

NEW ZEALAND BULLETIN



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IS MESH YOUR PROBLEM?

by Colin Hamilton

Over the years many thousands of words have appeared in these columns, and in those of the New Zealand Newsletter (not to mention the more permanent series of Notes in the C. P. Catalogue) on the subject of paper mesh recognition, and its importance in the positive identification, and rapid sorting, of a whole host of otherwise "difficult" N. Z. stamps.

Just consider for a moment the following list of issues:

$\frac{1}{2}$ d Newspaper Stamp, Second Sidefaces, $\frac{1}{2}$ d Mt
Cook, 1d Universal, 1d Dominion, K. G. V,
1935-43 Pictorials, K. G. VI, Life Insurance,
Postage Dues, Arms Types.

In identifying and sorting every one of these, a knowledge of mesh is always of inestimable value, and sometimes essential. Nevertheless my impression is that to the vast majority of collectors, mesh remains a closed book. In the minds of most, it is at best "something for the experts"; at worst, "a figment of someone's imagination".

I wonder how much of this peculiar attitude of mind stems from the fact that virtually everything which has ever been written on the subject (and certainly everything worthwhile) has come from the pen of one man - Mr Campbell Paterson's, of course. Incredibly, "C. P. 's" has been for twenty years and more a lone voice in propounding what is beyond doubt the greatest single aid available to anyone - I repeat ANYONE - who wants to increase his understanding, appreciation and enjoyment of his stamps.

Perhaps a few words from someone who is himself a comparatively recent initiate will help to remove the mystique which seems to surround mesh. I assume that readers have already studied the Notes on Papers and Mesh in the Catalogue, or will at the very least read those Notes in conjunction with this article.

When I joined C. P. Ltd some three years ago the word Mesh conveyed nothing more to me than its usual dictionary definitions. Yet I have a clear recollection of being set a "mesh-test" before I'd been on the staff for a fortnight, and of getting every one correct first time (not without a good long look at each example, I admit, but correct all the same). I hasten to add that this is mentioned not in self praise, but simply to show that the alleged intricacies of mesh can be grasped in a remarkably short time without, I'm convinced, any special skill or aptitude. Certainly I would claim none, not even extra keen eyesight - in point of fact I wear glasses to counteract a bad case of myopia!

The whole secret of distinguishing mesh in paper is to know what it is you are looking for, so ideally the absolute beginner should find someone who knows his mesh, and charm a practical lesson out of him. Five minutes at the outside should be all that's necessary to set anyone on the right path. It is all too easy for the beginner working alone to see something in paper which he thinks is mesh. Perhaps the most common example of such a false

trail occurs in the Coarse Paper issues of the 1936-43 Pictorials and the K. G. VI King's Head Definitives. These poor quality papers all have, to a greater or lesser degree, a pattern of parallel ridges (I would describe it as "ribbing") which the unwary, or unprepared, might well assume to be the mesh. The trouble is that this pattern runs at right angles to the mesh, so it will be obvious what disastrous results would accrue from any attempt at sorting on this basis.

The presence of mesh, per se, gives paper an inherent weakness along the direction of the mesh. Anyone who has torn an advertisement from a newspaper will have - consciously or unconsciously - demonstrated this fact very effectively. Newsprint tears relatively easily, and neatly, along the mesh (by way of example, in my Daily Telegraph that is vertically), while a tear across the mesh, however carefully done, tends to look like a dog's hind leg.

This test isn't recommended for your stamps, of course, but the built-in paper weakness mentioned does provide two useful aids to detecting the direction of the mesh:

- (i) The "curling" test described fully in the Catalogue Notes, on Permanent Page XII.
- (ii) Hold a stamp edgewise between thumb and forefinger, and apply slight pressure so that the paper "arches", or curves like a bow, between your fingers. Having done this test in both directions (by compressing the stamp side to side and top to bottom in turn) you should feel a distinct difference in the resistance to the pressure. The resistance is always less when bending along the direction of the mesh than across it.

