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## THE LAKE LEFROY STAMP

By Sir JOHN WILSON, Br.

SOME time ago Mr. H. W. Edmunds showed me a Lake Lefroy Gold Field Cycle Mail stamp on part of cover, and some documents which belonged to a friend of his, and through his introduction I met the owner, Mr. J. R. Hoade, who had acquired the piece and documents from his mother-in-law, and he kindly permitted me to purchase them for the Royal Collection.

The existing knowledge on the Lake Lefroy stamps is printed in two paragraphs in the *Australian Philatelist*, Vol. IV of 1897 and 1898; it is curious that these paragraphs are not detailed specifically in the index, and it is a wonderful tribute to the late Sir Edward Bacon's thoroughness that in spite of this they appear in his list of articles on Western Australia which appeared in the *Journal of the Philatelic Literature Society*.

The first paragraph of December 24, 1897, is as follows:

"Another Westralian Local. We have seen a large stamp issued by the proprietors of the Lake Lefroy CYCLE MAIL. The words 'Lake Lefroy Goldfield' on a lined ground occupy the upper portion of the design. Below this is a swan in an oval frame, inscribed 'Cycle Mail' above and 'Western Australia' below. At the base of the design is the word 'Postage,' with '6d.' in each of the lower angles. A scalloped frame surrounds the whole design, which is very roughly executed, and apparently lithographed. The stamp is printed in red on green wove paper, perf. 12."

"This is doubtless issued by another of the 'pioneer posts' which serve outlying mining settlements not reached by the Government mails. Its fate will probably be similar to that of the Coolgardie Cycle and Camel Express, which had to cease operations as soon as regular mail communication was established."

The second is in the issue of April 25, 1898, and reads:

"Lake Lefroy Cycle Mail. While upon the stool of repentance we have another apology to make. This time it is to Mr. J. F. Hambly, who kindly wrote under date February 25<sup>th</sup> (just too late for the February number, but in ample time for the March issue)"; In a recent number you spoke of a West Australian local cycle mail established at Lake Lefroy. Under date of February 14<sup>th</sup>, Mr. Frederic E. Maskell writes me: 'The mail service is not now in existence. We were running from February to June, 1897, since which date there has been a Government service. We had only one issue of stamps, consisting of 1,000, after which the block was defaced.' You may think this of sufficient interest to insert in the shape of a paragraph."

It is curious that after so many years further information should come to light from documents belonging to the other partner in the concern, and I print these documents as an appendix to these notes just as they are.

The Lake Lefroy stamp is in my experience very rare, and though I had a specimen in my collection of its brother the Coolgardie Cycle Mail (1/- value), on a portion of a cover, used with the Western Australia 2d. grey stamp, (S.G.100a), I do not recollect having before seen the Lake Lefroy used with a specimen of a Western Australia stamp on a piece. It is clear from the letters, however, that there might be, if they have not all been destroyed, quite a quantity of these stamps in unused condition (remainders) which could eventually turn up.

Strangely enough, our Hon. Secretary, Mr. Gilbert-Lodge was in the goldfields at the time this stamp was in use and kept a used specimen of it. A good many years ago Mr. Gilbert-Lodge gave me this stamp, and it is in my private collection of local posts.

#### LAKE LEFROY GOLDFIELD CYCLE MAIL STAMP (WESTERN AUSTRALIA)

A SHORT ACCOUNT OF THE STAMP BY THE SURVIVING PROPRIETOR

THIS stamp was designed by H. & M. at the end of 1896. A Zinco block was made and 1,000 stamps printed off in sets of four, dark pink on green paper. Immediately after printing this thousand the Z. block was most effectually obliterated by cutting with a knife a deep line across from corner to corner making it quite impossible for others to be printed off without showing a line on the printing. These stamps were used in connection with the "Cycle Mail Service" from Lake Lefroy to Coolgardie, and several hundreds passed through



The Lake Lefroy stamp is illustrated the right way up because it is not generally familiar, but it should be appreciated that it has been affixed upside down on the original envelope.

