

Magnify Sept -Oct 1974

The Colour Samples and Artwork of Stamps of southern Rhodesia 1924-47 A Haward

The stamps of our country- beginning with the B.S.A. Company (issued December 1890), then Rhodesia "Double Heads" in 1910 and the "Admiral" issue in 1913 and Southern Rhodesian "Admiral" issues in 1924 and all subsequent stamp issues to date possess unique features that no other stamps ever issued by Great Britain possess.

In the first instance their designs are unique, and in no way come under the general design of most of Britain's colonies that is with the portrait of the Monarch with the name of that colony in a keyplate and the value in whatever currency in the value place. In no other colony are found the portraits of King George and Queen Mary, or of King George V first in the Admiral of the Fleet and later in the uniform of Colonel-in-Chief of the Black Watch Regiment.

Secondly, the papers bore no watermark of either Crown Colony or Crown Agents, a distinguishing feature of Britain's colonial stamps.

It is interesting to speculate in the light of today's events what political designation Rhodesia was given by Britain at the inception of the country. Not a colony; then were we quite an independent country with loyalties to Britain or a suzerainty?

Southern Rhodesian stamps were designed and recess printed by Waterlow & Sons Ltd. 5 in 1924. Specimens of Printer's samples came to light in 1969. The ½d was a reddish-brown single working plate, that is a plate that contained a King's head and the surround and the whole was printed in one colour. Two 2d samples were printed on double working plates, that is the surround in one colour and the King's head in black. The two colours submitted were red and blue. But these would not do however beautiful they were because the lower values did not comply with the colour coding suggested and adopted by the U.P.U,

No Printer's samples are known to exist of the 1931 "Grapes" issue printed by Bradbury, Wilkinson & Co., possibly because there 'was no need to show different colours since those were already designated to their different values. There is little difference in the colour coding for the respective values in either the Admiral or Grapes issues. There was thus no confusion over the value of each stamp and today's modern stamps bear no relation with their colours or values.

Throughout Rhodesian postal history it has been the custom for the Printers to have approval of the size, design and colour of the issues from the Rhodesian Postal authorities. The colour samples are all perforated. Presumably one sheet of each was printed then perforated. One speculates why a whole sheet was made, for only a handful of men who would approve or reject these stamps. Why go to all the trouble of perforating one sheet? Perhaps the full quota of numbers of sheets of these lower values were printed and perforated and later had to be destroyed because the colour coding did not fit the U.P.U. suggestions and were destroyed save one sheet of each sample which was later broken up and put on the market.

So far, the definitive ½d and 2d of the 1924 issues have come to light.

What of further samples from Waterlow & Sons Ltd.?

Their next examples are their printing of the "Large Falls" 1932. Those are the 2d, double working plate in a green falls with a mauve surround and the second choice of a brown falls with

a purple surround and of a single working plate of a blue-grey 3d.

The first commemorative stamps of Southern Rhodesia were of the Silver Jubilee of King George V in 1935. The Printer's colour samples of those were again perforated and show a single working plate of purple of the 1d. and a double working plate of the 1d. with an orange falls and mauve surround. A 2d, double working plate of a green falls and purple surround, and a double working plate of the 3d. purple falls and chocolate surround.

All sets of Printer's samples are overprinted with the words "Waterlow & Sons Ltd Specimen".

The Printer's next samples to come to light are those of Southern Rhodesia's next commemorative issue, the 1937 Coronation printed by Waterlow & Sons Ltd. These samples depict three 1d. stamps and one 6d. These are all double working plates. The penny stamps show one with a grey surround and an orange falls, another a mauve surround with a chocolate coloured Falls and the third a grey-blue surround with a green coloured Falls. The 6d. has a green surround and a black coloured Falls.

The general effect of these samples is drab and the final choice of the Postal authorities showed their good taste in these matters as well as keeping to the colour coded values.

The next colour samples to come to light are those of the third definitive issue, King George VI but only one is known that is of a single working plate of the 6d. grey-brown by Waterlow & Sons and of two revenue stamps, single working plates showing a purple 7s 6d and a brown 10s.

No Printer's colour samples exist of the next commemorative issue the 1940 Golden Jubilee of the British South African Company. Waterlow & Sons produced the final choice of design and in beautiful colours still adhering to the colour coding.

