

# King George VI Varieties

## Part 53—Basutoland, Cayman Islands and Cyprus

Richard Lockyer OBE reviews varieties, shades and printings

### Basutoland

#### The Tower Flaw

A note in *GSM* many years ago reported that Lieutenant A R Kennedy had noticed a flaw on the 1d. value, but went on to observe that it was a moot point if a minor flaw deserved more attention because it happened to fall in a position that made it prominent. In this instance a little coloured line on Row 2/4 might have been ignored, had it not fallen in a position where it became a new feature in the design, earning for itself a most descriptive title—"The Tower Flaw". The variety, featured on the front cover, only rates one entry in *Part 1* (SG 19a). However, it is a different story in *Commonwealth* where it has three entries, depending on the shade—scarlet, scarlet-rose (1 October 1946) and carmine-lake. The third shade is very hard to find, even without the variety, and this is reflected in the price column. In January 1967 Saunders, writing in *Geosix*, reported that S J Boulton possessed a corner block of eight stamps on which the Tower did not occur on R2/4. He attributed it to the first printing in 1938.

#### Shades of the 1d.

Potter and Shelton described the 1 April 1938 release as scarlet, followed by a dull carmine stamp from a colonial release in 1940/42. They noted that the former was perf 12.4, whilst the latter had the same horizontal perforation (12%), as had the succeeding, bright scarlet, January 1944 issue. *GSM* (October 1939) noted a new supply in a brighter scarlet with a slightly finer perforation, and in January 1943 announced the arrival of new stock perforated 12% with no change of shade.

Potter and Shelton, in their introductory remarks to the Basutoland issue, refer to the soft carmine shade of the 1940/42 colonial release as outstanding and thanked Bentley Kettle for drawing it to their attention. Kettle claimed that used copies, in a distinct dull carmine, in his possession, all bore dates in 1940. For the record, Potter classified the perf 12% October 1946 issue as carmine-red, but *Commonwealth* used scarlet-rose and *GSM* slightly deeper red. For the 14 May 1952 stamp, Potter preferred carmine. Saunders favoured

carmine-pink and *GSM* chose slightly paler red. Saunders classified the final issue in 12 November 1953 as bright scarlet and *GSM* selected brighter scarlet. All these slight variations show only too well how shades vary in the eye of the beholder and make the task of identification after 45 years or so very, very difficult.

#### Numbers printed

There were eight requisitions for the 1d. The first despatch from Waterlow and Sons on 24 February and 31 March 1938 was 2,416,630 stamps, the second, on 14 and 20 October 1938, was 1,784,820 and the fourth, despatched on 25 November 1940 and 12 February 1941, totalled 3,144,600. None of the 924,900 stamps from the third despatch, on 15 and 25 September 1939, was sent to dealers, whereas the fifth despatch, on 29 July and 27 August 1943, consisting of 102,480 stamps, or 1708 sheets, went to the Bureau earmarked for them. However, following custom, it is possible that about 10 per cent could have been sent to Basutoland. From these figures it seems that Kettle's distinctive shade of copies used in 1940 came from the third despatch. Saunders noted, many years ago, that the only mint copies of the difficult shade could be purchased, at a price, from a well-known Manchester dealer. It is not beyond the bounds of possibility that, by coincidence, this one dealer happened to obtain a number of sheets straight from Basutoland, or maybe a South African supplier, either in 1939/40 or, more probably, after the end of World War II, and some of them were in the unusual shade. The other three despatches were: 4 July and 8 August 1946, 759,640 stamps; 10 and 21 April 1952, 688,740 and 2 November 1953, 952,200.

#### T-marks

Single inverted setting marks have been identified on R1/6, R1/10, R2/4 (with the Tower Flaw) and R3/1 with a trace affecting R3/6. A very clear double inverted T-mark can be found on R1/12. *Fig 1* shows where the marks are located and it has to be emphasised that the marks are not as distinct as the one illustrated. It is important to remember that sheets consist of five horizontal rows of 12 stamps and the marks are not necessarily identifiable on every printing, conversely more may be spotted at other positions on the sheet. T-mark hunting on King George VI Waterlow issues can prove to be an intriguing pursuit needing a lot of patience as well as a good magnifying glass. The same can be said for general variety-hunting. The small, but powerful,  $\times 10$  measuring magnifier selected as 'The Editor's Choice' and

