

1951 POSTAGE DUE

Released 1st October, 1951

R C Smith in his book “Rhodesia – A Postal History” did not have much to say about postage due labels. His only reference was to state “The first postage due labels were ordered from the British Post Office, and were overprinted ‘Southern Rhodesia’.”¹

There was a question asked in the RSC Journal No 5 of June 1949 – “Why are there no postage due stamps for Southern Rhodesia? Mr Edge raises this question and wonders if it is owing to the magnanimity of the postal authorities or whether it is because of the difficulty in getting native postmen to collect the dues.” Indeed, Southern Rhodesia lagged behind its neighbours. South Africa first issued Postage Due labels in 1914; Bechuanaland in 1920; Northern Rhodesia in 1929 and Nyasaland in 1950. Apart from Bechuanaland, the first labels were in their own designs, albeit very similar designs. Bechuanaland’s first issue was overprinted Great Britain labels, these were replaced two years later.

When the labels were released, a further question was asked by the editor, Wilf Nodder, in RSC Journal No. 15 of December 1951 – “I am wondering why they are overprinted “SOUTHERN/RHODESIA” on the current G.B. set (except the 4d value which has not yet been issued in this country). Surely having been without postage dues for twenty eight years, the postal authorities could have waited a few months longer for a set to have been suitably designed and printed? Mrs Cawood has had some pertinent questions published in the local (Salisbury) newspaper concerning these “labels” - the official term applied to them - it will be interesting to see if they are of a provisional nature or not.” (The editor was wrong about the 4d blue not having been issued. It was in August 1951).

Never-the-less the labels were issued, which drew the following comment from Gerry Bater, the editor of the G.B. Overprint Society, in RSC Journal No. 102 of June 1978.

“The thing I cannot understand is that in each and every other case where Overprinted G.B. stamps have been used, the British Post Office actually ran the postal services in the area concerned, usually remotely from London, and most often (as far as is known) using British personnel. It seems there would have been no case whatsoever for issuing a British stamp unless it was planned at some time for the British Post Office to take over the postal services. Nor do I know of any emergency which would have necessitated such an issue”

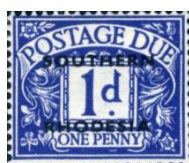
The design of the GB Postage Due labels had been established when they were first released in April 1924, differing only in colour and watermark until 1970 when decimalisation was beginning. The stamps were initially printed by Somerset House, and later by Harrison & Sons using the typographical printing method. The stamps overprinted “Southern Rhodesia” were from those released in 1937-38, with a couple released after a change of colours in 1951. These labels were reprinted as and when required by the Post Office. The stamps overprinted were:

SG No.	Duty	Colour	Released
D27	½d	Emerald	05/1938
D29	2d	Agate	05/1938
D30	3d	Violet	12/1938
D31	4d	Dull grey-green#	10/1937
D33	1s	Deep blue	9/1937
D36	1d	Violet-blue	06/06/1951
D38	4d	Blue	14/08/1951

overprinted and released in error

(Source *The Rhodesian Philatelist* No 19 October ⁵)

The Labels



Catalogue listings

SG ²	RSC ³	Value	SG colours
D1	D1	½d	Emerald
D2	D2	1d	Violet-blue
D3	D3	2d	Agate
D4	D4	3d	Violet
D5	D5	4d	Blue
D6	D6	4d	Dull grey-green
D7	D7	1s	Deep blue

Technical details

Stamp size:	24 x 20 mm
Sheet sizes:	Printed in sheets of 240 stamps (12 rows by 20 columns.)
Printing method:	GB stamps printed in lithography by Harrison & Sons. Overprints in lithography by Harrison & Sons
Plates numbers: ⁴	No plate numbers
Guide lines: ⁴	Vertical guide line in right and left margins between horizontal rows 6 and 7



