

The Wonky Cancellation

A cancellation has two purposes; firstly to deface the postage stamp as to prevent reuse and secondly to indicate where and when a letter was posted.
This one frame exhibit will examine some of the covers that have gone through the postal system and been cancelled in an 'Wonky' manner.

'Wonky' Definition (adjective) broken, not straight, wobbly, crooked or askew.

'Wonky' History and Etymology
Probably alteration of English dialect *Wankle*, from Middle English *Wankele*, from Old English *Wancol*; akin to Old High German *Wankōn* (to totter)

Plan

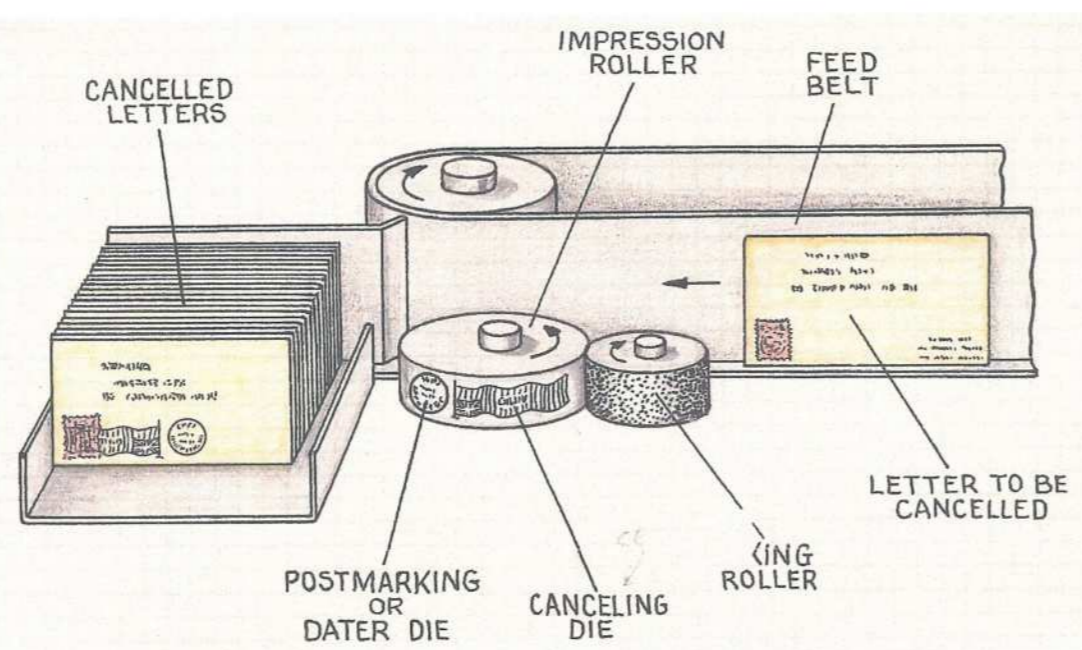
1. Letters that had cancellations that missed the stamp
2. Second time lucky: Letters that had to be postmarked twice so as to get the stamp cancelled.
3. Letters that somehow were cancelled twice for no good reason.
4. Philatelists, you can't fool the Post Office.
5. Just plain wrong
6. And the 'Pen'.

To start with I need to show you a perfectly cancelled cover, as without perfection, how would you know that another cover is 'Wonky'.



Gisborne to Lower Hutt 1st January 2000
Town die is clear and readable and the stamp is obviously cancelled

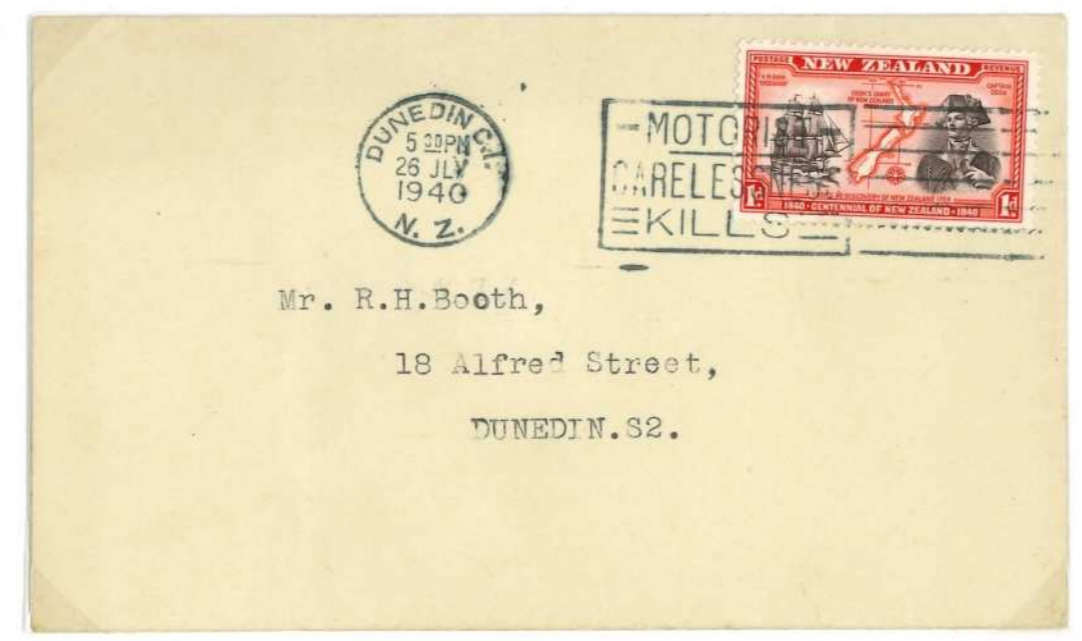
The Cancelling Machine
These machines were designed to speed up the processing of mail following the explosion in the number of postal items mailed in the late 1800's



All envelopes are faced up the same way, i.e. with the stamp in the top right hand corner. The stack of envelopes was then placed in the machine upside down and would then be run through the machine and cancelled.

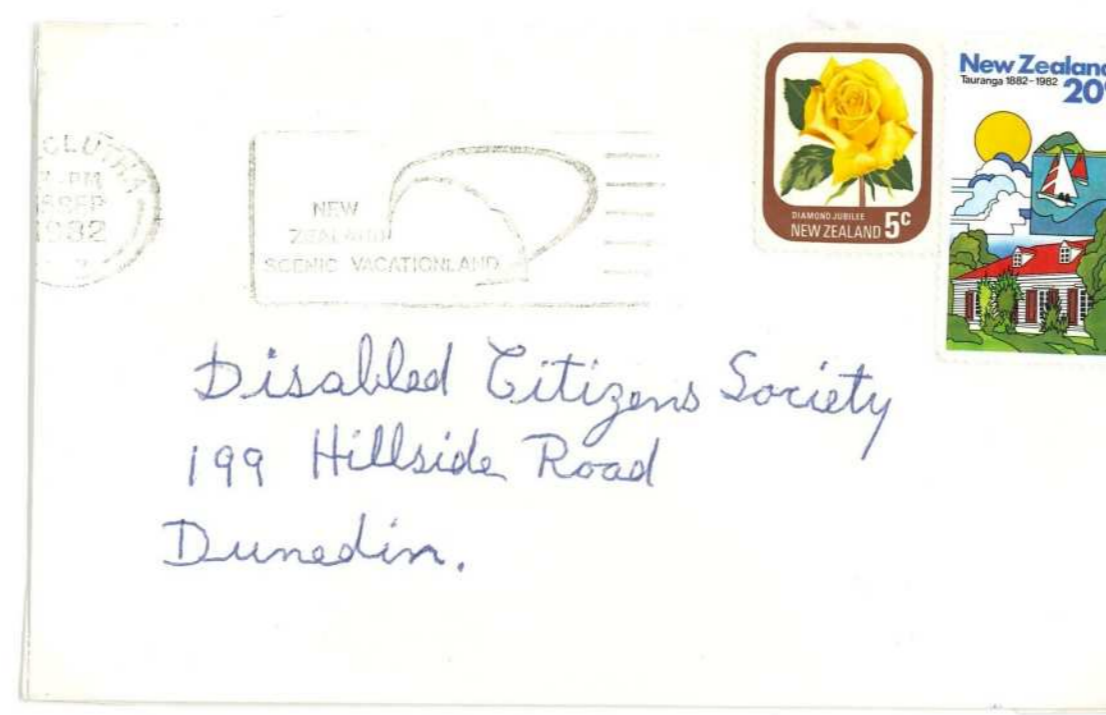
Town Die which shows place, date & time of posting

Obliterator which cancels the stamp(s). Frequently this will be combined with a slogan.

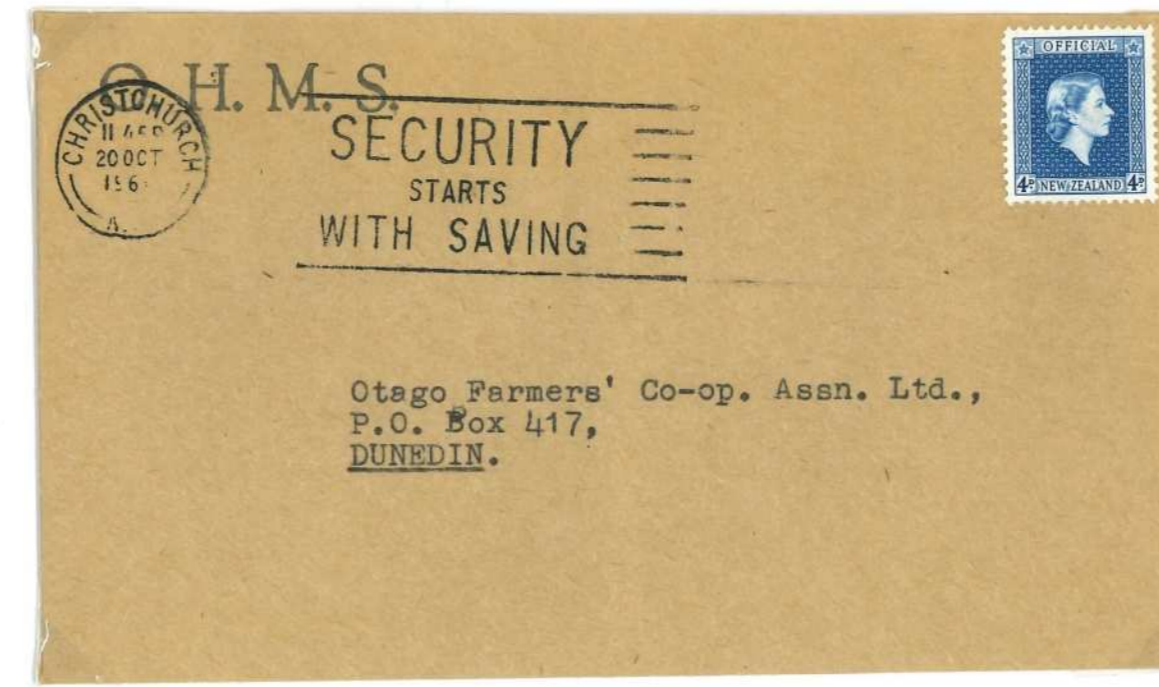


Local cover (Dunedin) 26th July 1940
The Town Die is clear and readable and clearly shows date, time and place of posting. The slogan cancel is readable. Compare with the diagram above to see that the envelope was placed upside down in the cancelling machine.

Missed Cancellation
Stamp in correct position but Machine Cancellation completely misses the stamp

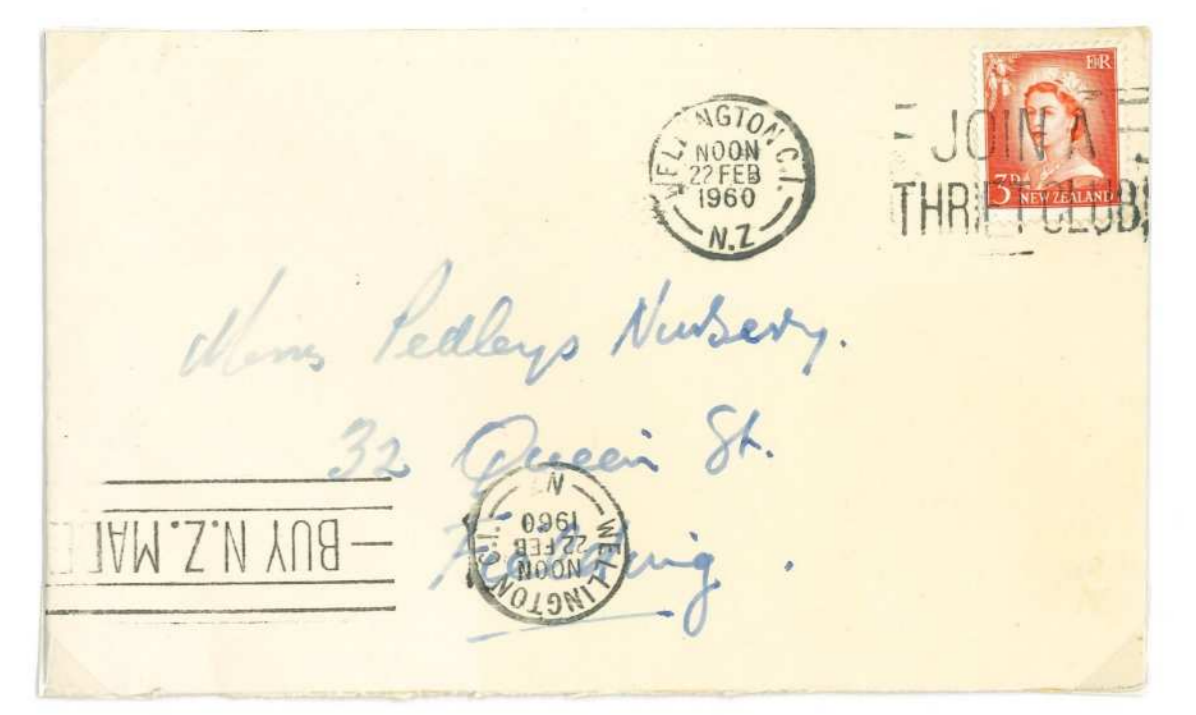


Balclutha to Dunedin 15th September 1982
Machine Cancellation completely misses the stamp



Christchurch to Dunedin 20th October 1967
Machine Cancellation completely misses the stamp

Double Cancellations
Envelopes placed upside down in the cancelling machine could be processed again, thereby receiving two cancellation marks.

