

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

The Australian Commonwealth Specialists' Catalogue was first published in 1926 by S. Orlo-Smith & Co., a leading Melbourne stamp dealer. After 14 editions the catalogue was sold in 1953 to C.E. Norden, who published two editions under the imprint of Australian Stamp Auctions. The catalogue was then acquired by The Hawthorn Press, which published 24 annual editions up to 1980. Ownership then passed to Seven Seas Stamps Pty. Ltd. which published two editions in 1981 and 1983.

Following acquisition of the catalogue in 1987 Brusden-White converted the format to a loose-leaf one and the revised catalogue appeared in 1988.

The aims of *The Australian Commonwealth Specialists' Catalogue* are:

To establish and maintain a catalogue for specialists and all collectors interested in Australian Commonwealth stamps.

To enable collectors to understand and expand their collections of these stamps, by supplying more detailed and illustrated information.

To provide an accurate and detailed reference for dealers when serving their clients.

The publishers are cognisant of the fact that the standard handbook on the stamps of the Commonwealth of Australia has not been published since 1968 and is out-of-print, and now contains much information that is out-of-date and inaccurate. No new edition of this work seems likely in the near future, and this catalogue now serves as the major work of reference on Australian Commonwealth stamps.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The present publisher and editors are indebted to their predecessors for the time and energy expended on the catalogue to make the listings as accurate and informative as possible.

The previous editors were:

S. Orlo-Smith 1926-1952

C.E. Norden 1953-1954

Rev. J.C.W. Brown 1956-1965

J.P. Meara 1968-1983

A.J. White 1988-1992

These editors in turn were dependent on information supplied by numerous collectors over the years. Individual acknowledgements will be given in each Section to the best of the present editors' knowledge.

Extract from "KING GEORGE VI - 2006"

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION TO THE SECOND EDITION (2006)

This second edition of the King George VI section of the Australian Commonwealth Specialists' Catalogue appears some ten years after the first. This is a period in which there has been little new significant research into these issues, and the listings remain essentially the same as those of the earlier edition. That said, new work has been incorporated where this seemed appropriate. A number of new plate varieties have been added, as well as a number of new shade listings. The most significant new listing is the unissued 2d King Edward VIII stamp, whose existence only became apparent to the philatelic world at large in 1996.

A number of new plate numbers have been recorded. The listings of all these plate numbers have been revised, to differentiate between those with or without dots or dashes, which are now separately listed.

The most significant changes to the text result from the last ten years' researches into the Note Printing Branch archives held at the Reserve Bank of Australia, Sydney. The earlier edition incorporated the printing instrument data for most of these issues, enabling an exact assessment of the printing plates used for each stamp for the first time. A number of corrections and additions have been made to this information. New records, unavailable in 1995, have now made it possible to identify the quantities printed of every stamp of this period. These figures provide quantities for a large number of stamps for the first time, and supplement the quantities issued which have been known for most stamps.

This new edition is some 35 pages larger than the previous one, largely due to the new illustrations of plate varieties that have been incorporated. All these illustrations have been re-scanned and printed in larger size. As a result, it is believed that much clearer images of all of the plate flaws are included in this new edition.

The Market

The King George VI issues have not been immune from the spectacular market activity through which Australian Commonwealth material has passed in the last few years.

There has been surprisingly little movement in the prices of basic stamps since the first edition, a sign of the new sophistication of the market, which has tended to concentrate on the rare and unusual rather than the key "investment" stamps of previous decades.

Proof material is in considerable demand. The presentation sunken die proofs available for most post-war stamps have seen significant rises, although levels here are somewhat dependent on condition, which is very variable. Earlier die proofs are of such rarity, and appear on the market so infrequently, that their current market value is difficult to gauge.

The rare plate numbers on King George VI issues were once the domain of a few specialists, but are now attracting a wider audience, and the numbers in existence are generally insufficient to meet the demand. The price increases in this area have been in some cases extraordinary, with valuations eight to ten times the 1995 levels. The rarest numbers, many of which are "one-offs", especially those on what are considered more important issues, are now being traded in the \$5000-\$7500 range. There have been some realizations for the "commoner" plate numbers in this flurry of activity which are unlikely to be maintained in the near future.

There is also a new appreciation of the limited numbers available of imprint blocks of various scarce printings, such as the thin paper varieties, and also of the no imprint blocks of the later period. An overall strengthening of the market for most plate varieties is also apparent, and the scarcity of many of the most important and significant of these is now becoming appreciated.

Extract from "KING GEORGE VI"

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION TO THE THIRD EDITION (2015)

This third edition of the King George VI section of the Australian Commonwealth Specialists' Catalogue appears some nine years after the second. There are signs in the last few years of renewed interest in research into these stamps, and it is hoped that this will continue. It is a period in which much work remains to be done, especially with respect to many of the more common values. A small number of new plate varieties have been added in this edition, as well as additional (or improved) illustrations of previously listed flaws.

Several new plate numbers have been reported and these have now been listed. There have been several significant holdings of these rare items that have reached the market place in the last decade, and a review has been made of the notes incorporated into the listings of plate numbers, with the result that revisions of the numbers known of some of these items has been made.

