

CAPTAIN COQK

NEWSLETTER OF THE
CHRISTCHURCH (NZ) PHILATELIC SOCIETY, INC

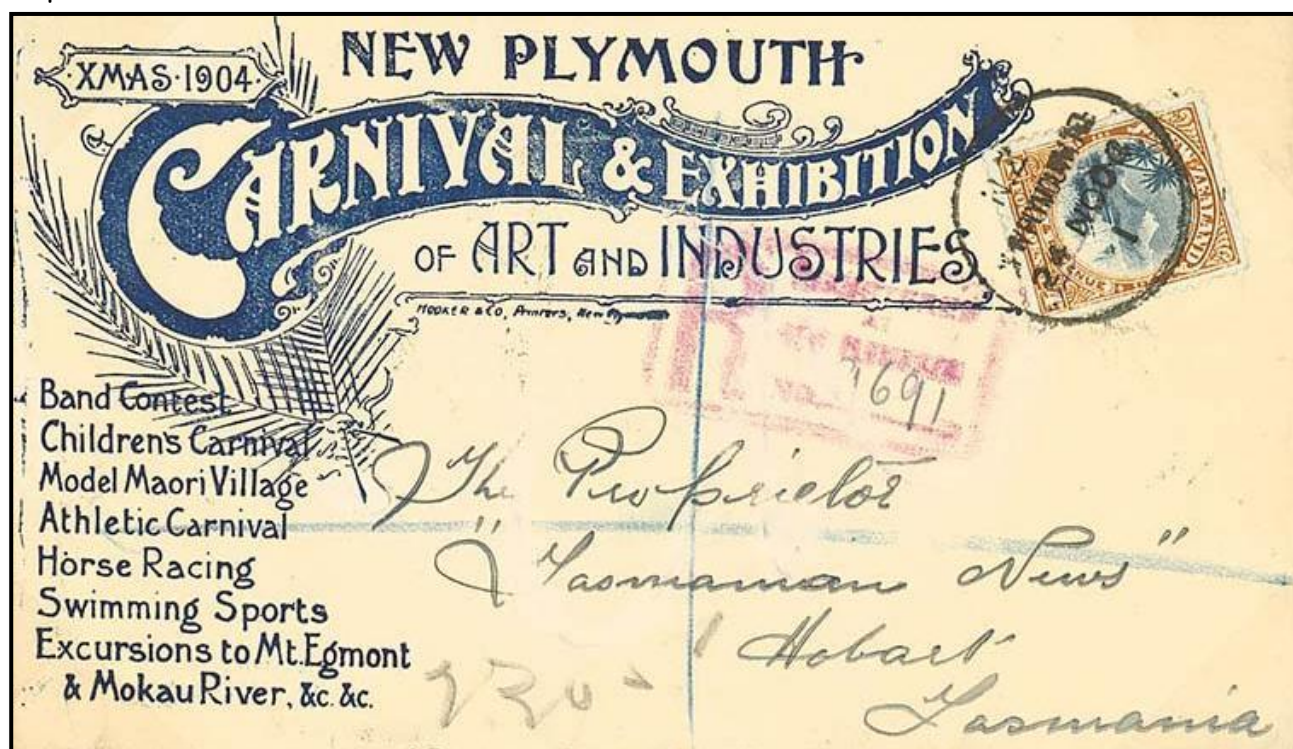
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May, 2020

1904 New Plymouth Carnival

This wonderful cover was prepared to advertise the "New Plymouth Carnival and Exhibition of Art and Industries". The carnival, located at Poverty Flat, opened on Boxing Day and closed on Tuesday, January 17. Reading through the newspaper accounts, it was quite an elaborate affair with the closing of the event being extended due to visitor demand. The main hall, designed by John Maisey and specially constructed for the event, measured 300ft x 240ft and surrounded a square with band rotunda.



A Maori Village of six large whares, cookhouse etc was also built on the site. One newsworthy event from the village was the birth of a boy, christened Kaniwerea (Maori for carnival), during the Exhibition. The Art Gallery located in the adjacent school, contained "...a most comprehensive collection of oil paintings, engravings and prints, besides innumerable English, foreign and Maori curios..." The works included five paintings by Goldie, along with internationally recognised artists such as Turner (A Rural Scene) and Gainsborough (Sunset).

Athletic, swimming and cycling competitions were held along with steamer rides, wood chopping events, and Maori cultural displays, all of which were well supported. Two large displays of fireworks were especially popular.

According to the newspaper, 28,743 adults plus children visited the Exhibition and with receipts of £4200, the Exhibition treasurer indicated the guarantors would not be called upon to contribute.

Stephen Jones

Postal Disruptions

The COVID-19 has seen major disruptions to international and domestic mails. It is an ever changing situation and the NZ Post website is the source for keeping up with those. In the interests of recording at least some of the effects a brief summary of the disruptions as at April 12;

All PostShop retail outlets closed on March 25 throughout New Zealand.

Street receivers (postboxes) are still being emptied but the website is vague as to whether they are maintaining their advertised times for pickups, and mail is still being delivered. Box lobbies are still open, but with reduced hours.

Sending parcels has got more expensive. There is now a surcharge on International parcels. According to the schedule it only applies to parcel for Zone D UK and Europe and is \$7.00/kg extra. This came into effect on April 1, 2020 and remains in place until international air schedules are back to normal.