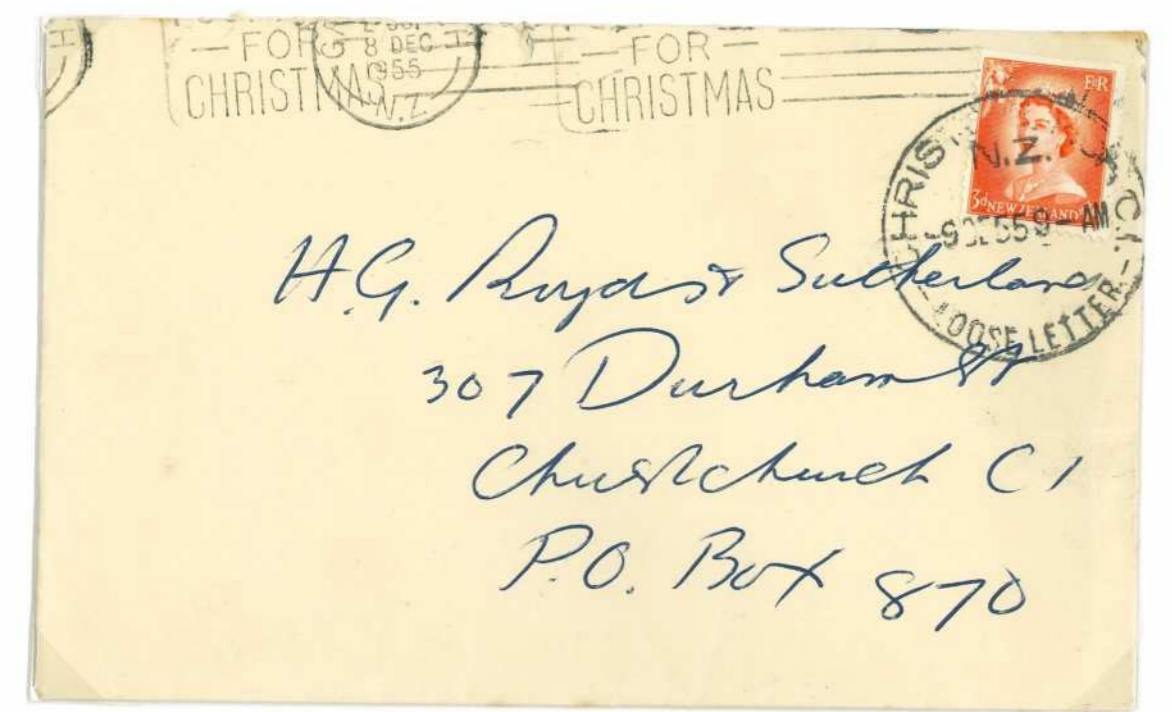


Wellington to Felling 22nd February 1960
One upside down cancellation and one correctly orientated cancellation

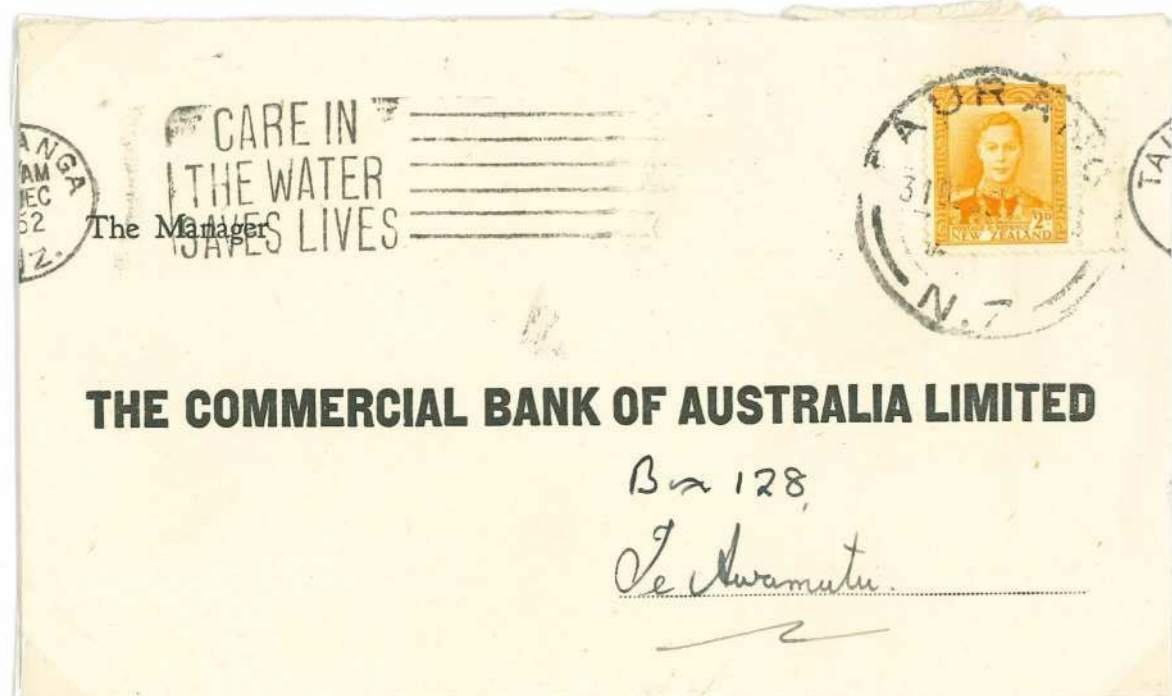


Lambton Quay to Dunedin 11th September 1962
One machine cancellation applied upside down and one cancel the right way around applied but this is an angle and misses the meter mark

Double Cancellations
If a machine cancel was in the wrong place, then a hand cancel could be applied.



Greymouth to Christchurch 8 December 1955
Two strikes from the cancelling machine, both of which missed the stamp. Hand cancel applied at Christchurch on 9 December 1955

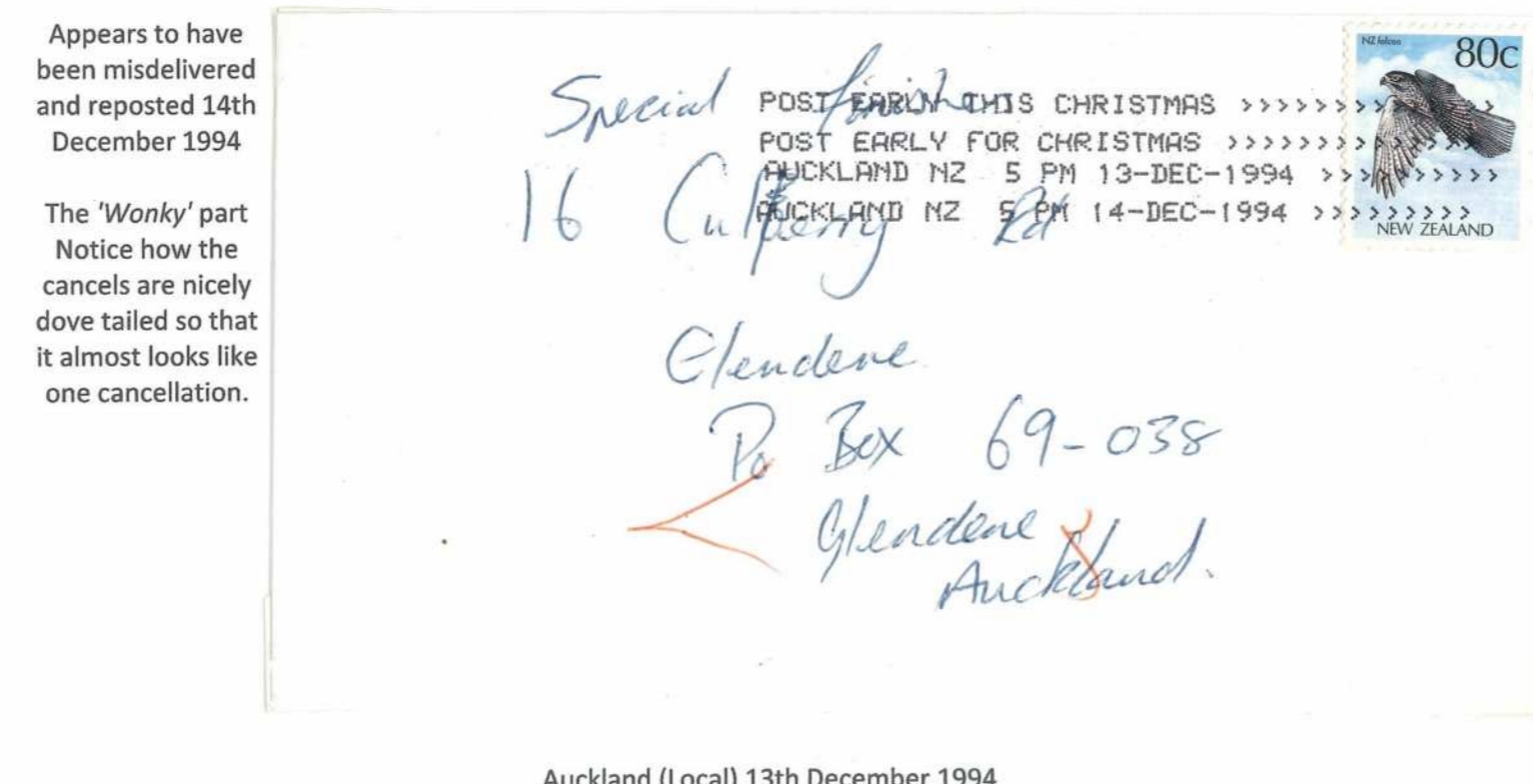


Tauranga to Te Awamutu 31st December 1952
Machine cancel missed the stamp, Tauranga Hand cancel applied

Double Cancellations
Occasionally an envelope would accidentally be put through the cancelling machine twice.



Letters that were misdelivered could end up receiving a second cancellation.



Auckland (Local) 13th December 1994

Philatelists
Philatelists would sometimes place stamps in strange positions to obtain a philatelic curiosity.

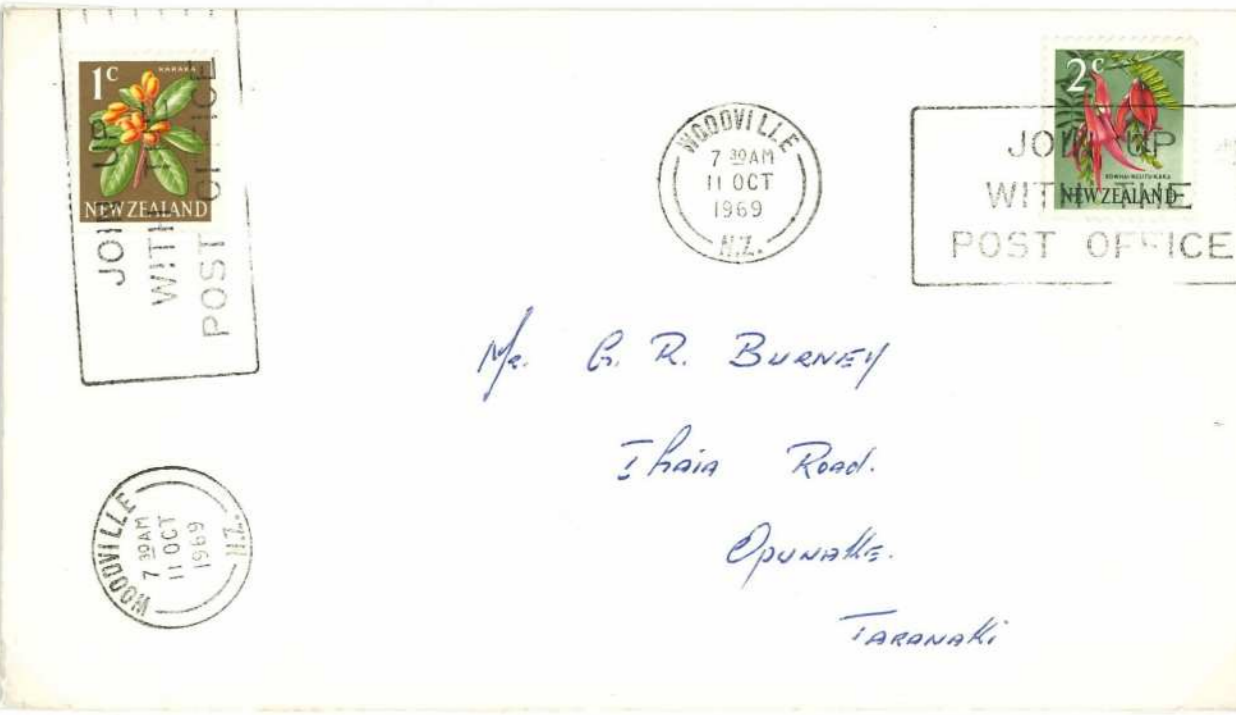


Waihi to Opunake 18th November 1969
Stamps on the left side have been cancelled by pen

Philatelists
Philatelists with friends in the Post Office could get an unusual cancellation. Place one stamp in the correct place and another stamp in the top left hand corner. Then get your Post Office friend to run it through the cancelling machine; once correctly, then the second time rotate the envelope by 90 degrees.

