

The Pacific Islands

A display to
The Royal Philatelic Society London
by members of
The Pacific Islands Study Circle



22nd November 2018

The Pacific Islands Study Circle

We are an international philatelic society whose members study the stamps and the postal history of the islands of the Pacific Ocean.

Our philatelic studies range from the earliest philatelic times to the present day, and include military campaigns, censorship, postage dues, meter marks, postcards, seamails, and airmails throughout the region.

PISC is run by collectors for collectors. We have over 260 members, split almost equally between the UK and the rest of the world.

PISC is affiliated to the Association of British Philatelic Societies and the American Philatelic Society.

Our award-winning quarterly journal, *Pacifica*, has been published since 1962 and covers a wide range of articles contributed by members, news items about our area and activities, as well as sections reviewing recent publications and auctions. Our well-used website – <http://www.pisc.org.uk> – is kept fresh and up-to-date with news on meetings, publications and auction listings.

PISC has displayed at The Royal Philatelic Society London twice before – in 1970 and 1990 – and we hope our 2018 display will be enjoyable and rewarding for everyone attending the display today and everyone who reads this publication subsequently.

Dr Simon Heap

Chairman, PISC, 2015-18

Frames 1, 2, 3 and 4

Norfolk Island, 1939–1947

Chris Clifford

Between 1939 and 1947 Norfolk Island experienced more changes in her communication and postal systems than at any other time. Lying over 1,000 miles from Sydney and 670 miles from Auckland, Norfolk Island had depended on the Burns Philp Line for the collection and delivery of supplies including the post. This dependence was to be removed by the advent of World War 2 and the subsequent building of an airfield on Norfolk Island in 1942.



*Only known example of a registered cover
sent from APO 400 – 30.AU.43*

The building of an airfield led to regular fights between Norfolk Island, Sydney and Auckland.

Some 2,000 New Zealand troops and Air Force personnel were garrisoned on the island to run and protect the airfield.

The war was also responsible for the imposition of postal censorship on civilian mail on Norfolk Island, which was extremely unpopular and Governor Sir Charles Rosenthal faced severe criticism. He was also criticised for the destruction a local landmark, the 'Avenue of Pines', for the building of the airstrip.

Prior to the outbreak of war in 1939 plans had been put in place for Norfolk Island to replace the use of Australian stamps with its own stamp issue. However, as the war progressed, these plans were shelved. In January 1947 the issue date was set for June of that year.



*Rare use of 1s6d of Ball Bay stamps sent through
R.N.Z.A.F. – N.Z.A.P.O. 'E' – 29.AU.47*

Frames 5 and 6

Tahiti – French Oceania

Kay Gaetjens

The islands of French Polynesia formerly named French Oceanian Settlement or even earlier Tahiti are in the centre of the South Pacific Ocean. There are 115 main islands in four archipelagos: the Society Islands (including Tahiti and Bora Bora), the Marquesas to the North, the Tuamotus (East) and the Australes – Gambier to the South (the most southern island is Rapa).

The island of Tahiti is the most important one administratively and economically. Papeete is the capital. There are presently 287,000 inhabitants in French Polynesia (in 1874 there were 32,397 inhabitants, including 1,180 Europeans).

Spaniard Vasco Nunez de Balboa discovered the Marquesas as early as 1513, while Tahiti had been discovered almost at the same time by three navigators (1767–1789), namely Wallis, Bougainville and Cook. Tahiti became a French protectorate in 1843.

Prior to the organisation of the post in Tahiti, little mail was sent by the Europeans and missionaries to Europe (mainly to England and France). There was no regular packet service; mail took 2–6 months; at the time of the missionary letters in about 1840 it took a year! The schooners went either to the West (Australia, India, and Great Britain) or to the East towards the Panama Isthmus, Cape Horn and later California – New York (with the opening of the Transcontinental Railroad).

The first postal marking of Tahiti is the rare circle date stamp “POSTE AUX LETTRES TAHITI” of 1847. The first stamps in Tahiti were the imperial eagle issues of the (French) General Colonies first sold there in October 1862; they were cancelled with the “losange OCN”, rarely with the “mute losange” (only 4 letters known). Later issues used the following General Colonies stamps: Cérès, Napoleon and Sage type (all rare on cover).



Nearly all of the mail came from Papeete (Tahiti Island); later, small post offices were opened on some of the other islands. There are only a few letters from Tahiti with the General Colonies issues; letters from the outer islands are always rare, even non-existent.

