The Rectangular Stamps of the Cape of Good Hope
by David Mordant

Cape Triangulars Becomes Rectangular
The first stamps were issued at the Cape of Good Hope on the 1st September 1853 and were, of course, the well-known triangulars. They were printed in sheets of 240 and it soon became obvious in the Post Offices that the separation of the triangulars from each other was tedious as either a knife or a pair of scissors had to be used, as they were imperforate.

During February 1860 the Postmaster-General at the Cape wrote to the Colonial Secretary requesting that in future all postage stamps at the Cape be perforated. This request was transmitted to the Crown Agents in London who subsequently contacted the contractors. Messrs Perkins Bacon and Company replied that perforation of the existing triangular stamps by any machinery then in use would be a difficult and costly process.

At this point the Crown Agents decided to transfer their stamp contracting business to Messrs De La Rue and Co. on behalf of the various colonies that they represented. After discussions with Messrs De La Rue and Co. on the subject of perforation of the Cape stamps, the Crown Agents reported that in their opinion the most economical way of surmounting this obstacle would be by changing the shape of the Cape stamps to approximate those of Great Britain (which were rectangulars), while still retaining the central design of Hope.

Anatomy of the Cape Rectangulars
During 1862 the Postmaster-General suggested to the Governor of the Cape that should the decision be taken to alter the shape of the Cape stamps from triangular to rectangular, the figure of Hope should be retained as the central position of the design and also that she should be placed in an upright posture. The Governor referred the matter to the Surveyor-General, Mr Charles Bell, who was initially responsible for the design of the triangulars 10 years previously. Mr Bell replied by forwarding the Governor a proposed new design adapted to the requirements of a rectangular shape. In Bell’s produced design, Hope was as nearly upright as space would permit, so fulfilling the wishes of the Postmaster-General. His Excellency the Governor, accepted Bell’s design without modification and transmitted it immediately to the Crown Agents in London (this being in August 1862), with instructions that it should be adopted as suggested and only modified where engraving requirements necessitated alterations, but that the basic design of Hope, with an anchor, a bunch of grapes and a lamb should be retained.

The Crown Agents submitted the design to Messrs De La Rue and Co. towards the end of 1862. During engraving, little modification was found necessary except that the lamb was changed to a Merino ram and the bunch of grapes replaced with vine leaves. The basic design of Charles Bell in 1862 was retained, except with slight modifications until a new penny stamp was issued in 1893; that is to say, for well on 30 years.

Postal Rates
The postal rates at the Cape at the time of the introduction of the rectangulars in 1864/65 was fourpence per half ounce weight or part thereof, between towns. This postal rate between towns in the Cape Colony was retained until the 1st of November 1882, when it was changed to twopence and in 1895 it became a penny. So between 1853 and 1895 the postal rate at the Cape decreased from fourpence to a penny per half ounce. The newspaper rate in 1853, when adhesive stamps were
introduced, was one penny per newspaper and this was changed on the 1st July 1882 to a halfpenny per newspaper, this rate remaining until unification in 1910.

Local one penny postage within a town was introduced first in Cape Town in 1860, in Port Elizabeth in 1861 and in various other towns in the Colony in 1864, 1876 and 1878.

The overseas letter rate per half ounce in weight, when adhesive stamps were introduced in 1853, was one shilling by mail packet and eight pence by private ship. In 1857 the rate to England was decreased to sixpence per half ounce and on the 1st April 1863 the rate was set at one shilling by mail steamer and fourpence by private ship. On the 1st January 1891 a new overseas letter rate was introduced, being two pence halfpenny per half ounce or fraction thereof between the United Kingdom and the Cape, in either direction. On the same date, 1st January 1891, a new letter rate of threepence per half ounce or fraction thereof was introduced between Europe and the Cape of Good Hope.

Within the British Empire the postal rate between countries of the Empire in 1886 was sixpence per half ounce. In 1888 this decreased to fourpence per half ounce, in 1890 to twopence halfpenny per half ounce and in 1895 to one penny per half ounce.

Registered rates for the registration of letters were introduced twice in the Cape. In 1857 it was fixed at an additional sixpence per letter and this was decreased in 1897 to an extra twopence halfpenny per letter, over and above the standard postal rate for the specific letter.

The Cape Colony joined the Universal Postal Union in 1895 and Imperial Penny Postage was officially introduced at the Cape on the 1st September 1899.

Watermarks of the Cape Rectangular Stamps

During the whole Cape rectangular period, from 1864 to 1910, only three different watermarks were used (Figure 1):

* The Crown CC watermark from 1864 to 1881;
* The Crown CA watermark from July 1882 to 1883;
* The Cabled Anchor watermark from December 1884 to 1910.

Crown CC Watermark

This was the watermark used from the outset of the Cape rectangular period; from the first shipment which left England on the 5th May 1863 and thereafter continuously for nineteen years. It consists of a crown above the capital letters CC (Crown Colony), and each watermark impression was so positioned 20 mm apart horizontally and 25 mm apart vertically (from a central point), that in a pane of sixty stamps one watermark impression should have fallen in the center of each stamp.

The sheet measures 55 cm x 28.3 cm and is made up of four panes of sixty watermarks each. Each pane comprises ten rows of six watermarks and each pane is surrounded by a single watermark line. The watermark impressions themselves occupy 49.4 cm x 24.5 cm of the sheet area. Between the panes is a vertical gutter 1.25 cm in width. There is also a horizontal gutter between the panes, measuring nearly 2.5 cm in width and is watermarked by the words Crown Colonies in capital letters, this also being found along the outside margins of each of the panes.

The gum is white and was applied before printing the stamps, while the perforations were effected by a comb machine gauging 14.

Crown CA Watermark

After receiving the assent of the Crown Agents in London, Messrs De La Rue and Co. introduced a new paper for the postage stamps of many of the colonies, including the Cape of Good Hope, in early 1882. This paper was watermarked Crown CA and consisted of the capital letters CA (Crown Agents) below the crown. This new watermark was, like the preceding Crown CC, so placed that one impression was intended to fall in the center of each of the 240 stamps making up a sheet.

The sheet is again made up of four panes of sixty stamps each, each pane containing ten rows of six stamps. Each pane is surrounded by a single watermarked frame-line. The sheet measures 52.1 cm x 27.8 cm.

On each side of the sheet, reading upwards on the left and downwards on the right in outlined capital letters, are the words “Crown Agents for the Colonies”. The horizontal central gutter dividing the upper panes from the lower is watermarked with the words “Crown Agents”. At each corner of the sheet and at each end of the central gutter is a single plain watermarked cross.

Continuing the practice of the past, the paper was gummed before the printing of the stamp impressions and was perforated by a comb perforator gauging 14.

The Crown CA watermark period of the Cape was of short duration (and was highlighted by the introduction of a twopence value in bistre with all its fascinating printing problems) and was replaced in 1884 by an arrangement with Messrs De La Rue and Co. whereby all future supplies of stamps were printed on paper specifically prepared for the Cape Colony only.

