

CHAPTER 9

The Queen Victoria Halfpenny Yellow Stamp

In 1859 it was decided that the Free Internal Post, which had been inaugurated on the 10th June 1853, would be withdrawn on a date to be announced. As British stamps were used for overseas mail it was felt that a special stamp would be appropriate. On 12th March 1859 it was resolved by the Committee of Supply that "*it is the opinion of this Committee that a sum not exceeding £110 chargeable upon the revenue of the year 1859, be applied under the head of Miscellaneous Services for cost of a die and other articles for making stamps for a half penny postage for the transmission of letters by the inland post.*" Accordingly, on 30th April 1859, an order was sent to the Crown Agents for the Colonies, who in turn commissioned Messrs De. La Rue & Co. (now the De La Rue Company) to go ahead with the engraving of the die which was executed by J. F. Joubert de la Ferte.

The Halfpenny Inland Post was introduced on 1st December 1860.

Over the years there has been doubt and controversy concerning the number of printings and dates of issue of this stamp but it is hoped that the information now published will establish the number of printings in chronological order. There were actually twenty-nine yellow printings and one green printing (that being between the 28th and 30th).



Interpanneau Block of Eight of the Yellow-buff (Wmk. CC., Perf. 14) showing part of the imprint MALTA POSTAGE ONE HALFPENNY.

It is almost impossible to be dogmatic on the interpretation of the various shades, as no two persons will see these alike. In differentiating between shades, it must be remembered that the ink used was:—

- (1) "Fugitive";
- (2) Dirt and over inking accumulated on the rollers, giving the impression of a muddy appearance;

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- (3) With used copies, bleaching has taken place, especially when one remembers that the Malta water contains a very high percentage of calcium and chlorine, and this must have faded the colour considerably.

However, in spite of the above, in the great majority of stamps, the true nature of the ink mixture can best be understood by examining the solid value tablet with a strong magnifying glass.

The plate formed was an electrotpe one, the engraving being in relief or in cameo, consisting of four panes, two above and two below, each containing 60 stamps in ten horizontal rows of six. With the introduction of watermarked paper Crown CC in 1863, there may be found in the side margins, near the upper right and lower left corner of the sheets, plate numbers — the numeral "1" in white on a small circular coloured disc, with an inner white concentric circle: above the upper panes and also between the two upper and two lower panes, is the inscription "MALTA POSTAGE ONE HALFPENNY". There is also a perforation cross in the upper margin; the horizontal space between the panes was watermarked "CROWN COLONIES".

This die was used throughout the 29 yellow printings as well as the $\frac{1}{2}$ d green printing.

Proofs in black from the die were struck on white glazed card, one dated in pencil "21.6.59" and another inscribed in pencil "after hardening June 28/59". Similar but "cut down" proofs in black having 2 mm margins, and another in yellow on white paper having 1 mm margin, also exist. There is a cut down die proof in yellow on white paper overprinted SPECIMEN in black. A few copies of imperforate plate proofs, taken in buff on blued paper, the issued colour, exist. "Die proofs", one in black and one in buff, are known, made by the late Jean de Sperati — these are, of course, forgeries. There is also a forgery of the 1861 white paper with bars cancellation and which has been attributed to Panelli.

Despite the fact that these stamps were only intended for local mail, there is an entire with a $\frac{1}{2}$ d buff dated SP 16 63 (A25 duplex) addressed to Philippeville, Algiers.

1860 1st Printing: (S.G. and Said No. 1)

On page 41 of "Day Book A", of Thomas De La Rue for the period 30th November 1857 to 30th June 1864, there is the following invoice:—

AGENTS GENERAL, CROWN COLONIES

<i>1st Invoice</i>	21st July 1859			
	One form containing 240 stamps Malta-Duty.			
	"One Half Penny" ordered April 30th 1859.			100
	100 sheets of stamps in fugitive ink perforated = 24,000 stamps @ 11d.	1	2	
	Packing in tin lined case.		7	6
				<hr/>
			101	9 6

Printed on paper bought from W. Turner
(part of three reams)

Signed: E.M.M.

