

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.