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NEW ZEALAND NOTES AND COMMENT

By Warwick Paterson

ANTARCTICA

We were extremely privileged last month to have the opportunity of seeing the award winning (Silver, London International Stamp Exhibition, 1960) collection of *Antarctica* brought together over a period of 30 years by Eric Gibbs, of Taihape. This magnificent collection comprises in excess of 3000 covers and entries of individual interest and significance dating from the earliest expeditions and much of his material is excessively scarce, including a number of unique pieces. The collection is increasing as the field of International Antarctic research widens year by year, and for its sheer comprehensiveness, it must be virtually without equal—we at least know of no other.

Eric, himself, has made several trips to Antarctica, and we found his account of his experiences on the latest of them so fascinating as to bear brief re-telling herein—Historic, if not entirely Philatelic—we do not apologise!

Climatic conditions are a predominant feature of any account of activities within the Antarctic region. During the winter period, the Continent is in complete darkness, gradually lightening towards the summer season of 24 hours daylight. The sea during winter is frozen far off shore, but as the summer approaches, the ice breaks up and moves out to sea. Eric explained that at any time of the year the weather can change from clear and calm to blizzard conditions within a very short time. Eric was a member of the 1960-61 Huts Restoration Project, a venture organised by the New Zealand Antarctic Society (and backed by the D.S.I.R. Antarctic Division) to restore Lieut. (later Sir Ernest) Shackleton's 1907-09 Hut at Cape Royds and Captain Scott's 1910-13 Hut at Cape Evans. The fact that these remnants of such stirring times had stood unattended for 50 years had caused concern amongst New Zealanders and the brief of the party was to clear the huts of snow and ice and restore them to "lived-in" condition. The ventures were completed successfully and during the 1963-64 summer season it was decided to send another party (this time led by Eric) to restore Captain Scott's 1902-04 Hut at Hut Point, McMurdo Sound (where the United States Base and Nuclear Power Station now stands only a stone's throw from the Hut), Mount Erebus (13,300ft), the only active volcano in Antarctica, and depicted on the 3d Ross Dependency stamp, rises within 20 miles of Hut Point. Eric talked about this hut, prefabricated in Australia to a local design and brought in by Scott's 1901-04 Expedition for use as a base camp. In practice it was found to be too cold for habitation and the 40 crew and Expedition members lived on board their ship *Discovery* for two years, using the Hut solely for storage and entertainments. The party staged an original play "Ticket of Leave" there during their second winter. Scott's and Shackleton's later Expeditions were to use the Hut as a staging post.

The restoration party found many relics and reminders of the tragic circumstances and acts of high courage and endurance associated with these Expeditions. They found the Hut itself packed with snow and ice necessitating a laborious chipping operation—the accumulation of successive snow storms forcing their way through every crack in the building. They found a copy of the *Lyttelton Times*, dated December 10, 1901, containing an article on the first Expedition. In the sub-zero atmosphere food was perfectly preserved. Still edible tins of biscuits, cocoa, flour and onions were found in the Hut and outside a carcase of mutton. These foodstuffs are preserved there today. Some items

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they found told a story of their own—a M/S "Ticket of Leave," sketches, books and letters, many reflecting the difficulties in finding amusement and diversion through a long, dark winter. Eric's party must have felt like treasure hunters as they uncovered the provisions, clothing and personal effects of men who carried out exploration in their own time as portentous as that of our present-day astronauts, and none the less dedicated and courageous.

One of the most fascinating parts of our chat with Eric was his account of the experiences of the Ross Sea Shore Party—a story most inadequately documented; possibly unknown to many.

Eric told us that this group was a component of Shackleton's abortive Imperial Trans-Antarctic Expedition of 1914-17. Their purpose was to lay supply depots as far afield as the Beardmore Glacier in preparation for the arrival of Shackleton's party from the other side of Antarctica. Ten of these men were marooned at Cape Evans (approx. 13 miles from Hut Point) when their ship "Aurora" was taken out to sea and was unable to make anchorage again under the prevailing conditions. They were placed in what must have seemed a hopeless position—alone in a frozen desert, dependent both on a ship which might already have gone down and a party of explorers which might not (and never did) arrive. With remarkable dedication they continued their appointed duties throughout the first year, during which time one member died. They lived in Scott's ice-filled Hut at Hut Point for three months during their second year and remnants found by the restoration party testified to their ordeal. Scurvy-ridden and under-clothed they existed there under unimaginable winter conditions, eating seal meat and burning the blubber for fuel. Eric and his companions found the interior of the Hut entirely blackened by the sooty smoke of seal blubber. Unaccountably, the stranded Aurora party had never excavated the Hut, and this must remain one of the mysteries of the Antarctic. Had they done this they would have found many provisions in perfect condition—enough to make them relatively comfortable. Two of them were lost in an attempt to return to Cape Evans in June, 1916, in time for their relief on January 10, 1917 by their own ship back from New Zealand (with Shackleton himself aboard)—2 years to the day since their disembarkation in 1915. One can only guess at the extent of their ordeal, both physical and mental. The fact that they laid their depots and that seven of them survived is a measure of their epic endurance.

