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NEW ZEALAND NOTES AND COMMENTS by WARWICK PATERSON

THE DECISION TO SPECIALISE

While I have no doubt that the majority in numbers of stamp collectors do not, in fact, qualify for the description "philatelist" the signs are that philately is on the increase - meaning a closer interest and specialisation in the finer points of stamp use and production going hand in hand usually with a concentrating of attention on the stamps of one country or even one "issue". The sheer volume of new issues makes "general" collecting a tough undertaking if completion of a collection is attempted. It is a natural enough progression to select a favourite country or "theme" and take it from there. One's own country is the usual choice for reasons of easy supply; thematics or the collecting of say, ships, railways, birds, on stamps is just one other growing branch of the hobby and obliging postal administrations around the world are providing a fine variety of "themes".

To specialise in one country, then, a liking for the stamps of that country is an essential. The availability of reliable information is the next essential if interest is to be maintained. If specialisation is to include variety collecting the existence of specialised catalogues, handbooks, and regular magazines and newsletters are the usual way in which new study, discoveries, and ideas are shared by the many - it all goes to make philately the gregarious habit that it is.

New Zealand is one of the best served countries in this respect. As well as having a tradition of attractive stamp designs, there are available at least one highly specialised catalogue and a number of excellent newsletters put out by Stamp, and Postal History Societies, and dealers and perhaps most important, the monumental series "The Postage Stamps of New Zealand" in five (soon to be six) volumes, published by the Royal Philatelic Society of New Zealand. A popular country indeed and deservedly so. ◇

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WOKING
SURREY
ENGLAND

Modern New Zealand is proving a fertile field for specialisation. To take one issue in particular, the 4c on 2½c Magpie Moth Provisional Surcharge of July 1971 to date has provided Philatelists with quite extraordinary selection of different printings, different surcharges, constant plate varieties in the stamps and surcharge and "Errors", those non-constant, and often very spectacular and rare aberrations of the printers art. Three different sets of two plates each (printed "in tandem") have been found in the basic 2½c stamp and these six plate combinations have produced an easily identifiable series of constant flaws and printer's retouches to the plates. These varieties can be collected in "positional" blocks and contrasted with similar blocks from the same part of the sheet demonstrating their different states and the skilled work which printers carry out on the plates during the printing of the stamps. The amount of attention paid by the printers to these plates during their use suggests that even today, with more economical ways of producing them, it still pays to repair plates and keep them in use.

In permutation with the states of the basic 2½c stamp surcharging was carried out on the large stocks of printed sheets which the printers were holding by separate and quite distinct processes.

Harrisons, of England used photogravure and letter press surcharging plates to overprint the value and change it to 4c, in black and the two types of surcharge are easily detected by the shape and size of the lettering and overprinting bars as well as by the differing features of the two types of surcharging process. As if that were not enough, the New Zealand Government recalled all the existing sheets of 2½c stamps from Post Offices all over the country and had them surcharged to 4c by their own printers using the letterpress process and a shape of lettering and bars that is quite distinct from the two surcharges used by Harrisons in England - variations also exist within all three types of surcharge.

Thus, the dimensions of variation and combination of types and varieties - all, I may say easily and clearly identifiable - has been multiplied greatly by these developments.

Errors discovered have included missing colours and double perforations in the basic 2½c stamp and in the black surcharge, offset impressions in reverse on the back of the stamps, missing and doubled surcharges, double impression surcharges with albino impression only, and others.

The interest created by such developments has been tremendous in fact it is fair to say that New Zealand philatelists have been preoccupied for months now wondering what is going to happen next. In such a stamp that is anyone's guess. But for many years to come, as is the case with New Zealand's "Penny Universal" stamp of 1900, which produced a similar selection of distinct variations, collectors will argue and discuss - and collect - the varieties of the 4c on 2½c Magpie Moth. The beauty of such a stamp is that you can go as deeply into it as you wish. Just to collect the main overprint types is a rewarding study and for those with a more obsessive bent, the possibilities are enormous.

