

## THE FIRST POSTAGE STAMP DESIGN – THE FLORIN HEAD

In 1865 Joubert de la Ferte, the engraver of the De La Rue Colonial Head of Queen Victoria, adapted the design by replacing the diadem with a Gothic crown. The new design was later referred to by the Crown Agents as "The Florin Head".

The following DIE PROOFS show experimental designs for the Florin head. The crown was retained in this format, but further changes were made to the Queen's hair.

British Honduras was the only Colony to use the Florin Head.

Endorsed in manuscript

*"Made as Expt for 1d Postage"*



Note hairstyle differences

ex Tucker



ex Tucker

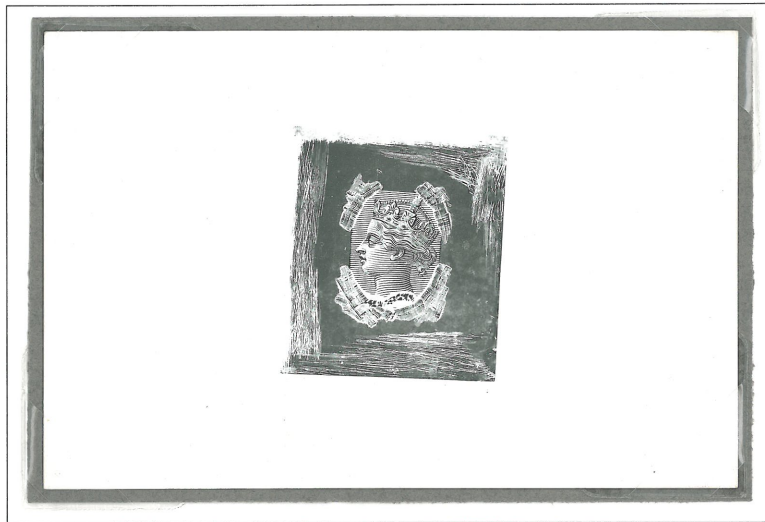


## THE FIRST DEFINITIVE ISSUE (1865)

The first issue of British Honduras stamps was ordered by E.Sheldon of Lime Street, London (known as the "Agent for Honduras"). Preparation of the dies and plates was invoiced at £225 on 11 October 1865. 200 sheets were printed at the special price of £1 the lot. Perforating and packaging cost a further £10.

### DIE PROOFS

This proof appears to show initial signs of the garter around the Queen's head.

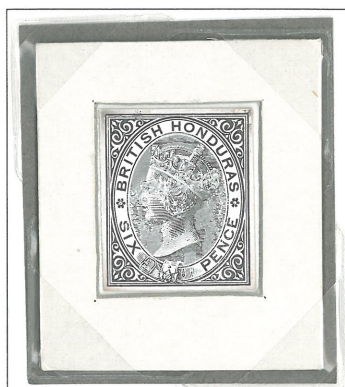


ex Tucker

Finished design.  
Note further changes to Queen Victoria's hairstyle



**Green die proof**  
dated "Sept 19, 1865"



**Black die proof** cut down and prepared for presentation in a sunken card mount.



## THE FIRST DEFINITIVE ISSUE (1865)

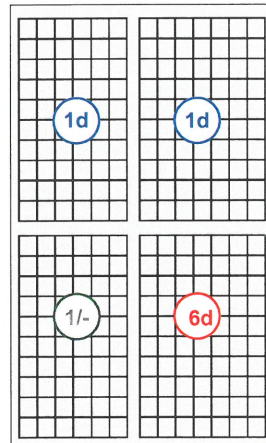
The first printing of British Honduras stamps was the one penny pale blue, sixpence rose and one shilling green, each printed on separate panes within a single sheet (see illustration). 200 sheets (24,000 X 1d, 12,000 X 6d, 12,000 X 1/-) were received in Belize on 28<sup>th</sup> November 1865 and put on sale on 1 December.

The second and third printings were in sheets of 120 arranged in two horizontal panes of sixty with a central gutter. Only one penny duties were ordered. They were printed in a darker blue than the first printing. The second printing (invoiced 31 May 1869) was for 120,000 stamps and the third printing (invoiced 6 May 1871) was for 24,000 stamps.

1865-71. No watermark. Perf 14.



Pale blue  
(1<sup>st</sup> printing)



Sheet format of  
first printing



Darker blue  
(2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> printings)



Wing margin copies from central gutter. Note that the one penny can have the wing margin on right or left, but the sixpence can only be on left and the one shilling can only be on right.



ex Hart (1978)



Strip of six 1865 one shilling definitives, each cancelled with the large "A06" obliterator and showing a wing margin at right. This is the longest possible strip as the pane was only six stamps wide (6 X 10).



