

\$10 PAINTING STAMP - Coming South

Postage stamps showing the finest Australian paintings were often the subject of discussion, but printing had to wait until better multicolour printing technology was available.

In April 1974 the first stamps in this series were issued. The values of \$1, \$2 and \$4 were postally used on parcels and overseas airmail items. Non postal uses included telegrams, payment for bulk postage and payment for other services such as mail redirections.

The \$10 stamp was issued on 19 October 1977 to pay the higher rates (due to inflation) for the services listed above, but also for airmail parcels, and the new associated services including International Priority Paid and Insured Parcels.

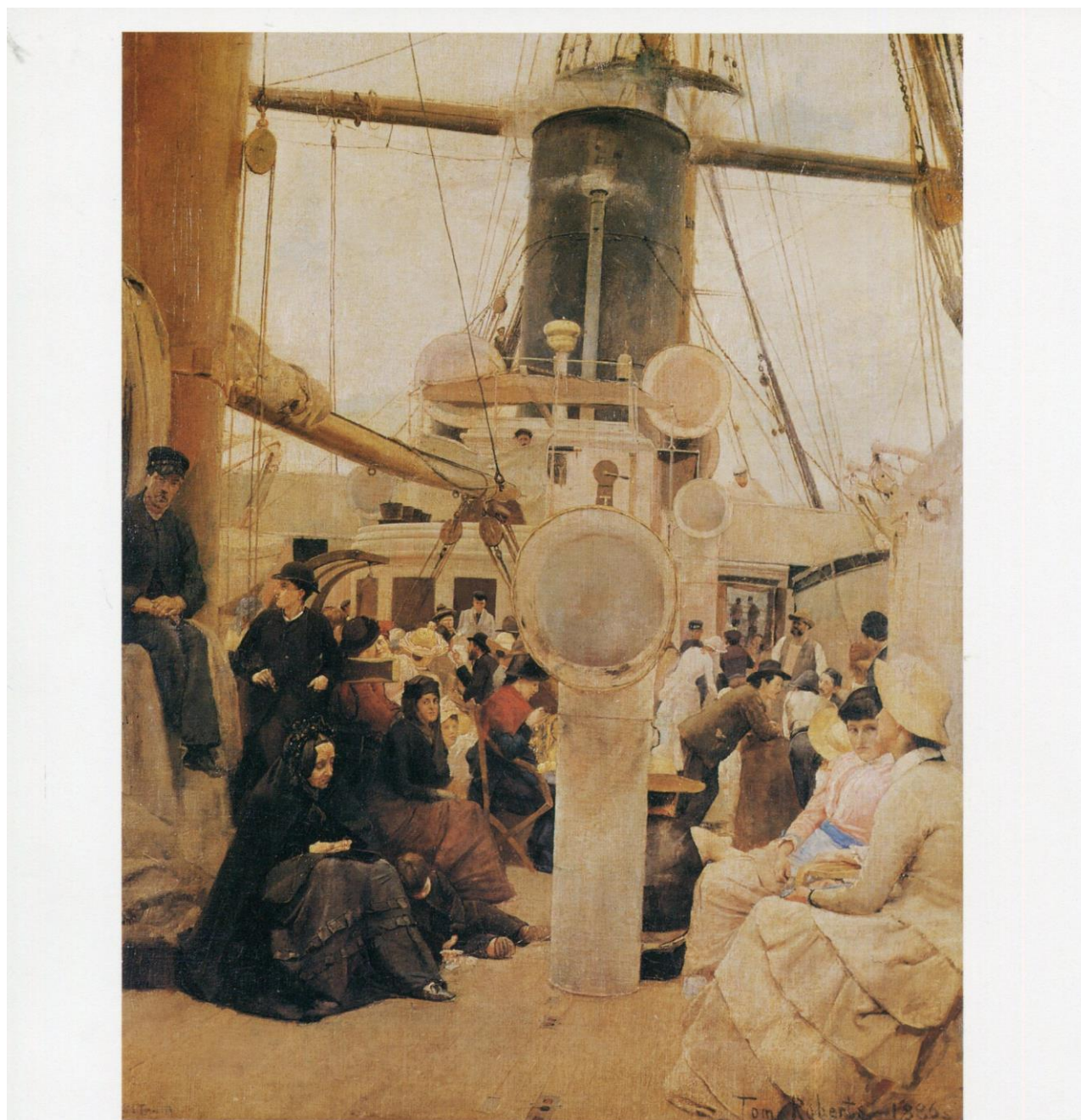
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Social Perspective

