



THE *Postscript*

Tallahassee Stamp & Cover Club

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Tokelau Philately by Gerry York

Tokelau presents an interesting collecting opportunity. Since 1948, Tokelau has issued approximately 425 stamps and miniature sheets which is a very conservative philatelic record. The stamps depict the islands, people, wildlife and economic activities of life on these remote Pacific islands – ideal for new collectors seeking to start a new “one country” collection.

Tokelau comprises three tropical coral atolls – Atafu, Nukunonu and Fakaofu—five square miles in total. It is an area lying midway between Hawaii and New Zealand, 300 miles north of (or a day’s sailing from) Apia, Samoa. Formerly known as the Union Islands, Tokelau was administered as part of the Pacific Ocean colony of the Gilbert and Ellice Islands. In 1925 administration was transferred to New Zealand. The first Tokelau Islands stamp set (Scott 1-3) was issued on June 22, 1948 and depicts scenes from each of the atolls:



The Tokelau Islands were incorporated into New Zealand on January 1, 1949, and their name shortened to Tokelau in December 1976.



Meeting Dates & Presentations, 2014

Jan. 14, Gerry York, Botswana Philately	July 8, Gerry York, United Arab Emirates
Feb. 11, Jerry Davis, Easter Island	Aug. 12, Show Your Collection
March 11, George Harmon, Making Specialty pages	Sept. 9, Mike Francis, ??????????
April 8, Gerry York, Ex-USSR—the “Stans”	Oct. 14, Single Page Exhibit
May 13, Club Auction,	Nov. 11, Gerry York, Antarctic Philately
June 10, Mike Francis, ??????????	Dec. 10, Annual Christmas Party



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NOTICE:

- The APS has notified the club that we have met the membership requirements for free dues for 2014.
- The TS&CC has nominated and elected the existing club officers for another one year term.
- Club member Sam Hendrix has a website where he is selling stamps. The site is www.stampstach.com and his ebay dealer name is stampstach.com. I have seen some good deals on the site and Sam is going to start selling more supplies also. You can contact Sam at Comcast: sam.h@comcast.net
- The editor could use more articles for the *Postscript*. Thanks to those of you who have been contributing over the past year. Mail or email your articles, even rough drafts, and they can be placed in a publishable format.
- The *Postscript* is now being sent out by email except for four members. This has saved the club over a hundred dollars a year and saved the editor many, many hours.
- Dr. Hemanth Vasanthiah’s one frame stamp exhibit, “Early Indian Cancellations” was awarded the Silver-Bronze award at FLOREX 2013. The exhibit also secured the Indian Study Circle Award. Well done Hemanth!
- Since the club meeting in November, 2014, falls on the 11th, Veterans Day, the Senior Center will be closed. The club officers will attempt to move the meeting to another night at the Senior Center or a different location for November.

Tokelau Philately (cont'd) by Gerry York

Many Tokelau stamps feature the flora and fauna of the island – coral (37-40), fish (45-48, 208-212, 353-362a and 406-409), birds (57-60, 190-194, 204-207, 278-281, 331-334, and 349-352), trees (114-119), agricultural livestock (132-137), flowers (138-143 and 260-263), butterflies and moths (213-216), sea turtles (217-221), dolphins (228-231), sea shells (232-236), sea snakes (386-389), whales (238-242), beetles (255-259), crabs (273-277), lizards (288-291), seahorses (293-297) and sharks (308-311).



Tokelau has participated in many Royal omnibus issues beginning with a 1953 single stamp honoring the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth (Scott 4) and most recently, a May 2013 set and souvenir sheet (Scott 413-414) honoring the 60th Anniversary of the Queen's Coronation.



From 1995 through 2011 (represented by a prominent New Zealand stamp dealer), Tokelau issued regular Chinese New Year souvenir sheets (Scott 203, 222, 237, 252, 264, 282, 292, 307, 319, 325, 335, 341, 348, 363, 374, 379, and 385), frequently overprinting them for sale at stamp shows around the world. While many of these issues feature unremarkable graphic designs, the 1995 sheet honoring the Year of The Pig (Scott 203) features the “fishing pigs”

Tokelau Philately *(cont'd)* by Gerry York

of Tokelau, pigs that forage in the surf for food.