Cabled Anchor Watermark

During 1884 arrangements were made between the Cape Government and Messrs De La Rue and Co. whereby all stamp supplies in the future were to be printed on paper specially prepared for the Cape Colony and reserved exclusively for its requirements. This paper was watermarked with a large single-lined anchor arranged in such a way that an anchor was programmed to fall in the centre of each stamp.

The anchor consists of a ring at the top and a stock at the bottom, the stock and ring being joined by a single upright rod. A cable is attached to the ring and twisted around the upright rod.
leading to the description of a cabled anchor.

With one exception, this watermark was retained exclusively for Cape of Good Hope stamps. In 1905 a few sheets of the Transvaal penny red denomination were printed on this paper and the surviving specimens, only found used, have become rarities for Transvaal philatelists (Figure 2).

![Figure 2. Transvaal stamp with the cabled Anchor watermark of the Cape](image)

**Printers**

All the Cape rectangular stamps, from the first shipment of the 5th May 1863, until the union of South Africa was formed on the 31st May 1910, were printed in London by Messrs De La Rue and Co., who also twice did surcharging of the provisional stamps. Six times the surcharging of the provisional stamps was done at the Cape by Messrs Saul Solomon and Company, and once it was done by Messrs W A Richards and Sons of Cape Town.

Throughout the period the gum used was white in colour and was applied before the printing of the stamps.

**Perforation**

Throughout the rectangular period, 1864 to 1910, the stamps were perforated by a comb perforator gauging 14. Most of the time the vertical line of perforation between the panes was double, one for each pane. Initially, however, some sheets were perforated vertically by a single line of perforation between the panes, resulting in twenty stamps of each sheet being provided with a wing margin of about 5 mm in width on the right hand side of the design and twenty stamps with the same characteristic on the left hand side of the design.

As far as can be ascertained, no Cape rectangulars were issued for postal usage while being imperforate on any margin. Such stamps when found, are probably due to the margins having been removed, for whatever reason, or are proofs and/or specimens.

**Issue of 1864 and 1865 with Outer Frame-Line**

This was the first issue of the Cape rectangular stamps after the design of Charles Bell. The die was engraved on steel and the stamps were typographed by Messrs De La Rue and Co. They are characterised by an outer frame-line surrounding the design. The watermark is that of the Crown CC and the perforations by the comb perforator gauge 14. There are four distinct stamps in this issue, a penny red, a four penny blue, a six penny lilac and a one shilling green (Figure 3).

The first stamp in the rectangular series to be issued with an outer frame-line was the “One Shilling Green of 1864”. It was issued early in January 1864 and is found in shades of green, varying from deep green to green, pale-green, yellow-green and a blue-green. The paper used was the medium white wove type and the gum is white. Approximately 2,500,000 stamps were issued of which 410,000 were later issued to the Griqualand West Administration and were overprinted with a capital “G”. Varieties known include wing margins as described previously, broken outer frame-lines and numerous shades of green, as well as inverted watermarks in the pale green and blue-green shades.

![Figure 3. The original Charles Bell designs with outer frame line, and issued in 1864 and 1865](image)

The next issue in the 1864 outer frame-line series, was that of the “Six Penny Lilac of 1864”. The actual date of issue is not really known, but was definitely before the 21st March 1864. The recognised shades are those of deep lilac, lilac, pale lilac, mauve, violet and a bright violet. The number of stamps issued was just over 5,000,000 of which approximately 410,000 were surcharged with a capital “G” and issued to the Griqualand West Administration. Varieties known include wing margins, broken outer frame-lines and missing outer frame-lines, numerous shades of lilac, mauve and violet, and an inverted watermark in both the mauve and lilac colours.

The next stamp to be issued in the outer frame-line series is that of the “One Penny Red of 1865”. It was probably issued on the 1st May 1865 and definitely prior to the 14th May. Recognised shades are pale rose-red, rose-red, carmine-red, pale carmine-red and deep carmine-red. Approximately 8,000,000 stamps were issued. Varieties include wing margins, broken and missing outer frame-lines, numerous shades of red, and an inverted watermark has been recorded in the rose-red colour.

The last stamp to be issued in the outer frame-line series was that of the “Four Pence Blue of 1865”. It was issued dur-
ing August 1865 and recognised colours are those of pale blue, blue, deep blue and ultramarine. The number of stamps issued of the fourpenny blue exceeded 10,000,000. The deep blue shade numbered just under 4,000,000 and was printed from 1872 to 1873 after complaints had been received in 1871 that the pale blue shade emitted a greenish hue in the gas light of the post offices and was being confused with the one shilling green. Varieties of the fourpenny blue include wing margins, broken outer and missing frame-lines and numerous shades of blue. The ultramarine colour has been recorded with an inverted watermark, and the inverted watermark has also been recorded in the pale blue colour.

The 6d lilac and one shilling green have been found with inverted watermarks.

![Figure 4. Four Pence on Six Pence from 1868](image)

**Provisional Four Pence in Red on Six Pence Deep Lilac**

This stamp was issued in a hurry on the 17th November 1868. The reason was that the ordering of postage stamps from England was the duty of the Treasury at the Cape whilst the use was controlled at the Post Office. As a result of a change in postal rates to overseas destinations from the Cape as from the 1st April 1863, fourpenny stamps were in strong demand while sixpenny stamps, which were used less often, accumulated at the Treasury.

Towards the end of October 1868, rectangular fourpenny stamps ran out and an emergency issue of fourpenny triangular stamps still in stock at the Treasury was released and used for about three weeks until Messrs Saul Solomon and Co. had time to surcharge the sixpenny. A suggestion from the Post Office that another issue of fourpenny woodblocks be made was rejected by the Treasury.

The sixpenny deep lilac of 1864 was overprinted in red by Messrs Saul Solomon and Co. with the words “Four Pence” in lower case type (Figure 4). The original “Postage Sixpence” at the foot of the stamp was obliterated by two bars in red set close together. There are at least two printings of this provisional surcharge known and there may be more. It is thought that the overprinting was done in panes of sixty stamps. Altogether 1,120,080 stamps are known to have been overprinted (4,667 sheets).

The first printing was in early November 1868 and consisted of 120,000 stamps. The distance between the surcharged words and the cancellation bar varies from 17 to 18.5 mm and these were first issued on the 17th November 1868.

The second printing was done late in December 1868 or early in January 1869 and 1,000,080 were overprinted. In this case the distance between the surcharged words and cancellation bar varies from 15 to 16.5 mm. There does appear to have been a third printing as well, as stamps are found with a gap of 12.5 to 15 mm between the words and the surcharge bar.

Thus depending on the printing the gap between words and bar can vary from 12.5 to 18.5 mm.

