

THE NEW ZEALAND 1954 HEALTH STAMPS AND ASSOCIATED COVERS

New Zealand issued health stamps between 1929 and 2016. Not only did the stamps raise funds for health camps, they raised awareness of the good work carried out by these camps. The first illustrated cover produced specifically for the first day of issue of a health stamp appeared in 1933. Since then there has been a large number of illustrated first day covers issued for health stamps. A selection of covers, not necessarily first day, are shown in this exhibit. The 1954 issue is of interest to cartophilatelists because it is the only health set which includes a map as part of the design.

The 1954 stamps were designed by James Berry, and feature a young tramper, with map in hand, gazing across a lake to a snowclad mountain. In the top of the left hand corner is a view of Mt Everest, topical at the time because Edmund Hillary and Tensing Norgay had climbed it just the previous year.

This exhibit shows:

Pages 2-5: technical details, die proofs, printing, plate blocks, and value blocks

Pages 6-7: Health Camp Federation covers, including the Overseas Mailers Ltd. colour variation

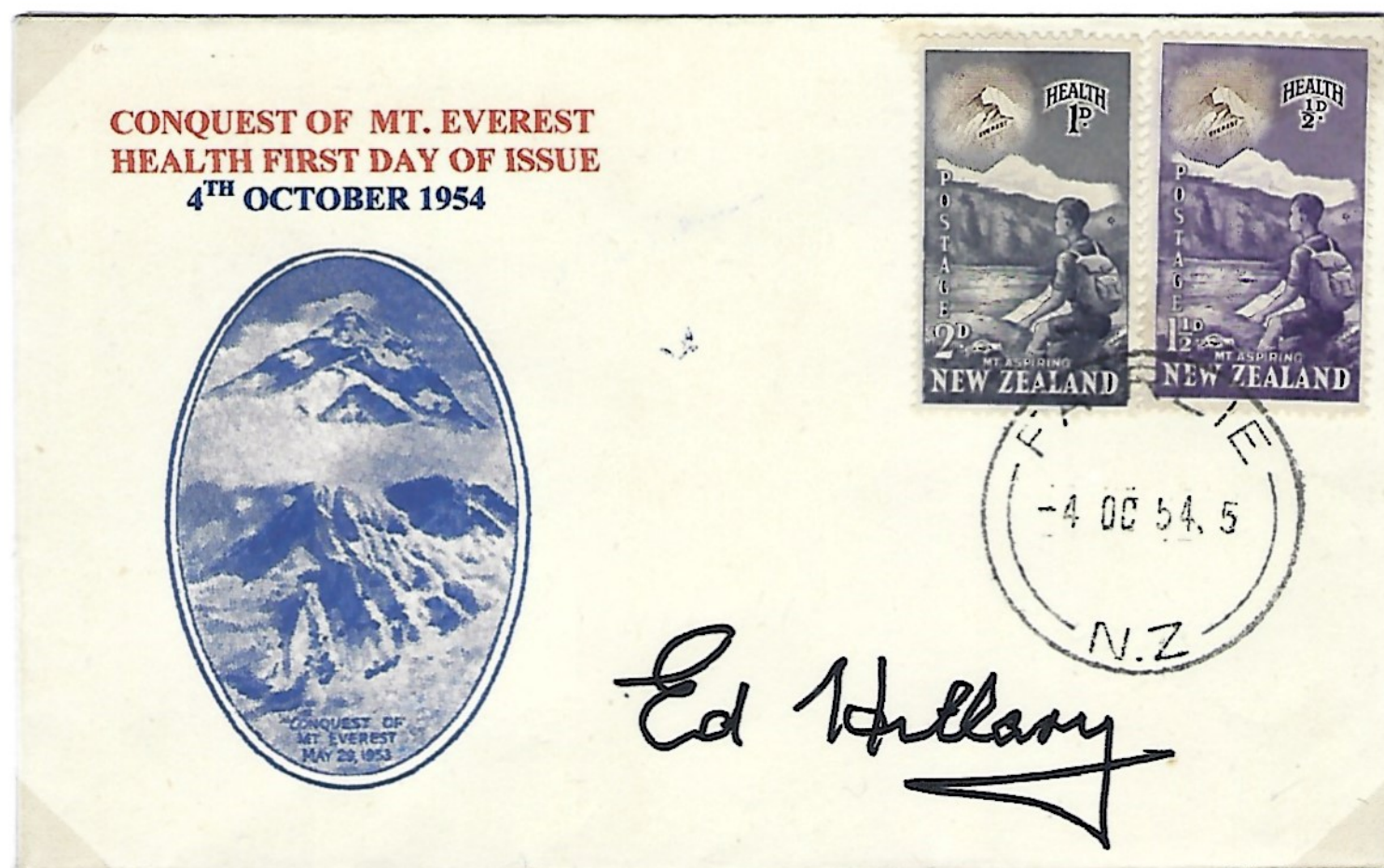
Pages 8-16: a variety of covers featuring the 1954 health stamps. Attention is drawn to:

