

The King George VI Large Key Type Revenue and Postage High Value Stamps 1937–1953

Thomas De La Rue and Company were responsible for the printing of the majority of the King George VI large key type stamps, which are exhibited here. Only the 1941 line perf issues were printed by Williams Lea and Company due to bombing damage to the De La Rue plant.

Two plates were used, the key plate (referred to as the head plate) and the duty plate (referred to as the frame plate). The frame plates for the majority of colonies already existed, some dating back to the King Edward VII era, thus were reused for the King George VI issues. However, the head plate had to be engraved by a skilled engraver as the monarchy changed. Die proofs of both head and frame were printed in black on glazed white cards.

The exhibitor thanks the efforts of Bob Dickgiesser Jr. and Eric Yendall for their exhaustive research and the publication by the RPSL of their work (updated and authored by Eric Yendall) entitled the same as my exhibit title. Some of the items shown in that book can be seen in this exhibit. Eric Yendall must also be given thanks for allowing me to use some of his terminology and the flaw identification pictures.

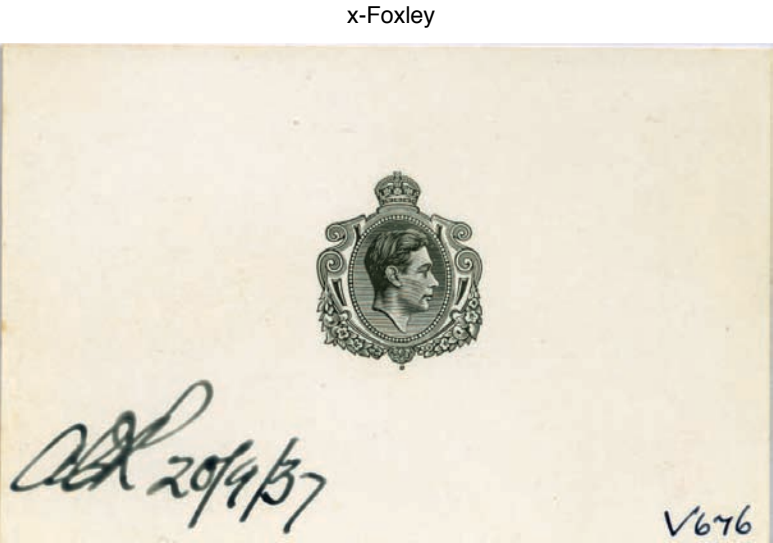
The order of this exhibit is as follows:

- 1. Head and frame die proofs are shown below and opposite – Page 1
- 2. Sheet layout and plate plugs – Page 2
- 3. First printings and perforated specimens – Page 3
- 4. The various printings of the Bermuda 12/6 and the Leeward Islands watermark varieties – Page 3
- 5. Sheet reconstruction with blocks and singles for the Bermuda 5/ line perf 14.1 – Page 4
- 6. Major flaws as documented by Dickgiesser/Yendall and catalogued by Stanley Gibbons Page 5–7
- 7. Some Minor Flaws as documented by Dickgiesser/Yendall – Page 7
- 8. Revenue Key Plates – Page 8

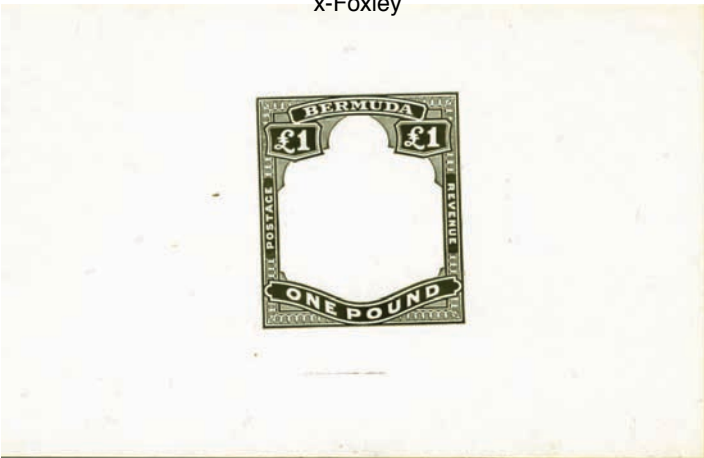
Dates used throughout are printing dates versus actual date of issue. This exhibit does not show postal history. Items with a grey border are part of a larger piece.

