

NEW ZEALAND

stamp papers from the reign of King George V

George V reigned in Great Britain and throughout the British Commonwealth from May 6, 1910 through World War I (1914-1918) and until his death on January 20, 1936. During those years, New Zealand had some of the most complex issues of their history, primarily due to paper...

Prior to the death of his father (Edward VII) in 1910, most stamp issues were printed by the Government Printing Office in Wellington, using either chalk surfaced paper purchased from De La Rue & Co., pre-gummed and watermarked with NZ and Star or a "better quality" unsurfaced paper purchased from Alex. Cowan & Sons, also pre-gummed and watermarked with NZ and Star.

This procedure continued until the first stamps were issued with the new George V design. In December of 1915, on the surface printed ½d stamp of that issue, a small provisional printing was attempted on a Cowan thick, highly chalk surfaced paper. This was an experiment to provide a sturdier paper for use in vending machines.

WWI shortages caused the use of left over stocks of the paper previously used on the 2½d Pictorial, even though the watermarks didn't align well with the stamps being printed.

After WWI, prices and availability of papers fluctuated enough to justify experimenting with several less expensive papers, 1924-1926 saw several paper types in use, typically for short print runs. These papers often have as their best identifying characteristics the subtle changes to the watermarks.

In the early 1930s, a cheaper and smoother paper type came to the market. the paper was made using partially pulp from the Esparto grasses grown in Europe. This paper tears somewhat easier than the previous wood pulp papers, and is hard to identify.

The final new paper to be used during George V's reign was a rag paper produced by Wiggins Teape for use on the pictorial issues of 1935. Results when used to test print some of the values from the Pictorial series were unsatisfactory though, so the remainder of the Pictorials were printed on esparto paper.

References:

The Postage Stamps of New Zealand, Volume 1; R.J.G. Collins & H.T.M. Fathers ed. 1938
Campbell Paterson's Catalogue of New Zealand Stamps; Campbell Paterson Ltd. 1985