the use of the stamps on a cover sent from Korea (Korean War) (page 9)

"Three Arrows" covers and the Mrs Purdon cover (pages 11-12).

Examples of the 1954 stamps on earlier covers are included (page 14)

Our story concludes with examples of overprinted Health Camps Federation covers used to promote sales of the 1955 health stamps (page 16).



Cover signed by (Sir) Edmund Hillary.

The vignette on the cover, showing Mt Everest, was used also on a cover in 1953 commemorating the Royal Visit.

References

- Campbell Paterson Ltd. *Handbook-Catalogue of New Zealand Stamps*. Auckland, 1952-
Collins, R.J.G. & Watts, C.W. (eds.) "Korean War". *The Postage Stamps of New Zealand*. Vol. III. Wellington, RPSNZ, 1955, 411-415.
Jones, Stephen. *Illustrated First Day Covers of New Zealand 1933 – 2000. Part 1: Health*. Lower Hutt, 2008.
Naish, D.E.G. "Health stamps". *The Postage Stamps of New Zealand*. Vol. IV. Wellington, RPSNZ, 1964, 296-341.
Thackery, T.C. *New Zealand First Day & Early Use Covers & Stamps 1855 – 2003*. Wellington, RPSNZ, 2004.
Watts, John. "Mrs. Purdon illustrated covers". *The Kiwi*, v.62(5), September 2013, pages 100-103.

DIE PROOFS AND RESPONSES TO THE DESIGN



Imperforate proof pairs set on gummed watermarked paper.
The 1½d pair is endorsed "11/3/54", the date of issue was 4/10/54.

What Mr Campbell Paterson thought of the 1954 health stamp design:

What a stamp we have here. One might say a masterpiece of sensitivity and sympathetic treatment. We have a pathetic picture of a poor, brave boy, hardly old enough to describe as a youth, all alone and about to attempt Mt. Aspiring or even Everest itself. He has had a sad and chequered career. His left arm is clearly broken below the shoulder, that portion of his anatomy on which he sits is sadly deformed and he suffers from a shortened thigh – probably an injury at birth. Somewhere, somehow, he has lost his nose – an ill-judged glissade on an earlier expedition perhaps. In spite of all these crippling handicaps he yet seeks new peaks to climb. But wait – surely in attempting such peaks he must be judged to be of impaired intellect? Poor lad, his sufferings must have turned his mind. But this only makes his indomitable spirit the more heroic. A remarkable stamp – a moving stamp indeed. I can hardly look at it without tears in my eyes. I have already been asked what I think of the play on words – the youth aspiring to Mount Aspiring. I can only reply that common charity does not allow me to believe that any such childishness was intended.

Campbell Paterson's Newsletter
Vol.6(3), October 1954, page 1.

