

L7: 4d

Campbell Paterson's Notes



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There is little space this month for our “running commentary” so I will just record that our next subject of the 1935-47 Pictorials is the 4d Mitre Peak. As usual we will presume that we have before us a large and mixed lot of these 4d and some busy sorting lies ahead of us. The first move is to separate the issue on “Single” watermark paper from the rest. There is only the one issue on the “Single” and (as always) it is the only issue with the paper having vertical mesh, L7a. A word of warning here – do not try to use the perforations as a guide to identification of L7a, L7c or L7e. As a guide the perfs here are quite hopeless and are much better ignored. There are much easier and more certain means of identification available in all three.

To reiterate, there was only one 4d. Mitre Peak on the Single watermark paper and this is easily separated from all later issues by its vertical mesh. The perf is about “14” but this is not a suitable identifying factor since two later stamps had perfs about the same. Rely then, on the mesh, or the watermark if you must.

The Single watermark issue (L7a) is known used with inverted watermark. It is rare thus and I cannot recall that I have ever seen it mint. Plate varieties are few, the most notable being some clumsy retouching of the letters of MITRE, giving elongated or otherwise abnormal letters. Occasionally the stamps were printed out of position on the sheet and in such cases copies are found with “letters” watermark – from the watermark lettering “NEW ZEALAND POSTAGE” which appeared in the margins of all single watermark sheets.

Turning now to the rest of the 4d’s – all with multiple watermarks. Some of these, the very last issues, were on the coarse war time paper. This is readily recognized by its roughness and the clarity of the watermark. Its perf is 14 x 14.1 or 14.2, which is close to “14 all round” so it is a poor identifying factor. Still, a perf close to 14

coupled with a poor quality paper should be enough guidance for most. I have emphasized the necessity for recognition of the coarse paper because this common stamp (L7e) is far too often mistaken for the much scarcer issue L7c. There is little help to be got from the perfs in separating these two stamps, and I would advise every collector to look again at his copies of “L7c”. It can be taken as certain that unless the stamp has a fine quality, dense, smooth, white paper it is not L7c. Another good guide is the colour of the frames. In the true L7c the frame is always a grey-black, gunmetal shade, identical with the frames of the perf. 12½ issue and quite unlike the deep black-browns found in L7e. It is easy to mistake one’s geese for swans but with the information above there is really no excuse for self-deception.

Last month I spoke of the ways to recognize the rarity L7c and how to distinguish the much commoner L7e. We have now eliminated L7a, L7c and L7e; this leaves us with only L7d the perf 12½ issue, and L7b, the issue with multiple watermark (horizontal mesh) perf 14x13½.

Neither of these stamps should give any trouble at all. Varieties to look for are a few rather minor reentries, illustrated in CP or usually affecting the top and top-right frames. The retouches to the letters of MITRE occur in all of L7a, b and e, since the same plate was used for all three issues. Other plates were also used and Plate 3 (the only one used for L7c and d) is scarce indeed in L7e. The 4d plate numbers are undoubtedly much better collected in strips from right across the bottom of the sheets – only thus can show what combinations of centre and frame plates were used.

Inverted watermarks are relatively common in L7b, quite rare in L7e and unknown in L7c and d.