

Under the Magnifying Glass: No.10 West Falkland Cancels by Malcolm Barton and Kim Stuckey

To illustrate everything “Falklands” in the Stefan Heijtz catalogue would be an impossible task, therefore the information on one of the early cancels of West Falkland, the WF.2 canceller is of necessity limited to stating “known year variations are: 1899, 1900, 01, 1901, 02, 02 inverted, 03, 03 inverted, 4, 4 inverted”.

Bob Barnes' book “The Postal Cancellations of the Falkland Islands” published thirty years ago remains an invaluable resource. For the cancellations of 1901 and 1902, Bob states that in 1901 the year is abbreviated to “01” from January to August. The year 1901 is in full and small numerals from September to December. In 1902 the year is abbreviated to “02” throughout the year and is inverted with the exception of the 2nd May. The three examples of the “01”, the small numerals “1901” and the inverted “02” are shown in the examples below.



Figure 1 – The three West Falkland Year Slugs for 1901 and 1902

Bob gives the following dates for the cancels:

“01” - earliest date 16 JA 01, latest date 25 AU 01 (example shown above).

Small “1901” – earliest date 20 SP 1901, latest date 19 DE 1901 (example shown above).

“02” inverted – earliest date 2 MY 02 (not inverted), latest date NO 6 02.

At the West Falkland display at the recent Study Group weekend, the cancel in Figure 2 was shown which appeared to be an anomaly.



Figure 2 – FE 25 1901? and close up of the year slug

It appeared to be the small “1901” year slug which was only used in the second half of the year, but the cancel was FE 25, from the first half of the year. This was when the “01” year slug should have been used. However, it can also be seen that the year slug is severely distorted within the cancel.



The Study Group regional meetings are very useful for having time for longer discussion and research and this was demonstrated at the recent South West meeting where Carl Varnum showed yet another example of this February 25th cancellation, with the date clearly visible, but again a severely distorted year slug. During a discussion Wilf Ververs made an excellent suggestion to explain this anomaly. Could in fact the small “1901” continued into 1902, with either the year slug filed to lose the second “1” of “1901” or with a “1902” that was not well registered within the cancel frame? This would certainly fit with the gap in dates between the last known use of the small “1901” on 19th December 1901 and first use of the “02” year slug on 2nd May 1902.

Figure 3 – The Varnum example

Bob Barnes records the *Estrella* arriving from Fox Bay into Stanley on 16th February, 5th March, 29th March and 26th April in 1902 and it would be difficult to imagine that no mails were carried on those sailings. Also a February 25th cancel date fits well with the sailing arriving 5th March 1902 into Stanley.

So the theory is that the small “1901” (either distorted or filed) or a new distorted “1902” carried on until May 1902. It would help our research if members could review their WF.2 cancels and see if they have any from 19th December 1901 until 2nd May 1902, especially dates from January – April with a small “1901” or “1902” other than February 25th. Close ups of the year slug are especially important!

Meanwhile back on ebay, there was a nice example of the Centenary 1½d “Cloud Flaw” used with a SG.4 timed cancel – a scarce combination! It is good to continue to see new examples of this flaw.



Figure 4 – “Cloud Flaw” Centenary 1½d with SG.4 cancellation

Thanks to:
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