# Tasmania "Commonwealth" Perfin "OS" – Fakes or Not?

**David McNamee, FRPSL**

Australian Commonwealth Government departments operating in Tasmania used Tasmanian stamps perforated "OS" starting 20 September 1904. The "OS" perforations were done by the Commonwealth Government Printing Office in Melbourne.

W. E. Tinsley's book, *Tasmania: Stamps and Postal History* (London: RPSL, 1986) describes the perfin "OS" found on Tasmanian stamps as follows:

> "In Tasmania, Federal departments used stamps perforated O S and State departments used stamps perforated T.
>
> Two types of the O S are known, Type A being relatively common while Type B is quite scarce.
>
> Type A is 10mm high and 14mm wide overall, with 2mm between letters, each letter consisting of 12 holes.
>
> Type B is 8½mm high by 16mm wide, with 4mm spacing between letters. The O comprises 12 holes and the S 11 holes."

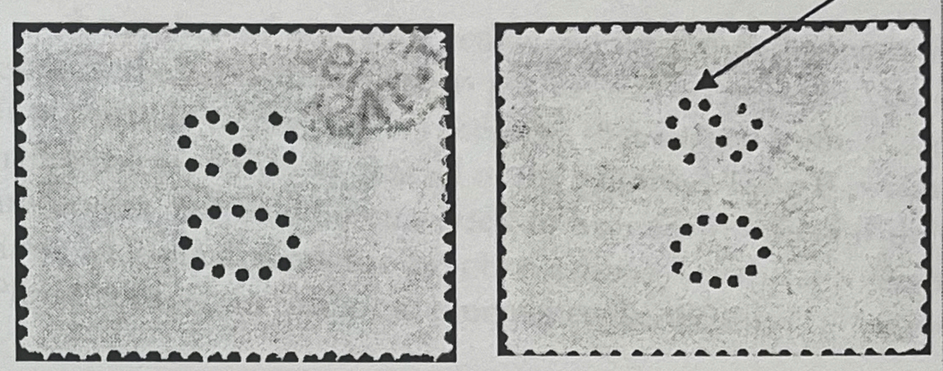
Tinsley reported two copies of the Type B perfin "OS" on the Pictorial issue dated 30 July 1907 and 7 September 1912. Since the publication of his book, several other copies on Tasmanian Pictorials have been reported:

| Value | Orientation | Date | Cancel |
|---|---|---|---|
| **2d** | Parallel to short axis | No date reported | Smithton, Tas |
| **1d** | Parallel to long axis | 1 SEP 1909 | Launceston, Tas |
| **2d** | Parallel to short axis | 29 JAN 1908 | Derby, Tas |
| **3d** | Parallel to long axis — inverted & reversed | 14 MAY 1903 | Sydney, NSW |

The Type B is also known colloquially as the "Commonwealth" type "OS" because it resembles closely the small "OS" found from 1913 on the Kangaroo issue of the Australian Commonwealth. The Commonwealth "OS" has also been reported on a South Australian 1d red and a Victorian 1d red.

In order to perforate the Tasmanian Pictorial stamps with the Commonwealth "OS" over the period 1907-1912 (ignoring the 3d in the table above for now), the machine and heads to perforate the Kangaroo issue in late 1913 had to be in the Government Printing Office for at least six years prior. If so, why are there not more State stamps found with this type of perfin? Why was the larger perfin "OS" used first on the Kangaroo issue since it made the stamps obviously so weak? These questions raise some doubts about the authenticity of all Type B perfin "OS."

*Position of 8th Hole (see text)*



**Type A** **Type B**

Stamps with the normal perfin "OS" on the short or narrow axis are found 20 September 1904 to 16 June 1906 only. Both 2d stamps in our table at left are perforated on the short axis, but the only dated copy of the Type B perfin "OS" is beyond the latest time boundary. Could this also indicate a possible fake?

The appearance of the Type B perfins on the 1d and 2d Pictorials closely resembles the actual Commonwealth perfin "OS." Hole diameter is consistent between Type A and B, and the holes are cleanly cut. There is nothing about the perfin itself to arouse suspicion for the 1d and 2d stamps found to date.




**Supposed Type B**

**Probable Fake**

The perfin on the 3d I recently acquired is another matter. The following red flags seem to be yelling "fake!"

- The date on the 3d (1903) is prior to the introduction of perfin "OS" in Tasmania.
- The 3d stamp was used in combination with at least one other stamp (partial second strike of the c.d.s. on left). The 3d was used most often to pay the Registration Fee for registered mail. The c.d.s. indicates usage of Tasmanian stamp in New South Wales, which is possible only for paquebot or loose ship letters posted at dockside or on board, scenarios that are unlikely for registered official mail.
- The "OS" is inverted and reversed. Such gross errors have never been reported for Type A perfins. Because of the "gang"-type pin setup, the perforations are unusually regular and well-centered with only an occasional perfin found slightly off-center. Inverted and reversed means the sheet of stamps was in the machine upside down and backwards while the operator punched one row at a time without noticing.
- The pattern size is correct, but the hole placement and diameter are not. The hole following the three straight holes in the "S" (#8) is *behind* the third hole (#7) on the 3d, but in the other Type B candidates, the #8 hole sticks out slightly in *front* of #7. The holes on the 3d are smaller, giving the impression that they were made by a pointed instrument rather than cut by a round pin.

A number of questions remain about the authenticity of each of the 1d and 2d Type B perfin "OS" reported to date. It is possible to construct a scenario that makes some sense; nevertheless, it may be that all of the reported Type B perfins are bogus. I would be interested to hear from others if they have additional thoughts or observations on this problem. Please contact the author at dmcnamee@aol.com. *SAS/O*


*Join the. . .*

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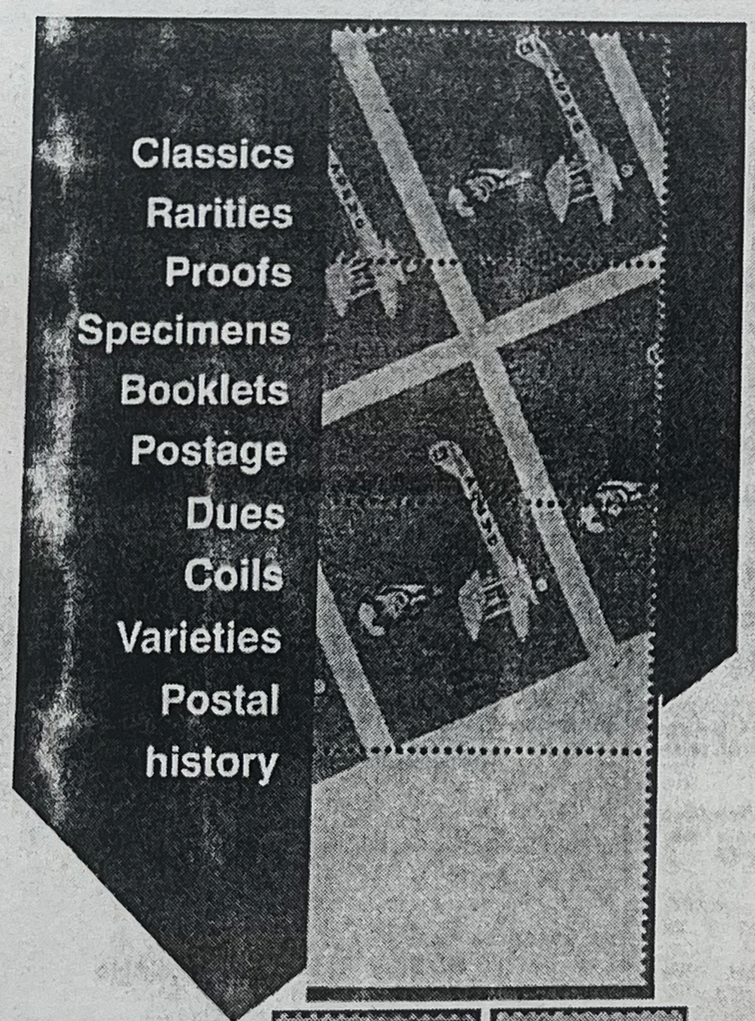
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Email: info@richardjuzwin.com.au

