THE TRUE CHRONOLOGY OF THE TATTERSALL'S A PATTERNS (Bill Harley)

Introduction

I have been collecting the postage stamps of Australia and its Colonies since my youth, but I did not start to collect perfins until 1969, but my interest in these grew when later I was working for the Melbourne Stamp Dealer, Alan White.

Alan was part of the team that gave us the current format of the "Australian Specialist's Catalogue" in the partnership of Brusden-White. But at the time he was running a Stamp Dealership in Blackburn (VIC) and I was living in Dubbo (NSW).

Alan would send up to me large consignments of Australian Colonial issues on paper and it was my job to soak them, and bundle them by issue into 100's (actually 105), and then return them to Alan for sale as budleware.

Seeing all these stamps, that arrived in large "Weetbix" boxes (about the size of a tea chest), containing large plastic bags, I came upon a huge number of interesting collectables including perfins of all the States, but also the barred numerals and numeral cancellations as well as the postmarks of Melbourne.

By arrangement with Alan I was able to purchase the items that I wanted from the bulk lots that I was processing. This gave me access to a huge range of material and it provided me with the basis for many of my studies, including the A patterns of Tasmania. The study started in earnest in about 1994 and I am not alone as articles about the Tattersall's issues regularly appear in the SPPB and indeed fellow PCNZA member David McNamee wrote a book on the subject "Beating the Odds" see SPPB # 60 of January 2003 and John Mathews has written a series of recent articles in SPPB #70, 82, and 89.

The A Patterns of Tasmania and George Adams

All of the reported A patterns found on the issues of Tasmania have been proved to the Tattersall's company of George Adams.

George Adams was born in March 1839 in Hertfordshire, England, and his family arrived in Australia in May 1855. George Adams tried a variety of jobs including gold mining, working on a sheep station, stock dealing, and a being a butcher, before acquiring the licence to the "Steam Packet Inn" at Kiama (near Wollongong) and a part ownership in the nearby "Wellington" sheep station in 1875.

On visits to Sydney for race meetings and the Royal Show, Adams frequented O'Brien's Hotel in Pitt St, the headquarters of the Tattersall's Club. He was a good mixer and made some valuable and influential friends. In 1878 some of his Sydney

friends, George Hill, Bill Archer and George Loseby, decided to buy O'Brien's Hotel for Adams, it is said for the reason that "George Adams liked O'Brien's and they liked George Adams". The terms were generous and easy but within just 6 years Adams had repaid his debts and in addition he acquired the freehold for a further £40,000.

Much of his prosperity came from the sweepstakes that Adams conducted for the Tattersall's Club members at their meetings at his Hotel. Later patrons, who were non-members, were included and in 1881 Adams conducted his first public Tattersall's sweep on the Sydney Cup.

Within Ten years Adams was very wealthy, with interests in the Bulli colliery, electricity plants at Broken Hill, Newcastle and Sydney, the collier "Governor Blackall", the Palace Theatre in Sydney, as well as his Pitt St Hotel.

By 1892 growing opposition from religious bodies in NSW opposed to gambling saw the passing of legislation to prohibit the delivery of letters containing sweep details and payments. In response to this Adams moved his lottery business to Queensland but similar legislation was passed by the Queensland Government in 1895. However in 1896, after considerable lobbying and debate the Tasmanian Government passed legislation outlawing betting shops but permitting certain lotteries. This gave Adams a home for Tattersall's lotteries and he moved his operation to Hobart.

Adams spent the rest of his life in Hobart buying several businesses and properties as well as starting a Brewery. Although Adams held no public office he wielded a great deal of influence behind the scenes.

Tattersall's relied heavily on the postal system to receive their entries from their agencies around Australia, and beyond, and they were also large users of outgoing mail. As a result the A patterns are the most common private perfin patterns found on Tasmanian postage stamps. Over the period 1899-1910 Tattersall's used at least 6 different perforating devices with various A patterns.

