

CHRISTMAS ISLAND 6798: 1906 – 2021

[INDIAN OCEAN]

Christmas Island postal history reflects the political and economic history of the island. Captain Mynors, of the British East India Company, saw an island on 25 December 1643 and named it Christmas Island. William Dampier was the first to land in 1688 but, as there was no anchorage, the island remained uninhabited. Captain May annexed the island for Britain in June 1888. G. Clunies-Ross established a settlement at Flying Fish Cove and in February 1891 he and Sir John Murray were granted a 99 year lease. In 1897 the lease was transferred to the Christmas Island Phosphate Company. The island was incorporated into Straits Settlements in 1900 and the laws of Singapore applied. A post office was opened in 1900 but a building to house it was not available till 1904. Singapore achieved self-government in 1958 and Christmas Island was made a Crown Colony before being transferred to Australia as an external territory. Because of its isolation, limited commercial activity, and small literate population, Christmas Island has never generated much non-philatelic mail.

Christmas Island 6798 is an Australia Post (W.A.) office serving a population of 1700. The display is arranged chronologically to illustrate the slow postal development from an isolated mining settlement to a small mining/tourist town.

SECTION A: 1906 – 1942 British Phosphate Commission post office, Straits post office

SECTION B: 1945 – 1957 Singapore post office

SECTION C: 1958 – 1968 Crown Colony, British Phosphate Commission post office

SECTION D: 1968 – 1993 Christmas Island Administration post office

SECTION E: 1993 – 2021 Australia Post office

Christmas Island Post Office Picture Post Card 2021

Christmas Island 4 November 2021, Perth 15 November, received 16 November (12 days transit)

More to pay

\$	C
	10

Insufficient postage and surcharge
Return charge
Total

CHRISTMAS ISLAND 10^c

Christmas 1970

25 years of the boat club

75^c Christmas Island

CHRISTMAS ISLAND 5^c

20^c CHRISTMAS ISLAND

INDIAN OCEAN

Dr Bruce Haynes
17B 25 Victoria Ave
CLAREMONT
WA

PMc 995-2
11:00
6 15/11/2021 0

AUSTRALIA POST

8836457 July 2012

Christmas Island Post Office, 6798
Phone: (08) 9164 8495 Fax: (08) 9164 8494
Email: dmasters@locomm.com.au

Rec 16/11/21

SECTION A: 1906 – 1942

Straits Administration

DARLING POSTCARDS

Few items of pre-war outwards mail are recorded (ERD 4 September 1904). The majority of inwards mail are the Darling postcards (ca 25).

Boustead & Co. (Singapore) served as agents for the Christmas Island Phosphate Company forwarding freight and mail via monthly voyages of the Company's *Islander*.
Largs RSO 20 June 1906, Penang to Singapore 20 July *Moldavia*



Largs RSO 4 March 1907, Penang to Singapore 29 March *Arcadia*

VIA SINGAPORE

Mail addressed to Christmas Island via Singapore was carried on the fortnightly P&O mail steamers from Colombo to Penang and Singapore and with the ship continuing on to the Far East. It received the Penang to Singapore TPO postmark but no Singapore sorting mark and seems not to have been handled by the Christmas Island post office. Largs RSO 31 March 1907, Penang to Singapore 26 April Devanha

Published by Murray & Co., London E.C. Series 1057.

With love to all at C.I.
 If we receive your letters
 Father's letters yesterday you can
 better let Mother know I will
 write soon as I don't wish to
 be cut off by the "Boats".
 Jane

POST CARD



Master Darling,
 (Christmas Island)
 Messrs Boustead & Co.
 Singapore
 Straits Settlements.