T Perfin - State Departments

4×6

5×4

5×5

5×6

6×4

6×5

6×6

6×7

6×8

7×4

7×5

7×6

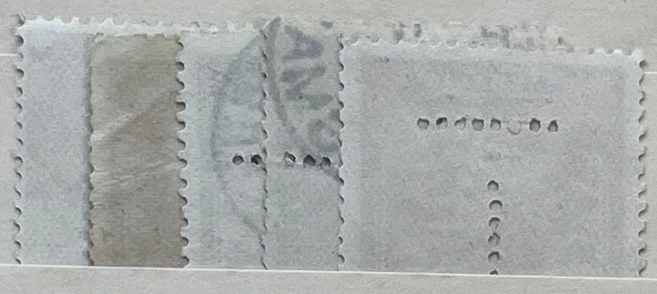
7×7

7×8

T Perfin — State Departments

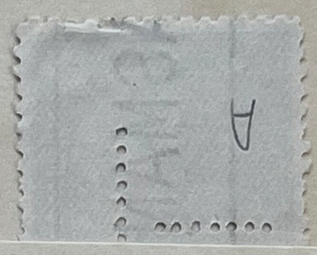
8×6

8×8

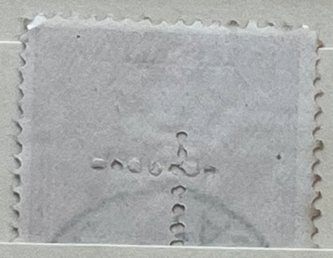





8×7



7×10
(not listed
by Finsley)



