

# KING GEORGE VI VARIETIES

## Part 18—New Zealand

Richard Lockyer OBE

A series of articles about King George VI varieties would be incomplete without mention of some of those occurring on the stamps of New Zealand. Thanks to the diligence of a host of collectors in the post-war years, ably backed by the expertise of Campbell Paterson, there can be little left to discover. Nevertheless, a resumé of the 1946 and 1949 Health Issues may not only help to refresh some memories but perhaps arouse interest in the subject of varieties or tempt a general collector to specialise in the stamps of a country well served by societies in the United Kingdom as well as New Zealand. After all, with stamps issued since 1855, all that a specialist requires in the form of watermarks, papers, perforations and different methods of printing, with their associated re-entries and retouches, are there to find. While for the postal historian the search is seemingly endless beginning with handstruck stamps and numeral postmarks and pen cancellations of the very early days, through to wartime cancellations, used abroad marks, airmails and TPOs. But that is a big enough plug for a very popular country and it is time to turn to the 1946 Health Issue.

### 1946 Health Issue

In the epilogue to Part 16 (*GSM* May 1990) mention was made of sheets recess printed by Waterlow that very occasionally show five figure numbers in the margin. Fortunately, this happened to both values of the 1946 Health Issue. The frame plate of the 1d. + ½d. was numbered 43009 and that of the 2d. + 1d. was 43010. The centre plates were numbered 43011 and 43012 and were used for both values. The sheets, consisting of 120 stamps, were printed by Waterlow in 15 horizontal rows of eight, comb perf 13½. Guide marks in the frame colour occur between, and at both ends of, the seventh and eighth rows. A large cross appears between the same rows by the fourth and fifth stamps and a vertical line occurs between these stamps at the top and bottom of the sheet. Lines in the centre plate colour also occur between the seventh and

eighth rows, but on the south-east corner of the first stamp and the south-west corner of the eighth stamp. All these marks are most useful when positioning multiples. The numbers printed were: 1d. + ½d., 4,500,000 and 2d. + 1d., 5,000,000. They were placed on sale on 24 October 1946 and were withdrawn on 28 February 1947. *Stamp Mirror* (3 December 1948) reported that although the number sold was not available only a few stamps of the issue had been destroyed.

**Shades.** Colour is in the eye of the beholder and to add substance to this truism it is only necessary to look at the accompanying list to see the varying descriptions adopted by different catalogue editors.

The one point in common is that all the catalogues give a good price rating to the 1d.+ ½d. yellow-green shade and Campbell Paterson judges the lettuce-green shade to be even better. As an historical aside it is relevant that the 11 January 1952 edition of *Stamp Collecting* reported that Bentley Kettle had purchased a sheet in a yellow-green shade from a United Kingdom dealer and went on to comment that it was strange that the shade had only just been discovered as, had it been found in New Zealand, the very active Health Study Circle there would have doubtless reported it. From this it would appear that the shade occurred late in the printing run and was released in London.

**Centre Plate Variety.** Both centre plates were used with the frame plate for each value. This can be verified by examining R4/3. On stamps from plate 43011 a coloured line extends from the top of the hill into the sky vertically in line with the running boy (*Fig 1*). Stamps printed from 43012 do not have this characteristic. Both values can be found with and without the flaw which could be mistaken for a hill that has not been shaded in by the engraver.

**Frame Plate Varieties 1d. + ½d.** There are, at least, seven varieties to be found on the lower value. Some of them are difficult to detect unless one is familiar with the design, for example, on R1/5 the lines of shading simulating the sky are slightly doubled in the top left

corner and on R3/8 the doubling of the horizontal inner frame line in the same corner to the right of '½d.' The next variety on R5/6 is easily seen—a small clearly discernible green mark in the foilage above the head of the girl and immediately below the right leg of the second 'A' of 'ZEALAND' (*Fig 2*). Fourthly, very slight doubling of the shading lines on the face of the soldier can be detected on R5/1. The design in the lower left corner of R8/5 is very strongly doubled (*Fig 3*) and the sky in the top left corner to a lesser degree. The sixth variety must be judged to be a re-entry. It occurs on R8/8 where the left inner frame line is doubled throughout its length and on the right side the middle and upper part of the inner frame is similarly affected (*Fig 4*). The background to the left of '1d.' is also doubled, but it is not as strong as the similar doubling on R8/5 (*Fig 5*). In addition, 'POST' of 'POSTAGE' shows slight traces of doubling (*Fig 6*), while the leaves of the trees and other vegetation have a fuzzy appearance in comparison to the sharp definition of neighbouring stamps. Lastly, on R13/3 a couple of lines of shading in the top left corner show signs of strengthening, but in all fairness although this is detectable when in a positional piece it is very difficult to pick out when examining single copies.