Final head die proof (key plate) approved by the Crown Agents on 21 September 1937. The only copy known to be in private hands.

Final duty die proofs (frame plate) approved are shown opposite



Die proof of the frame before the interior portions have been removed shown above and below working frame die proofs of various values



The first printings of the King George VI key plates for Bermuda, Leeward Islands, Ceylon and Nyasaland Protectorate were in plates of 60 stamps – 5 rows and 12 columns. They all have the plate plug number 1 above stamp 2 and below stamp 59. In subsequent printings (other than the Nyasaland 10/ reprint) the number 1 is no longer present above stamp 2 but always is below stamp 59. Each plate also has two jubilee lines, the inner line printed in the colour of that particular plate. The outer jubilee line has varying breaks thus helping to identify plate positions.

1

13

25

37

49

Plate plugs under stamp 59 differ by printing date and help to identify the printing. The majority of plate plugs are shown throughout this exhibit.



Oct 39



Oct 40



Oct 40



Jun 44



Nov 44



Jun 45



Jun 46



Jun 48



Aug 50



Nov 51



JAN 53



Examples of first printings with plate plug above Position 2. Nyasaland and Bermuda printed Nov 1937 for all values. Leeward Islands printed Oct 1938 for the 10/ and Dec 1937 for the £1



Examples perforated 'SPECIMEN' were allocated to De La Rue and the Crown Agents for their reference books and for distribution to the postal administrations of the Universal Postal Union.



The large key types for postal use had numerous printings (up to 13 of the Bermuda 12/6) as they were issued between 1937 and 1952. One of the ways to collect is to identify the year of issue by colour, gum, perforation and paper. With respect to colour there can be day light colours that differ for the paper, the head and the frame. As well there could be an ultraviolet reaction. There are no watermark variations except for the Leeward Islands £1 issues below.

Perf
13.9
x
13.8



Nov 37

Paper
Gum
Head
Frame

chalk surface
thick brownish
grey (shades)
brownish orange



Jul 38

chalk surface
thick brownish
deep grey
deep brownish orange



Aug 38

chalk surface
thick brownish
grey
pale brownish orange



Jul 39

chalk surface
thick brownish
pale grey
pale yellow orange



Oct 40

chalk surface
thick brownish
grey (shades)
dull yellow
orange

Perf
13.9
x
13.8



Mar 43

Paper
Gum
Head
Frame

ordinary
clear
pale bluish grey
orange yellow



Mar 43 reprint

ordinary
clear
pale bluish grey
pale orange yellow

RPSL 189139



Jun 46 (Lemon)

ordinary
clear
grey
yellow



Dec 46

ordinary
clear
grey
orange yellow



Jun 48

chalk surface
clear
grey
deep yellow
orange

Perf
13.2
x
13



Aug 50

Paper
Gum
Head
Frame

chalk surface
clear
grey
pale orange yellow



Jun 51

chalk surface
clear
deep bluish grey
pale orange yellow



Sep 52

chalk surface
clear
deep bluish grey
yellow orange



Nov 51


Watermark
Inverted




Nov 51

Watermark Sideways


Collecting complete sheets is not always possible and because of the number of printings of each key plate value they may not all exist. A common practice is to 'plate' the sheet. This is accomplished by collecting multiples or singles (mint or used) and positioning them where they came from. The Dickgiesser/Yendall book is an absolute necessity in order to correctly 'plate' the stamps. **The example below is the part reconstruction or 'plating' of a single printing for the line perf 14.1 5/ May 1941 printing.** It printed on yellow paper with a red frame and a dark green head. This sheet when completed will have 29 positions with head plate flaws and 7 frame flaws.