Frames 7, 8 and 9

The Samoa Express Post Office

Jan Berg

In 1877 the proprietor of the *Fiji Times* decided to establish a newspaper in Samoa as well, and at the same time to open a post office with the main purpose of providing stamps and facilities for mailing and distributing the newspaper. The post office also provided services for the population of Samoa. The so-called Samoa Express Post Office was in operation from 1st October 1877 until 31st August 1881.



The
earliest
recorded
cover
from
the
Samoa
Express
Post
Office

After the closure of the Samoa Express Post Office on 31st August 1881, the consuls invited the former postmaster, Andrew Speirs, to continue the operation. The reopened Samoa Express Post Office finally closed on 31st December 1881. During the operation of the re-opened Samoa Express Post Office, the date-stamp of the former Samoa Express Post Office was in use.

After the closure of the Samoa Express Post Office in 1881, a need to solve the postal situation arose. Historical records show that the Municipal Board adopted a 'Regulation for the Post Office' on 7th February 1882, and then elected the British citizen James Laurenson as Provisional Municipal Postmaster.

This display includes the first issues of Samoan stamps which are presented with large multiples and eight of the twelve recorded covers (by far the largest number ever assembled). A large number of imperforate proofs from states I, II, III and the very difficult to find remainders (as contrasted with the common reprints) are also presented.

Frame 10

The First Issue of the Gilbert and Ellice Islands, 1910-11

Simon Heap

The Gilbert and Ellice Islands comprised 37 islands and coral atolls spread across nearly two million square miles of the central Pacific Ocean. The remoteness of the islands and the distance between them had an effect on the development of postal services, which were *ad hoc*, depending on which ships called at the various islands. When the Gilbert and Ellice Islands became a British Protectorate in 1892, New Zealand stamps were used locally. No organised postal service existed in the colony before the introduction of stamps in January 1911, which this frame examines.



The history of the printing of the stamps is examined in detail, illustrated by a 1910 *Edward VII Fiji 6d imperforate plate proof for the 6d in issued colours* [left] and a 6d imperforate colour trial for the 6d in issued colours affixed to piece, dated "10.5.10" in the top right corner [King Edward VII had died four days earlier], from the De La Rue archives [right].



Specimen stamps were overprinted with "SPECIMEN" (size 14.5mm by 2.5mm) in sans-serif capitals between the two lines of the "GILBERT & ELLICE PROTECTORATE" overprint, in black on all values except the 1s which was overprinted in red, and distributed by the UPU in September 1910.

The Gilbert and Ellice Islands issued its first set of seven stamps on 1st January 1911. That date was a Sunday, so the first proper postal use would have been Monday, 2nd January 1911.



Sheets of 120 stamps in two panes of 60 and three papers were used for the printing. The display includes examples of blocks, marginals and plate numbers, as well as Butaritari Island's cancelled-to-order stamps with large violet circular cancels.

Frames 11 and 12

The King George VI definitives of the Gilbert and Ellice Islands

Simon Heap

The British colony of the Gilbert and Ellice Islands was one of the last to replace its King George V definitive stamps. Designs of all the George VI stamps except the 5s value were based on water colour sketches by Mr G. E. Hand, Headmaster of the Banaban School on Ocean Island.

The vignette of the king's portrait was based on a portrait by Bertram Park, and derived by reducing what was used by Bradbury, Wilkinson on their Nigerian stamps.



Imperf pair of the GEIC GVI 1½d 'Canoe crossing reef' stamp of 14th January 1939 partially overlaid by a vertical impression of Nigeria's GVI 2s 6d 'Victoria-Buea Road' stamp, which had been issued on 1st May 1938

Due to King Edward VIII's abdication and the short time available for preparation of the King George VI definitives, three printing companies shared the contract in order to expedite delivery to this remote colony:

1. Bradbury, Wilkinson & Co. Ltd. printed the ½d, 2d and 2s6d values in sheets of 60 (12 by 5) and comb perforated 11.5 x 11.
2. Thomas De La Rue & Co. Ltd. of London printed the 1½d, 2½d, 3d and 1s values in sheets of 60 (10 by 6) and comb perforated them 13.5. The 1s value was reprinted in 1951 and the 3d value in 1955, both comb perforated 12.
3. Waterlow & Sons Ltd. of London printed the 1d, 5d, 6d, 2s and 5s values in sheets of 60 (6 by 10) and comb perforated them 12.5 (the 1943 printing was perforated 12.65 and the 1944 printing 12.45).

All the values were bi-coloured; the printers all used separate plates for the frame and centre of each stamp.

The display shows how each value was perforated with "SPECIMEN" in the styles adopted by the three printers. The three different ways in which sheet numbers were added is also shown.