Many varieties of this emergency surcharge are found:

* The colour of the surcharge varies from a bright vermilion through red to a dark brown;
* Instead of the word “Pence” one finds the word “Peuce”, caused by an inverted “n” (Figure 5);
* A comma is found instead of a stop after the word “Pence”.
* “Fonn” instead of “Four” caused by an inverted “u” (Figure 5);
* Downwards shifts of the type leading to the omission of obliterating bars on the upper stamp and the presence of obliterating bars at the top of the stamp below;
* On the original sixpenny stamp that was overprinted, one also finds wing margins, broken and missing outer frame-lines as well as various shades of lilac;
* An inverted watermark has been recorded;
* An interesting variation is a narrow stamp fully perforated and 18mm wide as opposed to the standard 20mm of all the Cape rectangulars;
* “Penoe” instead of “Pence”;
* An indication of “Penoe” instead of “Pence”.

**Modification of the Original Rectangular 1864 Die**

A superficial study of the macro appearance of the Cape rectangulars indicates that sixpenny and one shilling values with outer frame-lines continued to be issued for many years thereafter during the later Crown CA and Cabled Anchor watermarks periods.

In the case of the sixpenny all subsequent printings showing Hope seated on an anchor had outer frame-lines. The only other sixpenny rectangular value issued at the Cape was that of the Edward series issued in March 1903.

In the case of the one shilling value printings with an outer frame-line continued to be issued until December 1893, when a one shilling value in a blue-green colour was issued with Hope seated upright on an anchor but with no outer frame-line. A deep blue-green shade was also printed and was followed in May 1896 by a one shilling value without an outer frame-line in a yellow ochre colour. The Cape issues of the one shilling value was concluded with an Edward one shilling value in a yellow ochre shade.

However, in the case of the one penny and fourpenny values the printing plates were replaced with new ones, without an outer frame-line, during the 1870’s. On the 12th July 1870 Messrs De La Rue and Co. informed the Crown Agents that the
one penny printing plate, only five years old, was worn out and incapable of further satisfactory use. Without reference to the Cape the Crown Agents gave Messrs De La Rue and Co. permission to proceed with the renewal of the die and the preparation of further printing plates.

The original die was softened, the details thereon re-touched, the shading on the figure of Hope and upon the vine leaves was re-drawn and the thin outer frame-line was permanently removed. This modified die was then hardened and after transfer to the rollers was subsequently used for all printing plates of the Cape rectangulars with Hope seated upright on an anchor.

This modified die is known as the re-engraved die, without an outer framing line.

Upon acceptance of the new plates and plate proofs, the original one penny plate was defaced and filed down by Messrs De La Rue and Co. on the 14th October 1870.

The last issue of the 1871 to 1876 series was the fourpenny with a capital “G” and issued to the Griqualand West Administration. The requirement for a five shilling value was hastened by the discovery of diamonds in the Griqualand West area of the Cape Colony in 1867. Often time the diamonds were insured and posted to London, England.

The second stamp of this series to be issued was the “One Penny Red of 1872” and was issued during February of the same year. Recognised shades are those of pale carmine-red, carmine-red and a deep carmine-red. Over 38,000,000 stamps of this denomination were issued of which 1,600,000 were issued to the Griqualand West Administration. A variety with an inverted watermark has been recorded. Especially where the shades of red are darker, there are indications of a printing having been done with a somewhat over-inked plate.

The next stamp in this series to be issued was the “Half Penny Grey-Black of 1875”. The first consignment hereof was received at the Cape on the 21st December 1875 and was issued either during late December 1875 or early January 1876. The reason for the issue of a halfpenny stamp at the Cape was that on the 5th August 1875 the Postmaster-General of the Cape pointed out to the Government that the newly constituted Postal Union in Europe, to which the Cape Colony had agreed by virtue of its British Imperial Connection to become a member, had fixed the pre-paid single letter rate at 25 centimes. The Postmaster-General requested such a denomination for the Cape although such a rate was not introduced to the Cape until the 1st July 1882 when the newspaper rate for inland transmission was reduced to one halfpenny. The colours recognised are shades of grey-black, varying form pale to deep. At least one sheet of black stamps was sold erroneously over the counter in Cape Town as this was from a colour trial. The variety of inverted watermarks on different shades have been recorded.

In excess of 1,400,000 stamps of this denomination were issued of which 378,000 were surcharged with a capital “G” and issued to the Griqualand West Administration.

At the beginning of March 1882 stocks at the Cape Treasury of the halfpenny grey-black numbered approximately 400,000. As there was a standing order for 38,400 or 160 sheets every quarter, the Postmaster-General suspended the standing order after despatch of the January 1882 consignment. When it became likely that the Post Office Bill, Act 4 of 1882 would be passed into law during the 1882 Parliamentary Session, whereby the postal rates on newspapers was decreased from a penny to a halfpenny, the Postmaster-General in April 1882 requested that supplies of the halfpenny be resumed immediately and that the quarterly shipment be increased immediately to 810,000 (3,375 sheets). By virtue of the distance from England this took a little longer to be implemented than anticipated and, as we will see later, led to another one of the very interesting provision-sional surcharges being issued in 1882.

The last issue of the 1871 to 1876 series was the fourpenny blue, issued in December 1876 (Figure 6). Although printings hereof had commenced in 1874, stocks of the issue with the outer frame-line were used up first. Approximately 14 million stamps of this denomination were printed and issued, of which 850,000 were overprinted with a capital “G” for the Griqualand

Second Issue of 1871-1876 With Outer Frame Removed

The next issue of stamps at the Cape took place between 1871 and 1876. This series is charaterised by a Crown CC watermark, perforations of the comb type gauging 14, but with the outer frame-line removed from the design (Figure 6). The range consists of a halfpenny in a grey-black colour, a penny in a carmine-red colour, a fourpenny in shades of blue and a five shilling in a yellow-orange colour.

The first issue of this series was the “Five Shilling Orange of 1871”, issued on the 25th August 1871. The colour recognised is that of an orange-yellow colour. As far as is known only 135,840 stamps were issued, of which 34,000 were overprinted with the rollers was subsequently used for all printing plates of the Cape rectangulars with Hope seated upright on an anchor.

The second issue of the Cape rectangulars with the modification to the original die and the outer frame-line removed

Figure 6. The second issue of the Cape rectangulars with the modification to the original die and the outer frame-line removed
West Administration. Shades recognised are those of blue, varying from a dull blue to a deep blue with an ultramarine known as well.

A constant variety found is that of a white spot in the blue tablet after the words fourpence (Figure 7), seemingly found on only one stamp in a sheet of 240, but its exact position is in dispute. An inverted watermark variety is also known.

In this series all four values have been found with inverted watermarks.

Provisional One Penny in Red on Sixpence Deep Lilac

During 1874 a temporary shortage of one penny stamps developed at the Cape because the order placed in April 1874 had not arrived by mid-August. By the 26th August the Postmaster-General reported that his stocks of the one penny value were exhausted. Messrs Saul Solomon and Co. were commissioned to surcharge sixpenny deep lilac stamps to make good the one penny shortfall. Altogether 480,000 sixpenny deep lilac stamps were surcharged with the words ONE PENNY in Roman capital letters and in red ink, and the sixpence value tablet was obliterated by a red bar (Figure 8). It would appear as if more than one printing may have occurred here because two widths of the obliterating bar can be differentiated, namely: 1.5 mm wide and 2 mm wide.

