

NEW SOUTH WALES 1897 Charity issue

On the 16th May 1890, Great Britain created the first commemorative postal stationery marking the introduction of Uniform Penny Postage fifty years earlier. Seven years later, New South Wales settled on the unique idea of creating Charity Stamps both to mark Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee and raise money to float a Hospital Charity fund, the Queen Victoria Homes for Consumptives' Fund (QVHC).

The stamps represented a postage rate of 1d. and 2½d. but the stamps were sold at 1/- and 2/6d. respectively, and the premium being a donation to a hospital fund. They were issued on 26th June 1897 [but Stanley Gibbons states that the lower value was issued on 22nd June and the higher value on 28th June].

The designs were created by Charles Turner and typographed by the Government Printing Office in Sydney. Perf 12 x 11 or 11, watermark Crown + NSW. Joseph Cook (1860-1944) (later Sir Joseph Cook, GCMG, PC) an Australian politician, was the Postmaster General at the time (3 August 1894 – 27 August 1898) and is likely to have overseen this process.



Two comprehensive reviews of the history are known to this author (and will not be summarised here): Australian Stamp Catalogue Publ: Seven Seas Stamps. 1990 ; Pearn, John H. (1987) Phthisis and Philately - an account of the Consumptives Home Stamps of New South Wales. Medical Journal of Australia, 147 11-12: 575-577.

A few comments: Committee minutes quoted in Pearn (p. 576.1) imply that an Honourable Mr Brinker was the Postmaster (General) providing committee oversight of the process. I believe this to be a misnomer, and that the person to whom reference is made was Hon. James Nixon Brunker (1832-

1910) who was N.S.W. colonial secretary (1894-1899); and acting premier representing Sir George Houstoun Reid when visiting London for the Diamond Jubilee.

The 2/6d. stamp (postal value, 2½d.) was described officially by the Government Printing Office thus: “the motif of restoration is typified by two figures draped in white, the strong gently leading the weak and pointing to the motto ‘Redifico’. The vignette is placed in a diamond shaped frame surrounded by flowers, with the inscription ‘Consumptive Home’ directly above it”.

‘Redifico’ means *I resign* in Esperanto. The inappropriateness of its use thus is obvious.

Personal Communication, D A E Pelteret PhD., classics academic: I have consulted five Latin dictionaries (Classical and Medieval Latin) and cannot find this word. The Classical Latin *aedifico* means 'to build'. In Medieval Latin this would frequently be spelt 'edifico'. With the use of the prefix re- 'again' one could imagine a word *redifico* 'I rebuild', but it is not attested in any of the dictionaries I consulted. There is a Classical Latin verb *redigo*, one of whose meanings is 'I bring back, restore (to a former condition)' but that is far from *redifico*.

The intended meaning of the motto remains obscure, and word thought by this author to be a blunder.

R M Pelteret Thursday, 06 September 2018