

KING GEORGE VI VARIETIES

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Part 28—Bahamas, The 1942 Landfall Issue

(Continued from February 1993 GSM)

Introduction

Parts 26 and 27 considered the most probable method of overprinting used in the offices of the *Nassau Guardian* for the 1942 Columbus Landfall issue and the varieties to be found on the nine small format stamps bearing the head of the King. This part will conclude the examination of the issue with a description of the varieties that exist on the 4d., 6d., and 8d. pictorial values recess printed by Waterlow, in sheets of twelve horizontal rows of five stamps, and the 2s. and 3s. with the Seal of the Colony design printed by Bradbury Wilkinson in the same manner, but in sheets of sixty arranged in five horizontal rows of twelve stamps. Apologies are offered for the error in the text describing the latter format in Part 26.

Warnings have been given during this series about inconstant broken letters and figures when recess printed stamps are overprinted. The five values to be considered now are prone to this and freaks are reasonably common. It appears that the 4d. value was most affected. This was, perhaps, because the design seems to have been more heavily engraved into the plate, judging by the finger-tip test across the surface of a stamp when the ridges of ink forming the design can be detected easily. It can also be argued that the design is far more complicated than the other two and there are more ridges to break the surface tension of the overprinting ink thus creating freaks.

The 4d., 6d. and 8d. Values

At the start it is worth mentioning the location of the printers' guide lines that appear between the stamps as they are a valuable aid to establishing the position of some individual stamps and multiples. On sheets of the 6d. and 8d. a guide line occurs between Row 1/2 and 1/3 at the top of the stamps. A vertical line and dot in the vignette colour shows between R2/2 and 2/3 at the foot of the stamps, with the dot at the bottom end. A central cross in the frame colour occurs between the sixth and seventh rows and the second and third stamps in the rows. A vertical line in the frame colour and a line and dot in the vignette colour, with the dot uppermost, show almost alongside each other between the second and third stamps in the tenth and eleventh rows. Horizontal lines in the frame colour occur between the sixth and seventh rows adjacent to the selvage on either side of the sheet. Sheets of the 4d. have a similar layout, except that there are no lines in the vignette colour and the vertical lines between R2/2 and 2/3 and R11/2 and 11/3 have dots under and over respectively. The imprint appears in the selvage below R12/3 on all the values.

It appears that the problem of misaligned horizontal overprint slugs encountered with small format stamps, and described in Part 26 (*GSM* November 1992), did not affect the three Waterlow stamps. However, Emil A Gotz, in a letter to *Stamp Collecting* on 20 February 1943, wrote that he had just purchased the three values in blocks of six with a right hand margin and the overprint on the stamps next to the margin was on the slant rising from left to right, while the adjoining stamps on the left were overprinted normally. In reply the editor pointed out that this peculiarity had been noted in the magazine on 31 October 1942, all the stamps in the left and right vertical rows being affected.

The 'COLUMBUS' Variety. Pride of place has to go to the 'COIUMBUS' flaw on R2/5. It is listed in 'Part 1' and the *Commonwealth* catalogues. Moreton Black has confirmed that he has identified progressive stages of deterioration to the letter 'L' in 'COLUMBUS' changing it into an 'I'. This most probably occurred at a very late stage in the period of overprinting. The variety is well known and whenever an example appears at auction it is usually illustrated in the catalogue. It was long believed that only the 4d. and 6d. were affected. However, just over thirty years ago a mint block of four of the 8d. was sold at Harmers for £100 and since then other examples have been seen. Auction prices are generally a fair indicator of scarcity and popularity. In March 1990 Christie's held the T D Barber sale of King George VI varieties. An unmounted marginal block of four of the 4d. fetched £176, a lightly mounted mint marginal pair of the 6d. reached £198 and a very fine used copy of the 8d., with a RPS certificate, achieved £880. Some seven months later when the Wilson Wong sale took place at the same auction house, a fine mint block of four of the 4d. raised £187, a similar block of the 6d. reached £198 and an outstanding positional and unmounted block of ten of the 8d. attracted £1430. It does seem that King George VI varieties command attention! It is also noteworthy that, at least, one example of the 8d. on a cover has been owned by a member of the King George VI Collectors' Society.