It should be emphasised that these are aids only, and particularly in the case of the curling test, not 100% reliable. Traces of an old hinge remaining on the stamp, for instance, can give a completely false result.

There is no substitute for actually seeing the mesh, and to the examples for initial study given in the Catalogue Notes I would add, for vertical mesh, the Waterlow paper issues of the $\frac{1}{2}$ d Mt Cook and the 1d Universal (i.e. Fla and G2a), and for horizontal mesh any of the 1931 Air Stamps, and any Arms Type stamp on Cowan paper. All of these have very clear mesh characteristics.

There is, of course, considerable personal satisfaction to be gained simply from acquiring the knack of reading mesh. But that apart, take another look at the list of issues in which the knowledge can be put to good use. Faced with that little lot, can you afford to carry on not knowing all about mesh?

SOME STAFF CHANGES AT C. P. LTD.

Mr Campbell Paterson, Chairman of the Company, is returning to New Zealand shortly. He will be devoting much of his time there to our rapidly expanding Publications Department. He will, of course, continue to supervise Company policy and deal with inter-branch liaison. As always he will be available to anyone requiring his personal attention or advice.

Mr Warwick Paterson becomes Managing Director of the Company, and continues as Manager of the Auckland Branch.

Mr Colin Hamilton becomes Manager of the Woking Branch, and will be ably assisted by Miss Dorothy Tutt, who remains in charge of the Mail Order and New Issues Departments at Woking. We expect to make an additional appointment to the senior Woking staff in the near future (only those with some professional philatelic experience, and definite executive potential, need apply!)

Mr Peter Collins has resigned his position on the staff, and carries with him our best wishes for his future prosperity.

A MISCELLANY OF UNUSUAL OFFERS

- 401 1906 Christchurch Exhibition. The complete set, $\frac{1}{2}$ d-6d, in beautifully fresh mint blocks of four, with an additional block of the $\frac{1}{2}$ d in a contrasting shade of green. As an extra bonus, both of the $\frac{1}{2}$ d blocks, and the 6d, have the watermark "sideways inverted". A scarce and desirable lot, and highly recommended at... £60
- 402(a) 1965 Parliamentary Conference. In a small number of issued sheets of the 9d value, the flagstaffs on Parliament House were either very faint or completely missing on a few stamps in row 12 (the bottom row of the sheet). We can offer an example of this striking and mysterious variety in a mint positional block of eight, which also includes the "Broken corner of building" variety (R11/6). The double variety block £12.50
- (b) As above. Plate blocks of the Parliamentary Conference issue (especially of the 2/-) have never been easy to come by. Take the opportunity now to secure the complete set of plate numbers - 2 x 4d, 1 x 9d and 1 x 2/-, all in mint blocks of four... £10
- 403 1d Universal Trial Slot Machine Stamps (GSLa, S.G. 420) As dispensed from the very early "Dickie" experimental slot machines installed in the G. P. O. Wellington, our offer is of Dot Plate stamps, imperf all round, with two large holes in each vertical gutter. Finest mint.
- Single £10
Pair £18.50
- 404 Q. E. Middle Value 1/- Die 2. (N10b, S.G. 732a). We've said it before, and we'll say it again - this stamp is SCARCE, much scarcer than is generally realised. If it's missing from your collection (and it probably is!) make sure of a copy now. Finest used, and guaranteed the real thing £7.50
- P. S. If you happen to have any spare mint copies of this stamp, just send them along to us. We'll be happy to consider your asking price!
- 405 Modern Varieties Used. The following lots consist entirely of constant plate varieties. For your convenience, sheet positions are pencilled lightly on the backs.
- (a) 1960 4d Puarangi. R6/4 "Foor to 4", R9/9 "P for D", and R18/3 "Bulging petal". The three big varieties on this stamp. 50p
- (b) 1960 $\frac{1}{2}$ d Manuka. R1/4 Flaw on D of $\frac{1}{2}$ d and R7/8 "Teardrop by 2". Also 1d Karaka. R20/1 Flaw on N of NEW. Three excellent variety stamps. 20p
- (c) 1960 2d Kaka Beak. No less than seven different varieties, all good, including of course the R3/1 ZFALAND (this one alone catalogued at £6!). Full description of all varieties is included. A superb specialist lot £4.50
- (d) As above. The ZFALAND variety only. A snip at £3
- (e) 1967 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ c, 3c and 4c Flowers. 17 (yes, seventeen!) variety stamps, all different, including the spectacular "Butterfly on flower", "Serif on 2" and "Z flaw" on the 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ c, and the "Gnome's head" on the 3c. The 3c Plate 2B1B1B1B, the most interesting in the whole 1967-70 series, being the only plate known to have been retouched during its printing life, is represented by five plated varieties. Altogether another wonderful specialised display £3.25
- (f) 1962 Telegraph 3d. Always popular, this one, thanks to a whole series of eye-catching varieties. Here we offer a collection of six of the best, again with full description supplied £1.25
- (g) 1964 Road Safety. The prominent R3/2 "Apostrophe" and R5/8 "Black bar on wrist". Both good! 60p
- 406 1967 3c Puarangi. Of particular interest to purchasers of Lot 405(e), two complete sheets (of 200 stamps each) from Plate 2B1B1B1B, one sheet being printed from the original state of the plate, the other from the later (retouched) state. We also include a comprehensive checklist of the more prominent varieties on both sheets. No doubt there are many more to be found by the keen student. The two fascinating sheets, complete mint £17.50

