

# SCANLENS SWEETS BADGES

## 150TH ANNIVERSARY OF AUSTRALIA (1938)



1. (unrecorded)



2. Landing of Captain Cook



3. Life Savers



4. Landing of the First Fleet



5. Birth of a Nation



6. Koala



7. Kangaroo



8. Platypus



9. WWI Soldier



10. WWI Sailor



11. Donald Bradman



12. Central Station, Sydney



13. Bert Hinkler



14. Macquarie Lighthouse



15. Governor Arthur Phillip



16. Town Hall, Sydney



17. Phar Lap



18. Charles Kingsford Smith



19. Sydney Harbour Bridge



20. Kookaburra



21. Stockman

## The Mystery of the 1938 Scanlens Badges

This is a story of a little known set of badges made by Scanlens to commemorate Australia's 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 1938. The badges are small, 21mm tin button badges that beautifully depict Australian themes of people, events, buildings, fauna and culture. The design has a circular border legend of "150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Scanlens Sweets" with a unique number framed in the bottom centre. They are highly collectable as they are made by Scanlens and feature many iconic symbols of Australia. Depending on the badge, prices may range from \$50 to \$500 given that

some badges depicting Bradman, Phar Lap and Sydney Harbour Bridge are more sought after than others.



**17. Phar Lap badge**  
*Scanlens Sweets 1938*



**Event Brochure**  
*Depicted on Badge #21*

To give some background, the preparations for the anniversary began in 1936 with the formation of Australia's 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration Council. Australia's 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations was a major national event. This was especially the case in Sydney, with a programme that extended from Australia Day, January 26<sup>th</sup> to ANZAC Day, April 25<sup>th</sup>, and which featured a wide range of activities and events across the country. The celebrations were strictly controlled by the passing of the Australian 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration Act No 57 - 1936 (Cth) under which governed the operation of the Council and its sub committees. Merchandise and memorabilia came under the Council's jurisdiction and needed to be approved and feature the official logo in order to be sold for the celebrations.

The 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations was a time of great national pride and reflection. They provided an opportunity for Australians to celebrate their history, culture, and achievements, and to look forward to the future. The late 1930s was a period of significant transition for Australia. The nation was slowly recovering from the Great Depression and there was the looming threat of war giving rise to a greater sense of patriotism.



**Stamp Label**  
*Depicted on Badge #19*



**Stamp Label**  
*Depicted on Badge #20*

In terms of Scanlens, very little is known about their early operation. Although they are most renowned for their football cards from the 1960s onwards, they did however as early as the 1930s begin to include trading cards in packets of sweets and chewing gum. The author believes at this time Scanlens seized the opportunity by jumping on the bandwagon and hype of the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations by producing these badges to promote their name and their sweets. With a fever pitched interest in anything Australian, it appears Scanlens was inspired by brochures, collector cards, stamp labels and other ephemera promoting the celebrations as Scanlens depicted the same subjects on their badges. Examples of these are shown throughout the article.



***Hoadley's Trading Card #1 from  
The Birth of a Nation series c1930s  
Depicted on Badge #5***

The highest recorded badge number is 21. The author has an image of a Kookaburra badge in very poor condition that is identical to number 20 but appears to be numbered 22. This cannot be confirmed until a better version appears on the market. Interestingly the only badge not sighted at the time of writing is number 1. In regards to badges numbered 9 and 10 following detailed military research, the author concludes that these badges are representations of a WWI soldier and sailor respectively and not of a specific person.



***Hoadley's Trading Card #7 from  
The Birth of a Nation series c1930s  
Depicted on Badge #4***

were never circulated to the public based on the reasons mentioned above. The author would like to specially thank the people who have helped him write this article. He is still looking for several of these badges to add to his collection and hopes this article will encourage readers to come forth with more information and generate more interest in these iconic badges of yesteryear.

### About the Author

The author is an avid collector and researcher of badges having written several books, catalogues and articles on badges. His latest article is on the Sydney Harbour Bridge Toll Collectors Uniform Buttons. He is known as the "Badgeman", operates a niche online collectables shop, *Victory Badges*, and manages the Facebook group, *Badge and Pin Collectors Australia*.

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As the badges were produced for a major event by a marketing powerhouse the author is puzzled as to why so little is known about them. To solve this and other mysteries the author has researched the archives of the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebrations held at the State Library of NSW, studied the history of Scanlens, and consulted several expert collectors of Scanlens trading cards. None of these unfortunately provided any shred of evidence on the badges. The author is aware of only a few other collectors of these badges and together with his own collection has been able to piece together the series.

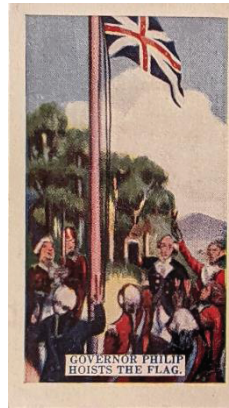


***Hoadley's Trading Card #25 from  
The Early Australian Series c1930s  
Depicted on Badge #21***

Another mystery is no one knows how these badges were issued. For such a dynamic marketing company it's so strange that no ephemeral material promoting these badges exists. Were they sold with the sweets or separately, were they sold or given as part of the admittance or included in a show bag at an anniversary event or were they sold after the event throughout the year? Given these badges are ultra-rare and generally not known by badge collectors suggests to the author that it was none of the above and that the most likely scenario is that these badges were never issued. It is likely the Council for the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebrations did not approve of their sale or Scanlens did not to issue the badges because of the red tape of getting them approved. On this basis the author suggests that the seldom few that have appeared on the market are samples or prototypes. This is further substantiated by their inferior quality as they are monochrome with no protective coating as you would normally expect in tin badges. It is this very fact that most of the known examples are foxed and rusted.

It is the author's understanding that the archives of Scanlens still exist but is not in the public domain. Until such time that it's proven otherwise, the author's conclusion is that these badges

Hoadley's Chocolates Collector Cards (1930s)  
Depicted on Scanlens badges



150th Anniversary of Australia Stamp Labels  
Depicted on Scanlens badges