Though the definitive set consisted of 12 stamps, over fifty shades are shown in the display to illustrate the many printings between 1938 and the mid-1950s.



Frame 13

The Military Franchise of New Caledonia and the New Hebrides

Jim Crompton

The civilian postage rate to France was 25c but from 1885 the French forces serving overseas were granted a 10c franchise on their mail, therefore paying only 15c. In 1893, the Military Authorities on New Caledonia proposed to issue a forces letter stamp to the troops. This was to prevent misuse of the franchise by the civilian population. Around the same time, moves were afoot in New Caledonia to invade the New Hebrides with a joint Anglo-French force. The Military Authorities proposed a free franchise of 25c – 2½d. This revised exhibit studies the development of these essays, by proofs, trials, and the issued final results.



22 Dec. 99 late usage of Type 2.
One of eight recorded so far

There were four types for New Caledonia and one type for the New Hebrides. Type 1 of New Caledonia was soon rejected due to having the 10c value shown, the remaining three types without a value being shown were allowed to be used, provided the stamp was cancelled by the military unit handstamp.

The New Hebrides essays were never issued due to the proposed invasion being rejected.

Final verification of the 10c
Franchise Rate is illustrated by
the 15c Franchise Militaire
stamp which was made available
in 1901. Only four items are
recorded for the New Hebrides
FM usage



Reference: Jim Crompton, *A Study of the 1893 Military Franchise Essays of New Caledonia and the New Hebrides*. London: Pacific Islands Study Circle, 2005.

Frame 14

Cook Islands: Selected Items from a Traditional Collection

Hans Van Dooremalen

The Cook Islands is a self-governing island country in the South Pacific Ocean in free association with New Zealand. It comprises 15 islands whose total land area is 240 square kilometres (92.7 square miles). The islands started issuing stamps in 1891 and continue to do so up to the present.

In the 19th century the islands were a British Protectorate, but in 1901 they were transferred to New Zealand and became a dependency. At this moment the islands of Aitutaki and Penrhyn started to issue their own stamps, which ended in 1932. Between 1919 and 1931 the stamps of the Cook Islands proper were inscribed with Rarotonga, being the most important island. In the 1970s, both Aitutaki and Penrhyn started issuing their own stamps again. Although not part of the Cook Islands, the stamps of Niue are often included in a collection of Cook Islands. The main reason for this is the use of the same stamp designs.

Many of the stamps of the Cook Islands were printed by the London firm of Perkins Bacon & Co. When they went out of business in 1935 a lot of their archival material was acquired by stamp dealers and became available to the philatelic market. It contained not only imperforate material, but partly printed stamps (frames or vignettes only) as well.



This display includes plate proofs, die proofs and similar material. Some consider this material to be printer's waste, but in fact it is not. Waste is meant to be destroyed but was usually stolen from the works. However, the material shown was actually held in the archives.

The display is supplemented with other interesting items like specimen overprints from the Mauritania Post Office UPU specimen collection.

Frames 15, 16 and 17

German Postal Interests in Samoa

Jan Berg

To serve their growing commercial and political interests in the Pacific area, Germany decided to subsidise a direct shipping line between Bremerhaven and Sydney, with a separate branch line between Sydney and Apia. The Australian Branch Line was operated by SS *Lübeck* of the Norddeutscher Lloyd. With political conflict and unrest in Apia between Germany on the one side and Great Britain and USA on the other, most Germans and the German Consulate affairs in Apia chose to use the operation of the new German-controlled Australian Branch Line.

With the new shipping lines also came the decision to open a post office in Apia. The date-stamp together with postage stamps, postcards and reply cards arrived on 21st September 1886 and the post office opened the next day.

On 22nd September 1886 the German Postal Steamship Agency Apia started its operation in the localities of the German company 'Deutsche Handels-und Plantagensgesellschaft der Südsee-Inseln'. The British and American Consuls almost immediately made complaints that a German post office was not allowed to operate in Samoa as there already was a post office in the Municipality. At the same time, some of the many German traders complained about the location of the post office.



*Postcard addressed to Munich, Germany where it arrived 28 NOV 86. The card is cancelled 22 September 1886, the first day of operation of the German Postal Steamship Agency Apia and it left on the SS *Lübeck* on that same day*

On 23rd July 1887, less than a year after the introduction of the German service, the German Postal Steamship Agency Apia was changed into the Imperial German Postal Agency Apia in the premises of the German Consulate, with Oskar Schlüter as postmaster. The Post Office became a German Post Office Abroad when the western part of Samoa became a German colony on 1st March 1900.

