SOME OFFICIAL INFORMATION ON THE STAMPS OF
THE CAPE OF GOOD HOPE (2)
A PAPER READ BEFORE THE PHILATELIC SOCIETY, LONDON, JANUARY 1ST, 1892,
BY E.D. BACON.

NOTE: The plate of illustrations given with this number of the Journal is taken from specimens of "triangle stamps in the "Tapling Collection." Numbers 1 to 4 represent the four values engraved and printed by Messrs. Perkins Bacon & Co. Numbers 5 and 6 illustrate the provisional stamps printed in Cape Town. Number 7 exhibits a variety of number 6, with the corner of one of the stamps defective, while number 8 is taken from a pair of the red stamps, showing the rare error fourpence attached to the one penny.
EARLY in the year 1861 the stock of one penny and fourpenny stamps became exhausted, and recourse was had to Colonial printers for a supply pending the receipt of a fresh consignment from England. The idea of surcharging the sixpence and one shilling values does not appear to have suggested itself to the then postal authorities, or if it did, was not approved of, though in later years, when fourpenny, one penny and other stamps were required, we find this course was adopted.

No notice appeared in the Gazette of this provisional issue, and I am entirely indebted to the courtesy of the present Postmaster-General of the Colony, Mr. G.W. Aitchison, for the following particulars, which he sent me in reply to questions I addressed to him. He informs me the stamps were printed by Messrs. Saul Solomon & Co., of 49 and 50, St. George’s-street, Cape Town. They were engraved upon wood, and the sheet was composed of sixty-four stamps, arranged in four horizontal rows of sixteen stamps to the row, forming eight squares. He further adds: – “I have not been able to ascertain the exact date of issue, but the stamps were urgently applied for, the one penny stamps of the 5th April, and the fourpence on the 8th April, 1861, and it is probable that they were issued within a few days of the latter date.” We may, therefore, put down the date of issue as about the middle of April, 1861, and this is as near the actual day the stamps first came into use as I think we shall now discover. The Postmaster-General in the concluding paragraph of his letter says: – “Some difficulty has been experienced in obtaining the books from which the above information has been extracted.” I feel duly grateful to Mr. Aitchison for taking the trouble to collect the facts which he has furnished me with and I regret it was not in his power to send me a reply to all the questions I asked him concerning these interesting stamps. Mr. Aitchison, for instance, does not tell me what method was employed for printing the stamps. One of the two following must, I think, have been used: – 1. Lithographic transfers made from the two engraved wooden dies, or 2. Electrotype taken from the two dies and clamped up together to the number of sixty-four stamps. I feel confident the first of these two methods was the one employed, but whatever process was adopted, it is clear that an impression from the one penny die got mixed up among the fourpennies, and vice versà, as pairs of the stamps are known showing the two values joined together. (Vide Illustration 8.)

Only one printing of these provisional stamps was probably required, as on referring to the appendix it will be noticed that Messrs. Perkins Bacon & Co., forwarded further larger supplies of one penny and fourpenny stamps to the colony on the 1st and 29th April, and again on the 8th May, 1861. The
provisional stamps could not, therefore, have been wanted beyond a few weeks, but no doubt the stock printed off of both values, whatever it was, was used up by the Post Office.

Reprints of these stamps were made, upon wove paper, about seven years ago, but I am unable to say for what purpose, without they were taken in order to enable the Post Office at Cape Town to present specimens to foreign countries in return for stamps received from them.

Mons. Moens gives the date of these reprints as 1885 in his Catalogue, but I find both stamps described in the Timbre-Poste for August, 1884, so they date back, at any rate, to the latter year.

I have already mentioned that Messrs. Perkins Bacon & Co. handed over the four steel plates they used for printing the triangular Cape stamps to the Agents for Crown Colonies, on the 28th January, 1862; and that from that date Messrs. De la Rue & Co. supplied all the postage stamps, etc., required by the Colony. The only value of the triangular stamps Messrs. De la Rue & Co. are supposed to have printed is the one penny, which is known upon paper watermarked “Crown C.C.” But from information I recently obtained, it is certain that Messrs. Perkins Bacon & Co. had delivered up the plates to the Crown Agents they found they had a stock of 29 reams of the “Anchor” watermarked paper they used for printing the Cape stamps left on their hands. This they handed over the Crown Agents on the 25th June, 1862, upon the understanding that they should be paid for it as it was used. The Crown Agents delivered Messrs. De la Rue & Co. supplies of this paper at various intervals, and the following dates and quantities are those the Crown Agents returned Messrs. Perkins Bacon & Co. upon which the paper was used: –

1863.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 21</td>
<td>570 sheets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar. 25</td>
<td>201 sheets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec. 1</td>
<td>4,060 sheets</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1864.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Apl. 13</td>
<td>6,107 sheets</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total 10,938 sheets.