The manuscript "H&M" in indelible pencil on the stamp represent Hillier and Maskell, the partners of the concern.

the post, being affixed to letters in the right-hand bottom corner, the Gvt.\* stamp being in the usual place. The face value of these stamps was 6d. Some time after they had been in use the chief Postmaster, Mr. Scholl, Perth, W.A., early in 1897 wrote a letter to the proprietors of the "Mail" pointing out that they were infringing the postal regulations by issuing a private stamp, his attention having been drawn to the fact, also informing us that we must desist or a penalty would be enforced for the offence. I regret to state that I am not in possession of this letter. Soon after this, a notice warning people not to fix these private stamps to their letters in future was posted up conspicuously at every post office on the W. A. goldfields, having the effect of well advertising our stamps, with the result that fancy prices were offered for specimens, 2/6 to 7/6 being obtained. However we held on to the remainder. I must mention that 50 stamps were given to a man named Albert Green employed at the Kalgoorlie P. O. in consideration of his getting our-stamp placed in the London Catalogue, although he assured us at the time that that had been done we found out it was not the case. The Postmaster Coolgardie, Mr. Thompson, handed us several letters he had received, asking him to procure for the writers specimens of our stamp. Of the two of us who ran the "Lake Lefroy Cycle Mail" F. Maskell died early in 1900; what became of the few hundred stamps and the defaced Zinco-block he had in his possession I cannot say.

*Signed:* H. LACY-HILLIER.

\* The specimen illustrated was put on upside down.

KALGOORLIE, Sept. 15, 1898

Dear Hillier,

I received your letter the other day, and the same mail received a communication from Engd. & a copy of the *Stamp Collectors' Fortnightly\** (the leading Philatelic of Engd.). They have an official notice of it and an engraving & comment very favourably on it etc.;† but I sent the paper to Clgdie to your partner & on its return will post it Registered to you. This journal first recognised the Clgdie Stamps, Bright & Son are also going to put it in their next Catalogue.‡ I will write you fuller in a day or two.

Signed: ALBERT GREEN,  
Registration Branch,  
Kalgoorlie.

(The postcard is dated KALGOORLIE SP 14 98.)

Letter sent to the Postmaster, Coolgardie, from C. A. Phillpotts,

27 Mount Park Crescent,  
Ealing W.,  
Middlesex.  
17th Sept 98.

To the  
Post Master  
Coolgardie.

Dear Sir,

It is some considerable time now since I left Coolgardie viz. '96, but still you might remember my name. You are the only man I know now who I can apply to for what I want, & I shall be much obliged to you if you will kindly comply with my request. I hear there is a Cycle mail running I think to Lake Lefroy, which has its own stamp, a 6d. one. Would you be kind enough to send 2 specimens (unused) to the above address. I enclose you a Postal note for 3/- to recouperate for stamps & postage. I don't know for sure if it runs to Lake Lefroy or if there is more than one Cycle mail, if there is you might send me a sample of each or if costing more than I have enclosed, I would remit you the balance immediately on receipt, also doing the same should you incur any expense in getting stamps for me.

Trusting you won't mind doing this for me,

I remain,

Yours sincerely,

Signed: C. A. PHILLPOTTS.

Extract from cutting taken from the periodical *Black and White* dated September 24, 1898.

Philatelists will envy the lucky possessor of the Cycle Mail stamp from Western Australia. It is indeed a unique curiosity, for there is but one cycle mail in the world.§ The original design is somewhat rough, but not the less interesting for that reason. The description of the stamp is as follows; First, on a ground lightly shaded with perpendicular lines are the words, "Lake Lefroy Goldfield." Then in an oval is presented the black swan of Australia, with the words "Cycle. Mail" above it and "Western Australia" below; while at the bottom under the oval are the words, "6d. Postage 6d." The colour is pink stamped upon a pale green ground.

(The stamp is illustrated with the following caption: "The only Cycle Mail stamp in the World.")

\* Vol. V (1898), Feb. 19th. containing a reprint of the paragraph in the *Australian Philatelist* already mentioned.

† This is quite untrue.

‡ It is curious that the Society's copy of the 3rd edition of this catalogue has been bound up without four pages which include Western Australia, but the fourth edition does not list the stamp.

§ This, of course, is not true.