

CORONATION OF KING GEORGE VI & QUEEN ELIZABETH

Issued 12th May 1937

1936 was a tumultuous year for the British royal family, with the death of King George V on 20th January, and the abdication of King Edward VIII on 10th December. One of the early decisions of the new King, George VI, was to decree that the Coronation Day of 12th May 1937 for King Edward would continue as planned, albeit for a different monarch.

Although, no doubt, consideration was in train for the issuing of a set of Coronation stamps, nothing had started. A start had been made for a new definitive issue, but this had not progressed, probably due to the uncertainty of the constitutional issues which the King was challenging, due to his desire to marry the woman he wanted.

According to R C Smith "Artwork and designs were left to Waterlows as there was insufficient time to have any of this done locally." Lacking any guidance, Waterlows probably turned to the last commemorative issue it printed for Southern Rhodesia, namely the King George V Silver Jubilee issue of 1935. This had at its centre part of the Victoria Falls, the portrait of the King to the right and a group of animals to the left (giraffe, elephant and lion). According to Smith "the design of the Rhodesian stamps was also selected by His Majesty". King George V was an avid stamp collector and therefore took a great deal of interest in the stamps issued for his Silver Jubilee. At the time the British Government appeared to want an omnibus issue of commemorative stamps by itself and by its dominions and colonies.

There was uncertainty about the Coronation of King Edward VIII, would he be crowned by himself or would there be a Queen crowned at the same time? With the abdication, there was a great deal more certainty, and the issue of Coronation stamps would therefore require the portraits of King George VI and his wife Queen Elizabeth. The rush was therefore on to design the stamps, print them and get them out to the postal authorities before the big day.

Waterlow therefore looked at the Silver Jubilee issue, retained the central area of the Victoria Falls, substituted the King's portrait, and placed the Queen's portrait in the location of the animals. The design however meant that there was a blank area in the stamp, this was filled with an image of a train crossing the Victoria Falls Bridge. With a little movement of the elements around, the final design was in place. The portraits used were photos of Bertram Park, numbers 01952G for the Queen and 03259B for the King.³

In seeking the approval of the proposed Coronation stamps for New Zealand by its High Commission, it appears that the King had a preference for the Southern Rhodesian stamps over those of New Zealand. It had to be pointed out that both the stamps had based their Majesties portraits from the same source, but the printers were different. It appears that the engraving work of Waterlow & Co was superior to that of Bradbury Wilkinson. The chief engraver at Waterlow was J A C Harrison.³ The final approval of the New Zealand design was provided on 21st January 1937, but the King did not like the portraits depicted expressing preference of those approved for the Southern Rhodesia issue.

The Waterlow archives show that the dates of Master Dies for the two portraits were 21st December for the Queen, and 24th December for the King. With these dates in mind, it would appear that the King had approved the master dies for the two portraits, not the stamps

themselves. The Master die for the duty/casement plates was not completed until 8 February 1937, the same date as the vignette. The final design of the duty plates was not signed off until 9th March 1937.⁴ The stamps were printed between 20th March and 5th April 1937, which didn't give it long to get the stamps to Southern Rhodesia and distributed to post offices. (See section on die & proofs below)

“Within a few days of the stamps being placed on sale the 3d. value had been sold out at the larger offices. The *Rhodesia Herald* reported queues of up to a quarter of a mile long at the Salisbury Post Office. Stocks of unsold stamps at the smaller offices were called in to augment the dwindling supplies in the principal offices. Soon after a black market developed in the 3d. stamps, and they were offered for sale at up to £2 each. An attempt was also made to corner the 6d. stamp and a person in Bulawayo offered to purchase the remaining stocks. The Postmaster-General thereupon gave instructions to limit sales of the 6d. stamp to ten per person per day. This difficulty was easily overcome by those wishing to acquire these sets and there was a continuous procession of messengers and friends to the Post Office. This issue caused a tremendous outcry from the public, particularly those who were unsuccessful in obtaining their requirements.”¹ Why did this occur?

With the 1935 KGV Silver Jubilee issue, it is suggested that the development of this first “omnibus issue” was viewed with uncertainty by issuing authorities and the stamp trade. It is probably true to say that Southern Rhodesia over estimated the number of stamps it required, as a significant number were destroyed after they had been withdrawn from sale.

A H Murrell's letter of 6th November 1937, for the Postmaster-General, gives the following figures for the 1935 Silver Jubilee issue.²

Duty	Total stamps sold		
	S Rhodesia	London	Total
1d	5,152,251	30,000	5,182,251
2d	460,418	21,000	481,418
3d	233,377	21,000	254,377
6d	384,123	18,000	402,123

R C Smith in “Rhodesia – A Postal History”, provided figures for the number of sheets printed and destroyed. These figures are very different from the figures stated by Murrell, with Smith stating the number of stamps released as 6,384,000, some 1.2 million more than reported sold. The same applied with the 2d and 6d duties, but the 3d had 235,440 stamps released about 19,000 more than sold. It is probable that Smith's figures cannot be relied on.

The reference to London, relates to stamps sold directly from the S Rhodesia High Commission to the stamp trade. The reason for examining at the sales of the Silver Jubilee issue is that it gave provided a context for the S Rhodesia post office when considering its order for the 1937 Coronation stamps. According to Murrell sales for the 1937 Coronation issue were:

Duty	Total stamps sold ²		
	S Rhodesia	London	Total
1d	3,287,294	300,000	3,587,294
2d	692,710	240,000	932,710
3d	130,440	240,000	370,440
6d	240,588	240,000	480,588

Whilst the total numbers sold of the Coronation issue was higher for the 2d, 3d and 6d duties, the problem was the number sold to the stamp trade in London. The London stamp sales were significantly higher for this issue than the Silver Jubilee. For the 3d this was 240,000 against the 21,000 in 1935. Although stamp numbers sold are about the same for both issues, the number of stamps available of the 3d and 6d duties was considerably reduced, hence the early exhaustion of these duties and the panic buying.

It should also be noted that there was a tremendous number of printed first day covers for this coronation issue, the listing below identifies 42 different covers, and there were also many plain covers. This undoubtedly also had an effect on the number of 3d and 6d stamps available for sale over the counter.

The difference in London sales is probably reflected in prices within the Stanley Gibbons Catalogue for Southern & Central Africa (2nd Edition) of £28 mint for the Silver Jubilee and £5.50 mint for the Coronation.

The Stamps



. Catalogue listings

SG ¹⁰	RSC ¹¹	Value	SG colours first/ <i>RSC colours in italics</i> , where different
36	C11	1d	Olive and rose-carmine (<i>Olive-green and rose-carmine</i>)
37	C12	2d	Emerald and sepia
38	C13	3d	Violet and blue (<i>Purple-violet and blue</i>)
39	C14	6d	Black and purple

Technical details

Stamp size: 44 x 27 mm

Sheet sizes: Four panes of 60 stamps: 10 rows of 6 stamps per pane

Printing method: Recess printed by Waterlow & Sons

Plates: Each duty with frame plates, common vignette plate for all duties

Plate numbers:⁴

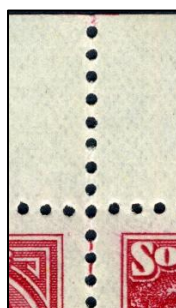
	Vignette	Value/casement
1d	39,546*	no number
2d	39,546*	39,547
3d	39,546*	no number
6d	39,546*	39,549

- two plates with numbers 39,546/1 and 39,546/2

Guide marks: Small crosses are found midway in all margins of sheets/panes, i.e. between rows 5 and 6 and columns 3 and 4. The guide marks indicated below are shown as been between certain stamps in rows and columns.