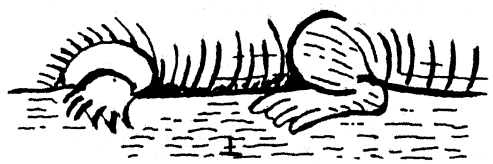
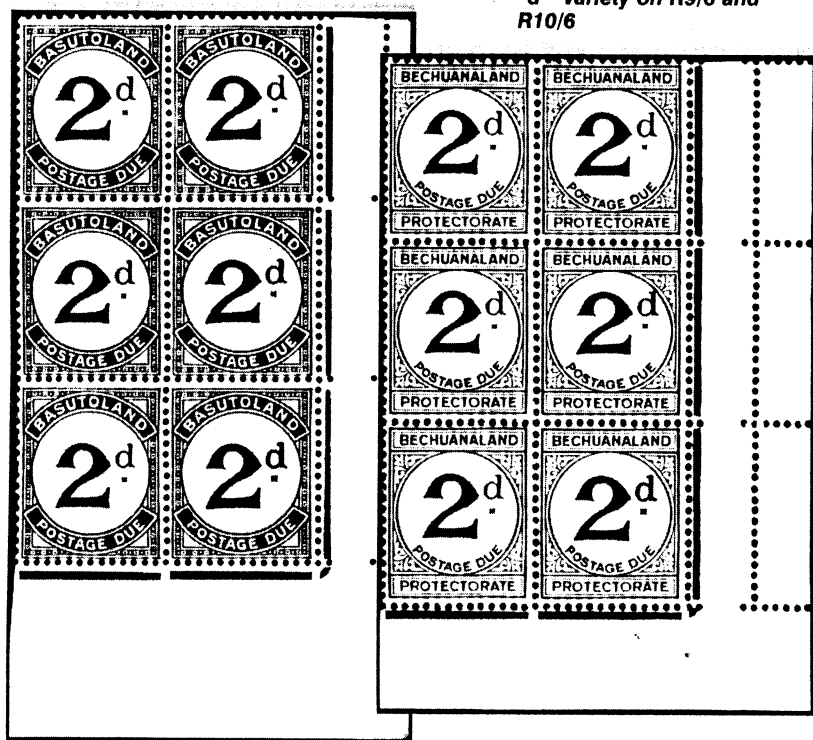


Fig 1 Basutoland T-mark

Basutoland and Bechuanaland 2d. postage due blocks showing 'Large "d"' variety on R9/6 and R10/6



described by Hugh Jefferies in recent editions of *GSM*, is a very handy version. His recommendation is strongly endorsed. Nevertheless, the Ultra Lens previously described in this series, with its built-in illumination and strong distortion-free set of lenses, must remain this author's choice!

#### Victory issue

The varieties occurring on the 1946 Victory Issue for South Africa were described in Part 10 (*GSM* November 1988). The three stamps were overprinted for Basutoland and thus carry all the varieties. The 'Barbed Wire' variety at R9/6 is listed in *Commonwealth*.

#### Postage Dues

The accompanying photograph of a corner block of the 1951 2d. postage due shows the 'Large "d"' variety on R9/6 and R10/6. For companionship, a similar block from the 1947 issue for Bechuanaland is also shown.

### Cayman Islands

#### Watermark errors

The 'A' of 'CA' missing from the watermark on the ½d. value is listed in *Part 1* (SG 116ab). An unmounted lower right corner block of 12 (4×3), with the variety between one stamp in the lower row and the margin, was sold for £782 at Harmers on 28 July 1995. In 1951, mention was made in *Stamp Mirror* of a 1943 10s. perf 14 with the 'C' completely missing. Fortunately, the watermark was centrally placed in the middle of the stamp. The commentator suggested that the letter had fallen off the dandy roll, complete with the wire fastening, as there was not a trace of any metal touching the paper in that position. He admitted that, to find another would be like looking for a needle in a haystack with the added complication that the affected paper could have been divided between different printers and it could only be a matter of guesswork for how long the omission went undetected.

Nevertheless, it must be worth examining all copies of the Cayman Islands 10s. perf 14 from the 1943 printing. At the time, *GSM* (September 1943) noted the line perforation measured 14.2 all round and that very white paper had been used. The colour has been described as chocolate or chocolate-brown. Halward reported cream gum on medium paper, but he may have been looking at a copy which had been in the colony. Potter mentioned the shaded face of the King. In comparison, the later perf 14 issue in December 1945 was, to Saunders' eyes, sepia-brown on thin, white paper with clear gum. Potter noted a clear face. *GSM* (February 1946) awarded the prize for perforation changes to the 10s. value, as the original perf 11½×13 changed to perf 14 in July 1943, only to return in March 1945 and then revert back to perf 14 on 17 December 1945.

