

"Collector" – "Dealer" – "Detective"?

THE STORY BEHIND THE AUTHENTICATION OF THE UNIQUE MILLION \$1 DBP

By Judy Shaw



Bob and I had known of the existence of the \$1 Test DBP note, numbers DBP 999999/1000000 from Nobles Auction since 1995. We had made enquiries for quite a while to track down the whereabouts of the pair with the intent to purchase them. Finally to our surprise they were listed in the November 2001 Nobles Auction.

Directly before this auction taking place, some doubt was raised as to the authenticity of the million note. Trusting in over 20 years experience, and with prior knowledge from research into the pedigree of the note, I purchased these notes notwithstanding. Months later with further doubt having been raised, I set about proving their authenticity: taking up the challenge to set aside any ill-conceived notions as to the authenticity of this note.

The query was based on the probability of a 100,000 numbered note having an extra "0" added. Sounds feasible, but bearing in mind, of the one million notes that were printed, it is estimated (apart from a small portion that was withheld by Note Printing) the rest were distributed in batches between Tasmania, Western Australia and Queensland. One has also to consider the numbering is usually backwards from 999999 to 000001 and the millionth note is printed and placed in sequence with the 999999 note. The possibility of someone finding the 100,000 numbered note, say in Perth or Brisbane, tampering with it, and then locating the 999999 note in say, Tasmania and marrying them together, are odds I would like to have on a Melbourne Cup winner!

Following several days of investigation, I located the gentleman who first received the notes. Now retired, he told me how he had cashed a cheque at the Reserve Bank and had been given ten notes—DBP 999991-1000000. Not knowing their true potential, he offered the notes in Nobles Auction in 1995 and the 999999—1000000 Pair sold for \$4,600.00 to a Melbourne Dealer. Dealer to Dealer the note then sold to a Collector who held them until November 2001 when they were resubmitted to Nobles for auction.

Wanting to prove the notes authenticity beyond any doubt we kept digging. A reasonable suggestion was to have the notes weighed – simple enough one might think but, have you ever tried to find a set of scales that could weigh a \$1 note? An item less than 1 gram? Or even tried to explain why you would want to weigh a \$1 note. Eventually, however, persistence paid off. The scales (and an intrigued technician) were found at a pathology laboratory. Under strict safety instructions from the technician, I donned my sneakers and off I went. Upon arrival, I was handed a "glamorous" white coat and hat to wear and we proceeded to weigh the notes. I had taken four notes: two ordinary DBP's (one under 500,000 and the other over 500,000) plus the DBP pair in question. The weighting comparison completed the difference between the million and DBP907359 was .001g and DBP456763 was .016g. This was a positive outcome.

The next step was to teleconference with Note Printing's expert in counterfeit

**THE UNIQUE
MILLION \$1 DBP**

Once upon a daytime past
When Judy Shaw was working fast
Correspondence did arrive
That made young Judy jump alive

It claimed there was a note so rare
That none to which it could compare
So off she went to make a bid
At Noble's Auction – with her kid

And low and behold the note she got
A story true – I kid you not
The DBP it was so rare
1 million serial was on there

Joy and elation was in the air
Because you see, it was a pair!
One was one million, one was one less
Yet what happens next you couldn't guess

Someone would claim it was untrue
And that would make young Judy blue
But she had faith in the note she had
And vowed to prove it to that 'lad'

To labs and jails to weigh and test
Remove the doubt of all the rest
And Judy sure did claim her stake
The note she proved was not a fake!

* * *

notes, Mr Veale. Mr Veale asked me a series of questions about the note and then indicated that he felt the note was genuine. However, I required a letter of authenticity and therefore Mr Veale had to view the note. Off we go to Melbourne. The meeting was set at Police Headquarters. Mr Veale introduced me to 3 other gentlemen: The Detective in charge of the Counterfeit Squad, the Head of Security at Note Printing and a gentleman who was actually the last employee who had participated in the manual printing of the million numbered notes at Note Printing. After being taken to an interrogation room, I handed over the suspect. They did a full body search and after much deliberation advised that this suspect was falsely accused



Rare DBP999999 / 1000000 Pair

and should be immediately released back into my custody. Justice had been served.

The evidence before them was irrefutable. The misalignment of the last "0" (the very part of the note which raised suspicion in the first place) turned out to be one of the factors in the authentication of the note. The method NPA used was to firstly reprint a second DBP 100,000 note. (*Unlike previous notes where a sheet of prefixes were printed the DBP was a one off.*) Then a mask of pink paper was cut to the size of the note. Without ink the serial was embossed onto the paper. A small square was cut where the sixth "0" was to be printed. The paper mask was placed on the note, moved slightly, positioning it to print the sixth "0". The number was printed with inked rollers with only the last zero printed on the note.

Although great care was taken a perfect outcome was difficult to achieve. Not the sort of job to tackle after a counter lunch!

Another feature checked was the letter press printing which was used by Note Printing. The 'letter press' machine caused a unique rim or halo on each number, also the serial went through to the other side of the note causing an embossed effect.

During the course of the morning many areas of printing procedures were covered. Everyone was interested in how these notes were now desired as collectables, recalling how they had handled them as a mere \$1 note, never realising the value they could achieve.

It is perfectly clear how important and unique the million numbers are, even compared to the highly sought after star notes. In comparison to the star notes, the process used was far more complex and aesthetically the number looks great. Also unlike the star notes where there were often over 200,000 per signature printed, there was only ever one per prefix of the million numbered notes—leaving the potential to have, in some cases, only a couple of notes printed, let alone survive.

The million numbering ceased after the Phillips Randall signature as it was deemed too time consuming to warrant continuation.

How unique does this make the DBP 1000000! Not only documented as the last million serial ever printed, this note was done during a test series some four years after the process of printing million numbered notes had ceased. Truly remarkable, this note should definitely be ranked alongside some of the rarest notes in Australia!

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