Broken and Polluted Type. Other broken and polluted letters and figures can be found affecting the three values. The examples illustrated have been noted after an examination of some twenty-five sheets of each of the 4d., 6d. and 8d. Some of them occurred on all three, others on two and the rest on a single value. This emphasises the point that signs of pollution came and went, just as breaks in the type grew in size and altered in shape. The sheets examined, thanks to the generosity of Mr Barney Kleinberg, could well be one of the last bulk batches available for study

and, because of this, defects in the overprint have been described in detail. The selvage, and with it the sheet numbers, had been removed from all the sheets. Those of the 4d. were cancelled to order on 3 December 1942, the 6d. on 1 December 1942 and the 8d. on 30 November 1942.

Varieties on the 4d., 6d. and 8d. The front of the '2' of '1942' on R6/2 had a shaved appearance (*Fig 1*). (A break developed at a later stage on this figure and will be described in a following paragraph as it was not common on the sheets of the three values examined.) A dot between the 'O' and 'L' is an example of stable pollution and affected R7/1 (*Fig 2*). The second 'A' of 'LANDFALL' on R8/3 also attracted some pollution which altered in shape (*Figs 3 and 4*). The first 'A' on R12/5 can be picked out easily—some examples show evidence of build-up (*Fig 5*), but generally the upper half of the letter was filled in completely (*Fig 6*).

Varieties on the 6d. and 8d. The '9' of '1942' on R5/5 had a dot in the lower loop (*Fig 7*). On R8/1 a minute dot on the 6d. appeared between the 'A' and 'L' (*Fig 8*). This became a comma-like mark on the 8d. (*Fig 9*).

Varieties on the 4d. and 8d. The '2' of '1942' on R9/3 collected two small dots (*Fig 10*), these grew into a large dot (*Fig 11*). On R12/1 another very small dot appeared close to the 'F' (*Fig 12*). (At a later stage this became constant on the three values.)

Varieties on the 4d. The '4' of '1942' showed a break on R6/2 (*Fig 13*) and the neck of the '2' showed weakness (*Fig 14*). A tiny spot affected the '2' of '1492' on R9/2 (*Fig 15*). Below on R10/2 the second 'U' showed an elongated dot (*Fig 16*).

Varieties on the 6d. The '4' of '1492' had a dot below it on R1/3 (*Fig 17*) and on R1/5 the '4' of '1942' showed some pollution (*Fig 18*). R5/2, which eventually carried the 'COIUMBUS' flaw, is of particular interest as the vertical shaft of the 'F' showed progressive signs of deterioration. *Figure 19* illustrates an extreme state. This fault must have been repaired as there is, for example, no sign of a defective 'F' on stamps with the major variety. The following comments can only be speculative, but it is possible that a blow struck the base of the 'L' of 'COLUMBUS', thus weakening the metal which later broke away at the end of the period. The blow then jumped over the word 'OF' to strike the base of the 'F' causing the deterioration already described. On R5/4 the top left serif on the 'M' was faulty (*Fig 20*). R6/2 featured again, but this time showed a different combination of faults in '1942'—the '4' had a slight nick on the right side (*Fig 21*), while the neck of the '2' was clearly broken (*Fig 22*). On R8/5 the '2' of '1492' had a dot (*Fig 23*) and underneath at R9/5 the 'M' showed a dot (*Fig 24*),

