

The Silver Jubilee Issue of 1935

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With the unexpected death of his elder brother Prince Albert Victor in 1891, George became the heir apparent, and when his father, Edward VII died, George became King on 6 May 1910 at the age of 45.

On 24 August 1934 the British Secretary of State for the Colonies sent the following telegram to each colony:-

“H. M. the King has approved an issue of special postage stamps throughout the Colonial Empire to Commemorate the Silver Jubilee. Single designs with appropriate heading for each territory are now being prepared. Proposed issue should be on sale from, or as soon as possible after, the 10 May 1935 until the end of the year and limited to four denominations. Suggest 1. Shilling or local equivalent. 2. Inland letter rate. 3. Foreign letter rate. 4. One other denomination not exceeding 6d. Please telegraph value to be printed and quantity of each value required excluding those for sale in the UK.”

A further circular issued on 5 December 1934 contained the following:-

“The series will comprise four denominations only in uniform design as depicted in the accompanying leaflet. The stamps will be printed in two colours in sheets of sixty each. The appropriate heading for each territory will be inserted in place of the word “Specimen” where this appears in the illustration and the duty in the oval panel in the left bottom corner.

It is His Majesty’s wish that this issue should be placed on sale on the 6 May 1935, and continue in use until 31 December 1935 when the residues whatsoever are to be destroyed. The sale of the corresponding denominations in the permanent series of stamps is to be discontinued during the currency of the Silver Jubilee issue. Arrangements are being made with the Crown Agents for the Colonies for the sale of the stamps to dealers in this country and a public announcement concerning the issue will be made on 1 February 1935 by which date the despatch should have been received in all the dependencies concerned. I assume that you will also wish to make a public announcement on that date in the territory under your administration”.

On the 29 January 1935 the British Secretary of State for the Colonies announced that these commemorative stamps would be placed on sale on 6 May 1935.

Three printing firms holding Government contracts submitted a total of eighteen competitive designs. The one chosen was that by H. Fleury of Waterlow & Sons Ltd. It consisted of a vignette showing a view of Windsor Castle and a frame

consisting of the crowned head of the King, set in oval frame formed by the collar of the Order of the Garter with its pendant badge of St George and the Dragon. In the background are crossed scepters and the Sword of State. The head of the King was adapted by the engraver from the portrait stamps of India.

Master dies for the frame and vignette were engraved by Waterlow and Sons and were used to prepare the printing plates used by the three printers Waterlow's, Bradbury Wilkinson's and De la Rue who shared the order as it was so large, (the total requirement for all the territories was in excess of 50 million stamps), and the time for completion so short. Bradbury Wilkinson were required to print for 14 territories by 4 values (not including Newfoundland whose four values were each printed from a single plate). It is interesting to note that there are differences in the vignette, for example, in the number of lines running down the wall, on the right of the round tower, to the river. Bradbury Wilkinson has 1, Waterlow has 2, and De la Rue 3.

It was a joint tender by the three printers to the Crown Agents. The following imperforate colour trials of the accepted designs on watermarked paper are in the Royal Collection:-

Grey Black & Deep Green	Blue & Green	Green & Mauve
Black & Mauve	Blue & Grey	Green & Indigo
Red & Purple	Indigo & Red	Vermillion & Green
Mauve & Green	Mauve & Brown	Red Brown & Black
Green & Vermillion	Green & Sepia	Brown & Deep Blue

The Malta stamps were printed by Bradbury Wilkinson & Co on Multiple Script CA watermarked paper supplied by De la Rue. The paper on reels 25 1/2 inches wide was manufactured by W. Howard & Sons and gummed by Samuel Jones & Co. De la Rue was responsible for the issue of the paper to the three printers. The printed size sheet was 25 x 13 inches to take 120 vignettes i.e. two panes of sixty, side by side. After the vignettes were printed the sheets were guillotined into two before the application of the frame plate. The perforation is 11 x 12 (comb), and there are perforation guide crosses in the selvedge 9 1/2 mm. from the outside edge of the nearest stamp. The values and colours were:-

1/2d Black & Green,	2 1/2d Brown & Deep blue
6d Light blue & Olive green,	1/- Slate & Purple

All values, as printed, were perforated SPECIMEN in an arc, the letters being 4 mm high. An imperforate copy of the 1/- value is also known perforated SPECIMEN.



Registered Cover to Guernsey showing the "Lightning conductor" on the 6d value

Although the quantities sold have not been ascertained, the Crown Agents' archives record that the following sheets, consisting of single panes, were despatched on the following dates:-

	½d	2½d	6d	1/-
28 March 1935	35,596	5,511	1,982	1,087
1 November 1935	4,112		550	366
Totals	39,708	5,511	2,532	1,453

These quantities are sheets of 60, thus the numbers of stamps supplied were:- ½d—2,382,480; 2½d—330,660; 6d—150,920; 1/-87,180, and include those sold by the Crown Agents.

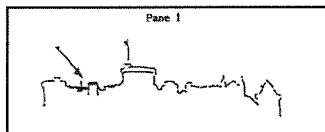
The stamps were, as intended, placed on sale on 6 May 1935 and first day covers are known bearing a 7 AM postmark.

