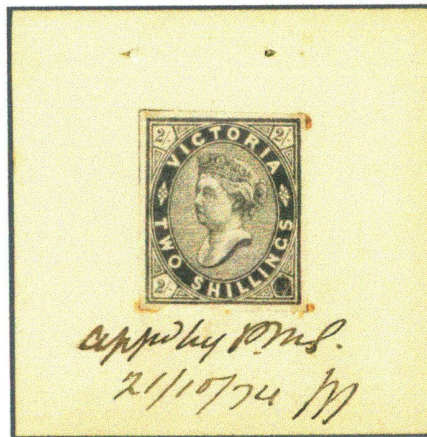


## THE 2/- "BELL" DESIGN OF VICTORIA, 1880-1885

This exhibit provides a study of the various printings of this stamp, both the original printings of 1881-1884, and the 'STAMP DUTY' overprints of 1885, including proofs, SPECIMEN overprints, and use for both postal and fiscal purposes. The use of a single printing plate is demonstrated, and a sample of the major plate flaws is presented, as well as a study of the setting of the 'STAMP DUTY' overprint. Much of the information presented is based on the personal research of the exhibitor.

The need for two new denominations (½d and 9d) and to replace several existing plates led to a series of new designs being commissioned in the early 1870s from William Bell, a local Melbourne engraver, who also engraved the dies. A 2/- denomination was ordered to replace the combined Woodblock/Electrotype plate which had been in use since 1854, and this die was engraved in 1874. Despite its availability, for reasons unknown printings of the old 2/- design continued up to 1880. The 2/- Bell Design was finally issued in early 1881, and was the last of the new designs to appear.



*Unfinished proof in black approved  
by the Postmaster-General (Robert Ramsey)*

The stamp was rendered obsolete by the 1883 Post Office Act, which authorised for postal use the existing adhesive series inscribed 'STAMP STATUTE' and 'STAMP DUTY'. At the same time, existing postage issues were authorised for fiscal use. All future issues were to be inscribed 'STAMP DUTY'. A large stock of the 2/- Bell Design remained, and it was decided that these should be overprinted 'STAMP DUTY'. This was done early in 1885.

The large proportion of the stamps were overprinted 'STAMP DUTY' and the earlier issues are relatively scarce, especially mint or in multiples; use on cover is rare. Post-1884 fiscal use represents approximately 85% of all surviving material.

### PLAN OF EXHIBIT

Page 2	The Die Proofs
Pages 3 to 7	The Printings of 1881-1884
Pages 8 to 9	The 'STAMP DUTY' Overprint
Pages 10 to 13	The Printing Plate and Its Varieties
Pages 14 to 16	The Setting of the 'STAMP DUTY' Overprint and Its Varieties

### References

Kellow, G.N. *The Stamps of Victoria*, B & K Philatelic Publishing, Melbourne, 1990.

Kellow, G.N. Turner, R and McCredie, W. *The Specimen Stamps of Victoria*, The Royal Philatelic Society of Victoria, Melbourne, 2013.

Rundell extracts of Victorian Post Office archives, held in the library of The Royal Philatelic Society of Victoria.

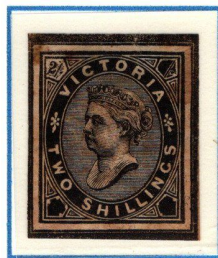
## THE DIE

---

The archival records are largely silent regarding the order for a 2/- die. It is apparent, however, that the die was ordered late in 1874, following the production of the dies for the ½d, 2d and 9d Bell Designs.

It is assumed that the printing plate was then manufactured at this time. However, use of the 2/- Woodblock/ Electrotpe Design which had been in use since 1854 continued, with fresh printings being made up to 1881. No reason is apparent for this. The 2/- Bell Design was finally issued in early 1881.