The source painting, 'Coming South', was painted in 1885 by the painter Tom Roberts, 1856-1931. The scene shows various immigrants, from different ethnic backgrounds, travelling to Australia. Tom Roberts was returning to Australia after 5 years in England. The painting is oil on canvas, measuring 63.5 x 52.2 cm. The painting was acquired by the National Gallery of Victoria in 1967.

Shown opposite is the Post Office publicity sheet for this issue. The illustration is a copy of the painting, the stamp has minor differences.



Tom Roberts
Australian 1856-1931
Coming South 1886
oil on canvas
63.7 x 50.5 cm
National Gallery of Victoria
Presented by Colonel Aubrey Gibson in
memory of John and Anne Gibson,
settlers (1887) 1967

\$10 PAINTING - Coming South - Introduction and details - printed from the first plates

This was the fourth stamp in the series, issued after a gap of 3 years, and the first to be printed by a private contractor. A different printing method, photo-lithography, was used for this and all subsequent issues.

This stamp was issued on 19 October 1977. It was the first \$10 stamp issued in Australia, and the highest value stamp yet issued.

It was printed by Asher & Co, Melbourne, on a two colour printing press. The stamp consisted of four colours, and required two passes through the printing press. The printing plates consisted of 200 impressions, comprising four panes of 50 stamps. The large sheet was guillotined into smaller sheets of 50 stamps for distribution to post offices.

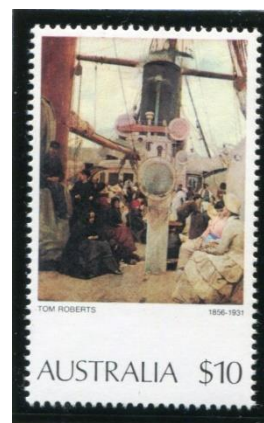
There were small colour signal strips at the top of the left margin. They were the only marginal markings on the post office sheets. Perforation gauge is 14.68 x 14.80 comb for stamps from the first plates. (14.63 x 14.80 for stamps from the second plates).

Total printing = 6,200,000 stamps from the first plates. The number of stamps printed from the second plates has not been published.

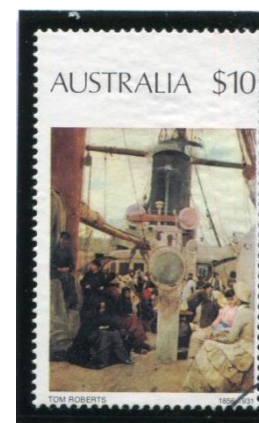
The stamp paid the higher charges for parcels and air mail services, and international priority paid services.

This stamp was replaced by the \$10 Gardens definitive stamp on 12 April 1989. It was withdrawn from Philatelic Sales Centres on 31 August 1989.

This perforation variety was first reported in December 1977. The perforations are misplaced upwards by 11 mm, so that the text AUSTRALIA \$10 is at the top of the stamp, rather than at the bottom.



Normal stamp,
text at bottom.



Stamp with misplaced
perforations, text at top.

This perforation error meant that the top row of stamps was imperforate along the top margin.



Vertical pair of stamps with
misplaced perforations, and
imperforate at top. These
stamps are from Pane A, (due
to location of plate number),
and column 3 (due to variety
on bottom stamp, unit 2/3).

Vertical pair from right column,
with misplaced perforations, and
imperforate at the top. Note that
the perforations do not extend
into the right selvedge. (These
stamps are from column 5).

\$10 PAINTING - Coming South - First Printing - Details of colour signal strips and plate numbers

Almost all of the printer's marks were guillotined off, leaving only small signal strips of colour in the top left corner, and two autotron T marks in the left margin.