This display includes examples of all early date-stamps used at the Apia post office, shown with some of the most important postal items from the period. In 1889 the Post Office burnt down and provisional measures had to be taken, and these provisional usages are shown in depth. The same depth is also shown from periods where no stamps were available, and there was a need to make payment in cash.

Frames 18, 19 and 20

Fiji: The KGVII Definitive Series

Bryan Jones

Issued from April 1938, the King George VI definitive series was the first pictorial issue, other than the previous omnibus issues for the 1935 Silver Jubilee and the 1937 Coronation, to be released in Fiji and has, since its appearance and through to the present-day, proved to be one of the most popular, and most studied, of all of the King George VI issues. This exhibit shows a range of the material available to collectors, whether general collectors of all issues from the King George VI period, or those specialists interested in the more esoteric aspects of this particular series.

The printing of the definitive series was sub-divided between two printers, De La Rue and Waterlow, and the exhibit commences with the series of perforated specimens from each of these two printers. This is followed by the complete set, showing all changes made during its long life, with modifications necessitating the reworking of the original dies, additional values and perforation changes many of which were dictated by the wartime conditions, and an overprinted value with a value surcharge, issued to cover an increase in the surface rate, and whilst waiting for supplies of this new value to arrive from the UK.



KGVI £1 black card proof with plate block

The remainder of this exhibit features a number of varieties, some listed in Stanley Gibbons catalogues, and others, which, whilst not listed, are of particular interest to the serious collector. This section of this exhibit, shown in ascending value order, illustrates some of these varieties showing their progression until almost all were removed following a comprehensive cleaning of the plates prior to the final series of printings and final perforation change three years after the end of World War 2. These sheets, taken from a much larger collection demonstrate how analysis of successive printings has, for some values, allowed complete plating of sheets to be completed. A forthcoming PISC publication, *Fiji – The Stamps of the KGVII Period*, has been written using this collection as its basis.

Frames 21 and 22

Norfolk Island

David Murray Brown

Norfolk Island, which measures 5 miles long by 3 miles wide, lies in the Pacific Ocean some 1,040 miles north-east of Sydney, Australia, and 670 miles north-west of Auckland, New Zealand. Discovered by Captain James Cook in 1774, it served as a penal settlement from 1788 until 1855. In 1856, the population of Pitcairn Island, numbering 193 persons, was resettled on Norfolk Island as a result of outgrowing the resources of their smaller island. Although some families became homesick and soon returned to Pitcairn, the majority remained on Norfolk, treasuring their origin and to this day speaking the unique “Pitkern” dialect amongst themselves.

Until 1844 the island was administered under New South Wales, when responsibility was transferred to Van Diemen’s Land (Tasmania). It became a Crown Colony in 1857, and in 1897 the British Government handed over responsibility for the island to New South Wales. In 1914 the Government of the Commonwealth of Australia took over the administration of Norfolk Island as an external territory. Later in 1979, the Norfolk Island Act gave the islanders a measure of independence over local affairs. In 2016, under the terms of the Norfolk Island Administration Bill, and despite some local opposition, control over the island was taken over by New South Wales. This resulted in arrangements for taxation, customs, immigration, social security and health are now the same as on mainland Australia.

Between 1866 and 1920 Norfolk Island was also home to the headquarters of the Melanesian Mission which had moved from Auckland where the cool climate had not suited the students who had come from all parts of Melanesia.

Although a postal service of sorts existed during the early part of the 19th Century, it was not until 1832 that a post office was established with the Commandant’s Clerk as Postmaster. Letters from this period, whether written by convicts or their military guards, are very rare. From 1854 stamps of Van Diemen’s Land were used, replaced in 1877 by stamps of New South Wales (which were not always available on the island) and in 1914 by stamps of the Commonwealth of Australia.

On 10th June 1947, Norfolk Island issued its first definitive set of 12 stamps, featuring a view of Ball Bay. This was followed over the next 69 years by a variety of definitive and commemorative issues, the income from which contributed greatly to the island’s economy, until 2016, when the Norfolk Island Post and Philatelic Bureau was closed, and responsibility for Norfolk Island stamps was taken over by Australia Post.

Frames 23 and 24

Cook Islands Postcards

Hans Van Dooremalen

The local British Vice-Consul declared a Protectorate over this group of 15 islands on 20th September 1888.

Along with the first stamp issue of the Cook Islands a postcard was issued franked with the 1d "Seven Stars provisional" stamp in ultramarine. The card was unusual in that it was double the size of a normal postcard, measuring 127mm x 154mm. The printing plate for these cards comprised just two impressions.

