

NEW ZEALAND – THE CHALON ISSUES

1855 – 1873

This is a study of the first postage stamp issues of New Zealand from 1855 to 1873, all of which used the Chalon head design.

The exhibit shows the different printings, papers, methods of separation, variation in shades, and damage to the plates resulting from their use over a long period of time.

The usage of the stamps to pay specific postal rates of the period is illustrated on covers. Throughout the exhibit, there is emphasis on the plates and printing process and methods of perforation.

The organization is chronological, starting with die prints of the portion of the 1837 portrait of the young Queen Victoria by Alfred Chalon R.A. that was used for the stamp design..

The initial printings in London of the 1d, 2d and 1sh values including plate proofs are shown. All subsequent printings were in New Zealand.

The first printings in Auckland were by John Richardson on blue followed by white unwatermarked paper and were issued imperforate.

The stamps from 1862 were printed by the New Zealand Government printer, John Davies, and were issued imperforate on paper watermarked large star. Examples of experimental separations (roulettes and serrates) by different postmasters are shown, as well as the first use of a perforating machine gauging 13 by the postmaster in Dunedin.

Provisional printings on pelure and thick unwatermarked paper during shortages of the large star paper, and 'NZ' watermarked paper are shown.

From 1864 the printer perforated the stamps on a machine gauging 12½. Progressive plate wear is evident in the 1d and 2d values, requiring a new plate for the 2d in 1865. Early damage to this new plate resulting from scaling of the nickel plating is illustrated.

Colors of the three most commonly used values were interchanged in 1871 and a rotary perforating machine gauging 10 was introduced to supplement the 12½ machine which was prone to breakdowns.

The exhibit concludes with printings on provisional papers during shortages of the large star paper in 1872-1873, and stamps of the 1864 – 1873 period issued imperforate during breakdowns of the perforating machine.

Re-entered and retouched examples are shown in order of printing rather than as a separate study.

The exhibit does not include stamps or proofs printed from the plates after the period of postal usage, or remainders that were retained by the Post Office and later released as specimens or for presentation purposes.

In 1874 a new design was issued which is beyond the scope of this exhibit.