

PILS

PLATE IDENTIFICATION LETTERS

A *Plate Identification Letter (PIL)* is a very small letter found on each note of nearly all Paper Decimal notes issued. Although initially thought to be a security device, it seems tenable now that they were included to assist with quality control.

IN ORDER TO LOCATE

the *PIL* on the Fraser Cole \$10, hold a ruler horizontally from the first "L" in 'DOLLARS' (as shown), if there is a *PIL* it will be on the outside of the left corner of a square in the intaglio design (as indicated in the second picture with a red circle).



As far as can be determined almost all letters of the alphabet were used, except "I" and "W". When *PILs* were used for the second time a vertical line " | " was printed before the letter.

The *PILs* were on the intaglio printing plates. It is interesting to note that the prefix letters run alphabetically and consecutively down (top to bottom) of a sheet, however the *PILs* run alphabetically and consecutively across the sheet (left to right).

PILs were to be phased out by 1990 prior to the introduction of Polymer notes. Following 1990, any new notes printed **did not** have a *PIL*. However, it was found in a long consecutive run of Fraser Cole \$10, that an interesting feature occurred during the latter part of the printing process. Throughout bundles of the last print run there was a *PIL* on every third note. To understand one needs to know the production process.

The machine used to print the notes had three intaglio plates on a circular drum and thus printed three sheets for each revolution. If the plate prints 40 notes, as with the \$10, then the machine would print 120 notes per revolution. In the case of the Fraser Cole \$10 this is an important aspect as three consecutive notes reveal the full story.

The anomaly occurred as, during production, one of the three (post 1990) printing plates with *no PIL* became damaged and was replaced with a printing plate made (pre 1990) that **had** a *PIL*. The result was that every third note printed in the final run of the Fraser Cole \$10, had a *PIL*! Because of this, only one in three MRR last prefix notes were printed with a *PIL*. They are consequently more valuable than the notes without a *PIL*. It should be noted that this anomaly does not occur in every run or bundle of Fraser Cole \$10. In fact, most bundles found today either contain all notes with a *PIL* or all notes without a *PIL*.

*Research by Judy Shaw
(with thanks to Harold Peake)*