

NEW ZEALAND BULLETIN



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ON THE SUBJECT OF THE DOUBLE PRINT, ONE ALBINO

by Colin Hamilton.

The 4c on 2½c Provisional has turned out to be virtually "The Complete Encyclopedia of Philatelic Varieties"! One of the most recent (as most Bulletin readers will be aware following our offer in last month's issue) is a "Double print of surcharge, one albino". Since this is the first such variety (on N. Z. stamps) since the similar one on the Q. E. 2d on 1½d of 1958, it is quite understandable that not all present-day collectors are fully au fait with the term.

The variety is the result of a sheet having passed through the printing press twice, once receiving an uninked impression, and once a normal inked impression. It follows that, if the variety is to be recognisable as such, the printing process used must be one which does something more than transfer ink from one smooth surface (the plate) to another (the paper). It is no coincidence, therefore, that the last two examples to occur have been on surcharges applied by letterpress, and that the other recorded instances have all been on recess-printed stamps.

The pressure exerted in both of these printing methods, coupled with the form of the actual printing surfaces, results in the leaving of a "trade mark". In the former process, the printing surfaces are raised in relation to the surrounding metal, thus producing a sunken impression on the paper; in the latter, as the name implies, the printing surfaces are the grooved recesses which make up the images on the plate, the paper being forced into these grooves to pick up the ink, so that the finished result is a slightly raised impression on the paper. To take an everyday analogy, the result of letterpress printing is similar to that of typewriting, while recess-printing produces a result roughly similar to one of those embossing gadgets used for personally addressed notepaper (if one visualises the hollowed-out letters in the metal block to have been given a coating of ink before use).

SUBS ARE DUE !

With this issue, subscriptions to the Bulletin/Newsletter become due for renewal. And that means that the time of year will soon be upon us when we invariably get into hot water with a few (mercifully, very few) subscribers who forget to respond to the reminder to renew - yet expect their Bulletins to continue arriving as usual each month. So this year may we make a special plea for all renewals to be in our hands by July 31st at the latest. That will ensure that we all remain friends! Please use the enclosed subscription form when renewing - and don't forget to include your Postcode (if you have one). With thanks in advance to all.

In theory (returning to our "double print, one albino" variety), either the inked, or the uninked impression could be made first. Provided that the second impression was not superimposed exactly on top of the first, some evidence of the albino would remain. However, the most likely and obvious cause of the variety would be for two sheets of paper to be fed (in error) into the printing press simultaneously, one on top of the other. The upper sheet would be printed quite normally, while the lower sheet would emerge completely clean, never having come into direct contact with the inked printing surface of the plate - but it would bear a set of albino impressions due to indirect contact under pressure. At a later checking stage, the apparently blank sheet of paper would be noticed, and returned to the stockpile to receive a normal inked impression in due course. In practice, therefore, the probable sequence would be albino print first, normal print second.

It will be readily appreciated that the component parts of a surcharge are relatively simple and uncomplicated, and the letterpress printing process (as used for surcharging) relatively crude, so that an albino impression - provided it is not exactly coincident with a printed impression - can be easily seen, particularly on the reverse side of the paper. Recess-printed designs, on the other hand, are made up of much fine line-work. As a result, any albino impression is correspondingly more delicate and less prominent, and a subsequent inked impression tends to mask the albino.

Usually the only direct evidence of an albino print on a recess-printed sheet occurs in the form of a "pressure-line" near the edge of the selvedge, due to slight misalignment of the two sheets when passing through the press together, and representing the edge of the upper sheet. It has been observed, however, that sheets bearing such a pressure line usually show in addition a distinctive blurring of the designs (or, in bi-coloured stamps, blurring of at least one of the colours). It seems logical to conclude that the two phenomena are connected, and the likely explanation is that the first (albino) print ruptures the fine fibres of the paper, so that when the inked impression is applied, the paper behaves rather like blotting paper, and the ink becomes diffused. The effect is altogether different from the "blotchiness" caused by over-inking. Viewed under a good glass, the appearance of the individual lines is not unlike that produced by pen and ink used on slightly damp paper.

