

KING GEORGE VI VARIETIES

Part 35—Kenya, Uganda and Tanganyika

Richard Lockyer OBE selects some more flaws and re-entries on the 1938–54 definitives

Thanks to the sharp eyes of Bernard Berrie, a *GSM* reader and member of the KGVICS, it is necessary to make a couple of corrections and an addition to the text of Part 34 dealing with the 1941–42 KUT Provisionals. The corrections concern the 10c./3d. where the dash between the 'K' and 'E' of 'KENYA' occurs on Row 3/2 (and not R8/2) and the 20c./6d. where it is the ball of the 'C' at the top of the letter that is missing on R1/6 and not the base. In addition, he has been able to position the 'T' of 'TANGANYIKA' without the left limb and reports that it occurs on R1/2 of the 10c./3d. Abject apologies are offered for sloppy copy-checking—the trauma of selling/buying and 'moving house' are not conducive to quiet study! With reference to Part 33 dealing with the 1c. value, Dickon Pollard of Murray Payne has reported that he has seen a sheet printed from FP22CP4B with the 'Break in Bird's Breast' at R2/5 (SG 131ad.) Readers will recall that at the time of writing the article examples of the variety had only been seen on sheets from FP22CP4A, with no sign on a large number of sheets printed from FP22CP4B.

Part 33 demonstrated the complexities facing a collector wishing to study the definitive issues of KUT. Huge quantities of stamps were printed by De La Rue to satisfy the postal needs of a large literate population. For example, RD Berrington listed 59 vignette or centre plates and 110 duty or frame plates in his handbook with many of them used in differing combinations; to assemble a complete collection of KUT definitives in plate blocks to-day would be extremely difficult and a question of patience, rather than money. Against this background it is not intended to dwell on the additional values, many printings, variations of shade and changes of colour and perforation. Fortunately, Frank Saunders and Niall Fair did evaluate and publish much research about these topics during the late 1960s in *Geosix*, the quarterly journal of the King George VI Collectors' Society, as well as in philatelic magazines. Perusal of their work by anyone wishing to study the issues in depth could save a lot of time and energy. Suffice it to say that the stamps were recess printed in sheets of 100 (10 × 10) with the exception of the £1 printed by letterpress (typography). For the moment an account of the three major catalogued plate varieties will be given, followed by a selection of minor varieties that, in the circumstances, will reflect personal taste.

Rope not Joined to Sail— SG 144a

In September 1939 Rang commented in *GSM* that, whereas previously the King George V 5c. and 50c. had shown a gap in the stern or stay rope where it joined the top of the sail of the dhow, the mistake must have been noticed as the defect had been corrected on the last printing of the King George V 5c. He went on to say that both the 5c. and 50c. of the new King George VI issue had also been corrected and all had seemed straightforward until one of the Gibbons staff discovered one uncorrected stamp in each sheet of the 50c. Close examination of the sheets showed that the corrected plate for the 50c. was the old vignette (centre) plate retouched. It was evident from the omission to correct one stamp and slight variations on others that the work had been done by hand on each subject on the plate.

He added that a search of the stock of used specimens of the corrected King George V 5c. had found that most had been posted in March and a few in April 1938, with the earliest postmarked 2 March.

In addition, a letter from Mr W Tunstall in Kenya had reported that a few post offices had had them on sale as early as mid-February. It is worth noting that in 1938 Rang drew attention to the ease a copy could be faked and his advice to purchase only from reliable sources is still worth heeding bearing in mind the catalogue price in 1995.

In January 1939 Rang noted that Row 2/5, which had previously shown the rope not joined to the sail, had been corrected and a new plate had come into use with the extension from rope to sail showing the same characteristics on all stamps. This indicated that the corrective work had been done, most probably, on the master-die. In the following June Rang quoted from notes received by H E Crocker from the Acting Postmaster-General in Kenya, concerning the rope varieties on the 5c. and 50c. It appeared that the correction of the short rope was considered during the currency of the old issue, but it was not until after the death of King George V that the Crown Agents were instructed to have the rope joined to the sail for the next issue. The correction had already been made by De La Rue when supplies of the 5c. ran low and, as the King George VI issue was not ready, a repeat order of the King George V issue was made in October 1937. It was printed from the corrected plate. Much later, in the 1960s, this remark sparked Saunders into investigating the slim possibility that the hand-retouched plate had been used. He eventually obtained a half sheet and found that the rope was firmly joined to the sail on R2/5. In January 1988 L J Powell writing in *Geosix* re-confirmed that the variety 'Does not show on the King George V printing'. The notes from Crocker went on to say that 5127 sheets of the GVI 50c. had been printed and supplied from the first corrected plate, before it was discovered that the engraver had omitted R2/5. An entirely new plate, correct in all respects, was then made with supplies printed from it arriving in the colony in September 1938. As will be seen later, the official record held in the British Library

shows that 4177 sheets were despatched—the larger figure given by Crocker has been used in the past in advertisements featuring the variety and is quoted in the *Commonwealth* catalogue.