From this invoice, we can draw the following conclusions:—

- (a) Delivery date — 21st July, 1859.
- (b) 24,000 stamps were printed on 100 sheets. Each sheet consisted of four panes, each pane consisting of ten rows by six.
- (c) The ink was fugitive which accounts for the shades within a printing (buff and bistre-brown). In this particular printing, the impression is quite clear at first — buff, but as the ink dirt accumulated on the rollers, we begin to have a muddy appearance — bistre-brown, which is the scarcer.
- (d) Paper bought from W. Turner of Chafford Mill, Kent. Unwatermarked, blued paper and perforation 14.

THE SECOND PRINTING

Although the first $\frac{1}{2}$ d yellow printing was despatched from London on 21st July 1859, it was not put on the market before 1st December 1860. (see colour plate on page xiv)

S.G.1. No Watermark, Blued paper, Perf. 14 exist overprinted SPECIMEN in black bold capital letters. (see colour plate on page xiv)

Dated Covers: The following dated covers have been recorded: 3.1.61, 13.1.61, 15.1.61, 16.1.61, 21.1.61, 14.2.61, 22.3.61, 3.4.61, 17.7.61, 2.10.61, 28.11.61.

The first cancellation used was the "M" obliteration, which besides being used to frank British stamps used in Malta (for overseas mail) also franked the $\frac{1}{2}$ d Queen Victoria on blued paper, during the month of December 1860 only, for inland use. Stamps franked in this manner either as a single or on entire are quite rare, although a pair S.G.I. on cover addressed to Zejtun, Malta, is known.

The second cancellation used to frank the $\frac{1}{2}$ d yellow was the 19 mm single ring MALTA c.d.s., which was already in use to register the arrival of a letter from overseas. It is usually found at the back together with other transit cancellations. This type of cancellation was used for a relatively short time, the earliest recorded date on a $\frac{1}{2}$ d yellow stamp is 3rd January, 1861.

1861-1863 Unwatermarked — White Paper Perf. 14

The invoice of Private Day Book AA of Messrs De La Rue records that the following printings were executed on the dates specified below.

2nd Printing	17th August 1861	Private Day Book AA	Page	92
3rd Printing	11th September 1862	" "	" "	134
4th Printing	17th April 1863	" "	" "	168
5th Printing	11th January 1864	" "	" "	233

The earliest recorded used date of a watermarked, crown CC, perf. 14 stamp is 4th June 1863, and a cover addressed to "Il Contino A. Sant Commandante del Forte Chambray", Gozo, having one watermarked Crown CC white paper — perf. 14 stamp, has the date 29th November 1863. This indicates that the watermarked Crown CC white paper perf. 14 belongs to the 4th Printing of 17th April 1863, as the 5th Printing was not invoiced until 11th January 1864, and so it seems correct in assuming that there were only two unwatermarked — white paper — perf. 14 printings, namely: the 2nd Printing of 17th August 1861 and the 3rd Printings of 11th September 1862.

2nd Printing (S.G. and Said 2)

Brown Orange, white paper, no watermark, perf. 14. Private Day Book AA, page 92.

2nd Invoice 17th August, 1861.

The Agents General for Crown Colonies

106 Sheets of Postage Labels for Malta, Duty $\frac{1}{2}$ d.

240 on sheet = 25,440 labels @ 11d.

Packed in tin lined case

1 3 4
7 6

1 10 10

Delivered to Mr. Winckley

The 2nd printing of 17th August 1861 is brown orange — a blurred and muddy printing which has not been seen used after 1862. It was issued in Malta in November 1861 and the earliest and latest recorded dates are 24th January 1862 and 16th December 1862 respectively. One dated 8th December 1862 is on entire addressed to Il. Sig Dr. Av. Guseppi Xuereb, Gozo.

The so-called pale buff or clear stone shade listed in some catalogues did not comprise a complete printing, as very few copies are known. The only dated copies seen are 28th March 1862 and 2nd April 1862. The only mint block of four that has been recorded in the last dozen years or so was that in the Damsell collection which makes it numerically rarer than a similar block from the 1st printing.

The 3rd printing of 11th September 1862 are the buff shades and which is not recorded used prior to 1863. It can, therefore, be concluded that the pale buff and buff shades are really variations of the 3rd printing.