Douglas E.G. Naish's (RPSNZ Handbook) comments on the 1954 Health stamp:

There was widespread criticism of the design throughout the country. Indeed it is doubtful whether any other New Zealand stamp has met with such adverse comment. Exception was taken to the fact that the tramping figure was featureless. The colours were considered dull and lifeless. Mt. Everest was poorly defined and the inscription so insignificant as not to be legible without the aid of a magnifying glass.

The Postage Stamps of New Zealand.
RPSNZ Handbook, vol. 4, page 312.

PLATE BLOCKS



The stamps were printed by Bradbury, Wilkinson and Co. in England. The main portion of the stamp was printed by the recess process and the inset of Mt Everest by lithography. James Berry was disappointed with the result, believing that the photogravure process would have produced a better result. The colours chosen for these stamps were somewhat insipid, which also contributed to a poor reception by the general public. The stamps were printed in sheets of 120 (10 rows of 12), and were perforated by means of a double comb head guaging 13½. The stamps were printed on Wiggins Teape Royal Cypher grade (coarse) paper with horizontal mesh.

Two plates, numbered 1 and 2, were used for the main portion of each design.

PLATE BLOCKS ON COVER

Covers showing use of plate block A2 for each value, postmarked Invercargill 4 October 1954, the first day of issue.





The postage rate for letters within New Zealand had been increased to 3d in 1953, but the denominations for the health stamps remained as they previously were. Christmas cards could be posted for 1½d, and unsealed commercial papers cost 2d. The numbers of 1954 health stamps sold were 1½d. + ½d. 4,723,313, and for the 2d. + 1d. Value 6,530,543. The stamps were first issued on 4 October 1954, and withdrawn from sale on 31 January 1955.



James Berry at work.

Reginald James George Berry, designer of the 1954 health stamps, was born in London 1906 and died in Auckland in 1979. In 1948 he was described by the American journal *Weekly Philatelic Gossip* as "the greatest stamp designer in the world". In 1966 he was named "Man of the Year" by the *Dominion Sunday Times*. He was awarded an OBE in 1968, and in 1978 became an honorary member of the Royal Philatelic Society of New Zealand.

HEALTH CAMPS FEDERATION FIRST DAY COVERS



Health Camps Federation cover, printed by John Dickinson and Co. This cover measures 146 x 88mm. The handstamp is that used by the Otaki Health Camp – 1954 was the first year the Otaki Health Camp had opened a temporary post office to coincide with the first day of issue for health stamps. [An earlier temporary post office in 1941 did not co-incide with the first day of issue]. Cover signed by James Berry.



The word Health (lower left corner) appears in yellow. The contents of the bowl and the girl's clothing have been coloured a shade of green. This colouring was added by Overseas Mailers Ltd. In the United States. All such covers are addressed to Overseas Mailers Ltd. Overseas Mailers was established by John Barnard (Jay) Leach, a resident of New York state. He designed and produced covers for dozens of countries from the early 1950s to 1976. In addition to his own covers, Leach sold covers designed by others which he modified by hand-painting or added art work. In the case of this cover, he has simply added a bit of colour.

