

# King George VI Varieties

RICHARD LOCKYER, OBE

## Part 8 — Malta

(Continued from February)

The 1940s were difficult times and the study of KGV issues is far from complete and so help to unearth additional information is most welcome. Therefore, before continuing with the varieties on the 2d. value I happily acknowledge some comments sent to me by Geoffrey T. Davis arising from the previous article (*GSM* February 1988). He confirms that a sheet of the 1½d. scarlet in his collection which does not have the 'Broken Maltese Cross' does have doubling on R 2/7 and 9, as well as the traces of 'T' marks on R 3/10 and R 5/8. The sheet does not, however, show the very strong doubling on R 4/8 which I described on the 1½d. black — another twist to the Malta tale! He rightly points out that the ¼d. value was issued in sheets of fifteen rows of eight stamps — I can only offer my apologies for the slip and plead that gremlins are alive and well in my type-writer. In concluding this short preamble I will take the opportunity to mention an overprinted 1d. green with a clear diagonal line, just over a millimetre long, jutting out in a north-westerly direction from the top corner. It was positioned by Botwright at R 5/6 and a copy has, at last, come my way.

### Two Pence Yellow-Ochre

This value, issued on 8 January 1953 from Plate 2, has two notable varieties. The first, reported in *Stamp Collecting* in September 1953, is named 'The Cracked Plate'. It occurs on R 5/1 and takes the form of a curved line running from the beginning of the final 'A' of 'MALTA' to the medallion containing the head of the King (*Fig. 1*). The other is called 'The Halation Flaw' and can be found on R 2/5. It consists of a white patch at the back of the King's head, where the parting of the hair ends. I. Azzopardi, a stamp dealer from Sliema, Malta, who reported both varieties soon after the printing was released on the island stated that 'The Halation Flaw' existed in three states. The first, having a faint background colour and shading. The second, showing the white patch and a short thin line running diagonally from the base of the crown between the inner and outer lines of the medallion. The third displaying an extended and larger white patch causing a break or gap in the inner circle (*Fig. 2*). I have yet to see the second state and am at a loss to suggest a reason for the sudden appearance of the short thin line. The wear on Plate 2 must have been quick and heavy to have caused the 'Halation Flaw', and this together with a crack or more likely a bad scratch on R 5/1, probably resulted in the introduction of Plate 3 for the next printing. Azzopardi confirmed the constancy of the 'Halation' variety, but stressed that it did not occur on every post office sheet. Indeed, he suggested

that there were four panes of sixty stamps to each plate, which gives food for thought! At the same time it is worth noting a relevant comment in *A Guide to the Postage Stamps of the Rhodesias and Nyasaland 1888-1963*, published by the Mashonaland (Salisbury) PS in 1965, that the positive identification of four distinct headplates from the 1937 Southern Rhodesia Coronation values, recess printed by Waterlow, supports the contention that they were printed from one plate with four panes of sixty subjects, which were then cut up into four post office sheets.

### Three Pence

In the 22 February 1952 *Stamp Collecting* A. Dowling reported the existence of a variety on the overprinted 3d. blue from Plate 2. He described it as a collection of four dots arranged in the form of a 'Horseshoe', located on the front of the cathedral, directly above the 'ST' of 'ST JOHN'S' and in line with the upper floor windows. He suggested that 'pitting' of the surface of the plate caused the marks and mentioned that the overprint could partially cover them, if not, they appeared between the '1' and '9' of '1947'. This advice should be heeded as the position of the overprint varies considerably on all values throughout the issue. For example, I have blocks of the 1½d. green where the 'T' of 'SELF-GOVERNMENT' straddles the right outer frame line.

The January 1948 edition of *GSM* carried the news that the 13 November 1947 release of the 3d. blue came from a new Plate 2. I can confirm that the flaw reported by Dowling exists on this release at R 4/7. This was, of course, the only printing from Plate 2 which was not overprinted. The variety takes the form of three large dots and one much smaller dot (*Fig. 3*). There were three releases of the overprinted 3d. blue from Plate 2 — 25 November 1948, 16 May 1950 and 11 March 1952 and it so happens that I have copies of the flaw showing three more distinct states.