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yellows, and on 8th August 1884 the Chief Secretary requested the Crown Agents to supply the "*Usual 200 sheets of Malta local Postage Stamps*". On 18th August the Crown Agents placed the order with De La Rue for 200 sheets of $\frac{1}{2}$ d adding "*I have to add that the colour of the stamps is to be in Yellow*". This letter was acknowledged by De La Rue on 19th August and their Private Day Book M, page 92, shows that this last printing of the $\frac{1}{2}$ d yellow stamps was dispatched to Malta on 27th August 1884.

30th Printing (S.G. No. 19 and Said No. 9)

Reddish-orange, watermark Crown CA, white, perf. 14

Private Day Book M, page 92

30th Invoice 27th August, 1884.

The Crown Agents for the Colonies

Malta Postage Stamps

200 sheets of 240 duty $\frac{1}{2}$ d = 48,000 stamps

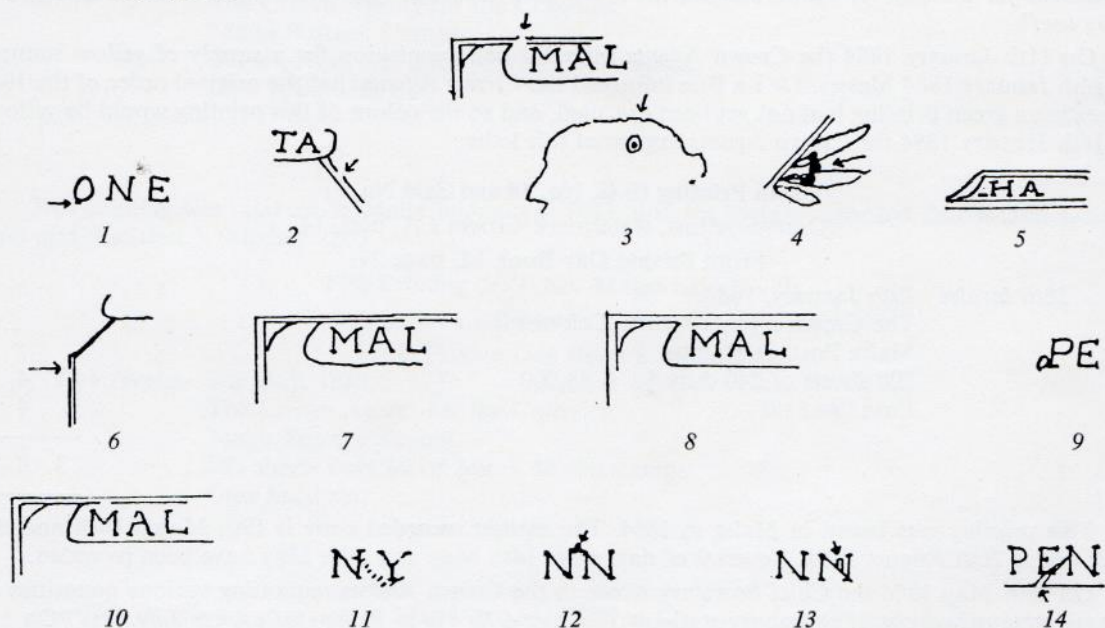
Case lined tin

3	4	0
	4	6
3	8	6

Issued in Malta 1884. Earliest and latest recorded dates are 17th September 1884 and 26th November 1885 respectively.

VARIETIES

The following varieties have been noted in the $\frac{1}{2}$ d yellow stamps; these varieties may, of course, be found on the $\frac{1}{2}$ d green.



LOWER LEFT PANE

Row 1, Stamp 5, Break in hair above and near end of Tiara (S.G.20)

Row 2, Stamp 1, Flaw through curl of chignon (S.G.20)

Row 2, Stamp 3, Spot on cheek (S.G.20)