The quantities and dates the triangular stamps of Messrs. De la Rue & Co. were despatched to the Colony are as under: –

1863.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
<th>Denomination</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 31</td>
<td>398 sheets</td>
<td>6d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 31</td>
<td>158 sheets</td>
<td>1s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apl. 17</td>
<td>195 sheets</td>
<td>4d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec. 2</td>
<td>2,056 sheets</td>
<td>1d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec. 2</td>
<td>2,004 sheets</td>
<td>4d.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1864.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Sheets</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Apl. 13</td>
<td>3,040</td>
<td>1d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apl. 13</td>
<td>3,067</td>
<td>4d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>10,918</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This leaves a balance of 20 sheets of paper handed Messrs. De la Rue & Co., which were perhaps defective, or spoilt in some way or another during the process of printing. The 10,938 sheets amount to 21 rms. 17 qrs. 13 sheets, so the Crown Agents still retained a supply of the paper, which apparently was never used. The triangular stamps of Messrs. De la Rue & Co.’s printing can be distinguished by the colours, which are distinct from those employed by Messrs. Perkins Bacon & Co.

The one penny is red-brown, in place of brick, red, or carmine-rose.

The fourpence is bright blue, in place of dull blue, or dark blue.

The sixpence is bright mauve, in place of pale lilac-mauve, grey-lilac, or dark lilac.

The one shilling is emerald, in place of dark green, or yellow-green.

The list I have given above comprises all the triangular stamps Messrs. De la Rue & Co. sent out to the Colony. It is therefore difficult to account for the existence of the one penny watermarked “Crown C.C.” I am unable to give the true raison d’être of this variety, and I can only suggest that it may be due to the following cause. It was in the year 1863 that Messrs. De la Rue & Co. first commenced to use paper with the “Crown C.C.” watermark, and they may have intended to print off the whole batch of one penny and fourpenny Cape stamps ordered at the end of that year upon it. After trying a few sheets for the one penny value they probably found the size of the paper and the watermark so ill adapted to the plates of these triangular stamps that they at once abandoned their intention, and applied to the Crown Agents for a further supply of the “Anchor” watermarked paper. Whether they forwarded any of the stamps with “Crown C.C.” watermark to the Colony at present remains doubtful. I have never seen or heard of a used copy, and in face of the list of consignments I have given it looks as if none of these stamps were sent out. In this case the variety would be merely an interesting essay. The Society contains on its roll members resident in the Colony, and by diligent search amidst used specimens they might, by the discovery of such copies, once and for all settle the question whether the stamp is an essay or one actually issued for use. To help any of those who may feel disposed to undertake this task, I may tell them the colour of the variety is identical with that of the one penny value printed by Messrs. De la Rue & Co. upon the “Anchor” watermarked paper, i.e., red-brown, and that the watermark “Crown C.C.” is found placed sideways, and only a portion of it is seen upon each stamp.

At the commencement of 1864 the rectangular stamps of Messrs De la Rue & Co. commenced to appear, and gradually replaced the triangular varieties as the stock of the different values became used up. The change in the design, as might be expected, did not pass without comment in the Philatelic press, and I cannot do better than reproduce here some pertinent remarks made by Mons. Moens in the *Timbre-Poste* for March, 1864, upon this subject. He says: –
“Some seriously regret the old design, which had become almost classical. It reminds us that in
the early days of collecting a Cape stamp was not only rare, but was the necessary ornament of a
collection, which was only considered as having some value when it contained at least one specimen. To
have his ‘Cape’ was equivalent to the amateur of pictures who had his Raphael, the bibliophile who had
his Elzevir. What noble lord, protecting art without understanding it, would admit not having a Raphael?
That in a catalogue was to have everything as it should be. A Cape was, then, the Raphael of a collection.
The peculiar estimation in which this stamp was held was owing solely to its shape, which was in strong
contrast to the perpetual parallelogram of the greater part of its confreres. Let us recall, then, as far as we
can, in searching our memories, the naïve reflections that the sight of these eccentric stamps provoked
every time that a schoolboy of fifteen or sixteen triumphantly displayed his album to the astonished eyes
of his mamma. Motherly consideration, put too often to the proof, patiently submitted to learn
dissertations on each particular stamp, but having arrived at a certain page, the roles were almost inverted;
the kind listener asks the name and origin of a stamp of such a bizarre design, and the scholar proudly
replies ‘Why it is a Cape.’

“The partisans of the old design have only this reason to produce in favour of retaining it in
circulation – the habit of seeing the Cape represented by triangular stamps. This is a reason, in default of
others, but it was not sufficient to retard a reform which all the inhabitants of this Colony who have
correspondence must feel the usefulness. There is nothing more inconvenient than these triangular
stamps, for the room they take and for their application on letters. From these two points of view the
square infinitely the best. As regards the artistic side, the merit of the new type is very open to discussion.
The allegorical figure is certainly poor in conception. It partakes of the similitude of a dancer. We shall be
told it is ‘Hope,’ and that with this appellation a sad or even severe expression could not appropriately be
portrayed; it may be so, but a little more boldness in the drawing would not have saddened it.”

I entirely agree with these remarks of Mons. Moens, for there is no doubt that in the early days of
collecting a three-cornered Cape stamp was look upon by young beginners as the acme of a collection. At
the same time, from a postal point of view, the shape was certainly a disadvantage.

