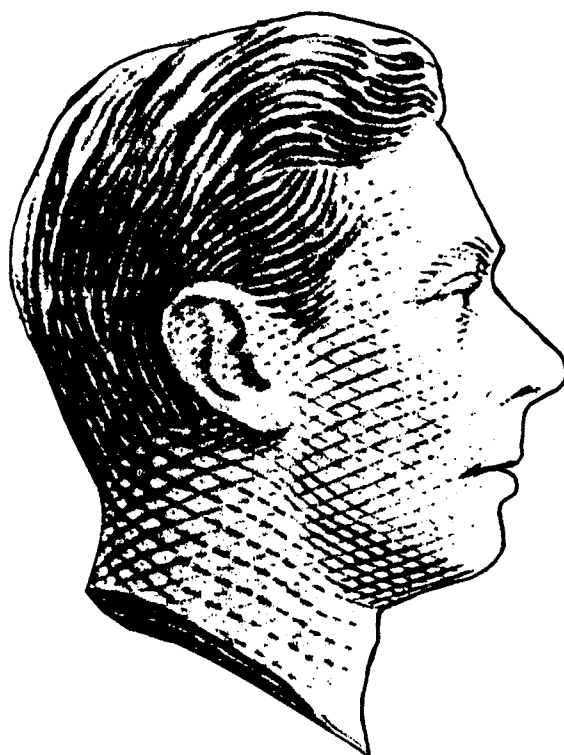


2/1998

THE KING GEORGE VI COLLECTORS SOCIETY



NOTES ON A DISPLAY PRESENTED
BY MEMBERS OF THE SOCIETY
ON THURSDAY 29TH JANUARY 1998
TO
THE ROYAL PHILATELIC SOCIETY, LONDON

THE KING GEORGE VI COLLECTORS SOCIETY

The Society was founded in 1960 by the late Frank Saunders, with the aim to draw together all those interested in the stamps of the reign of King George VI, so that they might pass on their knowledge to each other, record all that they knew for future generations, pursue joint studies of the stamps issued and so enlarge the philatelic knowledge for the benefit of all.

These aims hold good today with still a great deal of research yet to be carried out. As the years have progressed, members have expanded into the field of postal history for the period, where again there is still much to be discovered and recorded.

The membership, starting with a humble 15 people, now stands at approximately 385 residing in 23 different countries.

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INTRODUCTION

As we approach the new millennium the philatelic student is still very much affected by national and world events which took place during the era that embraced the reign of King George VI making this a particularly interesting period.

It must have been a perplexing, and sometimes frustrating and confusing time for those involved in stamp production for the Crown Colonies. Portraits, photographs and artwork for both the coronation and new definitive issues were well advanced when King Edward VIII abdicated in December 1936. This left the Crown Agents and the printers just five months to prepare, print and despatch new designs to mark the Coronation of King George VI on 12th May 1937. The remoteness of some of the colonies served only by regular, if infrequent, sea mail, only exacerbated the problems, which nevertheless were successfully overcome. It was a further mark of success that by March of the following year the new definitive issues were on sale within the colonies.

The outbreak of war in September 1939 brought further problems. Not only did the printing firms lose their skilled workers but also bomb and fire damage took their toll. Sub-contractors were subsequently used for both printing and perforating. War-time shortages adversely affected the supplies of paper, pigments, ink and gum. These factors brought about perforation and watermark varieties, changes of paper and coatings, varying gums, plate flaws, re-entries, re-touches and locally overprinted issues. Even when peace came it was not always possible to maintain quality and in a period of austerity, some of the Crown Colonies continued to use the same definitive design to the end of the reign. It was not until 1956 that the last King George VI stamps were replaced by those of Queen Elizabeth II.

In general terms the Dominions and their associated territories with their own domestic security printers were not affected as much as in the United Kingdom, although shortages of materials and personnel had to be overcome. The issues of the time have their share of shades

and varieties but the complexities of production and delivery were not so great.

Postal history has all the usual facets for study during the reign - changing postal rates, different methods of transport, varying routes (particularly those created by war), the development of air routes, used abroad, types of cancellation, cachets, registered mail, postal stationery, civil and military censorship, forces mail and airgraphs.

In conclusion, may I take this opportunity on behalf of our members, to thank the Royal Philatelic Society for the opportunity to display to them, a selection of our material. We hope that having seen our exhibits there may be those amongst you who would wish to join us in our continuing search for information.

Brian J W Rogers
Chairman

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Committee of the King George VI Collectors Society extend their grateful thanks to the following members, without whose contributions this Display would not have been possible.

A G Belfield, D F Boakes, D V Brookfield, B S Cook, G M Cooper,
J A C Farmer, C A Freeland, J W Haley, H A H James, I W Little,
D Littlewort, E L Needham, L Powell and B J W Rogers.

