

## INTRODUCTION TO THE SIXTH EDITION (2017)

The Sixth Edition is the first to be printed in full colour, as far as practicable.

Further revision have been made to the listings. A careful examination of the plate varieties has been made to all values from ½d to 2/-. This has been undertaken especially by John Bozic, Richard Guy and Gordon Towell, who have spent a great deal of time on the project, continuing their similar work for the previous edition. A number of errors have been identified in the previous listing, with regard to both incorrect identifications of varieties (especially wrong placement of varieties between Cooke and Harrison plates), and incorrect plate positions. These have now been corrected and it is hoped that few if any errors persist in this regard. In addition, a number of previously unpositioned varieties have been plated and now placed in the correct positions in the listings. New plate varieties have been added throughout, and it is believed we are now nearing finality in terms of the listing of plate varieties consistent with the scope of the catalogue. More work is still needed on the plating on the unpositioned varieties, and in confirming the existence of certain plate varieties on different watermarks. The same applies to the high value bicoloured denominations, where a few additions and corrections have been made.

The listing of the cancelled-to-order stamps introduced in the previous edition has been made in its present form. Although other dates exist information on the purpose of these is lacking. This may not be forthcoming, but pending further research it has been decided not to further complicate the listings.

No change has been made to the information in the notes regarding the rarity of various items, particularly with regard to the numbers extant of various rarities such as monograms and imprints. These numbers had been derived from an extensive survey of the literature and of auction catalogue records. The considerable demand for this material in the past decade has undoubtedly resulted in a number of previously unrecorded examples of such rarities coming onto the market, and in a number of instances the quantities stated in the notes are now out of date - these figures should, in any case, have always been treated as a minimum number. It is hoped that the work to update all these figures can be undertaken for a revision in the next edition.

### The Market

Since the publication of the Fifth Edition several major holdings of Kangaroo stamps have appeared on the market. This includes the legendary Stuart Hardy collection, as well as several holdings which have resulted in a recycling of many major pieces from the Sir Gawain Baillie, Arthur Gray and Hugh Morgan collections. Although demand remains strong, the emphasis on quality is more important than ever, and this has resulted in a softening of prices for any less than perfect stamps. This demand is emphasising the real scarcity of premium material, not only for the basic stamps, but also for SPECIMEN overprints and other specialist material. An outcome of this demand is a parallel demand for certificates to guarantee such stamps with regard to gum and perforations. The same applies to 'OS' punctures (particularly in the high values), where quality is even more of a problem, and in terms of centering perhaps an unrealistic expectation. Care must once again be taken, since faking of 'OS' punctures has been occurring for many years.

One area where demand has lessened considerably is that of essays and proofs, particularly of the pre-Kangaroo material, since most of the major collectors of this material are now gone, and have not been replaced. There is more interest in the Kangaroo essays directly related to the issued stamps, but even here buyers are selective. The prices of the pre-1913 essays have been lowered to reflect this situation.

Considerable interest continues in the cancelled-to-order stamps, and the number of collectors in this area has increased significantly since the last edition. The relative scarcity of the various dates varies considerably, and this is now being reflected in the prices being paid for these stamps. It is likely there will continue to be some volatility in this area before demand settles down.