Date..... 18 lbs. oz. No. **692** Colour *Blue.*

"Honduras Postage."



- 1 " Deep Antwerp Blue Ink No. 630
- 1 " Pale " " " " 629
- 2 Long Silvine Varnish.

Ink recipe for the one penny "Honduras Postage" stamp. The recipes for the Deep Antwerp Blue and Pale Antwerp Blue inks (nos. 630 and 629 respectively) are shown below. The block of four dummy stamps shows the colour to be expected. Recipes 597 to 1000 were fugitive inks. On reverse of this recipe is recipe No. 696 for an amber "Mauritius Bill Stamp".

Fugitive Inks.

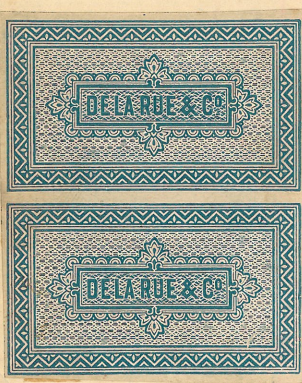
Date..... 18 lbs. oz. No. **629** Colour *Pale Antwerp Blue. in Silvine.*



- 10 " Pale Antwerp Blue, (dry)
- 6 " Long Silvine Varnish.
- 6 " Middle " "
- 1 " Thin " "

Used for Mixing

Date..... 18 lbs. oz. No. **630** Colour *Deep Antwerp Blue. in Silvine.*



- 10 " Deep Antwerp Blue (dry.)
- 10 " Long Silvine Varnish.
- 10 " Middle " "

Used for Mixing.



## THE FIRST DEFINITIVE ISSUE (1865)

Examples of the first issue used on cover.

ex Burrus (1972), Addiss (1991) and Richards (2005).



**6 September 1869.** Front to Aberdeen, Mississippi bearing four 1865 **one penny pale blue** definitives (single and horizontal strip of three with truncated wing margin). The stamps are each cancelled with the large "A06" obliterator, and two are additionally tied with a New Orleans transit datestamp of 11 September 1869. The "STEAMSHIP 10" handstamp denotes ten cents internal US postage unpaid. Belize type BSC-2 datestamp of "SP 6 69". The US and West Indies postal rate was 4d per half ounce.

**Type BSC-2:** ERD = 6 July 1867 LRD = 15 March 1880.

ex Harper (2009).



**15 July 1872.** Cover to New Orleans, Louisiana bearing four 1865 **one penny dark blue** definitives (defective single and vertical strip of three). The stamps are each cancelled with the large "A06" obliterator.. Belize type BSC-2 datestamp of 15 July 1872. Sent via Kingston, Jamaica where it was backstamped on 20 July then forwarded to New York. The cover bears a boxed "TRANSIT" mark and a New York Steamship "10" datestamp of 25 July to denote ten cents internal US postage unpaid.. The US and West Indies postal rate was 4d per half ounce.



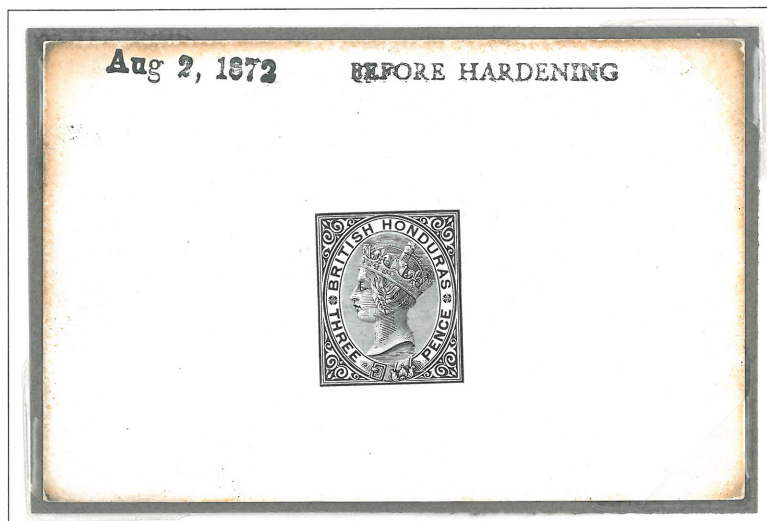
## THE SECOND DEFINITIVE ISSUE (1872-79)

After the dark blue reprints of the first issue were complete, the dies were handed over to the Crown Agents, who placed all subsequent orders. The second definitive issue was printed on Crown CC watermarked paper, perf 12½ from 1872-74 and perf 14 from 1877-79. The 1d, 3d, 6d and 1/- duties were printed in a single pane of 60 without a gutter, so no wing margins are found. The 4d duty was printed in panes of 30 on paper watermarked in units of 60, so examples of marginal watermark inscriptions are sometimes found on the stamps.

