

The DISTRIBUTION of "SPECIMEN" STAMPS by the UNIVERSAL POSTAL UNION

By Marcus Samuel

(Continued from page 685, January 8th)

Circular No. 429/20: February 3rd, 1887

POSTAL ADMINISTRATIONS FAILING REGULARLY TO SUPPLY SPECIMENS

Some administrations are not sending to the International Bureau triplicate collections of their new issues or of stamps that have been partly modified by means of a surcharge or otherwise. They are reminded that the possession of a complete collection of all stamps issued or modified is the only means for each office to assure itself of the validity of stamps employed in franking mail and to exercise a serious measure of control in this respect.

Circular No. 1533/87: May 13th, 1887

ST. HELENA: specimens of 3d. and 6d. postage stamps.



Bureau Collection. There are examples of the 1864-83 1d. lake, 2d. yellow, 3d. purple, 4d. carmine, 6d. blue, 1s. green and 5s. orange. St. Helena did not become a member of the U.P.U. until October 1896. No circular can be traced which announces the distribution of the early stamps which are without "Specimen" overprints. The first stamps overprinted SPECIMEN are the 1887 3d. mauve and 6d. grey, followed by the 4d. brown and the surface-printed 1 1/2d. red-brown and green with the Circular dated March 20th, 1890, and the 2 1/2d. on 6d. ultramarine with the Circular dated September 19th, 1894. Among the later "Specimen" stamps is the unissued King Edward VII large 1d. printed entirely in red.



In 1911 the postal authorities in St. Helena ordered from De La Rue & Co. a further supply of the 1d. postage stamp

"printed all in red". This was intended to refer to the small King's Head stamp of 1902. However, owing to the ambiguity, the order was carried out using the plates of the larger pictorial stamp of 1903, and the usual number of specimens were forwarded to the U.P.U. On the arrival of the consignment at St. Helena the error was discovered, and the entire issue, with the exception of a few specimen copies, was burnt by the authorities.

Circular No. 2734/144: September 7th, 1887

NATAL: specimen of a 2d. postage stamp received from the G.P.O., London.



Bureau Collection. Examples of the 1882-85 1/2d., 1d., 3d., 4d., 6d., 1s. green overprinted POSTAGE in serifed capitals and 5s., also of the embossed 1d. yellow, 3d. rose, 6d. green and 1s. brown (reprints or revenue stamps?). Natal did not become a member of the U.P.U. until 1892. The first stamp with SPECIMEN overprint is the 1887 2d. olive-green (Die I), followed by the 1882-89 1/2d. blue-green, 1d. carmine, 2d. olive-green (Die I), 3d. grey, 4d. brown, 6d. mauve, 1s. orange with curved POSTAGE overprint in carmine and 5s. carmine hand-stamped SPECIMEN in italic capitals in violet. The last were distributed with the Circular dated January 23rd, 1890.

Letter from the G.P.O. to the Crown Agents dated October 7th, 1887

D.L.R., page 457. "With reference to my letter of January 9th, 1886, respecting the number of new Colonial postage stamps &c., required to be sent to this Department for distribution, through the International Bureau of the Postal Union, among the various Postal Administrations of the Union, I think it right to point out specifically, in order to prevent any misunderstanding, that the necessity for sending 351 specimens to this Office exists only in the case of British Colonies comprised in the Postal Union. In the case of such Colonies as have not yet entered the Union, it will suffice to send to this Department six specimens of each new issue of postage stamps &c."

Circular No. 4198/218: December 22nd, 1887

POSTAL ADMINISTRATIONS WHICH HAVE NOT SUPPLIED SPECIMENS

A number of administrations, including those of Germany and the U.S.A., have complained that a number of others have not complied with the provisions of Article XXIX. It is requested that

(1) Administrations which have not completed the sending of single collections of postage stamps, etc., from April 1st, 1879, to April 1st, 1886, since the bringing into effect of the Acts of the Lisbon Congress should, if possible, supply 230 specimens (double collections) of their postage stamps, etc.

(2) Administrations which during the same period have issued new stamps or modified stamps without sending specimens should, if possible, supply 345 examples of these stamps.