Guide lines to left margin



Guide lines to right margin

Jubilee line: ⁴	The Jubilee line is a line adjoining the label in all four sheet margins. The Jubilee line to the bottom margin was broken between the stamps (see below). The lines were also broken at the corners of the sheet. A broad arrow is situated in the centre of the top and bottom. The line was also broken in the top margin to accommodate the point of the arrow. In the ½d value there is a white flaw in the Jubilee line above stamps R1/C2 and R15/C1
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Arrow to sheet top

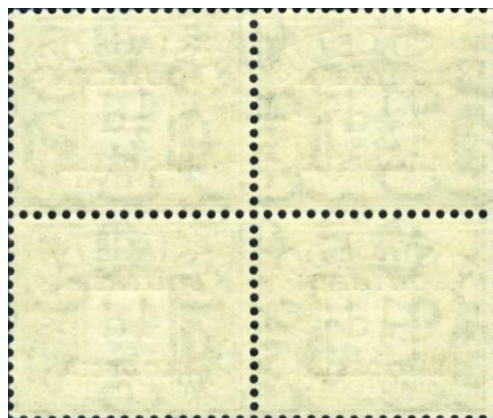


Arrow to sheet bottom

Perforations: ³	Comb perforations 14 x 15
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Margin perforations: ⁴ Top and left perforated. Right margin has one perforation hole between each horizontal row. Bottom margin imperforate in keeping with a comb perforation.

Watermark: SG type 127, sideways



(Source Stanley Gibbons catalogue)

Imprint: No imprint

Sheet Number: No sheet numbers

Print numbers: ⁷	½d	222,720	1d	671,040
	2d	229,120	3d	922,880
	4d blue	1,839,360	4d grey-green	109,680
	1s	672,240		

Date of release: 1st October 1950

Withdrawal from sale: Postage due labels are not sold over counter, but used to pay taxed mail. Labels used until stocks exhausted, known to still be in use in 1969 (see below).

The story of the 4d grey-green

R C Smith continues in his brief narrative on the postage due labels – “A small number of dull grey-green 4d labels were incorrectly supplied, and a quantity was issued by the Postmaster, Gwelo”.

The editor of RSC Journal No 21 of November 1953 provided further information on this stamp:

“I notice that it was reported in the August number of the S.A.P. that a package of 500 sheets i.e. 500 x 240 stamps, were forwarded to the Gwelo Post Office: some of these stamps were used locally and others were passed to ten district offices which come under its control. Only about 400 sheets were returned to head office and destroyed so that about 24,000 of these stamps were used or sold in unused condition. They are therefore not as scarce as the price charged for mint copies would indicate. I do suggest, however, that on cover, when correctly used, it would be a desirable item.”

The information of print numbers provided by Bridger & Kay suggests that the 4d grey-green had 109,980 stamps printed, that is 457 sheets of 240 labels. ⁶ So if about 400 sheets were returned to head office, the number of stamps in the post offices would have been less than suggested above.

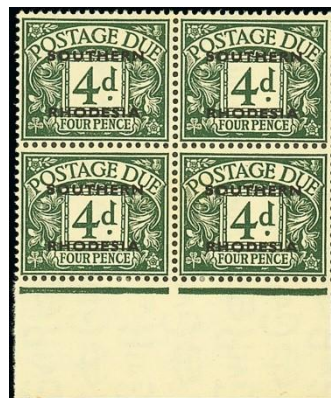
The district offices of Gwelo at that time were Daisyfield, Guinea Fowl, Lalapanzi, Lower Gwelo, Que Que, Redcliff, Selukwe, Shangani, Thornhill, Umvuma and Wanderer Mine (closed June 1952). (Source RSC Journal No 136 December 1986). However, there are a number of reports of first day covers cancelled to order from Fort Victoria. So, it is likely that a sheet or two were also dispatched by head office to Fort Victoria. The Fort Victoria district offices were Chibi, Triangle and Zaka, there is no evidence that these post offices received the 4d grey-green.

