

The 1932 CAUTION Labels

by Stephen F Prest

Introduction

In October last year, Jeff Long published an article⁽¹⁾ describing the Post Office's use of "CAUTION" and "NOTICE" labels that were affixed to the back of compulsorily registered letters. I have a number of covers from the New Zealand King George VI period with examples of CAUTION Labels with different text and formats as compared to the ones described in Jeff's article. Jeff's article noted that the message content of these CAUTION labels seem to change over time and that their use fell away by the late 1960's with the introduction of NOTICE labels.

Gathering information about these labels from published sources and examples from Harold Waite's collection in addition to my own, resulted in seven distinct text format types being identified. I contacted Jeff and in the ensuing exchange of information we were able to make a preliminary determination of the Earliest Known Use dates (or EKU's) of these labels.

This article describes the 1932 CAUTION Label which we have identified as having an EKU of 19 September 1932. The latest example of use of the 1932 Label identified to date is 14 March 1949.

Nomenclature

The Post Office typically used the designation "**[Mail 6.**" printed in the label's upper right hand corner as their Post Office Form identifier. Variations with or without the bracket and with or without the full stop have been observed. The four possible combinations for each variation of the Form designator are as follows:

1 - [Mail 6.

1a - [Mail 6

1b - Mail 6.

1c - Mail 6

All of the 1932 CAUTION Label examined to date exhibit either Type 1 or Type 1a Form designators, that is, they all feature the bracket but occur either with or without the full stop. The significance of these variations, if any, is not currently known.

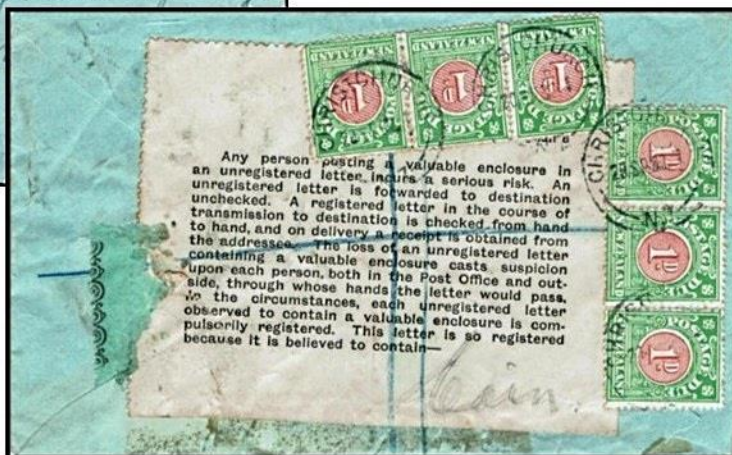
The 1932 CAUTION Label

The 1932 CAUTION Label and cover illustrated below shows the currently Earliest Known Use of these labels as being postmarked 19 SE 32 in Lincoln with the Type 1a (no full stop) Form affixed on the back of a compulsorily registered letter mailed to Christchurch. In all nine examples of the 1932 labels been identified to date, five are Type 1 and, four, Type 1a.

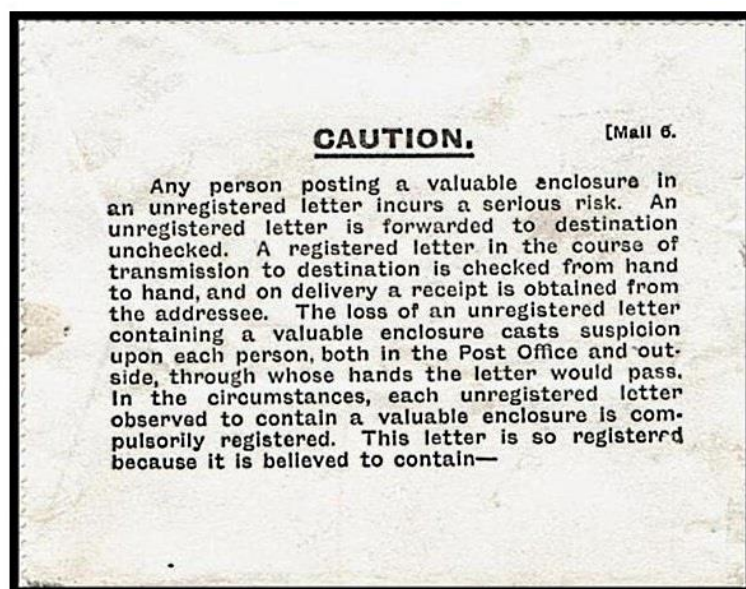
The 1932 CAUTION Label message is characterized by an extensive single 14 line paragraph advising recipients that "Any person posting a valuable enclosure in an unregistered letter incurs a serious risk." and goes on to explain the care the Post Office takes to make sure properly registered mail arrives safely. This letter was believed to contain a "COIN" (written in manuscript) which is the reason it was compulsorily registered by the Post Office. The important dimensional characteristics of the 1932 Label are also shown below.



