

Pitcairn Islands First Definitive Series Postal History

Synopsis

What is Presented:

This exhibit shows single, multiple and/or combination usages of all ten values. Nearly all usages are non-philatelic. Surface mail letter, postcard, parcel, printed matter, and internal rates are shown. WWII and post-war airmail rates are also shown. In addition, sea routes are discussed, as well as the ships used (i.e., merchant, passenger, and cruise ships). Censored and non-censored mail from WWII is examined.

Challenge Factor:

Pitcairn's population has always been extremely small (161 in 1956). In addition, visits from ships willing to carry mail were infrequent, even at the best of times. There is also no harbor at Pitcairn. All these factors taken together meant that there was little mail from Pitcairn, and what mail there was was carried in bags in open longboats in all kinds of weather out to waiting ships, resulting in much damage.

Organization:

Exhibit is organized by denomination, in ascending order from ½d. to 2/6. Two pages are devoted to multi-value usages, a Pitcairn practice that demonstrated their pride in their postal issues.

Material Highlights:



QSL Card to USA – The vast majority of Pitcairn QSLs are sent via QSL bureaus or under separate cover. Only occasionally can posted QSLs be found. 1 of 3 that I have seen.



Special Parcel Rate to New Zealand – A scarce parcel clipping showing sending and receiving addresses and hand typed customs declaration dating from 1943. Earliest and most complete parcel Pitcairn parcel clipping that I have seen from this era.



Early Airmail to Australia – Very scarce usage of the 2/6 on overweight airmail cover from 1947 (still WWII rate). Only non-philatelic example of 2/6 value that I have seen anywhere, including the Pitcairn Log and the auction catalog collection at the Spellman Museum. No other Pitcairn dealer or collector that I have consulted can recall any other non-philatelic usage of the 2/6.

Additional Notes:

Exhibit does not contain an example of Pitcairn-based censorship performed by the RNZAF in 1944 (I'm still looking for one of those – last example to come to market was about 5 years ago). Other military related covers (e.g., Dutch Frigate *Van Zijll* visit in 1955 and reports of BFPO covers) appear to be either philatelic or bogus.

Additional References:

Articles from the *Pitcairn Log* (quarterly publication of the Pitcairn Island Study Group):

- Badagliacca, Ralph; *An Introduction to Pitcairn Island Censored Covers of World War II*; Vol. 25, No. 2, January-March 1998.
- Badagliacca, Ralph; *Pitcairn Island Censored Covers – Part II*; Vol. 26, No. 1, January-March 1999.
- Bloom, Wilfred; *Dutch Frigate Visits Pitcairn – 1955*; Vol. 31, No. 2, April-June 2004.
- Editor; *A Note from Pitcairn*; Vol. 11, No. 2, December-February 1984.
- Kitching, Cy; *What Was the Status of British Field Post?*; Vol. 18, No. 3, March-May 1991.
- Parker, Everett; *Late Use for Pitcairn QSL Card?*; Vol. 25 No. 5 (special) October-December 1998.
- Speirs, George; *Maritime Mail from Pitcairn Island*; Vol. 30, No. 1, January-March 2003.
- Vadheim, Jeffrey; *Postmaster's Wife's Privilege?*; Vol. 17, No. 2, December-February 1990.