A total of 8,643 cards were printed in 1892 and 1893 during ten printings performed by the Government Printing Office in New Zealand. Soon after the first printing damage occurred to the plate, making it possible to differentiate between the two impressions. These are known as type 1 and type 2. Both James Wasielewski (in *The Postage Stamps of New Zealand*) and Robert Shoemaker (in his article in *Pacifica*) tried to differentiate between the two impressions. By combination of the information in their articles, the division on the title page was made.

In 1894 postcards franked with the Seven Stars provisional stamp were replaced by cards of the 1d Makea design. The size of the postcard was a normal 125mm x 80mm. The printing forme used was the same one as the 1892 postcards, but with the stamp replaced. The printing plate for these cards comprised just two impressions. All cards were cut to normal size before issue.



There were two printings of this postcard, a printing of 1,100 cards made in June 1894 and a second printing of 10,000 cards despatched on 21 March 1895. Because the same plates as for the 1892 cards were used, the same types can be found.

After the Makea card, which can be found postally used up the 1920s, no further postal cards were issued.

The Fiji Bomber Fund – A World War 2 “Gratitude” Label

Bryan Jones

Early in World War 2 a centrally inspired initiative was launched which suggested ways in which the inhabitants of the smaller Commonwealth territories could collect funds which would then be used to assist the UK in the war effort, particularly to “Buy a Bomber”, which would then carry a name associated with that territory. A Bomber cost £15,000, and Fiji collected sufficient funds to buy a Hampden, a Whitley and a Wellington. With sufficient bombers available, funds were then used to buy Fighter aircraft. A fighter cost £5,000, and Fiji provided sufficient funds to buy two Hurricanes, a Westland Whirlwind and six Typhoons.

Fiji generated funds through a silver collection at special cinema newsreels and donations from the larger local trading companies. Copra growers donated 10% of proceeds from their sales and the Makogai Leper Colony patients donated part of the proceeds from handicrafts that they made. Another activity was the production and sale of “Gratitude” labels, known generally as “Bomber Fund” labels”, printed locally in sheets of 6 and sold at 1d each label. These were specifically intended to be used on mail leaving the colony, although a few examples of local use are known.



*Fiji Bomber Fund.
Bomber Fund label
on cover to Tasmania,
label tied by censor
label, and arrival
date stamp*

A complete mint sheet of Bomber Fund labels is shown, one of only a handful of complete sheets recorded. A range of Bomber Fund labels used on cover follow; in over 20 years' study of this subject fewer than 100 examples used on cover have been recorded, and of these only just over one-third have the label tied in any manner, whether by the cancellation, the registration label or the censor marking or label. Most of those included in this display fall into this category. The final sheet illustrates the use of similar labels elsewhere in the Commonwealth with an example of a Rhodesian label used on an incoming cover to Fiji.

Following America's entry into the war, efforts were made to try to produce a label reflecting the part now being played by a Navy other than the British Navy. This was unsuccessful and use of these labels finished during 1943, although fundraising continued through to the end of the war. The “Bomber Fund” labels contributed less than £100 to the Fijian fundraising total of around £90,000.

Frames 26 and 27

Clipperton Island

Laurence Kimpton

Clipperton Island is a coral atoll of about seven square kilometres in the eastern Pacific Ocean about 1,100 km south-west of Acapulco, Mexico. The island is named after the English pirate John Clipperton who possibly discovered it. However, the French claim that Martin de Chassiron and Michel Dubocage discovered Clipperton Island in 1711.

In 1858 a French expedition took possession of the island but it remained uninhabited until 1893 when an American company began to exploit phosphate deposits.



Stamps from the set of 10 issued in 1895 by W. Frese and Co., agents for the Oceanic Phosphate Company, ostensibly to pay postage on letters from Clipperton Island to San Francisco.

In 1897 Mexico claimed Clipperton and occupied the island until 1917. The ownership of the island continued to be disputed between Mexico and France until 1931 when sovereignty was awarded to France.

Cover with a commemorative cachet marking the visit to Clipperton Island of the French cruiser Jeanne d'Arc, to take possession of the island for France in December 1934



Clipperton Island's subsequent history has been marked by the visits of French and American ships, a visit by P.G. Taylor's RAF Central Pacific Survey Flight in 1944, occupation by the US Navy in 1945, visits by French military and scientific expeditions, and the presence of an American research station, 1966-67.



