

INTRODUCTION TO THE FIFTH EDITION (2013)

Our Fifth Edition coincides with the centenary of the issue of the Kangaroo and Map series, and this edition sees considerable revision to a number of aspects of the catalogue.

A thorough revision of the plate varieties has been made to all values from 2d to £2. This has been undertaken with a great deal of input in particular from John Bozic, Richard Guy and Gordon Towell, who have devoted many hours to organising their holdings and identifying the varieties which should be added to the catalogue. Earlier editions were relatively deficient in their listing of plate varieties in a number of values, especially the 4d, 5d, 6d, 9d, 1/- and 2/-. To some extent this was due to a lack of published work on the subject, and while this largely remains the case, the original research of these collectors has enabled the inclusion of a large number of new varieties. Work remains to be done, in particular in regard to the positioning of a number of these varieties, and in some instances the their occurrence on the different watermarks, but all the listed flaws are believed to be constant, at least over a part of the printing.

The plate varieties on the bicoloured high were revised and extended in the previous edition, but these have been examined again and a number of corrections and additions have been made.

The 'SPECIMEN' overprints have been looked at again, and it has been decided that there remains some confusion with the nomenclature of the various varieties of the Type C overprint. These have therefore been renamed into a logical sequence; the detailed notes in the Introduction should be consulted.

There has been a considerable surge in interest in the cancelled-to-order stamps, and for the First Watermark stamps, the various dates are separately listed and priced. These various dates were created for different purposes and a number of these are very scarce, especially taking into consideration that sufficient of the date must appear on a stamp for its unambiguous identification. Again, a full explanation appears in the Introduction.

To round out the treatment of SPECIMEN stamps, also included for the first time in this edition, are the various forms of receiving authority handstamps that have been applied to Kangaroo stamps sent to the U.P.U. Also, a number of additions have been made to the listing of the rare 'display' Specimen handstamps.

The States' issues of 1901-12 have been omitted from this edition. Although some revision of the listings in the fourth edition are needed, it is felt that the listing provided there continues to serve collectors well for that area.

All the new Kangaroo material included in this issue means that the Kangaroo section of the catalogue is some 50 pages larger than in the previous edition.

The Market

Since the publication of the Fourth Edition (2004), the demand for fine and rare material in the Kangaroo and Map issues has continued to be very strong. The auction of the Sir Gawaine Baillie collection in 2005 saw new levels reached. Later, the sale of the Arthur Gray collection at auction in 2007 was the most extensive holding to appear on the market for many years and included a large number of the most important Kangaroo pieces which had not been in the market place for many years. The result was that many record realisations were set. Subsequently, the price levels reached in this auction have generally been maintained, and this has been reinforced by the recent sale of the Hugh Morgan collection.

The only area which appears to have lessened in interest are the essays and proofs, where prices have remained steady for a number of years. It would seem that many of the current generation of serious collectors do not include these in their area of interest. In particular, the essays of the 1901-12 period, with a few exceptions, have not moved upward significantly since the Fourth Edition. There is more interest in the Kangaroo essays directly related to the issued stamps, but even here buyers are selective.

Although investors have always taken an interest in the Kangaroo issues, this aspect has surged in recent years, and might be expected to attract further attention in the centenary year. The demand is especially strong for superb stamps - well-centred and unmounted mint - and this grade of material has seen very large increases. For many stamps, the number of available examples in the required condition is limited, and prices may be expected to continue to increase as long as the demand continues. Buyers must bear in mind, however, that the incidence of regumming is increasing, and it is likely that in the future demand for certificates of genuineness for this highly-priced material will also increase. Likewise, demand has increased for rare 'OS' punctures particularly in the high values, a number of which are great rarities. Care must once again be taken, since faking of 'OS' punctures has been occurring for many years.