Each pane of stamps was individually numbered after guillotining. In other issues the position of the plate number indicates different print runs made at different times, and this seems likely with this issue. It is improbable that all 6.2 million stamps (31,000 sheets of 200) were printed in the one operation.

Pane A

Pane B



Numbers were found under the stamps 10/4 and 10/5 on Pane D, but were only reported from Queensland. The numbers were applied by a hand held numbering machine, which accounts for the irregular placing. The reason for these numbers is not known, but they were first seen just a month after a robbery at a stamp distribution centre on the Gold Coast.



Pane C

Pane D



Each strip of 2 or 3 stamps on this page includes the stamp located at 10/4, with the characteristic variety found only on Pane D. Additionally each stamp shows the fluorescence of the first printing.

\$10 PAINTING - Coming South - Perforation guides and yellow printing

After printing the large sheet (four panes side by side) was guillotined in half to be perforated (two panes side by side). The pane on the left had a guide hole in the selvedge, but the pane on the right had none. Pane A and C show the guide, and the perforations do not extend into the left selvedge. Panes B and D do not have the guide, and the perforations pass through the selvedge. (All perforations pass through the right selvedge).



The first yellow printing plate was replaced after 12.5% of the print run. This was the only printing cylinder that was replaced.

This printing can be identified by the yellow signal strip (between black and blue bars) being shorter than the colour bars above and below it. Presumably many sheets would have been used to make First Day Covers and Post Office Packs, and not sold over the counter. These short yellow signal strips are very uncommon.

The 5 mm high, thick black sheet number, was used for a short while. It was replaced by 4 mm high numbers, as 5 mm was too tall for the narrow selvedge. The 5 mm tall style of sheet number (short top serif to 1, no serif at base) was only used for part of the first yellow printing.



Yellow signal strip shorter than black and blue strips = first yellow cylinder.

5mm tall serial number, different style of numeral 1



The second yellow printing plate can be identified by the yellow signal strip (between black and blue bars) being longer than the colour bars above and below it. This style of number (serifs on top and bottom of numeral 1) was used with the second yellow printing cylinder.



Yellow signal strip longer than black and blue strips = second yellow cylinder.



\$10 PAINTING - Coming South - paper variations and guillotine errors, first printing

This stamp was printed on Burnie KP6T paper incorporating helecron luminescence. This is true for most of the printing. This paper is white and has a bright white fluorescence under ultraviolet light.

Recently a few sheets have been found with a greyish appearance and a dull brown fluorescence under ultraviolet light. The colour and fluorescence are similar to the unsurfaced paper used for a small portion of the printing of the 20c grebe stamp.

Normal paper, shown at left, block inverted for comparison, beside a block of six stamps, with the appearance of unsurfaced paper.



The printer's signal strips are at the top left corner of all sheets, but rarely the printer's colour gradients are visible at the top.

Below the magenta colour signal bar is the top autotron bar, which was used to register (align) the four plates of each colour.



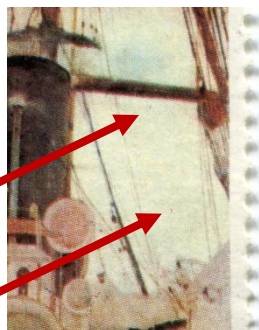
Lower autotron bar is seen in this strip of stamps.



\$10 PAINTING - Coming South - First Printing - Constant plate varieties

There are many minor constant plate flaws ('varieties') on this issue. Some of them occur three or four times on each of the four panes. Others occur only once on a pane, but occur on all four panes. Still other flaws only occur on one stamp on one pane.

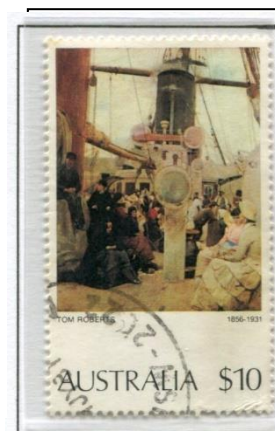
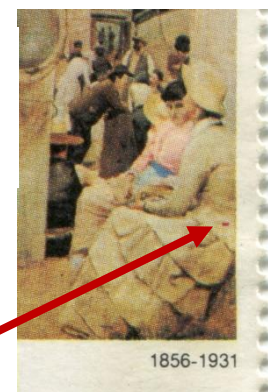
'Two small red dots in the sky at right' is found on Stamp 1/2, 4/2, 7/2 and 10/2.