Also the distance between the letters and the obliterating bars is usually 17.5 mm, but a variety is found with a distance of 13.5 mm, which interestingly enough, is the distance between the letters and the obliterating bar of the next provisional surcharge of 1876. Typically, the ink of the surcharge is bright red, but with age this has changed to various shades of dull red and even brown.

As this was a rushed job the sheets were often surcharged out of alignment leading to many varieties like:

* An upwards shifting of the surcharge leading to the words “ONE PENNY” being missing, resulting in a surcharge with only the obliterating bar being present;
* A downwards shifting of the surcharge resulting in an absence of the obliterating bar, and the stamp therefore being overprinted with “ONE PENNY” only;
* A more pronounced downwards shifting of the surcharge leading to the obliterating bar being over the Cape of Good Hope tablet and the words “ONE PENNY” 2 mm below this (Figure 8);

Other varieties include:

* The letter “e” in the word “PENNY” omitted,
* Multifarious broken or misplaced letters, e.g., “IENNY” instead of “PENNY”;
* A pronounced sideways shifting of the overprint either to the right or left.

The delayed order of normal one penny stamps arrived two weeks after the surcharging had been done, on the 9th September 1874.

Provisional One Penny in Black on One Shilling Green

Two years later exactly the same problem developed again. A temporary shortage of one penny stamps again developed at the Cape in 1876 when an order for 2,160,000 stamps dispatched in September did not arrive until the 12th December. On the 22nd November the Postmaster-General pointed out that his stocks of one penny stamps were completely exhausted and that he only had sufficient of the one halfpenny value as substitute to last for one week. Messrs Saul Solomon and Co. were again commissioned to surcharge stamps. This time the “One Shilling Green” issue of 1864 was chosen as rather large stocks were being held at the Cape and the demand was not too great. The
result was the provisional “One Penny in Black on One Shilling Green of 1876”, issued during November of 1876 (Figure 9).

The surcharge was done in Roman capital letters with an obliterating bar intended to cover the one shilling value tablet. The surcharge and obliterating bar are in deep black and the words and the bar are typically 13.5 mm apart. Of this provisional only 120,000 stamps were surcharged, but, again this was a rushed job and many varieties are found, e.g.:

* The words “ONE PENNY” missing; the obliterating bar is thus the only overprint;
* The obliterating bar omitted, due to shifting of the surcharge downwards; “ONE PENNY” is thus the only overprint;
* The obliterating bar across the centre of the stamp with the words “ONE PENNY” missing;
* The obliterating bar across the centre of the stamp with the words “ONE PENNY” 2 mm below it;
* With the words “ONE PENNY” over the value tablet and the obliterating bar 2 mm above it;
* A variety of the letter “o” in the word “ONE” is found, the letter being printed sideways or horizontally instead of vertically and thus somewhat egg shaped.

**Provisional Three Pence in Red on Four Pence Blue**

In terms of Act No. 25 of 1879, the rate of inland postage at the Cape was decreased from fourpence to threepence per half ounce. This was promulgated in the Government Gazette of the 31st October 1879, to be effective from the day thereafter.

The Postmaster–General had had prior warning of the legislation and had already had 5,000 sheets of the fourpenny denomination overprinted in readiness. 1,200,000 stamps of the fourpenny blue issue of 1876, without an outer frame-line and with a Crown CC watermark were overprinted in red by Messrs Saul Solomon and Co. during September 1879, and issued on 1 November 1879.

The surcharge consists of the word “THREE” in small Roman capital letters and the fourpence value tablet is obliterated by a red bar of which two widths can be differentiated, 1.5 mm and 2 mm (Figure 10). Classically the surcharge is red, although the colour has dulled with age to deeper duller reds and browns. Two distances between the words and the obliterating bar are found, namely, 16.5 mm and 18 mm.

Many varieties of the surcharge are found:

* At least one whole sheet seems to have been doubly surcharged and issued so;
* “PENC” for the word “PENCE”;
* “THE.EE” for the word “THREE”, also “THEEE” (Figure 11);
* Dropped “T” in “THREE”;
* Dropped “P” in “PENCE”;
* “THREF” for “THREE”, also “THRFE”;
* The word “THRFF” for “THREE”;
* A broken P;
* Miscellaneous varieties are found from imperfect printing and the use of broken and damaged type, as well as misplacement of the sheets being over-printed;
* A large “H” in “THREE”;
* Double surcharges have been described.

**Provisional Three Pence Black on Fourpence Pale Dull Rose**

With the change in postal rates, effective from 1st November 1879, a continuous supply of threepence stamps became necessary. On being contacted about the emergency, the contractors, Messrs De La Rue and Co. pointed out to the Crown Agents that the preparation of a three pence printing plate would take time and suggested running off 3,000 sheets of the fourpenny plate in
a maroon colour and surcharging them immediately. The Crown Agents agreed to this while the threepence printing plate was being prepared.

The 720,000 stamps were printed in a pale, dull rose colour using the fourpence printing plate by Messrs De La Rue and Co. in London. At the same time the stamps were surcharged by Messrs De La Rue and Co. with the word “THREEPENCE” in tall thin block capitals across the value tablet of the stamp (Figure 12). These stamps were issued at the Cape during February 1880 and the stocks were exhausted by the 19th July 1880.

Figure 13. The three pence pale dull rose of 1880 as issued and with surcharged “3” for easy identification

A constant variety is found where the foot of the “P” in pence is broken off, making the letter shorter. Other varieties noted in the surcharge are specimens with a short “H”, and also examples with a short “T”. One stamp 18 mm wide as opposed to the standard 20 mm has been found used. A long “H” variety has also been noted.

Inverted watermarks also exist.

Three Pence Pale Dull Rose

This was the issue specially prepared to fulfil the change in postal rate at the Cape. It was issued at the Cape on the 1st July 1880 in a pale, dull rose colour on Crown CC watermarked paper with the perforation gauging 14 and with white gum (Figure 13). Over 4,500,000 stamps of this denomination were dispatched to the Cape Colony. About 240,000 of these were issued unsurcharged to the public during July. But problems soon surfaced. On the 28th May the Postmaster-General drew attention to the fact that his original request for a maroon colour had surfaced. On the 28th May the Postmaster-General drew attention to the fact that his original request for a maroon colour had been complied with and the pale, dull rose colour was being confused in the post offices with the pale carmine-red colour of the one penny value.

The Postmaster-General requested that his request for a maroon colour be complied with and that all threepence stamps in the pale, dull rose colour be surcharged with a large figure “3” by the Government printers, who were Messrs Saul Solomon and Company (Figure 13).

Surcharging began on the 26th July 1880 and in excess of 4,300,000 stamps were surcharged. Thus, came into being the Provisional “Numeral ‘3’ surcharge on the Three Pence Pale Dull Rose of 1880”. These were issued during August 1880 after the original threepence pale dull rose stamps had been surcharged by a large numeral “3” of two different types. It seems as if the stamps were surcharged in panes of sixty at a time.

