

INTRODUCTION TO THE THIRD EDITION (1999)

Interest in the pre-1913 essays is at its highest level for many years and this has brought more material onto the market than has been seen for some time. A few additions have been made to this section, the most important of which is the previously unrecorded essay for the 1911 Fullface George V design. Some corrections to existing listings have been made, and it has been possible to include new illustrations and improve some existing ones. The 1901 "C.A." overprints, mentioned in previous editions, are now listed in full; some question must remain as to their status, but these items are now generally regarded as contemporary. The 1911 Competition essays have been reorganised to make the listing easier to use.

In the Kangaroo stamps themselves, there were some errors in the previous editions regarding the quantities of stamps printed and/or issued. These arose due to different recording systems used by the archival sources, which were not recognised when the figures were first extracted. The numbers have been reviewed and those now presented are as accurate as present research will allow.

A closer study of cancelled-to-order stamps (as sold in collectors' sets) has suggested that a number of such stamps listed in previous editions did not in fact exist, and these have been deleted. More research is required in this area, however. Added to the listings are cancelled-to-order OS punctures and overprints sold in the same manner.

The previous explanations of the Type C SPECIMEN overprint have caused some confusion. The account given in the introduction to this edition has been accepted by the experts as correct, and the catalogue now lists not only the Type C1 overprint, but also the variant (C1a). Various newly discovered archival sources have now provided what is believed to be a complete list of all printings of the SPECIMEN overprints, and an analysis of these figures, to allocate overprint types to watermarks, has been incorporated. The quantities produced of some of these stamps are extremely small. In the C of A watermark, there is a new listing for the Type D overprint in forms of 30.

No monogram listings have now been extended to separate listings of strips of 3 from each corner. The various states of the imprint in the 9d C of A watermark are now illustrated.

Alterations to the listing of plate varieties in the lower values are not extensive. In the bicolours, the listing of plate varieties has been reviewed, and the insignificant "clipped tail" variety has been deleted. At the same time a number of varieties have been added, particularly some of the more prominent value plate flaws. A note has been added in the introduction to this section on the transposition of the kangaroo plate. A recently-published study of the £1 grey has enabled the listing of this value to be greatly extended.

Market

Since the publication of the second edition (1996) a considerable increase in demand for pre-war Australia has been evident world-wide. For issues encompassed in this section of the catalogue demand has impacted upon prices on a broad scale, with many rises amongst the basic stamps to 1/-, including for fine used in which grade stocks are reported by the Trade to be difficult to maintain. Attractive covers are proving more elusive to obtain than previously accepted and availability nowadays is almost the exclusive domain of auctions. The higher denominations, with their greater accessibility via auctions, dealers and to an increasing extent the internet, have remained more steady, with some price corrections particularly in the case of constant varieties in the bicolours, where resistance to paying other than a token premium above the basic stamp price has become apparent.

The forces of supply and demand in this edition, however, are most evident in the more specialised material. Errors and major varieties, and monograms (and no monogram pieces) and imprints, especially the earlier Harrisons, have generally firmed up, often considerably. Few collectors were aware of just how few monogram pieces appear to have survived in the bicolours, and since we introduced the census of known items in the first edition (1993), very few new discoveries have been added to the previous totals. Even the 2/- brown monograms and imprints are far rarer than previously suspected.

The most substantial price increases have occurred amongst the essays and proofs. Here the supply of a given item is often limited to a single example, and as an increasing number of items have been offered at auction since the inaugural listing in the first edition, a more accurate assessment of market value is emerging in these fields.