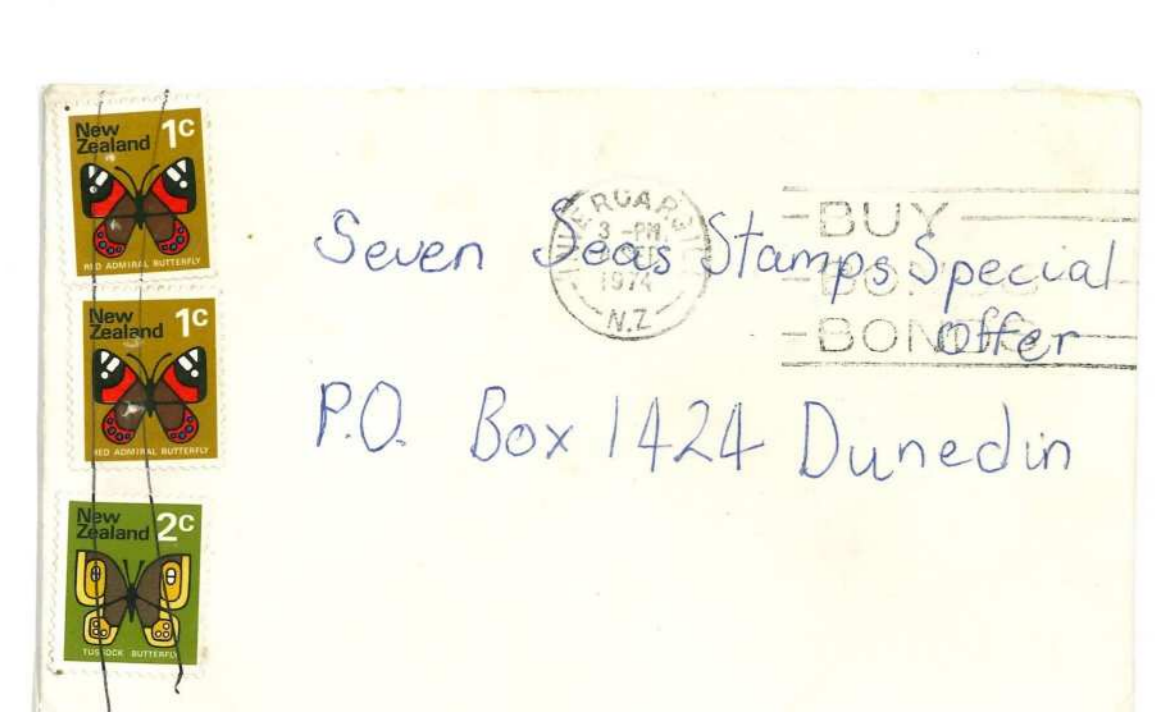


Auckland to Palmerston North 26th October 1978



Woodville to Opunake 11th October 1969

Philatelists
Junior Philatelists learnt from the older philatelists and would also place stamps in strange positions.



Invercargill to Dunedin 8th September 1974
Stamps placed down the left hand side of the envelope. Machine cancellation applied in the correct place thereby missing the stamps so they have been cancelled by pen.



Green Island to Dunedin dated ??
Stamp placed in lower right of envelope and cancelled by a Hand Canceller.

Stamps Placed in Strange Places



Christchurch (local) 16th January 1983
The stamp was placed in the bottom left corner, envelope has been put through the machine upside-down so that the stamp is cancelled.

Under-Inking
Cancellations would get lighter and unreadable as the cancelling machine ran low on ink.



Gore to Dunedin 7th September 1965
Town die is very faint and the stamps show almost no trace of a cancellation



Dargaville to Christchurch 28th November 1975
The Town Die is faint but readable, but the stamp doesn't show any trace of cancellation

Pen Cancellation
Multiples of stamps that are not aligned with the top edge of the envelope will not be cancelled properly by the cancelling machine.



October 1993
The strip of three stamps at the top have been cancelled by the machine, the single lower stamp has been cancelled by pen

Just made it
You can get partial postmarks on stamps if the cancelling machine wasn't feeding envelopes through correctly.



Lower Hutt 10th October 1983
The town die has been applied to the right hand stamp but the slogan/obliterator portion has missed the envelope. This leaves one stamp uncanceled.

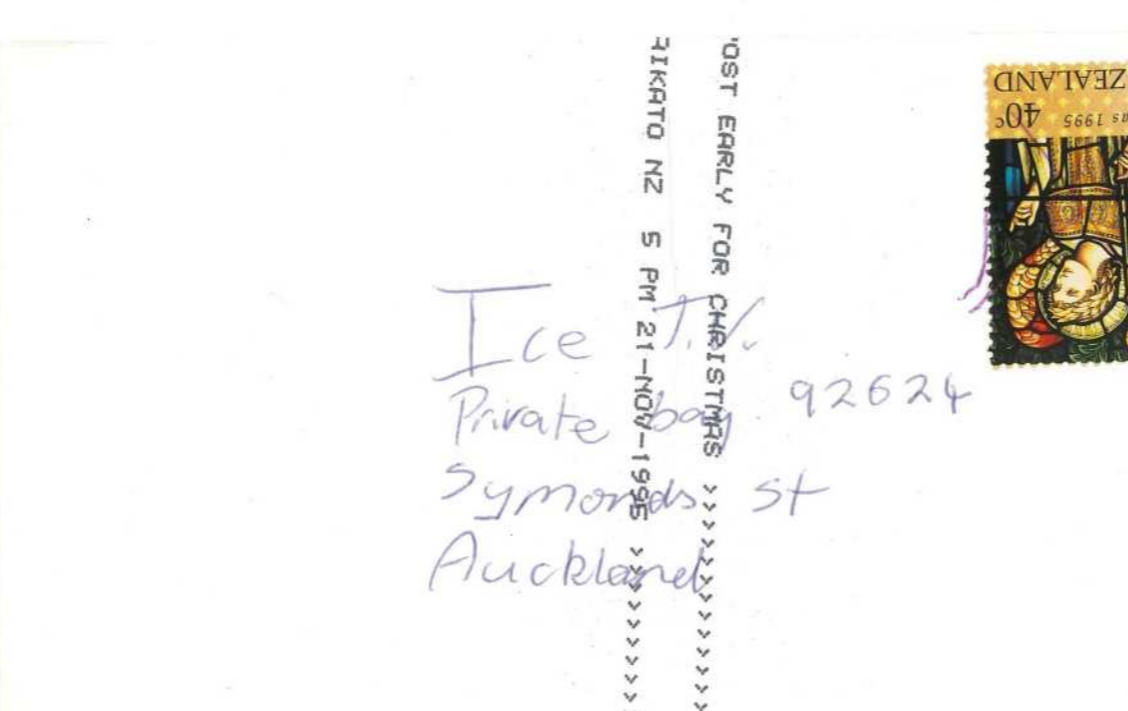


Wellington 5th September 1958
The town die has struck the meter mark but the slogan/obliterator portion has missed the envelope.

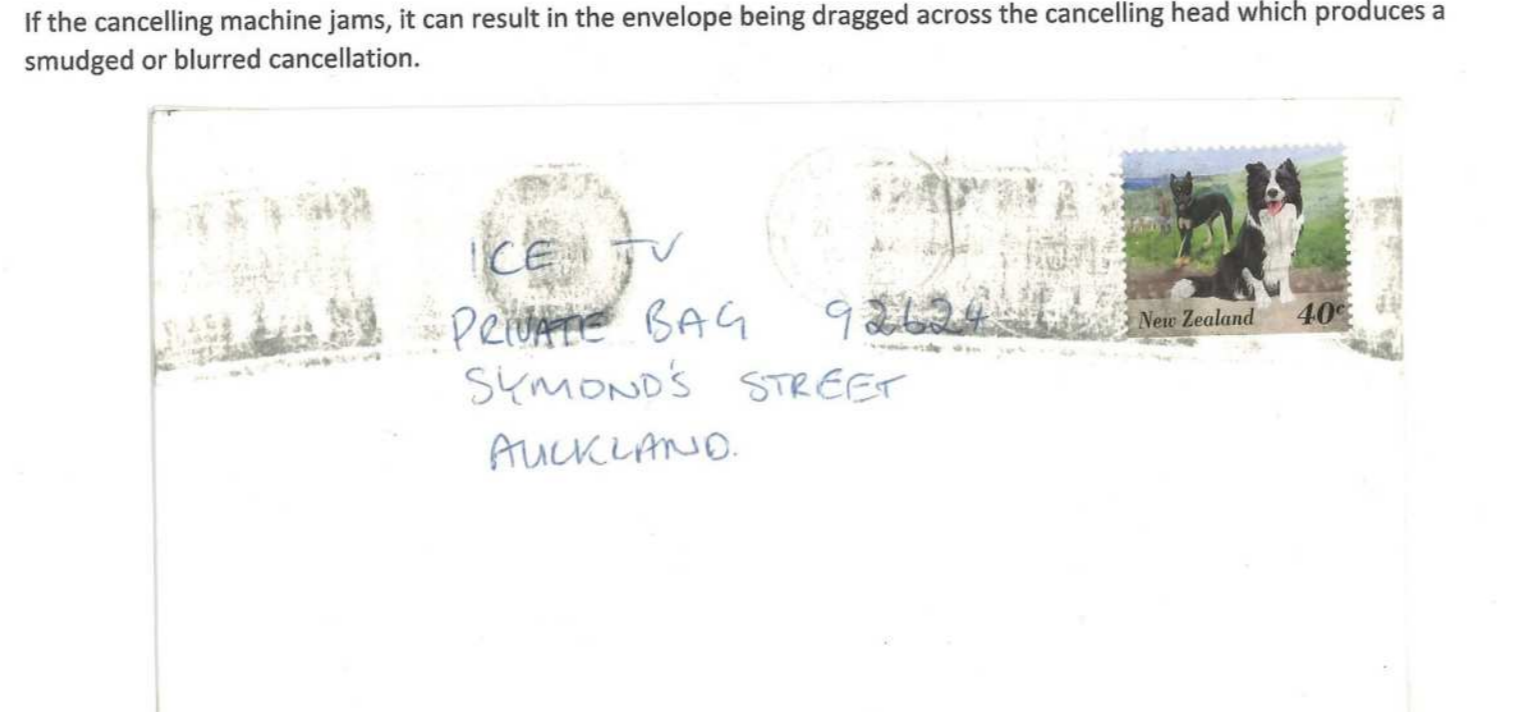


Queenstown to Auckland 10th November 1995
None of this is readable on the front of the envelope, but the envelope has received a cancellation on the reverse.

Envelope Fold

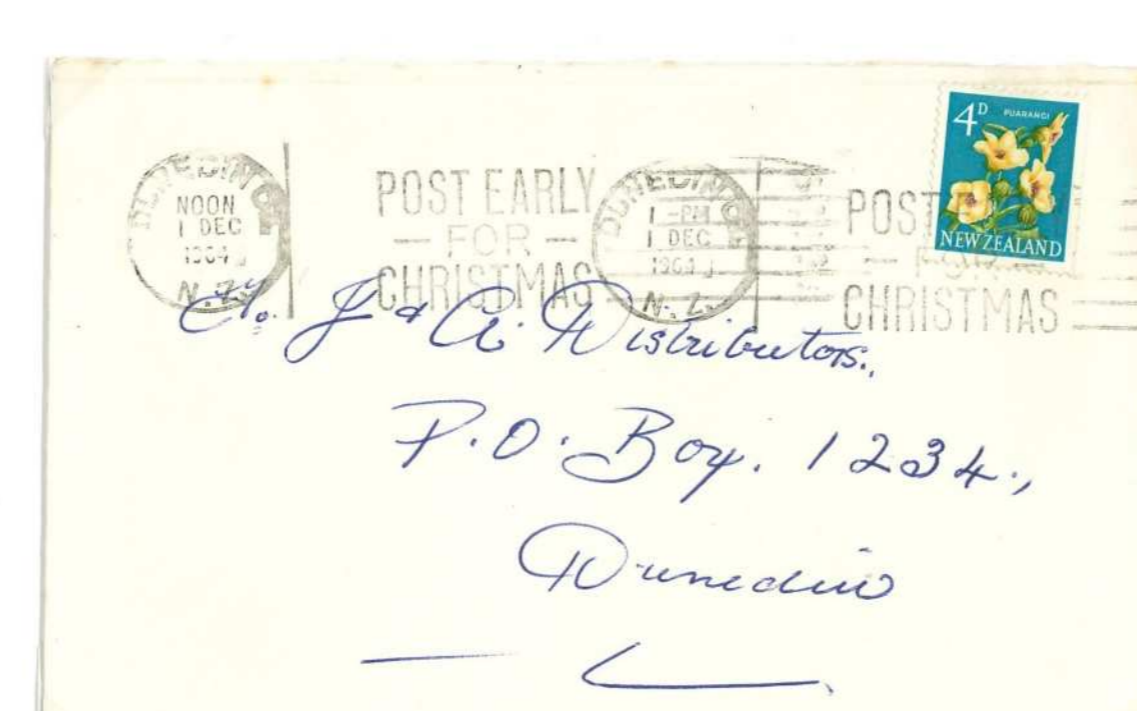


Waikato Mail Centre to Auckland 21st November 1996
The envelope has somehow got folded in half before being put through the cancelling machine and therefore received its cancellation in the centre of the envelope. The stamp has received a pen cancellation.