Of the sixty stamps in a pane, 48 were surcharged with a fat numeral “3” measuring 4.5 mm x 3 mm, ten were surcharged with a narrow numeral “3” measuring 5 x 2.5 mm and two stamps on the pane appear to have been unsurcharged.

From strips and blocks that have survived, it appears as if the two unsurcharge stamps were one from row 9, probably number 6, and one from row 10, position unknown.

Many varieties of the surcharge are found due to the irregular feeding of the sheets into the surcharging machine. In the most extreme case this has led to a single surcharge straddling two stamps, so that the individual stamp has two half surcharges, one over the top tablet and one over the bottom tablet of the stamp. This variety is usually classified as a double surcharge.

Five varieties of the fat surcharge are known:
* The surcharged numeral inverted;
* The top of the numeral broken off and other breaks in the numeral;
* A vertical or horizontal pair, one without a surcharge;
* A double surcharge;
* An inverted watermark.

Four varieties of the narrow surcharge have been recorded:
* The numeral inverted;
* A vertical pair, one stamp without a surcharge;
* A horizontal pair, one stamp unoverprinted;
* An inverted watermark.

Three varieties of the combined surcharges have been recorded:
* A vertical pair, fat surcharge upper and narrow surcharge lower.
* A vertical strip of three – fat surcharge upper, narrow surcharge lower and middle stamp without surcharge.
* A vertical strip of three – fat surcharge upper, narrow surcharge middle and the lower stamp without surcharge.

An inverted watermark on the 3d pale dull rose before surcharging were done is also known.

Three Pence Claret of 1881

The complaint of the Cape Postmaster-General that the pale, dull rose colour of the threepence was being confounded with the pale carmine-red of the one penny was acted upon by the contractors, Messrs De La Rue and Co. who then printed the next lot of threepenny stamps in a claret colour. These were issued at the Cape during January 1881.

The claret colour is found with shades varying from pale to deep. The watermark is the Crown CC. The paper is medium white wove, the gum is white and the perforation is comb gauging 14.

In excess of 4,000,000 of these stamps were issued. One variety of an inverted watermark has been recorded.

Three Pence Claret of 1882

During July 1882 a new stamp was issued at the Cape. In all respects this issue was a continuation of the threepence claret of 1881, except that the Crown CC watermark paper was replaced.
by the Crown CA watermark paper. One variety of an inverted watermark has been recorded. Again varying shades of claret from pale to deep are found.

Provisional One Half-Penny on Three Pence Deep Claret

The Post Office Bill, Act No. 4 of 1882, decreased the postal rate on newspapers from one penny to a halfpenny per copy effective on the 1st July 1882. The demand by the Post Office for halfpenny stamps was so great that stocks were soon exhausted. On the 30th June the Postmaster-General requested authority from the Treasury to surcharge stamps with one half-penny. The Government printer, Messrs Saul Solomon and Co. was handed 1,000 sheets of deep claret stamps for surcharging. The vast majority were on Crown CA paper; however, a few sheets on Crown CC paper were surcharged, although the exact number is not known. The surcharge was applied in panes of sixty stamps, was done in black letters and consisted of the words “One Half-penny” in two lines with an obliterating bar over the original value of the stamp (Figure 14). Of the overprint on the Crown CC paper, one variety is very well known, namely, the hyphen between the half and penny being omitted. This missing hyphen variety is probably the rarest of all the Cape Rectangulars.

The stamps were irregularly overprinted, with a pronounced shift to the left being especially common (Figure 15), in what is after all quite a rare provisional.

Minor breaks in the letters of the surcharge are found. One specimen of a “No stop after penny” has been found – its status is currently being investigated.

On the Crown CA paper a large number of varieties are known.

The most common are:
* The hyphen between the Half and penny omitted;
* The letter “p” of penny omitted;
* The letter “y” of penny omitted;
* Various shifts of the overprint leading to the obliterating bar being omitted or found at the top of the stamp, or in various other positions other than over the value tablet;
* Many varieties of broken letters due to defective type
* One case of an inverted watermark has been recorded.
* Shifting of the overprint to the left or right;
* A gap between “n” and “y” of penny;
* ‘Penoy’ instead of ‘Penny’ (Figure 16).

Inverted watermarks also exist.

New Definitive Stamps on Crown CA Watermarked Paper

During 1882 and 1883 a new series of definitive stamps on Crown CA watermarked paper, without an outer frame-line and perforated 14, was issued (Figure 17). The first one to be issued was the “One Penny Red of July 1882” and was issued in that month as well. The colours are basically red with shades apparently the same as those used for the Crown CC printings without the outer frame-line, i.e., pale carmine red, carmine red and deep carmine red.

Two varieties are known:
* A penny bisected on cover to give a half-penny value;
* An inverted watermark.

In August 1882 the “Six Pence Mauve of 1882” was issued. The printing plate used was apparently still that manufactured in 1863 from the original die with the outer frame-line intact. The recognised colour is mauve with various shades being
known, tending towards the brighter mauve and violet. It seems as if just over 1,000,000 stamps of this issue were issued. As with all the issues with outer frame-lines, minor varieties of the frame are found.

One month later on the 1st September 1882, the “Half-penny Black of 1882” was issued. The colours recognised are deep black, black and grey-black with many shades of the latter common. The printing plate used was apparently the same as that used for the Crown CC issue with the outer frame-line removed and manufactured from the re-engraved die.

The only variety recorded is that of an inverted watermark, specifically in the grey-black range.

On the same day the 1st September 1882 the “Two Pence Bistre of 1882” was issued. The Post Office Bill, Act 4 of 1882, reduced the inland rate on all letters to tuppence per half ounce or part thereof, effective the 1st July 1882. In April 1882 the Postmaster-General requested that a plate be prepared of the same design as that currently in use and to be printed in a shade of brown that could not be confused with the reds and maroons already in use.

For July and August, until the twopence became available, multiples of the penny value were used. The printing plate was prepared from the re-engraved die currently in use for the other values, without the outer frame-line (Figure 18). The colour is basically bistre with shades from pale to deep being recorded. Three varieties are known:

* An inverted watermark especially in the pale bistre range.
* An inverted watermark in the re-touched plate range has not yet been described.
* A re-touched plate.
* A coarse printing.

The re-touched plate is one of the very interesting varieties of the Cape rectangular stamps. Apparently the contractors, Messrs De La Rue in London, received an order from the Cape Treasury for 5,000 sheets of the two pence bistre value. When they took the plates from the strong room they found that they had rusted but, there being no time to prepare new printing plates, they re-touched the backgrounds where they had rusted, resulting in a re-touched plate variety where the background lines have been re-engraved. A full spectrum of the re-touched plate variety, from heavy re-touching to faint re-touching is found, but only on the two pence as it was the actual printing plates, and not the basic die, that was re-touched. The re-touching is mainly visible in the background, where the regular, parallel horizontal lines have been re-engraved into wavy lines of irregular thickness. To a varying degree the figure of Hope is also found re-touched.

