

Philatelic Literature: **Norfolk Island Cancels**

by Dr. Everett L. Parker

There is considerable interest these days in the South Pacific, particularly the smaller islands that were once British outposts. By and

large, the stamps are attractive, and the earlier postal history is both very collectible and increasing in value.

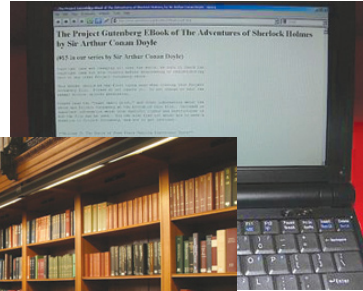
So it was with great interest that I received a packet recently from David Murray Brown in the United Kingdom. He had said he was forwarding a copy of the third edition of his seminal work titled ***Norfolk Island Cancellations and Postal Markings***. My enthusiasm was two-fold: it was the first update of the book since 1983 (the first edition was in 1974), and it covered an area of the Pacific in which I am keenly interested.

Since almost three decades had elapsed since the second edition in 1983, many discoveries and updates have been recorded, and it was time for a thorough review, Murray noted in his "Preface to the Third Edition."

With a few minor adjustments, the type numbers and endnotes (previously listed as "footnotes") have remained the same as in previous editions. More recent discoveries have been given new type numbers and associated endnotes. Some sections have been extensively rewritten "to reflect the wealth of new information that has come to notice since the last edition," Murray said.

Section VI ("Special Cancellations") has been updated, a mission, Murray notes, that will never end, at least as long as Norfolk Island postal officials continue with first day postmarks for each issue of commemorative stamps.

Regretfully, perhaps, illustrations of these new issue cancellations end in 1995, and listings end in 2000. Murray notes, "... perhaps another collector will take over the baton and record later commemorative cancellations for posterity." While another 17 years of cancel illustrations would certainly have increased the number of pages in the 142 page book (there are only about nine cancels illustrated on each page in the pre-1995 section),



it is a pity we cannot see them all. Of course, having said that, most of the post-1995 illustrations are available on-line from the Norfolk Islands post office.

Similarly, Section XI ("Air Mail Cachets") end in 1990. Here, however, it is noted that commercial air services to and from Norfolk Island went through a turbulent phase involving a number of operators, Murray said, and during this period, a number of souvenir covers were produced to satisfy the demands of aerophilatelists.

But these issues aside, this is a magnificent work on the postal history of this tiny island of about 2,300 people. My interest lies in the connection between Norfolk and Pitcairn Island, perhaps best known as the final destination of the *HMAV Bounty* mutineers. Pitcairners were evacuated to Norfolk in 1856, and while many returned to Pitcairn, descendants remain on Norfolk today.

Murray skillfully reports the early postal history of Norfolk, illustrating a number of early covers, most in full color. There is a section on forerunner obliterations used between 1854 and 1899. Again, several antiquarian covers illustrate these obliterations. Early datestamps (between 1891 and 1947) are illustrated and discussed, as are datestamps from 1947 onward.

There are very useful sections on World War II forces post office cancellations and censorship markings. Registered mail is covered in depth, as is official mail from 1904 onward. There is a comprehensive section on air mail cachets from 1931 to 1990, and another lengthy section on miscellaneous markings.

The book, published in the 8.25 x 11.75 inch format and perfectbound, is available through the Pacific Islands Study Circle. It is priced at £22, or about \$34US. Contact PISC at www.pisc.org.uk, or John Ray, 24 Woodvale Ave., South Norwood, London SE25 4AE, United Kingdom. His email address is: info@pisc.org.uk. Also ask about membership, and the study circle's award-winning journal, *Pacifica*.

David Murray Brown's book captured a Vermeil at Autumn Stampex 2012 in London, an honor that was truly deserved.

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That's it for this time. Remember that review copies of books, monographs, society journals and other philatelic literature are solicited. Please send all publications to Dr. Everett L. Parker, 249 NW Live Oak Place, Lake City, FL 32055-8906. Email is eparker@hughes.net.