

An Introduction to the Specimen Stamps of British Central Africa and Nyasaland

Rhodesian Study
Circle

Westpex Meeting

26th April 2025

Types of Specimen Stamps

- UPU Distribution Stamps
- Receiving Authority Specimens
- Archival Specimens
- Printer's and Publicity Samples
- Others including Display Specimens, Post Office Training Stamps

UPU Specimens

Postal Union Specimens	Nearly all	Number distributed
1879 (Oct.)–1884 (June)	Uncancelled	80
1884 (June)–1886 (March)	Specimen Overprints	100
1886 (Apr.)–1892 (June)	„ „	345
1892 (July)–1907 (Sept.)	„ „	730–756
1907 (Oct.)–1915	„ „	451–369
1915–1928 (<i>c.</i> Sept.)	„ „	369–423
1928 (<i>c.</i> Sept.)–1938	Specimen Perforations	423–395
1938–42	„ „	395–351
1942–1948 (<i>c.</i> Aug.)	„ „	351–379
1948 onwards	Uncancelled	

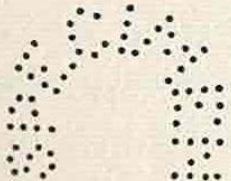
Distribution to Individual Countries

- Prior to the 1908 Definitive Issue – Five
- 1908 Definitive Issue and following issues – Three
- Number of panes produced dependent on sheet size
- To optimize break up of the panes, distributions were
 - in horizontal or vertical strips
- Disposition of residual stamps is unclear

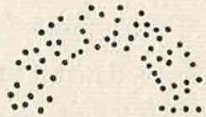
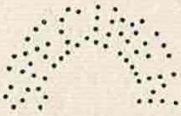
The Printers of British Central Africa and Nyasaland Stamps for UPU Distribution

- 1891 - 1895 Bradbury Wilkinson
- 1895 - 1933 De la Rue
- 1934 - 1935 Waterlow & Sons
- 1937 Coronation Issue Bradbury Wilkinson
- 1938 - 1944 Waterlow & Sons and De la Rue
- 1945 Bradbury Wilkinson
- 1946 Victory Issue De la Rue
- 1948 1d new definitive Bradbury
Wilkinson
- Later issues distributed without Specimen

Bradbury Wilkinson Specimen Overprints and Perforations

Bradbury, Wilkinson				
1890-1920				B1 Perf
1891-98	SPECIMEN.	12 x 2.5		B2 Optd
1921-27	SPECIMEN.	12.5 x 1.25		B3 Optd
1921	SPECIMEN	15.75 x 1.5		B4 Optd
1922	SPECIMEN.	29 x 3.75		B5 Optd
1923-25	SPECIMEN.	12.25 x 2.5		B6 Optd
1927	SPECIMEN	16 x 1.5		B7 Optd
1928	SPECIMEN.	16 x 1.75/1.5		B8 Optd
1928-48				B9 Perf

De la Rue Specimen Overprints and Perforations

De La Rue				
1870-1921	SPECIMEN	15 x 2	D9	Optd
1884-1922	SPECIMEN	14.5 x 2.5	D12	Optd
1897-1922	SPECIMEN	13.5 x 2.5	D12a	Optd
1889-1922	—————	14.5(±0.5) x 2.5	D12x	Optd
1885-87	SPECIMEN	14 x 2.5	D13	Optd
1903-27	SPECIMEN	15 x 2.5	D14	Optd
1922-28	SPECIMEN	15.5 x 1.75	D16	Optd
1922-28	—————	15.5(±0.5) x 1.75	D16x	Optd
1922	SPECIMEN	13.75 x 3.25	D17	Optd
1914-35	SPECIMEN	16.5 x 2.75	D18	RH/S
1928-36			D19	Perf
1936-40			D20	Perf
1941-48			D21	Perf