A coarse printing, not to be confused with the re-engraved plate, is also recognised. The coarseness is particularly evident in the background lines (normally regular, parallel, even and unbroken) being of irregular thickness, thus uneven, blotchy and with many small breaks.

During August 1883 the “Five Shillings Orange of 1883” was issued. It was printed from the same plate as used previously for the Crown CC series with the die used being that of the re-engraved one. The recognised colour is orange (with shades) and only 25 sheets, with 240 stamps per sheet, were issued. Thus, only 6,000 of these stamps were issued and this five shilling orange on the Crown CA paper is one of the rarities of the Cape rectangular series.
**Introduction of the Cabled Anchor Watermark**

The remainder of the Cape rectangular stamps were all printed on paper watermarked with a cabled anchor, a watermark specially prepared for Cape of Good Hope stamps (Figure 19).

The first stamp to be issued on this paper was the “Two Pence Bistre of 1884”, issued in December 1884. It was characterized by a bistre colour with shades varying from pale to deep. The paper is medium white wove, the watermark is a cabled anchor, the gum is white and the perforation is of the comb type, gauging 14 (Figure 18). The variety with an inverted watermark is known in both bistre and pale bistre colours. Background imperfections are also occasionally found.

The next issue in this series is the “Six Pence Purple of 1884” also issued in December 1884. The printing plate used was still that with the outer frame-line and the watermark is a cabled anchor. The recognised colours are lilac, purple, mauve, violet and shades of all these. A reddish purple and a bright mauve are relatively rare. The odd background imperfection is occasionally found.

Varieties known are, as with all the outer frame-line issues, defective, broken and missing outer frame-lines. The six penny is also known used, bisected on cover, to give a threepenny letter rate. The inverted watermark variety is known in the purple, mauve and violet shades. It is interesting, but possibly co- incidental that the rare inverted watermarks in the Cape rectangular stamps are commonest in the 6d violet stamps with the outer frame-line and Crown CC and cabled anchor watermarks.

The next issue in this series was the “One Shilling Green of December 1885”. It is characterised by a cabled anchor watermark and red colour with shades varying from rose to carmine. Varieties known include it used bisected on cover to give a halfpenny rate and also an inverted watermark has been described. One printing is of the coarse variety in a dull red colour and this shows the odd frame and background imperfection. A dull claret colour is also found.

The next issue in this first cabled anchor series is that of the “One Shilling Green of 1885” issued in December 1885. The motivation was that, early in 1885, the Cape Government amalgamated the administrations of the Cape postal and telegraph departments and simultaneously authorized the usage of postage stamps for the pre-payment of telegraphs. The minimum rate per telegram was one shilling and the stamps were affixed to the message forms. Prior to this telegrams had been paid for in the separate telegraph offices in cash. This of course, greatly increased the demand for one shilling stamps. In this issue the original printing plate with the outer frame-line was still used. The colours are recognised as being green, blue-green and yellow-green and shades thereof. The blue-green colour was apparently issued in 1889. The stamp is also characterized by the cabled anchor watermark. Varieties known include outer frame-lines of varying consistency due to wearing of the printing plate. A second variety is that of the inverted watermark in the green and yellow-green shades.

The next stamp in this first cabled anchor series was the “Two Pence Black of 1886” issued in January 1886. It is characterized by a cabled anchor watermark and printing plates without an outer frame-line. The recognised colours are black and grey-black with shades of both. An inverted watermark variety has also been described. One of the printings is of the coarse type, but does not appear to be from re-touching of the plate. The odd stamp also shows background imperfections, but these do not appear to be constant varieties.

The next issue in this first cabled anchor series is the “Five Shillings Orange of 1887” issued in July 1887. It is characterized by a cabled anchor watermark; the die used was the re-engraved die without the outer frame-line and the colour is orange, with shades tending to orange-yellow.

The last issue of the first cabled anchor series was the “Four Pence Blue of 1890” issued in June 1890. The reason for this relatively late issue was that in 1879 the Colonial inland letter rate was reduced to threepence. In consequence thereof, demand for fourpence stamps declined dramatically and stocks of the Crown CC stamps, last despatched in November 1879, lasted for another ten years. On the 1st October 1888 the postal rate from any part of the Cape Colony to the United Kingdom was reduced from sixpence to fourpence. New stocks were ordered and received in October 1888 on the anchor watermarked paper, but were not required until 1890. The stamp is characterised by the cabled anchor watermark, the re-engraved die without the outer frame-line having been used. It appears as if new plates were prepared, as the constant variety stop after “e” in pence, found in the Crown CC series does not seem to occur. The colour is blue with shades varying from bright to deep.

**2½d Letter Rate to the UK**

Effective the 1st January 1891, the rate of postage to and from the United Kingdom and the Cape Colony became 2½ pence per ½ ounce or fraction thereof. The charge on the letters posted in the Colony for the continent of Europe became three pence per half ounce or fraction thereof: While a 2½ pence plate for the new required denomination was being prepared, Messrs De La Rue and Co. ran off 12,660 sheets of the threepence value in a magenta colour and then surcharged them with “2½d” in black numerals and letters before despatch (Figure 20). The whole overprint is 6 mm high and 8.5 mm wide.

They were issued at the Cape in March 1891 and were characterized by the surcharge “2½d” in black over the value tab-
let. The stamp itself is the “Three Pence Magenta” with shades varying from pale to deep and has a cabled anchor watermark. Altogether, just over 3,000,000 stamps were so printed and surcharged.

Normally the “d” of the surcharge has a horizontal serif that is blunt at the point and the “l” in the fraction normally has a sloping straight serif. The fraction bar usually measures 2 mm in length.

Varieties of this issue are to be found in the overprint and are many and numerous. Each of the five components of the surcharge are found with minor breaks. If one examines the surcharges minutely then a multitude of minor variations can be found in each of the five components that go to make up the surcharge.

The main varieties are:
* The “l” in the fraction with a horizontal serif (Figure 19). This is found, on each pane, as number two in the second row and number one in the ninth row, stamps number 8 and 49. The serif classically joins the “l” at its apex, but occasionally joins somewhat below the apex.
* The “d” in the fraction is found with a sloping serif.
* The “d” the fraction is found with a pointed serif.
* The fraction bar is smaller than normal, and sometimes arched as opposed to the normal straight and horizontal.
* The sloping serif of the “l” is arched rather than straight.

Two Pence Half-penny Sage Green of 1892

In June 1892 the “Two Pence Half-penny Sage Green of 1892” was issued. Its function was to replace the recently surcharged threepence magenta stamps and thus to fulfil the new postage rate of 2½ pence per half ounce or fraction thereof between the Cape and United Kingdom.

This issue was prepared from the re-engraved master die of Hope seated upright without an outer frame-line and engraved with the new value in numeral instead of words because of a shortage of space. To prevent any confusion, a value tablet was inserted in the upper-background and the value, 2½d, was engraved in this tablet.

The stamp is characterized by a cabled anchor watermark, a sage-green or olive-green colour, with pale shades of both and, of course, no outer frame-line. It is comb perforated measuring 14.