SUMMARY OF FRAMES (1 - 52)

ERRORS, RARITIES & VARIETIES (1 - 6)

Displayed here are a selection of errors, rarities and varieties issued during the reign of King George VI. The 54 sheets are arranged by issuing "country" and include some 350 items from approximately 35 different postal administrations. In the case of some of these, there may only be a single item, this being the only one of interest listed for that country. For others the selection may only be a part of the unusual stamps known.

Among the more interesting items are included several nice GE definitive errors, the 1951 Australia 7 ½d imperf 3 sides pair in the top of the sheet block of 16, a wide range of Bermuda key plate high value flaws, scarce Japanese Occupation overprints of Brunei and North Borneo, the Grenada 1938/50 2 1/2d perf 12.5 x 13.5, the India Gandhi official overprint set, the Nauru 1948 2 1/2d imperf between horizontal pair, New Zealand 1936/61 1 1/2d official perf 14 x 13.5, Sarawak 1947 3 cent green with albino overprint, Solomon Islands 1939-51 2 1/2d pair imperf horizontally, Somaliland 1938 5 Rupee pair-imperf between and Southern Rhodesia 1937 1/- double print of frame in a block of 4.

Other items include major errors of watermark, perforation and printing as well as a wide range of less obvious constant flaws, all of which are highlighted where not obvious.

COMMONWEALTH DIE & PLATE PROOFS (7 - 11)

A selection of Die and Plate Proofs from across the Commonwealth that have come onto the philatelic market over the years.

MAJOR VARIETIES (12 -14)

A selection of major varieties from the King George VI period.

BRITISH HONDURAS (15 - 18)

Just one definitive series was issued by this Colony throughout the reign of King George VI, mainly depicting its produce. Printed by Bradbury, Wilkinson there are no know errors and only one variety. During 1946 the Crown Agents placed an order for a single value, the 2 cent, to be printed. This was perforated 12 on a Line perforator as compared to all other printings and values which utilised an 11.5 x 11 Comb perforator.

This display details and shows the various printings for each of the 12 values issued, the quantities and despatch dates being taken from the Crown Agents records. Only the 4th printing of the 10 cent currently evades identification, which is probably due to the skills of Bradbury, Wilkinson in colour matching. In some instances the release date appears to be at odds with the despatch date. This is due to that from 1942 onwards the Crown Agents retained a proportion of most printings for release in London and this on occasion preceded the despatch date for supplies to the Colony.

The display includes commercially used examples of the lower values all in their correct context and concludes with photographic essays of the rejected De La Rue designs for this issue. During the mid 1930's it was common practice by De La Rue to submit their essays, slightly larger than the finished product, by this method.

GRENADE (19 - 21)

The 1938-50 issue displayed here was the work of three different printers but was also unusual in that it was first released with most denominations up to the 3d having two different perforations. Various shades, perforations and papers are shown for the values to 5/-, with particular note to the perf 12.65 of September 1943 compared to the more usual 12.5.

The 10/- value is interesting in that it was printed on both wet and dry papers. The wet or "dampened" paper shrunk when dry, resulting in the frame being approximately 1mm narrower in width. There were 10 printings of this value, the fourth of these being very scarce, mostly released in London. Genuinely used copies are almost impossible to find, the one here unfortunately bears a "Madame Joseph" forged post-mark.

The 1951 issue, that completes this Colony, adopted the original Queen Victoria frame design for its low values.

GULF AGENCIES (22 - 25)

These next four frames depict the King George VI stamps of Great Britain "Overprinted and Surcharged" for use in the British Postal Agencies in Eastern Arabia and the Gulf. They start with the definitive and commemorative issues, including some of the varieties, and are followed by Postal History items showing Commercial, Cross and Philatelic usage.

KENYA, UGANDA & TANGANYIKA (26 - 28)

A study of the definitive issue of 1938-52 with perforation, paper, and colour changes and illustrating various printings, as well as the major varieties.

LEEWARD ISLANDS (29 - 30)

The fine old Keyplate designs of three previous reigns were only continued by Leeward Islands and Mauritius for the low values and Bermuda, Leeward Islands and Nyasaland for the high values. Consequently these issues have given much enjoyment to collectors in the scope for study of the head-plate over different colonies and values, and of the duty plate over various printings.

For Leeward Islands the only real printer's errors occur on the £1 value from the September 1951 printing, where due to mis-feeding into the printing press, one complete sheet of 60 stamps exist with an inverted watermark, one with a sideways watermark and one with an additional albino impression of the duty plate.

Many of the flaws were due to the conditions under which printing continued during the war period and whether the work produced was acceptable to the authorities. These few pages can only highlight the major flaws.