Cover flown from Acapulco to Sydney by Patrick Gordon Taylor's RAF Central Pacific Survey Flight in 1944. The flight experienced a four weeks delay on Clipperton Island

Frames 28, 29, 30, 31 and 32

Kiribati: The Islands Maps, 1981–1987

Keith Johnson

At a referendum in 1974 the people of the Gilbert and Ellice Islands decided that they wished to separate into two countries on 1st January 1976. The nine Ellice Islands were ready with the name Tuvalu, but the Gilberts which were to join with the Phoenix and Line Islands giving a nation with 33 islands in total, wished to find a name that would be inclusive. Therefore the indigenous language name for the Gilberts, *Tungaru*, was declined and after much discussion *Kiribati* (pronounced *Kiribas*) was chosen for the new Republic from 12th July 1979.

The Islands Maps stamps were at first conceived as a definitive issue, but it was eventually realised that with the 33 Islands on twenty five stamps the series would be too large and also the issue would be too soon after the first set in 1979-80. Also another set was under consideration. Therefore they were issued as six sets of four or five stamps between 6th May 1981 and 22nd September 1987.



Maneapa line drawing used on 30c, 1st issue 12c Tabuaeran (Fanning), 12c, 4th issue

John Cooter, who had also designed the previous definitives and other sets for Kiribati and previously many for the Gilbert Islands, was commissioned to produce the designs. He sketched his ideas for the stamps, four times actual size, roughly all at the same time during late 1980. The maps were drawn from large-scale 1:25,000 charts provided by the Directorate of Overseas Surveys. John also decided that on each stamp there would be a black and white line drawn image of something with a local connection.

The printers, Format International Security Ltd, printed issues 1-3 & 6, Waddingtons Ltd issue 4 and House of Questa issue 5, all by the process of Photo-Lithography using five colours.

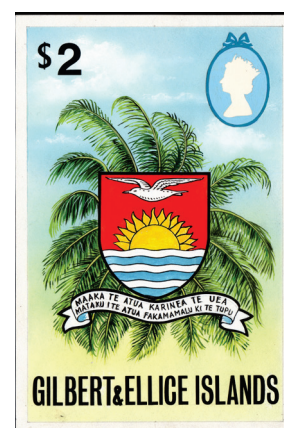
Frames 33, 34, 35, 36 and 37

Gilbert and Ellice Islands 1971 Scenic Definitive and Overprints

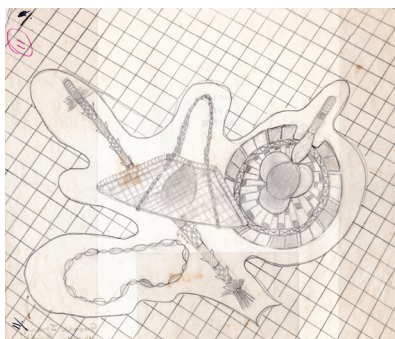
Hugh Bennet



This display examines all the definitive stamps issued including watermark errors and the overprints for both The Gilbert Islands and Tuvalu. The first frame contains the details of every stamp issued, with overprint comparisons by value for both sets of overprints. The two high values are displayed with Gordon Drummond's initial artwork, overprint errors and interesting covers.



Continuing with some individual values the next frame contains local children's drawings, artwork, watermark varieties and printing errors for the 50c and 25c values.



The 20c & 15c values are shown with Drummond's rejected design, a local child's concept design, watermark and printing errors, printing flaws and interesting covers. Then more values of the set are displayed, with the initial artwork, values revised with all watermarks including errors, stamp designs used on letter cards, gum differences and colour variations of stamps on cover.



The display concludes with the 2c & 35c values of the set, with all the known watermark variants. Interesting covers and colour differences on the reprinted 35c overprints are illustrated. A child's unadopted drawing and Gordon Drummond artwork complete the display.

Civil Censorship in Fiji during World War 2

Bryan Jones

Civil censorship of outgoing mail began in Fiji immediately following the declaration of war on 3rd September 1939, and continued until mid-1945. Ten local candidates were selected to serve as censors, and although some of the individuals changed during the war, the total number employed remained constant throughout.



Cover censored in Fiji the day war was declared

During **Phase 1** three different 'Passed by Censor' handstamps have been identified. Investigation has determined how these different handstamps were created. The display showing both before and after examples dated from the first three months of the war. Furthermore during the initial period immediately after the outbreak of war, and whilst training of local censors was under way, those doing the training were identified by a letter, rather than a number, an example is shown.

