

KING GEORGE VI VARIETIES

Part 22—St Kitts-Nevis 1950 Tercentenary Issue

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(Continued from August 1991)

Introduction

Part 21 (GSM August 1991) gave details of the quantities printed, despatch dates, most probable method of overprinting the small and large format stamps and the few more noticeable overprint varieties to be found on the former 1d., 1½d. and 2½d. Part 22 will describe the overprint varieties and the head and frame plate flaws that occur on the 3d., 6d. and 1s. It will conclude with remarks concerning shades that have been noted and the two watermark errors on the 1½d.

When studying overprints it is always necessary to keep in mind the surface of the stamp. Recess-engraving produces an uneven surface as the printed design consists of ridges of ink that stand up from the face of the stamp; they can be felt with the tip of the finger. In contrast stamps printed by typography (letterpress) or photogravure offer an even surface. A broken letter on a recess stamp may be nothing more than the failure of the ink from the overprinting unit to penetrate into the valley between two ridges of ink. The 4d., 6d. and 8d. pictorial values locally overprinted as part of the 1942 Bahamas Landfall issue and the 1947 Barbados 1d. on 2d. surcharge provide many examples of broken letters and figures formed in this way. The St Kitts-Nevis values overprinted for the Tercentenary issue were printed by typography, but even then it is necessary to discover, at least, some identical faults in the

overprint before it can be claimed that a defect was constant for some part of the overprinting run. A further complicating factor is that overlight inking can sometimes produce defects. Equally grease or oil on the overprinting plate can be the cause of startling results. For example, the overprint on R10/3 from a sheet of the 3d. I have examined is so badly affected that 1950 is almost invisible—the probable result of grease or oil on the plate preventing adhesion by the ink. Other very noticeable variants can be caused by intrusions resulting from excess ink filling up the type or foreign bodies lodging in or near the letters and figures. They print as specks, blobs or filled in letters and can grow and alter in shape and suddenly disappear should the overprinting unit be cleaned. Accidental damage to the type is another source of varieties, while malformed type caused possibly by an air bubble in the metal may lead to deterioration which can eventually print as a defect.

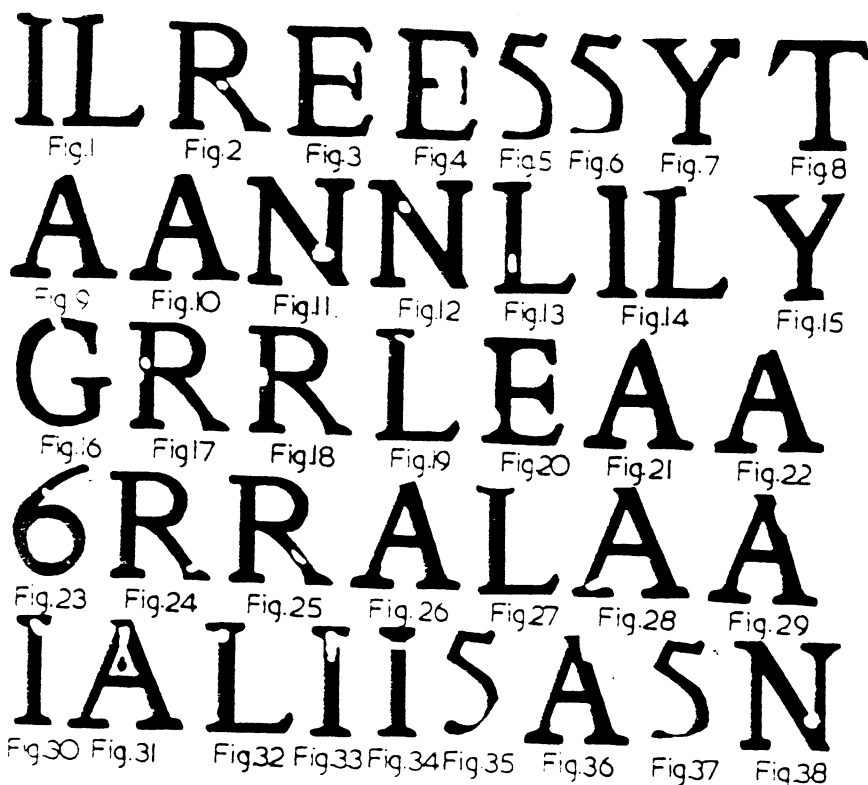
Overprint Varieties on the 3d., 6d. and 1s.