Of those in the Gwelo post office, and distributed to its district offices, used examples have been recorded from Gwelo, Que Que, Redcliff, Selukwe, Shangani & Thornhill. In addition, there are the Fort Victoria covers. Due to the distribution of the 4d grey-green by headquarters, it is considered in some circles that these are the only legitimate post office postmarks.

There are examples of postmarks, usually on cover, from Gadzima, Greendale, Umvuma and Umtali, and even one from Kitwe. It considered that these covers are philatelic with postmarks applied to the 4d stamps by favour.

Otto Peetoom suggested in the Rhodesian Philatelist No. 19 of October 1999 that on mint stamps – “Singles whether hinged or unmounted are not too difficult to obtain. Beside the Southern Rhodesia interest, collectors of postage dues and the KGVI reign in particular ensure that a constant demand is maintained. Blocks of four are quite scarce and large multiples are rare (Otto illustrated of a block of twelve).”

The mint single stamp is catalogued by Stanley Gibbons in 2014 at £300, and the used stamp at £700. ²

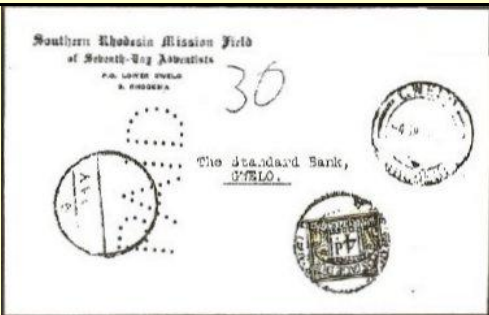


Block of 4 from bottom margin
(Source Spink auction archives
2014)

Otto continues to say “Used copies are rare and demand outstrips supply. It is an expensive item that is often beyond the pocket of many. An identifiable office name and/or date is important to determine genuine use. Gwelo cancels are encountered more often than others.”

Labels used at Gwelo & Fort Victoria and district post offices.

Used 4d grey-green labels as noted in the RSC Journals and The Rhodesian Philatelist no. 19 (RhoPhil).

RSCJ	Post Office	Date	Illustration (where available)
RhoPhil	Fort Victoria	01/10/1951	First day cover/s
RhoPhil	Fort Victoria		Allegedly 4d grey-green was used on seven covers sent to Ngomahuru Hospital in the Fort Victoria District. On letters sent to leper patients and collected by Dr M V Mostert
143	Gwelo	13/10/1951	
RhoPhil & 151	Gwelo (posted Lower Gwelo)	04/04/1952	
RhoPhil	Gwelo Registered	05/05/1952	
RhoPhil	Gwelo	06/1952	

RSCJ	Post Office	Date	Illustration (where available)
RhoPhil & 143	Gwelo	17/01/1953	
136	Gwelo	16/02/1953	
RhoPhil	Gwelo	26/02/1953	Pair of stamps
136	Gwelo	06/1953	
eBay	(Que Q)ue		
RhoPhil	Redcliff	05/02/1952	
RhoPhil	Redcliff	05/02/1952	
It is probable that the two blocks of four were cancelled by favour, rather than genuine use on cover.			

RSCJ	Post Office	Date	Illustration (where available)
RhoPhil	Selukwe	01/10/1951 First Day	 Two covers known (Cover above – Source rhodesia.co.za)
140	Selukwe	No date	
302	Shangani	01-10-1951 First Day	 Recently reported cover (Source RSCJ 302 – Ian Johnstone)
141	Thornhill	03/01/1953	
136	Umvuma	15/12/1953	
	Unknown		Possible postmark from these post offices  (Source Spink Auction October 2024 Paul Pegg collection)

Labels used on cover in other post offices.

Six covers are known from British Honduras, Jamaica and New Hebrides that have single 4d grey-green labels, postmarked, respectively Greendale, Gadzima and Umvuma. None of these post offices are known to have received these labels, and it is assumed that the labels were applied and cancelled by favour.