State 2 displays four large dots in a diamond shape (*Fig. 4*). State 3 is a very clear 'Horseshoe' with the open end on the south-west side (*Fig. 5*). In State 4 the open end of the horseshoe has closed and the flaw resembles an additional window (*Fig. 6*). I have classified these states on the basis of physical appearance as usually the largest and most noticeable flaw, caused by deterioration of the surface of a plate would, I suggest, occur at the latest stage. However, although the '1' of '1947' is undamaged with the first two states, on States 3 and 4 the left side of the '1' shows damage, but surprisingly with less on State 4 than State 3. This leads me to suggest that the 'Extra Window' variety (State 4) was a result of slight over-inking and probably occurred prior to copies of the 'Horseshoe'

that I have examined. It would be most interesting to discover if State 4 exists with a badly damaged '1', as this would be the fifth state. Finally I must add a note of warning to anyone searching for this variety. I have looked at many overprinted sheets from Plate 2 without finding a trace of it. Admittedly they were in a lighter shade of blue and in all instances the '1' of '1947' was in pristine condition. Furthermore, on every stamp the light vertical lines of shading on the face of the cathedral were absent and elsewhere they were noticeably fainter than before. These factors point either to the whole plate having received remedial treatment for a later printing or is this more evidence to support the belief that Waterlow used double pane plates for mono-coloured values?

### Six Pence

In the early 1960s Botwright drew attention to a faintly scratched letter 'L' to the right and adjacent to the base of the statue on R 5/10 (*Fig. 7*). Subsequent investigation by the KGVICS and the MSC revealed that the mark, now believed to be an inverted 'T', occurs on Centre Plate 2 used with Frame Plates 2, 3, 4 and 5. In recent months Geoffrey Davis, a KGVICS member, has discovered a very clear 'T' mark in the same position adjacent to the base of the statue, but on R 4/10 on two sheets from CP1 FP1 (i.e. unnumbered). There are no signs of any other similar marks on the two sheets. As an illustration of the fascination of these issues, another sheet in my possession, still from CP1, but with FP 2, does not have the slightest trace of a 'T' mark.

On some sheets from CP2 a very nice example of doubling occurs on R 6/1 of the 6d. value. The vertical lines of shading in the statue are clearly doubled. A minor aid to the identification of single copies is the presence of some very small dots, in the centre plate colour, in the sky just to the right of the plinth and above the roof of the building. Botwright also reported that the horizontal shading on R 5/6 from CP2 was doubled.

### One Shilling

In the 7 January 1950 *Stamp Collecting* H. Moreton Black described a diagonal line cutting the King's forehead on R 6/1 and a similar flaw on R 5/10. He also noted that R 4/1 had a constant hair line cutting diagonally across the lower part of the '1' of '1/-'. I have not seen this, however, a similar flaw occurs on R 5/1 (*Fig. 8*). It is possible to find R 6/1 without the scratch as well as with it (*Fig. 9*). Two different marks occur on R 5/10; the first, (*Fig. 10*) cuts the right corner of the King's left eye, while the stamp below has a long diagonal line crossing the fore-

head (Fig.11). The second mark on R 5/10 crosses the forehead on the left side (Fig.12), but this time R 6/10 is clear. Identical positional pairs can be found without any imperfections.

### Two Shillings & Six Pence

In 1950 Moreton Black listed the 'Broken Value Tablet' flaw or the 2s.6d. at R4/9. It is a large coloured mark affecting the outer frame line of the tablet to the right of the lower half of the figure '6'. I have only seen one copy, regrettably in someone else's collection!

### Five Shillings

The 'Semaphore Flaw' at R 2/7 on the 5s. is one of the best known KGVI varieties (Fig.13): in 1950, Moreton Black when writing in *Stamp Collecting* on 7 January mentioned that he understood that the flaw only appeared on the first printing in 1938, but added that he did possess a couple of copies with different shades of green. On 25 March he amplified his earlier comments and wrote that he had understood that the flaw occurred only on early printings of this stamp and that it had been checked by issuing stamps in half sheets and was then corrected by the printers. It may be, however, that the flaw lasted until fairly recently. In 1952 Potter and Shelton mentioned in their book, *The Printings of King George VI Colonial Printings*, when describing Malta printings that, *For those who like such things there is the 'Semaphore' variety on the first 5s., where a printers' guide mark was allowed to appear in the field of stamp No.2/7. As late as 1983 the footnote in the Commonwealth catalogue supports this view. Nevertheless, I believe that Moreton Black was correct in suggesting that the flaw did occur over a period of time.*

