

THE “WAITANGI” RELIEF DATE-STAMP of 1940

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What is a relief date-stamp?

A relief date-stamp is a skeleton type date-stamp where the office name could be assembled from loose type.

In 1926 each Chief Post Office was issued with a skeleton date-stamp for sending to an office where a 'relief' was required.

Relief date-stamps were first introduced in 1926 and finally withdrawn from service in mid 1990.



Type Face



Trays of letters, numbers and months (the month abbreviated to two letters) were supplied along with the skeleton date-stamp.

Note the curved shape of the letters to fit into the outer ring of the skeleton date-stamp for the office name.

The “Waitangi” Relief Date-stamp of 1940

- In 1940 celebrations were held to commemorate the centenary of the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840.
- A temporary Post Office was opened in the Treaty House grounds at Waitangi for cancelling mail on 6-7 February 1940.
- A relief date-stamp was sent from Auckland for cancelling mail at Waitangi.
- The relief date-stamp was constructed as per the image at right.



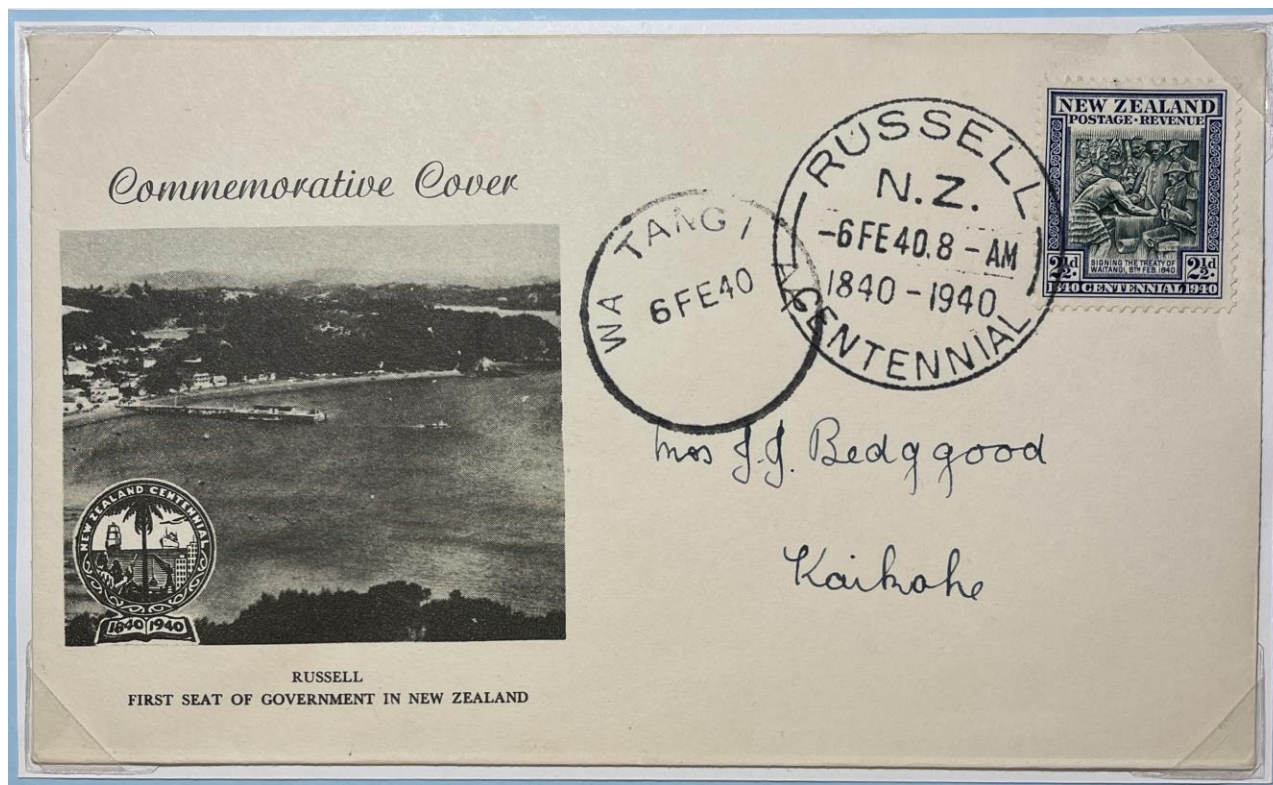
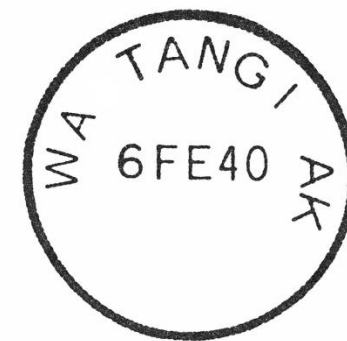
Cancellation of Mail Commences



2½d Treaty of Waitangi stamp tied with WAITANGI AK relief date-stamp dated 6 FE 40 (6 February 1940) on special *Centennial of the Signing of the Treaty of Waitangi* commemorative cover.