The official records were usually very well maintained. However, those covering late 1937 and early 1938 for the KUT issues are sometimes very difficult to follow and omissions occur. This is understandable remembering the spate of issues leaving the security printers at the time for the new reign. Nevertheless, it is possible to extract sufficient information to work out the most probable sequence of events concerning the 5c. and 50c.: Requisition 8088/1, the order for the first issue of nine values (1c. to 10s.) included 4150 sheets of the 50c. with 15,000 stamps earmarked for GPO specimens and dealers. A note in the Plate Issue Register shows that the vignette plate for the 50c. was returned on 15 September 1937. On 25 November the 50c. duty plate was issued and returned on 2 December, thus completing the printing of the value. 4177 sheets were despatched in two batches on 10 December 1937 and 7 January 1938—the records show the year as 1937 for both dates, a human slip at the start of a New Year!

Even though 5½ million 5c. Coronation stamps had been printed during 1937 it became apparent that more 5c. values would be needed before 2 May 1938, the planned date for the issue of the King George VI series. Requisition 9061/1 was an order for another 7500 sheets of the King George V 5c.—required for delivery as early as possible after December 1937. The duty (frame) plate was issued on 5 November 1937 and returned on 17 November. There is no mention of the date of issue of the vignette (centre) plate but it was returned on 28 March 1938. This omission could have been caused because this was the new plate (correct in all respects) and came into use in a round-about way without being properly recorded in the PIR—understandable at a very busy time. The first batch of sheets was sent to Kenya on 24 November, followed by another on 10 December 1937. Despite this extra despatch of 6908 sheets, the issue of the King George VI 5c. was brought forward to 11 April 1938, indicating a continued heavy consumption of the value used for the local letter rate.

It thus appears from these facts and contemporary observations that the hand-retouched plate was only used for the King George VI 50c. in August/September 1937, the rogue stamp at R2/5 was then noticed by the printers and a new plate made. This plate was then used to meet an urgent demand for 5c. stamps using the King George V frame plate in late 1937. It can only be assumed that, rather than destroy over 4000 sheets of the 50c. showing the

variety at R2/5, it was decided to despatch them, perhaps in the hope that the defect would not be noticed in the frantic rush associated with the new King George VI issues for so many countries. But, in August 1938 a sharp-eyed member of the Gibbons staff spotted the mistake. This led eventually to the listing, and illustration, in the catalogue of an important King George VI variety (SG 144a). Bearing in mind the time gap between the issue and discovery it seems likely that many examples would have been used in the post with positional blocks being removed from sheets still held in stock at a later stage. A cover with the variety would certainly make a nice item, while a similar positional block of the corrected King George V 5c. would make a fine pair with the King George V 50c. There is a story that a sheet of the King George V 5c. from the last printing was sought for the Royal Collection, but the hunt proved unsuccessful ...

Mountain Retouch— (SG 135a and 145ab)

In November 1950 Rang noted in *GSM* that the Mountain retouch had been mentioned three times in the recent past, the first being in September 1949. He had now received a long letter from Mr G P Willoughby in Nairobi recording his findings about the variety. Willoughby disclosed that he had discovered the original flaw which had led to the retouching. His investigations had revealed that the damage to CP7B first occurred on R6/7 during or just before the 1s. or 3s. was printed. The damage consisted of five unequal-sized marks below the dip at the left of the mountain peak and was known on both values (*Fig 1*). (It must be emphasised that the illustration of the damage has been produced using a small touched-up photograph in Berrington's handbook. As will be seen the location of the damage is not in the area retouched on R6/7 and, if correct, leads to speculation about accuracy, which after so long is unlikely to be resolved, unless a reader has a copy showing the damage). At the time of writing Willoughby reported that sheets of the 3s. with the damage were still held by the postal authorities, but only one used copy of the 1s. had come to his notice. This suggested that the damage occurred while printing the 1s. and was not noticed until after completion of the 3s. printing run when the plate was retouched. This hypothesis was supported later by Berrington and Rang who both commented on the rarity of the damaged 1s.

