

NEW ZEALAND BULLETIN



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N.Z. NOTES AND COMMENT by Colin Hamilton



First Local Plates



Reserve Plate



Dot Plates



Waterlow Trial Plates



Royle Trial Plates



Royle 3-dot and 4-dot Plates

The Plate Identification Marks of the Penny Universal. Of the sixteen different plates used in the printing of the Penny Universal, thirteen were identified by means of markings which appeared at or close to the centre of the bottom selvage on issued sheets. Illustrations of these markings appear above, in each case showing their positions relative to the dividing arrow which was placed below the gutter between vertical columns 12 and 13 in all the plates concerned. The three exceptions — those without plate identifying marks anywhere in the sheet selvages — were the London, Booklet and Surface-Printing plates (G1, G7 and G11 in the C.P. Catalogue). In relation to First Local Plates 1, 2 and 3, and Reserve Plate 4 — all of which were scratched freehand into the printing surface of the plate — it should be noted that the illustrations are taken from Volume I of "The Postage Stamps of

New Zealand", and show the scratched numbers in their original states. All four numbers were subsequently redrawn, or strengthened, in some cases more than once, and exist in multiple-lined form. In the single-lined form illustrated, I personally don't recall ever having seen the numbers 1, 3 or 4.

Bearing in mind the massive quantities of stamps printed from the majority of these plates, it may initially seem surprising that with the possible exception of the Waterlow and Royle Trial Plates (i.e. W1, W2, R1 and R2) examples of the plate markings are at best very scarce, and in several instances extremely rare. For instance I have never seen (nor do I know of the existence of) any complete Royle "Three-dot" marking, although I have seen two or three partial examples. And when the late G.R. Lee was researching his 1953 monograph (covering the Booklet and Dot Plates) he was only able to report locating one solitary marking from the Dot Plates, and that after an extensive search. Several more have come to light since, but even now I know of no more than three complete examples from any one of the three Dot Plates.

Reasons for this scarcity are, however, not difficult to find. But first let us dispose of the four Trial Plate marks which are unquestionably the commonest. They are prominent, they fit in with the general conception of a plate number's appearance, and almost as important they are the only four markings not placed in the **immediate** vicinity of the central dividing arrow (W1 and W2 appear below stamps 11 and 12, and R1 and R2 below stamp 12). All of these factors undoubtedly contributed to the preservation of pieces showing the markings intact.

In all other cases, as the illustrations show, the plate markings were positioned either directly above, directly below, or 'straddling' the central arrow, so that when sheets were divided vertically at this point (and they frequently were — one of the main *raison-d'être* of the selvedge arrows was after all to indicate convenient separation points) the markings were split into two parts, or (especially in the case of first Local plate 1) virtually lost altogether in the act of splitting. And positioning is not the only problem. The Dot Plates and Royle 3 and 4-dot markings, although quite prominent, just do not have the appearance of plate numbers to the casual observer, and would have little significance to any but the alert and keen philatelist. A curious note here. There must have been scores of thousands of sheets issued from the Dot Plates, yet of the mere handful of plate blocks I have seen, **the majority have had mixed perforations**. The clear implication is that these blocks were kept intact for that peculiarity alone, and that the presence of the plate number was purely coincidental!

That leaves the first four local plates. As with the 'Dots', the number of sheets printed from plates 1, 2 and 3 must have been astronomical — they were used for all printings on four issues (G2 — G5) — and the plate numbers **were** numbers, even if rather crudely executed. So why are they as scarce as they are? Apart from the wastage through positioning already mentioned, the main reason here is that they are frequently extremely easy to overlook, particularly after the plates had begun to show the slightest signs of wear. Even at best, they were never as prominent as they appear in the illustrations; usually they printed very faintly, and during the printings on the Cowan watermarked paper (G5), when wear became progressively more pronounced, the numbers faded almost into oblivion. Faced with a bottom selvedge piece with arrow from any of these issues, it is **always** worth checking, re-checking and re-checking again for a plate number. The odds are just 3—1 against striking lucky (there being four arrows in the bottom selvedge).

Finally the Reserve plate. Its number (4) was throughout its life much the most prominent of the scratched numbers, but it is the rarest of the four (indeed a block showing it is one of **the** blue-chip items in N.Z. philately). This is primarily because mint Reserve plate stamps are by no means common.

We offer a superb range of these 1d Universal plate numbers (from the Burberry collection) elsewhere in this issue.