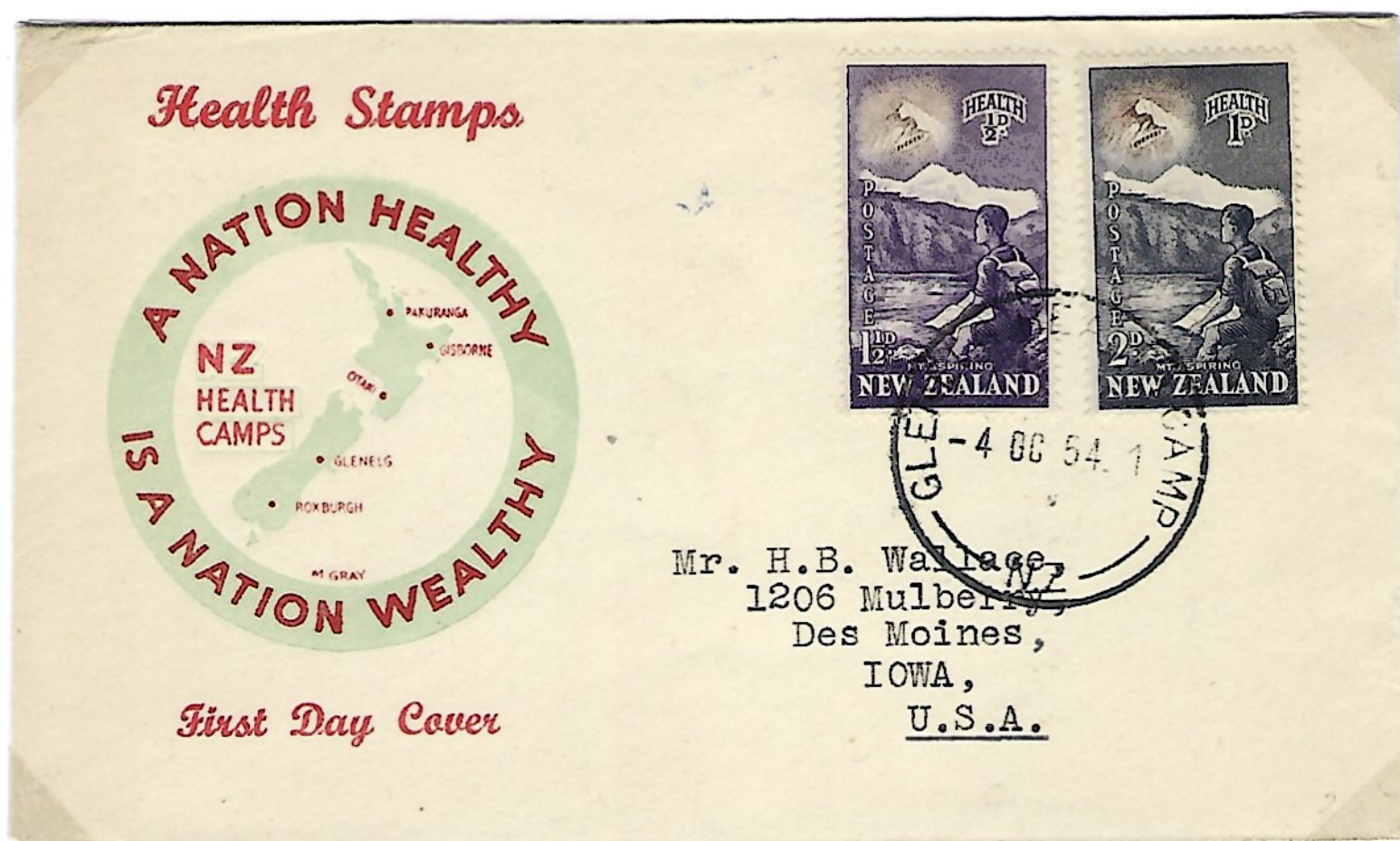
HEALTH CAMPS FEDERATION LONG COVER



Mrs. Tracy T. Gough,
P.O. Box 634,
CHRISTCHURCH.

This cover, printed by John Dickinson and Co., measures 228 x 102mm. Thackery notes that it is unclear why the long cover was produced, and observes that this was not repeated in subsequent years, even when health miniature sheets were issued.

Glenelg Health Camp 4 October 1954 cancellation.



A Nation Healthy is a Nation Wealthy

First Day Cover showing the location of health camps in New Zealand.

Postmarked Glenelg Health Camp 4 Oct 1954.

This cover was first issued in 1951, and was probably designed by M. Gray as these details are included in the design.