Willoughby stated that the retouch on R6/7 (*Fig 2*) was known on the 10c. and the 1s., but not on the 3s. This appeared to have been because fresh supplies of the 3s. were not needed until CP7B had been replaced by plates 8. He added that no trace of damage on the 10c had come to light and it seemed that CP7B was only used

for the 10c. after the change of colour (to green) and after retouching. He went on to say that the first supplies of the 10c. showed the retouch on R6/7, with some showing another retouch to the mountain on R5/10 (*Fig 3*). No trace of damage necessitating the second retouch had been found. On the day of issue in Nairobi some sheets showed both retouches, but a few days later only sheets with R6/7 were available. He considered that R5/10 was damaged and retouched during the printing of the first supplies in the new colour after R6/7 had been retouched. He confirmed that both retouches appeared on the 1s. printed from CP7B.

Unfortunately, it has not been possible to establish from the records in the British Library that the centre plate was used for the 1s. before the 3s. Nevertheless, from observation and comment made at the time the first sheets appeared it is most probable that the sequence of events for CP7B was: 1s. R6/7 damaged with R5/10 in the normal state (Issued August 1948). 3s. R6/7 damaged with R5/10 normal (August 1948). 10c. R6/7 retouched with R5/10 normal and R6/7 retouched with R5/10 retouched (1 June 1949). 1s. with both R6/7 and 5/10 retouched (July 1949).

The Dot Removed

In December 1950 Rang wrote in *GSM* that Master Adrien Begg, aged 9½, had pointed out that there was no longer a white dot in the fold of the scroll before 'KENYA' in the current 50c. Rang confirmed this and pointed out that the white dot had always been a feature of this frame used for all values with the Dhow and Lake Naivasha designs and was due to the omission of a short horizontal line of shading. However, in the latest printing of the 50c. perforated 13 × 12½ from a new CP3 (14 June 1950) a small horizontal line had been inserted obliterating the dot. In February Rang stated that, having examined complete sheets and received information from collectors, he considered that, 'this retouch is similar in style and equal in interest to the earlier variety 'Rope Joined to Sail'. Investigation had revealed that the line of shading intended to fill the white dot varied slightly from stamp to stamp and on R5/2, 6/1, 7/2, 7/4 and 9/1 had been omitted. It was clear, in Rang's opinion, that the removal of the dot had come about by retouching each impression on the plate. In March 1951 he wrote that a search had shown that only FP3 was affected. A year later Berrington added R9/3 to the list and in 1962 Rang reconfirmed that FP1, 2, 4A and 4B all had the dot and FP3 had the dot removed with the exception of the five impressions previously mentioned. This, of course, created an important King George VI variety when one of the five is found in a pair or multiple with stamps showing the dot removed (SG 144e). In March 1990

Christie's catalogue for the Barber Sale noted, when describing a block of four of the 50c. with three stamps showing the dot removed and the fourth with the dot in the scroll (SG 144eb), that 'Traces are still visible on some stamps, however, where the retouching was not completely effective.' This perhaps explains why Berrington added a sixth example to the list.

In November 1974 Saunders, writing in *Geosix*, contested Rang's views. First, it did not seem likely that, for no apparent reason, 95 out of 100 impressions should have been retouched. In the case of the King George V 5c. centre plate there had been good reason as the stay and mast did not join. On the other hand, the white dot had been part of the frame design, not only for the 50c., but for other denominations. Saunders pointed out that as time passed there had been a tendency to give a stronger impression to the plates and whereas the lighter impression of the earlier plates had caused the head of the King to have a grey-black appearance, the head printed from FP3 always appeared to be black. Having examined sheets, he contended that the transfer roller had, either, been rocked in under such pressure that there was a spreading of the lines or, more likely, that it was put through a second time and in most cases was so close to the original that the two impressions 'fused' obliterating partly, or completely, the white dot and making the frame lines extra thick. He examined the five positions where the white dot remained and found usually that there was a slight doubling in the design, as though the roller had been inserted a second time in that portion of the stamp only. He stoutly maintained, with due deference to Rang, that the sideographer had worked over the entire plate and this had caused the variety on five stamps to come into being. His theory does seem far more likely to match events and to paraphrase remarks by Lady Bracknell in *The Importance of Being Earnest*, to miss one retouch may be regarded as a misfortune, to miss two looks like carelessness, but to omit five is ridiculous!

