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New Zealand Pacific Islands Dependencies

Following on from the Stop Press discussion in July on the overprints of Cook Islands, Niue and Samoa, it seems a suitable moment to feature the comprehensive notes on the subject by Neil Donen.

They were previously published in the Flagstaff journal.



The Cook Islands, Niue and Samoa are located in the Pacific. In 1935 they were New Zealand dependencies. The decision to produce a special issue of the New Zealand Dependencies was only taken in January 1935. Because of the very short time left to the date of issue for the stamps, all were reprinted from plates of previous issues. This followed a recommendation from the Prime Minister's Office to the Director-General of the New Zealand Post Office and was formally approved on March 15, 1935. The stamps were to be in circulation for a three-month period only (May 7th, 1935 to August 6th, 1935). The Post Office grossly underestimated the demand for the stamps with the result that multiple printings were undertaken. All stamps were printed by the Government Printing Office in Wellington, New Zealand with the NZ & Star watermark. An overprint reading "Silver Jubilee of King George V. 1910 - 1935" was applied to all these stamps. Each value was printed three times, once each for the vignette, frame and overprint. The same set of fonts was used for the Cook Islands and Niue overprints. The printers, on some issues, used fonts for the Samoa overprints. This resulted in "narrow" overprints.

Below is a listing of the known varieties of the New Zealand Dependencies.

Country	Value	B	K	E	N	R	I	VI	HI	No. Printed
Cook Islands	1d	●	●							136,400
	2½d			●						98,080
	6d				●	●				107,520
Niue	1d	●	●							155,600
	2½d			●				●	●	77,600
	6d				●	●		●		76,560
Samoa	1d						●			134,160
	2½d						●			67,560
	6d			●						59,640

- B** = Narrow "B" in Jubilee
- K** = Narrow "K" in King.
- E** = Narrow "E" in Geo
- N** = Narrow "N" in King
- R** = Narrow "R" in George
- I** = Short "I" in Jubilee
- VI** = Imperf vertically in left margin
- HI** = Imperf horizontally

NB: One 1d Niue sheet known to have been issued with double perfs in right selvedge.

Cook Islands and Niue

Three of the 7 stamps from the 1932 issues from both the Cook Islands and Niue were reissued using new colours so that the overprints could be clearly seen. The original 1932 issue stamps were perforated 13 and had no watermark. A second 1932 issue was perforated 14 and was watermarked (NZ & star). The 1935 issue was perforated 14 and watermarked NZ & star.

Collins notes the press used was old and the paper had to be dampened prior to printing. Because of the multiple printings and the washing up of the press required between printings of the different values, colour variations (shades) occurred between printings and values. The main shades are shown below (It is not possible to identify which colours occurred with which printings).

Value	Cook Island Shades	Niue Shades
1d	Deep red-brown and lake Deep red-brown and carmine-lake	Deep red-brown and deep carmine Deep red-brown and red Red-brown and carmine red
2½d	Deep steel-blue and deep dull-blue Deep steel-blue and grey-blue Steel-blue and grey-blue	Deep steel-blue and deep slate-blue Deep steel-blue and slate-blue Steel-blue and slate-blue
6d	Deep blue-green and dull yellow Blue-green and yellow	Deep blue-green and aniline-orange Blue-green and aniline-orange Deep blue-green and yellow-orange Green and deep yellow-orange

Dates of Printing

A significant number of the sheets printed were rejected and the stamps not placed on sale. The figures listed below include only stamps that were available for sale.

Date	Cook Islands			Niue		
	1d	2½d	6d	1d	2½d	6d
March 18			40,000	40,000	24,000	28,240
March 26	40,000	40,000				3,760
April 4				40,000		
May 3	32,000			20,720	8,000	12,000
May 5		19,920	15,040			
May 8	5,920			5,520	3,920	23,440
May 14	12,000	10,000	10,160	24,000	16,000	
May 30	17,600	17,280	18,800	2,640		
June 25	28,880			22,720	11,440	
June 26						9,120
July 17		10,880				
July 27			23,520		41,240	
Total available	136,400	98,080	107,520	155,600	77,600	76,560
Unsold and destroyed	21,602	4,034	12,432	26,711	15,780	7,297
Total issued	114,798	94,046	95,088	128,899	61,280	69,263