As is pointed out in several reports, the covers were addressed to postal areas rather than specific addresses, these were

- Covers from British Honduras: Mr Joseh Atkins, Coro Park, Southern Rhodesia (Coro Park or Coronation Park was served by Greendale post office in Salisbury)
- Covers from Jamaica: Mr G Phillips, Gadzima, Southern Rhodesia
- Cover from New Hebrides: Mr G S Merrill, Umvuma, Southern Rhodesia

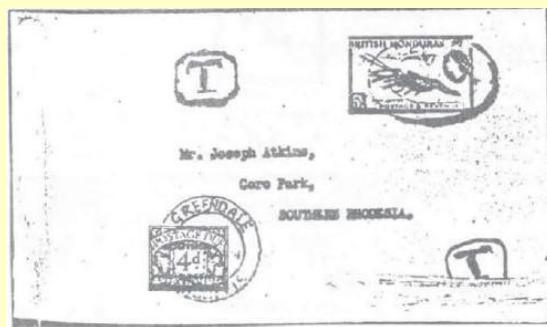
Whilst it is possible that the postmasters in Gadzima and Umvuma would have known where to deliver the letters being a small office. This would probably not been the case with the Coro Park cover. If the post offices knew where to deliver the letter, then in all probability there would have been a box number or street address handwritten on the cover in question.

All the covers have a 'T' tax mark, and the New Hebrides cover has the tax amount and a cachet 'To Pay'. One of the Jamaica covers had a rather large and clumsy '4D' cachet.

There can be little doubt that these covers are all philatelic and, probably, manufactured with the assistance of the postmaster concerned.



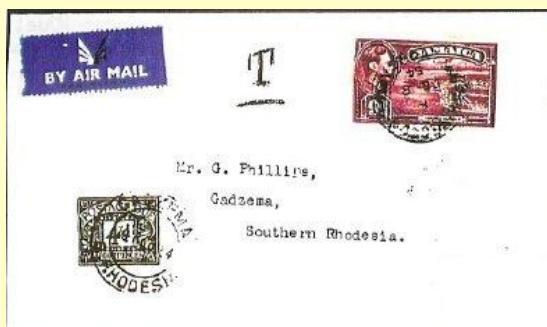
(Source Spink auction archive 2023)



(Source RSCJ No 144)



(Source The Rhodesian Philatelist No 19)



(Source The Rhodesian Philatelist No 19)

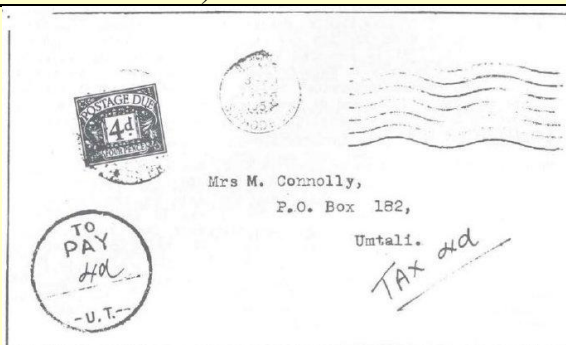


(Source *The Rhodesian Philatelist* No 19)



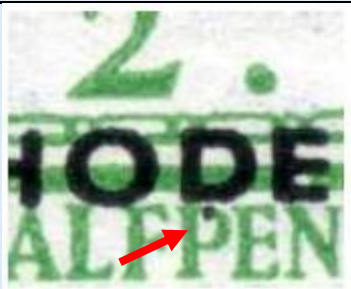
(Source *Spink auction archive* 2014)

The most believable philatelic cover recorded was created by Mrs M Connolly, the wife of the Umtali Postmaster. She used an unpaid self-addressed envelope applied an Umtali 20 APR 1954 machine cancel and the Umtali 'TO PAY- UT' handstamp. Taxed it correctly at 4d, double deficiency and applied the 4d grey green and cancelled it. This cover has a PFSA certificate stating 'Executed by favour at Umtali'.⁵