Minor Varieties

Introduction. The many printings from a very large number of plates resulted in a host of minor varieties in the shape of damage, retouches and re-entries. In July 1952 Rang noted that reports of varieties, though always numerous, had reached flood proportions. Kendalian writing in *Stamp Collecting* at the same time said 'Some of the things which De La Rue do to improve the appearance of their stamps are amazing'. A year later Bentley Kettle expressed the view that DLR seemed to make a special effort to cater for the collector of varieties. In 1964 Niall Fair concluded a rigorous study of FP5 used for the 5c., with a tribute to the meticulous

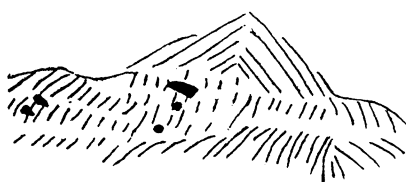


Fig.1



Fig.2



Fig.3

care taken by the printer in the maintenance of the plate and the excellence of the repair work. Against this background it is difficult to pick out a selection of minor varieties. Those chosen are mostly easy to spot, if difficult to find, either because of their clarity or the position of the stamp near the edge of a sheet. A good glass, as always, will prove most helpful. Careful study of the normal design, particularly the lines of shading in the sky and sea will enable retouches to be identified more easily. In the past commentators have bemoaned the shortage of material, especially sheets; time has only exacerbated the problem.

5 Cents

Research by Saunders. Two articles in *Stamp Collecting* (6 and 13 April 1956) entitled 'The 5c. and the Dhow Vignette', comprehensively described a multitude of minor varieties. For example, in the re-entered state of CP1A Saunders listed 27 positions where re-entries could be found—seven of them are very good instances of such work showing very clear doubling. Not to be outdone CP1B offered doubling on 29, with 18 showing clear and extensive doubling. Anyone possessing left corner blocks, printed late in the life of the plates, should examine R9/1 from CP1A and R7/1, 8/1 and 10/1 from CP1B to see some fine examples. The doubling of the lines of shading in the sea gives a 'smeared' and much darker appearance to the naked eye and is easily seen through a glass.

Research by Fair. In 1964 *Stamp Collecting* published a detailed account of the life of FP5 (2, 9 and 16 October). Fair discovered seven distinct states of the plate and the 39 illustrations accompanying the articles are very clear.

Centre Plate 3A. The use of CP3A in middle life gives a good indication of the varieties to be found on the 5c. A printing was released in London on 14 June 1950 perforated $13 \times 12\frac{1}{2}$ (SG 133a). The FP6CP3A combination was used, but the centre plate had been strengthened by a fresh entry of the transfer roller, resulting in slight doubling of the vertical and diagonal lines in the rigging, sails and occupants of the dhow. Berrington listed 11 positions (R1/3, 1/6, 1/10, 3/5, 3/7, 3/9, 4/6, 4/10, 9/8 and 10/10). Saunders added another seven (R1/4, 1/5, 1/7, 2/9, 2/10, 3/6 and 4/7). It must be said that, for the majority, the use of a glass is essential. Some of the instances of doubling are not discernible to the naked eye. However, it is important to remember that CP3A in this state was used for the 25c. with FP1A (SG 140) and the 50c. with FP2 (SG 144e) and because of this a selection will be described in detail. A very colourful display could, therefore, be built-up using examples from each of the three values. Patience rather than money would be the key to success! R1/4—all ropes to the left are doubled, plus the rear edge of the sail and some shading. The figures at the rear show a double outline to the left. R1/5—ropes, the edge of the sail and figures to the rear doubled. R1/6—a most interesting stamp and sometimes seen in blocks of four as the margin contains the guide cross. Traces of doubling occur all over the dhow. The most noticeable feature are small marks, like climbing rats, to the left of the pulley blocks on the main rope and very strong doubling to the

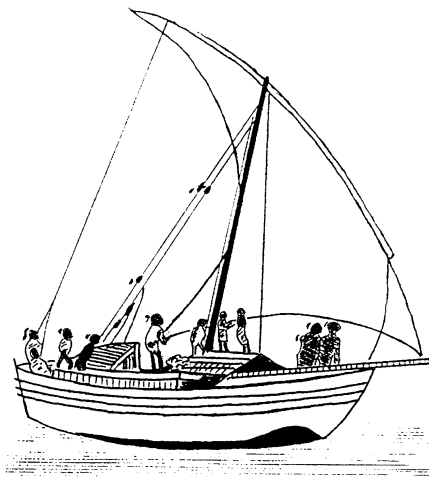


Fig.4

left of the mast and the outline of the figures. The three wide bars of shading along the side of the dhow protrude into the sea at the stern (Fig. 4). R1/7—doubling of the long stay rope and lines of shading in the top of the sail. R1/10—the long rope and figure in the stern show doubling. R2/9—the long rope, other ropes, sail and figures in the stern show doubling. R2/10—as for R2/9, but stronger. R3/6—figures at the stern thickened and ropes slightly doubled. R4/7—stern figure doubled and some of the nearby rope. Signs of doubling on the other positions listed by Berrington and Saunders usually take the form of thickened lines indicating skillful re-entry work by the De La Rue staff. On R5/1 a centre plate flaw, like a crescent, shows below the stern (Fig. 5), again this is to be found on the 25c. and 50c. values.