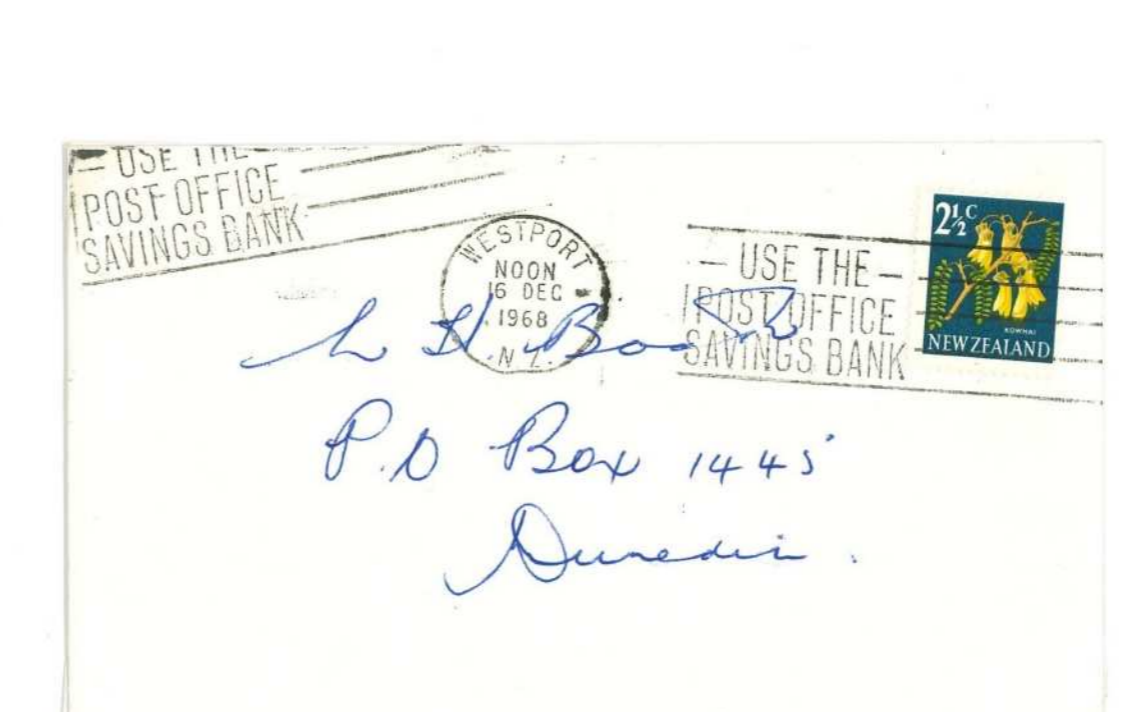


Stratford (return address) to Dunedin
Stamp has received a pen cancellation.

Double Cancellations
One right, one 'Wonky'

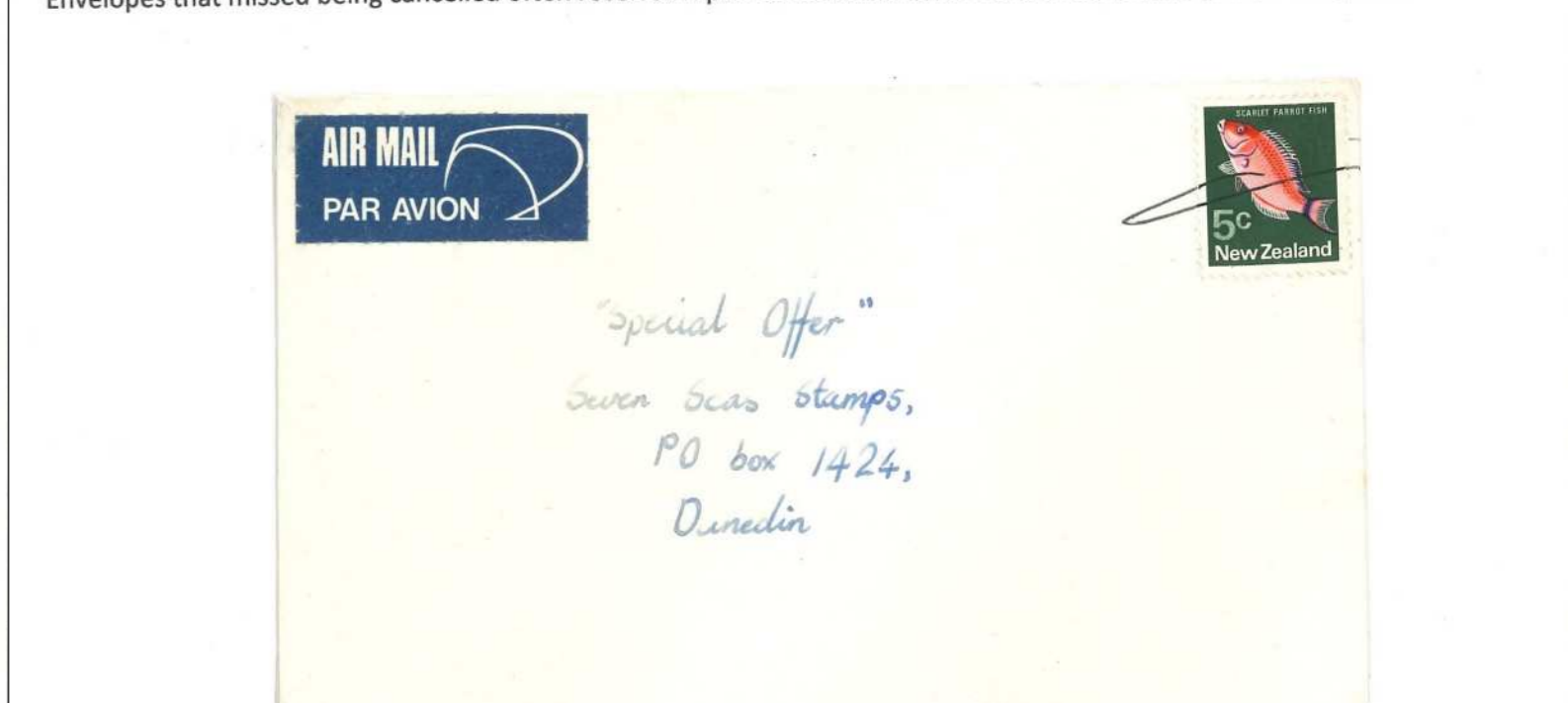


Local cover (Dunedin) 1st December 1964
One cancellation misses the stamp completely, second cancellation is correct



Westport to Dunedin 16th December 1968
One cancellation partially hits the envelope but misses the stamp completely, second cancellation is correct

Pen Cancellation



Envelope to Dunedin to Dunedin
Stamp has received a pen cancellation.



Stratford (return address) to Dunedin
Stamp has received a pen cancellation.

The Wonky Cancellation

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2. Second time lucky. Letters that had to be postmarked twice so as to get the stamp cancelled.
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4. Philatelists, you can't fool the Post Office.
5. Just plain wrong
6. And the 'Pen'.

To start with I need to show you a perfectly cancelled cover, as without perfection, how would you know that another cover is 'Wonky'.

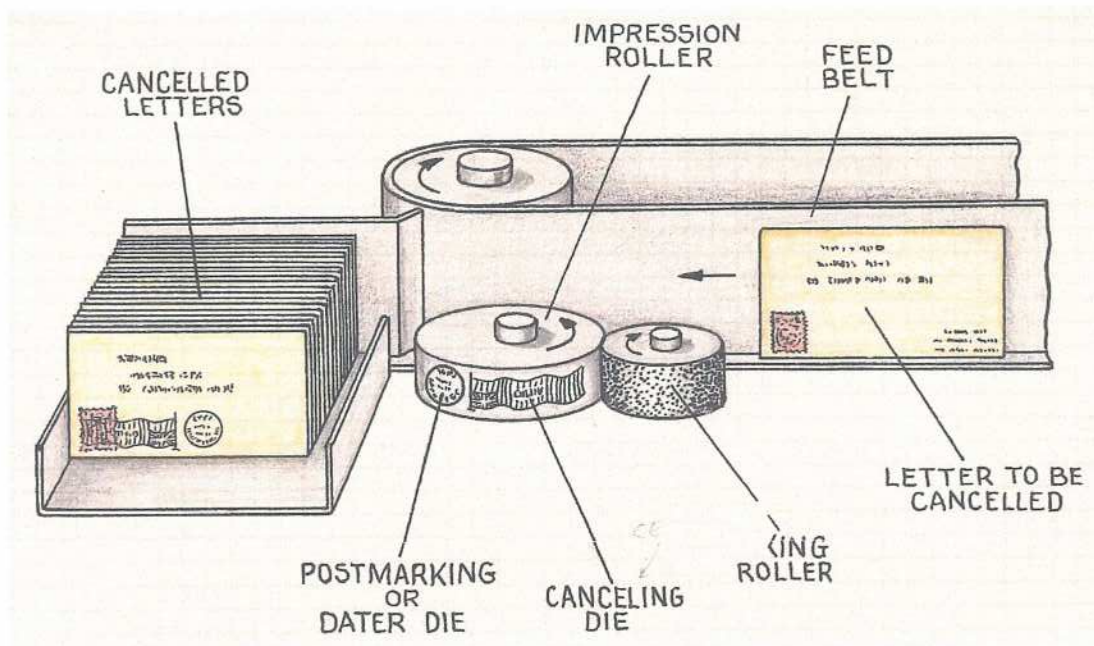


Gisborne to Lower Hutt 1st January 2000

Town die is clear and readable and the stamp is obviously cancelled

The Cancelling Machine

These machines were designed to speed up the processing of mail following the explosion in the number of postal items mailed in the late 1800's

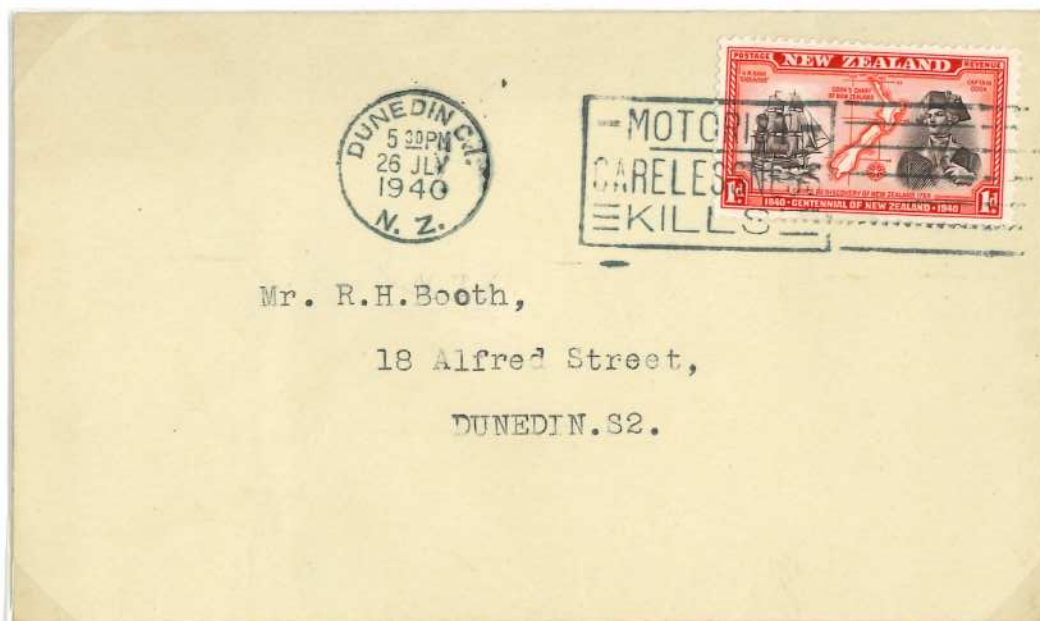


All envelopes are faced up the same way, i.e. with the stamp in the top right hand corner. The stack of envelopes was then placed in the machine upside down and would then be run through the machine and cancelled.

Town Die which shows
place, date & time of
posting



Obliterator which cancels the
stamp(s). Frequently this will be
combined with a slogan.

