printings from this plate were issued in October 1937, and some sheets had the watermark inverted.

In the 1B panel of the plate of 1937, one impression was not strong in the bottom corner and, before the plate was hardened, this impression was touched up. The variety occurred in R4/2, and showed as a recutting of the outer frame-lines in the right-hand bottom corner.

One sheet was issued at Ashburton with uncoloured or albino impression of the design in addition to the normal print. The albino impression showed most clearly on the selvedge of the sheet.

In some sheets issued at Methven the comb perforating machine did not "step" correctly for the row of perforations on the right-hand margin of the sheet, consequently the last vertical

row of stamps had double perforations for about a third of the distance along the top and bottom. All printings of the ½ d. were perf. 14 x 13 ½.

Considerable shade variations are to be found. The first printings were in deep bright green but later printings were in bright green and pale bright green. Some of the variation was due to the improper functioning of the mechanical inker, and sheets are to be found with pale patches in portions of the sheet only. In some instances, the mechanical wiper did not remove all the ink from the surface of the plate, with the result that copies are found with the face of the stamp with a distinct greenish tint.

Plate wear, combined with insufficient inking, resulted in uncoloured flaws showing on the stamps, particularly in the form of white horizontal patches near the top of the stamp. This was also the cause of what is known as the "hooded" fantail variety. In some sheets the space between the leaves just over the head of the bird, which was normally a solid patch of colour, appeared uncoloured, thus giving the bird a "hooded" appearance and when this happened there was usually a prominent white patch in a triangle formed by the right-hand side of the tail and the wing.

Printings from the 1937 plate were, as a rule, less heavily shaded, and this was most noticeable in the sprays of clematis and in the shading of the bird.

All unsold sheets of the ½ d were withdrawn from sale on February 28, 1938, and remainders were destroyed.

L1: Campbell Paterson's Notes ½ d

Here begins a series of Notes that I hope will be instructive. They are concerned with the accumulation of knowledge that I have built up over the years; not to do with printers or dates but with how to recognize certain difficult stamps, how to sort at speed, what to look for in varieties and perhaps occasionally an anecdote or two. I start with the 1935 Pictorials as a particularly large field for the student -- and for the picking up of unconsidered trifles of great value.

From the CP NZ Bulletin - August 1964, NZ STAMPS AS I HAVE COME TO KNOW THEM, by Campbell Paterson.

½d Fantail. First to deal with identification. There are only two major headings, Single and Multiple Watermarks, and there is an infallible method of telling one from the other in a twinkling, that is, by the recognition of the mesh of the paper.

The Single Wmk issue (L1a) is always with vertical mesh, the Multiple (L1b) always with horizontal mesh. The papers look quite different when one gets used to seeing the mesh, but that is by the way; the mesh is the thing and to anyone with normal eyesight, either with or without glasses, it is easy to see. The looking for the watermarks, with or without a detector, is unreliable in these cases and withal a waste of time.

Some good Plate varieties (by which I always mean re-entries or retouches as well as flaws) exist in both Fantail issues. The three best are illustrated in the CP Catalogue. One of them, the "Clematis" flaw, is much scarcer in the Single than in the Multiple. Inverted watermarks are relatively common in both issues. A real rarity exists in the form of a double print, one print being albino, i.e., colourless; however, it is so excessively rare that no one is likely to find it.

The sequence of plates and their numbers is interesting -- we list them in the CP.

As a side comment here I may say that terms such as "mesh", re-entry, retouch, "albino" and hordes of others are all explained in the CP Catalogue. To explain them each time is impracticable so please excuse the omission -- and perhaps consider getting our Catalogue! Still, I will explain "albino" as far as is possible. "Albino" is a loose term for a stamp from a sheet that has been twice through the printing press, the first time with another sheet that has prevented the "albino" from getting any of the ink. It has however received a clear impression off the plate and when used again, if it is, it will receive another, normal, inked impression. Provided that the two impressions do not exactly coincide it is usually possible to see the early impression; the whole stamp is classed as a "double print, one print albino". I recall one client writing to say that he had hunted in vain for a then-current albino of the 2/- Capt. Cook. He wanted to know what to look for: "Should Capt. Cook have pink eyes?"

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