

NEW SOUTH WALES PERFIN

Rosemary Smith

In the collection of the late John Luft, which I am breaking up for the Society Auction on behalf of his widow, I came across an unusual pair of stamps.



They are £1 Stamp Duty (pink/red) of New South Wales. I looked first in Stanley Gibbons Part 1 but found no reference to these stamps. The perfin “MM” (11,11 holes, 5½mm high) and the perfins are mirror image so the sheet must have been folded prior to striking.

The pair of stamps have a handstamp, part of which reads, “MERC?---/INSURANCE”. The pair has a crease across both stamps and one has a slight nick at the top of the perforation. They will be going into a future auction but can anyone identify the perfin user and probable date of use. I would guess this is not a common item.

[Ed: **John Mathews** has seen this piece and has provided the following]

The Perfin is MM.5 in the Australian private Perfin catalogue. It was used by the Mercantile Mutual Insurance Company Limited, 120 Pitt Street, Sydney, with known date range of 1938 to 1974, so it is not uncommon as Rosemary thought. GB stamps of the KGV and early E2R periods were inscribed “Postage and Revenue” – hence can be found with perfins (mainly Postal use) and overprints (revenue use). In Australia, after Federation in 1901, there were separate postage stamps and revenue stamps because Postage was a Commonwealth government charge and Stamp Duty was a State government charge. Many of the Insurance companies perforated their revenue (Stamp Duty) stamps as well as their postage stamps, because of the high denominations used on Insurance policies (known up to £50). The £1 value is in fact quite common. This example would probably have been used in the 1960s, prior to the change to decimal in February 1966.