Waterlow &
Sons
Specimen
Overprints
and
Perforation
s

Waterlow				
1898	SPECIMEN	19.5 x 1.75	W1	Optd
1913-26	SPECIMEN	12 x 1.25	W2	Optd
1917	SPECIMEN	17 x 2	W3	Optd
1922-31	SPECIMEN	19.75 x 2.5	W4	Optd
1925	SPECIMEN	15 x 2	W5	Optd
1926	SPECIMEN	15.25 x 1.75	W6	Optd
1928	SPECIMEN	12.5 x 2	W7	Optd
1928-44			W8	Perf
1938 and 1942			W8a	Perf
1944-48			W9	Perf

1891-1895

BCA

Overprints
on Rhodesian
Stamps

Samuel Type B1
Perforation



1895 Coat of Arms Issue

Overprinted by De
la Rue
Distributed with
the UPU
International
Circular dated 26th
July 1895

Distributed in
strips of five



1895 Coat of Arms Issue

Only stamps
to the One
Pound value
distributed



1895 Ten and Twenty-five Pound Stamps

Allegedly only
four examples
of each
prepared by De
la Rue and sent
to the G.P.O.
in London



1896 Watermarked Issue

All Values up to the Twenty-five Pound value overprinted by de la Rue and distributed with the UPU International Bureau circular dated 10th July 1896

Large format stamps with vertical Specimen overprint



1897
Issue

Overprinted
by De la
Rue



1903-4 King Edward VII Oak Leaf Design

Overprinted
d by De la
Rue



1908 Issue Inscribed Nyasaland

Overprinted
by De la
Rue
and now
distributed
in strips
of three



1908 High Value Key Plates

All values
overprinted by De
la Rue, also
distributed in
strips of three



1913-1930 King George Vth Issues

Different overprint types and introduction of Specime



1913-1930 King George Vth Large Format Nyasaland Key Plates

Different overprint types and introduction of
Specimen perforation



1934 Leopard Issue

Printed by
Waterlow &
Sons
Samuel Type
W8
Perforation



1937 Coronation Issue

Printed by
Bradbury
Wilkinson
Samuel Type B9
Perforation



1938-1942 King George VI Definitive Issue

Low values
printed by
Waterlow &
Sons and
high values
by De la Rue



1946 Victory Issue – Printed by De la Rue



1947 1d Leopard – the Final UPU Specimen

Printed by Bradbury
Wilkinson
Samuel Type B9
Perforation



Varieties of
the Standard
De la Rue
Specimen
Overprint

1	2	3	4	5	6
S				M P	
7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18
				M	
19	20	21	22	23	24
				M S	
25	26	27	28	29	30
				P N	
31	32	33	34	35	36
37	38	39	40	41	42
				M P	
43	44	45	46	47	48
	M E			M	
49	50	51	52	53	54
S				M N	
55	56	57	58	59	60
SMN				M	

The "Broken M" Variety – Position 41



The "Short N" Variety - Position 60



Examples of Unplated Varieties of the De la Rue Overprint



Flaw in N with normal (at left) Elongated
N

De la Rue – use of Red Overprint on Stamps with Black in the Design

Also
shows
thin and
thicker
overprin
t



Forgery of the Specimen Perforation

Most forgeries are
of the Specimen
perforations rather
than the overprints

Many were offered
for sale by Wayne
Hopkins during the
1970's and 1980's

PHILATELIC FEDERATION OF SOUTHERN AFRICA
EXPERT COMMITTEE

Serial No. 10001 Date 1993-01-15

The Expert Committee has examined the enclosed
Nyasaland 5s green and red/
yellow SG 112 unused with
perforated 'SPECIMEN'

and, subject to the conditions set out on the back of this form, is of
the opinion that the perforated 'SPECIMEN'
has been faked

[Signature]
[Signature]