Flaw 1a
Pearl
cracked
borders




Flaw 13c
Break above
left crown jewel




Frame Flaw 39
Crack above
left of B
of BERMUDA




Flaw 49a
Two damaged
areas in lower
right scroll




Flaw 38c
Crack in crown
right pearls




Flaw 17a
Gash in chin




Flaw 21a
Break in lower
leaf below flower




Flaw 22a
Lower right scroll
broken tail




Flaw 10a/11a
Dot at neck



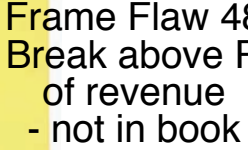
Flaw 12c
Mashed pearls




Flaw 12a
damage left
leaves




Flaw 34
Vertical break
under middle
of crown




Frame Flaw 48
Break above R
of revenue
- not in book




Flaw 60
Break in lower
right scroll




Flaw 47b
Break in third
right leaf




Frame Flaw 58
Dot after
SHILLINGS




Flaw 59i
Break in top
right scroll




Flaw 54
Dent in lower left scroll



Flaw 39
Break between
leaf and flowers



Flaw 33a
Enlarged
flower



Flaw 47a
Flaw in third
left leaf

4

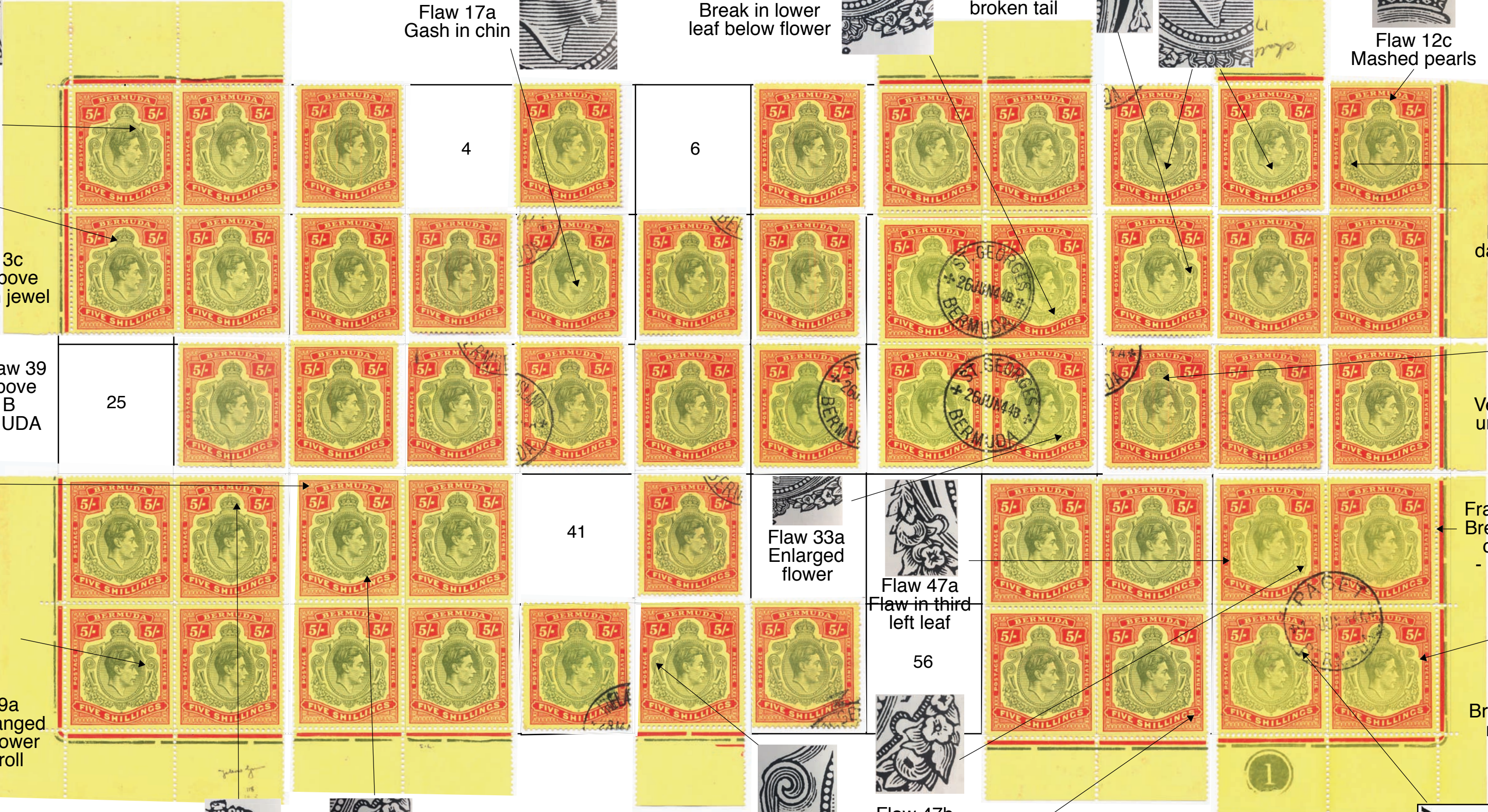
6

25

41

56

1



Many plate and frame flaws are identified by Dickgiesser/Yendall but only a few have been considered by Stanley Gibbons to warrant a catalogue classification. These are called **major flaws**.

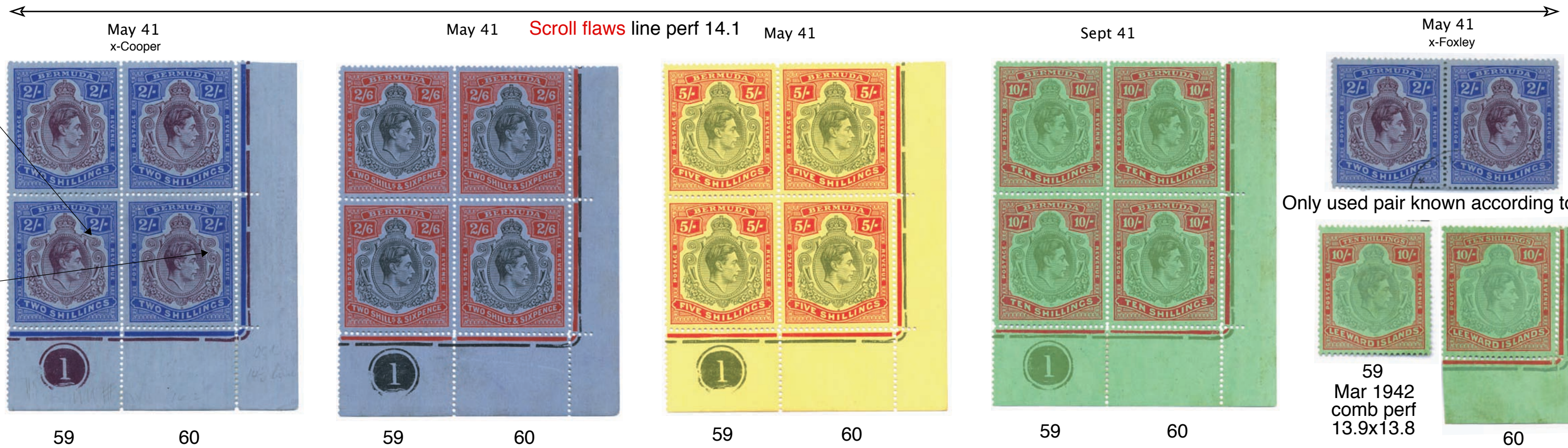
Scroll flaws



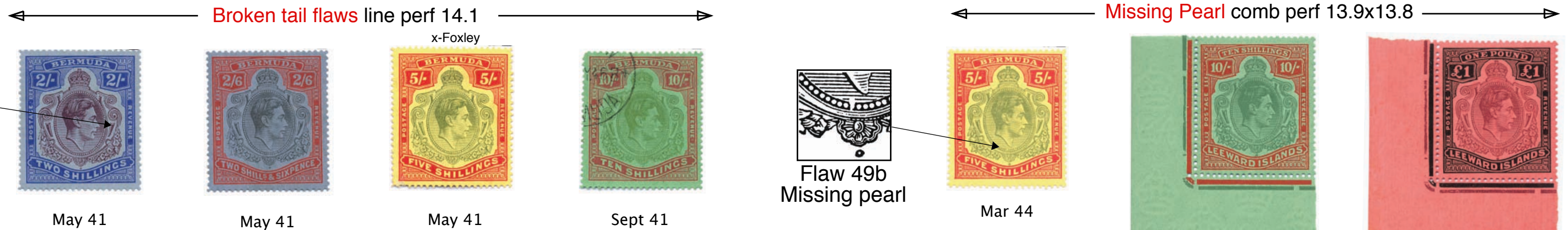
Flaw 59i
Break in top right scroll



Flaw 60
Break in lower right scroll



Flaw 22a
Lower right scroll with broken tail



Flaw 17a
Gash in chin



There are 15 Gash in Chin major flaws catalogued by Stanley Gibbons. There are actually 15 including the Bermuda Dec 41 2/6 and the Leeward Islands Oct 42 £1