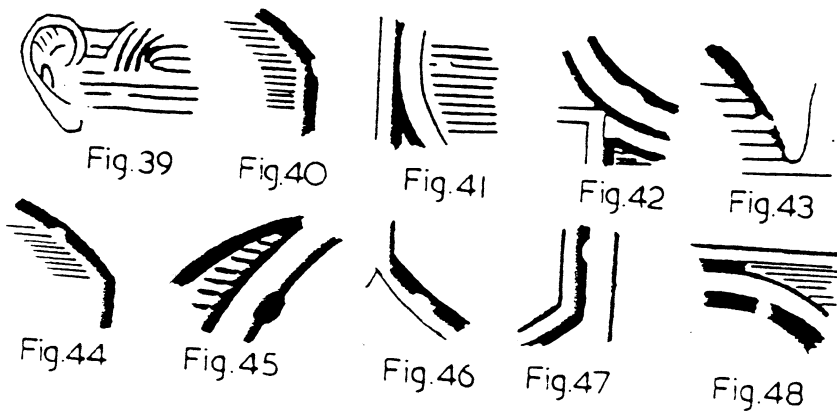
The overprints on the three large format bi-coloured stamps, with their larger letters, offer scope for the variety hunter. They certainly cause less strain on the eyes. Waugh picked out eight and details of these will be given as well as some others that seem of equal merit. Some are common to all three values, some to

just the 3d. and 6d. and a few are confined to the 3d. This pattern suggests that the order of overprinting was most probably 1s., followed by the 6d. and then finally the 3d.

Varieties common to all three values. On R1/1 the top of the letters 'IL' show damage (Fig 1) and the second 'R' of 'TERCENTENARY' has a hole in its diagonal leg (Fig 2). On R1/2 the first 'E' has states of damage or deterioration to the centre bar—a mere trace on the 1s., developing into a break on the 6d. (Fig 3) and becoming much larger on the 3d. (Fig 4). The thin foot of the '5' of '1650' on R2/1 comes in three states—thin on the 1s. and 6d. (Fig 5), very thin (Fig 6) and then normal on the 3d. At R2/2 the right serif of the 'Y' is thicker than normal and this seems more noticeable on the 1s. and 6d., but this could be the result of extra ink (Fig 7). The first 'T' on R2/3 has a much extended left serif on the cross bar (Fig 8) and on R3/1 the first 'A' of 'ANGUILLA' has a badly damaged top (Fig 9). Further along the third row on the fourth stamp the same letter has suffered less damage (Fig 10). On R6/3 the second 'N' of 'TERCENTENARY' has a break at the junction of the diagonal and the right vertical (Fig 11 and shown on the front cover) and on the fourth stamp of the same row the second 'N' has a hole in the diagonal that readily fills with ink (Fig 12). The second 'L' on R6/5 also has a hole (Fig 13). On R7/1 the tops of 'IL' are damaged in a similar way to R1/1 (Fig 14) and on R8/5 the 'Y' has lost its right serif (Fig 15). The upper curve of the 'G' is sliced right through on R11/5 (Fig 16) and below, on R12/5, the cross bar on the first 'A' of 'ANGUILLA' is very weak and can, sometimes, be broken while on the left side of the second 'R' slight damage shows on the 1s. and 6d. (Fig 17) which develops into a pronounced nick on the 3d. (Fig 18).

Varieties on the 3d. and 6d. (Except where noted). On R2/1 the second 'L' of 'ANGUILLA' has a weak spot at the top of the vertical shaft. It is particularly noticeable on the 3d. (Fig 19) but, although right susceptible to ink-filling, it does appear that some copies of the 6d. were not affected. The second 'E' in 'TERCENTENARY' has a chip in its vertical on the left side (Fig 20). The first 'A' of 'ANGUILLA' on R3/2 has a damaged top (Fig 21) and on R5/1 both the letters are similarly damaged (Fig 22). A minute nick in the inside neck of the '6' of '1650' occurs on R6/2 (Fig 23)—Saunders noted its presence on the 1s. as well. On the third stamp in the same row the second 'R' also has a nick (Fig 24 and front cover) and another hole shows in the leg of the same letter on R7/1 (Fig 25). Saunders reported that the top of the first 'A' of 'ANGUILLA' on R9/1 was damaged on all three values, but I have only seen this on the 3d. and 6d. (Fig 26). The second 'L' on the same stamp has a curved rather than straight edge at the top of the vertical shaft (Fig 27). The damage to the