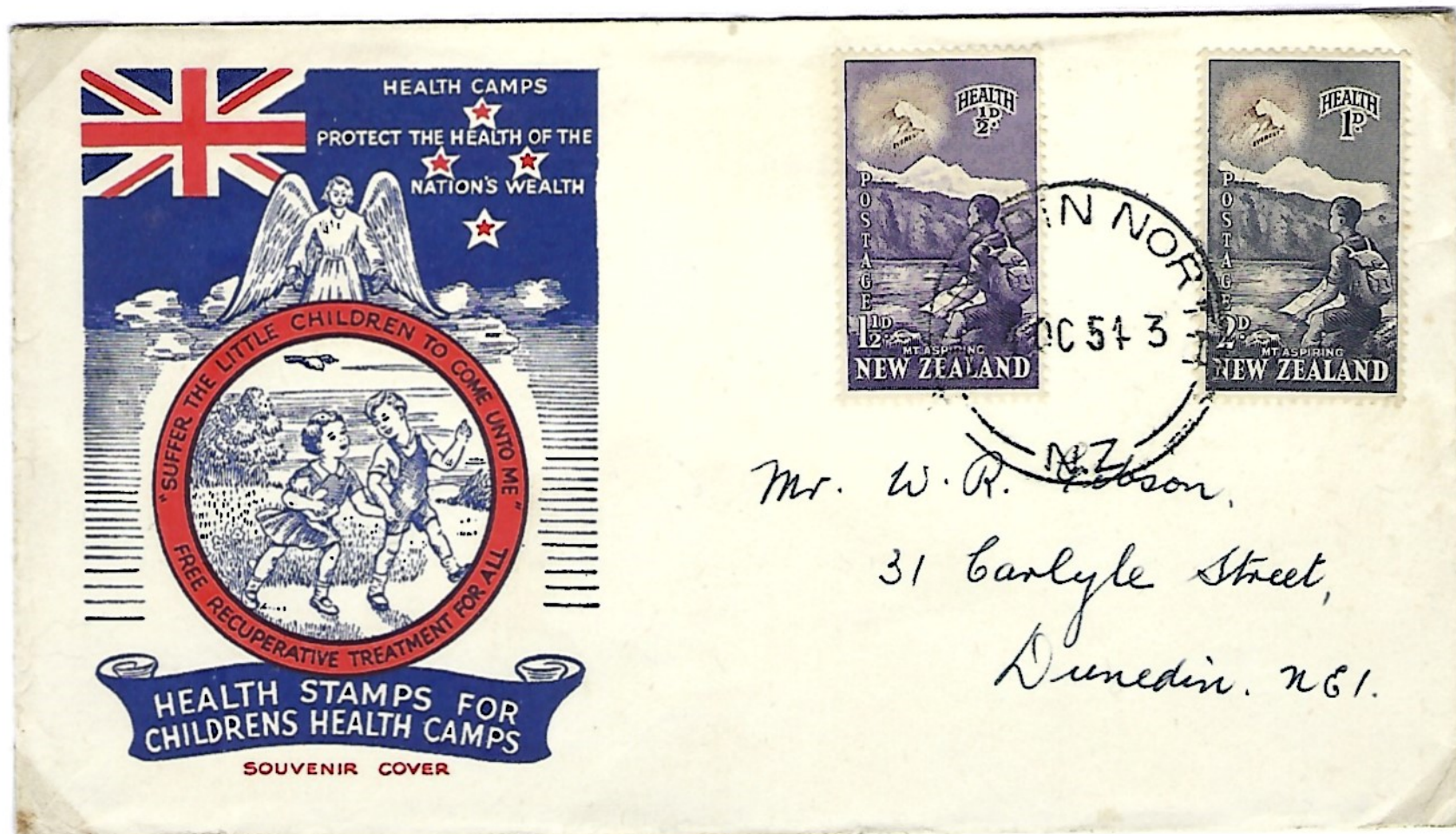
THREE COVERS WITH A RELIGIOUS THEME

A set of three covers with similar but different designs. Within the red circle each cover has the wording (top) Suffer the little children to come unto me, and (bottom) Free recuperative treatment for all. Within the red circle the designs differ, from a girl praying, to a child receiving medical attention, to two children playing. Each blue banner below the red circle bears a different message: I give thanks for the benefits of health camps; Health camps bring victory over sickness; and Health stamps for childrens health camps. Each design features the New Zealand flag, and above the red circle and in front of the flag, an image of Christ.