Exceptions to the above do occur, an excellent example being the 2¹/_d Pictorial of 1935, which exists with a double print of the frame design. No blurring is evident in this case, and the albino outline of the words 'NEW ZEALAND' stands out clearly over the sky and the mountain peak in the central part of the design.

One explanation of this apparent anomaly (as suggested in the footnote under L5a in the C. P. Catalogue) is that the albino print occurred after the normal printing of both the frame and the centre. There is another possible combination of circumstances which could account for the absence of blurring. This is most easily set out in a step-by-step fashion as follows:

1. The central design (in this case the brown colour) would be printed first, leaving the frame (the blue colour) to be added at a later stage.
2. During the printing of the frame, the sheet concerned would initially go through the machine under another sheet, receiving the misplaced albino impression partly superimposed on the central design, with the strong outline of the words NEW ZEALAND falling on the comparatively weak shading of the sky.
3. The partly printed sheet would be picked up in a visual check, and would in due course receive a normal inked impression of the frame, this impression being in proper registration with the previously printed centre. Thus no pressure would be brought to bear on the albino 'NEW ZEALAND' to lessen its clarity.
4. The misalignment of the two frame plate prints would be such that the more heavily shaded parts of the printed frame would fall on the lighter areas of the albino print (i.e. the comparatively undamaged areas of the paper). Correspondingly, the lighter, less inked parts of the printed frame would be superimposed on the more damaged areas of the paper, so that blurring, if any, would be very minimal.

One further point is worth mentioning. Certain colours when affected by the blurring associated with known albinos, appear as outstanding contrasts to the normal shade of the ink. The "cobalt blue" of the 5d Swordfish (L8f) and the "copper brown" of the K. G. VI 1/- (M13a) are well-known examples.

To these, it seems to me, could be added others such as the golden brown centres of the 1946 Health stamps and the bright blue of the 1946 Peace 3d because it would appear that there is a good case to be made out for the distinctive blurring discussed here (even when it is the only evidence) being the result of a double print one albino.

1960 PICTORIAL "BLACK NUMBER" COUNTER COIL PAIRS

- 1201 These are the scarce ones, having been on issue for only a few months in 1960 before the colour of all coil join numbers was changed to red. The black numbers exist in five values only - the 2d, 4d, 1/-, 1/6 and 1/9 bistre. We are in a position to offer the complete set of five black number coil pairs (one of each value), either in "matched set" form - i.e. all five pairs having the same coil number - or with random numbers. When ordering please state whether matched or mixed numbers are required. If matched, give choice of number, and we shall do our best to meet your preference.
The scarce set of five black number pairs, matched or mixed..... £11.50
- 1202 75c BOOKLET - COMPLETE PLATING RECONSTRUCTION
Exactly as set out in the excellent Jim Shaw/Colin Capill study which was sent out with the Newsletter a month or two ago. 100 booklet panes in all, comprising 25 each of the 3 x 1c, 6 x 1c, 6 x 3c and 6 x 4c. All four sets are numbered 1-25 lightly in pencil on the backs to correspond with the tabulations in the Shaw/Capill study. Superb specialist material. The four reconstructed plates, complete... £57.50

FIVE-STAR COLLECTIONS

Each of the collections offered below represents an outstanding showing of the issue concerned, built up over a considerable period of years by an experienced and knowledgeable philatelist. Because of their vast scope, we can here only hint at some of the contents, and collectors seriously interested in any of the lots are strongly advised to contact us without delay. The opportunity may not come again.