second 'A' of 'ANGUILLA' on R9+4 was seen by Saunders on the 3d. and 6d., but I have only seen it on the latter (Fig 28). Ink may have filled in the hole on my copies of the 3d. or perhaps the letter was repaired because the weakness threatened to break the foot of the letter. 'ANGUILLA' on R11 2 is a maverick in that the 'AN', 'I' and second 'A' show damage or deterioration. However, the dent in the right side of the first 'A' occurs on all three values (Fig 29), the 6d. has a weakened 'I' (Fig 30) and second 'A' (Fig 31), while the 3d. has a deteriorating leg to the second 'I' (Fig 32), worse damage to the 'I' (Fig 33) or a straight break (Fig 34). Saunders saw sheets with substantially more damage, notably to the 'I'. As an added bonus a large black blob affects the second 'A' on the 6d. (Fig 31).

Varieties on the 3d. On R2 3 the '5' of '1950' has a decidedly weak, even broken, tail (Fig 35). The 'Half-moon' variety on R6 3 has already been described in Part 21 and has special importance relating to the printing order of the three values. A coloured illustration appears on the front cover. The first 'A' of 'ANGUILLA' has taken a knock on R9 2 (Fig 36) and the tail of the '5' of '1950' on R10 5 is very thin (Fig 37). Lastly, on R11 3 the 'N' can have, depending on inking, a hole low down in the diagonal (Fig 38).

Order of overprinting. The overprint varieties to be found on the three values, then two and finally only on the 3d. have been described in the preceding paragraphs. The implication is that the 1s. was overprinted first (in red), followed by the 6d., and then the 3d. Certainly the presence of the 'half-moon' on R6 3 and the massive break affecting the middle bar of the 'E' on R1 2 on the 3d., plus the other smaller faults occurring only on that value, point most strongly to it being the last to be overprinted.

Head and Frame Plate Flaws

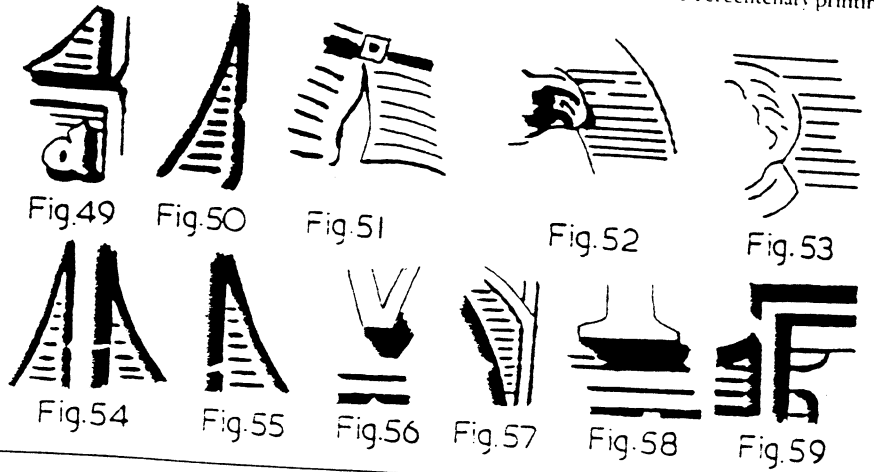
The head and frame plate flaws on the 'KGV' large key-plates, printed by De La Rue, are very well known and have excited interest since the 1940s. They have been described in great detail by R W Dickgiesser and E P Yendall in their recently published, and excellent, book entitled *King George VI Large Key Type Stamps of Bermuda, Leeward Islands and Nyasaland*. The flaws on the King George VI St Kitts-Nevis large format definitives have not evoked such interest. However, in 1985 Peter Baldwin, who like Dickgiesser and Yendall, is a member of the King George VI Collectors' Society, published *An Interim Study of the KGV Key-type Stamps of St Kitts-Nevis, 1938-1950*. The twenty-seven page study is chockfull of information about the six values (2d., 3d., 6d., 1s., 2s. 6d. and 5s.).

ranging from tabulated details of the printings and a step-by-step sorting guide to the identification of constant head and frame plate flaws. Baldwin did not include the special printing for the 1950 Tercentenary issue as, although the same plates were used, it was outside the scope of his investigation. It is, therefore, with thanks to him for his detailed work on the other releases that I can offer information about head and frame plate flaws on the three overprinted values. Comment will be restricted to them with only brief mention of the earlier releases, where relevant.