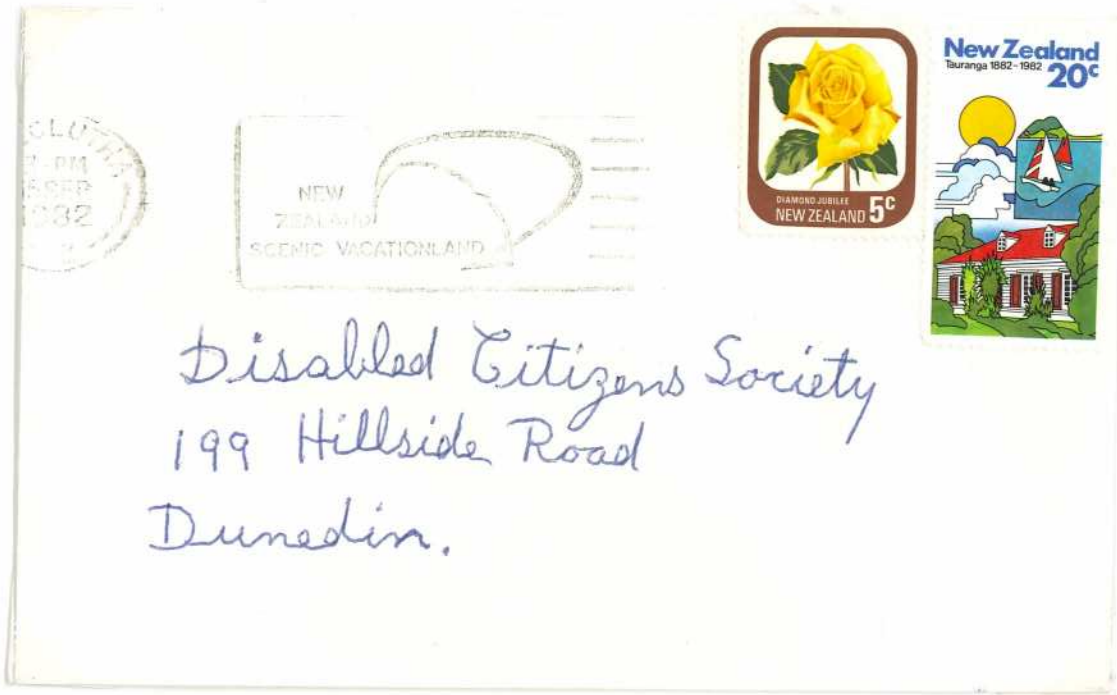


Local cover (Dunedin) 26th July 1940

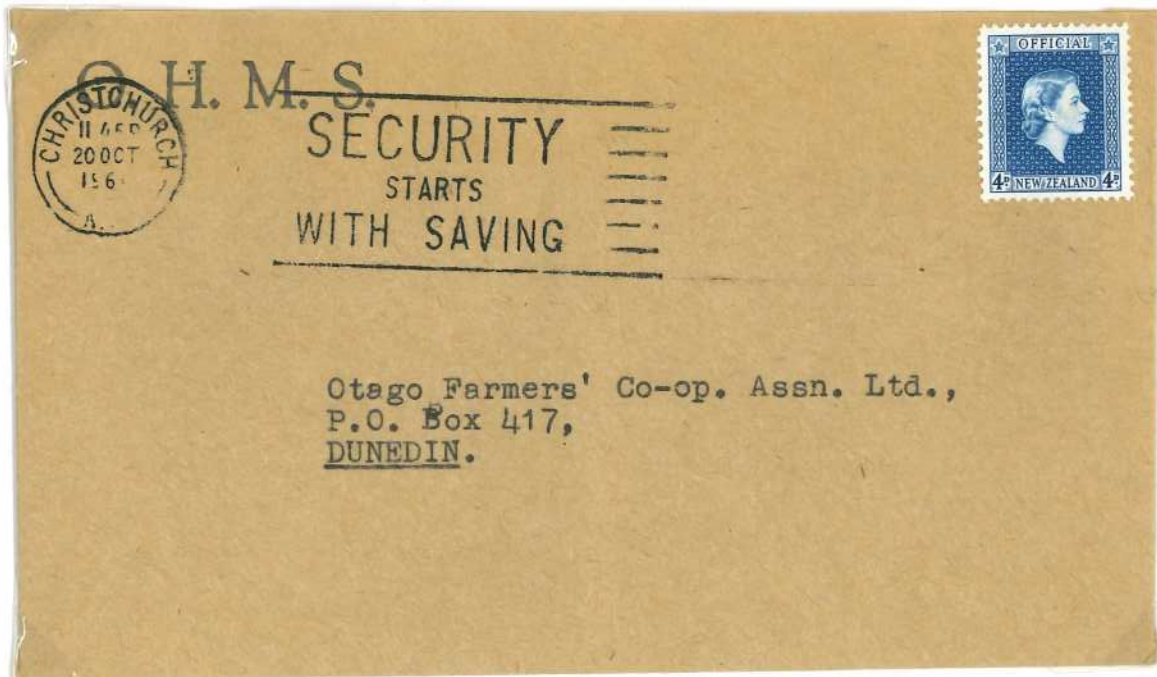
The Town Die is clear and readable and clearly shows date, time and place of posting. The slogan cancel is readable. Compare with the diagram above to see that the envelope was placed upside down in the cancelling machine.

Missed Cancellation

Stamp in correct position but Machine Cancellation completely misses the stamp



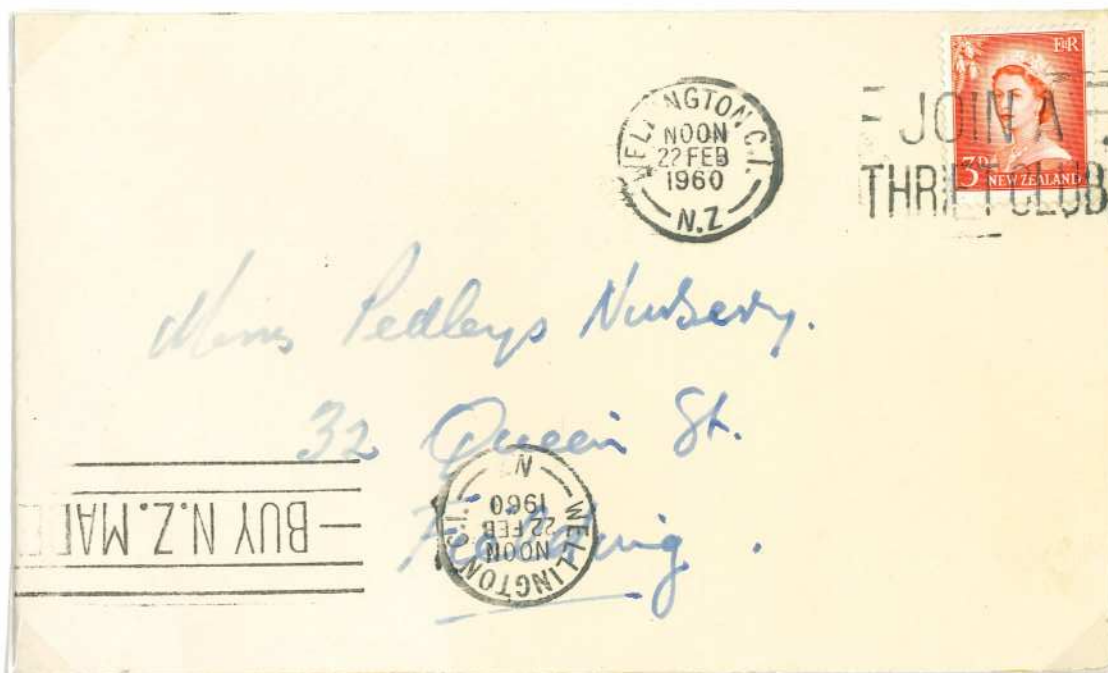
Balclutha to Dunedin 15th September 1982
Machine Cancellation completely misses the stamp



Christchurch to Dunedin 20th October 196?
Machine Cancellation completely misses the stamp

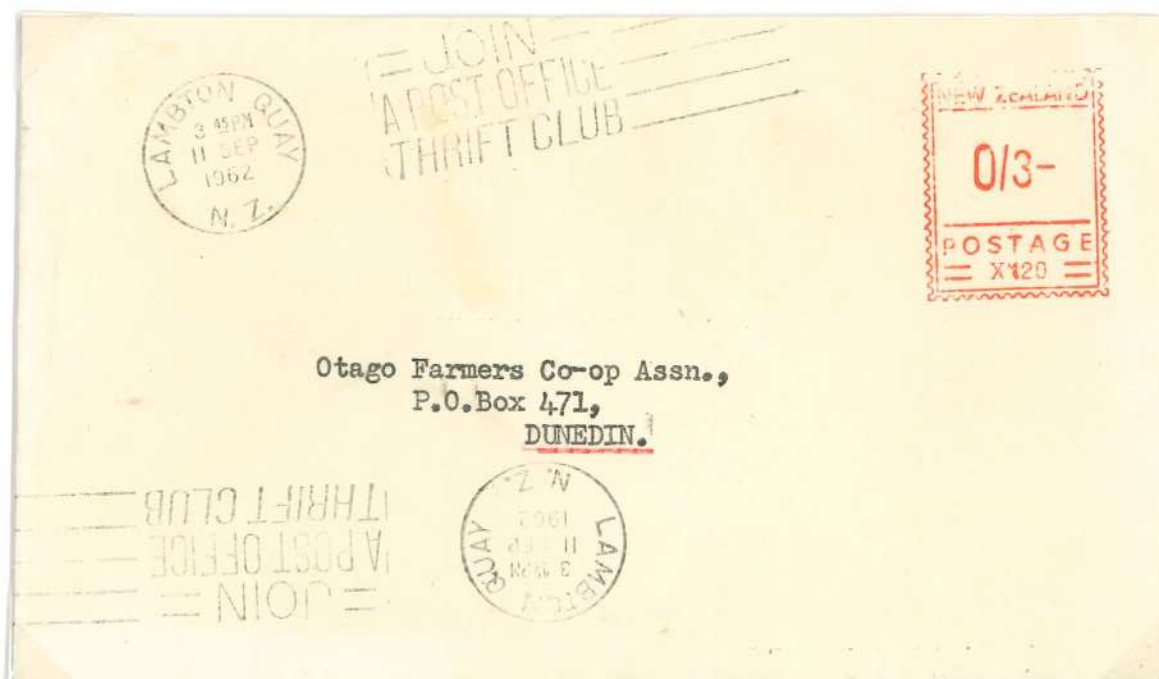
Double Cancellations

Envelopes placed upside down in the cancelling machine could be processed again, thereby receiving two cancellation marks.



Wellington to Feilding 22nd February 1960

One upside down cancellation and one correctly orientated cancellation

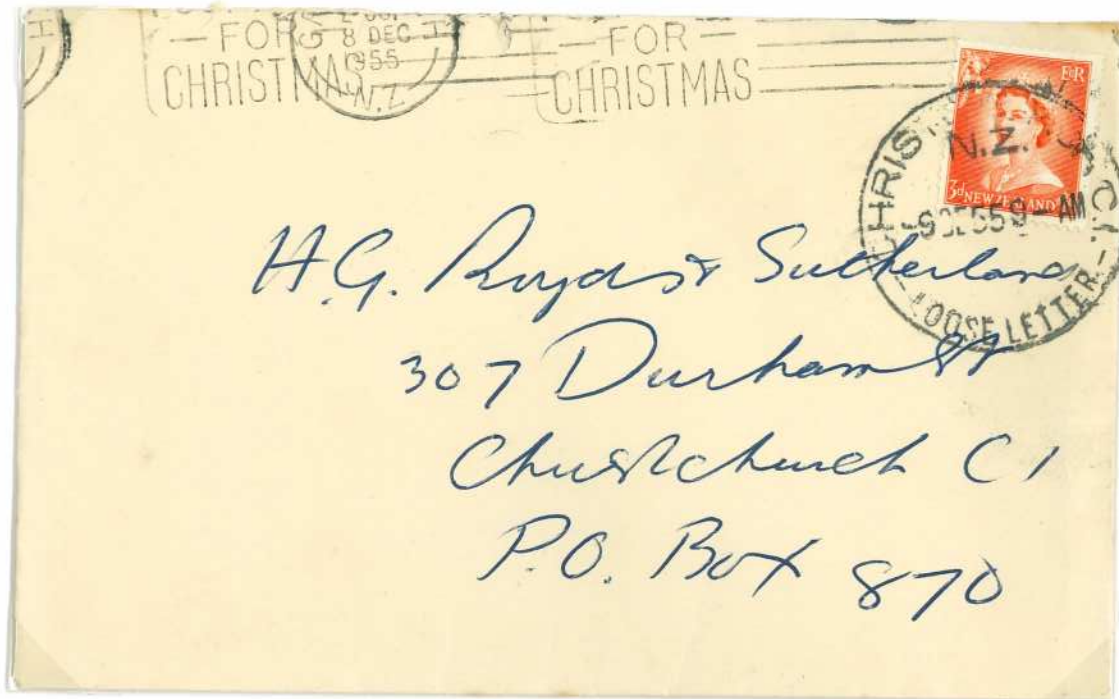


Lambton Quay to Dunedin 11th September 1962

One machine cancellation applied upside down and one cancel the right way around applied but this is an on angle and misses the meter mark

Double Cancellations

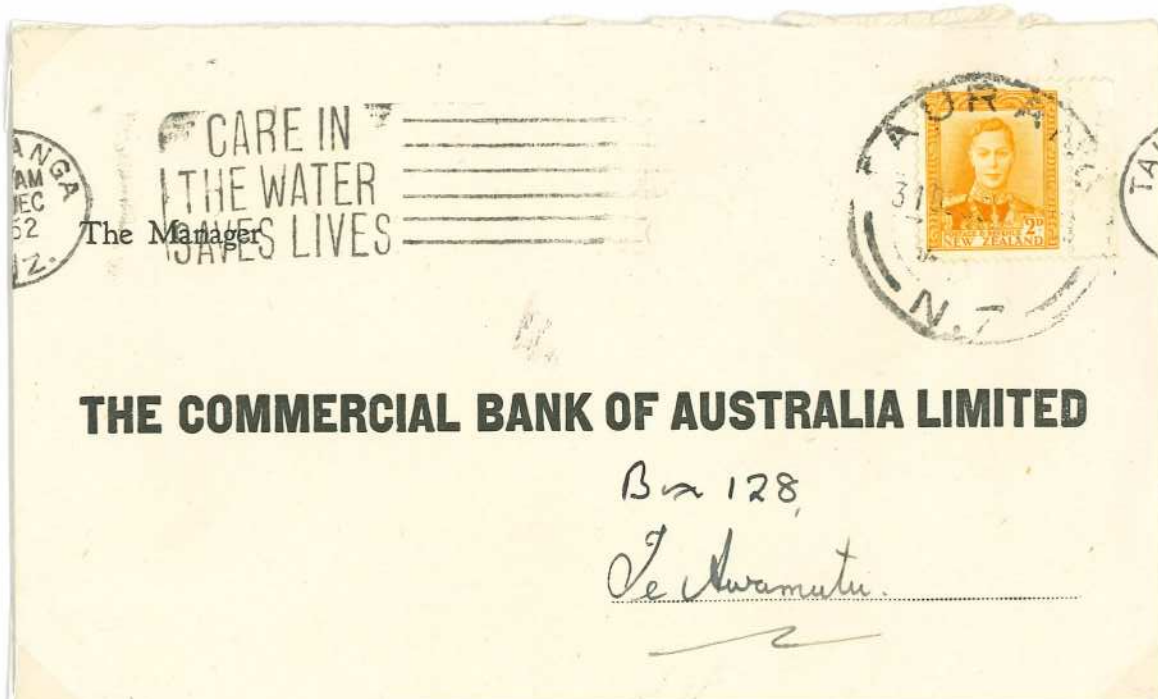
If a machine cancel was in the wrong place, then a hand cancel could be applied.



Greymouth to Christchurch 8 December 1955

Two strikes from the cancelling machine, both of which missed the stamp.