Thanks to the work of Eric and his party, the hut is now in "lived-in" condition, much as the explorers left it. As the plaque outside says: "This is historic ground."

1960 PICTORIALS: CHALK SURFACED PAPER

6d value is the latest to be reported on this paper. A remarkable fact is that chalk-surfaced paper has been used by Harrison's for some issues since 1959 and this has gone unnoticed all that time. The issues are:

Definitives 2½d (1961), 5d (1962), 1/9 (1963), and 7d since March, 1966.

Health Stamps: All Harrison's printings.

1959 Tete and Poaka; 1964 Tarapunga and Korara; 1965 Kaka and Piwakawaka; and Bellbird and Weka, 1966.

Xmas Stamps: Xmas stamps since 1961 ("Adoration of Magi")—all printed by Harrison's.

Commemoratives, Harrison's Printings: 1962 Telegraph Centenary, 3d and 8d; 1964 Road Safety, 3d; 1965 Anzac, 4d and 5d; 1965 ITU, 9d; 1965 Govt Centenary, 4d; and 1966 Jamboree, 4d.

De la Rue Printings. 1965 Parliamentary Conference, 4d, 9d and 2/-.

Printings by £, the Australian Reserve Bank on Harrison's Paper: 1963 Compac, 8d; and 1965 Churchill, 7d.

From the above it will be seen that Harrison's were in very early on the scene with their chalk-surfaced paper; all of their printings from the 1959 Healths to date are chalk-surfaced, with the exception of the **original** 1960 Pictorial Printings. Were these **original** Harrison printings (9d, 1/-, 1/3, 1/6, 1/9 yellow bistre, 2/-, 2/6, 3/- sepia, 5/- 10/-, £1) made before 1959?—That is one possible explanation.

NATIONAL STAMP EXHIBITION—APRIL, 1967

The Prospectus is now out and those of our customers who are interested in competing (we hope there will be **many!**) should write for a copy to "The Exhibition Secretary, P.O. Box 114, Whakatane, N.Z." This is a really worthwhile project and deserves every ounce of support collectors everywhere can give.

LATEST VARIETIES — 1966 HEALTHS

These stamps have produced a series of spectacular varieties and our readers have sent in a wide variety of them.

- (a) Perhaps the most unusual type I have seen in both values appears as irregular blobs of colour at odd positions in the sheets. I have seen these blobs in the same positions on successive sheets, suggesting some temporary fault in the cylinder at that position—oil spots perhaps?
- (b) One Bellbird plate block I saw had a creased corner; i.e. the corner of the sheet had been turned under and the sheet perforated that way—hence the perforations looked very odd when the corner was unfolded. The oddest thing about it was that the corner stamp had been partly printed correctly and partly after the sheet had been folded under; hence there was a complete printing throughout the stamp of all colours except the green (part of "POSTAGE" was missing)—conclusion: The green printing is done last and the crease occurred just before it took place.
- (c) I have also seen a miniature sheet with triple perforations.

SUNDRY HEALTH VARIETIES

Have a glance through some of these. Some of them have been very difficult to obtain and this month's offers represent a good opportunity to go back and rejuvenate your Health showing.

- 159 (a) T21(a) Nurse and Child 1d**
 "Wristlet watch" and "bandaged finger" flaws in positional blocks of 4; each block 7/-
- (b) T21(b) Ditto (2d)**
 "No dot below 0" in positional block of 4 21/6
- (c) T22a and T22(b) Princess Elizabeth and Prince Charles 1d + 2d**
 Two lovely right-hand selvedge blocks of 4, showing spectacular double perfs.—The two blocks £8
- (d) T22(b) Princess Elizabeth and Prince Charles 2d**
 WMK inverted blocks, singles per stamp 1/6
- (e) T30(b) Boys Brigade 2d**
 Portion of design repeated in selvedge—intriguing block of 4 6/6
- (f) T31(b) Poaka 3d**
 WMK inverted blocks of 4 or 6 per stamp 15/-
 Also positional block of 4 retouch R 2/9 9/-
- (g) T35(b) Prince Andrew Red**
 Positional block of 6 (top selvedge) showing the original state finger flaw R 3/5 75/-