1d UNIVERSAL PLATE NUMBER BLOCKS

- | | |
|---|---------|
| 201(a) First Local Plates. Mint block of 6 (G2a) with a brilliantly clear example of the plate 1 marking in its first redrawn state (double-lined). Although from a sheet broken in the "wrong" place (i.e. centrally), the vertical perforations are very fortunately off-centre to the right, leaving the plate number absolutely complete. Condition superb | £500.00 |
| (b) As above. Another example of the double-lined 1, in mint block of 12 which also includes the R10/8 and 10/9 re-entries. Again from a sheet broken centrally, and unfortunately in this case centring is better than in the above block, so the number is partly removed by the perforations. Nevertheless, and despite some noticeable age staining, a good example, and cheap at | £52.50 |
| (c) As above. Plate no. 2 in original single-lined state (about 70% present, and perfectly legible), in superb mint block of 10 including the R7/12 and 9/11 re-entries. The block (G2a) | £300.00 |
| (d) As above. Plate no. 2 again — but this one in the later re-scratched multiple-lined form on Cowan watermarked paper (G5a) in mint block of 8 including the R10/16 re-entry. Number again about 70% complete, and remarkably clear — from an early print of G5a. Some splitting perfs reinforced, otherwise superb and fresh | £245.00 |
| (e) As above. Plate no. 3 (first redrawn state, double-lined) in fine mint block of 4 on Basted Mills paper, perf. 11 x 14 (G3c). Number is complete, if rather faint — typical on this paper | £450.00 |
| 202(a) Dot Plates. Plate 1 marking complete in fine mint block of 4, left hand pair of stamps perf. 14 (G8a), right hand pair with mixed perfs (G8d) | £525.00 |
| (b) As above. Complete reconstructed plate 3 marking, achieved by means of two pieces — a mint strip of three, and a mint block of 4 with mixed perfs. | £275.00 |
| 203(a) Waterlow Trial Plates. 'W1' plate block of 4, finest mint | £125.00 |
| (b) As above. Similarly fine 'W2' plate block | £125.00 |
| 204(a) Royle Trial Plates. 'R1' in superb mint block of 4, perf. 14. On the reverse, there is a clear set-off of the plate number 'R2' — a phenomenon we have noted before (similarly we have seen R2 blocks with an R1 set-off on the back) | £125.00 |
| (b) As above. Superfine 'R2' plate block of 4, in a distinctly aniline shade, and perf. 11 x 14 (G10d). A great rarity. Interestingly this block has a set-off of — surprise, surprise! — 'W2' on the back. Since such set-offs would only occur immediately after printing, while the ink was still wet, it seems reasonable to deduce that the Waterlow and Royle Trial Plates were | |

printed from literally simultaneously, with the plates mounted side by side in the press £350.00

(c) **As above.** An absolutely unique piece, or to be precise **two** pieces, with a nice little story behind them. Each is a bottom selvedge vertical pair of the final comb-perf. issue, all four stamps with the variety complete double perfs. (G10fZ), and together they show the complete 'R2' marking in the selvedge. These two pairs were clearly once part of the same (and almost certainly the only) sheet. When we offered the right-hand pair to Michael Burberry some time ago, with a tongue-in-cheek apology that the plate number wasn't quite complete, he produced the other pair, commenting that he'd been living in hope of finding its companion for close on twenty years! £375.00

(d) **As above.** R1 plate block of 4 on the **Official** perf. 14 issue (G010a). A great rarity, and almost certainly this is the finest example extant £950.00

205 Royle 4-Dot Plate. Brilliant mint block of four with the 4-dot marking in the perfect form – **centrally** in the bottom selvedge. Another fabulous rarity – this is one of only three complete examples we have seen £1600.00

FIRST PICTORIALS – PLATE PROOFS

Some more delightful and unusual material from the Burberry collection. All items in this section are imperf.

206 Local Plates. Set of 9 black proofs from the accepted Waterlow plates (2½d, 3d, 5d, 6d, 8d, 9d, 1/-, 2/-, 5/-). By way of a bonus, the 2/- example shows a good re-entry (R12/3). Very scarce set £150.00

207(a) ½d Mt. Cook. Block of 4 in the 'London' design of this value (not to be confused with the relatively common similar proofs in the design of the Local ½d green). Printed in purple black on unwatermarked paper £40.00

(b) **As above,** but a horizontal pair £20.00

208(a) 1½d Boer War. Uniquely, the plate for this value was made in U.S.A. (by Parsons Bros.), and that firm printed a series of colour trials, represented here by a magnificent set of nine, all different, ranging from deep lake through brown, slate, purple and green to dull grey-blue. Beautiful! £275.00

(b) **As above.** Individual examples in deep lake, purple, deep yellow green, and dull grey-blue (all included in the set above) are available at, each £32.50

(c) **As above.** A vertical pair, the upper impression showing the massive R2/12 re-entry. Due to the re-entry doubling the shades of the two units appear to be eye to be quite different, the rich red-chocolate of the variety contrasting boldly with the cold brown of the normal. A rare and interesting piece £85.00

209(a) 2d Pembroke Peak. Block of 4, again in the 'London' design, and again not to be confused with the commoner proofs of the redrawn 'Local' 2d.