- 1203 Long Fiscals. As comprehensive a lot of these elusive stamps as we have seen in a very long time. Some mint are included, but the collection is mainly of used examples with values to £5 (a very high proportion appear to be postally used). We must also mention the range of imperf proofs (of values to £20) all in colour on thick card. In all there are 26 proofs, 289 Long Fiscal stamps, and 9 copies of the 1d Duty stamp of 1882, including one used on cover. The collection..... £390
- 1204 1936-44 Pictorial "Officials". Many of these issues are scarcer than is generally realised, but all values to 2/- are here in profusion, with a number of large blocks, and a goodly sprinkling of plate blocks. Not strong in plate varieties, but these apart, just about the only notable omissions are the "impossible" single watermark 1½d perf 14 x 13½, and the very rare 8d with multiple watermark upright. 276 mint and 95 used £70
- 1205 2/- Captain Cook Landing. A magnificent and wonderfully detailed study of this, one of the most interesting of all stamps. All three plates are covered in the greatest detail, with virtually all of the varieties followed through the many states in which they exist. In addition there are complete reconstructions of plates 1 and 2, plate 1 in used and plate 2 complete both mint (mainly large blocks) and used! The whole collection, housed in two well-filled F.G. Burleigh albums, is superbly presented, and there is enough annotation to delight even the most inquiring mind. The one-stamp study, in two volumes £540
- 1206 Q.E. 1953-59 Definitives. Very strong in all facets of this absorbing issue. Plate numbers appear to be complete, with the exception of the 1/- centre plate 3 (the stamp however is present in singles mint and used). Varieties are legion, and include a plate block of the large-figure 1d from plate 11 showing

- R10/22 in the very rare original (weak entry) state, this piece alone being catalogued currently at \$300. Counter coil pairs are complete per the C. P. Catalogue, including many of the "small type" varieties listed. Booklet panes? Merely complete reconstructions of the small-figure 1d and 3d booklet plates, with a photographic guide to the plating characteristics! But as pleasing to the eye as anything is the truly delightful array of shades in blocks of 4 or more in all values up to and including the 10/-. The superb collection, offered at a fraction of Catalogue price £525
- 1207 1960 Pictorials. Another fine and extensive collection, full or rare pieces. Missing colours include, amongst others, the 2d "no black", all the listed 3d's, the outstanding 4d "no buff" in a vertical strip of 5, the middle three stamps all showing the variety (most spectacular!), and a copy of the 2/- with half of the background colour omitted. Plate number combinations are complete excepting the 9d plate 14A15. Counter coil pairs are complete, with the chalky 3d and 6d and the "mixed papers" 3d. Plate varieties are present in profusion, and include the very elusive "Green dots" on R6/1 of the 1/6. The collection, all mint but for a handful of used £675

RECENT VARIETIES

- 1208 3c Lichen Moth. R10/20 Retouch below 3 of 3c. In positional block of 8 (from Plate 1a1a1a) which also includes a major black flaw in the selvage adjacent to R7/20. The double-variety block. 30p
- 1209 7c Leather Jacket. R8/11 Flaw on rear edge of fish's lower fin; also R10/12 Flaw on top of right leg of N of New. Both varieties in a positional block of 6 (with colour registration markings) from Plate 1b1b1b1b. 55p
- 1210 23c Egmont National Park. R6/3 Prominent dark flaw in sky to left of mountain. In selvage block of 6 from Plate 111 (this block is from the later printing on whiter paper, and with distinctively "aromatic" gum). £ 1.20

NEW ISSUES

- 6th June 1973 5c, 8c, 10c, 18c Frances Hodgkins Paintings. Printed by Courvoisier S.A. in Switzerland, in five colours. Set of 4, mint 34p
 Imprint/plate blocks. Set of four blocks (one of each value). £ 1.70
 First Day Cover, Auckland postmark. 37p
- No official date of issue. 10c Coat of Arms. Printed on unwatermarked paper (previously always on paper with multiple watermark sideways). The new paper is markedly whiter, and the silver and darker blue colours are notably different in shade from the earlier printings.
 Mint single 9p
 (blocks pro rata)
 Imprint/plate block (of 6 stamps). 60p
- No official date of issue. 4c on 2½c Provisional with Local Surcharge. The long-awaited third type of surcharge (applied in N. Z. to sheets of the 2½c which were already held in stock in Wellington when Messrs Harrison & Sons were originally instructed to surcharge the stock held by them). The new surcharge is clearly distinguishable from the first two types, having thin obliterating bars similar to the first (photogravure) type, but being printed by letterpress like the second type.
 Mint single 3p
 (blocks pro rata)
 Imprint/plate block of 10, plate nos 1A1A1A1A or 1B1B1B1B, each. 37p