103 Albert Road
 Langkate
 June 3rd 1907.

POST CARD

This Space may be used for Printed or Written Matter for inland use only. Only the Address to be Written here

Dear Mrs Darling. got your Post-Card. all right. I am very pleased to think that you still remember us. I & the children very much have liked to have seen you and the children before you left Scotland. had you all a pleasant voyage. perhaps you will write me a long letter to let me know how you like life on Christmas Island. and if



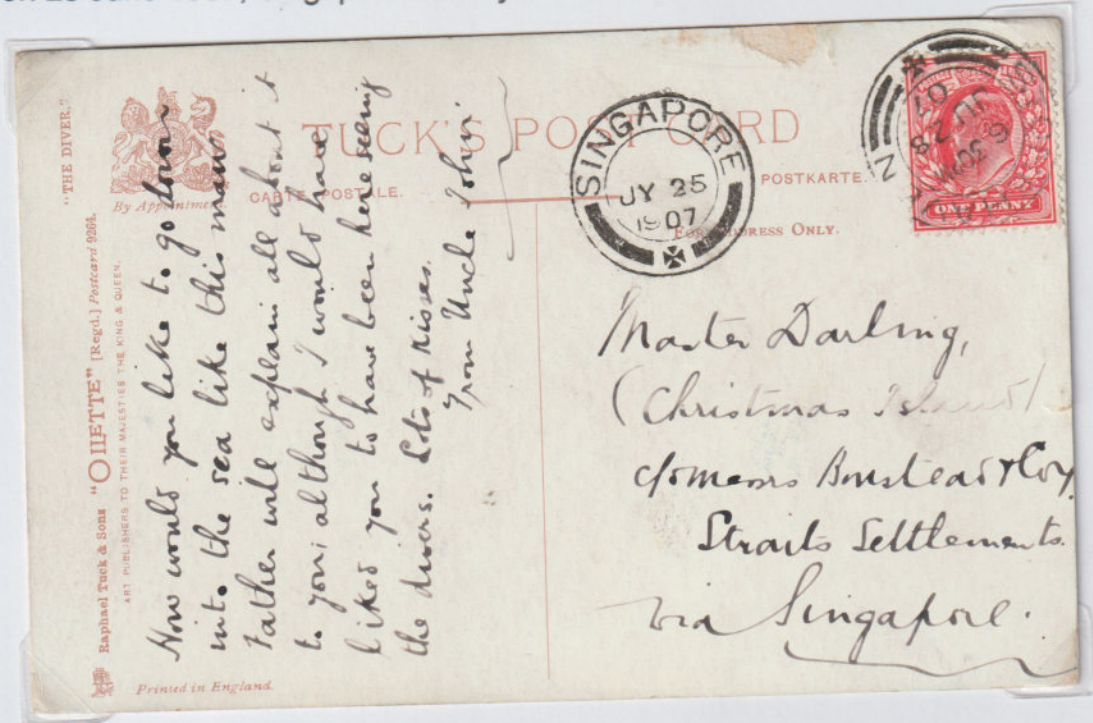


Darling
 Christmas Island
 Straits Settlements.

From January 1903 British India Steam Navigation Co fortnightly service Negapatam to Singapore called at Penang alternating with the P&O TPO and using a similar datestamp. This mail received no Singapore sorting mark but was handled by the Christmas Island post office (29mm datestamp in use until 1911). Sout-lern DO 4 June 1907, Penang to Singapore 29 June Thongwa (BISN), Christmas Island 7 July (29mm datestamp)

UNKNOWN SHIPPING

These cards were not carried on the Penang to Singapore TPO and so were sorted in Singapore on dates that do not match the TPO arrival. They seem not to have been handled by the Christmas Island post office.
Stonehaven 28 June 1907, Singapore 25 July ?



MAIL FROM AUSTRALIA

While there are no proving postmarks, it is probable that this card was carried by mail steamer from Adelaide to Colombo and transhipped to Singapore on an unknown ship. The instruction to use the left hand side of the card for name and address of the sender was ignored.