<u>The Study of Tasmanian Perfins</u>

The seminal general work on the subject of Tasmanian perfins seems to have been done by Dr K Pennycuick ("West End Philatelist" Nov – Dec 1955). I have not been able to find this study but it is referred to in Ingles article, "Tasmania – The Perforated Officials and other Punctures" (Philately from Australia - Dec 1967). Ingles recognises the earlier study, but also addresses its error in listing the A patterns of Tattersall's as being Official perfins. The A was possibly assumed to be A for Australia.

The Ingles study is augmented by Askeland's "Perforated Officials and Other Punctures" which covers the true Tasmanian Official patterns and supports the view that the A perfins were non Official (Philately from Australia Sept-1970). Both Ingles and Askeland are used as sources in Tinsley's definitive study of Tasmanian stamps, "Stamps and Postal History of Tasmania" (1986), and in particular for the study of perfins, Chapter XIII Perforated Initials (Perfins).

In fact Tinsley goes very close the defining all the A patterns as well as outlining their true chronology. The Tinsley listing was used as the references in PCNZA Member, David McNamee's, US Gold Medal winning exhibit "Focus on the Holes - Tasmania´s Private Perfins". Although David used his own numbering system it is largely consistent with Tinsley's.

When "Commercial Perfins of Australia"- Grant and Mathews (1992) was issued it did not adopt the Tinsley chronological listing of the A's including the main user Tattersall's. It adopted a listing of all the A's starting with the Tattersall's A's, but did not put them in chronological order.

This could be because the authors were following the order established by the key author of the study that they were using. Grant and Mathews were using the study of Australian Private Perfins that had been built up by Joe Purcell, and other members of the US Perfin Club, including Australian collectors such as West Australian PCNZA member and previous PCNZA President, Dr Derek Pocock. This study may not have been made in the knowledge of the Tinsley study of Tasmanian perfin issues.

Oddly the Grant and Mathews (CPA 1992) Bibliography (see pages 269-271) refers to both Tinsley (albeit incorrectly stating the date of the publication as 1968, in lieu of 1986) and the Ingles study of 1967 (again mistakenly reporting it as 1969).

So clearly the authors of CPA were aware of the previous studies of these A patterns, but they did not choose to use the authoritatively reported chronology. This is not unusual as the listings of patterns in CPA and latter in HAPP (Handbook of Australian Private Perfins – Mathews 2003) tend to not use the chronology of patterns as a method of ordering patterns.

<u>The Chronology of the A Patterns</u>

It is difficult to compare the various listings of the A patterns as each study has chosen a different structure to their listing. Tinsley chose a chronological order and this was used by McNamee. In CPA, the authors chose a series of different structures for ordering single letter patterns, such as ascending size, as shown in the basic B, D, H, K, M and other listings.

This is understandable as the lists made by Purcell and his team and later developed by Grant and Mathews where being drawn from a relatively small study base, compared to the amount of material that is in collections today. Also they were not all confirmed to particular users and did not all have accurate usage periods that would have allowed a listing based on Users, and the chronology of their devices, to have been built. It has required the growth of the collecting of Australia private perfins, spurred by the activities of the PCNZA, and the release of CPA and later HAPP, as well as specific detailed studies such as those of McNamee, to build the study of perfins to a scale that makes the creation of more accurate listings, even for a single User such as Tattersall's, possible.

This was not the case with Tinsley, who had a small series of perfins within his study of Tasmania, and these A patterns were used over a relatively small period of time.

This is not to suggest that our listings should continue to be built on a variety of structures. We need to develop and change our listings so that they provide the best representation of the object of our study. To my way of thinking the most logical way of listing any patterns from a user or pattern, is to consider them in their chronological order and this has been my focus with my study of the A patterns, as was Tinsley's and indeed McNamee's.
However readers will be most familiar with the CPA/HAPP listing so I have produced a comparison table below. Even the numberings systems are different with Tinsley using Roman Numerals, McNamee using numbers and letters while CPA/HAPP and my listing use letters and numbers.