**Frame Plate Varieties 2d. + 1d.** No less than fourteen varieties occur on the higher value, with one of them having four states. The head of the girl, particularly on the crown, shows slight doubling on R2/1, 2/2, 3/2 and 3/3. The doubling on R3/1 is pronounced (*Fig 7*) and also affects the running boy (*Fig 8*). On R6/1, the horizontal lines of shading forming the sky vary in strength and are sometimes non-existent. It is worth noting that Campbell Paterson's excellent loose-leaf catalogue gives a high rating to, 'no clouds top left R6/1'. R8/8 can be found in four states: without varieties, a pair of feathers on top of the soldier's hat, which are easy to see (*Fig 9*), doubled lines of sky shading in the top left corner and finally doubling of the upper section of both inner frame lines. The girl's hair is doubled on R9/1 in a similar fashion to R2/1 etc and on R9/3 her chin has been strengthened, but this is difficult to detect. On R10/1 her head again shows doubling and on R10/2 it is far more pronounced, so much so that the leaves just above her head also show doubling. On R11/2 two small dots of colour appear by the girl's hand (*Fig 10*) and further down the sheet on R12/5 another re-entry causes slight doubling of the soldier's profile and hat (*Fig 11*), many of the letters of 'NEW ZEALAND' (*Fig 12*), the foilage of the trees and the girl's head. R14/1 was also re-entered and again the letters 'NEW ZEALAND' show traces of doubling (*Fig 13*), as does the soldier's hat and his profile as well as the girl's head, the front of her dress and the leaves in the trees.

**A Transient Flaw.** A flaw affecting different parts of the girl's legs occurs on both values. Parts of

#### Different shade descriptions of the 1946 Health issue

*Stanley Gibbons British Commonwealth Catalogue*  
1d. + ½d.  
Green and orange-brown  
Yellow-green and orange-brown  
2d. + 1d.  
Chocolate and orange-brown

*Bridger and Kay Commonwealth Catalogue*  
1d. + ½d.  
Green and chestnut  
Yellow-green and chestnut  
2d. + 1d.  
Sepia brown and chestnut  
Sepia brown and reddish chocolate

*Robson Lowe Encyclopedia*  
1d. + ½d.  
Green and brown  
Yellow-green and red-brown  
2d. + 1d.  
Chocolate and orange-brown  
Chocolate and orange-brown

*Campbell Paterson Catalogue of New Zealand Stamps*  
1d. + ½d.  
Green and red-brown  
Yellow-green and red-brown  
Lettuce-green and red-brown  
2d. + 1d.  
Sepia and red-brown  
Chocolate and red-brown  
Sepia and chestnut

the engraved lines forming her shin bones and calf muscles are missing. The number of times this happens, as well as their location, varies from sheet to sheet and up to eleven examples have been noted on one sheet of the 2d. + 1d. The most extreme instance seen occurs on that sheet at R12.5 (Fig 14). In the past the flaw has been called the 'Broken Legs' variety, but because of its inconstancy it is only of passing interest. The one common factor noted is that the imperfections only affect stamps in the bottom 5 rows on the sheets examined. The cause could have been some minute bits of grit on the plate preventing the engraved lines of the legs registering properly.

### The 1949 Health Issue

The sheets of the two values (1d. + 1/2d., green and 2d. + 1d., blue) were photogravure printed by Harrison and Sons in 6 horizontal rows of 20, comb perf 14 x 15. *Commonwealth* notes that 5,517,034 of the 1d. + 1/2d. and 5,999,109 of the 2d. + 1d. were issued. The cylinder for the former was numbered 2 and for the latter 1. These very small figures in the colour of the stamp appear on their side under R6/18. Sheet values (15s. and 30s.) occur in the margin over R1/19. Other marginal markings are arrows in the top and bottom selvage between the tenth and eleventh rows, coloured lines to the right of each stamp in the last vertical column (reminiscent of jubilee lines on De La Rue keyplates) and three sided box-like marks in the side margins and at the top and bottom between the 14th and 15th vertical rows. These marks also have holes punched within them and similar holes occur at the top and foot of the left-hand margin. Some of these features are very useful when searching for varieties.

**Varieties.** On the 1d. + 1/2d. two flaws have been listed by Campbell Paterson. The first, called the 'Bandaged Thumb' on R4/1 is a small white patch over the thumb of the right hand of the nurse (Fig 15). The other, named the 'Wristlet Watch' occurs on R6/8 and is a white mark on the nurse's right wrist (Fig 16). On the 2d. + 1d. the variety, 'No Stop below "D" of "1D"' on R1/2 is listed in 'Part 1' as SG 699a. Close study of the area around the missing dot suggests the strong possibility that retouching took place. There is an unusual mark just under the figure '1' and the shading to the right appears to be slightly extended when compared with the normal. It is, of course, a matter of conjecture, but it does seem that an engraver, while engrossed in his work, touched out the white spot under the 1, thinking it was a flaw. This variety was reported soon after the release date on 3 October 1949, consequently corner blocks are about, in contrast to the comparative scarcity of the two other flaws on the 1d. + 1/2d. particularly in positional pieces. This is reflected by a difference in price in the Campbell Paterson catalogue. A lesser known, but nevertheless distinctive, flaw on the 2d. + 1d. occurs on R6/20 where the clump of daffodils in the lower left corner bear an extra bud on the left side (Fig 17).

**Watermark.** The fourth row, on some sheets of both values, has a horizontal line running through the upright multiple NZ and star watermark, presumably a piece of long, thin debris became temporarily and accidentally stuck to the dandy roll during the watermarking process.

The next two articles (GSM February and May 1991) will describe the major varieties occurring on the 1 February 1946 definitive issue for the Falkland Island Dependencies (The 'Thick Map' set).