Vertical guide marks in frame/casement colours between, with small cross guillotine marks in margins

All values R1/C3 & 4 top
R10/C3 & 4 bottom

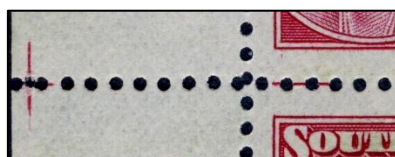


Row 1

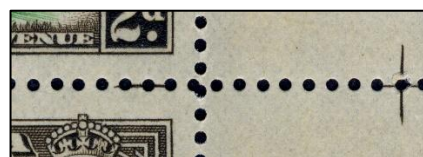


Row 6

Horizontal guide marks in in frame/casement colours between R5&6/C1 & R5&6/C6, with small cross guillotine marks in margins



Column 1



Column 10

Small cross in frame/casement colours at the intersection of R5 & 6/C 3& 4



Central cross

Vertical lines and dots in vignette colours:

- All duties
1. Dot below vertical line row 3 between columns 2 & 3, upper half of stamp
 2. Dot above vertical line row 8 between columns 2 & 3, lower half of stamp



Row 3 - dot below



Row 8 – dot above

Perforations:

Comb perforations: Perf 14 (SG) and 12½ (RSC)

Margin perforations:

All margins: Fully perforated

Imprint:

“Waterlow & Sons Limited, London Wall, London E.C.” below R10/C3 & 4

Sheet number:

Sheet numbers are found above the top right hand corner stamps (R1/6). Three digit numbers from 001 to 500, sheets placed in batches of 500 for packaging.

Print numbers:

Duty	Total stamps sold ²		Total
	S Rhodesia	London	
1d	3,287,294	300,000	3,587,294
2d	692,710	240,000	932,710
3d	130,440	240,000	370,440
6d	240,588	240,000	480,588

Date of issue:⁵ 12th May 1937 (Postal Notice 17 of 1937)

Withdrawn from sale:⁵ 31st August 1937 (Postal Notice 36 of 1937)

Demonetarised:⁵ 31st May 1938 (Postal Notice 52 of 1937)

Differentiation between the plates

All duties were printed in panes of 60 stamps, 10 rows with 6 columns. The plates can be distinguished by reference to the stamp at Row 9 Column 4, which can be seen in imprint blocks of 4 stamps by reference to the Queen's portrait. These varieties are from the vignette plate used for all the duties and are therefore in the colour of the vignette.

- Plate 1: no special markings
- Plate 2: coloured dot on the Queen's forehead between the right eye and the nose
- Plate 3: round dot above the Queen's left eye just below the hair.
- Plate 4: coloured bar crossing the bridge of the Queen's nose



Pane 1 – no marks



Pane 2 – dot between eyebrows



Pane 3 – dot above left eye



Pane 4 – line over nose

The exact positioning of the variety is dependent on the positioning of the vignette. For example, on the 6d, pane 3, example above, the dot is into the Queen's hair is higher with a shift of the vignette upwards. The images for pane 3 and 4 are from Otto Peetoom's publication *The Rhodesian Philatelist*, No 25 of January 2006. He illustrates pane 3 in a 6d duty, where the dot is further left than in the above example.

Varieties

Catalogues do not list any varieties for this issue. Apart from the varieties shown above to identify panes, the Mashonaland Guide lists a number of small varieties, these varieties may not be constant through the different panes and those reported do not indicate the pane. Otto Peetoom also examined a number of sheets of the issue and listed what he found in the Rhodesian Study Circle Journal, No 132, December 1985, pages 160 to 162. Otto did distinguish which pane he was examining.

These listing of both are shown within the attached Appendix.

Unlisted varieties

3d Imperforate top row

(Extract for Otto Peetoom's article in his publication "The Rhodesian Philatelist" No 25, January 2006.)

"This is one of the very few major perforation varieties found during the S. Rhodesia KGVII period. It was discovered soon after the stamps were issued and was apparently first found in Canada. The earliest report I am aware of appeared in the Philatelic Magazine 25 Jun 37, quote 'Coronation, 3d imperf at top. Mr Ian Morgan (Montreal) sends us a photograph of a top left corner block of four on which the perforation over the top row is missing.'

Stamp Collecting magazine 18 June 1938 illustrated the reported block along with a few lines of text. A booklet 'Coronation Stamps of the Empire'¹ circa 1938, published by Stamp Collecting illustrated the same block on page 31. This particular block was part of Tony Rubens' collection formed during the 1990s, he sold his collection by private treaty in 1999 to another South African. Since then, the block has been displayed at several exhibitions and was illustrated in the catalogue of the Paarl Rare Stamp Show held in 2000.

"A second left corner marginal vertical pair is known, sold by Western Auctions in February 1986 as lot 1318. During the early 1990s I purchased a single copy of the variety from a Warwick and Warwick auction, it has half of a horizontal printer's mark proving it stamp number 3 on the first row. A South African waterfalls collector provided me with a photocopy of a block of four, also with a central horizontal printer's mark, making then stamps 3 and 4 of a sheet. Thus far at least two sheets originally existed.

Then in the late 1990's David Brandon had on offer a horizontal pair, also with the central printer's mark, which then surprisingly proved that at least three sheets were broken up making eighteen examples possible."



The above images are from *The Rhodesian Philatelist* and illustrate the three examples seen of this variety from the top row, columns 3 & 4.

Otto suggests that there are at least three sheets released that would show this variety. If, however the printing sheets are fully perforated prior to cutting into individual sheets, there is every possibility that there are four sheets, being two each of panes 1 and 2. This would give a total of 24 stamps imperforate to the top margin. With the above stamps and a further pair from top left sheet corner, only six of these stamps have come to light.

Other significant varieties



1d: Marginal block of 1, with part of vignette plate number 39546.

(Courtesy of Keith Brodovsky)



1d: Partial offset of vignette on rear of stamp
(Source – Rhodesia.co.za)



2d: Large brown spot on '2' of 2d
Possibly variety listed by Mashonaland Guide as "Broken figure '2' of value" in R3/C4 or R6/C5



2d: Various emerald lines in top left margin

First Day Covers

The cover numbering comes from the catalogue produced by Geoff Brakspear. No first day covers were produced by the Post Office.