Hand cancel applied at Christchurch on 9 December 1955



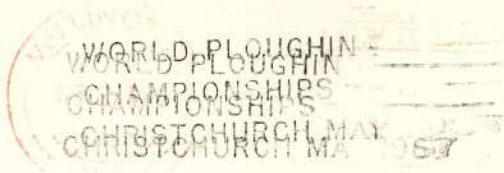
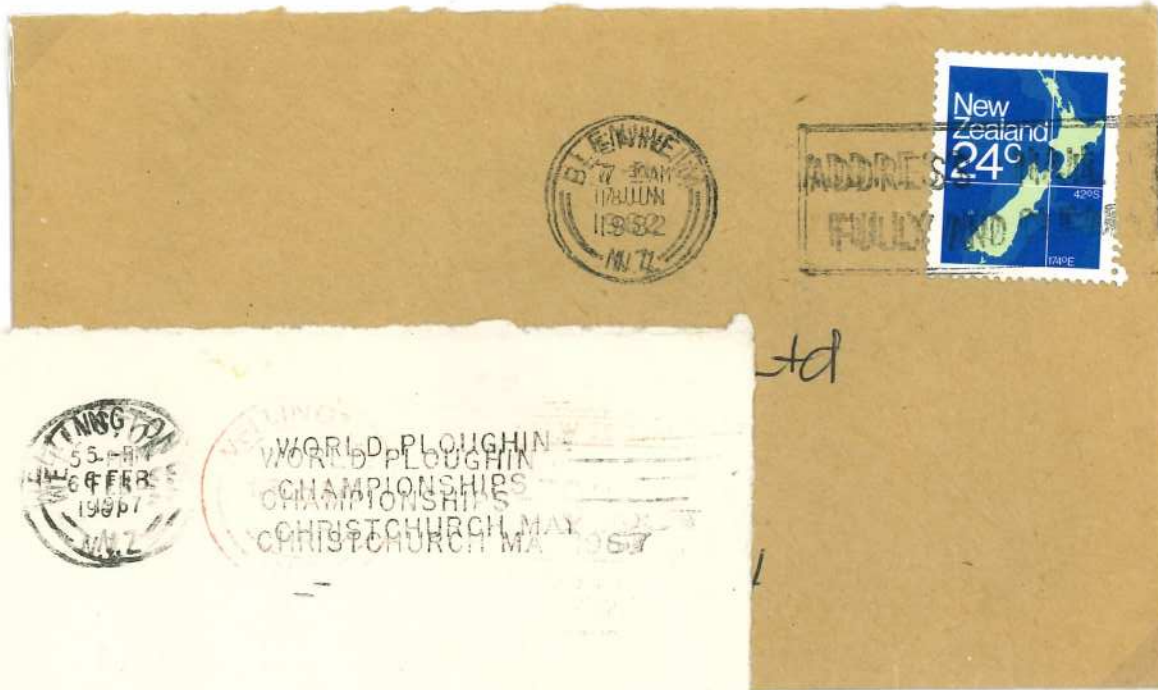
Tauranga to Te Awamutu 31st December 1952

Machine cancel missed the stamp, Tauranga Hand cancel applied

Double Cancellations

Occasionally an envelope would accidentally be put through the cancelling machine twice.

Wellington (Local)
6th February 1967
two machine cancellations
applied



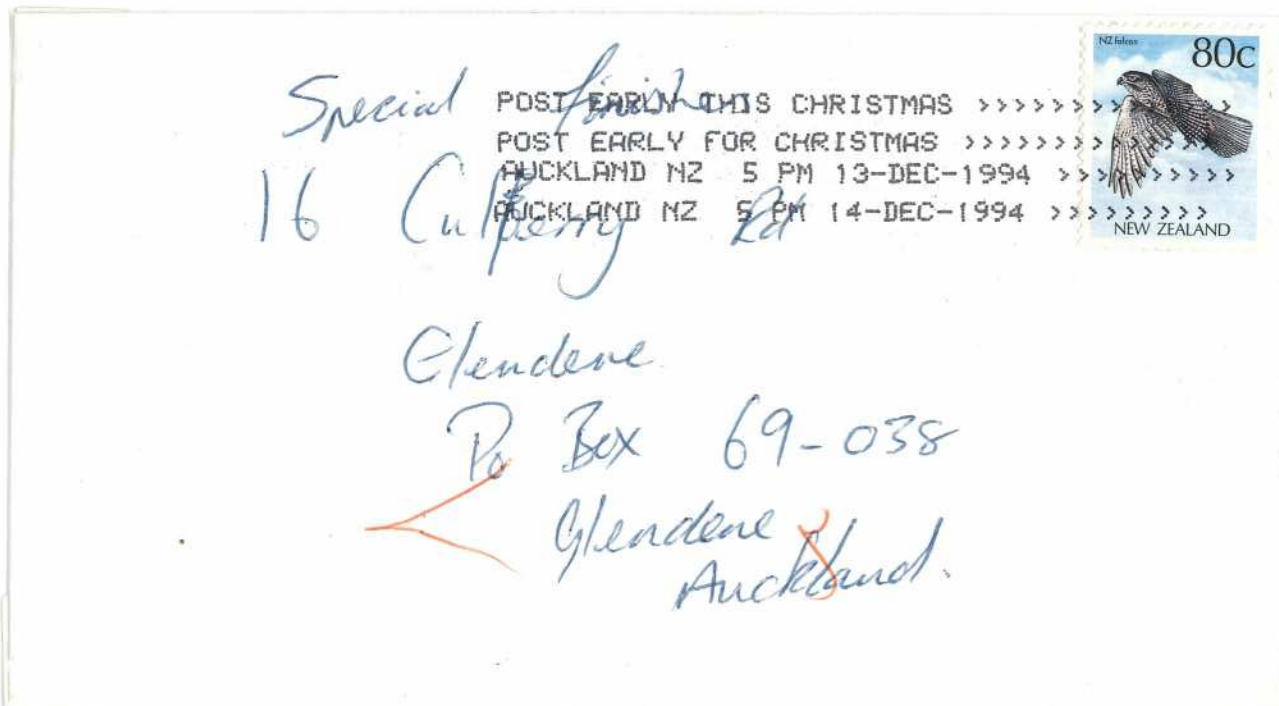
The Secretary,
Mines Dept.,
Anvil House,
Wakefield Street,
WELLINGTON C1

Blenheim to Christchurch
6th June 1982
two machine cancellations
applied

Letters that were misdelivered could end up receiving a second cancellation.

Appears to have
been misdelivered
and reposted 14th
December 1994

The 'Wonky' part
Notice how the
cancels are nicely
dove tailed so that
it almost looks like
one cancellation.

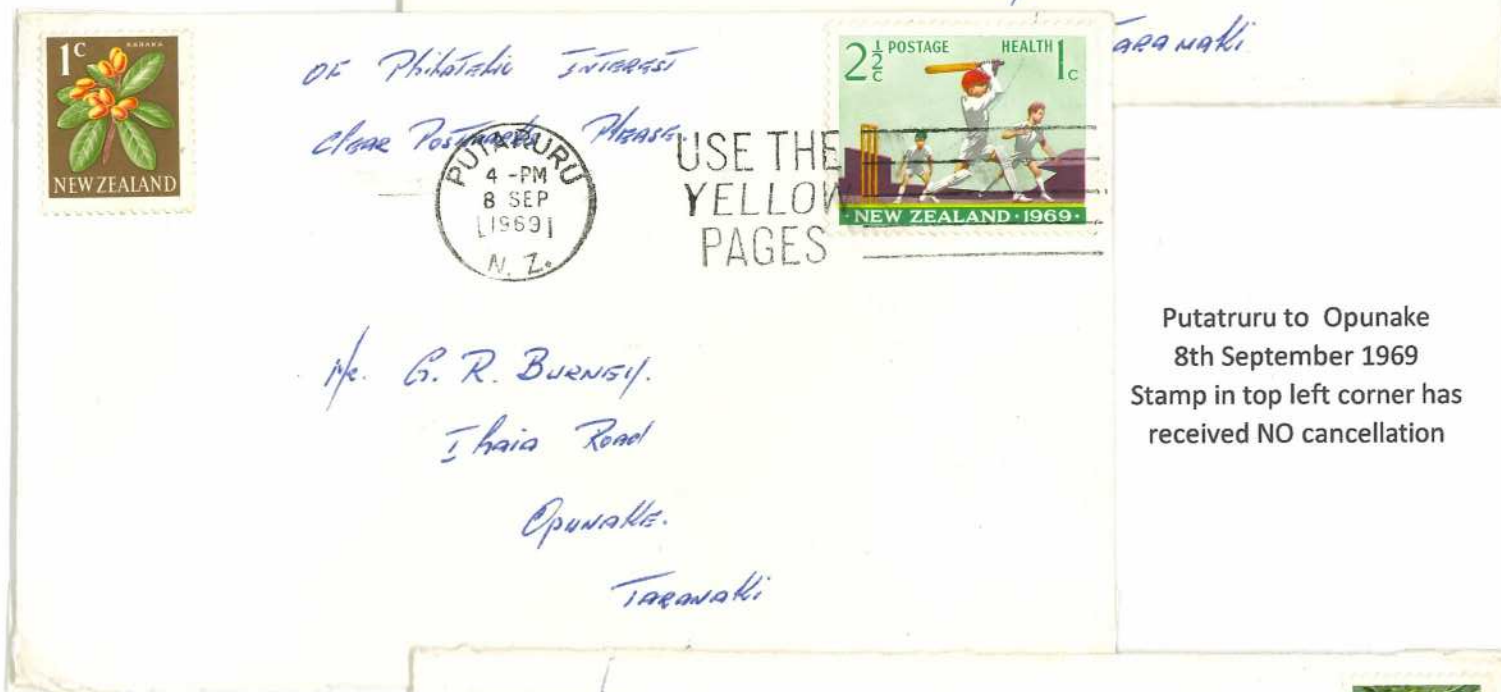
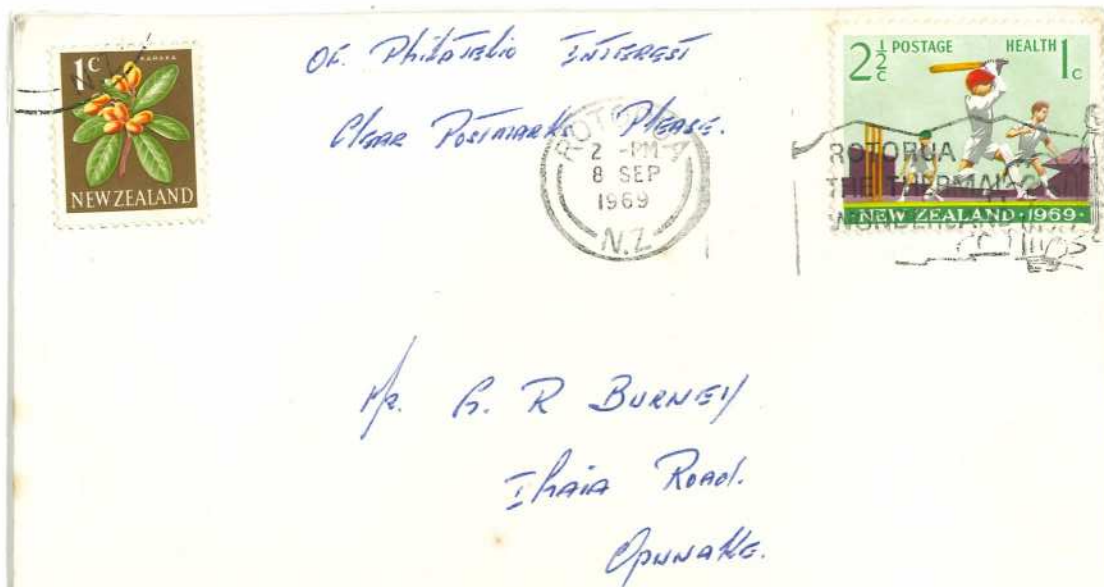


Auckland (Local) 13th December 1994

Philatelists

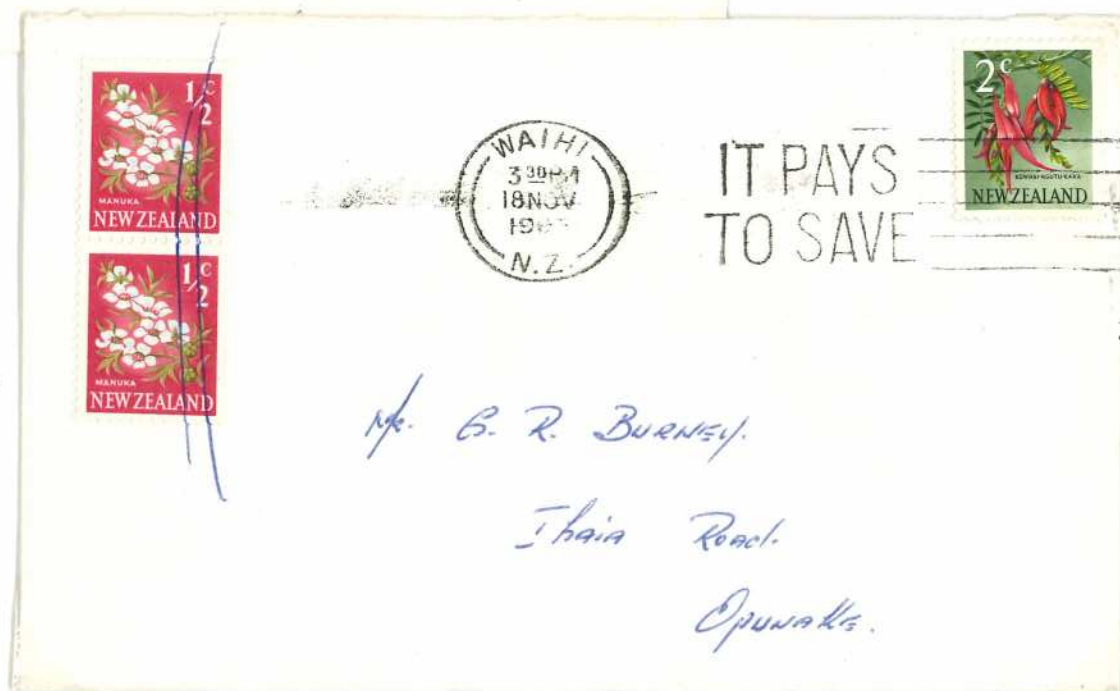
Philatelists would sometimes place stamps in strange positions to obtain a philatelic curiosity.