10001



10001



PHILATELIC FEDERATION OF SOUTHERN AFRICA
EXPERT COMMITTEE

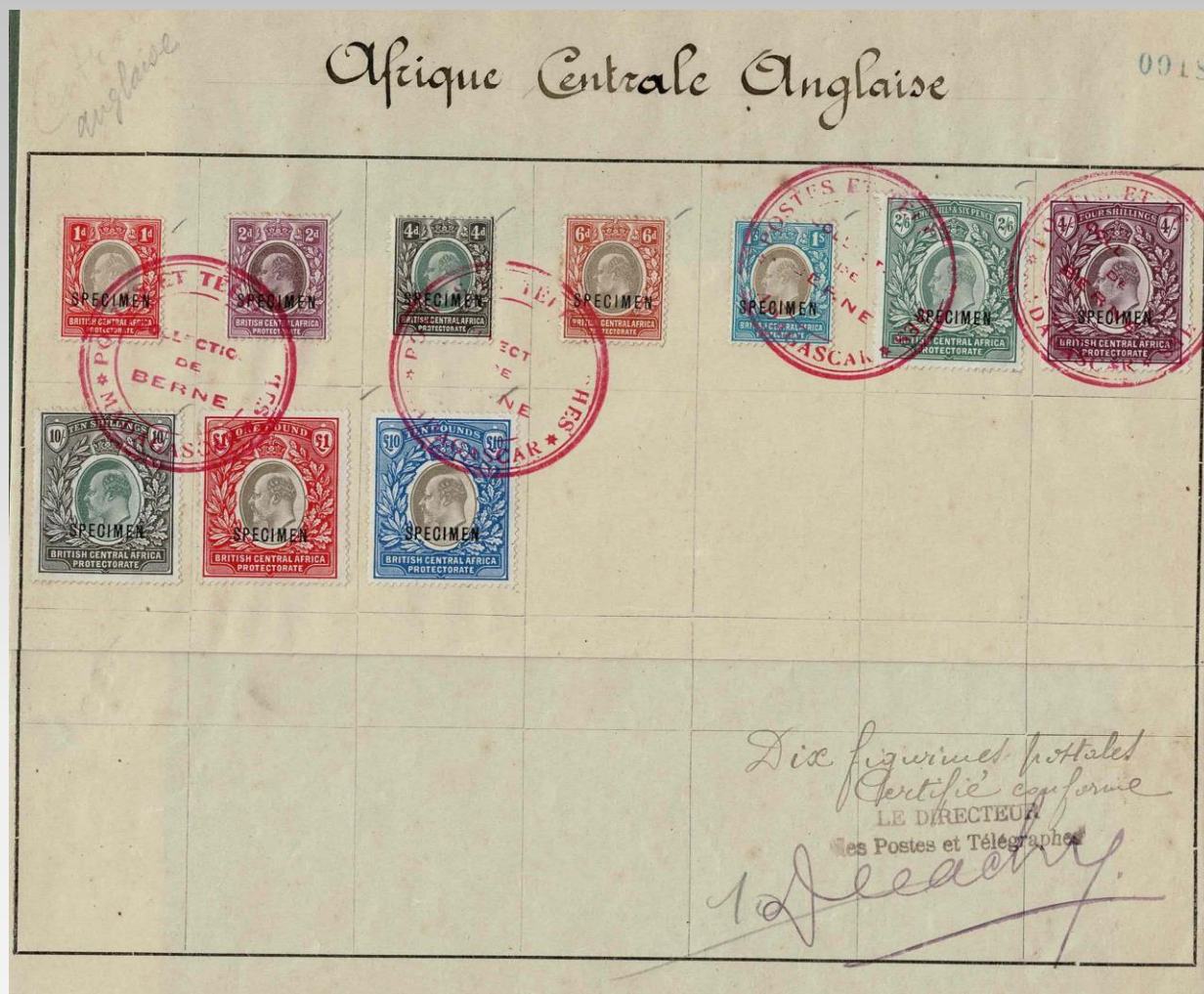
Receiving Authority Specimens

Ultramar – Portugal and
Portuguese Colonies

Most originating from Goa