Cover 1.1.1 (Ruislip Stamp Company)



(Printing in black)

145 x 90 mm

Cover 1.1.2 (Ruislip Stamp Company)



(Printing in purple)

145 x 90 mm

Cover 1.1.3 (Ruislip Stamp Company)



(Printing in blue)

145 x 90 mm

Cover 1.1.4



(Printing in green)

145 x 90 mm

Cover 1.2 (Broadway Stamp Co, USA)



164 x 91 mm

Cover 1.3



164 x 91 mm

Cover 1.4 (J Stephen, Liverpool)



151 x 89 mm

Cover 1.5.1 A



(Paper off white with bluish type pattern from printing within cover)

145 x 120mm

Cover 1.5.1 B



(Paper off white without background pattern)

143 x 115 mm

Cover 1.5.2



229 x 102 mm

Cover 1.5.3



229 x 102 mm

Cover 1.6.1 (E D Bowie. London)



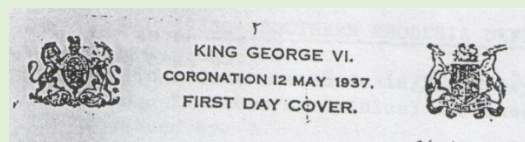
151 x 93 mm

Cover 1.6.2 (E D Bowie, London)



192 x 126 mm

Cover 1.7



Prepared for South African issue – reported in RSC Journal No 163

Cover 1.8 (Suburban Stamp co, London EC4)



151 x 91 mm

Cover 1.9



152 x 91 mm

Cover 10.1.1



Off white cover with bluish background

159 x 128 mm

Cover 10.1.2



Plain white cover

159 x 128

Cover 1.10.3



Off white cover

230 x 102 mm

Cover 1.10.4



Off white paper with bluish background pattern

230 x 102 mm

Cover 1.11 (Jennings Printers, South Shields)



(Also see 1.12 & 1.21)

151 x 121 mm

Cover 1.12



158 x 95 mm

Cover 1.13 (Stanbury & Stanbury, Exeter)



152 x 90 mm

Cover 1.14 (J E Lea, Manchester)



157 x 126 mm

Cover 1.15 (Maloo Bros, Dr-Es-Salaam)



Cover above dated 30-11-1957 – uncertain if covers exist for correct date of issue

164 x 92 mm

Cover 1.16 (A C Waterman, Skipton)



152 x 90 mm

Cover 1.17



Seen on eBay

Cover 1.18



136 x 108 mm

Cover 1.19



165 x 93 mm

Cover 1.20



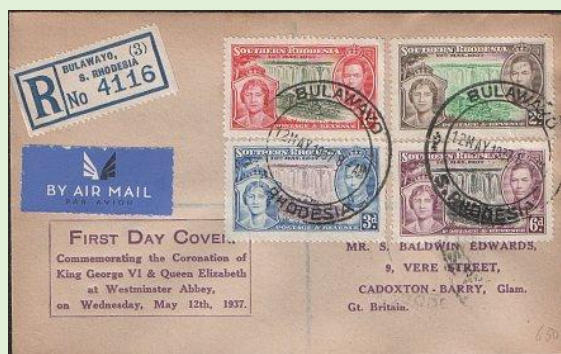
165 x 93 mm

Cover 1.21



151 x 120 mm

Cover 1.22 (S Baldwin, Barry, Wales)



149 x 92 mm

Cover 1.23



151 x 90 mm

Cover 1.24



148 x 90 mm

Cover 1.25 (D R Pope, Stourbridge)



151 x 89 mm

Cover 1.26



126 x 110 mm

Cover 1.27 (Peninsular Exchange Club, Cape Town)



165 x 93 mm

Cover 1.28

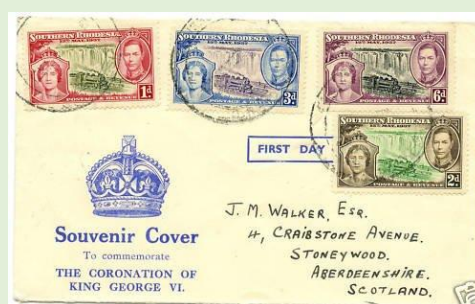


152 x 90 mm

Cover 1.29



Cover 1.30



146 x 90 mm

Cover 1.31 (Victor Clark, Victoria Falls)



157 x 98 mm

Cover 1.32



156 x 93 mm

Cover 1.33 (Nyasaland)



136 x 108 mm

Cover 1.34 (R Proud & Son, Newcastle-on-Tyne)



Cover dated 13th May 1937, possible cover correctly dated

146 x 89 mm

Cover 1.35



191 x 133 mm

Cover 1.36 (B E Parks, Bedford)



188 x 144 mm

Cover 1.37 (J S H Grant, Bulawayo)



288 x 152 mm

Cover 1.38 (J ECO McCormick, Canada)



165 x 93 mm

Cover 1.39 (Ivor Giblin, Canada)

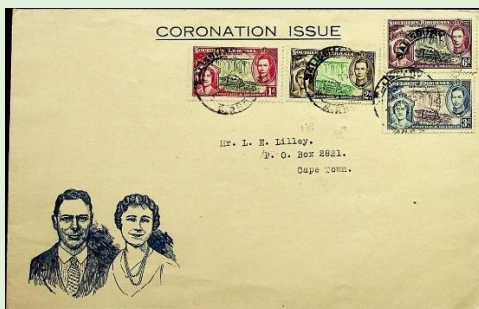


Cover 1.40



158 x 128 mm

Cover 1.41



(Source RSC website)

Cover 1.42 (J S H Grant)



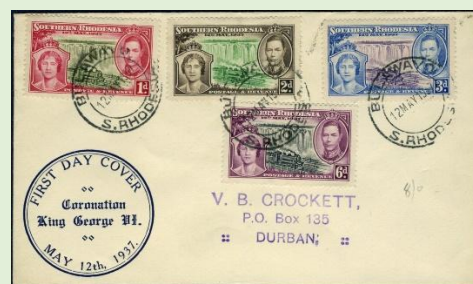
(Source RSC website)

Cover 1.43



153 x 92 mm

Cover 1.44



150 x 90 mm

Cover 1.45 (Stanbury & Stanbury, Exeter)



151 x 93 mm

Cover postmarked 13 July 1937, uncertain if this cover exists with correct first day cancel. Note Stanbury & Stanbury also produced cover 1.13, with different configuration, posted on correct day.

Cover 1.46



151 x 90 mm

(Cover has been printed – “First Day Cover” & registration lines. Many covers seen with same working but applied with rubber cachets)

(Courtesy of Adrian de Bourbon)

Related material

Sample Stamps



Waterlow & Sons printed examples of their work for publicity purposes. The 1937 Coronation was printed for this purpose in different colours to the issued stamps. With this issue they printed four examples of the 1d duty and one of the 6d. All stamps have the words “Waterlow & Sons Ltd/Specimen” overprinted across. The overprint is listed as Samuel type WS1. All stamps have a small punch hole within the frame of the Queen. (Source – all images RSC website)



The above samples were cut from Waterlow specimen booklet and have the hand printed number “S.T.1793” above. The left sample is imperforate, and the right perforated.

Neither stamp have punch holes.

(Source Rhodesia.co.za)



More of the sample book

(Source Spink archives 2025)



The above final printed colour 1d with semi-circular “Specimen” overprint.