A







A

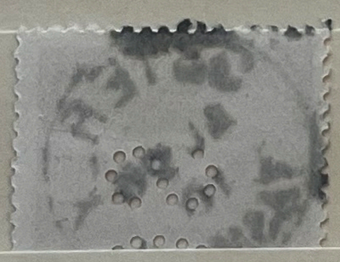




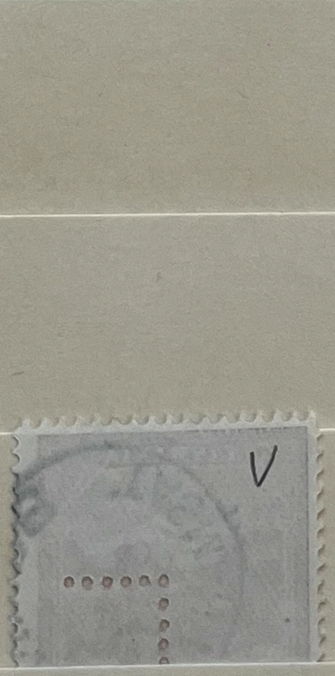


A

05



5



V



8 vertical punches only

PERFINS
ON 2d





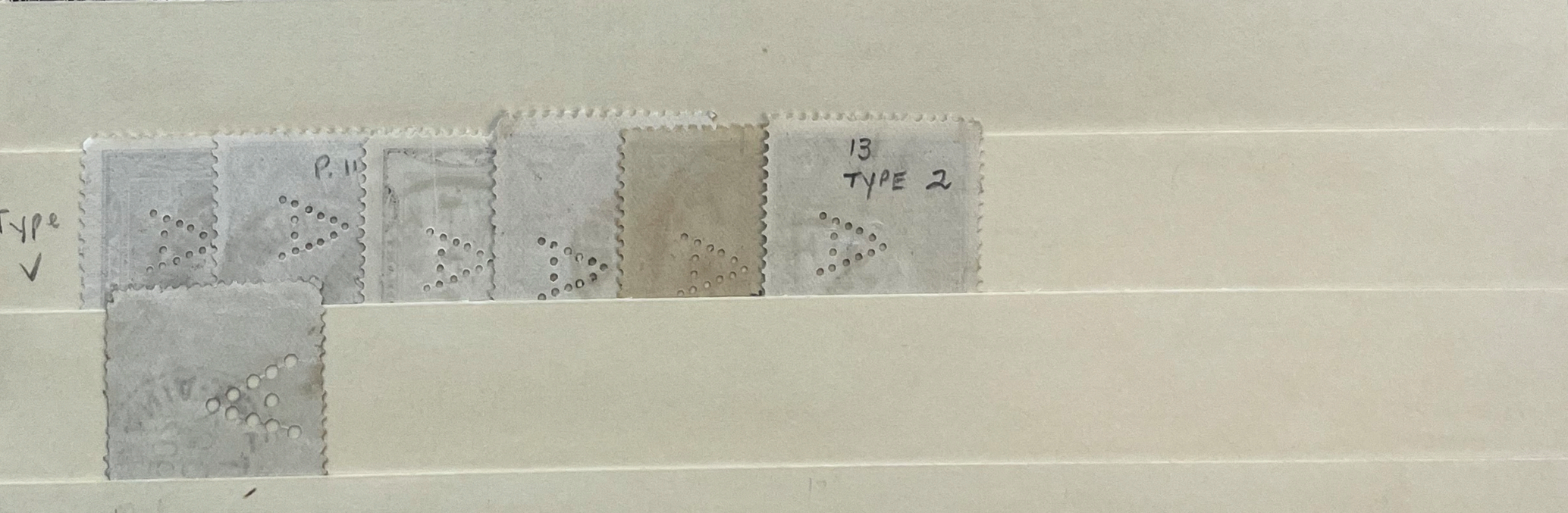





05






Type
✓

"T" PERF'N - STATE DEPARTMENTS

WMK TAS




V/CROWN







CROWN/A




LITHO

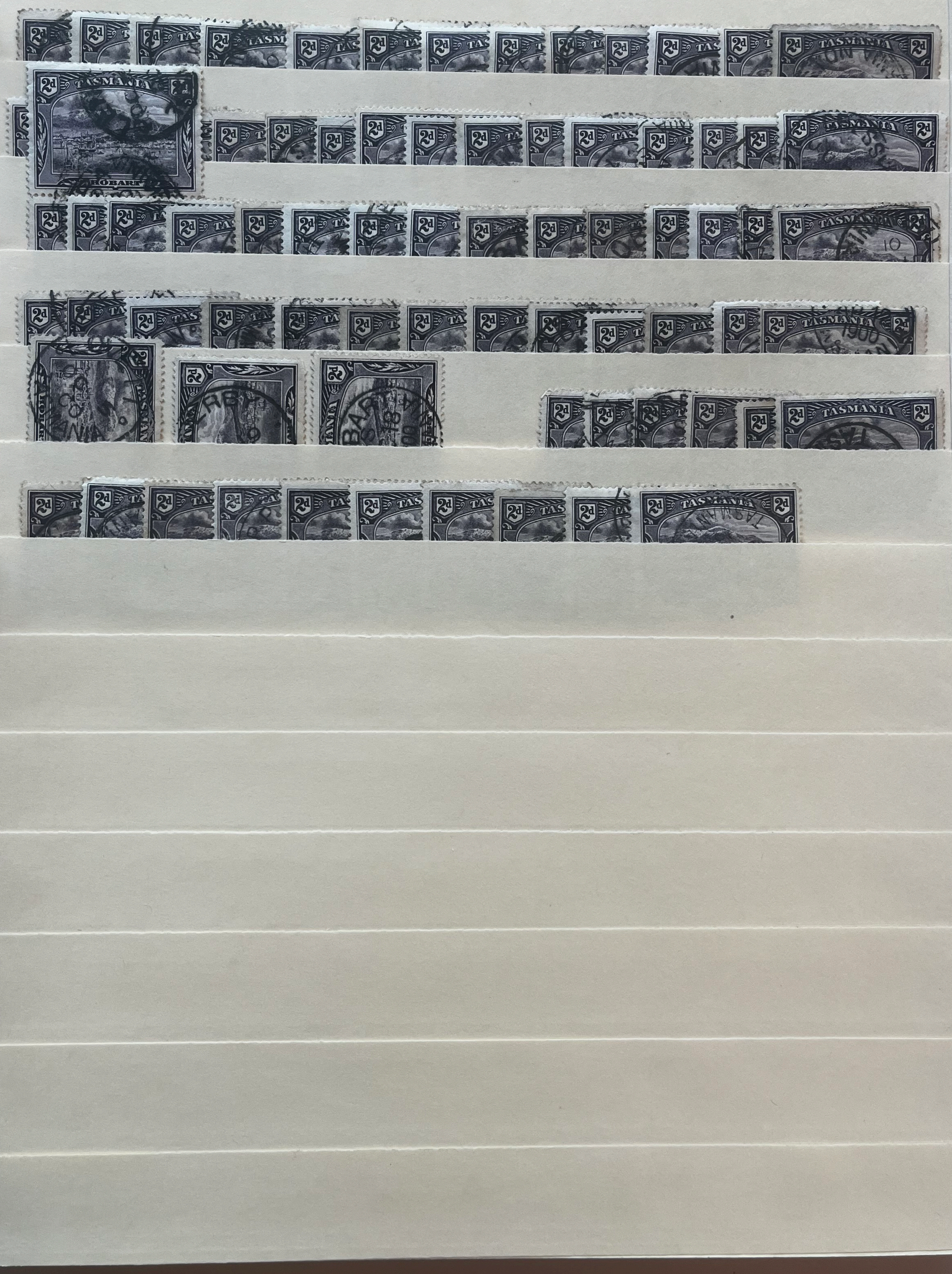



TYPO

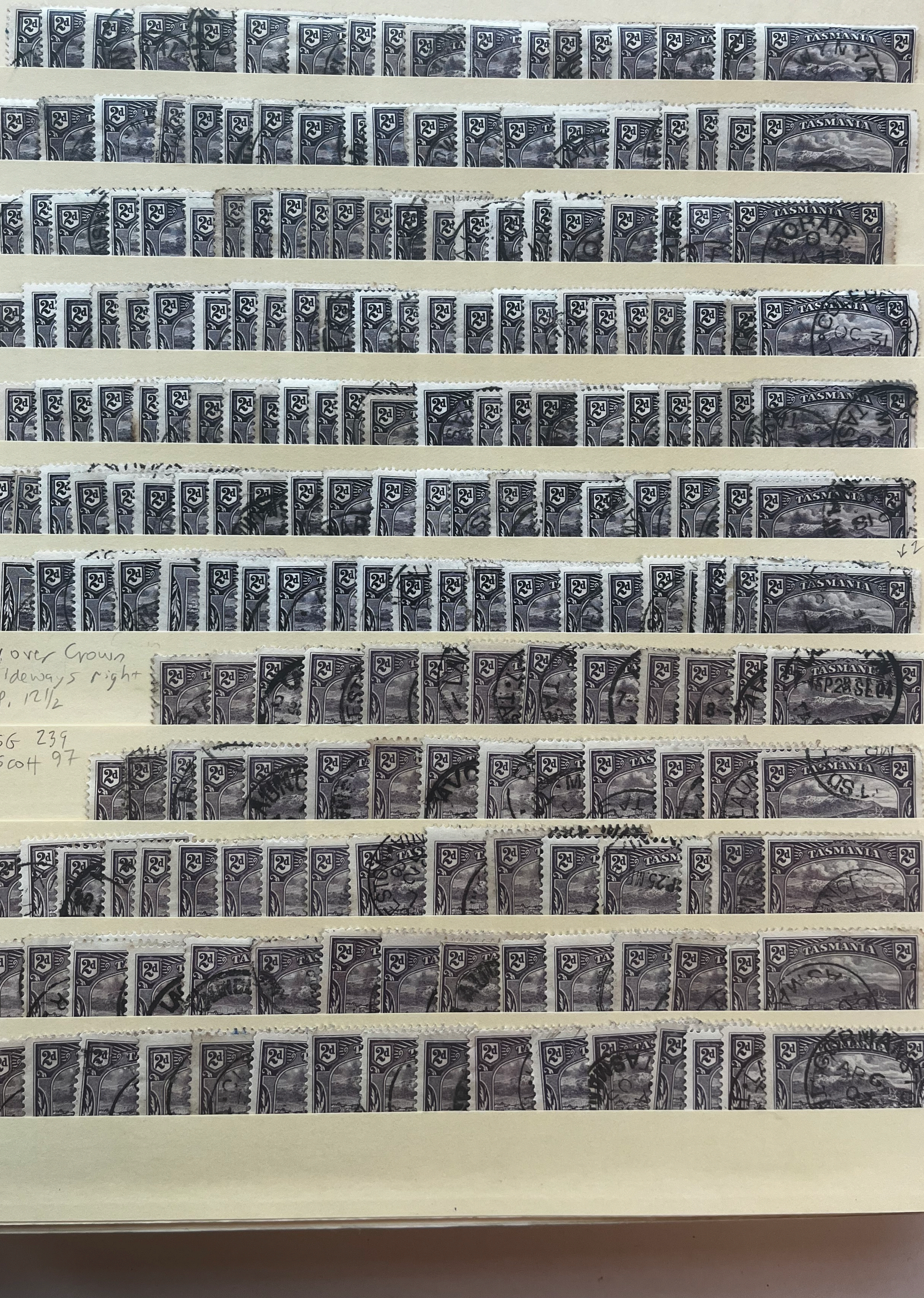


Wmk TAS

Scott 88
SG 231



wmk TAS
Scott 88
SG 231
perf. 14




V over Crown
sideways right
P. 12½

SG 239
Scott 97

V over Crown
sideways right
P 12½
SG 239 Sc 4 97

guide line

white spot right of left value tablet

white slash above right value tablet

12½ crown left "searchlight" flaw

wmk upright

V over Crown
sideways left
P. 12½

white spot in "2" in
left value tablet

Damage and color
dots in "TASMANIA"

