

NEW ZEALAND BULLETIN



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A 'NEW' SCRATCHED PLATE NUMBER by Colin Hamilton

Mr D.R. Diamond of Surrey has shown me a very interesting item from the 1d Terraces issue of 1900(E3a). It is a horizontal strip of three from the top of a sheet, and high in the selvedge above the right hand stamp appears the marking 'N^o 4/TOP' in two lines, printed in reverse in the colour of the stamps. This inscription has been scratched freehand into the surface of the plate, and there can be no doubt that the 'N^o 4' is a plate identification. By reference to the marginal watermark inscription, we have tentatively established the position as being above the 12th vertical row of stamps.

On first seeing the piece, my instinct was that the selvedge looked unusually wide (it measures 34mm from the top framelines of the stamps to the edge of the sheet). At the time of writing, I have since examined only one other top selvedge strip — also by courtesy of Mr. Diamond — and its selvedge was 4mm narrower. Since the 'N^o 4' lies almost entirely above the 30mm mark, it is quite possible that we are seeing, thanks to an abnormally wide selvedge, something which would not normally appear on issued sheets. Nevertheless, further investigation of this marking, and very possibly others as yet unrecorded on the 1d and other contemporary values, is clearly necessary. I hope that any readers possessing selvedge pieces will examine them closely, and report any findings.

It is always a pleasure to report something fresh. When that something happens to have some bearing on an unproven theory (as will be seen later) it is especially pleasurable.

Several other N.Z. plates are known to have borne identifying numbers scratched in by hand, but all of these numbers have appeared in the bottom selvedge of printed sheets, about mid-way between the first and last vertical rows of stamps. Records of these markings are somewhat sketchy and inconsistent, but I myself have seen examples of the following nine numbers:

C.P. LTD — A NEW BRANCH IN AUSTRALIA

Readers may be interested to know that C.P. Ltd. have opened a new Branch in Sydney, N.S.W.

As with our other Branches, "N.Z. only" will continue to be the rule. The new Branch is at present under the personal charge of C.P. himself — this will be the case for at least two months, while suitable staff are initiated.

It is not at present intended that Australian stamps, first day covers or new issues will be dealt in by the Sydney Branch.

½d Mt Cook Green. early plates - nos 1, 2, 3 and 4
1d Universal, early 'local' plates - nos 1, 2, 3 and Reserve plate no. 4.
2d Pembroke Peak Purple - no. 4.

The N.Z. Handbooks make mention only of the ½d Mt. Cook and 1d Universal numbers. Verne Collins & Co's Catalogue of N.Z. Plate Markings (my copy is the 3rd edition, 1950) lists the ½d Mt Cooks, 1d Universals and the 2d Pembroke Peak plate no. 3 (other than the Verne Collins listing of this latter number, I know of no evidence of its existence). Neither publication records the 2d plate no. 4.

Thus, if we include the 1d Terraces, and the unconfirmed 2d plate 3, the total is now eleven, and it is interesting to note that every one of these plates was made by Waterlow and Sons, within a short period of time around the turn of the century, and that every one is part of a series of four plates made for the same value. The obvious question, therefore, is "Were the 1d Terraces plates 1, 2 and 3, and the 2d Pembroke plates 1 and 2, also similarly numbered?" Equally obviously the likely answer to that question is "yes".

All scratched numbers fall readily into two categories, those which print 'right-reading' (and were therefore scratched in reverse on the plates themselves) which I will call, purely for convenience, type A; and those which print in reverse (and were therefore 'right reading' on the plates), which I will call type B.

With the exception of the 1d Terraces, all the plates listed are known with type A numbers. The only plates known with type B numbers are the 'new' 1d Terraces one, and the four ½d Mt. Cooks. So it will be noted that the ½d Mt Cooks are peculiar, in that they and they alone each bore numbers of both types A and B.

The handbook clearly implies (and it is I think widely accepted) that all the scratched numbers it records were added to the plates after their arrival in New Zealand, and after some printings had been made. For instance, referring to the ½d Mt. Cooks, the Handbook states:

".....sheets from the first printings show no distinguishing marginal marks. At a later stage six divisional arrows were engraved on the plates - three at the top and three at the bottom - at the usual places to facilitate the separation of sheets into set amounts. In addition to these arrows, and in order to check the production from the various plates, the plate numbers were scratched in duplicate on the plates below the central arrow, and both scratched numbers show on the selvedge of the printed sheet". (The subsequent text makes it clear that of the duplicate numbers referred to, one was type A, the other type B).