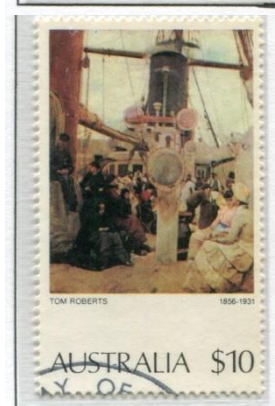
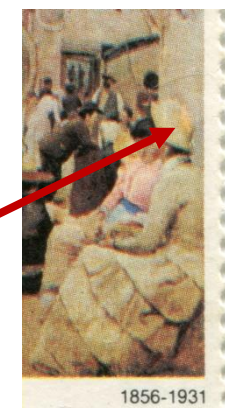
'Blue dot in top left sky', on Stamp 2/3, 5/3 and 8/3.



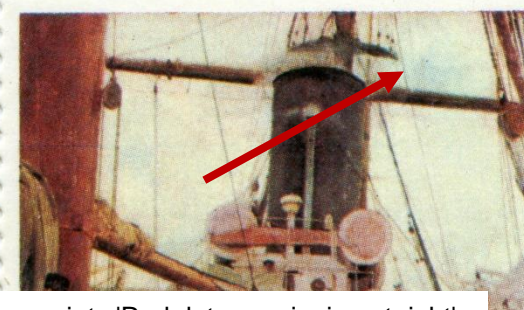
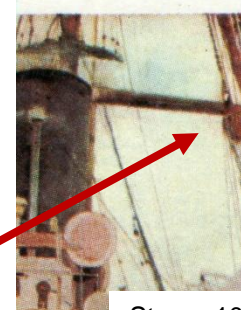
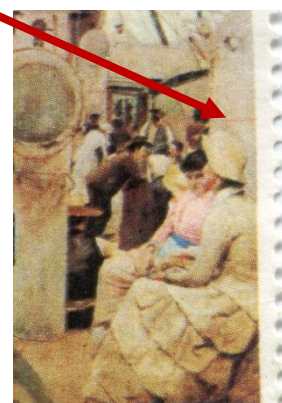
Stamp 6/2, all panes, 'Red dot on dress of lady seated at right'.



Stamp 8/3 Pane B has an additional variety 'Yellow flaw on the lady's hat'.



The variety, 'Horizontal red line over head of lady seated at right', is found on Stamp 3/1, 6/1 and 9/1.



Stamp 10/4 has variety 'Red dot near rigging at right', Stamp 10/5 has variety 'Blue dot near rigging at right'.

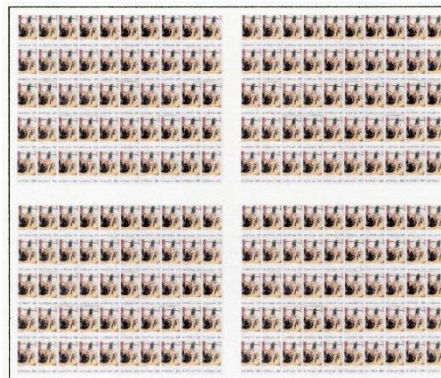
This indicates that in making the first pane of 50 stamps, rows 1, 2 and 3 were made first, and then copied to make rows 4, 5 and 6, then copied again to make rows 7, 8 and 9, and then finally row 1 was a copied to make row 10. All the plate flaws (varieties), such as these dots and lines, were copied as well. After this first pane of 50 stamps (ten rows of five stamps) had been made, it was then copied to make the other three panes. This copied the initial plate flaws onto all four panes.



\$10 PAINTING - Coming South - Comparison of printings

The first printing was by Asher & Co, Melbourne, on a two colour printing press. The stamp consisted of four colours, and required two passes through the printing press. The printing plates consisted of 200 impressions, comprising four panes of 50 stamps. The large sheet was guillotined into smaller sheets of 50 stamps for distribution to post offices.

