

## Bibliographical Note

### No. 6: Printing Newspapers on Silk

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In discussing the printing of keepsakes on horse-drawn wagons during processions in the Australasian colonies in the mid-nineteenth century (*BSANZ Bulletin*, 11(1987), 97-107, 'An Excursion into printed keepsakes: II: Colonial celebrations') I referred to the inclusion in the celebrations of 9 July 1863 in Christchurch marking the wedding of Edward and Alexandra of 'three white silk banners, on which were printed the first pages of the three newspapers of the day' and went on to cite the related phenomenon - instanced for me by Dr Ross Harvey from the 29 May 1865 issue of the *Christchurch Evening Mail* - of whole newspapers printed on silk.

I can now report an instance of the front page of a newspaper being printed on silk. The newspaper is the *Ovens and Murray Advertiser*, no.7157, Saturday, 10 May 1890, 'Printed by Richard Warren, at The *Ovens and Murray Advertising Office*, Ford-street, Beechworth, in the Colony of Victoria'. The copy seen - in the Burke Museum at Beechworth - is printed in blue on silk. The occasion for the special printing was the laying of the foundation-stone of the Ovens District Hospital isolating ward 'on Thursday afternoon last', the report of which occupies the first five (of seven) columns of the page.

Clearly the occasion itself was considered to be noteworthy, warranting this particular form of commemoration. But how many copies on silk would have been printed? and who would have been the recipients? A partial answer no doubt is 'distinguished members of the official party', and I note Professor Harold Love's comment about programme posters (*BSANZ Bulletin*, 4(1979), 3-11, 'Early Melbourne theatrical ephemera'): 'For special occasions programme posters [i.e. printed cast lists distributed inside theatres] would be printed on silk with a border of tasselled embroidery - examples being four Lyster opera company programmes for Vice-Regal performances in Adelaide in 1879.' Printing on silk (or satin) implies perhaps an intention to preserve (though is silk necessarily more durable than good paper?), but for what purpose? - simply admiring? framing? or converting to some utilitarian object, like a handkerchief or a cushion-cover?

The date of the present example, 1890, is rather later than the period covered by the earlier examples, 1850-1863, thus prompting a further question: what is the temporal extent of printing newspapers (even if only individual pages) on silk? And what is the geographical extent? - presumably wider than Melbourne, Geelong and Christchurch. Indeed what is the taxonomy of printing on silk in general?