Centre Plate 3B. For the record, and to complete the pair, CP3B offers examples of doubling on nine stamps. R4/10—slight doubling of the figures in the stern and the nearby rope. R6/8—the long rope is doubled. R8/8—clear doubling of the ropes, figures outlined or thickened and the hills in the background appear fuzzy. R9/2 and 10/2—slight doubling of the long rope near the stern. R10/3—long rope doubled, figures thickened or showing slight doubling. R10/7—long rope doubled. R10/8—all ropes, the edge of the sail, rigging and the outlines of the figures show doubling, making this impression a good companion for R1/6 from CP3A. R10/9—long rope, other ropes and rigging show doubling.

Extended Mast and Sail. *Stamp Mirror* (18 March 1950) suddenly asked its readers if they possessed a copy of the 5c. value with the lengthened mast. The extension went well beyond the top of the mast and was easily seen by the naked eye. Berrington also mentioned it, describing the variety as either engraved or smeared. In June 1951 a photograph appeared in *GSM* showing the main or stay rope projecting 1mm above the sail on a 5c. (SG 132). Rang commented that the projection appeared to be clearly engraved and was not an ink slur. The date of the postmark looked like 1939. So far as is known Rang's appeal for more information went unrewarded. Berrington believed the variety occurred on Plate 1. In passing, 'The White Wave' should not be missed. Although not constant, Berrington encountered it sufficiently often to regard it as a flaw. He considered it was probably caused by the blob of ink forming the wave

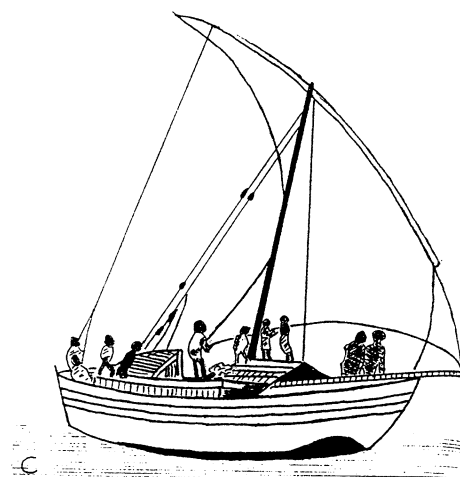


Fig.5

at the prow of the dhow coming unstuck—an example of ink-stripping.

Deep Scratches. The Crested Crane Club of Kampala reported (*GSM* July 1952) that a constant flaw extended over R7/1 and 8/1 in sheets of the 5c. brown and orange (SG 133) from FP5. The damage consisted of scratches, some of them deep, in the shape of a curve, extending from the 'A' of 'TANGANYIKA' (on R7/1) through the last 'A' of 'UGANDA' to the medallion (R8/1). In his erudite study of FP5 Fair identified this as occurring on the seventh and final state of FP5 to be found on the orange and brown printing from CP3A and 3B.

Odds and Ends. An extra mark on the bowsprit—another rat—caught Berrington's attention on R4/10 from CP1A. Roy Botwright positioned a large dot between 'LAKE' and 'VICTORIA' on R7/10 from Plate 1 and a line joining 'ON' to the frame on R2/3 from FP3. Berrington had mentioned this frame flaw, but could not add anything further other than it occurred on the 1941 release. He also recorded a large dot over 'E' of 'LAKE' on R2/6 and a comma in front of 'A DHOW' on R9/7, both from CP2A with FP5.

Finally, on R10/9 of a plate block from FP5CP2B it is reasonably easy to pick out the general effect of the doubling to the left side of the frame particularly the background to 'KENYA' where it appears much darker than the same area in adjacent stamps. The longest leaf in the group of bulrushes on the left side is clearly doubled as are the semi-circular lines of shading in the top of the lower left scroll. On R9/9 the bulrushes on the left show evidence of a minor retouch and for good measure, slight doubling of the horizontal lines of shading in the sea occurs on the extreme right of R9/9 and 10.

Part 36 (GSM May 1995) will describe more varieties to be found on KUT definitive stamps.

Further details about the King George VI Collectors' Society can be obtained from: The General Secretary, 98 Albany, Manor Road, Bournemouth, BH1 3EW.