In previous editions the listing of the errors which came into the market in 1950 as a result of thefts from the Note Printing Branch in 1946-47 has been limited to some notes in the General Introduction (with prices added), as well as notes under specific stamps in the main listing. Although it was once illegal to deal in these stamps, this ban was lifted many years ago, and this material has become very popular in the last few years. It has been decided that this material should now be given full listing. However, the appended notes try to make it clear which stamps emanate from this source, so that collectors can decide for themselves whether or not to include a particular item in their collections. It should also be noted that there is some ambiguity in this area, since it is certain that the official list of stolen material is not exhaustive.

Another popular collecting area is printing freaks, which are now selling for significant prices. It is difficult to identify those which are worthy of inclusion, and in this catalogue the listing is largely restricted to partial imperforates caused by paper folds. Many of these are illustrated.

A number of new thin paper varieties from the 1949-51 period have been added, and some new shades have been identified and listed.

The Market

There has been relatively little movement in the prices of the basic stamps, virtually all of which are available in sufficient quantities to satisfy a large demand.

It has been decided to establish a minimum price of \$1 for any listing, which brings the catalogue into line with most others, the minimum price being a value which represents a fair "handling charge" from a retail dealer for any common stamp. This minimum price results in a necessary increase in the catalogue value for imprints of common stamps, which most users will realise does not always accurately reflect the real value for such items.

There has been several significant holdings of the rare plate numbers of the George VI period that have reached the market in recent years. These seem to have satisfied the current demand and there are signs that the market for this material is levelling off. Nevertheless, whenever a previously unavailable or previously unrecorded plate number becomes available, it is likely that competition will be intense.

The sunken die proofs of 1947 onwards also seem to have settled somewhat to a stable price level. Any other proof material is very rare, but has so rarely appeared on the market that when it does become available the catalogue prices may seem inexpensive.

Perhaps the most significant movement has been in the area of plate varieties. These have always been undervalued, since their occurrence is often only one in several hundred. It is apparent that the listing of a number of plate flaws by Stanley Gibbons has greatly increased demand. There are even more dramatic advances in the catalogue value of the rare plate varieties, many of which probably exist in numbers under one dozen, and often only in used condition.

The unissued Edward VIII 2d block of six was sold at auction with much attendant publicity at the end of 2014. Consequently, it is now priced at \$120,000 per stamp.

INTRODUCTION TO THE FOURTH EDITION (2019)

This fourth edition of the King George VI section of the Australian Commonwealth Specialists' Catalogue appears some four years after the third edition. As for the recent revisions of Kangaroos and King George V, this is the first edition of King George VI in full colour. This is also the first of the Brusden-White catalogues to be produced in A4 size, following the format of the Postal Stationery catalogue. This larger size has been introduced to accommodate a major new pricing innovation. Two cover prices are now provided, one for the solo usage of the stamp on cover, and a second for other uses of the stamp, either in multiple form or in combination with other stamps (whichever is the cheaper). This reflects a burgeoning interest in this field of collecting, and the prices for a number of the cover categories will surprise some. At the same time the opportunity has been taken to increase the font size, which will also be welcomed by many.

The new format has also enabled a number of new illustrations of various printing and perforation errors to be included.

The listings have been fully reviewed. Several new plate numbers have been reported and these have now been listed, and many of the notes regarding these have been revised in the light of new information. It was noted in the last edition that perforation errors arising from paper folds were rising in popularity. That trend has continued and has resulted in a number of previously unrecorded examples coming to light. A few new plate varieties have been included, plus new or additional illustrations of existing listings.

It has been traditional to list the imprints as blocks of 4, but many collectors now consider that the optimal collecting unit for gutter imprints is a block of 8. This has been incorporated into the present listing, but gutter block of 4 have also been retained.

It has also been decided to include the Postage Due stamps issued during the George VI period so that all issues of the reign are included in the volume. These issues have been relatively neglected in recent years, and it is hoped that their inclusion here may lead to an increased interest in these stamps.

The Market

There is evidence that the stamps of King George VI are growing in popularity. This has not affected the market for the basic stamps, of which the large stocks that exist are sufficient to meet the demand.

However, specialised material is in much more limited supply, and prices are beginning to rise. Areas such as the perforation pip blocks are a typical example. For many issues these are not easy to find, and indeed, although all the possible combinations are listed, some may in fact not exist. Obvious examples are the perforation pip blocks of the Coat-of-Arms stamps, but more seemingly mundane material, such as the blocks of the original perf. 13½ x 14 definitives, can also be placed in the rare to virtually impossible category, and prices will rise rapidly if demand increases.

A small number of collectors continue to chase plate numbers, so the prices for the rare numbers, or for newly discovered ones, remains strong. For those numbers for which more than 3 or 4 examples exist, the market is much less firm, and some rationalization has been made of the prices in this catalogue.

Proof material is probably the weakest area. A large number of sunken die proofs of the period from 1947 onwards have reached the market in recent years, and these have struggled to be absorbed at prices approaching the catalogue prices. This material has, in most cases, been lowered in the current catalogue. Other proof material tends to be of great rarity, but is also not experiencing great demand.

The demand for the popular or rare plate varieties has continued, and in general the prices for these is on an upward path. Some of the scarcer plate varieties exist in very limited numbers.

Two major collections of King George VI appeared on the auction market recently - those of Graham Cooper and Arthur Gray. These indicated that the market for the major rarities remains very strong, not only from Australian Commonwealth collectors but also from collectors of King George VI generally.