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Paul Woods (UK)

New Zealand: 1867 First Duty Stamps - a Fascinating Story

These pages provide an insight into the fascinating story of these rather plain looking 'revenue' stamps, produced just before the RPSL was founded. They are challenging stamps to collect and research and have led me to travel half way around the world to meet collectors; and carry out research to resolve mysteries and fill gaps in the current information about them.

When New Zealand passed the 1866 Stamp Duty Act on 8 October 1866, officials had less than 3 months to agree a design; produce a die and electrotypes; print the stamps; and distribute them around the country by 1 January 1867. Given the limited resources available, it was a huge achievement for Charles Batkin and the Government printers. Batkin was dispatched to Sydney to find how New South Wales had produced its duty stamps – which had taken a year. He arrived on 2 November, and in one month had agreed a simple design - inspired by the stamps he saw; arranged for an engraver (Alfred Flack) to make a wooden die and 100 electrotypes. He arrived back in Wellington on 8th December and "at that moment all had to be done". Working day and night, the Government printer used the electrotypes to print the stamps, using paper and ink originally bought for the 'Chalon' postage stamps. The electrotypes were used to print sheets of stamps in a single colour and different values were then printed onto two key plates at the top and bottom of the stamps using typeface.



The rare pair of stamps on the left show the design without values. The inspirational design of the NSW stamp in the middle, was produced by De La Rue with values incorporated into the design of each stamp. The Specimen on the right is one of those issued to the 9 provincial Stamp Offices to illustrate how they should be applied to documents. There was an urgent need to produce enough 1d stamps, as these had to be applied to any invoices of over £5. The first stamps were dispatched on 22 December. Most stocks of 1d stamps were exhausted in the first few days of January and more had to be urgently printed.

By 10 January 1867 over 1,069,432 stamps had been issued, including 595,487 1d stamps. Early used examples are shown below, showing some of the different colours issued.



Paul Woods (UK)

New Zealand: First Duty Stamps - Challenging Varieties

Collecting these stamps is fascinating and challenging due to their variety. Most values were printed between December 1866 and 1870. A second Die with a slight variation in design was introduced in 1871 to replace the worn electrotypes. The stamps were replaced with a new design in 1880. 67 values up to £10 were printed in the first year, with 76 values from 1d to £50 printed over the period. These included 4d, 6d, and 8d values for each shilling up to 10shillings; 2/6d intervals to £1 15s; £2; and then 10s intervals to £10; and £5 intervals to £50.

Stamps were printed on six papers - five with watermarks (small, medium and large N Z; two **Star** watermarks and an impressed NZ monogram). They were issued imperforate in the first few months, then with a variety of perforations and experimental separations; colours, typeface sizes and formats. A few examples are shown below.



4s 4d.



5s 6d.



Experimental Separations



7s 8d.



9s 4d. p12½



"FIFTEEN" error



£1:2:6 p12½



£1 15s



£9:10:0



£50

The destruction of the Government printer's records by various fires, means that catalogue listings and the story of these stamps has evolved over time as new evidence emerges. Articles about the stamps in the 1920s, 30s and 50s were reflected in chapter XXIV in *The Postage Stamps of New Zealand Volume VI*. More recent information has been published by Graham Robertson in the *New Zealand Stamp Collector (RPSNZ)* and myself in the *KIWI*. Information can be found in the *KIWI Catalogue of Revenue stamps* and on various websites.

I was encouraged by Derek Diamono carry out additional research to help solve some of the mysteries and gaps in knowledge about these stamps. It was also a great reason to visit New Zealand, where I received a warm welcome, (thanks to - Alan, Andrew, Graham, Lindsay, Michael, Stephen, Walter, et al). My research in the museum of Te Papa Tongawera and the NZ Archives in Wellington has revealed new information, which I expect to publish shortly. This will include catalogue corrections; a new theory about the number of stamps printed on each sheet (120 or 100); and information about the number of stamps produced, the majority of which were later destroyed - which explains the rarity of many of the odd stamp values.

Paul Woods (UK)

New Zealand: 1867 First Duty Stamps - Postal Usage

As these stamps were issued for revenue rather than postal purposes they are not listed in many catalogues. From March 1882 a change in regulations allowed them to be used to pay postage. I have examples of 1d, 2d, 4d, 6d, 1/- and 1/8d stamps used on local and on registered international mail.

The envelope piece on the right includes a 1/8d stamp, posted on 14 September 1898 from Christchurch to London. With a 3d registration fee, and a postage rate of 2½d per ½oz, this would have covered postage on a letter of up to 4oz in weight.

The envelope below includes a 6d stamp paying 11d postage on a registered letter from Auckland to Paris in February 1892. With a 3d registration fee, this would cover postage on a letter weighing between 1 and 1½oz.



Paul Woods (UK)

New Zealand: First Special Duty Stamps - Ongoing Research

There are 12 special purpose stamps: 7 Ad Valorum estate duty stamps (1%, 1½%, 3%, 5%, 6%, 7% and 10%); 'FINE PAID'; 'DUTY PAID IN FULL'; 'PENALTY PAID'; 'COUNTERPART' and 'NOT LIABLE' stamps. Ultra high special value 'gold' stamps were printed individually with values from £389 up to £190,225 using the first design from on or before 1878 to 1935.



New research has identified earlier dates of production; an indication of the volume of stamps printed; and evidence that full sheets of 1% Ad Valorum stamps were also printed. The strip of three Ad Valorum stamps on the left illustrates how they were printed on the first paper in 1866 with each value on a separate row. We know from articles in 1937 that Mr A. Brodie had a block of 80 stamps. This had the Ad Valorum stamps printed in 7 rows of 10 stamps with the values one below the other. That block had 6 rows in a top pane of 60 stamps, with a gutter between the 6th row (7%) and the 7th row (10%). We also know that Ad Valorum stamps were printed on paper with a NZ impressed monogram in a different format with a central vertical gutter.

I am undertaking research to resolve the question first posed in 1937 by A.F. Bassett Hull about which stamps were printed in the rows below the Ad Valorum stamps on each type of paper. I have submitted the most likely candidates 'DUTY PAID IN FULL'; 'PENALTY PAID' to be expertised and the ink chemically tested by RPSL. I am seeking information from collectors about these stamps with selvedge, margins, and any other characteristics that can help identify their positioning on the sheets. Evidence exists of DUTY PAID IN FULL stamps with a bottom selvedge and it is possible that two rows of each could have been printed on the small NZ watermarked paper. I hope that the results of this new research and modern techniques will help resolve this. Please contact pvdw1958@yahoo.co.uk if you have information about these stamps that could help. I dedicate these pages to Derek Diamond and the collectors from New Zealand who have given me so much help and such a warm welcome.