In 1892 Messrs De La Rue and Co. had reported that the one penny printing plate had become too worn for further satisfactory use and it was decided to introduce a new design. Early in 1893 an order was given to Messrs De La Rue and Company to prepare a new master die and printing plate from the accepted design of Mr Mountford.

Simultaneously it became apparent that the colony could run out of one penny stamps as the new design had been delayed. It was decided to surcharge surplus twopence bistre stamps, pending the arrival of the new one penny denomination.

Provisional One Penny in Black on the Two Penny Bistre

Two Penny pale bistre and deep bistre stamps were surcharged by the Government printer, Messrs W A Richards and Sons in Cape Town in panes of 60 at a time and issued during March 1893. Altogether 10,000 sheets were surcharged, giving 2,400,000 stamps. The stamps were overprinted with the words “ONE PENNY” in black across the middle of the stamp (Figure 21). The words are in Roman capital letters and the original value tablet is obliterated with a black bar. The bar was set up one for each stamp individually and not in a continuous line.

A large number of varieties of this overprint have been recorded. The main one is the double surcharge. It appears as if only one or two sheets were surcharged twice (Figure 21) and issued in Port Elizabeth as all known examples bear this postmark. It is only known used.

A second well known variety is the no stop after PENNY (Figure 22). This occurs on eight stamps per sheet, namely the sixth stamp in the seventh row, number 42 and the sixth stamp in the first row, number 6. These constant varieties prove that the sheet was overprinted one pane of 60 at a time.

Many stamps appear to have a missing stop due to a shift to the right of the surcharge, but this is only because the actual stop has been removed during the perforating process, or occasion-
ally printed on the adjacent stamp.

By the same token many overprints are shifted to the left.

Other varieties known are:

* The broken “O” in “ONE”;
* The obliterator bar omitted due to misplacing downwards of the surcharge;
* A large space between “N” and “Y” of “PENNY”;
* A large space between the “O” and “N” of “ONE” and “N” and “E” of “ONE”;
* Breaks in the cancellation bar of varying extent;
* A single example of a probable double surcharge on a mint specimen is in the collection of the author by the author (Figure 22). This is the first described mint double surcharge (reference 8) previously only known used Port Elizabeth.

* There are many varieties in the overprint of broken letters, weak letters, and letters out of alignment. In fact varieties of each of the letters that go to make up the surcharge, plus varieties in the cancelling bar can be found with minute examination; e.g., “OHE” instead of “ONE”.
* Rarely, a comma after the “Y” instead of a stop.

The stamp is characterised by the cabled anchor watermark and is found in many shades of red, running from rose through to carmine (Figure 23). The perforation, gum and paper is the same as for the other cabled anchor issues. The inverted watermark variety is also found, but relative to the number of stamps issued, is rare. One printing seems to have been over-inked as shown by the thickened background lines. The odd frame break is also found.

In 1892 Messrs De La Rue and Co. reported that the printing plates for the one shilling value had become too worn for further use, these being still of the original design with the outer frame-line prepared thirty years earlier. They were instructed to prepare a new die and printing plate, this being done from the re-engraved master die without the outer frame-line.

In December 1893 a new “One Shilling Green” was issued at the Cape, this being the first one shilling issue without an outer frame-line. It is characterised by a cabled anchor watermark and a blue-green colour with shades varying mostly to the deep end of the spectrum.

**UPU Colour Scheme Adopted**

As from 1st January 1895, the Cape Colony joined the Universal Postal Union which stipulated specific colours for some denominations and this led to a general change in colour in the Cape cabled anchor rectangular stamps between 1896 and 1898 (Figure 24).

The first to be issued in the new colour was the “Two Pence Half-penny Ultramarine of 1896”. It was issued in March 1896 with shades tending to pale ultramarine. The same printing plates were used that had been used to print the twopence half-penny sage green of 1892. Thus, this issue also contains the additional value tablet in the upper right hand corner of the background.

In May 1896 the one shilling value was issued in a yellow-ochre colour. Green had been the colour of the one shilling value at the Cape since 1858, but the Universal Postal Union had decided on green for its halfpenny value, thus a change in colour was required and yellow-ochre was chosen. An inverted watermark variety is recognized.

The next stamp to be issued in this series was the “Five Shillings Brown-Orange of 1896” issued in June of that year. The only change in this issue compared with the release of July 1887 was one of tint. This orange colour is deeper from the addition of brown to the ink.

Then the “Half-penny Green of 1896” was issued in December of that year. This colour change was to fall in line with the Universal Postal Union regulations of green for the Half-penny

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**One Penny Red of 1893**

Six months later in October 1893, the new “One Penny Red of 1893” with the new design, was issued. The stamp was designed by Mr. Mountford of Cape Town and still has Hope as the central theme, but she is depicted standing fully upright, and reclining with her right arm on the anchor. The lower background is of Table Bay with a steamer on the ocean on the right, and Table Mountain and the sky are the upper background.
value. In colour the stamps are basically yellow-green with shades tending towards the pale tints. However, a distinct blue-green colour is also recognised and is quite rare. An inverted watermark variety used at Trappes Valley on 4 November 1898 has also been found.

Three months later in March 1897, the “Two Pence Chocolate Brown of 1897” was released. Apparently, the same printing plates as those of the previous two penny bistre stamps were used. Differentiation is only really possible by the characteristic chocolate brown colour, and to some extent the date of usage can be an indicator.

In the same month the “Four Pence Sage Green of 1897” was issued. Knowing that the Universal Postal Union stipulated blue for the two-pence half-penny value, the Cape authorities decided to use the discarded sage green colour for the four-pence, thus, in fact, bringing about a direct switch in colour between these two values.

The last issue in this second series of cabled anchor watermarked stamps with the change in colours was the “Three Pence Magenta of 1898” issued in September of 1898.

The demand for threepence stamps decreased when the postal rate to and from the United Kingdom was decreased from threepence to two pence halfpenny per half ounce, from the 1st January 1891. The supply of threepence stamps on Crown CA watermark paper, first issued in 1882, sufficed until 1898.

The stamp is characterised by a cabled anchor watermark and a bright magenta colour and, in fact, is the same as the threepence magenta printed by De La Rue and Co. in 1890 and simultaneously surcharged “2½d” by them and issued as such in March 1891. This was again re-issued without the surcharge.

Half Penny Green of 1898

In 1895 the Cape authorities decided that as the printing plates of Hope seated upright became too worn for further use, they would gradually be replaced by Mr. Mountford’s new design as had been accepted for the one penny of 1893. In 1898 it was reported that the old halfpenny printing plate was no longer useable. Thus, in October 1898 a new halfpenny green was issued at the Cape on cabled anchor watermarked paper of medium white wove type, perforation was the comb type gauging 14 with the colour being various shades of green, the design being that of Mr. Mountford (Figure 25). A specimen with an inverted watermark and used in East London on 17 April 1902 has been found. A blue green colour is also found, but is rare.
Edwardian Cape of Good Hope Rectangulars

Finally the Cape of Good Hope rectangulars were completed by the issue of stamps, depicting the head of King Edward VII of Great Britain, between December 1902 and October 1904. The central theme is that of a profile portrait of King Edward VII, the outer design being different for each stamp. All the stamps have a cabled anchor watermark, perforation of the comb type gauging 14, are printed on medium white wove paper and have white gum (Figure 29).