Adelaide 29 November 1907, Singapore 16 December



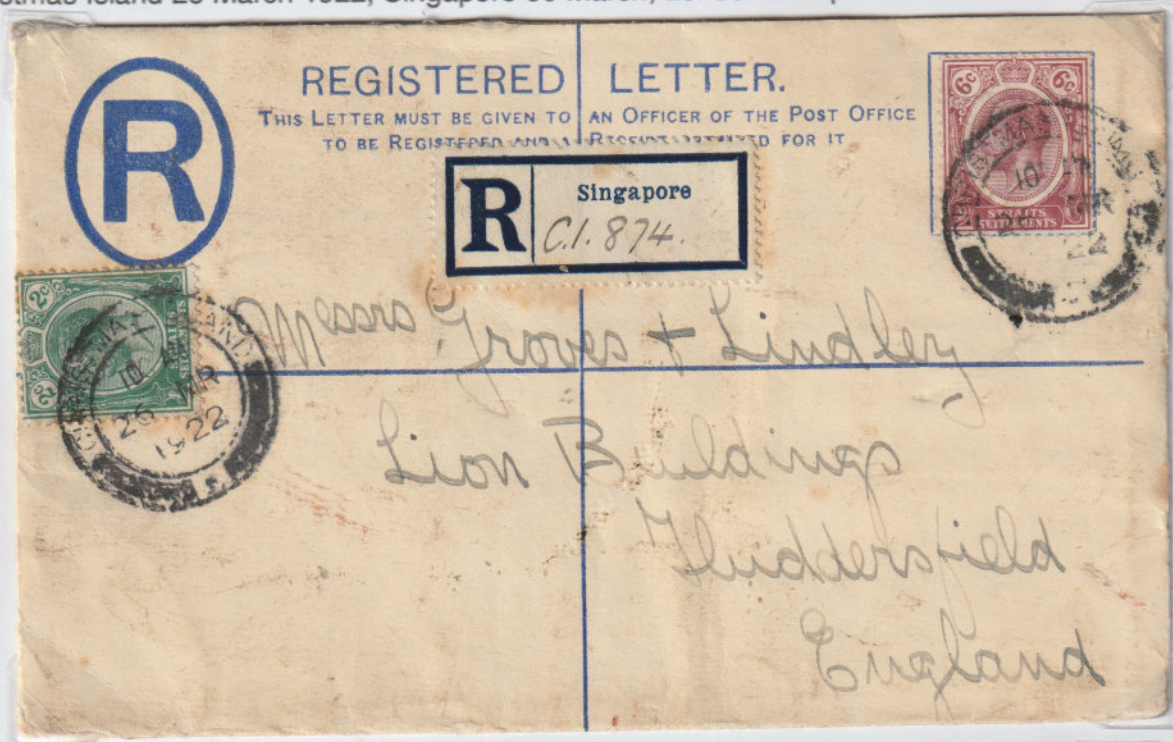
Phosphate prices and production dropped during the war. War disrupted shipping and in July 1917 P&O ceased service to Singapore. Straits mail was sent by steamer and rail to Bombay to connect to the P&O service but no wartime Christmas Island mail is recorded.

REGISTERED MAIL

A 1911 philatelically contrived cover with handstruck registration mark exists but the cover below is the first recorded use of the Singapore unnumbered label. The manuscript number indicates substantial use of the registration service, probably for remittances to Singapore and South China, but no example of such use is recorded.

Ten cents Straits registration envelope uprated 2 cents for British mail and 6 cents postage. Second datestamp 29mm with time.

Christmas Island 26 March 1922, Singapore 30 March, London 28 April



A different style Singapore registration label. Third datestamp 31mm with index letter. Christmas Island 8 June 1925