VARIETIES

- Row 2, Stamp 4, Break in shading above head below "A" of Malta (S.G.20)
- Row 4, Stamp 2, Large flaw on ear (S.G.19, 20)
- Row 4, Stamp 6, Broken lower right-hand corner of outer frame (S.G.20)
- Row 5, Stamp 1, Tail on "O" of one (Fig. 1) (S.G.20)
- Row 5, Stamp 4, Top inner frame line broken at right spandrel (S.G.20)
- Row 6, Stamp 3, Spot under eye (S.G.18, 19)
- Row 6, Stamp 4, "NY" joined at top serif (S.G.20)
- Row 7, Stamp 3, Break in outer Portrait frame line at right (Fig. 2) (S.G.20)
- Row 8, Stamp 4, Spur on right-hand bottom serif of "H" (S.G.20)
- Row 9, Stamp 1, Broken outer and inner frame lines above "M" also in hair (Fig. 3) (S.G.3, 20)
- Row 9, Stamp 2, Flaw in "A" of half (S.G.3, 20)
- Row 9, Stamp 5, White spot on second leaf between buds at right (Fig. 4) (S.G.18, 19, 20)
- Row 9, Stamp 6, Line before lower serif of "H" (Fig. 5) (S.G.18, 19, 20)
- Row 10, Stamp 3, Broken outer frame line exactly under "Y" (S.G.20)
- Row 10, Stamp 6, Broken outer frame line lower right corner (S.G.19, 20)

LOWER RIGHT PANE

- Row 1, Stamp 1, Break in line of shading on cheek (S.G.20)
- Row 1, Stamp 4, Seventh line of shading broken under and right of "A" in Malta (S.G.10, 20)
- Row 2, Stamp 1, Break in line of shading in front of Tiara (S.G.20)
- Row 2, Stamp 4, Break in fourth line of shading under "A" in Malta (S.G.20)
- Row 2, Stamp 6, Break in outer frame line 4 mm from right corner (S.G.20)
- Row 3, Stamp 2, Dot above first "N" in penny (S.G.20)
- Row 3, Stamp 3, Sloping crossbar in "A" of Malta also break in first line of shading under "L" in Malta (S.G.20)
- Row 3, Stamp 4, Broken line of shading centre of neck (plate proof, S.G.20)
- Row 3, Stamp 5, Broken line of Portrait shading level with third bud on left (S.G.14, 19, 20)
- Row 3, Stamp 6, Broken outer frame above right leg of "M" of Malta (S.G.20)
- Row 4, Stamp 2, Broken lines of shading in front and back of neck (S.G.20)
- Row 4, Stamp 3, Broken outer portrait frame line below angle at left (Fig. 6) (on Plate Proof over-printed CANCELLED; S.G.20)
- Row 6, Stamp 3, Spur on lower left serif of "F" and dot between "F" and "P" (S.G.20)
- Row 6, Stamp 5, Broken inner frame line above "L" in Malta (Fig. 7) (S.G.20)
- Row 7, Stamp 1, Broken line of shading behind curl also on cheek (S.G.20)
- Row 7, Stamp 2, Broken inner frame line left of "M" in Malta, nick under neck, and dot above second "N" in penny (Fig. 8) (S.G.20)
- Row 7, Stamp 4, Spot on neck (S.G.20)
- Row 7, Stamp 5, Dot near nostril also solid spot of colour in background shading top right corner (S.G.20)
- Row 8, Stamp 1, White flaw joined to left of lower serif of "P" in penny also broken line of shading immediately above hairline (Fig. 9) (S.G.20)
- Row 8, Stamp 2, Broken inner frame line above centre of "M" in Malta (Fig. 10) (S.G.20)
- Row 8, Stamp 4, Spot on neck (S.G.20)
- Row 9, Stamp 1, Line on "O" of one, and dot between "F" and "P" (S.G.19, 20)
- Row 9, Stamp 2, Spot under neck (S.G.20)
- Row 9, Stamp 5, Broken outer frame line $\frac{1}{2}$ mm from lower left corner (S.G.19, 20)
- Row 10, Stamp 1, White flaw under and through "NY" (Fig. 11) (S.G.19, 20)
- Row 10, Stamp 2, Broken line of shading near and behind nape hair (S.G.20)
- Row 10, Stamp 4, Scratches through frame and "L" in half (S.G.20)