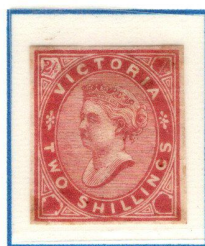
### DIE PROOFS



**BLACK** on pelure paper

*Two examples recorded in private hands*

*Ex Perry, Stevenson and Besançon*



**DULL ROSE** on pelure paper

*The only example recorded in private hands*

*Ex Perry, Stevenson and Besançon*

All recorded die proofs are in an unfinished state, showing the top right, lower left and lower right denominations yet to be engraved, and have come from the estate and descendants of the engraver, William Bell. It is understood that one of the terms of the contract for engraving was that the die was to be completed at the G.P.O. Melbourne, to ensure that no illicit use could be made of the completed die.



# THE PRINTINGS

Three printings were made of the 2/- Bell Design. All were printed on Watermark V over Crown (V2) green glazed paper and comb-perforated 12½.



**Printing 1  
Deep Blue**



**Printing 2  
Light Blue**

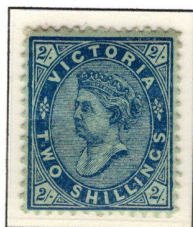


**Printing 3  
Ultramarine**

Printing 1 November 1880  
Deep Blue on Green Comb Perf. 12½  
36,000 stamps



Mint - no multiples are recorded



**SPECIMEN Type 12<sup>1</sup>**  
*Two examples recorded*



**Specimen Type 14<sup>1</sup>**  
*Two examples recorded  
in private hands*



Fiscal use from 1884 - unusual from this printing.

<sup>1</sup> Types from Kellow Turner and McCredie, 'The Specimen Stamps of Victoria' (2013).

## THE PRINTINGS

Printing 1 November 1880  
Deep Blue on Green Comb Perf. 12½

By 1880 overseas postal rates had fallen to levels at which they remained until U.P.U. membership (the U.K. rate was 6d for a half ounce letter), so use of the 2/- stamp was restricted to overweight articles.

### REGISTERED MAIL TO IRELAND



Pair used with 4d Lauredated Design cancelled '1' obliterator in thin bars on 27 September 1881 registered cover from Melbourne to Dublin, Ireland. Carried by P. & O. steamer via Brindisi with London transit datestamp and Dublin arrival on reverse (9 November 1881).

Prepaid for 4 ounce letter at 6d per half ounce plus 4d registration fee.

*Five covers bearing the 2/- Bell stamp are recorded, this being the only multiple.*



# THE PRINTINGS

Printing 1 November 1880  
Deep Blue on Green Comb Perf. 12½

## REGISTERED MAIL TO ITALY



Used with 1d and 1/- Bell and 2d Naish Designs cancelled '1' obliterator in thin bars on November 1885 registered cover from Melbourne to Rome, Italy. Carried by Orient Line 'John Elder' to Naples, with Rome arrival datestamp (9 12 83).

Prepaid for 2½ ounce letter at 7d per half ounce plus 4d registration fee.

*Five covers bearing the 2/- Bell stamp are recorded.*



# THE PRINTINGS

Printing 2 April 1883  
Light Blue on Green Comb Perf. 12½  
35,040 stamps

A proportion of this printing is found with watermark sideways. These must have arisen die to cutting the 240-on sheets of watermarked paper, with some sheets turned 90° prior to printing. Approximately 20% of the printing shows watermark sideways.

## Watermark Upright



Barred Numeral 7  
Creswick's Creek

Use of the 2/- stamp outside Melbourne is rare.



Fiscal use after 1884.

## Watermark Sideways



Fiscal use after 1884.



## THE PRINTINGS

The third printing comprised 266,400 stamps, however of this quantity 222,000 were subsequently overprinted "STAMP DUTY". The issue without overprint was therefore 44,400. As in the previous printing a proportion of this printing is found with watermark sideways. In this case, however, the sideways variety comprises about 90% of the printing.

Printing 3 June 1884  
Ultramarine on Green Comb Perf. 12½  
44,400 stamps

### Watermark Upright



### Watermark Sideways



Fiscal use is relatively common.

## THE 1891 REPRINT



12,000 stamps printed from a new plate to provide obsolete stamps for distribution to the U.P.U. (overprinted REPRINT). The cancelled-to-order stamps ( dated JE 2 02) are scarcer but their purpose is not known.