Surcharges and provisional issues do not often catch the imagination of philatelists - here we have a significant exception one in which an inexpensive pound weight "on the paper" will afford lasting pleasure, and reference to C.P. Newsletter and Catalogue will provide information as detailed as is required for identification and sorting.

3d "Erebus" .(RD 4a) Tom Robinson of Nelson, passing through Auckland recently, showed me a mint pair of this value with inverted watermark. We have not seen it before and it will be listed in our catalogue.

1973 HEALTH STAMPS

The design. Each Health Stamp issued carries a 1c contribution to childrens' health camps run for the benefit of children experiencing some form of emotional disturbance. They are, then a charity issue in the true sense and they have proved, over the years since 1929 when they were first issued, to be a highly successful way of raising money for a worthy purpose. Children are admitted to the camps for short or longer periods depending on their response to the ordered routine and psychological assistance they receive. However, over the past several years sales of stamps have fallen off badly and the reason for this may be a lack of public awareness of the work they do.

The Health Camp Federation has in 1973 attempted to publicise their work more effectively by television programmes and so forth, but I regret that this year's stamps are unlikely to improve sales by virtue of their designs alone. This year sees a return to a single design for both stamps in different colours. The first such issue since 1963. Since then we have had the superb "birds" series and designs dealing with childrens' sports. The fact that now we should have the same portrait of Prince Edward (albeit a very handsome lad) for both values seems to me a retrograde step and one which is unlikely to help sales. Would it be too much to ask that a little old fashioned inspiration be brought into this series now? It's well overdue.

4c Plus 1c Prince Edward This value has produced an early variety of spectacular type. The red colour of the background was, in one sheet I saw, completely offset in reverse on the back - the result of a sheet being missed in the press during printing. The impression which it should have received, being deposited on the outside roller and eventually printing on the reverse side of the next sheet through. The offset impression is definite if not overly clear and I think that the fact that the paper used is already coated with polyvinol alcohol gum. before printing may have affected the extent to which the back of the sheet picked up its reversed print. A scarce and desirable item.

THE PIGEON POST ISSUES :- a fascinating insight

I have in my possession a hand-written letter signed by the Imperial Governor of Samoa at Apia dated 19th December 1901. Samoa was at that time a colony of Imperial Germany. The letter is written in rather spidery script in German. The addressee is S. Holden Howie of "The Original Great Barrier Pigeon-gram Agency" fame at "Newton Road, Auckland." Mr Holden Howie, readers will recall, initiated in 1898 the prepayment of charges on letters sent by Pigeon Post between Auckland and Great Barrier Island 65 miles away in the Hauraki Gulf.

A translation reads : " I have given your suggestion of the 18th October of this year to Mr Williams in Lata for direct reply."

Mr Williams handed the pigeons to the Government in February of this year with the remark "they are a gift from Mr Holden's loft and a nucleus of a pigeon-gram service."

"As the local Post (Post Office) remained sceptical, I was not in a position to make use of the pigeons.

The pigeons and offspring are at your disposal.

The Imperial Governor
Rolf (signed)"

The letter gives an interesting hint of Mr Holden Howie's belief in the value of Pigeon Posts in those far off days before airmail was envisaged and his attempts to proselytize others.

Loud and clear from the letter comes an unequivocal, if not curt lack of enthusiasm for Mr Holden Howie's suggestion. The fact that the Governor himself wrote the letter is less likely to reveal a close personal interest on his part, than that staff was hard to get! That Mr Holden Howie was prepared to give his treasured birds away in the hope that others might recognize their mail-carrying talents says a lot for his faith in the value of such a system. The technical problems involved in getting the birds unsolicited, from Auckland to Samoa must have taken some solving and even more expense - doubtless Mr Howie footed the bill.

What the suggestion to Mr Williams in Lata was, we can hazard an educated guess, but whether Mr Williams found a use for the birds or whether Mr Howie went to the extra trouble and expense of reclaiming the pigeons "and offspring" may never be answered.

Item of Samoan postal history, or New Zealand Pigeon Post "background"? Take your choice! It is offered elsewhere in this issue.

