

The John Amiet perfins

The *World Perfins Catalog* lists one perfin from Christmas Island and one from the Cocos (Keeling) Islands. Both perfins are the large capital A and the user is identified as John Amiet.

There are actually two Christmas Islands, but the one we're talking about is located in the Indian Ocean, south of Java and about 600 miles from Singapore. It is administered as an Australian External Territory and has had its own stamps since it became a part of Australia in 1958. The Cocos (Keeling) Islands are located about 200 miles further away from Singapore than Christmas Island. They, too, are a Territory of Australia. The Cocos (Keeling) Islands are known in some circles for their first settler, Alexander Hare, an English adventurer, who is reported to have established a harem on one of the islands. A few years later Hare left and a more reputable businessman established a copra business in the islands.

One can easily conjure up all sorts of visions of John Amiet



The A perfin (upper right) on a stamp from the Cocos (Keeling) Islands. The JA perfin (lower left) on Australian and Christmas Island stamps.

holding forth in the islands, perhaps running a thriving business, and using perfins to control his postage supplies. As exciting as that may sound, it isn't quite factual.

John Amiet is a 58-year-old banker who spent part of his career in the Fiji Islands and in Papua New Guinea and is now retired and living in

Queensland. It is doubtful that any of the A perfins ever saw the Christmas, Cocos (Keeling) Islands, or the Australian Antarctic Territory, although it appears on the stamps of all three. The A is also known on the stamps of Australia. The key is that all these stamps are equally valid for use in Australia itself and the A is the personal perfin of Amiet.

Amiet bought the A perforator at an auction in Brisbane late in 1993. It was first used on Australian stamps on February 1, 1994. It is rarely used these days because it is very old and not in good repair. The machine was designed as an industrial perforator and can punch all the letters of the alphabet from A to Z plus a small c (for Mc). It was made in Manchester, England, and how it wound up in Australia remains a mystery.

Amiet has been a perfins collector for nearly 30 years and developed his own perfins as a reflection of his interest.

He also has another vanity perfin, a JA, which also is also known on Australian, Antarctic Territory, Christmas, and Cocos stamps. It was first used in 1996.

This is #13 in a series on vanity perfins by *Bulletin* editor Floyd Walker. Special thanks go to John Amiet for his generous assistance.