Now Britain was producing commemorative stamps with gusto and this issue was produced during the darkest days of the war in 1940 when Britain was fighting for her very existence! Beautiful stamps were being painstakingly produced for a self-governing territory thousands of miles away.

There exist the original art work made by the two printers Waterlow & Sons Ltd., and Bradbury Wilkinson & Co. These have to be seen to appreciate the minutia of the artists skills on these life-sized miniatures, works produced by men of non-military age. There are variations in the colours and the finished replicas of the stamps were submitted to the Southern Rhodesian Postal authorities for final acceptance. The engravers were then able to make their double working dies to make the printing plates for these bi-coloured stamps, the actual finished designs enabling the engraver to make his recesses according to the design in front of him.

The 1s. commemorative of the British South Africa Company's Golden Jubilee is variously treated. The 1890-1940 motif and Queen Victoria and King George VI facing each other are portrayed. The Queen wears a shawl over her head. Otherwise the design resembles the accepted design. The colour is basically deep maroon and white and measures 8 cm by 6 cm. This was done by Thomas De La Rue and Company, the final choice being Waterlow.

The next are of Bradbury Wilkinson's of this same 1940 issue. The horizontal designs measure 4cm by 3 cm and the vertical designs. 3cm by 4cm. The finished stamp designs measured 3.5cm by 2.5cm and 2.5cm by 3.5cm and chosen from Waterlow & Sons. Bradbury Wilkinson's had their ½d in a green surround with pale blue arms; the 1d was a red surround and green centre. All their designs were basically the same as the final choice. The 1½d shows a more mellow portrait of Cecil John Rhodes. The colours are brighter in the ½d and 1d samples than those chosen. The 1½d has a reddish maroon and the 2d, has a burned orange instead of bright violet

surround and a violet instead of a green-design. Their 3d remains a blue but lighter in colour. Bradbury Wilkinson's 4d is much the same but again with fresher colours than those of Waterlow. Their 6d is a purple - much more alive than the final choice and the design is bolder. The 1s. shows a very stern Queen Victoria in mauve and she faces slightly inwards as is King George. The kraal and Government House Salisbury remain as in the final printed stamp. Two more 6d had been submitted, one in mauve and green, the other in reddish brown and green.

The next samples are by De La Rue & Company and are the black and white and grey 'proofs.' These are life-sized stamps and are again miniature masterpieces of freehand art. These are of the ½d, 1½d, 2d and 3d and these values reproduced again freehand but in colour. The ½d has a bright green surround and a grey coat of arms. The 1l has a red surround with black middle showing the raising of the flag in Salisbury Port. The 1½d. is a dull mauve of a rather glassy eyed Cecil Rhodes and their 2d is a drab green with a grey-black centre.

There are more examples of the black and white proofs of the 1d, 4d, 6d and 1s and the colour treatment of their 1s is a drab brown and black, their 4d a burned sienna and black, their 3d a dark blue and black not unlike Waterlow and the 6d an orange-red and black.

Returning to the Printer's colour samples, perforated and overprinted "Specimen" Waterlow, there exist those of the Royal Visit 1947 and are of double working plates. The ½d is light orange surround and black interior, of the Princesses Elizabeth and Margaret and the 1d a blue surround with black portrait of King George VI and Queen Elizabeth. Then more samples of single working plate of the 1947 Victory issue. The 1d is drab green 2d. chocolate 3d grey-brown and 6d olive green. Again, these last two lots did not conform with the colour coding. One wonders why they ever bothered with these colours when it was accepted, that the ½d was green, the 1d red and so on. These are the last known colour samples from the printers, the next being the imperforate proofs. It was with the 1953 Definitive issue of Southern Rhodesian stamps that the colour code was finally thrown to the winds of change, thereafter all stamps became colourful with gay abandon to their values.

The only known Southern Rhodesian stamp resembling any other is the international 75th Anniversary of the Universal Postal Union. This is logical, but otherwise all our stamps have been individual and unique. Our unswerving regard for the British Royal Family as seen in our commemoratives is worthy of note; from this independent colony with no affiliation with the Crown Agents or Crown Colonies as seen by the absence of any watermarked paper.