1973 HEALTH STAMPS

by Jim Shaw

Two values, 3 cent, and 4 cent were issued on 1st August. Both were printed and perforated by Harrison and Sons Ltd, London. The process used was Photogravure, a welcome change for Harrisons, after the Lithography issues of recent years. Both values are in two colours; the 3 cent value in green and brown, the 4 cent in red and black - both being plates 1A1A

The same centre plate 1A was used for both values - I believe this is a first for Harrison & Sons Ltd.

It would appear that the 3 cent value was printed initially. (see notes on Miniature sheets). It is possible that the centre plate could have been printed initially for both values, however, and then the frame plates afterwards.

As a result the flaw observed in the Miniature sheets type I in the left hand eye of the Prince, could exist in both values. This is worth watching out for, as yet I have only seen the flaw and retouch in the 3 cent value.

In the large sheets, (10 rows of 10 (100 stamps)) there is a fine flaw and later a retouch in the 3 cent value at row 6/8. Both values were perforated by a single comb head vertically gauging 13½ x 14.

Varieties

3 cent and 1 cent : Touching up occurs at row 1/6, 2/6, 4/1, and 8/1 in the 1A frame plate. Row 6/8 has a flaw and later retouch.

4 cent and 1 cent : Touching at row 1/1, 2/3, 3/2, 4/2.

Both Values Centre Plate 1A : Row 2/3 - a defect in the "e" of "Prince".
Row 7/4 - a spot on the "i" of "Prince".

GEORGE V Surface Printed

A glorious run through the entire George V surface printed group featuring proofs and used and mint stamps including many, if not most, of the great varieties. A selection worthy to follow the recess engraved coverage seen in these pages over the last few months.

PROOFS

29 (a) Imperforate proofs cut, with unusually large margins in all cases, from the sheets (plate proofs). This group should not be underestimated. Offered by the page. Includes on thin card ½d Black, Grey and Green on gummed and watermarked paper (N.Z. and Star) ½d Pale Grey and Grey Black, 1½d Grey Black and Grey 2d Grey Black. 3d Black, Grey Black and Grey. On White wove, unwatermarked paper, 1d Field Marshal. The lovely page in perfect condition \$40.00

Note: The ½d value Pale Grey proof above appears to have been printed on the back of the sheet as well (on the gum)

(b) PLATE PROOFS in blocks of four. Another spectacular page. All imperforate. On thick glazed unwatermarked paper ½d Green (not recorded) Black, Black (from Perkins Bacon plates) 2d Black, 3d Black. On De la Rue paper watermarked N.Z. and Star, 2d Black (two blocks) imperforate and perforated 12½. The page \$65.00

(c) PROOFS of entire booklet panes. Offered individually these specialist items:
½d on thick glazed unwatermarked paper - selvedge bars \$25.00
½d on De la Rue paper watermarked N.Z. and Star \$25.00
1d Field Marshal on thin wove unwatermarked paper \$25.00

Note: The above items are not often seen.

PRINTED ON DE LA RUE PAPER

30 (a) On three pages. A selection of all values mainly used but including a set of mint shade contrasts shown in up to seven copies of each value. Condition generally good \$2.50

(b) K13a ½d Green. On one page. Five blocks of four in various shades including the scarce yellow-green. Two stamps in one block creased and not charged \$12.50

(c) K13a Ditto. Copy with offset on back. Minor soiling from hinge \$2.50

31(a) ½d War Stamp. Nice page including three blocks of four in sharply contrasting shades and a used strip of three "Puponga" (closed office 1958) \$1.15

32(a) K16a 1½d Black (Local Plate) Attractive page of one of the scarcer values. Perfect mint block of four and five fine shade singles \$4.50

33 (a) K17a 1½d Black (London Plate) Nice again! This time three shade blocks of four - some minor hinging but good at \$3.50

34 (a) K17b 1½d Orange-Brown. Two fine shade blocks of four with a block of nine - one stamp officially patched into the centre of the block. Lovely \$27.50