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UPPER LEFT PANE

- Row 1, Stamp 3, Lines of shading missing on front portion of headband of Tiara (S.G.19)
- Row 1, Stamp 5, Broken outer frame lines lower right corner (S.G.19)
- Row 2, Stamp 3, Broken lower outer frame line near right corner (S.G.19)
- Row 2, Stamp 4, Broken lower outer frame line near left corner (S.G.19)
- Row 2, Stamp 6, Nick in inner frame under and between "LF" of half (S.G.19)
- Row 3, Stamp 2, Break in lower hairline on forehead above eye (S.G.19)
- Row 3, Stamp 6, White flaw joining top serifs of "NN" in penny (Fig. 12) (S.G.19, 20)
- Row 4, Stamp 2, Thin crossbar in last "A" of Malta, and broken lower outer frame line right corner (S.G.19)
- Row 4, Stamp 3, Crossbar of first "A" in Malta slopes downward to right, and is thicker at right (S.G.19)
- Row 5, Stamp 1, Broken lower left angle of Portrait frame line (S.G.19, 20)
- Row 5, Stamp 4, Broken inner frame line above "L" in Malta (Similar to 6/5 Lower Right Pane) (S.G.19)
- Row 5, Stamp 5, Spur on crossbar of second "N" in penny (Fig. 13) (S.G.11, 19, 20)
- Row 6, Stamp 1, Breaks in lower outer frame line (S.G.19, 20)
- Row 6, Stamp 6, Broken lower outer frame line right corner (S.G.19, 20)
- Row 7, Stamp 2, Two shading lines on nose broken close to eye (S.G.20)
- Row 7, Stamp 4, Broken lower outer frame lines near or in right corner (S.G.19, 20)
- Row 7, Stamp 5, Broken lower outer frame lines near or in right corner (S.G.19, 20)
- Row 7, Stamp 6, Broken lower outer frame lines near or in right corner (S.G.19, 20)
- Row 8, Stamp 5, Broken lower outer frame line right corner (S.G.19, 20)
- Row 9, Stamp 3, Nick under right downstroke of second "N" in penny (S.G.19, 20)
- Row 9, Stamp 5, Nick under and between "FP" in halfpenny (S.G.20)
- Row 10, Stamp 4, Broken righthand outer frame line near lower corner (S.G.20)
- Row 10, Stamp 6, Spot of colour in hair between end of Tiara and Chignon (S.G.19, 20)

UPPER RIGHT PANE

- Row 1, Stamp 1, Broken inner portrait frame line at top of leaf right of rose (S.G.19)
- NOTE:* Similar breaks in this frame line occur in a number of positions on the sheet, but they appear to be haphazard.
- Row 2, Stamp 5, Flaw through frame and "E", to "N" in penny (Fig. 14) (S.G.18, 19, 20)
- Row 3, Stamp 1, Broken top line of shading under "T" in Malta (S.G.19)
- Row 3, Stamp 3, Broken outer frame line lower right corner (S.G.19)
- Row 4, Stamp 2, White flaw on crossbar of "A" in half (S.G.19)
- Row 5, Stamp 2, Broken inner Portrait frame line above rose (S.G.19)
- Row 5, Stamp 6, Broken inner Portrait frame line above rose (S.G.19, 20)
- Row 6, Stamp 1, Broken outer frame line lower right corner (S.G.19)
- Row 6, Stamp 5, Broken line of shading under neck and above rose (S.G.19, 20)
- Row 6, Stamp 6, Broken line of Portrait shading near and almost on Nose (S.G.19, 20)
- Row 7, Stamp 6, Stop after "Y" in penny, also broken outer frame line lower right corner (S.G.19)
- Row 8, Stamp 2, Broken lines of shading in hair above clover leaf of Tiara (S.G.10, 18, 19, 20)
- Row 8, Stamp 3, Broken lower outer frame line near right corner (S.G.19)
- Row 8, Stamp 5, Nick in name tablet frame line under lower left serif of "L", also break in lower right corner of portrait shading (S.G.19)
- Row 9, Stamp 3, Nick in value tablet between "AL" of half, also broken lower outer frame line right corner (S.G.19)
- Row 9, Stamp 6, Two spots on nose and spot in centre of eyeball (S.G.19)
- Row 10, Stamp 3, White spot "hanging" on top left serif of second "N" in penny (S.G.19, 20)
- Row 10, Stamp 5, Solid spot of colour above Queen's lip, also a larger spot of colour in background shading to left and below name tablet (S.G.19)