I am by no means convinced that the Handbook's account is wholly correct. For some time I have had a rather nebulous hunch that while type A numbers are undoubtedly printer's additions, placed there for the reasons stated, type B numbers were much earlier additions; inscribed by the plate makers in England for their own purposes. Admittedly I have had no real evidence to support this contention - it was partly based on the lack of evidence in favour of the accepted belief - but recently I saw a complete sheet of the ½d Mt Cook on 'Pirie' paper, perf. 11 (F1a), from plate 3, without either selvedge arrows or plate number Type A, but with the type B number 3 in its usual position below vertical row 12. I believe that this was a sheet from "the first printings" to which the Handbook refers, and although of itself this sheet does not prove my theory, it certainly does prove that the type B number pre-dates the type A, and that the Handbook is inaccurate in this respect.

Mr Diamond's item, too, tends to bear out my contention. The individual lines of the 1d Terraces markings are so fine and clean, and so fluently executed, that they could not possibly, in my view, have been added in New Zealand, when the plate would be in a 'hardened' state. They must have been engraved while the steel was 'soft', in other words, while it was being worked upon by the plate-makers. Indeed the presence of the word TOP might well indicate that the marking was put there when the blank sheet of metal was first selected, or perhaps during the rolling-in of the impressions, to guard against the inadvertent inversion of the partly-completed plate during this process.

KING GEORGE VI PLATE VARIETIES, USED
(concluding the listing which we began last month)

- 1101(a) 2d on 1½d (M5a). Plate 20 R8/18, both the first and second state retouches, MV5a (a and b). Two naked-eye varieties. £ 9.00
- (b) As above, plate 20 R8/18 first state retouch, to right of head, MV5a(a). . . £ 4.00
- (c) As above, plate 21 R4/10 flaw and retouch examples, MV5a (c and d).
Another easily seen pair of variety states. £ 8.00
- (d) As above, plate 21 R4/10 flaw state only, MV5a (c) £ 4.00
- 1102(a) 2d Yellow-orange, CVM paper (M6a). Plate 41 R2/21 flaw shows as a tail to &. £ 2.50
- (b) As above, plate 61 R4/5 retouch to top frame panel, MV6a (a) £ 2.50
- (c) As above, plate 61 R6/24 doubling of top right frame £ 2.50
- (d) As above, plate 76 R5/24 doubling of top half of right frame £ 2.50
- (e) As above, plate 80 R5/20 retouch to left frame £ 2.50
- (f) As above, plate 140 R7/1. Kings hair and ornament in the top frame are notably paler than normal £ 2.50
- (g) As above. A set of 3 stamps showing different graver slips to frame lines, sheet positions supplied £ 3.00
- 1103(a) 2d Yellow-orange, CHM paper (M6b). Plate 86 R3/7 retouch to hair MV6b (c) £ 2.50
- (b) As above, plate 86 R7/21 retouch to hair and background, also face is generally whiter than usual, MV6b (d) £ 3.00
- (c) As above, plate 87 R7/5 retouch to REVEN and ZEAL, MV6b (e) £ 3.00
- 1104(a) 3d Blue, FHM paper (M7b). Plate 27 R3/19 retouch - frame line of left inner panel is extended downwards £ 2.50
- (b) As above, plate 27 R9/24, similar variety to R3/19 above, but more strongly retouched £ 2.50
- 1105(a) 3d Blue, CVM paper (M7c). Plate 39 R7/24, retouching of right panel £ 2.50
- (b) As above, plate 45 R8/5 shifted transfer - clear doubling of some horizontal lines of shading to right of head. £ 2.50
- (c) As above, plate 58 R3/11 retouch to top of right panel, MV7c (a) £ 2.50
- (d) As above, plate 58 R8/21 retouch - right frame line is extraordinarily thick, naked-eye variety £ 2.50

- (e) As above, plate 63 R1/19 first state retouch to right of head, MV7c (b) ... £ 4.00
- (f) As above, plate 63 R1/19 third state retouch over face and background MV7c (d) £ 4.00
- (g) As above, plate 139 R2/12 retouch to bottom of right panel and the epaulette, MV7c (f) special offer (Cat. \$10) £ 2.50
- 1106 4d Magenta, FVM paper (M8a). Plate 90 R1/6 shifted transfer, a large part of the lower half of the stamp is doubled £ 2.50