35 (a) K18a 2d Yellow. A delightful range in mint mounted on one page. Four blocks of four including shades of Pale Yellow and Orange-Yellow. Also a pair \$16.50

(b) K18a Ditto. A block of four mint in the scarce Pale Yellow shade. This one differs from the "Pale" block included in the lot above and would combine well with it \$12.00

36 (a) K19a 3d Chocolate. Superb mint block of four \$ 4.00

ON COWAN EXPERIMENTAL PAPER

37 (a) K13b ½d Green. A block of four of this scarce item - guaranteed \$12.00

(b) K13b Ditto. Strip of three mint. Minor stain but \$ 6.00

ON JONES PAPER

38 (a) A page of used copies in ½d Green (6), 1d Dominion (5), 2d Yellow (2), 3d Chocolate (3) condition fair to good \$ 3.00

39 (a) K13c ½d Green. Block of six (thicker paper) block of four and two singles - all fine. Markedly contrasting shades \$ 7.25

40 (a) K18b 2d Yellow. Two shade blocks of four, two shade blocks of six and a single \$20.00

41 (a) K19b 3d Chocolate. Three shade blocks of four and a top selvage block of six showing slight plate wear. Also a single. This is a scarce stamp and our offer constitutes something of an investment \$55.00

Alternatively we shall supply stamps as ordered -

Block of four \$12.00
Block of six \$18.00
Single \$ 3.00

To be continued next month

SPECIALISED "WHOLE" ISSUE COLLECTIONS - NEARING COMPLETION

A fine opportunity to secure superb basic collections in issues from 1898 Pictorials to moderns. C.P. are breaking up a fine larger lot and at this stage we are prepared to let individual issue collections go at "bonus" prices. Some of the collections feature rarities and if we eventually break the collections up, prices will be somewhat higher on individual items. YOUR CHANCE then to make a very good purchase indeed. Condition in all items specified is fine.

1898 PICTORIALS and ½d GREEN MT. COOK

43. Beautifully mounted and annotated by a meticulous student. The collection is almost entirely mint and features blocks of four and singles in all values and varieties. Items of particular note are the 2½d London (Wakitipu) selvage block of four :- Re-entry Row 11/9; a page including four blocks of four of the 4d Terraces demonstrates respectively. Re-entries Rows 1/10, 2/5, 8/8, 2/5 (all naked eye items)5/- and 2/- values in all major groups; "Waterlow and Sons Limited" overprints on singles from the recently discovered miniature

sheets - 4d Green and 2/- orange (delight!) 6d D 14C pair imperf between, 1½d. Boer War Rose Khaki shade, postmark dated 28 DE 1900, with certificate of genuineness signed by C.P. Top right selvedge serial in block of four showing major re-entry row 2/12 in 1½d value, (crease one stamp); 6d Red on "Lisbon Superfine" paper. Block of four and two singles plus letters water-mark single, 2/- laid paper, mint and used and perhaps the *crowning piece* REDRAWN 1/- VALUE, Kea and Kaka perf. 14 x 15. The very RARE ORANGE-BROWN SHADE in superb mint block of four. A wonderful lot with page upon crowded page of lovely shade and variety material - hard to repeat