white spot in "2"
right value tablet

horizontal white
scratch thru sky

horiz. color
line left side

V over Crown
sideways right
P. 11 . SG 239c, 239ca












dot inside "d"
left value tablet




broken frameline



white spot

V over Crown
upright / inverted
P 12½ *



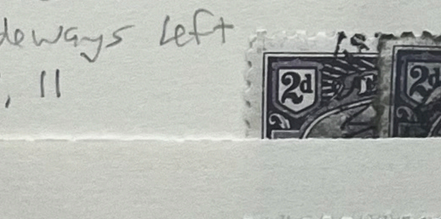
V over Crown
Sideways Left
P, 11









color spots left of ferns left of HOBART



all-over purple specks



white spot



Circular color flaws top of ferns, both sides




broken line of shading



white spots

Crown over A
Sideways right
Perf 12½

Lithographed

SG 245



oval color flaw left of LVT

blotches

extra frame line

blotches in background

narrow stamp

Crown over A
sideways Left
perf. 12½

LITHOGRAPHED

SG 245



white diagonal flaw in Sea above "T" pl 27, 28 (IV)

damage at right

"2" and "d" joined

white line in "R" of HOBART

white spot in left "d"

color dot left of 'T' in TASMANIA

Crown over A
sideways right
Perf. 11

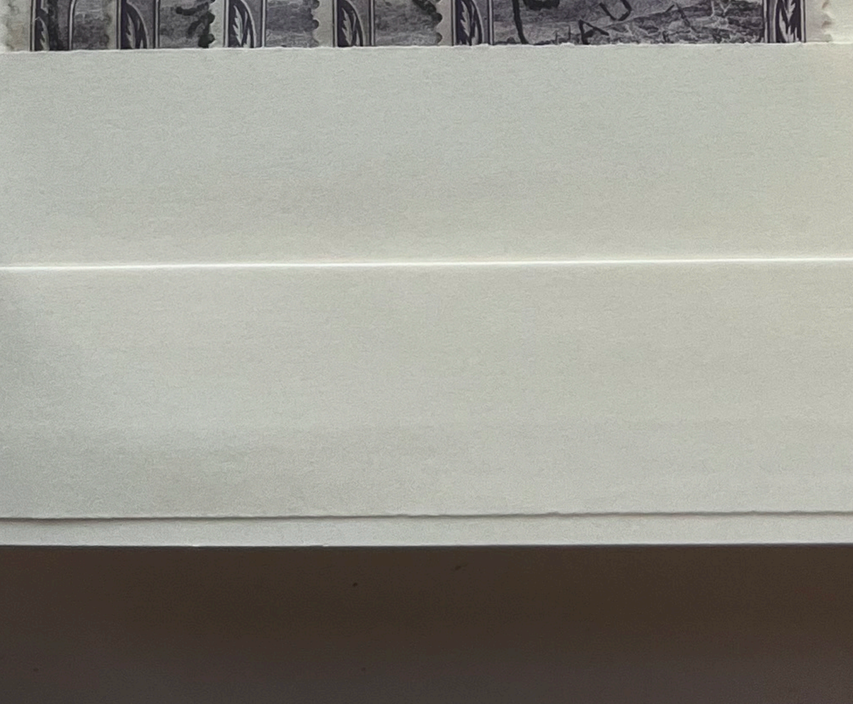
Lithographed

SG 245a



Sideways Left
Perf. 11







Flaw in value tablet

Crown over A
Sideways right
Perf. 12½
Typographed

SG 251

SG 251a
wmk upright

SG 251a var.
wmk upright—
inverted

upright.
inverted

P. 11

White spots on
"N" and "A"