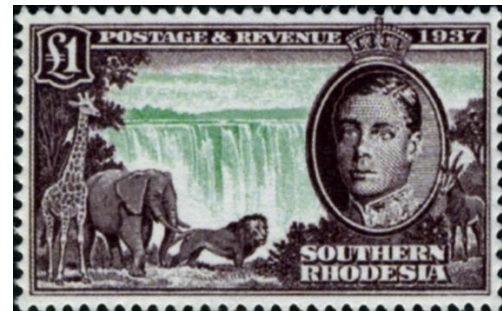
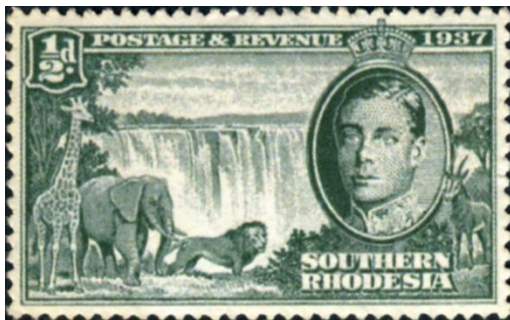
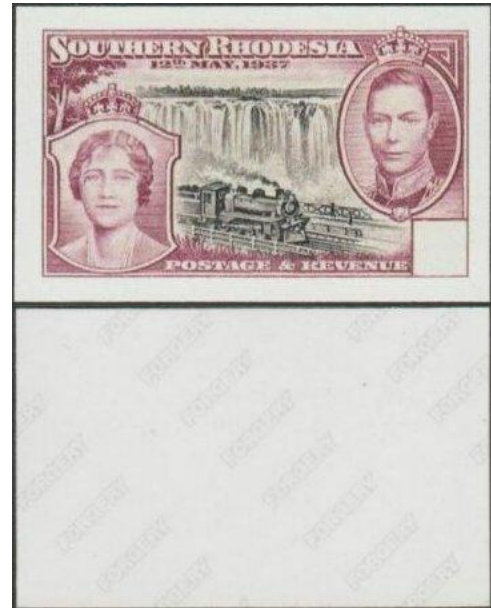
It is unknown if this was undertaken by Waterlow.

(Source RSC website)

Forgery/fake

With the advent of the modern computer, stamps can be manufactured using powerful computer software. In what is referred to as the ‘Maryland’ forgeries including the 1937 Coronation issue in the colours of the 6d duty but without the duty. These copies appeared in the market in around 2001. The stamps were produced on ‘very sophisticated printing equipment’ probably in Maryland, USA. The entire stock was purchased by Roger West of Avion Thematics in the UK. The stamps were sold with printed certificates explaining their origin and with “Forgery” endorsed on their backs.

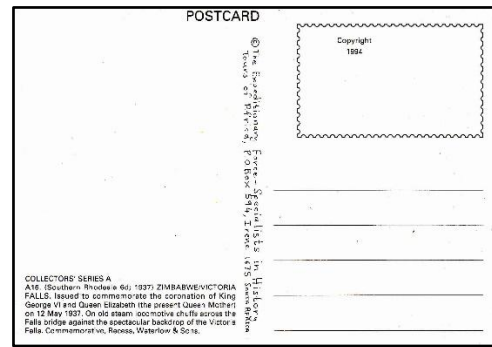
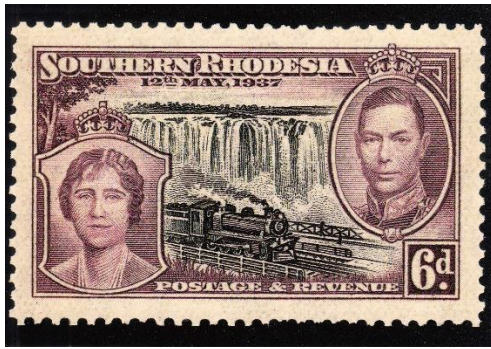
(Source: RSC Memoir 22 “A Guide to Rhodesian Philatelic Forgeries” by Phil Stevenson and Colin Hoffman)⁸



Fake stamps showing the portrait of King Edward VIII, styled on the 1935 Silver Jubilee stamps. The stamps are dated 1937, so presumably they could have been possible designs for this King’s coronation.

These facsimiles have not previously been reported. Any further information would be appreciated

“Maxi” postcard



©The Expeditionary Force – Specialists in
History Tours of Africa, P. O. Box 594, Irene
1675, South Africa. ©1994

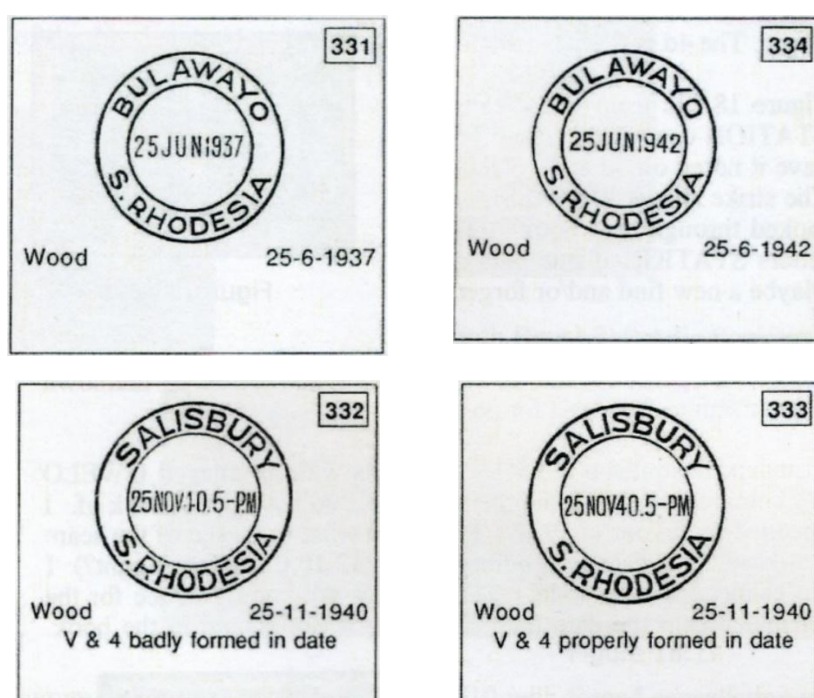
(Courtesy of Keith Brodovcky)

COLLECTORS' SERIES A
A16. (Southern Rhodesia 6d; 1937) ZIMBABWE/VICTORIA FALLS. Issued to commemorate the coronation of King George VI and Queen Elizabeth (the present Queen Mother) on 12 May 1937. On old steam locomotive chuffs across the Falls bridge against the spectacular backdrop of the Victoria Falls. Commemorative, Recess, Waterlow & Sons.

Madame Joseph forged postmarks

Madame Joseph was a stamp dealer in London and specialised in the repairing of stamps and the production of postmarks. A service Madame Joseph did offer to members of the trade, was the 'hire' of her 'equipment' for members to convert their own stamps into 'fine used' examples. This service may account for the perfect 100% strikes on some stamps, whilst others have only a faint part strike of one of her implements. She is believed to have operated from the 1920's through to the late 60's.⁸

There are four Southern Rhodesia cancellers and one registered canceller for Bulawayo. These 4 known cancellers span the dates 25th June 1937 & 25th June 1942 for Bulawayo and the two cancellers for Salisbury are dated 25th November 1940. The forged cancellers all give very good quality impressions, however one saving grace is that there do not appear to be any with moveable date slugs and so the specific dates make identification fairly easy. Part cancels are going to more difficult to confirm.⁸



*(Source Memoir 22 ex "Madame Joseph Revisited" 2005 publication⁸
It is assumed that the number shown with each strike refers to the catalogue number)*

The story is continued by Roger West of Avion stamps, a small note entitled "Madam Joseph – The story behind the fine used on piece" which accompanies examples of the forged overprints sold by him.

