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This Newsletter gives valuable information. Retain it for reference purposes.

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NEW ZEALAND NOTES AND COMMENT by Peter Oldham

By kind permission of the New Zealand Herald, we are reproducing an article on the early postal services in N.Z. It paints a very clear picture of the hardships encountered by the postmen of those days in their endeavour to assure the safe delivery of mail.

HEROES OF THE FIRST OVERLAND MAIL

It was the sea that provided the first communications links between the scattered settlements of New Zealand in the 1840's. The land that lay between presented an impenetrable barrier of bush, rivers and mountains.

The isolation of the early settlements was broken only by infrequent calls from vessels whose masters carried letters as a favour while trading along the coast.

This spasmodic service became inadequate after the settlement of Wellington. Means of conveying mail overland to the then capital at Auckland became imperative.

The settlers had not yet explored the 400 miles of territory between the two settlements, but there were others who knew the land. The island possessed a network of narrow well-worn tracks, the centuries-old thoroughfares of the Maori foot messengers.

The first major overland mail service linked Wellington and Wanganui. It began on Monday, October 4, 1841. It was a weekly service, leaving each centre on alternate Mondays. Only letters specially marked "overland" and bearing the rate of postage of one shilling for a single letter or two shillings for a double letter were carried.

Maoris were the first messengers on this famous Wellington-Wanganui route. They took five days to complete the 120-mile journey travelling at the steady jog-trot proved by their forebears to be the best for covering long distances.

In September, 1843, the Wellington-Wanganui service was extended to New Plymouth, making the journey for the runner an arduous 238 miles.

TAIAHA AND GUN

Records remain of the messenger appointed to carry the first official Government dispatches from Wellington to New Plymouth. The Maori chosen for the task was one Wi Hapi Pakau, of the Ngati te Whiti, a New Plymouth tribe. Wi Hapi was renowned for his endurance and his bush knowledge. To safeguard the mail and official documents, he was given a revolver, complete with leather holster, belt and powder and shot bag.

Wi Hapi Pakau had more faith in the Maori taiaha than in the pakeha's revolver. He also preferred to swim the rivers rather than depend on the horses and canoes supplied at different points of his journey.

The first overland service from Auckland through to Wellington was made at the end of 1843.

The task of carrying the mail on this first occasion was undertaken by Constable Thomas Heale. He carried it as far as Waimate (now Manaia) on the first stage of its journey to Wellington.

Those early years of the overland mail service contain many tales of heroism, exploits performed by Maori runners and Mounted Constabulary.

MEN ON HORSEBACK

The 437 miles were covered, on an average, in three weeks and the mails were sent twice monthly. The average of 20 miles covered each day in difficult country was no mean feat by any standards.

But not one of the runners who performed marathon journeys and endured hardship to carry the Queen's mails could have imagined the day would come when their descendants would talk through the air between Auckland and Wellington as freely as men talked then when they met on the street corner.

A MIXED BAG

Lot 341 rd Dominion

- (a) **J4a Roughway (De La Rue)** chalky paper—sideways watermark. A rare block of 8 consisting of 6 “no wmk,” one “wmk letters” and one with the **excessively scarce wmk “cross”**. We cannot recall ever having sold this last item before £5
- (b) **J5a. Lithographed.** A lovely mint pair with the scarce “colourless” wmk and horizontal mesh, one stamp showing the “globe” flaw. A real collector’s piece this £12
- (c) **J5a. Lithographed.** A mint single, once again with the “colourless” wmk and horizontal mesh. Do not miss this £5
- (d) **J6a. On thick Cowan paper.** A mint block of 9 showing the middle row officially patched in, the interesting point being that the middle row is a different shade and obviously from another sheet. A bargain 10/-
- 342 1898 Pictorials**
- (a) **E14g 6d Kiwi.** Two striking mint blocks in contrasting shades of Pink and Rose-carmine. The block in Pink shade 75/-, the Rose-carmine £5 OR—this attractive pair for £8/10/0
- (b) A set of fine used **1907/8 Officials**, including 3d green Mt. Cook (2 shades), 2d Pembroke Peak (3 shades), 3d (2), 6d large size (2), 6d redrawn, 1/-, 2/-, 5/-. The set of 13 52/6d

Lot 343 Scarce cover, bearing a beautifully cancelled block of 6 of the **1934 Crusader Health**. The block also has lower selvedge Plate No. 1. Unusual on registered cover in so large a piece. The cover 90/-

Lot 344 A magnificent mint bottom left corner selvedge block of **8d Ed. VII Official, Perf 14 x 14½**, on inverted watermark paper. The block of 12 ... £5/10/0

Block of 4, £2. Singles 10/-

Lot 345 Complete set of **4 Ross Dependency** on official souvenir cover with “**Scott Base 11 Ja 57**” postmark, commemorating the first day of issue. The cover 10/-

INSPECTOSCOPE MAGNIFIERS !

Just arrived from England. Fitted with adaptor to take power from any 230 volts bayonet light socket (could be converted for wall plug)—and with clear plastic head so that no power is needed in daylight hours. The powerful “10X” lens gives all the magnification that can be desired.

The Inspectoscope, torch-type, 10X magnifying glass—perfect for special-ists £6/5/0

ARMS TYPE

Lot 346

Seldom offered. Complete range of superb mint, **Cowan paper, single wmk, Arms type**, including 1/3 (both Lemon and Orange), 2/6, 4/-, 5/-, 7/-, 7/6, 8/-, 9/-, 10/-, 12/6, 15/-, £1. The set of 13 £13

Lot 347 **Arms Type. Scarce high values**

- (a) **Z46c.** £2, W. Teape, mult. upright wmk. Fine used 35/-
- (b) **Z50a.** £4 Cowan paper. Fine used £4
- (c) **Z55b.** 11/- on 11/-, W. Teape, mult. upright wmk. Mint 30/-
- (d) **Z56b.** 22/- on 22/-, W. Teape, mult. upright wmk. Mint £3/10/0
- (e) **Z44c.** 30/- W. Teape, mult upright wmk. Mint £3/10/0
- (f) **Z47d.** £2/10/0, W. Teape, mult. upright, inv. wmk. Mint £7

Lot 348. A seldom presented opportunity in the ever popular **Healths**.

We offer the complete range of colourful Health Stamps in **Plate Number** blocks from the earliest year the plates were so distinguished, i.e. 1934 up to the 1959 “bird series.” The only absentee is the 1945 Peter Pan 2d plus 1d. Plate B2 rarity which no one would expect to find in any case. The offer includes all four corner blocks of both Plates 1 and 2 of 1936 and 1937, and also the Imprint Block of 1938. This grand collection of 84 Plate number blocks in perfect condition and housed in a beautifully presented 7-page clear cellophane slot stockbook £34

Lot 349 **The 1946 Peace series**

Another popular group absolutely complete in all Plates and Imprints. The range of 29 Blocks in top condition £4

Lot 350 **1935 Air Stamps**

A most attractive set of three Plate number blocks, with wide selvedges (like small miniature sheets) and bright colouring. The three blocks 25/-

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