### DIE PROOFS

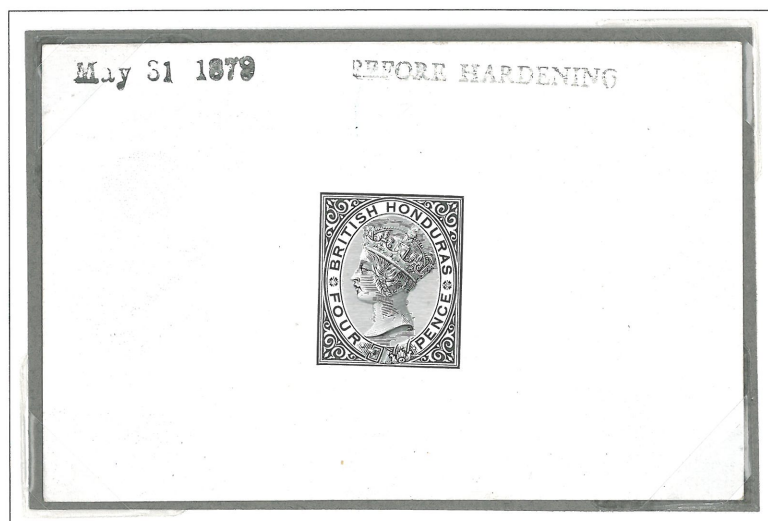
Two new duties had been added for the second issue so dies had to be prepared for the 3d and 4d values.

**Three pence die**  
(invoiced 14 August 1872)



**Die proof** cut down and prepared for presentation in a sunken card mount.

**Four pence die**  
(invoiced 12 July 1879)

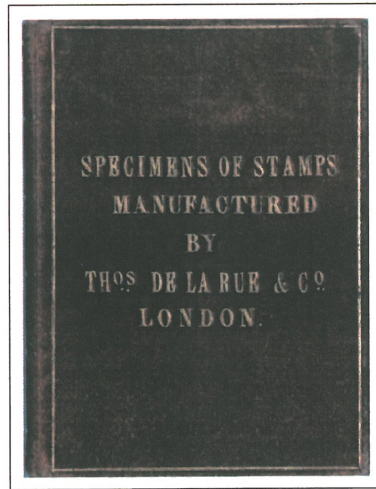




## THE FIRST DEFINITIVE ISSUE (1865)

### “ARCHIVE” SPECIMENS

The pre-UPU specimen overprints arise from two sources – retained archive samples and marketing samples. The examples below arise from the latter category. The illustrations show the sample book and the full page from which the samples were taken.



Front cover of Specimen sample book ex De La Rue archives



British Honduras set taken from the Specimen sample book illustrated above showing the 1865 issue overprinted with Samuel type D5.



Reduced photocopy of the page from which the above stamps were taken, showing also stamps from Jamaica.



**“ARCHIVE” SPECIMENS**

A selection of stamps from the first (no watermark) and second (watermark crown CC) definitive issues overprinted “SPECIMEN” or “CANCELLED” showing the range of different types used to preserve archive samples.



e

No wmk. Type D2



e

No wmk. Type D5



e

Crown CC. Type D8



Crown CC. Type D11



Crown CC. Type D4  
*ex Latto & Foxley*



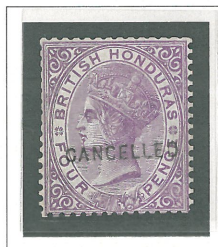
e

Crown CC. Type D5  
*ex Samuel*

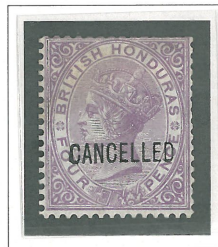


e

Crown CC. Type D8



Crown CC. Type D4  
*ex Latto & Foxley*



e

Crown CC. Type D7



e

Crown CC. Type D8



Crown CC. Type D11  
*ex Samuel & Foxley*



No wmk. Type D2



e

No wmk. Type D2  
*ex Samuel*



No wmk. Type D5



e

No wmk. Type D5



Crown CC. Type D11  
*ex Samuel*



## ESSAY FOR BRITISH HONDURAS KEYPLATE

On 13 January 1891 the Crown Agents ordered the "6 CENTS" on three pence ultramarine issue, but they also asked for designs from the British Honduras Keyplate and the Universal Postage Keyplate. The colour had to be the same as the British 2½d, as laid down by UPU standards. These designs were sent on 19 January.

