

# King George VI Varieties

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## Part 10—South Africa

### The Victory Issue

The varieties described in the preceding articles have all occurred on recess-engraved stamps—now for something completely different! A sub-entry in the *Commonwealth KGVI Catalogue* concerning the South Africa 1d. Victory stamp, entitled 'Barbed Wire Flaw R9/6', caught my eye some time ago. It inspired me to examine many sheets of the three values of this issue, kindly made available by J. Sanders Philatelists of Southampton.

The issue, which also includes the four over-printed sets (South West Africa, Basutoland, Bechuanaland and Swaziland) was printed by photogravure, in sheets of twenty rows of six stamps. Some of the varieties that follow are very small, but as sets and pairs frequently appear in club packets, are freely available from dealers and are inexpensive, the search for them offers a lot of enjoyment, without great expense, as well as a challenge. The designs are not particularly attractive, however, when a collection of the varieties is eventually assembled it makes an unusual item—perhaps for a society competition. It is worth noting that, whereas with line-engraved stamps many of the varieties can only be picked out with a good glass, most of those that follow are more easily spotted with the naked eye, because of the comparative crudity of the printing.

**One Penny.** As it sparked my interest I will start with the 'Barbed Wire Flaw' on R9/6 (Fig. 1). The extra mark is an almost complete circle 'floating' in the air in the lower part of the left-hand shaft of light. *Commonwealth* gives varying prices for the five stamps. If a marginal block is seen, then identification is easy as a very large printer's arrow appears in the selvage adjacent to R10/6 and 11/6. On R1/5 a short red stroke almost joins the lower bar of the 'F' and 'R' of 'AFRICA' (Fig. 2). Further down the sheet at R5/1 a white 'grave accent' occurs over the 'G' of 'POSTAGE' (Fig. 3) and on the fifth stamp of the same row a white spot shows just above the second 'S' of 'POSSEEL' (Fig. 4). Finally, at R8/4, a red mark runs upward from the 'R' of 'AFRICA' (Fig. 5).

**Two Pence.** A very nice and easily seen 'Tower on the Hill' occurs on R1/2 (Fig. 6), while a large white mark on R6/1, about two and a half millimetres above the 'P' of 'POSSEEL', resembles a dumb-bell (Fig. 7). On R7/3 a round white spot appears mid-way up the left side of the hill (Fig. 8) and a 'white ear' at the top of the 'S' of 'SUID' on R11/4 deforms the letter (Fig. 9). A similar mark on R13/2 is just clear of the same letter (Fig. 10). R17/5 is affected by a faint streak of violet running almost vertically through the stamp

crossing the 'U' of 'SOUTH' into the margin. Another thin line passes vertically through the right-hand figure '2' on R18/6 (Fig. 11).

**Three Pence.** The first stamp on the sheet (R1/1) provides the first variety—the man has, what can only be described as a 'Black Eye' (Fig. 12). Immediately below, on R2/1, a white flaw occurs between the 'P' and 'O' of the left hand 'POSSEEL' (Fig. 13) and further along the row, on R2/4, a small spot occurs in the middle of the man's forehead (Fig. 12). The design features the night sky and on R3/3 a large additional star gleams brightly, level with the man's eye (Fig. 12). The man's forehead suffers further indignity on R6/1 as another, larger, spot makes an appearance (Fig. 12)). The lady is not immune and on R9/3 two coloured spots show close to her ear (Fig. 12). A more distant star shows faintly on R14/1 (Fig. 12). R14/6 carries a prominent mark, like a hyphen, between the '3' and 'D' on the left side (Fig. 14) and, to complete the account, R18/1 has a wide coloured line passing over the face of the lady forming a distinctive 'scar' (Fig. 12).

### The 1947 Royal Visit

**One Penny.** The sheets of the 1d. value were printed in twenty rows of twelve stamps. This may seem an odd format today, but did, of course, exactly total £1 for a sheet. With further thanks to J. Sanders of Southampton, I am able to describe five constant varieties. The first, on R3/11, is a vertical line to the right of the King's head (Fig. 15). The second, a red dot in the 'O' of 'SOUTH', is on R15/12 (Fig. 16). The third, on R16/12, is a truly delightful variety, as the King has grown side whiskers on his left cheek (Fig. 17). On R20/3 a white dot appears in the 'O' of 'SOUTH' (Fig. 18) and, finally, on R20/5 a white mark shows at the foot of the 'U' of 'SOUTH' (Fig. 19).

**Two Pence.** Two cylinders were used to produce this value. They can be identified by the number of dots in the centre of the flower on the left side—Cyl. 39 has eight dots (Fig. 20) and Cyl. 6912 has nine (Fig. 21). Another identifying feature on Cyl. 39 is a break in the small scroll on the left side of stamps bearing the Afrikaans inscription (Fig. 22). It is worth noting that the *Commonwealth Catalogue* mentions both, when listing the issue for South Africa and gives a much higher rating to Cyl. 6912. *Commonwealth* does not differentiate when listing the set for South West Africa and it appears to me that most, if not all, the overprinted sheets came from Cyl. 6912 which would account for variation in pricing. Sheets were printed with twenty horizontal rows of six stamps. Five noticeable varieties can be found on