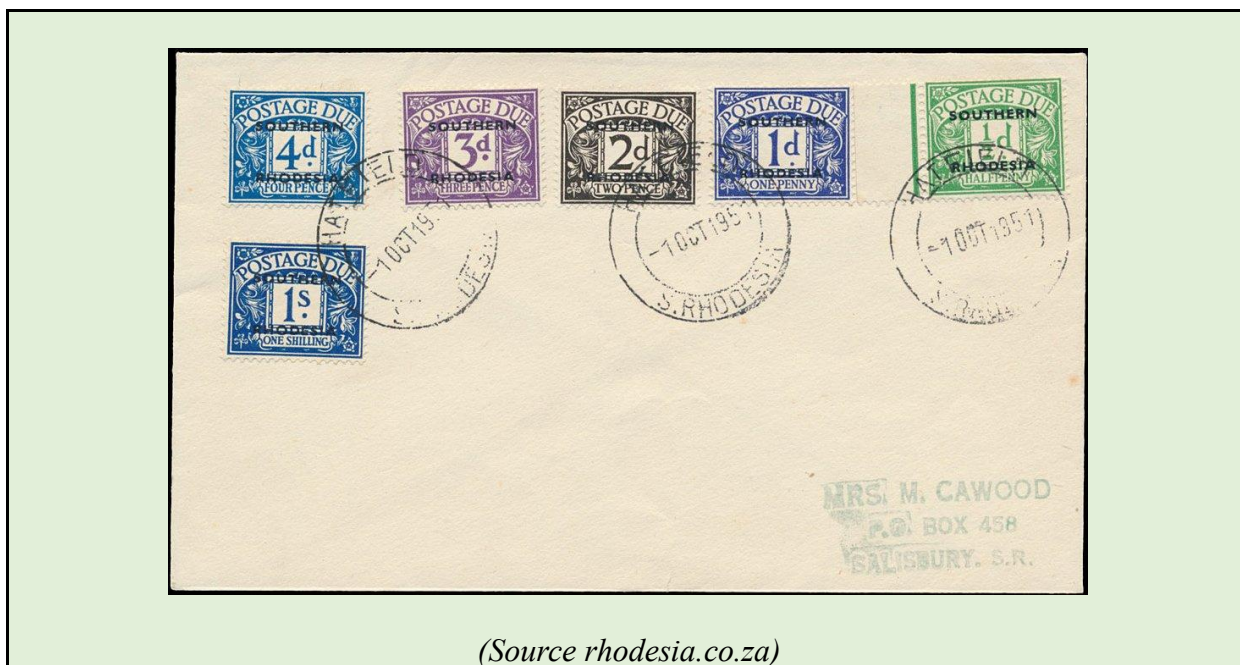
Varieties

The Mashonaland Guide provided a listing of various flaws on the ½d and 2d labels, which is reproduced in the Appendix attached. The majority of the flaws appear in the underlying GB labels, with four noted as being from the overprint which are listed below

Duty	Row	Col	Description	
½d	2	14	Large black dot under 'D' of Rhodesia	 <i>(Source RSCJ 295 – Andrew Wilson)</i>
	3	3	Short vertical black line to right of and touching 'S' of Southern (variable)	
2d	2	14	Black dot under 'D' of Rhodesia	
	11	5	Black dot under 'U' of Southern	
			Unlisted black mark under 'H' of Rhodesia, unknown position	 <i>(Source RSCJ 295 – Andrew Wilson)</i>

First Day Covers

The Post Office did not at the time produce first day covers for any issue, and in subsequent years did not do so for Postage Due/To Pay labels. Apart from the first days covers with the 4d grey-green label produced in Fort Victoria, Shabani and Shangani, there is only one known cover with all the labels, including the 4d blue, produced by Mrs M Cawood of Salisbury.