The essay shown below, prepared by De La Rue and dated "JAN 19<sup>th</sup> 91", was a part of the proposals, being a cheaper alternative to individual designs for each duty. In the event the still cheaper Universal Postage Keyplate was selected and an order place in March 1891. More surcharged issues were prepared to meet interim shortages of certain duties.



ex De La Rue  
archives  
(V09-0304)

Queen's head essay in blue and grey with details picked out in Chinese White. Value tablet is blank. Hand-painted on tracing paper.

There must have been some reservations about the Universal Postage Keyplate, because the one cent, five cents and ten cents duties were not ordered from this keyplate until 1895. The use of provisionals for the five cents may be explained by the small usage (the postal rate was 6c) but certainly not the one cent.



## THE "SIX" ESSAYS

These were unaccepted essays for the subsequent "6 and bar" on "10 CENTS" on fourpence mauve issue. Presumably it was felt that the numeral surcharge was more distinct.

The British Honduras Postmaster W.J.McKinney asserted that the stamp was never issued to the public. However it is known that at least one stamp was given to an officer of H.M.S.Buzzard and was postally used. Other copies are known used to New York by Carl Metzgen, a P.O. clerk, who stole them from the GPO. Several mint copies also reached the market.

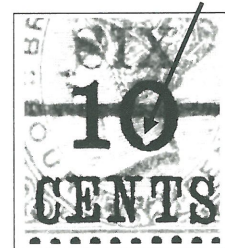
The BH Executive Council dismissed Metzgen and pronounced all circulating copies to be forgeries, except the one postally used copy. It was claimed that 30 copies were printed and that the GPO still held 29. This was not accepted; it is believed that the circulating copies are genuine essays fraudulently issued to the public and (at least) two panes of 30 of the issue with bar are known to have been issued.

- (i) Overprinted "SIX" without bar.

As these copies show, the red printing was oily and unclear, particularly because the surcharge was applied over the previous surcharge..



- (ii) Overprinted "SIX" with bar.



Corner block of 15 showing the varieties:  
R2/1. Broken bar  
R3/2. Broken "N" in "CENTS"

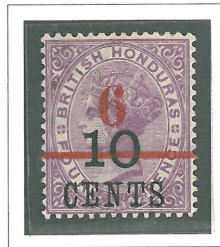
Marginal copy from R5/4 showing the variety "damaged 0 in 10".



## LOCAL SURCHARGES (Letter rate reduced from 10c to 6c)

In 1891 the foreign letter rate was reduced from ten cents to six cents per half ounce. Pending delivery of six cents stamps from De La Rue ("6 CENTS" on threepence ultramarine), a provisional was prepared locally by surcharging the redundant "10 CENTS" on fourpence mauve with a red "6" and bar. Problems arose with legibility of the red ink, so the second part of the printing employed black ink. Several constant surcharge varieties are found in both overprint colours and can be seen in the full panes on the following sheets. The issue date in 1891 is not known. It has been argued that it must have been before the issue of the 1891 6c on 3d ultramarine, but it is also possible that a decision was taken to continue with the surcharging to render existing stamp stocks usable.

### (i) Red surcharge



### (ii) Black surcharge



No report exists in the local Gazette of remainders being offered for sale, but gummed cancelled stamps are known bearing later (1910) postmarks.

