

Campbell Patersons for collectors of NEWSLETTER New Zealand Stamps

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A MATTER OF OPINION - by Campbell Paterson

In a "Post Office New Service" release, (distributed to the newspapers and other news-media for publication), Gillian E.M. Shadbolt of the Public Relations Division, N.Z.P.O., traces something of the history of New Zealand Christmas stamps to date. It is evident that thought and much discussion has gone on over the years, at first resulting in the decision to concentrate on religious painting. This custom was followed but was modified in 1964 by the introduction of a New Zealand scene (Marsden's first sermon in New Zealand). Thereafter, until 1970 the "single-stamp-Old Master" policy was followed and, (I think it pretty safe to say), was generally popular. But then the decision was taken to issue three stamps instead of one.

In Miss Shadbolt's discourse it is stated that "it was felt that a 3¢ stamp to (provide) postage on overseas (Christmas) cards could prove popular." Continuing the quote"another suggestion considered at the time was that the Post Office should produce a (10¢) Christmas stamp for use on aerogrammes overseas. The result was the introduction of a new theme in the Christmas series, that of a stained glass window on the 3 cents stamp and the production of a 10 cent stamp which with its church spire against a blazing hot sun gave the series its first impression of Christmas in the Southern Hemisphere". I take up the quote again at Miss Shadbolt's last paragraph. She writes "It seems that with the production of these three stamps in the last two Christmas issues and the evolution of the Church window traditions, New Zealand Christmas stamps have stabilized into a pattern which will be followed by generations of New Zealanders to come."

I fully realize that here I enter the realm of personal opinion and what I say may be far from coinciding with the opinions of the majority of our readers. However, I feel that a principle is involved and with "Mother of Five" and "Pro Bono Publico" I feel an uncontrollable urge to rush into print so here goes!

In the first place I submit that there is no evidence of any desire on the part of the public to spend 17¢ annually on Christmas stamps instead of the previous 3¢. I'd go so far as to say that the presumption that there was any desire to expand from one Christmas stamp to three is entirely in Post Office's imagination, the wish being father to the thought.

Secondly, if we have to have three stamps instead of one, the mixture of an Old Master with reproductions of Church windows of possible but not certain artistic merit, plus "symbolic" designs of even more chancy artistic merit - this is a mixture that I find unattractive. It lacks general cohesion. It

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almost inevitably means three different artistic styles and (on the record), it will result in higgledy-piggledy sets, the stamps being a mixture of ages, styles, sizes and formats. One longs for a set that looks like a set with stamps all on a general theme, all of the same size and format and all of top artistic merit. I think it is not a pro-British bias but a desire for uniformity and style that makes me think that this year's G.B. "Church Windows" series leaves our current Christmas 4¢ stamp looking pretty inadequate.

But it is with Miss Shadbolt's final paragraph that I really take issue. On the flimsiest of evidence and without (as far as one is told) any attempt to gauge public opinion, it seems that the Post Office consider that two years' ill-assorted issues have "stabilized into a pattern to be followed by generations of New Zealanders to come". Ye Gods! "Fossilized" might be a better word and many fossils I have seen appealed to me a lot more than what we are promised is to be our lot "for generations to come". Actually the statement is very naive - I'll bet that somewhere in the recesses of the GPO someone is already toying with the idea of a lovely Christmas set of ten (or twenty?) values, all on different subjects, all of different shapes and sizes (and possibly different methods of printing mixed up in the same set (it's happened before) - but with one common aim at least, the taking of yet more money out of collectors' pockets!

NEW YEAR NOTES - by Warwick Paterson

4¢ on 2½¢ Maggie Moth Provisional a *little more news!*

Plate 1B1B1B1B both in the basic 2½¢ stamp and in the 4¢ surcharge from this plate appear a flaw and its retouch at Row 10 No. 20. They show at the top of the lower white wing segment in the right hand wing. The fact that both states are known in both 2½ and 4¢ versions of this stamp makes Row 10/20 unique (so far! but who can say what will happen in such a stamp?) as all the other flaws exist in only two or three of these combinations. In this plate also the Row 2/14 "broken green stalk" at furthest left appears (see last months NL). This flaw is common to green plate 1B in the following combinations 2½¢ 1B(4) 4¢ provisional 1B(4), 1B1B1B2B. It is retouched in 4¢ provisional plate 1B1B1B3B (cleverly too). Again in 4¢ provisional plate 1B(4) appears a red flaw at Row 4/19 and it is retouched in this plate. It appears retouched in the 2½¢ printing of this plate.

Plate 1A1A1A1A 4¢ Provisional. Last month's flaw at Row 4 No 15 (blob on green stalk) is retouched also in this plate concurrently with the multi-positive flaw at Row 1/20. (Black plate)

Note to above: with the sheets alone in this 4¢ Provisional overprinting on plates 1A(4) 1B(4) being so scarce, both flaw and retouch states in all the above will be much sought after. Particularly scarce items at this stage appear to be plate 1A(4) flaws at R1/20, R2/3 (both Black plate) R4/15 (Green plate) and plate 1B(4) flaws at R4/19 (Red plate) R10/20 (Black plate). The flaw at R10/20 in the original 2½¢ version is to my knowledge very scarce indeed. We have limited supplies of a number of these flaws and retouches in positional blocks and customers on our new variety service will receive as good a selection as we can muster for them in due course.

STUPENDOUS BLOCKS OF FOUR - USED

- 162 (a) AUCKLAND EXHIBITION 1913 used with light clear Exhibition postmarks. The 3d is top right serial number selvedge block, the ½d bottom selvedge. 6d and ½d show "last day of issue" cancels. 18 APRIL 1914.
WOWIE ! \$325
- (b) RED AND BLUE BOY HEALTHS 1931 two wonderful blocks of four with First Day of Issue postmarks, twice in each case - unrepeatable \$225

FULL FACE QUEENS

A continuation of last month's fabulous offerings.

- 161 (a) S.G.1 1d Deep Carmine-Red (London) a lovely looking, four margined example with deep rich colour. Ink from the postmark has stained the stamp to the right of the Queen's head but the postmark. tarif is right and generally off the face. This stamp is catalogued (CP) at \$1200 and at our price is absolutely ~~gone~~ away Guaranteed intact in all respects a four margined attractive S.G.1 at ... \$400
- (b) S.G.35 1d Davies printing. imperf with Star watermark, unused. One of the best we have seen with four huge margins, beautifully intact \$50
- (c) S.G. 81 1d Pelure, no watermark, orange vermillion, light mark over the face, four margins (if close, two points). This is a stamp of glorious pristine appearance (cat \$400) \$225