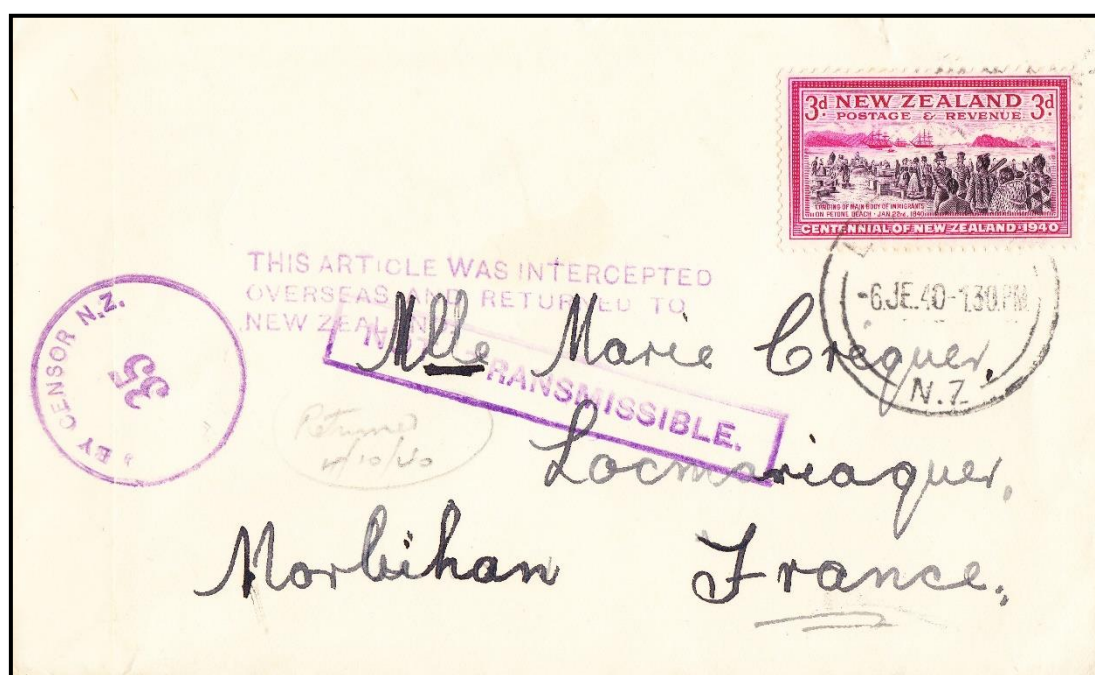
The website also shows where mail is not going out to, a list of 102 countries in total. Likewise, there is a list of 27 who are not sending mail to New Zealand.

Some of the listings do not make much sense. From NZ to France, Belgium and Luxembourg is closed while Germany and the Netherlands are not on the list. The other way where mail is not coming from and Germany is on the list. That is a little ironic and we have seen a great fleet of German aircraft coming to New Zealand to repatriate some 12,000 Germans stuck here by the lockdown and the collapse of international schedule air services. We have seen daily flights, sometimes 2 flights from Christchurch and at least 12 flights out of Auckland over a seven day period.

The Czech Republic does not feature on either list, yet this writer has an email from a resident of that country saying his local Post Office is not accepting mail for New Zealand.

It is obviously a very fluid situation, and without any doubt, there is a lot of disruption. It may in the end be a bonus for philatelists if it results in transit or delay identifications by means of markings or labels. We can but hope.....

Paul van Herpt



As the German invasion of France began in May, this cover was returned to New Zealand

SOCIETY PAGE

Lockdown, COVID-19, new words that have turned things upside down for most people. The CPS is no exception and we now have a program to reshuffle dependant on what the post lockdown rules will be in terms of meetings and gatherings.

"Captain Coqk" April issue didn't make it to the printer before lockdown and so only went to digital subscribers. It was also sent to those whose email addresses we hold. Those who pay for the hard copy will still get a hard copy irrespective of whether they were sent a digital one or not. Hopefully this issue and April will be able to be posted together.

Meetings can't be reorganised at this stage until we have clarity from Government as to what the rules will be if there are indeed any. As the production of this issue is ahead of any Government announcement there is still uncertainty as to the best way forward.

We will try and keep the planned Members Night Q,R,S,T for May 12th, but no Library Night a week later.

If government rules are favourable we will get back to normal in June.

Please keep an eye out for information on our website relating to programme. It is the only way we can reach the widest range of our members with the current disruptions. We will also email any updated programme to those we hold email addresses for. Feel free to send your email address to captaincoqk@gmail.com for CPS updates.

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The annual subscription to the Society is \$60.00. A \$10.00 discount may be deducted if paid by March 31st (or on application for membership) Where both husband and wife are members but require only one CAPTAIN COQK newsletter to be sent, a combined subscription of \$90.00 is charged, \$15.00 discount allowed. Additional postage is charged to cover the extra cost of posting to overseas addresses. Overseas postage rates are as follows: Australia & South Pacific \$13.20 Rest of the world \$18.70 (Economy rate discontinued)

The view expressed in this issue of CAPTAIN COQK are not necessarily those of the Christchurch (NZ) Philatelic Society (Inc) but are simply those of the respective authors

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1948 Polio Epidemic

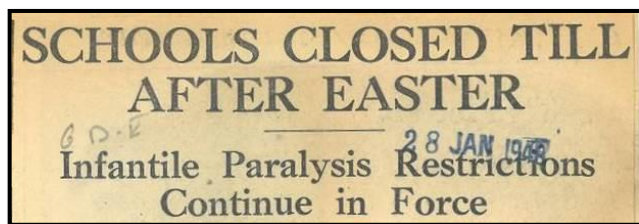
During the measles epidemic last year, I began drafting a piece on the polio virus epidemics that had run through New Zealand during the 20th century and the impact that vaccinations had on controlling, and effectively eradicating, it in New Zealand. This latest virus outbreak and the isolation controls associated with it are reminiscent of the measures put in place during these polio epidemics.

