

CHRISTMAS ISLAND (PACIFIC OCEAN)

CENTRAL PACIFIC COCOANUT PLANTATIONS LTD
The 5 cents perf. 11½

By David Beech



The second issue of the Christmas Island local, the 5 cents perf. 11½ is without doubt the most scarce of the four issues. In *Philately from Australia* vol. 11 pp. 6 -9 (March 1959) in an article titled "Christmas Island: The Printing Process - and Other Notes" by L.N. and M. Williams, the existence of sheets of stamps of all issues (except the third issue) was recorded as comprising two blocks of four side by side with the second issue having two blocks of four tête-bêche. In a sheet which recently came to light the panes are vertically one above the other. The overall size of the sheet is 125 x 154 mm. and the gutter is 8 mm. across. The vertical sheet format differs from that of the 10 cents fourth issue, which is horizontal.



Another item of interest and rarity, from the second issue, recently seen by the author, is a vertical pair, error imperforate horizontally, in unused condition. In *Christmas Island and its Postal History* by the Pacific Islands Circle of the Royal Sydney Philatelic Club, page 12, dealing with the first issue (5 cents perf. $12\frac{1}{2}$), an extract from *Roessler's Stamp News* of 1920 is quoted from the *Australian Philatelist Record* vol. 3, p. 278 (January 1921) which not only mentions sheets of eight (2 x 4) but goes on to elaborate: "A few are known part perforated". As stated, that refers to the first issue.

That brings me to the question of the issue date of the second issue. A cover dated 30 June 1924 is the earliest recorded and, because of that cover, 1924 is regarded as the date of issue. However, it is a possibility that the second issue was in existence in 1920 when Roessler wrote in his journal? This notion is strengthened by the existence of a cancelled block of four with margins on three sides (not at top) with the inscription in the right margin "Christmas Is/12-3-22". Resolution of this question depends on the discovery and identification of a cover with an earliest date. Perhaps one day one will come to light.

Check List of Issues

- 1 *First Issue 1915 - 16 perf. $12\frac{1}{2}$*
5c. in sheets of eight (2 x 4)?

- 2 *Second Issue 1924 (1920?) perf. $11\frac{1}{2}$*
5c. in sheets of 8 (2 x 4)
 - a 5c. pair imperf. horizontally
 - b "10 cents" on 5c. manuscript provisional 1925? - See "Cinderella Corner" by Norman Williams, *Stamp Magazine*, vol. 48, No.8, p. 62 (August 1982)

- 3 *Third Issue 1926 perf. $11\frac{1}{2}$*
10c. value in red, in sheets of four (2 x 2)

- 4 *Fourth Issue 1934 (25 Dec) perf. $11\frac{1}{2}$*
10c., value in blue, in sheets of 8 (4 x 2)

Illustrations by courtesy of Argyll Etkin Ltd.
(Illustrations replaced by modern ones Roland Klinger)