1970 - 75 PICTORIAL VARIETIES

- 1107(a) 1c 'Red Admiral'. Plate block of 10 stamps (no wmk, white gum) with pronounced upward shift of blue, giving white spots on rear wings, and a markedly misplaced blue plate number. The block £ 7.50
- (b) As above. The same variety, but single stamp at £1.00, or block of 4 at ... £ 3.00
- (c) As above, but unwmk'd blue gum issue. A very spectacular multiple shift - the black and blue colours are misplaced downwards, the red is misplaced upwards. The end result has to be seen to be believed! Mint single £7.50, or block of 4 at £ 25.00
- 1108(a) 2c 'Tussock'. Variety watermark inverted (P3aZ), Mint single at £1.25, or marginal block of 4 at £ 5.00
- (b) As above, no wmk, blue gum. Mint corner copy with delightful yellow wings offset impression on the back £ 20.00
- 1109 2½c 'Maggie'. Single mint copy with variety Albino 4c Provisional Surcharge (P4aZ). This "surcharge that never was" raises the question - is the face value 2½c, or is it 4c? The interesting variety, scarce £ 7.50
- 1110(a) 3c 'Lichen', Mint top selvedge block of 4 (wmk'd) with a fine example of partial double perfs at top (P5aZ) £ 5.00
- (b) As above. A very similar block, but on unwatermarked paper £ 5.00
- (c) As above. Set of two variety booklet panes - one (on wmk'd paper) with prominent brown doctor blade flaw on left vertical pair of stamps, and the other (unwmk'd) with an excellent downward shift of the orange, with most peculiar results. The two panes £ 7.50
- (d) As above. Mint single of the scarce Inverted Watermark variety from booklets (P5bZ). Cat £12+ but offered at £ 6.50
- 1111(a) 4c 'Puriri Moth', no wmk white gum. Set of three mint: (i) with bright green (wing veins) totally omitted: (ii) with wing veins partly omitted; (iii) normal. The set £ 5.00
- (b) As above. Mint block of 4 with a big upward misplacement of the wing veins, which project into the top gutters of the stamps £ 2.25

- (c) As above. The same variety, but in imprint/plate block of 10 stamps, also showing the misplaced bright green plate number £ 5.75
- (d) As above. The same shift again, but in "traffic lights" block of 10, with the bright green colour code marking very much out of alignment £ 5.75
- (e) As above. Mint selvage block of 6 with pre-printing paper crease across three stamps. Unusual, and nice! £ 2.75
- 1112(a) 5c 'Scarlet Parrot'. Sheet value block of 10 (wmk'd) with original erroneous VALUE \$12.00 obliterated, and correct VALUE \$10.00 inserted alongside. £ 3.00
- (b) As above. Mint pair (unwmk'd) with downward shift of purple, giving a very attractive "Four-eyed fish"! £ 4.75
- 1113 Lower-Value Plate Varieties. A fine collection of 18 blocks (5x½c, 2x1c, 1x2c, 4x3c, 2x4c, 1x5c, 1x7c, 1x7½c, 1x8c), showing no less than 31 constant plate varieties, all fully annotated (all but one are in fact listed in our Catalogue). The 18 mint blocks (180 stamps) all on wmk'd paper £ 35.00
- 1114 15c Fish Hook. Mint copy (wmk'd) with good upward shift of black, with normal stamp for comparison. Varieties on this value are unusual £ 6.50
- 1115 18c Club. Vertical pair (unwm'd) with top selvage, upper stamp with striking variety Partial Green Offset on back (P14bZ) £ 15.00
- 1116 23c Park. Marginal block of 6, second printing (C.P. listed shade 2), including constant Upper Plate R6/3 'Flaw in Sky' variety (PV16a) £ 1.90
- 1117 30c Park. Bottom selvage block of 4 showing partial double perfs at the bottom of the upper pair of stamps. Unusual thus £ 4.50
- 1118 4c/2½c Photogravure Surcharge. Left marginal example with '4c' at extreme bottom left of stamp, and bars at upper right (P30aU). Perfect mint, and very scarce £ 27.50
- 1119(a) 4c/2½c Harrison Letterpress Surcharge. Variety 'Double Impression of Surcharge, One Albino' (P30bS). An excellent example of this scarce variety, the misplaced albino surcharge being particularly heavily impressed £ 17.50
- (b) As above. Variety 'Surcharge Offset on Back' (P30bV). One of the best offsets we have seen - complete and magnificently full £ 15.00
- (c) As above. Corner block of 15 (3x5), with sheet value marking Type 1, and with two stamps showing offset of surcharge, one impression being complete, the other partial. The block £ 20.00
- (d) As above. The Catalogued R5/1 variety 'Bars almost Completely missing' (P30bT). We have seen this variety on offer elsewhere at £25— our price ... £ 4.75
- (e) As above. Another, and equally prominent, "Missing Bars" variety, in a mint block of 6. Uncatalogued, but proved by the presence of bottom selvage to be from row no10. For confirmation that it is not a 'one-off' chance, also included is a superb used pair on dated piece, one stamp showing the same variety. The two items £ 6.50