When I was younger, I recall seeing adults either walking with the aid of leg callipers and walking sticks, or in wheelchairs, as a result of contracting polio when they were younger. Those people have since passed on and now many people either haven't heard of polio or have no comprehension of the impact that it had on New Zealand society at the time.

Caused by a virus, polio is an acute viral disease affecting the spinal cord and nervous system and whose symptoms can range from none at all (95 per cent of cases) through to paralysis (up to 2 per cent) in limbs or the respiratory system. Case-fatality rates from paralytic polio have varied from 2% to 10%. Polio is typically a disease of children and adolescents, but the risk of paralysis increases markedly with the age of the patient, making young adults especially at risk if they catch this disease. It has been with us for a long time; Egyptian wall carvings from 3500 years ago show a person with the characteristic withered leg of a polio victim.

The virus is spread in faeces and in saliva. It can also be passed on through contaminated water, milk and food. New Zealand's first major polio outbreak was recorded in 1914. It killed 25 people. Epidemics, typically lasting a year or two, occurred every few years until the early 1960s, after the introduction, in 1956, of vaccines which eventually eradicated the disease.

In 1947, the first case of what would become a major outbreak was detected in Auckland in mid-November. There was a rapid increase in cases in the city and then in Waikato and Taranaki. The epidemic spread throughout the North Island during the summer and peaked in Wellington at the start of winter 1948. By the end of the year it had dispersed widely in the South Island. Monthly tallies slowly tailed off during 1949 but dropped to low levels only until early 1952, when a new epidemic got going.



Auckland Herald, January 28, 1948

Early in December 1947, quarantine measures and other restrictions were starting to be implemented. Children were prohibited from staying in motor camps and attending Sunday schools, and two days later inter-island travel by school children was forbidden.

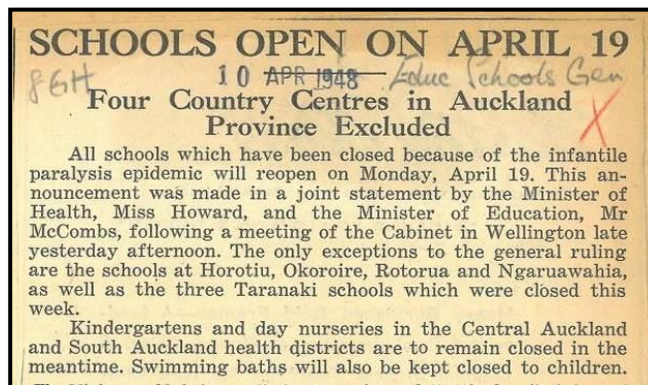
Beaches and swimming pools were closed and in Hamilton a Christmas parade was permitted, provided the children stood at least 6 feet (1.83m) apart. In Auckland, hospital patients in polio wards were not allowed any visitors, not even their parents.

The start of the new school year for 1948 was delayed. The government announced in late-February 1948 that schools would reopen on March 1. But just days after the announcement, when faced with continuing new cases and protests by worried parents writing to the newspaper, the Government backtracked on this and schools remained closed.

In a speech to the Crippled Children Society, the Health Minister, Mabel Howard, said she must be satisfied there was no danger of renewing the epidemic by reopening schools. "After all, what does a few weeks of education that a child can catch up later mean when we may have children crippled for life?"

In April, the Government advised, with some exception, all schools closed by the epidemic would reopen on April 19. Despite that, some individual schools continued to close for periods in the following months when children were diagnosed with polio.

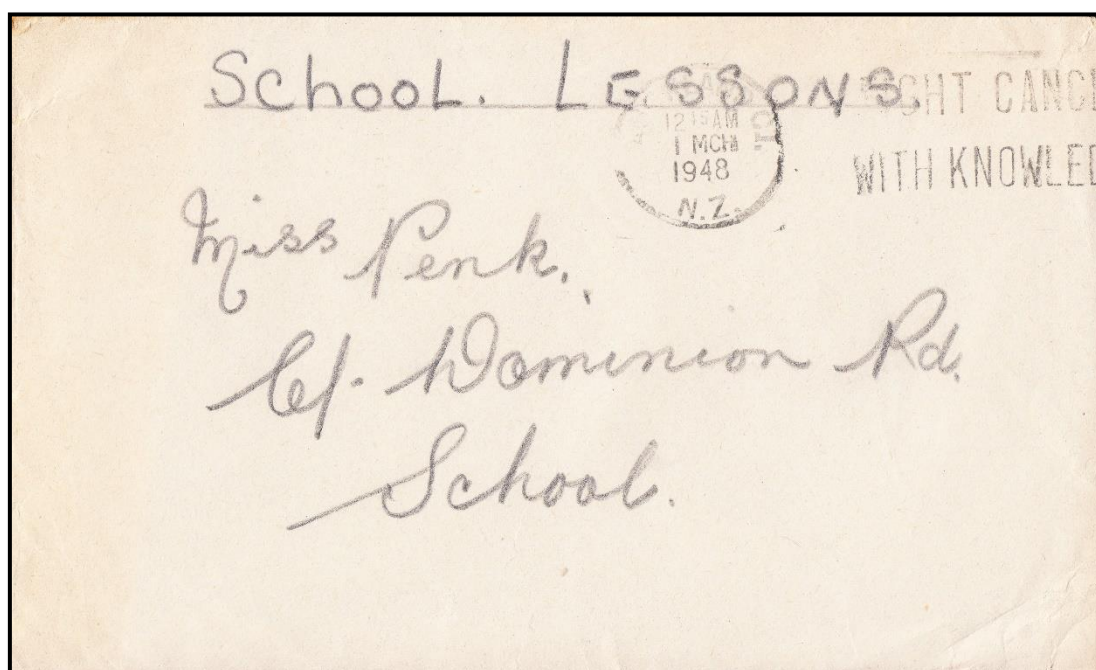
While at home, children were expected to complete lessons by correspondence and listen to school broadcasts on radio.



