

FURTHER COMMENTS ON GIBRALTAR ERROR AND VARIETIES 1886-1985

by George Coates

The Gibraltar Study Circle Draft Study Paper N^o 12 headed "Errors and Varieties, 1886-1985" lists some 181 items. Many of these are minor printing errors, some watermark varieties, and the later printings mainly of the fly speck variety. These last named provide much enjoyment for the collector with a taste for such things at reasonable prices — although missing colours on the Harrison printed stamps of the 60s, 70s and 80s can be quite expensive.

The classic Gibraltar error is the 1889 10 centimos Queen Victoria stamp with the value omitted.

Only 60 of these stamps were discovered — the left hand pane of one sheet of 120 stamps. This error was noticed in 1895.

Collectors do not need to be told of changing values. In 1925 a mint block of 4 realised £225 at Auction in London. Gibbons now list the variety at £4,500 and in the mid-eighties it fetched even more at Auction!

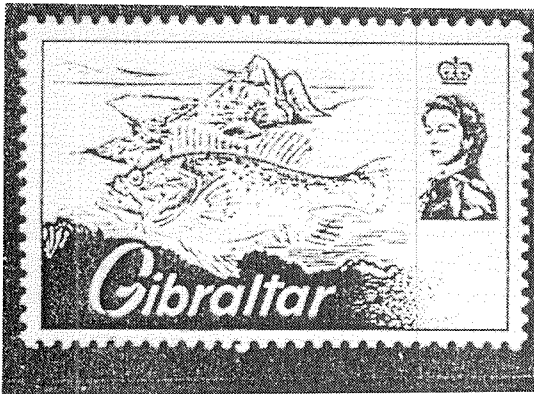
A Mr Chipolina was the Chief Clerk at the Post Office in 1895. A messenger was sent from a local firm to purchase some 10 centimos stamps, on his return he was told to go back to the Post Office and exchange the stamps which were worthless (!) as they had no value printed on them. Mr Chipolina readily exchanged the stamps. The alert Chief Clerk set aside the "no value" stamps just over half a pane remaining. He paid for the stamps at face value and then informed the Postmistress Miss Margaret Cresswell of his purchase. Soon afterwards, we are told, Mr Chipolina was selling each stamp for £1.

It is recorded that a wealthy Spanish collector purchased four to make a "block", a pair from a local pharmacist at a high price, one in Belgium and a fourth in South America.

In 1966 another major error surfaced. The Gibraltar Post Office issued the first set of commemorative stamps that did not form part of an omnibus Commonwealth issue. This was a set of three stamps, 4d., 7d., 1/-d. issued for the European Sea Angling Championships which were taking place in waters off the Rock.

Designed by A.G. (Freddie) Ryman, MBE, and printed by Harrison's placed on sale on August 27, 1966. The error — missing black printing on the 7d. was noticed on November 14, 1966. An employee of the Mediterranean Bank was sent to the





GPO to purchase thirty-six 7d. Sea Angling stamps. The Bank Manager, unlike the shopkeeper of 1895, did not return the “valueless stamps” but advised the Postmaster who checked the stock and found twenty faulty stamps unsold. A complete check of all the stock was then made and no further missing values were found. Four of the stamps had already been sold, the bank had thirty-six and the remaining twenty were withdrawn from sale.

A block of four was sent to Her Majesty the Queen for the Royal Collection, another block of four was placed in the Gibraltar Museum.

The remaining twelve stamps were duly incinerated under the eyes of Board of Destruction (what a splendid title!) on January 19, 1967.

The stamp is offered at Auction from time to time — incidentally from the original Bank stock. Gibbons list it at £650 unused. As far as is known none have been found used.



Acknowledgements

1. Gibraltar Study Circle Draft Study Paper N° 12, Oct. 1985
2. Looking Back. R. Garcia. Gibraltar Philatelic Society, 1985.