- 1120(a) 4c/2½c Local Surcharge. Set of 4 sheet value blocks: (i) the error with the original Value \$5.00 unaltered (block of 8); (ii) the original \$5.00 altered to \$8.00 in red ball point (block of 4); (iii) with \$5.00 obliterated and \$8.00 inserted by purple rubber stamp (block of 10); (iv) with \$5.00 obliterated and \$8.00 inserted by blue rubber stamp (block of 8). The four blocks . . . £ 11.75
- (b) As above. The error, unaltered \$5.00 only, in mint block of 10 . . . £ 8.25
- 1121 Varieties. Collection of 19 'Magpie Moth' variety blocks (2 unsurcharged, 17 with photogravure surcharge), with detailed descriptions of the varieties. The 19 blocks (166 stamps) all mint . . . £ 35.00

K.G.V. RECESS PRINTS

- 1122 K.G.V. 2d Violet. "Two-perf" block of 4 (K2c), perfect appearance, but small part gum missing at foot, hence . . . £ 17.50
- 1123 K.G.V. 2d Yellow. Marginal "two-perf" block of 4 (K2f), small insignificant gum tone. The block . . . £ 8.50
- 1124 K.G.V. 8d Indigo-Blue. "Two-perf" block of 4, fine unmounted . . . £ 30.00
- 1125 K.G.V. 3d Official. Mint block of 4 of the recess-print, perf. 14x14½, with variety Watermark Inverted (KO4bZ). Hinged on one stamp only. Scarce . . . £ 19.25

N.Z. AIR MAIL STAMPS

- 1126(a) 3d Chocolate, perf. 14x14½ (V1a). Fine mint . . . £ 7.50
- (b) As above. Not so fine, mint . . . £ 3.00
- (c) As above. Block of 4, brilliant unmounted . . . £ 40.00
- (d) As above. Fine used single (c.d.s.) . . . £ 6.00
- 1127 3d Dark Chocolate, perf 14x15 (V1b). The rare one - mint copy of exceptionally fresh and fine appearance. Now Cat. £60+, this example has just the faintest trace of a gum tone, hence . . . £ 45.00
- 1128(a) 4d Purple (V2a). Fine mint . . . £ 7.50
- (b) As above. Not quite so fine copy . . . £ 4.00
- (c) As above. Block of 4, brilliant unmounted . . . £ 40.00
- (d) As above. Fine used single . . . £ 6.00
- (e) As above. Not quite so fine used . . . £ 3.50
- 1129(a) 7d Brown-Orange (V3a). Fine mint . . . £ 8.50
- (b) As above. Not quite so fine mint . . . £ 6.00
- (c) As above. Fine used . . . £ 6.00
- (d) As above. Good average used . . . £ 4.50
- 1130(a) 5d on 3d Surcharge (V4a) Superfine mint . . . £ 3.10
- (b) As above. Brilliant mint (unmounted) block of 4 . . . £ 15.50
- (c) As above. Set of three mint blocks of 4 in fine contrasting shades of deep yellow green, yellow green and pale yellow green. Most unusual, and a lovely show . . . £ 47.50

- (d) As above. Corner block of 9 (with sheet serial no.), two stamps showing minor varieties of the surcharge, fully annotated. Corner crease in selvage only - stamps are superfine. The block (large blocks are seldom seen). £ 32.50
- (e) As above. Fine used single £ 2.85
- 1131(a) 7d Blue 'Trans Tasman'. Vertical pair, upper stamp showing the Catalogued 'Broken N' variety (V5aZ). A few very light gum tones, otherwise superb mint £ 18.50
- (b) As above. Fine used copy, with 'Broken N' variety £ 15.25
- (c) As above. A magnificent used block of 4, with neat central c.d.s. of Auckland 17th Feb. 1934 - the date of the first NZ - Australian Trans-Tasman flight by Kingsford Smith £ 67.50
- 1132(a) 1935 Bell Block Aerodrome. A marvellous set of outstanding shades, with the 1d (2 shades), 3d (2) and 6d (3) - all in corner blocks of 4 with plate numbers. The seven plate blocks, mint £ 37.50
- (b) As above. Another shade set in mint blocks of four, and excluding the extra shades of the 6d. The set of 5 mint blocks (three being marginal) £ 16.50
- 1133(a) 1d 'Bell Block' (V6a). Mint single £ 18p
- (b) As above. Used single £ 10p
- (c) As above. Used copy with variety watermark inverted (V6aZ) £ 9.25
- 1134 3d. 'Bell Block' (V6b). Mint single in dark, deep or a very distinctive bright violet, each (please state which shade is required) £ 1.25
- 1135(a) 6d 'Bell Block' (V6c). Mint copy in dull blue £ 1.25
- (b) As above. Superfine (unmounted) copy of the rare variety with wmk inverted (V6cZ) £ 25.00
- (c) As above. Used single in dull blue £ 1.25
- (d) As above. Used, but in bright blue £ 1.55