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Distribution of "Specimen" Stamps by U.P.U. (cont. from p. 753)

(3) Administrations which since April 1st, 1886, until the present date have put into circulation new stamps or stamps modified by a surcharge, etc., without sending triple collections to other administrations should supply 345 examples of these stamps.

To prevent such complaints in future, Administrations should give instructions that, in future, 345 specimens of all new or modified stamps intended both for internal and international service should regularly be supplied to the International Bureau.

Circular No. 1517/76: May 11th, 1888

TUNIS (Regency): specimens of 1c., 2c., 5c., 15c., 25c., 40c., 75c. and 5f. postage stamps.

Bureau Collection. There are no stamps of Tunis with "Specimen" overprints.

Circular No. 2702/126: July 30th, 1889**EXCHANGE OF SPECIMENS WITH BRITISH COLONIES WHICH WERE NOT THEN MEMBERS OF THE U.P.U.**

Referring to Circular No. 4347/168, dated December 28th, 1885, requiring 345 collections to be supplied to the International Bureau to enable collections to be sent to British Colonies which were not yet members of the Union, although they adhered to the terms of the revised Constitution, the Director of the International Bureau has written to the G.P.O., London, requesting them to ask these Offices if they would be prepared to carry out the execution of Article XXIX (distribution of specimens, etc.) as if they were already members of the Union.

The G.P.O. replied that there was no doubt that such Colonies would comply with this request. In consequence, the Director has sent to the Administrations for each of the British Colonies of South Australia, Western Australia, Queensland, New South Wales, New Zealand, Tasmania, Victoria, Ascension, Cape of Good Hope, Fiji, Natal and St. Helena, a triple collection, as complete as possible, of all the postage stamps, postcards, etc., distributed to Administrations of the Union up to the present time.

As the British Administration had supplied 115 triple collections of the postage stamps, etc., of Victoria, the Director forwarded with this circular three specimens of each of the following items:—

VICTORIA: specimens of ½d., 1d., 2d., 3d., 4d., 6d., 8d., 1s., 1s.6d., 2s., 2s.6d., 3s., 4s. and 5s. postage stamps, of 1d. single and reply postcards and of 2d. and 3d. postcards, of ½d. letter cards, of ½d. and 1d. stamped wrappers and of 2d. and 4d. stamped envelopes.

Bureau Collection. All the above postage stamps are without "Specimen" overprints. The 1897 Charity 1d. blue and 2½d. red-brown are overprinted "Specimen" in lower case italic type.

The collections of the other Colonies would be distributed when received.

Circular No. 3022/145: August 24th, 1889

SOUTH AUSTRALIA: specimens of ½d. (two kinds, one surcharged), 1d. (three shades of green), 2d. (four shades of brick), 3d. (one greenish and two shades of blue), 4d. (three shades of violet), 6d. (six shades of blue), 8d. (two shades of brown with surcharge), 9d. (two shades of violet), 10d. (three shades of yellow with surcharge), 1s. (three shades of brown), 2s., 2s.6d., 5s., 10s., 15s., £1, £2, 50s., £3, £4, £5, £10, £15 and £20 postage stamps, of 1d. single and reply postcards and of ½d. (two kinds) and 1d. stamped wrappers.

Bureau Collection. Examples of the surface-printed 1d. green, 2d. orange, line-engraved 3d. on 4d. ultramarine, 4d. dull purple, 6d. blue, 8d. on 9d. brown, 9d. purple, 10d. on 9d. orange, 1s. red-brown and 2s. carmine, all with diagonal SPECIMEN hand-stamps. These are all original prints and it is not known if they received a general distribution as they are very scarce. The others are a mixed bag, the values to 2s. mostly overprinted REPRINT in serifed capitals, the 2s.6d. to £20 "long" stamps overprinted SPECIMEN.

Circular No. 4021/195: November 6th, 1889

NEW SOUTH WALES: specimens of 1d. (1888), 2d. (1888), 3d., 4d. (1888), 5d., 6d. (1888), 8d., 9d., 10d., 1s. (1888), 5s. (1888), 10s. and 20s. postage stamps and of 1d., 2d. (1888) and

3d. (1888) postcards, of 1d. reply postcard, of 1d. and 2d. stamped envelopes, of a 4d. registration envelope and of 1d. wrapper.

