

The Cook Forgery

In the early 1970s, the Australian Post found that its normal "Shield" - first day covers were no longer the big seller and its competitors WCS, Royal and Excelsior - to name a few - had been selling their jewellery FDCs much better for a long time.

So in 1970 the Australian Post began to produce and sell its own cacheted FDC - without much advertising - and the Expo 70 issue was the first such cacheted FDC .

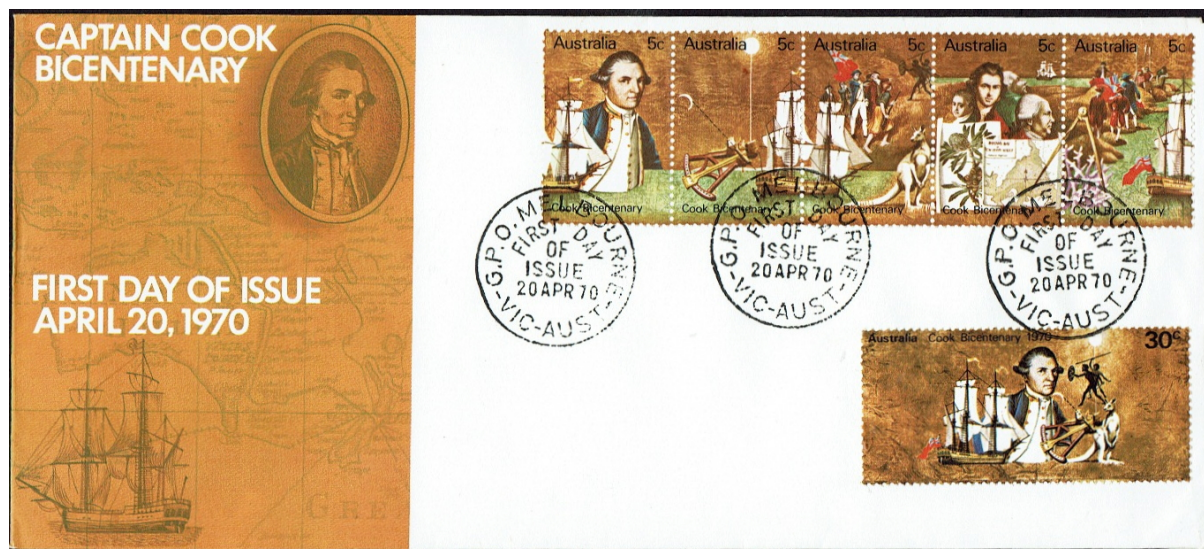


Fig. 1: Long format (9" x 4" or DL) of the Australian Post Office cacheted FDC on the occasion of the 200th anniversary of the discovery of the Australian East Coast by James Cook, GPO Melbourne, 20 April 1970.

To mark the 200th anniversary of the discovery of the east coast of Australia, the Post Office issued a 5-piece se-tenant stamp, an accompanying large-format single stamp and a sheet containing these stamps. For this purpose, two cacheted envelopes were produced, one in long format and one in normal format.

The usual way of collecting first day covers at that time was to have the stamps cancelled with the official first day postmark and to collect them blank or, if necessary, with a cleanly typed address afterwards. However, the desired blank stamping by the post office was not permitted.