26 May 1910



18 May 1910



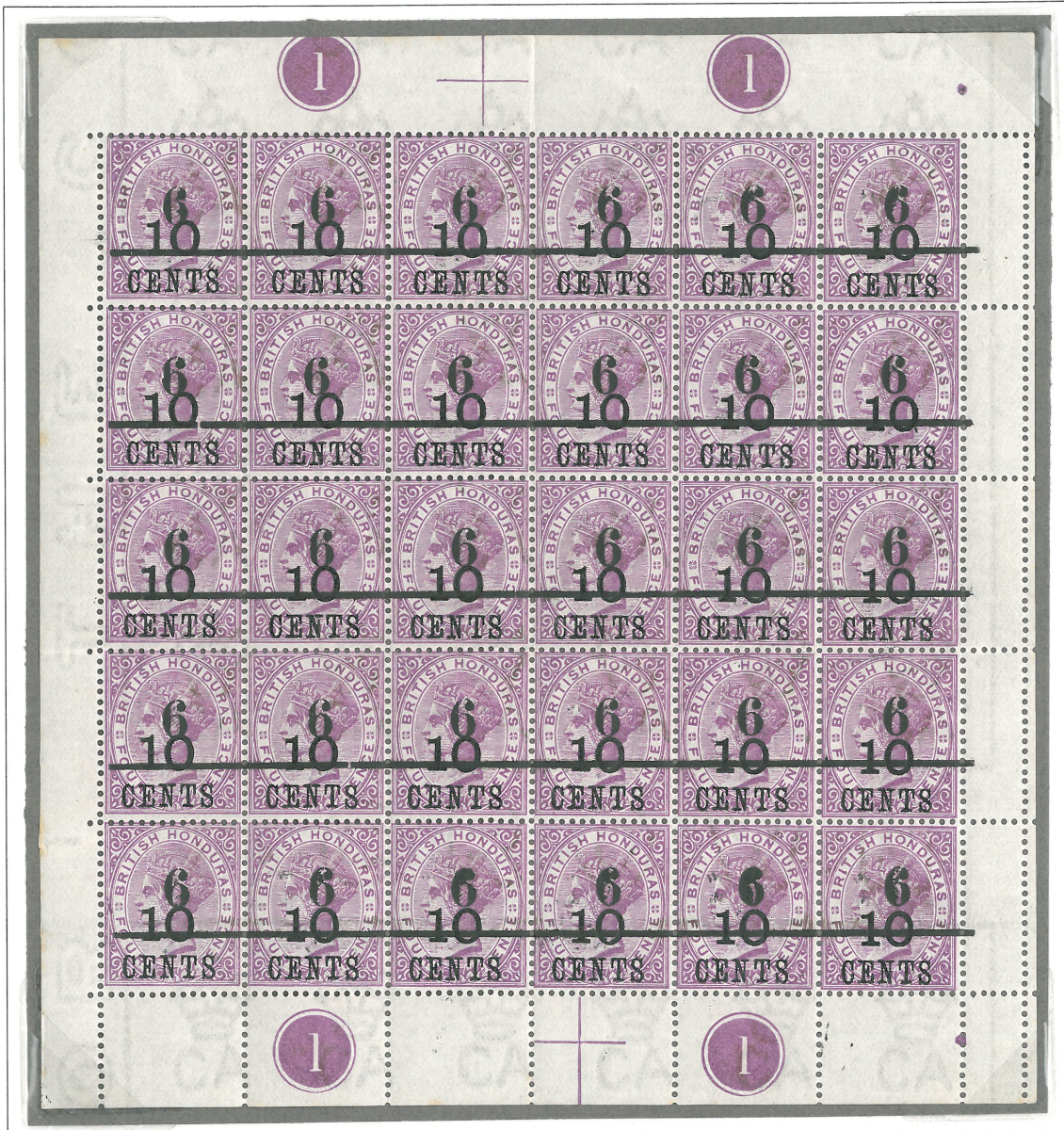
**Variety:** Surcharge misplaced (too low)





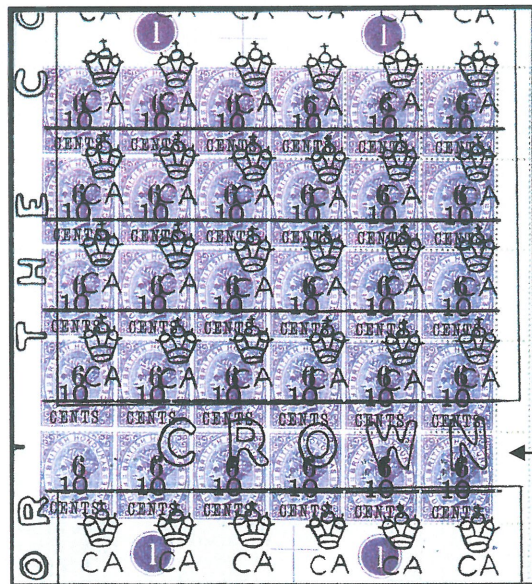
## LOCAL SURCHARGES

November 1891. "6 and bar" in black on "10 CENTS" on fourpence mauve – complete pane with marginal watermark.



### Marginal Watermark.

This pane shows a part of the "CROWN AGENTS" horizontal marginal watermark inscription on the fourth and fifth rows as illustrated alongside. The vertical margin bore the words "CROWN AGENTS FOR THE COLONIES". The watermarked paper was laid out for sheets of 4 X 60 stamp panes, so this printing on discrete panes of 30 simply did not fit!



Photocopy