Auckland Herald, April 10, 1948



This "Home Schooling" resulted in the creation of an interesting philatelic record of the epidemic. To encourage children to continue with their education, the post office allowed free postage for children sending their lessons to their teachers. To ensure no postage due was levied, the envelope had to be endorsed "School Lessons".



While healthy children appreciated the time off school because it meant more playtime, those who caught polio could not enjoy the extended holiday. One woman remembers visiting a school friend recovering from polio and who spent most of her time in an iron lung - some polio victims could only breathe with the aid of this machine.

The 1948 epidemic resulted in 963 cases being reported with 52 deaths. There were three further outbreaks in 1952, 1955 and the last in 1956 resulting in 2490 cases and 136 deaths. The worst outbreak was in 1925 when 173 died from the virus.



Polio patients at Hastings Memorial Hospital being given physiotherapy, Auckland Herald archives

Effective polio vaccines were developed in the 1950s. Jonas Salk's inactivated vaccine of 1955 was followed by Albert Sabin's weakened live virus oral vaccine in 1960. In New Zealand use of the Salk vaccine delayed the reappearance of polio between 1956 and 1961. After this a mass immunisation campaign using the Sabin oral vaccine achieved high population coverage and eliminated the polio virus from New Zealand.

The Ministry of Health says the last case of "wild" polio virus in New Zealand was in 1977. No cases of vaccine-associated paralytic poliomyelitis have occurred in New Zealand since the introduction of inactivated polio vaccine in 2002.



Iron Lung respirator

Used in the treatment of patients who have contracted the virus, an iron lung encapsulates the patient in a sealed housing and uses negative pressure to assist the body to draw air into the lungs.

The idea was first developed in 1670 by English scientist John Mayow but it wasn't until 1928 when the "Drinker respirator" was built by Philip Drinker and Louis Agassiz Shaw Jr from the Harvard School of Public Health, the machine as we know it was developed

The machine was powered by an electric motor with air pumps from two vacuum cleaners. The air pumps changed the pressure inside a rectangular, airtight metal box, pulling air in and out of the lungs.

The first clinical use of the Drinker respirator on a human was on October 12, 1928, at the Boston Children's Hospital in the US. The subject was an eight-year-old girl who was nearly dead as a result of respiratory failure due to polio. Her dramatic recovery, within less than a minute of being placed in the chamber, helped popularise the new device.

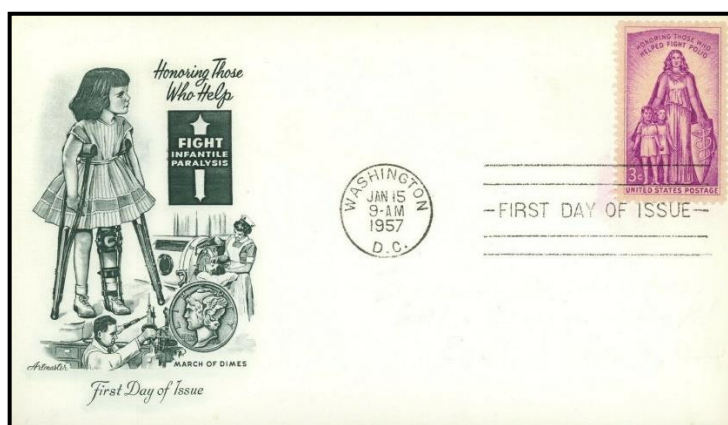
In 1931, John Haven Emerson introduced an improved and less expensive iron lung. The Emerson iron lung had a bed that could slide in and out of the cylinder as needed, and the tank had portal windows which allowed attendants to reach in and adjust limbs, sheets, or hot packs. Drinker sued Emerson, claiming he had infringed on patent rights. However, Emerson defended himself by making the case that such lifesaving devices should be freely available to all and that every aspect of Drinker's patents had been published or used by others at earlier times. Since an invention must be novel to be patentable, prior publication/use of the invention meant it was not novel and therefore unpatentable. Emerson won the case and Drinker's patents were set aside.

Interestingly the term "iron lung" also featured in a slang phrase I recall hearing my father use in the 1960's. As the device worked without any physical input from the patient, the expression "wouldn't work in an iron lung" was commonly used to refer to someone who was excessively lazy. I suspect the full meaning of this expression would be lost on most young people today.

Stephen Jones

March Of Dimes

The organization began in 1938 as the National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis and was founded by President Franklin D Roosevelt on January 3, 1938, as a response to US epidemics of polio. The foundation was an alliance between scientists and volunteers, with volunteers raising money to support research and education efforts.



To raise funds, an appeal called the "March of Dimes" — a play on the contemporary radio and newsreel series, *The March of Time* — was coined by stage, screen and radio star Eddie Cantor.

Launched in January, numerous events were held at which a lapel pin was sold for 10 cents, a dime, raising over \$85,000.

This became an annual event where people were asked to contribute a dime to the appeal with the term becoming synonymous with the organisation. Because Franklin D. Roosevelt founded the March of Dimes, a redesign of the dime was chosen to honour him after his death. The Roosevelt dime was issued in 1946, on what would have been the president's 64th birthday.

Due to the success of the vaccination programs, polio was effectively eradicated, the organisation's focus changed to the prevention of birth defects and combating infant mortality, becoming formally known in 2007 as the March of Dimes Foundation.