FIRST TASMAN FLIGHT — 30th ANNIVERSARY 1958

S75(a) Smyth and Southern Cross 6d
Deep Ultramarine P.14 x 14½

- 184 (a)** This interesting stamp recess printed in Australia by the Commonwealth Bank of Australia. Note Printing Branch produced some outstanding flaws and this month we offer a magnificent block of 36 stamps from the lower right-hand corner of the sheet. The block includes:
R7 No. 7—Doubling in 6-pointed star
R10 No. 9—Coloured dash on 8-pointed star
 And **R10/10**—Coloured dash on 7-pointed star
- (b)** Magnificent plate number blocks of 9; plates 1 and 2 and value □ 22/-
 To left of "1958"—This outstanding block 40/-

FLOWN COVERS

We have a few items which will be of considerable interest to Air Mail F.D.C.S. enthusiasts.

- 185 (a)** First unsubsidised air mail service in New Zealand. Dec. 31, 1934 Hokitika, Haast and Okuru, South Westland, PMK Haast, 3IDE 34, 1d Field Marshal 20/-
- (b)** First Air Mail New Zealand-USA; December 1937, PMK Auckland 28DE 37 backstamped; San Francisco Jan. 6 1938, 2 x 1/3 arms and 2/- Captain Cook 10/-
- (c)** Kaitiaki Airways cover PMK Kaitiaki, 19 May 31, backstamped Hobsonville 21, May 31; 1d Field Marshal signed by Pilot F. Mill 10/-
- (d)** First Official Xmas Air Mail; PMK Gisborne 24 DE; 1931 air 5d overprinted. Different covers backstamped Auckland, Dunedin, Palmerston North each cover 6/-
- (e)** First Official Air Mail flight Gisborne to Auckland; PMK Gisborne 10 OE 31 backstamped Auckland. 1931 Air 3d chocolate and Geo. V 2d yellow (surface) 6/-
- (f)** VL2 Dominion Airways Ltd. "sixpence" stamps mint each 30/-

A STOCK BOOK TO END ALL STOCK BOOKS!!

This one holds full sheets—its measurements 13in x 22in, with strong, thick card cover and 50 light-grade, good quality leaves—strongly made, with an attractive mottled appearance. **Do you save sheets?** This is for you—gigantic at 45/-

GEOFF PERKINS CATALOGUE OF 1960 PICTORIAL VARIETIES

We feel that there may be a few more people who are interested in our August Newsletter announcement of this Catalogue—please let us know.

A COMPLETE SET OF NEWSLETTERS

From the now very scarce Volume 1, No. 1, to date changed hands lately at £7/10/—a figure (we note) in excess of the total cost of the set in annual subscriptions—such is the price of knowledge and this is a hobby where, we might say, "knowledge is both protection and strength."

SOME HEALTH PLATE BLOX

Your response to our advertisements of plate blocks over the past few months has been so encouraging that we continue this month with a few more interesting ones. Read on; this is one of the sensible ways to collect stamps.