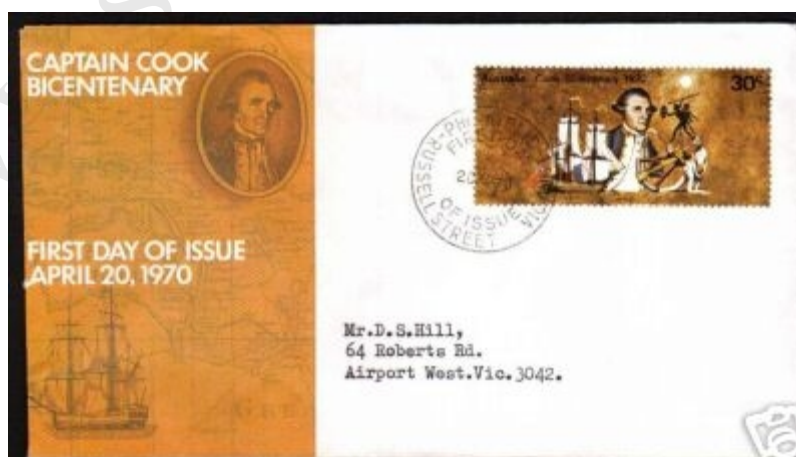


Fig. 2: Small Cook size of the Australian Post's cacheted FDC on the occasion of the 200th anniversary of the discovery of the Australian East Coast by James Cook, GPO Melbourne 20 April 1970.

To avoid this problem, dealers (and also collectors) bought blank cacheted envelopes and stamps, addressed them with a pencil, provided the letter with the desired stamps and handed them in at the post office counter for stamping.

The address was then erased by the dealers and the envelopes sold blank. In many first day covers of this period, the traces of erased addresses can be seen in oblique light incidence.

Genuinely used first day covers of this time are rare, a registered "*small Cook*" - is worth a fortune.

The existence of the "*small Cook*" envelope was largely ignored. This changed in the 1980s when the big album producer PW produced a page for the "*small Cook*" cover in his album and everyone was desperately looking for "*small Cooks*". Temporarily up to 750 A\$ were paid for the jewellery FDC.

It was not long before excellently counterfeit "*small Cooks*" covers appeared on the market, which were indistinguishable from each other in terms of the printed image. However, there was a difference, because the counterfeiters printed on modern envelopes with a different rubber coating.

The originals have patchy, very streaky, orang/yellow gum, that of the fake FDC has smooth blue green gum on the flaps.

After it was published how easy it was to distinguish the envelopes, they were sold closed by the counterfeiters and thus no longer distinguishable. Anyone who owns a locked "*small Cook*" is highly likely to have a fake in his collection.

Some of the traders marked their fake "*small Cooks*" with the stamp "FORGERIE".

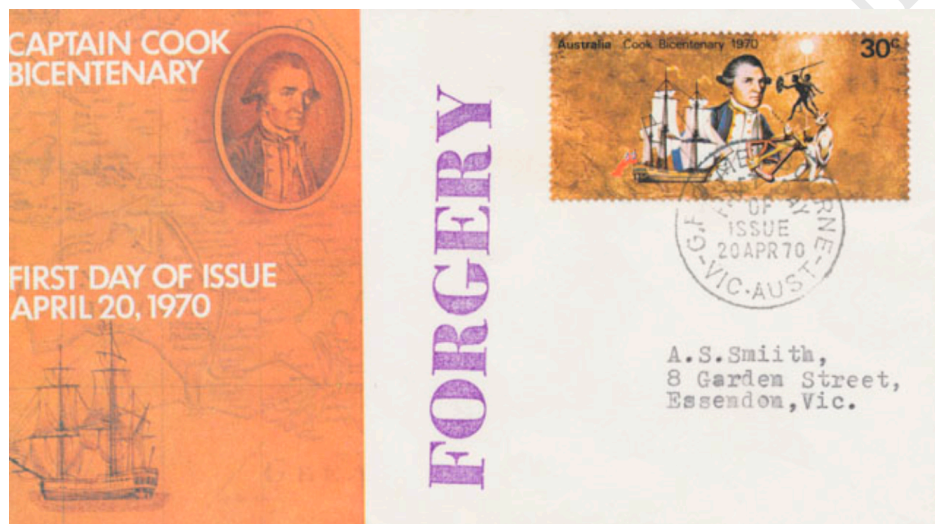


Fig. 3: "*Small Cook*" marked as fake

There are also (small) commemorative envelopes in the same design, but with the imprint "COMMEMORATIVE COVER" instead of "FIRST DAY OF ISSUE". They are not rare.

Literature:

<http://davidaedwards.com/ausfdclist>

<https://glenstephens.com/snfebruary18.html>

Translated with deepl.