Stephen Jones

The Decisive Battle Of WW2

Some years ago, I was asked which battle I considered to be the decisive battle of World War 2. The questioner was taken aback by the answer. The Questioner said what about Stalingrad



or El Alamein or the Atlantic? I replied if this battle was lost, these other battles would not have been fought. For I had stated what I called "The Battle of the War Cabinet", aka the War Cabinet Crisis, May 26-28, 1940, to be the decisive battle. It is a forgotten piece of WW2 history. In the 80 years since the battle, it was made into the 2017 movie "the Darkest Hour". Its only memorial.

The War Cabinet Crisis was a split in the British War Cabinet over whether Mussolini should be officially approached as an intermediary to find out what terms Hitler would offer for peace. On May 10, 1940 German forces attacked Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg and France.

The German attack through the Ardennes and superior tactics split the French armies and forced the withdrawal of the British army from Belgium. On May 26, the German army surrounded the British army at Dunkirk. To many it seemed only a matter of time before the British army would be captured and Britain invaded. Winston Churchill (Conservative), who had just become prime minister on May 10, 1940, had included in his War Cabinet: Clement Attlee (Labour Party Leader); Arthur Greenwood (Labour); Edward Wood, who was Viscount Halifax and Foreign Secretary; and Neville Chamberlain, who Churchill had replaced as Prime Minister. The latter two were Conservatives.



Viscount Halifax

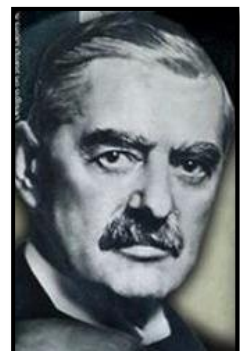
On May 24, Paul Reynaud, French Premiere, wanted to approach Mussolini via Roosevelt to get peace terms from Hitler and wanted Britain to be a party to the approach.



Halifax, who thought all was lost, wanted to support an approach to Mussolini. May 26, Halifax presented the proposal to the War Cabinet. Churchill was against the proposal as was Attlee and Greenwood. Churchill co-opted Archibald Sinclair, (Liberal Party Leader), for the debate. He too was against the proposal. Chamberlain was undecided.

The following day, Halifax threatened to resign from the War Cabinet if Churchill refused to authorise an approach. Churchill had the majority, there should have been no problem. However, the Conservative party had a large majority in parliament. Both Halifax and Chamberlain held great sway in the party.

This would have two issues. First: resignation would have triggered a motion of no confidence in Churchill. To many senior Conservatives he was a renegade and an adventurer. The Conservative majority of 216 could have seen him replaced. Secondly: Churchill understood the need to show a united front that was willing to fight.



GB 2015 Prime Ministers sheetlet - Chamberlain

At this juncture of the fighting, a public display of defeatism would have been fatal to the army and public morale. Chamberlain, like Churchill, wanted to keep France fighting as long as possible. Thus, he didn't immediately reject the approach. However, he distrusted Mussolini and thought Reynaud's plan more to France's benefit than Britain's.



German "Liquidation of Empire" Propaganda forgeries

On May 28, Churchill called a meeting of the 25 member outer cabinet. They unanimously endorsed Churchill's decision not to seek peace terms. Also, Chamberlain came to the view that an approach to Mussolini would likely not generate a desirable outcome. That day, at the 7pm War Cabinet meeting, Halifax realised Churchill would not budge and he had lost the support of Chamberlain. He was defeated. The crisis had passed.

Why do I consider the "Battle of the War Cabinet" so decisive? Did Churchill's victory guarantee victory? By no means. The German advances in the Ukraine, loss of Burma, defeat in North Africa, and the U-boats return to the mid-Atlantic all in mid-1942 and the "Black May" of 1943 in the Battle of the Atlantic were darker hours.

Its importance lies in that if Halifax had won, the defeatist sentiment would have signalled the defeat and capitulation of Britain.



Norway 1942 - had 400,000 German troops



In North Africa Germany lost 200,000 men and 2,500 tanks

Had Britain capitulated Germany would have won the war. On June 22, 1941, Operation Barbarossa, the German invasion of Russia, began. Over 1 million German troops, potentially $\frac{1}{2}$ million Italian troops, and 2 air fleets were not available for the invasion because Britain did not capitulate. This rose to 1.9 million after September 1943 when Italy surrendered. Any peace deal would have included access to the Middle East oil, rubber and other commodities, and access to the then pro-German Persia. There would have been no Allied re-supply. Turkey could have been induced to allow Germany access to attack the USSR. There would be little prospect of a Soviet victory.

British capitulation would have given Japan the material benefits of British, French and Dutch East Asia (oil, rubber, metals, food) without having to risk a war with the USA. Japan would be free to concentrate all its energies in defeating Chiang Kai-shek and the Chinese Nationalist Government.

The USA would have been powerless to intervene. Germany would have been in a position to supply Japan with armaments and materiel to reverse the decision of the 1939 Battles of Khalkhin Gol. At Khalkhin Gol, Japan was decisively beaten by the USSR.



Japan 1942 Greater East Asia Co-prosperity Sphere

After this, the Japanese military feared the Soviets. They entered into the 1939 Japanese-Soviet Non-aggression Pact against Hitler's wishes and turned their attention to South East Asia. In later 1941 when Stalin accepted that Japan was not going to attack the USSR: 18 divisions; 1,700 tanks; and over 1,500 aircraft were transferred from Siberia to Moscow for the 1941 Winter Offensive



USSR 1961 - 1941 Battle for Moscow

Chamberlain resigned from the War Cabinet on September 29, 1940 for health reasons. He died on November 9 of colon cancer. Churchill became the next leader of the Conservative Party. This secured his position as prime minister where his own party was concerned.

On December 12, after the sudden death of the British Ambassador to the US, Halifax was "offered" the role. Halifax was effectively "exiled" to the US. However, Halifax was successful in the role.