1136

LONG FISCALS, MINT

An exceptionally fine lot of 10 of these scarce and grossly undervalued issues, with 2/-, 2/6 (two different), 3/-, 4/-, 5/-, 6/-, 7/-, 8/- and 9/-. Absolutely free of foxing and toning which one almost expects to find, and beautifully fresh throughout. The 10 mint Long Fiscals £100.00

Q.E. MIDDLE VALUES - SHEET VALUE BLOCKS

Due to the occasional issue of half-sheets, the sheet value markings were the subject of various alterations, and blocks showing the different forms provide a study of unusual interest. We can offer the following (Reference should be made to Permanent Page N6 in our Catalogue for details and illustrations of the 9d and 1/- markings):

- 1137(a) 9d Brown/Green. Complete set of 5 value blocks, comprising the normal (£6), and all four variations listed and illustrated £ 8.50
- (b) 1/- Black/Carmine. Complete set (of 7 blocks this time), showing the original marking (8£), the corrected form (£8), and all five variations listed £ 15.00

- (c) 1/9 Black/Orange. Apart from the normal marking (£14), there was only one variation in this denomination — that where the £14 is cancelled by thick black bars. Our set is of two blocks (both on the thick white paper) showing the markings described £ 10.75

SILVER JUBILEE VARIETIES

- 1138(a) Miniature Sheet, with large retouch in background right of Queens forehead on stamp 2. This is a clear naked-eye variety. The miniature sheet mint .. £ 1.00
 (b) Miniature Sheet, with notable defective print of silver on stamp 3. Mint .. £ 75p

RECENT ISSUES

- 5/10/77 1977 Christmas 7c (Correggio's drawing of "The Holy Family"), 16c Stained glass window, St. Michael's and All Angels Anglican-Church, Dunedin), 23c ("Partridge in a pear tree").
 Set of 3 values, mint £ 45p
 Imprint/plate blocks, complete set of three blocks (of 4 stamps each) £ 1.85
 Official illustrated F.D.C. (Wanganui pmk) £ 50p

- 10c Coat of Arms. Imprint/plate block of 6 stamps, with new plate number 2A2A2A5A (unwatermarked, bluish gum) £ 62p

- 50c Park. The so-called Sixth Printing, with (a) bluish gum, (b) left headland even deeper and duller green than the First Printing and (c) distinctive blackish green plate number surrounded by a grey-shaded area.
 Imprint/plate block of 6 stamps £ 2.90
 Mint single with deep dull green headland and bluish gum £ 48p

STOP PRESS

We have been privileged to purchase the following outstanding single-issue collections. Formed over a considerable period of years by a discerning and discriminating collector, they are of quite exceptional quality. Initially, each is being offered as it stands, the previous owner's wish being that we endeavour to preserve intact the results of his labours. In the space available, it is impossible to provide adequate descriptions, so inquiries are invited from clients seriously interested in acquiring either collection.

½d Mt. Cook, Green. Prefaced by a die proof in lake-red, and covering in depth every issue, including Officials. So rich in fine and rare material that it is invidious to single out items for special mention, but to give just a few examples, there are four scratch plate-number blocks (one of which is overprinted Official) and six of the later Perkins, Bacon plate blocks (again including one Official). The collection of about 950 stamps, all mint but for 45 — 50 which are used PRICE ON APPLICATION

King Edward VII Heads. An equally magnificent collection on 38 high quality leaves. Commencing with two pages of proofs and colour trials, and continuing with the issued stamps, with a profusion of blocks of almost every major issue, including "two-perfs", ordinary and Official. 28 proofs, 1 cover (a first day cover of the ½d!) and over 560 stamps, mainly mint but including three presentation copies and about 25 used. The 'Edwards' collection PRICE ON APPLICATION