There is no indication on the covers as to who produced them.



THREE COVERS WITH A RELIGIOUS THEME



USE ON KOREAN WAR MAIL



Cover posted from Korea to Dunedin, New Zealand.

N.Z.A.P.O. / 444 / F.P.O. 3 circular date stamp 20 OC 54

N.Z.A.P.O. 444 acted as a base post office, with four F.P.Os in outlying districts.

N.Z.F.P.O.3 served the New Zealand Transport Platoon, and from 15 October 1951 was attached to the 10th Company Royal New Zealand Army Service Corps.

New Zealand postage stamps were used on soldiers' mail sent from Korea to New Zealand.

The Glenelg Health Camp, located on Murray-Aynsley Hill, Christchurch, was officially opened in April 1945. Its purpose at that time was to provide for the physical health needs of children. Over the years Glenelg produced a number of souvenir covers for fund raising purposes. Three of them are shown here with the 1954 health stamps attached. The designs on these covers were in use from 1951.

The yellow cover shows the building occupied by the Glenelg Health Camp..



GLENELG SOUVENIR COVERS (continued)



FIRST FLIGHT COVER

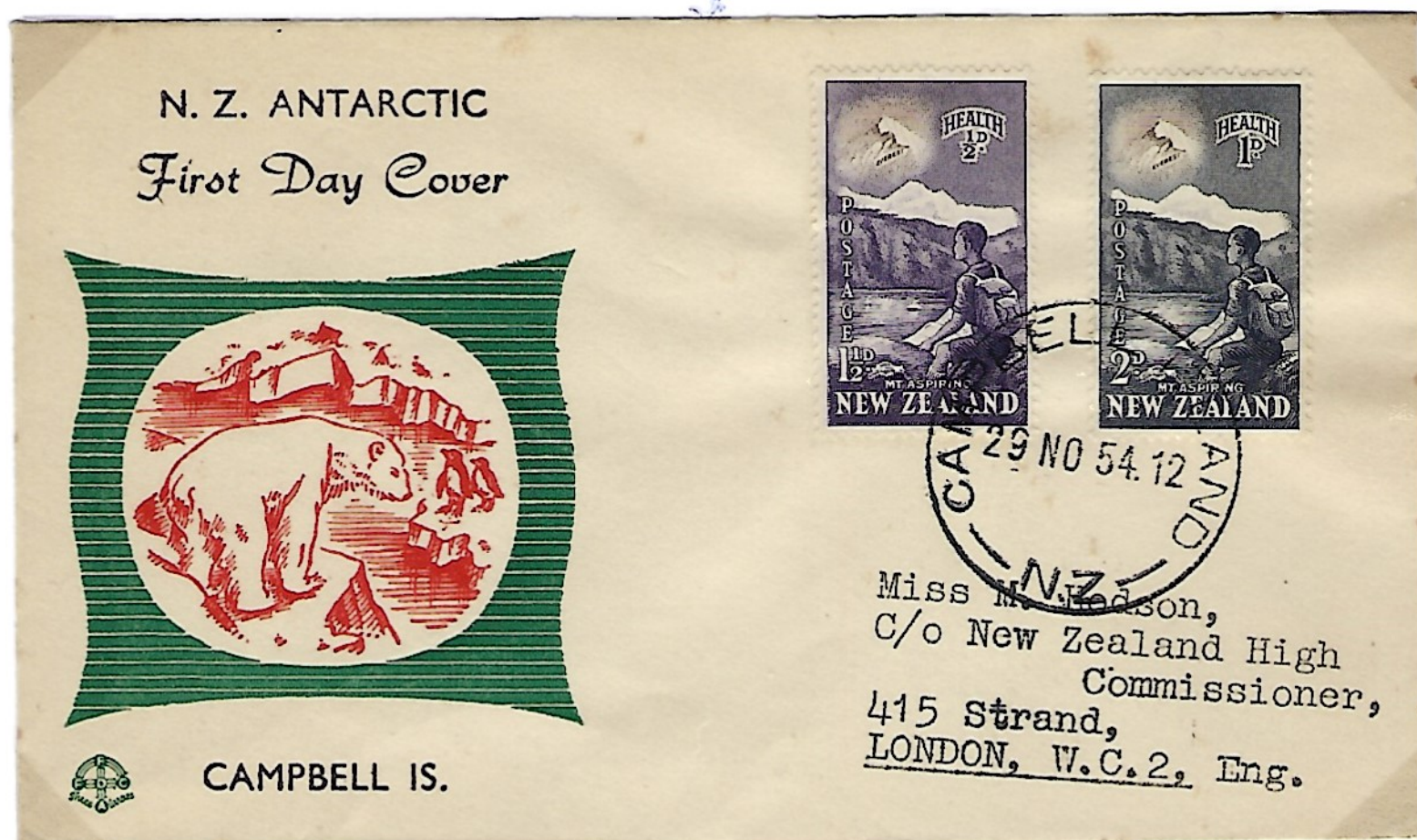
1954 health stamps on a first flight cover, flown from New Plymouth to Wanganui, 1 November 1954. While a first flight cover, it is not also a first day cover.