What happened to the British army? On May 24, Hitler agreed with General von Rundstedt to halt the German armour and allow the infantry to catch up so to not allow the British Army to escape encirclement, first miracle. This allowed defences around Dunkirk to be prepared. May 26, German forces surround the British army at Dunkirk, but fail to break the defences and on the same day, Operation Dynamo, the evacuation of British and French troops from Dunkirk, began. Luftwaffe commander, Hermann Göring, claimed he could destroy the British army. Large scale air attacks against Dunkirk began.



Churchill ordered the RAF to provide air cover. German bombers destroyed the harbour facilities, so the troops had to use the moles and beach. The weather was calm, second miracle, which enabled the evacuations to occur. On 4 June, German forces finally captured Dunkirk. 861 boats rescued 338,226 British, French, Belgian, and Polish soldiers. 243 boats were sunk and 145 fighters (nearly 20% of RAF Fighter Command) and the invaluable pilots were lost. 2,000 civilians in and around Dunkirk were killed.



Cover (cropped) with French stamps over-stamped "Occupation area Northern France" cancelled Dunkirk

As Reynaud had predicted, the German army commenced Fall Rot (Case Red), the capture of Paris and France, on June 5. The French armies put up unexpected stiff resistance with Paris finally falling on June 10. Italy declared war the same day, in fear off missing out on the spoils. From June 15-25, nearly 200,000 British and French troops were rescued from the Brittany ports. Reynaud resigned on June 16.

He was succeeded by Marshall Pétain, who immediately asked for an armistice. At the Forest of Compiègne, in the same carriage Germany signed the armistice in 1918, Hitler forced France to sign on June 22.



Marshall Pétain
note the stamps is
inscribed "Francaises" not
the traditional "RF"



Armistice negotiations on June 22, 1940

Murray Taege

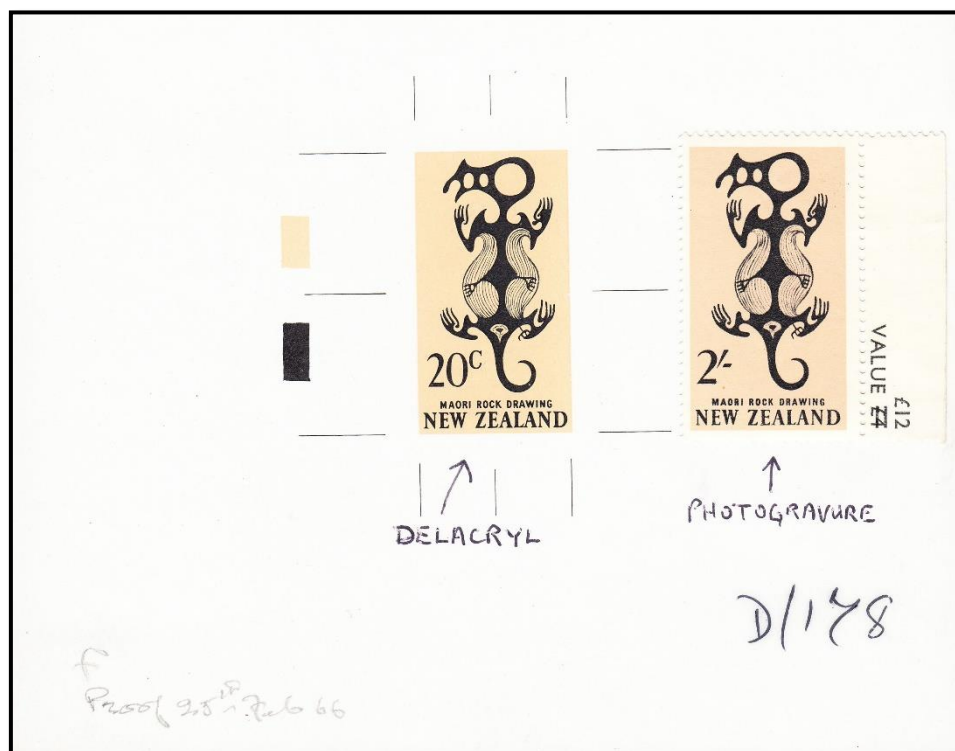


WWII German cinderellas for the Legion of French Volunteers

1967 Pictorial De La Rue Essay

With the change to decimal currency scheduled for July 1967, the post office decided to retain the same designs, with the values amended to decimal currency, from the 1960 Pictorial issue. The 1960 issue had been printed by two companies, De La Rue & Co and Harrison and Sons, with Harrisons printing most of the values. Both companies had had a long association with printing stamps for New Zealand.

By the mid 60's, New Zealand had gone away from having the stamps recess printed in favour of the less expensive, and more versatile, photogravure process. During this period, De La Rue had been working on a new process, which they named Delacryl, a lithographic process enhanced in order to offer both the same facility for multicolour work as photogravure, and the fine line detail of recess printing. The process produced brighter and more perfectly detailed stamps through sharp line work, subtle colour definition and the ability to print firm black colour in the 'unshaded' areas. The exact details of the process were kept secret by De La Rue.



Delacryl essay for the 1967 20 cent value, 132mm x 127mm

The above essay, dated February 25, 1966 in pencil, is printed on gummed, glossy paper without a watermark. The printer has also placed a mint copy of the then current 1960 2/- value next to it as a way of comparing the appearance of the two processes. In the flesh, the Delacryl essay appears "richer" in colour and depth when compared to the Harrison printing of the 2/- value. In fairness to Harrisons, the 2/- example used on the essay was printed on unsurfaced paper. The increasing use of chalk surfaced paper by both printers enhanced the appearance of all the stamps printed using that paper.