There were residual small colour bars at the top of the left margin. They were the only marginal markings on the post office sheets. Perforation gauge is 14.68 x 14.80 comb for stamps from the first plates.

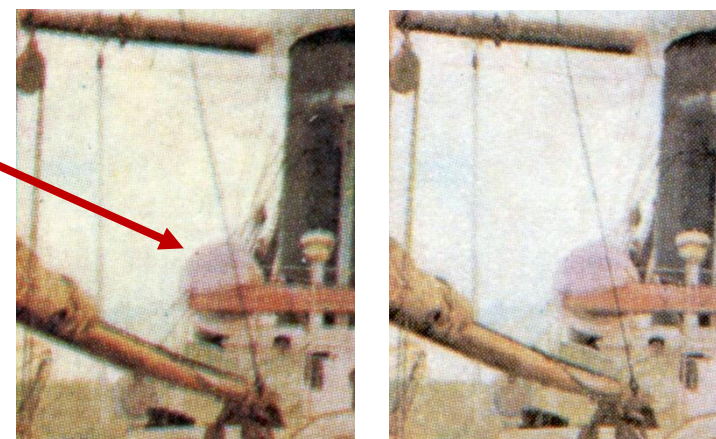


Printer's sheets for the first printing plates and the second printing plates.

Stamps printed from the new printing plates were issued in August 1980. The new printings were made on a four colour press, again by Asher & Co, Melbourne. There was only one pass through the press. These stamps were printed in a sheet of 200, with a different sheet format, and issued to post offices in panes of 50 stamps. With the new plates there were no marginal markings and the previous varieties no longer occurred. The horizontal perforations are slightly different, gauging 14.63 x 14.80. This is the same layout that was used for the subsequent lithograph printed stamps in the Paintings series.

The initial printing was perforated 14.68 x 14.80. Stamps from the second printing were perforated 14.63 x 14.80. This minor variation is not visible over one stamp, but when stamps of different printings are placed side by side the perforations gradually fall out of alignment. First printing on the top.

Stamps printed from the first and second printing plates have only minor differences between them. The most obvious difference is the presence (first printing) or absence (second printing) of a red dot on the ventilator. (Scans above at 500%.)



First printing plates, three of these four stamps have constant flaws.

Second printing plates, there are no catalogued printing flaws.

\$10 PAINTING - Coming South - two printing plates, three paper types used

New printing plates were introduced, and the first stamps printed from it issued in August 1980. Stamps were printed in a sheet of 200 stamps, and issued to post offices in panes of 50 stamps. Unlike the first printing plates, all of the printer's guide marks were guillotined off.

The paper used for the first printing was Burnie KP6T paper, 104 gsm, with a pink luminescence under UV light. Sheets have signal strips at top left, and a sheet number. Post office sheets were 5 stamps wide and 10 stamps down.

The second printing (new plates) was made on Clarke paper, August 1980, 104 gsm, with no marginal markings Luminescence is yellowish green under UV light. Post office sheets were 10 stamps across and five stamps down.

The third (final) printing was on APWH paper, similar to the second printing, and issued on June 1982. Luminescence is bright white under UV light. This paper was used until the stamp was withdrawn in 1989.



The stamps above have been photographed under ultraviolet light. They show the reaction of the three main types of paper: KP6T (pink), Clarke (yellow green), AWP (whitish blue).

\$10 Painting Stamp 'Coming South' - Postal Uses - Parcels

This stamp was the highest denomination postage stamp on sale during the entire period of its use. Within Australia the main use of this stamp was to pay postage on heavy parcels, and overseas use was for parcels and international priority paid articles. These stamps are all from the second printing.

The piece from a parcel (right) is postmarked Belfield, NSW, 2191, dated 7 August 1987. Minimum weight for a parcel with this postage would have been 16kg, including \$5.55 for security postage.

The air mail parcel tag (below) is postmarked Bomaderry, NSW, 2541, dated 1983. The tag was attached to the parcel with string, and threaded through the hole behind the creased air mail label.

The envelope (bottom right) has paid \$13.10 for international priority paid to North America (Zone 4). This was the rate for articles up to 500g, which applied from April 1982 to March 1985. In October 1983 the circular IPP label / logo was replaced with a square label.