# THE 1885 "STAMP DUTY" OVERPRINT

The 1883 Post Office Act, which came into operation on 1<sup>st</sup> January 1884, authorized the interchangeable use of Stamp Statute, Stamp Duty and Postage adhesive stamps for both postal and duty purposes. All future issues were to be inscribed 'STAMP DUTY'. The existing postage stamps continued in use throughout 1884, but by the end of that year considerable stocks were still held of the 3d, 4d, 1/- and 2/- denominations. It was decided that these should be overprinted 'STAMP DUTY'.



Ultramarine on Green Comb Perf. 12½  
220,000 stamps

The 2/- Bell issue was sent for overprinting on 3 March 1885, and the stamp was probably issued later in the same month. Both upright and sideways watermarks are found. Only about 5% of the printing is found postally used.

## Watermark Upright



## Watermark Sideways Approximately 15% of the total printing. Postal use is rare.



SPECIMEN Type 12c<sup>1</sup>      SPECIMEN Type 20b<sup>1</sup>  
Four examples recorded      Two examples recorded,  
one in the Royal collection

<sup>1</sup> Types from Kellow Turner and McCredie, 'The Specimen Stamps of Victoria' (2013).



# THE 1885 "STAMP DUTY" OVERPRINT

The large majority of the 'STAMP DUTY' overprints were used for fiscal purposes.

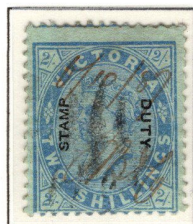
Ultramarine on Green Comb Perf. 12½  
220,000 stamps

## Watermark Upright



'COUNTY COURT/MELBOURNE'

## Watermark Sideways





# THE PRINTING PLATE

All printings were made from a single 120-on copper electrotype plate in 10 rows of 12. The plate was coated, probably with nickel, to provide a harder surface for printing and lessen wear of the plate. This nickel coating was quite poorly applied, and there are imperfections caused by the uneven application of the coating, especially affecting the frames of the stamps.

These flaws are so numerous, and constant, that it has been possible to isolate and identify all 120 units making up the plate. However, the lack of multiples means that the actual reconstruction of the plate cannot be completed.

## PLATE VARIETIES

### Flaws Affecting the Top of the Stamp

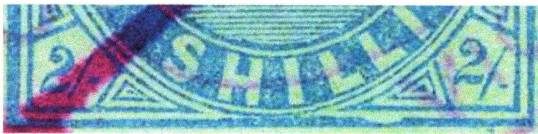


Colour flaw in shading over Queen's head under " of 'VICTORIA'



This unit is stamp 3 in the block of 6 on Sheet 9

### Flaws Affecting the Bottom of the Stamp



Scoop out of base frame under 'LL' of 'SHILLING'



Printing 2



This unit is stamp 6 in the block of 6 on Sheet 9



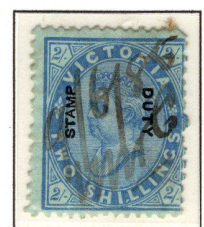
Break in oval frame over left end of lower left ornament



Printing 1



Printing 3



Break in bottom frame of lower left ornament

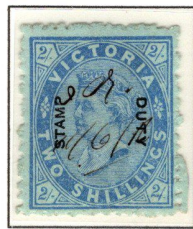


Top of sheet (line watermark)



PLATE VARIETIES

Flaws Affecting the Right Side of the Stamp



Three breaks in central portion of oval frame



Printing 1

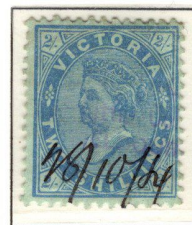
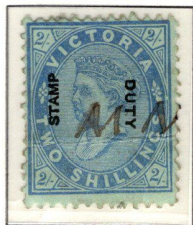


Printing 3

Break in oval frame at centre, deformed right frame above



Printing 1



Printing 2



Break in oval frame at centre

Irregular upper half of right frame



Printing 1



Top of sheet (line watermark)