The post office chose to retain the status quo for the printing of the decimal values of this set and it wasn't until the 1968 Maori Bible issue that De La Rue were able to utilise the Delacryl process for printing New Zealand stamps. Readers may recall the front cover of the December 2017 issue showed two De La Rue essays for the 1966 Christmas issue and it is likely that these too, were printed using the Delacryl process

Stephen Jones

1880 QVLT 5/- & 9/- With NZ Watermark – Postally Used

The previously unreported postally used 5/- QVLT stamp with NZ watermark, illustrated above, is clearly dated 1882. The 2012 RPSNZ certificate accompanying the stamp states: "That this is a genuine postally used (in 1882) example of 1880 QV long type fiscal 5/- green, wmk NZ, perf $11\frac{3}{4}$ ".

The previously unreported postally used 9/- QVLT stamp with NZ watermark, also illustrated above, bears part of a Napier duplex cancel and date (??) 84 and received a similar RPSNZ certificate stating genuine postal use.

Before the *Stamp Amendment Act, 1881* postage stamps were not intended to be used for fiscal purposes and fiscal stamps were not intended for postal purposes. That Act prepared the way for the 2nd Side Faces with their inscription "Postage & Revenue", by providing that "one form of stamp of various denominations", ie one form of stamp for each denomination, "may be created which may be used either as postal labels or for any other purpose for which stamps are used or permitted to be used whether under 'The Stamp Act, 1875' or 'The Stamp Fee Act, 1880' ...".

There was a shortage of 1st Side Face stamps before their 2nd Side Face replacements were ready. Thus, 1d blue Stamp Duty stamps were permitted (in February 1882) for postal use to help counter the shortage problem¹. Queen Victoria Long Type 4d, 6d 8d and 1/- stamps are also known postally used and are listed in stamp catalogues. However, there are inconsistencies and inaccuracies with several of these listings. QVLT of the 2nd series stamps were initially printed on NZ watermark paper in 1880, followed in 1882 with printings on NZ & Star (6mm) watermark paper.



Illustration - courtesy of
Mowbray Collectables.



Illustration - courtesy of
Andrew Spence

Only the 4d, 6d & 8d NZ watermark stamps are priced in CP and SG, whereas in both catalogues all NZ & Star 6mm wmk stamps are. It is apparent from the SG listing that denominations other than 4d, 6d, 8d and 1/- with NZ watermarks have been reported in the past.

In this writer's opinion, it would make more sense for SG to split the 1882 "NZ & Star (6mm wmk)" section into two chronological listings: 4d to 10/- NZ watermark stamps (which were the original issue in 1880), followed by NZ & Star 6mm watermark stamps.

Stanley Gibbons lists the following under **1882 NZ & Star (6mm) watermark**:

4d	NZ wmk	3/-	6mm wmk	8/-	6mm & NZ wmk
6d	6mm & NZ wmk	4/-	6mm & NZ wmk	9/-	6mm wmk
8d	NZ wmk	5/-	6mm wmk but 2 shades	10/-	6mm & NZ wmk
1/-	6mm & NZ wmk	6/-	6mm & NZ wmk	15/-	6mm wmk
2/-	6mm wmk	7/-	6mm & NZ wmk	£1	6mm wmk
2/6d	6mm & NZ wmk	7/6d	6mm wmk		

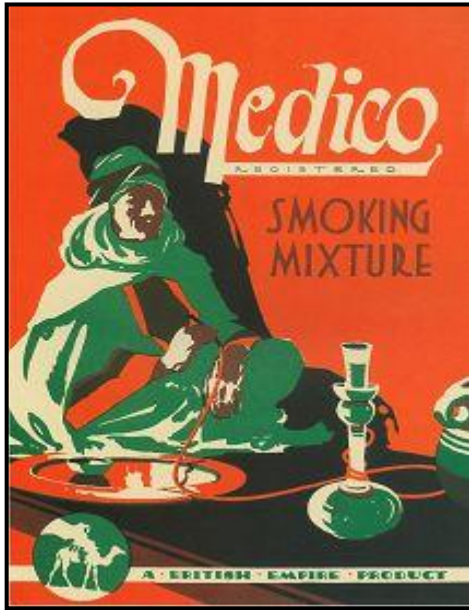
The Scott and Michel catalogues: there are no listings of any QVLT stamps with NZ watermark.

Reference

- 1 *Collecting New Zealand Stamps, 1988*, by Robin Gwynn, pp 28-29.