"NYASA" TYPE LARGE FORMAT KEYPLATES (31)

Unfortunately for King George VI Keyplate collectors, the limited demand in Nyasaland for high values resulted in only one printing being ordered and despatched in November/December 1937 for each of the 2/-, 2 1/6, 10/- and £1 values, plus two printings of the 5/- value - the first in November/December 1937 and the second in July 1943. Undoubtedly, the change to pictorial Definitives in 1945 was another major factor.

The original 1937 printings were, of course, free from subsequent damage to the Head Plate, which produced a number of constant positional flaws. These abound in other Colonies which utilised the large format "Nyasa" type Keyplate design.

Fortunately the second printing of the Nyasaland 5/-, issued in March 1944 for Dealers only, has provided collectors with welcome examples of certain unrepaired Head Plate flaws. This printing is also in a most distinctive and attractive shade. With a total of only 141 sheets printed (8460 stamps), these flaws are extremely elusive and therefore eagerly sought after by those who realise that some are much rarer than their more expensive Bermuda cousins!

Unusually, for Dealers supplies, the 5/- second printing sheets were numbered "1 up" (a practice generally reserved for supplies being forwarded to the Colonies). Numbering was normally in the upper right corner margin above stamp no. 12 (Row 1/12), but some have been recorded above stamps nos. 3, 6 and 9. As with constant Head Plate flaws, positional examples showing Sheet Serial Numbers, especially in multiples, are now eagerly sought after.

Due to excessive waste, a further small reprint of the 10/- value only was made in late 1937, in a noticeably different shade. This urgent reprint was despatched to the Colony in January 1938 and, with only 76 sheets (4560 stamps), this extremely scarce and desirable stamp is missing from many collections.

This exhibit consists primarily of a selection of those constant positional Head Plate flaws that occurred on the second printing of the 5/- value.

BOOKLETS (32 - 34)

This display is a snapshot of a selection of booklets issued by various Commonwealth territories during the King's reign. Canada and South Africa had a fair number of booklet issues but the remainder of the Commonwealth released comparatively few and many none at all during this time.

The exploding of booklets, regarded by many as philatelic "harkari", is really necessary in order to see the contents, in particular the advertisements, with many of the advertisers still household names some 60 years on: British Guiana and Kenya, Uganda and Tanganyika are good examples.

The Hotel Metropole and McDonald's Hotel in Suva, Fiji, advertising in the 3/- booklet, offered a 12/6d per day tariff in 1938; The Jamaican 1946 New Constitution 2/- booklet is a fairly difficult item to come by, whereas the whole set with a face value of 17/11d can today still be purchased for less than £1.

The South Africa 1948 3/- Kirchoffs Seeds booklet, with Post Office slogans on the selvedge of the panes, the 1947 Canada "Gift Booklet" and the Southern Rhodesia 2/6d booklet are also included in the display,

COMMONWEALTH POSTAGE DUES (36 - 37)

A selection of Postage Dues from 18 different Dominions/Colonies all used, covering the reign of King George VI. Generally speaking, these stamps in used condition are much less common than their mint counterparts. Constant varieties do exist, some catalogued, others not. Details of these varieties shown are included on the relevant sheet.

The knotty problem of what are and what are not King George VI stamps certainly applies to Postage Dues. Some Colonies (i.e. Gold Coast) issued Dues as early as 1923, and they remained in use until 1951. Others, for example Mauritius, issued some values in 1933, which remained valid through the reign of King George VI, and then added 2 further values in 1954. In both cases all stamps are shown.

KENYA, UGANDA & TANGANYIKA POSTAGE DUES (35)

Although introduced in 1935 this series of postage dues were used by the postal authorities throughout the reign of King George VI as displayed here.

WWII CENSOR MATERIAL FROM THE B.W.I. (38 - 40)

A selection of censored mail focusing on two themes: the amendments to printed censor labels caused by the movements of individual censors, label shortages, etc., and the censoring of open mail such as postcards and window envelopes.

COMMONWEALTH COVERS (41 - 43)

Amongst this section may be found 1937 Coronation First Day Covers, some featuring varieties, Airmails including Empire All-up First Flights, Service covers, a redirected item clearly handstamped 3-9-39 the Sunday war started, Colonial Coronations "used abroad" and finally 2 items featuring the last Royal Visit of the reign.

(Falkland Island Dependencies (44 - 47))

Operation Tabarin, a second world war expedition to Antarctica, was mounted by the Admiralty on behalf of the Colonial Office in 1943-45 (from mid 1945 on it became the Falkland Islands Dependencies Survey). It was named after a well known Paris night club "Bal Tabarin", since the detachment would winter in the Antarctic darkness.

