



## CLASSIC STAMPS IN DETAIL

**CELEBRATED  
SETS**

# 1888 Centenary of New South Wales

In our latest examination of a classic stamp set to add to your album, David Bailey discovers how the world's first commemorative stamps went on to do duty as definitives

**N**ew South Wales always took pride in being Australia's first. It was the place where Cook made his first landfall. It was the site of the first British settlement. Now, the centenary of that settlement would produce the world's first commemorative stamps to be issued by a postal authority.

The first 1,000 settlers were jailers and their convicts: 586 men and 192 women. America no longer wanted British convicts and their forced labour would build the infrastructure required by later settlers. The First Fleet, commanded by Admiral Arthur Philip landed in January 1788 and Philip

became Governor of the colony, which then comprised the Eastern third of Australia, Tasmania and part of New Zealand as well.

He anchored first in Botany Bay, where Cook had landed, but after a few days the fleet found a better berth in Port Jackson. Here, Philip named his new settlement Sydney Cove, after the Secretary of State Lord Sydney. And the date of its founding, January 26, is still celebrated as Australia's national day.

A century later, New South Wales had shrunk in size but grown massively in terms of population and financial clout. Sheep and cattle farming expanded across the state; by 1850, New South Wales was exporting 6.4

Main image: Hawkesbury Railway Bridge, New South Wales. The bridge, which spans the Hawkesbury River near Sydney, was under construction in 1888 as the stamps were being issued.

Above: the 1888 1d lilac



Right: the 1888 2d with Official overprint

million kgs of wool to Britain every year. Refrigerated transport was invented in 1880 so meat joined the list of exports. And Sydney itself



grew from the rudimentary prison headquarters to a major city of buildings in brick and stone, while railways and tram networks stimulated suburban developments around it.

One of Sydney's most prominent buildings was the Central Post Office. An expanding economy needed a lot of official paperwork and by the turn of the century the State Printing Works was producing train and tram tickets, excise duty stamps, regular and official postage stamps and stamp booklets, as well as a wide range of postal stationery. Printing was by letterpress (typography) or litho.

### The centenary set

The centennial stamp designs would be chosen by a competition, which



Above, from left: the 1888 4d in the red brown shade. Originally printed in carmine, the 6d appeared in emerald green in 1898 and both green and orange a year later

was held in November and December 1887. It attracted 956 entries from 250 competitors and their pencilled rough layouts were put on public display. There were five winners but only five winning designs actually appeared in the set of eight stamps.

### 1d lilac, Sydney

This was by Maximilian Tannenber, who also designed stamps for Victoria and South Australia. It shows a view of Sydney in an elaborate frame of palm trees.

### 2d Prussian blue, Emu

Designer Catherine Devine was an accomplished artist who had exhibited in both London and Edinburgh before moving to Australia. She is occasionally confused with her sister Mrs Mary Stoddard, who designed the 20/-. The 2d, however, was not a prize-winning design.

The Emu is a flightless bird, unique to Australia, which appears on the flag and coinage as well as stamps. Though smaller than its relative the Ostrich, it can reach over six feet in height and sprint at 30mph.

### 4d Purple-brown, Captain Cook

This was designed by H A Barraclough,



a painter and member of the Sydney Brush Club. James (then Lieutenant) Cook discovered Australia on his 1st voyage, which set out to observe the transit of Venus in Tahiti and thereby help determine the distance from the Earth to the Sun. But once this was complete, he was instructed to look for Terra Australis Incognita, the great unknown southern land. Sailing Westward, he claimed three Pacific Islands for King George before reaching New Zealand in October 1769, spending six months charting its coasts before resuming his westward voyage. Cook and his crew were the second Europeans to land in New Zealand, but the first to Australia's eastern coast, where he landed at Botany Bay, so called for the richness of its flora and fauna.

Heading North up the coast, he was nearly wrecked on the Great Barrier Reef and limped up for repairs in Batavia in the Dutch East Indies, where his crew were sworn to secrecy as to what they had found.