REFERENCE SET - K. G. V. SURFACE-PRINTED

Many collectors have difficulty in identifying the various papers, watermarks and perforations of these issues. To resolve any doubts you may have, we've prepared yet another of our ever-popular Reference Sets. It comprises:

- (i) De La Rue Paper, Perf 14 x 15, represented by the 1½d Orange-brown in two shades. Used.
- (ii) Jones Paper, Perf 14 x 15. 3d overprinted "OFFICIAL" Used.
- (iii) Cowan Experimental Paper, Perf 14 x 15. The scarce one with the De La Rue type watermark, found only in the ½d. Our reference copy is mint.
- (iv) Cowan Paper, Perf 14 x 15. Three shades of the 1d Field Marshal, used.
- (v) Cowan Paper, Perf 14. Again the 1d Field Marshal is the example - this time in four excellent shades, used.
- (vi) Cowan Abnormal Paper, Perf 14 x 15. This paper was surfaced on the wrong side, with the result that the watermark appeared reversed. Represented by the ½d, used.
- (vii) Wiggins Teape Paper, Perf 14. Two shades of the 1d Field Marshal, used. Note the vertical mesh - the feature which distinguishes the Wiggins Teape papers from all others in the Surface-Printed issues.

The reference set of 14 stamps as described, all fully identified. Just what you need to give you confidence in sorting your Georges £1.75

Note: If demand is as heavy as usual for reference sets, we may have to include substitute examples in one or two instances. Of course this will in no way detract from the reference value of the set.

RECENT ISSUES

As this Bulletin goes to press, overseas mails have not yet fully recovered from the effects of the recent postal strike, and some of our supplies of the items listed below have not yet reached us. Orders from this list, however, will be given priority, as soon as stocks are to hand.

- 20th January, 1971. New Definitive Series (contd).
 15c Maori Club. Mint single 10p. Plate Block 70p
 18c Fish Hook. Mint single 12p. Plate Block 84p
 20c Tattoo. Mint single 13p. Plate Block 90p
 F. D. C. with all three values 42p
- 10th February 1971. 50th Anniv. Country Women's Institutes 4c.
 Mint single 3p. Plate Block..15p
- 50th Anniv. Rotary International 10c.
 Mint single 7p. Plate Block.. 35p
 F. D. C. (both stamps on one cover) 15p
- 3rd March 1971. One Ton Cup Yachting 5c, 8c. Set of two, mint 9p
 Plate Blocks (2) 63p
 F. D. C. 15p

Important note: Because of escalating costs (of items which are beyond our control), we have to ask that a Postage/Handling Charge of 5p be added to all orders totalling £2 or less, please.