3d. Head and frame plate flaws. Ten stamps show evidence of the 19 flaws described by Baldwin on earlier releases. It is, of course, pertinent that the same head plate was used for the 2d., 1s. and 2s. 6d. On R1 3 the break in the shading lines close to the King's ear persists (Fig 39), while on R1 4 the damage to the top right corner of the frame outlining the two figures is very clear (Fig 40). For good measure another line of shading to the left of the King's neck on R1 5 still shows a clear break (Fig 41) and there is a sliver protruding from the right side. The nick in the frame surrounding the King's head, below the neck is present on R6 4 (Fig 42) and on R8 3 a strong nick in the base of the neck shows well (Fig 43). Although the break in the horizontal shading below the nose is no longer present on R9 3, the nick in the inner edge of the frame above the right figure is evident (Fig 44). On R11 3 the large nick in the frame around the King's head has been repaired and thickened (Fig 45), but the scratch in the hair two millimetres above the ear is still there as well as the break in the right vertical frame, surrounding the figures, which extends into the background. The heavy nick in the outer edge of the same frame in the left corner of R12 1 is easy to pick out (Fig 46), providing it is not hidden by the overprint—a hazard that is a constant threat on other stamps as well. On

R12 2 the south-west outer edge of the oval frame has a roughened appearance indicating a repair to the severe damage on the 1941-8 releases, described by Baldwin in his study. The minute break in the eighth row of shading directly below the King's ear persists. On R12 5 the slight damage to the outer vertical edge of the right frame line adjacent to the skirt of the right-hand figure, that first occurred in 1947, also continues (Fig 47). All the frame plates were, of course, unique to each value and in general terms suffered less damage. On the 3d. frame plate the red oval frame surrounding the medallion with the King's head has a break at R1 5 (Fig 48). The stamp below at R2 5 has a nick in the side frame which appears to be residual damage after a repair, as the frame line is thickened (Fig 49). Another small nick in the outer edge of the lower right ornamental framework occurs on R4 2 (Fig 50). On the 1947 issues Baldwin noted an unplated break in the slightly curved outer frame line, above the 'S' of 'NEVIS' that joins the vertical of the right value tablet. I have not been able to find this on the Tercentenary issue, but the area on R1 4, 4 2, 4 5 and 5 4 shows a much thickened frame line, so much so that only two, rather than three lines of horizontal shading appear. This may have been the result of heavy inking, on the other hand, one or more could be the result of repair work.

6d. head and frame plate flaws. It is worth noting that the same head plate was used for the 5s. Baldwin reported noticeable damage to the north-west side of the oval frame surrounding the figure of Columbus on R5 5 from earlier printings—the repair shows as a marked thinness in the width to the frame. There is also a slight dent in the frame at much the same position on R9 5. A small break in the lower left edge of the coat worn by Columbus persists on R10 4 (Fig 51). When dealing with earlier printings Baldwin described two small breaks in the horizontal lines of shading by the King's forehead on R11 2, the one adjacent to the eyebrow no longer shows, but the other, plus a fresh one, are visible near the hair at the front of the head (Fig 52). Baldwin also noted a break in the outline of the head of Columbus on R12 5 on printings after 1944. It appears that could have been a general weakness as many impressions for the Tercentenary printing carry this minor defect (Fig 53). The frame plate for the 6d. has its share of small imperfections and a top left corner block of six features all but one. On R1 1 the two innermost centre frame lines are broken (Fig 54) and can be detected easily on lightly inked stamps. Baldwin found six flaws occurring on R2 2 at one time or another. On the Tercentenary printing



a break in the left frame line (slightly below the example on R1/1 continues (Fig 55), as does a tiny nick in the frame below the 'V' of 'NEVIS' (Fig 56). He also described a dent in the frame on the north-east side of the left oval which was repaired in 1948—evidence of the work can be seen with a very good glass. The inner edge of the right oval on R1/3 continues to carry a nasty nick at the 2.30 position (Fig 57). Finally, a very small break in the frame below the second 'T' of 'KITTS' on R12/4 is still detectable (Fig 58).

1s. head and frame plate flaws. As the same head plate was used for the 3d, it is not surprising that the earlier remarks are relevant to the 1s. Six frame plate variants can be found on four stamps. The first affects R3/1 where a clear break occurs in the frame in the top left corner of the right value tablet (Fig 59). Another break or dent in the outline affects the foot of the 1s.



Fig.60

Fig.61

in the right value at R3/2 (Fig 60). R6/3 has a break in the frame almost opposite the King's nose (Fig 61) and a tiny dot of colour in the border between the outer and inner frame lines in the north-east corner of the stamp. Baldwin reported a large break in the outer line which first occurred in 1938 and continued until 1949. I can only surmise that the dot of colour is, in some way, related to the repair. In his study Baldwin also noted that R12/1 had five flaws at varying times. Two can be found on the Tercentenary 1s, and both affect the right edge of the central green frame line. A slight dent is just noticeable opposite the King's mouth and another occurs at the junction of the frame lines by the eyebrow.

