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# THE BURNS, PHILP PACIFIC ISLANDS (NOTE) ISSUE

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## An Important Discovery

The recent discovery of two unissued one pound and two five pound notes of the Burns, Philp Pacific Islands (Note) Issue has solved a mystery which began when a note issue register was found in the Burns, Philp archives recently!

The register titled the "Pacific Island Note Issue Register No. 1" contained details of an issue of one and five pound notes for various Pacific Islands. It contained details of the different issues, including the number of each issue, date of the notes, signatures, date of issue, name of the ship which carried each issue, final destination and date destroyed. Not all details are given for each issue especially the final destination.<sup>2</sup>

Both the one and five pound notes are of similar design and follow closely the designs of previous Burns, Philp note issues for Port Moresby and Samarai, British New Guinea and Thursday Island. The title used on both notes is "PACIFIC ISLANDS ISSUE" with a sub title "SOLOMON, GILBERT, ELLICE AND OTHER GROUPS". The words "Please pay the Bearer on Demand the sum of One Pound or Five Pounds Sterling" is placed in two lines in the centre. In the lower left hand corner the words "These orders are negotiable at the Agencies of BURNS, PHILP & COMPANY LIMITED, in the Various Groups also on board their Steamers trading among the Islands, and are payable in gold at the offices in Sydney and Brisbane of BURNS, PHILP & COMPANY,

LIMITED", appear in six lines. The words "ONE POUND" or "FIVE POUNDS" appear on each border and the letters "BP & Co Lo" appear conjoined in a circle in each corner of the note. The denomination £1 or £5 also appears in a circle in the upper left and upper right of the note. The words "BURNS, PHILP & COMPANY, LIMITED" appear faintly, in large letters in three lines in the centre on the underprint.

An important feature of each note is the serial number. On the one pound notes the numbers are 4999 and 5000 and on the five pounds 999 and 1000. The note issue register states that only 2,500 one pound and 250 five pound notes were issued. The discovery of these notes indicates that as well as the numbers issued quite a lot more were printed. Possibly a total of 5,000 one pound notes and 1,000 five pounds.

The watermarked paper is also of interest. The watermark on the two five pound notes consists of the word "J WHATMA(N)" in one line and the date "1905" below. The watermark J WHATMAN is probably that of the firm of James Whatman, the English paper makers. James Whatman I (1702-59) and James Whatman II (1741-98) gave their name to hand made line rag papers in thick sheets used for watercolour painting. Although the two one pound notes do not have any visible watermark they are printed on the same paper as the five pounds.

<sup>1</sup> — Mira, Dr. W. J., "Mystery Notes of the South Pacific", *Australian Coin Review*, October 1983, p.9.

<sup>2</sup> — Mira, Dr. W. J., "The Burns, Philp Pacific Islands Note Issue Register No. 1", *International Bank Note Society Journal* Vol. 23, No. 1, 1984, page 9.

References — K. Buckley and K. Klugman, *The History of Burns, Philp — The Australian Company in the South Pacific*, Sydney, 1981.

K. Buckley and K. Klugman, *The Australian Presence in the Pacific, Burns, Philp 1914-1946*, Sydney, 1983.

## DESCRIPTION

### One Pound

Front — Main Print. Dark Blue.  
 Lettering in lower left corner, orange.  
 Under Print. Pale Brown.  
 Serial numbers. Black, two sets on front and four on back.

Back — Blank, except for serial numbers.

Size — 204 x 131 mm.

Paper — very thin lightweight paper, manufactured by J. Whatman, England.

Watermark — no visible watermark.

Printer — unknown.

### Five Pounds

Front — Main print. Dark Brown.  
 Lettering in lower left corner, orange.  
 Under print. Pale Green.  
 Serial numbers. Black, two sets on front and four on back.

Back — Blank except for serial numbers.

Size — 204 x 132 mm

Paper — Very thin lightweight paper, manufactured by J. Whatman, England.

Watermark — "J. WHATMA(N) 1905" in two lines.

Printer — unknown.