"THREE ARROWS" FIRST DAY COVERS

Covers produced by Three Arrows in the United Kingdom, and postmarked Campbell Island, Raoul Island, and Chatham Islands. Jones notes that with all three of these covers they may not be known postmarked 4 October due to the stamps not being available for issue at these remote places on that date. The Chatham and Campbell Islands covers have cachets that Jones says were added subsequent to the covers being serviced.

Three Arrows covers are the work of Mildred Hodson, who lived in Edinburgh, Scotland. Her distinctive artistic style appears on covers from a number of Commonwealth countries, including Australia and the Tokelau Islands. Most of the covers on the market are addressed to M. Hodson.



"THREE ARROWS" FIRST DAY COVERS (continued)



MRS. PURDON COVER

Mrs Myrtle Purdon was a gifted self-taught artist who, between the late 1940s and early 1960s, produced a considerable number of beautifully painted first day covers, including the one shown here. There are at least seven versions of this cover, each differing slightly in the detail of the design. All of Mrs Purdon's covers are addressed to her mother, Ada Fairburn, who lived in Whangarei.



PRIVATELY PRODUCED FIRST DAY COVER



Mr. J. G. Lucas
Te Aroha

First Day Cover



Privately produced first day cover, probably by J.G.(John Garnet?) Lucas of Te Aroha. It may be that Lucas had an affinity for mountaineering, and decided to make his own cover. The printing of the cover, examined under a 10x glass, indicates that it was most likely produced at the time the stamps were issued. Cover not recorded by Jones (2008).