The Cook Islands and Niue Varieties

The 1d Values

B		K			B		K		
B		K			B		K		
B		K			B		K		
B		K			B		K		
B		K			B		B		B
B		K			K		B		
B		K			K		K		
B		K			K		B		

The printed sheet was 10x8 (Rows/Columns). The original process involved making up one row of handset type that covered 5 horizontal places. This was dipped into a molten metal mould to make 16 duplicates ("stereos") which were then mounted onto the frame to give the 80 images. As the "B" and the "K" fonts from the Samoa overprint were used i.e. the narrower fonts, the mistake was thus repeated 16 times. The positions are noted in the table on the left. However this arrangement does not hold true for the bottom right quarter of the frame. For reasons unknown, some of the stereos were cut up and remounted in a different order

The 2½d Values

			E					E
			E					E
			E					E
			E					E
			E					E
			E					E
			E					E
			E					E
			E					E
			E					E

The 2½d values were done the same way. However the sheet was printed as an 8x10 image and the original typesetting covered only 4 images. At least 20 stereos were made. The Narrow "E" in GEORGE occurs in the last or 4th typesetting. Thus the narrow "E" is found in the 4th and 8th columns.

The 6d Values

N		R	N			R	N
N			N			R	N
N			N			R	N
N			N			R	N
N			N			R	
R		R		N		R	
R		R		N		R	
		R		N		R	
R		R		N		R	N
R		R		N		R	

The overprint of the 6d value has an interesting history. The sheets were printed as 8x10 rows/columns and the typesetting was in images of 4. Once the 20 stereos were mounted it was found that there was poor horizontal alignment between the stereos. They were subsequently cut up as vertical strips and remounted in a different order. It appears that at least one vertical strip was totally cut up which accounts for the placement of the stray "R" and "N"

Samoa

Three of the 12 stamps of the 1921 Samoa issue were reprinted using the same colours and overprinted. Some of the original 1921 stock was overprinted. However, because of demand, later new stamps were printed. The information is detailed below. None of the original issue stamps were watermarked.

Value	Printed		Destroyed	Sold
	1921 issue	1935 issue		
1d (14x14½)	6,360		5,400	960
1d (14x13½)		127,800	16,877	110,923
2½d	27,240	46,260	6,576	66,924
6d	48,360	11,280	8,762	50,878

Dates and Numbers of Stamps Printed

(1921 = 1921 Issue; 1935 = 1935 Issue)

Date	1d		2½d		6d	
	1921	1935	1921	1935	1921	1935
April 4		48,000	21,480		21,480	
May 3	6,360	9,240	5,760	5,880	10,080	
May 13					15,000	
May 14		36,000		24,000		
June 10		30,720		10,440		11,280
July 19		3,840			1,800	
Total	6,360	127,800	27,240	40,320	48,360	11,280

Differences between the 1921 and 1935 (definitive) issues

	1921 Issue	1935 Issue
Watermark	1d (14x14½) 2½d and 6d (14x13½) All watermarked NZ & Star	All 14x13½ All watermarked NZ & Star
Paper	Medium thick unsurfaced Cowan paper. Brownish gum	Thin, hard Cowan Esparto paper. Colourless gum
Plates	Plate numbers can be found in top left corner of sheet. Sheet numbers located in top right corner of sheet. 1d = Plate 44 2½d = Plate 47 6d = Plate 51	

Notes:

The "I" of King

The "I" in King is thicker than the "I" in Silver and Jubilee

The "F" of OF

The lower horizontal stroke of "F" in OF slopes

1d Varieties

R/C 12/5. Downward slant on middle arm of first 'E' of Jubilee

A number of varieties to the second 'E' of Jubilee have been noted, but none appear to be constant.

Further clarification is awaited.

Patching

Because of the frequent printings a number of stamps became damaged. In an attempt to salvage some of the stamps, the Printers removed the damaged portions of the stamp (mostly confined to the upper right corner of the sheet), patched in other sheets and then overprinted the stamps. The patches can be seen as thin horizontal strips on the top and bottom of the obverse side of the stamp.

Sources

Collins, R.J.G. The Postage Stamps of New Zealand Vol V. The Royal Philatelic Society of New Zealand, Wellington. 1967 (Major source of most of the above information)

The Flagstaff 6th and 8th editions quoting the following sources

1. Lowe, Robson. The Encyclopedia of the British Empire Stamps 1788-1952. Vol IV. The Empire in Australasia. Robson Lowe. London 1962
2. Verne, Collins & Co. Catalogue of the Stamps of the Dependencies of New Zealand. Verne, Collins & Co. Ltd. Christchurch 1954

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