I have found no notices in the Gazette of the issue of the earlier rectangular stamps. The one
shilling was the first value to appear in January, 1864. The one penny and sixpence are stated in the
Timbre-Poste for October, 1865, to have been issued on 20th July of that year, and the four pence,
although not in use at the latter date, was issued shortly afterwards.

Towards the end of 1868 the supply of fourpenny rectangular adhesives became exhausted, and
for a time the old triangular fourpence was re-issued. After the small remaining stock of these stamps had
been absorbed, the rectangular sixpence was surcharged “Fourpence” in red.” This provisional stamp was
issued on the 16th November, 1868, in accordance with the terms of the following notice published in the
Gazette of November 17th of that year: –

GOVERNMENT NOTICE.
Colonial Office, Cape of Good Hope,
16th November, 1868.
His Excellency the Governor directs it to be notified for general information that he has sanctioned the conversion into Fourpenny Postage Stamps of a redundant stock of Stamps of the value of Sixpence.

This conversion has been affected by obliterating the words “Postage Sixpence” at the foot of the stamp, and printing across the body the words “Fourpence.”

By command of his Excellency the Governor,

(Signed) R. SOUTHEY,
Colonial Secretary.

This notice of the issue of the five shilling adhesive is found in the *Gazette* of the 25th August, 1871.

POSTAL NOTICE.

The general public are hereby informed that Five Shilling Postage Stamps have been received from England, and are now procurable at the General Post Office.

(Signed) CHARLES PIERS,
Postmaster-General.

General Post Office, Cape Town,
22nd August, 1871.

In 1876 a halfpenny black adhesive was described in the Philatelic Journals. I have searched the *Gazette* in vain without finding any mention of this stamp, but what is more extraordinary is that at this date there was no use for such a value. The lowest postal rate at the time for either letters or newspapers, if I am not mistaken, was one penny, and it was not until the 1st July, 1882, that the inland rate of newspapers was reduced to a halfpenny. This value must, I think, have been prepared for some projected alteration in the rates which for some reason or other was not carried out at that time. The stock of this stamp, forwarded to the Colony, was sold off at the Post Office, and when a halfpenny value was required on and after the 1st July, 1882, a small number only could have remained on hand, as in this month or August of that year a provisional halfpenny had to be provided.

The following notice taken from the *Gazette* of the 22nd February, 1878, gives the date and other particulars concerning the issue of the first post-card used in the Colony: –

GOVERNMENT NOTICE.
*Colonial Secretary’s Office, Cape of Good Hope.*
20th February, 1878.
The subjoined notice relative to the issue and circulation of Penny Postal Cards is hereby published for general information.

(Signed) J. GORDON SPRIGG.

Colonial Secretary.

POSTAL CARDS.

On the 1st proximo, the Cape Colony postal cards, imprinted with a penny postage stamp, will be procurable by the public at the following rates:

Seven pence for six post cards, or one shilling and two pence for the dozen.

They will be available for use only wherever there is a street or town delivery, and between those places to which the Penny Post at present extends, viz., those between which there is a postal communication not less than twice a day.

To be made available for any other places they must bear additional postage stamps, at the usual letter rate of four pence the half-ounce.

(Signed) G.W. AITCHISON,

Postmaster-General.

General Post Office, Cape Town,
20th February, 1878.

This card was of Colonial manufacture, and was lithographed by Messrs. Saul Solomon & Co., of Cape Town, the printers of the provisional “triangular” adhesives. Specimens are known printed in black, in place of red, the usual colour of the issue. An extract from a correspondent’s letter in The Philatelic Record for October 1883, says the Postmaster-General of the Colony states the black card “is a decided error.” I wrote to the Postmaster-General upon this subject, and he replied under date 12th June, 1889, as follows: “I cannot gather from the enquiries which I have made that postcards printed in black were ever issued to the public.” No doubt proofs of the card were taken in black, as usual, before commencing the printing off of an order, and some of these may have got into the hands of persons interested in Philately. There mere fact of one of these “black” cards having passed through the post, as mentioned in the paragraph of The Philatelic Record, I have alluded to above, does not in any way prove that the card was issued to the public by the Post Office. For instance, many collectors can show specimens of extraordinary anomalies that have passed through the post, without attracting the attention of the officials, our own country being by no means exempt in this respect. Mr. McDonald, the correspondent of The Philatelic Record, however, states he found three black specimens in a packet of cards he purchased at the Post Office, so if the black variety was an essay, some of the copies apparently got mixed up with the red cards.
The next notice gives the date and reason for the issue of three penny stamps. It was published in the *Gazette* of October 31\textsuperscript{st}, 1879.

**ALTERATION OF RATES OF POSTAGE**

From Saturday next, the 1\textsuperscript{st} November, the rates of postage on letters posted in this colony, Basutoland, and the Tanskeian Territories, for transmission to Post Offices within the same, will be THREE PENCE the half-ounce, or fraction of the half-ounce, whether the letter be conveyed by the General, Divisional, or Field-cornets Post, or by rail.

(Signed) G.W. AITCHISON.

*Postmaster-General.*

General Post Office, Cape Town,
20\textsuperscript{th} October, 1879.

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