Shades

In March 1951 W M Royale commented in *Stamp Mirror* on the shades he had noticed when examining many sheets of the Tercentenary issue. His observations, made when there was plenty of material about, are worth heeding. He noted that the 1d. could be found in rose-red and pale rose-red, similarly the 1½d. was orange-yellow and very pale orange-yellow. The 2½d. so far as he was concerned was blue and he mentioned that F R Metcalfe, the editor of the *Commonwealth* Catalogue, agreed with him, but had had to use ultramarine in the first edition as it had gone to press before the stamp had been released leaving him no choice than use the information supplied by the Crown Agents. In later editions the colour changed to blue. However 'Part 1' still describes the 2½d. as 'bright ultramarine'. Royale found the 3d. to be the most variable stamp in the set, with the frame either a deep or pale bright-red and the centre either slightly reddish-purple, usually of rather poor quality reproduction with white flecks in it, or a stronger purple approximating to the normal issue. He found the colours of the 6d. to be the most consistent with a very slight variation of the frame colour and the centre normally a dull bluish-green having a slightly more velvety tone on some sheets. I have to add a personal observation here as to my eye there are two distinct shades of frame colour—pale and dark. Royale judged the green frame of the 1s. as constant, but the centre existed in three

shades: grey, grey-black and black. The overprint varied from pale to very deep red. For those collectors with an ultraviolet lamp it is worth looking at the centre of the 3d. and the frame of the 6d. as they are both fluorescent aniline.

Readers of this series will know that occasional digressions occur. Mention of a UV lamp brings to mind the wonderful colours, as well as changes in colour, that a lamp reveals when used with KGVI stamps. The velvet-like sheen and rich brilliance of some examples introduce a new philatelic world, albeit in darkness. Nevertheless, the glowing colours would test the imagination of any catalogue editor. Some of the stamps of St Kitts-Nevis provide a good starting point. The definitives of Basutoland, Bechuanaland and Swaziland are worth exploring, as well as Mauritius small key-plates, where one printing of the 2r.50 all but disappears and another shows as orange—startling changes bearing in mind that the basic colour in daylight is violet.

Watermarks Errors

Two watermark errors on the 1½d. have been given catalogue status. A note in 'Part 1' states that the 'Crown Missing' and 'St Edward's Crown' occur on a row in the watermark in which the crowns and the letters 'CA' alternate. It is surprising that the same errors have not been found on the 1d. and 2½d. values as it is reasonable to assume that the 372 large sheets of paper earmarked for the 1½d. were not specially selected and were stacked with the remaining 1486 sheets issued to De La Rue on 19 July 1950. It is, of course, possible that the sheets with the watermark errors, that also occur on other KGIV colonial stamps, were randomly stacked at the paper mill in Ivybridge and were then issued as and when needed. Nevertheless, although examining stamps for such errors, even in sheet form, is a tedious and tiring business, the discovery of a watermark error on either, or both, of the other two values would be a remarkable occurrence. It is always worth remembering that a pair of sharp East Anglian eyes spotted the first known copy of the 'Doubled Map' on the 1948 Falkland Island Dependencies 3d. (GSM May 1991) and an unmounted copy of the well known 'Doubled Map' on the 2d. was sold for £300 (plus VAT and auctioneer's premium) at the 'Wilson Wong' sale of King George VI material at Christie's on 23 October 1990.

Conclusion

At the start of Part 21 the words of Frank Saunders were recalled when he wrote, 'Money is necessary to win medals—but a keen eye produces interest cheaply.' I recently saw the Tercentenary set in sheet form, together with some other King George VI oddments, fetch just £18 at a small auction. I hope that the buyer has as much fun with his purchase as I have had with mine and that the details I have given will kindle interest, not only in the stamps of St Kitts-Nevis, but other issues.

Collectors interested in the King George VI period are invited to join the King George VI Collectors' Society. Information can be obtained from Richard Lockyer, General Secretary, 24 Stourwood Road, Southbourne, Bournemouth, BH6 3QP.

Parts 23, 24 and 25 (GSM February, May and August 1992) will be devoted to varieties occurring on the 1946 New Zealand Peace Issue. This will be followed by articles on the 1942 Bahamas 'Lanifall' set.