FIRST INWARDS AIRMAIL 1930

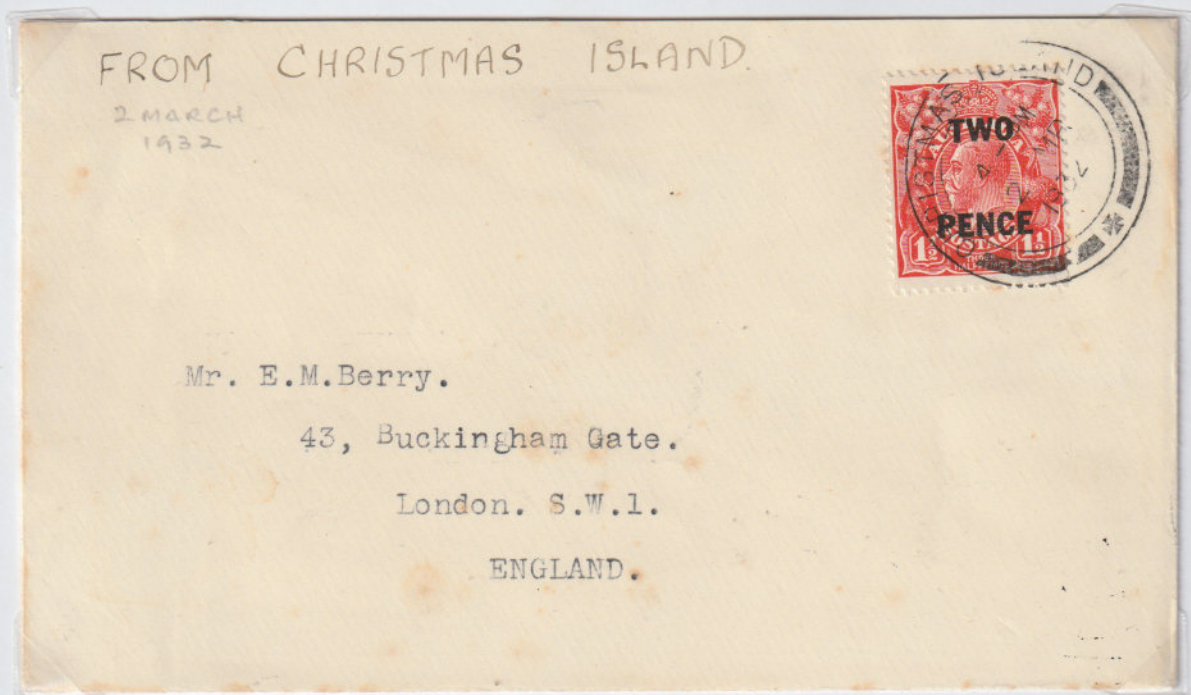
The first scheduled air service to Christmas Island did not occur until 1974. This inventive philatelist produced the first mail to Christmas Island to be carried (part way) by airmail. Moose Jaw 3 March 1930, Calgary 4 March, Montreal 8 March, Singapore 12 April, unknown, Singapore 5 May, Montreal 12 June



SIX CENTS RATE

Postage to Britain was increased from 4 cents to 5 cents in 1918, 6 cents in 1922 and 8 cents in 1932.

Christmas Island 5 March 1928 (31mm index letter), Singapore 10 March



Presumed to have been posted as paquebot mail aboard an unidentified Australian ship bound for Christmas Island. An identical cover is in this collection.

Christmas Island 2 March 1932 (32mm time), Singapore 15 March

PAQUEBOT MAIL

EIGHT CENTS RATE

The eight cents rate applied to both Britain and Australia.

Philatelic cover sent by R. Stevenson, Manger (sic), Christmas Island S.S.

Christmas Island 16 December 1932 (32mm datestamp time), Singapore 21 December



Straits Administration

EIGHT CENTS RATE

The fifth datestamp was
used from 1936 to 1942.
Christmas Island
28 ? 1936
(30mm datestamp time)



TWELVE CENTS RATE

Foreign letter rate increased from 8 cents to 10 cents in 1918 and to 12 cents in 1922.
Letter (enclosed) from ship's Captain to wife.
Christmas Island 24 February 1934 (32 mm datestamp time).



