

## AUSTRALIAN HIGH COMMISSION IN LONDON.

information from MR.A.W.SWANSTON.

I do not collect perfins, but in the 1950's, whilst researching the use of G.B. stamps with an Australian connection, I came upon the C/OF/A perfin used on G.B. stamps. The following information is mostly from correspondence with officials at Australia House in the mid 1950's.

For normal inland mail from Australia House, posted during working hours, a purple Franking stamp was used (Fig.1); the perforated stamps only being used for overseas mail (Fig.2). For this reason, it is usually the stamps of higher value which are found.



Fig. 1

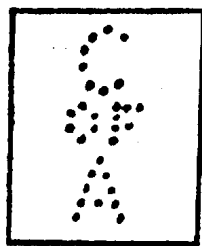


Fig. 2

46<sup>TH</sup> PARLIAMENTARY  
CONFERENCE

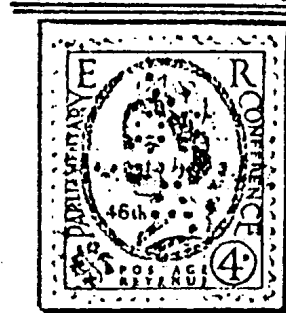


Fig. 3

The normal inland rate stamps and lower values are scarce, due to the fact that the stamps were only used on inland mail when Australia House staff were working and the G.P.O. was closed. This was not a very common occurrence.

I was informed that mint stamps perforated C/OF/A were not sold to the public and the stamps were only used on inland mail in very rare circumstances. However, the correspondent at Australia House had a number of re-used envelopes originally sent from Australia House with C/OF/A perfins, and the envelopes and packets had been re-used for return to Australia House. The official sent me a full set of the then current QEII stamps, from ½d to £1, plus the 4d 46th Parl.Conf. stamp of 1957 (Fig.3), all used, all from these re-used items, some showing bits of non-London postmarks which were picked up on the return journey.

No stocks of perforated stamps were held but tended to be done to requirements on a hand machine at Australia House. If a large number were required the stamps would be folded up and perforated thereby giving a mirror image on pairs of stamps. I was told that my correspondent could only remember perforating about 6 of the Parliamentary stamps.

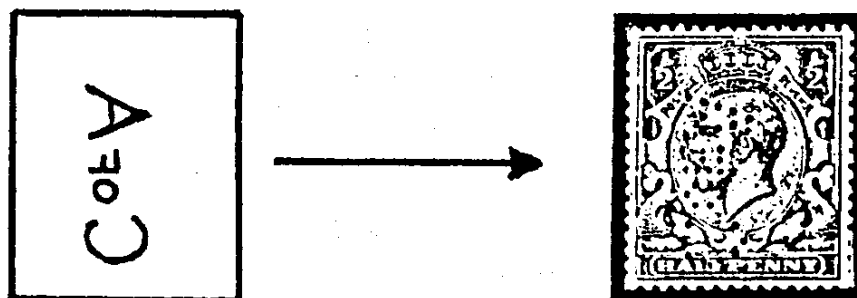


Fig. 4

I have a mint GV ½d green with CofA perfin (Fig.4). This came from a member of the Australian Commonwealth Specialist Society of G.B.who informed me that in 1922, "H.M.A.S.STUART" visited Britain, and the crew were issued with ½d stamps, perforated CofA. The unused remainder of these were returned to Australia House. In 1953 a part sheet was found in the lining of a drawer at Navy Office, London. The part sheet was broken up and sold at auction. My copy cost 8/- and I was told, "it was the last of the Mohicans!"

I have a 6d, 9d, 1/- and 2/6d of the GVI 1939-48 issue. I had to buy these from Australia and even in the 1950's the price was about 50 times the cost of the ordinary used stamps. Although this information is from 35 years ago, it is first hand and I still have the correspondence from Australia House. I have not had cause to doubt any of these facts during my forty years of collecting Australian Philatelic material.

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This article adds a little more information to chapter 13 (Overseas Governments, b) Australian High Commission) in the "G.B. OFFICIAL PERFIN" book by T.A. Edwards and B.C. Lucas, published in 1984 by the Perfin Society of GB. (Ed. M.R.S.)