Courtesy of the
Jeff Long Collection



Earliest Known Use of the 1932 CAUTION Label (Type 1a – no Full Stop)
affixed to Compulsorily Registered letter - Postmarked 19 SP 32 from Lincoln to Christchurch



1932 CAUTION Label

Text Message (14 lines)
76 mm wide beginning
"Any person posting ..."

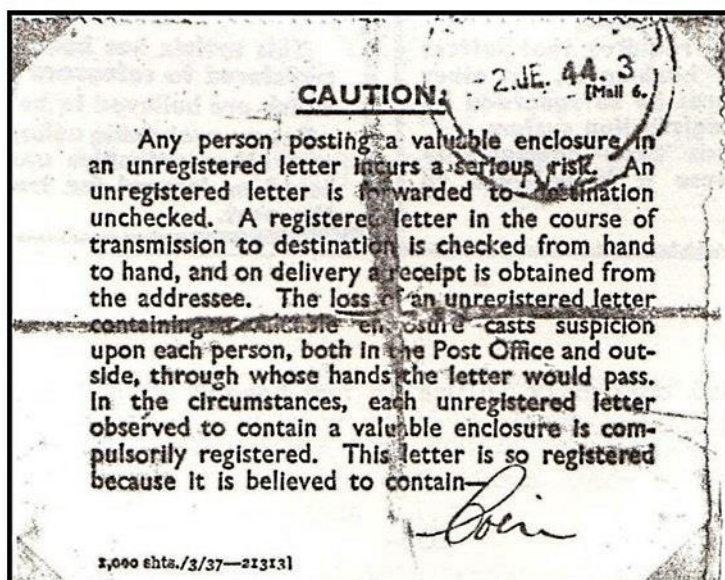
Type 1 Form " [Mail 6.]"
Bracket; with Full Stop

CAUTION.

21 mm in length
underlined with a full stop

Overall Dimensions
76mm (H) x 97mm (W)

Rev Voyce records the existence of a 1932 (Type 1) Label with the printing order details printed in the lower left corner of the label ⁽²⁾. The label illustrated below comes from a printing run of 1000 sheets in March 1937. This particular label received a cancellation marking (2 JE 44) which places its use more than seven years after its actual production.



Courtesy of the
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The Earliest and Latest Known Use dates of the two 1932 CAUTION Label types are tabulated below.

<u>Earliest Known Use of the 1932 CAUTION Labels</u>		
	Postmark	Route
Type 1 (with Full Stop)	6 SEP 1934	Auckland to Melbourne, Australia
Type 1a (w/o Full Stop)	19 SP 32	Lincoln to Christchurch
<u>Latest Known Use of the 1932 CAUTION Labels</u>		
Type 1 (with Full Stop)	14 MR 49	Dargaville to Whangarei
Type 1a (w/o Full Stop)	2 JE 44	Unknown (<i>ex Voyce</i>) ⁽²⁾

Acknowledgements: The author wishes to acknowledge the contributions of Jeff Long, Harold Waite, Paul Wales and Richard Wooders have graciously provided permission for information and images from their respective collections or websites to be incorporated into the database assembled for this series of articles on CAUTION Labels

References:

- (1) J. Long "Compulsorily Registered in New Zealand", *CAPTAIN COOK*, Newsletter of the Christchurch (NZ) Philatelic Society, Whole Number 767, Vol 43, No 9, (October 2015) pp 130-132
- (2) Rev A.H. Voyce, "New Zealand Registered Mail Markings", by the Postal History Society of New Zealand, 1971 pp. 44-48