Keith Brodovcky has within his collection two commercial covers with the Postage Due labels cancelled on the first day of issue, 1 October 1951 (Images below courtesy of Keith Brodovcky)



Local mail within Salisbury with 1d KGVI definitive, taxed at twice deficiency with two 1/2d and single 1d PDLs, cancelled Salisbury 1 October 1951



Letter from UK with 1s KGVI definitive, taxed at 6d with different cachets. Two 3d PDLs used a cancelled Salisbury 1 October 1951

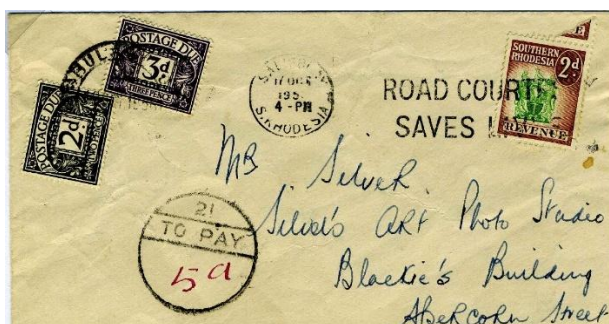
Use of the 1951 Postage Due Labels

The use of the 1951 Postage Due labels continued in use by the Post Office throughout the Federal period, with the last known example in 1969. This was despite the introduction of the Federal Postage Due labels on 19 April 1961 and the Southern Rhodesian labels on 17 June 1965.

The following collection of covers bearing the 1951 Postage Due labels is from the collection of the late Cecil Russell, a specialist in taxed mail.



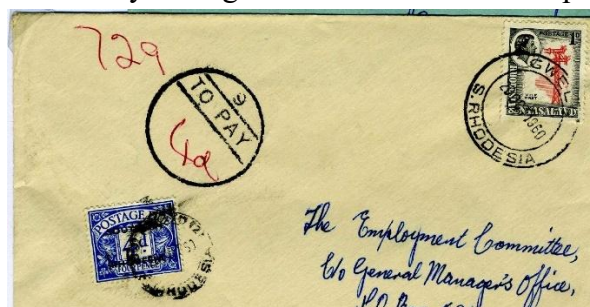
Sent from Umtali 28 September 1953 to Bulawayo, with invalid Coronation stamp



Sent from Salisbury 17 October 1956 to Bulawayo using an invalid Revenue stamp



Letter sent to Causeway, cancelled PDL 11 April 1959, no stamps used



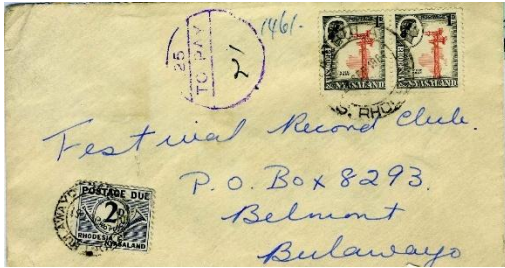
Part cover sent from Gwelo on 2 October 1960 to unknown destination



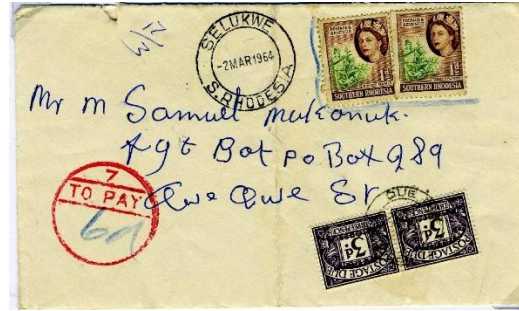
Letter posted Umtali 12 October 1960 to Bulawayo



Part cover sent from Salisbury 4 November 1960 to unknown destination, PDL's with 1960 partial print.



Letter sent from Mangula 28 Septmeber 1961, PDLs postmarked Bulawayo 5 October 1961.



Letter sent from Selunkwe 2 March 1964 to Que Que, invalid 1953 definitive stamps.



Manila unselaed letter from Bulawayo 14 June 1969 to Bulawayo PDLs cancelled 15 June 1965



Letter posted Salisbury 8 December 1969 to Buffalo Range December 1969 cancel. With RAPT 1969 Christmas label.