Since late 2011, Tokelau's philatelic program has been managed by the New Zealand Post Office: Collectibles Centre, New Zealand Post, Private Bag 3001, Whanganui 4540, New Zealand. A handsome set of definitive stamps (Scott 395-403) was issued on April 11, 2012:

<http://stamps.nzpost.co.nz/shop/international-stamps/tokelau>

Every few years, I mail packages of stamped letters to the Police Chiefs (who also serve as Postmasters) in Atafu, Fakaofu and Nukunonu to obtain covers cancelled in Tokelau itself. On June 10, 2008, I received the cancelled letters from a package I mailed to Nukunonu on February 7, 2007! Usually it takes 3 or more months to get my letters back from Tokelau. I never received an explanation for the delay of over a year in handling the covers, but was glad to get the covers back that is shown below!



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Easter Island Philately by Gerry Davis

The next several pages comprise a fascinating piece about Easter Island penned by club member Jerry Davis and titled "The Navel of the World."

The Navel of the World by Jerry Davis

Rapa Nui, or Easter Island as it is more widely known by most of the world, is one of the more isolated specks of land on Earth. Located in the middle of the southeastern Pacific Ocean, this triangular-shaped island of about 63 square miles, with a north-south axis of less than eight miles and an east-west axis of slightly more than fourteen miles, is more than 2,000 miles from the coast of South America and some 1,500 miles from the island of Tahiti. It was formed by volcanic activity more than two million years ago.



Chile, 2001, #2058/9, Easter Island Archaeology

Today, Easter Island (Isla de Pascua) is most easily identified with the more than 900 hundred large carved statues, or *moai*, that were cut from the island's volcanic rock and are scattered throughout the island. To learn who fashioned and erected these iconic statues, one has to go back in time to about 300-600 AD (linguistic evidence supports this early settlement, but some believe settlement did not occur until several centuries later), when daring Polynesian seafarers first arrived, likely accidentally, bringing chickens and a few other animal species, like the Polynesian rat, with them. Plants, such as, taro, yam, sugar cane, and banana also survived the long voyage. In addition to the flora and fauna, the early settlers brought with them traditions of stone and wood carving.

Chile, 1965, #347



Easter Island Moai

Rapa Nui oral traditions hold that one or two great canoes carried the mythic chief Hotu Matu'a, his immediate and extended families, and other important personages on the settlement expedition. These early explorers came to view Rapa Nui as the "navel of the world" and their belief systems,



Chile, 1986, #719, Raraku Volcano Chile, 1986, #720, Tongariki Ruins which included ancestor worship, remained, for a time, relatively intact.

Easter Island Philately *(cont'd)* by Gerry Davis

Probably one of the first organized projects upon their arrival was to construct a ceremonial site. Mythical founders of certain clans, the ancestors were "kept alive" with the carving and erecting of huge monolithic stone *moai* which rested on vertical, carved or shaped, stone platforms called *ahus*. Priests served as mediums for contacting the

spirit world and guardian spirits, or *aku aku*, provided protection for family dwellings, gardens and animals, and other property. Elaborate ceremonial rituals constituted the final cycle of the Rapa Nui religion.

Over the centuries that followed, *moai* of similar form and of varying size were fashioned and erected on *ahus* around the island's rugged coastline. The largest *moai*, found in situ on the western slope of the extinct volcano Rano Raraku, measures 71' in length and weighs an estimated 270 tons, though the largest ever successfully transported and placed on an *ahu* weighs about 75 tons.



Chile, 2008, Block Souvenir Sheet, Te Pito o te Henua

The *moai* construction materials consisted of basalt, trachyte, and red and gray scoria, but the vast majority were carved from tuff (compressed volcanic ash).

Many of the *moai* were topped off with cylindrical *pukaos*, or 'topknots', carved from red scoria, a result of iron oxidation which gives them a rusty red color.

It is believed by many that the extensive use of the island's limited resources to construct and move the *moai* led to increased dissension and even starvation among the island's population, which may have reached 10,000 at its peak. In particular, the destruction of palm trees played a very significant role in these endeavors to the extent that the most numerous and influential of the clans began to choose sides, eventually resulting in savage clan warfare breaking out in what has been termed the Battle of Poike around 1680.