Note that the postmark is complete, showing all letters present in WAITANGI.

Something Goes Wrong

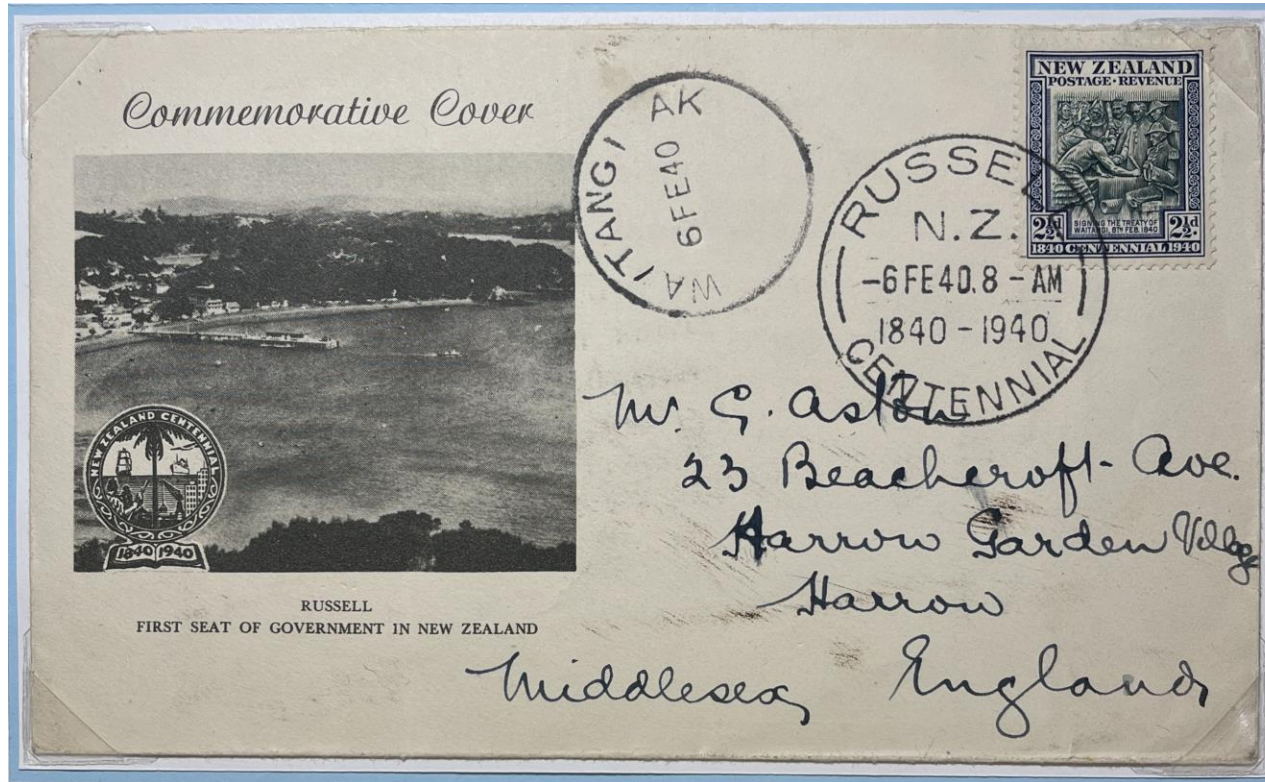


The WAITANGI postmark showing missing first 'I' variety.

At some stage during the cancelling of mail on 6 February 1940, the first 'I' of WAITANGI fell out.

The result was that a limited number of covers received a postmark where the office name reads; **WA TANGI** instead of **WAITANGI**.

It's Noticed!



Manuscript 'l' inserted with black pen.

The missing 'l' was noticed, and was either found and reinserted, or a replacement was inserted into the date-stamp.

Mail that could be recovered by the post office staff had the missing 'l' inserted manually with black pen, as in the example at left.

The Scarce One



The main Waitangi celebrations occurred on 6 February.

By the morning of 7 February most people had left town and the post office was all but deserted.

Very little mail was posted on 7 February and examples bearing this date are scarce.

In Summary



- A temporary Post Office operated at Waitangi for cancelling mail on 6-7 February 1940.
- A relief date-stamp was used for the two day event.
- At some stage during the cancelling of mail on 6 February 1940, the first 'I' of WAITANGI fell out.
- The missing 'I' was noticed, and was either found and reinserted, or a replacement inserted.
- Mail items missing the 'I' and able to be recovered had the missing 'I' inserted manually with black pen.
- Mail franked on 7 February 1940 is scarce but shows WAITANGI intact in all examples recorded.