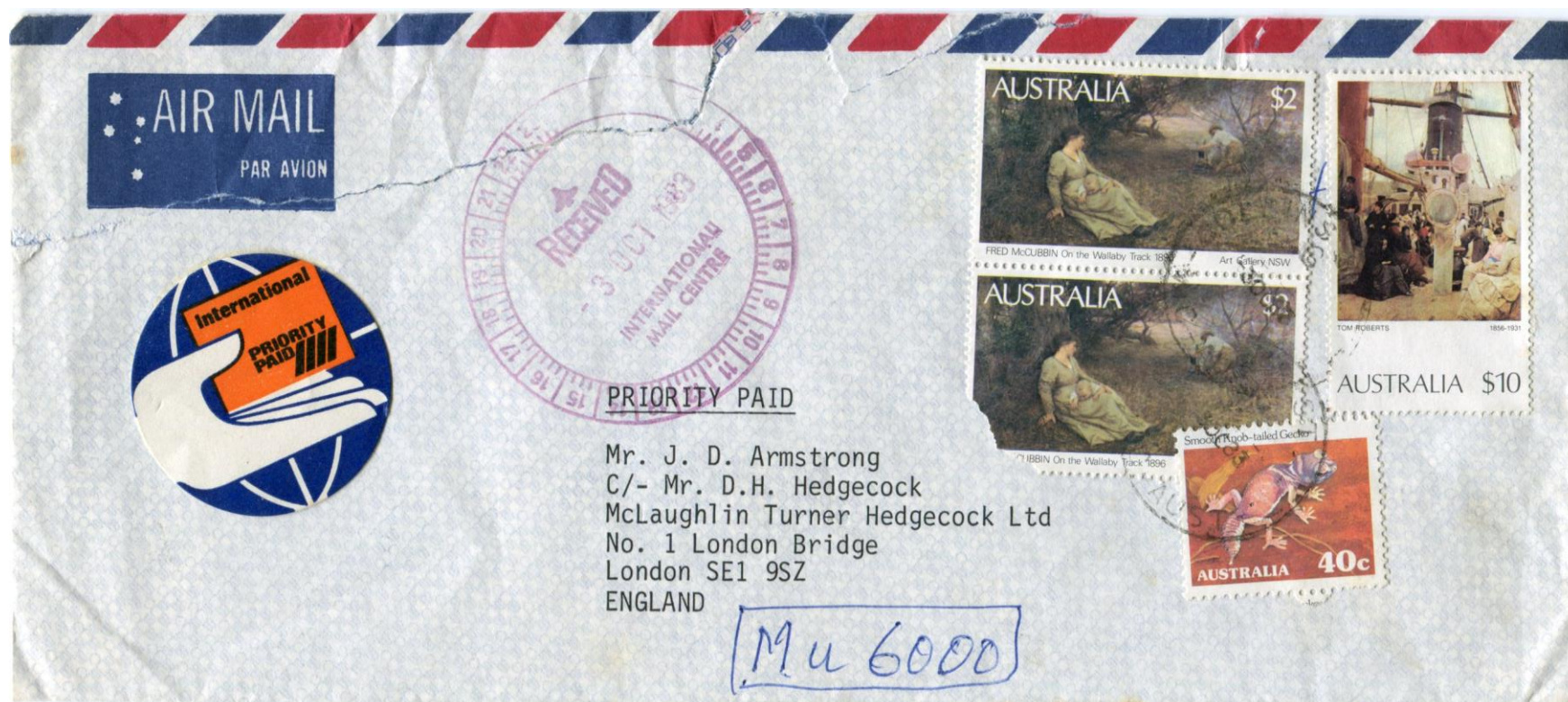


\$10 Painting Stamp 'Coming South' - Postal Uses - International Priority Paid Mail

International Priority Paid mail was introduced in October 1974 (to selected countries only) to provide a speedy overseas service for legal and financial documents. This was an extension of the Australian Priority Paid mail service which commenced in 1971.