The first one to be issued was the “Edwardian Half-penny Green of 1902” issued in December 1902 in a characteristic green colour. This was followed by the “Edwardian One Penny Red of 1902” also issued in December 1902 and is known in a wide variety of red tints. Varieties of this one penny stamp are the shading in the background to the right of the King’s head being almost absent, and also another constant variety on one stamp in a sheet is a spot of colour between the “O” and “N” of “ONE”. Other varieties are an inverted watermark, and an inverted and reversed watermark has also been described. An aniline printing is also found.

The next issue in this series was the “Edwardian One Shilling Yellow Ochre of 1902” also issued in December 1902. So in December 1902 the halfpenny green, the penny carmine and the one shilling yellow-ochre were issued. Various shades of yellow-ochre, especially tending towards the darker hues, are found.

Two months later the “Edwardian Five Shillings Brown-Orange of 1903” was issued in February 1903 and is a characteristic brown-orange colour.

The next month, April 1903, the “Edwardian Three Pence Magenta of 1903” was issued in the characteristic magenta colour. A variety with an inverted watermark is also found.

One year later the “Edwardian Two Pence Halfpenny Ultramarine of 1904” was issued in March 1904. This stamp is the rarest of the Edwardian ones as the 2½ pence denomination did not find much use during this Edwardian period, there being no specific postal rate applicable. A single variety with no watermark has been found.

Six months later the “Edwardian Two Pence Brown of 1904” was issued in October 1904 and is of a characteristic brown colour. A dark black-brown colour is also known as well as a variety with an inverted watermark.

These Edwardian stamps were the last issued at the Cape as the Union of South Africa was formed on the 31st May 1910, and thereafter the Union of South Africa stamps were gradually introduced as the provincial stamps became used up.

Summary

And so, over a period of 46 years from 1864 to 1910, the Cape had 56 different rectangular issues beginning with Charles Bell’s design with the outer frame-line; the same design without outer frame-line began in 1871; a short interval of 10 years between 1893 and 1902 when three denominations were issued according to the design of Mr. Mountford with Hope standing; and one according to the design of Mr. Sturman where Table Mountain, Table Bay and Lions Head are the main part of the design together with the crest of the Cape of Good Hope; and ending up with the Edwardian series of 1902 to 1910.

The stamps, of course, are only the basis to the philately of this period, for after one has studied the stamps in detail, one can then move on to the postmarks, the barred numeral cancellers, the postal history, the social history and any of the aspects of Cape philately of the period that one wants to study and enjoy. In particular, over the last fifteen years, extensive detailed studies of each Cape of Good Hope post office, its history and postmarks, have been published by Dr Franco Frescura, the late Ralph Putzel, and Alex Visser. The information in these works are incredibly detailed and voluminous. Nevertheless it is great fun to add information to their published tomes, one of the great attractions being that postmark material of the Cape Rectangu-
lars is still available at affordable prices.

Finally the annual catalogues published by Stanley Gibbons and especially Lutz Heffermann make every effort to keep up with the new findings in the Cape Rectangular period. Considering that the last serious work in this field seems to have been published by Gilbert Allis in 1930, all philatelists in this field owe a debt of gratitude to these cataloguers for keeping the field alive, while serious studies of the stamps and their varieties and their overprints have been conspicuously lacking.

Acknowledgements

The article was originally published by the South African Philatelist in 2005, April (48-49), June (82-85), and August (114-117). We are in debt to Peter van der Molen for scanning the original article and to Janice Botes of the editorial office of the South African Philatelist for searching the archives and finding many of the original scanned illustrations. We are publishing this revised version with permission. Illustrations with black background are courtesy of Alan MacGregor’s website at http://www.rhodesia.co.za/.

Suggested Further Reading

1) “Cape of Good Hope - Its Postal History and Postage Stamps” by Gilbert J. Allis (1930), Stanley Gibbons Ltd.


3) “The Encyclopaedia of British Empire Stamps, Volume II. The Empire in Africa” by Robson Lowe (1949), Robson Lowe Ltd.

4) “Postmarks of the Cape of Good Hope” by Robert Goldblatt (1984), Reiger Publishers Ltd.


Postscript

Very few, if any, references have been made in this review of the very rich and interesting fields of the Cape of Good Hope proofs, specimens, postcards, postal history, and cancels. The further reading section refers to some of the voluminous publications in these fields and the intention is to cover some of these fields in further articles and a monograph.

As far as the author knows a definitive article on the role Emil Burmester (see Figure 31) played, probably unintentionally, in Cape Rectangular Philately has still to be written. He was a watchmaker, jeweler and retailer in Cape Town from the mid 1850’s until the outbreak of the South African War in 1899. He used the post he received as his filing system, so that not only did he retain all the contents of the cover he received in the cover, but also wrote the action that he took on the back (occasionally on the front) of the envelope concerned.

From 1863 to into the Twentieth Century up to 1500 Barred Oval Numeral Cancels were issued by the Cape Post Office, seemingly randomly. No official list to identify at which post offices the various numerals were used, has ever been found, so one has to research from extant “proving covers” and “proving pieces”. About two-thirds of the 1500 numbers have so far been identified, and the Emil Burmester archive has provided a rich source of this treasure hunt, by virtue of his retaining most, if not all, of the covers he received.

Similarly H. H. Loest, farming in the Alice district of the Eastern Cape, retained most, if not all, of the covers he received (with their contents) from the 1890’s for 40 odd years, and some of his children did likewise. H. H. Loest was a Freemason and an active member of the local legislative assembly. The covers and contents give a most enlightening and interesting accounts of the attitudes and life styles of the period in the Eastern Cape at that time. The social philatelic aspect, with descriptions of the private lives (sometimes very private) of the participants and business and farming conditions of those times in that area, is most absorbing.

Figure 31. Cape of Good Hope postcard used in 1885 with imprinted one penny seated Hope stamp. Addressed to Emil Burmester of “Capetown.”
Membership Application

Membership fees are $25 to US mailing addresses and $30 for all other addresses. Membership includes a subscription to the Society’s journal Forerunners. Those that join before July 1 will receive the complete back issues for that year. Thereafter annual renewals occur in August and are due by September 1. If sending in dues by mail, please provide funds in US$ either in currency or a check on a USA bank account made out to “PSGSA.” Mail all payments to David McNamee, PSGSA Treasurer, P.O. Box 37, Alamo, CA 94507 USA. Paypal to “dmcnamee@aol.com” is also acceptable, but please add US$ 1 extra to cover part of the PayPal fees we must pay to use the service. For some overseas members, it might be more advantageous to send in dues for two or more years to avoid the annual conversion fees.

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Block of ½d grey-black Seated Hope with cabled anchor watermark from 1886

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