The expedition was set up for 2 reasons - first to deny Antarctic anchorages to enemy ships and second to strengthen British claims to sovereignty of the Falkland Islands Dependencies (Graham Land, South Georgia, South Orkneys and South Shetlands). In addition to actions by Germany and a threat from Japan, Argentinean activity made it highly undesirable that potential Axis power should control the Drake Passage.

The expedition left England in 1943 and reached Port Stanley on 26th January 1944. All cargo and men were loaded on HMS William Scoresby and the SS Fitzroy arriving at Deception Island on 3rd February and Port Lockroy on 12th. On 17th February the ships returned to Port Stanley via the South Orkneys and South Georgia. In the second year, 1945, a base was opened at Hope Bay.

Mail is shown from all three active bases and the first visits to the South Orkneys and South Georgia. In such situations, active service mail would not normally require stamps, but to underline the sovereignty issue, stamps of the current Falkland Island pictorial issue were hurriedly overprinted for use by the Expedition.

JAMAICA FIRST FLIGHT AND ASSOCIATED COVERS (48 - 49)

In 1939 Pan American Airways (PAA) inaugurated their first transatlantic service from New York to Europe via the Azores and arranged for Jamaican air mails to connect with the new service at New York. The outbreak of war curtailed further expansion but in 1943 KLM made Jamaica a calling point of their Curacao - Miami service.

In 1944 British West Indian Airways (BWIA) opened a new service between Kingston and Trinidad but were soon absorbed by British South American Airways (BSAA) who in turn were taken over by BOAC. Before BSAA were taken over they had opened a transatlantic route to London via Bermuda in 1946 and a service to Miami in 1948.

Other new services soon followed from Chicago and Southern Air Lines, Trans-Canada Airways, British Caribbean Airways and BWIA (the latter 2 companies being part of BOAC). Between 1950 and 1954 BOAC inaugurated three further international services from the Colony.

The absence of new PAA services after the war is surprising but in 1946 they carried out a comprehensive air mail test from various US cities to Jamaica and return and apparently found it more profitable to expand elsewhere.

The exhibit gives details of major services in the King George VI period with relevant covers, many of which bear commemorative cachets. Examples from the PAA air mail test are also included.

JAMAICA POSTAL STATIONERY (50 - 51)

NEWSWRAPPERS to be used to enclose newspapers or magazines sent by post were introduced in Jamaica in 1888. The first King George VI wrapper was printed in 1938 and reprinted 14 times up to 1949. They were reprinted in the changed definitive stamp colours in 1951 when a wrapper specifically for overseas mailings was added.

STAMPED POSTCARDS were first used in the Colony in 1877 while the first King George VI cards were printed in 1938 for internal and overseas use. These cards had a short life due to postage rate changes in 1940 when the overseas card started to bear a bi-lingual UPU inscription. The local card was reprinted many times, the last in 1953, with WWII printings on recycled card.

REPLY PAID POSTCARDS were introduced in Jamaica in 1883 but the only printing of King George VI was in 1938.

REGISTERED ENVELOPES with embossed stamps were first sold in the Colony in 1913. The first King George VI envelopes were printed in 1938 in sizes F and H but had a short life due to increases in postage/registration rates in 1939. Reprints continued until 1951 when further price increases required another change.

STAMPED AIR LETTER FORMS were introduced in 1947 but unstamped forms had been available at the Kingston General Post Office from 27th November 1944 when 2500 forms were placed on sale. These latter forms were sold out with-in hours and the PMG arranged for the Island's four main printers to print unstamped forms. The 1947 form continued to be printed until 1952 when a change of format was required. In 1955 there was a shortage due to delays in producing QEII forms. To cover the shortfall, provisional King George VI forms were printed in September and December of that year and continued to be sold after the Queen Elizabeth II forms became available in August 1956.

LEEWARD ISLANDS POSTAL STATIONERY (52)

Postal stationery is in general an undervalued field of study. Although the full range of the previous reign with the new king's portrait was produced, the changing means of communication meant a much lower demand for certain items - plain postcards were being replaced either by letters or picture postcards and airmail letters were giving way to airgraphs, telephone, cable and facsimiles.

Over the fifteen years of the reign, of the envelopes only 1550 of each the F and K sizes of registered envelopes were reprinted; and of the 1 1/2d airmail weight envelope, for which there was the most demand, there were four printings totalling only 5400 in all. This latter item is of particular interest as the security wavy-lined pattern inside was originally printed in blue but latterly in grey-black with a watermark imprint ALL BRITISH but one, or some of a, printing on envelopes were watermarked ABERDEEN OPAQUE of which very few copies survived.

Used examples of all postal stationery are scarce.

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For further information about the King George VI Collectors Society please write to:-

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