Comparison of listings

CPA/HAPP	Tinsley	McNamee	Harley
A.1	Type Ia	Type 1c	A.2
A.2	Type II	Type 2	A.3
A.3	Type Ib	Type 1 a and b	A.1
A.4	Type Ib	Type 1a and 1b	A.1
A.5	This pattern is not reported in any other study. It is most likely a report of a partial strike.		
A.6	Type III	Type 3	A.4
A.7	Type IV	Type 4	A.5

A.8 Type V Type 5 A.6

So in these studies there are different reports and different structures. CPA/HAPP has 8 patterns, Tinsley has 6, McNamee has 6 and I have found 6. No prizes for guessing that there were just 6 Tattersall's devices, but the story is a little more complex than that.

The problem is that the first Tattersall's A device was a multi die device and it had at least 6 dies. McNamee says 7 and I must confess that at times in the past I have been almost certain that the number of dies was 8 or more, but I know believe that there are 6 dies to this device. At the end of the day there are 6 devices, the first device has 6 dies (all different) and all the rest are single die devices, so the total of the different patterns is actually 11.

The confusion is caused, in part, by the fact that the A patterns in this first multi die device and indeed most of the later single die devices are not symmetrical. Add to this the fact that the stamps are found punctured in a variety of positions, including strikes from the front and the back, and the range variation grows. It does not help that the Tattersall's patterns are almost always found as singles, in fact of the thousands of A's I have handled, I have only sighted two examples of multiples of my A.1 (CPA/HAPP A.3 and .4)

Lets look at the 6 Tattersall's A devices

Now we know that there are just 6 devices but as the first device is a 6 die device (all dies different) and the remainder are single die devises and that gives us 11 patterns. I am using my own numbering system, so refer to the chart above to see the corresponding reference in CPA/HAPP, Tinsley or McNamee.

A.1 Used 20 July 1899 until 12 April 1900

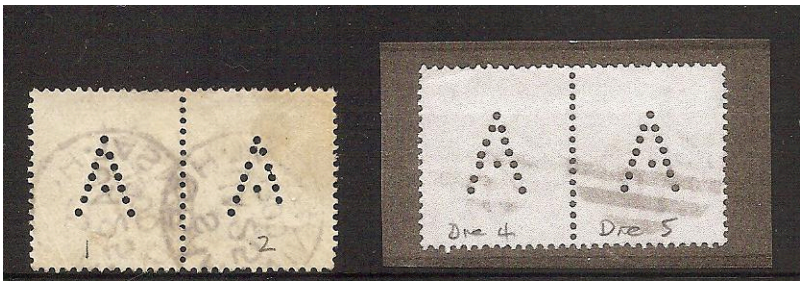
A.1, a six die device, with each die slightly different. Remember that they may appear different if the strike is from the back, or from the front, so turn the stamp over when you are overlaying it over the pattern image to make sure.

Die 1 Die 2 Die 3 Die 4 Die 5 Die 6

The Tinsley study considered all of these dies as the same pattern (Type 1b) and the McNamee study recognised the variation and described the dies as 7 types plus the

specific pattern listing as two distinct patterns Types 1a and 1b. CPA/HAPP listed two of the dies as A.3 and A.4 but did not recognise the remaining dies.

Please note that the 1-6 Dies listed and illustrated above may not be in the correct order to the true layout.



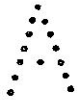
Here are some rare multiples of the different dies in joined pairs.

The strike is almost always found in the upright position or upright reversed, we cannot say which. This may tell us something about the layout of the dies compared to the layout of the sheets of the small format Sideface and Tablet issues as these are the only issues found with the A.1 pattern.

In the absence of more multiples, and in particular vertical multiples it is difficult to determine the structure of this multi die device. It is possible that the device is a 2 high by 3 wide layout, or vice versa, but at present I think it is most likely 6 dies in a horizontal row.

A..2 Used 6 February 1900 until 5 October 1900

A.2 is a single die device and it is the largest of the A patterns. It is somewhat like A.1 but larger. I believe that this may have lead to the Tinsley and McNamee studies considering this pattern to be a related pattern to A.1.



Tinsley calls this pattern Type 1a and the A.1 above Type 1b and McNamee calls it Type 1c. In CPA/HAPP it is A.1.

The short usage period of the device is odd as it does not show signs of wear and tear, such as missing pins. Its size is rather large and it would have been difficult to use it on the small format Sideface and Tablet issues. However it is seemingly well suited to the large format contemporary, Pictorial issues.