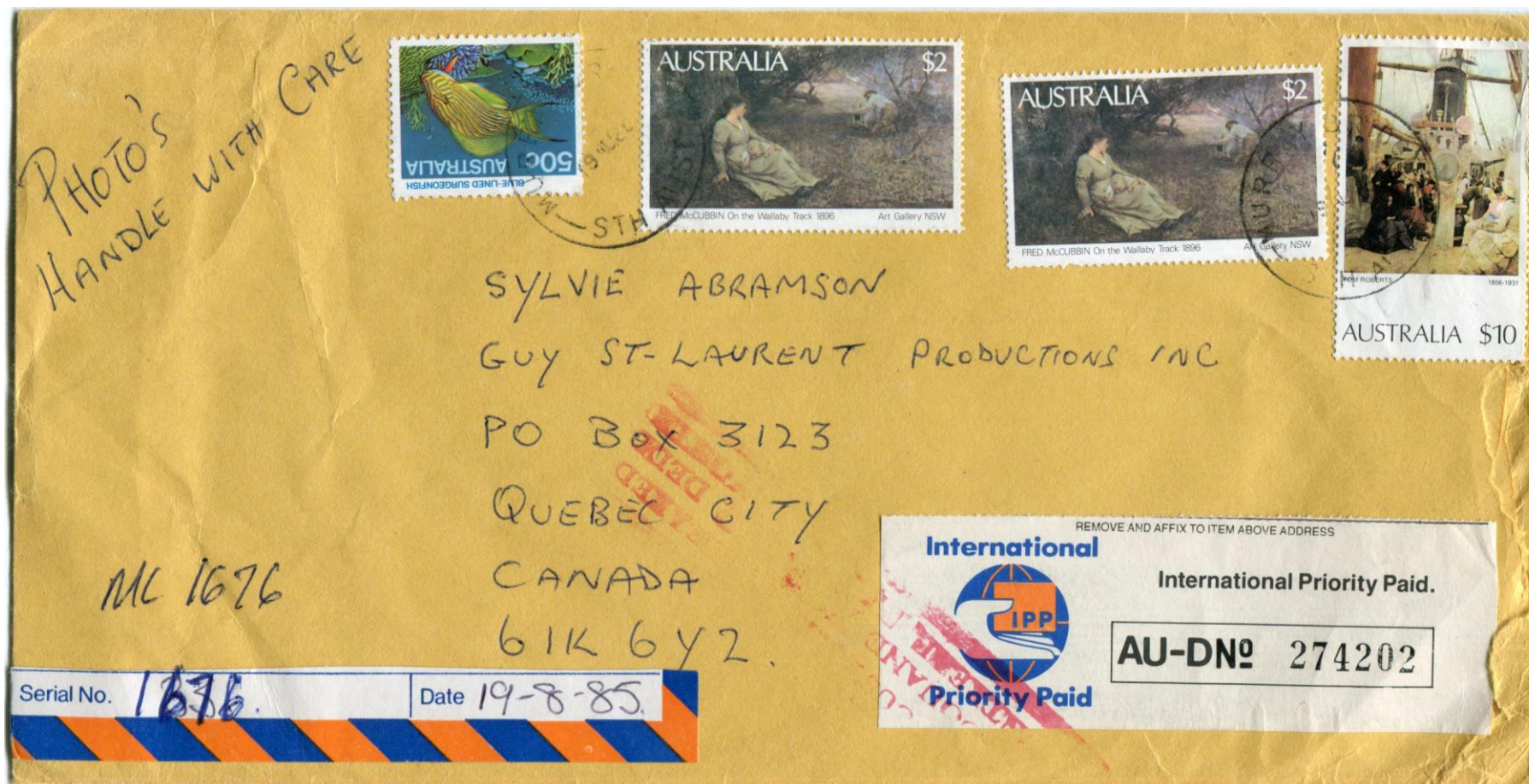
This cover has paid the \$14.40 rate (from April 1982 to March 1985) to a Zone 5 country (England and Europe) for a letter weighing up to 500g. Postmark is COLLINS ST VIC AUST, dated 3 October 1983.

The cover has a blue airmail printed etiquette and a circular international priority paid label.