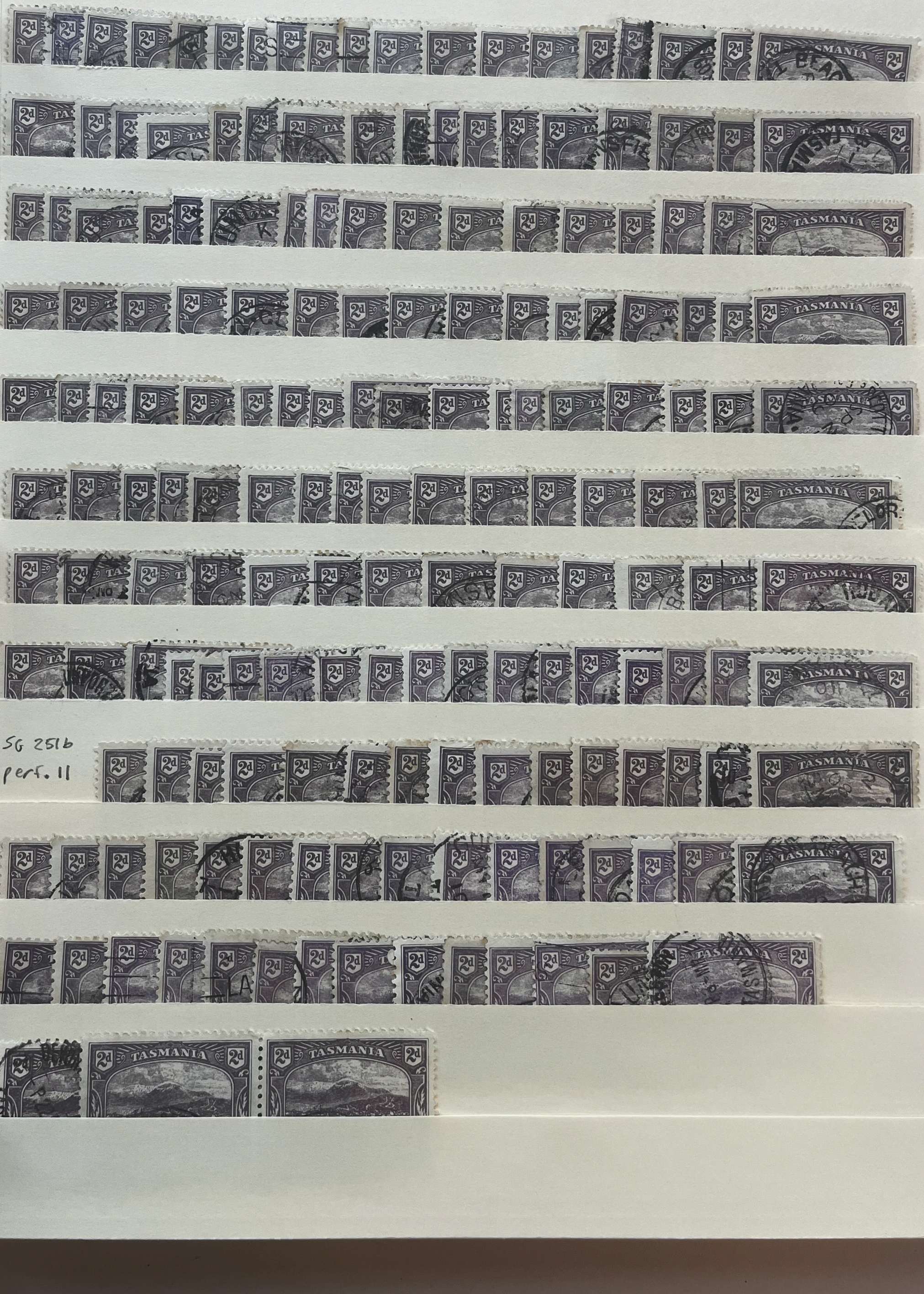
Corner flaw

A-5

"Bombed steamer"
Plate 2, Stamp 4

Crown over A
Sideways left
Perf. 12½

TYPOGRAPHED
SG 251




SG 251b
perf. 11

CROWN OVER A
SIDEWAYS RIGHT
PERF 11
TYPOGRAPHED

SG 251b

SIDEWAYS LEFT
Perf 11

Pl. 1 Pos 30

CROWN OVER A
SIDEWAYS RIGHT
PERF 11
TYPOGRAPHED

SG251b



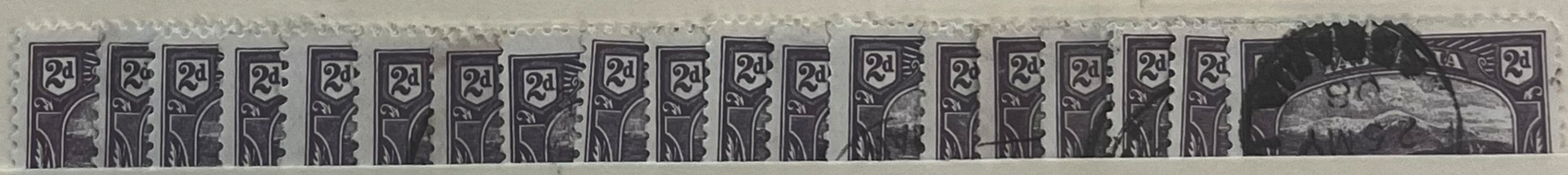




wmk upright
SG251ba




wmk upright –
inverted
SG 251ba var





CROWN OVER A
SIDEWAYS RIGHT
PERF 12½
STEREOTYPED

SG 252




1000—24

1030—15

12½
Left

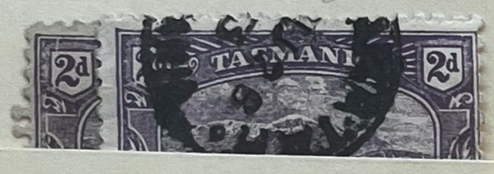



P. 11
SIDEWAYS
RIGHT




1150— 25

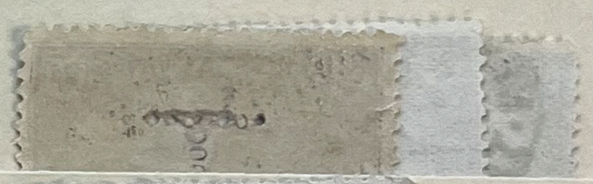
P11
SIDEWAYS
LEFT



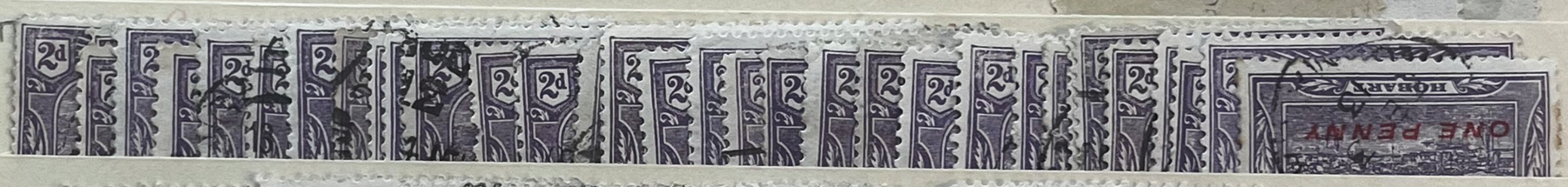
10-9



← broken frame line



OVERPRINT
SG 259
12½ right



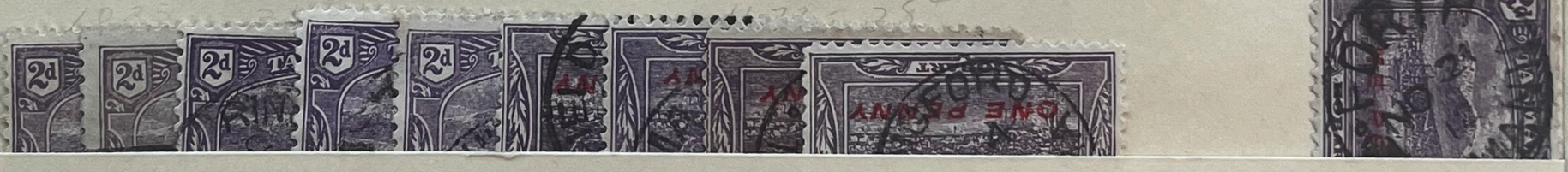

12½ left






7×6

11 right




11 left




framelines




19-24

No. 65

watermarks
unchecked





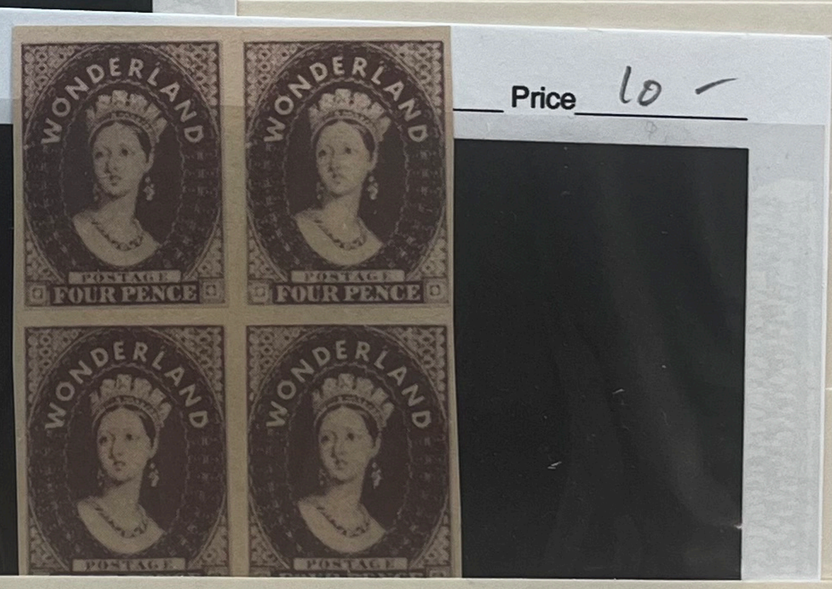




Price 10 -




Price 10 -




Price 10 -

and as amended by
Sec. 23 of 2 Geo. V.,
No. 65 ...