Rotorua to Opunake
8th September 1969
Stamp in top left corner has
received a Hand Cancel



Putatruru to Opunake
8th September 1969
Stamp in top left corner has
received NO cancellation

Waihi to Opunake
18th November 1969
Stamps on the left side have
been cancelled by pen

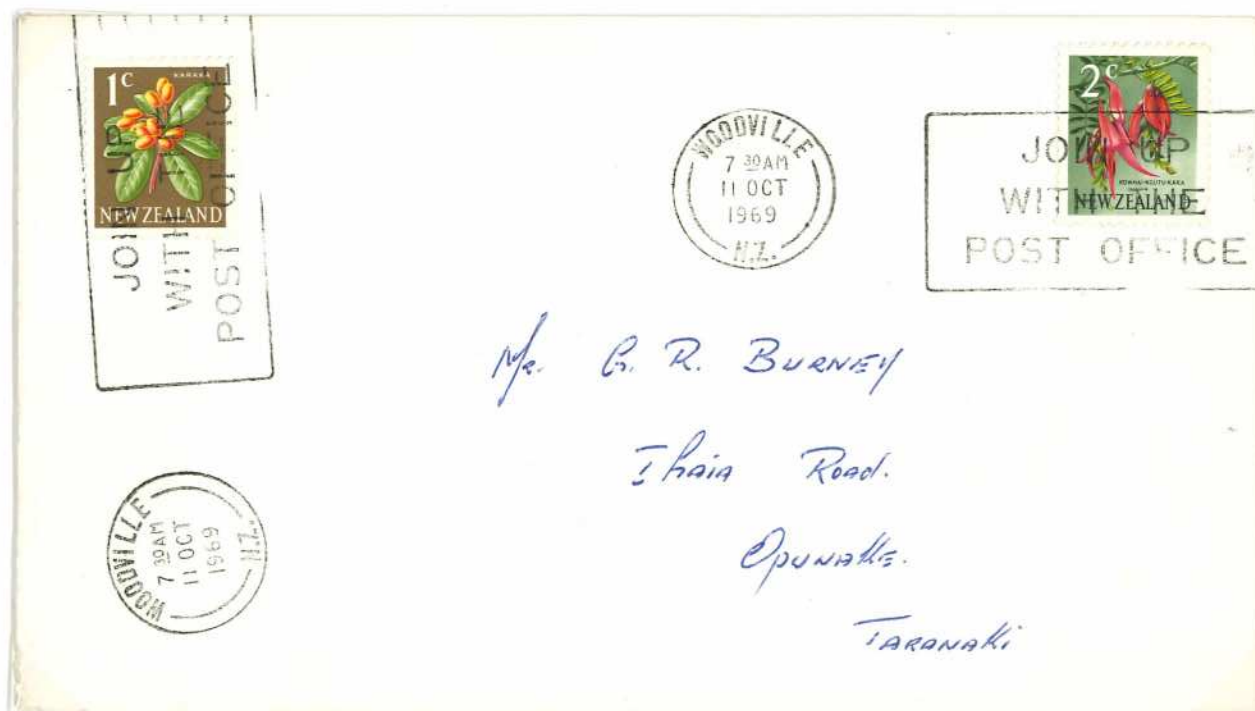


Philatelists

Philatelists with friends in the Post Office could get a unusual cancellation. Place one stamp in the correct place and another stamp in the top left hand corner. Then get your Post Office friend to run it though the cancelling twice; once correctly, then the second time rotate the envelope by 90 degrees.



Auckland to Palmerston North 26th October 1978



Woodville to Opunake 11th October 1969

Philatelists

Junior Philatelists learnt from the older philatelists and would also place stamps in strange positions.



Invercargill to Dunedin 8th September 1974

Stamps placed down the left hand side of the envelope. Machine cancellation applied in the correct place thereby missing the stamps so they have been cancelled by pen.



Green Island to Dunedin date ??

Stamp placed in lower right of envelope and cancelled by a Hand Cancellor.

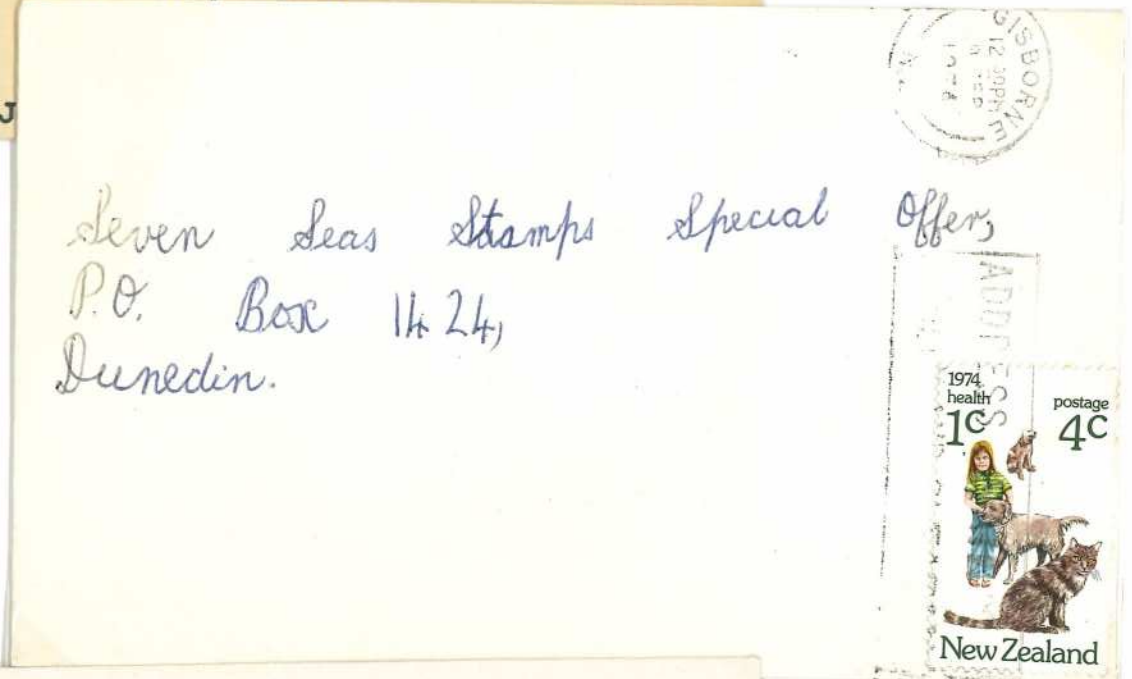
Stamps Placed in Strange Places



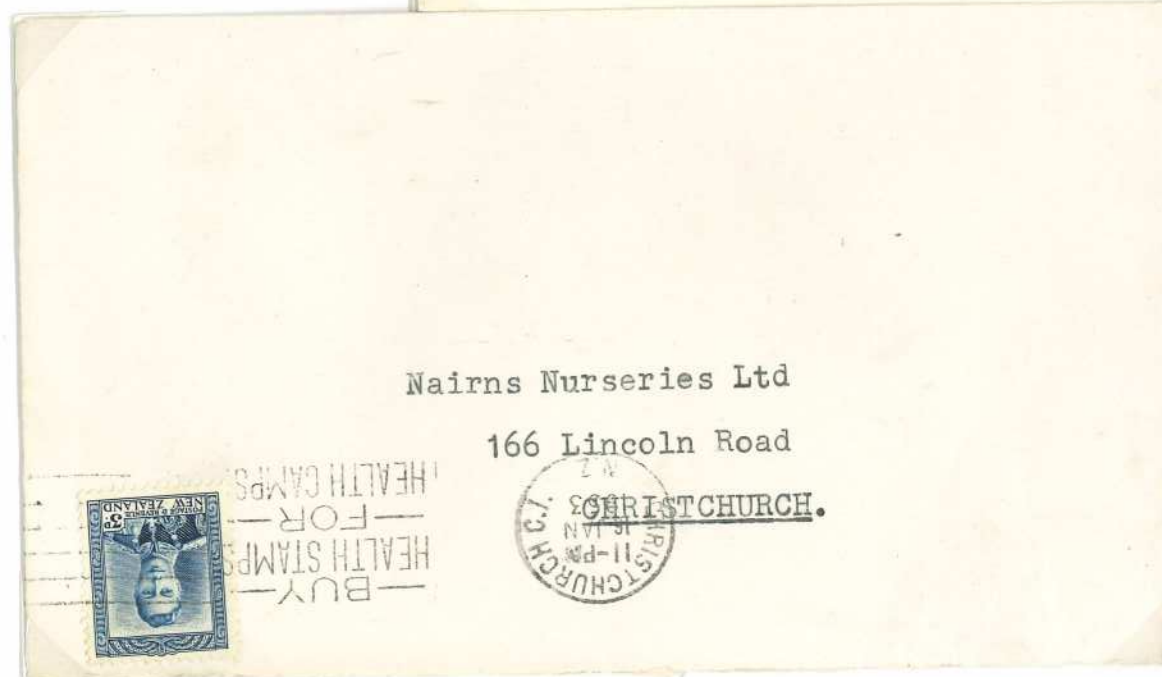
Wellington to Dunedin
29th October 1974
The stamp was placed in
the top left corner,
envelope has been put
through the machine

MSJ

Gisborne to Dunedin
9th September 1974
The stamp was placed in
the bottom right corner,
envelope has been put
through the machine
sideways so that the
stamp is cancelled.



Christchurch (local)
16th January 1963
The stamp was placed in
the bottom left corner,
envelope has been put
through the machine
upside-down so that the
stamp is cancelled.



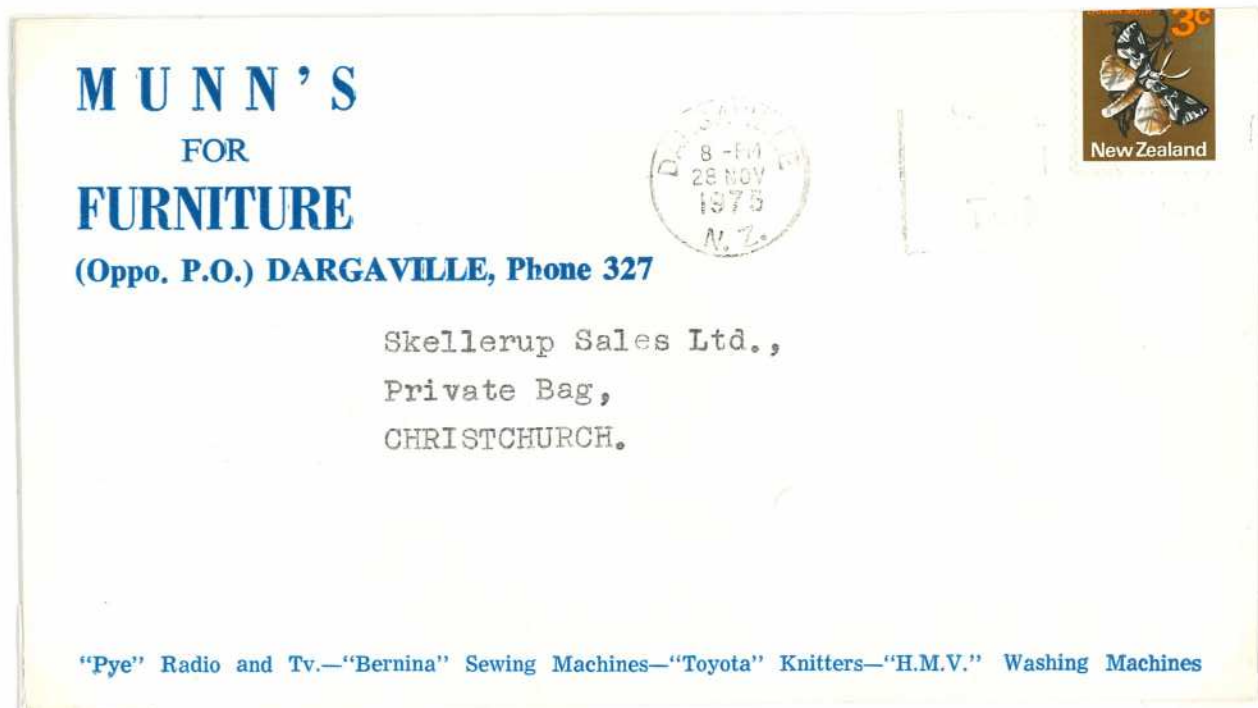
Under-Inking

Cancellations would get lighter and unreadable as the cancelling machine ran low on ink.



Gore to Dunedin ?? September 1965

Town die is very faint and the stamps show almost no trace of a cancellation



Dargaville to Christchurch 28th November 1975

The Town Die is faint but readable, but the stamp doesn't show any trace of cancellation

Pen Cancellation

Multiples of stamps that are not aligned with the top edge of the envelope will not be cancelled properly by the cancelling machine.



Christchurch 19 April 1982

The top two rows of stamps have been cancelled but the lowest stamp has missed being cancelled.

Auckland to Dunedin
14 March 1976
vertical pair of 1975
Christmas stamps
The top stamp has been
cancelled by the machine.



October 1993
The strip of three
stamps at the top have
been cancelled by the
machine,
the single lower
stamp has been
cancelled by pen

Just made it

You can get partial postmarks on stamps if the cancelling machine wasn't feeding envelopes through correctly.

Lower Hutt
October 1983
The town die has been applied to the right hand stamp but the slogan/obliterator portion has missed the envelope. This leaves one stamp uncanceled.