### 6d carmine, Arms of the Colony

Designed by Maximilian Tannenber, this design shows Queen Victoria and the current Arms of the Colony: these



Left: the 8d in lilac rose from 1888 and in magenta from 1899

Right: one shilling issues from 1888 and 1905



differ from the Official coat of arms which was granted in 1906 and show the Southern Cross, a wheat sheaf, a sheep, a miner's pick and shovel and a ship, with a lion in the centre of the cross.

**8d lilac rose, Superb Lyrebird**

Designed by H A Barraclough, the stamps show the larger and more common of the two lyrebird species in Australia. They are famous for their spectacular courtship displays and also for their songs. According to Sir David Attenborough, they display the most sophisticated vocal skills in the animal kingdom 'the most elaborate, the most complex and the most beautiful'. They are also excellent mimics, especially the males.

**1s Maroon, Eastern Grey Kangaroo**

Designed by the Government Printing Office. Australia also has two species of Kangaroo. The red kangaroo is larger and likes the arid interior. The Eastern

Grey can still reach 6'7" in height and is the species most people are likely to see in the forests and woodlands of the moister areas.

**5s Deep purple. Map of Australia**

Designed by Charles Turner, a cartoonist and illustrator as well as a painter, the stamp shows a map of Australia with no Canberra or Northern Territories plus the British and Australian coats of arms.

**2s Cobalt Blue, State Governors**

Mrs Mary Stoddard was one of three sisters with a talent for art. She and her husband emigrated first to New Zealand and then the Sydney in around 1880, and her paintings were widely exhibited. Here she depicts the first and current governors: Arthur Philip and Charles Robert Carrington. Lord Carrington's five-year term as Governor was just one of a string of high offices in a glittering political career, but he was popular in the Colony as an able and tactful Governor

From left: the 5-shilling stamp in lilac and the Official version in deep purple; twenty-shilling stamps from 1890 and 1905

who faithfully passed on the views of the Colony to the Crown and was an early advocate of Federation.

**The printed stamps**

The set appeared stamp by stamp throughout 1888 and 1889, and soon became a complex challenge for collectors. The Government Printer had acquired a number of perforating machines with different gauges, while the inks varied in colour from batch to batch. So the 1d appears in lilac and mauve, with each shade in three different perforations plus imperf between two; eight stamps in all. The later that year, came new watermarks – for the 1d and 2d then the 5/- and 20/-. The set was also overprinted for Official use.

Meanwhile, in the country as a whole, pressure for Federation was growing, first among statesmen, who held the first Australasian Convention in 1891, and then as a popular movement. After a second referendum in 1899, and a last-minute change of heart by Western Australia, the Commonwealth of Australia was declared on 1 January 1901.

It was widely assumed that the new country would have its own stamps, but with so much else to be worked out, no-one had thought about what they should be, or where they should be printed. This was a loaded topic; stamp production in the various states employed a lot of people, who stood to lose their jobs.

While this was resolved, the states' stamps continued in production. New South Wales had created new designs for the ½d, 1d, 2½d and 9d values. But since there was no point in designing new stamps for an entity that had officially ceased to exist, the 100th anniversary set was called in to fill the gaps, with changed colours and even more watermarks. Australia's first stamps appeared in 1913. So these were commemorative stamps with a working life of over twenty years. Another first.

**THE SET IN DETAIL**

**1888 Watermark Crown NSW**

	<b>Mint</b>	<b>Used</b>
1d Lilac. Mauve	£7.2	£1
2d Prussian blue. Milky blue	£11.52	£1
4d Purple brown. Red brown. Orange brown. Yellow brown	£18	£6.30
6d Carmine	£41	£6.30
8d Lilac-rose. Magenta	£30	£6.80
1s Maroon. Violet brown	£41	£6.30

**1888 Watermark NSW**

1d Lilac. Mauve	£25	£2.80
2d Prussian blue	£82	£4.3

**1888 Watermark 5/- at an angle**

5s Deep purple. Deep violet	£342	£75
20s Cobalt blue	£432	£162

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