59 Mar 1943 60



59 Mar 1943 60



59 Mar 1943 60



59 Mar 1943 60



59 Mar 1943 60



59 Oct 1941 60



59 Jul 1941 60



59 Mar 1943 60



59 Feb 1942 60



59 Oct 1942 60

The other major Bermuda **scroll flaws** are comb perf 13.9x13.8. Flaw 59 has been partially corrected and is now called 59ii with still some damage being evident. With the exception of the Dec 1941 2/6 all Flaw 60's are identified by Stanley Gibbons. **All examples of the various printings are shown on this page.**



Nov 1941
Known as the
Bronze Green



Flaw 59ii
Upper Scroll
Repair



59 Dec 1941 60



Flaw 60
Break in lower
right scroll



Nov 1941
Known as the
Bronze Green

The £1 Leeward Island major scroll flaws are comb perf 13.9x13.8. Flaw 59 does not exist on the £1 but does on the 10/- see previous page. Flaw 59ii does exist. Only the Feb 1942 printing is identified by Stanley Gibbons but there are two printings – the other is Oct 1942.

Frame Flaw 2
ER Joined
State I



Jul 41
State II has
a break in
the join



Nov 37 - State I

2

Frame Flaw 11
Island Flaw
Damaged Left
Value Tablet

Frame Flaw 41
Serif on G

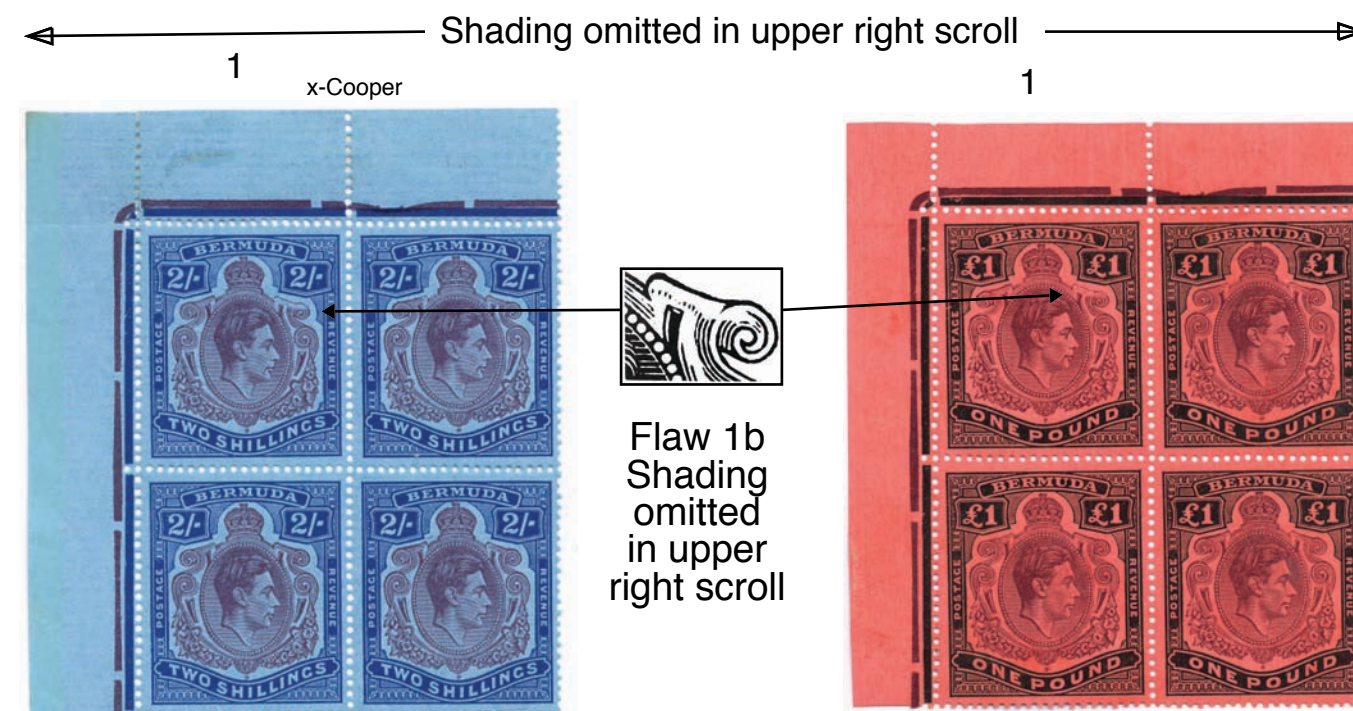


Nov 37



Nov 51 - occurs on only part of the printing

11



Mar 43



Flaw 1b
Shading
omitted
in upper
right scroll

Mar 43

Some minor plate and flame flaws identified by Dickgiesser/Yendall are difficult to see by the naked eye. However, these flaws help to plate the stamps to the position and also the year of issue.

Frame Flaw 44
Damaged cliché



x-Reed
x-Shaw



Mar 42



Dec 43

Flaw 4a
Vertical slice
cutting left
scroll and
second leaf tip



Mar 44

Flaw 4b
Dot above
left hair



Flaw 21d
Upper scroll
chips



Oct 40

Flaw 31
Missing leaf
tip left



Aug 50

Frame Flaw 25
Notch over O
of POSTAGE



July 39

Frame Flaw ??
Behind last E of REVENUE
violent black frame

x-Dickgiesser



Unrecorded

Flaw 12b
Missing right
leaf tip



Jun 44

Flaw 14a
Scratch
through
upper and
lower
right scroll



Jun 51

Flaw 14b
Nick between
scroll and
crown

