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THE ADELAIDE ROYAL BANK

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In 1982 a purported newly discovered banknote appeared in Melbourne¹. It was a large and attractive uniface note under the title of the ADELAIDE ROYAL BANK. The note had three corners missing and a large piece out of the right hand margin. It was also split vertically and had been crudely repaired. The printing was in black over a light green background with intricate fine-line work in both printing stages. The printed area measured 205 x 123 mm.

The note bore the black handwritten serial number 742662, the date December 16, 1869 and a signature of Edwin Marsh (or Yarsh?) Later that year it was again offered for auction².

In Banks of Issue in Australia I said of the Adelaide Royal Bank: "No details of any such bank are known, and a £50-0-0 note with such a high serial number is not likely to be genuine and is at the most possibly a trial piece."³

The note next appeared in auction in 1985.⁴ In 1987 it was offered through Gledinnings in London and later appeared in 1992 in the banknote listing of John Pettit⁵.

In 1987 a written inquiry was directed to Reserve Bank Archives, Sydney, in an attempt to find out if such a bank ever existed. The following reply was received⁶. "...Referring to your inquiry about the Adelaide Royal Bank of 1869, unfortunately we have been unable to locate any reference to the existence of this bank."

The appearance of a very similar note in auction in November 1992⁷ may have solved the mystery of the Adelaide Royal Bank. The note had the same design as the previous item, but included a maker's imprint "Boot & Clements, 7, Mark Lane, London" between the signature panel and the bottom border of the Bearer clause panel. The printed area measured 209 x 128 cm. It was a complete



note with additional selvage on the right hand side.

Glued to the back was an advertisement for Boot & Clements, 7, Mark Lane, London, Steam Printers, Manufacturing and Export Stationers. The upper printed portion of the back featured advertising for "Steel & Copper plate Engraving of every description", including Bank Notes and Cheques. The bottom portion illustrated 18 different styles of lettering for Brass & Zinc Door and Window plates.

The note did not have any additional writing and was correctly described in the auction catalogue as a printer's promotional note. It sold to John Pettit where no doubt it became an interesting companion to the original Adelaide Royal Bank £50 note which has puzzled collectors and researchers for so long.

REFERENCES:

1. Downie Auction, Melbourne, January 1982, lot 292.
2. Downie Auction, Melbourne, April 1982, lot 211.
3. Vort-Ronald, Michael P. *Banks of Issue in Australia*, 1982.
4. Spink Auction, Melbourne, July 1985, lot 1824.
5. John Pettit, Sydney, Sale List, September 1992.
6. Personal Communications with Reserve Bank of Australia Archives, 20 November 1987.
7. Spink-Noble Auction, Sydney, November 1992, lot 2975.