Phase 2 commenced at the end of 1941, still using locally produced resealing labels, but with a smaller oval integrated metal handstamp containing the censor's number. These metal handstamps were manufactured in New Zealand, the timing of their introduction suggests that they could have formed part of the cargo on the PAA first return flight from Auckland on 14th November 1941. During this phase the use of the handstamp, without the use of the resealing label, on mail 'Passed by Censor' without having been examined can be found for the first time. Evidence of dual censorship, particularly when America entered the war can also be found. Apart from one batch of resealing labels, printed in black, issued in January 1942, resealing labels used during Phases 1 and 2 were printed locally in red.

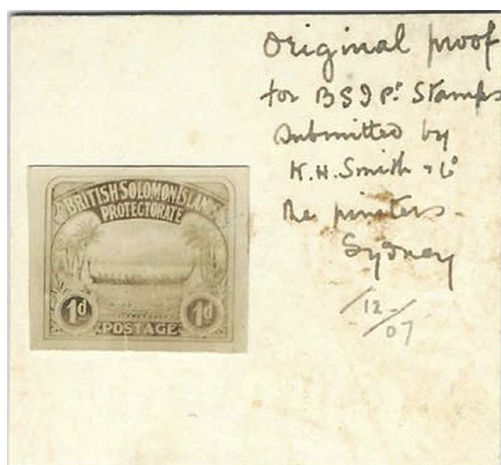
Phase 3 began in late 1943 when Commonwealth countries adopted a standardised method of censorship, with each country being given its own letter code (Fiji was allocated letter 'X') with the word 'Censor' being replaced by the more gentle term 'Examiner', reflecting the more politically correct attitude prevalent in the USA. Censor numbers 111–120 were used, and a printed standardised PC-90 label, replaced the locally printed labels. Variations in printing of these labels are apparent, as are minor differences indicating that more than a single printing of that particular label had occurred. Finally an octagonal handstamp containing the 'X' identifier was made available to signify mail passed without being examined. Examples of the use of this handstamp can be classified as rare.

Frames 41 and 42

British Solomon Islands Large Canoes

Simon Greenwood

The Resident Commissioner of the Solomon Islands, Charles Woodford, had for some time, been in correspondence with his superior in Fiji about a stamp issue for the islands. In the absence of any progress towards a satisfactory agreement he decided to proceed independently.



Photographic proof for the Large Canoe issue endorsed by Charles Woodford

After rejecting three suggested designs he produced his own sketch from which the die was engraved and the stamps were then lithographed by W. E. Smith of Sydney with 60 stamps to the sheet. The perforation was carried out on two hand-operated machines. Both had 11 pins to 2cm and perforated one line at a time. One machine produced larger holes than the other. To perforate the final row or column the whole sheet had to be reversed. This operation led to the various varieties – double perforations, imperforate between stamp and margin, and imperforate between vertically and horizontally.

The stamps can be plated with each vertical column differing in minor details with the ½d and 2½d having three types repeated twice and the remaining values six types. The lower values have had all positions plated but this has not been completed for the three highest values for which only one complete sheet is known.

The stamps were issued on 14th February 1907 and two first day covers are known. Initially they were only valid as far as Sydney and from 15th March are seen with New South Wales stamps added for onward transmission. From early September they became valid for international postage. The Large Canoes remained in use after the Small Canoes were issued on 2nd November 1908 and are known used as late as 1928.



Earliest example of use in combination with adhesives of New South Wales

Frames 43, 44, 45 and 46

Coastwatchers of the British Solomon Islands during World War 2

Robin Sherman

Japan entered WW2 in December 1941 and by March 1942 its ships and aircraft were to be seen in the Solomons, although landings and occupation did not begin until April 1942. As there were nearly 1,000 islands and islets in the Group, the Japanese concentrated on the larger, more important islands and tended to ignore the lesser ones. Thus, these latter islands provided a rather precarious refuge for foreigners who chose to remain, as did remote villages on the larger islands; particularly on Guadalcanal and Malaita. The Japanese Infantry were always trying to catch coastwatchers and silence their radio transmissions, but swamps, hilly terrain and a lack of roads to most of the villages made capturing them very difficult.

In advance of the unknown Japanese arrival date, people were advised to be vigilant and most foreigners were requested to leave by any transport possible. Some ships called specifically to facilitate this evacuation. However, various people in key positions remained and many of these became coastwatchers. They were mostly diplomatic and military personnel but also some missionaries and quite a number of Solomon Islanders joined this coastwatching contingent. Of course, the local coastwatchers had superb contacts within the indigenous population, who sometimes worked closely with the Japanese forces and could pass back crucial information on military strength and equipment.