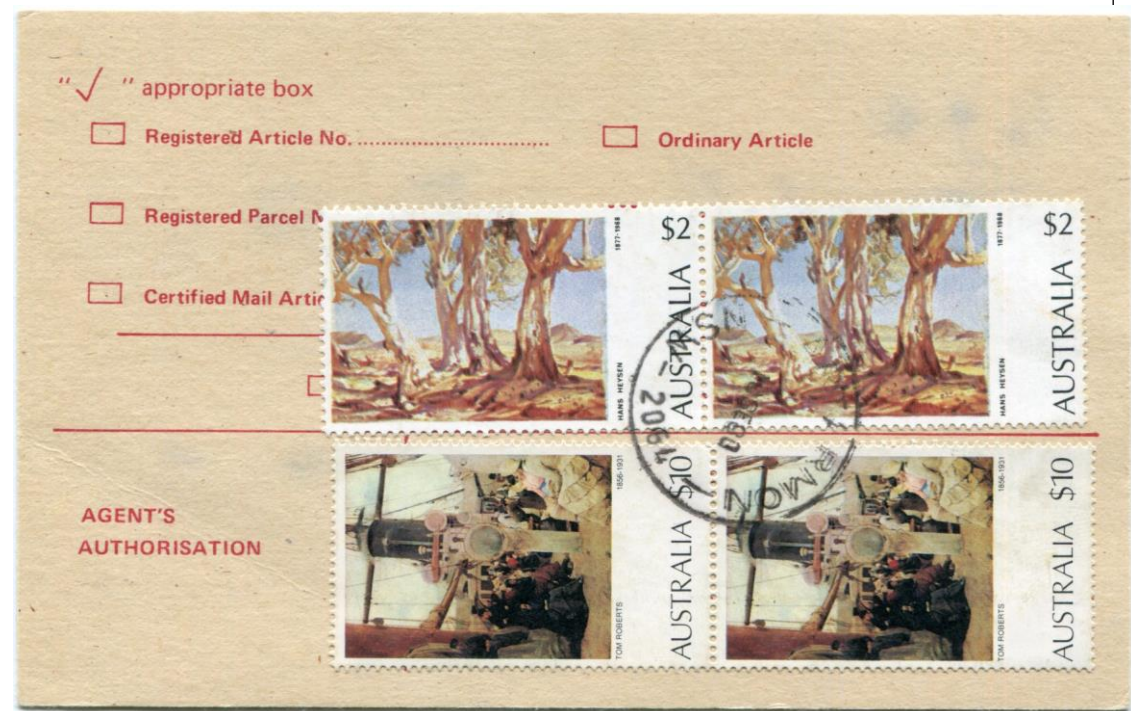
This cover has paid the \$14.50 rate (from March 1985 to August 1986) to a Zone 4 country (North America) for a letter weighing up to 500g. Postmark is MURRAY BRIDGE STH AUST, dated 19 November 1985.

The cover has the later version of the International Priority Paid protocol, with a tracking number. This was before bar codes and code



\$10 Painting Stamp 'Coming South' - Non-postal uses

These stamps have received payments for mail re-direction, telephone payments, and extra postage charges for mail re-direction (top left), payment of telephone account (bottom left), 'more to pay' postage charges (top right), and business reply postage (centre right and bottom right).



\$10 Painting Stamp 'Coming South' - Postal Uses - Overseas Parcels

Parcels could be sent overseas by surface mail (ship), by part surface mail part air mail using the Surface Air Lifted service, or by air mail. Other services such as registered postage (later Security Post), the Insured Parcel Service, demurrage and Acknowledgement of Delivery were also available at extra charge.

Part wrapper from an insured parcel, posted from Blackburn South, Victoria, 3 November 1982 to Sohmentuna Sweden, insured for \$198 AUD. Postage pays air mail to Europe (\$14.30 airmail parcel 500g to 1kg to Zone 5 (UK & Europe) and \$3.00 Insured Parcel Service fee (for compensation up to \$500), giving a total of \$17.30. Australian and Swedish insurance labels are attached.

Parcel tag with a 'Surface Air Lifted' adhesive label attached. This discount service was introduced in August 1971, and applied to UK and most European countries, and USA and Canada. Parcels were carried surface mail in Australia, air lifted to a central airport such as Los Angeles or London, then delivery by surface mail.