PAYMENT ORDERED BY THE COUNCIL

4 JAN 1933

As per minute dated ..... 19

R G Allwright Warden

Countersigned

Guy A. Palmer Council Clerk

| Voucher No. | Cheque No. |
|---|---|
| 386 | 480 |

# THE MUNICIPALITY OF HAMILTON

Dr. to R. O. & Wm. Shoobridge

## ANALYSIS OF VOUCHER EXPENDITURE

| Subdivision of Account | General Account £ | s. | d. | Road Rate Account Ward | Amount £ | s. | d. | Health Account £ | s. | d. | Rabbit Account £ | s. | d. | Sundry Roads Account £ | s. | d. | Total £ | s. | d. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Administrative Charges (proportion) ... | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Expenditure authorised under Sec. 113 of 6 Ed. VII., No. 31 and as amended by Sec. 23 of 2 Geo. V., No. 65 ... ... | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 1 | | | | | |
| Other charges | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Other charges ...

TOTALS ...

| Period of Service | PARTICULARS | Amount £ | s. | d. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 19..... | Refund of contribution towards re-construction of Butler's Bridge over Duse River | 10 | . | . |
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| To..... | | £ 10 | . | . |

**Received** from the Municipality of Hamilton Ten pounds

~~shillings and~~ ~~pence~~

Date of Payment ..... 19

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Above £15 up to and including £25 3d.
Above £25 up to and including £50 4d.

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W221530

TASMANIA 2½ STAMP DUTY

P/P R. O. & D. M. SHOOBRIDGE

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Register Login

Enter Key Words

Government of Tasmania

The Tasmanian Government
Tourist and Immigration Dept.
COLLECTION ACCOUNT

23 JAN 1956

Commonwealth Bank of Australia
HOBART, TAS.

005948

17th January 1956

Pay THE NURSES' CLUB or Order

the sum of TWENTY-ONE POUNDS FIFTEEN SHILLINGS £21.15. 0

COMMONWEALTH BANK OF AUSTRALIA 23 JAN 56 HOBART TAS. NOT NEGOTIABLE

H. C. Charlton
Director

J. Loughlin
Countersigning Officer

mail, to "VDL") was excised from New South Wales as a separate Colony.

November 2003, marked the sesquicentenary of the issue of Tasmania's first postage stamps. Two values both inscribed 'VAN DIEMENS LAND' were released, a 1d blue for "town letters", and a 4d orange for "inland letters".

Government of Tasmania

The Tasmanian Government
Tourist and Immigration Dept.
COLLECTION ACCOUNT

Commonwealth Bank of Australia
HOBART, TAS.

016997

24th February 1959

Pay STAR SEDANS or Order

the sum of THREE HUNDRED & SEVENTY SEVEN POUNDS & TWO PENCE £377.0.2.

COMMONWEALTH BANK OF AUSTRALIA 26 FEB 59 HOBART TAS. NOT NEGOTIABLE

26 FEB 1959

H. C. Charlton
Director

Countersigning Officer

available.

The original plates for both the 1d and 4d survived but each impression was scored-through with two parallel lines. In 1879 a number of sheets were printed from the defaced plates. For many years these were considered

W 221530

£2
A
A
A
No
n

Fro

To

M M star sedans

A G Jacobson

*Endorsement of Payee*

The correct endorsement of this cheque is sufficient discharge for the purposes of the Stamp Duties Act 1931 for the amount specified therein, being payment for

ACCOMMODATION

.....

and no other receipt is necessary provided the correct stamp duty is attached.




PAID R.O.

PARTIC

re-co

of co

Rose S. Rasey (matron)

for: The Nurses' Club.

*Endorsement of Payee*

The correct endorsement of this cheque is sufficient discharge for the purposes of the Stamp Duties Act 1931 for the amount specified therein, being payment for

ACCOMMODATION

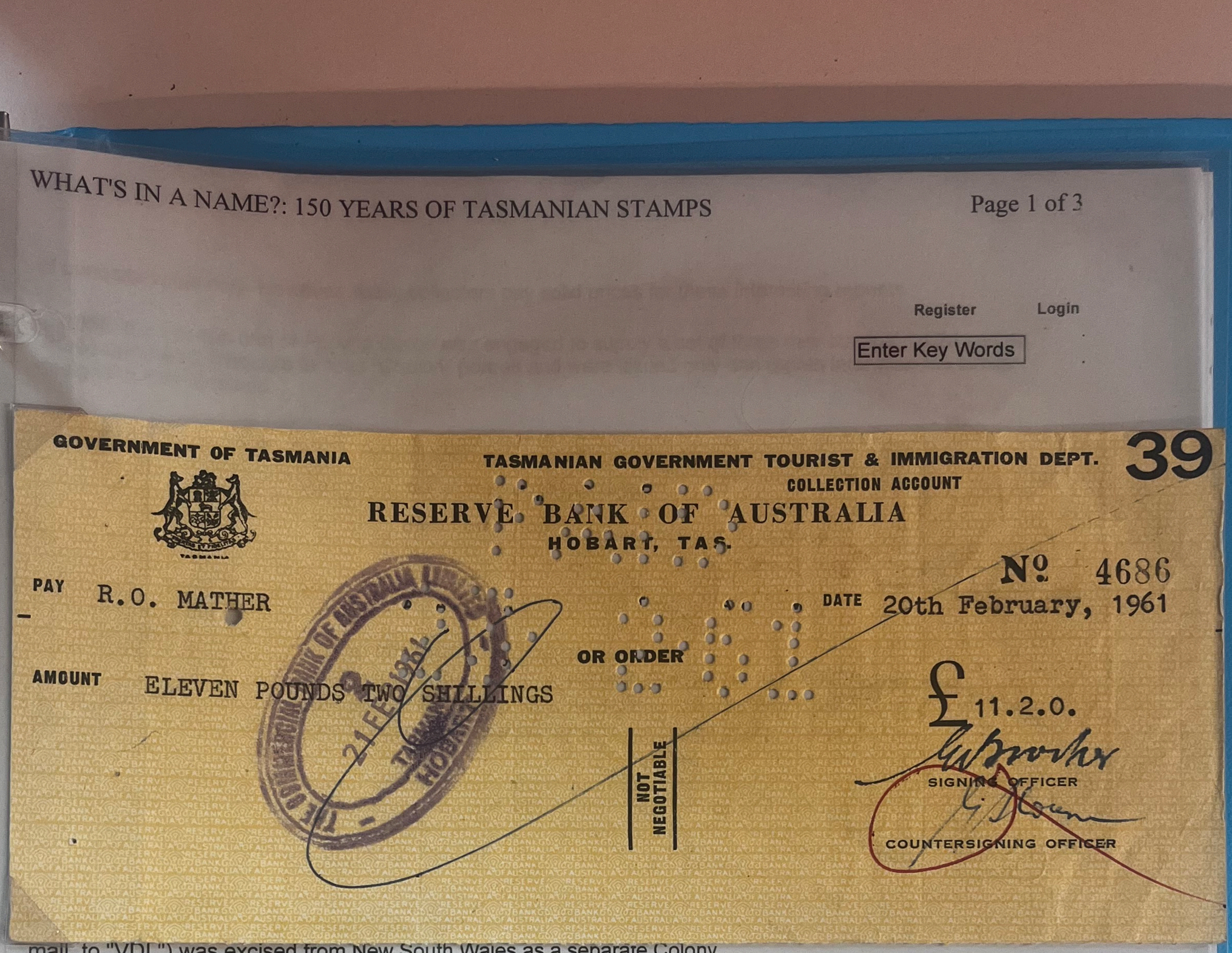
.....