In any case size may have been an issue, as it is replaced by a device which produces a much more compact pattern.

A.3 Used 19 January 1900 until 1 November 1910

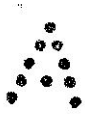
A.3 is another single die device and it is the longest serving device that Tattersall's used. Its more compact format means that it was suitable for the full range of Tasmanian issues of the period including the Sideface, Tablet and Pictorials.

The Tinsley and McNamee studies give it the similar reference being, Type II and Type 2 respectively. In CPA/HAPP it is numbered A.2

Because of its long period of use it is the most common of all the Tattersall's A's. The strikes are found in the full range of positions and multiples are known.

A.4 Used 13 September 1901 until 28 October 1906

A.4 is the most distinctive of all the A patterns, and it is characterised by very thick pins.



Tinsley and McNamee again agree in giving it the same reference, Type III and Type 3 respectively. It is A.6 in CPA/HAPP.

It was a single die device and the larger pins removed a great deal of paper from the stamp. This meant that it was rarely used on the smaller format stamps and it is most often seen on Pictorials.

Its usage is overlapped by the usage of A.3, although it is not as common as A.3. As I earlier in the article, the mail volumes of the company where huge and it may have required two devices to provide the required volume of perfined stamps. As with A.3 the pattern appears in the full range of positions.

A.5 Used 24 October 1906 until 30 October 1908

A.5 is an odd pattern it that it is almost always incomplete.

The device was of a single die format and was not in use for long. It seemed to suffer dropped pins almost immediately it went into service. I have made a detailed study of the degradation of this device and will submit this for a future Bulletin.

Given the timing of its introduction it most likely replaced A.4. Again, like A.4 it appears to have been a support device to the more commonly used A.3.

Tinsley and McNamee again agree in giving it the same reference, Type IV and Type 4 respectively. It is A.7 in CPA/HAPP.

As with A.3 and A.4 it is found in a full range of positions.

A.6 Used 1 March 1907 until 21 June 1909.

A.6 was another single die device and it appears to have replaced A.5 as the support device for A.3 which was still in service.

Once again Tinsley and McNamee again agree in giving it the same reference, Type V and Type 5 respectively. It is A.8 in CPA/HAPP.

It is found in a full range of positions.

Other Reports

Reported but not seen 12 pinholes 9mm high
A.5 1 T USED 1899-1899

The existence of the CPA/HAPP report of the pattern A.5, is not supported by any other study.

In his article in SPPB # 82 of July 2008, John Mathews states that "Pattern A.5 has been confirmed to be an example of variety #2 – it is now realised that the bottom pin of the longer leg was actually off the edge of the stamp!"

I agree that the report is erroneous and I have an example of the strike. It is clearly from the Die 2 of my A.1 pattern, the 6 die device used in 1899- 1900.

Given the mail volumes of the Tattersall's organisation it would be almost impossible for them to have a device in use that did not leave a trail of examples.

Conclusion

Tattersall's were huge perfin users and in only about 10 years they produced more perfins per year than almost any other user, before or since. This availability and the popularity of Tasmanian philately have lead to many studies of this pattern group. Each of these studies has had its insights, but it is only by drawing them together that the full story is told.

In my collecting and the study of these A patterns I have followed the chronological approach used by both Tinsley and McNamee in determining how to present this pattern group in the most logical manner.

This chronological approach lays out the patterns in a sequential order as they were used. I believe that as our hobby matures that we should extend this chronological approach to all patterns. Frankly it makes sense and then the patterns are not individuals but characters in a story told over time.

References:

"Tasmania – Stamps and Postal History" W E Tinsley (1986)
"Tasmania – The Perforated Officials and other Punctures" O G Ingles, Philately from Australia, (Dec 1967)
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"Commercial Perfins of Australia" J Grant and J Mathews (1998)
"Handbook of Australian Private Perfins" J Mathews (2003)

"Focus on the Holes - Tasmania´s Private Perfins". The US Gold Medal winning exhibit of David McNamee.
"Tattersall's" website
"The Australian Dictionary of Biography"