Two breaks on central portion of oval frame

Colour flaw across right frame just above base



PLATE VARIETIES

Flaws Affecting the Left Side of the Stamp



Irregular left frame for most of length



Short vertical lines outside middle third of left frame



Printing 3



Irregular left frame for lower two-thirds



Printing 1

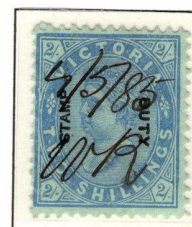


Printing 3

Irregular left frame for lower two thirds



Flaws in left frame opposite both ornaments



Flaw in left frame opposite base of upper ornament



PLATE VARIETIES

Flaws Affecting the Left Side of the Stamp



Printing 3

Deformed left frame opposite base of upper ornament

Flaw in left frame opposite 'W' of 'TWO'



Printing 3



Printing 1

Printing 2

Base of sheet (line watermark)

Irregular left frame for lower two-thirds

Irregular lower third of left frame



Printing 1

Printing 3

Base of sheet (line watermark)



Colour flaw left of top of central ornament

Irregular left frame along most of length, break in oval frame at centre



# THE 'STAMP DUTY' OVERPRINT FORME

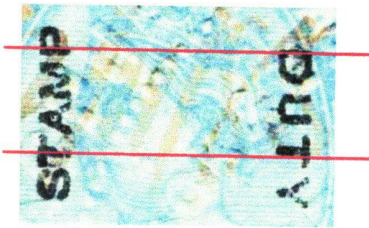
A casual examination of a quantity of the 'STAMP DUTY' overprints shows that the positions of 'STAMP' and 'DUTY' to each other varies considerably.

However, if one groups all the left vertical column and right vertical column stamps (as indicated by 'line' watermarks), it will be seen that the positioning of 'STAMP DUTY' is constant, and that other individual flaws on the letters are found.

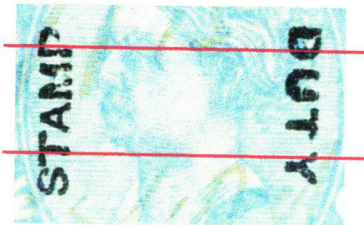
This indicates that the overprint was set up as a horizontal row of 12, which was then duplicated ten times by electrotypy or stereotypy and clamped together to provide a 120-on overprint forme.

## OVERPRINT VARIATIONS

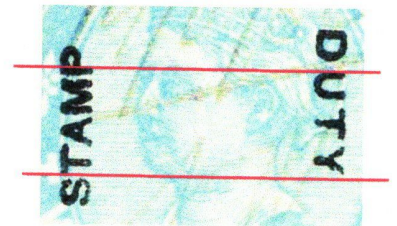
### Primary Types Occurring in Each Vertical Column



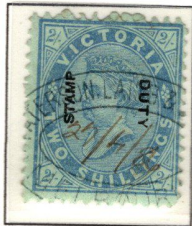
Vertical of P through left edge of D  
Vertical of T through right edge of T



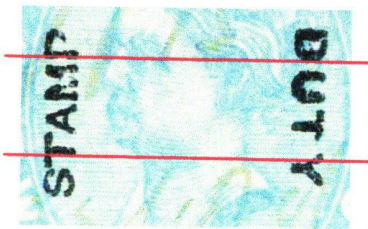
Vertical of P through right edge of D  
Vertical of T through left edge of Y



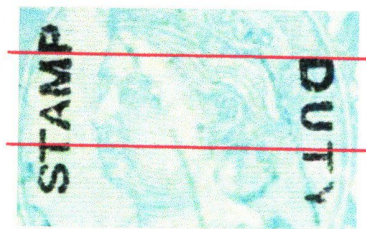
Vertical of P through left edge of U  
Vertical of T through right edge of Y