TOWNSEND & PAUL LTD.
GRAIN, FRUIT, & PRODUCE MERCHANTS
POULTRY & FISH MARKETS
WELLINGTON, N.Z.
AUCTION SALES DAILY OF
FRUIT & GENERAL PRODUCE

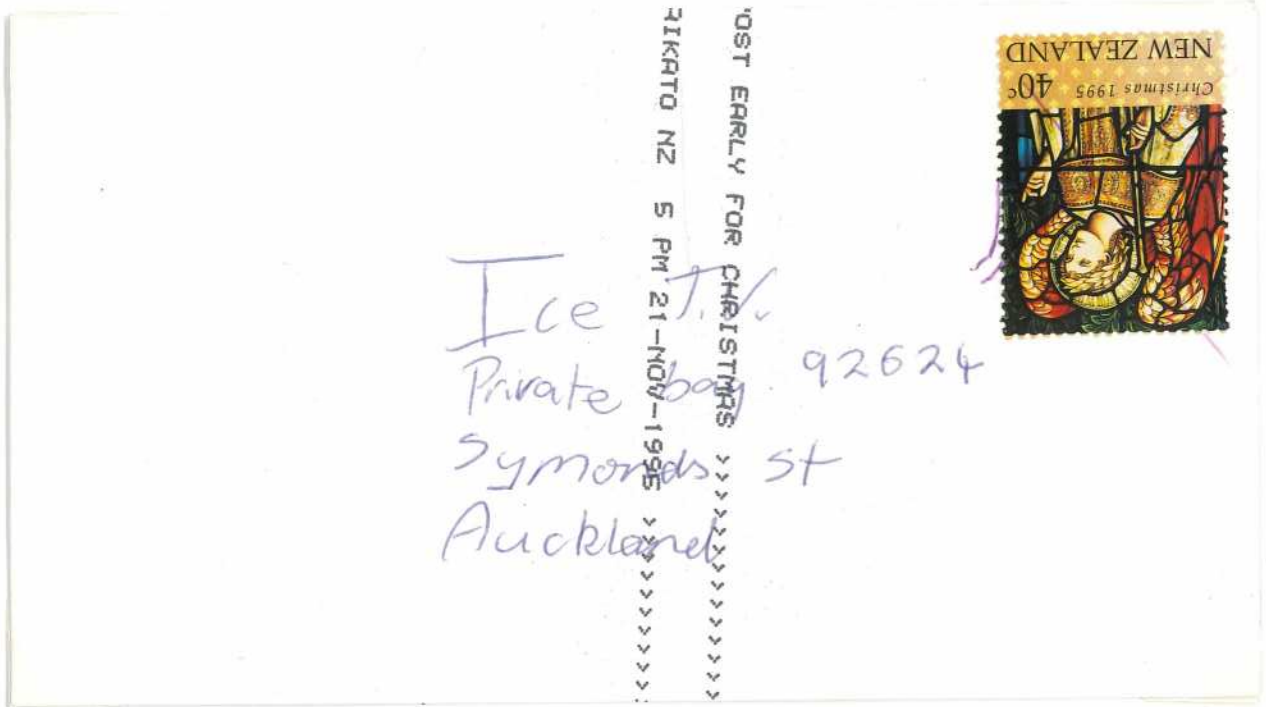


Wellington East
5th September 1958
The town die has struck the meter mark but the slogan/obliterator portion has missed the envelope.

Part of the obliterator has struck the Meter mark. No town die is visible.



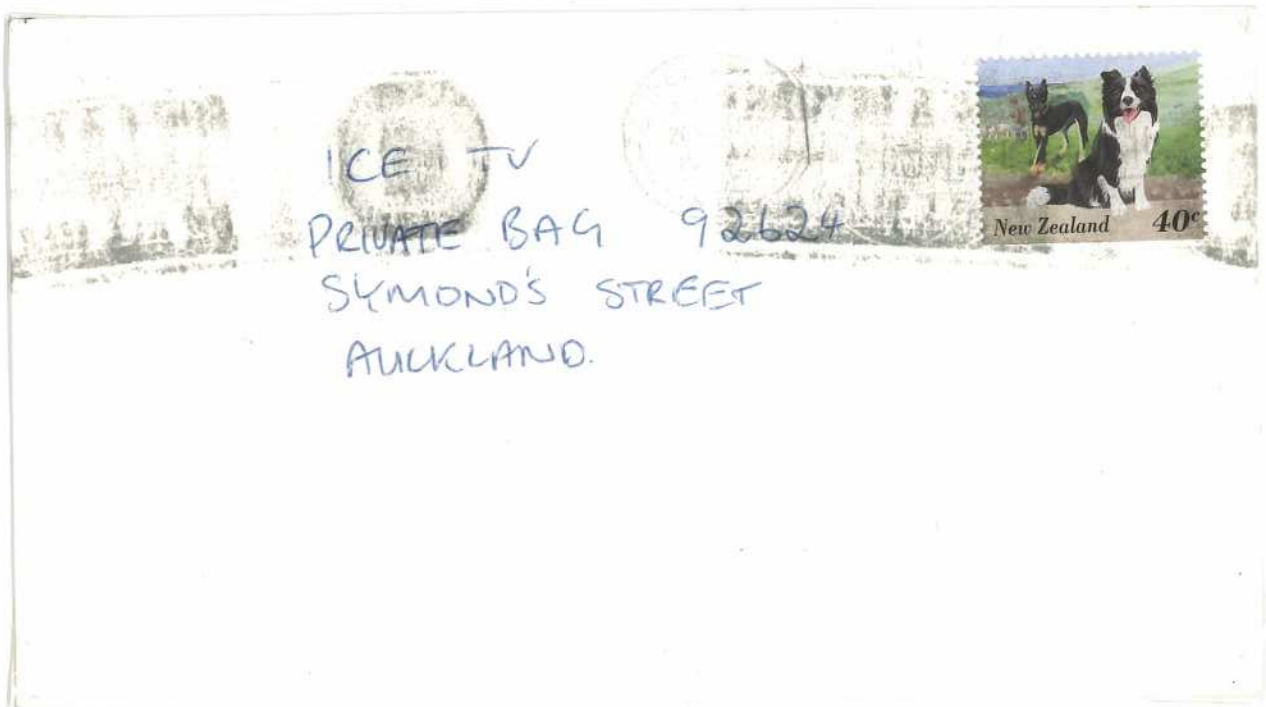
Envelope Fold



Waikato Mail Centre to Auckland 21st November 1996

The envelope has somehow got folded in half before being put through the cancelling machine and therefore received its cancellation in the centre of the envelope. The stamp has received a pen cancellation.

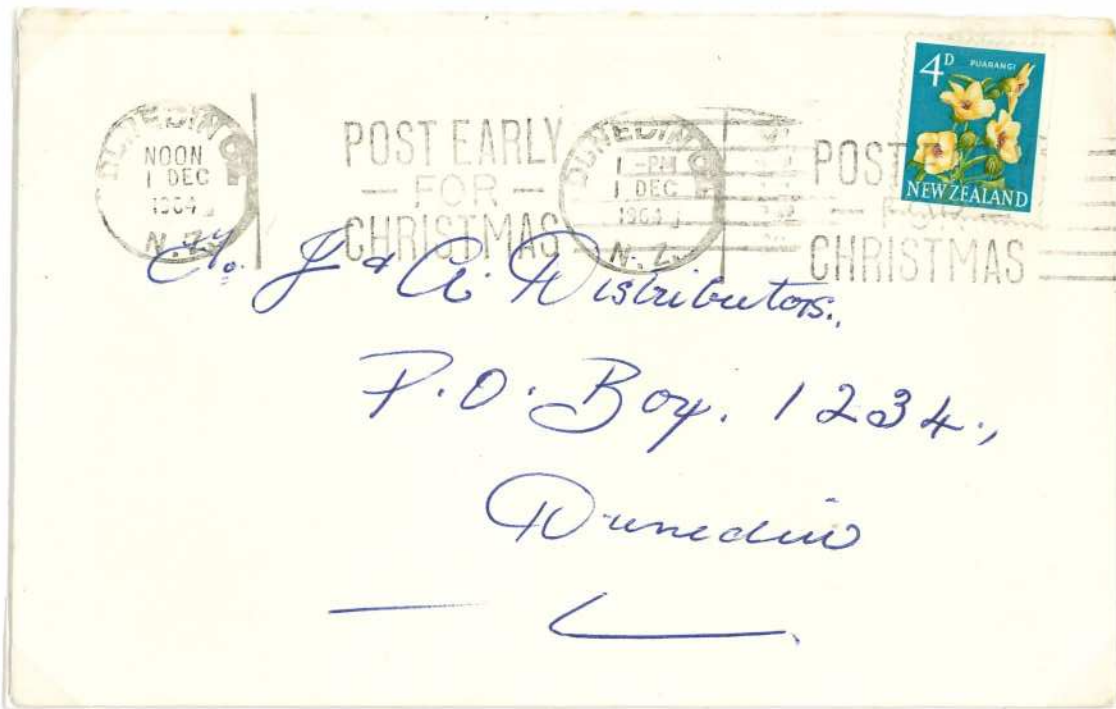
If the cancelling machine jams, it can result in the envelope being dragged across the cancelling head which produces a smudged or blurred cancellation.



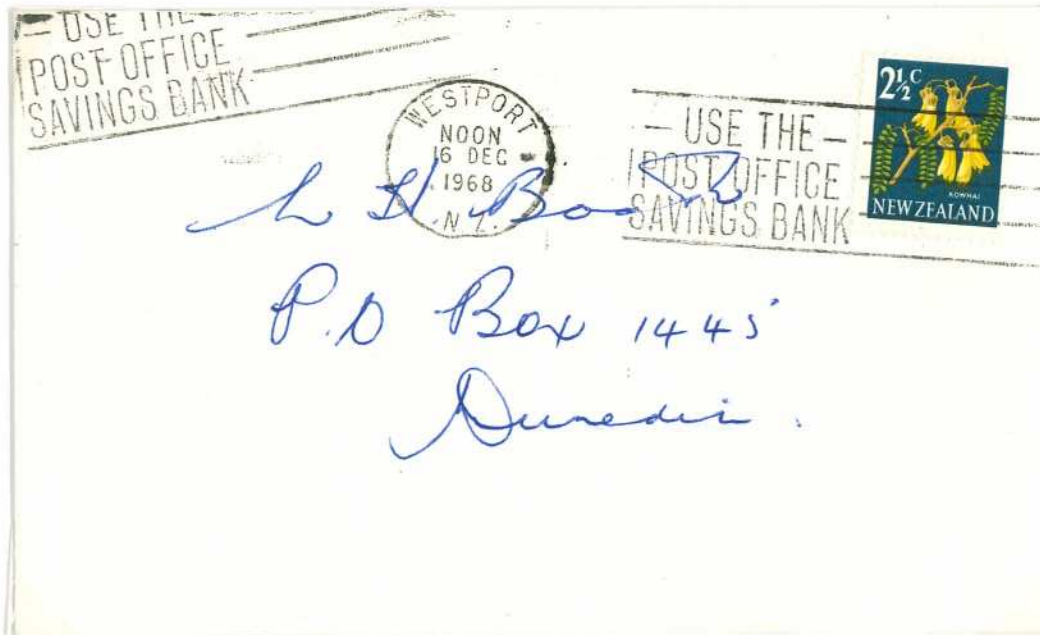
Queenstown to Auckland 10th November 1995

None of this is readable on the front of the envelope, but the envelope has received a cancellation on the reverse.

Double Cancellations
One right, one 'Wonky'



Local cover (Dunedin) 1st December 1964
One cancellation misses the stamp completely, second cancellation is correct



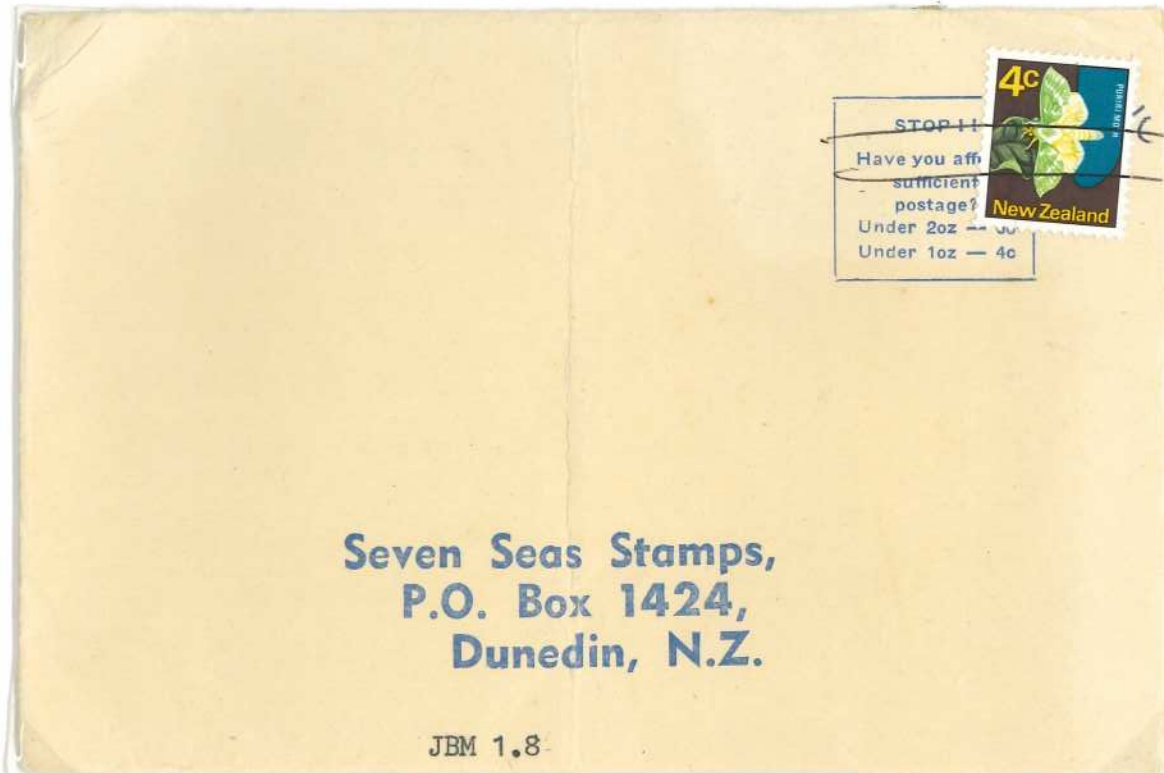
Westport to Dunedin 16th December 1968
One cancellation partially hits the envelope but misses the stamp completely, second cancellation is correct

Pen Cancellation

Envelopes that missed being cancelled often received a pen cancellation either at the Post Office or from the postie.



Envelope to Dunedin to Dunedin
Stamp has received a pen cancellation.



Stratford (return address) to Dunedin
Stamp has received a pen cancellation.