	Printed in rosy-lake on unwatermarked paper	£42.50
(b)	As above, but a horizontal pair	£20.00
210(a)	2½d Lake Wakatipu. 'Local' plate proof block of 4 in the issued colour on unwatermarked paper	£50.00
(b)	As above, but a horizontal pair	£25.00
211(a)	3d Huia. Block of 4 from the 'Local' plate, printed in yellow-brown on unwatermarked paper	£50.00
(b)	As above, but a horizontal pair	£25.00
(c)	As above. Government Printer's colour trial in indigo on unwatermarked paper. Rare	£35.00
212(a)	5d Otira Gorge. Block of 4 from the 'Local' plate, printed in deep brown on unwatermarked paper	£50.00
(b)	As above, but a vertical pair	£25.00
213(a)	6d Kiwi. Block of 4 from the 'Local' plate, printed in deep green on unwatermarked paper	£50.00
(b)	As above. Another block, but in pale yellow-green	£55.00
(c)	As above. A third block (in deep green), including on the upper left impression the listed R9/5 retouch to the 'REVENUE' label	£60.00
(d)	As above. Colour-trial single, printed in deep violet-purple on unwatermarked paper. Rare	£35.00
(e)	As above. Similar colour trial, this one printed in pale brick-red	£32.50
214(a)	8d War Canoe. Block of 4 from the 'Local' plate, printed in the issued colour on unwatermarked paper	£50.00
(b)	As above. Another block, including the good R5/2 re-entry (with illustration supplied)	£60.00
(c)	As above, but horizontal pair, without variety	£25.00
(d)	As above. Pair including the R10/6 re-entry (minor)	£27.50
215(a)	9d Pink Terrace. Block of 4 from the 'Local' plate, printed in the issued colour on unwatermarked paper	£50.00
(b)	As above, but a horizontal pair	£25.00
(c)	As above. Set of five colour trials (in mauve, purple, violet, pale carmine pink and deep carmine-lake). One includes a good re-entry	£115.00

(To be concluded)

PIGEON POSTS

220(a)	1/- Original Design (VP1). Superfine used copy. Tiny corner perf. crease, otherwise absolutely immaculate, clean and fresh	£82.50
(b)	As above. Unused example not-so-fine (gum tones and adhesions), but nice appearance. Excellent spacefiller	£12.50
221	1/- 'Special Post' (VP2). Brilliant unhinged mint copy. Perfect	£85.00
222(a)	1/- 'Pigeon Gram' (VP4). Unused, average condition, but appearance superb	£15.00
(b)	As above. Used copy, small defects, but very fair example	£12.50
223	1/- Marotiri Island (VP6). Very fine unused example, no gum	£25.00
224	6d Triangular (VP7). Mint triangular block of 4. Previously hinged, but magnificently fresh. Couple of minor perf. imperfections	£175.00
225(a)	6d and 1/- Triangulares (VP7 and 8). Very good mint set of two	£75.00
(b)	As above. Not-so-fine set of two	£20.00
(c)	As above. Exceptionally fine used set, the 1/- being on piece of original flimsy. Each has complete 'G.B.P.A.' rectangular cancel (Dec 1900 and March 1901 respectively)	£185.00
226(a)	'G.B.P.A.' Flimsy. Unused printed flimsy (Type 5 in the J.Reg. Walker handbook), with 1/- triangular (not so fine) attached. Good condition	£42.50
(b)	As above. Similar flimsy, but with 6d Triangular attached. Superb	£47.50
(c)	As above. Similar flimsy, but with 6d and 1/- Triangulares attached. Superb	£60.00
(d)	As above. Printed flimsy with "Auckland, N.Z.1903" dateline (Walker type 6(a)), with pair of 6d triangulares attached (1/- was the correct rate for flimsies to be flown from Auckland to the island). Superb condition	£75.00
(e)	As above. Similar complete flimsy, but with "Whangaparapara, G.B.1903" dateline (Walker type 6(c)), with 6d triangular attached (the correct rate for 'island-to-Auckland' pigeon mail). Superb	£60.00
(f)	As above. Reproduction 'flimsy', on very much less flimsy paper than the originals. Produced for Stampex 1959, commemorating the diamond jubilee of the Service , though oddly the design is based on the rival Agency forms! An attractive curio	£7.50

1d DOMINION 'OFFICIAL'

The concluding part of our listing of one of N.Z.'s best specialist interest stamps.