"When Derek Worboys purchased the hoard of Madame Joseph cancellers in 1993, his intention was simply to remove them from the gang of London dealers who were putting them to fraudulent use. Once it was decided to illustrate them all in a handbook, Derek wrote to the major postal history dealers requesting some financial help towards this project. Very little was forthcoming until the British Philatelic Trust reimbursed Derek and the Royal Philatelic Society published the book.

“Some time ago, probably in the late 1980's, a large accumulation of mint Commonwealth stamps became damaged through flooding. The owner laboriously separated the stamps and mounted each on a small square piece of paper. These eventually received the appropriate Madame Joseph cancellation. Thus these ‘worthless’ flood-damaged stamps became quite valuable as ‘fine used’.

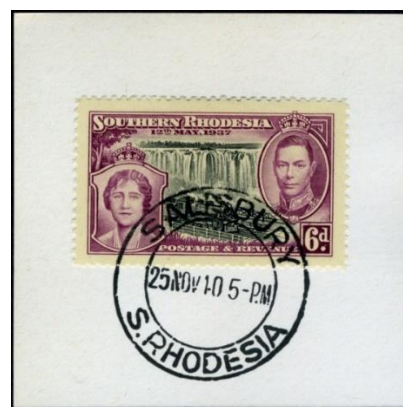
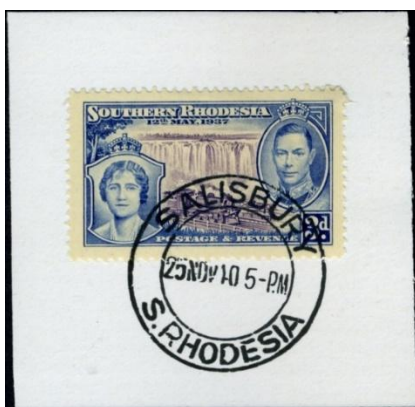
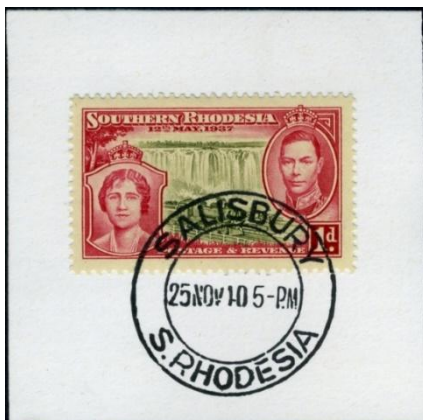
“Derek remained disappointed with his fellow dealers right up until his death in 1995. As a means to promoting the book, he threatened to ‘name and shame’ several dealers who we knew had been involved in using the cancellers.

“The owner of the ‘fine used on pieces’ sent me his stock declaring that he no longer wanted anything to do with them.

Following the success of the book, and the reprint, I felt the time was right to release these items to interested collectors.

Roger West - joint editor - Madame Joseph Forged Postmarks
Codnor Park July 2020”

Avion Stamps stock contains Madam Joseph postmarks on the King George VI Coronation and definitive issues. The examples below are all type 332, with the badly formed V & 4 in date.



The J.D. Harris forgeries on cover

George Whitehurst and John D. Harris, stamp dealers in Birmingham and Smethwick, England produced forged first day cancellations on Coronation Day covers purporting to originate on May 12 1937 of several Empire countries including Broken Hill, Rhodesia and Blantyre Nyasaland

Protectorate. Whitehurst applied the forged cancels using dies prepared for him in Leeds to stamps and covers supplied by Harris. Harris also supplied genuine covers to Whitehurst from which the forged markings were copied. Robson Lowe exposed the scheme and the forgers in a series of articles in *The Philatelist*. Cover below illustrates a 1937 KG VI Coronation set on a Harris cover with forged cancel of SALISBURY 25 MAY 1937 10 30AM. Note the pristine condition of the envelope! *(Complete extract from Memoir 22 page 59)* ⁸



Dies & proofs

In 1981 the Waterlow die proof books were discovered and shown to Robson Lowe at Basingstoke; this discovery led to the emergence of about 14 “dirty” books (the proofs used by the printers as an index in the print shop) and about the same number of “clean” books (the proofs used in the design department). In 1982 Robson Lowe estimated that the Waterlow Archives record sheets amounted to about 14,000 sheets. Since that time the 28 volumes of die proofs have been found to contain about 20,000 die proofs.⁵ In studying the Federal issues printed by Waterlow, reference with examples, will be made to this material.³

In addition, Colin Hoffman had an opportunity to take extensive notes of the Waterlow archives proof material held by Robson Lowe, and included this in the RSC Journal no 156 in March 1991.

This section will start with the dies produced, and progress through the supply of proof material available to study. Little of this material has been found in research for this publication, examples of the marginal notes would be much appreciated.

The archive material comes from the dirty books which were kept as an index in the print room, these contain unperforated proofs, with markings for improvements in printing of the stamps and various other handwritten annotations.

The material from the clean books, which were kept in the design department, are perforated stamps with the only annotation being “File Copy” followed by an order number. None of this material has been located for this publication.

Dies



Queen's portrait
Die No. 15519
Roller No. 11151
Proof No: None
Index Date: 21.12.36



King's portrait
Die No. 15520
Roller No. 11207
Proof No: None
Index Date: 24.12.36



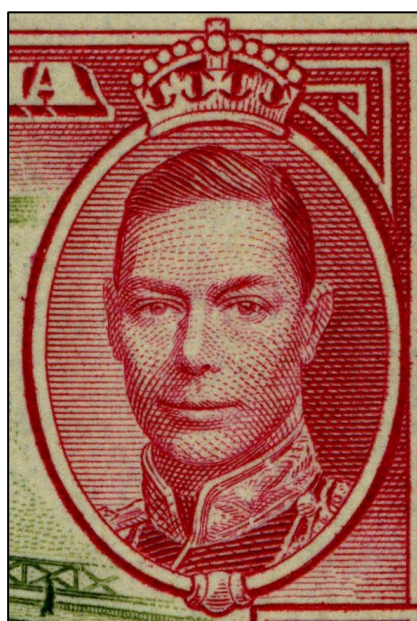
King's portrait die print out,
it is probably this print of the
die that was presented to the
King for approval in late
December 1936
(Source Memoir 21)⁹

These dies were produced by Waterlow's engraver J. A. C. Harrison. ⁹

This issue is unusual as the dies for the King and Queen's portrait were produced first, it should be noted that the above die prints do not have the proof numbers inscribed below.

The question arises is whether these dies were used in the production of the master die for the Coronation issue. With the King's head there has been a reduction in the extent of the portrait eliminating most of the detail below the King's collar. Below are enlargements so the King's die head and his portrait within the oval of the stamp. There are a number of differences between the two, including more lines and detail to the face; and gap between the collars being more 'V' shaped in the stamp than the die.

It is probable that for the master die, Harrison re-engraved the King's and Queen's portraits in the production of the master die for the casement/frame plate.



Master die for casement

Die No. 15558
Roller No. none
Proof No: 6208
Index Date: 8.2.37



Vignette die.

Die No. 15559
Roller No. none
Proof No. 6209
Index Date: 8.2.37



1d duty casement die

Die No. 15585
Roller No. none
Proof No. 6205
Index Date: 9.2.37



2d duty casement die

Die No. 15587
Roller No. none
Proof No. 6214
Index Date: 9.2.37



3d duty casement die

Die No. 15586
Roller No. none
Proof No. 6207
Index Date: 9.2.37



6d duty casement die

Die No. 15588
Roller No. none
Proof No. 6206
Index Date: 9.2.37

The casement master and duty die images appear to have had their roller number scratched or torn out in top right corners.