David Aggersberg recently commented in *GSM* (October 1998) that finding watermark errors seemed to have developed into a 'fairly lucrative cottage industry'. However, the challenge is to find them. Those who try, will find the task time-consuming, tedious and nearly always unrewarding, but when one is found the

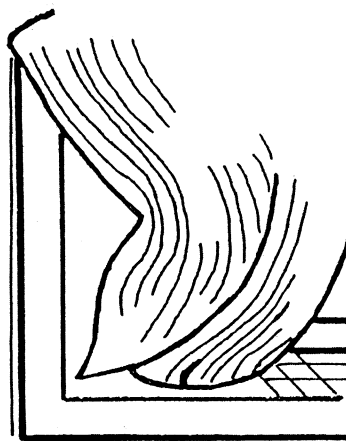


Fig 2 Doubling of vertical outer frame line in lower left corner

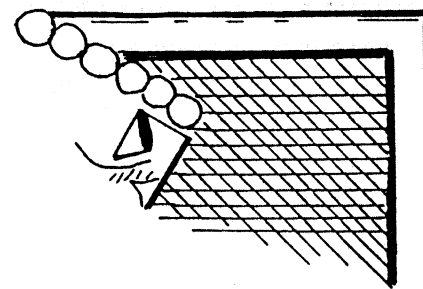


Fig 3 Slight doubling of top horizontal frame line in upper right corner

emotion generated could be compared to bungy-jumping! This can be confirmed by D Farmborough, a member of the King George VI Collectors' Society, who recently discovered a missing 'A' watermark error on a 1s. perf 14. This discovery, which will be listed as SG 123ab, means that three of the five De La Rue values perforated 14 and released on 16 July 1943 have been seen with watermark errors—surely it must be worth looking at the backs of copies of the 2d. and 6d. to see if bungy-jumping is even more closely associated with philately. However, there is a complicating factor, as both values were also released on 17 December 1945 with the same perforation. *GSM* (February 1946) noted that the 2d. was a slightly deeper shade of violet, but the colour of the 6d. was unchanged. Potter endorsed the first opinion, but suggested that the second 6d. was deeper olive. In conclusion, Aggersberg commented that 'the damage probably occurred on the reserve dandy roll of the Multiple Script CA watermark and may well date from the early 1930s. This dandy roll was not, however, in continuous use and may well have been scrapped completely after the Dominica 1951 definitive series where it was, clearly, in a very poor state.'

#### Shades

As for Aden, the shade enthusiast can find plenty to occupy his time, should the aim be to assemble examples of all the printings from Waterlow (½d., 1d., 1½d., 2½d., 3d., 2s. and 5s.) and De La Rue (½d., 2d., 6d., 1s. and 10s.). Help can be found in the pages of contemporary issues of *GSM*, Potter and Shelton's book describing colonial printings, an article in *Stamp Collecting* (29 January 1949) by R C Henry, *The West End Philatelist* for July–August 1962 and, lastly, a detailed listing by Frank Saunders published in *Geosix*, the journal of the King George VI Collectors' Society. The 10s. value, in particular, makes an interesting display and in Potter's words the different printings 'can be easily identified'. He provided extra details of the value to amplify his main listing of shades:

Cayman Islands re-entries on the 2½d.

1938—Chocolate, thick paper, brown gum, clear face—perf 13×12

1943—Deeper chocolate, medium paper, cream gum, shaded face—perf 14

1945 (March)—Deep chocolate-brown, exactly as 1943, but perf 13×12

1945 (December)—Deep chocolate-brown, thinner white paper, clear gum, clear face—perf 14

1948 (August)—Brown-sepia, as 1945, but colder shade—perf 13×12

It is reasonably easy to obtain copies of the 10s. and the five printings make an attractive page in a collection.

#### Re-entry

Bentley Kettle noticed one very nice re-entry on the 2½d. in both colours (*Stamp Collecting* 10 October 1952). The sheets consisted of 12 rows of five stamps. Waterlow plates were unnumbered. The re-entry affected R9/2—very clear vertical doubling of the outer frame line in the lower left corner (Fig 2) and slight doubling of the top horizontal frame line in the upper right corner (Fig 3).

#### Plate damage

The only mention of accidental plate damage to come to light is a remark by Saunders in *Stamp Collecting* (17 June 1950), when he mentioned the 'Scar over the Eye' on an unpositioned copy of the 5s.

### Cyprus

#### Shades

Potter and Shelton devoted two full pages of their book to this recess-printed issue from Waterlow and Sons and, once again, the research undertaken by Saunders and recorded in *Geosix* is of considerable help when sorting out the many printings. Kendalian forcefully expressed his feelings in *Stamp Magazine* (30 December 1952) when he reviewed a recent issue, 'What on earth does this country (Cyprus) do with all their ten shilling and pound stamps, and why are larger printings not made? It allows them to reap in cash from dealers, who must pay Crown Agents commission, every time a new release is announced, just in case there is any change'.

## Perforations

As well as the plethora of shades, there are also perforation differences, including the one piastre orange perforated  $13\frac{1}{2} \times 12$  (SG 154a), first shown by H J R Allan to *GSM* (February 1946), when it was observed that a few more specimens with postmarks



ranging from May to September 1944 had been seen.