Potter and Shelton state, in the Malta section of their book, that, *in common with other Waterlow sets, the original printing can always be distinguished with the aid of a gauge indicating one-tenth of a perforation, as it measures 12.4 as against the normal 12.5 and the 12.7 of the March 1944 release. They listed three unoverprinted printings for the 5s. — 1938, 1944 and 1947. I have unmounted marginal pairs perforated 12.5 in different shades of green and, of more importance, they are on different paper — two are on thin white paper, which shows as grey under a UV lamp, while the other is on thicker, off-white paper appearing as white under UV. other copies are perforated 12.5, with one pair measuring 12.6. It is a difficult matter to determine perforations to one-tenth, but the major point is that none can be judged to be 12.4. Therefore, on the basis of the Potter and Shelton measurements, the 'Semaphore Flaw' was not restricted to the first printing. It is also feasible that, at least, one printing has escaped the record, which is understandable when one recalls conditions in London during the 'Blitz'. So far as I am aware the flaw does not exist on the overprinted stamp. I have dealt with this most attractive variety in some detail because it is clear that even after some forty years questions remain to be answered. As I wrote at the start of this article comments are most welcome and I do hope that others will examine their copies of the 'Semaphore Flaw' to help resolve matters.*

The next part in this series (August 1988) will describe some of the more prominent overprint varieties from the Malta Self-Government issue.



Fig.1

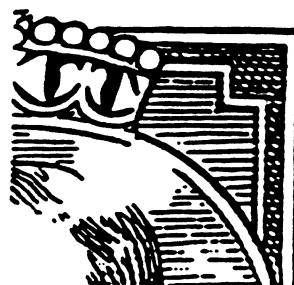


Fig.2

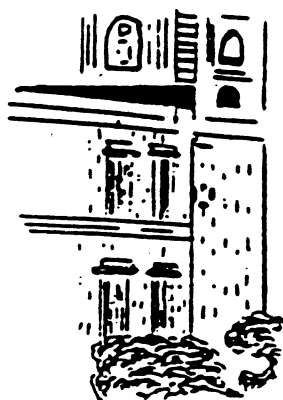


Fig.3

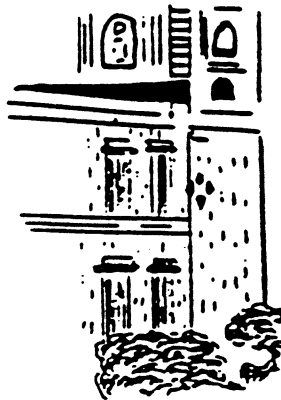


Fig.4

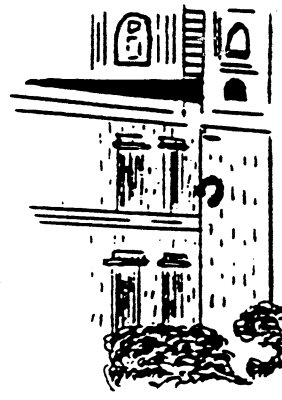


Fig.5

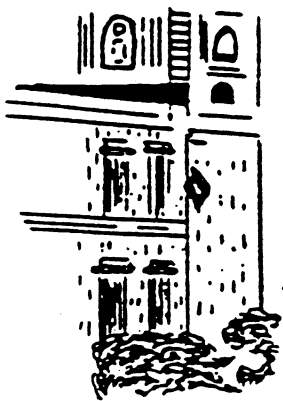


Fig.6

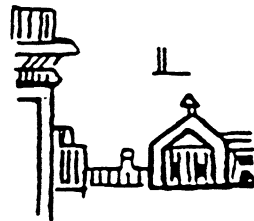


Fig.7

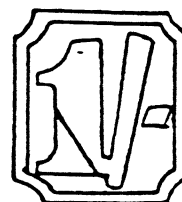


Fig.8



Fig.9



Fig.10



Fig.11



Fig.12



Fig.13