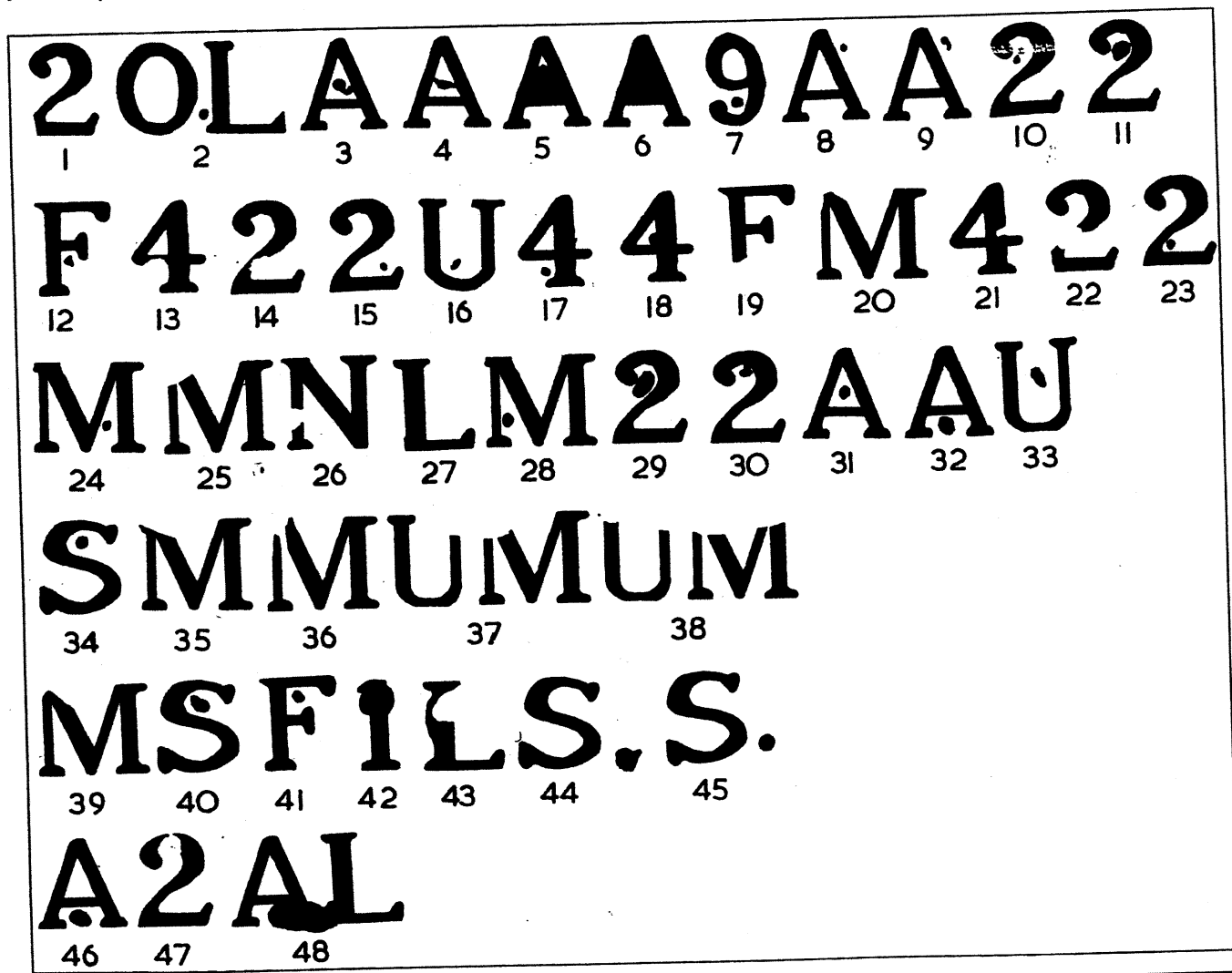
while the same letter on R10/3 showed severe deterioration (Fig 25). Further down the sheet on R12/1 the left leg of the 'N' had a break which widened progressively (Fig 26). It is noteworthy that the break did not show on the sheets of the 4d. and 8d., but did occur in conjunction with the missing serif on the first 'L' at R12/4 (Fig 27). Later on the broken 'N' affected the three values.

Varieties on the 8d. The 'M' carried a dot on R4/4 (Fig 28). The '2' of '1942' was polluted on R5/1 (Fig 29) and the '2' of '1492' also showed pollution on R9/5 (Fig 30). The first 'A' on R10/1 displayed a large dot (Fig 31).

Previous Research. Comment so far, with the exception of the remarks about the 'COIUMBUS' flaw, dealt exclusively with sheets made available for study by Mr Kleinberg. The different combinations that occurred show the transient nature of some of the examples of pollution, on the other hand, they may well prove useful for readers as a guide to plating similar stamps in their possession. The opportunity will now be taken to mention comments made in the past concerning all three values. Stanley Garnett set the ball rolling way back in 1943 and his articles were followed by those from Gisburn and Castle, who writing in *Stamp Magazine* in August 1944, drew attention to the 'Stop in the "U" of "COLUMBUS"' on R11/2, the 'Broken "N"' on R12/1, the 'Missing serif from the "L"' on R12/4 and 'Filled-in "A"' on R12/5. In later years Moreton Black contributed

several excellent articles in philatelic magazines to be followed by Saunders who reported a dot in the '2' of '1942' on R1/5 late in the printing period which was joined by another in the 'M'. He also mentioned that when the 'COIUMBUS' flaw was present on R5/2 there was a dot in the loop of the '4' of '1492'. The damage to the '4' and '2' of '1492' on R6/2 has already been the subject of comment, but Saunders noted that the '2' was broken for much of the period of overprinting. Mr Graham Hoey had noted that the adjacent '4' showed damage. Saunders suggested that this might have been a freak as it had not been confirmed. Study of the Kleinberg sheets of the 4d. support Hoey's observation. In addition, I have seen the '4' and '2' broken on a sheet of the 8d. numbered 0828. Saunders wrote that at one stage a dot appeared in the second 'U' on R10/2, as already noted on sheets of the 4d. He also commented on a large dot between the legs of the first 'A' on R11/1 on the 4d. overprinted very late in the period (Fig 32). Moreton Black reported a dot, hardly visible, in the first 'U' on R11/2. It is easy to pick out once it had grown in size (Fig 33)! Saunders commented that before the serif on the 'L' disappeared on R12/4, a dot appeared in the 'M' of R11/5. He confirmed the damage to the left leg of the 'N' on R12/1 and mentioned that the heel serif on R12/4 had, at one stage, been bent downwards before eventually disappearing. Finally, the solid apex on R12/5 was confirmed for most of the printing.