This perforation was only released on the island and was not available in London or through any other wholesale source.

At the time, collectors scoured the rural post offices seeking mint examples, but with very limited success. The perforation variety is more common in the used state and throughout the history of the stamp the price ratio between unused and used copies has been around the 15 to 1 level. A used copy is shown here.

## Double entries 45 piastres

*Stamp Mirror* (28 July 1951) reported that the 45pi. released on 12 July 1951 showed doubling on R5/3. The outer right vertical frame line, just about opposite the face of the King and then downwards, was divided into tram-lines for some five or six millimetres, after which it reverted to a single line again. There was also a sign of a shift to the right, on a level with the ear of the King, outside the oval containing his head. The writer also noted a short black line on R5/1 between the inner and outer frame line to the right of '45' in the bottom right corner, while on R6/1 there was a pronounced thickening of the right frame line at the top right corner for  $\frac{1}{2}$ mm, as though it had been recut or the roller die had shifted a little. This description is reminiscent of the Malta 1d. at R2/9 described in Part 7 (*GSM*, February 1988). Kettle later mentioned two almost identical re-entries on R4/2-3 (*Stamp Collecting* 2 October 1953). The former showed only duplication of the vertical lines in the top right corner and the latter had this, plus horizontal doubling in the top left corner.

## £1

E Shaw of Halifax showed *Stamp Mirror* (16 June 1950) an interesting example of doubling on the £1. An extra line cut across the left outer vertical frame line. It started outside at the top and finished inside the frame line at the bottom, adjacent to the value tablet. There were also signs of doubling to the right of the solid lines in the '£' sign. The *Commonwealth* catalogue describes another unpositioned re-entry (CW 19a) which is described as 'left value tablet doubled at both sides'.

## Plate numbers

Corner blocks showing plate numbers have always been most collectable and usually justify a premium as they are helpful when identifying printings. This is certainly so in the case of a block of the  $\frac{1}{4}$ pi. value showing 3-3, (illustrated) as this frame

and centre plate combination was only used for the September 1940 printing of this value.

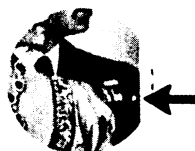
Although nothing to do with plate blocks, *GSM* (September 1947) noted a very odd event concerning their latest supply of the 2pi. from the Crown Agents—all sheets had a block of ten stamps (2x5) missing from the bottom left corner. One is left to ponder why this happened.

## Silver Wedding

The low values of the 1948 Silver Wedding issue are uninteresting and insipid. A chance flaw on the Cyprus stamp at R3/5 gives the King 'An Extra Decoration' (SG 166a) and livens up the scene. A used example is shown. Generally speaking, it is harder to find used examples of King George VI varieties than mint copies.



On the other hand, collectors who look for a really difficult challenge should take up the hunt for examples of any variety on cover.



## Postmarks

Rural or small post offices in Cyprus provide a sideline for collectors interested in unusual postmarks. However, it is possible that somewhere a perplexed collector has some high values from the colony bearing cancels from a Cairo-based South African Troop post office. The story behind this unusual occurrence is told by Cecil Rose in his book *Ten under Cat* where he recounts amusing tales about his life as a stamp dealer before, during and after World War II. At the outbreak of war he joined the army, but his life as a stamp dealer was

never far from his thoughts and throughout the period he invested as much as he could in sound stock. In 1945, having had a spell of duty in Cyprus, he found himself in Cairo as a warrant officer in the Field Security Police, where he stamped and addressed a number of envelopes to himself in England. He took them to the South African Troop post office and, because he asked for very clear postmarks, he was allowed to do the job himself. In his book he admitted that he took advantage of this irregular privilege on another occasion, when he was prompted by that 'imp of devilment or misguided sense of humour to which a carefree Service atmosphere seemed to give full rein' to stick some high-value Cyprus stamps on pieces of brown paper, so that they looked as if they had been torn off parcels. The next time he had some envelopes to send back to England and was given the datestamp, he postmarked the Cyprus stamps as well. He offered and sold them to a dealer in London for £50 pounds. This left him not only with a nice profit of £30, but also the thought that the stamps could become rarities and, as they changed hands in the years to come, possibly inspire intense discussion as to why and how they came to bear a Cairo postmark.

Part 54 (*GSM* November 1999) will feature comment about King George VI varieties on some of the stamps of the Falkland Islands and Gibraltar.

Details about membership of the King George VI Collectors' Society can be obtained from the Secretary, KGVICS, 98 Albany, Manor Road, Bournemouth, BH1 3EW.

This corner block of the Cyprus  $\frac{1}{4}$ pi. value can be identified as the September 1940 printing by the 3-3 frame and centre plate combination