David Smitham

1946 Medico Tobacco Adverting Cover

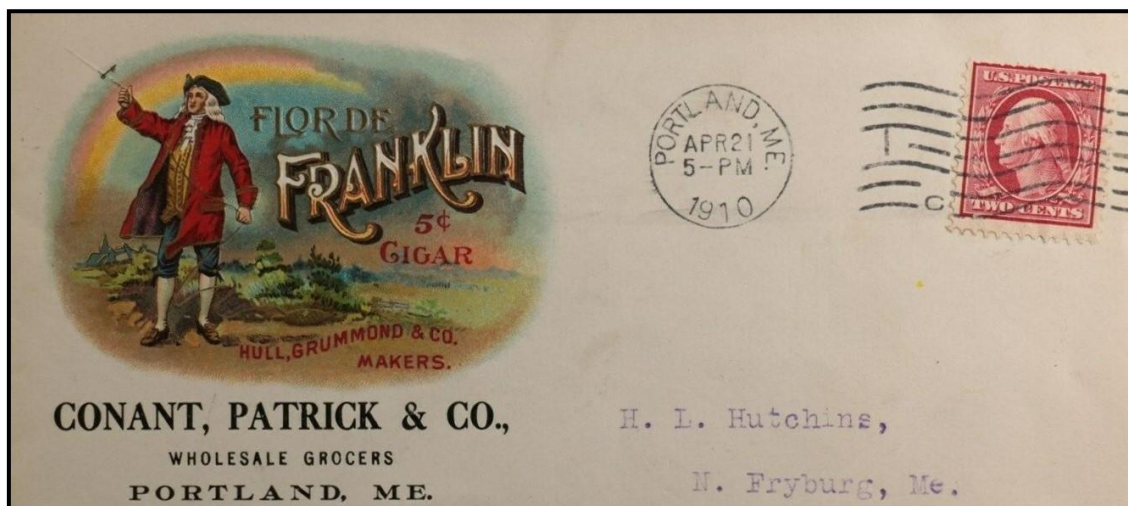


The detrimental effects of smoking have long been recognised, along with ways of trying to convince consumers that the advertised product helps to reduce the harm caused from smoking tobacco.

A great deal of thought goes into the naming of a brand. The British Empire tobacco company obviously thought that consumers would tend to feel that "Medico" tobacco was somehow not as bad for you as other brands. The image in the advert also lends an exotic, middle eastern theme to the product. Other Medico advertising indicates that their main products were filters and pipes designed to remove the nicotine and tar from the tobacco smoke.



Stephen Jones



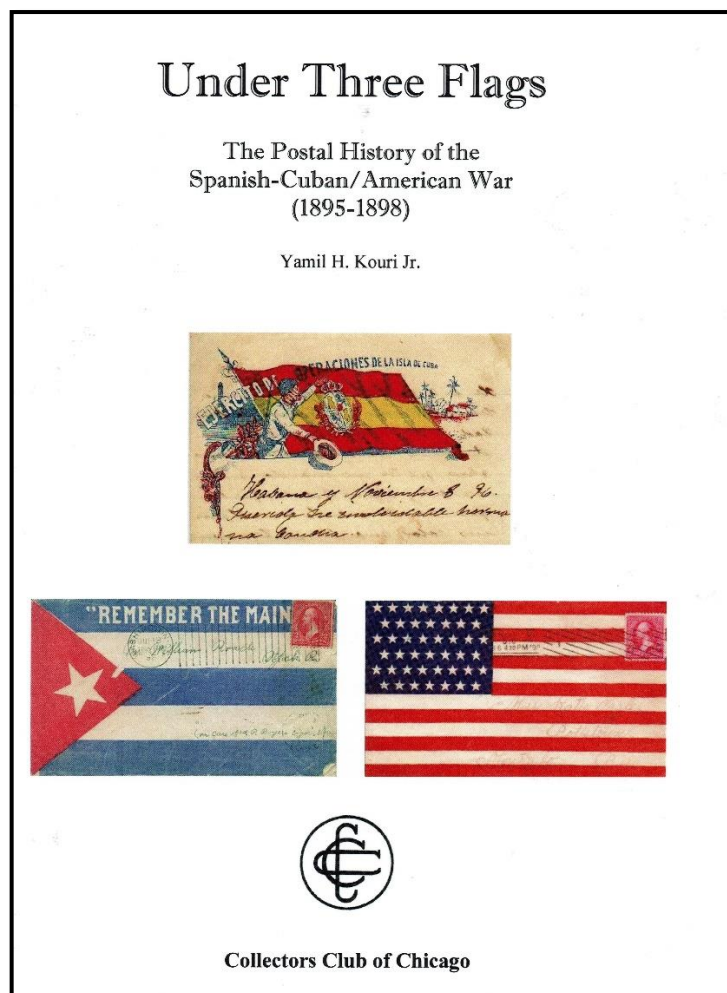
US Tobacco Advertising cover (cropped) from 1910

Book Review

Under Three Flags, The Postal History of the Spanish-Cuban War 1895-1898

Yamil H Kouri Jnr. Published by the Collectors Club of Chicago 2019. ISBN 0-9827357-6-6

This is the thirty-fourth book published by the Collectors Club, and surely must be one of the most impressive. The three flags title refers to the involvement of Cuba, Spain and the USA. The book covers every aspect of the postal history of all three parties over the course of the war.



Spain's power on the world stage had been in decline for nearly two centuries and was facing a situation where it had no territorial presence in the 'new world' which had had discovered, other than Cuba. The USA had been pursuing a policy of growth within the continent and international isolationism, but entered the battle with Spain for control of Cuba, which was not yet fully established as a nation.

The book has 27 chapters, and in a brief review it is not possible to even list the main aspects of the postal history. Suffice to say that it covers Cuban postal systems in and out of the island, mail from Spanish soldiers, military posts, military hospitals, interrupted mails, patriotic covers and labels, local provisional stamp issues, official mail envelopes, and all aspects of postal markings.

The book runs to an incredible 752 pages, has 1600 illustrations in full colour of covers, postal markings, stamps, labels, maps, documents, photographs, and more. Despite the amount of technical details, the book is very readable.

The bibliography alone runs to ten pages, and includes 40 previously published articles by the author, so not only is Yamil Kouri an experienced researcher and author, but he also is probably the leading expert on this short period of postal history. Kouri is also an experienced international philatelic exhibitor, with four large-gold exhibits to his credit. The book is of the same level, with a large gold and literature grand award at its first showing at the 2019 ATA National Topical Show in Omaha, Nebraska.

We were fortunate that a copy of the book was forwarded to the 16th national literature exhibition organised by the CPS last year, where it was awarded a large gold, felicitations for research, and best monograph. Some of you who visited NZ2020 in Auckland may have had the good fortune to have a look through the book while it was on display as part of the Literature competition. This is a truly amazing book, and I recommend a viewing, regardless of your own collecting interests.

Jeff Long

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