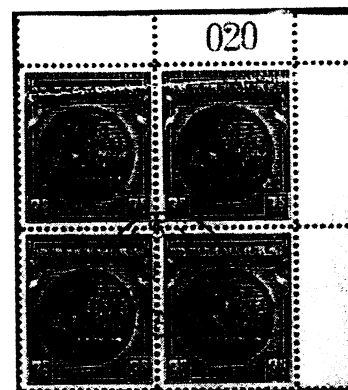
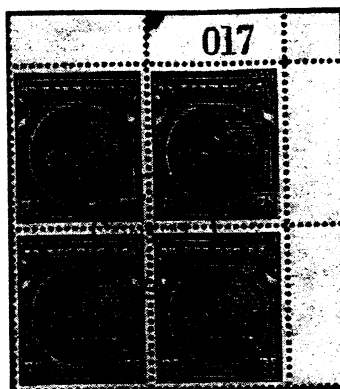
It does seem that the stock used for overprinting the 2s. and 3s. came from several earlier printings. For example, Hoey reported in *Stamp Collecting* on 12 August 1950 that he had a copy of the 2s. which was definitely a 1931 printing on thick paper with cream gum. In addition, many writers have commented on the wide variety of shades. Black has identified five groups for the 2s., all with white gum (royal blue and grey-black, royal blue and black, dull blue and slate-purple, steel-blue and brownish-black and steel-blue and slate) and three of the 3s. (yellowish-green and black and green and slate-purple on white paper and green and slate-black on either white or toned paper). It also appears that the sheets were selected from stock in a random manner. As an example of this, a corner block with the variety 'Stop after "COLUMBUS"' on R2/12 has been seen bearing sheet number 048, but another corner block with the same number did not have the variety. In addition, the dot did not show on blocks with number 046 and 050. This evidence points to batches of sheets being withdrawn from stock for overprinting in the offices of the *Nassau Guardian* without regard for sheet numbering, except possibly for accounting purposes, and even if this was so, once the sheets were in the printing room they would, in all probability, have been considered just as reasonably valuable pieces of paper and counted without thought to the numbers appearing in the top selvedge.



Rearrangement of Type. It appears that once again some rearrangement of type occurred. R1/1 is most interesting. At the start it appears that '1492' and 'OF' were positioned to the left of normal with the '1' of '1492' lying between the 'A' and 'N' of 'LANDFALL'. 'LANDFALL' was then moved to the right with '1492' and 'OF' still left of normal; the '1' of '1492' being almost directly over the apex of the 'A'. Lastly, '1492' moved to the right and 'LANDFALL' to the left leaving only 'OF' out of normal alignment. On R1/9 'LANDFALL' was positioned well to the left so that the first 'L' is to the left of the 'C', instead of slightly to the right. This was not corrected. R4/2 had a slight shift of '1492' to the right, this was corrected later, but was moved a little too far to the left. The adjacent stamp at R4/3 showed '1492' to the left at the beginning. This was corrected when R4/2 was realigned. The overprint on R5/12 was also misaligned at the start with both '1492' and 'OF' moved to the right bringing the 'N' and the 'F' of 'OF' to the right not left of the 'F' of 'LANDFALL'. '1492' was corrected, but 'OF' remained mispositioned.