(All die images sourced from RSC website)

Proofs

Colin Hoffman had the opportunity of inspecting the Waterlow archive through the office of Robson Lowe at Christie's Auctions, which he published in the RSC Journal No. 156 in March, 1991.⁴ The information he obtained and placed in his article largely provides the majority of what is known of the proofs of this issue.

Plate and proof numbers

The die and roller numbers and index dates are shown below the die above, the following are the proof and plate numbers not seen on the dies. There are problems with this issue on the description of die or the dies forming the outer part of the stamp, it is variously referred as the duty plate (as the duty is shown), head plate (as the King's portrait is incorporated) and casement. The term casement is the one that is used by Waterlow, so this being utilised below.

	Proof Number	Plate Number.
Casement	6,208	No number
Vignette	6,209	39,546/1 & 39,456/2
1d duty	6,205	No number
2d duty	6,214	39,547
3d duty	6,207	No number
6d duty	2,206	39,549

The archive indicates that there were two vignette plate numbers, see below.

Print numbers endorsed in archive sheets

Duty	Endorsed on archive sheets	Numbers sold			Difference between printed and sold
1d	4,140,000	3,287,294	300,000	3,587,294	552,706
2d	1,380,000	692,7120	240,000	932,710	447,290
3d	310,500	130,440	240,000	370,440	Minus 59,940
6d	420,720	240,588	240,000	480,588	Minus 59,968

It is probable that the surplus stamps of the 1d and 2d duties were destroyed when the issue was withdrawn. There has been persistent speculation that there was a second printing of both the 3d and 6d duties, as the Waterlow archive record indicates a print run of approximately 60,000 stamps short of what was sold. There is no record within the archive that 1,000 additional stamps were printed. Whether there was an additional printing or not, there was never-the-less a shortage of these duties when the issue went on sale.

Print dates

The following table is from Colin Hoffman's article and described as the contents of the Waterlow Archive folder SR11

Duty	No of sheets	Vignette 39546/1	Imperforate Vignette 39546/2	Complete	Perforated
1d	8	17.3.37 18.3.37	17.3.37 18.3.37	20.3.37 22.3.37 "Standard"	4.3.37
2d	5	23.5.36 (sic)	23.3.36 (sic)	31.3.37 1.4.37	4.3.37
3d	3	25.3.37	25.3.37		4.3.37
6d	3	None	None	5.4.37 5.4.37	4.3.37

There are a number of aspects to note from the table above:

1. No vignette proof sheets were found in the achieve for the 6d duty, nor for the complete printing of the 3d.
2. With the 1d, 2d and 3d printings of the vignette both the plate numbers 39546/1 and 39545/2 were used on the same day.
3. Clearly there was an incorrect date written onto the proofs of the 2d vignette.
4. With the 1d duty there were two separate printings of the completed sheets on consecutive days
5. It appears that with three of the duties there were separate printings of the casement plate for both the 2d and 6d duties on consecutive working days (21.3.37 was a Sunday).
6. There is some uncertainty what the “Standard” 1d duty printing was.
7. The date of the perforated “File Copy” is clearly incorrect as this date was before the sheets were printed.

Number of panes per printing sheet.

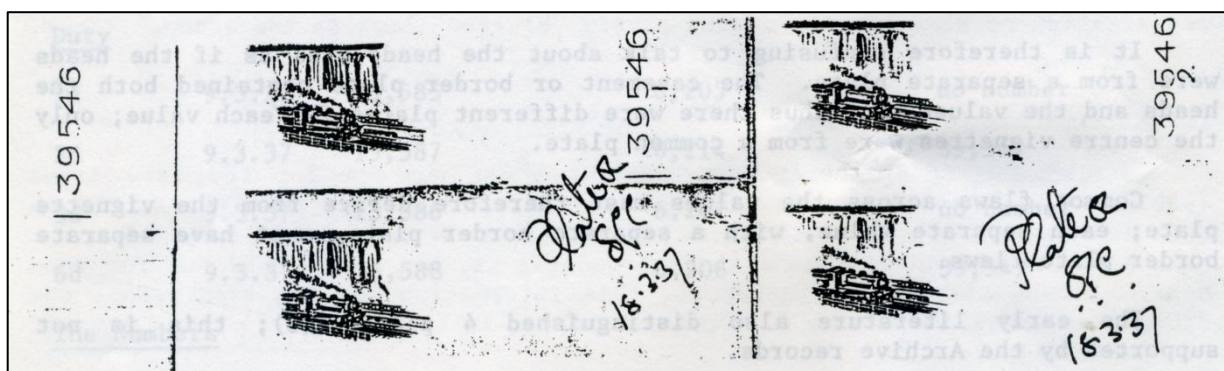
Colin Hoffman clearly states on inspecting the Waterlow archive records there was no indication that four panes were used. Smith states “The stamp order entailed the design and engraving of original dies, preparation of the 4 value casement dies, five 60 set casement printing plates and a set of Vignette Plates”.¹ Colin Hoffman suggests Smith saw a copy of the order, and was therefore able to verify these numbers. It is noted that Smith states there were five casement dies, which probably indicates that there were two casement plates produced for the 1d duty. There were no plate numbers for the 1d and 3d duties, so they are not verified.

Vignette plate numbers

As can be seen from the above information, there were two vignette plates used for at least three of the duties, the plate number being 39546, with a ‘1’ or ‘2’ below the five. Colin Hoffman stated that this plate number was “subject 42”, or opposite row 7 in the right margin.

The images of these plate numbers show the plate numbers to be a fair distance from the stamps. If indeed there were four panes to the printing sheets, it is suggested that these plate numbers occur to the right of either the top right or bottom right panes. If it was also alongside the two left panes, the central margin between the panes would have been considerable. It appears sensible to presume that the vignette plate numbers are only found in the right margins of the right hand panes.

The analysis of the panes for the four values suggested that there are constant flaws to the stamp at Row 9 Column 4 (position 52). This suggests that there was only one printing vignette printing plate, which raises the question of why there was a ‘1’ and ‘2’ beneath the plate number 39546? It is suggested, without evidence, that 39546/1 is opposite row 7 of the top right pane, and 39546/2 is opposite row 7 of the bottom right pane.

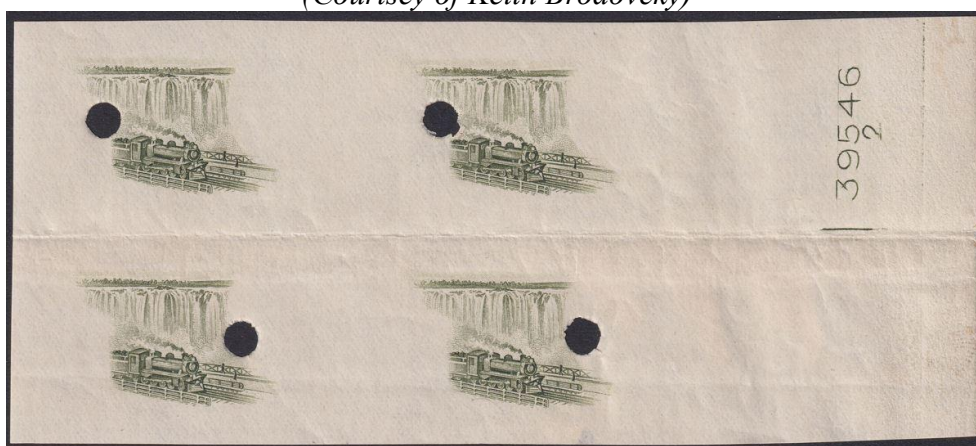


The above illustration is from RSC Journal 156, in Colin Hoffman's article.⁴ There are three 39546 plate numbers, the one on the left being from a complete sheet of the 1d duty, where there was no trace of the number beneath. The other two images have the wording "Plate OK, 18.3.37", which indicates the second printing of the 1d duty.