Cyl. 39. A dark blob occurs at the top right of R7/6, between the King's head and the top of the '2' (Fig. 23). On the stamp below, R8/6, another small blob appears at the bottom left of the '2' level with the King's ear (Fig. 23). A violet spot shows under the 'I' of 'AFRICA' just touching the outside of the scroll on R10/6 (Fig. 24). A white hyphen makes an appearance between the 'A' and 'F' of 'AFRICA' on R12/2 (Fig. 25) and on R19/3 a short violet smudge shows to the right of the head of the King (Fig. 23). Five constant marks can be identified on sheets printed from Cyl. 6912. The first, is a 'V' mark on its side between the King and Queen on R5/1 (Fig. 23). Further down the sheet at R7/3 an almost rectangular shaped mark is almost joined to the left side of the name scroll (Fig. 26). Another large mark, rather like a bird sitting on its perch, affects the top of the '2' on R10/6 (Fig. 27) and a broken slightly curved line passes from above the Queen's head down her right side through the 'U' of 'SOUTH' and then in R11/6, where it runs almost vertically down the Queen's right shoulder (Fig. 23).

**Three Pence.** One flaw on the 3d. has been given catalogue status by *Commonwealth*. It has been named 'The Blind Princess', as a strong smudge of colour crosses the eyes of Princess Elizabeth on R19/2 (Fig. 28). There are nine other, equally noticeable, flaws on a sheet which consists of twenty horizontal rows of six stamps. They are widely available in pairs, thus the odds of finding a flaw on a random pair are far shorter than for the 1d. value! Starting at the top of the sheet at R3/6, a blue mark crosses the arm of Princess Elizabeth (Fig. 28). Another mark affects the foot of the right hand numeral on R5/3 (Fig. 29) and further along the row at R5/5 a large circular dot of colour shows between the heads of the two Princesses (Fig. 28). On the last stamp of the same row (R5/6) a 'white curl' appears over the left shoulder of Princess Margaret (Fig. 28). This 'white curl' reappears on R13/2-3 and the first five stamps of the fourteenth to twentieth rows, making thirty-eight stamps in all, which must make it the most common variety mentioned in this series! On R7/4 another circular mark occurs between the arms of the Princesses (Fig. 28) while there is a break in the 'D' of the left hand value on R9/1 (Fig. 30). R9/5 carries a curly line, resembling a reversed question mark, which crosses the right arm of Princess Margaret (Fig. 28) and on R16/5 a 'hair clasp' shows in her hair (Fig. 28). Finally, on R20/6 her forehead bears a nasty 'cut' (Fig. 28).

*The next article in this series (February 1989) will describe plate flaws on the 1938 Bahamas definitive issue.*



Fig.1

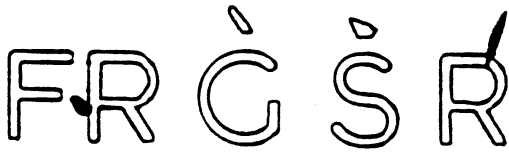


Fig.2

Fig.3

Fig.4

Fig.5



Fig.6

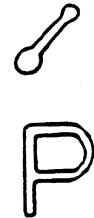


Fig.7



Fig.8



Fig.9



Fig.10



Fig.11



Fig.12



Fig.13



Fig.14



Fig.15



Fig.16



Fig.17



Fig.18



Fig.19



Fig.20



Fig.21

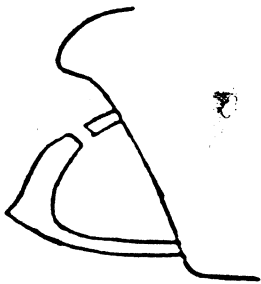


Fig.22

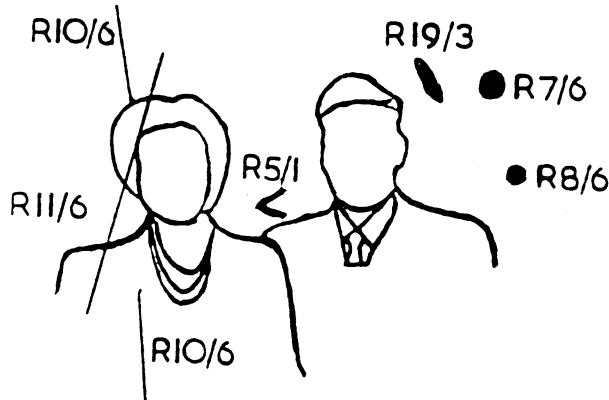


Fig.23



Fig.24



Fig.25

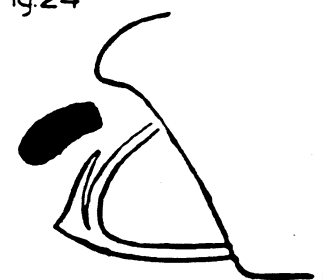


Fig.26



Fig.27

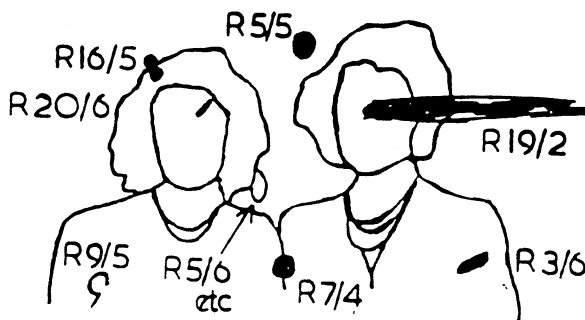


Fig.28



Fig.29

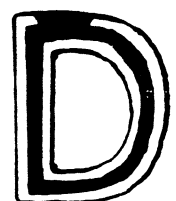


Fig.30