Bradbury Wilkinson produced six vignette plates each consisting of two half plates (or panes) of sixty vignettes and they described the two plates used for the First printing of Malta stamps in March 1935 as numbers 5 and 6. However, we have called them plates 1, 2, 3, & 4, although plates 1 & 3 as well as 2 & 4 were permanent pairs, each constituting a 120 vignette set printing plate. The two printing plates were combined for the first printing, thus 240 vignettes were printed concurrently. Thus Bradbury Wilkinson only used two of the six vignette

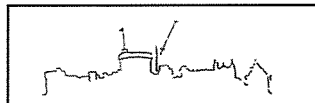
plates that they had produced for Malta.

The first jubilee stamps printed by Bradbury Wilkinson were for the Gilbert & Ellice Islands as they were the most remote territory, and there are no recorded varieties on these stamps. Further territories were then printed and by the time that they came to print for Malta a number of cracks had developed on the plates causing the following varieties to be recorded.

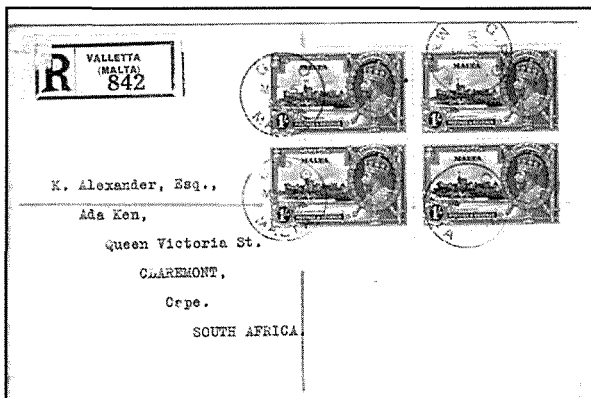
Row 3 No. 2. Short vertical lines between the two turrets at the extreme left.



Row 6 No. 1. Vertical hairline to the left of the round tower extending from the building to the border. An additional hairline, 1mm. to the left of the other hairline, extending downwards to the buildings on stamp 50. These lines are very faint but traces may be seen extending upwards into the margin above.



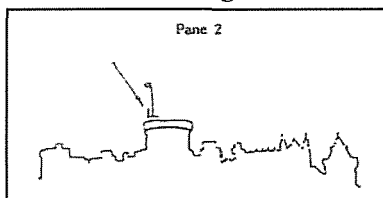
Row 9 No 1. Extra flagstaff, consisting of a vertical line which is the length of the normal flagstaff, rises from a gap in the buildings between the round tower and the turret on its right. Probably the best known variety on this issue.



Registered cover to South Africa showing the "Extra Flagstaff" variety.

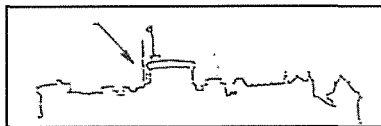
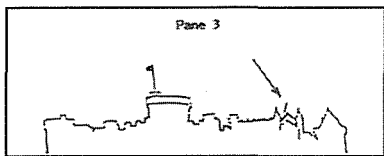
Row 9 No. 2. Long vertical hairline, (an extension from stamp 44) to the left of the round tower.

Row 10 No 2. Short vertical line to turret to right of round tower.



Row 2 No1. Short flagstaff, (a short vertical line), on the round tower at the left of the main flagstaff. A copy of this stamp is known with a short vertical hairline above the “M” of “MALTA” which may be an extension of the short flagstaff.

Row 8 No. 5. Diagonal from behind round tower.

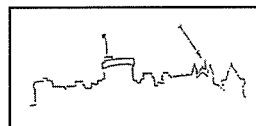


Row 8 No. 6 Vertical hairline on left of round tower

Row 1 No. 4. Short vertical line projecting from the left gable of St George’s Chapel.

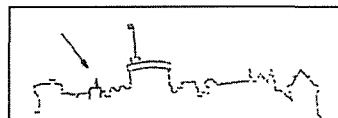
Row 2 No 2. Two “swans” in water.

Row 2 No. 5. “Lightning conductor” short vertical line projecting from the right gable of St George’s Chapel.



Row 9 No. 2. Two long faint vertical long hairlines, one each side of the conical tower.

Row 4 No. 3. Short horizontal lines in the sky between “MALTA” and the left hand vertical frame line.



Row 10 No. 2. Short projection on the turret at the left of the round tower.

Row 10 No. 6. Long vertical hairline extending from the left gable of the chapel just to the right of the pinnacle.

Frame Plates

Individual frame plates were used for each of the four values. The only constant variety noted is a re-entry on the 2½d value tablet.

The Second printing on 1 November 1935 used the combined plates 1 & 3, of 120 vignettes, which therefore include the extra flagstaff variety on plate 1 Row 9 no 1, and the lightning conductor on plate 3 Row 2 No 5. The printers decided to erase the extra flagstaff, and this had to be done by hand, but as the other varieties were less visible they were ignored. They also decided to erase it on 6d & 1/- values of Gambia.

A sharp tool was used for the erasure of the flagstaff above the building line thus scratching the stamp surface very slightly, but in most cases the flagstaff can still be seen in part and it is therefore described as “partially erased”. As the 2½d value was not reprinted, this variety does not appear on that value. Thus the maximum number of varieties of the “extra flagstaff partially erased” is:-

	½d	2½d	6d	1/-
1 November 1935	2056	–	275	183