### Secondary Varieties Occurring Once Per Sheet



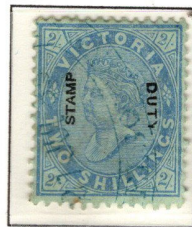
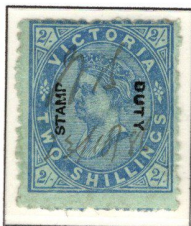
Defective MP of STAMP



Defective Y of DUTY



Defective AMP of STAMP

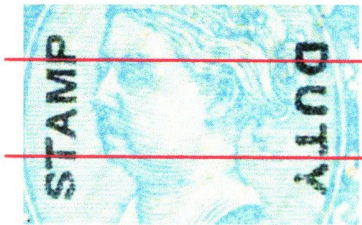




# THE 'STAMP DUTY' OVERPRINT FORME

## COLUMN 1 OVERPRINTS - THE TEN TYPES

Vertical of P through right side of D



All show line watermark down left side

Vertical of T through right side of T



All letters thin



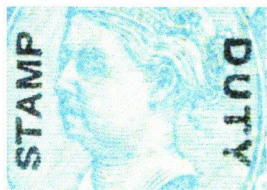
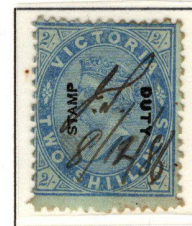
Defective TL corner



DU very thick, S thin



Break in triangle below TR 2/-



All letters medium thick



Flaw in L frame opposite ornament



DUTY thick



Spot between R frames under top 2/-



TY thick



Flaws on lower L frames



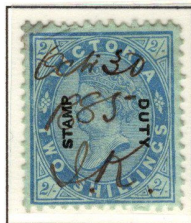
ST thicker than AMP



Irregular left frame opposite 2/-



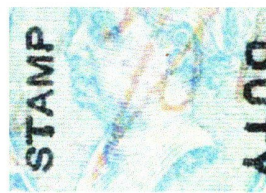
ST thick



Flaw in L central ornament



T of STAMP thick



Spot R of second S of SHILLINGS



S thin, M defective



Flaw in R frame opposite G



DU thick, S weak



Enlarged O of TWO





# THE 'STAMP DUTY' OVERPRINT FORME

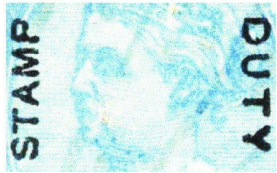
## COLUMN 12 OVERPRINTS - THE TEN TYPES

Vertical of P through left edge of D

Vertical of T through middle of T



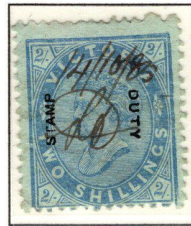
All show line watermark down right side



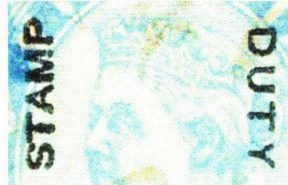
Y thick



Break in L frame opposite T



STAMP thick



Break in triangle right of LL 2/-



All letters thin



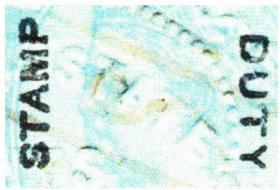
Flaw in L frame opposite ornament



All letters thick



L frame thinned opposite ornament



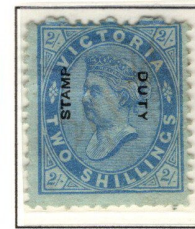
STAMP thick



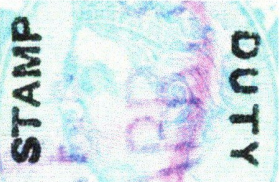
Break in oval frame L of ornament



ST thick, thin Y



Flaw in L frame opposite V



S thick, short Y



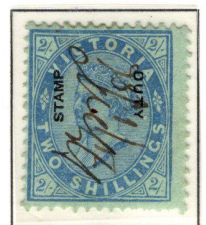
Thin L frame under LI



STAMP thick, Y thick



White spot at right end of bust



P thick



Flaw in L frame opposite V



TAMP thick



Thin T frame over right ornament