and no other receipt is necessary.



Register Login

Enter Key Words


GOVERNMENT OF TASMANIA

TASMANIAN GOVERNMENT TOURIST & IMMIGRATION DEPT.
COLLECTION ACCOUNT

39

RESERVE BANK OF AUSTRALIA
HOBART, TAS.

No. 4686

PAY R.O. MATHER

DATE 20th February, 1961

AMOUNT ELEVEN POUNDS TWO SHILLINGS

OR ORDER

£ 11.2.0.

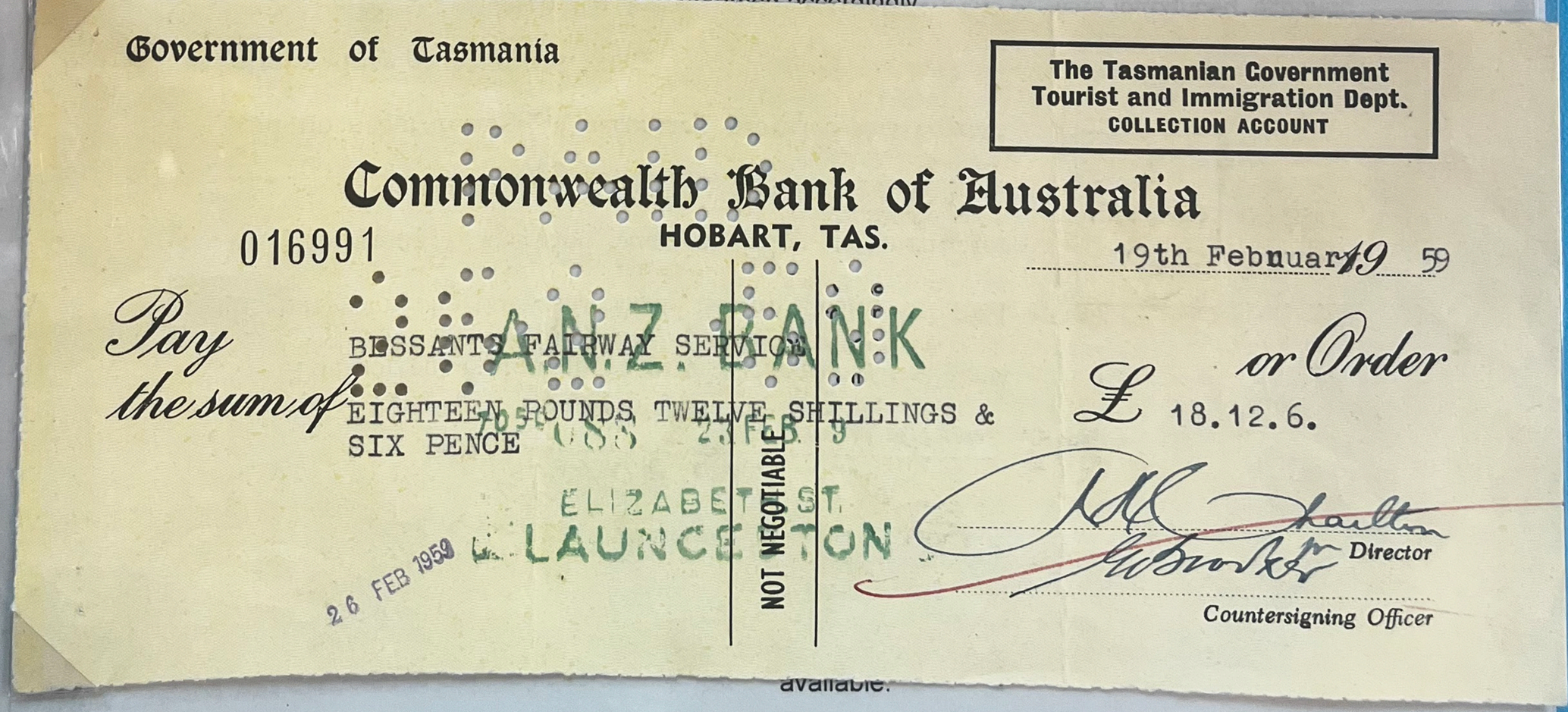
NOT NEGOTIABLE

SIGNING OFFICER

COUNTERSIGNING OFFICER

mail, to "VDL") was excised from New South Wales as a separate Colony.

November 2003, marked the sesquicentenary of the issue of Tasmania's first postage stamps. Two values both inscribed 'VAN DIEMENS LAND' were released, a 1d blue for "town letters", and a 4d orange for "inland letters".


Government of Tasmania

The Tasmanian Government
Tourist and Immigration Dept.
COLLECTION ACCOUNT

Commonwealth Bank of Australia
HOBART, TAS.

016991

19th February 59

Pay the sum of BESSANTS FAIRWAY SERVICE

EIGHTEEN POUNDS TWELVE SHILLINGS & SIX PENCE

or Order

£ 18.12.6.

ANZ BANK

26 FEB 1959 ELIZABETH ST. LAUNCESTON

NOT NEGOTIABLE

Director

Countersigning Officer

available.

The original plates for both the 1d and 4d survived but each impression was scored-through with two parallel lines. In 1879 a number of sheets were printed from the defaced plates. For many years these were considered

Bernard Jarman Service

J A Bernard

*Endorsement of Payee*

The correct endorsement of this cheque is sufficient discharge for the purposes of the Stamp Duties Act 1931 for the amount specified therein, being payment for

MOTOR FARES

and no other receipt is necessary provided the correct stamp duty is attached.







The proper endorsement of this cheque is a full discharge for the amount of such cheque and, with the addition of the required stamp duty, is a correct receipt for the purposes of the Stamp Duties Act, 1931.