227(a)	De La Rue Paper (J01a). Single copy, mint unhinged	£1.30
(b)	As above, but lightly hinged, fine	85p
(c)	As above. Three excellent shades, used	40p
(d)	As above. Good mint copy with R5/24 'Broken Globe' variety (J01aY) ..	£12.50
(e)	As above. The same variety, but fine used	£4.25
(f)	As above. Used example of the R10/19 'Q' flaw (J01aW)	£11.50
(g)	As above. Mint copy with superb complete offset impression on back (J01aZ)	£16.50
228	Jones Paper (J02a). Very lightly hinged mint copy	£7.50
229(a)	Art Paper, Litho Watermark (J05a). Mint, unhinged and superb	£4.25
(b)	As above, but fine lightly hinged mint	£3.00
(c)	As above. Fine used example. Scarce	£8.25
230(a)	Cowan Paper (J06a). Unhinged mint	£3.50
(b)	As above, but previously hinged	£2.00
(c)	As above. Corner block of 4 with sheet serial number. Superfine mint	£14.50
(d)	As above. Set of two superb shades, one a clear print, the other with pronounced blurring of the design (from top row of sheet)	£1.50
231(a)	Cowan Paper, Reversed Watermark (J07a). Finest used.	£8.00
(b)	As above. Set of two shades, very similar to Lot 230(d) above	£17.50

RECENT DEFINITIVE PLATE BLOCKS, Cont.

232(a)	4c on 8c Provisional (PA30a). Imprint/plate block of 10, plate nos 2Ax4 or 2Bx4 (all plate blocks of this stamp are without side selvage, as left selvages were removed from complete sheets during the surcharging process), each	65p
(b)	As above. Two different sheet value blocks of 10 (the provisional sheet value is in the bottom selvage)	£1.30
233(a)	14c on 10c Provisional (PA31a). Imprint/plate block of 10, two reprint spots by R10/1, plate nos 3A2A2A2A2A or 3B2B2B2B2B, each	£2.00
(b)	As above. Imprint/plate block of 10, three reprint spots by R10/1, plate nos 3A2Ax4, 3B2Bx4, 4A2Ax4 or 4B2Bx4, each	£2.00

(c)	As above. Seven different sheet value blocks (6 stamps per block) — four from the top-right corner of sheets showing the "old" sheet value obliterated, three from the bottom-right corner with the new sheet value inserted	£15.00
(d)	As above. Two sheet value blocks, one from the top-right corner, the other from bottom-right	£4.00
234(a)	17c on 6c Provisional (PA32a). Imprint/plate block of 10, plate nos 2Ax5 or 2Bx5 (as in the 4c on 8c, no side selvage), each	£2.25
(b)	As above. Two sheet value blocks of 6, both different	£3.75
235(a)	20c on 7c Provisional (PA33a). Imprint/plate block of 15 with one reprint spot by R8/1, plate no. 2Ax5	£4.00
(b)	As above. Imprint/plate block of 15 with two reprint spots by R8/1, plate nos 2Ax5 or 2Bx5, each	£4.00
(c)	As above. Two sheet value blocks of 6, both different	£3.75
236	\$5 Beehive (PA34a). Imprint block of 6 — incidentally we understand this stamp is to be withdrawn in April	£22.00
237(a)	24c Map, perf. 12½ x 12½ (PA35a). Imprint/plate block of 6, plate dots 1:1:1, bottom selvage perforated or not perforated, each	£6.00
(b)	As above. As (a), but dots 2:1:1, each	£6.00
(c)	As above. As (a), but dots 1:1:2, bottom selvage not perforated only (Cat. \$50)	£15.00
(d)	As above. As (a) but dots 1:2:2, each	£6.00
(e)	As above. Sheet value block of 6	£5.00
238(a)	24c Map, perf. 14½ x 14 (PA35b). Imprint/plate block of 6, plate dots 2:1:3, bottom selvage perforated or not perforated, each	£2.75
(b)	As above. As (a) but dots 3:2:3, each	£2.75
(c)	As above. As (a) but dots 1:1:4, each	£2.75
(d)	As above. As (a) but dots 1:1:5, each	£2.75
(e)	As above. As (a) but dots 2:1:5, each	£2.75
(f)	As above. As (a) but dots 2:2:5, each	£4.00
(g)	As above. As (a) but dots 1:1:6, each	£4.00
(h)	As above. Sheet value block of 6	£2.25

(To be concluded)