The job of the foreign coastwatchers was to hide and watch what was going on, but not get caught; for if they were, automatic execution would follow. Feedback was passed to key team members who relayed the information back to the allied forces. As a result, binoculars and radio transmitters were essential equipment – but in short supply.

This display contains covers sent by many of the people involved: often written in difficult circumstances and carried under onerous conditions. It also focuses on censor markings, unusual cancellations and other wartime endorsements. Overall, they reflect the arduous and stressful conditions faced by courageous but underfed and ragged coastwatchers.



Pitcairn Islands Postal History

David Murray Brown

Pitcairn Island lies in the South Pacific roughly midway between New Zealand and South America. Measuring some two square miles, it is the largest and only inhabited member of the four island Pitcairn Islands group. Although once occupied by Polynesian settlers, it was uninhabited when discovered in July 1767 by Captain Cartaret in HMS *Swallow*. In 1790, it was settled by nine members of the mutinous crew of HMAV *Bounty*, together with twelve Polynesian women and six men, remaining undisturbed until re-discovered in 1808 by Captain Mayhew Folger of the American sealer *Topaz*.

By 1856 the population of 193 had outgrown the resources on the island and was moved to Norfolk Island. However, some of the islanders were homesick and between 1859 and 1864 five families returned to Pitcairn where their descendants have lived ever since. A British Colony from 1838, in 2002 it became one of the British Overseas Territories.

During the 19th and early 20th Centuries mail to and from the island was carried by courtesy of captains of passing ships which visited at irregular intervals. However, with the opening of the Panama Canal in 1914, passenger liners started to call more frequently, and an unofficial postal service was set up between Mr Gerald D. Bliss, US Postmaster in the Canal Zone, and Edgar Christian, Island Secretary on Pitcairn. In 1921, the British and New Zealand Governments agreed to accept and deliver unstamped mail from Pitcairn Island, and envelopes were endorsed either in manuscript or with a variety of "NO STAMPS AVAILABLE" handstamps. These letters would then be paid for at the single rate on receipt. This concession was withdrawn in May 1926 as a result of abuse by passengers on passing ships who took advantage of the 'free' system for personal or souvenir mail.

On 7th June 1927, the New Zealand Government established a Postal Agency on the island, appointing Edgar Christian as postmaster and providing him with a small stock of New Zealand stamps and a steel circular datestamp. This ceased operation on 14th October 1940, and the first Pitcairn Islands KGVI definitive stamps were issued the following day. Since then, numerous definitive and commemorative issues have brought much-needed income to the economy of a dwindling (now about 45) and ageing population.

This display consists of two frames. In the first are pre-1940 Pitcairn Island items showing "NO STAMPS AVAILABLE" handstamps and the Postal Agency cancellation. The second frame contains artwork and stamps of various "Pitcairn Islands" (now plural) issues after 1940.

Frames 49, 50, 51 and 52

Recent Issues of Kiribati

Hugh Bennet

These final frames bring the collecting of new stamp issues in the Pacific right up-to-date.

The first frame shows the Kiribati 2004 Olympics and 25th Anniversary of Independence issues, including printer's proofs, final proofs and J. Vasarhelyi's artwork.



With the display having been intimately involved in its production, the next two frames chart the story of the Kiribati 2017 Flower issue, including the concept designs, Kiribati's choices, the artist's designs with some with revisions, printer's proofs and the final issued stamps.

A printer's 'running sheet' shows all six sheets as they were printed before perforating and cutting. The sheet shows all the colour markings used by the printer over and above the colour flowers in the final sheet margins.

The final frame includes the Kiribati issues of 2018 for the Royal Wedding of the Duke and Duchess of Sussex and "Lest We Forget" Centenary of the First World War's Armistice. It shows the concept design, Kiribati's choices, artist's designs some with revisions, printer's proofs and the final issued stamps.

The last stamp artwork of Jennifer Toombs, unfinished as she died before completion, concludes the display.



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Ross F. Duberal and Bryan A. Jones (2018), *Fiji Postage Stamp Issues of the King George VI Period: Definitives, Commemoratives, Booklets and Postage Dues*.

John Dear (2015), *Fiji Postal History – Postage Meters, Registration Labels, Machine Cancellations*. £21 members/£25 non-members.

John Dear (2015), *The Picture Postcards of Fiji*, 3rd edition, £25/£30.

Steve Pendleton and David Maddock (2014), *Collecting Easter Island – Stamps and Postal History*. £25/£30.

David Murray-Brown (2012), *Norfolk Island Cancellations and Postal Markings*. 3rd edition. £12/£14.50.

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