\$625.00

1d UNIVERSAL

44. Another superbly mounted lot, all identifications guaranteed. Included: The very rare Die proof from relief die used as a *Recess die*, of the surface printed variety - an oddly "negative" effect. Described in the "Handbook" volume I page 262 and 575. Utterly unrepeatable. Also surface printed stamp, plate proof in block of four. The other 20 pages in this lot feature beautiful mint blocks and singles of every paper and printing used for the issue. Of particular note are four LONDON PRINT positional blocks showing re-entries, and a bottom selvedge block of 40 with re-entries. First Day Cover and greetings card from the P.M.G. water low paper perf. 14, block of four and two mixed perf. singles, Basted Mills perf. 11, single perf. 14, pair imperf. vertically, pair with mixed perfs (good) also block of four and two singles (½d Green mixed perfs,) perf 11 x 14 a pair, block of four and block of 18, block of nine and block of 15 showing re-entries. Also ½d Green perf 11 x 14 block of four and two singles - and many others. Cowan unwater marked perf 14 x 11 single and pair, perf 14 two blocks of four and two singles and mixed perfs strip of three (lovely!) ½d Green - perf 11 mint (rare!) Cowan watermarked a big selection including perf 14 vertical pair imperf vertically, and another imperf horizontally and other blocks, 14 x 11 and mixed perfs. Also, all these varieties in ½d Green Mt. Cook. Reserve Plate - selection of singles and blocks. Booklet Plate, a fine selection including complete pane, Dot Plates perf 14, 11 x 14 (two singles) and mixed perfs, a pair and four singles, Waterlow Plates - a selection of block of four pair and single plus the rare "double print" listed by Verne Collins Catalogue. Royle Plates many mint in blocks etc, and perf 11 (2) perf 11 x 14, perf 14 x 11 and perf 14 x 14½ mint (2) and used (3) in shades. Experimental slot machine issues complete set with GS1a pair and single GS2a pair GS3a, GS4a, (2) and GS5a. The superb and comprehensive collection. Note, outstanding items only are detailed above. This lot contains many more than described in variations of shade etc.

\$1400.00

KING EDWARD VII

45. On five pages ½d proof in black plus ½d Green blocks of four (shades) (2). Booklet pane with ornamental star. 2d a pair of plate proofs on grey/green paper and complete sets all other values and perforations. Super

\$105.00

1d DOMINION

46. Another big and exhaustive coverage on eleven pages. Many varieties are there including De La Rue offset block of four, and imperf pair, plus block of four imperf at bottom row (selvedge). Jones unsurfaced (no gum but guaranteed) Colourless litho watermark and a block of four Blackish watermark - also watermark on front variety, Cowan offset on back and Wiggins Teape in block of four "NNY" flaw many blocks and masses of lovely shade variation

\$230.00

PIGEON POST ISSUES

A LETTER OF GREAT SIGNIFICANCE

42. Wonderful opportunity to secure an item of "background" for a collection of Pigeon Post issues. This letter, written in German by the then German Imperial Governor of the colony Samoa relates to an attempt to institute a pigeon post service in Samoa. Unique and quite unrepeatable

\$75.00

JIM SHAW (continued from page 4)

HEALTH STAMPS - MINIATURE SHEETS

<u>Sheet Type</u>	<u>Centre Plate</u>	<u>Frame Plates (1A)</u>	
I	<u>3 cent</u> - Stamp 1 Left eye with flaw (also retouched) <u>4 cent</u> - retouched eye	<u>Stamp 4</u> - Green spot to right of collar	<u>Stamp 5</u> - 2 red spots to right of collar.
II	<u>Stamp 6</u> - Flaw in middle of Prince's head.	<u>Stamp 1</u> - Green flaw by "d" of "Edward" <u>Stamp 3</u> - Green spot over "s" in top margin	<u>Stamp 2</u> - Flaw by left hand ear and over "ri" of "Prince"
III	<u>Stamp 1</u> - Spot by "e" of "Prince" <u>Stamp 3</u> - Button on shoulder to right	<u>Stamp 2</u> - Green spot by ear on left side	<u>Stamps 5, 6,</u> - Horizontal streak developing through collar.
IV	<u>Stamp 3</u> - Spot near top of head and white spot on chin. <u>Stamp 4</u> - white patch by "Z" of "Zealand"	<u>Stamp 6</u> - White spot by ear on left side	NIL
V	<u>Stamp 6</u> - Spot on collar on left side of tie knot	<u>Stamp 4</u> - Diagonal scratches by ear on left side. <u>Stamp 6</u> - Green patch in right hand margin	<u>Stamp 2</u> - Spot centre right hand margin <u>Stamp 3</u> - Light patch left of head.

NOTE

- In type I above, the 3 cent value has a flaw and later retouch. Because this occurs in the centre plate, it could also occur in the 4 cent value. This is worth watching for.
- Numbering of Types I to V is purely arbitrary - there being no way of establishing their relative positions.