Bureau Collection. Most of the stamps have "Specimen" overprints. It is hoped that further information may be supplied later.

NEW ZEALAND: specimens of ½d. rose (1873), 1d. brown (1871), 1d. violet (1874), 1d. rose (1882), 2d. brick (1871), 2d. rose (1874), 2d. violet (1882), 3d. lilac (1863), 3d. brown (1874), 3d. yellow (1882), 4d. yellow (1865), 4d. rose (1874), 4d. green (1882), 6d. blue-green (1871), 6d. blue (1874), 6d. brown (1882), 8d. blue (1882), 1s. yellow-green (1858), 1s. blue-green (1874), 1s. rose (1882), 2s. rose (1878) and 5s. grey (1875) postage stamps and of 1d. single and reply postcards and of ½d. stamped wrapper.

Bureau Collection. There are no stamps with "Specimen" overprints. The six Chalon Heads in the collection can be identified from the above list. The collection includes the 1908 King Edward VII Land 1d. carmine and the 1911 Victoria Land 1d. carmine.

QUEENSLAND: specimens of 1d., 2d., 4d., 6d., 1s., 2s., 2s.6d., 5s., 10s. and 20s. postage stamps and of 1d. (large and small), 2d. and 3d. postcards.

Bureau Collection. There are examples of the Chalon Head 1d., 2d., 3d., 4d. slate, 4d. yellow, 6d., 1s. grey, 1s. mauve, and 5s. rose with diagonal SPECIMEN hand-stamps. The others are without "Specimen" overprints.

Circular No. 4209/200: November 20th, 1889

WESTERN AUSTRALIA: specimens of new ½d., 2d., 3d., 4d., 6d. and 1s. postage stamps and of new ½d. and 1d. postcards.



Bureau Collection. There are examples of the 1854 lithographed 4d. blue and 1s. pale brown, of the 1860 imperforate 2d. orange and 4d. blue, and of the 1861-72 2d. yellow, 3d. pale brown, 4d. vermilion, 4d. carmine, 6d. mauve and 1s. green without "Specimen" overprints. Also the 1865 1s. green, 1872 3d. pale brown, 1882 6d. lilac, 1888 1d. carmine-pink, 2d. grey, 4d. red-brown, and the 1885 ½d. green, 4d. chestnut and 1s. olive-green with SPECIMEN hand-stamped in serifed capitals. The 1892 2½d. blue and 5d. bistre overprinted SPECIMEN were distributed with the Circular dated March 28th, 1892. Some of the later issues are cancelled-to-order.

Circular No. 4373/209: December 5th, 1889

TASMANIA: specimens of postage stamps, etc. *Obsolete.* 1853 1d. blue, 1855 1d. red, 1855 2d. green, 1864 3d. yellow-green, 1853 4d. brown, and 1855 4d. blue, all "ungummed".

In present use. 1889 ½d. red, surcharged; 1889 ½d. orange; 1870 1d. red; 1880 1d. blue, bird design; 1870 2d. green; 1871 3d. raspberry (ungummed); 1881 3d. raspberry, bird design; 1870 4d. blue (ungummed); 1871 4d. yellow; 1858 6d. raspberry (ungummed); 1880 6d. lilac, bird design; 1871 8d. brown; 1871 9d. blue; 1870 10d. black-brown; 1858 1s. brick (ungummed); 1880 1s. red, bird design; 1864 2/6 raspberry (ungummed); 1864 5/- brown; 1871 5/- violet; 1880 5/- green (ungummed); 1864 10s. yellow (ungummed); 1880 10/- brick (ungummed); 2d. stamped envelope; 4d. small and large postcards; and 1d. single postcard.

Bureau Collection. No stamps have "Specimen" overprints before the 1892 ½d. to 10/-, which were overprinted in serifed capitals. In the above list, it appears that "ungummed" signifies a plate proof (the two 1853 items defaced), "bird design" signifies the Platypus postal fiscals, and "raspberry" covers a multitude of colours!

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