Broken and Polluted Type. A small dot occurred in the upper loop of the 'S' on R1/8 (Fig 34) and on at least one sheet of the 2s. the 'M' was defective on R1/7 (Fig 35). Black reported that on some early sheets the '2' of '1492' was broken on R1/10 and Saunders noted that very late in the sequence of printing the top of the 'C' became dented on R2/1. A defect in the overprint on R2/2 affected the top left of the 'M' and gradually spread until the tops of the 'U' and 'M' were missing. Figure 36 shows an early stage of deterioration to the 'M' and 37 and 38 show how both letters were eventually affected. Saunders mentioned that examples he had examined from a late stage of overprinting did not show any sign of damage and suggested that, in view of this, repair work to the individual letters was unlikely to have occurred. He suggested that spreading grease or oil could have been the cause and straightforward cleaning the remedy. On the other hand, he pointed out that the substitution of a completely new slug would have resolved the problem if the letters had been faulty, but this would not have been easy. On a large block of 2s. the 'M' was defective on R2/6 (Fig 39). R2/7 was affected by a long wedge-shaped mark in the upper loop of the 'S' (Fig 40). It is completely different from the dot that affected the same letter on R1/8. Another far more famous dot, which has already been mentioned, is now listed in 'Part 1' as SG172b and 173b. This dot occurred on R2/12 and is illustrated on the front cover of this issue of GSM. Slight pollution also affected the 'F' of 'OF' for most of the time (Fig 41). R3/1 can be found in four states. The first has no pollution or damage. A blob then appeared at the top of the '1' of '1492' (Fig 42) and damage affected the vertical of the last 'L' (Fig 43). The other two states showed either a polluted '1' or a damaged 'L'. Research by Black, confirmed by Saunders, established that at first there was no pollution, then the 'L' became damaged and this was joined by pollution on the '1'. The damaged 'L' then disappeared leaving the polluted '1'. Saunders considered that, although there had been no shift of the slugs to prove substitution, this seemed to be the logical remedy, rather than repair by tooling. On a personal note I

Blocks of the us. and 3s. 'Landfall' cancelled on 12 October 1942, the first day of issue, showing the overprint tilted downwards on R2/12 (right); the two blocks below, cancelled on 12 February 1943, show the overprint horizontal



take the opportunity to draw attention to what could be described as the 'Very large dot after "COLUMBUS"'. It occurs on a positional block of four of the 3s. on R3/12 (Fig 44). It is possibly a one-off example, but a reader may have another. In comparison to the listed variety on R2/12 the dot is much bigger and has slightly fluffy edges, rather than the precise clear cut nature of the true 'Stop after "COLUMBUS"' on R2/12 (Fig 45). During the middle period of overprinting a blob appeared in the base of the second 'A' on R4/12 (Fig 46) and on R5/3 the '2' of '1492' weakened to such an extent that a break appeared (Fig 47). It is similar to the defect on R1/10. Finally, massive pollution affected R5/5 at some stage (Fig 48), only a single copy has been seen in an imprint strip and is shown in the photograph.

Tilted Slugs

The accompanying photographs of corner blocks of the 2s. and 3s. (Nos. 399 and 087) cancelled on 12 October 1942, the first day of issue, although most unfortunately not showing the 'Dot after "COLUMBUS"' on R2/12, do show all five lines of the overprint tilted down on the right side. The two other blocks (Nos 017 and 020) cancelled on 12 February 1943 have the lines of the overprint in the normal horizontal manner and in line with their neighbours. Pure conjecture now follows, it is possible that the 'Dot after "COLUMBUS"' on R2/12 could have been caused by an extraneous piece of metal attached to the slug, rather than pollution that could have been cleaned away without difficulty. The piece of protruding metal could, therefore, have picked up ink resulting in the early sheets showing the variety. The clear form of the dot is indicative of this.

The defect was then noticed and corrective action had to be taken, but not before a very limited number of stamps with the dot had come into circulation. The remedy could have involved the removal of the slug. This would have been time-consuming and unlikely to have tilted the lines of overprint that were horizontal when the dot occurred. It seems far more probable that a swift downward tap with a sharp tool would have removed the piece of metal effectively. However, if this did happen then the blow could have tilted the lines of overprint, leaving them to be corrected at a later date. This is, of course, just a hypothesis, but a reasonable one unless someone knows better....!

Conclusion

Some of the examples of pollution described in Parts 27 and 28 were not only very small, but occurred for limited periods during overprinting. Criticism may be voiced that such items are of little philatelic significance. This would be fair comment. However, the search for such items can give much enjoyment, matched only by the satisfaction when an elusive item is found and, to quote Ian McQueen, it is important to remember that 'Philately is Fun'. I hope, therefore, that my comments, and the accompanying illustrations, will encourage more collectors to join in the study of stamps of King George VI.

Part 29 will consider plate varieties on the 1937 Newfoundland Long Coronation Set and will appear in the August 1993 edition of GSM.

Collectors wishing to join King George VI Collectors' Society should write to the General Secretary, 24 Stourwood Road, Bournemouth, BH6 3QP.