(India) and Angola



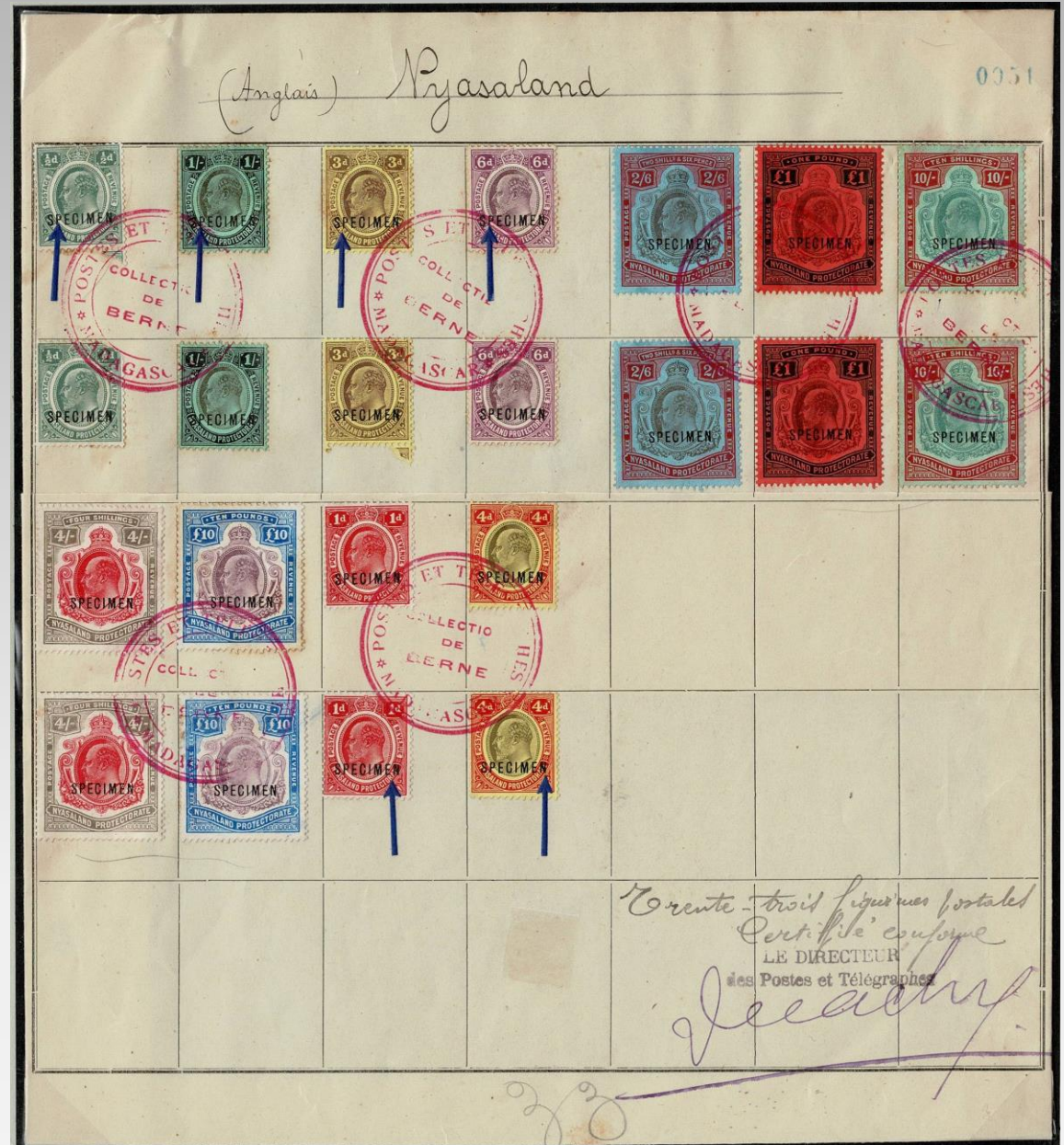
Madagascar – French Colony



Madagascar – French Colony

Issues between
1902 and 1912
released in
1980

British
Colonial
issues offered
by Argyll
Etkin Ltd.