PERFINED EXAMPLE



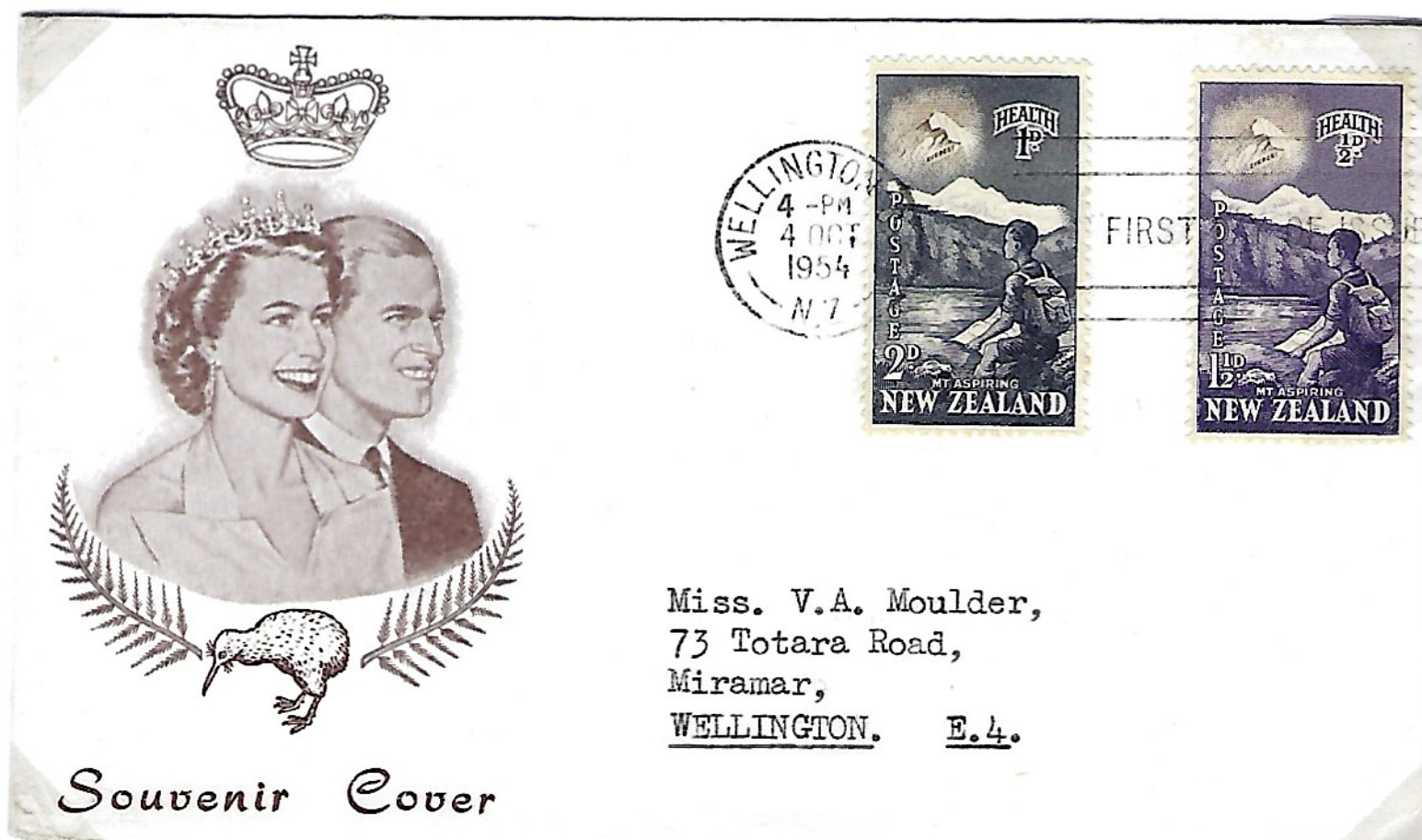
Perfined copy of the 1d + 1/2d 1954 health stamp. The perfin is R1, used by the Royal Insurance Company, Christchurch, between 1952 and 1956.

SHORTPAID MAIL



1954 health stamps on a shortpaid letter to the United States.

1954 HEALTH STAMPS ON COVERS FROM EARLIER YEARS



Souvenir cover drawn by Ray Rowell of the Wellington Stamp Centre, and issued December 1953.



This first day cover cover was produced in 1953 by Keith Collinson in Palmerston North. It was printed by Dudley Rabone & Co. from blocks made by Palmerston Photo Engravers Ltd.

USE OF SURPLUS FIRST DAY COVERS

Surplus covers were overprinted to promote the sale by the Health Camps Federation of the 1955 health stamps. The top cover contained 12 4d. stamps, 3d postage plus 1d. health. (The highest denomination for the 1954 stamps was 2½d. postage plus 1d. health).

The lower cover contained three sets of the 1955 health stamps. The stamps enclosed in this cover (face value 2/6d.) are shown.