AIRMAIL

Christmas Island airmail would have been routed through Batavia (KLM from 1928) or Singapore (Imperial Airways from 1931). The date of introduction of Christmas Island registration label is not known. 12 cents registration, 8 cents postage, 44 cents airmail. Christmas Island 16 December 1935 (32mm datestamp time), Singapore 2 January 1936, Saltash 15 January

BY AIR MAIL
PAR AVION



*James R. G. Fleam Esq,
Kingsleigh,
Saltash,
Cornwall.
England.*

BY AIR MAIL
PAR AVION



*F. L. Clark Esq
408 Howard Street
Dorchester Square
London. Sec. 1.*

Singapore joined the Empire All-Up airmail scheme on 28 February 1938 with the rate of 8 cents to Britain. Christmas Island 26 January 1938 (30mm datestamp time)

WAR-TIME MAIL

Mail services to and from Christmas Island proceeded uninterrupted until the Japanese capture of Singapore on 15 February 1942.

Written 4 February 1940, Waikerie South Australia 6 February, Singapore censor cachet, mss Replied 12 April 1940



Only recorded inwards war-time mail

Japanese troops occupied Christmas Island on 31 March 1942 without opposition, as the Indian garrison troops had killed their British officers. After unsuccessful attempts to ship phosphate to Japan, most of the population was removed to NEI leaving a small number of locals and 15 Japanese soldiers. No record of mail during the Japanese occupation.

SECTION B: 1946 - 1957

Singapore Administration

CHRISTMAS ISLAND POSTAL AGENCY

On 1 April 1946 the Colony of Singapore comprised the islands of Singapore, Cocos and Christmas. The Christmas Island post office had Agency status and used Singapore stamps and stationery. Registration receipt # 22, Christmas Island Postal Agency 30 May 1946 (30mm datestamp)

書留郵便物受領書 (郵政局)		P-R & P I	Date
Received a Registered Postal Article	No. 22	Addressed to:—	Stamp Received by:—
INSURED FOR	P.D. Dochray Esq. Christmas Island		
Fee			

書留郵便物受領書 (郵政局)		P-R & P I	Date
Received a Registered Postal Article	No. 640	Addressed to:—	Stamp Received by:—
INSURED FOR	R. Atkinson Esq. Christmas Island		
Fee	Indian Ocean		

With the resumption of phosphate mining and increased philatelic mailing, the post office was upgraded and provided with a new datestamp.

Registration receipt # 640, Christmas Island 29 October 1948 (26mm datestamp in blue)

CHRISTMAS ISLAND POST OFFICE

PHILATELIC ACTIVITY

The increased philatelic interest in Christmas Island is illustrated by these CTO stamps and the related registration label (see previous page). It is assumed that these were all the denominations of the BMA overprint available on Christmas Island on the 29 October 1948. Singapore issued the King George VI definitive set inscribed Singapore on 1 September 1948 but it is not known when those stamps were placed on sale on Christmas Island. These CTO strikes may mark the last day of issue for BMA stamps on Christmas Island.

Christmas Island 29 October 1948 (26mm datestamp in black)



PHILATELIC MAILING

Singapore issued the Silver Wedding stamps on 25 October 1948 but it is not known when they went on sale on Christmas Island. Because Mr Atkinson did not mark his many registered covers as First Day, it is possible that they were posted as a Christmas item rather than a FDC. Registration receipt # 798 to 867, Christmas Island 23 December 1948 (26mm datestamp in black)

寄留郵便物受領書 (郵政局) P-R & P I	
Received a Registered Postal Article	No. <u>798 to 867</u> Addressed to:—
INSURED FOR	<u>R Atkinson Esq.</u>
\$	<u>X-1.</u>
Fee	
Date CHRISTMAS ISLAND 23 DEC 48 Stamp Received by:— <i>[Signature]</i>	



PHILATELIC MAIL

By the time that this cover was posted, only the 5 cents was current. BMA overprint stamps used on Christmas Island are hard to find. Why this cover was struck later with the new datestamp is not known.

Christmas Island 12 July 1950 (26mm datestamp in blue), Christmas Island 28 July (30mm datestamp)



Neither of these covers are franked at the appropriate postal rate.
Christmas Island 6 August 1952 (26mm datestamp)