186 T6(a) Crusader Pl. 1	30/-	211 T25(a) "Guides" 1½d (a) Pl.2 (6)	3/-
187 T7(a) Key to Health Pl. 1	25/-	(b) Value	1/6
188 T8(a) Lifebuoy Pl.1 (4 positions) ea.	14/-	212(a) T25(b) "Scouts" 2d. Pd. (6) (b) Value	3/6 1/9
189 T9(a) Hiker Pl.1	22/6	213 T26(a) Mt Aspiring (a) Pl. A1, A2, each	1/6
190 T10(a) Children Pl. a) H.1 (2 position) ea. (b) Imprint	16/- 20/-	(b) Value	1/3
191 T15(a) Triangular 1d Pl. (8)	5/-	214 T26(b) Ditto (a) Pl. A1	3/6
192 T15(b) Triangular 2d Pl.3, 6 (8) ea.	3/6	(b) Pl. A2	2/6
193 T16(a) Princesses 1d Pl. 1	2/-	215 T27(a) Medallion Pl. 1½d (a) A1, B1	3/6
194 T16(b) Princesses 2d Pl. 2	3/-	(b) Value	2/6
195 T17(a) Peter Pan 1d Pl. a) A1, B2 each (b) Pl. A2, B1 each	3/6 4/6	216(a) T27(a) 2d Ditto Pl. B.1 (b) Value	3/6 2/6
196 T17(b) Peter Pan 2d (a) Pl. A1 (b) Pl. B1	3/6 4/6	217(a) T27(c) 3d Pl. A1, A2 (b) Pl. B1, B2 (c) Value	4/6 6/6 2/6
197 T18(a) Soldier 1d Imprint	1/3	218 T28(a) Apple Tree 1½d Pl. 1	3/6
198 T18(b) Soldier 2d Imprint	2/6	219 T28(b) Ditto 2d Pl. 1	3/6
199(a) T19(a) Eros 1d imprint (b) Imprint with arrow (c) Value "six shillings" (d) "twelve shillings"	1/3 5/- 5/- 4/-	220 T28(c) Ditto 3d Pl. 1	3/6
200(a) T19(b) Eros 2d imprint (b) Value "£1/4/0" (c) Value "twelve shillings" (d) Selvedge "black arrow"	4/- 2/- 4/6 7/6	221 T29(a) Beach Scenes 2d (a) Pl. 0069-0070 (b) Value	1/9 1/9
201 T20(a) Health Camp 1d Pl. (a) Nos. B1, B2, A1, A2, each (b) Value	3/- 2/1-	222 T29(b) Ditto 3d Pl. (a) 0071-0072 (b) Value	2/6 2/3
202 T20(b) Health Camp 2d Pl. (a) Nos B1, B2, A2, each (b) Value	3/- 2/-	223 T30(a) "Brigade Children" 2d Pl.3 (6)	3/- 2/6
203 T21(a) "Nurse and Child" 1d Pl.2 (6)	2/6	224(a) T31(a) Tete 2d, P. I.HI (6) (b) Value	2/- 2/6
204 T21(b) Ditto 2d Pl.1 (6)	3/6	225(a) T31(b) Poaka 3d, P.III (6) (b) Value	3/6 2/9
205 T22(a) "Elizabeth & Charles" 1d Pl.1 (6)	2/6	226(a) T32(a) Kotare 2d, Pl. A1 (b) Value	6/- 2/6
206 T22(b) Ditto 2d Pl.1 (6)	2/6	227(a) T32(b) Kereru 3d Pl. A1 (b) Value	6/- 2/6
207 T23(a) "Yachting" 1½d (a) Pl. A1 (b) Pl. B1 (c) Value	4/- 8/6 3/-	228(a) T33(a) Kotuku 2d, Pl. A1 (b) Value	3/6 2/6
208 T23(b) Ditto 2d (a) Pl. C1, C2 each (b) Value	2/- 1/3	229(a) T33(b) Karearea 3d Pl. A1 (b) Value	3/6 2/6
209 T24(a) "Princess Anne" 1½d Pl.2 (6)	2/6	230(a) T34(a) Kakariki 2½d. Pl.1A1A1A (8)	6/-
210 T24(b) "Prince Charles" 2d Pl.1 (6)	4/-	(b) Pl. 1B1B1B (8)	6/-
		231(a) T34(b) Tieke 3d. Pl. 1A1A1A1A (8)	7/-
		(b) Pl. 1B1B1B (8)	7/-
		232(a) T35(a) Prince Andrew, Pl. 1A, 1B (6) each	4/6
		(b) Value	2/9
		233(a) T35(b) Ditto, Pl. 1A, 1B (6) each	4/9
		(b) Value	3/-
		234 T36(a) Tarapunga 2½d Pl. plus imp. 1A1A1A1A (8)	8/6
		235 T36(b) Korara 3d Pl. and imperf. 1A1A1A1A (8)	8/6
		236 T37(a) Kaka 3d Imperf. plus Pl. 1A1A1A1A (8)	6/-
		237 T37(b) Piwakawakawa 4d Impr. plus Pl. 1A1A1A1A (8)	6/-
		238 T38(a) Bellbird 3d. Impf. plus Pl. 1A1A1A1A1A (10)	6/-
		239 T38(b) Weka 4d Impr. plus Pl. 1A1A1A1A (8)	6/-

Map Stamp 1923 — Mint

A chance to fill a gap here!

160 (a) S16(a) P15 x 15 De la Rue Chalky pairs and singles per stamp	6d
(b) S16(b) P14 x 15 Jones Chalky, blocks of pairs and singles	4/-
(c) S16(c) P14 x 15 Cowan unsurfaced, blocks pairs, singles	3/6

WE MUST BUY, BUY, BUY:

That's business! And we needn't tell you that we offer only as much as we buy. However, we can PAY; and the best prices, too. Thinking of selling? We need good specialised collections of issues, 1882-1934. We can help you: You can help us by writing now to us at P.O. Box 5555, Auckland, C1, with a brief description of the material you wish to sell—you could be about to make a very wise move!