Madagascar – French Colony

Issues between
1912 and c.1928
released in 1985



Bechuanaland

Originating from distributions received by the Bechuanaland Protectorate Post Office that were returned to the GPO (London) around 1937

Sold at auction by Robson Lowe in Switzerland in 1976



Local Specimens



Samuel Type R2
(Rhodesia)



Manuscript Specimen,
source unknown

Distinctive Local Handstamps – Samuel Types NY1 and NY2



1895 Coat of Arms Issue with Local Specimen Handstamp

Handstamps in black
or violet



Local Handstamp – Samuel Type NY3



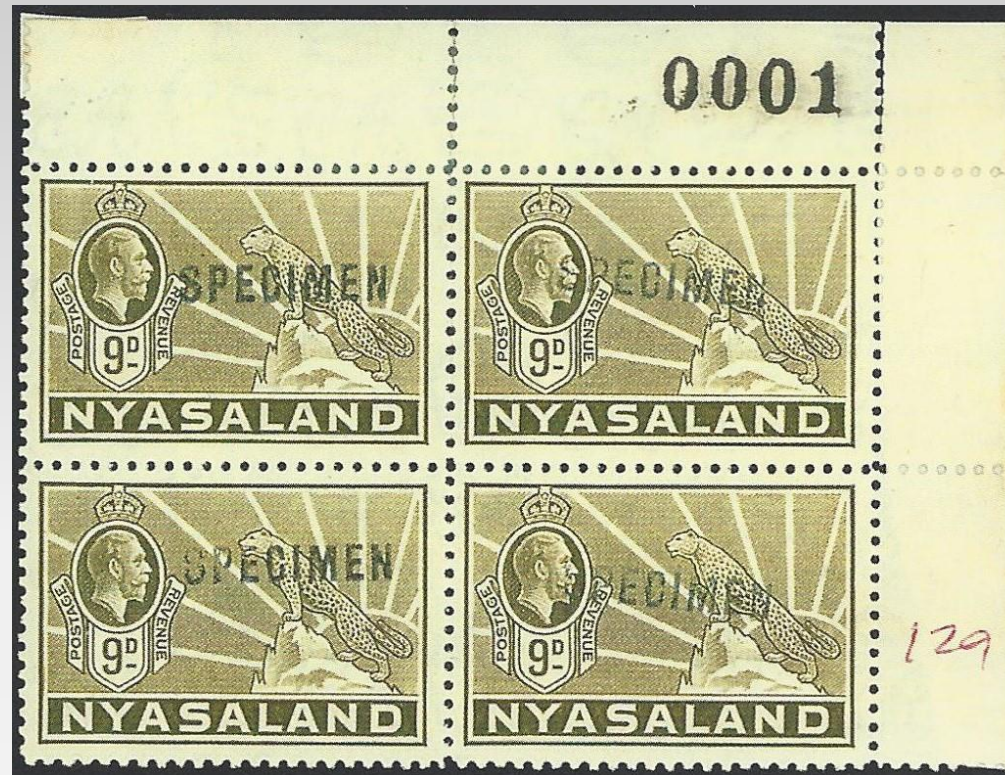
Local Handstamp – Samuel Type NY4