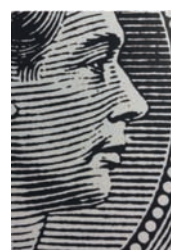


May 41

Flaw 23
Crack below
last crown
pearl on right



Flaw 28a
White dot
right
of lip



Oct 1940
Reprint

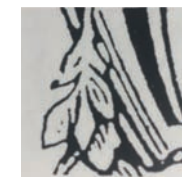
Frame Flaw 28
Line break
left of right
value tablet



Nov 37

Frame Flaw 13
Damage to and
under P
of POSTAGE

x-Dickgeisserr



Mar 43

Flaw 52a
Notch in
left leaf



Jun 46

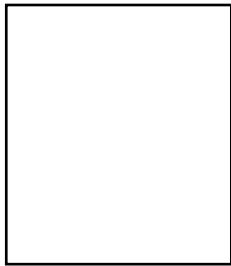
Flaw 41
Upside down Y
scratch behind head



May 41

Frame Flaw 25iii
Damage to lower
left panel

The large key type was also used for revenue only stamps. Ceylon and Nyasaland shared the same plate size of 60 stamps shown above for Bermuda, Leeward Islands, Ceylon and Nyasaland. Kenya, Uganda and Tanganika used a 100 stamp setting divided into 4 panes of 25 stamps separated by gutters. Strait Settlements, British Military Administraion Malaya, Singapore, Penang and Malacca used a 50 stamp setting. As these stamps were issued for fiscal purposes they are not found used for postal purposes other than the following exception. The Straits Settlements \$25 was authorized for postal use in late 1940. **Very few mint revenue only stamps have survived.** Some are shown below with a few used revenues (simply to show what existed at the time) including the Japanese Occupied overprinted revenue stamps.



Interpanneau block proving piece confirming existence of gutter with vertical columns
pert 13

x-Yendall



Shades of the
Poll Tax Stamp

per 14



The two items above are on actual documents. They were used during the **Japanese Occupation** in Penang. They are handstamped in red ink with the Okugawa Seal. It is believed the handstamp was applied at the time the stamp was affixed to the document. Yendall states that unused examples would therefore not exist.



RPSL 218507



RPSL 218508



\$25 Straits Settlements with Singapore registration obliterations. Authorized for use in late 1940 primarily for important documents that had to be sent to the UK via South Africa or trans-Pacific routes as KLM flights were halted due to WWII.