

Under the Magnifying Glass: No.18 More on West Falkland Cancels by Malcolm Barton and Kim Stuckey

This article follows on from two previous Under the Magnifying Glass articles; firstly No. 10 on West Falkland Cancels, secondly No.16 on Victorian Datestamp Challenges. In this article we discuss more news on the 1902 West Falkland cancels, and give a listing of the known dates of the WF.2 canceller.

Those of us searching dealers stock books in the 1960s – 1980s often found that West Falkland (and indeed New Island) cancels were placed amongst the other used Falkland Islands stamps and could be purchased at no premium above the “normal” Falkland Islands cancelled examples. Since the publication of the Heijtz catalogue, the dealers have become more savvy and you may have to pay more than £50 for a nice socked on the nose WF.2 cancellation. However, the odd example does get through the dealer evaluation, so it is worth checking – and it certainly is still possible to find a date not previously recorded.

As we stated previously Bob Barnes' book “The Postal Cancellations of the Falkland Islands” published thirty years ago remains an invaluable resource. He did excellent work in cataloguing the known dates of the WF.2 cancel, so much so that this is the first time an update to that listing has been published. Partial dates are only listed if they are unique examples – ie we are certain they are different to other complete dates.

In the following listing, additional dates to those given in Bob Barnes book are shown in **bold**.

WF.2 Cancellor used in 1899

The “1899” is in full for all known dates in 1899.



Known cancellation dates:

JY 28 1899
SP 4 1899
SP 28 1899
NO 25 1899
NO 30 1899

Figure 1 – WF.2 canceller for 1899 – cancelled NO 30 1899

WF.2 Cancellor used in 1900

The “1900” is in full for all known dates. Barnes notes that the “OC” is inverted for October dates.

Known cancellation dates:



20 JA 1900	8 AU 1900
11 JA 1900	15 AU 1900
1 FE 1900	27 AU 1900
FE 13 1900	11 OC 1900*
FE 25 1900	12 OC 1900*
MR 12 1900	13 OC 1900*
12 JU 1900	25 OC 1900*
JY 20 1900	9 NO 1900
2 AU 1900	4 DE 1900

* “OC” inverted for October dates

Figure 2 – WF.2 canceller for 1900 – cancelled 15 AU 1900

WF.2 Cancellor used in 1901

There are two types of year designation for WF.2 usage in 1901. Between January and August 1901 the year is abbreviated to “01”. The latest known date for this is 25th August 1901.

Between September (earliest date 25th September) and December 1901, the year is in full and small numerals “1901”. Often this year slug appears distorted in the cancel.



Figure 3 – WF.2 canceller for 1901 – left “01” cancelled 25 AU 01, right small “1901” cancelled 19 DE 1901

The known dates for 1901 cancellations are:

14 JA 01	30 JY 01	26 SP 1901*
16 JA 01	31 JY 01	22 OC 1901
AP 12 01	5 AU 01	25 OC 1901
MY 6 01	19 AU 01	21 NO 1901
28 JU 01	23 AU 01	3 DE 1901
2 JY 01	25 AU 01	5 DE 1901
4 JY 01	20 SP 1901	6 DE 1901
27 JY 01	23 SP 1901	19 DE 1901

* 26 inverted

WF.2 Cancellor used in 1902

The use of the WF.2 canceller in 1902 was the main subject of Under the Magnifying Glass No.10, in particular whether the small distorted “1901” continued in use in early 1902. The evidence pointed to our date of FE 25 1901, shown in the example to the left in Figure 4, actually being used in February 1902. It does not seem feasible that this small “1901” was only used in February 1901, when all other early 1901 cancels used the large “01” for the year slug.



Figure 4 – WF.2 canceller for 1902 – left and centre February 25th examples, right the new earliest known date of the 1902 canceller with inverted “2” of “02” - MR 25 02

Now two further discoveries give more weight to this theory. Firstly is the example shown in the centre above, a FE 25 cancel with no year date at all. Was the “1901” year slug so distorted that it broke or fell out, leaving no year slug used at all? The second discovery is a new earliest date of the “normal” 1902 canceller using an inverted “02” – 25th March 1902. Barnes notes *Estrella* arriving in Stanley from Fox Bay on 5th March and 29th March 1902, so the FE 25 cancels could have travelled on the sailing arriving 5th March and the next sailing arriving 29th March could have carried mail postmarked the 25th March.

It has to be stated that even though the examples above provide more evidence that the FE 25 1901 cancels were used in February 1902, there are no further date examples to support this theory, so a theory it remains!

For the remainder of 1902 a “02” year slug was used. With the exception of 2nd May the “2” of “02” is inverted.

The known dates for 1902 cancellations are:

FE 25 1901
MR 25 02
AP 28 02
2 MY 02
19 MY 02

21 MY 02
8 JY 02
18 JY 02
6 AU 02

SP 1 02
SP 12 02
SP 2? 02
NO 6 02

WF.2 Cancellor used in 1903

In 1903, the year slug used was a "03" with the "3" inverted. This is illustrated in Figure 5.

The known dates for 1903 cancellations are:



16 JY 03
AU 13 03
AU 15 03
SP 10 03

OC 8 03†
NO 5 03
DE 3 03*

* "3" of day slug inverted
† "OC" inverted

Figure 5 - WF.2 canceller for 1903 - DE 3 03 (with both "3" inverted)

WF.2 Cancellor used in 1904

1904 was the last year of opening for postal services (except money orders) at Fox Bay Post Office before reopening for business in 1914. In 1904 the year slug was a "4".

The known dates for 1904 cancellations are:



?? AP 4
19 MY 4*
16 JU 4
JY 14 4

11 AU 4†
SP 8 4
OC 6 4

* Inverted "4"
† Inverted "11 AU"

Figure 6 - WF.2 canceller for 1904 - OC 6 4

The listings above show the relative scarcity of different cancel dates from the beginning (1899) and the end (1903 and 1904) of the first operation of the Fox Bay Post Office. However, any WF.2 cancel is a sought after part of a Falkland Islands postmark collection.

As always we thank the members below who have helped with cancellation dates for this article. But as always "the last word in philately is yet to be written", so if any members have clear cancellation dates to add to this listing, please get in touch. We will publish an updated spreadsheet of dates on the FIPSG website as changes occur.

Thanks to:

Albert-Friedrich Grüne
Stefan Falkland Heijtz
Sir Geoffrey Palmer

Carl Varnum
Wilf Vevers

References:

Specialised Stamp Catalogue of the Falkland Islands and Dependencies 6th Edition by Stefan Falkland Heijtz
The Postal Cancellations of the Falkland Islands by Bob Barnes (p 66-69)
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