*Endorsement of Payee*

45128

Register Login

Enter Key Words

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# WHAT'S IN A NAME?: 150 YEARS OF TASMANIAN STAMPS

1st December 2004

## WHAT'S IN A NAME?: 150 YEARS OF TASMANIAN STAMPS

by Gary Watson

Most readers would be able to rattle off the names of the six States of Australia. However, many will be unaware that our island State, Tasmania, was originally named Van Diemen's Land.

The Dutch navigator Abel Tasman sighted the island's east cost in November 1642 and named it after his benefactor Anthony van Diemen, then the Governor of Batavia. The Dutch never settled in Van Diemen's Land, or any other part of *Terra Nullius* (the unknown land, a term used on early maps that included parts of Australia), but the name was retained by the British who did.

Hobart Town was founded in 1804 by settlers and convicts from Sydney, 1600kms to the north. Launceston and other settlements quickly followed and in 1825 Van Diemen's Land (often abbreviated, especially on inwards mail, to "VDL") was excised from New South Wales as a separate Colony.

November 2003, marked the sesquicentenary of the issue of Tasmania's first postage stamps. Two values both inscribed 'VAN DIEMENS LAND' were released, a 1d blue for "town letters", and a 4d orange for "inland letters". Overseas rates were generally prepaid in cash and endorsed accordingly.

These first primitive emissions were printed at the office of *The Hobart Courier* news-paper and are thus colloquially known as "Couriers". The unflattering portrait of Queen Victoria was engraved by a local artisan by the name of C.W. Coard whose imprint appeared at the base of the sheet.

The Octagonal 4d is quite a common stamp, even on cover, but many examples were cut-to-shape and these are collectable only for the cancellation. Like all imperforate classic issues most have faults or the margins cut close. Superb examples are both rarely encountered and highly attractive.

The 1d Courier has survived in much smaller numbers and, in very fine condition, is rare. The 1d was intended to pay the local delivery rate. However, few covers bearing a single 1d are recorded. Perversely, inland letters bearing a strip of 4 (instead of a single 4d) are more readily available.

The original plates for both the 1d and 4d survived but each impression was scored-through with two parallel lines. In 1879 a number of sheets were printed from the defaced plates. For many years these were considered

of curiosity value only. However, today collectors pay solid prices for these interesting reprints.

In 1855, the London firm of *Perkins Bacon* was engaged to supply a set of three new stamps: 1d 2d and 4d. These featured Corbould's famous "Chalon" portrait and were issued only one month later than the similar designs in New Zealand.

The initial consignment was on paper with a Star watermark. Later printings employed the *Perkins Bacon* plates but were produced in Hobart, firstly on unwatermarked paper, and later on paper impressed with the appropriate numeral of value.

Perkins Baco excelled in the design and engraving aspects of stamp production but their plate-making technique, often described as "chaotic", left a lot to be desired. The individual clichés were often out of alignment and printed too close together. As a result, even single Chalon stamps with full margins are quite scarce, while blocks with clear margins on all sides are rarely seen.

In 1858, 6d and 1/- designs were supplied by *Perkins Bacon*. These two values were the first stamps inscribed 'TASMANIA'. It is a curious circumstance that for the next 12 years the Colony used stamps bearing two different names, despite "Tasmania" being officially adopted in 1855.

This period also saw the introduction of various methods of separating stamps, including oblique and serrated roulettes that resulted in some of the Colony's most elusive, albeit unofficial, stamps.

By 1870 most of the Chalon plates were showing signs of deterioration. Owing to a scandal about their provision of stamps to members of Rowland Hill's family, *Perkins Bacon* had lost their stamp printing contracts. *Thomas De La Rue & Sons* was now the principal stamp-printing firm and produced for Tasmania the Queen Victoria "Sideface" design.

As was the established Tasmanian practice, the plates were sent to Hobart where the printing and perforating were undertaken. (An anomaly was the 1878 London printing of the 1d and 2d from *De La Rue's* reserve plates, and of a new 8d value.) Between 1870 and 1880 nine denominations from ½d to 5/- were introduced, although the Chalon 6d and 1/- designs remained in use until 1892.

One of the major challenges for the collector of both the Chalon and Sideface issues is that they were available not only for postage but also for revenue use. Removal of fiscal manuscript cancellations is commonly encountered.

Many cleaned stamps were fraudulently reused on mail, while other stamps had forged postmarks applied to dupe unsuspecting collectors. A common error is to not recognize stamps cancelled with the 'COLONIAL TREASURER' cds as being fiscals.

A new stamp series, commonly known as "Tablets", was produced by *De La Rue* through the 1890s. Then, in 1899-1900, Tasmania made a bold decision. It requisitioned from *De La Rue* the famous large format "Pictorials" series, one of the most controversial stamp issues of the era and, with British New Guinea's "Lakatois", the high-water mark of *De La Rue's* stamp output.

The Colonial government correctly reasoned that stamps featuring distinctive landscapes would raise Tasmania's profile and directly encourage tourism. The new stamps were a marketing success and even today the Pictorials are the most popular of Tasmania's stamp issues.

On 1st January 1901Tasmania joined with the five mainland Colonies to create the Commonwealth of Australia. (New Zealand was expected to join the Federation but withdrew from negotiations at the eleventh hour.)

One of the consequences of the new political arrangements was the opportunity for the "smaller" States (note they were no longer Colonies) to have their stamps printed in Melbourne thereby obtaining economies of scale that were not previously available to them. The Victorian Government Printer provided new designs for Western

Australia but continued to use Tasmania's Pictorial series.

However, the printing process changed. *De La Rue* had used the recess (engraved) method but the initial Melbourne printing was by lithography employing transfers derived from the British firm's steel plates.

The matter was further complicated by the later use of typography, resulting in the Pictorials being printed by three different processes, using three different watermarks and four different perforation gauges!

Distinguishing the London printings is very straightforward. The watermark reads 'TAS' and all are Perf 14. Care must, however, be taken to separate the litho and typo printings. With the exception of the final printings in 1912, these appeared on V/Crown or Crown/A paper with thick brown gum through which the watermarks are often difficult to discern. These issues were normally Perf 12½ but Perf 11 values exist, along with compound and mixed perf varieties that also introduced a machine that gauged 12.

Tasmania's "policy" of not standardising its stamp designs continued right through to the end of the "States" period. There is so much emphasis on the Pictorials that a new collector could easily overlook the fact that they were available alongside the 8d and 9d Sidefaces, Tablet values from 10d to £1 and a 1½d on 5d Surcharge (issued in 1904).

This theme continued even into the period of the Commonwealth's uniform Kangaroo stamps. The new series were released progressively during the early months of 1913. At least until all Kangaroo values were available one finds commercial combination covers bearing both State and Commonwealth issues.

Tasmania has a rich philatelic heritage. A basic face-different collection can be assembled for little outlay, with only the issues to 1856 stretching the budget. However, at a more specialized level, the stamps of Tasmania are among the more interesting and challenging issues of the old Empire.

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