Inter-provincial use of Southern Rhodesia 1951 Postage Dues labels

It is known that the 1961 Southern Rhodesia postage due labels were used in both Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland.

Opposite is two 2d labels postmarked Lilongwe, Nyasaland 3 October 1963



References:

1. "Rhodesia: A Postal History" by R C Smith, published 1967, pages 383-385
2. "Commonwealth Stamps Catalogue – Southern & Central Africa", 2nd Edition, published by Stanley Gibbons in 2014,
3. "The Rhodesia Stamp Catalogue 1983/84", published by Salisbury Stamp Company.
4. "A Guide to the Postage Stamps of the Rhodesias & Nyasaland 1888-1968" Mashonaland Philatelic Society, page 91
5. "Southern Rhodesia – Postage Due Labels", The Rhodesian Philatelist, No 19 October 1999, a publication of Otto Peetoom.
6. "Commonwealth King George VI Catalogue" 1991, Bridger & Kay, page 205
7. Rhodesian Study Circle Journals references (Journal No/page/s) #5/5-6; #15/32; #20/36; #21/41; #102/70-71; #108/161/62; #120/176; #134/61-62; #135/107; #136/144 (Otto Peetoom); #140/139; #141/24; #143/115; #144/161-62 (Otto Peetoom); #145/15; #151/??; #155/258-59; #158/101-02; #168/15; #295/22; #302/246

Additions/Changes	
8-2026	4d grey-green with Que Que postmark

APPENDIX

The Mashonaland Guide provided a list of flaws from sheets of the ½d and 2d labels, it is not known if the other duties were also examined. The majority of the flaws noted relate to the underlying label, with only a few that relate to the overprinting. The latter are shown in bold below.

Duty	Row	Col	
½d	1	14	Straight right side to full stop
	2	2	Hardly any serif to '2' of value
	2	6	Stubby serif to '2' of value
	2	14	Large black dot under 'D' of Rhodesia
	3	3	Short vertical black line to right of and touching 'S' of Southern (variable)
	3	6	Stubby serif to '2' of value
	3	14	Broken off or missing portion of limb of '2' of value
	4	8	Only the left half of the full stop present
	5	10	Shortened serif to '2' of value
	6	10	Hardly any serif to '2' of value
	7	10	Broken off serif to '2' of value
	7	13	Broken off serif to '2' of value
	7	14	Half a full stop (left half)
	7	16	Full stop with straight right side
	8	10	Damaged serif to '2' of value
	9	9	Broken off serif of '2' of value
	9	13	No serif to '2' of value
	11	11	Poor serif to '2' of value
2d	1	11	Break in bottom of 'P' of Pence; 'E' and 'N' of pence joined
	2	14	Black dot under 'D' of Rhodesia
	4	14	Brown mark above 'E' of pence
	6	8	Brown mark from middle limb of 'E' of DUE
	6	14#	Top two limbs of 'E' of Postage joined
	6	15#	Top two limbs of 'E' of Postage joined
	6	20#	Middle limb of 'E' of 'DUE' lightly joined to frame
	7	2	Brown mark from bottom of 'O' of Twopence to design
	7	5	Large brown dot at top of 'S' of Postage
	7	12#	Line joining top of 'E' of 'DUE' to design
	7	14#	Break in base of 'd' of value
	8	6	'T' and 'W' of Two joined at top
	8	20	Middle limb of 'E' of 'DUE' joined to frame
	9	3	'T' and 'W' of Two joined at top
	9	6	Brown dot under 'C' of Twopence
	9	11	Top two limbs of 'E' of Postage joined
	9	12	Top two limbs of 'E' of Postage joined
	10	11#	Two top limbs of 'W' of Two joined solidly
	10	14	'T' and 'W' of two joined together and to design
	11	5	Black dot under 'U' of Southern
	11	7	Top two lines at left of 'P' of Postage joined
	12	12	Vertical brown 'stain' from under 'C' of pence to frame line (variable)
Note			Flaws on stamps marked # are not constant