This appears to the vignette plate no 39546 without the number beneath.

(Courtesy of Keith Brodovsky)



Vignette proof with plate number 39545/2 in colour of the 1d duty

(Source eBay April 2023)

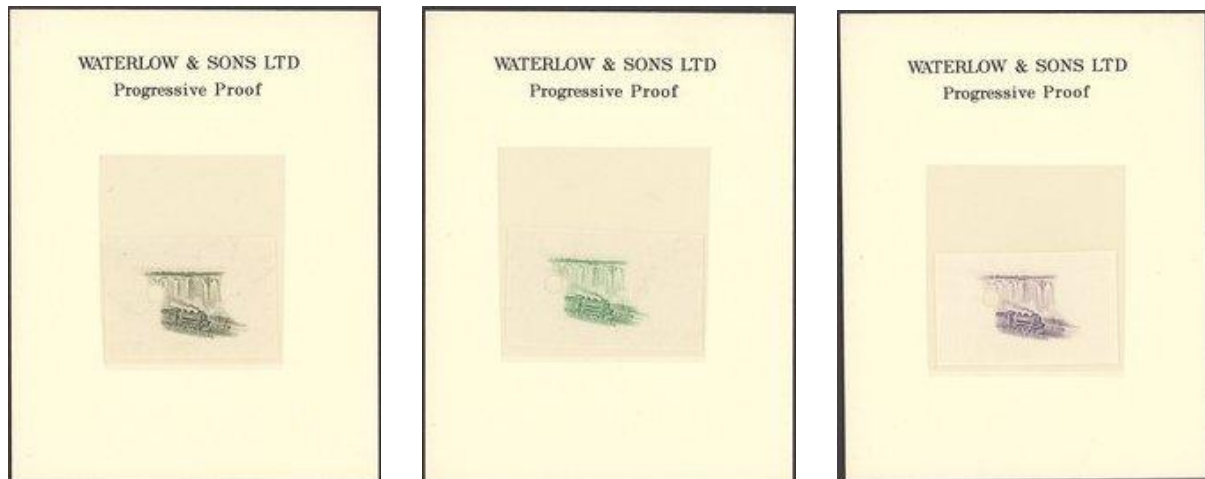


6d duty proof with the vignette plate no 39546, and frame plate no 36549

(Courtesy of Keith Brodovsky)

Proofs

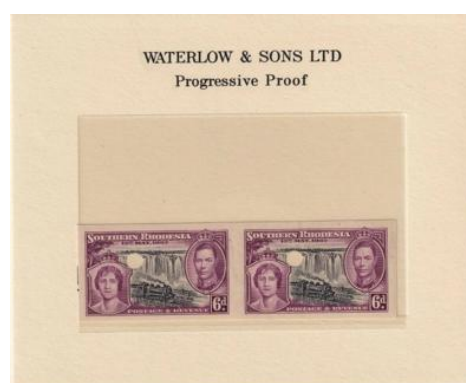
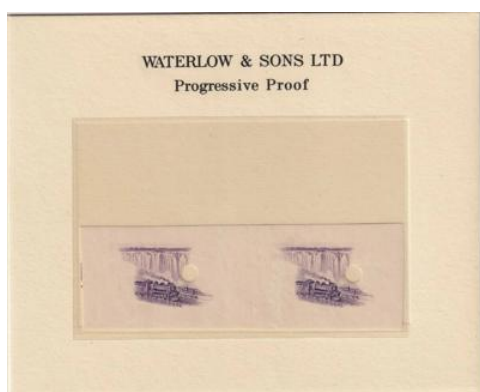
Proofs of the issue have only been found in singles or pairs, and then not for all the duties.



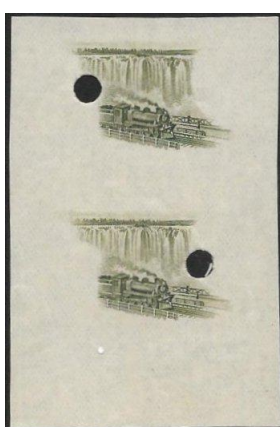
Presentation cards produced by Robson Lowe with the vignettes for the singles 1d, 2d and 3d duties, referred to as 'Progressive Proofs'

(Source Spink auction archive December 2024)

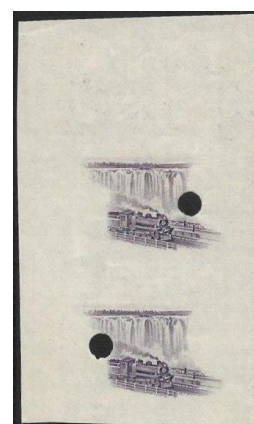




1d & 6d: Robson Lowe Progressive proofs in pairs
(Source eBay June 2026)



Vignette pairs of the 1d, 2d and 3d duties
No vignette proofs were found in the Waterlow
archives for the 6d duty.
(Source H&S Stamp Fare)



1d complete imperforate block of 4
(Source Spink auction archive December 2024)



2d complete imperforate pair, obviously from the print room



2d Imperforate pair lacking punch holes.
(Courtesy of Keith Brodovsky)



6d Imperforate imperf pair
(Source rhodesia.co.za)



Complete set of single stamps perforated from design department's file copies

Marginal notations

Recently some of the marginal notations to the printing proofs have come available for three of the duties, the other duty notations still being sort.



“EG 21,023; 4,140,000 stamps = 69,000 pulls”

“Vignette plate correct for 1d value. Lay straight as marked. 19/3/37”

(Source Pat Flanagan presentation December 2025) ¹²



“EG 21,023. Casement plate correct, improve register 30.3.37”

(Source Pat Flanagan presentation December 2025) ¹²



“EG 21,023. 2120,500 stamps = 5,195 pulls”

“Vignette plate & lay correct for 3d value 25.3.37”

(Source Pat Flanagan presentation December 2025) ¹²



“EG 31,023. 420,720 stamps = 7,012 pulls”
 “Casement wording & lay correct 5.4.37”
 (Source Pat Flanagan presentation December 2025)¹²

File copies of all six duties, courtesy of Christopher Cooksey
All proofs below have the order number 31023, date of 4.3.37 and print number





A further analysis of the die heads of King George VI can be found in Annexure 1 of the KGVI definitive issue – postage stamps

References:

1. “Rhodesia: A Postal History” by R C Smith, published 1967, pages 378-79
2. Letter by A M Murrell dated 6th November 1937, within RSC Journal No 156 page 41
3. “What the King thought”, article by George Stewart in RSC Journal 238, March 2011, pages 37-38.
4. “Southern Rhodesia: Waterlow Archives: 1937 Coronation Issue”, article by Colin Hoffmann in RSCJ 156, March 1991, pages 36-41.
5. “A Guide to the Postage Stamps of the Rhodesias & Nyasaland. 1888-1963”, published by the Mashonaland Philatelic Society, known as the “Mashonaland Guide” or “Mash Guide”. (Page 84)
6. “The Southern Rhodesia 1937 Coronation Issue”, The Rhodesian Philatelist No 25 January 2006, pages 423-428, published by Otto Peetoom.
7. “1937 Coronation Issue of Southern Rhodesia” (SG 36/9), RSC Journal 132, December 1985, pages 160-162
8. Rhodesian Study Circle Handbook “Memoir 22 – A guide to Rhodesian Philatelic Forgeries”, by Phil Stevenson & Colin Hoffman, published 2017, pages 55, 56 and 59.
9. Memoir 21 – “The KGVI Postage and Revenue Definitives of Southern Rhodesia”, by George Stewart & Colin Hoffman, published 2012.
10. “Commonwealth Stamps Catalogue – Southern & Central Africa”, 2nd Edition, published by Stanley Gibbons in 2014,
11. “The Rhodesia Stamp Catalogue 1983/84”, published by Salisbury Stamp Company.
12. “Waterlow & Sons Limited: File Proofs of Southern Rhodesia”. Pat Flanagan presentation to Manchester virtual meeting December 2025. (obtainable on RSC website)

Additions/Changes since first published	
12-2024	FDC covers 45 & 46 added
	3 progressive proof cards
	Block of 4 1d imperf proof
4-2025	J D Harris forgery FDC
	Fake King Edward VIII Coronation stamps
8-2025	Fake King Edward £1
12-2025	Fake King Edward ½d
	Proofs – file copies samples of each duty
4-2026	Proofs with marginal notations– 1d vignette, 1d full, 3d vignette & 6d full
8-2026	Robson Lowe Progressive proofs of 1d and 6d in pairs

APPENDIX

VARIETIES OF THE 1937 CORONATION ISSUE

MASHONALAND GUIDE

Row	Col		Stamp No
Constant flaws on all values			
4	1	Hairline through value tablet	19
5	5	Coloured mark on Queen's upper lip.	29
9	4	Plate 1, devoid of any special markings on Queen's head	52
9	4	Plate 2, coloured dot on the Queen's forehead between the right eye and the nose	52
9	4	Plate 3, round dot above the Queen's left eye just below the hair	52
9	4	Plate 4, coloured bar crossing the bridge of the Queen's nose.	52
2d			
3	4	Broken figure '2' of value	16
6	5	Broken figure '2' of value	15
3d			
5	6	Circular mark at the corner of the King's left eye.	29
9	2	The small figure on the bridge appears to be fishing as there is a distinct line from the figure upwards.	50

O PEETOOM – RSCJ 132 December 1985

Row	Col	
All duties, varieties that distinguish the four panes. Colour of variety is the colour of the vignette - that of the Falls and train		
9	4	Pane 1 – No marks on queen's Head
9	4	Pane 2 – coloured dot between Queen's eyebrows
9	4	Pane 3 – coloured dot below hairline above Queen's left eye
9	4	Pane 4 – Coloured bar on bridge of Queen's nose.
Notes on 1d and 2d		
Otto examined two sheets of these duties and found what would appear to be constant varieties – these are shown in italics		
1d. Pane 1 Sheet No. 112		

Row	Col	
2	4	Broken lines of shading to right of Queen's neck
3	1	Small red line into '1' of 1d
3	2	<i>Small dot in middle of left margin (constant)</i>
3	4	Broken lines of shading to left of King's hair
3	5	Broken line of shading to right of Queen's neck
4	1	Hairline on value tablet
4	4	<i>Hairline on value tablet</i>
6	1	<i>Hairline on value tablet - also line in King's oval and hairline under 'Revenue'</i>
9	1	<i>Spot in bottom of Falls (?R9/2)</i>
9	6	<i>Small mark on Queen's chin (constant)</i>
1d. Pane 1 Sheet No. 115		
1	5	Dot above engine
3	2	<i>Small dot in middle of left margin (constant)</i>
4	1	Spot on King's left cheek and diagonal line running down to Queen's cheek on next stamp (R4/2). Similar line above and parallel to first line, also hairline as recorded in the Mashonaland Guide
4	4	<i>Hairline on value tablet</i>
6	1	<i>Hairline on value tablet - also line in King's oval and hairline under 'Revenue', also mark on King's nose due to strengthened lines of shading</i>
7	1	Hairline from King's crown into margin
9	1	Black dot on King's forehead
9	2	<i>Spot in bottom of Falls</i>
10	1	'S' shaped line in King's oval
10	4	Two scars on King's right temple
2d. Pane 4 Sheet No. 333		
2	5	Brown dot in margin above King's head
3	4	Brown spot in Queen's fringe
5	2	Brown spot in King's oval
6	5	Small brown line in Falls
9	4	<i>Flaw on bridge of nose (constant)</i>
2d. Pane 4 Sheet No 334		
3	6	Brown dot in Falls
9	4	<i>Flaw on bridge of nose (constant)</i>
10	5	Line under Queen's nose
3d. Pane 1 Sheet No. 333		
1	1	Mark on King's forehead
3	5	Large ink smudge at extreme right frame

Row	Col	
4	1	Spot in Queen's frame
6	1	Spots round King's nose
6	2	Spots round King's nose
8	3	Small spot in Falls
9	1	Spots in Queen's oval
10	1	Spots in front of King's oval and line in '3' of '3d.'
6d. Pane 2 Sheet No. 116 Black and Deep Reddish Purple		
1	1	Spot on King's right cheek
2	5	Two spots in left frame
3	5	Spot on King's forehead
4	1	Hairline as recorded in the Mashonaland Guide
4	2	Small spot in bottom of 'D' in '6d.'
4	6	Broken lines of shading to right of Queen, also to left of King
5	2	Horizontal scar on Queen's left cheek below lips
6	1	Coloured line into Falls at the top of the Falls extreme right
6	6	Small dot bottom frame
7	6	Several prominent broken lines of shading round Queen's portrait, also in Falls
8	1	Short line in '6' of '6d.'
8	6	Broken lines of shading around Queen
10	1	Coloured line on top of Falls, appears as a buoy
6d. Pane 3 Sheet No. 338 Black and Purple		
1	1	Black marks under 'May' and '1937', also small dot on horizon
1	2	Dot on King's forehead
1	3	Vertical stroke in margin below '6d.'
1	5	Diagonal stroke in margin below Queen
3	2	Dot above King's left eyebrow
5	2	Extra curl to Queen's hair
6	1	Spot in shading next to Queen's cheek
7	1	Smudges left of Queen's hair
8	1	Diagonal hairline in margin under '6d.'
8	4	Hairline flaw under 'S' of 'Southern' extending into margin
9	1	Smudged shading to right of Queen's cheek
9	6	Black mark on Queen's face next to nose

Row	Col	
General Notes on 6d. The two sheets in Otto's possession have distinctively different shades as recorded above. There is a small vertical line in the bottom margin of each stamp directly below the left vertical frame line, on some stamps it is reduced to dot size. This dot is on every stamp except Nos. 32 (R6/C2), 38 (R7/C2) and 46 (R8/C4) in the pane, therefore the missing dot can be classified as a constant variety.		