Chad, 1999, Rano Raraku Moai

Dutch Commander, Jacob Roggeveen, experienced violence when he visited the island on Easter Sunday, April 5, 1722, and an almost fifty-year hiatus resulted before the island was again visited by westerners. These earliest explorers called it Easter Island.

Easter Island Philately (cont'd) by Gerry Davis

Captain James Cook came ashore on Rapa Nui in 1774, at which time the large *moai* were still standing, though some were toppled not long after as the island's very limited resources became further depleted. Cook noted that there was no safe anchorage, no wood for fuel, nor any fresh water worth taking on board. Further, and more importantly, he noted that the inhabitants were few in number and that they planted little more than was sufficient for their numbers.

Though many transitional and profound changes were contemporaneous with, and further exacerbated by, the arrival of these first outside visitors to Rapa Nui, there had existed for some time a growing disenchantment with *moai* construction. Concomitantly, what is known as the "birdman cult" took on increasing importance.

Chile, 1989, Overprint



#1285/6, Folk Art

According to American archaeologist Jo Anne Van Tilburg, this cult was "Centered upon a universal creator god and provider called Makemake, who became incarnate in the *tangata manu*, or birdman." Some of the birdman's cult rituals grew out of the statue cult and were moved from the *ahu* sites to a location on the island's northwest coast known as Orongo.



Chile, 2011, #2458, Rapa Nui Masks

Katherine Routledge, an early Rapa Nui investigator, believed that the Orongo birdman petroglyphs, as well as woodcarvings, represented birdmen in much the same way that *moai* represented deceased, deified ancestors.

The birdman ritual was initiated each year consistent with the expected arrival of the Sooty Tern (*Sterna fuscata*), a sea bird that had been extirpated from Rapa Nui and now returned only to two small islets offshore to nest and lay its eggs.

Four men, who represented the powerful and politically dominant exclusively, at an appointed time (usually July), descended the steep slopes of Rano Kau volcano and swam treacherous, shark-infested waters to await the first Sooty Tern eggs to be laid, usually in September or October.

UK, Easter Island Statue



Hakananna, SS #2409

The first participant warrior who found an egg and returned it to Rapa Nui unbroken was feted, along with the group he represented, until the ritual was conducted again the next year.

In the years following the Roggeveen, Gonzalez y Haedo, and Cook visits, Rapa Nuans were kidnapped by adventuresome exploiters to help with mining in South America and seal harvesting in the southern oceans to such a great extent that the overall island population dropped precipitously, and only those individuals who managed to find refuge in the island's caves escaped capture. Clan warfare, near starvation, and even cannibalism all contributed to a tenuous existence for the remaining population until their

Easter Island Philately *(cont'd)* by Gerry Davis

numbers reached a low of approximately 110 inhabitants by 1880.

In 1888, Chile laid claim to Easter Island and has governed the island since that time.

Commencing with the interest generated by the Thor Heyerdahl expedition in the 1950s, significant Rapa Nui archaeological study and site restoration began and continues to the present day with some of the *moai* being reerected and covered to forestall erosion.

Nineteen ninety-five saw Rapa Nui National Park established as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO.



Chile, 1988, #1318/21, Isla De Pascua, Annexation Centennial

President's Message *from Mike Francis*

This year's Christmas Party was fun and enjoyed by all. Thank you for all of you that came to the party and, especially, to those of you who brought extra "goodies."

We have a busy year coming up in 2014. Gerry York has informed me that we now have 7 or 8 dealers signed up for TALPEX 2014 on March 22-23. We will have show notices in Linn's and the American Philatelic Magazine. Save your money (something hard to do this time of year) because the dealers have been bringing well-rounded stamp inventories.

I would like to thank all of you who gave presentations at the club meetings. Also, thanks to those of you who provided me articles for the *Postscript*. It is a big help so

please keep up the effort. The *Postscript* is not hard to publish when members provide me some material. Thank You!

Some of you have requested that I try to get my grandson, the famous and infamous (not sure which on any given day) 14 year old guitar master, to come to a meeting and play one or two guitar solos. Well, I asked him if he would give us a short presentation and he said he would be glad to play a few "blues" songs. Sometime within the next three months we might see Hub Cub at the club meeting.

All of you have a Merry Christmas, a Happy New Year, and be safe. See you in January. Mike

The Postscript

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