Local Specimen Handstamp applied to Postal Records in Zomba



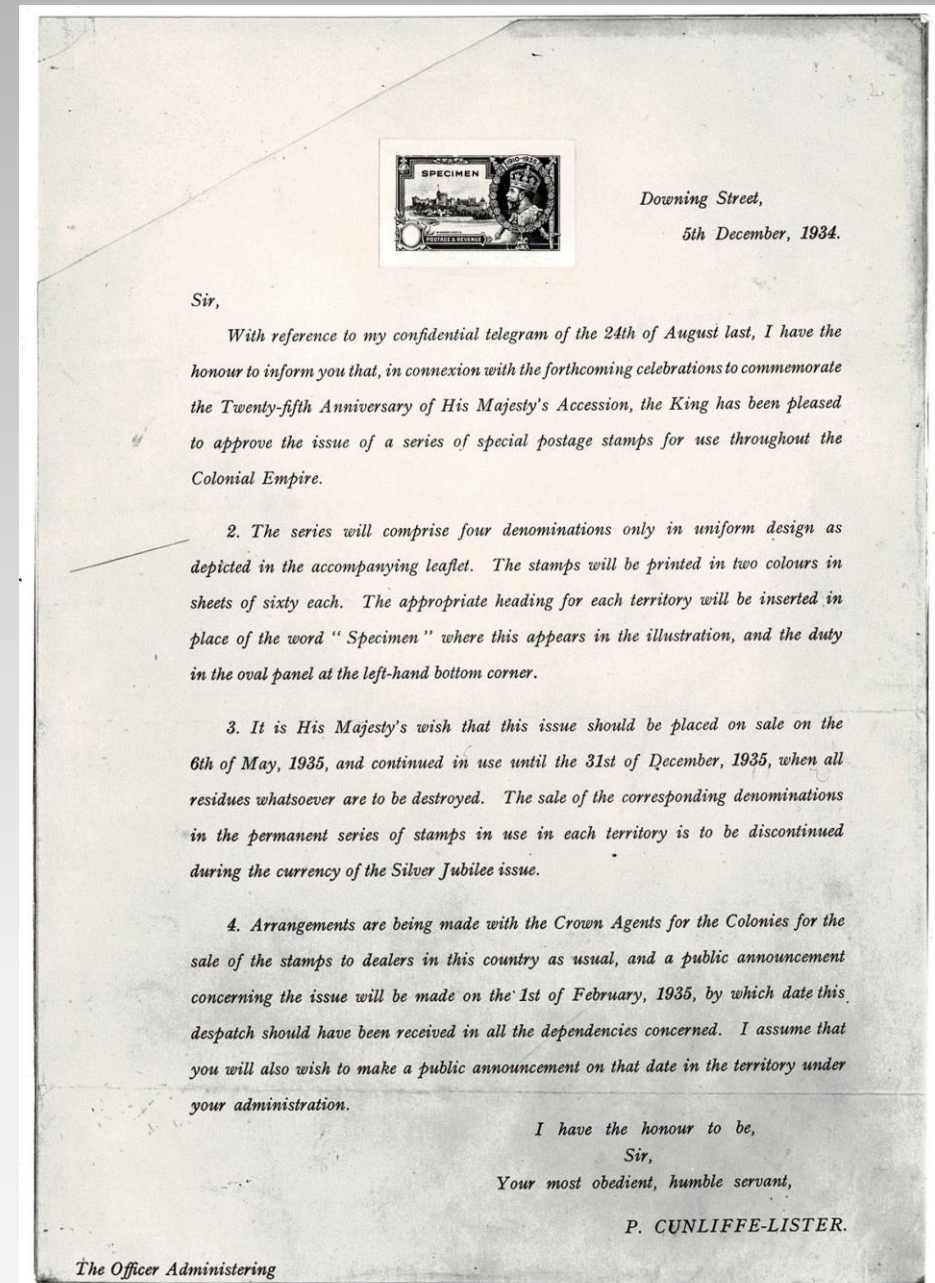
Local Specimen Handstamp applied to Postal Records in Zomba



Official Reference Specimen



From the 5th December 1934
Colonial Secretary's
notification about the
proposed Silver Jubilee
stamps



Bradbury Wilkinson Sample Specimen

From a Sample book,
ex Bradbury
Wilkinson archives
Samuel Type B9
perforation



Display Specimens, Post Office Training Stamps

- No Display Specimens recorded
- The only Post Office Training Stamps recorded are from the Federation Period and Independent Malawi